THE WEB OF KINSHIP AMONG THE TALLENSI

The Second Part of an Analysis of the Social Structure of a Trans-Volta Tribe

Meyer Fortes

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by

MEYER FORTES

READER IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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TO MY WIFE
AND FELLOW-WORKER
SONIA L. FORTES

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FOREWORD

THIS book concludes the investigation of Tale social structure begun in *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, 1945. It carries the analysis into the domain of family life and the social ties that grow directly out of marriage and parenthood. This is the domain of kinship, in the current usage of social anthropology.

No subject in the whole range of anthropological studies has been so voluminously investigated and debated as kinship. It is no exaggeration to say that every anthropologist of repute has, at some time or another, written about kinship. Nor has this interest been confined to anthropologists. The marriage customs of primitive peoples, their modes of domestic organization, their rules of inheritance and descent, the laws, morals, and religious beliefs associated with family life among them, have furnished material for scholars of many kinds. It is nearly a hundred years since Bachofen's reconstruction of primordial mother-right and McLennan's theory of exogamy and endogamy upset long-standing beliefs about the nature of the human family. It is exactly a century since Lewis Morgan, who may justly be regarded as the father of the scientific study of kinship in primitive society, first wrote about the Iroquois clan. Since then psychologists and philosophers, sociologists, jurists, historians, and others have drawn constantly on the mounting quantity of data concerning primitive kinship to support their theories or confute their opponents.

Fortunately for the anthropologist who ventures to write about kinship, the vast mass of literature on the subject contains only a small amount of generalization that has stood the test of modern field research. But this alone would not excuse the omission of reference to the work of other students of the subject in a book on kinship. The chief reason why I have, in this book, referred only to those authorities whose writings have direct bearing on my material is because the general problems of kinship lie outside the scope of a descriptive monograph.

At the same time the truism that facts only acquire meaning for science in the light of an adequate theory is specially relevant to the study of kinship. 'No systematic thought has made progress apart from some adequately general working hypothesis, adapted to its special topic', says Whitehead.[1] Kinship studies, right up to

[1] Whitehead, A. N., *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 286.

the present time, have suffered from working hypotheses not adapted to the topic. I was fortunate in that both my chief teachers on this subject, the late Professor Bronislaw Malinowski and Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, approached it with working hypotheses founded on the realities of field observation. Their theories have the merit of being adapted to the methods of observation available to the anthropologist in the field and to the kind of data within his reach. They can be tested in the field, as is most cogently shown in Raymond Firth's book *We, the Tikopia* (1937), which appeared while I was among the Tallensi. I found this book a mine of ideas and a most valuable stimulus to observation.

I have not, however, attempted to give a comprehensive account of family life and kinship among the Tallensi in this book. I am concerned only with kinship in relation to the social structure—that is, in my view, with the fundamental principles of Tale kinship relations as they enter into the organization of collective life. In a society as homogeneous as that of the Tallensi the common denominators of thought, feeling, and action stand out very clearly and the principles governing social behaviour are not so difficult to discern as might be supposed.

It is of interest to add that I was able to pay a very short visit to the Tallensi in 1945, after this book was finished. I found that as far as their social structure was concerned there had been no appreciable change since my wife and I first went to Taleland in 1934. But there are many signs that they are on the threshold of a period of rapid change. The war has opened up wider horizons to many of the young men who saw active service. Native Administration has developed greatly; schools are being established; missionaries have started work inside Taleland. The social structure I have described may well undergo many modifications in the next few years, though I do not believe it will alter much in fundamentals for decades.

M. F.

OXFORD 1948

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The Large-scale Framework of Tale Society

THE central subject of the first part of this analysis of Tale social structure was the lineage system.[1] Our attention was fixed on the permanent large-scale framework of the society in relation to which individuals behave primarily as members of corporate groups. We observed that according to native belief and usage this framework has maintained its form from time immemorial and must continue to do so as long as their social system lasts. Our data left little doubt that in fact the macroscopic social structure of the Tallensi has been highly stable in form for at least five generations and probably for many more. We found evidence, however, that a continuous process of adjustment in the grading of structural relations between the component units of the total social structure underlies its stable form. These adaptations take place in response to economic, structural, and religious stresses. Though they do not alter the established forms of corporate grouping by means of which Tale collective life is organized, they do affect the social relations of persons as individuals and as members of corporate groups. Nor can there be any doubt that they are inherent in the social structure; whatever sets them in motion at any given time or in any given sector of the society, they are made possible by the dynamic factors inherent in the constitution of the stable large-scale units of social organization. We saw that units of Tale social organization can only be defined by reference to the way in which they emerge in corporate action in relation to other like units, and not by mechanical criteria.

For convenience of orientation I shall here sum up the principal results of our previous study. The Tallensi[2] are typical of the great congeries of Mole-Dagbane-speaking peoples that occupy the basin of the Volta rivers in the French Ivory Coast and the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast.[3] In race, speech, culture, social organization, and economy they constitute a completely homogeneous community of sedentary farmers. But there is no 'tribal unity' among the Tallensi in the ordinarily accepted sense of this phrase. They have no fixed territorial boundaries, nor are they precisely marked off from neighbouring 'tribes' by cultural or linguistic usages. They have no political unity in the sense of being uniformly and exclusively subject to a single, centralized tribal government (other than that imposed by the British

[1] *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, hereafter referred to as *Dynamics of Clanship*.

[2] Population (1931), approx. 35,000; density, approx. 170 per square mile.

[3] See *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. i.

Colonial Government),[1] and no judicial or administrative machinery such as goes with a centralized form of government.[2]

The 'tribal unity' of the Tallensi is, in general terms, the unity of a distinct socio-geographical region forming a segment of a greater region of similar cultural type, economic organization, and social structure. This region can be demarcated only by dynamic criteria. The Tallensi have more in common among themselves, both in sentiment and in nuances of cultural usage, and closer social and politico-ritual bonds *inter se*, than the component segments of Tale society have with other like units outside what we have called Taleland. This characteristic of Tale society has a special relevance for the investigation we are undertaking in this book. For, like the network of clanship ties and the bonds of common custom and of politico-ritual association analysed in our first book, the web of kinship spreads far beyond the social frontiers of the Tallensi. This is one of the ways in which the field of inter-personal relations is congruent with the structure of relations between corporate groups among the Tallensi.

The principle of segmentary differentiation and the associated principle of dynamic coherence operate in every department of Tale social organization. We described in our previous work how the Tallensi are internally divided by a major cleavage into two clusters of clans, the Namoo clans on the one hand, and the Talis[3] clans and their congeners on the other. These two groups are distinguished by differences in their myths of origin, their totemic and quasi-totemic usages and beliefs, the politico-ritual privileges and duties connected with the Earth cult and the ancestor cult, and to some extent by their local distribution. The clans belonging to each group are more closely interlinked by clanship and politico-ritual ties than any one of them is linked to clans of the other group. But very close bonds of local contiguity, and of politico-ritual interdependence and co-operation in assuring the maintenance of the common interests of the society—peace and

[1] Since 1937, under the new system of local government introduced by the Administration, the Tallensi have a centralized Native Authority built up on federal principles and closely related to indigenous forms of political institutions. I am speaking, however, of the period prior to 1937. Moreover, the new political constitution has not yet been wholly integrated with the indigenous system of politico-ritual relations.

