

Chapter 5

Family and Community

“...It would be easier to characterize Matsigenka society in terms of what there is not than in terms of what there actually is” (Rosengren 1983: 48).

The Matsigenka might almost as easily be called semi-nomadic as semi-sedentary. Because they center their lives in sturdy houses where they store more possessions than they can easily carry with them, they are ultimately sedentary. But because they often leave these houses for extended periods, living from foraged foods in temporary shelters, they are frequently nomadic. In fact, their houses are so well-built that they easily last longer than the Matsigenka choose to live in them, and may be kept for some years after abandonment as hunting lodges and as shelters while harvesting the remaining useful products from old gardens.

The Household

Household Composition--. The Matsigenka prefer to live in single-family dwellings, well-spaced from their neighbors. On average, the people of Shimaa live in households of seven to eight members. Each household consists of a walled main house in a clearing, perhaps with an additional kitchen or shed, forming a unit that is physically and conceptually separate from other households. A husband and his wife or wives consider themselves to be independent of other households, even those in their own hamlet, and free to leave the house site for shorter or longer periods as their convenience indicates. With the division of labor among its members, a household is a self-sufficient unit capable of living on its own for long periods of time.

Of 23 households in the vicinity of the school at Shimaa in 1972, three-quarters (17) consisted of a monogamous couple and their children, although seven of these had one or more additional household members, usually an unmarried kinsman. In three households the husband had two wives, and another three comprised widows with children (Table 5.1).

<u>Household Type</u>	<u># of Households</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Monogamous Couple w/ children	17	74%
Polygynous Couple (2 wives) w/ children	3	13%
Widows w/ children	3	13%
TOTAL	23	100%

Table 5.1. Household Types in Shimaa, 1972-3.

The households in a school community like Shimaa are generally similar to those found in more distant areas. The presence of a school teacher and his aura of protection, however, may lead to more fragmentation of households than would otherwise be common. In both Shimaa and Shimentaato, for example, we find several households headed by widows, whereas in outlying areas widows and their children are generally attached to a household containing at least one married man. Away from the school, women still need the protection of a man in the house.

We also find several young couples without children near the school, exploring the opportunities of the new settlement where in the past such couples would have attached themselves to the girl's household until they had children and moved into a house of their own. We know, however, that in the past, powerful shamans similarly acted like magnets drawing settlers in closer than they would otherwise have chosen to live, and it is likely that unstable or transitional households gathered near shamans then, as they do near schoolteachers today.

Considering the unusual preponderance of females in the Shimaa population (Fig. 5.1), it may be surprising that only 3 out of twenty households have polygynous marriages. This preponderance of females, however, is a local occurrence of chance origin: in the nearby community of Shimentaato, the ratio of males to females is virtually 1:1, and in Camisea males outnumber females, 1.2:1. We will return later to the question why more of these available women are not absorbed into polygynous marriages.

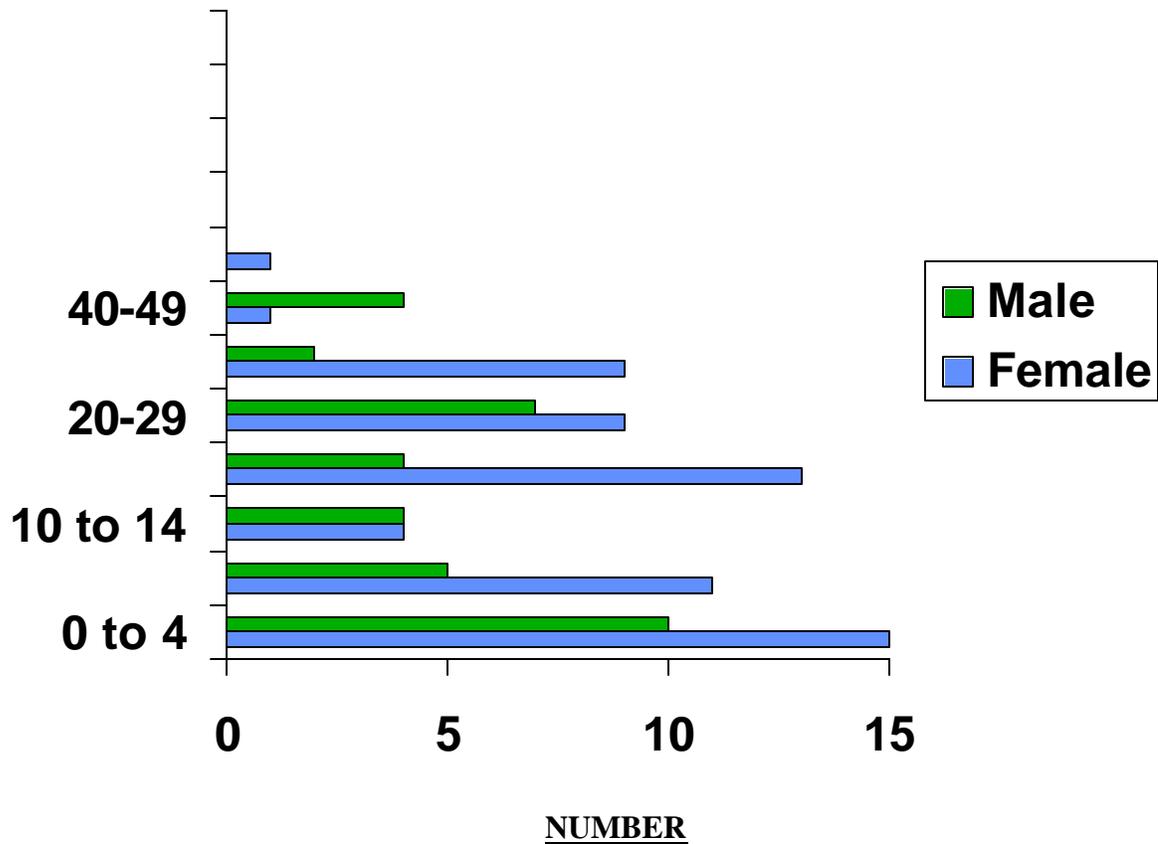


Figure 5.1. Age-Sex Distribution in the Time Allocation Sample.

Settlement Pattern--. Matsigenkas prefer to live either in single-family homesteads or in extended family hamlets of two to four households. Their settlements rarely comprise more than 25 people and may be as small as a family of four. Although this preference is giving way under pressure from the government to form “native communities” that will have official standing, the resistance of Matsigenka householders to such clustering is a perennial complaint of the community leaders as they attempt to bring the Matsigenka into the modern world: in addition to

Maestro's "We are not very united here," the schoolteacher at Camaná complained, "They can't handle community."

Even in the general neighborhood of the school communities many families prefer to live alone at a distance of an hour or more from the school itself. That this is close to the traditional pattern became abundantly clear when I had the opportunity in May 1973 to make a flight over the watershed of the Rio Kompiroshiato upstream from Shimaá. Apart from the other two school communities at Shimentaato and Mantaro Chico, we flew over 22 widely scattered settlements containing a total of 39 houses, an average of less than two houses per settlement. Half of the settlements consisted of but one house, whereas only one had as many as four (Table 5.2).

<u># Houses/Settlement</u>	<u># Observed</u>
1	11
2	6
3	4
4	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	22

Table 5.2. Number of Households per Settlement, Upper Kompiroshiato Watershed, 1972-

73.

Based on these observations, the population density of the upper Kompiroshiato watershed is about 0.3 persons per square kilometer. The new-style community being

promoted by the government could hardly contrast more: houses close together, lined up in two rows with a street running between them. Such villages are common at the lower elevations, along the Bajo Urubamba where travel in motorboats links the Matsigenka more regularly to Peruvian society, and in communities like Camaná under strong “progressive” leadership.

We will see below, however, that even though new settlements reduce the physical distance that formerly separated houses or extended family clusters, they do not eliminate the social distance: when we look at patterns of visiting and the exchange of food and labor in new villages, we still discover small isolated kin clusters and even households that remain aloof from their neighbors. Despite the compact settlement, the old independence persists in behavior, just as stones assembled into a mosaic still retain their original shape and character.

Map 2 shows the community at Shimaá. Farthest downstream along the Rio Kompiroshiato (off the map to the right) are the three households of Italiano's hamlet (Hses. 17, 18, 21 in Table 5.3), whose children walk 45 minutes in good weather, much longer in bad, to attend school each day. The children like school very much, but neither they nor their parents have any desire to live closer to the school community. Moving up the Kompiroshiato toward the school, the next settlement is the downstream (kamatikya) hamlet of Felipe's group, which has a core of five households (Hses. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14). Hse. 10 belongs to Javier, a partial loner who moved his family a half-hour away from the downstream cluster during our fieldwork in 1973.

<u>Household</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>ID</u>	<u>Birth Year</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1	Oscar	MHD	1945	
	Elisa	FHD	1946	
	Mariana	DA1	1969	b. August
	Aretmio	SN1	1972	b. May
	Alicia	AF1	1956	
2	Omenko	MHD	1924	
	Victoria	FHD	1937	
	Lola	DA1	1957	twins
	Teresa	DA2	1957	“
	Pepe	SN1	1963	
	Rokash	SN2	1969	b. November
	Amelia	DA3	1972	b. May
	(Mauro AM1)	1957		usually upstream Shima)
3	Aradino	MHD	1927	
	Kasimira	FH1	1932	
	Rosa	FH2	1939	
	(Viviana)	DA1	1947	Da of FH1; mostly in Hse. 20)
	Irima	DA2	1955	Da of FH1
	Erena	DA3	1957	Da of FH1 (previous husband)
	(Jorge)	AM1	1960	So of FH2; lived in Hse. 11)
	Vinancio	SN1	1971	b. April; So of FH2 and MHD
4	Jacobo	MHD	1943	whole family absent 8/72-8/73
	Celia	FHD	1939	
	Miguel	SN1	1960	
	Haroldo	SN2	1967	
	Olivia	DA1	1973	
5	Eduardo	MHD	1953	
	Inez	FHD	1947	
	Violeta	DA1	1968	
	Alberto	SN1	1971	
6	Pedro	MHD	1942	“Maestro”
	Adela	FHD	1942	
	Juan	SN1	1962	
	Raquel	DA1	1964	
	Delia	DA2	1968	b. March
	Melina	DA3	1969	b. August

	Delmira	DA4	1970	b. August
	Norma	DA5	1972	b. June
	Justina	AF1	1952	servant
	Graciela	AF2	1956	servant
	Teresita	AF3	1954	servant
	(Libia		1965	from Hse. 16)
8	Santiago	MHD	1949	composite household
	Marina	FHD	1952	dependent on Maestro
	Maritina	AF1	1952	
	Nieve	DA1	1965	adopted
	Serequita	DA2	1967	adopted Da of Si of FHD
	Miriam	DA3	1969	Da of AF1
	Marita	AF4	1939	
	Vicky	AD1	1965	Da of AF4
	Delia	AD2	1968	“
	Andrea	AD3	1970	“
	Adela	AF3	1956	Si of FH4, married to AM1
	Shoshovi	AM1	1956	
	Angel	AM2	1954	married AF1 in 1973
9	Aretoro	MHD	1947	
	Pororinta	FHD	1948	
	Andres	SN1	1966	
	Moises	SN2	1967	
	Enriqueta	DA1	1970	
10	Javier	MHD	1930	
	Viviana FHD		1937	
	Juanita	DA1	1954	
	Marosa	DA2	1962	
	Olga	DA3	1965	
	Elsa	DA4	1966	
	Erindina	DA5	1968	
	Silverio SN1		1971	b. December
11	Felipe	MHD	1946	
	Eva	FH1	1940	
	Amaria	FH2	1954	
	Manuela	DA1	1969	Da of FH1
	Aventura	DA2	1973	Da of FH1
	Ekitoro SN1		1961	So of FH1
	Juliano	SN2	1971	So of FH1; b. August

	David	SN2	1972	So of FH2; b. April
12	Julio	MHD	1932	
	Juana	FHD	1937	
	Roberto	SN1	1955	
	Guillermo	SN2	1960	
	Elva	DA1	1964	
	Aurora	DA2	1972	b. May
	Estefania	AF1	1944	Si of MHD; later moved to Hse. 10
	Miguel	SN3	1972	So of AF1
	Alicia	AF2	1960	adopted by AF1
13	Karoroshi	MHD	1950	
	Virima	FHD	1945	
	Micaela	DA1	1962	Da of FHD, previous husband
	Martin	SN1	1969	
14	Mariano	MHD	1950	
	Rosa	FHD	1955	
	Elias	SN1	1971	b. April
15	Camila	FHD	1912	
	Beatriz	DA1	1942	Da of Camila
	Maria Rosa	DD1	1956	Da of Beatriz
	Bertina	AF1	1968	Da of Maria Rosa
16	Geronimo	MHD		
	Shasharo	FH1		
	Maritina	FH2		
	Juanito	SN1		
	(Libia	DA1		living in Hse. 6)
		DA2		
17	Italiano	MHD	1943	
	Maria	FHD		
	Rosa	DA1	1961	
	Hugo	SN1	1960	
		SN3?		
	Peruviano	AM1		married to AF1
	Salomia	AF1		married to AM1
18	Torres	MHD	1944	
	Almania	FHD		

		SN1		
		DA1		
19	Evaristo	MHD	1935	
	Teodora	FHD	1953	
	Ramona	DA1	1971	b. May
20	Tito	MHD	1948	
	Estella	FHD	1938	
	Juanito	AM1	1962	So of ?
	Viviana FH2	1947		(also in Hse. 3)
	Armando	SN1	1966	So of Viviana
	Jorge	SN2	1969	So of Viviana
	Maria	AF3	1959	Da of ?
	Ricardo	AM2	1952	So of Omenko, Hse 2
	Rokania	AF3	1932?	
	Elvira		1944	
	Jaime		1971	b. April
21	Mario	MHD		
	Rea	FHD		
	Angel	SN1	1959	
	Americo	SN2	1960	
		SN3		
		DA1		

Table 5.3. Census of Households in Greater Shimaa Area, 1972.

The school cluster, at the confluence of the Rio Kompiroshiato and the Rio Shimaa, itself is heterogeneous and quite unlike a traditional settlement. Several of the households here, 5, 7, 8, and 9 are largely unrelated families living in various degrees of dependence on Maestro (Hse. 6). Households 1 and 2 are really part of the upstream Shimaa hamlet to which we will turn in a moment, and household 3, while linked to the downstream hamlet, was another loner family that had a second residence at considerable distance and spent much of its time there. All in all, “not very united” is an apt description of this “community.”

The upstream Shimaa (katonko Shimaa) hamlet consisted of households 19 and 20 in addition to households 1 and 2. It was very difficult to get there during the rainy season, when the Rio Shimaa was swollen and turbulent. Households 1 and 2 spent many weeks at a time up there, where they planted gardens and went on foraging expeditions.

In sum, the larger community at Shimaa was an aggregate of three extended-family hamlets of two to four households each, in addition to a fluid assortment of households close to the Maestro. Beyond this aggregate, several isolated households lived far up the Rios Shimaa and Kompiroshiato and did not send their children to the school. They would visit Shimaa a few times a year, to catch up on gossip and to trade a little, but were otherwise self-sufficient and averse to community life.

Selecting a House Site. The school acts as both a magnet and a repellent for Matsigenka households. Attraction to the school, for trade goods, medicines, and a general sense of security, comes into conflict with many of their most basic preferences about where and how to live best. It is these conflicts that account for the aversion many Matsigenkas have toward school communities.

A house site must ideally be near a good source of water. The Kompiroshiato overflight showed each house built close to a year-round river. Usually, a house is also adjacent to a stream that feeds into the river, since during the rainy season such streams provide the purest water. But small streams disappear in the dry season, when it becomes necessary to bring water in gourds uphill from the river.

