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THE RITUAL OF MARRIAGE (An Ethnographic Study in West Labuhan Haji-South Aceh)

Abdul Manan¹

Abstract

This article explores the mating rituals in Labuhan Haji West - South Aceh. The goal is to express the values and profound ideas expressed by Aneuk Jamee society before and after the wedding ceremony itself. This research is a field of research and data collection through observation with utmost care and in-depth interviews of key informants. The research concludes that men are more active than women. Therefore man is personified as "beetle" while women personified as "flowers", passively waiting for "the coming beetle". Men planned marriage but women have the right to agree or not. Overall this ritual aims to obtain offspring. In regard to Islamic law represented by the priest, custom by Keuchik (village head), and the Old Village by Tuwo Ampek. But the overall picture of this ritual is the authority in carrying out the marital relationship is not derived from the father's brothers next door called the legal guardian of the brothers but next to the mother who called the niniak mamak.

مستخلص

يستكشف هذا المقال طقوس التزاوج في لبوهان حاجي الغربية - الأتشية الجوهانية من ذلك هو للتعبير عن القيم والأفكار العميقة التي أعرب عنها Aneuk Jamee قبل وبعد حفل الزفاف نفسه. هذا البحث هو حقل البحث وجمع البيانات من خلال الملاحظة مع أقصى قدر من الرعاية والمقابلات.

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المتعمقة من أبرز المخبرين ويخلص البحث إلى أن الرجال هم أكثر نشاطا من النساء. ولذلك فإن جسد الرجل هو "خنفساء"، بينما جسد المرأة بأنه "الزهور"، والانتظار السلبي لـ "خنفساء المقبل للرجال المخطط الزواج ولكن النساء لديهن الحق في الاتفاق أم لهما ما تهدف هذه الطقوس للحصول على النسل. فيما يتعلق بالشريعة الإسلامية ممثلة في الكاهن، والعرف من قبل Keuchik (رئيس القرية)، والقرية القديمة بواسطة Tuwo Ampek. ولكن الصورة العامة لهذه الطقوس هي السلطة في تنفيذ العلاقة الزوجية لا مشتتة الإخوة الأب المجاور دعا الوصي القانوني من الإخوة ولكن بجانب الأم التي تسمى niniak mamak.

Keywords: *Marriage Ritual, The Terms of Marriage, Marriage Ceremonies And Rites After Marriage*

A. Introduction

In the Aneuk Jamee society, traditional marriages continue to be seen as ideal. Marriages occur among cousins and among those who occupy a similar socio-economic status. Marriage of a man with his multilateral cross cousin is preferred by most parents although patrilateral cross cousin marriage is also permissible. This is evident from the following expression, "It is better to shelter one's own salt than other people's salt".² This expression beautifully illustrates that it is advantageous to marry kin to keep property within the kin because their customs are known.³ In the past, marriage within the village was preferable, the reasons being similar to those given for marrying kin (See also Jayawardena: 1977 and Muntasir: 2009). Snouck Hurgronje I (1906:299) wrote that a man wishing to marry outside the village required the permission of the village head, and this was not readily given. Today this permission is freely given.

Parents in Aneuk Jamee society wish their son to marry a woman who is not only attractive in appearance but is also well behaved, as illustrated in

² Jamee, "Dari pado manaduah garom urang labiah baiak manaduh garom sandiri".

³ But some people say that it is foolish to do so because of the rupture it could cause if the marriage breaks up.

the following expression, “Parents want a wife who is like a ‘flower’ for their son and a comfort for the parents-in-law”.⁴ Today, however, marriages do not have to be endogamous. Modernization has paved the way to a rather flexible social structure that has inevitably brought about changes in the pattern of male-female interactions. Men and women find themselves interacting in different communities and with different people. As a result, the number of non-kin marriages has increased. Parents also prefer their daughters to marry a man working for the government as a civil servant, he should be affluent, or have honorable descendants as they can sustain the future life as well as improve the social status of their daughters. This was even more evident during the colonial period. Those who had a superior social status would not allow their daughters to marry men of an inferior one. They could not afford the children of aristocratic descent losing that status. In contrast, those of a lower social status would like to marry their daughters off to those of a higher status so that they could improve their social status as well. Marriage restrictions are formulated in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Hence it is forbidden for a man to marry his mother and her sisters’ father and his sisters, daughter’s sisters, sister’s daughters, ‘sisters’ by nursing and step-sisters. These relations are called *muhrim*. It is also forbidden to marry someone of a different belief unless he or she converts to Islam.

I attempt in this ethnographic research⁵ to convey the in depth-ideas and values expressed by the Aneuk Jamee⁶ Muslims in performing one of life cycle rituals, that is the ritual of marriage tradition in West Labuhan Haji-South Aceh. In addition, this ethnographic research also describes the commonly practiced rituals before and after the traditional wedding ceremony itself.

B. Marriage ritual

The traditional marriage procedure is divided into four main phases, namely *risiak*, *bisiak*, *dohai*, and *menendei*.

⁴ Jamee, “*Nan kajadi disunting kan anaknyo, nan ka jadi pamaenan ka uwaik ayahnyo*”.

⁵This ethnographic research was conducted in the village of Blangporoh in West Labuhan Haji-South Aceh during three months in 2013. I thank Prof. Platenkamp, Prof. Sprenger and Ms. Mina Bahar, MA of Münster University-Germany for their critical comments on the early version of this text.

⁶Aneuk Jamee “the guest of the children” is one of the tribes who live in the Western and Southern part of Aceh Province.

1. Risiak

Risiak is an initial step where the prospective groom's side (Jamee *pihak calon marapulai laki*) collects information (Acehnese *coh rhot*) about the prospective bride (Jam *calon marapulai pausi/nak daro*). In this process, a respected and wise man belonging to the groom's matrilineal kin (Jamee *niniak mamak*) who is experienced in representing the prospective groom's side called *talangkai* (Acehnese *seulangkee*) is sent to seek information regarding the prospective bride's side. This mission is secret. The representative pretends as a guest and does not show any particular intention. His task is to obtain information from the parents and their closest kin. This mission is said to be "like looking for lice on the head where one combs the hair, going down each hair strand until the lice are found and removed". Afterwards the *talangkai* reports the results to the parents of the prospective groom.

After a prolonged thoughtful discussion between parents and their son in a 'meeting of the family members' (Jamee *rapat bilik*), the parents then go and report the name of the prospective bride to a 'clever person' (Indonesian *orang pintar*) who is consulted about the character, habits and behaviour of the girl by looking at the 'habits' of nature and animals (Indonesian *kebiasaan alam dan binatang*) and predictions from the stars (Jamee *mancaliak parajo*) and the precise auspicious date and month (Jamee *mancaliak langkah*) for the engagement, marrying and holding the *khanduri* for both candidates. The aim of *mancaliak parajo* is more or less the same as predicting the fate of both spouses after their wedding. One of the most important things in *mancaliak parajo* is the name of both candidates. The names of the man and the woman are also given an animal's name based on the last syllable (vowel) of their names in Arabic. For example; the name of a person is Mukhtar. The word ta (Arabic ت) is taken. The word ta (ت) means frog (Indonesian *kodok*). A frog has a bad character because it is fond of sticking out its tongue to catch insects and it likes kicking things with its legs.