[2] This is further discussed in *African Political Systems*, ed. by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Introduction and pp. 239 ff.

[3] As explained in *Dynamics of Clanship* I use the following terminology for the sake of clarity: *Tallensi* (sing. *Taləŋ*) means all the inhabitants of *Taleland*; *Tale* is the adjective derived from Tallensi and is used to refer to things common to all Tallensi. *Talis* (sing. *Talis*) is used both as a substantive and as an adjective to refer to the 'real' Tallensi, as the natives call them, who live on and around the Tong Hills. They are usually contrasted with *Namoos* (sing. and adj. *Namoo*) who are also Tallensi but a different section of the population. This nomenclature is artificial, though derived from native speech forms.

the rule of custom, fertility of soil and of man, health and prosperity—unite the two groups. In particular, inter-personal ties of kinship and of affinity link the members of the two groups of clans to one another, so that practically every Namoo has kinsmen among the Talis and vice versa.

These two groups of clans, we learnt, never combined for defence against or attack on neighbouring 'tribes'. Indeed, they were the traditional enemies of one another, and war sometimes broke out between Namoos and Talis in the Tongo area. But these wars were short and sharp. They were acute forms of internal dissension rather than wars as we understand the term, and they immediately set on foot actions to restore the *status quo ante*. Thus they served to emphasize the inescapable interdependence of the two groups.

The unity and moral solidarity of all the Tallensi emerge most conspicuously during the annual cycle of the Great Festivals. At these times the divergent interests that normally dominate the corporate actions of clans or groups of clans are set aside in obedience to ritual sanctions. A series of rites and ceremonies requiring the co-operation of both major groups of clans takes place, in which the greatest common interests and values of the whole society are dramatized and affirmed. The solidarity of the widest political community to which every Talǝŋ belongs thus becomes temporarily supreme, and no intestine dissensions at other times can destroy it.

The Great Festivals bring out two points of special importance. They show, firstly, that the widest unified political community in which Tallensi participate is not a fixed group but a functional synthesis based on a dynamic social equilibrium. This equilibrium is maintained by the balancing against one another of like corporate units; by the play of the counterpoised ties and cleavages of clanship, kinship, and ritual allegiance; and through the agency of complementary politico-ritual-institutions. And secondly, they show that the whole system hinges on the complementary roles of two types of politico-ritual functionaries, chiefs (*na'ab*, pl. *nadɛm*) and Custodians of the Earth (*tɛndaana*, pl. *tɛndaanam*). The office of chiefship (*na'am*) is considered to be characteristic of the Namoos, the tɛndaana-ship of the Talis and their congeners, but neither office is the exclusive prerogative of either group. The picture is further complicated by the existence of other politico-ritual offices, in particular among the Talis, connected with their cult of the External *Bɔɣar*. The complementary functions of chiefship and tɛndaana-ship are rooted directly in the social structure, but are also validated by myths of origin and backed by the most powerful religious sanctions of the ancestor cult and of the cult of the Earth. The Namoos are believed to be the descendants of immigrant Mamprusi who fled from Mampurugu many generations ago. Hence they claim remote kinship with the ruling aristocracy of Mampurugu. Their chiefship is derived from that of the Paramount Chief of the Mamprusi, and this is

the ultimate sanction of its politico-ritual status in Tale society. The Talis and other clans that have the tɛndaana-ship claim to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, and the ritual sanctions of their office are derived from the Earth cult.

The Maximal Lineage and Clanship Ties

All politico-ritual offices are vested in particular maximal lineages or clans. These are the basic units of Tale social organization that emerge in corporate activities. They are defined primarily by the canon of agnatic descent. A maximal lineage is the most extensive group of people of both sexes all of whom are related to one another by common patrilineal descent traced from one known (or accepted) founding ancestor through known agnatic antecedents. The exact agnatic relationship of every member of a maximal lineage to every other member is, in theory, known or can be ascertained by genealogical reckoning. All the agnatic descendants of the founding ancestor, both male and female, belong to the maximal lineage. But in practice the male members are supreme in the conduct of lineage affairs and the *de facto* corporate unit is the group of male members. This is due in part to the fact that women members are bound to marry out of the lineage, by the rule of lineage exogamy. As marriage is patrilocal, a woman is usually separated from her male lineage-kinsfolk, and cannot easily take part in regular lineage counsels. What is more important, her children do not belong to her patrilineal lineage and they do not therefore contribute to its physical and social perpetuation. This is one manifestation of the dominance of males and the male line in jural and ritual institutions which, as we shall see in the following pages, is the principal factor governing the inter-personal as well as the corporate relations of individuals.

The maximal lineage is the basis of the Tale clan. A clan (or subclan, in a few instances) is a localized unit consisting of a defined segment of a maximal lineage, or a whole maximal lineage; or of two or more linked maximal lineages, augmented, frequently, by one or more accessory lineages incorporated into the clan by a fiction of kinship through a woman of the authentic male line. The commonest type is the composite clan, consisting of two or more linked maximal lineages of independent patrilineal descent whose association is accounted for by a myth of remote kinship or of age-old local solidarity. Every maximal lineage is exogamous, and with very few exceptions this rule applies also to the associations of maximal lineages we have called clans. Apart from local unity and putative genealogical linkage, clans are internally unified by common ritual cults connected with the worship of the ancestors and the earth.

An important corollary to the rule of exogamy in the maximal lineage and clan is the right of a man to inherit the widow of any male member

of his lineage or clan, other than those whom he describes as his 'fathers' or 'sons'.

Every Tale clan is anchored to a particular locality from which it takes its name. In the central area of Taleland, around the Tong Hills, the present clan settlements appear to date back not less than eight to ten generations. But they have not been and are not territorially static. There are no strict territorial boundaries between adjacent settlements. The homesteads of a settlement merge with those of the adjacent settlements, and the boundaries between them are definable only in social terms, as a function of their ecological and politico-ritual relations at a given time. In the same way every segment of a clan—that is, each of its component maximal lineages—is anchored to a local subdivision of the clan settlement, though many of its members may be dispersed elsewhere.

A striking feature of Tale social organization is the system of inter-clan linkages which constitutes one of the principal forces of cohesion in the society. The genealogically and socially autonomous maximal lineage or clan is not a closed group. The component maximal lineages that form the segments of adjacent clans have ties of clanship identical with those that unite them to one another within their respective clans. Thus if two adjacent clans have segments A, B, C, and D, E, F, G, respectively, then A (but not B or C) may have clanship ties with D (but not with E, F, or G); B may have clanship ties only with E, and C with F. Each of these maximal lineages also has clanship ties with segments of other neighbouring clans. Thus each component maximal lineage of a clan has a field of clanship that includes the other segments of the clan as well as segments of other clans. This results in a network of interlocking clanship ties that embraces all the separate clans of Taleland. All the Talis clans and the main block of Namoo clans are interlocked in this way in two clusters which are in turn similarly connected at certain points. Moreover, this system of linkages ties the Tale aggregate on to adjacent clans of other neighbouring 'tribes'. Thus we observe that at this level of social structure—the skeletal level, so to speak—as in its territorial and cultural relationship to neighbouring 'tribes', Tale society is a segment of a greater society. The network of inter-clan linkages is one of the principal factors by which the socio-geographic region we have called Taleland is differentiated as a distinct segment of this greater society.