For two reasons, however, it is rare to find a Matsigenka house on the river bank. First, fluctuations of many meters in water level from wet to dry seasons bring danger of flooding. Felipe built his first house at Shimaa in 1968 along the banks of the Rio Kompiroshiato, only to see it swept away in the big flood of 1971. He built his next house on a bluff some 200 meters inland and 50 meters above the river. Although this meant an inconvenient trudge uphill for the women carrying water in the dry season, the threat of flood was eliminated.

The other reason for building away from the river is fear of strangers. The old fear of slavers has abated near the school communities in recent years but remains strong in outlying areas. A relative of this fear today is of illness, especially influenza, which is frequently fatal to the Matsigenka. Always a main topic of conversation, news of a viral infection in the neighborhood travels quickly. Families scatter to their alternative residences. They will stay away until they believe the danger has passed and the locale is again safe. Since school communities, with their relatively dense settlement and more frequent contact with the outside, are vulnerable to epidemics of flu and other contagious diseases like colds and conjunctivitis, a number of alarms and flights are liable to occur each year, sharply reducing the student body for periods of time.

This is but one of many reasons why the prime characteristic of Matsigenka settlement is “competitive” in Steward’s (1955: 105-107) sense. The term is apt if we do not project too much of our own cultural meaning into it. The Matsigenka are not so much concerned to beat out their neighbors in some contest (although this element is not completely absent) as to avoid getting into trouble with each other through conflict over resources. They are most thoughtful in making their choices of where to locate, and their conversation is replete with references to the availability of resources in this or that place. They always describe the streams and rivers where other people live, for example, by showing with their hand above the ground how high the water is, and then listing the main species of fish found there. Men often joke about leaving the place where they live to go where their guests have just come from, arguing that fish and other resources are more abundant over there.

We will examine in Chapter 6 the rate at which resources can be depleted from an area by human settlement. Resource depletion is a major source of frustration, since it raises the cost of living while reducing the quality and variety of foods and other essentials. In the artificially dense settlements of the school communities, resource depletion is a major source of complaint, and, along with contagious disease, a prime source of aversion to community life.

When families think of settling in a particular location, they consider all these factors and others, such as the local availability of kin. Given the importance of all factors, it is understandable that desirable residential sites are scarce. When a choice has been made, a man will advertise his interest, to learn whether competing claims exist. He does not want to get into a dispute that would lead to aggression, and so another criterion for settlement is that no one else shall have announced interest in, or rights over, the chosen location. A family will make its

choice a year or more before a planned move, and make sure that word gets out about exactly where a house is to be built or a garden cleared. Only when no one objects and the property thus “clears title,” will a family actually make the move.

A pervasive feature of Matsigenka settlement is dual residence. It could be as easily called “flexible” or “alternative” residence, and is not a specific feature so much as a general quality that takes several forms, of which two predominate. First, as we shall see, it is common for households to move to a new location after several years. When about to move, the first step is to clear a new garden at the new location, and when that garden begins to produce food, to build a house in the midst of the garden. This initiates a period of a year or more when the family will move back and forth between the two residences, enjoying the advantages of each until the old gardens lose their attractiveness and the new homestead becomes the main residence. When Javier (Hse. 10) moved his family away from the downstream hamlet in 1972, for example, his original plan was to continue to inhabit both old and new houses and tend both sets of gardens (he eventually abandoned the old house and gardens in the hamlet).

Second, families frequently maintain a secondary residence at some preferred location that acts something like a vacation home. In low water season, households commonly move down to the river and live on the exposed beach in houses of caña brava (Generium sagittatum). The women avoid the long climb carrying water, and enjoy easy fishing and foraging for water creatures. Foraging expeditions into the seasonably dry forest are sources of pleasure for the whole family, enhancing the sense of this period as a kind of vacation time.

In the school communities, many of the families that live closest to the school maintain such dual residences. Aradino (Hse. 3) kept a house and large garden an hour away up the Rio

Shimaa, and frequently took his family there for extended stays. The house was the usual, well-built structure, as though this were a new location to which Aradino planned to move his family. He appeared, however, to be committed to life in the school cluster, treating his second house as a place to go to get away from the crowding of the school community, to avoid epidemics, and to enjoy a greater abundance of game and other wild foods.

In Camaná, where houses were more closely crowded around the school, Baksh (1984: 427) reports that families often left the village for days at a time, ostensibly to fish and forage, but indirectly to reduce their contact with other community members. The village could not have remained intact without this pattern of dual residence to act as a pressure valve for the tensions of village life. To describe these periodic get-aways, villagers had adopted the Spanish word “vacaciones.”

Travel. Although some Matsigenka in the Shimaa vicinity know how to make and use canoes, and all can make and use balsa rafts, their preferred means of travel is by trail. Waters are often too rough and rocky for a canoe to pass. Furthermore, although traveling downstream on a balsa raft is speedy and thrilling, it is dangerous and occasionally fatal. And then, the raft must be hauled back upstream on the return trip.

Undoubtedly it is much easier to walk upstream by trail than to shove and drag a balsa raft up a rushing mountain torrent. Surprisingly, this is often true going downstream as well. On a two hour raft trip downstream from Shimentaato to Shimaa I saw a man on the trail matching our speed. I had assumed that our raft would move much more rapidly downstream than a man could hike the trail, but he actually arrived in Shimaa at the same time we did. This is because, between the stretches of river where the balsa is swept downstream on rushing water, there are

other stretches of shallow, slow-moving water where the balsa gets caught on rocks and must be dragged along.

A raft or canoe is most helpful in moving quantities of materials and goods downstream. It is worth wrestling an empty one upstream in order to load heavy construction materials like palmwood for transport back downstream. Trading expeditions to Kiteni frequently employ two or three canoes to carry sacks of coffee and other items for trade. Most households in the greater Shimaá area own a raft, and two own a canoe.

The main trails--along the rivers and up the crests of the mountains that separate the rivers--are generally well-maintained. Even main trails may have hazardous stretches, as when they cross slippery shale outcroppings close to the rushing river, or when a mountain trail suddenly narrows to a hand's breadth along the edge of a landslide. But main trails have undergone a long selection process. Not only are they for the most part easy and direct routes, they are well-groomed through frequent use. As people walk along, they make little improvements: breaking away eye-level branches, removing fallen logs, fashioning footholds in muddy slopes. The great (and probably ancient) trail running up the watershed between the Shimaá and Kompiroshiato rivers was one to two meters broad and clear overhead to more than two meters. Although no single individual took responsibility for clearing it, through frequent use it was the local equivalent of a highway.

The main trails along the riversides and mountain crests form the grid on which a finer net of small paths is laid. From each homestead paths will extend both downstream and upstream to link up with the riverside trail; other paths will reach out toward the various gardens, and others toward the main crestline trails. Walking along a major trail, one encounters

a small path once or twice per kilometer, leading to someone's homestead or garden. These paths are regarded as private, and are not used unless one intends to pay a visit to the homestead. Unwelcome use of such a path can lead to disputes. The major trails, by contrast, are considered public right-of-way.

Spatial Use in the House. The traditional Matsigenka house is an oval about 8 meters long and 5 meters wide, with a palm leaf roof that peaks about 4.5 meters off the ground (Ch. 6). It is almost always walled with wood slats, with a single doorway located in the middle of one of the long sides. Upon first entering from bright sunshine it is quite dim and often smokey inside. Unless there is a separate kitchen structure (usually the same size as a house but without walls), there will be one or two hearths in the house. When there is a single hearth it will be located roughly in the center of the house, perhaps somewhat to the left or right of the entrance. When there are two hearths, they will be at opposite ends of the house, 1 or 2 meters from the wall. The number of hearths is determined by the number of women with children. When there are two wives with children, each has her own hearth; when an unmarried woman with children is present, she too will have her own hearth. In Aradino's household in late 1972 there were three hearths in a separate kitchen: two for his two co-wives and a third for a co-wife's daughter and her two young children.

The Matsigenka sleep on plaited mats which are rolled up and stored in the rafters during the day. Two-thirds of the households we visited had a raised platform made of palmwood that served as a bed for the parents and their younger children. Older children, and other members of the household, usually sleep on mats on the ground in their own area next to the wall. They keep their personal possessions in the rafters or hung from the walls where they

sleep, and this is regarded as their private space. Even when the mats are rolled up during the day and no visible mark of the sleeping area remains on the newly swept ground, family members crossing from one part of the house to another will not walk through another person's sleeping area, but will walk around it as if there were actually walls.

The platform is the sleeping area for the man of the house and his first, or primary, wife. Their young children will usually join them there, older children sleeping apart. The secondary wife will also sleep off the platform, surrounded by her own children. As sexual intercourse does not usually take place in houses where co-wives or grown children are living, this does not indicate any unevenness in the distribution of sexual favors. On cold nights, however, the whole family will approach the fire, since they sleep without blankets. Someone will periodically tend the fire during the night, while the family curls up in the circle of the fire, and members who would ordinarily sleep apart huddle together.

Fieldnote (08-08-75) At dusk (about 5:30 pm) the teen-age son sets up his space, placing his mat close to the fire opposite his mother, telling his younger brother to set his mat next to him on the side away from the fire. On the other side of the fire is his mother, then his father. Their youngest daughter is right next to mother; their older daughter is near the fire to mother's left and teen-age son's right. Mother's married daughter, visiting, was sitting in teen son's space until he decided to put his mat down, then she moved and settled down again after he was settled. The second (and maligned) wife, when in the house, occupies the direction opposite older sister, but against the wall (almost "hunched" against it), as far as possible from the fire and next to the water jugs--also close to the door (sometimes giving the appearance of being ready to flee).

In the morning, members may remain on their mats while eating or doing indoor tasks, but as they leave they roll up their mats and store them overhead. A wife or older daughter will sweep the floor and the house comes to appear quite clean and empty. If during the day members return for a period, usually to work at indoor manufactures, they tend to sit in their sleeping area on their own mat. Hence, it becomes apparent after a while that a Matsigenka house has “rooms” in it--albeit without walls--that are the customary working, sitting, and sleeping areas of the older members of the household. Other members respect these spaces as a matter of courtesy, and we never saw any sign of disputes over household space.

Fieldnote 05-27-73: During the telling of the myth everyone in the house had his place, corresponding, for the members, to their sleeping areas and for the guests to other spaces they usually occupy.

In polygynous households, the two hearths act as two poles around which family activity takes place. As we saw in Chapter 3, children tend with high frequency to interact with their own biological mothers and with their full siblings. They are far less likely to interact with their father's other wife and her children, although naturally, being in the same household, they interact more than they do with members of other households. In the normal course of the day, and night, each hearth is the center of activity of the wife and her children. The husband will frequently join his primary wife at her hearth, but during mealtimes he may place his mat between the two hearths and act as a conduit through which food passes back and forth between the two hearth centers. This is not just courteous reticence on the wives' part, avoiding each other's space; it also avoids the need to share food directly, since each is

ostensibly giving food to her husband, who then may or may not choose to give it to anyone he wishes.

House and Garden--. The Matsigenka house is a secure haven in an often dangerous world. In the beginning, I did not respect their houses very much. The dirt floors, the uneven wall-slats that let in light and air, and the palmleaf roofs alive with the sounds of mice and insects--occasionally we would hear rustling in the roof-leaves and then the squealing death-throes of a mouse being devoured by a snake--all these provoked some doubt about the quality of both construction and hygiene. But the Matsigenka build sturdy houses that remain completely dry inside even in drenching thunderstorms, and they proudly explain that their walls keep out the jaguars. After several months I came to be grateful for these well-built structures and the sense of security they afforded.

Walking outside the house, we find ourselves in a clearing that extends in a rough circle about 15 meters around the house. Beyond this radius will be garden land and perhaps a ravine or other uncultivable land. The clearing is swept every day and is weeded every week or two, so that on dry days it is an expanse of baked earth that is momentarily dazzling after the dim interior of the house. This area is partly an extension of the house, for it serves as a patio in which all household activities can take place. During the heat of the day, food processing and manufacturing take place outside on the shady side of the house; in the evening, meals and manufacturing can be enjoyed while leaning against the walls of the house; and at night when guests are visiting, men will sometimes lie outside on mats gazing at the stars and talking for hours.

A main purpose of the clearing is as a buffer against snakes. This is why it is swept clean and weeded with such regularity. Snakes are reluctant to cross such a clearing, and they can be spotted and killed if they do so. When Omenko returned from a stay of several months at his second house upstream on the Rio Shimaa, his yard was so full of weeds that, out of fear of snakes, he slept at another house for several nights while he thoroughly weeded it.

Also, to keep the clearing free of rubbish, all garbage is carried beyond the clearing and disposed of in an unused place. Households living near the river will mount their garbage into a pile and, using an old cushma or mat, carry the trash to the river for dumping. Other households maintain a rubbish dump at the edge of the nearest garden.

Near most houses will be strips of uncultivated land where brush or cane grow. These are preferred areas for urination and children's defecation. Adults are fastidious about defecation, however, and prefer whenever possible to refrain until they are at the edge of an old garden or out foraging in the forest. One path to several gardens near the school at Shimaa wound through a weed-patch that was the latrine for Hse. 8, and my companion Roberto would always wrinkle his nose and express disgust when we had to pass by. No feces were visible from the trail, but the smell was a reliable reminder of the regular use to which the area was put. I never noticed that smell when we were around the hamlets away from the school community.

New House and Garden. A new homestead begins with a new garden at a desirable location, preferably where little foraging has gone on for some years. During the clearing phase, a man erects a temporary shelter where he sleeps for days at a time while working on the new garden; his family may join him there, bringing crops from the old homestead and enjoying the greater access to wild foods that always favors a new, unexploited

area. As the garden matures during its first year and manioc begins to provide a reliable staple in the diet, a man can turn his attention to building a new house, most likely somewhere within the new garden. The house could take several months to complete, so that about a year after beginning the new garden, a family will take up residence in the new dwelling.

Because the Matsigenka like to clear a new garden each year (Chapter 6), a patchwork of gardens comes to surround the house over a period of several years, each garden being in a different stage of evolution, producing different crops in differing proportions. The original garden surrounding the old house is partly abandoned, becoming a small housegarden for herbs, condiments, and some fruit trees, the abandoned part serving as a source of firewood and a refuse area. During the first year or two at the new house the family will continue to return to the old homestead, where fruit trees, barbasco, and some other crops will remain attractive, but that house will decay and the gardens revert to weeds. Eventually, the old homestead turns into secondary forest and begins the lengthy process of regeneration.

Life Cycle of the Homestead. Considering the amount of labor that goes into clearing a new garden and building a new house (Chapter 6), it is startling to find that the average Matsigenka household moves to a new homestead every four years. This figure is the exact average of the moves made by six men since their first marriages. The men ranged in age from 22 to 48, with an average age of 36, and had moved a total of 22 times in their combined 88 years of marriage. If anything, this estimate is conservative, because the oldest records, of moves made before 1964, are very difficult to pin down as to date and are most subject to informants' likelihood of forgetting. These older records tend to show longer settlement periods, an average of one move every 4.6 years.

Each move covered an average distance of 14 km. Of those 22 moves, however, half (11) were within a kilometer or two of the previous homestead. The other half of the moves were for substantial distances: several moves exceeded 20 km. and one covered nearly 60 km. Of the eleven long distance moves, the average distance covered was about 25 km. In several cases, these involved moves to adjacent river valleys; only the longest move traversed two watersheds.

Men give many different reasons for moving. In the old days, they moved to avoid slave raiders. Then, and now, they moved to avoid illness: Omenko left Maputanoari, the stream where he used to live, because of kamagantsini (lit. “death sickness”; flu). He left in such a hurry he left his axe and machete behind. But the majority of moves had no explanation (kogapai “no reason”). There is a measurable decline in overall quality of life after a few years of residence in one place, however, that can be remedied by moving to an unused area.

