Gender and Ethnicity in Sayyid Community of Cikoang, South Sulawesi:

*Kafa’ah*, a Marriage System among Sayyid Females

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**Abstrak**


Key words: Arab Indonesian; South Sulawesi; kinship; marriage reference.

**Introduction**

The article observes the origins of the kinship system of a Sayyid community in a Makassar *kampung* (I. kampung or desa; E. village) called Cikoang, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The system of *kafa’ah* (I. sepadan; E. equality of marriage partner) has made the Sayyid rather exclusive both socially and culturally. Although they have lived with the Makassar for a lengthy period, they have not become totally Makassar in terms of titles, marriage policy and kinship system. Several Makassar kinship terms which are discussed at length later, for example *siri’* (I. martabat, harga diri; E. self-respect), were also culturally adopted although in a modified usage.

Previous studies including L.W.C. van den Berg (1886), maintain that the Arabs, including the Sayyid (the Arabs of Hadhramaut), have lived in Indonesia for a long time and they tended to assimilate with the local people.
Many of the Arabs, particularly their children, were already difficult to distinguish from the local people; they were Indonesians. Partly due to the absence of women born in Arabia and Arab-born women who obtained an education in the Hadhramaut, the Arabs in Indonesia frequently married the local women or Arab women who had never been outside Indonesia. Consequently, the language spoken in the household of the Arabs was not Arabic, but Indonesian, Javanese, Makassar or the language of their women.

**Sayyid in Kampong Cikoang**

The advent of Sayyid in Cikoang relates to the coming of Jalaluddin, a Sayyid, to the region (Pelras 1985:113). He was descended from the al-'Aidid clan in Hadhramaut (Yemen); his full name then was Sayyid Jalaluddin al-'Aidid (Nuridn, Borahima, Manyambeang 1977/1978; Hisyam 1985; van den Berg 1886). Sayyid (plural Sadah), people who claim to be descendants of the prophet Muhammad from the al- 'Aidid family in the Hadhramaut.

Etymologically, Sayyid is an Arabic word, literally master. Sharif (plural ashraf) - literally the honourable is a synonym for Sayyid, and a lady of a Sayyid house is called Sayyidah or Syarifah. The Sayyid title is normally attributed to the Arab people, notably the descendants of the prophet Muhammad, from his grandson al-Husein. According to Hisyam Ahmad (1976:15), the Sayyid are considered to be the descendants of al-Husein and the Sharif are those of al-Hasan (both are the grandsons of the prophet Muhammad). Yet, Abaza (1988:6) maintained that both the Sayyid and Syarif claim to be the descendants of al-Husein. Thus, the Sayyid claim descent from the household of the prophet Muhammad.

In South Sulawesi, he married the daughter of a Makassar nobleman from Gowa, namely I-accara Daeng Tamami. Traditional records note that Sayyid Jalaluddin al-'Aidid first arrived in Aceh, then left for Banjar in Aceh (where his preaching was strongly tinged by Shi‘ite influence) by the end of the sixteenth century. From there, he traveled across to Cikoang, via Gowa (Pelras 1985:113; c.f. Hamonic 1985:176).

According to Pelras (1985), however, Sayyid Jalaluddin’s grandfather originally came from Iraq, then stayed for a while in Hadhramaut. From there, he went to Aceh. The Sayyid family living in Cikoang believe that Sayyid Ahmad bin ‘Isa is the forebear of Sayyid Jalaluddin al-‘Aidid (see Table 1). Pelras implies Sayyid Jalaluddin was born in Aceh, but local Cikoang oral sources might want to see him as coming straight from the source in Hadhramaut just as they might push back the period. Thus, Pelras’ (1985) view is that it might be in those first years of the seventeenth century that Sayyid Jalaluddin al-‘Aidid came to Cikoang and founded a Sayyid community in the region.

The Sayyid, wherever they settle, insist on maintaining their social status through the systems of genealogy and Kafa’ah (Abaza 1988:15). In order to prove themselves as being descendants of the al-‘Aidid clan of Hadhramaut, members of the al-‘Aidid family in Cikoang display a certificate showing their genealogical link with the al-‘Aidid clan up to the prophet Muhammad. The certification then distinguishes the Sayyid from the local people.