It is also one of the main factors of social equilibrium in Tale society. Dissension between neighbouring clans is kept in check by the mediation of maximal lineages linked by identical ties to both; and warfare is inhibited from disrupting the entire social order by the intervention of social and ritual obligations arising *inter alia* out of the fact that enemies are related directly or indirectly by clanship ties. It is this, in part, that gives Tale wars the complexion of acute family quarrels.

A maximal lineage is not only an organic genealogical unit, it is also *ipso facto* an organic ritual unit. The focus of its genealogical differentiation from and relative autonomy in relation to other like units, as well as of its corporate solidarity and its continuity in time, is the cult of its founding ancestor. The material symbol of this is the shrine (*bɔɣar*) of that ancestor, custody of which is vested in the head (i.e. the most senior male) of the lineage. Among the Talis each segment of a composite clan has its lineage *bɔɣar*, distinguishing it from the other segments of the clan. But, in addition, groups of maximal lineages belonging, severally, to *different* clans, and not necessarily united *inter se* by ties of clanship, collaborate in the cult of their collective ancestors. The collective ancestors are believed to dwell in a *bɔɣar* known as an External *Bɔɣar*. An External *Bɔɣar* is usually a sacred grove, or a shallow cave in the hill-side, where the community meets for the ritual of the cult. The most important rites of the cult occur during the Harvest Festival, when thanksgiving sacrifices are offered and young men of the group are initiated into its mysteries by special ceremonies.

Clanship ties, as we have mentioned, constitute the principal factor of social integration among all the Tallensi. Among the Talis the cult of the External *Bɔɣar* is another important factor of cohesion and equilibrium. It unites segments of different clans in the worship of the ancestors, and is common to the majority of Talis clans. It represents a system of social bonds that cut across and counterpoise those of clanship. But this system is itself counterpoised, on the plane of religious values, by the organization of the Earth cult. Groups of maximal lineages belonging severally to *different* clans, which are not associated in the cult of the External *Bɔɣar*, collaborate in the rites of the Earth cult. Each such group has its special Earth shrines, generally in the form of sacred groves (*tɔŋgban*). Thus each maximal lineage of a composite clan among the Talis has one field of corporate social relations in terms of clanship ties, a different field of corporate social relations in terms of the External *Bɔɣar* cult, and yet a third field of corporate social relations in terms of the Earth cult. The system as a whole forms a remarkable structure of mutually balancing fields of social and politico-ritual relations integrated into a complex unity. Sectional loyalties in one direction or on one level are counterpoised by similar loyalties in another direction or at another level. And the system as a whole stands under the governance of the supreme sanctions of Tale social life, the ancestor cult and the Earth cult. To crown it all, moreover, there is the ritually sanctioned and regulated polar opposition of Talis and Namoos focused in the relationship of the chiefship and the tɛndaana-ship.

The Internal Constitution of the Maximal Lineage

In this scheme of clanship ties and politico-ritual relationships the

maximal lineage emerges as a corporate unit irrespective of its internal constitution. The main characteristics of the latter can now be briefly summarized.

A *maximal lineage* is divided into a number of segments all of the same form as the whole lineage but of regularly diminishing order of segmentation. Each segment is identified by reference to its founding ancestor. He marks the point on the genealogical tree of the whole maximal lineage at which that segment's line of descent connects with the other lines of descent sprung from the founding ancestor of the maximal lineage. Thus every maximal lineage is divisible, in the first instance, into two or more Major Segments. This is the highest order of segmentation. Each Major Segment embraces (or is believed to embrace) all the agnatic descendants of one of the sons of the founder of the maximal lineage. At the next level each Major Segment is itself divisible into Major Segments, each embracing the agnatic descendants of one putative son of a son of the founding ancestor of the maximal lineage; and this formula holds at every generation level of the maximal lineage structure (see Fig. 1). The lowest order of segmentation, at the opposite end of the lineage scale to that represented by the maximal lineage, is that of the *minimal lineage* or *minimal segment*, which we define as the group comprising only the children of one man. This is the narrowest agnatic group to which a person can belong.

It is clear from the above that every person belongs to a hierarchy of lineage segments lying between the minimal and the maximal limits of his maximal lineage. Different orders of segmentation become relevant for his conduct in different degrees and in accordance with variations in the social situation. As a farmer, for instance, his productive activities are mainly determined by his membership of his minimal lineage. If he wishes to marry, membership of his maximal lineage is one of the factors limiting his choice of a bride; but the completion of the jural formalities is governed by his membership of a segment of intermediate order. At the same time a very important aspect of the lineage organization is the fact that even when only a segment of a lineage emerges in any corporate activity its status and functions are influenced by the total lineage field including, at the limit, the field of clanship. A lineage segment emerges in action only as a relatively autonomous unit. Its activity is regulated by its relationship to other like segments of the lineage and to the whole. Conversely, a lineage or lineage segment always functions as a combination of segments, not as a collection of individuals of common descent. Every lineage or lineage segment, in fact, represents a dynamic equilibrium of mutually balancing segments.

To the contemporary observer a maximal lineage is fixed in form and dimensions, and all its segments except the minimal segments are fixed in relation to one another. Only the complete extinction of a segment can alter the balance. But the degree of relative autonomy which the segments

