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In: *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 147 (1991), no: 1, Leiden, 96-127

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AFFINITY, CONSANGUINITY, AND INCEST: THE CASE OF THE ORANG LOM, BANGKA, INDONESIA

The Lom, sometimes also referred to as the Mapur, are a Malay-speaking¹ group occupying an area of some 200 square kilometres in north-eastern Bangka – an island situated in the South China Sea, very roughly midway between Singapore and Jakarta (see Map 1). Presently the Lom number some 800 individuals, most of whom live in nuclear family units. About fifty per cent of the population live in *kampung* Air Abik and the surrounding forest – the other fifty per cent are found along the coast, many of them in *kampung* Pejam (see Map 2). The Lom grow hill/upland rice, cassava and yams in swiddens; cash crops such as pepper, cloves, pineapples and bananas (to name but a few); and coconuts along the sea shore. Most households keep some chickens and a dog and/or a cat. Those growing coconuts usually raise pigs, which they sell at the market in the nearest town (Belinyu) or to the inhabitants of some of the nearby villages, occupied primarily by ethnic Chinese.

Published accounts of the Lom are scant and, as far as I know, have all been written by non-anthropologists. In the main they describe the material life of this 'heathen' population in the briefest of terms, stressing that the Lom eat indiscriminately and emphasizing their laziness and low

¹ To say that they are Malay-speaking is to over-simplify. It is not a straightforward task to determine whether a local dialect is just that or whether it can better be classified as a language. Commenting on a draft of my 1987 publication, which also contains comparative lexicostatistical material from five Bangka isolects, a linguist stated: 'Lom is one of the languages on Bangka, and it has a certain similarity to official Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia). Nevertheless the differences are so great that it cannot be characterized as a dialect of Indonesian. In Richard Salzner: *Sprachenatlas des indopazifischen Raumes* it has the status of a separate language.' (Otto Chr. Dahl, personal communication; see Salzner 1960:11 and Holle 1889.) Bangka Malay has hitherto been almost entirely uninvestigated (see also Voorhoeve 1955:23-24).

In this paper, non-English terms are italicized throughout. It should be emphasized that these are sometimes native, sometimes Indonesian. This inconsistency is due to the fact that most Lom are fairly proficient in *Bahasa Indonesia* and hence most discussions with them were in that language.

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Map 1: Bangka

degree of metaphysical speculation, and give some details of customs in connection with marriage and divorce.²

² Neither Horsfield's report (1848), Lange's work on Bangka (1850), Crawfurd's great Dictionary (1856), nor de Clercq's handwritten Malay manuscript (1895) contains any reference to the Lom, although Bangka's mountain dwellers are described as 'rude inhabitants' (Crawfurd) who are 'but a small remove from the state of savages' (Horsfield). An anonymous article (1862), a paper by Zelle (1891), and Hagen's translation of a Dutch manuscript (1908) (an English translation of which is included as Appendix 2 in Smedal 1989) – in sum, seventeen and a half pages – contain the total of the information on the Lom ever printed; some of this is reproduced in Dutch colonial dictionaries. Finally, Teysmann (1873) remarks on the Lom/Mapur language, Zondervan (1894) mentions the Lom twice, and the contribution by de Nooij (1895) refers to them in the first footnote. In 1940 Helbig stated that research on the Lom was urgently needed. In the chief modern reference work on ethnic groups of Southeast Asia (LeBar 1972) the Lom remain unlisted.

The name of the group, Lom/Lum – used by themselves and others – signifies their arguably most salient characteristic: they are *belum bera-gama*, that is to say, they are unaffiliated to any of the world religions officially recognized by the Indonesian authorities. In this paper, however, I am concerned with how the Lom organize those relationships which are established as people marry, divorce and beget children.³

1. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

The Lom are monogamous – they permit divorce, they reckon kinship cognatically and have bilateral relationship terms, some of which are used classificatorily. Neither the concept of clan nor that of lineage exists, nor does any notion of marriage regulated by ideas on exchange or alliance. But, in a limited sense, they use a concept of descent (*keturunan*), firstly in that the Lom and, say, the Chinese are thought to have originally descended from different ancestors, and secondly in that the applicability of certain spells is determined by the ‘descent’ of the spell along one’s matri- or patriline – not, that is, that it matters through *which* of the lines the spell has come down; what is important is the mere fact that it has been used by one’s forebears.

The genealogical memory of most adult Lom reaches, in the most extensive cases, about four, sometimes five generations back. But, as I aim to demonstrate, horizontal affinal links are as crucial as vertical consanguineal ones for the regulation of marriage.

1.1. *Marriage*

Before discussing the formal limitations on sexual/marital eligibility among the Lom, I shall sketch the events leading up to conjugality.

Marriage is usually arranged by the four parents coming together and reaching an agreement. It is the parents of the bride who have the weightiest say in the question as to whether or not a proposed marriage is to materialize; they either accept a suitor or they do not. If the parents concur,

³ I first became interested in the Lom in 1982, when my attention was drawn to them by Øyvind Sandbukt, then a research scholar at the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo. This paper is based on field research in Indonesia in 1983–84 partly financed by NAVF (The Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities) and sponsored in Indonesia by LIPI (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia) and Universitas Sriwijaya, Palembang, South Sumatra. While in the field, I received a grant from SIAS (now NIAS, the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies), Copenhagen. I am grateful to these institutions and to the numerous helpful Indonesian individuals (whose names have all been changed in this paper in order to ensure anonymity) – in Lom villages and elsewhere – for their assistance. In addition to Sandbukt, the following persons have read and commented on the paper (a revised version of chapter eight in Smedal 1989) at various stages of its preparation, namely Alan Barnard, Elisabeth Forseth, Signe Howell, Øyvind Jaer, Lars Løvold, Finn Sivert Nielsen, Knut Odner, and Arve Sørum. I have perhaps been foolhardy in not always heeding their advice, but I wish to express my gratitude to them.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Map 2: Belinyu and environs

the proposal is put to the prospective couple. If they agree, the matter is settled. The father of the bride subsequently informs the village headman and the marriage officiant (*penghulu*) accordingly, and a date will be set for the wedding. If both or one of the prospective spouses disagree, the matter is closed.⁴

⁴ A marriage which was settled rather more impromptu than in the orderly fashion described above was that between Amak and Aba: once, several years ago, Amak had been asked by Tolang if he wanted to marry Aba, the latter's daughter. Being drunk at the time, Amak had agreed right away. But the next three days he had been sowing rice with Tolang (famous for his stamina) and had changed his mind. Tolang works from sunrise and has his first meal at 2 p.m.; he continues working until nightfall and has supper at 8 p.m. Amak was unable to take this regime for more than three days; then he ran away – apparently before the marriage was consummated.

The future husband has to pay a bridewealth of some Rp. 100,000 – 200,000 to the bride's family and a sum of some Rp. 5,000 – 10,000 to the officiant. If the husband is unable to pay, his family will usually try to help him.⁵

The couple may also decide on their own to get married. The customary thing for them to do in this case is to put the matter to their parents. If the parents agree, the matter is settled. If they object, the couple may elope (but this has become more difficult as bureaucratization has increased: village officiants are now reputedly reluctant to marry couples domiciled elsewhere). Later on, when things have quieted down, the husband will pay the bridewealth, but a considerably smaller one than if the parents had initially agreed.

The last few days before the wedding the couple may spend the night together and the man may then leave his laundry behind to be washed by his prospective wife. But sleeping together is not sanctioned until all the matrimonial arrangements have been agreed upon (bridewealth, post-marital residence, etc.).

After the wedding the young couple may choose either viri- or uxori-local household membership (either of which is termed *sekepok*).⁶ This arrangement may last for as long as a year or two – or indeed for a much shorter time if those involved fail to get on. Joint household uxorilocality until recently has been the more common choice of the two, but more frequently (in about fifty per cent of the cases in a small sample) the married couple will have established their own household. However, if the term 'uxorilocality' is understood more broadly as the couple's residence in the same hamlet, village or culturally defined area (an area with its own *adat*) as the wife's parents without being members of the latter's household, then uxorilocality is predominant.

