APPENDICES,

PHOTOGRAPHS

and

REFERENCES.
APPENDIX I

Coffee Planting in 1895

I summarise here an interesting contemporary account of a typical day in the life of a European assistant on a coffee estate of the west coast of Malaya in the 1890s ("Abel" 1895:116-120). The working day began at 4 a.m. with a muster near the coolie 'lines'. Tamil coolies stood in two long rows, one row consisting of men and the other of women and children. The manager then called out the names of the coolies from a muster-book and marked their presence or absence. (This list of coolies was compiled by the assistant on the preceding afternoon. The procedure was as follows. After the work was over at about 2.30 p.m., the 'headmen' were instructed to hand over to the assistant lists of coolies who worked under them that day. After collating these lists the assistant visited the coolie 'lines' at 4 p.m. to check whether his total corresponded with the actual number of coolies available for work next morning. In the final list which was entered into the manager's muster-book the possible absentees were eliminated.) Batches of coolies were then sent to their various works of holeing, filling, weeding and pruning. Two or three men went to the nursery and some to plant. With this the manager returned to his bungalow saying that he will give out medicine to any coolies who are sick, while entrusting field supervision to the assistant. Weeding was done on a task basis; a coolie asked to weed a certain number of
rows (his task) was paid wages on completion of his task. Each weeder was supplied a dibble stick to pluck the weeds and a sack to collect them before burning or burying. The assistant, on reaching the weeding area, checked if the number of labourers present corresponded with the number dispatched from the muster and fixed the task for each weeder. He next visited the holers, fillers and pruners and repeated the steps taken for the weeders. The supervision of task-labourers could then be entrusted to headmen. Planting coolies were paid a daily rate and not given a task for a coolie in a hurry to plant (and thus to finish his task early) was liable to bend the tap roots of a coffee sapling. For the same reason these coolies needed closer supervision which accounted for the largest proportion of the assistant's forenoon in the field. At 11 a.m. the assistant was back in his bungalow for a meal and siesta. Again at half past one, an hour before the siren was sounded to mark the end of the non-task coolie's working day, the assistant was back in the field for a final round of inspection. From half past two till four he would often have to instruct task-coolies who dragged on in the fields. After he had visited the coolie 'lines' at 4 p.m. he found time to have afternoon tea and wash. From then on until dinner time (about half past seven) he kept the books and made copies of business letters which the manager may have written.

From the planter's account one can also glean some of the ideas and mechanisms of supervision and control on estates. "It
never does to trust any of these men too implicitly", he advises when talking of the supervision of 'holers' and their headmen, "so I proceed to count every fifth row and find that though the correct number of holes has been cut many are not of the proper size. As the headman possesses a gauge to measure the holes, he has no excuse to offer .... So I dock two days pay, firmness being the only method that answers with coolies; leniency they regard as weakness to be taken as much advantage of as possible....." ("Abel" 1895:119).

Two other features of the early industrial subsystem emerge from the latter statement of the planter. Firstly, members of the supervisory staff bracketed the headman with coolies. Secondly, a headman was made responsible for the faults made by his coolies in the work situation. Taken together, these features suggest an earlier form of the development of the recruiter-foreman as the management's man among the labourers.
APPENDIX II

Kangany Recruitment

The word kangany is the widely used anglicised form of the Tamil word kankani meaning 'overseer' or 'foreman'. It is the word used in the Tamil bible for 'bishop'. It is not the word commonly used for 'foreman' in Southern India but it is used in this sense both in Malaya and Ceylon. Further, on the pre-World War II plantations both in Malaya and Ceylon, the kangany was a 'recruiter-foreman'.

As early as the 1890s, alongside the indentured system, the so-called 'Ceylon system of kangany recruitment' was started among the planters in the F.M.S. Under this system, an employer requiring labour sent a kangany to India, giving him an advance to pay expenses, and the man returned with the coolies and in due course repaid the advances. In this early phase, the employer did not bother to find out the nature of agreement between a kangany and his coolies which enabled him to recover passage money from them. The kangany could create debt-bondage among recruits. There was no guarantee either from the employers or the government to ensure the actual, as against nominal, freedom of coolies. At the turn of the century, coolies recruited by a kangany began to be paid free passages from India to Malaya. Nevertheless, there was still no system by which kanganies could be prevented from recovering from their coolies 'advances and expenses incurred
before importation'.

To meet the increased demand of labourers in the first decade of the present century considerable improvements were thought necessary in the system of labour recruitment. Through the active collaboration of the planters and the Government - the two main employers of immigrant Indian labour in Malaya - the system of kangany recruitment was geared to a pan-Malayan administrative machinery for the supply and control of immigrant Indian labour. From 1907 until the Government of India ban on assisted emigration in 1938 the Indian Immigration Committee and the Indian Immigration Fund (henceforth referred to as the Committee and the Fund) were the quasi-official and legal instruments for the centralised control of labour supply on estates. The law establishing these instruments was designed, first, to make each employer of Indian coolies bear a fair share of the cost of importing them, secondly, to prevent the deduction of large amounts from the wages of labourers to recoup recruiting expenses, thirdly, to attract more labourers by assuring a prospect of good wages free of excessive deduction, and fourthly, to prevent malpractices by recruiters and kanganyies in India. Under its provisions the cost of importing Indian coolies was equitably distributed among employers by payment of assessments into a fund. The assessments were determined by the amount of work performed by Indian coolies on each employer's estate. The Fund covered the expenses for both kangany-recruited and non-recruited assisted immigrants.
The principal purposes for which the Fund was used in the initial stages were as follows:-

(a) Train fares of emigrants and their dependants from their villages to the camps at Madras and Negapattinam;

(b) Feeding and medical attention of emigrants and their dependants awaiting shipments at the Indian camps;

(c) Steamship passages from India to Malaya;

(d) Quarantine charges in Malaya;

(e) Transport charges from ports to places of employment;

(f) Repatriation to India;

(g) Payment of food and transport expenses to repatriates and their dependants from ports of disembarkation to their homes and villages in India.

To recruit new coolies from India an employer had to obtain kangany-licences from the Committee which would not be granted unless the employer stipulated in each licence that no deduction would be made from wages to offset importation expenses. The general procedure of recruitment was as follows:-

Kanganies were licensed by the Deputy Controller of Labour, Malaya, at Penang and Port Swettenham, and the licence holders had to see the Agent of the Government of India to have licences endorsed by him. In India, the licences were registered either at Madras or Negapattinam. The number of recruits allowed to be
recruited by each kangany was generally limited to twenty and the operations of the kanganies were confined to the neighbourhood of their own villages. Further, before any recruit left his village he had to be produced by the kangany before the village headman and the latter confirmed the fact that there was no objection to this recruitment. The general procedure was that the kangany obtained a small advance of Rs.20 against his commission from his employer's financial agents at Madras and Negapattinam. This commission did not exceed Rs.10 for each adult recruit - at least half of which was usually spent on the recruit or his family. The kangany was refunded out of the Fund the cost of train fares of all persons accepted at the camps by the Emigration Commissioner for Malaya at Madras or by the Assistant Emigration Commissioner at Negapattinam. Employers in Malaya, having paid recruiting commission and in some cases kanganies' passages to India, were given from the Fund a recruiting allowance for each adult immigrant brought over and this allowance was calculated so as to cover all these expenses. By increasing or decreasing the number of kangany licences and/or the amount of recruitment allowance the Committee could control the volume of immigrants.

The process of kangany recruitment on Pal Melayu, approximately between years 1915 and 1935, may be illustrated by means of the recruiting experiences narrated to me by kanganies or their recruits. In the following account, I shall detail the experiences of three brothers - Ranganathan, Sinnesamy and
Sanjivi - of the village Chennasamuthiram in North Arcot District of Madras State. All three are working as kanganies on Pal Melayu today (see Genealogy II, p. 470).

Seventy-two years old Ranganathan (B14) is the eldest of three brothers - all kanganies - now serving on Pal Melayu. The second brother, Sinnesamy (B19), was the first to be recruited in 1917 from his natal village of Chennasamuthiram. His recruiting kangany was Arumugam, originally of Damal and a resident of Division A on Pal Melayu. Arumugam recruited a number of men and women - kin and non-kin - from Damal and a few persons from Chennasamuthiram. Sinnesamy's father and grandfather were both masons with sufficient though irregular earnings. They had a little ancestral land which was cultivated by the sons. According to Sinnesamy his recruiting kangany tempted him to go to Malaya by saying that "there were a lot of things to eat and no hard work" and that anyone could become rich quickly in Malaya. The idea of leaving for Malaya was opposed by Sinnesamy's parents, mainly because of the unfavourable reports about that country brought back by the earlier emigrants. Once Sinnesamy managed to escape to Madras with Arumugam but he was chased by his grandparents who caught him at the depot and brought him back to the village. Next time, in 1917, when Arumugam was back again recruiting, Sinnesamy planned his strategy better and successfully dodged his parents by hiding himself in a coconut grove for fifteen days. On Pal Melayu he joined a gang of weeders under Tandavarayan
kangany (B9). After about six years of hard life as a weeder (see p. 27) Sinnesamy became a tapper in 1923.

Sinnesamy was only 16 years old when he reached Pal Melayu. At that time most of the region was still under forest and there were few good roads. ("I did not know which way to go." ) His only succour in this situation was the presence of his father's elder sister (A2) and her son who was his kangany. When Sinnesamy joined Pal Melayu the salary for a weeder was only £20 a day. Even so, the cost of living was low and Sinnesamy was able to send some money regularly to his parents. The latter still insisted that Sinnesamy should return. They also sent clothes and cookies for him with kanganyies coming to and fro his own and neighbouring villages from Malaya. However, as the salary rose to £50, Sinnesamy, who had been planning to return, decided instead to stay on. It coincided with a long recruitment trip by his maman Tandavarayan to India, leaving his family in the care of Sinnesamy.

"When my maman went to recruit in 1925" observed Sinnesamy, "nearly half of my village people came." Some of these were Sinnesamy's kinsmen from Chennasamuthiram but there were others too. The heavy exodus was due, it is said, to a severely felt food shortage in the village.

With Tandavarayan came Sinnesamy's elder brother, Ranganathan. He was 35 years of age at the time of leaving his village. "I quarrelled and did not go to work (to the fields) for one month."
I stood on one leg to come here." Ranganathan gave a vivid account of the hazards accompanying a kangany's efforts to recruit an able-bodied youth from his natal village. Even among his own kinsmen the recruiting kangany was very often a persona-non-grata and an evil to be avoided. But the daredevil kangany also learnt, over the years, to devise his techniques of recruitment the better. One of the devices described by Ranganathan came close to kidnapping. The recruiting kangany would go and stay in the house of a relative and they would treat him with hospitality. There the kangany would secretly inform a youth that he would be shipped to Malaya. They would appoint a rendezvous and from there proceed to the depot. More often than not, although proper documents from the village officials were lacking, a clearance at the depot was obtained by bribing the clerks. But even at the village level the system was not foolproof. Occasionally, the trick would bounce back upon the kangany. The youth would leak out the information and the kangany would be met at the tryst not by his recruit but by his angry kinsmen, sometimes armed with sticks and shoes. Many a tale is still told on Pal Melayu of a kangany being severely beaten when caught in the course of an escapade.

In cases of group emigration such as described by Ranganathan for his recruiting kangany, there was no camouflage. The famine-afflicted villagers were further encouraged to migrate overseas by the prospect of a relatively light job in comparison
to the hard labour demanded for cultivation of their own or somebody else's land in India. The myth prevailed in those villages that the only work which these recruits would be asked to do in Malaya was to "chase away crows from sugar". As Ranganathan summed it up with characteristic candour - "The reasons for coming to Malaya were mainly two: famine and laziness to plough the land". The journey by ship was uncomfortable. The food was very dirty and people on board vomitted all over the place. There were male and female inspectors on boat but they did nothing to improve the conditions.

Ranganathan too started as a weeder but his opportunity to recruit came within five years of his arrival from India. In 1929, Sinnesamy was given a licence which he passed on to his elder brother. According to Ranganathan (told by him in the presence of Sinnesamy and his wife) the only reason why his younger brother gave him the licence was the latter's lack of skill and confidence in recruiting. At that time, Sinnesamy was unmarried whereas Ranganathan had migrated with his wife and one child. The brothers lived in a joint household in Division C and Ranganathan, being the head, controlled the family purse constituted from the combined earnings of the adults. Whereas Sinnesamy had left his village clandestinely as an inexperienced youth, Ranganathan emigrated as a mature adult with the consent and knowledge of his kinsmen. It would have been apparent, therefore, to both of them that Ranganathan could be more
successful in bringing recruits over from Chennasamuthiram. Ranganathan recruited about 60 persons in the course of his two trips in 1929 and 1934. In both the trips, the majority of his recruits were kinsmen. These persons are also plotted on Genealogy II.

By the time of Ranganathan's first recruiting trip sufficient and reliable information would certainly have existed in Chennasamuthiram about conditions of work and living on Pal Melayu. As noted earlier, recruits of at least two kanganies from Damal, about twelve miles away, had included persons from Chennasamuthiram. It may therefore be safely inferred that strong local pressures would have been present to cause this large-scale emigration. But apart from general remarks about drought, scarcity of food, indebtedness and poverty, no specific local factors are mentioned by the early emigrants to account for the exodus. Prominent among those recruited by Ranganathan in 1929 were three of his siblings - one brother (B12) and two sisters (B16 and 24) - and their spouses (B13, 17 and 23). Another of his sisters (B21) had come earlier with her husband while only one sister, Pechai (B11), never came to Malaya. Pechai's husband (B10), a brother of Tandavarayan kangany, was the only one of four brothers who remained in his village (Damal) all his life cultivating the family land. It is said that he earned enough money by farming and bullock-cart driving to compare favourably with the three brothers who came to Pal Melayu.
and died there. Ranganathan's elder brother Samivelu (B12) and his wife (B13) did not find Pal Melayu congenial and they left for Chennasamuthiram in 1933. In the same year his sister Katai (B24) and her husband also left. Back in the village they discouraged their kinsmen from migrating to Malaya and Ranganathan reckons their criticism to have been a potent factor in reducing the number of his recruits during second trip.

Nevertheless, a number of people from Chennasamuthiram came in 1934. Again, most of them were of the Vanniar caste and close or distant kin to Ranganathan. Thangaraju (B6), a distant collateral of Ranganathan, had been a pioneer emigrant from Chennasamuthiram to Natal. He returned to his native village with his family in 1932 but soon in 1934 his two sons, Raman and Letchmanan (C1 and 2) proceeded to Pal Melayu with Ranganathan. During the Japanese Occupation Raman died on an estate near Pal Melayu while Letchmanan married, and subsequently deserted and abandoned in India, the sister (C6) of his elder brother's widow (C3). Raman's widow came to live on Pal Melayu, earlier on with her younger brother Mangalam (C4) whom she called from India, and later with her married son and daughter-in-law (D1 and 2). By remitting money to her brother (C5) in Chennasamuthiram she has been able to build a house for herself in the village. She plans to return in a few years time and spend her retirement in that house. Another group of brothers (B30, 31 and 32) which came with Ranganathan in 1934 is survived
today by some of their Malaya-born children (C14 and 15). All three brothers died during the Japanese Occupation - two in Siam and one in a Japanese camp near Pal Melayu. They emigrated to Pal Melayu with their spouses leaving behind in Chennasamuthiram their parents, unmarried sisters and a brother. In the pre-war period the brothers with their families lived in adjoining 'lines' of Division C. After the loss of all three family heads their survivors formed a joint household on Pal Melayu under the headship of the only surviving widow, Kanamma (B33).

In relating his experiences as a recruiter, Ranganathan recalled the difficulties he encountered and how he solved them. A typical incident occurred at the depot in Avadi which was the first step for a kangany and his recruits en route to Malaya. An inspector asked Ranganathan to sit down but being considerably hard of hearing the latter kept standing. This so infuriated the inspector that he got hold of Ranganathan's tuft of hair (kutumi) and gave him a thrashing. As he was about to cancel Ranganathan's licence, the kangany effectively used the panacea of bribe and got out of the tangle relatively unharmed.

Sanjivi kangany (B25) the youngest of Ranganathan's brothers, was the last to emigrate. He was married to the daughter (C12) of his sister Katai (B24) who, along with her husband, had returned from Pal Melayu a year before their marriage. Sanjivi's plans to leave for Pal Melayu with his brother in 1934 were foiled by his affines. In the following year, however, both
Ranganathan and Sinnesamy persuaded Sanjivi to disregard the in-laws' objections and start for Pal Melayu under the surat system (see p.51 fn.17). To Sanjivi, then in his late twenties, this came as a last chance to try his own luck in the place where two of his brothers had become rich. In Chennasamuthiram he had a meagre income from cultivating the hereditary land of his father. The reason why his brothers on Pal Melayu were anxious to call Sanjivi lay in the latter's ability to read and write. By the mid-1950s, the money dealings of Ranganathan and Sinnesamy had begun to multiply and they badly needed their educated younger brother to assist them in carrying out the transactions. Sanjivi learnt tapping with "five or six days" of his arrival on Pal Melayu and became a kangany in 1952. He did not bring men from India but he recruited 10 persons locally for the estate.
Ranganathan's Household:

Ranganathan's household is based on what may be termed an 'incomplete extended family' because his wife and two grown-up sons returned to India a few years ago. Presently the household comprises Ranganathan, his eldest married son (Munisami), youngest unmarried son (Kesavan), Munisami's wife (Kamala) and five children (four sons - Murugan, Tanapal, Bappa and Moghan - and one daughter - Papaty). The family composition of the household with the members' ages is given in an extract from Genealogy II (p. 479). The following account of a typical day in this household is an edited version of my field notes dated 14/6/1963.

Exactly at 4 a.m. on a cool starry morning in mid-1963, the siren in the factory of Pal Melayu sounded four times. Following the time-signal, loud yells by the estate watchman (kavar-karan) could be heard issuing from a distance of about a hundred yards. His shouts grew progressively louder as he moved closer to the 'lines', flashing his torch to find his way in the dark. No-one in Ranganathan's house woke up, although kerosine lamps began to be lit up in house-blocks here and there. An hour passed by during which fires were made in some of the houses. The noise made by the washing of buckets or chopping of wood mingled with the cackling of geese, crowing of cocks and an occasional cry of
a child. A few women could be seen strenuously grinding chillies and turmeric on the stone mortars to prepare paste for the day’s curry. One woman poured tea into a thermos flask for carrying to the tapping task. At 5 a.m. another time signal went up from the factory. Ranganathan was the first to wake up in his house and he began shouting 'Murugan' – the name of his eldest grandson. He covered his head with the kangany's headcloth (tunțu) and started out to wake up members of his gang, shouting high pitched abuses at the top of his voice. Almost simultaneously, a large number of neighbours woke up. Kamala came downstairs and lit the fire on the hearth where on the preceding night Kesavan had left firewood in readiness for the morning. From water stored in a large drum of corrugated iron, Kamala filled an aluminium kettle and put it on the fire to boil water for tea. Three years old Moghan, still half-asleep in the room upstairs, kept whining all the time. As Kamala went upstairs to bring condensed milk, teadust and sugar (all household provisions except condiments are kept in a cupboard upstairs), she also attended briefly to Moghan. Before coming downstairs she called out to Murugan that tea will be ready. This was meant to be an indication for all members of the household to come down. Munisami came down next carrying Moghan in his arms. Kamala began winnowing rice. One by one all children and adults came down and cleaned their teeth with a pinch of charcoal powder kept in a paper bag. Kamala instructed her eldest son to clean the empty beer bottle in which she carried her tea to the task. All those
who must go to work that morning - Ranganathan, Munisami, Kesavan and Kamala - drank their tea in enamel mugs standing or squatting near the fire. Kamala shared her tea with Moghan. She next filled the clean bottle with tea. After the elders had finished, Murugan made tea for himself and his younger siblings. Papati was asked to clean the mugs. Kamala filled an alluminium pot with rice and water and put it on the fire to cook. She instructed Muniammal, the 12 years old non-schooling daughter of neighbours to watch for the rice and remove it from the hearth when it was cooked.

It was about 5.45 a.m. now and from a transistor radio turned full pitch in a nearby 'line' the sound of a Tamil film song kept pouring in. Most of the workers had already left for the muster ground and the working members of Ranganathan's household were just about to leave. Munisami was in his tapping shirt and blue shorts and carried two small mat-baskets for collecting scraps. Kesavan wore only a singlet over a pair of shorts. Each brother had a cycle and two buckets. One bucket was tied to the carrier at the back and the other hung on the handle. Inside one of the buckets each of the brothers had put his tapping knife. Kamala, wearing a cilai and a pavatai dangled her two buckets in hooks attached to the two ends of an arched bamboo stick. She placed the bamboo across her left shoulder and left for the muster ground on foot. Ranganathan kangany, with his inevitable headcloth and a shoulder bag containing the 'kangany's tools', also left for the ground on foot. By 6 a.m. the household was left in charge of the children.
A few minutes before 7.30 a.m. Murugan, Tanapal and Papati left for school leaving Bappa and Moghan behind. Both these children could have been left in the creche but Bappa was now regarded to be sufficiently grown up to take care of himself and of his younger brother as well. In fact, of late, Kamala's efforts to leave both of them, or only Moghan, in the nursery had proved futile. As I gathered from the creche Ayah (my other neighbour's wife) Bappa was no longer amenable to her discipline and Moghan felt miserable staying in the creche without his elder brother. On the other hand, throughout the period they were left alone, the brothers played together or in the company of other children of their age-group, similarly left by their parents. It is important to note, however, that Muniammal kept an eye over the children.

