

The Sky is our Roof, the Earth our Floor

Orang Rimba Customs and Religion
in the *Bukit Duabelas* region of Jambi, Sumatra

Steven Sager

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The content of this thesis is the original work of the author from research conducted in Jambi, Sumatra from January 2003 to June 2004

Signature of Ph.D. Candidate Steven Sager
(Steven Sager)

Department of Archeology and Anthropology
Australian National University

Members of Doctoral Committee:

Patrick Guinness
James J. Fox
Andrew McWilliam
Christine Helliwell

Since the earth was as small as a track,
and the sky was as wide as an umbrella,
our *adat* customs and laws that were given to us by our ancestors,
in life and death,
are to be used by us all

*Sejak dir'i bumi setumpang tajak
langet solebor payung,
adat nenek puyong kito,
hidup, mati
do posko posko jugo nang dopakos yah*

The sky is our roof,
the earth is our floor,
this is our *adat* in the forest

*Hatop, belangit
lantai, begebun
Iyoi, kami adat Rimba*

(*Orang Rimba* proverb)

If our forests are cut down, they destroy the world,
If the government settles us in the village
they kill our *adat* (customs, religion, and way of life),
In the same way, they kill us

*Kalu balok rimba kami, maju kiamat
Kalu pemer'intah tetap kami de dusun
bunuh adat nenek puyong kami,
bunuh hidup kami
Samo lah, bunuh hidup kami*

Our customs and ways of life are already different
(and can not be mixed with those in the village)
from the time of our ancestors, we have lived in the forest
until they cut our throats, we do not want to join life in the village

*Adat kini sodah berbeda
jedi, kami deri nenek puyong dulu duduk de rimba
sampo putoi patah leher kami
piado endok ikut hidup de dusun*

(Orang Rimba man along Makekal River)

Abstract

This is an ethnographic study of the *Orang Rimba* ('people of the forest'), a Malay-speaking minority group who traditionally lived throughout the lowland rainforests of Jambi, Sumatra. The *Orang Rimba* have much in common with surrounding Malay peoples, including a similar local dialect and variants of regional Malay customs and beliefs. They are different from the Malay and other Austronesian peoples in that they have a unique, mobile, flexible economy that traditionally shifts in and out of periods of swidden gardening and a very nomadic life based on digging for wild yams, largely upon death. They have an egalitarian social system based on sharing and reciprocity, which occurs within the context of a system of relationships in which women have great rights over forest resources and extraordinary distribution rights. They are also unique for their traditional non-Islamic religious beliefs, which they believe are crucial towards maintaining their way of life in the forest based on maintaining separation with the outside world. While the *Makekal Orang Rimba* believe themselves to share common origins with the Malay/*Melayu*, the downstream world of the villagers is perceived as a source of danger and sickness, which holds the potential to disrupt the delicate relations with their gods and make life in the forest impossible.

Within the history of an unstable and assimilative upstream climate that was often hostile towards animist forest peoples, ethnic boundaries have served as a means to maintain their social identity, safety, and maintain a distinctive way of life in the forest. However, within the context of an egalitarian share society in which groupings of closely related women have a great deal of authority over the management and distribution of resources, including game, and the power of men is diminished through dispersed uxorilocal residence patterns, ethnic boundaries are also closely intertwined with internal power issues. The authority adult men is marked by their duty and obligation to protect and shield the rights of women from a dangerous outside world, and all outside males who are not immediate kin, through the manipulation of a convoluted system of law and fines paid in sheets of cloth. While females have great rights in their society, and the complete freedom to bully men through their passions and voice, their social mobility is limited by some of the most rigid gender divisions in all of Southeast Asia. Male authority is also marked within the domain of religion, through their duty to maintain the order and balance of their material and spiritual world (*adat*) in the forests by observing and enforcing religious prohibitions, which restrict

relations with the outside world. This serves to facilitate close relations with their gods in matters ranging from health and subsistence to maintaining the timely occurrence of the seasonal fruits, honey, and migrations of bearded pigs.

This thesis explores how the *Orang Rimba* maintain their distinct social identity as 'the people of the forest' through an examination of their customs, beliefs and religion (*adat*), and their belief and ritual surrounding fruits and the annual season of fruits, a primary season in the lowland dipterocarp forests of Sumatra. Throughout the thesis, I explore some of the key concepts, structural categories (forest-village, upstream-downstream, mobility-sedentism, hot-cold, and reason-passion), and metaphor that run through their system of beliefs and religion, and how some of these beliefs influence their social, moral and cosmological orders, relations amongst themselves, and with the outside world. A broader theme examines how religious beliefs are intertwined with social relations, which are largely based on issues of gender, adulthood, relations of affinity and male experience in the realms of law and religion, and how some of their beliefs are interrelated with maintaining ethnic boundaries with outsiders. Some of these topics are explored in their social relations, the structure of their origin stories, gender related food prohibitions, and the management of forest resources. These issues are examined in light of the great change that has taken place over the last 30 years, a result of large-scale logging, plantations and development projects.

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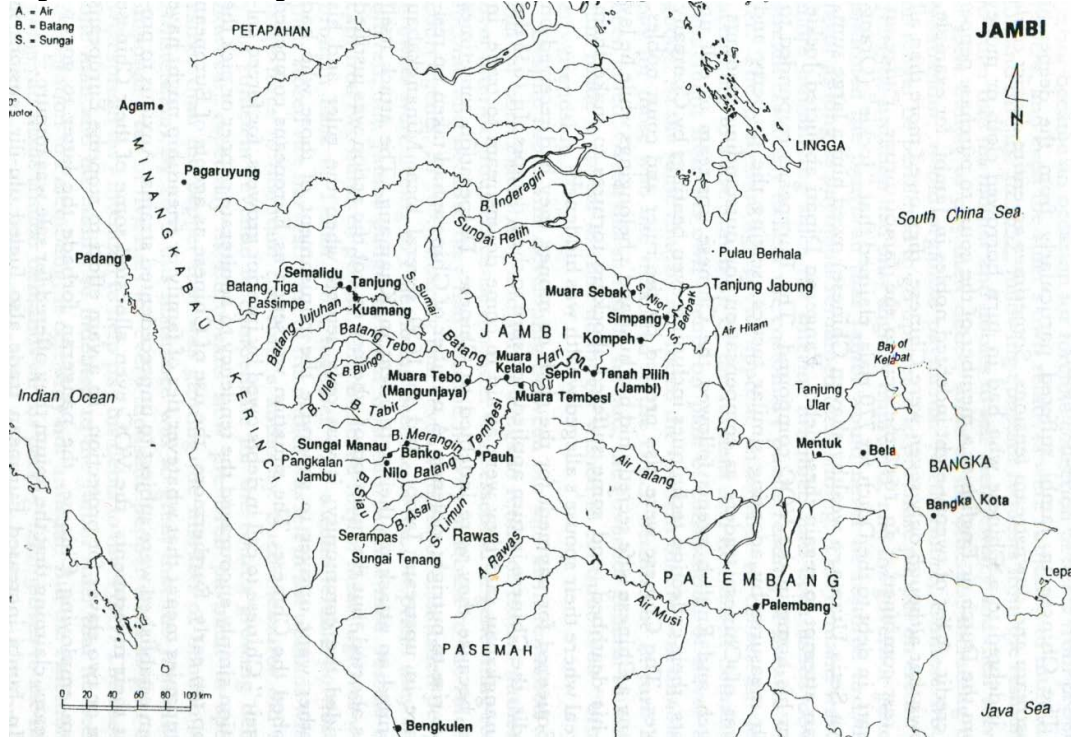
Map a: The Larger Malay World (Sumatra, Malaysia and Borneo)



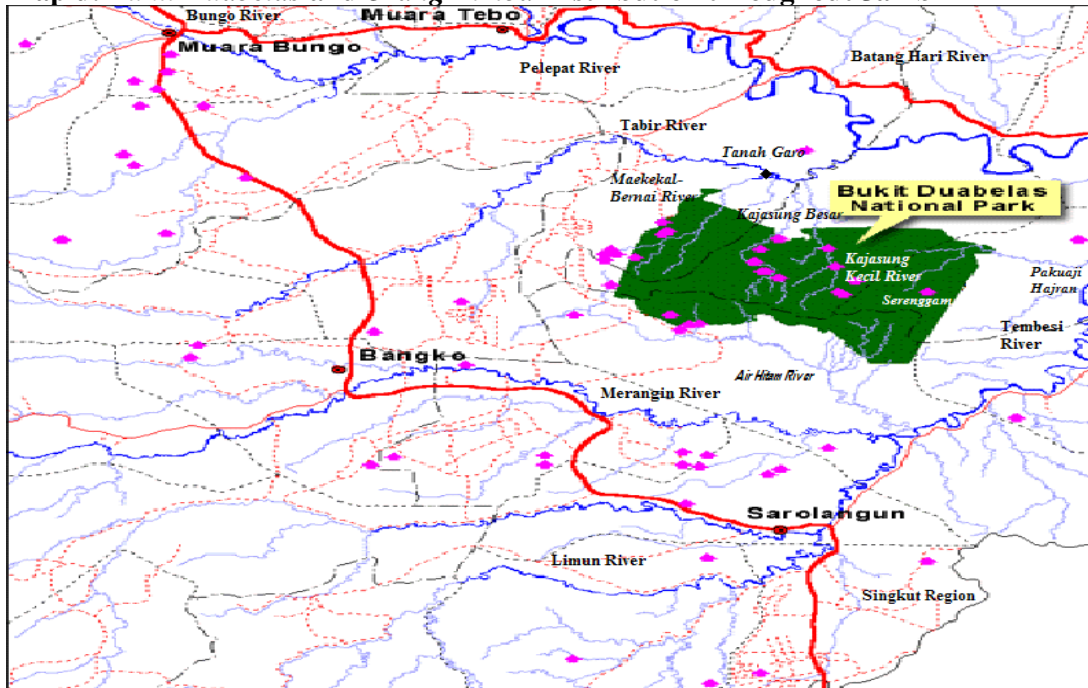
Map b: Jambi and South Sumatra (Palembang)



Map c : Detailed Map of Jambi and South Sumatra



Map d: Bukit Duabelas and Orang Rimba Distribution throughout Jambi



(Source: Modified map from warsi.org)

A Note on the Orthography

Throughout the text, foreign words and Latin scientific names are in italics while English definitions are in single quotes. Unless indicated otherwise, local terms are in the *Rimba* dialect (*beso rimba*) of *Bukit Duabelas*, an isolect of the local Malay language spoken along the upstream *Batanghari* River in Jambi. Both are similar in phonology and grammar to the Indonesian language Bahasa Indonesia, however, the *Rimba* language is very glottal, which initially makes it very hard to understand. The letter r is often pronounced with a glottal stop, which in the text will be marked with the character: r' (for instance, *or'ang*, *war'is*, *mer'u*). Initial h- and r- are hardly pronounced; while as a rule, final -s usually becomes a diphthong (for example, *halus*, becomes *haluy*, *gedis-gediy*, *balas-beloi*). As is the case in Malay, c is pronounced as 'ch'. The *Rimba* language uses the following pronouns: *akeh/awok* (I/mine), *mikai* (you), *mika* (he/she), *kito* (we), *mikai segalo* (you guys), while internal reduplication is used much more commonly to denote a state of being (for example, *akeh komamaluon*, *kobebingunon*) or an event (*membunuhbuhuhon*). Some of the variations within 'Kubu' isolects throughout South Sumatra and Jambi are described in Dunggio's, "*Struktur Bahasa Kubu*" (Dunggio 1995).

Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis is an ethnographic study of the *Orang Rimba* of the *Bukit Duabelas* region, a Malay-speaking minority group living throughout the upstream regions of Jambi on the island of Sumatra. The words *Orang Rimba* mean ‘people of the forest’, a befitting name given their unique way of life in the forests. Like the *Penan* of Northern Borneo, the *Orang Rimba* are an example of the Austronesians’ adaptation to a mobile, hunter-gatherer way of life in the lowland dipterocarp rainforests of Southeast Asia. The *Orang Rimba* have a uniquely flexible economy that continuously shifts back and forth between periods of swidden gardening and a nomadic life based on digging for wild yams, the shift commonly being triggered by the death of a camp member. In addition, the *Orang Rimba* also engage in hunting, trapping, fishing, and the collection of forest products for trade. Their social relations are highly egalitarian, with women having extraordinary rights over forest resources, and extraordinary sharing rights. Their system of law, however, is largely concerned with arranging marriages and regulating proper interactions with females and their rights to forest resources, resulting in some of the most restrictive gender relations in Southeast Asia.

The *Orang Rimba* live in a region known for its long history of upstream–downstream riverine trade, and for being the cultural homeland of Indianized Malay culture. They have long been under great pressure to be absorbed into the socio-economic fabric of *Melayu* society and the Islamic religion, and in turn have developed a number of ways to maintain their unique way of life. The *Orang Rimba* have some of the most sharply defined and staunchly defended cultural and ethnic boundaries in Southeast Asia, greatly restricting interactions with outsiders. Regionally, their boundaries might compare to the *Baduy* of West Java, and for those who no longer have access to forests, the more pragmatic purity and pollution taboos of the Gypsies (Garna 1988; Okely 1983:8). Like many Austro-Asiatic speaking forest peoples on the Malay Peninsula, the *Orang Rimba* perceive the realm of villages outside the forests as a source of danger, sickness and cultural impurities, and as a threat to the *Orang Rimba*’s autonomy (Dentan 1968; Robarchek 1979). Relations with the outside world are restricted through an institutionalized system of beliefs and prohibitions (*pantangon*) that distinguishes the *Orang Rimba* from the *Melayu* and enables them to maintain good health, favorable relations with their gods, and the overall balance of *adat* (‘customs, traditions, order’) in the forests.

In recent times, a great deal of the *Orang Rimba*'s customary forests have been clear cut or severely degraded through logging, and many *Orang Rimba* have been displaced and had to resign themselves to living a semi-nomadic life as squatters in palm-oil plantations or rubber fields. Some have taken to begging along the roadside as well. While many have chosen to participate in government settlement projects, few have remained settled for more than a single season.

This thesis is based on research carried out among *Orang Rimba* who live along the *Makekal* River in the recently established *Bukit Duabelas* National Park (*Taman Nasional Bukit Duabelas*), in the center of the province of Jambi. While the forests in *Bukit Duabelas* have also been degraded, the *Orang Rimba*'s access to traditional forests has allowed them to continue to practice many of their traditional beliefs in the forests, within a context of more frequent interaction with outsiders and a quickly encroaching outside world. This thesis, intended to describe the *Orang Rimba*'s pattern of beliefs and the ways in which some of their beliefs serve to strengthen their cultural identity and autonomy, and prop up power relations within their own camps, may also provide insight into the reasons for the *Orang Rimba*'s passionate opposition to settlement and interaction with the outside world.

The *Orang Rimba* are of great interest to anthropology for their traditional non-Islamic religious beliefs and their primary ritual practices, which are oriented towards ensuring the seasonal cycle of rains, fruits, honey and migration of bearded pigs. This thesis explores how the *Orang Rimba* maintain their unique identity as the 'people of the forest' through an examination of their social relations, cosmology and religion, origin stories, and beliefs and rituals relating to fruits and the annual fruit season, a primary season in the lowland dipterocarp rainforests. A larger theme is the connection between religious belief and management of forest resources, internal social and power relations, and maintenance of ethnic boundaries with the outside world. More importantly, this thesis hopes to fill in some of the "ethnographic grain work" and provide some insight into the extraordinary lives and belief system of these 'people of the forest'.

The *Melayu* and the *Kubu* in Eastern Sumatra

The Malay region of the world is the region of the former Malay kingdoms and their hinterlands, which existed or still exist along the coasts of Sumatra, Peninsular Malaysia, and Borneo, on the landmass of the Sundic Shelf (Benjamin 2002:5). The geographical terrain on these islands was originally dominated by lowland dipterocarp

rainforests (0-600 meters), which are dissected by major and minor river systems, and contain some of the richest biodiversity in the world. Traditionally, rainforests averaged around 35 meters in height, with dipterocarp emergents reaching up to 70 meters. These forests contain an estimated 10,000 plant species and nearly 200 mammals, which in Sumatra include the rhinoceros, the elephant, the tiger, seven species of primates including the orangutan, and the tapir (Kapos 2005). There are over 200 species of reptile, including two species of crocodile and the greater reticulated python, nearly 300 varieties of freshwater fish, and over 400 and 50 bird species (Kapos 2005). The climate is hot and humid, and revolves around a major rainy and a major dry season interrupted by patches of fair weather and a unique one-two month annual fruiting season. Since the 1970s, the region's landscape has been dramatically transformed by large-scale logging, the Indonesian government's transmigration program, and the establishment of rubber and palm oil plantations. The majority of remaining forests have been severely degraded by logging.

In terms of ethnicity, Jambi was historically dominated by Malay or *Melayu* villagers, with bilateral kinship systems and matri-local residence patterns, and by minority populations of Malay-speaking forest peoples collectively referred to as the *Kubu*. Members of both these groups engaged in political economic relationships (debt bondage, slavery) with villagers of wealth and rank, and in tribute relations with representatives from the downstream kingdom. Off the coast and among nearby islands live the *Bajau*, nomadic sea people more generally referred to as the *Orang Laut*. In the past, these people floated in and out of the kingdom's reach as, variously, traders, tax collectors and coastal defenders in the kingdom's employ. The *Orang Laut* had a reputation as independent-minded pirates and slave raiders (Andaya 1992).

The traditional economies of upstream peoples consisted of combinations of horticulture, foraging, and the gathering of forest products for trade, with different groups focusing more on some activities than others. Today, many upstream *Melayu* still do some swidden farming, fishing and hunting, but most are predominately engaged in rubber tapping and logging. Over the last several centuries, the upstream regions have received significant numbers of migrants from the matrilineal Minangkabau, who often identify as *Penghulu* or *Suku Pindah* and have economies which generally resemble those of the surrounding *Melayu*. Since the early 1980s, the upstream regions have been flooded by peasants from Java and Bali, who have come with the Indonesian government's transmigration program and mostly work in attached palm oil plantations.

In Eastern Sumatra, most people identify not as Malay but rather as *Melayu*, the Sumatran variant on which the term ‘Malay’ is based (Andaya 2001). In the past, the term *Melayu* probably never referred to a distinct cultural group or primary ethnic identity, and in contrast to ‘Malaysian’ never became a nationalist identity. In the distant past, *Melayu* referred to the downstream coastal kingdom, with *Orang Melayu* or ‘*Melayu* people’, meaning the people or subjects of the Kingdom of *Melayu*. Very early in its history, the term probably came to encapsulate the regional Malay or *Melayu* trading-based language, inclusion within a kingdom-wide social hierarchy, and the customary laws (*adat*) of the downstream kingdom, although different peoples had their own primary customs and laws. Since the coming to Sumatra of Islam, the term has gradually become synonymous with being Muslim. This is how the term is now used throughout Sumatra and the wider Malay world.¹

In the upstream regions of Jambi, native *Melayu* villagers refer to themselves as ‘old’ or ‘native’ *Melayu* (*Melayu kuno/tua*) and more generally as *Melayu Jambi*, while more recent Malay immigrants often identify by their province of origin (*Melayu Palembang, Kerenci, Minangkabau*, etc.). In the past, upstream peoples who lived off the main *Batanghari* River, and beyond direct rule of the kingdom, often identified on a secondary level as ‘*batin* people’ (*orang batin*). As with many of the former Malay kingdoms throughout the region, this term refers to outlying administrative regions, which were involved in tribute relations rather than performing corvee duties.² More specifically, people identify by their village name or general river region, and more broadly can be identified by an association with a spatial or geographic feature in the environment, which – depending upon who is making the reference – can be associated with either positive or negative values. Some of the most common spatially based terms are ‘upstream people’ (*orang hulu*), ‘downstream people’ (*orang hilir*), ‘coastal people’ (*orang pasir*), and ‘people of the sea’ (*orang laut*). Forest minorities in South Sumatra are sometimes referred to as ‘inland people’ (*orang darat*), ‘people of the swamps’ (*orang payau*), and more generally in both provinces by the more positive terms, ‘people of the interior’ (*orang dalam*) and ‘people of the forests’ (*orang rimba/hutan*). In addition to the term *Melayu*, the *Orang Rimba* often refer to outsiders as ‘village people’ (*or’ang dusun*), most commonly as ‘newcomers’ (*or’ang mer’u*), and sometimes as ‘people of the open/light’ (*or’ang ter’ang*).³

In the anthropological literature, the *Orang Rimba* have traditionally been referred to as the *Kubu*, a regional *Melayu* exonym ascribed to mobile, animist peoples who live in the interior lowland forests of South Sumatra and Jambi. In the Malay

language, the word *Kubu* can mean ‘defensive fortification’, ‘entrenchment’, or ‘place of refuge’. While these peoples have a long history of economic and political affiliations with the *Melayu* through trade in forest products, most have traditionally attempted to limit their interactions and have developed strong cultural and ethnic boundaries to differentiate themselves, and maintain distance from the village. In the past, these boundaries served to maintain their culture, beliefs, and autonomy within the wider *Melayu* world. They also served to maintain their physical security in the face of slave raids and pandemic disease (smallpox, cholera), spread through upstream-downstream trade.

The term *Kubu* refers to the majority Islamic *Melayu* villagers’s perceptions of the *Orang Rimba* as using the interior forests to resist inclusion in the larger *Melayu* social and Islamic religious world.⁴ As is the case with other Malay exonyms in the region (for instance *Sakai*), the term *Kubu* has negative connotations: ‘uncivilized’ or ‘not yet developed’ (*belum madju*), ‘primitive’ (*primitif*), ‘dirty’ (*kotor/jorok*), ‘smelly’ (*bau*), ‘stupid’ (*bodoh*), ‘yet to acquire a religion’ (*belum punya agama*). For most *Orang Rimba*, the term *Kubu* is strongly offensive. Following the Indonesian government, many now use the more politically correct *Suku Anak Dalam* or the abbreviated *sanak*, which means ‘tribe of the interior forests’.

In line with local *Melayu* classifications, which to some extent are still used today, Europeans in the late 19th and early 20th century divided the *Kubu* into two categories: ‘tame’, ‘domesticated’ or more ‘civilized’ *Kubu* (*Kubu jinak*), who were predominantly swidden farmers; and ‘wild’ *Kubu* (*Kubu liar*), who lived deep in the forests and made much greater efforts to avoid close relations with the outside world. Because of their rigid boundaries, very little was known of the wild *Kubu*. According to both local *Melayu* and European belief, tame *Kubu* were wild *Kubu* in the process of settling down and becoming more civilized (*madju*) due to increased Malay influence. In reality, these peoples represent at least two separate cultural groups, and while closely related (linguistically and culturally) with Malay-speaking peoples, have very different economic and socio-religious systems.

The Swidden-farming *Orang Batin Kubu*

The peoples referred to as tame or settled *Kubu* (*Kubu jinak*) are a larger population of swidden-farming peoples who traditionally lived in the lowland forests along the central (midstream) to eastern (downstream) parts of South Sumatra (~3,000–5,000) and Jambi (~10,000). These are the peoples described in the early 20th century by van Dongen,

Bernard Hagan and Paul Schebesta, and more recently by the Polish anthropologist Janusz Kamocki (Dongen 1906; Dongen 1910; Dongen 1913; Dongen 1931; Hagan 1908; Kamocki 1972; Schebesta 1926). As with other forest minorities in the region, their traditional economy is based upon swidden farming, and also includes hunting, trapping, fishing, and the collection of forest products for trade. These people also traditionally used the swidden field as a base camp from which to exploit resources in the forests; however, extended visits to the forests appear to have occurred primarily when there was a need to collect forest products for trade. Unlike the *Orang Rimba*, these people's traditional economies did not depend on a capacity or preference for independent nomadism based on digging for wild yams or exploiting sago palm.

According to van Dongen, the *Kubu jinak* have typically Malayic beliefs relating to the soul, healing and magic, and, like the *Orang Rimba*, moved to ritually prepared land in the forests to give birth, ritually bathed their babies in the river, and had similar ritual beliefs surrounding death (Dongen 1910).⁵ While most had switched to ground burials by the early 20th century, van Dongen writes that some of the *Kubu jinak* still performed platform burials, which would be followed by a truncated version of *melangun*, or movement in the forests following death (Dongen 1910:236). Unlike the *Orang Rimba*, these peoples apparently did not have any prohibitions on hunting elephants, or rearing and eating domestic animals. While these peoples probably attempted to limit their interactions with the *Melayu*, they apparently did not have the same system of institutionalized prohibitions restricting interactions with the outside world as the *Orang Rimba*. Some of the early Dutch writings mention that there was some intermarriage with the *Melayu*, and at times, a *Melayu* patron would take the daughter of a 'tame' *Kubu* client as a wife (Dongen 1906). Throughout this thesis, *Kubu jinak* beliefs, as described by van Dongen, are mentioned in footnotes.

On the Jambi side of the border, these people identify primarily as the 'people of the nine *batin* regions' (*Orang Batin Sembilan*). As with the *Orang Rimba* and *Orang Hutan*, they also identify as 'people of the interior' (*orang dalam*), 'indigenous people' (*orang pribumi*), and probably by their river region or (especially these days) their village. Since the 1970s, these people have been displaced from their traditional lands by logging companies and palm oil plantations, and over the last 100 years, have been the target of Dutch and Indonesian settlement projects (Schebesta 1926; Dongen 1910). These days, the majority live in mixed *Melayu* villages, have at least nominally chosen to become Muslims (*masuk Melayu*), and oftentimes identify as *Orang Melayu*. According to government documents, some still exploit resources in the forests and

follow many of the traditional ways (Tim Peneliti Universitas Sriwijaya 1995). While it is certainly not the correct classification, and is to some extent politically incorrect, for purposes of clarity I will refer to these swidden-farming *Kubu* people as *Orang Batin Kubu*.

The *Orang Rimba* and *Orang Hutan*

The other quite distinct and much smaller cultural group traditionally referred to as the 'wild' *Kubu* (*Kubu liar*) live in the upstream parts or western half of both provinces. In Jambi, these peoples identify as *Orang Rimba* (pop. ~3,000), in South Sumatra as *Orang Hutan* (pop. 1,000–2,000); both terms mean 'People of the Forest'. In Jambi, the *Orang Rimba* traditionally lived in the upstream lowland forests, which begin at the base of the *Barisan* mountain range, with their customary forests ending around the *Tembesi* River or midstream region of the province. In contrast to other peoples in Sumatra, both have a unique and extremely diverse economy, which continuously shifts between two base subsistence strategies: swidden farming (*behuma*), and nomadism (*bebenor* or *remayo*) based on foraging for wild yams (*benor*, mainly *Dioscorea* sp.). The nomadism occurs primarily following the death of a group member, but can also occur or be extended due to mere preference for the lifestyle. It is traditionally combined with hunting, trapping, fishing, damming and poisoning rivers, and collection of forest products for trade. For many, part-time rubber tapping and participation in logging has gradually replaced the collection of forest products.

Orang Rimba residence is characterized by small and constantly changing camps, which can be the size of a nuclear family during periods when the *Orang Rimba* digging for wild yams, but more commonly is based around an extended family, and can include several extended families during periods of swidden farming. Kinship is determined bilaterally, while residence patterns are strictly uxorilocal. Camps are most commonly arranged according to groupings of closely related women and their dispersed in-marrying husbands. Cousin marriages are preferred, and marriage is usually performed after a lengthy period of bride service, which is often cut short and combined with a payment of bridewealth in the form of sheets of cloth. In *Bukit Duabelas*, there is a high concern for a system of law, based upon an old variation of Jambi *adat*, which is enforced through a headman system overlaid with a hierarchal system of village titles. The *Orang Rimba*'s system of law is primarily concerned with arranging marriages, and protecting the chastity, property and rights of women from outsiders and all outside *Orang Rimba* males. This results in very rigid gender divisions.

Orang Rimba society is also characterized by strong cultural boundaries, and institutionalized prohibitions that restrict travel outside the forests and interactions with outsiders. This makes learning anything about them very difficult, and is one of the reasons why very little has been written about them.

The *Orang Rimba* still follow their traditional religion, which is based on an underlying system of traditional Malay animistic beliefs that have been influenced by their unique way of life in the forests, history in the region, and incorporates many Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic elements. Outside of their limited trade with traditional patrons, which in the recent past was conducted at a distance through 'silent trade', the *Orang Rimba* have traditionally made attempts to avoid close relations with the outside world, particularly those involving women and children. Endogamous marriage is strictly enforced, while outside marriage results in banishment from the *Orang Rimba* community.

Very little is known of the closely related *Orang Hutan* of South Sumatra. Their economies appears to be very similar, and they apparently maintain close relations with the *Orang Rimba* in the southern *Singkut* region of Jambi, commonly inter-marry, and maintain a distance with outsiders through similar cultural prohibitions as those of the *Orang Rimba*. Van Dongen briefly mentions their tendency to live a nomadic life based on digging for wild yams, similar prohibitions on eating domestic animals and hunting elephants, and a unique taboo on planting or eating rice (Dongen 1906:239). While he was apparently unable to learn much about their spiritual beliefs during his two brief visits to a camp, van Dongen does mention the practice of spoke-frame tree burials, a common burial practice of the Semang, and in the past, other Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples on the Malay Peninsula (Dongen 1910:238; Endicott 1979). A recent Indonesian Department of Social Affairs document concerning the *Pinai* settlement in the southern *Singkut* region, which apparently included *Orang Hutan* recruits from across the border, briefly mentions what may be similar social and ritual practices (Sosial 1998).

According to Elkholy, some of the *Orang Hutan*'s social practices may be very different. While visiting several *Orang Hutan* camps in 2000, Elkholy noticed that uxori-local residence and bride service are less stringent, and that gender relations were much less rigid (personal communication with Elkholy). In an interesting anomaly, Elkholy noted, "Several of the southernmost *Orang Hutan* groups in the *Semangus* region of the *Musi Rawas* district do not practice uxori-local residence or bride service at all, and have more co-equal gender relations, similar to the *Semang* in Malaysia"

(personal communication with Elkholy).⁶ Unfortunately, the majority of the *Semangus* forests were clear-cut and burned during the El Niño dry period in the mid-1990s, and soon after planted with palm oil. Since this time, the *Orang Hutan* have been strongly encouraged to enter government settlements.

Indonesian Policies Relating to Tribal Peoples

The Indonesian government classifies the *Suku Anak Dalam* as an 'isolated community' (*masyarakat terasing*), an official term applied to marginalized, isolated minority peoples who live on the fringes of mainstream society and are targeted for government settlement and civilizing programs.⁷ According to the official government view, "For a variety of reasons and at various stages in history, these groups have lost touch with the main processes of social, religious, political and economic change and it is the obligation of the state to help them return to mainstream Indonesian society with assistance in terms of housing and settlement patterns, modes of production, cultural expression, formal education, health care, an accepted religion, and by facilitating interaction with other parts of society" (Persoon 1998:289). This program has its roots in early Dutch projects, but has also been strongly influenced by the cultural politics of Suharto's New Order Regime, which in the early 1970s embarked upon an agenda of rapid development based on the exploitation of natural resources in Indonesia's outer islands. In addition to its awkward objective of civilizing minority peoples by introducing them to an accepted world religion, which in Jambi is almost always Islam, the program also has the function of bringing mobile minority peoples – particularly those who live in the vicinity of valuable natural resources – within the government's reach (Scott 14 December 1998; Scott 1998).

The *Suku Anak Dalam* are one of four peoples in Jambi classified as *masyarakat terasing*. The other three are the *Or'ang Laut/Bajau*; the southernmost populations of the swidden-farming *Talang Mamak*; and the ambiguous *Talang* people, sometimes simply termed *masyarakat terasing*, a general term for isolated *Melayu* swidden farmers who are determined by the government to be in need of assistance. In the neighboring province of Riau, Malay speaking forest minorities classified as *masyarakat terasing* include the *Orang Bonai*, *Hutan*, *Akit*, *Sakai*, and the *Or'ang Laut/Bajau*.⁸ Programs and policies surrounding these peoples are managed by the Indonesian Department of Social Affairs, and receive assistance from the Department of Forestry and Department of Religion.⁹

The broader philosophy and objectives of the government's *Suku Anak Dalam* settlement program are very similar to, and reinforce Jambi's deeply entrenched 'masuk Melayu' philosophy. Apart from any noble intentions the program might have, these activities are often conducted in a very paternal and insensitive manner. They rarely take into account the traditional economic systems, social patterns, or religious beliefs of the *masyarakat terasing* they are supposed to 'develop'. Corruption within the program is extremely common. The program's houses are always built with the cheapest materials and often fall apart within a year. Food rations are often of low quality or spoiled, and rarely arrive on time if at all. While settlements involving swidden-farming *Orang Batin Kubu* have had some success, all *Orang Rimba* settlements that I am aware of have eventually ended in failure. After initial supplies are stopped at the end of the first year, or whenever there is a death, most participants sell or abandon their home, land, and any assets given (palm oil, livestock, etc.), and return to a mobile life in surrounding forests where they exist or to nearby palm-oil or rubber plantations. In the latter case, some supplement their hunting and fishing with begging along the roadside. One of the main reasons for these failures relate to strongly ingrained patterns of behavior and belief, which traditionally serve to prevent assimilation into *Melayu* village life. Regardless of the continued failures and their reasons, the government continues these projects year after year with little or no change in strategy or approach.

Demographics of *Suku Anak Dalam* Peoples in South Sumatra and Jambi

The government lacks accurate population figures for *Suku Anak Dalam* peoples, and depending upon the year and government agency doing the reporting, population figures vary greatly.¹⁰ Government figures are confounded by a number of variables, some of which include the Department of Social Affairs' general indifference in differentiating the different cultural groups traditionally referred to as *Kubu*, the difficulty of reaching their camps and conducting a proper census, their mobility and changing camp structures, and their general avoidance of outsiders. There is also a tendency for these peoples to fluctuate in and out of government settlements, and thus in and out of stages of being classified either as *masyarakat terasing/Suku Anak Dalam* or as 'advanced' to the level of *Melayu* and Indonesian citizens. The availability of funding for settlements also probably has some influence on population figures for any year. Below is an example of the variation in government figures on a yearly basis, while other figures

given by different government agencies are equally inconsistent and confusing (Benjamin 2002:24).

Table 1.1 Government Population Figures for the *Suku Anak Dalam*

<u>Province</u>	<u>Suku</u>	<u>Population</u>	
		<u>DBMT 1990</u>	<u>DMBT 1995</u>
Jambi	Anak Dalam (Kubu)	3,718	5,142
Sumatra Selatan	Anak Dalam (Kubu)	7,188	1,086

(Source: Direktorat Bina Masyarakat Terasing 1995, from Benjamin 2002:24)

In Jambi, more realistic population figures for each cultural group were collected in 1998 by the local NGO WARSI (WARSI and Sandbukt 1998). General estimates for South Sumatra can be made from colonial documents and government surveys based on the general river region of each cultural group. *Orang Rimba* and *Orang Hutan* peoples probably have an overall population of around 5,000, with nearly 3,000 *Orang Rimba* located in the province of Jambi, and 1,000–2,000 *Orang Hutan* located in the northwestern/central parts of South Sumatra. *Orang Batin Kubu* may have an overall population of 13,000–15,000, with around 10,000 living along the southern tributaries of the *Batanghari* River, which lie east of the *Tembesi* and flow southeast at *Muara Bulian* towards the border with South Sumatra. There are from 3,000 to 5,000 *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples living along the *Lalan*, *Tunkal* and *Bayat* Rivers, in the *Musi Banyuasin* district of South Sumatra.

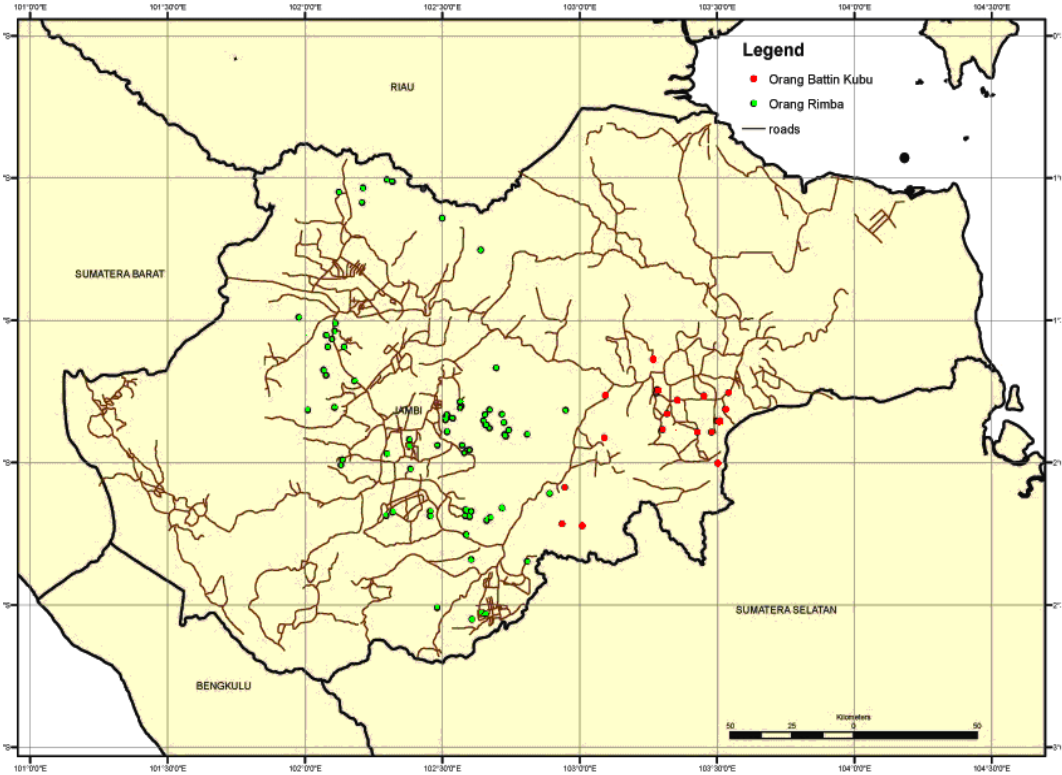
Table 1.2 More Realistic Population Figures for Each Group

<u>Ethnic Group</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Population</u>
<i>Orang Rimba</i>	Jambi	~3,000
<i>Orang Hutan</i>	South Sumatra	1,000–2,000
Total: around 4-5,000		
<i>Orang Batin Sembilan</i>	Jambi	10,000+
<i>Orang Batin Kubu</i>	South Sumatra	3,000–5,000
Total: around 13-15,000		

In both provinces, the *Orang Batin Kubu* and *Orang Rimba* live in between the *Musi* and *Batanghari* Rivers and its river sub-branches, with some *Orang Rimba* camps having recently migrated north of the *Batanghari* to the less logged forests in the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region along the border with Riau. Within this area, there is a general upstream/midstream or west/east divide, on either side of which the customary lands of

each group are located. *Orang Rimba* and *Orang Hutan* peoples live on the lowland forest plains that begin at the base of the *Barisan* mountain chain and extend to the midstream or central regions of both provinces. The traditional lands of swidden-farming *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples generally lie between the central/midstream and eastern/downstream regions of both provinces, ending in the east where the lowland forests transition into tall and low peat swamp forests. The chart below shows the west–east divide in Jambi, and the extent to which the construction of new roads has opened up traditional lands to logging companies and palm oil plantations.

Map 1.1 Locations of *Orang Batin Kubu* and *Orang Rimba* in Jambi



(Source: WARSI website)

In both provinces large-scale logging and palm oil plantations have dramatically changed the physical and social landscape, displacing these peoples and making it very difficult for them to continue with their traditional way of life. A brief summary of the population figures, distribution and current situation of each cultural group in both provinces is included in the appendix.

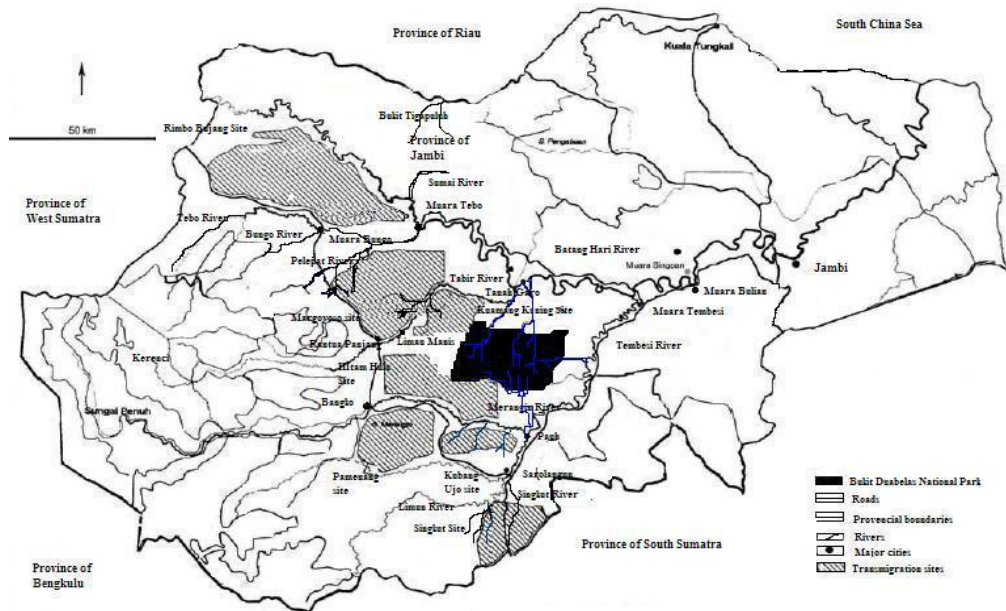
Demographics and Current Situation of the *Orang Rimba* in Jambi

According to an unpublished WARSI survey, there were around 2,800 *Orang Rimba* living in the province of Jambi in 1998. This figure included nearly 600 families divided

among 70 primary groupings (WARSI and Sandbukt 1998). Around 43% of the *Orang Rimba* population (over 1,200) is concentrated in the centre of the province in the *Bukit Duabelas* National Park region, while around 42% (around 1,200) are dispersed in much smaller aggregates from Jambi's southern to northern borders, primarily along the western Trans-Sumatran highway. Nearly 15% (around 400) are recent migrants to the northern *Bukit Tigapuluh* National Park region. The *Orang Rimba* usually maintain relations with kin in their own and neighbouring river interfluves, and while they share a larger social identity as *Orang Rimba*, there is probably a great deal of local variation in their beliefs. The *Orang Rimba* who traditionally lived along the Trans-Sumatran highway, which follows a path initially established by the Dutch, have had increased interaction with outsiders for the greater part of the last century. This may have weakened their traditional relationships with patrons, concern for village titles, and traditional system of law (BAPPEDA-Jambi 1999:20).¹¹

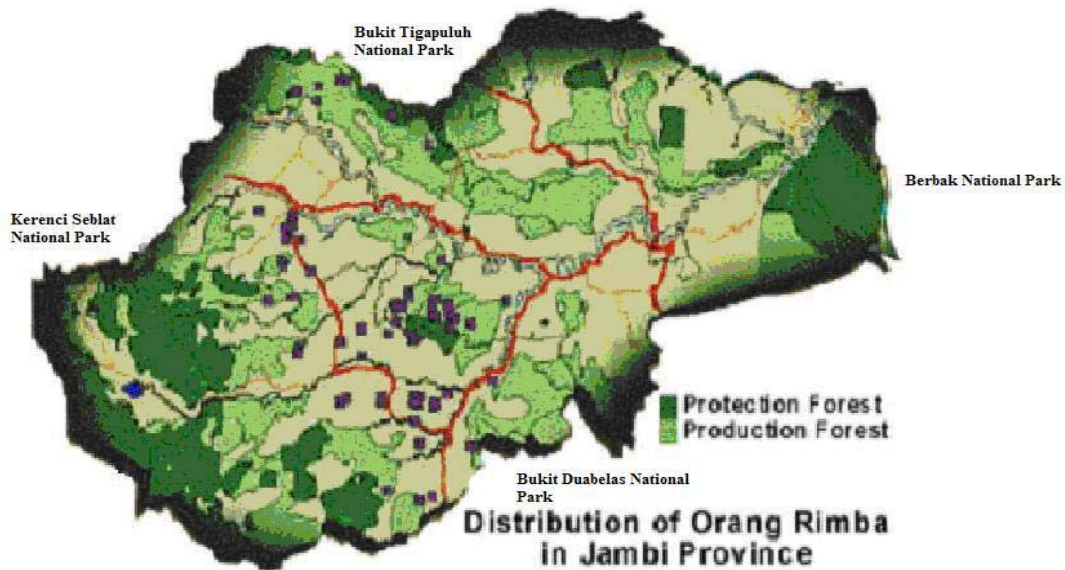
With the transition to Suharto's New Order government in the early 1970s, the concession rights to the majority of Jambi's lowland forests were handed over to large-scale timber companies. Development of large-scale palm oil plantations soon followed. In the 1980s, this development occurred in tandem with Indonesia's transmigration program, which sent millions of (mainly) Javanese peasants to colonize Indonesia's outer islands and provide cheap labour for palm oil plantations. In Jambi, the most extreme forest clearance, and *Orang Rimba* displacement, have occurred along the east-west Trans-Sumatran highway and its connecting feeder roads, which provided access to logging companies and six major transmigration projects and attached palm oil plantations. Before 1960, most of the area had forest cover. By 1980, 73% had forest cover, and by 1990, when the World Bank ended its support for the transmigration program, the figure had again dropped to just over 50% (Potter 1998; WARSI 2007).

Map 1.2 Transmigration Sites in the Province of Jambi



The situation is complicated by locals, regional migrants, and second-generation transmigrants who seek access to remaining forestlands for logging, cultivation, and planting rubber. Since the 1990s, the creation of forest reserves, four national parks, and related buffer-zone forests have prevented some forests from being clear-cut and planted with palm oil, but have certainly not slowed the progression of logging.¹²

Map 1.3: Forest Use and *Orang Rimba* Distribution in Jambi



(Source: WARSI.org)

In the era of regional autonomy, following the fall of Suharto, the number of logging concessions decreased. However, unregulated logging by timber companies and *Melayu* villagers, whose economies are now dependant on logging, has dramatically increased.¹³ In order to boost regional economic growth (*pendapat asli daerah*), which entitles provincial governments to added benefits and development support from the central government, the Jambi government has turned a blind eye to illegal logging. For the most part, the logging of Jambi's forests is unregulated, and often facilitated by payoffs to government and village officials, the forest department, and the police and military. Between 1990 and 2007 nearly one million hectares of Jambi's rainforests were cleared, and by 2007 forest cover had dropped to 27% (Taufik 2001; WARSI 2007). Today, a significant portion of the wood processed in Jambi originates from unregulated logging within the province's protected reserves, four national parks and buffer-zone forests.¹⁴

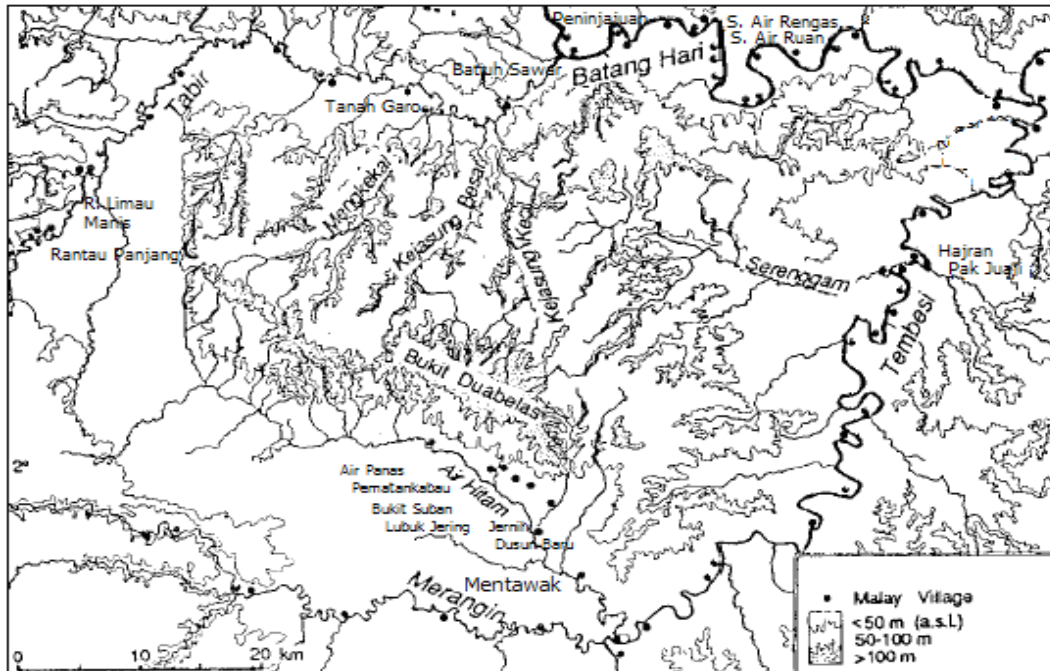
In places where traditional forests have been clear-cut, and the land taken by plantation holders, there has understandably been a great deal of tension and even conflict with *Melayu* villagers. This is particularly the case along the southern tributaries of the *Merangin* River, where the *Pamenang* and *Kebang Ujo* transmigration sites now stand. A common strategy is to set up roadblocks along the Trans-Sumatran highway and surrounding roads, and with large sticks or spears in hand, stop all vehicles and demand they pay a toll before letting them pass. In between the *Merangin* and *Tabir* Rivers, where forests were cleared to make way for the *Margoyoso* and *Hitam Hulu* transmigration sites, several camp populations now live a nomadic life in the surrounding plantations, and subsist by hunting wild pigs, selling medicinal remedies and begging for change at a nearby bus stop. For these peoples, ethnic prohibitions and boundaries with outsiders have become much more pragmatic. Since the early 1970s, many *Orang Rimba* throughout the province have decided to migrate to the better forests of the northern *Bukit Tigapuluh* region. A more detailed account of the current situation of *Orang Rimba* outside *Bukit Duabelas* is included in the appendix.

The *Orang Rimba* of *Bukit Duabelas*

The largest numbers of *Orang Rimba* have traditionally lived in the center of the province, in the forests surrounding the *Bukit Duabelas* Hills (100–500 m.), in and around the recently established *Bukit Duabelas* National Park. The 60,500-hectare park is an extension of an International Biosphere Reserve, initially established in the southern *Air Hitam* region in 1982. In 2003, the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* had a

population slightly over 1,200, divided into 16 main groupings (*rombongan*) along its five main tributaries: the *Makekal/Bernai* Rivers in the west, the central *Kajasung Besar*, *Kajasung Kecil* and *Seranggam* Rivers in the east, and the *Air Hitam* River in the south.¹⁵

Map 1.4: Bukit Duabelas Hills and Surrounding Melayu Villages



(Source: Sandbukt 1988a with additions)

In contrast to many other areas, the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* still represent a rather distinct social entity, based upon access to their customary forests and a unified system of beliefs, customs and law (*adat*), which serves to regulate social relations, access to forest resources, and endogamous marriage with extended kin along its different river regions. To some extent, aspects of their political system (laws and village titles) may have always been more intensive in *Bukit Duabelas*, given its higher population density and position within the heart of the upstream region of the traditional Kingdom. *Bukit Duabelas* is surrounded by 22 traditional *Melayu* villages, many with overlapping claims over its forests.

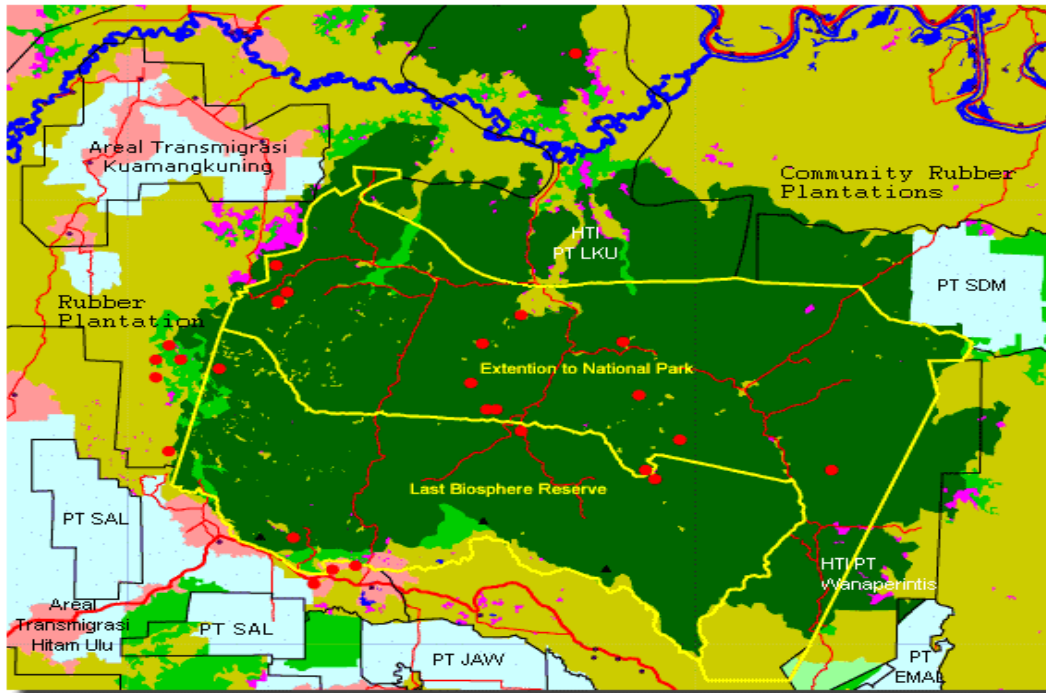
The *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* traditionally maintained relations with patrons (*jenang*) in three *Melayu* villages surrounding their forests, which in effect formed a triangular power structure around the region. Camps in the southern *Air Hitam* River region were traditionally bound to *Air Hitam jenang*, who in the past was a formal appendage of the downstream *Sultan*. Camps along the western *Makekal* and *Bernai*

Rivers are bound to multiple semi-autonomous *waris/jenang*, referred to as *pangkol* or ‘trunk’ *waris*, located in the northern village of *Tanah Garo*. In the past, the southeastern groups along the upstream *Kajasung Besar*, *Kajasung Kecil* and *Serenggam* Rivers may have had a similar arrangement with *ujung* or ‘branch’ *waris* based in the eastern village of *Pakuaji* or *Hajran*. Today, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* are the only people in *Bukit Duabelas* who still maintain relations with their traditional patrons in *Tanah Garo*, which these days is largely concerned with village efforts in illegal logging. However, in other regions, camps have formed new relations of bondage with wealthy patrons in the villages.

Along the *Makekal* River, the rights to trade with individual *Orang Rimba* families is divided among 33 native inhabitants (*waris*) in the village of *Tanah Garo*, who possess *jenang* titles. According to local history, these families obtained semi-autonomous *jenang* titles from *Sultan Taha* some time in the late 19th century, for their assistance in the Dutch resistance. *Jenang* manage *Orang Rimba* families (*bubung*) as immovable property. Like other forms of property, women inherit both *jenang* titles and the rights to trade with particular *Orang Rimba* families, while brothers, maternal uncles, and in-marrying husbands are the ones who manage them. Among the *jenang*, *Orang Rimba* family units can be bought, sold, traded, given as gifts, or used to pay off debts. The headman of *Tanah Garo* holds the title *pangkol* or ‘trunk’ *waris*, and is the leader and caretaker of the *jenang* system; he is also a wealthy illegal logging boss.

Despite the early establishment of the International Biosphere Reserve, the forests of *Bukit Duabelas* have been selectively logged, and are largely degraded, secondary forests. In 2000, the Forest Department extended the borders of the biosphere to the north, and changed its classification to National Park status. However, in mid-2004, its boundaries were still in a state of limbo, and its forests were being illegally logged, with little government monitoring. According to custom, most *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* still shift in and out of periods of swidden farming and nomadism following a death in the camp. However, the impact of logging and surrounding development projects have made it increasingly difficult for them to sustain themselves when nomadic. Many still make a strong effort to follow their traditional way of life in the forests and maintain traditional prohibitions that limit interactions with the outside world, although the contexts in which and extents to which different groups practice these beliefs have changed a great deal over the last 25 years. More information surrounding the recent history of development surrounding *Bukit Duabelas* and the establishment of the National Park is included in the appendix.

Map 1.5: Bukit Duabelas National Park and Surrounding Projects



(Source: WARSI.org)

In the southern *Air Hitam* region, there are around 50 families (pop. 250) divided among four main groupings (*rombongan*) and two titled headmen (*temanggung*), along the sub-branches of the *Air Hitam* and *Merangin* Rivers. After the establishment of the *Hitam Ulu* transmigration site in the early 1980s, relations with a traditional patron (*jenang*) in the village of *Air Panas* declined, and stopped after his death in the late 1980s. Given better access to roads, some of the southern groups occasionally collect rattan and dragons blood, while many have planted rubber along the edge of the forests to block village swidden farmers from encroaching upon their lands. Because of their proximity to transmigration sites, past participation in government settlements, and better relations with loggers, many here maintain less intensive boundaries with outsiders, and it is common to see women and children visiting the surrounding markets.

With a total population approaching 400, the *Orang Rimba* in the central and eastern parts of *Bukit Duabelas* consisted of 76 family units, divided into six main *rombongan*, each with a *temanggung*, along the sub-branches of the *Kajasung Besar*, *Kajasung Kecil* and *Serenggam* Rivers. Aside from one camp along the downstream *Kajasung Besar*, whose people planted rice during my stay, most of the central and

eastern groups are more mobile, and rarely plant rice. Some camps along the upstream *Kajasung Kecil* and *Serenggam* Rivers prefer to remain nomadic, apparently supplementing their livelihoods with handouts from networks of kin who have established swidden camps.

In the western region, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* represent over half of the population in *Bukit Duabelas* (over 600), with the highest concentration located in the upstream *Makekal* River region, where I conducted my research. In 2003, there were over 100 families divided into ten *rombongan*. The *Makekal* River region was divided under two *temanggung*, with one presiding over the mid and downstream regions and the other over the upstream section of the River. In contrast to other areas in *Bukit Duabelas*, some *Orang Rimba* along the upstream *Makekal* more commonly plant dry rice, which may explain the higher population density. They combine this with periods of nomadic hunting and gathering following the death of a group member; this hunting and gathering now primarily occurs in palm and rubber plantations to the west. Some *Orang Rimba* along the down and midstream *Makekal/Bernai* Rivers participate more in their patrons' efforts in logging, while the upstream groups have recently come to acquire a reputation for subtle resistance.

Early European Debate Surrounding the *Kubu*

In the early 20th century, many social scientists believed the *Kubu* to be the aboriginal inhabitants of Sumatra, and their lives of rainforest hunting and gathering to have remained unchanged for thousands of years. The *Kubu* were believed to be of Vedda origin, and closely related to forest nomads on the Malay Peninsula.¹⁶ Because of their physical resemblance to the surrounding *Melayu*, some observers thought that there must have been a great deal of intermixing between the two populations, while also stressing that many *Kubu* had darker skin, flatter noses, and wirier, curlier hair. Stories of 'wild *Kubu*' (*Orang Hutan/Rimba*) based on secondhand reports from *Melayu* villagers, Dutch civil servants, and travelers/adventurers motivated a few curious Europeans to make short visits to the interior of Palembang. Due to the resistance to Dutch rule in the late 19th century, which was waged from the upstream forests, most European visitors resigned themselves to visiting the settled *Orang Batin Kubu* villages that surrounded a Dutch base along the upper *Rawas* River, in a district of Palembang then referred to as the *Koeboestrecken*. On the rare occasions when anyone encountered 'wild *Kubu*', the latter would generally run to the forests in 'panic stricken flight'. Because very little was known of either group, both the local *Melayu* and the Europeans

believed that the swidden-farming ‘tame *Kubu*’ were ‘wild *Kubu*’ who were in the process of settling down and becoming more civilized (*madju*) due to increased Malay influence. From the scant information collected, a debate sprung up among German, Dutch and Swiss social scientists as to whether the *Kubu* represented the aboriginal inhabitants of the island of Sumatra, a pre-matriarchal society at the lowest rung of the social evolutionary ladder, or a more recent case of degeneration.

In the late 19th century, the American naturalist Forbes was able to visit ‘tame’ *Orang Batin Kubu* villages in the *Koeboestrecken* district and gave a brief account of *Kubu* social life in tune with the social evolutionary paradigm he believed they fit (Forbes 1885a; Forbes 1885b). Most of his descriptions concern what he believed they lacked, such as material culture, art, suitable housing, property, clothing, cleanliness, complex social relations or life stage ceremonies, and religious beliefs (Forbes 1885a; 1885b).¹⁷ Forbes appears to have had difficulty soliciting any information concerning their religious beliefs, aside from the practice of leaving their dead behind before leaving a location to *melangun*. He writes that they had no idea of a state after death, the most common answer to his questions on the matter being, “When we are dead, we’re dead.” (Forbes 1885b:125) Of the wild nomadic *Kubu*, Forbes writes, “They are so timorous and shy that it is a rare circumstance for any one to see them, and of course an extremely rare one for any white man. In fact, I doubt if any white man has ever seen the uninfluenced *Kubu*, save as one sees the hindquarters of a startled deer. They are so afraid of seeing any one not their own race, that if suddenly met or come up with in the forests, they will drop everything and flee away.” (Forbes 1885b:122)

In the early 20th century, the most extensive first-hand knowledge of the ‘tame’ *Orang Batin Kubu* comes from the Dutch official van Dongen who served as Administrator (*Controleur*) of a base in the *Koeboestrecken*, and later as the Resident of Jambi (Dongen 1906; Dongen 1910; Dongen 1913; Dongen 1931). In a lengthy article published in 1910, van Dongen describes aspects of the *Orang Batin Kubu* economy, social beliefs, life stage rituals (birth, bathing the baby, death), conceptions of the soul, and prayer songs sung during a healing ceremony (Dongen 1910). He writes that their system of shamanism is a process of ghost exorcism for curing the sick, and, “when someone is deathly sick or dies the camp *melangun* or run away as quickly as possible” (Dongen 1910:236). Van Dongen briefly mentions some of the *Kubu* funeral practices, which for both groups traditionally included platform funerals; he also mentions that, at the time, settled *Kubu* peoples were more commonly replacing this with ground burial (Dongen 1910:239). In some areas, van Dongen writes that platform burials were

combined with a form of cremation, while the ‘wild *Kubu*’ (*Orang Hutan*) along the *Ikan Lebor* River in South Sumatra also performed spoke-frame tree burials (Dongen 1910:239).

During two brief visits to an *Orang Hutan* camp, along the *Ridan* River (a tributary of the *Musi*) in early 1906, van Dongen took note of digging for wild yams and a prohibition on hunting elephants that is not present among settled *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples (Dongen 1906:238). He also wrote of a unique taboo on growing and eating rice, largely, as a strategy to avoid contact with smallpox (Dongen 1906:238-9). In contrast to his experience with the settled *Kubu*, van Dongen was unable to elicit any information regarding their spiritual beliefs, and that they did not have any was affirmed by their *Melayu* patrons, and nearby ‘tame’ *Orang Batin Kubu* (Dongen 1906:250).¹⁸ During his visit, van Dongen wrote that they stood in front of him “trembling with fright”, and during his questioning of their spiritual beliefs, was met with “uncomprehending stares” (Dongen 1906:253). Upon telling them of some of the religious beliefs of the surrounding ‘tame’ *Kubu* peoples, “they looked in wonderment and listened like children to a fairy tale, often with wide open mouths” (Dongen 1906:252-253). The only trace of religion that van Dongen could discover was their practice of building a wooden palisade upon which they placed the body before abandoning the location of death (Dongen 1906:251).

A couple of years after van Dongen’s account of the *Ridan Kubu*, the German anthropologist Bernard Hagen published *Die Orang Kubu auf Sumatra*, which is still the only book published on the *Kubu* (Hagen 1908). Hagen combined a summary of previous work published on settled *Kubu* (mainly van Dongen) with his own observations, made during a two-week visit to *Orang Batin Kubu* settlements in the *Koeboestrecken* district, and attempted to paint a picture of what he believed to be the pre-Malay aboriginal people of Sumatra. On the basis of their simple material culture, and what he believed to be their lack of social institutions and religious beliefs, Hagen placed the *Kubu* in the pre-matriarchal stage of development, the lowest rung on the ladder of the social evolutionary framework of the time.¹⁹ While unable to visit Sumatra, the German anthropologist Wilhelm Volz contributed several articles supporting Hagen’s claim, as did van Dongen, based largely on what they believed to be the undeveloped religious beliefs of the wild *Kubu* (Dongen 1913; Volz 1908-9; Volz 1909; Volz 1911; Volz 1922).

Nearly two decades later, an alternative hypothesis of *Kubu* origins was given by the Swiss anthropologist Paul Schebesta, who had lived for 16 months with the Semang,

and more briefly with other Malayic forest peoples on the Malay Peninsula (Schebesta 1928; Schebesta 1936).²⁰ Having read the published accounts, Schebesta made the trip to Sumatra and was able to spend three weeks visiting ‘tame’ *Orang Batin Kubu* camps in South Sumatra and Jambi. Far from being aboriginal hunters and gatherers, as he believed to be the case with the Semang, Schebesta writes that the *Kubu*, and the *Jakun* in Southern Malaysia, were of Proto-Malay origin or some of the first Malay-speaking peoples to settle in the two regions.²¹ According to Schebesta, both peoples possessed an agricultural background, but at different points in their history regressed or were driven to a nomadic life due to the depredations of the Malay, which included slavery, disease, economic exploitation and warfare (Schebesta 1925; Schebesta 1926). According to Schebesta,

While the true Malay has experienced change through the Hindu (Javanese) and Islamic influence, the *Kubu* and the *Jakun* have remained untouched and have kept to the purer Malayic culture-type. Today they are what the Malay had been 500 or more years ago. (Schebesta 1926)

Schebesta argued this claim by outlining the core similarities that exist between the *Kubu*, *Jakun* and village *Malay* in regards to their traditional economies, technologies (dwellings, basket and mat weaving, use of dammar resin for lighting, and weaponry), social organization, leadership structure, language, and religious beliefs (conceptions of the soul, shamanism, and the afterlife) (Schebesta 1926). According to Schebesta, the nomadic ‘wild’ *Kubu* visited by van Dongen were an anomaly caused by years of slave raids, and, by any means, he did not believe there to be any *Kubu* groups who still maintained a nomadic way of life.

The wild *Ridan Kubu* can be explained as a kind of degeneration phenomenon. They do not exist today, and earlier there was only a scent about them, which stemmed from the Malays. A truly nomadic people similar to the *Negrito* do not become a sedentary agricultural people, as the *Kubu* in fact are, within a few decades. If a people returns to an earlier level, it is because of unavoidable outside circumstances – as is the case with the *Kubu*. (Schebesta 1926)

In a lengthy response to Schebesta, van Dongen disagreed that the *Kubu* were degenerate swidden farmers, or the ‘wild’ *Kubu* a historical anomaly (1931). While he agreed that the ‘tame’ *Kubu* had some sort of religious beliefs, he did not believe this applied to the wild *Kubu*, nor did he believe they should be removed from the bottom rung of the social evolutionary ladder (Dongen 1931). Ultimately, van Dongen writes, “Schebesta, as a catholic priest, was biased towards evolutionary

theories, and his limited time in the area did not qualify him to speak with any authority on the matter.” (Dongen 1931 from Sandbukt 1982)²²

Meanwhile, several accounts by Dutch officials of encounters with ‘wild’ *Kubu* began to filter in, with hints that they had at least some religious belief in a spiritual hornbill, and that they performed healing ceremonies (Adam 1928; Waterschoot van der Gracht 1915).²³ With the debate shifting to one of semantics and what actually constituted religion, the question of whether the *Kubu* represented pre-matriarchal/pre-religious nomads or degenerate swidden agriculturists ended in the pre-war period without anyone being able to spend more than several quiet days with the ‘wild’ *Kubu*.

The Recent Debate on the Origins of Southeast Asian Hunter-Gatherers

In the post-war era, the debate over whether or not the *Orang Rimba* have a religion has finally ended; however, similar questions surrounding their origins remain. According to Peter Bellwood, the hunter-gatherers occupying the rainforests of Southeast Asia could have either survived assimilation or adapted from the ever-expanding agricultural economies of the Austronesians (Bellwood 1985). On the basis of racial and linguistic characteristics, Bellwood believes that Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples, such as the Semang in Malaysia and the Agte in the Philippines, represent an ancient stratum of hunter-gatherers in the region (Bellwood 1985). He believes that the Indonesian cases, such as the *Penan* and the *Kubu*, who are both Austronesian speakers and racially Malay, probably adopted their way of life as a result of a change from agricultural ancestry (Bellwood 1985).

Bellwood bases these claims on Austronesian linguistic reconstructions, archeological remains, and cultural affinities made by Fox and others, which trace the initial Austronesian expansion into the Indo-Malay archipelago from Taiwan around 4000 BC, and then outward around 3000 BC through the Philippines, the northern half of Borneo, Sulawesi, central Java, and Eastern Indonesia. Shortly after this expansion, there was further movement south into Borneo and western Java, with Malay-speaking peoples migrating from the Western part of Borneo to Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula (Bellwood 1997:118). If the linguistic reconstructions are correct, when the first Austronesians expanded into the Indo-Malaysian archipelago, they most likely carried with them a full agricultural economy including tuberous crops (taro, yams, sugar cane, bananas) and rice, and domesticated animals, with certain modifications and adaptations occurring to exploit and fill ecological niches in new locations. According to Bellwood, founder rank enhancement may have been one force pushing the Austronesian

expansion, whereby junior founders moving into relative or absolute isolation could establish themselves as founders and senior lines, and ensure autonomy or privileges for their descendants (Bellwood 1996:19). While Bellwood believes that those who expanded into the archipelago must have had at their disposal a mixed economy that included foraging strategies enabling some to exploit new environments, he does not believe that it initially included independent hunting and gathering.²⁴

As Sather points out, rather than a clear dichotomy between agriculture and foraging, the initial Austronesian expansion into the rainforest probably involved a wide range of food producing and foraging, independent foraging, and mixed economies alike (Sather 1995). The expansion of those with mixed economies into forested environments probably introduced foragers into a diverse economy, offered new technological innovations, and made foraging and the trade in forest products more effective and profitable (Sather 1995). As the regional demand for forest products rose, forest hunter-gatherers like the *Penan* probably established trading ties with stratified societies (Sather 1995). Historically engaged in the forest trade themselves, larger and more egalitarian groups like the *Iban* were probably seen as trade competitors as well as threats to their cultural autonomy (Sather 1995). By forming ties with stratified long house communities, who were more interested in maintaining trade relations rather than absorbing them culturally, the *Penan* were able to secure markets for their forest products, as well as maintain their own cultural boundaries (Sather 1995). Benjamin explores some of the economic adaptations that may have occurred among Austro-Asiatic and Malayic peoples in Malaysia, while similar issues may have been involved among Malayic peoples in Sumatra (Benjamin 1986).

While archeological evidence in Borneo and Sumatra is scanty, it does suggest a long history of foraging and possibly swidden gardening on both islands prior to the arrival of the Austronesians, which certainly adds an interesting dimension to the equation. However, in contrast to Malaysia, there is no linguistic evidence for non-Austronesian speaking peoples in Sumatra, and if present when the Austronesians began arriving, they were apparently absorbed into the Malay stream of language and culture.

Post-war Anthropology Surrounding the *Kubu*

The first published accounts of the *Kubu* in the post-war era come from the Polish anthropologist Janusz Kamocki, who in 1970 visited several *Orang Batin Kubu* camps along the *Medak* River, a tributary of the *Lalan* River in the *Banjung Lintjir* district of South Sumatra (Kamocki 1972; Kamocki 1975; Kamocki 1987). Kamocki does not say

how long he stayed with the *Medak River Kubu*; however, it was probably a short time, as he only gives a general overview of their material culture. Kamocki's 1972 article does include an interesting description of the nomadic dimension of the *Orang Batin Kubu* economy, made from an extended forest foraging trip. In 1979–80, the Norwegian anthropologist Oyvind Sandbukt became the first anthropologist to conduct lengthy research among the *Orang Rimba*, primarily with camps in the southern *Air Hitam* region of *Bukit Duabelas*. During the first nine months of his year-long research, he had difficulty establishing rapport with camps. Eventually he established cordial relations and based himself on the far fringe of a camp (he mentions a one-hour walk), and he was able to collect a great deal of information during the last few months of his research. Sandbukt has published three articles on the topics of *Orang Rimba* cosmology and religion, economy, and trade and gender relations.

In the article “Kubu Conceptions of Reality”, Sandbukt describes some of the forest–village divisions inherent in *Orang Rimba* cosmology and religious beliefs and gives a general outline of some of their gods, rituals and shamanistic practices (Sandbukt 1984). In “Resource Constraints and Relations of Appropriation Among Tropical Foragers”, he provides a lengthy description of their economy, while more broadly fitting them into Woodburn's graded delayed-return forager classification (Sandbukt 1988b; Woodburn 1980).²⁵ Here Sandbukt suggests the delayed-return aspects of the *Orang Rimba* economy (swidden farming, trapping, processing and storing food) are “facilitated and even determined by their socio-political organization” and relations with outsiders. In “Tributary tradition and relations of affinity and gender among the Sumatran Kubu”, Sandbukt briefly examines some of the ways in which tribute and trade relations may have influenced *Orang Rimba* gender relations, leadership structure, and system of law (Sandbukt 1988a).

Sandbukt has also published three minor articles, which include some of his initial reflections following fieldwork (1982), status and rank in the historical context of Jambi (1991), and a summary of the effects of logging on the *Orang Rimba* in an indigenous rights magazine (2000). In the *Indigenous Affairs* article, Sandbukt makes the rather bold claim that “there is no ecological imperative to *Orang Rimba* nomadism ... (rather) it must be an adaptation to the exigencies of living within confined spaces that are claimed as territories by exploitative and hostile village communities.” (2000:41) Since his initial research period, Sandbukt has worked as a consultant authoring World Bank reports on the negative effects of transmigration on the *Orang Rimba* and their dependence on the *Kerenci Seblat* National Park. He currently serves as

an advisor for WARSI's 'Habitat and Resource Management for the Kubu Project' in *Bukit Duabelas*.

The Dutch anthropologist Gerard Persoon has published several general articles on the *Kubu*. On the basis of brief visits to different camps throughout the region, he gives a general overview of *Kubu* lives and explores some of the negative effects of logging, plantations, and an encroaching outside world on the *Kubu* way of life (1989; 1991; 2000). Since Sandbukt, the *Melayu* anthropologist Muntholib Soetomo has performed extended fieldwork with the downstream *Makekal Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas*, which served as the basis for a Ph.D. thesis at the *Universitas Padjadjaran Bandung* in West Java (Soetomo 1995). Soetomo's thesis gives a very general and broad account of *Orang Rimba* life and is limited in many respects, probably because the time he spent with the *Orang Rimba* in the forests was quite short. Regardless, his thesis contains a great deal of interesting data on *Orang Rimba* customs and *adat* legal codes.

The only other non-Indonesian anthropologist to spend time with the *Orang Rimba* is the American anthropologist Ramsey Elkholy. In 1995, Elkholy spent 20 months conducting fieldwork for a doctoral thesis with the northernmost groups who live in the buffer zone of the *Bukit Tigapuluh* national park along the border of Jambi and Riau. The camp that Elkholy spent the majority of his time with had apparently migrated from the *Telah* watershed during the 1960s or 70s, after their traditional forests had been clear-cut and targeted for the *Hitam Hulu* transmigration site. This camp traditionally lived in the neighbouring watershed to the west of the *Makekal* and *Bernai* Rivers where I conducted my research. Based on the accounts of elders along the *Makekal*, in the past, there was some intermarriage with these peoples, so their general system of beliefs should be somewhat similar to those described in this thesis. Elkholy's research investigates the *Orang Rimba's* attachment to the forests from a phenomenological perspective, and should add to the knowledge of *Orang Rimba* peoples outside of the *Bukit Duabelas* region. Elkholy's only published work is a contribution to the International Encyclopaedia of Sexuality concerning *Orang Rimba* gender roles and sexual practices (Elkholy 2001).²⁶

Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

Objective and Goals of the Thesis:

A primary goal of this thesis is to describe some of the key social and religious beliefs of the *Orang Rimba* along the *Makekal* River, how they relate to the management of forest resources, and some of the key beliefs and rituals surrounding the annual season of fruits. I explore some of the key concepts, structural categories and metaphors that run through *Orang Rimba* social and religious beliefs, how they influence their worldview and relations among themselves as well as with the outside world. Further themes are the interrelation between religious beliefs and gender and social relations, maintenance of ethnic boundaries with outsiders, and the importance of these issues to *Orang Rimba* social identity.

A broader theme is the comparison of *Orang Rimba* social and religious beliefs with those of other Malayic, Austronesian, and Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples in the region. This is largely done in the footnotes. As James Fox points out, “the extent to which similarities are discernable across the broad range of Austronesian societies may be indicative of the sharing of fundamental cultural conceptions that constitute some of the epistemic ideas of the Austronesians” (Fox 1980b:333; Fox 1996a:4). Similarities and differences are examined in the context of kin categories, social relations, terms for the home, structure of origin stories, core aspects of religious belief, and use of botanic metaphor. While *Orang Rimba* beliefs are by no means static, and have always been influenced by their *Melayu* neighbors, their strong boundaries with the outside world have allowed them to maintain a degree of separation, resist religious conversion, and continue to practice what they consider to be the original ‘forest’ religion and way of life in the heart of *Melayu* Sumatra. Their social and religious beliefs may offer a localized ‘forest-oriented’ glimpse into some of the ‘general’ patterns of belief that may have been more common among forest-oriented Malayic peoples in the past, in a location where there are no longer any non-Austronesian speaking peoples.

Unless otherwise indicated, the term ‘Malay’ is used in reference to the village Malay proper who live in Malaysia, of whom a great deal has been written. The term ‘*Melayu*’ is always used as the local term for culturally related peoples in eastern Sumatra, of whom very little has been written. While village Malay peoples throughout Sumatra, Malaysia and Borneo certainly have their own localized beliefs, customs, (*adat*) and social identities, from an anthropological perspective they also appear to have very similar social patterns, and traditional religious beliefs, particularly peoples

who live in eastern Sumatra and Malaysia.²⁷ The term ‘Malayic’ is a linguistic term used for peoples throughout Sumatra, Malaysia, and Borneo who speak dialects of the Malay language, and who also have ‘broad’ social and cultural affinities, which together with some of the linguistic evidence, may suggest common ancestry in the distant past, possibly in Western Borneo (Adelaar 1992; Adelaar 1993; Adelaar 1995; Sather 1995). Throughout the thesis, I use the term ‘Malayic’ in the manner that James Fox and others use the linguistic term ‘Austronesian’, from a cultural and comparative perspective (Fox 1995). The term ‘Austro-Asiatic’ is used in a similar manner to differentiate peoples in Malaysia, most of whom speak variants of Mon-Khmer languages, from Malayic and Austronesian-speaking peoples.

The Study of the Traditional Folk Religions of Malayic and Austro-Asiatic Peoples in Malaysia and Sumatra

The traditional folk religions of peoples on the Malay Peninsula have attracted researchers and writers for over a century, and provide a good comparative baseline for an examination of the *Orang Rimba* religion. Skeat’s *Malay Magic* and two-volume set with Blagden provide a treasure trove of information about the traditional religious beliefs of the Malay, and other Malayic and Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples on the Malay Peninsula at the turn of the 20th century (1900; 1906a; 1906b). Influenced by Tylor’s *Primitive Religion*, Skeat believed the soul or rather its essence (*semangat*), in its various forms, was central to understanding traditional Malay folk religion or ‘Malay magic’ (Skeat 1900:579; Tylor 1873).²⁸ Annadale and Robinson, Cuisnier, Winstedt, Firth, Osman and others have examined Malay conceptions of the soul, and many of the key concepts of traditional Malay religious beliefs through lengthy descriptions of magic, shamanism, and rituals surrounding healing ceremonies and swidden farming (Annandale 1903; Annandale 1904; Cuisnier 1951; Firth 1996; Osman 1989; Winstedt 1924; Winstedt 1961). Drawing on some of the earlier writings, Endicott organizes and arranges many of the key concepts in the Malay folk religion according to a more ‘traditional order’ (Endicott 1970). He structurally examines different categories, and provides insight into the relationship between their conceptions of the soul, the terms *keremat* and *badi*, different categories of spirits, and how some of these concepts are manipulated through magic and ritual (Endicott 1970). More recently, Laderman has examined traditional Malay religious beliefs surrounding the hot:cold opposition and its relation to Islamic notions of humoralism and health in the context of Malay healing ceremonies (Laderman 1991).

In Sumatra, several academics have examined the traditional religious beliefs of Malay-speaking peoples in the highlands of South Sumatra and the interior forests of Riau. Collins examines some of the key traditional religious concepts (*adat, ilmu, sakti*, shamanism, and the realms of *rezeki*) of the *Besemah*, while Sakai examines some of the *Gumai*, in the context of the structure of their origin stories (Collins 1979; Sakai 1999). More recently, Kang, Effendy and Porath have investigated some of the traditional religious beliefs of the *Petalangan* and *Sakai*, Malayic swidden farmers who live in central and northern Riau (Effendy 1997; Effendy 2002; Porath 2003). Kang uses social relations as the baseline for a linguistic analysis of the structure of *Petalangan* ritual speech, while Porath examines the therapeutic value of *Sakai* shamanism in relation to individual and group identity (Kang 2001; Kang 2002a; Kang 2002b; Kang 2002c; Kang 2003). Bakels, Barendregt and others have examined some Malayic beliefs surrounding the tiger spirit and *silat* arts of peoples in Kerenci and Minangkabau (Bakels 1994; Bakels 1995; Barendregt 1995; Wessing 1986).

In regard to broad similarities and differences between the religious systems of the *Malay, Temiar* and *Semang*, Benjamin writes, “*Orang Asli* and Malay folk religion are obviously ethnologically cognate in the sense that they derive, in large part, from a common cultural matrix...but the various religious systems differ in the organizations and uses made of their otherwise very similar underlying ideas” (Benjamin 1979:9). According to Benjamin, the Malay cosmos “is structured according to an in/out or man/world axis”, in which the traditional spirits occupy subordinate positions under Allah, within the larger framework of Islam (Benjamin 1979). Malay shamans do not conduct rituals on behalf or for the good of the larger community, but are often rather marginalized members of their communities, and are divided according to a profession of selling magic for purposes of ‘soul fixing’ or mediating with the spirit world on behalf of clients, usually in the context of healing ceremonies (Benjamin 1979). The latter do not conduct soul travel, but rather manipulate relationships with subordinated familiar spirits, which are closely related to the spirits of the dead or ghosts, in order to draw other allied spirits to the location of the ceremony to identify the spirit that has caused the sickness in the patient. Many rural Malays still have a high concern for appeasing and chasing away earthbound spirits and ghosts, particularly when opening a swidden field, and often prior to performing a ritual to call the soul of rice to the plants in the field.

The *Semang* cosmic axis, on the other hand, is “up/down or man/god oriented”, with shamans acting more as priests or intermediaries with their gods on behalf and for

the good of the larger community (Benjamin 1979:15-18). *Semang* shamans also act as healers. However, their main role is to manipulate relations with heavenly spirit intermediaries during soul travel to their heaven, so they can intercede with other deities and ensure the continuity of the seasonal cycle of thunder, rain, plant fertility, honey, and the annual season of fruits in the forests. As Benjamin and Endicott have written, this is done by maintaining a proper circulation of vital essence, largely through blood sacrifice or human bloodletting, which is stored up by their creator in heavenly fruit blossoms and transferred to fruit trees in the forests during the annual fruiting season (Benjamin 1979:18; Endicott 1979). The *Semang* believe that failure to carry out this ritual would lead to failure of the natural seasonal cycle upon which *Semang* life depends (Endicott 1979; Benjamin 1979). For the *Semang*, appeasement of earthbound spirits or 'soul fixing' through the use of magic is less of a concern (Benjamin 1979; Endicott 1979a).

The *Orang Rimba* religion draws from an underlying system of Malay beliefs, which are configured in a way to address their primary concerns in the forests, which are very similar to those of the *Semang*. The broader orientation of their religion combines a horizontal (man/world) dimension of concern that is very similar to that of the Malay with a more dominant vertical (man/god) relationship with the gods, while some of their primary rituals serve to ensure the seasonal cycle of rains, honey and fruits, for the good of the larger community. This thesis examines *Orang Rimba* conceptions of soul matter and its relationship with health, entities in the sacred and mundane realms of existence, the term *ker'emat* ('sacred' or 'holy'), and how some of these beliefs are arranged in their cosmology. How are some of these notions interrelated with primary rituals which serve to maintain the forest ecosystem, and how are religious beliefs interrelated with the management of forest resources? How do men acquire religious knowledge, manipulate relationships with the spirits and gods, and how do some of these issues fit within the context of their *adat*?

Maintaining the Adat of the Ancestors

Throughout the region, the Arabic-derived term *adat* is used to broadly define traditional beliefs, customs and traditions. In some contexts, *adat* can refer to a people's communal territory, and the traditional customary laws of a community, ethnic group, and sometimes a larger region. In Jambi, these customs, rules and laws are often embedded in rhythmical couplets, aphorisms, proverbs, and analogies called *seleko adat*.²⁹ Some of the beliefs embedded in *seleko adat* relate to the management of

resources, kinship, residence and inheritance patterns, and life stage rituals surrounding birth, marriage and death. *Adat* can also refer to a people's traditional dress, home, way of life, ethics, and proper behavior. For the *Melayu*, the term is sometimes used in reference to the traditional religious beliefs (*perpercayaan*) surrounding spirits or ghosts, swidden farming and healing ceremonies, but are often subordinate to, and mutually defined by, their larger Islamic beliefs and religion (*agama*) (Kipp 1987:4).

For many non-Islamic and minority peoples in the region, *adat* is a much more wide-ranging and inclusive concept that incorporates some of the above into the overall balance of their traditional spiritual orders (Atkinson 1987; Jensen 1974:111; Kipp 1987; Weinstock 1987:74). For the *Orang Rimba*, *adat* is an all-encompassing system of knowledge, laws and beliefs that governs their way of life in the forests and their larger worldview. These beliefs and laws, believed to be handed down by the ancestors, exist to maintain the overall balance and order (*keselematon*) of the *Orang Rimba*'s material and spiritual lives in the forests, and serve to ensure harmonious relations between entities on earth (animals, plants, objects, spirits) and the gods in heaven. *Adat* is intertwined with the balance of life in the forests, the proper functioning of the forest ecosystem, a bountiful harvest in the swidden, and issues of health, fertility, luck, and the overall prosperity of the community. Whenever something goes wrong, it is believed someone has diverged from or disrupted the balance and order of *adat* (*mer'uba adat*), which can disturb the lesser gods and/or the creator of the universe, and lead to misfortune. This can occur when someone breaks any of the rules and laws of the ancestors, engages in improper social relations, particularly between men and women, commits incest or adultery, lies, steals, has an argument, uses black magic, fights, or injures another.

Another common way for the harmony of *adat* to be disturbed is by diverging from, confusing, or crossing back and forth between the realms of forest and village *adat* (*mer'uba halom*). While the *Makekal Orang Rimba* believe themselves to share common ancestry with the *Melayu*, they clearly conceptualize the forest and village as two separate *adat* realms of existence, delineated by the contours of the forests, which according to the wishes of their ancestors and gods should be kept separate, and not confused or crossed over. The *Orang Rimba* strongly believe that their life in the forests can only continue if they maintain good relations with their gods, uphold their *adat*, and follow the numerous prohibitions which ensure the purity of their way of life.

Cultural and Ethnic Boundaries and Social Identity

The strong concern for maintaining distinct ethnic and indigeneous identities is characteristic of many peoples in the Malay world. What is unique about Eastern Sumatra is that here ethnicity tends to be established within a relatively homogeneous population in which minority tribal peoples are closely related Malayic peoples. Throughout their history in the region, these peoples have been subject to strong pressure from their *Melayu* neighbors through rank and tribute relations, debt bondage, and slavery to be incorporated into the political-economic hierarchy, and socio-religious world of the *Melayu*. These days, there is still strong pressure from the surrounding *Melayu* and the Indonesian government for them to settle outside the forests and enter Islam.³⁰ However, the *Orang Rimba* still adamantly resist settlement and social and religious conversion (*masuk Melayu*). They have been able to maintain their social, cultural and religious autonomy in the face of large-scale deforestation, and in many cases, the breakdown of their economic base, by maintaining some of the most intensive cultural and ethnic boundaries practiced in Southeast Asia.

Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1969) was influential in dispelling the notion that cultures and societies are objectively bounded, or held together by primordial ethnic bonds, and instead put the primary emphasis on the interface and interdependency of ethnic and cultural groups. Contrary to what a group of people might claim, "categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information"; often quite the opposite is the case, particularly when strong ethnic boundaries are maintained (Barth 1969:9). Being essentially interdependent, ethnic identities are the product of continuous ascriptions and self-ascriptions (such as livelihood, language, food, dress, the home, social relations, law, religion, ritual and related prohibitions), and *become* and are maintained through relational processes of inclusion and exclusion (Barth 1969).³¹ Since Barth, much of the related work on this topic has been situational or context-oriented, and through a variety of approaches (deconstructionist, structural, symbolic) has examined the relationship between social identity, notions of ethnicity, ethnic boundaries.³²

Strong cultural and ethnic boundaries often form in the historical context of power relations between a dominant society and minority communities, and can be used by the latter as a means of resistance, cultural perseverance, autonomy and even survival. Cohen writes that, "communities often mobilize themselves by representing themselves as having clear boundaries that are *endangered*, which are under threat from

the outside” (Cohen 1985; Cohen 1986). According to Stuart Hall, “Cultural identities come from somewhere, they have histories...far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power (Hall 1990). Tania Murray Li writes that, “when tribal or ethnic boundaries are clearly marked, they can usually be traced to specific histories of confrontation and engagement...a group’s self-identification is not natural or inevitable, but neither invented nor imposed. It is positioning which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes and repertoires of meaning and emerges through particular practices of engagement and struggle.” (Li 2000:151) Harris has described some of the ways that material conditions of life can influence cultural practices, which are interrelated with identity issues and ethnic boundaries, while Douglas describes how issues of identity perseverance can be symbolically reflected in a people’s customs in the form of purity and pollution beliefs (Douglas 1966; Harris 1975). Others have written how the symbolic systems on which boundaries are based are never merely reflections of the world, and can sometimes include ecological models that provide criteria for simplification or make sense out of how things work in the world.

As with forest-oriented Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia, the foraging aspects of the *Orang Rimba* economy, ‘switches’ in their social organization, and the orientation and importance of maintaining their religious beliefs have helped prevent them from being drawn into a process of peasantation, and being assimilated into the *Melayu* socio-religious world (Benjamin 1979; Benjamin 2002). In the traditional context, their economy is self-sufficient and has the ‘ability’ to be completely detached from the regional economy, encouraging the development of a mindset of autonomy and independence. Aspects of their social organization and the strict rules surrounding endogamous marriage strongly discourage intermarriage between the *Orang Rimba* and *Melayu*. However, in contrast to Austro-Asiatic peoples on the Malay Peninsula, who to varying extents are racially, linguistically and culturally more distinct from their Malay neighbors, the *Orang Rimba* go to greater lengths to distinguish themselves through a wide variety of ethnic markers and *adat* customs, rules, and prohibitions. In many instances they embrace shared concepts – when to their advantage, while at other times they play upon them to establish irrevocable differences based on their unique way of life in the forests, and a fear of disturbing the order of *adat*, their ancestors, and the fragile relationships with their gods. These differences are particularly relevant within their own communities, as they make strong attempts to minimize their social existence in the eyes of the surrounding *Melayu*.

Traditional prohibitions (*pantangon*) include taboos on raising or eating domestic animals, using soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and in the recent past, planting or harvesting Brazilian rubber. Some along the upstream *Makekal* still put pressure on young boys to wear the loincloth, while it is customary for adult women to go topless, exposing their breasts as a symbol of female adulthood. Many encourage the use of traditional materials to build their homes, and restrict the use of some outside technologies. More generally, prohibitions restrict any close relations with outsiders and travel outside the forests, particularly with their women and children. Travel outside the forests is discouraged through a belief that gods of sickness frequent the rivers surrounding the downstream villages, and many along the *Makekal* still apply prohibitions, which quarantine new arrivals from outside the forests. Throughout the thesis, I explore how some of these prohibitions are interrelated with issues of purity and pollution to ensure prosperity in the community by maintaining good relations with the gods and to establish difference with the *Melayu* in order to reinforce their social identity and traditional way of life.

The idea of ‘borders’ is a popular metaphor for examining the topic of social identities and ethnicity. The work of Renato Rosaldo has served as a model for the metaphorical extension of the border image to think about negotiated identities of all sorts (Rosaldo 1989; Rosaldo 2003). While many have applied these ideas to national borders, relations to the state, and issues of citizenship, they can also be applied on a smaller scale, to the realms of territoriality and social space. I examine the notion of borders in the context of the physical, spiritual and symbolic borders that exist between the forest and village, and explore how some of the issues are reflected in *Orang Rimba* religious beliefs and cosmology. I use the term ‘boundary crossers’ to refer to *Orang Rimba* who pass between the realms of the forest and village, and as a result can acquire varying levels of impurity.

Oppositional Asymmetries, the Notion of Precedence, Botanic Metaphor and Origins

Structural analysis can provide insight into how people arrange and organize their social relations, religious beliefs and their worldview. It can also be a means to examine how people construct and maintain their social identity and their ethnic boundaries with others. One of the most basic manners in which conceptual domains are organized is upon dualisms, around which relational and symbolic categories are arranged (Needham 1973; Needham 1979; Turner 1967). James Fox combines this type of analysis with the notion of precedence, in which one side of an asymmetrical opposition or plurality of

oppositions is given primacy or value over the others (Fox 1989; Fox 1990:7). Some of these notions can be linguistically expressed through common metaphors and a wide variety of other different operators, which are often socially asserted claims to difference. These claims often involve an affirmation of some sort of “superiority” and/or “priority” in time, social or moral value, position, place, rank or relations in a society, or between societies (Fox 1996b:131). Fox has described some of the more prominent ways that precedence can be linguistically constructed and expressed in different Austronesian societies, with recourse to a variety of common complementary categories. Some of these include directional and spatial coordinates, male/female, elder/younger, first-born/ last-born, inside/outside, prior/after, trunk/tip, intellect/reason, and hot/cold (Fox 1980; Fox 1996b:131; Fox 1989:44). As Fox points out, “Different operators may be invoked to create alternative forms of precedence in a variety of different contexts.” (Fox 1996b:131)

One of the most common and socially precedent metaphors for Austronesian peoples is the botanic metaphor, which is often used to express primary social relations among kin and between societies, and can be reflected in terms for parts of the home, places, or ritual practices (Conklin 1964; Firth 1936; Fox 1971; Fox 1980a; Fox 1993; Grimes 1997; Rosaldo 1980; Rosaldo 1975; Sather 1996).³³ Some of these issues have been examined in the context of alliances formed through marriage (‘the flow of women’), ritual speech, and claims to place and relations among peoples through the structure of origin stories (Fox 1988; Fox 1996b; Fox 1997; McWilliam 1989; Rueter 1992; Sakai 1999). This thesis examines some of these notions within *Orang Rimba* social relations, origin stories, religion and ritual. How are notions of common origins and shared beliefs manipulated to establish difference, precedence, and place in the region? How are these ideas interrelated with notions of social identity and ethnic boundaries with outsiders? How do the *Orang Rimba* arrange and express important social relationships through botanic metaphor?

Forest–Village, Upstream–Downstream, Mobility–Sedentism and the Emotions of Fear

People’s conceptualizations and orderings of space can be useful towards understanding the creation of locative identities and ideas about relations with outsiders (Fox 1997:4). Throughout the wider region, generalized terms and labels for different peoples are often based on spatialized representations or geographical features in the landscape such as the land and sea, proximity to civilization, the forest and village, and the directional flows of rivers. These representations can have a strong impact on the ordering of

cosmologies, social and moral orders, social identity, and representations of others. In this thesis, I examine the notion of precedence in the context of some of the primary spatial and orientational contrasts around which the *Orang Rimba* worldview and cosmology are arranged. Some of these contrasts relate to the forest (*rimba*) and village (*dusun/keluaron*), the flow of the rivers (*hulu/hilir*), the realms of the spiritual (*halom huluy/dewo*) and mundane (*halom cabu/kasar*), mobility and sedentism, and related notions of sickness and health.

The forest:village division is a fundamental contrast in the minds of Malayic peoples, and a primary division in the minds of the *Orang Rimba*. For village Malay throughout eastern Sumatra and Malaysia, the forests are often perceived as a wild, unknown, and dangerous realm of existence, lying outside the boundaries of village ‘adat’, and presided over by an ancient order of dangerous forest spirits (Annandale 1903:101; Benjamin 1967; Collins 1979:304; Endicott 1970:64; Endicott 1979b:220). While many rural *Melayu* in Jambi nostalgically associate the *Orang Rimba* with the old ways of the forests and its powerful knowledge or magic, they also perceive them as socially inferior, primitive, and non-religious, at least in the Sanskrit sense of the term ‘religion’ (*agama*), in that they still follow the old non-Islamic beliefs (*percayaan*) of their common ancestors. In the opposite manner, the *Orang Rimba* worldview is arranged according to a strong preference for life in the forests, which is associated with safety, purity, health and positive values. For them, the village is associated with danger, impurities, sickness and negative values. Sandbukt writes that these beliefs are elaborated and patterned across key domains in their lives, through different metaphors, analogies and symbols (Sandbukt 1984:86). How the *Orang Rimba* perceive these different and separate domains of life with such ‘power and passion’ is crucial to an understanding of their strict prohibitions, which restrict relations with outsiders (Sandbukt 1984:86).

Closely intertwined with the forest:village division is the primary means by which these two realms are connected, through the flow of the rivers. As Adelaar has written, the flow of the rivers, based on the directional co-ordinates ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’, is the fundamental axis of orientation for Austronesian societies throughout the landlocked interior regions in the western part of the archipelago (Adelaar 1997:53).³⁴ This contrast is particularly prominent in the belief systems, cosmologies, and ritual practice of Austronesian peoples throughout the interior regions of Borneo (personal communication with James Fox; Adelaar 1997; Grimes 1997; Nicolaisen 2003; Sather 1993; Weinstock 1987; Wilder 2003).³⁵ In *Orang Rimba*

cosmology, the rivers are a primary avenue for the interconnection of forests and villages on earth and the heavens, for the flow of ideas, contact and relations with the outside world, as well as means through which the gods of sickness travel from heaven to earth. Beliefs surrounding the flow of the rivers are a dominant feature of *Orang Rimba* cosmology and social and moral orders, and wind their way through their poems, proverbs, and life stage rituals. Beliefs surrounding the flow of the rivers and the gods of sickness are a primary means through which *Orang Rimba* restrict interactions with the outside world.

As with other mobile minority peoples with swidden-based economies, the distinction between mobility and sedentism is a fundamental contrast that runs through the *Orang Rimba* worldview and social identity, and is a key point of contrast between *Orang Rimba* and their more settled neighbors (Benjamin 1979; Helliwell 1992; Helliwell 2001; Tsing 1993).³⁶ The foraging aspects of the *Orang Rimba* economy allow them to live a very self-reliant life in the forests, encouraging the development of an attitude of independence and a preference for mobility. Within the *Orang Rimba*'s economy, there is a strong conceptual division between their two base subsistence strategies, swidden farming (*behumā*) and digging for wild yams (*remayo* or *bebenor*), which assigns precedence in value to the latter despite its perceived difficulty. Within their swidden-farming practices, there is a further conceptual distinction between gardens planted with tuberous crops (*human tanohmon*) and dry rice (*huma padi*), which assigns precedence and preference to tuberous swidden gardens. Mobility is reinforced through religious prohibitions on raising and eating domestic animals, which are intertwined with notions of purity and pollution, and through the *melangun* mourning requirement, which requires a camp to abandon their swidden and switch to a nomadic way of life following the death of a member of camp.

The 'passion' Sandbukt refers to above is important towards better understanding the manner in which the *Orang Rimba* conceptualize and maintain their social and religious beliefs, create difference, and enforce ethnic boundaries with outsiders. While *Orang Rimba* terms and concepts surrounding their patterns of emotions are very similar to other Malayic peoples, the range in which they are felt and are allowed to be culturally expressed strongly distinguishes them from the surrounding *Melayu* (Banks 1983; Goddard 1996; Kang 2002c; Karim 1990a; Karim 1990b). One of the bases for this difference relates to their heightened notions of fear, and its prominence in their patterns of emotions. In a manner very similar to the Semai, *Orang Rimba* parents install a sense of fear of the outside world in their children's minds at a

very young age; this sense of fear is nurtured by adult men, camp leaders, and shamans (Dentan 1968; Geertz 1959; Robarchek 1979). Women and children are taught to run to the forests whenever an outsider arrives, and in the traditional context are not allowed to engage in close interactions with outsiders or travel to the village. More generally, most will become highly passionate and grossly exaggerate a scenario that involves only a minor accident or crisis, particularly when that incident involves an outsider.

The *Orang Rimba*'s emotions are prominent in the context of their religious beliefs, and their high concern for following religious prohibitions, which serve to maintain community health and good relations with their gods. The range of their emotions is relevant in the context of their history, and may have partially served as a means to ensure safety (from slave raids and pandemic disease) and cultural and political autonomy in a very assimilative *Melayu* world. The *Orang Rimba*'s emotions may also partially serve to differentiate them from the *Melayu*, and in some cases, inadvertently reinforce their mobility. Their passionate expression of intense emotions occurs while mourning death, which despite similar beliefs surrounding the attachment of the soul to the living for women includes dramatic displays of sobbing, moaning and wailing. In addition to being an effective way to deal with grief, this extreme form of mourning is one reason given to justify movement following death, so that the soul does not dwell on its attachments to the living and remain on earth as a ghost.³⁷ Their passionate expression of intense emotions is also interrelated with gender and power relations. The culturally accepted expression of 'passionate' emotions is generally more common among women, who brandish it to manipulate power relations with men.

Throughout the thesis, I explore how the forest:village, upstream:downstream, and mobility:sedentism contrasts are reflected in *Orang Rimba* beliefs, cosmology, and ritual practice. How are these beliefs reflected in *Orang Rimba* worldview and social and moral orders? How are *adat* prohibitions interrelated with male religious power, and how are some of these issues related to camp power relations, the construction of social identity, and maintaining ethnic boundaries with outsiders?

The Hot:Cold Contrast and the Relation to Health and Religion

Many anthropologists have shown how the hot:cold contrast is a dominant opposition running through the traditional belief systems of Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples on the Malay Peninsula (Endicott 1979b:40; Howell 1984; Laderman 1991; Roseman 1984). Variants of these beliefs appear to wind their way through the belief systems of Malayic and Austronesian peoples throughout the Archipelago, particularly in relation to

childbirth, health and healing (Carsten 1995; Carsten 1997; Laderman 1991; Sather 1996). Laderman writes how Malay notions of health have been influenced by Islamic notions of humoralism (Laderman 1991). Much like other Austro-Asiatic forest peoples, the *Orang Rimba* associate the heat and bright light of the sun with discomfort, misfortune, mortality, sickness and death, and most will make efforts to avoid spending too much time in open forest clearings or hot swiddens.³⁸ The shade and coolness of the forests are associated with comfort, health, fertility, the moon and the gods, and are perceived positively. Endicott, Howell, and others have written how some of these beliefs are reflected in the cosmologies, religious beliefs and moral values of the Semang and the Chewong (Endicott 1979b:40; Howell 1984; Laderman 1991; Roseman 1984).³⁹

The traditional beliefs of the *Orang Rimba* share important characteristics with the traditional beliefs of other Austronesian peoples and forest-oriented Austro-Asiatic peoples; to some extent the similarities may derive from the similarities of the different peoples' lives in the forests. This thesis examines some of the ways these beliefs are interrelated with *Orang Rimba* notions of health, gender and fertility, soul matter, spirits, their cosmology, and are related to the construction of ethnic boundaries.

Social Relations: Gender, Adulthood, Affinity and the Reason:Passion Contrast

Another theme explores how social relations, law, and the management of forest resources are interrelated with religious beliefs. The *Orang Rimba*'s social organization is based on a Malayic system of social terms and concepts that are adapted to fit their small and fluid camp structures, uxorilocal residence patterns, and egalitarian social relations. Some of the broader patterns of their social relations are very similar to those of other bride service societies, with some of the primary organizational features being gender, age, adulthood, and relations of affinity, with adult males achieving additional status and authority in the domains of law and religion (Collier 1981; Marshall 1959; Rosaldo 1980; Turnbull 1961). As with other mobile, egalitarian societies some of the more important social relations take place within the context of 'demand' sharing, and reciprocity (Bird-David 1990; Collier 1981; Dentan 1968:55; Endicott 1988:117; Marshall 1976:288; Peterson 1993; Spencer 1969). Within their system of sharing, *Orang Rimba* women have extraordinary rights (inheritance, management, and distribution) over resources in their customary forests, which include the right to distribute most varieties of game.

Despite their broad rights, women lack the complete status of “social adulthood”, and are perceived socially as children and as minors in the realms of *adat* law and religion (Sacks 1974). Their social relations within and outside their communities are heavily restricted through a system of social values and a convoluted system of law, which is almost exclusively concerned with arranging marriages and strictly shielding female safety, chastity, and rights to resources from an exaggerated threat of a dangerous outside world and all outside males who are not immediate kin. The *Orang Rimba*’s very rigid gender divisions and high concern for law probably has much to do with their history in the region and relations with outsiders, and is a very effective means to guard the core of their society from being absorbed into the larger *Melayu* world. However, within the confines of their own social world, these matters largely relate to internal power issues. This occurs within the context of a cycle of legal hearings, where an accused man can be fined in sheets of cloth for his improper interactions with women, or for violating a woman’s rights to forest resources.⁴⁰ As with many people throughout the region, the structural backdrop for justifying the beliefs surrounding male–female relations are based upon the reason:passion contrast.

The Arabic and Islamic influenced reason (*akal*) and passion (*nafsu*) contrast are key concepts and symbols that run through many domains of life in Malayic, Javanese and Islamic cultures, and are frequently invoked in discussions surrounding the similarities and differences between males and females. According to this concept, men are believed to be innately associated with reason and intellect and to have better balance and control over their emotions than females, while females are associated with emotions, passions and desires. As with other societies in the region, the concepts behind the reason:passion contrast are used by the *Orang Rimba* to argue that females are the spiritually weaker of the two sexes, to categorize women as legal and religious minors, and to justify placing matters of law and religion into the hands of men (Banks 1983; Peletz 1994; Peletz 1996).⁴¹ While the beliefs surrounding this contrast allow men to achieve a limited amount of status and authority within the realms of law and religion, and through these notions acquire additional distribution rights, they do not create an aura of female subordination.

In contrast to the situation among the surrounding *Melayu* and other Malayic and Austronesian peoples in the region, the reason:passion contrast also provides the structural basis and justification for allowing women complete freedom to wield their passions (*nafsu*) towards the men in the household and public eye of the community. This is done on a daily basis to pressure husbands and male in-laws to step up their

work efforts and fulfill their obligations to the household and camp, or to manipulate them in other ways. The women's techniques include seducing and flattering the men, making them feel bad or guilty, threatening to harm themselves, or through argument, yelling, threatening divorce, or insulting, beating or shaming them in front of others. In contrast to other peoples in the region, the high-end range of female passion is expressed for political purposes during legal hearings, and during periods of bereavement following death.

Adult men, on the other hand, portray and carry themselves as the epitome of intellect and reason, and highly pride themselves on these matters, particularly their mastery of *adat* law. The manner in which *Orang Rimba* men express their life, particularly law, through a winding series of analogies, metaphors and proverbs embedded in the patterned rhymes of *seleko adat*, to me, resembled the manner of a classical philosopher. The honing of intellect through memorization, mastery and manipulation of hundreds of *seleko adat* in matters pertaining to everyday life and law is one of the primary ways that in-marrying husbands can establish authority and status in their communities. While men perform analytical debates and are the ultimate decision makers in legal hearings, women are allowed to participate, and strongly influence men through dramatic displays of passion. They also control the cloth. The precedence towards male intellect, and their concern for *adat* law is so prominent in the community in which I lived, that it is reflected in the name of their river region (*Sungoi Mak'ekal*, 'the river of intellect'), and as a result is their primary local identity, *Or'ang Makekal*, 'the people of intellect'. Along the *Makekal*, male intellect is a source of community pride, and is a strong feature of their social identity.

Within the context of their relations and interactions with outsiders, men often carry and express themselves in quite the opposite manner to that described above; this might be described as quiet, depressed, lackadaisical, ignorant, subservient or child-like – and indeed the surrounding *Melayu* tend to perceive them as such. When questioned about their social or religious beliefs, the *Orang Rimba* almost always go into a shell, change the topic, or deny that they have any. As James Scott has described, some of these techniques are “weapons of the weak”, which the *Orang Rimba* sometimes employ to minimize their social existence in a very assimilative *Melayu* world (Scott 1985). In addition to their avoidance techniques, this is also the reason why some of the early European writers and *Melayu* they questioned were unable to find out anything about *Orang Rimba* social or religious beliefs, and believed them to be very simple, or in fact absent.

Gender-Related Food Prohibitions

A great deal has been written on the food classifications and prohibitions of Malayic and Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples on the Malay Peninsula (Dentan 1965; Endicott 1979b; Howell 1984; Laderman 1981; Laderman 1991; Mohd 1978; Provencher 1979). The *Orang Rimba* follow a Malay variant of these beliefs, which restricts or prohibits females (and often children) from eating certain varieties of animals (rodents, civets, otter), fish, frogs, river mollusks (snails, crabs, shrimp), honey (particularly when it is uncooked), bee larvae, and varieties of fruit, primarily because they are believed to be 'hot' foods. Some of these foods are believed to have the potential to negatively affect female fertility, complicate pregnancy or childbirth, and in cases of overindulgence lead to sickness, insanity or accentuate sexual urges. This thesis examines how food prohibitions are interrelated with the *Orang Rimba*'s notions of the hot:cold contrast, soul matter, stamina, social and religious classifications. How are some of these issues interrelated with male and female domains of life, the reason:passion contrast, issues of female health and fertility, and how can they influence gender related rights and distribution patterns?

The Belief and Ritual Surrounding Fruits, Honey and the Annual Season of Fruits

The corpus of beliefs surrounding fruits, honey, and the annual season of fruits is a good context in which to examine some of the primary beliefs and seasonal rituals of the *Orang Rimba* religion. The forest resources of the mixed lowland dipterocarp forests are important to Austro-Asiatic and Austronesian-speaking peoples throughout Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo. However, they are also known for an annual season of flowering and fruiting, during which a high number of dipterocarps blossom, and several months later bear fruit. Several anthropologists have described how the annual season of fruits is a primary focus of the religious belief and seasonal ritual of forest-oriented Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples (such as the Semang, Semai, Temoq, Btsisi, and the Malay-speaking Temuan) on the Malay Peninsula (Benjamin 1979; Endicott 1979b; Laird 2005; Skeat 1906a; Skeat 1906b). However, outside of Malaysia, the *Orang Rimba* appear to be the only Austronesian peoples in Sumatra or Borneo whose ritual system is oriented towards regulating or initiating this important season, its fruits, honey, and migration patterns of the bearded pigs (personal communication with Clifford Sather and Raj Puri).⁴²

This thesis examines how some of these beliefs are interrelated with the *Orang Rimba*'s notions of soul matter, the hot:cold contrast, cosmology and gods, and their ecological understanding of the environment in the forests. How are some of their beliefs similar and different to Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia? How are religious marriage ceremonies, held during the annual season of fruits, interrelated with notions of gender, adulthood, health, fertility, religious purity, and the transfer of religious knowledge between adult males? How are these issues interrelated with the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, gender and power relations, and social identity?

Fieldwork and Methods

This thesis draws from ethnographic research conducted over a period of 20 months with the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* National Park. In September 2002, I conducted a six-week pre-fieldwork visit to Jambi to meet with local academics, government officials, and local NGO workers who had experience working with the *Orang Rimba*. During this time, I made brief visits to *Orang Rimba* camps located south of the *Merangin* River, the southern *Singkut* region, and the *Air Hitam* watershed in the southern region of *Bukit Duabelas*. The bulk of this research took place over an 18-month period from January 2003 to June 2004 in *Bukit Duabelas* national park, primarily with camps located along the mid and upstream regions of the *Makekal* River. At different points during the research, around a month was spent in the *Melayu* village of *Tanah Garo* gathering oral histories and information surrounding their debt bondage relations with the *Makekal Orang Rimba*. Nearly two months were spent with a camp along the downstream *Kajasung Besar* River in the north-central region of *Bukit Duabelas*. Shorter periods were spent with camps in the southern *Air Hitam* Region, the upstream *Kajasung Besar*, *Kajasung Kecil* and *Serenggam* Rivers, as well as the numerous *Melayu* villages surrounding *Bukit Duabelas*. Only brief encounters were made with *Orang Rimba* camps north of the *Tabir* River.

Due to traditional beliefs that restrict interactions with the outside world, conducting research with the *Orang Rimba* is exceptionally difficult, and is very different from most other ethnographic fieldwork experiences. Most *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* have strong community prohibitions against interacting too closely with outsiders, let alone allowing them to live close to their communities. They are very guarded of any interactions involving their women and children. While the contexts and the extent to which these prohibitions are practiced have changed a great deal over the last 25 years, many in *Bukit Duabelas* still have a strong desire to maintain the customs

of their ancestors. However, most also realize that they must make an effort to engage in dialogue with outsiders concerning the fate and access to their remaining forests in this era of logging. For the last several years, the local NGO's WARSI and *Sokola* have facilitated an alternative means for this to occur in *Bukit Duabelas*, and to some extent have made it easier to approach and interact with some camps.

My research initially began along the downstream *Makekal* River, after I was dropped off on the outskirts of an *Orang Rimba* camp by one of their *Melayu* patrons from the village of *Tanah Garo*. After being ignored for around a week, I decided to seek out camps along the upstream *Makekal* who had adolescent males participating in WARSI's mobile *Orang Rimba* education program for the last year. Upon finding the students, I quickly made the transition to living in *Orang Rimba* camps, usually in bachelor huts and sometimes in a tent. The majority of the research took place with an extended family then based along the *Sako Jer'nang River*, a sub-branch of the upstream *Makekal* River. At the time, the camp consisted of around 40 individuals based around a grandmother, and included her six married daughter, their families, and a group of unmarried bachelors (see appendix).⁴³ When my research began, the majority of the camp had just returned from a period of nomadic life following the death of the grandmother's second husband, and was living around newly opened swidden fields. During the second season, several families again broke off from the larger camp and swiddens to *melangun* after the death of the headman's son. This occurred over a spell of two consecutive seasons in which many planted dry rice, which was more common along the upstream *Makekal* River. Their motivation to plant rice during this time was to some extent influenced by a recent effort to mix rubber saplings into their swiddens, along the borders of their customary forests and national park, as a means to block *Melayu* swidden farmers from encroaching into their forests. When major ritual events occurred, many would suggest they were leaving to the forests, which was a polite way of saying they needed time alone. During these times, I would often redirect my research to nearby camps along the upstream or mid-stream *Makekal*, an *Orang Rimba* settlement in the surrounding transmigration sites, or a *Melayu* village, sometimes using the time to transcribe tapes and write, usually together with an *Orang Rimba* informant.

I entered the field with an intermediate knowledge of *Bahasa Indonesia/Malay*, which during the initial months was used as a bridge language to learn the 'forest language' (*Beso Rimba*), a closely related dialect of Jambi Malay (*Bahasa Melayu Jambi*) spoken along the upstream *Batanghari* River. The *Rimba* dialect shares a vocabulary with classical Malay, with variations in its phonology and grammar. In the

village, a great deal of its vocabulary is more common in the language of *seleko adat* proverbs and classical Malay literature, but in its pure form is glottal and initially very difficult to comprehend. Most *Orang Rimba* men also have a good knowledge of *Bahasa Melayu*, which is used during trade. As much as I possibly could, I used participant-observation as a field method. Due to culture prohibitions, relations with women were always limited, and given my status as an outsider I was never able to observe ritual atop the *balai*, nor establish relationships with big shamans who conducted some of the primary rituals outlined in the thesis. These are obviously weaknesses in the thesis. Despite my shortcomings as researcher and a writer, I hope this thesis displays to the reader the great knowledge that the average person in this society has of their spiritual world, particularly the youth. Information was collected through informal conversations and unstructured interviews, many of which were recorded and latter transcribed. Depending on topics that needed clarification, open and close-ended interviews were performed. Throughout the research period, I kept a daily journal and diary.

Positioning myself in the field and juggling relations with the *Orang Rimba*, *Melayu* loggers, government officials, and local NGO's was extremely challenging. During trips to other camps, my association with bachelors, whom I used as guides, often put me in the middle of improper encounters and legal cases involving women. I also often found myself in the middle of heated encounters with *Melayu* loggers. The research was interrupted twice during the main fieldwork period. In March 2003, I fell ill with a dual case of vivax malaria and dengue fever (at least this is what the doctors told me), and after spending a week in Jambi's Police and Military hospital, I returned to Australia for around a month to recuperate. Upon returning to *Bukit Duabelas* in May, I continued to struggle with Malaria, and eventually learned to control it on my own by taking chloroquine tablets at the onset of fever and chills. Maintaining my body weight and health was a challenge, as were infections caused by lacerations, ticks and skin parasites. During the first couple of months, blisters and lacerations on my feet turned to tropical ulcers, which initially limited my mobility. I eventually dealt with this by doing away with shoes and sandals altogether, and building up the calices on the bottom of my feet as the *Orang Rimba* do.

In October 2003, I ran into a different type of problem during an extended trip to an *Orang Rimba* camp along the downstream *Kajasung* River. After two of my guides (bachelors from the *Makekal*) were pressured into a period of bride service and marriage, which they ultimately refused, they were roughed up and forcefully bound

until the issue was resolved. Matters worsened after their representatives from the *Makekal* River decided not to make the long trip to attend the legal hearing or pay the cloth fine, which shamed the group along the *Kajasung* River. Eventually, I agreed to pay the bachelors' cloth fine, and believing the matter closed, left the *Kajasung* River to continue research along the *Makekal* River. I later found that the group decided that I should pay an additional fine for bringing the bachelors to their camp as guides. After returning to the *Kajasung* to pay the additional cloth fine, I took a break for two months before returning to the *Makekal* River for several months to complete my research.

Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the *Orang Rimba* economy and social organization, and provides the background for better understanding the social context of *Orang Rimba* religious beliefs, origins, and some of the rights and authority that men can achieve within the domains of law and religion. One of the themes explored in this chapter is the arrangement of notions of precedence, rights, obligations, and authority within important kin and social relationships. I examine how some of these notions are reflected in kin terms, teknonyms, and terms for parts of the home, some of which are expressed through botanic metaphor. I explore how some of the concepts surrounding the reason:passion contrast wind their way through important social relationships, and how they are expressed in legal hearings. Different aspects of their economy and social relations are pointed out, which are used to establish difference with the *Melayu*, and are important towards establishing their social identity.

Chapter 3 explores the relationship between *Orang Rimba* social identity, ethnic boundaries and their relations with the *Melayu* through the structure of their origin stories, legends and folklore. I examine how the *Makekal Orang Rimba* use notions of common origins to justify their place in the region, explain their separation with the *Melayu*, religious prohibitions, and justify their rights to live according to the *adat* of their ancestors. I explore how this is often done by manipulating shared beliefs, common ancestor figures, and Islamic elements, largely based on notions of precedence. This chapter also examines the stories of how the *Makekal Orang Rimba* received their *adat* legal codes, a common version of Jambi *adat*, which is adapted to suit their social relations, notions of law, and management of forest resources.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the *Orang Rimba* cosmology and religion, their conceptions of the earth and heaven, gods, spirits and ghosts, and the basics of *Orang Rimba* shamanism. I examine their conceptions of soul matter, its relation to

entities in heaven and earth, and how these issues are intertwined with their notions of health, the hot:cold contrast, and the term *ker'emat*, a key concept in the *Orang Rimba* religion. I explore how some of these beliefs are intertwined with food prohibitions, male religious power, and how these ideas influence gender related sharing rights. I examine how important contrasts (forest:village, upstream:downstream, hot:cold, male:female and reason:passion) wind through these beliefs, and can influence their social, moral and religious orders. Finally, I explore how religious beliefs relate to the construction and maintenance of ethnic boundaries, and how some of these ideas are interrelated with issues of gender, age, affinity, power, and social identity.

The last two chapters examine the beliefs and rituals surrounding fruits and the annual season of fruits. Chapter 5 explores some of the beliefs surrounding the management of fruit trees, and the primary seasonal ritual related to the annual season of fruits. This chapter begins with a description of how fruits are classified, and how these classifications relate to gender collection schemes, distributions rights, key religious beliefs, and gender prohibitions on eating specific fruits. I explore some of the *Orang Rimba's* ideas surrounding the management of fruit trees, and how they relate to gender-related distribution patterns. The bulk of this chapter examines three primary rituals conducted during the season of flowers, which serve to initiate the annual season of fruits, call the honeybees down from the heavens, and call the bearded pigs to embark on their seasonal migrations. I describe how knowledge of the surrounding environment is embedded in these seasonal rituals, which in addition to ensuring the timely occurrence of seasonal resources also serves to maintain the continuity of the forest ecosystem. This chapter also examines some of the key religious concepts and contrasts that run through these beliefs, how the seasonal rituals are interrelated with maintaining ethnic boundaries, and how some of these issues are interrelated with camp power issues.

Chapter 6 examines the extended ritual activity that takes place during the annual season of fruits, in the context of *balai* wedding ceremonies. In this chapter, I describe how wedding ceremonies serve as a religious rite of passage into adulthood, enhance fertility, maintain the religious purity of adult males, and maintain and affirm their authority in the domain of religion through the transfer of religious knowledge. I examine how these matters are related to maintaining the purity of *Orang Rimba adat* through the observance of boundary prohibitions, and how these issues are related to camp power relations between adult males, women and their unmarried brothers. The

final chapter summarizes some of the findings of the thesis in the context of their past, present and future.

Chapter 1 Endnotes

¹ The etymology of the term *Melayu* appears to be based on the root word 'layu', meaning the wilting of plant or animal matter or the deterioration of one's health through material or spiritual means. *Me-layu* is the verb, 'to wilt away', and I would guess that the term for the kingdom might have originally had to do with an association with its magic or power, and its ability to wilt or wither away rival or opposing powers. In addition to its association with magical power, for upstream, and particularly *Kubu* peoples, the downstream region of the kingdom may have also been perceived as a source of disease (smallpox, cholera, etc.) spread through upstream-downstream trade. These days, the *Orang Rimba* I lived with did not see a direct etymological linkage or even a 'conscious' association between the term for the people, and *me-'layu* 'to wilt away'. Since the fall of Suharto's regime, there has been an effort to establish a larger *Melayu* social identity, which extends past its present Islamic association, and incorporates *Melayu* ethnic markers and social practices embedded in *seleko adat*. Many community leaders appear to be constructing this identity around the former kingdom-wide Jambi *adat* legal codes.

² *Batin* was also a title used for appointed leaders in these regions. It is still used in minority communities in Eastern Sumatra such as the Talang Mamak and Petalangan. In Jambi, the *batin* districts were groupings of rivers or river regions located off the main *Batanghari* River, which were semi-autonomous regions that fell outside of the direct rule of the king (see historical background chapter). Some elders in these regions still identify on a secondary level as *batin* peoples, and can recall their former *batin* groupings (*Orang Batin 9*, *Orang Batin 5*, etc). The Arabic derived *batin* can be defined as 'innerness', 'esoteric', or 'spirituality', and is an important term in Sufi Islam. The use of this term for peoples in the outlying regions of the kingdom may reflect a time when interior peoples were associated with their traditional non-Islamic religious beliefs, knowledge or magic, or possibly were more slanted towards Sufi Islamic practices, which initially may have been the variety of Islam spread throughout the interior regions.

³ Along the *Makekal* River, the term *orang terang* is only rarely used as a term for outsiders. While some *Orang Rimba* say it can be used as a general term for outsiders, most say that it is more specifically used in reference to people in the village with some kind of higher education, big city experience, for specialists in religion (an *Imam*, or shaman), people who have performed the *haj*, have some status, title or rank, or come from a larger city such as Jambi. This term is also used by other minority peoples throughout in the region such as the *Talang Mamak*, and the *Petalangan* in Riau (Kang 2002). Along the *Makekal River*, the most common term used for outsiders is *orang mer'u* (from *Ma. baru*) 'newcomers', followed by *orang Melayu*, 'Melayu people', and *orang duson* 'village people'.

⁴ In his 1935 PhD thesis, "*The Ethnology of the Greater Sunda Islands*", Kennedy writes of different Malay exonyms ascribed to interior peoples throughout Sumatra, even suggesting that the *Kubu* exonym may have been used as a term for animist forest peoples as far north as the Batak lands in north Sumatra (Kennedy 1935). While migrants to any region may have brought with them their own local exonyms, Kennedy

may have been confusing the similar term *Lubu*, an exonym ascribed to migratory peoples who now live near the southern part of the Batak lands. These people also determine kinship relations bilaterally, speak a Minangkabau dialect, and have adopted the Batak sib system (Loeb 1935:295). Throughout Eastern Sumatra, most interior villagers have their own exonyms for surrounding minorities. In many of the early writings, mention is made to the correct exonyms currently used in Eastern Sumatra; the *Kubu* (for the swidden-farming *Orang Batin Kubu* and *Orang Rimba/Orang Hutan*) in south Sumatra and Jambi, the *Mamak* or *Talang Mamak* in southern Riau, the *Petalangan* in central Riau, and the *Sakai*, *Orang Bukit*, *Akit* and *Hutan* for Northern Riau. Several accounts mention that the word *Kubu* may derive from the word *ngubu* or 'elusive', a term that is sometimes used by the *Melayu* in reference to wild animals. This is the term *Kubu* ('fortress, refuge') in verb form. In the interior region of Jambi, the prefix *ng-* is often substituted for *me-*.

⁵ According to van Dongen and limited accounts by the Social Department, the settled *Orang Batin Kubu* who live east of the *Tembesi* and south of the *Muaro Bulian* River in Jambi, are culturally very similar to groups across the southern borders of Jambi, who live along the *Lalan*, *Tungkal* and *Bayat* Rivers in South Sumatra. A recent report by the University of *Sriwijaya* gives a very brief overview of some of these beliefs, and describes some of their ritual practice (Tim Peneliti Universitas Sriwijaya 1995).

⁶ Their rigid gender divisions are very different from the more equal gender relations of the *Semang* as described by Kirk and Karen Endicott (Endicott 1979a; Endicott 1979b; Endicott 1988).

⁷ There are four other primary factors, which the Indonesian Social Department use to determine their degree of isolation: 1) geographical remoteness, 2) lack of communication facilities and modern technology, 3) lack of interactions with other societies, and 4) adherence to folk beliefs and primitive worldviews.

⁸ Curiously, the *Petalangan* in central Riau appear to have had a more respectful relationship with Malay in the former kingdom of *Indragiri*. While also perceived as somewhat primitive, as holders of magic (etc.), they are apparently viewed in a slightly more positive manner by the *Melayu* community, possibly because they now identify as Muslim, and sometimes *Melayu*.

⁹ *The Department of Social Affairs*

The Indonesian Department of Social Affairs (DEPSOS) is the lead agency for *masyarakat terasing* development and civilization programs. Their explicit aims are the following; 1) permanent settlements in sufficiently large social units; 2) increase in production capacity; 3) expansion of societal life outside the family group; 4) increase of rational and dynamic mental capacities; 5) breakthrough of the tribal world view and way of life; 6) development of norms similar to the rest of the country; 7) increased consciousness of state and nation; and 8) development of a monotheistic religious life (Departemen Sosial 1981 and 1986 from Persoon 1998:290). The core activities in these programs revolve around resettlement villages, where they are encouraged to take up settled agriculture or work in plantations, break away from their 'primitive' customs,

and convert to an accepted monotheistic religion, which in Jambi is usually Islam. After a number of years, they are expected to become ‘modern Indonesians’ after which the resettlement villages lose their project status, and the people and villages should be integrated into the regular structure of provincial administration.

The Forest Department

In line with the Department of Social Affairs, the Forest Department also has a number of explicit aims for dealing with forest peoples, which center around solving the ‘problem’ of shifting cultivation (*perladangan berpindah-pindah*) in valuable forests, and facilitating commercial logging. Some of their stated aims are: 1) to prevent the loss of valuable timber; 2) facilitate the smooth operation of commercial logging; 3) prevent erosion; 4) to utilize agriculturalists/settled nomadic peoples as a labor force; 5) to increase the standard of living of the agriculturalists; 6) to facilitate the administration of the area; 7) **to up-root the nomadic way of life**; and 8) provide favorable circumstances for economic development (Team Pusat Resetelmen Penduduk 1980:108). Like the Social Department, their focus is the resettlement of forest peoples into permanent villages, and replacing shifting cultivation with sedentary agriculture or with work in surrounding palm oil plantations. In Jambi, because the soil is unable to sustain permanent agriculture without expensive fertilizers, they are often encouraged to work in plantations. The Forest Department is less concerned with the social and cultural aspects of the larger civilizing/development mission, and leaves these aspects to the Social Department and the Department of Religion. Many of the settlement programs have been integrated into transmigration projects, where it is hoped that local peoples will be inspired by the sedentary agricultural techniques of the Javanese and Balinese, to give up their shifting cultivation and nomadic practices. However, the wet rice farming techniques of the transmigrants are not applicable in the context of the poor soil content of Jambi, without expensive fertilizers and developing irrigation canals.

The Department of Religion

The Department of Religion usually assists the Social Department in their civilizing mission by providing funds to build mosques, and assigning them with religious teachers. Instead of the one acceptable religion that *Melayu* society affords, the Indonesian government allows its citizens to choose from six of the world’s dominant and ‘monotheistic’ religions (Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism). Local animist ‘beliefs’ (*perpercayaan*) are not necessarily illegal, but according to the Ministry of Religion, are potentially subversive and unworthy of government support. In Jambi, these factors no longer justify a life of enslavement or bondage, but merely non-citizen status, as without declaring an accepted religion, a person is unable to receive an identity card that enables them to access basic services provided by the government. This is not necessarily a concern for the *Orang Rimba*, but does involve frequent visits from government officials who often try to entice them to leave their traditional lands and abandon their traditional way of life, through temptations of a home in a settlement, a garden, sometimes a small plot of palm oil, and supplies, which include one year’s worth of food rations.

¹⁰ 1995 statistics from the Regional Social Department in Jambi (*Kantor Wilayah Departemen Sosial Jambi*) suggest there are 2,656 *Suku Anak Dalam* families with an overall population of 12,326 (Sosial 1998).

¹¹ At least this is what Sandbukt implies in (BAPPEDA-Jambi 1999:20). Ramsey Elkholy, on the other hand, seems to think the *Orang Rimba* outside of *Bukit Duabelas*

never had the same concern with law and hierarchical relations with patrons, and that this is a rather unique adaptation in *Bukit Duabelas* given their higher population density and more intensive relations with surrounding *Melayu* (personal communication with Elkholy). The fact that the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Tigapuluh* (where Elkholy conducted his research) are recent migrants who no longer have ties to their traditional forests, are a relatively small population who have access to extensive forests, and no longer maintain relations with their traditional patrons, may have something to do with their limited concern for these matters.

¹² Since the 1990's, four national parks have been established in Jambi, which include *Berbak* National Park (162,700 ha) in the East, 40% (590,000 ha) of the *Kerenci* National Park in the West, around 25% (33,000 ha) of the *Bukit Tigapuluh* in the north, and the *Bukit Duabelas* National Park (60,500 ha).

¹³ For examples of *Melayu* struggles with timber companies and plantations to re-obtain rights to traditional lands or forests in Jambi, see Candra 2004; Dharma 2000; Erinaldi 2004; Kurniawan 2003; Taufik 2000a; Taufik 2000b.

¹⁴ In 1997, statistics from the regional Forest Department in Jambi reported 9 plywood factories, one pulp industry plant, and 73 sawmills, the latter of which had increased to nearly 350 in 2002 (Osamantri 1999). Out of 5.1 million ha of total land area in Jambi, the percentage had dropped to 2.1 million ha by 2001, 846,000 ha of which was located in national parks. In order to meet the overambitious needs of Jambi's wood industry, 2.8 million tons of wood per year are needed, 204,000 tons of wood a month or the wood logged from 80 ha of forest per day. The remaining forests outside of national parks are only able to supply one third of these needs (Taufik 2001).

¹⁵ While never conducting a detailed census, in the early 20th century a Dutch expedition to the area estimated the population of *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* to be around 400, a number which was probably too low even some 90 years ago (Waterschoot van der Gracht 1915). While it isn't clear whether Sandbukt conducted a detailed census during his research, some 70 years later he estimated the population at around 800 (Sandbukt 1988a). In 1998, WARSI's estimate was 1047, which more recently was increased to 1269 (Siagian 2003; WARSI and Sandbukt 1998). Their later estimate for the population along the *Makekal* River is more in line with that given by the local anthropologist Soetomo (Soetomo 1995). WARSI's population figures for *Bukit Duabelas* are included in the appendix.

¹⁶ Robert Dentan gives a good summary of the term *Veddoid*, "In the old and obsolete racial typological categorization "Veddoid," a term derived the *Veddah* foragers of Sri Lanka. The *Hindism* suggests that indigenes/autochthones have a special connection with the earth, as *bumiputera*, and should be the highest caste, a rank that, as in Sri Lanka with the *Veddahs*, does them precious little good. Though in peninsular Malaysia the remnants of this belief rationalize, justify and mystify Malay political domination, they do *Orang Asli* precious little good as well. *Veddoid* was a term for primitive types found in the hilly margins of Asia. It was often classed together with *Australoid* (=looking like indigenous Australians, who in some cases were classified as "paleo-Caucasoid") in some form like *Australo-Veddoid* or *Vedd-Australoid*. Scientists applied all four terms to *Semai*, along with "paleo-Alpine"--perhaps out of deference to *Schebesta*, an old Swiss himself" (personal communication with Robert Dentan).

¹⁷ Curiously, Forbes describes the “relative ease” of *Kubu* marriage and that it did not include any ritual. According to Forbes, “After finding a female, and paying a sufficient bride price, all with in reach gather near a tree, where the father of the maiden proclaims his approval, hits the tree a few times with a club and proclaims them man and wife” (Forbes 1885b:124). In stark contrast to the *Orang Rimba* and other Malayic peoples throughout Sumatra, van Dongen also writes that marriage is a simple affair with no ceremony or feasts, marriage arrangements are loose, elopement is common, and, “Divorce is utterly without ceremony, either the man can desert the women or the women the man” (Loeb 1935:284; Dongen 1910).

¹⁸ To van Dongen, this seemed justified during a severe lightening storm, when he could not detect the slightest trace of concern on their part (Dongen 1906:250-1). Like other forest peoples, stormy weather does cause anxiety when living in a forest camp, due to the possibility of falling trees. However, unlike forest minorities on the Malay Peninsula, the *Orang Rimba* do not have a pronounced fear of thunder, or a god specifically associated with thunder (*gurwuh*). When hearing thunder or lightening (*kenyoh*) during the day, some say that it may be caused by the senior creator throwing stones to the earth when angry that humans have disturbed the balance of *adat*.

¹⁹ According to Hagen, the nomadic wild *Kubu*,

“...stood at a level below the lowest stage of human evolution then known to be extent in the South Seas. Their pre-matriarchal social organization was considered of the most simple kind, based on an egalitarian and “loose” relationship between man and wife. Children, as soon as they were able to procure their own subsistence would separate from their parents and nomadize on their own. These Kubus were considered to be at an intellectual or spiritual stage of development at which “absolutely no transcendental conceptions of any kind” existed; in particular, there was no trace of any belief in spirits or ancestors; magic or medicine men were lacking; their dead and dying would merely be left behind. In sum, they were considered only slightly “above those creatures without power of speech which alongside them inhabit these forests” (Hagan 1908:160-1; Sandbukt 1982:7).

²⁰ Of Schebesta’s theoretical influence, Dentan notes,

“In the Swiss-German anthropological circles of the early 20th century, it was a popular theoretical belief (Kulturkreislehrung) that all cultures in the world originated from a quite limited number of original cultures, that spread through the world, layering themselves upon the cultures that were there first, making Kulturschichte, or cultural strata. Theoretically, Schebesta was a Kulturkreislehrer, who came to Malaysia looking for remnants of the earliest culture (Ur-Kultur) or bow culture (Bogenkultur), which he believed he found among Semang foragers. As a Roman Catholic, like many of the other Kulturkreisvolker, he thought one characteristic of this Ur-Kultur was monotheism (Henatheism). In theory, foragers were always remnants of the earliest migrants” (personal communication with Robert Dentan).

²¹ Schebesta uses R.J. Wilkinson’s definition for the term Proto-Malay, meaning “a stock which speaks archaic Malay, whose culture however differs from that of the new-Malay although related to it. Proto-Malays are certain stocks of Malaya, Sumatra, and the islands in between which speak only this archaic Malay, from which logically it cannot become asserted that they obtained (their language) from the later immigrating

Malays. Thus cultural uniformities in the different subunits are so large” (Wilkinson 1920). As Robert Dentan explains, “Proto-Malay is a term that refers to a supposed first migration “wave” of Austronesian-speakers into SEA, basically to inland folks (“Orang Darat,” German Inlandstämme) and, I believe, to recently acculturated Austroasiatic-speakers. The Deutero-Malays were, in this now largely discredited theory, the more “advanced” coastal peoples who were to be the first to acquire “pasisir” culture. The theory reflects a style of anthropological thinking popular in Swiss-German circles in the early twentieth century, a style which found its apotheosis in the Kulturkreislehrung, in which all the cultures of the world came from a quite limited number of original cultures, which spread through the world, layering themselves upon the cultures that were there first, making Kulturschichte, cultural strata” (personal communication with Robert Dentan).

²² In the late 1940s, Vroklage published a brief article agreeing with Schebesta that the *Kubu* probably represent a case of devolved foragers (Vroklage 1946-1949).

²³ Of a brief encounter with an *Orang Rimba* camp during a survey mission in *Bukit Duabelas* in 1913, Waterschoot writes of their belief in a spiritual hornbill. During a trip to the upper *Batanghari* Region, the Dutch ethnographer Tassilo Adam writes that he was able to observe a ‘wild’ *Kubu* (*Orang Rimba*) shaman in a state of trance, but does not go into any detail of what he observed (Adam 1928; Waterschoot van der Gracht 1915).

²⁴ Bellwood supports this claim with Hoffman’s work on the ‘Punan’ (or Penan) in Borneo, although other anthropologists have argued along similar lines (Blust 1989; Harrison 1949; Hoffman 1983; Hoffman 1986). In order to account for racial and linguistic similarities with surrounding agriculturists, Hoffman claimed the Penan to be “devolved” agriculturists who moved to the rainforests to engage in the collection of forest products for trade (Hoffman 1983). Hoffman believed the various Penan groups to have stronger linguistic and cultural connections with the agricultural community closest to them, rather than to other Penan groups as a whole (Hoffman 1983). Therefore, rather than representing a distinct cultural group as a whole, he believed them to represent factions of settled agricultural communities that split off to specialize in the international demand for forest products. In the late 1980’s, this argument was extended to the Philippines through the ideas of Headland and Reid. Working with Agte, Headland questioned whether it was possible for hunter-gatherers to live in the rainforests without regular access to agricultural food via trade (Headland 1989). This question is interesting, because in contrast to the Semang in Malaysia, the Negritos in the Philippines speak an Austronesian language. Headland believes that before the Austronesian migration, the Negritos most likely inhabited only the margins of the forests, the coastal zone, and the more open monsoon forests, and it was only after the Austronesian migration that a “symbiotic” relationship developed between the two, thus allowing the Negritos to exploit the tropical rainforests as hunter-gatherers (Sather 1995). This led Headland and Reid to argue, “the Negritos evolved culturally into what they are today as they moved into the forest to collect wild products to trade with agriculturists and overseas traders” (Sather 1995). This is essentially the same point that Hoffman made in Borneo. Rambo (1988) and Kuchikura (1993) repeated this question on the Semang in Malaysia, both believing that a hunter-gatherer lifestyle was not possible without a symbiotic relationship with agriculturists (Bellwood 1997). Bailey searched the ethnographic and archaeological literature for unequivocal cases of peoples living in tropical rainforests independently of cultivated food, and failed to find any

examples (Baily 1989). Basically, the premise of his argument rests on the fact that undisturbed tropical rainforests lack an adequate resource base, and are incapable of supporting independent foragers (Brosius 1991; Endicott 1991; Sather 1995). However, various anthropologists working with rainforest hunter-gatherers in Southeast Asia have disputed the idea that it is impossible to exploit the rainforests, without support from agricultural communities, as well as the idea that rainforest foraging was a commercial adaptation (Brosius 1988; Brosius 1991; Endicott 1991). Endicott and Bellwood (1991) give various archaeological and historical examples of independent foraging for the Batek de in Malaysia, as well as recent examples, mainly during times of crisis, such as intensified slave raiding during the Japanese occupation and the communist insurrection (Endicott and Bellwood 1991). From these examples, they conclude that the resource base for independent foraging in tropical rainforests exists, and that trade with outsiders is a flexible adaptation that occurred later to make life in the forests easier. Brosius (1988 1991) finds major faults with most of Hoffman's work, as well as the inapplicability of Headland, Reid and Bailey's hypothesis to the Penan. According to Brosius, Hoffman's work has major flaws, which stem from his fieldwork methodology. Because his fieldwork consisted of a broad survey of Penan camps, Hoffman was never able to spend more than three weeks with a single group. Spending so little time with each group, Brosius claims that Hoffman was never able to learn the dialect of a group, nor for that matter learn much about each camp's culture, religion, traditions, etc. (Brosius 1988, 1991). Concerning Hoffman, Blust and others claim that individual Penan groups have dialects that are closer to surrounding agriculturists. Brosius and Sellato have shown that both the Western and Eastern Penan have mutually intelligible dialects stemming from a common group, which none were currently in contact with, and who most likely only recently settled from a foraging lifestyle. Meanwhile, the agriculturists they trade with speak a combination of 12 unintelligible dialects, which are not related to dialects of the Penan (Sather 1995). In response to the impoverished rainforest hypothesis, Brosius claims that until recently, trade did not involve subsistence interdependence (Sather 1995). Penan foragers had always subsisted independently on wild sago palms, with trade only conducted for things like tools, batteries, tobacco, and salt. Traditionally, the Penan had a long-term pattern of management that enabled multiple groups to exploit sagos indefinitely. It is only with the increasing availability of cultivated foods, that this traditional system of management has broken down, leading Brosius to argue, "agriculture itself may have led to the current dearth of carbohydrate resources in most tropic forest ecosystems" (Sather 1995:255).