In the days before the present-day government-sponsored settlements (i.e., before 1975) people lived *di kebun* (literally 'in the garden', but in this context 'in the (rice)field', but actually designating small clusters of settlements in forest clearings) – sometimes kilometres apart. At that time there was no rule, I was told, as to where the young people should settle; in principle one could choose residence wherever one

⁵ When I was doing fieldwork, Rp. 1000 roughly equalled 1 USD. No Lom knew what the bridewealth consisted of formerly; none of them had any recollection or knowledge of the pre-monetized era.

⁶ I did not, unfortunately, inquire into the semantics of this term. It is possible, also, that it is more properly spelled *sekapok*, in which case a symbolical interpretation of the term becomes possible: *kapok* means 'edible lime', a chalky and smeary paste (which is used when chewing betel and areca), and the term could then mean 'that which is stuck together'. This interpretation is speculative, but perhaps not entirely senseless. Less speculative is the theory on the basis of Sandbukt's information that *sekapur sesirih* is a common expression for common ritual sharing among Peninsular and Sumatran Malays, meaning 'to share betel and lime'. By simple metaphorical extension the Lom term would thus designate sharing and commensality in a more general sense.

pleased. In fact, according to several Lom, people disliked living close together; whenever they did, quarrels and fights would erupt, and even women would engage in fistfights. At that time people were 'fearful and angry (*takut dan marah*); now they have begun to learn to live together'.

1.2. *Divorce*

In the words of one Lom, the most frequent cause for divorce is the spouses' 'talking nonsense' (*bertelete-tele*), something which leads to quarrelling, the end of which, if people do not want to give in, will be divorce. According to the Lom, extramarital affairs are rare occurrences and hardly ever lead to divorce.

Divorce is easily obtainable and requires little more (for the husband or wife) than a statement that the marriage is now over. Children under the age of ten or twelve typically stay with the mother (who usually remains with her parent(s) if the couple has lived in an uxori-local household, or move back in with them if the couple has lived elsewhere), while older children are allowed to choose whether they want to stay with their father or their mother.

If a divorcée wishes to take a lover, she may do so, and the couple may meet at night – nobody will interfere or say anything about it. But, since an obvious possible outcome of sexual encounters is pregnancy, this implies a kind of pledge to marry and is viewed as a sort of engagement. If the woman does not become pregnant, however, the liaison may be dissolved without ado.

2. ELIGIBILITY AND PROHIBITION

A Lom contemplating marriage is constrained by three basic rules with varying effects. These rules may summarily be stated as follows:

- (1) avoid ethno-cultural (*adat*) out-marriage;
- (2) avoid *buyong* (incestuous) relationships;
- (3) avoid relationships entailing conflict with *adat* (traditional) rules of inheritance.

In what follows I shall consider the first two of these rules. When I discussed inheritance with the Lom, they were so unclear about *which* relationships entail conflict with traditional rules of inheritance, and where so, *why*, that the matter requires further investigation before it can go on record.

2.1. *The principle of the 'remaining seed'*

As a point of departure for the remainder of this paper – and in apparent

contradiction of the first of the rules just stated – one should realize that *the Lom do not constitute a discrete marriage group*. Basically, outsiders are accepted marriage partners. But there is one exception to this general principle, namely rule (1), and because it is both simple and unique I shall discuss it immediately. It is crucial because without it the Lom (theoretically, at least) would be endangered as an ethnic group.⁷

This exception involves simply that at least one of the children of a Lom couple must remain outside Islam, or, more precisely, must marry another Lom.⁸ This may be a male or a female, and who it should be – whether the firstborn or one of the firstborn's siblings – is uncertain, or undecided (*tidak tentu*). Parents will reportedly ask their children if any of them have any (religious and/or marital) preferences, and only as a last resort will they order one of their children to remain true to *adat*.⁹ One man had been told by his mother's mother that he, being Mapur seed (*bibit Mapur*), must never 'leave his fold'. He was about 17 years old at the time – already past puberty, and thus marriageable/sexually aware (*lah igê*). 'And then I married a Mapur, *wah, bagus!* (excellent!)'. His two brothers have both entered Islam through marriage.

I was interested to note that the Sekak, or sea nomads, have exactly the same conversion rule. One Sekak woman (today married to a Lom and residing in Pejam) told me that it was her younger brother who had not become converted. But he had died a young bachelor, and consequently there are no non-Islamic offspring in that particular family.¹⁰

2.2. Relationship nomenclature

Before proceeding to discuss incest (*buyong*) as it is conceived of by the Lom, I shall provide a list (Table 1) of the Lom relationship terminology. It is of what has become known as the simple Hawaiian type, which, in

⁷ The term 'ethnic group' is not used here as an analytical term. Whether, or to what degree, the Lom constitute an ethnic group in a more precisely defined sense has been discussed in Smedal 1989:19–35; the question specifically relates to the Lom conception of themselves as being simultaneously Malay (on the points of physical type, temperament and language) and non-Malay (as regards religious belief and food proscriptions). I hope to be able to return to this issue in a future publication.

⁸ In principle this person should remain outside *any* religion. For all practical purposes, however, Islam is the religion to be thus shunned (but see Smedal 1989:32–35 for a note on Lom attitudes towards Christianity).

⁹ If an analogy is permitted: we know that in some communities in Eastern Indonesia 'obligatory exclusive cross-cousin marriage is restricted to the eldest son [...]' (van Wouden 1968:87). Thus, although only *one* son is obliged to marry his MBD, we may still speak of *prescribed marriage* here. Similarly, although no more than one Lom son or daughter *must* marry another Lom, the rule may well be considered to constitute a *prescription*.

¹⁰ I told one rather orthodox Lom who on certain matters was one of my key informants that the group of Sekak, or sea nomads, who are now settled in Kedimpel (near Pangkal Pinang) no longer adhere to the *bibit* ideology. He shook his head and said, referring to the cataclysmic events predicted to be the result of a neglect of *adat*, 'There is not much time left'.

the words of Bloch, uses 'distinctions by sex and relative age for the grandparental generation, by sex and relative age for the parental generation, by sex and relative age for Ego's generation, and usually only one term for descending generations. These terms can be used very freely according to principles which have very little to do with genealogy.' (Bloch 1984 (1975):209; see Bloch 1971:79-87.)

One of these principles, to anticipate part of the discussion which follows, is that spouses address each other's kindred by the same terms; if I call my younger sister '*adek*', my wife calls her so too – even if my wife is younger than she. Thus, our children will hear only one term for their (in this case) paternal aunt, and address her accordingly (typically *wak cit*, if she has a younger sibling, or *wak su*, if she has not).

Table 1. Basic Lom Relationship Terms.

TERM	ENGLISH GLOSS	EXPLANATORY NOTE
1 <i>aki usang</i>	'classificatory great-great-grandfather'	any male who is (the spouse of) a fourth ascending generation kinsperson of ego
2 <i>usang</i> (+ suff.?)	'classificatory great-grandfather'	any male who is (the spouse of) a third ascending generation kinsperson of ego
3 <i>aki</i> (+ suff.)	'classificatory grandfather'	any male who is (the spouse of) a second ascending generation kinsperson of ego
4 <i>nik/nuk</i> (+ suff.)	'classificatory grandmother'	any female who is (the spouse of) a second ascending generation kinsperson of ego
5 <i>mak, wak, pak</i>	'father'	any male who is (the spouse of) a first ascending generation consanguine of ego [the terms are in chronological order, the latter being the most recent]
6 <i>mak, nuk</i>	'mother'	any female who is (the spouse of) a first ascending generation consanguine of ego [the terms are in chronological order, the latter being the most recent]