The following formulas are used in *mancaliak parajo*: ا (alif) = moon, ب (ba) = sun, ت (ta) = frog, ج (jim) = plant/wood, ح (ha) = hen, خ (kha) = duck, د (dal) = buffalo, ذ (zal) = cow, ر (ra) = goat, ز (zo) = cow, س (sin) = scorpion, ش (syen) = centipede, ص (sha) = shrimp, ض (dha) = monkey, ع ('ain) = turtle, غ (ren) = goat, ف (fa) = grasshopper, ق (kha) = elephant, ك (ka) = deer, ل (lam)

=snake, م (mim) = peacock, ن (nun) = eagle, و (waw) = river, ه (ha) = hen, and ي (ya) = horse. It is said that this stipulation is very important especially in choosing a marriage partner. When the names prove incompatible, it is believed that there will later be a bad influence on the household. For example, Munawar (ending with the vowel و (waw)) who has a river character (Jamee *parajo sungai*) marries Lestari (ending the vowel ra (ر)) who has goat character (Jamee *parajo kambing*). This marriage will not last long as this couple has contrasting and conflicting characters. If Munawar who has river character marries Masyitah who has a frog character (Jamee *parajo kodok*), they will be happy because both of them have similar characters. It is like if Muntadhar who has a monkey character (Jam *parajo monyet*) gets married to Khatijah who has plant/wood characters (Jamee *parajo kayu*). They are said to be compatible. Thus, the name is very important to determine the *parajo*. After knowing the *parajo*, the human characters and the destiny of the future household of the prospective spouse can be predicted. Therefore, if the parents find that their prospective son/daughter does not have compatible characters after uniting both prospective names, they look for alternatives, for instance, changing one of the prospective spouse's names, especially the last vowel of the name.⁷

Names are believed to have a direct relation to character and fortune. In choosing a name, the chooser must know the science of names. The name is said to be like a prayer (Indonesian *do'a*). Any time a person is addressed by his or her name it means that people give a gift to Allāh so that a good name must be chosen. It is said that after a prospective bride or groom's name is changed, the parents often offer glutinous rice to the men presiding over the ritual so that the name will 'sit well' with the bride or groom throughout their life. It is not surprising that the parents in the village often change their daughter's name or their son's name in order to render it suitable for the prediction of the *parajo* at the marriage contract. Modernists, however, do not agree that predicting a name determines the destiny of the future household of the prospective spouse. They contend, "the future destiny is the secret of Allāh. If it is predicted, the human beings thus have preceded His secrecy. It thus deviates from Islamic teaching". The *imām* said that predicting the unseen such as predicting a mate, livelihood (Indonesian *rezeki*), and death and the Day of

⁷For the Aneuk Jamee Cosmolgy, see Manan (2013: 1-31).

Judgement are supernatural problems, only Allāh can know them as He says, "Say, no one in the sky and on earth knows the unseen except Allāh, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected" (QS 27:65). Added to this are fortune-tellers, witches, healers, astrologers, who all belong to one 'group'. They are the people who admit knowing unseen things (Indonesian *perkara gaib*), their acts are clearly unlawful and this makes them unbelievers. Should the names be considered compatible, the next phase in looking for the son's marriage partner can begin.

2. Bisiak

Bisiak (Indon *berbisik*, to 'whisper') means sending a representative from the groom's side (Jamee *talangkai*) to deliver news confidentially and quietly to the prospective parents of the bride's side. Here the representative plays a vital role in ensuring that the proposal is welcomed. Once he arrives at the house of the prospective bride, he explains the purposes of his presence and asks the parents graciously for their daughter's hand in marriage. If the parents do not accept the proposed marriage, they should refuse with a polite excuse, e.g., their daughter still wants to continue going to school or at the moment their daughter is not thinking about the marriage. The process is kept confidential as there is a possibility that the prospective bride's side may refuse the proposal. An expression articulates this in the following way, "Whispering in the water, walking in the earth, an ant does not know".⁸

If the prospective bride's parents agree to the proposal, they still need the consent of the other family members. As such, they would ask for some time to put the proposal before their *niniak mamak*. The prospective bride's parents say diplomatically to the representative from the groom's side, "It is right that she is our daughter, but she is somebody's niece".⁹ A meeting is then held with her matrilineal relatives. While waiting for this meeting, the representative from prospective bride's side is sent to the prospective groom's side to investigate the characters of the prospective groom, examining whether he can become a son-in-law in their family. After detailed information about the prospective groom is

⁸ Jamee, "Babisiak dalam ayie, bajalan dalam tanah, samuik saikue indak tau".

⁹ Jamee, "Ini betul anak kami, tapi kemenakan di urang".

obtained by the representative of the prospective bride, the family of the prospective bride's side says to the representative of the prospective groom's side, "The door is now open and the prospective groom's side can come to our house". When the proposal is accepted, the next phase in looking for the son's marriage partner is then continued.

3. Dohai

Dohai is a phase in which the parents of the groom and bride begin to make their consultations public. Although the parents have a more dominant role in deciding their children's marriage, the proposed married needs to be discussed with the entire family. The parents of the prospective groom invite *niniak mamak* (the relatives on the mother's side) and *wali hukum* (the relatives on the father's side) to attend a family gathering called *rapat niniak mamak* to let them know that *risiak* and *bisiak* have been performed. Before the meeting, the parents of the prospective groom ask one of the *niniak mamak* to lead the family meeting. In the meeting he says:

We are here on behalf on the *niniak mamak* to convey that we will soon search for our sister's son's (ZS), name. . . , marriage partner. Everything has been initiated by the *talangkai* of the family. Our party has tried to clear any branches blocking the way and to remove the intertwined roots.¹⁰ Tonight we look for an agreement to take a sign (Jamee *maantèk tando*) to the prospective bride. For this reason, we need to send an official representative of our families to the prospective bride's house. His task is to ask the prospective bride's side how much dowry (Jamee *jinamu*) should be made, asking the prospective bride's side if they are willing to accept the prospective groom's side to take the 'mark' (Jamee *maantèk tando*), and asking for other requirements of the engagement that must be presented by the prospective groom on the day of the engagement.

Through all stages of the ritual the *wali hukum*, the patrilateral kin are present and consulted the essential role in deciding and performing the ritual is in the hands of the *niniak mamak*, the matrilateral kin. This is not as elaborate as the *niniak mamak*, *wali hukum* and the other family members accept the

¹⁰ Jamee, "Pihak kami alah berusaha mengabuang kayu yang melintang, dan maratèh aka yang bajalin".

decision made by the parents and their son, as expressed in the saying: "If the parents of the bride and the person who possesses the body [the bride] like the marriage, then we also like it".¹¹ Having reached an agreement, the parents of the prospective groom will soon let the *talangkai* know about it and proceed to the next phase, *menendai*.