²⁵ Those who fall in the 'immediate return' classification usually collect and consume food on a day to day basis, have a limited level of technology, have a more egalitarian social system and co-equal gender relations, have few property rights, and less developed legal and political systems. Included in this classification are peoples like the Semang, Kung, and Mbuti. Delayed-return systems usually include peoples who have economies that include a mixture of foraging and horticulture, have an increased ability to process and store food, and greater technology, greater property rights, a more developed system of leadership and law, while females have less rights (Woodburn 1980).

²⁶ As I was entering the field, a Norwegian anthropologist named Geir Erichsrud was just finishing six months fieldwork (for a masters degree) in the *Melayu* village of *Peninjajuan*, located along the northeast border of *Bukit Duabelas*. The economy of this *Melayu* village is based upon illegal logging within the forests of *Bukit Duabelas*. As I

was leaving the field, a German anthropologist named Stefanie Steinebach had just arrived to conduct doctoral research concerning Sokola's alternative education and rubber planting project, implemented by *Orang Rimba* students along the *Makekal* River.

²⁷ For an examination of the 'Malay' identity in the context of ethnicity, assimilation, and ethnic mobility in a 'plural society' in Malaysia, see Nagata 1974; for an examination of the hybrid nature of the 'Malay' identity, see Vickers 1997. For an enlightening historical investigation of the *Melayu* identity, in the context of Eastern Sumatra, see Andaya 2001. For a broad examination of the national Malay identity in Malaysia, see Watson 1996.

²⁸ Like Tylor and others, Evans-Pritchard wrote a great deal on the centrality of the soul towards understanding religious beliefs, at times to debunk some of the earlier evolutionary writings that they eventually evolved towards a belief in spirits and gods (Evans-Pritchard 1956; Evans-Pritchard 1965). As Benjamin points out, while it is easy to agree with Evans-Pritchard when debunking some of the evolutionary theorists, it is harder to agree with him, "that the two conceptions (spirit and the soul) are not only different, but opposed", when taking into account some of the traditional religious beliefs on the Malay Peninsula (Benjamin 1979:10 from Evans-Pritchard 1965:26).

²⁹ The word *seloko* derives from the Sanskrit *sloka*, meaning 'verse'. The Indonesian definition is, "an archaic short witty poem ending in an aphorism". In Jambi, *adat* is often expressed in a short two or three versed *seloko* format, which provides a short and easy way to memorize legal codes based on aphorisms, metaphor and analogy. Every *Orang Rimba* male knows hundreds of *seloko adat*, which can be manipulated to fit a variety of different scenarios to strengthen an argument or make a point during *adat* debates (Casparis 1997; Echols 1989).

³⁰ While most Malayic forest-based minority peoples in the region (Petalangan, Sakai, Akit, Hutan) continue to practice many of their traditional beliefs within the wider context of *adat*, only the *Orang Rimba*, *Orang Hutan*, some *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples, and many of the *Talang Mamak* in Riau continue to completely reject identifying themselves as *Melayu* or Islamic.

³² Harrison makes a useful distinction between 'ethnic' and 'cultural' boundaries to examine how people construct and express collective or cultural identities and employ representations of boundedness (Harrison 1999). Ethnic boundaries, are then the distinctions drawn between group members and other groups which demarcate ethnic collectivities, while cultural boundaries demarcate the boundaries of symbolic practices, which these collectivities attribute to themselves in seeking to differentiate themselves from each other expressively" (Harrison 1999). While many have argued that cultural and ethnic boundaries might be breaking down or homogenizing in a recent era of globalization, Sahlins rightly mentions that, "Conscious and conspicuous boundary-making has been increasing around the world in inverse relation to anthropological notions of its significance" (Sahlins 1999).

³³ As Lakoff and Johnson write,

Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Our concepts structure what we perceive,

how we get around the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. (Lakoff 1980:3)

According to Fox, a common effect of the variety of Austronesian botanic metaphor is to give physical representation to temporal process, which can provide a framework or placement of more extended knowledge (Fox 1996a:8). They often combine notions of growth and succession of derivation and differentiation through derivatives of the terms, “root”, “trunk”, “sprout”, “branch”, and “tip”, which are relied upon for heuristic purposes to trace, distinguish, and mark precedence in features of social and religious life (Fox 1996a:8). According to Fox, “Such cognate terms give a distinctive botanic caste to affiliation and alliance relationships. But more important, the use of these terms and other cognate terms to denote significant cognate categories is evidence of close cultural relationships among Austronesian peoples. Thus, despite the intricacies of their patterns of alliance, these peoples seem to share common ideas about the nature of life, of society, and of the human person” (Fox 1980: 14).

³⁴ In an examination of the directional systems of Austronesian peoples, Adelaar writes, “the fundamental axis of orientation in Austronesian societies is the inland versus the sea. ProtoAustronesian **Daya* ‘towards the interior’ and **laSud* ‘towards the sea’, have reflexes in a huge number of daughter languages all over the Austronesian areas” (Adelaar 1997:53). In many landlocked areas in Borneo and Western Indonesia, the meanings for these reflexes have switched to ‘downriver’/‘upriver’ (Adelaar 1997:77).

³⁵ According to Grimes, the fundamental directional axis for people on the Eastern Indonesian island of Buru are the rivers, based on the coordinates “upstream” and “downstream”. “At the center of their island is a lake, which is as far upstream as one can go, which is a metonym for the interior of the island, and symbolizes the cultural value of upstream over downstream. For the people of Buru, this co-ordinate provides the basis for a more complex moral ordering. Upstream to downstream is also correlated with the flow of precedence from elder to younger” (Grimes 1997). On Iban belief Sather writes, “In death, the metaphoric association with life and river travel is symbolically expressed as the souls journey ...first downriver to the river mouth, then upriver to headwaters...before entering the other world of the dead which is itself conceived as a river system” (Sather 1993:80). Of the Kaharingan in Southern Borneo Weinstock writes, “Down on earth and downriver is where living man makes his home, up in the sky and upriver on the mountain are where the bifurcated souls of the deceased make their abodes. Elaboration of these sets of binary oppositions (occur in their) life and death rituals” (Weinstock 1987:83-84). At death, the Punan Bah believe the soul to embark on a journey downstream, which eventually winds its way up a heavenly river to the land of the souls, while Wilder writes that the Rungas believe that the levels of their heaven are separated by a river in the sky (Nicolaisen 2003:150; Wilder 2003:14). For an example of the upstream-downstream contrast in the cosmology of South American Indians along the Amazon River, see Descola 1994.

³⁶ Several authors have mentioned how Dayak groups in Borneo emphasize the mobility and autonomy inherent in swidden rice agriculture whenever contrasting themselves to their more settled Malay neighbours (Helliwell 1992; Helliwell 2001; Tsing 1993).

³⁷ Holst-Warhaft writes of the different political ends that can be manipulated through the passions involved in grief, death and mourning (Holst-Warhaft 2000).

³⁸ During a brief visit to an *Orang Hutan* camp in South Sumatra, van Dongen writes of their discomfort to bright light and the heat of the sun while standing outside the shade of the forests (Dongen 1906).

³⁹ According to Endicott, “The Batak De point out a fundamental distinction between the contrast between hot and cold. The sun epitomizes excessive heat, which the Batak take pains to avoid, while the moon epitomizes coolness, which the Batak highly value. The distinction between hot and cold has far reaching ramifications in the Batak De worldview” (Endicott 1979b:40). Howell writes of similar beliefs among the Chewong (Howell 1984). Laderman gives a summary of some Austro-Asiatic beliefs surrounding the hot-cold contrast, in relation to village Malay beliefs on the Peninsula (Laderman 1991).

⁴⁰ In relation to Woodburn’s classification system for egalitarian societies, the *Orang Rimba* may fall somewhere in between the competitive and non-competitive categories (Woodburn 1982). However, rather than trying to fit people into very broad, graded, stage-based classification systems, a more fruitful approach in examining *Orang Rimba* egalitarianism and its different levels of equality and inequality may be achieved by taking an approach similar to Sather’s examination of Iban egalitarianism (Sather 1996).

⁴¹ This Arabic influenced contrast and some of its associated Islamic and patrilineal based concepts are often used to justify the placement of domestic issues, inheritance and law formally in the hands of men, regardless of the social type. This results in some interesting variations in the matrilineal and matrifocal based societies throughout the region (Peletz 1994; Peletz 1996). The ideas surrounding the reason-passion contrast clearly predate Islam, and, “partake of the early Greek and Christian (i.e., neo-Platonic and more specifically Aristotelian) influences that informed the development of both premodern European and Islamic thought and cosmology” (Peletz 1996). The resemblance of this opposition to similar oppositions in non-Islamic Austronesian societies may suggest that the relationship between intellect and desire is at least partially founded on a prior conceptual framework (Fox 1990; Rosaldo 1980).

⁴² According to Clifford Sather, the ritual of swidden-farming peoples in Borneo is much more concerned with the swidden cycle (personal communication with Clifford Sather). The nomadic Penan in Borneo represent a good candidate for having some belief and ritual system oriented towards the annual season of fruits, although ethnographers working with them have recorded very little on this topic (see chapter 5). Raj Puri was unable to discover any ritual related to fruits with the people he worked with, but does mention that many of their traditional beliefs and ritual practices may have been lost due to their long history of relations with Christian missionaries (personal communication with Raj Puri).

⁴³ The majority of my research took place with the extended family of *Bejiwa*, the eldest female in a camp led by *Bepak Meranti*, which was then based along the *Sako Jernang River*, a sub-branch of the upstream *Makekal* River. Two unrelated families (14 people), one led by a former *Temanggung* from the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region, also fell under *Bepak Meranti*, and lived around a five to ten minute walk from the larger camp. In the wider hierarchy of the upstream *Makekal*, *Bejiwa*’s camp fell under *Temanggung Mirak*, who was located around one hours walk from the camp. The trading rights to *Bijiwa* and her daughters families were owned and managed by *Rio Bujang* (or *Pangkol Waris*), the recently appointed headman of *Tanah Garo*, and son in-law of the former *Rio Siyuti*.

Chapter 2

Economy, Social Relations, and System of Leadership

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the *Orang Rimba* economy and social organization along the *Makekal* River. It provides the background for better understanding the social context of the *Orang Rimba*'s religious beliefs, and the rights that *Orang Rimba* can acquire in the domains of law and religion. One of the themes explored in this chapter is the arrangement of notions of precedence within patterns of kin and social relations, and its relation to issues of gender, age, adulthood and relations of affinity. I explore some of the concepts surrounding the reason:passion contrast, and how these ideas wind their way through different social relationships (male/female, husband/wife, brother/sister) and can be expressed during legal hearings. I examine certain aspects of the *Orang Rimba*'s economic and social relations, some that pointedly express difference between the *Orang Rimba* and the *Melayu*, and are important towards constructing and maintaining *Orang Rimba* identity. Some of the similarities and differences between *Orang Rimba* and *Melayu* patterns of social relations are pointed out in the footnotes, and are briefly touched upon in the discussion section.¹

Camp Structures, Inheritance Patterns, and the Home(s)

Orang Rimba life is based around forest and/or swidden camps, which are small and fluid and constantly changing from season to season. While an *Orang Rimba* camp has the potential to be as small as a nuclear family, the most stable social unit is the extended family, which in Jambi is strongly influenced by uxori-local residence.² After marriage, a group of sisters (*war'is per'ebo*) will remain together with their parents and in-marrying husbands, while sons and brothers will eventually move to the communities of their potential wives (*besmindu*) to perform a lengthy period of bride service (*ber'induk semang*) and eventually marry. When digging for wild yams, the size of a camp can be small as a nuclear family (*bubung* or *r'umah tanggo*), but is more commonly based around an extended family (*war'is per'ebo*). When in the swidden mode, camp groupings (*rombongan*) may consist of several extended families, and range from 10 to 100 individuals.

Kinship is determined bilaterally, and, in accordance with uxori-local residence patterns, assigns precedence in relations to mother's kin (*war'is betina*) over father's kin (*war'is jenton*). As in the surrounding villages, daughters inherit the heavy (*har'to nang*

ber'at) or immovable property, which implies rights to resources found in their customary forests based on a mixture of private and collective ownership over fruit and honey trees. Women also inherit sacred family heirlooms and cloth (*koin*), which is a form of family wealth and status. In addition to its uses in clothing and blankets, cloth has important religious uses, and is a primary means to arrange marriages and pay *adat* fines at the very frequent community legal hearings. Most families have a bundle of anywhere from 200 to 500 sheets of cloth, which these days are machine-made Javanese *sarongs*. With the arrival of logging and transmigration sites, family stores of cloth have increased over the last 25 years, and have added some extra weight to the *Orang Rimba's* mobile lifestyle.³ In addition to inheritance rights, women determine who can collect many of the more important resources found in their customary forests, have primary distribution rights, and manage the cloth. All of these roles have important ramifications for their place, status, and influence in their communities.

Sons inherit the light or moveable property (*har'to nang rehat*), which often includes male subsistence-oriented tools such as spears (*kujur*), slender-shafted axes for chopping down trees (*beliung*), cone-shaped turtle spears (*tir'ug*), village-bought machetes (*par'ong*), and knives.⁴ Upon leaving their natal camp to begin a period of bride service and eventually marry, they are allowed to take some of these items with them in order to establish a life in the camp of their wife. Recently, there has been some confusion about how to distribute rubber trees, which are a relatively new addition to *Orang Rimba* property and of course are immovable. Sometimes, they are handed down to males, who upon marriage can lease their rights or sell them to kin or villagers.

The basic structure of a camp consists of a grouping or several groupings of nuclear households, and a grouping of bachelors. The layout of the camp is arranged according to general preference and current relations or tensions at the time. The type of hut built usually depends upon what mode of subsistence the people of the camp are in at the time. Whenever living in a swidden, families usually build a 'big home' (*rumah godong*), which is usually around three by five meters in area and built upon nine poles (*tiang*) that raise the structure around a meter off the ground. Before cutting the poles for a big home, the tree is circled 'seven' times (a magical number), while repeating magical incantations (*jempi r'umah kemiang*), which are believed to be absorbed into the poles, particularly the middle pole (*tiang tengah*). This serves to guard the family from earthbound spirits, the gods of sickness, or black magic. They rarely perform this ritual when building a medium-sized home (*sungsudungon*), and never when building a transient lean-to. The *Orang Rimba* lack any stories (origins or

mythology) associated with the poles, which appear to be more common among more settled and stratified Austronesian peoples.⁵

Terms for parts of the home can be symbolic of gender or age, and can reflect the different rights and obligations of the members of the family. Big homes built for the nuclear family always have gendered flooring (*lantai* or *kar'agongan*) or sleeping spaces for the husband, wife, unmarried daughters, and male children. The sleeping space for the mother is called the 'depth of the women' (*kedelomon betina*) or the 'room down below' (*r'umah der'i bewo*), and is always built lower than the father and children's sleeping space. It is referred to as the 'roots' or 'trunk' of the home (*pangkolon r'umah*), which suggests the mother's position of precedence in the family, and her strong ties and rights to her customary forests.⁶ Apart from her husband, it is strictly forbidden for men to pass through this space, which can be expressed as a sexual violation ('rape' *kosa*, 'incest' *sumbang*) of the woman, and is one of the most serious violations that a man can commit. The sleeping space of the unwed daughter is referred to as the 'depth of the maiden' (*kedelomon gedy lapai*), and is built higher than the other floor levels. It is referred to as the 'sprout' or 'branch' of the home (*ujung r'umah*), marking her place as the future of the family, and is equally forbidden to be passed through by men. If the people of the camp are planting rice, a rice barn (*gelubo*) is usually built beneath the 'trunk' of the home, and given its association with women's work and the goddesses of rice, is also considered female space and forbidden to be entered by men.

The sleeping space of the husband (*tegekakot tenggi*) is built higher than the wife's, lower than the daughter's, and level with the rest of the flooring. The sleeping space of male children (*besenting* or *besulunta*) is on the same level as that of their fathers. The husband is more strongly associated with the framing of the home, which is referred to as the 'bones or skeleton of the family' (*penohan tulang bububungon*). It symbolizes his duty to protect the safety and rights of his wife and children. Husbands are also associated with the rafters (*kosoh*) of the roof, and particularly a sacred spot called the *pagu*, which is considered male religious space, and is not allowed to be touched by women and children. This is where a man stores his sacred religious items, which may include a dream pillow, and the ritual mat and clothing used during ritual atop the *balai*. Near this sacred spot, is the place where a family hangs their bundle cloth (*amkuyon koin*), which depending on the sacredness, power and religious purity of a man, can influence the accumulation of family wealth. Roofs are made from the leaves of *ser'dang* (*Livistona saribas*) or *benal* trees, which together with the sturdy

mer'anti bark used to construct the flooring and walls, are often pointed out as ethnic markers that distinguish their homes from *Melayu* swidden huts. The *Orang Rimba* commonly point out the small size of their homes when distinguishing themselves from their neighbors.

Regardless of whether a 'big home' is built in the swidden, most families will also build and spend a great deal of time in smaller wall-less huts (*sungsudungon*⁷ 'hut' or *r'umah de tanoh*, 'room on the ground') in the forests. These huts are around two by three meters in area, and raised around half a meter off the ground. They also have different leveled sleeping spaces for the husband and wife, but are not large enough to include sleeping space for adolescent children. Whenever these homes are built, unmarried adolescent females will also build a small hut next to their parents, while male children will always move out of their parent's hut upon entering adolescence and establish their own huts near the camp. This often takes the form of a collective bachelor (*bujang*) hut with leveled un-gendered flooring space when young men decide to live in the swidden. Transient lean-tos (*belepaion* 'cover' or *kememalomon* 'room for the night'), which can be built in less than an hour, and lack any gendered flooring space, are lived in whenever on the move, and for longer periods during *melangun* journeys upon death. Sacred heirlooms and important religious items are usually stored in the fanned buttress of sacred *aro* trees (*ficus* sp.), which are usually well hidden in their customary forests.

The *Orang Rimba* Economy and Gender-Related Work Patterns

Of their two base subsistence strategies, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* say that a more normal and secure life revolves around a swidden garden (*huma*). Swidden gardens can be divided according to whether they are planted with tuberous crops such as yams, taro, sweet potato and cassava (*huma tanohmon*) or primarily with dry rice (*huma padi*). Tuberous swiddens are preferred, as they are extremely durable, self-sufficient, and allow great flexibility to conduct a multitude of other subsistence pursuits in the forests. They are often used as a storehouse of crops around which they base themselves, while much of their time can be spent moving around in the forests living in smaller wall-less huts. In addition to tuberous plants, the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* are also adept rice farmers, although most rarely plant the crop as it tends to tie them to a 'hot' swidden field, and take away time from other subsistence pursuits in the forests.⁸ Many along the upstream *Makekal* take pride in the fact that they plant rice on a more

consistent basis. However, aside from the camp I lived with, I was only aware of two or three other camps in *Bukit Duabelas* who planted rice.

Husbands do the hard work of opening fields and building homes, while wives plant, tend and harvest the crops. When rice is planted, the women do the extra work of guarding the field from pests, as well as drying out (*jomor*), threshing, winnowing (*sar'ot*) and pounding (*tumbuk padi*) the rice after harvest. Whenever living in and around a swidden, the women spend a great deal of their time weaving rattan baskets (*ambung*) and pleated mats (*tikor*) from the slender leaves of the *rumbai* palm (*sago* sp.). While there was a general ban on planting Brazilian rubber in the past, these days many in *Bukit Duabelas* are strategically placing their swiddens on the edges of forests, and mixing in rubber saplings as a means to block *Melayu* swidden farmers/rubber planters from encroaching into their traditional forests.

What normally triggers the switch to a nomadic life is death. During this time, customary law (*adat*) calls for the members of a camp, and particularly immediate family members, to abandon the swidden and *melangun*, or embark on a nomadic journey outside their customary forests in order to wash the memories of the dead from their minds (*cuci mato* or *pikir'on*). Most will say that a nomadic life is very difficult and that it helps the family to grieve. Because of their very open and extreme form of grieving (*mer'atop* or *bubughatongpon*), which for the women includes dramatic displays of sobbing, moaning and wailing, they also say that movement helps the soul of the dead to break any attachments it has to the living, and make its journey to the afterlife. More generally, they say that the *melangun* is a custom that their ancestors performed and which, according to *adat*, they must follow. If the *melangun* journey is not performed, they believe the camp could be struck by a curse from the ancestors (*kutuk nenenk moyang*), which could lead to misfortune, sickness, accidents or bad luck.

The *melangun* journey varies according to time and distance, and can last anywhere from a month to several months depending on the amount and intensity of grief. During this time, the camp lives a transitory life in lean-tos (*belelapion* or *r'umah de tanoh*), as they move away from their customary forests, and eventually return to them. Traditionally, the basis of their economy switched to the exploitation of over 12 varieties of wild yams (mainly *Dioscorea* sp.).⁹ The women perform the laborious work of searching for wild yams, digging them out of the ground, and procuring them. While some varieties can be eaten raw or after they are cooked, the majority must be leached of toxins before they are prepared and eaten. Other possible staples during these times are a variety of sago yielding palms (*segu*, mainly *Arenga* sp.) and other wild palm

cabbages (such as *beyoy*, *Oncosperma horrida*), although most will say that these are only sought as a last resort.¹⁰ These days, many traditional *melangun* destinations outside their forests (and national park) have become palm oil and rubber plantations, and most must make ends meet by other means. Depending on their access to forests, some still depend upon wild yams to varying extents.

Upon returning to their customary forests, customary law (*adat*) prohibits the camp from returning to or obtaining any crops from their swiddens, which they believe would result in a curse from their ancestors, and lead to sickness or bad luck. According to preference, most camps continue to live a nomadic life until the next swidden season comes around, while some choose to bypass the swidden season and continue with a nomadic way of life. In fact, these two ways of life do not represent an absolute dichotomy, but often tend to merge into and envelop one another. As is often the case, camps digging for wild yams often spend a great deal of time on the fringes of the swiddens of close kin, and those who have a swidden will often pack up and spend a great deal of time moving around the forests. In this sense, whenever a camp is digging for wild yams they are usually not entirely dependent on them, although they certainly could be if they so chose.

These days, there are also a number of alternatives to digging for wild yams. Despite its position of precedence in the *Orang Rimba*'s belief system, and its importance to their social identity, many perceive it as a difficult way of life. This is particularly the case for women, who must conduct the hard work, and unmarried brothers, who often prefer life in a swidden. Alternative ways to obtain staples during these times can include selling off some of the family cloth or wild pigs or other game animals to Chinese and non-Muslim traders, conducting village work such as tapping rubber or logging, or more likely running up debt with village patrons. The *melangun* way of life can be preferred by husbands, as it often allows them to break away from demanding relations with their in-laws, and depending on who joins, allows them to be the cock of their own roost. In addition to being an effective form of grieving, assisting the souls of the dead to pass to the afterlife, and following ancestral custom, one of the primary benefits *melangun* may have is that of a social pressure valve, as it allows for the easing of tension in relationships within the camp. Upon returning from the journey, it also allows for the rearrangement of camps.

These days, the *melangun* practice is one of the primary reasons that most *Orang Rimba* will abandon a government settlement, and never return after finishing the journey (Sandbukt 1988a). In the past, *melangun* may have had a strong association

and initially been used as a strategy to avoid locations associated with death caused by pandemic disease.¹¹ Their beliefs surrounding death, mourning and the *melangun* practice are some of the primary ways that the *Orang Rimba* distinguish themselves from the *Melayu* (and the *Melayu* from the *Orang Rimba*), and despite *melangun*'s perceived difficulty and prominent association with death and grieving, it is still a primary feature of their social identity.

In either mode of subsistence, men spend a great deal of time hunting and trapping wild game (*lau'wuk*), and fishing in the rivers. Hunting lies strongly within the domain of males. While females sometimes capture small game when the opportunity presents itself, they never go out on a hunt. They are never allowed to accompany the men on their hunts, which they believe will result in bad luck. The only weapon traditionally used by hunters is the long shafted spear (*kujur*), which is used effectively from close range, but is rather limited in reaching animals in the canopy. In the early 20th century, Schebesta writes that some 'tame' *Orang Batin Kubu* encountered in Jambi had some notion of the blowpipe (*tulup*), and built small versions of them as toys for their children (Schebesta 1926).¹² In *Bukit Duabelas*, most *Orang Rimba* are unaware of the weapon, and do not make it in any form. Some men are now using self-built flintlock guns (*kecipet*) from materials purchased in the surrounding transmigration sites, while others consider their use a violation of *adat*.

Hunting is sometimes conducted individually, using different stalking and ambushing techniques, and a variety of calls, usually at key places where animals gather such as fruit trees, rivers, wallowing holes (*kubang/labuk*) or salt licks (*sus'pon* or *inumon*). Hunting is more commonly conducted in groups, usually with a pack of dogs, whose job is to catch the scent of an animal, and chase prey until it tires, and is driven up a tree or into a key feature in the landscape such as a river, mountain or strategically placed barrier, snare, or spring-loaded net (*lapun*). Some of the most successful hunting occurs during the evenings, when hunters strap flashlights to their heads and *nyuluh* or hunt by the torch.¹³ A good deal of their daily hunting activities consist of setting (*napon*) and checking (*ngohot*) a wide array of traps and nooses (*jer'ot*), which vary in size and function according to the animal sought.

Some of the most common animals captured are the 'Eurasian wild boar' (*bebi*, *Sus scrofa*), 'bearded pig' (*nangoi*, *Sus barbatus oi.*), the largest 'Sambhur deer' (*r'uso*, *Cervus unicolor*), medium-sized 'red barking deer' (*kijang*, *Muntiacus muntijak*) and the 'greater' (*napu*, *Tragulus napu*) and 'lesser' (*kancil*, *Tragulus javanicus*) mouse deer. Other game animals hunted or trapped include the 'Malaysian sun bear'

(*bur'uwong*, *Helarctos malayanus*), 'Malaysian tapir' (*tonuk*, *Tapirus indicus*), three different varieties of porcupine¹⁴, jungle cat (*kucing hutan*), and monitor lizard (*biowak*). Elders say that their parents used to hunt the rhinoceros for its meat, but that it has been absent from *Bukit Duabelas* since at least the 1960s. A number of rodents ('rats' *tikuy*, 'squirrels' *posow*), shrews (*tupoi*), and civets (*munsong*) are usually hunted by bachelors, often by constructing small deadfall traps (*pelabu*), spearing them with a makeshift lance or even catching them by hand. Religious taboos prohibit hunting the elephant (*gedjoh*, *Elephas maximus*, absent in *Bukit Duabelas* since the late 1980s), tiger (*mer'ego*, *Pantera tigris*), 'scaly anteater' (*tenggiling*, *Manis javanica*), 'siamong' gibbon (*Symphalangus syndactylus*), 'helmeted hornbill' (*bur'ung gedeng*, *Buceros vigil*), and a specific variety of bushy tailed tree shrew (*buyuto*) associated with *sialong* honey trees. Unlike many forest peoples in Malaysia and Borneo, the *Orang Rimba* do not hunt or eat the seven different species of primates found in their forests, as they often say, because they share too many resemblances to humans.¹⁵ Technological constraints may also be an issue as they lack the blowpipe. Sometimes traps or poisons are set around the swidden to catch or kill macaques in order to prevent them from eating their crops. While some say that other camps along distant rivers will eat primates in dire circumstances, most will comment that these peoples are barbaric.

Fishing, damming and poisoning the rivers is an important aspect of the *Orang Rimba's* economy. The rivers contain an amazing variety of fish – I recorded over 40 varieties myse, and there are probably twice as many in all. During the dry season, men walk along the rivers stabbing fish (*ngilisih*) with a three-prong barb (*ser'empang*), while men and women will search out small streams or swamps, and catch them with their hands (*nangkop*). During the rainy season, men build different varieties of dams across the rivers, which often incorporate a variety of rattan fish traps. Smaller *ngar'akoh* dams divert the path of a stream through a rattan basket (*lulung*), while larger *sukam* fish dams divert water through a rattan weir. The largest *hompongongon* dams are constructed across a stream to channel its flow through the base of the dam, which have in place several cylindrical rattan tubes that are regularly checked for fish. During the rainy season, small rivers and streams are blocked and poisoned with a variety of different tubers (*ber'isil*, *carako*, *kaput*, or *tuba*, *Dioscorea piscatorum*) or bark (*tungku*), which stuns the fish, so that they easily can be collected off the surface of the water. Women are not allowed to participate in these activities, as they believe the poison can negatively affect their fertility.

During the dry season, the rivers are also actively searched for a variety of turtles, often by stabbing the muddy portions of the river with a conical spear called the *tir'uk*. Other animals occasionally captured in the rivers or swampy marshlands (*payau, lebung*) include the 'Sunda river otter' (*cencehir, Cynogale bennettii*), the increasingly rare freshwater crocodile (*buayo/kuyo aik*), the 'lesser blood python' (*ulor pandok, Python curtus*), and the massive 'greater reticulated python' (*ulor sawo, Python reticulatus*). During the evenings, children and bachelors often head to the rivers to capture large river frogs (*kodok*), while river snails (*tenguyung, cece pang and kelumboi*), crabs (*kotam*) and shrimp (*udang*) are sometimes collected by the men and eaten as snacks. As with rodents, frogs, and river otters, women are prohibited from eating mollusks.

While hunters rarely target birds in the canopy, as is the case with other Malayic peoples, ground fowl (jungle chicken, quail and pheasants) are sometimes captured using traps and enclosures (*jar'ing*), which employ a variety of suspended rattan nooses (Skeat 1900).¹⁶ Whenever coming upon colonies of large insectivorous bats (*beyot, Cheiromeles torquatus*) or fruit bats (*keleluang, Pteropus vampyrus*), men will sometimes fell the trees, allowing the bats to be clubbed or speared. Small children and bachelors sometimes make a snack out of a smaller species of bat (*kelelawor*) commonly found in the hollow branches of banana trees, but more commonly play around with them.

Fruit and honey are important aspects of the economy, as well of social and religious life (which I will examine in depth in later chapters). The gender-related distribution of work surrounding the collection of fruits and honey generally relates to whether or not the task involves climbing trees, which is considered men's work. A variety of other wild vegetables, nuts and seeds are collected throughout the year to supplement the diet, including seeds from the *Salacca* palms, seeds from the *Ceolostegia* and *Scorodocarpus* trees (*nunggai, kulim, biq*), and the stinking bean (*petoi, Leguminosae parkia speciosa*), a protein-rich bean pod that grows high in the branches of *Legum* trees. A type of acorn called the *buntor* fruit (*buah buntor, Ochanostachys amentacea*) is sometimes collected and processed by the women towards the end of the annual fruiting season, and can be sealed in containers and eaten throughout the year.

The collection of forest products for trade (rattan, *jer'nang* and dammar resins, wild latex, medical plants and honey) was an important aspect of the traditional economy, one that tied the *Orang Rimba* to the wider political economy of the region.

In addition to giving them access to outside goods such as salt, sugar, tools, and cloth, their limited relations with village patrons also offered them a degree of protection in the past from slave raids, and a means of representation in their relations with the outside world.¹⁷ In the past, most *Orang Rimba* and *Orang Batin Kubu* conducted these relations through the silent trade, or trading from a distance, which according to elders along the *Makekal* River and their *Melayu* patrons in *Tanah Garo* was practiced well into the 1950s. In addition to being a strategy to maintain social distance with the *Melayu*, and, in the past, possibly to avoid being ambushed in a slave raid, one of the main reasons that *Kubu* peoples probably practiced the silent trade was to avoid contact with pandemic disease, particularly smallpox. According to European accounts, which begin in the 16th century, smallpox struck the region on a cyclical basis at intervals of eight to ten years, and could devastate populations in the upstream regions (Andaya 1993:596; Boomgaard 2003). Some of the reasons the *Makekal Orang Rimba* give for continuing to practice the silent trade, even after smallpox was eradicated in the 1920s, have to do with their cosmological beliefs and related prohibitions surrounding sickness and the containment of sickness. These beliefs are reinforced by other beliefs that serve to maintain good relations with their gods, by limiting interactions with the outside world. Many of these ideas will be described in later chapters. Their relations with *Melayu* patrons have also strongly influenced their social and political systems by giving them access to an outside system of law, village titles, and cloth, which is used to enforce their system of law.

The work of collecting forest products is performed primarily by the men, while women and children sometimes collect dammar resins, or other items which do not involve heavy work or climbing trees. While most still collect a variety of forest products for their own use, these days the only forest products actively collected for trade along the *Makekal* River are honey, sometimes medicinal plants, and *jer'nang* resin (*Daemonorops draco*), which is the most valuable of the forest products. These days, due to a combination of forest degradation, lack of access to roads, and other economic alternatives, the trade in other forest products (such as dammar resin and rattans) has largely been replaced by occasional rubber tapping, and for some, assisting patrons or *Melayu* villagers in their logging efforts. The *Orang Rimba* still put a great deal of what they earn towards the accumulation of cloth, which is a form of family wealth and status, and is the primary manner in which marriages are arranged, and how fines are paid in their traditional system of law.

Generational Kinship Relationships and Teknonymy

The wider network of *Orang Rimba* social relations can be characterized according to a “kindred”, with a strong intergenerational emphasis arranged according to three primary generation levels, “child, parent or grandparent” (Freeman 1957; Freeman 1961; Sather 1996:90).¹⁸ There are strong bonds of “intra-generational unity” couched in terms of siblingship, and “intergenerational asymmetry”, which imply relationships of authority, respect, and obligation (Sather 1996:90). There are of course strict rules of inclusion in and exclusion from *Orang Rimba* kindred, depending on whether a person is *Or’ang Rimba* or outsider (*Or’ang Mer’u*), which restrict anything but brief and shallow encounters with the latter and completely cuts off the option of marriage. Within the *Orang Rimba* kindred of relations, which is generally confined to neighboring river interfluves, cousin marriages pull cognates in danger of becoming non-cognates back into a network of kin and social relations, and build bonds of solidarity between people of the same generation within the confines of very asymmetrical relations of affinity (Sather 1996:90).

As is the case with other Malayic peoples, physical proximity has much to do with the strength of primary kinship and kindred relations, and is particularly relevant in the context of dispersed uxorilocal residence, which often weakens the primary mother–brother relationship. More generally, the emphasis on determining kinship relations to the second and third degrees of closeness (and beyond) creates a situation where everyone is related to everyone else in one manner or another. In the rare instance that they are not, a person is often referred to by a generation-level kin term, which places them within the kindred of relations. These types of relations create extremely diverse kin relations, which can be called upon according to place and generation level, and imply notions of subordinate, respect and authority. Most importantly, these relations create notions of obligation and reciprocity by which kin assist one another through a network of share relations. As in other egalitarian bride service societies, social relations are largely defined by issues of gender, age, adulthood, seniority and relations of affinity, but also by generation level (Collier 1981; Marshall 1959; Rosaldo 1980).

The general term for children is *budak* (Ma. servant, slave (*Lit.*), youngster), denoting their position as minors in the context of social relations and *adat* law, and their subordinate position in relation to parents and those of higher generation levels, who are in a position of relative authority and should be shown respect. Parents and those of higher generation levels are strongly obliged to provide for them, and protect their interests and safety from those outside their community and a dangerous outside

world. *Budak* is also a common term used in reference to females of all ages (*budak betina* ‘women’ *budak lapai* ‘maiden’), which doesn’t necessarily imply that they are subordinate in all types of social relations, but like children, does mark their status as minors in the context of *adat* customs, law and religion. More generally, it denotes their vulnerability in relation to a dangerous outside world, and all outside males who are not immediate kin. Women usually cannot be fined for misconduct, unless it is in the context of share relations with husbands or in the context of divorce. They are also not believed to accumulate sin, which for men can influence their status in the afterlife. Men are expected to provide for them and protect their interests and rights, with primary obligations falling to maternal uncles/brothers and father/husbands.

Children are often referred to by their given names, which are highly personal and have associations with their birth deity. They are sometimes used amongst people of the same age grade, and those who have a close or intimate relationship with one another. As people grow older they are rarely used and almost always replaced by kin terms or teknonyms, which denote gender, marital and adult status, and generation level, and marks one’s place and social status as junior or senior in relation to others in the community (Geertz 1973; Geertz 1964). After reaching adulthood, it is often considered offensive to refer to someone by his or her given name, particularly when addressing someone of a higher generation level.

On the intra-generational level, kin terms that denote siblingship are arranged according to birth order as ‘younger sibling’ (*adik*), ‘elder sibling’ (*kakok*) and eldest sibling (*kakok tuha*), which create relationships of subordinate and superior and imply related notions of authority, respect and obligation. Cousins (*pupu*) and more generally those of the same generation level will also refer to each other with these terms, which imply a relationship of siblingship and unity amongst those of the same generation level. This is also the permitted range of allowable marriages. Regardless of one’s age, relationships that cross generation levels are relationships between subordinates and superiors, and imply related notions of respect, authority and obligation. They are also closed or forbidden marriages. Parent-level kinship terms are arranged according to gender (*bepak, induk, ibung, mamok*), with father occupying the position of an outsider in post-marital residence, and is expected to provide for his nuclear family, parents-in-law and wife’s extended family. Mother’s adult brothers and maternal uncles occupy a position as insiders and authority figures who are obliged to protect the rights of their mother, sisters, and sister’s female children (*nakon*). Maternal uncles are further differentiated according to their birth order as youngest (*pamok*) and eldest (*uwak*),

which for the latter, implies seniority in the relationship, and stronger obligations to manage issues surrounding their sisters and sister's children.

Table 2.1 Orang Rimba Kinship Terminology¹⁹

<i>moyang</i>	(beyond great grand parents, ancestors)	PPP +	<i>mengkanak tuha</i>	DH
<i>puyang</i>	(great grandparents or ancestors)	PPP		
<i>nenek</i>	(grandparents)	PP	<i>mengkanak betina</i>	SW
<i>nenek jenton</i>	(grandfather)			
<i>nenek betina</i>	(grandmother)			
<i>bepak</i>	(father)	F	<i>anak buah kontan</i>	SbCSp
<i>induk</i>	(mother)	M		
<i>ibung</i>	(aunt)	FZ, MZ	<i>ipor</i>	SpSb [WB, ZH, BW, WZ]
<i>mamak</i>	(uncle)	FB, MB		
<i>uwak</i>	(eldest maternal uncle)	M eldest B		
<i>pamak</i>	(youngest maternal uncle)	M youngest B		
<i>dulur</i>	(sibling)	Sb	<i>kekakok</i>	SpeSb
<i>kakok tuha</i>	(eldest sibling)	eldest Sb	<i>kekakok tuha</i>	Speldest Sb
<i>kakok</i>	(elder sibling)	eSb	<i>mengkadik</i>	Spysb
<i>adik</i>	(younger sibling)	ySb	<i>adik ipor</i>	Spyoungest Sb
<i>pupu</i>	(cousin)	PSbC	<i>or'ang tuha</i> (parents) <i>kolup</i> <i>kupek</i> <i>busu-nye</i>	S D youngest D
<i>laki</i>	(husband)	H	<i>nakon</i> (nephew/niece)	SbC
<i>bini</i>	(wife)	W		
<i>or'ang besen</i>	(both sets of parents of a couple)		<i>cucun</i> (grandchildren)	CC
<i>or'ang hubanon</i>	(spouse's parents)	SpF. SM	<i>cicip</i> (great """)	CCC
<i>manantu</i>	(child's spouse)	CSp	<i>piyud</i> ("" and below)	CCC

Cross-generational kinship terms used by parents in reference to their children ('son' *kolup* and 'daughter' *kubek*) are also arranged according to gender, while the youngest daughter (*besunye*) is further differentiated according to her birth order. Youngest daughter is always lavished with affection by her parents, and because of this, it is expected that the in-marrying husband should perform a lengthier period of bride service and pay a higher cost of bridewealth.

For members of the opposite sex, relationships that cross generation levels are characterized by a degree of social distance, as they hold the potential to verge into the realm of incestuous relations (*sumbang*). In addition to primary incest taboos with parents and siblings, incest taboos also extend to relationships that cross generation levels, which regardless of distance, are regarded as unallowable marriages. As Fischer notes, the term *sumbang* or 'incest' is an important concept for people in Sumatra, one that has a much broader range of meaning than its most narrow reference to the primary incest taboos (Fischer 1950:222).²⁰ For most societies in Sumatra, the concepts

surrounding *sumbang* are arranged according to different levels of severity, and can include adultery, intimate relations out of wedlock, and more generally whatever the society considers to be inappropriate relations between the sexes, with the seriousness increasing as one gets closer to the range of unacceptable marriages.

The *Orang Rimba*'s use of the term is very broad and much more sensitive than most, if not all peoples in Sumatra. In addition to the above, for males *sumbang* can include violating a female physical or social space, which may include accidentally coming upon a female alone in the forests, encountering females while they are bathing in the river, passing too closely to females while walking along a path or within the camp, or looking at them in the wrong way. *Sumbang* can also include passing through female sleeping space in the home, or touching any of their objects without permission, particularly sleeping mats and clothing. It can also include harvesting any forest resources associated with women, without first asking their permission. Through analogy a man can find himself committing *sumbang* or violating women and their rights in a variety of different ways, with the cloth fine increasing whenever it can be determined that there is a generational relationship at play, according to the degree of distance.²¹ Thus, while the *Orang Rimba* kindred of relations creates an infinite network of support and share relations, it also creates a tangled web of cross-gender kindred violations between men and women, which are actively debated and manipulated through legal hearings in order to determine the fine paid by the accused male, from his mother and/or sister's store of cloth. *Adat* legal hearings surrounding male violations of women are a constant re-occurring cycle in *Bukit Duabelas*.

The right to participate in the camp decision-making process comes with one's passage into adulthood or being *rer'ayo*, which can only be achieved through marriage. For the male, adulthood implies an obligation to provide for wife, children, and in-laws, to engage in proper share relations in the camp, and to begin participating in the realm of *adat* law through community legal hearings. It also implies an obligation to maintain proper relations with the gods by following religious prohibitions, and by beginning to participate and engage in the domain of religion and ritual. For the female, adulthood allows her to establish her own household, begin managing some of her inheritance, such as fruit and honey trees, and receive some of the family cloth in order to establish her own family store of cloth. Adult women are also allowed to begin displaying their 'passions' (*nafsu*) in relationship with their husbands, the larger camp, and within community *adat* legal hearings. After marriage, a man and woman are no longer addressed by their given names or non-adult teknonyms, but initially as 'father/mother

in waiting' (*bepak/induk mentar'ow*). Their more complete entry into adulthood is achieved after the birth of their first child, after which they are referred to as 'father/mother of eldest child's name'.

Precedence in relations falls to the wife's kin, while in-marrying husbands initially occupy a rather subordinate position, even in relation to their wife's unmarried non-adult brothers. For husbands, affinal kin terms mark their subordinate place within a network of asymmetrical relationships where it is their duty to provide for their in-laws. The general term that parents use in reference to their children's spouse is *manantu*, with additional terms used to mark priority in relations between those of sons and daughters. Son's spouse is referred to simply as daughter-in-law (*mengkanak betina*), while daughter's spouse, who will move into and contribute to the camp, is referred to as 'head' child-in-law (*mengkanak tuha*). Maternal uncles refer to the husbands of their sister's female children as *anak buah kontan* or 'dangling subordinate/descendant of the chief', and can call on them for assistance, food, work, or to perform other tasks. As with consanguineal kinship terms, intragenerational terms of affinity used in reference to spouse's siblings (*ipor*) are arranged according to their order of birth, in relation to the spouse, and include: 'spouse's eldest sibling' (*kekakok tuha*), 'spouse's elder sibling' (*kekakok*), 'spouse's younger sibling' (*mengadik*) and 'spouse's youngest sibling' (*adik ipor*). For an in-marrying husband, these terms mark the order of precedence and obligation inherent in the relationships with his brother and sisters-in-law.

With the passage of time, a husband will establish his place in a camp and acquire seniority in relation to other in-marrying husbands through age, and by accumulating experience and expertise in the domains of law and religion. Eventually, after his wife's parents pass away, and parents become grandparents (*nenek jenton/betina*), camps will fission, and a male will eventually become the senior male in his camp, and ease into the less stringent position of social, political, and religious authority. As people ascend to the third generation level, they are looked after by their children, sons-in-law and grandchildren. Grandparents are often assigned a male suitor performing bride service, who will hunt for them, build their home, and manage their fields.

Great grandparents (*puyang*) are perceived to be one step below the exalted status of ancestor (*moyang*), although both of these terms are usually only used in reference to those who have passed on. As is the case throughout the region, the living are strongly prohibited from mentioning the given names or living teknonyms of the

dead, which can insult, offend or anger the dead or the ancestors, and lead to misfortune (Brosius 1992; Geertz 1973:360; Geertz 1964). Death is again the last step in social status, or rather the transition to the spiritual status of an ancestor, and a veneration of one of the lesser gods. *Orang Rimba* death names are fairly simple, and are based on the terms *ndihang* (Malay, *mendiang*) meaning ‘the late’ or ‘deceased’ and *melekat* meaning ‘angel’, which is followed by a term which denotes their marital status and gender while living, and the name of the river nearest to the location where they passed away (Wilkinson 1948:56).²² Thus, children are referred to as *ndihang keciq*, unmarried males and females as *ndihang bujang/gediy*, and married men and women as *ndihang jenton/betina*. Senior and big shaman are referred to as angels (*melekat*); again, the term is followed by terms that mark marital status, gender, and the river nearest to the place of death.

Relations of the Household (Husband and Wife), Affinity and Sharing Relations

As with the *Melayu*, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* express the different levels of authority in their community through an abbreviated nested ladder analogy (*bejenjang naik be'tanggo tur'un*), which can be extended to fit their system of hierarchical titles held by camp headman, and their position under the *Melayu* village of *Tanah Garo*.²³

the environment is one with god	<i>halom sekato tuhan,</i>
the community, the headman	<i>raykat sekato penghulu,</i>
a wife, her husband	<i>bini sekato laki</i>
the household, sisters married brother	<i>rumah tanggoh sekato tengganai</i>

Within the nuclear family, father (*bepak*) is considered a provider, and the caretaker of his wife and children. While he has authority over his wife (*bini*), his children, and the internal matters of his own household (*bubung* or *r'umah tanggo*), within the larger camp he is perceived as an outsider and is involved in rather asymmetrical relationships with his in-laws. To some extent, the husband's children and the legal matters surrounding his larger household fall more under the authority of his wife's adult brother's (formally referred to as *tengganai*), particularly her eldest brother, but as marriages are dispersed they are rarely present. The rights that a husband obtains in the customary forests of his wife only come through marriage and are often downplayed by in-laws, particularly by wife's unwed brothers. Some of the husband's broader obligations to their wives and in-laws, within the context of uxori-local residence and/or bride service (*ber'induk semang*) are expressed in the following *seleko adat* couplet.

collect what is far, balance what
is long, and carry what is heavy
hunger and sickness must be
diminished by providing food, these
are the rules of uxorilocal residence
and/or bride service

*monyompat nang jowu mikul
nang rintang dukung nang ber'at
capur nang momor'i
makon, sakit nang bopur'u batko
pongatur'on ber'induk semang*

Husbands are expected to provide a steady flow of game and other foods for their nuclear families, wives' parents (*or'ang hubanon*), and on secondary level to other in-laws. They receive constant pressure from their wives and in-laws whenever they fall short or are perceived to be lazy. They are also expected to open fields, help their parents-in-law open their fields, and periodically collect forest products or perform other work to obtain village goods, and to increase their family store of cloth. Wives wield their 'passions' (*nafsu*) on a daily basis to pressure their husbands to pick up their work efforts or to manipulate them in their own interests. They can do this by yelling, arguing, threatening divorce, crying, beating, or shaming them in front of others. These relations tend to ease as a husband begins to establish his position and authority in the camp through age, seniority and matters of law and religion.

One of the ways that husbands establish their place in the camp is through a system of sharing. Camp social relations take place within a context of sharing and reciprocity (*beloi budi*), which means that a person is obliged to give game meat or other foods, whenever asked or demanded from a fellow camp member, and by doing so, can do the same in the future. The rules that regulate many of the rights to manage and share different types of foods are based upon the gender-related work patterns of the nuclear family. According to custom, 'all that is collected or obtained by the husband, returns to be managed and distributed by the wife, and all that is collected by the wife returns to be managed and distributed by the husband' (*segelo nang depot laki balik ke bini, segelo nang depot bini balik ke laki*). While this arrangement appears to imply a degree of equality in the husband/wife relationship, it also results in extraordinary sharing rights for the women, which include game, the most socially significant item that can be shared. The division of authority over the fruits of labor in the nuclear family is expressed through the 'laws of the household'.

Table 2.2 The Laws of the Household (*adat rumah tanggo*)

The rights/authority of the wife

game animals, fish, sour, salt, the field, crops, cloth, forest products, and village goods are the rights of women

Penguasohon bini

lou'wuk, ikan, hasom, ger'om, huma tanom, ker'ajut belanjo, penguasohan budak betina

The rights/authority of the husband

the remainder of the food, after being being cooked is given to the man but the woman controls (or has final say) whether the man gives or not work in the home, baskets, mats, whatever is cooked, durian taffy, and yams are the authority/rights of the man

Penguasohon laki

por'imahonnye jenton doh sambut tosayin di makon betina poncola jenton nang kasi apo hopi plan pogaweh, ambung, tikor, susuk, sankan masok matah, lempuk, gedung penguasohan jenton

The rights of the child

Sweets/honey, fish, durian, turtle eggs and fat are the authority of the child

Penguasohon budak

maniy, ikan, dur'ion dan toluk, lomok penguasohon budak ebun

In addition to game, the wife has the right to share fish, which may include a small catch from a river or pond, or a much larger bounty from a river that has been dammed and poisoned. They also receive the right to manage sour cluster fruits, which are associated with satisfying pregnancy cravings, and whatever lies in the swidden field, including the home and crops. They receive the rights to manage forest products collected by their husbands, and any village goods obtained, which may include salt, sugar and cloth. In theory, infants and small children (*budak ebun*) also receive rights over some of the fruit of their parents work, such as fat, fish, turtle eggs, honey, and *dur'ion* fruit. Because they are minors, these items are managed by mothers, which give women the additional rights to distribute *dur'ion*, the most socially significant fruit, and honey, which is probably the second most precedent share item following game. They also receive the right to distribute the fat from larger game animals, which is the favorite and most precedent part of the animal. Both fat (*lemak* or *gemuk*) and sweets (*maniy*) are important ritual requirements that a host camp must provide during primary life stage ceremonies such as bathing the baby in the river and marriage ceremonies.

Husbands receive the right to manage wild yams whenever a camp is nomadic, which are rather insignificant in terms of sharing and the obligation the receiver has to return any form of reciprocity. Husbands also receive the right to manage the rattan baskets (*ambung*) and pleated mats (*tikor*) made by their wives. Many of these items are traded or sold for village goods, which in turn are managed by the women. In contrast to what is often implied through customary law, husbands do obtain the right to distribute certain game animals that are associated with the male domain of religion. There are

also a number of gender-related food prohibitions that restrict female consumption of important foods such as honey, and while men are not able to distribute these items, in some cases they are its primary consumers. In any case, it is strongly prohibited for a husband to distribute his wife's items and vice versa, without first receiving permission from the other to do so. In such cases, either party can bring their spouse to a legal hearing where the losing party is subject to pay a fine of 66 sheets of cloth to their spouse's natal family. In repeated instances, these issues can be used to justify a divorce.

The most significant item that can be shared is game meat (*lau'wuk, menso*), which always implies the greatest obligation on the part of the receiver to return with equal reciprocity in the future. In theory, and in regards to the animals most commonly captured, the game caught by a hunter is managed by his wife, who is referred to as the *mogong*, 'holder' or 'owner', and is its primary distributor to others in the camp. There are several pre-*mogong* divisionary rules that determine how much of the animal a hunter or group of hunters will bring back to their wives after any hunt. Whenever the hunter captures an animal during an individual hunt or with his own weapon or trap, its arms and legs are usually strung together with a piece of rattan and carried back intact in the form of a backpack, where it is then handed over to his wife to distribute. However, during collective hunts, the men will usually go through a pre-*mogong* quartering of the animal in the forests (unless the animal is small) where each of the hunters receives a portion of the animal according to his level of participation in the hunt, which he then brings back to his wife to share. If the spear, weapon, or trap used by the hunter belongs to another man, he is also obliged to give its owner a portion of the animal, which is then handed over to his wife.²⁴

In any case, it is strongly forbidden for a hunter to eat any of the game while alone in the forests, or to distribute it to others before first bringing it home to his wife. In such cases the wife can wage a legal hearing against her husband referred to as 'finding out if the male has given or is greedy' (*pencolok jenton nang kasi atau jengki*), which can carry a cloth fine of 60 sheets of cloth paid to the wife by the husband's female kin. Greed, overindulgence (*jengki*) or bypassing sharing rights are some of the most serious offences a person can commit, and can lead to a negative reputation in the camp, affect the way others will share or return reciprocity in the future, and is one of the main reasons given to justify a divorce. When game arrives in a camp, its members will always gather to distribute or share the game, and whoever shows up has the right to receive a portion of the animal, unless it is too small.

As the *mogong*, the wife of the hunter has primary right to distribute game to others, and when the animal is large, can assign one of her female kin as a secondary distributor. In these cases, the wife is designated as the primary distributor of the animal's forequarters (*or'ang sempu kepala*), while the secondary distributor (*or'ang sempu punggung*) has the right to distribute the animal's hindquarters. The sharing of game proceeds according to precedence in relations within the camp, or upon whoever needs it the most and has the most number of hungry children to feed. The male camp elder, who is usually a senior shaman, always receives the animal's blood (*der'o*) and important interior organs ('bile/gall' *sompdu*, liver, and if it is not a pig, its heart), which are used for medicinal purposes and for healing. If the animal is large (pig, tapir, bear, etc.), the family of the primary distributor also has the right to take a portion of the animal home, where it is slowly smoked over a fire so that it lasts several days, and can later be eaten by the family or given in portions to whoever asks. In these cases the husband/hunter also has the right to take secondary portions to his natal camp (his *war'is perebo*), which depending on where he lives, may be several hours walk or longer from his camp.

There are a number of secondary levels of sharing food (game, honey, *dur'ion*, etc.) after the initial distribution has been made or the food has been cooked. According to custom, all cooked food becomes the right of the husband to manage, but only if his wife agrees. These matters usually depend on whether there is enough food for the household, but can also relate to whether she believes the food will be shared with another woman. Whenever a husband or wife shares their food with members of the opposite sex in what might be considered a disproportionate or improper manner, this can also be construed as *sumbang* or having an affair out of wedlock, and can be subject to a legal hearing, cloth fines or used to justify a divorce.

While a wife receives the right to distribute the fruit collected from her *dur'ion* trees, the husband receives the right to manage and distribute the *dur'ion* taffy made by his wife. Cooked *dur'ion* taffy can be made plain (*lempuk*) or mixed with chillies (*cabe*) and made spicy (*tempoyak*), and like cooked honey is placed in containers and can be stored for long periods of time. Despite the fact that most honey is cooked, this important item always remains the right of the children, and thus it is the mother's right to manage and distribute it to others.

Food is openly shared with the other members of a camp, and as long as a person is in good standing, is not considered lazy (*penyogon*), and shares whatever he has with others, is entitled to receive some of whatever another has, as long as the

giver's nuclear family has enough to eat. The rights that a husband and wife acquire to distribute their particular foods are forms of status, power and authority in themselves. But more importantly, sharing builds bonds of obligation and reciprocity between people (*beloi budi*), and obliges the receiver to somehow return the favor in the future, whether it is in the form of game meat, fruit, honey or help in opening a swidden field. The last thing anyone wants is to obtain a reputation for being greedy, not sharing or hoarding food (*pahor'it*/males, *newasi*/females). These actions can disrupt one's network of sharing relations, which is the socio-economic foundation on which this society stands.

This does not necessarily imply that the giver will easily part with some of their important items (such as honey and durian), and an attempt is always made to keep some around for the household. While game tends to spoil quickly and is always distributed and eaten rather quickly, the negotiation over cooked sweet items (*dur'ion* and honey), which can be stored for longer periods, can become an interesting battle, particularly when a person's supply begins to dwindle. There are many ways of asking for or denying food, most of which include exaggeration, humiliating or lowering oneself or making outright demands. Below are some common examples of the ways that a person can lower oneself or exaggerate a scenario when asking for food.

I will eat my feces, give me some honey	<i>Tasi akeh makon, bor'i maniy</i>
I will suck my own penis, give me some pig	<i>Cici akeh kulum, bor'i bebi</i>
I will lick your bum my friend, give some food	<i>Bur'it kawana akeh dilat, bor'i makon</i>
I will drink my urine, give me some meat	<i>Kocing akeh minum, bor'i lau'wuk</i>
Can I have some food, I have not eaten in a week	<i>Akeh minta makon, lah sodah seminggu hopi bemakon</i>
I ask forgiveness, I have ten fingers, eleven counting my head	<i>Akeh minta maaf, supuluh jar'i, sebelai dengen kepelu</i>

Within one's network of share relations, someone in the parent's generation level is obliged to share with those of lower and higher generation levels without expecting much in return, while relations between those in the same generation level are equal. In regards to secondary sharing rights, husbands usually engage in equal sharing relations with other husbands, according to seniority, while there is a degree of inequality within the share relations of a husband and his wife's kin, particularly with wife's unwed brothers. Unmarried brothers will often demand from their sister's husbands without giving much back in return, or for that matter doing much work around the camp. To a certain extent, this behavior is accepted from them as they are natal residents, not adults, and will soon be making the transition into a subordinate set

of relationships with their affines during the difficult period of bride service and uxorilocal residence. It is also perceived as their right as the 'stalks' (*tampung*) of their sisters, and their role as the *waris di atas batin*.

Brother–sister Relations: The Stalk that Supports the Flower

The relationship between brothers and sisters (mother/sons, maternal uncle/sisters female children) is perceived to be the primary and most important set of kin relationships, despite the fact that it is often weakened after marriage due to dispersed marriage and strong obligations to affines. Brothers (sons, maternal uncles) are perceived as insiders in their natal camps and forests, and are expected to serve as the guardians and protectors of women (mothers, sisters, sisters female children), and to represent their rights and interests to all outsiders. They are also expected to perform the role of authority figure to their sister's children, and help to negotiate and arrange important life stage ceremonies such as birth, bathing the baby in the river for the first time, marriage and divorce. The relationship between brothers and sisters is nurtured from a very young age, as reflected in metaphoric appendages attached to the end of children's names. The given names of male children are followed by the term *tampung*, meaning the 'stalk' of a plant, while the names of female children are followed by *bungo*, meaning 'flower'.²⁵ As this metaphor or analogy implies, throughout one's life a brother is obliged to be the primary support network for his sister.

Within this relationship, the mother, sisters and sisters female children are referred to as the *wa'ris per'ebo* (*wa'ris* 'kin'; *per'ebo* who 'take care of' the son/brothers) and the 'female kin who sit at the door of debt' (*wa'ris per'ebo nang duduk de pintu utang*). Debt refers indirectly to the obligations of a son to his mother and sisters, and more directly to the women's rights to manage immovable inheritance in their forests such as fruit and honey trees, and more particularly the family cloth (*koin*). Brothers (sons/maternal uncles) are referred to as the 'the kin who stand over the innerness' of the women (*wa'ris di atas batin*²⁶) and the 'kin who sit at the door of debt as warriors' (*wa'ris di atas batin nang duduk de pintu baling*²⁷). The *wa'ris di atas batin* perceive it as their duty and obligation, through aggressive posturing and the rule of law, to protect the interests of their women from a dangerous outside world, and all outside *Orang Rimba* males who are not immediate kin. Their protective and posturing role is expressed in the following *seleko adat* aphorism.

you must be shy, polite, and fear the male kin who sits as the protector, so that the women can't be stabbed with a knife, cut with a knife, enslaved, lied to, harassed, or made stupid

har'uy malu har'uy sopan, santun dengan war'is di pintu de baling. maeh hopi bisa or'ang kelosko or'ang pancung de umbasko or'ang tipu or'ang dayo or'ang umbuk or'ang umbasko

In the traditional context, women are not allowed to leave the forests, and it is perceived as the duty of the *war'is di atas batin* to ensure that they are shielded from any interactions with outsiders. In addition to protecting the women from non-*Orang Rimba*, who in the past anyway probably only rarely came upon their camps in the forests, their role is much more concerned with preventing improper relations with *Orang Rimba* males. Any outside male caught in a case with a woman is subject to an *adat* hearing (*rudingon* or *sidang adat*) where he can be fined in sheets of cloth.

Adat hearings involving improper conduct with women or infringing upon their rights are a constant occurrence in the forests, and while many of these cases involve bachelors and maidens, they are certainly not confined to them. Most adult men will find themselves involved in cases with women throughout their lives, particularly in reference to improperly harvesting primary forest resources without the permission of the female owner. In addition to restricting improper interactions between men and women, these rules and their related hearings are more generally intertwined with regulating proper social relations in their communities, which are based around women, and through legal analogies can extend to a number of different domains of social life. Thus, a man who violates *adat* customs, is disruptive, or harvests primary resources in the forests without first receiving permission from the woman or group of women to which it belongs, may find himself in a legal case, where through analogy he will be deemed to have violated, defiled or committed incest with a woman. These issues are closely intertwined with camp power relations between women, their protective and aggressive 'non-adult' brothers, and in-marrying 'adult' husbands. They also appear to be related with either reacquiring or increasing the family store of cloth, which through marriage and a constant cycle of legal hearings involving men is continuously moving from household to household.

After moving to the camps of their wives, brothers (sons/maternal uncles) are expected to maintain the relationship with their sisters, and whenever called upon, return to their natal forests to manage important affairs. These obligations are expressed in the following *seleko adat* couplet.

the wide of the river comes and goes
the long bend of the river is looked after

*sur'at lebor har'uy diulang
r'antu panjang de lendu*

you cannot leave the group of women	<i>piado ketingalon war'is per'ebo</i>
they cannot be forgotten	<i>lelak telupos</i>
or they are left to be stolen from	<i>tinggal kemalingon pado war'is per'ebo</i>
the sons/brothers can still be called upon	<i>tetep pepangilon war'is di atas batin</i>

By fulfilling their obligations and maintaining good relations with the women, sons and brothers not only ensure that their family rights are protected, but also maintain a positive network of support relations, and receive access to their mother and sister's store of cloth, whenever they find themselves involved in a legal hearing.

Despite the social importance ascribed to the brother–sister (mother/son, maternal uncle/sister's female children) relationship, it is often diminished after marriage due to distances between families and stronger obligations to relationships with in-laws. Unless a man marries near his natal camp, he is usually only able to handle urgent matters involving his natal women, which may include arranging or attending important life stage ceremonies, and negotiating marriages of his sister's female children. In these cases, the aggressive posturing role of the *war'is di atas batin* often falls to women's unmarried brothers when they come of age, with primary obligations falling to the eldest unmarried brother.²⁸ This often results in a rather tense and sometimes disrespectful relationship between unmarried brothers and in-marrying husbands, despite the latter's adulthood, age and seniority. Unmarried brothers are usually persistent in defending the interests of their mother and sisters in the relationships with their husbands. They often make a point to stress their natal ties and rights within their customary forests, and downplay that of their brothers-in-law. Throughout my stay, the bachelors would verbally confront their sister's husbands and even the camp headmen, whenever they were chided for being lazy and not contributing to the camp, involving themselves in too many legal hearings involving women, or for leaving the forests and interacting too often with villagers. On one occasion, the senior bachelor forcefully told the headman that if he did not like his behavior then he should divorce his sister and return to his own forests. After the argument escalated, he later threatened to burn his house down.

Within their camps, sister's unmarried brothers are valued in their role as protectors, and through their posturing, give additional leverage in their relations with their husbands. Outside their camps, they are perceived as a disruptive threat to women, particularly to maidens (*budak/gediy lapai*), and throughout their youth often find themselves involved in legal cases during their travels (*mer'antau*) to other camps. When involved in too many cases, this can burden and lead to tense relations with their mother and sisters, and quickly diminish the family store of cloth. As non-adults, they

are also unable to perform the legal duties in their role as *war'is di atas batin*, which involves taking men to court and fining them for infringing upon women's rights, and of course increasing the family store of cloth. The absence of mother's adult brothers from everyday camp life also allows in-married husbands the opportunity to acquire a degree of respect, status, authority and influence as the legal protectors of women within the domains of *adat* law and in religious matters. It also allows them a degree of authority over their unmarried brothers-in-law through their ability to wage legal and religious related threats, whenever their behavior falls outside the boundaries of *adat*.

Makekal Orang Rimba Leadership Structure and the Rundignon

Each camp or associated grouping of camps (*rombongan*) is led by a headman (*penghulu*) who is democratically chosen by its members, largely based on his age, seniority and knowledge of *adat* law. Their system of law, which will be described in more detail in the following chapter, is based on a variant of Jambi *adat*, a kingdom-wide legal code originating from the downstream kingdom sometime in the 16th or 17th century, with the intent of establishing a common law between the upstream and downstream regions. While legal cases can be heard on a wide range of issues, the majority are concerned with arranging marriages, enforcing inappropriate cross-gender relations, and defending women's rights to forest resources. The manipulation of *adat* law in community legal hearings (*rudignon* or *sidang adat*) lies strongly within the domain of adult males. While females always attend and 'actively' participate, it is not considered appropriate for them to manipulate legal analogies (*seleko adat*) in the context of a legal hearing, nor do they formally determine the outcomes.

Over this simple *penghulu* system of leadership, there is a system of hierarchical village titles held by many of the *penghulu* along the *Makeklal* River. These titles place them within a nested order of leadership under their *Melayu* patrons in the village of *Tanah Garo*, and through them, the wider hierarchy of the kingdom, and these days, the provincial and Indonesian government. From the village standpoint, these titles traditionally served to facilitate the trade in forest products, to arrange collection teams and meeting points, and to enforce the obligations inherent in this relationship. However, the *jenang/waris* are of little relevance to their social relations in the forests, and rarely participate in their internal legal matters unless it is an important matter involving the outside world. Obtaining village titles, and the attached status and authority they imply, is very important and relevant to them, and to their internal system of leadership and law.²⁹ Participation in community legal hearings and obtaining a title

can be a means for an adult male to achieve status and a limited amount of authority within his community.

The titleholders are often senior males and camp headmen, who are usually chosen democratically within the wider *Orang Rimba* community based on their knowledge, mastery and reputation for manipulating *adat* law in community legal hearings. They are later affirmed by the headman (*rio*) and lead patron (*pangkol war'is*) in the village of *Tanah Garo*.³⁰ In theory, final appeals can always be taken to *pangkol waris* in the village, but this only occurs in the most serious cases, and those that involve outsiders. These days, relationships with their patrons are fairly strained due to the position of the village headman as one of the main illegal logging bosses in the *Bukit Duabelas* region.

Table 2.3 *Orang Rimba* Leadership Structure along the *Makekal* River³¹

<i>Melayu</i> Village		
The Headman of <i>Tanah Garo</i> (<i>Rio</i> or <i>Pangkol War'is</i>)		
War'is with <i>Jenang</i> titles in <i>Tanah Garo</i>		
<i>Orang Rimba</i>		
Head Elder	Leaders	Religious Heads
<i>Tengganai</i>	<i>Temanggung</i>	<i>Dukon Godong</i>
	<i>Depati</i>	<i>Dukon</i>
	<i>Mangku</i>	
	<i>Menti</i>	
	<i>Anak dalam</i>	
<i>Penghulu</i>	<i>Penghulu</i>	<i>Penghulu</i>
Community	Community	Community

As is the case with other *Orang Rimba* communities in the region, the head title along the *Makekal* River is the *temanggung*, whose responsibilities include acting as an intermediary and handling all major issues involving the outside world, particularly matters concerning their patrons. The *temanggung* is also responsible for presiding over major *adat* cases along his river region, which fall within the upper branches ('four above' *empat di pucuk*) of their system of law. Along the *Makekal* River, there are two *temanggung*: one who resides over the camps along the upstream, and one over camps along the mid- and downstream *Makekal* and *Bernai* Rivers.³² On a parallel level to the *temanggung* is the position of *tengganai*. As with the *Melayu*, *tengganai* can also be used as a formal term for the position of maternal uncle, and *tenggani tuo*, to refer to a

camp elder. Within their supra-local leadership structure, *tengganai* is also a title held by the senior-most expert in *adat* law along a river region, and is often a former *temanggung*. Some of the responsibilities of the *tenggani* include giving advice to the *temanggung* during major cases, and deciding those he cannot settle. To some extent, he also represents an option through which cases can be appealed. Senior and big shamans can also be influential in legal hearings, particularly those that involve religious matters.

Under the *temanggung*, the *depati* usually resides over intermediate-level cases that fall within the lower branches of law, such as the ‘four above and below’ of the ‘trunk’ law. The *mangku* or *mangku rykat* represents the larger voice of the community, and usually resides over lesser cases of law, which are included in the ‘the twelve amendments’ (*teliti duabelai*) of the trunk law, and those that higher authorities are not able to attend. If the community does not agree with the *mangku*’s decision, the case can always be appealed to the *depati* or *temanggung*. The *mangku* also acts as a legal representative or defendant to those who find themselves involved in legal cases outside their community forests, and outside the jurisdiction of their own sub-*adat* community. The *mangku* usually resides over cases involving bachelors during their travels to other camps (*mer’antau*), and joins the boy’s father and brothers when they travel to a female’s camp to negotiate a payment of bridewealth. Under the *mangku*, the *menti* acts as a messenger and delivers important information surrounding *adat* cases to other camps, while the *anak dalam* serves as an investigator who gathers background information involving a case, and parlays it to the leaders above him.

Despite this hierarchy of titles, the system of law is extremely democratic. The headman or title holder always receives a payment of several sheets of cloth for residing over a case, which does not amount to a significant accumulation of cloth. Acquiring a title and being the foremost legal figure at these events is much more a form of status that gives the person a limited amount of authority in his everyday network of social relations in the camp and river region. The title does not give a leader the direct authority to determine the outcome of a hearing, without the consensus of the larger community. While a man can be fined for insulting, abusing or disagreeing with the leader’s final decision, the headman or titleholder who resides over the case can also be fined or removed from his position if he diverges from the opinion of the larger community, or if the community believes he is not performing his duties properly. If the community finds out after a hearing that a person was wrongly accused of a crime, they refer to this as *balim hukom*, ‘the law that returns’. In these cases, the fine will be dropped and the leader who made the wrong judgment can be discharged. If the leader

does not agree to step down at the community's request, his reluctance can endanger the community through a curse from God (*kutuk adat pesko* or *kutuk Allah Tallah/Tuhan Kuaso*), and lead to bad luck, accidents, misfortune and bad relations with the gods. Additional pressure can be levied for him to step down on these grounds. More generally, a person's negative actions are believed to be governed by karmic law (*hukom ker'ema*) and fate (*nasib*), and work their way out through misfortune, accidents or bad luck on the part of the wrongdoer. For males, it is also believed that negative actions can lead to the accumulation of either 'light' or 'heavy' sins, depending upon the crime, which will follow them into the afterlife when it is time to be judged.³³

Adat hearings are always attended by the larger community and involve the active participation of both men and women.³⁴ They are more generally a microcosm of male–female relations and the ultimate display of male reason (*akal*) and female passion (*nafsu*). During any legal case, there is an order of speaking that begins with the senior titleholder and shifts to others according to their age, seniority, title and gender. In a soft but stern tone, and with complete control over their emotions, adult men take turns arguing the case through a series of nested analogies, metaphors and aphorisms embedded in the rhymes and rhythm of *seleko adat*. The flow of poetic rationality is abruptly interrupted by the women, who display the full range of their emotions and passions (*nafsu*) to manipulate the case, the opinions of others, and the amount of cloth being wagered to their advantage. At times this can include boldly yelling out their argument in anger, jumping to their feet and collapsing to the ground, and pounding the dirt. This can quickly shift to buttering up the crowd in a soft and seductive tone, or breaking out in tears, sobbing, or threatening to kill themselves. After these outbursts, the men, with complete control over their emotions, will go back into their own rhythm of debating the case through the winding analogies of *seleko adat*. While the adult men, together with the headmen or titleholder, ultimately determine the outcome of a case, it is the strong voices, dramatic displays, and passionate opinions and interests of the women that ultimately sway and have a significant or the dominant impact on the outcome of a case, although the stoic, 'rational' and proud men would never admit this.

Marriage, Polygamy and Divorce

Types of Marriage

According to custom, a true marriage can only occur after the completion of bride service, which many say can formally last around seven or eight years. If successfully completed, there is no obligation to pay bridewealth. While most bachelors will perform

lengthy periods of bride service that may last a season or two, these days, few ever get around to successfully completing it according to their in-laws' standards, and they always combine work with a payment of bridewealth in sheets of cloth. Within one's network of kindred relations, first cousin marriages (*kebonor'on* 'the truth') are preferred, as first cousins are often familiar, nearby and hold the potential to intensify relations with neighboring camps. These types of marriages are referred to as '*juwok dengan palau*', *juwok* and *palau* being two types of fish that are delicious to eat. Males prefer parallel cousin marriages because they hold the potential to keep all parties within their camp and customary forests, but they rarely occur as they also hold the potential to reduce the stringent demands made by in-laws during bride service and throughout a marriage.

Cross cousin marriages are also preferred and much more common, as they hold the potential to intensify relations with mother's adult brother. If a marriage does occur where no kin relations are involved, which is extremely rare, the most important issue is that they are nearby, so that the male can maintain some kind of relations with his mother and sisters. Along the *Makekal*, most males will try to find a potential wife who lives along the upstream or downstream portions of the river, or along one of its neighboring interfluves, the *Air Hitam* River to the south, or the *Kajasung* River to the east. Marriages amongst the *Makekal* and the *Serenggam* or *Ter'ap* Rivers in the southeast region of *Bukit Duabelas* are less common, as they are several days' walk away. Marriages with *Orang Rimba* outside of *Bukit Duabelas* are even rarer, primarily because they are far, so maintaining any relations with the natal camp would be difficult. People also say that camps outside of *Bukit Duabelas* may have different systems of *adat* law, and that arranging bride service and bridewealth would be difficult.

Marriages between kin who cross generation levels are considered incestuous (*sumbang*), and are strictly prohibited within the first and usually second degrees of distance. These marriages are referred to as '*pancit dengan memiang*', *pancit* and *memiang* being two types of fish that smell bad, are rarely eaten by men, and are prohibited for females and children. Cross generation marriages are grudgingly permitted at further degrees of separation (from the second and third degree on), but also lead to increased payments of cloth for bridewealth. More generally, generation level restrictions are highly negotiable, as long as they are not within the first and usually second degrees of distance. These matters can be manipulated by all parties involved, to get into or out of a marriage, or influence the payment of bridewealth. The

birth order of daughters can also influence the payment of bridewealth. A marriage with a youngest daughter (*bunsunye*) is referred to as a ‘cutting the swing’ marriage (*mancung tali buoyon*), and is expected to fetch a longer period of bride service, and a higher payment (around 60 sheets of cloth) of bridewealth. The reason given is the extra care and affection that parents put into raising their youngest and last child, and the greater sorrow felt in parting with her. It is also usually the last chance a family will have to receive the services and payment from a male suitor.³⁵

The *Orang Rimba* prohibit all marriages with outsiders, and while a man may occasionally leave the forests and marry a villager, there were no cases of this occurring with the women. In the rare case of intermarriage, or for that matter living in the village, entering Islam or becoming (*masuk*) *Melayu*, the person is banished from the *Orang Rimba* community. While they may visit their family in the forests, they are forbidden to spend the night in a camp or attend any religious events or rituals, including life stage ceremonies surrounding birth, bathing the baby in the river for the first time, and religious marriage ceremonies held during the annual season of fruits. However, the conversion to *Melayu* is rarely permanent.

Bride Service and Bridewealth: becoming a ‘parasitic plant on the mother’

Upon entering adolescence, the males will usually begin to *mer’antau* (‘travel to the far reach of a river’) or travel to different camps within and outside their community forests, attending life stage ceremonies or seasonal subsistence-oriented pursuits (collecting honey or opening a swidden field) in order to catch the eye of a female, and prove their worth to a maiden and her parents by engaging in work with her father and brothers and other potential in-laws. One socially acceptable way for bachelors and maidens to express their desire or lack of desire for a relationship is by singing love poems (*pantun*) to one another (see appendix). During this time, the bachelors often find themselves involved in community legal hearings involving improper interactions with maidens, in which it must be determined whether the couple marries (*timbang hopi kawin*) or the bachelor pays a cloth fine and moves on. In a ‘clean’ case where there are no cross-generation level relations involved, the fine for deciding not to marry is usually around 20 sheets of cloth, but varies according to river region. When it is determined that a relationship cross generation levels, and they often do, then the hearing goes into a detailed debate into the degree of incest involved, in which the cloth fine is increased accordingly.

In the ideal situation, and if both sets of parents (*or'ang besen*) are interested in advancing the relationship, before such a case occurs the parents of the bachelor will present small gifts to the parents of the maiden. If accepted, the male moves to the female's residence (*besemindo*) to perform a period of bride service or *ber'induk semang*, 'to be a parasitic plant' on the camp 'of the mother'.³⁶ During this time, the suitor is obliged to perform 'free' or 'clean work' (*budi beso*) for the maiden's parents and extended family, which does not imply an obligation of any form of reciprocity. Some of his tasks may include opening swidden fields, building homes, climbing honey trees, hunting and providing game, collecting forest products, or any other work. At the lowest rung in the pecking order, in-laws can call upon the suitor at any time, according to their relations to the maiden's parents, to perform or help them out with their work. Throughout this period the suitor is usually hazed by his unmarried brothers-in-law, senior husbands and in-laws. In instances where the maiden's parents have primary obligations to provide for their own parents, the male suitor may be assigned to provide game, build a home or clear their swidden.

While many elders say that the successful completion of bride service was more common in the past, these days it is rarely, if ever completed. Usually the family of the maiden will attempt to extend the period as long as possible until the suitor finally forces a 'push-pull' (*tar'ik-r'ento*) marriage by stealing some of the female's belongings. In these cases, which these days and to some extent may have always been the norm, a party from the bachelor's side, which usually includes his father, brothers, the camp headman and the titled *mangku* of their region, make the trip to the maiden's camp in order to negotiate a payment of bridewealth with the male representatives of the maiden's family, which usually include mother's brothers, father, brothers and the camp headman. It is considered the obligation of the maiden's senior maternal uncle (*uwak*) to return and take the lead role in these negotiations, although younger maternal uncle (*pamok*) can also substitute. The maiden's father also plays an important role in these negotiations. The bridewealth is debated according to the amount of bride service the bachelor has performed, and the kinship relations at play, with any cross-generational ties increasing the price.

The Law of the 'Beating' (adat membunuhbunuhon)

After the bridewealth has been paid, the family of the maiden conduct a formal ritualized 'beating' (*membunuhbunuhon*, 'beating' or 'massacre') of the bachelor and maiden in order to compensate for the shame (*malu*) that they have inflicted on the

maiden's family for not completing bride service. Before the beating, the male representatives of both families exchange a formal series of *seleko adat* couplets (included in the appendix), which clarify the rules of the beating, and warn of the fines involved if the boy is seriously injured. The beating is usually dished out by the important members of the maiden's family, which usually include her mother, mother's sisters, and mother's brothers, who do so with their fists, rattan canes, bamboo sticks or whatever other items they can find. No deadly weapons are allowed. The number of family members participating from the maiden's side usually depends upon and is slightly higher than the number of representatives who have made the trip from the bachelor's side, who in turn are allowed to try to defend the bachelor and maiden without the use of any sticks or weapons. The *mangku* or titled legal representative and defendant of the bachelor monitors the beating to ensure that it does not get out of hand, and fines members of the maiden's family if the boy is seriously injured.

While I was never able to observe a 'beating' they were always described as being really brutal, as if the bachelor and maiden were beaten nearly unconscious. The *Orang Rimba* often exaggerate the extent of arguments, fights or accidents, and in a case where a person has fallen and received a small cut to his head, the scenario can be dramatically described to others as if his 'brains were oozing out'. However, I did encounter a new bride the day following her beating and found that she was now missing her front tooth. In addition to compensating the family of the maiden for any shame induced by not completing bride service, the ritual beating also appears to mark the couple's initiation and passage into adulthood, and in a very firm way, marks their pecking order in camp relations, and the new husband's position of subordination and obligation to his affines.³⁷

After the ceremonial beating, the headman of the female's camp usually performs a brief non-religious marriage ceremony in front of the larger community, where he explains to them through the words of *seleko adat*, the rules and obligations of being adults or *rer'ayo*. This includes going through the rights and obligations of the relationship between the husband and wife through the laws of the household, the laws of uxorilocal residence, and the husband's obligations to his in-laws. The headman also explains the laws of *engkar*. Throughout a marriage, it is strongly prohibited for the couple to move from the community forests of the wife. Doing so is termed *engkar* (Arabic, *ingkar*) or 'breaking the pledge' or 'oath', in which case the husband must pay a fine of 500 sheets of cloth to his in-laws in order to compensate for the life of the woman. This in turn severs the female's relations with her natal camp, her rights to any

heavy inheritance (fruit and honey trees, cloth, etc.), and her right to live in or access any of the resources found in her customary forests.³⁸

The couple initially live in a small hut next to the bride's parents, and until the birth of their first child are referred to by others in the community as 'father or mother in waiting' (*bepak* and *induk mentar'ow*). Their new status as *rer'ayo* or adults gives them the rights and obligation to participate in matters concerning the camp within the realm of *rundingon* or community *adat* hearings. The couple's more complete entry into adulthood arrives with the birth of their first child, after which they are referred to as 'father or mother' of '(their eldest child)'. This event is also marked by a change in the way that women wear their *sarongs*. After the birth of their first child, women no longer wear their *sarongs* high over their breasts, but rather leave them open (*buka koin*) or rather down low wrapped around their waist, exposing their breasts as a sign to others that they are now married adult women and mothers. This also marks their full rights to manage their inheritance, such as fruit and honey trees, and receive a portion of their mother's cloth. It also shows that they have the authority to wield their passions towards their husbands and other men within the everyday life of the community, and within the realm of *rundingon*, to defend or to increase their own family stores of cloth.

As with the male loin cloth, the pattern of female dress is obviously pointed out by the *Melayu* as a major difference between their peoples, one which they believe to be primitive, and according to Islamic morals and etiquette improper. While women's breasts are a very open and symbolic display of female adulthood, rights and power, they are never the focus of attention in a sexually provocative way, nor are the rest of women's bodies. On the contrary, they serve to mark women's differences from and boundaries between men. In addition to avoiding contact and maintaining physical proximity, men will also often avoid direct eye contact with females and their bodies. Aside from the fact that *Orang Rimba* women expose their bodies, breasts and their passions, the very restrictive nature of their cross-gender relations is in some ways up to the standard or beyond that of some orthodox branches of Islam, and is certainly more restrictive than the surrounding *Melayu*.

After the beating, the couple are allowed to participate as adults in camp decisions and within legal hearings. However, their complete status as adults arrives only after their marriage is sanctioned before the gods during a religious marriage ceremony held during the annual season of fruits. For the new husband, this event marks the beginning of a religious life, which together with the manipulation of law,

allows him another avenue to acquire rights and a limited amount of authority within the community of his wife.

Polygamy and Divorce: 'pollinating the flowers' and 'cutting the rattan'

As with the surrounding *Melayu*, polygamy (*bemadu*) sometimes occurs.³⁹ However, given prior obligations to in-laws, bride service is never performed, and because of this, most families are unwilling to offer their unwed daughters to someone who already has a wife. When polygamy does occur, it is often with the widowed sister of the first wife, or in a case where an affair out of wedlock has led to a pregnancy. When a man does take a second wife, a religious ceremony is never held, nor is the husband required to make a payment of bridewealth. Instead, a small ceremony occurs called the 'law of answering or response' (*adat besesambuton*) in which the first wife establishes her precedence and seniority in the relationship by receiving a cloth payment (around 60 sheets) from the second wife, and afterwards gives her a ritual beating for the shame (*malu*) she has inflicted. In contrast to the ritualized beating of the bachelor and maiden, this event only involves the two wives and no other family members.⁴⁰ After the ceremonial beating, the second wife establishes a separate household near the first wife, while the husband floats back and forth and is obliged to provide for both. In some cases, a husband may take more than two wives, but this is rare as it includes a great deal of obligation on the husband's part to provide for additional families.

Grounds for divorce can include the failure of either party to fulfill their obligations in a marriage, which for the husband include obligations to provide for the extended family of his wife. Throughout a marriage, the wife will threaten divorce on a regular basis in order to pressure her husband to step up his work efforts. In the context of *Orang Rimba* marital relations, this does not necessarily imply that the relationship is on the verge of collapse. If the relationship does reach a boiling point, for whatever reason, then a divorce hearing can be held before the community to decide who is at fault and who will be required to pay the cloth fine. Each party argues his or her case, usually saying that the other is lazy, greedy, has violated gender-related sharing rules or has engaged in an affair out of wedlock. The fine is usually higher if the male wins the case, as compensation for his contributions (bride service, etc.) to his wife's camp.⁴¹ After the hearing, they perform a small ceremony referred to as 'cutting the rattan' (*bototor'uwo'ton*), where the headman goes through a formal series of *seleko adat* couplets, after which the couple hold opposite ends of a piece of rattan, which is cut down the middle, symbolically severing their ties, and the husband's ties to his in-laws.

Whether or not the husband wins the case, he usually returns to his natal camp in shame (*malu*) to again become dependant on his mother and sister's cloth in arranging a future marriage.

In cases where an *Orang Rimba* male divorces a village wife, the transition in and out of the *Orang Rimba* community is rarely a permanent one. If a man does become *Melayu* (*masuk Melayu*), he is allowed to return to life in the forests after a divorce as long as he resumes the numerous prohibitions required of the community, such as not using soap, eating village domesticates, etc., so that he doesn't disturb the community's relations with the gods. In the vast majority of these cases, the man will eventually return to life in the forests or re-*masuk Orang Rimba*.

Discussion

The *Orang Rimba*'s social organization, terms and concepts for social organization, kinship terminology, primary kinship relations, and use of botanic metaphor demonstrate their ties to other Malayic and Austronesian peoples throughout the region. The manners in which many of these concepts are put to use are very different, and are arranged in a way to fit the *Orang Rimba*'s unique way of life in the forests. Some of the broader differences in their social relations, for instance brother-sister relations, relate to their small camps, mobile economy, dispersed residence patterns and asymmetrical relations of affinity, which take place in the context of an egalitarian network of share relations. This results in a set of social relationships which is not unlike many other bride service societies throughout the world (Collier 1981; Marshall 1976; Rosaldo 1980; Turnbull 1961).

Rather unique are the extraordinary rights that *Orang Rimba* women have over the management of forest resources, and that because they are considered minors in the realm of *adat* they are not legally held accountable for their actions. This provides the justification for them to wield their passions (*nafsu*) towards the men within the everyday life of the camp, and within the domain of male intellect (*akal*), community legal hearings. It is also the reason that closely related men are obliged to guard their safety, rights and interests from a dangerous outside world and all males who are not immediate kin. In the traditional context, this tends to restrict their social mobility and ability to leave the forests, interact with outsiders or interact freely with *Orang Rimba* males without their male guardians being present. The *Orang Rimba*'s history in the region and relations with outsiders have made a strong impact on some of the ways in which these concepts are arranged and expressed. The unique aspects of their economy

and social relations (digging for yams, mobility, the home, dress, gender and social relations and death) are often emphasized to establish difference with the *Melayu*, and are important towards creating and maintaining their social identity.

As with the surrounding *Melayu*, the primary set of kinship relations is between brothers and sisters, and mother's brothers and sister's children. The importance of the brother-sister relationship is expressed through botanic metaphor (brother=stalk, sister=flower), and within numerous *seleko adat* couplets that express the great obligations inherent in this relationship. Dispersed residence patterns and the strong obligations that in-marrying males have to their in-laws often weaken this relationship, and lead to a shift in the priority of male relations to their in-laws. The stringent demands made of husbands during bride service and residence in wife's camp are expressed through the botanic expression of being a 'parasitic plant on the mother' (*ber'induk semang*), which is quite literally how in-laws perceive the subordinate position of in-marrying males. The ritualized 'beating' of the male suitor (and his fiancé) at marriage is not only compensation for the shame inflicted for not completing bride service, but is also a rite of passage into adulthood, and an opportunity for affines to mark the subordinate position of the husband in his wife's camp. From a legal perspective, moving away from wife's residence is perceived to be on the same scale as murder, committing incest with one's parents or child or chopping down a honey tree (a primary means in which women mark their place and rights in their customary forests).

After marriage and the birth of a first child, a woman begins wearing her cloth wrapped around the waist as a sign to others of her full status as a female adult. She begins to display her dramatic passions (*nafsu*) in the everyday life of the camp in order to pressure her husband to step up his work efforts and provide for the household, her parents and extended kin. One of the ways in which a husband can increase his standing in the camp is by becoming a good hunter and provider, and participating in a network of share relations. Another avenue is to hone his intellect (*akal*) and establish a reputation for his knowledge of *adat* law, within the context of legal hearings, to defend or increase his family store of cloth. Adult females also participate in these hearings, and, upon entering adulthood, begin to hone a very different set of skills in their passions (*nafsu*), to manipulate men, and to defend or increase their store of cloth.

Because marriages tend to be dispersed, in most cases the guardian role of the brother is carried on by unmarried non-adult brothers, which tends to result in some tension in the relationship with sister's husbands. The weakened mother-brother relationship also allows for in-marrying husbands, perceived as outsiders, to take the

reigns within the domains of law and religion in the camps of their wives, without much influence from mother's adult brothers, who whenever present are considered the authority on these matters in their natal camps. Most legal matters are concerned with arranging marriage, and with enforcing and fining males for their improper interactions with women, or through analogy their rights to forest resources. In *Bukit Duabelas*, these legal hearings are a constant or cyclical occurrence. Thus, while the *Orang Rimba* kindred of relationships create an infinite network of support and share relations amongst different camps in the forests, they also create a tangled web of cross-sex kindred violations for males, with the cloth fine debated in reference to their relations to the female and the degree of *sumbang* at stake.

The manner in which the *Orang Rimba* restrict interactions with the core of their society (the women and children) has traditionally served to protect the health, safety, and maintain the autonomy of *Orang Rimba adat* within the context of an assimilative outside *Melayu* world. Within their own social worlds, these issues are closely intertwined with power relations between the great rights of the 'passionate' women, their 'aggressive' and unruly 'non-adult' brothers, and their 'intellectual' and 'religious' 'adult' husbands and brothers-in-law. These issues are also closely intertwined with either reacquiring or increasing cloth, which through a constant cycle of legal hearings is continuously moving from household to household. Cloth is a form of wealth needed to arrange marriages and pay fines incurred by males, but also a symbol of the great rights and 'passions' of the female and the 'intellect' of the male, and the ability of both to defend the integrity and chastity of women and their rights and claims to forest resources.

As with other Austronesian peoples, the *Orang Rimba* home is a good reflection of the relationships, rights and obligations inherent in the relationships of the nuclear family (Fox 1993). Expressed through botanic metaphor, the mother's lowered sleeping space is referred to as the 'depth of the women' (*kedelomon betina*) and is expressed as the 'roots' or 'trunk' (*pangkol r'umah*) of the home, marking mother's position of precedence within the home and her customary forests. The daughter's raised sleeping space is referred to as the 'sprout' or 'branch' (*ujung*) of the home, marking her position as the future of the family. Both are 'strongly' prohibited to be passed through or even touched by men, which is considered one of the most severe violations of women and their rights. The father is associated with the frame or 'skeleton of the family' (*penohan tulang bububungon*), which implies his obligation to provide for them, and along with their brother's, protect their great rights. He is also associated with the religious space in

the rafters, which marks his right to participate as an adult male within the domain of religion. The bundle of cloth, the weight of which is to some extent dependant upon his intellect (*akal*), hangs in a special spot very near his religious space.

Divorce is expressed through botanic analogy as 'cutting the rattan' (*bototor'uwo'ton*), which not only severs a man's ties to his wife, children and his wife's kin, but to some extent takes away his full status of adulthood. This shameful experience sends a male back to his natal forests, where he is again dependant on his mother and sister's bundles of cloth to arrange a future marriage. The next chapter examines how the *Makekal Orang Rimba* believe they acquired their system of law, and how they justify their place in the region, and rights to live by the way of their ancestors in the context of their origin stories.

Chapter 2 Endnotes

¹ Jambi *Melayu* social organization is very similar to the village Malay proper in Peninsular Malaysia as described by Banks (Banks 1983). *Melayu* life is based around the village of a wife, which given preference for cousin marriage is often the village of her husband. In the village, most are engaged in the domestic rearing of animals, while swidden farming, hunting, fishing and gathering (fruits, honey, forest products, etc.) is conducted in the surrounding forests and rivers. In the past, forest products were often collected by men during trips to the forests, while women stayed put in the village or in a swidden surrounding the community. These days, the collection of forest products has gradually been replaced by rubber tapping and more recently, logging. In the *Melayu* village of *Tanah Garo*, which is generally similar to other old *Melayu* (*Melayu kuno/tuo*) villages along the upstream *Batanghari* River region, post-marital residence is matri-local and kin ties are bilateral. Heavy or immoveable inheritance such as land, the home, rubber and fruit trees are handed down to daughters, while light or moveable inheritance is handed down to sons. Maternal uncles, sons and brothers manage mothers/sisters inheritance, and after marriage, husbands acquire the right to use and manage these resources. Father is more of a provider, nurturer and caregiver, while maternal uncle is more of a disciplinarian and manages important issues surrounding his sister's natal household. He also arranges the important life stage ceremonies of his sister's children, which include birth, bathing the baby, circumcision and marriage. He is more generally responsible for defending the rights of his mother, sisters and sister's children. Unmarried sons and brothers are often very protective of their unmarried sister's and together with maternal uncle protect their chastity, and defend their rights and relations with outside males. When a daughter is ready to marry, mother's adult brother negotiates the bridewealth with grooms family, which in *Tanah Garo* commonly consists of a cow, chickens, rice, jewelry and these days cash, which is commonly around the price of a cow or around 500 US dollars. If the person is a *waris* with *jenang* rights, bridewealth can also include the inheritance of *Orang Rimba* families (*bubung*). After going through the wedding ceremony, the groom is required to *besemindo* or move to the residence of the wife, which is commonly within the same village. The husband is traditionally required to *berinduk semang* or lives within the home of his wife's parents for a period of three months to a year, and during this time familiarize with the family, perform family work and together with mother's brother, manage the family's inheritance. Afterwards, the newly weds establish their own

household within the wife's village, usually close to her parents home. Because, the husband usually marries within the same village he is able to maintain the role of brother/maternal uncle with his sister and her children and because he lives in his natal village, use his natal kin as a crutch in his more subordinate relations with his in-laws. In rare cases where he does move away, relations and obligations to natal family are weakened as is the case in kindred type social systems, the intensity of which depends largely on proximity. For further information on Jambi *Melayu* social relations in the context of *seleko adat* couplets, see Syukur's (1994) *Buku Pendoman Adat Jambi*.

For accounts of the different patterns of social organization among Malayic peoples in Sumatra: highlands of South Sumatra (*Besemah* and *Gumai*) (Collins 1979; Sakai 1999); the *Redjang* of South Sumatra (Jaspan 1964); Kerenci in Jambi (Watson 1991) Petalangan of Riau (Kang 2002); Minangkabau in West Sumatra (Ng 1987; Thomas 1977); Aech in North Sumatra (Bowen 1984); and the village Malay in Malaysia (Banks 1983). For a comparative examination of social relations in Sumatra in the context of the 'flow of life/women' and a theory of precedence, see Rueter 1992.

² Both uxorilocal and matrilocal residence refer to post-marital residence with wife's kin, although several authors have expressed that the two terms need to be separated in order to better classify those with matrilineal descent groups. Keesing tends to group both together into the uxorilocal category (Keesing 1975). However, others mention that the matrilocal category refers specifically to those with matrilineal descent systems and residence patterns that are closer to matrilineal descent groups. In this case, uxorilocal refers to those who do not have matrilineal descent groups, yet have post-marital residence patterns near wife's kin.

³ In the past, elders along the *Makekal* mention that they received rolls of cloth from their patrons, which measured out to the equivalent of around five of the Javanese *sarongs* they receive today. Sometime during the youth of camp elders, this transitioned to the cheaper Javanese machine-made *sarongs* whenever they became available in the region (Fiona Ferlogue may no more on this topic). Sandbukt, who arrived in 1979, mentions that stores of family cloth had already reached high levels, and was weighing them down (Sandbukt 1988a; 1988b). Logging, which began in the 1960s and 1970s, and work available in the transmigration sites in the early 1980s, led to more opportunities to acquire money, and increase stores of cloth. In the distant past, the women may have also worn traditional t-bandage loincloths made from the bark of the *ter'ap* tree, which is pounded soft in the river. The *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Dubelas* claim that their women have never worn them, and based on pictures by the Dutch officials Watershoot and Graft during a surveying mission, the women were wearing *sarongs* in the *Air Hitam* region in 1915. However, more than a decade earlier, pictures taken by Hagan of 'tame' *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples along the *Bahar* River in South Sumatra show the women wearing loincloths. While probably staged for the photos, this may suggest that they may have been more common in the past.

⁴ Division of inheritance between males and females,

Male-spears, axes, turtle spear, a little cloth, a share of the honey or fruit

Female- Cloth, durian trees, groupings of fruit trees, honey trees, honey and

kujur, beliung, ter'uk, koin dikit, maniy, polai, kar'et

koin, pohon dur'ion, nuar'on, kayu kowon kedungdun, maniy, rugaion, pustako

cooking pots, family heirlooms

⁵ Whenever building a home, most Austronesian peoples tend to perform some sort of ritual associated with implanting the main poles in the earth (personal communication with James Fox). These rituals can be associated with guarding the home from spirits, magic or origin stories, which can serve to establish precedence in relations with other peoples in the region. Kerlougue writes of some Jambi *Melayu* ritual beliefs surrounding the centre pole of the home.

When the house was built, the distance between the pillars was traditionally measured in the arm span (*depo*) of the women who was to own it, and for the ceremony for the installation of the first pillar, the *tiang tuo*, an unmarried girl would be the one to place ritual items in the post hole and to sprinkle purifying rice-water and flowers over it (58). These and other ritual associated with hanging objects from the rafters (*kaso*) are conducted as offerings to, or to protect the inhabitants from the spirits of the landscape (*pennungu tanah*, *setan tanah*) or other malevolent spirits (Kerlogue 2003:63).

⁶ For examples of how social relationships are expressed in Austronesian societies through terms for parts of the home (often through botanic metaphor), see articles in Fox 1993; Schefold 2003. The Minangkabau have similar terms and concepts regarding gendered space in their homes. A lowered space in the home called the *pangkalan* ('trunk' or 'roots'), is considered social space associated with the women. Below the *pangkalan* is the *rumah dalam* 'interior room or room inside' where women spend a good deal of time weaving (Ng 1993).

⁷ This word is based on the Malay '*sudung*', which means 'hut' or is a 'self-deprecating term for one's home' (Echols 2000). The term *belelapion* is based on the root *lapik*, meaning 'base', 'lining' or 'mat', or possibly the root *lapis*, which can mean 'thin', 'lining', 'stratum' or 'cover'.

⁸ According to Brosius, the swidden farming practices of the Western *Penan* in Sarawak have only recently been introduced by the government during the last 40 years, and rice, only during the 1970s (Brosius 1986). Brosius doesn't really go into the ritual related with opening the field, planting or harvesting, although similar to other Austronesians, the *Penan* do believe in a class of malevolent spirits called the *bale sarawah*, which inhabit open spaces in the sky and places in the landscape, including swidden fields (Brosius 1986; Brosius 1992:200). As is the case among other Austronesian peoples, the *Penan* believe earth spirits to be more dangerous in locations where the forests have been cleared, and disturbed their homes. These spirits are sometimes referred to as *bale pane* or 'heat' spirits (Brosius 1986:196; Brosius 1992:200). According to several historical accounts, some *Kubu* peoples in South Sumatra were apparently not growing rice in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and were only recently being taught or retaught the techniques by government officials or their *jenang* (Dongen 1906; Dongen 1931; Loeb 1935; Winter 1901). In South Sumatra, *Orang Hutan* groups appear to have developed institutions that prohibited the practice of growing and eating rice, and according to van Dongen, in the early 20th century were just being taught the practice by their *jenang* (Dongen 1906; 1931).

⁹ Wild yams are classified according to their size, shape, depth or location, some of

which include: the ‘ghost yam’ *benor angkar angkar*, ‘hairy yam’ *benor bobulu*, the ‘big yam’ *benor godong*, the ‘bearded yam’ *benor jengot*, the *kona*, which can weigh as much as 50kg, the ‘mud yam’ *benor korukon*, found in swamps, the ‘upright yam’ *benor lecup*, the ‘broad yam’ *benor lebor*, the ‘slender leafed yam’ *benor seluang*, the ‘matted yam’ *benor sukusut*, and the *gedung* yam (*Dioscorea doemomnun*). Many varieties must be leached of their toxins in a tub (*bengku*) made of the bark, with a solution made from the liliana’s (*betu/kopur*), and then drained and dried in a bark tub (*lating*). For a more detailed description of how the *Orang Rimba* exploit wild yams, see Sandbukt 1988a.

¹⁰ Some of the sago palms exploited by the *Orang Rimba* include *sego buntal* (*Arenga* sp.), *sego risi* (*Arenga porphyrocarpa*), *sego rounton* (*Arenga* sp.) and *sego henow* (*Arenga pinnata*). Some other palm cabbages include *beyoi* (*Oncosperma horrida*) and *jelayan* (*Calamus ornatus*). The *Orang Rimba* only rarely process sago palms during nomadic forays, and generally use them as an emergency store of food when they can not find wild yams. This is the opposite of *Penan* nomadism, which is based on the exploitation of sago, and only rarely exploit wild yams as an emergency source of food. While most still regularly process palm starch, particularly during breaks in the swidden season, Brosius writes that the recent government introduction of swidden farming has resulted in a more sedentary way of life (Brosius 1992). Judging by its mention in place names and origin stories, the exploitation of sago appears to have been more common in Sumatra in the past. These days, it is more commonly found in the economies of peoples throughout eastern Indonesia. For an example of how the very mobile Nualulu on Seram Island rely on sago palm, see Ellen 1988, and for the more sedentary Rotinese, see Fox 1977.

¹¹ In the early 20th century, van Dongen writes that many tame *Orang Batin Kubu* also followed the *melangun* practice, but for shorter periods of time, and particularly when a death resulted from smallpox or other pandemic disease (Dongen 1906: 1910).

¹² Schebesta writes that he saw a blowpipe (which resembled a *belahan*) in the Palembang museum (Schebesta 1926). For a discussion of the distribution of the blowpipe throughout the greater region, see Skeat 1906:260.

¹³ The verb *nyuluh* is derived from the root *sulu* meaning the ‘flame of a torch’. According to Sandbukt, night hunting was a rather recent technique, which had only begun five or six years prior to his research. These activities are always conducted with flashlights, which are strapped to the head of the hunter, and slowly probed to the forests surrounding a trail. Upon spotting an animal, the beam is focused into its eyes, stunning the animal, which allows it to be easily speared or shot. Nocturnal animals are usually caught during night hunts, one of the most common being the mouse deer (*kancil* or the slightly larger *napu*). This term is also used by the surrounding *Melayu*, the Malay, and the Western Semai (*Sengoi*) in Malaysia (Edo 1998:47).

¹⁴ The ‘greater porcupine’ *landok*, *Hystrix brachymya*; ‘lesser porcupine’ *titil bonor* *Atherurus macrourus*; and ‘long tailed porcupine’ *kelumbi*, *Trichys lipura*.

¹⁵ The ‘pig tailed macaque’ *berok*, *Macacus nemestrinus*; ‘long tailed macaque’ *cegak*, *Macacus fascicularis*; ‘silver leaf monkey’ *cingkuk*, *Presbytis cristata*; the ‘banded langur’ or ‘leaf monkey’ *simпой*, *Simnopithecus melalophos*; the ‘siamong gibbon’

Symphalangus syndactylus; the ‘agile gibbon’ *hungko*, *Hlylobates agilis*; and the *lutung*, *Presbytis rubicunda*.

¹⁶ Wild game fowl include: ‘jungle chicken’ *ayom hutan*; ‘the crested wood quail’ *siul’on*, *Rollulus roulroul*; ‘the bustard quail’ *kepuyu*, *Turnix pugnax*; ‘Argus pheasant’ *kuwo*, *Argusianus argus*; and ‘Peacock pheasant’ *muwo*, *Polyplectron bicalcaratum*. Aside from the tabooed ‘helmeted hornbill’ *bur’ung gedung*, the *Orang Rimba* have no problem eating other hornbills such as the ‘rhinoceros hornbill’ *enggak* or *nggak*, *Buceros rhinoceros*, whenever the opportunity arises. Smaller birds are sometimes caught by children using a stick smeared with sap from the *tungkal* tree (*pulut tungkal*).

¹⁷ Referred to collectively as the *getta/gutta percha*’s, in the past wild latex was occasionally tapped from the *Sapotaceae* trees some which included ‘*getta balam*’ *Palaguium gutta*, ‘*balam mer’o*’ *Dichopsis gutta*, and ‘*jelutung*’ *Dyera costulata*. Similar to Brazilian rubber, rings are cut around the base of the tree in order to drain the latex, which is then collected and coagulated into round hard balls using a tanning resin from the *samak* tree (*getah samak*), which in the past was also collected for trade. Together with beeswax, rhinoceros horns, bezoar stones (*pestiko*), and the sexual organs of tree shrews (*tupoy*), the *getta percha*’s were traditionally considered a precious good (*barang indah*), which was to be handed over to the *jenang* as a form of tribute. These days they are no longer collected. Several varieties of rattan (*ro’wu’ton*) were traditionally collected, the most important being rattan sego (*Calamus caesius*), and the much thicker rattan *manauh* (*Calamus ornatus*). Some of the lesser varieties collected were *r. semambu*, *r. balam* and *r. batu*. While some camps in the south, who have better access to roads still collect rattan, forest degradation has made rattan harder to come by, and other opportunities such as tapping rubber are often preferred. In the past, dammar (*demor*, *Shorea* sp.) was internationally valued as a caulking material and torch fuel, although these days it has lost its value and a market, and along the *Makekal* is no longer collected for trade. Women and children still collect dammar resin as a means to fuel their traditional torches. At times, some varieties of medical plants are still sometimes collected for trade, which include the vine of *sempuduh tanoh* ‘bile of the land’, known to the *Melayu* as *bedero putih* or ‘white blood’ plant (*Strychnos lingustrina*). Regionally, the plant is used by Malayic peoples to treat malaria, ease pain during childbirth, and to increase stamina and strength. These days, some are selling game meat to the villagers, particularly wild pig and turtles to Chinese traders.

¹⁸ In some Southeast Asian societies with Hawaiian or bilateral kinship systems where relatives of the same generation level are recognized beyond the second level of distance, these relations are often referred to as a network of ‘kindred’ relations. In place of a more organized or direct method of reckoning descent, these relations can be called upon for support, work, for marriage, to form loose alliances, to attend ceremonial occasions, and so on (Keesing 1975:14). The classic example of kindred relations is described of the *Iban*, but can also include other peoples throughout Borneo such as the *Gerai* as well as the Malay. For further discussion of kindred type relations in reference to the *Iban*, see Freeman 1960; Freeman 1961; Mitchell 1963; Murdock 1960; for the *Penan*, see Brosius 1992; the *Gerai* of western Borneo, see Helliwell 2001; and for the village Malay in Malaysia, see Banks 1983.

¹⁹ *Orang Rimba* kin terms are a classic example of a Malayic kinship terminology, and are very similar to the village Malay and other Malayic speaking peoples in Sumatra

(personal communication with James Fox). For an example of Malay kin terms in Malaysia, see Banks 1983, and for other Malayic peoples in Sumatra and Malaysia, see the first footnote.

²⁰ The original Latin use of the word *incestum* is much closer to the way *sumbang* is used in Sumatra. In ancient Rome, *incestum* could include fornication, prostitution and adultery, and only in the narrow sense of the word included incest with close relatives (Fischer 1950:222). For an early 20th century account of the variety of relations that can be referred to as *sumbang* by the *Melayu* in Palembang, see Lublink-Weddik 1939.

²¹The general term for improper interactions between the sexes where no cross-generational incest ties are involved is *sumbang saloh* ‘fault or wrong of incest’. Whenever there is generational prohibition at play they refer to this as *sumbang selemut*, ‘incestuous blanket’. There is a further term called *sumbang sore*, ‘afternoon incest’, but can not remember the meaning. Coming upon a woman bathing in the river or looking at her the wrong way is termed ‘to wrong with the eyes’ (*cempalo mato*), walking into female space in the home or stepping on their belongings is termed ‘wrong with the feet’ (*cempalo kaki*), and touching their belongings (or bodies) is termed to ‘wrong with the hands’ (*cempalo tangon*). All are subject to different levels of cloth fines. If a male enters a home with a female, while her male guardian is not present, he can be fined from 20 sheets of cloth, while passing through their sleeping space is subject to the highest fine of 500 sheets of cloth. If a male passes too closely or inappropriately interacts with a female alone in the forests, this is referred to as *hukom samun*, the ‘law without permission’ (from her male guardians), with the fine commonly put at six sheets of cloth for unmarried women, and 20 sheets of cloth for a married women. Flirting with an unmarried woman is referred to as the ‘law that is ripe’ (*hukom mato*), and can incur a fine of 20 sheets of cloth. Curiously, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* also extend these violations to taking any photographs of women. After word leaked in the community that I had snuck a photo of the headman’s unmarried daughter, I was later accused of having intimate relations or kissing her, despite the fact that it was taken from distance with a zoom, and I had never even spoken to her. I was able to get out of paying the fine by destroying the picture. It is curious to note that my violation was also interrelated with their notions of sickness. Through association, they believed that the picture could also cause the person to become sick.

²² *Orang Rimba* death names are much more simple than those used by the Penan or other peoples in Borneo (Brosius 1992; Brosius 1995).

²³ The surrounding *Melayu* use the same ladder format (*berjenjang naik bertangga turun*) for their structure of authority. This analogy also branches the village leadership structure into the larger hierarchy of the kingdom, and includes maternal uncle and sister’s children, which probably has to do with the more prominent role of this relationship in village life. The *seleko* below is taken from Syukur, *Buku Pendoman Jambi Adat* (Syukur 1994)

children are under the authority of their fathers
sisters children/niece, their maternal uncle
wives, their husbands
a household, the *tengganai*
a local, the *penghulu*

anak sekato bapak
penakan sekato mamak
isteri sekato suami
rumah sekato tengganai
luak sekato penghulu

a village, its head
a *negeri* or region, the *batin/pasirah*
a *rantau/kecamatan*, the *jenang/bupati*
the environment or kingdom, the
the King/*Sultan*/President

kampung sekato tuo
negeri sekato batin
rantau sekato jenang
alam sekato rajo

²⁴ The practice of granting the owner of the weapon rights to a portion of the animal is common in hunter-gatherer societies. Ingold examines some of these beliefs in relation to the hunter's prestige, and as being a motivating factor for hunters to conduct the hunt (Ingold 1986:223). For a Batek example of these beliefs, see Endicott 1988.

²⁵ The use of botanic metaphor to denote and mark precedence in primary kinship relations is common among Austronesian peoples (Fox 1971; Fox 1980). I am not sure if the practice of attaching metaphoric stems to the end of names is practiced in *Orang Rimba* camps in other river regions. Among the Peninsular Malay, botanic or flower metaphors are also used in a different manner in reference to unmarried women/sisters. According to Karim, "to avoid experimentation in premarital sex, sexual exploitation, or abuse, girls become gradually more protected than boys and the pride and joy of a mother is to maintain the image of her daughter as a 'budding flower' (*bunga dalam kuntum*), ready to be picked by a desirable suitor (metaphorically described as a bee pollinating a flower)" (Karim 1990).

²⁶ Another way to translate this phrase might be, 'the kin who stand over their inner hearts or spirituality.'

²⁷ The *Orang Rimba* term *baling* has the same general meaning as the Malay term *balang* or *hulubalang*, which in Jambi means warrior, good fighter, protector or efficient negotiator.

²⁸ The eldest brother usually takes the role as the primary *war'is di atas batin*, until marriage, after which a younger brother may take over the role. This is expressed in the following *seleko* couplet,

if blood is not yet pointing
if age is not yet the tip

kalu der'oh bolum seliling tunjuk
kalu umur bolum setupak pinang

²⁹ These days, some *temanggung* in *Bukit Duabelas* are obtaining more wealth by accepting tolls from villagers to log in their community forests.

³⁰ Unlike the village, these titles are not strictly handed down to son-in laws, but are often democratically chosen by the community. However, preference may be slightly slanted towards, and it is not uncommon for a son-in law to win a title.

In the southern *Air Hitam* region, there are two closely related titled headmen (*temanggung Tar'ib* and *temanggung Mir'ing*) who reside over two larger groupings (*rombongan*). The latter grouping led by *Mir'ing* splintered after its leader and several families entered a government settlement. A third largely autonomous group (around 7 families) near *Bukit Suban* is associated with the latter group and had previously participated in a prior settlement. They eventually returned to the forests, where they now have a notorious reputation for stealing small items from transmigrants. There is a

fourth very small group that lives along the *Merangin* River near the *Melayu* village of *Kar Brahi*. In the central *Kajasung* and eastern *Serenggam* regions there were three main groupings (*rombongan*) located along the down, mid and upstream *Kajasung Besar* River, who were divided amongst two titled headmen (*temanggung*) along the upstream and downstream *Kajasung*, at opposite ends of the river. Those along the *Kajasung Kecil* River were also divided according to two titled headmen along the upstream and downstream regions, with the nearby eastern *Serenggam* River groups having their own *temanggung*.

³¹*Temanggung* (Ma./Jav., *temenggung/temenggong*, ‘Malay dignitary of high rank’, ‘title of high ranking royal official’, ‘title of regent during the colonial period’); *depati* (Skt./Jav, *dipati/adipati*, ‘an ancient exalted title used in Java’, ‘(vice)-regent’, ‘head of regency’, ‘prince’, ‘title for *bupati* during the colonial period’); *mangku* (Skt./Ma, *mangkubumi*, ‘a regent’, ‘high administrators in Malay and Javanese courts’; or *pangku*, ‘manager’, ‘administrator’); *menti* (Skt. Ma./Jav, *manteri/menteri*, ‘minister’, low ranking government employee’) (Echols 2000; Wilkinson 1948). In his Ph.D. thesis, Soetomo also mentions that the *Makekal Orang Rimba* use the titles *duabelang batin* and *kelubo*, and while I have heard both of these titles mentioned, they are not actively used along the *Makekal* (Soetomo 1995). ‘*Penghulu*’ is the native Malay term for ‘local headman’ or ‘chief’. The term *jenang* can be defined as: ‘prop’, ‘door frame’, ‘support’, ‘aid’, ‘referee at a cockfight’, ‘coadjutor’; ‘the chief assistant to the *batin*’ or ‘headman’ (Echols 2000; Wilkinson 1948). In the past, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* say that *depati* used to be the highest position in their leadership structure and that the title *temanggung* originates from the *Orang Rimba* in the Southern *Air Hitam* region. Some say that it was *Sultan Taha* who introduced the *temanggung* title, and dropped *depati* to second in rank.

³² There is another small camp (2 families, 14 people) along the upstream *Makekal* whose headman holds the title *temanggung* who recently moved from the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region. At the time, he lived along the outskirts and was attached politically to the main camp that I stayed with along the *Sako Jer’nanng* River. His title is not of any particular relevance along the *Makekal* and his group generally falls under the native leaders along the upstream *Makekal*. The other headmen of different groups can hold lesser titles such as *depati*, *mangku*, *anak dalam*, etc. While not widely acknowledged outside of his own group, there is a third leader (*Nggr’ip*) who is native to the upstream *Makekal*, who claims the title *temanggung*. *Temanggung Nggr’ip* is the son of an influential elder who is currently the *tengganai* and is the former *temanggung* along the upstream *Makekal*. It was probably the wish of his father that he follow in his footsteps and become the *temanggung* of his river region, but for other reasons the title fell to *Mir’ak*, the current *temanggung* along the upstream *Makekal*. In 1999, WARSI chose *Nggr’ip*, along with his father and *temanggung Tar’ib* of the *Air Hitam* region to be representatives for the AMAN indigenous rights conference (*masyarakat adat*) held in Jakarta. After having the opportunity to meet with then vice president Megawati and other high ministers, upon returning to the forests he declared himself *temanggung* without the support of the larger community or *pangkol waris* in *Tanah Garo*. In his own words, Megawati bestowed the title upon him. Outside of his own group, most *Orang Rimba* do not acknowledge and find amusing his self-ascribed status. In addition to his illegitimate claims, he has a reputation for violating uxorilocal residence patterns (*adat engkar*), constantly using whatever means (death, conflict with outsiders, etc.) he can to maneuver himself back to his natal *adat* forests where his father presently

resides. Towards the end of my research, I had heard that both ‘leaders’ had decided to enter a government settlement that was being organized by the local NGO KOPSAD.

³³ There are two degrees of penalty or cloth fines that can be waged against someone who challenges the headman or titled leader’s final decision in a case, which in both cases vary according to his level in the hierarchy. Verbally harassing a titled leader is referred to as *sidam*, while physically confronting or hitting him is referred to as *pemacat*. Physically fighting with or hitting the *temanggung* (*pemacat temanggung*) incurs the highest fine of 500 sheets of cloth, while verbally harassing him (*sidam temanggung*) is 120 sheets of cloth. Fighting with the *depati* (*pemacat depati*) is 280 sheets, while verbally harassing him (*sidam depati*) incurs a fine of 80 sheets. Fighting with the *mangku* (*pemacat mangku*) incurs a fine of 60 sheets of cloth, while verbally harassing him (*sidam mangku*) is only a six sheet fine. However, according to the following *seleko adat* verse, ‘if the leader makes a wrong judgment, he can be relieved of his position’ (*saloh hukom penghulu pecat*); if the community overturns a wrong judgment, the leader can be relieved (*balim hukom pengulu pecat*); and if his obligations are not fulfilled, the leader can be relieved (*sedang hukom pengulu pecat*). As one man along the upstream *Makekal* explained:

If you steal and are not caught, then eventually it will come back to you through karmic law (*hukom ker’ema*) and you will be fined more severely in an *adat* case in the future. If you mock or laugh at one over their misfortune this is the worst. If someone harasses or bothers you, then it will eventually return to that person, but worse. This is fate (*nasib*) or the curse of *Kutuk Allah Tallah*, it is *ker’ema* and means the wrong will return to that person. The same applies to a leader when he does not decide a case fairly.

Another method in which the accused can appeal the headman’s decision is to challenge him to *salah bekaikon* or ‘take the wrong to the river’. The test is simple, both the leader and the accused dive into a large river, and whoever is able to stay under the water the longest is considered just. According to belief, the person’s ability to hold their breath under water is not relevant to the test. They believe that whoever is truthful will be given the ability from god (*Tuhan Kuaso*) to stay under the water longer. If the accused stays under longer his fine is removed and the headman or titleholder can be asked to step down from his post. If the accused loses the test, then he can be punished by having his hands and legs bound and thrown into the river for a spell.

³⁴ This is very different from the community *adat* hearings of the surrounding *Melayu* where women are expected to sit silent during legal arguments. Describing the *adat* legal hearings of the *Gerai*, a Malayic speaking Dayak people in Western Borneo, Helliwell writes, “women are enjoined to say little during moots and other community discussions, and their testimony on such occasions is given less credence than that of a man” (Helliwell 1995:364).

³⁵The cost of bridewealth is highly variable depending on the amount of bride service performed and the degree of the generational relationship involved. A normal marriage will usually cost anywhere from 20 to 30 sheets of cloth, whenever a season or so of bride service has been performed, was conducted in a proper manner, and there are no cross-generation level relationships involved. This is usually raised to the 60-sheet range when there is third degree (and beyond) cross-generation level relation involved,

and even higher when there are second degree levels. If a male suitor engages in a relationship with or marries a maiden who already has another male candidate performing bride service, they refer to this as *adat sur'ok betunago*, in which case the new male will eventually have to pay 60 additional sheets on top of the determined bridewealth, which goes to the former male candidate. If the couple elope, this is called *pogi belar'ion* 'to go running', which can incur a fine of 500 sheets of cloth, but can usually be negotiated down into less serious branches of law and incur a fine in the 100-cloth range and over. These penalties are all negotiated in regards to the upper branch of the 'trunk' or 'root' law (*pangkol adat*), which will be discussed in the next chapter.

³⁶ In Indonesian and Malay dictionaries, the term *induk semang* can refer to an 'adoptive parent' or 'female employer', while the term *berinduk semang*, in the village *Melayu* context in Jambi, refers to a period of residence, usually around 6 months to a year, with wife's family following marriage. While the term *semang* is not defined in standard Indonesian dictionaries that I could find, according to the *Orang Rimba* the word means a parasitic plant, which lives on another host plant, and *ber'induk* 'to go to the mother'. The term *ber'induk semang* meaning 'to be a parasitic plant on mothers/sisters family' and refers to a period of bride service with wife's family. More generally, the *Orang Rimba* can also use the term, along with the term *semindo*, to refer to the in-marrying husbands place in the context of uxori-local residence.

³⁷ From this perspective, the ritual beating tends to share some resemblance to the ritual beatings of new gang members in the ghettos of central Los Angeles, which also serve to mark loyalty, subordination and pecking order within the larger gang.

³⁸ Below is a *seleko adat* couplet expressing *engkar* and the severing of a woman's ties with her natal forests.

Breaking the pledge, according to the words *engkar badur podoh war'is per'ebo*
of the mother and sisters

means you are not allowed again to take *asala jengon lagi ambiq soding di hati*
sadness in the heart

a *bengkal* tree grows in the upstream *betong bengkal tumbu doh hulu*
the place to bathe holds regrets *pian monyosol kemudian*

This generally means that if you leave your mother and sisters, community forests and inheritance to be with another man, don't regret it later.

³⁹ The term *bemadu* is an analogy of the work of bees 'to pollinate the flowers and collect honey', and in the case of people, 'to take a co-wife'.

⁴⁰ Below are some of the formal *seleko adat* couplets between the headman and the two wives during the ceremony of the 'answering or response' (*adat besesambutan*).

The camp leader (*penghulu*) says the two wives,

do not always look to argue *jengon nelok balah bento har'uy balah*
afternoon's must *siang beik pagi balah pagi beik potong*

The eldest wife then says to the younger wife who wishes to marry her husband,

the oldest wife says yes, but must
the man to be willing first
in front of my face, the younger wife
must pay a fine in cloth to buy the man

*bini yang tuha bilang auwlah tapi
har'uy bulih laki doh kotangkakoh
nohulu do dopan ponghadopon keh
har'uy bini mudah bayar go koping koin
beli laki*

⁴¹ If a husband wins the divorce hearing (*mencampur betina*), the fine for the wife is 40 sheets of cloth, and if the wife wins the case (*mencampur jenton*), the husband must pay 20 sheets of cloth. Before it gets to this point, either the wife or the husband can initiate a legal hearing, where the other can be fined for not fulfilling their marital obligations. This can occur several times before the headman may suggest that it is time to 'cut the rattan'. For Jambi *Melayu* and Peninsular Malay beliefs surrounding divorce, see Banks 1983; Jones 1981; Syukur 1994.

Chapter 3

Origins, Folklore, and Legends: The Stories of the Ancestors

‘*Dongen* (origin stories, legends) are stories handed to us from the ancestors. They tell us what is dangerous. They teach our children what is sacred. They remind us of *adat*, and that it must be guarded’

Introduction

For the people along the *Makekal* River, *dongen* are the stories of the ancestors, who are believed to have migrated to the forests of Jambi from the lands of Minangkabau, and are handed down from generation to generation through storytelling. One of the main themes that run through these origin stories is the fundamental importance of maintaining *Orang Rimba adat* by maintaining separation with the *Melayu*, largely through the belief that *adat* is enforced by supernatural sanctions. However, in addition to establishing issues of autonomy based on separation, the stories also represent a negotiation process, and serve to explain and justify the *Orang Rimba*’s social, political and economic relations with the outside *Melayu* world. Through notions of common origins with the *Melayu*, the *Orang Rimba* are able to situate themselves within a network of social relations, hierarchy, and the ideological framework of the *Melayu*, while at the same time establishing difference, separation and autonomy through their *adat*. Largely, they do this by localizing ‘forest’ versions of concepts and background characters that are not unique to the *Orang Rimba*, but which commonly occur throughout Jambi. The names of common ancestors, prophets and ancient kings from Jambi folklore and legends not only contextualize and explain their place as ‘*Orang Rimba*’ in a larger *Melayu* world, but also legitimate and justify their rights to maintaining the separation and autonomy of their *adat* based on notions of common origins and precedence.

Dongen do not systematically categorize history into neat chronological order. They are often located in a distant and vague past and the characters and events that occur within them often vary and contradict one another. However, while time and space are sometimes blurred and ambiguous, some of the events, ideologies and characters that wind their way through these stories are often significant for changes they are perceived to have introduced into the social fabric of communities in the upstream regions of Jambi, especially in the fields of religion and civil *adat* law. Ancestor kings and historical figures from the 15th century such as *Putri Seleras Pinang Masak* appear as key characters, often portrayed as common ancestors in the forests who split with the *Orang Rimba* and entered settled Islamic lives in the village.

These historical figures are credited with founding and spreading Islam and introducing new codes of civil *adat* law throughout the interior of Jambi, which the *Orang Rimba* consider sacred.

Camp elders often tell these stories in lively oral performances – usually around a campfire, since they are only allowed to be told at night. If told during the daylight, it is said they would anger the ancestors or disturb the spirits of the earth. *Dongen* are never the creation of one person alone: participation and reaction from the audience are essential parts of the storytelling performance and an important way to remember and pass the stories onto the next generation. Many of the stories are also an important avenue for teaching children moral values and the consequences of violating *adat*. These stories represent a good portrayal of the some of the *dongen* told between the *Makekal Orang Rimba*.¹

Tuhan Kuaso and the Creation of the Sky, the Sun and the Moon

In the beginning, the *Orang Rimba* say that everything in the universe was created by two higher order gods: a senior god called the ‘god of all animal life’ (*Or’ang Pomogong Ciak Mencipai*), and a junior called the ‘god of all tree and plant life’ (*Or’ang Pomogong Kayu-Kayuon*). In their creation myths, the senior god created the heavens, sky, earth, animals and humans, and the junior god created the trees and all plant life. The *Orang Rimba* commonly refer to these two gods together as *Tuhan Kuaso*, the all-powerful god of the universe. They usually point out their separate identities when referring to their different historical acts and roles in their cosmology, to establish difference whenever the *Melayu* wind their way into the stories. Before *Tuhan Kuaso* created the land and the forests, they say that in its original state the earth existed in an endless sea. Before creating land, the senior god of animal life created the sky, the sun and the moon.

When *Or’ang Pomogong Ciak Mencipai* first created the firmament in the sky, it was small like an umbrella and only big enough to cover the small amount of land (*tanoh tumbuh*) that god had created. This small earth was created atop the earth pole (*tiang halom*), a very big tree trunk. *Tuhan Kuaso* then placed the sun and the moon in the sky and connected each to a huge piece of rattan (*ro’wu’ton*), with its movement around the earth powered by a machine. To watch over the movement of the sun and the moon, he sent the ‘god in the sky’ (*or’ang de langit*) to live on the cool surface of the moon, where he lives in a giant *mer’anti* tree. He sent a red hawk named *kilik dar’i* to fly around the surface of the sun, to make it hot and give off light. After creating the sky, the moon, and the sun, *Tuhan Kuaso* then created the land and the forests.

The format and content of this creation myth is similar to many traditional Malayic and Austro-Asiatic versions told throughout the region.² The sky as an umbrella analogy is useful towards understanding the *Orang Rimba*'s cosmological perceptions of the domelike shape of the firmament, which they believe falls to the earth along the horizons. It is a very Malayic belief that the earth rests on a pole, and that a man lives near a tree on the moon (Skeat 1900:3). As Schebesta and Endicott have mentioned, some Semang peoples believe the sun and the moon to be associated with a piece of rattan in the sky, while it is a common belief among Austro-Asiatic peoples that the sun is associated with the destructive nature of 'heat', the moon with 'coolness', health and fertility (Endicott 1979; Howell 1984). For the *Orang Rimba*, these celestial bodies are dominant symbols that interrelate with their conceptions surrounding the hot:cold contrast, and are intertwined with their notions of health and fertility (Turner 1967). From a stylistic perspective, the track-umbrella analogy is a common method for Malayic peoples throughout Sumatra to begin their origin stories, in a very similar manner to 'a long, long time ago'. For minority communities, it is a politically charged way to begin origin stories as it implicitly stresses the longevity of their beliefs and customs (*adat*), and their rights to live as their ancestors did before them.

Origins in 'Minangkabau': The creation of the earth, forests, and humans

The *Makekal Orang Rimba* believe that *Tuhan Kuaso* originally created the earth, forests, animals and humans in the lands of Minangkabau, and later their ancestors migrated to the forests of Jambi. The belief in Minangkabau origins is common for many interior peoples in Jambi and Riau who base themselves along the *Batanghari* and *Indragiri* Rivers, which have their source in the highlands of Minangkabau. These rivers wind their way through the forested interiors of Jambi and Riau and empty near the former downstream coastal Malay kingdoms of *Jambi*, *Indragiri*, *Siak* and *Kampar* on the Malaka Straits. For the interior populations of Sumatra, these rivers were a means of transportation and communication, and served as a conduit for cultural ideas and influence from the Minangkabau through trade and migration.

Generally perceived as the older, more powerful, stable and legitimate kingdom, Minangkabau was believed to have precedence over the Malay kingdoms of Eastern Sumatra in the realms of knowledge (*ilemu*), magical objects (*pustaka*), and with this, power (*sakti*). Historically, this probably was not always the case. Located along the *Musi* and *Batanghari* Rivers, the earlier kingdoms of *Sriwijaya/Palembang* and *Melayu* were the most powerful kingdoms in Sumatra and, in their heyday, all Southeast Asia.

As the power of *Sriwijaya* declined, the kingdom eventually shifted its location from Palembang or South Sumatra to the *Batanghari River* in Jambi, and over time, again upstream, before eventually settling in Minangkabau. For Malayic peoples in the region, Minangkabau is the legitimate successor to *Sriwijaya*, and the caretaker of this very ancient and powerful Buddhist Hindu heritage. With the kingdom's shift to Minangkabau, there was probably a shift in precedence to this region, and possibly a gradual shift in the content of many people's origin stories.³

In order to strengthen their legitimacy with interior subjects and their position with neighbouring kingdoms, Jambi royalty worked towards building relationships and kinship ties with Minangkabau royalty through the exchange of women and titles of nobility. In Jambi folklore, the first queen (*Putri Seleras Pinang Masak*) in the last line of Jambi's kings, which lasted for nearly five centuries, is said to have returned to Jambi from Minangkabau. Whether this is historically true is not important. The subtle binding of symbols and power to origin stories and the outrageous actions of ancient ancestor kings and queens is all part of the aggrandized manipulation of legend and folklore in Jambi. They are key strategies for capturing and maintaining the loyalty of subjects, and for interior populations, claiming autonomy over land, forests, self-governance, and maintaining *adat* customs and law.

In the realm of legend and folklore, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* and other forest peoples such as the *Talang Mamak* mimic coastal kings and queens by claiming to be the original migrants from Minangkabau. In this process, they claim precedence over their *Melayu* neighbours and establish their rights to live in specific tracts of forests according to the original *adat* ways of their ancestors. Whenever referring to the longevity of their *adat*, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* mention a time 'when the earth was as small as a track and the sky as wide as an umbrella' (*kalu bumi setupang tijak, langit selebor payung*):

When *Tuhan Kuaso* created the world, when our ancestors came in the beginning to stand on this earth, the earth was as big as a track and the sky was as big as an umbrella. The rest of the earth was covered with water. Before *Or'ang Pomogong Ciak Mencipai* made humans, he believed that the sea would be an obstruction for the people, so he threw it drained some of the sea, and created the rivers. Then *Pmogong Kayu Kayuon* made a flower of grass sprout, and the small piece of land on earth began to blossom into forests. This all happened in Minangkabau, in the past, there was no one living in Jambi. All the humans originate from Minangkabau. Our ancestor *Bujang Per'antau* was the first person to come to Jambi. He came from the forests near Padang, from a camp in the forest named *Si'a Paga Ujung*. After the earth and sky became wider and there were many people, then *Bujang Per'antau* made the trip (*mer'antau*) to Jambi in order to search for fortune and establish a new life.

Towards the end of this story, the storyteller jumps to a separate origin story surrounding their ancestor's migration to Jambi, which takes place much later in the chronology of their origins. Storytellers often add abbreviated stories of migrations or separations to the end of stories, to stress that their ancestors were the first settlers and have precedence in the region.

The People of the Flood

A similar creation story concerns the 'people of the flood' (*orang kebanjir'on*). As is common throughout the world, most origin stories told in Sumatra emerge from a period in time when the world was covered by water. For Malayic peoples, these deluge-creation stories often include a mixture of local and Hindu-Buddhist beliefs, which often appear to be adapted to fit Old Testament or Islamic themes. After hearing the *Orang Rimba* version of their deluge story, I asked one of the elders if this was the story of Noah (*Noh*). 'No, it is not', he replied. 'We also know the story of *Noh*, but that is the story of the *Or'ang Mer'u* (*Melayu* villagers). In our story, there is no boat or mountain where the boat landed, and the people waited for the water to come down. That is the story of Islam and the Prophet Mohammad.'⁴

The traditional *Melayu* association between sacred local mountains and origins is a significant difference that the *Orang Rimba* point out. In the Southeast Asian adaptations in Cambodia (Angkor Wat), Malaysia and Indonesia (Sumatra, Java and Bali), some of the beliefs surrounding *Mount Meru* were adapted to fit previously held beliefs in local, sacred mountains and local origin stories.⁵ In Hindu-Buddhist times, these mountains were associated with godly kings and only later were adapted to incorporate Old Testament themes such as Noah and his ark. The *Orang Rimba* certainly attribute supernatural associations to mounds of earth, hills and mountains, but they also try to distance themselves from *Melayu* origins, power and religion. The *Orang Rimba* elder quoted above sets the *Orang Rimba* and *Melayu* origin stories apart from each other while at the same time pulling *Melayu* origins into the *Orang Rimba*'s own 'rise of land', which existed somewhere in Minangkabau.

The *Orang Rimba* deluge-creation story also begins with the words, 'when the earth was as small as a track and the sky as wide as an umbrella'.

During the time when the earth came into existence, God created a 'small rise of earth' (*tanoh tumbuh*) and 'seven' honey trees (*kedungdung*). This piece of earth was surrounded everywhere by water, the entire world was flooded. On this rise of land, *Tuhan Kuaso* then took handfuls of earth and moulded it into two siblings, one male and one female. He then took handfuls of earth and created two creatures of

every species, two gibbons, two tigers, two elephants, two *kijang*, two pigs, one male and one female. All of these animals were then domesticated by the original people. Through incest (*sumbang*) the women gave birth too many children, who when grown, also bore children. During this period of incestuously populating the world, the water gradually went down and as the land became more extensive. The sky widened and grew larger. Eventually, the animals of the ancestors multiplied, became wild, and then spread out to populate the forests. As the world was populated with people, there was no longer incest and the people broke into different tribes. Half of these people decided to become *Or'ang Mer'u* (non-*Orang Rimba*) and settle in villages, and half of them decided to stay in the forests and live a mobile life looking for wild yams. This is one of the splits between the *Or'ang Rimba* and the villagers.

This creation story is also a unique forest adaptation of similar variants told among Malayic and Austronesian peoples throughout the region.⁶ As in many Malayic creation stores, God moulded the first people out of earth or clay, which in the *Orang Rimba* variant is extended to the first pairs of forest animals that were originally wild, were then domesticated, and then became wild again (Skeat 1900; Wilkinson 1906). It includes 'seven' honey trees, which are a primary means for the *Orang Rimba* to mark their territories, claims and rights in customary forests. In this story, the *Orang Rimba* claim that their ancestors were the first domesticators, and only later became forest people who lived a life based on digging for wild yams. As in some of the other Malayic versions, the water goes down, the small earth becomes larger and the umbrella-like sky becomes wider (Skeat 1900).

The early people's incestuous repopulating of the world provides an initial grounding for their notions of incest (*sumbang*), which in their society has broad meaning. The essential point is that incest with primary kin was only acceptable during the initial act of populating the world, and later during their ancestor's migration to Jambi, when making the crucial decision of how to repopulate the forests. In the latter case, issues of incest led to their last and permanent parting with the *Melayu*.

Islamic Features in Origins as Key Reference Points and Precedence Shifters

Islamic ideologies have made a significant impact on the content and characters in origin stories throughout this region of the world. Traditional deluge stories, the creation of the world, splits between ancestor figures, significant historical events, and changing ideologies serve as key reference points in which to merge, change, or adapt more traditional beliefs to significant events and prominent characters in Islamic beliefs and the Koran. For Islamic peoples, these reference points often mark a shift in precedence from the older more traditional 'beliefs' (*per'cayaon*) to the newer Islamic 'religion' (*agama*) (McKinley 1979; Osman 1989; Skeat 1900; Wilkinson 1906;

Winstedt 1961a; Winstedt 1961b). Many traditional religious beliefs are still important, but only those which can be adapted and placed within the socially acceptable, monotheistic and bipolar framework (heaven and hell) of Islam. As many have pointed out, some minority and non-Muslim peoples also work Islamic elements into their belief systems and origin stories, often to provide self-justification for their own traditional beliefs (Atkinson 1987; Edo 1998; Nowak 2004; Tsing 1987; Tsing 1993). These features often serve as a bridge or a means to maintain a 'dialogue' with the more dominant peoples and ideologies that surround them, and serve to justify and shift precedence to their traditional beliefs and way of life (Atkinson 1987).

Throughout the Malay region of the world, the most significant and symbolic characters taken from the Koran and adapted to fit within traditional origin stories are the 'prophets' (*nabi*) Adam and Mohammad; Adam, the first human created by god, and Mohammad, the last of God's prophets and the founder of Islam. In this adaptation, Adam is associated with the old religious traditions and beliefs (the old gods, spirits, demons, ghosts) and Mohammad with the newer beliefs and traditions of Islam. For the majority of the dominant Islamic Malay, Adam and the old ways are nostalgically respected, and in theory are historically senior. However, precedence of belief is shifted to that which can be included or adapted to fit within the monotheistic and bipolar framework of Islam, that which is associated with the prophet Mohammad. In a more politically charged manner, these characters also wind their way into the origins of many minority peoples, both Malayic and Austro-Asiatic, Muslim, nominal Muslim, and non-Muslim throughout the larger Malay region.⁷ For minority peoples, the characters *Nabi Adam* and *Nabi Mohammad* may or may not have anything to do with their acceptance of Islam. However, they usually implicitly serve to define their relationship with more dominant Malay peoples, and they are often manipulated so as to justify or mark a shift of precedence to Adam and the old ways.

In Jambi, the *Melayu* villagers respect the character Adam: he is the first human created by man, and is at least implicitly a nostalgic reminder of the old beliefs and ways of life. The *Melayu* surrounding *Bukit Duabelas* often mention their 'little brothers', the *Kubu*, as the followers of *nabi* Adam. Most Islamic villagers have an ambiguous respect for the *Orang Rimba* and their insistence on living in the forests, as some believe their ancestors did. However, many of the villagers also see their 'little brothers' as socially inferior, primitive, dirty, unintelligent, overly mobile, and, most importantly, polytheistic pagans.⁸ They believe that they are not yet developed (*belum*

madju) and still need to abandon the old beliefs, settle down in the village, and become *Melayu* (*masuk Melayu*).

For the *Orang Rimba*, precedence shifters in their origin stories such as *Adam* and *Mohammad* represent a largely ideological means to self-justify their traditional beliefs and way of life. The Koranic characters Adam and Mohammad are ideological figures who struggle for precedence of ideas, religions and relationships between peoples within the mythical context of origin stories. The names *Adam* and *Mohammad* can be invoked to justify rights to live particular ways of life within certain lands and use the resources found within. Within the realm of origin stories, the *Orang Rimba* manipulate the relationship between the ancestor figures *Nabi Adam* and *Nabi Mohammad*, and through them their own relationships with the village *Melayu*, through kinship relations.

The Separation of the Prophet Brothers and the Establishment of the Food Taboos

Within the realm of origin stories, one common avenue that Austronesian peoples traditionally use to establish precedence and seniority among peoples, beliefs and often rights and access to lands and resources is the manipulation of sibblingship among common ancestor figures (Atkinson 1987; Bellwood 1996; Fox 1996a; Fox 1996b; Tsing 1993). As in everyday sibblingship, “seniority establishes privilege and authority, and just as children should defer to parents, so younger sibblings should defer to elder ones” (Atkinson 1987:183). For many Austronesian peoples, these patterns equally apply to age and age groups, regardless of age, ancestor figures and the relationships between descedants of related ancestors.

In *Orang Rimba* folklore, *Adam* and *Mohammad* are described as brothers, *Adam* the elder brother (*kakok*) and *Mohammad* the younger brother (*adik*). They are considered to be the original ancestors of all humans who lived in the forests of Minangkabau according to the first and oldest *adat* in the world, that which the *Orang Rimba* believe they still follow today. According to legend, their split with the *Melayu*, who then entered Islam, and the creation of the taboos on pork and other village domesticates were caused by an incident in which what the *Orang Rimba* consider one of the biggest offences in their society: greed, in the hoarding and not sharing of game. As one elder along the *Makekal* explained, ‘This was before the separation, when all people lived in the forests and shared the same *adat*. This was before there were villages and before Islam.’