TERM	ENGLISH GLOSS	EXPLANATORY NOTE
7 <i>mang</i> (+ suff.)	'classificatory uncle'	any male who is (the spouse of) a first ascending collateral consanguine of ego
8 <i>wak</i> (+ suff.)	'classificatory aunt'	any female who is (the spouse of) a first ascending collateral consanguine of ego
9 <i>kakgat</i> (suff. incl.)	'eldest sibling'	the first-born same generation consanguine who is the offspring of a parent of a later born ego
10 <i>kakak</i>	'classificatory elder sibling'	any earlier born consanguine collateral of a later born ego <i>or</i> anyone who is (the spouse of) a kinsperson of ego's generation whose mother or father is called <i>kakak</i> by ego's parent(s)
11 <i>ayak; ayuh; ayuk</i>	'classificatory elder sister'	any female earlier born consanguine collateral of a later born ego <i>or</i> anyone who is (the spouse of) a kinsperson of ego's generation whose mother or father is called <i>kakak</i> by ego's parent(s)
12 <i>adek</i>	'classificatory younger sibling'	any later born consanguine collateral of an earlier born ego <i>or</i> anyone who is (the spouse of) a kinsperson of ego's generation whose mother or father is called <i>adek</i> by ego's parent(s)
13 <i>sanak pupek</i>	'classificatory cousin'	[term of reference; <i>sanak</i> corresponds to the Standard Malay/Indonesian (SM/I) <i>saudara</i> ; <i>pupek</i> corresponds to <i>pupu</i>]
14 <i>anengk</i>	'classificatory child'	any first descending generation consanguine of (a spouse of) ego

TERM	ENGLISH GLOSS	EXPLANATORY NOTE
15 <i>anengk tué</i>	'classificatory eldest child'	eldest first descending generation consanguine of (a spouse of) ego
16 <i>bongsu</i>	'classificatory youngest child'	youngest first descending generation consanguine of (a spouse of) ego
17 <i>abeng</i>	'classificatory nephew'	any male first descending generation collateral consanguine of (a spouse of) ego
18 <i>kemanangk</i>	'classificatory nephew, niece'	any first descending generation collateral consanguine of (a spouse of) ego
19 <i>kemanangk dué pupek</i>	'classificatory child of first cousin'	any first descending generation collateral consanguine of (a spouse of) a collateral of ego [lit. 'nephew/niece of the second degree/order']
20 <i>cucek/cucung</i>	'classificatory grandchild'	any second descending generation consanguine of (a spouse of) ego
21 <i>cicit</i>	'classificatory great-grandchild'	any third descending generation consanguine of (a spouse of) ego
22 <i>cucek pupek/cucung pupek</i>	'classificatory cousin's grandchild'	any second descending generation consanguine of (a spouse of) ego [used for distant kin]
23 <i>lakei't</i>	husband	male spouse of a female ego
24 <i>bining</i>	wife	female spouse of a male ego
25 <i>mensén; bisén</i>	'co-parent-in-law'	any parent of the spouse of a child of ego (reciprocal) [the former term is one of address, the latter one of reference]
26 <i>mak mentué</i>	'mother-in-law'	any female who is (the spouse of) a first ascending generation consanguine of the spouse of ego

TERM	ENGLISH GLOSS	EXPLANATORY NOTE
27 <i>pak mentué</i>	'father-in-law'	any male who is (the spouse of) a first ascending generation consanguine of the spouse of ego
28 <i>urang tué</i>	'parents-in-law'	any parent of a spouse of ego [term of reference]
29 <i>ipar</i>	'classificatory sibling-in-law'	any spouse of a same generation consanguine of ego [term of reference]
30 <i>(pe)birés</i>	'co-brother-in-law'	[reciprocal term of reference for men who have married genealogical sisters – they address each other as <i>kakak/adek</i> or by name, as the case may be]
31 <i>menantek</i>	'classificatory child-in-law'	any spouse of a first descending generation consanguine of ego

In addition to the suffixes *gat*, *nga*, and *su*, which denote 'eldest', 'middle' and 'youngest' of a group of siblings respectively, at least two other suffixes are commonly used.¹¹ These are *gilo* and *cit*, which are used for individuals addressed as *wak*, *mang*, *nik*, and *aki*. *Gilo* signifies that the sibling is neither the first nor the last child born to his or her parents. *Cit* means that the sibling is younger than ego's (grand)parent. While *gat*, *nga*, and *su* are frequently used for individuals of both ego's own and superior generations, *gilo* and *cit* are only used in connections with kindred of plus one or more generations.¹²

¹¹ I have to say 'at least' here because, while several other suffixes appear to be commonly used, the Lom were not clear as to when these are to be understood as relationship terms proper and when as idiosyncratic terms of endearment.

¹² This should not, however, be interpreted as obligatory usage. The conventions I describe here may merely be instances of what Bloch has labelled 'the tactical meaning of kinship' (Bloch 1971:79-87).

Table 2. Further Lom Relationship Terms.

TERM	ENGLISH GLOSS	EXPLANATORY NOTE
32 <i>nuk/pak tiri't</i>	'step-mother/father'	spouse of genealogical parent of ego [term of reference]
33 <i>seperadek; beradek</i>	'siblings; sisters/brothers'	any consanguine collateral of ego [used in sentences translated as 'we/they are brothers and sisters']
34 <i>pak/aki angkuk</i>	'godfather'	[an inaccurate gloss of the Lom term; see section 2.5 below]
35 <i>pedurin</i>	'spouse of ex-spouse'	present spouse of former spouse of ego [reciprocal term of reference; <i>durin</i> = durian: a fruit with a spiky rind which, though much loved by Malays, can kill a person if it falls from a great height; <i>pe-</i> = prefix denoting the performer of the action of the root word or having the quality expressed by the root word]

2.3. *Buyong* among the Lom

While *buyong* is a widely known concept in Bangka and apparently always connotes 'incest' in one form or another, it is not a Standard Malay/Indonesian (SM/I) term.¹³ Neither, I hasten to add, does one find one definition of the word shared by all the various Malay groups on Bangka. Rather than taking up space now to instance some uses of the term among other Bangka *suku* ('tribes', in the loosest sense of the word), I present this information in an Appendix and proceed immediately to discuss the Lom concept of *buyong* (as they pronounce it).

The Lom define the general term '*buyong*' as either 'wrong marriage' (*salah kawin*) or 'marrying the same blood' (*kawin satu darah*) (but see below and note 15 for the ambiguity of the word *kawin*).

They recognize seven kinds of *buyong*:

1. between siblings
2. between parents and children (*buyong jaman*)
3. between grandparents and grandchildren

¹³ Note, however, that *mak buyong* means 'procuress; a pregnant woman'. Note also that I have spelt the word according to Lom phonological practice whenever I discuss the concept as used by the Lom and according to SM/I pronunciation elsewhere.

4. between aunts/uncles and nephews/nieces
5. between two persons of whom one is the offspring and the other the *angkuk* child of the same man (*buyong sikok mak sabong*)
6. between persons who have been nursed at the same breast (*buyong air tetek*)
7. *buyong seperadek aker*: see below.

I translate '*buyong*' with 'incest' rather than 'exogamy' for two reasons. Firstly, sexual relations *and* marriage between any two persons belonging to categories of people not supposed to be thus involved with each other are encompassed by the Lom definition. Whether or not such relations result in offspring or have been officially, but wrongfully, permitted as a result of carelessness (such as omission to make inquiries prior to the marriage into how the partners are consanguineally or affinally related) is unimportant: when detailing the calamities believed to be caused by *buyong* relationships, the Lom typically related stories in which offenders were 'caught in the act'. Thus sexual intercourse in its immediate sense is at issue. Secondly, the Lom use this term for sexual relations between siblings and between parents and children, as well as between more distant kin. *Buyong* is therefore taken to mean sexual relations prohibited on account of kinship.¹⁴

The *buyong* prohibition is strongest, the Lom say, between parents and children, but even between uncles and nieces and aunts and nephews sexual intercourse is considered to be so appalling that, were it to take place, death would result, since their bodies would grow together – their flesh would literally become one.

If for some reason this proverbial 'sudden death' does not occur, it was pointed out to me, persons engaging in any of the first four categories of *buyong* listed (in its consanguineal, non-classificatory sense) would undergo capital punishment. The fact that no Lom cited any cases in which such punishment had been executed suggests that this is only threatened with, that it is used as a warning, and is an element of *nominal* and not of practised *adat*. Even so, it still signals the abhorrence with which the Lom view *buyong*.