4. Menendei

Menendei is the ceremony of engagement. In the past, it was held prior to announcing the intended marriage but now it is held on the same day. Like the Acehese *adat*, the marriage proposal is always made by the man's family, never by the woman's as the expression says, "The well never seeks the bucket" (Acehese *hantom mon mita tima*). In the Aneuk Jamee *adat*, there is no term for *nikah bajapuit* "picking marriage" as found in Minangkabau, West Sumatra, in which the marriage proposal is made by the woman's family. The group of *menendei* consisting of *niniak mamak*, *wali hukum*, *imām*, *keuchik* (village leader), and *tuwo ampék* (village elders) is sent by the groom's family. They take betel leaves with them filling a tray of leaves (Indonesian *cerana sirih*) called *bungkusan adat* 'the packing of tradition' and a gold ring called *tando* 'mark' as a part of bride price. In the bride's house, they are warmly welcomed by old respected people and after a while the *menendei* ceremony begins. Afterwards, the groups are served with glutinous rice (Jamee *nasi sipuluik*).

Soon after the *manendei* ceremony is performed, the ceremony of making a 'sign of engagement' (Jamee *maulu tando*) to the prospective bride's side takes place, showing that a girl is now traditionally 'bound' to a young man: "Trees are bound by their roots, promises are bound by signs".¹² The *tando* is presented along with a tray containing betel leaves and is considered a part of the bride price to be completed at the marriage contract ritual.

There are two kinds of *tando* known in the Aneuk Jamee speaking areas in South Aceh; *tando dohai* and *tando suruk*. This classification refers to the magnitude of the wedding ceremonies. If it is an extensive wedding ceremony, *tando dohai* is presented to the bride's side and it should be held during the day. If the wedding ceremony is a simple one, it is sufficient for the groom's side to

¹¹ Jamee, "Kok umak ayahnyo dan nan punyo badan alah suka, kamipun suka pulo".

¹² Jamee, "Maikèk kayu samo aka, maikèk janji samo tando".

merely present *tando suruk*. *Tando suruk* is usually held in the evening and no invitations are extended to the surrounding people. There are only several of the groom's kinsmen present without the presence of traditional leaders; the tray of betel leaves (Jamee *jamba sirih*) is not used. The latter normally happens when the bride is a young girl or still attends school or because their parents do not have ample financial means for a huge wedding ceremony. People recognize the type of wedding ceremony from these two *tando* (see in Sulaiman: 1978:23, see also Sufi (1998), Usman (2009) and Abdullah (1994)).

The *tando* is performed when all requirements have been agreed upon by both sides, such as the sum of the bride price and the duration of engagement. Prior to the engagement ceremony, close relatives, neighbors, the *keuchik*, the *teungku imām*, the *khatib* (preacher) and *tuwo ampèk* (village elders) are invited to the house of the groom at night to discuss who will go to the house of the bride on the day of engagement on behalf of the groom's side. That night all requirements for the engagement are prepared by several village women. These include making a metal traditional holder to place the betel leaves on called *cerano adat* "the tray of *adat*" and decorating a copper silver bowl with an ornamental piece of cloth to place gold in called *bungkusan adat* "the wrapping of *adat*". These will be brought to the bride's house the following day as a mark of engagement (Indonesian *tanda pertunangan*). The people who bring the *bungkusan adat* consist of the groom's matrilineal relatives, patrilineal relatives, *tuwo ampèk*, a young man who holds a *cerano adat* and a wise man who is versed in diplomacy and rhetoric (usually the *talangkaï*). Once they arrive at the bride's house, they are warmly welcomed by the bride's family, the village and religious leaders. The *bungkusan adat* containing a part of the agreed bride price and the *cerano adat* are handed over to the waiting group and religious leaders on the bride's side. During light conversation, they are served with coffee, tea and cakes. The official *menendei* ceremony then begins.¹³ The speaker for the groom's side sits facing the

¹³ At this ceremony, the groom is not required to be present. However, in *nikah gantung* marriage in which the sexual intercourse is suspended because the bride is still young in age, the groom has to be present because the marriage contract ceremony (*ijab qabul / akad nikah*) is also held on that day. A trusted religious leader usually stands for the parents of the bride to utter the oath of marriage. To affirm that the marriage is valid by law, however, they have to get a government official agreement (Indonesian *kantor urusan agama kecamatan*) prior to the marriage contract ceremony.

representative from the bride's side. He greets the audience and delivers a short speech, then offers a traditional poem (Indonesian *pantun*) which is soon answered by a representative of the bride.

After reciting the poem, the groom's side is served glutinous rice. Having handed over a part of the bride price, the bride has been officially 'tied' to the prospective groom's side. A prayer is then uttered by the *imām* invoking Allāh's blessings of the agreement between the bride as a 'flower' (Jamee *bungo*/Acehnese *bungong*) and the groom as a 'beetle' (Jamee/Acehnese/Indonesian *kumbang*). They are now officially engaged and any inappropriate behavior (Indonesian *penyelewengan*) will from now on be fined. In that case, the bride's side must return the gift (Jamee *tando*) and pay compensation equal to the gift they received during the engagement ceremony, whereas the groom's side will lose the right to marry. The bride price is legally owned by the bride, as this ritual is witnessed by the *adat* elders, family, and matrilineal and patrilineal kin of both sides. During the engagement period, the prospective groom may not walk or travel with his prospective wife. If there is a life-cycle ritual (Acehnese *buét hudép*) or a mortuary ritual (Acehnese *buét matée*) at the prospective groom's house,¹⁴ the prospective bride may not be picked up by the prospective groom or come alone to the prospective groom's house except when there is a representative old woman accompanying her.

C. Prerequisites for marriage

Prerequisites for marriage are a collection of norms regulating a matrimonial process which consists of certain procedures to be completed before the marriage contract ritual is undertaken to ensure that the marriage is lawful and valid. Among the prerequisites are physical and mental sound conditions. These prerequisites are in line with Islamic teaching because the populations of the Aneuk Jamee in West Labuhan Haji district are Muslim. As to the age, they do not particularly specify the minimum age requirement at which one is

¹⁴ Life-cycle rituals (Acehnese *buét hudép*) include the ritual of birth, circumcision, marriage etc. The mortuary ritual (Acehnese *buét matée*) is from one until seven days after the death of someone, the *khanduri* on day fourteen and on day forty, and on the hundredth day after death (for the mortuary ritual in the Aneuk Jamee Society, see Manan (2012: 47-78).

allowed to marry. It is common practice that men are seen as eligible to marry when they have adequately acquired basic skills to engage in certain activities to support the family, such as having a knowledge of cultivation-related activities and fishery. Women, on the other hand, are eligible to wed once they have had their first menstruation and know how to cook. Older people say that the minimum age of marriage is legally after a girl's first menstruation (around 12 years old) and after a boy's first ejaculation during sleep (around 15 years old). Nowadays, however, people ignore this requirement. Men are mostly inclined to wed between 18 and 30 while women wed between 15 to 25 years old.