One day, after *Adam* caught a wild pig, *Muhammad* asked *Adam* if there was any pig to eat and *Adam* replied that there was none, that it had already been eaten. Later,

Muhammad caught *Adam* eating pork and found out that *Adam* had been hoarding the pig. *Muhammad* said to *Adam*, “Now we will separate, I will leave the forests and form a village. From this point on my descendants will be forbidden to eat pig. It will be *ha’rom*.” Upon leaving the forests, he extended what was forbidden to eat (*har’om*) to other forest animals. In response to *Mohammad’s* actions, *Adam* equally made it forbidden for forest peoples to eat domesticated animals. Later, these two prophets were given their separate *adat* from the hands of two separate angels and it was said that *Muhammad* later developed Islam. This is our separation.

In identifying with the elder brother *Adam*, the caretaker of the original *adat*, the *Orang Rimba* establish precedence and seniority over the descendants of *Mohammad*, their *adat* and Islam. For the *Orang Rimba*, the story also gives a reasonable explanation for their split, and describes the establishment of some of the religious and ethnic markers for the groups based on dietary restrictions.⁹

Pigs and Chickens: A Central Divide

Food prohibitions are one of the most effective avenues to create and reinforce, in a ritual everyday manner, a sense of community and a community ethic. On the borders of the community, they are an effective avenue to construct and maintain cultural and ethnic boundaries.¹⁰ In Jambi, village Muslims have prohibitions on eating most animals in the forests, which the *Orang Rimba* hunt, although none is more important and symbolic than abstaining from the eating of pork. In concordance with Islamic values, the *Melayu* view pigs as vile and disgusting animals, and make an earnest effort not to associate with or even touch the animals, which in their perception are a source of pollution and a sin. Abstaining from pork is a central feature of remaining within the Muslim and *Melayu* community. On the other hand, the villagers love their domestic animals, the women their chickens and the men their cocks.

In the opposite manner, the *Orang Rimba* hunt and eat most of the animals in the forests that the Islamic villagers are forbidden to eat (*har’om*), particularly wild pig. Wild pig is the most nutritious and consistent part of their diets, and their favourite food. Whenever a hunter catches a wild pig, word spreads quickly, eyes light up, and the camp comes alive. Wild game cannot be stored for more than a day or two before becoming spoiled, so when big game is caught gluttonous eating ensues.

In contrast to the villagers, the *Orang Rimba* have taboos (*pantangon*) on raising, tending, eating or associating themselves with all domestic animals, which they consider defiled and polluting. For the *Orang Rimba*, these animals are *har’om* and to break these prohibitions is a major sin. In theory, the *Orang Rimba* also consider domestic pigs defiled and polluting, but as the animals are no longer tended in the

upstream regions they are never specifically pointed out. The most powerfully symbolic domestic polluting animals and animal products are cows and their milk, and chickens and their eggs. In Jambi, the food prohibitions surrounding pigs and chickens are a central and symbolic cultural divide between these peoples.

Before the coming of Islam, most peoples throughout Jambi would have been pork and chicken eaters, both domestic and wild, probably not in the ‘pig loving’ manner of the Melanesians, but like other Austronesians would have raised and tended domestic pigs, and hunted wild boar (Groves 1995). The villager’s transition to Islam would have been made for a variety of reasons, including a fit with social and gender values, religious empowerment, and possibly as a means to facilitate economic, political and trade relations. Islam was also established as the kingdom’s religion, its legal codes becoming the overriding law of the land.

After the decline of its mighty Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, the pre-Islamic kingdom of Jambi was a vassal state to Java and only a shell of its former self. Local folklore mentions that regional *Melayu* power had shifted to the Buddhist kingdom of Minangkabau and that the lesser kingdom of Jambi was in disarray. The upstream peoples were socially and economically divided and disconnected from the downstream royalty and were increasingly coming under the influence of Minangkabau. The royalty’s gradual warming to Islam would have been an effective avenue to distance themselves from their Javanese patrons, and warm relations with Islamic Indian and Arabic traders making their way through the straits. More importantly, the royalty may have seen this new religion as an effective tool to reunite the upstream peoples with the downstream court.

From the 16th to the 17th century, Islam gradually spread throughout the interior of Jambi through the work of religious teachers and the building of mosques. In the rhymed couplets of *seloko adat*, Islamic rules and moral values were pegged to a unified civil *adat* law, which was spread throughout the kingdom. They had begun to merge an outside religion with a standardized legal code, which in its style and incorporation of local features would have been familiar to the people of the region. According to Nassrudin, the first moral codes in this civil law are included in the couplets below (Nassrudin 1989). They are a good example of how Islamic beliefs were combined with law, and how Islamic taboos were initially one of the fundamental requirements of being Muslim.

The steps to heaven are made of steps of stone *Titian teras bertanga batu*
The passageway is *adat* *Titian teras adat*

the steps are Islam and the Koran.
That what is forbidden (*haram*),
cannot be made (*halal*) pure,
That which is pure (*halal*),
cannot be made forbidden (*haram*)
That which is true is forgiven, that which
wrong is fined

Bertanga batu Islam dan Koran”
Yang haram, tidak dapat
dihalalkan
yang halal tidak dapat
diharamkan,
yang benar dibela, yang salah
dihukum

As Islam took hold, there may have been great community pressure to remain part of the *Melayu* community, which eventually became synonymous with being Muslim. For peoples in the upstream, it also may have been safer to embrace the religion, as it eventually became illegal to enslave a Muslim.

As with the *Melayu* Islamic food prohibitions, the *Orang Rimba* versions are a means for adherents to remain socially acceptable members of the *Orang Rimba* community. Together with numerous other rules and prohibitions, they are also methods to guard and maintain the *Orang Rimba*'s cultural, religious and political integrity in relation to the *Melayu*. These taboos reinforce the mobile aspects of their economy and very effectively prevent them from becoming sedentary farmers. Along with the Islamic practice of circumcision, the *Orang Rimba* often point out food prohibitions as one of the primary reasons why they would never enter Islam (*masuk Melayu*).¹¹ In the above story, the *Orang Rimba* credit their ancestor *Adam* as being the underlying cause for the Muslim taboo on pork, and react by creating dietary restrictions of their own, including prohibitions on all village domestic animals and their products. Dietary restrictions are some of the most important first or oldest laws (*adat lamo*), which must be followed, and those who diverge are subjected to a great deal of community censure for upsetting the balance of *adat*. The *Orang Rimba* believe that eating domestic animals pollutes their bodies, offends the ancestors and gods, and can influence them to ignore the community, making life in the forests impossible. In the distant past, the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* rejected Islam and its food taboos, but didn't necessarily reject the universal civil legal codes (*Jambi Adat*), one of the avenues by which these values were spread. The *Orang Rimba* have their own ideas as to how these laws originated, and have uniquely adapted them to fit their own lives in the forests.

When the Brothers Received Separate Laws from the Angels

The *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* divide the chronology of their history by the different eras when their ancestors lived according to different branches of *adat* law. These eras are divided according to three sections: the 'old or first laws' (*adat lamo-lamo/hukom per'tamo*), the 'laws of the community' (*adat samo-samo*), and the current

and just era of ‘religious law’ (*adat ugamo-gamo*).¹² The ‘old or first laws’ are the primary laws of the first ancestors, those that have always been followed, which children learn first and one should never violate. They include the laws surrounding uxorilocal residence, the laws of the household, brothers and sisters, bride service and marriage, incest (*sumbang*) and proper interaction between men and women. They include prohibitions related to interaction with outsiders, food prohibitions, and the observance of sickness boundaries (*besesandingon*) for those who travel downstream or outside the forests. To break these rules is considered a primary or ‘heavy’ sin (*duso ber’at*); for adult males, sins accumulate and will be judged in the afterlife.

The ‘laws of consensus or the community’ are based around the trunk laws, which were later received by the prophet *Adam* in Minangkabau after his separation with *Mohammad*. In the past, the trunk laws were said to be strongly enforced by harsh community penalties, which included torturous punishment and the death penalty (*bengun nyawo*). The current era of ‘religious law’ is believed to have begun with the acceptance of the ‘twelve amendments’ to the law (*teliti duabelai*), which eased these harsh penalties and established a system of fines to be paid in sheets of cloth. They were believed to be given by an angel to the ancestors who had already migrated to Jambi. These laws are equally important and layered upon one another. The main differences are the latter additions of laws, and the manner in which penalties are determined.

After the split between the prophet brothers, *Adam* stayed in the forests of Minangkabau according to the original ways (*adat lamo*), while *Mohammad* left the forests and founded a village and Islam. From this time, the *Orang Rimba* believe that their ways of life diverged, particularly after both brothers received separate *adat* laws from the hands of two different angels. Stressing the different and separate revelations by these prophet brothers, one elder explains:

According to us, there were two prophets and two angels. In the village, their *adat* was brought to them by an angel to the prophet *Muhammad*. He was *Or’ang Mer’u* (non-*Orang Rimba*). My prophet is different, he is the prophet *Adam*. Our *adat* was given by *Pomogong Ciak Mencipai*, it was brought by the hand of an angel who entered this world and put it directly into the hand of the prophet *Adam*. Who is the authority to bring the breath of life (*nafai*)? It is our god, *Or’ang Pomogong Ciak Mencipai*. In the village, their *adat* is the prophet *Muhammad* and Islam.

The elder’s account refers to how the *Orang Rimba* received their *adat* legal codes. While no longer used by the *Melayu*, these laws are almost verbatim Jambi *adat*, the same civil code attached to Islamic philosophies and food prohibitions and distributed to the interior populations in the 16th and 17th centuries by amendments of the King.¹³ The *Orang Rimba* are aware that their laws are very similar to those in the

village, but stress that they each encompass two separate ways of life, religions and *adat* faiths. For both, this law was based around ‘the laws of Jambi’ (*undang undang Jambi*), the ‘eight branches of law’ (*pucuk undang undang nang depan*) and the ‘twelve amendments’ to these laws (*teliti duabelai*). The *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* consider these laws sacred and collectively refer to them as the *pangkol adat*, the ‘root’ or ‘trunk’ law.

As with so many important aspects of their lives, the *Orang Rimba* conceptualize and express their system of law through botanic metaphor. Botanic metaphor is extremely effective for structuring, remembering and manipulating *adat* legal codes, most of which are debated and deduced analogically through the recitation of hundreds of rhymed couplets (*seloko adat*). Linguistically, the basis of their law is conceptualised as the ‘base’ or ‘trunk’ (*pangkol*) of a tree or plant, from which other branches of law (*seleko adat* couplets) can ‘sprout’ or ‘branch’ (*pucuk*).

Table 3.1 Different Eras and Subsections of *Adat*

Major Era’s of <i>Orang Rimba Adat</i>	<i>Zaman Adat</i>
The old or first laws	<i>adat lamo-lamo/per’tamo</i>
The laws of the community (laws of Jambi and eight branch laws)	<i>adat samo-samo</i>
Religious laws (the twelve amendments)	<i>adat ugamo-gamo</i>
Some of the old laws that can branch into the trunk law	
The laws of the household	<i>adat r’umah tango</i>
The laws of bride service	<i>adat besemindo-be’induk semang</i>
The laws for violating uxori-local residence	<i>adat engkar</i>
The laws of the male protectors (brothers/sons)	<i>adat. war’is di atas batin</i>
The laws of the women (sisters/mothers)	<i>adat war’is per’ebo</i>
The laws surrounding the negotiation of marriage	<i>adat pes’ko</i>
The ‘beating’ for not completing bride service	<i>adat membunuhbunuhon</i>
Laws of polygamy	<i>adat besesambutan</i>
Divorce law	<i>adat bototor’uto’won</i>
The laws following death	<i>adat melangun</i>

Within the trunk laws, there are key contrasts between ‘up’ (*pucuk*) and ‘down’ (*bewoh*), which are associated with the severity or priority of laws. When reciting the origins of these laws, the contrasts often relate to prior/later or good/bad and mark a reinterpretation of the earlier upper (*pucuk*) harsh law through the lower (*bewoh*) more just or fair (*adil*) set of laws. Where branches of law are coded in relation to the trunk laws is significant towards understanding the *Orang Rimba* legal system, and how it is manipulated in *adat* hearings. In *Bukit Duabelas*, all males begin learning the trunk laws at a young age and continue the memorization, mastery and manipulation of their sprouts and branches (*seloko adat*) throughout their lives. Mastery of these laws can determine how well a husband is able to defend his rights and the interests of his natal

women and their cloth from others within *adat* hearings. To some degree, how well an adult male learns to master and manipulate these laws can determine his status, standing and authority in his community. Below is how the *Orang Rimba* recall the basis of their trunk law, followed by some of the ways they are altered to fit their lives in the forests. Reference to the similar Malay versions (of *Jambi adat*) can be found in Syukur's, *Buku Jambi Adat* (Syukur 1994). These laws begin with the 'laws of Jambi' or the 'first four traits of a king'.

Table 3.2 The Laws of Jambi (*Undang Undang Jambi*)

<u><i>The Four Traits of a King</i></u>	<u><i>Empat Per'tamo R'ajo</i></u>
1. The King who is ashamed (to disturb unmarried daughters)	1. <i>R'ajo nang dimaluko</i>
2. The King who is scared (to disturb another's wife)	2. <i>R'ajo nang ditakutko</i>
3. The King who submits (to the demands of a child)	3. <i>R'ajo nang diper'ajo</i>
4. The King who is given homage (and in return gives autonomy)	4. <i>R'ajo nang disembah</i>

The laws of Jambi are the primary laws or traits that a king and all of his subjects should possess and follow. These laws are adapted in a slightly different way by the *Orang Rimba* to fit their unique social relations and relations with the outside world. They serve as the backdrop for laws concerning the rights of unwed daughters, adult females, a man's wife, children's rights and their greater cultural and political autonomy. The first law concerns the shyness (*malu*) and respect that a man should afford a maiden, who in the context of *Orang Rimba* social relations are shielded from outside men, and will eventually bring in the labour of an in-marrying male. The second law surrounds the fear (*takut*) and respect that a man should show towards another man's wife. Most cases involving women usually wind their way in and out of the first four traits of a king (and the four above), while the defending party (of the male) usually attempts to argue the matter down into lower and less severe branches of law. The third law concerns children, who like women are minors in the eye of *adat* and are vulnerable in nature. Because of their more recent association with the gods (particularly babies and toddlers), they should be treated as kings and their rights protected and ensured by the adult men. Like women, it also the duty of adult men to guard them, and keep them away from the threats and dangers of the outside world. The fourth law concerns the *Orang Rimba*'s incorporation into a system of hierarchy with the outside *Melayu*, which previously consisted of tribute relations, and in turn the autonomy and respect they

believe they should receive from the outside world. The *Orang Rimba* often show their respect to outside leaders in the village by referring to them as kings (*rajo*).

Also included in the trunk law are the ‘eight branches of law’ (*pucuk undang undang nang delean*), which are split into two parts, the ‘four above’ (*empat de pucuk*) and the ‘four below’ (*empat de bewo*). The four above deal with primary incest taboos and adultery, the two largest violations or heavy sins (*duso*) that a man can commit, and more generally relate to the laws surrounding incest (*sumbang*) or improper relations with women, which in a legal hearing are often manipulated according to the generation level at play.

Table 3.3 The Eight Branches of Law (*Pucuk Undang Undang nan Delean*)

The Four Above

- 1. Cracking the egg**
(incest with one’s own child)
- 2. Bathing on the tusk of an elephant**
(incest with a sibling)
- 3. To dig inside**
(adultery)
- 4. Stabbing the Earth**
(incest with ones own mother)

The Four Below

- 1. Poisoning a person**
(fine depends on the state of the victim)
- 2. Small cut or injury**
(20 sheets of cloth)
- 3. Threatening to kill another**
(60 sheets of cloth)
- 4. Argument over a women**
(60 sheets of cloth)
- 5. The spark of a flame**
(burn a home or property, 60 sheets of cloth)
- 6. Axing inside, slashing outside**
(slander, 60 sheets of cloth)
- 7. Heavy injury**
(120 sheets of cloth)
- 8. Major cut, or broken bone**
(120 sheets of cloth)

Empat di Pucuk

1. *Mencar’ak Telor*
2. *Mandi de Pancur’an Gading*
3. *Gali or Melubo Delom*
4. *Nikom Bumi Halom*

Empat di Bewoh

- Upas Racun*
- Luka Gor’es/Rehat*
- Amaar Ger’om*
- Menentan-nentang lawan*
- Siur Bekor*
- Kapak Sayup Pecung Leput*
- Lembam Balu or Luka bopampai*
- Empar Patah or Luka Par’oh*

Another major violation included in the ‘four above’ is murder. *Orang Rimba* notions of murder certainly apply to humans, but its legal equivalent can also be applied to anyone causing the death of a *sialong* honey tree, a husband removing a woman from her customary forests (*adat engkar*), or when a man passes through a wife’s or unwed daughter’s sleeping space. The ‘four above’ are of similar significance to the ‘first four

traits of king’ and equal in terms of the severity of law. In both cases, the penalty for breaking these laws during the era of consensus (*adat samo-samo*) was death and after the ancestors received the ‘twelve amendments’ (*teliti duabelai*) to these laws in the era of ‘religious law’ became 500 sheets of cloth, the equivalent of a person’s life.

The four below, which are actually eight laws, deal with issues of criminal law, such as assault, slander, crime and destruction of property. These lower laws are actually much more extensive than the laws included and, depending on how the accusation is argued, can incorporate some of the lesser branches of law included in Table 3.1. They can also incorporate matters pertaining to ‘private property’ (*hak malik*) and ‘community property’ (*hak besamo*); ‘theft’ (*samun*), ‘minor theft’ (*maling cur’i*) and ‘grand theft’ (*maling bongkah*), ‘endangering the safety of the community’ (*hukom siosio*) and ‘disrespecting’ a community leader (*sidam*). When the infraction infringes upon the rights of females, and they usually do, these issues can be argued as incest (*sumbang*) and branched into the ‘four above’.

In the past era of ‘community consensus’ (*hukom samo-samo*), the *Orang Rimba* describe a time when there were extremely harsh and torturous penalties for breaking the ‘eight branches of law’. Past memories of heavy penalties are common among the interior communities in Jambi. While these penalties appear to share similarities with Islamic law, they also reflect recollections of the harsh law that existed before the arrival of Islam.¹⁴ In the 13th century, a Chinese traveller in Palembang comments that adultery was the only crime that merited death and that customary law in Jambi allowed for burial alive as a test of innocence and banishment or death for the guilty (Andaya 1993). According to the *Orang Rimba*, they received the trunk laws in Minangkabau, while the twelve amendments were received later in Jambi.

In the past, our trunk laws were given by an angel to our ancestors in Minangkabau, and later, were brought to Jambi by our ancestor *Bujang Per’antau*. Later, we received the amendments to this law from an angel when we were already in Jambi. Said the angel, ‘we brought you this *adat* so that it would be followed and not be lost’. After our ancestors met with the angel, they later gave us the twelve amendments. Although we base our *adat* on the ‘eight codes of law’, the ‘twelve amendments’ eased the punishment and the fines for breaking these laws. The angel said, ‘This is what is allowed to be used. That which is used, are sacred laws. This is the path that is true.’

The couplet below recalls the severity of past punishments.

Whoever wronged, was fined very harshly	<i>Siapo nang saloh dihumum ber’at,</i>
If you wronged with your feet, your feet were cut off	<i>Kalu saloh kaki, kaki ditotok</i>
If you wrong with your hand, your hand	<i>Kalu saloh tangon, tangon ditotok</i>

was cut off	
If you wronged with your eyes, your eyes were gauged out	<i>Kalu salah mato mato dicukoi</i>
If you wronged with your mouth, your tongue was cut off	<i>Kalu salah mulat, lidah digunting</i>

According to the twelve amendments, they still maintained the trunk laws although the punishment was no longer so harsh. The couplet below reaffirms that they are still not allowed to violate the old laws.

Wrong steps or strides are not allowed	<i>Saloh langko tiado bulih</i>
To wrong with one's tracks, is not allowed	<i>Saloh tijak tiado bulih</i>
Hazy wrongs are not allowed	<i>Saloh gur'am tiado bulih</i>
To wrong by stabbing is not allowed	<i>Saloh tikom tiado bulih</i>
To wrong by gauging is not allowed	<i>Saloh cucung tako tiado bulih</i>
The wrong of impregnation is not allowed	<i>Saloh bunting bur'ih tiado bulih</i>
To damage property or slander is not allowed	<i>Saloh samun sakal tiado bulih</i>
Robbery and violence are not allowed	<i>Saloh samun setio tiado bulih</i>

Because the gods felt sorrow for the severity of law, they sent an angel to their ancestors with amendments to these laws, which eased the punishments.

Then came the twelve amendments (*teliti duabelai*), from Jambi... we now follow the four below and its appendages. Whoever wronged does not die. If you received the death penalty, then you are not punished with death, but instead are fined in sheets of cloth. This is the *adat* that came down to us from the angel to the prophet. And what arrived in the middle of this, a snake, a snake from our ancestors. The snake said, allow your *adat*, allow your *pucuk undang*, wherever there is a problem, it will no longer be a matter of life and death.

As one elder recalls, "The harsh law that came from above (the four above: *empat di pucuk*) was shifted to that which fell below (the four below: *empat di bewoh* or the eight criminal laws) and the new amendments to this law." As with the 'four below', the 'twelve amendments' (*teliti duabelai*) do not necessarily accord in number with their numerical title. They are split into two groups, the 'six above' (*enom de pucuk*), which is a recital of the old harsh law and the 'six below' (*enom de bewoh*), which is a negation of these previous punishments. The 'six below' follow with suggestions advocating tolerance and methods to learn from one's mistakes.

Table 3.4 The Twelve Amendments (*Teliti Duabelai*)

<u>The Six Laws Above</u>	<u>Enom de pucuk</u>
Buried deep in the ground	<i>Ditanom delom delom</i>
Thrown far away	<i>Dibuang jauh jauh</i>
The death penalty	<i>Dibunuh mati mati</i>
Hung from high	<i>Digantung tinggi tinggi</i>

The Six Laws Below

If buried, not so deep
If thrown, not so far
If sold, not too far away
If hung, not from high
If the punishment is heavy,
it will not result in death

Enom de bewoh

Kalu ditanom, jengon sampoi delom-delom
Kalu dibuang, jengon sampoi jauh-jauh
Kalu te'jual jengon ado sampoi jauh,
Kalu digantung, jengon sampoi tinggi tinggi
Kalu tebunuh, jengon sampoi mati.

The Six Laws Below

Pointing out a teaching

(to others who do not understand *adat*)

Remember tears

(learn from past mistakes)

A hit and slap

(light punishment for breaking
minor laws)

Enom di bewoh

Tunjuk ajar

Ingat tangis

Tepuk Tampar

After receiving the amendments to the trunk law, the penalty for committing a violation was no longer physical punishment or death. Instead, they now paid for their violations and sins in sheets of cloth, which in turn erase the sin a person has committed.

Before we received the twelve amendments, the path that is true, this was the only path we were allowed to walk. Whenever the path was wrong, it was not allowed to be made. If one walked down the path of sin, he died, because if I committed a sin, it meant death. Now, if I wrong, I am only fined. It is clear what we have to pay. However, our wrongs stick with us. When we sin, we will actually die in the end, in the afterworld. Inside of us, each person will have to answer for his sins. Said the prophet and the angel, 'An example is incest (*sumbang*), take people who have committed incest, this is the biggest sin.'

Within *Orang Rimba* conceptions of law, the notion of sin is crucial, and has apparently been influenced by Indian and Islamic philosophies. The *Orang Rimba* believe that sin accumulates, is carried with a person throughout their life, and can effect their position in this world and the next. Some sins, such as those that enter the 'four above' of the trunk law are considered heavier (*duso ber'at*) than others. In this world, the accumulation of sin can lead to accidents, misfortune or death, through *Orang Rimba* notions of 'karmic law' (*hukom ker'ama*). In the afterlife, the *Orang Rimba* believe that a person's sins will be judged or weighed on a scale by 'Mohammad's assistant' (*wakil Mohammad*), and can effect his or her position in the afterlife. This determines whether a person will reside in the village of their birth deity in heaven, in a purgatory state in the lower heaven of the dogs (*hentew* or *pahalow*), or spend up to 'seven' years burning in the fires of hell (*ner'ako api*) which is believed to be located above the sun. No matter how many sins are committed, the *Orang Rimba* believe that as long as they pay for their faults in sheets of cloth during a community *adat* hearing, they are erased or cleared. There are other ways that men can clear their sins, through religious ritual,

which will be discussed in the last chapter. As minors in the eye of *adat*, both women and children are not believed to accumulate sin, negative karma or receive any type of judgement in the afterlife.

By building their *adat* around this code of law, the *Orang Rimba* take a legitimate legal structure known and used by everyone in the region and claim a very similar version as their own, legitimately placing themselves in the larger *Melayu* kingdom. However, they cleverly reshape the law, pulling out many of its Islamic undertones, and fit them into the old laws (*adat lamo*), which come with their own cultural usages, religious beliefs and stories of their ancestors. Through these codes of law, the *Orang Rimba* structure their identities and notions of law, and set numerous boundaries based on interactions, food taboos, clothing, materials and technologies. An example of one of these ‘sprouts’ of law (*seloko adat*) that is commonly interwoven when reciting the trunk law reads,

Our chicken, it is a jungle chicken,	<i>Kalu ayom awok, ayom hutan</i>
our goat, it is a deer	<i>kalu gambing, kijang,</i>
our roof, is a roof of <i>cikai</i> leaves	<i>kalu hatop, hatop cikai</i>
walls, walls of bark	<i>dinding, dinding benyer</i>
a floor, a floor of bark	<i>lantai, lantai gembut</i>
water that I drink, is not yet poisoned	<i>aik bisoa kitok, belum ado racun</i>
it is water that stores in the hole of a tree	<i>aik der’i lubang kayu</i>

The first two stanzas establish a contrast between diets, that wild animals are good, and that village domesticates are taboo; the next three have to do with specific materials or ethnic markers that should be used when constructing their homes. The last stanza concerns the *Orang Rimba*’s cosmological perceptions of the downstream rivers as frequented by various gods of sickness, and the ways villagers pollute the downstream rivers with garbage and the manner in which their outhouses extend over the side of the riverbanks. In the forests, prohibitions against throwing garbage into or defecating in the rivers are included in the earliest *adat* laws (*adat lamo*). For fear of contracting illness, few men will bathe in the village portions of the river during a trip downstream.

From the trunk law grow cultural boundaries that enforce separation between the *Orang Rimba* and the villagers. The *Orang Rimba* sanctify this law, claiming that it was given exclusively to their ancestors by the hand of an angel, thus liberating them from a time when the fines for violating *adat* law meant extreme physical punishment and often death. More generally, they believe these laws are enforced by the gods and by the curse of the ancestors. As commonly told at the end of the stories of how they received their trunk laws:

Then after the separation, from the time of my parents to the time of the prophets this is how our *adat* came to us. Since the earth was as big as a track and the sky as big as an umbrella we have always had our *adat*. The trunk laws have been enforced, the amendments have been enforced (*undang di kundang, teliti diteliti*).

Shared Ancestors which Sprung from a Fruit: *The buah kelumpang story*

Within the origin stories of peoples across the region, important items such as the first grains of rice, and often ancestors, commonly spring out of a variety of different hard-shelled fruits.¹⁵ This is a classic feature of Austronesian peoples' origin stories (personal communication with James Fox). Among the *Makekal Orang Rimba*, the *Buah Kelumpang* story is the legend most often told whenever inquiring into their origins. In addition to calling themselves the *Makekal Or'ang Rimba*, along the *Makekal* River they also identify as *Or'ang Kelumpang* or 'Kelumpang people', the descendants of *Seti'au*, the goddess who sprang from the *Kalumpang* fruit.¹⁶ In the *Kelumpang* fruit story, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* describe their migration from Minangkabau to Jambi and their last and permanent split with the *Melayu*. While the *Orang Rimba* stayed in the forests according to the old ways, some of their junior ancestor figures left the forests to settle in the nearby village of *Tanah Garo*, while others went east and formed the village of *Serangam*. From here, some went on to populate the rest of Jambi. The separation occurred due to four siblings' unwillingness to commit incest in order to populate the uninhabited forestlands of Jambi. Before leaving the forests, they made an oath to define their future relations with one another, and strictly lay out one another's cultural boundary markers based on diet, clothing, religion and the use of certain outside technologies. The rules laid out in this story clearly define each of their social identities as *Orang Rimba* and Islamic *Melayu* villagers, and strongly point out that the cultural boundary markers created between the two groups are not allowed to be confused, mixed up or crossed.

The origins of the *Makekal* River *Orang Rimba* come from a man named *Bujang Per'antau*, who left his family in Minangkabau to establish a new life (*mer'antau*) in Jambi. He journeyed for a long time until he came to *Sako Tuha*, a sub-branch of the *Makekal* River, and there he opened a field. This was before anyone had moved to the Jambi region and before Islam had come to Sumatra. One day he was walking along and came upon a *kelumpang* fruit, picked it up and took it to his home. Later, the *kelumpang* fruit broke into pieces and from inside came a beautiful young woman with very dark skin. 'What is your name?' he asked her. 'My name is *Seti'au*, she replied. Why have you travelled this river?' 'I have moved (*mer'antau*) to this area in order to search for a new life, open a field and find a wife', he replied. 'However, since I have travelled here, I have found no one. Regardless, I do not think there is anyone who is the right match for me. Besides, who is there to marry

around here, I have looked for people, but there isn't anyone here,' said *Bujang Per'antau*. While *Seti'au* wanted to marry, *Bujang Per'antau* was a little uncertain. When *Seti'au* persisted, one day *Bujang* made a deal with her. He cut down a tree, peeled off its bark and placed it across the *Tuha* River. 'I will stand at one side of the tree and you stand at the other. If we both make it across the slippery tree and our heads meet in the middle, then it means that we are right for one another and we will be married. However, if one of us falls off the log then we will go our separate ways', *Bujang* said to her. Therefore, they both stepped on top of the log and started walking across until their heads finally met in the middle, and they were married.¹⁷

Eventually, they had four children with the names *Puter'i Geding*, *Bujang Melapangi*, *Puter'i Seler'as Masak* and *Dewo Tunggal*. As they came of age, their parents were worried how they would propagate. 'If our children marry one another, this will be incest', *Bujang* expressed to his wife. Therefore, the parents came up with a plan to deal with the incestuous situation. The eldest child will marry the youngest and the third child would marry the second, and the incest would be broken. However, the children did not want to follow the suggestion of their parents. The eldest child, *Dewo Tunggal* and the youngest, *Puter'i Geding*, decided to stay in the forests, while the two middle children, *Bujang Melapangi* and *Puter'i Seler'as Pinang Masak* decided to leave the forests in order to create a village and form the religion of Islam.

Standing at the base of *Sekembang* mountain, before parting they made an oath with one another that was sanctioned with a curse (*ayom per'tuanan*), which would stand throughout Jambi. *Dewo Tunggal* pointed to *Bujang Melapangi* and *Puter'i Seler'as Masak* and said, 'If you want to enter the village and enter Islam, grow betel nut, coconuts and build a village. If you want to form a settled village, grow coconuts and domesticate animals such as goats, then we will cast you to the downstream (*hilir*). We who stay in the forests will have roofs of *cikai* leaves, walls of bark and where water falls into the holes of wood, this is where we will drink. We are forbidden to eat the blood of buffalo, goat and chicken.'¹⁸ *Bujang Melapangi* was shocked and expressed, 'uhhhhhh'. He then pointed to *Dewo Tunggal* and said, 'if we, the *war'is* come to the forests, we will be polluted by food in the forests such as pig, tapir and snake'. 'Do not accept orders from us, the *war'is* who will live in the village. However, all forest products should return to us. If this oath is broken then the possibilities of the curse are many; in water you will find nothing to drink and on land you will find no food. In the water, you will be eaten by a black crocodile and on land a black tiger. You could be hit by a falling tree or cursed by a *kris*.' *Dewo Tunggal* said, 'uhhhhhh'. The two parties brought to the location signs to signify their identities. Those that left the forests held a piece of cassava (*ubi kayu*) and a buffalo, and those who stayed in the forests held a wild yam and a monitor lizard (*biawok*).

At that spot in the forest, we split. Those who moved to the village followed the ways of their father *Bujang Per'antau*, and those who stayed followed the ways of their mother (*Puter'i Buah Kelumpang* or *Seti'au*) who originated from the hills of *Bukit Duabelas*. The two who entered the village took their loincloths off and sewed pants. *Bujang Melapangi* first formed a settlement at *Muar'o Kembang Bungo* along the *Makekal* River, and over the generations this village shifted downstream to *Emapang Tilan*, *Cempendek Emas*, *Per'umah Ber'uh*, *Limau Sundai* and finally to its present location at *Tanah Garo* where the *Makekal* meets the *Tabir* River. His descendents in the north are referred to as 'trunk' (*pangkol*) *waris*, and are known as

the caretakers of the forests and the intermediaries of the *Orang Rimba*. *Puter'i Seler'as Masak* moved southeast where the *Ser'angam* River flows into the *Tembesi* and formed a village at *Hajran*. From that time, their descendants were called 'branch' (*ujung*) *war'is*. After some time, it is said that she moved west and founded the city of Jambi.

In addition to explaining another split with the villagers and reinforcing separate identities based on food, lifestyle and technologies, this origin story is significant for one particular ancestor whom the *Orang Rimba* work into it. In Jambi *Melayu* history and folklore, *Puteri Seleras Pinang Masak* is the name of the first princess in the last line of Jambi royalty, which lasted for over 450 years. She is one of Jambi's most significant ancestor figures who returned from Minangkabau, re-established the legitimacy of the kingdom, and was responsible for promoting and spreading the religion of Islam throughout the kingdom. In this story, the *Orang Rimba* work Jambi's most sacred ancestor queen into their origin myth, make her a younger sibling to their own ancestors who stayed in the forests according to the original *adat*, and again establish precedence over the *Melayu*. Later, they cast her downstream where she is then believed to have founded the city of *Hajran* and become *ujung waris*, and later moved on to found the kingdom of Jambi and lay the foundation for Islam throughout the region.

Shared Origins as the Baseline for Supernaturally Charged Relations of Bondage

This origin story is also unique in that it lays out the ground rules defining the debt bondage relations based on the trade in forest products between the *Makekal Orang Rimba* and their *Melayu* patrons in the village of *Tanah Garo*. As with so many primary aspects of their social and religious lives, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* express their external power relations with the *Melayu* through the botanic analogy of 'trunk' (*pangkol*) and 'branch' (*ujung*). The lead patron in the village of *Tanah Garo* is referred to as 'trunk' *waris* (*pangkol waris*), while the lead patron in the eastern village of *Hajran/Pak Juaji*, who in the past was an authority over the eastern *Orang Rimba* was referred to as 'branch' *waris* (*ujung war'is*), marking the priority in their relations with the *Melayu*. For the *Makekal Orang Rimba*, trunk *waris* is the final authority in legal matters concerning *adat* law, and through his ability to bestow or affirm titles on headmen, adds legitimacy to their system of law.

These relations are reinforced by the belief that they share common ancestors, and perceive themselves to be distant kin. The native inhabitants of *Tanah Garo* are referred to as *waris*, which is a term used in reference to a web of kinship relations, and

in theory, both parties feel the obligation to look after one another as they would kin. As in its Arabic usage, the term *waris* can also be used to refer to inheritance. While the *waris* believe that the *Makekal Orang Rimba* have the right to live in the forests, they also believe that all its contents, including the labour power of the *Orang Rimba* and the forest products they collect, are their lineal heritage to manage. In this relationship, the *waris* are obliged to assist the *Makekal Orang Rimba* in any legal issues that might arise. However, only the *waris* whose families originally received *jenang* titles from *Sultan Taha* (in the mid to late 19th century) are allowed to trade with the *Orang Rimba*, and only with families who they have inherited the rights to trade with. In the village, both *jenang* titles and the right to trade with particular *Orang Rimba* families are passed on to daughters as heavy inheritance (*harto yang berat*), and are managed by mothers brothers, sons and in-marrying husbands. These relations are reinforced by supernatural sanctions. The *Makekal Orang Rimba* believe that if they were to trade with anyone else besides the individual *waris/jenang* who owns the right to manage their family, they would break the oath made between their ancestors and be struck by a curse, causing misfortune to fall upon the community.

To an outsider this relationship may seem ambiguous, as these relations appear to be in direct contrast to the precedence that the stories establish and which is acknowledged in principal by both parties. Aside from the fact that the *waris* believe themselves to own everything found in the forests along the *Makekal* River, including the *Orang Rimba*, they view them as socially inferior and do not respect or treat them as they would 'elder brothers'. The *waris* have a very paternal way of dealing with the *Orang Rimba*, perceiving their distant kin as 'little brothers', and as primitive, dirty, ignorant and pagan. In theory, they claim that they would never deny their little brothers the opportunity to settle in the village and enter Islam, as long as it was of their own accord. However, they also respect the oath made between their ancestors and the cultural autonomy that it ensures.¹⁹ While this respect is intertwined with a belief in distant kinship (*pertalian darah*), the oath of the ancestors, and *adat* law (the forth trait of a king: tribute and autonomy), there are certainly status- and wealth-related motives for granting them this autonomous respect. To convince the *Orang Rimba* to leave the forests and settle down would deprive them of a traditional form of status in their own village, inheriting, trading, buying, selling and managing *Orang Rimba* families. Traditionally, these issues were intertwined with their economic livelihoods, the trade in forest products, and these days, many still assist their patrons from time to time in their logging efforts.

These stories situate the *Orang Rimba* within and in fact bind them by the curse of their ancestors into a complex web of social, political and economic relations that is based on but not restricted to trade. The *Orang Rimba* are the subordinate party in this power relationship, although they also secure several advantages, which in the past included a stable and reliable market for the forest products, a means to acquire advance goods on credit, and representation and protection from outside entities. These relations are also a means to obtain a hierarchy of village titles, which facilitate fluent relations with their patrons, but more importantly influence their own internal system of law.

After the separation with the *Melayu*, some say that *Bujang Per'antau* received the title *temanggung* and from that point on was called *Temanggung Mer'o Mato*, referring to the colour of his blazing red eyes. This character also provides a link with the most common *Melayu* folktale surrounding the origins of the *Kubu* (see historical chapter in the appendix). While both the *Makekal Orang Rimba* and the *Melayu* point out *Temanggung Mer'o Mato* as the first leader of the *Orang Rimba* in their origins, each story is told in a different manner. In the *Orang Rimba* version it was not the *Melayu* king (*Orang Kayo Hitam*) who drove the *Orang Rimba* to the forests, but their ancestors who cast the King's mother (Queen *Pinang Masak*) outside of the forests. The *kelumpang* fruit story is commonly told by the *Makekal Orang Rimba* and the *Melayu* villagers in *Tanah Garo* and a version of each their local dialects is included in the appendix. According to one elder along the upstream *Makekal* River,

Bujang Per'antau held the title *temanggung* and afterwards was referred to as *Temanggung Mer'o Mato*. His son *Dewo Tunggal* held the title *mayang* meaning 'palm blossom'. Among the descendents of *Dewo Tunggal* and *Puteri Geding* are the ancestor *Mayang Balur Dado* and his child *Mayang Segayur*. This was one of our greatest ancestors. After he died he was referred to as *S'pite Lidah* or 'Sir Bitter Tongue'.

Table 3.5 The Ancestors of the *Makekal Orang Rimba* and *Tanah Garo* Villagers²⁰

Nabi Adam and Nabi Mohammad		
Bujang Per'antau and his wife Setiau or Putri Buah Kelumpang		
Below are the four children of Bujang Per'antau (Temanggung Mer'o Mato) and Putri Buah Kelumpang, two who left the forests and two who stayed in the forests		
<i>Serengam Tembesi (Ujung Waris)</i>	<i>Ancestors of Tanah Garo (Pangkol Waris)</i>	<i>Ancestors of the Makekal Orang Rimba</i>
Puteri Sela'ang Pinang Masak (<i>ujung war'is</i>)	Bujang Melapangi	Dewo Tunggal married his sister Puteri Gading
	<i>Rio Badar</i>	Mayang ²¹ Balur Dado
	<i>Rio Bugkuk</i>	Mayang Segayur
	<i>Rio Timpang</i>	Mayang Tungkal
	<i>Rio Gundar</i>	<i>Depati Payung Alam</i>
	<i>Rio Dindir</i>	<i>Depati Payung Agung</i>
	<i>Rio Bujang Intan</i>	<i>Depati Payung Alam</i>
	<i>Rio Daim</i>	<i>Depati Payung Bungo</i>
	<i>Rio H. Sahari</i>	<i>Depati Bulan</i>
	<i>Rio Tahir</i>	<i>Depati Singo</i>
	<i>Rio Bedul</i>	<i>Depati Pemauncak</i>
	<i>Rio Karim</i>	<i>Depati Pagar Alam</i>
	Rio H. Sayuti	Temanggung Besar Singo Jayo
	Rio Samidin	Temanggung Ke'ti Singo Jayo
	Rio Bujang (son in-law of the former Rio Sayuti)	Temanggung Bedinding Besi
		Temanggung Mirak

The Legends Surrounding *Segayur* or *Si Pahit Lidah*

Several *Orang Rimba dongen* aggrandize the mistakes of mythical ancestors in order to teach people what not to do.²² This seems to be the point of the *dongen* related to the ancestor *Segayur*, also known as *S'pite Lidah* and throughout Sumatra as *Si Pahit Lidah*, 'Sir Bitter Tongue'. The legends surrounding *Si Pahit Lidah* are told throughout the provinces of Lampung, South Sumatra, Pasemah, Bengkulu, Kerenci and Jambi.²³ He is often portrayed as one of the most prominent community ancestors, having great strength and magic, yet being arrogant and quick-tempered and fast to vent his rage on anyone who crossed him. His trademark magical ability was the power to turn objects (humans, animals, trees, homes, etc.) into stone by touching them with his tongue. Numerous large stones throughout Sumatra are said to be the result of *Si Pahit Lidah* and villages in Jambi, such as *Batu Kerbau*, (stone buffalo), *Batu Kucing* (stone cat),

Batu Penyambung (stone that conveys a message) and *Batu Sawar* (stone barricade or fence) have villages named after these story-filled stones.

The *Orang Rimba* also have a localized tradition of *Si Pahit Lidah* stories that are told within the context of their lives in the forests. According to their stories, *Segayur* lived during the age of the Hindu Kings in the hilly area between the *Air Hitam* and *Makekal* Rivers, and according to folklore, he was the king (*rajo*) of all the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas*. They say that *Segayur* lived two generations after *Dewo Tunggal*, one of the four children of *Bujang Per'antau* or *Temanggung Mer'o Mato*. As in some of their stories surrounding *Mer'o Mato*, they describe *Segayur* as gigantic in size and as having extraordinary strength and great magical powers. Like *Bujang Per'antau*, he was married to a woman who derived from an earth-bound spirit. The stories of *Segayur* recount a nostalgic past when the *Orang Rimba* had a dominant leader who lived by his own rules and would not bow or make himself subordinate to the *waris* in *Tanah Garo*, Malay kings or even *Sekilat Lalu*, the king of the tiger gods. While his stories are gloriously recalled, his actions were often reckless, and at times, disturbed the harmony of *adat*. As one legend tells,

During the time of *Segayur*, there were many problems between the *Orang Rimba* and the villagers. Back then, the *Orang Rimba* lived around the *Bukit Duabelas* hills between the *Makekal* and *Air Hitam* and the villagers often attacked us in the forest.²⁴ Some of them wanted us to move out of the forests and to enter their religion so that the problems between our peoples would end. The first war with the villagers occurred when the king of Jambi sent his soldiers to attack *Segayur* at his home, which was then located on the hills of *Bukit Duabelas*. During this attack, the villagers began at the base and started to march up the hill with weapons; however, *Segayur* was very intelligent and easily outwitted the villagers. With his superhuman strength, he chopped down several trees, each tree with one swipe of his axe and rolled them down the hill killing those who tried to climb up. Ever since this event, we call the small river at the bottom of this hill, *Lancer'on Dero*, the 'path of flowing blood'.

After this event, there was a time of peace. *Segayur* opened many fields throughout the forests, planting them with fruit trees, and domesticated many of the wild animals in the forests. His wealth (*har'to*) in the form of fruit trees, especially durian, is still found throughout the forests around the numerous areas where he lived. Eventually, as he moved north closer to *Tanah Garo*, tensions rose with the *war'is*, and they say that he fought a brutal war with them and won.²⁵

After defeating *Tanah Garo*, *Segayur* moved to the forests along the *Tabir* River to a place called *Kelaka Pinang*. This is close to village we now call *Batuh Sawar*. One day he was damming a river in order to poison and stun the fish. As the fish became dazed, he began to pick them off the water and throw them to his wife to put them in her basket. He threw one of the fish to his wife; yelling to her, 'see if you catch it in your bag.' However, she was not able to catch the fish and it fell back into the river. His wife called out, 'You need not always be so arrogant *Segayur*'. *Segayur* replied,

‘There is no one who can challenge me in this forest! If a tiger came, I would swat him away like a mosquito.’ Moreover, as he said that, the king of the tiger gods, *Sekilat Lalu* (‘bolt of lightning’, in reference to the speed of his *silet* attacking style) and *Squat Lar’ai*, a student of *Sekilat Lalu*, appeared along the side of the river, together with 60 tigers, which were in their manifestations as tigers. The tigers began to attack him one by one, and as they attacked him, he swatted each of them away like mosquitos. After dealing with the tigers, he laughed, turned his back to the king of the tigers and then continued to look for fish. *Sekilat Lalu* then struck *Segayur* from behind, pulling the content of his stomach out through his anus and killed him. After killing *Segayur*, *Sekilat Lalu* cut off his tongue and brought it to a powerful ruler named *Squat Lar’ai* who wanted to see if the myth of *Seguyur’s* power was true, if it was truly bitter. Upon putting the tongue in his mouth, the tongue instantly turned him to stone. This is how *Segayur* received the name *S’pite lidah*, ‘Sir Bitter Tongue’.

As in other *Si Pahit Lidah* legends throughout Sumatra, after his death his bones were distributed to different groups throughout the forests. The *Makekal Orang Rimba* received his jaw bone,

Later, *Segayur’s* followers attempted to carry his jawbone back so that it could be buried near his home at *Lancer’on Der’oh*. The bone was so heavy that it took 120 soldiers to carry it on top of a plank, 60 in the front and 60 in the back. Because it was so heavy the soldiers were unable to make it that far and left it at *Ser’undo* between the *Kajasung* and *Makekal* Rivers. The enormous jawbone as well as the plank used to carry it are still sitting along the trail, preserved in stone and charged with magical powers. Most are afraid to sleep at this location and say that it is a spot occupied by evil earth bound spirits (*setan*).

There are numerous stones throughout the forests, which the *Orang Rimba* will say are the result of *Segayur’s* tongue. They believe that these stones have a magically charged essence, which is attractive to earth bound spirits, who often make them their homes.

At his former camp atop the hill near *Lancer’on Dero*, *S’pite Lidah’s* home is said to still be present petrified in stone. In this rock, you can still see the door as well as the base poles. Near his home, there is a huge stone that looks like an elephant. Some say this was a shaman gone insane invoking the elephant god. Because no one in the community could control the shaman, *S’pite Lidah* eventually had to turn him into a stone with his tongue. These days, people say that if you touch the stone elephant it can cause a person to go insane, just like the shaman before he turned to stone. However, shaman who are sacred (*ker’emat*) and powerful (*sakti*) are able to go into trance and touch the stone, and if they have great powers, they can cause it to return to life and make it roar like an elephant.

As the story below recounts, the *Orang Rimba* work in yet another split between themselves and the villagers through the content of these stories, and another explanation for the presence of the wild animals in the forests. Notice the mention of their ancestor’s *dur’ion* trees, which in addition to honey trees are a primary means by which families mark their claims to customary forests.

These days, his inheritance (*har'to*) of *dur'ion* trees is still spread throughout our forests. Many of the wild animals in the forests also originate from *Segayur*. After he was killed all of his domesticated animals (chicken, goats, dogs) became wild jungle chickens, forest goats, deer and spread throughout the forests. Many of the animals in the forests originate from *Segayur's* domesticated animals. It is possible that some of the *Or'ang Rimba* originate from the split caused by the death of *Segayur*, half of his subjects decided to move to the village and half decided to stay in the forests. However, most people along the *Makekal* say that this happened through the *Or'ang Kelumpang* tale.

The *Segayur* or *S'pite Lidah* legends allow an avenue, through folklore and legend, for the *Orang Rimba* to recall a time in the past when they were led by a dominant and powerful leader who did not subordinate himself to the *Melayu*. While they nostalgically recount these legends with community pride, *Segayur's* actions also violate countless community prohibitions, and at times disturb the harmony (*keselematon*) of *adat* in the forests. By going to war with *Tanah Garo*, breaking the ancient oath made between the ancestors, and ultimately mocking the tiger god, *Segayur* caused disorder, which ultimately led to his death by the hand of *Sekilat Lalu*, the king of the tiger gods, and the guardian of *adat*.

Discussion

Origin stories, folklore and legends (*dongen*) are a medium in which community elders begin to teach and explain to the youth, in the format of lively and enjoyable performances, the sacred, aggrandized and seemingly unbelievable tales of their ancestors. Through *dongen*, younger members of the community learn about the structure and creation of the universe, the stories of various gods and ancestors, common origins with the *Melayu*, as well as their separation. Most importantly, they learn of the sacred nature of *adat*, its history, structure, and rules for maintaining its balance based on separation and avoidance of the *Melayu*. Through these stories, they begin to develop their unique social identity as *Or'ang Rimba*, *Or'ang Makekal*, and *Or'ang Kelumpang*, which develop in direct contrast to the villagers.

An analysis of the structure of *Orang Rimba* origin stories shows that the content, themes, and characters that wind their way through them are very similar to those of other Malayic and Austro-Asiatic peoples in the region and are manipulated in ways that are common among Austronesian peoples. Through the belief that the world was created in Minangkabau, a land charged with ideological undertones of power, and by claiming to be the original migrants from Minangkabau to Jambi, they claim precedence over the *Melayu*, and begin to establish the right to live in their customary forests by the *adat* of their ancestors. The politics of precedence begins in some of their

initial creation stories when the God of Trees and Plants created ‘seven’ (a magical number) honey trees, which together with durian trees are important forms of inheritance handed down to women, and establish family rights to live in and exploit resources in customary forests. Through these stories, their ancestors in the forests are understood to have been the first domesticators, several times, but to have chosen to continue with the older and culturally more precedent lifestyle of digging for wild yams. Many of them left behind vast tracts of durian and honey trees, which again establish the longevity of their rights to customary forests.

The supernatural manner in which the *Orang Rimba*’s ancestors received the ‘trunk’ laws gives their *adat* legitimacy and precedence over similar laws, which in the past were the common laws of the kingdom. From its ‘trunk’ spring ‘branches’ or ‘sprouts’ of law imbued with complementary categories, which can denote precedence, seniority and values. Where and how they place these branches of law is important towards understanding how the *Orang Rimba* structure and manipulate their system of law. A theme of precedence continues through the numerous ancestor characters that work their way into *Orang Rimba dongen* such as *Nabi Adam*, *Nabi Muhammad*, *Puteri Selar’as Pinang Masak* and *Si Pahit Lidah*. By choosing the names of important characters found in Jambi folklore and religion, claiming them as common ancestor figures, and often making them junior to their own, the *Orang Rimba* cleverly manipulate common aspects of origin stories to their advantage. They participate in a wider common language of folklore, which does not translate into receiving precedence in everyday social relationships, but can be used in their interactions with the *Melayu* to establish autonomy, seclusion, and rights to specific patches of forests or the resources found within them. Most importantly, it also allows them an avenue to justify not becoming *Melayu* (*masuk Melayu*) and to continue living according to the *adat* of their ancestors.

Some *Orang Rimba* origin stories have also served to establish generally subordinate political economic debt bondage relations. Many scholars have argued that myths and origin stories become traditional because, at least at the time of their inception, they serve strongly felt ideological, political, social and economic needs (Hobsbawm 1983). While the *Orang Rimba*’s origin stories situate them in subordinate bondage relations with the villagers of *Tanah Garo* by the oath and curse made between their common ancestors, the steady economic and political relations between the two groups gave the *Orang Rimba* a reliable, constant and safe means to interact with the outside world, maintain autonomy over their *adat*, and – in the past – some protection

from the slave raids that were being carried out against mobile animist forest peoples throughout the wider region. Internally, the relationship gives their traditional *adat* legitimacy, and can be a means to obtain titles, status and a limited means of authority in their communities. However, while origin stories are a means for the *Orang Rimba* to work their way into a web of relations in the larger *Melayu* world, they are also an effective avenue towards building boundaries between themselves and the *Melayu*. In everyday life these boundaries are marked by dietary restrictions, clothing, building materials, and taboos on using soap. These boundary markers are daily reminders of difference and serve to reinforce separation between the *Orang Rimba* and the *Melayu*.

Chapter 3 Endnotes

¹ Versions of some of these stories in the *Rimba* language are included in the appendix.

² Malayic peoples throughout Sumatra and Malaysia believe that following a flood, the first land was very small like a footprint, track or tray and that it was covered by a dome-like sky, which was initially only as wide as an umbrella (Skeat 1900:3). The *Petalangan* of interior Riau also appear to conceptualize the world according to a track-umbrella analogy. Neither Kang nor Effendy have published any *Petalangan* creation myths. Effendy's "*Bujang Tan Doman*" is an origin account told through 'long songs' (*nanyi panjang*) of a *Petalangan* clan's migration from Peninsular Johor to the forests along the *Kampar* River in Sumatra (Effendy 1997). Within the context of a healing ritual recorded by Kang, the track-umbrella analogy makes its way into *Petalangan* ritual speech as a means to contextualize or shrink the world during interaction with the spirit world (Kang 2002a:109). The Malay have a similar belief of a man on the moon who is associated with a tree. According to Skeat, "The spots on the moon are supposed to represent an inverted banyan or *beringin* tree underneath which sits an old man" (Skeat 1900). Skeat writes that some Malay believe that the earth was originally created and rests upon the 'pillar of Ka'bah', (a cube-like building in the centre of a Mosque at Mecca, which contains the Hajarul-Aswad or black-stone) whose growth is comparable to a tree (Skeat 1900:3). The nearby *Talang Mamak*, on the other hand, believe the earth to rest on the back of a gigantic bearded pig.

There are also a number of features in this creation story which are shared with Austro-Asiatic peoples on the Peninsula. According to Schebesta, "the Western Negritos believe that there is a system of planks or beams called *galog'n*, running through the sky, and the sun travels along one of these...". As Evans points out, "there seems to be some confusion in the minds of the Negritos over whether the paths of the heavenly bodies are like planks or like multiple loops of rattan". Endicott writes that the Batak de explain the halo around the sun to be like a coil of rattan, while others say that it is the halo around the sun rather than the path along which it moves (Endicott 1979:39) from (Schebesta 1957). For many Austro-Asiatic peoples, the gods are strongly associated with the moon; its 'coolness' is associated with health and the 'heat' of the sun with sickness and disease (Endicott 1979; Howell 1984; Laderman 1991).

³ According to some *Talang Mamak*, their ancestors were the original migrants from Minangkabau and were responsible for founding the downstream Malay court of

Indragiri. While professing loyalty to the Malay kingdom of Indragiri, their allegiance was always fragile, and as seen in their folklore, conditional upon autonomy, mutual respect for their *adat* and fair trading relations. Summarizing their web of relations in the world, the *Talang Mamak* have the saying ‘There are nine leaders along the Gangsal River, ten along the Cinaku, ten along the sub-branches centred in *Tigabalai*, mother or origins in *Paganuyung* (Minangkabau), father along the *Indragiri*, and bound to the Sultan Rengat.’ (*simbilan batin gangsal, sepuluh batin Cinaku, sepuluh anak talang, tagas binting aduan berserta ranting cawing, berinduk ke Tigabalai, beribu ke Pagaruyung, berbapa ke Indragiri, beraja ke Sultan Rengat*). Through this saying, the *Talang Mamak* are stating their present web of alliance relations, and expressing their loyalty to the Sultan. However by claiming origins in Minangkabau, they leave open the possibility that their loyalties could turn if the Sultan is not fair.

According to *Talang Mamak* legend, “in the distant past there was a very large family who lived in poverty. To seek fortune, the youngest male floated across the Malaka Straits in a raft made of logs in order to search for a better life. As time passed, it was learned that the youngest child became very successful and was adorned as the prince of Johor, a kingdom in Malaysia. There are various stories concerning this *Talang Mamak* king. After receiving a curse for ignoring his family his boat is destroyed at sea by a large dragon. There is another story that tells of a turbulent period in which there was no coastal king, and it is believed that one of the *Talang Mamak* built a wooden raft, floated to Malaka, and brought back with him the prince of Malaka, Nara Singa, who then unified the kingdom and became a great leader. After the king passed away, he was replaced by his cousin, who had no regard for his subjects, and whose reign was brutal. After some time, the *Talang Mamak* led an uprising of the people, and the malevolent king was killed. Since this event, successive kings of the *Indragiri* have been careful to acknowledge and consider the concerns of their subjects, particularly the *Talang Mamak*. If not, it is believed that the kings (or Indonesian government officials) will be struck with a curse, enacted by the ancestors of the *Talang Mamak*, which reads “*Keatas tak bepucuk, ke bawah tak beurat, di tengah dilrick kumbang, hidup ndak jaya, mati ndak sempurna*” (Silalahi 1999a; Silalahi 1999b).

According to Gerrell Drawhorn,

The *Talang Mamak* perceive themselves as the original Minang, and many Minang also seem to think this. The argument goes that the Minang are derived from the *Talang Mamak* who were also the roots of both the Srivijaya and Melayu. This is why Adityaravan was able to become king of the Minang peoples when the Srivijaya Empire faced collapse, as “we were the same people”. Others tend to think that the *Talang Mamak* are merely “influenced” by the Minang, holding that Gunung Merapi (or Gunung Sago) is the mythic source of Minang people, and that the area the *Talang Mamak* occupy is in “Rantau” (outside the residential polity of Minang). (Personal communication with Gerrell Drawhorn)

Minangkabau origins are also held by several *Petalangan* clans who live along the sub-branches of the *Kampar* River in Central Riau, and were traditionally involved in trade relations with intermediaries from the downstream Malay kingdom of *Kampar*. Other *Petalangan* clans are believed to originate from the kingdom of *Johor* on the Malay Peninsula (Effendy 1997; Kang 2002). Andaya writes that the interior populations of South Sumatra do not structure their origin stories around *Minangkabau*, but rather

towards features of the landscape such as *Si Runting* Mountain and powerful kingdoms abroad such as Java (1993).

⁴ According to a Minangkabau origin story, “In ancient times a ship belonging to a king with three sons and their children landed on a small island. The seawater then receded enlarging the small island into the whole island of Sumatra. The small island where the ship landed now appeared to be the top of a volcano, the Merapi, situated in the heart of Central Sumatra. The king and his three sons are said to have been the ancestors of the Minangkabau.” (Sjafiroeddin 1974:34)

⁵ In South Asian belief, Mount Meru is believed to be located at the highest point or pinnacle of the Himalayas (the Himalayas are said to be its foothills), and in a sense, represent a vertical bridge to the heavens (Srivastava 1989). In the Angkor Watt complex, the temple-mountain associated with Meru was Bakheng, built by Yosovarmann towards the end of the ninth century. Located near Palembang, along the border with Jambi, the primary mountain associated with local origins or Mount Meru and in the past, the kingdoms of *Sriwijaya/Palembang* and the *Melayu* is *Bukit Si Guntang Mahameru*, and to a lesser extent *Bukit Lebar Daun*. In Minangkabau, it is *Gunung Merapi* or *Gunung Sago*. Within the origin stories associated with the Kingdom of Johor in Malaysia, an association was not made with a local mountain, but rather with South Sumatra or Palembang, *Gunung Saguntang-guntang Mahameru* (Skeat 1900:2). By recalling this mountain in their origin stories, local peoples and kings associate themselves with the ancient power of Sriwijaya. Java has its own local mountains that are associated with origins, Mount Meru and the godly power of kings. In central Java, the mountain associated with Meru is *Gunung Merapi*, and in East Java, *Gunung Semeru*.

⁶ Many Malayic peoples believe the first humans to be moulded out of clay: for a Peninsular Malay example, see Skeat 1900; for an example among the Kaharingan in Southern Borneo, see Weinstock 1987:82.

⁷ After reading this chapter, Andrew McWilliam mentioned that Nabi Adam/Mohammad wind their way into the origin stories of Austronesian peoples across the Indonesian Archipelago. For Malay examples, see Skeat 1900, 1906a, 1906b, Weinstedt 1951. For an Austro-Asiatic or Seng-oi/Semai example in Malaysia, see Edo 1998. For an example in west Java, see Adimihadja 1989.

⁸ A *Melayu* rubber tapper once pointed out to me,

The *Kubu* still follow the old Hindu gods, those that are associated with life in the forest and the devil (*setan*). The *Kubu* do not have a religion (*agamo*), they only have their *adat* beliefs, they believe in many gods. Their religion originates from *setan*, and falls within the realm of *setan*. The *Kubu* gods come to them when they sleep, in dreams. They constantly pray to them, the hornbill and the tiger god, but they all originate from *setan*.

Most *Melayu* villagers do not know much about the Hindu gods or for that matter the *Kubu* gods, some of which they share in modified forms. The main point that the villagers establish through these types of comments, is that they fall uneasily outside of the realm of the larger *Melayu* community.

⁹ In Sulawesi, the Wana have a similar story to explain their rejection of the pork taboo and Islam (Atkinson 1987).

¹⁰ In his book, *Cows, Pigs, Wars & Witches*, Marvin Harris gives a materialist explanation for the development of the pork taboo among Muslim and Jewish peoples in the Middle East (Harris 1975). In her book, *Purity and Danger* Mary Douglas mentions that anxiety over ones minority status in a society is often reflected in rituals concerning the bodies' orifices, thus the care taken to avoid pollution to ones physical body can be a symbolic manifestation of ones place in society and a desire to protect political and social integrity (Douglas 1966). Douglas writes, "if a society or class feels the need to protect itself from outsiders or foreign influences, this can be symbolized through rules of behaviour and eating" (1966). Thus, protecting the body from pollution by guarding the body's orifices, in this case by restricting the diet, symbolizes the protection of beliefs.

¹¹ The village Muslims are permitted to eat the different varieties of deer, fish, birds, and the portions of the tapir covered in white hair, a colour that Malayic peoples associate with purity. However, they are forbidden to eat the meat under the black hair of the tapir, which is considered defile and polluting. In a similar manner, the *Orang Rimba* believe the practice of circumcision to be a major sin (*duso*) and a mutilation of their bodies. The adults have a variety of stories to scare the young children from ever considering entering Islam and ever having to go through this strange village practice.

¹² For an interesting account of how the Peninsular Malay divide the different 'eras and periods' of their history based on historical events, religious ages and so on, see McKinley 1979.

¹³ Together with the court's effort to spread Islam throughout the interior, one of the main reasons for the standardization of Jambi civil *adat* law along the upstream communities of the *Batanghari* River was the increased arrival of Minangkabau migrants and the growing use of Minangkabau *adat* throughout the interior regions of Jambi. In the past, Nasruddin writes that these laws came to the interior tied to the following *seleko adat* couplet (Nasruddin 1989):

The laws come down tied to a spear	<i>Undang turun bertali galeh</i>
The amendments come downstream pegged as ornaments	<i>Teliti mudik belantak tajuk</i>
The amendments sink inside	<i>Teliti tenggelam dalam</i>
The laws are hung high	<i>Undang bergantung tinggi</i>

Jambi's eight base laws are very similar to Minangkabau's 'twenty codes of law' (*undang undang nang duapuluh*). Jambi *adat* may have been a method for the royalty to distance themselves from the Kingdom of Minangkabau as well as create commonalities, unity and order within the boundaries of their own kingdom.

Minangkabau *adat* is based around the eight codes, which include *tikam bunuh* (murder by stabbing), *upas racun* (poisoning), *samun sakar* (robbery, or murder), *siar bakar* (burning ones house, property, or belongings), *maling curi* (stealing ones belongings), *dago dago* (to wrong the community or its leaders), and *umbuak umbai, sumbang salah* (to wrong by committing incest) (Amir 2003).

¹⁴ According to Islamic law, a soul is paid for with a soul, an ear with an ear, an eye with an eye, and if an injury is caused or one is caught stealing, the left hand is cut off. For inappropriate sexual relations, a person could be stoned to death if it is with one who is married or hit 100 times with a stick for relations out of marriage.

¹⁵ See the swidden farming chapter in the appendix for a story of how their ancestors received the first grains of rice from a hard-shelled nut. A similar Malay story was recorded by Skeat in the late 19th century (Skeat 1900).

¹⁶ The *Orang Rimba* choose to identify primarily with the ancestor *Seti'au*, who was believed to be a spirit or descended to earth from heaven. The *Tanah Garo* villagers, on the other hand, attempt to distance themselves from this ancestor, and rather choose to identify with the human ancestor *Bujang Per'antau*.

¹⁷ While several Indonesian writers, including Nasruddin, have described this event as a common *Orang Rimba* custom performed before a marriage, along the *Makekal* they say that it only occurs in the myth (Nasruddin 1989).

¹⁸ It is also told that he said, “*rapat de luor, rencong de delom* (meet in the open with a dagger in your pocket), *besuruk budi betanom akal* (hide reason, plant common sense), *bedacing duo becupak duo dan begantang duo* (weigh two, measure two, and measure two with rice containers), which is followed by a description of the curse, “*de aik detangkop buwayo kumbang, ke darat detangkop merego kumbang, detempo punggur, ke pucuk dokutuki pisau kawi, ke bewoh keno masrum kalimah Allah, de arak kabangiyang, dotimpo punggur, ke atai hopi ke pucuk, ke bewoh hopi berurat*.”

¹⁹ According to one of the *waris* in *Tanah Garo*,

We cannot influence them to change religions or enter Islam, this goes against the oath made between our ancestors. We respect their right to carry on with the *adat* of their ancestors. However, if they come to us and want to learn about or enter Islam, then we cannot deny them this. In the *Air Hitam* and other regions, there are government officials who have tried influence and sometimes pressure them to come out of the forests, settle in the village and enter Islam. We do not allow this to occur along the *Makekal*. It is up to them to decide.

²⁰ Most elders in the forest and village can call off a lengthy list of their shared ancestors, although the *Orang Rimba* often give truncated accounts. The table below includes a lengthier list given by *pangkol waris* in *Tanah Garo*, while the names in plain font are the ancestors most commonly recalled by the *Orang Rimba*.

²¹ Along the *Makekal*, they say that the first title given to their leaders was *mayang*, meaning means' palm blossom'. Later, the head title was changed to *depati*, and again was later changed by *Sultan Taha* to *temanggung*.

²² Similar to people throughout Sumatra, Malaysia, Java and Borneo, the *Orang Rimba* have numerous tales of how the cunning and quick-witted mousedeer (*kancil*) outsmarted the animals in the forests (Carpenter 1992). These stories are often told to teach children moral lessons

²³ While passing through the Pasemah highlands in the mid-19th century, Forbes briefly mentions some beliefs concerning *Lidah Pait*.

There is almost no tradition respecting them, beyond that they are the handiwork of *Sarung Sakti and Lidah Pait* (Bitter Tongue), who, wandering about the country, turned all who displeased them into stone; or that they represent the people who in the far, far back time used to inhabit this land, and who possessed tails, which the renowned ancestor of the Passumah people, Atum Bungsu, cut off. (Forbes 1885)

Barbara Andaya gives a good example of a *Si Pahit Lidah* legend told in Jambi.

Long ago, it is said, an ancestral couple who had no children, prayed for a child at a sacred place. Suddenly a boy, Si Runting, sprang up between them. He was raised as their son, and when he grew up married the sister of a certain Aria Tebing. This brother in law became jealous of Si Runting, and quarrels broke out between them. Aria Tebing eventually became victorious because he was able to persuade his sister to betray her husband. Thirsting for revenge, Si Runting appealed to the powerful king (or in some accounts a holy man) who lived on the slopes of Bukit Si Gunting. The King spat into Si Runting's mouth, giving him supernatural powers (*sakti*) that enabled him to turn people into stone by touching them with his tongue. Known by his new name, Si Pahit Lidah now embarked on a series of adventures that took him all over southeast Sumatra, wreaking vengeance on any who caused him harm. When he finally met his death in combat with a giant, his body turned to stone. The pieces were divided among his descendents, who buried them in different places. Si Pahit Lidah thus has many graves, and throughout the area rocks inexplicably found beside a river or down the sides of mountains bear silent witness to his formidable powers. (Andaya 1993)

For other examples of *Si Pahit Lidah* stories throughout Sumatra, see Boers 1839; Collins 1979; Hasjim 1999; Marsden 1986; Westenek 1962.

²⁴ The *Orang Rimba* believe that the *Bukit Duabelas* hills (500 meters), which divide the northern portion of forests from the southern *Air Hitam* region, are the abode of evil earthbound spirits (*setan* and *silumon*) and ghosts. In origin stories, some of their ancestors wind up living on these hills (*Puteri Buah Kalumpang, Temanggung Mer'oto Mato*, and *Segayur* or *Si Pahit Lidah*), although no one presently lives on them, and whenever they cross over them, most will do so quickly as not to be disturbed by the spirits and ghosts which are believed to dwell there. One practical reason why no one lives on these hills is the difficulty in fetching water, fishing and opening a swidden field.

²⁵ As with most peoples throughout the interior regions of Jambi, the villagers of *Tanah Garo* have their own stories of *Si Pahit Lidah*, which involve their own village ancestors. While the *waris* in *Tanah Garo* claim to have heard several *Orang Rimba* stories related to *Segayur*, no one was aware of the story concerning a war between this character and their ancestors. When hearing this story, one *waris* laughed and said that it would not be possible and has never occurred, 'the *Kubu* would be too afraid to confront us'. Nor do they believe that *Segayur* is the same character as *Si Pahit Lidah*, or that *Si Pahit Lidah* was a forest person. According to them, *Si Pahit Lidah* was a superhuman villager and lived during the age of the Hindu kings.

Chapter 4

Orang Rimba Cosmology and Religion

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of *Orang Rimba* cosmology and religion, their conceptions of the earth and heaven, the lesser gods, the spirits and ghosts on earth, and an overview of some of the basics of *Orang Rimba* shamanism. *Orang Rimba* religion draws from an underlying system of traditional Malayic religious beliefs, which have been uniquely influenced by a very different way of life in the forests. The *Orang Rimba* stress that their religion is very different from that of the surrounding *Melayu*, but also suggest that it may be an older variant or rather the original religion in the region, that which is associated with life in the forests. According to their beliefs, the ancestors of the village *Melayu* may have also followed a variant of this religion before leaving the forests and entering Islam. Some of these key shared concepts are manipulated in a way that create difference, and are used to justify maintaining cultural boundaries and separation with the outside world.

The *Orang Rimba* cosmology is conceptualized according to a number of dualisms and divisions: spiritual and mundane; the rough, material realm on earth (*halom cabu*) or this world (*halom nio*), and the more refined realm of the spirits (*halom huluy*), gods (*halom dewo*) or heaven (*sor'go*); and life in the forest and village. The mundane world is strongly perceived as being divided between the realm of the forests (*halom rimba*) and the outside realm of the villagers (*halom dusion, kelur'oan*), each of which is believed to have its own beliefs, gods, *adat* order and bounded notions of heaven, which the *Orang Rimba* also believe share borders. While both realms were originally said to have been created by their two higher-order gods (the senior *Or'ang Pomogong Ciak Mencipai* and junior *Or'ang Pomogong Kayu-Kayuon*) or *Tuhan Kuaso*, the *Orang Rimba* believe that the forests were the creators' first and favorite creation. Life within them is still believed to run according to the oldest customs and laws (*adat*) of the forests, and, according to the creators' wish, should remain separate from customs in the village. The *Orang Rimba* often stress that if they were to not follow *adat* in the forests, or in any way confuse or mix life in the forests with life in the village (*mer'uba adat* or *mer'uba halom*), the gods would ignore or abandon them, and life in the forests would become impossible. Even worse, many believe that confusing the forest–village realms of existence may anger the creators, moving them to destroy the world. The *Orang Rimba* believe that when they leave the forest they leave its

overall *adat* order and enter that of their junior ancestors, which falls under Allah, the prophet Mohammad and Islam. However, they always believe themselves to be looked over and judged by their own gods when leaving the forests, and must continue to follow their own customs, traditions and prohibitions if they wish to remain in good favor. Many of the *Orang Rimba*'s religious notions tend to reflect this division and to assign precedence of belief and related positive notions and values to life in the forests over life in the village.

This chapter begins with an examination of the soul or spiritual matter, its relation to spiritual and mundane beings in heaven and earth, and how these ideas are interrelated with their conceptualizations of health, the hot:cold contrast, and the Arabic or Sufi-derived term *ker'emat*, which, as with people throughout the region, is a key concept in the *Orang Rimba* religion. I explore how these beliefs are intertwined with issues of male religious power, and influence gender-related sharing rights and food prohibitions. The majority of the chapter examines some of these concepts within the structure of *Orang Rimba* cosmology and religion: heaven and earth, the lesser gods, gods of sickness and earthbound spirits. Throughout this description, I investigate how some of these ideas are based upon or associated with the forest-village, upstream-downstream, hot:cold, male:female and reason:passion contrasts, and can be manipulated to maintain and enforce prohibitions that restrict interaction with the outside world, particularly the beliefs surrounding sickness. I examine how some of these ideas are interrelated with issues of gender, age and power, and discuss similarities with other Malayic, Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples in the footnotes. This chapter concludes with a brief description of some of the basics of *Orang Rimba* shamanism atop the *balai* platform.

The Soul, Health as a '*Plant*' and Relations to the Hot:Cold Contrast

The beliefs surrounding the soul or its essence are a good starting point for understanding traditional Malay animism and the *Orang Rimba* religion (Benjamin 1979; Endicott 1970; Skeat 1900). The primary word the *Orang Rimba* use to refer to the soul and spiritual matter is *huluy*, which like the Malay term *halus* can refer to the unseen, as in spirits, as well as to the more refined aspects of life. Like the *Melayu*, the *Orang Rimba* sometimes use the term *semongot* as a synonym, although, this term is more often used more specifically in reference to the soul of rice (*semongot padi*). On earth, almost everything (animals, plants, land, stones, objects etc.) has the potential to contain a soul, spirit or some degree of spiritual matter, although only certain entities

are ever believed to contain it at any time. The *Orang Rimba* believe that the spiritual matter (*huluy*) present in all entities in heaven and earth is essentially of the same essence, but can be attributed difference due its degree of concentration in an entity, and the differentiation of its material casing, if it has one. Spiritual matter can be attributed additional characteristics, particularly when it is enclosed in a living entity, such as breath (*nafai*) and character, intellect and thoughts (*sifat*), which are more commonly associated with the human soul. A soul or spirit can also be attributed positive or negative values based on its association with the creators (*tuhan kuaso*), which is the source of all spiritual matter.

The *Orang Rimba* say that the spiritual matter (*huluy*) of *Tuhan Kuaso* is spread throughout the cosmos, but concentrates in heaven, which was their initial creation. The *huluy* that exists on earth, which is a rough material (*kasar, cabu*) version of heaven, also has its origins here. The primary points in heaven where the essence of the creators concentrate is the palace of the mother goddesses (*bidodar'i*) and in places where their venerations appear, the pole upon which the earth rests and the moon. The lesser gods in heaven also exist as *huluy*, but unlike the creators take the form of humans, share some of their characteristics, and are the deities with which humans interact. The spirits on earth ultimately originate from heaven and *Tuhan Kuaso*, but are now somewhat detached from both and are attributed negative values. While often binding themselves to living and nonliving entities such as trees or features of the landscape, some varieties (*hantu*) lead a more mobile existence free of any material entity, which tends to make them more of a threat.

Some say that each rice plant can contain an individual *huluy* or *semongot*, but it is more commonly attributed a larger collective soul (*semongot padi*) that is associated with the delineation of the field of rice. The soul of rice only becomes associated with the plants in a field after a ritual is performed for the goddesses of rice to bring its soul to the plants in the field. Some of the higher-order animals on earth, such as the elephant, tiger, scaly anteater, bearded pig and *siamong* can contain a soul, but are not believed to be born with one. Their souls are more strongly associated with the lesser gods, who sometimes use their bodies (enter or transform into) as earthly receptacles to carry their spirits to earth. Other *ker'emat* animals associated with the gods or spirits – such as the rhinoceros, tapir, turtles, greater reticulated python, helmeted hornbill, Argus and Peacock pheasants, and porcupines – are ambiguously said to contain a higher concentration of spiritual matter, but not necessarily a proper soul.

Only two animals on earth are believed to be born with souls: humans and dogs. The belief that dogs are also born with souls is not surprising given their strong affinities with man and their great importance in hunting.¹ There are specific qualities which differentiate the human soul from that of a dog and from other living entities which may contain soul matter or an earthbound spirit, such as a plant or tree. As with other Malayic peoples, the human soul can be divided according to three essences: the soul proper or vital essence (*huluy/semongot*), the breath or life force (*nyawoh* or *nafai*) and an individual's character or thoughts (*sifat*).² *Huluy* is the central and (usually) immortal feature that humans share with other spiritual beings, and is an overall term for the complete soul. It is the central part of the soul created by different categories of lesser gods, possibly with help from the *bidodar'i* goddesses and eventually transferred to the material body (*baden cabu*) on earth, which in turn is created by its human parents. The senior creator (*tuhan kuaso*) gives the child two other aspects associated with the human soul, its breath or life force (*nyawoh* or *nafai*) which animates and brings the body to life, and its individual character and thoughts (*sifat*), which is what distinguishes humans from one another and from other beings on earth. From time to time, the *huluy* or possibly an aspect of the *huluy* called the traveling soul (*huluy bejelon*) can leave the body, sometimes when startled, lured or forced out by another entity, or during dreams, when it is often said to wander. Later in life, men, and sometimes women, can learn to control the soul's traveling abilities in dreams or during shamanistic ritual atop ritual platforms called *balai*. At death, when the breath force leaves the body, the soul (*huluy*) is believed to rejoin its category of lesser god and become a veneration of a lesser deity in the realm of the souls (*halom huluy*) or heaven (*sor'go*). While dogs are also believed to originate and return to their own heaven (*hentew* or *pahalow*) located below the human heaven, their souls are only believed to contain *huluy* and a breath force, and not the human character and intellect (*sifat*) associated with the lesser gods, which is given by *Tuhan Kuaso*.

Orang Rimba conceptualizations of health relate to the fragile relationship between the soul (*huluy*) and its mundane container on earth, the body. While the soul holds the potential to be eternal, the body and to some extent the soul are vulnerable to material and spiritual elements on earth, and death, in a relationship that is conceptualized through botanic metaphor in the form of a plant or flower. Good health is often said to be blossoming or flowering (*bungohon*), while different physical and spiritual entities can 'heat' both causing sickness (*penyakit, cenengo*), which can lead to the 'wilting' or 'withering away' (*layu*) of the body and soul.³ Negative influences to

one's health can be caused by physical or humoral degrees of heat, from the sun, different varieties of hot foods, sickness, black magic or spirit invasion. When the body or soul becomes too hot it can wilt or decay, causing the *huluy* or soul proper to flee and eventually lead to the release of the breath/life force (*nyawoh, nafai*), which is synonymous with death. This analogy can be applied to other living entities that house a spirit, such as animals and plants (trees and rice), as well as non-living objects that are believed to contain concentrated spiritual matter. It may also relate to places where the manipulation of spiritual matter takes place. Open places in the landscape are believed to be 'hot' and unhealthy, while old growth forests (*rimba godong*) are often referred to as 'flowering' or blooming (*rimba bungahon*). They are often said to be 'cool', pure and healthy, and are good places to live, give birth, open a garden or perform shamanistic ritual.

The Term *Ker'emat*, its Relation to Spirit Matter and Gender-related Sharing Rights and Food Prohibitions

The Arabic-derived *ker'emat* is a closely related concept intertwined with the beliefs surrounding the soul, gods, spirits and male religious power. As in its traditional usage among the Peninsular Malay, *ker'emat* can mean 'sanctity', the 'quality of being holy', 'sacred' or 'godliness' (Skeat 1900:673). Following Endicott, I would add to this an amoral power, the measure of which depends on a strong association with the gods or spirits on earth, or a higher concentration of spiritual matter (*huluy*) that may reside in an entity (Endicott 1970:93). The *Orang Rimba* believe that the creators (*Tuhan Kuaso*) are the ultimate representation of *ker'emat*, with a descending association with the *bidodar'i* goddesses, the lesser gods in heaven and the earthbound spirits. Similar to the more traditional Malay usage, the *Orang Rimba* can use the term adjectivally, in relation to the gods in heaven, earthbound spirits, humans, animals, plants, features in the landscape and objects (Skeat 1900:673). These notions can also be interrelated with animals forbidden to be captured or consumed, gender-related food prohibitions, and gender-related rights surrounding the distribution of *ker'emat* animals.

Animals of spiritual significance are often considered *ker'emat*, particularly those associated with the lesser gods or earthbound spirits. Some *ker'emat* animals that are associated with the gods are allowed to be captured and consumed. However, given the strong association with *adat* values, defense and healing, strong prohibitions apply to hunting tigers, scaly anteaters, elephants, and the *siamong* gibbon. Because of their strong association with shamanistic ritual, the *ker'emat* helmeted hornbill (*bur'ung*

geding, *Buceros vigil*) is strongly forbidden to be disturbed. It is also prohibited to harm a *ker'emat* hawk called the *kilik dar'i*, which is related to the functioning of the sun. A type of *ker'emat* tree shrew (*buyutu*) associated with the spirit of *sialong* honey trees is not allowed to be captured, and similar to other Malayic peoples all *ker'emat* white or albino animals are believed to be emanations or signs from the gods and are forbidden as well (Winstedt 1924:271). The *ker'emat* Great Argus and Peacock pheasants are associated with the ritual related to the fruit season and are only allowed to be captured outside of the season of flowers and fruit.

Table 4.1 *Ker'emat* Animals Forbidden to Hunt

Animal	Local name	Latin Classification	Associated God
Asian Elephant	<i>gejoh</i>	<i>Elephas maximus</i>	god of elephants (<i>or'ang de gejoh</i>)
Sumatran Tiger	<i>mer'ego</i>	<i>Pantera tigris</i>	tiger god (<i>mato mer'ego</i>)
Scaly anteater/ Pangolin	<i>tenggiling</i>	<i>Manis javanica</i>	god of scaly anteaters (<i>or'ang de tenggiling</i>)
<i>Siamong</i> gibbon	<i>siamong</i>	<i>Symphalangus syndactylus</i>	the god of the <i>siamong</i> (<i>dewo siamong</i> or <i>siamong putih</i>)
Helmeted hornbill	<i>bur'ung gedung</i>	<i>Buceros vigil</i>	shaman's transportation to heaven
Red hawk	<i>kilik dar'i</i>	Unknown	related to the functioning of the sun
Other Animals		Reason	
Rare white animals or albino's		<i>ker'emat</i> , signs from the gods	
<i>Buyuto</i> tree shrew		emanation of the spirit of the <i>sialong</i>	
All other primate species		not <i>ker'emat</i> , but too closely resemble humans	

Other varieties of *ker'emat* animals are allowed to be captured and consumed, and more importantly set some of the gender-related rules pertaining to the distribution of game. Reflecting aspects of gender, power and religion, game animals are divided into two classifications, the 'game of the kin/women' (*lau'wuk bewar'is*) and the 'game of the gods' (*lau'wuk betuhan*). A wife normally has the right to manage all that her husband procures and vice versa, and in theory, this should include all game (*lau'wuk, menso*), which is the most socially significant item a person can share. However, in practice, women are actually only entitled to distribute animals classified as the game of the kin, which by any means are the most common and frequently caught game animals.

Table 4.2 The Game of the Kin/Big Game (*Lau'wuk bewar'is/ godong*)

Common wild pig (<i>bebi</i>)	Monitor lizards (<i>biowak</i>)
Sambhur deer (<i>r'uso</i>)	Jungle cat (<i>kucing hutan</i>)
Red barking deer (<i>kijang</i>)	Lesser reticulated python (<i>ulo pandok</i>) and other snakes
Lesser mouse deer (<i>kancil</i>)	Non- <i>ker'emat</i> varieties of game fowl, birds, bats
Greater mouse deer (<i>napu</i>)	Fish (<i>ikan</i>)
Malaysian sun bear (<i>bur'uwong</i>)	Other non- <i>ker'emat</i> animals

In contrast to economic pursuits that lie within the structured domain of ritual practice (such as the swidden field), most economic pursuits in the forests such as hunting, fishing, gathering forest products and digging for wild yams are believed to lie largely within the realm of chance. In addition to one's individual skill, success in these pursuits is believed to be dependent upon searching for and coming upon *res'ki* (derived from the Arabic *rezeki*) or 'luck', blessings and 'good fortune' from the lesser gods, ancestors and spirits.⁴ Because of the strong association between males, the domain of religion and their pursuit of *re'ski*, husbands are entitled to manage and distribute the meat of all *ker'emat* animals that fall into the classification of game of the gods (*lau'wuk betuhan*), which tends to make the sharing of game a little more gender-neutral. Some of the religious beliefs surrounding the *ker'emat* game animals included in the chart below will be discussed throughout the thesis.

Table 4.3 The Game of the Gods (*Lau'wuk betuhan*)⁵

Animal	Associated God or Spirit
Rhinoceros (<i>bedok</i>)	God of the Pouch (<i>or'ang de kandong</i>)
Malaysian tapir (<i>tonuk</i>)	God of the Pouch (<i>or'ang de kandong</i>)
Specific types of turtles (<i>labi</i>)	God of the Burrow (<i>or'ang de gaung</i>)
Bearded pig (<i>nangoi</i>)	God of Bearded Pigs (<i>or'ang de nangoi</i>)
Argus pheasant (<i>kuaao</i>)	God of Fruits (<i>or'ang de buah</i>)
Peacock pheasant (<i>muao</i>)	God of Fruits (<i>or'ang de buah</i>)
Crocodile (<i>kuya/ buayo aik</i>)	God of the Riverhead (<i>or'ang de mato aik</i>)
Greater reticulated python (<i>ulo sawo</i>)	<i>Ker'emat</i> animal associated with earthbound spirits
Different varieties of porcupine (<i>landok, titil bonor, kelumbi</i>)	<i>Ker'emat</i> animal – association unknown? Quills <i>layu</i> -charged

A rather anomalous *ker'emat* animal in this category that is not associated with a category of lesser god or earthbound spirit is the porcupine. The quills of the porcupine (*landok*) are believed to be charged with a concentrated essence, which can wilt away (*layu*) plant and animal matter, and before it is consumed the hunter must perform a series of rituals to discharge this essence from its body. The interior organs of game animals (the blood, bile/gall *sompudu/empudu*, liver, heart, if the animal is not a pig⁶) are believed to have medicinal value and are always handed over to a camp elder, who is usually a shaman or healer.⁷ Other parts of animals such as the skin of reptiles, the feathers (*buluh*) and spurs (*taji*) of *ker'emat* pheasants and hornbills are also handed over to elders for healing purposes, while the *layu*-charged quills of porcupines are often kept as magical objects (*pelet* or *jimat*).

While most *ker'emat* game animals are allowed to be consumed by both genders, some animals that are associated with stamina such as rats (*tikuy*), squirrels

(*posow*), *ker'emat* tree shrews (*tupoi*), civets (*musang*) and river otter (*cinciher*) are strongly forbidden (*pantongon*) to be eaten by females. These animals, along with some of the fruits, honey and bee larvae, sometimes fall into *ker'emat* classifications, but are more generally said to increase one's stamina and libido. This may relate to a higher concentration of spirit matter (*huluy*) residing within them, particularly the sexual organs of the males or simply a different essence, which leads to an association with the animal's speed.⁸ For men, these foods are safe when eaten in moderation. Whenever indulged in, they can 'heat' up the body and lead to sickness or insanity. They are always believed to be more dangerous to women's health, particularly their fertility. Because women are believed to have greater passions (*nafsu*) and less control over their reason or intellect (*akal*), they can also stimulate their libido, leading to uncontrollable sexual and incestuous urges, and can negatively affect their mental state, leading to insanity. These cases are often related to issues of gender and power and are sometimes intertwined with gender-related sharing rights.

Certain trees and plants associated with the lesser gods or earthbound spirits are considered *ker'emat*, such as wild palms, rattan, some wild fruit trees and honey trees. Trees that are associated with the ritual surrounding birth are considered *ker'emat*, such as the *mentubung* tree, where the placenta is buried and is associated with the newborn's spiritual sibling. *Sengor'i* trees are also believed to be *ker'emat*. Its bark is pounded into a paste and smeared onto the newborn's head after birth. Wood from these trees is also used to construct the *lantak* pegs used for climbing honey trees and has a reputation for not cracking or splitting. After performing this ritual with the newborn, similar characteristics are believed to be transferred to the baby's head. The *ker'emat aro* tree (*ficus sp.*) is a place where the (*ker'emat*) helmeted hornbill (*bur'ung gedung*) commonly builds its nest, feeds on its figs, and its fanned buttresses a place where sacred objects are stored. After a shaman dies, his sacred cloth is hung in its branches, and the tree strongly associated with its spirit.⁹ All *ker'emat* trees are strongly forbidden to be disturbed, and depending on the tree, the fines for felling or killing them can wind their way into the four above and below of the trunk law. Places in the landscape can be considered *ker'emat*, whenever associated with the gods, powerful ancestors or earthbound spirits. Sacred heirlooms (daggers, *piagam*, ceramic pottery, brass bowls or plates) handed down from the ancestors are considered *ker'emat*, as are sacred objects used during shamanistic ritual. They say that some of these magically charged objects were hidden by their ancestors in the distant past, and were discovered later in the forests through signs and revelations in dreams. The sacredness and purity of these

objects can be polluted when touched by those who are impure or travel downstream, and can be diffused of their power when exposed to the light of the sun. Sacred heirlooms and objects are stored in the ‘cool’ and shaded fanned buttresses of *ker’emat aro* trees, which in turn maintains their purity and helps to keep them *ker’emat*. Wooden *balai* platforms built for shamanistic activity are *ker’emat*, particularly the larger platforms built for marriage ceremonies during the annual season of fruits, which are believed to possess a soul. Finally, shamans can be *ker’emat*, the quantity or quality of which depends upon their knowledge (*ilemu*) and power (*sakti*).¹⁰

Shamanism: Knowledge, Sacredness and Power

Orang Rimba shamans are referred to as *dukon*, or those who have the ability to mediate and interact with the lesser gods and spirits, conduct seasonal rituals and healing ceremonies. In contrast to the surrounding *Melayu*, *Orang Rimba* shamans are not formally divided according to rigid specialties such as magician, spirit intermediary or healer, and rarely are these abilities said to be inherited.¹¹ Upon entering adulthood at marriage, all men are expected to begin learning how to interact and manipulate relationships with the lesser gods in heaven, and the spirits on earth, and become shamans (*dukon*) to some extent. Similar to the realm of *adat* law, learning how to manipulate the religious aspects of life is one of the ways in which adult men can acquire rights to resources, power, status and prestige, and to some extent is perceived to be the responsibility of a man to his wife and family. That said, some shamans are considered more sacred and powerful than others. There is usually only a single, or several big shamans (*dukon godong*) along any river region who have the special abilities required to perform critical healing ceremonies and the ritual surrounding the annual fruiting season. More generally, the abilities and power of a shaman are closely interrelated with gender and power, and in most cases, determined by adulthood, one’s age and experience in religious matters.

As with law, matters of religion lie strongly within the domain of adult males. Usually the men begin to establish more fluent relationships with the gods after marriage. Because of their inability to control their passions (*nafsu*), and thus their inner winds, women usually, do not become shaman proper, at least until later in life after reaching menopause. Many pre-menopause adult women do play minor roles in shamanistic ritual, sometimes as a *beyu*, who interprets the shaman’s interactions with the spirit world during ritual, or as a midwife (*bidan*), to assist with some of the ritual surrounding childbirth. Later in life, some elder women do begin to develop shamanistic

abilities, and some become big shamans.¹² A shaman's ability depends upon the search and accumulation of knowledge (*ilemu*), which together with other factors can increase his sacredness (*ker'emat*) and power (*sakti*).¹³ A shaman's sacredness and power ultimately depend upon developing relationships with the lesser gods, who can bestow knowledge, luck and blessings, visions of the future, and can be appealed to influence the weather, enhance success in subsistence pursuits, health, healing, fertility, obtain knowledge in fighting or defense, or cancel accumulated sin.

The first kind of knowledge (*ilemu*) that most begin learning at an early age and continue to acquire throughout their lives is magical incantations. *Orang Rimba* magic can be divided into two broad categories, community magic (*bopato*, Malay *pepatah*), and individual or personal magic (*jempi*, Sanskrit derived). *Bopato* is often described as traditional knowledge handed down from their ancestors, which can be used in community-related matters ranging from the weather, seasonal ritual, hunting, collecting honey (*tomboi*), healing, birth and marriage.¹⁴ *Jempi* on the other hand, is individual magic which can be used for personal gain, a good deal of which is obtained from the village.¹⁵ In contrast to *bopato*, *jempi* is often held in a secretive manner and is acquired through purchase. Some *jempi* are self-oriented and function to enhance one's health, strength (*ilemu peneripuk*) or libido, while other forms can influence the thoughts, emotions or actions of others; to make someone fall in love (*ilemu cinta*), hate (*ilemu pemenci*), ward off the suitor of a man or women (*sentung pelalow*), make someone astonished (*ilemu pencengang*), silent (*pembungkam*) or mindless while arguing a legal case (*setunggang menang*) or to influence a person's thoughts and opinions (*silip mato*). More dangerous varieties can make someone submit (*ilemu penunduk*), gasp for air (*pancuk bengkoy/angina*), die in an accident (*pancung manyo*), fall from a honey tree (*lantak gambar*) or die of poisoning (*adum*). When influencing another's actions, *jempi* tend to merge into the realm of black magic (*ilemu hitom*), which is regarded as dangerous, offending to the gods and can lead to a record of sin and bad luck. Both are believed to work primarily through the power embedded in their words, which contain the knowledge or words of the ancestors, and not through an association with the individual's inner personal power (Kang 2003). Some of the nuts and bolts of magic are described in a separate chapter in the appendix, in the context of the magical songs (*tomboi*) used to collect honey.

The recitation of magic is often followed by the ritual pouring of water over different varieties of ritual leaves, ashes or other objects in order to achieve an effect. In the case of *jempi*, the recitation of magical spells is often combined with sympathetic

magic, usually in the form of the hair, fingernails or an object associated with a person, while some *jempi* are recited over small objects (*pelet*, *jimat*) which can affect a person through contact (Frazer 1914). There are a number of ways that a person can block black magic, which often serve the dual purpose of preventing attacks from the gods of sickness and earthbound spirits. Ritual conducted while implanting the central post of the home is said to protect a family from some of these threats, as do necklaces strung with the seeds from the fruit of the *sebalik sumpa* ('blocking or returning the curse') tree, which may also include a piece of iron. According to Benjamin, the use of spells and magical substances for the purpose of 'soul-fixing' is much more common among Malayic peoples and less important in the traditional religion of some Austro-Asiatic peoples (Benjamin 1979:17).

Another way that knowledge (*ilemu*) can be acquired is through signs and interactions with the lesser gods in dreams. The *Orang Rimba* divide dreams according to three different categories; flowery dreams (*bunga bunga tidur*), which are the most frequent dreams that have no inherent meaning; dreams where meaningful signs are encountered (*tando tidur*); and dream travel (*bemimpi jelon*), when a person's traveling soul (*haluy bejelon*) leaves the body and travels. The *Orang Rimba* have a general system of community knowledge surrounding the recurring signs and symbols in dreams, which are always interpreted upon waking and can be a lively topic of discussion with others. Signs in dreams can be interpreted to find a particular animal in a specific location in the forests, foretell or find a cure for sickness, avoid danger, accidents, the ill intent of others or death.¹⁶ A person can also receive signs from the gods outside of dreams, in the forests, usually in the form of *ker'emat* animals, albinos, or birds, which can be interpreted within the particular context in which they are encountered. Paying attention to signs in dreams is an important means to interpret and to some extent control one's fortune or fate (*nasib*). It is also an important part of growing up and coming of age.

Newborn babies are often said to have a more open connection to the lesser gods from which their souls descend, but are believed to lose this connection around the age of one or two, as their body and soul adapts to, and is polluted by life on earth. As one enters adolescence, one begins to re-establish connection with the gods through signs and sometimes brief encounters with the lesser gods in dreams. When a person dreams, their travelling soul is often said to wander outside the body and can visit faraway places – and when a person has led a life that is pure can even visit the gods in heaven. An adolescent's encounters with the lesser gods in dreams are not interactive. Until a

person has gone through ritual ceremonies to purify or cleanse the body and soul during a religious marriage ceremony, the gods never acknowledge their presence and are said to purposely ignore them.¹⁷ It is only after becoming an ‘adult’ that a person is able to begin to engage in two-way interactions with the gods in dreams, and later through a state of trance. This can only occur if they also follow everyday religious taboos to maintain the purity of the body, which include abstinence from soap, maintaining prohibitions on eating village domesticates, restricting interactions with outsiders, not confusing the forest and village realms of life, and more generally by maintaining the order and balance of *adat* in the forests. Eventually, after years of leading a proper religious life, a man begins to learn how to control the movement of his travelling soul in dreams (*mimpi bejelon*) and can encounter, interact and develop relationships with the lesser gods to acquire knowledge and increase his sacred nature and individual power. Later in life, many acquire a sacred wooden dream pillow, which they say can facilitate these abilities.¹⁸

The most important knowledge a person can acquire are prayer songs (*dekir*, Arabic or Sufi derived¹⁹) consisting of the most sacred words of the ancestors, which are used to communicate with the gods during ritual atop wooden platforms called *balai*. Prayer songs provide the medium and framework for interactions with the lesser gods during structured ritual performances related to the seasons and healing ceremonies. This knowledge can be learned by observing other shaman during ritual performance. However, it is more commonly obtained through revelations revealed through dream travels, particularly from their *aku-on* (my-own), a person’s primary familiar spirit and the birth deity or category of lesser god from which they descend.²⁰ Throughout life, a person can use the relationship with their *aku-on* to develop relationships and acquire knowledge from other categories of gods.

The division of shamanistic duties and the performance of ritual is largely based on adulthood, age, experience, and the shaman’s knowledge, sacredness and power. By adolescence, most will have learned a great deal of community magic (*bopato*) and will have begun to collect an arsenal of personal magic (*jempi*). After marriage most males will begin to interact with the gods in dreams or in trance to receive fortune and luck (*res’ki*) in everyday subsistence pursuits in the forests, and most middle-aged men are able to perform the rituals related to swidden farming. As men become elders, most will begin to devote more time to religion, and have acquired the ability to perform complicated rituals. However, it is only the most senior or big shamans (*dukon godong*) who have the ability to perform critical healing ceremonies, ritual to manage the

seasons, and lead purification and invocation rituals during *balai* wedding ceremonies held during the annual season of fruits.

In contrast to the average shaman, a big shaman is believed to be born with his special abilities, which can only be realized if nurtured and if he lives a life that is pure. Big shamans are the most senior and respected religious authorities along a river region and in the realm of religion have a standing on par with the *temanggung*. Unlike the *temanggung*, the sacredness and power of a big shaman depends on his maintaining absolute separation with the outside world, and by strictly maintaining the purity of his body by following cultural and ethnic boundary prohibitions. Together with senior shamans and camp headmen, it is also the big shaman's duty to ensure that others follow *adat* prohibitions in order to ensure the health and fortune of the group and the harmony and balance of *adat* in the forests. Big shamans are crucial to instilling a sense of fear and guilt whenever members of the group diverge from these rules. According to *Orang Rimba* belief, the gods are repulsed by humans who wash their bodies with soap, eat village domesticates, spend time outside the forests and confuse the forest and village realms of existence (*me'uba adat/halom rimba*). If the gods smell soap on either an *Orang Rimba* or outsider, they are said to ignore the larger community, run away (*dewo akan lar'i*) and abandon them, or wreak havoc by causing bad luck, accidents or disaster. If a person's actions are believed to result in misfortune in the community, senior shamans and elders are often the first ones to stir up a fuss in the community, which can include threats, sometimes of banishment, or a community hearing and fine. In more serious cases, senior shamans may install a sense of urgent fear in the community by playing upon their conceptions of *kiamat*, the destruction of the world by the creator.

Before providing a brief overview of *Orang Rimba* shamanism atop the *balai*, it may be useful to first examine some of these concepts within the context of their cosmology, the lesser gods, and the spirits of the earth.

***Orang Rimba* Cosmology: The Rough Earth and the Refined Heaven**

As with the Malay, the *Orang Rimba* believe the earth (*bumi*) rests atop an earth pole (*tiang bumi halom*) that resembles a gigantic tree trunk (Skeat 1900:3). It is said to be occupied by an emanation of the senior creator (*Or'ang Pomogong Ciq Mencipai*) called the god of the earth pole (*or'ang bipiar'oko tiang halom*). Periodically, he is said to awaken and shake the pole, causing earthquakes (*gempu*), in order to see if the trees, plants, animals and people are still around and if the overall order (*adat*) of the forests is

being maintained. Deep within the earth is a chaotic forest underworld called the *tanoh kapir* (Arabic *kafir*, 'pagan or infidel'), 'the land of the pagans'. This realm is the home of a number of polluted anthropomorphic animals, mainly dogs, called the *or'ang kafir*. Like people, they are said to live in homes and villages and have the ability to speak in an unknown language. This place is often referred to as a realm without *adat*, and is sometimes used as an example for inappropriate cross-gender relations, those which are too close, cross generation levels and are considered incestuous. While some say that distant ancestors may have had a means to communicate with the *or'ang kafir*, these days their realm is believed to be sealed off from the rest of the cosmos, the gods, the spirits and man. By any means, this realm is not associated with hell (*ner'ako api*) or purgatory (*hentew*), both of which are believed to be located in the sky.

Metaphorically, the forests are referred to as the 'roots' or 'trunk' of the world (*pangkol bumi halom*), the boundaries of which are generally delineated by the contours of the forests. Ontologically, it is perceived as a closed, safe, 'cool' and healthy environment, which one exits by stepping out (*tur'un der'i rimba*), in which case they leave its overall *adat* order under the tutelage of the forest gods and enter that of their junior ancestors in the village, which is under the tutelage of Allah, Mohammad and Islam. In contrast to the forests, the downstream village is perceived as open, bright, 'hot', uncomfortable and unhealthy. Because its rivers are frequented by the gods of sickness, it is also believed to be dangerous. Like humans, certain *ker'emmat* trees and plants associated with the gods or spirits are believed to be sensitive to heat and sunlight, which can cause them to wilt away and die whenever forests are cleared. Below the forests, the earth (*tanoh*) is held together by a symbiotic network of roots from the forests trees and plants, which are also believed to be sensitive to 'heat' from boiling water. When forests are cleared on a large scale they say the rains can cause the earth to break apart, causing flooding. The forest and village are more fluently connected through the rivers, which in turn are ascribed similar characteristics and values. With their source in the forests, the upstream portions of the rivers are perceived to be clean, cool and healthy, while the downstream portions are perceived to be dirty, impure, unhealthy and traveled by the gods of sickness.

The *Orang Rimba's* broader conceptions of the world outside the forests are generally limited to vague notions of Jambi and its neighboring provinces, and are based upon some of the larger rivers and key features in the environment such as mountains. Larger rivers and bodies of water are referred to as *lout*, which can be defined as sea or ocean, rather than *sungoi*, the common term for river. The largest river in the province,

the *Batanghari*, is often referred to as the big river (*lout godong*), which is rightly said to have its source in the mountains of Minangkabau, where god originally created the first forests, and flows downstream towards the eastern horizon (*pir'imping halom*). After merging with other rivers, and passing the kingdom of Jambi (*ker'ajohon Jambi*), the big river is said to empty into an even larger endless body of water, at the place where the sky meets the earth (*bumi betemu langit*). This last endless body of water is referred to as the drunken sea (*lout mabuk*), the taste of which is said to make one sick, dizzy or drunk.²¹ When the drunken sea is reached, conceptions of the cosmos tend to transition into the realm of the souls or gods, which winds its way up along the dome-like firmament of the sky.

Similar to other Malayic peoples, the firmament in the sky is believed to take the dome-like shape of an umbrella (*payung*), which falls to the earth along the horizons (Skeat 1900:3; Kang 2002:109). The four corners of the firmament are supported by an apparatus that has the same name as the triggering mechanism (*pesenting*) used in their traps and snares. This results in an unstable firmament, always at risk of falling or crashing into the earth if it is disturbed. Below the firmament in the sky (*langit*), the sun (*matoar'i*) and moon (*bulan*) are believed to be attached to opposite ends of a gigantic loop of rattan (*kantow*) with its movement monitored by the god of the sky (*or'ang de langit*), who some say is an emanation of the senior creator. This god lives near a gigantic *mer'anti* tree on the moon, which can be seen from earth as its spots. As with Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples on the Peninsula, the moon is positively associated with coolness, health and fertility (Endicott 1979). The moon is said to settle or rest under the palace of the *bidodar'i* goddesses, who are believed to create and/or look over the newly created human souls. The sun, on the other hand, is negatively associated with the destructive forces of 'heat', discomfort and sickness. It is believed to be powered by a spiritual version of a hawk (*kilik dar'i*), which continuously flies around its surface to make it hot and give off light. In addition to its negative associations with health, religious purity, and fertility, the sun is said to settle under and fuel the fires of hell (*ner'ako api*), and at times, can be associated with similar values.

The *Orang Rimba* have few conceptions of the stars (*binatang*), which are generally hard to see from the forests, other than that they are located above the sun and moon, and below the firmament.²² Clouds (*selet*) are believed to accumulate from fire and smoke (*hasop*) on earth, which make the world 'hot', uncomfortable and unhealthy. Rain is believed to fall from a river in heaven located above the firmament in the sky, which in turn 'cools' and purifies the earth, and washes away remnants of sickness.

Similar to other Malayic peoples, the *Orang Rimba* believe that rainbows (*ulo danu*) are spiritual snakes, which descend to the earth from the downstream portion of the river in heaven in order to feed on small dogs and unborn babies (Skeat 1900:14; Evans 1937). Thunder (*gu'woh*) and lightning (*kenyoh*) are generally seen as a sign of impending rain and stormy weather, which does cause some anxiety to those in forest camps given the possibility of falling trees. When thunder or lightning occurs during the day, some say that this is caused by the senior creator throwing stones to the earth from the moon, whenever angered by humans for upsetting the harmony or balance of *adat* in the forests.

The *Orang Rimba* say that the realm of the souls (*halom huluy*) or gods (*halom dewo*) is located above the firmament in the sky. This realm can more generally be referred to as *sor'go* (Sanskrit; *svarga*), meaning heaven, or more specifically by the names of the villages of the lesser gods (*ujion, pe'intion, pahalow, etc.*) who live there. The realm of the gods is said to be a more perfect reflection (*tir'u-on*) of the mundane world in the forests (*halom cabu* or *kasar*), or rather the spiritual version upon which the world is based, plucked or pulled (*cabu*). Like the earth, it is said to be bisected by a river which has its upstream source in a hilly region in the west and flows downstream through flat plains, before flowing down or falling off the firmament at the eastern horizons. Along and around this river are the villages of different categories of lesser gods that fall under *Tuhan Kuaso*. These gods have the appearance, characteristics and emotions of humans, and live in villages or alone along the upstream and downstream portions of this river. Some manage the structural features of the world, while others are associated with and manage spiritual versions of key resources found in the forests. Some are associated with different facets of knowledge related to health, fighting and defense.

The *Bidodar'i*, the Creation of Human Souls and *Aku-on* Familiar Spirits

The lesser gods also fall under the mother goddesses (*bidodar'i*), who in turn are more strongly associated with the creator's. The most dominating and sacred feature in the landscape of heaven is a large multi-roomed palace that sits atop a great hill in the upstream portion of heaven called *bidodar'i*.²³ This shangri-la palace of purity and bliss reflects the names of the numerous beautiful nymphs or mother goddesses (the *bidodar'i*) who live here. The *bidodar'i* are strongly associated with fertility and the interrelated spiritual cycle of human life on heaven and earth. Their main task appears

to be looking over and possibly creating the souls or 'soul babies' of humans, before they are transferred to material bodies on earth by a senior shaman.

There are a number of different ideas as to how human souls are created, all tending to hover around a central theme but differing as to the roles of the lesser gods, the *bidodar'i*, *Tuhan Kuaso*, and shamans themselves. According to many, it is the lesser gods who create the souls of humans; a male god places a flower in the hair bun of his wife, which eventually transforms into a soul baby that tends to resemble a toddler. After some time, the lesser gods, the *bidodar'i* or the creator takes the toddler to an enclosure near the palace of the *bidodar'i* called the 'playground for children' (*gelanggang anak ke anak*), where the soul babies spend a joyous time being looked over by the *bidodar'i* mother goddesses. Within the enclosure, each child has its own rooms or sleeping space, with the different floor levels in their rooms resembling the floor levels and gender spaces found in *Orang Rimba* huts. There is a lower level (*kedelomon* 'depth' as in roots) for the girls and a higher level (*ker'agongon tinggi*, 'high frame') for the boys.

Others explain that it may be the senior creator who makes the *bidodar'i* conceive by placing a flower in their hair bun, the type of flower used determining an association with a category of lesser god, the person's birth deity or *aku-on* familiar spirit, and which god village the soul will return to after death. Sandbukt writes of different variations to the theme, which include the *bidodar'i* self-conceiving, and/or the traveling souls of shamans doing the work of placing flowers in their hair buns (Sandbukt 1984:92).²⁴ It may be that the lesser gods create the average person, while the creator and the *bidodar'i* work in tandem to create the souls of big shamans (*dukon godong*), who after death are the only ones able to return to palace and become part of the primary essence of *Tuhan Kuaso*. Whatever the case, this unique relationship does seem to imply that humans are veneration of the lesser gods, the lesser gods are in some way the ancestors, and that humans will eventually join them in the heavenly pantheon of gods after death. These ideas are rarely talked about by the *Orang Rimba*, who as mortals could offend the gods by making such comparisons.

The soul babies are said to stay in the *gelanggang* until a shaman's traveling soul makes the journey to heaven to receive the soul of the baby around six or seven months into a pregnancy. The *Orang Rimba* say that *Tuhan kuaso* chooses which soul baby is given to a human based on whether it will match with the individual's character and intellect (*sifat*), which he gives to its material body. Once this is decided, he allows the *bidodar'i* to hand over the soul baby from the *gelanggang* to a shaman, which is then

taken to earth in a sacred white sheet of cloth (*toluk koin*), and through ritual transferred to the mother's womb. Shortly before birth, additional ritual is performed by a shaman to return to heaven, and receive the child's name from its category of lesser god (see section on birth and death in appendix).

During life, men have a special connection with their birth deity, which is that of a guardian deity, familiar spirit or as the *Orang Rimba* call them, their *aku-on* ('my own'). For men, these relationships are usually quite fluent, and for women, who less commonly develop their religious abilities is less so. This relationship can be manipulated to receive good fortune in the realm of their *aku-on*'s field of knowledge or power, and to form relationships and alliances with other gods in heaven or manipulate relationships with the spirits on earth. If a person has lived a life that is just, at death, it is believed that he can join the village of their *aku-on* deity, or as some say, spend time living in the different god villages until they find one they like. Only big shamans (*dukon godong*) and those who have led the purest lives can enter the palace of the *bidodar'i* and live with the mother goddesses, and possibly, become part of the essence of *Tuhan Kuaso*.

The Boundaries of Heaven, *Kiamat*, and the River in the Sky

As is the case with their perceptions of the forests and villages on earth, the *Orang Rimba* heaven is strongly delineated according to distinct boundaries, edges (*bir'ay halom*) and corners (*sudut*) that mark their heaven from the heaven of the village, which it is believed to share borders. Guardian deities are stationed along its edges (*or'ang de bir'ay*) to maintain the integrity of their heaven, while the gods of the corners (*or'ang de sudut*) look over and guard the supportive apparatus (*pesenting*) that maintains the firmament in place, and prevents the sky from crashing into and destroying the earth. These ideas are associated with beliefs surrounding the god of the earth pole, earthquakes and *kiamat*, the destruction of the world by the creator.

Most of the time the god of the earth pole is said to be asleep, but from time to time he awakens and shakes the pole causing earthquakes, in order to see if the forests are still intact and if the harmony and balance of life (*keselematon*) has been maintained. If he finds that the trees, plants and animals are in a state of harmony, he goes back to sleep. However, if he believes that the balance of life has been disrupted, he becomes angry and continues to shake the pole. This holds the potential to cause the supporting apparatus (*pesenting*) holding the firmament in place to collapse, causing the sky to crash into and destroy the earth, and returning the world to its original state of an

endless sea. The ideas surrounding *kiamat* are sometimes manipulated by senior or big shamans to create a sense of fear in confusing or mixing the forest-village realms of existence (*mer'uba halom*) and disturbing the *adat* order (*mer'uba adat*) and balance and harmony (*keselematon*) in the forests. In the past, the beliefs surrounding *kiamat* were more commonly applied to instances where major *adat* violations occurred or when someone in the community confused or disturbed relations with the outside world.²⁵ These days, they are more commonly applied to fit the context of deforestation and logging.

Another key feature in the landscape of heaven is a hole or 'door' in the firmament in the sky (*pintu langit*) located somewhere around the midstream portion of the river, or as the *Orang Rimba* might say, directly above one's head. This sky door is an opening through which the gods can descend to the forests in spirit form, and likewise is an entry point through which the traveling souls (*huluy bejelon*) of shamans can enter heaven by hitching a ride on the spirit of the helmeted hornbill (*bur'ung geding*). The sky door is guarded by the meeting place deity (*or'ang de kar'andoqhon*), who greets those who are welcome and prevents those who are not. This god only allows entry to the souls of shamans who are sacred and pure (followed prohibitions on soap, food and restricted interactions with outsiders) and are accompanied by an intermediary spirit, which is often the tiger god or one's *aku-on* familiar spirit.

In spite of these bounded notions of heaven, the world of the gods is believed to be connected with the earth through the flow of the rivers. The river in heaven is said to flow downstream along the domelike firmament towards the eastern horizons, where it drops off the firmament and crashes into the drunken sea at a location referred to as the twirling sea (*lout bekililing*). In *Orang Rimba* cosmology, this large endless body of water separates the heavens from the downstream villages and upstream forests on earth. It represents a bridge of sorts or an entrance point by which some of the gods can make their way into this world, in either spirit form, in boats or canoes, and for some deities, by acquiring or transforming into an earthly body (*baden cabu*) or animal of their association.

Characteristics of the Lesser Gods

The lesser gods are generally referred to by the Sanskrit *behaylo* or *dewo* and more specifically by their specific category of god following the pre-term *or'ang*, meaning person.²⁶ The lesser gods resemble humans, in pure soul or spirit form (*huluy*), and tend to have similar characteristics, traits, emotions and desires. Their different categories or

'villages' are arranged according to whether they live along the upstream or downstream portions of the river in heaven. Upstream deities tend to be associated with some of the characteristics of upstream life in the forests (purity, health, fruits, honey, tuberous swidden plants, large game) while downstream gods tend to be associated with aspects of downstream life in the village (impurities, Islam, trade, rice, sickness). Some of the gods are responsible for the weather and the migrations of honeybees and bearded pigs, while others manage the soul or spiritual versions of key resources which have mundane counterparts on earth. Many are strongly associated with specific types of knowledge (*ilemu*) and power (*sakti*) or with bestowing luck and fortune (*res'ki*) to humans in matters related to subsistence, health and healing or fighting and defense.

All the gods are arranged according to gender. Some categories have both men and women in their god villages, while the gender of lone gods tends to reflect the gender with which their particular knowledge or resource is most strongly associated on earth. The lone goddess of wild yams is female, since females dig for yams, while reflecting regional beliefs, the village of the goddesses of rice consists entirely of goddesses. Aspects of gender are important towards understanding the potential categories, which men or women can have as their birth deity or *aku-on*, and in the case of fruit, the gender of the individual gods and goddesses and their association with particular varieties of fruit in the forests. These beliefs can sometimes influence gender-related food prohibitions and set the tone for gender-related sharing rights.

Male gods do not wear rough, earthly loincloths, nor do female goddesses wear shabby, earthly sarongs, which is often how the *Orang Rimba* describe their clothing (*koin cabu/kasar*) in the forests. However, this was the way the first ancestors clothed themselves, and because of this and for pragmatic reasons, many elders and purists believe that this is the way forest people should continue to dress. The *Orang Rimba* say that their gods wear the fine cloth of kings and queens. Male gods are said to wear a fine *sarong* wrapped around their waist (*bopot pingang*), a cloth turban upon their head (*tokulut*), a scarf that hangs around the neck and falls onto the chest (*bopot leher*), and to carry a magically charged cane (*tungkot*). Female goddesses wear fine *sarongs* and have the shiniest of hair, which is pulled up in a bun held by a pin. Whenever interacting with the gods during shamanistic ritual, this is also how humans should dress, and upon death how the body is dressed for the soul's return journey to heaven.

According to the *Orang Rimba*, the language of the gods is somewhat different from their own, or is a form of high speech (*beso huluy*) with each category of god having its own unique set of words. In contrast to what has been written, the *Orang*

Rimba do not associate the high speech of their gods with *Bahasa Melayu*, the language of the village (Sandbukt 1984). A shaman must learn how to speak the words of the gods from other shamans, and more likely, they say, from the gods themselves, in dreams and in trance. They say that some of these words still live in traditional community magic (*bopato*) and prayer songs (*dekir*) handed down to them from their ancestors. Personal magic (*jempi*) on the other hand is often acquired from the village and is said to contain a great deal of the words, knowledge and power of Islam, the religion of their junior ancestors who left the forests.

Some of the lesser gods are said to be interested in and enjoy engaging in the mundane activities of humans on earth, but are generally confined by their heavenly manifestation as soul matter (*haluy*), and at least in heaven, are incapable of engaging in earthly experiences such as taste, eating, sex, pain or death. It is only by making the journey into this world (*halom cabu* or *halom nio*) while bounded in an earthly body (*baden cabu*) of their association, that a god is capable of fulfilling an earthly desire. During seasonal ritual, *Orang Rimba* shamanism often involves giving particular gods offerings of flowers as proof (*bukti*) that a particular season has arrived in an attempt to seduce them to this world to fulfill an earthly desire. In order to engage in relationships with the lesser gods, one must uphold the traditions and prohibitions in the forests. The lesser gods are only said to pay attention to humans who live a life according to the customs and traditions (*adat*) of the ancestors in the forests, and who do not confuse the forest-village domains of existence. In particular, they are said to be repulsed by the smell of soap, those who pollute their bodies with village domesticates, or unnecessarily travel downstream and interact with the outside world in the village.

The Lesser Gods of the ‘Upstream’ Region of Heaven

The gods and goddesses of elephants (*or’ang de geboh*) are said to live in a small village in the far upstream region of heaven, where they are led by a headman or *penghulu*.²⁷ These gods and goddesses are strongly associated with the knowledge of health and the power of healing. They have a strong association with the fruit of the *sibul* palm (*Orania macroladus/ sylvicola*), and from time to time, are said to make their way down to the forests in their earthly bodies (*baden cabu*) as elephants in order to search for them. The flowers of the *sibul* palm are given as offerings to these gods during shamanistic ritual, and are ingested by shamans during annual *balai* rituals held during the season of fruits, in effort to invoke its spirit, and acquire the knowledge and power to heal.

Near this village lives the lone god of the scaly anteater (*or'ang de tenggiling*), who is often described as a reclusive magician and holder of knowledge and power associated with defense. This god is said to make the journey to the forests in the earthly body of a scaly anteater (*tenggiling*) to search for spiritual objects for magical amulets, which he fastens to his body in order to maintain and increase his power of defense. Likewise, shamans can appeal to this god or invoke its spirit during the annual season of fruits in order to acquire the knowledge and power to make their skin as strong as a scaly anteater for defensive purposes.

Further downstream is the very large village of the gods and goddesses of swidden plants (*or'ang de tanohmon*), who are said to manage the spiritual versions of the seeds and plants planted in a tuberous swidden field (*huma tanohmon*), wild palms, and rattan plants. Some of the more prominent plants associated with these gods include the traditional Austronesian crops such as taro (*keladi*), semi-domesticated varieties of yam (*benor*), sugarcane (*tobu*), bananas (*pisang*), as well as some of the new world crops such as sweet potato (*piloh*) and bengkuang or the yam bean (*benkowong*). This god doesn't have an association with cassava (*ubi kayu*), the main crop these days planted in a tuberous swidden. This is understandable as it may have been introduced as late as just 70–100 years ago (personal communication with James Fox, Boomgard 2003:597).²⁸ These gods and goddesses are also associated with the ritual surrounding tuberous swidden farming, which similar to people throughout the region concerns summoning its spirit to a sacred pole (*pengogor'on der'i hutan*) on a mound in the middle of the field.²⁹ Here, the spirit is magically bound within an enclosure of guarding logs (*betung puwar*) containing the field's first plantings (*penculung huma*) where it is said to energize and lead to abundant, healthy crops and protect them from the weather, pests, earthbound spirits and black magic.

In addition to tuberous crops, these gods and goddesses are also associated with a number of wild palms, which include: the sago yielding varieties (*Arenga* sp.), those with edible palm cabbage (*beyoi*, *Oncosperma horrida*; *ser'dang*, *Livistona saribas*), fan palms with broad leaves for making roofs (*ser'dang* and *benal*), the screw pines (*Pandanus* sp.), which are used by the women to make pleated mats (*rumbai*), and all types of rattan palm, which the men collect for trade, and the women use to make baskets (*ambung*). These plants are considered extremely '*layu*' (wilting, decaying), not to humans or other spirited entities, but to the soul of rice (*semongot padi*). *Layu* plants are strictly prohibited to be carried over a swidden field planted with rice (*huma padi*) before being discharged of its *layu* essence by drying them out. If this is not done, they

believe these plants can cause the rice to *layu* or wither away and die. The latent tension in their spiritual beliefs between tuberous crops and rice through the *layu* plant prohibition may relate to a closer association of rice with a more restrictive and sedentary life in a 'hot' swidden, which more closely resembles the swidden aspect of *Melayu* life surrounding the village.

The gods and goddesses of swidden plants are more generally associated with the purity and purifying powers of the upstream region of heaven. Another plant associated with these gods is the *hantuy* palm, which is one of the most significant plants in *Orang Rimba* ritual. While also considered *layu* in relation to the soul of rice, the oil from its flowers is associated with a sacred pond in heaven, which is believed to hold the power to purify the human soul. Next to the village of the gods of swidden plants, the *Orang Rimba* describe a purifying pond (*kolam*), which can 'cool' and cleanse the human soul, cure sickness, increase fertility, and wash away impurities accumulated by going downstream. Through soul travel, shamans visit this pond and transport the souls of others to be ritually bathed and purified during *balai* wedding ceremonies held during the annual season of fruits. This occurs in tandem with the spreading of oil from *hantuy* flowers over the person's body atop the *balai*. The positive associations between the gods of swidden plants, their plants, and the purity of the upstream region of heaven probably relate to the flexibility that tuberous swiddens afford. They allow a camp to diversify economic pursuits, and live a mobile life in the 'cool' forests, which many believe is more in harmony with the ways of their ancestors and the gods of the forest.

There are two lone gods in the upstream region of heaven who are associated with classes of *ker'emat* game animals commonly captured by hunters. The god of the pouch (*or'ang de kandong*) is associated with the forests three-toed ungulates, the Malaysian tapir (*tonuk*) and the Sumatran rhinoceros (*bedok*), an animal which is no longer present in the forests of *Bukit Duabelas*. The god of the burrows (*or'ang de gaung*), which is sometimes said to be located in the downstream region of heaven, is associated with several varieties of larger turtles, which are valuable trade items. Both of these gods are said to manage or look over their associated class of forest animals, although never use them as a material body to enter the forests. These gods bestow *res'ki* or good luck and fortune to hunters who pursue them, through signs in the forests or by encountering them in dreams or soul travel atop the *balai*. Whenever encountering the god of the pouch (*or'ang de kandong*), a shaman approaches him and looks inside a pouch which hangs over his shoulder. If he finds a piece of rattan (*rantoi*), it is a sign or

proof (*bukti*) that he will capture tapir or (in the past) rhinoceros.³⁰ Similarly, if one receives a piece of rattan from the god of the burrow it is proof that he will find turtles. Finding these *ker'emat* animals is interrelated with religion, and as such, these animals fall into the classification 'game of the gods' (*lau'wuk betuhan*), which gives men the right to distribute their meat to the larger group.

In the upstream village of *Ujion*, the gods and goddesses of fruit (*or'ang de buah*) look over and manage forests of fruit trees, the spiritual versions of those which grow on earth, particularly the wild varieties that blossom during the annual season of fruits. Each god and goddess is said to manage a different variety of spiritual fruit tree, which bring vitality to its material counterpart in the forests and allow them to blossom and bear fruit. These gods are appealed to on an annual basis to initiate the annual season of fruits. Next to the village of fruits is a place called the 'stopping or resting point' (*per'intion halom*) for the numerous spiritual counterparts of the wooden *balai* platforms constructed for religious wedding ceremonies during the annual season of fruits. These platforms are the largest and most sacred structures built by the *Orang Rimba*, and are believed to have souls. After a *balai* wedding ceremony is complete and the platforms are abandoned in the forest, the souls of these platforms are said to ascend to the resting point in heaven where they are looked after and guarded by gods of the resting point (*or'ang de per'intion*). This location is also said to be frequented by the *bidodar'i*, the lesser gods, and the shamans' traveling souls whenever visiting heaven. Very near this spot is the lone god of the honeybees (*or'ang de rapah*), who is responsible for looking over a netted enclosure which contains the forest's honeybees. This god is appealed to annually to unleash the honeybees so that they can descend to the forests to pollinate the fruit trees and create honey.

Just up from the midstream and very near to the sky door (*pintu langit*), there is a lone god called the god of the riverhead (*or'ang de mato aik*) who is responsible for managing the flow of the heavenly river and controlling the rains. This god is responsible for initiating the major rainy (*pangaboh delom ke aik*) and dry (*kamar'ow*) seasons in the forests, which are associated with the annual season of fruits (*petahunon*), and subsistence pursuits intertwined with the rains such as hunting, fishing and swidden farming. According to the *Orang Rimba*, rain is caused whenever the river in heaven floods or when there are holes or leaks in its river bed, the firmament in the sky. In order to bring the rains, shamans appeal to him to place a giant crocodile (*kuyo/buayo aik*) into the heavenly river, which causes it to flood, and puts pressure, and creates holes and leaks in the firmament, causing rain. In order to stop the rains and initiate the

dry season, appeals are made so that he lift the giant crocodile out of the river and go to work plugging the holes in the firmament with a mallet and wooden plugs. Given its source in the upstream portion of heaven, rain is more generally seen as a purifying entity, which ‘cools’ the weather whenever fire and smoke lead to the accumulation of clouds and make the world ‘hot’, uncomfortable and unhealthy. The rains are also believed to help wash away dangerous remnants or seeds of sickness (*bekai becai penyakit*) from the forest landscape.

Along the midstream of the heavenly river, there is also a lone god called the god of the borders (*or'ang de pebatason*), who restricts the movement of some of the more polluting or malevolent downstream deities from entering the upstream region of heaven, particularly the gods of sickness.

Table 4.4 Primary Gods in the *Orang Rimba* Religion

The All powerful Creators	<i>Tuhan Kuaso</i>
The senior God or creator of the earth and animal life	<i>Or'ang Pomogong Ciak Mencipai</i>
The junior God or creator of trees and plant life	<i>Or'ang Pomogong Kayu Kayuon</i>
The mother goddesses (fertility and child birth)	<i>Bidodar'i</i>
The Lesser Gods of the Upstream	<i>Behaylo or Dewo</i>
The gods of elephants (health)	<i>Or'ang de geboh</i>
The god of the scaly anteater (defense)	<i>Or'ang de tenggiling</i>
The gods and goddesses of swidden plants	<i>Or'ang de tanohmon</i>
The god of the pouch (tapir and rhinoceros)	<i>Or'ang de kandong</i>
The god of the burrows (turtles)	<i>Or'ang de gaung</i>
The gods and goddesses of fruit	<i>Or'ang de buah</i>
The god of honeybees	<i>Or'ang de rapah</i>
The god of the riverhead (rain and weather)	<i>Or'ang de mato aik</i>
The god of the border	<i>Or'ang de pebatason</i>
The Lesser Gods of the Downstream	
The god of village angels (power of Islam and canceling accumulated sin) or god of the mountain	<i>Or'ang de melakat or'ang mer'u or Or'ang de gunung</i>
The goddesses of wild yams	<i>Or'ang de benor</i>
The god of exchange goods (<i>jer'nang</i> and cloth)	<i>Or'ang de bar'ang</i>
The goddesses of rice	<i>Or'ang de padi</i>
The gods of sickness	<i>Or'ang de penyakit</i>
The gods of skin disease	<i>Or'ang de kuman</i>
The gods and goddesses of the bearded pigs/warts	<i>Or'ang de nangoi/kutel</i>
Other important figures in their cosmology	
The meeting place deity	<i>Or'ang de karandokon</i>
The god of the corners	<i>Or'ang de sudut</i>
The god of the edges	<i>Or'ang de bir'ai</i>
The gods of the <i>balai</i> resting point	<i>Or'ang de per'intion</i>
The tiger god/spirit	<i>Mato mer'ego or dewo mer'ego</i>
The god of the <i>siamong</i>	<i>Dewo siamong</i>
<i>Mohammad's</i> assistant	<i>Wakil Mohammad</i>
The god of the sky/moon	<i>Or'ang de langit</i>
The white hawk that flies around the sun	<i>Kilik dar'i</i>
The pagans below the earth	<i>Or'ang kapir</i>

The Lesser Gods of the ‘Downstream’ Region of Heaven

The downstream god of the village angels (*or'ang de melakat orang mer'u*) is associated with the knowledge and power of Islam and the ability to erase or cancel accumulated male sin (*duso*). This god is said to sit alone on a mountaintop located far inland along the borders with the village heaven. Shamans can manipulate relations with this god in order to obtain the knowledge and power of Islam, discover the source of a sickness, or break the hold of a spirit who has possessed the sick. This god also has the power to erase or cancel accumulated male sin, which makes it easier for a person to enter heaven. He is appealed to every year during the annual season of fruits.

The lone goddess of wild yams (*or'ang de benor*) is also associated with bestowing luck or good fortune (*res'ki*) through signs or interactions in dreams or trance, so that women can more easily find wild yams (*benor*, *Dioscorea* sp.) whenever a group is nomadic. As women generally do not have the ability to interact with the gods, these interactions and signs usually come through related men. Whenever this goddess is encountered, she is generally said to appear in one of two forms. If she appears young, beautiful and kind, in the following days the women will find nice big yams, which are shallow and require little digging. If she is encountered as an angry old hag with an evil cackle, the women will have a hard time finding wild yams, and will follow ghost vines to great depths, which eventually lead to small spoiled yams or nothing at all. The religious significance of an encounter with this goddess doesn't really influence sharing rights. Husbands usually have the rights to distribute the yams found by their wives, although the social value of sharing them are of little significance in comparison to game or honey. The reasons this forest-oriented goddess may be located in the downstream region of heaven may have to do with the rather negative association of nomadism with death and mourning, and the difficulty in which this way of life is perceived by the women. That said, the *Orang Rimba* say that a nomadic way of life based on digging for wild yams is how their ancestors and all humans originally lived, and is a strong measure of their social identity. It is also conceptualized as a more intimate way of life in the forests, which brings a camp and particularly its adult men, closest to the gods.

Further downstream, the lone god of exchange goods (*or'ang de bar'ang*) is strongly associated with *jer'nang*, the most valuable and sacred forest product collected by the *Orang Rimba* for trade, and with cloth, a traditional medium for trade and a measure of family wealth. Throughout Sumatra and the greater region, the deep red resin from the acorn-like fruit of the *jer'nang* rattan (*Daemonorops draco*), is strongly

believed to have a potent vitality or essence that is used to cure colds, facilitate the process of healing and alleviate pain. It was also traditionally used by the downstream *Melayu* as a high quality red dye to colour their unique 'red' batik cloth (Kerlogue 1996). Throughout the region, cloth plays an important role in religious ritual, and for Malayic peoples throughout the region, the colour red is often associated with power, liminality, shamanism, and more specifically, the tiger spirit (Porath 2002). *Or'ang de bar'ang* is also a *res'ki*-oriented god and whenever planting specific signs or encountered in dreams or trance, a man can receive luck or fortune (*res'ki* or *jer'eki*) in finding plentiful patches of *jer'nang* or coming upon wealth from the outside, in the form of cloth or these days money. This god can also be visited during dreams or soul travel to have him bless a sheet of cloth or money. When bundled together with the family cloth and hung in a sacred spot in the rafters, it is believed the cloth (or money) will multiply.

The numerous goddesses of rice (*or'ang de padi*) reside in the all female village of *Imom* (Malay, Islamic religious teacher), located in the far downstream region of heaven. They are said to live in luxurious village style homes, which similar to *Melayu* along the *Batanghari* River extend over the edges of the riverbanks, a practice prohibited by the *Orang Rimba*. These generally benevolent goddesses are described as young and beautiful and dressed in elegant white cloth. They are believed to be as numerous as the grains of rice they look over, each goddess being an exact duplicate of the other, yet only the size of one's hand or finger. In contrast to the purity of the *tanohmon* plants, they are said to live lives intermingled with the malicious gods of sickness (*or'ang de penyakit*) and possess some of the knowledge (*ilemu*) and power associated with Islam. Much of their time is said to be spent paddling around in small canoes around their homes, where they frequently interact and have relationships with the malicious gods of sickness. More generally, these goddesses are associated with the soul of rice (*semongot padi*), and similar to many throughout the region, an elaborate system of ritual to bring their soul or essence to the rice plants in a swidden rice field.³¹

According to the *Orang Rimba*, the ancestors received knowledge of rice much later than knowledge swidden plants (see appendix). This may not imply that rice is a recent introduction or re-introduction, and the related beliefs recently borrowed. Their unique variant of these regional beliefs appears to be relatively established within their cosmology, ritual and belief system. That said, most *Orang Rimba* only rarely plant the crop as it tends to tie them to a more sedentary life in a 'hot' swidden, which many see as unhealthy, and latently begins to merge, cross over or confuse the boundaries

between forest and village life. Rice also tends to limit alternative economic pursuits in the forests, which require mobility and a more interactive relationship with their gods in the forests, which is seen in a positive way. Tension between rice and tuberous plants is implicitly reflected in the prohibitions on bringing *layu* plants, which are associated with the god of swidden plants, near a rice field.

The gods and goddesses of the bearded pigs (*or'ang de nangoi*) live in the very large and highly stratified village of *Ponger'an*, the last and furthest village in the downstream region of heaven. This village is said to be located in a mountainous coastal region (*gunung pasir lout*), close to the twirling and drunken seas. These gods and goddesses are said to be tall with pale white skin, and are led by a powerful king named *Kokoden*. That this category of gods is also included in the downstream region probably has more to do with their belief that the migrations of pigs originates from across large bodies of water in the east, than any association between wild pigs with downstream village life, which in itself doesn't make much sense. These gods are said to have an insatiable lust for eating fruit, which doesn't exist in heaven, and at times, are said to make their way across the drunken sea *en masse* following the annual fruiting season in the forests by transforming into their earthly forms of bearded pigs. The primary ritual surrounding these gods and goddesses represents an attempt to seduce them to the forests on earth by convincing them of a particularly abundant season of fruits. Given their spiritual significance, the *ker'emat* bearded pigs fall into the classification 'game of the gods' (*lau'wuk betuhan*), which allows the men to distribute and share their meat to others in a camp.

The 'Downstream' Gods of Sickness

The downstream river of heaven is also said to be occupied by the malevolent gods of sickness (*or'ang de penyakit*) who do not live in settled villages, but rather on the water, in small boats or canoes.³² The gods of sickness each have their own identities according to an associated sickness they can inflict on humans; and include the god of skin sickness (*or'ang de kuman*), colds and coughs (*sutan gulgas* or *betuk*), stomach sickness (*bur'oy* or *mer'ancong*) and the most feared, smallpox (*campok* or *cacar*). Like the other gods, they also take the form of humans, yet like the goddesses of rice are said to be small. They are described as having grotesque and distorted features and angry, violent and malicious characters. Because of their dangerous and polluting qualities, they are barred by the midstream border god from entering the upstream region of heaven. While based in the downstream region of heaven, they are often said to paddle

across the drunken sea (*lout mabuk*) in their spirit form and spend a great deal of time in the downstream rivers on earth.³³ They are said to be attracted to strong smells, particularly soap, which is a major reason why the *Orang Rimba* practice and justify the soap taboo. Only rarely do these gods travel further upstream to the forests, although they are sometimes drawn by the scents emitted during the annual season of flowers and fruits. Whenever coming to earth, they are said to spend most of their time stalking and hunting down humans in order to feed on their essence and replenish and strengthen themselves. They are believed to be rather slow and immobile outside their canoes, and to usually stick to their canoes in the rivers, riverbanks and surrounding trails near the downstream *Melayu* villages. Each of these gods has its own unique way, weapons or objects (*pelet, jimat*) for hunting humans, which initially includes a dose of their polluting bodily waste to induce an associated sickness. This is usually followed by throwing, shooting or piercing a human with bamboo pellets, pebbles, small sticks or *jelutung* barbs to cause the sickness to worsen. The *Orang Rimba* believe that a person can be contaminated by making contact with them, passing through their waste, or being pierced with one of their objects of sickness. Through contact, a sickness can quickly spread to others. They believe that the gods of sickness commonly dwell along the downstream riverbanks and trails around the villages, and can latch on to a person with their arms and legs, and be carried back to a camp in the forests. Bringing a sickness back to the camp in this manner is referred to as a *kebial*, a term also used for the carrying straps on their rattan baskets.

One of the least dangerous, yet annoying gods of sickness is *or'ang de kuman*, the god of bacteria or parasites. This god is responsible for causing common skin sickness such as ringworm (*kur'ap*) and scabies (*segetal*) by spitting seeds of the *kalade* fruit at his victims. *Sutan gulgas* or *betuk* (cough or cold) is believed to be a source of colds and coughs. Whenever paddling down the river in his canoe, floating on a small piece of wood or a banana peel, or ambushing someone along a jungle trail, he is said to plug a nostril and blow mucus on them, which can result in a nasty cold or cough. While malevolent, *sutan gulgas* is the only emanation of the gods of sickness who is believed to be somewhat rational and respect *adat* law, so generally he is only believed to blow mucus on those who break with customs and traditions (*adat*) are dishonest, steal or cause harm to others. *Sutan gulgas* can also be befriended by shamans, who can use this relationship to inflict sickness upon others who have violated *adat*.

Table 4.5 Downstream Gods of Sickness

The god of stomach sickness	<i>Bur'oy</i> or <i>mer'ancong</i>
The god of smallpox	<i>Campok</i> or <i>cacar</i>
The god of skin disease	<i>Or'ang de kuman</i>
The god of colds	<i>Sutan gulags</i> or <i>betuk</i>

Bur'oy ('to spill out in streams'), sometimes simply referred to as *mer'ancong* or diarrhoea is associated with causing stomach sickness. *Bur'oy* goes about his work by disembarking from his canoe and defecating along the riverbanks or nearby jungle trails. If a person passes through his spiritual waste it can result in a bad case of stomach sickness, which is believed to be contagious and can spread to others. When a person is bed-ridden, *bur'oy*, who is said to be very slow on land, continues to stalk his victim, shooting him repeatedly with bamboo bullets, making him more ill.³⁴ *Bur'oy* waits closeby until the person dies and then descends upon and devours the body.

The most feared and dangerous god of sickness is *campok* ('to throw or toss'), sometimes called *cacar*, meaning skin eruptions or smallpox. *Campok* is described as having an extremely violent and aggressive character and furious red eyes that bulge from his head with anger. He is said to wear a shawl over his head in order to protect his exposed brain from the wind and rain. Because of his condition, he is only believed to enter the forests for 40 days and 40 nights during a period of pleasant weather during the annual fruiting season. Whenever entering the forests, he is said to be loud and aggressive, throwing objects or firing his weapon at any humans that cross his path. His small objects or bullets (*pelet*, *peler'u*) are said to look like fire, and burn the skin upon contact, erupting into sores that quickly spread over one's body and to others. The arrival of *campok* is believed to be marked by mass death.

Throughout the greater region, spirits are believed to be a common source of sickness, while some of the more dangerous spirits are associated with unknown or dangerous locations outside one's community such as the jungle or sea.³⁵ Some of the most elaborate beliefs surround pandemic diseases such as smallpox, and in the past, it was common practice for people to construct symbolic or ritual boundaries to block or contain them (Boomgaard 2003b).³⁶ This was often combined with enforcing actual physical boundaries to prevent carriers from spreading the sickness to others. Given their intimate life in the forests, it is not surprising that the *Orang Rimba* perceive the threat of sickness as coming from the opposite direction, from the downstream village to the forests. What is unique about their beliefs surrounding sickness is the manner in which they have become institutionalized in an everyday manner outside of pandemic

situations, serving to limit and restrict travel outside of the forests and interactions with outsiders. The *Orang Rimba* believe that most sicknesses in the forests, especially the more dangerous and contagious varieties, come from the downstream rivers near the *Melayu* villages, and if people did not leave the forests or interact with outsiders, the likelihood of sickness would be much less.

Traditionally, their beliefs in the gods of sickness (and their contagions) were a major reason for their reluctance to leave the forests, and why in the traditional context, women and children were usually not allowed to travel to the village. For the men, this fear or reluctance is not, primarily, because they are afraid of getting sick, these days anyway, but rather because they may be accused for bringing sickness back with them to a forest camp, and blamed for others falling ill. Whenever meeting a person returning from the village, along a jungle path or at the edge of a camp, most will stop several meters before approaching or passing the person and ask, 'Have you been downstream or to the village?' and 'Are you sick?' (*Ado becenengo?*) Many will avoid places in the landscape (jungle trails, dwellings) that are believed to be polluted by the gods of sickness for days, and at least initially, will walk along the edges or choose a different jungle trail altogether after it has been travelled by someone returning from the village or by someone who is believed to be sick. Rain is seen as a purifying entity that washes away remnants of sickness (*bekai becai penyakit*) from a jungle trail or the forest landscape.