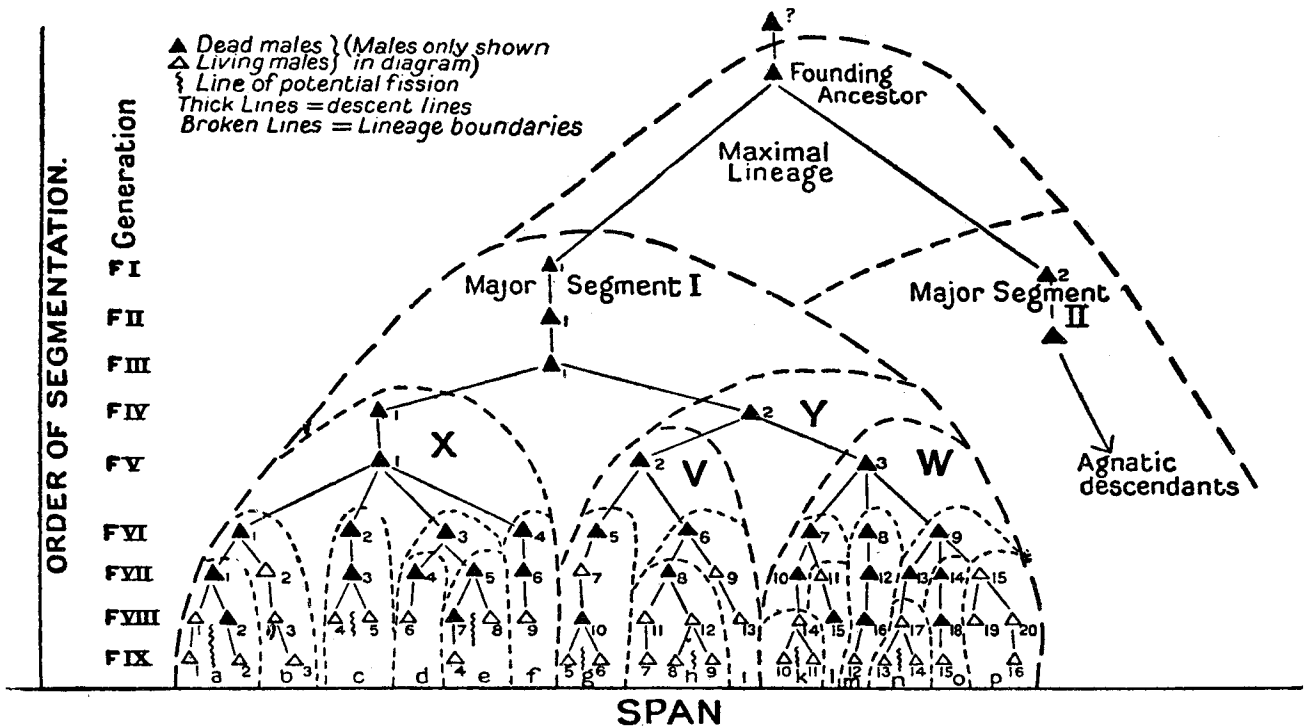

FIG. 1. (Reproduced from *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 34.)

of a particular order have in ritual, jural, and economic affairs gradually alters with each generation. Thus, while their father is alive, two or more brothers have no jural or ritual or economic autonomy, either severally or as a group. The minimal segment of which they are the nucleus is submerged in the more inclusive lineage segment of which their father is the head. If their grandfather is still alive they and their father come under his jurisdiction and have no autonomy as a lineage segment independently of the segment of higher order of which the grandfather is the head. Thus the *effective minimal lineage*, as we have labelled it in order to simplify our analysis (that is, the narrowest lineage segment which is recognized in corporate activities), is not the same as the morphological minimal lineage. It may include two or three generations of agnates.[1] But the group that constitutes an effective minimal lineage in one generation may, in the next generation, split into two or more effective minimal segments.

In the same way, to simplify our exposition, we have distinguished three other grades of segmentation in the maximal lineage,[2] the *nuclear* lineage or segment, the *inner* lineage or segment, and the *medial* lineage or segment. These grades of segmentation vary in dimensions from one maximal lineage to another and from one generation to the next in the same maximal lineage. They cannot be precisely defined by morphological criteria, for they are distinguishable only in functional terms, by the incidence of jural, ritual, and economic rights, duties, and privileges.

The effective minimal lineage is marked by the fact that it commonly forms the basis of a domestic family which usually constitutes a single unit of food production and consumption.

The nuclear lineage generally forms the basis of what we shall later designate the expanded family. Its male members have a common interest in, and joint rights of inheritance to particular patrimonial farm-lands; and the head of the lineage bears the formal jural responsibility for any of the members in such matters as the payment of bride-price. The founding ancestors of such a lineage may be placed from four to six generations back, reckoning from contemporary minimal lineages. A nuclear lineage may include two or more effective minimal lineages.

The inner lineage, which may include two or more nuclear lineages, may, but does not necessarily, have a common interest in patrimonial land. Like the nuclear lineage, it is not the basis of a unit of production or consumption. Its characteristic feature is that it is the widest lineage within which generation differences are socially recognized. From this it follows that incest with a woman member of the same inner lineage is strongly reprobated and sexual intercourse with the wife of any other

[1] Very rarely four generations; never, to my knowledge, more.

[2] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xii.

member of the lineage is regarded as a grave sin. The head of the inner lineage still bears jural and ritual responsibility for all junior members of the lineage but to a lesser extent than the head of the nuclear lineage. The founding ancestor of an inner lineage may be placed five to seven generations back.

A medial lineage includes two or more inner lineages. It may be a major segment of a maximal lineage or a major segment of a major segment. Its founding ancestor may be placed from six to eight or nine generations back. Its segments do not, as a rule, have a common interest in patrimonial land. The seduction of a co-member's wife is not invariably considered to be a sin. If it is a lineage of wide span, embracing several sub-segments, and the parties are distant agnates, this might be treated simply as a jural offence.

Generation differences are usually no longer recognized for jural purposes at this range of patrilineal connexion, and the lineage head has no jural responsibility for or ritual obligations on behalf of individual members who are not of his nuclear or, at most, inner lineage. A significant index of the medial lineage is that it marks the limits within which a man is prohibited from marrying a patrilineal kinswoman of his mother. He cannot, as a rule, marry a woman of his mother's maximal lineage who belongs to her medial lineage; he is almost always allowed to marry one who falls outside this range of agnatic kinship with his mother.

It must be emphasized that these distinctions are not made by the natives. The lineage units thus identified are often fairly clearly defined in practice in certain maximal lineages at a given time. But what holds for one maximal lineage does not hold for another of the same clan or for the same maximal lineage at another time. And borderline cases are common, so that a lineage which functions as an inner lineage in one situation may be treated as a medial lineage in another. These distinctions are based on the gradation of rights and duties observed in Tale jural and ritual relations in which lineage segments emerge as corporate units. Hence in considering the incidence of jural or ritual rights and duties, or in determining the scope of kinship sentiments, we cannot always lay down exact limits within which they apply, in accordance with this set of labels. In function as in form the different grades of lineage segments tend to merge into one another; and distinctions that hold at one period will not do so a generation later. As a lineage ramifies, the relative autonomy of its component segments tends to increase in proportion; so that a segment that functioned as a nuclear lineage at one time may, twenty or thirty years later, exhibit all the characteristics of an inner lineage, in corporate activities.

Finally, it should be noted that the Tallensi have no term for the lineage. A lineage of any order is designated the 'house' (*yir*) or the children (*biis*) of the founding ancestor, as in most West African societies

which utilize the lineage principle in social organization. In contexts where the emphasis is on the lineage considered as a segment of a more inclusive lineage, it is commonly described as a 'room' (*dug*) of the more inclusive 'house' (*yir*). But when Tallensi speak of a *dug* without further specification they generally mean a segment of the order of an inner or medial lineage.

As this nomenclature shows, the internal constitution of the lineage is modelled on that of the polygynous joint family. The standard pattern is that the segments of a lineage trace their descent from the sons by different wives of their common founding ancestor. We shall consider this subject more fully in this book. In consequence, co-ordinate segments of a lineage are referred to as 'brother' (*sunzɔ*) lineages, and their reciprocal rights and obligations, as well as the conventional patterns of sentiments holding between them, are modelled on the mutual relations of brothers.

At the end of our previous book we pointed out that our study of the structure of corporate groups and their interrelations in Tale society covered only one aspect of the total social structure. We spoke of the first part of this study as an analysis of the warp of the social fabric. Our task now is to examine what might be called the woof of the social fabric. Our starting-point, this time, is not the organized corporate group or the framework of continuity and stability in the social structure, but the individual. Our main interest will be in the standard forms and processes of person-to-person relationships and their connexion with the large-scale framework of the society. Our subject, in other words, is Tale kinship in the narrow sense, viewed in relation to the lineage system.

