

Transformation of Rice Farming and Rural Life in a Kelantan Village

Akimi FUJIMOTO*

I. Introduction

Rice farming was the specially reserved occupation for the Malays under British control and its political and economic status remained practically unchanged for many years after Independence.¹⁾ The Government of Malaysia became very active in modernizing rice farming and supporting Malay rice farmers, initiating drastic changes over the past three decades in rice production structure, represented perhaps by the introduction of rice double-cropping for some period and the emergence of abandoned rice fields in a later period. The latter phenomenon was a reflection of the rapid growth of the non-agricultural sectors which absorbed a large volume of rural labour under the New Economic Policy implemented from 1971 to 1990.

As rice producers, Malay farmers have traditionally centred their life around the conduct of rice farming. There have been a large number of studies made on the nature and process of changes in rice policy, technology and support institutions in Malaysia,²⁾ but there exists a serious vacuum in our knowledge of actual change in the life of rice farmers especially in the face of rapidly improving farming conditions and macroeconomic environment during the 1970s and 80s. How do Malay rice farmers live now? We know that they produce and eat rice, but do we know how they mill and cook their rice? Do we know if they use an electric rice cooker, like the majority of city residents, or depend on wood fuel for cooking? When do they have free time and what they do with their leisure? We know that many youngsters do not want to work on the farm, but who will produce rice and what will happen to rice farming in the future? These are just some of the unanswered questions related to rice farming and the mode of rural living in Malaysia.

This paper aims to document the nature and process of transformation in rice farming and the

life of Malay farmers, based on my successive surveys of a rice growing village in Kelantan. The village studied is Kampung Hutan Cengal in Pasir Mas District and a farmer, hereafter referred as MAR, was especially chosen for a detailed description of change in the mode of rural living. I have already written a number of books and papers on rice technology, farm management and some aspects of social structure in this village,³⁾ but the way farmers live remains largely unrecorded. Therefore, what I attempt in this paper is a description of the change in the life of a Malay farmer and his family under the changing farming environment for rice production. It is considered that the nature and style of a farmer's life is principally determined by the mode of production which is in turn influenced by ecology, infrastructure, technology, institutions, and economics.

However, a village society and farmers' life herewithin are not necessarily closed to outer worlds, and in the Malaysian rural context, the extensive impact from many types of development projects has certainly been felt. It is important to take into account these external influences on the change of rural life. In other words, this paper attempts to trace recent changes in village life resulting from drastic changes in production and living environments. By so doing, it is hoped to clarify the nature and characteristics of such recent change in the mode of living among farmers in the Malay rice growing village.

For this purpose, a lengthy interview survey was conducted anew in November 1994 with MAR in order to obtain more information on his personal and family history as well as the state of rice farming prior to the introduction of double-cropping. In fact, I first lived in his house while conducting a farm management survey from 1973 to 1974, and have since then paid repeated visits to follow up rapid developments in rice farming and village life. Sources of information, on which this paper is based, therefore include my own observation of technological change and cultural

* Tokyo University of Agriculture.

transformation in this village over the past two decades, in addition to the most recent interview survey.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Following the introduction, a brief description of MAR's life development and major changes in rice farming in this village will be presented in chronological order in the second section. The third section will focus on technological and institutional changes in rice farming as well as the farmers' responses in production activities especially with reference to the introduction of rice double-cropping. This will be followed in the fourth section by discussions of changes in life style, using the case of MAR and his family. An attempt will also be made to highlight more generally symbolic changes in social involvement of villagers during the past two decades in the fifth section. The last section will constitute the summary and conclusions.

II. Chronological Development in Life and Rice Farming

In order to prepare for more sophisticated discussions in the following sections, it may be useful at this stage to have an overall understanding of

changes in rice farming and farmers' living in the study village. Figure 1 shows the location of the study village in Kelantan, while Figures 2 and 3 show the state of the village in 1973 and 1994 respectively. Using the case of MAR, let me present chronologically the happenings of his life and rice farming in this village as follows:

- 1927 MAR born in Kampung Paloh, Mukim Paloh, Daerah Kubang Sepat, Jajahan Pasir Mas, Negri Kelantan.
- 1935 At the age of 8, he entered Sekolah Melayu Tendong, which was established in 1922 and provided four year elementary education.
- 1939 After 5 years, he completed schooling and began to help father farming.
- 1941 Engaged in wage employment in Kota Bharu. Japanese Occupation began in December. During the Occupation, he remained in the village and helped father farming.
- 1945 End of the Japanese Occupation and the return of the British to Malaya.
- 1947 At the age of 20, MAR married to HAB. Lived with her parents and helped their family farming in Kampung Hutan Cengal, Mukim Hutan Cengal, Daerah Kubang Sepat, Jajahan Pasir Mas, Negri Kelantan.

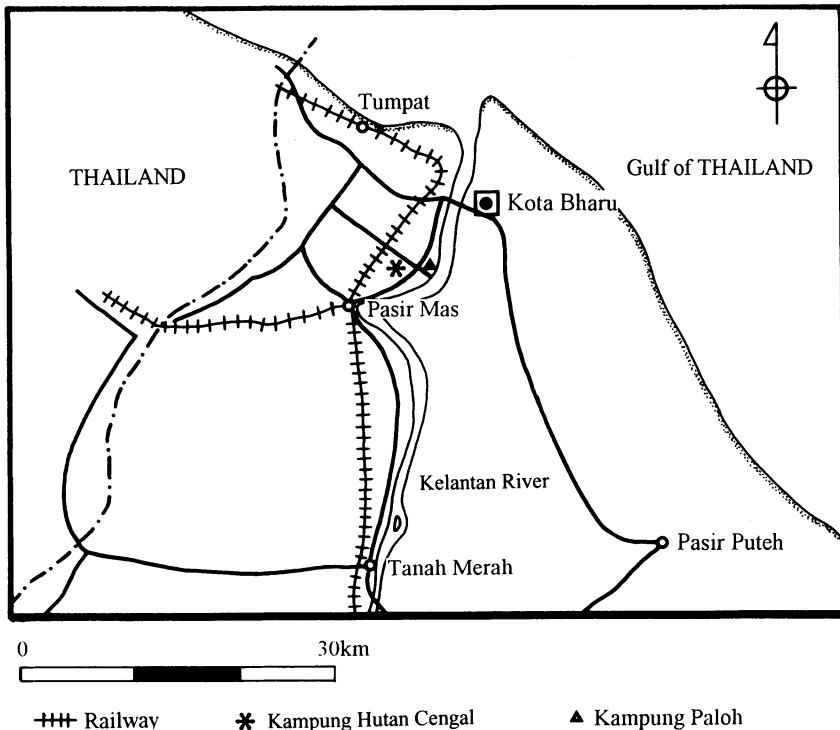


Figure 1. Kelantan and Location of the Study Village.

Transformation of Rice Farming and Rural Life in a Kelantan Village (Fujimoto)

