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Nurturing in Matrilineal Society: A Case Study of Satawal Island

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This paper attempts primarily to clarify how control or authority over a woman and her child is shared between her husband and her brother in the matrilineal society of Satawal Island, Central Carolines. Thomas [1980] stated that on Namonuito Atoll the matrilineal puzzle is resolved by women taking primary authority for the nurturing of their children and taking responsibility for land. And Petersen [1982] stressed the importance of women in the production of exchange goods on Ponapean society. I examine the sharing of authority by looking at each step of a child's growth. During the period beginning with conception, continuing through childbirth and infancy, and ending with a child's coming of age, the father's matrilineal descent group, including the father himself and his sisters plays a vital role. On the other hand, after a child becomes a "full man" or a "full woman", its maternal uncle assumes responsibility for and authority over the behavior of his sister's child.

This leads to the conclusion that the so-called "structural contradiction in matrilineal society" is compensated for in Satawalese society by a mutually complementary relationship between the father and the maternal uncle. The former assumes responsibilities in the domestic sphere before a child's coming of age, and the latter in the social sphere after adulthood has been reached.

Keywords: matrilineal puzzle, sister's spiritual power, blood and flesh, father-child relationship, Satawal Island.

INTRODUCTION

With the exception of Yap, at the eastern end, and the Gilbert Islands, at the western end of the region, the societies of Micronesia are matrilineal. Matrilineality in this context refers to the social system in which an individual acquires his/her membership in a kin group through his/her matrilineal descent. That is, through his/her mother and the mother's mother.¹⁾

Social anthropological studies on matrilineal society have been carried out with regularity since the 1950's [RICHARDS 1950; SCHNEIDER and GOUGH 1961; NAKANE 1970; SCHLEGEL 1972]. As Richards pointed out, the structural contradiction of

any matrilineal society is the fact that authority over a woman and her children, and the prestige associated with this power, are shared between her husband and brothers. In other words, is an inherent conflict between the power controlling the descent group and the principle of continued survival of the group, a structural trait which has been termed a "matrilineal puzzle" [RICHARDS 1950: 246]. The way in which this contradiction is resolved or adjusted to differs remarkably from one society to another.

Schlegel classified the matrilineal societies of Micronesia by the criterion of whether the authority over women and their children is held by their husbands or their brothers, putting Truk society into the category characterized by "strong brother authority with husband authority in certain spheres" [SCHLEGEL 1972: 7]. Thomas stated that on Ulul Island (Namonuito Atoll) the matrilineal puzzle is resolved by women taking primary authority for the nurturing of their children and taking responsibilities for the land [THOMAS 1980: 176]. The importance of women in matrilineal societies was also pointed out by Petersen in his research on Ponape society. He rejected the traditional anthropological viewpoint which relates the characteristics of matrilineal societies with the role of women labor in subsistence economies, matrilineal residence, land tenure, and the ideology of matrilineal descent. Instead he stressed the importance of women in the production of exchange goods [PETERSEN 1982].

The purpose of this paper is to describe how the "matrilineal puzzle" is resolved in Satawalese society, where kin groups are formed in accordance with the principle of matrilineal descent and uxorilocal residence. The author's viewpoint is based on Schneider's finding that the authority of men in matrilineal societies is distributed between the domestic sphere and descent group sphere [SCHNEIDER and GOUGH 1961: 7]. However, Schneider did not support this probability with specific examples. Therefore, I discuss the role of men in Satawalese society in terms of their role in reproduction, pregnancy, childbirth and nurturing until children become adults, as well as their authority over their children after the latter's coming of age.

Another purpose is to clarify the characteristics of the matrilineal society of Satawal in relation to the structural framework of "Indonesian type" and "Oceanian type" of patrilineal societies proposed by Toichi Mabuchi. These two types are distinguished from each other by the contrasting nature of "spiritual superiority/inferiority" among kinsmen (kin group), an embracing phenomenon which manifests itself in various forms in kinship rituals in several patrilineal societies in Indonesia,

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- 1) In the Caroline Islands where kin groups are organized in accordance with the matrilineal descent principle, matrilineal residence rules and inheritance forms are varied. Palau adopts the patri-avunculocal residence [SMITH 1983], Ulithi adheres to the patrilineal residence rule [LESSA 1950, USHIJIMA 1983], and Ponape has changed to the patrilineal inheritance rule in accordance with the policy of the governing country [FISCHER 1957]. There are other societies, like Fais, in which virilocal residence and patrilineal inheritance rules prevail today, but where only a few generations ago the matrilineal inheritance was seemingly predominant [RUBINSTEIN 1979: 87-101].

Melanesia and Western Polynesia [MABUCHI 1980: 60]. In terms of ideology, the term “spiritual superiority/inferiority” as used by Mabuchi relates to “spiritual and magical authority” and “spiritual power of blessing and cursing” [MABUCHI 1960: 51]. The Indonesian type refers to societies in which the “patrilineal clan on the mother’s side spiritually predominates” [MABUCHI 1980: 79], whereas the Oceanian type refers to societies characterized by the “spiritual predominance of sisters and their matrilineal descendants over brothers and their agnatic descendants” [MABUCHI 1980: 83].²⁾

Mabuchi also pointed out that types in which the characteristics of the Indonesian and Oceanian types are totally reversed also emerge in matrilineal societies, but failed to discuss these “matrilineal versions” in specific terms. In connection I focus on kin relationships, particularly those between brothers and sisters, in Satawalese society, where kin groups are constituted in accordance with the principle of matrilineal descent. I also discuss how the characteristics of these relationships correspond to Mabuchi’s “matrilineal versions”.