CHAPTER II

KINSHIP AND THE LINEAGE SYSTEM

The Connexion between Kinship and the Lineage System

THE method of analysis we have followed in this study has required, for purposes of description, the isolation of the lineage system from the domestic organization of the Tallensi. In the actual life of the natives, however, these two planes of social structure do not emerge in isolation from each other. Like blood and tissue in the animal organism, they constitute interpenetrating media of Tale social life. Membership of a family and membership of a lineage are equally and often concurrently decisive for the conduct of the individual and for the course of his life. Yet the analytical separation of these two planes of social structure is not entirely artificial. It corresponds to the fact that the interests and ends (primarily political, jural, and ritual) subserved by the lineage system differ significantly from those (primarily economic and reproductive) subserved by the family system, both in their bearing on individual conduct and in the values attached to them by the society.

The lineage system is the structural basis of Tale political, jural, and ritual institutions, whereas the domestic organization is the structural basis of person-to-person relations in the sphere of kinship in the narrow sense. One of our main tasks in the present investigation will be to observe how these two categories of interests and ends, and the institutions and practices in which they emerge, are co-ordinated and integrated. For the individual's rights and duties, sentiments and values, manners and moral conduct, his thinking, feeling, and acting, in the context of lineage relationships, on the one hand, and in the context of family relationships on the other, are organically integrated, as are lineage and family in the social structure. This appears most clearly, we shall see, from the way in which segmentation in the domestic family parallels segmentation in the lineage, the two processes being not only simultaneous in time but complementary in function. Fission in the lineage[1] follows the pattern of cellular segmentation in the joint family; and fission in the joint family, as we shall see, follows the lines of cleavage in the effective minimal lineage. The local and the functional groupings of families are regulated by the agnatic distance of the family heads from one another. In the study of Tale kinship usages and values we are confronted, at every step, by the interaction of domestic organization and lineage structure.

The Tallensi apply the concepts of kinship to describe and define domestic relations and the person-to-person ties that are derived from them. They use the same concepts in dealing with lineage relations. In

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iii.

the social structure as a whole kinship is the fundamental binding element. It furnishes the primary axioms of all categories of inter-personal and inter-group relations.

From the standpoint of the individual, all the norms and conditions that govern his social behaviour fall within a single, syncretic frame of reference; and kinship forms the base line from which this frame of reference is projected. This is a consequence of the syncretic structure of Tale society, based as it is on genealogical connexion. The alinement of individuals and groups for all social purposes follows genealogical lines; with few exceptions, social relations always have a genealogical coefficient. And because they have a common foundation in the genealogical structure of the society, Tale institutions interlock with one another in a consistent scheme. For the same reason Tale social relations do not fall into distinct categories with only adventitious connexions between them. Economic relations serve jural, political, and religious ends as well; political relations are at the same time religious relations; jural rights and duties are aspects of economic, religious, and political bonds.

The extent to which the idiom of kinship dominates Tale thought about human affairs is shown by the tendency of the people to explain conduct that conforms to the norms by appealing to kinship. The late Chief of Tongo, for example, justified his conciliatory tactics with the Gəlibdaana, in spite of the latter's provocations, on the grounds of their ties of cognatic and affinal kinship. On the other hand, departure from normal standards of conduct is apt to be ascribed to personal idiosyncrasies. Thus when Zaɣahkpɛmərɛ fought with his older brother over the division of their late father's land, the elders of his lineage ascribed it to his violent temper and lack of intelligence. In keeping with this idiom of thought, a gross breach of kinship duty is the prototype of the Tale notion of sin.

Cognatic and Agnatic Kinship

It is essential to distinguish two kinds of genealogical ties among the Tallensi. There are, firstly, cognatic ties, that is, ties of actual or assumed physical consanguinity and of the social relations entailed by them, which link person to person or an individual to a lineage or one lineage to another in a specifically defined and particular bond. Such ties may be traced through males only, through females only, or through both males and females. Secondly, there are lineage ties, social relations based on the tie of common agnatic descent.

Cognatic kinship and agnatic kinship have different, in some situations even opposed, functions in Tale collective life. The distinction turns on the principle that lineage ties always unite people in or relate them to corporate groups serving common interests and held together by common values, whereas cognates do not necessarily form corporate

groups. Cognates have mutual bonds of sentiment and reciprocal obligations, but not necessarily common interests. All the members of a given lineage have the same agnatic kin and therefore identical lineage ties; but only identical siblings—that is, brothers or sisters by the same parents—have the same cognatic kin.[1] By automatically making him a member of maximal lineage and clan, his agnatic descent fits the individual into the constituted framework of Tale society. It is this that gives him his political status in the society. It gives him also a special field of defined social relations with clear contours. Cognatic kinship creates a number of contingent social ties for the individual, valid for him only. Unlike lineage ties, they differ in quality; they multiply in the course of his lifetime; in theory their range is indeterminate, since there is no limit to the reckoning of cognatic kinship. Tallensi often discover cognates of whom they were previously ignorant, in the most unexpected places in their own country, even in their own clan. But it is extremely rare for anyone to discover a hitherto unknown agnate, even in these days of relatively great mobility.

The Tallensi maintain, and genealogies of individuals bear this out, that if enough were known of the genealogical relationships of the people of adjacent settlements, they would all be found to be related to one another. In the clan itself, under the surface of its strict patrilineal organization, the filaments of cognatic kinship bind individuals together by special personal bonds which operate independently of lineage ties. This complex and unlimited ramification of cognatic kinship gives these relations great fluidity, in contrast to the comparative fixity of lineage relations. Individuals are often connected by multiple cognatic ties which are differentially effective in different situations; and, as will be clearer later, cognatic ties make breaches in the barriers of lineage and clan exclusiveness, thus extending widely the flow of social relations.

The domestic family is the matrix of all the genealogical ties of the individual, the contemporary mechanism for ever spinning new threads of kinship, and the focal field of social relations based on consanguinity. In it we can observe the working of the nuclear patterns of kinship and the formation of the ideas and values which steer the individual in all his genealogical relationships. In the domestic family we get the sharpest picture of the interaction between cognatic kinship and agnatic or lineage ties. We have there the elementary ties of cognatic kinship linking parent to child and sibling to sibling, and we have also the agnatic tie which

[1] These are the kinsfolk whom Rivers called a man's *kindred*; vide *Kinship and Social Organization*, p. 80. I am avoiding this term as it is best used to refer to a defined social unit in Rivers's sense. Sibship among the Teutons and Celts was reckoned bilaterally on this principle, cf. Vinogradoff, P., *Outlines of Historical Jurisprudence*, vol. i, ch. viii. But the kindred as a defined social unit does not exist among the Tallensi.

sets apart the males as the nucleus of the lineage. We can see the centrifugal, sundering force of matrilateral kinship counterbalancing the centripetal, uniting pull of patriliny. In the context of family life we can see the play of conflict and compromise in the working out of the primary equilibrium of Tale social organization, due to the interaction of these two sectors of social life.