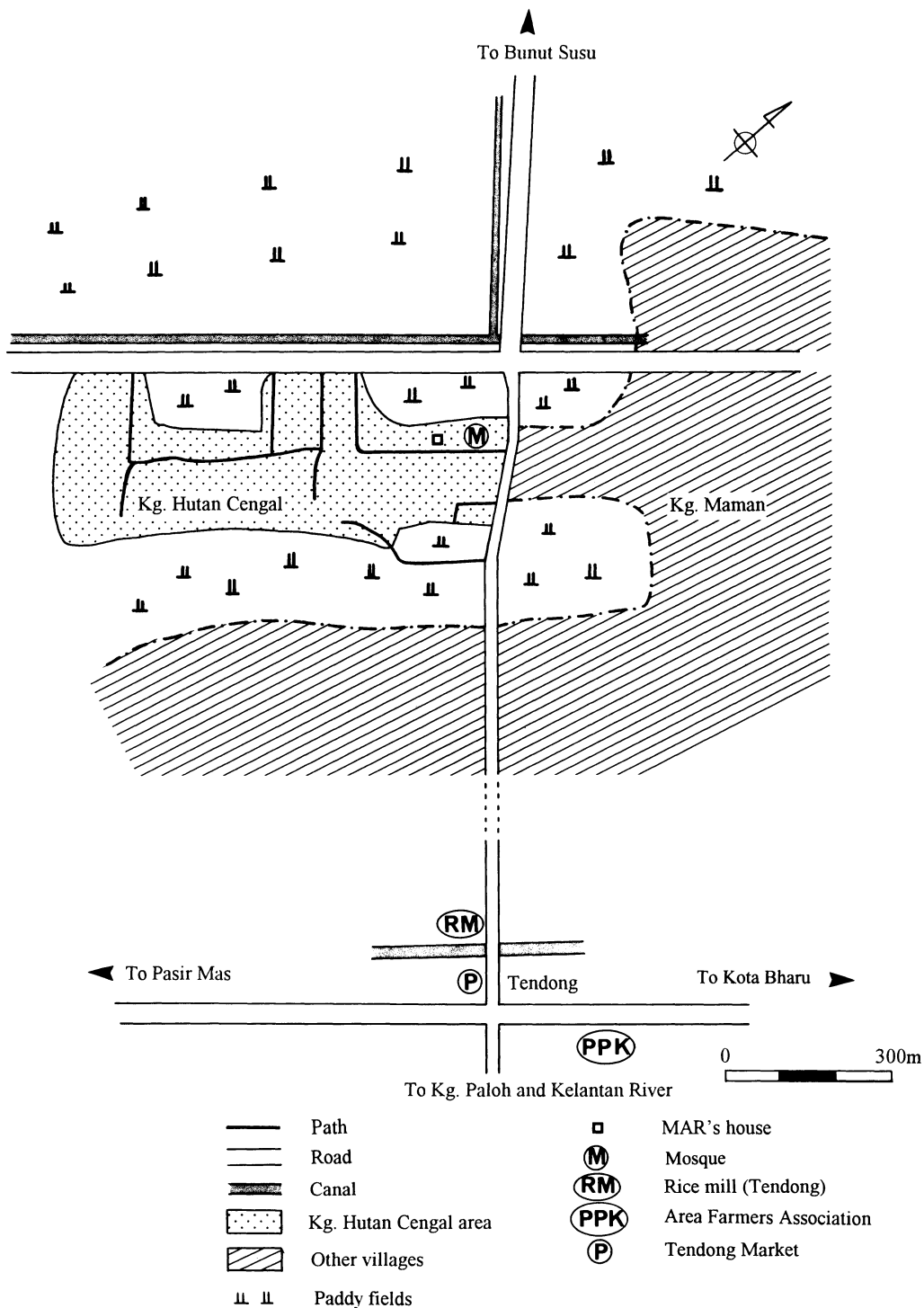


Figure 2. Map of Kampung Hutan Cengal and Surroundings (1973).

Transformation of Rice Farming and Rural Life in a Kelantan Village (Fujimoto)

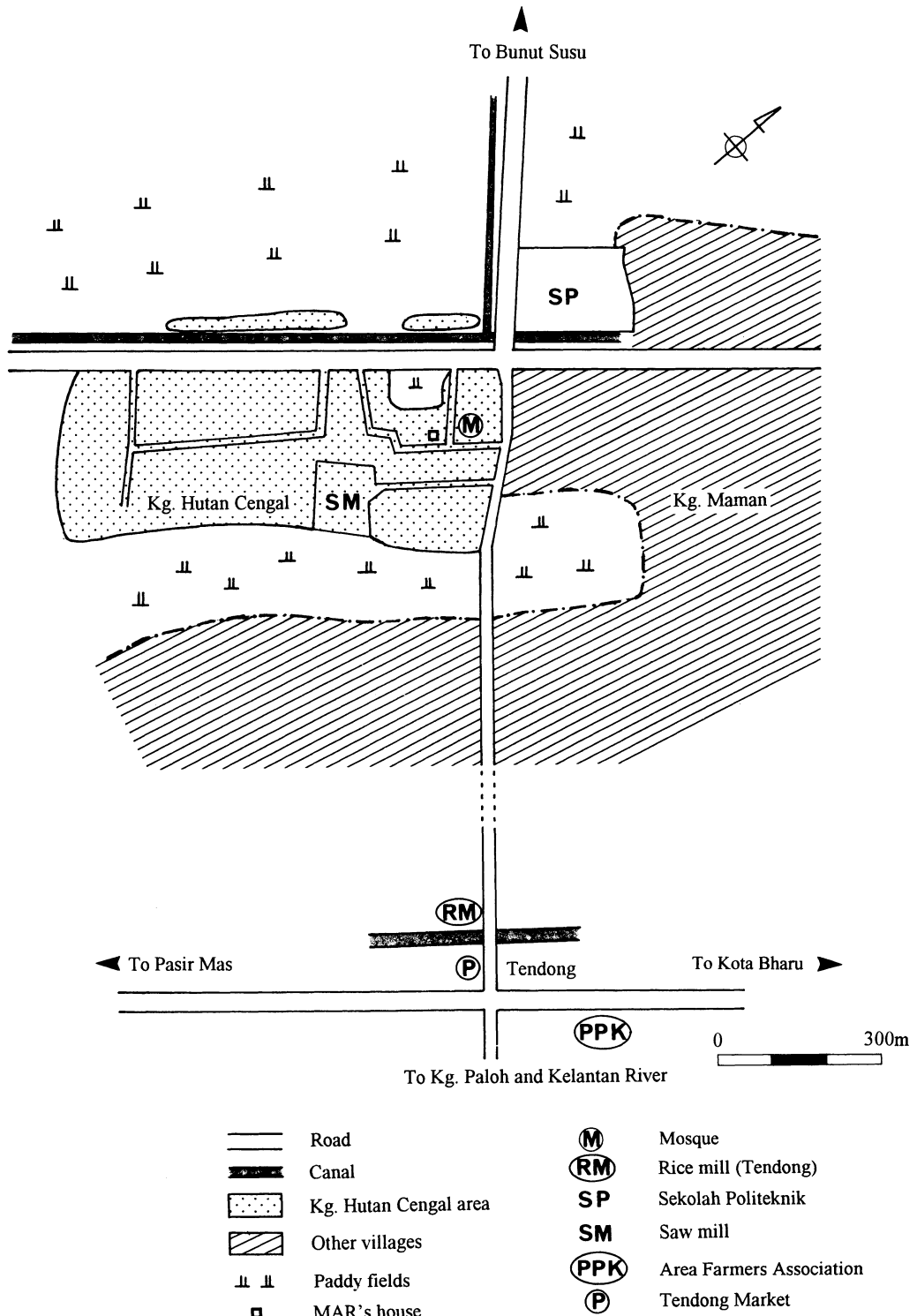


Figure 3. Map of Kampung Hutan Cengal and Surroundings (1994).

Transformation of Rice Farming and Rural Life in a Kelantan Village (Fujimoto)

- 1948 Purchased 0.75 acres of paddy land at 500 ringgit in the neighbouring Kampung Maman.
- 1950 MAR inherited 0.75 acres of paddy land from father in Kampung Maman. Wife also inherited 1.50 acres of paddy land and 0.50 acre of homeyard from her mother in Kampung Hutan Cengal. First son, HM, was born in November.
- 1952 Built and moved into a small house on the homeyard inherited by his wife.
- 1954 A mosque was constructed in Kampung Hutan Cengal.
- 1955 Purchased 0.25 acre of paddy land at 400 ringgit in Kampung Hutan Cengal.
- 1957 Malaya obtained Independence as Federation of Malaya.
- 1959 A Rice Mill Cooperative was established in Tendong, Kubang Sepat.
- 1962 Rice double-cropping began with the first dry season rice planted in April under the Pasir Mas Irrigation Scheme, which was constructed by 1961. Together with new variety, water nursery, sickle harvesting and *tong padi* threshing were introduced.
- 1964 Purchased 0.25 acre of paddy land at 600 ringgit in Kampung Hutan Cengal. Second son, JM, was born.
- 1965 Rebuilt the house on the same homeyard.
- 1967 Kubang Sepat Farmers Association was established. First son completed secondary school and went to help his uncle's family farming in Pahang for two years.
- 1968 MAR was recommended by the Musharat Kampung Hutan Cengal (a decision-making committee consisting of 12 prominent villagers) to be Penghulu. The Kota Bharu-Pasir Pekan bridge was completed as the first one over the Kelantan River.
- 1970 First son returned home from Pahang and began helping family farming.
- 1971 New Economic Policy was introduced.
- 1973 First son married to RGY and continued to stay at home.
- 1974 First grandchild (girl) born.
- 1975 First son got employed by Jabatan Telekom and posted in Kuantan, Pahang. He and his family went to live in the capital city of Pahang for three years.
- 1978 First son got transferred to Kota Bharu. His family returned home. As a result of state election in July, Barisan National pushed PAS out of the state control. MAR got fired from Penghulu. Second son completed secondary school and entered vocational school in Trengganu.
- 1980 Padi Subsidy Scheme introduced.
- 1981 Electricity installed and a saw mill constructed in the village. MAR installed a pump over a well and built a toilet within the water area. RGY got employed as a Government clerk and posted in Kuala Lumpur. She went to work there alone for one year.
- 1982 Sekolah Politeknik was established adjacent to the village. MAR sold 0.75 acre of paddy land acquired in 1948 in Kampung Maman as part of the school yard (4,500 ringgit). Wife passed away in February. RGY was transferred to Kota Bharu and returned home. Second son returned home after 5 years of vocational training but soon got employed and went to Kuala Lumpur to work as a Government servant. All the properties of late wife transferred to the second son.
- 1984 Pilgrimage to Mecca from March to June with the total expenditure of 4,100 ringgit and food expenses. MAR remarried in August.
- 1985 Rented out all paddy land under share tenancy arrangement. A combine harvester made the first appearance in the area.
- 1986 Pre-germinated direct-seeding was first introduced in the village.
- 1987 First son built and moved into own house on the homeyard inherited by his wife in the village (total expense of 60,000 ringgit).
- 1989 MAR purchased 0.20 acre of orchard at 600 ringgit in Kampung Bachok and planted such fruit trees as durian, rambutan and mangosteen.
- 1990 Price subsidy was raised by 50%. Began planting paddy on 2 acres while leaving the rest of land rented out under share tenancy.
- 1993 MAR renovated part of the house, kitchen and bath room, at the cost of 2,000 ringgit. Purchased 0.9 acre of forest at 14,000 ringgit and cleared it to plant fruit trees such as durian, rambutan, mangosteen and banana.
- In short, MAR is one of the farmers in the area who have experienced ups and downs in their life as well as economic activity of rice farming during the last half century. At the age of 67, he seems to be mentally prepared for closing of his life while planting fruit trees which will bear some produce in five years time. He kept telling me in

