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C. BARRAUD

WIFE-GIVERS AS ANCESTORS AND ULTIMATE VALUES IN THE KEI ISLANDS¹

In honour of Professor P.E. de Josselin de Jong

For more than fifty years now, Southeast Asian societies have served as illustrations for anthropologists interested in kinship studies, particularly in marriage rules. As early as 1935, the asymmetric connubium was recognized by F.A.E. van Wouden as one of the most important features of Eastern Indonesian social structures. Under different names – circulating connubium, unilateral cross-cousin marriage, asymmetrical alliance, alliance, prescriptive alliance, marriage alliance, and others – this marriage system has since been scrutinized by a number of authors, including Cl. Lévi-Strauss, J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong, E. Leach, P.E. de Josselin de Jong, R. Needham and L. Dumont, to cite only the principal ones, and has raised critical theoretical problems. In the present paper, we wish to contribute to the discussion with certain additional facts observed in one Eastern Indonesian society, that of the Kei Islands, which Van Wouden also studied, and to test the appropriateness of an approach

¹ This paper was originally written for publication in the volume *Time Past, Time Present, Time Future*, edited in honour of Professor P.E. de Josselin de Jong by David S. Moyer and Henri J.M. Claessen in 1988. For personal reasons, it was not possible for me to finish it on time for inclusion in that volume. I am glad to be able to publish this contribution, although late, at this stage.

A different version was presented in French at the seminar 'La symbolique de l'alliance', directed by Professor F. Héritier-Augé at the Collège de France, in December 1985. Another version was presented at the CASA Seminar at Leiden University in February 1986.

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founded exclusively on marriage systems for the analysis of this type of society.

Following Louis Dumont's commentaries on Lévi-Strauss' *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, we have chosen to use the expression 'marriage alliance' to designate this marriage system. As Dumont explains: "The expression "marriage alliance", in which "alliance" refers to the repetition of intermarriage between larger or smaller groups, denotes what amounts to a special theory of kinship, a theory developed to deal with those types of kinship system that embody positive marriage rules, though it also affords certain general theoretical insights regarding kinship" (Dumont 1968:19).² We may put it more rigorously by saying that positive rules give marriage a diachronic dimension, in which affinity is transmitted from generation to generation (Dumont 1975:48). This fact is clearly observable in South Indian kinship, which was used as the main illustration for the development of this idea. Dumont proposes that 'Real understanding is reached when the marriage rule understood as marriage alliance is seen as giving affinity the diachronic dimension that we tend to associate only with descent and/or consanguinity" (Dumont 1968:23). This point of view was suggested in order to distinguish, in Lévi-Strauss' work, certain specific types of marriage system from what is essentially a general theory of kinship founded on incest prohibition and its implications (viz. exchange theory). What is transmitted from generation to generation in marriage alliance is a relationship of affinity rather than an obligation to exchange women. Thus, putting aside the question of exchange in this sense, the analysis can be pushed further. My point here is not to stress the widely raised objection to Lévi-Strauss' theory that it looks on women as objects, but rather to call into question the explanatory value of the notion of exchange itself.

As Dumont points out: 'The expression "marriage alliance" [...] covers both the general phenomenon of mental integration and the particular phenomenon of group integration' (Dumont 1968:23). The analysis of a society in terms of marriage alliance theory should state what is the place of marriage rules and affinity in the general system of ideas and values or ideology of this society. We do not mean to suggest that there is merely a correspondence between the social structure and what is called 'symbolic order' or 'representations' (as Van Wouden's hypothesis suggested), but rather that the system of ideas and values hierarchically orders all social facts of the given society, including its marriage rules. In the study of the relevant society's ideology, rather than use the concept of complementary opposition, we shall use that of hierarchical opposition, which introduces the consideration of value as being constitutive of the opposition (Dumont

² Although this quotation and others below are drawn from a somewhat controversial edition of a paper concerning the question of intermarriage groups to which Dumont later on responded (Dumont 1983a:148), I use them here for the convenient summary they provide of his ideas on the matter.

1980). Keeping the above points in mind, we shall designate as 'marriage alliance' the marriage system as defined by L. Dumont in his writings to the exclusion of all others.

Oversimplifying, we might say that in some cases marriage alliance provides the model for a society's ideology as a whole, that is, a society's system of ideas and values (Dumont 1980). In other cases, however, it may be subordinated to another model or represent an opposite value with regard to the model. Cases have been described in which marriage alliance appears to contradict the model, for instance Dravidian marriage alliance in the caste system.

Our study of the marriage system in Kei society involves two steps. First, we question marriage alliance theory in general, in order to delimit its scope and to reconsider its appropriateness in the case of Kei society. Second, we attempt to trace more closely the society's concepts regarding the marriage system and its relation to values. The question might be stated the other way round: is the Kei marriage system appropriately described by the concept of marriage alliance as defined above, and what is the place of that system with regard to the Kei value order?

One can examine Kei society in terms of marriage alliance; yet, in doing so, a particular level of the system is isolated from the rest of the society's values. Our hypothesis is that marriage, funerals, and, generally speaking, relationships with the dead, constitute a system which may only be understood by reference to the overall values of this particular society. Therefore, marriage alliance appears as being subordinated to a value system which encompasses it.

This hypothesis has already been set forth in two previous papers about Tanebar-Evav, a Kei Island village (Barraud 1984 and 1985). In the 1985 article, a general picture of the society's values was presented by reference to the main image used in Tanebar-Evav to speak of the society as a totality: the sailing boat. The 1984 paper discussed the exchanges observed in marriage and placed them in the framework of the general system of circulation and exchanges.

The approach chosen here, however, is slightly different. In order to answer the two questions posed above, in the present analysis of marriage we will engage in a detailed study of the Keiese definition of intermarriage groups³, of prestations and rituals as expressions of values, and of the position of the marriage system in the socio-cosmic order. This approach will then lead us to examine the concept of 'house', which is intimately linked with that of marriage.

In numerous Southeast Asian societies, a description of marriage rules and exchanges necessarily involves a thorough study of the nature of

³ Rather than 'marriage groups', which conveys an idea of a matrimonial class, I will use the expression 'intermarriage groups' to designate the groups between which a marriage occurs, in order to avoid any a priori definition of these groups in terms of marriage only.

intermarriage groups, usually houses, whose definition in terms of descent or alliance is not sufficiently precise. Our attempt to define the concept of house finds its place in the debate about exogamous groups and exchange groups. The composition of a house is one thing, while the role of the house in the overall exchange system (and not only in exchanges of women) is another. Houses as social units have been described both for societies in which marriage alliance systems are observed and for so-called 'cognatic' societies, where no positive marriage rules are to be found. The study of marriage and affinity will perhaps shed some light on the meaning of 'house'.

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This paper is based on data collected during several fieldwork visits to different parts of the Kei Islands, in the Southeast Moluccas.⁴ The most intensive work was done in Tanebar-Evav, a small village on the isolated island of the same name at the southern end of the archipelago. Other, briefer surveys were made in the northern part, and the more recent data collected are integrated here into a general view.

Although the same type of society is to be found throughout the Kei Archipelago, one may observe local differences. Three of these are relevant for us in this paper, viz.:

- Tanebar-Evav society is composed of a number of 'houses', which we may provisionally treat as social units. My previous analyses dealt mainly with the relationships between these. However, many villages in other parts of the Kei Islands are constituted by only one so-called 'house', house and village being in that case coterminous (which raises further questions about the concepts of house and village in Kei society). In the latter case, we are speaking about inter-village relationships when we consider the relations between houses.
- All the members of Tanebar-Evav village society are nobles, while in the northern part of the archipelago there are generally three social orders in each community: nobles, the servants of nobles (often called slaves or dependants), and commoners.
- One may say that in Tanebar-Evav the society is organized around the annual millet cultivation ritual, which is the most important activity in the social life. Thus far, we have been able to obtain few data on the ritual cultivation of rice⁵ in the northern part of the area, and possess very little evidence of its social significance. Its relative importance,

⁴ Fieldwork in Kei was carried out in 1971-1973, 1978, and 1985, under the auspices of the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia and in cooperation with the Pattimura University in Ambon. The research during the first visit was supported by the Laboratoire d'Ethnologie et de Sociologie Comparative de l'Université Paris X, that during the others by the E.R. 262, E.R.A.S.M.E, of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

⁵ Rice was traditionally cultivated in this area, where millet is seldom used.

as compared with that of millet in Tanebar-Evav, has therefore yet to be determined.

Keeping in mind the above points, we shall first present some data on marriage relationships, focusing upon the terminology used when speaking of the groups and of the prestations which circulate among them, as we noted this in different villages. After that, we analyse certain aspects of funerals in the same manner, and discuss their relation to marriage.