At 10.15 a.m., after finishing their tapping, Munisami and Kesavan came home for tiffin. Kesavan, who often finished his task (450 trees) sooner than Munisami, kept the key of the food almirah himself. That day both of the brothers came simultaneously. The food had been cooked on the preceding evening. Rice was kept in a large earthenware pot while there were two enamel bowls for curry. Most of the curry from one of the bowls had been consumed at dinner time on the preceding evening. Kesavan took out an enamel plate and helped himself with rice and the leftover curry. Next he served a similar dish to Munisami and a smaller one to Bappa. The brothers sat down facing each other on corners of a
wooden bench. They discussed the lucky numbers of three-digit lottery (Ekor) throughout their meals, eaten with all five fingers of the right hand. Moghan kept receiving morsels from his father and at the same time snatched one or two in play from Bappa's plate. In the meantime, the three school children also came back for tiffin. Kesavan shouted to Papati for a drink and she brought a mug filled with water. Murugan and Tanapal now settled on the other bench and they shouted "Pā pā corū poṭu" (Papa, give rice; 'papa,' meaning 'child', is the nickname of Papati). There was no curry left over for them in the evening bowl and curry from the other bowl had not to be taken with tiffin. Even the supply of rice in the pot kept in the cupboard was sufficient only for one person. At this juncture Muniammal brought out from the cupboard of her house the pot of rice cooked by Kamala that morning. Murugan and Tanapal both accepted their rice without curry but the latter kept running his fingers in Bappa's plate to sponge some of his curry. In turn, Murugan helped himself with some from Tanapal's plate. This led to mutual bickering. Munisami intervened to restore peace by contributing some of his curry to the plates of his sons. Papati ate quietly from her own plate being unaffected by the tussle among her brothers or its outcome. As soon as he finished eating Munisami left for Dhoby's house in the adjoining block to hear more Ekor stories. Kesavan began chatting with Muniammal. Papati collected all the dirty plates and washed them. She then swept the floor clean with a
broomstick and left for school with Murugan and Tanapal. By 11 a.m. things were again back to what they were three quarters of an hour earlier.

At 1.00 p.m. some workers, mainly women, could be seen returning to the 'lines'. Most of them were weeders and thus without buckets. But there were also some tappers who, like Kamala, entrusted the work of getting the latex weighed and buckets brought back to their husbands or another male member of the household. On the other hand, some women even carried firewood collected on the way. As soon as Moghan saw Kamala approaching he ran out to meet her, clinging to her cilai. Often the children could expect the returning parents to bring cheap biscuits (rotti) bought at the wayside kaka shop. Kamala came straight to the 'line' utterly exhausted and for a few minutes sat on the floor holding her head in her hands. While she thus rested other members of the household kept returning. Munisami and Kesavan came next while Ranganathan was the last to arrive. Within this period the children also came back from school. The home became the hub of activities. Kamala instructed Papati to keep water in a cannister for heating. Munisami was surrounded by children as he sat on a bench resting his back against a pillar. Kesavan, the only one in his family to go to work in footwear, changed his muddy shoes for rubber slippers and headed for the common bathroom. Ranganathan attended to the fowls first. He brought the chicken out of a home-made wooden coop suspended from the ceiling and scattered
unhusked rice on the floor for them to peck at. He kept shooing the grandchildren away. In the meantime Kamala had begun her inspection of the household work. She had been screaming at her children for making the place dirty and the father-in-law's latest activity further enraged her. Ranganathan, helped by his defective hearing, remained absorbed in his activity of feeding the chicken and then went for a bath. By this time Kamala had also bathed by pouring warm water over her body, standing in a corner of the home close to the drain. She had bathed with a sarong on pulled up to cover her breasts. Since she had not to wash clothes that day her bath had been quick. After the bath she sat down on the floor and had her meals of rice and curry. Moghan ate with her. Having finished her meal and without waiting to serve food to other members of the household now seated on the bench, Kamala slipped away to the adjoining house for her long afternoon chat with the neighbour's wife. Papati served everyone and in the end began to eat herself. Again, the business of washing pots, pans and plates and of sweeping the floor was left to her.

As the mid-day meal was about to finish, a sound of loud weeping and scolding came from across the road. In the house in front, Kaliyappan's wife was crying while Kaliyappan stood with a firewood stick in his hand. Kaliyappan's mother was cursing her son loudly. The attention of everyone in the two households became concentrated on what was going on; there undoubtedly was
an air of excitement all around. The children began hopping about, climbed upon the bench to obtain a better view of the scene of the quarrel and shrieked "quarrel, quarrel" (cañtai cañtai). Munisami quietened them by saying that it was no concern of theirs. But an animated discussion about the incident ensued between Munisami and Kamala and the neighbour's wife. Munisami told me the gist of the affair. Kaliyappan's 'going in a bad way' with another woman had led to a quarrel between him and his wife. Just now Kaliyappan had beaten his wife with a stick and the latter was crying. Kaliyappan's mother was staunchly on the side of her daughter-in-law.

Now everyone had leisure. Kamala joined other women who played a type of dice and board game (tāyam) on the floor of the neighbour's house. Ranganathan also joined them after some time. Munisami took the bicycle and went away to the kaka shop and Bintang Emas. Kesavan sat for a long time on the staircase pretending to read a Tamil newspaper but in fact gazing at the house in the opposite road where his beloved Logammal carried out household chores. He was later joined by his father's younger brother's son from a nearby house. They chatted for a long time. The children played in and around the house. At about 4.15 p.m. it was time again for Kamala to start cooking for the evening. Instructing Papati to make fire, she went upstairs to bring rice in a flat winnowing basket. From a distance one could see the old goldsmith of Pal Melayu approaching Ranganathan's house.
Ranganathan left the game and sat down on the bench in his 'line' to talk to the goldsmith. He did not offer him a seat but after a while the old goldsmith himself got seated beside the kangany. The goldsmith always needed ready cash to buy gold for making ornaments and Ranganathan was his trusted money-lender. At that time of the year estate workers had begun ordering jewellery to be worn during Tipavali then almost four months away. The goldsmith's need for cash was thus even more pressing. Ranganathan was well aware of this and he told him to come on the following day. In the meantime Ranganathan wanted him to repair his daughter-in-law's old necklace. While they were still talking Kamala gave Ranganathan a handful of red chillies and half a dozen radishes for cutting into small pieces. She kept listening intently to their conversation while cleaning and washing rice. Moghan, wearing only a partly-buttoned bushshirt, hung on his mother's back. She took the necklace off and handed it over to her father-in-law. The goldsmith left with the necklace assuring Ranganathan that he would bring it back repaired on the following day. As the goldsmith left, Murugan returned from kaka shop bringing for his mother a packet of scrubbers to clean pots and pans. Now Ranganathan took off his shirt, tucked up his wrapper skirt above the knees and, with a spade in his hand, left to work in the kitchen garden. Kamala instructed Papati to clean the utensils then put a cauldron on fire to fry chillies in coconut oil.
As dusk appeared Kamala settled on the grind stone to prepare a paste of chillies and turmeric for the evening's curry. At this time Poorasamy's wife appeared, said something to Kamala (presumably to ask her for a betel) and then walked away to Dhoby's house. On her way back she again visited Kamala. The latter had now finished grinding. She was shouting for Murugan, playing some distance away, to come and light up the lamp as it was getting dark. Before Poorasamy's wife could say anything, Kamala began "Veerappan (the neighbour's son) did not come to fill our drum of water and roll the pipe. We do not have any water. Nobody in my house looks after this. One man (referring to her husband) only eats rice morning and evening and spends the rest of his time in the shop. When he does not stay home how can he do any work? There are so many men in this house but nobody bothers to do even such a simple job. Why should I worry? Let me also start cooking food late at night; at least everything will not get eaten up so soon. They are only to eat and not to work. Why did not he (again referring to her husband) fill the drum?" Poorasamy's wife offered no sympathies to her; instead she pursued her own train of thoughts and said, "When I came and asked you for a betel you did not give me; when my husband came you offered him one". Kamala was irritated and released her anger on Poorasamy's wife, "You came here and started talking about the estate; otherwise you never talk even though living so near. Instead of coming straight to the point and asking me for the
thing you wanted, you began telling stories..." Poorasamy's wife left forthwith without even mentioning her mission which, I later gathered, had been to borrow money.

At about 7.30 p.m. Ranganathan returned and was followed by Kesavan who came on his bike. Both father and son were soon busy taking their bath. Kamala and the neighbour's wife sat down to chat. They chewed betel and called Moghan to sing a song. Bappa intruded by singing loudly. He was silenced by his mother. Just then all other children of the two households gathered together and began to sing Tamil film songs. Kesavan came back. He hung on a wire a pair of blue shorts and a singlet that he had washed. No sooner was he seated on a bench than he called "Pāpā cōṟu pōṭu". Ranganathan also came and sat on the bench. The children, except Papati who served the food, also got seated. The cycle of taking meals was again repeated. There were two important deviations from the pattern of the afternoon meals: first, Munisami was absent, and second, Kamala had her meal last and not first. By about 9.15 p.m. everyone in the household except Munisami had had his meal. Papati busied herself with washing up the cooking and eating utensils. Kamala sat in a corner patting Moghan to sleep in her lap. After a while, Ranganathan got up with a yawn and went upstairs to sleep on the wooden floor of the verandah. His bedding consisted only of a pillow and a blanket with no mat or mattress to spread on the floor. Moghan slept in Kamala's lap and Papati carried him upstairs in her arms. Without
anybody asking, Kesavan started chopping bigger logs of firewood into manageable sticks. Some of the children went upstairs to sleep. After a long time, while Kesavan rested on the bench after chopping the wood and Kamala sat quietly chewing betels, Munisami came, holding his bike with his hand. He put it in a corner, being careful not to make a noise, then came a few steps forward but soon retreated and started going upstairs. On being asked by Kesavan if he would have a meal Munisami answered curtly "Vāntām" (Do not want). Kesavan threw the key of the cupboard to Papati who was still busy washing up and went upstairs. Now only mother and daughter were left. The neighbour's son Veerappan filled up the water drum in Kamala's vicinity (15 yards away). Kamala had a last snatch of conversation in suppressed tone with the neighbour's wife in which Papati joined as a passive listener. Finally, Kamala took up the kerosine lamp and with Papati following her made for the living room upstairs.

Abbu's Household

The organisation of Abbu's household may be described briefly. It is based on a nuclear family (see extract from Genealogy I: p.491). The head is employed on Pal Melayu as a lorry driver and his wife Sukammal is an ayah in the creche. None of the children is an estate worker. Chandiran studies in the Secondary English School at Bunga Raya. Veerappan stopped studying after passing the Primary School Leaving Examination and has never taken a job.
EXTRACT FROM GENEALOGY I

B

Δ 1 ABBU
57

Δ 2 SUKAMMAL
37

C

Δ 1 CHANDIRAN
16

Δ 2 VEERAPPAN
13

Δ 3 MUNIAMMAL
12

Δ 4 PERUMAL
10

Δ 5 NAGESHWARI
 7

Δ 6 MURUGAI
 4
Muniammal never went to school for she was needed at home to help her mother in household work. Perumal and Nageshwari are studying in the Primary School whereas Murugai accompanies her mother to the creche.

Abbu's usual hours of work are from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. but for at least ten days of the month he returns from work at about 8 p.m. The earliest riser in the household is Sukammal. Sometimes Abbu gets up next and wakes up his children by shouting their names in a loud voice. More often, however, the head sleeps until late in the morning because he has not to leave for work early. It is the shouting of neighbours, especially of Ranganathan kangany, which normally wakes the children up. Muniammal joins her mother downstairs. Sukammal makes no contribution to household chores. If Murugai is awake she may mind her. Muniammal lights up fire, makes tea and cleans utensils. First Sukammal then all children except Muniammal and Veerappan leave for their work and school respectively. After 7 a.m. Abbu takes the charge of directing all activities in the household. After having his tea, he begins to instruct Muniammal and, to a lesser extent, Veerappan to do this and that. Muniammal sweeps the wooden floor of the living room and verandah upstairs with a broomstick. She is also supposed to plaster with cowdung the cooking and sitting space in their 'line'. After having his tea Abbu often goes to work in the garden plot. He may ask Veerappan to accompany him. If he is not asked to accompany his
father, Veerappan has nothing specific to do at this time. On most of the days he joins a group of similarly unemployed young men who either play a game of ball or 'tip cat' (kitti-pul) throughout the major part of the morning. On the other hand, after sweeping the 'line' clean, Muniammal is soon busy cooking rice and washing clothes. The latter is a group activity in which all non-school girls of Muniammal's age join. They congregate at a water-tank situated between rows I and II, Division I, each carrying her cake of soap and a bucket full of clothes to be washed. Washing and gossiping go on for nearly an hour. Occasionally a young tapper wife with no-one in her household to do the washing takes half an hour off her tiffin interval and joins this group. By the time Muniammal is back, Abbu has already returned from the garden and Veerappan too, fearing that his father will scold him, leaves the game and sits down quietly on the wooden bench of his house. Next the children come back from the school for tiffin and Muniammal serves them and Veerappan rice and curry. During this period Abbu dresses after his bath and makes his children run up and down the 'line' to fetch their father's personal effects - shoes, watch, shorts, comb, etc. After he has left for his job and the children have

---

1 The game of 'tip cat' is sometimes called 'Indian cricket'. The game is played with a 'cat' (a short piece of wood tapering to a point at each end) which is struck at one end with a stick and while in the air knocked as far away as possible. The team which hits the 'cat' is said to bat while the one that tries to stop the 'cat' from going far or attempts to catch it, fields.
gone back to school, both Veerappan and Muniammal idle away in the company of friends. Veerappan either returns to his play group or lies down in the verandah singing Tamil film songs and reading aloud to himself a Tamil story book or a novel from his elder brother's collection. Sometimes he dozes off these idle hours. Muniammal rejoins some of the girls of the washing group at the house of a friend but makes it a point to be back a few minutes before her mother returns from the creche.

The afternoon routine of Abbu's household is strikingly different from most others. Two factors are of crucial importance: first, Sukammal has a grownup daughter to relieve her of household chores. The situation in Abbu's household thus stands in marked contrast even to that which obtains in Ranganathan's where Kamala has to carry out most of the late afternoon work herself. Of course the situation is still more different (and difficult) with a housewife who does not have the help of a daughter at all. Second, Abbu's job is such that he is never home in the afternoons. Through a concurrence of these factors, several working-women regularly gather at Abbu's house each afternoon to play dice. Occasionally Sukammal engages in activities that may be described as economically remunerative. For instance, she may receive cash payment from a young and inexperienced mother for making a visit to the latter's house every day to give her new-born baby a bath. Neither Sukammal nor any of Abbu's other children assist Muniammal in her household.
work. Since their father is away and their mother remains free
the children are not required to run errands so frequently as in
Ranganathan's house. Chandiran, who stays home the whole day
after 2 p.m., is not asked to do any work. One of the reasons
is that he is eldest among three brothers and the brother younger
to him (Veerappan) is sufficiently old and able-bodied to do
outdoor jobs for the household such as bringing firewood which
Chandiran might otherwise be expected to do. The other reason is
Chandiran's physical disability - a club-foot. It is noteworthy,
however, that Veerappan too receives most of the instructions from
his father. Usually before leaving for work in the morning, Abbu
tells Veerappan what jobs the latter must finish that day. Among
these, cleaning the bicycle, bringing firewood and working in the
garden appear prominently. Even if Sukammal knows what Veerappan's
work for the day is supposed to be she wields no authority to see
that it is done. Veerappan may easily ignore Sukammal's
instructions to do odd jobs in the household. But all the children
are personally responsible to Abbu for the completion of tasks
allocated by him in the morning. During most of the afternoon,
Perumal plays with boys of his own age-group, especially Murugan
and Tanapal of the neighbouring household. Immediately after his
return from work in the evening, Abbu takes his bath and asks
Muniammal to serve his meal. The children finish their evening
meal earlier than either parent. Sukammal usually waits for her
husband's return and the two eat from separate dishes. Abbu sits
cross-legged on the bench while Sukammal keeps sitting at her favourite spot on the floor with her back against a pillar. The conversation between husband and wife now devolves mainly upon how things have gone in the household that day. Sukammal reports to her husband about the conduct of the children. Often she complains about a child's disobedience or misbehaviour that ought to be punished. While the parents have their meal Veerappan arranges for the drum to be filled with water. Chandiran and the younger children go upstairs and sit reading or playing. Soon afterwards they are joined by their parents. Abbu sleeps in the verandah while Sukammal with her six children sleeps in the small (12' x 9') living room. Before the family retires for the night one more aspect of the daily routine deserves mention. Abbu is a well known drunkard on Pal Melayu. Usually an hour before sleeping both Abbu and his wife consume one or more bottles of samsu or beer which he buys in Bintang Emas on his way back home every evening. This activity is not hidden from children although there was a tendency on the part of the couple to hide it from us while we lived as their next-door neighbours. Some informants said that Abbu used to beat his wife after drinks but that he had given up this practice since we had moved into his neighbourhood. What I often heard through the thin wooden partition between our living room and Abbu's was of a very different nature and I here report it faithfully. Abbu talks to all his children in terms of endearment and often exhorts them to
improve their manners, especially speech and habits. He cites from the Tamil classic Thirukkural and asks Chandiran to read from it daily the excellent teachings concerning the happy life. He turns autobiographical and tells his children how he came to Malaya with his parents but that their true home was Tamiland. They should never forget the Tamil language although it was good to learn Malay while they lived in this country. On a few evenings, Abbu begins teaching Malay to his youngest daughter. Occasionally, for a long time after the lamps in the houseblock have been turned off, Sukammal talks to her eldest son telling him all about her own brother in India, about his daughters and the desirability that Chandiran should marry one of them after completing his studies at the English school in Malaya.
APPENDIX IV

Average annual earnings of a tapper, weeder and relief tapper
## APPENDIX IV

### Kritman, Tapper

### Chart 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>Total Days Worked</th>
<th>Weight in Pounds</th>
<th>Late Tapping Wages</th>
<th>Scrap</th>
<th>Paid Holidays</th>
<th>Total Earnings Attracting E.P.F.</th>
<th>Extra Special Evening Holiday December Without Supplementary Holiday Wages</th>
<th>Total Wages</th>
<th>E.P.F.</th>
<th>B.E. School Fund</th>
<th>Subscriptions</th>
<th>Advance Deduction</th>
<th>Total Deduction</th>
<th>Cash on Pay Day</th>
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| Total for 11 months | 307            |                  |                  |      |              | 1196.79                        |                                                                           |             |        |                  |                |                 |                |               |

| Monthly Average | 28             |                  |                  |      |              | 108.80                         |                                                                           |             |        |                  |                |                 |                |               |
## APPENDIX IV

### Chart 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>Total Days Worked</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Wage</th>
<th>Special Allowance</th>
<th>Overtime Holidays</th>
<th>Earnings Attracting E.P.F.</th>
<th>Earnings Which Do Not Attract E.P.F.</th>
<th>Deductions</th>
<th>Total Cash on Pay Day</th>
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**Total** | 23½             |                  |    |                   |                  | 725.50                     |                                      |             |                      |           |                     |

**Monthly Average** | 14             |                  |    |                   |                  |                           |                                      |             |                      |           | 60.50               |
<table>
<thead>
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<th>January</th>
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<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
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**WAGES AS A RATION**

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<th>December</th>
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APPENDIX V

Expenditure Cycles of Pal Melayu Labourers

The pattern of regular expenditure among labourers on Pal Melayu may be described in terms of the following three cycles:

(1) The Monthly Cycle;
(2) The Annual (Festival) Cycle;
(3) The Life Cycle.

(1) The Monthly Cycle:

The monthly expenditure of households on Pal Melayu regularly includes the following principal items of consumption:

1. Food;
2. Fuel;
3. Toilet articles;
4. Laundry;
5. Compulsory subscriptions - temple, cinema, football, union and E.P.F.;
6. Lotteries;
7. Incidentals - education, transport, medicine, etc.