Property, Exchange, and Power in the Household--. The respect for personal living spaces within the household is part of general pattern by which household resources are considered the possessions of their “owner,” shintaro. Among the Matsigenka, ownership in possessions is created through labor and transferred through gifting. Nobody owns nature itself: people appropriate nature by using it, spending time and energy to convert it to useful forms. We will examine more closely below how large-scale “possessions” like foraging territories are negotiated. For now, we will focus on how property is created within the household and how it is allocated to meet the needs of the household.

Personal Property. I will begin with a strong statement: everything the Matsigenka make and use is owned by someone. I first sensed this early in fieldwork when a

neighbor borrowed one of what I thought of as “our” books from Orna, then carefully returned it to her although he had to walk past me to do so. I wrote in my fieldnotes: “The implication to be explored is that husband and wife do not hold property in common, or at least such property as books.” As often and as generously as the Matsigenka share their possessions with kinsmen and friends who ask for them, they are careful not to blur the distinction between property and generosity.

Clarity with regard to property is at the heart of Matsigenka social relations, both within and outside the household. The division of labor by sex, and to a lesser degree by age, brings about a need to obtain useful items from other members of the household. That the Matsigenka keep detailed account of this process of mutual exchange only means that they do not undervalue the ties that bind them into a household. To blur the boundaries of personal ownership, to pretend to some sort of communal ownership of “household property,” would be to deny the specific contributions each member makes to the whole, and would deprive them of one of their prime sources of pleasure.

Every act of sharing is consciously, and usually explicitly, by permission. One does not borrow willy-nilly the possessions of another, even of a wife or brother. People keep careful track of their possessions and become agitated when something is missing: this inevitably occasions a thorough search to locate the missing item, managed through asking an ever widening circle of neighbors whether they know what became of it. Should the item indeed be missing, the reaction to the loss is one of outrage and suspicion. Although they are no more covetous than other people and probably a good deal less than many, the Matsigenka see theft

as an assault and violation. Therefore, everyone is careful how he handles the possessions of another.

Everything in the household is individually owned. The house belongs to the man who built it, and the bar he places in front of his door when away for any length of time is ample claim of possession to keep others from wandering in. Just as the interior floor space is specifically allocated to family members, so too above their spaces, on the walls and in the rafters, are mats, bundles, boxes, and other containers with personal possessions. If you ask a Matsigenka over the age of six to name his possessions, he can give you a complete list. If you wish to see any of them, he can go to the exact container, retrieve it, and show it to you. If he says he has three needles, he will have three. He only begins to lose count as numbers mount above five, when, like all his neighbors, he tends to remember in increments of five or ten, which he can indicate by opening his fists and flashing his fingers the right number of times.

Manufactures contain small elements of individual style that indicate who made them. Men of a hamlet could easily identify the arrows of all the other men, just as women could identify cushmas by their weaver's designs. This might not be so true of simpler items, like cane boxes or wooden spoons, but the basic principle still applies, because people always remember who gave them any item they possess. So, even if it has no distinctive markings, it remains important to know who made it and who gave it. For items not manufactured locally, such as needles or mirrors, people could state exactly where and from whom they obtained it, whether as a gift or barter.

One afternoon Felipe's 12-year old son, Ekitoro, came in with two one-kilogram mamori fish. He dropped them without ceremony near his mother, but Felipe, who was drunk,

got up and gave him a great loving hug. We were living in Felipe's house at that time, and I knew Felipe was thrilled to have fish to eat, for meat was scarce. He was proud of his son, and grateful. Ekitoro was similarly thrilled and proud of his ability to contribute something truly special to his household. It took the family two days to finish off those fish. Although they were shared under Felipe's supervision with other households in the hamlet, they never ceased to be Ekitoro's fish in anybody's mind.

Careful reckoning of ownership begins very young. It is common to give a chick to an infant, so that even before the child can speak it owns a full grown chicken. Should you try to buy or beg for that chicken, the parents will inform you that the matter is out of their hands, the chicken belongs to the child. This may seem a convenient fiction, since the parents will manage to make a meal out of that chicken sooner or later, but it is also part of the general attitude that children have autonomy and full personhood from the time they are born.

This said, it is probably well to affirm that, in daily living, the Matsigenka household is full of acts of generosity. It almost seems as though the emphasis on individual property exists in order to make generosity possible. The giver, by being acknowledged as owner of the gift, and therefore empowered to dispose of it at his or her will, is assured that the gift will be acknowledged and respected, not taken for granted.

We have seen that a Matsigenka should not refuse a proferred gift. Early in fieldwork I got into trouble with Aretoro when he discovered a sahini wasp's comb and offered me my pick of larvae (igitsoki sahini), still slippery in their cells. I refused, he insisted, and with each of my refusals he offered the gift more forcefully, finally shoving it in my face and forcing me to step back. I had not yet learned to eat insects--nor even to say, "I don't know how"--and stuck to

my refusal, leaving Aretoro annoyed with me. The process begins early in life, when toddlers wander up and offer to take mashed food from their own mouths and place it into yours. Adults accept these offerings. Too worried about germs, I refused these gifts and, in this and other ways cut myself off from the fullest possible membership in the household.

It was also true that a wife would not have to ask her husband's permission to go into his garden, since it was her garden too (some of its "property-ness" was created by her labor). But she would of course know not to go into the garden while crops were in a stage vulnerable to contamination by a woman's presence. And children would have to get their parent's permission before going into the garden to harvest food. I learned early to be careful to ask permission before measuring any gardens, and never to help myself to food in anyone's garden but my own.

Out hunting, men would sometimes enter someone else's garden, even someone from another hamlet, to cut one or two lengths of sugar cane to slake thirst and hunger. Sugar cane is never in short supply and so may be seen as cheap enough to be taken without giving offense. And I have seen a man borrow another's axe from his wife when the axe owner was not home; although, I have also seen a wife refuse to loan her husband's axe, saying, "I don't know. He's not here." In some cases, the difference is that the borrower arranged to borrow the item ahead of time, and thus the wife was just respecting her husband's stated wishes.

I have also seen a brother walk into his brother's empty house and take his axe to cut a tree. So there are exceptions to the rules concerning property and permission. But the rules are strong. It might be difficult to refuse to be generous to a kinsman, but that kinsman still has to ask. The tranquility of the Matsigenka household, and the flows of generosity that bind it,

depend upon respect for the personal ownership of everything in it, whether manufactured, grown, caught, or bartered.

Power. If we take power in the social arena to be the ability to get others to do what you want them to, then everyone in a Matsigenka household has power over everyone else. Naturally, what each wants from the others varies with age and gender, as does their degree of success in getting it.

In the Matsigenka household, a strong ethic of generosity and congeniality inhibits the use of threat or physical force in gaining compliance. Words like “authority” or “respect” better describe the mutual give-and-take than does “power.” But threat is not absent: parents threaten corporal punishment, especially of toddlers, and husbands and wives know that, in the libertine excesses of a beer feast, they may exchange blows, sneak off for sexual liaisons, or (in the case of wives) run away somewhere until an apologetic husband comes begging forgiveness.

Yet, as Orna Johnson (1978: 221) summarizes,

...There is a strong sense of togetherness in the Matsigenka family that is expressed by mutual affection and a feeling of responsibility for one another. To the observer, Matsigenka domestic life does indeed appear to be well-integrated. The feeling of togetherness is reinforced on the behavioral level by physical proximity and interdependence in the course of daily domestic activities. People are respectful and considerate of one another, seldom showing substantial irritation or anger. Their attentiveness to the needs and feelings of others reflects a sensitivity developed through close association and cooperation. People are conscious of each other's actions, and often anticipate what another person may want in the absence of verbal communication.

In her analysis of videotapes of domestic behavior, she was able to classify over 5,000 individual actions taken by one household member (the “initiator”) toward another (the “recipient”). Although some 35% of the individuals present in households during her videotaping were non-nuclear family members, only about 10% the actions initiated by nuclear family members were directed toward non-members, establishing the behavioral primacy of the nuclear family in daily life.

Figure 5.2 summarizes the predominant direction in which actions were initiated within the household. Solid lines represent the major direction in each case, while dotted lines indicate the secondary direction. As discussed in Chapter 4, male heads (FA) predominantly direct their actions toward their wives (MO), whereas their wives predominantly direct their actions toward their children (CH). Children evenly split their main actions between their mothers and other children. Secondly, women direct a significant number of interactions toward their husbands, and men do likewise toward their children, but children direct only a small fraction of their actions toward their fathers.

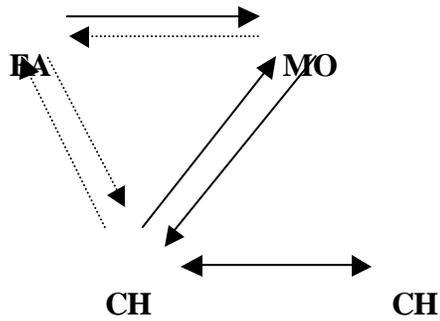


Figure 5.2. Pattern of Actions Directed toward Family Members. (Source: O. Johnson 1978: 230)

Orna found that 2,161 of these actions could be unambiguously coded as either “supportive” (hugging, offering food, answering a question) or “unsupportive” (hitting, refusing to share, scolding, ignoring a question). The rest of the actions were part of complex conversations that could not be readily coded in these terms. Of those actions that could be coded, four out of five were supportive, which “says a good deal about the tenor of life in the Matsigenka household” (O. Johnson 1978: 231).

Nowhere is this more clearly seen than during mealtime in a Matsigenka household. The bulk of mealtime foods are initially provided by mother from her hearth. Almost immediately, however, those who have been given food begin to share. Not everyone will be seated next to the hearth, and not everyone is served at once. Those who are served first break off a portion of theirs and offer it to someone else, saying something like nero pagiri “look, grub.” Those others in turn may break their piece into still smaller pieces and find someone to give them to. It is not uncommon for an ear of maize to be broken in two, then subdivided again, and still again until the piece being given has but a few kernels; the one who originally shared the maize may later receive a fragment of the very portion she gave away.

Other family members may also prepare small amounts of food themselves, roasting a few caterpillars or slicing up a palm heart. They may take charge of distributing that which they brought into the household. In this way, new foods enter the circle of exchange at points other than the wife and mother. The result is a Brownian motion of bits and pieces of food moving among household members during mealtime.

The nuclear family is, overall, quite insular in its everyday behavior. Even when additional members occupy the same house, nuclear members do not engage them much.

Additional members are sometimes women in a dependent position, taking orders from the wife and applying to her in return for instructions and approval. Insofar as they are delegated to care for children of the nuclear family, they issue a large number of requests for action, something they do with no other members of the nuclear family.

Polygynous Households. In polygynous households the space is essentially divided into two or more parts, each centered on a hearth for the wife who occupies it. Even when there is a separate kitchen structure with multiple hearths, co-wives keep their possessions in the main house separate, as do all household members, and their children array themselves around their mother's space. Young children wander across the invisible divide into the co-wife's space, but older children and adults associated with one wife remain largely on her side of the house.

An important element of this separateness is that Matsigenka women rarely care for the children of their co-wives. Each wife is a center of gravity around which her children revolve in close orbits. They are rarely reprimanded for wandering out of orbit, but they discover in time that doing so is not encouraged. Since women are not overly generous with the children of their co-wives, it may simply be that the rewards for approaching one's step-mother are too slim to reinforce such behavior.

In the time allocation survey we recorded for children under six not only what they were doing, but in whose company they were doing it, that is, who the primary caretaker was. In Table 5.3 we can see that young children are found more than three-fourths of the time in the company of one or both of their parents. Indeed, 76% of the time children are with their mother, whether or not father is present. By contrast, they are alone with father only 2% of the

time, a further example of how mother occupies a social space between father and child, interacting far more with each of them than they do with one other.

Even more significant in Table 5.3 is how far down the list of caretakers co-wives rank, accounting for only 3% of all observations. They do not contribute as much even as the residual category, “other kin,” which includes cousins, aunts and grandmothers. (Even “nonkin” outnumber co-wives as caretakers, but that category is artificially enlarged by the group of additional women who care for Maestro’s children.)

<u>Relation</u>	<u>No. Obs.</u>	<u>%</u>
mother only	394	50%
mother and father	209	26%
sister	63	8%
non-kin caretaker	34	4%
other kin	30	4%
co-wife	20	3%
brother	17	2%
father only	12	2%
alone	<u>8</u>	<u>1%</u>
TOTAL	788	100%

Table 5.4. Relationships of Caretakers to Infants and Toddlers.

Not all the households in the time allocation sample are polygynous, however, so not all children being observed had a chance to be cared for by a mother's co-wife. If we look only at the 289 observations of children in polygynous households, we discover that 20, or 7%, involve care by co-wives. This is a better estimate of the role co-wives play in caring for each other's young children, and it is a very low figure, showing that co-wives are caretakers only about one-tenth as often as a child's own mother is.

Among co-wives there are differences owing to age and levels of experience. The clearest pattern is between young wives without grown children and older wives who have the labor of their children at their disposal.

The younger wives, having fewer children, spend the most time engaged in the outdoor tasks that offer little opportunity to draw on assistance from others. And at home, they show the lowest relative authority.... The elder wives ... spend relatively more time working at home, where they can take advantage of the children's labor. Consequently, among wives, the elders exercise the greatest relative authority, initiating the highest number of requests.... (O. Johnson 1978: 251)

Time allocation data according to the social setting in which activities take place also show that younger wives tend to spend more than three times as much time alone with their husbands as do older wives, who spend much more of their time socializing with adult kinsmen than younger wives do (O. Johnson 1978: 252). Although younger wives receive more sexual attention from their husbands than older wives, these behavioral differences contribute to a clearly higher overall social standing for senior wives.

Getting along with co-wives requires a husband to be sensitive and respectful.

... Polygynous arrangements call for equality among co-wives in every respect. Co-wives have equal rights to household resources, and neither is subject to the authority of the other. A husband is expected to treat his wives equally, clearing garden space in which each can plant her own crops, providing each with meat and manufactured items, and exchanging food with each during meals.

That a man may have an emotional preference for one of his two wives is generally accepted. And such a preference need not provoke jealousy; all are aware that one of the two is the favored wife (the one the husband feels more desire for), but some men are said to favor both of their wives, for different reasons (e.g., one wife may be older and know how to weave well, the other may be younger and more physically attractive). However that may be, he must provide for his wives equally....

Co-wife compatibility is also important in polygynous households. A man should not take in a second wife without the permission of the first, for it is important that they get along with one another....

When questioned about their marital preferences, Matsigenka women express different opinions on whether monogamy is preferable to polygyny. Monogamous women feel monogamy is better, but polygynous women like having a co-wife because she contributes domestic help, especially as concerns obligations to the husband (e.g., weaving his clothes, making beer, or accompanying him on forest trips). It all comes down, as one monogamous woman said, to what kind of co-wife you have--whether she knows how to work hard, whether she would be generous and understand the sharing of things. (O. Johnson 1978: 204-206)

Many men would like to have a second wife. But it is a difficult matter to arrange.

Mariano, whose young wife Rosa was considered lazy, tried on two different occasions to woo mature, productive women. One of them even entered into a trial marriage with him, but it did not last. A man must provide a decent supply of meat, and co-wives must get along together for the marriage to work. Still, polygyny appeals even to men committed to monogamy: once,

when Omenko and his wife Victoria dropped by to chat, I asked if he would like a second wife. He answered “No,” but Victoria countered, “He wants more.” Omenko was about fifty years old and his monogamous marriage to Victoria had produced a successful extended family with many grown children, yet Victoria, albeit in a mildly bantering tone, recognized his ambivalence.

The fact is that there is generally tension between co-wives, even though they manage to treat each other courteously most of the time. The division of the house into separate territories, each wife procuring and preparing food separately in her own pot at her own hearth, sharing through her husband rather than directly with her co-wife, caring for her own children alone or with help from her own relatives--all these indicate that the polygynous household really operates as an aggregate of distinct nuclear families that happen to share a husband and father in common.