I. MARRIAGE

I.1. *Questions of vocabulary: Definition of intermarriage groups and the intermarriage relationship*

In Kei, every marriage unites two groups in a relationship called *yan ur* – *mang oho*, ‘children-sister – people of the village’. (Note the dissymmetry between the two expressions: *yan ur* is composed of two kinship terms in apposition, while *mang oho* is a genitive form.) The nucleus of each group is always a house.⁶ The *yan ur* house is the groom’s, while the *mang oho* house is the bride’s. Each house is thus related to a number of other houses, some of which are its *mang oho* and others its *yan ur*. From the former, wives are taken, while daughters and sisters are married to men in the latter. A man is not permitted to marry a woman from a house into which his sister has married. Such a system is known as asymmetrical marriage, the classic form of which is marriage with the mother’s brother’s daughter. An identical marriage is theoretically repeated at each generation, giving its diachronic dimension to the relationship. No fewer than three houses are necessarily involved in such a system. Since in Kei, two brothers are not allowed to marry two sisters, wives have to be chosen from among different *mang oho* houses, and husbands found in different *yan ur* houses. Therefore, in each generation, only one marriage is contracted with a genuine matrilineal cross-cousin, while the other marriages are contracted with distant cousins, or initiate new intermarriage relationships with as yet unrelated houses. But, once a marriage relationship has been established between houses, it is impossible either to reverse its orientation or to interrupt it.

In the accepted vocabulary of social anthropology, these poles of a marriage alliance relationship are defined as ‘wife-giver’ and ‘wife-taker’. Such a translation of *mang oho* and *yan ur* would imply, however, that the relationship is restricted to an arrangement of marriage groups. In the present study, in which we make reference to the order of values which structures the society as a whole, an analysis of marriage vocabulary,

⁶ The house is the smallest social unit. It is usually exogamous and comprises two patrilineages, located on the right and on the left side of the habitation, and referred to as ‘older’ and ‘younger’ respectively. As I mentioned above, a village may be constituted either by a single house or by a number of houses.

exchanges and rituals points to the fact that, while a marriage initiates the relationship between houses, this relationship cannot be defined simply as women exchange. Rather, the house has its place in what may be called a socio-cosmic order. We shall see that to speak of 'wife-giver' and 'wife-taker', restricting one's perspective to the issue of the exchange of women, affords too narrow a view of the society.

Further, one can empirically observe in Kei that the relationship established by a single marriage between two houses continues for generations (through the exchange of prestations, mutual aid, and so on) even if, as may happen, no further intermarriage occurs, since wives may be chosen from a number of houses.⁷ We are thus finally led to ask, with regard to marriage alliance in Kei, whether it is affinity which is transmitted from generation to generation, or whether it is something more. Stated differently, what is the content of affinity? In accordance with the introductory hypothesis, we are first obliged to distance ourselves from a vocabulary that seems to reduce marriage to exchange. Secondly, although we might use the expression 'marriage alliance' to describe this continuous relationship between two houses, this would bias the results of our analysis. We will thus employ the expression 'intermarriage relationship' henceforth.

With regard to wife-giver - wife-taker vocabulary, we should further note that in Kei only these two terms, *yan ur* and *mang oho*, are used to describe an intermarriage relationship. This contrasts with certain other Moluccan or Eastern Indonesian societies governed by the same marriage rules, where three terms are necessary. Indeed, from a man's point of view, one term designates the reference group (his own), another the group from which a wife is taken, and a third the group into which his sister marries. Emphasis is placed on a triad which allows the marriage system to operate. In Kei, where the relationship is expressed by only two terms which represent its poles, the reference group is conceived of only through the relationship, or, in other words, the relationship comes first. Generally speaking, the use of two terms denotes a 'relationship', which even in the context of marriage may not be exclusively a marriage relationship, while three terms are more likely to suggest marriage (the triad is necessary for asymmetrical marriage to be operational).⁸ In Kei, both the *yan ur* group and the *mang oho* group are therefore defined by the interrelationship

⁷ Marriage with a genuine matrilineal cross-cousin occurs regularly, although it is not statistically predominant. Very few cases of reversal in the orientation of intermarriage are actually observed.

⁸ To make this difference more explicit, one may draw a parallel between societies practising cross-cousin marriage and dualistic societies: the former formulate rules in relation to each individual subject, while the latter formulate rules bearing on the structure of the society as a whole. In both, however, the same type of marriage may be observed (see Dumont 1971:94-97).

The question of dualism and tripartition raised here does not refer only to a symbolic order, but to a holistic versus an individualistic view of the society. Either the whole is the initial given, or the individual ego serves as the central reference point.

between them, which is founded at least in part on intermarriage, but perhaps also includes something more. We shall, in fact, see that the main aspect of this relationship is something that is more important than marriage itself, namely a relationship to dead ancestors. This is inferable from the terms used to designate the intermarriage groups, as well as from the prestations that circulate among them at marriage ceremonies, but also on numerous other occasions.

We shall now examine the ideas and values connected with the two usual terms used in the context of ceremonial marriage exchanges, as well as with the terms used in daily life.

I.1.a. The *yan ur - mang oho* relationship

Since in the Kei language the most important member of a dual expression is generally placed in the second position, we will first consider the *mang oho*.

This term designates the house from which a wife has come. It can be translated literally as 'people of the village' (*mang*: people, *oho*: village). It refers both to a place and its inhabitants, which together form a homogeneous social unit, *oho*, the village. Implicitly, it denotes a distinction with regard to other villages. Locality is emphasized in opposition to an indefinite 'elsewhere'. At the same time the notion of land is implied, since being a member of a village society means having a relationship to the village land. A village society and its land constitute a whole. *Oho* also refers to the original settlement founded by the ancestors and to their burial place. It incorporates a notion of permanence. The genitive form of the expression underlines the fact that the identity of the people is linked to the place to which they belong.

Mang oho are also referred to as *mel oho duan*. *Mel* means 'noble', 'great', 'to grow'. *Oho duan* means literally 'masters of the village', in the sense of 'belonging to' the village, in contrast with 'strangers', *marvotun*, who do not belong to the village and its land. *Oho duan* are at the same time masters and servants of the village and its land (the village's sacred territory).⁹ 'Greatness' results from this quasi-identification of land, village and inhabitants, all in relation to the foundation of the village, i.e., the society. *Mel oho duan* might be translated as 'the true inhabitants of the village'. When addressed with the respectful term *mel oho duan*, the *mang oho* are accorded a high position in reference to the place with which they are identified and to the society of which they are members.

There is another idea that is associated with the *mang oho*. In ceremonial exchanges, the expressions *itin kan* or *tuar tom* are frequently joined to the term *mang oho*. *Itin* means 'base', 'foot' (of a tree, for instance); *kan* is the

⁹ The term *duan* comprehends both the idea of being a master or owner of something and that of being at the same time at the service of something, and is better translated by terms implying sovereignty than by words denoting ownership: one has a right to something because one belongs to it.

word for a dry millet (or other cereal) stem stripped of its grain. *Tuar tom* is 'the foundation of myth or history'.¹⁰ When a person in the position of a *yan ur* calls a house from which a bride has come *itin kan*, he is referring specifically to the origin of his own life, as well as to his house's origins, for the *yan ur* house represents the grain from the millet stem.

Like all kinship terms and words denoting parts of the human body, the term *itin kan* is grammatically classified among the 'inalienable possessive terms', in which the pronominal suffix indicates the relationship to the speaker (for instance, *itid kad*, 'your *itin kan*'). It may thus be said that this relationship is one of the constitutive elements of the *yan ur* house, just as the parts of the body, or kinship relations, make up the person. The *mang oho itin kan* house, as the origin of the *yan ur* house, is a constitutive part of it.

Yan ur thus always speak of their *mang oho* in terms of respect and honour. *Mang oho* are considered higher than *yan ur*, not because of their rank (as is the case in some societies practising asymmetrical marriage) but because they are attached to a specific piece of land and locality, are related to the ancestral founders, and represent the origin of the society, *oho*, and the base, *itin*, of the *yan ur*. Their higher position is to be attributed to the values they embody in this dual relationship.

The other expression, *yan ur*, designating the house into which a woman marries, is a contraction of two kinship terms, *yanan*, 'child' or 'children', and *uran*, 'sibling of the opposite sex'. Given the fact that the term *yan ur* is understood from the point of view of mother's brother, the term *ur* (or *uran*) here may be translated by 'sister', considering the brother-sister relationship from the male standpoint. *Yan ur* thus means 'children-sister'.

The expression *yan ur* is also grammatically classified among the 'inalienable possessive terms', which emphasizes the necessary relationship to the speaker. One says *yanang urang*, 'my children-sister', when speaking of one's sister's husband's house. It may be concluded that the *yan ur* house is also a constitutive part of the *mang oho* house.

Yan ur makes no reference to any locality. It expresses kinship, and more precisely siblingship and descentance. We employ the word 'descentance' intentionally here, instead of 'descent', since, if we consider houses as descent units, the children in question are the sister's. We cannot use the term 'descent group' here, because descent groups are houses, and we are concerned with 'descentance' involving a number of persons. Indeed, this descentance diffuses through different houses, generation after generation, binding together each man and his sister's children, or, in other words, the descendants of male and female siblings. Although the term *yan ur* applies to the groom's house as a permanent social unit, what is

¹⁰ The expression *yan ur - mang oho* would be replaced in a ceremonial context by the complete one *yan ur - mang oho itin kan - vu'un*. *Vu'un*, a contraction of *vu'ut*: fish, and *ulun*: head, means fish's head. Kei people say that the *yan ur* are called after the name of the gift of the best food they must offer regularly to their *mang oho*.

primarily relevant here is the extension over time implied by the association of two successive generations (that of the brother and sister and that of the sister's children). Further, this extension over time is not connected with descent, but rather with siblingship. It is siblingship which here expresses diachrony and intermarriage, where one should expect these to be expressed by descent and affinity.