Furthermore mental and physical healths are necessary. They should not suffer from infectious diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis and be sexually healthy. The bride price (Jamee *jinamu*; Acehnese *jinamee*)¹⁵ is assessed in measures of gold, due to the fluctuating value of money, and mostly presented in the form of a golden ring, bracelet or necklace. The bride price for the bride is jointly decided by the bride's family in a meeting with their matrilineal kin (Jamee *rapat niniak mamak*). The amount of the bride price takes into account the current social and economic status of the bride's parents, which is well expressed in the saying, "If the bride price is high, what can be received in exchange" (Jamee *kalo jinamu tinggi, apo yang bisa dipulangan*).¹⁶ The amount is negotiable once the families of the groom and the bride have reached an initial agreement about the marriage. Usually the amount expected for a bride is equivalent to that which was paid for her mother. The amount of the bride price can also serve a sign of refusal to a proposal of marriage. When the bride price demanded is unreasonably expensive, it conveys that the intended bride is reluctant to engage in the marriage.

D. Wedding ceremony

When the day of the wedding ceremony approaches, the *niniak mamak* and *wali hukum* of both sides call a meeting to set the date. The

¹⁵ A word which, Snouck Hurgronje observed, derived from the word *jamee*, meaning guest, is based upon the idea of a husband as a guest in the house of his wife (Snouck Hurgronje I 1906: 339).

¹⁶ In other words, "If the bride price is high, what has to be made to return home". If we ask a high bride price, what must we give in return? It is not wise to ask a high bride price because if it is too high, we have to give more back. This poem can be understood as a warning against asking for a too high bride price.

Islamic calendar is referred to in deciding the month and the day. The marriage ritual may be performed in Sya'ban (i.e.August), the *mò lôt* lunar months; Rabiul Awwal (i.e.March), Rabiul Akhir (i.e April) or Jumadil Awwal (i.e.May) but never in the Safar (i.e.February) lunar month as this is the month to "ward off calamities" days. The ceremony is often held in the period of time when the moon is ascending (the first day until the fifteenth day of a month) in Sya'ban or *Mò lôt* lunar month.

Two weeks before the wedding day, both sides are busy with preparations. A meeting of *niniak mamak* is conducted in her house to discuss thoroughly any problems relating to the preparation work. The meeting is led by respected male members of *niniak mamak*. They specify any kind of help which might be provided by *niniak mamak* and *wali hukum* to support the wedding celebration. The meeting provides a well planned traditional agenda and indicates the processions for the wedding ceremony.

A week before the wedding day, another meeting is held at night at the bride's house. This is a village level meeting called *pakat rami*. Unlike the *pakat niniak mamak's* meeting which is only attended by close family, *pakat rami's* meeting is not only attended by close family and neighbors but also open to the entire population of the village. To this meeting, the male participants bring sugar (a half or one kilogram) or a little money while the women bring cakes to the family of the bride to show a sense of brotherhood and togetherness. At this time the meeting is led by the *keuchik* on the behalf of the bride or groom's family. The *keuchik* informs those attending about the wedding day, about sending the groom to the bride's house called *maantra marapulai* as well as sending the bride to the groom's house called *menjelang*.¹⁷ This is expressed in the saying, "When the moon appears, when the promise should be fulfilled, the debtor is waiting for repayment and the debtor is ready to pay".¹⁸ The representative of

¹⁷ In Susoh, another district of Aneuk Jamee speaking area, it is called *pengaling suruit* (Sulaiman 1978: 25).

¹⁸ Jamee, "Kok bulèn alah nampak, kok janjipun alah pulo sampai, nan bapiutang alah manunggu nan berutangpun nandak mambayie".

the bride's family asks the people to attend the ritual and to make it successful by saying, "If vegetables have a skin, we peel them together. If they are still raw, we cook them together. After being cooked, we eat them together".¹⁹ After this, the workers are served 'light food' (Indonesian *makan ringan*) such as cakes with coffee and tea. The bride's family then asks the traditional leaders for their authorization to conduct the ritual. Then an informal meeting between the bride's family and the traditional as well as religious leaders is held. This meeting is called *rapat menduduekkan keuchik meminta adat dan tampèk* "seating the village head, asking about *adat* and place". Having been granted the authorization, the bride's family requests the traditional leaders as well as the head of the village youth to set up a committee that is responsible for performing the ceremony.

The preparation continues at the bride's house. The bride's family cleans and repairs the house to honor the coming of the groom. This expresses the respect of the bride's family towards the groom, as well as the last responsibility of a father toward his daughter since after marriage a woman obtains legal possession of the house, in accordance to the matrilineal marriage tradition of Aneuk Jamee. Neighbours and kinsmen also come to the bride's house to fix and prepare things needed for the wedding reception.

Three days preceding the wedding day, the ends of the bride's hair (Indonesian *rambut kecil*) are cut (Acehnese *meandam*) and her nails are cut. *Bainai* (heena), a traditional process of dyeing the hands and the feet of the bride with heena is conducted in the evening. The bride wears a traditional dress and an old woman sprays the water of *tepōng taweu*²⁰ onto the bride's hands and forehead and scatters husked (Jamee *barèh*) and unhusked rice (Jamee *padi*) over her from right to left. The bride is then asked to lay down on the mattress. Heena paste is applied in patterns on the palm, back of her hands, the fingernails and tips of her fingers as well as on the bride's feet. After a few hours elaborated patterns in red appear. In the past, the groom was also dyed with heena, but nowadays this practice has been mostly abandoned.

¹⁹ Jamee, "Kok nan bakuliek samo-samo dikubak, kok nan mantah samo samo dimasak alah masak samo- samo pula disantap".

²⁰ The water of *teupōng taweu* consists of water and the rice flour. Sometimes the Acèhnese say tasteless flour (Acehnese *teupong tabeu*) instead of *tepuōng taweu*.

From the night of *bainai* onwards people are busy preparing for the ceremony. One group of women fixes and decorates the house and the dais (Indonesian *pelaminan*). Others cook the rice. They chop onions, garlic, ginger and other ingredients. This work is called *ricieh-maricieh*. Another group of women collect utensils from the neighbors and make sure that the plates, cups, glasses, forks and spoons and other utensils are clean and ready for the wedding day. Men do the heavy work. Some men set up the tents and arrange the tables and chairs for the guests. Others take firewood and make a fireplace; others collect jackfruit (Ach *boh panah*) and the hearts of the banana palms (Acehnese *haté bak pisang*) for vegetables. Some fish in the river or at sea, others cut firewood and erect a hall for the audience called *balairong*. At the same time, various traditional narratives are recited such as *kaba* (*kaba ungeh-bambam* and *kaba dangderia*), *rantak kudo* and *badampiang* to entertain the men and women who are occupied with their respective tasks. In certain places, modern music performances such as orchestras and *gambus* are also shown (See in Sulaiman, 1978:26). The duration and extent of the performances depends on the social and economic status of the bride or groom's family.

In the early morning of the day preceding the wedding, the bride performs the ritual of *mandi balimau* "bathing with citrus fruit" to make her body fragrant. It is done by mixing several kinds of fragrant flowers (including the leaves of civet cat's *pandanus*) in water to be used as a shampoo. In addition, she drinks boiled water from various kinds of leaves and plants that make her breath fragrant as well. During the day, the *khanduri* takes place in the bride's house. In the early morning, two goats are slaughtered and the meat has been mixed with the hearts of banana trunks (Jamee *hati batang pisang*). Men who are unable to help with the physical work present gifts such as fish, chicken, rice, money and some other goods while women present cloth gifts or cosmetic products to the bride's house. The male guests give money placed in an envelope and the female guests bring gifts that have been wrapped in colorful paper containing clothes called *kado*.²¹ The villagers are the first to taste the *khanduri* and the invited guests follow.