Food:

Rice constitutes the staple diet of Indian labourers. Mixed with curry it is eaten at least twice a day in every family. Normally the mid-day meal is taken between 1 and 2 p.m. while the time for the evening meal varies from 7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m. In
households with children going to the primary school there is usually a third meal of rice and curry eaten by them during the tiffin interval between 10.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. All other workers who can afford carry their forenoon meal to the task and eat it there during tiffin break. Curry is cooked in coconut oil, mixing spices with vegetables and pulses. Occasionally a fried vegetable or fish supplements the main diet consisting of rice and curry. Strict vegetarianism is not practised in any household but meat, being expensive, is eaten only on pay day and one or two other days in a month. Chicken and mutton are the principal items of a Tamil menu on such days. Although meat and fish are bought sparingly in most of the households, yet proportionately more money is spent monthly on buying these items of food than on vegetables. In some cases at least the reason seems to be that a considerable proportion of vegetables needed for household consumption are grown in the garden-patch. While chicken and eggs may also be provided for domestically, the more expensive items of mutton and fish must be bought from the market. Rice is bought from one of the shops on the estate or from Bintang Emas either once or twice in a month round about the pay day or advance day or both. Other food items are also bought at the same time as rice but not in large enough quantities to last for a long time. The supply of spices and coconut oil in particular has to be replenished many times in a month. This is related, firstly, to the inadequate storage facilities in the labour 'lines'.
Preservation of spices is specially difficult in the tropical climate without air-tight containers. Secondly, the quantities of coconut oil and spices that will be consumed in a month vary with the type of curry to be cooked. If meat and fish curry is cooked frequently the consumption of oil and spices will be increased. Thirdly, these ingredients are also needed for preparing food other than the main meals.

Besides having their main rice meal, members of a household drink tea or coffee two to four times during the day. Appam, a cake made of rice and pulses and coconut oil and eaten with coconut sauce, is sometimes had with the early morning tea. Nothing is had with tea taken during the tiffin break or in the afternoon. Tinned condensed milk is used in tea as well as for feeding infants even in those households that have cows. Locally-produced cows milk is used for making butter-milk or it is bottled and sold in Bintang Emas. Tinned and cooked food is not bought to any appreciable extent although it is treated as a distinct luxury to be indulged in on special occasions. Normally only the children buy home-made buns and biscuits from the Chinese and Indian Muslim hawkers and palakaram from old Tamil women ex-estate workers.

Betel chewing is an addiction with the majority of elderly persons on Pal Melayu. Betel leaves that are grown in one's own garden do not usually suffice for the entire consumption in a household and have to be bought either from other gardens or from shops on the estate. The shops supply areca nuts as well.
Monthly expenditure on betel and nut tends to be higher than on tobacco, cigarettes and cheroots. While both men and women chew betels, only men smoke cigarettes or cheroots and only relatively few women chew tobacco.

Drinks are not sold on credit either by the illegal samsu seller or at the shops. There is thus a direct correlation between the household head's ability to buy drinks and his possession of cash. Ordinarily if he is not a drunkard, an estate worker buys himself a drink on a few days following the pay day and advance day. Occasionally a person may have more drinks in a month as when he wins a lottery, draws a cittu or gets invited by a friend or a kinsmen. Anyone who buys drinks more frequently is considered a steady drinker and anyone who must have half a bottle or more each evening soon gets an appropriate nickname. In cases of the latter sort, the head usually sets aside his entire salary for drinks while the household is run on the earnings of other working members. With the exception of a few persons with whom our relations were intimate, most of the others addicted to drinking tried to conceal their actual expenditure on liquor from us. It later became evident that samsu (bootleg liquor) was being illegally consumed in large quantities and many estate workers thought they would be caught if the true expenditure on drinks was revealed. In actual fact, in the household budget of a steady drinker, liquor (beer, brandy and samsu) proved to be the most expensive monthly item after rice and
sugar. In one household where there was a deliberate attempt to conceal expenses on drinks the head had been misinformed by someone that we were Brahmans. He became further convinced of this fact by our insistence on having a vegetarian diet during our brief stay as his neighbours in the labour 'lines' of Division II. This accommodation had been arranged for us by the management and both of our neighbours seemed particularly concerned to do nothing that might offend our sensibilities. Both families switched over to a vegetarian diet. We recorded the daily budget from one of these households and were struck by the fact that the head spent nothing at all on drinks. On the other hand, it soon became apparent to me that although he was neither a steady drinker nor a drunkard this man had an occasional drink at one of the estate shops. Actually while giving me a report of his daily expenditure this man adopted the practice of arbitrarily absorbing the cost of liquor under such items as biscuits, fruits, oil and soap.

Among Tamil labourers on Pal Melayu the quantity and quality of daily food consumed varies but little from one household to another. This is not to deny that in some households - and at any rate on a few days of the month - adult members may have to reduce their diet to a drink of rice gruel (kanci) or even forego a meal, while in some others special cookies may be cooked quite often in addition to ordinary food. When this occurs with sufficient regularity every month, one can usually correlate it
with the economic status (not merely the monthly earnings) of households concerned. But sporadically the same discrepancy in the diet may result from shared attitudes towards food in the community. Thus on more than one occasion during my stay as his neighbour I saw Ranganathan kangany - reputed to be a 'millionaire' - having mid-day meals of boiled rice and salted water instead of the usual curry. When he had finished the meal he looked as contented as he always did after food. Everyone would continue to eat the same food for several days until possibly one of the children refused to have it any longer. Ranganathan would then ask his younger son to bring the rations from Kaka Kadai and the cycle of ordinary meals would resume as usual. The reason why on some days in Ranganathan's house poor meals may be eaten is not his lack of resources to buy rations but simply that frugality does not matter to him. At the end of the month food stocks are low in nearly every household and whether a household head can buy provisions for cash or credit or cannot obtain them at all, he does not mind eking out the family supplies until the next wage day.

The following chart shows the average daily expenditure on regular items of food consumption in a household with two adults and two children aged 14 years and 10 years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spices</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat and Fish</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables and Eggs</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea and Coffee</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscuit and Bread</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoghurt and Buttermilk</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betel and Nut</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco and Cigarettes</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Drinks</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 4.68

Average daily earnings in the household : £6.20
Average daily expenditure on food as % of average daily earnings : 75.4%

**Other Expenses.**

The labouring population on Pal Melayu buys from stores. Situated close to the labour 'lines', the kaka and Chinese general provision stores stock all those things from food to incense which the workers need. Expenditure on consumption items other than food and drinks is slight. There is no electricity in the 'lines' and kerosine lamps are lit in every house. The lamps range from simple wick-burners to pressure lamps. Nearly a third of the households on Pal Melayu own the latter but these are lighted up daily in only seven or eight households where some regular activity is pursued in the evening. Estate workers doing
part-time tailoring and teaching and school children need a bright light for at least three hours each night. Often an arrangement is made whereby all scholars study at the same place and thus expenditure on oil for a single lamp is shared among many. The absence of electric current does not deter estate workers from pursuing night-time activities that have an entertainment value. During school holidays, night badminton was very popular in the 'lines'. There was little difficulty in arranging for pressure lamps and collecting subscriptions for kerosine from all the members of a team. Ordinarily a house is lighted with pressure lamps on pay day and a couple of evenings following it. A tin of kerosine costs $5.50 plus $0.30 extra for the container. In most households, however, kerosine is not stored in a tin but is bought several times in a month. Each time, a bottle costing 75 cents is procured, usually on credit. By so doing, the customer is able to spread out over time his credit with the shop and save his scarce cash for other expenses. Other fuel requirements, such as firewood for cooking and fodder for the cattle, are obtainable free of cost.

Oil and soap are the most important toilet articles on Pal Melayu. Men, women and children use coconut oil to massage limbs before bathing (oil bath) and to dress their hair. We have to bear in mind this aspect of the consumption of coconut oil which was listed as a food item. Soap bars are bought for washing which is a daily activity of most women and relatively few men.
The same soap is used for bathing purposes. In every household certain clothes have to be washed by the vannan. These are the clothes worn during periods of ritual pollution. These services are no longer paid for exclusively in kind and are now paid for at a rate of so many cents per cloth. Nevertheless, payment in rice and cloth still supplements the usual cash payment for the vannan's services during the life-cycle rituals. The two washermen on Pal Melayu combine their traditional role in the community with that of professional launderers. Over the years the latter role has become increasingly more lucrative, for the vannan's clientele has expanded as a larger number of young estate workers now like to wear starched shirts and ironed trousers on their evening trips outside the estate.

'Compulsory contributions' and 'incidental' represent two extremes in the pattern of regular monthly expenditure. Every month nearly the same amount of deduction per head is made by the management from the wages of each working member in a household towards E.P.F. (according to earnings) for the cinema - $1.00 or $0.50 depending on whether there have been two or one film shows in a month; the temple - $1.00; and football - $0.20. Every worker on Pal Melayu is a union member; hence the monthly union subscription of $1.00 per head can also be included in the category of 'compulsory contributions'. In contrast to the predictable amount of these contributions stand the largely unpredictable incidentals that include expenditure on medicine,
transport and miscellaneous items such as stationery and repairs. The amount spent on 'incidentals' varies greatly from one month to the next.

**Lottery.**

The appearance of 'lottery' as an item of regular expenditure in the majority of monthly household budgets on Pal Melayu is a recent development. More specifically, the regular buying of Forecast Three Digit Lottery Tickets (**Ekor**)

1 - by far the most popular lottery in the region - began barely four months before I settled on Pal Melayu (June, 1962). Earlier, the interest of the people in games of chance and of occasional profit had been sporadic. A few veteran kanganies are reputed to have paid regular visits to cities, as far as two hundred miles away, to attend race meetings. It was a costly hobby for each trip meant spending money on travel, boarding and lodging and, of course, the race itself. Worse still, paid holidays for estate labourers before 1956 were very few and each trip entailed a further loss of wages. Needless to say, the profits earned at the races were never commensurate with the losses. The fact was so obvious to most estate labourers that horse-racing (**kutirai-p-pantayam**) never gained in popularity; rather it was and is still cited as the major cause of ruination of the persons concerned.

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1 'Ekor' is a Malay term meaning 'tail'. The Forecast Three Digit Lottery is known by this name among all racial groups in the region.
Ekor, on the other hand, has a different structure and therefore a sustained appeal for estate labourers. As its name implies, Ekor still has a connection with horse racing but it is a device of bringing the excitement and thrill of horse racing to the people without their having to attend the races or even to listen to a commentary over the wireless. The system works as follows.

Three digit Ekor tickets are printed and supplied by the State Turf Club conducting races on Sundays and public holidays at the race course in the state capital. Each ticket costs $0.50 and potentially carries a first, second and third prize of $300, $100 and $30 respectively. The club pays a sales tax of $0.15 per ticket to the Government. An Ekor ticket is transferable and one person can buy as many tickets for a given number as are available. The number of tickets printed for each three-digit (100 to 999) is determined by the total amount of prize money set aside for a particular race. The distribution and sale of tickets is organised through zonal offices, each with a salaried manager, stationed in a Malayan town. One such zonal office is located in Bintang Emas with a Tamil youth as its manager. He is the son of an ex-PWD labourer who began selling the Government sponsored Social Welfare Lottery tickets soon after leaving the Secondary School and later changed over to selling Ekor. As manager in Bintang Emas he receives a monthly salary of $750.00 plus a travelling allowance of $0.25 cents per mile and a commission on
sales exceeding a fixed target. Two days before a certain race is run he goes to the state capital and gets tickets worth approximately $20,000 (40 tickets of each three-digit number). If a race is to be run on Sunday, the sale of Ekor tickets in Bintang Emas is conducted between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Friday, between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturday and between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Sunday. The result is announced at the Ekor shop between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. on the day of the race. The winning numbers are displayed on a board outside the Ekor shop. Winners can collect their prize money on any working day within the week following the announcement of results. A new Ekor lottery is held every time there is a race meeting in the state capital.

In Ekor, the element of speculation leading to profits by middlemen is reduced to a minimum although it is not entirely eliminated. Since all sales are conducted at the Ekor shop in Bintang Emas, there are no such agents who might try to capture a monopoly of certain tickets of a certain number, boost up their demand by creating artificial scarcity and then sell them at blackmarket rates. Any form of punting by salesman in the Ekor shop is prohibited. Speculation is discouraged also by the manner in which the winning numbers are declared. The first, second and third prize-winning numbers of Ekor correspond to the last three digits in the six-digit number of each of the horses finishing first, second and third respectively in the last race run at a race meeting. A few minutes before the last race is
run, each of the horses entering it is given a six-digit number. The allocation of numbers to horses is done mechanically and all possibilities of human manipulation are eliminated. It is, therefore, not possible to predict the winning numbers in advance except, as quite a number of people believe, with the help of supernatural guidance.

The low cost of the ticket, the short interval between the sale of tickets and declaration of results and the relatively high frequency with which races are run all contribute to the maintenance of popular interest in Ekor. Once it has been introduced in the region, it needs no publicity. Only a very small fraction of the regular buyers of Ekor from Pal Melayu have won prizes (the manager of the Ekor shop said his 'guess estimate' was that about $40,000 have been given in prizes to the residents of Pal Melayu alone) but the important fact for them is that at least some one whom they know has actually won it. So they persist in buying tickets and more tickets for the same number if they feel that that number might win. As in most other forms of gambling, the addiction for Ekor is strongest among those who have once had the taste of success. Sinnesamy is a case in point, devoting 5.2% of his regularly monthly expenditure for June, 1963, to buying Ekor tickets. He had won a sum of $3,000 (ten first prize tickets - investment of $5.00 only) in January of that year and his average monthly expenditure on Ekor in the five months following his success was $15.00. Even those who fail to win a
prize, despite repeated attempts, do not give up buying. Each new race brings fresh hope; successes are emphasised while failures are either played down or rationalised.

The thought of Ekor is ever-present in the minds of most estate workers on Pal Melayu. The obsession manifests itself in a variety of behavioural forms. Of these, 'number-dreaming' is possibly the commonest. A person waking up from his sleep, either during the daytime or in the morning would claim that he has dreamt of the winning number. Alternatively, he would dream of an animal or an object and then consult a booklet printed mainly in a Chinese script with translation of relevant portions in Malay to find out what number is signified by the dream. In this illustrated booklet, which is sold for 40 cents in a number of Chinese provision stores, Arabic as well as Chinese numerals are printed against line drawings so that even a non-Chinese can easily interpret his dream in terms of an Ekor number. Most of the Tamil users of this booklet are entirely ignorant of its origin but a few more knowledgeable ones claim it to be a publication of the devotees of 'Hongkong Sami'. The dreaming is sometimes pursued with dead-seriousness as in cases where a person tries to induce sleep before going to Bintang Emas to buy the ticket. Any interruption while the dreaming is in progress is met with anger.

Often the dreaming of a number is followed up by a verification ritual in the Muniandi kovil. The temple, now neglected, is swept clean and a ceremonial lamp is lighted up.
The god is prayed to with betel leaves, water, banana, orange fruit and coconut. Turmeric water is sprinkled in all corners of the temple and lighted camphor waved before the image. The ceremony is climaxed by the sacrificial offering of a white cock by the person who has dreamt the number. The body of the cock is then thrown outside the temple while the severed head is kept before the image and turmeric water sprinkled thrice on it. If the cock opens its mouth each time water is sprinkled the worshipper believes that he has dreamt the true number. He breaks a coconut, lights camphor, prays to the god again and often bathes the image with half a bottle of beer while drinking the remaining half himself. There are other ways of divining a number besides dreaming. Sometimes the likely numbers are scribbled on several chits of paper. After praying to God Muniandy in the manner described above, the worshipper draws lots in front of the image. Other gods besides Muniandy are also believed to be effective guides if proper worship is offered to them. The location of these gods and manner of worshipping them may itself require consultation from an expert, occasionally a Malay bomoh or a Chinese diviner, who charges a fee for his services. Alternatively, the Tamil bird astrologer (kuruvicatakam) may be consulted to ascertain one's luck in Ekor. These specialists charge a fee of $0.20 per consultation.

Ekor forms the chief topic of conversation and animated discussion in any informal group of men. On Friday morning men
surreptitiously make for Bintang Emas straight from their tasks during the tiffin-break. One man may buy tickets for several persons if the latter give him the ticket number or numbers and the money. The enthusiasts look forward to an evening out in Bintang Emas on the day the result is to be declared. The fact that the Ekor shop houses a bar run by the manager's father makes it more attractive. Groups of friends drink together before the result to quieten their excitement and after it has been announced to either jubilate over someone's success or more often to drown their own disappointment. The immediate lot of a person who wins a big sum of money is a curiously mixed one. Fearing jealousy he may try to hide the fact of his success but mostly in vain. Typical remarks overheard in conversations between estate workers after Sinnesamy's big prize were: "Money attracts money" and "God gives more to those who already have enough". The neighbours even denied the truth of the report that Sinnesamy had won the lottery. The whole family of Sinnesamy's younger brother came over from a neighbouring 'line' and had all their meals at Sinnesamy's place. This younger brother continued to have his evening meals and beer with Sinnesamy for nearly 10 days after the event. Sinnesamy, realising early his obligations towards well wishers, friends and kinsmen, set aside a sum of $50 for their entertainment, mainly by offering beer. With the rest of his money he decided to 'help' his needy kinsmen - a euphemism for investing the sum in money lending
activities among them.

A person who is not adept in handling money may dissipate most of his prize on jewellery and consumption goods. Abbu driver got $600 from Ekor in August, 1962. He spent this sum on the following principal items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall clock from Bintang Emas</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes for the family</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold jewellery from Bintang Emas</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long trousers for self from Bintang Emas</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrist watch from Bintang Emas</td>
<td>125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured family photograph at a Chinese studio in Bintang Emas</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$540.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining $60 could not be accounted for but it is a fair guess that most of it was spent on drinks.

Other less popular forms of lottery on Pal Melayu are the Social Welfare Lottery and Illegal lotteries. The Social Welfare Lottery is Government-sponsored and drawn every fortnight. To most of the estate workers, it seems remote and impersonal though the prizes offered are bigger than those in Ekor. I met an ex-resident worker of Pal Melayu who had won a prize of $5,000 from this Lottery. Within a year he left Pal Melayu to become a tenant-farmer on a 3½ acre plot of rubber land owned by a Malay. He bought cattle, began sending his son to an English-medium primary school and led an independent existence. The immediate reason for his leaving Pal Melayu, as he told me, was the greediness of a kirani who asked for a share of the prize money.
on pain of prosecution. The point, however, is that in this
case economic mobility was made possible by lottery. Today,
his monthly earnings range from $580 to $620. Nevertheless,
the example of this man's success failed to inspire estate workers
to buy more Welfare Lottery tickets for, basically, it lacked the
entertainment value of Ekor or even the illegal lottery run on
similar lines. Tickets for the latter are not printed and
consist merely of hand-written slips of paper. Thus payment of
tax to the Government is evaded and the lottery becomes
technically illegal. These lottery tickets are distributed on
the estate surreptitiously by the elder brother of the Chinese
shopkeeper. The cost of a ticket varies according to the total
prize which is offered. In one case the first prize offered on
a ticket of $1.20 was $1,300 and the second prize amounted to half
of the former. Most of the transactions in regard to this
lottery take place at the Chinese shop and for obvious reasons
its results are not discussed in public. 2

2 The estate labourers' addiction to Ekor means profits to the
rich patrons of the State Turf Club. The prizes do not account
for more than five percent of proceeds from the sale of tickets.
Of course, expenses on overheads for organisation and actual
conduct of the races is considerable. Yet patrons of the Turf
Club receive regular yearly dividends in addition to the
entertainment and the lion's share of the prizes at actual race
meetings. It can thus be demonstrated that Ekor is a means of
siphoning a good part of the labourers' wages in a capitalistic
society but knowledgeable people claim the illegal lottery to be
even more widespread and 'exploitative' of the working classes.
Although no first-hand study has ever been made of the operation
of the illegal lottery it may, however, be suggested that profits
New Year's Day Celebration (Varuša-p-pirappu):

The Tamil New Year begins on the first Cittirrai (April-May). It is a paid holiday for all labourers on Pal Melayu. There is no temple festival but the worship of ancestors and other deceased persons (pu-v-āṭaikkāri) takes place in the family. Special meals of chicken and mutton curry are cooked and food on banana leaf is offered to the spirit of deceased persons. A token offering of newly bought clothes and jewellery is made to the worshipped objects, such as the photograph of a deceased ancestor or the hair of a deceased wife. Eventually, all the offerings belong to the members of the household. Indeed, it is obligatory that the new clothes and jewellery should be worn by someone on that very day and the food be shared by all.

Āṭi tiru-vilā:

The biggest annual festival on the estate is held in the honour of Goddess Mahamariamman during the last days of the month of Āṭi (July-August). It is known as Ati tiru-vilā. While the festival is a collective celebration by the whole community, the month of Ati has a special significance for families where a marriage has recently taken place.

