

CHAPTER IV.

PERSONAL CAPITAL BELONGING TO THE CHILDREN.

(A) Personal Effects of the Male Children.

Only four items belonging to the male children in this village will be discussed in this Chapter. They are their songkok, shirts, shorts and shoes. These items are worn by all of them and the ^{amount} amount they own of each item will show us the distinction in the distribution. It is necessary to divide the children into two categories; those of the school-going age and those of the non-school going age.

Evidence from the field investigations shows that every school going child will have at least a pair of shoes, two shirts, two pairs of shorts and a songkok each. This is the minimum amount they can own. If one set of dress gets dirty they can wear the other set, and at the same time they can wash the other set. Usually a set of dress can be worn by an ordinarily careful boy for two days before it gets dirty. This rotation is practiced by the children in this village throughout their school-days. As far as their shoes are concerned they always wash them when they get home in the afternoon, so that they will have clean pair of shoes to wear to school the next morning.

Of course the sons of the higher income groups will have more pairs of shoes and shirts and more shirts to wear for their parents can afford to buy more of the articles due to their relatively high income.

At home most of the boys in the village do not wear shirts. They wear some of their old pairs of shorts and nothing else. They do not wear anything to protect their feet from any danger. In wonder the Health Survey carried out by thirty-two Medical students of the University of Malaya at the same time as the writer was doing his survey in the area reported that 27 per cent of the children in this village have hook-worms in their stomachs.

The songkok are only worn by the children when they go to school or when they attend their Quran studies. Otherwise they are not worn at all. Because of this the writer finds that even those with high incomes do not buy more than one songkok for each of their children.

The children who do not go to school do not have any songkok or shoes at all. To some of them their personal belongings do not exceed more than two pairs of shorts and three or four shirts. Those whose parents earn a high income may own more of these goods.

(3) Personal Effects of the Female Children.

The female children are also divided into the same categories as their male counterparts. Here again we only discuss

four of their personal belongings. They are their bajes, their selendangs, sarungs and shoes. Nearly all of them will have two or three sets of dress⁽⁴⁾ each. Those whose parents are poor will only own two sets of dress each, but those who come from the higher income families will own more than five sets each.

If a female child does not own a selendang she can always wear her mother's but a male child in the same position will not be able to do so because his father's sarung will not fit him. Because of this some of the female children are not very eager to own more selendangs.

Most of the Bajus are cut in Baju Kurung or Kebaya styles, but these girls who attend English Schools do own frocks. These frocks are mostly school uniforms which they are forced to make otherwise most of them prefer to wear their national dress.

However it is a different case that the writer finds among the non-school going girls. The girls are below the age of five years and most of the items that form their personal belongings are small frocks made or bought by their mothers. Children in this village often wear a frock each day, and because of this their parents provide them with four or five frocks each. Even the poor parents do this because it is cheap to make these small frocks.

(4) A set of dress will consist of a sarung, a baju and a selendang.

They do not need very much cloth to make. The same amount of money used to buy a shirt can be used to buy cloth to make three or four of these small frocks.

The writer finds that there is no evidence that these young children wear shoes when they play in the village. When asked whether any of their non-school going children own a pair of shoes, the answers are always in the negative. This answer is given by the muk-muk parents and the same answer is given by the parents in the drivers and the conductors group.