In preserving their genealogy, the Sayyid adopt the system of Kafa’ah—literally equality of marriage partner, marriage between their own children. Yet, unlike the women, the men can marry women of other descent if there is no suitable spouse available. This matrimonial exchange has, in fact, added to the numbers of the Sayyid population, because the children will inherit the family name of their Sayyid father. The Kafa’ah is applied for assimilation and maintenance of their Sayyid status, which is regarded as their Arab identity (Patji 1991).
Social patterns in Kampong Cikoang: origins of ancestry and social rank

The Sayyid always distinguish their present social order from that of the Karaeng (Makassar nobles). According to my Sayyid informant, the term Sayyid is associated with spiritual matters: religious specialists and heads of practices, whereas Karaeng is related to secular matters; chiefs and heads of adat community. The union of the two is a set of reconciliation between religious and secular realms. These two ascribed statuses are significant for the Cikoangese in the formation of social patterns in Cikoang.

Before the coming of Sayyid Jalaluddin al-‘Aidid and his family, the system of social subdivisions in Cikoang was basically similar to those of other Makassar societies. That is, there were three major ranks in Cikoangese social hierarchy: Karaeng (E. Makassar nobles), Tumaradeka (E. free people), and Ata (E. slaves) (Hisyam 1985:126). Individuals regarded as Karaeng, according to the Makassar traditions, were principally limited to the children of Sombaya ri Gowa (rulers of Gowa kingdom) called Anakkaraeng. They were distinguished by their white blood inherited from Tumanurung.
etymologically, *Tu* means person and *manurung*, to descend from, thus literally the one(s) who descended (from the sky) which both Makassar and Bugis claim as their founders, the first rulers of South Sulawesi people.

A traditional myth, found in *lontara’* (i.e. Makassar manuscript), states that the Tumanurung married the leading representative of the Makassar people, *Karaeng Bajo*. This union then created the first sophisticated polity in South Sulawesi, the Gowa kingdom. The descendants of this couple were said to be the Anakkaraeng, who held the right to rule the kingdom and inherited the white blood of the Tumanurung, as compared to the red blood of the commoners (Bulbeck 1992:40). The Anakkaraeng consist of those who can trace their origins to the supposed founders of the Gowa kingdom, the white blooded Tumanurung. According to Bulbeck again (1992:41), “the aristocrats were ranked by the degree to which their white blood, as traced through both parents, remained undiluted by the red blood of commoners; access to titles depended on nobility of birth. That is, status was ascribed.”

The Cikoangese nobles, however, were derived from what Bulbeck (1996) termed “lesser rajas (E. rulers) or petty royalty” compared to “greater rajas” (e.g. Gowa rulers)—belonging to “historical successions”, that is, rulers of the Laikang kingdom (Bulbeck 1996). Yet, the aristocrats of this kingdom, and other lesser kings, are also considered *Karaeng*, similar to the Anakkaraeng.

According to *caritana turioloa* (E. stories of the elders), it was Sayyid Sirajuddin al-‘Aidid (a grandson of Sayyid Jalaluddin al-‘Aidid) who first married a female aristocrat named Ranjabila Daeng Tiknok, a Laikang noble, which is said to be the beginning of reconciliation between the Sayyid and Karaeng in Cikoang. The descendants of this union, for generations, form the population of Sayyid *Karaeng* in Cikoang. The Sayyid Karaeng are those who can trace their origins from both the father’s (the Sayyid) and the mother’s (the nobility) sides. Thus, they are called Sayyid Karaeng.

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2 According to Bulbeck (1996), the Makassar aristocratic titles (the Karaeng title) were usually derived from place names where the aristocrats had authority, such as with one Makassar nobleman named Sultan Abdullah, whose full name was “Palakkaya I Malingkaeng I Daeng Manyomi Karaeng Matoaya Karaeng Kanjilo Karaeng Segeri Sultan Abdullah Awaalul Islam Tumenanga ri Agama Tumenanga ri Bonto Biraeng”. So he was the chief (karaeng) of three regions; Matoaya, Kanjilo and Segeri.
Sayyid Tuan, the pure Sayyid, the children of the intermarriage between the Sayyid and the Syarifah, often called Anak (child) Tiknok (Tiknok means ripe or proper, then proper children). The Syarifah are not limited to the al-'Aidid clan only, but they can be from any other Sayyid clans (e.g. Assegaf). Yet, the children take the family name of their father and not their mother. For example, if the father is a Sayyid of the al-‘Aidid clan and a mother of the Assegaf clan, the children will be a Sayyid (and Syarifah) of the al-‘Aidid clan.