The festival is organised by a Tiru-vilā committee comprising popularly elected representatives from both Divisions. The
programme of the festival is spread over four or five days, two of which are paid holidays. The details of the programme are thrashed out at a temple assembly which is attended by most of the adult male population on Pal Melayu. The entire celebration is financed by the people's own monetary contributions. Listening to the hot debates on financial questions at this assembly and the next one during Tai-p-pucam festival (January-February) when members of the public cross-question the committee members on their handling of the finance of the Ati tiru-vila one gets the inescapable impression that economic considerations loom large in the minds of participants. The celebration entails considerable expenditure. The programme for Ati tiru-vila on Pal Melayu for 1962 was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, 12/8/1962</td>
<td>6.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Kappu ceremony (kappu-k-kattutal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 13/8/1962</td>
<td>9.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Tamil Film Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 14/8/1962</td>
<td>9.00 p.m.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 15/8/1962</td>
<td>11.00 a.m.</td>
<td>Consecration of the idol of Mahamariamman (Ammanakkuppi apiśekam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 noon</td>
<td>Alms or feast (Apaññatānām)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Procession (Amman-ur-valam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 16/8/1962</td>
<td>5.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Sprinkling yellow water (Mañcaḷ-nirattal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All told $1300 was spent on the festival. Most of the money was realised from a contribution of $1.00 per worker which was deducted from the Register of Wages on the next pay-day after
Ati. Some money was also contributed from the regular Temple Fund. The management gave no direct financial help but after paying a visit to the temple the assistant recommended that to facilitate carrying the idol in and out of the temple the gate should be widened and the muddy ground in front of the building be metalled with tar and laterite. This job was approved by the manager and wholly financed by the estate. For the decoration of the temple and chariot, the youth association of Division I offered free voluntary services. Specialists performing the traditional services were paid as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$35</td>
<td>Washerman (vaṇṇāṇ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20</td>
<td>Temple priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25</td>
<td>Assistant priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25</td>
<td>Priest carrying the sacred pot (karakam) to the river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$28</td>
<td>Flower seller supplying one main garland (mālai) 80 yards long and several smaller ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$47</td>
<td>Two drummers for five days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$55</td>
<td>Father and son clarionet and drum orchestra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: $235

Nearly $400 was spent on the feast, $300 on hiring Tamil films and screening equipment from the state capital and the rest of the amount on buying provisions for the temple worship on all five days and on transport.
"Saturdays of Purattaci month" and Tipavali:

The four Saturdays (cani-k-kilamai) of Purattaci month (September-October) and the first two of the succeeding month Aippaci (October-November) are connected with the myth of the fight between the demon Naragasuran and Lord Krishna. The long fight which lasted six weeks was brought to an end by the slaying of Naragasuran on the sixth Saturday. While Naragasuran lay dying, so the story goes, Krishna asked him to express his last wish. Naragasuran requested that there be a festive celebration to commemorate the day of his death when everyone should take a bath and clean the house. His wish was granted and the celebration, known as Tipavali, is held annually on the night of the 14th day of the dark fortnight at moonrise in the month of Aippaci.

On each of the four Saturdays of the Purattaci month a special worship of Ramar (or Perumal or Visnu) is held in the smaller temples dedicated to him on Divisions I and II (see Map 6). Each of these temples is looked after by a devotee who acts as the honorary priest. The special worship is also offered by him and conspicuously by the singing of devotional songs by a group of boys in the age-group of 11 to 16. Some of these boys belong to families where Ramar or Perumal is worshipped as family god, while others join the group for the fun of it. After the worship, these boys form a small procession. Carrying an iron lamp, making sounds from cymbals and ankle-belts, blowing the conchshells
and crying 'Govinda Govinda', they pass from house to house. To devotees they offer holy ash and accept from them small money offerings in a kitty. The expenses of the weekly worship are met with these contributions.

Often on either the third or the fourth Saturday, residents on one of the Divisions of Pal Melayu hold a festival. The Ramar temple is profusely decorated with garlands, banana leaves and streamers of bright coloured paper. The walls of the temple are white-washed by the barber. A booth of atap leaves and bamboos is constructed outside the temple for receiving the deity which is carried round the 'lines' in a palanquin from the main temple to the mantapam. All expenses incurred in the temple are regarded as those for receiving and worshipping the deity in the decorated booth (manṭapa-c-celvu). Apart from these religious expenses, however, there are others of a secular sort such as a Tamil film show in the evening. Both the religious and secular expenses of the festival are met by a contribution of $1.00 per head from the residents of only that Division where the celebration takes place. There is no sharing in the expenses of the festival by people of the other Division just as there is no participation by them.

Tipavali is no longer marked by a temple festival on Pal Melayu. In common with other family celebrations Tipavali also begins with the ritual worship of the family god and spirits of the deceased family members. But this is perhaps the only religious aspect there is to Tipavali on Pal Melayu and accounts
for only a small proportion of the total expenditure on the entire festival. The celebration of the festival is spread over three days of which two are paid holidays.

In keeping with the mythical character of the festival great stress is laid on the cleanliness of the houses and the surroundings. A day before Tipavali women and children can be seen in every household scrubbing and washing the wooden floor of the house with hard brushes and buckets full of water. Each and every piece of furniture, all utensils and containers must be thoroughly cleaned and left in the sun to dry. The job is completed in a short time with remarkable dexterity. Since this is a working day on the estate, women members of the household have often to get up as early as 3 a.m. or they must divide the cleaning up between the tiffin hour and a couple of hours in the afternoon. Most of the afternoon and evening is devoted to cooking a rich curry and numerous palakaram.

The activities of menfolk on this afternoon centre around the purchase of meat and slaughter of goats for mutton. A household head who could not afford to buy meat on this day would feel utterly miserable. During Tipavali 1962 meat curry was cooked in 95 out of 109 households on Pal Melayu, Division I. Of the remaining 14 households, members of 7 celebrated Tipavali jointly with their kinsmen on Pal Melayu while members of the other 7 went out of the estate to visit kinsmen elsewhere.³

³ Data could not be obtained from 4 households.
There are two main sources of meat supply on Pal Melayu. The majority of people buy goats which are slaughtered on Tipavali day. The rest buy mutton or chicken from butchers on the estate. Goat-buying is more economical when a large supply of meat is needed. The period for buying goats commences two months before the festival and lasts until the very day of celebration. The sooner a goat is bought the more economic it is to the buyer. The reason is simple. Goats and fowls are sold by weight. A person can buy a small billy goat relatively cheaply and if there are sufficient number of days to go for Tipavali the animal is fed to yield more mutton at no cost to the buyer. The first signs of Tipavali on an estate are scores of such goats, tethered with long ropes to wooden pegs, grazing in front of the labour 'lines'. Goats are usually bought by two or more persons jointly, i.e. the cost is divided among partners according to the agreed share. Often a goat is shared equally between two household heads. Since the animal has to be bought from a town or kampong the cost of transportation is borne by the buying partner. The other partner then bears the responsibility of rearing the goat until Tipavali day and if there be a third partner, he may agree to slaughter the goat for everyone. In a bigger and/or a richer household a goat may not be shared with another household. All the meat may either be consumed by members of the household or gifts of extra meat may be sent to relatives and friends.
During Tipavali of 1962 on Division I, 34 goats were bought in 53 households and a chicken in each of 3 households. Of the 53 households buying goats 19 households had a goat each while 34 households shared 15 goats. Goat meat was bought in 35 households and 4 households received it as free gift from the members of the community. These were the households of two drain sweepers and one barber. One household head said he had not wanted to celebrate the festival and so bought no meat. But his affines sent him one and a half kattis of mutton as gift. The butcher living on Division II bought the highest number of goats and on the day before Tipavali he slaughtered 13 goats between 6 a.m. and 11 a.m. alone. He supplied orders of meat wrapped in banana leaves and paper to residents of both Divisions at the rate of $3.00 per katti and received payment on the next pay day after Tipavali. The average price of goat bought for the festival has been calculated to be $1.10 per katti. The price of goat per katti from the end of the month of August to the end of October, 1962, varied from $0.80 to $1.35.

Slaughter of goats on the day before Tipavali is more or less exclusively the men's job. It is believed to be too strenuous a job for women. Indeed, a single man takes as much as an hour and a half to slay, skin and butcher a goat. Women do, however, collect the fresh blood from the wounded animal's neck to mix in the curry. Nearly half of the buyers of goats on the estate had their animals slaughtered by a professional
butcher. The butcher visits the 'lines' needing his services and does the job on payment of $1.00 or a bottle of beer per goat. In a household where a goat may have been bought, the animal must not be killed at home if someone in the family has an attack of chicken pox. In fact, should this happen strictures are also laid against cooking meat and palakaram and the festival ought not to be celebrated at all in that household. On Pal Melayu occasionally the advent of the chicken pox epidemic coincides with Tipavali and so a compromise has to be made between the traditional rule and actual practice. The households so affected are still said not to celebrate Tipavali although special food may be cooked. If there is a goat to be slaughtered it is taken to the butcher's place instead of being killed at home. Alternatively, mutton is bought from the butcher. A similar solution is adopted in households where the Tipavali celebration overlaps with a period of pollution (ṭittu) following the birth or death of a relative.

The atmosphere on the evening before Tipavali presents a curious admixture of cleansiness and defilement (in Sanskrit terms) which seems to typify the religious life of the Tamil non-Brahman castes. The morning's cleansiness with the floors and vessels shining brightly contrasts sharply with the butchering of goats in the afternoon. Following the latter, the men go out to buy provisions for the evening's worship of the ancestors and for the next morning's entertainment of visitors. The buying
list includes betels, camphor and coconuts as well as beer bottles, tobacco and spices. Among food offerings made to ancestors, meat dishes are avoided. But new clothes, cigars, beer, betel leaves, coconut, bananas, a glass of water and rice and curry must be presented. Offerings are made to the photographs and clothes of deceased ancestors. In some cases, however, ancestors are represented by striped squares drawn with turmeric. Intoxicating drinks are presented not only to the spirits of the dead but also consumed by men in large quantities. Drunkenness leads to minor acts of violence in the family and even outside.

On the morning of Tipavali food offerings are again made to the ancestors. The food offered includes palakāram specially cooked for the occasion. Most of the people take an oil bath and put on new clothes. Then begins a round of visits and exchange of food and sometimes of meat among kinsmen. Only a few workers carry gifts of palakāram outside the labour 'lines' such as to the kirani, the assistant and a jeweller in the nearest big town. Visitors to a house are feted and offered beer or samsu. In the evening whole families go to see Tamil movies in the towns and estate workers owning taxis make good business. On these trips women put on expensive clothes and jewellery. Children buy firecrackers and keep the estate agog the whole day. These activities continue on a reduced scale on the day after Tipavali. Being the second paid holiday, it
is used by most estate workers to sleep off their fatigue before going to work the next morning.

The celebration of Tipavali calls for considerable expenditure on items of food, clothing and household upkeep. Further, it is regarded as a suitable occasion for making new jewellery. Only a small number of people can afford to do this in addition to meeting the already enhanced expenditure. During Tipavali, 1962, new jewellery was made in six households of Division I. In two households it was a matter of ritual obligation. In each case a recently married daughter had to be given jewellery (2 and 3 sovereigns in the two cases respectively) on her return to her husband's house from the house of her parents where she had come to celebrate the first Tipavali after marriage. In another case 10 sovereigns of gold jewellery was bought at Tipavali as bride-price (paricam) to be paid at a son's marriage due for the coming month of Tai (January-February). All these households in which new jewellery was made belonged to the higher income-groups. A number of other people in the labour 'lines' could not buy new jewellery but were at least able to redeem their jewellery from the pawn shop for the occasion. There were also a few who had actually to pawn their jewellery to obtain enough cash to make purchases for Tipavali. People in the last category were really the poor ones. Obtaining cash through pawning jewellery is one of the less popular forms of augmenting the purchasing power during Tipavali; ideally both cash and jewellery are needed
for the occasion. The estate management offers two sources of increasing the workers' earnings during the month: (1) A bigger advance to each worker; and (2) A special bonus of 10 per worker with the advance. Adjustments are also made in the indigenous saving systems in the 'lines'. Members of the various savings groups (cititu) agree to skip over one turn during the month of Tipavali in the total cycle. It enables each member to use his instalment for that month to make purchases for the festival.

**Karttikai:**

It is a three-day festival on Pal Melayu celebrated during the month of Karttikai (November-December). There is no temple festival on any of these days but houses and temples are illuminated with earthenware lamps (akal) on two nights. The first day is known as Karttikai and considered to be the holiest. Only vegetarian food should be taken on this day. Ancestors must be worshipped before the evening meals. The second day, Karttikai proper, is reserved for feasting and merry-making. The main item of food is again goat meat. Meat supplies are obtained in the same way as during Tipavali but goats are slain in fewer households. Most of the meat in the community is supplied by the butcher on Division II who begins to receive orders one month in advance. He delivers meat to the buyers' doorsteps in parcels of 1, 2 or 3 kattis. The price of meat and system of payment during Karttikai 1962 was the same as during Tipavali. The last day of the festival is the least celebrated and only insignificant
spots such as latrines and bathrooms are illuminated with lamps. On all these days, children blow fire-crackers.

Poŋkal:

Early in the morning of the first day of Tai month (January-February) women make a bonfire of old household goods such as brooms, baskets and slippers. The day is known as pokipanṭiŋkai, celebrated in this way to mark the end of the inauspiciousness (pīṭai) of the preceding month (Markali). The main festive day of the month is Tai poŋkal, also called Perum (sun) poŋkal, held on the first day of the solar month of Capricorn (generally in mid-January). On this morning, boiled rice sweetened with milk and sugar is cooked in every house and each temple. Traditionally for this purpose three new hearths are made and three new cooking pots are bought. The pots range in size. Rice is cooked in each, with most rice in the largest pot, a little less in the next and least in the smallest. Vegetables are bought from one's own garden and their number should be odd not even. The poŋkal food is served to the sun before sunset. On Pal Melayu, however, only one new hearth is made and sweetened rice (also called ponkal) is cooked in one newly bought pot. Before having their meal, people offer ponkal to the family gods and ancestors. Elaborate prestations as those between brothers and sisters described by the people for Indian villages do not take place on Pal Melayu. The second day of the festival, known as Mattu poŋkal, is celebrated by owners of cattle
to ensure the prosperity of their livestock. On this day cattle are worshipped in a special manner. Ponkal is cooked in the morning in quantities sufficient to feed the cows. The worship proceeds in the afternoon, i.e. after everyone is back from work. The household head brings cows and ties them to a tree or a pole close to the 'line'. A married woman of the household hand-prints turmeric and smears *kuṅkuman* (*crocus sativus*) paste on the flanks and horns of the cows respectively. The animals are garlanded. The man prays to the cows by clasping his hands over his eyes bowing down and patting their sides. In the meantime, two large trays, one with flowers and coconuts and the other filled with ponkal, are brought and kept on the ground in front of the cattle. The coconut is broken and the worshipper walks round the cows. Then he and everyone else present, including women and children, lie down on their stomachs for a minute or so. After that the man gets up and sprinkles water from a metal vessel on the cows and worshippers. Flowers are strewn over the cows and they are given a handful of ponkal to eat. Everybody shouts, "ponkalō-ponkal...ponkalō-ponkal". Finally, the main worshipper distributes coconut and ponkal to all gathered. The quantity remaining is offered to the cows in two buckets.

On Pal Melayu the ponkal festival is not characterised by heavy expenditure on recreation and merry-making. More recently, however, this festival has begun to be celebrated by the estate
youth in a secular manner as Tamizhar Tirunal.

**Tai-p-pucam:**

This festival is celebrated on the full-moon day in the month of Tai (January-February). On Pal Melayu, Tai-p-pucam is celebrated both as a community festival and as an auspicious day for penance by persons who take a vow to worship Subramaniam. It has additional significance as a day when the life cycle ritual of the first hair cut may be performed at a Subramaniam shrine. There are two main Subramaniam temples in the Pal Melayu region where a big congregation of Tamil workers from nearby estates gathers on each Tai-p-pucam day. Most of the estate temples being dedicated to Goddess Mahamariamman contain only an image of Subramaniam or Murugan. They lack, therefore, the full holiness (makatmiyam) of a temple where devotees may adequately do penance. This fact extends the arena of celebration far beyond the confines of the estate, for the holiest of shrines is not even in the Pal Melayu region but on a famous cave near the capital of Malaya. Indeed, a number of Tamils who may have taken a vow at a time of adversity during the year must visit that shrine on Tai-p-pucam day. Many others pay a visit to the caves for entertainment, in the spirit of visiting a big fair. At any rate the spectrum of celebrations is widened. Among the annual festivals on Pal Melayu Tai-p-pucam combines the religiosity of Ati tiru-vila and the excitement and entertainment of Tipavali. Accordingly the expenses per household over its celebration are also large.
On Pal Melayu the organisation of this temple festival in 1963 was carried out in much the same manner as of Ati tiru-vila during the preceding year. There were film shows, procession, feast and sprinkling of turmeric water - all spread over three days. One detail of the celebration was strikingly different from the Ati festival. The programme for the third day of the festival read as follows:

Thursday, February 7, 11.30 a.m. Ceremonial consecration of kavati. (Kavatikalapişekam)

It referred to the ceremonial consecration of kavati (a kavati is a decorated pole of wood with an arch over it, carried on shoulders with offerings) on the southern bank of Sungei Chempaka. After the consecration the kavati are carried by the devotees to the estate temple. The ritual is performed in all shrines of Subramaniam throughout Malaya and Southern India on the morning of Tai-p-pucam as an integral part of penance and worship of Lord Subramaniam in fulfillment of a vow (nērtti-k-kaţan). For the present discussion two aspects of this worship are worthy of special note. Firstly, its association with a vow and secondly, the acts of penance through which the vow is fulfilled.

Kavati were carried to Pal Melayu temple by five persons - four females and one male - in fulfillment of vows taken by them. One of the females was a girl aged 12 who carried a milk kavati (palkavati) which had, in addition to the usual decorations, a pot of milk tied to the main pole. (A palkavati is carried by
an unmarried boy or girl; if the person be a child, by an adult on his behalf.) All the kavati belonged to the worshippers, having been made for them at a cost of $2 to $5 by a temple priest. In addition, there was a potu kavati which belonged to the temple to be carried from the river bank to the temple by the devotee who went into a trance first on the Tai-p-pucam morning. The materials for offering prayers (milk, camphor, incense stick, frankincense) on the river bank were carried by Munisamy Samiyar (pious medicine man) who had bought them earlier at a cost of $5.00 to each kavati carrier. Two of the devotees had arranged with a man of Paraiyan caste to carry silver spikes (alaku) river bank and to pierce them into the devotee's tongue, chest and back when the latter became possessed. After all the devotees had taken a dip in the river, Munisamy Samiyar began praying to Subramaniam and others followed him. While the worship was in progress, Munisamy Vannan went into a trance and the appointed man put spikes on his tongue and body. He thus became entitled to carry potu kavati and led the procession of kavati carriers, similarly possessed, to the temple. The drum beaters appointed by the temple committee for the occasion provided the music.

The scene was similar at the two-and-a-half-mile (from Bunga Raya) Subramaniam Temple where several devotees came from nearby estates. Many of them carried kavati and I here cite one case. Arjunan is a bachelor working as a tapper on A.J. Estate. In
1961 his brother Letchmanan's one year old child became seriously ill and was taken to many hospitals. When nothing was of avail, Arjunan took a vow to carry a kavati on Tai-p-pucam for three successive years (1962-1963-1964) from his estate to the Two-and-a-half-mile Subramaniam Temple, a distance of about five miles. Soon after he took the vow, the child began to recover. At about 10 a.m. on February 7, 1963, Arjunan came to the temple carrying the kavati that had been consecrated by the priest in the estate temple. He was in a trance and surrounded by a crowd of kinsmen and devotees. The party was led by two drummers and the kavati carrier appeared dancing to the rhythm of their drum-beating. He had his body and tongue pierced with 30 small silver spikes (alaku) and one large skewer (vel) respectively. It was said that the scale and intensity of worship at the Two-and-a-half-mile Temple has been lowered ever since estate temples began to have the ritual of consecrating kavati and indeed workers from Pal Melayu came only for sightseeing, not for worship.

(3) The Life Cycle:

Childbirth.

Cimantam is a ritual associated with both marriage and the birth of the first child. It is held during the seventh month of a woman's first pregnancy at either her husband's place or her mother's place. Wherever it is held, female affines are invited.
A soothsayer is consulted for a suitable date and time for the celebration. On this occasion prestations (cir) consisting of gold ornaments, sari, comb, hair oil, mallikai (jasminium anestomosans) flowers, bananas, sugar, betel and areca nuts are presented to the bride by her mother. The rite of mutuku-nīr-kuttal is distinctive of cīmantam. It consists of rubbing cantan (santalum album) paste and pouring water and milk upon the back of the mother-to-be. The purpose of the ceremony, which includes offering prayer to kāmatciamman, is to secure the mother against the physical hazards of childbirth.