The people of Satawal Island, located in the Central Carolines, are noted for their strict observation of the system of matrilineal descent and uxori-local residence. This society is composed of eight matrilineal descent groups called *yáyinang*. The *yáyinang* are non-localized, exogamous and ranked, each having a proper name. In the region ranging from Ulithi Atoll to Mortlock Islands, there are several *yáyinangs* having identical names or genealogical relationships, and the members of these *yáyinangs* provide mutual assistance whenever one group visits the other. On Satawal these *yáyinangs* have been segmented into 15 minor descent groups. The same term *yáyinang* can be used to denote such a minor descent group but, to avoid confusion, the term *yeew raa* (lit., “one branch”) is preferred when referring specifically to this type of group. In this paper *yáyinang* is translated as “matri-clan”, and *yeew raa* as “matri-lineage”, to better clarify the meaning of the terms.

A lineage refers to a land-owning, corporate descent group localized on a single island. This group of people usually has a common female ancestor four or five generations previous to their own. A lineage is called by the name of the place where its female members reside. Since on Satawal Island, uxori-local residence is strictly adhered to, the people who live together in the homestead are female lineage members, their husbands and children, unmarried male members, and adopted children. This residential group is called *pwukos*, and can be regarded as a matri-extended family. As of 1980, the population of the island was 492, and the number of the member of *pwukos* was 71 at maximum and 5 at minimum. The kinship terminology system on Satawal is essentially of the Hawaiian (generation) type, except that the line of male siblings and their sisters’ children is given a special name [SUDO 1980, 1985a].

2) Marshall has recently reported that complementarity between the descendants of a brother-sister pair is observed in several societies, such as Palau and Gilberts in Micronesia, as well as in Polynesia and Melanesia [MARSHALL 1981: 8].

FOLK KNOWLEDGE OF REPRODUCTION AND KIN CATEGORY

According to the understanding of the Satawalese people, a child comes into being as a result of a sexual intercourse by its parents. Thus men are seen to play a major role in reproduction. The Satawalese explain the mechanism of reproduction by saying that "when a man sleeps with a woman and discharges 'blood', a baby is born in the woman's abdomen." 'Blood' in this context means semen. *Kusu*, the Satawalese equivalent for semen, is a taboo word which must not be used in usual conversation. The word which is used in place of *kusu* is *chcha*, which means blood. This blood becomes the source of the baby's bones (*ruw*) inside the woman's body. A man's physiological contribution to the child is counterbalanced the woman's role, which is to "form the baby's flesh (*fituku*)". More specifically, the Satawalese people explain that "as the baby's skeletal structure begins to be formed by the man's 'blood' in the woman's abdomen, menstruation (*ngufarh*) ceases." In other words, menstruation is believed to serve as a nutritive function in the formation of flesh of the fetus.

This "ethnophysiological explanation" that a baby is the result of the combination of two physical substances, blood and flesh, is an important key to the understanding of kin groups in the Satawalese society. This ideology is crucial in clarifying how children are affiliated to kin groups in Satawalese society and how the Satawalese recognize kin relationships. When the islanders converse with each other, they often ask such questions as "Where is your blood from" or "To whom is your flesh related?". These questions are answered, for example, by responses such as "My blood is from Kataman (father's clan)", or "I belong to Natic flesh (mother's clan)." If the question is about "blood", the answer will contain the clan name of the respondent's father. This indicates that the Satawalese clearly perceive their "blood" as having originated in the father. On the other hand, when a Satawalese is asked about his/her "flesh" relationship, the person answers with the name of his/her mother or descent group.

"Blood" and "flesh" are used to describe kin group categories when a third party praises, ridicules, or criticizes the personality, behavior or traits of a child (individual). For example, if a man becomes too excited, drinking coconut toddy and shouting loud in violation of the island's rules, people will speak ill of him by saying: "Indeed, his father was a boozier." Furthermore, if a child is dumb, has a mental disorder or suffers from a rare disease (e.g., leprosy), the cause is always explained in connection with the child's patrilineal ancestor who had the same defect. These categories manifest themselves not only in terms of negative social behavior but also in the positive evaluation of young men, as for example, when a young man shows superior ability in navigation or canoe building. If the man's father was a famous navigator or a canoe builder people talk about the young man's skill as "stemming from his father's blood". The term "blood" is used in making clear kin relationships in Satawalese society in cases where the individual displays abnormal behavior, a physical handicap, or special abilities. The Satawalese believe that

these types of individual characteristics are shared by the father and his children through the blood relationship. The blood category also manifests itself in the selection of sexual partners and spouses. In these situations, the taboo: "do not steal a woman of the same blood," effectively prohibits sexual intercourse or marriage with a child of one's father's brother.

The term "flesh" is used in daily conversation to denote a kinship category. For example, if a man returning home from fishing encounters a woman but does not give a single fish to her, the woman may remark that "his flesh (*yáyinang*) is stingy." If a woman forms a ridge which trespasses on another's taro patch adjacent to hers, people will speak ill of her, saying "that *yáyinang* never thinks of others." Thus, references to flesh are made when talking about the typical nature of a specific clan.

As is evident from these few examples, people in the "blood" category from the viewpoint of ego comprise his/her father and the specific members of his descent group, whereas people in the "flesh" category comprise the members of his/her mother's descent group. The phrase *yeew chcha* (meaning "one blood") is used to refer to a group of children born of one father. When the term "blood" is used to describe kin relationships, the relationship between an individual and his/her father's father is denoted by "father's blood". Thus, "blood" as a kinship term refers basically to the consanguineal relationship between two generations of father and child. It does not refer to the pattern of relationships with which the genealogical tree of a patrilineal line can be reconstructed. When the members of the father's descent group (*i.e.*, the father's sisters) refer to his children, they use the expression: "people of our blood".

By contrast, people referred to as "one flesh" consist of "children born of one mother" and "people of *yáyinang*". Thus, in Satawalese society, the physical substances of blood and flesh are used as the criteria for classifying kin relations. "Blood" describes the consanguineal relationship between father and his child, while "flesh" describes the descent relationship between an individual and his/her matrilineal descent group.³ However, a third party is strictly prohibited from using the term "blood" or "flesh" in the presence of the party concerned.

