

The manipulation of bride-wealth rights

The potential rights which bride-givers acquire through a marriage are translated into claims which may be differently manipulated by various bride-givers. The significance of affinity, therefore, varies from one individual to another and for each individual it varies over time. But, generally speaking, from the bride-receiver's point of view the transfers of bride-wealth can be divided into three main types: transfers which open up relationships, those which strengthen already existing relationships and those which conclude a relationship by merely meeting an acknowledged right. A husband's life falls into three periods each of which is related to different rates of stock transfer and of the acquisition of rights over his bride. The first runs from the wedding until the husband 'goes to *dimi*'. The second runs from the conclusion of the *dimi* ceremony to the completion of the transfers of small bride-stock. The last follows the completion of small-stock transfers and is usually terminated by the death of the husband, but is sometimes formally concluded by the 'household' (*gol*) ceremony.

The first period, which usually lasts for about eight to ten years, coincides with the bride's crucial initial child-bearing span and the couple's period of mutual adjustment. During this period the couple learn what to expect from the sets of affines each has acquired through the nature and extent of the economic and social help they offer. This is also the period during which the bride-givers and receivers learn about each other's networks, and the effective brokerage power each individual possesses.

It is difficult for a newly married couple to sustain their married life without the tolerance and co-operation of the bride's kin. The bride-givers can show their disapproval of the marriage or of the groom's behaviour by urging their rights. But if they accept the marriage, or come to do so, their feelings are apparent from the degree of help and co-operation which they proffer. Whatever their demands, the actual number of stock transferred during this period is small and usually only

Plate 11. Men dancing with their wives during the *dimi* ceremony.



covers the legitimisation payment for the children born of the union. A newly married husband who had left his natal household and is establishing an independent household is unable to withstand the economic burdens it imposes unaided. He depends on elders for access to inundated strips and especially needs the labour of young unmarried affines to help him with herding; his bride may also need domestic help from her brothers' wives or her sisters. The bride-givers are able to offer access to economic resources and labour to the husband at a time when he is in greatest need of them. (Table VI.1 shows that 20 per cent of the strips had been allocated by affines.)

The first transfers of bride-cattle are used to open up relationships, and to some extent transfers of small-stock are similarly utilised, in particular to open up relationships with those to whom bride-cattle cannot yet be transferred. During this first period the husband is likely to be active with others as a cultivator and herder, but he is unlikely to establish strong bond partnerships with any of his affines; any bonds he establishes are likely to be based on *ad hoc* economic considerations and not to be long-lasting.

The second period, which follows the *dimi* ceremony, is crucial in that the way in which bride-wealth is distributed among the bride-givers will determine the configuration of a man's effective affinal relationships. The post-*dimi* period is marked by a decrease in his own

work as his sons start to become useful but, until they are mature enough to manage a herd by themselves, a man still needs the co-operation of his bride-givers.

Stock transfers after the *dimi* ceremony are mostly aimed at opening up relationships with selected bride-givers. It will be recalled that not all the cattle due to a particular bride-giver are transferred simultaneously; indeed a delay may emphasise a joint wish to maintain the relationship. While he is actively herding and cultivating a man is likely to co-operate with a wider range of bride-givers than that to which he transfers bride-stock, but the assistance he is then rendered is given on the mutual assumption that he will later, when he is able, fulfil his obligations. If towards the end of the second period, he does not fulfil them the bride-givers are likely to press their claims. During this period he is exposed to demands, 'visits' and sanctions, from those bride-givers who, realising that their relationships with the bride-receiver are not flourishing, endeavour to obtain their share of the bride-cattle before the bride-receiver finally acquires his final rights over his bride. Such claims, and the resultant transfers, may in effect serve to close relationships as the husband enters a stage in his life in which he does not need their help any longer.

After a man has completed the transfer of small-stock he acquires more freedom to make gifts rather than satisfy demands. Indeed at this stage transfers should be regarded not as bride-wealth payments but rather as cattle transactions which transform the original affinal relationship into one of pseudo-kinship.

The three-stage sequence which I have outlined is an ideal pattern rather than an account of what all men achieve. In reality there are many deviations. Apart from the fact that the bride-receivers and bride-givers do not form homogeneous groups but consist of various persons with different interests, the bride herself and her father's bond partners may all influence events. Relations between the persons who compose that network are not single-stranded, and a husband cannot always arrange relations to correspond to his personal interests. Relationships may develop or be severed as a consequence of particular and unforeseeable events, or by the manner in which particular bride-givers manipulate their claims.

This chapter concentrates on certain aspects of affinity. First, I consider the manner in which affinity influences bond partnerships. The sets of affinal ties that each bond partner has are not usually directly interconnected and the rights that each bond partner acquires in the affinal set of his partner provide a wide field for manipulation. Second, I examine the opportunities which affinity opens up for the development of other kinds of co-operation, especially the bond partnerships which flourish between the holders of inherited rights to bride-wealth and the

bride-receiver. Third, I deal with the way a set of potential affinal connections is changed over the years into a selected and effective set of affinal connections, which is so loaded with bond partnerships that affinity is eventually transformed into strong pseudo-kinship relationships.

The variable use of affinal ties

The wide range of social and economic co-operation which is expressed in rights to bride-wealth is differently manipulated by various bride-givers during different periods of the sequence of stock transfer. The senior generation of bride-givers usually consists of elders who have completed the *dimi* ceremony and have only small herds. Their need for cattle to strengthen their social relations or to provide cattle for their second or third marriages is obvious, and elders tend to press their claims. In return a newly married man expects access to economic resources and labour which the elders can provide through their accumulated brokerage power. The allocation of bride-wealth to elders is in the interests of both parties, and such claims are usually met first. But a husband also needs the co-operation of other bride-givers to whom he cannot, at that stage, allocate cattle. So he has to enter into temporary co-operation with a relatively large number of bride-givers by exploiting their expectations for a return in the future.

During the final period it is difficult for any distant kinsman of the bride or a partner of her father to enforce his claims. If he does so before those of the elders have been met, he is likely to encounter opposition from the bride's parents and uncles.

After a husband has 'gone to *dimi*', the chances are that a bride-giver whose claims have not yet been met will press his claim. He may argue that the bride-receiver has not assisted him sufficiently and is an ingrate; alternatively, the bride-giver may wish to shift the co-operation between himself and the bride-receiver to another level, for example, from domestic help in camps to allocation of strips or stock herding. A husband may be forced to extend his co-operation with the claimant if he is unable to meet the claim at that time, as the following case illustrates.

Kwata was a father's father's brother's son's son to Maro, Yotok's bride. When Yotok joined the base camp where Kwata was staying, he asked Yotok to transfer stock due for Maro. This request puzzled me. First, it is considered inappropriate to ask for bride-wealth from a visiting affine, let alone one who joins your camp. Second, just before Yotok joined the camp I had interviewed Kwata about his rights to livestock in the herds of his affines. He had mentioned Yotok but said that, though he was still entitled to 'eat' two cattle in addition to the one

he had already 'eaten', Yotok had no cattle. Yotok answered Kwata that at the moment he had no stock, but that he would transfer them as soon as he could. When Yotok left I asked Kwata why he had made the request. Although Kwata merely said that he just wanted his share which had been delayed for too long, I learned that during the previous year Kwata had asked Yotok's youngest full brother to allocate him part of his strip and been refused on the grounds that the strip was too small. Kwata had been unable to cultivate that year and had been forced to exchange eight small-stock for grain. In addition, for some years previously, Yotok had joined the camp where Kwata was staying at the beginning of each dry season. As Yotok had only a young daughter, Kwata had let Yotok's cows be herded with his own. Kwata, in this instance, only evoked his rights mildly in order to keep open the chance of obtaining other concessions from Yotok in the future.