According to traditional prohibitions surrounding the containment of sickness, before a person coming from outside the forests is allowed to come into close proximity with other members of a forest camp, they must serve a boundary prohibition called *besesandingon*. This is a quarantining period for new arrivals on the fringe of camp which may last several days, until it has been determined that they are not sick, and have not brought a sickness from outside the forests. If a person is found to be sick (has a cold, cough, etc.) this period can be extended until the person is healthy. This prohibition is more generally practiced by those who fall ill in the forest, regardless of whether they have left. A person who does not follow the *besesandingon* practice is considered irresponsible, reckless and can be accused, blamed and fined accordingly by a camp headman for endangering the lives of others if someone were to fall sick. This concern for sickness is reflected in language through the use of names for sickness or the gods of sickness to denote shock, confusion, wonder, amazement, and their use as swear words (*kato ser'o*).³⁷ Another common term to denote these feelings is *belangun*, the term for movement and ritual mourning following death. The strongest swear word

in the *Orang Rimba* language is *campok* or *cacar*, the word for smallpox, and likewise can be offensive, shocking and anger someone when directed towards them. All of these words are used rather sparingly by those who are less refined (*kasar*) or amongst bachelors.

More generally, *Orang Rimba* sickness boundaries resemble and are closely intertwined with general rules which restrict outsiders, particularly men from approaching or interacting with a camp's females and children, particularly if their male guardians (husband, brothers) are not present. These boundaries are magnified in relation to non-*Orang Rimba* who arrive to a camp, in which case the women and children will generally flee to the forests. However, they are more generally applied to all out-group *Orang Rimba* males. In *Orang Rimba* society, there is an urgency to protect the 'more vulnerable' women and children from an exaggerated threat of all outside males, regardless of whether or not they are close kin. As most in the forests are related in some way, inappropriate gender interactions with kin who cross generation levels are considered even worse, as they are *sumbang* or incestuously improper. Thus, a third question that a person is required to ask whenever approaching a camp is 'Are there any females ahead in the camp or nearby forests?' and 'Are they alone, and are their male guardian's present?'

While these boundaries may have originally been influenced by, and helped to contain the spread of pandemic disease, on a broader level the *Orang Rimba*'s boundary practices also serve to maintain the integrity of their system of beliefs, and to prevent the core of *Orang Rimba* society (the women and children) from having much interaction with or influence from the surrounding *Melayu*. However, within their own social worlds, these issues are also intertwined with internal power relations. These beliefs give in-marrying 'adult' males a degree of authority over their wives and their unmarried non-adult brother in-laws, who often discount their authority and are tough to keep in line. As religious adults, senior men and shamans have the ability to see whether a sickness is a result of one of the gods of sickness, and through dreams and ritual atop the *balai*, can go about curing the person. They are typically the ones who are concerned about enforcing sickness boundaries, and go about accusing others, usually the women's unmarried brothers and junior husbands for breaking these rules.

The Tiger God and the God of *Siamong*

As with many peoples throughout the region, the *Orang Rimba* believe that the tigers in the forests are material manifestations of the tiger spirit (*mato mer'ego* or *dewo*

mer'ego), who occasionally enter the forests as tigers, but whose spirits take human form in their spirit villages (Bakels 1994; Endicott 1979; Skeat 1900; Wessing 1986).³⁸ The tiger god or spirit is primarily associated with upholding and enforcing the customs and traditions (*adat*) of the ancestors, and in maintaining the overall balance and order (*keselematon*) of *adat* in the forests. In the *Orang Rimba* version of these beliefs, this includes not confusing or crossing over the forest-village realms of existence. Whenever encountering a tiger in the forests, the *Orang Rimba* refer to it as *datuk*, meaning grandfather or ancestor, a reference which is often quite literal as along the *Makekal* River, the tiger god is one of the most common *aku-on* birth deities for men. While always believed to be a source of danger, they are also believed to be fair, and usually do not harm those who follow a life according to *adat*. To avoid their attacks, men often hang *lalon* or *tepan* leaves from the rafters of their homes as a sign of respect, and a reminder that their relations are on good terms. These flowers are also the primary offering to their spirit during ritual atop the *balai*.

In the past, the spirit villages of the tigers were said to be located somewhere in the deep jungle, and encounters, attacks and deaths by tigers in the forests were much more common. According to legend, the tigers moved their spirit villages to the upstream region of heaven after one of their ancestors, a great shaman, helped to free a tiger's paw from a tree in the forest (see appendix). Before freeing the tiger, the shaman made a sacred oath to the tiger, which agreed that the tigers would move their spirit villages to heaven, and would no longer harm people in the forests, as long as they lead a life that was just. One of these spirit villages is said to be located along the Raining River (*Sungoi Penghujan*), a place which always appears to be raining but actually has no rain, while the other is located along the Blood River (*Sungoi Beder'o*), a river which flows with the blood of the tiger's human victims. In both villages, the tiger's homes are said to be similar to their raised huts in a swidden field, but similar to the *Melayu* are constructed along the river banks. Like other Malayic peoples, the *Orang Rimba* say that the tigers construct their homes from the body parts of their human victims who failed to conform to *adat* in the forests. The walls are made from stretched skin, the roofs thatched with hair, and the ladders to their homes are made of bones (Skeat 1900:157).³⁹

As the above story implies, the tiger spirit, and possibly the god of *siamong* (described below), have a stronger association with the earth, and this may be a reason why they are not referred to with the pre-term *or'ang*. The primary role of the tiger spirit in shamanistic ritual is that of an intermediary spirit, who can facilitate relations

with the lesser gods in heaven and the spirits on earth. During soul travel, they are usually the first spirits called down to the *balai* platform, and accompany the shaman's traveling soul to the sky door to negotiate with the meeting place deity (*or'ang de kar'andokon*), their passage into heaven. Relations with the tiger spirit can also be manipulated to approach some of the less approachable gods, such as the gods of sickness or the spirits on earth, to acquire knowledge or discover the source of sickness in an individual, break its hold, and find a cure. In the past, some say that certain big shamans (*dukon godong*) who maintained close relations with the tiger spirit could use their powers to transform into material tigers and serve justice to those who had committed major *adat* violations, although this rarely occurs these days. During *balai* wedding ceremonies held during the annual season of fruits, shamans gather atop the *balai* to invoke the tiger spirit, and study from him *silet*, a traditional martial art that throughout the wider region is associated with the tiger spirit.

Of the two species of gibbon found in the forests, the *Orang Rimba* believe the larger black furred *siamong* (*Symphalangus syndactylus*) to be a sacred *ker'emat* animal associated with the god of *siamong* (*dewo siamong* or *siamong putih*). While not always mentioned when describing the other gods in heaven, some say that the god of *siamong* (*dewo siamong*) lives in the 'upstream' region of heaven where it takes human form in its spirit village, and at times enters the forests in its earthly emanation (*baden cabu*) of a *siamong* with white fur. However, all *siamong* in the forests are associated with or looked over by this god. *Siamong* are mainly associated with looking out for the safety of people from high up in the forest canopies. They usually begin their beautiful calls around nine or ten in the mornings. In the rare instance that a *siamong* calls during the evening, the *Orang Rimba*, as well as the *Orang Batin Kubu*, perceive their calls as warnings to humans that danger is near, usually in the form of an ill intentioned tiger (*mer'ego*) or bear (*bur'uwong*) (Dongen 1910). *Siamong* are sometimes appealed to through traditional magical verses (*bopato*), which are intertwined with positive connotations of the upstream rivers, and serve to bring safety in the forests, whenever one feels a sense of danger from wild animals.⁴⁰

Earthbound Spirits of the Landscape

The forests are also believed to be occupied by varieties of earthbound spirits, which are generally referred to as *silumon*, the 'unseen' or 'invisible' or by the Arabic derived *setan*.⁴¹ The majority are said to have relatively elastic, unbounded spirit matter (*haluy*), which can bind itself to different features of the landscape such as hills, indentations or

mounds in the earth, swamps, trees, features of a river, large boulders or small objects (*bendo*) like pebbles, sticks or seeds. The *Orang Rimba* believe that everything in the forests has the potential to be imbued with an earthbound spirit, although only certain things actually contain them at any time. One of the main characteristics of earthbound spirits is that they tend to search out objects to attach themselves and that they tend to be territorial and guarded of their locations. They are also believed to be somewhat mobile and can shift their residence if forced from a location by magic, the gods, or other earthbound spirits.

Table 4.6 Common Terms for Earthbound Spirits of the Landscape

Spirit of sickness	<i>Setan/silumon kuman</i>
Spirit of the headwaters of a river	<i>Setan/silumon mato aik</i>
Spirit of the swamp	<i>Setan/silumon payau</i>
Spirit of the waterfalls	<i>Setan/silumon talun talon</i>
Spirit of a sliver	<i>Setan/silumon suban</i>
Spirit of the earth	<i>Setan/silumon tanoh</i>
Spirit in an indentation or mound in the earth	<i>Setan/silumon tanoh tumbu</i>
Spirit of a tree	<i>Setan/silumon tunggu kayu or hantu kayu</i>
Spirit in an object	<i>Bendo silumon</i>

Earthbound spirits are sometimes said to take the form of people or entire villages of people, while others can take the form of animals, plants or an object, which it makes its home. Many have their own local identities, different characteristics, occupations, and interesting stories surrounding their origins.⁴² Most are not constrained to a particular form and more generally can change and adapt their size and shape according to location. Reflecting their upstream–downstream conceptions of heaven and its mundane likeness on earth, some *Orang Rimba* say that there are benevolent earthbound spirits and fairies on the mountains of Kerenci and Minangkabau who can be visited through dreams and soul travel. However, the majority of earthbound spirits present in their own forests are said to have dangerous and immoral characters, and while some may have a negligible respect for *adat*, they are almost always believed to be a threat to humans. Most of the spirits of the landscape will usually go about their own business as long as their abodes are remembered, respected and not disturbed or passed over. A person must always be aware of their places in the landscape, and never urinate, defecate or walk over them. Some say that passing over their abodes, which may include a mound of earth (*tanoh tumbu*), a boulder, or feature along a river bank, can cause one’s legs and sexual organs to swell and lead to infertility. More generally, spending any amount of time around their locations can disturb them and lead to bad luck or accidents. There are number of ways to appease the spirits, whenever they are

disturbed, sometimes by reciting incantations (*bopato*), which is usually combined with a ritual offering of water and different varieties of sacred leaves.

Earthbound sprits tend to be attracted to sacred *ker'emat* places in the landscape or to entities that possess a soul or a higher concentration of spirit matter. They sometimes make their way to and enter these locations or entities if nearby, and if an opportunity arises. Some will enter into a symbiotic union and a long-term protective relationship with living *ker'emat* entities such as trees, while others will momentarily enter them to feed on the essence of a living entity and in the process can cause it to '*layu*', wilt away or die. This appears to be the case when they enter a swidden field to replenish themselves on the essence of the crops, the soul of rice, or humans. As with the gods of sickness, earthbound spirits are said to be attracted to the scent of soap, and this is another reason why it is tabooed. They are usually said to only invade the human body when people build their structures on top or around their abodes, and are usually said to do so when the human soul is absent from the body or in a liminal state. Usually, these opportunities only present themselves during the evenings when the soul tends to wander or travel in dreams or during ritual soul travel atop the *balai*. Another opportunity for spirit invasion is when a soul has been captured by another person through the use of black magic (*jempi hitom*).

While inside the body, the spirit is said to generate 'heat', which can lead to sickness, fevers or insanity. The victims eyes are said to become black, their behavior lethargic and zombie-like or sometimes unpredictable and chaotic. The spirit doesn't initially kill the person, but eventually will if it remains within the body and blocks the return of the soul for any lengthy period of time. Whenever this happens, it must quickly be removed by a shaman, who negotiates with the lesser gods (particularly the tiger spirit) to break their hold and forcefully expel them from the body. Earthbound spirits are said to be particularly dangerous when around a birthplace, before the soul has arrived or is only recently adjusting to its new body within the mother's womb. Whenever opening a swidden field, building a dwelling, performing ritual atop a *balai*, or moving to a birthplace, it is a shaman's responsibility to expel any spirits from the location before the location is occupied.

Earthbound spirits often tend to be attracted to sacred *ker'emat* trees in the forests, particularly those that are believed to have spiritual counterparts in heaven and/or are associated with the different categories of lesser gods. Some *ker'emat* trees always believed to contain a tree spirit (*hantu kayu*) include the wild '*layu*' palms associated with the god of swidden plants, and *sialong* honey trees, which are associated

with the god of honeybees.⁴³ Tree spirits do not have a special association or relationship with a lesser god associated with a tree. Rather, they independently enter the tree and make it their 'home', which does tend to resemble the relationship between the human soul and the body. The relationship can become a symbiotic union between the pair, through emotions, sensations and feelings. Like other entities that contain spirits, the tree also tends to become more sensitive to physical heat from the sun. If the tree or spirit is disturbed or the surrounding forest cover cleared, making the location hot, the spirit may leave its home, which can cause the tree to fall into a state of grief and sorrow, become sick and wilt away and die. As trees that contain spirits are almost always key resources, there are a variety of ways in which the spirit can defend its home from a person who comes around to harvest it. Sometimes the spirit does this by weakening its trunk or branches, which can cause the person to fall out. In the case of wild palms, the spirit sometimes transform into green tree frogs and in the case of *sialong* honey trees, demon tree shrews (*setan buyuto*), in order to distract and expel the climber from the tree. Traditional knowledge (*bopato*) is always recited before harvesting resources from these trees in order to momentarily rid the spirit from its home, and after the tree is harvested, to invite it back so that the tree does not fall into a state of sorrow and die.

Earthbound spirits can also be associated with certain *ker'emat* animals, the most prominent being the greater reticulated python (*ulo sawo*, *Python reticulates*). This impressive snake winds through a number of the *Orang Rimba's* beliefs and legends, as it does with the neighboring *Orang Batin Kubu*, and other people throughout the region.⁴⁴ In *Orang Rimba* legend, this snake is believed to have given their ancestors the knowledge of how to make dammar (*demor*) torches so that they could see during the night, and facilitate interactions with the spirit world during ritual atop the *balai*. This sacred animal is also believed to be associated with an even larger spiritual version of itself which is managed by a class of earthbound spirits who commonly make their homes in swampy marshlands (*payau*, *inuman*, *kolam*), and near salt licks, the locations where these animals tend to be found. According to the beliefs of the *Orang Rimba* in the northern *Bukit Tigapuluh* region,

Inuman is such a class of deity residing in the swamps between the Gelumpang and Sumai watersheds...these deities share the same morphology as humans and each owns an enormous reticulated python (*ulo sao*), which is said to be the size of a timber lorry. While these snakes are able to attack and suck the blood out of people with their enormous fangs, they are well trained by their *inuman* masters and therefore not inclined to harm humans. (From a draft of Elkholy's Ph.D. thesis)

The *Makekal Orang Rimba* classify this *ker'emat* snake as *panoy* (Malay: *panas*) or that it has a great deal of 'heat', which they believe tends to manifest itself in its characteristic incestuous behaviors. Whenever this snake is captured the hunter must eat the skin around the upper portion of its eye and its tail in order to ritually discharge its *panoy* and avoid its transference to humans. The python's association with swamps and salt licks may also be the reason why the barking deer (*kijang*, *Muntiacus muntjak*) and Sambhur deer (*r'uso*, *Cervus unicolor*) are also classified as *panoy* animals. Whenever these two species of deer are captured, the hunter must eat the skin around its lips, nose, ears and eyelids in order to discharge its *panoy*. If the hunter fails to consume the features on these three animals, they believe that they would be struck by the animal's *panoy* or insatiable sexual drive and uncontrollable incestuous (*sumbang*) urges, and potentially act them out with members of the camp.

The python's *panoy* or 'heat' appears to be related to its association with the earthbound spirits, its higher concentration of spiritual matter, and has a curious resemblance to the *badi* beliefs (evil forces that emanate from the carcass of certain wild, *ker'emat* or stamina-related animals) of Malayic and Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia.⁴⁵ To a lesser extent, the *Orang Rimba* also believe that other stamina-related animals and foods (rodents, shrews, fruits, honey, etc.) can have similar 'heating' effects on the human body, and when overindulged in can lead to sickness, incestuous urges or insanity. As with the other *ker'emat* animals that are allowed to be captured, they are allowed to be eaten by both men and women after rituals are performed to deal with these properties. The greater reticulated python also falls within the classification 'game of the gods' (*lau'wuk betuhan*), which gives men the right to distribute its meat to other members of a camp. The two deer species, on the other hand, are not considered to be *ker'emat* or to have direct relations to the earthbound spirits or gods, and therefore fall into the classification game of the kin (*lau'wuk bewar'is*), which gives women the right to distribute or share their meat to the members of a camp.

Some of the more dangerous places in the landscape are referred to as 'cursed land' (*tanoh celako*) or places where particularly malign earthbound spirits make their homes. These places are also sometimes associated with *hantu* (ghosts or demons) or the gods of sickness, who are more mobile and are less likely to permanently reside in places in the landscape. Some describe these locations as being associated with events in which humans have passed away under tragic circumstances, and for a time anyway, can be occupied by a disturbed soul of the dead. A characteristic feature of spirits associated with cursed land is their tendency to go out of their way to cause misfortune,

accidents or aggressively attack and feed on the animal or spirit matter of anyone who passes through them, particularly those who decide to take a nap or spend the night in the location. According to Elkholy, *Orang Rimba* shamans in the northern *Bukit Tigapuluh* region sometimes determine the locations of *tanoh celako* in a state of trance, “through an overpowering noxious odour resembling rotting flesh” (personal communication with Elkholy).

The *Orang Rimba* concern for earthbound spirits is more pronounced during activities that may disturb their ‘homes’ or places in the landscape, and these concerns are usually greatest whenever opening a swidden and choosing to live a more settled life in a swidden. Whenever the *Orang Rimba* lead a more mobile life in the forests, earthbound spirits become much less of a cause for anxiety for them. This is often a reason why many choose to live in smaller wall-less huts in the cool forests, even after building a larger house (*rumah godong*) in the swidden. This option becomes less of a possibility during rice planting, and is one of the reasons why most *Orang Rimba* rarely plant the crop. Problems with earthbound spirits, usually together with death, can also be a reason or excuse to abandon a swidden and lead a nomadic life in the forests. More generally, spirits must be temporarily removed whenever the resources from a *ker’emat* tree are being harvested, a dwelling is being built, or land is being chosen for construction of a *balai* platform for soul travel or a birthplace, when the new soul will be introduced to life in the human body.

The *Hantu*: demons or ghosts

Another class of malevolent demons or ghosts in the pantheon of earthbound spirits is that of the *hantu*.⁴⁶ *Hantu* are sometimes associated with particular locations in the deep forests; however, their most characteristic feature is that they are mobile and not bound to places in the landscape, which makes them more dangerous. Unlike *silumon* or *setan*, *hantu* are sometimes said to make themselves visible to the average person, and have more mischievous, dangerous and malign characters. *Hantu* do not have any concern or respect for *Orang Rimba* customs or the universal order of *adat*, and like the gods of sickness are often said to go out of their way to harm, kill and feed on the essence of humans. *Hantu* are not the smartest of the spirits, and often can be tricked, misled, scared or chased away by reciting magical incantations (*bopato*) or a ritual action specific to the particular *hantu*. A general way to repulse and scare away most *hantu* is by burning pubic hair, usually together with the recitation of traditional magical incantations (*bopato*) and throwing ashes in their general direction.

According to McHugh, the forest *hantu* are some of the oldest varieties of *hantu* for the Malay, and many of them are believed to have human origins (McHugh 1959). The *Orang Rimba* believe that at least some *hantu*, such as disturbed souls of the dead originate from humans; however, most people are vague in their knowledge of their origins. All are forest varieties, and some are similar to those described in Malaysia. Similar to other peoples throughout the region, the *hantu tenggi* is said to take the form of a monstrous tree, with sharp protruding fangs, long fingernails and long black hair which hangs from its body (McHugh 1959). Because of its towering height, they are often said to live in old growth forests located far away from any camps. The *hantu niyak* is said to take the form of a malevolent child, who usually approaches and attacks people in the late evening when they are trying to sleep. These ghosts are only afraid of a women's naked body, and whenever they encounter them women usually try to scare them away by exposing their breasts. The refined faceless ghost (*hantu butubu haluy*) appears as a human without a face, making its way to camps during the evenings to beg for food. Its appearance is accompanied by an icy cold wind, and if allowed to get close enough to a person while they are alone, sucks the breath (*nafai*) from their lungs, and while unconscious or dead devours the essence of its body.

Table 4.7 Demons or Ghosts (*hantu*)

Faceless ghost	<i>Hantu betubu haluy</i>
Short ghost of the primary forests	<i>Hantu bewo</i>
Ghost of the primary forests	<i>Hantu gedio</i>
Small hairy ghost	<i>Hantu lipoi</i>
Small children ghost	<i>Hantu niyak</i>
Nude hairy forest ghost	<i>Hantu rimba</i>
Tall tree ghost	<i>Hantu tenggi</i>
Short ghost	<i>Hantu pendek</i>
Spirit of the tree	<i>Hantu kayu</i>
Disturbed ghost of the dead	<i>Hantu pununggu baluh</i>

Hantu rimba ('forest ghost') are described to be very large and have naked bodies covered with hair. The female varieties are said to carry a baby in a pouch located on the side of their bodies. They are said to be afraid to come upon larger camps, but often approach an individual or pair sleeping alone in the forests and tickle them. If the person jolts or begins to laugh, then they become vulnerable to its attack. However, if they refrain from reacting to its tickles, they are safe. There are several *hantu* similar to the Malay varieties (*bajang, langsuir, pontinak, etc.*), which tend to linger around the birthplace and feed on the blood of unborn babies (McHugh 1959).

Another category of spirit in the *hantu* category is *hantu penunggu baluh* or disturbed human souls of the dead. The *Orang Rimba* believe that if a person had a traumatic death, the proper death rites were not performed or if the person led a particularly ‘sinful’ life, the soul can linger or be stuck on earth in the form of a ghost, and in these cases will never have the opportunity to make the journey to the afterlife. This sort of ghost often remains close to the location of death for around two weeks, disturbing or harming those who pass by. After two weeks, the soul is said to be reborn as a bear (*bur’uwong*) and eventually be killed and eaten by a hunter. After this death, the soul enters a common wild pig (*bebi*), which suffers the same fate as the bear, and then becomes a fish.⁴⁷ After being eaten as a fish the cycle of life ends, and because the person was disturbed or led a sinful life he or she is not able to enter the afterlife, but remains lost, ‘like a stone thrown into a muddy pond’.

A rather ambiguous creature placed in the *hantu* category is the *hantu pendek* (small demon or ghost), known by the surrounding *Melayu* as the *orang pendek*, and by the *Orang Batin Kubu* as the *gugu*. Stories of these creatures have made their way to Europe since the 13th-century travels of Marco Polo (Yule 1983).⁴⁸ The surrounding *Melayu* villagers believe that these small ape-like creatures are covered with shades of orange or red hair, have inverted feet and walk as people do. The *Orang Rimba* also describe the *hantu pendek* in this manner, but fit them into their *hantu* or demon category. In the *Orang Rimba* version, the *hantu pendek* have the ability to speak in an unknown language, and travel in groups of five or six, subsisting off wild yams and hunting wild game with small machetes. In the past, there are stories that they would sometimes ambush and kill the unfortunate hunter camping alone in the forest. Along the *Makekal*, there is a legend of how a group of ancestors outsmarted these cunning, yet stupid creatures during a hunting trip, which is often used to justify why the people of the *Makekal* River, or at least their males, are a people of intellect and reason (*akal*). While the *Orang Rimba* say they were more frequently encountered by their ancestors, they are rarely encountered these days.

Choosing ‘Cool’ and Healthy Forests for Ritual atop the *Balai*

Outside of dream travel, most formal communication with the gods or spirits takes place in isolated forests, upon small temporary wooden platforms called *balai*.⁴⁹ *Balai* platforms provide a medium through which the gods can be summoned or invoked, and from which shamans can dissociate their traveling souls (*huluy bejelon*), and travel to far away locations, including heaven. *Balai* platforms are built for rituals related to the

seasons, birth, the first bathing of the baby, marriage, healing ceremonies, and purification and invocation ceremonies held during the annual season of fruits. Most of the more common smaller *balai* platforms are around two square meters in size, and are just big enough for a shaman, his assistant, and a patient, but can be adapted according to the occasion. The larger *balai* platforms built for religious marriage and purification and invocation ceremonies during the annual season of fruits can reach 100 square meters in size, and in contrast to their smaller counterparts are believed to possess a soul (*huluy balai*). In the center of a *balai* there is usually attached a cone-shaped offering receptacle (*songkot*) made of rattan and a ritual perch that attracts the spiritual emanation of the helmeted hornbill (*bu'ung gedung*, *Buceros vigil*), which transports a shaman's traveling soul to heaven.⁵⁰

Balai are never allowed to be built near a 'hot' 'open' swidden field, and outside of the bathing the baby ceremony, too close to the rivers, which can be traversed by the gods of sickness. In order to provide an intimate and healthy location conducive to interactions with the gods, *balai* platforms are usually built away from more beaten forest paths in more secluded older-growth forests. Older-growth forests (*rimba belalo* or *rimba godong*) are less likely to be occupied by earthbound spirits or remnants of sickness and because of their age are considered to be 'cool', healthy or blooming forests (*rimba bungahon*). During the evening, in dreams or in trance, a shaman examines the location to see if the land is safe using a sacred instrument called the 'staff that sees from afar' (*kayu penyogot*). In a state of trance, he holds the stick in the direction of the location, and if it grows towards it, it is an affirmation (*bukti*) that the location is safe, cool and healthy (*tanoh bungahon*), and that the platform can be constructed. If the staff does not grow in this direction, the land is considered to be unhealthy or to be occupied by remnants or seeds of sickness, earthbound spirits or ghosts. If this is the case, a shaman may perform ritual to remove these entities, thus 'cooling' the land, or repeat the ritual in another location. The general outline for choosing cool, safe and healthy forests is followed whenever choosing land for a birthplace, opening a swidden field, or choosing a location to build a dwelling.

Key Aspects of Ritual at the *Balai*

Balai ritual always take place during the evenings, and depending upon the event, can last a night or several nights. The larger *balai* ceremonies held during the annual season of fruits can last a week or two. The formal dress of a shaman is similar to how the *Orang Rimba* perceive the dress of gods: a *sarong* wrapped around the waist (*bobot*

pinang), a turban worn on the head (*tokulut*), a scarf that hangs over the shoulders (*bopot leher*), and on some occasions a crown of white flowers. At points during the ritual, a shaman drapes a sheet of red cloth over his head, symbolizing a union with the tiger spirit. Many, but not all structured ritual ceremonies occur within the framework of prayer songs (*dekir*). There is room for improvising, whenever a dialogue is held with a god or spirit, and during invocations when a shaman's body becomes a vessel through which the god can speak. A shaman is usually assisted by a *pinginang* – a man who supports his body from behind while he is in a state of trance and, at different points in the ritual, puts offerings into the *songkot*. A religious-oriented elder female (*beyu*) often interprets a shaman's journey for the benefit of observers, while a drummer dictates the tempo of the ritual and signals shifts in the performance with a metal pan called the *kuali*.

Ritual usually begins with introductory songs, which outline the course and purpose of the journey and identifies the various gods with whom the shaman hopes to interact. During these songs the ritual environment is purified with incense (*bezoar*), which also attracts the attention of the deities or spirits and informs them of a desire to make contact. Initial offerings of food and tobacco may be placed in the *songkot* to establish the basis for an encounter and relationship. The shaman then sits upon his sacred mat (*tikor*) in front of a candle of dammar (*demor*), which is the focus of his attention throughout the ritual. The flickers and reflections of the candle often suggest the presence of or encounters with spirits or gods.⁵¹ During the next set of songs, which are often accompanied by dance, the shaman works himself into a state of trance (*tegejo*) by stirring up his breath force (*nafai*) or inner winds (*angin delom*), which allows his traveling soul (*huluy bejelon*) to disassociate from the body.⁵² This liminal state is said to be extremely dangerous, particularly for a novice, and can leave the body vulnerable to soul loss and invasion by earthbound spirits, black magic and sickness. Throughout the event, the *pinginang* supports the shaman's body as he drifts in and out of consciousness and gives him a nudge whenever his traveling soul becomes too distant or dissociated from his body.

One of the first deities called to the *balai* is the tiger spirit, who can facilitate entry to heaven and communication with other deities or earthbound spirits, while the shaman's *aku-on* birth deity, if not the tiger, can be summoned for similar reasons. If the destination is heaven, the sacred hornbill (*bur'ung gedong*) is called to its sacred perch to provide the shaman's traveling soul with transportation to the sky door. During interactions with the lesser gods, the shaman establishes a relationship as a subordinate,

flattering the gods with words of praise in an effort to play on their emotions. In exchange for their help, different varieties of flowers are placed into the *songkot* as offerings, each specific to a category of lesser god. During ritual related to the annual season of fruits, additional varieties of flowers can be offered as proof (*bukti*) that a particular season has arrived or to convince or seduce a god to play its part in initiating a goal related to the particular season.⁵³ In addition to flowers, sheets of cloth are hung on rattan lines surrounding the *balai*, each of the colors associated with and given as offerings to different categories of lesser gods.⁵⁴ As in everyday social relations (bridewealth, settling a fine), offerings of cloth place the gods in a position where they are obliged to assist their subordinate during an appeal (Kang 2002:52). Sacred white cloth can also be used during ritual to absorb, transport or bind soul matter during shamanistic ritual (during birth, swidden farming, examination of the body of the baby or patient) or to locate sickness during healing ceremonies.⁵⁵ After an encounter, the shaman thanks the deity for its knowledge or action, then usually makes his way to another god and begins a new set of songs specific to it. A *balai* ritual concludes with songs that recount the soul's journey back to the *balai* if one was made and its reorientation to this world and the body in the context of the larger cosmos, while calming his inner winds and bringing himself out of a state of trance.

Discussion

The beliefs surrounding the soul or spirit matter are a good starting point towards understanding *Orang Rimba* religion, relations between the spiritual and mundane in *Orang Rimba* belief, and *Orang Rimba* shamanism. Spirit entities are differentiated according to an association with the creator, heaven or earth, and whether or not they are associated with an earthly casing or body. Health depends on the fragile relationship between the soul/spirit matter and its material casing or body, which is conceptualized through botanic metaphor in the form of a plant or flower. Interrelated with notions of the hot:cold contrast, health is vulnerable to different forms of 'heat' from material or spirit entities which can cause the body and/or soul to *layu* or wilt away. These beliefs can apply to other entities that have an earthly casing or body, non-living entities, and places where manipulation of spirit matter may take place. As with many Austro-Asiatic peoples, the sun and the moon are dominant symbols in relation to the healthy effects of coolness and the damaging effects of heat (Endicott 1979; Laderman 1991; Turner 1967). While many of these beliefs are these days more strongly associated with Austro-Asiatic peoples, the prominence of the hot:cold contrast in the *Orang Rimba* belief

system may suggest that a pattern of these beliefs was more common among Malay peoples in the past.

The term *ker'emat* (sacred, holy) is a key religious concept in the *Orang Rimba* religion, and as with its traditional usage among the Malay, can be used adjectively to refer to a variety of living and non-living entities that have an association with the gods, spirits or a higher concentration of spiritual matter. In *Orang Rimba* society, this concept is interrelated with issues of gender, age and power, and winds its way into beliefs surrounding gender-related food prohibitions, religious game animals and gender-based sharing rights, shamanistic abilities, and religious boundaries with the outside world. The religious domain of life is strongly associated with adult men, and is dependent upon coming of age and maintaining prohibitions that create difference and restrict interactions with the outside world. These prohibitions serve to maintain the integrity and continuity of *Orang Rimba* customs and beliefs, but are also strongly intertwined with internal power relations. As with customary law, the realm of religion can be an avenue for adult men and in-marriage husbands to acquire status and authority in relation to other husbands, and to obtain authority and influence over the actions of women and their unmarried brothers who are considered minors in matters surrounding law and religion.

The *Orang Rimba* cosmology and religion is conceptualized according to a number of strong contrasts between the sacred and mundane and a 'mobile' life in the 'upstream forests' and 'sedentary' life in the 'downstream villages'. The boundaries between the forest and village are strongly perceived to be delineated according to the contours of the forests, each having its own customs, beliefs, religion and overall *adat* orders, which according to their beliefs cannot be crossed over or confused. Both the forest and the village are believed to be more fluidly connected through the flow of the rivers, with precedence of belief and value ascribed to upstream life in the forests. These ideas are reflected in bounded notions of the forest and village heavens, and conceptualizations of *kiamat*, the destruction of the world by the creator. The primary deities, some of which are similar to those in the traditional religious beliefs of the *Melayu*, are distinctly arranged according to whether they live along the upstream or downstream portions of the river in heaven, and are attributed with characteristics and values of upstream and downstream life on earth. The heavens are believed to be connected to this world through the rivers, and at times can be an avenue for the gods to enter this world in spirit form or the material body of an associated animal.

The *Orang Rimba* strongly believe that they can only maintain relations with their gods by maintaining cultural prohibitions that create difference and restricts interactions with the outside world. The most significant beliefs and prohibitions that restrict and limit interactions with the outside world are those related to the gods of sickness. While many peoples in the region have complex beliefs surrounding spirits of sickness and ritual boundaries to deal with them, for the *Orang Rimba* the threat of sickness lies in the downstream villages via the downstream region of heaven. Their beliefs surrounding sickness are ritually institutionalized outside of a pandemic scenario through prohibitions that discourage any unnecessary travel outside the forests and interactions with outsiders, and which quarantine new arrivals who travel outside the forests. More generally, *Orang Rimba* sickness boundaries resemble and are closely intertwined with the general rules that restrict all outsiders (non-*Orang Rimba*) as well as *Orang Rimba* men from approaching or interacting with a camp's females and children without the presence of their male guardians. These beliefs may have initially been influenced by and used as a means to prevent contact with pandemic disease, particularly smallpox, but are more generally used to maintain social distance from the *Melayu*, maintain the integrity of their society, and prevent outsiders from having much contact or influence on its core, the women and children. Within the *Orang Rimba*'s social world, these boundaries are implicitly intertwined with issues of gender, age, affinity, and power.

As with other Malayic and Austronesian peoples throughout the region, the *Orang Rimba* have a high concern for avoiding and appropriating dangerous earthbound spirits of the landscape (Skeat 1906a; Benjamin 1979, Endicott 1979, Evans 1937). Earthbound spirits are often attracted to *ker'emat* places and drawn to entities which possess spirit matter, and must be propitiated whenever *Orang Rimba* harvest *ker'emat* trees, open a swidden, build a dwelling, choose land for a birthplace or perform ritual atop the *balai*. In what may be a variant of the *badi* beliefs on the Peninsula, hunters must perform ritual prohibitions to discharge the incestuous 'heat' (*panoy*) from the *ker'emat* python, a servant of earthbound spirits, and by association two species of deer, whenever captured. The concern for dangerous earthbound spirits is pronounced whenever the *Orang Rimba* live a more sedentary life in a 'hot' swidden. They become less of an anxiety when they live a mobile life in the 'cool' forests. A shaman's abilities to propitiate earthbound spirits depends upon the maintenance of cultural prohibitions and restricted interaction with the outside world, and at times these beliefs can be used as a reason to leave a swidden and return to a mobile life in the forests.

The *Orang Rimba* religion and practice of shamanism has broad similarities with those of other Malayic peoples, as well as key differences. In the Malay system of traditional animism as it exists today and in the written record, the spirits are dissociated with heaven, and occupy a position under Allah on earth. Malay shamans do not conduct soul travel to interact with their deities or spirits, but rather call them to the location of the ritual, primarily in the context of healing ceremonies, and often for a client (Benjamin 1979; Laderman 1991). While the ancestors of other Malayic peoples would have been dependent on the forests to varying extents, and had different means and purposes to deal with their spirit world, the *Orang Rimba* system of animism may offer some insight into some of the broad patterns that may have been more common among Malayic peoples in the past.

As with the Semang, the *Orang Rimba* system of animism has a “cosmic axis that is up–down or god–man oriented” with *Orang Rimba* shamans acting more “as priests” whereby the gods may be approached often on behalf of the larger community (Benjamin 1979:15). With assistance from familiar spirits or rather birth deities from which their souls descend, *Orang Rimba* shamans conduct soul travel to meet and interact with their gods above the firmament in heaven. They do this to maintain the continuity of the season cycle and the pattern of rains, and to obtain luck in subsistence-oriented pursuits and matters pertaining to birth, fertility and health. The gods can also be approached for personal reasons – to acquire knowledge and power, or to cancel accumulated sin. This is combined with a horizontal (man–world) axis in which *Orang Rimba* concern for dealing with earthbound spirits, healing and magic is very similar to that of the surrounding *Melayu* (Benjamin 1979:15-20). The next chapter examines some of these issues in the context of their beliefs and rituals surrounding the management of fruit and the annual season of flowers and fruits.

Chapter 4 Endnotes

¹ Dogs are crucial to the success of *Orang Rimba* hunting activities, initially for scenting out and tracking an animal, and, once a scent is caught, driving the animal into a strategic location such as the banks of rivers or up a tree, where it can be trapped, speared or shot. Hunters develop strong emotional ties with good hunting dogs (*anjin bubuk’u*), which are believed to have a strong hunting drive or spirit (*hmow*). When a new litter is born, the first sign that a pup has a strong *hmow* and will be a good hunting dog is the presence of a black tongue, that it has a great deal of energy and can be easily angered, shows bravery and barks a great deal. Dogs that show promise for hunting are nurtured, fed and trained to hunt at an early age; played with roughly, and if game is killed, encouraged to bite at it. They are fed its blood in order to increase its anger and *hmow*. Lousy or lazy dogs that lack a hunting spirit are called *pinjilet bu’rit* or ‘bum

lickers' denoting their primary benefit for cleaning a baby's dirty rear end. The standard of living between a good hunting dog and a *pinjilit bu'rit* is great. While hunting dogs are well fed and treated as part of the family, *penjilit bu'rit* dogs are often kicked, chased away from camp and only rarely fed scrapes of food like left over cassava. Several ethnographers have written of forest people's inhumane treatment of their dogs (Schebesta 1936; Turnbull 1961; Singer 1978). For a description of *Orang Rimba* beliefs surrounding the lower heaven of the dogs (*pahalow* or *hentew*), a purgatory state that humans souls pass through upon death, see the chapter on birth and death in the appendix.

² On the Peninsula, the most common way the village Malay differentiate the different aspects of the soul are *semangat*, *nyawa* and *roh* (Endicott 1970:47). In the early 20th century accounts, the division of the soul and what each quality represents tends to get a little confusing. Wilkinson defines *semangat* as the spirit of physical life, the *nyawa*, the immortal essence or soul, life or spirit, and the *roh* as the spirit of life or the breath of life (Wilkinson 1906). Cuisnier appears to get a little closer writing that the *nyawa* signifies the breath and life, and joins the vital breath with the vital principle (*sumangat*) (Cuisnier 1951:197). The best early description of these beliefs, which Endicott employs as the baseline for his analysis of Malay Magic is Annandale and Robinson's description of the Patani Malay in Malaysia. According to the Patani Malay, the *semangat* is the soul present in all organized things, guiding and co-ordinating their actions" (Annandale 1903b:95; Endicott 1970:49). The *nyawa*, is the breath of life... "it enters the human fetus at the end of the sixth month, at which date the child becomes a person...the removal of the *nyawa* is synonymous with death" (Endicott 1970:65). The *roh* is that which distinguishes man from other animals, "It is that which goes out of the man when he sleeps...takes a long drink or yawns" (Endicott 1970:76). According to Endicott, "the *roh* distinguishes one's identity as a human being...without *roh*, a man is reduced to the level of animals, possessing only body, *semangat* and *nyawa*" (Endicott 1970:76). The most common overall term for the complete soul is *semangat*, whatever creature is being considered (Endicott 1970:79). For a comparative examination of these beliefs on the Peninsula among the Malay, Temiar and Semang, see Benjamin 1979.

The *Orang Rimba* in the northern *Bukit Tigapuluh* region also divide the different aspects of the human soul according to the *huluy*, *nyawoh* and *sifat* (from a draft of Elkholy's Ph.D. thesis). Of the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* of the *Lalan* and *Bahar* Rivers in South Sumatra, van Dongen writes,

Every person is made up of *sipat* (material), *roh* (or *halus*, spirit, thinking matter) and *njawa* (or *napas*, health producing matter). The material body is equated with *sipat* (character). The soul consists of *njawa*, or breath, which does not leave the body until the man dies, and of *roh*. *Roh* the spirit, or power of thought, is able to leave the body and wander around, as in dreams. At death the *njawa* and the *roh* go back to heaven and are received by god (*Radja Njawa*). (Dongen 1910:244)

The above example is somewhat different, as there is no derivative of the term *semangat*, although in other writings Dongen says that the *roh* can also referred to as the *halus*, and the *njawa* as *napas* (Dongen 1931:576-9). The soul proper, vital essence or the overall term for soul is apparently *roh*, together with the *nyawa* (or *napas*) or breath force also being immortal. In this example, the *sipat* or character appears to be more material and ceases to exist at death. The actual ideas could be a little different or

possibly misunderstood by van Dongen or myself. For further discussion of swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* beliefs surrounding the different aspects of the soul, largely in response to Schebesta's 1926 article on the *Kubu*, see Dongen 1931:576-9.

³ In northwestern Borneo, the Iban also believe the soul, or rather an attached soul plant is associated with their health and tends to sag or wilt away whenever sickness strikes (Sather 2003).

⁴ The term *res'ki* derives from the Arabic *rezeki* (livelihood, sustenance), which in the *Orang Rimba* and Indonesian context can broadly be defined as an individual's livelihood, good fortune, luck or blessings, which for many is believed to be dependant or bestowed by the spirits or gods. The *Orang Rimba* use the term *jer'ki* as a synonym, which may be a native term for the concept. In its more traditional usage, *rezeki* usually refers to chance economic pursuits that lie outside the structured realm of ritual, swidden farming or one's *adat* community. It usually includes economic pursuits which occur in the forests (hunting, fishing, searching for forest products), along larger rivers or the sea, through trade or in the market (Collins 1979). Throughout urban Indonesia, the phrase '*cari rezeki*' is now commonly applied to fit within the context of market-oriented pursuits such as wage employment, business and trade. For a more traditional usage of the term in Sumatra, see Dongen 1910, and Collins 1979. For an example of the Butanese use of the term in Sulawesi, see Blair Palmer's ANU Ph.D. thesis. For a city usage of the term, see Guinness 1986.

Like the *Orang Rimba*, van Dongen writes that the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* interpret encounters with specific birds in particular contexts as signs of good luck (*reseki*) or misfortune. The *tambah cuke*, *sejerih* and the *burung secai* are often interpreted in different contexts as signs of luck, while encounters with the *burung lang* are believed to bring bad luck. They believe that if a black sparrow (*burung pipit*) flies through one's room during the evening, then the person must leave the house, as within one hour it will be followed by a tiger (Dongen 1910).

Along the *Makekal* River, a newer way to obtain *res'ki* is by singing songs to Jesus, who solely in the context of male *res'ki* oriented activities (hunting, fishing and collecting forest products) is sometimes mentioned as the god of good fortune or luck (*tuhan res'ki*). To receive *res'ki* from *Jesuy*, a hunter may joyously sing the simple lines, 'Jesus bring us luck, Jesus bring us luck' (*Jesuy bor'i res'ki*, *Jesuy bor'i res'ki*) as they go about their hunts in the forests. The singing of these songs is curious, as the *Makekal Orang Rimba* claim to have never encountered Christian missionaries in the *Bukit Duabelas* region. These ideas may have filtered in through stories in from *Orang Rimba* in the southern *Singkut* region who have had more intensive relations with *Batak* missionaries (who have carried on with the work of American missionaries who were present in the 1930's), or possibly through *Batak* and *Dayak* loggers employed by the logging companies over the last thirty or forty years. By any means, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* know extremely little about Jesus and apart from singing these simple songs, have no association with him in dreams, trance or assign him any other place in their religion or cosmology.

⁵ Malayic peoples in Sumatra and Malaysia have similar spiritual beliefs surrounding the tiger and their spirit village in the jungle, while Skeat mentions a Peninsular Malay belief that elephants also take human form in spirit villages deep in the jungle. The Malay also have religious beliefs surrounding the crocodile (Skeat 1900:282), *siamong*

gibbon (Skeat 1900:185), and at least religious related legends involving the scaly anteater (Skeat 1900:154), greater reticulated python (Skeat 1900:302) and the Argus pheasant (Skeat 1900:123). According to Skeat, the Peninsular Malay believe the *Kuau* or Argus pheasant to have been metamorphosed from a women, “the reason of whose transformation is not known” (Skeat 1900:123). The *Orang Rimba* version of this story is included in the appendix.

⁶ Whenever a pig (*bebi* or *nangoi*) is captured, the hunter must eat its heart in order to receive luck (*res’ki, jer’ki*) towards capturing them on future hunts. Heavy fines apply if anyone other than the hunter were to eat the pig’s heart. After large game is butchered there are prohibitions (*pantong*) on the discarding their bones in the rivers. It is believed that if the horns of a deer or for that matter the bones of all large game are thrown into the rivers (*tosamput*), the hunter will have bad luck in future hunting pursuits. After eating a turtle, its shell must be hung on the trees and are not allowed to be disturbed as to not anger the god of the burrow (*or’ang de gaung*).

⁷ As with other Malayic peoples, the gall or bile (*sompudu*) of different animals are used to treat different types of sickness; the bear (*bur’uwong*) to treat smallpox or bloody stools; monitor lizard (*biowak*), eye sickness (red eyes); porcupine (*landok*), dry cough and poisoning. The gall/bile of the *katuih* and *keberau* fish is believed to help with stomach sickness. The quills of the *ker’emat* common porcupine (*landok*) are believed to be charged with a concentrated essence and are often used as magical objects; the power inherit in the quills is believed to have the power to wilt away (*layuko*) soul matter. The flesh of a specific variety of tree shrew (*tupai jumput*) is used to treat poisoning, while the skin of the crocodile (*buyo aik*) is believed to facilitate the female reproductive system. The feathers (*buluh*) and spurs (*taji*) of the *ker’emat* Great Argus and Peacock pheasants are also believed to have medicinal value and are used during curing ceremonies.

⁸ As with the surrounding *Melayu*, the male sexual organs of rodents (rats, squirrels), and particularly tree shrews (*tupoi*) are prized by the men. After being captured, the sexual organs of the males are often eaten on the spot before the rest of the animal is cooked over a fire. In the past, tree shrews (*tupoi*) were categorized as a precious good (*bar’ang indah*), which together with ivory, rhinoceros horn and bees wax were the sole right of the Sultan, and legally anyway, were supposed to be handed over to the *jenang*. There are also female prohibitions on eating several irregular varieties of fish, frogs (*kodok*), river shrimp (*udang*), crabs (*kotam*) and all types of river snail (*kelumboi, tenguyung, cecepan*). While the above creatures are allowed to be consumed by the men, the reasons why they are prohibited to be eaten by women appears to be less related to stamina and more closely tied to their strange and irregular features and possibly the inability to fit them into regular or safe classification systems (Douglas 1966; Laderman 1981).

⁹ On the Peninsula, the Malay also associate the “*kayu ara* (a kind of fig tree)” with the graves of *kramat* saints (Skeat 1900:66). According to Skeat, “...and at the base of its roots, is an oblong-shaped spacing having the appearance of a Malay grave, with the headstone complete...to this sacred spot constant pilgrimages are made by the Malays, and the lower branches of the tree rarely lack those pieces of white and yellow cloth which are always hung up as an indication that some devout person has paid its vows”(Skeat 1900:68) and again, “A tree overshadows the grave and is hung with strips of white cloth and other rags which the devout have put there” (Skeat 1900:66).

¹⁰ In a discussion of Kelantan magic in Malaysia, Raymond Firth points out the Malay “have a strongly integrated framework of ideas expressed in terms such as *semangat*, *hantu*, *keramat*, symbolized forces responsible for success and failure, health and sickness, ease or disturbance of mind” (Firth 1996:155). In the context of people, he describes *keramat* as an, “extraordinary or superhuman power, with positive or negative aspects uppermost according to circumstances. The notion of *keramat* has a strong inferential aspect; it is an invisible power the presence of which is inferred from concrete events which are take to be evidence (or *bukti*)... To be *keramat* could be the result of searching, a matter of obtaining special knowledge- *ilmu keremat*. *Keremat* is an active, often offensive power, whereas *semangant* is a rather passive, sensitive life principle” (Firth 1996:153).

¹¹ Among the Peninsular Malay, there is a division between the ordinary magician (*pawang*) who deals primarily with magic, and the *belian* or shaman proper who mediates with the spirit world and conducts curing ceremonies. The shaman (*belian*) is distinguished by his method of operation; “he carries out his work, which includes curing, divination, and general spirit propitiation by means of spirit-raising séances called *berhantu* or *berjin*. In contrast, the ordinary magician (*pawang*) must rely on recitation of spells and performance of ritual actions using special materials” (Endicott 1970:13). According to Osman, the Malay *pawang* is a specialist who is able to invoke the help of the spiritual world, while the *bomoh* is more of a medicine man or shaman who can traffic with the spirits (Osman 1989:preface, xxiii). To date, no research has been conducted with *Melayu* shamans or magicians (*dukon* or *malim*) in Jambi, South Sumatra or Riau. More similar to the *Orang Rimba*, swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* (*dukon* and/or *malim*) and *Petalangan* (*dukon biaso* and *kemantan*) shamans are divided according to their degree of knowledge and power, which to a large extent is based on age and experience, and desire to pursue religious matters (Dongen 1910). Among the *Petalangan*, normal shaman are called *dukon biaso*, while more advanced level shaman, who perform community and healing rituals, are referred to as *kemantan* (Kang 2002).

¹² For reasons similar to the *Orang Rimba* (gender divisions, the reason:passion contrast), most Malay shamans are male. As Endicott writes, some Malay midwives (*bidan*) who specialize in the magic of bringing babies into the world may be regarded as minor part-time magicians (Endicott 1970:13). It is quite different with the nearby *Besemah* of South Sumatra, where shamanism appears to be more gender neutral. According to Collins, in the past both men and women could become shaman (*dukon*), “male *dukon* were called *pendite* (from Sanskrit, meaning *pundit*, learned man)” while, “the females were called *rebiah* (from Arabic, meaning devout or God-fearing women)”. These days, he writes that almost all shamans are women, the most common reason being, “men, more than women, are supposed to be good Muslims and to abide by the Islamic prohibition on what is called ‘craving favors from spiritual forces or *setan-iblis*’ (devils and demons)” (1979:231). While there were older female shaman along the *Makekal* and other rivers, I was not aware of any female big shaman (*dukon godong*) in *Bukit Duabelas*. Some of my informants said that this was more common in the past, but as far as they were aware hadn’t occurred in the present generation. Elkholy mentions that there was a female big shaman in the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region during his research (personal communication with Elkholy).

¹³ Of Sanskrit origin, the term *sakti* is used to refer to a shaman's power, usually a supernatural or spiritual power obtained by acquiring knowledge (*ilemu*), establishing relations with the gods or spirits or through the search for magic (Casparis 1997).

¹⁴ The word *bopatah* derives from the Malay *pepatah*, meaning 'adage', 'maxim' or 'aphorism' (Wilkinson 1948:181). Of the *Petalangan*, Kang writes that the word (*pepatah* or *bepatah*) can be defined as a "maxim or proverb"...which are put together in, "couplets, in which the first line parallels the second line in rhythm and meaning". The *Petalangan* mention that the speech of *adat* law (*undang undang cakap*) is made up of *pepatah* or *bepatah*, and represents the wisdom of the ancestors (Kang 2002:37).

Some *Orang Rimba bopato* serve to bring or stop the rains (see chapter on swidden farming in the appendix). There are a number of *bopato* to increase the effectiveness of a spear or trap or to seduce different animals into them. In regards to swidden farming, *bopato* can be used to appease the spirits, ensure safety when felling trees or remedy a situation when a branch is believed to land the wrong way. They can also be used to stir up the wind in order to facilitate the burning of a field, and afterwards to bind the spirit of the god of swidden plants into the ritual first plantings of the field. During birth, *bopato* are recited so that the baby does not become deaf or dumb, and some function to scare away spirits, ghosts or rainbows (spiritual snakes that can feed on the blood of baby) who linger around the birthplace. At marriage, *bopato* can be recited by a headman or shaman so that the bride and groom maintain their feelings for one another and uphold their obligations in marriage.

¹⁵ As is the case with other forest minorities in Sumatra, the village *Melayu* believe the *Orang Rimba* to have a great deal of powerful magic (*jampi*), as they often say, because of their ancient way of life and closer relations with the spirits of the forest (Kang 2001; Porath 2002). Some *Melayu* stories tell of powerful *Kubu* magic which can causes the occasional visitor from the village to become lost or trapped in the forest or can mesmerize their children or unwed daughters to leave the home in the middle of the night for the forest, become lost, trapped or marry with the *Kubu*, which of course is not allowed (Nasruddin 1989). In the opposite manner, the *Orang Rimba* also believe that the *Melayu* are holders of powerful magic, and have similar stories. Ironically, the vast majority of *Orang Rimba* personal magic (*jempi*) is obtained or purchased in the surrounding *Melayu* villages or Javanese transmigration sites during trips to meet with a patron or visit the market. This village magic contains a great deal of the words and knowledge of Islam, and Koranic characters and concepts, which are often unfamiliar to the *Orang Rimba*. Durkheim's writings on magic provide a good comparison between *bopato* (community magic) and *jempi* (individual or personal magic). According to Durkheim, "while magic is full of religion, just as religion is full of magic, the use of magic is individualistic and seeks technical and utilitarian ends...The difference between magic and religion is that religion has a definite social group as its foundation ...there is no Church of magic...no lasting bonds which make them members of the same moral community, comparable to that formed by the believers in the same god or the observers of the same cult...The magician has a clientele not a Church" (Durkheim 1961:60).

¹⁶ If one wakes up during the night or in the morning and cannot remember a dream, they believe that this is only a 'flower dream'. However, if they can remember the dream and it weighs on their minds, preventing them from falling back to sleep, then it is 'support or evidence' (*porotujo'on* Malay: *pertunjangan*) that the dream may be a

sign and have some kind of meaning. If a person dreams that they are picking chili (*cabe*), it is a sign that upon the next hunt they will find a porcupine, and if one comes upon round beads or gold in a dream they refer to this as *manek mer'jan*, and when they wake and return to the location, they will find a greater reticulated python (*ulo sawo*). Signs can also foretell sickness; if one eats a *punti* fruit in a dream it is sign that they will have stomach sickness upon waking. If they are given honey from a friend, they will wake up with a cough. Signs can also warn of impending danger. If collecting bark for poison (*tunku*) the next day the person will be attacked by a bear. Signs can tell of relationships and marriage; if losing a dog during a hunting trip, there will be great difficulty in one's marriage; if a snake crosses their path, there will soon be an arranged marriage, but it will not work out. If bit by a centipede (*lipan*) in a dream, a person will soon marry, and if bitten by a snake they will definitely marry. If a bundle of string is found on the ground, the person will encounter a disagreement or problems with a camp member upon waking. An encounter with a tiger in the forest can mean that someone harbors negative feelings towards the person and is a threat (*mimpi amo*). If one engages in sexual relations or sees a light crash to the earth, then dangerous earthbound spirits are nearby and need to be propitiated. If they meet someone who has already died in a dream, then it means they have already entered heaven. However, if he dies again in the dream, then its spirit is disturbed and may still be on earth.

¹⁷ According to one bachelor receiving mobile education along the *Makekal* River,

I can dream, but I am still young. Sometimes I can travel to the realm of the gods during my dreams, but it is as if I am only observing or watching the gods...If I try to speak with them, the words do not come out of my mouth. I am not yet able to interact with the gods, nor would they want to interact with me. They (the gods) are guarding themselves against me, because I am still dirty (*kotor*), and not pure (*ker'emat*) or powerful (*sakti*), because I am not yet a shaman. Before I started to go to school, I had already started to have these types of dreams, strange ones, and at night I would join with the others and pray (*bedikir*). However, after I started to go to school and crossed the realms and broke with our *adat*, they stopped, I lost the ability. I am no longer sacred (*sakti*) and break too many of our rules, like bathing with soap, eating domesticated animals, leaving the forests for long periods of time and interacting with outsiders. This makes me sad, I feel I need school to help make the *Orang Rimba* smart, to protect the forests, but I am no longer sacred and cannot participate in my religion. However, I believe in dreams more than anything I have learned in school or from the outside world.

¹⁸ One of the most important processions of a senior shaman is a wooden dream pillow (*bentol dukon/ker'emat*) made from the dark wood of the *ter'ap* tree. Sleeping on a dream pillow is said to facilitate signs, luck and fortune (*jer'eki/res'ki*), visions of past or future events, and facilitate controlled soul travel (*mimpi bejelon*) in dreams. They are never allowed to be touched or polluted by others, and during the day are kept out of the sunlight, wrapped in a pleated mat (*tikor*) and hung in a sacred portion of the rafters (male religious space) in the home. During the large *balai* ceremonies held during the season of fruits they are wrapped and stored under the *balai* platform while ritual interactions with the gods take place during the evenings. When unwrapped from the mat in the morning, the color is said to change from black to white, a sign of its purity, power and future efficiency.

¹⁹ In Arabic and Sufi Islam *dhikir* means the recitation of religious formula or the remembrance of god, which are performed through dance and cyclical patterned songs (Jabbar 1979:115). Very early on, these prayer songs may have been very familiar natives and their own prayer songs, and may have been one of the features which attracted people in the region to Islam. Throughout communities in the interior of Sumatra, this term appears to have overlaid a native term for prayer songs, as appears to be the case with the *Orang Rimba* and *Sakai* (Suparlan 1995). In the bits and pieces of the prayer songs (*dekir*) I was able to collect, the *Orang Rimba* appear to structure their prayer songs according to couplets and semantic parallelism. Kang writes how the *Petalangan* in Riau arrange their ritual speech or prayer songs (*anak iyang*) in this manner (Kang 2001; Kang 2002). As Fox mentions, a more elaborate and compulsory use of parallelism in ritual speech is found as you move towards the Eastern part of the Archipelago (Fox 1988).

²⁰ The term *aku-on* is commonly used by Malayic peoples in Sumatra (*Minangkabau*, *Kerenci* and by the *Petalangan* in Riau) as a term for a shaman's familiar spirits (Ahmad 1922; Bakels 1994; Kang 2002). I was never able to discover if the term was used by the village *Melayu* in Jambi or South Sumatra, and have yet to come across the term in the literature in regards to the Malay proper in Malaysia. The term *akuan* is commonly used among Minangkabau migrants in the Negeri Sembilan region of Malaysia (Ahmad 1922). According to Kang, among the *Petalangan* in Riau the *oku-okuan*, "refer to the shaman's celestial counterparts who can communicate with one another while the shaman is in trance" (Kang 2002). Unlike the Malay or the Minangkabau, *Petalangan* spirit familiars are not specific familiar spirits bound to the shaman, nor are they inherited, but are a range of spirits, which a shaman (*kemantan*) interacts with in order to acquire *ilmu* (knowledge), power, or are used in the process of healing. These spirit familiars occupy hierarchical strata in the spirit world, under the power of Allah, and are the caretakers or messengers of his knowledge (Kang 2002:105-6). Further, she writes that not only humans, but every creature in the world has its own guardian spirit or spirit familiar (*okuan*), the four types being; the *jengkodi* (angel) for animals and man, the *mambang* (fairy) for plants and trees; the *semangat boe padi* (rice spirits) for rice; and the *ajo ikan* (king of fish) for fish (Kang 2002:34).

²¹ Their conceptions of the drunken sea (*lout mabuk*) appear to share some resemblance with the ocean. On a trip to Minangkabau, one of my informants had the chance to view the ocean for the first time, and was amazed of the similarities to descriptions given by shamans during periods of soul travel. Upon tasting the salty water, he immediately made the comparison with shamans' descriptions of *lout mabuk* and vowed to never doubt them again,

When I was growing up my parents always told me to not act crazy or we will throw you into the drunken sea (*lout mabuk*), the taste of which will make you drunk (*mabuk*). The shamans had learned that the water was like this through experiences of soul travel in their dreams. While visiting the ocean in Padang, and after tasting the water, this was proof (*bukti*) to me. I thought, they were right, the water tastes of salt and would make you drunk if you drank it. I thought, I really believe the elders, and will not doubt them again.

²² The *Orang Rimba* tell a story that in the distant past the (female) moon was married to nearby (male) star, probably Venus. Whenever the moon appears next to this star,

they believe that someone in the camp has the desire to marry. A very similar story is told by the Batek de, borrowed Endicott writes, from the Peninsular Malay (Endicott, 1979). Skeat also briefly mentions this Malay belief (Skeat 1900:112). The *Orang Rimba* version tells as follows,

Once there was a young man and beautiful young women who lived on the surface of the moon. The man was very much in love with the women and wanted more than anything to marry her, but the women was reluctant to marry. Said the women on the moon, 'if you want to marry me, then go down to the earth and find lots of money, bring it to me here and then I will marry you'. The man agreed and went down to the earth, and for a long period of time, collected money here and there. When he had collected enough, he attempted to fly back to the moon, but his wings became very tired and he fell back to the earth. He tried this many times but with the same results, and after a while transformed into a bird. These days, when the moon appears during the day we always here him calling, '*duit, duit*' ('money, money'). He is calling out to his beloved on the moon that he already has enough money and wants to return, but is trapped on the earth and no longer has the ability to make the return journey.

²³ The *bidodar'i* (Sanskrit: *vidyadhari*), or the term anyway, may have been influenced by the beautiful dancing girls of Siva's heaven, overlaying a native term for their own mother goddesses associated with fertility. Similar versions of mother goddesses intertwined with fertility and soul babies also appear in the traditional cosmologies of Malayic, Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic peoples throughout the region. According to Laderman, "The heavenly midwives (*bidandari*), demigoddesses who live in Kayangan but come down to earth to assist mortal midwives and occasionally women in childbirth" (Laderman 1991:93). According to Edo, the Semai believe the *koog* (spirit) of the first *bidat* or midwife lies in the section of the heavens which looks over the souls of children (1988:66). Variations of term are also occur with the Sam (*bidadali*), Madurase (*bidadari*), Sasak of Lombok, Wol, Saw, Gor (maiden goddess with wings from the abode of the gods) and Xar (spirit female) (Tryon 1995). For an interesting example of the beliefs surrounding birth and the creation of soul babies among the Luangan of southern Borneo, see Weinstock 1987.

²⁴ In the version Sandbukt was told, the *bidodari* create human souls and when the shaman's traveling soul comes to retrieve it for the mother, he consults with the gods to establish which category of god will agree to adopt the child. After birth, a veneration of the soul baby is then brought by the Mother Goddess down to the adopting deity and placed within a shielded enclosure in their village, which are called *kedelomon* for the girls and *anjung* for the boys. In this version, a veneration of the babies soul stays in the enclosure, while its traveling soul is taken by a shaman for its body on earth. When a person dies, he writes, only certain pure shaman are able to return to the enclosure, somehow merge with it and become "individuated entities of veneration in their appropriate category of deity" (Sandbukt 1984:92). From what I was told, the rules for entering heaven are not this strict, and one does not need to be an extremely pure big shaman to become a lesser deity, and that this is only the case if one wishes to enter the palace and live with the *bidodari*. These beliefs are probably all interrelated in some manner or another and would have to be clarified by a senior shaman, which is extremely difficult.

²⁵ *Melayu* religious leaders in the region have a history of manipulating the beliefs and fears of *kiamat* for various purposes in their communities. The most widespread

example of such a case in the written record occurred during the Jambi revolution in order to rally support for Dutch resistance (see historical chapter in appendix, and Muttalib 1977).

²⁶ The term *behalo* is also widespread, but often has a slightly different meaning from the Sanskrit (*bharala*), meaning idol or figurine for worship. For the Kiribati, the word means ‘spirit post’, while for the Maringe it means ‘a carved spirit figure’. Several Austronesian languages use a derivative of the word in similar manner to the *Orang Rimba* with the meaning spirit or God. This is the case in Motu (shadow, spirit), Burn (the worshipped things), the Sasak of Lombok (a kind of spirit), the Marshalese (those gods) and Tagalog in the Philippines (*Bathala*, meaning God) (Tryon 1995:737-8).

Several Malayic peoples throughout the region commonly refer to their gods, spirits or ghosts with the pre-term *orang*, meaning people. In the *Orang Rimba* case this may be closer to a native term for the concept. The Besemah in South Sumatra refer to the sea spirits as *orang de laut*, the mountain spirits as *orang de gunung* and the invisible people (or spirits) as *orang halus* (Collins 1989:260). The *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* use this term to refer to gods in heaven and not the earthbound spirits. Curiously, they do not refer to the tiger spirit (*mato mer’ego/dewo mer’ego*) or the god of *siamong* (*dewo siamong*) with this pre-term, which may denote their closer association with the earth.

²⁷ In the late 19th century, Skeat mentions a Selangor Malay belief in an elephant village which is not located in heaven, but similar to regional beliefs in the village of the tiger spirit, is located in an unknown location deep in the jungle (Skeat 1900:149-156). According to Skeat, the elephants had “a city of their own, where they live in houses like human beings and wear their natural human shape...whoever trespasses over their boundaries of that country turns into an elephant” (1900:151-2). In the early 20th century, van Dongen recorded a belief in an elephant spirit within the prayer songs of an *Orang Batin Kubu* healing ceremony (Dongen 1910).

²⁸ According to Boomgaard, Europeans introduced maize to the Indonesian Archipelago in the 16th century, sweet potatoes in the 17th century, and to a lesser extent (it was never as popular), benkuang and the Irish potato in the late 18th century (Boomgaard 2003a). Of cassava, he writes, “Little mention is made of cassava in Sumatra prior to the 1850s. Found growing in the Batak area and in Bengkulu in the 1880s and in Kerenci in the 1890s, it reached the island of Siberut and the Siak region by 1900. By then it was a staple among the Batak and tribal groups like the Akit and Sakai also planted it” (2003:597). After reading a version of the swidden chapter in the appendix, James Fox (personal communication) guessed that cassava may have been introduced to the *Orang Rimba* as late as just 50–70 years ago.

²⁹ Throughout Sumatra, Malaysia, Borneo and Java, many Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic swidden farmers appear to share a ‘broad’ outline of similar beliefs and ritual related to swidden field (personal communication with James Fox). In West Java, the swidden-based *Kasepuhan* refer to this as the *ngaseuk* ritual (Adimihadja 1989). According to Adimihadja, the sacred pole is believed to be the centre or pulse (*pusat*) of the swidden field, a symbol of the beginning and end of life both in and outside of the swidden. Several representatives of the crops in the field are planted around the pole within a sacred bounded grouping (*paparokoan*), after which a shaman who deals with ritual surrounding the swidden (*sesepuh girang*) presents offerings of cloth, a *keris*, a

small mirror, coconut oil and small scissors. He then performs ritual prayers to the spirits of the earth, wind, fire and to the ancestors (the prophets Adam and Muhammad) to bring safety, harmony (*keselemat*) and an abundance of crops in the field, and to protect the crops from evil spirits (*jin, silumon, iblis*, etc) (Adimihadja 1989:240). The bounded grouping is built in the middle of the field and its borders marked with bamboo (Adimihadja 1989:283). Skeat and Blagden mention a similar ritual among the West Semai, “On arriving at the first available open space near the middle of the field the magician drew a circle round himself made a specially made staff, and all the planting sticks were heaped up inside the circle...the wide irregular ring was called the rice bin (*kepuk*), and in the centre the “*bunglei*” plant was planted in the ground. Around this plant, the seeds of rice (from the previous years *semangat padi*) were deposited within the ring” (Skeat 1906:349). Of the Peninsular Malay, Vaughan-Stevens writes, “But the demons could not break through the enchanted ring of planting sticks, nor could they penetrate to the inner circle of seven holes in which the body of the rice was buried” (Skeat 1906:349). In the *Orang Rimba* variant, the guarding logs are not allowed to be crossed by a person until the crops are harvested or it is believed the spirit will be released, and the crops could fail. For further information see the swidden farming chapter in the appendix.

³⁰ If tapir or rhinoceros is captured there are certain charms (*bopato*) that the hunter must immediately perform, while covering its body with *topos* leaves. If this ritual is not performed they believe that the animal can come back to life, attack the hunter and run off into the forest.

³¹ Throughout the region, many Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic rice growing peoples share similar conceptions in the soul of the rice field (*semangat padi*), which is often conceptualized as closely resembling the human soul, and often associated with complex ritual to bring the soul of rice to the plants in the field. Sir James Frazer, was one of the first to comparatively investigate the matter regionally, dedicating a section (part five, volume seven) of his twelve volume study, “*The Golden Bough*” towards a comparative description of second hand reports in the largely Austronesian portion’s of Southeast Asia (Frazer 1914 180-204). Titled the ‘*The Rice Mother*’, Fraser compares some of the 19th and early 20th century accounts of peoples in Peninsular Malaysia, Minangkabau, Java, Bali, Lombok, Borneo, and also Burma (1914; part five, volume seven, 180-204). Having spent a great deal of time on the Malay Peninsula, Skeat, Blagden, and Wilkinson were some of the first to write extensively of these beliefs for Malayic and Austro-Asiatic peoples on the Malay Peninsula, which were later added to by Winstedt and structurally analysed by Endicott (Blagden 1897; Endicott 1970; Skeat 1906; Skeat 1900; Wilkinson 1906; Winstedt 1961). In South Sumatra, Collins and Sakai briefly discuss some of these ideas for Malayic highland peoples (Collins 1979; Sakai 1999), and in Western Borneo Jensen has written of similar beliefs held by the Malayic speaking *Iban* in Sarawak, Helliwell for Malayic speaking *Gerai* of Kalimantan, and in Java Geertz briefly writes of broadly similar Javanese conceptions of the soul of rice (Geertz 1960; Helliwell 2001; Jensen 1974). Of Iban beliefs, Jensen writes, “none matters more than the personified spirit/soul of rice, *samangat padi*, to which human emotions and responses are regularly attributed and with which the *samangat* of man is ultimately identified” (1979:109). Variants of these beliefs extend as far east as the Philippines, where they have been recorded among the *Ilongot* (Rosaldo 1975).

³² The god's of sickness mobile life in boats is curiously similar to the *Orang Laut*, who for centuries had a reputation for slave raiding in the region. Their frequent contact with outsiders along the straits may have resulted in a situation where they were a carrier of disease. The *Orang Rimba* do not have any contact with these peoples, and generally do not have any knowledge of their existence.

³³ In prayer songs, mention is often made to a group of 'seven' (*tujuh bangso*) large rivers or bodies of water (*lout*) in which the gods of sickness are most commonly associated: *lout bekililing*, *lout mabuk*, *lout mer'angin*, *lout singkat*, *lout godong*, *lout songsang* and *lout kecil*.

³⁴ As with other Malayic peoples, the *Orang Rimba* often associate patches of bamboo in the forests as the abodes of earthbound spirits, which must be propitiated before it is harvested (Skeat 1900).

³⁵ In highland South Sumatra, the Besemah believe the primeval jungle to be the dwelling place of the *ulubalang penyakit* (war-chief of sickness), malevolent spirits who cause sickness to those who enter their sphere of existence (1979:304). For an Austro-Asiatic version of the *Penyakit*, see Edo 1998.

³⁶ Gimlette mentions some Malay spiritual beliefs surrounding smallpox on the Peninsula,

A nameless tree grows on the banks of the *Sungai Neil* (Nile River?), a river whose water flows to heaven. This tree bears fruit once a year, and when there are many fruits on any one side of the tree, smallpox will occur in the subjacent country. In days long ago, the Prophet once summoned leaders of the smallpox demons, who are *Mering Tanu* for the male group, and *Mering Tandok* for the female group. Muhammad told them to put the disease on his body, so that he might experience the pain of smallpox. They did as he commanded, and when the prophet realized the pain he read out a passage from the Koran calling Allah to drive out the disease. When the group leaders *Mering Tanu* and *Mering Tandok* heard the inspired words as the Prophet read them, they said they would avoid anybody who should ever repeat the; moreover, if a sick man with smallpox suffered very much, that they would leave him on hearing the prayers to God. (Gimlette 1971:38-9)

One group of Malay people believed that there were 199 demons connected with smallpox, each which operated on a different part of the body.

There is *Seri Berdengong* (His lordship Buzz) for the ear; *Seri Gempa* (His lordship earthquake) for the roof of the mouth; *Seri Gunting* (his lordship scissors) for the genital organs; *Seri Pasak* (His Lordship Peg) for all of the joints; *Raja Besawan* (The Epileptic King) for the nose; *Seri Bergantong* (His Lordship Suspension) for the chin; *Seri Chahaya* (His Lordship of Lustre) for the right cheek; *Seri Balek* (His Lordship in Reverse) for the left cheek, and so on. The demon for smallpox on the tip of the tongue is *Maut*, so named from the Arabic word for death. Special reference has been made to cholera and smallpox, because these are the diseases most dreaded by Malays-especially smallpox, which by Malays is euphemistically called *penyakit orang baik*, or the disease of good people. (Gimlette 1971:39)

Boomgaard writes, “In most areas of the archipelago it was assumed that smallpox was caused by an often female demon, god or evil spirit. In many areas the notion existed that this demon came from the sea. There are various examples of ritual attempts to get rid of the smallpox by constructing a small boat or raft, on which the disease was sent downriver, back to where it came from” (2003b:600). In South Sumatra, the *Melayu* believe in an evil spirit named *Dandai* who is associated with smallpox (1982).

Gimlette recorded some Peninsular Malay beliefs on quarantining the sick:

The shaman often forbid any one to enter a sick room, or even to approach the dwelling by a particular path. A string with coconuts fronds hung on it is generally drawn across the path as a notice of pantang or prohibition. Fines are levied by the bomor for transgression of his taboo. A string called Tali pupoh was stretched across main path entering the village, and twists of leaf depended from the string. At either of the pat was stuck a bamboo. These were not as might be thought, offerings to the evil spirits of disease, but a sacrifice to other spirits called up by the shaman to combat the evil spirits of cholera. (Gimlette 1971:40)

³⁷ There are other words used to denote these feelings or to swear, which do not have an association with sickness, some which include anus (*burit*), feces (*tasi*), male sexual organ (*cici*) and sex (*bejuluk*, gender specific term only used by males), which is often used in a similar way to ‘fuck’. *Behalo anjin*, meaning the god of dogs, is another common expression used to express wonder, amazement, confusion or is used as a pun, as there really isn’t a god of dogs. However, the terms for sickness appear to be the most common and potent of these words. In Poland, one particularly harsh swear word translates to the word cholera, a reflection of the devastating effect it once had in Eastern Europe.

³⁸ Throughout Sumatra (Lampung, South Sumatra, Kerenci, Jambi, Riau, Minangkabau, and Ache), Malaysia, Borneo and Java many Malayic, Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic peoples have a complex system of beliefs surrounding the tiger spirit (Wessing 1986). In this region of the world, “tigers are believed to have close affinities with man, either through common descent or as a vehicle for the souls of human beings” (Wessing 1986). Many peoples in Sumatra and Malaysia have myths surrounding the origins of the tiger spirit and how their ancestors initially formed a relationship with them. In Sumatra, the *Talang Mamak* and village *Melayu* in Jambi and Riau believe the tiger spirit (*datuk*) originates from one of their ancestor’s disobedient children, who was chased into the forest and later took the form of a tiger, later becoming the ruler of the jungle. This story is similar to those told by the Peninsular Malay and Minangkabau immigrants in the former Negri Sembilan (McHugh 1959:104-105). Many Malayic peoples have a story of how an agreement was reached in the form of an oath between humans and tigers, in which a mutual respect for each others territories was reached. The tigers often pledge not to disturb humans, with the exception of people who have broken with *adat*. In contrast to the villagers, the *Orang Rimba* do not really conceptualise separate territories in the forests for man and tiger, but do have a similar legend surrounding an oath made between the humans and tigers. After making this oath, the tigers are believed to have moved their village from the forests to heaven (see appendix).

³⁹ *Orang Rimba* conceptions of a tiger spirit village are very similar to the Peninsular Malay. According to Skeat,

Far away in the jungle (as I have several times been told in Selangor) the tiger-folk (no less than the elephants) have a town of their own, where they live in houses, and act in every respect like human beings. In the town referred to their house-posts are made of the heart of the Tree-nettle (t'ras jelatang), and their roofs thatched with human-hair-one informant added that men's bones were their only rafters, and men's skin their house walls-and there quite lively enough until one of their periodical attacks of fierceness comes on and causes them to break bounds and range the forest for their chosen prey. (Skeat 1900:157)

⁴⁰ Upon hearing a rustle or growl in the forest, it is common for a man to climb up a tree while calling out the magically laden verses (*bopato*) below. Notice the positive 'upstream' connotations in the verse.

The gibbon calls from the upstream	<i>Siamong duduk di hulu akeh duduk</i>
I sit at the mouth of the river	<i>di muar' o</i>
The gibbon dies in the upstream I do not	<i>Siamong mati di hulu akeh idak</i>
receive danger, bring safety to (<i>Bekilat</i>),	<i>depot behayoh, Bekilat engkau!,</i>
Bring safety to (<i>Mijak</i>)	<i>Mijak engkau!</i>

Of all the animals, the Peninsular Malay believe the *siamong* gibbon shares the greatest affinities with man, and have several legends, which describe their relations with humans (Skeat 1900:185). Similar to the *Orang Rimba*, van Dongen mentions that the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* along the *Lalan* and *Bahar* Rivers believe that if one hears a *siamong* call during the evening, that within a month a man will die of blood, usually from a tiger attack, and if heard by a women, from difficulties during childbirth (Dongen 1910:213). Juli Edo writes of Semai religious beliefs surrounding some of the first gods (*hala*) in the heavens, one that was said to take the form of a *siamong* gibbon (Edo 1998).

⁴¹ The Malay more commonly refer to earthbound spirits by the Arabic derived terms *setan*, *jin* or *iblis*, and to my knowledge do not commonly use the term *siluman*. However, the swidden-based *Kasepuhan* in East Java use the term in a similar manner to refer to invisible earthbound spirits of the landscape (Adimihadja 1989). According to Sakai, the *Gumai* in highland South Sumatra have a belief in an invisible spirit village called '*dusun silam*, which is said to exist in the middle of virgin rainforest (Sakai 1999:310).

⁴² Elkholy describes an interesting *Orang Rimba* belief in local hybrid earthbound spirits in the northern *Bukit Tigapuluh* region,

Subon is the name of such a population of deities located near the *Sungai Kebong* area. They are a form of *setan tanah* of the most malignant order. They commonly live beneath rice fields where they are said to raise wild animals such as pig and tapir but, like the Malay villagers they descend from, they do not eat these animals. According to legend, these 'hybrid' deities were conceived when a villager from *Sungai Kebong* lost his way in the forest with insufficient food supplies. In his last moments of life he was approached by the female deity *Subon* and given an ultimatum, to either marry her or die. To save his life the villager chose the former and their offspring now comprise the population of deities inhabiting this backwater area. (From a draft of Elkholy's Ph.D. thesis)

⁴³ In *Kubu Conceptions of Reality*, Sandbukt tends to make a primary association between *layu* palms and *silumon* tree spirits, which he describes as “the cultivates of the earthbound deities” and then draws an association with the *Melayu* villagers and more generally the term *layu*. He supports this claim by writing that the *Melayu* typically live in swampy areas where these wild palms grow, and that the *Melayu* ‘have a predilection for (eating) the shoots and palm-starch’ of these trees, as well as porcupines, which are considered a ‘*layu*’ animal that falls outside of Islamic food prohibitions. He associates the *Melayu*, who are known for their sorcery (they can *me-layu* matter), with the *silumon* tree spirits, which also have the power to *me-layu* certain objects. He then attempts to further associate the *silumon* tree spirits with the villagers because they were described to him as wearing *sarongs* instead of loincloths. Further, he writes that “the ‘*Kubu*’ are quite explicit that there is an essential homology here” (Sandbukt 1984:87). The *Orang Rimba* are not explicit that there is an essential homology here, between the concepts and term *layu* (wilting away), *Me-layu* (to wilt, decay) and the *Melayu* villagers, or between the villagers, *layu* palms and *silumon* earthbound tree spirits. No one I questioned believed there to be any association between the locations of *Melayu* villages with the swampy areas where wild palms tend to grow, nor was I ever able to find a *Melayu* preference for eating wild palm shoots, or an association with the porcupine and *Melayu* villagers. Fine clothing or *sarongs* are the *huluy* dress of the lesser gods and sometimes the spirits of the earth. The *Orang Rimba* do believe the *Melayu* villagers to have effective sorcerers who have the power to *Me-layu*; however also believe their own shamans to be effective in these regards. Both *Orang Rimba* and *Melayu* villagers believe the earthbound spirits are able to *me-layu* the body and soul whenever they invade the human body.

The primary religious association with *layu* palms is with the god of swidden plants (*or’ang de tanohmon*), from which they draw their *layu* power and not from *silumon* tree spirits who are only attracted to their essence and take up residence in the trees. These *layu* plants are more generally associated with the purity of the upstream region of heaven and not the *Melayu* villagers. Their *layu* essence is only able to *layu* the soul of rice, which is ‘latently’ associated with sedentary *Melayu* life.

⁴⁴ According to Skeat, the Malay believe that if the greater reticulated python is killed and its bile kept (they are believed to have two bile), it will develop into a serpent of twice the size from which it was taken (Skeat 1900:302). In 2003, a supposed 49 foot python named “Fragrant Flower” was obtained by Curugsewu park in Central Java that was said to have been caught and kept by members of a *Kubu* tribe, although it doesn’t mention where or which *Kubu* cultural group they are referring to (“Captured: 49-foot python”, Reuters, December 30, 2003). According to the article, the *Kubu* supposedly “revered the creature as a ruler” and required the zoo to wait several months before obtaining the villagers’ permission to bring it to Java (ibid). During a brief discussion with *Kubu* somewhere near the town of Bangko, Richard Freeman writes of an interesting belief in spiritual versions of larger pythons (or *naga*, dragon), which have horns and legs, “All three men were adamant that these 10 meter snakes sported cow-like horns. They also said it had a moss like growth on its back. Once a snake reaches a very large size it begins to get fatter and shorter. It grows four legs, each with five toes. Then it swims out to sea. I drew another picture, this time of an Indo-Pacific crocodile. The *Kubu* all agreed that this is what the great horned snake eventually becomes. In this form they called it a *naga*. They said it was larger than the common crocodile (or *buaya*)” (Freeman 2004).

⁴⁵ The *Orang Rimba* do not use the term *badi*, although their conceptions surrounding *panoy* appear to be similar in some ways. According to Annandale, the Patani Malay believe that only certain wild animals have *badi*, which include some of the higher order animals such as the elephant and rhinoceros, but also deer, squirrels, cats, several types of snake as well as the Semang (Annandale 1903a:101; Annandale 1904:29; Endicott 1970:67; Skeat 1900:428). Endicott writes that that the *badi* animals are in some way interrelated with the beliefs surrounding *semangat/kramat* (1970:66). In regards to the animals above, the *Orang Rimba* believe that the elephant and rhinoceros are *ker'emat*, the squirrels are stamina related animals and that deer and the greater reticulated python are *panoy* animals. Endicott writes that, "In Patani, the *badi* of animals are thought to cause a kind of madness wherein the actions and even the appearance may come to resemble those of the animal from which the *badi* came" (Endicott 1970:72; Annandale and Robinson 1903:102). According to Benjamin, "the Temiar have a concept similar to *badi*, which is called *caay*, the odor of blood" (Endicott 1970:70).

Skeat writes of a similar ritual performed on captured deer to discharge or remove the *badi* from the animal, "When you have caught a deer, cast out the mischief (*badi*) from the carcass...**Here take small portion of the eyes, ears, mouth, nose**, hind-feet, fore-feet hair, liver, heart, spleen, and horns, wrap them in a leaf and deposit them in the slot of his approaching tracks" (Skeat 1900:178). For some reason Winstedt tends to see this as a Hindu ritual, "But the books of magicians still contain directions for many humbler occasions when the Hindu Malay made offerings to Siva. Those who had snared a deer were to wrap in a leaf, portions of her *eyes, ears, mouth, nose*, feet, liver, heart, and spleen and put the packet in the slot of his victim as a present for the Hindu god."

⁴⁶ McHugh writes, "the word 'hantu' like most Malay words, is difficult to translate by a single English word. It stands primarily for the unseen powers which Europeans term "ghosts". But the term hantu is also associated by the Malays with many mysterious types of the subject", such as owls, birds, middle finger, trees" (McHugh 1959). According to Dentan, "ghost is a terrible translation of hantu in most cases... Hantu are more like demons (or *guizi* in Chinese, for which "devil," the standard translation, is equally misleading). Descartes screwed up Anglophone (and, of course, Francophone) ways of conceptualizing the semi-empirical world of things, which disturb, puzzle and therefore scare us, things onto which we project our fear as *mana* or *semangat* or *shen* (or *guai*). There really is no satisfactory term, so pervasive is the Cartesian material/spiritual dichotomy. I use "demon" for *Semai janii'/nyanii'*, since demons are pre Cartesian and not firmly either material or spiritual" (personal communication with Robert Dentan). According to van der Helm, *hantu* can be many things for the Senon (or Jakun), but whatever it is: (a) it is immaterial, although it may appear in various material forms; (b) it is always evil (*jahad*), as opposed to *orang halus*, who are more like angels (personal communication with Peter van der Helm).

⁴⁷ Upon catching a common wild pig, a hunter will sometimes speculate as to whether it is the ghost of a person (*orang*). Of *Bukit Tigapuluh Orang Rimba*, Elkholy writes that those who have led a particularly bad life can be reincarnated as head lice and a number of other unpleasant entities (from a draft of Elkholy's Ph.D. thesis).

⁴⁸ Passing through Sumatra towards the end of the 13th century, Marco Polo wrote,

It should be known, that whatever is told about the desiccated bodies of small human beings, which are imported from the Indies, is nothing but pure fable. So called beings of this kind are prepared in Sumatra in the following manner: There is a species of ape, not very tall, but with a face like that of small human beings. They shave the hair, only leaving it below the chin and on other parts of the body where humans also have hair. Then they dry the bodies and prepare them with camphor and other species. When these animals have been prepared in the manner described above, so that they look like small men, they put them in wooden cases and are sold to the traders, who dispatch them to all parts of the world. So this is all fake, for neither in the Indies nor in any other country are pigmies found as small as these monkeys. (Dammeran 1929:121; Yule 1983)

One fairly recent account of the *Orang Pendek* comes from Benedict Allen's *Hunting the Gugu* (1989). While entertaining reading, Allen's story of sleeping overnight in a "Kubu" camp while searching in the forest for the *Orang Pendek* is obviously fiction. In an *Orang Rimba* camp he would never be allowed to sleep so close to the women, let alone be offered sexual services from a man's wife. It is not entirely clear which *Kubu* he encountered, although given his limited time in the region, and *Orang Rimba* boundaries, I would imagine that it probably would have been with *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples. As the *Orang Rimba* do not use the term *gugu*, I would guess that this is a cognate term used by these peoples. The book does include some interesting local and Dutch accounts of the *orang pendek* or as he refers to them, the "gugu". As Allen writes,

The *Gugu* were, more often than not, small; on that, at least, there was overall agreement, and some folks insisted they walked with backward pointing feet to confuse anyone audacious enough to track them. In 1924 a Dr Dammerman examined a paraffin-wax mould of a Gugu print from upper Palembang and proved that it was the impression of the flat hind feet of the Malayan sun bear. He noted that this species was more habitually bipedal than any other, standing at 5 foot. Its claws were often retracted—that was why they did not show in prints; the small prints discovered were not of Gugu young, as claimed, but of the squarer front paws of a bear. The old wisdom that the Gugu pottered along with his feet turned back to front must have derived from the bear's manner of walking with toes turned inwards, thus rendering the little toe particularly conspicuous. (Allen 1989:27)

In March 2004, I encountered a hysterical rubber tapper returning from his gardens, who claimed to have just encountered the headless corpse of an *orang pendek* near a river close to the SPG transmigration site in *Bukit Duabelas*. Upon returning to the location the next day with others, the body was gone, and was believed to have been scavenged by wild animals. While most rural *Melayu* surrounding *Bukit Duabelas* believe that the existence of this animal is beyond question, some Westerners also tend to believe it to be some kind of unclassified ape roaming the forests of Sumatra. A former journalist named Debbie Martyr has gained some notoriety for her accounts of an acclaimed sitting in *Taman Nasional Kerinci Sebelat*. Since 1993, she has worked in Sumatra as head of the tiger conservation team and spends her spare time looking for the *orang pendek*. According to Martyr, "It doesn't look like an orang-utan. Their proportions are very different. It's built like a boxer, with immense upper body strength. But why an animal with immense upper body strength should be lumbering around on the ground, I don't know. It makes no sense at all. It was a gorgeous colour, moving

bipedally and trying to avoid being seen.” (Freeman April 2004) While visiting Kerenci with *Orang Rimba* informants, we met with two British filmmakers who were in Sumatra to make a documentary on the *Orang Pendek*, and were happy to explain to them some *Orang Rimba* conceptions on the topic. A version of a legend surrounding the *hantu pendek* is included in the appendix.

⁴⁹ Van Dongen and Schebesta write that the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* build *balai* platforms for shamanistic ritual, as do the Jakun on the Peninsula (Dongen 1910; Schebesta 1926; Skeat 1906:189). Skeat and Blagden write that the village chief of different Malay and Jakun tribes on the Peninsula sometimes attach a *balai* or tribal meeting hall to their homes, some large enough to hold around sixty or seventy people or an entire tribe, while the Besisi build large *balai* platforms on the occasion of weddings (Skeat 1906:189). The *Petalangan* of Riau also build *balay* platforms for their interactions with the spirit world. According to Kang, “the *belian pole* ritual requires construction of an additional ritual hall called the (*balai*), “Male members of the shaman’s clan build the ritual hall in front of the shaman’s house as a preparation for the ritual performance” (Kang 2002:108). Firth writes of a miniature *balai* platform built by a Malay shaman during a healing ritual as a means to place offerings to and draw a spirit from the sick (Firth 1967:195).

James Fox (1993) provides an interesting description of the widespread usage and meanings of the term *balai*:

Although the term *balay* has no known reflexes in the Formosan (F) languages, it does take a variety of forms in both the Western Malayo-Polynesian and Oceanic languages. In the Philippines, reflexes may refer to a ‘house’ while in the Malayic languages, Minangkabau included, *balai* denotes a ‘public meeting –house’. This is also the meaning of the Palauan *bai*. Other reflexes refer to a ‘raised platform’ or a kind of pavilion which may have a roof and walls on one or two sides, as is the case with the Balinese *bale*. Such structures are to be found in the household compounds as well as in temples and other public places. In Melanesia, reflexes of *balay* may refer to a ‘shed for yams’ or a ‘garden house’ or a ‘house of retirement for women during menstruation and childbirth’. In the Pacific however, reflexes of *balay* generally refer to the house proper as they do in the Philippines (Fijian, *vale*, Samoan, *fale*; Hawaiian, *hale*). Blust proposes an original primary gloss for this term as ‘village meeting house’ suggesting that the general Malayic language forms retain the original meaning, whereas those in Oceania indicate a transformation in the use of this structure. (Fox 1993:11)

⁵⁰ Ironically, a smaller version of this most sacred and pure ritual receptacle finds its nearly identical yet polluted counterpart in the surrounding villages, where these rattan cone-like receptacles (*sangkok ayam*) are used to feed chicken (Sagimun 1985).

⁵¹ Endicott writes that in Malay ritual, incense and candles serve as ‘communicators’ or serve to make contact with spirits (Endicott 1970:140).

⁵² Fox writes how metaphors of ‘heat’ and the ‘power’ of performance are common in the ritual of Eastern Indonesia.

The pattern of such celebrations calls for a gradual build-up of ritual ‘heat’ which

must then be cautiously dispelled by ritual ‘cooling’...Important utterances, given ‘heat’ by the ritual, mark the pinnacle of a ceremony and lend weight to the general view that the ‘taking of voice’ (the words of the ancestors, spirits, gods) is a powerful and dangerous undertaking. (Fox 1988:27)

For a discussion of Malay ideas surrounding the inner winds in the context of a healing ritual, see Laderman 1991.

⁵³ For instance, white *sibul* flowers are associated with and offered to the god of elephants (*or’ang de gejoh*); *hantuy* and *keladi* flowers to the god of swidden plants (*or’ang de tanohmon*); *merapo*, *tunom*, and *sapo* flowers to the god of honeybees (*or’ang de rapah*); *hantuy* flowers to the god of the riverhead (*or’ang de mato aik*); *jambu* flowers to the god of the village angels (*o’rang de melekat or’ang mer’u*); *tangkal* and *jawo* flowers to the goddesses of rice (*or’ang de padi*); *remanai* and *ranggung* flowers to the gods of bearded pigs (*or’ang de nangoi*); and *cempaka* flowers to the gods of sickness (*or’ang de penyakit*); *glingnag* and *kemang* flowers and *lalan* grass is offered to the tiger spirit (*mato mer’ego*).

⁵⁴ I was unable to discover the full range of colours associated with each of the gods, although red is associated with the tiger spirit (*mato mer’ego*), and I believe, the gods of fruit (*or’ang de buah*); white is associated with the goddesses of rice and gods of elephants (*or’ang de gejoh*); white and yellow associated with the god of swidden plants (*or’ang de tanohmon*); and black, with the gods of sickness (*or’ang de penyakit*).

⁵⁵ Skeat writes that the Peninsular Malay use white ‘soul cloth’ in ritual to retrieve the child’s soul, manipulate soul matter, and to absorb or bind the soul of rice (*semangat padi*) to the ceiling of the rice barn (Skeat 1900:45; Endicott 1970:139).

Chapter 5

Belief and Ritual Surrounding Fruit and the Annual Season of Fruits

Introduction

The lowland mixed dipterocarp forests of Sumatra provide the *Orang Rimba* with an amazing variety of edible fruit, including mangos, mangosteen, cluster fruits such as rambutan, langsung and jujube, spiky durian fruit, the star fruit and enormous 50-pound jackfruits. Fruits provide a splash of sweetness, sour and tang to the *Orang Rimba*'s diets, and according to seasonality, can be a major focus of their subsistence pursuits. Fruits wind their way through numerous aspects of the *Orang Rimba*'s social and religious lives, appear in their cosmology as heavenly forests, gods and guardian deities, and sometimes influence people's names. Fruit plays a major role in the construction of *Orang Rimba* identities.

The greatest numbers of fruit ripen after the extended rainy season, during a phenomenon unique to the dipterocarp forests of Southeast Asia, the annual season of fruits (*petahunan*). This time of the year is a primary or pivot season in the forests, around which the other major and minor seasons revolve. The *Orang Rimba* believe that this season is crucially interrelated to the regeneration of the forest plants and the availability of key resources in the forests. It is a primary focus of their seasonal ritual activity. This chapter examines some of the primary *Orang Rimba* beliefs surrounding fruits, the management of fruit trees, and some of the key seasonal ritual surrounding the annual fruiting season in the forests. The seasonal ritual described in this chapter relates to initiating the annual season of fruits and takes place several months prior during the annual season of flowers. Their more elaborate and drawn out *balai* wedding ceremonies, held during the annual season of fruits, will be the focus of the next chapter.

The chapter begins with a description of how fruits are classified, and how classifications reflect and can influence gender collection schemes, distribution rights, key religious beliefs and gender prohibitions on eating certain fruits. I describe how the *Orang Rimba* make various claims on fruit trees and how claims justify uxorilocal residence patterns, distribution rights and rights to live in and use the resources in customary forests. In relation to the more important and socially significant fruit trees, I continue my examination of the branches of *Orang Rimba adat* legal codes, how they are manipulated in relation to the trunk law (*pangkol adat*), and relate to the management of fruit trees and fruit.

The bulk of the chapter is devoted to an examination of three key rituals conducted during the preceding season of flowers, which serve to 1) initiate the annual season of fruits, 2) call the honeybees down from the heavens, and 3) seduce the bearded pigs to embark on their seasonal migrations.¹ In the context of these three rituals, I continue with an examination of the upstream:downstream contrast, and how life based along the rivers is reflected in the *Orang Rimba*'s conceptions surrounding the 'upstream' gods and goddesses of fruit, the god of honeybees, and the 'downstream' gods and goddess of the bearded pigs. Continuing with an investigation of the hot:cold contrast, I examine how some of the *Orang Rimba*'s beliefs surrounding health, and the vitality of soul matter in its various forms, winds their way into these conceptions. Some of the broad similarities with the seasonal ritual of Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia are examined, and the ways in which certain aspects may be grounded in an Austronesian tradition. The chapter also examines how the ritual surrounding the fruiting season can be used as a means to encourage prohibitions that maintain boundaries with the outside world.

How Fruits are Classified

Research by Saw et al. provides a good example of the amazing diversity of edible fruit present in the lowland mixed dipterocarp forests in Malaysia (Saw 1991). In an examination of a 50 ha plot of primary lowland rainforest in which 340,000 trees were examined, 820 species of trees were identified, 76 of these bearing edible fruit. (Saw 1991)². The tables below provide a Sumatran example of this diversity, including a range of possibly 60–70 species of fruits and nuts exploited by the *Orang Rimba*, although there are certainly many more.

The first overarching division in the *Orang Rimba*'s fruit classification system depends on seasonality. The *Orang Rimba* refer to the non-seasonal varieties as 'deep water' fruits (*buah pendelom aik*), reflecting their ability to grow throughout the year even when submerged by the rains. Many of the deep-water fruits are caulifory type plants, a class of plant unique to the dipterocarp forests where trees flower and bear fruit on their trunks. While the durian is a good representative of a caulifory plant, many of these varieties grow as small bulbs along the base of a tree, are extremely sour and of little importance aside from being a minor snack. Of more importance are the non-seasonal fruits from the *salacca* palms such as the *salak* fruit, and several non-seasonal varieties of fruit seeds.

Table 5. 1 Some Non-seasonal Fruits³

1. <i>pupuy</i> (<i>Comaropsis griffithii</i>)	11. <i>pisang ker'ayak</i> (<i>Musa</i> sp.) 'wild banana'
2. <i>sengkuang</i> (<i>Dracontomelum magiferum</i>)	Fruit from the (<i>Salacca sumatraesis</i>) palms
3. <i>ridon kuneng</i> (<i>Mishocapus</i> sp.),	12. <i>salak rimba</i> (<i>Salacca edulis</i>)
4. <i>bunot</i> (<i>Calphyllum macrocarpum</i>)	13. <i>kelumbi</i>
5. <i>puar</i> (<i>Aingiberaceae</i>),	14. <i>lensum</i>
6. <i>rukom</i> (<i>Flacourtia</i> sp)	Seeds
7. <i>punti</i> (<i>Palaquium macrocarpum</i>)	15. <i>nunggai</i> (<i>Coelosteggia griffithii</i>)
8. <i>lempahung</i>	16. <i>kulim</i> (<i>Scorodocarpus borneensis</i>)
9. <i>kosor</i>	17. <i>biq</i> (Malay: <i>petatal</i>)
10. <i>sintanom</i>	

The majority of edible fruits are seasonal and are further classified according to general similarities, whether they are 'wild' or 'tended', how they grow and are collected, and by the gender which tends to reflect these categories. Several classes of fruit appear to be grouped according to general similarities or genus, such as a number of *Baccaurea* species, which tend to be collectively referred to as *tumpoi* and the subcategory *tungau* (Sandbukt 1988a). The *Orang Rimba* further distinguish 'wild' from 'planted' fruits. Wild varieties are referred to as *laloton* fruits, reflecting their tendency to attract flies in older growth forests, and are usually distinguished from the semi-domesticated varieties as being somewhat smaller, sour and seed-filled. While some may have been influenced by past swidden farming efforts, the most defining characteristic of wild *laloton* fruits is that they are not associated with former swiddens, commonly claimed, or regularly tended. Many of the wild fruits, particularly the ones that are bitter or sour, are associated with men and ascribed male gender.

The *Orang Rimba* call the semi-domesticated varieties of fruit 'planted fruits' (*buah cucuk tanom*). In contrast to the 'wild' fruits, they are often larger, sweeter or bland, contain less seeds, and are commonly associated with former swidden fields that have returned to secondary forests (*sesap tuo*). The *Orang Rimba* do not always intentionally plant these fruits and most are the remnants of snacks discarded in the swidden. When these seeds take root and eventually return to secondary forests, clusters of semi-domesticated fruit trees are referred to as *nuar'on* or fruit gardens. Fruit gardens are always claimed by the family who originally opened the field, and are often tended or cleared to facilitate growth and increase productivity. While these rules are not set in stone, many of the wild fruits tend to be associated with men and ascribed male gender, while many semi-domesticated or planted fruits tend to be associated with women and ascribed female gender.

The main division in seasonal fruit classifications depends upon how the fruit ripens and is collected, either high upon the trees branches or fallen to the ground upon ripening. Smaller bunches of cluster fruits that often ripen in the trees branches are called ‘cut fruits’ (*buah tutuhan*), referring to the manner in which they are collected. As climbing trees is considered men’s work, these fruits are often associated with men and ascribed male gender.

Table 5.2 Primary Seasonal Cut Fruits (*Buah Tutuhan*)

Wild fruits (<i>laloton</i>) untended fruits in the forests (<i>rimba godong</i>)	Planted fruits (<i>buah cucuk tanom</i>) often tended in former swidden’s (<i>sesap tuo</i>) and referred to as fruit gardens (<i>nuar’on</i>)
Genus <i>Baccaurea</i> (<i>tampoi</i> and <i>rambai</i>)	
<i>tumpui rimba</i> (<i>B. griffithii</i>), <i>tumpui sebanggang</i>	<i>tumpui ku’a ku’a</i> (<i>B. parviflora</i>), <i>tumpui nasi</i> , <i>tumpui kuning</i> and <i>tumpi inggulon</i>
<i>tungau lajor</i> , <i>tungau kar’ai</i> and <i>tungau rinam</i>	<i>nadai</i> (<i>B. motleyana</i>), <i>keduduk rimba</i> (<i>B. racemosa</i>), <i>rambai</i> (<i>B. motleyana</i>) and <i>kotompon</i>
Genus <i>Nephelium</i> (male in gender: a ritual class of fruit only to be eaten by adult men)	
<i>ranggung</i> (<i>N. mutabile</i>), <i>ridan</i> (<i>N. glabrum</i>), <i>sio</i> , <i>kudoq kuyah</i> , <i>na’ong pa’o</i>	<i>rembutan</i> (<i>N. lappaceum</i>), <i>remanai</i>
Genus <i>Lansium</i> ‘ <i>langsut</i> , <i>duku</i> ’	
<i>beduku rimba</i> ⁴ (<i>Lansium pubescens</i>)	<i>beduku nuar’on</i> (<i>Lansium domesticum</i>)
<i>Langsut</i> (<i>Lansium</i> sp.), <i>air air</i> (<i>Lansium</i> sp.)	
Genus <i>Ziziphus</i> ‘ <i>jujube</i> ’	
<i>beder’o rimba</i> ⁵	<i>beder’o nuar’on</i> , <i>manggui</i> , <i>tukaqon</i>
Other genus of cut fruits	
<i>cupak manggis</i> ‘mangosteen’ (<i>Garcinia mangostana</i>), <i>sentul</i> (<i>Meliaceae</i> sp.), <i>ker’anji</i> (<i>Buchanania lanzan</i>), <i>kelepug</i> (<i>Ficus</i> sp.), <i>har’a</i> (<i>Ficus</i> sp.), <i>benton</i> (<i>Vitex</i> sp.), <i>suloi</i> (<i>Vitex</i> sp.)	
Unidentified cut fruits which are found during the season of fruits	
<i>dekat</i> , <i>siabuk</i> , <i>bekil benton</i> , <i>pletok</i> , <i>mato bedok</i>	
Petai bean pods (<i>Leguminosae parkia speciosa</i>)	
Fruit found on wood climbers	
<i>melapangan</i> (<i>Bauhinia</i> sp.), <i>kar’et</i> , <i>kayu manau</i> , <i>paca pinggan</i>	

While fewer in number, larger fruits that fall to the ground when ripe are referred to as the ‘falling fruits’ (*buah labu ke tanoh*) and are always collected by the women. The falling fruits contain a great deal more flesh, are often more sweet or bland and are not as sour as the cut fruits. Because of their size, dietary impact and the *Orang Rimba*’s preference for them, the falling fruits are more valuable than the cut fruits, and are often claimed by females through inheritance. Many of the falling fruits are strongly associated with women and ascribed female gender.

Table 5.3 Primary Seasonal Falling Fruits (*Buah Labu ke Tanoh*)

Wild fruits (<i>laloton</i>) Untended fruits in the forest	Planted fruits (<i>buah cucuk tanom</i>) Often tended and referred to as fruit gardens (<i>nuar'on</i>)
Genus <i>Durio</i> (<i>Durian</i>): female in gender	
<i>dur'ion daun</i> (<i>Durio zebethinus</i>)	<i>dur'ion</i> (<i>Durio testudinarum</i>)
Genus <i>Mangifera</i>: male in gender	
<i>Mecong rimba, pouh, tayoi</i> and <i>rerawo</i>	<i>mango</i> (<i>M. indica</i>) ⁶ , <i>mecong</i> (<i>M. foetida</i>), <i>kemang</i> (<i>M. kemanga</i>) and <i>tajoi</i> (<i>M. sp.</i>)
Other Genus	
<i>belimpi</i> (<i>Averrhoa belimbi</i>) related to 'starfruit' (male in gender), <i>tabedak</i> ⁷ related to the 'jackfruit' (<i>Artocarpus integer</i>), <i>pisang kayu</i> 'papaya' (<i>Carica papaya</i>)	
<i>buah buntor</i> (<i>Ochanostachys amentacea</i>)	

There is a strong relation between a fruit's gender, the manner in which the fruit grows or is collected (falling fruits or cut fruits), whether it is wild or semi-domesticated, its taste (sour/sweet/bland), value and ritual status. Thus, reflecting men's work, many of the cut fruits, such as the *rambutan* and the *langsats* (*beduku*, *langsut*), are male in gender, while many of the falling fruits, such as *dur'ion* and jackfruit (*tembedak*), are female in gender. Similar classifications surround some of the wild and sour fruits, which tend to be associated with men, and some of the semi-domesticated, sweet, creamy or bland fruits, which tend to be associated with women.

Gender-Related Prohibitions Surrounding Fruit

Several fruits are prohibited or restricted to women, often with the reason that they are 'hot' foods and can 'heat' up their bodies, make them skinny, and negatively affect their fertility. These prohibitions often apply to younger women trying to conceive or who are already pregnant and living at a birthplace. Some of these fruits, such as *beder'o rimba* and *beduko rimba*, are classified as wild, hot and cut fruits, which are associated with men and ascribed male genders. Because of its *ker'emat* and ritual status, the *rambutan* fruit ('cut', 'male') and several other *Nephelium* species are classified as 'hot' fruits, and are forbidden to be eaten by women. These fruits are associated with the ritual surrounding the annual fruit season, and as a result fall within the male domain of religion. Several of the falling fruits, such as *tayoi*, mango and *dur'ion* are also considered sour, sweet and 'hot'. While women are allowed to eat some of the 'hot' and sour varieties in moderation, in some cases to satisfy pregnancy cravings, some of the female forbidden and restricted fruits appear to be symbolic of gender and power, and as with the 'hot' nature of honey can influence gender-related consumption and distribution patterns.

The relation between gender classifications and female forbidden or restricted fruits are commonalities and never set rules. However, whenever this trend is deviated from, issues of gender and power arise. Both the domesticated and wild varieties of the *dur'ion* fruit provide good examples. The planted or domesticated variety of *dur'ion* fruit is strongly associated with uxorilocal residence patterns, female inheritance, distribution rights, and more generally with femininity, female rights and power. It is ascribed female gender, yet is believed to be a 'hot' fruit, which in moderation is not dangerous to women, but in cases of overindulgence is dangerous to a woman's fertility and sanity. As with honey, these beliefs limit women's intake of *dur'ion*, yet reserve their right to distribute it to others in the camp. The 'wild' *dur'ion daun*, which is equally bland and creamy, is also strongly associated with or claimed by a grouping of women (*war'is per'ebo*), but in contrast to domestic *dur'ion* is not strictly inherited by individual females. While also ascribed female gender, this 'wild' variety is believed to contain even more 'heat' and because of this is a female forbidden fruit. This opens up the opportunity for men to collect and distribute this important fruit to others in the camp.

Ownership, Claims and Laws Surrounding Fruit Trees

While some of the less significant fruits can be collected from any trees, the more important and socially significant fruits can only be harvested from one's customary forests with permission from the female owner or the group of females associated with forests or trees. The rights to more important fruit trees, such as *dur'ion*, are inherited by individual women. Other important fruit trees are claimed by groups of women and are managed collectively according to community laws (*hak besamo*). Outside of nomadic forays (*remayo*) during periods of ritual mourning (*melangun*), women generally live in the same customary forests throughout their lives, and in these forests they have natal rights to exploit the resources. Upon marriage, men leave their natal customary forests and their rights within, and acquire secondary rights through their wives to harvest or make claims over fruit trees (and other resources) in their customary forests. Customary '*adat* forests' are not marked with specific borders. However, in regards to a family's history along a section of a major river, long-standing claims of ownership or use over particular fruit and honey trees are the skeleton around which families base general rights to live and use the resources in specific tracts of forest.

Women's Dur'ion Trees, Fruit and Men's Dur'ion Taffy

As tends to be the case throughout Sumatra, *durian* is the most relished, most valuable and most socially significant fruit in the forests for the *Orang Rimba*. For the *Orang Rimba*, *dur'ion* is a symbol of femininity and female passion. Within the rhymes of *seleko adat* couplets, the spiky exterior of the *dur'ion* is compared to the uncontrollable passions (*nafsu*) of a woman, while the intellect and rationality (*akal*) of man are likened to the coolness of a cucumber (*kintion*). In argument, the *dur'ion* will always squash the cucumber. As *Orang Rimba* men often say, women are experts in manipulating an argument with their emotions, although their basis always lacks reason (*akal*). This is one of the reasons why men classify women as minors in the eyes of *adat* and why women are formally excluded from the legal decision-making process.

Dur'ion is an important form of inheritance, establishes ties and rights within customary forests, and is a socially important fruit for distribution. As with the surrounding *Melayu*, *dur'ion* trees are 'heavy' or immovable inheritance (*har'to nang ber'at*), which are passed on through females from mother to daughters.⁸ Together with honey trees, *dur'ion* trees ground a woman and her family to particular tracts of customary forests, giving them implied rights and the justification to live in and use a forest tract's resources. They also give individual women exclusive distribution rights over the fruit in their trees. According to gender-related collection schemes, women normally have the right to distribute the more valuable falling fruits, while men generally have the right to distribute the cut fruits, which depending on the type of fruit and gender-related restrictions on eating them, are sometimes primarily shared with men. There is greater social significance (status and implied obligation) involved in the distribution of the more valuable falling fruits, particularly *dur'ion*, which is the only fruit that approaches the obligation inherent in the sharing of game or honey. As with game and honey, a woman's right to share *dur'ion* with the larger group builds and strengthens bonds of reciprocity with receivers (*beloi budi*), obliging them to return the favour in the future. Aside from the rare instance of *dur'ion*, the fruits are of little significance in trade.

The importance of *dur'ion* trees is reflected in the *Orang Rimba*'s system of law. If brought before the camp for taking a woman's *dur'ion* fruit without first asking permission, a thief can be accused of minor (*maling cur'i*) or grand theft (*maling bongkah*) depending on the amount of fruit taken from the tree, and can more broadly be accused of violating the female owner in an incestuous (*sumbang*) manner. In relation to *adat* law, forms of theft are normally judged in relation to the four below

(*empat de bewoh*) of the trunk law (*pangkol adat*), each having a set fine depending on the particular case. When a thief is accused of violating a woman (*sumbang*), the case can become much complicated and serious, and wind its way into the four above (*empat de pucuk*) of the trunk law and carry a much larger cloth fine. This can cause tension in the relationship between brothers and their mother and sisters (*war'is per'ebo*), who will have to pay a fine, and, depending on the frequency of the events, can result in threats to cut them off from the cloth.

While women enjoy sharing rights over their trees' *dur'ion* fruit, their husbands acquire the right to distribute its most important derivative – *dur'ion* taffy. After it is collected, a good deal of the fruit is slowly cooked by the women in order to make a highly coveted sweet *dur'ion* taffy called *lempuk*, or mixed with chilli's (*cabe*) to make a spicy taffy called *tempoyak*. As with cooked honey, this taffy is sealed in containers and is one of the few food items that can be stored for long periods. Of social equivalence to a woman's honey, *lempuk* and *tempoyak* are delicacies husbands can share with the rest of the camp. As with women's honey, *lempuk* and *tempoyak* are used to fulfil the ritual requirement of sweets during important ritual and ceremonial occasions. A husband's right to distribute *dur'ion* taffy during these events is a form of status, allowing him to strengthen and re-establish bonds of friendship and obligation with a wide network of family and friends, many of whom he may not have seen in a very long time. It is strongly prohibited for a wife to share or distribute her husband's *lempuk/tempoyak* to others without first receiving his permission, particularly with other men. According to *adat* legal codes, this act can also be referred to as *sumbang*, and in this context is usually construed as if the woman has engaged in an affair out of wedlock. These instances are one of the few cases in which a woman can be fined by a man and is one of the most common reasons put forward by a man to threaten or justify a divorce. In the reverse manner, the same case can be made of a husband who distributes or shares his wife's *dur'ion* fruit (game meat or honey), particularly if it is with another woman.

While not on the same scale as the felling of a honey tree, the unthinkable event of the felling of a *dur'ion* tree is legally compared to a serious non-death injury, which can be branched into the four below (*empat de bewoh*) of the trunk law. The fine for felling or somehow causing the death of a *dur'ion* tree is referred to as *setengah bengun* to 'provide compensation for half a human life' and depending on how the case is negotiated can carry a fine as high as 120 sheets of cloth.⁹ These events were rare in the past. However, the felling of *dur'ion* and other trees of socioeconomic or religious

importance has become extremely common in the current era of logging. Legally, these actions can be appealed through their traditional hierarchy in *Tanah Garo*, but they rarely achieve proper compensation. The beliefs surrounding honey trees and honey are described in appendix E.

Claims of Ownership and Rights of Use on Other Fruit Trees

There are several other semi-domesticated varieties of fruit trees that are often said to be managed by the women, some of which include rambutan (*rembutan*), jackfruit (*tabedak*), langsung (*beduku*), jujubes (*beder'o*) and larger groupings of fruit gardens (*nuar'on*). Many of these trees are not necessarily inherited individually in the strict manner of *dur'ion*, and a more correct assumption may be that they are strongly associated with particular family units (*bubung* or *r'umah tanggo*) and women (*war'is per'ebo*) who have long-standing claims and the right to harvest from them. Similar legal hearings can be waged against those who fell or improperly harvest from these trees, although they are not considered as serious as *dur'ion* trees. Aside from the more important fruit trees or groupings of fruit trees associated with former swiddens (*nuar'on*), most wild fruits collectively belong to the community (*hak besamo*). There are several methods for making temporary claims on unclaimed fruit trees on behalf of an individual, a family unity or a grouping of women, some of which are similar to those used by the *Melayu*.¹⁰

The most common method for claiming an unclaimed fruit tree is by clearing away the undergrowth, opening it to light, which facilitates growth and increases the amount of fruit it may bear. A more direct claim can be made by making one of several markings (*penanda* or *pependa*) on a tree, as a signal to others that it is being used by an individual or by a family. An individual can claim a fruit tree, at least for that season, by marking it with a *selegi* sign or positioning a branch at an angle so that it points towards the tree.¹¹ A stronger claim can be made on behalf of a female by tying a vine around its trunk; this is referred to as a *gegelagon* sign. The word *gegelagon* derives from the words *gelang gadiy* or 'women's bracelet' and generally implies, like jewellery, that the fruit tree belongs to a woman as light inheritance (*har'to nang rehat*) for that particular season (Siagian 2003b). A series of three markings is referred to as *tunak tangga* 'wed to a family' and has similar implications.¹² Only a minor *adat* hearing can be waged against someone who takes fruit from a tree marked by a non-gender-related *selegi* sign. Taking fruit from a tree with a gender-related marking (*gegelagon* or *tunak tangga*) can be more serious. Aside from wild *dur'ion* (*dur'ion*

daun), claims of ownership and use are less commonly made on wild fruit trees, particularly the wild varieties that concurrently bear fruit during the annual season of fruits.

Some Academic Ideas Surrounding the Annual Season of Fruits

As different varieties of fruit trees blossom and bear fruit at different times, there is a nominal supply of fruit available to the *Orang Rimba* throughout the year. However, the lowland mixed dipterocarp forests of Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo are also known for an annual blossoming and fruiting season in which a high percentage of dipterocarp and related trees come into blossom and several months later bear fruit.¹³ These annual occurrences have yet to be examined in Sumatra, although a good deal of research has been conducted in the very similar forests of Peninsular Malaysia (Caldecott 1986; Medway 1972; Numata 2003) and northern Borneo (Momose 1998; Sakai 1999).¹⁴ According to academics, during a normal flowering/fruiting season anywhere from 3% to 15% of dipterocarp and related trees can come into blossom and latter bear fruit (Medway 1972; Caldecott 1986).¹⁵ The amount of annual fruit varies greatly from year to year, and depends on the synchronization of the various dipterocarp and related fruit trees, which bloom sub-annually (5%), annually (13%), supra-annually (19%), or once every 2–10 years (35%) (Sakai et al. 1999). The latter ‘general flowering’ varieties (35%) constitute the largest number of flowering and fruiting species in these forests, and whenever coming into synchronization at irregular intervals of every 2–10 years nearly all dipterocarp species come heavily into flower in what researchers call a general flowering period. As many of the peoples who live in these forests well know, general flowering periods are followed several months later by a masting period of abundant fruit (Sakai et al. 1999).¹⁶

Long-term research by a team of Japanese researchers has investigated how the seasonal general flowering and masting dipterocarp species are spread and pollinated, and what factors may be responsible for triggering heavy flowering and fruiting seasons (Sakai et al. 1999). Varieties of insects play important roles in the pollination of the seasonal species of fruit, particularly bees, which represent 36% of these efforts. However, it is the long-distance seasonal migrations of the honeybees, which are the main pollinators of the supra-annual or general flowering species, their main propagators, and those responsible for their density and general abundance throughout the forests (Sakai et al. 1999).¹⁷ According to Sakai et al., the pollination efforts of the honeybees promote the synchronization of general flowering and are one of the primary

reasons why masting fruiting seasons occur. However, the trigger appears to be climatic variables, annual patterns of rainfall, and a steady (two or three day) 2-3°C drop in the average night time air temperature during a period of cloudless weather, around two months before general flowering (Ashton 1988; Sakai et al. 1999; Yasuda M. J. 1999).

Closely interrelated with the annual season of fruits are the seasonal mass migrations of the bearded pigs (*Sus barbatus oi*). Found only in the dipterocarp forests of Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo, this unique species of pig is known for seasonally banding together in very large numbers and erupting into long-distance migrations following the annual fruits in the forests. Ecologists have long believed that these migrations are related to the annual fruiting season in the forests, but only recently have strongly tied them to heavy or masting fruiting periods (Hancock 2005).¹⁸ Many of these findings surrounding the season of flowers and fruits, its honeybee pollinators, low temperature triggers, and relations to the migrations of the bearded pigs, in one form or another are embedded in the *Orang Rimba* beliefs and ritual surrounding this most important time of the year.

***Orang Rimba* Beliefs Surrounding the Annual Season of Fruits**

The *Orang Rimba* refer to the annual fruiting period in the forests as *petahunon* ('annual or perennial'), the 'annual fruits' (*petahunon buahbuahon*) or 'the season of fruits' (*musim buahbuahon*).¹⁹ The fruiting season is preceded by the 'season of flowers' (*musim bungabungahon*), which occurs several months prior to the fruiting season during a period of fair weather during a break in the dry season (*pecat komarr'ow pekeso'an petahunon*).²⁰ The fruiting season is often said to fall into a period of time called the 'good days when the *buntor* fruit comes' (*har'i beik pohalion buah buntor*), reference to seasonal acorn-like nuts (*Ochanostachys amentacea*) that are sometimes collected and processed during the tail end of the fruit season. While these nuts are rarely collected by those in a swidden field, they are important to camps who are nomadic (*remayo* or *bebenor*), and are more easily collected and procured than wild yams.²¹ They can easily be stored in containers and carried during their travels, or placed or buried in a cool location in the forest, and collected whenever hunger requires a return to the location.

The months of the flowers and fruit season will vary from year to year. Table 5.4 lists the times of year when the annual season of flowers and fruit fell during my two seasons in Sumatra. The general opinion was that the seasons were late and were becoming increasingly irregular due to decades of logging.²²

Table 5.4 Cycle of Seasons and Related Ritual Activity

Approximate month	Season	Related Ritual and Subsistence
May-June	'Hot days, wet nights' (<i>puang hor'iko ranto sungoi bosoh</i>)	Ritual related to choosing and opening the swidden field
July-October	'The dry season' (<i>bocencing kamarrow</i>)	Ritual relating to swidden field
November-December	'Break in the dry season with an aim towards the fruit season' (<i>pecat kamar'ow pekeso'an petahunon</i>) or the 'season of flowers' (<i>musim bungabugahon</i>)	Ritual related to the Gods of Fruit, Honeybees and Bearded Pigs Collecting Honey
January-March	'The rainy season' (<i>pangaboh delom ke aik</i>)	Finish the collection of Honey
February/March/April ²³	'The fruit season' (<i>petahunon</i>) 'The good days when the <i>buntor</i> fruit comes' (<i>har'i beik pohalion buah bunto</i>)	<i>Balai</i> marriage ceremonies, collecting fruits and hunting the bearded pig
April-May	'Light rains every night' (<i>pangaboh menyeyetah</i>)	Ritual related to the harvesting of rice

The *Orang Rimba* refer to a year of regular or light fruiting as a 'little season of fruit' (*petahunon mer'alang*) and a heavy or masting fruiting season as a 'big season of fruit' (*petahunon godong*).²⁴ During a regular or little season of fruit, the majority of the fruiting will usually occur within a narrow six to eight week period, while during a heavy or big fruiting season the fruits are available for longer periods. While it is difficult to predict the seasons, the general consensus was that heavy fruiting seasons, in the past anyway, came about every two or three years, while the heaviest of fruiting seasons occurred perhaps every four or five years. Because the forests are much smaller and what remains is degraded now, the *Orang Rimba* say that larger masting seasons have become increasingly irregular.

The *Orang Rimba* believe that the seasons of flowers and fruit are intimately interrelated with the work of the insects, particularly the honeybees, the regeneration of forest plants, the mating cycles of animals, and their relative densities at particular locations throughout the year. During this time of plenty, animals are at their fattest and predictably found feeding in clusters at groupings of fruit trees. This is especially the case with the bearded pigs, which are more adapted to the delicate balance of life in the forest than the incredibly supple Eurasian wild pigs, which flourish in a number of localities including rubber and palm oil plantations. During a large fruiting season, the *Orang Rimba* believe that there will be more honeybees and honey and that it is more likely that the bearded pigs will embark on their seasonal migrations.

Austro-Asiatic Influence?

Given their adaptation to a mobile life under the rainforest canopy, it is not surprising that a great deal of the *Orang Rimba*'s primary religious belief and ritual pivots around the annual season of fruits. Quaritch Wales has speculated that some of the first religious influences to the rainforest hunter gatherers "may well have been to variables that seemed most immediately connected with game and wild fruit supply" (Wales 1957). This is the case with several forest-oriented Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples in Malaysia, who appear to have adapted to different varieties of mobile lifestyles in the dipterocarp rainforests before the arrival of the Austronesians. Some of these peoples, such as the Semang, Temiar, Semai/Senoi, Btsisi and Temoq, have similar cosmological and religious beliefs surrounding the annual season of fruits, the honeybees and seasonal migrations of the bearded pigs. Like the *Orang Rimba*, some of them perform primary seasonal rituals that serve to initiate or ensure that the annual fruiting season and its associated resources come around in a timely and abundant manner (Benjamin 1967; Benjamin 1979; Endicott 1979a; Endicott 1979b; Evans 1937; Freeman 1968; Skeat 1906b). Perhaps the most interesting similarities are beliefs in heavenly forests of fruit trees that are interrelated with the fruit trees on earth. Some of these beliefs are also interrelated with conceptualizations of soul matter and ritual blood sacrifice as the trigger for maintaining the annual season of blossoming and fruits.

It is uncertain whether the *Orang Rimba* independently developed or borrowed some of these beliefs from Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples. As is the case in Borneo and the other islands throughout Indonesia, there are no Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples in Sumatra, although one can only speculate that there may have been prior to the arrival of the Austronesians, and that they could have learned a great deal from them when initially moving into the upstream, forested regions of Sumatra.²⁵ These straits have also long been one of the busiest in the world and Malayic peoples, some of their most effective carriers. However curious these shared overarching similarities, it is important to note that the 'nuts and bolts' of *Orang Rimba* social and religious beliefs, ritual and style of prayer are quite distinct and appear to be rooted in Malayic and Austronesian traditions.

The remainder of this chapter examines the three major rituals conducted during the annual season of flowers, which serve to initiate the annual season of fruits, call the honeybees down from heaven, and seduce the bearded pigs to begin their seasonal migrations. Because of their importance they are always performed by a 'big shaman' (*dukun godong*) atop a *balai* platform in isolated, cool and healthy forests. Aside from

the fact that the *Orang Rimba* believe these rituals must be performed on an annual basis, they are also an excellent avenue for elder men to establish their authority by enforcing cultural prohibitions and boundaries with outsiders. The big shamans who perform these rituals have obtained a level of sanctity or sacredness (*ker'emat*) and power (*sakti*) by maintaining the purity of *adat* by strictly following everyday food and soap taboos and not leaving the forests or having any intensive interaction with outsiders. On the days surrounding these rituals, they too expect the larger group to maintain the purity of *adat*, strongly follow its prohibitions, and limit their interactions with the outside world.

The 'Upstream' Gods of Fruit and their Heavenly Forests of Fruit Trees

The *Orang Rimba* believe that the seasonal varieties of fruit in the forests are intimately interconnected with and are managed by the numerous gods and goddesses of wild fruit (*or'ang de buah*). These gods and goddesses live in *Ujian*, a large village in the 'upstream' region of heaven surrounded by lush forests of fruit trees, the spirit emanations of those that grow in the forests and are associated with the annual season of fruits. These heavenly fruit trees never blossom, nor bear fruit, and this is understandable, as the gods have no need to eat while in heaven. These beliefs fit nicely with the seasonal rituals, which depend on using the temptation of flowers or fruits to seduce the gods to release the honeybees and enter the forests in their earthly emanations of bearded pigs. As the caretakers of these sacred trees and by association their earthly emanations in the forests, each god or goddess of fruit is closely associated to a particular species of fruit tree. The gender of these gods and goddesses follows the same patterns for fruit, and depends upon what fruit tree they are associated with in their heavenly forest, which are the spiritual venerations of the fruit trees on earth. Thus, there are particular gods of fruit that are associated with and look over the male fruit trees, such as the *langsats* and *rambutan* and certain goddesses of fruit that are associated with the female fruit trees, such as *durian* and *tembedak*.²⁶

As both genders are present in *Ujian*, it is common for both males and females to possess these gods or goddesses as their birth deity (*aku-on*), a factor that brings success or luck in the realm of fruit finding and can be associated with the person's name. Whenever meeting a man or woman in the forest with a fruity-sounding name, you can be sure who his or her guardian deity is, as well as the gender of the fruit and god/goddess. These gods and goddesses and their heavenly trees are strongly associated with the annual fruiting season in the forests, and are appealed to annually by shamans

to initiate the annual season of blossoming and fruit.²⁷ The central feature of this annual ritual is a ritual cockfight and blood sacrifice.

Performing a Sacred Cock Fight and Blood Sacrifice to Initiate the Season of Fruits

Ritual cockfighting is widespread among the Austronesians and has been described of the Malay, Balinese, Iban, the Wana in Sulawesi, as well as in eastern Indonesia on the small island of Savu (Atkinson 1989; Eiseman 1989; Forbes 1885; Fox 1979; Geertz 1973; Jensen 1974; Skeat 1900; Winstedt 1951).²⁸ While cockfighting always seems to involve complex social dynamics (gambling, cocks standing for clans, etc.), it seems the primary ritual role of cockfighting, “where it still occurs in traditional form, has to do with an offering of blood to appease the earth spirits” (personal communication with James Fox). This appears to be the case with Malayic peoples, the Javanese, Balinese and the Iban who for a variety of reasons, perform cockfights throughout the year in a festive social context, for ritual ceremony surrounding the seasons, or for healing, usually to appease the gods/spirits of the earth, water or sky. Most of these events are (or were in the past) followed by a blood offering to the gods or spirits.

Like the *Orang Rimba*, some of these peoples base their primary seasonal rituals around ritual cockfights and blood sacrifice. In Sarawak, the Iban begin their annual *gawai* festivals with a ritual cockfight and blood sacrifice to inaugurate the new agricultural rice-growing season to ensure an abundant harvest of rice (Jenson 1974:77, 122, 199). On the far eastern end of the Indonesian Archipelago, James Fox has written that, “cockfighting forms the core of Savu’s indigenous religion” (1979:165). The Savunese hold their socially complex cockfights on numerous occasions, particularly surrounding important seasons, which at least partially serve to insure bountiful fishing, a rich yield of lontar palm, or following the harvest as a ceremonial invocation of fertility (Fox 1979:164-6).

Most of the *Orang Rimba’s Melayu* neighbors have economies supplemented by the raising of domestic chickens, whose men relish their socially complex and ritual oriented cockfights. Given their cultural affinities with the *Melayu*, it is not surprising that the *Orang Rimba* associate a variant of this belief with one of their most important ritual events of the year. However, in the context of the *Orang Rimba’s* lives the “deep psychological identification between cocks and men” is very different (Geertz 1973). Domestic cocks symbolically stand for everything the *Orang Rimba* are not, and raising, tending or eating the animal is strongly prohibited according to their customary laws (*adat*) passed on to them by their ancestors. From a religious perspective, the

domestic cock (or any other domestic animal) has the potential to reduce a shaman's sacredness (*ker'emat*) and power (*sakti*), and inhibit his ability to communicate with the gods. Anyone rumored to associate too closely with this taboo animal runs the risk of being ignored by the gods or, worse, being labeled as the reason why the gods have abandoned the camp. By associating with domestic cocks, a person can be stigmatized as a social outcast. These rules are excellent strategies for maintaining a mobile life in the forests and strong identities, which are deeply rooted in opposition to the *Melayu*.

The *Orang Rimba* appear to have adapted or molded a variant of this common Austronesian belief around the mating ritual of two wild cocks or wild pheasants, which are strongly associated with the fruiting season in the forests. Outside of being a tasty meal when they are allowed to be hunted, the *kuwo* or Great *Argus* pheasant (*Argusianus argus*) and a similar pheasant referred to as the *mua* (possibly the peacock pheasant) are best known for a magnificent mating ritual, performed by the cocks during or just before the annual flowering season in the forests.²⁹ As with other pheasants, there is a marked degree of sexual dimorphism in the species, the males having much larger bodies and a magnificent plume, which functions to attract the females during their mating season. During this time, the male pheasant's build a small arena of sticks and twigs (*lamon*) in a small forest clearing and let out extremely loud calls that can be heard for miles in order to call the female into their arena. When the female arrives, the male performs a spectacular dance, furiously ruffling and flapping its wings and waving his plume, as it circles the female. During this mating ritual, the males are hyper-aggressive and when rival males invade their *lamon* territories it is common for them to engage in furious cockfights.

The *Orang Rimba* strongly associate these wild pheasants, their mating ritual, ensuing cockfights and their blood as being interrelated with or the trigger for the annual occurrence of blossoms and fruits in the forests. Not necessarily, their earthbound emanations, which are *ker'emat* yet sometimes hunted, but their related soul counterparts, which exist in the heavenly forests of fruit trees surrounding the village of *Ujion*. In order for the annual season of flowers and fruit to occur in the forests, these heavenly cocks need to spar off in a cosmic cockfight. It is this annual event or 'trial', from which the village of *Ujion* derives its meaning. Shortly before the arrival of the season of flowers (*musim bungabungahon*), a small *balai* ritual is conducted in order to 'initiate the annual season of fruits' (*bopjediko halom buah-buahon*). The general storyline in which the prayer songs (*dekir*) are framed concern the search for the sacred cocks, a cockfight and a ritual blood sacrifice. As the sacred hornbill (*bur'ung geding*)

arrives at its perch atop the *balai* platform, the shaman's traveling soul (*huluy bejelon*) hitches a ride through the door in the sky (*pintu langit*) and upstream to the village of *Ujion*, where he sets out among its fruit trees to catch the spiritual emanations of the *kuwo* and the *muoh*. The prayer songs include a number of squawks, whistles and birdcalls to attract and catch the cocks.

Once captured, the shaman brings the pheasants to the headman of *Ujion*, who is seduced to spar the two cocks, which ends after one of them spills blood. The cockfight that unfolds is "high cosmological drama" to the numerous observers surrounding the *balai*, and the shaman who is the only one actually able to experience the cockfight in *Ujion* (Fox 1979).³⁰ The shaman goes through the motions of observing the cockfight, while those observing react on cue to the events unfolding atop the *balai*. As the cosmic cockfight comes to a climax with a blood injury, the shaman takes the blood from the wounded pheasant and rubs it onto a sacred *rambutan* tree within these gods' village. This act is believed to release or send the soul matter of the heavenly fruit trees down to the wild fruit trees in the forests, enlivening their branches and causing them to blossom and fruit according to their respective seasonal patterns. Because of the central importance of the *rambutan* tree in this ritual, only adult males are allowed to eat this *ker'emam* fruit and several other *Nephelium* species. The *Orang Rimba* believe that if the cockfight and blood sacrifice are not performed, then the soul matter (*haluy*) would not be sent to the trees on earth and the seasonal flowers and fruits would not occur.³¹

After the blood sacrifice, a shaman continues his songs of prayer late into the night, with the objective to insure a heavy flowering and fruiting season (*petahunon godong*). This part of the ritual is considered crucial, as the *Orang Rimba* are well aware that a heavy fruiting season is closely related not only to the amount of fruit that will be available to them, but also the amount of honey, and whether the bearded pigs will embark on their seasonal migrations. These prayer songs are accompanied by fast-paced dancing, possibly patterned after the mating ritual of the pheasants, which is believed to cause the winds to blow throughout the forests. The faster the shaman waves his arms around and spins during his dances, the more the wind blows, 'cooling' and preparing the earthly fruit trees, and spreading its spiritual blossoms throughout the forests. The presence of strong winds during this ritual is a sign of great and powerful shaman and brings confidence that fruit and honey will be abundant and the bearded pigs will soon make their way in mass to the forests.³²

Prohibitions Surrounding the Annual Season of Fruits

After performing the ritual, there are two prohibitions (*patangon*), which stand until the season of blossoming and fruiting has come and gone. There is a general ban on hunting either of the sacred pheasants associated with the ritual, the *kuwo* and the *mua*. While considered *ker'emat*, they are normally hunted outside of this ritual period. However, if hunted within the period of the season of flowers or fruits, then they believe that the flowers would wilt away and die or the fruit would rot and drop from the trees. A different prohibition with similar results is a general ban on spilling 'hot' or boiled water (*aik diglogok*) onto the earth after performing the ritual. If this were to happen, they believe that the hot water would 'heat' the earth or be soaked up into the roots of the fruit trees and cause the flowers to wilt away or the fruit to rot and drop off the branches of the trees. These conceptions relate to their pattern of beliefs surrounding the dangerous nature of 'heat' in its various forms and the fragile transition period of newly arrived spiritual matter to its earthly casing. Similar conceptions relate to the newly arrived soul of rice (*semongot padi*) to the rice plants and the land it is rooted, and the transition of a newly arrived human soul (*tulok huluy*) to the mother's womb and the land beneath her at the birthplace. If a big shaman (*dukon godong*) did not travel to *Ujion* and perform this ritual, they believe that the natural cycle of seasons in the forests would not begin. In their minds, this would negatively effect the regeneration of forest plants, the mating cycles of animals, and the arrival of the fruits, honeybees and migrations of bearded pigs.

Unleashing the Honeybees from Heaven and Seducing Them to the Forest

Closely intertwined with these religious notions is an elaborate system of belief and ritual surrounding the honeybees. Two types of honey (*maniy* or *madu*) are annually collected by the *Orang Rimba*, the honey from the smaller *nyur'uon* bee (*Apis indica*), and the honey from the largest of the world's honeybees, the *rapah* (or *repah*, *Apis dorsata*).³³ *Nyur'uon* bees randomly build their solitary hives in the lower trunks of trees, and whenever discovered in the forests are harvested according to 'community rights' (*hak besamo*), by the first person to claim the hive. In contrast to the randomly placed *nyur'uon* hives, *rapah* colonies tend to congregate together in the same trees from season to season, and can build up to 100 of their very big parabolic hives high in the branches of a number of trees collectively referred to as *sialong*. In contrast to *nyur'uon* hives, women inherit honey trees, which are collected by the families of the owner.

The *Orang Rimba* do not have any religious beliefs surrounding the *nyur'uon* bees. The honeybees (*rapah*), on the other hand, are believed to be looked over by the god of the honeybees (*or'ang de rapah*), a lone god who performs the role as a sacred beekeeper of sorts.³⁴ Located in the 'upstream' region of heaven, he is said to keep the forests honeybees in a giant *songkot*, a larger version of the offering receptacle typically built in the center of a *balai*, where they are held under cover by seven locked nets (*kelambu tujuh huluy*). It is the responsibility of the god of honeybees to determine the proper season to release the honeybees down to the forests, so that they may begin their jobs collecting the dew from the flowers, regenerate the forests plants and fruits and build hives filled with honey. It is the responsibility of big shamans to prove to this god when the flowers have arrived in the forest, unlock the nets, and seduce the bees to the forests through the singing of prayer songs (*bedikir*) and *pantun*.

After activating the fruit season, the *Orang Rimba* wait for the fruit blossoms to appear before performing a small *balai* ritual to activate the honey season (*bopojediko halom rapah*). Through songs of prayer and soul travel, a big shaman travels to the god of honeybees in order to ask permission to unlock these nets. The god of honeybees only agrees if he is convinced that the blossoms have appeared in the forests, and this is done by presenting him with offerings and proof (*bukti*) of the different types of blossoms and flowers (*mer'payo*, *tunom* and *sapo*), which during the ritual are placed into the offering receptacle (*songkot*). After releasing the bees, the shaman takes the queen or mother bee (*induk rapah*) in his hand and sings to her a song or poem (*pantun*) describing the flower blossoms that await her and the other bees in the forests on earth. These *pantun* contain words of seduction, which persuade the mother bee to lead her subjects down to the forests, begin collecting the dew from the flowers, build hives filled with honey, and produce more children to continue the work in the future. The shaman then throws his voice down to the forests, and suggests that she and the other bees follow it through the sky door (*pintu langit*) down to the largest *sialong* honey tree in the forests, the 'stopping point *kedungdung*' (*kedungdung per'intion*).³⁵ Here, the honeybees rest their tired wings before spreading out to build their nests in the other *sialong* honey trees throughout the forests. Upon returning to the *balai* platform they say that the shaman's body is covered with bee stings, proof (*bukti*) that he has released the bees, and successfully completed his duty of activating the honey season.

It is uncertain whether other Malayic peoples ever had similar beliefs or ritual for calling the honeybees down from heaven, which tends to resemble some of the beliefs of the *Semang* in Malaysia (Endicott 1979).³⁶ However, it is still a widespread

belief among Malayic peoples throughout the region that *sialang* honey trees always possess a spirit, which are very protective of their trees and their relationship with the honeybees. According to the *Orang Rimba*, the bees migrate back and forth from the heavens to the forests according to the seasons, and once in the forests busy themselves working the flowers during the day in order to build hives filled with honey (*maniy rapah*), in which they store their children (*anak rapah* or *kluyut*). Once the honeybees begin building their hives (*sar'ung rapah*) in a particular tree, it is believed to attract a spirit (*hantu kayu*), which forms a symbiotic union with the tree. It is only then that the tree comes to be known as a *sialong* honey tree, in which the honeybees will seasonally return and build their nests. If the bees were to stop seasonally building their hives in the tree, the spirit would fall into great sorrow, and the *sialong* tree would eventually die of grief. Like other bounded living entities that are believed to possess a spirit, *sialong* trees are also believed to be sensitive to the 'heat' of the sun, and it is commonly said that if the trees surrounding the *sialong* are cut and exposed to the sun they will eventually die. An analysis of their very Malayic variant of ritual love songs sung to the spirit of the tree and the honeybees while collecting honey is included in the appendix.

Seducing the Bearded Pigs down from Heaven

The third major ritual performed during the season of flowers is an attempt to seduce the migratory bearded pigs (*nangoi*) to embark on their seasonal migrations down from heaven and into the forests to eat the abundant fruits available during the fruiting season. There are two types of pig found in *Bukit Duabelas*: the common wild pig (*Sus scrofa*) and the bearded pig (*Sus barbatus oi*).³⁷ Both species are captured throughout the year, although bearded pigs are less commonly captured outside of the annual fruiting season. The bearded pigs are different from the common wild pig by their larger size, elongated skulls, longer legs and 'bearded' jaw. Because of their sparse body hair, the *Orang Rimba* also describe them to have whiter skin.³⁸ The most characteristic feature of the bearded pig is their tendency to seasonally band together in large groups of up to several hundred individuals and erupt into seasonal migrations following the seasonal fruiting in the forests.³⁹

The *Orang Rimba* have established religious beliefs surrounding these migrations, which in the past anyway were an extremely large, dependable and easily obtained supply of meat. This allowed for camps throughout the forests to congregate together and devote the annual fruiting season to religious marriage ceremonies, ritual

and strengthening their relations with the gods. While common wild pigs are generally believed to be soulless animals, bearded pigs are always believed to be an earthly manifestation of one of the gods and goddess of the bearded pigs (*or'ang de nangoi*), sometimes referred to as the gods and goddess of warts (*or'ang de kutel*).⁴⁰ In addition to their attempt to influence a big fruiting season (*petahunon godong*), it is also the duty of a big shaman to attempt to influence these migrations.