1994 that he would be able to eat some of the fruits with me in the future, should he remain living and I would come during the fruit season. It seemed to me that he was quite satisfied with his life so far. What happened and what he experienced in the past are now to be discussed in detail in the following sections.

III. Modernization of Rice Farming

The most significant change in rice farming, which caused dramatic alterations in the economic structure as well as the mode of living in the Malay rice growing village, was the introduction of rice double-cropping. This section is devoted to the presentation of rice farming practice before and after the introduction of double-cropping in this village, and by so doing, social, economic, and cultural implications for farmers' lives are highlighted through the evolution caused by double-cropping.

Rice Cultivation during the Single Cropping Era

The rainy season extends from September to January, and the dry season from February to August on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Unlike continental Southeast Asia, there is some amount of rainfall during the dry months in Peninsular Malaysia, but it is certainly insufficient for rice growing. It was therefore the traditional practice for farmers to grow rice only once a year during the rainy season. Common varieties planted were *padi segupat* and *morak*. Although transplanting method (*mencedon*) predominated in rain-fed fields, drill seeding (*tugal beni padi atas tanah kering*) was practised in those fields which were rather high-lying and so did not long retain water. Prior to the provision of irrigation water, it was estimated, the former method was practised on 80–90% and the latter 10–20% of the area planted by the villagers in Kampung Hutan Cengal.

An interesting practice in relation to transplanting was the preparation of upland nursery (*semai kering*) nearby a house, not in the paddy field. Farmers cleared a small plot of upland (*tanah kampung*) with cattle or buffalo and broadcast seed over the entire area without preparing seed beds. Immediately after broadcasting, the field was raked by cattle or buffalo to prepare small ditches. The amount of seeds required for transplanting into one acre field was 5 gantang (12.5 kg/acre or 3.1 kg/10a). Land was, of course, more or less in dry condition, and no water was artificially supplied. Fertilizer was not applied at

all, nor was pesticide. The nursery was prepared at the beginning of the rainy season, cleared at the beginning of September and seeds broadcast from the middle to the end of September. With occasional rainfalls, seeds usually germinated within one week and seedlings were let grow there about 40 days. Seedlings grew to as tall as 50 cm and entered the tillering stage. Meantime, farmers prepared the main fields with buffalo, and transplanting was carried out in November. Seedlings were however cut at the top end and transplanted at about 30 cm intervals. Approximately two months later, some amount of organic fertilizer, home made cow dung and ash, were applied to the plant. This was about all farmers did before harvesting in March. With this practice, they could obtain 300–400 gantang of paddy per acre (1.88–2.50 tons/ha).

In contrast, drill seeding was practised in August or September, prior to the preparation of upland nursery. This method required three-time ploughing with cattle or buffalo of the fields in dry condition in July. On the prepared fields, farmers dug small holes (*lobang*) at about 30 cm intervals with a wooden stick and placed 3–4 seeds in each hole. Seeds were buried at 3–4 cm deep by treading over the hole. The amount of seeds required was the same as for transplanting; 5 gantang per acre. About a week after being placed in the soil, seeds germinated. Two or three weeks later, weeding was carried out by hand, immediately followed by application of home-made organic fertilizer; a handful of the mixture of cow dung and ash was placed on each hill. No more work was required for growing paddy until harvesting in March, but farmers could obtain about the same yield as transplanting; 300–400 gantang per acre.

Whichever method farmers adopted, the traditional photo-period sensitive varieties were planted and thus ripened in March. Harvesting was carried out by a hand knife (*ketam*) jointly by male and female members of the family. It has been reported that Malay farmers practised various rituals related to rice cultivation, the most important one being that related to the spirit of paddy (*semangat padi*). Paddy field was conceived as a pregnant woman, while the harvest was equivalent to the birth of a baby. In the study village, too, prior to harvesting of the main crops the farmers very carefully and gratefully brought home the paddy spirit or the rice baby and placed in the rice store.⁴⁾ They believed that the spirit was vested in specially tall ripened plants in the

fields. Therefore, 7 such panicles were first cut and brought home in the early morning, after which they began harvesting all other ripened panicles. The 7 panicles were kept in the store for 7 days and then could be put together with other panicles for threshing and milling. However, with the change in value system, the farmers gradually ceased to practise paddy rituals, and MAR in fact had stopped the paddy spirit ritual by the end of the 1940s. It was said that the last of such practices was the beginning of the 1950s in this village.

The harvested panicles were dried and stored. Whenever the necessity arose, they were threshed by treading, winnowed, hulled by wooden tool, and polished by wooden miller. For marketing, too, paddy had to be milled first by the farmers, and milled rice was sold at home or at the market in Tendong. The price of milled rice was 1.20 ringgit per gantang (3.6 kg). Because the process was time-consuming, no farmers could mill a large volume of paddy at one time. In other words, during the era of rice single-cropping in this village, there was no large-scale commercial rice farming whereby paddy was milled and sold in the form of milled rice by the producers directly to consumers. The practice of selling paddy to rice mills or rice dealers was not observed during most of the single-cropping era. Only in 1959 was a cooperative formed and a machine operated rice mill established in Tendong. This had a significant impact on rice milling in the area in that the farmers no longer had to mill paddy themselves by traditional tools but could have paddy grains milled at the cooperative rice mill by paying a contract fee. Although the form of sale was also changed to paddy from milled rice, the volume of production was still limited and farmers mainly grew paddy for home consumption.

It may be added that the division of labour by sex was clearly established on the West Coast area: uprooting of seedlings, transplanting and reaping were the main tasks performed by females, while ploughing, transporting of seedlings, threshing were carried out exclusively by males. However, in Kelantan, the heavy work with animals was certainly practised exclusively by males, but all other rice operations were jointly carried out by both male and female workers. Thus, as mentioned earlier, harvesting with hand knife was also done not only by female but also male workers in the village. The social and cultural implications of the differences in labour practice may be an important subject of study for clarifying re-

gional features of Malay village society, but this paper will not go into this issue.

Establishment of Rice Double-Cropping

The first irrigation project constructed for rice double-cropping in Kelantan was Salor Irrigation Scheme, completed in 1958 on the right bank of the Kelantan River. On the other side of the river, the second oldest project, Pasir Mas Irrigation Scheme was constructed in 1961 and began supplying water from the dry season in 1962. Kampung Hutan Cengal is located within this project area and thus began receiving irrigation water in April 1962, entering into the era of rice double-cropping. As there are a number of well documented studies on the impact of double-cropping on village society and rice production in Malaysia, this paper does not attempt to put forward any new perspective in the evaluation of such dramatic improvement in rice farming. Instead, this paper concentrates on the presentation of findings related to the major changes in rice technology as observed in the study village as a result of the introduction of rice double-cropping.