²¹ The word *kado*, coming from the French word *cadeau*, is used here rather than its more traditional meaning in Arabic equivalent with *hadiya*.

E. Maantra Marapulai

At night the *maantra marapulai* ritual takes place.²² *Maantra marapulai* is a ritual of taking the groom to the bride's house for the inauguration of the marriage. The groom is escorted by the *keuchik*, *imām*, *ninik mamak*, *wali hukum*, *tuwo ampèk*, neighbors, and male and female friends of the groom.

Before the groom and the group escorting him arrive at the bride's house, the bride is dressed and adorned. She wears a long black embroidered golden trousers and *kebaya* dress (Indonesian *baju kebaya*) with a scarf (Indonesian *selèmpang*) and the *panduo* cloth (Jamee *kain panduo*), a cloth embroidered with golden thread, which is worn over the shoulder or diagonally across the body. *Kulahkama* (Indonesian *mahkota*), a crown made of either metal or golden gilt, is worn on the bride's head. A necklace and a bracelet are also put on the neck and the hand respectively. Afterwards the bride is seated at the gaily decorated dais, usually set up in the living room next to a window. The beautiful bride is fit for a 'king' (Jamee *rajo*; Indonesian *raja*) and is now ready for the groom to arrive.

The groom also wears the traditional wedding dress. He wears a long white sleeved shirt and a black coat. *Panduo* cloth made of *silungkang* with embroidered golden thread is put on arounds hips. The *rencong* "dagger" is inserted at his waist. The *kupiah meuketop*²³ "head cloth" is fitted on his head. After this has been done, the *imām* delivers a short speech as the last advice to free the groom from his parents. The groom then deliberately comes forward to his parents seeking their 'blessing' and asking their consent to leave the house for the bride's house. Here emotion is strongly felt by the parents, especially the groom's mother. She kisses, embraces her son and then cries inconsolably whilst liberating (Indonesian *melepaskan*) him as the married son to go to live with the family of his wife and only sometimes visit his own parents. A 'cooling' ritual (Acehnese *peupon taweue*) is then performed. An old

²² This is a tradition that has been widely practiced since the Dutch colonization period. Later, during Japanese colonization this had changed somewhat because of the economic recession and unstable and escalated political turmoil. The people, therefore, held it on the day for economical and security reasons (Sulaiman 1978: 27). Now again in West Labuha Haji district and other neighboring districts conduct the ritual of sending the groom to the bride's house at about 8 at night.

²³ *Kupiah meuketop* is a kind of Turkish headband which is worn by the groom.

woman sprays the water of *teupōng tawe* onto the groom, and scatters husked (Jamee *barèh*) and unhusked (Jamee *padè*) over his head. The groom now may leave from the house. In front of the house, the *imām* utters, 'O Allāh, call down blessing on our leader, Muḥammad' (Arabic *Allāhumma shalli 'alā saiyidinā Muḥammad*) three times and all people answer, 'peace be on him' (Arabic *shallu 'alaihi*) in chorus. The groom accompanied by his old and young relatives, religious leaders, invited guests, old men and women as well as by a group of *pencak silat* "martial arts specialists" players are then ready to leave for the bride's house.²⁴ The number of accompanying people is decided beforehand and has been agreed on by both sides. They leave for the bride's house after the 'night prayer' (Acehnese *sembahyang isya'*) at about 8 pm. One of his best friends shades the groom with a gold colored wedding umbrella. The groom then confidently moves to the bride's house. This group brings along the following market goods (Acehnese *dabeh keudè*) as gifts to the bride's family:

1. Bride price placed in a decorated copper silver bowl (Jamee *carano*).
2. Betel leaves heaped up high on a rounded tray (Jamee *jamba sirih*).²⁵
3. Toiletries on a rounded tray.
4. Cloth and cosmetic products in a suitcase.
5. Onions, garlic, ginger, greens, chili and other food ingredients for the dishes are placed in a *sanggèn* (Acehnese *ambèn*) which is made of wood connected with small irons to prevent the dishes from falling when it is moved.

In addition, the following garden produce is also presented as gifts for the bride's family:

1. A bunch of young coconuts. It is said that this is a symbol that the groom is still young.
2. Straight sweet sugarcanes (Acehnese *teubè mameh teupat*) together with their leaves. They are said to be a symbol of male fertility. The couple hope to have children and grandchildren like the shoots of the sugarcane plants.

²⁴ In the capital city of South Acèh, Tapak Tuan, *pencak silat* players, groups of *zikir rebana* and *gendang salusin* are invited into the group, especially in *berhanta-hanta* marriage. On the way to the bride's house they beat drum while humming religious songs reflecting the greatness of Allāh and His messenger (Sulaiman 1978: 29).

²⁵ Betel leaves (Jamee *jamba sirih*) are presented only when there is no engagement ceremony or in a suspended marriage (Indonesian *nikah gantung*).

All these gifts are called *hantaran* (Acehnese *peunuwo*). Once they are about to reach the bride's house, the *imām* again utters, 'O Allāh, call down blessing on our leader, Muḥammad' (Arabic *Allāhumma shalli 'alā saiyidinā Muḥammad*) three times and all people answer, 'peace be on him' (Arabic *shallu 'alaihi*) in chorus. This uttering is a sign that the groom's group will soon arrive. The group stops once they are about to step into the front yard of the bride's house. Now the two groups are standing face to face. The *pencak silat* group of the bride's side puts on their best performance. They stop right away when a traditional leader puts the tray of betel leaves right in between the two groups. The village leader of the bride's side greets the groom's group by saying, "Are all present?" (Jamee *ado hadir kasadonya?*). Which is soon answered; "yes" (Jamee *ado*), by a traditional leader on the groom's side. Then the two shake hands and the host hospitably invite them to step into the house. Once the groom reaches the feet of the house ladder, the traditional leaders come in front of the door's house to greet the groom (Jamee *menyapo marapulai*) with traditional poem.²⁶ The old women of the host spray the water of *teupōng taweu* onto the groom and scatter husked and unhusked rice over his head. The groom is then guided by an old woman called *peunganjue/mak pangapit* into the house and sits on a mattress called *kasue pandak* which is placed on the verandah of the house. The women of the visiting group sit in the main hall where the dais stands and the men sit outside the house. After a while, the group leader of the groom recites a traditional poem²⁷ to express the handing over of the groom to the bride's side which is responded to by the representative of the bride. Afterwards, the village head of the groom's side stands in front of the men's group and delivers a traditional speech expressing the purpose of their presence and formally hands over the groom to become a new member of the house and the village. This is immediately replied to by the village head of the bride accompanied by the *imām*, *niniak mamak*, *wali hukum* affirming that they have warmly welcomed the groom into the house and the community.²⁸ Afterwards, the *keuchik* of the groom's village hands

²⁶For the traditional poem of greeting the groom (Jamee *marapulai*), see Emtas (2005: 202-8).