It should perhaps be stressed again that, since the Lom use relationship terms classificatorily, the number of people who are not potential marriage partners is considerably greater than it would have been otherwise. I shall return to this issue in greater detail below.

In what has been described as 'the leading introductory kinship textbook' (Barnard and Good 1984:1), Robin Fox issues a warning against mistaking

¹⁴ One corresponding term in Bahasa Indonesia is *muhrim* (from the Arabic) meaning 'forbidden marriage on account of blood-relationship' (Wojowasito and Poerwadarminta 1980:189). But among the Lom, as will become clear, much more than 'blood-relationship' is involved.

incest prohibitions for exogamy, which, he says, 'is really only the difference between sex and marriage, and while every teenager knows these are different, many anthropologists get them confused' (Fox 1967:54).

While I am hardly averse to the idea that anthropologists ought to be as knowledgeable about matters of sex and marriage as the average teenager, I believe – on principle – that it is of minor consequence what anthropologists are aware of if the peoples they study are not. The following statement from a recent study on 'Malay kinship' holds true for the Lom, too: 'Since marriage is both easy for Malays to arrange and not an unbreachable contract, *linguistic usage equates marriage with the sexual act*' (Banks 1983:65, emphasis mine).¹⁵

And, as I noted above, *buyong* is explained as 'wrong marriage' or 'marrying the same blood'. The question to be answered, then, is whom may a Lom marry, or conversely, with whom may a Lom not have a sexual relationship? A Lom may of course marry another Lom but, as I have already stated, the Lom do not constitute a bounded marriage group. They may freely marry non-Lom and frequently do so. (I was initially surprised at the number of Lom-with-non-Lom marriages I came across.) One basic rule (from which I have noted one crucial exception in the section on 'the remaining seed' above) is therefore that outsiders, male as well as female, are eligible. 'Outsiders' must here be understood to refer either to Malays (in a wide sense, including for example Muslim Sundanese from Java and Christian Batak from Sumatra) or Chinese. This was never explicitly stated, but can reasonably be inferred, to my mind, from an account of how the Chinese became Chinese.¹⁶ At any rate, members of the only other 'pure' category of people known to the Lom, *Belandé* (literally 'Dutch', but in fact encompassing all Westerners or people with a 'white skin'), have, to my knowledge, never attempted to marry a Lom.¹⁷

Whom may a Lom *not* marry? In addition to the prohibition against marrying one's parent or grandparent (and conversely, one's child or grandchild) the basic prohibition is, briefly stated, that one may not marry any of one's parents' children, siblings or cousins (PC, PG, or PPGC). Crucially (as a consequence of the use of classificatory relationship terminology) the prohibited group also includes PPPGCC, PPPPGCCC, and

¹⁵ It makes perfect sense to say of someone with a deliberate *double entendre* in colloquial Bahasa Indonesia: '*kawin sudah, tapi nikah belum*', which is best glossed as 'has already had sex, but not yet been wed', but which at the same time means 'has already been married, but not yet been wed'.

¹⁶ The Chinese are described as being 'of the same skin' as Malays (see Smedal 1989:44-52).

¹⁷ The Lom are of course cognizant of the Japanese. First of all, the Japanese occupied Indonesia (including Bangka) during World War II. Secondly, they are recognized as the successful manufacturers of a host of highly reputed consumer commodities. But, rather than having an ethnic status comparable to that of the Malays, the Chinese, or the Dutch, they are thought to be the descendants of the offspring of a Chinese and a Malay.

PPPPPGCCCC. Obviously, this prohibition is reciprocal, too, which means that one may not marry, or have sex with, the children of one's siblings or their cousins. These relationships are all collectively known as *buyong*.

The broad picture emerging thus is that a Lom may marry any stranger – and any consanguine except genealogical siblings, *as long as the consanguineal relationship does not transcend generational levels*. Only if a consanguineal relationship which transcends generational levels is more than four degrees removed is it untarnished, so to speak.

One may well ask why marriage to PGC is permitted, while it is forbidden to marry, say, PPPGCC.¹⁸ The answer to this question is to be found – partly, at least – in the Lom's classificatory use of relationship terms (see Table 1). Given the prohibition on marriage with a *mang* and *wak* (PG), this makes sense if one keeps in mind that these are the terms used for male and female PPGC (and PPPGCC, PPPPGCCC, and PPPPPGCCCC) as well. Parents, while knowing full well who their PPGCC and PPPGCC are, will only tell a small child that these are to be addressed as *mang* and *wak* (with the appropriate suffix). Conversely, parents will make it clear to a child who its own (genealogical and classificatory) 'nephews' and 'nieces' are. The Lom do not expect children to have a comprehensive knowledge of terms of address among kin until they are at least 10 years old. Through the first years of the socialization process, therefore, no attempt is made to distinguish parents' siblings from parents' cousins vis-à-vis children.

Marriage bonds, as has already been mentioned, are relatively easily broken, and multiple marriages are, if not frequent, at least far from exceptional. Sibling groups may thus become quite sizeable and the age difference between a first- and lastborn may be significant. Many Lom consequently are of the same age as their 'uncles' and 'aunts' or 'nephews' and 'nieces'. While this may not be too difficult to keep track of in a population that is sufficiently large for people rarely to be related in more than one way, it is obviously quite difficult in a society like that of the Lom, where the marriageable population today numbers some 200 individuals. I am not suggesting that the greater the population, the simpler it is to trace genealogies – my point is just that within a very small population most people will know these (to whatever degree required) and that within a very large one eligible members will be sufficiently numerous for genealogies to disperse rather than overlap. The Lom, in this respect, seem to constitute a society somewhere in between.

Further, not only do the Lom employ relationship terms classificatorily along consanguineal lines, but they also use the same terms for affines and, it is important to note, *across* affinal links. This fact makes for crucial

¹⁸ The following abbreviations are used for kin types: F = father, M = mother, B = brother, Z = sister, S = son, D = daughter, H = husband, W = wife, P = parent, C = child, G = sibling, E = spouse.

complications: parents' siblings' spouses (PGE) – and even their siblings again (PGEG) – are conceptualized as being within the kindred group. And, being included in the kindred group, these brothers and sisters of one's affinal kindred are also included as regards *buyong*. One particular case, that of Alim's second marriage, will illustrate the complications arising from this extended use of relationship terms.

Figure 1 demonstrates why Alim, when he married for the second time, thought he had chosen a 'proper' partner. We see that Akum 'in a way' is Alim's first cousin, or rather, she is Alim's eldest brother's MBD (Alim's eldest brother, Alun, is Dakang's son of a previous marriage): – hence she is a close relative, but not too close.

(// = divorce)¹

Figure 1. The uncomplicated version of Alim's relationship to his second wife.

But this union is, in fact, a *buyong* relationship because Alim and Akum are related in another way, too, though so distantly that neither Alim nor Akum were aware of it at the time they married. Alim himself still is uncertain as to whether the relationship goes back four or five generations. He knows only that he is the fourth or fifth cousin of Akum's mother – which according to the Lom rules requires Akum to address him as *mang* ('uncle').

Because *buyong* relationships embrace all relations up to and including parents' fourth cousins – with the important qualification that the gravity of the transgression diminishes with increasing relationship distance – another diagram must be drawn (Figure 2), in which Alim and Akum are seen to be related through the parent(s) of Sudi and Acal (I was unable to trace their parents' marital history). Although the relationship between the marriage partners is, as I have said, one of 'negligible consequence', in that it entails no sanctions proper, it is still classed as *buyong* and causes Alim some embarrassment. (Figure 2 also demonstrates the bilateral recognition of affinal kinship: Alim and Duran are clearly not consanguines.)

Figure 2. The complicated version of Alim's relationship to his second wife.