The ritual is attended by women only, such as female members of the kindred and neighbourhood. Menfolk sit and chat on the ground-floor. A drummer and clarionet player team is often engaged to play music for a couple of hours and a feast follows the ritual.

An old woman of Padayachee caste gave a somewhat different version of the ceremony which she said must take place at the bride's mother's house. The ceremony is known as valayam kāppu after the fact that a gold bracelet (valayam) should be presented to the mother-to-be by her mother. Other features of the ceremony include sun-worship by the pregnant woman through an offering of cooked food and the holding of feast for the poor.

Most of the mothers on Pal Melayu have their babies delivered in the estate group hospital. Those women who prefer a home delivery by an indigenous mid-wife have to forego the maternity
allowance paid by the estate. Nowadays the husband and his kinsmen carry gifts of fruits to the hospital for the mother. On the seventh day after childbirth, when the mother and child are back at home, a ceremony is held to remove pollution. On this day the mother is given an oil bath and purified with campirāṇi (styrax benzoin) smoke. A feast is again held to mark the occasion. Gifts to the new-born child are given by its paternal grandparents and paternal aunt and often include expensive items, such as a gold chain or a ring, clothes and a cradle.

A few related families of Vanniyar Goundar caste hailing from Damal and Chennasamuthiram villages of Chingleput and North Arcot Districts respectively in South India worship a malignant deity called Katteri during the first Ati month after the birth of a child. The worship is performed exclusively by women. In at least two cases the women took a vow to pray to Katteri after they had been taken ill and an old woman had diagnosed that they had neglected to worship Katteri. An expectant mother who takes a vow to pray to Katteri after her delivery asks her husband to buy a black fowl and a black sari. On the day of worship the fowl is slaughtered and its freshly laid eggs are boiled. All close kinswomen of the locality proceed to some isolated part of the estate where a man may not come. They carry a spade to clear a small patch of ground and food and other materials to offer to the deity. The food includes the black fowl, curry and boiled
eggs and dry-fish. Along with betel, areca nuts and coconut halves, these are offered to Katteri on banana leaves. The shrine is made by two bricks each smeared yellow with turmeric and having three lines drawn with kunkumam. In between the bricks a Pillaiyar of mud is erected and the black sari and yellow thread are placed in front of the Pillaiyar. The women pray to the goddess and, after the worship, eat all the food at the shrine. Each ties a kappu of yellow thread in her arm and the main worshipper puts on the black sari. The worship, when performed by an expectant mother, is believed to guard her from disease.

The First Hair-Cut.

Certain minor rituals follow those connected with childbirth. In the case of a first child, a name-giving (pervaittal cataniku) may be held in the third month. The child's maternal uncle brings the main prestation including gold jewellery. Other kinsmen may also bring gifts of clothes and ornaments. The next major ritual is held to celebrate the first hair-cut (muti-y-aruttal) of the child. It may take place at any time while the child is between the age of 6 months and 5 years. There are two alternative modes of performing this ritual. First, on an auspicious day such as Tai-p-pucam, the child is taken by the

Pillaiyar is also known as Vikkinecuran or the Lord of Obstacles.
parents to a shrine where the festival is celebrated. In larger temples of Subramaniam an arrangement is made by the organisers of the festival to appoint barbers to shave children at a fixed rate of payment. Alternatively, the ceremony may take place at home by offering worship to the family god. Usually the devotees of Subramaniam perform the ritual at a shrine whereas others hold a house ceremony. The cost of the hair-cutting ceremony at the caves on the Tai-p-pucam day was $2.00 for the hair-cut itself and $3 to $4 for ritual objects to be offered to the deity (naivettiyyam). To this must be added the costs of transport to the caves and other incidental expenses. In one case expenses of a house-ceremony were detailed to me as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cost (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White rice</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black sugar</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camphor</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betel</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areca nuts</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankincense</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconuts</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground nuts</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grams</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turmeric</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two cocks</td>
<td>6.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: £13.50
Ear-boring ceremony (Katu-kuttal):

An earboring ceremony is held for male children only. It takes place before a son attains puberty. If there are several sons, the ear-boring ceremony for all of them may be held at the same time. The role of mother's brother (tay-maman) is again very important for on this occasion he must bring the main prestation for his sister's sons. If a mother has many sons and brothers, each one of her brothers must select one or more nephews (sister's son) for whom he would bring the prestation. The father's male affines other than his wife's brothers are also invited for the ceremony. Father's sister's husband and son also bring a prestation and occasionally share with the tay-maman the role of the important person in the rituals.

The ear-boring of Pitchai's three sons, aged 8, 6 and 4, was held at the same time. Pitchai's father-in-law, Thangavelu, also lives on Pal Melayu in an extended family with his two married and one unmarried sons. The management has allocated Thangavelu two adjacent 'lines' in one house-block so that the ground floor of his house was deemed suitable for holding the ear-boring ceremony of Pitchai's sons. Pitchai gave Thangavelu a sum of $80 towards the expenses of the ceremony and the feast which the latter held in his house on behalf of his son-in-law. The rest of the procedure of the ceremony was as if it had been in Pitchai's own house. A goldsmith was invited to pierce the children's ears and to officiate at the ceremony. For this purpose, Pitchai's two elder sons sat in the laps of Thangavelu's
elder sons while Pitchai's youngest son sat in the lap of his father's sister's son. The goldsmith put on each child a pair of gold ear rings presented by the maman on whose lap he sat. Other prestations from their father's affines included gold chains, gold rings, shirts, shoes and toys. Thangavelu, who paid for the prestations by his sons, spent about $120.00.

An interesting feature of the ritual was a moy held immediately after the ear-boring and before the other gifts were presented to Pitchai's sons. Moy means a kind of fund-raising from among those attending the ceremony to cover its costs. Each participant remitted a certain amount in an envelope on top of which he wrote his name. The moy for this ritual raised $280. Moy makes it possible for poor people to celebrate an expensive ritual, like ear-boring, at home instead of the temple. On Pal Melayu a moy is held in some families during the celebration of a few other life cycle rituals also. We shall consider it more fully in the context of marriage and the puberty ritual for girls.

**Girl's Puberty Ritual.**

This is one of the most elaborately celebrated life-cycle rituals on Pal Melayu. The celebration begins with the start of menstruation of a girl and climaxes with the purification ceremony of tiraṭṭi held in her father's house on an auspicious day soon after the bleeding ends.

The organisation of activities in the household throughout the duration of a girl's first menstruation is fairly uniform in
the community. The girl informs her mother or any other senior woman in the family that bleeding has started. A word is sent immediately to the girl's mother's brother, real or classificatory, who must come to the girl's father's house and make a temporary hut (kuṭicai) of palm leaf and atap for the girl's seclusion. In the labour 'lines' kuticai is erected inside the living room. The maman also provides every day during this period supplies of cooked vegetarian food, gingily (sesamum indicum) oil and eggs for the girl. On the first day the girl's mother invites three or five women (her sisters and neighbours) to give her daughter a bath. These women are offered food and tea. They carry home cakes sent by the girl's maman and betels. The girl's father consults an astrologer to fix a date for tiratti and to read the girl's luck from the almanac as indicated by the date and time of menarche. Poorasamy Iyer (real caste Padayachee), the astrologer-priest of Division I, charges a fee of $2.00 for this consultation. Next, a washerman or a drummer is engaged to inform all kinsmen on the estate and outside it about the date of tiratti. He is paid $2 to $3 for the job. On the first day again, occasionally the girl's maman engages drummers to beat drums for a couple of hours in front of her father's house. During the entire period of a girl's first menstruation the members of her family observe pollution. Only vegetarian food should be cooked in the house. Participation by any family member in temple worship or a life-cycle ritual in another family
is prohibited. This is also considered to be a period of danger for the girl and she should have the constant company of a married woman. For this reason a kinswoman, normally the mother, has to take leave from the estate. The girl should not step out of the kuticai except for toilet purposes and then also with her female companion (tolı). The tolı serves her food inside the kuticai in special plates. The girl should not touch any pots, pans or clothes in the house. She is not permitted to speak with children and girl friends for any length of time. At the same time, however, she is dressed in new clothes and bedecked with jewellery. Usually the jewels which she puts on are those made for her during Tipavali. On the whole, a girl in her first menses is treated as an impure and somewhat sick but privileged person.

The outstanding feature of tiratti ceremony is the prestations from affines. The maman brings the first cir consisting of a sari, blouse, comb, mirror, kunkumam, flower-garland and cosmetics for the dressing-up of the girl. Added to these are five coconuts, five bunches of bananas, oranges, apples and candy. Subsequently, other affines bring their cir consisting of similar items. Each gift-giving party is headed by drummers and consists of both men and women. The men carry gift-laden trays on their heads. The widow or separated wife of a male affine may bring cir on behalf of her husband. This is specially true in cases where a widow may plan a match between her son and
either the girl who has come of age or one of her sisters. In
one case a separated married daughter living with her parents
offered cir at the tiratti of her younger sister. The father
bought her gift objects (she is an earning member of the
household of which her father is head). At the time of the
prestation ritual she carried the cir on her head from the road
to the 'line' to the accompaniment of drums as if she brought
them from her husband's house.

Two other features of the prestation should be noted here.
First, unrelated members of a higher (Non-Brahman Vanniyar Goundar)
and lower (Paraiyan) caste may, from long standing friendship,
form a relationship of exchanging cir on the tiratti of their
daughters. The cir and its prestation takes exactly the same
form as between affines. Second, without exception, a respected
member of the community, occasionally the chairman of the
panchayat or the union secretary, assiduously jots down in a
notebook the name of the principal gift-givers, the items
comprising the cir and its approximate value. After prestation
are over a nalaiuku ceremony is held to remove pollution from the
girl. The cir is carried to the living room and the toli
dresses the girl in sari and blouse presented by the maman. In
the meantime, betel and areca nuts are distributed to all those
present at the ceremony. These include the head's agnates,
friends, neighbours and community elders. The girl approaches
each of the community elders with folded hands to seek their
blessings. Most of the people now hand her money (usually £1 to £5) kept in envelopes and some slip a gold ring onto her finger. Contributions to this moy too are made by people of all castes and the names of contributors are again recorded.

In tiratti the girl's father has to spend money on festoons for house decoration, worship-materials for nalanku, provision of refreshment and other requirements of guests and the engagement of service-castes - drummers and washerman. The hiring of the estate band has also become very common. The chief sources of income in cash and kind are moy and cir respectively. It is interesting to note that the distinction between cir and moy is now becoming obliterated. A reasonably well-to-do man standing in the proper relationship of gift exchange with a poor kinsman may choose to give money instead of the traditional cir. Since there is no notion of cash payment of cir, it becomes indistinguishable from moy.

Marriage.

The engagement ceremony known as niccaya-tāmpūlam or uppu-tāmpūlam is held in the girl's house on an auspicious day during the new moon quarter. It is not necessary for the boy or his father to accompany the party to the girl's house. It consists of an odd number (5, 7, 11) of their elderly male cognates. On the evening of the ceremony the girl's father invites his kinsmen and other elderly people of the community to his house. The girl's maman must be present for the main
ceremony for it is with him that a senior member of the boy's party exchanges betels to signify confirmation of the engagement. In an increasing number of cases on estates, to save time and expenditure of travelling, the ceremonies of the engagement and betrothal are held together. The latter ceremony entails giving of prestations, including jewellery, from the boy to the girl. The ritual procedure adopted in the composite ceremony is as follows.

The boy's party arrives with three or five women (wives of the members) carrying cir in large trays. If the party includes the boy's maman he is greeted first by the girl's father. The men of the party are offered seats, mostly on mats but occasionally on chairs and benches, while the women, after entrusting cir to the menfolk, join other women upstairs. Niccaya-tampulam is more or less men's affair. Women are onlookers and the girl does not appear at all. Large trays full of betels, areca nuts and a little quantity of quick-lime keep circulating among men for betel-chewing while animated negotiations go on. On Pal Melayu, Sanjivi kangany usually performs the functions of a spokesman for both the parties and of a go-between and mediator between them. In the majority of

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Here we assume that a typical marriage on Pal Melayu is not between a girl and her real mother's younger brother or a first cross-cousin (father's sister's son or mother's brother's son). At least, none of the marriages I attended on Pal Melayu was of that sort.
these ceremonies the ritual exchange of betels takes place first. Each party has to nominate a man whom the other party can hold responsible in the event of a quarrel between the married couple. The kinsmen selected for this onerous job differ in each case depending upon the existing network of alliances of the boy's and the girl's fathers. Ideally the responsible person should be a maman (or pāṭṭaṅ, mother's father) but this norm is rigorously applied in the case of the girl only. I was repeatedly told that a girl's tay-maman has an exclusive right to give his sister's eldest daughter in marriage. Similarly, no negotiations for the marriage of a second or subsequent daughter may proceed unless tacit approval has been obtained from the married daughters' husbands.

Ordinarily the engagement ceremony gives the boy's side an opportunity to know the attitude of the girl's maman. The maman's promise to give away his niece as the responsible person at the ceremony is thus a guarantee against his future interference. In one outstanding case, however, the engagement of a Paraiyan girl had to be broken off when her elder sister's husband who had himself exchanged betels on the girl's side during the ceremony, nursed a grudge against his affines and spread the rumour that the girl to be married had lived with him as his wife for three months!

In the ceremony, the responsible person on the girl's side sits facing eastwards and that on the boy's side sits opposite
him; we shall here call these persons x and y respectively. Firstly, y takes a handful of betels, areca nuts, turmeric and a gold ring and gives it to x saying, "Gold is yours, girl is ours". x holds this in his left hand and with the other hand gives to y a handful of betels, areca nuts, turmeric and one dollar note (substitute for the silver dollar (vellī) saying, "Gold is ours, girl is yours". After the initial exchange the same act of exchange, with appropriate sentences as uttered before, is repeated twice. However, in the second and third exchanges only the gift presented by x to y (betels, areca nuts, turmeric and one dollar note) and not the gold changes hands in the following manner:

(2) $\text{y} \rightarrow \text{x}$

(3) $\text{y} \leftarrow \text{x}$

It is obvious that the principal assurance (niccayam) of the 'betel-exchange ritual', that is the promise of giving girl (pen) for gold (pon), is accomplished in the initial exchange. The subsequent exchanges mark a symbolic reaffirmation of the agreement. Also, y's final acceptance of a token cash payment from x serves to minimise the unilateral aspect, and to counteract the pecuniary character, of the transaction 'girl for gold'.

It is important that before this ceremony is gone through the girl must be consulted and her decision must be conveyed to all present. At the conclusion of this ceremony, some would say that the marriage is now half finished. After the ceremony,
affines may eat freely in each other's houses.

The symbolic significance of the engagement ceremony for the forging of the alliance is very great. But so also is the material value of the chief prestation before marriage from the bridegroom to the bride. The cir called paricam comprises standard items of worship and of decoration for the bride as well as a variable though always substantial amount of jewellery. Cash payments have also to be made by the bridegroom to the bride's mother ("milk money") and for the estate temple. The amount is often determined by the bride's people. In regard to jewellery one often hears a woman of the girl's family murmur, "After all, this jewellery will be taken away by the girl to her husband's house. Personally we do not gain anything. But it would be nicer to have this or that item additionally". These innuendos are made more specific by the mediator who might put the point of view of the girl's side thus, "Look, so-and-so (responsible person on the groom's side), it is inappropriate not to give ear-tops (tōtu)". Often the bridegroom's party, to uphold their prestige, would forthwith obtain a pair even if a woman of the party has to snatch them from her own ears. Before their return, the bridegroom's party may or may not be treated to a feast.

Invitation cards for the marriage are printed in both English and Tamil at a press in the nearest big town. The parties may agree to share the cost but often this is also
charged to the groom's account. One young man paid the whole amount of $56.80, the cost of printing 1,000 invitation cards for his marriage. The distribution of invitations may also take a traditional form; to close kinsmen, members of the estate staff, estate shopkeepers, teachers and friends in towns the invitation is accompanied by a gift. One such invitation received by me comprised the following items:

- 2 bottles of orange drink 0.70
- 4 oranges 0.20
- 1 apple 0.20
- 6 bananas 0.10
- candy crystal 0.10

Total: $1.30

My friend distributed at least 25 to 30 invitations of this sort throughout the Pal Melayu region. He drives his own car. All told he spent nearly $100 on invitation cards alone. In another case, this sum may only be $40 or even less when shared with the bride's side.

It is unnecessary to detail the cost of all items needed at various stages during a person's marriage. The nuptials are held at the bridegroom's house. The expenditure for the main ceremony falls into traditional and modern categories although the distinction gets blurred in some instances, e.g. the marriage booth (a traditional item) may itself be decorated with expensive
plastic festoons (a modern item). Taxis are liberally hired to travel long distances (60-70 miles) for a return trip for buying ceremonial goods, clothes and jewellery for ritual prestations and foodstuffs for feasts and tea parties. Often a whole group of young men goes to town on one or more shopping trips for a friend's marriage. When money is at hand for bigger items it matters little if members of the group spend something on minor entertainments such as refreshments and drinks or even on a whole 'night out' in the town and charge it to the marriage account. On the day of marriage itself the youth musical band is always engaged and a microphone joined to loudspeakers hired. Of course, these expenses are incurred in addition to payments for traditional services such as those of the Paraiyan drummer, the marriage 'Iyer' and the washerman, and for buying traditional objects connected with marriage rituals.

A marriage ceremony held in a temple is less expensive. The bridegroom's father saves money on decorations, feasting and hiring of the ritual paraphernalia. Yet a temple marriage, precisely because it may be austere, is considered inferior to a 'line' marriage. Temple marriage is regarded as suitable for men whose fathers are dead or who live far away from the bride's place of residence. In the latter case, the two parties reach a mutual agreement to hold the celebration at a temple close to the bride's place. This arrangement is more economical to the bridegroom's side while it also saves the bride's people extra
travelling expenses and time. Yet, temple marriage is resorted to only under compelling circumstances.

The first wedding rituals for the bridegroom and the bride are held separately for each although within the same marriage booth and conducted by the same non-Brahman priest. During these initial rituals neither puts on ceremonial clothes - although these are brought to the booth in two separate trays. The new silk clothes and garland for the boy are provided by the girl's father while the dress and jewellery for the girl are the same which were presented to her by the in-laws at paricam. As soon as the separate ritual for the groom is over the bride's brother leads him by the hand to a room for changing into ceremonial clothes. Similarly the bridegroom's sister leads the bride off to change. After that, the bridegroom and the bride go through the remaining rituals jointly. The climax of the ceremony is reached when the bridegroom ties the silver or gold marriage badge (tali) around the bride's neck. The tali is always provided by the boy. The last major prestation at the wedding ritual consists of the tying of gold badges (pattam) on the couple's foreheads by the kinsmen of both. Again, the girl's maman enjoys the prerogative of tying the first pattam. The denial of this right to a tay-maman can seriously jeopardise the happy conclusion of the nuptials.

It is customary for the bridegroom's father to treat his cognates, affines - old and new - and friends and helpers to a
feast after the nuptials. Formerly, this might have been an occasion for moy but now this collection is held at a different ceremony on the same day. A tea party is now arranged by the youth association to felicitate a member on his wedding. A substantial present, usually a dressing table, is presented to him on behalf of the association. Speeches are made by school teachers, staff members and fellow estate workers in Tamil, blessing the couple and offering advice on the happy life. The speeches of school teachers in particular are studded with memorised couplets from the Tamil classic, Thirukkural, especially from the section on 'Domestic Virtues' in Part I of the book. At the end of the ceremony prestations are made. Gifts include framed coloured pictures of Indian political leaders, teachings from Thirukkural calligraphically inscribed and framed, pictures of Hindu gods in their childhood, Tamil language books on sex technique in marriage, novels of Karunanithi and Annathurai (Indian leader of the Dravida Munnettra Kazhagam) and, significantly, sealed envelopes containing money with the name of the giver on the top. Since the last mentioned type of prestation is the commonest, it seems fair to interpret this (and my informants agreed) as moy in a new garb.

The tea party prestations notwithstanding, the fact remains that it is the bridegroom's party which has to bear the main brunt of ceremonial expenditure for engagement and nuptials. Yet before long the bride's side is also drawn into an expensive
cycle of visiting and prestations between the affines. Within a couple of days of the wedding ceremony the bride's father invites the newly-wed couple to spend a few days at his house. The bridegroom stays at the father-in-law's house for a period varying from two days to two weeks. In traditional families this occasion is marked by a feast for kinsmen and close friends in the locality of the girl's father. I have also seen a modern version of this feast. A telephone operator on Pal Melayu married his daughter to a non-kinsman who works as a postman in a large town. The bridegroom organised a temple marriage in the Two-and-a-half-mile (from Bunga Raya) Subramaniam Temple, after which the bride and bridegroom came to stay with her parents just for the day. In the afternoon the girl's father arranged a tea party in the Estate Primary School building. Of the 103 people invited to the tea party, there were only 11 kinsmen and 12 estate labourers. The rest were teachers (25); kangani (25); kirani (12); drivers, factory workers, carpenter, office boy, telephone operator and hospital dresser (10); contractors, shopkeepers, tailors and goldsmith (8); and outsiders (2). The total cost of the tea party was £84.70 but the girl received presents in cash and kind from the guests. Conspicuous among gifts was a kerosine cooking stove presented by the chief clerk of the estate.