As is well known, the most significant technological change caused by rice double-cropping was the introduction of modern inputs, represented by improved non-photo sensitive varieties, chemical fertilizer and pesticide. However, it should be noted that these inputs did not necessarily penetrate at once into the existing cultivation system. As is indicated in Table 1, they took some years and the traditional practices were gradually modified by the farmers themselves, under some guidance from Government extension workers, from the beginning of double-cropping. Unfortunately, the exact varieties which were planted in the initial dry seasons after 1962 could not be ascertained, but the following varieties were adopted by the farmers in the village after the middle of the 1960s: *malinja* and *mashuri* bred by Japanese experts in Malaysia, and IR8 (called *ria* in Malaysia) and IR5 (*bahagia*), developed by International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines. Among these, *mashuri* was the preferred variety in the village for many years because of its superb eating quality. The fact that the farmers preferred good tasting rice rather than a merely high yielding rice in this village was a reflection of the nature of rice farming, as a subsistence crop for home consumption. Ten years after the introduction of double-cropping, the villagers planted nothing but *mashuri* in the dry season but as many as 68% of them still planted local varieties in the traditional rainy season in 1973. This fact alone is

Table 1. Rate of Adoption of New Rice Technology in Kampung Hutan Cengal, 1973-1984

	Unit: %	
	1973 dry season	1983/84 wet season
Variety (improved, recommended)	100	89
Seed selection: salt water	29	na
Amount of seeds	6	13
Fertilizer in nursery	26	53
Transplanting: age of seedlings	62	17
Transplanting: square planting	78	5
Transplanting: seedling/hill	45	80
Basal dressing: type and amount	16	50
Basal dressing: timing	0	21
Top dressing: type and amount	42	61
Top dressing: timing	51	61
Practice of weeding	64	47
Use of pesticide	9	71

Source: Fujimoto 1994, p. 116.

Note: Rate of adoption is indicated by the proportion of farmers who abided by the recommended farming practice of the Department of Agriculture.

sufficient evidence for the argument that the farmers took many years to adopt new technology as they had maintained their own needs and only gradually adjusted themselves to the changing environment.

Very positive and vigorous attempts at modernization of the rural sector by the Government from the 1960s and especially under the NEP were accompanied by the establishment and strengthening of farmers support systems such as research, education, extension, and credit, all of which eventually brought about more drastic changes in rural villages. The establishment in 1969 of Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) and its intensive rice breeding program resulted in many more varieties in consideration of varying local conditions in the country. In the 1980s, these new varieties certainly achieved wide-spread penetration in Kelantan, and traditional varieties completely disappeared in the study village as well.

Chemical fertilizer made the first appearance in the hands of merchants in the area as early as the 1950s, but as mentioned earlier home-made organic fertilizer predominated in the village. With the planting of improved varieties which are fertilizer responsive, the application of chemical fertilizer came to be a key measure in realizing the

high-yielding potential. The farmers in the village came to be aware of this fact and desired a heavier dosage of this wealth-yielding chemical, but the amount of application was generally severely limited by economic hardship. At the beginning of the 1970s, the increased amount of fertilizer application was confirmed by a production function analysis to be the most important technological improvement for obtaining a higher yield in the study village.⁵⁾ As is well known, Padi Subsidy Scheme was introduced from the 1979/80 rainy season cropping, and in addition to subsidy of paddy price, the Government began providing chemical fertilizer free of charge to all rice farmers in the country. The amount of fertilizer provided was equivalent to the dosage recommended by the Department of Agriculture. Although the ceiling was set at 6 acres per farmer, nobody in the study village operated a farm larger than the ceiling until the mid 1980s. In other words, the villagers could receive free fertilizer for their entire fields and the application certainly increased the level of yield in the 1980s.

Discussion so far has been more or less the recapitulation of what is known about the technological innovation which began to take place with the introduction of rice double-cropping. However, do we know how these new practices replaced the hitherto existing traditional practices? What differences can we observe from the new practices in relation to the traditional technology? In view of the practices common during the single cropping era mentioned in the preceding sub-section, the new technology system adopted under double-cropping may be summarized in the following changes in the study village.

First, drill seeding was completely replaced by transplanting. With the stable provision of irrigation water, the need for such practice disappeared from the village. The work calendar for the villagers was accordingly changed: nursery preparation and ploughing of the main fields from September to October, transplanting from October to November, and January to February for harvesting in the case of the rainy season cropping; and February to March for nursery and ploughing, April to May for transplanting, and July to August for harvesting in the case of the dry season cropping. It is thus clear that the traditionally existing slack season, after the harvest in March until the ploughing for partial drill seeding in July, had now disappeared with significant impact on the social and cultural activities of the villagers. Details of changes in the mode of living

caused by the new work calendar will be discussed in the following section.

Second, upland nursery was changed to water nursery under the guidance of the agricultural extension office. As soon as water began to flow in the canal in September for the rainy season and April for the dry season, farmers prepared a nursery at a part of the field nearby a canal and began ploughing the remaining fields. Because of the relatively shorter time available for ploughing, the farmers gradually began to adopt tractor instead of buffalo in land preparation. The adoption rate of tractor ploughing, however, remained low for some years as it was provided by a contractor and the number of tractors available for service was rather limited in the area until 1967. When the Farmers Association was established in Tendong and began providing tractor ploughing service on a contract, most of the farmers in the area increased their dependence on mechanical power. In addition, some progressive farmers in the village itself began to own a hand tractor from the beginning of the 1970s. As of the 1973 dry season, 8% of the farmers in the village owned a Japanese made hand tractor but the rate of ownership increased to 20% by 1978. However, with the decline in rice farming from the end of the 1970s, the rate of ownership decreased and farmers once again began to depend upon contract service provided by the Government agency. Whatever the later development may have been, it was true that the introduction of double-cropping and shortened slack season between rice plantings necessitated the adjustment of work schedule and promoted the introduction of labour-saving technology in rice farming.

Third, the traditional ritual of *semangat padi* had already ceased to be practised by the beginning of the 1950s, but the use of hand knife continued hereafter. With the planting of improved varieties, however, the harvesting tool was quickly changed to sickle for various reasons including the following: (1) New seeds obtained by the farmers came to ripen simultaneously so that there no longer existed a need to select only those ripened panicles in harvesting operation. In other words, all the standing plants in the field could be reaped at once; (2) New varieties were shorter than the traditional varieties, causing inconvenience in the use of hand knife; and (3) sickle harvesting certainly enabled higher labour efficiency. Thus, the use of sickle came to predominate in a very short period of time and paddy was harvested not at the end of panicles but at lower

part of the stem of the plant. This in turn necessitated the use of another new tool for threshing. It was customarily done by treading on panicles, but foot alone was not adequate for a panicle with stem, so that farmers introduced a tool called *tong padi*. It is a round (sometimes, square) tub in which a small ladder is placed, against which panicles are hit. Because of the high threshability of improved varieties, this tool proved to be quite efficient in that perhaps two hittings removed all the grains from a panicle. This threshing method was originally developed in Kedah, and according to MAR, brought to Kelantan by Southern Thai workers who came to work in northern states of Malaysia during the peak seasons of transplanting and harvesting.

Fourth, the increased rice production from two plantings a year promoted commercialization in the village. In spite of emerging sale of paddy instead of milled rice which occurred with the establishment of a cooperative rice mill in the area, low production under single-cropping severely limited the surplus amount of paddy available for sale. The introduction of double-cropping not only enabled two plantings in a year but also increased the yield of each crop, thus more than doubling the total annual production and greatly expanding the volume of sale. There emerged rice dealers who came to the village and purchased paddy from the farmers in cash. Since there appeared to exist some dishonest transactions by merchants, an increasing number of farmers began to sell their paddy directly to a rice mill opened in Tumpat District following the establishment of Lembaga Padi dan Beras Nasional (LPN) in 1971. However, the majority of farmers continued to sell to private rice dealers, as the Government rice mill was located 15 km away, to which paddy had to be transported at the farmer's expense and strict quality check was imposed on the product. When the LPN issued a license to Farmers Association in Tendong for rice trading, more farmers came to sell their paddy directly to the Government. With the introduction of paddy price subsidy from 1980, the Area Farmers Organization in Kubang Sepat (formerly Farmers Association) came to be almost the sole buyer of paddy produced in the area.

It is also mentioned here that the paddy subsidy scheme has caused an unbelievable change in the farmers' attitude toward rice production and consumption. Because the price subsidy is paid only to the paddy sold by the farmers, they do not

receive anything for the amount of paddy kept for seeds and home consumption. At the same time, Kelantan faces the Thai border through which a huge amount of cheap and good quality rice is brought into Malaysia. It is therefore not surprising to see the farmers selling most of the paddy they produce and purchasing milled rice for home consumption. MAR mentioned that in 1994 only two families in the village ate home grown rice while all the rest purchased Thai rice for home consumption. In other words, the farmers in the village now produce rice for sale, not for home consumption.

Discussion so far has revealed the dramatic changes which have taken place in rice farming in the study village during the past three or four decades. Actually there have been more serious phenomena indicating the ups and downs of rice farming in the village, such as the increased area of idle land, increased profitability of rice farming, further advancement in rice technology as represented by the introduction of combine harvester and direct seeding, and the aging of rice farmers, which have been analyzed and discussed in detail elsewhere.⁶⁾ It is sufficient for the purpose of this paper to have summarized the major changes in infrastructure, technology and institutions, which bore the most significant implications for change in farmers' life.