Through his primary relations of consanguinity in the domestic family the individual is linked to agnates in other families and to cognates in other families and clans. There is, however, one significant difference between intra-familial and extra-familial bonds of kinship. Unlike the latter, the former are necessarily ambivalent, each relationship containing within itself both an agnatic and a cognatic component. In a joint family of three generations, for example, a child's relationship with his father differs from his relationship with his grandfather or his mother. Though these are all cognatic relationships, the tension and latent rivalry in the relationship of father and son stand in marked contrast to the comradeship of grandfather and grandson. On the other hand, grandfather, father, and son belong to the same lineage segment; they are united by a common interest in patrimonial land and in the product of their joint labour, by a common ancestor cult, by rights and duties vested in that lineage in relation to like segments of a greater lineage, and by their common concern for the continuity of their line. These are part of the whole complex of common interests and values that mobilize corporate action and maintain corporate solidarity in the maximal lineage and clan of which they form a segment. The men of a joint family may be thrown into conflict with one another on account of their cognatic relationships, but they act in union and on behalf of one another and of the whole unit in virtue of their lineage ties.

There is another paradox in the structure of the Tale family that is of importance for our inquiry. Consanguineous relationships arise out of parenthood; but parenthood presupposes marriage, a union of a man and a woman who are, by definition, not kin. The bonds of kinship are rooted in a bond the very essence of which is the absence of kinship. Hence comes the ambivalence inherent in intra-familial cognatic relations. Hence comes, also, another category of social relations, both in the family and between members of different families and clans, relations of affinity. There are two axes, as it were, in the structure of the family, the axis of kinship and that of marriage.

Before we discuss kinship in the domestic family more fully, we must consider a few matters of more general import. For the constellation of ties and cleavages that makes up the focal field of kinship is conditioned by the formative principles and values that shape the greater society into which the domestic family fits and which it helps to knit together. All person-to-person relations in the family are biased by the values attached to patrilineal descent and maternal origin in the total social structure.

The Generic Concept of Kinship

Among the Tallensi the generic concept of kinship, *dɔɣam*, subsumes all kinds and degrees of genealogical relationship, however remote, through one or more progenitors or progenetrices. But its primary reference is to procreation. One might perhaps translate it by the word 'generation' in its etymological sense. Its root, the verb *dɔɣ*—to bear or beget a child—signifies both the male and the female function in procreation. *Dɔɣam*, the abstract noun, describes the process, or the act, or the physiological capacity, of bringing a child into the world, as well as the ties thus created. The logic behind this generalized concept of kinship is plain. Every genealogical relationship goes back, eventually, to one pair of parents. Both in fact and in Tale kinship theory the parent-child bond is the nodal bond of kinship.

Though the Tallensi see every genealogical relationship as a tie of physical consanguinity, this is not the thing that matters most. What matters most is the social relations entailed by consanguinity. A genealogical tie between two people or two genealogically defined units comes into action in the palpable facts of economic life, jural relations, moral values, ceremonial duties, and ritual ideas and performances. Genealogical ties very often have economic or political utility and are sustained by powerful moral and religious sanctions. But behind all this lies a general notion which the natives themselves do not need to formulate but which is implicit in all their kinship behaviour. A great deal of Tale kinship custom is specific. In ceremonial situations different categories of kin often behave in prescribed ways which sharply distinguish them from one another. At a funeral ceremony, for example, one can tell at once, from the kind of gifts they bear and the attitudes they display, whether a party of mourners are relatives-in-law (*deenam*), clansmen (*yidɛm*), or sisters' children (*ahɔs*), of the bereaved. But in the routine of ordinary life the intercourse of kinsfolk has no such formal precision, and is often indistinguishable from the intercourse of friends, neighbours, or other associates. Not even the native, attuned as he is to the fine nuances of his cultural idiom, could tell whether two women working and chatting amicably together are co-wives, mother and daughter, or mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The general notion we have mentioned corresponds to this indeterminate and elastic manifestation of kinship.

The Tallensi indicate it most clearly in connexion with the rules governing a proper marriage. They draw a sharp distinction between *dɔɣam*, kinship, and *deen*, in-lawship. The crux of the rule of clan exogamy and of the collateral prohibition of marriage with consanguineous kin of any degree (and the natives do not distinguish these two classes of restrictions) is the principle that *dɔɣam* and *deen* are irreconcilably contradictory. They must not be 'mixed' (*gyɛt*).

A striking illustration of this antithesis occurred at a sacrifice that Diŋkaha made to one of his ancestors. An ambitious and none too scrupulous braggart of considerable intelligence and drive, Diŋkaha had been very useful to me and had made the most of his connexion with me. One of the objects of this ceremony was to show off his friendship with me to his clansmen, and his prestige among them to me. It was, therefore, a specially lavish occasion. In the middle of the ceremony Diŋkaha's father-in-law called in. The old man was respectfully received and ushered into his daughter's rooms. Diŋkaha finished the sacrifice and began to distribute the meat. Various members of his lineage and clan received the portions due to them. And then, intoxicated with conceit at having his white friend in his house and at the obvious appreciation of his stock, in consequence, in the eyes of his clansmen, a rash impulse overcame him. Holding up a goat's foreleg—one of the ritually prescribed portions that should be reserved for those entitled by birth to share in the sacrifice—he launched out into a speech, the gist of which was that he desired his father-in-law to accept it in order to mark this special occasion. A sombre look came upon the old man's face. He was visibly shocked. Speaking gravely but curtly, he refused the gift. *Deenam*, he said, do not sacrifice together; it is an unheard-of thing; he could not accept the gift. Diŋkaha retired in discomfiture behind a smoke-screen of apologies.

Marriage implies the absence of kinship ties between the parties; kinship, the impossibility of marriage. Kinship ties exist in their own right; *deen* is an artificial alliance of a contractual nature. The parties to a marriage deliberately and voluntarily enter into a bond, the bride's guardian permitting her to marry in return for a promise on the part of the bridegroom's guardian to pay him four head of cattle. Kinship ties are not voluntary and are automatically binding. The parties to a marriage are bound by rights and duties which did not exist before. Kinship automatically entails moral, jural, and ritual bonds, whereas there is an avowed element of mutual coercion, and therefore potential tension, in the relations of in-laws. They rely upon a special, impartial jural instrument, the bride-price, for the adjustment of their rival claims on the woman.

Tallensi think of *deen* as a relationship for ever fraught with the possibility of conflict over these claims. Nearly all their litigation nowadays, like much inter-clan fighting in former days, concerns bride-price debts or the rival claims over a woman or her children of father-in-law and son-in-law. Such quarrels are incompatible with kinship. They would cut to pieces the solidarity of kinsfolk—that is why, say the Tallensi, kinsfolk do not marry. *Dɔŋam*, in short, presupposes some degree of identification of the parties concerned, mutual or common interests, and especially a bond of amity that excludes strife which might fix a permanent gulf between them.