Throughout Sumatra, both *Kubu* peoples believe the migrations of the bearded pigs to originate from across great bodies of water, which in some cases may be correct, as some of them appear to be migrating back and forth between mainland southeastern Sumatra and the island of Bangka.⁴¹ The *Orang Rimba* believe the bearded pigs to originate from the furthest and last village along the downstream of heaven, from a mountainous coastal region (*gunung pasir laut*) referred to as *Ponger'an*. Unlike the other god villages in heaven, which are described as extending from the west/upstream (*hulu*) to the east/downstream (*hilir*) region above the dome-like firmament in the sky, whenever describing the location of *Ponger'an*, the *Orang Rimba* point to the far eastern horizons (*pir'imping halom*), to a place where the 'sky meets the earth' (*langit betemu bumi*). It is here that the river in heaven is believed to flow down the firmament, crash into a larger body of water called the 'swirling sea' (*laut bekilling*) and eventually empty into a larger endless body of water called the 'drunken sea' (*laut mabuk*), the taste of which makes a person drunk. While most *Orang Rimba* have difficulty conceptualizing such a massive body of water, the drunken sea does seem to share some curious similarities, both in size and composition with the ocean. In their cosmology, it is this endless body of water that separates the forests on earth from the eastern or 'downstream' realm of the gods, and to some extent represents a bridge or an entrance point, through which some gods can make their way into this world by transforming into their earthly manifestations (*baden cabu*).

A reflection of what they perceive to lie beyond the downstream kingdom of Jambi, *Ponger'an* is described to be the largest, most stratified and powerful of the god villages, which is probably why its name is based on a regional title of nobility (*pengeran*) used throughout the former kingdoms of Sumatra, Malaysia, Borneo and Java (Wilkinson 1948:180). The gods and goddesses of bearded pigs are believed to take the spiritual form of humans, and are described as tall and, like the bearded pigs, having pale white skin. The *Orang Rimba* say that *Ponger'an's* inhabitants have tremendous wealth, dress themselves in fine white cloth (*koin putih*), and are ruled by a powerful king (*rajo*) whom they call *Kokodin*. Because of the curious analogies

between their large populations, wealth, white skin and stories of originating across large salty oceans off into the horizon, in *Bukit Duabelas* they playfully refer to Europeans as *nangoi*, an association that may have some continuity given the historical presence of a Dutch base in the nearby town of *Merangin*.⁴²

In contrast to some of the other downstream gods, these gods are not associated with the knowledge or power of Islam, which probably would not suit a class of gods associated with wild pigs. However, as with the former Malay kings, *Kokodin* is said to be consumed with increasing the power of his kingdom, a feat that is synonymously accomplished by raising its population. It is here that they run into a problem. While many of the gods are said to enjoy engaging in the mundane activities typical of living beings on earth, they are generally confined by their heavenly manifestation as soul matter (*haluy*), and in heaven are incapable of engaging in such experiences as tasting, eating, pain, death or reproduction. It is only by making the journey into this world (*halom cabu*) while bounded in an earthly casing (*baden cabu*) that a god is capable of fulfilling an earthly goal or desire. In the case of this class of god, this tends to be the bearded pig. As a man along the upstream *Makekal* explained,

These gods are like people, but they do not have a body (*baden cabu*) when they are in their village, they are only souls (*haluy*). It is only when they come to the forests as pigs that they can have a body. They risk their lives to come to the forests because of the delicious taste of the fruit. There is no fruit in their village, the gods do not eat. They are asked by *Kokodin* to come to this world and have children so that they can increase the population of the kingdom (*kerajahon*). It is only when they come to the forests as pigs that they can have children and create more people for their village in heaven. When they come to the forests, they are able to eat the delicious fruit, have many children and return to heaven in greater numbers.

The gods conduct their journeys to the forests at a risk, and as with all spirited entities that enter an earthly body, are subject to pain, sickness and death. Whenever their earthly bodies fail, their souls are believed to return to *Ponger'an* and resume their normal existence as a god. However, there is a particular rule that if killed on earth, they will never be allowed to participate in a seasonal migration in the future. While the gods are aware of this risk, and the possibility of death, they also have an insatiable lust for eating fruit, and because of this, it is not too difficult for king *Kokodin* and an *Orang Rimba* shaman to convince them to make their way into the forests as pigs.

When the flowers begin to bloom (*kambang*), available as offerings or proof (*bukti*) to the gods that the fruit season is on its way, a big shaman performs a *balai* ceremony in order to 'call or seduce the bearded pigs' (*nur'utko nangoi*) to embark on their seasonal migrations to the forests. During the ritual, the shaman sings a structured

corpus of prayer songs (*bedekir*) associated with the gods and goddess of the bearded pigs, disassociates from his body, and makes the trip to *Ponger'an*. Here, he presents king *Kokodin* with various flowers or fruit blossoms, from the varieties of fruit typically eaten by the bearded pigs during the annual fruiting season. Sitting near the soul traveler, an assistant (*pinginang*) supports the shaman's body throughout his journey, and at key points places these offerings inside the *songkot*, which make their way to the shaman in heaven. Filled with words of seduction, these songs serve to seduce the pigs down from the heavens through descriptions of the abundant and delicious fruit that will soon appear in the forests. While these gods and goddess can make their way to the forests as pigs during any time of the year, it is only during a large fruiting season (*petahunon godong*) that they are seduced to embark on their mass migrations. Because of this, the purpose of these prayer songs (*dekir*) is to convince *Kokodin* and his subjects that a large fruit season (*petahunon godong*) is on its way, one in which new gods will far outweigh the casualties sustained by the spears of the *Orang Rimba*. Below is a verse from one of the prayer songs sung to *Kokodin* and his subjects,

King, hurry	<i>Rajo kelentang</i>
Come by the thousands	<i>Tur'un ser'ibu,</i>
Come down by the millions	<i>Tur'un belansoh</i>
To this dirty world <i>hai-lehhh</i>	<i>Ko dunio cabu hai-leh</i>
Quickly, we go to the rough world	<i>Bocikat pantas kito menuju dunia cabu</i>

If convinced that the fruiting season will be heavy, *Kokodin* orders those who join him to hang in front of their homes a sheet of white cloth (*koin putih*) as a sign to their families of their status while away in the forests. If 1,000 gods decide to join the migration, then 1,000 pieces of cloth are hung throughout their village. If the cloth falls from the rattan line while they are away, it is a sign that one of the pigs has been killed while away in the forests and will soon be returning home to their village.

Unlike the honeybees who make their way through the sky door, the bearded pigs take a different path. Constrained by the necessity to metamorphose into the earthly body of a pig, these gods and goddess begin the journey from the downstream region of heaven on foot, walking down from their mountainous village to a sandy coastline/riverbank along the 'drunken sea' (*laut mabuk*). Sometime after beginning their swim across the drunken sea, they are said to acquire or transform into the body of a bearded pig, and it is in this form that they continue their swim until they reach land and the forests. The *Orang Rimba* believe that their migrations are always led by king *Kokodin*, the oldest and largest of the boars, whose duty is to guide them to the groves

of fruit and away from danger. Whenever hunting the bearded pigs on these migrations, the *Orang Rimba* have strong prohibitions against killing the lead pig, which they believe would offend the gods, lead to misfortune and prevent the migrations from occurring in the future.⁴³

The *nangoi* are always said to conduct their migrations according to the same sets of forest trails, so whenever they arrive hunters have little difficulty in finding them. During this time of the year, trails are checked regularly for their signs and tracks, and whenever they are detected word spreads quickly to groups along the different rivers. The migrations usually take place in the evening, with pigs retreating to the forest during the day to sleep in beds (*jer'mun*) made of mud, thicket and palm leaves. In contrast to their shy behavior when alone, the *nangoi* are said to be brave (*ber'ani*) but stupid (*loloh*) when they embark on these stampedes, and continue their march regardless of whether there is a band of hunters nearby. Because of their characteristic bravado, hunters say that they can be easily speared at strategic points along a trail or as they swim across the rivers. As one hunter along the *Makekal* explains,

When the *nangoi* come everyone is happy (*ladai*), because during this time we do not have to worry about finding game (*lau'wuk*). Hunters can wait along a trail and spear them as they come by, or along the riverbank, it is easiest to catch them while they are swimming across a river. When they come during the fruiting season, then there will usually be a *balai* marriage ceremony soon.

More easily obtained does not necessarily mean safe, and maneuvering around a pig's sharp canines while attempting to plunge a spear into it takes a great deal of skill and courage. As the gruesome scars that hunters proudly display bear testament, any pig hunt, let alone a stampede of up to several hundred pigs, can be an extremely dangerous activity. These migrations can provide a ready source of game, and gluttony of meat, which traditionally enabled camps throughout the forests to congregate together and devote the fruiting season to religious marriage ceremonies and ritual interaction with their gods. In the past, when the forests were more extensive, and the fruiting seasons were more consistently heavy, the *Orang Rimba* say that the *nangoi* made their migrations on a more frequent basis and in larger numbers. These days they say that both the *nangoi* and their migrations are becoming increasingly rare, a result of decades of logging.

As the fruit season comes to an end shaman perform prayers informing the pigs that it is time for them to return to *Ponger'an*. One of the first prayers sung to the pigs is below.

King hurry home, go ahead and go home	<i>Rajo keletong pulang boidar pulang</i>
To <i>Ponger'an</i>	<i>Ponger'an</i>
<i>Ponger'a</i> take flower and go fast	<i>Ponger'a ambiq bunga jalan ponunjang</i>
Walk <i>hilileh</i> go home fast all of you	<i>Jelon hiileh bocikat pantas pulang rantu.</i>
We will all go home	<i>Pulang borantu kito</i>
Go to the place of many mountains	<i>Menuju agung nang banyak</i>
<i>Hai lehhileh</i>	<i>Hai lehhileh</i>

The *Orang Rimba* say that the fleeing pigs mock (*nghinar*) the hunters through poems (*pantun*) as they begin their return trip home, and express their regret that they will no longer be able to eat the fruit in the forests.

No longer to be a dog's vagina, to my sir's penis	<i>Hopi lagi bilak beinjap cici abang</i>
Heads full of black hair, which hunt us	<i>Kepalo hitom buru kito</i>
I will miss eating <i>rembut</i> fruit	<i>Aku ker'anye makon buah rembut</i>
<i>Remanas</i> and <i>repehung</i> fruit	<i>Buah remanas repehung</i>

Having fulfilled their seasonal desire for fruit, and their king's wishes for more gods and goddess, the bearded pigs make their way east, towards the downstream forests and into the realm of the gods, swimming across various rivers and oceans (*lout godong*, *lout mabuk*, *lout bekiling*) along the way. Upon swimming across the drunken river, they abandon their earthly bodies and regain their godly form in the downstream realm of heaven, resuming their lives in *Ponger'an*, until the next heavy fruiting season in the forests.

Discussion

Fruit classifications are an excellent reflection of gender and power in this egalitarian society. According to these classifications, each fruit is ascribed a gender, which sometimes reflect gender collection schemes, ownership and claiming rights, and gender-related distribution patterns. Fruit classifications apply to each fruit's associated god or goddess in the heavens, represent both male and female birth or guardian deities (*aku-on*), and can influence a person's name. Fruit classifications are interrelated with gender prohibitions, which prohibit females from eating specific varieties because they are 'hot' and can negatively affect women's fertility. While largely implicit, some of these prohibitions are symbolic of male and female rights and can influence consumption and distribution rights.

The manner in which the *Orang Rimba* manage fruit trees is similar to regional practices, and is strongly influenced by their residence patterns, mobility, fluid camp

structure and egalitarian social relations. The more significant fruit trees such as durian (and honey trees) form the skeleton around which the *Orang Rimba* base rights to live in and use the resources in customary forests. Regulated through female inheritance and long-standing claims passed on through the women, fruit and honey trees justify uxorilocal residence patterns and the rights to distribute their resources. This is particularly the case with durian, the most valuable and socially significant of the fruits. As with honey trees, durian trees are inherited by individual women, who are the sole distributors of their trees fruit, and their husbands the sole distributors of cooked *dur'ion* taffy. *Orang Rimba* legal codes reflect the great importance of these rights (ownership, claims, and distribution), and serve to protect and enforce them. By branching into the trunk law (*pangkol adat*), violations surrounding durian trees are analogically compared to injuring a human or sexually or inappropriately violating a woman or group of women (*war'is per'ebo*). The use of regional claiming methods also provides an avenue to justify rights or claims over forest resources in relation to the surrounding villagers. Unfortunately, outsiders rarely respect their legal codes in this modern era of logging.

The *Orang Rimba* have a deep ecological understanding of the annual season of fruits, its relation to the honeybees and bearded pig migrations, and this vast ecological knowledge is embedded in their seasonal rituals. In addition to ensuring an abundance of honey, the ritual related to the god of honeybees serves to ensure that the honeybees will go about their work pollinating the flowers, ensure an abundance of plants, flowers, and a heavy fruiting season. The ritual surrounding the annual season of fruits incorporates an understanding that this event is triggered by cool weather, in a manner that is intertwined with their conceptualizations of the healthy effect of coolness on transient soul matter. The shaman's ritual dance 'cools' the forests, preparing the trees for the arrival of spiritual blossoms and their spread throughout the forests in order to influence a heavy fruiting season. This ritual works in tandem with the other two rituals to influence an abundance of honey, and make it more likely that the bearded pigs will embark on their migrations.

Broadly, the intent of these rituals is very similar that of rituals performed by forest-oriented Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia. Like the Semang, Semai, Temoq, Btsisi, and the Malay speaking Temuan, the *Orang Rimba* have elaborate cosmological beliefs surrounding heavenly forests of fruit trees, which are believed to be interrelated with and to influence the functioning of the seasonal blossoms and fruit in the forests. These beliefs are intertwined with conceptions of soul matter, and the belief that a ritual

blood sacrifice is needed to ensure that these heavenly fruit trees transfer their spiritual essence to the forests on earth, so that they blossom and bear fruit. In contrast to the Semang and Semai, the *Orang Rimba*'s form of ritual blood sacrifice does not include human bloodletting or issues of atonement to a more powerful thunder god, but is related to the more common Austronesian practice of animal blood sacrifice following a ritual cockfight. Like many other Austronesian peoples, this core belief is adapted to fit their primary seasonal ritual, the annual fruiting season in the forests, and in a unique way, adjusted to fit with boundary prohibitions, which prohibit them from having anything to do with domestic cocks. The *Orang Rimba*'s form of ritual cockfighting is patterned on the mating rituals of wild pheasants, which are strongly associated with the annual season of fruits, and while lacking many of the social dynamics of Austronesian cockfighting, domestic cocks or any mundane cocks for that matter, suggests further ties with Austronesian peoples.

The ritual activity that takes place during this time of the year is an excellent avenue to enforce prohibitions, which encourage boundaries with the outside world. On the days surrounding these rituals, the community is expected to maintain the purity of *adat* by following boundary prohibitions and limiting interactions with outsiders. Both outsiders and boundary crossers are strongly prohibited from being near the location where this ritual activity takes place. It is believed that their presence could impair a shaman's ability to communicate with the gods, harm the shaman while in a liminal state of soul travel, and more generally negatively affect the proper functioning of the annual season of fruits. The *Orang Rimba* enforce these boundaries to maintain the purity of *Orang Rimba adat*, strong relations with the gods, and in relation to this time of the year, to ensure a bounty of fruit, honey and bearded pigs. Outside of these commonly given explanations, these prohibitions serve to maintain strong identities and create difference with the *Melayu*. They are implicitly related to internal camp power issues. Enforcing boundary prohibitions is a primary avenue by which adult men can manipulate relations with the women, junior males, and their wives' non-adult brothers. In an egalitarian society in which adult men are dispersed and are placed within a rather subordinate network of relations in the camps of their wives, manipulating and enforcing boundary prohibitions can be a source of authority and power.

Chapter 5 Endnotes

¹ Due to the difficulty in discussing these rituals, my descriptions are broad summaries and lacking in many regards. In this chapter, I examine the three rituals individually; however, some say that they can be performed either separately or collectively. The *Orang Rimba* say they do not have a specific time for performing these rituals, although given their intent, it is important that they take place before the annual season of fruits begin. The timing appears to be dependent on the preceding season of flowers, the mating patterns of Argus pheasants, and the presence of specific varieties of flowers that they offer to the god of honeybees, and bearded pigs. If they believe that the rituals have not achieved their purpose, they can perform them again.

² On the diversity of fruits they identified, Saw et al. write, "...wild species of mango (*Mangifera*, 12 sp.), mangosteen (*Garcinia*, 13 sp.), breadfruit (*Artocarpus*, 10 sp.) and rambutan (*Nephelium*, 5 sp.) were found to be particularly diverse. The potential value of the species as genetic resources is very large: 24 species are cultivated, 38 edible species are congeneric with cultivated species and at least 10 other species bear non-edible fruits but are related to cultivated ones" (Saw et al. 1991).

³ Fruits included in the tables were identified using Morton's, *Fruits of Warm Climates* and other sources (Morton 1987). Some unidentified fruits include the *buah kasai*, *kaki nyamuk* ('mosquito foot'), *embacong*, *arem*, *rengon*, *cimpoi*, and *capo*. Some were also taken from the endnotes of (Sandbukt 1988a).

⁴ Both wild (*buduku rimba*) and domesticated (*buduku nuar'on*) varieties are tended. The peel of the *beduku* is toxic, while its bark are used by peoples in Malaysia and Borneo for dart poison, and its dried peel as medicine (Morton 1987).

⁵ The Sanskrit derived *beder'o* or 'jujube' is referred to by the Malay as *bedara* (Wilkinson 1948:21).

⁶ Mangoes are believed to originate from South Asia and brought to Malaysia and Sumatra in the 4th or 5th century by Buddhist monks (Morton 1987: 221-239). The *Orang Rimba* believe these sour fruits to have negative effects on the reproductive systems of females and forbid women to eat them.

⁷ Various Malay speaking peoples use the similar terms *cempedak*, *sempedak* and *temedak*. These fruits are closely related to the jackfruit, the largest of all tree-borne fruits. According to Morton, a jackfruit can range from eight inches to three feet in length, and six to twenty inches in width. They can weigh anywhere from 10 to 60 pounds, and sometimes as much as 100 pounds (Morton 1987: 58-64).

⁸ Like the *Orang Rimba*, the surrounding *Melayu* classify durian trees as heavy inheritance passed on through females. The following *Melayu* proverb relates to the inheritance of fruit trees (*Adat hak alko*): *Kok durian lah seko*, *Kok kelapa lah gayu* (Syukur 1994).

⁹ Along the *Makekal*, the fine for *sentengah bengun* is usually between 60 and 80 sheets of cloth.

¹⁰ Traditionally, the primary or free forests (*rimbo lepeh*) of *Bukit Duabelas* were in theory, the property of the King/Sultan, and were only allowed to be used by

surrounding communities. Whenever free forest (*rimbo lepeh*) is opened as a swidden, and planted with a valued crop (for instance fruit trees), these resources are considered the rights of the person who opened the field. However, wild fruit trees or those th not tended, forgotten or overgrown by forests can be claimed using common methods for claiming fruit trees and other resources found in free forests. The following *Melayu seleko adat* couplets are excerpts from Syukur 1994.

Jambi *adat* concerning free forests and former swiddens (*adat rimba lepeh rimba tenang*)

Primary or free forests are calm and quiet	<i>Rimbo lepeh hutan tenang</i>
Former swiddens (secondary) are guarded	<i>Rimbo belukar nan dikendano</i>
The forests sprout native rights surrounding fruit trees	<i>Perimbon taruko, hak alko seseko lia</i>

The *Melayu* in Jambi have several very similar traditional laws surrounding the management of wild or domesticated fruit trees (*seseko lia*) in the forests. Some of the rules surrounding ownership or rather use of fruit trees dispersed in the forests are encoded in this *seloko adat* couplet.

Jambi *adat* concerning dispersed fruit trees (*adat sejulai dan kayu, serentang urat*)

Obtained by tending the area around a tree, according to law	<i>Diperdapat dari usaha cencang tanah, jerih payah syah</i>
Obtained as inheritance, under law	<i>Diperdapat dari warisan yang syah</i>
Obtained by someone, under law	<i>Diperdapat dari hibbah yang syah</i>

Melayu methods for marking resources (forest products, swidden fields or fruit trees) found in free forests (*hutan lepeh rimbo tenang*) are pointed out in the following *seleko adat couplet*.

Jambi *adat* concerning marking resources (*adat dendang lalu*)

Sign of hair of an appeal	<i>Dendang bulu sepengimbau</i>
Sign of a standing stone	<i>Dendang tere betegak batu</i>
Sign of a stalk of a <i>kelike</i> fruit	<i>Dendang buah kelike batang</i>
Sign of a <i>dama beudung kelakai</i>	<i>Dendang dama beudung kelakai</i>
Sign of rows of notches in the trees	<i>Dendang kayu bertakuk baris</i>

¹¹ In Malay, the word *seligi* means a pointed stick, or a sharp bamboo or wooden dart (Wilkinson 1948: 219).

¹² In addition to the *gegelagon* and *tunak tangga* signs, gender specific markings are sometimes carved into a fruit tree in the form of an arrow. When the arrow points upwards, the marking implies rights of use by an individual male, and when pointing downwards implies rights of use by a particular women or family (*rumah tango*).

¹³ According to research by Sakai et al., “The Dipterocarpaceae represent the major component among the canopy and emergent trees (73% of 48 species). In the lower layers, Anacardiaceae, Burseraceae, Euphorbiaceae, and Myristicaceae were the most

common families, but no one family dominated. Most lianas belonged to Leguminosae (24% out of 45 species) and Annonaceae (seven species). Epiphytes included 14 species of Orchidaceae, three species of Loranthaceae, and two species of Araceae” (1999).

¹⁴ Affected by various factors such as location, monsoon winds, and ocean currents, the annual season of blossoms and fruits occurs during different times in Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo. In the Pahang district of Peninsular Malaysia (Taman Negara), the flowering season is said to begin around March or April, and the fruiting season around July or October (Tuck-Po 2004:132). More closely resembling Sumatra, Brosius writes that the fruiting season in northern Borneo begins around mid December or early January and can last until March (Brosius 1992:113). Laumonier has recently published a book on the physical environment, structure, general floristics and the derived secondary vegetation of the lowland dipterocarp forests in Sumatra (Laumonier 1997).

¹⁵ In the lowland dipterocarp forests of Peninsular Malaya, Medway (1972) and Caldecott (1986) mention similar figures. According to Medway (1972), in most months 0–7% species were flowering, while at most 35% of the species bloomed during a masting or general flowering period (Medway 1972). According to Caldecott, “...a markedly greater proportion of the trees in any forest will be in fruit from April to October than at other times (Caldecott 1986). In most years, 3-15% of all mature trees fruit in the peak month, but every few years their number is supplemented dramatically by a so-called “mast” fruiting of dipterocarps” (Caldecott 1986).

¹⁶ From 1992 to 1996, a Japanese research team monitored the annual fruiting season in the Lambir Hills National Park in Sarawak of northern Borneo. During this time, they monitored 576 individuals representing 305 plant species in 56 families. “At the beginning of our study, the forest was at the final stage of fruiting following a general flowering event in 1992. We observed general flowering for the first time in 1996. Thus, these phenology data comprise the first relatively complete documentation of a general flowering cycle.” (Sakai et al. 1999)

¹⁷ According to Sakai et al., “The most common pollinators of the 305 plant species monitored were small social bees (25%) followed by beetles (23%), diverse insects (14%), and *Apis* bees (11%)...Immigrating flower visitors are represented by *Apis dorsata* (Sakai et al. 1999). The seasonal migration of *A. dorsata* over 100 km between montane and lowland areas reported from Sri Lanka (Koeniger and Koeniger, 1980). The tight relationship among general flowering, *Apis* bees, and *Apis*-pollinated plants possibly has led to the large proportion of general-flowering species and the drastic increase of flowering individuals during GFP in *Apis*-pollinated species” (Koeniger 1980).

¹⁸ In a model that takes into account statistics of bearded pig migrations in Borneo, and fatness as a key variable, Hancock et al. demonstrate that a single fruiting peak will not produce a bearded pig eruption no matter how large the fruiting event (Hancock et al. 2005). This is because, “the duration of the fruiting is too short to allow for exponential growth of the population” In order for bearded pigs to band together and embark on their migrations, consecutive masting events are necessary, because if the events are separated by more than a year, the population will decline to its minimum fatness and abundance levels” (Hancock et al. 2005:123). It is also necessary for at least one of the fruiting events in a consecutive sequence to be a large event, “as consecutive smaller

fruiting events do not increase the fatness enough to cause an eruption” (Hancock et al. 2005:123).

¹⁹ Like the *Orang Rimba*, the Batek De (Semang or Negrito) in Malaysia refer to the seasonal cycle of fruits as *tahun* (or *masa tahun*), a Malay word meaning year (Endicott 1979a:55).

²⁰ A good translation for *pecat komar’ow pekesor’an petahunon* may be, a ‘break in the dry season with an aim towards the fruit season’.

²¹ In Malaysia, this tree is referred to as Petaling and in Sumatra Petakil. The acid of this fruit has shown to have anti-HIV affects.

²² The months in which the seasons fell during my research seem to be a month or two ahead of those recorded in Sandbukt’s 1988 article, which were probably recorded during his period of research in 1979-80, a time when large-scale logging was only just beginning. Long-term records of annual rainfall in the province of Jambi (1901-1928, 1956-1980) are available in Sandbukt 1988a:125.

²³ While the fruit season seemed to appear around early March during both seasons I was in the field, I was told that it was late, and usually occurs earlier, possibly around late January or early February.

²⁴ Other rainforest hunter-gatherers have similar divisions to refer to small and large fruiting seasons. The *Penan* refer to a heavy fruiting season as *bua darok*, and a light season as *bua unyin* (Brosius 1992:113-114). According to Brosius, “...the occurrence of the fruit season is highly regular...the first fruits occur in mid-December, and last until March. Nearly all fruiting occurs during this limited amount of time. On a year-to-year basis, the amount of fruit occurring in any particular area varies greatly. In some year’s, fruit is extremely plentiful while in other years it is very poor. Good fruit years occur perhaps every five years, with exceptional years perhaps every 20 years...in any given year one area may be experiencing poor fruiting, while in another area the fruiting is heavy” (Brosius 1992:114). Similarly, the Batek in Malaysia refer to a lean fruit season as *tahun cekey*, and a season of abundance as *tahun bew*. *Tahun skali* refers to the mast fruiting of dipterocarps, and *juw* is the tail end of the fruit season when few fruits are left (Tuck-Po 2004:133).

²⁵ Numerous anthropologists have written of the beliefs shared between Austro-Asiatic and Austronesian peoples in Malaysia (Benjamin 1979; Laderman 1991) and in Borneo (Needham 1964; Freeman 1968; Endicott 1979; Brosius 1992). According to Needham, Endicott, Brosius and others, some very characteristic Austro-Asiatic beliefs in thunder god’s and mocking taboos have made their way to north eastern Borneo, where they wind their way into the belief systems of the *Penan*. The *Orang Rimba* do not have a god exclusively associated with thunder, nor any rules surrounding the mocking of animals or insects. In his article on the *Ridan ‘Kubu’*, van Dongen was surprised that the *Orang Hutan* group he visited didn’t display any fear during a lightning storm (Dongen 1906). They often mock and abuse live and dead animals, although they may tone it down in regard to *ker’emat* animals.

²⁶ As one man explained to me, ‘In the village of the gods of fruit there are many people, many men and many women. It is the same with the fruit trees in *Ujion*, and the

same here on earth (*halom cabu*). Some fruits are male and some are female fruits. The male gods look over the male fruits and the female gods look over the female fruits in the forests.’

²⁷ The Batek De believe that the firmament in the sky is covered with great quantities of flowers, which are managed by the superhuman beings, and are the blossoms that the *hala* (or gods) send to earthly fruit trees during the proper season (Endicott 1979:55). In some accounts, they say that the flowers take the form of human beings while in the heavens, these beings are referred to as *hala tahun*, or the seasonal fruit super humans (Endicott 1979:56). When the thunder god (*Gobar*) rumbles, they send their shadow souls to the earth, where they enter the limbs of the fruit trees and cause the flower buds to burst out (Endicott 1979:56). According to Endicott, the Batek De hold one or more singing sessions immediately following the floods each year to ensure that there will be an abundant crop of fruit, and believe that their wouldn’t be any fruit if they did not hold the singing sessions (1979:57). In addition to *Gobar*’s thunder, the songs intend to induce the *hala* who control the fruit to be generous in sending flowers or the shadow-souls that produce flowers (1979:57). Other singing rituals are held for calling the honeybees to the earth (see below). Similarly, Skeat and Blagden (1906a) write that both the aboriginal Malay and the Batak Nong believe there to be a fruit island (*polaw kebu*) in the sky looked over by a deity known as *Jawec* who is responsible for sending the blossoms to the fruit trees in the forests (Skeat 1906a). The Temoq in the Pahang district of Malaysia, also perform seasonal ritual to initiate the annual fruiting season in the forests, which is related to the arrival of the honeybees and the migrations of bearded pigs. Of this annual ritual Peter Laird mentions, “The Temoq Orang Asli of Pahang Tenggara (Peninsular Malaysia) have a shamanic rite called *Teng Gaduq* (“Mother Rite”) specifically devoted to initiating the annual flowering and fruiting cycle of the forest. Normatively performed over seven nights, the Temoq shaman accompanied by the subtle forms of bees (3 species), bearded pigs, and tigers travels to a far off land, to a ‘*batang*’ where the bearded pigs and tigers throw off their *baju* and become beautifully attired young men and women living in an agrarian society. The shaman collects various types of *padi*, which conveyed back to this world, become the blossoms of the forest fruit trees. When the shaman nears the *batang* he encounters the sacred churned earth of *Negeri Nangoi* and sings out the squealing of *nangoi* pigs. This ritual involves the carving of bees nests, and the fashioning and painting of *jelutung* tigers and bearded pigs, the *semangat* of which form a part of the shaman’s entourage” (personal communication with Peter Laird). Also see Laird 2005.

²⁸ The Malay commonly perform cockfights during festive or ceremonial occasions. Most involve gambling, although Winstedt mentions the more traditional belief surrounding the sacrifice of cock’s and the offering of blood to appease earthbound spirits (1951:67-71). For a mid-19th century description of a traditional cockfight (*nyabung*) in the residency of Palembang held towards the end of 20 days of festivities to mark the death of the Chiefs father, see Forbes 1885, and for a 19th-century description of Malay cockfighting on the Malay Peninsula see Skeat (1900). For an Iban account see Jenson 1974:77, 122, 199. In Bali, Clifford Geertz (1973) has written of the cultural importance of cockfighting, which, “...is in the first instance a blood sacrifice offered, with the appropriate chants and obligations, to the demons in order to pacify their ravenous, cannibal hunger”. For another Balinese account, see Eiseman 1989. For an account on the eastern island of Savu, see Fox 1979.

²⁹ There are two subspecies of the Great Argus pheasant, the Malaysian Great Argus (*A. a. argus*) found in Malaysia and Sumatra, and the Bornean Great Argus (*A. a. grayi*), found in Borneo. The males have large primary and secondary tail feathers. Their face is blue, and the crown is black with a distinctive short crest. The upperparts are brown, finely mottled with buff and iridescent ocelli can be found on the wings and tail. The male is very large, can reach three feet in length, and has one of the loudest calls of all birds. This call helps to ward off enemies as well as locate family members gone astray. Females are smaller than males and lack the ornate tail and wings. In Borneo, some peoples use the male plume feathers to decorate their ornamental headdress, while the *Orang Rimba* use them during healing ceremonies. For an *Orang Rimba* folktale concerning the *kuow*, which is a variation of one recorded by Skeat (1900) on the Peninsula, see the appendices.

³⁰ The *Orang Rimba* version of ritual cockfighting lacks some of the complex dynamics typical of Austronesian cockfighting, for instance gambling, cocks that are symbolic of clans, nor any earthly cocks for that matter.

³¹ According to Benjamin, “The *Semang* deity either is, or is closely associated with thunder; it is believed that men’s sins against him can be expiated by a human blood offering, which the deity then stores up and transforms in due course into the blossoms of the seasonal fruit trees... Blood in *Senoi* and *Semang* symbolism very clearly stands for the soul.” (Benjamin 1979:18)

³² Below is a line from one of the prayer songs of the ritual,

An abundance of flowers with stems	<i>Mer’amai pudung pudung</i>
Flowers that are wide	<i>Me’rayau bungo</i>
<i>Halililih kuku kuwuh</i>	<i>Haillilih kuku kuwuh</i>
(the sound the <i>kuwo</i> bird makes)	
Lively dancing	<i>Buekepak rami</i>

³³ In the late 19th century, Kedhing mentions similar beliefs surrounding the smaller with the people of Siak (Riau), “Besides the *lebah* there is to be found another bee, called *neruan*, which does not make its nests on trees, but in holes. The regulations observed when taking the wax of the *lebah*, do not apply to the taking of the wax and honey of the *neruan*. Anybody is at liberty to look for them wherever and whenever he likes” (Skeat 1900:204). According to Skeat, the rules and beliefs for collecting the nests of the *neruan* also apply to the Peninsular Malay (Kehding; Skeat 1900). Aside from these two honeybees, the *Orang Rimba* collect the hives of two other types of bees (*kelulut nasi* and *kelut gegalo*) that fall under the *melipona* category, and line their nests with resins collected from *Dipterocarp* trees. When the resin hardens, it is collected as dammar (*demor*), which is used for making torches or for trade.

³⁴ A WARSI fieldworker has written that the *Orang Rimba* believe the honeybees are looked over by a very tall god (as big as the Dutch) with white skin and red eyes. In contrast to what he has written, no one I spoke with believed the honeybees to originate from Mount Kerenci (*Gunung Kerenci*) (Siagian 2003a:15). The *Orang Rimba* believe that the honeybees are mundane, and are the same in the forests as they are in heavens. For some of the very different South American Indian myths and beliefs surrounding honey see Levi-Strauss 1973.

³⁵ The *Orang Rimba* refer to the largest species of *sialong* as *kedungdung* (*Koompassia excelsa*), while *per'intion* means stopping point. The *Makekal Orang Rimba* are not exactly sure where this tree is located, but say that it is somewhere in their own forests.

³⁶ Closely interrelated with their religious notions surrounding seasonal fruit, the Batek annually call the honeybees down from the heavens through singing sessions. According to Endicott, "...as with fruit...the first bees were *hala* (or gods) who normally lived by eating flowers" (1979:59). While these *hala* take human form in their normal abodes atop the stone pillars and on the top of the firmament (in the sky), each year after the rainy season they fly to earth in the form of bees (Endicott 1979:59). "The Batak sing 'bee songs' in an attempt to attract large numbers of bees to earth...they express the singer's hope that the bees will come to earth in an unending procession" (Endicott 1979:60). When the flowers disappear, they return to the sky and resume their human-like form" (Endicott 1979:59). The nearby Aring Batek have slightly different conceptions, and like the *Orang Rimba*, believe the bees to be instruments of the gods sent to the earth by the superhuman beings, and thus keep their mundane beelike form in both realms (Endicott 1979:59).

³⁷ When discovered by Western taxonomists in the late 19th century, the Sumatran bearded pig was initially thought to be a new species distinct from the already classified *Sus barbatus* of Borneo and was termed *Sus oi*, after *nangoi*, the native term for the species throughout the Malay regions of Eastern Sumatra (Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra). Upon reconsideration, *Sus nangoi* was dropped, and the species was grouped together with the Borneo and Malay species as *Sus barbatus* (Kloss June 1906) (Moulton 1922). Groves has recently split the classification of bearded pigs again into three subspecies; the Malay and Sumatran bearded pigs being termed *S. b. oi*, in Borneo *S. b. barbatus*, and the eastern (from Palawan and neighboring islands of the Philippines) subspecies being termed *S. b. ahoenobarbus* (Groves 1981). According to Groves, in the future *Sus b. oi* may revert to its original species classification, "very recently, some DNA work has been done, which seems to indicate that the Sumatran bearded pig is more different from the Bornean one (*Sus barbatus barbatus*) than had been thought. But I would go with the traditional classification until things get sorted out" (personal correspondence with Colin Groves). Humans have a long history of hunting these animals throughout the region, particularly in Borneo where archaeological evidence in the Niah caves in Sarawak have uncovered human altered remains of bearded pigs predating the Paleolithic (Medway 1958; Medway 1977). The bearded pig is still one of the main sources of protein for many non-Muslim peoples throughout its range, particularly throughout Borneo where it usually the preferred food and is hunted by the Iban in eastern Kalimantan, the Dayak in western Kalimantan and the *Penan* in Sarawak and Kalimantan (Setyawati 2004; Wadley 2004). Brosius has written that the bearded pig is the food of choice among the *Penan*, and the main animal hunted throughout the year (Brosius 1992). In *Bukit Duabelas*, they are not the dominant pig species found in their forests throughout the year, and tend to be more commonly present during the annual fruiting season. Brosius only briefly mentions their migrations, and does not write of their spiritual beliefs on the topic. Raj Puri gives the most detailed accounts of the *Penan* hunting of bearded pig (*Penan Benalui*, eastern Kalimantan) in his new book, "Deadly Dances" (2005), an adaptation of his Ph.D. thesis completed at the University of Hawaii (Puri 1997; Puri 2005). In Malaysia and Sumatra, the coming of Islam curbed the Malay's appetite for pork, although many animist and nominal Muslim peoples hunt pig. In the past, "many southern Pahang Malays who also hunted and ate wild pigs, regarded them as clean vis a vis domestic

pigs” (personal correspondence with Peter Laird). While most *Orang Asli* peoples in Malaysia hunt pig, curiously little has been written of their beliefs on the topic or their migrations. Peter Laird has written of the religious beliefs and ritual of the Temoq surrounding bearded pigs, honeybees and the fruiting season in the forests (see endnote above). According to Dentan, “regular pig hunting is generally without much ritual, but the *Teiw Waar* perform a hunting wife ritual after any significant hunt” (personal communication with Robert Dentan). While herds of *Sus barbatus oi* have been seen in the vicinity of the Taman Negara National Park (Johns, 1983), which is most likely a refuge for the species in Malaysia, the Batak have prohibitions on hunting “large and scary” ground species, and instead have traditionally focused on hunting primates in the canopy see Endicott, Batek hunting article. In Sumatra, bearded pigs have also been reported in northern (Medan), and are still found in central Sumatra (Indragiri River, Riau, Batanghari), and in the past, in southern (Lampung) Sumatra (Groves, 1981). I am uncertain if they are still found or hunted in the largely ‘Christian’ Batak regions of Medan or by the *Sakai*, *Bonai* and *Petalangan* (all who are now at least nominal Muslims) in Riau. A field survey revealed that they had all but disappeared from the southern quarter of the island, and are now reported to survive only in the *Lebong Hitam* forests across the straits from *Bangka* Island (Blouch, 1984). In Southern Riau and Jambi, the *Talang Mamak*, *Orang Rimba* and some *Orang Batin Simbilan* hunt them, although deforestation has severely fragmented most of the forests that remain.

³⁸ *Nangoi* can range anywhere from three to five and a half feet in length, two to three feet in height, and weigh over three hundred pounds. Their weight and fat content, which is highly valued, depends on the fruit available in the forests, particularly the fatty rich seeds from the fruit of oak trees. These pigs have more fat on them during the fruiting season, particularly after consecutive heavy fruit seasons. Because of the degraded nature of the forests, these days the *Orang Rimba* say that they have less fat on them, and they do not perform their migrations as regularly as they did in the past.

³⁹ Research on bearded pig migrations have yet to be conducted in Jambi. However, interior peoples usually describe their migrations as occurring from the coast towards the interior forests following the fruiting season in the forests. The directions, length, and reasons for the migrations appears to vary according to each locality. Of their general nature, Caldecott writes, “Pigs are described as moving consistently in one direction, in scattered or condensed herds, over a broad or narrow front, and over a period of several days, weeks or months. In some cases, the population is said to retrace its route later, or to follow a circular course to return whence it originally came. The distances traveled appear to vary greatly.” (1993) Pfeffer (1959) described annual, apparently unidirectional, population movements in Kalimantan involving distances of 250-650 km, while Davies and Payne (1982) refer to annual reversible movements over tens of kilometers in Sabah. The approximate population tracks given by Caldecott (1988a) suggest rates of travel of 8-22 km/month sustained over at least 4-8 months as part of larger cyclical movements in interior Sarawak. Some reports indicate that such population migrations begin or end in particular locations where abundant food may be found. Thus, Davies and Payne (1982) linked movements to seasonally fruiting *Dinoshloa* bamboo groves, while Caldecott (unpubl.) reinterpreted historical accounts in order to link Malayan bearded pig movements with predictable fruiting in camphor wood (*Dryobalanops aromatica*) forests. Caldecott (1988a) also described what appeared to be regular use of fruiting montane oak (*Lithocarpus*) forests in the upper Baram area of Sarawak. In Sumatra, bearded pigs also exhibit large-scale population movements, but reports are anecdotal and often contradictory. Groups of up to 300

individuals are said to embark on long migrations, arriving at a given location at irregular intervals, sometimes as often as once a year but more frequently once every two to four years. In the highlands, these movements do not seem to have any relation to the seasons, but in the lowlands the pigs tend to move out of the inundated forests to higher ground in the rainy season and back again in the dry season (Blouch, 1984). The relationship between these movements and the cycles of mast production has not been investigated. The primary ecological adaptation of the western races of bearded pigs, to the pursuit of fruiting peaks within the large-scale phenological mosaic of dipterocarp forests seems to be the most likely reason for their migrations” (Caldecott 1993).

⁴⁰ In rare circumstances, some *Orang Rimba* say common wild pig (*bebi*) can contain the soul of a recently deceased human, reincarnated as punishment for leading a sinful life. Bearded pigs (*nangoi*) are also known for having characteristic wart-like protrusions found just below each eye, which is why these gods are sometimes referred to as the god of warts (*or’ang de kutel*).

⁴¹ Their cosmological notions surrounding the origins of the godly pigs seem to reflect the general belief in Jambi and South Sumatra that the *nangoi*’s migrations originate in the eastern coastal regions, and progress towards the interior forests following the fruiting season. In the early twentieth century, van Dongen mentions an *Orang Batin Kubu* belief that the bearded pigs originate from a small coral island called *Batu Baruk*, located in between the larger island of *Bangka* and mainland Sumatra (Dongen 1910). According to the *Orang Batin Kubu*, the bearded pigs begin their seasonal migrations from here, swimming across the oceans to the forests of mainland Sumatra to eat its seasonal fruits, and return to the island after the fruiting season ends. Academics have established that bearded pigs often swim long distances during their migrations, and in southeast Sumatra, may be coming over from the nearby island of *Bangka*. Moreover, additional evidence for these trans-island migrations may exist in the fact that the populations on *Bangka* and mainland South Sumatra may be more exclusively interbreeding with one another (personal communication with Colin Groves). According to Colin Groves, the bearded pig populations in *Bangka* and South Sumatra may represent a unique subspecies of bearded pig that possess some (albeit minor) differences to the other populations that inhabit the more northern provinces of Jambi and Riau (personal communication with Colin Groves). According to Caldecott, bearded pigs, “regularly swim across rivers, sometimes coastal bays and even out to sea” and in Northeastern Borneo, Oliver et al. have written that groups of bearded pigs, “periodically cross the strait between the tip of Borneo (Sabah) to Sibutu and Tawi-Tawi, the southwestern most islands of the Sulu archipelago located in the southwest Philipinnes” (Caldecott 1993). Blouch has written that bearded pigs are present on the island of *Bangka* and also in the Lebong Hitam forests across the straits in Sumatra (Blouch 1984). According to Colin Groves, it may well be possible that the bearded pigs in South Sumatra are making their way back and forth from the Island of *Bangka* to mainland Sumatra (personal communication with Colin Groves). As he explains, “I found there to be slight differences between bearded pigs from southern Sumatra plus *Bangka* versus central and northern Sumatra. I thought not enough to rank them as different subspecies, but one author in the 1930s did think so, and described the *Bangka* pig as a separate subspecies, which he called *Sus barbatus edmondi* and thought that those from southern Sumatra might be the same” (personal communication with Colin Groves).

⁴² In his article “Kubu Conceptions of Reality”, Sandbukt colorfully narrates his experience of first being accepted as or compared to the tiger god (*mato mer’ego*), and

eventually after his apparent threat to the community had diminished, being accepted as or compared to one of the gods of the bearded pigs (Sandbukt 1984). While this account makes for entertaining reading, it makes it seem as if the *Orang Rimba* had never seen or even heard of people with pale skin and were attempting to make something of his unique existence by ascribing him to one of their godly categories. While he may have been referred to as the tiger god, it is unlikely that the adult men who most likely made the claims actually believed this, and probably did so to scare the females and children from having anything to do with him. I would imagine that their reference to Europeans as *nangoi* has a long history that predates Sandbukt's arrival to *Bukit Duabelas*, and may have begun with the Dutch, who for over a century were stationed in the nearby town of *Merangin*. The *Orang Rimba* have a lively oral history surrounding the Dutch and Japanese, particularly relating to their support of the *Tanah Garo* villagers and *Sultan Taha's* resistance. This includes accounts of attacks on Dutch boats (or spearing them) from the riverbanks of the *Tabir* River. Much later, the Dutch cartographer Tassilo Adam writes of encounters with *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* (Adam 1944). That said, I was playfully referred to as *nangoi* during my stay, and at times was asked if I knew where the *nangoi* came from and if it was along the eastern horizons, where the sky meets the earth. These were only curious questions, and regardless of the jokes (when I made the journey to the forest in the form of a pig they would hunt me down, and enjoy eating me), they didn't actually believe me to be one of the gods of bearded pigs.

⁴³ Similar beliefs in spiritual lead pigs and prohibitions on killing them, are held by the *Orang Batin Kubu* in South Sumatra and the *Penan Benalui* in northeastern Kalimantan (Dongen 1910; Puri 2005). Of the *Orang Batin Kubu* in South Sumatra, van Dongen writes that every pack of bearded pigs was believed to be led by an old, yet very large male, referred to as the *penghulu* or headman (Dongen 1910). According to van Dongen, it was the lead pigs duty to lead the pack on their swim across the oceans of the *Bangka* straits, across the *Muaro Simbilan River*, and into the forests where they traveled by the hundreds following the blossoming fruit (Dongen 1910). As the bearded pigs usually followed the same routes, one method of catching them was to wait along the rivers in small boats and spear them as they crossed (Dongen 1910). While van Dongen doesn't mention if the *Orang Batin Kubu* conceptualize the *nangoi* as gods, their belief that the *nangoi* originate from a location far across a large body of water or sea resembles *Orang Rimba* beliefs in *Bukit Duabelas*.

According to Puri, the *Penan Benalui's* long history with Christian missionaries appears to have led to a lack of ritual surrounding the fruiting season and migrations of bearded pigs (personal communication with Puri). Puri does mention, "Penan hunters report that the lead pig in the migration is a spirit known as *kan avung* or *avung*. This pig is said to be very large, with curving tusks, and said to leave footprints that resemble a small child's, except that they point backward. *Avung* is commonly said to be the rajah or 'king' of all pigs, and some informants claim him to be the leader of all animals. He is said to be endowed with the power to communicate with all pigs, leading them to fruit as well as warning them of potential dangers such as hunters. *Avung* is said to be immortal and cannot be caught; those hunters that spear or injure the animal can expect to die in the process or in mysterious circumstances soon after" (Puri 2005:256). On a past *Penan* ritual associated with the first catch during a migration, Puri writes, "Informants said that the captured pig is sacrificed and incantations recited over the body that call on the pigs to gather in large numbers, to travel close to *Penan* camps, and to arrive clean of ticks. This ritual was observed once by Pfeffer in 1956 when he

visited Penan Benalu lingering on the Nggeng Bio River” (Puri 2005:257). Of the incantation recorded by Pfeffer, Puri writes, “the incantation itself, implies a pig migration and asks for an abundant harvest (Puri 2005:257).

Chapter 6

The Annual Season of Fruits and *Balai* Marriage Ceremonies

Introduction

The rituals conducted during the annual season of flowers tend to culminate in the annual fruiting season, a most joyous time of the year when fruit is abundantly found throughout the forests, game populations are fat and predictably found in certain locations, and if the fruiting is heavy, may include migrations of bearded pigs. These seasonal resources have traditionally allowed the *Orang Rimba* to ease their work, congregate together in larger groups, and devote this roughly two-month period to their most intensive ritual activities of the year: religious *balai* wedding ceremonies (*balai kawin/nikah*). *Balai* wedding ceremonies are the most elaborate and extended rituals performed by the *Orang Rimba*. Lasting up to a fortnight, they are mixture of social and religious events, and one of the few times during the year that a wide network of family and friends from throughout the forests gather together in order celebrate a couple's religious rite of passage into adulthood through marriage and purification ceremonies.

However, they are also much more than this. After the first nights festive wedding ceremony, the activities shift to groups of adult men who attempt to reaffirm, strengthen and form new alliances with the gods on matters surrounding subsistence, health and healing, fighting and defense through purification and mass invocation ceremonies. For adult men, it is a time to increase one's knowledge, sacredness and power, and make religious pilgrimages through soul travel to cast away accumulated sin. For younger adult men, these events are an opportunity to learn from numerous elders the various paths to manipulate relationships with the gods and acquire religious knowledge and power. For women, *balai* ceremonies are an opportunity to increase their fertility, attractiveness and youth. For bachelors, they are a time to see what being a shaman entails, and are a socially acceptable arena to interact with maiden and search for a wife. *Balai* wedding ceremonies are believed to be a time of great sanctity, purity and health, when relations with the gods and *Orang Rimba adat* are at their strongest. These occasions play a major role in maintaining the continuity of the *Orang Rimba* community, reaffirming their strong identities as *Orang Rimba*, and reinforcing difference and boundaries with the outside society.

Why Marriage Ceremonies Are Held During the Season of Fruits

The *Orang Rimba* say that it is possible to hold a *balai* wedding ceremony during any time of the year, although there are a number of reasons why these events take place during the annual season of fruits. While the availability of abundant resources makes it easier to sustain large gatherings, the ability to predict where resources can be easily obtained is also important when living lives that are dominated by weeks on end of evening ritual which can last until day break. The availability of ritual requirements is also important, many of which can only be obtained during the season of fruits. The host family is required to provide a feast for the guests, which call for the ritual requirement of fats (*lemuk*) and sweets (*maniy*). In this, game animals tend to be fatter during the fruit season, and sweets are generally available from women's reserves of honey and men's durian taffy.

Flowers are important ritual requirements, and both the great quantities and seasonal varieties needed for rituals only bloom during this time of the year. White flowers are needed to weave the crowns worn by the bride and groom, shamans, and guests. However, the majority are seasonal flowers that are required as offerings to the gods, each god being associated with particular varieties of flower. One of the most important seasonal flowers that are needed derive from the *hantuy* palm, which are given as offerings and pressed for its oil and used during purification ceremonies. Another important seasonal flower derives from the *sibul* palm, which are given as offerings to the god of elephants (*or'ang de gedjoh*), and are eaten by adult males in order to invoke its spirit and acquire the powers of healing. As both of these flowers only appear during the annual season of fruits, the large *balai* wedding ceremonies are the only time of the year when purification ceremonies take place, and when shamans invoke specific deities such as the gods of elephants, tigers and the scaly anteater.

The *Orang Rimba* believe that these events need to be performed during the annual season of fruits as there is greater potential for sickness and epidemic. Somewhat ambiguously, the *Orang Rimba* often say that life is easy during the fruiting season, a time when food is easily found and when people rarely fall ill. However, the great scents emitted from the forest's flowers and fruits can attract evil earthbound spirits (*setan, silumon*) and the 'downstream' gods of sickness to their forest camps. The greatest threat is believed to come from the god of smallpox (*campok*), who whenever making his way into the forests from the downstream rivers is said to stay for 40 days and 40 nights (*satu bulan, sepuluh har'i*), the oft-mentioned duration of the annual season of fruits. By maintaining the purity of their bodies and the larger community by

following prohibitions and through heightened relations with the gods, these threats are believed to be greatly diminished, thus ensuring that the *balai*/fruit season will be a time of great health.

Choosing ‘Cool’ and Healthy Land and Building the *Balai*

The marriage *balai* platforms are the largest structures built by the *Orang Rimba*, and in contrast to their smaller counterparts, commonly reach 100 square meters in size. The center of the platform is mounted with a much larger rattan offering receptacle (*songkot*), which is used to place offerings to the gods. Around the *balai* platform, other structures are built for the women’s cooking and to keep the rain off the guests. Along the *Makekal* River, the construction of the *balai* platform is a significant social event performed by the significant male family members of the bride and groom, and can take up to a week to complete.¹ Marriage *balai* platforms are built in the forests surrounding the bride’s residence, its primary builders being the bride’s brothers, maternal uncle (*war’is di atas batin*) and father, and the groom’s father and brothers.

As is the case when choosing ritual land for a birthplace, the larger marriage *balai* platforms are never allowed to be built in the ‘open’, near a ‘hot’ and well traveled swidden field, or too close to the rivers, which are believed to be avenues along which the gods of sickness travel. In order to provide an intimate and healthy location conducive to interactions with the gods, *balai* platforms are always built off less traveled forest trails in a secluded clearing of lush, ‘cool’ or healthy forest. The platform will be a medium for soul travel and invoking the gods into their bodies. During this liminal period, their bodies are more vulnerable to sicknesses caused by intrusions from earthbound spirits, the gods of sickness or black magic. In theory, marriage *balai* platforms are also vulnerable to some of these elements, as in contrast to their smaller counterparts they are believed to possess a soul (*haluy balai*). Choosing land for the *balai* is very similar to choosing the land for a birthplace, where the mother receives the soul of a baby, or a swidden field where the rice plants will receive the soul of the rice field. Before beginning construction, the location is examined by a shaman while in a state of trance, consultation with the gods, and is affirmed with the ‘stick that sees from afar’ (*kayu penyogot*). If the land is found to be unhealthy or ‘hot’, the shaman can perform ritual to remove earthbound spirits or seeds of sickness and ‘cool’ the land or choose a different location to build the *balai*.

In order to ensure the purity of the *balai* platform, it is essential that the men who construct it have bodies that are pure, have not used soap, eaten village

domesticates and have restricted their interactions with the outside world. There are a number of other variables, such as dogs and the urine or feces of babies, which can dirty the platform, and must be kept away while it is being built or in use.² Outsiders also have the ability to defile a *balai* platform, and for similar reasons are never allowed to be near the location when they are being constructed, while in use, or even afterwards, as they fall apart and are overgrown by the forests.

Boundaries, Purification and the Sacred Pond

Marriage *balai* ceremonies are one of the most effective avenues for the enforcement of prohibitions and taboos that encourage boundaries with outsiders. As with any *balai* ritual involving ritual communication with the gods, both outsiders and *Orang Rimba* who have confused the forest and village realms of existence are strongly discouraged to attend, and are often threatened or chased from the vicinity whenever a *balai* ceremony occurs. While a person may not lose too many nights of sleep over missing a *balai* event that lasts one evening and only includes the members of his camp, he may feel a great deal of regret missing the biggest social/religious event of the year. No one wants to sit alone in a hot swidden or forest camp as the larger camp moves away to spend up to two weeks at these events.

As with an outsider, it is generally believed that the presence of a boundary crosser can defile a marriage *balai* platform, bring sickness to the event, harm a shaman while in a state of trance, and more generally disturb relations with the gods. Those who wash their bodies with soap or commonly travel downstream and interact too often with outsiders are considered more likely to have objects of sickness attached to them, and given their strong soapy scents, attract sickness. Their presence could threaten the health of the guests and a shaman in a state of trance. Just as importantly, the gods are repulsed by those who confuse the forest and village realms of existence (*mer'uba adat/halom*), which can occur by spending time outside the forests, interacting with outsiders, eating village domesticates or washing their bodies with soap. If the gods smell soap or village domesticates on the body of a boundary crosser or an outsider, they believe that they will ignore them. More generally, the gods are repulsed, ignore and will avoid any event that is believed to disturb the greater harmony or balance (*keselematon*) of *adat* and this can include the presence of outsiders, social deviants and those who confuse the forest and village realms of existence.

Those who confuse the forest and village realms of existence are not forever banned from attending religious events, and whether or not they are able to participate

relates to their encounters with the outside world and if they are conducted within the socially accepted range of trade or political affiliations and their history of these actions. Aside from their religious significance, boundary prohibitions relate to camp power relations, and those who are usually labeled as boundary crossers often reflect these relations. As *adat* minors, women and children are rarely accused of confusing the forest and village realms of existence, while senior males are usually the ones who make these types of accusations. Those most commonly labeled boundary crossers are women's unwed brothers.

Marriage *balai* ceremonies are a time of purification, initially for the young bride and groom who will begin their adult religious life, but also for adult men who throughout the year have traveled to the village to trade and have accumulated varying amounts of impurities. The purification of men occurs through soul travel to a sacred pond (*kolam*) associated with the god of swidden plants (*or'ang de tanohmon*) in the 'upstream' region of heaven. This pond is believed to have purifying qualities, and throughout the ceremony, shamans conduct soul travel to this pond, and guide the souls of non-adults and females who are incapable of making this trip on their own. Bathing in this pond is believed to purify one's soul of impurities caused by crossing over the forest and village realms of existence. For adult men, this facilitates interactions with the gods in dreams and during soul travel atop the *balai*. For women, it is a means to increase one's youthfulness, beauty and fertility, and for the sick and mentally ill, can bring health and clarity. This ritual baptism also marks the beginning of the newlyweds' adult religious life, which for the bride includes successfully bearing children, and for a young groom provides the requirement to begin developing their relations with the gods in matters related to subsistence, health and good fortune.

The Marriage Ceremony: A Sacred Baptism and Becoming Religious Adults

The first evening of a *balai* ceremony is always dedicated to a couple's religious marriage ceremony, a sacred consecration of their marriage before the gods, a baptism of their souls in the heavenly pond, and their introduction into the larger *Orang Rimba* community as religious adults. Afterwards it is a festive night of socializing, feasting, singing and dancing. From an orthodox perspective, the *balai* marriage ceremony is supposed to mark the endpoint of bride service, and represent both their community and religious marriage ceremony. These days this rarely occurs, and in fact it may have never been the strict case. Depending on when their marriage was forced, the couple has most likely been living with one another in a small hut next to their parent's home and

the woman is usually pregnant with their first child. In this case, they are no longer allowed to be called by their given names, but rather as ‘father or mother in waiting’ (*bepak/induk mentar’ow*). This gives them new status as *rer’ayo* or adults, which come bundled with new rights and obligations to participate in matters that concern the larger community. However, as their new teknonyms imply they are not yet complete adults, a status that usually comes with a child, and for a man, a religious life actively intertwined with intimate two-way relations with the gods.

After the sun sets, and the forests comes alive with florescent traces of moss, insects, fireflies (*nyup-nyup*) and the piercing sounds of insects, people begin to gather around the *balai* platform for the night’s activities. At *balai* wedding ceremonies, the attire of the groom and other male participants is similar to that of a shaman, which is how they envision the attire of the gods. This includes a cloth turban wrapped around the head (*tokulut*), a sarong around the waist (*bopot pingang*), and a scarf that hangs around the neck and falls onto the chest (*bopot leher*). The women wear their finest sarongs and the participants and guests wear crowns woven with white flowers; a halo with six strings of flowers that fall from the crown. Eventually, the bride and groom are called by a shaman atop the *balai* in order to consecrate their marriage before the gods, purify their souls in the sacred pond, have their future or fate (*nasib*) interpreted, and if problems are found, correct them. For this night, a square area surrounding the offering receptacle (*songkot*) is cordoned off by sheets of cloth (*kelambu koin*), giving the newlyweds and their shaman guide an aura of privacy in the ritual journey to the sacred pond. As is the case during *balai* ceremonies, each piece of cloth is of different colors, which are symbolically associated with and represent offerings to the different gods.

Sitting next to the couple, the shaman enters a state of trance (*tegejo*) while singing a corpus of prayer songs (*bedikir*) related to the sacred pond and the gods of swidden plants. With the support of a religious assistant (*pinginang*), the shaman stirs up his inner winds (*angin delom*), disassociates his traveling soul (*haluy bejelon*) from his earthly body, and guides the souls of the newlyweds above the clouds, through the sky door, and upstream to the village of the god of swidden plants. As young adults lack the ability to conduct soul travel or communicate with the gods, the bride and groom are only able to participate in this journey through the eyes of the shaman. Upon arriving to ‘upstream’ village of the god of swidden plants, the shaman’s traveling soul presents the headman with offerings of *hantuy* flowers, while atop the *balai* this scenario is enacted by placing flowers into the centre rattan receptacle.

After meeting with the headman of this god village, the newlyweds' souls are ritually bathed and purified in the pond. Atop the *balai*, this scenario is enacted by spreading oil from *hantuy* flowers onto the couple's earthly bodies (*baden cabu*). This ritual provides the basis and marks the beginning of a religious life for the newlyweds, particularly the groom. After marriage, it is his marital obligation to maintain a religious life, developing the ability to conduct soul travel in dreams and atop the *balai*, and enter into various relationships with the gods, which can be manipulated in matters of subsistence and health. To facilitate these abilities, it is his responsibility to maintain boundary prohibitions with outsiders, which includes not using soap, eating village domesticates and avoiding any close interactions with outsiders. The groom is no longer allowed to conduct extended (*mer'antau*) journeys to other camps, and unnecessarily travel outside the forests, unless it is to conduct trade, meet with patrons or visit the market. According to one man along the upstream *Makekal*,

During a person's bachelor (*bujang*) years, it is a time to *mer'antau*, to travel around the forests and to the village gaining experience (*car'i pengalamon*), earning money, and looking for a future wife. Before marriage and the ceremony at the *balai*, some do not follow a religious life, because as teenagers we are too young to interact with the gods. Some may see the gods in their dreams, but as non-adults, the gods do not acknowledge them. If a person has not bathed in this pond, they will be ignored. After marriage and bathing in the sacred pond, then a man must become more devoted to a religious life in the forests, providing for and protecting his family. Bathing in this pond...and having a shaman spread the *hantuy* oil on the body...it clears a person's sins (*duso*), it clears their soul. Afterwards the gods acknowledge the person, and we can begin to develop relationships with them. Someone who has accumulated too many sins...has not been following *adat* prohibitions and has been away from the forests, they need to visit this lake before resuming a relationship with the gods.

After returning from the journey, the shaman interprets the couples future or fate (*nasib*) by reading the signs in their palms. The *Orang Rimba* refer to this as determining 'the misfortunes of one's fish trap' (*induk malang ser'ow*).³ Of this act, one man explains,

When reading their signs (*induk malang ser'ow*), the shaman finds out if the two fit with one another, whether the marriage will be successful, how many children they will have and if there will be sickness or a death in their future. If he finds that their fate will be too dangerous or full of bad luck then they can call the marriage off. However, the shaman can perform prayers to 'throw away the bad luck' (*buang sial*), correct their fate and create a sense of harmony or balance (*keselematon*) in their lives and destiny (*nasib*). He can tell them what to do to fix their futures, or fix it himself by sucking the misfortune or bad luck out of their bodies.

If the shaman discovers 'misfortune' (*sial*) in the couple's future, he can remedy the situation by reciting magical incantations (*bopato*) or by using methods commonly used

during healing ceremonies to remove an intrusive object or spirit. In consultation with the gods, the shaman can probe the body with a piece of sacred white cloth in order to find where the bad luck is located and using techniques and powers learned from the god of elephants (*or'ang de gejoh*), suck the bad luck out of their bodies. After performing these rituals, the bride and groom engage in a symbolic gesture similar to a Western wedding. Within the privacy of the sacred curtains surrounding the *songkot*, the couple gently rubs faces together, their noses or their lips, as a symbolic gesture of their sacred union before the gods. With this, their journey atop the *balai* comes to an end, after which the attention shifts to the area around the platform, to a long night of celebration, socialization, feasting, singing and dancing.

Balai wedding ceremonies are attended by friends and family from throughout the forests, and are one of the few times of the year when they have the opportunity to come together, catch up on events that have occurred throughout the year and reaffirm ties with one another. In the structures surrounding the *balai* platform, the women of the bride's family cook fatty game (*lemak* or *gomuk*), a ritual requirement of the wedding, which may consist of deer, tapir, wild pig or if they have performed their seasonal migrations, bearded pig. The family of the bride is also obliged to provide their guests with sweets (*maniy*). After the fatty meal, the men distribute their durian taffy (*lampuk* and *tempoyak*), while the women distribute their honey (*madu-maniy*). In addition to being a ritual requirement, these actions strengthen bonds of obligation (*beloi budi*) between the bride's family and a wide network of family and friends.

The social activities following the wedding ceremony are filled with festive singing and dancing, primarily between unwed bachelors and maidens. Within the socially accepted confines of the occasion, and the watchful eyes of the adults, *balai* wedding ceremonies are the only ritual occasions apart from the bathing the baby ceremony that teenage youth, in a socially accepted manner, are allowed to dance and more freely interact with one another. Dressed in the attire of the gods, bachelors rhythmically beat ritual steel pans (*nintin quali*), while maiden (*gediy lapai*) sing and dance around the boys in zigzag patterns, while holding a stretched sheet of cloth over their heads. The ritual steel pans (*quali*) that the bachelor use are sacred heirlooms passed down from their ancestors, are a family's inheritance (*har'to*), and are stored throughout the year in sacred *aro* trees.

Within a potentially diverse social network, a *balai* wedding ceremony is a prime opportunity for a bachelor to find a potential wife, and in this, most bachelors attempt to attend as many of these events as possible. The festive dancing is excellent

opportunity to express their affection towards a maiden or her parents. Following one of these events, it is common for parents to begin talk of a bride service arrangement. Unless a bachelor is serious, he must be careful in how close he interacts with a maiden, as the following day he may find that his parents have begun to arrange a situation without his knowledge. If the bachelor is not up to the arrangement, he may find himself accused of ‘the law that is ripe’ (*hukom mato*) in an *adat* hearing, and struck with a cloth fine for the shame (*malu*) of rejecting an arranged proposal, or for interacting too closely or inappropriately with a maiden. The night’s festivities surrounding the large *balai* platform often go on until sunrise.⁴

Purification and Reaffirming Relations with the Gods

Subsequent nights atop the *balai* platform serve to address some of the needs of the community, and can involve healing ceremonies, fertility, matters pertaining to subsistence, and strengthening relations and acquiring knowledge and power from the gods. To facilitate these relations, the initial nights following the wedding ceremony consist of purification ceremonies or soul travel to the sacred pond of the god of swidden plants. Throughout the year, most men leave the forests to trade, visit the market or conduct business with their patrons and accumulate at least some degree of impurity. By having their souls ritually bathed and their bodies rubbed with *hantuy* oil, men are able to clear away some of these impurities and facilitate interactions with the gods during the *balai* event, and beyond.⁵ These purification ceremonies are not restricted to men, but do have slightly different purposes for women. They are primarily a means to enhance their youth, beauty, fertility and health, and are particularly appealing to women who have been unable to conceive or have a history of miscarriage. These activities are sometimes combined with healing ceremonies in order to ‘cool’ the body or bring clarity of mind in instances of spirit possession or insanity.

Following the marriage and purification ceremonies, the activities atop the *balai* platform shifts to groups of adult men of all age groups who strive to strengthen their relationships and alliances with the gods. These group shamanistic activities are excellent opportunities for younger adult males to learn from a diverse network of elder males and established shamans, the prayer songs and techniques needed to communicate with the gods. Under the guidance of elder shamans, they are characteristic times when specific gods are called down from heaven, and invoked into their bodies in order to acquire their knowledge (*ilemu*), power (*sakti*) and abilities. There are three particular gods that shamans commonly invoke during the large *balai* ceremonies, the elephant

god, tiger god and the god of the scaly anteater. These gods are invoked in order to acquire their knowledge and power in the realms of healing, fighting (*silet*) and defense.

Learning to Heal from the ‘Upstream’ God of Elephants

Given the sacred nature and purity of the events, wedding *balai* ceremonies are an opportune time to conduct healing ceremonies. The boundaries between normal and supernaturally caused sicknesses are often blurry, although the later are often believed to be influenced by spirits, the gods of sickness or black magic. These types of sickness are often said to be caused by spirit invasion or the intrusion of a small object (*pelet*, *jimat*), such as a small sliver of wood, bamboo, stone or seed, which can be sent by one of the above agents. Upon penetrating the body, the spirit or associated object can take over the body and mind and/or cause health (*bungahon*) to ‘heat’ up and wither away (*layu*), leading to sickness, mental illness and eventually death. Depending on the severity and duration, many types of sickness will eventually fall into this category.

During healing ceremonies, a shaman’s first task is to find the source of the sickness, the particular earthbound spirit, god of sickness or person, which has invaded or sent an object of invasion and through possession or contagion, may control the sickness inside the person. Through songs of prayer and soul travel, the shaman meets with various spirits or gods, manipulating personal relationships or alliances between them in order to discover its source. Many deities can be appealed in these efforts, particularly a person’s *aku-on* birth deity. Because of its ferocity and ability to bully and influence other spiritual entities, the tiger god is a prime ally in these efforts. Some of the more benevolent downstream deities such as the goddess of rice and the god of village angels can be used as intermediaries to discover whether sickness derives from the unapproachable gods of sickness. Once he discovers its source, a shaman must convince or pressure the entity to release its hold over the patient.

The shaman then focuses his efforts towards locating and removing the spirit or intrusive object lodged inside the patient’s body. This is performed with a sacred sheet of white cloth, which gives a shaman the ability to see within the body of the patient, and discover where the sickness is located. The shaman then probes the body to maneuver the spirit or object into the right position, so that he may suck it out of the body. After this suck curing, the shaman removes the object from his mouth as proof (*bukti*) to the patient, his family and those observing the ceremony that the intruding spirit-object has been removed. The removal of an intrusive spirit/object is often followed by the recitation of magical incantations (*bopato*), which are blown over the

patients body in order to 'cool' and heal the body and soul. During the annual fruiting season, a trip to the sacred pond of the god of swidden plants can serve a similar purpose. Healing ceremonies are often coupled with a medicinal remedy (plant, fungi, etc.), the prescription of which, may be obtained in the state of trance or dreams through consultation with the gods.⁶

Throughout the year, healing ceremonies are conducted atop smaller *balai* platforms whenever they are needed. However, larger *balai* ceremonies are the only time of the year when shamans gather to learn the knowledge and power of healing from the gods of elephants (*or'ang de gejuh*).⁷ The gods of elephants are associated with the knowledge of healing and the power to locate sickness and remove it by sucking it from the body. The ritual requirement for these occasion are white flowers from the *sibul* palm (Malay: *Ibul*, *Orania macroladus/sylvicola*), which are needed both as offerings to these gods, and are ingested by shamans as a trial in order to invoke its spirit into their bodies. The symbolic association between the gods of elephants and the *sibul* palm may have something to do with the poisonous nature of its fruit and palm cabbage, which many in the region believe is powerful enough to tame or kill an elephant. Throughout Eastern Sumatra, portions of the plant are used as medicinal remedies, while in Malaysia it is an important ritual plant for Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples, which some believe has the power to heal (Dentan 2002, personal communication with Peter Laird).⁸ As these flowers only blossom during the annual season of fruits, the larger *balai* ceremonies are the only time when these ritual invocations occur.

These rituals are performed within the framework of prayer songs (*dekir*) sung to the gods of elephants, and are intertwined with the related dance, movements and sounds of elephants. The event is led by a big shaman (*dukon godong*), who acts as the initial medium to contact and call these gods to the *balai* platform through words of seduction and offerings of *sibul* flowers. When the elephants arrive, those who choose to participate in the invocation, begin attempts to invoke its spirit by proving to them that they are sacred (*ker'emat*) and powerful (*sakti*) by ingesting *sibul* flowers, and different varieties of mushrooms (*jamur*). The *Orang Rimba* claim that these plants are extremely poisonous (*racun*) and make the person who eats them disoriented and drunk (*mabuk*).⁹ They believe that if a person has not obtained a level of sacredness and purity by following cultural prohibitions (soap and food prohibitions, interacting with outsiders) this trial could be fatal. According to one man along the upstream *Makekal*,

All of the shamans struggle (*rebutan*) for his power by eating these poisonous plants, and letting his soul enter their bodies. While eating these plants, the elephant god enters their bodies and they become him and are able to learn from him. If the person was not pure and sacred, and have the soul of the elephant inside him, these plants would definitely kill a man.

After consuming the plants, if a shaman shows no sign of being sick or drunk, he has proved to the elephant god that he is pure and powerful, which enables him to invoke its spirit. During these group invocations, the *balai* comes alive with shamans marching around on all fours, mimicking the movements of elephants, waving an arm in front of their face as a trunk, and belting out its calls and roars. Not all are successful in these efforts, particularly inexperienced shamans, who during their initial attempts may fall ill, vomit or pass out after eating these plants. However, those who are successful acquire the elephant's knowledge, power and ability to locate sickness, his massive power of intimidation, which can be used to bully agents of sickness, and the great suction power of its trunk, which give shamans the ability to remove intrusive agents of sickness (spirits, or intrusive objects/*pilet*) by sucking them out of the body.

For more experienced and elder shamans, invoking the spirit of the elephant is a ritual performed annually, to maintain one's relationship with this god, and increase their knowledge and ability to heal sickness. Elder men also serve as teachers, from which younger men learn the 'complicated, and strange' prayers songs, its dance, movements and sounds, which are said to be the most difficult to learn. They also serve as guides to younger men, monitoring their 'dangerous' intake of *sibul flowers* and mushrooms, and attend to those who fail or become sick. Invoking the elephant god is a key trial in a young shaman's career, which many do not achieve on their first try. They are experiences that are built upon on a yearly basis at the *balai*, and are considered advanced shamanistic skills. As sickness is a dominant concern for the *Orang Rimba*, those who are able to obtain the elephant's abilities to heal, acquire a skill of great importance in *Orang Rimba* society.

The danger involved while invoking the elephant god is a primary reason for not allowing boundary crossers or outsiders to attend *balai* ceremonies. They often say that if there were any disturbances to a shaman's state of concentration during these events, or to the spirits, gods, or the general harmony of the environment (*keselematon*), then the dangerous plants could kill them or the spirit of the elephant could become trapped inside the shaman's body. In the case of the latter, they say that a shaman would become a crazed elephant, marching uncontrollably around the forests, until the spirit wears out the shaman's body and he eventually dies of exhaustion. If the exhaustion does not kill

the person, some say that the spirit of the elephant would eventually begin to metamorphose into its manifestation as an elephant, ripping apart the shaman's body as it makes its way out.

Learning the Martial Art of *Silat* from the Tiger God and to Toughen the Skin from the God of Scaly Anteaters

Throughout one's life, most will acquire various forms of magical knowledge and incantations related to the realms of submission, fighting and defense. Some of this knowledge is traditional magic (*bopato*) handed down from the ancestors, while other forms (*jempi*) are obtained from Malay or Javanese shamans in the surrounding villages, for a price. However, the most effective forms of knowledge is said to be acquired directly from the gods. Following the marriage ceremony, the activities atop the *balai* platform are also opportunities for groups of adult men to invoke the tiger god into their bodies, acquire his knowledge and abilities, and study from him his style of fighting and defense.¹⁰ As is the case when invoking the elephant, the *balai* platform comes alive with shamans who struggle to invoke the spirit of the tiger, and if accomplished, fall into the movements and motions of the tiger within the context of *silat*.

Silat is a traditional martial art of Indo-Malaysian origin found throughout Malaysia and the Indonesian archipelago (Barendregt 1995). Of the Minangkabau, Barendregt writes that the *silat* style of fighting and defense was primarily taught to youth by their maternal uncles, and could be used as a means of defense when it came time for them to conduct their teenage *merantau* journeys outside their communities in order to search for good fortune and a wife (1995).¹¹ More generally, *silat* was a means for the Minangkabau to, "introduce both customary law (*adat*) and more mystical religious concepts to the youth, knowledge that is necessary if one wants to become a full-grown member of society" (Barendregt 1995). In contemporary contexts, *silat* is often practiced as sport or a dance and is sometimes performed at weddings.

Throughout the centuries, *silat* has incorporated various influences from Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic (Sufi) philosophies, although the earliest form of *silat* practiced by peoples in Sumatra, Malaysia and Western Java incorporate the style and philosophical influence of the tiger spirit. In the traditional beliefs of Malayic peoples, the tiger spirit serves the role of "sanctioner and defender of the righteous, and is strongly associated with moral values inherent in customary law (*adat*), values that are strongly emphasized in the etiquette of the *silat* world" (Barendregt 1995). Throughout the region, the spirit of the tiger is still invoked during *silat* education in order to harness its awesome

fighting abilities, sometimes as a student's final trial to master particular branches of *silat* skills (Bakels 1995; Barendregt 1995; Wessing 1986).¹² Among animist forest peoples in the region such as the *Orang Rimba* and the *Talang Mamak* in southern Riau, the tiger form is still the primary style practiced.¹³

From what I was told, the *Orang Rimba* form of *silet* includes numerous formations based around the *langkah* or sliding step, with movements, strikes and defensive postures that mimic the fighting style of the tiger. Those who are able to develop a relation with the tiger spirit and learn *silet* are able to call upon or invoke its spirit in battles, in order to obtain its speed, strength, ferocity and fighting abilities. The *Orang Rimba* say that the strike of a person who has invoked the tiger can slash open an opponent, leaving the marks of a tiger's claws. Along the *Makekal*, unmarried youth sometimes gather to practice *silet* as novices but rarely study these skills under the tutelage of adults, and as non-adults are not allowed to practice *silet* in a religious context. Here, the religious study of *silet* is the privileged realm of adults, and is often used as a threat to enforce *adat* law in the forests.

In the context of disagreements and legal hearings, adult males and camp headmen sometimes go into the movements of *silet* to instill a sense of fear (*takut*) and shame (*malu*) in the accused for violating *adat*, particularly if the person refuses to pay a cloth fine. As with Barendregt's example in Minangkabau, the primary context in which I observed *silet*, or the threat of *silet*, was in regards to the bachelors' *mer'antau* journeys, and related situations involving inappropriate encounters or interactions with women. However, unlike the Minangkabau, bachelors never use *silet* as a means to defend or prove themselves during their *mer'antau* journeys, nor would they at this time in his life, have any in depth knowledge in the realm of *silet*. More often, *silet* is an aggressive display performed by adult males towards bachelors over violations with unwed woman.¹⁴ In quarrels between adults, I was told that *silet* confrontations sometimes occur, but never against a headman or in regards to a headman's decision in a legal hearing. In any *silet* confrontation, they believe that those who use their skills outside the realm of *adat* can never harness the fighting abilities of the tiger. Those who attempt to use their *silet* fighting skills in an inappropriate manner can disturb the harmony of *adat*, accumulate sin, bad karma, and ill will from the gods.

In addition to fighting knowledge, the larger *balai* ceremonies are opportunities for adult males to acquire guardian knowledge (*ilemu penjagahon*) by invoking the god of the scaly anteaters (*or'ang de tenggiling*). Scaly anteaters (*tenggiling*, *Manis javanica*) are armadillo type animals with long snouts, and tongues which are used for

collecting ants.¹⁵ The exterior of their body is covered with bony scales and whenever in danger, they curl up into a ball in order to protect themselves from predators. In Malay myth, these animals are ascribed extraordinary abilities, and are one of the only animals that can submit and kill the elephant (Skeat 1900:154). In the *Orang Rimba* cosmology, the scaly anteaters in the forests are believed to be an earthly emanation of the god of scaly anteaters, and are sacred animals, which are forbidden to be harmed. The *Orang Rimba* say that the god of scaly anteaters lives alone in a solitary home in the ‘upstream’ region of heaven, and in its heavenly form wear a number of necklaces attached with dangling magical objects (*jimat*). The power of these objects is said to extend to its bony scales, which serve as protection whenever descending to the forests in his rough or earthly body (*baden cabu*) to search for magical objects to increase his powers.

In a dramatic trial atop the *balai*, shamans invoke the spirit of the scaly anteater in an effort to demonstrate or prove (*bukti*) to him that their bodies are also sacred and powerful, by stabbing into or cutting their skin with sharp objects, and at times, the blade of a knife. If able to make it through the event unscathed, without signs of cuts or abrasions, then they believe that they have successfully begun to form a relationship with him, and can begin acquiring his knowledge and powers. As one man along the upstream *Makekal* describes,

It is very dangerous to study his knowledge, and many shamans have been severely injured when trying to prove to this god that their bodies are pure and sacred and can deflect the blade of a knife. If they are able to acquire his knowledge and powers, then a shaman has the ability to make his skin as strong as the scales of the *tenggiling*, and can protect himself from animal bites, confrontations with others or the blade of a knife. A knife will bend or break when making contact with the skin. They begin to study from this god at the marriage *balai* ceremonies, but afterwards can continue to learn this knowledge throughout the year.

As with *silet* abilities obtained from the tiger, a man must be careful of the context in which these powers are drawn. If the gods consider a man’s efforts to be unjust, he may enter a conflict without the ability to call upon his fighting or guardian knowledge.

Embarking on Religious Pilgrimages from the *Balai*: Soul Travel to Kerenci and *Haji* to the ‘Downstream’ God of Village Angels

The larger *balai* ceremonies are also times for adult males to embark on religious pilgrimages, not in their physical bodies, but through soul travel from the *balai*. One common soul pilgrimage is to Kerenci’s lake on seven mountains (*danau gunung tujuh*), which like Minangkabau, is believed to be a magically charged land.¹⁶ During these visits, shamans can enter into relationships and alliances with spirits for different

purposes, and purify themselves in its mountain lake. Regarding these journeys, one man along the *Makekal* remarked,

We are certain that there are many good earthbound spirits in the Kerenci Mountains, especially near the lake of seven mountains. We sometimes travel to their villages through dream or soul travel atop the *balai* in order to obtain knowledge from them. They are good *silumon*, not the evil ones that can kill or drive people crazy. There are also many female spirits and shamans form relationships with them and enter into marriages. These relationships are similar to the ones with the gods. However, they are also different...the gods are more sacred...they live in heaven, not on earth. We believe that the lake of seven mountains has purifying powers and when shamans travel here and bathe in this lake, it purifies their bodies and makes them more sacred and powerful. It can also cause flowers to blossom in the forests, some that we use as offerings at the *balai*.¹⁷

Balai ceremonies are also times for shamans to conduct soul travel to the 'downstream' god of village angels (*or'ang melakat or'ang mer'u*), which they refer to as '*haji*'. For Muslims, the *haj* is an Islamic pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, retracing Muhammad's triumphant return to his city of birth, from which he was cast.¹⁸ If able, every Muslim is required to make this journey at least once in his lifetime, and by doing so will receive good will and blessings from God. In the upstream regions of Jambi, this pilgrimage is beyond the financial means of most villagers, although a few men of prominence and wealth in the region have made the trip. One of these men is *Rio Siyoti*, the headman and lead patron (*pangkol waris*) of the *Makekal Orang Rimba* in the *Melayu* village of *Tanah Garo*. The *Orang Rimba* believe that villagers who are able to perform the *haji* receive blessings from God, can increase their social standing, sacredness and can clear away accumulated sin, making it more likely that they spend eternity in heaven. Reflecting the social status gained from his pilgrimage, *Rio Siyoti* is often referred to in the community as *Pak Haji*.

Within the *Orang Rimba* pantheon of heavenly gods, there is one god in particular that draws interesting influence from the surrounding *Melayu* religion. Located in the downstream realm of the heavens, the god of the village angels is said to sit alone on a mountaintop, often meditating and studying from a stack of religious books (*buku ketib*). Sometimes referred to as the god of the mountain (*or'ang de gunung*), this deity is said to resemble a religious leader at a mosque (*imom* or *ketib*), and is strongly associated with Islamic knowledge (*ilemu Islam*) and powers. Throughout the year, shamans can manipulate relations with this god to obtain Islamic knowledge or powers, or use him as an intermediary during healing ceremonies to manipulate relationships with the gods of sickness. More formalized soul travel to this god takes place during the fruiting season for the purpose of clearing accumulated sin

(*duso*), any related bad luck or misfortune that may result, and make it more likely at judgement that they will enter heaven. The *Orang Rimba* refer to these annual visits as their *haji*.

The association of this god with Islamic knowledge relates to his location along the border of the *Orang Rimba* heaven and the village heaven, and his close relations with village gods, Mohammad and Allah. They say that the mountain where he resides is located some distance inland from the heavenly river, in between the village of the goddesses of rice and the gods of bearded pigs. Across the border into the village heaven, they describe another mountain where the prophet Mohammad and Allah reside, and according to *Orang Rimba* belief this is where the villagers conduct their *haj*. According to one man's account,

The *balai* is a time for shamans to *haji*. We believe that Muslims have a religion and that their god is true because when shamans pray at the *balai* they are able to see some of them as they *haji* to their gods in their heaven. Shamans can see them...that a short journey from *or'ang de melekat or'ang mer'u*, there is another mountain where some of the villagers *haji*. Through dreams and soul travel, shamans are able to follow the villagers and see them from the forests as they conduct their *haji*. During the *balai* ceremonies, we can also *haji* to our god of village angels, or if we choose join the villagers on their *haji* to have our sins cancelled by god. Only a few of the villagers have enough money to *haji*...but shamans, they are able to *haji* as often as they please from the *balai*.

Through annual *haji* visits to the god of village angels or to the nearby heaven of the villagers, the *Orang Rimba* are selectively able to draw upon outside village knowledge and power in order to heal sickness or clear accumulated sin. This religious mobility is also a form of empowerment over the villagers, most of whom are never able to conduct the *haji*.

The Soul of the *Balai* Platform as an Eternal '*Rumah Adat*'

As the annual fruiting season wanes and the *balai* ceremonies end, the platforms are left in the jungle to decay and are eventually overtaken by the surrounding forests. However, the souls of these platforms are believed to remain eternally present in the upstream realm of the heavens. In contrast to the smaller *balai* platforms, the marriage *balai* platforms are believed to have souls, which occupy its earthly wooden casing in the forest. After they are used and are overtaken by the forests, their souls are believed to ascend to a place in the upstream realm of the gods/souls called the 'stopping or resting point' (*per'intion halom*) of the *balai* platforms. The resting point of their souls are said to be located very near the village of the gods and goddess of fruit (*Ujion*), and are tended and looked over by the gods of the resting point (*or'ang de per'intion*) and

the mother goddesses (*bidodar'i*). These platforms are sometimes visited by shamans during soul travel, and by those who have passed on and have become ancestors and lesser gods. They are eternal reminders or testaments to a couple's sacred marriage, a young man's introduction to a religious life, and a shaman's journeys and interactions in the realm of the gods. They are more generally a symbol of *Orang Rimba* customs and religion (*adat*). According to one man along the *Makekal*,

Only the rough material form (*cabu* or *kasar*) of the *balai* stays here, and will eventually decay and disappear in the forests. However, the soul of the *balai* remains new in *per'intion*, along with the other *balai* that our ancestors have built. Many beautiful goddesses (*bidodar'i*) watch over the *balai*, clean around and manage the area. Shamans often visit this area, and when we die, we pass through this area and spend time here at the *balai* with the *bidodar'i*. When shamans travel here they can see the many *balai* platforms and remember and pick out which ones were used at so and so's marriage. Their souls stand as proof (*bukti*) to our customs and ways, sort of like a *rumah adat*.

The curious analogy between the soul of the *balai* platform and *rumah adat* cultural halls/museums came up several times during these discussions. In the last several decades, traditional *rumah* or *balai adat* cultural halls have sprung up in ethnic communities throughout Sumatra. The most relevant examples are those built for minority communities such as the *Petalangan* and *Sakai* in nearby Riau, which are sometimes sponsored by the corporations, which have stolen their traditional lands.¹⁹ A remnant of Suharto's New Order cultural politics, these ethnic cultural halls are often oversized versions of the ethnic group's traditional home, which often serve as a museum for displaying the people's disappearing traditional culture as they travel down a path towards becoming settled and 'developed' Indonesian citizens.²⁰ Depending on whether they are visited by tourists, these halls can sometimes be a means for locals to supplement their incomes by selling traditional handicrafts or by offering cultural performances. In a more liberal post-Suharto era, some of these halls are now serving as a venue for regional community/indigenous rights (*masyarakat adat*) meetings and are becoming an interesting arena for the formation and manipulation of ethnic identities.

Having heard about some of these *rumah adat* cultural houses from outsiders, the analogy above was made in the context of expressing their lack of desire for having an *Orang Rimba* 'rumah adat' cultural hall. In the minds of some, a 'settled' cultural hall would never serve the role of housing their very 'mobile' culture and religious beliefs, which are extremely sacred, personal and lived, and by any means are dependent upon maintaining separation with the outside world. For the *Orang Rima*, the

role of a *rumah adat* building is already present in the numerous soul versions of *balai* platforms located in their ‘upstream’ region of heaven.

Discussion

The abundance of fruit and game and the availability of important ritual requirements have traditionally allowed *Orang Rimba* camps to congregate during the annual season of fruits and devote this period to ritually intensive *balai* wedding ceremonies. *Balai* wedding ceremonies are a mixture of social and religious events, which begin with a couple’s rite of passage into adulthood through a purification ceremony, and then shifts to the purification of the larger group. They include mass invocation ceremonies for adult males to acquire the knowledge and power of healing, fighting and defense, and religious pilgrimages to cancel accumulated male sin. During a time when the potential for sickness is believed to be greater due to the scents emitted from the flowers and fruits, *balai* wedding ceremonies are a time of great purity and health, when relations with the gods and *Orang Rimba adat* is at its strongest.

Choosing the land for the *balai* is very similar to choosing the land for a birthplace where the mother receives the soul of a baby, or a swidden field where the rice plants will receive the soul of the rice field. Intertwined with the hot:cold contrast and notions of health and sickness, the land chosen for the *balai* must be located in ‘cool’ and healthy forests, and never in or near a ‘hot’, open and more traveled swidden fields. It is important that the builders maintain a sense of purity by remaining in the forests, following soap and food prohibitions, and maintaining separation from outsiders. These issues are especially important, because in contrast to smaller *balai* platforms the larger versions are believed to have souls. Marriage *balai* ceremonies are one of the most effective ways of enforcing everyday prohibitions and maintain boundaries with the outside world. As is the case with an outsider, they believe that the presence of a boundary crosser can defile a marriage *balai* platform, bring sickness to the event, harm a shaman while in a state of trance and more generally disturb relations with the gods. In addition to preserving the purity of their beliefs, boundary issues are strongly related to power issues based on gender and adulthood, and those who are often accused of crossing the forest and village realms of existence are often bachelors and social deviants.

Balai ceremonies are also a time for purification, initially for the young bride and groom who will begin their religious lives, but also for adult men who throughout the year have journeyed downstream to the village, interacted too closely with outsiders,

violated boundary prohibitions, and accumulated different amounts of impurity. These purification ceremonies occur in the context of soul travel to a sacred pond located in the 'upstream' region of their heaven. For the young bride and groom, this ritual baptism marks the beginning of their adult religious lives, which for the bride, may include a life of successfully bearing children, and for the young groom provides the purifying requirement for beginning a religious life. A young groom is no longer allowed to *mer'antau* or journey away from his wife or unnecessarily outside the forests, and must follow prohibitions on food and soap use. For adult men, bathing in this pond cleanses the body and soul of impurities caused by violating boundary prohibitions, leaving the forests or interacting with outsiders, and facilitates interaction with the gods in dreams and during soul travel atop the *balai*. For women, it is a means to increase one's youthfulness, beauty and fertility, and for the sick and mentally ill can bring health and clarity. For bachelors, it is a time to see what being a religious adult entails, but also a socially acceptable arena to interact, dance and search for a future wife. They are also a means for the adults to keep in them in line, by prohibiting them from attending, whenever their behaviors diverge outside the boundaries of *adat*.

Under the tutelage of established shamans, *balai* ceremonies are opportunities for young adults to learn the prayer songs and techniques of shamanism. It is a chance to learn how to conduct soul travel to heaven and far away places in an effort to establish relationship with gods and spirits, and acquire their assistance, knowledge or power. Through characteristic trials in which men must prove their sacredness and purity, *balai* ceremonies are opportunities for both young and old to invoke the gods of elephants, tigers and scaly anteaters into their bodies, in order to acquire knowledge and power in the realms of healing, *silet* fighting and defense. The *silet* skills obtained from the tiger are used to enforce *adat* precepts, improper relations involving women and unruly bachelors during their *merantau* travels. Those gained from the scaly anteater can be used to defend one-self in similar situations or from animals while hunting. The healing powers achieved by invoking the gods of elephants, give more experienced shamans the ability to deal with sickness, an area of constant concern in *Orang Rimba* society. Aside from the utility and status achieved by a man who possesses these abilities, he is able to manipulate matters pertaining to sickness, which includes making accusations pertaining to its source, and enforcing the boundaries that serve to prevent sickness. Through soul travel to the god of the village angels, shamans are able to draw upon outside Islamic knowledge and power, manipulate relations with the unapproachable gods of sickness, and *haji* in order to cancel or clear one's accumulated

sins. More generally, “a shaman must travel in order to be politically effective... men are confirmed as privileged travelers on both the physical and metaphorical (or religious) landscapes (Tsing 1993:205).

Balai wedding ceremonies play a major role in maintaining the continuity of *Orang Rimba* culture and religion, reaffirming their strong identities as *Orang Rimba* and providing a basis for creating and enforcing strong difference or boundaries with outsiders. They also play a part in maintaining internal power relations. The sacred *balai* platform is a symbolic embodiment of *Orang Rimba adat*, in a sense, the *Orang Rimba*'s *rumah adat*. Eternally present in the religious landscape of the ‘upstream’ realm of heaven, they are a testament to a young couple’s sacred marriage, a shaman’s interactions with the gods, and more generally, *Orang Rimba adat*.

Chapter 6 Endnotes

¹ A popular Jambi *Melayu* myth mentions that the *Kubu*'s construction of the structure for the marriage ceremony is a trial to be performed solely by the groom within certain time limits. This *Kubu* myth may have its roots in the regional Jambi *Melayu* legend of *Tun Talanai*'s unsuccessful betrothal of Queen *Puteri Selerang Pinang Masak* (Andaya 1993:13). According to this legend, *Pinang Masak*, who was then a Minangkabau princess, had come to the attention of *Tun Talanai*, the ruler of *Muara Sebak*, and had travelled upstream to ask her to marry him. As Andaya writes, “*Tun Talanai* was required to win his bride by performing a superhuman task. *Pinang Masak* had agreed to marriage on the condition that her suitor builds her a palace in a single night, before the cocks crowed. *Tun Talanai*, himself a great *poyang* (ancestor) would have succeeded had his prospective bride not hung a lamp near the cocks while it was still dark, and so awakened them” (Andaya 1993:12). Another popular *Melayu* myth mentions that the *Kubu* are to perform a marriage trial similar to the ancestors *Bujang Per'antau* and *Seti'au*, the goddess who sprung from the *kelumpang* fruit (chapter 3), that is, balance themselves on a slippery log and walk across til they meet in the middle (Palle 1993:24). Both myths commonly appear in local Social Department manuscripts under descriptions of *Kubu* marriage practices. According to the *Makekal Orang Rimba*, both of these trials are not performed along the *Makekal* River nor did they have any knowledge of them being performed by any other groups.

² According to one man along the *Makekal* River,

We believe that dogs are dirty (*kotor*)...they are prohibited (*harom*) to be around the *balai* when it is built and while they are in use. If a dog jumps on top of the *balai*, it would make the *balai* dirty and take away its sacredness...then we would have to rebuild it. This is the same for babies, not because they are dirty...they are actually more sacred than adults (given their recent association with the gods). However, if a baby defecates or urinates on top of the *balai*, this would dirty the *balai* and then we would have to rebuild it.

³ The term *induk* usually means mother, but in this context means primary or chief. *Malang* can be defined as traversing, as well as unlucky or unfortunate. Stationary fish traps set along a river are sometimes referred to as *serow*.

⁴ The bride and groom always participate in these festivities, but may leave the event early, together with the wife's brother, to conduct a symbolic hunt called 'the search' (*cencar'ion*). What they catch is symbolic of the manner in which their marriage will turn out. This hunt can also take place after the couple's mundane *adat* ceremony, after they receive their beating.

⁵ As one man along the *Makekal* explains,

If I eat food that is prohibited (*pantong* or *har'om*) then a shaman can bring me to this pond, bathe my soul and cleanse me of all that is dirty (*kotor*)...it will make my body and soul pure again. If we have eaten chicken, eggs, milk or any domestic animals in the village, if we have bathed with soap or spent time with outsiders or in the village...this pond will cleanse us. It is to clean our bodies of that which is impure, so that we can speak with the gods and that they will acknowledge us.

⁶ The *Orang Rimba* have a rich knowledge of traditional medicinal plants in the forests. In 1998, a research team led by DEPKES, LIPI, IPB, and LIPI in the southern *Air Hitam* region of *Bukit Duabelas* and *Bukit Tigapuluh* identified one hundred and thirty seven types of plants, mushrooms, and animals used by the *Orang Rimba* for medicinal purposes (DEPKES 1998). Their knowledge of medicine is extremely sophisticated, but does not always work according to scientific beliefs. One example of a common medicinal cure prescribed by the gods and conjured up to cure sickness is called *ranting manikum*, or finding a twig that falls to the ground and lodges into the fork of another stick. In order to concoct this potion, the lodged twigs must be ground up with ashes from a fire, mixed with water, and fed to the sick as a cure.

⁷ Other Malayic peoples also believe the elephant to be a sacred animal. In the Selangor region of Malaysia, Skeat writes that the Malay believe the elephants had "a city of their own, where they live in houses like human beings, and wear their natural human shape...whoever trespasses over their boundaries of that country turns into an elephant" (1900:151-2). In other regions of Malaysia, Skeat writes of a Malay belief in sacred ghost elephants (*gajah kramat*) associated with shrines in different regions (1900:153). Skeat doesn't mention any primary Malay beliefs associated with the spirit of the elephant (healing, etc.), nor to my knowledge are there any recorded of the *Melayu* in Eastern Sumatra. In the early twentieth century, an elephant deity or spirit (*roh gajah*) does wind its way into the twelfth prayer song (*saleh*) of an *Orang Batin Kubu* healing ritual recorded by van Dongen along the *Lalan* River in South Sumatra. They appear to be calling upon the power of the elephant spirit to cast away sickness.

The 12th prayer song (*saleh*) from van Dongen's account of an *Orang Batin Kubu* healing ritual (Dongen 1910:271).

The prayer of a pair of elephants "*Saleh Gajah Bandung*"

A pair of tails, a pair of heads a pair of tubers are together as big as a tusk, as big as a mast the tip of the tusk, crusher of rice small bachelor come to the field bring a leave, rolled for the future food for a pair of elephants	<i>Bandung ikuk, bandung kepelu bandung gadung kaduanya sebesak gading, sebesak cemat ujung gading penggirik beras bujang kecil datang ditalang bawak daun segulungan bakal makanan gajah bandung</i>
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The surrounding *Melayu* do not have a prohibition on hunting elephants, and according to *Orang Rimba* accounts were the ones who hunted them for their ivory and killed them off as pests. According to van Dongen, the swidden based *Orang Batin Kubu* also captured elephants for a source of food, in pit traps covered with branches and leaves (Dongen 1910). Sandbukt suggests the presence of elephants in *Bukit Duabelas* during his initial fieldwork in 1979-80. The *Orang Rimba* say that they eventually became absent in the region during the mid 1980's, displaced by logging, transmigration, plantations and outside poaching for their ivory. The *Makekal Orang Rimba* do not consider them to be extinct. In their minds, the elephants that used to make the trip from heaven to the forests have returned to their village in the heavens, to the 'trunk' realm of existence (*balik ke pangkol halom*), and no longer visit *Bukit Duabelas* as the forests are no longer considered healthy (*bungahon*). Those elephants that now choose to make the trip down from heaven are said to visit the more healthy forests in the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region, where they are still encountered by the northern *Orang Rimba*.

⁸ The common Malay term for this plant is the *ibul palm*: "a large thornless palm that yields poisonous fruit" (Shadily 2000: 216). Its Latin taxonomy is *Orania macrocladus*, recently reclassified as *Orania sylvicola* (Whitmore 1998:125). Both the fruit and palm-cabbage are alleged to be poisonous. In his book "*Malay Poisons and Charm Cures*", Gimlette writes, "*Buah Ibul*, the fruit of a very handsome, large, thornless jungle palm (*Orania macrocladus*) is held by Kelantan Malays to be exceedingly poisonous. In Kelantan it is said that a single fruit is sufficient to kill an elephant: the poisonous nature of the fruit is said to be known to the jungle-folk of Selangor." and again...,"In 1914, De. J. A. Gunn reports that the alcoholic extract of the nut was innocuous in considerable doses, but that an acid aqueous extract was highly toxic; but the toxicity was destroyed by heating this preparation. In rabbits the heart stopped very suddenly in diastole, both in situ and when isolated; with fibrillation when quickly investigated. An extract tried on the heart showed slowing of the beat by prolonged diastole and strengthened systole, thus resembling vagus action, but without the weakening. Unfortunately, the outbreak of war prevented closer investigation" (Gimlette 1971).

According to research conducted by DEPKAS et al. in *Bukit Duabelas* and *Bukit Tigapuluh*, the *Orang Rimba* use the cabbage of the *ibul* palm (grated and squeezed) to treat women's sterility, and it is used by the *Talang Mamak* (pounded) to treat interior sickness. Curiously, I was told by the *Makekal Orang Rimba* that only male shamans have anything to do with the plant, although this may not be the case after it is processed (DEPKES 1998:61-65). DEPKAS does give a different Latin classification for the palm (*Korthalsia* sp. *arecaceae*) and may be referring to a different plant.

Regionally, the *sibul* palm has a variety of economic and ritual uses among Austro-Asiatic peoples, and amongst some, an association with healing. According to Dentan, "the lowland Semai use the hallucinogenic fruit of the '*hibuul*' palm for dart poison, and as a means to block the souls of the dead from returning to their camps" (Dentan 2002). Of the Temoq, Peter Laird mentions that the irritating and poisonous flowers of the *hibul* palm are believed to have 'cooling' and healing properties (personal communication with Peter Laird). According to Laird, "As it happens the *hibul* (Malay: *ibul*) palm is very important in the *Teng Gaduq* performance. In the fifth *teng* (journey segment / 'song') of the first night of the *Teng Gaduq* performance (beginning at about phrase 5:100), the shaman's banded leaf monkey familiar spirit uses sprigs of *hibul* palm flowers to purge the subtle body of the patient. Temoq shamans do not consume

the plants during any ritual, Temoq shamans do not appear to take any mind altering substance other than tobacco and betel” (personal communication with Peter Laird). I have not come across any Austronesian or Austro-Asiatic examples of people ingesting any part of the plant or for that matter, any other potential ‘heavy’ mind altering plants other than tobacco or betel nut during shamanistic ritual.

⁹ I am uncertain whether the flowers of the *sibul* palm, as opposed to its fruit or palm cabbage, or the mushrooms they consume, contain any significant hallucinogenic or mind-altering properties. However, if they do *Orang Rimba* shamanism may be one of the only Austronesian or Austro-Asiatic examples of ingesting hallucinogenic plants during shamanistic ritual. These ‘dangerous plants’ are only eaten while invoking the god of elephants during the annual fruiting season.

¹⁰ Below is one of the prayer songs (*dekir*) to the tiger god while invoking its spirit.

Already grows guroowww...	<i>La bedagur gurowww...</i>
Already a friend	<i>La sekawan</i>
Already light rain, already hot rain	<i>La mer’epak la hujan panai</i>
Comes down to the earth	<i>Tur’un bolabu</i>
Come down to the season	<i>Tur’un bomusih...</i>
Not allowed to lie	<i>Tidak bulih bosuruk</i>
Reciprocity <i>eeayee leelii...</i>	<i>Budi eeayeee leeliii..</i>
Make an effort to call god	<i>Layunap Tuhan</i>
<i>Ayililil</i> the student of a thief	<i>Ayililii malim mocr’il</i>
It is forbidden to destroy this reciprocity	<i>Lar’angon malim bosuk-budi</i>

¹¹ In a Jambi *Melayu* folktale surrounding the origins of the *Kubu* (see historical background chapter in the appendix), a *silat* battle was the initial context in which *Orang Kayo Hitam* forced *Temanggung Mero Mato* to offer terms of bridewealth for the hand of his daughter. Along the *Makekal*, the knowledge of *silet* falls within the realm of adults and is never a marriage trial between a travelling bachelor and a male member of the maiden’s family. Aside from the fact that a *bujang* probably would not have knowledge of *silet* at this point in his life, it would be inappropriate for him to confront an adult in a case involving women.

¹² Of the Minangkabau, Barendregt writes, “In earlier times the *silat* education appears to have been closely connected with the belief in tiger-spirits. The *Raja macan*, king of tigers, was the patron of all *silat* students. Culturally, this tiger fulfilled a role as sanctioner and defender of the righteous. The resulting moral values were strongly emphasized in the important etiquette of the *silat* world. All vices, particularly arrogance, complacency and egocentrism, were to be cast out by the teacher. Some Minangkabau regard the tiger as the founding father of some *silat* styles. Moreover, the final stage (*putus kaji*) of each Minangkabau *silat*-style can only be accomplished in a fight with the *Raja Macan*” (Barendregt 1995). In the Kerenci district of Jambi, the tiger form (*silat harimau*) is considered the highest form of *silat*. According to Bakels, “Tales tell how originally this *silat* was learned from a tiger, and a *silat* teacher will never practice the *silat harimau* without asking the tiger’s permission first. When in severe trouble someone might call the spirit-tiger, whose energy can enter the person in need and fill him with a tigerish power. Adversaries, it is said, then see this person as if he were a tiger. Also the spirit-tiger may come himself and confront the aggressor” (Bakels 1994; Bakels 1995). In South Aceh, a student of *silat* must learn to master the tiger form of *silat*, before one’s studies are considered complete. Of Acehenese belief,

Wessing (1986) writes, “it is reported that there are *silat* teachers who can change themselves into tigers when fighting other *silat* teachers. They also use this skill during the final test of a student of the art. If the student comes out of the fight without being clawed by the tiger/teacher he is considered to have finished his study” (Wessing 1986:56). For a description of the various forms of *silat* including the tiger or *rimau silat* in Malaysia see: (Rashid 1990). The Javanese also have an established tradition of the ancient form of tiger *silat*. In west Java, Wessing writes, “the center for *silat maung* (tiger *silat*) is said to be at Cimacan (tiger river) between Jakarta and Bandung at Mount Gede. It is said that there are *silat* groups who practice *pencak karuhun* (ancestor *pencak*), whose members become possessed and then behave like tigers” (Wessing 1986:56).

¹³ During his research of *silat* practice in Minangkabau, Barendregt was able to visit the *Talang Mamak* in southern Riau for two weeks (personal communication with Barendregt). According to Barendregt, their ‘*silat langkah panjang* (Silat of the long steps)’ always begins, “with the evocation of one or several tiger-spirits” (Barendregt 1995). For a description of Minangkabau *silat* practices, see Barendregt’s masters thesis in Dutch at Leiden, and his 1995 publication in English (Barendregt 1994; Barendregt 1995).

¹⁴ In a specific case involving *silet* during my stay, a traveling bachelor had warmed to a maiden, had begun bride service, and eventually decided to force a marriage by stealing some of the her belongings. After sending word to his parents to arrange a community gathering to determine the bridewealth, he found that the parents had disagreed with the marriage, and to make matters worse, they did not show up to the hearing to determine the cloth fine, which shamed the maiden’s parents. In reaction to this disrespect, the headman invoked the tiger spirit, approached the captive bachelors, and erupted into a series of *silet* moves while wielding a machete. The series of moves ended with the headman forcefully hitting the bachelor on the head with the handle of the machete. Throughout the headman’s display, the bachelor stood still with his eyes to the ground, crying, in a state of fear (*takut*) and shame (*malu*), which was probably the headman’s intention. In these cases, it would never be appropriate for the shamed bachelor to confront an adult, nor would he at this time in his life have any in-depth knowledge in the realm of *silet*.

¹⁵ This animal is often referred to as the pangolin.

¹⁶ Several *Orang Rimba* groups live in some of the remaining lowland rainforests in the *Kerenci* province, and some in the buffer forests of the *Kerenci Seblat* National Park. For a brief and general economic survey of these groups, see Sandbukt 1995.

¹⁷ During my stay several bachelors from the up- and midstream *Makekal* Rivers who had been working for WARSİ as guides had the opportunity to take a camping trip to Kerenci’s lake on the seven mountains with several WARSİ fieldworkers. For the bachelors, the trip was a religious experience in which they expressed the ability to feel the presence of the spirits and after hiking to the top of the mountain, took a dip in its purifying lake. Upon returning to the forests, the bachelors recounted their experiences to the adults, who were interested in their visit, but at the same time disappointed and chided them for spending so much time out of the forest with outsiders. By making the trip in their earthly bodies before they were religious adults, the bachelors may have intruded into the sacred realm of adult religious experience, and adding to already existing tensions between boundary crossing bachelors and the religious adult males. To

some extent, the adults seemed to discount the religious nature of their visit and any purity or power that may have achieved by bathing in the lake. For the adults, soul travel is an entirely different perceptual experience, which is dependent on remaining in the forest and can only be made by those who are pure and have avoided contact with outsiders.

¹⁸ The Arabic term for the pilgrimage to Mecca is *haj*. In Malay, to perform the *haj* is referred to as *naik haji*. A man who has already performed the *haj* is often referred to as *haji*, or *Pak Haji* which is how the *Makekal Orang Rimba* refer to the headman (*rio*) of *Tanah Garo* or ‘trunk’ *war’is* (*pangkol war’is*).

¹⁹ For examples of *rumah/balai adat* community halls/museums built in *Petalangan* and *Sakai* communities in Riau, see Kang 2002; Porath 2002. Porath has recently published a book titled, “*When the Bird Flies*” on the therapeutic value of shamanism and its relation to social identity among the *Sakai*, based on his Ph.D. thesis at Leiden University (Porath 2003). The only other extended work on the *Sakai* of Riau is Superlan’s, “*Orang Sakai di Riau*” (1995).

²⁰ A grand spectacle of Suharto’s New Order government’s vision of the *rumah adat* concept occurs in the Jakarta cultural theme park *Taman Mini* or Mini Indonesia (Suharto’s wife was apparently in charge of planning the theme park), which has versions of the traditional ethnic houses/museum for each major ethnic group in Indonesia. Symbolizing Suharto’s development-oriented version of the national motto ‘unity in diversity’, these traditional houses/museums circle the churches of the six acceptable religions and various national museums, which display the history and accomplishments of the Indonesian Nation.

Conclusion

Orang Rimba religious beliefs provide a means to explain and deal with practical problems faced in the context of their lives in the forests. It allows a means to explain their cosmology, the reasons for life in the forest and village, interpret misfortune, and ensure health and fertility. It provides an avenue to receive luck and fortune in subsistence pursuits, and obtain knowledge in a variety of different contexts including healing, fighting, defense, love, or interpreting fate. Religion is a means to ensure the balance of material, social and spiritual life in the forests. As with some forest peoples in Malaysia, their primary seasonal rituals are concerned with managing the cycle of seasons and rains, which revolve around the annual fruiting season. This serves to ensure an abundance of fruit, honey and the seasonal migrations of bearded pigs. As with their more settled neighbors, they have very similar belief and ritual surrounding swidden farming and the soul of the rice field. Within the context of an assimilative and often dangerous upstream climate, their social and religious beliefs have also provided them a means to maintain physical and social distance with the outside world through the construction of very effective social and religious cultural boundary mechanisms.

Present-day *Orang Rimba* social and religious concepts, identities and boundaries with outsiders can only be understood in the historical context in which they formed. Their long history of being enveloped in some of the earliest and most powerful riverine trade-based kingdoms in the region (*Sriwijaya/Palembang*, *Melayu*, and *Minangkabau*) have strongly influenced their system of beliefs. In the 17th century, the arrival of the Europeans led to instability in the upstream that was to last several centuries. This included tense relationships between peoples in the upstream and downstream, inter-border conflict amongst the kingdoms of Jambi and Palembang, intensified slave raids against animist forest peoples to provide labor for Dutch projects, and possibly the increased spread of pandemic disease. The tense relationship between the *Melayu* and Dutch appears to have influenced a more crystallized Islamic *Melayu* identity, which may have inadvertently resulted in a more crystallized and derogatory use of the *Kubu* exonym, and their dehumanization, which apparently justified intensified slave raids. *Orang Rimba* identities and boundaries formed in reaction to a dangerous and assimilative outside world, as a means to guard and maintain their safety, cultural autonomy and traditional way of life in the forests. The *Orang Rimba* have developed the ultimate means to resist being absorbed into the socio-religious world of the *Melayu*.

The *Orang Rimba* appear to share common ancestry with other Malayic peoples in Sumatra. For a number of reasons, which may have initially been to settle the upstream regions, they established a niche in the forests, later became involved in the regional trade in forest products, and due to separation and historical circumstance, their cultures, beliefs and futures diverged. While language alone may not indicate common heritage, prior social and religious beliefs would not completely be replaced by adopting a dialect of the Malay language, particularly within a situation during the last several century's of recorded history where institutionalized prohibitions have prohibited anything but fleeting and shallow interactions with outsiders. The *Orang Rimba's* core patterns of social and religious beliefs, and the manner in which they conceptualize and express many of these notions through botanic metaphor is very similar to other Malayic and Austronesian peoples throughout the greater region. For those involved in the comparative study of peoples in the region this is not a striking revelation, nor would it be to the peoples of Jambi, as this is what they claim within their origin stories. While the *Orang Rimba* would have always been a very small minority group, it is also interesting to point out that in the past, the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* may have been much less of a minority in the upstream regions of Jambi and South Sumatra. In the mid-19th century, the entire population of Jambi was only estimated to be 60,000. If you take *Melayu* and Dutch claims at face value, over the last several hundred years the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* have been gradually entering Islam, settling in the village and 'becoming *Melayu*'.

In contrast to Schebesta, Hoffman and others, this should by no means be taken to imply that Austronesian hunter gatherers (*Penan* and *Orang Rimba*) are devolved foragers, at least any time in their recent histories (Hoffman 1983; Schebesta 1926). The *Orang Rimba's* adaptation to life in the rainforests demonstrate longevity, and echoing Sather's hypothesis for foraging adaptations to rainforests in Borneo, this type of mobile life may have initially been a means for some Proto-Malay peoples to adapt to the interior rainforests of Sumatra (Sather 1995). Later, it would have been a flexible means to allow more time collecting forest products, whenever choosing to devote more time to these activities. It is also possible that some of the distant ancestors of the *Orang Rimba* and other Austronesians may have been, or were at least influenced by the ideas of non-Austronesian speaking peoples who lived on these islands before them. This may be one of the reasons that Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia appear to draw many of their beliefs from an underlying "common cultural matrix" (Benjamin 1979). As archeological evidence is beginning to suggest, when the Austronesians

began arriving to Borneo, Sumatra, and some of the other islands in the region, some would have been sparsely inhabited by either foraging or swidden gardening peoples, and acquiring knowledge from these peoples would have certainly had its benefits for those heading upstream. Outside of Malaysia and the Philippines, these peoples appear to have gradually been absorbed into Austronesian societies or adopted their languages and many of their cultural beliefs.

Economy

The *Orang Rimba* say that a life based on wild yams was the earliest way that people lived in Sumatra, and is the way in which their ancestors lived. While the Penan sometimes exploit wild yams as an emergency store of food, the *Orang Rimba* are the only Austronesian peoples who will depend on them as the basis of their economy for extended periods of time. They have an extremely complex knowledge of how to exploit and process wild yams, sago palm and *buntor* nuts (*Ochanostachys amentacea*), which are crucial ways for living a nomadic life in the forests without depending upon on a swidden garden. For many in *Bukit Duabelas* this is perceived to be a hard way of life and most prefer to live a mobile life in the forests that is based around a tuberous swidden garden. A nomadic way of life in the forests does hold a position of precedence in their belief system and is believed to bring them (particularly adult males) closer to their gods. Mobility is reinforced through their social and religious beliefs, prohibitions on eating domesticated animals, and through the *melangun* mourning prohibition, which periodically kicks them out of a swidden and into a nomadic way of life upon death. These days, the *Melayu* associate this with a ‘primitive’ way of life, and wild yams as a polluted food associated as the primary food source of wild pigs. While of little importance in Sumatra’s recent history, the past importance of sago is reflected in numerous place names and origin points throughout the Island, including *Gunung Merapi* in Minangkabau, commonly referred to as *Gunung Sago*. Fruit and honey are still important aspects of the economies of peoples throughout the lowland dipterocarps, and similar to the *Orang Rimba*, Malayic peoples throughout Sumatra and Malaysia still perform variants of magical love songs to the spirit of the honey tree and the bees while collecting honey. Fruit and honey are a central part of the *Orang Rimba*’s social identity and belief system, and are a primary means in which women mark and claim rights within their customary forests. The *Orang Rimba* appear to be the only Austronesian people outside of Malaysia whose primary seasonal rituals are oriented towards

regulating and maintaining the annual season of fruits, the honey season, and the migrations of the bearded pigs.

The *Orang Rimba* believe that their ancestors received the knowledge of planting tuberous crops (taro, yams, sugarcane and bananas) later in their histories, and only after they had received the knowledge of planting rice. Along the *Makekal*, tuberous swiddens have a position of precedence in their belief system, probably because they allow them to live a mobile life in the forests, which they strongly prefer. From the perspective of their social identity, it also tends to differentiate them from a *Melayu* swidden way of life. That said their different and developed mythology, belief and ritual surrounding rice, even though most rarely plant it, appears to demonstrate longevity in *Bukit Duabelas*. In other regions, Dutch accounts mention that rice was just being introduced to both *Kubu* peoples in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Boers 1838; Dongen 1906; Dongen 1910). The late introduction or reintroduction of rice probably has much to do with a focus towards collecting forest products, which for swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples appears to have been a major stimulus for them to branch away from a tuberous swidden and to make extended trips to the forests. The *Orang Rimba* on the other hand, strongly prefer a mobile way of life in the forests regardless of whether they are collecting forest products, and the reasons for their mobility appear to be more complex. With the arrival of smallpox, several centuries before the arrival of the Europeans, and its spread through upstream-downstream trade, some *Kubu* peoples appear to have associated settled rice growing with contacting the disease and abandoned the practice for lengthy periods in their histories (Boomgaard 2003b; Dongen 1906). In addition to being a means to maintain their social autonomy, and possibly avoid being ambushed in a slave raid, the silent trade also appears to have been one of the ways to avoid contact with smallpox and other pandemic disease. The *Orang Rimba* and *Orang Hutan* developed a wide variety of other social and religious means to distance themselves from the *Melayu*, some which are based around sickness and preventing the spread of disease.

Social Relations

Orang Rimba patterns of social organization, its terms and concepts, primary kinship relations, and the manner in which social relations are expressed through botanic metaphor, *seleko adat* couplets, and are reflected in terms for parts of the home are very similar to the *Melayu* and other Austronesian peoples. Some of the broader differences in their social relations, for instance weakened brother/sister relations, relate to their

dispersed and mobile camps and asymmetrical relations of affinity, which take place in the context of egalitarian share relations. This results in a network of social relationships and practices very similar to other bride service and hunter-gatherer societies throughout the world. What is rather unique are the extraordinary rights that women have over the management of resources, the manner in which they can freely wield their passions towards the men, and the rather subordinate position of in-marrying husbands in post-marital residence. The authority of adult men is marked by their duty to protect the safety and rights of women from a dangerous outside world and all *Orang Rimba* males who are not immediate kin. This results in very rigid gender divisions. As with other peoples in the region, the reason:passion contrast provides the justification for male-female relations, defining women as minors in the realm of *adat*, and placing matters of law and religion into the hands of men. In a rather unique manner, these concepts also provide the justification for allowing women the complete freedom to express their passions in everyday camp life, to pressure men to step up their work efforts, and within the male domain of legal hearings. According to custom, the duty of guarding the women is the responsibility of brothers and maternal uncles. Because of dispersed marriages and strong obligations to the relationships with affines, these duties are often carried on by non-adult brothers while the legal responsibilities of fining outside men for infringing upon their rights falls to in-marrying husbands. Thus, in addition to becoming a good provider and acquiring rights through a network of share relations, adult men are also able to achieve a degree of status and authority in the domains of law and religion.

The restrictive nature of *Orang Rimba* gender relations and their high concern for enforcing improper conduct with women through their system of law appears to have developed as a means to guard the safety, health, rights and cultural autonomy of the core of their society (the women and children) within the context of an assimilative *Melayu* world. Within their own social worlds, these issues are intertwined with marking the rights of women, and the authority and status of adult men within the realm of law. They are also related with reacquiring or increasing the family store of cloth, which through marriage and a cycle of legal hearings involving men is constantly moving from household to household. In addition to being a means to acquire trade goods and receive representation in regards to the outside world, relations with *Melayu* patrons traditionally gave their system of law a sense of legitimacy by providing access to titles, and the means to pay fines in their system of law through access to cloth.

The resemblance of the Arabic based reason-passion opposition to similar oppositions in non-Islamic Austronesian societies may suggest that the relationship between intellect and passion is at least partially founded on a prior conceptual framework (Fox 1990; Rosaldo 1980). While certainly influenced by their unique history and relations with the outside world, the *Orang Rimba* variant of this opposition provides a unique Malayic example of the ways that these concepts can be arranged in the context of an egalitarian share society. The precedence ascribed to the brother/sister and mother's brother/sister's children relationships, even though they are greatly diminished, may also suggest distant ties with the *Melayu* or other Malayic peoples, possibly in a context where mother's brother was able to maintain more fluent ties with natal kin. These days, the birth order of maternal uncle (*pamok/uwak*) is rarely distinguished through use of distinct kin terms.

Religion

Many of the underlying concepts of *Orang Rimba* religious beliefs are similar to the traditional religious beliefs of the Malay and other Malayic peoples in the region. The manner in which many of these ideas are arranged in their cosmology reflect a unique way of life in the forests and their history in the region. At the basis of these beliefs are their conceptions of the soul and spiritual matter in its different manifestations, its relationship with mundane entities, and their conceptions of health, which is conceptualized through botanic analogy in the form of a plant. These ideas relate to their concepts surrounding the hot:cold contrast, and the belief that 'hot' entities can disturb the relationship between spiritual matter and its body, and lead to sickness and 'wilting' (*layu*) of health. The entities they consider *ker'emat* or 'sacred' relate to an association with the creators, gods, spirits or a higher concentration of soul matter, which ultimately has its source in the creators. Many of their beliefs in earthbound spirits, ghosts, some of their gods (*bidodari*, the goddesses of rice, the spirit of the tiger and elephant), and the manner in which spirited entities are dealt with through magic, ritual (*badi/panoi* beliefs, birth, swidden farming, honey), and in healing ceremonies are very similar to the traditional religious beliefs of the Malay.

In contrast to the Malay, most adult males interact with their spiritual world, engage and manipulate relationships with their gods, and will eventually become shamans to some extent. This is considered a responsibility of an adult male, and is the means to acquire fortune in subsistence pursuits and deal with health and sickness. It is also a means for a male to obtain sharing rights and a limited amount of status and

authority in his community. Some of the foods classified as 'hot' are intertwined with male and female domains of power, and gender related food prohibitions, which restrict female consumption of important items such as *dur'ion* and honey. These issues are sometimes interrelated with gender related distribution rights, and may provide some insight into the past relevance of the very similar Malay beliefs in 'hot' foods. Their conceptions of heaven, birth deities/familiar spirits, method of soul travel, and the manner in which they manipulate relations with gods for the good of the larger community is very different from their settled neighbors. However, some of these beliefs may have been more common among the Malay in the past.

Orang Rimba religious beliefs are an extremely efficient cultural boundary mechanism. The *Orang Rimba* strongly believe that life in the forests can only exist by maintaining the purity of their *adat* and by maintaining good relations with their gods. This requires them to follow numerous prohibitions, which creates difference, maintains physical and social distance from the *Melayu*, and reinforces a traditional way of life in the forest. By diverging from *adat* in the forest or by confusing it with life in the village, they believe their gods will abandon them, and life in the forest would be impossible. Some of the most effective beliefs in these regards are those surrounding the gods of sickness. Their religious beliefs are intertwined with social practices that serve to limit relations with the core of their society, the women and children. As with their system of law, the domain of religion also relates to internal power relations, and is a means for adult men to achieve a limited amount of status and authority in their communities. This authority is often established by waging threats towards those who step outside the boundaries of *adat*.

Similarities with Austro-Asiatic Forest Peoples in Malaysia

The *Orang Rimba* also share many beliefs with Austro-Asiatic speaking forest peoples, who have had a long history of interaction with Malayic peoples in Malaysia. It is difficult to say which beliefs are distinctly Malayic, and which ones may have been influenced by these peoples. Some of the *Orang Rimba's* beliefs surrounding health, sickness, fertility and the hot:cold contrast, particularly the manner in which these ideas are reflected as dominant symbols in their cosmology (the sun and moon), tend to resemble the beliefs of Austro-Asiatic peoples. The vertical dimension of their religion and method of soul travel is similar to the Semang, as are their reasons for performing open platform burials to allow the soul to pass on to the afterlife. The spoke-framed tree burials of some *Orang Hutan* in South Sumatra appear to be very similar to the

traditional burial practices of the Semang, and in the past, other Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia. Some of the most curious similarities are those surrounding the annual season of fruits. As with several forest peoples in Malaysia, the *Orang Rimba* share a similar belief in heavenly fruit trees which are believed to be interrelated with the proper functioning of the seasonal fruits in the forests. These beliefs are intertwined with their conceptions of soul matter, and the belief that ritual blood sacrifice is needed to maintain or trigger the heavenly fruit trees to transfer their spiritual blossoms to the forests on earth. Unlike the Penan in Borneo, the *Orang Rimba* do not possess any ‘characteristic’ Austro-Asiatic beliefs in thunder gods or practice any mocking taboos. It is possible that today, many of the shared beliefs that more closely resemble Austro-Asiatic peoples may have been more common among Malayic peoples in the past. As there are no Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples in Sumatra, the *Orang Rimba* represent a good case study for the comparative study of traditional religious beliefs in Malaysia.

Some of the techniques the *Orang Rimba* have traditionally used to maintain distance (mobility, silent trade, flight) with the Malay are very similar to Austro-Asiatic forest peoples. Similar to the Sakai, fear is a prominent emotion that runs through the *Orang Rimba*’s patterns of emotions, and is an important means to discourage interactions, and maintain their traditional system of beliefs and prohibitions. In contrast to Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia, many of whom are more racially, linguistically and culturally distinct from the Malay, the *Orang Rimba* go through greater lengths to distinguish themselves through ethnic markers, and traditional beliefs and prohibitions that often play on the variations within key similarities in order to establish difference. Some of the reasons that the *Orang Rimba* may have developed such a wide array of institutionalized boundary mechanisms, which appear to be absent among other Malayic forest minorities, may relate to their mobile economy, which instills a mindset of autonomy and independence, and their vertical relationship with their gods, which are intertwined with the proper functioning of the forest ecosystem. Despite this separation, most *Orang Rimba* appear to have maintained limited relations with *Melayu* patrons, and an ideological dialogue through the content of their origin stories, and shared aspects of their religious beliefs.

Today

In the era of regional autonomy, logging in Jambi has dramatically increased. Jambi’s wood industry presently runs on unrealistic expectations and the majority of wood now originates from unregulated logging in its protected reserves, national parks, and buffer

zone forests. Between 1990 and 2007 nearly one million ha of Jambi's rainforests were cut, and by 2007 total forest cover had dropped to 27%, most of which is in a severely degraded state (Taufik 2001; WARSI 2007). There is a great deal of competition, tension and conflict over access to remaining forests, and most *Orang Rimba* are now in a position where they are forced to adapt to life outside the forests and interact and deal with outsiders on a more regular basis. In cases where their customary forests have been clear-cut or severely degraded, some have decided to move to better forests, while many will remain on their traditional lands, which are often a mixture of village rubber gardens or palm oil plantations. Most still maintain social distance from the outside world, and attempt to make ends meet by hunting, fishing and occasionally tapping rubber, while some camps supplement this by selling traditional medical remedies and begging at the bus stops along the Tran-Sumatran highway or in the surrounding villages. Despite traditional customs which prohibit this, the women and children are very much involved in these efforts: men will usually do the selling, while women and children go from bus to bus doing the begging. Some of the camps surrounding the city of *Bangko* will set up barriers along the Tran-Sumatran highway and other roads, and with spears or sticks in their hands, stop vehicles and demand that they pay a toll in order to pass through their traditional lands.

While many have tried their hand at government settlements, most, if not all of them have eventually ended in failure. In the *Bukit Duabelas* region, most *Orang Rimba* see the transition to life in a settlement as passing over into the realm of village customs, beliefs and religion (*adat*), and will make attempts to give up traditional practices which they see as incompatible with life in the village, including the traditional practice of their system of law and religion. Most will begin using soap, eating domesticated animals, and will at least claim to be Muslim. For most, this primarily relates to food prohibitions, such as giving up pork and other wild animals that Muslims are forbidden to eat. The settlements are usually built with a mosque and are assigned an Islamic religious teacher, while social workers usually make their rounds and discourage any traditional beliefs they see as unfit with life in the village. Few will attend the mosques for long, and after some time the assigned religious teacher will usually stop visiting. In addition to inadequate housing and the poor quality of food rations, the settlements lack an adequate subsistence base for the *Orang Rimba* to continue with a village way of life once the rations stop at the end of the year. As with the *Melayu*, few choose to work in the 'hot' palm oil plantations that normally surround the settlements. If given any assets such as a plot of palm oil or domestic animals, they

will often sell them, and because of Islamic prohibitions, few will hunt the wild pigs, which are abundant in the surrounding rubber fields and plantations. Unless the settlements are close to surrounding forests, most will sit around idle in the 'hot' sites, while some of the men may go off to tap rubber at low rates.

More generally, life in a settlement breaks down the fabric of their traditional socio-economic relations and gender and age-based power relations. In a settlement, women are removed from their customary lands, lose their power to manage resources found within them, while share relations based on the division of game and other forest resources are rarely practiced. It is not considered proper for them to wield their passions towards the men in public. Because of their rigid gender relations, there is often tension with villagers surrounding improper relations with women and numerous cases of alleged violations. Because they are now under village law and religion, the system of fining males for their violations rarely occurs, while males lose any status or authority they may have achieved within the realms of law and religion. There is more generally a degree of social stigmatization by the villagers who perceive them as primitive, stupid, dirty, etc, while the traditional manner in which the *Orang Rimba* interact with outsiders puts them at a social disadvantage in their interactions and dealings with the villagers. Because of similar biases held by teachers, ridicule by village children, traditional suspicion of education, and rigid timetables, few parents will send their children to school for any length of time. The settlers are often ridiculed by kin who have not entered settlements, for crossing over and becoming *Melayu*. After the year's worth of rations ends, or whenever a death occurs, most will sell the home and return to forests if they have access to them, or to a nomadic life in surrounding palm oil or rubber plantations. With little or no change in their strategy, *Orang Rimba* settlements are destined to fail.

Within the present context of Indonesian 'progress' and 'development', *Orang Rimba* social and religious practices and boundaries have been a major obstacle in making the transition to a future with very few forests. Edgerton has written how patterns of cultural beliefs, while useful during the time of their inception, can become maladaptive over time within the changing context of the wider society (Edgerton 1992). While very effective in preserving a traditional way of life in a context in which they have access to forests, in an extremely resilient manner, these beliefs are now preventing them from becoming villagers even in contexts where they have lost access to their traditional economic base, and place them in a position where they are now at a social and psychological disadvantage in their dealings with the outside world. *Orang*

Rimba boundary mechanisms are grounded in the 'roots' of their economic, social and religious system, are intertwined with gender and age-based power relations, and are the ultimate means to resist becoming *Melayu*.

An alternative to the current government approach may lie in changing the goal from attempting to assimilate them into mainstream village life and the Islamic religion, towards giving them room to adapt to the outside world on their own terms and at their own pace, while encouraging them to maintain some of their social and religious practices. One strategy may be constructing settlements at a distance from the villages, and closer to remaining forests or small scale jungle rubber agro forests. This would allow them access to a more appropriate subsistence base when the food rations run out, and allow them to hunt wild boar, exploit the rivers, tap rubber, and possibly open a swidden garden. Rather than trying to convince them to abandon and change their cultural practices, a more effective approach by government social service workers might include assisting them to better understand their cultural institutions and boundaries with outsiders, which might be facilitated by an alternative education program administered by universities or open-minded NGOs. The *Orang Rimba's* social and religious beliefs are the cultural heritage of Malay peoples, and should be preserved, not demeaned, erased or lost.

On paper *Bukit Duabelas* is now a national park. However, as my research ended its boundaries had not been established, and its forests were still being illegally logged, without any monitoring by government agencies. The timber companies had been replaced by wealthy logging bosses in the surrounding *Melayu* villages who had old ties to the logging ring, and ran their logging operations within the park in tandem with or through bribes and pay-offs to government officials. The forest department had yet to effectively manage or enforce logging inside its projected boundaries, largely they claimed, because they lacked the funding to do so, and because the boundaries of the park had yet to be determined. The real reasons probably had much more to do with the fact that the local economy was dependant on the logging industry, the money involved, and that many government officials were making a profit in some way or another. Until the national park becomes a park, the *Orang Rimba* wait in a state of limbo, avoiding outsiders when they can, confronting loggers when key resources are destroyed, and juggling relations between traditional patrons/*Melayu* loggers, government officials who ultimately want them settled, and local NGOs who supposedly represent their interests. While most of the *Orang Rimba* were against

logging in principal, many felt resigned or pressured to accept payoffs from loggers to access their forests, or to gain part-time work in some aspect of the logging ring.

Since 2002, WARSI and *Sokola's* mobile education program for the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* has increased the confidence of children and bachelors to interact with outsiders on more equal footing. If conducted on a long-term basis, these types of programs may help *Orang Rimba* to better understand their religious beliefs and boundaries with outsiders, and help them to overcome some of the social, psychological and religious obstacles they create. However, this program has also led to a great deal of tension within the inherently tense relationship between bachelors and adult males/in-marrying husbands, whose power over them largely derives from waging religious related threats for diverging outside the boundaries of *adat*. Since 2001, both NGOs have made attempts to encourage *Orang Rimba* camps in *Bukit Duabelas* to open their swidden fields in tandem with the projected park borders, and to plant them with rubber. This effort does not prevent the logging of their forests; however, according to village customary law, does prevent *Melayu* farmers from opening their swidden fields/rubber gardens within their customary forests. It also secures acknowledged customary land rights over traditional lands and a future subsistence base if their forests are cut.

Bukit Duabelas national park was initially established primarily because of the *Orang Rimba*; however, there has been recent discussion by the governing body of the national park and other government agencies to reverse the unique 'people in the park' policy, and settle them outside the park sometime in the future. While villagers are allowed to log in the park, the primary grounds for removing the *Orang Rimba* rest on the fact that their swidden practices degrade the forests, they hunt its animals, and that they, along with the villagers are also involved in logging. The real reasons probably have much more to do with the growing tension in the surrounding villages that the *Orang Rimba* will be allowed free access to use the forests while everyone else will be restricted, and the government's determined mission to finally settle them. If they do decide to remove the *Orang Rimba* from their forests, their jungle rubber agro forests will be all the more important to their futures, and give them a much more appealing alternative to government settlement schemes and religious conversion.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Despite its historical importance as the presumed cultural homeland of the 'Malay', very little anthropological research has been conducted in Eastern Sumatra. My

recommendations for future study of the *Orang Rimba* religion would lie in an analysis of ritual speech, particularly the prayer songs sung during the annual season of fruits. An interesting comparison would be the content of these songs with the ritual songs of Austro-Asiatic forest peoples in Malaysia that are performed for a similar intent. Another possible topic could be the manner in which the *Orang Rimba* carry on relations with their gods and religious boundaries in places where they no longer have access to forests. In theory, these relationships are dependent upon forests, but appear to be carried on or adapted in new ways by peoples whose forests have been clear-cut and who now live in plantations. How do the 'forest people' reconstruct their identities and maintain boundaries in places where they no longer have access to forests? Another obvious focus would be the study of any *Orang Rimba* social and religious beliefs outside of *Bukit Duabelas*. Aside from Elkholy's fieldwork in the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region, there has yet to be any research conducted with *Orang Rimba* outside of *Bukit Duabelas* or with the *Orang Hutan* in South Sumatra. Despite the fact that the *Orang Hutan* have lost the majority of their forests to outside interests, the southern-most groups in the *Semangus* region may have very different patterns of social beliefs and localized religious beliefs. More applied research in conjunction with the Indonesian Government or local NGOs would certainly be of more significance to the *Orang Rimba*, and if they keep an open mind, the Indonesian Social Department.

Apart from van Dongen's early 20th century writings, there has not been any research done with swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples, some who have yet to become *Melayu* (*masuk Melayu*). It would certainly be interesting to learn of their cosmological perceptions of the earth, their spiritual plane of existence, and if their shamans conduct soul travel to meet with their spirits in heaven. As they appear to lack intensive boundary prohibitions with outsiders, fieldwork with these peoples would certainly be much easier, and may offer an even closer glimpse into the traditional religious beliefs of the upstream *Melayu* of Jambi and South Sumatra. Fieldwork has yet to be conducted with the swidden-based *Talang Mamak* of northern Jambi and southern Riau, most who still follow the *adat* of their ancestors, and are the only other peoples in Eastern Sumatra who are strongly opposed to entering Islam and becoming *Melayu*. Aside from Kerlogue's research on the *batik* practices in the downstream region of Jambi, anthropological research has yet to be conducted with the *Melayu* in South Sumatra, Jambi or Riau.

Appendix A

Historical Background

Introduction

In a lecture delivered at the University of Manchester in 1961, Evans-Pritchard said that “a people’s traditional history is important for the further reason that it forms part of the thought of living men and hence part of the social life which the anthropologist can directly observe” (Evans-Prichard 1962:51). It is impossible to properly understand *Orang Rimba* society, beliefs and their institutionalised cultural and ethnic boundaries with the outside world, without first critically examining the historical, socio economic, political and ideological contexts in which they were formed. *Orang Rimba* cultural beliefs, social and political relations, and especially their perceptions of and boundaries with outsiders did not develop in isolation. The *Orang Rimba* have always been enveloped in a larger *Melayu* kingdom that from very early on were involved in intensive upstream–downstream and international trade.

The *Orang Rimba*’s belief system and relations with the outside world can only be understood in the historical context of the relationships, actions, events and ideas passed on through the flow of the rivers. This chapter begins with a description of the historical development of Jambi’s trade-based kingdoms, the upstream and downstream relationship and the fragile traditional administrative structure that held them together. While largely a figment of the past, an understanding of Jambi’s traditional administrative structure, and how many *Orang Rimba* fit into this hierarchy is important towards understanding their present day external relations with the *Melayu* as well how they have adapted many of these concepts to suit their internal leadership structure and customary law.

Also explored are some of the historical influences that may have influenced the *Orang Rimba*’s strong cultural and ethnic boundaries with the outside world, which ultimately would lead them to become known as the *Kubu*. The *Melayu* often claim that the *Orang Rimba* retreat to the *Kubu* (defensive fortress, i.e. the forest) occurred over their reluctance to be absorbed into the administrative structure of a kingdom, Islam, and their strong desire to maintain autonomy over their lives and *adat* beliefs. These boundaries probably existed prior to Islam, but may have intensified due to European influence in the region, and the resulting social, economic, and political change caused by their occupation of Jambi. *Orang Rimba* identities and boundary mechanisms would have been an effective method to shield themselves from an unstable climate that

included over three centuries of upstream instability, inter-border conflict and raiding, disease, and increased slave raids on animist communities. The Dutch presence most likely led to more crystallized Islamic-*Melayu* ethnic identities, creating strong us them identities, based primarily on religion. Inadvertently, one of the effects this might have had was to make it easier to perceive animist forest peoples such as the *Orang Rimba* as outsiders, dehumanise them, and more easily justify slave raids on their communities. Another very strong influence on their system of beliefs and their boundaries with outsiders would have been the history of pandemic disease spread through upstream-downstream region, particularly smallpox. The very regular and cyclical pattern of smallpox receives steady mention from the first accounts of the Europeans in the 16th century, but was most likely present in the region before their arrival.

It may have been over this 300-year period following the arrival of the Europeans that a variety of the *Orang Rimba*'s institutionalised cultural boundaries intensified, which both distanced them from the *Melayu*, yet also ensured a degree of protection through institutional debt bondage relations forged with specific *Melayu* patrons (*jenang*). While always based on trade, some of these relationships developed around notions of distant kinship, *Melayu* notions of hierarchy, as well as notions of reciprocal obligation. During the villagers resistance to the Dutch (and the Japanese), many saw it as their obligation to lower these boundaries and help their patrons and others in positions of hierarchy when needed. This chapter also includes some early European accounts of the *Kubu*, and a disentangling in recorded history of two different animist cultural groups known as the *Kubu*, the *Orang Batin Kubu* (*tame Kubu*) and the *Orang Rimba* and *Orang Hutan* (*wild Kubu*). I continue with the *Orang Rimba*'s place in Jambi's history since the rebellion, World War II and Indonesian Independence.

Sundaland and the Austronesian Migrations to Sumatra

During the last Ice age, the lands that lie upon the Sundic shelf would have been above water, connecting Mainland Southeast Asia to a landmass that would have been larger than India. Extending east to the Wallace line (incorporating Bali, yet excluding Lombok and Sulawesi), academics commonly refer to this region as Sundaland. In contrast to the northern climates, Sundaland would have been warm, fertile, and a great deal of its terrain would have consisted of continuous lowland dipterocarp forests similar to the forests still present in Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo. According to scanty archaeological evidence, Sundaland was sparsely populated by pre-Neolithic foraging

peoples. By any means, from 10,000 to 7,000 BC, the warming of global temperatures melted glaciers, and raised the sea level eventually creating an archipelago of islands.