A bride-giver may also press his claim out of chagrin. If a long time has elapsed since the marriage and bride-giver has received little help he may press his claim. This may lead to the transfer of stock in order to close off the relationship. However, a wily husband can sometimes anticipate such claims and transfer bride-wealth at a time that suits him in order to maintain the relationship: the following instance indicates such anticipation.

Kinatch had inherited from his father the right to receive bride-wealth from Arlal for the marriage of Nyadome. Kinatch and Arlal and their wives had co-operated closely for many years as neighbours, herdsmen and cultivators. In 1968 Arlal's strip did not flood so he moved to another one and then went on to the pastures by a fresh route, so he did not meet Kinatch. Kinatch's strip, according to Arlal, had been too small for them to share. At the end of the rainy season, about fifteen years after his marriage, Arlal transferred two cattle to Kinatch. As long as the relationship between the two had remained close, there had been no need for stock transfers and the transfer that now took place served to strengthen a relationship that looked likely to decline. Arlal also probably wanted the relationship to continue. But it is not the actual transfer of bride-wealth that ends a relationship but rather the manner in which it is transferred and the previous history of co-operation. If co-operation has been slight a bride-giver is likely to press his claim; but such closures, even if accompanied by a dispute, are not necessarily accompanied by permanent ill feeling. If, in the future, the disputants find themselves sharing a common interest they can resuscitate their old relationship. A breach is most likely to be permanent if the husband has retired from active work. Likewise, the allocation of bride-wealth to one bride-giver may be interpreted by another as provocative and lead to the closure of a relationship: an example of such is the allocation of a 'gift' by Arturga to (44) mentioned in Chapter VIII.

In the sequence of bride-cattle allocation, (44) received his share before (31), who was the lawful heir to (15) and had a prior claim. Arturga was not interested in developing relationships with (31), a point that was stressed again when Arturga made a later allocation of another ox as a 'gift' to (44).

One way of pressing a claim to bride-wealth is to spread rumours. These are usually started by a bride-giver who feels deprived by the way in which a husband is distributing bride-wealth. He gossips about a specific transfer which he regards as unjust, thereby seeking to damage the reputation of the bride-receiver by implying that his relations with his affines are strained. Since such rumours are likely to reach the bride-receiver, an indirect message is sent that the giver is weary of waiting for some sign of co-operation. But the response to such a message may lead to a confrontation that the bride-giver has not expected. The husband may come and present his share of the bride-wealth and state that he is doing so to prevent the use of occult forces against his wife and children, because he fears the bride-giver's anger.

Rumours can also have other consequences. As the rumour spreads, other bride-givers may decide that the appropriate time has come to press their claims also. The bride-givers likely to do this are those with relatively weak rights who thereby exploit the husband's inconvenience in order to receive their share. Such actions are not co-ordinated and if a number come simultaneously the bride-receiver may be provoked to counter-action. This is probably what had happened to Saniye during a bride-wealth dispute. Saniye's brothers-in-law were returning his bride after he had sent her away because he was 'exhausted' by bride-wealth claims. Saniye did not want her back and said: 'All the time bride-wealth, all the time bride-wealth, this I don't want.' The bride's eldest full brother tried to persuade Saniye to forget the incident saying 'It is true, leave it, leave it', and Saniye answered: 'I am one, they are many and she also.' He pointed towards his bride as he said this, implying that she had also pressed him to pay. Eventually Saniye listened to his brothers-in-law who promised to speak to the demanders and Saniye's bride remained with him.

This example shows that the pressing of claims is not a simple one-sided process limited to bride-givers. The husband can stand up for his rights and send his bride away, especially if he has completed the legitimisation payment for his children but not yet completed the transfer of small bride-stock. Such action serves as a warning that he will cut off relations if the bride-givers do not reduce their demands. It also shows that independent action by some bride-givers against the husband may be against the interests of others who therefore strive to restrain them. It is difficult to be precise about the number of husbands who send their brides away temporarily, but my impression was that

such action was not infrequent and in many cases provoked by the demands of bride-givers.

Obviously, the relationships between a husband and his bride's full brothers and between a husband and the rest of the bride-givers are of a different order. The bride's full brothers normally try to maintain continuous mutual co-operation with the bride-receiver throughout the years. They have a vested interest in maintaining close affinal relations because when their sister's daughter marries in her turn they will acquire new bride-wealth rights as maternal uncles. I suggest that one of the reasons why only a few husbands complete the allocation of bride-cattle lies in the interest that a bride's brothers have in slowing down the handing over of cattle, in order to give strength to the new rights they acquire as maternal uncles. If a bride-receiver completes the transfer of bride-wealth to his wife's full brothers the intensity of his relationships with them may decline.

An elder described to me in detail the transfers of bride-wealth he had made and the five cattle he had received from the marriage of his sister, who had a married daughter who had not yet given birth. Since he was his sister's eldest full brother he had a right to six cattle, and I asked him about the beast still outstanding. He answered that 'it had disappeared', but later the elder's brother-in-law acknowledged that a right to another beast still existed. The elder probably wanted to forgo that particular right in order to maintain his rights as a maternal uncle. Since he was also the only heir to his parents' rights he preferred to emphasise the newly created set of affinal ties, which opened a new field of claims, rather than to insist on the last beast as a right from a relationship that was almost exhausted.

During the first fifteen years of marriage only a few head are transferred annually. Taking into consideration the annual reproduction of a herd, this is not a heavy burden. However, towards the end of the second period and during the third period of bride-wealth allocation a man's herd will normally have been reduced to only a few beasts so that the transfer becomes a burden. As a husband transfers less he thus 'closes' or restricts his relationships with more and more bride-givers. He must, perforce, select from the wide range of affines those with whom he has successfully co-operated, and with whom he has common interests and wishes to maintain intimate relationships. The brothers of his bride are those most frequently chosen.

The manipulation of inherited rights to bride-wealth

I have noted earlier that inherited rights to bride-wealth are by and large not powerful enough to force a husband to meet them immediately. An inherited right only concerns the right of a deceased bride-

giver *vis-à-vis* the husband himself during the latter's life-time. Four factors need to be borne in mind in relation to inherited rights. The first, obviously, is the person whose right was inherited. The second is the time at which a right was inherited. A right which at the time of marriage was already an inherited one carries less strength than one inherited several years after the bride has given birth, i.e. one directly vested in a living person at the time of the marriage. Third, the stage in the sequence of bride-wealth allocation in which the right was inherited also affects the strength of a claim. Generally speaking, the closer the time between the husband's 'going to *dimi*' and the inheritance of the right, the more powerful the claim. Fourth, the strength of an inherited right depends to a large extent on the composition of the group of living bride-givers with direct claims, especially those of the senior generation. As the sequence of bride-wealth allocation progresses, the heirs to inherited rights are more restrained in pressing their claims since they are unlikely to be met as long as stronger claims remain outstanding. The husband has some freedom of choice in choosing which of the inherited rights he prefers to meet.