These norms of kinship the Tallensi regard as axiomatic, one might say as the *a priori* moral premisses of their social behaviour. Behind the utility of kinship in practical life and the jural and ritual sanctions that buttress kinship ties stands the notion of kinship as the rock-bottom category of social relations, inviolable in its own right. The root of this notion lies in the bond between parent and child and it reflects the fact that genealogical relationship is the binding medium of Tale social structure. The Tallensi are outspoken sceptics about human nature. They take it for granted that the ideal norms of kinship will often be violated. They know well, however, that they are usually effective and cannot be destroyed by the transgressions of individuals; for these, in the end, always bring their own revenge and are compensated for in the total flow of collective life. In any case, the lapses of individuals, and the fact that strong sanctions exist to check them, do not diminish the absolute, *a priori* character of kinship.

It is worth noting that economic reciprocity—which is a conspicuous element in kinship, especially among close kin—and jural rights and duties have a much less direct connexion with this fundamental assumption of kinship than religious bonds have. This is connected with the important place of ancestor worship in Tale society. To trace genealogical relationship it is necessary to recollect common ancestors; and if these have religious value, ritual allegiance to a common ancestor or ancestress inevitably forms an intrinsic feature of kinship ties and their most powerful sanction. The more distant a genealogical tie is, the more does it become a matter of moral and ritual, rather than of jural or economic, relations. We shall see this in more detail when we come to compare social relations within the domestic family with the relations of kinship outside the domestic family.

Two Classes of Kinship Relations

Any relation of kinship belongs to one of two classes. If people say 'We are *dɔɣam*', the basic analogy they have in mind is that of siblings. Two men who are cognatically related to the same lineage—e.g. two men who have a common maternal uncle's lineage (*ahəb yir*) or whose fathers or grandfathers had a common maternal uncle's lineage—describe themselves thus. They visualize their relationship primarily as one of common though independent religious allegiance to a particular line of common ancestors, in sacrifices to whom they may both partake. By the operation of the lineage principle two lineages might consider themselves to be related in such a manner. Kɔnbamɛŋ and Pudiniba, two young men of the same clan but of different sections of the clan, were good friends. When I asked them how their friendship had arisen, they resorted, characteristically, to the idiom of kinship. Being members of the same clan is not a sufficient reason for so personal a relationship as friendship. The reason they adduced was that they were both sister's

sons (*ahəs*) of the same Tɛnzugu clan. This had brought them together. Similarly, there is a much closer bond between Ziŋgan biis and Tambil biis, two of the five segments of Bɔɣayiedət yidɛm of Tongo, than between either of these segments and the other three segments, because their founding ancestors were sister's sons of the same clan.[1]

The other and more important class of kinship ties presupposes the analogy of the parent–child relationship. When a person says of another '*n-dɔɣume*—I have begotten (born) him', or, speaking of lineages, '*ti dɔɣabame*—We (my lineage) have begotten (born) them (their lineage)', what is meant is that the latter can trace a line of descent to the former or to the former's lineage. A man refers to a sister's son (*ahəŋ*) or to a classificatory *ahəŋ* in these terms. When I was staying at Kpata'ar, my servants received unusually generous hospitality and were obviously much more at ease than they had been at some places we had previously visited. I was several times told in explanation (on one occasion by some Kpata'ar children) that my two local boys were *dɔɣa* by the Kpata'ar na'ab's lineage. The father of one and the paternal grandfather of the other had been sister's sons of Kpata'ar. Again, two lineages can be related in this way, as, for instance, Naɣasaa yidɛm of Kpata'ar and Dmanpiog yidɛm of Gbeog are. The most important feature of such a relationship to the natives is that the lineage or individual of the senior generation sacrifices to their or his ancestors on behalf of the lineage or individual of the junior generation.

The idiom of kinship has such a dominant place in Tale thought that all social relations implying mutual or common interests tend to be assimilated to those of kinship. This happens, as has been shown in our previous volume, with ties of local contiguity and of politico-ritual interdependence between lineages and clans.

The Native Theory of Conception

The Tallensi, we have said, take cognizance of a very wide range of genealogical relationships, and they regard all such relationships as based on the physical fact of consanguinity. The starting-point for this lies in their notions about the physiology of conception. In their view man and woman have equally vital roles in the act of conception. Hence kinship through one's mother, and, consequently, through her ascendants, counts equally with—though admittedly less influentially than, and differently from—kinship through one's father and paternal line.

Dɔɣam is the power of procreation. In women it is connected with menstruation, the external signs and periodicity of which are known to everybody, and the nature of which man, woman, or child readily refers to without the slightest squeamishness. A girl is said to be fit for child-bearing (*u saɣa dɔɣam* [*or dɔɣabu*]) when her monthly courses become established, her breasts develop, and her body takes on womanly

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 211 ff.

contours. Before a woman menstruates (*lu sie*, lit. fall from the waist), and after she ceases altogether to menstruate, she cannot bear children. When a woman has monthly periods she is capable of conception; when she is pregnant her periods stop. Thus menstruation, say the Tallensi, is a condition like pregnancy (*sie a puur*). It is the sign of capacity for child-bearing.

A man's *dɔŋam* becomes fruitful some time after puberty (*u soləme*, verb), the main sign of which is the emergence of pubic hair. At first, when the adolescent boy begins to have nocturnal emissions, his powers of procreation are not yet mature. It is only after some time, when he is completely *sol*, that he becomes capable of procreation. For procreation depends not on the sexual fluids ejaculated in the act of coitus by both man and woman, but on an active principle, as it were, in these fluids, the *ŋaamis*. The natives cannot explain more precisely what the *ŋaamis* is or how it works. What they maintain, emphatically, is that conception, both among men and among animals, cannot occur without sexual congress, and that it depends on the mingling (*gɛrəm*) of the male sexual fluid with the female sexual fluid, or rather on the happy conjunction of their respective procreative essences (*ŋaamis*). Thus the function of the male is as essential as that of the female in procreation, and every child knows this.

Much evidence could be quoted in proof of this. Tallensi know that a male's procreative potency resides in the testicles (*lana*), and they castrate small livestock which they want to prevent from breeding. The suspension of sex relations with a wife who has a nursing child is not a ritual matter, subject to mystical sanctions, but a practical necessity in order to prevent the woman from conceiving again too soon. Its observance is a question of conscience and self-control and few men get through life without a lapse. Some, I was told by one of my most trustworthy informants, practise *coitus interruptus* in order to avoid impregnating a nursing wife. Some men believe in a 'safe period'. I once heard a theory of this kind stated by a man to a couple of friends. His very modern-sounding theory was that the 'safe period' follows shortly after menstruation, since menstruation is a sort of pregnancy, and a pregnant woman cannot conceive again. But the clearest indication of the role attributed by the Tallensi to sexual conjugation in procreation was given in a conversation I listened to at the Chief of Tongo's house. The chief and the elders were talking about the White Fathers at Boləga. Garbled ideas about their doctrines have reached many Tallensi. Jesus was mentioned. One man said that the Fathers claimed that His mother conceived Him without knowing a man. A vigorous argument followed. Most of the men were openly sceptical, saying that it was quite impossible. But one or two had a deeper respect for the white man. True, they admitted, black people cannot have children without sex relations; but perhaps the white man, with his wondrous powers and knowledge,

has a medicine which enables women to conceive without the participation of a male.