Archaeological research conducted in Southeast Sumatra indicates a long and continuous human presence in Sumatra. Excavation of limestone caves by a French team in the *Rawas* and *Renjang* regions of South Sumatra have recently uncovered Acheulian tool technology which date between 30,000 and 60,000 years old. Several recently excavated cave sites (*Gua Tiangko Panjang*) in the Kerenci region of Sumatra have uncovered pre-Neolithic human remains with radio carbon dates around 10,000 B.C. (PHKA 2003). These latter peoples possessed an obsidian microlith industry, and lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle just before or after the later periods of flooding, and possibly five thousand years before the current estimate for the Austronesian arrival to Sumatra. The only other record of a pre-Austronesian presence in Sumatra is archaeology by Flenley who appears to have scanty evidence for forest clearance in the highlands of Sumatra, and pollen samples, which may date to 6000 BC (Bellwood 1995; Flenley 1988). If Flenley's research is correct, it is unknown who these swidden farmers might have been, while Bellwood suggests the possibility of Austro-Asiatic peoples with swidden economies (Bellwood 1995). According to most accounts, Austro-Asiatic peoples possessing foraging (*Semang*) and mixed swidden-foraging economies (such as the *Semai*) had migrated from the north and colonized Peninsular Malaysia by as much as a millennia prior to the Austronesians, and possibly those with swidden economies, portions of Sumatra (Bellwood 1995).

However, despite several linguistic hints in Aceh and West Borneo, and numerous distinct cultural similarities particularly among the Penan of Sarawak, there is no solid linguistic evidence to link the presence of Austro-Asiatic speaking peoples to Sumatra or anywhere in Indonesia (personal communication with Peter Bellwood).¹ If there were ever any indigenous or Austro-Asiatic occupants in Sumatra prior to the arrival of Malayic speaking Austronesians they were either pushed aside, or adopted Malayic languages and many aspects of Malayic culture. Thus, contrary to many of the early writers, it is unlikely that the *Kubu* or any other peoples in Sumatra or Indonesia represent a pure substratum of pre-Neolithic foragers, as their language and culture is strongly Malayic. This does not mean that there was not some kind of historical relationship between peoples of diverse origins, only that there is no solid evidence for the relationship.

Based on language reconstructions, archaeological research, distinct core cultural similarities and use of metaphor, the Austronesian colonization of Sumatra and

Malaysia may have occurred some time around the late 3rd-2nd millennium BC (Bellwood 1995; Fox 1996).² According to linguistic research conducted by Northofer, the first Austronesians to colonize mainland Sumatra appear to have been the Batak in northern Sumatra, who may have been followed by Lampung peoples who settled in the Southern part of Sumatra (Northofer; personal communication with Peter Bellwood). Shortly after, various groups of Malayic speakers appear to have begun to make their way from riverine and lowland swamp areas in Western Borneo and settled Southeast Sumatra and Malaysia (Adelaar 1995; Hudson 1970).³ The early colonization of Sumatra by Malayic-speaking Austronesians may have been comparable to the examples given by Sather's for Borneo, or Benjamin who explains the mutual symbiotic economic and cultural adaptations of Austro-Asiatic and Austronesian peoples to Malaysia (Benjamin 1986; Sather 1995). Upon arriving to Southeast Sumatra, the dispersal of Malayic peoples may have concentrated along Sumatra's two largest Rivers, the *Musi* and the *Batanghari* and its numerous tributaries. Having come from the similar forests of Borneo, these peoples would have come prepared with a strong knowledge of the dipterocarp forests.

It is possible that some of this knowledge may have been supplemented by the islands prior inhabitants. Peoples with mixed economies of swidden farming and foraging, similar to the *Orang Batin Kubu* and the *Orang Rimba*, may have been involved in a symbiotic relationship with more settled swidden farmers who lived along the downstream of these forested rivers. In their early history, populations of Malayic peoples may have been very alike, economically, and from a cultural standpoint, with most relying on swidden tuber and dry rice cultivation, foraging, hunting and eventually, the collection of forest products. As regional and international trade became more lucrative, and as stratified societies arose to deal with this trade, these groups probably would have found themselves in a situation similar to Borneo, competition amongst rival forest collectors, with both foraging and mixed foraging-swidden economies, who then entered into trade relations with more stratified communities.

The Rise of the Sumatran States: *Kan-to-Li*, *Sriwijaya* and *Melayu*

Early Sumatran states probably began to emerge along the coastal regions of the major downstream rivers (*Musi*, *Batanghari*) of Eastern Sumatra throughout the first centuries of the first millennium. These developments occurred in tandem with increasing trade across the archipelago, and the beginnings of international trade routes making their way back and forth from China and India. During the early 5th century, a major

alteration occurred in the East-West international trade routes. Instead of traversing the upper Malay Peninsula, Chinese and Indian traders started to sail through the straits of Malacca. According to 5th century Chinese records, the kingdom of *Kan-to-li* was one of the first organized states in Southeast Sumatra, which was later to become the centre of *Sriwijaya* (Casparis 1997:1). During the next two centuries the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of *Sriwijaya* arose out of *Kan-to-li*, along the base of the *Musi* river and soon became the mid point for the East-West international trade (Wolters 1967). Increasingly thereafter, the trade of the archipelago, including the upper Malay Peninsula, Western Borneo, Java and to some extent the islands of the east, were controlled or heavily influenced by *Sriwijayan* politics and trade (Whitmore 1977). According to Andaya, both historical and linguistic evidence suggest *Sriwijaya* to be the Indianised *Melayu* cultural homeland whose traders spread the Malay culture and language throughout Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula and much of Western Indonesia. (Andaya 2001:318).

As early Chinese literary sources (the Tang Annals) describe, the first tributary visit sent to China from the Kingdom of *Melayu* occurred in 644. The first detailed descriptions of *Sriwijaya* come from the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Yijing, who spent time in both Palembang and Jambi in 671 and again from 689-95. During his first trip, he spent six months studying Sanskrit grammar in the capital, which was then located along the *Musi* River. Later he was sent by its ruler to the then separate kingdom of *Melayu* located along the *Batanghari* River where he comments on the high number of learned scholars found here (Andaya 1993). During his second visit to the kingdom of *Melayu*, “Yijing says the kingdom of *Melayu* had now become *Sriwijaya*, meaning either that it had supplanted *Sriwijaya*, or more likely that it had become a part of *Sriwijaya*” (Andaya 2001:319).

In its early history, *Sriwijaya* may have focused on handling the flow of goods between China and India. As its power grew, it soon became an inland power and sought allies in the more populous interiors for manpower and access to forest products such as resins, bezoar stones, rattan and dragon’s blood, the resin from a creeping rattan *Daemonorops draco*, which it soon injected into the international trade routes (Wolters 1967). Several 7th century inscriptions found along the upstream branches of the *Musi* and *Batanghari* Rivers attest to the trade in forest products. The 7th century *Sriwijayan Karang Berabi* stone on an island in the *Merangin* River, a branch of the *Tembesi* River (between *Bangko* and *Pauh*) suggests that the interior was an active region of trade during the pinnacle of the *Sriwijayan* Empire. The *Karang Berabi* stone is located in the

heart of the *Bangko* and *Merangin Orang Rimba* territory, and just south of *Bukit Duabelas* where I conducted my research.

Apart from *Sriwijaya*'s prime location at the crossroads of international trade routes, a major reason it was able to control early trade was its control over the two largest river systems in Sumatra, which allowed easy access to an exceptionally large part of the interior of Sumatra. The enlarged demand for forest products most likely influenced many of the inhabitants along the major upstream rivers (*Batanghari* and the *Musi*) to take up gathering of forest products at least part time. It also might have influenced some groups whose economies may have included more developed foraging strategies, such as the *Orang Rimba*, to specialize in some of the more difficult to obtain forest products, such as dragons blood. Writing on the inter-local and international trade in Jambi from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, McKinnon speculates that the ancestors of the *Kubu* most likely played an important role in the collection of forest products, such as rattan and dragons blood (*jernang*) and valuable items as rhinoceros horn and other items found deep in the forests (McKinnon 1992). There is a very long history of Chinese and Indian trade in the region as evident in the ancient trade items (*bendo kuno, pustaka*) that the *Orang Rimba* still possess, which include Chinese ceramics from the 10th to 13th century (Sandbukt 1999).⁴ During this period, trade relations between the ancestors of the *Kubu* and their local trade partners may have been more cooperative as well, the result of a less divided interior population, many of whom probably shared similar ideological and mystical beliefs.

The Influence of Hindu-Buddhist Philosophies

Sriwijaya and similar states that rose and fell during the next eight centuries were greatly influenced by Hindu-Buddhist culture, religion and the Sanskrit language. It is uncertain what the Indian presence was in South Sumatra or Jambi during this pre-historical period, and to what extent they 'peacefully colonized' the region. However, from the fifth century onwards, Indian and Hindu Buddhist philosophies had a significant influence on Malayic peoples in Sumatra, and their lasting effect can be seen in the numerous Sanskrit loanwords that appear in their language surrounding matters of philosophy, art, law, commerce, government, administration, power and religion.

Kings, nobles, people of influence, and possibly some in the downstream capital adopted the Hindu-Buddhist religion. The 7th-century *Talang Tuwo* stone found near Palembang, proclaims the ruler's Bodhisattva status, his concern for the salvation of all beings and states the realm of his kingdom as a centre of Tantric Buddhism (Andaya

2001:320). During his trip to *Melayu* (Jambi), Yijing mentioned that, “in the fortified city there were more than a thousand Buddhist priests who had come to study religion. He even suggested that Chinese Buddhist priests should study religion in (Foshi) Sriwijaya for a year or two before seeking further wisdom in Central India” (Andaya 2001:319).

From at least the seventh to the fourteenth centuries, the court’s legitimacy was drawn from this imported theocratic ideology; the kings were considered gods incarnate. Their legitimacy and power was strongly associated with sacred local mountains, which in turn had become representations of Mount Meru, the believed centre (or axis) of the world and home to gods in the Hindu-Buddhist pantheon such as Lord Siva and Brahma. Nobles were graded spiritually according to distance from the king, which determined succession to the throne, and access to many political office (Kipp 1987). The Hindu-Buddhist religion during this time offered Indonesian states both a projection and legitimation of monarchical order and the subjects of Jambi were bound to the king by supernaturally sanctioned oaths (Legge 1964; Rogers 1987). As in India, religion was intertwined with issues of grade, class and status, and probably not fully accessible to the common villager. There is some debate over how intensively the religion was adopted or practiced by the rural and interior populations. In contemporary Jambi most interior *Melayu* claim to have formally been Hindu, but know extremely little of the religion, most associating it with polytheism and claim the *Orang Rimba* follow a variant. Despite this ambiguity, Hindu-Buddhist religious concepts certainly made an impact on peoples throughout the region, influencing or overlaying many native concepts.

During this time, a differentiation between a powerful outside religion (*agamo*), with its various gods (*dewo*) and celestial nymphs-angels (*bidodari*) appears to have been made, and possibly set as a standard from which to compare their all-embracing *adat* universe. The dichotomy between heaven (*surgo*) and hell (*ner’ako*) may have overlaid native terms for these beliefs. The Sanskrit *bidodari*, a term for the celestial nymphs of Siva’s heavens, overlaid native concepts for a mother goddess throughout the region, which is intertwined with the spiritual cycle of birth and the human soul. Hindu-Buddhist notions of sin (*duso*) and judgement in the afterlife appear to have influenced native ideologies. One of the most interesting influences that the *Orang Rimba* still have is a belief in karmic law (*hukum keramah*), and the idea that good deeds and actions are followed by blessing and luck, and wrong or sinful actions and doings will follow with bad luck and accidents. Further religious influence is seen

through the Sanskrit loanwords, soul (*jiwa*), magic or magical verse (*jempi*), incantation (*mantera*), power (*sakti*), magic or power laden object's (*pustako*) and ritual (*upacara*).

The Fall of the Hindu-Buddhist Kingdoms

According to local folklore, the fall of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms was violent. According to the historical record as seen through tributary missions from Zanzei (Jambi) to China in 1079 and again in 1082, it is believed that the capital of *Sriwijaya* moved from Palembang to Jambi (*Muaru Jambi*).⁵ Aouu Qufe (1178) and Zhao Rugua (1225) mention that during this time Jambi compelled ships to enter its harbour in order to trade (Andaya 2001:321). Attacks on Palembang by the Chola of South India in the 11th century (1024-25) and the Javanese kingdom of Singosari in the late 13th century (1275), influenced the relocation of the capital to Jambi, and later to the upstream *Batanghari*, an area that had long been of strategic importance due to its direct trade routes into the Minangkabau highlands.

Towards the end of the 13th century, Javanese forces had penetrated as far as the upper *Batanghari*, and a new centre of *Melayu* was established close to the Minangkabau highlands along the upper *Batanghari* River. Later during *Adityawarman's* reign in the mid to late 14th century, the capital had moved even further into the Minangkabau highlands to the ancient centre of *Dharmasraya* (Andaya 2001:323). According to Wolters, *Adityawarman* was most likely the same person as the *Melayu*-Jambi ruler *Maharaja Prabhu* and that he moved inland to become the ruler of *Melayu* in the Minangkabau highlands, while the coastal *Melayu* came to be associated with Palembang. As Andaya points out, "if this is correct, it would explain the close relationship between the Minangkabau and the *Melayu*, and explain why the *Melayu* in subsequent centuries continued to speak in awe of Minangkabau and to describe it as the cradle of their race" (2001:344). In Jambi, and Riau, it explains why Malay kings, farmers, and *Orang Rimba* consider Minangkabau more legitimate or 'sakti' in the realm of magic, power and ancient heirlooms, and why many may have constructed their origin stories around Minangkabau in an effort to manoeuvre for precedence in the region.

The Coming of Islam: The return of the Queen, and the re-emergence of Jambi

During the pre-colonial era, the kingdom of *Sriwijaya* gradually gave way to smaller trading polities in Jambi and Palembang (as well as Minangkabau), which continued to control inland trade along the *Batanghari* and the *Musi* Rivers. From the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, Islam spread gradually from the coastal ports of Malaka and

the coastal trade centers of Palembang and Jambi, and probably much later into the interior regions of Sumatra. The attraction to Islam marked an increasing affiliation with Islamic (Indian and Arabic) traders which for the Malay courts offered an ideological weapon to establish autonomy from the hierarchical order of Javanese Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom of Majapahit, and just as importantly, was used to bring the increasingly distanced upstream interior communities back into the imagined realm of the Kingdom of Jambi (Kipp 1987:16). As can be seen in the numerous Sufi religious terms and concepts in their language and beliefs, the initial spread of Islam throughout the interior regions was probably carried out by roaming Sufi mystics, whose roots lie in the Shamanistic practices of Middle Asia, and whose philosophies probably would have been familiar, appealing and overlaid many native concepts in the interior regions (Bowen 1987; Drewes 1985).⁶ Several key Sufi terms and concepts have overlaid native *Orang Rimba* religious terms and concepts, the most important of which is *dekir*, the primary word used for their prayer songs.

For the interior *Melayu*, access to a progressive outside religion (*agamo*) must have been an appealing alternative to the Hindu-Buddhist philosophies, which were largely inaccessible to them, “In bringing man face to face to face with God without the necessity of a mediating priesthood or a complicated ritual, it implied a doctrine of equality” (Kipp 1987). In the eyes of God, a rural peasant was equal to the King, as long as the peasant was Muslim. Other reasons for the appeal of Islam may have lain in its emphasis on family relations, inheritance and the regulations of sexual behaviour” (Andaya 1993). In Jambi, sexual misconduct was perceived, “as one of the deepest threats to communal harmony, and the flouting of sexual mores, a challenge to the very cosmos” (Andaya 1993:27).

The spread of Islam penetrated different regions and cultural groups to various degrees and at different times. Aside from whatever ideological attractions it may have held, Islam appeared to be made the law of the land, and for interior peoples, being a Muslim eventually became synonymous with being a subject of *Melayu*. In later years, it would have been a means to be safely incorporated into the Kingdom, avoid injustices such as slave raids, and as a result, strong community boundaries appear to have developed between Muslim and non-Muslim. Later, Islam appears to have led to stronger us-them categories with the Dutch, which inadvertently may have affected relations with the ancestors of the *Kubu*, who for their own reasons chose not to become Muslims. However, well until the Dutch occupation, most interior *Melayu* probably straddled the boundary between Islam and *adat*.

Historical figures from this time-period such as *Putri Seleras Pinang Masak*, (Queen of Ripe Beetlenut) and her son *Orang Kayo Hitam* (The Rich King with Black Skin) emerge as key ancestor figures and Kings and Queens in recorded Jambi legend and folklore. In the late 15th century, *Putri Seleras Pinang Masak* is believed to be the daughter of *Adityawarman* and *Puteri Mandi*, a powerful Buddhist/Hindu King who ruled Minangkabau in the mid 14th century, and in this sense, she is connected to the lineage of Sriwijayan kings.⁷ In folklore, it is told that *Pinang Masak* returned and reestablished the Kingdom of *Melayu*, now being referred to as Jambi, along the downstream *Batanghari* River at *Tanjung Jabung*. In actual recorded history this occurs sometime in the late 15th century. She is said to have married a Turkish Prince by the name of Achmad Salim (or *Datuk Berhalo*) whose boat stranded off the shores of Jambi, entered Islam and began to establish the religion throughout the kingdom by sending Islamic teachers to the upstream communities (Boers 1839).⁸ *Pinang Masak* is also credited with establishing the basis for a universal Jambi *adat* (*pucuk nan delepan*) and one of the primary means in which Islam (or *agamo*) was merged with *adat* beliefs (*percayaon*) and spread throughout the kingdom. *Pinang Masak* is also credited for giving birth to Jambi's greatest ancestor/king, *Orang Kayo Hitam*.

In history and folklore, *Orang Kayo Hitam* is portrayed as Jambi's most powerful and wise ancestor king, and credited with bringing the present boundaries of the province together into the kingdom of Jambi. It is told that he established independence from Majapahit, unified the upstream interior with the downstream courts, established a unified code of Jambi *adat* law, furthered the spread of Islam throughout the kingdom, and established an administrative structure that was used until the fall of the sultanate in the early 20th century (Nasruddin 1989). As seen in the following legend, he did this by creating lasting kinship relations (through marriage or the giving of titles) with interior leaders, thus promoting and facilitating stable trade relationships.

The legend of the battle between *Orang Kayo Hitam* and *Temanggung Mero Mato* (Chief Red Eyes), and the founding of the present location of the Jambi Kingdom is a popular story in Jambi *Melayu* folklore. This story incorporates key themes that reverberate through Jambi history and folklore including the tension between the upstream and downstream, attempts at building relations between the two based on kinship relations, and an explanation of *Kubu* origins. The *Orang Rimba* of *Bukit Duabelas* believe *Temanggung Mero Mato* to be the first *Temanggung* in the forest, who lived along the *Bukit Duabelas* hills and the forests of *Air Hitam*. The *Makekal*

Orang Rimba sometimes refer to *Temanggung Mer'o Mato* as *Bujang Per'antau*, their founding ancestor who migrated to Jambi from Minangkabau (see chapter three).⁹ It provides a good representation of the dynamics between the interior and the downstream kingdoms during this period and their efforts to incorporate interior populations into the kingdom through kinship relations, *adat* and Islam. It also gives the *Melayu* a reasonable explanation for the origins of the *Kubu*, mainly based on their reluctance to enter Islam or sacrifice the autonomy of their *adat*. By taking *Mero Mato*'s daughter, the *Melayu* King has essentially placed the *Kubu* in the *Bukit Duabelas* region into a wider web of kin and economic relations with the king through tribute relations.

The Battle between *Orang Kayo Hitam* and *Temanggung Mero Mato*, the Foundation of a New Capital and the *Melayu* Origins of the *Kubu*.

Setting out with a boat and several oars man, *Orang Kayo Hitam* travelled the long trip upstream. Upon approaching the source of the *Air Hitam* River, he was surprised of the density and black colour of the water. According to *Melayu* beliefs, if the density of the water in a river is heavy, then the people in the region will be very strong, beautiful and led by a charismatic leader. Upon travelling further upstream along the *Air Hitam* River, he saw a fire along the riverbank and behind the fire was a beautiful woman with long black hair. *Orang Kayo Hitam* thought to himself, 'this is one of the most beautiful young girls I had ever laid eyes I had ever seen, she must be a virgin.'

He then disembarked and asked a man bathing along the riverbank who the leader of this area was. The man replied, 'This is the region of *Temanggung Mero Mato* and his brother *Temanggung Temuntan*, the king of the *Tembesi*.' *Orang Kayo Hitam* then found the home of *Temanggung Mero Mato*, and greeted him according to the new Islamic tradition, '*Assalamu'alaikum*', an expression that *Temanggung Mero Mato* had never heard. *Temanggung Mero Mato* replied to *Orang Kayo Hitam*, 'It is certain you come from far away, who are you and where do you come from?' *Orang Kayo Hitam* answered, 'It is true, I come from *Ujung Jabung*, and my name is *Orang Kayo Hitam*, the son of *Datuk Paduko Berhalo*.' The *Temanggung* introduced himself and his brother, *Temanggung Temuntan*, as the sons of the king of the gods (*Rajo Dewo*) and descendent from the god *Megat-Megatan*.

It was the custom of this previous era that when two leaders met, they compete with one another to see who is the master of martial arts (*silat*), magic and divine power. So the gong sounded and the entire community gathered to witness. Out came *Temanggung Mero Mato* and *Orang Kayo Hitam* to a field in order to compete in *pencak silat* in all its steps, scattered high, to collide and defend punches and stabs, to collide sacredly, like the wind and other natural forces. They only rested to eat and drink and then continued for three days and three nights, until finally everyone knew the higher of the two when *Orang Kayo Hitam* finally won the match.

Temanggung Mero Mato had two children, one boy named *Raden Kuning Megat di Alam*, who befitting his name was very handsome, and a daughter named *Mayang Mengurai* who was very beautiful, also fitting her name. *Orang Kayo Hitam* remembered the long hair he had seen beside the fire several days before and it was

clear that the beautiful woman was the child or princess of *Temanggung Mero Mato*. *Orang Kayo Hitam* approached *Temanggung Temuntan*, the brother of *Mero Mato*, the uncle of the girl and the *Tenganai Tuo* of the family, and asked that *Puteri Mayang Mensural* be his wife.

Temanggung Temuntan told *Orang Kayo Hitam* he needed to discuss the proposal with his father and brother. It was very difficult for both brothers to decide whether to receive the offer, and while knowledgeable, they were sure that *Orang Kayo Hitam* had come from the beach and his skin had been baked black by years of the sun's rays reflecting off the sea, as well as having a face, which caused one's hair to rise. They did not believe that *Orang Kayo Hitam* was an equal match for the girl. The family did not want to give away their daughter, but found it hard to reject the proposal after failing the *silat* match the previous day. They finally decided that they would reject him politely, by claiming that he had not fulfilled community *adat* obligations, and then laid out what seemed to be an impossible list of items required for the bridewealth: a rice mortar made of gold, a swallow in a bamboo cage, a fine tailored shirt and a large basket (*gantung*) of head lice.

Orang Kayo Hitam was also very wise in negotiating policy. A shining fish in the water, he knew people's minds. Because of this, he did not reject the bridewealth. All was received, he only asked that they give him six months to return and fulfil his *adat* obligation.

At the time *Orang Kayo Hitam* had not yet ascended to the throne, but had a very strong relationship with the Javanese and had already visited a number of regions in the ex-kingdom of Majapahit, including: *Materam*, *Pamalang*, *Tumenggung*, *Kendal*, *Jepara* and *Demak*. He was previously an assistant to the King of *Materam* and had already married with *Ratu Mas Pematang*.

Orang Kayo Hitam left the region of *Temanggung Mero Mato* and returned to *Ujung Jabung*, to rest, assess his governance, and develop Islam, and then sailed to the seven regions of Java in order to ask for the gold required to pay the bridewealth of *Puteri Mayang Mengurai*. Several months later he returned to *Ujung Jabung* and then to the region of *Temanggung Mero Mato*, along the *Air Hitam River* in order to fulfil his *adat* obligation.

After the marriage rituals were performed, both parties, that is *Orang Kayo Hitam* and his new younger brother-in-law *Raden Kuning Megat di Alam*, left the region of *Temanggung Mero Mato* with supplies given by his in-laws, as well as two white geese given by the community, who swam in front of the boat as if to guard them from danger. *Orang Kayo Hitam* said to those on board, 'Wherever the geese stop and walk on to the shore for two days and two nights, that is where I will stab my sword into the earth and begin to build my new kingdom.'

During the journey downstream, the white geese first left the water and walked to the shore of *Muaro Tembesi*. However, they soon got back in the water and continued down the *Batanghari* until they finally came to a village named *Tenadang*, where they stayed for two days and two nights. Based on the mandate given to his in-laws, this is where he stuck his sword into the ground, naming the location the 'chosen land' (*tanah pilih*). According to legend, the surrounding villagers were called to clear the land and build a palace and the buildings for the new capital.

Much later, news came from *Air Hitam* that *Temanggung Mero Mato* and his wife had mysteriously vanished from the area. Seeing how the future direction of the kingdom would go and the rapid pace of the new king's Islamic missionary work, it is told that they ran to the forests surrounding *Air Hitam*, to preserve their *adat* beliefs and became the founders of the *Kubu* groups between the *Air Hitam* and *Tabir* Rivers. The *Kubu* in this area still use the title *Temanggung* (Nasruddin 1989).¹⁰

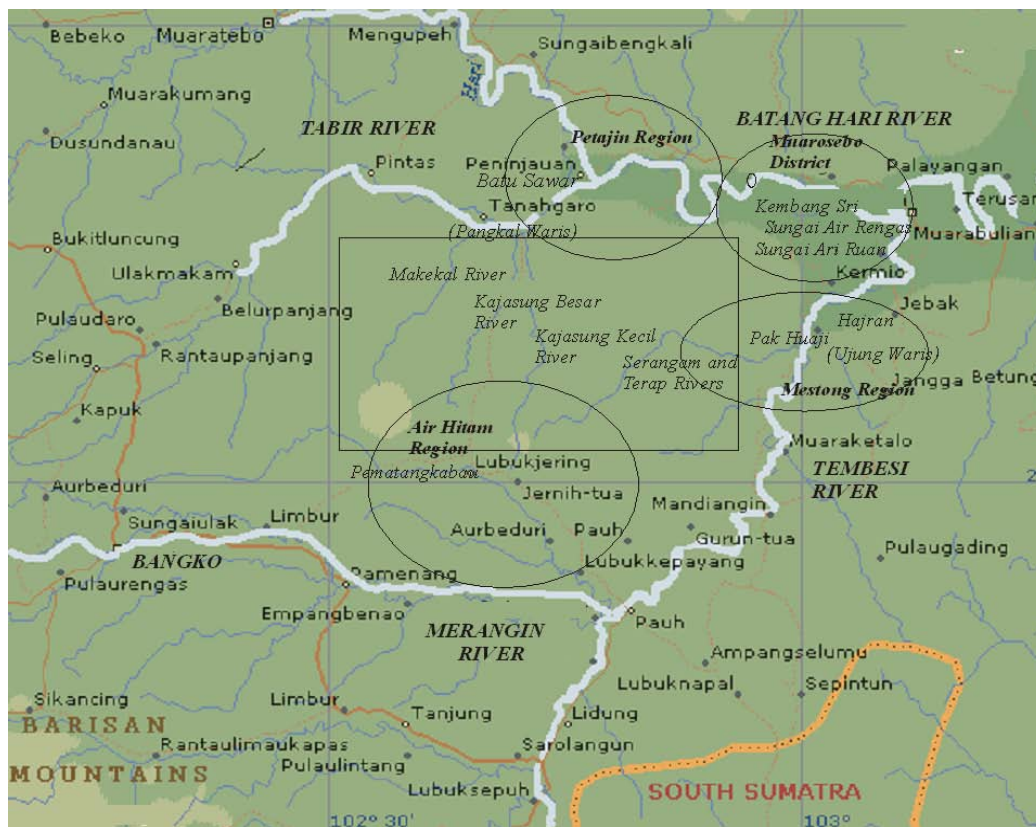
Traditional Administration of the Kingdom of Jambi

According to Jambi folklore, the traditional administration of Jambi was initially established by Queen *Pinang Masak*, and furthered by the efforts of her sons, particularly *Orang Kayo Hitam*. Administratively, the kingdom of Jambi was divided into three main groupings based around the administrative center in the downstream capital of Jambi; 'the realm of the king' (*alam berajo*), the 'distant branch communities' including Kerenci (*pucuk Jambi sembilan luarah*), and what in the mid to late 17th century would become known as 'the land of the *jenang*' (*tanah berjenang*), consisting of the tribute paying interior communities that were referred to as *batin* districts (Nasruddin 1989).¹¹ The 'realm of the king' (*alam berajo*) consisted of the 'twelve districts' (*bangsa duabelas*), groups of villages located mainly along the upstream *Batanghari* and *Air Hitam* Rivers, the region of *Tungkal* and the districts located along the borders of the kingdom.¹² These districts were called the 'banners under the umbrella of the kingdom of Jambi' (*payung panji-panji kerajaan Jambi*) and were controlled either directly through members of the king's family or indirectly through kinship relations (Nasruddin 1989). Land rights in the *alam berajo* were not granted outright, but consisted of 'rights of use' (*hak guna pakai*) to certain areas of land or forests. The *bangsa duabelas* were considered 'lesser appendages (children or descendents) of the king' (*anak rajo*) and exempt from paying tax or tribute (*jajah*). However, they were responsible for specific duties or services for the maintenance of the Kingdom.¹³

Examples of the 'twelve districts' (*bangsa duabelas*) that border, presently interact or have *adat* claims over the forests in the *Bukit Duabelas* region where *Orang Rimba* live include *Petajin*, *Marosebo*, *Air Hitam* and *Mestong*. Based in village *Peninjajuan*, but which also included the old/native *Melayu* (*Melayu kuno/tuo*) villages along the *Tabir* River such as *Batu Sawar* and to some extent *Tanah Garo*, the leader of *Petajin* held the title *pasirah*, and was responsible for supplying carpenters as well as providing transportation to the Sultan (Muttalib 1977:102). The *demang* or leader of the district of *Murosebo* was based in the old *Melayu* village of *Kembang Sri*, and

responsible for policing and upholding adat law throughout the kingdom.¹⁴ As a result of *Orang Kayo Hitam*'s marriage to *Mero Mato*'s daughter (at least in folklore), the old *Melayu* villages in the district of *Air Hitam* along the south of *Bukit Duabelas* became known as the *suku berajo*, or the 'extended family of the king'.¹⁵ The women in the *Air Hitam* region were responsible for organizing the palace kitchen for courtly rituals, coronations or parties (Muttalib 1977). The *Mestong* district was responsible for supplying the Sultan's private bodyguards.¹⁶

Map A.1 The Traditional Administrative Structure around *Bukit Duabelas*



Groups of villages along the borders of the kingdom were also included in the *alam berajo*, and in exchange for the service of guarding the borders were exempt from paying tribute or taxes (*jajah*). The Western borders with West Sumatra and Bengkulu were guarded by the autonomous regions of XI and VII Koto, Batang Asai, and Kerenci. The peoples in *Tungkal* guarded the eastern coasts, and borders with Riau. Depending upon the social climate of the time, they were sometimes assisted by the independent minded *Orang Laut*. The southern borders with Palembang were the responsibility of the *Kubu* (*Orang Batin Kubu*) groups east of the *Tembesi* River (Muttalib 1977). According to Nasruddin, these *Kubu* were located along the

Pamusiran, *Sekamis* and *Sungai Tigo* Rivers, and were given the title *pasirah* (1989). While these *Kubu* were not responsible for paying tribute, it is very likely that they would have been involved in similar debt-bondage relations with influential *Melayu* patrons specializing in the trade of forest products.

Certain regions in the interior such as the 'branch or sprout regions of Jambi and its nine rivers' (*pucuk Jambi sembilan lurah*)¹⁷ were given autonomous or semi-autonomous status in the kingdom. After acknowledging the rule of the king, the city of *Bangko* was given outright autonomous 'land rights' (*hak tanah*) as well as the highest title (*rio depati*) in the kingdom, placing him directly under the king. *Bangko* was not subject to corvee duties, nor required to pay tribute to the king, but was placed in charge of the outer regions of Kerenci, and allowed to collect taxes from their own district as well as a percentage from Kerenci (Nasruddin 1989). Several other districts were also given autonomous status such as the villages along the *Merangin* and the *Pelepat* Rivers. While admitting the ultimate authority of the king, these areas were in effect kingdoms within kingdoms, titles of leadership and land ownership were given by the king in the form of *piagam* (see below) which along with titles of leadership, were handed down as inheritance through women (Nasruddin 1989).

Outside the *alam berajo*, the majority of the interior populations were organized into *batin* sub-districts or the villages along specific groupings of rivers, and represented by locally elected leaders called *batin*.¹⁸ In contrast to the *alam berajo*, lands in the *batin* districts were either loaned, or given to the *batin* headman and his communities as 'land gifts of the king' (*tanoh kurnia*).¹⁹ These land agreements were handed to interior communities in the form of *piagam*, usually a metal plate, stone, or buffalo horn, with local, Javanese or Arabic inscriptions describing the land included in the gift, which is usually pointed out by specific features in the landscape. Many interior communities including *Kubu* peoples still possess these *piagam*, often considering them sacred items that legitimate their claims to land, forests, and the autonomy of their customary *adat* law.

The *batin* peoples (who consist of the old *Melayu* villages, *Minangkabau* immigrants²⁰ and *Kubu* peoples) were not responsible for providing services towards maintaining the kingdom, but were instead involved in tribute relationships through a representative of the king called the *jenang*.²¹ This relationship was summarized in the saying, 'gifts flow to the upstream and tribute/tax flows to the downstream' (*serah naik, jajah turun*). Periodically, the *jenang* would come to a *batin* district and give gifts (*serah*) such as cloth, axes, knives, hoes, salt and sugar to the *batin* head, which were to

be distributed to the family heads in his district. In exchange, the *batin* head was responsible for collecting different types of tribute from each village head in his *batin* district, and handing it over to the *jenang*.²² Depending on the primary subsistence style in the district, this might include a yield of a harvest, forest products, or gold. In addition to collecting *jajah* from *batin* (old *Melayu*) peoples, the *batin* head was also responsible for collecting *jajah* and land use taxes from recent immigrants in his district such as the moving tribes (*suku pindah*) or Minangkabau, many who originally came to the region looking for gold.

According to Muttalib, *jenang* were originally envoys sent from the capital to the interior of Jambi to proclaim the founding of the Jambi sultanate following the overthrow of Mataram's suzerainty somewhere in the early 16th century (Locher-Scholten 2003; Muttalib 1977:111). Most likely, *jenang* were originally independent traders and entrepreneurs who in addition to private motivated trade also conducted the Sultans business during their own trading trips in the upstream regions (Nasruddin 1989). It is likely that under increasing pressure from the Dutch to increase revenues in the interior, the monarchy decided to formalize the *jenang* position, and in the mid to late 17th century posted them permanently in the interior *batin* districts (Andaya 1993). In their new official role as 'representatives' (*wakil*) of the Sultan, the duty of the *jenang* was to collect tribute, ensure a constant flow of trade downstream, and were also given the authority to settle important legal matters, which could not be resolved by the village leader or *batin* head.²³ While not aristocrats, *jenang* stood above commoners and became quite influential in the interior regions. They were able to collect a great deal of wealth, and as representatives of the king were able to influence local politics. That said, the influence of the *jenang* was always confined to his district and his power had to be within reason. As Muttalib writes, "a *jenang* could be killed by community members if he went beyond certain limits" (Muttalib 1977: 113).

Like the interior *batin* communities, the different *Kubu* (*Orang Batin Kubu* and *Orang Rimba*) communities were also encapsulated within the traditional administrative structure of the kingdom of Jambi, some to greater extents than others. Unlike most of the rural *Melayu* in these districts, they were not subject to the *batin* head, but directly under the jurisdiction of a specific *jenang* assigned to them, who had the sole right to collect tribute from them. In order to facilitate tribute relations, most *jenang* appointed *Kubu* headman with a range of village titles, which vary from region to region, although the most elaborate range and usage now appears in *Bukit Duabelas*. In addition to trade

and titles, the *jenang* also acted for the *Kubu* as an *adat* consultant, protector and intermediary to the outside world.

While the major rivers and their tributaries made possible the flow of wealth to the downstream kingdoms, these relations were by no means a system of domination or absolute control. Due to a combination of environment, technological and military limitations, the downstreams ability to maintain a steady supply of trade goods was balanced on granting the interior a great deal of political autonomy, which in turn was expected by the people of the interior. Many peoples residing along the *Batanghari* River appear to have been, to certain extents, politically incorporated as subjects of the downstream kingdoms, and subject to direct rule through an appendage of the king's family. However, the populations in the upstream areas were largely autonomous communities linked to the Sultanate through tribute relations.

A limited degree of control over these autonomous communities was maintained through ascribing rank and titles but also through establishing kinship relations. In the interior, rank and titles were given to influential members of their communities, and depended on an individual's ability to attract followers, and procure resources for the downstream trade. Although the influence that these rank and titles provided were bound to an individual's position and performance, they were also inherited and insured some sort of continuity of rank or wealth through kin. In Southeast Asia, where land was abundant, control of labour was an index of power, and society was held together by vertical bonds between men (Reid 1983b:8). For influential members of society, power depended on how many men were bound to them. Aside from reaffirming their relations with the downstream kingdoms, rank and titles reaffirmed the position and legitimacy of influential members in inland societies and attracted followers to enter into relationships of debt bondage. The downstream king was the embodiment of *adat* law, high morals, religious values and the rank and titles he disseminated to those who supported him were generally acknowledged throughout the interior. Another method of maintaining the loyalty of the interior people was through marriage ties, resulting in the establishment of political alliances between influential members. The practice of polygamy made this system easier.

With the arrival of the Europeans, fragile upstream-downstream relations were severely strained, and led to centuries of instability, especially for the animist peoples of the forests. While forest peoples were most likely under strong pressures to be within the grasp of *Melayu* society beforehand, these pressures probably would have intensified after the arrival of the Europeans and to some extent may have intensified

their boundary techniques with outsiders. It also may have led to a more crystallized use of the ‘*Kubu*’ exonym.

The Arrival of the Europeans and Slavery in the Region

The first Europeans to arrive in Jambi were the Portuguese. According to a Dutch report in 1619, “black Christians” or mixed Malay/Portuguese/Indians had already been making the trip upstream for more than two generations, in order to trade for items such as pepper and forest products (Andaya 1993:49). Drawn by stories of the growing riches of its interior pepper fields, both the Dutch and the English set up posts in Jambi in 1615, and made joint efforts to exclude the Portuguese from the region. The growing of pepper in the interior regions of Jambi may have begun as early as the 15th century, initially supplying markets in China, and in the 16th and 17th centuries shifting to the European demand. While growing in popularity, this newer export was difficult to tend, and the work was less preferred among peoples of the interior. Many in the upstream continued their efforts at swidden farming and collecting forest products, Jambi’s traditional primary export.

During the 17th century, Jambi continued with a tradition of vibrant trade in forest products, which included rattans, wild latex tapped from *jeletung* trees and tree resins such as *damar*, and the valuable *jernang* (dragons blood), which was coveted both for its medicinal purposes as well as its use as a high quality dye. As is the case today, the *Kubu* were most likely some of the main collectors of many types of *rattan*, particularly *jernang*, which only grow deep in the forest is very difficult to obtain. According to Andaya,

“...the best rattans were believed to come from the Lalan area, where the arduous work of cutting and gathering was carried out mainly by the forest dwellers, who exchanged them for salt and cloth obtained by local traders. The latter were probably responsible for boiling and drying the rattans to remove the gums and resins, after which the canes were brought to the markets in bundles of two to three hundred. So valuable was the trade that in 1658, the ruler of Jambi had even laid down that rattans be sold only to him” (Andaya 1993:119).

Within the records of the Dutch East Indies Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, VOC), mention of the *Kubu* is brief, but does point to native use of the *Kubu* exonym as early as the 17th century. Early on, the much more common term used by the Dutch, was ‘wild people’ (*wilde mensen*), which in the 19th century, was increasingly substituted for a variant of the local *Melayu* exonym, ‘*Koeboe*’ (personal communication with Barbara Andaya). According to Andaya’s translation of VOC documents, the first mention of the ‘wild people’ of the forest comes from Dirk de

Haas, the captain of the VOC base in Jambi (personal communication with Barbara Andaya). On the 14 July 1670, he writes Batavia over a disagreement amongst groups of 'wild people' in the forests, which appears to have delayed a shipment of rattan (personal communication with Barbara Andaya).²⁴ With increased Dutch influence in the region, disagreements among interior peoples appear to have become much more common.

Upon establishing themselves in Jambi, the Dutch pressured the monarchy to manipulate its relations in the interior to increase pepper growing, often by intimidation, and by the 1630's pepper growing had spread up the *Batanghari* River along the *Tembesi*, *Merangin* Rivers and even into *Pasemah* (Andaya 1993: 64). By the 1660's, Jambi had rose to become the main pepper producer in the region. However, the methods in which pepper growth was stimulated also led to the deterioration of traditional economic relations, both with the upstream districts as well as the neighbouring kingdom of Palembang. These measures led to increased slave raiding, a growing slave trade, and eventually conflict and chaos in the upstream regions of Jambi and Palembang.

Traditionally, most economic and trading relationships in the interior of Jambi were based on debt-bondage or patron-client relationships. In these relationships, a financial backer/trader would advance capital or supplies to client until a field or plantation was harvested, or forest products obtained. The time expected for repayment in full was rarely an issue. In order to maintain the longevity of the relationship, as well as maintain a constant flow of trade in the future, the patron would always allow a portion of the debt unpaid. While the relationship was business oriented and involved certain aspects of power and subordination, it was also intimate and paternal. If the client ever fell short of supplies, he could always ask his patron for help, thus again rebinding himself to the patron and continuing the relationship. As Andaya writes, "With the arrival of the Europeans, both the Dutch and Jambi royalty began to act more like debt collectors, employing intimidation or force to call up what was owed. Pressured by growing debt to the Dutch, and with new weaponry such as muskets, the king and his soldiers increasingly led expeditions to the interior to collect debt forcefully" (Andaya 1993: 90). Over time, these tactics eroded relationships previously created by gentle persuasion and luring upstream leaders into kin-like relations based on mutual respect, and the opportunity to achieve status by the receiving of titles.

Larger problems were created by the growing need to enlarge the labour pools needed to work the interior pepper fields. Because local populations were often

reluctant to take on the backbreaking physical labour required to clear jungle for new pepper fields, local rulers increasingly resorted to forced labour and slavery in order to respond to these demands (Andaya 1993). While both debt bondage and slavery had been practiced well before this period, the European presence led to increased slave raiding and expanded slave markets in both Jambi and Palembang (Sutherland 1983). Speaking of Malay trading kingdoms of *Melaka*, *Sriwijaya*, *Jambi*, *Palembang* and *Pasai*, James Scott writes,

“These were Hulu-Hilir systems...states that controlled ‘choke points’ on a river system or in a navigated strait. Their problem was always a lack of manpower and they were all, without exception, slaving states that ranged far and wide to grab manpower wherever they could find it. But the problem was most severe in the coastal kingdoms that did not have an irrigated wet-rice core. The Malay states resemble nothing so much as the Viking system of trading, raiding, and slaving (Scott 14 December 1998).

In addition to regular debt bondage trade relations which were the basis for economic relations in the upstream, two basic types of slavery were found in the Indigenous Malay states, debt-slavery and ordinary or true slavery (Endicott 1983).²⁵ Debt slaves were mostly commoners who had become indebted to aristocrats either by borrowing money or for being fined for a real or alleged offence. In theory, they were free persons and could get out of the relationship by repaying the debt (Endicott 1983). True slaves were considered property, had no rights or legal protection, and were either captured by force, in war or by slave raiding (Endicott 1983:217). Reid writes, “...the movement of captive peoples and slaves was the primary source of labour mobility in Southeast Asia. Typically, it took the form of transferring people from weak, politically fragmented societies to stronger and wealthier ones. The oldest and demographically most important form of movement was the border raiding against animist swidden cultivators and hunter-gatherers by the stronger wet-rice cultivators of the river valleys” (Reid 1983:27). As was the case throughout the Western part of Indonesia, because it was forbidden in Islamic law to enslave a Muslim, most true slaves captured in Jambi were probably animist forest peoples.

Because the *Kubu* would have been an economic asset to a *jenang* or patron in a local area, slave raids against their communities would have most likely been carried out by outsiders, either from the downstream or from other upstream communities coming across the border from Palembang. As Andaya mentions, “both Jambi and Palembang enjoyed established reputations as lucrative slave markets, largely because of their links with the *Orang Laut*, who roamed the surrounding waters as raiders” (Andaya 1993). According to Dutch records, in 1667, three hundred *Orang Laut* boats

manned from Johor conducted slave raids up Jambi's rivers, and in 1669, it was estimated that 2,500 slaves were captured on slave raids in Jambi (Andaya 1993). The majority of these raiders probably would have come across Jambi's southern borders, from the upstream interior of Palembang, particularly from the *Rawas* region, which had a renowned reputation for slave raiding.

With Dutch interference in the traditional political relations between Jambi and Palembang, the two kingdoms became more distant and hostile with one another. By the 1690's, interior instability gradually led to a decline in Jambi's prosperity, while at the same time, Palembang's control over the upstream had become more secure, and new pepper fields were being opened by imported slaves, mostly those taken from slave raids into Jambi (Andaya 1993:124). As Palembang and Jambi vied for control over the *Rawas-Tembesi* area, slave raids originating from the upstream borders of Palembang were causing great population movement in the interior (Andaya 1993). In 1680, upon hearing news that an attack from Palembang was in the works, there were claims that over 2000 men were sent to guard the *Lalan* area, the principal land route between Jambi and Palembang (Andaya 1993:130). Moreover, in 1688 it was reported that thousands of people from the area surrounding *Merangin* had been captured by Palembang raids and taken across the borders (Andaya 1993:136).

As the 17th century ended, Jambi's upstream region was strewn with a combination of downstream and inter-border raiding, conflict, and internal rebellion against the King. Interior districts such as *Merangin* had cut relations with the downstream, and after the Sultan sent troops to restore trade, interior rebellions began anew (Andaya 1993).²⁶ It was reported that the new Jambi Sultan, *Kia Gedi*, had even lost his control over the *Orang Laut* and the "wild people of the forest" (Andaya 1993:136). In October of 1692 a Dutch report stated that, "the wild people along the *Bulian* and *Bahar* Rivers (the *Orang Batin Kubu*), tributaries of the *Lalan* River, renounced Jambi's overlordship and rebelled against Jambi authority, their attacks so effective that no one from *Tanah Pilih* dared venture into their rice fields" (Andaya 1993:137). According to the report, "without the wild people or the support of their trade intermediaries no trade in jungle products was possible, and in 1694 VOC representatives were unable to obtain supplies of rattan requested by Batavia because the wild people had fled" (Andaya 1993:137). As Andaya mentions, "the reason for their anger was straightforward, Sultan *Kia Gede* had sold into slavery three of their children who had been presented as a gift" (Andaya 1993:137). According to Dutch documents of the content of ships leaving for Batavia in December 1694, both

Palembang and Jambi's forests continued to support a vibrant trade in valuable forest products (Andaya 1993:118). However, this is the last VOC mention of the wild people of the forest. After their office was attacked by the Sultans troops in 1754, the Dutch left Jambi for Palembang, and only returned to re-establish a very limited presence in Jambi in 1833 (Andaya 1993).²⁷

Marsden's late 18th century, '*History of Sumatra*' was the first English account with mention of the *Kubu* (Marsden 1986). During his stay in West Sumatra (1771-1779), he mentions that there was no contact between the *Kubu* and the outside world, which by this time may have been more pronounced after centuries of intensified slaving, and the repeated occurrence of mass epidemic throughout the interior regions. Upon the reestablishment of Dutch relations in the mid 19th century, more detailed accounts of the *Kubu* begin to appear in written record. These early accounts often tend to lump together the animist forest peoples traditionally referred by the *Melayu* exonym *Kubu*. The more accessible 'tame *Kubu*' (*Orang Batin Kubu*) of South Sumatra and Jambi have swidden economies, and lived along some of the more travelled rivers. The 'wild *Kubu*' (*Orang Rimba/Orang Hutan*), lived in the more hard to reach western upstream regions of both provinces and have much more mobile, mixed foraging-swidden economies, which at times centre upon on the nomadic digging of wild yams, and maintain much stronger boundaries with outsiders. According to the *Melayu* and early Europeans, the 'tame' *Kubu* (*Orang Batin Kubu*), were 'wild *Kubu*' (*Orang Rimba/Orang Hutan*) in the process of settling down and becoming *Melayu* (*masuk Melayu*).

Many of these early European accounts pertain to the more settled *Orang Batin Kubu* living near a Dutch base along the *Sarulung* River, a sub-branch of the *Musi* River in the upper Rawas region of Palembang or South Sumatra. During this time, the Dutch referred to this interior district as '*Onderafdeeling Koeboestrecken*', the district of the *Kubu*. Some of these accounts offer a glimpse into the very inhuman manner in which the *Melayu* perceived the *Kubu*, a result not only not only of the valuable slave commodity they had become, but also the effect of a more crystallized Islamic *Melayu* ethnic identity, which may have developed in reaction to the Dutch.

One mid-nineteenth century account of the social climate in Palembang and Jambi comes from the American adventure traveller Walter Gibson.²⁸ The captain of his own vessel and crew, Gibson arrived in Eastern Sumatra on January 17th 1852 with dreams of finding riches, and establishing his own niche in the East Indies ala James Brooks. A couple of weeks after his arrival, Gibson was arrested by the Dutch on

charges of high treason after a letter he sent to the Sultan of Jambi was intercepted, and was accused of attempting to sell arms and offer America's support in the local resistance to Dutch rule. Sentenced to a twelve-year prison term in Batavia, he later escaped after serving only twelve month's of his sentence (Gibson 1885). In March 1854, one year after his escape, Gibson recounted some of experiences in Sumatra at a meeting of the American Geographical and Statistical Society, "where the audience hung on his every word as he told them the most astonishing tales of the hairy *Kubu* and the beauties of Nias" (Locher-Scholten 2003:101-2). An elaborate storyteller, at times his accounts tend to merge into the realm of fiction. However, his accounts do offer an early glimpse into the social climate of the time.

In his book, "*The Prison of Welterveden*" he writes that his interest in the *Kubu* was aroused by stories of Jambi's Sultan *Abdul Nazaruddin* who was rumoured to have a large number of *Kubu* slaves (Gibson 1885). In order to find out more about the *Kubu*, he sought out a Palembang noble (*pangeran*) along the upper *Musi* River in the *Ogan* or *Koeboestrecken* region (Gibson 1885). During Gibson's account, what shifts the discussion towards the topic of the *Kubu* is Dutch-Malay tension, "the Dutch...were hateful and ugly: they treated the people of Islam like dogs; they were ugly as orang *Kubu*" (Gibson 1855). According to the Malay noble, they justified the *Kubu*'s place as slaves or "beasts of burden" with imaginative stories of their shameful origins, lack of culture and absence of religion. As with the Sumatran (Riau) and Peninsular Malay exonym *Sakai*, a term that in the past may have had connotations of friendship or companion, the term *Kubu* appears to have become synonymous with slave, primitive or wild animal (Dentan 1997a; Endicott 1983). In short, the *Melayu* had come to perceive them as wild animals,

"These were tai (*tasi*) orang, the refuse of men: they were the descendents of some slaves of Alexander²⁹, who fled from their masters. They could tell nothing of their forefathers; they could only speak some short grunting words; and one syllable of Malay words they could repeat-nassee, rice, being nass with them; and yan for orang. They were brutes, they had no worship, no marriage, no law, no clothing, no idea of its use; they were the accursed of Allah, companions of dijins on earth; fit only to be beasts of burden (Gibson 1855).

Another *Melayu* myth surrounding the origins of the *Kubu* collected by van Dongen, who at this time was the administrator (*controleur*) of the Dutch base in the *Koeboestrecken* region, has a similar theme,

"It once happened that a pirate brother and sister committed incest, and the sister in consequence became pregnant. The pair was accursed by the pirates, abandoned in the brush, and founded the first *Kubu* settlement on the Lalan River" (Loeb 1935).

Visiting this same region just after Gibson, the American naturalist Forbes writes,

“they believe that they are the descendants of the younger of three brothers: the two elder were circumcised in the usual way; the younger it was found no instruments would circumcise, a circumstance which so ashamed him that he betook himself to the woods to live” (Forbes 1885a).

The themes running through these *Melayu* folk tales of *Kubu* origins make a clear us them separation based on extreme moral violations or religious divisions.³⁰ The *Melayu* had dehumanized the *Kubu*, which apparently gave some kind of justification to hunting and enslaving them. Along the *Musi*, *Rawas* and upper *Batanghari* Rivers, which Gibson visited during his trip, he writes that the Malay hunted the *Kubu* just as they might wild animals,

“...and the Malays hunted them and caught them in pits and tree tops; and made slaves of them, as of right, said the Panyorang, all beings ought to be, who are inferior to men”(Gibson 1855).

Similar stories abound in Malaysia of the *Orang Asli* communities who were also subject to slave raids during this period in history. Curiously, many of the slave raiders on the Peninsula appear to have been migrants who originated from the same general area where heavy slave raiding was being conducted upon *Kubu* peoples. According to Nowak, most of the people who called themselves Malay on the Peninsula are relatively recent Indonesian migrants from Sumatra, including the Minangkabau, *Rawas* (south Sumatra), Kerinci, and the Bugis from South Sulawesi (2004:308). Many of these peoples originally came to the Peninsula on slaving expeditions or to gain control over the trade routes in forest products, and eventually settled along the southwest coasts of Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Malaka (Nowak 2004:308-309). It seems that most of this Indonesian movement into the peninsula was aggressive and violent, at least towards the *Orang Asli* communities. In 1847, Logan gives an account of a slave raid on Btsisi communities by the *Rawas*, migrants from the *Koeboestrecken* district of South Sumatra. The account below gives a good representation of the mentality that would have been prevalent among some of these 19th century Sumatran slave raiders.

“They [Rawa] always go well armed...About seven months ago, bands of them attacked the Mintira (Btsisi) in different places, killed many of the men and carried away more than a hundred of their women and girls into Pahang, where they were sold as slaves. The Rawa declared that they would hunt down the Mintira everywhere, and deal with them in the same way.” (Nowak 2004:309).

Numerous accounts of the period describe slave raids on Peninsular forest peoples such as the Semang, Sengoi and the Temiar (Dentan 1997a; Endicott 1983; Favre 1848; Skeat 1906).³¹

In Jambi nothing is written on what the life of a true slave might have been like, whether an “open” or “closed” system of slavery existed, and if they would have eventually been absorbed into the general *Melayu* population or kept as a distinct class (Reid 1983a). In theory, if a slave entered Islam it would have been illegal to keep or own him as a true slave. According to Forbes 19th century account, there was marked separation between the *Kubu* and *Melayu*, and little intermarriage,

...rarely do the Kubu intermarry with Malay villages, they consider the Kubus far their inferiors, a position which the latter seem to accept with very marked submissiveness. “You Kubu!” is a term of opprobrium... the village people consider them little other than beasts. (Forbes 1885a)

In the early 1800’s, Marsden mentions that at least some female slaves (probably *Orang Batin Kubu*), after marriage and entering Islam were absorbed into the rural Malay population,

Some have at times been caught and kept as slaves in Labun; and a man of that place is now married to a tolerably handsome Kubu girl, who was carried off by a party that discovered their huts. (Marsden 1886:41)

In both Sumatra and on the Malay Peninsula, royalty and nobles would have been large slave owners. Andaya and Andaya mention that as late as the 19th century, the Sultan of Selangor on the Malay Peninsula owned a great number of Orang Asli slaves (Andaya 1982). And from Gibson’s account, the royalty were owners of *Kubu* slaves,

The Panyorang said that the Sultan of Jambee had a great many Kubu slaves. They were found in the rich gold region of Korinchee, as well as the gum benzoin forests on the Batong Lekoh. (Gibson 1855)

Almost three centuries of intensified slave raids on *Kubu* communities would have had a marked effect on their perceptions, behaviours and relations with the outside *Melayu*. As seen in the early reports, both groups seemed to have developed an institutionalised fear of the *Melayu*.³² While visiting *Kubu* (*Orang Batin Kubu*) villages along the *Rawas* River in the *Koeboestrecken* district, the American naturalist Forbes was struck by their eye contact avoidance and extreme submissiveness, “One cannot help feeling that they are harmless overgrown children of the woods”(Forbes 1885a). While the ‘tame’ *Orang Batin Kubu* generally tolerated the presence of outsiders, and were believed to be in process of settling or becoming civilized, second hand reports of wild *Kubu* describe that the *Orang Rimba* most often resorted to flight in the presence of outsiders. Of the wild *Kubu*, Forbes writes,

They are so afraid of seeing any one not their own race, that if suddenly met or come up with in the forest, they will drop everything and flee away...They are so temorous and shy that it is a rare circumstance for any one to see them... I doubt if

any white man has ever seen the uninfluenced Kubu, save as one sees the hind-quarters of a startled deer. (Forbes 1885a)

Both the *Orang Rimba* and *Orang Batin Kubu* would have easily been able retreat to the forests during periods of slaving, and similar to the Batek in Malaysia, *Melayu* slave raids in Sumatra may have reinforced *Kubu* mobility (Endicott 1983). Practiced to some extent by both groups, the practice of *melangun* or movement following death may have prevented a group from settling into a swidden field for long periods. Given their more settled subsistence style along the more well travelled rivers, particularly those located along the border with Palembang, the *Orang Batin Kubu* were probably more susceptible to slave raids than the *Orang Rimba*. In the early 1900's, a seventy-year old woman from the upper *Bahar* River in Palembang (*Orang Batin Kubu*) describes to Schebesta, that at times, this would have driven them to a more nomadic life in the forest,

Before the Whites came, the Malay persecuted us and shot us down as game.³³ We had our plantings but never lived in them. We erected small huts in the depths of the forest, family by family. From time to time, we ventured out of the forest in order to fetch supplies from our fields. Now that peace obtains, we have again put our huts in the fields as in the time of our forefathers. (Schebesta 1926)

Trade items such as cloth, iron tools and salt and in some cases pressures from long-standing debt bondage or tribute relations with *Melayu* trading partners, would have motivated, or even obligated them back into trade relationships with the *Melayu*. One method in which both groups of *Kubu* peoples dealt with the often-dangerous situation of dealing with outsiders was through a 'silent trade'. At different times in their histories, this method of exchange has been used by forest peoples in Brazil, India, Africa, eastern Indonesia and by the Semang and other *Orang Asli* in Malaysia (Begbie 1834; Endicott 1983; Hanbury-Tenison 1975; Skeat 1906).³⁴ In one of the first written accounts devoted solely to the *Kubu*, the Dutch Resident of Palembang J.W Boers (1834-1840), describes how the *Kubu* conducted a silent trade with the surrounding Malay villagers,

In the interior of Palembang one can find a wild tribe named the *Orang Koeboe*, who avoid all communication with other peoples. They do not harm anyone and barter without showing up. At several places where they roam about, one puts down linen, tobacco, and other products that they need. After that, one beats a gonggong as a signal and then retreat to some distance. The *Orang Koeboe* come to get these products and replace them with honey, resin, and other products with a higher value. (Boers 1838:288)

In the early 20th century, van Dongen writes that the tame *Kubu* (*Orang Batin Kubu*) along the *Bahar* and *Bulian* Rivers (Jambi) had just recently stopped practicing the

silent trade, and that more personal trade relations had developed with their *Melayu* trading intermediaries. Of the silent trade, van Dongen writes,

When a trader arrives in a boat close to a Kubu village, he must hit a hollow tree (*pukul banir*) in order to call them. If the sound is answered by the Kubu, it means that they are willing to trade...the trader must retreat to a distance and wait. After hearing the gong of this tree again, the trader goes to the former location and sees various forest products laid out. The trader then places items, which he wishes to trade next to the forest products, hits the tree, and leaves the location. If the Kubu accept the trade, they take the items, if they do not; they take their forest products and return to the forest. For the last twenty years, this form of trade has not been practiced with the Kubu along the Lalan, Bahar and Bulian Rivers. (Dongen 1910:191)

The Dutch colonial ethnographer Eerde speculated as to whether the silent trade was a traditional form of *Kubu* trade, universal throughout South Sumatra and Jambi, or only occurred with specific groups.³⁵ During the time of his stay, he notes that (among the *Orang Batin Kubu*) more personalized trade relations had recently replaced the latter in most areas with appointed Malay intermediaries (*jenang*) (Eerde 1929). Of course, whether or not they were trading from a distance most *Kubu* peoples would have probably been conducting business with a formal trading partner, or *jenang*. In reality, there was probably great variation in *Kubu* trading relationships, the closeness or intensity changing according to the social climate of the time. Reasons for conducting trade from a distance may have included among others, a strained debt-bondage relationship, disease, slave raids, missionary or settling activities or uneasy relations with surrounding villagers.

In the 19th and 20th century, several reports mention that some settled or tame *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples began making attempts to settle down, become *Melayu* (*masuk Melayu*) and at least nominally enter Islam (Dongen 1910). In 1860, the practice of slavery was made illegal in Dutch colonies, and in the early 1900's they began to take measures to enforce this law (Reid 1983b:34). At the turn of the 20th century, the Dutch began several development oriented social programs, and began encouraging some of the more accessible (*Orang Batin*) *Kubu* communities to settle down and take up agriculture in planned settlements.³⁶ In contrast to these peoples, in some regions the *Orang Rimba* continued the silent trade well into the first half of the 20th century. In these cases, it was a technique to maintain the purity of their beliefs (*adat*) through a number of institutionalized boundaries, which serve to prevent sickness and to ensure health and good fortune by maintaining a close relationship with their gods.

***Orang Rimba* Boundaries: External Relations with the *Jenang* in *Bukit Duabelas* and a History of Sickness and Disease**

The *Orang Rimba*'s more mobile subsistence patterns and the ability to make the transition to rainforest hunter-gatherers, and their locations off well-travelled rivers and forests, would have allowed them options other than assimilation. In contrast to the more settled or tame *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples, the *Orang Rimba/Hutan* developed a different means to maintain social distance from the *Melayu* by establishing strong institutionalised cultural boundary mechanisms, and an elaborate system of beliefs encapsulated and symbolized in their all-embracing *adat* customary law. *Orang Rimba adat* is conceptualised, formed and maintained in direct contrast to the surrounding sedentary villagers, and serves to maintain strong *Orang Rimba (adat)* identities, based on enforcing and maintaining separation. Some of these boundaries include dietary taboos on all domestic animals (and in some cases rice), village clothing, soap, and other village technologies. The downstream *Melayu* are seen as a source of sickness, disease and danger, and while adult men are allowed trading trips, women and children are forbidden to leave the forests or have any contact with the outsiders. Any sustained interaction with the *Melayu*, whether the *Orang Rimba* spending unnecessary time in the village, or the *Melayu* in the forest, is forbidden, not only because sickness can be carried into the forests by those who leave, but because it can also result in being abandoned by their gods.

External trade and politically oriented debt bondage relations with *Melayu* patrons of status and rank seemed to have helped reinforce *Orang Rimba* boundaries with the outside world. While trade always favored the patrons, the *Kubu* were able to gain access to outside goods, and political titles that gave male leaders status and a limited amount of authority in their communities. In the *Bukit Duabelas* region, elaborate mythologies, origins, and claims of distant kinship evolved around these relationships, binding them into mutual obligations of trade and protection, which were sealed by supernaturally sanctioned oaths. Because the relationship was beneficial to both parties, their continuity depended on mutual respect towards one another's beliefs and boundaries.

In contrast to many other areas in Jambi and South Sumatra, the position of the forests in *Bukit Duabelas* within the heart of the traditional administrative region of the upstream portion of the kingdom, and their external relations with patrons (*jenang*) appears to have protected them from slave raids being conducted in other areas. The old *Melayu* villages located in the *Air Hitam* region, along the southern borders of *Bukit*

Duabelas, were included in the realm of the king (*alam berajo*), and according to intermarriage with royalty in Jambi folklore, were considered the clan of the king (*suku berajo*). The old *Melayu* villages along the north and eastern boundaries of *Bukit Duabelas* were also included in the realm of the king, and according to their corvee duties, were the villages that supplied the Sultans personal bodyguards, the kingdom's *adat* police force. The villages along the *Tabir* River (of which the *Makekal* and *Kajasung Besar* Rivers are tributaries) were also considered to be in the realm of the king, but were also more remote and inaccessible to raiders, and watched over by patrons in the village of *Tanah Garo*. In the past, western access to *Bukit Duabelas* would have been difficult, as there was a large buffer of rainforest between this area and the *Melayu* villages of *Liau Manis* and *Rantau Panjang*.

Along the *Makekal* River, *Orang Rimba* elders and their patrons in *Tanah Garo* say that silent trade was still being practiced well until the 1950's. Here, there is awareness that slavery existed and that slave raids were historically conducted on other *Kubu* groups outside *Bukit Duabelas*. However, most cannot recall slave raids being launched against the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas*. That said, the *Makekal Orang Rimba* tell plenty of stories of outsiders coming into the forest with the intent to rape and take away their women and children, which certainly sound like slave raids. The primary reasons why elders say that practiced the silent trade was to prevent contact with sickness from the downstream, and to maintain a general division or separation between their customs and beliefs (*adat*) and those in the village, which ensures a strong relationship with their gods. One of the strongest boundary mechanisms that ensures actual physical distance between the *Orang Rimba* and outsiders, and limits *Orang Rimba* activities or travels outside the forests, are sickness boundaries, and the perception of the downstream *Melayu* as a source of sickness such as fevers, coughs, stomach sickness, cholera and smallpox. In the past, these boundary mechanisms partially served to prevent contact with sickness and pandemic disease, which historically was a major threat to the upstream peoples, particularly smallpox.

Smallpox was probably already present in the Indonesian archipelago when the Europeans began to arrive in the 16th and 17th centuries. The people in the Malay straits were engaged in intensive trade relations with the Indians and the Chinese, both of whom had already been exposed to the disease for centuries. The first Dutch mention of smallpox is the Governor General of the VOC, who in 1618 describes it as "more lethal than the (bubonic) plague, the illness Europeans of this day and age feared the most, having killed one-sixth of the population" (Boomgaard 2003:593). These words

were echoed by William Marsden in the late 18th century who comments, “smallpox was regarded as a plague from which the mightiest were not safe...the Sultan of Palembang, lost 14 of his children to just one outbreak of smallpox (Marsden 1986). The Europeans may have hastened its spread to regions previously unexposed through intensified mercantile activities and by eagerly adopting and intensifying native institutions of slavery (Boomgaard 2003:609).³⁷ Based on European accounts, Boomgaard counts twelve different smallpox epidemics occurring in the 17th century, and fourteen during the 18th century.

While downstream peoples may have built up a degree of immunity to epidemic diseases, upstream peoples in Sumatra, particularly small and more isolated communities like the *Orang Rimba* may have been more prone to the disease with increased interactions during the 17th and 18th century.³⁸ Andaya writes that three widespread epidemics hit Jambi in 1693, which lasted three months and claimed many lives, including the Sultans pregnant wife (Andaya 1993:139). During this early period Andaya writes, “The young, the old and pregnant women were all particularly vulnerable, and whole villages could be decimated in a few weeks” (1993:228). In 1758, smallpox ravaged the interior of Jambi, and in 1772 again swept through *Lematgang*, *Komering* and *Ranau*, while *Rawas* in *Palembang* was reported to be depopulated as survivors fled to uninfected areas (Andaya 1993: 228). In Bengkulu (Southwest Sumatra), one-third of the population was said to have died during a smallpox epidemic while more outbreaks were said to have broken out in South Sumatra during the 1790’s, with claims that deaths in the upstream exceeded ten thousand (Andaya 1993:226; Boomgaard 2003). Andaya writes, “losses on this scale could not readily be replaced, and may have explained the expanded raiding and trading of slaves to replace the interior populations” (Andaya 1993: 228). This may have increased the spread of smallpox carriers to other regions that previously had not contacted the disease.

Different epidemics continued to break out in the 19th and well into the 20th century. In 1818, Sophia Raffles writes that smallpox created “great ravages”, killing nearly forty percent of some Batak villages in northern Sumatra, and according to Collins repeatedly hit *Besemah* communities in South Sumatra during the mid to late 19th century (Boomgaard 2003; Collins 1979; Raffles 1830). In 1897, Locher-Scholten writes that the ousted *Sultan Taha* used a recent outbreak of smallpox in the downstream as an excuse not to meet with Dutch officials in Jambi (2003). During a visit to an *Orang Hutan* camp along the *Ridan* River (in South Sumatra), van Dongen was told that a recent smallpox epidemic in late 1904 killed nearly eighty people in a

camp, which had recently been planting rice under the direction of their *jenang* (Dongen 1906:238-248). This event was given as one of the main reasons why they had recently given up the practice and tabooed the growing and eating of rice (Dongen 1906:238). After visiting these people, the entire camp was believed to have perished in a smallpox epidemic (Dongen 1906).³⁹ Soon after, several cholera epidemics were reported to strike the interior of Jambi during a four year period from 1909-1913 (Muttalib 1977: 204).

By limiting travel outside the forest, maintaining physical distance with outsiders, and quarantining new arrivals from the downstream, the *Orang Rimba* appear to have found an effective strategy to decrease the occurrence of smallpox and other disease. According to 19th century accounts, "...visitors reported that smallpox did not reach them (the *Kubu*) more often than three times per century and sometimes left them alone for 50 to 60 years". In Batak communities in north Sumatra, the disease seemed to reappear every eight to twelve years (Boers 1838:295; Mohnike 1874; 199-200; Knapen 2001:105; from Boomgard 2003:596). In the mid 19th century, the Dutch began an intensive smallpox vaccination campaign in the outer islands, which by the late 19th century was said to have even reached the 'wild' *Kubu*, and by the late 1920's the program had largely succeeded in eradicating smallpox (Boomgaard 2003:607). While there have been no confirmed cases, the *Orang Rimba* claim that smallpox and cholera still periodically claims lives within their communities. These claims probably relate to their efforts to maintain social distance with the *Melayu*.

Despite the extended occurrence of silent trade, in all reality the boundaries between the two communities appear to have been rather porous along the *Makekal*, and allowed for at least some two-way interactions throughout the 20th century. In the *Bukit Duabelas* region, continuous contact with their *jenang* (while at a physical distance) would have served as a conduit for outside ideas. The strong practice of endogamy within the *Orang Rimba* community, serve to maintain their cultural boundaries. The *Makekal Orang Rimba* say that no women have ever left the forests to marry a villager. However, there is a story that in the early 20th century at least one *Melayu* villager from *Dusun Baru* moved to the forest, married an *Orang Rimba* woman along the *Makekal* River, and became *Orang Rimba*. While strongly discouraged by the community, the much more common occurrence was and still is male experience and travel to the village during ones teenage years (*merantau*), which for most is brief, but in some cases appears to have been quite intensive. Several elders in their sixties or seventies along the *Makekal* claim to have spent varying amounts of time living with their patrons in

Tanah Garo during their teenage *merantau* years, and in one of these cases, a man entered Islam and sent to a larger village to attend school. In nearly all these cases, the *Orang Rimba* eventually abandon village life and return to the forests.

Many *Kubu* peoples (*Orang Batin Kubu* and the *Orang Rimba*), especially those in *Bukit Duabelas*, have for some times seen themselves as part of the larger administration and hierarchy of the Kingdom of Jambi. Throughout the various resistance movements to the Dutch and the Japanese (from 1858 to 1949), many *Kubu* peoples grudgingly pushed aside boundaries, and felt a sense of obligation to assist their *jenang*, *Melayu* villagers, nobles and the Sultan himself in their resistance against the Dutch. As Nasruddin mentions, the *Kubu* assisted both as soldiers and forest guides, sheltering resistance fighters as they made their way in and out of the jungles during their attacks on the Dutch. Versions of these stories are nostalgically recollected by the *Makekal Orang Rimba*, although their participation as soldiers is somewhat refuted (with a chuckle) by their patrons in *Tanah Garo*. While the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* may have assisted as fighters, in all likelihood the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* may have had only a very small role in the resistance as guides, porters or providing shelter for the resistance fighters. Along the *Makekal* River, when speaking of the mutual obligations that exist with their *waris/jenang*, the *Orang Rimba* often bring up their assistance during their resistance to the Dutch, and their times of hardship during the Japanese occupation.

The Jambi Rebellion and Sultan Taha: resistance in the forests of the interior

Upon being appointed the Sultan of Jambi in 1858, *Sultan Taha Sifuddin* cancelled all deals made with the Dutch, and after being forcefully removed from his palace after fierce resistance, retreated to the interior of Jambi where he led a guerrilla war against the Dutch for forty-six years (1858-1904). Until the mid 19th century, the two patron-based systems along the northern (*pangkal waris*, *Tanah Garo*) and eastern (*ujung waris*, *Hajran/Pakuaji*) borders of *Bukit Duabelas* were to some extent autonomous, but to some extent may have been bound or under the jurisdiction of *Tabir jenang* who lived in the village of *Peninjauan*, along the junction of the *Tabir* and *Batanghari* Rivers. After fleeing to the upstream, *Sultan Taha* based himself along the then, hard to reach upstream *Tabir* River, and while often mobile, is said to have kept a home near the outskirts of the village of *Tanah Garo*. According to oral histories in *Tanah Garo*, *Sultan Taha* ordered the villagers to move from their former village then located along the downstream *Makekal* River to its present location along the junction of the *Makekal*

and *Tabir* Rivers. During this time, *Sultan Taha* released them from their obligations to *Tabir jenang*, and granted them (as *tanah kurnia*) formal autonomous rights over their community forest lands, which included all resources (forest products) found within them, as well as the right to manage the *Makekal Orang Rimba*. The boundaries of these community forests extended from the northern borders of the *Tabir* River to southern borders of the *Bukit Duabelas* hills, and east from the *Bernai* and *Makekal* Rivers to the western *Kajasung Besar* River.

While similar trade relations between members of *Tanah Garo* and the *Makekal Orang Rimba* may have existed beforehand, elders mention that *Sultan Taha* officially gave thirteen members of this village *jenang* rights to trade with the *Orang Rimba*. During this time, all *Orang Rimba* families (*bubung*) along the *Makekal* River were divided amongst the original thirteen *jenang* and according to law, bound or obligated to trade with their *jenang*. Since this time, *Orang Rimba* family units have been managed by the *jenang* as personal property, and amongst other native inhabitants of the village (*waris*) with *jenang* titles, can be bought, sold, traded, given as a gift at a wedding or used to pay off a debt. Both *jenang* titles and *Orang Rimba* family units are inherited through women, and managed by their brothers, maternal uncles, and in-marrying husbands. Through this system of inheritance, the present number of *jenang* in *Tanah Garo* have nearly tripled to thirty-three, although most *Orang Rimba* families have been consolidated by prominent members in the community such as the village headman (*Rio* or *pangkol waris*) and his close family, who is legally the caretaker of this system.

Despite these new rights and *jenang* titles, the villagers of *Tanah Garo* were still obligated to pay taxes directly to *Sultan Taha* in order to finance his resistance against the Dutch. During this time, *Taha* continued to control the upstream salt trade, and collected 10% taxes from all forest products gathered in the region. Signs picturing his royal insignia (a sacred *keris* and a spear), were hung along the interior rivers, as a sign that a portion of all forest products such as rattan, *dammar*, *jernang*, *getah balam*, and *jelutang* were to be handed over to their headman, and then up to *Batin* heads as tax or tribute to the resistance (Nasruddin 1989). It is told that *Taha*'s warehouses for storing these items were kept hidden along the *Tabir* River where they were stored before being traded with European (English, American's) or Chinese traders in the *Tungkal* region, taken West to Bengkulu, or north to the *Indragiri* River (Nasruddin 1989).

The Sultan's resistance was strategic; his troops would attack Dutch forces from the forests or riversides and quickly retreat and blend in with local communities, or to

the forests where the *Kubu* often assisted them. Several sources mention that the *Kubu* also participated in numerous roles in the resistance, both as guides and soldiers but also as leaders. Muttalib writes that an “*anak dalam*” named *Buntil* (an *Orang Rimba* name), became a leader in *Taha*’s troops and was known as *Pangeran Naga Sari* (Muttalib 1977:290). Several troops led by *Sultan Taha* and his nephew *Raden Mattahir* were said to consist of *Kubu* resistance fighters. In order to deal with the Dutch response to the seizure of their warship, Nasruddin mentions that the Sultan sent troops from the *Air Hitam* region led by *Pangeran Karto* and *Depati Alam Sekamis*, the leader of the *Pauh Kubu* groups (Nasruddin1989). In 1902, he also writes that *Mattahir* and commander *Tanggung Suto Alam* of the *Bahar Kubu (Orang Batin Kubu)* successfully attacked the Dutch customs office in *Bayung Lincir* (South Sumatra) and left with weapons and 5000 Guildens, and during their retreat engaged with Dutch forces along the *Terap* River in the eastern portion of *Bukit Duabelas* (Nasruddin 1989). Later in 1906, after killing several Dutch along the *Kumpe* River, *Mattahir* fled through the forests surrounding *Muaro Bulian*, and was assisted by *Kubu (Orang Batin Kubu)* in the area (Nasruddin 1989).

In the first years of the 20th century, the Dutch began establishing posts throughout the interior of Jambi, and from 1901-1907 began sending more troops along the upstream *Merangin* and *Tabir* Rivers in effort to put an end to the Sultan’s resistance (Locher-Scholten 2003:239). *Taha* made several unsuccessful attempts to request support from the Sultan of Turkey whom he perceived as distant kin through his ancestor Queen Pinang Masak, before his resistance was slowly put to a halt by the Dutch. In 1904, it is reported that *Taha* was almost captured along the *Aro* River, a sub branch of the *Tabir*. After retreating to *Tanah Garo*, he was said to have finally been killed several days later around twenty km away at *Betung Bedara* (Nasruddin 1989). Raised along the *Mentawak* River in the *Air Hitam* region, *Taha*’s nephew and right hand man *Raden Mattahir* (1855-1907) was largely responsible for carrying on the rebellion till his death in 1907 (Nasruddin 1989). After *Mattahir*’s death, the Jambi rebellion continued for another decade, now being linked to growing Indonesian-wide Islamic movements such as pan-Islam and *Sarekat Islam*. Curiously, it took on millenarian aspects due to an influential upstream religious leader (*Orang Keramat*), who besides claiming to have channelled the spirit of *Sultan Taha*, preached the imminent arrival of Turkish warships, and a swift victory that would be followed soon after by *kiamat* (doomsday) (Muttalib 1977). After fifty-eight years of resistance, the Dutch finally put down the Jambi rebellion in 1916.

Early European Accounts of the *Kubu*

From the mid 19th century, the *Kubu* began to garner a fair amount of attention from European travellers, academics and Dutch civil servants. However, just as interest in the *Kubu* was rising, a variety of factors prevented anyone from visiting the *wild Kubu* groups everyone was interested in. In addition to the difficulty in entering and finding the *wild Kubu* due to their avoidance of outsiders, one of the main reasons no one visited the upstream jungles is because they were believed to be frequented by *Taha's* guerrilla soldiers carrying on the Jambi rebellion. These fears were exacerbated during the Dutch mid-Sumatra expedition of 1877, 1878 and 1879, the first formal scientific exploration of the interior regions of Jambi by a team of geographers, biologists, geologists and an ethnographer. Written in a four-volume set, the team apparently had a brief encounter with *Orang Rimba* in the *Bukit Duabelas* region, where a comment is made that their language was a distinct dialect of *Bahasa Malay* (Hasselt 1885; Hasselt 1881; Veth 1881-92). As the expedition encountered several hostile encounters with supporters of *Sultan Taha* in the regions of *Merangin*, *Tembesi* and along the upstream *Batanghari*, the Dutch strongly discouraged all foreign visitors from entering the interior regions. These restrictions were probably coupled with a hesitant suspicion of allowing any foreign interference in the region following Gibson's imprisonment.

Two years after the Dutch mid-Sumatra expedition, the American naturalist Forbes visited Jambi but was unable to go ahead with his original plans of penetrating the interior jungles after being advised by Dutch officials that he should not make the attempt without the mandate of *Sultan Taha*, "whom all the people of Djambi recognized" (Forbes 1885a; Forbes 1885b). Forbes did have the chance to visit the same general area as Gibson, that is tame or *Orang Batin Kubu* villages surrounding the Dutch outpost in the *Koeboestrecken*. Forbes appears to have had some difficulty soliciting information from these people, and left without learning anything about these peoples elaborate relationship with their gods.⁴⁰

In the early 20th century, the most extensive first hand knowledge of 'tame' *Kubu* comes from the Dutch official van Dongen.⁴¹ Having spent a great deal of his professional life as the captain of the base in the *Koeboestrecken* district, and latter as the Resident of Jambi (1925-1928), van Dongen took a special interest in the *Kubu*. To this day, van Dongen's writings are the only lengthy accounts of the 'tame' *Orang Batin Kubu* of Palembang and Jambi, although he often tends to blur his accounts with speculations of what he believed to be the practices of 'wild' or nomadic *Kubu*. Having

spent a great deal of time in both provinces, he states that the *Kubu* in the *Muaro Bulian* areas of Jambi had the same customs as those along the *Musi*, *Lalan* and *Bahar* Rivers in Palembang. While van Dongen and the surrounding *Melayu*, believed the tame *Kubu* to be wild *Kubu* going through a process of settling down and becoming ‘civilized’ (*madju* or *masuk Melayu*), numerous details in his writings make clear that the *Orang Batin Kubu*, while sharing many similarities, are a different cultural group altogether.

In stark contrast to the *Orang Rimba*, he writes that marriage is a very simple affair with no ceremony or feasts, and that marriage arrangements are loose and elopement is common. Also puzzling is van Dongen’s comments that, “Divorce is utterly without ceremony, either the man can desert the women or the women the man” (Dongen 1906, 1910, Loeb 1935:284). Like the nomadic (*Orang Rimba*) groups, he mentions their elaborate system of shamanism as mainly a process of ghost exorcism for curing the sick, and writes that when someone is deathly sick or dies, they “*melangun*” or “run away as quickly as possible” (Dongen 1906, 1910). Of the various *Kubu* peoples, he writes of a great variety of burial practices some of which include ground burials, platform funerals, cremation and tree burials (Dongen 1910:238).

One of the most telling differences are his descriptions of the tame *Kubu*’s method of hunting elephants with covered pit traps, which according to the *Orang Rimba* is an emanation of a god and is not allowed to be hunted (Dongen 1910). Other differences include descriptions of raising domestic animals including chickens, and their practice of ground burials, which the *Orang Rimba* believe would trap the soul in the ground. He also writes that they give offerings of both chicken and rice on the graves of the dead (Dongen 1910). Other differences surround descriptions of *Orang Batin Kubu* oral histories, marriage, sickness, death and funeral traditions, as well as a lengthy description of an *Orang Batin Kubu* healing ritual (Dongen 1910, 1931).⁴²

In addition to his more lengthy experience with ‘tame’ *Orang Batin Kubu*, van Dongen was also able to visit an *Orang Hutan* camp located along the *Ridan* River, a sub-branch of the *Musi* near the border with Jambi (Dongen 1906). Having heard reports of the *Ridan* group through local villagers, van Dongen arranged with their local *jenang* to have the group assembled along the *Ridan* River, and upon arriving with his entourage, they were startled and ran to the forest. When the *jenang* was finally able to persuade them to return, they stood there “literally trembling with fright” (Dongen 1906:232-3). Van Dongen stayed with the group for a total of five days on two separate trips made in January and February of 1906, but was unable to elicit much information from them. Most of his accounts are observations of their dwellings, material culture,

mobility and residential patterns, a supposed aversion to water and their uncleanness (Dongen 1906). During his attempts to question them of their spiritual beliefs, he was met with “uncomprehending stares”, and after telling them of the religious beliefs of surrounding settled *Kubu* villages, “They looked in wonderment and listened like children to a fairy tale, often with wide open mouths” (Dongen 1906:252-253). Thinking he had gained the trust of the *Ridan Kubu*, he returned some weeks later to find the group had vanished and the *jenang* had no idea of their whereabouts. This is the last he heard of the them, as the entire group was later believed to have perished during a smallpox epidemic (Kamocki 1972:91).

After the Jambi Rebellion

After the death of *Sultan Taha* in 1904, the Dutch government declared the end of the Jambi Sultanate system and incorporated the region as a subdistrict into the residency of Palembang. In 1906, Jambi was assigned an independent resident and the administration in the former kingdom was reorganized according to the *Marga* or *Adat* federation system. The boundaries relating to traditional *adat* regions were for the most part kept the same, and the main changes within the traditional administration of upstream Jambi concerned the elimination of *batin* heads and the position of the *jenang* (Muttalib 1977). Because of the difficulty in reaching them, and a reluctance to interact with strangers, many of the *Orang Rimba* continued their political-economic relationships with a *jenang* well into the 1980's, and in some areas such as the *Makekal* River continue with them to some extent.

Relieved of the interior rebellion, the Dutch continued with many of their planned development activities throughout the interior of Jambi, many of which were later carried on by the Indonesian government. Some of these projects included developing an infrastructure of roads, settlements intended to civilize the more approachable ‘tame’ *Kubu*, and during the end of their rule, experimented with transmigration settlements. In the late 20th century, the Indonesian variations of these projects would have a tremendous impact on *Kubu* peoples. Prior to 1913, transportation throughout the interior largely existed in the form of jungle paths and the rivers, and there were very few roads (Nasruddin 1989). From 1913 onwards, the Dutch began building roads throughout Jambi, linking villages previously only accessible by river, and by 1933, there was a network of roads throughout the province. Towards the later part of the century, the establishment of these roads would allow easy access to the

upstream regions for logging companies, palm oil plantations and Javanese transmigrants.

The improvement of roads also opened up the upstream interior to American Missionaries. In 1934 Reverend Hubert Mitchell of the Go-Ye Fellowship, an interdenominational fundamentalist group in Los Angeles, his wife and their 2-year-old son, arrived in Sumatra, and in 1935 settled in *Lubuk Linggau* to work among the *Kubu* (Gould 1961).⁴³ With assistance from a Batak man named *Lumban Tobing*, they claimed to have made nearly two hundred *Kubu* converts by the end of 1935, “whom they found with no organized religion and no concept of sanitation.” (Gould 1961). Their work was extended to the *Kubu* of the *Rawas* valley in South Sumatra, near *Muara Rupit* and *Malus*, and a *Kubu* settlement above *Mauer* and the southern *Singkut* region between *Sarolangun* and *Surulangun* in Jambi, where the chief groups were the *Klumpang* and *Merong Kubu*. Even among the Dutch, Mitchell was known as one of the few people during this time who knew anything of the *Kubu* (Gould 1961).

In 1936, Mitchell extended his work to the *Sekaks* or sea gypsies on Bangka and Billiton, and eventually had five hundred converts of various sorts. Due to health problems, the family left in 1938, but returned in 1939, along with Mitchell’s sister Helen and her husband Reverend David Morken of Lodi, California, who focused their attention on *Kubu* peoples in Jambi near *Sarolangun* (Gould 1961). Another family, Rev. and Mrs. Hart Armstrong and their son settled in *Muara Rupit* in late 1940 to work among the *Rawas Kubu* in South Sumatra, and by December 1941, there were fifteen Americans of the Go-Ye Fellowship in South Sumatra and Jambi. All soon left after the attack on Pearl Harbour and the US involvement in the war, and the denomination never returned to work with the *Kubu* (Gould 1961).⁴⁴ Some of this work was carried on by Batak missionaries in South Sumatra and in the southern region of Jambi. In Jambi, the *Orang Rimba* who live along the *Rebah* River still have close relations with a *Batak* Protestant Church near the town of *Singkut*, and claim to be active Christians. However, most north of this region have little knowledge of Christianity.⁴⁵

The improvement of roads also influenced rapid population growth throughout the interior regions. In 1852, the population of Jambi was estimated to be as little as 60,000 and 75,000 in 1888 (Locher-Scholten 2003). According to Tidman, the population of Jambi more than doubled to 161,000 by 1920, only 58% of which were natives of Jambi (Tidman 1938). By 1930, the population had again nearly doubled to 235,000, which by any means was still the most sparsely populated region in Sumatra (Tidman 1938). At the turn of the twentieth century, most peoples in the interior were

subsistence swidden farmers, who also collected forest products for trade, and during the years 1890 to 1900, ninety nine percent of Jambi's exports still consisted of forest products (Locher-Scholten:281). Not wishing to repeat previous failures of the pepper growing years, after the rebellion the Dutch encouraged people in the interior to take up smallholder mono-crops such as coconuts and copra, and even encouraged people living along the *Batanghari* to plant gardens of rattan.

The largest impact on the economy in the upstream region came with the Dutch introduction of Brazilian rubber. According to W.A Zegers Rijser, the Dutch introduced rubber in Jambi in 1904, and for the next decade continued to distribute seeds and saplings to rural villagers throughout the interior (1918). In 1914, rubber exports from Jambi totalled 132 tons, and by 1927 had reached 38,644 tons a year. In 1935, Dutch figures for those participating in the coupon system state that over 43,000 people owned rubber gardens and that around 67 million rubber trees had been planted throughout the province (Nasruddin 1989).⁴⁶ In contrast to the exhausting and hot work of maintaining pepper fields, rubber planting was easily mixed into the swidden fields of most interior peoples, and after planting needed very little upkeep. While rural peoples continued to open swidden's and plant them with rice, largely in order to plant more rubber, by the 1930's the majority of the upstream peoples of Jambi had made a transition from subsistence based swidden economies, to market dependant smallholder rubber tapping. This change pegged upstream peoples to the market economy, and when high prices were high, appeared to increase the quality of life for many. However, it also left them vulnerable to disturbances in the market when prices were low, and the complete halt of the market during the Second World War. In *Bukit Duabelas*, the *Orang Rimba* were largely unaffected by the war, as they appeared to have developed prohibitions on the planting of rubber, which were not given up until the 1960's or 70's.

The Japanese Occupation (1942-1945)

Upon the impending arrival of the Japanese, the Dutch urged upstream communities, who by this time depended on the downstream market economy for most of their subsistence needs, to return to the practice of subsistence based swidden rice. This advice fell largely on deaf ears, and upon the arrival of the Japanese, the upstream downstream economy came to a halt. For the next four years rubber was neither bought nor sold, and downstream goods such as rice, salt, lamp oil, sugar, cloth and other market goods, were virtually absent from the upstream markets. To make matters worse, in order to prevent future interior rebellions, the Japanese soldiers made rounds to

upstream villages to collect items they believed could be used as weapons, including, knives, machetes, rakes, hoes and metal tools. Not having these items, made it very difficult to open fields.

While the Japanese occupation (*zaman kulit putih*) had little effect on the economy of the *Orang Rimba* (aside from a hiatus in the collection of forest products), it is mentioned as a time of great suffering in the villages surrounding *Bukit Duabelas*. In *Tanah Garo*, elders who lived through this time recall the Japanese occupation as a time of terror, rape and poverty. As one elder from the village of *Tanah Garo* recounts,

“I was already pretty old when the Japanese came...old enough to open a field... yes I had a field during this time. The Japanese soldiers often entered through the *Tabir* River...there were many killings and women were raped. Many people also died of hunger, there was no rice, and supplies were not allowed to come to the villages. During this time we only ate cassava given to us by the *Orang Rimba*. They were an evil people. At least the Dutch respected our *adat*; the Japanese had no respect for our *adat*. They were a people without *adat*”

As Nasruddin mentions, many upstream communities had to revert to the lifestyle of the *Kubu*,

“some attempted to plant cassava, and others attempted to dig wild yams from the forest, but no one knew how to process the plant and rid it of its acidic content. Most villagers were against this type of subsistence, believing that wild yams were only food for wild pigs, not humans. To overcome the lack of cloth, many made clothes from the bark of the *Terap* tree, like the *Kubu*. And because medicine was also absent, interior communities had to find traditional medicines found in the forest” (Nasruddin 1989).

Elders from the village of *Tanah Garo* often recall how they were dependent on the *Orang Rimba* during the Japanese occupation, often frequenting their camps and asking for food such as taro, sweet potato, and wild game. Many recall moving closer to *Orang Rimba* camps, opening fields, and planting them with taro, yams, sugarcane and bananas. They mention the absence of cloth, and like the *Orang Rimba*, having to make clothing from tree bark pounded soft. These memories are often brought up as examples of the mutual obligation, which they are bound to because of the oath made between their ancestors. During this time, the *Orang Rimba* appear to have put their boundaries to the side, and nostalgically recount that during these periods they and the villagers of *Tanah Garo* were once again like brothers.

The Return of the Dutch (1945-1949): *Revolusi* and the struggle for independence

The Japanese withdrew in 1945, and after four long years the upstream-downstream economy was re-established. The rural people of the interior returned to rubber tapping,

and again had access to market goods such as tools, salt, rice and cloth. In 1946, Indonesia declared itself a nation, and *Raden Inu Kertopati*, the son of *Sultan Taha* and former assistant *demang* in Pauh, was chosen to be Jambi's new resident. Following the former practice of the Sultans, Nasruddin mentions that the new resident hired several individuals with "extraordinary strength" to provide private security, which included several *Kubu* leaders from the *Terap* River (1989:416).⁴⁷

In 1947, the Dutch disregarded Indonesia's claims of nationhood and returned to Jambi to resume administration of its colony. In reaction, the upstream resistance to the Dutch began anew, this time under the banner of Indonesian nationalism, led by *Raden Inu Kertaopati*, the son of *Sultan Taha*. In the midst of these guerrilla attacks *Kubu* throughout the interior forests regularly assisted the Raden's troops, with food or as guides as they made their way through the jungles, and it is written that at least one troop of resistance fighters was made up entirely of *Kubu* soldiers (Nasruddin 1989). In 1949, the Dutch attacked the *Raden's* troops at *Sungai Air Rengas*, a small *Melayu* village along the *Batanghari Tabir* River junction. The resistance fighters retreated to the village of *Kembang Sri*, where they were then led by *Kubu* guides (*Orang Rimba*) south through the forests of *Bukit Duabelas* to the village of *Semurung*, in the *Air Hitam* region (Nasruddin 1989). Later, the Dutch attacked these guerrilla fighters at *Semurung*, again pushing them through the forests, where they again used their relations with the *Kubu* to work their way north through the forests of *Bukit Duabelas* to the *Tabir* River, the former stronghold of *Taha's* resistance (Nasruddin 1989).

To the west of the *Makekal* River, the small *Melayu Kunu* village of *Rantau Panjang* was apparently a strong point of Dutch resistance and was attacked, while the largely Javanese transmigrant village of *Margoyoso* was also said to be a strongpoint of the resistance and to have successfully defended itself (Nasruddin 1989). Under the pressure of Western Allies and threats by the United Nations to cancel post-war reconstruction aid, in 1949 the Dutch began the process of handing over their former colony, and on December 27th Jambi became part of the independent nation state of Indonesia (Ricklefs 1993:233). Within this new era, the *Orang Rimba* would face some of their greatest challenges from the outside world under the banner of development.

Discussion

Present-day *Orang Rimba* identities and cultural boundaries can only be understood in the historical context of the larger *Melayu*, and later, colonial context in which they formed. As Eric Wolf points out, "many societies, which were habitually treated by

anthropologists as static entities, were in fact produced and constructed in the course of capitalist expansion around the globe” (Wolf 1988:753). The *Orang Rimba*’s long history of being enveloped in a riverine trade-based kingdom along a major international trade route led to various economic, political and cultural influences long before capitalism. However, the European colonial influence in the region may have also led to a climate, which intensified some of their boundaries with the *Melayu*. In this chapter, I began by attempting to explain how the *Orang Rimba* fit into Jambi’s lengthy and regionally important, yet little known history. In concordance with Schebesta, Bellwood and others, it is probably safe to say that the *Orang Rimba* share a common history with other Malayic speaking peoples, as Austronesian migrants to Sumatra. However, for a variety of reasons, partly, but not exclusively to deal with the regional and international trade in forest products, established different economic niches in the environment, and from that point, their cultures, beliefs and futures diverged.

The most pervasive theme in Jambi’s history, upon which others merge (trade, hierarchy, leadership, religious autonomy, sickness, slavery) is the flow of the rivers. Jambi’s history was built around the fragile social, economic and political relationships formed between the upstream and downstream portions of the rivers. Through the rivers, the *Orang Rimba* received outside cultural ideas, and for many, became participants in the larger outside economic and political system of the kingdom of *Melayu*. The rivers also brought a significant degree of danger in the form of sickness and slave raids. While colonial influence and slave raids may have intensified their avoidance of outsiders, and led to a more crystallized *Melayu* use of the *Kubu* exonym, in contrast to Schebesta, it is unlikely that this unfriendly climate resulted in the *Orang Rimba*’s adaptation to life in the rainforests.

For many *Orang Rimba* peoples, political and economic relationships with outsiders (*jenang*) are a remnant of the traditional administrative structure of Jambi. While *Orang Rimba adat* forbids close interaction with the outside world, in many regions, close relationships were forged with *jenang* in order to maintain trade and ensure protection from an often-hostile world. In *Bukit Duabelas*, these relationships also placed them into the Jambi hierarchy, sometimes-fictive kinship relations, and bound them into a relationship or reciprocal reciprocity and obligation. That this relationship involves two-way responsibilities and obligation (outside of trade) was seen during the turbulent years (1858-1949) of the *Melayu* resistance to the Dutch and Japanese occupation. During this time, many *Kubu* peoples lowered their boundaries, and saw it as their obligation to assist the *Melayu*. While the *Orang Rimba* eventually

constructed strong boundaries, which reinforce and maintain a degree of separation with the *Melayu*, their societies were never static, and for many, these boundaries were often porous.

Appendix A Endnotes

¹ For possibilities of non-Austronesian linguistic traits among Malayic peoples in Riau see work by David Gill, and in northern Sumatra, see Adelaar 1995. For Austro-Asiatic linguistic features found among Austronesian peoples in Borneo, see Adelaar 1995, and for Austro-Asiatic cultural traits found among Austronesian peoples, see Needham 1957; Brosius 1991; Endicott 1979.

² Based on language reconstructions, archaeological research, distinct core cultural similarities, and use of metaphor, the initial Austronesian expansion from South China to Taiwan is believed to have occurred around 4000 BC, stimulated by the Neolithic revolution in China some two thousand years prior (Bellwood 1995; Fox 1996; Fox 2004). These peoples would have had at their disposal a base economy of swidden farming (tubers, rice, millet), flake and polished stone tool manufacturing for hunting and fishing, and domesticated animals (pigs, chickens, dogs). Bellwood suggests that the Austronesians then very rapidly made their way to the Philippines around 3000 BC. In the Philippines, Austronesian peoples would have diversified their economies to include some rainforest foraging, possibly drawing some of this knowledge from the islands prior foraging inhabitants. The diversification of Austronesian economies to include rainforest foraging, was crucial for the later colonization of Borneo, Sumatra, Malaysia and other forested islands in Indonesia. From the Philippines it is believed that some of these groups moved south to Borneo, and then to Sumatra and Malaysia, some time around the late 3rd-2nd millennium BC (Bellwood 1995). As both Adelaar and Sather's stress, Borneo was a crucial crossroads for the Austronesians, particularly for Malayic peoples who later travelled to the south and east (1995).

³ The theory of Western Borneo as the Malayic homeland is based on language similarities between Malayic speaking Dayak peoples (such as the Iban, Kendayan, Salako and Gerai) and language reconstructions conducted by Adelaar (Adelaar 1995; Hudson 1970). In his research, Adelaar demonstrates that these Borneo Malayicized dialects retain many of the grammatical and lexicological elements of the Proto-Malay found in the seventh century Malay, or *Sriwijayan* inscriptions found in South Sumatra, which are no longer found in other Malayic dialects (Adelaar 1995). If this was the case, it would certainly explain the strong cultural affinities that Malayic peoples share with peoples such as the Iban in Sarawak or the Gerai in Kalimantan (Helliwell 2001; Jensen 1974; Sather 2003).

⁴ Most of these heirlooms are centuries old items obtained through trade such as Chinese ceramics (plates, bowls), ancient daggers (*keris*), and metal plates and discs, and buffalo horns many that have some inscribing on them (*piagam*), which often clarify the boundaries of their *adat* communities and community forests based on features in the landscape. As with the surrounding *batin* heads, these *piagam* were most likely given to them through external patrons such as the *jenang* (appendages of the King/Sultan), and represented land rights or the autonomy of their *adat*. According to the *Makekal Orang Rimba*, in the past, their ancestors hid some of these objects and through dreams some

were told of their locations and how to recover them. In an issue of *Alam Sumatera*, Sandbukt notes a Chinese ceramic bowl, which he speculates is from the Sung Dynasty (10th-13th century), in the possession of the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* (Sandbukt 1999).

⁵ The *Muaro Jambi* temple complex is located around 30 km downstream from the present capital of Jambi. Judging by the eight temple complexes, statues, Chinese ceramics, coins, beads and broken glass, it is estimated that the complex was used between the 10th to 13th centuries.

⁶ For a short discussion of the spread of Sufi beliefs in Malaysia and the relation between Sufi concepts and the soul, see Endicott 1970:42-46. For a discussion of the spread of Sufi Islam in Indonesia, see Drewes, and Bowen's work with the Gayo in Aceh (Bowen 1987; Bowen 1993; Drewes 1985).

⁷ *Adiyawarman* was the nephew of King Keranagara. After the death of Kublai Khan in 1294, he was sent on a diplomatic mission to China, which was then in a whirlpool of resistance against Mongol power. Later, he was sent to Java and worked closely with the young Gajah Mada, the Patih of the kingdom of Majapahit in order to help subdue revolts in Sadent, Keta and Bali. In 1343, he left Majapahit to succeed his dead uncle and build his own empire in the kingdom of his origins, *Dharmasyaya* (Minangkabau). *Adiyawarman* was said to be a strict king and the people suffered under his rule. He was installed as Great Emperor and his inauguration was performed according to the Bairawa demonic Buddhism with Shivatic elements, which originated around the 6th century in the eastern part of Bengal. It was said that in the month of his death in 1375, "the New emperor sat alone on an elevated throne, in the middle of a field of corpses, laughing like the devil, drinking human blood while his offering of humans flared up like the fire in hell, spreading an unbearable stench; for the emperor however it smelled like ten million flowers" (Sjafiroeddin 1974: 54).

Putri Mandi was a Minangkabau Princess from *Pariangan Padang Panjang*. It is said that *Adiyawarman* married her at the foot of *Merapi* Mountain in central Sumatra, and later returned to his kingdom in *Dharmasraya* located along the upper *Batanghari* River. Later, their first son *Ananggawarin* was believed to have returned to Padang and to have founded the Kingdom of Minangkabau (Nassrudin 1989). For other accounts of Minangkabau origins, including their belief in the establishment of the Kingdom in Padang by King *Sri Turi Buwana*, the first King of *Sriwijaya*, see Sjafiroeddin, 1974. According to his account *Adiyawarman* had two sons, an elder brother named *Tamangung* who favoured patrilineal kinship, and a younger brother named *Perpatih* who favoured matrilineal kinship, and goes on to tell of the struggle between the two in order to find reconciliation between the two.

The name Jambi may derive from the word *Jambe*, the Javanese word for the arceca nut (which in the Malay language is *pinang*) commonly used in betel nut and lime (Andaya 1993, Nasruddin 1989). In Jambi, this nut is associated with one of the gifts commonly given during marriage proposals. The name of the Queen, *Puteri Selero Pinang Masak*, or the 'queen of ripe beetlenut', most likely refers to the many suitors she rejected (in Jambi folklore), the most famous being *Tun Talanai*, who ruled *Muoro Sebak*. However, given the Chinese Tang Anal account of a tributary mission from Zanbei in the 11th century the kingdom appears to have obtained its name long before Queen *Pinang Masak* (Andaya 2001).

⁸ According to Nassrudin, this Turkish prince was the son of *Datuk Paduko Berhalo*, who lived in the kingdom of *Sultan Zainal Abidin*, in what was then Constantinople, Turkey (1989). Actually, this prince never intended to come to Jambi. His ship was said to have become stranded off what is now *Berhalo* Island.

⁹ In *Orang Rimba* folklore, *Temanggung Mero Mato* is often portrayed as a giant who had the strength of several men, and whose eyes were as red as fire. One common story told along the *Makekal* tells of him jumping into a river and slaying a bothersome crocodile with his bare hands, which was as big as a *kudungdung*, the largest of the *sialong* honey trees.

¹⁰ I translated this legend from an unpublished typescript (Nasruddin 1989) found at the library at the Museum of Jambi, while Kerlogue appears to have recorded a similar version in her book, "*Scattered Flowers*" (Kerlogue 1996). The Indonesian version of the legend is included in the appendix as it occurs in Nasruddin.

¹¹ The capital city of Jambi had its own administrative status, and it and the surrounding population was subject to direct taxation by the king. The king also derived a great deal of his funds from taxes levied on all trading vessels coming in and out of the port in Jambi. The town was managed by five groups (*orang kecil*), who were mainly responsible for duties at the *Keraton* (Kings Palace); the *suku keraton*, *suku perban*, *suku raja 40*, *suku kadipan*, and the *suku kemas*. While the Sultan was said to have direct rule over the *Bangsa 12*, the *Batin* communities, and later, the land of the *jenang*, were administered by the *pepatih dalam* and *pepatih luar*, who were political administrative councils led by the crowned prince (Muttalib 1977:105).

¹² The area along the *Tungkal* River in the northeast corner of the province was always said to have a fair deal of autonomy from the kingdom. The majority of this population is made up of Minangkabau migrants who were said to have followed *Puteri Selerang Pinang Masak* to Jambi in the 15th century (Nasruddin 1989).

¹³ These services were classified as 'short service' (*kerja pandok*) and 'long service' (*kerja panjang*). Long service is the services I mention in the text (Muttalib 1977).

¹⁴ The district of *Marosebo* also included the old *Melayu (Melayu kuno)* villages of *Sungai Air Ruan*, *Sungai Air Rengas* and *Sungai Bengkal*. All of these villages still claim parts of *Bukit Duabelas* as their *adat* forests and have economies that are based almost entirely on illegal logging. The same is true for the villages of *Peninjajuan*, *Batu Sawar*, *Tanah Garo* and to a lesser extent the villages surrounding the forests in the southern *Air Hitam* region.

¹⁵ Included in the region of *Air Hitam* were the villages of *Pamatankabau*, *Dusun Baru*, and *Mentawak*. After establishing his kingdom at *Tanah Pilih*, *Orang Kayo Hitam* is said to have sent his brother *Orang Kayo Gemuk* to directly manage the *Air Hitam* region. Most of the king's decedents, including the son of the last king *Sultan Taha*, are believed to come from the *Mentawak* region just south of *Bukit Duabelas*.

¹⁶ While somewhat hard to believe, Nasruddin writes that these bodyguards were largely chosen from *Kubu (Orang Rimba)* leaders from along the *Terap* River, although he may be referring to a different river than the one located in the east of *Bukit Duabelas* (Nasruddin 1989).

¹⁷Muttalib writes that the nine rivers were: *Merangin, Mesumai, Tabir, Pelepat, Senama, Tebo, Bungo, Jujuhan* and *Tungkal* (1977). Nasruddin writes that the *pucuk sembilan lurah* consisted of four rivers in the *Kerinci* region and five in the *Bangka* region (1989).

¹⁸ Throughout the former Malay kingdoms of Western Indonesia, the term *batin* was often used as the administrative classification for areas in the outlying regions of a kingdom, as well as a term or title for their appointed leaders. In Jambi, the *batin* regions were located off the main *Batanghari* River. Some elder people in these regions still identify on a secondary level as *batin* peoples and can recall their former *batin* groupings (*Orang Batin 9, Orang Batin 5*, etc). Nasruddin (1989) writes that the word *batin* may originate from the word *batino*, meaning *induk* (mother), *pangkal* ('base', 'roots' or 'trunk'), or *asal mula* or *aslinya* (natives). He mentions, De Bor, a former Dutch *controlier* in Jambi, who writes that the word might be associated with matrilineal residence or inheritance. While interesting, this is not the case, although the word has come to be associated with these concepts in *Melayu kuno/tuo* villages in the interior of Jambi. The word *batin* is Arabic derived, meaning 'secret', 'esoteric', 'innerness', or 'spirituality', while *ilmu batin* refers to secret or esoteric knowledge. The term was probably ascribed to interior leaders at a time when Islam had not taken root, or was influenced by Sufi concepts. These days, most *Orang Rimba* can easily recall their former *batin* classifications, which they conceive as a kind of secondary identity, or an ethnic or cultural affiliation, while the *Orang Batin Kubu* in Jambi use their old *batin* classification in the region as a primary ethnic identity. According to Kang (2002), the *Petalangan* who lived in the former Malay kingdom of *Kampar* in Riau also term their leaders *batin* headman. In their usage, *batin* is a title for a traditional leader who regulates each clan's *adat* customary law. They are also considered to have secret and spiritual power (Kang 2002).

¹⁹ In all areas of the kingdom, unless land or forests had been given as gifts (*tanah kurnia*) or was considered 'free or liberated forests' (*rimbo lepas*), all 'large forests' (*rimbo godong*), 'interior forests' (*rimbo dalam*), 'marshlands' (*payo rumbai*) and 'lake valleys' (*lebak danau*) were the possession of the king. Use of forests within 10 km of ones village (*tanah serenan* or *rimbo keden*) were available to all community members to open a fields or collect forest products, as long as fruit trees had not been planted in the area, which establishes a claim to the land. Temporary rights to use forest lands or products in a stretch of land, was shown by *dendang lalu* or clearing land in an area or around a tree, notching a tree, standing a group of stones in an area, or planting stalks of the kelike plant in an area. This was summarized by the *Melayu* and *Orang Rimba seloko adat* saying, "*di mana bumi dipijak, disitu langit diujung, dimana tembilang, disitu tanaman tumbuh*" which means, 'wherever the earth is stepped on, there the sky lies above, wherever the spade is planted, that is where the earth sprouts' (Nasruddin 1989, Syukur 1994).

²⁰ Minangkabau migration began in very early times, and by the 16th century the upstream regions of Jambi were firmly established as areas of Minang migrants (or *rantau*) (Andaya 1993).

²¹ The term *jenang*, can be defined as: 'prop', 'door frame', 'support', 'aid', 'referee at a cockfight', 'coadjutor', 'the chief assistant to the *batin*' or 'headman' (Echols 2000; Wilkinson 1948).

²²Different types of *jajah* included; a percentage of the yield from gold prospectors, yields from forest products such as getah, damar, rotan and jernang, land rent collected from new migrants or settlers, tariffs (*cap dagang*) from traders, tax from salt traders (salt and opium was a royal monopoly), and fines from *adat* meetings that rose to the level of the *batin* head or the *jenang* (especially “*bangun*” hearings, heavy injury or death). In addition, certain items such as ivory, rhinoceros horns, the sexual organs of male tree shrews (*culo tupoiy*), and bezoar stones (*mastiko*) from the porcupine, elephant or snakes, were considered the rights of the king, prohibited to be sold (*larangan rajo*), and were to be handed over to the *jenang*.

²³ Some of the *Batin (Melayu)* communities that were assigned *jenang* were; the *Batin 5* in *Lubuk Mandasara*, the *Batin 7* located along the *Semai* River, the region of *Muaro Bungo*, the *Luhak Batin 5* with the title *Rio Depati* along the *Tembesi* River, the *Batin 8* along the *Muara Danau Tanjung 12*, the *Likur Batin 5*, *Hulu Tebo* and *Tanjung Gersik Bulan* at *Tanjung Sarolangun*. *Muaro Siau* was under the *jenang* in *Koto Buayo* along the *Tembesi* River and the *Rio Depati* of the *Batin 5* along the *Tabir* was under *Tabir jenang* (Nasruddin 1989).

²⁴ Algemeen Rijksarchief, Den Haag, VOC 1277 fol. 1227v, Dirk de Haas to Batavia, 14 July, 1670. De Haas was the Captain of the VOC Jambi post. “Dipa Negara ons selfs mondelingh heeft verhaalt, souden partij wilde menschen (alias orang kubu) tegens den anderen in oneenigheid . . . ‘ i.e. Pangeran Dipanegara himself told us verbally that one group of wild people (alias orang kubu) were at odds with another (personal communication with Barbara Andaya).

²⁵ Following James Watson, Anthony Reid also groups Southeast Asian slavery into two categories, “Closed” and “Open” slave systems. According to Reid, the open system is one that acquires labour through the capture or purchase of slaves, and gradually assimilates them into the dominant group, while the closed system was oriented towards retaining the labour of slaves by reinforcing their distinctiveness from the dominant population. Reid notes that the open system was more prevalent in Southeast Asia, largely because of the relative abundance of land and the primary importance place on accumulating manpower. However, most societies in Southeast Asia had a system that was a mixture of the two (Reid 1983a).

²⁶ Writing of the widespread status and power of the leader of the *Merangin*, Andaya writes, “even the wild people deep in the jungle (the *Kubu*) were willing to accept his mediation in disputes, and in the words of one VOC resident, “all the heathen and the people have submitted to him and will have no other” (1993:89).

²⁷ Initially, only two bases were kept in Jambi, one in the capital and one interior base at *Muara Kompeh*. In 1858, another was added at *Muara Saba*. It was not until 1902 that posts were established throughout the interior regions of Jambi (Locher-Scholten 2003).

²⁸ Gibson arrived in Sumatra on January 17th 1852, during a period when foreigners were viewed with suspicion by the Dutch, largely due to James Brooke’s interference in Sarawak, but also because the US had recently sent warships to forcefully re-establish trade relations with Japan. To add to this, there had been a great deal of unrest to Dutch rule in Jambi and Palembang. Gibson’s relationship with the Dutch began on bad terms, while during discussion with an official he defended America’s attempt to annex Cuba and expressed admiration for Brooke’s administration of Sarawak. During this time he also openly met with community leaders who attempted to court his favour. A couple of

weeks after his arrival, Gibson was arrested on a charge of high treason, after a letter he sent to the Sultan of Jambi was intercepted, in which he offered to sell arms (and offer America's support) to the resistance to Dutch rule. He was sent to Batavia where he was sentenced to twelve years in prison, but escaped after serving twelve months of his sentence. (Locher-Scholten, 2003:101-2).

The American government viewed Gibson, "as totally unworthy of the protection of his own government...an unprincipled villain...and a pirate who swindled", so Dutch fears of American interference were not wholly groundless (2003:108-109). Upon returning to America, Gibson urged the US congress to conduct a local investigation into the Netherlands rights of sovereignty in the Indonesian archipelago, and they initially agreed. While the case was never followed up, because of Gibson the US public took more of an interest in the Indonesian archipelago during the 1850's than at any other time in the nineteenth century (Locher-Scholten 2003:111).

During a meeting with the noble in Jambi, Gibson writes that he was able to get a glimpse of one of the *Panyorang's Kubu* slaves, which he obviously exaggerates to make the story more exotic or entertaining. It is possible that he may have mixed in some of the descriptions and stories commonly told by the surrounding *Melayu* of the *Kubu* or the *Orang Pendek*.

"I saw a dark brown form, tall as a middle-sized man, covered with hair, that looked soft and flowing...that beings of well made human form, covered with hair, almost without speech, and living on raw food, dwell in caves and tree tops of the forests of Sumatra, are facts that are well established. Was this some connecting link, between man and beast, more human than orangutan, or chimpanzee; and less so than Papuan or Hoottentot?" (Gibson 1855).

Gibson was a wonderful storyteller. In March 1854, during a meeting of the venerable American Geographical and Statistical Society, the audience hung on his every word as he told them the most astonishing tales of the hairy *Kubu* and the beauties of Nias. In the words of another writer, "He has the facility of narrating his adventures with wonderful eloquence-...in fact, they were so admirably done that I could never more than half believe them...There was an Oriental fragrance breathing through his talk and an odor of the Spice Islands still lingering in his garments" (Locher-Scholten, 2003: 103-4). (From the Report of American Geographical and Statistical Society, Regular Monthly Meeting, March 1854. National Archives, State Department, Consular Reports Batavia, vol 3.).

After escaping from the prison in Batavia, he continued to strive towards a dream of administering a kingdom in the east. He became a Mormon and used the church's influence to found a colony on one of the islands near Hawaii. Expelled by the church after a dispute in 1864, he openly embraced politics. In 1878, he became the president of Hawaii's parliament, and served as prime minister from 1882 to 1887 until ousted following its revolution (Locher-Scholten, 2003:111).

²⁹ One story collected by the Dutch tells of the *Kubu* having once been sword bearers of Alexander the Great, but fled into the jungle after a shameful incident. While it is unlikely that (*Iskandar Zulkarnaink*) or Alexander the Great ever set foot in Southeast Asia, frequent mention is made to this conqueror of India in Malay history, traditions

and poetry. In Jambi folklore, it is said that he is buried at the foot of *Bukit Si Guntang*, which of course was also believed to be Mount Meru.

³⁰ In his post-field work report, Elkholy writes, “To this day, an endless variety of these stories are told by surrounding Malay villagers, and have spread by word of mouth, throughout the Jambi province. These tales have permeated into Jambi folklore, and more recently the primary and secondary school system” (Elkholy 1998). Most of these folk tales are quite brief and attempt to make sense of their insistence to live a mobile life in the forest, reluctance to *masuk Melayu*, enter Islam, settle down and become developed (*madju*). Some of the common themes that run through these folk myths attempt to explain their origins due to moral violations, breaking incest taboos, or conflict and resistance to enter the dominant belief system. On a general level these stories function as rationalizations as to why a group of people would ever want to live the way the *Kubu* do. Some of the common folk tales of *Kubu* origins told by the *Melayu* are:

Malay princess who ran to the forest as a result of internal conflict in the palace.

Nassrudin writes that one common myth in Jambi tells that the *Kubu* descend from one of seven beautiful Malay princesses who ran to the forest over an internal problem in the palace (1989).

Soldiers of Alexander the Great who violated adat and ran to the forest

Another story collected by the Dutch and retold by Gibson tells of the *Kubu* as having once been sword bearers of Alexander the great, *Iskandar Zulkarnaink*, having fled into the jungle after a shameful incident or *adat* violation (Gibson 1855).

Sriwijaya-soldiers explanation of origins

Nasruddin writes of a similar folktale commonly told among the Jambi *Melayu*,

“The *Kubu* are the decedents of soldiers from the Malay kingdom in Jambi that didn’t want to submit to the Kingdom of *Sriwijaya* when it was sacked. The attack by *Sriwijaya* came from a sea armada, which then sailed upstream through the various rivers. The attacks were brutal, villages burned and women and children were killed. Many ran to the forests, which at that time were very close to the banks of the *Batanghari* and *Tembesi*. Many people near the mouth of the river, located near the capital of the kingdom, ran to the upstream *Batanghari* and became the *Air Hitam* groups. The *Bulian Kubu* have borders with the *Jeluti*, these *Kubu* border with the *Kubu Ketalo* located near *Tebing Tinggi* village. The attack of *Sriwijaya* proceeded upstream and those who could not defend themselves, entered the *Pemusiran* and one of these refugee communities that was formed was *Dusun Baru*. Because the soldiers already reached the *Merangin* River and a village named *Karang Berahi*...The *Kubu* from the *Air Hitam* border with the *Kubu* in the *Tabir Rantau Panjang Bangko* who may originate from refugees through the *Batanghari* who entered *Bangko Pentus* and then to the *Tabir* and to *Bangko* and then to *Tanjung Sarolangun*, and then to the forests of *Bungo* and *Tebo* where there still are *Kubu*. Aside from the brutal nature of the attack, many secluded themselves in the forest so that they would not have to change their belief systems” (Nasruddin 1989).

While briefly visiting a camp in the *Air Hitam* region of *Bukit Duabelas* in the 1980's, the Austrian anthropologist Helmut Lukas mentions a similar story told to him by *Orang Rimba* (Lukas 2001:4).

Minangkabau soldiers lost in the forest myth

While it is inconsistent with history and other folklore, the story below by Nasruddin (1989) plots Queen *Pinang Masak* against her son and later king, *Orang Kayo Hitam*, thus leading to the origins of the *Kubu*.

While the Queen of Jambi, *Putri Selerang Pinang Masak*, was in still in power, there was a battle between her and *Orang Kayu Hitam*, another king who held significant power over a portion of her kingdom, from the sea until *Muaro Sabak*. The Queen of Jambi who descended from the kings of *Pagaruyung* (Minangkabau) asked for help from her place of origin, and the king of Pagaruyung agreed to help her by sending troops to Jambi. The troops travelled through dense jungle and crossed many rivers. However, by the time the troops had reached the middle of their journey, that is, what are now the border's three provinces of the *Batanghari*, *Saralangun Bangko* and *Bungo Tebo* (where *Bukit Duabelas* is located) they ran out of supplies and were stranded. They were only half way through their journey and still had very far to travel. There, they made an oath with one another, "To the upstream we are cursed by the king of Minangkabau, to the downstream we will be cursed by the Queen of Jambi. Above is the tip, to the middle eaten by a black tiger and crushed by a fallen tree". The meaning of the oath was that they were not brave enough to return to the king of Minang because they would be punished by their king for not fulfilling his orders, and since they had no supplies to complete their journey, they agreed to stay put in the forest. After making the pact, they believed that whoever violated the agreement would be cursed. While it was difficult for them to adapt to life in the forest, at least there, they were autonomous from the two kingdoms. The upstream of the *Makekal* was considered safe; it was an entrenched environment (*Kubu*). These are considered the decedents of the *Kubu* (Nasruddin 1989).

³¹ Describing a typical Malay slave-raiding expedition on an *Orang Asli* community in the Selangor district of Malaysia, Letessier (1895) writes,

"For wherever the Malay perceived any indication of their presence, he would build himself a small shelter, and never leave it until he had discovered the place of retreat where they generally spent the night. He would then repair to the spot at nightfall, accompanied by a few accomplices, and concealing themselves until dark they would not begin the hunt until the *Orang Buket* were asleep. They would then fire several rifle shots, spreading terror and confusion in every family. Their breaking up then made them easy prey to the Malays, who would make a rush for the spot where they heard the shrieks of women and children. The girls were as a rule once knocked on the head, and the boys were carried off and sold as slaves. There is hardly a family but what has its own calamity to relate, and cherishes a profound aversion for the Malay" (Dentan 1997b; Nowak 2004)

³² According to Winter, the *Kubu* fear and avoidance of outsiders was caused by centuries of slave raids and rape by the surrounding *Melayu* (Winter 1901).

³³ By the time Schebesta arrived, slavery had already been abolished for several decades, and by this time the Dutch were taking efforts to eradicate the practice. While this woman may have believed that the Dutch were peacemakers, it was their presence, which actually stimulated the slave trade over the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

³⁴ Hanbury-Tenison writes that this method of exchange has a long history of being practiced in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa. According to Herodotus, the Carthaginians acquired gold from black tribes to the south through a silent trade. It has also been reported in New Guinea, the Congo where the Pygmies traded bananas for meat from the Bantu, and in Ceylon where the Vedda obtained iron implements from Sinhalese smiths in return for game. A similar silent trade was conducted in the recent past to make contact with the remaining isolated tribes in Brazil (Hanbury-Tenison 1975). Begbi (1834) describes the silent trade conducted between the Semang and the Malay in Malaysia;

“The usual method of barter prevailing between the Malays and these aboriginal tribes is the former to bring their commodities, consisting chiefly of coarse cloth, tobacco and knives, to any open space in the vicinity of the places known to be the resort of the Semangs, and retire to a convenient distance as soon as they have deposited them. The Semangs then approach, and, having selected such articles as they either fancy or require, bear them off, leaving in their room whatever they may deem an equivalent: this consists chiefly of elephants teeth, gahru, dammar, canes, rattans, etc; of which, from ignorance of value which they bear in the market, they always leave an ample return” (Endicott 1983:228).

³⁵ In his 1920 article, “De Volken van Nederlansch Indie”, Eerde compares and contrasts the Balinese aristocrats with the *Kubu* (Eerde 1920).

³⁶ On early Dutch settlements for the *Kubu*, Schebesta writes,

“The Dutch rule has served the Kubu ethos, so that voluntarily or by force, they settled down in villages. How this kind of life is contrary to the Kubu, I heard from several people. Moreover, the Kubu have found a clever escape, satisfying both the officials and the Kubu individually. Under pressure of officials the Kubu built pretty villages, neat huts in rows and ranks. The Kubu seldom live in these. In their fields they have kept their huts, in which they live. They only return to the settlements as necessity dictated or when a festival was celebrated” (Schebesta 1926).

³⁷ According to Boomgaard, the first European reference to smallpox in the Indonesian archipelago was in the North Muluccas in 1558, followed by central Muluccas in 1564, and the Philippines in 1574 and 1591. The first time it is mentioned by the Dutch is 1618 for West Java (Boomgaard 2003). The Governor General of the of the VOC mentions that “it strikes irregularly (every 7 or 8 years) and is more lethal than the (bubonic) plague, the illness Europeans of this day and age feared the most, in this case having killed one-sixth of the population” (Boomgaard 2003:593).

³⁸ In the late 18th century, Marsden comments that, “smallpox was regarded as a plague from which the mightiest were not safe, mentioning that the Sultan of Palembang, lost 14 of his children to just one outbreak of smallpox (Marsden 1986).

³⁹ While the Dutch began to offer smallpox vaccinations in the colony in the late 19th century, there are reports that Sultan *Nazaruddin* expressed concern to the officials that

his subjects were wary of the permanent scar, which they saw as a cap, branding them as Dutch property (Locher-Scholten 2003:125).

⁴⁰ He did not however, until managing with some difficulty, to dig up and take home a few *Kubu* skeletons, for the benefit of Craniology. In the same year Garson published the article, “*On the Osteological characteristics of the Kubus of Sumatra*”, where after two pages of measurements, suggests while they seem to have closer relations with the anthropoid apes, they are most likely Mongoloid. He does note that more samples are needed before any definite conclusions can be drawn (Garson 1885).

⁴¹ In 1778 the Batavian Society of arts and sciences (*Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*) was founded, “its members mainly composed of high ranking VOC employees who believed that the Company should be more than a mere commercial concern and also be involved in the recording of natural history, antiquities, and the customs of the people of the Indies” (Andaya 1993). While initially, the societies focus was on more “civilized” or complex coastal peoples, by the mid 19th century less developed societies had begun to generate some interest.

⁴² Writing on the oral history of the tame *Orang Batin Kubu* in the *Koeboestrecken*, van Dongen describes their modern era as beginning in the 17th century after a prince from Palembang (*Ratu Sinuhun*) visited them and made them his subjects (Dongen 1910). According to van Dongen, these settled *Kubu* say that it was *Ratu Sinuhun* who gave them their first clothes, taught them how to eat rice and use salt (Andaya 1993 from Dongen 1910:189). Supposedly, this prince distributed copper “*piagam*” or basins, which were probably used for measuring out important items such as salt when trading with non-*Kubu* traders (Andaya 1993). At the time of van Dongen’s visit, these items were still handed down in *Kubu* families. These stories might have some legitimacy to them. Andaya writes that in the 17th century the monetisation of the economy by the Dutch caused deep strains in trading relations between the upstream and downstream regions (Andaya 1993). In local folklore, *Ratu Sinuhun* is said to have organized the ranking of nobles by distributing titles, and provided traders with their first scales. During his reign some of the first agreements on trade issues were worked out with the people of the interior, which probably included the village *Kubu* (Loeb 1935).

⁴³ Reference cited from, ‘H. C. Zentgraaff and W. A. Goudoiver. *Sumatraantjes*, Van Hoeve, The Hage, 1947, pp. 80-81.’ Thanks to Dee Bayer for pointing out this reference.

⁴⁴ For an account of the Morken family experience, which is very limited in regards to ethnographic detail of the *Orang Rimba/Orang Hutan* and *Orang Batin Kubu* they encountered, see Winston 2007.

⁴⁵ Just off the Sumatran Highway near the town of *Singkut*, there is a small Protestant church (*Gereja Kristen Protesten Indonesia*), which has conducted missionary activities with the surrounding *Orang Rimba* since the 1970’s. The Batak pastor has amicable relations with the *Rebah Orang Rimba*, often assists them with food and clothing, and they apparently claim to be Christian. During my visit, the pastor had recently taken in several *Orang Rimba* children from the *Rebah* group (8 boys and 1 girl) as boarding students, and many had Christian names such as Thomas, Henry and Sam. Largely unpopular with the surrounding Muslims, the priest recounted stories of how the logging companies, plantations, together with the police, military and locals had a physically intimidated them to leave their lands during the 1970’s and 80’s when the

logging companies and transmigration program began. Some of these stories include poisoning their crops, trees and water sources. These types of stories are reiterated by *Orang Rimba* throughout the province, particularly where their traditional forests have been clear-cut for transmigration settlements and palm oil plantations.

⁴⁶ Before the people of the interior began to plant and tap rubber, they were still engaged in a barter economy. In 1937 the Dutch initiated the coupon system, where every three months, rubber holders were given a coupon, which included the maximal production of that garden according to the number of trees he possessed. The coupons were bought and sold with a varying value according to the market price of rubber. The standard value for the coupon depended on the value of the contract made with the buyer that year (Nasruddin 1989).

⁴⁷ One can only speculate as to whether these *Kubu* bodyguards were *Orang Batin Kubu* or *Orang Rimba*. Given his father (*Sultan Taha*) and uncle had established networks in the interior regions based along the Tabir (as far as *Tanah Garo*) and in the *Air Hitam* region, and that he frequently hid or made his way through the jungles of *Bukit Duabelas* in between attacks, *Sultan Taha* must have developed at least nominal relations with the *Kubu*. Although given their boundaries with outsiders and their prohibitions on interacting with outsiders, it is hard for me to believe.

Appendix B

A Recent History of 'Development'

The *Orang Rimba* have faced some of their greatest challenges since Indonesian Independence. During the rule of Indonesia's first President, Sukarno, the government upgraded Jambi's network of roads, providing better access to the interior forests. The new nation continued its support for some settlements, mainly for more reachable *Orang Batin Kubu*. In the mid-1960s and early 1970s, things changed drastically with the transition to Suharto's New Order regime, which embarked on an agenda towards rapid development based on exploiting forest resources and land in the more sparsely populated outer provinces. Tania Murray Li gives a useful summary of the recent post-colonial history leading up to current Indonesian policies on isolated tribal peoples.

The New Order regime took power in 1965 after bloody massacres directed against alleged communists and Chinese. Popular mobilization to seize and redistribute colonial plantation land ended abruptly...the regime declared race, ethnicity, regionalism and religion illegitimate grounds for politics. In the late 1960s, the regime's attention shifted to the outer islands of Indonesia with its extensive land and forest resources. A forest law was passed declaring state ownership over all land not held under private title, the area amounting to seventy five percent of the nation's territory. Forests were handed over for exploitation by national and transnational capitalists, military and government officials in various combinations. The people inhabiting these areas, who considered themselves to have private, customary, communal or individual land rights were ignored. If recognized at all, it was not for their territorial attachments, but rather through the homogenized, negative and a-cultural categories isolated community (*masyarakat terasing*), shifting cultivator or forest squatter. Their forest uses were deemed illegal, and they were subject to harassment and displacement whenever they were found to be in the way (2001:654).

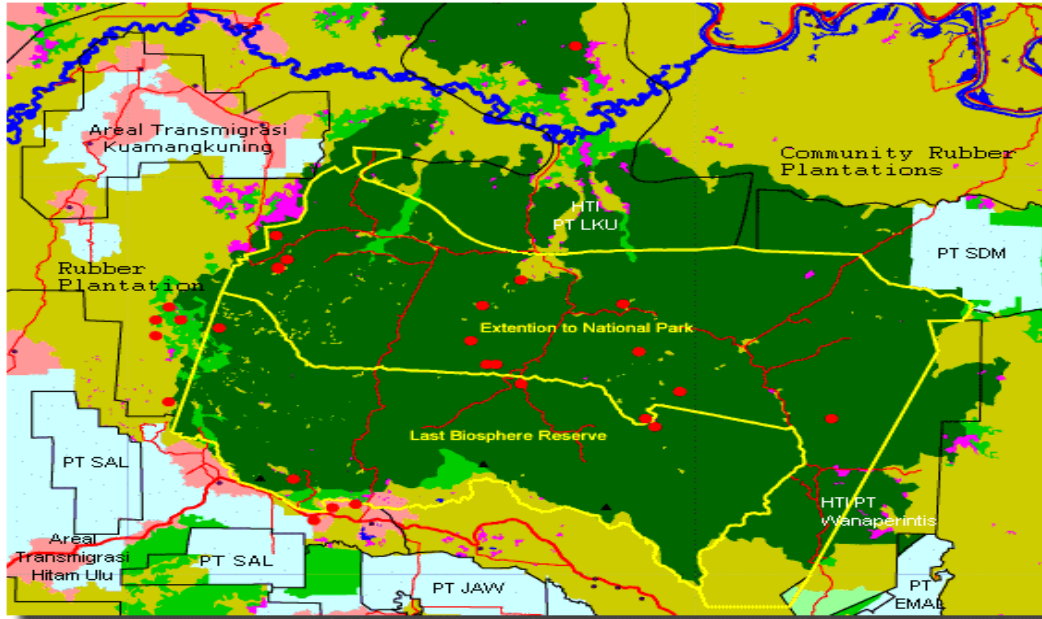
In Eastern Sumatra concession rights to lowland forests were handed over to large scale timber companies, and by 1979 timber has eclipsed rubber as Jambi's main export (Potter 1998:35). In many areas hired security forces, the police and military encouraged, often by intimidation, forest peoples to relocate or enter settlements to make way for logging and plantation projects. During the 1980s and 90s this occurred in tandem with Indonesia's transmigration program, which settled millions of peasants from Java and Bali throughout the outer islands to work in attached palm oil plantations. In Jambi, the transmigration program nearly doubled the population to around 2 million.¹ With majority forest cover prior to 1960, by 1980 forest cover had dropped to 73% and by 1990 when the World Bank's support for the transmigration program ended, it had again dropped to just over 50% (2.4 million ha) (Potter 1998; WARSI 2007).

Jambi's wood industry (sawmills, plywood and pulp industries) presently runs on unrealistic expectations with no account that the majority of wood now comes from unregulated logging in protected reserves, Jambi's four national parks or its buffer zone forests. In 2002, Jambi's forest department reported 350 sawmills, up from 76 in 1997, the majority running illegally without a permit (Osamantri 1999; WARSI 2002b).² Between 1990 and 2007, nearly one million ha of Jambi's rainforests were cut, reducing overall forest cover to 41% (2.1 million ha) by 2001, and much more dramatically to 27% (1.4 million ha) by 2007 (Taufik 2001; WARSI 2007).³ From 2000 to 2002, annual statistics from the Jambi Forest Department claim on average one million tons in wood exports per year although more realistic figures are probably twice this number. In 2002, Jambi's wood was exported to over sixty different nations, with the top five consumers being China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and the United States.

A Recent History of Development in *Bukit Duabelas*

When the anthropologist Oyvind Sandbukt arrived to conduct research with the *Orang Rimba* of *Bukit Duabelas* in 1979, Sandbukt writes, the region was largely bypassed by development projects and the *Orang Rimba* here were not engaged in the money economy, but still practiced trade in kind with their traditional patrons in the village (1984; 1988a). This is not entirely true. Logging companies entered the *Bukit Duabelas* region in the early 1970s, and towards the end of the decade had accelerated along the present western and southern borders, which had been slated for two transmigration projects.⁴ In the mid 1970s and early 1980s, the forests of the *Telah* watershed (west of the *Makekal/Bernai Rivers*) were clear-cut, which pressured the *Orang Rimba* in these forests to migrate to the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region.⁵ In the early 1980s, the *Kuamankuning* and *Hitam Hulu* transmigration sites were established along the north and southwest borders of *Bukit Duabelas*. These projects were accompanied in the southern regions by the 3,500 ha *PT Sari Aditya Lok* (SAL) and 11,500 ha *PT Jambi Argo Wiyana* (JAW) palm-oil plantations, with the intent to create economic livelihoods for the settlers, and provide low-wage workers for the plantation holders. The projects took customary forest lands from traditional *Melayu* villages in the south (*Air Panas, Pematangkabau, Bukit Suban, Lubukering, Jernih Seurung and Dusun Baru*), which now pressures them to open their swidden/rubber fields north into the southern region of *Bukit Duabelas*.

Boundaries of *Bukit Duabelas* National Park and Surrounding Projects



(Source: Warsi.org)

Along the Western border, parallel with the upstream *Makekal River*, customary forests taken by the transmigration projects, triggered *Melayu* swidden farmers from the nearby villages of *Rantau Panjang* and *Rantau Limau Manis*, to begin opening their swidden rubber gardens in between the two transmigration sites to the present boundaries of *Bukit Duabelas* national park. The majority of these rubber holdings have been consolidated in a private rubber plantation (around 10,000 ha) by a self-made and uneducated man who goes by the name *Bidul Kayo*, ‘stupid but rich’. *Bidul* comes from the *Melayu* village of *Rantau Limau Manis* and throughout the 1970s worked as a small-time logger in the region. He is currently one of the richest men in Jambi and has recently constructed a dirt road along the borders of the park to connect his plantations to the neighboring transmigration sites.⁶

In the northern region of *Bukit Duabelas*, what remains of *PT Inhutani V*'s degraded logging concession (around 20,000 ha) is now managed by the timber company *PT Limbah Kayu Utama* (LKU), who hope to establish the area with a palm-oil plantation. Just northeast of *Bukit Duabelas*, a 14,000 ha stretch of forest was acquired and cleared in 1987 by the Asiatic groups *PT Sawit Desa Makmur* (SDM) in order to establish a palm-oil plantation. Since clearing the forests, nearly sixty percent of this area has sat unused for nearly two decades and has yet to be planted with palm. Without traditional forest lands needed to establish swidden's and rubber fields, this has influenced many in the northeastern *Melayu* villages (*Peninjauan*, *Kembang Sri*, *Sungai Air Rengas*, *Sungai Air Ruan*, *Hajran* and *Pakuaji*) into logging to make ends

meet. Similar situations exist in the 7,000 ha *PT Wana Perintis* timber concession (HTI industrial timber permit) and the 8,000 ha *PT Era Mitra Agro Lestari* (EMAL) palm-oil plantation along the southeast borders of *Bukit Duabelas*.⁷ The palm oil established in the eastern region is now largely worked by second generation and spontaneous Javanese trans-migrants.

In response to some of these pressures, in the early eighties several *Orang Rimba* headmen from the *Air Hitam* region, accompanied by their *jenang*, visited their Mayor (*Bupati*) and made a plea that he prohibit the logging of their forests. Because of the increasing marginalization of the *Kubu* in other areas, and the ecological importance of the area as a flood plain drainage system for the region, in 1982 a 26,800 ha forested area surrounding the *Bukit Duabelas* hills (100-500 meters) was classified as a Nature Reserve, and in 1985 reclassified as an International World Heritage Biosphere Reserve. For both practical and religious reasons few *Orang Rimba* exploit the hilly region in *Bukit Duabelas*, and only a few camps in the *Air Hitam* region actually lived within the Biosphere. However, the biosphere did have the benefit of changing the classification of the surrounding forests to buffer zone status, which in theory only allows the timber concession holder to conduct selective logging with a HPT (*Hutan Produksi Terbatas*) permit and prevents clear-cutting or establishing a palm-oil plantation.

During the 1980s and 90s, a 76,000 ha concession in the northern buffer zone forests have been held by various timber companies such as *PT Alas Kesuma*, *PT Intan Petra Darma* and in 1996 was transferred to *PT Inhutani V* who contracted the rights of use to *PT Putra Sumber Utara Timber* (PSUT). The traditional center for the timber companies logging activities was established in the northeast *Melayu* village of *Sungai Air Ruan*, at a holding pond where logs are kept before being floated/sold to the numerous sawmills located along the *Batanghari*. While some workers were transferred from concessions in north Sumatra and Kalimantan, the majority of the workforce was acquired locally, and over the last 30 years, the economies of the surrounding old *Melayu* (*Melayu kuno/tuo*) villages in the northern and eastern regions have become increasingly dependant upon logging. In addition to logging, many *Melayu* villages, particularly in the western and southern regions, no longer have access to forests outside of the park and are now opening their swidden/rubber fields within the new national park.⁸ When compounded with village *Melayu* efforts in illegal logging, confrontations over village swidden and rubber fields have slowly eroded traditional relations and ties with patrons in the village, created tension, and has led to confrontations and conflict.

The Habitat and Resource Management for the 'Kubu' Project

Since 1997, the *Orang Rimba* in the *Bukit Duabelas* region began to receive attention from the local conservation-based NGO WARSI, who with assistance from Oyvind Sandbukt was able secure long-term funding from the Norwegian Rainforest Foundation and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) to initiate the 'Habitat and Resources Management for the *Kubu* Project'. The program, which involves over twenty staff members including several field researchers, a doctor, and an educator, is also almost exclusively concerned with the *Orang Rimba* in the *Bukit Duabelas* region, and works most closely with a headman named *Temanggung Tarib* from the *Air Hitam* region, one of Sandbukt's informants or guides during his research. The stated purpose of the project is "to halt the marginalization of the *Orang Rimba* by protecting the forests that they live in, and ensuring their access to forest resources, and facilitating access to basic services" such as health care and alternative education within the forests (warsi.org). Aside from the basic services, the project is primarily involved in an advocacy campaign directed towards the Indonesian media, which is aimed at influencing public opinion, government officials and decision-making activities related to policies and the management of the National Park. Their attempts to involve the *Orang Rimba* in park decision-making or forms of joint-park management such as park rangers have been largely unsuccessful.

In line with donor interests, WARSI's media and advocacy campaign rests on a conservation-based agenda, which ultimately places the primary importance on forest preservation with the *Orang Rimba* harmoniously existing as 'natives as part of the park' (Li 2001:667). The campaign romanticizes the *Orang Rimba's* way of life with exotic images (men are encouraged to wear loin cloths during visits from officials, donors or the media) and stories of the *Orang Rimba* living an isolated, primordial, untouched way of life in the forests, which is only now being disturbed by outside interests. Maintaining this type of campaign has probably proven to be quite a challenge given their active involvement in illegal logging. As with other conservationist campaigns involving forest peoples, these essentialist images tend to "objectify or dehumanize" the *Orang Rimba*, placing them in preservationist scenario's more commonly found in work related to protecting the habitat of endangered animals, minimizes the complexity of their current situation, and obscures existing forms of domination (Brosius 1999:380). While their campaign has caught the attention of the Indonesian public and high officials, it has largely emphasized their needs rather than

their rights, portraying them as passive victims rather than legitimate political actors (Li 2001:668).