In Satawalese society, where *yáyinang* is described by "flesh", there is another kin term, *yafakúr*, used to describe the consanguineal relationships represented by "blood".⁴ *Yafakúr* is a kin term denoting children of the male members of a matrilineal descent group. In daily conversation people often say, "I am a *yafakúr* of Clan A", or "He is a *yafakúr* of my clan." As these usages suggest, *yafakúr* is a kin term which identifies the relationship between an individual and his/her father's

3) Among the matrilineal societies in Micronesia, Truk, Namonuito Atoll, Satawan Atoll, Ponape Island and Marshall Islands have kin terms denoting the father-child relationship. I have conducted comparative research of the kin categories in Micronesian societies in which "blood" and "flesh" are used as kinship terms [SUDO 1985b].

4) The Satawalese could not say what exactly *yafakúr* means, but on Truk it means "heir" [GOODENOUGH 1951: 92]. The kinship term *yafakúr* is distributed mainly on Truk, but also on Satawal to the west and Mortlocks to the east.

matrilineal descent group. In other words, *yafakúr* indicates a consanguineal relationship. The basic unit is neither individual-to-individual nor group-to-group. Rather it is an individual-to-group relationship.

These findings have made clear that the physical substances, blood and flesh, which represent specific kin categories—*i.e.*, “flesh”; *yáyinang* (matrilineal descent group) and “blood”; *yafakúr* (consanguineal relationship between a child and his/her father’s matrilineal descent group)—deserve attention, since the islanders have a tendency to avoid using the words “blood” and “flesh” in their everyday conversation. Instead they use *yafakúr* and *yáyinang* to denote categories which are virtually the same as these “blood” and “flesh” categories.

KINSHIP BEHAVIOR AND “BLOOD” CATEGORY

In Satawalese society people belonging to kin categories represented by “blood” and “flesh” possess certain rights and are expected to perform certain obligations in their everyday life. The natives’ notion that the life of a child derives from his/her father’s semen (“blood” according to the Satawalese) has resulted in the norm that the father (and members of his matrilineal descent group) must behave “with responsibility and authority” with respect to the birth and nurturing of his child. This section focuses on the behavioral standards expected of the father and his kin (cross siblings).

Conception and Childbirth

When a wife conceives the task of fishing and collecting coconuts is imposed on her husband. Moreover, he is expected to perform this duty eagerly. This is based on the belief that a mother’s sufficient intake of food provides nutrition for the fetus. Even on days when no communal or group fishing are planned, the husband personally goes out spear fishing or bottom line fishing. He also looks for young coconuts so that his wife can drink coconut juice every day, utilizing not only the coconut palms owned by his wife’s lineage, which he is entrusted to manage, but also those owned by his own lineage. The members of his lineage never oppose his frequent visits to their coconut groves. In addition to the husband’s duties, his mother and female siblings are expected to deliver cooked food to him whenever such food is prepared by the group or for major events on the island.

This gift of food to the male member who has married out of his lineage is termed *nippéér* (lit., “information of catches”), and is regarded as food for the male member and his child. This gift of food by the husband’s lineage continues not only during the wife’s pregnancy but throughout the entire life of the husband. But this obligation is particularly important when the wife of a man who has married out of his lineage is found to be pregnant, at which time the husband’s lineage delivers a gift of taro or breadfruit steamed in a stone oven (*wuumw*) along with cooked fish or chicken. This combination of vegetable and animal food is deemed as a “full gift”

in the gift-giving customs of Satawalese society. No counter gift is expected for the gift of *nippéér*.

During the period of pregnancy, the so-called "medicine for pregnancy" is administered to the woman in the third, fifth, seventh and ninth months. This medicine is prepared by grinding the stalk, leaves, root and fruit of a certain plant, and mixing them with coconut juice. It is then squeezed to obtain a liquid. This medicine is given to the woman in the third and fifth months of pregnancy to mitigate morning sickness and promote healthy growth of the fetus, or to cause an abortion should the fetus be abnormal. The medicine given in the seventh month is believed to be effective for maintaining the fetus in the proper position and for preventing a feet-first delivery. The medicine in the ninth month is given to expedite childbirth. This medicine is administered four times during the period of pregnancy by a member of the husband's lineage. A *sawo safey*, or older who has acquired knowledge of the medicine, takes priority in assuming this role. If no *sawo safey* exists in the lineage of the pregnant woman's husband, her father or a member of the father's lineage assumes the responsibility.

Preparations for childbirth and postnatal care of mother and infant are carried out by female siblings⁵⁾ or kin of the woman's husband, father of the newborn. Today, babies of Satawalese women are usually delivered at their homes, under the responsibility of a "male Health Aide". Before 1953, when the islanders were converted to Christianity, special houses were used for childbirth.

Here I discuss the "traditional" childbirth customs of Satawal and the role of the baby's patrilineal kin, with reference to a case study on childbirth customs that prevailed prior to the 1950's. When the expectant mother began to feel labor pains, she moved to the house of delivery, where she was attended by a woman called *yinnew* (lit., "mother having many children"), who cooked food for her, and another woman, called *kemunupwu* (lit., "belly-supporting person"), who took care of the woman throughout childbirth. The *kemunupwu* was the midwife, a role usually assumed by a sister of the husband's father. On the other hand, the role of preparing food was usually played either by a sister or mother of the baby's father. The *yinnew* also attended childbirth and assisted the *kemunupwu* by making hot water for bathing the newborn baby. The expectant/nursing mother stayed in the house of delivery for 20 days. During this period, the food for the mother and newborn was primarily procured from the lineage of the baby's father.