The notion of a procreative essence as distinct from the sexual fluid, however vaguely formulated it is, is of importance. Tallensi distinguish between sexual vigour or desire and the power of procreation. They know that people who are sterile (*kundɔɣar*) lack the latter but are not necessarily deficient in the former. Na'abzɔ, gossip said, was sterile because in his wild young days as a soldier he had lived with a Dagban woman who had maliciously caused him by some magical means to 'pour away all his power of begetting (*kpaa u dɔɣam waabi bah*)' in excessive intercourse with her. The uncharitable believed that he was impotent to boot, but others were prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt.

The Tallensi regard *dɔɣam* as, above all, a very precious human function, quite apart from the pleasures of sex. Thus, when Zikihib's young wife was left a grass widow for three years by her vagabond husband and had a child by a lover, it was unanimously condoned. Was she, it was argued, to cast away her powers of child-bearing for nothing (*zaŋ u dɔɣam bah wari*) just because she had a faithless husband and was herself too devoted to her children by him to run off with another man?

Lastly, the notion of the *ŋaamis* is the point at which mystical beliefs enter into the theory of conception. The obvious physiological facts of parenthood are summed up in the maxim, 'A man and a woman unite to procreate a child'. But behind plain physiology lies a mystery. Sometimes a man sleeps with his wife on a single occasion and she becomes pregnant (*u ŋɔɣa puur*—lit. she seizes a belly). At other times a man has relations with his wife regularly for months and she fails to conceive. Thus conception depends, in the last resort, on Heaven (*Naawun*), the Final Cause by which the Tallensi rationalize chance and which they invoke when empirical or less recondite mystical explanations fail. There is an essential mystical factor in procreation; and if a man or a woman fails to beget or bear a child, appeals can be made to the ancestor spirits and other mystical powers that intervene directly in human destiny. That is why a barren woman in her heart of hearts never gives up hope of having a child as long as she is still of child-bearing age, though the Tallensi know that barrenness is often a fact of nature beyond cure by either empirical or mystical agencies.

The Significance of Paternity and Patriliny

A person's genealogical ties are fixed by his parentage. Among the Tallensi these are the ties that plot the trajectory of the individual's life. The rights and duties that are critical for his role and status in society all stem, in the last resort, from the fact of birth. A person cannot divest himself, or be divested, of the bonds created by his birth and yet remain a member of the society; nor can he fully and unconditionally acquire

these bonds except by birth. No other ties can wholly supersede them in linking person to person and affiliating individuals to defined social groups.

We have noted, however, that not all genealogical ties have an equal value. Though a person acquires significant social ties through both parents, his agnatic relationships have an outstanding importance; and this is particularly so for a man. For not only is patrilineal descent the vertebral principle of Tale social organization and the vehicle of the continuity and stability of the social structure, but men hold the reins of authority, direct economic life, control the political organization, and are supreme in religious and ceremonial thought and action. From his father a man derives his rights to inherit land and other property, his clan membership and the political rights and ritual obligations that go with it, and his ritual relations with his most important ancestors. A woman does not inherit land or other property of value, nor does she succeed to political or ritual office. But clan membership and the concomitant totemic observances,[1] as well as her ritual allegiance to her patrilineal ancestors, mean a great deal for her social destiny and for her children. In short, paternity is the predominant side of parentage in this conspicuously patriarchal society.

Like many other primitive societies, the Tallensi recognize a distinction between physiological paternity and jural paternity—between *genitor* and *pater*, as Radcliffe-Brown puts it. However, the Tallensi feel very strongly that a person's physiological father is his or her right jural father. The assumption is that all the social attributes that come to one from one's father should come from a father who both begot one and recognizes one as his legitimate offspring. Thus there is an inevitable tendency for conflict to arise if a person's physiological and jural paternity do not coincide. Such a person tends to be penalized in respect of his social status, for jural paternity by itself cannot altogether take the place of physiological cum jural paternity.

The conflict is least in the case of an adulterine child, who is always accepted as the rightful child of its mother's husband. No difficulties at all arise in the case of a daughter, who marries out of the lineage as soon as she is nubile. An adulterine son has complete and unreserved filial status. He has full rights of inheritance, of succession, and of ritual access to his putative patrilineal ancestors. Nevertheless, the blot on the scutcheon is not without effect. The story of Sayəbazaa's first-born son, Kologo, illustrates this.

Some years before my first visit to Tongo, Kologo had left his father to go and farm near Datɔk. There seemed to be no adequate motive for this in his case. But when Sayəbazaa died, in 1936, and Kologo as chief mourner had to be summoned for the mortuary rites, I was able to piece together how it had occurred, from guarded hints and veiled comments

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. ix.

made by other members of the family and by one of Sayəbazaa's maternal kinsmen. Kologo, it appeared, was an adulterine child. Sayəbazaa could never forget this, though it was not a thing that was ever mentioned in public. A man of strong principles, inclined in any case to keep a firm hand on his children, Sayəbazaa was often over-severe with Kologo. The tension admitted by custom to exist between a man and his first-born son was exacerbated. At length Kologo deliberately violated—or so Sayəbazaa said—the Namoo taboos of a first-born son; and Sayəbazaa thereupon cursed him and expelled him from the house. It was evident from the remarks which gave the clue to the story that the seed of discord here was Kologo's physical paternity, though it did not affect his rights to inherit his father's property and ancestral shrines.

This kind of psychological friction is said not to occur in the special case of a child begotten in permitted extra-marital intercourse, which the Tallensi do not regard as adultery (*pɔyambon*). A man who is sterile or impotent may allow his wife to conceive by another man. The proper way to do this is for him to inform the elders of his lineage first. With their blessing and consent he may give his wife permission to find a lover wherever she wishes—*'u gɔma, nye puur, ɔn nye Moog ni Zaŋbiog ɔn nyɛbma*—let her walk about to get a belly; if she meets a Mossi man or a Hausa man (i.e. any passer-by) let her copulate'—is the traditional formula with which he sets her free to be promiscuous, if she chooses, in order to become pregnant. Sensible men and women prefer a more reputable procedure, however. Either the husband asks a friend or kinsman not of his own clan to deputize for him sexually, or he lets the wife choose one of her own distant clan-brothers as a lover. This man is then formally deputed (*galəh*) to be the woman's lover by being presented to the lineage elders, who sacrifice a fowl on his behalf to the lineage ancestors, with an explanation of the circumstances and pleas for a blessing on the affair. The arrangement, though formal, is strictly private, for no man willingly admits to sterility or sexual incapacity; and when, as inevitably happens, it leaks out, public opinion is sympathetic rather than contemptuous. Tallensi say that such cases of begetting a child by proxy do not occur very often.

While I was in Taleland, Baŋam-Teroog's junior wife had a child by a deputed lover. Teroog was an old man, shrivelled and half-blind with age. He once begged me for medicine to restore his fertility, but admitted with regret that he was probably too old for procreation. He deputed his closest friend and distant sister's son, Naabdiya, to beget a child for him. The liaison continued throughout the woman's pregnancy, but ceased as soon as her child was born. I often saw Teroog with this baby, fondling and caressing it with a tenderness that showed more eloquently than words that he regarded it as his own child. Naabdiya, for his part, though his relations with Teroog were as cordial as ever, took no more interest in the infant than any man might take in