Moreover, the *yan ur*, implicitly considered strangers, are not referred to as a society (another village, *oho*), but only as kin, linked by an inter-personal relationship – in contrast to the *mang oho*, who are identified with a village, a fully constituted society. Although it is 'houses' which are related to each other in a *yan ur* – *mang oho* relationship, the relationship itself is denoted in terms of an opposition between a society on the one hand and relatives on the other. The permanence of the village and its members is contrasted with the scattering of the descendants, like millet grains sown in a garden.

Other elements of the marriage vocabulary further illustrate this opposition. We should add that the terms below no longer apply to groups, but rather to persons.

Women, before and after their marriage, are called *vat yan ur* or *vat marvotun*. *Vat* means 'woman'; *vat yan ur* therefore means 'woman children-sister', signifying that the woman is classified as a member of her husband's group. *Vat marvotun*, on the other hand, means 'woman outsider', or 'stranger'. Even before marriage, women thus are recognized as being external to their house of birth, as already belonging to the 'children-sister' group, or strangers to the village. This points to the fact that in most parts of the Kei archipelago a woman leaves her original village when she marries (although this is not strictly true in Tanebar-Evav, where she simply leaves her house for another within the same village).

Vat marvotun may be compared with *eri marvotun*. In Kei society, *eri* designates the servants or dependants who do not have a house or land of their own and belong to the house of a noble, who calls them 'nephews'. As *marvotun*, 'strangers', they are opposed to the two other social orders, those of nobles and commoners.¹¹ Like women in marriage, the *eri* are destined to leave their original village, either because they are exchanged for money or because they follow a noble bride when she leaves her house of birth at marriage. The use of the expression *vat marvotun* again contains an implicit reference to locality.¹²

This does not mean, however, that a woman is not considered a full

¹¹ Nobles and commoners are both related to the land in specific ways, the former because they usually have been given rights to land upon their arrival in the village after formally agreeing to obey the local laws (although some noble lineages are of autochthonous origin); the latter because they have sprung from this very land.

¹² Women, sailing boats and servants are all mentioned together in ritual prayers offered to a specific class of spirits of the islands; all three are sent away and are replaced by the same precious goods on all occasions.

member of her house of origin before marriage, as the marriage prestations and rituals testify at length. Contrary to the tendency of anthropology to transform women into 'objects' of exchange, a woman here is doubly a subject, namely as a member of and as a stranger to her own house, the bearer of a relationship with another house. Two points of view are to be distinguished here: one whereby the house is considered as a totality made up of members bound together by specific relations, and another whereby the house may only be considered as being constituted by its relationships with other houses. We shall return to this question later.

From what has been said, it is clear that the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship involves an idea of movement. A woman is destined from birth to leave her house to marry a stranger. She is thus conceived of as a stranger long before she in fact departs. This movement is also observable in the marriage prestations, as we shall see below.

We must also insist upon the dissymmetry in the very definition of the intermarriage groups themselves. There are many expressions referring to the *mang oho* house, but only one designating the *yan ur* house as such, while there is another referring to a class of persons – *vat marvotun*, the women who must leave – and not to a group. These expressions oppose a society as a whole to a class of persons, not to another society. With regard to the *yan ur*'s side, one observes a downward orientation, toward the expected descendance of a sibling of the opposite sex (which includes an implicit reference to foreignness), while with respect to the *mang oho*'s one notes a reference to the lasting existence of a respected, localized village society. The set of references involved in the two expressions is not the same: the one comprises locality, origin, greatness and permanence of a society, the other incorporates a diachronic dimension through siblingship in combination with foreignness.

From this dissymmetry, it follows that the relationship is oriented, that is, that its poles do not have the same value, and that the *mang oho* are accorded a higher value than the *yan ur*.

We should stress that for the purposes of our analysis we have had to distinguish the two poles of the relationship and to attempt to understand the ideas which lie behind each of them. It goes without saying, however, that we are studying a relationship, i.e., that we are concerned with the point of view of one pole vis-à-vis the other *within* the relationship, not with the status of groups in the abstract. We should never forget that what is determinative is the relationship itself, that is, the whole. The relationship takes primacy over the groups, as was demonstrated very concretely in the discussion of the interdependence between the two terms of the relationship: the *mang oho* are a constitutive element of the *yan ur* and vice versa. It follows that the notions which we described above as being associated with either the *mang oho* or the *yan ur* have to be understood as the basic values of the relationship. More precisely, the values are attached to the relationship rather than to the groups, and it is the particular ordering of

these values that gives its specific orientation to this particular relationship.

In what follows we offer further data on this relationship from the *yan ur*'s standpoint.

I.1.b. Affinity relationships and the dead

The notion of *mang oho*, besides its reference to locality and origin, involves a very important relation with the dead. While the expression *mang oho* is generally used on ceremonial occasions stressing the intermarriage relationship, in daily life Kei islanders usually use the expression *duad-nit* to refer to their mother's brother's house. This term taken literally means 'the god-the dead'. More precisely, after the birth of children to a new couple, the *mang oho* is considered a *duad-nit*. In order to understand the distinction made by the Keiese between the father's house and the mother's original house, one might say that affinity is no longer expressed in terms of marriage, but in terms of a relationship to the dead ancestors of the mother's brother. The use of the expression *duad-nit* to designate the *mang oho* is further evidence of the dissymmetry in the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship, since the *yan ur* have no other names.

Duad means 'the god', while *nit* means both 'a dead body' and 'the dead' as a category. *Nit*, understood as 'all the dead', are usually worshipped by the village society as a whole on special occasions. The word *nit* is also used by the members of each house for their patrilineal ancestors, who are honoured as such within the house. The expression *duad-nit*, however, refers specifically to the mother's brother's house, to the grandmothers' brothers' houses, and so on up the genealogical ladder (i.e., to all the houses in which in-coming women were born), and to all their ancestors. The relationship with the *duad-nit* is highly valued, and the *duad-nit* are much more feared than the dead in general, *nit*. The *duad-nit* are associated, but not equated, with the Sun-Moon god (nor is the mother's brother assimilated to this god, as is sometimes the case in other Indonesian or Pacific societies).

A villager invokes his *duad-nit* in the case of illness and difficult pregnancies and deliveries, in the choice of a spouse, and in connection with many kinds of daily problems. When someone wishes to address his *duad-nit*, he brings offerings to his mother's brother, who divides them into three shares in his house: one for the god, *duad*, another for the dead, *nit*, and the third for himself. The *duad-nit* are said to be of two kinds: *mamatan*, 'dead', referring to the dead ancestors, and *vavan* 'living', referring to the mother's brother.¹³ The mother's living brother, who is also called *duad-nit*, is thus included among the ancestors. Indeed, in the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship, living and dead *mang oho* (*nit mamatan* and *nit vavan*) make up a single category (*duad-nit*) together with the god, but do so only in

¹³ A similar expression, *iaten mamatan vavan*, the 'dead and living elders', classifies remote ancestors and the elders presently exercising authority in the village in the same manner. The law enforced by the living is strengthened or confirmed by the authority of the dead.

relation with their 'children-sisters', their offspring. To put it another way, in the framework of the relationship to the mother's brother, the god, the dead and the mother's brother together form a whole, while in all other circumstances the god and the dead are distinguished into two different classes of supernatural beings.

The villagers do not say that the *duad-nit* 'give' life or death, since only the god can do so. But, in their association with the god, the *duad-nit* play an important part in the giving of life or death.

As soon as a woman knows she is pregnant, she must make offerings to the *duad-nit* of her natal house in her mother's brother's house, and usually in her mother's mother's brother's house as well. After birth, the child receives its name at a ceremony in which its own *duad-nit* (the ancestors of the mother's house) are invoked to determine whether or not they approve the proposed name. They are offered gifts of food, especially fish, which are eaten by their representatives, the members of the mother's brother's house. The *yan ur* (members of the child's father's house) say that they went 'to look for the same in the sea' when they went to sea to catch the fish offered to the *duad-nit*. The *duad-nit*¹⁴ are called upon on many occasions (sickness, the choice of a spouse, long journeys, disputes, sterility, etc.) for the rest of the child's life.

It is only in relations with their *duad-nit* that men, as mother's brothers, address the god directly on a personal basis. (Otherwise, the god is addressed directly only in collective rituals involving the society as a whole.) However, this direct relationship with the god does not have any consequences for the mother's brother, who acts merely as an intermediary, but does so rather for his sister's son. It seems that no request is made by a human being to the god for himself, but it has to be mediated either by a mother's brother or by an officiant on behalf of the society. Indeed, although the mother's brother is not to be regarded as a god, he is the only intermediary between the god and a particular category of human beings: a man's descendants through his sister. In this particular relationship, the mother's brother is the person nearest to the god.