The house of delivery was constructed together with the menstruation hut, both situated along the coast. The area surrounding the houses was called *nee yimwanikatt* (lit., "a place where a house of children is built"). People other than expectant/nursing mothers, women in menstruation and those who took care of them were prohibited from entering this area. After staying in the *nee yimwanikatt* for 20 days,

5) Since Satawalese kinship terminology is of the Hawaiian type, not only ego's brothers and sisters but also consanguineal kinsmen of ego's generation are collectively referred to as *pwiiy*. Therefore the term "sibling" used here refers to this (classificatory) category.

the new mother and child returned to her home. Early in the morning of that day a ritual called *péépé* (lit., "to purify") was held on the border separating the taboo area, in which the house of delivery was located, from the village. As the meaning of *péépé* suggests, this was a rite of passage which purified the woman who had been isolated in the tabooed house of delivery, thereby enabling her to resume ordinary life.

The Satawalese believe that women immediately after childbirth and as well as those in menstruation are in *faanpwut*, or "in a bad condition". Thus a special facility was required to restore women, who had borne their children in the house of delivery, back into their ordinal condition. In the ritual of *péépé*, a woman who served as priest bound two fern leaves together and took them to the highest-ranking master of magico-religious knowledge (an older) on the island. The master then endowed "spiritual power" to the leaves. The woman priest returned and patted the bodies of the nursing mother and her two attendants with the bundle of leaves. Interestingly, the priest and the two women were under a sheet of fabric when this rite was performed. The priest's role was assumed by an elderly woman in the newborn's father's lineage.

Once a baby was born in the house of delivery, male islanders were actively engaged in fishing activities for four days, donating part of the catch to the baby's mother. This gift was called *rhow*, which means "communal fishing with hand nets". "Good fish" were selected for this gift, which was thought to have the effect of "increasing the mother's milk". Meanwhile, the lineage of the nursing mother was expected to provide the male islanders with food during the period of *rhow*. A considerable amount of food was required, and thus was procured not only by the new mother's lineage but also by the lineages of her husband and father. In particular, the lineage of the husband dug all taros that had been cultivated exclusively for the *rhow*, and donated them to the wife's lineage. Also, the female siblings of the husband went to the wife's home where they cooked food for the male islanders together with female members of the wife's lineage [SUDO 1987].

For several days after the child was born, cooked food was delivered to the nursing mother, who remained in the house for delivery, from the lineage or kin of the baby's father, as well as from the patrilineal kin of the mother. Such gifts were called *yammoot* (lit., "cooked food") and consisted of boiled taro pounded with a poi pounder, and kept in a washbowl size container. Today, Satawalese women bear their babies at home and, accordingly, *rhow* fish and *yammoot* food are delivered to their houses. As the male Health Aide takes care of the woman in labor, the mother and sister of the baby's father, serving as attendants, make the necessary preparations for the first bath for the newborn in the new mother's house. Thus whereas childbirth in the house for delivery and the ritual for purifying women after childbirth are no longer conducted the role of the kin of the newborn's father with respect to childbirth remains unchanged.

First Menstruation and Initiation Ceremony

The relationship between a child and his/her father's kin group as observed on

the occasion of childbirth and the "purification" ritual also manifests itself in the ritual conducted for first menstruation. When a girl exhibits her first menses, at around the age of 13 or 14, she is isolated in a menstruation hut for a fixed period of time. The girl wears a brand new loincloth for the first time in her life, is daubed with turmeric powder⁶⁾ all over her body, and enters the menstruation hut with a woman attendant.

In Satawalese society, a girl's wearing of a loincloth for the first time serves as a public announcement that she has become "a full woman". Apart from bathing in the sea three times a day she does nothing but lie quietly in the menstruation hut. She is prohibited from knitting pandanus mats and weaving of loincloths, the customary tasks of menstruating women. She stays in the hut for five days and nights, eating only the meals prepared by her attendant. The Satawalese believe that if a girl cries out in fear or shame during her first menstruation, the weather will worsen or bad spirits will enter her body, causing her to become "crazy" [HUIKATA 1974: 109]. The woman attendant is obliged to calm the girl's anxiety or to recite magical chants to dispell bad spirits from her. The sister or mother of the father of the girl having her first menstruation is given priority in electing the woman attendant.

Early in the morning of the sixth day the girl bathes in the sea. Then the accompanying woman daubs the girl elaborately with turmeric powder before she leaves the menstruation hut to return home. At this time the *yinames* (lit., "bringing good luck") ritual is performed at the border between the taboo area and the village. In this ritual a priest attaches ornaments made of young coconut leaves around the neck, wrists and ankles of the young woman. While placing these ornaments on her, the priest reports to spirits (mainly ancestor spirits) that she has become a "woman" and recites magical chants whose meanings may be roughly rendered as "may she be liked by the spirits," "may she be capable of working hard and cooking good meals," and "may she find a good spouse." An "old woman" of the girl's father's lineage assumes the role of the priest.

In contrast there is no ritual symbolizing a boy's transition into puberty. Instead, the acquisition of various skills indispensable for men's work and of traditional navigation techniques are regarded as the requirements for "men of the island". These navigation techniques are taught to the boy after he becomes 10 years of age by his father or his mother's male siblings. The learning of navigation techniques from one's kin is regarded as a private matter. However, in order to become a socially certified "navigator" (*panú*), he must undergo the *ppo* (lit., "initiation ceremony for navigators") rituals.

6) The powder made from turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) root is valued by the Satawalese, who believe that it purges bad spirits of every kind from the human body and prevents their entry into the body. Since turmeric is not grown on Satawal, until the 1960's Satawalese men embarked on long-distance voyages in a fleet of canoes to the Truk Islands, about 500 km to the east, in order to make turmeric powder. Today, their turmeric supplies come from Yap Island by cargo boat. This powder is directly applied to the skin and is indispensable for religious rituals.