Sayyid Daeng, children of a Sayyid father and a mother from Tumaradeka (free people) or lower. It is said that individuals of this stratum are descendants of Sayyid Umar al-‘Aidid (the oldest son of Sayyid Jalaluddin al-‘Aidid) who married I Dandang Daeng Rima (daughter of adat community head in Cikoang) in 1062 H.

The second group in the Cikoangese social hierarchy is Jawi (the non-Sayyid), consisting of two clusters: Jawi Karaeng and Jawi Tumaradeka. Jawi Karaeng literally—the descendants of the nobility of the Laikang kingdom. Their blood remained undiluted by the Sayyid’s blood. Whereas, Jawi Tumaradeka (neither nobles nor slaves, or free people) consisting of two former categories: Tusamarak (E. ordinary peoples) and former Ata (E. slaves).

Kampung Cikoang has a total population of 8,300. The figure above indicates that approximately 5,402 or 64.3% of the Cikoangese population are the Sayyid. This means that the Jawi comprise only about 2,898 or 35.7% of the total population of Kampung Cikoang. About one per cent of 35.7 % are Jawi Karaeng, the rest are Jawi Tumaradeka.

Siri’ and Kafa’ah: notions of superimposition

According to Makassar traditions, apart from the ascription of descent status, the placement of the people in any social hierarchy is also dependent upon their Siri’. For example, individuals of the Karaeng could enter the group of Tusamarak (E. ordinary peoples) when they failed to restore their violated Siri’. Conversely, individuals of Tusamarak could come into a higher rank of social hierarchy if they managed to enhance their Siri’ or at least maintain their stable siri’. Siri’ is an inner state which etymologically has two meanings, the first is shame (I. malu) and the second is self-respect, self-worth, or self-esteem (I. harga diri). Leonard Andaya wrote (1979:366-7; c.f. Marzuki 1995: 115-6):

The two contradictory meanings of siri’ must always be kept in balance one with another. By maintaining this equilibrium, a person remains whole, a full individual. If shame should dominate and overwhelm the whole person, then self-respect must bring back into equilibrium. If self-respect should turn to arrogance, then shame or humility should be reasserted to restore the balance. Without the balance of these two aspects of siri’, one is considered to be lacking or unwhole.

Thus, this inner state is said to be a standard measure for crediting the value of a person in the Makassar notion of personhood. Once one’s siri’ is offended the person will feel embarrassed (M. ripakasiri’) until he can restore his violated siri’. Otherwise, he can be considered as a lesser person (M. tutenasiri’nà). Thus, to be a whole person (M. tutojeng) means to keep siri’ in stability (M. paentengi siri’nù).

The cause of embarrassment, for example, varies in the present day, but previously it referred to women’s misbehaviour. In old times, but still commonplace at present mainly in rural areas, it was taboo for a young lady to be...
Table 2
The Transmission of Sayyid Descent

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<tr>
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<th>(Male)</th>
<th>(Female)</th>
<th>(Male/Female Children)</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Karaeng</td>
<td>Sayyid/Syarifah Karaen</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sayyid</td>
<td>Syarifah</td>
<td>Sayyid/Syarifah Tua</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tumaradeka</td>
<td>Sayyid/Syarifah Daen</td>
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<table>
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<th>II</th>
<th>(Male)</th>
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<td>Female Karaeng</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sayyid Karaeng</td>
<td>Syarifah Tuan</td>
<td>Sayyid/Syarifah Karaeng</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Syarifah Daeng</td>
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<td>Sayyid Tuan</td>
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<td>Other Females</td>
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found sitting or walking with a foreign man (intentionally or unintentionally) without the full knowledge of her family. Chabot (1996:182) best illustrated this interesting phenomenon:

A young girl only leaves the house in the company of older women. Little excursions are holidays for her. She dresses carefully for these occasions, she makes herself up, blackens her eyebrows and the hairline on her forehead, and powders her face. The older women guard and protect her. In their presence, a young girl is safe. If she is alone at home or in the yard and a man enters the yard accidentally, a dangerous situation is created because this encounter, regardless of the intention of both parties, is considered a breach of established forms of social intercourse. If a neighbour woman were to see and talk about it, so that the girl’s brother hears of it, the latter would feel si’iri’ and act accordingly.

The family of the girl (usually kinsmen) would feel shamed by such a deed. In this inward situation, they will be called tumassiri’, literally the offended people. Particularly, for example, if the girl decided to marry the man without permission of her family, locally called annyala (L. kawin lari; E. elopement). This, in turn, dissolved the engagement already arranged by her family. In that sense, the girl as a family member already brings dishonour on the family, causes their humiliation and undermines the family’s si’iri’ (Marzuki 1995: 35; Chabot 1996: 236–255).