WARSI's base field activity with the *Orang Rimba* in the forests involves intensive cultural research of their lives by local field researchers, which allegedly serves to guide program activities, build positive relations, and the means for a dialogue regarding program activities and government policy related to the forest. A great deal of their relations with the *Orang Rimba* appears to be related to their advocacy campaign, and facilitating interactions with the media, officials and donors. To facilitate these activities, WARSI depends upon children and bachelors, mostly those who have participated in their education program as students, guides and informants. Due to traditional prohibitions which restrict interactions with outsiders, most *Orang Rimba* are rather disturbed by their presence, and the adults, less than eager to partake in any intensive interactions or any revealing discussions of their lives. Aside from *Temanggung Tarib* in the south and bachelors who work part-time for the program as guides, informants and teacher cadres, WARSI has had a very difficult time obtaining the active participation of adults in their projects. These matters are compounded by a fear of disturbing long-standing relations with traditional patrons and/or loggers in the village, whose interests run contrary to WARSI's agenda to establish regulations and enforce park boundaries.

WARSI's mobile education program involves teaching *Orang Rimba* children, teenagers and some adults, according to their own terms and schedules, basic skills in reading and writing, in order to help them in interactions and transactions with outsiders, and as a platform to discourage their participation in logging. For the first several years, WARSI's teachers were completely rejected. In addition to their customary laws (*adat*), which prohibit and restrict interactions with outsiders, many parents viewed education as an attempt to indoctrinate their children, change their religious beliefs, and influence them to leave and settle outside the forests and become *Melayu*. WARSI's fourth teacher, Butet Manurung⁹ was finally able to break through some these barriers, and began teaching several students along the *Makekal* River. Some were trained as cadres, and used to reach different camps along the *Air Hitam* and downstream *Kajasung* Rivers. Since catching on in 2002, education has increased the confidence of children and bachelors in their interactions with outsiders, while some of the more general effects include a dwindling respect for uneducated adults/leaders, and customary laws and prohibitions surrounding dietary restrictions, clothing and the taboo on using soap.

As most *Orang Rimba* are very keen to acquire outside medicines, WARSI's mobile health program was more readily accepted. The program basically consists of a mobile doctor/nurse who visits camps in the forests to treat basic illness's, distribute medicine and inform them about ways to prevent sickness by maintaining health and hygiene. The program has also attempted to distribute special health cards, which allow them to access public health clinics and hospitals outside of the forests without having to acquire citizenship cards.¹⁰ Due to traditional religious beliefs surrounding sickness, convincing them (particularly women and children) to leave the forests to seek health care has proved to be quite a challenge.

The Establishment of Bukit Duabelas National Park

WARSI's greatest accomplishment was their role in convincing the government to extend the boundaries of the biosphere reserve to the north. As was the case with the biosphere, some of the reasons put forward for the extension included preserving increasingly rare lowland flora and fauna, and the importance of the forests as a flood drainage system in the region. However, their main selling point was the use of the park as a refuge for the *Orang Rimba*'s traditional way of life.¹¹ While WARSI assisted in an effort to organize research and build affiliations with local academics, NGO's, conservationists and the government, the success of the extension was ultimately accomplished through an intensive national media campaign that attracted the attention of high officials, through a local project initiated by the *Orang Rimba* called the *hompongon*.

In the *Orang Rimba* language, *hompongon* are dams constructed across the width of a river to catch fish, and, in this case is an analogy for using rubber gardens as a means to block village swidden farmers/rubber planters from opening fields within their customary forests. As *Melayu* rubber tapper's and planters are usually away from their villages while conducting their work, there are a number of local customary laws that regulate *Melayu* life while they are outside of their villages, opening and planting rubber and tapping rubber (*talangan*). Those tapping or opening fields in a region, generally fall under the legal jurisdiction of the first tapper's or planters in the vicinity, who are considered the headman (*penghulu*) of the area.¹² Another general rule concerns prohibitions on crossing swidden fields that have been opened along the edge of the forest. In the late nineties, several *Orang Rimba* groups throughout *Bukit Duabelas* began opening their swidden fields along the edges of the forests, and planting them with rubber gardens as a means to block village swidden farmers from

doing the same. Apparently, one of the first to conceptualize the *hompongon* effort was *Temanggung Tarib*, a headman in the southern *Air Hitam* region of *Bukit Duabelas*.

WARSI promoted *Tarib's hompongon* efforts on the national stage during the first annual AMAN (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*) conference, the 'alliance for indigenous rights for people of the archipelago in Indonesia' held in Jakarta in 1999. During the event, the national media was captivated by images of *Tarib* and two other headmen from the *Makekal*, walking scantily through the streets of Jakarta in loin cloths, and relayed sound bites to the public of their experience of the journey to the island on an 'iron bird', awkward experiences using toilets, and pleas to save their forests. *Tarib* later returned to Jakarta in 2000 and was awarded the national conservation-based 'Kehati' award from then vice president Megawati and during the event had the opportunity to describe his struggle to her and several top Ministers.¹³ Shortly after their visit, a recent proposal to extend the *Bukit Duabelas* International Biosphere Reserve to the north was fast tracked and approved in August 2000, yet reclassified as an Indonesian National Park. The park was established with a unique clause, the first such case in Indonesia, that allowed the *Orang Rimba* to live their traditional lives, at least in regards to obtaining non-wood forest products, within the boundaries of the park. The decision is rather vague in regards to the swidden farming/rubber aspects of their economies, and was approved with the hope that the *Orang Rimba* would eventually enter settled mainstream Indonesian society outside the forests. While seen as a victory by WARSI, they initially hoped that the extended reserve would remain an international biosphere, as the laws and regulations pertaining management are more flexible and not subject to Indonesian National Park policies, which in all other cases prohibit people from living in them, and are strongly against swidden farming within their boundaries.

Since the park was established, there has been disagreement in each of the four provinces in which the park is divided, as to where the actual boundaries should be marked. The majority of the surrounding *Melayu* communities, particularly in the northern and eastern regions, are strongly opposed to the establishment of the national park, do not acknowledge its existence, and in some cases have disrupted surveying attempts to determine and mark its borders.¹⁴ In addition to the fact that established and enforced boundaries would prohibit the surrounding *Melayu* from logging and opening new swidden/rubber fields in the park, many villagers already have established rubber holdings within its projected boundaries. Since 2001, WARSI has attempted to encourage *Orang Rimba* camps along some of the other rivers to establish *hompongon* rubber forests in tandem with the projected park borders along the West, East and

northern borders of the national park, with little success, particularly among groups who have more mobile economies, maintain stronger boundaries with outsiders, or who are engaged with more active relationships with debt patrons/loggers in the village. Apart from the southern region, which has established borders in line with the former biosphere, as my research ended in June 2004, the northern, western and eastern borders of *Bukit Duabelas* were still in limbo; nearly four years after the park had been established.

In the era of regional autonomy, illegal logging within *Bukit Duabelas* national park has drastically increased.¹⁵ The remaining degraded forests in the northern portion of *PT Inhutani V's* concession are currently managed by the timber company *PT LKU*, who commonly obtain wood from within the national park. They currently hold an industrial timber permit (HTI), and in the future, hope to establish the area with palm oil. However, the role of the timber companies have to a great extent been replaced by wealthy logging bosses (*toke kayu*) in the surrounding *Melayu* villages who control key rivers in the northern (*Tanah Garo-Makekal River, Batu Sawar/Peninjajuan-Sungai Air Ruan-Kajasung Rivers*) and eastern (*Hajran/Pak Juaji-Kajasung Kecil/Seranggam River*) regions, have old ties to the logging ring, and run their logging operations within the park through bribes or pay-offs to officials. In many cases, they manipulate or use as fronts, new small-scale native use timber permits (*IPK* permits: *izin pemanfaatan kayu* or permission for the exploitation of wood) enacted during the era of regional autonomy, which are written up to give them permission to exploit degraded or clear-cut land outside the boundaries of the park, whenever they are questioned by authorities.¹⁶ At the community level, *Melayu* villagers surrounding the park see it as their right to exploit the forests of *Bukit Duabelas*, which many consider their traditional community forests, which they believe were wrongfully taken from them by logging companies and plantation holders. The forest department has yet to effectively manage or enforce logging or village swidden activities inside the projected boundaries of the park, largely they say, because they lack funding to do so and because the boundaries of the park have yet to be determined. While most are against logging in principal, many *Orang Rimba* feel resigned or pressured to accept some small profit from the exploitation of their forests, sometimes by accepting community tolls for allowing loggers to pass key rivers and access logs, or by gaining part-time work in some aspect of the logging ring.

Since 2003, the focus of WARSI's *Orang Rimba* project has shifted to promoting alternative livelihoods for the *Melayu* villages surrounding the park, particularly those that are involved in illegal logging and are dependant on the park as a

source of land for swidden and rubber fields.¹⁷ In turn, their education program has become much less intensive and their hopes to get the *Orang Rimba* more involved in limited forms of joint park decision making or management (possibly as park rangers) have been unsuccessful. During my research, these issues were compounded by stories in the *Orang Rimba* community and surrounding *Melayu* villages that the project coordinator for WARSI's *Orang Rimba* project illegally purchased wood from an *Orang Rimba* group from within the parks boundaries. Disenchanted with WARSI's agenda in the village, in 2004 Butet Manurung and several other of WARSI's fieldworkers left WARSI to create the NGO *Sokola* (the *Orang Rimba* pronunciation for School) to provide more focus on some of the primary concerns of the *Orang Rimba* along the *Makekal* River, such as education, health and the revitalization of their *hompongon* project.¹⁸ More recently, there have been discussions by the governing body of the *Bukit Duabelas* national park (BKSDA¹⁹), Jambi forest department and other government bodies to reverse the unique 'people in the park' policy on the grounds that their swidden practices degrade the forests, and hope to settle them outside of the boundaries of the park sometime in the near future.

Failed Settlements in Bukit Duabelas

Meanwhile, the Social Department's attempts to establish settlements for different *Orang Rimba* camps in *Bukit Duabelas* have all resulted in failure. In 1994, the first and most unsuccessful *DEPSOS Orang Rimba* settlement in *Bukit Duabelas* was set up for the downstream *Makekal Orang Rimba* near the *Kuamang Kuning/Trans Tanah Garo* transmigration site. During the recruitment period, the Social Department made the mistake of sending female workers to meet with *Orang Rimba* males, which led to a great deal of suspicion among their wives that they were trying to lure them from the forests with the temptation of sex. There was also a great deal of social pressure and ridicule by kin in the upstream *Makekal* for even considering the settlement. Shortly after moving to the settlement, the majority of the *Orang Rimba* in the project sold their homes, 2 ha of palm oil to transmigrants, and gave the domestic animals and tools provided by the program to their patrons in the *Melayu* village of *Tanah Garo*.

In 1996, a second unsuccessful Social Department settlement was established for the *Air Hitam Orang Rimba* in tandem with the southern *Hitam ulu* transmigration site in the *Melayu* village of *Air Panas*. The project involved giving around fifty *Orang Rimba* families the standard transmigration package of a home, 1 ha garden, 2 ha of palm oil and a one years supply of rations. The Social Department also provided the

settlement with a mosque, an assigned religious teacher (*Imam/Kitap*), and an *Orang Rimba* school, which apparently was never popular among parents, and rarely attended by *Orang Rimba* students. In addition to the problem of adjusting to a settled life in a 'hot', dusty transmigration site, most sat around idle, preferring not to work their palm oil. Apparently, there was a great deal of social pressure and ridicule from the *Melayu* villagers, including improper interactions with women, and the alleged rape of an *Orang Rimba* woman by a villager. As with other *Orang Rimba* settlements, after the year's worth of rations stopped, and after death, all but two families eventually sold their homes, land and palm oil to spontaneous transmigrants and returned to the forests. Just outside of the nearby village of *Pematangkabau*, a third settlement project was underway in 2004 for *Orang Rimba* in the *Air Hitam* region, and plans for a fourth, this time for people along the upstream *Makekal* in 2005.²⁰ With little or no changes to their strategies, these settlements are certain to fail.

Appendix B Endnotes

¹ The transmigration program was implemented with financial support from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, UN agencies and bilateral donors, who supported the program despite prior knowledge of the negative effects it would have on the forests and local peoples. Government transmigration sites forcefully took local indigenous lands without local consent or compensation. To this day, the World Bank has failed to accept any responsibility for their role in displacement of the *Orang Rimba* and has not offered any compensation for their involvement. According to Chatterjee, the Bank was warned as early as 1985 about the potential affects on the *Kubu* by Anthony Whitten, a British consultant who submitted a report to the Bank that year. At the time, environmentalists were outraged over the programme, and the popular British magazine the *Ecologist*, had devoted an entire issue in 1986 to the possible problems posed by the projects to the *Kubu* and similar indigenous groups. The Bank downplays their role in the matter, believing it is the responsibility of the Indonesian Government to clean up the mess. According to the words of Marc-Antoine Autheman, a French Executive Director for the World Bank, "This is an autopsy of a dead and closed project". For further information see Pratap Chatterjee "world bank fails to help tribe it destroyed", <http://nativenet.uthscsa.edu/archive/nl/9408/0031.html>. For local studies on the effects of transmigration in the outer islands and Sumatra, see Bank 1994; Charras 1993; Guinness 1977; Otten 1986; Transmigrasi 1988.

² Since the 1990s four national parks have been established in the province of Jambi: (*Berbak* National Park (162, 700 ha) in the East, 40% (590,000 ha) of the *Kerenci* National Park in the West, around 25% (33,000 ha) of the *Bukit Tigapuluh* in the north, and the *Bukit Duabelas* National Park (60,500 ha).

³ Statistics from the regional forest department in Jambi in 1997 report 9 plywood factories, 1 pulp industry plant, and 73 sawmills, the latter which had increased to nearly 350 in 2002 (Osamantri 1999). Out of 5.1 million ha of total land area in Jambi, by 2001, the percentage of forest cover had dropped to 2.1 million ha, 846,000 ha of which was located in national parks. In order to meet the overambitious needs of

Jambi's wood industry, they need 2.8 million tons of wood per year, 204, 000 tons of wood a month or the wood logged from 80 ha of forests per day. The remaining forests outside of national parks are only able to supply one third of these needs (Taufik 2001).

⁴ In the northern village of *Tanah Garo*, elders remember small-scale logging efforts by villagers beginning in the 50s and 60s.

⁵ *Telah* is how the *Melayu* villagers refer to the river region, while the *Orang Rimba* inflect the final -h, pronouncing it as *Telai*. According to accounts by the *Makekal Orang Rimba* these people were harassed, poisoned and killed by loggers, police and military during the cutting of their forests, and were eventually pressured or forced to leave their lands in the 1970s. Curiously, the descendants of this group who now live in the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region did not reveal any of these stories to Elkholy during his research (personal communication with Elkholy).

⁶ Despite his wealth, *Bidul* leads a very simple life in a shack around midway along his rubber plantation, which is located along the edge of the forest. His shack has an attached shop, from which he commonly trades with the *Orang Rimba* and buys their tapped rubber. In early 2000, he constructed a dirt road along the western border of *Bukit Duabelas*, which allows the plantation and the upstream *Makekal Orang Rimba* easy access to the south and northwestern transmigration sites and its markets. However, he does not allow outside vehicles to use it. In addition to degraded forests, this is a reason commonly given by those along the upstream *Makekal* for not collecting rattan for trade.

⁷ *Hak Pengusahaan Hutan* (HPH) or Forest Utilization Rights are general logging concession permits, which for a set amount of time allow a timber company to conduct their activities in a determined area of forests. There are different varieties of permits depending on the status of the forests or surrounding forests. *Hutan Tanaman Industri* (HTI), 'Forest Industry Land' or industrial timber permits allow logging companies to log as they wish or clear-cut forests as well as establish the area with projects such as palm oil plantations. *Hutan Produksi Terbatas* (HPT), 'Production Forest on the Border' (of protected forests), are selective logging permits, which are generally allow companies to log within the surrounding forests or buffer zones of protected forests. They allow selective logging of trees that have a diameter of over 60 cm.

⁸ This is particularly an issue along the Western *Makekal/Bernai* River region where *Melayu* swidden-rubber tappers, largely from the villages of *Rantau Panjang* and *Limau Manis*, are encroaching into the traditional forests of the *Makekal Orang Rimba*. For a WARSI article that examines some of these issues between the *Makekal Orang Rimba* and villagers, see Zainuddin 2002. Conflict over village swidden fields is also an issue along the southern borders of the park, where the *Melayu kuno* villages of *Pematankabau*, *Dusun Baru*, *Lubuk Jering*, *Jernih* and *Pauh* are encroaching into the traditional forests of the *Orang Rimba* in the *Air Hitam* and Southeast regions of the park. These issues rarely occur with Javanese trans-migrant's who are not usually engaged in swidden farming, but by any means are aware that they lack native customary rights to open land in the region (*hak putri daerah*) and generally tend to work in the palm-oil plantations, small business or trade. In 1997, two *Orang Rimba* men in the eastern region of *Bukit Duabelas* were killed by loggers from a *Melayu* village along its northern borders after protesting logging activities. While the murderer was eventually pressured to pay the customary fine of 500 sheets of cloth to the family, he was never prosecuted according to Indonesian law or received any jail time. The

following year, another *Orang Rimba* man in this same region was killed while sleeping with his family in their hut after having a disagreement with a village logger and was never prosecuted. Several articles in WARSI's periodical *Alam Sumatera* briefly touch upon these issues (Anon 2004; Candra 2004b; Kurniawan 2002)

⁹ For a summary of the history of WARSI's mobile education with the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* see (WARSI 2005). After receiving attention from the Indonesian media, in late 2003 Indonesia's leading national newspaper *Kompas* made a television commercial featuring Butet's work with the *Orang Rimba* in the forests, transforming her virtually overnight into an Indonesian celebrity. Since then, she has received several national awards in education, human rights and in 2004 was named one of Time Magazine's Asia's "Asian Hero's". She has also formed collaborations with national celebrities and icons such as Iwan Falls, to raise awareness of the *Orang Rimba*'s struggle to preserve their way of life. For the Time Magazine Asia article see; http://www.time.com/time/asia/2004/heroes/hbutet_manurung.html; mention in a presidential speech see <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,501051010-1112908,00.html>; for mention of collaboration with Iwan Falls, <http://iwanfalsmania.blogspot.com/2007/06/peniti-benang.html>. For a first hand account of her experience teaching *Orang Rimba* children in the forests, see her recently published book (in *Bahasa Indonesia*), "*Pengalaman Belajar Bersama Orang Rimba*" (*Jungle School: Experience learning with the Orang Rimba*) (Manurung 2007).

¹⁰ For WARSI articles related to their *Orang Rimba* health program, see Diharjo 2004; Harjati 2001a; Harjati 2001b.

¹¹ Some of this was a continuation of BAPPEDA Jambi efforts work/research to extend the boundaries of the biosphere in the early nineties, but had their proposal rejected in 1994. For an example of the results of the joint research team and the amazing diversity of plants and fungus exploited by the *Orang Rimba* and the *Melayu* as traditional medicines, see DEPKES 1998. The later effort involved joint research trips to the park in collaboration with other NGO's, local conservationists, academics and government officials. Crucial in justifying the area of the extension was the claim that each *Orang Rimba* needed around 1.5 km² of forest land to lead a sustainable traditional way of life (Taufik 1999b).

¹² While the *Melayu* are generally aware that the *Orang Rimba* have precedence to their traditional forests, they do not always respect their right to such vast regions, particularly in this day and age when forests are scarce. By playing within the rules of local *Melayu adat* and securing land rights through the opening of fields, the *Melayu* are pressured to acknowledge them.

¹³ During this process, *PT Inhutani V* was in the process of attempting to change the status of their timber permit in the buffer zone forests north of *Bukit Duabelas* from HPT (*Hutan Produksi Terbatas*) or selective logging status within the buffer zone, to industrial production (HTI, *Hutan Tanaman Industri*), which would allow them to clear-cut and establish a palm-oil plantation. For a brief, but critical discussion of *Temanggung Tarib's* participation in the AMAN-*Masyarakat Adat* Conference, the *hompongon* project, and his acceptance of the *Kehati* award see Li 2001. For limited summaries of the *Orang Rimba* leader's experience at AMAN and *Tarib's* acceptance of the *Kehati* Award, see Taufik 2000b. *Tarib* has continued to use his cash prize from the *Kehati* award to continue funding the opening of new *hompongon* rubber fields. He has also begun some private business oriented ventures, such as buying palm oil, going

in as a partner with several *Melayu* in the purchase of truck, and opening a small shop (*warung*) to sell everyday goods. This shop was run from his home on the edge of the forest, and catered mainly to *Orang Rimba* who were also close kin. I later heard that his effort quickly went bankrupt, as most of the supplies were given away or demanded by close kin without payment. Given his ability to effectively shift identities, WARSI has regularly used *Tarib* as a spokesperson for the *Orang Rimba*.

¹⁴ WARSI's attempts at facilitating the surveying and establishment of the park borders have been met in the northern and eastern regions with frustration, arguments, threats, banning them (or government officials) from entering villages, and in the *Sungai Air Rengas* region, the destruction of one of WARSI's vehicles. For WARSI articles surrounding the establishment and current challenges facing *Bukit Duabelas* National Park, see Alam Sumatera's January 2001 issue (Vol. 1, No. 1) and the following articles: Juandaru 2001; Kurniawan 2001; Taufik 1999a; Taufik 1999b; Utomo 2001a; Utomo 2001b; for ideas/projects related to community based forest management and forest revitalization in and around *Bukit Duabelas* see, Alam Sumatera, July 2004, No. 7. For WARSI articles related to the marking of the park borders, see Hasan 2004; WARSI 2002c; WARSI 2003a.

¹⁵ For WARSI's articles on the implications of decentralization and regional autonomy to *Bukit Duabelas* National park, see Alam Sumatera, Volume 1, No. 4, October 2003; and the following WARSI articles: Minulya 2003b; Minulya 2004b; the threat of village swidden farming and the *hompongon* project (Candra 2004c; Priana 2003); and the opinions/interviews with heads of the forest department in Jambi on the topic of *Bukit Duabelas*, see Roidah 2003.

¹⁶ In the village of *Sungai Air Ruan*, a wealthy logging boss acquired an IPK native use timber permit in 2000 under the name of an *Orang Rimba* cooperative, which is used as a cover to exploit logs from within the national park (Taufik 2000a). The permit legally allows the exploitation of logs in a 1,550 ha area located within the clear-cut and yet to be established *PT SDM* plantation outside the park, a location where some of the eastern camps traditionally moved during their *melangun* periods. Apparently, the *Orang Rimba* in which the permit is registered were intimidated by a village thug to sign off (thumbprints) on the application papers. Similar small scale native use permits have been issued to logging bosses in the northern villages of *Tanah Garo* (500 ha) and *Batu Sawar* (500ha) who use them as fronts to exploit wood along the *Makekal* and *Kajasung* Rivers, within the national park.

¹⁷ One of WARSI's main projects in the village is termed "*gerakan kembali sawah*", 'movement to return to wet rice farming' and involves reviving ancient rain fed wet rice techniques, which were sparingly used by some in the southern villages in the distant past. So far, the program has encountered problems with recruitment, farmers who lack the skills to farm rain fed wet rice, reviving or reconstructing ancient irrigation methods, obtaining fertilizer and pesticides, and infestation of crops by pests. The first season's crop was unsuccessful due to lack of irrigation networks and was largely destroyed by pests. For articles related to WARSI's: research on the economies of local Malay villages surrounding *Bukit Duabelas* see: Alam Sumatera, January 2004, No.6 and the following WARSI articles: (Candra 2004a; Candra 2004c; Minulya 2003a; Minulya 2003b; Minulya 2003c; Minulya 2004a; Retno 2004; Zainuddin 2004); conservation based advocacy campaign in the Malay villages surrounding the park (Anindita 2003); and movement to return to wet rice farming (*Gerakan Kembali Sawah*) project for Malay villages in the southern *Air Hitam* region: (Minulya 2003a; WARSI 2002a;

WARSI 2002d; WARSI 2003b). Other efforts to engage *Melayu* villagers in small scale palm oil projects have been unsuccessful (lack of road infrastructure), although future projects related to more traditional, occupations (such as rehabilitated rubber or rattan fields) may be more promising.

¹⁸ *Sokola's* first success at obtaining funding came from the Global Environmental Facilities Small Grant Program, who agreed to support the opening of *hompongon* rubber fields, which they now call the 'The Living Fence', along the *Makekal* River. Once again, the project was being coordinated and implemented by teenagers, but did run more smoothly by adequately compensating *Orang Rimba* workers for opening the fields. I did later here that after some of the fields were opened some were sold to *Melayu* villagers by the youth after running into financial difficulties, and left gaps in the *hompongon* through which village swiddens could pass through. No special legal measures have been made to secure the *hompongon* fields as communal property, which might have prevented them from being sold. Since beginning its project in *Bukit Duabelas*, *Sokola* has expanded its basic education, health and other services, under different themes, to other communities in Ache, Sulawesi, Maluku and Timor. For information surrounding the *Sokola* project visit their website at sokola.org

¹⁹ *Balai Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam* or 'Conservation Platform for Natural Resources'.

²⁰ The current settlement in *Pematankabau* was funded by the Social Department, but is being implemented by the NGO KOPSAD. Although it included the usual religious conversion methods (a mosque and religious teacher), the location of the settlement was established in a somewhat secluded location on the edge of the forest, giving them a degree a privacy to go about their lives, and also allows them the opportunity to establish swiddens, hunt and access resources in the forests. While it was too early to see how they react to death or long-term social pressure from surrounding camps, in situations where *Orang Rimba* have a desire to settle, and locations can be determined which give them access to limited tracts of forests, similar arrangements without the mosques (unless they want them) may be a model for future *Orang Rimba* settlements.

Appendix C

Belief and Ritual Surrounding Birth, Bathing the Baby and Death

Some Beliefs Surrounding Childbirth

Women usually become pregnant (*bunting*) shortly after marriage and continue to bear children throughout their adult lives. It is common for a mother to lose one or several children during childbirth or the first month of its life, and some of this anxiety is expressed in the ritual surrounding childbirth.¹ The *Orang Rimba* see birth as a dangerous liminal state, when the baby's soul is brought down from heaven and introduced to its material body (*baden cabu*) where it is exposed to dangerous elements (spirits, sickness) on earth. They say that conception occurs when the woman's body is in a 'cool' state, which allows the fluids from the man (*kadih genoh*) to combine with the fluids of the woman (*aik genoh betina*) and form the body of a baby.² It is important that women refrain from eating 'hot' foods and follow food prohibitions to keep their body 'cool', particularly when pregnant. If a couple is having difficulty conceiving a child, there are a number of medicinal and ritual remedies that can 'cool' the woman's body, enhance her fertility and the chance of conception.

Around five or six months into a pregnancy the pregnant woman and her immediate family move to ritual land in the forests called the 'land of birth' or 'birthplace' (*tanoh per'anahon*). Other members of the extended family may also join, particularly elder women who have experience in facilitating childbirth (*bidan*).³ Similar to other Malayic peoples, earthbound spirits and ghosts (*hantu*) are believed to be attracted to pregnant woman at the birthplace, hoping to feed on the blood of the unborn baby, and a woman is never allowed to give birth in a 'hot' open swidden or in forests, which are believed to be occupied by earthbound spirits or ghosts.⁴ When choosing land for the birthplace, it is crucial that it lie within healthy, cool and 'blooming forests' (*rimba bungahon*) that are believed to be safe for childbirth and have been used for successful births in the past. Before moving to these places, the land is first ritually prepared or 'cooled'. One man explains these beliefs through botanic analogy in the form of seeds and plants.

It is like when you plant seeds. If the earth does not fit with the seeds then the seeds will not grow into plants. If the land at the birthplace does not fit with the child and mother, then the birth will not be successful. There can be a complication with the pregnancy and the child or mother could get sick or die. This is caused by disturbances in the land, when the land is 'hot'. If the land is 'cool' then it is less likely to occur. During this time, shamans are always making sure that there are no *setan* or ghosts in the area. If there are seeds of sickness (*bibit penyakit*) or *silumon/setan* on the land, then a shaman can medicate (*nyoboti*) the land or the

mother. After he does this then they are not there again, the land is healthy and 'cool', and it is safe for childbirth. They do this through praying throughout the night atop a *balai*. There are a number of places we can use for a birthplace (*tanah per'anahon*), places that were used in the past, we can also use new places, but before we move there, a shaman must first make sure that it is the right place. It is the choice of the shaman, but the choice must be certain. The place can change, but the 'face or characteristics of the land' (*wadjah tanah*) must be 'cool' (*sejuk*).

As with so many aspects of the *Orang Rimba's* lives, these beliefs are often used to justify cultural and ethnic boundary prohibitions.

This is why outsiders and even those who bathe with soap are not allowed to come to these places during this time. One, because shamans are constantly examining the baby to make sure everything is ok. Two, because they are constantly making sure that the land is safe, free of seeds of sickness, and earthbound spirits (*setan*), and three, because during the evenings they are constantly praying to the gods for safety and harmony (*keselamatan*). If outsiders or those who do not follow *adat* were here, they would attract sickness, and because we have broken with *adat*, the gods would not assist us.

Another reason why a birthplace should never be located in a 'hot', open swidden or recently cleared forests is a fear of rainbows (*ulo danu*), which are said to be one of the most common reasons for miscarriage. Similar to the Malay and Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia, the *Orang Rimba* believe that rainbows are spiritual water snakes or 'bow snakes' that live in the downstream portion of the river in heaven (Skeat 1900:15).⁵ They believe these entities have a fondness for drinking blood, and sometimes descend from heaven to feed on small puppies and unborn babies. These snakes usually descend in pairs, and can only be seen on 'hot' rainy days, just after the weather has cleared. The colors are said to represent different aspects of its body; green (the bile), red (its beating heart), white (its stomach), and black (its mouth). Whenever making their way to this world, they shrink to the size of a sliver of wood and enter the crevices (anus, vagina) of pregnant women while they sleep in order to feed on their unborn fetus. To ward off bow snakes or rainbows, men take ashes from the camp fire and throw them towards the woman for several days after spotting one, while reciting magical incantations (*bopato*), the gist of which commands them to find a nice dog instead of the baby.

Soon after moving to the birthplace, a shaman performs an extended *balai* ceremony that last several days in order to retrieve the baby's soul from the gods in heaven. According to one man along the upstream *Makekal*, 'If we have sex and make a baby, this is only begins the process, the babies body is only the rough form of a human and it is still incomplete. Humans only make the rough form of the body (*baden kasar*), but it is *Tuhan Kuaso* who gives the baby its soul (*haluy*), its character/attitude (*sifat*),

and its breath (*nafai*).’ During these rituals, a shaman meets with the lesser gods to determine which soul baby *Tuhan Kuaso* will choose from the ‘playground of soul babies’ (*gelanggang anak*), which is looked over by the *bidodar’i*, and eventually bring it down to earth in a sacred white piece of cloth called the ‘egg’ or ‘seed’ cloth’ (*toluk koin*). Through additional ritual, the shaman transfers the soul from the cloth to its body within the mother, after which the baby receives its breath force (*nyawoh*) and character (*sifat*) from *Tuhan Kuaso*, and becomes a complete person. On the nights following the ritual, it is a responsibility of a shaman to perform regular and constant rituals to monitor and observe the condition of the baby in the mother’s body. As is the case during healing rituals, shamans do this by placing a sacred piece of white cloth over the mothers stomach so they can observe its condition, and determine if anything needs to be done to heal or correct it. As one man explains,

After the baby receives its soul (*huluy*), a shaman can see the character (*sifat*) of the baby while it is inside the mother, and also see if there are any problems. If there is a problem, a shaman can see what it is, and then medicate it. In the hospital, they might use special equipment. But here in the forests, a shaman uses a sacred piece of white cloth, which he folds and places on top of the mother’s stomach to see if there is anything wrong with the baby. They use the cloth to see if the baby is complete, if anything is missing or needs to be added. If there is a problem, then a shaman can pray and learn from the gods what medicines to use to fix the problem. This happens all the time, if the baby is too big or small, if a part of the body is deformed or missing. While at the birthplace (*tanoh per’anahon*), a shaman is constantly examining the baby, through his own knowledge and through prayer, and has the power to medicate or fix anything that is wrong while it is still inside the mother.

If something were to go wrong, the family can blame a shaman for not performing his duties correctly; that he did not choose the land, purify it, or examine the baby correctly during the stay at the birthplace. If the baby is born disfigured or retarded, they say this can result from being harmed or possessed in the womb by a spirit, and in these cases, the baby may be taken into the forest and killed. According to one account,

Around five years ago, the *temanggung’s* wife had a baby at a birthplace (*tanoh per’anahon*) that was not safe and had seeds of sickness and spirits (*setan*). When born, it was already possessed by spirits or demons, and took the form of a monkey. The demon baby had to be taken into the forest and killed, but this rarely happens.

In these rare cases, one must consider their practice of infanticide within the context of their lives in the forests. In cases when a child will not be able to walk, function or provide for itself in the forests, the ability is beyond the means of the family.

While giving birth, two or three midwives (*bidan*) assist the mother, one who supports her from behind, one who massages and pushes on the woman’s stomach and

one who sits in front to receive the baby. After the birth, the placenta (*kakai*) is cut with a knife and washed, and while reciting a number of magical incantations (*bopato*), buried beside a *mentubung* tree.⁶ After they wash the baby, bark is peeled from a *sengor'i* tree and ground together with *tetemu* leaves into a paste, which is smeared onto the babies head in order to harden its soft spot. *Sengor'i* trees are hardwoods normally used for making the *lantak* pegs that are used for climbing *sialong* honey trees. They have a reputation for not splitting or cracking, and likewise, they hope that the babies head will adopt similar characteristics. Similar to regional beliefs, the *Orang Rimba* believe that the placenta has a spirit or soul (*haluy kakai*), which is believed to be the person's spiritual sibling, which is associated with the person through out their lives. They believe that it looks over them and sometimes bestows good luck (*res'ki*) or fortune whenever the person passes by the tree and remembers the location while going about pursuits in the forests.⁷ After they bury the placenta, there is no further ritual associated with the location, other than marking the trees and making sure no one disturbs it. According to *adat* legal codes, the penalty for felling a *sengor'i* or *mentubung* tree winds into the 'four above' (*empat de pucuk*) of the 'trunk law' (*pangkol adat*), the same classification for felling a *sialong* honey tree or murder, and incurs a fine of five hundred sheets of cloth.

Similar to other mobile peoples the *Orang Rimba* have a post-partum sex taboo, which prohibit a couple from having sexual intercourse for around six months after the birth or until weaning the baby. They believe that if a woman were to become pregnant during this time it could endanger her health, fertility, and her life. The penalty for breaking this prohibition is twenty-five sheets of cloth, which the husband family pays to his wife's parents. If they believe a woman becomes infertile by breaking this prohibition, or become ill and dies, the fine is increased to five hundred sheets of cloth, the cost of her life. These prohibitions tend to put some space in between births, but as far as I could discover not much space, and in most cases siblings tend to be a year or two apart. The post-partum sex taboo tends to be more strictly practiced when a group is nomadic, when women are depended upon to dig for wild yams. However, death always holds the potential to kick a group into a nomadic life. There are ways to get around paying a fine for violating the post-partum sex taboo, the most common being the claim of an immaculate conception. Rarely, some say, the soul of the recently deceased has a longing to stay on earth, and can enter a woman's womb so that it may be reborn (*detong myomugur*) and triggers a pregnancy without coitus. When a shaman determines that *myomugur* has occurred, the husband is not fined.

This first month or so after the baby is born is said to be the most fragile and dangerous time for the newborn and its mother, during which they are to remain away from the larger camp at the birthplace, until a ritual is performed to ‘bath the baby in the river’ for the first time (*mandiko budak de aik*). During this time, they are looked after by their immediate family, a *bidan*, and are ritually monitored by a shaman until the ceremony takes place. While at the birthplace, they prohibit the newborn, its eldest sibling (if it has one) and the mother from taking baths in the rivers, which they believe are an avenue in which the gods of sickness travel. Similar to other Malayan peoples, after childbirth the mother's body is believed to be in an extra ‘cooled’ state and must be brought back to equilibrium by sitting next to a fire, what is commonly referred to in the literature as ‘mother roasting’ (Laderman 1991). The baby, on the other hand, must be continuously ‘cooled’ by washing it at the location of the birth with buckets of water. Several days after the birth, the parents recite traditional incantations (*bopato*) to the god of the burrows/turtles (*or'ang de gaung*) while drumming a turtle shell, which they believe will eventually bring a voice to the baby, and prevent it from becoming deaf and dumb (*ubo*).⁸ Atop a *balai*, shamans appeal to the gods on a nightly basis for the safety, luck and health of the baby, and to keep away spirits, ghosts and sickness.

Around a week or so, after the birth, they hold a *balai* ritual to meet with the newborn's *aku-on* birth deity/familiar spirit in order to receive the baby's name (*melakatko namo*). The meanings of *Orang Rimba* names are related to the characteristics and associations with their *aku-on* birth deity, and are often borrowed from the context of prayer songs (*dekir*) sung to that god atop the *balai*. Human souls, associated *aku-on* birth deities, and names are arranged according to gender, and reflect the potential for gender, which exists in the village of a lesser god. Thus, male souls, *aku-on* deities, and names can only be had from categories of lesser gods that have men (gods of elephants, fruits, swidden plants, pouch, burrows, honeybees, riverhead, exchange goods, bearded pigs and the tiger), while female souls, *aku-on* deities and names from those that have females (goddesses of fruit, swidden plants, rice, tubers and bearded pigs). While people receive souls and names from both upstream and downstream deities, there were not any cases where they were received them from the gods of sickness.⁹ Upon reaching adulthood, males usually develop intimate relationships with their *aku-on* birth deity, the category of lesser god from which their soul descends, and can manipulate this relationship to receive luck and fortune in its specialty of knowledge, and to develop relationships with the other categories of lesser

gods. Females may also develop relationships their *aku-on* later in life after their childbearing years, if they choose to become more religious oriented.

Along the *Makekal*, one of the most common *aku-on* birth deities for males is the tiger god (*mato mer'ego*), who is considered a guardian and protector of *adat*, and is a primary intermediary spirit used to enter heaven and to make contact with the other gods. Those who possess the tiger as their birth deity have names associated with the characteristics of the tiger. The name *Bekilat* refers to the manner in which a tiger lurks through the forests during a light rainy afternoon, while the name *Penyar'uk* refers to the manner in which a tiger crouches behind a tree, right before it attacks its prey. The name *Mijak* refers to the wisdom of the tiger. Other male names, for instance *Peniti Benang*, derives from the downstream god of exchange goods (*or'ang de bar'ang*), which gives a person luck in acquiring *jer'enang*, cloth and other forms of outside wealth. The name *Peniti Benang* means to 'thread a pin through a needle', which is an analogy for leading a good life along a path that leads to the gods, and is taken from a verse of the prayer songs sung to this god. *Meramai* is a female name related to the goddesses of fruit (*or'ang de buah*), which means an 'abundance' (in relation to fruit), and is a word that commonly occurs in the prayer songs to initiate the annual fruiting season. *Bir'a sibul* is another female name related to the goddesses of fruit, which is reference to the pin that female goddesses use to hold their hair buns in place. This reference is strongly associated with the manner in which the gods create new human souls and is strongly associated with fertility (see chapter four). The name and soul given by an *aku-on* deity does not always fit with the child's human body (*baden cabu*) and its character (*sifat*), and in some instances can lead to bad luck, misfortune or illness. When this occurs, they perform a *balai* ceremony to retrieve a new name that is a better fit for the child, or as some say, find a new *aku-on* deity, which may imply an exchange of souls.

Given names are primarily related to a persons association with the gods, and are usually only used in reference children, or amongst people who are of the same age grade who have an intimate relationship with one another. Along the *Makekal* River, a male child's given name is usually followed by the term *tampung*, meaning the 'stalk' of a plant, while a female given name is usually followed by *bungo*, meaning 'flower'. The use of botanic metaphor or analogies to denote primary kinship relationships is common among Austronesian peoples, and in this case the stalk-flower analogy represents the relationship between brothers and sisters (Fox 1971). As this metaphor or analogy implies, a brother is obliged to be the stalk or support network for his sisters

and throughout life look after her safety, interests and rights. As with other peoples in the region, as one grows older, they are less commonly referred to by their given name, and more so by kin terms and terms which denote their social status (generation level, gender, marital or adult status) and relationship to others in the larger community (Geertz 1973; Geertz 1964). After marriage, most are no longer referred by their given name, but rather as ‘mother or father in waiting’ (*induk* or *bepak mentar’ow*), a sign of their new adult status (*rer’ayo*), which also allows a person to participate more actively in decisions regarding the larger community and in matters of law and religion. After the birth of the first child a person is then referred to as mother or father of ‘the name of the eldest child’, which implies that one has reached complete adult status.

Bathing the Baby in the River Ceremony

Similar to other peoples in the region, around a month or so after the birth, they perform a community ritual to bath the baby in the river for the first time.¹⁰ Until the bathing ritual takes place, the mother and baby are kept away from the larger group in the safer land of the birthplace. To some extent, this may also keep others from becoming attached to the baby, if it were to die during its first month of life. The purpose of the bathing ritual is to introduce the newborn to the elements on earth through the flow of the rivers. After performing the ritual, the mother and her baby leave the land of the birthplace and join the larger camp, and the baby becomes a more legitimate social being in the camp. The time for holding the bathing ritual is based on monitoring the phases of the moon. They hold them on the first full moon following a complete lunar cycle, or between one and two months following the birth of the baby.

These ceremonies take place along the edge of a riverbank upon a temporary wooden platform that extends over the riverbank. The platform has a small hole in the middle through which they bathe the baby, which is surrounded by sheets of cloth giving the event an aura of privacy. Around twenty meters from the river a small *balai* platform is built for ritual communication with the gods, which in the context of this ritual is referred to as the *gelanggang*, and is symbolic of the enclosure where soul babies are kept in heaven while being watched over by the *bidodar’i*. In between the *gelanggang* and the bathing platform, they create a corridor with poles, which are connected by lines of rattan, and draped with sheets of cloth. They refer to this corridor as the *lamon*, which has conceptual coordinates that symbolize the flow of the river. Walking towards the *balai* or *gelanggang* is conceptualized as moving upstream (*hulu*) towards a place of purity and safety where ritual communication with the gods takes

place. Walking towards the river is conceptualized as moving downstream (*hilir*), where the baby will be introduced to the various threats of the material world, and sickness, which is believed to originate and travel from the downstream portions of the river.

The ritual takes place during the evening with an elder family member carrying the baby from the ‘upstream’ location of the *balai/gelanggang* platform and walking ‘downstream’ through the *lamon* corridor to the bathing platform, which extends over the river. ‘Seven’ machetes (*par’ong*), an axe (*beliung*) and a grinding stone are ritually doused through the hole in the platform and then sharpened. Shavings from the machete’s and axe are smeared onto the baby’s body as protection from the gods before being ritually introduced to the dangers of earth, or its sickness (*genoh penyakit*) that travel from the ‘downstream’ of the rivers. The elder woman then dunks the baby in the river through the hole in the platform ‘seven’ times (a magical number) to the ‘upstream’ and ‘seven’ times to the downstream while reciting the *bopato*, ‘the gods bathe from the upstream, while the baby bathes from the downstream’ (*behelo mandi der’i hulu, budak mandi der’i hilir*). While they bathe the baby, the mother bathes the baby’s eldest sibling (*kakok tuha*) to the ‘upstream’ of the platform in a similar ritual manner in order to cement a bond between the two. Throughout life, the eldest sibling is obliged to protect and look out for its younger sibling.

After the ritual bathing, the baby is carried by an elder women in the family walking together with the mother and eldest sibling, ‘upstream’ through the *lamon* corridor, where it is then handed over to its father (or maternal uncle if present) who sits next to a shaman atop the *balai* platform or *gelanggang*. Throughout the evening, a shaman communicates with the gods atop the *balai*, which in a sense, is a kind of handing over of the baby from heaven and the gods to the parents on earth. The main goal of the ritual is to meet with the baby’s birth deity and each of the categories of lesser gods to request that they look out for the baby’s safety, health, fortune and luck. During the infants first years of life, its body and soul are believed to be pure, and not yet polluted by the elements and influence in this world. During this time, they are still believed to have a close or open connection with the gods, especially its *aku-on* birth deity. At times, infants (*budak ebun*) can be a medium to the gods, and their mumblings interpreted by shamans as signs of fortune or danger. This status is reflected in the laws surrounding children, which are based upon the ‘first four traits of a king’ (*empat petamo rajo*) in the ‘four above’ (*empat de pucuk*) of the trunk law. They suggest that a ‘king (or child) should be treated as a king’ (*rajo de per’ajoko*), and should not be denied anything during its first years of life.¹¹ They believe that this early connection to

the gods fades after some time, as they acclimate and become polluted by life in this world, and that a connection (for males) is only reestablished during adolescence within their dreams.

Bathing ceremonies are great social gatherings in the forest. In a similar manner to *balai* wedding ceremonies, distant kin from other camps often attend these occasions in order to celebrate the new member's entrance to camp life, which allows families from throughout the forests to socialize and re-establish ties with kin and friends. Like *balai* wedding ceremonies they are one of the few occasions in which young men and women are able to freely interact with each other in an open and socially accepted manner, and are eagerly attended by youth from throughout a river region. Dressed in ritual clothing and crowns of white flowers, unmarried women (*gediy lapai*) sing and dance along the fringe of the *lamon* corridor, while young bachelors (*bujang lapai*) keep the rhythm by drumming metal pans (*ninting kual*). On the outskirts of the *lamon* corridor, small huts are constructed where the host women cook food and distribute ritual requirements (fat and sweets, *lemak/maniy*) of fatty meat and their honey, while the men distribute their durian taffy. After the ritual has been performed, dammar (*demor*) is kept lit at the site for the following three nights as an offering to the gods, while the platforms and structures must be left to decay on their own. The *Orang Rimba* say that if anyone were to dismantle or disturb the structures built for a bathing ritual, it could disturb or offend the gods and lead to misfortune, and likewise incurs a fine of sixty sheets of cloth. After the bathing ritual, the mother and her baby return to life in the larger camp, and afterwards can bathe freely in the rivers.

Beliefs Surrounding Death: The Path to the Sky Door, Heaven of the Dogs, Judgment, and the Fires of Hell

When someone dies, several men from the family carry the body on their backs to an isolated spot deep in the deep forest, away from any trails to a place next to a 'cool' stream. Along the upstream *Makekal* River region there is a common place where many of the death platforms are built referred to as the 'fork in path at the *mer'anti* tree' (*sympan mer'anti*), although some say that they can construct them in other locations, as long as it is deep in the jungle and far away from any camps. In contrast to the surrounding *Melayu*, the *Orang Rimba* do not bury their dead, but rather place them upon wall-less death platforms (*rumah pasar'on*) in the deep forest, which are built around two meters or higher off the ground. The *Orang Rimba* say that the platforms are built high so that wild animals, particularly tigers, do not scavenge the body. Platform

burials are also built for women while the body of an infant is wrapped in cloth, and hung high in the branches of a tall tree. In the early 20th century, van Dongen writes that some of the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* also performed platform burials; however, during this time they were more commonly performing ground burials. Of the 'wild' *Kubu* or *Orang Hutan* in South Sumatra, van Dongen writes that type of spoke-framed tree burial was performed along the *Ikan Lebar* River region, which appears to resemble the traditional burial practices of the Semang, and in the past, other Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia (Endicott 1979:114-115).¹²

The reasons why the *Orang Rimba* do not bury their dead relates to a belief that the soul would be trapped in the ground, preventing it from making its journey to heaven, and would remain trapped on earth as a ghost. For similar reasons, the eyelids are never allowed to be shut nor the limbs bound.¹³ When arriving to the location, the body is washed, dressed in the clothing of the gods (for a man: a sarong, turban, and scarf draped over his shoulders, and if a shaman, placed with his sacred staff), adorned with a crown of white flowers, and placed atop the platform in the fetal position, the same position the person came into the world. Materials and supplies (*bekal*) are placed next to body for the soul's long journey to the afterlife, which include: several pieces of cloth for sleeping and to pay any possible fines incurred along the way, a spear (*kujur*) for hunting, a machete (*par'ong*) for making a room, a cooking pot and a spoon (*sudu*), and these days money, in case it is needed. Eventually, they say that the soul's *aku-on* birth deity descends to earth to accompany the person's soul on the long journey to the sky door, along which a man will be judged. As *adat* minors, the souls of women and children are believed to bypass this journey, any judgment, and are allowed direct entry to heaven.

In addition to heaven proper, there is another plain of existence described whenever speaking of the lower heaven of the dogs (*pahalow* or *hentew*), and the journey of the human soul after death. Somewhere in the sky, below the moon and sun, they say that a path begins, which eventually winds its way up towards the door in the sky (*pintu langit*) and into the realm of the gods. They say that there is *lalan* grass along the bottom of this path, which often grows in abandoned swiddens, and is a plant that is strongly associated with the tiger and given as offerings to its spirit during ritual. Some say that the spirit villages of the tiger may have been located in this location before they relocated their villages to heaven, while others say that they may have been located in unknown locations deep in the jungle. If the person led a sinful life, they say that this journey is full of danger, and the soul can encounter a number of traps along the way

such as falling trees, which can knock their soul back to earth where they will become a ghost. Eventually, the soul comes upon a large white tree (*betong putih*) which lay fallen over on its side blocking the path. After climbing over the tree, they come to a grove of banana's which they are supposed to avoid (unless they choose to be knocked back to earth), and continue along the path to their judgment.

After some distance, they say that the path transitions into forests that eventually leads to *hentew*, sometimes referred to as *pahalow*, the lower heaven of the dogs. In the heaven of the dogs, the role of humans and dogs is the opposite of that on earth. Here, the dogs live in nice homes, eat to their hearts content, and throw their scraps of food to the humans, who in turn, are never allowed to enter their homes and must live and sleep on the ground. If humans try to enter the rooms of the dogs or steal any of their food they are barked at and bitten. For humans this place is viewed as a kind of a purgatory state that one passes through on the way to being judged, and is a place where they must rough out the 'law of the dogs' (*hukom anjing*). While the *Orang Rimba* believe that beating their dogs is a sin, few abide by this belief, although they probably should. The dogs are said to keep record of abuse to their own kind (as well as those who were benevolent) and are prepared to enact retribution through the law of the dogs whenever a human soul passes through their heaven.¹⁴

After passing through and spending some time in the heaven of the dogs, the soul comes to a fork in the road called 'right and wrong' (*saloh nang bonor*) where an assistant of Mohammad (*wakil Mohammad*) sits with a book or record of the persons sins, and a scale to weigh the amount of sin (*duso*) accumulated throughout their life. Based on this weight, Mohammad's assistant decides whether the person must spend time in the 'fires of hell' (*ner'ako api*), sent back to spend more time in the lower heaven of the dogs (*hentew, pahalow*) or is allowed to pass through the sky door into heaven. Located above and fueled by the heat of the sun, hell is described to be an unimaginably 'hot' and torturous realm filled with a wide variety of abusive anthropomorphic animals, which in some ways tend to resemble the pagans below the earth (*or'ang kafir*).¹⁵ Unlike the beliefs of their Islamic neighbors, the *Orang Rimba* do not believe that people who led sinful lives will stay in hell for an eternity. Depending on the weight of ones sin, the maximum stay in hell is 'seven' years, after which they are believed to have paid their debt, and can precede to heaven and join the village of their *aku-on* birth deity. Some say that a person may decide to live in the village of their *aku-on*, although are not bound to stay there, and have the choice to roam around to the different god villages until they find one they like. Only the most senior and big

shamans (*dukon godong*) who have led the purist of lives according to *Orang Rimba adat* are able to enter or live in the palace of the *bidodar'i*.

Most will strongly avoid locations associated with death platforms, and believe them to be scary, dangerous places frequented by spirits or ghosts. However, for several years following a death, closely related male kin return sometimes return to the location of the platform on an annual basis in order to pay their respect, remember, and give offerings to the dead. A rattan offering receptacle (*songkot*) similar to those built for *balai* are constructed at the location, and placed with offerings of tobacco, food and flowers. Next to the *songkot* they light a candle of dammar, and sticks of incense. In addition to being an act of respect and remembrance, they also believe that this act will influence the dead to bestow good health, luck and fortune (*res'ki*).

As with other peoples in the region, the living are strongly prohibited from mentioning the names of the dead, which can offend, disturb or anger them, the ancestors or gods, and lead to misfortune (Brosius 1992; Geertz 1973:360; Geertz 1964). People are only allowed to refer to the dead through a system of death names, which are rather simple. *Orang Rimba* death names are based on the terms *ndihang* (Malay, *mendiang*), meaning the late or deceased, and *melekat*, meaning angel, which is followed by a term that denotes their marital status, gender and the name of the river that is nearest to the location where they passed away (Wilkinson 1948:56). Thus, children are usually referred to as *ndihang keciq*, unmarried males and females as *ndihang bujang/gediy* and married men and women as *ndihang jenton/betina*. Senior and big shamans are referred to as angel (*melekat*), which again can be followed by their marital status/gender and the river nearest where they past away.

When a death occurs, an *Orang Rimba* camp goes into a very open and dramatic display of community grieving and mourning (*bubughatongpon* or *meratop*), which is very different from the surrounding *Melayu*.¹⁶ This is particularly the case with the women, who spend weeks or months going through bouts of sobbing, moaning, howling or wailing. This often includes dramatic displays of falling to the ground or into the arms of others, hitting themselves or pulling at their hair, as other members of the camp offer their support, or attempts to restrain them. While men are also allowed to grieve openly, it is never as extreme as the women. They are expected to offer support and arrange for the immediate departure of the camp, so that they can *melangun*.

After performing a platform funeral, it is a custom that the members of a camp pack their belongings, abandon a swidden field, if they were residing in one, and *melangun* or embark on a nomadic journey away from the customary forests of the

women in order to grieve and wash the memories of the dead from their minds.¹⁷ Because of their more extreme and open form of grieving, they also say that *melangun* reduces the longings of the soul of the dead to remain on earth in the form of a ghost, and makes it easier to go ahead with its journey to the realm of the gods. The *Orang Rimba* stress that *melangun* is one of the primary customs handed down to them by their ancestors, and according to *adat*, must be followed by the immediate family members of the diseased. Failure to do so could disturb the harmony of *adat* in the forests, result in a curse from their ancestors, the gods, and result in danger, bad luck and misfortune. During the early 20th century, van Dongen writes that some of the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* still practiced a version of *melangun* for shorter periods, usually following death from pandemic disease (Dongen 1910:236).¹⁸

When the *Orang Rimba melangun*, the basis of their traditional economy shifts from the swidden field (*behuma*), to a nomadic life based on the women's work of digging for wild yams (*bebenor* or *r'amayo*), and to a lesser extent harvesting sago palm. There are strong prohibitions on returning to or eating any of the crops from a former swidden, which they believe could cause sickness and misfortune from the gods, and the ancestors. During the *melangun* journey most will live in transient lean tos (*belalapion*) rather than wall-less platforms (*sungsudungon*) typical of life in the forests. This is partially because they are constantly moving, but as many point out, also because most are too overwhelmed with grief to be concerned with building a proper *susudungan*. Many will say that there are not any prearranged destinations where they regularly conduct their *melangun* journeys, although some suggest that it is more common for the *Makekal* groups to head west outside of the *Bukit Duabelas* forests, while the central *Kajasung* and *Seranggam* groups head to the east and northeast of their customary forests. These days, the locations where camps commonly *melangun* are now primarily rubber and palm oil plantations, which does reduce the likelihood that they will find any wild yams. In any case, these days there are other alternatives to sustain themselves during these times. Village staples, usually in the form of rice, can be purchased or traded away by selling some of the family cloth, selling game meat to villagers, performing work, or more likely obtaining credit from a patron. To some extent some of these methods also appear to have been used in the recent past (Sandbukt 1988a).

The duration of the initial *melangun* journey may last as long as a month or several months, after which they may stick around the location for a while or plan a new destination. In the past, most agree that they would *melangun* for longer periods.

Because of the difficulty in digging for wild yams, it is usually the women, along with their unwed brothers who press for a return to their customary forests, while the men, whose workload doesn't change much, and to some extent are liberated from the customary laws in their wives forests, may attempt to extend the period for longer. After the *melangun* journey, most will return to the customary forests of their wives and remain semi-nomadic until the next swidden season comes around. During this time, some will dig for wild yams or perform some kind of work in order to supplement their economies, while others will leach off relatives who have established swidden camps. Some groups, particularly in the eastern region of *Bukit Duabelas*, choose to remain in the *bebenor* or *r'emayo* mode of subsistence for longer periods, but this can lead to tension with swidden camps, which often grow weary of giving handouts.

In addition to being an effective manner to deal with grief, facilitating the passing over of the soul of the dead, and following an important custom of their ancestors, there are a number of implicit reasons or benefits that reinforce the *melangun* practice. *Melangun* is an important part of their social identities, and is often pointed out as a key point, which distinguishes and differentiates them from the surrounding *Melayu*. It also reinforces a mobile life in the forests, which is seen in a positive way, and is believed to bring them closer to their gods. More importantly, I believe, is its functions as a social pressure valve, which for a time anyway can allow junior adults males to break away from very restrictive relations with their in-laws and be the head of his household outside of the customary forests of the women. It can also serve as a springboard for a change in the composition of camps, and at the least allow them to shift the location of a swidden or home when they return. Upon returning from the *melangun* journey, a man often settles once again into these relations. However, the time away may have reduced any built up tension, and the likelihood of any open confrontations, which hold the potential to disrupt social relations.

Appendix C Endnotes

¹ For the surrounding *Melayu* the word *bunting* also means pregnant, but is only used in the context of everyday speech in reference to livestock. In addition to *bunting*, the *Orang Rimba* also use several other words that the surrounding *Melayu* commonly only use in reference to their livestock, including *jenton* (male), *betina* (female), and *betunak* (marriage). Use of these words is somewhat ironic, given that many *Melayu* perceive the *Orang Rimba* as animals, and as is the case with their patrons (*war'is*) in *Tanah Garo*, trade, purchase and sell *Orang Rimba* families (*bubung*) for a price that is often based on the reproductive potential or the number of women in an *Orang Rimba* family. *Orang Rimba* families are commonly sold, traded, or used to pay off debt amongst *waris* with *jenang* titles for the price of a cow. Within the *Melayu* community, these

terms are also used in reference to people, but only in formal or ritual speech embedded in *seleko adat* couplets, particularly those surrounding marriage. This may imply a broader usage of these terms in reference to humans in the past.

It is not uncommon for a woman to bear seven to ten children throughout her reproductive years. One of my main informants was one of thirteen children, of which three died during childbirth or soon after. This informant's eldest sister, who was in her early forties, had already born nine children, of which seven had survived the early period following childbirth. While *Orang Rimba* seem to have rather large families, the population does not seem fluctuate much due to the more frequent occurrence of death.

² For examples of Malay beliefs surrounding childbirth, which are intertwined with their own notions of the hot-cold contrast, see Carsten 1995; Endicott 1970; Laderman 1983; Laderman 1991; Skeat 1900.

³ According to van Dongen, the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* along the *Bahar*, *Lalan* and *Bayat* Rivers in South Sumatra also have or had prohibitions on giving birth within a swidden field, with the reason that the locations are unsafe and frequented by evil spirits (Dongen 1910). Van Dongen writes that during the advanced stages of pregnancy a woman and her immediate family move to the forests and live in temporary huts (*rumah sampaeyon*) until the baby is born (Dongen 1910:229-30). He mentions several prohibitions surrounding pregnant women, which include never allowing them to view a human corpse, elephant or a buffalo (Dongen 1910). If a woman were to view a human corpse then the unborn baby could be struck with a sickness called *nyeladang bangkai*, in which case it born paralysed like a corpse, and will never be able to sit up, stand or walk. If the pregnant woman were to view an elephant or a buffalo, then similar to these animals, the gestation period of the baby would extend to that of the animal, and the baby would die within the womb (Dongen 1910). While the pregnant woman is not allowed to view these animals, they are allowed to eat them. Van Dongen also mentions a prohibition on mentioning the names of two types of gibbon, the *siamong* and *ungko*, whenever in the presence of a pregnant woman. If a man were to get too close to the women, and say these words, then it could result in the woman's death during childbirth or cause the baby to be born in the form of either ape (Dongen 1910).

⁴ According to Alhady, "a type of *hantu*, that makes it its business to come during the delivery of a child, to enjoy drinking or eating the blood from childbirth, and who may do harm to both the mother and the newborn baby. The *menkuang* leaves, they say, have the power to prevent *hantu* from coming close to the place of delivery, where the leaves are hung" (Alhady 1962:16). For regional examples of Malay ghosts (*hantu*) who feed on the blood of newborns (the *pontinak*, *langsuir*, etc.) see Endicott 1970; McHugh 1959; Skeat 1900.

⁵ Malay and Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia have similar conceptions of rainbows as spirit or bow snakes, which descend to earth in order to drink human blood (Skeat 1900). Skeat writes that this belief may have originally made its way from India. The word *ular* is Malay for snake, while according to Maxwell *dhanuk* is Hindustani for bow, and a common term used in India for rainbows (Skeat 1900:14-15). Malay peoples in Penang also call rainbows *ular danu*, as they do in Perak and Selangor (Skeat 1900:14). The Kintak Bong and the Menik Kaien also call the rainbow *ular minum* or spirit snakes who they believe to drink human blood (Evans 1937). According to them,

the rainbow is a path by which the snake spirits descend from the heavens to drink human blood, “So, too, midday, especially when a light rain is falling and the sun is shining at one and the same time, is usually regarded as equally dangerous” (Skeat 1900:15).

⁶ In contrast to the village Malay, there are no prohibitions on cutting the umbilical cord using a ‘metal’ knife (Endicott 1970). After birth, the *Orang Rimba* commonly cut the cord with a small metal knife or machete, after which the belly button is medicated with bark from the *tengger’is* tree. Some say the placenta must be buried next to a *mentubung* tree and not the *sengor’i*. Regardless both relate to birth, with the *sengor’i* related to hardening the head. In contrast to the *sengor’i* and *mentubung*, both which wind their way into the four above of the trunk law and are comparable to murder, the fine for felling a *tengger’is* tree usually winds into the four below, is classified as *setengah bengun* (to provide ‘compensation for half a life’), and can incur a fine of one hundred and twenty sheets of cloth.

⁷ Of the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* belief surrounding childbirth and the placenta, van Dongen writes,

After the birth, the baby is bathed with water, and the placenta is buried close to the birthplace, around one foot under the ground. Before they return to the room, they utter magic over the spot where the placenta was buried, to protect it from nearby evil spirits and to remind it that it is not forgotten or left behind. If the placenta thinks itself to be abandoned or neglected, it can visit the child with various sicknesses. The placenta is believed to have a life force. It is considered to be a sibling of the newborn baby, one that doesn’t have a body, but which has a soul. It is believed that the soul of the placenta makes daily visits to the newborn, two or three times a day times a day and three times a night, in order to check on its health. It is thought that this soul will remain nearby, looking over the person, until they die. They are good spirits, a type of protective angel, which is born with them and lives on the earth, and will protect them in all activities. Because of this, the *Kubu* always remember the placenta, before they go to sleep, work, go on a journey, etc. Just remembering them is enough, they don’t have to call them or ask anything of them. (Dongen 1910:230)

Similar beliefs are common throughout the region. Of Minangkabau belief (immigrants in the Negri Sembilan region of Malaysia), Peletz writes “the afterbirth (*temuni*) is regarded as the newborn’s mystical “elder sibling” since it derives from the placenta, which nourished and protected the fetus in the womb, much like an elder sibling ideally helps sustain and protect his or her younger sibling throughout life...Before placing the afterbirth in the hole, the midwife wraps it in silk or other fine cloth, all while reciting Koranic chants or other incantations. The afterbirth is sometimes buried with items that will ensure the skills associated with its gender such as pencils and notebooks (for males) and sewing needles (for women). The location of the hole also carries symbols of gender. The female placenta is often buried under the home, while the males is buried in the garden” (Peletz 1996:219). The Batek believe that the mother and her newborn still have a connection with the placenta for three or four days after the birth, “The mother keeps a fire going above or beside the placenta, returning several times a day to add fuel and keep it warm. It is thought that if it were allowed to grow cold, the mother would suffer from chills, and the baby would have fits of crying” (Endicott 1979:100). For other regional examples, see Geertz 1961:89 and Koentjaraningrat

(1957: 21 (Java); Hurgronje 1906 and Bowen 1993:216 (Aceh); Hookyaas 1974:93 (Bali); and Peletz 1996 and Laderman 1991 (Malaysia).

⁸ One of these incantations reads, ‘*Kolup dan kupek komaik kito mano lolabi dan posow*’.

⁹ Some male names; *Ngelemun* and *Nutup* (god of honeybees, *or’ang de rapah*); *Nitu* (god of the riverhead, *or’ang de mato aik*); *Pelimbai* (god of the mountain, *or’rang de gunung*); and *Penyaruk*, *Bekilat*, *Mijak* (tiger god, *mato mer’ego*). Some female names: *Nugsa*, *Meremai*, *Bira sibul* (goddesses of fruit, *or’ang de buah*); *Ngankui* (goddesses of rice). I did run into an ambiguous male name (*Pengandum*), which one person said derived from an earthbound spirit.

¹⁰ Throughout Sumatra, the ritual bathing of the baby in the river is one of the first life stage rituals in an individual’s life that is performed to introduce the newborn to the elements on earth through the flow of the rivers. While little appears to be written on the topic, variants of the ritual also occur among the *Orang Batin Kubu* in South Sumatra and the *Melayu* in Jambi, Kerenici, Riau and Minangkabau. Kang mentions it as a life stage ritual among the *Petalangang* in Riau (2002). Similar bathing rituals may also occur among the Malay on the Peninsula. According to Skeat, “...bathing purification ceremonies form an integral part of Malay customs at birth, adolescence, marriage, sickness, death and in fact at every critical period of the life of the Malay” (1900). Weinstedt briefly summarizes the bathing the baby in the river ceremony for Malay Kings, which apparently serves as a means to introduce and acquire power over different domains in the world, “Some time after the birth... the mother and child are taken to the river....A live fowl is placed in the water and the child is made to tread on it, so that it has power over domestic animals, coconut, to have power over the field, jungle saplings to have power over the forest” (1951:110).

Van Dongen briefly describes the bathing of the baby ritual performed by the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* along the *Lalan* and *Bahar* river regions in South Sumatra,

Between three and seven days after the umbilical cord is tied, and after it falls, the baby is bathed and receives its name (*melekatkan nama*).The bathing is done by a male *dukon*, one who has experience in curing people in the village and exorcizes spirits by dunking the baby with his left hand in the river. The *dukon* places a *keris* or *tumbak lado* in a dish and holds a short spear in his right hand, which is used as a walking stick with a spear on the tip. This spear is called the *tombak tungkat mandi*, or spear staff to bath, which are found in every village and used especially for this ritual. The *dukon* also brings a piece of *betal* nut leaf and the leaf of an orange, which he also holds together while dunking many times in the river, and then rubs it on the babies head, saying, be gone sickness which makes the baby lie on its back like a stiff corpse, have diarrhea, sick head, ulcers, or inflamed skin, while then saying, who is this baby whose name will begin today. Then, in a procession, which includes the mother and child, they return to the room and the ritual is continued with the first cutting of the baby’s hair. Everyone present cuts a small piece of hair from the baby, until finally the mother shaves its head bald with a knife. The hair is collected and put in a bamboo tube and then thrown into the river. (Dongen 1910:231)

In contrast to the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* and other Malayic peoples, the *Orang Rimba* do not perform a ritual practice of cutting ‘seven’ locks of the babies hair

or shaving its head (Skeat 1900). According to Skeat, this practice may be of Arabic or Islamic origin (Skeat 1900).

¹¹In general, children along the *Makekal* River are allowed a great deal of personal autonomy and are spoiled. This quickly changes as they enter adolescence, which in turn, tends to mirror Elkholy's very different description of how children are treated in the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region, "...children are highly disciplined and are expected to both respect and obey their elders. A child that does not obey a parent is referred to as "evil" (*jehat*) and in extreme circumstances, may be subject to physical punishment. More commonly, children are scolded verbally to invoke a sense of shame that is especially felt when their behaviour is called into question publicly before the scrutiny of the camp" (Elkholy 2001). In *Bukit Duabelas*, adopted parents care for orphans (*kepahutuon*) is more distant and detached than would be the case for a natal child.

¹² In the early 20th century, van Dongen writes that some 'wild' *Kubu* in South Sumatra also performed open platform burials, some of which appear to have been combined with cremation.

There is a type of burial referred to as *pendem* (hide, or bury), if a person leaves the corpse without ritual in the place where he passed away...but usually they place the body in a small hut which stands on poles in the forest. Usually, they set a fire below the hut in order to burn the body and the hut... this is called a "*dikubur*" burial. After this the group *melangun* or leave the camp and go far into the forests. (Dongen 1910:238).

Similar to the Semang and the traditional practices of other Austro-Asiatic peoples in Malaysia, van Dongen writes that some 'wild' *Kubu* (*Orang Hutan*) along the *Ikan Lebar* River in South Sumatra also performed spoke-framed tree burials (Endicott 1979:114-15).

Another method of burial is called "*dipasar*" or tree burials, where the corpse is placed in a sitting position in the part of the tree where the branches start and is secured by wooden spokes. After the dead is placed in the tree, they *melangun*. I have found examples of tree burials near *Ikan Lebar* village. (Dongen 1910:238)

During this period, he writes that 'tame' *Orang Batin Kubu* along the *Lalan* River in South Sumatra also performed *dikubur* and *dipasar* burials, along with a tradition of *melangun*, but usually only during pandemics, or when the groups embarked on extended trips in the forests to search for forest products (Dongen 1910:238). By this time, he writes that it was becoming more common along the *Bahar* and *Lalan* Rivers for them to perform ground burials. According to van Dongen,

...two people usually carry the corpse to the grave very slowly, because they believe that if the corpse falls there will be misfortune. To respect the corpse, it is also carried on the back of a person like a small child...these days, the corpse is wrapped with the usual cloth and covered with pleated mats... women also join the men at the burial, which many say never occurred in the past. Without any ritual, the corpse is placed on over the top of a ladder in a grave that is more than one meter deep, so that pigs or tigers do not disturb it. Afterwards, the hole is covered with dirt, and people place rice wrapped in banana leaves over the top of the grave and also place a fried chicken. If the deceased was male, then a live male chicken is left around the grave, if female, a female chicken, while saying, "we wish to give you peace over

your grave, this is your rice, if you wish to eat chicken, this is your food”. With this the ritual is finished....they usually keep the area of the grave clean and free from weeds and thicket. During harvest time, they often respect the grave and place offerings of rice or fruit upon the grave, which they believe will give them luck in the harvest. (Dongen 1910:235)

¹³ According to one man along the *Makekal*,

A person’s soul enters heaven, but their body will only rot in the ground. When someone dies, their body is not allowed to be buried, their hands and legs are not allowed to be tied, and their eyes are not allowed to be closed. Because when we die, we must be able to walk through the different levels of the afterlife. If buried the soul would not be able to breathe, the traveling soul (*haluy bejelon*) would not be able to make the journey to the different levels of heaven in the afterlife. The soul would be trapped in this world and become a ghost.

The Semang, and in the past other Austro Asiatic peoples also performed tree burials for similar reasons, as was probably the reasoning behind *Orang Batin Kubu* platform burials and *Orang Hutan* tree burials in South Sumatra (Endicott 1979:114-15).

¹⁴ As one man along the *Makekal* River explains,

The *Orang Rimba* believe that dogs have souls and that when they die their souls enter a place called *hentew*, the heaven of dogs (*sorgo anjing*). In this place, we believe that the dogs have a good life, kind of like the life of humans while they are on earth. Actually, in the dog’s heaven the relationship between dogs and humans is the opposite of what it was in the forests. Here, the dogs live in nice rooms and have lots to eat, while those human souls that have sinned on earth or have abused dogs while alive, are judged according to the law of the dogs (*hukom anjing*). They must pass through or stay for a while in *hentew*, where they are bitten if they try to enter the dog’s homes. They must sleep on the floors and are only thrown bones and scraps of food to eat. If a person receives the law of the dogs when he dies on his way to be judged, he will definitely be abused and repeatedly bit by the dogs and will have to stay for a while when passing through *hentew* in order to pay for his sins. Actually, all must pass through *hentew* on their way to heaven, but only those who have sinned or have abused dogs while on earth will have to stay there for longer periods of time.

¹⁵ According to van Dongen, the settled (*Orang Batin*) *Kubu* believe the soul (*nyawah*) soul to embark on a journey to *Rajo Nyawah* or *Tuhan Allah* at death (Dongen 1910:245; Dongen 1931:577). Schebesta writes, “Both *Kubu* (swidden based *Orang Batin Kubu*) and *Jakun* (in Malaysia) have told me that the soul leaves the body after death and departs at sundown. Here it must march over a very small bridge, which leads over a kettle of boiling water. The guilt ridden soul irrevocably falls in and is destroyed, while the innocent without mishap, reach paradise, described as a kind of garden. The *Jakun* relate the same story” (Schebesta 1926).

¹⁶ The surrounding *Melayu*, on the other hand, value control over their emotions and consider extreme and open displays of community grieving inappropriate during a funeral. This together with the *melangun* practice is often pointed out by the *Melayu* and *Orang Rimba* as key differences which distinguish their peoples. However, throughout

the region, many peoples, including the *Orang Rimba*, *Melayu* and Javanese believe that open forms of community grief can also influence the soul to remain on earth as a ghost.

¹⁷ Movement following death is common among mobile hunter-gatherer peoples in Africa (bushman), Malaysia (Austro-Asiatic peoples), Indonesia (*Penan* in Borneo, see Brosius 1992; swidden based *Orang Batin Kubu* in Sumatra, Dongen 1910) and with aboriginal people in Australia (see chapter five of Yasmine Mucharbash's ANU Ph.D. thesis on the Warlpiri). Brosius writes of similar *Penan* prohibitions on abandoning a swidden field upon death, and a related curse (*bale utang*) of returning to a swidden or eating its crops (Brosius 1992).

¹⁸ Of the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu*, van Dongen writes,

After returning home from the grave, the oldest sibling of the deceased says to the spouse, 'elder brother/sister, with this I hand you to your parents'. Then the widow answers, 'younger sibling I hand you to your parents'. Then the sibling says to the mother of the widow, 'Mother I hand my sibling over to you because from this death, if she is drunk or drinks poison or fall into the hands of a foreigner, I no longer have responsibility for her'. Then the widow is asked, 'Now what do you want to do? Do you wish to *melangun* to the forest or stay in place, which is full of people?' Usually, the widow wishes to *melangun* to a quiet place in the forest, where there are many birds or where there is a small river with an abundance of fish. If she decides to leave, usually she is accompanied by her parents and siblings, which bring a little food like rice, bananas and sugarcane. After three months, the grief-stricken widow returns to her village. After three months, the widow is allowed to marry again even if she is still pregnant with the child of the deceased. However, if the widowed marries before this three month period is over, they can be fined (*bangun*) by the relatives of the deceased. Generally, even the village *Kubu* still *melangun* for some period when a family member dies. The shortest amount they now *melangun* is a week. (Dongen 1910:236)

Appendix D
Belief and Ritual Surrounding Swidden Farming
Swidden Plants and Dry Rice

This appendix describes some of the *Orang Rimba's* beliefs and ritual surrounding swidden farming. Most along the *Makekal* River will say that they prefer to base their lives around a swidden garden, which provides a stable flow of staples, regardless of whether they actually spend much time living in the swidden. Within their swidden practices, the *Orang Rimba* have a strong conceptual division between swidden fields that are planted with tuberous crops (*human tanohmon*) and those that are planted primarily with dry rice (*huma padi*). Similar to the contrast made between swidden fields and digging for wild yams, precedence and preference slants towards fields planted with tuberous crops over rice. A tuberous swidden requires much less maintenance than dry rice, and allows a camp the option to diversify their subsistence strategies in the forests, which requires mobility. Given the economic flexibility that tuberous gardens afford they tend to be much smaller than a rice field, and while variable, tend to range from 1/2 to 1 hectare per family although there are not necessarily any rules as to their size.

Husbands often open individual family plots contiguous to one another, which they often place with a larger 'big house' (*rumah godong*). Depending on preference, camp tensions or according to separate family groupings, they can also be disconnected, yet nearby. Sometimes, several families will open a collective swidden field together, whenever camps choose to spend more time collecting forest products. Because of the greater time and energy it requires, swiddens plated with rice tend to be bigger. While most will say they were much smaller in the past, rice fields along the upstream *Makekal* River commonly measured to around one *tanoh* or around two and a half hectares, which is the way that the *Melayu* commonly measure their swidden fields. The larger size may have to do with their access to chainsaws, and a recent effort to mix in rubber saplings into their fields, which at the time (along the *Sako Jernang* River), were being opened along the edge of the forests (the *hompongon*) as part of an effort to block *Melayu* swidden farmers from encroaching into the customary forests.

The annual fruiting season is a primary or pivot season in the forests; however many subsistence strategies such as hunting, fishing, gathering forest products and swidden farming are conducted according to the two dominant seasons in the forests, the rainy and dry seasons and intermediate gaps of fair weather. The following chart

lists some of the subsistence activities that are generally associated with the dry and rainy seasons.

Table D.1 Subsistence Activities Based around the Rainy and Dry Seasons

Approximate month	Season	Subsistence activities
May-June	'Hot days, wet nights' (<i>puang hor'iko ranto sungoi bosoh</i>)	Begin opening the swidden Slashing (<i>manca</i>), cutting the trees (<i>nobong</i>)
July-October	'The dry season' (<i>bocencing kamarrow</i>)	Breaking up branches to dry for burning (<i>mer'ada</i>), drying out, and burning the field (<i>bekor</i>). Catching fish and spearing turtles
November-December	'Break in the dry season' (<i>pecat kamar'ow pekeso'an petahunon</i>) or the 'season of flowers' (<i>musim bungabugahon</i>)	Planting tuberous crops Towards the end, rice may be planted Begin collecting honey
January-March	'The rainy season' (<i>pangaboh delom ke aik</i>)	Begin harvesting tuberous crops. Damming and poisoning fish
February/March/ April	'The fruit season' (<i>petahunon</i>) 'The good days when the <i>buntor</i> fruit comes' (<i>har'i beik pohalion buah bunto</i>)	Collecting fruit, and hunting migratory bearded pigs if present. <i>Balai</i> wedding ceremonies
April-May	'Light rains every night' (<i>pangaboh menyeyetah</i>)	Harvest the rice

Choosing Where to Open the Swidden Field

In contrast to many full time swidden farmers throughout the region, the *Orang Rimba* claim to have few structured rules or prohibitions (*pantangon*) that mandate the opening of swidden fields or govern any strict rotation patterns.¹ Where a new field is opened is often said to be a matter of preference, and most importantly a manoeuvre towards forest resources such as game, fish, or fruits. This is not entirely true. However, their less stringent beliefs on the topic, which they do not always practice, may have to do with their small camps, mobility and the tendency to continuously fluctuate back and forth between swidden farming and a mobile life based on digging for wild yams. They say that many will not follow these prohibitions when opening a smaller tuberous garden or when fields are not opened during consecutive seasons. These prohibitions can become more complex whenever planting dry rice, particularly in the rare cases that they establish any kind of continuity on a year-to-year basis.

Some of the beliefs and prohibitions taken into account whenever opening a swidden are individual, family and community rights to resources in forests, the location of land in reference to previously opened forests, the flow of nearby rivers, the

presence of neighbouring camps, patches of forest or trees that are of religious significance, and the presence of spirits in the landscape (*setan* or *silum-on*). Breaking any of these prohibitions can lead to the ‘curse of the swidden field’ (*pengana huma*), which can strike any one associated with the field with sickness, bad luck or accidents. Because of this, the male who opens the field usually makes some of the decisions when opening the field in consultation with a shaman. In addition to leaning on junior family members for his own subsistence needs while opening his field, a camp elder is usually an expert in matters pertaining to *adat*, religious matters and is often a senior in-law.

A person or family is usually only allowed to open swidden field in their own customary forests, unless they first receive permission from the headman of another region. Within customary forests, there are a number of loosely followed prohibitions, which direct the opening of new swidden fields. It is usually, not allowed to open a swidden to the downstream of a field opened the previous year, and whenever opening new fields they tend to move upstream or to a different river sub-branch. Some say that these rules only apply to those opening swidden’s during continuous seasons, when branching out from a previous field, and more commonly when they plant rice, which is again inconsistent. More often than not, an abrupt shift to a nomadic life following death will disrupt some of these patterned seasonal rules.

Given the relatively high population of *Orang Rimba* along the *Makekal*, their long history of opening fields, and several decades of selective logging in the region, most forests along the *Makekal* River are now secondary forests. Within a person’s customary forests it is generally preferred to open swidden’s in older ‘healthy’ forests (*rimba belalo* or *rimba godong*), which in the past may have been a term for primary forests, but these days are either logged forests or older secondary forests in former swiddens (*sesap tuo*). They believe that these forests are less likely to be occupied by earthbound spirits, and because of their age are ‘cool’ and ‘healthy forests’ (*rimba bungahon*). They are also easier to open than older forests (*rimba belalo/godong*) and younger secondary forests (*rimba beluko* or *sesap*). Whenever opening a swidden in younger secondary forests there are prohibitions that allow a forest to lie fallow for a period of seven to ten seasons, and for fear of the curse of the swidden (*pengana huma*) are forbidden to be opened during this period.

Families are prohibited from opening forests or cutting down trees that are key resources or hold religious significance. Whenever choosing a location for a prospective field the *Orang Rimba* also take into consideration the surrounding rivers

and its flow (upstream/*hulu* vs. downstream/*hilir*), its proximity to the riverbanks, and the presence of surrounding camps. They prefer a ‘long flat topography’ (*tanoh rana* or *pematong lebor*) that has easy access to a nearby river, yet is not too close to its riverbanks, which are believed to be an avenue in which the gods of sickness travel. Many will open their fields perpendicularly between two sub-branches of a river. When plating rice, they prefer to open the field in lower marshlands as the crop tends to absorb more water.

Swiddens are not allowed to be opened too closely to the upstream or downstream (along the same river branch) of another person’s swidden field, unless the two fields are connected to one another. Reasons for this relate to a belief that the camp in the downstream would be polluted by the *kuntung* or waste from another’s swidden field, and result in a variety of the curse of the swidden (*pengana huma*), which in this case appears in the form of sickness. Their conception of *kuntung* does not have anything to do with normal wastes, as the ancient or ‘old laws’ (*adat lamo*) prohibit polluting the rivers with faeces, soaps, gasoline and oils. *Kuntung* are the charred remnants of an already burned field, which fall into the rivers and eventually settle and accumulate along the edge of the riverbanks near another’s downstream field. Given their religious beliefs concerning the soul of rice, *kuntung* is particularly dangerous when the charred remains are believed to come from a rice field. If fields are placed in this manner, it is believed that the camps present in either of the fields (the upstream and downstream) can be struck with ‘the warmth or heat of the charcoal’ (*kehanyuton punting*), which leads to fevers (*demom*) or excess heat in different portions of the body. The family that opens the field in the upstream region is struck by ‘raise to the chief’ (*noek penghulu*) or a fever of the head. The family in the downstream region is struck by ‘fall to the feet’ (*tur’un kaki*) or an accumulation of heat that begins with aching pain in one’s feet, and eventually leads to paralysis and the inability to walk.

After weighing these features the last major consideration when choosing where to open a field is to determine whether the land is safe, ‘cool’ (*sejuk*) and healthy (*bungahon*), and will fit with its human occupants, the crops, the sacred bounding of first crops (*penculung huma*), and if rice is planted, the soul of the rice field. There are a variety of reasons why the land in forests may be considered unhealthy or ‘hot’ (*panai*) and dangerous to live on. The most common reason is when the land is occupied by spirits (or whole villages of them) who reside in or make their homes in the features of the landscape. Most are believed to go about their own business when they are not disturbed; however, it is difficult to avoid these spirits when opening the forest and

living in a swidden. If not removed from the land, their presence can lead to unfortunate accidents, bad luck, attack, spirit invasion or possession, and in the case of the later, can take over or control ones body, actions, mind and thoughts. Land can also be considered 'hot' whenever covered with seeds of sickness (*bibit penyakit*), left by earthbound spirits, the gods of sickness, or objects related to a persons black magic (*ilemu* or *jempi hitom*). Rather than risk problems with spirits, prospective swidden land is first examined, and dealt with by a shaman. Because a shaman's abilities to propitiate spirits depends upon maintaining separation with the outside world, these beliefs are given as a reason for maintaining boundaries with outsiders, and can also be a reason to leave a 'hot', unhealthy swidden, and return to a more healthy mobile life in the 'cool' forests.

Whenever choosing land for a swidden it is the duty of a shaman to find out if there are spirits present on the land (or seeds of sickness), and then make the decision on whether to abandon the spot and choose another location, or forcefully expel them using magic or his relationships with the gods. According to one man along the *Makekal* River,

A shaman often examines if their spirits present on land through dream travel (*bemimpi jelon*). When a shaman dreams, they can see if there are *setan* or ghosts in different places in the land, and if their homes are present in the location. If there is, we are not allowed to sleep there, and not allowed to open a field in that spot. Usually, if we want to get rid of *setan*, for instance from a swidden, a shaman asks for assistance from the tiger god (*mato mer'ego*) because all evil spirits are afraid of him.

After a night of these activities, a shaman visits the edge of the location in order to test if the field is safe with the 'staff that sees from afar' (*kayu penyogot*). If during these activities the staff extends or grows in the direction of the field, it is an affirmation that the location is most likely safe and healthy (*tanoh bungahon*) and the next day they can begin opening the field. If the staff does not grow in the direction of the prospective field then the land is considered unhealthy or dangerous, and a shaman may repeat the ritual in another location.

Opening the *Huma*: Slashing the undergrowth (*manca*)

Fields are opened during the roughly two-month period of light rains falling before the dry season, a period referred to as 'warm days ending in rainy nights' (*puang har'iko ranto sungoi bosoh*). Opening a swidden field (*huma*) is considered men's work, and in accordance with *adat*, puts the rights or authority (*penguasaan*) of the field, the home, and its crops into the hands of their wife. Generally, the husband of each household is individually responsible for opening a family's swidden field. Elders will also usually

open his own fields, and given issues of seniority or physical limitations, often lean on the labor of junior males, usually a son-in law (*manantu*). If the family has an unwed daughter (*budak lapai*), they may also lean on the 'free work' (*budi beso*) of a suitor performing bride service. When they are old enough, bachelors who are not away performing bride service may open their own field, but are more likely to help their fathers or possibly a brother in-law open theirs. Expectations for them to perform this type of work are rather limited while in their natal camps, and it is much more common for them to leech off the work (*numpang*) of their brother in-laws or a sister's suitor performing bride service.

The difficult work of 'slashing' the vines and undergrowth (*manca*) is performed by the men with iron machetes (*paroh*). They conduct this work from the bottom up, first clearing the lower bushes, small trees and eventually working up towards the creepers and tuberous vines that wrap their way around the trees. One of the most important aspects of the slashing work is 'cutting the vines away' (*ngentung ukar*) from the larger trees so that they do not snag onto and effect the direction of the trees when they are felled (*nobong*). During the first few days when opening a field there is always a belief that evil spirits may remain in the field, and have the potential to cause sickness, invasion, possession or dangerous accidents. During these early days, a man must be careful to read the numerous signs he encounters in the field. Reading signs in the landscape and interpreting some of them when they appear in dreams is not a ritual specialty, but common knowledge learned by all at a very early age.

There are many signs that we encounter during the first couple of days of slashing (*manca*) the field. After the first day of work, we know whether to continue or whether to abandon it and leave. If we meet centipedes (*lipan*) while slashing the undergrowth this can be sign that there will be spirits (*setan*) in the field, and that we need to consult a shaman to see what needs to be done. If there is a dead branch that falls from a tree and stabs into the ground, it is definitely a sign that someone will die. I would leave and not lay my eyes on the field again. However, there are also good signs...if we are slashing through the undergrowth and encounter a black snake called the *tali kikiding* the crops will be a success.

After the first days work these signs are discussed with a shaman, who in effort to find out more about the 'unseen' in the field, contacts the gods in trance or dreams and determines what needs to be done.

If a shaman finds that there are many spirits (*setan*) in the field then he must decide what to do next, whether to use magic to chase them away, or his relations with another god. It may be that it is best just to abandon the field.

Slashing work (*manca*) is usually done in the early mornings and late afternoons to avoid the intense midday heat. Women and elder children may also help with the

slashing work, at a leisurely pace. During a midday break, most will retreat to the cool forests. Husbands and any male suitors performing bride service might go off on a variety of food finding activities, which may include checking traps or fishing, while unmarried brothers (*bujang*) and the children may go for a dip in the river. As preference always seems to shift to other activities in the forests, and free time is often absorbed by legal hearings and ritual, work in the field is often conducted at a leisurely pace. The *manca* work eventually tends to finish in a little under a month's time, or around half way through the hot days, rainy night season.

Felling the Trees (*nobong*)

After they finish the slashing work, it is the responsibility of the males to cut down the larger trees (*nobong*) in the plot. In the past, they cut the larger trees with a long and slender shafted axe called the *beliung*. While effective for opening small fields, cutting large trees with the *beliung* is time consuming, and together with a preference to diversify subsistence activities in the forest, in the past anyway, appears to have limited the size of a swidden field to less than an acre. Because of its difficulty, felling trees is often a collective effort with several husbands working together to fell the trees within a family plot. While cutting the trees, the men sing poetic songs (*memantuan*) that express the hard work, and how their wives (mothers, sisters, or father-in-laws) are constantly monitoring and analyzing their efforts.

We diligent workers (warriors) clear the tall trees	<i>Kami doh (baling) boh jantang tenggi</i>
We are working in the fields and are measured, lelih ha ileh	<i>kami bohgaji jaji lading di ukur lelih ha ileh</i>

The poem below is recited before the trees are cut, so that any earthbound spirits that may remain near a field do not influence the direction the tree falls or possibly cause a man to trip and fall while trying to run clear of a falling tree. The poem serves to remind them to be aware and keep on their toes while the tree is coming down.

A buffalo is at the top of the tree Hanging like a stone	<i>Ker'bau di tangun pucuk batu begantung</i>
Heavy, like a floor of stones, heavy Far, you need to run far	<i>ber'at lantaury batu ber'at jauh kau jauh</i>

There are several ritualized beliefs concerning how the trees or branches fall. They refer to a log or branch that falls and stabs into the ground as *hunjom* or *bunkot bungki*, which can lead to *tekanu*, or swelling of the head and strong headaches. Another situation that can lead to *tekanu* is the 'bite of the crocodile' (*kuyu hmang gong*). The bite of a crocodile refers to a log or branch that falls in between the forked branches of

an already fallen tree, and looks like the jaws of a snapping crocodile when it attacks its prey. In order to remedy both unordered situations, they remove the logs or branches from the ground while repeating the following incantation (*bopato*) three times.

Health of the *juaray* leaves
Health flames like a fire

Sambu juar'ay
Sambu ber'oh

After repeating the verse, they dig a small hole beneath the location where the branch or log fell, place it with three types of leaves (*sedingin, setawah, and kunyit*), sprinkle with water, and cover it with soil. Aside from how the trees fall, the *Orang Rimba* are also careful to remove all *ser'agih* trees that lie in a five-meter radius in the forests surrounding the field. According to belief, their shadows (*gemayong* or *bayangon*) can lead to dizziness and vomiting. According to one man,

Their shadows will usually come around the late afternoon and it can be dangerous if the shadows reach the house. If *ser'agih* trees are left in the forests surrounding the field then those who stay around the house during the day will often get sick.

In the past, cutting the trees might have taken anywhere from three to four weeks, and usually extended well into the roughly two-month dry season, referred to as *bocencing kamarow*. However, these days someone in the group usually has access to a chainsaw, which allows a man to fell the trees in a few days' time. Chainsaws seem to have taken away from the communal effort in felling trees, and have given those who possess them an added means to make a profit, even at the expense of charging close kin. While an elder may be able to persuade a son-in law to cut his field free of charge, they will often charge others for the maintenance (oil, gas and files) as well as the labour.

Cutting up the Branches, Stirring up the Winds, and Burning the Field

After felling the trees, the men will cut up the smaller trees and branches (*mer'ada*), which serve as kindling and make it easier to burn the field (*bekor*). The cut branches, leaves, shrubs and fallen vines are left to dry for around two weeks during the long hot dry season. During this time, the men will monitor the weather (*ngengong raba*), avoiding rain and waiting for a hot and dry day with just the right amount of wind needed for a successful burn. Explaining the burning process,

To burn a field you must read the wind. If there is no wind it can take forever to burn the field... you must light it here or there and then, the fire dies, there it dies again. To burn the field we take a stick of dammar resin (*demor*) and wrap it 'seven' times (magical number) with a thin piece of cloth, light it and throw it into the field.² If the sun is bright and there is a lot of wind then it will burn. There is also magic (*bopato*) to increase the wind (*pukulan angin*). We must walk around the field

‘seven’ times saying this magic and afterwards, the wind is heavy, making it easier to burn.

After burning the field, the *Orang Rimba* wait around a week for a time that usually coincides with the transition to the one month break of light rains after the dry season (*pecat kamar’ow pekesor’an petahunon*) in order to ‘cool’ the land (*sejuko tanah*). This allows the field to absorb just enough moisture to plant the standard tuberous crops of the *huma tanahmon* (non-rice swidden field).

The God of Swidden Plants (*or’ang de tanahmon*) and the *Penculung Huma*

Throughout the larger region of Sumatra, Malaysia, Borneo and Java, many (Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic) swidden farmers appear to share a broad outline of similar beliefs and ritual related to the swidden field (personal communication with James Fox; Skeat 1906a; Adimihadja 1989).³ These beliefs can be interrelated with tuberous crops planted in a swidden, rice or a mixture of the two. However, throughout the region, they are more generally intertwined with the more common practice of rice farming and the soul of rice field. In the *Orang Rimba* variant, there is a certain amount of ideological tension that exist in their beliefs between tuberous crops and dry rice, which tends to shift precedence to the former. The beliefs surrounding tuberous plants form the basis of this ritual practice, while the ritual surrounding dry rice tends to be fall within its domain, whenever mixed into a field.

The health and spirit of the plants in a tuberous swidden (*huma tanahmon*) is dependant upon *or’ang de tanahman*, the upstream gods of swidden plants. Located in the ‘upstream’ region of heaven, they say that their village is surrounded by lush jungles plants, the heavenly or spiritual versions that grow in the forests, many of which are the varieties planted in the *huma tanahmon*. Some of the plants associated with the god of swidden plants include, taro (*keladi*), semi-domesticated yams (*benor*), wild banana’s (*pisang*), sugarcane (*tobu*) and sweet potato (*piloh*). While some of the older new world crops such as the sweet potato and bengkuang/yam bean are also included in this classification of plants, the gods and goddesses of swidden plants are not strongly associated with its primary crop, cassava/manioc (*hubi kayu*). The *Orang Rimba* lack any religious notions or stories concerning the origins of cassava, most assuming that this durable, yet protein deficient plant was obtained sometime in the recent past from the surrounding *Melayu*. This is understandable as the crop was only introduced to the region during the last hundred years (personal communication with James Fox; Boomgaard 2003).⁴ Regardless of its recent introduction and association with the

Melayu, this tuberous, durable and low maintenance crop is generally classified as a *tanohmon* plant and is included within the ritual related to the field.

In order to maintain the health, vitality and safety of the crops and the people residing in the field, the *Orang Rimba* call upon *or'ang de tanohmon* to send its spirit to reside in the field, and remain there throughout the duration of the swidden season. After cooling the field, the *Orang Rimba* choose or create a slightly elevated mound of earth (*tanoh tumbu*) near the center of the swidden where they build the *penculung huma*, a bounded grouping of the sacred first crops planted in the *huma*.⁵ The *penculung huma* is marked off from the rest of the crop by four guarding logs (*betung puwar*), which serve as its boundaries and are not allowed to be crossed during the swidden season. In the middle of the guarding logs, they implant a sacred forked pole (*pengogor'on der'i hutan*), found deep in the forest, around which they plant the first crops of the field, those that are normally associated with *or'ang de tanohmon*. The sacred forked pole is a contact point that attracts and will receive the spirit or soul (*haluy*) of *or'ang de tanohman* vitalize and protect the sacred first plants within the guarding logs, the swidden, and a family's home, from spirits, crop failure and sickness.

Unlike so many other rituals surrounding key subsistence activities, *or'ang de tanohman* is not seduced to come down from heaven through prayer songs, but rather forced into an oath by magical incantations (*bopato*), which keeps its spirit bound in the *penculung huma*. While a shaman may later visit this god with matters pertaining to the health of the swidden field, any junior male who has knowledge of this magic can do the initial incantations, which bind it to the *penculung huma*. According to one man,

During this time, an oath is made with the god of the swidden fields (*or'ang de tanohmon*) to look after the crops in the field and to protect the families in the *huma*. These are not prayers (*bedekir*) but magic (*bopato*) handed down from our ancestors. They are words that force this god into an oath, and serve to guard the families and the crops in the field. This is so no one falls into danger, gets sick, or dies. Until we harvest all of the crops in the swidden, and until the branches surrounding the plants decay we are not allowed to pass the guarding logs. If the wood is broken, or even if someone passes through them, then we must quickly leave the *huma*, because someone could die.

There are strong prohibitions against passing over the guarding logs once they bind the spirit of *or'ang de tanohmon* in the *penculung huma*. It is believed that if anyone were to pass over the logs, the sacred oath would be broken, and its spirit would be freed, abandon the field, or lead to its wrath of anger, which could lead to the possibility of crop failure or endanger the lives of those in the field.⁶ After creating the *penculung huma*, the women begin planting the field (*tanom*) by transferring stalks of cassava (*ubi*

kayu) and semi-wild varieties of yams (*hubi*), taro (*keladi*) and sweet potato (*piloh*) from the previous year's field.

Table D.2 Varieties of Swidden Plants

Cassava/Manioc (<i>ubi</i>)	Taro (<i>keladi</i>)	Yam (<i>benor</i>)	Sweet Potato (<i>piloh</i>)
<i>lemak</i>	<i>bankohulu</i>	<i>gejoh</i>	<i>piloh</i>
<i>lembaw</i>	<i>ber'at sepikul</i>	<i>maniy</i>	<i>cankung</i>
<i>ber'ali</i>	<i>damakon mata</i>	<i>hitom</i>	<i>mer'ansi</i>
<i>gedang</i>	<i>kambow</i>	<i>jer'i</i>	<i>puteh</i>
<i>kawat</i>	<i>keneng</i>	<i>tandek</i>	<i>labu</i>
<i>kepal</i>	<i>rejang</i>	<i>kelapo</i>	<i>kambang jaloh</i>
<i>kir'ai</i>	<i>rumpan pisang</i>	<i>kolot</i>	
<i>cino</i>	<i>santai</i>	<i>kasai</i>	Benkowong
<i>bir'ah</i>		<i>soan</i>	
		<i>bahai</i>	

Other crops associated with the gods of swidden plants that are often mixed into a tuberous swidden field include different varieties of bananas (*pisang*) and sugarcane (*tobu*). Some other types of crops planted in a field, which are not associated with these gods, include chili (*cabe*) and sometimes corn (*jegung*).⁷

Table D.3 Other Crops Planted in a Tuberous Swidden

Sugarcane (<i>tobu</i>)	Banana's (<i>pisang</i>)	<i>bulu</i>
<i>t. hungka</i>	<i>buoy</i>	<i>lidi</i>
<i>t. kapur</i>	<i>gembor</i>	<i>belabai</i>
<i>t. liat</i>	<i>kuneng</i>	Other crops
<i>t. pupur</i>	<i>susu</i>	<i>cabe</i> (red chili)
<i>t. landok</i>	<i>empang</i>	<i>jegung</i> (maize)
	<i>rounton</i>	<i>kar'et</i> (rubber)

The plants in the *huma tanohmon* are extremely durable and self-sufficient. They need little tending after being planted and allow great flexibility to conduct other subsistence pursuits in the forests. Most *tanohmon* crops are ready to be collected in three months time during the rainy season (*pangoboh delom ke aik*), after which they can begin to uproot the crops as needed for their daily meals. Sometimes the fields are extended after the rainy season, and planted with another round of *tanohmon* plants. A tuberous field is often used as a storehouse of crops from which they base themselves, although much of their time can be spent moving from different locations in the surrounding forests.

Building the Big House (*r'umah godong*) in the Swidden Field

While the women plant the field, the husband usually begins work on the big house (*r'umah godong*) of the swidden, which accordance with *adat* is under the authority (*penguasaan*) of the wife. Big swidden homes are on average three meters in width and five meters in length, and are usually built on nine poles (*tiang*) which raise them around a meter off the ground. Before cutting the poles for the home, magical

incantations (*bopato*) are recited while circling the trees ‘seven’ times, which are believed to be absorbed into the poles and protect the home from spirits or black magic. After planting the poles in the ground, the base and ceiling framing (*ambion*) of the big home are tied to the base poles with rattan, after which the crossbeams (*gelogo*) are then mounted across the base *ambion*. The *gelogo* support the durable bark stripped from the *mer’anti* tree, which serve as the room’s floor (*lantoi*), and walls (*dinding*). This bark is pointed out as an ethnic marker, which distinguish their homes from the swidden homes of the surrounding *Melayu*. Similar to their temporary wall-less home (*sungsudungon*), yet unlike a lean too (*belelapion*), the *Orang Rimba* create the flooring of the big home according different levels to create gender space for the wife, unwed daughter and the husband. If planting rice, a rice barn is built beneath the home under, which given its association with the goddesses of rice, and women’s work is also considered female space, and is not allowed to be passed through by men.

After the flooring and walls are put in, work on the roof is begun, which is by far the most difficult part in building the home. The first step in building the roof is building the triangular framing referred to as the ‘bones or skeleton of the family’ (*penohan tulang bububungon*) and the ribs (*kosoh*) upon which the roof will sit. This is conceptualized as male space in the home. After this is done the men set out to the forests to collect the long broad leaves (from the *ser’dang*, or *benal* tree), which will serve as the shingles for the roof (*hatop*). Like the bark for the flooring and walls, these leaves are also pointed out as an ethnic marker, which distinguishes their homes from the surrounding *Melayu*. The leaves from these trees are believed to be sacred (*ker’emat*) as their trees are associated with or looked over by the god of swidden plants (*or’ang de tanohmon*). In a similar manner to *sialong* honey trees, these *ker’emat* trees are often believed to be inhabited by protective earthbound spirits who are engaged in symbiotic relationships with the trees which they make their homes. Like the demon *buyuto* tree shrew, these spirits have the ability to transform its leaves into tree snakes or green tree frogs in order to distract the climber and make him fall out of the tree, when he attempts to harvest them. The night before collecting from the trees, the climber must first ask permission from the spirit or chase him from the tree before collecting the leaves. To climb the trees, long strips of the soft and durable bark from the *hantuy* tree are removed and tied together in a loop (*tali hantuy*), which are latched around the feet and allow the climber to easily make his way up the tree. Several days are spent chopping the leaves from several of trees, which are collected and bound with rattan into bundles (*ber’kai*). They are then attached with rattan straps (*kebial*), turning

them into backpacks, which allow them to carry the heavy bundles back to the *huma*. While green, the broad leaves are then sewn (*dijahit*) onto poles with strings of rattan, and pressed and dried for several days before being tied onto the roof as shingles. Depending on how consistently the husband works, building the big home can take anywhere from two weeks to a month to complete. They often use the big homes in a swidden as a base, and they may not always live in them. Depending on the camp, a family may spend more time living in smaller wall-less homes in the forests surrounding the swidden.

The Rice Field and the ‘Downstream’ Goddesses of Rice (*or’ang de padi*)

In addition to tuberous plants, the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas* sometimes plant dry rice (*padi*), more commonly it seems along the upstream *Makekal* River. Their belief and ritual surrounding rice is similar to other Malayic and Austronesian peoples in the region, although unlike other swidden farmers they never depend on the crop on a consistent basis. As a swidden planted with rice needs much more attention and tending than tuberous crops, whether or not they plant it often depends on whether they choose to limit their mobility in the forests. The *Makekal Orang Rimba* have a strong conceptual division between fields planted with tuberous plants (*huma tanohmon*) and fields planted with dry rice (*huma padi*), and this tension is implicitly reflected in their cosmological conceptions and ritual. Despite the largely latent tension in their belief system, whenever they plant rice it is usually mixed in to a field with tuberous swidden plants, and is included in the first sacred bounding of ritual plants in the *penculung huma*.

Throughout much of Southeast Asia, the religious beliefs surrounding rice tend to be strongly associated with femininity, which in the cultivation of swidden rice may be a reflection of women’s primary role in conducting much of this work. For many peoples in the region, the goddess of rice is seasonally called upon to send her soul to the rice field to impregnate the stalks of rice with spirit matter (*semangat*), give and maintain the health and vitality of the rice, and ensure an abundant harvest.⁸ According to the *Orang Rimba* variant, the benevolent downstream goddesses of rice (*or’ang de padi*) are young and beautiful, and dress themselves in elegant ‘white’ cloth, normally reserved for royalty. They are believed to be as numerous as the grains of rice they look over, each goddess being an exact duplicate of the other, yet only the size of one’s hand or finger. These goddesses reside in the all female village of *Imom*, where they live in luxurious *Melayu* style homes, which similar to the *Melayu* are built along the edges of

the riverbanks, a practice prohibited by the *Orang Rimba*. They spend most of their time paddling the downstream river of heaven in boats, where they frequently interact with and form friendships and alliances with the malicious gods of sickness. Because of this, shamans say that they strategically form close relationships with these goddesses, who can be used as intermediaries during curing ceremonies, and assist them to approach and deal with sickness associated with the largely unapproachable gods of sickness. As with many of the downstream gods, the *Orang Rimba* say that the goddesses of rice are holders of Islamic knowledge (*ilemu Islam*). This is reflected in the name of their village (*Imom*), a term for a Muslim religious leader and a daily leader of prayer in the mosque, and in the prayer songs to these goddesses, where they are often referred to as *ketib* (Malay, *khatib*), a largely synonymous term.

The Origins of Rice

Along the *Makekal*, the myths surrounding the origins of rice include some characteristic Malay features and a common Austronesian association between origins and hard-shelled nuts.⁹ According to the stories, the goddesses of rice originally felt sorrow for the *Orang Rimba*, who in the past knew nothing of rice, and could only subsist by digging for wild yams or planting tuberous crops. Out of pity, she sent the knowledge of rice to their ancestors in the form of a sacred child named *Setunjuk*. As his name implies, *Setunjuk* was believed to be only as big as a finger, similar to how they conceptualise the numerous miniature goddess of rice. There are several different versions of how *Setunjuk* came to the ancestors and brought to them the knowledge of rice (see appendix). One common version tells that an ancestral couple who could not bear children prayed to the gods for a child, and were answered by the goddess of rice, who sent the couple a divine child. Another story says that *Setunjuk* was found as a baby deep in the forest by a group of hunters who were chasing a sacred (*ker'emat*) white mousedeer (*napu putih*). Both stories tell of his amazing feats and magical powers as a child, particularly when opening the first rice field, and how he led the ancestors to the original 'big' rice that fell out of the coconuts (*kelapo*). According to this story,

Before we did not possess rice, but only lived by digging for wild yams (*bebenor*), or planting swidden plants (*huma tanohmon*). Because of this, the goddess of rice felt so sorry for the *Orang Rimba*. She believed that the food given to us was the most sorrowful of all the tribes (*suku*). The goddess of rice came to one of our ancestors and said, "we feel sorry for you always eating food that is so sorrowful... take our rice, this is the food which is the best". Later, the ancestors found rice stalks with what looked like coconuts hanging from them. Upon cracking the coconut open, the grains of rice (*padi*) fell out. This old rice was different. It was

rice without a husk as if it had already been removed. In the beginning, *padi* had no husks and the grain was much bigger than it is now. These days it is already small.

The smaller rice planted today particularly that which is saved from the *penculung huma* and is planted on a yearly basis is believed to descend from this original big rice, made small by generations of replanting.

The Soul of the Rice Field

Throughout the region, many Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic rice growing peoples share similar conceptions in the soul of the rice field (*semangat padi*), which is often conceptualized as closely resembling human souls.¹⁰ The *Orang Rimba* variant of these beliefs is very similar to other Malayic and Austronesian peoples. In their conceptions, each piece of rice contain an individual soul (*semongot*) that closely resemble human souls, which is associated with and receives its vitality from the infinite miniature goddesses of rice. This is quite different from their conceptions of the plants in tuberous swidden field (*huma tanohmon*), which are only believed to be looked after, guarded, and inspired by the soul of the god of swidden plants, but do not actually contain a soul. Whenever referring to the soul of rice, the *Orang Rimba* more often use a more common variant of the Malayic term for soul matter, *semongot*. While the *Orang Rimba* see the words *huluy* and *semongot* as being largely synonymous and can be used interchangeably, whenever referring to the soul matter of humans, animals, the gods, and spirits they more often use the word *huluy*. In addition to having individual characteristics, the soul of rice also combines together to form a larger collective soul of the rice field (*semongot padi*). As with humans, and several other animals that are believed to have the potential to possess souls, the rice stalks in the field are conceptualised as impermanent casings or receptacles, which the goddesses of rice will fill with her soul matter (*semongot*). As one man along the *Makekal* points out, ‘Only the casing of the rice is rough and impermanent, but inside, its soul is like a person’s’ (*cuma padinye kasar, tapi huluynye or’ang*).

Very similar to other Malayic and Austronesian peoples throughout the region, the *Orang Rimba* describe the growing stalks of rice in the field in analogies that are linked to the birthplace (*tanah per’anothon*), pregnant women and childbirth.¹¹ In both rice-growing and childbirth, it is essential to take extra care in preparing the land, ridding it of spirits and seeds of sickness, and making sure it is ‘cool’ so that its soul matter is successfully transferred from heaven, and impregnates (*buntingko*) the seeds and stalks of rice in the field. While the rice is growing, the *Orang Rimba* refer to the

plants as rice babies (*budak padi*), which like humans, are said to have emotions that need to be catered to and nurtured while growing in the field. It is said that rice feels joy (*ladai*) when it is sung to and cared for, and sadness (*sedih*) or anger (*mar'ah*) when it is neglected, ignored, or the balance of *adat* in the swidden is disturbed. It is considered extra important to guard the field from pests, which are said to cause them fear (*takut*), and to make the rice feel sorrow for its siblings who have been taken. Very similar conceptions are held by other Malayic peoples in Sumatra, Malaysia and Borneo (Helliwell 2001; Jensen 1974).

It is also considered important to keep the souls of rice together in one bounded area, in which case the field is collectively referred to as having a larger soul of the field. The numerous rice babies consider themselves to be siblings, and have the desire to be together. If kept apart through breaks in between two fields, they can transfer these longings to, and literally take over the bodies of the human inhabitants of the field. They believe that caring for rice plants as if they were children keeps the rice babies (*budak padi*), and more importantly their 'mother' goddesses happy and content, so that they remain in the field and continue to keep their soul matter strong, so that the rice plants remain healthy, and an abundant harvest is ensured.

'Cooling' the Field, Calling the Goddesses of Rice and Planting the *Semongot Padi*

In contrast to the short 'cooling' period with tuberous plants, this period is drawn out from two weeks to a month whenever planting rice, as the land needs extra time to 'cool' and to fit with the soul of the rice field. This drawn out cooling period may also allow for the extra time needed to wait for the heavier rains that begin before the start of the rainy season (*pangaboh delom ke aik*), which is needed when planting rice. According to one man along the *Makekal*,

After burning, we must wait two or three weeks to cool the land (*sejuko tanoh*) before planting rice. If the land is too 'hot' then the soul of the rice (*semongot padi*) will not fit with the land. The goddesses of rice will not come in great numbers and the rice will wilt away (*layu*) and die

The evening before planting rice, a shaman adorned in sacred white cloth, a symbol of the goddess of rice, sing prayer songs (*bedikir*) to the goddesses throughout the night in an effort to lure them into their swidden fields. During these prayers, the shaman's travelling soul (*huluy bejelon*) leaves his body to travel to *Imom*, where he attempts to flatter and seduce these goddesses through joyous singing and dancing and offerings of sacred white cloth (*gumpuy*). The goal is to seduce as many of these goddesses as possible (thousands or millions) into their boats which lie along the

riverbank, which they paddle downstream along the river in the sky, down from heaven, to the earth, and upstream to their swiddens in the forests.¹² In addition to its use as an offering, the sacred white cloth (*gumpuy*) brought with them on their journey serves a function similar to the soul cloth used to transport the human soul (*toluk koin*) from heaven to the pregnant mother on earth. It is used as a means to attract or bind the goddesses of rice to their boats and bring them down to the fields on earth. After attracting them to the field, the white soul cloth is imbued with the essence of their soul and serves to bind them to the field.

The community also have an important role as participants in these prayers, and actively join a shaman to ‘sing the joyous song and dance’ (*bedingdang*) of the *padi* song. The *padi* song is the first song they sing to the goddesses of rice in order to attract them to their boats, but is commonly sung while the *padi* grows in the field, so that the goddesses remain content and happy, and to seduce more of them down to the field and maintain and increase the vitality of the rice. The more goddesses who are seduced to enter the boats and come down to the field, the stronger the soul of the rice, and the more successful the crop.

Cheerfully singing and dancing in the village	<i>Hididang hididang kampo</i>
the religious man’s (<i>ketib</i>) village	<i>ketib kampong</i>
Dancing in <i>Imom</i> performing a dance	<i>Imom joget main tar’i</i>
A shaman’s cloth for good fortune	<i>solindang ponguyup untung</i>
One thousand come from the left,	<i>ser’ima detong de kir’i</i>
One million come from the right	<i>solanso detong de kano</i>
A shaman’s cloth for good fortune	<i>solindan ponguyup untung</i>

After a shaman lures the goddesses to the field, they reside in the family’s rice barn (*gelubo*) below the house, where they are believed to remain throughout the rice season and until the harvest. They hang these sacred soul cloths (*gumpuy*) from the four corners of the rice barn, and believe them to attract and bind the goddesses to the location. They also refer to the *gumpuy* as ‘inspirers’ (*pemanto*), which strengthen the soul of the rice in the *huma* and ‘inspire’ (*manto*) the *padi*’s growth. After they occupy the rice barn, men are not allowed to enter this female space. Similar to entering female space in the home, they consider this a strong breach of gender conventions, and as with crossing over the guarding logs of the *penculung huma*, can cause the goddesses to flee, and result in a failed crop.

The morning after these prayers, the women begin to plant (*nugal padi*) the rice, first by placing the ritual first planting of rice, referred to as the *semongot padi* inside the sacred bounding of the *penculung huma*. The *semongot padi* is considered the

central embodiment of the larger soul of the rice field. As the first planting in the field, it is sometimes referred to as the ‘elder sibling’ (*kakok*) and serves as the spirit or inspiration for the rest of the rice in the field. It is both included under the protective umbrella of the god of the swidden fields, but more directly receives its vitality from the mother goddesses of rice who are bound to the rice barn. They believe that the *semongot padi* is intimately connected to the larger collective soul of the field, and in a sense, symbolically serves as a gauge, representing the greater health and vitality of the crop of rice. If the *semongot padi* were to begin to wilt (*layu*) or fall into a poor state of health, then the rest of the rice in the field would soon follow suit. Because of this, those in the field must keep a close eye on the *penculung huma*, and ensure that its soul remains strong by monitoring and attending to the needs the rice babies in the field, and the mother goddess in the rice barn.

After they plant the *semongot padi*, the women walk through the field, using a long shaft to poke holes (*nugal*) into the earth, dropping the rice in, and cover them up with soil. Below are a few of the local terms for the different varieties of rice planted in the upstream regions of Jambi, which generally fall into the classification *Oryza sativa* (Beukema et al. 2004:65).

Some Local Terms for Different Varieties of Rice

<i>kuning</i>	<i>santan bayula</i>	<i>hului</i>
<i>koning</i>	<i>lemang</i>	<i>bungo macang</i>
<i>putih</i>	<i>hetung putih</i>	<i>padi tumbuh</i>

***Layu* Tensions between the Gods of Swidden Plants and the Goddesses of Rice**

For the most part, the *semongot padi* peacefully coexists with the tuberous plants inside the protective covering of the *penculung huma*, and the *Orang Rimba* do not believe there to be any tension or conflict between the two gods. However, there appears to be at least some latent ideological tension between the ‘upstream’ god of swidden plants and the ‘downstream’ goddesses of rice, which seems to work itself out through at least one ritual prohibition. In addition to their association with the *tanohmon* plants in the field, the gods of swidden plants are also associated with a variety of plants that are considered extremely *layu* (‘wilt away, decaying’) not to the body or souls of humans or any other creatures, but only the soul of rice. These plants mainly derive from wild palms such as the purifying *hantuy* flowers, all varieties of rattans, the leaves (*serdang* and *benal*) that are used to build the roofs of the big house, and the slender leaves of the *rumbai* palm which women use to weave their pleated mats.

Layu Plants Associated with the God of Swidden Fields

<i>rumbai</i> palm leaves (used to make mats)	<i>kopu</i>
<i>serdang</i> leaves (used to make roof)	<i>jero</i>
<i>benal</i> leaves (used to make roof)	<i>bunkawong</i>
all types of rattan	
<i>hantuy</i> palm	

Because of this, they strictly prohibit brining these plants near or over the rice field as it would cause the soul of the rice (*semongot padi*) to ‘wither away’ (*layu*) and die. They allow these plants in the swidden field as long as they sit outside for several days after they cut them. After the leaves fade from green to brown, the *layu* causing energy is discharged from the plant, so that they may be placed on the roof or used by the women to make pleated mats or baskets.¹³

Positioning the Rice Fields and Sicknesses Related to the Soul of the Rice

Whenever planting rice, there are several rules or prohibitions surrounding how they position two neighbouring rice fields, which relate to the desire of the soul of rice for the familiarity and company of its siblings. Breaking these prohibitions is dangerous, as they believe that the soul of the rice field can exert its influence over those residing in the field and cause sickness. One of these rules is expressed in the analogy, a ‘deer always returns to its droppings’ (*kijang melikih tasi*), and relates to where a rice field is opened in relation to previous years. If a field is not opened from a spot adjacent to the previous opening, it is believed that whoever lives in the field will be struck by ‘rice fever’ (*demom padi*).

If you have already planted rice in one location, the soul of the rice gets used to the land, and a location. This is why if you are going to plant rice, it needs to be continued from that same spot. If we violate this rule, then we can catch rice fever, which can make a person dizzy, and eventually cause them to go insane. It can also cause diarrhoea. When a person has rice fever, it is like a fire inside of their body, inside you feel extremely hot, but on the outside, you feel very cool.

One practical function of this prohibition may lie in organizing rotation patterns. However, this rule is only rarely enforced when they plant rice, and usually only in cases when it is planted during consecutive years. As the *Orang Rimba* may go several years without planting rice there does not seem to be any consistency in its use.

Another rule related to the larger *semongot padi*, concerns how they position the borders of two neighbouring rice fields. Whenever they open two separate fields with rice, the boundaries of the two fields must share the same borders. If one field extends along further than the neighbouring field, they believe that the *semongot* in both fields will have an irrepressible urge to be together, and will transfer these longings or possess

the occupants of the two fields. They call these longings ‘reaching for the *padi*’s elder sibling’ (*tenetung kokoh padi*), which can strike the inhabitants of both fields with a sickness called the ‘curse of reaching for the *padi*’ (*huku padi tenetung*). This curse or sickness begins with fevers, diarrhoea and follows with the irresistible urge to sit and stare at the mismatched borders of the two adjoining fields. Eventually, the occupants of both fields begin to lose control over half of their bodies, which become possessed by the *semongot padi*, and continuously pulls them towards the *semongot padi* in the adjoining field. As one man explains,

The *padi* longs to be one with its siblings in the other field, but it cannot because it is too far away. If one catches this sickness it is always like this, one arm and leg on one side of the body, always being pulled towards the rice. It exhausts the person’s body, by pulling on it all day, even during the night. The person can never sleep, and has a hard time eating. If the field is not fixed, the person will eventually die of exhaustion. My younger brother caught this sickness. At first, he was only sick, and then he started to lose control of half of his body. It only happened a little at first, but then it was all the time. Towards the end, he was barely coherent, and could not speak. The only thing that held him up was the soul of the rice, which was always pulling him towards the field. It wore him out and he eventually died.

A similar set of beliefs is referred to as *setoon akar*, which occurs when a small patch of forest, undergrowth or vines, grows between the borders of two *padi* fields, which disrupts the unity of its larger soul. When this occurs, those in both fields can be struck by a sickness called *jer’enang jer’noh*, which results in fevers and the longing to sit and stare at the patch of growth that disturbs the soul of the *padi*. The first step towards curing *jer’enang jer’noh* is removing the patch of forest, undergrowth or vines, which lies in between the two fields. After removing these obstructions, these sicknesses are remedied by unifying the two fields’ *semongot* through a communal ritual known as ‘appending the field’ (*anak kampunko*). In appending the field, *padi* must be taken from each of fields and transplanted to other along the mismatched borders in the case of ‘reaching for the *padi*’s brother’ or in the foliage that has been cleared in the case of ‘*setoon akar*’, thus once again uniting and appeasing the soul in the two fields.

Women’s Work in the Swidden, Nurturing the Rice Babies and Rain Magic

In contrast to the laborious work of digging for wild yams, the workload for women tends to be much easier after opening a swidden. When they plant a field with rice, they spend a lot of time guarding the field from pests, while if it is planted with tuberous crops, they spend more time foraging in the forests. Because they consider a swidden to

be 'hot' most will build temporary wall-less huts in the forests surrounding the field, while some of the women's daily activities revolve around looking after the kids, washing cloths, and preparing meals for their families. A great deal of their free time is spent weaving pleated mats (*tikor*) from the narrow leaves of the *r'umbai* palm, and a variety of different sized rattan baskets (*ambung*).¹⁴ Other female activities might include foraging trips into the forests to collect firewood for cooking, fish from the rivers, available fruits that fall to the ground, tuberous roots or barks that are used by the males to poison fish, and dammar (*demor*) resins that are used for both lighting and in the past, trade.

Orang Rimba swidden fields are low maintenance as few weeds grow in a newly opened swidden field. Swiddens may be used for a second season, but are more likely abandoned after the first year, as a second planting generally requires more tending. If they plant rice, the women's workload tends to increase during the collection and procuring stages. However, while the rice is growing they are generally stay in or around the fields in order look over and shoo away pests, such as locusts, birds, especially black sparrows (*bur'ung pipit*), wild pigs and macaques (*cegak* and *berok*). Because they believe rice has, in a sense, the soul of a child, it is extra important to guard the crop from being eaten by pests. Some of the larger pests such as the long tailed macaques are sometimes kept away with baited traps with poison from the bark of the *penyutuh* tree. The most dreaded pests come in the form of large flocks of black sparrows (*bur'ung pipit*).¹⁵ According to belief, the black sparrows originate from the inside of a volcano (*gunung api*) located somewhere in Kerinci, which are believed to be looked after by a spirit (*silumon*) who occupies the interior, and sends the birds out to feed in farmers' rice fields. According to their religious beliefs, they must defend the rice to prevent the goddesses from any sorrow, which can lead to bad luck in future crops. According to one account,

If ants, locusts or birds eat the rice, this causes the goddesses to cry. The rice is like a child, we call it a child (*budak*). If we allow the *padi* to be eaten by ants, birds or other animals, then the next season we will not be given any luck, its soul will not enter the field, and there will be little or no rice

Throughout the rice-growing season, women will often attend to their emotional needs by cooing the rice as one would a baby, but also by entertaining them and their mother goddesses through lively song and dance.¹⁶ If the *padi* becomes thin or begins to sag or wilt, the *padi* song is sung during the evenings, which can be accompanied by shamanistic ritual to increase the vitality of the *semongot* in the field by bringing more goddesses down from heaven. Keeping the *padi* entertained, happy, content and strong

by enticing more goddesses to the field is important in maintaining a healthy crop. According to one man along the upstream *Makekal* River,

Singing helps to make the rice healthy, and when we sing the rice is happy, it becomes healthier, stronger, and it will be abundant. It also protects it from dying of disease or drought. We also have special knowledge (*bopata*) that brings or stop the rains.

People of all ages commonly recite magical incantations to bring the rains on a hot day or to prevent it when it conflicts with their daily chores. They often recite rain magic in relation to the crops in the swidden field, particularly when planted with rice, which is more sensitive to drought or floods. Below are two magical incantations (*bopato*) to bring and stop the rains.

Bopata to bring rain

Rain rain, oh yes, you
A day of rain is good

Hujan hujan au—kauh
Har'i yeyik ei beyik

Bopata to stop rain

Cilak, Make it hot, which is good, good
I ask or three days, hot, hot
Malon tupacul leaves of my tree
Petankil not yet my day to smoke
I ask for day's three days

Cilak, pematang panai, beik, beik
Akeh minta tigo ar'i panai panai
Malon tupacul daun kayu akeh
Petankil bolum ar'i ku memor'ok
Akeh minta ar'i tigo har'i

Whenever magical incantations fail, a shaman can conduct soul travel atop the *balai* to appeal to the god of the riverhead (*or'ang de mato aik*) to place or remove the giant crocodile in the river above the firmament. This god is commonly appealed to on an annual basis to initiate the major dry season (*kamar'ow*) and rainy season (*pangaboh delom ke aik*), and sometimes as needed in order to bring or prevent the rains.

Women's Harvesting Work and the Men's Ritual Surrounding the Soul of the Rice

Around six months after planting, and well into the short period of light rains that fall before the dry season (*pangaboh menyeyetah*), the women, at times assisted by their unmarried brothers, begin to harvest the rice (*panin padi*). Similar to other Malayic and Austronesian peoples throughout the archipelago, the harvesting of the rice begins with the ritual cutting of the *semongot padi* (or 'seven' ears of rice) from the *penculung humu*. The cutting of the *semongot padi* is at least symbolically associated with the birth of the rice baby (see Skeat 1900, Endicott 1970).¹⁷ After the *semangot padi* is cut, it is wrapped and tied in the sacred white cloth (*gumpuy*) initially used to attract the rice goddesses to the field, and is hung from the center and the four corners in the rice barn, where it will remain until the rice is harvested and consumed. After the ritual cutting of

the *semangot padi*, the women begin to cut of the rice (*nuaoi padi*) with small reaping knives (*tuaoi*) held in between their fingers, placing it in rattan basket (*ambung*) that hang around their necks. The rice is temporarily stored in the rice barn, underneath the protective covering of the *semangot padi*, which is believed to influence a bountiful harvest.¹⁸

After the rice is cut and stored in the rice barn (*gelubo*), a shaman performs prayers to thank the goddesses of rice for a bountiful harvest, or if the harvest was light, renounce any debt. In a state of trance, a shaman leads the goddesses back to their boats, and accompanies them back on their journey to the downstream realm of heaven.

Prayer of indebtedness to the goddesses of rice if the crop is successful

Dancing lively to music, dancing
Let's paddle home, paddle with a full ship

*Joget main joget tar'i main tar'i
Mar'i boidar pulang bobidar sar'at*

Prayer if the crop is not successful

The village religious teacher, paddle home
Only receive shame if paddling home with
an empty ship
Indebtedness, not
We warriors paddle with an empty boat
Paddle once, twice three times, through a
bend in the river

*Kampung ketip bobidar pulang
Cuma depot malu bobidar lenjos

Bo untanghi dak
Kami dobalan bobidar lenjos
Sekali ayun duo, tigo tanjung
lampau*

During the next month or two, the women gradually do the work of processing the rice, which is begun by laying it out on pleaded mats to dry (*dijomor*) in the sun. After drying, the rice is threshed in order to separate the rice from its husk, and then winnowed (*disar'ot*) to sift out the stalk ends. The final step is the laborious work of pounding the rice (*tumbuk padi*), which the women do with large solid poles and wooden mortars made of *bulian*, the most durable hardwood in the forests.¹⁹ After it is pounded, the *padi* is referred to as *ber'ai*, and stored in bags measured by the *gantang* (roughly a gallon), and is ready to be cooked and eaten or sold to the villagers. After being pounded and stored the rice is still referred to as a child (*budak*), and is not allowed to be spilt on the ground, or after being cooked, wasted or thrown from the dish which can lead to bad luck during future crops. After the rice is removed from the rice barn, the *semangot padi* is taken down from the ceiling and stored for use during the next planting.

After the Harvest

Rice is one of the few foods that have the potential to provide food long after the harvest. However, it also tends to weight them down a bit, and for a variety of reasons, has a way of disappearing soon after the harvest.²⁰ It is often shared with other camps, some who are in a nomadic mode of subsistence, while a portion may be sold to the *Melayu* to buy village goods or to increase the store of cloth. Another trend I observed during the two rice growing seasons along the upstream *Makekal* was the reluctance of several groups to even harvest their crop. In several cases, the rights to harvest the crop were sold to *Melayu* villagers at very low prices, after which the group left the field to live a mobile life in the forests. During the first season, several families did this with the excuse that it was too much work and wished to devote more time to pursuits in the forests, ritual or *adat* legal cases. During the second season, many sold the rights and abandoned the rice field to *melangun* after the death of the headman's son. If a death occurs, the *melangun* tradition requires that they abandon the field and prohibits them from returning to harvest or eat any of the crops from the field. While the ritual surrounding rice is some of their most elaborate, the crop in no sense a dominant aspect of their identities, and in the *melangun* custom, have an institution that serves to kick them out of swidden farming.

Appendix D Endnotes

¹ The neighbouring *Talang Mamak* of northern Jambi and southern Riau refer to their rotating system for opening swidden fields as *beringsut*. According to this system, they begin at the 'trunk', 'root' or 'base' (*pangkal*) of their customary forests, and move in a circular patten towards the 'branch', 'sprout' or 'tip' (*ujung*), eventually making a complete rotation to the trunk, every twenty years, by which the time the forest has had significant time to regrow and can be cleared again (Silalahi 1999).

² During my stay, I never saw the *Orang Rimba* burn a field with dammar resin. These days, most will use kerosene bought from the surrounding transmigration sites to light the fires. Dammar is often used for lighting when batteries and kerosene is not available, and is a requirement during ritual at the *balai*.

³ For many people in the region, the swidden is associated with a spirit that energizes, maintains the health, and protects and looks over the crops in the field. It is a common ritual practice for the spirit to be called to a center pole placed in the middle of the field, which is often surrounded by guarding logs that keeps the spirit bound to the field. In West Java, the *Kasepuhan* (in South Banten, South Sukabum and South Bogor) must perform the *ngaseuk* ritual, or a ritual planting of the first crops around a sacred pole of bamboo (*aseuk*, or the *pupuhunan*) while opening a swidden field (Adimihadja 1989:238). According to Adimihadja, this sacred pole is the center or pulse (*pusat*) of

the swidden field, and a symbol of the beginning and end of life both in and outside of the swidden (1989). Several representatives of the crops in the field are planted around the pole within the sacred bounded grouping (*paparokoan*), after which a shaman of the field (*sesepuh girang*) presents offerings of cloth, a dagger (*keris*), a small mirror, coconut oil and small scissors. He then performs ritual prayers to spirit of the earth, wind, fire and ancestors (the prophets Adam and Muhammad) to bring safety, harmony (*keselemat*) and abundance to the field, and to protect the crops from a variety of evil spirits (*jin, silumon, iblis*, etc) (1989:240). This bounded grouping (*paparokoan*) is built in the middle of the field, and its boundaries or borders marked with bamboo (Adimihadja 1989:283).

Writing on the rice growing practices of the West *Semai* in Perak, Skeat and Blandgen mention a similar ritual, “On arriving at the first available open space near the middle of the field the magician drew a circle round himself made a specially made staff, and all the planting sticks were heaped up inside the circle...the wide irregular ring was called the rice bin (*kepek*), and in the centre the “*bunglei*” plant was planted in the ground. Around this plant, the seeds of rice (from the previous years *semangat padi*) were deposited within the ring” (1906:349). Of the Peninsular Malay, Vaughan-Stevens writes that the new soul waits in a liminal period for three days and during this time the soulless rice are particularly vulnerable to attacks by demons. “But the demons could not break through the enchanted ring of planting sticks, nor could they penetrate to the inner circle of seven holes in which the body of the rice was buried. After the third night the “*semangat*” or soul of the rice returned to its body, after which it could take care of itself, so that the protection of the planting sticks were no longer needed” (Skeat 1906:349).

⁴ Boomgaard estimates that cassava may have been introduced to the interior of Sumatra in the early 20th century, and after reading this chapter James Fox estimated that it may have been introduced to the region as little as fifty to seventy years ago (Boomgaard 2003).

⁵ The *Singkut Orang Rimba* in the southern part of Jambi have similar ritual practice surrounding the swidden. According to a DEPSOS report for a *Singkut Orang Rimba* settlement near the village of *Lubuk Sepuh*, whenever opening a swidden they use magic to find the center or heart (*hati huma*) of the swidden field (PSBL 1997:6). The heart of the field measures two by two meters, and is planted with various plants that serve to maintain the health of the field, repel malevolent spirits (*setan tanoh*), and can be used for medicinal purposes (PSBL 1997). Some of the plants they put within this bounded space are *kunyit, banglai, sepedas, jahe, lengkuas, laos, jerangau, setewar, keladi hitam* and *serai* (PSBL 1997). According to this brief account, their beliefs surrounding the harvesting of rice are also very similar to the *Makekal Orang Rimba* and the Malay. See footnote below.

⁶ Sandbukt mentions that the beliefs surrounding the *penculung huma* can be manipulated in a way to prevent crop thieves, particularly those living a nomadic (*bebenor* or *remayo*) life in the forests (Sandbukt 1988a:145). In cases where crops are taken from the field, rather than accusing a man of theft (*maling* or *samun*) and thus having to go through a lengthy adat case (*sidang adat*), a stronger accusation can be made by accusing him of crossing over the *penculung huma*, thus putting his crops and family in extreme danger. He writes that one of the main reasons why the *Orang Rimba* are often absent from the swidden and ranging around the surrounding forests in more

temporary wall less homes, is to avoid the frequent demands of neighbouring groups in a *bebenor* mode of subsistence from quickly depleting their crops. During my stay, I was never aware of anyone being accused of crossing over the guarding poles of the *penculung huma*, and the *Orang Rimba* probably would not agree with this analysis. His analysis highlights the interlinking dependencies that nomadic groups have with those that are based in a swidden. While a nomadic camp can make ends meet on their own, on days when little is found they certainly have the option to ask someone in a nearby swidden for assistance. In mischievous or dire circumstances, some may take crops from another's swidden field without asking, although this is considered a serious offence. According to *Orang Rimba* legal codes, stealing crops is minor theft (*maling cur'i* or *hukom samun*), falling into the four below (*empat de bewoh*) of the trunk law (*pangkol adat*). More likely, an individual or larger group can accuse the thief of violating the safety of the larger group, by depriving them of their subsistence means. This can be done overtly through an accusation of *hukom siosio*, which can carry a fine of sixty sheets of cloth, or indirectly, through other means. More often than not it seemed those who opened a field felt obliged and would go out of their way to travel to surrounding groups and offer them cassava or game, which strengthens relations and through *beloi budi*, obliges them to return the favour sometime in the future, possibly when they are nomadic. Some of the reasons they give for living outside of the swidden include coolness, comfort and health, attending to religious ritual, which must take place in the forests. Relations with the gods are also believed to be stronger in the forests. One particularly nasty sickness that strikes crop thieves is the *hulu tahun*, which can lead to an extended and extremely bad case of uncontrollable diarrhoea.

⁷ The *Makekal Orang Rimba* also have a ritual surrounding *miang* plants (and fruit trees), which are believed to cause itching and are communally planted along joining swidden fields. If *miang* plants are not planted between fields, it is believed that those in the adjoining swidden fields can catch *miang* fever, which is accompanied by irritation and itching.

⁸ According to Frazer, the Javanese and the Minangkabau believe, "rice to be under the special guardianship of a female spirit called *Saning Sari*, who is conceived as so closely knit up with the plant that the rice often goes by her name. In particular *Saning Sari* is represented by certain stalks or grains called *indoea padi*, "Mother of Rice" a name that is often given to the guardian spirit herself" (Frazer 1914).

⁹ In the late 19th century, Skeat writes of a similar Malay belief surrounding the origins of rice (Skeat 1900). According to these peoples, the prophet Adam brought the first rice down from the heavens enclosed within a *Kelubi* fruit, a bitter hard-shelled fruit from a variety of *Salacca* palm (Skeat 1900:616).

¹⁰ Sir James Frazer was one of the first to investigate this matter regionally, dedicating a section (part five, volume seven) of his twelve volume study, *The Golden Bough* towards comparative descriptions of second-hand reports of the soul of the rice in the largely Austronesian portion's of Southeast Asia (Frazer 1914 180-204). Skeat, Blagden, and Wilkinson were some of the first to write extensively of these beliefs for Malayic and Austro-Asiatic peoples on the Malay Peninsula, and later Winstedt and Endicott (Blagden 1897; Endicott 1970; Skeat 1906; Skeat 1900; Wilkinson 1906; Winstedt 1961). In South Sumatra, Collins and Sakai briefly discuss some of these ideas for Malayic highland peoples (Collins 1979; Sakai 1999), and in Western Borneo Jensen for the Iban in Sarawak, and Helliwell, for the Gerai of Kalimantan. In Java,

Geertz briefly writes of similar Javanese beliefs (Geertz 1960; Helliwell 2001; Jensen 1974). Titled the ‘The Rice Mother’, Fraser summarized and compared some of the 19th and early 20th century accounts then available for peoples in Peninsular Malaysia, Minangkabau, Java, Bali, Lombok, Borneo, and also Burma (1914; part five, volume seven, 180-204). Of Iban beliefs surrounding the soul of rice, Jensen writes, “none matters more than the personified spirit/soul of rice, *samengat padi*, to which human emotions and responses are regularly attributed and with which the *samengat* of man is ultimately identified” (Jensen 1979: 109). For a Ilongot example of these beliefs in the Philippines see (Rosaldo 1980a; Rosaldo 1980b). From my brief inquiries, the surrounding *Melayu* have a similar variant of these beliefs, which is more generally similar to the Peninsular Malay. Most of the village *Melayu* who open their fields along the western borders of *Bukit Duabelas* were from the old *Melayu* villages of *Rantau Panjang* and *Limau Manis*. During my passing conversations with these peoples, their beliefs surrounding the swidden included a vague belief in an earthbound mother goddess of rice, which they now associate with Allah. Their ritual practice also included a bounded center pole where they put the first planting of rice and is associated with the soul of the rice field (*semangat padi*). Below their swidden huts, there was always a white soul cloth tied to the ceilings and corners of their rice barns. After the harvest, they perform a ritual cutting of ‘seven’ ears of the *semangat padi* which is conceptualized through analogies of birth, which is then tied to the soul cloth in the center and corners of the rice barn. The younger generation of village swidden farmers appeared to lack any in depth knowledge of this system of beliefs, but were still going through the motions of the ritual while farming.

¹¹ Analogies between rice growing and childbirth are common throughout the archipelago. Of the Javanese, Geertz writes a “rice pregnancy” *slametan* held towards the end of the growing season, when the rice begins to bend over with the weight of the grains (Geertz 1960:81). Michell Rosaldo writes of similar analogies between rice and childbirth for the Ilongot in the Philippines (Rosaldo 1980a; Rosaldo 1975).

¹² According to Skeat and Blagden (1906), the Malayic speaking Blandas (or *Jakun*) in K. Langat in Malaysia have a charm for calling the rice soul home at harvest, which calls for it to enter a miniature rice boat. While not going into too much detail he says this ritual is borrowed from the surrounding Malay who refer to the rice boat as, “a *puan*, a boat shaped wooden box, in which the rice is deposited by Malays, when used ceremonially on great occasions, or in processions such as a wedding” (Skeat 1906:359)

¹³ According to one man, ‘It is strongly forbidden to bring these plants through a rice field when they are still green (*mata*), as it will cause the rice to wither and die (*layuko padi*). The rice grows in the tip of the stalk, and if you bring *layu* plants over the rice then the *padi* will wilt, fall off and die.’ The *Orang Rimba* will go through great efforts to avoid bringing *layu* leaves through a rice field. My introduction to *layu* prohibitions was a gruelling experience. We had been collecting *benal* leaves for a number of days, gathering them up and tying them into bundles, to be carried back to a hut I planned to build. The hut was around two hours walk from the trees, and was on the opposite side of the camp’s rice field. After several days hard work, I was exhausted and was beginning to have malaria attacks from carrying the bundles, which were extremely heavy (around 40 kilograms). On the trips back from the trees, we would divert the rice field and take an hour-long detour through muddy rivers and swamps, which were like quicksand, to avoid bringing the *layu* plants through the rice field.

¹⁴ Rattan baskets (*ambung*) are made in a variety of different sizes depending upon their function or use. Their rims are usually painted red with the resin of *jernang* (dragon's blood) and attached with pleated rattan straps (*kebial*) so that they can be carried as backpacks.

¹⁵ There are at least two birds that are positively associated with a swidden rice field. The *bur'ung simbilan tahun* 'the bird of nine years' is associated with the dry and rainy seasons and the rice growing season. The *bur'ung gentan ser'atuy* 'bird of one hundred gallon containers' is also associated with an abundant harvest and luck in the rice field. For an example of how the Iban of Borneo associate certain birds with the annual cycle of rice growing see chapter twelve of (Jensen 1974).

¹⁶ Helliwell writes how the *Gerai* (Malayic speaking Dayak peoples in West Kalimantan) conceptualize analogies between the growing of rice and raising or nurturing children. In her words, "For the *Gerai* people the separate activities of growing rice and raising children are each spoken of with the same mixture of love, pride and anxiety" (Helliwell 2001; 101). And again, "While rice plants are small and frail, it is said, they need to be provided with constant care and protection. Once they are themselves producers, both rice plants and children are expected, in turn, to offer care to those who have cared for them" (Helliwell 2001:102).

¹⁷ In, "*An Analysis of Malay Magic*", Endicott gives a good summary and analysis of Skeat's (1900) descriptions of the taking of the rice baby among the Malay in the Selangor region of Malaysia, "One of the best-known Malay ceremonies concerns the talking of the first rice from each field. This is usually called the taking of the 'rice baby' or 'rice soul', the first few ears being ritually cut (usually seven) and escorted to the home of the fields owner where they are received as a new born baby. Similar ceremonies are performed throughout the Malay Peninsula and the Archipelago. The ceremonies are usually interpreted as being intended to preserve the life or vitality of the rice, the *semangat padi* from one season to the next" (Endicott 1970).