IV. Evolution of Life: Case Study of One Family

This section presents a detailed account of the life of one farmer, MAR, and his family, who has lived through the Second World War, both eras of single and double-croppings of rice, and the more recent era of modernization of rural life. He was at one time the village headman and in 1994 at the age of 67 he still cultivated rice and grew fruit trees, just as he has done all his life. He now lives a relatively quiet and peaceful life, but his experiences, especially during his economically active period, must be recorded as they are indicative of what has happened to the life of farmers in the village.

Birth and Schooling

It was in 1927 that MAR was born in Kampung Paloh, Mukim Paloh, Daerah Kubang Sepat, Jajahan Pasir Mas in Negri Kelantan, located on the left bank of the Kelantan River. This village was an important transport centre in that there was a jetty for regular boat services which connected Kota Bharu, the capital of Negri Kelantan, and Daerah Kubang Sepat. MAR's father was born

and brought up in Kampung Maman in Daerah Kubang Sepat, which is adjacent to Kampung Hutan Cengal where MAR now lives. His father apparently married at least twice, and began to live in Kampung Paloh after marrying a woman of that village at the age of about 50. He cultivated one acre of paddy fields and two acres of orchard, an average size for a farmer then, in the wife's home village. He and his wife had a total of three children; MAR born in 1927, second son in 1932, and a daughter in 1937.

As is well known, the education system was not fully developed in Malaya during the era of the British control.⁷⁾ Most children in rural areas did not receive any formal education at all and there were in fact only two schools for Malays in Pasir Mas District before the Second World War: Sekolah Melayu Pasir Mas (7 year education) in the town of Pasir Mas and Sekolah Melayu Tendong (4 year education) in Tendong which was adjacent to Kampung Paloh and located mid-way between Pasir Mas and Kota Bharu. Those who successfully completed the 7 year education in the former school could receive a certificate and be employed as a teacher at a Malay school. There was only one class of 30 pupils and there was a total of seven teachers in the latter school, but the graduates could be admitted to the fifth grade in the former school, should they have wished to continue education for the teacher certificate.

Generally, Malay farmers saw only limited value in school education for their children who were to become farmers in the home or nearby villages, so that very few farmers were willing to send their children to school under the prevailing poverty.⁸⁾ MAR and his siblings were among the very few fortunate children in the area in that they were allowed to receive school education. This was not only because their house was located close, less than one kilometre, to the school in Tendong, but also because their father highly valued school education and was thus happy to send the children to school. MAR recalls that only about 10 children of his generation went to the school from his own village during his time. MAR managed to complete, in five years from 1935 through 1939, the prescribed requirements of the 4 year education program at the Sekolah Melayu Tendong. Although schooling itself was free of charge, he had to give up the idea of further study at Sekolah Melayu Pasir Mas, as it was located about 12 km away from home, requiring an expenses of about one ringgit per day for commuting and meals. This was a relatively large

expense in view of the fact that a teacher's salary was about 15 ringgit per month and one gantang (3.6kg) of milled rice cost only 1.20 ringgit. Even willing parents could not afford to send their children to the Pasir Mas school, and MAR recalls that out of the 150 graduates of the Tendong school during his time, only three went to Pasir Mas for further study.

Employment and Marriage

MAR graduated from the Sekolah Melayu Tendong in 1939 at the age of 13. As was the case for most of the other graduates, he now stayed home and was counted as a minor part of labour force on the family farm. While helping his father to cultivate in the village, he looked for a job in Kota Bharu. Thanks to his reading ability, he found a notice of job offer and applied. Thus, he was employed by a construction company in Kota Bharu and worked at a daily wage of 2.50 ringgit, later 3 ringgit. The distance between Kota Bharu and Kampung Paloh is only about 8 km, which one can cover in 10 or 15 minutes by vehicle. However, it should be remembered that the first bridge over the Kelantan River, the Kota Bharu-Pekan Bridge, was constructed as late as in 1968, which meant that the only means of transport at that time was the boat service. Because there was a jetty in Kampung Paloh itself, MAR could commute to Kota Bharu in less than an hour. Although his wage was very high, he maintained the desire to work on his own, or become self-employed in agriculture, so retaining more freedom in life. This was the reason for his quitting his job two years later and starting to help seriously in father's farm activity in 1941. Soon after he settled at home, in December 1941, the Japanese Army carried out the first aggression of the Pacific War in the Kota Bharu landing operation. During the period of the Japanese occupation, MAR stayed home and farmed.

In 1947, during the dry season as was traditionally the case, MAR married to HAB, a girl born and brought up in Kampung Hutan Cengal. MAR and his bride did not know each other until the marriage. Because MAR's father originated from Kampung Maman, a neighbouring village to Kampung Hutan Cengal, he and the bride's father were acquaintances and thus arranged the marriage. It has been a customary practice that for some time after marriage, a young couple stay with parents.⁹⁾ They are socially allowed to choose either set of parents, but the parents' economic conditions would have a deciding impact on whom they would stay with. This was the time

MAR began to live in this village, staying with HAB's parents. MAR's parents had two younger children and limited land while HAB's parents had only one other child, a son, and larger area of land were the main factors in their decision.

For some period, MAR helped his father-in-law to cultivate rice and fruits. In 1948, he purchased 0.75 acre of paddy fields located in Kampung Maman at the price of 500 ringgit, which was paid in cash from the past savings to which his work in Kota Bharu made a large contribution. Unlike many other villagers who had to start their careers as tenants, MAR was thus able to begin his farming as an owner farmer. In 1950, he inherited 0.75 acre of paddy fields, also located in Kampung Maman, from his father. In the same year, HAB also inherited land from her mother, 1.50 acres of paddy fields and 0.5 acre of homeyard in Kampung Hutan Cengal. Likewise, in the village and surrounding area, MAR and his wife now came to own and operate 3.0 acres of paddy fields. In November 1950, the first son, HM, was born. In 1952, they had a small house built on the homeyard inherited by HAB and began living as a socially and economically independent family unit. This original house was rebuilt in 1965 and the new house still stands firmly on the same plot.

In the following years, MAR continued to work hard in rice cultivation by further purchasing land, while experiencing the joy of having the village mosque in 1954, Independence of the nation in 1957, the introduction of rice double-cropping in 1962, and the birth of his second son, JM, in 1964. Probably because of the general appreciation of his ability in reading and writing, he was elected by the *musharat kampung* (village committee of 12 influential members) as *penghulu* (village headman) in 1968 and contributed to village development for the following 10 years. However, when the state election pushed PAS out of power, most of village headmen in the state including MAR were suddenly replaced by new men under the initiative of the new Barisan National Government.

Family Development

In view of the large number of children in rural villages in Malaysia, MAR and HAB were rather exceptional in having only two children. This was probably due to the rather weak constitution of his wife, who eventually passed away in 1982 in her early 50s. MAR remarried two years later to a woman who had earlier lost her husband, and continued to live in the same house in Kampung Hutan Cengal.

With Independence as the Federation of Malaya in 1957, more extensive social and economic development policy began to be implemented in the country, including the establishment of a school education system of 6 year elementary and 5 year secondary schools. In Tendong, too, both schools were established and MAR's children together with all other children in the village commuted about 1.5 km to these schools. They had managed to obtain a Lower School Certificate (LSC) after 3 years of secondary education and thus were able to further study at the 4th and 5th grades in the secondary school. However, they did not manage to pass the national examination to earn a Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE), which meant that they could not go on to tertiary education. It also meant that they had to stop studying and start working at the age of 17. However, it should be remembered that there was 14 years difference between the two brothers at the time of completing the 5th grade, 1967 and 1978. This was also a period of rapid development for Malaysia in that the New Economic Policy (NEP) had been implemented from 1971. They certainly had distinctively different experiences when they left school.

When the first son finished his schooling in 1967, the village was full of new hope and prospects in rice farming in that rice double-cropping began in 1962 and the Farmers Association was established in Tendong in 1967. It was the early period of technological innovation under improved infrastructural conditions for rice farming, with the national objective of achieving rice self-sufficiency. Farmers were happy with the prospect of greatly increased rice production and farm income, with which they worked hard in introducing new technology and adjusting their work and life to a new calendar of double-cropping. However, as before, off-farm employment opportunities were very limited in the state. HM could not find any job nearby and thus was sent to have experience in farming and the outer world to a relative in Pahang. Two years later in 1969, however, he returned home with no intention of working on the farm and began his waiting life. When I first visited the village in March 1973, he was still unemployed and staying home, waiting for an employment offer. He married in that year, continued to live with his parents, and had his first child, a daughter, in 1974. HM was a very fortunate man to have relatively better off parents in that all this happened without his having a job.