The *duad-nit* are the masters of their 'children-sister's' destinies throughout the latter's lives (though not after death, as we shall see below). It is noteworthy that, although in a patrilineal society one normally expects the patrilineal ancestors to play the predominant role, in Kei the most vital ancestors are those on the mother's brother's side. They are the mother's brother's patrilineal ancestors. The marriage relationship thus comprises a specific relationship between the god, the dead and the living, expressed by the relationship between the mother's brother and his 'children-sister'.

The superiority granted *mang oho* depends in part on their association with the values attaching to locality, land and origin in the *yan ur - mang*

¹⁴ This may be his own *duad-nit*, i.e., his mother's brother, or the former *duad-nit* of his house, depending on the strength of the relationship or on the frequency of intermarriage between the two houses.

oho relationship. But this connection with land and locality, translated in terms of the relation between a mother's brother and his sister's children, furthermore represents a relation to dead ancestors whose descendants are located elsewhere. The value assigned to the relationship with the dead ancestors of the mother's brother gives their full meaning to the values observed at the level of the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship. Although for the purposes of analysis we have had to distinguish, in the affinity relationship, the marriage relationship on the one hand from the relation to the ancestors on the other, obviously these two aspects cannot be separated. Thus, the term *mang oho*, because of its association with *duad-nit*, expresses the high value attached to the mother's brother's ancestors' place of origin, in contrast with that of the father's ancestors. Further, the idea of descentance, whose association with one pole of the relationship, i.e., the *yan ur*, we have previously noted, here finds its full meaning in its association with the ascending generations of the other pole, i.e., the ancestors of the *mang oho*. In the above discussion, we discovered in the two poles of the *yan ur* - *mang oho* a contrast between a set of descendants and a society. But through its connection with *duad-nit*, the intermarriage relationship as a whole may also be conceived of as a relationship between ancestors and their descendants.

An implicit idea of foreignness is also inherent in this relationship. As a value, this idea occupies two positions. The *mang oho* consider women (and their descendants) as foreign, *marvotun*, while the *yan ur* are considered to be foreign as well. Foreignness from this point of view is less highly valued. The *yan ur*, from a contrary point of view, attach the highest value to ancestors who belong not to their own locality but to a 'foreign' village.

One might thus say that relationship to the outside world is an intrinsic aspect of the intermarriage relationship. If we look at intermarriage as a relationship between houses, the outside appears to be less highly valued. If we take a wider view of intermarriage, beyond the question of marriage itself, i.e., in relation to the ancestors, as part of the value system of the society taken as a whole, the outside appears to be highly valued. We will observe that the relationship to the outside, as a value, is one of the fundamental elements of this society's ideology.

This contrast thus underlines the fact that the value attached to the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship comprises two dimensions: basic membership of a localized village society on the one hand, and the – no less essential – relationship of this localized society to the outside world on the other. According to the level of the ideology that is taken into consideration, this second aspect, the necessary relationship to the outside world, is more or less highly valued. We have just observed that, from the *yan ur*'s point of view, the relationship to the outside assumes the form of a relationship to the most important ancestors; but when only marriage is taken into account, in the relationship between two houses, the relationship

to the outside is implicit and appears to be of secondary importance.

We may add that, although the value involved at the level of intermarriage is considered, in each particular relationship, from the point of view of the 'people of the village', empirically every house must necessarily place itself in both positions, since all *mang oho* are at the same time *yan ur*: their daughters and sisters are given away, but their men must marry foreign women. These men act not only as brothers but also as husbands, and bring women in, thus implicitly acknowledging the value of the outside world. It follows that what is most valued is one's own locality, something outside be this a house, a village or an island.

1.1.c. Marriage

In what follows, we shall see that the integration of different value levels that was observed in the preceding analysis is manifest as well from certain facts relating to marriage itself when studied from a different point of view than that of the intermarriage relationship.

Thus far we have been studying marriage in Kei from the standpoint of the *yan ur - mang oho* intergroup relationship. This approach has given us clues as to the significance of marriage for the respective groups, i.e. the houses, thus shedding light on the definition of the houses themselves. It revealed a number of ideas and values associated with the intermarriage relationship in Kei society, and showed how these combine, both when analysing each pole separately and the relationship itself taken as a whole. From a theoretical point of view, this approach made clear how an opposite sex siblingship extended over time encroaches on the realm of descent and affinity.

In Kei society, however, marriage can also be viewed on another level of meaning. If we temporarily disregard the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship – that is, intermarriage between houses – we may concentrate on marriage itself and what the villagers say about it. Only a few examples will be presented, since a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this paper.

Proverbs pertaining to marriage frequently compare the husband to a piece of flotsam seeking an island on which to drift ashore.¹⁵ This comparison indicates the proper course of action to be followed in marriage: the man seeks a woman who may become his wife – it is not the island which seeks the flotsam. Here the husband is again considered as an outsider (coming from outside the island), as in the case of the *yan ur -*

¹⁵ I use the word 'flotsam' here as it conveys precisely the ideas contained in the proverbs. Generally speaking, however, in Kei ideology flotsam and jetsam are included in a single category, that of wrecks washed ashore by the rising tide, and 'entering' the territory without help from anyone, instead of being brought in. Wrecks occupy a very specific and important position in the society's value system, namely in relation with certain island spirits. They are highly feared and respected, like everything which comes from outside the island, and sophisticated welcome rituals are performed when they wash ashore. Accordingly, when the husband is compared to flotsam, this has no pejorative connotations.

mang oho relationship, but what is relevant is no longer the foreigner/society opposition, but the sea/land opposition. The husband is not considered as a 'foreigner', and the concept of foreignness is no longer relevant at this level. Indeed, in contrast with the movement that was observed at the intermarriage level, an inverted movement is noted in this example: the husband's arrival instead of the wife's departure. This inward movement of the husband has to be compared with the wider inward movement of life-giving things to be observed in numerous other contexts, for instance in the millet cultivation ritual cycle, in which the masculine rain necessary to fecundate the land is also associated with the outside (Barraud 1984, 1985). The inversion of the movement (inward instead of outward) coincides with an inversion of values: what comes from the outside is considered to be of higher value than what is from the island itself.

Another example is that of the marriage ritual itself. Here a double inversion reverses the order of values.

The marriage ritual strictly speaking emphasizes, as is to be expected, the whole constituted by masculine-feminine complementarity. The first ritual act here is the consumption by the betrothed couple and by bachelors – friends of the groom – of a conical rice cake topped by a hard-boiled egg, as symbols of the unity that is necessary if the union is to last. Although what is stressed here is the male/female complementarity represented by the young couple, the male element represented by the male bachelors' participation is predominant.

The second ritual act is the suspension around the groom's neck of a small basket containing items representing the outside world: a black stone as one of a pair of (probably small) meteorites, described as the 'testicles' of the rain or of the tornado falling from the sky after an overly violent act of copulation between it and the clouds – which are considered as husband and wife –; two small dry fruits found washed up on the beach, one of which is vulviform; tobacco; half a betel leaf; and half an areca nut. The small basket is not put in place by the bride, but by an old woman from the bride's group, to whom the husband will later offer food coming from the sea. In this case again, male/female complementarity is stressed, although it is associated with the outside, and the masculine elements predominate. One may note a movement from the outside (from the rain and the sky, and from the sea) to the inside, as opposed to the movement from inside to outside observed in the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship. The outside here is associated with the masculine principle. (We noted the reverse configuration in the preceding analysis, in which the inside is associated with the *mang oho*, representing the brother and the male side, while the *yan ur* incorporate the husband and wife into the same category, as 'sister' and feminine, in a movement to the outside.) The lack of completeness (half a pair of stones, half a leaf and half an areca nut) can be interpreted as a provisional stage, as if totality may be attained only after the marriage has been consummated and children are born, intima-

ting the assignment of a lesser value to marriage than to descentance, and calling to mind another totality, that of the sailing boat at sea, as an image of the society as a whole. It is precisely in the ritual of the sailing boat that the complete pair of stones is used. As was mentioned earlier, the sailing boat represents the totality of the society.

In reference to the society as a totality, represented either by the sailing boat or by the complementarity of land and sea, marriage ceremonies thus evidence an inversion of the movement and of the order of values that were observed at the level of intergroup relationships.

We are still in the context of marriage here, but the perspective taken is not that of a relation between houses. It is, rather, that of marriage as a union between a man and a woman in relation to prosperity. The society, i.e. the village, is no longer contrasted with people from the outside. Further, what is stressed is the socio-cosmic complementarity of land and sea, which together form a whole. This is precisely the way in which the Kei islanders conceive of their universe.¹⁶ There is a significant number of data showing that, in this complementarity between land and sea, the land is associated with feminine elements, while the sea is associated with masculine ones. The masculine/feminine distinction is linked to the overall value system of the society in many respects, which, unfortunately, we cannot discuss here.

It is just as important to give to as to receive from the outside world. The tales relating the settlement of newcomers on the island at the time when the village was founded evidence the same inversion of values: the immigrants invited to settle and to marry autochthonous women were rulers and nobles, and are considered as being superior.¹⁷

Just as a reference to land, locality and origin has a value dimension, so the necessity of receiving – this inward movement – also incorporates a value, but on another level. Each of these two values can at a particular level encompass the other. At the level of the intermarriage relationship, where the woman is destined from the beginning to leave, the outside is

¹⁶ Beyond the mere opposition between sea and land, in which the sea is superior to the land, the question is that of the value attached to the relationship between sea and land; this value is superior to that attached to land with respect to exchanges between houses.