Felipe’s wife Eva strongly disliked her co-wife, Amaria. Amaria had a strange manner: diffident and vague, she often called Felipe “father” (apa). Eva once told us tera onkametite ogito “Her head is no good.” They generally accommodated each other, but when Eva was angry at her she would refuse to eat any of Amaria’s food. Often, Felipe shared Eva’s anger and brusquely refused Amalia’s efforts to placate him with offerings of special foods. When Eva thought she was having pregnancy complications, she and Felipe scolded Amaria for having eaten monkey, something as a good member of the household she should have avoided because of a pregnancy proscription.

This unhappy marriage did not improve. By the time we had returned to Shimaa in 1975, Amaria had moved her hearth outside the house to a lean-to built off one end, and spent many of her daylight hours there alone with her young son. When in the house, she

Fieldnote 8-8-75 - occupies the direction opposite older sister, but against the wall (almost “hunched” against it) as far as possible from the fire and next the water jugs -- also close to the door (sometimes giving the appearance of being ready to flee).

In another case, after Orna left the videotape machine running at Aradino’s while she went off to do other things, she discovered when she reviewed the tape that his senior wife, Kasimira, had roughly scolded Erena, his new young wife (his third), then walked over to her and struck her a blow, something we had never seen happen between wives in our presence. Adding to the tension in this case was that Erena was the daughter by a previous marriage of Kasimira's co-wife, Rosa. The incestuous overtones of this marriage had upset the community at large (Chapter 3). Not yet being pregnant, Erena was still sharing the hearth of her mother, retaining her daughter-like place in the family.

There are many unmarried women of marriageable age in Shimaa, yet they do not get absorbed into polygynous marriages, remaining attached to other households. We can see now that a woman would not enter lightly into a polygynous marriage. It would mean living in a household with a high likelihood of a permanent state of tension, carefully managed through separation of living spaces, food and other property. Especially in the zone of security provided by the school community, a woman can find alternative living arrangements with relatives. Although she does not have a husband, she can become a useful member of a household and can raise her children in reasonable safety and comfort. A few of the women in Shimaa seemed ready to “tough it out” as single mothers, working hard at contributing to the households in which they lived. Yet they remain open to courtship by attractive men and ready to be convinced that even a polygynous marriage could be right for them.

Political Economy: The Hamlet

As applied to small-scale societies, political economy refers to the economic, social, and political relationships that tie subsistence-oriented households into larger collectivities (Johnson and Earle 2000: xx). Although the household participates in the political economy in order to achieve its own goals, its members encounter a political world quite different from that of the nuclear family household. For the Matsigenka, principles of kinship, patterns of marriage, gender segregation, political and economic dominance, and public interaction--lively and joyous at one moment, angry and contentious the next--all change the tenor of life from that of the household.

Thus, to say the Matsigenka have a political economy is simply to acknowledge that all humans live within a political economy. It may not be as massive and impinging as the one in which we live, nor even as dramatic and vivid as a New Guinea pig feast, but it is still a presence for the Matsigenka and looms larger in their lives than we might imagine from comparing it to such larger systems. Even in a family level society, the nuclear family is always embedded in a social matrix that includes not only portions of the extended families of both husband and wife, but also an attenuated network of "friends and relations" throughout a large region, sporadic contacts with unknown Matsigenkas, and delimited interactions with non-Matsigenka Peruvians, missionary linguists, and anthropologists.

Kinship and Marriage--. The Matsigenka social world is, conceptually, one of kinship. Their rare and curious deemphasis on personal names dramatically underscores this: the only way the Matsigenka of Shimaa are comfortable addressing or referring to anyone is in the

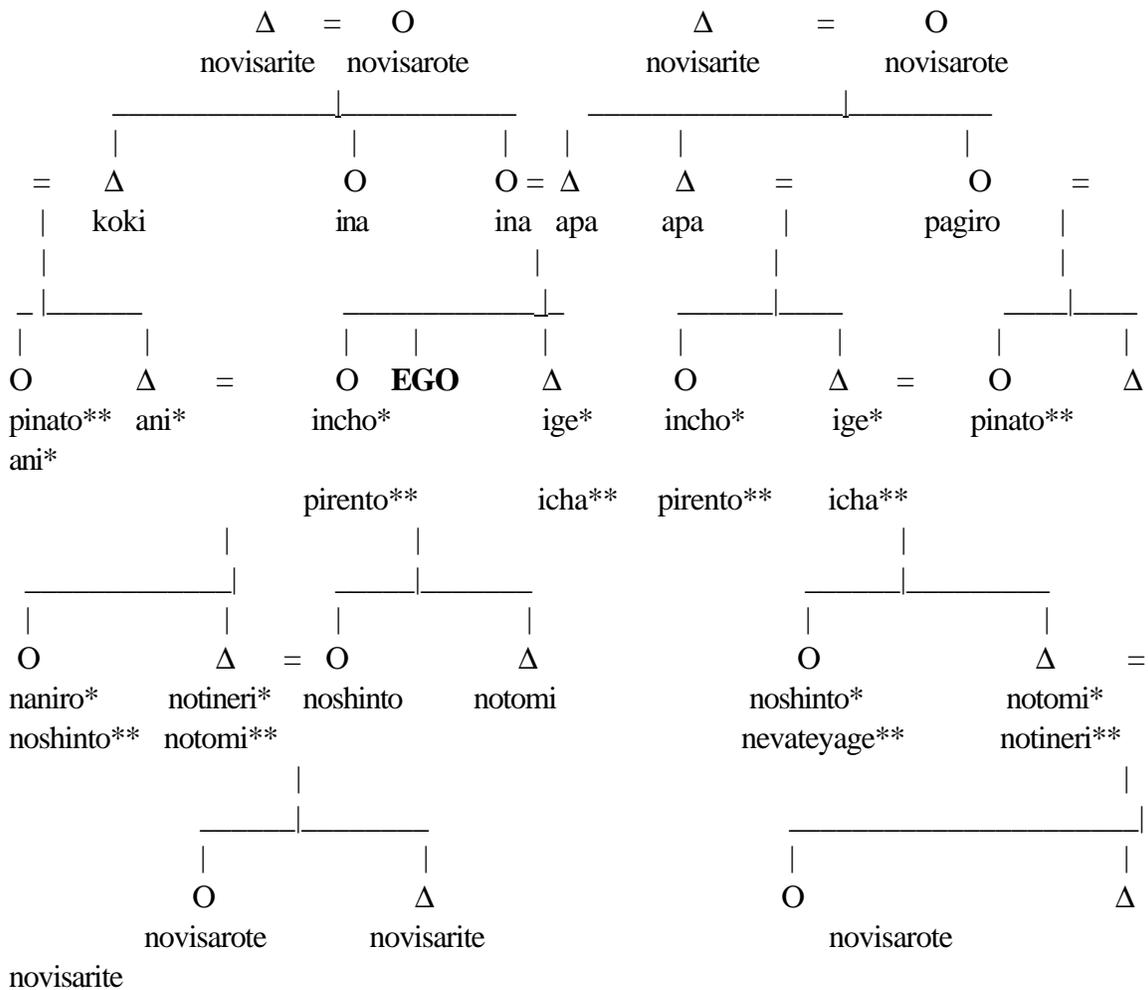
language of kinship. Their opening conversation with a stranger almost immediately turns to the question, ainyo piniro “Is there your mother?” and thence to other relatives and one’s immediate social world. Conversation with one who has returned from a long absence will in addition include queries about any of the inquisitor’s relatives that might have been encountered on the subject’s travels. Even when I was reading In the Shadow of Man (Goodall 1971), people looking over my shoulder at the photographs of chimpanzees wanted to know who they were and whether they were relatives of anyone I knew.

Kin Terms. Matsigenka kin terms make up a system of kin reckoning that is simple and elegant. It falls in the general class of systems based on the widespread “cross/parallel” distinction (Kay 1965). It is of the symmetrical exchange type identified by Levi-Strauss (1969: 119-133) as the most elementary of kinship structures, a view supported by comparative analysis of the complexity of kinship structures (Dole 1972: 154). The Matsigenka version has been well described by W. Snell (1964) and O. Johnson (1978). Since discussions of kinship terminology can quickly become esoteric and overly elaborate, I will confine myself here to trying to convey the small number of principles necessary to see the Matsigenka kinship system from the inside out, as it appears to one actually living within it.

We can learn most of what we need to know from Figure 5.4. The **EGO** at the center is the vantage point from which we want to try to comprehend the Matsigenka-eye view of their kinship system. Looking directly up and to the side we find familiar concepts, differentiated only by gender: parent (APA “father” and INA “mother”) and sibling (IGE or ICHA “brother” and INCHO or PIRENTO “sister”). Leaving for a moment the question why there are two Matsigenka terms for “brother” and “sister,” we will begin this discussion using the English

glosses, although I have put them in quotes to indicate that they need not mean to the Matsigenka what they mean to us. (If the anthropological reader finds the next two paragraphs elementary, I ask forbearance; it gets more interesting.)

On the parents' (+1) generation we discover a crucial difference from our own system: father's brother is called father and mother's sister is called mother. Only when a parent's sibling is of the opposite sex is he or she designated by a different term. Although I have translated KOKI "uncle," it really refers to mother's brother, and "aunt" (PAGIRO) really refers to father's sister. The difference is the result of the "cross/parallel distinction," which can be seen best by looking at the children's (-1) generation: expectably, one's own children are called "son" (NOTOMI) and "daughter" (NOSHINTO). A man will call his brother's children "son" and "daughter," just as they will call him "father." In that case, a man's children and his brother's children will call each other "brother" and "sister" because they are related through parents of the same, or "parallel," gender (their fathers are brothers; the same would be true if their mothers were sisters). A woman, however, will call her brother's children NOTINERI "nephew" and NANIRO "niece," they will call her PAGIRO "aunt," and they will call her children ANI "male cousin" or PINATO "female cousin," because they are cross-cousins (they are related through parents who are cross gender).



Key

ani	male cross-cousin (Γ spkr)	noshinto	daughter
apa	father	notineri	sister's son (Γ spkr)
icha	brother (E spkr)	"	brother's son (E spkr)
ige	brother (Γ spkr)	notomi	son
ina	mother	novisarite	grandfather, grandson
incho	sister (Γ spkr)	novisarote	grandmother, granddaughter
koki	mother's brother	pagiro	father's sister
naniro	sister's daughter (Γ spkr)	pinato	female cross-cousin (E spkr)
nevateyage	brother's daughter (E spkr)	pirento	sister (E spkr)

Figure 5.3. Matsigenka Kin Terms.

*Male Ego Speaking **Female Ego Speaking

Although I was familiar with this kind of kinship system in theory before going to the Matsigenka, I found in the field that I had no internal appreciation of it until I had lived with them for many months and been incorporated into their kinship relations. Then what had been a theoretical knowledge became practical understanding. What this kinship system does at its most basic level is to create a social world made up of two kinds of people: own family and affines. From a man's standpoint, all men of his generation are either brothers or brothers-in-law; all women are either sisters or potential spouses. The gender obverse is true for a woman. For both men and women, in the generation above are either parents or parents-in-law, and in the generation below are either sons and daughters or people one's sons and daughters can marry.

Why the existence of two terms for "brother" and "sister?" The gender of the speaker determines which term is used. What is really being labeled is whether or not the sibling is the same gender (that is, the same kind of person) as the speaker. Thus, a woman calls her sister PIRENTO, which might be rendered "my sister, like me (my gender)," and calls her children daughter and son. A man calls his sister INCHO, "my sister, unlike me (other gender)," and calls her children niece and nephew. Similarly, we may understand IGE to mean "my brother, my gender," and ICHA, "my brother, other gender." Gender of speaker, therefore, owes its prominence in sibling kinterms to the cross/parallel distinction.

The other instance in which the speaker's gender is important is in relation to the cross-cousin. A man calls his male cross-cousin ANI, but has no term for his female cross-cousin. His sister can call her female cross-cousin PINATO, but, reciprocally, she has no term by which to call her male cross-cousin. The crucial relationship between potential spouses is

marked by the absence of a term. When cross-cousins do marry, they refer to each other as NOHINA “wife” or NOHIME “husband” Otherwise these two delicately-related people will go through life without a kin designation for each other. Since a wife’s sisters or a husband’s brothers fall into this category, there are frequent situations in which one must talk to or about someone for whom no term exists. The neighboring Campa avoid this situation by use of a construct NOHINACORI, from NOHINA “wife” + CORI “potential” (W. Snell 1964: 14). This allows them to speak of “one who could be my wife.” A Campa woman may similarly call her male cross-cousin NOHIMECORI. But the Matsigenka allow the odd vacuum to exist:

“...Opposite-sex cross-cousins are defined as potential spouses, a relationship characterized by ambiguity and embarrassment. Unless involved in a conjugal relationship, classificatory spouses avoid one another and do not refer to one another as kinsmen” (O. Johnson 1978: 97-98).

Another notable feature of this terminological system is that all the work is being done in the three generations of EGO, parents, and children. The system appears almost completely disinterested in grandparents and grandchildren, distinguishing them only by gender: NOVISARITE “grandfather” or “grandson” and NOVISAROTE “grandmother” or “granddaughter.” Since grandparents and grandchildren of the same sex are called by the same term, we must translate it with some strange gloss like “grandmale” for NOVISARITE and “grandfemale” for NOVISAROTE. Owing to the hard reality that grandparents are not often still living when their grandchildren reach the age of reason, a merging of the worlds of kinfolk at these distant boundaries creates little confusion. Indeed, there is no incest taboo on marriage between grandrelatives. Snell reports a case of a woman who mistreated her granddaughter

because she was jealously afraid her husband might marry the child when she reached puberty (Snell 1964: 7).

In a rather nice bit of symmetry, the kinterm system wraps around after the second generation up or down. That is, grandmother's mother is called "daughter," because, after all, grandmother = granddaughter, and daughter is the mother of granddaughter. Likewise, grandson's son is called "father." This situation will occur rarely, but Rosa, who was our "granddaughter," had a young son whom we called "Apa."

We may, therefore, state the basic incest rule as originating in the statement, "you shall not marry a parent, child, or sibling." This becomes immediately extended to, "you shall not marry the sibling of a parent, or the child of a sibling." The artifice that is introduced into this simple prohibition is to treat two sets of cousins as absolutely different, although they are genetically of equal distance from EGO. Because siblings of the same gender are merged into the same kin category, their children become--to one another--parallel cousins and by definition siblings whom it would be incestuous to marry, whereas the crucial gender difference between brother and sister turns their children into the opposite, cross-cousins who are the ideal marriage partners.

In daily life, and equally in folklore, seemingly different relationships are collapsed into a single category. Not only does father's brother become "father" or mother's sister's son "brother," but the person referred to as ANI becomes simultaneously my mother's brother's son, my father's sister's son and my sister's husband--a family member and in-law at the same time. PAGIRO is at once father's sister, mother's brother's wife, and mother-in-law. That each of these people is, at the conceptual level, all these things at once is no problem for the

Matsigenka, since all is implied directly by the terminological system. This does not mean, however, that conflicting aspects of such kinsmen and women do not arise from their being simultaneously kin and in-laws.

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
	<u>Parallel</u>	<u>Cross</u>	<u>Parallel</u>	<u>Cross</u>
+/- 2	NOVISARITE		NOVISAROTE	
+1	APA	KOKI	INA	PAGIRO
0 (m. spkr)	IGE	ANI	INCHO	
	[NOHINA]			
0 (f. spkr)	ICHA	[NOHIME]	PIRENTO	PINATO
-1 (m. spkr)	NOTOMI	NOTINERI	NOSHINTO	
	NANIRO			
-1 (f. spkr)	"	"	"	NEVATYAGE

Figure 5.4. Matsigenka Kin Terms Analysed on Four Dimensions: Gender, Generation, Cross/Parallel, and Gender of Speaker.