The NEP, with the aim of poverty eradication and restructuring of society, implemented many measures in favour of *bumiputra*, of which the Malays are by far the largest ethnic group. Public expenditure was allocated not only for the modernization of the rural sector but also for the creation of social and economic opportunities such as education, employment and share holding, in all of which the Malays could enjoy special consideration and allocation. This policy certainly had significant impact in various fields nation wide, including hitherto hopeless young village men. HM was finally employed by the Government as a clerk in 1975 and posted to Jabatan Telekom (later privatized to Telekom Malaysia) in Kuantan. He, together with wife and daughter, went to live in a city for the first time. In 1978, when he was transferred to Tanah Merah office in Kelantan, he decided to come back and live with the parents, because he could commute to work by motorbike. He brought back all the home appliances including such electrical goods as television, refrigerator and washing machine, which however could not be used in the village until 1981 when the village was electrified.

It was 1981 when HM's wife was also employed by the Government and initially posted to Kuala Lumpur for one year. It was very indicative of new era of working women that she went to Kuala Lumpur alone, leaving behind husband and children whose number had grown to three by then. It was possible because the young family stayed with HM's parents and HAB took care of her grandchildren. Unfortunately, however, the grandmother passed away in 1982, leaving no woman's hands at home. Soon after that, HM's wife was transferred to Kota Bharu and thus able to return home.

In contrast, MAR's second son, JM, completed his schooling in 1978, the same year that HM and his family returned home from Kuantan. Without any waiting, JM went to vocational training for five years in Trengganu under a full Government sponsorship. It was a part of the national development policy to have many technicians in various fields by providing vocational training to rural Malays who otherwise had to stay home. Having completed training in 1983, JM immediately obtained a job in the Government sector and now works in Kuala Lumpur. He met a woman from Kedah in the office and they eventually married. She did not stop working even after marriage. They now have two children who are looked after by a maid in a house of their own,

purchased in 1994 in the capital city.

At this stage, a word must be mentioned of inheritance of the properties owned by HAB; 1.50 acres of paddy fields and 0.5 acre of homeyard. According to either Islamic law or Malay customary law, the property could be equally divided between the two sons for inheritance.¹⁰⁾ However, MAR decided to give the entire assets to the second son after her death in 1982, while he would eventually give all his properties to the first son. In terms of value, the division may not be exactly equal and favours the first son, but MAR's decision was reached with at least the following considerations: (1) Both children had a good job, HM in Kelantan and JM in Kuala Lumpur. As long as they were employed by the Government, MAR knew, they would be all right in the future years. He would be able to take care of HM and his family, as they still lived at his house then, but JM was far away. It would be a good gesture of parents' love to give the property to a child whom he could not take physical care so easily; (2) JM would probably work in Kuala Lumpur until his retirement. When he retires and wishes to come back to the village, he would need a place to live and paddy fields for producing rice to eat. It would be good for him to have homeyard and rice land in the home village where his brother also lives; and (3) HM's wife inherited a homeyard within the village, where he would be able to build a house, thus not needing the homeyard owned by his mother.

MAR went on pilgrimage alone from March through June in 1984. Two months after returning home, he remarried, to a woman from Kota Bharu District who had lost her husband some years before. On this occasion, HM decided to have his own house on the homeyard inherited by his wife, actually only about 50m away from MAR's house. He began the construction in 1984 but took some time to complete as a loan was delayed. In 1987, HM's family moved to the new double-story house which was finally completed in 1988 at a total expense of about 60,000 ringgit.

At present, MAR lives a quiet life with his second wife, cultivating some paddy fields and orchard, while both his children with their respective wives work in the public sector. There is no guarantee that any of them would cultivate rice in the future as their father has continuously done for more than 50 years.

Housing Conditions

MAR built the first house and became socially independent in 1952. This small house was repla-

ced by the currently standing large house with a traditional raised floor in 1965 after saving sufficient funds from rice double-cropping and fruit cultivation.¹¹⁾ To this house, MAR has gradually made a number of improvements, a description of which may more visually clarify the process of evolution in daily life of a farmer in the village.

When I first lived in this house in March 1973, it still maintained more or less the original structure in that there were only three rooms: a large front room, a small bedroom which was in fact a merely cornered section of the front room, and a large back room which also had a cemented washing corner and a raised fire place (Figure 4). Through the kitchen, the cemented stair led to a bath room, surrounded by zinc walls with no roof. The front room was a centre for social activities for many villagers in this part of the village, who visited every day after dinner for lengthy chatting, probably because MAR was the village headman and a strange foreigner was there. Customarily served was a cup of tea with which the villagers went on chatting for hours, not only to satisfy their curiosity but also the opportunity for exchanging information and confirming their friendship. It was around 12 o'clock midnight that all the visitors had gone home and I was allowed to sleep at the side of this room. The back room was for reserved for family, and no male visitors usually walked in there, although female visitors often chatted with HAB in the kitchen. Family meals were taken in this room, but a larger scale dinner was served for important visitors in the front room. The small bedroom was reserved for MAR and his wife. In 1973, when HM married and continued to live in this house, MAR and HAB gave the small bedroom to the young couple for a short period of time before adding two more such rooms at the other corner of the front room.

There was no toilet in the house. Behind the house, there was a rubber plot in which a hole was dug and surrounded by low *nippa* fence. Since this had no roof, one usually got wet in rainy moments. This however was quite acceptable as they used to bath straight after using toilet. There were two wells, one at the back and one in front of the house. The one in front was used for bathing after coming back from muddy paddy fields and by visitors like me.

There was also no electricity until 1981 in this village. As soon as the power supply began, MAR installed an electric pump at the back well and piped water to the newly built toilet at the bath room. A simple but useful shower was also in-

stalled in the bath room, together with a pipe to the wash basin in the kitchen. A television set and other electrical goods brought home by HM from

Kuantan in 1978 could now be used. But the farmer's life style did not change drastically in that the refrigerator initially functioned only as an

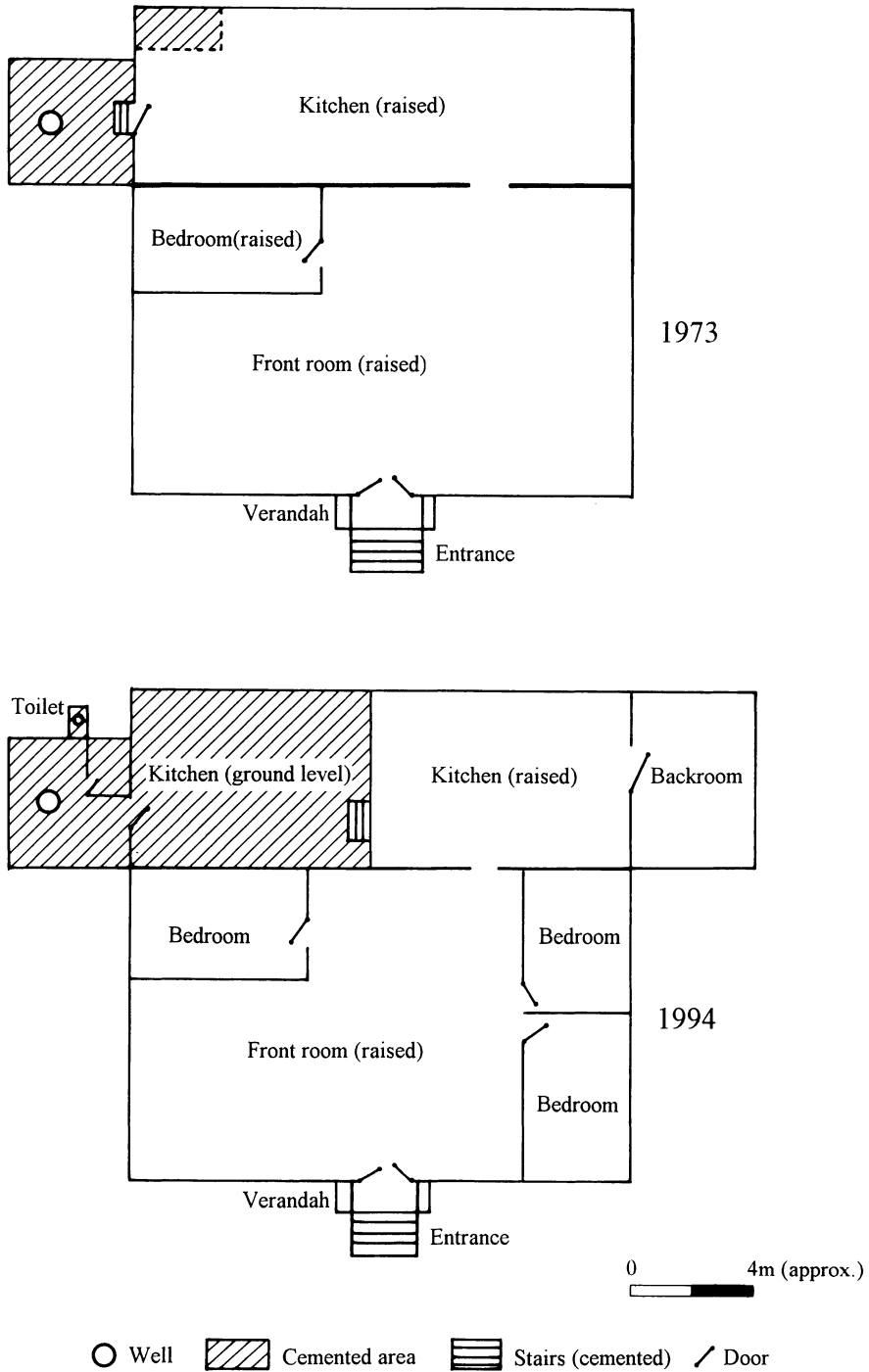


Figure 4. Plan of MAR's House (1973 and 1994).

ice candy making machine for small children.