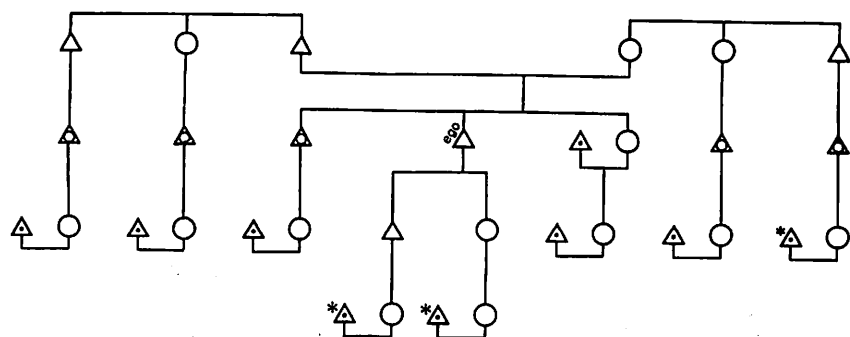
The generational division of the bride-givers into opposite alternations and moieties and their differentiation into the kinship categories of *dalto* and *lil-metch* also adds to the ambiguity of inherited rights. That an inherited right changes its alternation and moiety affiliation in the hands of an heir cannot affect its strength. But, a change in the category of kinship relationships of the right holder *vis-à-vis* the bride may alter its strength. I noticed such changed interpretations on two occasions. One was an heir's claim by a father's father's brother's son's son of a bride. The heir claimed 'Am I not a man of *dalto* [i.e. second degree kin] to the bride?' He pointed out that an allocation which had been made to the bond partner of the bride's deceased father had not been justified, since the relationship with that partner had been based on *lil-metch*, whereas his claim lay in the *dalto* category. At the 'compromise meeting' the husband argued that the right of the heir's father was *lil-metch* also and had no priority. Another, and contradictory, example which I recorded occurred when the heir to the right of the bride's mother's mother complained to a bride-receiver about a recent allocation of a bride-wealth 'gift' which had been made to the heir of the bride's father's sister. His argument was that the mother's mother of the bride is a *dalto* relationship and that therefore his mother's legitimate right should be met before a gift was given. The bride-receiver's response was that the heir of his bride's mother's mother was in a relationship of *lil-metch* to his bride, while the heir of the father's sister stood in the stronger relationship of *dalto* to the bride. Such different interpretations are made possible by the fact that one person stresses the priority of the right while the other emphasises the priority of the actual person claim-

ing the right. The very fact that an inherited right is subject to such interpretations enables the bride-receiver to manipulate the sequence of bride-wealth distribution.

It might be thought that a history of earlier co-operation—or of its absence—between a deceased bride-giver and a husband might endow the right of the deceased with strength or weakness, but this ignores the interests of the bride-receiver. A husband decides whether or not to allocate bride-wealth according to his interests. Past co-operation with an affine by no means ensures that co-operation with his heir will be to the bride-receiver's advantage.

A man inherits rights to receive bride-wealth but he does not inherit bride-wealth debts. A bride-receiver becomes in turn a bride-giver in the marriages of some of his kinsmen's daughters, and when his own daughters marry he becomes a joint bride-giver with his own bride-receivers. The rights to bride-wealth which a man has from his cognatic relations always lie within the succeeding generation. In other words, a man acquires his cognatic bride-wealth rights only at the marriages of his cognate's daughters, as is illustrated in Fig. IX.1.

Fig. IX.1 Claims in the bride-wealth of the daughters of cognates.



- ▲ Persons with whom an individual has reciprocal rights of bride-wealth.
- △ Person against whom an individual has bride-wealth rights
- * Right to small bride-stock only

These permutations have an important bearing on the nature of affinal relations, but especially on the continuation and transformation of affinal sets. Such rights are based on the indirect exchange of bride-wealth which the fathers of married girls mediate to the cognates of their own generation. These follow from the rule that a father does not receive bride-wealth from the marriages of his own daughters but only

from those of his cognates. This pattern of bride-wealth exchange between cognates of the same genealogical generation clearly has no potential for the continuation of affinal links from generation to generation. Although the young husbands who first transfer bride-wealth to the elders of the ascending generation of their bride-givers may continue to develop relations with those elders, and may for a time rely on labour to which those elders give them access, the age gap between the generations is likely to be such as to mean that essentially the relationship is a dead end. Although it may stimulate close relationships among cognates of the same generation, this pattern of indirect exchange is fragile. If we take two cognates, for example, their mutual interests depends on the proper allocation by two persons who are unrelated to each other. The allocations of bride-wealth by the sons-in-law of the two elders are independent of each other, and circumstances may disrupt the pattern of reciprocal transfers. Both parties are to a certain extent at the mercy of quarrels which occur at the fringes of their network and disrupt their tenuous relationships.

The reciprocity implicit in bride-wealth rights also explains to a great extent why each generation becomes a terminus for similar links of an affinal set. Reciprocal bride-wealth rights extend only as far as paternal and maternal cousins. If the rights of the ascending generation of cognates are fully met, no rights are inherited. The differences in age between young husbands who transfer and those elders who receive bride-wealth, and their different stages in the life cycle and different economic preoccupations, are such that it is unlikely that they will be members of the same close and intimate circle. Though they may cooperate for a while, there are no common interests or reciprocal rights to perpetuate their relationship. However, if the rights to bride-wealth are inherited, it is more probable that the heir will co-operate with the bride-receiver since they are of the same generation, and at similar stages in their life cycles. Their mutual interests could lead them to exert pressures on the husbands of their sisters and thus achieve a solid basis for co-operation. If this occurs, they usually re-establish their relations on a different basis. Since the marriage rules prohibit the duplication of existing affinal ties, this can only be achieved by establishing strong bond partnerships which give reciprocal and multiple rights in bride-wealth. All in all, bride-wealth rights and the patterns of stock transfer encourage a man to establish relationships with his coevals.

Cognatic relationships as such are bound to terminate, because cognates are unable to extend them beyond the point where their bride-wealth rights have been fully met. In contrast, a man has the option to enlarge and strengthen his field of social relationships with his affines by entering into bond-partnerships, which he can do without customary restriction. Indeed, it is common for a man and his bride-givers,

particularly those of his own generation, to establish strong bond-partnerships which look forward to the future and his daughter's marriage when he and his bride's brothers become joint bride-givers of that daughter. A man also frequently establishes bonds with the half-brothers and paternal and maternal cousins of his bride who hitherto had no bride-wealth rights in the marriages of his daughters. The very fact that a man's various sets of affines are distinct enforces a wide spread of relationships, encourages the formation of wide-ranging networks and permits almost endless permutations to be made of cross-cutting bond partnerships and affinal sets. For example, a man may give the name of an affine through his first wife to his second wife's son.