²⁷For the traditional poem of handing over the groom by the groom's side, see Emtas (2005: 209-14).

²⁸ The speech of handing over the groom is intentionally held before eating so that everyone listens to it.

over all the gifts mentioned above to the bride's side by symbolically presenting the bride price in the decorated copper silver bowl. The *keuchik* of the bride's side receives the copper silver bowl and, after a while, uncovers in to allow people to see it.

All requirements have now been fulfilled. The uttering of the marriage contract (the reciting of *akad nikah*)²⁹ can be soon conducted so that the groom and the bride are then deemed husband and wife. The *niniak mamak* of the groom side says, "Where is the *tuangku* whose guidance we follow? We have cleared the blocked branches, so as to follow the *Shari'ah* law, the cutting up of the three *marieh*³⁰ is up to you".³¹ The authorized religious officer (Jamee *tuangku imam/kadhi*) replies with a succinct response, 'if Allāh wills it' (Arabic *insya Allāh*). He, therefore, presides over the marriage contract ceremony in the presence of several witnesses from both parties to ensure the contract meets religious requirements.³²

The contract is signed by the bride's father and the prospective groom and the bride price is paid then or at a stipulated date. Furthermore, he delivers a short marriage sermon (Indonesian *khutbah nikah*) that advises the groom on the duties as a husband and vice versa, and of the consequences should the husband leave his wife. The advice given is meant to ensure that the husband becomes a good husband and takes his responsibility as head of a family seriously. A moment later, while holding the groom's right hand, the *imām* pronounces the marriage contract based on the Islamic requirement and

²⁹ The marriage contract (Indonesian *akad nikah*) consists of the *ijab* and *kabul*, shortened into *ijab kabul*. *Ijab* is the utterance of the *wali* or *kadhi* of the behalf of the *wali*, starting that he marries the bride to the groom; the words may be like this: "Brother so and so (he mentions the name of the groom), I marry the girl named so and so (he mentions the name of the bride) to you with the bride price consisting of such and such (he mentions the amount, volume and value of the bride price), paid in cash (or debt). *Kabul*, on the other hand, is the groom's response to the *ijab*, saying that he accepts the marriage of the bride to him with the marriage gift as stated by the *wali* or *kadhi*. This marriage contract is attested by two witnesses who are usually the village leader and the *imām* or other elders from the bride's village.

³⁰ *Marieh* is the buffalo's neck consisting of veins of the neck, artery and respiratory vessel.

³¹ In Jamee, "*Mano tuangku nan ikutan kami, kok samak nan bajalin alah kami tateh, mako untuk menjalankan hukum, mamatuuh marieh nan tigo, kami pulangkan kepada tuangku kadhi?*".

³² The *tuangku imam/kadhi* marries the girl here because her *wali* has already asked him in advance. A woman's *wali* is her closest agnate, usually her father or father's father. If her father or father's father is dead, it falls onto his brothers, sons, bothers' son, etc., to assume the position in order of agnatic distance.

rules which must be immediately and succinctly replied by the groom. If the witnesses agree that the word of acceptance (the groom's utterance) has been made clearly and are acceptable to them and proclaim it adequate, the *imām* then recites the *do'a* and wishing the newly married couple a happy life. To end the ceremony, the groom is then asked to sign all the necessary statutory documents of marriage making them valid and legal by law of the state.

The groom is now called a husband (Jamee *laki*) and bride is now called a wife (Jam *binie*). The groom is carefully led to the dais on which the bride is waiting. On the floor leading to the dais, a traditional cloth called *kain jajakan* is laid. The old *penganjue*³³ guides the bride to move forward to traditionally welcome the husband into the house at the other end of the *kain jajakan* where the groom stands still with the *penganjue*. The bride then wipes the feet of the husband with flowered water already prepared in a bowl. The two shake each other hands during which the groom presents a monetary gift to the bride. The groom then walks with the bride to the dais with the guidance of the *penganjue*. The two take a seat on the dais. This ritual is called *bersandiang duo*, which can be translated as 'sitting together side by side'. At the same time the invited guests in the yard and the group of the groom's side in the house taste the various kinds of foods served.

There is a special rice with dishes on a round tray (Jam *daluang*) called *nasi bisan* which is particularly prepared for the groom's parents (Jamee *urang seumando*). If this special rice is eaten by other persons of the groom's side, they must place some money on the round tray. It is a sign that the eaters are the people who know the *adat* rules or they are 'cultured people' (Emtas 2008:208). This ritual is preceded by the newly married couple eating together for the first time the food prepared on a special table in front of the dais. Watched playfully by the others, the couple, nervous and joyful, feed one another (Indonesian *saling suap*) the food and drinks seven times. This ritual is called *bertimbang basawok* and symbolizes togetherness, reciprocal understanding and a sense of responsibility toward one another (See also Soelaiman (1989: 141).

The invited guests and the group from the groom's side leave the bride's house after the *batimbang basawok* ritual is finished. A friend of the

³³ It is called *induk inang* in the capital city of South Acèh, Tapak Tuan (Manaf 1977: 25).

groom remains with the groom during the ritual of *basandieng duo* "sitting together with bride on the dais" which is the climax of the wedding ceremony. When all guests have left the house, the ceremony is soon concluded. The groom and the bride are allowed to leave the dais. He with his friend takes a rest on the verandah which has already been prepared. In another room, the relatives of the bride and a number of distinguished traditional leaders open up and display the gifts from the groom to all family members. The bride's family then distributes some cooked rice with various side dishes to the *niniak mamak* and *wali hukum*. Some betel leaves and some straight sweet sugarcane are distributed to the neighboring families. At night the groom and the bride are guided into a room by the *penganjue*. The room has been prepared with a red curtain (Jamee *tabia*), a reddish palanguin (Jamee *langik-langik*), and tiered pillows (Jamee *banta basusuen*) which have been adorned with a reddish and embroidered golden thread (Jamee *kasab*). The couples take off their traditional wedding dress and sleep on the wedding bed (Jamee *peratèh*) which is covered with a decorated mosquito net (Jamee *caradie*) also embroidered in golden thread.³⁴ In the past, the ritual of sending the couples to the wedding bed was performed by the *penganjue* at midnight. During the ritual she played a decisive role in ensuring a warm and intimate feeling prevail between the two. She would suggest any necessary advice if she finds the couples are shy with each other (Sulaiman 1987:31). Now this ritual is no longer often practiced as many couples have already known each other before they get married.

At dawn on the following day, the groom and his friend go back to his house as in the afternoon he, accompanied by an old woman, has to come back to the bride's house. In that very day, the *menjelang* ritual takes place.