The person who told Alim about this, after the fact, was Bakil (leftmost in the diagram). He explained the *buyong* relationship by the fact that Alim addresses him as *mang* ('uncle', MZHB), whereas Akum calls him *aki* ('grandfather', MFMBS). Precisely because Bakil is addressed with kinship terms implying different generational positions ('plus one' and 'plus two') by each of the spouses respectively, Alim's relationship to Akum is defined as that of an uncle to his niece.¹⁹ Thus, 'kinship' here is not understood as mere consanguinity; lateral affines, as long as they are the spouses of anyone related up to four consanguineal degrees, are included as if they were consanguines, and they are reckoned as valid kindred when eligibility is determined.

In former times, customs and prohibitions were monitored by the incumbents of the two institutionalized and hereditary 'offices' of *peniti* and *penaber*, whose descendants, importantly, were forbidden to intermarry; their relationship was referred to as *buyong aik lemu* or *buyong ilmu*, 'incest

¹⁹ Elisabeth Forseth has pointed out (personal communication) that the fact that Bakil became aware of the *buyong* relationship between Alim and Akum only begs the question of what his reaction was when Sedit and Aba married: if Akum calls him *aki* (classificatory grandfather), then surely Aba must call him *mang* (classificatory uncle). The crucial question is what Sedit calls (or called, before he married Aba) Bakil. Most likely he called him *kakak* or *adek* (elder/younger brother or 'cousin'); these appear to be, after all, the logical options when the diagram is read horizontally. If he did, then Sedit, too, was marrying someone belonging to another generational level. However, the possibility remains that Sedit's personal genealogy (which regrettably I did not record) places him on the same generational level as Aba, and that the question of *buyong* could only meaningfully be raised when Alim married Aba's daughter.

of magic'. The duty of these 'office holders' was to keep any possible transgressors against custom on the right side of *adat*. They would punish anyone marrying prohibited relatives of another generation. The ultimate retribution would be a great flood from Gunung Pelawan – in the words of one Lom, 'Its source will vomit' (*sumbernya akan muntah*).²⁰

According to one elderly Lom (whom I once witnessed having a violent emotional fit over the matter) not one, but many couples nowadays enter into *buyong* relationships, thereby playing havoc with the world order (*atur*) and social – as well as geographical – stability. Others, too, confided that presently incest rules are frequently violated. Formerly it was almost impossible to do so, they said, for the precise reason that the *penitit* and *penaber* were always called upon to scrutinize the relationships involved in a proposed marriage.²¹ When I inquired into the reasons for the disappearance of these institutions, the answer invariably was 'who dares?'. Further discussion revealed that what was implied was that at present it is considered too personally risky for any one individual to prohibit a marriage. A marriage that is officially endorsed is publicly 'guaranteed', so to speak, not to violate *buyong* prohibitions. The *penitit* and *penaber* would be held responsible for any possible future revelation of a prohibited relationship between the couple, and individuals willing to take this responsibility can no longer be found.²²

Perhaps equally important is the rumoured tendency to become converted to Islam without the traditionally proper reason, namely ethno-cultural outmarriage. There is no prohibition against conversion as such if the reason is that one is marrying a Muslim woman.²³ The Lom practice

²⁰ There are a number of other transgressions which are punished in this way. Building a school or a house of worship on Tanah Mapur are just two of them (see Smedal 1989: chapter four).

²¹ Although statements about the putatively 'real' past are difficult to distinguish from mythical traditions, I was informed that one informant's mother had been told as recently as in the 1920's or '30's that she would not be permitted to marry the man who was wooing her.

²² One reason why this sort of genealogical scrutiny is held to be more difficult at the present time may relate directly to demographic factors. Ninety years prior to my fieldwork, Kroon (Hagen 1908) reported the total Lom population to be 267; now they number more than 800.

²³ As much as this may be a Lom practice, it is an unequivocal reflection of Muslim custom, too. I was repeatedly told that no Muslim father worth being called so would let his daughter marry a non-Muslim – be he Lom, Christian, or Buddhist. Interestingly, the only case where a Lom male had married a Muslim which I came across was one in which the bride's father was deceased: when the man had married, he had done so *adat*-style (he had not become converted) and paid the marriage officiant Rp. 5000. The wedding expenses in this case were shared equally between his parents and his wife's widowed mother. Had he become converted, the corresponding costs would have been Rp. 30,000. His mother-in-law, originally from a non-Lom village (as was her deceased husband) and now residing elsewhere (but still outside 'Lom Land' or Tanah Mapur), had wished her daughter to marry a Muslim. But, having almost no money, she had given in and permitted her daughter to marry a Lom. According to the latter, he and his wife were free to choose their place of residence.

(though not requirement) of post-marital uxorilocal residence in the extended sense of the term is a major contributing factor here, and vice versa; if a male Muslim marries a Lom woman, he is expected to 'act like a Lom', or *pulang Mapur*. But lately some unmarried youngsters whose parents are both Lom are reported to have become converted to Islam (*masuk Selam*). If this is true (I was unable to have the rumour confirmed), it clearly poses a novel and serious threat to the viability of the Lom as a group with a difference.

I stressed above that, by being included in the group of kindred, the brothers and sisters of affinal kindred are classified in terms of incest. Therefore, cases of *buyong* are reported not only among distant classificatory cross-generational relatives. Figure 3 illustrates a (hypothetical) case of *buyong*: here it is a marriage with a sibling's spouse's sibling's child which is thus classified.

Figure 3. An incestuous relationship: that with sibling's spouse's sibling's child.

Now, to Western readers, there would be no question of incest between Anglun and Mungri – it is an uncompromised relationship.²⁴ I asked if not a much more flagrant case would be a relationship between, say, Ngim and Mungri's sister. My informant answered that 'there isn't all that much difference between a headache and a toothache, *pokoknya begini* (the point is this)', at which he made a universally recognized sexually charged gesture.

A rather serious case of *buyong*, and one with a particular twist to it, is that of a man who is reportedly married to his classificatory grandmother

²⁴ In an earlier version of this paper I pointed out, erroneously so, that insofar as Westerners consider a relationship to be incestuous, it is always sex between consanguines that is involved, and that while it is true that recent legislation on incest in some Western societies has included the relationship between step- and adopting parents and their children, these relationships are, by their very nature, designed as substitutes for blood-relationships. I am grateful to Knut Odner and Alan Barnard for both having spotted this mistake. Odner knew of a case in Norway in the 1530's of a man by name of Knut Lykke being executed because he had made his deceased wife's sister pregnant – although the events which led up to his death were of a highly political nature, too (see Benedictow 1987:424-30). Barnard pointed out that the Church of England long forbade marriage to a brother's widow, and that in some Roman Catholic countries marriage between co-godchildren is forbidden.

(no one was able to tell me how many degrees removed – and given the ‘public secret’ nature of the case, I decided not to discuss it with the man himself or with any of his next of kin). This is a more clear-cut case – generally known, evidently – and I pointed out that, as much as this may have been a fault on the husband’s and his wife’s part, it had been a mistake on the part of the marriage officiant as well. But according to the villagers, the latter had had little choice because the woman had already been visibly pregnant. And, even more importantly, I was told that the whole affair had been of the husband’s designing, because by marrying this way he would acquire a certain kind of potentially lethal magic, or secret power, called *ilmu nipu*.²⁵

The complications arising from all *buyong* relationships are of course that hereby kin terms become mixed up, and, more precisely, that the forms of behaviour connected with discrepant kinship positions become mutually incompatible: were a man to marry his classificatory niece, he would be expected to call his ‘cousin’ (the girl’s father) *pak mentué* (‘father-in-law’). This would be embarrassing because what is basically a relationship between peers would abruptly be turned into an asymmetrical one in which one party (the father) could exact deference from the other (the husband).