The senior generation of affines thus provides the next generation with a constellation of relationships from which some can be selected to be continued in other forms. In each generation some selected ties of affinity are thus transformed.¹ In the succeeding generation emphasis is placed on the new bond relationship, rather than on attenuated affinity. To sum up, inherited rights to bride-wealth are not in themselves powerful and their strength lies rather in the possibility of their transformation into bond partnerships. Bond partnerships themselves are a scarce resource to which the affinal relations of one's parents offer a chance of access.

Although strong bond partners have claims in the bride-wealth of each other's daughters and sisters, the satisfaction of these claims is conditional on the previous exchange of gifts of oxen. The concept which I translate as a conditional right depends, in fact, on the actual presentation of an ox, and the right itself is not inherent in the partnership. When no oxen have been exchanged the right to bride-wealth is merely nominal. In certain cases neither of the partners gives an ox and sometimes only one partner does so. Custom explicitly states that the crucial time to present an ox is at the *dimi* ceremony, which is a time of great expense. Indeed, one man told me that he 'hated' his 'held' partner because the latter had not given him an ox at that time. By not giving an ox, a partner publicly demonstrates his dissatisfaction with the relationship and implies a desire to terminate it. If a bond is established after one partner has 'gone to *dimi*' the failure to give an ox may be regarded as the result of special circumstances. When two elders, for example, establish a bond of 'name-giving' and neither appears to have any immediate possibility of receiving bride-wealth they sometimes do not bother to exchange beasts. However, since bride-wealth rights are inherited only when an ox has been presented, this may affect the claims of their sons. Some men told me that they had quarrelled with their fathers because the latter had refused to give oxen to their partners. A father may deliberately withhold such an ox to deprive his sons of the bride-wealth rights they otherwise would have inherited. On the other

hand, several men whose fathers had not transferred oxen were indifferent about their loss: they said it did not matter and stressed that, if they wished to do so, they could always establish a bond of their own with a son of their father's partner. Nevertheless, an inherited right does permit occasional claims for co-operation. Sons thus like to have as many inherited rights as possible, as a pool of potential ties from which they can later choose those which they want to reinforce in their own particular interests.

An interesting situation arises when only one partner presents an ox. Generally when debt relations, whatever their nature may be, are derived from direct exchange between two persons the one whose gift has not been reciprocated retains claims over the one who is in debt to him. Therefore one might anticipate that the partner who has given should be in a stronger position than the other because he had acquired rights whereas the other had not. But this is not the case. A right only becomes strong when the other partner has also given an ox. I suggest that this stems from the fact that the main significance of conditional bride-wealth rights lies in the partnership itself and not in the debt. Such a debt remains between the two partners, whereas an exchange creates the possibility of the partners mediating in the new fields of social relationships opened up between bride-givers and receivers when a marriage takes place. The bride-wealth rights of bond partners do not derive directly from the partnership itself, but from their relationship with the men who become their sons-in-law. Any strong bond partnership between two persons indirectly gives each of them rights in the stock of other unrelated persons. But each partner's claim has to be mediated through the other partner, and cannot be effected personally or directly. In other words, a bond partner who has returned an ox to his partner still depends on his partner to mediate his right on his behalf, like a partner who has not. It is not the actual transfer which is important but rather the state of the relationship between the partners and between each of them and the bride-wealth giver. A bride's father is an important intermediary in all bride-wealth transfers. Arturga (see Chapter VIII) did not even list a 'held' partner of his wife's father among those entitled to receive bride-wealth from him. Yet this 'held' partner had presented an ox, and thus acquired bride-wealth rights, whereas Arturga's father-in-law had never made a return gift. Arturga explained it thus: 'Nabuma [i.e. his wife] told me that her father did not give him an ox. This partnership was established a long time ago. Now Nabuma's father went away [i.e. has died] and I do not know that man'. Arturga meant that his late father-in-law had had plenty of time to return an ox but had not done so. This he interpreted as meaning that his late father-in-law had not been particularly keen for Arturga to continue relations with that particular partner. With the death of

Arturga's father-in-law, the 'held' partner's right also died. By saying 'I do not know that man', Arturga indicated that he did not recognise a relationship.

By and large the actual allocation of bride-wealth to bond partners or their heirs depends on the insistence of the bride's father or brothers that such allocation be made. A husband will only rarely allocate bride-cattle to a partner of his bride's father against the wishes of the latter and his sons. The following instance illustrates this.

Nitira, who was about forty years of age, married and with two daughters, enumerated in detail those to whom he had given bride-wealth. I noticed that none of the 'holding' partners of his bride's father had received bride-wealth. I asked Nitira why he had not allocated to the 'holder' partner, or even indicated that he wanted stock to be transferred to him. He said that he had heard that there had been an exchange of hard words between his brother-in-law and the 'holder's' son, after their wives had quarrelled. I then asked Nitira why he had not allocated bride-wealth to those partners of his bride's father whom the latter had 'held'. Nitira answered: 'I will give small bride-stock soon, but as to bride-cattle I do not know.' Nitira did not directly give his reasons for not allocating stock to his father-in-law's 'holding' partners even though two of them had presented an ox. However, what he meant seems to be quite clear. First, when he said that there was no indication from his bride-givers that they wished him to allocate bride-wealth to the 'holder' partner, he meant that relations between his father-in-law and his partner were not highly developed. Even if a husband wishes to allocate bride-wealth to the partner of his bride's father, he will not do so if this would endanger his relations with his immediate bride-givers. Second, Nitira's mention of the quarrel between his brother-in-law and the son of the 'holder' partner indicates the vulnerability of the bond of 'holding'. To break a bond of 'holding' automatically cancels the rights which inhere in it, including bride-wealth rights. Usually when a man hears that relations between his bride-givers and their bond partners are not at their best, he will be reluctant to allocate to the latter. If the relations continue to be bad, it is very likely that the rights to bride-cattle will be ignored and become 'lost'. Third, Nitira said that he did intend to allocate small bride-stock in the near future to the 'holding' partners of his bride's father. This, no doubt, was to ensure his own rights irrespective of the relations that existed between his bride-givers and their partners. Fourth, he said that he did not know about cattle in the future, implying that he could not forecast how relations would develop. When Nitira said 'I do not know', he meant, 'I will wait and see how things turn out.'

However, Nitira also had another good reason for 'not knowing' and for waiting. One of the partners who had been 'held' by his bride's

father had a sister who had been married a few years earlier. At the time of that partner's circumcision, the latter's sister had been under the age of *dimi*. When Nitira's wife's father reciprocated an ox to his 'held' partner, he thereby acquired rights to receive bride-wealth from the husband of the partner's sister. So Nitira's father-in-law was also waiting to see how much pressure his 'held' partner would exert on his brother-in-law to transfer stock. In any acquisition of conditional bride-wealth rights the partner who first presents an ox runs the risk that his gift may not be reciprocated, and he cannot forecast in what way his partner may influence his future affines.