F. Menjelang

Menjelang is a ritual of taking the bride (Acehnese *antat darabaro*) to the groom's house escorted by a group of respected old

³⁴ For aristocratic and religious leaders' families such as the family of the '*ulamā*', *sayéd* etc, the room, curtain, tiered pillows, dais etc are adorned with a yellow embroidered golden thread whilst the marriage ritual takes place.

men and women. At around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, this group arrives at the groom's house and presents the following garden produce as reciprocal gifts and market goods to the groom's family:

1. *Idang nasi kunyit/jamba* filled up with the cooked yellow glutinous rice which is heaped up high like a pyramid form on a quadrangle made of wood with four legs and a long rounded wooden pole in the middle (Acehnese *capah idang*) and covered with thin sweet cakes called *tumpi* (Acehnese *tumpo*) In addition, there are traditional cakes attached to it such as, *keukarah*, *kamaloyang*, *seupét* and *juadah talue*, the same *idang* as at the *khanduri mò lôt* ritual. Sometimes on top of *nasi kunyik/jamba*, there is toasted chicken.
2. Special traditional cakes such as *dodoi*, *meuseukat* and *wajéb* are placed in a rounded tray.
3. A special packet of food with various side dishes filled in many sets of stacked containers for transporting food called *rantang*. Some *rantang* are filled with the ordinary cooked rice and some others are filled with side dishes such as cooked vegetables, cooked fish together with their broth, cooked meat with their broth, toasted and fried chicken, meat, and fish including boiled eggs and salted eggs, the same side dishes are used for the *khanduri mò lôt* ritual.

Arriving at the groom's house, the group places these gifts on the front verandah of the house. They are then asked to step into the house and are served with betel leaves while having a chat with the groom's family. The ceremony of giving these gifts to the groom's family is then held. One of the gift bringers on behalf the bride's side says, "Where are "our parents" in this house? We bring a shipful of rice, even if it is mushy, or not perfect. It is understandable we, old people cook it, whether it is salty or not. This is what we have and bring for our elder sister in this house".³⁵ The host group answers, "Our younger sister's gifts are not seen as mushy/uncooked but we hold up our heads. The mountain is smaller; our younger sister's gifts are

³⁵ Jamee, "Mano dusanak nan urang tuo kami dirumahko, kami ko ado membawok sakapa nasi, antah lambiak, antah baratah, maklumlah buatan kami nan tuo-tuo, kok antah asin, antah hamba, ikolah nan ado kami bawok dakèk kakak di rumahko" (see Sulaiman, 1978: 32).

bigger.³⁶ “We highly appreciate our younger sister’s gifts. We believe that these are the best gifts ever given”. Here there is the situation in which the gift exchange takes place between two parties, the bride’s side (Jamee *pihak laki*) and the groom’s side (Jamee *pihak padusi*) but they talk about these parties as if they were elder and younger sister in the context in which the bride is presented to the groom.

Right after the ceremony of giving these gifts has finished, another group of women called *menjelang* escorts the bride to the groom’s house. The groom’s side has already been well prepared for their arrival. Unlike the group who escorts the groom which consists of men and women, the group of *menjelang* consists of only women. The bride is shaded with a wedding umbrella by the *penganjue*. The bride’s side is waiting for the visiting group in the front yard when the *menjelang* group is about to arrive. Once they arrive, an old woman warmly greets and welcomes them by presenting *carano sirih*. She asks the group, “Are all present?” (Jamee *ada datang kasadonyo*) which is soon replied by the group with a brief answer, “yes” (Jam *ado*). The group is then asked to go into the house. When the bride and the groom step in, the two are sprayed with the water of rice flour on their hands and foreheads and sprinkled with husked and unhusked rice from right to left. Afterwards, the bride and the groom are again guided toward the dais where they take a seat and the others taste the foods served.

After the meal, the bride, guided by an old woman, is then introduced and she shakes hands with the parents and *niniak mamak* of the groom. The parents and *niniak mamak* give a monetary gift to the bride amounting to Rp 1.000 to Rp. 50.000. This ritual is called *teumuntuak*. It is then continued by ‘giving the bride’ (Jamee *mamulangan anak daro*) to the host of the groom’s side. This is performed by an old woman as the representative of the bride’s side who delivers a traditional speech. The ritual of giving the food plates to the bride by the groom’s side then follows (Jamee *memulangan piringan makan*). This ritual symbolizes that the bride carries an obligation to look after the groom’s property. The visiting group then leaves the house in the evening.

³⁶ Jamee, “*Pembawok adikko, dikami indak kami pandang mantah, melainkan kami junjung diatèh kepala kami, kètèk gunung, gadang pambawok adik kami ko*” (see Sulaiman, 1978: 32).

Before leaving, the parents of the groom, through an old woman, presents another cloth and monetary gift called *paragieh* to the bride. The old woman says, "This is what his mother [groom's mother] has for you (Jamee *ini lah nan ado dari umaknya*). It is replied with a grateful expression, "All praise and thanks be to Allāh" (Arabic *alhamdulillah*).

G. Rituals after the wedding ceremony

At about two to five days after the day of sending the bride to the groom's house, the "ritual of tracing back" (Jamee *maulang jajak*) is held. In this ritual, the bride accompanied by several old women pay a visit to the groom's parents in the early morning. They bring along a present made up of glutinous rice. The bride does not wear the traditional wedding dress. The purpose of this visit is to get to know each other (Indonesian *beramah tamah*) and strengthen the already established relationship between the bride and the groom's families. They stay in the groom's house for a few hours. When leaving, the groom's families give a gift of cloth to them.³⁷

Although the 'tracing back' ritual has finished, this does not mean that all *adat* interaction between both sides is over. The established relationship between the two families through the traditional ceremony and ritual procedures continues. By custom, in fact, the traditional procedures are seen to be finished after one year of marriage after the bride delivers her first baby. For instance, two days before the celebration of the end of Ramadhan (Arabic *'id al-Fitr*) and the celebration on the tenth day of Dzulhijjah (Arabic *'id al-adhā*), that is the day of *meugang*, the parents of the groom will send some needed materials such as meat, coconut oil, coconut, glutinous rice, etc including the materials for the making of traditional cakes for celebrating *meugang* days to the bride's house. In return, on the same day and on the day of *'id al-Fitr* and *'id al-adhā* the bride

³⁷ In the capital city of South Acèh, Tapak Tuan, however, the ritual of fetching the bride (Jamee *manjapuik anak daro*) is performed prior to the 'ritual of tracing back' (Jamee *maulang jajak*). In the ritual of fetching the bride, the parents of the groom ask several old women to bring *carano sirih* to the bride's house which signifies a traditional endorsement of the invitation to the bride to pay a visit to her husband's parents. To comply with the invitation, the bride moves to the house of the groom's parents. She stays there for a night enjoying a warm welcome from the groom's family. Music and art performance such as *kaba unggèh bamban* and *rentak kudo* is presented to thoroughly entertain the bride (Sulaiman 1978: 34).

presents the groom's parents with cakes such as *lomang* and *juadah*. Again, the parents of the groom reciprocate the gift by putting money in the place where the bride had placed the gifts to them earlier. This ritual, too, applies when the bride is pregnant and when giving birth. During the days of pregnancy, for instance, the parents of the groom send required materials such as coconut, coconut oil, rice, glutinous rice, betel leaves, cooking spices etc to the bride's house to conduct the ritual of "giving rice to the midwife" (Jamee *kanduri maagieh nasi biden*). On the day of delivery, the husband's mother will send presents (a cradle, bedclothes, and jewelry) to the daughter-in-law in preparation of the bathing ritual (Acehnese *peutron bak ie*) for the newborn baby.