When the bride and bridegroom leave for the latter's home, the girl's mother is expected to give her daughter new clothes,
mats, brass utensils for cooking, presents received for her at the marriage feast and, indispensably, a copper pot filled with cookies. On the eve of her departure from the parents' house the daughter puts on most of the jewellery she received from the bridegroom's parents and packs up the rest with her clothes. She may not take all the jewellery which her parents bought or kinsmen presented on tiratti and other occasions before her marriage. If her parents are poor and have other daughters to marry, they may keep part of the jewellery with them. The gold pattam (p. 553) are also retained by the bride's parents.

If the bridegroom's parents live within a reasonable distance from the bride's house, a few elderly people, such as the girl's father's agnates, accompany the couple to the boy's house. Upon the arrival of the party there the son breaks a coconut on the doorstep of his house and his family prays to the ancestors. The prestations from the bride's house are then opened in front of the elders of both estates and cookies are distributed among those present. A feast is held to honour the affines, immediately after which the girl's party returns to their locality.

Within three months of a marriage the parents of the bride and bridegroom (campantikal) must pay a visit to each other's house and exchange prestations. Again, this norm is broken when marriages take place over a large distance. Even in these cases, however, the girl must be brought back to her father's
house after the first three months. Usually the bride's father and brother go to fetch her and often the bridegroom accompanies them back. The bridegroom returns immediately while the girl is escorted back to her husband's house after spending a couple of weeks with her mother. While she returns, the mother buys her new jewellery - especially, a gold pendant (nankuzal) made from the pattam retained by the bride's mother is added to the girl's tali.

The same pattern is repeated during each of the major festivals - Ati, Tipavali and Tai-p-pucam - all through the first year of a daughter's marriage. Subsequent prestations are tied up with childbirth (cimantam) and so on. With the exception of prestations at death-rituals which we shall presently discuss, these have already been treated as aspects of affinal roles in major life-cycle rituals.

Death.

The death of a man or a woman is followed by elaborate rituals. As in other rituals, so in the death rituals too, the distinction between the deceased's kinsmen (pankāli) and affines (māmaṇ-maccuṇaṇ) is clearly maintained in the allocation of roles. The affines are expected to make prestations of unused cloth - white long turbans (kōṭi) and vesti in the case of a man and red saris in the case of a woman. The clothes, with customary betels and areca nuts are ceremonially brought, accompanied by music, on the day of death as well as at the end of the sixteen
day pollution (karumāti). Roles in death rituals are also distinguished by the sex of the bereaved kinsfolk and members of the community taking part in them. Women do the actual lamentation (uppari) by sitting around the dead body, crying aloud and beating their breasts. Menfolk engage in the preparation and decoration of a coffin made of bamboo poles. Only men may go in the funeral procession. Besides the kinship and sex roles, there are caste-roles, such as those played out by Paraiyan drummers, barber and washerman. The barber shaves the corpse before it is bathed by the son of the deceased. He also lights a fire in an earthenware pot and fixes on it a wire handle. The fire-pot is carried to the burial ground by the youngest son in the case of a man’s death and by the eldest son in the case of a woman’s death. The washerman brings a new cloth which he spreads on the ground for the pall-bearers to walk over. He also carries firebrands with the procession. Traditionally, the task of making and decorating a coffin is carried out by the paraiyal (Adi Dravidas) but as we saw, on Pal Melayu men of all castes, specially agnates of the deceased, perform this function. The chief services of the paraiyal are, therefore, those of beating drums and digging the burial hole. A priest and soothsayer of the Valluvar caste accompanies the party to the burial ground to guide the course of the rituals and to chant hymns at the proper occasions. On the day of the burial no meals are cooked in the family of the deceased but food -
strictly vegetarian - is provided for them by the affines. The chief mourner (eldest son or youngest son) may not eat the rice-meal but only accept a soft drink from his affinal relations. During the sixteen day period of death pollution only vegetarian food should be cooked in the immediate family of the deceased. For the first eight days after death all members of the family pray twice daily before the ritual lamp used for daily prayers in the family. This lamp is lit by the deceased's son soon after the death and it should not be extinguished for at least the first eight days. At each prayer, cooked food and cakes are placed before the lamp as offerings to the deceased person. The food is later eaten by the family members. On the eighth day a stone or a brick is brought and consecrated with turmeric. After being placed among other items of worship in a corner of the living room this too is prayed to daily in the above manner for the next eight days. In some cases a copper pot filled with water replaces the brick or stone. On the sixteenth day the affines are again invited and each brings a prestation of koti, as mentioned earlier (p. 557). Drummers, washerman and barber are again called to accompany the procession of kinsmen, this time to the river bank. The offering of last oblations to the deceased and the course of ritual purification of mourners is guided by the higher caste astrologer-priest Pograsamy Iyer. At the end of the rituals, the chief mourner brings a pot full of water and sprinkles it on the houses of his agnates. This brings the period of death
pollution to an end. On the day after karumati, that is the seventeenth day after the death, the chief mourner gives a big feast when non-vegetarian food is cooked. All the affines are invited to the feast and the occasion is said to bring long standing quarrels among kinsmen to an end.

The estimated cost of death-rituals as given by a chief mourner with a large body of kinsmen on Pal Melayu was $400.00. The payments to the members of service-castes were made as follows:

- Priest $10 (1 vesti and headcloth)
- Clarionet player and drummer $20
- Drummers $30
- Washerman $7
- Barber $5

Total: $72

A note on certain economic aspects of life-cycle prestations:

From Dumont's account (Dumont 1957) of cir and moy among certain Tamil castes in South India, it would appear that each of these prestations illuminates a facet of solidarity in Tamil kinship and that both taken together constitute an exemplification of the alliance between what are broadly 'kinsmen' and affines. In his paper, Dumont does not examine the economic aspects of these prestations. He does say that moy is a kind of mutual
economic help - but he leaves us in the dark about the parallel function of cir, if any. He also makes no mention of participation in gift-giving by non-kin and by persons of other castes. Further, his particular analysis depends to a large extent upon a clear distinction between moy and cir. On Pal Melayu, on the other hand, we noted that persons of all castes participate not only in moy but also in cir and that the distinction between the two is beginning to be blurred.

These are only two symptoms of what I consider to be a major tendency present in all major rituals on Pal Melayu, namely the evaluation of gift-giving in the ritual, by the participants themselves, in economic terms. We noted that the names of the givers, along with the specifications of their gifts, are assiduously noted. What is the purpose of this record? First, it serves as an aide mémoire for the recipient of gifts so that he may know where his obligations lie. Secondly, the circumstances in which the record is made, with a responsible person like the union secretary or the panchayat chairman making the note in the presence of everyone, emphasise the public character of this obligation. It ensures that at least the sanction of public stigma will apply to the one who is put under an obligation to return the gift. The obligation to return a gift has to be honoured and the record is a guarantee that it will be.
The person who gives a gift does so with an unmistakable intention of receiving a counter-gift. This applies to cir as well as moy. People are most reluctant to forego the return. An example will clarify the relentless manner in which the idea of getting a square deal from a prestation is pursued.

Pungavanam, living on x estate, is Ponnan's wife's brother. He has a large family of eight children - all below the age of twelve years. Pungavanam and his wife are the only wage earners in the family. Pungavanam's wife has grown weaker with the birth of each successive child and now her ill-health has forced her to become an irregular tapper, thus reducing the family to economic stringency. As Ponnan's only real brother-in-law, Pungavanam receives occasional financial assistance from his rich affine. One day Pungavanam came to consult Ponnan about holding the ear-boring ceremony for his sons. Ponnan agreed with the idea but in view of the financial state of Pungavanam's family suggested that the ceremony be held cheaply in the estate temple. Pungavanam disagreed with Ponnan, arguing that an elaborate home ceremony alone would enable him to receive gifts from the many people to whom he had been giving prestations over the years. Further, Pungavanam wanted to hold the ceremony soon because a few old people were due to return to India and an ear-boring ceremony at his house might well be the only opportunity to get return gifts from them. Thus Pungavanam convinced his brother-in-law by sheer logic of his case and obtained an advance
to prepare for the ceremonial.

Economic considerations enter significantly, if covertly, at all stages in a marriage. But the equation between the paricam prestation by the bridegroom and the bride's economic value is openly expressed after marriage. As noted before, there is no actual haggling over jewellery at the time of paricam. Sometimes before the selection of responsible persons at the engagement ceremony, the onerous nature of the responsibility is made clear by reference to roles which other responsible persons have had to play in the past in cases of tiffs between affines. Also, at this juncture, each party tries to ascertain the attitudes towards the present marriage of the other party's kinsmen who may not be present at the engagement ceremony. Usually even at this stage there is no talk of monetary sanctions against divorce, however.

Something of the idea that in marriage a woman's services are bought for a price is not entirely missing. The bride's earnings as an estate worker make a monetary evaluation of her services much easier. The similar experience of two persons, each father of a recently married daughter, showed this fact clearly to me. In each case the father went to his son-in-law's father's (campanti) place to bring his daughter to her natal home during the month of Ati. Although he was greeted with formal courtesy, neither his son-in-law nor his campanti relished the idea that the man should take his daughter away for a month. The
crux of the objection was that the daughter-in-law's absence from work for a month would mean a loss of family earnings. In one case the bridegroom's father put his objection in so many words, adding that the payment of a paricam for her had entitled him to use the daughter-in-law's services in the manner that he liked. Her father had no business to turn up like that and demand to take his daughter back. On being reminded about the tradition forbidding a newly married couple from sleeping together during the month, this man agreed to send his daughter-in-law to her mother's house for a fortnight only; during the remainder of the dangerous month, he assured the girl's father, arrangements would be made for the couple to sleep apart. The other man who went to bring his daughter back is a carpenter. His affines were more tactful. Their excuse for not sending the daughter-in-law was that the estate management would not grant leave to someone who had joined work only recently. The bridegroom's mother was quick in suggesting that an arrangement could easily be made for the couple to sleep apart during this inauspicious month. The carpenter too lost no time to counter the suggestion with a sarcastic repartee. He said, "I am a carpenter and this estate of yours is a jungle. I should soon get busy in making a Sakai house\footnote{Aboriginal tree dwelling of Sakai tribals of central Malaya.} for the couple. The bridegroom
can then sleep at the foot of the tree and the bride at the top. That would be the most satisfactory arrangement, would it not?"
The woman was deeply ashamed and fell silent; the bridegroom's father, to avoid any ill-will, waived his earlier objections and let the daughter-in-law go with her father.

Occasions do, however, arise when arguments develop in precisely the above manner but cannot be brought to an end half so amicably. Indeed, too much pressure on the daughter-in-law to serve in lieu of the paricam paid to secure her may lead to separation and divorce. The threat of separation is always greater from the woman's side; since in sheer economic terms she stands to lose little if the marriage breaks up. The onus of reclaiming paricam from her father lies with the boy's side, while at any rate theoretically the girl can be married again without any economic loss to her parents. Even if a separated daughter does not marry - and this is what usually happens on Pal Melayu - she continues to stay with her parents without being a burden on them. The great thing about a woman on estates is that she earns wages. She does need a house to live in, be it her husband's, father's or son's. In the second eventuality and to a lesser extent in the third she may carry on liaisons with other men. If she lives alone or with a widowed mother, the liaisons may develop into semi-permanent arrangements whereby the man might also give financial support to his mistress in lieu of sexual favours from her. While a separated woman lives with
her father or her son, such a public arrangement tends to be equated with prostitution and carries a stigma. Even this applies mainly to the woman of non-Brahman castes. A separated daughter of Palla caste, on the other hand, may form liaisons for money in the knowledge, and often with the approval, of her father. Care is taken to avoid childbirth and in a case of a pregnancy from such a liaison known to me, one of the paramours paid the costs of an abortion.

A divorce is formalised only when the panchayat and the kirani or other elders of the localities have negotiated with the responsible men of the parties and failed to arrive at an amicable settlement. One of the parties may then decide to approach the government's Social Welfare Department but in the majority of cases the decision of the kirani is binding. The granting of a divorce is signalled by the return of tali and often by insertion of the announcement in a Tamil newspaper. Complete settlement of the case requires that the entire amount of paricam from the bride to the bridegroom should also be returned. The record made by a responsible person of the girl's locality and testimony of those who attended niccaya-tampulan and paricam are important evidences to determine the amount which must be returned. No rebate is sanctioned on counter-gifts from bride's father to the bridegroom except that a woman may take
her own jewellery back. The distinction between a woman's own jewellery and that of her husband is not always easy to determine. No wonder, therefore, that economic issues raised by separation and divorce tend to drag on for years.
Cittu on Pal Melayu are of two sorts: "ela-c-cittu" or cittu by auction and "kulukka-c-cittu" or cittu by lots.

Ela-c-cittu (cittu by auction):

Most of the cittu on Pal Melayu are of this type. The membership of each group ranges from 10 to 40 people of both sexes. Only adults are eligible to be members and there are no ela-c-cittu of younger boys and girls. The majority of members are estate workers but a Tamil smallholder or a shopkeeper from the region may also be permitted to join. The important consideration here is that the members should be in face-to-face contact with the organiser. While all cittu in the 'lines' are ethnically exclusive (Tamil) those organised by the Chinese and Malabari Muslim shopkeepers on the estate have a mixed Tamil and Chinese membership. There are no Malays in any of the cittu on Pal Melayu.

To a certain degree the membership of a particular cittu depends upon who the organiser is. A kangany can usually count upon the members of his gang joining a cittu initiated by him. This is even more often the case when a kangany also acts as a money-lender for his gang. Interestingly enough, an ela-c-cittu organised by a kangany may contain two or three members of the
Asian staff invited by the organiser to join in. Their participation adds prestige to that cittu so that more estate worker members can be attracted. The kirani participate on terms grossly favourable to them. Being the other participants' bosses in the industrial subsystem they are not only permitted to draw on the fund before anybody else but the bidding on discount, normally very high during early rotations, is either non-existent or kept extremely low. As a result, the kirani members of a cittu obtain the largest funds (cittukacu) and earn the greatest interest.

The organiser of a cittu, like the household head, is called mutal-ali (literally, responsible person). Theoretically, anyone in need of a large sum of cash may start a cittu and become its mutal-ali. In actual fact, the mutal-ali is either an influential person in terms of his office on the estate or a person who is acknowledged by the community as someone with the qualities of a 'broker'. The latter is an independently achieved status and the incumbent tends to become a professional. At least one man and one woman currently (in 1962-63) holding cittu on Pal Melayu fit this description. Each has organised three cittu operating simultaneously with a combined membership of over a hundred people. Some of the members have shares in more than one cittu organised by the same person. A large membership means much running about by the cittu mutal-ali for it is his chief function to collect contributions from all the members in time.
If anyone fails to pay in time or absconds without paying after receiving the fund the mutual-ali has to bear the risk.

The organiser maintains the records of his cittu in a notebook. He makes entries in Tamil. The cittu book is open to inspection by any member at any time. The organiser is personally responsible for collecting contributions from shareholders and for paying them the fund in rotation. He does not issue a receipt nor is there a written constitution or set of rules for cittu.

All contributions are made in cash and every member must contribute at each collection. At each collection all members contribute equal amounts but the amount payable by the members at each collection will vary according to the bidding for discount at the last meeting. At the initial meeting of the cittu, however, every member pays a contribution fixed in advance and a cittu is commonly designated throughout the cycle of rotation by this initial amount, for example $30 cittu, $100 cittu, and so on. The initial contribution from each member for ela-c-cittu on Pal Melayu is fixed between $25 to $100. A single contribution is known as a share (panku) and a person may have up to three but not more shares in one cittu. In a cittu of large denomination, such as a $100 cittu run by Kaka and Chinese shopkeepers, two members may have one share in partnership.

As said before, variations in the sum to be contributed to each fund equally by all members depend on discount bidding. The
relationship between bidding, contributions and fund may be
understood by reference to what actually happens after a saving-
group has been formed; that is to say, when an organiser has
collected the first contributions from all members.

Usually the first fund is received by the organiser in toto
and no bidding takes place. This at once brings into focus the
raison d'être which the cittu has for the organiser - it is meant
to finance him. The members grant him the prerogative of
receiving the first fund as the price of his entrepreneurship. It
is customary for an organiser, however, to allow the cittu members
a discount of $1.00 per contribution on the first fund. To take
an example, if there are 12 members in a $40 cittu the amount of
the first fund will be $40 x 12 - 12 = $468. The award of the
first fund is subject to two possible variations. Occasionally,
when the organiser is not hard pressed for money, he may forego
the first fund and throw it open for bidding. This gesture is
calculated to gain the confidence of cittu members. It is
appreciated by both the needy contenders for the first fund as
well as by all other members not interested in receiving the fund
but who expect to receive a large discount through high bidding.
Secondly, the organiser may forego the first fund in favour of a
kirani. As said earlier, in this case too there will be no bidding.
The only loss sustained by the organiser is that he has to wait one
turn in the rotation. The other members of the group have to allow
the first two funds, for the kirani and the organiser, without bidding.
In ordinary course, after the first fund has been taken by the organiser, the amount of the next fund and its recipient are determined strictly by bidding. A couple of days before the pay-day or on the morning of pay-day itself a cittu meeting is held at the organiser's house. The organiser must notify all members about the meeting at least three days in advance. Most members of a cittu attend these meetings for each member who has yet to receive the fund is either interested in taking it (the fund) or in increasing the bidding to obtain bigger discounts. These opposing interests of the members build up the competitive situation in bidding for the fund. Once a member has received the fund for his share he is, of course, not eligible to bid. At a cittu meeting bids are shouted in complete dollars. The highest bidder gets the fund. His bid represents the total discount which is equally divided among all members of the cittu, including the highest bidder himself and the earlier recipients. To continue with our example of a hypothetical cittu of $40 with 12 members, should the highest bid at the second cittu meeting stand at $156\textsuperscript{1} then each member will get a discount of $13 ($156 divided by 12), the contribution per member will be $27 ($40 minus $13) and the total amount of the second fund paid to the highest

\textsuperscript{1} To simplify the illustration I have chosen an amount which is an exact multiple of 12. In actual cases the amount of the highest bid may not be an exact multiple of the number of shares in a cittu. In such cases the cittu organiser has to manage an equal distribution of discounts among members by making minor adjustments between collection and fund throughout the cittu cycle (see Chart 4, column 'adjustment').
bidder will be $324 ($480 minus $156 or $27 x 12). Soon after wage-payment at the Divisional Office, the cittu organiser will go from house to house of each member to collect their contributions and hand the collection over to the highest bidder at the last cittu meeting. The same process will be repeated until every member has received the fund(s) for his share(s) in the cittu.

Chart 4 shows the record of an actually completed ela-c-cittu. It was a monthly cittu. The cittu organiser was a tapper named Muniandy. There were 17 shares including the organiser's. Each share cost $30.00. Three members had two shares each and eleven members had one share each. (see Chart 4 p. 574).