Matsigenka kinship terminology is created out of four dimensions of contrast: gender, generation, lineality, and gender of speaker. Actually, “lineality” refers to the bifurcation created by the cross/parallel distinction, which as we have seen is rooted in a gender difference. So, we could say the kin terminology is ultimately based on only two dimensions of contrast: gender

and generation. In Figure 5.5 we can see that Matsigenka kin terms are very efficiently analyzed in terms of these four (two) dimensions.

Marriage. We have gone as far as we need looking at the kinship system from within (EGO's standpoint). If we turn to look at it from the outside, its most striking feature is that it tends to create a symmetrical exchange structure consisting of two families intermarrying endlessly across the generations (Figure 5.6; cf. Chagnon 1987: 26). The pattern begins with two brother-sister pairs intermarrying. With the cross/parallel distinction, the offspring of each couple are cross-cousins of the offspring of the other couple, and hence ideal marriage partners. In principle, a very small group of people may stay together across the generations, without needing to leave the group in order to find a spouse.

This is the ideal form of a hamlet, where both newlyweds can stay close to their parents after marriage. Incest prohibitions do not require marriage outside such a hamlet. In reality, this means that children are often effectively betrothed to an appropriate cross-cousin in their hamlet. This should not be thought of so much as child marriage as of an understanding between married brothers and sisters that their offspring, when grown, would make an ideal match. That the children would not have to leave the hamlet upon marriage is seen as a blessing for all (cf. Kensinger 1995: 137).

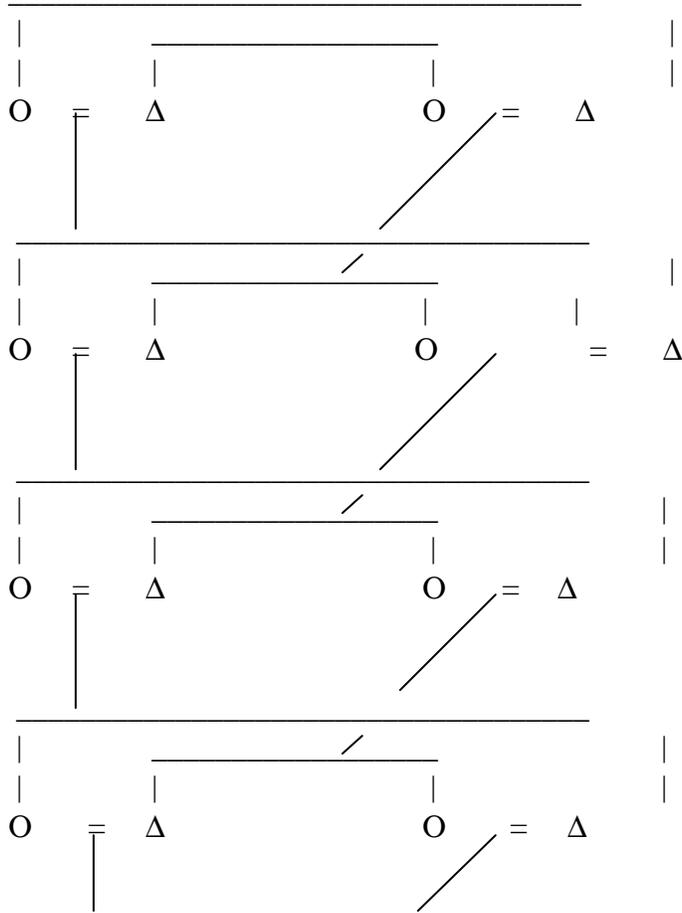


Figure 5.5. Two Intermarrying Lines--the Ideal Hamlet.

The hamlet, while divided by the cross-parallel distinction and the implied split between two intermarrying families (an emic split between kin and in-laws), is at the same time a tightly-knit kindred. Indeed, the distinction between in-laws and kin is far from clear: as we saw, PAGIRO (“aunt”) is “mother-in-law,” “father’s sister,” and “mother’s brother’s wife” simultaneously. In general, relatives traced bilaterally, through both father and mother, are equally weighted in Matsigenka reckoning. Although the Matsigenka may in some ways be described as having a matrilateral or matrilocal bias (Casevitz 1977; Rosengren 1987a: 335), their social organization is strictly bilateral, with flexibility as the key (O. Johnson 1978: 126; Löffler and Baer 1978). Indeed, the opposition created at one level by the incest prohibition on parallel cousin marriage is counteracted at a higher level by bilateral descent reckoning, which ensures that “in-laws” are part and parcel of the individual’s kindred, without regard to “male line” or “female line” (O. Johnson 1978: 93-96).

The Matsigenka also lack terms for social categories. For example, there are no terms for affine, agnate, or family. Bodley (1970: 65) suggests that the Campa word noshaninka corresponds to “my family.” For the Matsigenka, noshaninka corresponds to “my people,” those who live in ego’s general locality; nomagimoigirira (“those who sleep with me”) designates the people living in ego’s immediate settlement cluster. Both terms reflect physical proximity rather than social standing. For ego’s kin ... there is the term nohitane, “the people I treat as kinsmen,” which constitutes an egocentric kindred. The only relationship denoted by a categorical term is blood sibling. Notovainka (literally “my others”) refers to both male and female siblings who have at least one parent in common. The Matsigenka also distinguish between “real” kin and people who are simply regarded as kinsmen. For example, apa sanorira is a true or biological father (also

itomintakenarira, meaning “the one who fathered me”). When kin terms are extended to incorporate new relationships, the Matsigenka say, nopegakeri (apa), literally “I changed him into [a father].”

Outside of the general category of being a Matsigenka, which is primarily a linguistic distinction, the Matsigenka do not classify people according to membership groups, as the lack of linguistic terms for social categories implies. Emphasis is placed on the genealogical core of male and female kin, which extends outward through marriage. The ordering principle is kindred unity through incorporation rather than exclusion. And because the kindred is ego-centered, its boundaries vary with the perspective of each individual, never establishing a defined sociocentric group. (O. Johnson 1978: 114-115).

What this means in practical terms is that the Matsigenka hamlet is likely to contain a full complement of relatives, even though comprising only four or five households. If, for example, a brother and sister should marry another brother and sister who are their cross-cousins, then the offspring of each couple will be cross-cousins. If those offspring marry each other, as they are likely to do, they can take up residence in the hamlet and reside both patrilocally and matrilocally simultaneously. In theory, if each generation provides the suitable number of mates, the hamlet itself becomes a self-perpetuating breeding cluster.

Of course, this does not happen because nature decrees an uneven distribution of suitable mates. For example, in the downstream hamlet the children of the classificatory brothers Felipe, Mariano and Julio included 7 boys and 4 girls (all parallel-cousins to each other), whereas the children of their cross-cousins Karoroshi and Javier included 7 girls [including 12-AF2] and 2 boys (all cross-cousins to the other set of children). Even if they were

all matched off to their cross-cousins, there would still be two girls from Felipe's group without mates.

When a boy and girl from the same hamlet are "betrothed" from an early age, this will be seen not only as an advantage for cementing relations between the two families, but also for solving the problem of how to find each of them a spouse, because the widely spread settlement pattern and the low frequency of contacts between hamlets means that everyday social life presents few potential spouses.

When a man and woman court, their households are most interested in the event and carefully cross-examine their potential in-law. A reputation for courtesy and respect, a full range of manufacturing skills, and a liking for hard work are expected in a new in-law. If the marriage is bringing together a man and woman from different hamlets, the usual pattern is for the man to move into his bride's home and work for her father for a year or two. This bride service seems primarily to provide a period for a trial marriage, when the newlyweds discover whether they truly like each other and can make a marriage. As Matteson (1954: 79) describes for the Piro,

There is usually matrilocal residence for an indefinite period. It seems to be a matter of protection of the bride and of mutual help, rather than of actual bride service. The son-in-law does the hunting and more active work, and the families have fields adjoining if possible. The wife seems to consider herself bound more to her parents than to her husband.

Marriages frequently founder during this period. In such cases, the ex-husband simply packs up his belongings and leaves to effect a divorce. Because he has been working for his father-in-law during this period, no disputes will arise over the ownership of garden lands he cultivated.

Once this period is past, typically marked by the birth of a child, the young couple has freedom to decide where to live. They may remain with the wife's family, move to the husband's hamlet, or strike out on their own for some period of time. They may form a close bond with one of their siblings and branch off to form a new hamlet within easy visiting distance of one of their original hamlets. Judging from our migration histories, they will move in and out of residential proximity to their other kinsmen on both husband's and wife's sides more than once in the years to come.

It should be clear, therefore, that the social structure provided by the kinship system is limited to a kind of conceptual ordering that prohibits nuclear family incest and tends toward a pattern of intermarrying families over the generations. This is not "sister-exchange" (O. Johnson 1978: 104), although it may work out that way some of the time: it is just as often "brother exchange," perhaps even more so because of the matrilineal bias created by the custom of bride service. And often it is marriage between cousins so distantly related that the genealogical details are unknown. There is no evidence that in the general region around Shimaa the system of asymmetrical alliance postulated by Casevitz (1977: 129-37), including local exogamy, preferential patrilineal cross-cousin marriage, and matrilineal marriage, can be found (cf. Löffler and Baer 1978).

Nor is this in any way a system of two lineages intermarrying. A lineage system not only regulates marriage, but generally residence as well, and is most likely to occur where agricultural land is controlled by descent groups. The Matsigenka do not impede (very much) the access of other Matsigenka to agricultural land, which is generally abundant, and certainly do not use kinship and marriage to determine who can farm where. The freedom they have to move from

one place to another, from one living arrangement to another, means that they are much more likely to decide how to apply the kinship system to their own advantage than to sacrifice their freedom of choice to social structural imperatives.

This freedom is especially clear in the frequent, occasionally blatant, manipulation of the kin terminology to suit the marriage plans of individuals (cf. Chagnon 1987). We learned about this first hand when, after perhaps six weeks in Shimaa, Felipe approached us and asked us to be kinsmen. I said that would be pleasing, and asked how we should be related. He said it was my decision. I said how about us being brothers (IGE)? This seemed to disconcert him and he said something like, "I was thinking that you could be my father (APA)."

I had suggested IGE because of the egalitarian implications, but Felipe had other considerations in mind. As we came to understand this process of creating kinship ties, we could appreciate the care Felipe invested in it. We learned that a father-son relationship would minimize any ambiguity about sexual relationships between us and them, by bringing virtually every adult member of Felipe's hamlet under the incest prohibition, as either our sons, daughters, nephews, or nieces. Later, when we told Wayne and Betty Snell about it, they smiled knowingly and said, "Also, as your sons, it is appropriate for Felipe and his brothers to ask you for things. Brothers do not feel so free to ask favors from each other." So we had been neatly positioned in a kin relationship that maximized Felipe's self-interest. Very quickly thereafter everyone in his hamlet was calling us by the kinterms that made sense in view of their relationship to Felipe (that is, his children called me "grandfather," his cross-cousins called me "uncle," etc.)

A less common, but still satisfactory, strategy was for men to ask me to treat them as ani (cross-cousin/brother-in-law). This had the advantage of making my wife their sister and their wives my sisters, eliminating any possible sexual involvements.

In the same way, Matsigenkas beyond the confines of the hamlet reserve the right to choose how to refer to other Matsigenkas. It is common to find that a person simply does not treat (tera nohuteri) another as a kinsman at all, even though they encounter each other on public occasions. It is also common that they do not use the usual kinterms, but choose among alternatives such as nocharinantsi “my rival/friend” or “my friendly adversary,” or notsipatarira “my friend of same sex” (O. Johnson 1978: 118). These terms leave the kinship relationship unspecified and future marriage possibilities ambiguous.

If this is not possible--if, for example, a man finds himself in a hamlet where all the women of his generation are classified as sisters-- “he will want to reexamine the existing relationships in order to establish marriageability. Very likely there are alternatives in the reckoning of his own kin” (Johnson 1978: 122). In one case, a man who wished to marry his stepmother, widowed when his father died, refrained from calling her INA “mother” while he emphasized that her sister was married to his own parallel cousin (i.e., his “brother”): thus, his “mother” became the sister of his sister-in-law, moving her into the marriageable category (see also Casevitz 1977: 125-6).

Finally, if such delicate restructuring will not work, a man can simply redefine a relationship and dare the world to object. Snell (1964: 33; q. in Johnson 1978: 99) offers an example of a man who stood in marriageable relation to a woman he did not want. When she

persisted in trying to marry him, he stopped her in a public place and said, "From now on you are my niece."

I also mentioned earlier the case of Aradino, who treated Erena as NOSHINTO "daughter" because he had married her widowed mother when Erena was still a girl. But when she grew up, he stopped calling her anything for about six months. Then he married her. It was a public scandal, but he simply put up with the condemnation and had soon fathered children by her.

In all these cases, the manipulation is possible because the true kinship relationship is ambiguous. No such ambiguity exists about nuclear family members who have grown up together, or members of a hamlet who can trace their relationships to known ancestors. Where the relationship is close--siblings, first cousins, children of siblings--these manipulations are much more difficult to pull off. This too is evidence for the absence of clearly bounded kin groups: kin relations are ego-centric and the more distant a kin relationship actually is, the more room the Matsigenka have to redefine it into a form that suits their individual interests. Throughout the process they remain opposed to incest in principle, while being more flexible the greater the genealogical distance.

Kinship and Group Identity--. Other native Amazonian groups who now live in small villages or hamlets may once have been much more highly organized than today, victims of a long history of displacement and depopulation. This is suggested by their possession of complex group naming and political ranking systems, and by the persistence of public rituals that engage scores of participants (as many as can be rounded up, in some cases) in group dances,

contests and feasts. The absence of any evidence for such systems and rituals among the Matsigenka suggests that they have lived much as they do today for the indefinite past.

This is not to say that they lack completely a sense of belonging to larger groups. But is worth keeping in mind that, in quantitative terms, the Matsigenka spend only a tiny fraction of their time in group settings like barbasco fishing and beer feasting--in fact, less than 4% of adult daylight time. Qualitatively, these short periods of group interaction are intense and of undeniable importance, but Matsigenka days are lived out mainly in solitary work and nuclear family intimacy.

The Hamlet as an Enduring Group. We will see (Chapter 6) that economically the hamlet is held together in part by collaboration in critical activities like housebuilding and obtaining and sharing wild foods. Despite the advantages of this collaboration, households do leave hamlets and isolate themselves for shorter or longer periods of time. On the other hand, migration histories document that households tend to remain in the general vicinity of a group of families that is fairly stable over time. These families comprise people who grew up together as siblings or cross-cousins and remain closely linked through intermarriage, just as the structural model (Fig. 5.6) suggests.

The social closeness of hamlet members is evident in behavior. Just as members of a household interact far more frequently with one another than with non-household members, so too members of a hamlet interact more with each other than with members of other hamlets. For example, the members of the downstream hamlet visited one another about five times as often as they did households in the school community (Johnson 1978: 109). Although this contrast in visiting patterns is a function of distance in Shimaa, Rosengren (1983: 57) reports a

similar pattern in a “Comunidad Nativa” of the Upper Urubamba, and Baksh (1984: 416-428) shows how the sharp drop-off in visiting patterns between hamlet-sized kin groups persists even after they have been brought into close proximity in a school community. The visiting patterns reflect a hierarchy of social intimacy that is most intense within the walls of the household, drops to a lower but still substantial level within the hamlet, then drops sharply again between members of separate hamlets.

Four of the men of the downstream hamlet used to live upriver in the vicinity of what is now the school community of Shimentaato, where they knew one another as children. When Maestro invited them to come to Shimaa in 1968 they did so as a group. Felipe (11) and Mariano (14) were full brothers, and Julio (12) treated them as brothers although he could not trace an exact relationship to them. Javier (10) stood in relation to them as cross-cousin/brother-in-law (ANI). The fifth household in the hamlet was headed by Karoroshi (13), who had recently married the sister of the two brothers, so he also was their ANI, although he had come from a different tributary of the Kompiroshiato and was not closely linked to the other four.