2.4. Authority and deference

This sort of explanation of incest taboos does not appeal to Robin Fox, who writes (my apologies for the lengthy quotation):

‘Another disadvantage of incest is said to be the confusion of relationships that would follow if incestuous unions were allowed. As with the man in the song “I’m my own grandpa”, people in incestuous families would be confused as to who they were. This argument is as old as Philo the Alexandrine and as recent as Kingsley Davis. Thus, it says, if a man had a child by his own daughter, then the child would be a brother to its own mother and wouldn’t that be confusing. You can run through the catastrophic combinations for yourself if you wish to waste that much time. The theory is really too silly to dwell on, but as some people take it seriously we may as well spell out the objections. Again it confuses incest with exogamy, but more importantly it confuses role with biology. It doesn’t take into account that a person can only be one person at a time. If, in the case of a simple incestuous act, the said daughter has a son, he would be her offspring, and it would make no difference if the genitor were her own father or the milkman or an anonymous donor. Even if the mating of father and daughter were formalized and she

²⁵ If one marries one’s classificatory grandmother unwittingly and the *ilmu nipu* does not ‘descend’ (*turun*) by itself, one is reportedly obliged to pursue it all the same. The magic power in question, which is widely known on Bangka, enables one to turn someone’s head 180° – permanently.

became his wife, what would follow? She simply exchanges the role of daughter for that of wife.

Her children are still her children and are socially the children of their father. That the latter is genetically their mother's begetter is neither here nor there. After all, in Tibet and other parts of the world, a man may marry a mother *and* her daughter, which is not far from what we are contemplating. In many cases of consummated incest the daughter "steps into the shoes of", that is – takes over the role of – her mother.' (Fox 1967:57-58, his emphasis.)

The point is not of course that people are confused about who they are, if who they are is supposed to mean who their begetters are. The point is simply that in every society, role and behaviour are inextricably linked, that in every society some roles are incompatible with others, and that for an individual to assume mutually incompatible roles is confusing – not least of all to others. In short, the point is not logical, but cultural. If in a given society being the offspring and the spouse of the same person generates no conflict, there is no problem. But if it does, there is. Among the Lom it does. In order for the readers to understand why this entails conflict among the Lom, I shall briefly explain how authority and deference in relationship-defined roles are expressed.

Parents' authority over children among the Lom (as among Malays in general) is not only unquestioned but also virtually absolute. This suddenly became clear to me when Alim proudly told me that his 11-year-old son is so afraid (*takut*) of his father that he does not even address him. Others confirmed that Alim's pride was far from exceptional. Furthermore, first-born children are rarely punished for bad behaviour and hence are 'audacious' (*berani*) vis-à-vis their younger siblings. If elder siblings beat younger ones, they are not regularly reprimanded by their parents. Thus elder children assert their authority over their younger siblings and continue to do so as adults, even long after they have set up independent households. Another incident, also involving Alim, demonstrated this to me. In an effort to make a living he had set up a small business selling sweetened ice-shavings. There being no electricity, and hence no refrigeration facilities in the village, he had to go to Belinyu by motor cycle every two or three days to replenish his stock of ice. A few times he borrowed the motor cycle I had at my disposal, but when I had to go away for a few days he was at a loss as to how to get his blocks of ice to the village. I suggested he borrow his elder brother's motor cycle. He shook his head and said, 'impossible'. I asked him if it was impossible because Kalu constantly needed it (which I knew was not the case, anyway). He answered that no, that was not the reason; the reason was that Kalu is his elder brother, and Alim, as *adek*, cannot ask his *kakak* to do him a favour. The outcome of Alim's predicament was that he closed his stall until he was able to borrow my motor cycle again, by which time someone else (who owned a motor

cycle) had stolen the business idea and carried it through more consistently than Alim had been able to.

Banks writes:

'While responsibility and authority inhere with special force in the parental roles, elements of them are found in all kinship relationships. No Malay kinship relationships are conceived as symmetrical. Differences of generation, relative age, and sex all mark one end of a kinship dyad as responsible and the other as dependent. Relative age suggests somewhat lesser dependence than generational difference, but the elements of deference and respect present in the relations between parents and children are present in relationships between *abang* (*kakak*) and *adik*.' (Banks 1983:133-4.)

Siblings address each other by terms indicating relative age, and first, second, third and fourth cousins use the very same terms. But while siblings stress the element of authority and deference implied in these terms, cousins attach far less importance to this and will point out instead that they belong to the same generation level (*samé sepantér*). That they are genealogically more distant provides only part of the explanation for this. The fact that the sibling terms they use reflect not their own relative age, but that of their parents, is arguably equally important. Someone addressing a cousin as *kakak* (glossed here as 'elder brother') could well be older than him; it is one's parent's age relative to his which is decisive here.²⁶ While I agree with Banks that 'no kinship relationships are conceived as symmetrical', the relationship between cousins comes fairly close to this and constitutes the only near-egalitarian 'kinship relationship'. Indeed, cousins – as potential marriage partners – are peers.²⁷

Therefore, a person who marries a cousin's child forfeits an egalitarian relationship for one of deference; the peer (cousin) becomes a parent-in-law (to be respected). Similarly, for a woman to 'simply exchange the role of daughter for that of wife', as Fox suggests, would, among the Lom, be tantamount to exchanging a role implying deference for one of equality.

I therefore agree fully with Needham where he writes:

'The scope of application [of incest prohibitions, O.H.S.] is in each case an integral feature of the social system, and in some sense a

²⁶ In anthropological texts on Malaysia and Indonesia, *kakak* and *adik* are almost invariably glossed as 'elder sibling' and 'younger sibling' respectively, or in other words, as kinship terms, and thus *nouns*. But frequently native speakers use the terms *adjectivally* as well. So '*Siapa lebih kakak?*' means 'Who is the elder/more senior?'.

²⁷ Apparently the standard practice among married couples in the Malay world is for *him* to address *her* as *adik*, while *she* calls *him* *kakak*. The Lom do not do this. Face-to-face they address each other by personal names, nicknames, or one version or another of the terms for 'father' and 'mother', or just grunt.

function of it; i.e., the complex of prohibitions in a society cannot be comprehended except by a systematic purview of the institutions with which they are implicated. By this account of the matter there are as many different kinds of incest prohibitions as there are discriminable social systems.' (Needham 1974:63.)

As I explained when discussing *buyong*, one important incest prohibition is that between consanguines of different generations. This holds true also for 'half' relationships and means, referring to Figure 4, that if one of Suman's sons were to marry Tudi, the two of them would suffer capital punishment; they would (nominally) be 'thrown into the sea until they died'.

Figure 4. 'Half' relationships count as full ones in terms of incest.

NOTE: Terms of address used by Ego are capitalized. The suffix or extension '*gat*' means 'eldest'; '*nga*' 'middle', and '*su*' 'youngest'. Duran, although the firstborn, cannot of course be addressed as *manggat* ('eldest uncle') by Ego, since Ego is his son. Jiku, the second-born, is the one to be thus addressed, though Tudi will address Duran as *manggat*, because her (mother and) father addressed him as *kakat* ('eldest sibling').

A further relationship which might be glossed as 'root sibling incest' (*buyong seperadek aker*) is difficult to explain in an uncomplicated manner. In Figure 5, marriage between Tolang's sister and Ajul is prohibited. Two principles appear to be simultaneously at work here. Firstly, a principle akin to that explained by the refusal to distinguish between a headache and a toothache. In this case, Akik has had children by Abar, who has had children by Anun, who has had children by Bumun; thus there is a 'thread of parenting', if I may say so, right from Ulima through to Ajul. Therefore, for purposes of eligibility, Ulima and Ajul count as siblings (although in

terms of actual blood-relationship, the only thing they have in common is Milapi: she is the half-sister of both). The second principle operating here is a prohibition against marrying one's sibling's spouse's sibling: Ajar now having been established as Ulima's brother, Tolang's sister cannot marry him. (However, stating it thus causes the marriage between Anglun and Mungri discussed above (see Figure 3) to appear in a different light: a marriage between Anglun and any brother of Ajar's would then also be prohibited. I neglected to explore this eventuality.)

Figure 5. Two incest rules at work simultaneously.