There are three types of annyala: (1) silariang, both the girl and the men agree with elopement; (2) nilariang, the girl is abducted by the man to find the imam, who is in charge of Islamic marriage services, wanting to marry them. The cause is usually due to the refusal of the girl’s family to the man’s prior marriage proposal; and (3) erangkale, the girl who forces the man to marry, partly due to sexual advances, which sometimes lead to pregnancy, by way of reporting the man’s deed to the imam. The role of the imam is to handle cases of annyala (Thontowi 1997).

Annyala, with its three types, does not necessarily need the family’s approval. It is considered as the last resort to proceed marriage, after the normal process is regarded unsuccessful. Likewise, both parties already believe that their marriage proposal is impossible to be approved, usually by the girl’s family, partly due to the two differing social ranks. I found one Syarifah who decided to choose annyala, because her beloved was a non-Sayyid.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hamlet</th>
<th>Sayyid Karaeng</th>
<th>Sayyid Tuan</th>
<th>Sayyid Daeng</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cikoang</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pattopakkang</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>1,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bonto Parang</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Panjangkalang</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,327</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,844</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,231</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,402</strong></td>
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</table>

N= 5,402 (This is an estimate of the number of all Sayyid in Cikoang).
The consequence of breaking an engagement was, to a large extent, death for both the girl and the man, because the killing was considered to be a remedy to cure the offended siri’. Yet, one of the methods of reconciliation is called ab bajik (E. making peace). If they asked for ab bajik from the girl’s family, and their apology was accepted, associated with the payment of compensation by the man or his family to the girl’s family, appasala, the death penalty would not come into effect.

In practice, Ab bajik literally means a representative of both the girl and man is sent to the family of the girl to offer a reconciliation proposal. The process sometimes continues to a number of further meetings until the proposal is approved. The successful proposal in the negotiation depends partly on the credibility and integrity of that representative. Such categories as descent, wealth and social rank of that representative can guarantee the proposal is welcomed. For the successful peace proposal, an official approval of their marriage would then be published openly to all the girl’s relatives, including the family of the former fiancé, in the hope that it can restore the violated siri’ of her family. Conversely, if the proposal is unsuccessful, the man and the girl must put themselves in exile to avoid the killing until their proposal is accepted.

For the Sayyid, however, there is no such forgiveness in their dictionary. Once a woman of the Sayyid house behaves in that way, she will be isolated from her kin group. Yet, unlike the ordinary Makassar, the Sayyid do not show their anger by exercising, for example, a death penalty for the transgressor of their siri’ since, according to one Sayyid, there is no curing process for that kind of violation. The least the woman will accept is the loss of familial ties with her relatives forever.

In the eyes of the Makassar, the position of women is the predominant factor that influences the siri’ of the family. Chabot’s analysis (1996) is that men are the defender of siri’, and women are the vessels or carriers of siri’. According to Makassar traditions, it is preferred for women to marry men according to their family’s arrangement, usually selected from the same stratum or a higher stratum, and those who are distinguished by their wealth (M. takalumannyang), intelligence (M. tucara’d), bravery in war (M. tubarani), and trustworthiness (M. tubajik). The preferred tendency of the Makassar women to marry up is a typical marriage custom in the region.

In a normal situation, the Sayyid women (i.e. Syarifah) marry one of equal (or above) descent to themselves. However, when such a man is unavailable, the Syarifah must marry the man of the Sayyid origin, regardless of their social capacity such as wealth, intelligence, stratum and so forth. For example, Syarifah Karem are allowed to marry a Sayyid Daeng, or beneath themselves, so long as the man is a Sayyid.

In addition, dowry, or locally called sunrang, a gift of the groom to the bride (this is usually a specified amount of money) is one of the most meaningful in Makassar marriage tradition, because the amount of sunrang signifies the dignity of one’s social rank. A different perspective of this matter is, however, apparent in the Sayyid community where sunrang is not so important. For the Sayyid, sunrang is not necessary so long as there is a Sayyid man who would be available to marry their Syarifah. One Sayyid Karaeng told me;

Usually, a man cannot afford to fulfill the amount of sunrang required by the girl’s family. This sometimes leads to the failure of a marriage proposal. We the Sayyid are not like that, because the marriage between our children is more important. We even assist a man of the Sayyid descent financially if he is poor enough to proceed his marriage.