During our research, Mariano entered a trial marriage with the sister of Javier. Although it failed to take hold, it was natural to try. The members of these five households were very close to one another. They cleared gardens near one another, helped each other build houses, shared meat, constituted a beer feasting group, and had been so evidently since their parents' generation.

Italiano (Hse. 17) and Torres (Hse. 18), and perhaps one or two other households had lived in the Shimaa area for many years before the school was started. In that era they had

occasional interaction with Felipe's hamlet, providing them with the trade goods that made their way upriver from the outside world.

When living together in a hamlet, households are subject to certain intimacies. Members of one's own hamlet may simply walk in through a closed door unannounced, and expect to share valuable items like meat or steel tools, reflecting a long close association that includes friendship as well as strong biological ties. In partial response to this, they take certain steps to maintain privacy. They often position their houses so that they are not visible from one another, allowing a stretch of forest or a knoll to separate them. They maintain separate paths to their houses, so that people walking on the main trail need not pass any given house unless they have specific business there. Even when Mariano and his cross-cousin, Karoroshi, lived side by side in the same clearing, they placed their doors in opposite walls--Mariano's facing the river and Carlos's facing the mountain--so that their comings and goings were not directly visible to each other.

To a degree men view their brothers-in-law (ANI) as interlopers into the family. This was evident in the way Felipe and Mariano treated Aradino (3), who married their sister Rosa and lived outside their hamlet. They would visit Rosa and be courteous to Aradino, but in private they made fun of him. Once they accused him of beating Rosa, and on another occasion angrily accused him of stealing Felipe's machete. Aradino may have been more vulnerable to such open disrespect because he was a uncooperative loner who spent as much time in an isolated house far up the Rio Shima as he did in the school neighborhood.

The ambivalence to the cross-cousin relationship is seen in the tale of Peccary, where in-laws are portrayed as animals.

SHINTORI (PECCARY)

Julio (08/11/75)

They say there was once a shaman who knew ayahuasca. His spirit flew to Mamori River where he saw the people who live there and peccaries as big as tapir. He told his people. They said, "Tell those people to come here that we may see peccaries as big as tapir." He drank ayahuasca and chanted a long while. He transformed into a guan and flew high up, then dove sharply, almost hitting the sand of the vast beach, then up and down many times until he finally reached the great river Mamori. Perching on a branch there, he summoned the peccaries. Then he flew home.

"Start the fire," he said, "I saw the peccaries and told them to come." They all made arrows. Each day the shaman told them, "They are coming." On the tenth day they heard the peccaries calling from the mountain, then they could hear them at the edge of the garden. "All right now," the shaman said. As they did long ago, the hunters removed their cushmas and hung them from branches. Then they hunted peccaries. The arrows flew--tsei! tsei! tsei! tsei!. Dead peccaries mounted in piles, darkening the ground. When they ran out of arrows they told the shaman they could not kill any more. He looked at the sky and whistled, and the peccaries ran off into the forest nearby.

The hunters went to locate their kills. They were too big to carry home, so they butchered them on the spot. They smoked the meat. Then they hunted again. The arrows flew, the ground grew dark. The shaman's neighbor said, "That's a lot of 'tapir' there." The next morning the shaman said, "They have gone. You have killed enough. Now be careful. They may return to

attack you and slice open your guts. Stay home until you have finished the meat you already have. Later, they will come back.”

Many times after that when they finished the smoked meat the shaman would call the peccaries once again. When they got to the garden, he would cry, “Defend your manioc!” After they were killed, the shaman would pull their teeth in order to give them to Peccary Spirit, who returned them so that they could drill holes in them for women’s necklaces.

One day the shaman’s neighbor went hunting. He said, “I dreamt about that manioc-like plant [kanirigovureki]-that I ate it and ate it.” Now he ate nothing. “I will go hunting. I will kill peccary so that I may eat fresh [not smoked] meat.” His neighbors said, “Peccary will conquer him.” He said, “No, I will shoot him. If I fail to shoot him, then he will conquer me.” They said, “All right.”

He stalked peccary. When he saw them they were eating, really eating. “Ee, look out!” they cried. “That archer is shooting. Let’s defend our lives!” They ran at him, their hooves pounding on the dry leaves. Peccary said, “Don’t kill him. Leave him! Bring him with us to climb trees, to gather palm fruits for us. Until now we have been eating fruits from the ground. He will gather them from the trees.” They surrounded him, grabbed him, and took him to where the others were waiting. They were in human form. That evening the shaman said, “They have captured him. They have conquered him as I predicted. They are taking him with them.”

The peccaries went along their way. Spotting a palm tree, Peccary said, “See that? Climb it!” The man got fruits and threw them down. They were not yet ripe. The peccaries husked them. When he had thrown them all down, he remained seated in the tree. “Let’s go,” said Peccary. “No.” “Let’s go.” “No.” Peccary cut the roots of the palm tree. When the man saw that the tree was beginning to fall, he said, “Hold on. I’m coming down.” The same thing happened at the next tree. Then Peccary said, “Let’s go. My sister will chew fruits to soften them for you. Sister, chew them so that he does not die from hunger. Otherwise, who will climb trees for us?”

They went along until they reached a stream. Peccary said, “Now wait, Ani (Brother-in-law), my sister will catch materi fish.” They ate materi. They went along until they heard the sound of Maniti demon. Peccary said, “Wait here, I will kill him.” When he returned, the man said, “Ani?” Peccary said, “I have killed him. I did it in his lair.”

That evening they laid down to sleep. Peccary said, “Be my brother-in-law.” He gave him his sister.

“Ani,” the man said.

“Huh?”

“Your sister’s quills are sticking me.”

“Sister, move away from him so as not to stick Ani. Ani, here is my old cushma for you to wear.” The man put it on. “Now, Ani?”

“Now it’s fine,” the man replied.

Now they slept. The man woke up cold. “It’s cold,” he said. He turned over. He looked at the fire. He stirred it. Thinking it was a piece of wood, he took Peccary’s leg and added it to the fire. Peccary yelled and ran around. When he was seated, the man said, “Ani.”

“Huh?”

“It was cold.”

“You should have told me, Ani,” Peccary said.

“Ani, it was cold, so I added wood to the fire.”

“What you added was me.” Peccary built up the fire, and the man was warm.

Now the man climbed trees without hesitation and threw down the fruits. His wife chewed them to soften them for him. They gathered their sugarcane [caña brava] and boiled it for him.

They reached the bank of Mamori River. They feared the heat of the sun, so they waited until evening to cross the river. On the vast beach they ran and ran, fearing the dawn. Sand rose in a cloud behind them. At dawn they reached the stand of caña brava. They collapsed until dusk. Then they got up and ate bamboo shoots. They ate and ate. Then they went along the paths to their homes. The man lived with Peccary there for a long time.

One day the man said, “Ani, I am going home where my daughter is. Come with me. Your sister will make beer, we will eat nothing but manioc and drink beer, and when we have finished we will return here and never go back there again.” Peccary agreed and called his neighbors. More peccaries came than ever before. From all their little paths they poured onto the main trail to Mamori River. They waited until night to cross the river. The shaman said, “They are coming to eat manioc.” After ten days they arrived at the gardens. The shaman told the men, “Go ahead.” The men removed their cushmas and hunted.

The man’s peccary wife carried manioc to him in her mouth. A hunter shot her. Another carried him manioc, but she was shot, too. He climbed into the branches of a nearometiki tree he had felled when he cleared the garden. He sat up there silently. The shaman whistled for the peccaries to leave, but they did not. They were looking for their brother-in-law.

The people also were looking for him. They went through all the dead peccaries but could not find him. The shaman said, “I don’t know. Maybe they took him. There were some in human form that went with them. I saw them yesterday: they do not walk on all fours and they are only a little dark on their backs.” Then the shaman knew the man had gone to his house. The people surrounded him there but he ran away in fear. They captured him and tied him up. He made animal noises because the peccary cane had ruined his voice.

The shaman took ayahuasca and sang until Peccary Spirit entered his body. Peccary wanted to keep the man with him, but his human wife said, “I took him back because he has a daughter. You would have him abandon his daughter.” Peccary said, “Well, that’s the way it is. I want him.” The man’s soul accompanied Peccary back to Mamori.

The next day the man [still at home also] went to look for the peccaries that had been killed. “That’s Brother-in-law; so’s that one. That’s Uncle; that’s Aunt; that’s my wife; there’s Brother; that’s my good friend.” He visited other houses. “That’s Uncle; that’s Son; that’s Daughter; that’s Brother.” People offered him smoked meat, but he refused. He had seen that peccaries are like us.

The shaman drank ayahuasca and chanted strongly. He went to stay for a while in Mamori. When he returned he said, “Let’s all go there. People live there. Let’s go, now that I have been there.” They went slowly in that direction, planting gardens to live from along the way. Finally, they arrived. “There it is,” said the shaman. “Where I went before.” They lived there, but did not cross the river. They saw a man [an Unseen One].

There, now. I finished chopping down that tree. Now that’s all.

In addition to the emotion storyline identified in Chapter 4 (Figure 4.1), and the theme of failure to heed the shaman’s warning (Chapter 7), this story presents a nature/culture opposition in which the wild animal aspect is personified by in-laws. But the opposition, intensified when the man is captured and forced to work for the peccaries, lessens as the peccaries are kind to him and bring him into the family. Eventually, he loses the power of speech because he has learned to eat caña brava, the peccary “sugarcane.” Ultimately, he can no longer eat their smoked flesh because he has discovered that they are like us.

Many joking interactions between men at beer feasts reflect underlying tensions, whether between in-laws or others. It is not always clear whether someone is joking or fooling (taking advantage yamitavinataka). For example, if your sister's new husband joked about abandoning her, then actually did so, you would feel betrayed and very angry. And "jokes" at a beer feast may actually be insults (ininatakeri). When Maestro jokingly told Aradino, "If you don't want to work for me, then get out of my house," Aradino took it as an insult and left the beer feast Maestro was hosting. But other guests accused Aradino of not taking the joke. The beer feast is clearly a place where unresolved resentments can be expressed in an atmosphere of "fun," and where taking insults seriously is regarded as bad form.

Gender Segregation in Public. Matsigenka is not a society strongly polarized by sexual antagonism. Within the privacy of the household, husband and wife are generally respectful and frequently affectionate. Despite the emotional ambivalence between men and women explored in Chapter 4, the division of labor by sex ensures that husband and wife need each other and appreciate the many ordinary services they provide.

Outside the household, however, interaction between man and woman is uncommon. In Chapter 6 we will see how, at a fishing expedition, the men and women segregate into a male group upstream working on the large dams that slow the current, and a female group downstream that builds the small dam with a net in it to catch the stunned fish that may escape the foragers' hands. As the fish poison is introduced, men move downstream and women move upstream until married couples have met at prearranged fishing spots to continue foraging as household units: the gender segregation of the cooperative work phase has disappeared as separate households reassert their practical importance in the noncooperative harvesting phase.

In sharing a meal of animal food like boiled fish, the whole hamlet will gather, segregating into men's and women's groups (Chapter 6, section "Eating--."). As in the case of fishing expeditions, when the communal portion of the activity is over, couples edge back together, dissolving the larger same-sex groupings. O. Johnson (1978: 212-219) ties gender separation at communal meals to the general pattern of avoidance between men and women who could marry but have not--that is, between opposite-sex cross-cousins who are not married and have no kinterm for each other. The tension arises because sexual liaisons between them are permitted by the kinship system but would be socially disruptive, especially if one or both of them are already married. The problems that might arise if they were to meet easily face-to-face in public settings are avoided by gender segregation in groups.

As evidence for this, Orna describes behavioral interactions during meals (from videotapes), showing extreme avoidance between people who could marry each other (Table 5.5). In fact, of 111 observations of food exchanges between a man and a woman during meals, 37 (33%) are between husband and wife, although only 11% would be expected by chance. In sharp contrast, none of the food exchanges were between "marriageables not married to each other," although 13% would be expected by chance. In short, husbands and wives share food disproportionately often, unmarriageable pairs share food often, although less than would occur by chance, and "marriageables" never share food.

Exchange Category	Observed Exchanges	Expected Exchanges
<u>Opposite-sex exchanges</u>		
Married	33%	11%

Nonmarriageable	21%	31%
Marriageable	0	13%
<u>Same-sex exchanges</u>		
Female	29%	21%
Male	17%	24%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Table 5.5. Food Exchanges During Meals. (Source: O. Johnson 1978: 218).

Orna points out that cross-culturally there is a strong association between eating and sexual intercourse. By avoiding food sharing with a potential spouse, the Matsigenka reduce the possibility of a disruptive sexual liason. Beyond this, both men and women have their own networks of same-sex friends and relatives; it is natural for them to socialize in same-sex groups when several households are together. In fact, the larger the group, the more formal the segregation appears to become. In large beer feasts hosted by Maestro, for example, the men gathered on the veranda of his house, whereas the women met in the kitchen, a separate structure next to the house. Women and children moved back and forth between the two groups delivering beer to the men and retrieving their empty bowls.

An interesting gender difference characterizes these segregated groups of men and women. Whether they occur at work, mealtime, or leisure, the interactions among the women involve more mutuality than among the men (O. Johnson 1978: 52; 136; 219). In work, men tend to work alone whereas women tend to work in company, often of another woman; women say they fear to work alone, fearing attack by demons more than men do. At communal

meals, women exchange food with other women more than men exchange with other men (Table 5.5).

In the dances at beer feasts, the general pattern is for men to dance out ahead of the women, individualistically drumming and darting and twirling so that their cushmas billow out like full skirts. The women, by contrast, follow the men in a group, holding hands and singing in rhythmic counterpoint. This was the pattern at all feasts but one, where I saw a group of four men hold hands and walk singing between a group of darting male drummers in front of them and a hand-holding group of women singing along behind them.

In each of the above cases, then, the women show more interest in making and reinforcing connections with their gender mates than men do.

Socializing in Groups. Even group work, as in the hand mowing of the airstrip under Maestro's direction, appears to have social rewards. Strung along a line that moves slowly forward down the airstrip, men fire off jokes that provoke hearty laughter. Despite the extreme drudgery of the task (mowing thick, unpleasant weeds from a crouch, using a machete), the men seem to enjoy themselves socially. As one man from Camaná told me in 1980, after working in a group weeding project: "You don't get tired, finish quickly! My own garden takes five days to weed. But with the group, you finish in less than one day." Baksh (1984), however, found that men accomplished less on the whole in such groups than their rates of work in individual projects would have predicted, indicating that some labor efficiency is sacrificed for a more playful sociability.

The Matsigenka clearly enjoy recreational gatherings and prepare for them with enthusiasm. We noticed again and again how the level of excitement rose as the day for an

expedition or feast approached. The Matsigenka are normally very quiet and calm, moving gracefully and without hurry. But as the participants begin to gather for the event, the air becomes animated with laughter and movement. Long before the first bowl of beer is passed, the people have reached a sort of social high where good spirits and effusive gestures prevail.

If there is work to be done on a fishing dam, no beer will be served, but people work quickly and much is accomplished. Jokes fly back and forth, and when work offers the opportunity to play, as when the men rode logs downriver as though they were bucking broncos, they give themselves over to the fun of the moment. Everyone is friendly, all the old animosities seemingly evaporate. Such a mood may persist through one or two days and into the feasting and beer drinking.

These are common occasions on which individuals can engage in trade. In the generosity of the moment, people give away possessions, or beg them from another. Since these events rarely involve visitors from distant communities, people do not come to the feast with a pack of items to barter. But it is a natural outcome of the gathering that individuals compare possessions and may swap them, or give them away in the interest of building friendships.

Here is a description of a beer feast I attended fortuitously during the second month of fieldwork:

Fieldnote 09-17-72 - Omenko had told me that he was going to his chacra to plant today, so I went to Oscar and told him I wanted to go, too. We left at 7:20 a.m., walking up the Shimaa and crossing it after about 15 minutes, and arriving at Tito's at 7:45. A large crowd was gathered, sitting in the shade of Evaristo's kitchen drinking masato. Those present were Ricardo, Angel, Evaristo, Juanito, Tito, Eduardo, Omenko, Oscar, Alicia, Victoria, Rokania, and some other women unfamiliar to me.