When an elder establishes a bond with a younger person, the younger is more likely to receive bride-wealth than the elder. But this is only one reason for not returning an ox to a junior partner. The unreciprocated acquisition of bride-wealth rights minimises the strength of the partner's claim, which is based on the presentation of an ox. In theory the partner who acquired a bride-wealth right can claim it, but in practice his right remains nominal as long as the other partner has not acquired his own right. However, if such a nominal right is acknowledged and stock is transferred, then that partner is placed under a heavy and general obligation. A partner who presents an ox hopes that his partners will return one, and acquire a similar right. They sometimes indicate their wishes by referring to their young daughters who have come of age, or to sisters who have been married recently, as potential sources from which 'to eat' bride-wealth. The conventional reasons given for not reciprocating an ox, such as 'Waiting to receive bride-wealth' or 'a temporary shortage of stock', could, of course, be genuine but often they are excuses proffered to keep the other partner either at a distance or with only a nominal right which cannot be pursued.

Oxen are reciprocated when the partner who has acquired a bride-wealth right either is pressing or wishes to gain something from his partner and has no other way to do so. This occurs when one partner is manipulated by the other, or by some of the persons in that partner's network, into a situation in which he is called upon to provide something, such as assistance with herding or a strip, which he does not want to do. He is then faced with a dilemma in that he must either fulfil the request or risk his partner severing relations which he would prefer to maintain. A possible way of diverting such requests, but by no means an assured one, is to reciprocate the gift of an ox. The very reciprocation of an ox strengthens the other partner's formerly only nominal right to bride-wealth. Partners' rights to bride-wealth are now equal and can open up new ranges of social relations and claims.

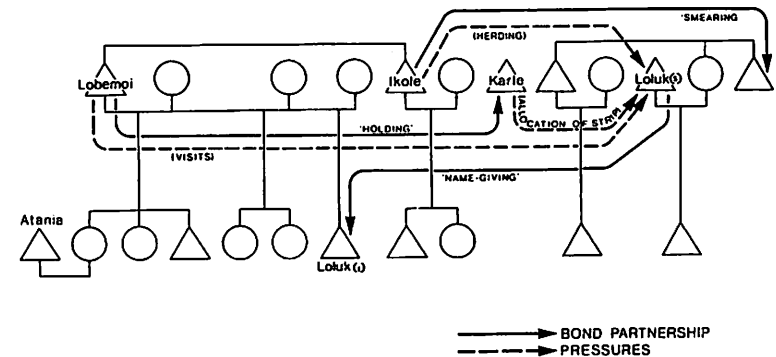
Reciprocation also occurs when the partner in debt wishes to acquire a concession from the other. This point can be illustrated by an anecdote about Government Chief Atol. The father of a boy who had

received Atol's name presented an ox to Chief Atol a few years after the boy was born. Atol did not reciprocate. In October 1969, Chief Atol asked his partner's father to pay his tax but the name-receiver's father refused, saying that he was not wealthy enough to pay tax. A few days later Chief Atol reciprocated the ox. He thereby acquired bride-wealth rights about seven years after the first ox had been presented. The return of the ox strengthened the boy's father's position *vis-à-vis* Chief Atol, and obviously Atol hoped that the tax would follow. Also, however, as I later realised, he hoped, through the father of his young partner, to reduce some of the objections to paying their tax held by two of his partner's wealthy affines. Atol only reciprocated the ox when it suited him. I emphasise that if there is a real possibility of receiving bride-wealth, and through it access to social relations with others, a man will not hesitate to give an ox, even though it may be a one-sided gift. Only a man with sufficient brokerage power, social credit and a reservoir of cattle, like Atol, will feel able to delay reciprocating an ox in partnerships which offer him the possibility to receive bride-wealth. Delaying enables a man to keep options open, whereas immediate return may temporarily release him from pressures and difficulties. Another way out of such difficulties is to establish a new bond; alternative solutions will be discussed in the next chapter. A man cannot directly offer, or even suggest, himself as 'name-giver', 'holder' or 'smeared'. He should be asked to be the senior partner by virtue of his status and credit. What he can do, however, is to ask another person to become the senior partner to his son or younger brother, but this requires planning and is not always possible. Childbirth and circumcision are relatively infrequent events. Only the ceremony of 'smearing', which takes place when a boy reaches physical maturity, is not performed at a specific time; but even this requires a boy of the appropriate age who has not already been 'smeared'. So a man may turn, though sometimes reluctantly, to his married brothers or sons or to his affines. He may point out to them the advantages which relations with a certain person would have, and it could well be that their interests coincide with his, as the following instance illustrates.

About two years after Loluk had married, Lobemoui asked him to be 'name-giver' to his new-born son (see Fig. IX.2). Lobemoui was probably seeking herding help from Loluk's new affines, because Lobemoui was short of labour as he had only one son and he was afflicted by a severe eye disease which prevented him herding. But Lobemoui had several nubile daughters.

A short time after the ceremony Loluk presented an ox to Lobemoui and thereby acquired bride-wealth rights in his many daughters. A short time after that, Atania, who had earlier married one of Lobemoui's daughters transferred a milch cow to Loluk. After Loluk's right to

Fig. IX.2 The pressures on Loluk.



receive bride-wealth from his partner's son-in-law was established, pressures on him were gradually increased. Ikole, Lobemoui's younger brother, indicated to Loluk that he would like Loluk's assistance with herding since his own son was too young. Loluk ignored the request. Karle, who was a 'held' partner of Lobemoui, then asked Loluk to allocate him a strip. Loluk could not do so since his own strip was small. Also Lobemoui himself began to visit Loluk often and, although he did not ask for anything explicitly, the pressures of hospitality these visits imposed on Loluk made Lobemoui's desire for close co-operation obvious. Eventually Loluk gave in and persuaded his wife's brother to offer Ikole the opportunity to be the 'smeared' of his wife's young brother. This bond gave Ikole potential rights to bride-wealth and also an immediate right to recruit Loluk's young affine as a herdboys for his own and Lobemoui's herd. Loluk senior thereby acquired rights in Lobemoui's daughters, received his share of bride-wealth from Lobemoui's son-in-law and hence became in debt to Lobemoui. He could not, however, meet the herding claims which Lobemoui and Ikole urged on him, nor was he able to reduce the pressures Ikole, Lobemoui and Karle exerted, and faced the damaging possibility of becoming known as an ingrate. To save his reputation and reduce the pressures he had to establish a new bond. Since his own son had already been 'smeared' the only way left to him was to suggest that his affine should create a bond which he could also utilise.

The case of Loluk indicates some important traits in the establishment of bonds and the consequent impact the formation of a bond has on a man's social standing. First, though there is competition among men for strong bonds and a person strives to achieve as many as possible in order to increase his brokerage power, there is danger in entering into a new bond partnership if there has been no previous co-operation. The temptation to establish a strong bond of 'name-

giving', for example, plus the acquisition of promising bride-wealth rights, could easily be transformed into a source of weakness, and sometimes even a trap, as the instance of Loluk shows. Second, the case of Loluk and Lobemoi shows that the ideal policy for an elder, which is to reduce his bonds and social connections to a manageable number of good, affectionate and meaningful ties, cannot always be pursued. A man is sometimes manipulated into a bond which turns out to be a nuisance. Further, if he is forced to establish a bond in order to maintain his social reputation, as Loluk did, he enters into the new bond not as a senior partner, as every elder or 'notable' wishes, but as a person who is related to a junior partner with inferior rights and little power. Third, if a man cannot offer his son as a partner he needs the help of his kinsmen, affines or existing partners. They may turn him down since they prefer to create partnerships of their own in their own interests. Consequently any one of them who does agree to a proposed partnership will, in due course, almost certainly ask for a high return. An agnate may press for acceptance of his proposals about betrothals, his terms in a negotiated marriage, or acceptance of his policy towards a bridegroom. An affine may press for co-operation and even apply pressures to allocate bride-wealth to his own kin; a partner may make constant demands for allocation of strips or ask for help in herding. Fourth, if a man obtains his brother's help in establishing a bond partnership, friction may develop between the man and his own sons. The brother who agreed to help will probably transfer an ox to acquire conditional bride-wealth rights (his son, being a junior partner, has more chances of receiving bride-wealth). This may lead to resentment on the part of the sons against their father who asked his brother for help. They may resent him because they know that the new partnership was entered into at their expense, in that they will be asked to supply labour from which they will not benefit. Any benefits from the bride-wealth rights will accrue to their paternal uncle and cousins.