In 1992, MAR added one more room to the back of the house. This room was not for human dwelling but built with the intention of making a quailery with a fire place in the middle. However, this venture did not last long and the room is left unused nowadays. In 1994, MAR made further improvement to the house, this time the kitchen. The half of the back room was demolished, the floor was lowered to the ground level and cemented. Installed there were a raised wash basin with a pipe, a raised stove with LP gas, a refrigerator, an electric rice cooker, and a set of table and chairs. This corner now looks like a city house kitchen. According to my observation of the similar structure in new houses in other Malay villages, it can be said that this is certainly a fashionable direction for housing improvement among village residents nowadays. In the case of MAR's house, it may also have resulted from the influence of his second wife, who used to support her family as a cook and finds a raised kitchen easier and more efficient to work.

In contrast, the new house MAR's first son built in the village is a modern double story house, with 5 bedrooms on the second floor and a bedroom, a kitchen, a living cum dining room, a bath room and a toilet at the first floor. Although the upstairs has wooden floor, the downstairs is at ground level and entirely cemented. With the modern structure of house, the young family conducts a modern life in the village: they go to work in the morning and come home in the late afternoon together by their own car, as both HM and RGY are now posted in Kota Bharu, while three small children out of the total five are taken care by RGY's mother who also lives downstairs. Cooking is done in a large kitchen with the help of electrical goods and meals are taken at the dining table, after which the children watch television or play family computer games. In other words, their life is practically the same as those families in the city, or perhaps better in that a more spacious garden provides a play yard for the children and fruits for family consumption.

V. Changes in Social Involvement

Following a detailed description of the life of this particular farmer and his family in the village, it is necessary to have a more general account of village life presented in this section. This is a very difficult task for someone who has been narrowly interested in the mechanism of rice production

and whose social and cultural experience has been largely limited to one particular family in the past two decades. Through my personal observation, however, let me attempt to highlight some changes in what may be called the community circle, i.e., social involvements of the villagers by describing noticeable trends in cooperation in rice production and passtime activities, with the aim of drawing out some indications of the nature of social evolution in the Malay rice growing village under the rapidly changing economic and technological conditions.

Changing Social Role of Rice Production

For many years, rice cultivation was the most important productive activity in this village. With the limited land area and increasing population, there existed uneven distribution of land among the villagers which inevitably caused inequality in income distribution. Some villagers were relatively better off than others, while there were some who depended on others for their survival. There were various social institutions related to rice farming which assured the subsistence of all the villagers. In other words, although rice farming was certainly an economic activity, it played a wider and significant social role in the village.

In an attempt at a more comprehensive analysis of land tenure and rice production in four villages during the 1970s, including Kampung Hutan Cengal, I once put forward the concept of income-sharing as a broader socio-economic system of the Malay village society. It was argued that the villagers' economic behaviour could be explained within the framework of income-sharing mechanism which was defined as an income redistribution scheme.¹² In order to assure the subsistence of all villagers, there traditionally existed income-sharing practices in rice production, which, as an expression of reciprocity, took different forms depending upon the nature and closeness of the relationship involved among the parties concerned. Four modes of such practices were identified as follows: (1) Transfer of resource ownership, especially of land, which necessarily accompanied the transfer of income generating capacity; (2) Redistribution of realized income, from haves to have-nots, through means of grant or gift; (3) Provision of income opportunities, through giving and receiving opportunities to use resources in a productive way, especially through the renting of land and the employment of hired labour; And (4) pricing of factors of production, through which part of the marginal products of land and labour could explicitly be

transferred to either party to achieve the sharing of income.

During and perhaps up to the 1970s when the great majority of farmers suffered from low rice income and off-farm employment opportunities were severely limited, there certainly existed many practices through which poorer villagers could continue to subsist. One example was the custom of *tolong-tolong* in which poor landless villagers simply came to help harvesting work, without being requested, and received a significantly higher wage than their economic contribution. Another was the common underpayment of contracted rental by share tenants, which was implicitly allowed by landlords. Although my argument of income-sharing inspired some serious criticism in the following years,¹³ it was the result of my analysis and observation of the village economic structure, i.e., an aspect of social involvement of villagers in rice production.

The question arises as to what has happened to this scheme of mutual assistance among the villagers in the circumstances of rapid economic and technological change. To answer this question, let me first quote my own sentences which were written in the discussion of the dynamic aspect of income-sharing:¹⁴

“—if the successful growth of the non-agricultural sector and land development projects result in decreasing population pressure on land in the villages, the effects of increased yield would be quite different from the concept of (Geertz's) agricultural involution. Since those villagers who obtain off-farm employment and leave the villages are likely to be the younger generation with better education, there would be at least two consequences for the mechanism of income-sharing: a reduced pressure on relatively large cultivators to employ so much wage labour, and a reduced number of would-be-tenants.—The reduction of the number of would-be-tenants and technological innovation would probably provide larger incentive for cultivators to expand their farm size, which may be accompanied by increased production efficiency. The final outcome, then, could be the reduction of income-sharing practices and the establishment of more efficient production systems.”

My continued observation of rice farming in the village into the 1980s has discovered incredible changes, which seem to support the above statements on the expected change of income-sharing mechanism. These new phenomena may

be summarized as follows:¹⁵ (1) With the progress in technological innovation and fertilizer subsidy scheme, rice yield dramatically increased in the two decades from 1.5 tons/ha in 1973/74 to 2.89 tons/ha in 1983/84 on the average, and to about 3.5 tons/ha for a particular farmer in 1992 (Table 2); (2) However, small farm size and resulting low total income, together with the increased shortage of young labour, induced the abandonment of rice farming. During the period from 1973 to 1984, the number of rice farmers decreased from 57 to 38, and the average farm size also became smaller from 1.9 to 1.4 acres. Those who remained farming were the elderly farmers who were more subsistence oriented while probably receiving a larger remittance from their working children; (3) Introduction of labour-saving technology, pre-germinated direct-seeding and mechanical harvesting, removed technological constraints on the expansion of farm size. Consequently, there emerged from the middle of the 1980s an enterprising farmer who expanded his farm size to more than 20 acres and obtain a very high income from rice farming; And (4) young generation villagers have not been interested in rice farming, and there is actually not a single farmer who newly began cultivating rice in the last 20 years. The total number of households increased from 59 in 1973 to 86 in 1984, while the proportion of rice growing households declined from 97% to less than 50% in 1984. There is however no idle young labour in the village, as there are ample employment opportunities in the non-agricultural sectors.

In other words, rice farming operations are now largely conducted on a family basis with the use of labour-saving technology. It has been reduced to only one of many activities from the formerly predominant activity within the village economy. As mentioned earlier, the great majority of rice farmers now sell all the paddy they produce and purchase milled rice for home consumption. This indicates that paddy is no longer a good for exchange among the villagers, indicating the enormous extent to which the social role of rice production has been drastically modified during the past two decades.

Passtime Activities

The most significant change caused by the introduction of rice double-cropping was the greatly decreased period for the slack season. Traditionally, the dry season was the time for various social functions in the life of rice farmers. Most marriage ceremonies took place between March and

Table 2. Changes in the Number of Rice Farmers and Average Rice Yield by Farm Size and Tenurial Status in Kampung Hutan Cengal, 1973–1984

	1973 dry season		1973/74 wet season		1977/78 wet season		1983/84 wet season	
	No.	Yield	No.	Yield	No.	Yield	No.	Yield
Farm size (acres)								
0.1–0.9	6	476	7	286	15	374	12	512
1.0–1.9	23	279	18	269	21	314	15	457
2.0–	26	218	29	219	21	327	11	416
Tenurial status								
Owner farmers	23	282	25	246	24	318	29	462
Owner-tenants	26	324	23	256	24	340	4	389
Tenant farmers	6	283	6	191	9	362	5	518
Overall	55	302	54	244	57	334	38	463

Source: Fujimoto 1994, p. 120.