In the case of adoption proper, the adopted child may not marry any of its foster-brothers or -sisters if it has been nursed at the same breast. This is considered an incestuous relationship and is referred to as *buyong air tetek*. However, if the adopted child is already weaned at the time of adoption, foster-siblings may marry each other freely. According to a Malay Muslim, this is a Muslim custom as well, and it may, in the case of the Lom, be a result of Muslim influence.²⁸

2.5. Angkuk

In addition to the *buyong* relationships encompassing consanguines and affinal kindred which have been discussed above, there remains one last variation of *buyong* to be examined. It concerns the sexual/marital relationship between the offspring of a man and a person who is this man's *anengk angkuk*. The *angkuk* institution is somewhat similar to the institution of godfather/godchild in our own culture, or perhaps that of *compadrazgo* that is familiar from Latin American ones and from the Philippines. Before I account for the problems connected with marriage involving *angkuk* kindred, I shall first describe the institution itself.

²⁸ Banks documents that this is a sentiment that is shared by Peninsular Malays: 'Another form of *baka* [the female contribution nourishing the male *benih* in the womb, O.H.S.] frequently mentioned is *darah susuan* (the blood of suckling), which appears to have originated from the Islamic prohibition against marriage of two children nursed at the same breast for a regular period. The same kind of horror of incest does not appear to inhere in violations of this prohibition' (Banks 1983:67).

The Lom say that 'everyone' has an *angkuk* (meaning by this that every Lom has one), who is invariably a male in a plus one or higher generation. He is addressed and referred to as *pak angkuk* (*aki angkuk* if in the plus two generation), while his wife is correspondingly addressed as *nuk angkuk* (*nik angkuk*). The relationship between the adult and the child is explained as being similar to that between them within the *angkat* institution (adoption proper), though the latter is a more comprehensive one. '*Angkat*' means 'adoption', and by definition it permanently incorporates the adopted child into a new household. '*Angkuk*' may entail similar residential rearrangements, but rarely does so, and at any rate the legal status of the child remains unaffected. The causes of such a move may be conflicts between the parents and their child, or simply that the child and its *angkuk* parents want it. One Lom had gone to live in the household of his *aki angkuk* while in his teens, but had moved back to his parental household within a few days. According to him, his *aki angkuk* had been very strict with him: he had told him never to enter the house without first fetching water, and if he ever wanted food or drink he had to get it himself.

A man may become a *pak angkuk* in the following way. He waits for a visit to his house by appointment with the child's parents. He knows why they have come to visit him, but feigns ignorance by engaging in small talk. After a while, the baby is put in his lap and he bestows a name on it. He then tells the child (in such a manner that the parents may overhear him, as they are supposed to) what object(s) he expects it to return to him on marrying. These objects may be of various kinds, including money, rice cakes, dinner plates, a dozen drinking-glasses, gold, a dozen lengths of cloth, a sack of rice, a dozen plaited straw mats – or even live crabs. Finally, the *pak angkuk* may tell the child to come and live with and work for him for up to a year.

I expressed surprise at what seemed to me an enormous difference between the various kinds of 'sacrificial payment' (which is a rough translation of the native term, *meir niat*, meaning lit. 'paying [for the] vow'). What is a dozen glasses compared with a year's labour? But I was assured that nobody has ever fulfilled the obligation by doing labour.

If the *pak angkuk* dies before the time comes for the child to marry, then the right to receive *meir niat* is inherited by his wife and/or children; if he has no children, it is passed on to his (genuine – not classificatory) nephews and nieces.

There are two kinds of 'godchildren'. The first (and considered to be the 'closest') is referred to as either *anengk cucung* ('grandchild') or *anengk angkat* ('adopted child'). These are the terms used when the 'godfather' has followed the mother's pregnancy and/or the child's birth closely, and for this reason is considered as having a particular relationship with the newborn from the very first moments of its life. The second is known as *anengk angkuk*. This term denotes a relationship that is somewhat more

distant than the former and is more specifically connected with concrete assistance in difficult situations, notably illness.²⁹

Now for the *angkuk*-connected relationship that is classified as incestuous: a sexual relationship between two persons of whom one is the offspring and the other is the *angkuk* child of the same man is called *buyong sikok mak sabong* ('one-rooster-incest'). Contrary to *buyong* proper, this alliance is socially accepted, if it is insisted upon. It must, however, be symbolically paid for with a rooster. The term for this payment is *meir niat*, the same as the term for the gift given to one's *angkuk* parent when one contracts a regular marriage: a rooster must be bought, and the cost is shared between the couple to be married. It is placed between them, lifted to the level of their ears, then put on the ground, and let free, 'vow-freed' (*lepas niat*). I have never witnessed this, but was assured that there was nothing more to it. When the rooster has escaped, marriage is permitted.

(D = daughter, S = son)

Figure 6. The *angkuk* relationship.

NOTE: Unlike the other diagrams appearing in this paper, Figure 6 shows not actual persons but relations in the abstract. Gender designations in this diagram may be interchanged without detracting from the validity of the argument (except, of course, that of b).

Let us assume that b, in Figure 6, is the *pak angkuk* of aD and cD. Marriage between bS and aD (or between bS and cD) then is considered *buyong*. So is marriage between bS and aDD, a rule which is an extension of that regarding trans-generational incest. In fact, none of b's children will be allowed to marry aD or her children and, by the extension pertaining to biological relatedness – but never confused with it – neither will b's offspring for four generations. However, aD's siblings may marry any of

²⁹ Because I was actively present at his wife's confinement, showed considerable interest in what was going on, and was happy, when requested, to give the newborn baby a name (Nura, a name not very different from my own daughter's, Nora), Alim stressed that I am his daughter's 'adoptive father' (*ayah angkat*) and that as such I am entitled to ask her for favours, to give her orders, and to be always kept informed about major events in her life.

b's children; they are not considered to be related in any way. Between aD and cS (referred to as *seperadek angkuk*, or 'godsiblings', for lack of a better term), on the other hand, marriage is fully permitted among the Lom.³⁰ If they want to marry, they cannot, of course, do so unless *meir niat* is paid. In their case, though, the recipient is the same, b, and only the most costly *meir niat* needs to be paid.

The relationship between 'godchild' and 'godfather' is, although not a deeply committing one, of a spiritual and social rather than an economic nature. Excepting the *meir niat*, no material transaction is supposed to take place between the two parts of the dyad. 'Godchildren' never inherit from their 'godfathers'. Even where the relationship is of the 'close' kind referred to as *angkat* ('adoption'), it never involves inheritance except in one instance: if a *pak angkuk* dies before his adopted children marry, then his near kin inherit his claim – part economic, part symbolic – on them, namely to the *meir niat*.

Meir niat thus can take place under two different kinds of circumstances. The first is where a 'godchild' gets married. In this situation, the *meir niat* symbolizes the severing of the pseudo-parental bond between the 'godfather' and the adult 'godchild'. Here the payment (of objects, money, labour, or whatever) has been individually determined by the *pak angkuk* himself, who is also the recipient. The second is where a 'godchild' marries one of the 'godfather's' direct descendants. In this case the 'payment' is socially determined, fixed, and symbolic, and there is no recipient (the rooster is let free).

3. CONCLUDING COMMENT AND SOME IMPLICATIONS

My central concern in this article has been to explain how the Lom, through Adat Mapur, conceptualize and regulate affinal, consanguineal and incestuous relations. Comparing the Lom data with material I collected somewhat haphazardly on brief excursions to other parts of Bangka (see Appendix below), I think it is fair to say that the Lom rules on matrimonial eligibility and incest are the most wide-ranging ones of all those of the various groups on the island. I hope to have conclusively shown up the rules which are crucial – in terms of social organization – with respect to incest.

Why rules on incest should occupy the Lom so intensively has been explained in terms of what the Lom insist are the problems if they are broken. This is a result of the fact that relationship terms by and large define ranges of reciprocally acceptable behaviour and that each term in most kin-imbued dyads is located at different points in a matrix of

³⁰ By contrast, the custom in Gunung Muda (five or six kilometres from one Lom settlement) prohibits marriage between persons with the same 'godfather' as long as he is alive. But as soon as he dies this prohibition becomes invalid.

authority and deference. The problems arise where people – as a result of a sexual/marital union – are expected to address each other by terms implying behaviour that is incompatible with that implied by the pre-established relationship between them. This constitutes perceived social entropy.