¹⁷ As outsiders and representatives of other societies or other legal systems – that is, in the context of their relationship with Tanebar-Evav – they occupy a superior position, but at the same time, since they receive women as *yan ur*, they occupy a subordinate position. This example illustrates how the relationship may be conceptualized on two different ideological levels – that of the internal organization of the society and that of the relation of the society as a whole to the outside world. The latter level is the superior one, where the values attached to the outside world encompass those in the relationship between houses.

In this sense also the asymmetry inherent in the marriage rule, which results both in the superior position of the *mang oho* and in a man's occupying a position as both giver and taker, disappears if the marriage alliance is considered in the framework of the overall values of the society. Indeed, an inferior position on one level may become a superior position on another, in the above example on the cosmological level.

subordinated to locality and to the relationship to the dead ancestors and, as a value, the necessity of receiving is encompassed. At the level of the socio-cosmic order, where marriage forms part of a wider masculine/feminine opposition and the man is the outsider, the inward movement and the value associated with the outside are encompassing. This can also be seen in the millet cultivation ritual (Barraud 1984).

We can summarize the main points of the above analysis of intermarriage groups and relationship as follows:

- With regard to the values displayed on the level of intermarriage in the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship, one pole, the *mang oho*, associated with locality, land, origin and the ancestors, is more highly valued than the other, the *yan ur*, associated with foreign descentance through a sister (from a brother's point of view).
- Affinity, in this relationship, is expressed in terms of a brother-sister relationship which includes a dimension of temporality.
- The relationship between the *mang oho* and *yan ur* implies a movement from within to without: from the village as a society to an outside that is defined as 'foreign' but that is not conceived of as a society.
- The *yan ur - mang oho* relationship is primarily a specific relationship between the living and the dead. The latter, in this relationship with the descendants of the women of their house, take on their most frightening form. They are endowed with power through their association with the god, and concern themselves directly with the daily life of their 'children-sister'. The importance of these particular dead implies an acknowledgement of the value of the outside world: they always belong to a place 'outside' their descendants' houses.
- The relationship to the outside is assigned two different positions with regard to the relevant configuration of values at the level of the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship. When seen as an intrinsic element of the relationship, it incorporates the highest value. But at the same time, when intermarriage is considered alone, the relationship to the outside, as linked to one particular pole of the relation, that of the *yan ur*, is less highly valued than the local society, that of the *mang oho*.
- Finally, sayings about marriage and marriage rituals reverse the ordering of values observable at the level of the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship, which shows what place marriage occupies in the overall order of the society.

In Kei society, the intermarriage relationship embodies a number of values and implies a movement which is not restricted to the transfer of a woman from one house to another. Further, it raises a question as to the content of affinity. A previous study of kinship terminology showed how affinity is subordinated to the brother-sister relationship (Barraud 1979:142 ff.). In the present discussion, though we are obliged to speak of affinity to account for the existence of distinct intermarriage groups due to the exogamous character of houses, everything pertaining to affinity is ex-

pressed in terms of the brother-sister relationship and of the relationship to origins and to the dead. However, siblingship is not to be confused with descent and/or consanguinity. We shall see how siblingship gives a new dimension to the opposition between consanguinity and affinity.

The following analysis of marriage and funerary prestations will enable us to see how the values identified in the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship fit into the overall system of ideas and values of Kei society.

1.2. *Marriage prestations*

Although a marriage is at the origin of the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship, prestations are exchanged between the two related groups thereafter on numerous ceremonial occasions in addition to weddings, such as ceremonies in connection with funerals, births, the construction of houses and sailing boats, long journeys, and so on. The relationship is a lasting one and the exchanges continue indefinitely, even if no new marriages occur.

On each of these occasions, specific prestations are given by each side to the other. On the one hand, the *mang oho* are said to 'feed and clothe' (*fa'an-fnolok*) their *yan ur*, to whom they offer goods referred to as 'plates-cloth' (*bingan-sibo*), and which in fact consist mainly of plates and dishes, pieces of cloth, and clothing. On the other hand, the *yan ur* are said to *flurut duad-nit* – an expression which is difficult to translate. It means roughly 'to let the *duad-nit* gorge themselves'.¹⁸ The verb *flurut* in other cases is mostly intransitive and describes a greedy way of eating. The underlying idea is that, unlike social beings, the *duad-nit* take what they like when they like, and that there is no way of preventing their doing so. The goods offered in this case are called 'money-gold' (*kubang-mas*) and consist of old Dutch cannons, gongs, jewellery, cash money and food. It should be stressed that these expressions are used in all situations where exchanges occur and are not restricted to the marriage context.

While the general names of these kinds of prestations are invariable, certain precious goods within each overall category bear different, specific names, according to the particular occasion on which they are offered.

In Tanebar-Evav, all valuables circulating in either direction, except food, have a mythical common origin connected with the cosmological centre of the village, its sacred mountain. All of them have in fact, however, been imported through exchanges with neighbouring islands.

The terms used to designate the prestations express a flow in two opposite directions, downwards towards life and descendants, from the *mang oho*

¹⁸ In my previous publications, I proposed slightly different translations of this expression. New data have led me to believe that the present interpretation more closely approximates the actual meaning of this expression.

to the *yan ur*, and upwards towards the dead (the ancestors of the mother's house), from the *yan ur* to the *mang oho*. This movement has a transverse orientation. It passes through different houses, since it is mediated by the mother's brother and the sister's children. The former is responsible for the feeding and clothing of his 'children-sister' – the proper behaviour of earlier generations towards later ones. He is the source of the very existence of 'his' descendants (we recall that he is called a 'dry millet stem'), directly through the blood transmitted by the mother, as well as indirectly through the death he may potentially inflict by refusing to 'feed' them or otherwise take care of them.

On the other hand, the *yan ur* worship the dead of their mother's brother's house and offer them food, but this act implies no notion of 'feeding' them ('feeding' is always an act taking place from older to younger). In doing so, they honour the dead *duad-nit* and request their protection. The offerings they make are an acknowledgement that their origin is with the *duad-nit*.

Viewing the exchange system as a whole, it is clear that the *duad-nit* not only give a woman in marriage, but also continually feed her descendants through prestations of plates and clothes. The latter offer them the *flurut* prestations of cannons and jewellery in return.

One should note the contrasted ideas involved in the movement of these prestations: one side 'feeds' the other, although no foodstuffs, but only empty containers (plates and cloth), are given. The other side includes foodstuffs and money among its gifts, which, however, do not feed the other party.

Let us now examine what is often called the 'matrimonial compensation', *velin*. This word may be translated roughly as 'the return work'.¹⁹

It should be stressed at the outset that, although houses are exogamous units and marriages take place between them, exchange groups are wider, and exchanges never take place between just two houses. The bride's and the groom's house are each assisted by their own *yan ur* and *mang oho* houses, as well as their 'younger brother' and 'elder brother' houses.²⁰ All in all these constitute a substantial number of mutually related units. The goods exchanged are provided by all the different houses involved. The specific relation (either *fa'an fnolok* or *flurut duad-nit*) in which a house stands to the bride's or the groom's house determines the type of goods

¹⁹ In reply to a personal question from R.H. Barnes: it seems highly probable that *velin* comes from the root *beli*, 'to purchase', which forms part of the Eastern Indonesian term for bridewealth, although full linguistic data to support this hypothesis are not yet available. There are many examples in the Kei language of the transformation of *b* into *v*. However, the Kei language already includes a word with the precise meaning 'to purchase'. Furthermore, the word *velin* is associated with the idea of 'return', as I have demonstrated in a previous article about exchanges in Tanebar-Evav (Barraud 1984:432-434).

²⁰ These latter terms refer to types of intra- or intervillage mutual assistance which I have analysed elsewhere (Barraud 1979:ch.5).

which it provides. In this way, each marriage in Tanebar-Evav implies exchanges in which the entire village, divided into two groups, takes part. Other Indonesian societies seem to follow the same pattern.²¹

The marriage prestations offered by the groom's group to the bride's are the following:

1. a cannon, which on this occasion is designated 'the keel and the first plank' (of the sailing boat), and which is said to 'replace' the bride's body;
2. a gong, in this ceremony called 'the paddles and poles of the boat' (which enable the boat to leave port, i.e. in this case, permit the bride to leave her house);
3. a piece of jewellery, which on this occasion bears the name 'to leave the house'.

These three prestations are offered to the bride's father.

4. One or more prestations of jewellery (bearing various names) are given to the bride's mother. One is always 'for the parting from the mother'; another may be offered for the mother's milk;

5. palm-wine, betel leaves and areca nuts are given to the bride's father for his dead, that is, for the *duad-nit* of the children to be born. These prestations are then placed on the floor of his house.