The siri’ of the women (including their family) will be enhanced if she marries a distin-
guished man, because that kind of union can in turn place its offspring in a higher place in the social hierarchy than ever before. If the reverse is the case, the women will decrease their family’s sirî’ and cause offense. The common way for the Makassar family to preserve the stability of its sirî’ is by exercising endogamous marriage. This is done through bilateral lines where the possible husband and wife derived from bilineal lines, both father’s and mother’s sides. The sirî’ (i.e. self-respect) of the Makassar family is significantly dependent upon the daughter’s future partner. For the Sayyid in particular, they will feel humiliated (M. tumassiri’; E. literally, the shamed person) if they cannot afford to maintain Kafa’ah. Violation against Kafa’ah is considered as the most severe attack on their sirî’. For the Sayyid, there is nothing more worthy of protection in this world than Kafa’ah.

Notions of blood ties

In terms of genealogy, ‘blood’ is the principle of the Sayyid identity. In order to preserve their pure blood, blood ties with the prophet Muhammad, the Sayyid strive to exercise kafa’ah strictly in their marriage policy. The idea of blood, I think, is superimposed on the Kafa’ah. Kafa’ah has an Arabic root meaning, equality of marriage partner—literally meaning marriage between the Sayyid and the Syarifah. Potential husbands and wives who have blood ties with the household of the prophet Muhammad are always considered the best marriage partners.

This system of marriage points to a distinction between the Sayyid and the non-Sayyid, the Jawi. With the identification of nobility of origin, the Sayyid regard themselves as having superior worthiness. The Sayyid, for crediting the quality and value of their family, also use this recognition as a metaphor. The idea of blood (represented by genealogy) is also the primary metaphor for honour. The absence of a genealogical link with the Prophet implies a lower moral worthiness. These principles then define the Sayyid’s identity and the quality of their relations to other people (see Abu-Lughod 1996).

This identification of nobility of origin also reflects the ideological system of the Sayyid. The Sayyid social structure is comprised of agnatic lineage, with descent traced through males. This explains why the preferred type of marriage of the Sayyid is patrilateral parallel cousin marriage, “the combination of husband and wife coming from their father’s side”, marriage between two brothers’ children. Many acknowledgements of the soundness of this marriage system are reported by my informants, particularly in matters of looking after the children, taking care of the property of the husband and, more importantly, the maintenance of the traditions (e.g. kafa’ah).

According to Sayyid Maluddin Daeng Sikki, in principle, a Sayyid is only permitted to marry a woman of another (lower) stratum if he first married a Syarifah. After his first marriage with a Syarifah, a Sayyid can marry others (Unfortunately, I hardly found statistics of the first marriage in cases of polygyny). Such a marriage is allowed because the capacity of the Sayyid is placed as pannongkoki, literally patron and carrier of the Sayyid blood. If the Sayyid marry women deriving from other (lower) stratum, children of this union will be honoured as equally given to the Sayyid, because the children will take the descent status of their father and not their mother (Bujra 1971:93).

1 Thontowi (1997) found that it is important to distinguish personal, familial and communal sirî’. In cases of annyala (E. elopement), familial sirî’ is particularly at issue, while instances of sirî’-motivated behaviour are more closely related to personal sirî’ (I. harga diri; E. self-respect), rather than the familial sirî’ that is centrally at issue in marital matters. Thontowi clearly reveals the persistence of familial sirî’, despite the decline of communal sirî’.

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In their social interaction, women of another (Anakkaraeng or lower) stratum having been married by the Sayyid can be fully accepted as part of this kin group (the Sayyid family) so long as they live together with the kin for a lengthy period. In other words, the female outsiders with their children can be part of the Sayyid family through marriage, if they can fully familiarize and adjust themselves as well as original members of the kin do in all aspects of life (patrilocal post-marital residence).

The term familiarisation is also significant in the kinship system of the Sayyid. Particularly for the non-Syarifah women who married the Sayyid, living in the surrounding settlement of the Sayyid community after marriage is most preferred, so that they can fully participate in the Sayyid familial relations, which in turn can strengthen their relationship to one another. I quoted one phrase taken from my informant: “Manna bija punna bellai pammantanganna, taumaraenji antu rikatte” — meaning, even if they are members of our relatives, but they live far away from us, they can be regarded as foreigners. Thus, the Sayyid kinship system is not only patrilineal but also patrilocal.

