

INTERVIEW WITH 3 YOUNG MEN MEMBERS OF A SINOMAN

This interview occurred in a small village near Jatisbono, in central Java near the border of Ponorogo. In this location sinomans exist, but are somewhat different from Ponorogo, where only males are members. Here both boys and girls are members.

Boys and girls usually join a sinoman at age 15 or 16. If a young person did not join a sinoman, their friends would not like them, so every teenager joins.

Members leave the sinoman about age 25, after they become a parent. They might continue in the sinoman after marriage, but after having a child the person is busy with his new parenting, so has to leave the sinoman in order to support the new family.

ACTIVITIES OF SINOMAN

When sinoman members are together, we enjoy talking with each other and doing things together. When a wedding party is held, the boys get the snacks and the girls serve the snacks. [in Ponorogo, the boys also serve the snacks]

Whatever the village needs, the sinoman will do it. We work together to make roads, gates, clean the streets, decorate for Independence Day and other holiday celebrations and village activities.

SINOMAN LEADER

The members decide on a leader by majority vote of all members. The leader is chosen by his or her ability to lead. It is not necessarily the eldest, and it can be either boy or girl. The leader is in charge of discipline, and leads sinoman activities. The leader remains as leader until he or she is too busy to keep holding the office, and then another leader is elected. Some sinomans have both girl and boy leaders. The boy leader is in charge of public works, like paving streets and sidewalks. The girl leader is trained by a government health worker, and she is in charge of educating the other girls for women's health concerns, family planning, and general family sanitation and health care. This is an integral part of the reasons for the success of the government family planning programs in reducing the number of children that young mothers want to have.

The sinoman leaders get together with the leader of the village, and together they decide what work needs to be done. Sometimes there are meetings, and all sinoman members get together, and the village decides what needs to be done. For example, they might plan a party, or provide for security. They might build a little guardhouse, for the village night watchman. If a villager is building a new house, sinoman members will help build it. But those members who are in school are expected to give priority to their schoolwork, so these labor activities tend to be done mainly by those who are not in school and who have the time. [WW -- This gives those who are not good in school, some feelings of accomplishment and self-worth.]

Sometimes the government will give a money grant, and the sinoman members will decide what needs to be done with it. When someone in the village dies, the sinoman will give some money for the funeral, and the sinoman members will prepare mats for people to sit on during the funeral, and will serve drinks and food at a

meal afterwards. Another thing they often do with some of the money is to make uniform clothing for all sinoman members. This makes sure everyone has good clothes, and it increases the feeling of pride and unity that they are in that sinoman, with everybody having nice clothes.

"I enjoy being in the sinoman, because I enjoy being in a group with my friends. The people like us, because of the good works we do. Everybody loves being in the sinoman, because every boy and girl is in it, and we can talk together while we work."