In addition to these five prestations, two others are presented by the groom's house to the bride's mother's house of origin. One is a gold bracelet, given to the bride's mother's brother, who is called, as we have indicated, *nit vavan*, 'dead living'. This prestation is referred to as *nit itin*, that is, 'the foot of the dead' (in the same sense as one may speak of the 'foot' of a tree). The other prestation, designated *nit sasak*, 'the dead carried in our arms', consists of a sum of cash offered to the dead, called on this occasion the 'dead masters of the house' or 'the far-away dead' or 'the dead who precede us'. Thus, apart from the groom's and the bride's houses, a third house, that of the bride's mother's brother, is directly involved in each marriage. These prestations refer implicitly to the bride's mother's own marriage, and therefore also to the relationship, through women, with the *duad-nit*. The offering of prestations follows an ascending path with a transverse orientation, from the living to the future *duad-nit* and thence to the latter's *duad-nit*, who are called, as we have seen, the 'dead masters of the house'. But the house they are masters of is to be understood as the *yan ur*'s.

Thus far, there are three points to be noted with regard to these prestations. First, there is the comparison of the bride to a sailing boat²²; second, we

²¹ For instance, in the matrilineal Minangkabau society of West Sumatra, two exchanging groups are clearly built up around the two lineages directly involved in a given marriage, and are each composed of several houses mutually linked by marriage (Pak 1986).

²² In a former paper, I analysed the sailing boat as representing the values of the society as a whole at length (Barraud 1985). Hence I will only briefly call to mind a few points developed in that paper.

have the replacement of the bride's body by a cannon; and third, there is the emphasis placed on the relationship with the far-away dead.

The ritual association of the bride with the sailing boat corresponds first of all with the fact that, at the level of the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship, she is viewed as a stranger bound to leave her birthplace (see above: *vat marvotun*). We have seen that two prestations are given on her departure from her house of birth. This association underlines the opposition between locality and the outside, and the necessary outward movement. We shall see further on how this 'outside' corresponds with values of a more universal order.

Comparing a woman to a sailing boat also stresses their equivalence from one particular point of view: thus the cannon, designated 'the keel of the boat', is given to 'replace' the bride. Although this comparison refers to the sea, it contains at the same time a reference to the land. The keel of the boat is indeed a tree trunk (in ceremonial language, the word for 'tree trunk' designates the keel of a boat). Women are frequently referred to as trees, owing to their fertility, and as a source of life, and the word *itumun*, 'body' considered as a container of life, is used for a woman's body as well as for a boat or a tree. In relation to the land, the comparison of women to the sailing boat emphasizes the fact that a woman, considered as the keel of a boat or as a tree, may be a source of life, but only insofar as she gives life outside her place of origin, through marriage.

As we remarked earlier (note 12), women, sailing boats and servants are regularly mentioned together in the same sentence in many important millet cultivation ritual prayers. They are all destined to leave the house and to be replaced by valuable objects: boats and servants were traditionally exchanged outside the village for cannons, gongs and jewellery, and in a sense, they belong to the same category as women. Cannons are also used to 'replace' adopted children, murdered men, and, as we shall see below, the dead body at funerals, in the same way as there is a 'replacement' for the animals killed during the clearing of the forest. Cannons given on these occasions and, generally speaking money as well, are a replacement for the life which goes away as a result of a death or of a departure in cases of marriage, adoption, the sale of a sailing boat, or the gift of a servant.

The fact that the woman is replaced by a cannon, called 'the keel of the boat', emphasizes the significance both of the woman and of the cannon for the very existence of the house. In another ceremony, that on the occasion of the construction of a house, the cannon offered is called 'the ridge pole of the roof'. The keel and the pole are not simply important parts of the boat and the house respectively, but are essential parts without which they do not exist. The giving away by the *mang oho* of his daughter or his sister (metaphorically designated as his own seed), considered as life itself, is replaced by the ridge pole or keel, a vital part standing for the whole of the house or of the boat. Life given away in the form of a woman is

replaced by another form of life, that of the house or the boat, i.e., social units. This prestation acknowledges the reality of the existence of the house, which cannot be a totality at one particular level without at the same time giving away part of itself (its life) at another level in a sort of inescapable movement. As we shall see, the latter level is subordinated to the former, which refers to the society as a whole, founded on its internal as well as its external interrelationships.

An additional remark concerning the emphasis placed on the far-away dead may be in order here. Contrary to what might be expected in a patrilineal society, the more revered dead are not those of one's own house, but those of a different house, with which a relationship is traced through the mother's brother, thus involving a female link. Not only are the *mang oho* considered as *itin kan*, 'the foot/base of the bare dry millet stem without grain', but the dead of their house are spoken of as *nit itin*, 'foot/base of the dead', that is, the source, the origin, but of other houses. Although a house may be conceived of as a descent group, it is clear that the most important ancestors of its members are not, in fact, members of the house: houses cannot be viewed as mere corporate groups.

Further, while, contrary to what was assumed in the theory of asymmetrical marriage, it is impossible to draw even an imaginary circle tracing the overall circulation of women, in Tanebar-Evav it was possible to draw lines connecting *duad-nit* to *duad-nit*, recalling the marriages of women, and reconstructing the past by means of the path followed by the prestations offered to the dead at each marriage.

These three points in connection with the marriage prestations constitute three aspects of the same hierarchical order involving different levels. The women as well as the boat, in their essence, are destined to leave, but for this outward movement a return is made of cannon – valuables which come from outside the island and which themselves, on a different level, give life back to the dead ancestors, ensuring the existence of the society.

*

We may attempt to order the various points we have thus far presented with regard to marriage prestations as follows.

At the level of the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship, and generally with respect to houses or villages – that is, with respect to social groups – a woman, as member (daughter or sister) of a house, is identified with the boat, with the outside, and with a necessary departure, which is strongly emphasized. When she leaves, she is replaced by extremely valuable things, which constitute vital parts of a house. The relationship created by intermarriage appears to be constitutive of and necessary for the very existence of houses.

The importance of the brother-sister relationship is confirmed by the

specific prestations offered to the mother's brother, and through him to the dead. In the intermarriage relationship, the male point of view is that of the brother, associated with the origin, the land and the dead, while the husband and wife are together classified as feminine and outsiders. What is relevant here is not the land - sea opposition, but the outward - inward movement, in the within - without opposition. At the level of the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship, the outward movement as well as the relationship to the dead are encompassing.

However, the identification of women with the sailing boat in the marriage prestations and in rituals shows that marriage is also to be understood at another value level. Where the male - female relationship (gender) and prosperity are involved, as elements of the overall socio-cosmic order, women are, conversely, associated with the land and with trees (together with the keel of the boat), as a source of life, and male elements come in from the outside in order to fecundate the land. At this level, as many rituals and myths demonstrate, the foreign element is in the superior position. When, in the marriage ritual, the groom and the bride are ceremonially tied together, both the male and female elements are briefly associated with the outside and the sea - though the male element is encompassing - in a reference to the highest values of the society; represented by the sailing boat at sea, which incorporate the opposition between male and female, land and sea (see Barraud 1985). The subordinate position of a foreigner as a recipient of a wife and a participant in the specific *yan ur - mang oho* relationship is no longer relevant. Rather, what comes from the sea and the outside to associate with and to fecundate the land represents the necessary superior element.

The same dual aspect is to be observed in the case of houses, which have no existence outside this interrelationship, while at the same time they are conceived of as wholes which cannot be deprived of any of their parts. The prestation of a cannon, in replacement of life going out, emphasizes the very fact that, in giving life outside themselves, houses remain wholes.

A more detailed analysis would show that the sailing boat as well should be considered on two different levels. On one level, it is associated with the feminine element and must depart. On the other, it combines both male and female elements and represents the society as a whole (which is itself compared to a sailing boat at sea with its crew and passengers) in association with its highest values (Barraud 1985).

The analysis of funerary prestations and of ideas in connection with death in Kei society will confirm this opposition between the two levels of meaning.

II. FUNERARY PRESTATIONS

Although at funerals prestations are offered in the framework of the *yan*

ur - mang oho relationship, the villagers here generally use the term *itin kan* ('base of a dry millet (or other cereal) stem stripped of its grain', see I.1.a. above) rather than *mang oho* to designate the relation, as if the idea of origin (*itin*) as source of life, rather than that of locality (*oho*), should be stressed. In fact, as we shall see, in a sense the departure from the realm of the living to that of the dead is not related to locality.

Most prestations at funerals come from the *mang oho* of the deceased's house. *Mang oho* principally give clothing and plates, which are meant, as in the case of marriage, to 'feed and clothe' (*fa'an fnolok*). The *yan ur* are thus treated in death as they were in life. The dead are destined to leave the island, in the same way as women, and their mother's brother's house is responsible for the journey. Here again, we notice the movement from within to without. However, this time it is not dominated by the *duad-nit*, as we shall see below. The prestations of plates and clothing are said to 'close' (perhaps the tomb), so that the souls of the dead will not return to make further requests.

Although in this case, as in that of marriage, there is an outward movement as well as a separation, the latter here is much more radical, since it implies a passage from the world of the living to that of the dead. The cemetery itself traditionally is not located in the village but on the shore, which is neither land nor sea. We may recall here that one of the marriage prestations is designated 'the paddles and the poles' (used for the sailing boat to leave the harbour), while a lesser one is given 'for the parting from the mother'. In the marriage ceremony, metaphorically departure from the island (in fact, the house or the village) is in a way emphasized more strongly than the departure from one's kin (emphasis on locality). The reverse is true at funerals, where there is a clearer indication of a break in the relationship with the living (emphasis on kinship and on the contrast between the living and the realm of the dead).