All these possibilities constrain a man's manipulative power. By seeking help from outside his own household a man may appear to reduce temporary pressures and thus maintain his social position *vis-à-vis* others, but to some extent he risks exposing himself to other pressures. Loluk's case provides an example of a man saving his reputation just in time by the establishment of a new bond, though clearly at the expense of a decrease in his manipulative power.

Finally, though any bond partnership is voluntarily established between two persons, it does not remain a simple dyadic relationship but involves other unrelated persons, whose independent decisions may overturn or confuse the previously established balance of the relationship. It is not so much the formal aspect of partnership which brings about the acknowledgement of claims but its actual content,

which changes over time. Some sons who have inherited their father's right to bride-wealth cannot rely simply on the formal tie which their father had with a bride-receiver, but must also base their claim on the strength it has in that particular situation.

The intermediary role of the bride

It will be recalled that the bride-givers can activate supernatural sanctions against a husband, and members of his household. Naturally, therefore, a bride is anxious for her husband to transfer bride-wealth for the sake of her own and her children's well-being. A bride never simply asks her husband to keep on transferring bride-wealth in order to avoid general misfortune, rather she urges him to allocate to a particular bride-giver when she, or her child, is ill. A bride retains membership of her natal clan and generation-set through most of her life time and is only fully incorporated in her husband's when the *it galan* and *gol* ceremonies have been performed. A bride maintains close relations with her parents and full brothers, often visits them and is kept well informed about any disagreements between her kin. She will know fairly accurately what her parents' and brothers' opinions are about a particular bride-giver who may be pressing his claim; and knows that the stability of her marriage depends to a large extent on her parents and brothers being satisfied and on her pleasing them. This is especially so if her family had raised any objections to her marriage. So, when a woman influences her husband to transfer stock to a particular person she does so not only to avert the occult forces she fears but also in the awareness of what her father and brothers wish to be done. A husband usually pays attention to his bride's advice.

During the dry season of 1968 I saw a man and his bride approaching a specialist to diagnose the illness of their second child, who was about five years old and had had severe stomach pains for several days. The specialist 'threw his sandals' and told them that one of the elder bride-givers had not received his share of bride-wealth and had activated the occult power that had struck the child. That very afternoon the father took coffee beans to his bride's father's mother's brother's son. As he returned I asked him how he knew that that particular bride-giver had caused the illness. He answered: 'She [i.e. his bride] knows.' He added that he had given the coffee beans in order to stay the illness, but during the impending big rains he would also transfer bride-cattle to the same elder to prevent a recurrence.

A husband learns of the opinions that his bride-givers hold from his bride. She not only discreetly keeps her husband informed but also informs her parents and brothers about her husband's actions and intentions. When she and her husband return to the settlement and the river

during the dry season, she informs her father and brothers where they have stayed and with whom they co-operated during the wet season. This is not done secretly but as part of the general conversation and exchange of news.

Any one transfer can touch the interests of a bride's brothers; but it would be petty of them to get angry whenever a particular transfer displeased them: it would also impose too much strain on the conjugal bond. So it is both more courteous and more effective for them to leave things to the discreet influence of their sister. Equally for a husband, his wife's confidences about the opinions held by her close cognates are useful. This is particularly important if the bride's brothers are still only boys and her husband is restricted in his relations with the senior generation of the bride-givers because of the customary avoidance relationship (*somo*).

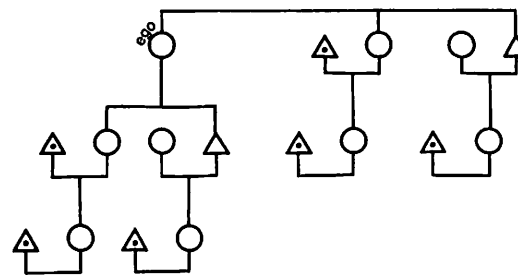
It is necessary to maintain a balance of interests. If the bride presses too often and too obviously, she may antagonise her husband and even provoke him to send her away or divorce her (the case of Saniye noted above is a case in point). A frequent reason given for divorcing a bride was that 'She asked me to transfer bride-wealth all the time'. Equally, a woman who is reluctant to influence her husband, or fails to inform him about her father's and brother's wishes, may find that her brothers will enforce their rights and thus endanger her marriage. A wise and contented bride mediates tactfully, does not press her husband too hard, and yet satisfies her father and brothers.

It will be remembered that women cannot own stock or allocate, or be allocated, land though they have rights to cultivate. Similarly, although women have rights to some bride-stock their portions by custom pass to their sons. This accords with the hypothesis put forward by Peters that whenever the jural rights of women are low their mediatory importance is high.²

The transfer of bride-stock to a woman's sons has important consequences for the inheritance of rights to bride-wealth. Both the father and mother of a bride have rights to bride-wealth although the stock actually goes to their sons (see notes 5 and 7 to Fig. VIII.1). A woman has rights in bride-wealth received for her sisters, daughters, daughter's daughters and sisters' daughter's marriages, but such female rights are seldom aggressively asserted (see Fig. IX.3).

I noted that women seldom receive their full portions of bride-wealth, and first thought that since women's rights were weak, and that because they had no voice in men's affairs, they were simply ignored. It is rather that women prefer to let their claims lie in abeyance for their sons to make when they grow up; if not, the stock would be absorbed into the household herd. Similarly a woman does not push claims she has in the bride-wealth of her sisters. By so doing a woman leaves her

Fig. IX.3 Man from whom a woman has bride-wealth rights.



sions the opportunity to extend relationships with her kin. This is important because the structure of bride-wealth rights is generally biased towards agnatic kin. Finally, a widow who is not taken in leviratic marriage usually joins the household of one of her sons, which then becomes a meeting point at which her other sons come to visit her and bring her gifts and food, which provides them all with opportunities to meet and co-ordinate their interests.