Kulukka-c-cittu (cittu by lot):

This is a much simpler arrangement. Membership of a kulukka-c-cittu may be sexually exclusive. There may also be exclusive kulukka-c-cittu of young girls and of children. This is a function of several factors. Firstly, members are required to make smaller contributions. I did not come across any kulukka-c-cittu with a monthly contribution of more than $10.00 per member while the majority of contributions ranged from $1.00 to $5.00. Secondly, these groups are often expressions of the members' solidarity based on the criteria of sex or age. Several women might decide that they want to buy gold rings. They will form a kulukka-c-cittu and each member will buy a ring in rotation. Similarly, young men may form a kulukka-c-cittu for buying watches.
### APPENDIX VI

#### Chart 4.

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### SHARES

1. Muniandi
   (organizer)
   29.00 19.00 17.50 16.50 17.00 22.50 17.50 18.00 18.00 17.00 27.00 27.50 28.00 29.00 29.00 29.00 29.00
2. Annamalai
3. Elumalai I
4. Elumalai II
5. Muniasmali
6. Govindaraju
7. Sippaiyan
8. Kullan I
9. Ramasamy
10. Gunmisami
11. Perumal
12. Parvati
13. Letchmanan I
14. Letchmanan II
15. Sippia
16. Kullan II
17. Raja

### COLLECTION

| 493.00 | 323.00 | 297.50 | 280.50 | 289.00 | 382.50 | 297.50 | 306.00 | 306.00 | 289.00 | 469.00 | 468.00 | 476.00 | 493.00 | 493.00 | 493.00 | 493.00 |

### Adjustment

| -1.00 | -3.50 | -3.50 | -3.00 | +1.50 | +2.50 | +2.00 | +1.00 | +1.00 | +1.00 | -6.00 | -6.00 | -2.00 | -2.00 | -1.00 | -1.00 | -1.00 |

### Fund (cistukeysu)

| 493.00 | 324.00 | 294.00 | 284.00 | 286.00 | 384.00 | 300.00 | 308.00 | 305.00 | 290.00 | 462.00 | 462.00 | 470.00 | 491.00 | 492.00 | 492.00 | 492.00 |

### RECIPIENT

| Muniandi | Annamalai I | Elumalai I | Elumalai II | Muniasmali | Govindaraju | Sippaiyan | Kullan I | Ramasamy | Perumal | Munisami | Parvati | Letchmanan I | Letchmanan II | Sippia | Kullan II | Raja |

### INTEREST

| Muniandi (organizer) | Annamalai I | Elumalai I | Elumalai II | Muniasmali | Govindaraju | Sippaiyan | Kullan I | Ramasamy | Perumal | Munisami | Parvati | Letchmanan I | Letchmanan II | Sippia | Kullan II | Raja |

| -18% | -12% | -17% | -19% | -18% | -1% | -16% | -14% | -15% | -18% | -12% | -13% | 14% | 18% | -18% | -18% | -18% | -18% |
Most of the instruments for the Estate Band were bought through this arrangement. On Pal Melayu at one time or another kulukka-c-cittu, either sexually exclusive or mixed, have existed for buying gold chains, cycles, pressure lamps and cane furniture. In all these cittu the organiser supplies the article to each member. The order of rotation, except in the case of the organiser himself, is determined by lot. As in ela-c-cittu the organiser gets the first fund either in cash or in kind. If a kulukka-c-cittu is formed to supply an article to its members the organiser usually has some special qualifications for procuring it. The organiser of the gold chain cittu was a goldsmith but the person who organised the cycle cittu was someone friendly with the cycle shopkeeper in Bintang Emas. The two men came to a business agreement that in return for the assured purchase of twelve bicycles in a year, the shopkeeper would pay a special discount on each bicycle supplied to the organiser of the cycle cittu.

The furniture cittu had eleven members - all either newly married young men or men planning to get married. Each member paid a monthly instalment of $5.00 and received in rotation furniture of his choice worth $55.00. The organiser reserved the right to supply the furniture and delivered it to the recipient's house. One young man recipient, for instance, got a roll of carpet (linoleum) and rattan (cane) sofa and four cane chairs from his fund. The organiser who had a deal with the
furniture shop in Bintang Emas made a profit of $5.00 per order supplied.

Cittu of $1.00 contributed to by boys and girls are often nothing more than games of chance. In these cases the use to which the fund may be put is not restricted by the cittu and the organiser does not supply a specific article. Even young children between seven and ten years receiving regular pocket money from their fathers on pay-day form a kulukka-c-cittu of 50 cents contribution. With this money they may buy a badminton racket or an assortment of lollies, biscuits, sweets, marbles and other playthings. It is easy to see, however, that the idea of cittu comes to them straight from the elders.
(a) A dispute referred to the community panchayat:

One case discussed in the community panchayat related to the alleged sexual advances by a married man living in the neighbourhood of a woman named Tulasiamma (T) whose husband left for India five years ago. With his savings from Malaya, T's husband has bought land in his natal village. A major portion of the earnings of T and her 17 year old son, both tappers on Pal Melayu, is being regularly remitted to India for making improvements in the land. The only other member of their family on Pal Melayu is T's 12 year old daughter who looks after the household. After earning sufficiently for a comfortable establishment in India T, along with her children, expects to join her husband. Like any other small household on Pal Melayu, T's household occupies one 'line' ('d') in a houseblock of four 'lines'.

T's neighbours are :-

1. Varatan and his wife in 'line' 'a'. The couple do not cook here since they belong to a large household. (family no. 96
2. Bhaskaran kangany and his wife in 'line' 'b'. The kangany is one of the oldest residents of Pal Melayu.

3. Motte and his wife in 'line' 'c'.

Relations between T and Varatan are cordial; one of the reasons being that Varatan is able to let T use the floor space of his 'line' 'a' in which to organise her cooking and seating arrangements. In a letter dated 31/3/63 addressed to the panchayat mediators (pancayattar) T's son Kaleyan alleged that their next door neighbour Motte has recently been disturbing his (Kaleyan's) mother. At a meeting of the community panchayat a few days later Kaleyan gave details. He said that Motte had made it a practice to knock on their door at night and on being refused entry he shouted "obscene words directed towards my mother". T had called Varatan on one such occasion whereupon Motte had quietly left. Kaleyan had reported the matter to the senior conductor who summoned Motte to the Divisional Office and cross-questioned him but the behaviour of Motte remained unchanged. Kaleyan and his mother took a very serious view of the matter and pleaded that the panchayat ought to punish the guilty. Having heard Kaleyan's story and noted Motte's evidence, the panchayat adjudged Motte to be guilty and ordered him to shift to another house-block. At this stage there was little discussion and to all appearance even Motte seemed to have signified his acceptance of the verdict by remaining silent.
Motte, however, still made no move to shift to another house-block. On the contrary, within a fortnight of the verdict he wrote a letter to the panchayat saying, "The panchayat have given a wrong decision in the last meeting. I therefore request you to convene another meeting in the temple and there the chairmen, secretaries and committee members of both Divisions should attend. In case in that meeting Tulasiamma can't speak herself, she should select a representative from the panchayat to speak of her behalf. Please give me an early date". The panchayat secretary kept the matter pending but in the meantime there was a quarrel between Motte and Varatan over this matter in which the latter's younger brother slapped Motte. Motte lost no time in making capital of this assault and reminded the panchayat about his request for an early date. He now made a fresh case against Varatan and his brother, shelving temporarily his issue with T. In the next meeting of the panchayat, only Motte and Varatan appeared; no-one mentioned the name of T or insisted on having her representative in the dispute. In fact, the whole discussion centred round the latest quarrel between the two men. An interesting sidelight of the proceedings was the appearance of the fourth neighbour, Bhaskaran kangany, or rather his pigeons as witness. Motte had produced witnesses in support of an alleged statement by Varatan, "I will poison you". Similarly, Varatan had witnesses to support a statement allegedly made by Motte, "I will beat the hell out of you". However, both
Varatan and Motte claimed that their statements were directed against the nasty pigeons of Bhaskaran kangany who made the house dirty off and on. A committee member suggested that Bhaskaran kangany should appear with his scape-goat pigeons. The kangany was called and he testified that his pigeons rather than men were the targets of certain bitter remarks he had heard in the neighbourhood.

A full analysis of the case Tulasiamma and Varatan versus Motte is not possible since the matter was still undecided when I left Pal Melayu (late 1963). Nevertheless, even in its unfinished form, the case throws up some of the latent functions of the community panchayat mentioned earlier (p. 372). Having failed to secure redress by reporting the matter to the senior conductor, T approached the panchayat hoping that Motte might be punished through public censure. She also thought that if Motte was declared guilty by the panchayat he might be made to suffer more material punishment too, such as being stopped from work for a few days. At any rate, she was interested that Motte should shift from the house-block to another 'line'. In expecting to gain redress from the panchayat, however, T seems to have miscalculated her social standing in the community. As a woman living in the labour 'lines' without her husband and with only minor children, her situation is vulnerable. There do exist social norms on Pal Melayu about relations which a widow or a separated married woman may have with other men (see pp. 565-566).
but the case of T is unusual. Living without her husband or adult son in a man's society she is bound to become partly dependent on another man. Yet these relations do not carry social legitimation and may at any time be subjected to the fire of criticism. Motte took advantage of T's invidious social standing in the community first by making advances towards her and later by threatening to make counter-allegations in the public. It was being murmured in the labour 'lines' that the latter threat pertained to an expose of the real nature of protector-dependant relationship between Varatan and T. It would have been relatively easy for Motte to prove his counter allegations for there is no natural sympathy for T in the community. Men and women in the labour 'lines' realise that her present station in life is a self-chosen one and motivated by considerations of sheer economic gain. At the same time, from T's point of view, the very fact that she should be associated loosely with another man before the community panchayat would have carried such stigma as to make her existence on the estate most difficult. Having taken the initiative and read the signs of future moves by Motte, therefore, she retreated.

The question may be asked as to why the kirani and the community panchayat could not compel Motte to change the 'line'. Perhaps the answer lies in the attitude of the kirani and the link between community panchayat decisions and their enforcement by the kirani. When the matter was referred to him initially, the kirani only cross-questioned Motte and asked him to mend his
ways. Might he not have tried to get the facts of the matter straight through the usual procedures? Here we must refer to two values which cut across the social class stratification on Pal Melayu and which we have had occasion to refer to in various contexts:

(i) Social norms of male dominance; and

(ii) Permissive sexual morality.

The former value seems to be a feature of traditional Tamil society while the latter may usefully be related to the conditions peculiar to a 'frontier' society. The labourers' own explanation (rationalisation?) of sexual immorality in labour 'lines' is simple. They say, "The vellai-k-karan and the kirani give the lead and we follow". The interplay of these values affected the course of the case Tulasiamma and Varatan versus Motte at the kirani and community panchayat levels. The kirani failed to consider the complaint seriously, presumably because in his estimation "such drunken behaviour is not uncommon among labourers" and that it would be hard anyway to vouch for the morals of a woman who is living without her husband. The panchayat let itself slide easily from the main issue to a side issue. The insubstantial nature of the quarrel between Varatan and Motte is epitomised in the pigeon episode. In a way, although the panchayat gave a favourable verdict to T, it did not care to enforce its decision on Motte. It was a continuation of the lukewarm attitude shown earlier by the kirani.
A case referred to the Union:

On 23/8/63, at 6:15 p.m., as I sat talking to Subramaniam (the union secretary, Division I), M, a tapper from Division II, came excitedly and showed us two letters both dated 16/8/63 that he received from the manager. One of these was a letter of dismissal addressed to M and sent to him by registered post; the other was a notice of dismissal addressed to M's son. The reason given for M's dismissal was "bad work and bad behaviour at the Divisional Office" and his son was served notice on account of bad work. M claimed that the charge against his son was purely fictitious. M and his son were the only working members in the household and by serving a notice on both of them the kirani had hope to ensure that the family would be evicted from the labour 'lines'. M had referred the matter to the union secretary on Division II but had now come to ask Subramaniam to make a phone call to 'Jaya' (the union headquarters). M said that he would pay the charges of making the phone call. The incident leading to the dismissal letter was narrated by M as follows:

On 16/8/63 M was tapping trees in Section 5A. At about 9 a.m. the clerk for bark inspection came and observed that the putting of coal-tar marks on these trees, carried out by the same workers on 1/7/63, had been defective. The bark was beginning to crack because they had painted coal-tar over wider than the required surface of the tree. In defence, M said
that the cracks were caused by the poor quality of the coal-tar as could be seen from similar cracks appearing in all newly painted trees on the estate. The clerk left without giving further instructions to M and his fellow tappers. Using their own discretion the latter began to peel cracked bark from the trees, throwing strips into a nearby drain. Nearly an hour after the kirani had left, the manager came and ordered the workers to stop throwing away the strips. He instructed them to collect the scrap and leave it in heaps by the side of the road from where he would arrange to get it sent to the factory. Since M had also had to collect latex from the trees within a specified period, M and four other tappers failed to carry out the manager's instructions that morning. At the weighing station the junior conductor told these tappers to present themselves at the Divisional Office in the afternoon. M reached the office a little later than the rest. The senior conductor of Division II asked him the reason for being late. M said he had fallen asleep after the mid-day meal and was able to get up only now. The senior conductor began counting M's mistakes and concluded that his work had been worse than the rest. He rubbed hard the point of M's late appearance at the Divisional Office by adding, "I can see why you are so inefficient in your work. You seem to experience great difficulty in being up and about on your feet". The personal aspersion enraged M, who shot back at the senior conductor, "If that is the case, anyone with defective
legs should be shot down by the manager's orders". The repartee hit the senior conductor directly because he still limped from a foot injury he had sustained in a motor cycle accident a few months earlier. Humiliated, he countered the insult by ringing up the manager and telling him what had passed between him and M. The manager suggested that while he hung up the receiver M should tender his apologies. This M refused to do, insisting that he still stood by what he had said. After this the senior conductor had another short conversation with the manager in English and then turning to M said that the manager had ordered his dismissal. M should go to the Main Office next morning to receive the letter of dismissal.

On the morning of 17/8/63 at 9 a.m., M went to the Main Office. The chief clerk took him to the manager who instructed M to take a month's salary and leave the estate immediately. On being asked the reason the manager said that M had misbehaved and that his loud voice could be heard even over the telephone. M came back and reported the matter to the union secretary on Division II but M did not have high hopes from the committee office bearers. The chairman is a kangany and "nobody can expect a kangany to go against the management". (Perumal kangany, who listened to our conversation, agreed with M, saying it was unwise of the people to choose a kangany as union chairman. "We kanganies are like the management's dogs. We cannot go against it.") The secretary, said M, is a weak person (maṭṭu-matari - literally, 'like a cow'). So M had come to Subramaniam.
Subramaniam had written a letter to the union (cankam), meaning thereby the NUPW headquarters, but there was no reply yet. Therefore, M persuaded Subramaniam to phone up the union officials. Subramaniam thought this course of action to be unnecessary because he knew the officials will be in Bintang Emas on 26/8/63. He promised to bring M's grievance to their notice on that day.
Social Situation 1 - Festival of Ati (Ati tiru-vila)  
August, 1962:

Four days prior to the beginning of Ati tiru-vila, the newly elected taruma-kartta and committee members from Divisions I and II met in the temple and decided that a general meeting should be convened to discuss the arrangements for the forthcoming event. Next day in the afternoon a tom-tom beater of the Palla caste announced the time and venue of the meeting from one 'line' to the other. At about 6 p.m. more than fifty persons assembled in the temple courtyard. The proceedings of the meeting were directed by Kandasamy kangany, the taruma-kartta from Division I, as well as the chairman of the community panchayat. There was a fair representation from both Divisions. The kangany began by announcing that he had been to the Divisional Office and was told by the assistant how much money there was for the celebration of the Ati tiru-vila. He continued, "All the kirani are extremely busy at this time of the month as they have got to complete the registers and send them on to the main office. Yet, it was their kindness that they let us know how much money we can get from the Welfare Fund. If we overspend, deductions shall have to be made from our wages". Since Kandasamy had gone alone to the Divisional Office, one of the committee members, Arokkiam, a young tapper and an active member of the youth association, began questioning the
kangany about the way in which accounts were kept in the office. The kangany explained to the best of his knowledge. In the meantime a lower caste committee member asked the kangany whether the money would be deducted from the check-roll or by committee members from each person. This question led to some debate. Sami washerman who had actually come to get the terms of his services in the ceremonies fixed suddenly spoke out, "Rice was first supplied by the estate, now it is not so. It seems that someone went to the manager and told him to stop making deductions from the check-roll against rice. Who was it?" Sami demanded. His sudden outburst evoked a roar of laughter from the crowd. Someone said, "Forget about those old stories. What is the point of dragging the rice issue here?" Arokkiam now took the initiative and felt there existed a strong case for deductions from the check-roll. He reminded people that the year before when the alternative method of money collection was adopted some persons from the factory division had escaped without payment. There the matter was settled. The next item in the evening's agenda was the allocation of duties and fixing terms of payment for the traditional functionaries. For various functions throughout the three-day long festival, three drummers, one washerman and one helper-priest were appointed on terms of payment in cash and kind (the latter only for the drummer and the washerman). The remuneration in kind for the washerman consisted of rice and cloth and that for the drummers of alcoholic drinks.
All this was done without much ado; there was hardly any participation by other members of the community and Kandasamy did most of the talking. The 'caste-servants' also accepted the terms without a word, all the time standing in an attitude of humility. Only when the appointment of a helper-priest was being finalised someone from Division II suggested a cut in the salary of the permanent priest on grounds of inefficiency and ill-maintenance of the temple. Kandasamy ruled out the issue as irrelevant for immediate consideration.

Two other matters were decided before this meeting, now being conducted under the light of pressure lamps, was to end at 10 p.m. The first of these concerned the evening entertainment to be provided on the two nights of the festival. There seemed a formidable difference of opinion as between the committee members of Divisions I and II on the question whether two films were to be shown on two consecutive nights or there should be one film-show and one drama. Gopal from Division II claimed that he spoke for 180 out of 200 members from his Division present in the meeting in holding that there should be a drama-evening. The itinerant drama party camped in Bintang Emas should be invited for the evening. A non-committee member kangany from Division I replied that the drama party had been refused in accordance with an opinion formed after consulting everybody. Now a non-committee member kangany from Division II pitched himself opposite the speaker from Division I and a heated debate followed. Accusations
were hurled at each other by young men speaking as representatives of their respective Divisions but betraying in effect the rivalry which has become institutionalised through youth associations between the young men of Divisions I and II born and bred in Malaya. To follow the proceedings of the meeting, the debate went on for an hour amid appeals by elderly persons of both Divisions for peace and unity. Then a solution was suggested. The non-committee member kangany from Division I whose statement had triggered off the debaters somehow suddenly grew agreeable to the suggestion that an effort should be made to invite the itinerant drama party if it had not yet moved away from the nearby town. (That it had actually left the town was known the very next morning and it is my guess that a prior knowledge of this fact was what made this kangany change his mind.) Nevertheless, the outcome was regarded as a signal victory by the youth of Division I and it found an immediate concrete expression in Elainyar kuzu's voluntary offer to assume the responsibility of decorating the temple at no cost to the temple committee. This meeting set the tone for much of the group action which followed until the end of the festival.

There was no direct participation by the kirani in the deliberations of the meeting but their co-operation was of paramount importance in setting the organisational machinery into action. We have seen how they exercised control through their knowledge of the fund; we shall note their influence in the subsequent events as
well. The first day of the celebration consisted of tying the sacred thread, hoisting the sacred flag at the temple and consecrating a metal pot (karakam) on the river bank. This day was not declared a holiday on the estate whereas the remaining two were. On this day there was heavy rainfall early in the morning which delayed the commencement of tapping by two hours (8 a.m. instead of the usual 6 a.m.). This interfered seriously with the routine envisaged by the committee. At least some of the committee members were required for supervision in the temple. Kandasamy kangany approached the assistant and got a day's paid leave sanctioned for himself and two other members of the committee. The assistant made several trips to the temple to find out if everything was in order. On being asked by the committee he even ordered the gravelling and cementing of the space in front of the temple - a gesture which was highly appreciated by the people.

The following other features of the festival may also be briefly noted:

1. In the temple feast on the second day the European manager came with his wife. Food and beer was served to them and to all members of the staff by certain committee members on tables in the school building adjoining the temple.

2. Film shows on both the nights were attended by staff members.
3. The details of expenditure in the festival had to be accounted for by the taruma-kartta in a general meeting held prior to the election of the new committee next year.

Social Situation 2 - Opening Ceremony of the New Group Tamil School in Bintang Emas, December, 1962:

When I first visited the Pal Melayu region in mid-1962, one could see a brand new building at the western end of the town of Bintang Emas along the Government road to Bunga Raya. This building was to house the New Group Tamil Primary School. At that time the school building was being painted by Chinese labourers. Painting was finished by early August and a meeting of the Building Committee was convened later in the same month to discuss (i) the levelling of the ground in front of the building; and (ii) fixing a date and other details for an inaugural function to be held in December. The Building Committee was chaired jointly by the assistant of Pal Melayu and two highly placed government officials of the district. The committee's treasurer was a kirani from an estate situated closest to Bintang Emas and its executive secretary, a teacher of the old Bintang Emas Tamil Primary School. One of the chairmen (the assistant of Pal Melayu), treasurer and executive secretary were respectively the chairman, vice-chairman and secretary of Bintang Emas M.I.C. Similarly there was a considerable overlap between the members of the
Building Committee and the local M.I.C. Committee members included an equal number of kirani from estates of the region and Indian businessmen from Bintang Emas. A small number of Tamil school teachers also sat on this committee. The composition of the committee gave an indication of co-operation between the government and the local M.I.C. in this venture. Part financing of the building by the Ministry of Education and participation of government officials in the inaugural function left no doubt that strong liaison between the M.I.C. and the government was a major contributory factor in the success of the project.

On a couple of evenings before the date set for the inauguration a few estate labourers and kanganies could be seen going to Bintang Emas and returning late in the night. Members of the musical band and M.I.C. committee representatives from Pal Melayu were prominent among them. They worked each evening to make a dais on the new school grounds and to decorate the school hall for the inaugural function. They were all praise for the zeal and hard work of the assistant, adding that he had been carrying them to and from Bintang Emas in his own car. On the day of the inauguration itself, the assistant arranged for a paid holiday for those helpers. The news of the forthcoming school inauguration was first conveyed to the labourers on Pal Melayu by these helpers as well as by the chairman of the community panchayat and a hospital assistant living on Pal Melayu but working at the government hospital in Bintang Emas. Besides
the members of the band, the community panchayat chairman and
the hospital assistant were the only residents of Pal Melayu to
receive formal invitations from the secretary of the Building
Committee. For the rest of the labourers who, being the main
contributors to the Fund, had to have a share in the celebrations,
a Tamil film was to be screened in the evening. The secretary of
the Building Committee requested the conductors of each Division
to convey this message to all labourers at the morning muster.
Word had also gone round the 'lines' that those who wanted to
inspect the school building might also attend the inauguration.
The time was not specified.