Ppo is held for young men who have received private teaching for an average of seven to eight years. The main part of this ritual consists of examining the young man's knowledge of navigation techniques, and further instruction by the older considered to be the most skillful navigator on the island. The participants in this ritual must remunerate the older with loincloths woven by the women of the island. About 80 to 100 loincloths are required for each young man. To meet this requirement women in the young man's lineage must work hard to produce a large number of loincloths. The lineage of the young man's father is also required to present as many loincloths as possible to the man, usually about 20-30 cloths. Thus a man's father and the father's lineage are deeply involved in the young man's acquisition of navigation techniques in a society where the highest praise is given to men with great skill in navigation.

I have outlined the relationship between a child and his/her father, father's sisters and lineage members as observed in conception, childbirth and in initiation ceremonies. As shown the woman's husband's sisters (female siblings) or mother assume a major role in care during childbirth, in the "purification" ritual for nursing mothers, and in the ritual for girls who have had their first menstruation, (*i.e.*, have become a "woman"). It should also be noted that the food for the newborn and mother are donated frequently, if not regularly, by the lineage of her father or husband. Furthermore, the highest importance is placed on the teaching of traditional navigation techniques by the father to his sons. In view of this it can be said that the members of the lineage of the child's father (particularly, the father's sisters) assume an essential role in the various processes of nurturing in Satawalese society, particularly in ritualistic contexts. Concerning the important relationship between the child and his/her father's sisters (or lineage members), the Satawalese people often remark: "Children of my brothers share the same blood as ours (or, they are our *yafakur*)."

The Father's Responsibility for Nurturing

On Satawal, infants are brought up in their mothers' home (*pwukos*) by the mother and her sisters (female siblings) and mother. The primary task of the infant's father is to secure food for his wife and child. Specifically, he collects food which is believed to increase the mother's milk, *i.e.*, young coconuts and copra, and catches fish and other marine products. If the husband is negligent in performing these duties, the wife as mother of the infant is entitled to in extreme cases, to divorce him.⁷⁾ In other words, the status of the husband in the force him to return to his natal home

7) Marital relations were rather unstable before divorce was banned with the introduction of Christianity. A man went through an average of almost three marriages in his life. The major causes of divorce were negligence and adultery on the part of husband. In this society, participants in the wedding ceremony only exchanged food between the husband and wife sides. Divorce was approved when the first to marry again paid 20 loincloths to the other party. If the divorcing couple had children, the property which had been given from the husband's side, such as breadfruit trees, taro patches and coconut palms, was left for his wife and children [SUDO 1984].

or, wife's lineage is quite low. Apart from these productive activities, the husband's "fatherhood" includes several rights and responsibilities with respect to treatment of the infant; namely, determination of the infant's adoption, donation of property to the infant, and naming of the infant.

On Satawal, adopted children under age 15 represent about 60% of all children in this age bracket. These children are, in the majority of cases, adopted by people with whom they have a kin relationship. Situations where a number of kin members wish to adopt a single infant often arise. In such cases, it is not a member of the infant's descent group (*e.g.*, the infant's mother, or her male siblings) but the infant's father that determines who shall adopt the child. When a kinsman expresses a desire to adopt the infant, the actual parents can rarely reject the request. If the infant is a first born child, the father gives the infant to his sister or mother as her heir. This custom of having the first born child adopted by the father's lineage member has been established as a "norm" in Satawalese society. The Satawalese people explain the priority of adoption given to the father's sister (their descent group) by saying, "the infant must fill the vacancy created by the married-out father." This means that the (male) child adopted into the father's descent group manages on behalf of his father the co-owned property of the lineage (breadfruit trees, coconut palms and canoe houses) which are entrusted to him by his father. In addition the adopted child is expected to take care of his true father's mother and sisters in old age.

Next is the gift of property to the infant. When a man marries he brings with him one block of taro patch or a few breadfruit trees to his wife's lineage. Such property is considered to "produce food" for the man marrying into the wife's lineage and the future children of the married couple. When the couple's baby is born, the husband (father of the baby) informs his mother and sisters of the fact, and has them allocate additional palms or taro patches to him so that he can give them to his wife and child. According to the Satawalese, this donation is intended to "provide the child with sufficient food". This action by the father of giving property belonging to his lineage to his child is regarded as the "father's responsibility". If the father does not give taro patches or coconut trees, his children may be blamed by the members of their lineage who will say, "there is no food for you in this lineage." This property given by the husband to his wife's lineage is not regarded as being co-owned by the wife's lineage. Until the child comes of age the breadfruit trees and coconuts palms on the property are used and controlled by the father, while the taro patches are used and controlled by the mother.

Once the child becomes a full adult the breadfruit trees and coconut palms are transferred from the father to his sons, and the taro patch from the mother to her daughters. This property is discriminated from the property co-owned by the mother's lineage and becomes that shared by the children. To put it differently, the property transferred from the father is used by the children born of the same parents and can be disposed of by them. Thus, in the matrilineal descent group, children born of the same parents, *i.e.*, brothers and sisters, live as "independent" units sharing the same property. The economic basis of these independent units is estab-

lished by the gift of property from their father (and from the father's brothers and sisters and matrilineal descent group). Children who have been given property from their father's lineage are expected to pay frequent visits to the lineage and eat meals there. Upon coming of age these children are obligated to freely give of their labor, more so than others, when the father's lineage is involved in canoe making or the construction of houses and canoe houses. They are also expected to send a gift of coconuts or other food to sick people in the lineage. These obligations continue for the duration of their lives. If a child fails to meet the expectations of its father's lineage or fails to perform its obligations, the father's sisters conclude that "the mind of the child (*yafakúr*) is not directed toward this *yáyinang*," and confiscate the property that was donated to that child [SUDO 1984]. As a general rule, children (*yafakúr*) are permitted to borrow the canoes owned by the father's lineage and to harvest coconuts grown by the lineage without special permission. They are even allowed to use the cloth, rice and other materials which the canoe builders of the father's lineage received as remuneration at ceremonies held to mark the completion of canoes they constructed for others.