Some time after the funeral ceremony, the most important funerary prestation is offered by the deceased's children to the *itin kan*, personified by the deceased's mother's house of origin, i.e., the deceased's mother's brother's house. A gift is made of a cannon, called on this occasion *nit voka*, which literally means 'the replacement of the deceased's body'.²³ When a man dies, his children give the cannon to their father's mother's house, which may also, in some cases, but not in all, be their own mother's brother's house (if a matrilineal cross-cousin marriage has been contracted). When a woman dies, the presentation of a cannon to her mother's brother's house means offering it to the *duad-nit* of her children's own *duad-nit* — the same house which received the prestation for the

²³ New inquiries made during recent fieldwork allow me to correct a statement in a previous paper (Barraud 1984). Contrary to what is said there, the cannon is not given at the time of the funeral but afterwards.

dead (*nit itin*, 'the food of the dead') at her marriage (see I.2. above).²⁴

We pointed out how, in the context of the marriage ceremony, a cannon 'replaces' the woman's body: in Keiese terms, it is a 'return', in a different form, for life which has been given. But how are we to understand here the replacement of a dead body by a cannon given to a house which is not that of the departing deceased? Further data on the comparison between a cannon and the body are necessary. Before they are forthcoming, however, we must briefly describe the Keiese concept of the 'person' and the person's destiny after death.

A person is considered to be composed of several different elements, the most important of which are the body, the name, and what we may provisionally call the soul.²⁵ The soul is given by the god through the intermediary of certain spirits. The body, *itumun*, which is formed principally from the mother's blood, and the name are the concern of the *duad-nit*. The latter may inflict illness, in which case the soul temporarily leaves the body, but they do not directly inflict death.

We shall see, however, that these elements of the person, which we have isolated here for analytical purposes, are not really independent of each other, but rather constitute different aspects of the same entity (which still remains to be defined). Indeed, at the time of death, the 'soul' is not said to quit the body, but rather to break free and leave the surface of the earth. The islanders say that each of 'the seven souls' returns to its appropriate place, thus speaking of the seven souls of the deceased, while for a living person, no number is ever mentioned. These souls depart in seven different directions. Six of them 'rejoin' (*ba il*: litt. 'go back to') the categories of supernatural beings who each constitute a part of the universe, viz. 1) the god; 2) the spirits of miscarried foetuses; 3) the spirits of stillborn children; 4) the *mitu*, protective spirits of the village and of houses; 5) the dead *nit*, associated with the Mother Earth; and 6) a category of beings, the 'disappeared', who have vanished in the forest or at sea.²⁶ The seventh soul accompanies the body, *itumun*, to the cemetery, where it remains in order to protect it.

We should note that, in contrast with the other supernatural beings, the

²⁴ Informants did not agree about the number of *duad-nit* houses involved. Some believed that the cannon could go back through more than two houses.

This prestation is to be compared to that of a golden bracelet, called *mas mel*, which, tracing the path of *duad-nit* back through different houses, is offered in compensation for the loss of the 'noble' status of a man who has married a commoner woman. The offering of this prestation enables him to recover his 'nobility', his blood having been purified (replaced?) by this valuable gift.

²⁵ For want of more accurate terms with which to designate these concepts, I am provisionally speaking in terms of our own categories, which do not coincide precisely with Keiese ones.

²⁶ People would go into the forest, never to come back, after disputes, often in connection with adultery or infractions of the law of the spirit *Hukum*. More details of this category are to be found in Barraud 1984.

duad-nit as such are not rejoined by any of the seven parts of the soul. This is in spite of the fact that one part goes to the godhead and another to the *nit*, the dead.

Only a cannon is returned to the *duad-nit* explicitly in replacement of the body, but not of any soul, even though the *duad-nit* have given an essential element of life – a body, in the form of blood coming from the mother. The problem therefore is how to interpret the relationship of the body to the soul in the light of the analysis of the part played by the cannon.

On some occasions the cannon is said to 'replace the body' (in the case of marriage, murder, and gifts of servants), on others to 'bring back' the soul (in the case of victims of drowning). I will not give full details of the rituals here, but further analysis would show that a soul and a body should not be distinguished in a living person: as soon as there is life in the mother's womb, there is soul. I use the word 'soul' here (recalling Mauss' use of the word, Mauss 1966) in the sense of life in association with 'body'. It would not be accurate, in this context, to speak of 'a' soul or of 'souls' and to consider the existence of a body '*itumun*' independent of that of a soul. While the god gives soul, the *duad-nit* make life possible, giving the person its first component, the blood that is the origin of the body. Only the joint action of the god and the *duad-nit* makes it possible for one to become a complete person, as this establishes the fundamental relationship of soul and body.

The cannon thus replaces the movement of life, which is in effect in the hands of the *duad-nit* from the beginning to the end of life, the 'soul - body'. The *duad-nit*'s role comes into play at a person's conception. However, after death the person no longer exists for them, since it has split into seven parts over which they exercise no control, and life as such has gone. One can thus understand why the cannon goes to the house of the dead person's mother's brother, which was really the origin of his or her life. It replaces the dead person's body – which belongs to that house, and which has departed – in the same way as a cannon replaces the body of a bride who leaves her father's house. At marriage, this cannon bears the name of an essential part of the sailing boat, equating the woman's body with the keel of a boat. The bride's father's house is pre-eminently concerned with the life given through the bride. At death, it replaces the blood and body given by the *duad-nit*. For the replacement of the deceased's life, it is the deceased's mother's brother's house which is responsible.

The meaning of marriage prestations is clearly replacement of the life given explicitly by the *duad-nit*. The *duad-nit* are the masters of the destinies of their 'children-sister', but only from conception until death, in a very specific relationship to a category of living human beings, but not to society as a whole understood as a socio-cosmic order.

In other words, if the god is the origin of all life, the *duad-nit*, as intermediaries between the god and human beings, are the origin of a person, insofar as a person is involved in the social relations which are

controlled by the *duad-nit*, namely the relations between houses. The *duad-nit* are the founders of the social aspect of life.

Thus, at the end of life, the elements of a person return to the socio-cosmic universe of which they form part. The deceased's relations with the society of the living continue, on an anonymous basis. Dead persons are no longer identified with a particular house standing in a *yan ur - mang oho* relationship to another house, but are the dead *nit* of the society as a whole (which in Keiese terms is referred to as *lor-haratut*), and are worshipped as such at the annual rebirth of the village society in the millet cultivation ritual.

While elements of the person constitute parts of the universe, houses linked by intermarriage participate in the universe in a specific way, and their destiny is controlled not by the combined supernatural forces in general but by an association of *duad* and *nit* on a more restricted basis. We are thus able to distinguish two different levels: one at which the movement from life to death and from death to life takes place (which includes the socio-cosmic existence of society and of persons); and one at which this movement assumes a specific form, namely the outward-inward movement involved in the intermarriage relationship.

By way of conclusion, I shall now briefly discuss the arrangement of these two value levels in Keiese ideology.

III. INTERMARRIAGE AND VALUES

As was mentioned previously, the ultimate values of Keiese society are expressed in two terms, both of which mean 'society', but do so in relation to various ideas involving a different set of references. One of these terms, *haratut*, refers principally (to simplify) to the village society in the restricted sense, taken in relation to its specific origin, to the particular territory it occupies, and to its ancestors. The other, *lor*, refers to the society at large, including the organization of the society of the Kei Archipelago as a whole, as well as to different principles of organization or laws coming from elsewhere, that is, outside the society proper (the village or the island), in relation to certain spirits. Previous analyses of this society showed how, at the highest level of the ideology, the ideas and values of *lor* encompass those of *haratut*. More precisely, one may say that the highest level is constituted by the relationship between *lor* and *haratut*, in which the values of *lor* encompass the values of *haratut*.²⁷

The above analysis of the marriage vocabulary and prestations has stressed the importance of locality, of land and of origin, in a specific relationship to the dead, in the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship. Inter-

²⁷ This finds expression mainly in the millet rituals, which are analysed briefly in another paper (Barraud 1985).

marriage is expressed in terms of the brother-sister relationship. At the intermarriage level which we have isolated in the ideology, the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship may be considered as representing a hierarchical opposition which, contrasting the values attaching to locality, land, origin and the ancestors with that attaching to 'external' descentance, stresses the importance of an inevitable relationship to 'an' outside. The relationship between the dead ancestors and the living children of the sisters living elsewhere seems to be a fundamental characteristic of this opposition. What is observed is that, while *mang oho* represent a permanent society in relation to the dead ancestors, the dead ancestors cannot belong to the same locality. The relationship to the dead gives its value dimension to the outside.

Furthermore, we have shown that, in a society of this kind, it is possible to speak in terms of houses only if one speaks first of the relationship which accounts for the very existence of the house, the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship. The importance of the uterine lines was thus seen to be stressed. Here, as in many other Eastern Indonesian societies, life does not flow within each individual house, but the 'flow of life' irrigates successive houses. The Keiese metaphor is that of grains sown among the *yan ur* houses. The return of the cannon to the *duad-nit* after funerals clearly shows that what is replaced is not the woman given in marriage (for whom a cannon has already been given direct to her father) but life itself, in terms of soul-body, which has come from the house of the deceased's mother. This life thus travels in a transverse direction, and not vertically through one particular house, which, at this level of the ideology, gives meaning to the 'house' other than as a container of life. A house may have existence only insofar as life is given out. It follows that houses not only exchange prestations, but are at the same time subject and object modified by the exchanges.