At 4 p.m. then, a number of men, but no women, started for
Bintang Ernas from Pal Melayu on bicycles, buses and five private
taxi run by estate labourers. A good number comprised regular
evening visitors to town for drinks, gossip and small purchases.
They went somewhat earlier that day to enable them to attend the
inauguration as well. There were also a few labourers who went
to the town and returned oblivious or unconcerned about the school
inauguration. I went to the function accompanied by an old
teacher of Pal Melayu Tamil Primary School and a young tapper who
holds a night class for estate children. When we reached the
school building at the officially stated time of 4.30 p.m., no
guests had arrived. Even committee members and local guests
were then only beginning to appear. Nevertheless, school children
(all Tamil) in their smart school uniforms lined both sides of a
gravel path leading from the entrance to the building. A teacher of the Bintang Emas school, son of the estate peon from Pal Melayu, accosted us near the entrance and asked me to park the car in a bamboo staked area outside the school compound. That this parking area would be converted into an open air cinema showground was apparent from a screen set up there on bamboo poles. The cars of all guests except V.I.P.s and top-organisers had to be parked there. As we walked down the gravel path, the children received a sign from their teacher (a middle-aged Tamil Christian lady) and shouted "Selamat Datang" (Malay for 'Welcome'). The treasurer of the Building Committee, who had just then arrived, came forward to greet us and requested us to be seated on chairs facing a wooden dais built on the school lawn. As we drew close to the building, the two teachers accompanying me hesitated in going over to the lawns to take seats where the treasurer had indicated. The reason for their hesitation soon became clear. It emanated from the same consciousness of status which had kept the estate labourers standing largely outside the school compound. As Tamil school teachers invited for the function, my friends felt free to come inside but they had their doubts about the propriety of sitting on chairs, especially while they could see other teachers and estate labourers still putting the final touches to decorations and arrangements for a tea party inside the hall. Indeed, as more guests came in (including the Inspector of Indian Schools and other district educational officers) they also stood
there - unattended and uncertain as to where they had to go.
At about 5 p.m., the assistant's car stopped right in front of
the building and the chairman of the Building Committee emerged,
dressed in a suit of sharkskin material. His arrival caused a
distinct stir; several Tamil school teachers came out of the
hall and the assistant instructed them to lead the guests to the
venue of the main function. Significantly enough, on seeing the
assistant, the teachers who had accompanied me from Pal Melayu
also merged themselves with those working inside the hall. I
joined other guests and we walked on to the lawn. There, without
prompting, the guests occupied their seats in front, middle or
back rows according to their social statuses.

Members of the band occupied seats to the left of the dais
which was richly decorated with multi-coloured festoons and flower
pots. They played Tamil film tunes to keep the audience
entertained. The assistant sent other members of the committee
also to take their seats while he continued his personal inspection
of the arrangements. The only Europeans to attend the function
were the State Educational Officer and a manager of a tin-mine.
The latter had had the land in front of the school building cleared
free of cost. He came with his wife and the couple took seats in
the front row of chairs. Others in the same row were - the
Educational Officer and the Inspector of Indian Schools. The
second row comprised more government officials of all three races
and some of the very rich Indian and Chinese businessmen of Bintang
The third and fourth rows consisted of kirani and other shopkeepers of the region. They were followed by school teachers, including members of various committees. A few rows at the back were empty. Behind the chairs stood a crowd of about 50 to 70 estate labourers.

The assistant kept pacing up and down the dais, arranging the tablecloth, placing chairs at the correct angle and so on. He found time to have a word with the leader of the band. Everyone now waited for the arrival of the chief guest, the Menteri Besar (Chief Secretary), who was to give a 'special speech' and perform the opening ceremony. The assistant apologised to the E.O. for the delay and for not introducing him to the European couple (the mine manager and his wife). After the introduction the three Europeans began to chat.

After another quarter of an hour the chief guest arrived, accompanied by the District Officer. Both V.I.P.s were Malays. The assistant met them at the car and offered them seats on the dais. The headmaster of the new school garlanded them. After it had been announced over the microphone that the 'national song' was going to be played and everyone was expected to stand, the assistant had second thoughts. He came to the E.O. for a quick consultation about the propriety of playing the State anthem instead of the national anthem. He had suddenly realised, said the assistant, that the band only knew how to play the former.
The E.O. answered inconclusively. The need for further consultation was obviated, however, by the band which now began playing the music they knew. Between the end of the anthem and the beginning of speeches, one reshuffle was made in the seating arrangement. The assistant noticed that after he and two other guests had occupied seats on the dais two more chairs were empty. To these he now invited the E.O. and the editor of a national Tamil-language newspaper. Thus, five V.I.P.s sat on the dais.

Speeches were made in the following order:–
1. "Welcoming Speech" by the D.O. (in Malay);
2. Chairman, the Building Committee (in Malay, Tamil and English);
3. Education Officer (in Malay);
4. "Special Speech" by the chief guest (in Malay);
5. Editor, Tamil newspaper (in Tamil);
6. "Vote of Thanks" by the secretary of Building Committee (in Tamil).

Here it is possible only to indicate the main theme of the various speeches. Representatives of the government, including the chief guest, congratulated the public and the Building Committee on their achievement. But the central point of their speeches was the promise which the school held and the task it had to fulfil. This was the moulding of "responsible, self-respecting and law-abiding citizens of the country". The suggestion was made,
though implicitly, by the District Officer, that the school symbolised the government's solicitude for protecting the interests of ethnic minorities. The Education Officer emphasised the role of educational institutions, such as the present school, "in forging a Malayan outlook which would be a pillar of strength to the united Malayan nation". The speech by the editor of the Tamil newspaper was repeatedly applauded by estate workers; the main reason being that they could follow all that he said. Of course, applause was most sustained on points where the speaker enumerated the contributions of Tamil language and culture to Malayan culture. The chairman of the Building Committee first spoke in Malay then in Tamil and finally in English. (None of these was his mother tongue, however.) The content of his speech was very similar to his opening message entitled "Forward" (Sic) published in the School Souvenir. He spoke on behalf of the Building Committee referring to it as "my Building Committee". The speech contained a vote of thanks, generally to all those who contributed to the Fund and particularly to certain individuals who had been most helpful. It also contained an exhortation to the new Board of Managers and to school teachers. There was a brief survey of what his committee had achieved, setting out the essential details of the school building and the members of staff and students. While paying a tribute to all estate workers who contributed to the Fund, the chairman selected for special mention - "for their inspiration" - the people of Pal Melayu and
two other estates belonging to the same Company. At the end of
the speech he placed a suggestion before the Ministry of Education
that a secondary school be opened in Bintang Emas. The choice of
the medium of instruction whether Malay or English could be left
to the Ministry. He assured officials of the Ministry that the
move would have the whole-hearted support of the public of
Bintang Emas. One or two formal aspects of his speech also need
to be noted. He began his speech and ended it with the mention
of God. To many in the audience his pronunciation of certain
Malay and Tamil words sounded funny and one could see some people,
including the Malay VIPs on the dais, unable to resist a smile.

A formal inauguration ceremony followed the speeches. The
guests moved to the foyer of the school hall. A large
ceremonial lamp had been placed here at the suggestion of two
Tamil members of the Building Committee. In the traditional
Tamil style, amid blowing of conch shells, the lamp was lighted
by the editor of the Tamil newspaper. The assistant then offered
sandal wood paste to the guests and a teacher sprinkled rosewater.
After this Tamil ceremony, the chief guest performed the
westernised ceremony of cutting the ribbon. Then the guests
entered the hall where tables had been arranged for a tea party
for nearly a hundred people. Teachers of the school were posted
at each of the two entrances to prevent uninvited estate labourers
from gate-crashing. The VIPs were led to a rostrum in the hall
and they occupied three long tables arranged there in the
following manner:

Chief guest, D.O., E.O.,
editor of Tamil newspaper and some members
of Building Committee.

Other members
of Building Committee, head-
master of the
English Secondary School, tin-mine
manager and his
wife.

Businessmen of
Bintang Emas,
newspaper reporters,
businessmen of
Bunga Raya.

Below the rostrum, the hall was fully occupied by sets of smaller tables, each with four chairs. The band played music in one corner of the hall where a microphone had been installed. A male crooner singing Tamil film songs had now joined the band. The grand spectacle of so many people enjoying a tea party and the enthralling music of the band attracted a host of estate workers who now thronged the galleries outside the hall. In due course, the teachers posted at the entrances also joined their friends at the tea party; a number of onlookers now entered the hall. Those who could find a seat joined the tea party, others began an inspection tour of the building.

Back in the labour 'lines' some of the people unable to join the tea party complained, "Why should there have been discrimination? We also paid our wages for the Fund, why should have we been debarred from the tea party?" Perhaps the complaints would have been fewer had some estate workers not joined the tea party - either as invited guests or gate-crashers.
But the number of even the latter was very small. Broadly, the smaller tables in the school hall were occupied by those who sat in the middle and back rows at the inaugural function preceding the tea party. It must be said, however, that members of the band and other helpers were most satisfied with the happy conclusion of the function. As before, they dwelt largely on the great impression created on "big government officials" by the assistant (cinna-turai). It was through his efforts, they said, that the estate was able to earn a good name in the whole district. Many estate labourers agreed with them, especially those who had enjoyed the film show organised for them by the Building Committee.

Social Situation 2 brings the entire social field into focus. The opening ceremony drew its participants not only from estates and towns of the region but also from the State capital. In the function there were representatives of four ethnic groups - Indian, Malay, European and Chinese - in that order of numerical strength. However, popular attendance in the ceremony was confined only to Indians. Malays, Europeans, Chinese and a few Indians came to fulfill their roles as government officials, patrons or political allies of the M.I.C. while the majority of invited Indians were there by virtue of the offices they held on various associations and committees. Yet by far the largest number of participants were Indian estate labourers who came either uninvited or on verbal invitation. Most of them had contributed
to the Building Fund, however. They participated in the ceremony as onlookers. Among these onlookers, estate labourers from Pal Melayu outnumbered all others. It can be legitimately said that labourers from Pal Melayu came in such large numbers because of two interrelated factors:—

(i) From its inception the Building Fund had become identified with cinna-turai's leadership of the regional M.I.C. The opening ceremony was a culmination of his efforts and people from Pal Melayu attended the celebrations through a feeling of personal pride as labourers of the Company whose official had organised the show. There was a latent feeling of rivalry with labourers of other estates as could be deduced from their repeated emphasis on the facts that "we of three estates belonging to this Company contributed the largest amount" and "our (the three estates) names appear foremost in the list of donors engraved on the foundation stone".

(ii) There existed better knowledge about the programme among Pal Melayu labourers. The assistant's helpers, including senior conductors on both Divisions, in their different ways spread the word among labourers, especially the news about the film show.

Throughout the celebration these labourers behaved with deference and demeanour towards their bosses, the super kirani and
other kirani as was apparent in their reluctance, by and large, to occupy chairs - in their wishing to appear helpful in the assistant's presence, and in their acceptance, again with some exceptions, of the role of onlooker during the tea party. Their attitude towards the speeches in Malay was one of acceptance without much understanding. The speeches were not discussed at all. It was said, however, that cinna-turai spoke in three languages, including Tamil. Only a few young men and some boys studying at the secondary school commented adversely, but good humouredly, on the cinna-turai's faulty Malay. Most of the labourers came back impressed with the grandeur of the celebration and of the school building. They made a special point of visiting the flush latrines, and some people said that the cushioned chairs inside the teachers' room were very comfortable.

For the assistant, the success of the function was a triumph of his personal leadership. It was a clear proof of his ability to interact harmoniously with the heads of other communities and with government officials. It enhanced his position in the local M.I.C. The public of Bintang Emas marvelled at the esprit de corps existing between the assistant and the labourers of his estate. The assistant's proposal to press education authorities for a secondary school was generally welcomed. A few days later when a kangany approached him to use his influence for getting a shophouse on rent jointly for three boys studying at the secondary school in Bunga Raya, the assistant, standing in his house facing
the Government road, is reported to have said, "My area of influence lies on the righthand side and not to the left. Wait for a couple of years and we shall have everything for your children in Bintang Emas". The statement was a measure of the confidence with which the assistant viewed his own leadership after the successful school opening.

**Social Situation 3 - Strike on Pal Melayu, March 1963:**

A series of events led to a two-day strike by the Pal Melayu labourers in March, 1963. I shall here enumerate these events in their rough time sequence to form the factual background for a subsequent analysis.

On December 25th (Christmas Day) 1962, there was double tapping on the estate. This meant that tappers had to tap twice the number of trees they tap daily and also that they were kept in the work two to two and a half hours longer than the usual. It was known to the labourers and kanganies that the manager had gone to the State capital the night before and that the clerks (10 out of 12 being Christians) would take an unofficial holiday on Christmas Day. In this situation the kanganies of Division I permitted their tappers to begin collecting latex a quarter of an hour earlier than the due time. This was noted by the assistant who now appeared on his motor cycle "but drove on to his bungalow without saying a word". At about 2.30 p.m., as the second collection was about to finish, he reappeared and called for
explanations from the kangani, one by one. He used abusive language. He pushed aside the kangani who were weighing latex and began to record the readings himself. This, they say, he could not do successfully since he was heavily drunk. Most of the kangani had stood and listened tongue-tied to the scolding but Ponnusamy kangany, taking an utterance from the assistant at its literal meaning, soon collected his kangany tools and left for the 'lines'. From the next day till the 31st he was not given work for his 'cheekiness'. Two days after the incident these kangani had gone to the Divisional Office to ask the reason why Ponnusamy was not given work. The assistant is reported to have restated Ponnusamy's faults but he also did something more. He took his motor cycle and made for his bungalow. From there he gave a ring to the senior conductor, Division I, telling him to convey his apologies to the kangani for his behaviour on the 25th. He admitted having been drunk at that time and of having also made faults in weighing latex.

But this was only the beginning. It soon became evident to all workers that the assistant's supervision of the tasks was getting more and more strict and involved elements hitherto unknown. This was the usual talk in the 'lines' between husbands and wives and in other informal gossip groups as among men in the dhobi's house or among women gathered to play dice in the house of Abbu driver. The main themes of these complaints were: (a) The assistant had made it a practice to be present at the muster.
This was a new development. (b) More novel and definitely annoying was his practice of frequenting the tappers' tasks accompanied by one or two conductors, probationer conductors and bark inspector. Each member of his team would try to find a specific fault in the worker's tapping. To quote a young tapper, "One fellow will say that the line is going down and another that there is a wound in the tree. A third person will complain that the bark is thicker and since the fourth one has also to say something, he will add that the tree is black".

(c) There were growing complaints about the abusive behaviour of the assistant in talking to both male and female workers at the muster ground, in the tasks and at the Divisional Office. In an increasing number of cases, insults were hurled at people in groups. An illustration of this, which was reported to me in confidence by two informants - a tapper and a member of the staff - (but which was openly stated in the meeting on the eve of the strike) was the assistant's use of obscene language in scolding women tappers who were late for the muster since they had to put the infants in the creche. These were all complaints centered on the work situation.

At the beginning of the New Year, it became known that the present manager of Pal Melayu was to be transferred. The man to succeed him had earlier served as a temporary manager of Pal Melayu for a year. Announcing his appointment to me one day, the assistant added, "He is a more approachable man". It was also the general feeling among the labourers that the new manager
would be more lenient than the past manager. A few days after the new manager's arrival, the assistant said this to a group of kanganees in the Divisional Office, "You should all try that our estate should get first place in tapping among all the estates of this Company. Last year we stood second. Now, do not be under the misconception that since most of you have served this Company for a long time your inefficiency will be tolerated. If I find anyone of you lagging in duty, I will serve notice to him. I have no work here for people who are bad workers yet proud of their long service". The assistant's words were seen to tally with his general attitude of strictness. Stories began to circulate in the 'lines' about the new manager's inefficiency and disrepute in the Company. The rumour had it that the manager was on probation and that his stay in the office would be confirmed only if he could maintain the production level. For this reason, it was suggested, he had delegated all his power and authority to the assistant.

It was not until the estate branch of the union became involved in the situation that a collective mobilisation of opinion was possible. One of the last incidents in the chain of events leading to the strike was the assistant's warning to the local union chairman's son that he would be beaten with shoes if he did not leave the office premises. This man had gone to him to ask for work after he had been stopped for a few days on grounds of having made wounds in the trees. There was a meeting of the
union the same evening in which it was decided that a letter should be sent to the manager, reporting the exact words employed by the assistant. From now on to the next week several other complaints were lodged with the local union secretary. Finally, there was an incident in which the union chairman himself was involved. This was again in connection with the work situation. Like his son, the chairman went to the Divisional Office and asked the assistant to be sent back to his job; likewise, he was ordered out in a torrent of abuse. Perhaps the assistant underestimated the chairman's pertinacity for the latter came back with all his committee members who demanded from the assistant an explanation for his rude behaviour. The assistant took the offensive line; not only did he refuse to listen to them but ordered that none of them would have work on the next day. The chairman was adamant and went to the muster ground again on the following morning. The assistant was also present. The chairman again asked for work and again there was an outburst from the assistant. But the chairman had won his point; he now had the entire workforce as witness to the assistant's use of invective. From 2.30 p.m. till 4 p.m. the chairman and committee members went from 'line' to 'line' on the estate, asking one and all to come to a public meeting in the temple that evening. This meeting was heavily attended and its proceedings began under the leadership of the union chairman. He called upon everyone who had a grievance against the management to speak out and several
men and women detailed their sufferings. Ironically enough, when the chairman described the incident which had led to the stoppage of his work, all his three witnesses (fellow workers) backed out. An anti-climax was averted by Arokkiam, a neo-literate young tapper, who spoke non-stop for 45 minutes and with his speech carried the day. He began with an incisive criticism of those, who, like the chairman's witnesses, hold back the truth out of fear and went on to emphasise the fact that as estate workers they lived in an independent country. Arokkiam gave the instance of the 18th century France when the people were very foolish. But then, said he, Rousseau wrote a declaration which awakened the people and they mustered courage to execute the tyrant king. Then he cited recent examples from India and Malaya to show how ordinary illiterate people had been able to bring any injustice to the notice of the highest administration. "There was nothing which could not be achieved by organised action", concluded Arokkiam. His speech was warmly responded to by cries of "We don't want to go to work tomorrow" ("nālaiKKu veIaiKKu pokku vaṉam"). But now Arokkiam preached moderation. He said and I quote, "This estate is giving us food and we should not give loss to the estate. We should let the manager have his income. We should go to work tomorrow. Let us report all our troubles to the manager".

On the same evening, however, the details of the meeting were conveyed to the assistant by certain of his well-known agents
among the workers. Infuriated by the reports, said my informants, he made it a point to be present at the muster again next morning. Then he openly dared the labourers to try and remove him. He threatened them all with dismissal and said that they should be warned for the future. Then he saw the chairman, arriving late for his work, and unleashed his verbal fury on him for carrying a report to the manager. The chairman did not speak a word but went straight to the task of the union secretary. From there the chairman and secretary contacted the other committee members and a strike was decided upon. Within a matter of minutes they contacted all the workers and the strike started.\footnote{Owing to circumstances beyond my control, I was unable to observe the actual progress of the strike on Pal Melayu.}
Labourers of Pal Melayu celebrating the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi in 1937.
Weighing.

Tapping.

Weighing.
Men and women labourers queueing outside the Divisional Office to receive wages on pay-day. Children in the foreground waiting for their 'tips'. 
Two women labourers from neighbouring 'lines' have a last chat before retiring for the night. Note the sleepy child resting on his mother's knee.

A working mother gives her child a bath in the afternoon; her six year old daughter helps.
A man worshipping ancestors on the death anniversary of his parents. His married son (sitting on the floor) has come to join in the worship from another Division of the estate. Among objects of worship on the table note a pair of wrapper skirts, belonging to deceased parents.
An old kangany giving his grandchild money to buy a pencil. Women in the foreground playing dice.
Kaka (Malabari Muslim) shopkeeper at his shop counter.
A girls' 'cittu by lots'.

A Sikh clothseller from town displaying his wares in the labour 'lines'.
Skinning a goat for Tipavali.

Funeral procession for a child with the father carrying the corpse on his bicycle carrier. Beside the father is a Valluvar priest and behind him is a washerman.
Pal Melayu music band before the start of the opening ceremony of the New Group Tamil Primary School at Bintang Emas.

The Secretary of the Building Committee speaking at the School opening ceremony. In the background, the V.I.P.s.
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