I have also demonstrated the virtual conflation of ‘affinity’ and ‘consanguinity’. While I have used these concepts throughout this paper, I want now to suggest that the material presented may warrant a far more radical analytical treatment. I refer, in the first place, to the implications of the inclusive categorizations graphically represented in Figures 2, 3 and 5 above, and especially the indigenous explanation for the incestuous relationship between Anglun and Mungri (see Figure 3). The fact that they have no blood in common is, as we have seen, of little interest to the Lom. What is crucial is that they occupy positions vis-à-vis each other which require the use of cross-generational relationship terms (and I have detailed what this implies). Secondly, I refer to the Lom practice of placing PeGC in the category *kakak* (‘elder same generation consanguine’) and PyGC in the category *adek* (‘younger same generation consanguine’) regardless of ego’s age relative to that of the person concerned. It might be reasonable to characterize these practices as conflation or absorption in the first case (parents’ siblings’ spouses (PGE) and their siblings again (PGEG) are treated ‘as if’ they were consanguines) and as extension in the second (terms which connote ‘direct relative age/seniority of two persons’ in Standard Malay/Indonesian have been expanded by the Lom to connote ‘indirect relative age/seniority of two persons’). But the implications of such conflation and extension could be far-reaching, in that they raise anew questions concerning the meaning of relationship terms. In Schneider’s view, for example, ‘It may well turn out (as I believe) that even what is called “referential meaning” is not primary and that primary meaning cannot be ascribed to any particular form of signification’ (Schneider 1984:200).

Indeed, with regard to the material presented here, attempts to pinpoint the core meaning or essence of relationship terms (as ‘referential meaning’ or ‘primary meaning’) are very likely bound to fail or misfire because the assumed ‘referential meaning’ (such as *mang* = PB and *kakak* = eG) may itself be constituted by any number of ‘non-referential’ meanings in order for it to have any meaning at all. What I am trying to say is that it may be the reciprocal expectations of persons referring to or addressing each other as X and Y which most profoundly express the meanings of X and Y. If I am right in this, then we should examine the norms (moral and others), values and actions associated with any X-Y relationship, since it is the fused complex of these norms, values and actions which (I hypothesize) makes up the general meaning of any particular X or Y. We should not take it as axiomatic that the relationship between an ego and the

'closest' *X* (or *Y*) is the indigenous template by which *other*, similarly named, relationships are modelled. Hence concepts like 'conflation' and 'extension' may ultimately be utterly inappropriate, in that they reinforce the preconceived idea that somewhere deep inside a relationship term there is some kind of core – *into* which certain uses of it can conflate or *from* which others can extend – awaiting discovery.

Finally, I wish to make a more general note. The rules regarding marriage and incest – including the 'principle of the remaining seed' – are an integral part of the wider body of cultural rules called *adat*. As such, they are of crucial importance for the identity of the Lom *as a group with a difference*: other Bangka *suku* have other *adat buyung*. I have detailed elsewhere (Smedal 1989:19-58) how, according to the Lom, the Almighty disseminated order and thereby established traditions in some indefinitely distant mythic past. There were various peoples existing already, but because *order* was wanting (*belum ada atur*), these were times of earthquakes, storms, and floods. What the Almighty brought to the world in reaction to these recurring calamities was, in a word, *adat*. *Adat* is culture and signifies order. According to the Lom the very essence of their *adat* is embodied in the rules on incest. Not to adhere to these rules therefore is in a deep sense to undermine *adat* and hence to jeopardize the very cultural identity which distinguishes the Lom from other Indonesian ethnic groups.

APPENDIX:

Buyung in some other parts of Bangka³¹

Two informants from the village of Kelapa in Central/West Bangka had somewhat differing views on '*buyung*'. According to one of them, '*buyung sumbang*'³² is the term for a sexual relationship between a parent and child, whereas other (unspecified) incestuous relationships are not termed '*buyung*' at all but instead are collectively labelled 'wrong marriage' (*salah kawin*) or 'improper marriage' (*kawin tidak sesuai*) (for the meanings of *kawin* see note 15 above). The other said that 'definite *buyung*' (*buyung mantap*) is the term for a sexual relationship between a parent and child; 'middle/central/moderate *buyung*' (*buyung pertengahan*) for one between siblings and between an uncle/aunt and nephew/niece; and 'external *buyung*' (*buyung luar*) for one between first cousins.

³¹ The data which follow here were noted down while I was collecting lexicostatistic material. They are too fragmentary to be useful by themselves, but suggest that comparative investigations may be worthwhile.

³² In SM/I '*sumbang*' means 'against the customary law; indecent, sinful; incest, mistake, fault, faulty'.

According to a practitioner of traditional medicine in the village of Pangkal Beras (south of Kelapa), the expression 'reversed, or repeated *buyung*' (*buyung balek*) denotes the relationship between a divorced couple who have married others, divorced them too, and then resumed their former relationship. The same man said that there is a particular kind of heavy rainfall that is called *hujan buyung* which is easily recognizable by the special sound it makes: '*keleték-keleték*'.³³

In *kampung* Belar (west of Pangkal Beras) '*buyung pat likur*' (lit. *buyung* twenty-four) is a term for marriage between paternal parallel second cousins (FFBSS/FFBSD) – a union that is considered 'worst of all' (*paling jehat*). The effect of marrying one's paternal parallel first cousin (FBD/FBS) in this village is that inheritance is 'cut off' (*putus waris*). It is said that a certain old tree at Gunung Asam may not be cut down, firstly because certain spirits live there (these are invoked, when necessary, by a local traditional healer), and secondly because the *buyung* sacrifices referred to as *buyung dibuang* (dispelling the *buyung*) are offered there.

In Tempilang (on the south coast of West Bangka) it is *buyung* to marry one's 'third cousin', while marriage between an 'uncle' and 'niece' or between an 'aunt' and 'nephew' is considered simply not right (*tidak benar*) and will, according to my informant, be punished by the police.

Among the Pelaik³⁴ (living in the forest about twelve kilometres northwest of Tempilang) *buyung* applies only to directly descending consanguines and siblings. *Angkuk* siblings (persons who are co-'god-children', see section 2.5 above) may freely marry each other and their biological counterparts. Brothers' children are discouraged from marrying each other; if they do marry, this results in inheritance being 'cut off' (*putus*).

The Pelaik (like the people in Kelapa) term a sexual relationship between a parent and child *buyung sumbang*; this is an offence that is nominally punishable by placing the offenders inside large fish-traps (*bubu*) and immersing them in water for 4-5 hours. The fine to be paid – either to the closest inheriting kin or to the *penghulu* – is 40 *perak* (250 *rupiah*). Furthermore, the two are beaten 125 times – only then is the *buyung sumbang* neutralized.

Incestuous relationships between siblings are viewed by the Pelaik as an even more serious offence. Each of the transgressors is to be thrown

³³ This is a clear parallel to the floods predicted by the Lom in the event of oaths/vows (*pesumpah*) being violated (see Smedal 1989:19-58).

³⁴ A group of semi-permanently forest-dwelling swidden cultivators, much like the Lom; indeed, held by some reasonably well informed people to share a common origin with them and sometimes referred to as 'Orang Mapur Kedalé'. Some linguistic information on them is included in Smedal 1987:135-145.

into the sea from a boat in a different spot (e.g., Laut Tempilang and Laut Teritip) to ensure that they never meet again. If they do – and resume the relationship – they are beaten 134 times. My informant stated that this is in accordance with the teachings of Islam (which the Pelaik profess).³⁵

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³⁵ He went on to explain that there are two prohibitions linked to '*buyung sumbang*' (though I am unable to explain the connection), viz.: 1. never place a container of unhusked rice immediately inside or outside the entrance of a house, or in the doorway itself – if it has to be placed in the vicinity of the entrance, take care to move it well to the side; 2. never, while cooking rice, chop *kacang* (pulses, beans). For both offences, the fine is 3 *rupiah*, and the parents or siblings must hit the offender with a *banyumursit* (unidentified) stick. In the absence of parents or siblings, it is the duty of anyone aware of the offence – even foreigners like the anthropologist – to execute the punishment.

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