When I arrived, Evaristo said pokakempi ... kameti ["You have arrived--Good"], making me feel at home, and I was offered yuca, a small catfish-like fish (etari) and manioc beer. The men were drumming and dancing (except Omenko), but stopped while I was there. At 8:00 I went with Omenko and Oscar to view Omenko's chacra, and I thought to work in it, but after a few minutes we returned to the party.

Those drumming were Evaristo, Tito, Juanito, Angel, Eduardo, and Ricardo. The drum is a wooden cylinder about one foot in diameter and 18 inches long, with a monkey-skin cover on each end and a snare at one end made of fine cotton string, taut, with small beads strung along it.

The men drum and dance, the women walking along behind hand-in-hand and singing. The dance steps include a snake-like forward motion in between the houses and around the yard, with various turns around to the left and the right while moving forward. All the drinking and socializing take place in what appears to be a kitchen rather than in two other structures that appear to be sleeping areas.

The men and women sit at opposite ends of the kitchen (women upstream, except for Victoria, who sits next to Omenko). One woman, possibly Evaristo's wife, serves the masato to everyone else and the women continue to work on making more masato while everyone gets drunk--the masato is pretty strong, probably three days old.

After a while I brought out my cameras and started taking pictures. At first, everyone seemed a little tense, but I handed around the cameras and let everyone handle them and look through them, and pretty soon things were relaxed enough for me to film the event.

The men wanted to know how much everything cost. Ricardo said he wanted my machete. My knife passed around and Angel cut himself on it (thumb), which occasioned mirth. He played with the blood and even smeared some on Juanito's foot, finally tying the thumb with string.

All ages of both sexes drink the masato, so the inebriation and lassitude are general. One dance by Tito, Angel and Ricardo, however, lasted from 9:10 to 9:45 and represents no mean

physical exertion, since the pace is fast and consistent. My presence by now seemed to be accepted, although occasionally all attention would center on me.

Ricardo gave me a feather headdress, offered me some plantains which I refused (probably shouldn't have), and blew his nose on his cushma. Everyone seemed to be pretty drunk by 10:00 a.m., although the older members and the very young children seemed to drink less. At one point (10:20) Victoria asked Rokash to pick out the one remaining little fish from the ashes, and Tito, seeing this, stood up and got about a dozen more from a pot.

Between the drinking, eating, dancing, and conversation the time was pretty much spent. Oscar asked me if I wanted to leave around 11:00, and I said yes. The day was very hot and dry as we returned by balsa raft (a roller-coaster of a ride which we all enjoyed like schoolboys).

Drinking beer at first intensifies the social high. Men take turns working on a drum or other project, begin to drum, play flutes, and sing. Dancers rise, drumming and singing. In the separate circles of men and women, friends hug one another and protest their abiding love. The shouts and laughter and the rhythmic drumming can be heard far away above the background noise of the river.

The high is complex, however. Whereas at first it is a genuine feeling of good will and fellowship, the jokes often have a sharp edge of ridicule in them. As the party wears on, the slow but steady supply of beer has the intended effect. Men and women slur their words and stumble about. Children begin to appear more mature and capable than the adults, cooking, serving and cleaning up for their incapacitated parents. Individuals liberated by drink from their usual courteous restraint reveal a harsh aggressive side. They begin to tease those they view as transgressors. People who have broken taboos are called to task and harshly ridiculed, to great roars of laughter. If one man suspects another of stealing his fishing tackle, or his wife, he will

confront him with detailed cross-examination concerning his movements. Long suppressed angers flare up and sometimes result in violence. More often than not, the aggressors will later apologize through a haze of tears and become friends again, but not inevitably: resentments aired at a beer feast can lead to broken marriages and disintegrated hamlets.

On the whole, however, the gathering of many families is a public forum in which to express feelings that would not be appropriate under other circumstances. In a society without institutional procedures for police investigation, judgement and punishment, it is an opportunity for airing grievances and seeking justice. The result can in many cases lead to a resolution of suspicions and disputes.

The Division of Labor in the Hamlet. Although the division of labor by sex makes it possible for a husband and wife to have between them a complete set of skills necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of the household, it sometimes happens that certain skills are de-emphasized in one household but emphasized in another, creating a division of labor and mutual dependence between households. Not everyone possesses the full range of skills associated with his or her gender role. There were men who did not know how to make bows and women who could not weave. Although not many were so handicapped, those who were had to depend on others to make their artifacts for them. This was always someone within their hamlet, for whom they did many return favors.

One woman, Rosa, who could not weave, lived next door to her mother, who was married to her husband's brother (Households 11 and 14). She spun cotton and continued to help her mother as a daughter should, although she had the reputation for being lazy. Her mother was an outstanding weaver who made cloth for both households. In a way, her

continued dependence on her mother allowed her to postpone growing up into a fully skilled woman.

Another example of specialization concerns Julio, whose large productive gardens became the breadbasket for his hamlet (and for some relatives outside the hamlet) during the scarce period in 1972 before new crops became ripe. Julio, who was crippled by polio, could no longer hunt effectively, but he had a grown son and a nearly grown one, and the three of them maintained high levels of garden productivity. In turn, Julio shared in the meat brought in by his healthy relatives in the hamlet.

The hamlet, or the circle of kin who have lived together as a hamlet in the past and probably will again, is the common unit of participation in beer feasts. The event is planned well in advance, and invitations made. Women of the group collaborate in beer-making while the men go hunting or fishing, and bring in special wood if a group project--such as making a drum--is anticipated. The person extending the invitation always includes the phrase, aityo shitea "There will be beer," with excitement and interest peaking as the time for the feast approaches.

Maestro is a social center, and the division of labor he organizes may hold some clues to what might have existed in the neighborhood of a respected shaman in the past. We have already seen how certain men and women, orphaned, widowed or in some other way not well-integrated into enduring hamlets, attach themselves to a strong household as if to find parental protectors and to create a kindred where little or none exists. They are willing to subordinate their autonomy to serve the political needs of the powerful household, which becomes a center of unusually high levels of food production, manufacture, and feasting. What they gain in return is the protection of the strong household, including spiritual protection and influence.

In Shima, Maestro's household commanded a remarkable amount of labor. When preparing beer for a feast, the gathering of a half dozen or more women boiling, grinding and straining the ingredients had, by local standards, the feel of a factory. Meanwhile, their husbands were out hunting to provide suitable game meat supplies for the feast. The same kind of labor-crew effort by the men cultivated the schoolteacher's huge gardens, many times larger than those of the average household. Although the schoolteacher had modern goods to offer as rewards, rather than spiritual healing, he was seen as protective in dealing with the outside world, which was the leader's function to some degree in the past.

Hierarchy in the Hamlet. The Matsigenka are certainly "egalitarian" in any typology of comparative political systems. Yet, just as careful analysis of patterns of command and compliance demonstrated the hierarchy of command within the household, so also analysis reveals asymmetries of behavior between members of different households within a hamlet or residential cluster. Elsewhere (A. Johnson 1978: 106-110), I have used visiting patterns from the time allocation study to reveal asymmetries between even closely related households (cf. Rosengren 1983). In Figure 5.3, which reflects the frequency with which visits were being paid by members of each downstream household to members of the others during the random spot checks, shows that many households received more visits than they paid, while others paid more than they received. Further analysis (O. Johnson 1978: 263-269) shows that those who pay the most visits are of lower status than those who receive the most.

When disputes arise between households, they are difficult to resolve because household members are basically independent from and equal to members of other households, an equality that ultimately rests on their freedom either to resort to violence or (more commonly)

to move away. But individuals differ in the intrinsic respect they evoke. For example, once during a fishing expedition, the low status adult, Evaristo, and the pre-adolescent youth, Pepe, were catching stunned fish in the same pool.

Pepe's eyes lit with pleasure when he caught a segori, one of the finest-tasting fish in the river. But Evaristo immediately confronted him: "Where did you catch that?"

"Right here," said Pepe, indicating the place.

"That's mine, then." Evaristo reached for the fish. "I was chasing it earlier right in that spot and it got away from me." Pepe held the fish out of Evaristo's reach, obviously upset. His older cross-cousin, Oscar, who was highly respected, inquired as to the problem. Listening to the explanations, he told Pepe he would have to give up the fish. This was the only acceptable choice, once Evaristo had initiated the confrontation: he was older than Pepe and, as a fellow hamlet member, Oscar had to think about long term peace with Evaristo's household.

The story had a happy ending when Pepe soon caught another segori and was allowed to keep it, his delight undiminished by the earlier incident. But the lesson here is that a senior and prestigious member of the hamlet had to impose his judgement to resolve one of those sour little incidents that are bound to arise between neighbors, and this is a form of leadership.

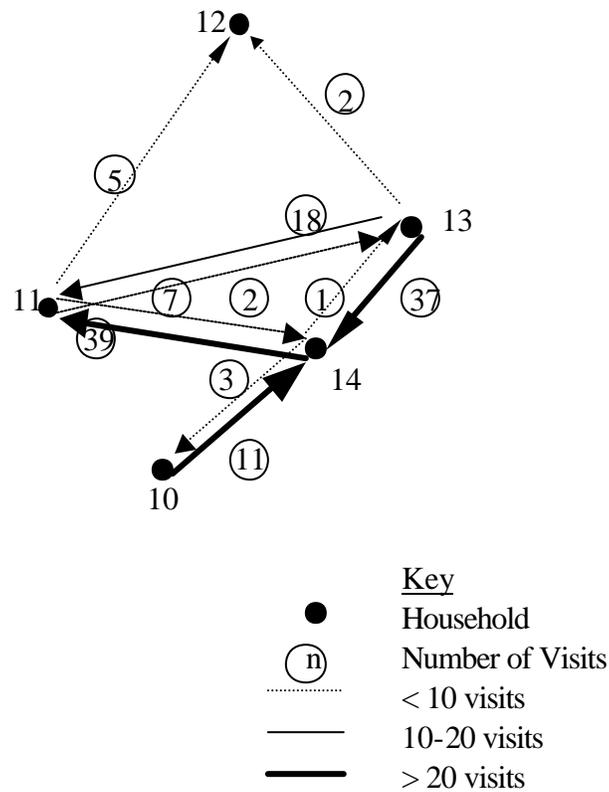


Figure 5.6. Visiting Patterns in the Downstream Hamlet (O. Johnson 1978: 264).

Perhaps the most noticeable pattern in the data on visiting is the predominance of visits being paid to Maestro's house, especially from the two dependent households (8 and 9), a flow of visits that reflects the status differential of a patron-client relationship (A. Johnson 1978: 109). This pattern is reproduced in another set of data. In the course of fieldwork I recorded many exchanges between members of different households, most of them involving either labor or food. Maestro is very much central to this process, being observed in exchanges with 11 other households. The next most involved household was only observed in exchanges with four other households, and the others with only one or two other households. Maestro is equally involved

both in giving and receiving, although there is an asymmetry: whereas he gives either meat or trade goods to others, he tends to receive garden produce, firewood, and labor from them in return. Such asymmetries in small-scale societies may often signal the existence of local leaders (Henry 1951; Stearman 1989).

Maestro is a local leader. Apart from his role in holding together the multi-hamlet school community, to be examined in the next section, he is also a patron to many individuals. He hires men and women to help raise, harvest and process food, paying them with trade goods he obtains with purchases from his government salary. So personal is their relationship that they do not speak of it as Maestro's garden, but as notsamairi "my garden." He takes men on shopping trips to Kiteni, who would otherwise not have the confidence to go. He encourages them to grow coffee and markets it for them. He hears complaints and tries to resolve disputes. He asks after their health and seeks outside medical advice for them.

He is also a successful shotgun hunter who shares meat widely among the households of Shima. After a hunt in November of 1972, for example,

Fieldnote 11-14-72 - Maestro distributed the meat he hunted Saturday as follows: left shoulder of peccary to Arturo, left leg (ham) to Omenko; right leg to Eduardo; half ribs to Aradino; other shoulder to Antonio. One bird for Oscar. He kept the other half of the ribs and three birds for himself.

In all these respects he fulfills the usual definition of a headman (Johnson 1989: 50-51).

A different situation exists in the more traditional downstream cluster. This hamlet, we have seen, is the persistence of intermarrying families that go back several generations, decades before missionaries arrived and launched the formation of modern communities. It is essentially

egalitarian, but only in the sense that social status is free to rise and fall with the life cycles and dispositions of its members. At any point in time, however, it is likely to be hierarchically ordered.

We see in Fig. 5.3 that Household 11 is the favored recipient of visits from 13 and 14. The head of 11 is Felipe, who is the older brother of Mariano, head of 14. Felipe's senior wife, Eva, is the mother of Mariano's wife, Rosa. Both of these differences in seniority affect relationships between the two households. Of special importance is that Eva is a major producer of beer and manufactured goods, being somewhat freed of other duties by her co-wife, Amaria. The extra members of Felipe's household, as contrasted with Mariano's three person house, make it the social center of the cluster, hosting periodic beer feasts. Although the male heads of houses 11 and 14 are equally skilled and hard-working, the female head of 11 is far more productive than her daughter, head of household 14.

The male head of Household 13, Karoroshi, is married to Virima, the sister of Felipe and Mariano. Karoroshi has no family in the vicinity, apart from his in-laws. Virima has, of course, her brothers, as well as a "sister" (parallel cousin) in household 10 who was her co-wife during a previous marriage. But this small household does not host beer feasts, and Karoroshi only recently completed his bride service obligations that included not only Felipe and Mariano, but their parallel cousin Julio, head of Household 12. His household paid a total of 76 visits to households 11 and 14, yet received only 8 in return.

For the most part, households 10 and 12 kept to themselves more so than the other households of the hamlet. Julio in Household 12 lived only a few minutes away, but was separated from the other houses by a patch of secondary growth and a small garden. He had a

separate path leading to the river so he need not go past houses 11, 13, and 14 except by design. He was rather well-linked to the school community because for a period of time most of those houses came to get manioc from his large gardens while theirs were maturing. This made his household the second most involved in observed exchanges between households in Shima. This did not make him a leader, but it contributed to his overall status: He was well-respected throughout the community for his intelligence, sharp wit, and knowledge of lore.

Household 10 was an outrider of this hamlet. Early in our fieldwork its male head, Javier, moved his whole household about 45 minutes deep into the forest, claiming that the downstream cluster was too crowded. In the process he abandoned a good house and two producing gardens. Later, when Javier's sister formed a trial marriage with Mariano in household 14, members of household 10 stopped by 14 frequently on their way to the river or upstream. During this period, the status of household 14 rose sharply as the new wife produced large quantities of beer and enabled the household to host a beer feast.

These examples show that both male and female heads of household take an active role in determining their household's status. The number of visits a household receives depends on kinship ties and economic status. Both the husband's kin and the wife's kin become integral parts of their social network. To attract visitors, both spouses must be hard workers; they must have an active household and plenty of food. The Matsigenka criterion for hard work is more than mere time and effort; it also entails initiative. There is always a clear "owner" of any communal enterprise, someone who assumes the responsibility and takes the credit. As the examples of households 11 and 14 show, it is not enough for one of the spouses to be hard-working--both must contribute if their household is to attract visitors. (O. Johnson 1978: 268)

Some individuals clearly feel stronger and more effective than others. Some men and women are either not very bright, or are fearful, or for whatever reason have low energy levels. They are objects of lower esteem, but generally have a pleasant manner and are accepted as marriage partners. They are liable to come into the orbit of a strong and active person who will, in a sense, take charge of them. These relationships are inherently hierarchical, with the lower status partner taking orders from the higher status one. Both parties seem to derive satisfaction from the relationship.