Finally, let us examine the naming of Satawalese children. A baby is given its name within one to two weeks of its birth. The father has full responsibility for naming the child; the mother and the members of her lineage not even entitled to express their opinion. The father takes into consideration names of his ancestors when naming his child. If the child is a boy, he often names his son after one of his male ancestors remembered as a great navigator. No ritual is held on the occasion of naming.

In review, we have seen that the responsibilities of fatherhood for a child in infancy include economic support of the domestic sphere, the handling of decisions concerning adoption, providing for the economic independence of the child (donation of property), and naming. From this time on, until the child come of age, the father teaches him how to catch fish and collect other marine products, how to care for coconut palms and breadfruit trees and to harvest their fruit, and other knowledge and skills required by men of the island. Particularly important is the teaching of esoteric knowledge (navigation techniques, canoe- and house-building techniques, and magico-religious lore). If a child steals crops or belongings from others, the father punishes him/her severely.

The father thus holds the greatest authority of all the child's nurturers (particularly in the case of sons), until the child reaches adulthood. The relationship between the child and father's lineage via the existence of the father is "lenient" and "familiar" in nature, so long as the child duly exercises his/her rights and perform his/her obligations.

KINSHIP BEHAVIOR BASED ON "FLESH"—THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILD AND MATERNAL UNCLE

According to the kinship terminology of Satawal, a man calls his sister's child

fatúw. Conversely, the child calls his/her mother's cross sibling *tukufáyiy*. *Fatúw* literally means "an egg" whereas *tukufáyiy* means "an old person". The fact that in Satawalese society, which has the Hawaiian type of kinship terminology, the relationship between a woman's child and the mother's cross sibling and males of the older generation of lineage is referred to by the above mentioned terms leads us to assume that there is a pattern of specific rights and obligations between the two. Among these rights and obligations the behavioral pattern (use of honorific words and respectful behavior) which *fatúw* must observe when conversing with *tukufáyiy* has already been reported [SUDO 1980, 1985a].

In Satawalese society, where the uxorilocal residence rule prevails, everyday life is conducted in the residential groups (*pwukos*), which are made up primarily of the female members of the lineage and their husbands. The allocation of property among *pwukos* members and the course of daily activities are determined under the instruction of the oldest woman of the uppermost generation and her husband. Accordingly, male members who have married out of the *pwukos* never interfere with ordinary activities directly, nor do they visit the *pwukos*, except under extraordinary circumstances. However, the cross siblings and male *fatúw* must present a gift of food to him every Saturday and whenever the island's events are held.

As the names of these gifts, i.e., *nippeer* (lit., "information of catches") or *kuteer* (lit., "searched food") reveal, the food prepared in the *pwukos* is intended to be "co-owned" or "co-eaten" together with the man who has married out of the *pwukos*. The natives believe that if the man's sister fails to present this gift or fails to behave respectfully toward her brother the "ancestor spirits" of the lineage will bring illness or other misfortune to her and her children. This sanction by the ancestor spirits is called *riya* [SUDO 1980; ISHIMORI 1985]. Such ill fortune is not caused by the brother's curses, but by the "judgment" of the ancestor spirits.⁸⁾

A married man does not return frequently to his own *pwukos*. But he always keeps an eye on what is happening there. For example, if he notices that the breadfruit trees and coconut palms of his lineage are not being properly care for, he reminds his sister(s) to look after them. He feels "shame" if any of the adult members of the lineage disturb the order of the island, and thus watches their behavior. Should a *fatúw* violate the island's rules, he will severely punish him/her. When a *fatúw* creates a disturbance by using foul language (e.g., "Go screw your sister!")⁹⁾ toward a male member belonging to another lineage, the *tukufáyiy* visits the lineage which has been wronged to present a gift of apology. Furthermore, when a member of the lineage has stolen copra from the resource conservation area in the forest, the *tukufáyiy* pays *pakking* (fine) to the island's chief. As these cases show,

8) The ancestor spirit of the lineage (*pwukos*) is called *sootupw* or *woonap*, and is believed to watch over the behavior of lineage members. The spirit applies sanctions against the members if they violate marriage rules or fail to present gifts to the man who marries out of the lineage. When sanctions are applied, the Satawalese present an offering of coconut and taro in front of the ancestors' graves or on the king posts of their houses, for the purpose of "purification".

whenever a dispute arises between groups (*yápinang* or lineage), or whenever someone violates the island's social norms, the man controlling the group (*tukufáyiy*) takes the central role as the representative or responsible person. In other words, the person on whom a woman relies when problems arise in connection with her lineage is not her husband, but her brother or *tukufáyiy*.

The political and legal control of a *yápinang*, which is an upper-level group of lineages, is assumed by the oldest man of the oldest generation belonging to the superior descent line among many *tukufáyiy*s. This governor of the *yápinang* is called "chief" (*sómwoon*). The *yápinang*'s chief and elderly men (*tukufáyiy*) have far-reaching authority in other aspects of life whenever a problem relating to all the *yápinang* members or the group as a whole arises. Their responsibilities include approval of marriages of *yápinang* members and the disposal of shared property.

Whenever a male member of the *yápinang* marries and his wife has a baby the chief makes the final decision as to the gift to be presented to his wife and child. This is particularly important when property co-owned by the lineage is to be given away, at which time the chief summons all the members of the lineage to a meeting. There he listens to the wishes of the man in question and his mother and makes the final decision, taking into account the opinions of the lineage members. Men who have married into the lineage can participate in this meeting, but are not allowed to express their personal opinions or views.¹⁰⁾ When the allotment of the taro patches, which are managed and utilized by the women of the *yápinang* as co-owned property, is discussed, the opinions of the female members are respected.