Looking for a definition of the house, particularly in relation to marriage exchanges, we find Louis Dumont's criticism of the concept of reciprocity most relevant. He points out that we should not posit subjects who remain intangible throughout the exchanges which take place between them, and stresses Marcel Mauss' former observation that, on the contrary, in non-modern societies one exchanges something of oneself at the same time that one exchanges things (Dumont 1983b:XVI). This is explicitly testified in the marriage and funerary prestations here.

However, the question may certainly be asked how we should interpret reciprocity in the marriage exchanges, in the light of the exchange theory. In the exchange system, at the level of the intermarriage relationship, houses would seem to be not poles in a system of reciprocity, but rather points along a path traced by the movement from the *duad-nit* to life, a movement implying a return to the dead in another form. Thus, reciprocity appears to be one aspect of a larger exchange movement.

With regard to the houses, we noted the primacy of the relationship

expressed by this movement over the very existence of houses as groups. We have pointed out all through this paper that the marriage vocabulary, prestations and rituals invariably emphasized a movement outward towards an indefinite elsewhere, or a movement inward. This is also the case at funerals, and many examples could be cited from other rituals as well, namely those before and at birth, and especially those in the millet ceremonies. Both ritual and daily speech include frequent references to containers and the act of containing, to the acts of going in and going out, and to those of opening and closing. This movement is so important that it should itself be understood as part of the society's values.

When considering the overall value system as briefly sketched at the beginning of this conclusion, the values attaching to the *mang oho*, as people of the village, i.e. of the origin and of the founding place, appear to be related to the concept of the society as *haratut*, or the society as considered from an internal point of view. The values attaching to the *yan ur* are to be related to those of *lor*, insofar as they embody a relationship with the outside world. Although intermarriage itself, that is, the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship as such, is included at the level of *haratut*, that is, the society in its internal organization, involving intergroup relationships, we observed that the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship as a hierarchical one conforms to the same logical model as that of the hierarchical opposition between *lor* and *haratut*. According to this model, the highest value is attached to ideas or things which do not belong to one's own place (be it a house, a village or the society in a restricted sense), but which belong to an external world.

The *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship thus has to be understood at two levels: one at which intergroup relationship (intermarriage) is involved and at which one pole of the relationship represents values of a higher order (*mang oho*), and the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship is integrated at the level of *haratut*; the other at which the relation to the outside is valued, because of the external position of the main ancestors, and is integrated as one of the fundamental aspects of the value system of the society.

However, we observe that such an analysis in terms of intermarriage relationship alone does not account for the society taken as a whole. We showed, in the analysis of proverbs and rituals, how at another level of the expression of marriage – which is no longer that of intermarriage or the *yan ur* - *mang oho* relationship – the values attaching to land, locality and origins in relation to the *duad-nit* were encompassed by the values attaching to foreign elements and to the society as a whole in its relation with the outside world. At this level also, the analysis of funerary prestations shows how the role of the *duad-nit* (and the intergroup relationship) meets its limits at the death of a person, while the totality of sacred beings in the socio-cosmic order, as well as the renewal of the society, is involved in the division of the soul after death. Intermarriage and the relation to the dead appear at a secondary level in the movement of beings and things which

compose the universe, i.e., in the realm of *haratut* encompassed by the values attaching to the *lor-haratut* relationship.

The relation between the two levels may be observed at a very precise point in the millet growing ritual. As was noted earlier, the woman, the boat, and the servant are associated with the whole, in one and the same sentence of some ritual prayers. The matrimonial compensation for the woman, the compensation for the sale of the boat, and the blood money for the murdered servant are all mentioned together (with other types of valuables offered to the god and the spirits during the millet rituals). It seems as if, at the highest level in the ideology, where society is understood as a socio-cosmic order, the valuables first offered at a subordinate level were integrated in an outward movement, in order to require continuously from the outside the elements necessary for the renewal of society. At this level, the relationship between *lor* and *haratut* presents itself as a movement from life to death and from death to life.

Further analysis would demonstrate how, at this level, houses are not to be considered in relation to one another, but in their relation to the whole. The principles of their constitution are different: the origin of houses is related to the coming of strangers from abroad, and reference must also be made to patrilineal principles, to the elder brother - younger brother relationship, and to the most important supernatural beings.

We shall now come back to the question of marriage alliance in relation to the valuesystem of Kei society.

Up to a point, we observe here a typical marriage alliance system, where two groups have a permanent relationship within which marriage always takes place in the same direction and where something like affinity is transmitted from generation to generation, although the kinship terminology does not support a strong opposition between consanguinity and affinity (there are only two terms in the ego generation). A closer analysis qualifies this strict definition. The order of the generations is reckoned through the sisters, through numerous houses, and not, as in the usual descent group, inside the same house. We observed that the intermarriage relationship opposes the ideas of a localized society to descentance through the sister and, last but not least, attaches the greatest importance to the dead ancestors of the brother. Opposite sex siblingship thus partly expresses affinity, and partly encroaches on the domain of descent by putting such a strong emphasis on the descending generations through the sisters and on the ascending generations through the dead ancestors of each house from which a spouse has come. Opposite sex siblingship, as a category combining descent and affinity, governs the whole system, taking the place of marriage alliance in the strict sense.

To return to the kinship terminology, it is thus not very surprising that the only genuine affinal kinship term is *ifar*, denoting the opposite sex sibling's spouse and the spouse's opposite sex sibling, as if affinity were

only understandable from an opposite sex sibling point of view, while in the succeeding generations affinity is perceived as a relation between the living and the dead, that is, in a diachronic perspective implying temporality.

In light of the above considerations, are we justified in speaking of marriage alliance when describing the marriage system operating in Kei? Where clearly defined, permanent intermarriage groups exist, one is likely to expect some kind of affinity that is transmitted from generation to generation through the relationship of these groups. When analysing the values pertaining to the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship, we observed that affinity is expressed through the brother-sister relationship and the relation to the dead. It is not affinity which is transmitted from generation to generation, but a relationship to the ancestors. Or, in other words, affinity supports the relationship to the ancestors.

Intermarriage groups are not linked together through any logic of an exchange of women. It is not the giving of women to the outside in exchange for something else, nor is it the maintenance of a particular status, that is at issue.

Alliance is not opposed to filiation. Opposite sex siblingship substitutes itself in part for a marriage alliance relationship, and in part takes the place of descent in the relationship to the dead ancestors. The relationship to the dead is the most important aspect of this marriage system, and it operates through the brother-sister relationship. More than ensuring an arrangement of groups in the society, the marriage rules organize the relations of the living with the dead. The relationship to the dead thus encompasses intermarriage proper in extending it beyond the matter of marriage. Indeed, 'wife-givers' are more than wife-givers, they are ancestors, and marriage may be seen as an aspect of the relationship between the living and the dead.²⁸ This is one of the reasons why we cannot qualify the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship simply as a marriage alliance relationship.

In the same way, the *yan ur - mang oho* relationship only partially plays the role in social integration that a marriage alliance system is supposed to play. As a whole, the relationship assigns value to an indefinite outside which gives the society its meaning, as is testified by the designation *lor-haratut* for the society.

Let me add in conclusion that the brother-sister relationship is only one

²⁸ As was shown already by R. Barnes in his study of Austronesian roots (Barnes 1979), there is a conjunction of related ideas found in a given terminology, including the terms for grandparents, the ancestors, the wife-givers, the godhead etc. We may add, by way of hypothesis, that the superior value attached to the ancestors, and sometimes to the godhead, in Austronesian societies, and particularly in Indonesian societies, is associated either with the grandparents (that is, in connection with descentance), or with the wife-givers (that is, in connection with affinity), depending on the society in question. Therefore in these societies stress will be put either on descent rules, i.e., the rules of membership of a house, or on marriage.

aspect of the concept of siblingship, which also includes the same sex sibling relationship. In Kei society, the latter, in terms of the older-younger brother relationship, expresses the relations inside the house, while the opposite sex sibling relationship, as we observed in the present analysis, to some extent expresses the interhouse relationship. In this way, it is difficult to approach this society in terms of consanguinity versus affinity. The central relationship, siblingship, describes the system more closely. Although we have no other theoretical tool than marriage alliance, we must qualify this by saying that what pertains to affinity within the limits of the marriage system must be supplemented by the notion of opposite sex siblingship, together with the diachronic dimension implied by the relation to the dead and to the descendants, while what pertains to consanguinity must be supplemented by the idea of same sex siblingship. This leaves open the possibility of comparison with other societies, where other combinations of affinity and consanguinity within a diachronic perspective may give an account both of the structure of the house and of the marriage system, which cannot be explained independently.

We have left unanswered the question of whether we should not include, in the definition of a marriage alliance system, the dimension of the relationship to the ancestors or to divinities which seems, in fact, to be found in so many marriage systems in Indonesian societies.

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