One avenue to low status is to be without close kin. Orphans are often adopted into families as second-class citizens, called nampiriansi (lit., “the person by one’s side,” but translated into Spanish as empleado, -a “employee” (O. Johnson 1978: 163). Adopted children appear conditioned to a lifetime of shyness and dependence on more confident people who have grown up in and continue to be surrounded by a supportive extended family.

Beyond the Hamlet--. As a rule, Matsigenkas from separate hamlets regard one another with considerable suspicion. If a man from another hamlet is encountered close to one’s own, insults may be exchanged, such as, “Why did you come here? Are you looking for a woman?” Often after a beer feast in which non-hamlet guests have been present there are complaints about theft, always blamed on the outsiders. These outrages are long-remembered and often told. When someone marries out, people frequently complain about the poor treatment their out-marrying relative has received in the other hamlet. In short, out-hamlet others are seen as thieving scoundrels in contrast to virtuous members of one’s own hamlet.

The School Community. The school community is a modern creation, only four years old when our research began in Shima in 1972. It exists because the school, and

Maestro, create opportunities for integration and leadership that would not otherwise occur, although comparable opportunities might have existed in the past in order to cope with slave raids and other outside intrusions.

Matsigenka school communities in general are rather fragile groups. In 1976, when I asked the schoolteacher at Camaná why a quarter of the people who had lived with him at Mantaro Chico had stayed behind when he moved the community to Camaná, he replied “Because it is our culture to live apart--we are not united.”

I was surprised to learn that members of one hamlet rarely visited other hamlets near Shimaa, even though they were within an hour’s walk of each other. Visitors pass through occasionally, of course, and may spend a friendly evening talking. But beneath the surface friendliness and even fascination lie suspicion and denigration. Following such a visit, rumors abound that the visitor stole something, that his or her true motive for the visit was to look for a spouse, or that he brought a virus with him that is now infecting the host hamlet. I also occasionally encountered a cautious sense that the trails in the vicinity of another hamlet were dangerous places, where one could meet koveenkaripage (mankillers), powerful animals like jaguar or anteater whose danger is partly spiritual. This would not be explicitly a fear of witchcraft, but a nonspecific sense that one’s danger of exposure to harm--spiritual or otherwise--increases in the orbit of a kin-distant community.

Members of other hamlets are persistently characterized as of low moral character or as ridiculous. Once, for example, I asked Julio in the downstream hamlet if his bamboo-point arrow was for peccary (ashi shintori); he said yes, and then there was a silence until his son Roberto said, “It’s for Evaristo” (ashi Evaristo). This provoked a roar of laughter from those

present. Evaristo was a member of the upstream hamlet, a man who appeared weak and ingratiating to me and was generally looked down upon by others. But this mean joke, which not only implied that Evaristo deserved to be shot, but also likened him to an animal (see Peccary myth), would not have been aimed at a fellow hamlet member.

Only two men, Maestro and Italiano, tended to move freely between hamlets, attending their beer feasts and regularly interacting with them. Italiano's role was as trader and culture broker, since his family lived the farthest downstream. His was the last Matsigenka household before Poñarona immigrant households began to appear near the mouth of the Rio Kompiroshiato. He evidently played this role near Shimaa before the school was established. He was not afraid of Poñaronas and used his access to trade goods, as well as his hunting success based on shotgun ownership, to play a minor Big Man role among the several hamlets around Shimaa.

But Italiano's role was not very integrative, since it did not bring the hamlets together in larger political activities. This was also true of Maestro in his role as patron, as described above. Both men were more generous than other men, many of whom never seemed to share outside their hamlets. In this they filled a modest role as local leaders.

Maestro, however, also played a deliberately integrative role. The work crews he mobilized to cut the grass of the airstrip, which needed to be done a few times a year when a plane was expected, drew men from the upstream, school, and downstream hamlets. These were the same people he invited to his house for beer feasts, the only beer feasts in the vicinity that regularly included guests from both downstream and upstream hamlets, and even Italiano's hamlet.

He also called meetings to celebrate important holidays. The students, who took their schoolwork seriously and exhibited a genuine pleasure in and enthusiasm for school, generally went home immediately after school let out--leaving Maestro's children with few playmates. But on meeting days their parents made a point of showing up. Then the schoolhouse was packed, men on one side, women on the other, with a standing-room-only crowd. These meetings were orderly, in the sense that Maestro set the agenda, but they were also relaxed, with much shifting about, scratching, nursing of babies, and coming and going. Schoolchildren usually performed songs or recitals, although a few were so overcome by shyness they could not speak.

Often, after the meeting, Maestro would host a beer feast at his house. In later years of research, in 1974 and 1975, he had begun to invite Poñaronas to these events, hosting a soccer game and a beer feast after the meeting. One, in July 1975, occasioned the largest barbasco fishing collaboration I had ever observed among the Matsigenka (described in Chapter 6). These were true political events, bringing househeads together in separate men's and women's groups to know one another better, to be united by collaboration and sport, and to hear political messages about the status of their community in relation to the Peruvian nation state.

But in Shimaa these efforts by Maestro were only partially successful. The integrating events were few and far between and did not erase the fundamental distance between hamlets. Often, men from different hamlets would attend his beer feasts, but their wives would stay home, uncomfortable in the company of so many strangers. In one such feast, for example, our female relatives from the downstream hamlet would only attend Maestro's beer feast when Orna went, and they left when she did. Their husbands stayed on to drink at Maestro's for

several hours, until Maestro left to continue drinking at the upstream hamlet, where they did not follow him.

Shimaa may have been unusually divided in this sense. Our subsequent short field stays in Camisea and Camaná exposed us to communities where households were much more numerous and placed adjacent to one another. Visits between households were frequent and people were friendlier and more willing to part with information than in Shimaa. But even in those communities, the underlying pattern of hamlet separateness could be discovered. Baksh (1984: 416-28) found that the dense cluster of houses at Camaná could still be broken down into hamlet-sized extended families who visited one another with much greater intensity than they visited neighboring households that belonged to another such extended family (cf. Hames 1996). Many individuals participate only minimally in community projects and are gone for long periods on their own. On getting away from the Camaná community:

Fieldnote 6-28-80 - Mike and I discussed how these separations might be crucial to the adaptation to community life here. He says people frequently “take off” for periods up to two weeks, and that they often have very comfortable savoropankos [caña brava shelters] in their distant gardens, preferred fishing places, or what have you. He has intuitively felt that Aurelio “has to get away” sometimes, and just takes off, sometimes with Viviana. Mike, too, feels good when he gets off with some family somewhere, with only his machete and living off the countryside self-sufficiently.

Furthermore, many Matsigenka school communities have undergone periodic crises that threatened to result in fission and dissolution of the community. One-fourth of the Mantaro Chico school community refused to join the move to Camaná. A few years later, the community nearly split again before the schoolteacher restored unity by moving the whole settlement to an area of better fishing. During our fieldwork we heard rumors that the school

communities at Huallana on the Rio Picha, and Nueva Luz on the lower Urubamba between Camisea and Sepahua, were riven with factionalism and on the verge of collapse. Somehow they survived those crises. But we can speculate that the lines of factionalism there would have reflected to some degree the same familistic divisions that kept Shimaá disunited.

Regional Integration. The hamlet is, then, the real world approximation of the structural model of two intermarrying families. The social system is dynamic because families often do not match in number and gender of children, and so must seek mates at large. Further, the willful Matsigenka often break away from the hamlet to pursue a solitary lifestyle. They stay in contact with one or more hamlets through visiting once or twice a year, maintaining their existing network of kinsmen. Or, they may choose not to maintain the network: people do refuse to “treat” people that they once treated as kin. They simply say, tera nohuteri maika “I don't treat him as kin anymore.”

Overall, Matsigenkas spend rather little time visiting others, and these visits are nearly always to other houses in the same hamlet, or to a close relative in another hamlet. Even in the case of full siblings, however, if they live in separate hamlets they will visit one another rarely. A common kind of visit is a brief stop en route to another destination. The host greets the visitor by saying, ainyobe “You are there” or pokakevi “You have arrived.” The visitor replies, pokakena “I have arrived,” and then stands outside the house he is visiting, exchanges a few words with someone inside about his destination, his state of health and that of his family, then is on his way. If he stays more than a minute or so, his host will rise and offer him a mat to sit on. He will enter the house and then must stay a while in order not to insult his host. Conversation will continue on fairly mundane matters for a while. If the guest has a particular reason for

visiting, he will get around to mentioning it eventually, and when his business is concluded, he will rise abruptly, without further ado, and leave with the parting, noate “I am going.” The most common reply is, je ‘ee “Yes.”

Those visits they do pay also keep them informed about death, divorce, or growth to maturity that indicate the availability of potential mates. And, they convey general information about the social and economic environment. Such a visit is a high intensity talk fest. A spirit of good will moves guest and host alike to stay up late into the night swapping stories and information. Others, even nonkin of the guest, will come by for various lengths of time to enjoy the news and festive atmosphere. But, even if they do not show up to see the guest personally, they will hear all about it as the visit is dissected after the guest departs.

This means that the Matsigenka of one hamlet have a rather detailed knowledge of many other hamlets and individual households in their region. They had, for example, a virtually complete knowledge of all the households along the Shima river, and those along the Kompiroshiato from Shima to the Urubamba River. They had less complete knowledge of the households of the school community of Shimentaato, several hours’ walk upriver, but they knew many of them well. They also knew at least something about a number of households far up the Kompiroshiato watershed, unattached to a school community but still engaged in the old pattern of visiting.

Today, the centers of such regional networks of acquaintance are the school communities. In the past, shamans (seripigari) or charismatic political leaders (itinkame) played this crucial role. Such men, and their households, were seen as sources of strength, wisdom and security. Their main attraction was probably their ability to deal with health problems arising

from spiritual causes, and perhaps also for dealings with the outside world. While settlement was scattered along available streams, as it is today, people in the vicinity of a local leader looked to his household as a social center. For his part, the leader furthered this process by marrying many women, who helped maintain his prestige by their industrious food production and manufactures. We have heard of at least two cases in which leaders acquired as many as twelve wives, although it is not certain they all lived in his household at the same time. I assume that this opportunity for differential reproductive success was one of the motivations for men to take on a position that “had few special rights but several demanding duties” (Rosengren 1987b: 171).

We can get some idea of traditional leadership by seeing how the Matsigenka interacted with the school community at Shimaa in 1972-73. Several households lived close to Maestro’s and provided him and his wife with labor. Several other households lived near the school, but maintained second homesteads at a distance, where they had large gardens and lived for months at a time. The remaining households lived at a distance from Maestro. They would come for a beer feast when Maestro invited them, and they would come to request trade items and medicines. During these visits they would look around them, curious about any new people or material goods, and would gossip. But they seemed reluctant visitors, eager to get back to their homesteads. And they would not be back again until invited or until prodded by need. I would guess that this description approximates the kind of regional integration achieved in recent history in the presence of a local leader.

Strangers and Enemies. Integration made possible by a leader created a region of relative peace and security where everybody knew everyone else at least casually. Beyond

this orbit, security was increasingly at risk. Until after World War II, slavers still roamed the montaña, delivering whole families to serve as cheap labor in various Peruvian enterprises.

These were not always intolerable circumstances, and some families stayed voluntarily attached to their “owners” even into the 1970s, when they could no longer be compelled to do so. But people did not want to be captured and forced to work for someone else, and they looked upon strangers with fear, fleeing when strangers approached; many were terrified of any member of the Pereira family (Rosengren 1987b: 166).

The Matsigenka of Shimaa believe that the only witches now practicing are in the outside world. In Chapter 7 we will learn of their belief in downriver tribes that eat demons and snakes. Whenever outsiders come upriver even today, they are spotted from far off and word rushes around to all the households, where the anxiety is palpable. Viruses (merentsi) come from the outside, just as slave traders did in the historic past, and who knows what kind of enemies from the distant past, with Inkas on the west and powerful warrior tribes downstream to the east?

Our first visit to a Matsigenka household was at a small settlement on the Urubamba, where there is a constant boat traffic up and downriver. Yet when we walked to a house set back in the hills, accompanied by an acculturated Matsigenka, no one came out to greet us, but a hand appeared through a crack in the door to offer us mats to sit on. This is reminiscent of Paul Marcoy’s experience a century earlier when the Matsigenkas who were camped with his party along the Urubamba would not let them inside their shelter, even when a terrific storm broke out. The house is the secure bastion of the family; strangers are intrinsically dangerous and must not be permitted inside.

As I described in Chapter 4, our early experience of the people of Shimaá, especially those living near the schoolteacher, was that they saw us as sources of valuable goods and little more. I felt they tried to take advantage of my ignorance and desire for goodwill to get as much and give as little back as possible. They seemed to regard me without “sympathy,” like a supply depot rather than a person seeking friendship. I struck up an early friendship with the assistant schoolteacher, Antonio, who was a Campa Indian married to a Matsigenka woman. Although he was fluent in Matsigenka, he was different and complained of loneliness in Shimaá. In part, we were drawn to each other as mutual outsiders. He left during our research to return to his family in Picha.

As we have seen, families in the downstream cluster began to treat us personally after a while. But the Matsigenka notion of stranger begins close to home. They refuse to treat some people as kinsmen (tera nohuteri), even though they may encounter them often enough through events arranged by the schoolteacher. This is not quite the same as treating someone as a stranger, but it begins the cleft between kin and nonkin at a close remove. The palpable mistrust between members of even neighboring hamlets is a sign that they are seen as partial strangers at best.

On one occasion, two Matsigenka men arrived in Shimaá to gather caterpillars they had heard were abundant nearby. They were careful to appear first at Maestro’s house and at our house, and explained that they had been sent by the schoolteacher at Shimentaato. This way, no one could suspect them of acting improperly, since a man of high status and power had told them to come. By this time, our house had also become a sort of public place, where speeches

were sometimes made and interhousehold disputes aired, and strangers usually made a point of stopping by to see and be seen.

In many ways, of course, we never ceased to be strangers to many in the Shimaa area. They did not seek our company, and, in cases where they were too far away to visit regularly, our arrival was always an event. Even in the upstream cluster, among people we visited regularly and in some cases treated as kinsmen, after a year of fieldwork the children still cried in fear when I arrived in their hamlet.

On the other hand, we were always treated with great respect, in keeping with local standards of appropriate behavior. Even during my 18 month absence between July 1973 and December 1974, when I left possessions stored in Shimaa, nothing was disturbed. This was true even though the Maestro had broken the padlock on my large footlocker in order, he said, to verify that the contents were safe. And (as mentioned before) Aradino took care of my banana trees for me. Indeed, much caution regarding strangers is a (partly accurate) perception that they are not as trustworthy as one's neighbors and relations.

The difficult access, and the poverty of resources, have served to keep population density low in the montaña and to minimize competition from outside. This may well have protected the Matsigenka historically to some degree, since they had nothing to steal and little could be gained by trying to control them politically. Aside from the annual trips to trading zones, which undoubtedly date back to Inka times and involved many tribal groups from the selva, the Matsigenka of the Kompiroshiato watershed have had only occasional contact with the outside. They tell vivid stories about their few contacts, especially those that resulted in the death, enslavement, or sale of Matsigenkas, but the stories about events at a distance, say along

the Rio Urubamba upriver past Kiteni or downriver past the Pongo de Mainique, become vague: they are not based on personal experience and blend into the realms of myth and the supernatural. Their belief in Kogapakori wild men far off (cf. d'Ans 1974: 342) has this fantastic quality.

Although we have seen that the Matsigenka were intimidated and raided until recently by neighboring tribes, the headwaters of the small tributaries of the Rio Urubamba, such as the Rio Kompiroshiato, the Rio Mantaro Chico, and the Rio Picha, were isolated enough that outside dangers were comparatively rare. Beyond the orbits of respected shamans--in neighboring river valleys, for example--one was likely to have a few kinsmen to visit from time to time, so that the whole region was loosely knit by partial kin networks, lightly maintained by occasional arduous journeys. In addition to keeping lines of communication open, these visits would inform the traveler about conditions elsewhere.