From the foregoing discussion it can be seen that the maternal "uncle" is in a position to supervise and assume responsibilities for a *fatúw*'s behavior after his/her coming of age. Conversely, the *fatúw* regards his/her mother's cross sibling as "supervisor" or "dreadful person". The *fatúw* never visits the house into which his/

9) On Satawal the worst expression of condemnation is "Go screw your sister!". This condemnation always results in violence. Conversely, when a woman happens to hear malicious rumors about her brother, she becomes aggressive toward the sister of the person who voiced the rumor in order to take revenge. Thus, between brothers and sisters there is a mutual obligation to take revenge on a person who has spoken ill of their sisters/brothers in relation to their sexuality, or who has criticized their personality. In Satawalese society, brother-sister relations are the very basis of social relationships, and mutually protective attitudes between them are much emphasized. This trait is commonly observed in the East Trukic language subgroup [GOODENOUGH 1951: 31, GLADWIN and SARASON 1953: 49, MARSHALL 1977: 646].

10) The relationship between a woman's husband and her brother is described by the kinship term *kówrh*. The former is obligated to use honorific words and show respectful behavior toward the latter (*kówrh*). In addition, the former is required to obtain the latter's permission whenever he intends to utilize property co-owned by his wife's lineage, for example, when he wishes to use canoes owned by the lineage or fell breadfruit trees for the construction of a canoe. Furthermore, the former is not allowed to reject the latter's solicitation for goods. Thus, a woman's husband is in a lower social position than her brother, and is required to follow the brother's instructions and orders.

her maternal uncle has married. A male *fatúw* has the right to learn esoteric knowledge, including navigation techniques, from his maternal uncle but, in payment for this right, he is required to present fish and coconut toddy to him. It is the duty of the *fatúw* to satisfy the *tukufáyiy*'s demands and follow his instructions and orders. The relationship between the child and his/her maternal uncle is "respectful", and "deliberate and courteous" in nature, as is revealed by the imposition of strict behavioral standards on the former that require him/her to show respect to the latter.

A comparison of the responsibilities and authority of the father and the maternal uncle in relation to the child, leads to the following insights. In Satawalese society a man who has married into his wife's *yáyinang* (lineage) is given the authority to nurture, instruct and control his child in the capacity of father. But he cannot engage in any activities or exercise authority related to the interests of the *yáyinang* or its involvement in the socio-political sphere. In other words, the man living in his wife's *pwukos* can exercise his own discretion in ordinary socio-economic activities, that is, in the domestic sphere, but has no authority whatsoever with regard to matters concerning his wife's *yáyinang*, that is, matters involving the descent group sphere. By contrast, a man of the descent group voices no opinions with regard to the nurturing of his sister's child until his/her coming of age but, after the child reaches full adulthood, the maternal uncle supervises and takes responsibilities for the behavior of the child. In addition, the uncle, as one of the leaders of the lineage, exercises his authority with respect to matters influencing his descent group.

CONCLUSION

In the previous section, an attempt has been made to compare the responsibilities and authority of father and his sister (their descent group) and the authority of the maternal uncle (director of the child's descent group) with respect to nurturing, particularly, nurturing as it exists in matrilineal society. I have discussed the term "blood" as used by the Satawalese as a metaphor for a kin category, implying the tie between a father and his child. It has also been pointed out that, from the child's viewpoint, brothers and sisters born of the same father (or the same mother) constitute a minor unit (nuclear unit) based on co-owned property in the framework of the matrilineal descent group.

The primary aim of this paper is to clarify how the power of control or authority over a woman and her child is shared between her husband (father of the child) and her brother (maternal uncle of the child) in matrilineal society. It has been shown that in Satawalese society the father assumes responsibilities and authority for nurturing of the child in the domestic sphere whereas the maternal uncle retains power in matters related to the descent group (social) sphere. This sharing of authority can be further clarified by looking at each step of the child's growth. During the period beginning with the mother's conception, continuing through childbirth and period of infancy, and ending with the child's coming of age, the

father's matrilineal descent group, including the father himself and his sisters, plays a vital role.

On the other hand after the child becomes a "full man" or "full woman", the child's maternal uncle assumes social responsibility for and authority over the behavior of his sister's child. This leads to the conclusion that the so-called "structural contradiction in matrilineal society" is compensated for in Satawalese society by the mutually complementary relationship between the father and the maternal uncle, the former assuming responsibilities in the domestic sphere before the child's coming of age and the latter in the social sphere after adulthood has been reached.

The Satawalese custom that gives the father's sister priority to adopt his child noteworthy in our attempt to understand the position of men in matrilineal society. In this matrilineal society the child automatically acquires his/her membership in his/her mother's matrilineal descent group at the time of birth. In the relationship with his/her father's matrilineal descent group, the child is called *yafakur* and is entitled to receive a gift (inheritance) of certain property. The social norm that allows the child to be adopted by his/her father's sister while maintaining a unique relationship with the father's matrilineal descent group, which involves certain rights and obligations, can be interpreted as a "system" to convert the father-child relationship into the relationship between matrilineal uncle and child via the adoptive mother (father's sister). In other words, from the child's point of view, he/she is put under the control of the "maternal uncle", like other members, by being admitted into his/her father's matrilineal descent group as a new "member". Therefore, such an adoption custom can be regarded as a system to enable a man to fuse his dual position as "father" and "maternal uncle", in his relationship with his child.

Now let us discuss the relationship of these findings with Mabuchi's typology, which is the second aim of this paper. According to Mabuchi, the "matrilineal versions" of the Indonesian type and Oceanian type are characterized by "the spiritual predominance of paternal matrilineal kin over maternal matrilineal kin" and "the spiritual predominance of brother and his agnatic descendants over sister and her matrilineal descendants", respectively [MABUCHI 1980: 85]. The Indonesian type refers to the relationship between two groups having affinal ties. Described in terms of cross sibling relationships, this refers to societies in which the "brother and his descendants along the male line are spiritually superior to the sister's child" [MABUCHI 1964: 88]. Therefore, its "matrilineal version" would serve as a description of societies characterized by "the spiritual superiority of the sister and her matrilineal descendants over the brother's child".