Notes: (1) Average yield is in terms of gantang of paddy per acre. 400 gantang is approximately 1,000 kg.
(2) Farm size refers to the area of rice land under cultivation.

August. Many traditional leisure activities were also organized during this period, some of which were conducted on a small scale among groups of villagers but some took the form of inter-village competition or open performance. Typical leisure activities practised by Malay farmers in Kelantan included shadow play, kite flying, top spinning, stage dancing, drum beating, and singing competition. They were somehow continued and could still be observed somewhere in the Pasir Mas District until the mid 1970s, after which they have gradually disappeared and been replaced by the modern activity of television watching. In the traditional setting, they certainly provided entertainment to villagers, but it is important to note that the performance sometimes functioned as an opportunity to enhance the village solidarity and proved to be an economic activity. The feeling of solidarity was rooted in the fact that the traditional leisure activity was related to the world of magic in which the Malays sought a cooperative relationship with spirits of earth, water and forest¹⁶⁾

For the examination of the economic aspect of the traditional leisure activity, let me first describe two cases of performance.¹⁷⁾ The first case was a singing competition which was organized jointly by five villagers and held in August 1974 in Kampung Maman, the neighbouring village. Two groups, each consisting of 30 representative members of two villages, were invited by the organizers to sing for overnight. Each group was paid 60 ringgit, and performance tax of 12 ringgit was

paid to the District Office. Two temporary stages were built side by side on paddy fields, in front of which two village shops opened their temporary coffee bars by paying 100 ringgit each to the organizers. About 1,000 villagers gathered there and enjoyed the singing of two groups in competition, while drinking coffee/tea and eating snacks purchased from the coffee bars until early hours of the morning. Each shop was said to have earned about 500 ringgit. In contrast, the organizers received a total of 200 ringgit from two shops, from which they paid 120 ringgit for singing groups, 12 ringgit of performance tax, and about 40 ringgit for the construction of two stages. The remaining revenue was equally shared among the five organizers.

The second case was a shadow play performance which took place in the village in March 1973. It was performed from 9 to 12 pm every night for the period of one week. There were more than 300 villagers who came to enjoy the play and made a total donation of more than 25 ringgit every night. The organizers had a coffee shop in the open field and earned about 150 ringgit per night. The performer and his orchestra were paid 25 ringgit per night, while a total of 8 coffee shop attendants received 2 ringgit each. The performance tax was 2 ringgit per night. Therefore, after paying for the material and construction cost of the theatre, the organizers still had a relatively large sum of revenue in their hands.

Common to both cases was the existence of

four economic players in the performance of the traditional leisure: organizers, performers, audience, and coffee shops, each of whom played an indispensable role in enabling the repeated performance. The organizer coordinated the whole show by contracting with the performer, paying all the necessary expenses but surely obtaining a revenue larger than the total cost through running by themselves or charging a commission to coffee shops. For the audience, the traditional leisure activities represented entertainments which had been available free of charge. However, they economically participated in the show through their own enjoyment of drinking tea and eating snacks, a part of the entertainment. Every member of the audience spent some money, because others did. Seeing the shadow puppets and drinking tea together functioned as the opportunity to confirm and enhance their common cohesive and egalitarian feelings, which had formed the fundamental social norm among the Malays.¹⁸⁾ It was an opportunity for one to show publicly that he could do as others could. Therefore, the existence of the coffee shop was the key to economic success of the entire show in that it collected money from the audience, part of which was then used to finance the performance and provided some returns to various services.

The egalitarian and cohesive social norm was the basis of cooperative activities not only in rice production but also in daily living. For instance, for the first time in the village a better off villager bought a television set with a power generator in early 1970s, well before public electricity reached the village. His behaviour could have been considered as showing off his wealth and thus breaking the village homogeneity, but it was socially accepted because he shared the enjoyment with his fellow villagers. In fact, he charged admission of 10 cents as a recovery of his generator cost, which about 50 villagers who gathered there every night paid without complaint.

Television is no longer a unique entertainment. As is seen from Table 3, as many as 54% of the households owned a set in this village in 1984, and this rate must have greatly increased by now. It is the main form of passtime activity in recent years, as the traditional leisure activities had disappeared almost completely by the 1980s. More than 50% of the households also owned a vehicle or motorbike, with which they could travel far to see relatives and friends, or just for fun. The increased penetration of modern facilities into the village as seen above necessarily implied the in-

creased independence of each family from the community circle in passtime activities. Nowadays, social visits appear to be largely limited to close relatives and immediate neighbours, thus giving the impression of cooperation and social intercourse being concentrated on primary groups of kinship and neighbours.

VI. Conclusion

This paper aimed at documentation of the transformation in rice farming and related life of Malay farmers in a rice growing village in Kelantan where I have conducted a series of surveys in the past two decades. More specifically, what I attempted was a description of the change in the life of a particular farmer and his family under the changing farming and macro economic conditions. A brief description of MAR's life development and major socioeconomic changes in this village was first presented, followed by discussion of technological and institutional changes especially with reference to the introduction of rice double-cropping, and by discussion of changes in the life style, using the case of MAR and his family. An attempt was also made to highlight more generally changes in social involvement of villagers during the past two decades.

Direction in technological change was first the adoption of yield-increasing and labour-intensive technology, followed by the introduction of labour-saving technology. The former was consistent with the existing social and economic conditions that labour was amply available for rice farming, the main economic activity in the village. It was actually absorbed by production process with the increased production. The villagers maintained cooperation in social involvement as well. Further modernization took the form of labour-saving technology, which was again consistent with the decreasing rural labour in view of the greatly increased off-farm employment opportunities under the macro economic development in the country. Although it removed technical constraints on the expanded farm size and consequently increased income, there is only one farmer who has been very positive in farm management improvement while the great majority were elderly and cultivated a small farm. The increased adoption of labour-saving technology, however, was accompanied by the greater independence of individual farmers from each other in production process.

Together with the penetration of modern living

Table 3. Changes in Proportion of Households Owning Durable Goods in Kampung Hutan Cengal, 1973–1984

	Unit: %		
	1973	1978	1984
Bicycle	70.9	66.3	na
Motorbie	3.6	23.8	40.7
Vehicle	0.0	7.5	11.1
Radio	28.1	47.5	na
TV set	7.0	11.3	53.7
Electric fan	0.0	0.0	33.3
Refridgerator	0.0	1.3	9.3
Washing machine	0.0	0.0	1.9
Total No. of households	59	80	86

Source: Fujimoto 1994, p. 48.

facilities, largely brought in by the increasing non-farming population in the village, the increased independence in production activities appeared to have reflected in social life as well. Many households now possess a stable source of income and modern living facilities, including means of transport and entertainment. In other words, they are now self-contained with respect to both economic and social activities. The village wide activities have practically disappeared and social intercourse has increasingly been limited to primary groups of kinship and immediate neighbours. In short, the direction of cultural transformation of a rice growing village in Malaysia appears to be towards urbanization in both economic and social spheres. This is taking place because of the greatly increasing non-agricultural population in the village, while it is true that aged farmers still grow paddy and live in a more traditional way than their children.

Notes

1. For an analysis of the British impact on contemporary Malaysia, see, for instance, Roff 1967.
2. See, for instance, Taylor 1981, Sivalingam 1993, and Fujimoto 1994.
3. See, for instance, Fujimoto 1983, and Fujimoto 1994.
4. Endicott 1991 (pp. 146–153) provides a detailed description of the ceremony of taking the *semangat* padi. See also Firth 1974, pp. 192–195; Laderman 1991, p. 42.
5. See Fujimoto 1976.
6. See Fujimoto 1994.
7. For the education system under British con-

trol, see Roff 1967, Ch. 5.

8. For the Malay view of vernacular education under British control, see Roff 1967, p. 139.
9. See, for instance, Winstedt 1961, p. 48.
10. Ibid.
11. For a description of traditional houin Kelantan, see Mubin Sheppard 1969 (Reprinted in the Royal Asiatic Society 1977, pp. 332–342).
12. Fujimoto 1983, Ch. 9.
13. See, for instance, Wong 1987, De Koninck 1992.
14. Fujimoto, 1983, p. 168. For the concept of agricultural involution, see Geertz 1963.
15. Based on the analysis presented in Fujimoto 1994.
16. See Endicott 1991, p. 114. It is also added that kite flying, for instance, was traditionally regarded as a means of communicating with the spirit of wind and sky (Sheppard 1972, p. 171).
17. Details can be seen in Fujimoto and Kosaka 1983, 1984.
18. The argument of egalitarianism as the social norm for the Malays can also be found in Swift 1965, and Mokhzani 1965.

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