

CHAPTER V

OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE TOWKAYS

Except for two towkays who entirely depend on making salt-dried fish for their living, the other three towkays, are engaged in other economic activities besides the salt-dried fish business. These economic activities of the towkays are so much varied from each other that it is necessary for us to make a case study of the economic activity of each towkay in detail.

We shall begin with Towkay D. This towkay is dealing in copra business, the only Chinese to carry on this business in the village. He owns five scattered pieces of land, as can be seen in Table III.

Table III

Towkay D's Coconut and Rubber Holdings¹

Locality	A R E A			Nature of Cultivation
	Acre	Rope	Pole	
Sungei Karang	2	3	19	Cocoanuts
	6	2	-	Rubber (under replanting)
Beserah	3	3	32	Cocoanuts
	2	2	20	Cocoanuts
	1	1	25	Cocoanuts
Total	17	1	16	

1. Source: Land Office, Kuantan, Pahang.

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Of the five pieces, only one big piece of land, $6\frac{1}{2}$ acres, is planted with rubber. But no income is derived from this crop as it is at present under replanting. The other four pieces are planted with coconut trees; but the coconuts obtained from his own trees fall far short of requirements for making copra.¹ Consequently, the towkay has to buy from other areas like Balok, Sungei Karang and Kuantan. The nuts bought from the first two places are at a rate of about \$6.50 per hundred, \$2.00 cheaper than those purchased from Kuantan. This difference in price is justified by bigger nuts from Kuantan. For instance, two hundred fifty nuts from Balok and Sungei Karang are required for making one pikul of copra, as against two hundred nuts from Kuantan. The total cost of making one pikul of copra comes to about \$23.30. (See Table IV)

Table IV

Total Cost incurred on making one pikul of Copra

	<u>Cost per pikul</u>
Cocoanuts	\$16.00
Plucking from trees, peeling the skin, and splitting the nuts	\$ 5.00
Transport to buyer's place	\$ 1.50
Smoking and drying in the sun	\$ 0.80
Total:	\$23.30

The market price of copra fluctuated very little during the month of June, ranging from \$24.50 to \$26.50 per pikul.

1. The figures of Towkay D's coconut production are not available.

(Table ~~III~~^V). That is to say, roughly speaking, Towkay D made a small profit of about \$1 - \$2.00, after having deducted fifty cents from the cost of transport per pikul to Kuantan.

Table V

Copra exported by Towkay D in June¹

DATE	Quantity exported		Price per pikul	Total Value
	Weight			
	Pikul	Kati		
1.6.58	33	50	\$26.50	\$887.75
7.6.58	7	19	\$26.50	\$190.54
11.6.58	24	96	\$26.00	\$648.96
18.6.58	13	64	\$25.00	\$341.500
24.6.58	13	17	\$26.00	\$342.42
30.6.58	34	38	\$24.50	\$842.31
Total	126	84		\$3,252.98

Taking an average profit of \$1.50 per pikul, Towkay D thus made a total profit of about \$190.00 in June out of the total monetary transactions of \$3,252.98.

The next towkay, Towkay C, derives his subsidiary income mainly from rubber production. Towkay C owns sixteen scattered pieces of rubber and coconut small-holdings, the largest piece of which does not exceed 6½ acres. (Table VI)

1. Source: Towkay D.

TABLE VI

Towkay C's Rubber and Coconut Small-holdings¹

Locality	A R E A			Nature of Cultivation
	Acre	' Rope '	Pole	
In Beserah	1	1	04	Cocoanuts
	6	2	-	Rubber
	5	3	10	Rubber
	2	2	20	Cocoanuts
In Sungai Karang	4	0	25	Cocoanuts & Rubber
	3	2	-	" "
	3	1	35	" "
	4	0	13	" "
	2	-	05	Rubber
	2	-	25	"
	4	3	-	"
	4	2	-	"
	5	1	-	"
	6	1	-	"
	4	2	35	"
	4	3	05	"
	Total	65	3	7

1. Source: Land Office, Kuantan, Pahang.

One will note in Table VI that two pieces of land in Beserah are planted with coconuts; four pieces with coconuts and rubber in Sungei Karang and the rest with rubber only. The total acreage of these small-holdings is sixty-five acres, three ropes and seven poles. It is estimated that the yield of rubber per month is about eighteen pikuls and the monthly receipt from these small-holdings is about \$400 - \$500.¹

Incidentally, this towkay is the richest among the Chinese fish-dealers. With such a good subsidiary income from his small-holdings, he is not much perturbed or worried even when little fish could be obtained in a given month.

The last towkay to be discussed in this chapter is a general merchant besides being a fish dealer. Towkay B is dealing in various types of goods such as textiles, canned food, rice, bananas, matches, cigarettes, etc. His shop caters, roughly speaking, for two types of customers: the fishermen who are working for him and those non-fishermen. Usually, his fishermen purchase goods, rice in particular, on credit and the debt will be gradually paid from their catches. Those non-fishermen who buy goods from him usually pay cash. Undeniably, from the towkay's point of view, to allow his fishermen to buy on credit is far better than to provide them with cash and allow them to buy from some other shops on the ground that he can make a small amount of profit on the goods sold. But, the prices paid by his fishermen are the same as the prices paid in the village. This is mainly due to the existence

1. Source: The towkay himself.

of many small retail shops competing for customers. According to the towkay, the business is on the whole brisk and profitable. From January to June, 1958, he made a profit from the sale of his miscellaneous goods of about \$500.00.

This towkay, too, owns two pieces of rubber small-holdings located at Sungei Karang, totalling slightly over nine acres (Table VII). But at present they are under replanting and thus do not yield any income.

Table VII

Towkay B's Two Rubber Small-holdings¹

Locality	A R E A			Nature of Cultivation
	Acre	Rope	Pole	
Sungei Karang	4	2	-	Rubber
	4	3	22	Rubber
Total	9	1	22	

In summary one can state that the three towkays, though are engaged in varied economic activities, have one feature in common. That is, they derive income from other sources and do not entirely depend on salt-dried fish business for their living. These towkays are agglomerators in the sense that they buy up pieces of land with a view to making more profit.

1. Source: Land Office, Kuantan, Pahang.