In marriage, affinal kin are also important to the Sayyid community. The intermarriage between the Sayyid and the non-Syarifah associates agnatic and affinal ties (the descendants of that union are either Sayyid Karaeng or Sayyid Daeng). This is called bija pammanakang (all male relatives) - defined askindred in the anthropological perspective, as an ego-centered network of bilateral ties. That is to say a culturally recognized category of bilateral relatives, which may extend only to a certain degree of relationship from ego (e.g. until the third cousins).

The affinal tie is termed bija panrenrengang - literally all relatives who enter the kin group through marriage. In short, the two categories (bija pammanakang and bija panrenrengang) play an important role in the realm of marriage policy, because whom one is allowed to marry is assessed in terms of bija pammanakang. All relatives inheriting Sayyid blood are categorized as bija pammanakang.

The right of an individual to obtain a Sayyid title is allocated through his or her father’s side, a local notion that allows us to speak of patrilineal descent. Unlike the men, once the women are born within a bija pammanakang group, they are ultimately directed to choose their partner from bija pammanakang only. This idea of bija pammanakang, I think, is the actual framework of the Kafa’ah system.

Concluding remarks

Due to the greater freedom given to the Sayyid, many complaints appear mainly among the Syarifah who have no possibilities to choose their own partner from another stratum. Many Syarifah notified me that they have to choose either becoming tulolo bangko (old maid), because not many Sayyid are available and want to marry the Syarifah, or ignoring the long-standing tradition (the kafa’ah system) by way of eloping with the non-Sayyid men, annyala (E. elopement). If they choose the lat-
ter, the consequence will be severe: it is punishable by breaking their familial ties.

This relates to the idea of modesty. My Sayyid informant explained to me, modesty is attributed to femininity, and siri’ (self-respect, self-worth and self-esteem) is commonly associated with masculinity. Yet, through the path of modesty, a Syarifah can obtain or even enhance her siri’. In practice, the Syarifah must maintain the siri’ of their family by strictly following the system of the Kafa’ah. Through the Kafa’ah system the Syarifah maintain their status, their blood link with the household of the prophet Muhammad, and at the same time enhance their personal quality. If the reverse is the case, they will raise a so-called ammere’ — literally violation against the kafa’ah system (Hisyam 1985), which in turn undermines the siri’ of their family. One Syarifah maiden told me about this:

If a Syarifah tries to manipulate the law, she will put herself at a terrible risk. Her family would be streaked with the shame she did (tumassiri’, the offended people). Her family no longer wants to regard her as its daughter. At her death, her family would not even pray for her.

Blood is the authenticator of origin or pedigree and, as such, is critical to the Sayyid identity and their differentiation from the Jawi, who lack roots or nobility of origin. Nobility of origin confers moral qualities and character. Thus, by having proper genealogical links with the prophet Muhammad people must show honour, because honour attributes to nobility of origin. A Sayyid said; “If a person fails to perform honourably, the failure will affect his or her moral quality and character.” Individuals of the Sayyid to structure their social world and to make comparisons and evaluations of their own behaviour and that of other people use these genealogical links.

In their social patterns, the Sayyid have adopted many of the Makassar social institutions in such matters as the Makassar titular system; Karaeng and Daeng titles, anyala (E. elopement) and notions of siri’ (the self-respect or self-worth). A particularly significant characteristic in terms of the kinship system of the Sayyid family compared to those of the Makassar is that the Sayyid traditionally strive to maintain their marriage system, Kafa’ah.

The article observes that the exclusiveness of the Sayyid is directly derived from the interplay between religious and social constructions. The religious legitimacy of the Sayyid is based on descent from Sayyid Jalaluddin al-‘Aidid whose origin is related to the prophet Muhammad by blood. It is this notion of descent, which justifies their religious authority over the Jawi. Generally speaking, to discard the theological decisions of the Sayyid is to reject the teachings of the prophet Muhammad, and to dispute with the Sayyid is improper and to hate them is wrong.

Interestingly, given their religious competence the Sayyid not only eclipse the Jawi in terms of religion, but also in other realms, such as in economic and political arena. The Sayyid have dominated the village head election in Kampong Cikoang over decades. They are also among the major employers. Thus, the Jawi are dependent on the Sayyid not only for their resolution of religious problems, but also for their subsistence. It is that sentiment of descent which underlines their Kafa’ah system. With the notion of descent related to the Prophet by blood, the Sayyid are said to be blessed, then sacred. To keep them pure, unlike their boys, the Sayyid protect their daughters from marrying non-Sayyid men in the knowledge that such a marriage will disjoint their descent ties with the Prophet, leading to the state of impurity.
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