The transformation of a bride into a wife

Of the 147 wives in my sample (see Table VIII.1) only eleven had had the 'departed oxen' ceremony performed for them and, of these, only 8 had undergone the subsequent 'household' ceremony. Performances of both ceremonies are hedged by customary restrictions, mainly concerning the birth order and seniority of co-wives, which apply to both the husband and his wives. For example, the eldest son of a second wife should not perform a ceremony for his own wife before all the sons of his father's first wife have done so. Ceremonies cannot be performed for a woman until all her older sisters have undergone them, or if her mother is living and the ceremony has not been performed for her. Similarly, a husband must perform these ceremonies for his wives according to their order of marriage. The 'departed oxen' ceremony then, can be performed only if all these conditions have been fulfilled, after all the bride-givers' rights to receive small-stock have been met, and after the bulk of the bride-cattle has been transferred.

The 'household' ceremony should follow the 'departed oxen' ceremony one to three years later. The first is performed by the bride-receiver for his bride-givers and their age-peers at his homestead, and the second by the bride-givers for the bride-receiver and his age-peers at theirs.³ After the 'departed oxen' ceremony a husband is under constant pressure to perform the 'household' ceremony but, by custom, there should be no mention of, let alone negotiations about, the second

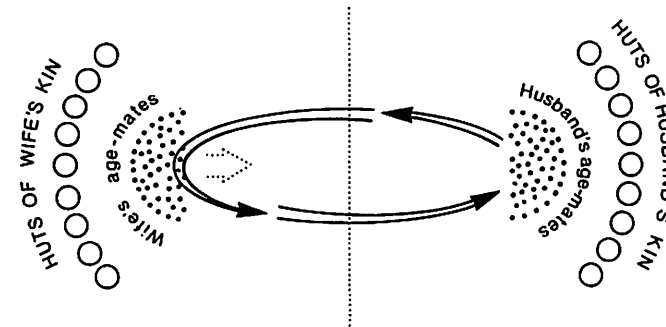
ceremony during the first. Ibare, who had recently performed the 'household' ceremony for the son-in-law of his deceased brother, told me that this was because 'We do not put together fathers [i.e. the wife's father and father's brothers for whom the departed oxen ceremony is performed] and sons [i.e. the bride-receiver and his brothers for whom the household ceremony is performed]. Fathers are not sons and if one mentions the household ceremony while the departed oxen ceremony is taking place it is like abusing and cursing the elders.' Ibare also explained that the 'departed oxen' ceremony is performed first because 'fathers' come first. 'Is one not marrying the father's daughter?' This rule forces the bride-receiver to approach his bride-givers. When agreement on the number of bride-cattle to be transferred is reached, the time and place of the ceremony is decided. The purpose of the 'household' ceremony is implied in its name: the bride-givers of the senior generation establish a house for their 'daughter', which formally and symbolically marks the full transformation of a bride into a wife and her incorporation into the clan and generation-set of her husband.

The 'departed oxen' ceremony is usually performed during the night, attracts only a limited number of people (usually fifty to seventy), drawn mainly from the bride-givers and age-peers of the senior generation. The 'household' ceremony, on the other hand, is performed during the day and followed by dances that last for two days. The hundreds of young people who attend are mainly drawn from the alternation of the bride-receiver and especially from his own generation-set with which the ceremony is explicitly associated. A frequent way of inquiring whether a man has held the ceremony is to ask, 'Did your generation-set dance for your house?' The wedding and the household ceremonies are spoken of as 'opening' and 'closing' the marriage, in reference to two actions undertaken by the husband's age-mates. At the wedding ceremony the groom's age-mates open the maiden leg rings of the bride and thus 'open' the marriage. At the 'household' ceremony they seize the *raritch* mat to 'close' the marriage. At the 'household' ceremony the bride-givers are also obliged to present the husband with gifts which they acquire, or start to manufacture, immediately after the 'departed oxen' ceremony.⁴

Before the 'household' ceremony the bride-givers and the bride-receivers erect separate camps, about 400 metres apart, at a previously agreed site. The ceremony begins when the wife leaves the camp of the bride-givers accompanied by about thirty unmarried girls of her generation-set. The girls drive four donkeys loaded with a big dismantled hut, a full set of domestic equipment and the *raritch* mat. They sing as they go. About four hundred young men from the generation-sets of the husband's alternation await them. When the girls have gone about one hundred metres, about twenty boys from the husband's

generation-set suddenly run towards them, wrench the mat away and run back again (see Fig. IX.4). They then dance and jump around the mat.

Fig. IX.4 A schematic illustration of the seizure of the *raritch* mat during the *gol* ceremony.



The girls make dramatic but unsuccessful attempts to recapture the mat, which the boys hold high in the air. After the boys have clearly won, the girls group on one side and the boys with the mat on the other. Then a senior member of the bride-receiver's generation-set takes the mat and pitches it on the ground. The boys and girls form a circle and dance around it. While the boys and girls dance, the wife, assisted by other wives of the bride-givers, starts to erect the hut.

When a bride marries it is not certain whether the marriage will last and she retains membership in her clan. By the time the two ceremonies have been performed, many years later, the marriage has become established in a complicated network of co-operative and affectionate relationships and multiplex rights; indeed the distinction between bride-givers and receivers will no longer be clear-cut in daily life. One purpose of the two ceremonies is to re-create that distinction for the final acts of stock transfer and the formal transfer of the woman to her husband. This is symbolised in both ceremonies by the nature of the gifts exchanged. As well as transferring the last instalments of bride-cattle, the husband gives gifts of livestock to the senior generation of his affines. At the 'household' ceremony the bride-givers give the husband and his wife gifts. Gifts of household goods to the wife are identified with her domestic and pastoral work. Each of the spouses is given gifts which symbolise fertility: the wife is given three necklaces, the colours of which—red, yellow⁵ and green—correspond to those of the forehead clasps which consist of 'red' copper, 'yellow' brass and 'green' iron which are given to the husband. These gifts acknowledge that the bride-givers have relinquished rights to the descendants and labour of their daughter. This is also demonstrated by the ceremonial estab-

Plate 12. Young men from the husband's generation-set dancing around the *raritch* mat (near top left) during the *gol* ceremony.



ishment of a house for her by the wives of the bride-givers at her husband's camp. At the 'departed oxen' ceremony both parties dwell, eat and celebrate together, which in a sense reflects the actual state of close and intimate relations between them; at the 'household' ceremony the two parties are artificially separated. The forceful taking of the *raritch* mat (which represents the wife) dramatises her transfer from one clan and generation-set to another, as the mat is taken by boys of the husband's generation-set from the girls of the wife's.

Finally, as a woman ages her life can be seen in one respect as offering a diminishing range of choices. During her teens she enjoys sexual freedom and can choose her lovers and sometimes even her suitor. Until marriage she belongs to an organisation of age-mates called *kob*.⁶ After marriage a girl is restricted to sexual relations with her husband

and she also ceases to be a member of the unmarried girls' *kob*, although she retains membership in her clan and generation-set. Until her husband has completed the transfer of small-stock she can leave him and remarry another man. After the transfer of small-stock is completed her husband acquires further rights over her but she is not completely transformed from bride to a wife. Her husband may send her away, she needs his permission to remarry, and if she is still fertile and relatively attractive she is bound by the levirate. As the bulk of the bride-cattle are transferred she loses the intermediary role she once had. Only women for whom the *gol* ceremony has been performed can be buried inside a livestock enclosure; all other women are buried either outside their huts or outside a livestock enclosure. The 'household' ceremony is the final *rite de passage* which marks her final incorporation in her husband's group.