In Satawalese society kin groups are organized in accordance with the matrilineal descent rule. In a separate paper, I have dealt with the status relationship between two matrilineal descent groups which are interconnected through marriage (Fig. 1) [SUDO 1984: 335-336]. The superiority/inferiority of the status in that context relates to the substance and nature of the "power of control" over the child born as a result of the marriage. I concluded that the group that the man leaves when he marries is

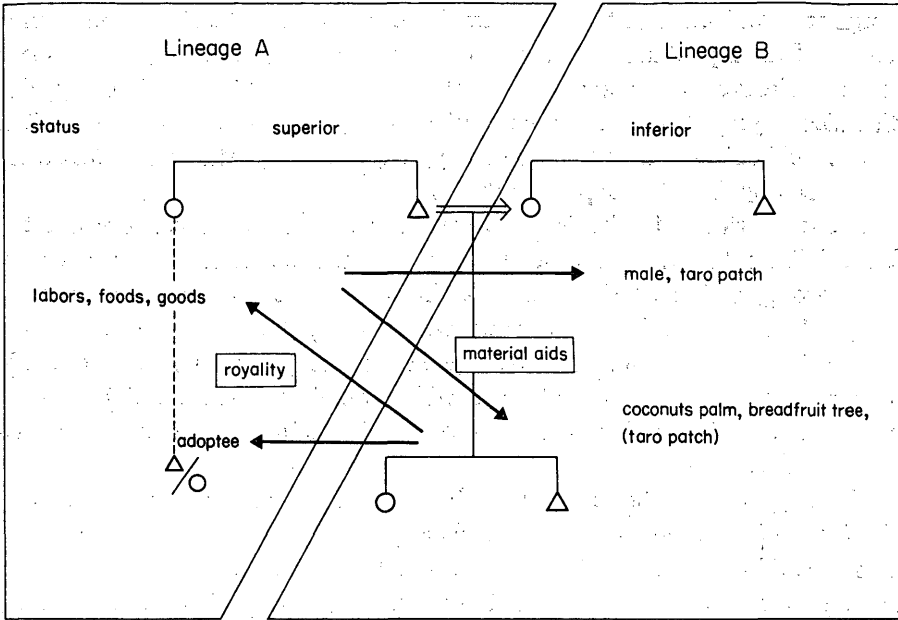


Figure 1. Gift-exchange and Status between two Lineages

superior to the group which he marries into, since the former retains the right to adopt the man's child as well as the right to ask for the child's labor and other goods and services. In this paper, I attempt to clarify the group-to-group relationship with respect to social status and kinship rituals from the standpoint of cross sibling relationships.

In terms of socio-political status, the superiority of brothers to sisters can be pointed out, judging from the fact that sisters are bound by unilateral obligations to show respectful behavior and use honorific words when interacting with their brothers. This gap in terms of status also comes into evidence in the form of the presentation of gifts of food from sisters to brothers. Brothers assume the position of "guardian" or "patron" for their sisters. When we look at the relationship of brothers and sisters to each other's children we notice the following characteristic aspect of cross sibling relations on Satawal. In the relationship between a man and his sister's child the kinship terms *tukufáyiy* and *fatúw* are used, respectively. The latter is obligated to use honorific words when addressing the former, and regards him as a "dreadful" person under whose supervision he/she is put. On the other hand the relationship between a woman and her brother's child is described by the kinship term *yafakúr*. The brother's child can visit his/her paternal aunt to eat meals or to borrow things without prior permission. A reciprocal relationship exists between the aunt and the *yafakúr*, the former donating property to the latter and the latter providing labor and gifts.

Finally, it is important to discuss the relationship with Mabuchi's typology

through an examination of the roles played and statuses assumed by kinsmen on the occasion of kinship rituals in Satawalese society. Strictly speaking, in this society there is no ritual or notion analogous to the index used by Mabuchi in his typology with which to judge "spiritual superiority/inferiority". Nevertheless, certain rituals related to childbirth and nurturing strongly suggest the existence of relationships characterized by "spiritual superiority/inferiority".

One is the ritual of childbirth and the other is the ritual of first menstruation. After childbirth the newborn's father's sister, female members of her matrilineal descent group, and the father's paternal kin play a major role in the ritual for "purifying" the new mother and her attendant. This pattern is also observed in the ritual for first menstruation. The paternal aunt of the girl who has experienced her first menstruation dispels the bad spirits which would otherwise attack her, and an old woman in her father's lineage reports to the spirits of her becoming a full woman, and blesses her.

This suggests that the members of father's lineage are in a position to dispell bad spirits and welcome good spirits in the major rituals of the natives' life, *i.e.*, the rituals of childbirth and transition to adulthood. We can thus reasonably assume that the power to control the relationship between the child and supernatural beings is held by the female members of the father's lineage, particularly, by the father's sisters. Accordingly, from the child's standpoint, in relation to certain aspects of the rites of passage, the "father's matrilineal descent group has the spiritual superiority to the child's own matrilineal descent group". In addition, the "sister's spiritual superiority to her brother's child" is shown by the fact that, among the members of the child's paternal matrilineal descent group, the child's father's sister is deeply involved in the rituals held on behalf of the child.

These aspects of two kinship rituals in Satawalese society correspond to the "matrilineal version" of the Indonesian type, if Mabuchi's definition of "spiritual superiority/inferiority" observed between different kin groups is expanded. However, although the Indonesian type society which Mabuchi proposed is characterized by a generalized exchange marriage system, Satawalese society lacks such a "prescriptive alliance" or typical kinship rituals with which to judge "spiritual superiority/inferiority". Therefore, the analogy with Mabuchi's typology requires further consideration, and it remains a task for the future to clarify the scope of societies to which Mabuchi's typology applies as a general rule and to determine if the severity of the criteria on which his thesis is based is to be fully respected.

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