The spouses stay in 'one kitchen' (Indonesian *satu dapur*) for a year or more or until they are seen as capable of financially and socially running their own family. When they have decided to live on their own, a ritual of "separation of the cooking pot" (Jamee *paasieng periuk*) is held. It is intentionally conducted to indicate the readiness of the spouses to live on their own. In the ceremony, the wife's parents hand over needed wealth such as rice fields, garden, livestock, and domestic equipment for continuing their life to the spouse. These gifts are called *panulang* or *peunulang*. Although this ritual marks a separation of the responsibility, it does not necessarily mean a separation of house. They remain in the same house until they can afford a house of their own. If the wife is the only child or her siblings have acquired their own houses, the wife's parents' house is destined for them so that the daughter inherits the house. See the following summary of stages in the establishment of affinity.

Stages in establishing affinity

Phases	Names	Actions	Relations: kinship + others
<i>Risiak</i>	<i>Talangkai</i>	Seeking information regarding the prospective bride's side	<i>Niniak mamak</i> (MB)
<i>Bisiak</i>	<i>Talangkai</i>	Negotiating with the prospective parents of the bride's side in marriage	<i>Niniak mamak</i> (MB)

<i>Dohai</i>	Both parents of the groom and bride, <i>niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i>	Beginning to make their consultation public by inviting <i>niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i> . This meeting is called <i>rapat niniak mamak</i>	Parents of the groom and bride, <i>niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i>
<i>Menendei</i>	<i>Keuchik, imām, niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum</i>	Presenting a 'mark of engagement' to the prospective bride's side.	<i>Niniak mamak, wali hukum</i> and <i>keuchik, imām</i> .
Wedding ceremony	<i>Niniak mamak</i> and <i>wali hukum, tuwo ampèk, keuchik imām, tuwo ampèk</i> and neighbours.	Calling a meeting to set the date and discussing thoroughly problems relating to the preparation work led male members of <i>niniak mamak</i> .	<i>Niniak mamak, wali hukum, keuchik, imām, tuwo ampèk</i> and neighbours.
<i>Maantra marapulai</i>	<i>Keuchik, imām, niniak mamak, wali hukum, tuwo ampek, neighbours, male and female friends of the groom</i> <i>Keuchik</i> <i>Imām/kadhi</i> The father of the bride <i>Tuwo ampèk</i>	Transferring the groom to the bride's house and giving the market goods and garden produce to the bride's family. Handing over gifts to the bride's side Uttering of marriage conducted for the groom and the bride Signing the contract of marriage Paying the bride price	<i>Keuchik, imām, niniak mamak, wali hukum, village elders, neighbours, male and female friends of the groom</i> <i>Keuchik</i> <i>Imām/kadhi</i> <i>Wali hukum</i> (FB) <i>Tuwo ampèk</i> of the groom's side
<i>Menjelang</i>	<i>Keuchik, imām, niniak mamak, wali hukum, tuwo ampèk, neighbour, male and</i>	Transferring the bride to the groom's house	<i>Keuchik, imām, tuwo ampèk, niniak mamak, wali hukum, neighbours, male and female friends of the bride</i>

female friends			
An old respected woman	Giving the cooked market goods and garden produce to the groom's side.		A female representative of the bride's side
An old respected woman	'Giving the bride' to the host of the groom		A female representative of the bride's side
An old respected woman	Giving the food plates by the groom's side to the bride		A female representative of the groom's side

H. Closing

In Aneuk Jamee society, men play a more active role in finding a match than women. That is why men are personified as "beetle" while women are passive and await the "coming beetle" and are personified as "flower". Men propose a marriage while women cannot, but they have the right to agree or disagree to the proposed marriage. Even so, the final decision is in the hands of the parents who first decide and, thus, arrange whom their children are to marry. Parents ask their son's agreement prior to proposing a woman and conversely, the agreement of the woman is more often neglected. Modernization has inevitably led to changes in the cultural and structural system of traditional society and in the traditional society of the Aneuk Jamee. Women and men are currently inclined to be more independent of their parents' choice in deciding their match. Thus, parents now have fewer roles in choosing their son's marriage partner.

The engagement ceremony carries the sign of intended marriage that a woman has been traditionally 'bound' to a man. The prerequisite for marriage is respecting the norms regulating the matrimonial processes. It consists of certain procedures to be completed before the *ijab qabul* ritual is undertaken to ensure that the marriage is lawful and valid. Among the prerequisites are health (both physical and mental) and wealth (bride price). These prerequisites are all in line with Islamic teaching. In all phases of the Aneuk Jamee marriage ritual, the group who negotiate, decide, perform the ritual, exchange gifts are defined or recruited on the basis of kinship and affinity; they are all the nuclear family of the bride and the groom, *niniak mamak*, *wali hukum* and in terms of

authority in local organizations such the *keuchik*, the *imām*, *tuwo ampèk*, neighbour, and male and female friends of the bride and the groom (see summary above). The whole ritual culminates in the establishment of affinity. These people are in terms of Shari'ah law represented by the *imām*, in terms of *adat* they are represented by *keuchik* (the village head), in terms of the village elders they are represented by *tuwo ampèk* and so on. However, the whole single image is that authority in conducting a marriage relationship does not derive from the patrilineal relatives but from the matrilineal ones. Any time we look at negotiation, exchange, gifts, it is the *niniak mamak* that presides. On the one hand, there is a concept of patrilineal kinship which stresses patrilineal descent, that is *wali hukum* and on the other hand, there is a Minangkabau concept of kinship which stresses matrilineal descent in constructing the marriage relationship. *Wali hukum* do not seem to play many significant roles in the establishment of affinity. The role of the bride's father as *wali hukum* in this ritual is signing the contract of the marriage. Another role, that is uttering the marriage contract conducted for the bride and the groom is not performed by him but by *tuangku imām/kadhi*. Most parts of the ritual are performed by both *niniak mamak* of the bride and groom. Never are a bride and groom represented by *wali hukum*. *Niniak mamak* is responsible in marriage; most transactions are performed by *niniak mamak* in the rituals. The sibling of the bride and groom are not given any formal roles in the wedding ceremony.

The Aneuk Jamee's wedding is accompanied by an elaborate series of gift exchanges between the groom and the bride's parents. Apart from the exchange of money and jewelry, the gifts given from the groom's side to the bride's called *hantaran* are the market goods such as cloth, cosmetic products, fruit, toilet articles, trinkets, etc. These gifts are reciprocated by the bride's side to the groom's side and are not distinguished by special terms but consist of cooked food which is prepared by women in the kitchen. The notion of marriage in the Aneuk Jamee is, therefore, of some theoretical significance in understanding the domestic life of the Aneuk Jamee society. In the complex web of the reciprocal gift exchange that characterizes the Aneuk Jamee wedding and in the definition of the domestic roles in the household that are about to be established, the wife provides the home as well the cooked food for the husband. This exchange is conceptualized as a relation between the host (wife) and the guest (husband).

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