Conclusion

In this and the preceding chapter I have analysed rights, especially inherited and conditional rights to bride-wealth, and the transfer of bride-wealth, bearing four aspects in mind. First, rights to bride-wealth contribute to the gradual severing of a man's relations with his parent's siblings and their offspring. A man cannot have reciprocal bride-wealth rights with his father's paternal and maternal cousins, so each must look elsewhere. They are neither more nor less liable to work together or support each other than non-related persons. While they are young, active herders, brothers are likely to co-operate with cousins of a similar age, and especially their paternal cousins. They exchange information about the activities of their unmarried sisters and support each other against suitors they consider to be unsuitable. But as they mature and their interests diverge and each has interests in different sets of bride-wealth rights, there remains little incentive for them to maintain co-operative relationships. Half-brothers maintain a common interest to bride-wealth rights through their sisters, though these rights are not specific to individuals but inhere in the household (see note 2 to Fig. VIII.1) to which they belong, as is also true of their father's half-brothers. Moreover those claims are not burdensome. Each brother, as I have shown, tends to select his own spouse, raise and allocate his own bride-wealth and thus create his own set of affinal relationships. This means that some of the affines of a man's siblings may be useful or desirable whereas others may not. From this range a man has considerable freedom of choice in selecting those relationships which appear to him advantageous. But, even though full brothers may have mutual interests in each other's affines for occasional co-operation, their joint interests in the marriages of their daughters encourage them to

Plate 13. The special hut built for a woman for whom the *gol* ceremony is performed.



co-ordinate their policies towards their sons-in-law, and, since they have individual rights in the bride-wealth of each other's daughters, to be present at most of the negotiations which precede these marriages.

Second, bride-wealth rights serve to strengthen the relationships between kinsmen and affines of the same generation, as it is clear from the analysis of inherited bride-wealth rights above. Indeed a man may even give bride-wealth gifts to establish a basis for co-operation with coeval affines who have no formal rights. The relatively late age at which men marry, and the different nature of the economic activities in which men engage before and after 'going to *dimi*', strengthens the tendency for coevals to work together. The fact that, with the exception of individually held rights, parents transfer claims to their sons means that in effect, through the parents of the bride, a husband transfers additional stock to his brothers-in-law.

Third, the structure of bride-wealth rights tends to encourage the transformation of affinal relationships into a complex of bond partnerships established between affines of the succeeding generation. Any man may co-operate with an immediate affine of his brothers and his father but if this continues it is likely that the relationship will be converted into a bond relationship which will give him bride-wealth rights and open up relationships with others. The establishment of bonds within the range of affinal relationships in one sense reinforces

the tie but in another sense transforms it and gives it a different quality. Distant affinity fades from memory and is certainly forgotten within two generations. But affinity plus a bond is maintained, though it is the bond which is the active component and is invoked rather than the affinal relationship which preceded it. Marriage restrictions are not maintained, so that lapsed and/or transformed affinity, as it were, mitigates the harshness of Dassanetch marriage rules.

Fourth, bride-wealth rights gradually transform affinal ties into selective pseudo-kinship relations.⁷ The long span of time over which bride-wealth is allocated and distributed, the births and deaths of claimants, the proliferation of 'bonds' and the manner in which rights to bride-wealth are mingled with other social and economic claims creates, for each elder, an intermeshed set of claims and counterclaims to bride-wealth. Indeed, in daily intercourse it is often impossible to single out the principle strand, whether bride-wealth rights, kinship, affinity or labour assistance, in any particular relationship which an elder maintains. Similarly a man may have many bond partnerships but only a few will actually carry bride-wealth rights which will be effective in any one partner's lifetime. The rights to bride-wealth rather assert the principle of mutual obligation, and the relationship is, in effect, similar to that pertaining between people who are categorised as *gal-le* kin. In that relation each kinsman has potential but vague bride-wealth rights in the livestock of the other related persons. In sum, the prolonged series of stock transfers permits a husband to select out of the wide range of affines acquired at marriage those which will be most useful to him.

Notes to Chapter IX

1 E. L. Peters (1976) has shown how in the lifetime of one old lady, three different configurations of affinal ties were formed in each of three succeeding generations. Dassanetch are able to renew relationships through bonds which achieve a momentum of their own.

2 See E. L. Peters (1966).

3 Even if the bride-receiver dies immediately after the *it galan* ceremony, the *gol* ceremony must be performed for his wife and the brothers and age-mates of the deceased.

4 The *gol* gifts are: a giraffe tail necklace called *som* or *damitch*, a necklace of yellow beads called *biero*, and a necklace of green beads called *challa*. These three gifts are given to the wife at the ceremony and are customarily supplied by her father or father's brother. Other gifts include about forty milk containers which are customarily collected or made by the wife's brothers, about thirty mats used both to roof huts and to sit on (made by the wives of the wife's father's brother), forearm clasps (*mul gilo*), and finally a large mat called *raritch* (yellow) which, after the ceremony, is placed inside the hut. The *raritch* mat is customarily made by the wife of the wife's father's eldest brother. Except for the *raritch* mat all the gifts are handed to the bride-receiver and his wife a short time before the *gol* ceremony begins.

5 It will be recalled that when a young man wants a girl to become his betrothed, he puts a necklace of yellow beads called *biedite* around her neck: *biedite* is a diminutive of *biero*. The two necklaces are associationally connected; *biedite* is given to a nubile girl when she is espoused, while *biero* marks the final establishment of a marriage.

6 The *kob* is a trophy made of a calabash decorated with beads. It is kept in the house of the leader of the local group of unmarried girls who belong to one generation-set. I hope to publish a full exposition of the *kob* organisation elsewhere.

7 Cf. E. L. Peters (1976) and N. Dyson-Hudson (1966), pp. 84-5.

Chapter X

Credit and credibility

In previous chapters I have described the shifts in intensity of relationships which may occur between partners connected by strong bonds and the way in which such relationships may be affected by the conditional rights to bride-wealth that partners acquire. Bond partnerships and affinal relationships are not socially isolated; the context of a relationship may be influenced by other persons in the social domain of each party. A bond or affinal relationship established voluntarily between two individuals as a result of co-operation affects others: these others may in their turn influence the nature of co-operation between the two partners or affines. External interests and social connections may transform a partnership or affinal relationship into something quite different from what the partners or affines originally had in mind.

The range and interconnectedness of a man's network, and particularly the effectiveness of crucial links, are the basis of his social strength. It is through the use of this network, and other formal ties, that a man is able to influence the behaviour of others in order to achieve his goals and increase his brokerage power. A man's social network forms his immediate social environment. In part a man can construct this network to suit himself but in part it is determined for him in that he does not choose his kin, his generation-set or peer-group, and the kin and affines of his partners. Although a man can endeavour to manipulate other persons in the pursuit of his own interests, he will equally be affected by the independent decisions and the manipulations of other persons in his network. Long-term, single-minded, planned construction of an effective network is almost impossible, because of the manner in which the social relationships which form its components fluctuate. Moreover a man may need to sacrifice long-term planning to the requirements of immediate support, in a game that all can play.

There are certain points in a man's life, such as when he first enters strong bonds, at the marriages of his siblings, or his own marriage,