A recent Social Department report written by Muntholib Soetomo briefly mentions the practice of *Singkut Orang Rimba's* ritual practice of cutting the initial 'seven' ears of rice (PSBL 1997). For a *Gumai* (highlands of South Sumatra) account of the mythology surrounding the cutting of "seven" stalks of the *semangat padi* see (Sakai 1999). Of the Malay ritual, Skeat writes, "...three rice baskets were intended to serve as the cradle of the rice soul...On reaching the rice the procession filed through a lane already made in the rice, until the mother shear was reached from which the rice soul (or rice baby) was to be taken. Covering her head with a flowing white cloth", he then cuts each of the seven heads of rice and places them in the basket, performing a variety of percussions so that the soul does not escape (1900:239). "She is then entered the house and laid the Rice-child (still in the basket) on a new sleeping mat with pillows at the head...and covered with the long white cloth, after which the wife of the master of the house to observe certain rules of taboo for three days. The above taboos are in many respects identical with those which have been observed after the birth of a real child." Some of these prohibitions include; rules against passing through the area, a light must be kept burning, prohibitions on loud noises, all of which would scare the soul away (Skeat 1900:244).

According to Endicott, "the magician is attempting to produce a confined body and a consolidated soul from a diffuse or scattered soul. The body of the rice baby is made by ritually severing a distinctive part of the rice field...the most concentrated part of the

semangat of the field” (1970:151). “Since the *semangat* of the rice field is, from one point of view, like a free spirit flitting from one place to another, the ceremony for taking the rice-baby appears in one aspect to be the capture of the spirit into an essence receptacle. Elaborate magical precautions are then taken to ensure that the rice-soul remains in the body created for it, to confine the essence so that it acts more like a *semangat* than a free spirit. It can easily be stored in this compact receptacle until it is placed in the earth at the next planting” (Endicott 1970:152). “The basis of the analogy between taking the first rice and the birth of a baby is now quite clear. The earth, like the blood, is the material out of which the body is formed. The process of creation is completed in both cases when the differentiated body and the *semangat* which is its vital reflection are severed from their undifferentiated matrices” (Endicott 1970:152). Wilkinson and Winstedt have also described Malay beliefs surrounding the ritual cutting of the seven ears of rice, and the symbolic birth of the rice baby (Wilkinson 1906; Winstedt 1961).

¹⁸ I could not find any village *Melayu* who could give a description of their goddess of rice, but they did not believe that she was small.

According to Skeat and Blagden, the Besis of Selangor (in Malaysia), “have a ceremony (resembling that of the Malays) for bringing the Rice-soul from the field. But on the arrival at the house the Rice-soul is suspended from the ridge-pole of the roof instead of being deposited (as the local Malays) in the rice-bin (*kapok padi*)”. (Skeat 1906). Of Javanese beliefs surrounding the harvesting of rice, Geertz writes,

Behind the harvest ritual lies the story of Tisnawati and Djakasudana. Tisnawati, the daughter of Batara Guru, the king of gods, fell in love with Djakasudana, a mortal. In anger, her father turned her into a rice stalk and, pitying her human husband, who merely sat and gazed sorrowfully at his transformed wife, changed Djakasudana into a stalk also. The harvest ritual re-enacts their marriage, and is often referred to as *temanten pari*, or “rice marriage”...during this ceremony, rice stalks are cut...being called the manten (bride and groom) and are taken back to the rice granary and hung up on the wall. (Geertz 1960:81)

¹⁹ In addition to *bulian*, another durable hardwood used to make their rice mortars and hunting spears is *mangoy*. The surrounding *Melayu* traditionally built their homes upon poles made of *bulian*. These valuable hardwoods are highly coveted by loggers and these days are hard to find in *Bukit Duabelas*.

²⁰ A typical Malay field measured at two and a half hectares (one *tanoh*) can yield 2,400 kg's of *padi*, and after being husked 1,200 kg of *beras*.

Appendix E

Belief and Ritual Surrounding *Sialong* Trees and the Collection of Honey

Introduction

From the southern province of Lampung to the northern province of Aceh, a glance at a Sumatran map shows the repeated use of the word *sialong*, the general term for honey trees, appearing as the name for villages, cities and place names throughout the island. Its common use as a place name reflects the traditional importance of honey trees to Malayic peoples throughout the larger region. The corpus of beliefs surrounding *sialong* honey trees occupy a central place in the *Orang Rimba*'s lives. Its influence branch into numerous aspects of their social and spiritual lives, influence the construction of their identities, and on various levels help one better understand what it means to be '*Orang Rimba*'. Honey is usually ready to be collected around six to eight weeks after the bees finish building their hives, towards the end of the season of flowers, during a time referred to as *por'epahohon*, the 'time of the honeybees'. This appendix examines some of the *Orang Rimba*'s beliefs surrounding the time of the honeybees, the management of *sialong* honey trees, and the ritual collection of honey.

In this appendix I examine how *Orang Rimba* management of *sialong* trees and honey fit some of the more unique features of their social organization such as uxorilocal residence, mobility, social structure, fluid or changing group membership and an egalitarian share society in which women have a great deal of power over the management and distribution of resources. In light of the above influences, I explore how female ownership of honey trees impact residence patterns, rights to resources in the forests, the organization of male honey collecting teams, bride service, and the distribution of honey. In relation to sharing, I examine honey-related gender prohibitions influence male and female access to honey, how these beliefs are strongly interrelated to the hot:cold and reason:passion contrasts, their notions of insanity, and issues surrounding male and female power relations.

Another theme of this appendix is to further demonstrate how various aspects of *Orang Rimba* belief is grounded in the Malayic and larger Austronesian tradition. A large portion is therefore devoted to explaining ritual honey collecting songs (*tomboi*), which similar to other variations found throughout Sumatra, serve to enchant the spirit and honeybees through a series of magical love songs. This continues a larger theme of the thesis which is to demonstrate how the *Orang Rimba* construct and maintain *adat* boundaries with outsiders, in this case, through an examination of the honey

prohibitions followed by male climbers throughout the *porepahohon* honey collecting season. I also continue an examination of the sprouts and branches of *Orang Rimba adat* legal codes in the context of *sialong* trees. The appendix concludes by looking at some of the traditional and contemporary issues surrounding *sialong* trees, the exchange of honey with the *Melayu*, and social change, particularly in relation to recent problems caused by logging.

***Sialong* Trees**

Throughout the Malayic regions of Sumatra and some parts of Malaysia,¹ *sialong* honey trees do not refer to a specific species of tree, but more generally a wide variety of trees in which the larger *rapah* bees (the Asian rock bee, *Apis dorseta*) tend to build their bee hives and as a result acquire a spirit that inhabits the tree, looks over the bees and their hives.² *Rapah* bees tend to build their nests in very tall hardwoods with dense and slippery trunks and numerous parallel branches that tend to branch at heights of up to one hundred feet or higher, an adaptive advantage that have prevented their hives from being taken by predators, such as the Malaysian sun bear. The number of hives and amount of honey found in a *sialong* varies from season to season, but to some extent depends on the type of tree in which the hives are found. Below is a list of several varieties of tree where the *rapah* build its nests and can be referred to as *sialong* trees.

E.1 Types of Trees considered ‘*Sialong*’

1. <i>kedundung</i> (<i>Koompassia excelsa</i>)	7. <i>kayu kawon</i>
2. <i>polai</i> (<i>Alstonia apocynaceae</i>)	8. <i>kayu muawo</i>
3. <i>jelemu</i> , (<i>Garcinia tetrandra-clusiaceae</i>),	9. <i>keluang</i>
4. <i>kayu batu</i> (<i>Iringia malayana</i>)	10. <i>alai</i>
5. <i>kundur</i> (<i>Mastixia trichotoma-cornaceae</i>)	11. <i>jerambai</i>
6. <i>kruing</i>	

The smaller *jelemu* and medium sized *polai sialong* can contain from a dozen to several dozen beehives while the massive *kedundung* trees (*Koompassia excelsa*) are considered the most valuable *sialong* trees. As seems to be the case throughout the region, *kedundung* are the first trees to enter the *Orang Rimba*'s minds when ever breaching the topic of *sialong*. They are the largest trees in the mixed dipterocarp forests of Southeast Asia, the third largest trees in the world, and can have a truck diameter of five to six feet, reach two hundred and fifty feet in height and in exceptional years can contain up to one hundred bee hives in their branches.

Some General Malayic Social Beliefs Surrounding *Sialong* Trees and Honey

For many Malayic peoples in Sumatra, *sialong* trees collectively belong to the community and are managed by the larger clan or the village headmen (Bashari 2001, Kang 2002a). Normally, the headman arranges for the honey trees to be collected by professional or ritual specialists, who may or may not be members of the community, and perform this duty in exchange for a share of the trees honey. After the honey is collected, a share of the honey is given to the headman for arranging the collection team, and in many areas, the rest of the honey is then divided among male family head's in the community (Bashari 2001, Kang 2002a, Silalahi 1998). In accordance with matrilineal residence patterns throughout the region, the resources in a community *adat* forests are often strongly associated with women. However, it is normally the men, which manage the honey.

In the northern region of *Bukit Duabelas*, the *Melayu* community of *Tanah Garo* have a unique variant to these regional patterns, which tends to reflect their unique relationship and overlapping claims to community forests along the *Makekal* River with the *Orang Rimba*. Similar to many of the surrounding *Melayu* communities, only the original descendents (or *waris*) of the village are allowed community access (*hak besamo*) to many of the resources found in their customary forests. As the *Orang Rimba* also inhabit these forests, many of its primary resources such as forest products, fruit and honey trees are already claimed. In *Tanah Garo*, only *waris* (native inhabitants) who have inherited *jenang* titles, and with them inherited rights to trade with particular *Orang Rimba* families, have access to the resources they procure such as forest products and forest honey. Both *jenang* titles and *Orang Rimba* families are inherited through women, yet managed by the men in the family (maternal uncle, fathers, husbands and sons), who are also the primary decision makers over what to do with these resources.

On one level, the *Orang Rimba* can be considered the ritual/professional collectors of honey for the village of *Tanah Garo*. However, access to honey and other resources they procure does not usually come freely, and is always bound into a system of exchange (tribute, debt bondage or trade) with the *Orang Rimba*. A *jenang* is only entitled to trade for a portion of a tree's harvest, and only from trees which belong to the *Orang Rimba* family units in which he 'owns' the right to trade with. In this unique system, a *jenang* inherits his title, *Orang Rimba* family units, but also access to resources that his *Orang Rimba* families inherit such as *sialong* trees. On the community level, the *jenang* (and their women) are the sole owners of the resources

they obtain from their *Orang Rimba* family units, and are not obliged to distribute honey to other family heads in the community.

***Orang Rimba* Social Beliefs Surrounding *Sialong* Trees and Honey**

Orang Rimba management of *sialong* trees and honey is again different, and tends to reflect their strong uxorilocal residence patterns, great mobility, the fluidity of group membership, and an egalitarian share society in which women possess a great deal of power over the management and distribution of resources. In this very egalitarian society, women individually own *sialong* trees, determine which men will harvest them, and control the distribution of the honey after it is collected.

Similar to durian trees, *sialong* are owned by individual women, and by extension, a grouping of women (*war'is per'ebo*, or mother and daughters) whose families will be the primary beneficiaries of its honey. *Sialong* tree's are considered a women's most valuable personal property (*harto*) and heavy/immovable inheritance (*har'to nang ber'at*), handed down from a mother and are passed on to daughters. In this strongly egalitarian society, female ownership of honey trees (and fruit trees) hardly resembles Western conceptions of ownership. Honey trees tend to be distributed evenly among the women throughout the forest and by extension to their families, and can never be bought, sold or traded. Regardless of ownership and which women come into possession of honey it is openly shared with everyone in the larger camp. What individual ownership of *sialong* trees affords is an efficient manner of arranging collection teams, thus determining which women will have the power to distribute the honey to the larger group. Very similar to men's rights to distribute durian taffy (*lampuk* and *tempoyak*), a women's right to distribute honey gives them the right to build bonds of obligation and reciprocity between the members of a camp. More specifically, female power to distribute honey influences cross gender power relations. Along the *Makekal* River, individual ownership of *sialong* also provides an efficient system in their obligation to provide a portion of their trees honey to their individual *jenang* in *Tanah Garo*, whom they are generally bound to from birth.

Sialong are often used as a primary example to justify uxorilocal residence patterns, grounding a female and her family to the resources in her customary forests, and into a complex web of kin relations who have the right to benefit from those resources. To violate post marital residence patterns, the most common reason being to join the community of her husband, is legally considered *adat engkar*, a penalty that disowns a women from her mother and sisters (*war'is per'ebo*), heavy inheritance (such

as durian, *sialong* and cloth), and the right harvest any of the resources in her customary forests. The fine levied towards a husband or his sisters for violating *adat engkar* is of the same severity as murder, legally branching into the ‘four above’ (*empat de pucuk*) of the ‘trunk law’ (*pangkol adat*) and incurs a fine of five hundred sheets of cloth. While the composition of families in a larger camp often change, and move from place to place throughout the forests, a woman rarely moves far from her customary forests outside the *melangun* morning period.

Sialong can either be referred to by the woman who owns the tree (the *sialong* of...), or by its name, which can be a combination of the type of tree (*kedungdung*, *jer’ambai*, etc.), the name of a nearby river, a key resource in the vicinity or an interesting story associated with the tree.³ They are imposing features in the landscape and key reference points in the forests, which are commonly used to point out directions to a camp location or a key resource found in the forests. They are easily distinguished by their great size, horizontal rows of scars that run along their trunks from the pegs used to climb the trees, and numerous hives in their branches. *Sialong* are sacred places in the forest, inhabited by an earthbound spirit (*hantu kayu*) and are associated with the god of honeybees (*or’ang de rapah*), who seasonally sends the honeybees down from heaven. These trees are always looked at in awe and great interest whenever passed in the forests.

Sialong are story-filled places in the environment, which sometimes serve to teach moral values and lessons, some of which include the dangers involved when climbing them. One example along the *Makekal* River is the *sialong cilpet*, which means ‘the *sialong* next to the indentation in the ground’. According to legend, this indentation was caused by a climber who fell to his death, apparently for not following *adat* customary laws (respecting the gods, the spirit of the tree or following honey climbing prohibitions) before climbing the tree. Whenever the honey season comes around, a version of this story is commonly told to the youth, a reminder of the dangerous nature and rules that must be followed when climbing honey trees. The following chart has a list of the names, meanings, locations and owners of some the *sialong* trees annually harvested by the *Orang Rimba* along the *Makekal* River.

Table E.2: Honey Trees (*Sialong*) and their Owners along the *Makekal*

Honey Trees along the Upstream <i>Makekal</i>	Meaning and Location	Owner
1. <i>Sialong Jer'ambai Ber'nai</i>	'The <i>Jer'ambai</i> tree <i>sialong</i> ' <i>Bernai</i> River	The elder sister of <i>Mijak</i>
2. <i>Sialong Sako Napo</i>	' <i>Sialong</i> along the Mouse Deer River'	The mother of <i>Peniti Benang</i>
3. <i>Sialong Maca Gaganding</i>	'The <i>sialong</i> that splits the pegs', downstream <i>Makekal</i> River	<i>sialong</i> has died
4. <i>Sialong Sungoi de Par'i</i>	'The <i>sialong</i> along the <i>Pari</i> River'	<i>sialong</i> has died
5. <i>Sialong de Kubang</i>	'The <i>sialong</i> near the water hole', located along the <i>Makekal</i> River	The mother of <i>Bekilat</i>
6. <i>Sialong Payo Bernai</i>	'Let's go to the <i>Bernai</i> River <i>sialong</i> ', <i>Bernai</i> River	The mother of <i>Cicicat</i>
7. <i>Sialong Manku Tuha</i>	'The <i>Manku Tuha sialong</i> ', downstream <i>Makekal</i>	<i>Manku Tuha</i> (senior shaman)
8. <i>Sialong Huma der'i Hilir</i>	'The <i>sialong</i> near the old field in the downstream', downstream <i>Makekal</i>	The mother of <i>Mencong</i>
9. <i>Sialong Cilpet</i>	'The <i>sialong</i> near the indentation in the ground'	The step mother of <i>Pengandum</i>
10. <i>Sialong Sako Talun</i>	'The <i>sialong</i> near the waterfall river'	<i>Temanggung Mirak</i>
11. <i>Sialong de Ser'dan</i>	'The <i>ser'dang</i> tree <i>sialong</i> '	The mother of <i>Melintik</i>
12. <i>Sialong Lubuk Bernang</i>	'The swimming hole <i>sialang</i> ' <i>Ber'ngang</i> River, midstream <i>Makekal</i>	The grandmother of <i>Berusi</i>

Unlike other Malayic peoples in Sumatra and Malaysia, honey climbing is not a professional or ritual specialty, and the *Orang Rimba* have no terms or titles used to refer to a honey collector or bee shaman.⁴ Any man with enough bravery to climb these trees may participate in climb. It is considered a sign of masculinity, bravado, passion, and an indicator that a man can provide for his wife and family. Whenever called upon by his mother, sisters, wife, or in-laws, it is a man's obligation to participate in a climb, and ensure that his women obtain control over a share of the trees honey. As some men are afraid to climb *sialong* trees, there are less dangerous ways to participate in a climb, and what is important is that a man participates in some manner. This can include helping to prepare the equipment for the climb, making the *lantak* pegs, basket or rattan rope, or joining the ground crew, which receives the honey from the climbers.

Depending on the size of the tree, and the number of hives in its branches, a honey collecting team can consist of five to ten men. Several climbers will scale the *sialong* and collect its honey throughout the night (*or'ang manjat* or *pamanjat*), and several will form a ground crew at the bottom of the tree (*or'ang menalo* or *or'ang/tukang tesamput*) to receive the honey as it is lowered. The composition of the honey collecting team, and thus which women in the larger group will obtain the right to distribute a portion of the trees honey, is largely determined by the owner of the tree.

The women who owns the tree always obtains control over the majority of the honey, determines how the honey will be distributed, and how much will be given, traded or sold to the villagers. They are also responsible for sending up a closely related male as the main climber, which may be husband, brother, son/son in law or potential son in-law performing bride service. The owner also chooses the other climbers and the ground crew, and thus determines the other women in the larger group who will receive a share of the trees honey to distribute. The women linked to the lesser climbers receive a smaller share of the honey, yet a greater amount than the ground crew. Whose men are able to participate on a climb is a matter of debate between females in the larger group, and to a lesser extent their male *adat* representatives. To some extent, this is determined through kin relations, bonds of obligation, and a trade off on whose men will be able to participate on other honey climbs. As the men in a larger camp may take turns collecting the hives from more or less than ten *sialong* during the honey season, there is ample opportunity for the men to participate in several climbs, and thus insure their women obtain a share of the honey from several different honey trees.

Because of the status that can be achieved by a young climber, participating in a climb is an excellent avenue for a bachelor (*bujang*) to attract the attention of a female, begin or continue bride service (*ber'induk semang*), and eventually obtain a future wife. Small children begin practicing their climbing skills early, and one of the most characteristic playtime activities of young boys is shaping *lantak* wooden pegs with their machetes, pounding them into smaller trees, and attempting to climb them while singing honey *pantun* (*tomboi*). These playtime activities gradually get more serious during ones teenage years, where they gradually perfect the art of forming and smoking *lantak* pegs, hammering them into and climbing taller and taller practice trees. Similar to love *pantun*, these passionate *tomboi* songs, are often subtly directed towards young women in the vicinity. Because of the danger involved in climbing *sialong*, a family is often hesitant to allow their own unmarried sons to climb a *sialong* before he believed to be able, and before making a first climb must receive permission from his parents.

This caution isn't necessarily adhered to with out-group bachelors who often make their way to other groups (*mer'antau*) during the honey season in order to participate in a honey climb, catch the eye of an unwed female (*budak lapai*), and enter into or continue bride service (*ber'induk semang*). During these occasions, their work is always considered 'free work' (*budi beso*) which is 'clean of any 'reciprocity' and in contrast to the obligation and reciprocity involved in normal exchange (*beloi budi*), the bachelor's share of honey freely goes to the mother or family of the maiden he is

interested in or already courting. Sending an out-group *bujang* up a *sialong* is one of the best ways to size up a bachelor's intentions towards a young girl, determine whether he will be a diligent (*rijin*) provider, and is a characteristic trial of bride service.

The Ritual Practice of Singing *Tomboi* during the Collection of Honey

In what appears to be a widespread pattern of ritual belief and verbal art form practiced by Malayic peoples throughout Sumatra and Malaysia, the *Orang Rimba* perform the ritual singing of magical songs (*tomboi* or honey *pantun*) while collecting honey. *Sialong* are a women's inheritance, but on a parallel or spiritual level they are believed to be the home of the spirit of the tree, and the bees. The *Orang Rimba* respectfully sing some of these songs to the spirit of the *sialong*, in order to lesson its power, and keep it, and the bees away from the tree, and prevent them from harming the climber as he collects the trees honey. However, the majority tend to be love songs sung to the bees, which serve to diffuse their anger and prevent the climber from being stung. According to one man along the upstream *Makekal* River,

Sialong are our inheritance, but the spirit and the bees, they live in the trees, it is their home. We sing the honey *tomboi* so that the spirit does not harm us, and also so that the bees will fall in love with us and will not disturb us when we collect the honey. They protect and guard us while we are collecting honey so that we are not stung by the bees. If we do not sing the *tomboi*, we will definitely be stung by swarms of bees, fall from the tree and die. *Tomboi* are the words and knowledge of our ancestors... they were handed down to us by our ancestors so that we can collect our honey trees without being harmed.

Despite the elaborate honey collecting rituals of Malayic peoples throughout the region, very little has been written of them. While bits and pieces of these songs demonstrate variations of this ritual practice to be widespread throughout Sumatra and Malaysia, so far only *Petalangan* honey songs (*tumbai*) have been described in any detail (Kang 2002a, 2002b).⁵ During her research in the interior forests of Riau, Kang was able to record thirty-two of these songs, and while the words are different, the general format, story line and purpose are very similar to those performed by the *Orang Rimba*.⁶

Tomboi are patterned according to *pantun*, a traditional Malay poetry, which usually consists of a series of metaphoric couplets that follow one another and together often contain a hidden meaning or riddle. They also include many of the features of magical knowledge (*bopato* and *jempi*) and prayer songs (*dekir*), which assist the climber to enchant the spirit and the bees in a variety of different ways. As with the *Petalangan tumbai* songs, *tomboi* create a series of imaginary scenes or interactions between the climber, the spirit of the tree and the bees (Kang 2002a). In these scenes,

the spirit of the tree is portrayed as the father of the household or *sialong*, the queen bee (*induk rapah*) as the mother, and the bees as their beautiful unwed daughters. In their *sialong* home, the highest leafy braches are portrayed to be the room or abode of the spirit. The points of the tree where the parallel braches (from which the hives hang), break from the trunk are portrayed as the entrance to the numerous rooms or *balai* of the bee maidens. The portion of the branch directly above each hive is portrayed as their individual rooms. In his role in this scenario, the climber plays the part of a passionate unwed bachelor (*bujang*) who has come to their *sialong* home by way of its *lantak* stairs to pay a visit, court, and win the heart of the lovely bee maidens. The climber generally sings the *tomboi* in an orderly progression, which depends upon what level he reaches in the tree, and what stage of work he begins. The main stages of work are included in the table below

E.3 Story Frame of *Tomboi* Honey Songs

Stage of work	<i>Tomboi</i> scene	Purpose
1. begin the climb	entrance <i>tomboi</i> ; entering the home of the spirit and bee maidens	show respect; warn the spirit and bees of the power of the climber and the assistants below
2. hammering the pegs	building stairs to pay a visit to the bee maidens and the father of the tree	facilitate the fastening of the pegs; claim and diminish the power of the spirit; begin seducing the bees.
3. stop in work	perform magic to chase the spirit/father from the tree	avoid being disturbed/harmed by the spirit;
4. climbing up the trunk to collect the honey	weaken the wings, and sting of the bee maidens, warn father (spirit) not to return, and seduce mother (queen bee) to leave the tree	avoid being harmed by the spirit, or stung by the bees
5. approaching the long parallel branches	paying a visit to the room/ <i>balai</i> of the bee maidens, begin to seduce the bees with a number of romantic and erotic <i>tomboi</i>	inform the bees of their arrival, defuse their anger; avoid being stung
6. sitting above the hive	entering the room/ <i>balai</i> of the bee maidens, seducing them with the possibility of marriage	avoid being stung by the bees
7. smoking the hive and cutting it open	warn the bees not to risk damaging the relationship they have built, while imbuing the knife with magic/poison.	avoid being stung by the bees while cutting open the hive and taking the honey
8. lowering the honey	reaffirming the strength of their relationship, and suggesting the possibility of children	strengthen the rope, prevent honey from spilling from the basket, and avoid being stung by the bees
9. coming down from the tree	exit <i>tomboi</i> addressed to the spirit of the tree	inform the spirit of his departure, and call for him to return to the tree

According to these stages of work, this ritual is framed with 1) an entrance *tomboi*, in which the bachelor respectfully enters the home of the spirit and the bees. During the first days work, 2) most *tomboi* are directed towards the spirit of the tree, with the intention to facilitate the fastening of the *lantak* pegs. As the climber/bachelor pounds the *lantak* pegs past the entranceways to the rooms or *balai* of the bee maidens (the parallel branches from which the hives hang), a seductive entrance *tomboi* is sung to the bees. After pounding the *lantak* into the highest portion of the tree, the climber enters the sacred abode of the spirit, claims the spirits knowledge/power, and reduces his power to cause harm later in the climb. Before collecting the honey the following evening 3) magic is performed to rid the spirit (or father) from the tree. As the climber continues his ascent up the *sialong*, 4) several *tomboi* are sung to reduce the power of the bees, seduce/warn/frighten the father (spirit) to stay away from the tree, and to persuade the mother (queen bee) to leave the tree, leading away as many of her daughters (bees) as possible. Having rid father and mother from the tree, the passionate bachelor/climber is free to visit the rooms of the remaining bee maidens. Upon making his way to their room/*balai*, 5) the climber sings a number of seductive *tomboi* to the bees in order to flatter and seduce them into falling in love with him. The themes in these seductive variants progress, as would a relationship, as the climber makes his way into 6) their room located directly above the hive. In these *tomboi*, the bachelor attempts to win the maidens hearts through words of seduction, romance, and erotic encounters.

By the time the climber/bachelor is ready to take the honey, a solid relationship beyond romance has been established, which includes the subtle suggestion of marriage. As the climber smokes and cuts open the hive, 7) his songs warn the bees not to risk damaging or loosing the relationship they have built together. They also serve to imbue the climber's knife with magic/poison, and take away their willingness to sting. The *tomboi* sung while 8) lowering the honey reaffirm the strength of their relationship, and subtly hint at the future possibility of children. They also serve the dual purpose of magically ensuring that the rope does not snap, and that honey does not spill from the bucket. After the climber is finished collecting the numerous hives from the tree, 9) an exit *tomboi* is sung respectfully informing the spirit of his departure, and calling for it to return to its home in the tree.

Tomboi appear to be working on a number of different and what sometimes seem to be contradictory levels, at times flattering, and seducing the spirit/ bees into a series of close and intimate relationships, while at other times warning, or attempting to frighten them away from the tree with claims and threats of greater power and magic.

The *Orang Rimba* do not see these approaches as working against each other, but rather as working on different, complimentary levels to achieve the same outcome; the safe collection of honey. As in other forms of ritual speech such as prayer songs and magic, the words, style and emotions embodied in *tomboi* are believed to contain the power of the ancestors, and to a large extent in and themselves, have the power to magically enchant, seduce, mesmerize, over power and exert their intended influence, in a variety of different ways.

Tomboi incorporate many features of magic and prayer songs, which are believed to increase their power, effectiveness and when added into a single *tomboi* or the larger collective storyline, influence or induce certain outcomes. Like these genres, some *tomboi* are framed with the introductory verse, ‘in the name of the prophet’ or ‘may peace be upon you’, invoking the powerful words of Islam or rather god in general. Some *tomboi* include the number seven, a powerful number in the minds of Malayic peoples, and in others, the metaphors or riddles embedded in the *pantun* like format are believed to achieve magical results. A common technique used during healing rituals, some *tomboi* divine or claim to know or possess the spirit/bees inner identity or knowledge, thus taking away or effectively reducing their desire or power to harm the climber. Many implicitly have multiple meanings and purposes, which may serve to enchant the bees, strengthen the rope or steady a honey basket as it is lowered.

However, the main purpose of *tomboi* appears to be the magical forging of close and intimate interpersonal relationships, magically seducing and sometimes placing or binding the spirit and bees into certain social roles, which come attached with certain social obligations. Some of these social roles can be seen in the terms of address that magically played on in *tomboi*, which include kin terms, terms of respect, terms of endearment and hierarchal terms. At times the spirit and bees are addressed as subordinates with the term *engkau*, a term meaning ‘you’ normally reserved for those in a subordinate relationship, a lower rank, dependents or in fact children. When put in subordinate relationships, the intention is usually to warn them from harming the climber, or to seduce, order, threaten, or scare them from the tree.

They are more commonly addressed with terms of respect, kinship or terms of endearment. The spirit of the tree is sometimes addressed as *tuan*, a term of respect or status reserved for elders or superiors, or the kin term uncle (*mamak*) both, which imply certain obligations as a caretaker. The bees on the other hand, are often addressed (flattered and seduced) with terms of endearment such as small child (*budak pandok*), little girlfriend (*kundang kecil*), or younger sibling (*adik*), terms normally reserved for

those in a romantic relationship. The progression of these romantic and erotic variants work on the hearts and emotions of the bees. As the *tomboi* storyline progresses, there come to include suggestions of marriage and children, which appears to be placing them in a role much closer to a fiancé or wife. By magically seducing or placing the spirit and bees into these types of relationships, they in turn become obliged to share the trees honey, or at least to allow the climber to collect the honey without causing any harm.

Stylistically, most of the *tomboi* sung to the bees are patterned according to love *pantun* (mixed with a tinge of love magic), poetic songs that are exchanged between unmarried males and females to express their interest in one another. As is the case with a young couple, the style and rhyme are believed to have some effect on the emotions of the bees. However, in addition to their style, the emotions expressed while singing these songs also assist in their function, and in this regard, *tomboi* are performed in manner, which is uniquely different from other *Orang Rimba* verbal genres such as magic, love *pantun* or prayer songs.⁷ It is believed that the more passionately a climber sings these songs, the greater effect they will have on the emotions of the bees. The power attributed to ones emotive efforts make *tomboi* the most beautiful songs sung by the *Orang Rimba*. They are sung from the bottom of the stomach, and filled with every ounce of a man's passions, desire and love. When performed by a bachelor (*bujang*), these seductive songs may be directed towards winning both the hearts of the bees, and implicitly, the heart of unwed female (*budak/gediy lapai*) down below.

As with the *Petalangan* ritual, in their extra linguistic context *tomboi* can also serve to indicate the climber's process of work to his assistants receiving the honey on the ground. Because visual communication is impossible between the climber and assistants below on the pitch black moonless nights when honey is collected, the members of the ground crew are informed at what stage the climber is at (embarking onto the parallel branches, sitting over the hive, cutting open the hive, lowering the honey) by what song he sings.

During my research with the *Orang Rimba*, I attended several different climbs during two separate honey seasons, and in and between was able to collect twenty five different *tomboi*, although they are many more. The following includes a description of the collection of honey through some of the *tomboi* typically sung during a climb. I present the *tomboi* in the general order in which they are sung during the different stages of the climb, but there is some flexibility in the order, particularly the seductive and erotic variants directed towards the bees, which are sung as needed in order to diffuse their anger. There are several different variants to each *tomboi*, and some of

these are included in the appendix. However, before jumping into a description of *tomboi*, let me first give a quick description of some of the taboos or prohibitions (*pantangon*) followed by all climbers

Prohibitions or Taboos (*Pantangon*) Surrounding the Collection of Honey

The prohibitions followed when collecting honey serve to remind, reinforce and provide added justification for primary or everyday prohibitions/taboo (*pantangon*), many of which play a role in maintaining *adat* boundaries with the surrounding *Melayu*. On the days surrounding the collection of honey, the members of a honey collection team must follow a mixture of normal and honey specific prohibitions, which set a man's body to a standard of purity, and are practiced to ensure a sense of safety or harmony (*keselematon*) during a honey climb. Normal taboos such as abstaining from eating domesticated animals, using soap or interacting with outsiders are followed in order to ensure a sense of safety or harmony with the gods. However, these taboos seem to merge or coalesce with honey specific taboos related to anything that associate the climber with strong smells, and attract the attention of the spirit of the honey tree or angry swarms of honeybees.

As always, normal prohibitions apply towards eating domestic animals, useful measures towards maintaining their delicate relationship with the gods, and more implicitly towards creating difference with the surrounding *Melayu*. However during honey climbs one can add a classification of foods that are believed to have a strong smell (*bemambu*), are spicy (*pedai*), and salty or bitter (*ger'om* or *pahit*). Thus, because of its strong smell, climbers are not allowed to eat wild pig (*bebi* or *nangoi*), rodents (*tikuy*, *posow*, or *tupoi*), frogs (*kodok*), and various types of fish (*ikan boung*, *ikan tanoh*, *kepuyu*, *sepat* and *kebakang*). Because of its spicy nature, chili (*cabe*), and spicy durian taffy (*tempoyak*) are off limits. Moreover, because of its bitterness (*pahit*), it is forbidden to eat salt (*ger'om*) before a climb. Whenever collecting honey they consider it extremely important to maintain the normal prohibition on the use of soap or shampoo. Abstaining from soap is crucial towards keeping good favor with the gods, and they consider it even more important whenever performing dangerous activities such as climbing a *sialong*. However, it is also always believed that the smell of soap on one's body has the potential to attract the attention of the gods of sickness, malevolent earthbound spirits, and when collecting honey, the spirit of the tree or angry swarms of bees. More implicitly, the soap taboo is an excellent avenue towards maintaining effective difference with the surrounding *Melayu*. During a honey climb, you can add to

this category any other cosmetic or oil that would cause ones body to smell strongly, including a restriction on smearing ones hair with coconut oil (*minyak rambut* or *minyak kelapa*), a common practice by men and women to increase their attractiveness.

Table E.4: Honey Collecting Prohibitions or Taboos (*Pantangon*)

Some of the normal prohibitions		
abstaining from the use of soap, shampoo; eating domestic animals; must wear a loin cloth; prohibitions on interacting with outsiders		
Prohibitions specific to the collection of honey		
Foods		
strong smells	spicy	bitter
wild pig (<i>bebi/nangoi</i>)	chili (<i>cabe</i>)	salt (<i>ger'om</i>)
rodents (<i>tikuy, posow, tupoi</i>)	spicy durian taffy (<i>tempoyak</i>)	
frogs (<i>kodok, ber'etong</i>)		
various types of fish (<i>ikan boung, tanoh, kepuyu, sepat, kebakang</i>)		
Other honey specific prohibitions		
prohibition on the use of hair oils, cosmetics; clean loin cloth (yet not washed with soap)	the presence of outsiders discouraged	
a white cloth <i>songkor'ot</i> must be used to climb out along the parallel branch (not the more common 'smelly' varieties made from the bark of the <i>hantuy</i> tree)	photography is discouraged as well as any other item or scenario prohibited by adat	

Clothing is also important, and many groups who follow a more traditional understanding of *adat* strongly encourage men to wear a loincloth (*kancut* or *cawot*) both as everyday attire, and particularly when climbing *sialong*. The loincloth is a strong symbol of their ethnic identity, and one of the ways in which they differentiate themselves with the surrounding *Melayu*. It is how their ancestors clothed themselves, and how many believe the gods think that they should cloth themselves. However, given that a great deal of men's work takes place in the thorny foliage of the jungle, a loincloth is considered a great deal more practical than village clothing, and during a honey climb is considered less likely to snag onto any branches. Before the climb, the loincloth must be clean (not smelly), yet not washed with soap, as the strong smell would attract the attention of the bees. Related to this last point, it is only permitted to use a clean *songkor'ot* (the apparatus looped between ones legs) made from white cloth when pushing ones self out along the parallel branches, as the more commonly used bark *songkor'ot* from the *hantuy* tree is believed to have strong smells. In addition to these prohibitions, they add any items brought along on a climb that might clash with their traditional *adat*, which in some groups may include a camera or banning outsiders from attending a climb.

By branching into the extremely important pattern of beliefs surrounding the collection of honey, normal prohibitions merge with honey specific prohibitions, and serve as signposts, or reflectors, providing a very effective reminder of the multiple meanings and purpose of *adat*. These prohibitions have religious, social and practical uses, giving them confidence during this very dangerous activity, to climb these trees and safely collect the honey. They also serve to reinforce their strong identities as *Orang Rimba*, reminding them both of their difference with the *Melayu*, and give added justification in the importance of maintaining boundaries and separation with the outside world.

Hammering the *Lantak* Pegs

Unlike other Malayic peoples in the region (the *Petalangan*, *Sakai* and Sumatran/Peninsular Malay), the *Orang Rimba* do not climb honey trees with makeshift scaffolding or ladders, but rather with dense wooden pegs (*lantak*) made from the very strong wood of a young *sungor'i* tree. While this method of climbing *sialong* may have been more common among Malayic peoples in the past, the only other peoples in Eastern Sumatra who presently climb *sialong* in this manner are the nearby *Talang Mamak* of southern Riau (Silahi 1998:10).⁸ The *Orang Rimba* put a great deal of effort into carving the *lantak* pegs, upon which the life of the climber will depend. After being carved, they are smeared with oil and smoked over a fire in order to prevent them from cracking or splitting while being pounded into the tree, or by the weight of a climber.

A day or two before the climb, the climbers hammer the *lantak* pegs in a single horizontal line, extending up the base of the tree and up into the various levels of horizontal branches, using a large cylinder mallet made of wood called a *genganden*. These pegs are not hammered along the narrow parallel branches, and to reach the numerous hives requires the climber to leave the pegs and the trunk and slowly make his way along the branch on his stomach, hugging the branch with arms while pushing his body along with a piece of cloth (*songkor'ot*) wrapped between his feet. The work of hammering the pegs begins at sunrise, and usually finishes some time before sunrise, the following day. During the hammering of the *lantak*, the spirit has yet to be chased from the tree, so most of the *tomboi* during this process are addressed to him. The first *tomboi* serves as an entrance song, respectfully informing the spirit and the honeybees that they intend to briefly enter their home (*rumah*) in the sky, by means of *lantak* 'stairs'. This *tomboi* informs the spirit that he does not come alone, implicitly hinting to his assistants below and their collective strength or power.

Tomboi 1 (entrance song: informing the spirit of the climber's presence and the power of those below)

<i>Oiiii</i> , help my friend to cheerfully sing on the stairs The stairs lead to the sky Stairs that are on the side of the room	<i>Tulung kundang berdendan tango</i> <i>Tango telepak de awang awang</i> <i>Tango meninggang ke rumah bandung</i>
Go into the house, come out of the house This song is not sung by a single person	<i>Noek ser'umah tur'un ser'umah</i> <i>Idak tedendan oleh seor'ang</i>

Most *sialong* trees are hardwoods with dense trunks, which at times, make it somewhat difficult at to apply the *lantak* pegs. While conducting this work several *tomboi* are sung to the spirit of the *sialong* (*hantu kayu*), so that he does not harden or soften the trunk, providing an improper foundation or attempt to disturb the climber while he is climbing the tree to apply the *lantak* pegs. The words in the *tomboi* below compare the *lantak* pegs to a *capo* fruit and the *sialong* to the softer wood of a *jelemu* tree; the point being to make the wood soft and facilitate the hammering of the *lantak* pegs into the tree.

Tomboi 2 (hammering the *lantak* pegs)

Peg by peg A <i>capo</i> fruit pegged to jelemu wood Peg by peg we meet We are not allowed to say a word to one another	<i>Lantak ke lantak</i> <i>batan capo telantak batang jelemu</i> <i>Lantak ke lantak kito betemuh</i> <i>Jengon bulih tegur sapa</i>
--	---

The next *tomboi* is for a similar purpose, by attempting to divine the spirits title or name. This technique is commonly used during healing rituals, and is a useful measure towards diminishing a spirits powers or finding a remedy or ally to combat the spirit. In this context, they believe it facilitates the hammering of the *lantak* pegs.

Tomboi 3 (hammering the *lantak* pegs)

What is your name/title? The hammer is ready Your name is the source of the pegs adherence What is your name? The peg is ready Your name is the source where the sharp peg is to be fastened	<i>Apo lah bogelar kau. Go ganden lah</i> <i>Bogelar sotampang lekat</i> <i>Apo bogelar aau. Lantak lah</i> <i>Bogelar setampang lekat ke mano di cecek kemano lekat</i>
---	---

Upon reaching the first set of parallel branches where the hives hang, the workers come down from the tree and rest, and only resume hammering the pegs along

the central portion of the tree, and towards the various levels of the branches late at night, to avoid bee stings. When the sky is pitch black, the climber resumes the hammering of the *lantak*, and upon reaching the various levels of parallel branches where the hive hangs sings this honey song. In the imaginary framework or scenario of the *tomboi*, the parallel branches are the *balai* (or room) of the honeybee maidens. This *tomboi* serves as an entrance song, seductively asking permission to pass through or make an entrance onto the *balai* or room of the honeybee maidens. They sing this *tomboi* throughout the honey collecting whenever approaching the horizontal branch levels where the hives hang. As is common in ritual speech, it begins by invoking the powerful words of Islam.

Tomboi 4 (entering the branches/room or *balai* of the honeybee maiden's)

May peace be upon you leaves and branches	<i>Salam walikum daun jer'ambang</i>
Leaves and branches may I pass through	<i>Daun Jer'ambang bulih aku lalu</i>
I wish to pass through to the your long room/ <i>balai</i>	<i>Aku dak lalu ko balai panjang</i>
Much has been forgotten, long since I stayed	<i>Lamo lupo lamo tinggal</i>
One branch to go around my dear...	<i>Tiyang satu bokoliling adik...</i>
<i>oiiyeyehhh</i>	<i>oiiyeyehhhh</i>

As the climber hammers the *lantak* into the highest levels of the horizontal branches (or the *balai*), the climber sings the *tomboi* below to seduce the bees who by this time tend to get aggravated by the climber's presence. The first stanza in this next *tomboi* turns the tables on a familiar scenario encountered during a hunt, describing the bees as 'seven' (a magical number) hunting dogs, and the climbers as 'seven' pigs. In the second stanza, the climber is metaphorically referred to as a flower blown by a storm of bees, while 'seven' mountains, metaphorically represents the various nodes or branch levels which the climber has passed in order to reach the top of tree. They believe the top portion of the tree is the abode of the spirit of the *sialong*, and the nodes or branch levels in the higher portions of the tree, imbued with the spirits knowledge (*ilemu*). By passing each node, the climber implicitly acquires or claims this knowledge as his own, which at the same time weakens the spirits ability to harm him.

Tomboi 5 (entering the higher branches/*balai*)

A group of seven dogs bark	<i>Salak manyalak anjing tujuh sokawo</i>
They bark at a group of seven pigs	<i>Nye menyolok babi tujuh sokawon</i>
Constantly following	<i>Lah tekunting kunting ibar'at</i>
Like a flower that is blown by a storm	<i>Bunga di puput rebut</i>
Seven mountains have already passed me	<i>Gunong tujuh la kelompokan</i>

The fastening of the *lantak* pegs is usually finished late that night and the honey collecting usually does not begin until around midnight the following evening. To avoid bee stings, the sky must be pitch-black without a trace of the moon. The work of collecting honey goes on throughout the night, and usually finishes around five or six hours later, just before the sun rises. During the morning of the climb, the men prepare the various instruments needed which include; a honey basket made of bark (*temeking* or *selundang*), the connecting loop (*tali kemanyang*) that attaches it to the rattan rope, and the long rattan rope used for raising and lowering and the honey (*tali hanyot*). The apparatus for smoking the bees (*tunom*) is made from the bark of the *mer'anti* tree. After peeling it from the tree, they smear it with oils and slowly dry it out over a fire, so that it is able to maintain a slow burn and give off a lot of smoke when smoking the bees away from their hive. There are various signs that they take into account while preparing the equipment. If the *tunom* catches fire while being dried out over a fire, it is a sign that danger will befall the climber and the climb postponed. The day of the climb, it is not allowed to joke or even mention the possibility of falling from the tree.

Ridding the Spirit from the *Sialong* with Magic

Similar to other Malayic peoples throughout Sumatra and Malaysia, the spirit of *sialong* (*hantu kayu*) must be momentarily chased from the tree before it can be climbed and the honey collected.⁹ The spirit of the *sialong* is believed to be very protective over his home in the tree, the queen bee, the bees, and their nests, given his existence in a *sialong* tree is dependent upon this relationship. If the bees were to stop seasonally building their nests in his *sialong*, the spirit would go into a period of sorrow and abandon the tree, which could lead to similar emotions in and kill the tree. If they do not perform magic and sing *tomboi*, they believe the spirit would take great efforts to expel the climber from the tree. One way it could do this is by causing the trunk of the tree to provide an unstable foundation for the wooden pegs, causing the climbers to fall, or the pegs to crack or split as the climber puts his weight upon them. The spirit also has the ability to take the form of various animals, such as a green tree snake, monkey or tree shrew, and while in these forms, distract or bite the climber, causing him to fall to his death. As in the magic verse (*bopato*) below, the most common animal form the spirit takes is a small tree shrew called the *buyuto* or *setan buyuto*, 'demon shrew'. While women are not allowed to eat any types of rodent, prohibitions on demon tree shrews apply to both genders, and are the only rodent-like animal that cannot be eaten by adult men.¹⁰

After the moon has disappeared from the sky, the honey collectors and usually the larger camp gather at the base of the *sialong* for a long night of collecting honey. Just prior to climbing the tree, a senior shaman recites a magic verse (*bopato*) to rid the *sialong* of its spirit or ghost (*hantu kayu*). As is common with magic, this verse begins with an invocation of the powerful words of Islam (or God in general), followed by a warning to the spirit, in case he decides to return to the tree and disturb the climber in the form of a monkey. Each line in this magic verse then proceeds to dissociate each portion of the tree from the spirit, or in the words of this magical verse, the *buyuto* demon tree shrew, while claiming each part of the tree, the hives, and the honey collecting instruments as his own. The magic verse ends by sending the spirit far away from his *sialong*, while the honey is collected. Like other magic, they recite these words very fast, in a largely unintelligible fashion.

Magic to Rid the Spirit from the *Sialong*

In the name of Allah and his Prophet
 Comes a monkey that will be eaten
 Comes fire, which I will use to eat it
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the trunk
 I have the trunk
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the tree
 I have the tree
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the bark
 I have the bark
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the base
 of the branch
 I have the base of the branch
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the nodes on
 branch
 I have the nodes on the branch
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the branch
 I have the branch
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the flowers
 I have flowers
 The *buyuto* doesn't have leaves
 I have leaves
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the tips of the leaves
 I have the tips of the leaves
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the top of the tree
 I have the top of the tree
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the baskets string
 I have the baskets string
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the honey basket
 I have the honey collecting basket
 The *buyuto* doesn't have the bottom of
 the tree (where the assistants take the honey)

Bismialhirohamirohim
Detong ber'uk simbo rayo
Detong api simbo makan
Bukon buyuto punya rumpun
Aku punya rumpun
Bukon buyuto punya betong
Aku punya betong
Bukon buyuto punya gelam
Aku punya gelam

Bukon buyuto punya jerambang
Aku punya jer'ambang

Bukon buyuto punya bungkul
Aku punya bungkul
Bukon buyuto punya dahan
Aku punya dahan
Bukon buyuto punya bungo
Aku punya bungo
Bukon buyuto punya daun
Aku punya daun
Bukon buyuto punya gumpoy
Aku punya gumpoy
Bukon buyuto punya puncak
Aku punya puncak
Bukon buyuto punya tali kelak
Aku punya tali kelak
Bukon buyuto punya temalong
Aku punya temalong
Bukon buyuto punya menalo

I have the bottom of the tree
The *buyuto* can bite but the buyuto is stupid
Go far away from the tip of my *sialong*

Aku punya menalo
Buyuto nyanya buyuto bisu
Buyuto bosisa bosisik der'i rambu
sialong rayoku

Dsttt....

Upon finishing the magic verse, a shaman kicks or slaps the base of the tree while calling out *dstttt....*, ridding the tree of its spirit, and momentarily paving the way for the climber (or passionate bachelor) to visit and seduce the lovely young bee maidens and collect the trees honey. The spirit is always believed to be nearby and throughout the night, many of the words in the *tomboi* are addressed to him.

Climbing the Tree to Collect the Honey

After ridding the *sialong* of its spirit, the climber begins his ascent up the wooden *lantak* pegs, belting out *tomboi* from the bottom of his stomach with all his passion, according to the various levels of the of the *sialong* he reaches. The *tomboi* below is one of the first sung during the climb, and is addressed to the queen bee (or mother) and her numerous bee maiden daughters. This *tomboi* below serves to weaken the wings of the bees, their sting, and desire to harm the climber. The words in this *tomboi* include a tinge of semantic parallelism, which similar to the nearby *Petalangan* may also be present in their ritual prayer (*dekir*) sung to the gods atop the *balai*.

Tomboi 6 (reducing the power of the bees)

Oii, iyyeah

A *senkrilung* bird in the middle of the day
You come with the lightening
You return with the darkness
Black *keladi*, black *birah*
(two types of semi-domesticated tubers)
Planted in the earth
A fatty piece of meat with black eyes
Bent down to the bodies soul
Its sting has been broken by me
Its wings have been weakened by me
Stabbed to the left hung by stone
Stabbed to the right hung by steel
Bent, shackled
Speechless to the body's soul
Then the prayer is granted, said God
the answer comes to me
Oiii, oiiii...

Senkr'ilung tengah ar'i
Engkau detong nyer'to kilat
Engkau balik nyer'to gelap
Keladi hitom bir'ah hitom

Dentanam deser'ung bumi
Segajjih bemato hitom
Tetunduk pado baden tubuh haliku
Songotnye sodah kupatah
Sayanye sodah kulemah
Nikom de kir'i digantung batu
Nikom de kanon digantung besi
Tetunduk, tepasung,
Tebungkam pado baden tubu haliku
Lalu sebut Kabul kato Allah,
setaa tiba de aku
Oiii, oiiii...

Upon reaching the first set of horizontal branches (or the *balai*), the climber sings *tomboi* the entrance *tomboi*, and then proceeds to leave the relative safety of the

lantak pegs, and begins his crawl towards the hive. He does this like an inchworm, hugging the branch while pushing his body along with a piece of white cloth looped around his feet (*songkor'ot* or *tali koin putih*).¹¹ During this process, the climber sings the *tomboi* below, warning the bee maidens (who are referred to as small python's) of the *tunam*, he is about to light, and the bath of smoke that will drive them away. He also sings of the power of his assistants below, and great magic, calling to the bees to fly like a rhinoceros hornbill (*enggak*) to another tree far away from those below.

Tomboi 7 (reducing the power of the bees, seducing them to leave the tree)

Cut the tail, cut the head	<i>Panchunglah ikuk pancung kepala</i>
Small python submerge in a bath	<i>Anak sawo mandi ber'endam</i>
Come down one, come down all	<i>Tur'unlah siku tur'un segala</i>
The people below miss revenge	<i>Or'ang menalo r'indu dendam</i>
Hornbill fly to a smaller tree beside	<i>Enggak melayang ke kayu anak di damping</i>
Not to the people below	<i>Jengon or'ang menalo</i>
People below have leaves a long leafy branch	<i>Or'ang menalo bedaun kepur bedaun</i>
A covering, a single rustling covering	<i>Alay lage mer'isik alay sebatang</i>
These are our thoughts my dear, <i>oiii...</i>	<i>Penano kami adik oii...</i>

A similar *tomboi* is directed towards the queen bee (*induk rapah*) or mother of the bee maidens, calling for her and the rest of the bees to fly away to a smaller tree, and away from those who will receive the honey below. The last stanza stands as a warning to the bees, not to fly down and harm those at the base of the tree, who are also fearfully singing the enchanting and magic filled words of the honey songs.

Tomboi 8 (seducing the mother, or the queen bee away from the hive)

(Mother bee) help us and fly far away	<i>Layangko sambat jauh jauh</i>
Assist us by flying to a small tree	<i>Sambat melayang ke kayu anak</i>
Don't come close to us who are below	<i>Jengon di damping mendalo kami</i>
The people below are fearfully singing	<i>Or'ang mendalo nyola dandan</i>

The *tomboi* below is addressed to the spirit of the tree, who at this point is angry that his daughters are being disturbed. In the first stanza, they seductively address the spirit as the climber's handsome and smart uncle (*mamak*), a relative of importance. In the *tomboi* below, he is flattered, and seduced to go afar, while the following stanza addresses the lovely bee maidens. Their relationship is compared to *puar*, a type of fruit that commonly grows together in bunches.

Tomboi 9 (keeping the father or spirit away from the *sialong* and seducing the bees)

Handsome uncle, smart uncle	<i>Mamaklah dancak, mamaklah dancik</i>
Go to afar, bring me some sugar	<i>Pogi ketalang mengantar gulo</i>
We are like ripe <i>puar</i> 's (We are united)	<i>Kami sepantut puar masak</i>
It is just memories	<i>Diketuk tupai tinggal lagi</i>
How beautiful my dear is, <i>oiii...</i>	<i>Ker'ompongnye adik, oiii...</i>

Eventually the climber makes his way to the hive or onto the bee maiden's *balai* or room, which is at this point located beneath him like a hammock hanging below the branch. A single *rapah* hive can reach up to six feet in length and contain over forty thousand bees. As the mother (the queen bee) and father (spirit of the tree) of the lovely bee maidens have by this time been seduced or chased from the tree, the *tomboi* below frames the climber and bees in an imaginary encounter between that of a young bachelor (*bujang lapai*) approaching the *balai* or room of the young bee maiden's (*gediy lapai*). In this seductive song, the bachelor comes to their room (*balai*) to laugh and play, suggesting to the bee maidens that they fly down to a royal bed of flowers located in another tree. The bachelor or climber that is, does not intend to join them.

Tomboi 10 (entering the room or *balai* of the bee maidens)

We didn't come here to kill you	<i>Bukanlah pulo andun ndok nyakat</i>
We visit with joy, to laugh	<i>Andun beusik gur'au tetawo</i>
A bachelor comes to play, sweetheart	<i>Andun mengasu sibujang, item</i>
Bachelor, come down bachelor	<i>Or'ang bujang tur'unlah bujang</i>
Maiden, come down maiden	<i>Or'ang gediy tur'unlah gediy</i>
Come down to a small tree	<i>Turun bebilang anak lawai</i>
Here there is a flower with a lot of moisture	<i>Situ nian bungo primbunan</i>
Here is a flower in which you can visit	<i>Situ nian bungo perladangan</i>
A flower eaten has a beautiful smell	<i>Bungo dikandung elok mambu</i>
It is ornamented like a delicate royal bed my dear <i>oii...</i>	<i>Lah besunting peadu aluy adik oiiii...</i>

Whenever conducting his work above the hives, in the *balai* or room, the climber passionately sings a number of seductive and sometimes erotic *tomboi* to the lovely bee maidens, particularly as the bees become aggravated by his presence. These *tomboi* serve to reduce the bee's anger, by enchanting, mesmerizing, and charming them to fall in love with the climber. In the *tomboi* below, the climber refers to the bee maidens as small child (*budak pandok*), a term of endearment between lovers. The framing of these magical words create an imaginary scene in which the climber (or bachelor) runs his fingers through the long black hair of the bee maiden, melting her emotions and as her posture weakens, makes sweet promises to 'play' in the night.

Tomboi 11 (seducing the bee maiden's)

Oiii. oiiii

Small child with a black shirt
Stroking through her long hair
The black one falls bent
Tonight we will play

Oiii, oiiiiii

Budak pandok bebaju hitam
Tebelai rambutnye panjang
Tentang tetunduk hitam
Malom iko main jedi

In the 'seductive' variant below, the interaction between the bachelor (climber) and maiden (bees) erotically progresses into an imaginary encounter between the bachelor (climber) and maiden (bees) at a bath, where the bachelor is aroused. In the following stanza, the bachelor begins to undress the lovely maiden exposing her breasts.

Tomboi 12 (seducing the bee maiden's)

Bathe where it is not desired
The bath is rejected by a sharpening stone
Whose heart doesn't long for
A breast is pushed out of the shirt
My dear, *oiii...*

Mandi di mana idak ingin
Mandi dinulak lesung batu
Hati siapa idak ingin
Susu menulak dalam baju
Adik oii...

The next *tomboi* creates an imaginary scenario where the relationship between the bachelor and bee maiden progresses, and hints towards the possibility of marriage. In this *tomboi*, their relationship progress beyond love, providing extra incentive (and obligation) for the bees to allow them to safely collect the honey. In the first stanza, the slippery rafter refers to the marriage trial performed by their ancestors in a common origin story shared with the villagers of *Tanah Garo* (see chapter three). In this story, the ancestor *Bujang Per'antau* was reluctant to marry the goddess *Seti'au*, but agreed to marry if both were able to walk across the slippery log and meet in the middle. As both ancestors inevitably met in the middle and were later married, this *tomboi* implies a similar possibility for the bee maidens. Interestingly, they refer to themselves as '*Kubu*', a negative term, which they almost never use in reference to themselves.

Tomboi 13 (seducing the bees with the possibility of marriage)

I play on a slippery rafter
Kubu play on a tricky rafter
Steep rafter in the middle of the current
(also meaning be careful)
in the time of the dew, look not
(it's a challenge to get through)
in our time, don't
(it never happens again)
my dear, *oiiii...*

Aku bermain kasau lilak
Kubu main kasau licik
Kasau tunggang tenggo arus arus

Ditempo embun melihat jengon

Ditempo kami gemali jengon

Adik, oiiii...

Sitting directly above the massive hive, the climber lights his *tunom*, and as its hot coals slowly burn red and begin to let off smoke, he waves it around the hive to smoke the bees from their nest. They say that the smoke disorient, shocks and stuns the bees, and prevents the climber from being stung. While smoking of the hive showers of sparks float to the ground together with hundreds of stunned bees who are not believed to be harmed by the smoke. During the process, the forest is enlivened by the magnificent buzzing of bees, which in confusion fly down from the tree to the pitch black forest. The assistants below are careful not to make any unnecessary movements, and most importantly, not to light a torch.

In addition to the smoke, *tomboi* are believed to enchant, disorient and seduce the honeybees. The climber sings the *tomboi* below while smoking the hive just before he cuts it open. It refers to the royal bed of flowers in the previous *tomboi*, the danger of the red-hot *tunam*, and further enchants the bees not to harm the climber or his assistants who wait for the honey at the base of the tree. These magical words refer to climber's knife as poisonous or rather imbues his knife with poison in order to distract the bees from the collectors hand as he cuts open the hive. The *tomboi* then proceeds to seduce the bee maidens with promises to 'play' later that night.

Tomboi 14 (smoking the hive)

Beckoned to a spot that is extensive	<i>Tekuit-kuik ikuk rua</i>
Below the flower is already nudged	<i>Bewoh betonglah mencuit</i>
The charcoal of my tunam my little friend	<i>Bar'a tunom kundang kecil</i>
The charcoal comes, do not respond	<i>Bar'a detong disambut jengon</i>
Don't scratch, don't nudge	<i>Dikubik jengon dicuil jengon</i>
A small knife is a poisonous digger	<i>Pisau kecil penggali tubo</i>
We are small, do not try	<i>Kami kecil jengon becubo</i>
Poison doesn't give shyness	<i>Tubo jengon dibagi malu</i>
How beautiful my friend is	<i>Alangkah elok budikundanku ini</i>
Later a promise to dance in the darkness	<i>Nanti nar'i janji bekela</i>
Our promise is not permitted to be broken	<i>Janji kito idak bulih lah bekiran</i>
My dear... oiiii...	<i>Adik...oiii.....</i>

After the bees have been smoked, and the hive cut open the climber begins the process of removing the honey filled waxy combs from the hive, folding them in half and placing them into the bucket to be lowered down to his helpers below (*or'ang menalo* or *or'ang tesamput*).

This *tomboi* and similar variants are sung while lowering and raising the buckets of honey, and repeated until the hive is emptied. The first stanza is believed to prevent the climber from being stung by frightening the bees, with a metaphorical comparison

of poisoning a river. During the rainy season, the *Orang Rimba* often block off or dam the downstream portion of a small river and poison its headstream, in order to stun and catch a bounty of fish. In this *tomboi*, the hive takes the place of a river, the bees are the fish, and the smoke and magic filled words of the *tomboi* symbolically stand for the poison. The magical words in the next line serve to ease the wind and steady the honey basket, so that not even a drop of this ‘water’ (or honey) spills from the basket as he lowers it to the ground. The fourth line metaphorically associates a drop of ‘water’ (or honey) in the basket with the climber’s semen, and the flower, as the bee maiden who asks for this drop of ‘water’. The next lines combine this seductive theme in reference to the rattan rope (*tali temiang*) used to raise and lower the honey. The rattan rope symbolically stands for the relationship between the bachelor and bee maiden, as one or united. The breaking or snapping of the rattan rope implies either that the relationship has broken, or a baby has come along. In either case, these powerful words serve to strengthen the rattan rope, and the relationship with the bees, so that it does not snap or break in two while he lowers the honey basket.

Tomboi 15 (lowering the honey)

The song makes you shiver with fear
 A child poisons the headstream
 A drop of water is not to be thrown
 A drop of water is asked by the flower
 A drop of water is not to be thrown
 Not even full of dew
 Not even full of wind
 One thread breaks into two
 The base of the rattan, my dear *oiiii*..
 My dear, *oiii*

Lagu metup panggung suluang
Budak menubu ulu lout
Aik setitik jengon tebuang
Aik delom mintai tanjung
Aik setitik jengon tebuang
Bukonlah pulo sar’at diembun
Bukon pulo sar’at di angen
Benang putuy satu belimba duo
Tingkil manna adik oiiii...
Adik oii....

The example below is another variant while lowering the honey, and repeats some of the themes from the *tomboi* above. It makes a more explicit analogy between a drop of honey in the basket and the climber’s semen, and suggests the possibility that their relationship may include a baby. With this suggestion, the relationship progresses even further, its strength and related obligations giving the climber further protection from the sting of the bees. The climber (or bachelor) further warns the bee maidens not to sacrifice this possibility, by getting angry and stinging him.

Tomboi 16 (lowering the honey)

Like a duck flying
 Child, poison the headstream

Itik-itik manggung suluang
Budak, menubo ulu laut

A drop of water, the source of a child
Don't be absent minded my dear

*Setitik aik setampang anak
Jengon menawar adik, oiiii...*

They repeat these *tomboi* throughout the night, as the climber makes his way to the various hives in the tree. They sing them in concordance with the various levels of the tree, the stages of work, or as needed to diffuse the anger of the honeybees. After the numerous hives of a *sialong* are collected, a final *tomboi* is sung as the climber climbs down the *lantak* pegs in order to recall the spirit of the tree to his home in the *sialong*.

Tomboi 17 (final *tomboi* sung to the spirit of the tree)

Safety Father/Sir, safety to all, safety
I, upon the spirit of the tree
I go down the wooden pegs
The ghost of the tree goes up the golden
stairs
The next season will be repeated again
The *kedundung* tree which is big
(referring to his knowledge and power)
Meranti which is full of leaves
There are only a few leaves at the top
Leaves will stay here
Not yet broken, not yet dead
Prudish from long ago, who knows

*Amenlah Tuah, amenlah nyamo, amen
Aku de hantu kayu
Aku tur'un betangga lantak
Antu kayu noek betangga emas

Musim di hadap ngulang pulo
Kedundung godong betong

Mer'anti lebat daun
Meilang mer'amba daun
Daun nipi tinggal di siko
Rusak bolum benaso bolum
Linjang dar'i lamo siapa tahu*

After the Climb

Depending on the size of the tree, the number of hives, and the amount of work, the honey from a tree can be collected in one to three nights. Each honey hive can contain as much as several dozen gallons of honey, and depending on how many nests are present in each tree, a single *sialong* tree, particularly a massive *kedundung* can have a significant impact on their economy. The men in a larger camp usually finish collecting the numerous hives from the women's *sialong* in two or three month's time, or midway through the rainy season (*pangaboh delom ke aik*). According to *Orang Rimba* cosmological beliefs, the honeybees return to their giant *songkot* in the heavens shortly after all their hives have been collected where they are covered by the god of honeybees (*or'ang de rapah*) with seven locked nets, and will remain there until a shaman's traveling soul releases them during the next season of flowers.

The *Orang Rimba* call fresh or 'ripe honey' *maniy mata*, which is of lighter consistency and much sweeter than 'cooked honey' (*maniy masak*). The men often indulge in eating raw honey following each one of their harvests. Outside of these male honey-eating feasts, the management of the honey quickly goes into the hands of

women, and is distributed to others more sparingly. As fresh honey (*maniy mata*) does not last long before going bad, shortly after the honey is collected the women begin the process of cooking the honey, slowly stirring it over a fire in large pots in order to make cooked honey. After the honey has been cooked, it is stored and sealed in bamboo receptacles or plastic bottles and can be stored for long periods. The men initially trade a portion of the women's honey with the villagers, although keep a great deal for personal use. During an abundant honey harvest a wooden platform can be built somewhere in the cool forests, which serves as a storehouse if the camp is nomadic.

The Importance of Honey as a Trade Item

Honey has traditionally been an important trade item, and a means for acquiring outside goods from the *Melayu*. In the past, most *Orang Rimba* trade throughout the region took place within a traditional system of tribute or debt bondage with a single patron (*jenang*) who served as an appendage to the Sultan. Before the fall of the sultanate, waxy honeycombs were classified as a 'precious good' (*bar'ang indah*), which were the legal right of the Sultan and handed over to their *jenang*, but these days are of no value in trade relations. With the decline of these relationships in most regions, these days, most *Orang Rimba* who have access to or choose to carry their honey the long distance to a market, can get a much higher price for their honey than they did in the past. The more common occurrence these days is to sell the honey to the *Melayu* traders who come to the forests looking to buy it, albeit at below market rates.

Along the *Makekal* River, *Orang Rimba* families still feel strongly obliged to participate in their traditional exchange relationship with their various *waris/jenang* in the village of *Tanah Garo*, and at least in public claim that it would go strongly against their *adat* to trade with anyone else. Here, they strongly believe that trading outside this relationship would violate the sacred oath made between their shared ancestors, invoke the 'curse of their ancestors' (*kutuk nenek moyong*) and lead to misfortune and harm.¹² The *jenang* in *Tanah Garo* are always aware when the honey trees are ready to harvest. During this time, they usually appear in the forests themselves or send an intermediary with the symbolic insignia of a dagger (*kris*) or Muslim hat, a signal that an arrangement should be made to collect the honey. Inside this exchange, they may give some of the honey in good will, to strengthen their relations, in payment for advanced goods, or exchange it on the spot (at a low rate) for supplies, tools and cloth, and these days, cash.

Sharing Honey in the Community

At the community level, honey is shared openly among the members of a camp. As long as a group member is in good standing, is a hard worker and shares whatever it is he procures, any woman in possession of honey is obliged to share it with camp members who ask. In this egalitarian society, a woman's right to distribute or share honey is a form of power in itself. But more importantly, sharing builds complex bonds of reciprocity between people (*beloi budi*), which oblige the receiver to somehow return the favor in the future, whether it is in the form of honey, game meat, forest products or help in opening a swidden field. The last thing anyone wants is to obtain a reputation for not sharing or hoarding food, a label (*pahor'it* for males, *newasi* for females) that can disrupt social obligations, which are largely the socio-economic foundation, which this society stands.

This does not necessarily imply that women easily part with their honey, and an attempt is always made to keep some around. Honey adds sweetness to their diet and gives men an added boost during the laborious work in the swidden field or forests. A woman's honey can also fulfill one of the ritual requirements of sweets (fat and sweets; *lemak/maniy*) that are called for during special occasions such as *balai* wedding ceremonies or the ritual bathing of a baby in the river. The right of women to contribute their honey adds a gender-neutral environment to these occasions. Outside of these ritual events, the negotiation of sharing honey can become an interesting battle in itself, particularly when a woman's supply of honey begins to dwindle. More generally, honey plays an important role in regulating cross gender power relations. The beliefs surrounding the intrinsic nature of honey regulate gender related access to this delicacy, and are issues that are strongly interrelated with gender and power in this society.

The Intrinsic 'Heat' of Honey and Gender Prohibitions

Both men and women are crazy about eating honey, although they do not have equal access to eating it. Honey is strongly associated with stamina, and in regards to its consumption, is more strongly associated with men and men's work. It is a community perception that it gives men an added boost in order to go about their more difficult workload, while hunting in the forests, collecting forest products or when opening a swidden field. Under normal circumstances, the women distribute honey to men in socially acceptable increments, and the only socially acceptable time that men have unlimited access to honey is immediately following a harvest, when they often indulge in eating raw honey. During these honey eating feasts, *Orang Rimba* men often point

out that one must be very careful in regards to how much they consume, that it can negatively effect ones body and mental state. They believe the temporary stamina or sugar high that honey provides is caused by ‘heating’ the body, which for men is generally safe within moderation, but can be dangerous to a person’s body and mental state in cases of over-indulgence. This is particularly true of raw honey, which is believed to be much more potent than cooked honey. Some of the negative effects that can result in excessive body ‘heating’ are body aches and pains, heart attacks, death, uncontrollable sexual or incestuous urges (*sumbang*), and particularly insanity (*kegilagilahon*). A women’s body is believed to be more vulnerable to all these effects.

Generally, women are only allowed to taste or eat very little of the raw honey, and are only allowed to eat cooked honey within socially accepted limits. They are never allowed to indulge during a male honey feast following a climb. This is particularly the case with raw honey, which is believed to be potentially damaging (by ‘heating’ up) to their bodies, and particularly their fertility. As women are believed to be dominated by their passions (*nafsu*) and are generally said to have little intellect (*akal*), insanity, particularly the related sexual urges can be a more common side effect in women, if they ever do over-indulge in honey eating. These prohibitions also extend to bee larvae. Depending on what stage the hive was harvested, most contain a great deal of bee larvae (*kluyuh* or *anak rapah*), which taste very similar to butter. Men relish in eating these larvae, which they consider healthy (and contain a great deal of protein) and give them stamina and energy for conducting their work throughout the day. As with honey, honeybee-larvae is also believed to ‘heat’ the body, harm female reproductive systems, and in excess, lead to insanity or uncontrollable sexual urges. They are prohibited to eat them. In relation to these gender related prohibitions, the association between insanity and honey is strongly pronounced.

Culturally Relative Notions of Insanity and Relations to Honey, Gender and Power

Many traditional societies have notions of insanity which are cultural relative, and allow a more “open dialogue” with the mentally ill (Benedict 1934; Foucault 1965). This is understandable in societies, which are mobile or lack a surplus base to sustain dysfunctional members, and must make a concerted effort to incorporate them. Regardless of ones mental shortcomings, if a person can adequately sustain oneself and does not deviate too widely from proper social and gender norms, they can be considered a normal and respected member of *Orang Rimba* society, and an attractive candidate as a spouse. *Orang Rimba* notions of insanity are interrelated with

characteristics or traits that are incompatible or particularly disruptive to the community.¹³ The *Orang Rimba* say that the insane often commit some of the most severe offences possible, which in the case of the non-insane, might be judged according the four above (*empat de pucuk*) of the trunk law (*pangkol adat*). Some of the more important characteristics of the insane category include whether or not they can work and sustain themselves and properly share with others and maintain proper age group and gender relations. They also relate to whether one can maintain boundaries with outsiders, which helps to ensure community health, and relations with the gods.

Insanity is not believed to result from ones genetic makeup, but is externally induced. In addition to particular foods (stamina classes of game, durian or honey), spirit procession or an individual's black magic, can also 'heat' up the body, cause sickness and/or a person to lose control of their mind. Spirit possession can also occur when one dreams, while ones traveling soul drifts, wanders and travels outside the body. It is here where the association between insanity and honey finds a strong foothold in their belief system. From time to time, the dream god *bujang diawan* appears in dreams, dangling before a persons traveling soul, a gigantic honey-collecting basket (*selundang*), which he holds with a rattan rope. His powers of seduction are almost irresistible, and whenever entering a dream, he begins an effort to enchant, mesmerize and seduce a person's traveling soul into his honey basket. If one enters, he violently shakes the basket, causing the person to go insane, and upon awakening is trapped in a state of insanity. If not worked on immediately by a shaman, the person will remain so permanently, or more likely die, after the body is exhausted and quickly worn out.¹⁴

The most effective cure for all types of insanity (or mental illness) is soul purification atop a marriage *balai* platform, where a shaman accompanies the person's soul to bathe in the sacred pond (*kolam*) of the god of swidden plants (*o'rang de tanohmon*). This is the same annual treatment used by men to wash away their sins, impurities, and the pollution caused by making trips to the village. For a young bachelor and maiden, it is their introduction into the social and religious confines of adulthood and the larger community. For women, it is can be used as a means to increase youthfulness, attraction and fertility. This purification ceremony is more generally a means to introduce, reintroduce, maintain and continue the *Orang Rimba* community. For the sick, mentally ill and socially deviant this purification ceremony serves similar purposes. However, this treatment is only available once a year during the wedding *balai* ceremonies held during the annual season of fruits. As one of my *Orang Rimba*

friends once told me, ‘whenever meeting *bujang diawon* in a dream, always avoid his temptations, and never enter the honey basket’.

In the context of *Orang Rimba* social relations, the strong association between honey and insanity is understandable. Interrelated with their notions of the hot:cold contrast, the honey related prohibitions limit a women’s intake, preserve more of the honey for male consumption, yet prevent men from over indulging and depleting a women’s supply of honey. While the men have more access to honey eating, the women control honey distribution, and in this have a very effective tool at their disposal in which to influence the desires and interests of their men. The strong and symbolic association between honey and insanity thus serves as an effective deterrent to improper honey eating practices among men and women, and male indulgence in honey, which like the insane, could be a potentially a destructive influence, and disrupt the balance of social and gender relations. Rather implicitly, this association is further reflected in their beliefs surrounding one of the most common causes of insanity outside over-indulgence in ‘hot’ foods, *bujang diawan*, the dream god of insanity.

Legal Notions Surrounding *Sialong* Trees, Logging and Conflict with the *Melayu*

The relationship between honey trees and honey to female rights and power is reflected in their *adat* legal codes. It is strongly forbidden to harvest a *sialong* without the permission of its owner. Similar to harvesting fruit from a women’s durian tree, the symbolic implications for unlawfully harvesting a *sialong* can be construed as a mixture of ‘grand theft’ (*maling bongkah*), and incestuously (*sumbang*) violating the women and her family, but would incur a much heavier fine paid in cloth. As in legal cases involving improper conduct with married women, the accuser could branch the crime into the ‘four above’ of the root or ‘trunk law’ (*pangkol adat*), in an analogous manner to violating a man’s wife (*gali delom*). Given the number of people and amount of work it takes to harvest a honey tree, I have never heard of such a case. However, Sandbukt has written of an old story or legend, in which a honey thief offended the spirit or gods by harvesting a tree without the owner’s permission, and shortly after, the *sialong* was struck by lightning, caught fire and died (Sandbukt 1988:139). In this story, the honey thief was eventually accused of killing the tree.¹⁵

Along the *Makekal* River, the act of felling or killing a *sialong* tree is comparable to murder, and legally branched into the ‘four above’ (*empat di pucuk*) of the ‘trunk law’ (*pangkol adat*). The four above is a grouping of the four worst violations in *Orang Rimba* society; the three others being incest (*sumbang*) with ones

mother or child, adultery, and rape or having sexual relations with someone's unwed daughter (*anak gedy*). Like murder, the penalty for felling a *sialong* tree is referred to as *mati bobengun*, meaning to 'provide compensation for a death', and can either be paid for with one's own life ('death penalty' *bengun nyawo*), which never occurs, or five hundred sheets of cloth, the standard monetary compensation for a human life. In the past, interpretations of this law may have applied to unique cases like the story above, or during a heated case when someone was accused of chasing the spirit or the bees from the tree, causing the *sialong* to die. No one could recall a past case in which a *sialong* tree was intentionally felled or killed, at least before the logging companies entered.

Unfortunately, this has become a common occurrence since the 1970's and 80's, when the logging companies entered their forests. Traditionally, the *Orang Rimba* have chosen to avoid close contact with the outside world, often fleeing to the forest when encountering outsiders, and particularly when any tension arose. While their cultural institutions have traditionally been extremely effective towards maintaining separation, preserving their way of life, and preventing assimilation (*masuk Melayu*), to a large extent they now place them in situation where they have a social and psychological disadvantage in their interactions with outsiders, particularly in efforts to claim proper compensation when key resources are destroyed. The felling of *sialong* trees always stirs up extreme emotions, and is usually the main cause whenever they do choose to confront, rather than avoid problems with the loggers. In some cases, minor compensation can be obtained by bringing the case to the headman of *Tanah Garo*.¹⁶

In 2000, the forests along the *Makekal* were legally given National Park status, a factor that has led to the departure of the logging companies, but which has unfortunately had little impact on logging in the region. Small-scale illegal loggers have taken their place, most who work under powerful logging bosses in the numerous *Melayu* villages' surrounding the forests. While logging their forests is now illegal, these laws do not have much credence in Jambi, to the *Melayu* villagers, local government officials, or the forest department and police whom never enforce them. Logging bosses often work in tandem or receive support (through bribes or payments) from corrupt government officials, including the police and military. Growing frustration over logging (particularly *sialong*) has led to increased confrontations with *Melayu* loggers, who better understand, but rarely respect their traditional legal codes or believe the *Orang Rimba* have the right to live in, and solely exploit some of the last remaining forests in the region. Confounding these issues are overlapping village claims

over sections of forest in *Bukit Duabelas*. Many of the surrounding *Melayu* believe it is their right to exploit these forests, albeit it in a very untraditional and in theory, illegal manner.

When traditional political avenues fail through their patrons, *sialong* often became the rallying cry to confront the loggers, which during my stay was the source of numerous arguments, fights and sometimes the seizure or destruction of logging equipment or logs. On numerous occasions, groups along the downstream *Kajasung* River tied off logs rolled into the rivers by loggers, preventing hundreds of logs from floating downstream when the rains finally came, in effort to pressure compensation for a felled *sialong*. These acts often led to increasing tension and conflict but sometimes compensation, albeit at rates far below what their legal codes demand. The *war'is/jenang* in *Tanah Garo* have gradually shifted their economic interests from forest products to logging, with their village headman (*Rio* or *Pangkol War'is*) becoming one of the major logging bosses in the region. Their participation in logging has led to the *Orang Rimba's* growing unwillingness to make appeals through their traditional political hierarchy to obtain compensation when resources are destroyed.

However, in contrast to their dealings with loggers from other villages (*Limo Manis, Ranto Panjang, Batu Sawar, Peninjauan, etc.*), the *Makekal Orang Rimba* are very reluctant to outright confront the *waris* in *Tanah Garo*, and risk disturbing their sacred relations and incurring the wrath of their ancestors, spirits or gods. The *Orang Rimba* more commonly use techniques mentioned by Scott (1985) as 'weapons of the weak', which at times may include 'desertion', 'foot dragging' or 'false compliance' on matters surrounding trade or their logging efforts, which is usually followed by 'feigned ignorance' or acting stupid whenever meeting them afterwards (Scott 1985; Tuck-Po 2004). Symbolized by the felling of *sialong*, the involvement of their *war'is/jenang* in logging, have led to a great deal of tension between these peoples, and when coupled with the vibrant new economy in the transmigration sites, a gradual decline in this complex and long-standing relationship.

Discussion

Sialong honey trees occupy a central place in the lives of the *Orang Rimba*. They are of certainly of great economic importance, but their influences branch into numerous social and religious aspects of their lives, play a major role in the construction of their identities. Their unique management of *sialong* trees and honey reflects a mobile life in the forests, fluid group membership, and an egalitarian share society in which women

possess a great deal of power over the management and distribution of resources. *Sialong* are used as a primary example to justify uxorilocal residence patterns, grounding a female and her family to their community forests, and giving them implied rights to use the resources found within. In my own analogy, fruit trees form the skeleton for these rights, and honey-trees, the backbone or spine. Unlike other Malayic peoples, the climbing of *sialong* is not a professional or ritual specialty but an obligation for men in general, and for young bachelors, an avenue to attract the attention of a female, begin or continue bride service, and eventually obtain a future wife. Given the fact that the honey is openly shared in the larger camp, ownership of honey trees by individual women may afford an efficient manner to arrange collection teams, and determine which women have the right to distribute the honey to the larger group. A woman's right to distribute honey is a form of status in itself, and more importantly builds bonds of reciprocity between the members of the camp (*beloi budi*), obliging the receiver to return a favor in the future. Along the *Makekal* River, ownership of *sialong* also provides an efficient method for a family to exchange honey with their individual debt-bondage patrons (*jenang/war'is*) in the village of *Tanah Garo*, and in return, receive access to outside goods such as sugar, salt, tools and cloth. Sharing community forests along the *Makekal* River, *Orang Rimba* men have traditionally played a role as the professional/ritual collectors for *Melayu* patrons in *Tanah Garo*, who in turn, inherit exclusive rights to trade with particular families, and through this, obtain the right to receive through trade or tribute a share of their honey.

Orang Rimba religious belief surrounding the god of honeybees is different from the village *Melayu* and reflects a unique way of life in the forests. However, the more general belief that honey tree's are occupied by an earthbound spirit, who along with the bees, must be propitiated and appeased whenever collecting honey through the singing of ritual songs (*tomboi*), is firmly grounded in the Malayic cultural and belief system. As with other Malayic peoples in the region, *Orang Rimba tomboi* create a series of imaginary scenes and interactions between the climber (bachelor), the spirit of the tree and the bees, which magically forge intimate and very personal relationships including respect, hierarchy, kinship and relations of love. These relationships can be understood in the wider context of everyday social relations, and come to include certain obligations between the spirit, bees and climber, which include allowing the climber safe access to its abode in order to collect its honey. When coupled with the magical threats and 'charms' cleverly placed throughout these scenes, *tomboi* empower the climber with confidence to harvest the trees, without being harmed by the spirit or stung

by the bees. By branching into the important pattern of beliefs surrounding the collection of honey, normal prohibitions merge with honey specific prohibitions, and serve as signposts or reflectors, providing a very effective reminder of the multiple meanings and purpose of *adat*. These prohibitions have religious, social, and practical ‘mundane’ use, which give them added confidence to perform this very dangerous activity. They also serve to reinforce their strong identities as *Orang Rimba*, reminding them of their difference with the *Melayu*, and provide added justification towards maintaining boundaries and separation with the outside world.

The gender related honey prohibitions are very similar to those found among the fruits, game animals (such as rodents), some fish and river animals (such as mollusks), and ritual related and *ker’emat* foods. Interrelated with their notions of health and the hot:cold contrast, honey is believed to ‘heat’ the body, which in moderation, can give men stamina as they go about their hard work in the forests. In excess, they believe honey can harm the body, cause uncontrollable sexual or incestuous urges, and sometimes insanity. Interrelated with their notions of the reason:passion (*akal-nafsu*) contrast, women are believed to be more vulnerable to these effects, and are encouraged to limit their consumption of honey (particularly raw honey and all bee larvae) which is believed to be more harmful to their fertility, and because of their great passions, their sanity. These beliefs also influence gender related distribution rights. The honey related prohibitions limit a women’s intake, preserve more of the honey for male consumption, yet prevent men from over indulging and depleting women’s supply of honey. While the men have more free access to eating honey, the women control honey distribution, and in this, can influence the desires and interests of the men. The association between honey and insanity serves as a deterrent to improper honey eating practices among men and women, and male indulgence in honey, which like the insane could be a potentially disrupt the balance of social relations. These ideas are further reflected in the beliefs surrounding the dream god of insanity, *bujang diawan*.

The economic, social and religious importance of honey trees is reflected in their legal codes. Branching into the four above of the trunk law, the act of felling a *sialong* is comparable to murder, and one of the worst violations which can be committed in this society. In the recent era of logging, the felling of *sialong* trees has led to a great deal of tension with the surrounding *Melayu*, who neither respect their legal codes, nor in this day and age, believe the *Orang Rimba* have the right to solely exploit some of the last remaining forests in the region. Along the *Makekal* River, the participation of their traditional patrons in logging has taken away one political avenue to deal with these

problems. However, the felling of *sialong* tree also leads to a tremendous swelling of emotions, bringing to their consciousness in a very symbolic manner, the extremely negative impact of logging to their lives. Despite cultural institutions which call for avoidance and separation, *sialong* also provide a great deal of motivation, at times a rallying cry, to struggle with the outside world to preserve their traditional way of life in the forests.

Appendix E Endnotes

¹ In Malaysia, the Malay more commonly use the similar term *tualong*, although the term *sialang* also appears to be used in the region of Perak (Skeat 1900). As with the *Orang Rimba*, *Koompassia excelsa* is often mentioned as the most characteristic *tualang* or *sialang* honey tree in Malaysia. According to Skeat, “there appears to be very little reason to doubt that the word *Tualang* (*Toh Alang* or *Sialang*) is the name not of a particular species of tree, but rather a generic name of all trees in which wild bees have built their nests, so that in reality it simply means Bee-Tree” (1900:203). Similar beliefs are held in the former state of Siak (Riau), “The following trees are generally inhabited by bees (*lebah*), and then become *sialangs*; near the sea, *pulei*, *kempas*, *kayu arah*, and *babi kurus*; whilst farther in the interior *ringas manuk* and *chempedak ayer* are their general habitats” (Skeat 1900:204).

² In rare instances, a single colony of honeybees (*rapah*) will build a single bee hive in a smaller tree for a season, and in these cases they are not considered a *sialong*. The *Orang Rimba* call these bees *rapah lolok*, ‘disoriented or confused bees’, because they do not build their hives together with other *rapah* colonies in the much larger *sialong* trees. In contrast to *sialong* trees, these trees are not individually owned by women, and similar to the solitary bee hives of the smaller *nyur’uon* bees (*Apis indica*) can be harvested according to community rights (*hak besamo*) or the first person to claim the tree by marking it as one would a fruit tree. These trees are not believed to possess a spirit, and the collection procedure lacks the recitation of magic verses to rid the spirit of the tree, although *tomboi* are sung to avoid being stung by the bees.

³ Two *sialong* mentioned in table are associated with high standing men; a senior shaman (*Manku Tuha*), and the *temanggung* of the upstream *Makekal*. While the names of these trees tend to be associated with prominent men, they do not enjoy any special rights over the trees. According to custom, ownership of the trees, and thus the right to determine who will harvest the tree and who will be able to distribute the honey, still falls to specific women in the group.

⁴ Near the border of Jambi and South Sumatra, the *Melayu* refer to these specialists as *juragan*. There are usually five professional climbers (*juragan mudo*) who take turns climbing the trees and collecting the honey, and one older expert (*juragan tuo*) who performs prayers or songs at the base of the tree. The honey here is divided three ways; twenty percent go to the climbers, twenty percent to the head of the community and sixty percent to the community (Bashari 2001). Similar terms for professional/ritual specialists are used in northern Jambi and Riau. The nearby *Talang Mamak* refer to their specialists as *juara*, and their collecting practice also consists of a team of climbers (*juara*), and those who help on the ground (*juara tanoh*). The honey is said to be

divided between the climber (30%), ground crew (15%), the village elder (*tuha-tuha*) (20%), and the local community who owns the *sialong* (35%) (Silalahi 1998:10). Further north, the *Petalangan* (in Riau) refer to their bee shamans as *juagan* or *dukun lobah*, who are normally members of ones clan (Kang 2002a; Kang 2002b). The honey collecting team consists of around ten males, including a bee shaman/climber (*juagan*) and the receivers at the bottom of the tree (*tukang sambut*) and those community members who help to build the ladder or scaffolding (Kang 2002b:304). According to Kang (Kang 2002a), a young bee shaman (*juagan mudo*) learns bee magic (*ilmu robah*) from a former bee-shaman by exchange of gifts (*hadiah*) such as white cloth, a rope and bucket, and a torch (Kang 2002a:167). Very little has been written on the *Sakai*, although an early article by Kehding writes of a similar specialist and system of division among the Malay in Siak (Riau). Here they divide the honey into three parts; to the professional honey collector, the person that helps below, and the owner of the tree (Skeat 1900:204).

⁵ In the late 19th century, Skeat was probably the first to mention the Malay practice of performing honey collecting ‘charms’ to the spirit of the honey tree and bees (Skeat 1900:203). Unfortunately, he was unable to obtain any information surrounding the ritual, nor record any of the Malay charms aside from a few lines from a “Sakai” variant. In a later book with Blagden, they do include one unique variant from the Malayic ‘Jakun’ in the Kuala Langat region of Malaysia (Skeat 1906). While only a single verse, the Jakun climbers refer to the bees as grandmothers, and to themselves as moon-white apes who climb the tree in order to beg their grandmothers for the knowledge to weave mats made from the wax of the honeycombs (Skeat 1906:231-2). As with most of these songs, the purpose is to seduce or charm the bees while their hives are being taken, and avoid being stung. Much more recently, Buchmann and Nabhan have written a brief article in the popular magazine, “Nature Explorer” on the traditional Malay honey collecting practices in the Kedah province of Malaysia. In the article, they mention that the ‘professional’ Malay climbers sing a series of ritual songs while collecting honey, in which the bees are referred to as “*hitam manis*” (black sweetness or beauty), or nicknames such as “blooming flowers” or “fine friend”. While the article does not include any of these songs (or *pantun*), the terms of endearment in which the bees are addressed hint towards general similarities with *Orang Rimba* and *Petalangan* honey poems. They do include a legend associated with the origins of this ritual, of which the *Orang Rimba* have no equivalent. According to the legend,

Seems in ancient times, there was a Hindu handmaiden called *Hitam Manis*... ‘Dark Sweetness’, for she was a dusk beauty. She fell in love with the reigning Sultan’s son, who returned her love. But they could not marry, for she was a commoner. She and her fellow maidens---called *dayang*---were forced to flee the palace, for the furious ruler wanted to kill her. As she ran away, a metal spear pierced her heart. She and her friends were turned into bees and flew away. One day, the prince, now engaged to a princess, noticed a honeycomb high up in a tree. He climbed the tree for it and discovered a sticky, sweet substance inside. He called down to his servants for a knife and a pail. When the pail was hauled down, they discovered to their horror that the princesses body was in it, all chopped up in pieces. A disembodied voice cried out that she had committed sacrilege by using a metal knife in cutting the comb., for *hitam manis* herself perished from a metal instrument. Later, a golden shower by the bees restored the princess to her entirety. To this day, no metal--only equipment of wood, hide or cow scapula, is used at all stages in the collection of honey. Whenever collecting honey, the traditional collectors always

refer to the bees with tenderness, calling them *hitam manis*, as they do lover worthy of a princess, and themselves as *dayang*, or the handmaidens of *hitam manis*. (Buchmann 1995)

The surrounding *Melayu* in Jambi and South Sumatra also ritually sing honey *pantun* while harvesting *sialang* trees with the similar intention to appease the spirit and enchant the bees, as do the nearby *Talang Mamak*. According to Bashari (2001), Malay in Riau refer to their honey *pantun* as *tumbai* (the same term used by the *Petalangan*) which are sung to make the bees fall in love with the climbers. In some of the songs, the climbers portray themselves as bushy red-tailed tree shrews (*tupai*) who wish to enter the tree in order to visit and play with the bee maidens. Some of these songs are addressed to the spirit of the tree, asking for permission to pass through his abode. Upon arriving to the nest, songs are sung to the bees, who are already asleep, “*Alangkah indah sarang anda, dan hitam manis tubuh anda benar-benar menggelorakan darah mudah*”. Before lighting the fire to smoke the bees from their nest, they sing songs to convey their respect to King (*raja*) Sulaiman, the king of the animals in the environment (*raja seru sekalian alam binatang*), and the bees in the forests. If the bees do not want to leave their nests, they sing this *pantun*, “my sweet dear who is good, I go quietly without your stings” (*itam mani baiknyo laku awak diam dicubitnyo*). Upon leaving the tree, songs thank the spirit of the *sialang* and the bees, informing them of their departure (Bashari 2001).

⁶ The *Petalangan* refer to their honey songs as *tumbai* (verb form, *menumbai*), which according to Turner (1997) and Kang (2002a, 2002b) means, “enchanting bees with songs”. The *Orang Rimba* word ‘*tomboi*’ (verb form, *nomboi*) is obviously cognate to this term (Turner 1997).

The *Petalangan* have a similar word *tombo* which is reference to their long songs (*nyanyi panjang*), the format in which their origin stories are recalled (Effendy 1997). While the word may share an etymological basis with the words *tumbai/tomboi*, they are quite distinct from the honey *pantun* genre. The *Orang Rimba* do not recall their origin stories in the *tombo*/long song format (Effendy 1997).

⁷The expression of happiness, and joy while singing the *bedinding padi* song to the goddesses of rice is believed to effect the number of goddess who come down and strengthen the vitality of the rice field. However, they lack the passion and love expressed while singing *tomboi*.

⁸ In the late 19th century Kedhing mentioned that the people of Siak (northern Riau, Sumatra) climbed, “the towering *sialong*, branchless to a considerable height, by means of bamboo pegs driven into the trunk” (Skeat 1900:204). Skeat writes that *sialong* were climbed in a similar manner by the Peninsular Malay (1900:203-4).

⁹ The belief that honey trees (*sialong*) possess a spirit is widespread among Malayic peoples in Sumatra and Malaysia and in most cases, a ritual must be performed to ask permission or momentarily chase the spirit away, before the tree is climbed and the honey is collected. In the highlands of South Sumatra, the *Gumai* (a Malay people) refer to the spirit of the *sialong* as *dewe* (Sakai 1999:311), while the *Talang Mamak* (interior forests of northern Jambi and Riau) use the term *penunggu sialang* (Silalahi 1998:10). According to Silalahi (1998), a *Talang Mamak* honey collector (or *juara*) recites this magical incantation in order to ask permission, or appease the spirit, before the tree is

climbed and honey collected, “Do not be angry or cause us harm, we are hungry and have not eaten, we are thirsty because we have nothing to drink, do not be angry or cause us harm” (*jangan mencoro dan menggodo, lapar kami nak makan, haus kami nak minum, jangan kau mencoro godo kepada kami*) (10). While Kang doesn’t mention the *Petalangan* term for the spirit of the *sialong*, within their honey *pantun* it is sometimes addressed as *tuan*, a term of respect for someone of age or higher status. The *Sakai* of northern Riau believe that honey trees are occupied by the “ghost” of the *sialang* (*antu pohon sialang rimbun*) which again, must be forced to leave before collecting honey (Suparlan 1995:197). Of the Peninsular Malay in Perak and Selangor, Skeat (1900) writes, “These trees (*tualong* or *sialong*) are supposed to be the abiding places of *hantu*, or spirits...and the large hollow projections from the trunk, called *rumah hantu*, or spirit houses.” (202).

¹⁰ While resembling a mouse, tree shrews are of the same rank (order) as the primates, and along with primates and flying lemurs belong to the clade *Euarchonta*.

¹¹ Whenever collecting honey it is forbidden to use the soft bark of the *hantuy* tree for a *songkorot*, which is more commonly used for climbing smaller fruit trees or to collect the leaves for a roof. The reason given is that the strong smell of this bark would attract the spirit or bees to the climber. When collecting honey, it is only permitted to use white cloth, which is clean, sacred and pure, yet not washed with soap.

¹² I am sure that many of the *Orang Rimba* along the *Makekal* River sell some of their forest products or honey at better rates outside of this relationship. However, it is not talked about in the open. If someone should fall ill, or have an accident, the person could be blamed for breaking the oath of the ancestors and being the cause of this misfortune.

¹³ Some of the characteristics that the *Orang Rimba* generally ascribe to the insane include forgetfulness (particularly of share relations), lethargy (not working), and wild or uncontrolled behaviors that are deemed socially unacceptable. They often point out that the insane break many of the ‘old laws’ (*adat lamo*), which are supposed to be learned by small children. Like a small child, the insane defecate on themselves, in socially unacceptable places such as a river, a camp, a person’s room, throw their feces at another, or play with it. The insane never contribute food to the camp, do not share food properly, and take food without asking and then lie about it afterwards. They do not follow boundary prohibitions, which serve to prevent and quarantine sickness (*besesandingon*), and as a result, endanger the health of the larger community, and relations with the gods. They are said to unacceptably walk around the camp nude (*telanjang*), masturbate (*ngisil, nyebak*) in public, and more generally, bother females while their male protectors (brothers, husbands, and sons) are not present, enter female rooms or space, or approach women at the river while they are bathing. The insane are often said to possess uncontrollable sexual or ‘incestuous’ urges (*sumbang*), and often act them out with primary (mother, siblings) or cross generation relatives, in a very similar manner (as they point out) to a deer, or an greater reticulated python. These incestuous urges are very similar to those that can potentially strike hunters, if the male hunting ritual ‘*panai*’ (Malay; *panas* or heat) is not performed after capturing a greater reticulated python (*ulo sawo*) or the two larger species of deer (*kijang, rusa*).

Elkholy discusses an experience with an *Orang Rimba* group in the southern *Air Hitam* region of *Bukit Duabelas*,

Orang Rimba generally accept, and even embrace, individual idiosyncrasies in behaviour, however extreme. For example an elderly man, who I shared a camp with for several days during survey work in the distant *Air Hitam* watershed area to the south, exhibited highly eccentric behaviour, often talking to himself and laughing aloud unprompted. He demonstrated a degree of self-amusement that would have deemed him a mad man in many societies. Although his behaviour was noticeably odd, his intentions were clearly benign and the *Orang Rimba* thus embraced his unique and quirky mannerisms with enthusiasm and occasional humor. He made no pretence at normalcy, wearing his neurosis on his sleeve, so to speak. Such peculiarities, by virtue of being treated as “dysfunctions” in many societies, often lead to the further maladjustment of such persons through highlighting and drawing negative attention to such behaviours. Among the *Orang Rimba*, acceptance of personal abnormalities tends to have a normalizing or “socializing” affect, ever diversifying and enhancing those unique personality traits that one encounters in collective camp life. (from a draft of Elkholy’s Ph.D. thesis).

¹⁴ One of my informants told me of a brother-in-law caught by *bujang diawan* in his dreams and became crazy for a period of two years. He explained that he would walk around naked, masturbate in front of people (*ngisil, nyebak*), throw his feces at people, steal or lie about food given to him, enter the rooms of women when their husbands were not around, and say things that did not make sense. The camps shamans attempted to cure him at numerous *balai* wedding ceremonies, and it eventually worked after purifying his soul in the sacred pond (*kolam*) of the gods of swidden fields (*or’ang de tanohmon*). Since his recovery, he leads a normal productive life and is respected by the community.

¹⁵According to Sandbukt, with backing from the outside *Melayu*, the man was successfully fined, and while I have never heard of such compensation, reimbursed the owner by handing over his daughters in a relation of debt bondage (Sandbukt 1988:139).

¹⁶ For a description of a similar case along the *Makekal* River in the early nineties, see Muntholib’s 1995 dissertation (Soetomo 1995). Due to the socio-economic and religious importance, the fine for felling any type of *sialong* is always construed as murder, and initially anyway, begins with a fine of five hundred sheets of cloth. The nature of debating the fine, can relate to the type and size of the *sialong*, and the number of hives typically built in their branches. For instance, the largest *kudundung* tree’s always incurs a fine of five hundred sheets of cloth, while the fine for the smaller sized trees may be argued down. These numbers are not set in stone, but actively debated.

Appendix F

Demographics and Current Situation of the Both Groups outside of *Bukit Duabelas*

The Swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* in Jambi and South Sumatra

In Jambi, *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples traditionally lived in the lowland forests east of the *Tembesi* River, primarily along the numerous tributaries of the *Batanghari* River which flow south from around *Muara Bulian* and extend south across the border into South Sumatra. According to WARSI's 1998 survey, there are two thousand and sixty seven *Orang Batin Sembilan* families with a total population which may be around ten thousand, who live in the sub-districts of *Batin 24*, *Muara Tembesi*, *Muara Bulian*, *Mestong*, *Mandiangan* and *Pauh* in the province of Jambi (WARSI and Sandbukt 1998). These peoples have different access to remaining degraded forests in the region, and for the last century, have been the target of government settlement projects. Most are now living in small mixed *Melayu* villages, and in around half of the cases, make up the majority of the village population (see appendix).

In the southern parts of Jambi, there are nearly three hundred *Orang Batin Sembilan* families (around 1500 people) in the *Tanjung Lebar* and *Pangkalan Ranjau* regions who live in the very large British owned palm oil concession *PT Asiatic Persada*, and the adjacent Timber concession held by *PT Asialog*. Some here are able to exploit the remaining degraded forests in the concessions, and apparently some still practice many of their traditional religious beliefs (Tim Peneliti Universitas Sriwijaya 1995). According to a report by Kafil Yamin, these peoples have long been harassed and pressured to leave their lands and enter settlements by police, and hired thugs defending the interests of the timber companies.¹ In the recent era of regional autonomy, many of these peoples have demanded rights to their traditional lands through organized protests. The initial response by *Asiatic* was to increase pressure for them to leave their lands by using company bulldozers to destroy their settlements.

Across the border in South Sumatra, most of the swidden-based *Orang Batin Kubu* traditionally live along the *Lalan*, *Tunkal* and *Bayat* Rivers (and its numerous sub-branches) in the eastern *Musi Banyuasin* district, particularly the sub-district of *Bayung Lincir*. Since the 1970's, the forests in the *Musi Banyuasin* district have been devastated by timber, palm oil and transmigration projects, and since decentralization, illegal logging.² Some of these peoples appear to be living further west, possibly as far as the district of *Musi Rawas*, as well as south into the northern parts of the district of *Muara Enim*. My very rough estimate of three thousand *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples in the

South Sumatra region is roughly based on a mixture of van Dongen's early 20th century figures for settled or taxable *Kubu* and more recent Government statistics of peoples living along these same rivers (see appendix) (Dongen 1910; Dunggio 1985; Sosial 1985; Tim Peneliti Universitas Sriwijaya 1995).³ It is uncertain how many of these peoples still identify as non-*Melayu*. However, if one considers government statistics, the numbers may be higher. In addition to van Dongen's early 20th century writings, a 1995 report published by a research team from *Sriwijaya* University (South Sumatra) and the Social Department gives a brief overview of the contemporary lives of one settled group (pop: 362) near the village of *Mansang*, many of whom work for the surrounding logging company (Tim Peneliti Universitas Sriwijaya 1995). While the report claims that these peoples have been nominal Muslims since at least the 1970's, it also gives a brief glimpse of some of their traditional religious beliefs and ritual (Tim Peneliti Universitas Sriwijaya 1995).⁴

The *Orang Hutan* in South Sumatra

The *Orang Hutan* live throughout the northwestern parts of South Sumatra, mainly in the districts of *Musi Rawas* but also further in the eastern portion of the *Babat Toman* sub-district in the district of *Musi Bangyuasin*. The majority of these forests have been severely degraded by logging or clear-cut and planted with palm oil. In the western district of *Musi Rawas*, there may be around seventy-five *Orang Hutan* families (pop. around 400) living around the *Kijang* River west of the town of *Sarulangun*, and around twenty-five families (pop. around 100) living further east in the *Cebur Anjing* region, in the sub-district of *Rawas hilir* (Dunggio 1985; Sosial 1980). A local NGO worker with general knowledge of these peoples estimated that there may be over two hundred *Orang Hutan* families with a total population of over one thousand living in the forest concessions north east of *Sarulangun* and into the *Babat Tomain* sub-district of *Musi Bangyuasin*. In the southern parts of the *Musi Rawas* district, there may be as many as one hundred families (or around 300) living around the *Sukaraya* region in the southwestern sub-district of *Bangkalan Ulu*, and nearly sixty families (around 200) who traditionally lived throughout the *Semangus* forests in the southeastern sub-district of *Muaral lantikan* (Dunggio 1985). In 1992, the majority of the *Semangus* forests were clear cut by *PT Musi Hutan Persada* (MHP), a subsidiary of *Barito Pacific* one of Indonesia's largest timber companies. While the concession set aside a small patch of secondary forests for the *Orang Hutan*, it caught fire or was intentionally set during the El Nino dry period in 1997, and after they planted the land with palm oil.⁵ Since then,

the *Semangus Orang Hutan* were encouraged to enter three different settlements sponsored by the Timber Company that seized their lands. When Elkholy visited the *Semangus* settlements in 2000, only a small fraction of these people remained in them (personal communication with Elkholy).

***Orang Rimba* along the Western Tran-Sumatran Highway in Jambi**

In between the border of South Sumatra and the *Tembesi River*, there are seven main *Orang Rimba* groupings (population: nearly five hundred) living in the interfluves created by the *Sipa, Rebah, Kutor, Singkut, Salembau, Surian* and *Pemusiran* Rivers, tributaries of the *Limun* and *Tembesi* Rivers (WARSI and Sandbukt 1998). Many of these southern groups maintain relations and have kinship ties with *Orang Rimba/Hutan* in the *Musi Rawas* region across the border in the province of South Sumatra. While the majority of these forests have been degraded by logging companies, particularly the areas around the *Singkut* transmigration settlement, many of the *Orang Rimba* along the *Barisan* foothills still have access to traditional forests, and some have secured traditional land rights by planting rubber.

Several of these groups have participated in failed Social Department settlements, including the *Kutor* group in the early 1980's, and more recently around twelve families along the *Pinai* River, a tributary of the *Singkut*. In 1998, the Social Department published a report on the *Orang Rimba* living in the *Pinai* settlement (the former *PT Pitco* logging concession), which in addition to local residents (around 60 individuals), included *Orang Rimba* recruited from surrounding areas, including *Orang Hutan* from the *Musi Rawas* region in South Sumatra (Sosial 1998). While most of these peoples abandoned the settlement once the food rations ended, the report does include limited descriptions of the southern *Orang Rimba/Orang Hutan* economy and beliefs. Since American Missionary activities were established in the region in the 1930's, the *Orang Rimba* in this region have been influenced by Christian ideas (Gould 1961; Winston 2007). The *Orang Rimba* along the *Rebah* River still have close relations with a *Batak* Protestant Church located near the town of *Singkut* and claim to be active Christians.⁶

Along the western Trans-Sumatran highway in between the towns of *Sarolangun* and *Bangko*, the surrounding *Orang Rimba* are divided amongst twelve different groupings (total population: slightly over 300), which base themselves along the southern tributaries of the *Merangin* River: the *Belengo* (near the town of *Bangko*) *Rasau, Pelakar, Kukus, Kejumat* and *Tambir*⁷ Rivers (WARSI and Sandbukt 1998). The

majority of these forests were cleared in the mid 1980's to make room for the *Pamenang* and *Kubang Ujo* transmigration projects and its connected palm oil plantations. Despite having lost the majority of their traditional forests to these projects, second-generation transmigrants, and small-scale *Melayu* rubber planters, the *Orang Rimba* in this area continue to live a nomadic life on their traditional lands as squatters. Near the *Pelekar* River, Social Department has made several failed attempts to place the surrounding groups in government settlements located in the nearby village of *Bukit Beringin* and *Tanjung Beneuang*. The earliest settlement in *Tanjung Beneuang* was initiated in the 1970's, and the latest in the late 1990's. The *Bukit Beringin* settlement was established in coordination with the local NGO KOPSAD⁸ and ended miserably in 2004 with allegations of the corrupt misuse of project funding.⁹

Because of the instability of their subsistence base, there has understandably been a great deal of tension and even conflict between the *Orang Rimba* and villagers in this region. Many have been reduced to begging along the Trans-Sumatran highway, the surrounding villages and the larger town of *Bangko*. During my research, many of these peoples banded together to demand rights to their traditional lands through organized protests. This only resulted in a small handout from a local palm oil company, the majority of which was unfairly divided between an *Orang Rimba* headman and the director of the NGO *KOPSAD*, apparently for arranging the event.¹⁰ A much more common and profitable form of resistance/retribution is to set up roadblocks along the Trans-Sumatran highway and surrounding roads, and with large sticks or spears in their hands, stop all vehicles including tourist busses and demand that they pay a donation or toll before letting them pass.

In between the *Merangin* and *Tabir* Rivers (south and southwest of *Bukit Duabelas*), there are around four *Orang Rimba* camps who live along the *Tantan* (and *Nalo*), *Melipun* and *Mentawak* Rivers, tributaries of the *Merangin*. The forests south and south west of *Bukit Duabelas* were cleared in the 1950's to build the *Margoyoso* transmigration settlement, initially a Dutch project, and in the early 1980's, the *Hitam Ulu* transmigration settlements and its related palm oil plantations. Numbering around sixty individuals, most of the *Orang Rimba* here live a very nomadic life in palm oil and rubber plantations, and remaining patches of degraded forests, while the *Melipun* group has recently moved west to forests in the western buffer zone of *Kerenci Seblet* National Park.¹¹ Several of these groups spend a great deal of time at a rest-stop/restaurant along the Trans-Sumatran Highway (near *Margoyoso*) where men sell traditional magic and

medicinal remedies, while the women and children make their rounds to each of the busses begging for change.¹²

In between the *Tabir* and *Pelepat* Rivers, there are around five different groupings (pop. around 160) that live in the interfluves, which are based upon the *Mendalang*, *Langeh* and *Aur* Rivers, northern tributaries of the *Tabir* and the *Sagu* and *Kuamang* Rivers, which are southern tributaries of the *Pelepat* River. In the area west of the Tran-Sumatran highway and the old *Melayu* village of *Rantau Panjang*, two groupings live along the upstream portions of the *Langeh* and *Aur* River interfluves. These camps still have access to forests and a stable subsistence base, but this is quickly changing due to unrestricted logging by timber companies (*PT RKI*) and illegal logging. Many here are relatively sedentary swidden farmers and have rubber holdings, which they use to block *Melayu* swidden farmers/rubber planters from encroaching into their traditional lands. North of this area, a small camp (around 20 individuals) traditionally lived around the *Sagu* River. This camp moved south after conflict erupted when their lands were scheduled to be transformed into a new transmigration settlement, together with a Japanese funded palm oil plantation, in order to accommodate spontaneous and second generation of transmigrants in the province (BAPPEDA-Jambi 1999). The *Orang Rimba* from the *Pemantang Kulim* River (nearly 40 individuals) have been given homes in a settlement near the village of *Dwi Karya Bakti*, which may be the most successful case of an *Orang Rimba* settlement. They often use the settlement as a base camp from which they float back and forth from swiddens, the forests, and their rubber tapping efforts. Many in this settlement have apparently entered Islam and now send their kids to school (BAPPEDA-Jambi 1999).

Northeast of the *Sagu* River, the forests in the *Telah* watershed (pronounced *Telai* by the *Orang Rimba*), which border the *Makekal/Bernai* River in *Bukit Duabelas*, were clear-cut in the 1970's to build the *Kuamang Kuning* transmigration settlement and related palm oil plantations. During the early period of clearing, the *Telah Orang Rimba* (pronounced *Telai* by the *Orang Rimba*) encountered conflict with the developers and were pressured to settle or leave their forests. Since then, these people have moved to the *Bukit Tigapuluh* Region where some of their descendents make up the *Tampung* group with whom Elkholy spent a great deal of time with during his research. Northeast of the *Telah* River, there are seven families (around 40 individuals) who live along the *Kuamang* River, a southern tributary of the *Pelepat*.

In between the *Pelepat* and *Tebo* rivers, the *Orang Rimba* (pop. around 150) are divided amongst eight headman, who live along the *Senamat* River, a northern tributary

of the *Pelepat* River, the *Benit*, a southern tributary of the *Tebo*, and the *Mampun Kecil* River, a tributary of the *Bungo* River (WARSI and Sandbukt 1998). While the forests in this region have been logged by timber concessions, the *Orang Rimba* here still have access to secondary forests, are able to collect forest products, and have accumulated some rubber holdings. Several camps in this area are fairly recent arrivals from north of the *Bungo* River. The forests in between the *Bungo* River and the province of West Sumatra were one of the earliest areas in Jambi to be completely deforested and is now situated with the very large *Rimbo-Bujang* transmigration site and related palm oil plantations (Sandbukt 2000:43). The *Orang Rimba* who traditionally lived in this region have all moved to other regions such as the neighboring *Pelepat-Bungo* interfluves, the forests of *Bukit Tigapuluh*, and some across the border into West Sumatra (Sandbukt 2000).

The *Orang Rimba* in the *Bukit Tigapuluh* Region

The *Orang Rimba* who now live in the less degraded forests in between the *Batanghari* River and the *Bukit Tigapuluh* hills (along the Jambi-Riau borders) are recent migrants to the region, most of whom probably began moving here in the 1970's and 80's, after being displaced from their traditional lands by logging companies, transmigration and plantation projects. The 127,000 ha *Bukit Tigapuluh* National park was established in 1995 along the border of Jambi (33,000 ha) and Riau (94,000 ha), while the surrounding forests are classified as buffer zone forests which are currently being logged.¹³ The rights to the two largest concessions in the southern buffer zone belong to *PT Dalek Hutani Esa* (50,000 ha) in the southwest (where most *Orang Rimba* are located) and *PT Hatma Hutani* (42,000 ha) in the southeast, both which are managed by the pulp/plywood factory PT STUD (*Sumatera Timber Utama Daai*) (WARSI 2001a).

In 1998, the *Orang Rimba* in the *Bukit Tigapuluh* region had an overall population approaching four hundred, which was divided amongst twelve different groupings and headmen living in the forests based along the *Gelumpang Besar* and *Sumai* Rivers, tributaries of the *Batanghari* River, and the *Cinaku* and *Peranap* Rivers, tributaries of the *Indragiri* River in Riau (WARSI and Sandbukt 1998). Given the larger and better state of the forests and low population, camps are dispersed, forest oriented, and highly geared towards the collection of forest products. The *Bukit Tigapuluh* groups also fluctuate in out of a life based on swidden farming and nomadic digging of wild yams, while some of the northernmost groups prefer to remain strictly nomadic. In one of the groups Elkholy encountered, they claimed to have been in the nomadic *berayau*

mode of subsistence their entire lives (personal communication with Elkholy). While these peoples have strict post-marital residence patterns and gender prohibitions typical of *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas*, they appear to be less concerned with a convoluted *adat* legal system that regulates claims over forest resources or leadership hierarchies (personal communication with Elkholy). As recent migrants, they no longer have ties to their former customary forests or traditional patrons, while they have access to extensive forests in an area where there are fewer surrounding *Melayu* villages or overlapping claims to forestlands, which may help to explain some of the above. Similar to most peoples in the upstream, they have developed new bondage relations with patrons in the surrounding *Melayu* villages.¹⁴ Several of the northernmost *Orang Rimba* groups along the *Cinaku* and *Peranap* Rivers have developed rather close relations with the southernmost *Talang Mamak* groups, and some cooperate in joint hunting activities and the collection of forest products.

Despite its buffer zone status, logging activities, plantation and transmigration projects are quickly threatening the quality and sustainability of these forests and the *Bukit Tigapuluh* National Park itself. The two timber companies that manage the southern buffer zone forests, supply wood to nearly fifty surrounding sawmills and to the massive PT STUD plywood factory.¹⁵ According to Indonesian forest laws, timber companies are only allowed to selectively fell timber within buffer zone forests, although *PT Hatma Huntani* has somehow managed to bend these rules and succeeded towards changing the status of its concession to 'forest industry production' status (HTI, *Hutan Tanaman Industri*), which allows them to clear-cut and establish palm oil plantations (Osamantri 1999). Over the last several years, the *Orang Rimba* and *Talang Mamak* have protested these events with little results (WARSI 2001b).

The first transmigration settlement in this area was established in the mid 1980's and more recently the *Sungai Karang* transmigration settlement was established within the *PT Wanamukt Wisera* logging concession in 1994 (*Alam Sumatera*, volume 3, No. 2, October 2000). The arrival of transmigrants and work available in the logging industry has led to competition over land and resources, and an increase in illegal logging. In 1997, the timber company *PT IFA* constructed an isolated settlement on their concession for the *Orang Rimba*, which several of the southernmost groups occupied until the years worth of food rations ran out. The settlement included a small school, which was only open for a few months due to the lack of enthusiasm by the *Orang Rimba* and the difficulty in finding a teacher who was willing to remain in the isolated location. From time to time, several camps return to the settlement in between

jaunts of living in the forests. Since the government teacher left, WARSI has sent mobile teachers to teach the children for a week or two at a time, but have yet to establish these activities on a permanent basis (Manurung 2003).

Appendix F Endnotes

¹See Amin Kafil, "Indonesia Oil Palm Industry a Threat to Tribe", <http://www.ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=19567>.

A few living in the *Asiatic/Asialog* concession have obtained work through the British funded Jambi Tiger Project. For a brief overview of the project, which includes hunting grounds, and excellent lists of the animal species found in their forests, see Maddox 2004.

² See "Forests in Transition" *Down to Earth*, No. 61, May 2004.

³ Curiously, 1985 government statistics for *Kubu* peoples living in the *Bayang Lincir* sub-district (*Lalan*, *Tungkal* and *Bayat*) are almost a third lower than the numbers recorded by van Dongen almost 80 years earlier, which may be an indication that many now identify as *Melayu* (Dongen 1910; Dunggio 1985).

⁴ In another location along the *Lalan* River, around forty families living in a government sponsored settlement in *Pulai Gading* were recently chosen to participate in a five year (2002-2007) livestock rearing program funded by the *Pandu Insani* Foundation, which is funded by Heifer International. Livestock projects may have some success with *Orang Batin Kubu* peoples as they lack religious prohibitions on tending and consuming domestic animals. Similar government projects initiated for the *Orang Rimba in Jambi*, who have strong religious prohibitions on tending or eating domesticated animals, have not been successful, although they may have the potential as some *Orang Rimba* camps outside of *Bukit Duabelas* raise chickens to sell to the villagers, but not consumption. Elkholy mentions that the *Semangus Orang Hutan* in South Sumatra have bended traditional taboos, and raise and sell chickens (and rice) to villagers, but did not eat the tabooed items (personal communication with Elkholy).

⁵ See "Poverty in the Midst of Plenty", *Down to Earth* Special Issue October 1999.

⁶ Just off the Sumatran Highway near the town of *Singkut* there is a small Protestant church (*Gereja Kristen Protesten Indonesia*), which has been conducting missionary activities with *Orang Rimba* since the 1970's. These efforts may be a continuation of American Missionary activities that began in the early 1930's. The Batak pastor has amicable relations with the *Rebah Orang Rimba*, often assists them with food and clothing, and they apparently claim to be Christian. During my brief visit, the pastor had recently taken in several *Orang Rimba* children from the *Rebah* group (8 boys and 1 girl) as boarding students, and many had Christian names such as Thomas, Henry and Sam. Largely unpopular with the surrounding Muslims, the priest recounted stories of how in the 70's and 80's, the logging companies, plantations, police and locals physically intimidated the *Orang Rimba* to leave their lands, and even poisoned their crops, trees and water sources. These types of stories are reiterated almost verbatim by *Orang Rimba* throughout the province, particularly in places where their traditional forests have been clear-cut for transmigration settlements and palm oil plantations.

⁷ The *Tambir* is a tributary of the *Tembesi* River.

⁸ An acronym for *Komunitas Peduli Suku Anak Dalam*, ‘The Community That Cares About (or for) the *Suku Anak Dalam*’. See December 12, 2002: KOPSAD Builds Mosque for *Suku Anak Dalam* (Jan 13, 2003: 17 *Suku Anak Dalam* Enter Islam) in ‘*Tabloid Repulika*’ (November 7, 2003), which gives a summary of some of their projects.

⁹ As with many Social Department *Orang Rimba* settlements, from start to finish KOPSAD’s management of the project included using only the cheapest and damaged materials to build houses, which fell apart only months into the project and shortened and bad quality rations. Throughout late 2003 and into 2004, there were constant reports in the media accusing KOPSAD of corruption and misusing project funding, with the Social Department and KOPSAD trying to lay the blame on one another.

Some of the headlines of these events in the local newspapers *Jambi Express* (JE) and *Jambi Independent* (JI) included; (JE) August 26, 2003: ‘KOPSAD Investigated for Legal Problems’ (*KOPSAD Disuluh Masalah Hukum*); (JE) August 29, 2003: ‘The Building of Rooms for the *Kubu* Neglected’ (*Pembangunan Rumah Kubu Terbengkalai*); (JI) January 16, 2004: ‘Problem with *Suku Anak Dalam* Rooms reported to Ministry of Social Affairs (Mensos)’ (*Masalah Rumah SAD dilapor ke Mensos*); (*Post Metro Jambi*) January 19, 2004: ‘KOPSAD Head of Dinas KSPM, The source of the noise’ (*KOPSAD Kepala Dinas KSPM. Asal Bunyi*); (JE) April 19, 2004: ‘Ask for the Aid to be Returned’ (*Minta Bantuan Dikembalikan*); (JE) April 20, 2004: ‘The NGO KOPSAD Sends a Letter to MENSOS and the Governor’ (*LSM KOPSAD Kirim Surat Ke Mensos dan Gubinator*); (JE) April 24, 2004 ‘Budi: KSPM has Bad Feelings for KOPSAD’ (*Budi: KSPM sakit hati dengan KOPSAD*).

¹⁰ A few of the headlines in the local newspapers covering these demonstrations include: March 1, 2003: ‘The *Orang Rimba* in *Bangko* protest Palmoil company’ (*Bangko Orang Rimba Protes PT sawit*); June 14, 2003: ‘16 SAD Protestors of PT JAW still in Jail’ (*16 Warga Pendemo PT JAW Masih Ditahan*); June 23, 2003: ‘The *Suku Anak Dalam* are often the target of exploitation in projects’ (*Suku Anak Dalam Sering Menjadi Proyek Exploitasi*); (JE) March 3, 2004: ‘The *Kubu* demonstrate at *Balai Desa*’ (*Kubu demo di Balai Desa*); (JI) May 29, 2004: ‘The *Suku Anak Dalam* Threaten to Demonstrate’ (*SAD Menancam Demo*).

¹¹ In 2001, six members of the *Melipun* group led by the headman *Arau* were murdered along the *Kunyit* River, apparently the media claims, by *Orang Rimba* spears. WARSI appears to imply that villagers with other interests may have been involved.

¹² Amulets, animal skins sometimes painted with stripes and claimed to be tiger skin, antlers, snake skin, the liver, bile and sexual organs of various animals such as bear, many times claimed to be from elephants, which are no longer present in this region. Traditionally, these kinds of activities would have been unthinkable given their taboos on interacting with outsiders.

¹³ For information surrounding the establishment and current situation of *Bukit Tigapuluh* National Park see, *Alam Sumatera* October 2000, and Sandbukt and Ostergaard (1993).

¹⁴ In an unusual success story, after being banished from *Bukit Duabelas* for violating customary law, one family from the *Air Hitam* River moved to a *Talang Mamak* settlement in the *Bukit Tigapuh* region in the 1980's, accumulated money by selling forest products, entered Islam and became *Melayu*, and now works as a debt patron (*toke*) in *Samarantihan* village (Kurniawan 2000). There is a similar story with another *Orang Rimba* man from the *Air Hitam* region, who now lives in the village of *Sungai Air Rengas*, a *Melayu* village located along the *Batanghari* River along the northeast border of *Bukit Duabelas*. After marrying and moving to his wife's residence in the upstream *Kajasung* region, he took a job as a logger for the local concession and after divorcing his *Orang Rimba* wife moved to the village and became *Melayu*. After spending some time working as a logger for the concession's affiliate in Kalimantan, he accumulated money and returned to *Sungai Air Rengas* where he married a *Melayu* woman. He now works as an illegal logging boss (*toke kayu*) and debt patron, managing both villagers and *Orang Rimba* kin who live in the forests.

¹⁵ The production forests in the buffer zone are managed by *PT Dalek Hutani Eda* in the west and *PT Hatmahutani*, who have attempted to have their concession converted to HTI status in the east. Both are managed by the pulp/plywood factory PT STUD (*Sumatera Timber Utama Daai*).

Appendix G

Population Tables

Orang Batin Kubu, Orang Hutan and Orang Rimba in South Sumatra and Jambi

I. *Orang Batin Kubu* in Jambi and South Sumatra and *Orang Hutan* in South Sumatra

Van Dongen's Population Figures for *Orang Batin Kubu* in South Sumatra in 1907

Marga	Population	Family head (Obligated to pay taxes)
Kubu Lalan	1095	315
Kubu Tungkal	770	192
Kubu Bayat	904	195
Kubu Hulu Leko	383	129
Kubu Dawas	35	9
Total	3187	1926

(source: Dongen 1910:196)

Social Department Figures for *Kubu* peoples in South Sumatra in 1980

Location	Marga	Kecamatan	Kabupaten	Families	Pop
<i>Orang Batin Kubu Peoples</i>					
Muara Kandang	Lalan	Bayung Lincir	Musi Banyuasin	36	271
Muara Medak	Lalan	Bayung Lincir	Musi Banyuasin	100	375
Simpang Bayat	Bayat	Bayung Lincir	Musi Banyuasin	75	315
Talang Pauh	Tungkal ulu	Bayung lincir	Musi Bayunasin	45	206
<i>Probably Orang Hutan</i>					
Talang Buluh	Penggap	Babat Toman	Musi Banyuasin	100	291
Sungai Ulu	Benaket	Gunung Megang	Muara Enim	100	478
<i>Orang Hutan</i>					
Jadimulyo	Jadimulyo	Jadimulyo	Musi Rawas	24	94
Cebur Anjing	Binggini Teluk	Rawas Hilir	Musi Rawas	21	95
Sungai Kijang	Suralangun	Rawas ulu	Musi Rawas	75	368
Sukaraya	Terawas	Bangkalan ulu	Musi Rawas	100	250
Semangus	Semangus	Muara Lakitan	Musi Rawas	60	180

Total: 736 2,921

(source: Team Survey DEPSOS 1980)

Orang Batin Sembilan Figures in Jambi and Related Government Settlements

Village/ Kecamatan	Batin 9 families /total families in village	Settlement/Year	Situation
Jangga Aur/Batin 24	173/200	75 (1997)	Most land taken newcomers
Jebak/Ma Tembesi	115/131	45 (1992), 40 (1993), 65 (1998)	Most land taken by PT TLS
Bungku/ Ma Bulian	195/300	50 (1972)	20 families own land, most taken by PTP6 and PT BDU
Poma Air/Ma Bulian	60/340		15 families own land. Most land taken
Sinkawang, Ma Bulian	120/170		No more land, PT BSB is taking private rubber to convert into Palm oil.
Kilangan/ Ma Bulian	132/219		9 families have land
Ladang Peris/ Ma Bulian	20/?	50 (1979)	Little land
Ma Singoan/Ma Bulian	20/159		Land taken by PT Ku and PT WKS
Pelempang/Mestong	63/301	75(1975)	31 families have rubber
Nyogan/ Mestong	32/337	50 (1975)	Still land available
Merkanding/ Mestong	300/800	75 (1974), 62 (1993)	Land being taken by PT 6 and PT Asialog
Tg. Lebar/Mestong	216/231	20 (1993), 30 (1994), 25 (1995)	PTP 6 taking land to convert into palm oil plantations
Tg. Pauh/ Mestong	56/?	56 (1980)	Minority has small land holdings
Nagasari/Mestong	29/?	? (1952)	All land taken by newcomers
Pemusiran/Mandiingin	100/185	40 (1982)	Still enough land
Lubuk Napal/Pauh	154/200		“
Lamban Segal/Pauh	132/152		“
Sepeintun/Pauh	150/188		“
2067 families with a population around 10,000 with 5 per family			

(source: WARSI 1998)

II. *Orang Rimba* in Jambi, outside of *Bukit Duabelas*

Orang Rimba between the border of South Sumatra and the *Tembesi* River

River	Tributary of	Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Sipa	Limun	Lb. Bedorong	7	35	Selo
Rebah	“	Tg Raden III	17	88	Ngampo
Kutur	“	“	9	37	Marodo
Singkut	Tembesi	Lubuk Sepuh	42	210	Slim
Salembau	“	Berau	6	35	Panto Ali
Surian	“	Pul. Lintang	13	54	Saringan
Pemusiran	“	Pemusiran	5	25	Apung
Total			99	484	

(Source: WARSI 1998)

Orang Rimba between the *Tembesi* and the *Merangin* Rivers

River	Tributary of	Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Belengo (Puteh)	Merangin	Sei. Putih	7	35	Cangkung
Belengo (Kayu Aro)	“	Sei. Putih	1	8	Kilip
Belengo (hilir)	“	Karang Brahi	4	46	Sukat
Rasau	“	Lantak Seribu	9	31	Peng. Lem
Pelakar	“	Lantak Seribu	7	25	Nijah
Kukus	“	Pauh Menang	14	51	Mansur
Kukus	“	Bangun Jaya	7	30	Nungki
Kukus	“	SPB	2	6	Gantap
Kejumat	“	Pem. Kancil	2	10	Juray
Palekar	“	Tanjung	2	8	Abas
Pelakar	“	“	2	9	Tempino
Tambir	Tembesi	Tinting	5	33	Salim
Total			64	312	

(Source: WARSI 1998)

Orang Rimba groups between the *Merangin* and *Tabir* Rivers

River	Tributary of	Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Tantan (hilir)	Merangin	Several	4	12	Kitab
“	“	“	3	13	Musa Tampung
“ Melipun	“	“	7	25	Arau
“ Lontar	“	“	3	14	Bujang Kuat
Total			17	64	

(Source: WARSI 1998)

Orang Rimba groups between the *Tabir* and *Pelepat* Rivers

River	Tributary of	Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Mendelang	Tabir	“	10	37	Toyed
Langeh	“	Tg Putus	7	30	Ali
Selayau	S. Pelepat	Several	5	20	Edi
Kuamang	“	Dwikarya	7	40	Ampung
Sagu	“	Baru Pelepat	4	20	Gubernur
Total			33	154	

(Source: WARSI 1998)

Orang Rimba groups between the Pelepat, Tebo and Bungo Rivers

River	Tributary of	Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Senamat	N. Pelepat	S. Beringin	5	18	Juru Penerang
Senamat	“	Talang Sungai	4	30	Hasan Tuneh
Senamat	“	Senamat	6	14	Bujang Hitam
Senamat	“	Tanah Datar	5	18	Bujang Paman
Senamat	“	Tanah Datar	3	13	Bujang Banjar
Benit	Tebo	Benit	5	17	Husin
Benit	Tebo	Benit	6	20	Cabung
Mampun Kecil	Bungo	Bedaro	3	15	Buyung
Total			37	145	

(Source: WARSI 1998).

Northern Bukit Tigapuluh Orang Rimba

River	Tributary of	Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Gelumpang Besar	Batanghari	Sungai Karang	5	26	Seijang
Geleumpang Besar Hulu	“	“	4	20	Bujang Rancak
Gelumpang Besar Langas	“	“	6	30	Bujang Bagak
Sumai	“	Muara Kilis	12	65	Bujang Kabut
Sumai	“	Semambu	8	40	Sukur
Sumai Hulu	“	Semambu	9	58	Debalang
	“	Pemayungan	5	21	Tampung
Sumai Hulu	“	“	8	52	Prusik
Cinaku (Alim)	Indragiri	Alim	3	7	Cilugak
Cinaku (Antan)	Indragiri	Puntianai	4	19	Iat
Peranap (Seranggeh)	Indragiri		4	18	Katoh
Total			68	364	

(Source: WARSI 1998).

III. Population Figures of the *Orang Rimba* in *Bukit Duabelas*

1995 Figures of the *Makekal Orang Rimba*

Region	Families	Pop
Makekal Hilir	19	102
Makekal Tengah	14	60
Makekal Hulu	87	479
Total	120	678

Source: (Soetomo 1995)

From WARSI 1998

River	Flows into	Melayu village	Families	Pop	Leader
Air Panas	Air Hitam	Pematangkabau	8	38	Tmg. Besering
Paku Aji	Air Hitam	“	4	17	Tmg. Tarib
Keruh	Air Hitam	“	16	74	Miring
Semapui	Air Hitam	Bukit Suban	14	58	Nyai
Tenguyung	Air Hitam	“	3	17	Cangking
Papit	Merangin	Kar. Brahi	2	8	Menyuruk
Total			47	212	

Makekal

River	Flows into	Melayu Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Makekal Hilir	Tabir	Tanah Garo	9	47	Depati Ngadap
Mid Makekal/Bernai	“	“	17	101	Bejumpai (later Tmg. Ngukir)
Mid Makekal/Bernai	“	“	10	50	Wakil Tuha
Makekal Hulu	“	“	11	69	Tmg. Mirak
Makekal Hulu	“	“	15	83	Bepak Meranti
Mekekal Hulu	“	“	2	13	Tmg. Bayu
Makekal Hulu	“	“	3	17	Ngandun
Makekal Hulu	“	“	29	139	Tmg. Ngerip Tenggana
Total			96	517	

Kajasung and Serenggam

River	Flows into	Melayu village	Families	Pop	Leader
Kejasung Besar Hilir	Tabir	Batu Sawar	2	9	Sijinjang
Kejasung Besar Hulu	“	“	10	42	Tmg. Setenang
Kejasung Besar Hilir	“	“	15	66	Tmg. Cilitai
Kajasung Kecil Hilir	“	“	2	15	Nyamping
Mid Kajasung Kecil	“	“	8	33	Tmg. Kecil
Kajasung Kecil Hulu	“	“	30	115	Tmg. Meja
Serenggam	Tembesi	Paku Aji	9	35	Tmg. Madrid
Total			76	315	

Total Population of Bukit Duabelas	219	1046
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More Recent Figures from (Siagan 2003)

Air Hitam River

River	Flows into	Melayu Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Pak Aji	Air Hitam	Air Panas/ Pematankabau	25	100	Tmg. Tarib
Keruh	Air Hitam	“”	20	99	Tmg. Miring
Tenguyung	Air Hitam	Bukit Suban	7	40	Laman
Merangin	Merangin	Kar Brahi	4	12	Kitab
Total			56	251	

River

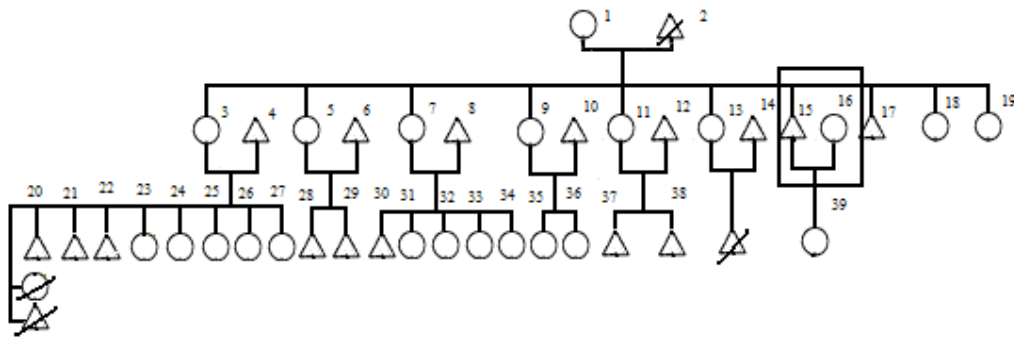
River	Flows into	Melayu village	Families	Pop	Leader
Makekal Hilir (Kembang Bungo)	Tabir	Tanah Garo	9	54	Depati Nagkaba
Mid Makekal/Bernai (Belamban Pupus)	“	“	12	47	Wakil Tuha
Mid Makekal/Bernai (Talang Dirombuton)	“	“	14	78	Tmg. Ngukir
Mid Makekal/Bernai (Tanoh Teregang)	“	“	13	64	Depati Pengelam
Makekal Hulu (Sako Tulan)	“	“	14	55	Tmg. Mirak
Makekal Hulu (Durian)	“	“	6	22	Depati Laman Senjo
Makekal Hulu (Lembing)	“	“	8	34	Mangku Muda
Makekal Hulu (Sako Rompon)	“	“	42	198	Mangku Tuha
Makekal Hulu (Kedudung Mudah)	“	“	13	63	Tmg. Ngerip/Tengganai Ngembar
Makekal Hulu (Serantan/Depari)	“	“	2	14	Tmg. Bayu
Total			133	629	

Kajasung and Serengam Rivers

River	Flows into	Melayu Village	Families	Pop	Leader
Kajasung Besar Hilir (S. Kundur)	Tabir	Batu Sawar	12	69	Tmg. Cilitai
Mid Kajasung Besar (Aik Behan)	„	„	6	34	Ngandun
Kajasung Besar Hulu (Handayan Beik)	“	“	12	50	Tmg. Setenang
Kajasung Kecil Hilir (Jerenang)	“	“	12	46	Tmg. Ngamal
Kajasung Kecil hulu/Serenggam (Terab)	Tabir/ Tembesi	Pakuaji, Hajran	30	155	Tmg. Mija
Serenggam (Bangkai Anjing)	Tembesi	“”	9	35	Tmg. Marid
Total			89	389	

Total Population of Bukit Duabelas	278	1269
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The Extended Family of *Bijiwa* from the Upstream *Makekal* River



- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Bijiwa</i> (grandmother) | 20. <i>Peniti Benang</i> (bachelor) |
| 2. <i>Mankondin</i> (deceased) | 21. <i>Peganai</i> (child, 8) |
| 3. <i>Ner'day</i> (mother) | 22. <i>Benapay</i> (child, 4) |
| 4. <i>Langkap</i> : (senior husband and <i>Pengulu</i>) | 23. <i>Nagal</i> (child, 10) |
| 5. <i>Blasimi</i> (mother) | 24. <i>Malayau</i> (child, 9) |
| 6. <i>Naguh</i> (in-marrying husband) | 25. <i>Bokacak</i> (child, 6) |
| 7. <i>Melar'is</i> (mother) | 26. <i>Besending</i> (child 3) |
| 8. <i>Bedengung</i> (in-marrying husband) | 27. <i>Cuali Bungoh</i> (one month) |
| 9. <i>Ger'indong</i> (mother) | 28. <i>Neling</i> (child, 6) |
| 10. <i>Ber'enti</i> (in-marrying husband) | 29. <i>Nuwun</i> (child, 4) |
| 11. <i>Nukup</i> (mother) | 30. <i>Bejumai</i> (child) |
| 12. <i>Diusa</i> (in-marrying husband) | 31. <i>Melanai</i> (child) |
| 13. <i>Bekur'ik</i> (mother) | 32. <i>Bekimai</i> (child) |
| 14. <i>Ber'edan</i> (in-marrying husband) | 33. <i>Naip</i> (child) |
| 15. <i>Penyar'uk</i> (married to downstream
<i>Kajasung Besar</i> River) | 34. <i>Gulugoh Bungoh</i> (child) |
| 16. <i>Nungsa</i> (<i>Penyaruk's</i> wife) | 35. <i>Nankui</i> (child) |
| 17. <i>Bekilat</i> (bachelor) | 36. <i>Ber'cento</i> (child) |
| 18. <i>Juwar'oh</i> (child) | 37. <i>Ningin</i> (child) |
| 19. <i>Bepunchoh</i> (child) | 38. <i>Nyangah</i> (child) |
| | 39. <i>Bira Sibul</i> (infant) |

Appendix H

Origin Stories and Legends in Local Dialects/English

I. *Melayu* Legends Related to the *Kubu*

The Battle between *Orang Kayo Hitam* and *Temanggung Mero Mato*, the Founding of a New Capital and the Origins of the *Kubu* (in *Bahasa Melayu*)

“Dari dusun Guru Tuo itulah Orang Kayo Hitam berangkat dengan dengan beberapa orang pedayungnya sampai di muara Sungai Air Hitam, dan disana ianya berpikir seakan sesuatu yang aneh berada didalamnya, oleh karena perbedaan warna air kedua sungai itu asing sekali. Warna air sungai Airhitam itu betul-betul hitam seperti tinta. Sebagai pedoman menurut ilmu batinnya, ditimbangnnya pula air sungai Tembesi dan Air Hitam, ternyata air sungai Air Hitam adalah lebih berat dari air sungai Tembesi. Menurut Sahibul hikayat, dimana air sungai yang timbangnya lebih berat, disitu berada orang kuat dan gagah, dengan pergertian orang jago. Mukiklah Orang Kayo Hitam menyusuri sungai Air Hitam itu, beberapa lama kemudian ia melihat sepotong puntung kayu api hanyut dan pada puntung itu ada terlilit sehelai rambut panjang, rambut wanita. Berpikir Orang Kayo Hitam, bahwa disitu ada anak dara. Sesaat kemudian sampailah ia kepada sebuah kampong dan bertanya kepada seorang laki-laki yang sedang mandi di rakit/jamban, apa nama kapung atau negeri siapa disini. Dijawab orang itu, bahwa ini adalah kampong atau negeri Temanggung Merah Mato dengan saudaranya Temanggung Temuntan, yakni raja Tembesi. Naiklah Orang Kayo Hitam ke kampong it uterus kerumah Temanggung Merah Mato dengan mengucapkan: “Assalamu’alaikum”, satu ucapan yang belum pernah didengar oleh Temanggung Merah Mato sebelumnya, hingga menjadi satu kehaeranan besar bagi mereka.

Bertanya Tumenggung Mera Mato: “Tentu ananda ini adalah orang jauh, siapa ananda dan dari mana dating ananda”. Menjawab Orang Kayo Hitam: “Benar apa yang mamanda duga, saya dating dari Unjang Jabung, nama saya Orang Kayo Hitam bin Datuk Paduko Berhalo”. Temanggung memperkenalkan dirinya pula serta memperkenalkan saudranya Temanggung Temuntan, anak dari raja Dewa, keturunan megat-megatan (dewa-dewa).

Mungkin sudah kelaziman pada orang dahulu kala itu, apabila sudah bertemu lalu menadu kependekaran dan sakti masing-masing. Gong tawak-tawak dibunyikan, seluruh rakyat berkumpul menyaksikan. Turunlah Temanggung Merah Mato dan Orang Kayo Hitam ke glanggang beradu pencak silat dan segala langkah, beradu menghambur tinggi, beradu tahan pukul dan tahan tikam, beradu sakti seperti menurun angina dan sebagainya. Istirahat sebentar waktu makan minum, kemudian dilanjutkan lagi sampai selama tiga hari tiga malam, baru dapat diketahui siapa yang ada kelebihanannya diantara Temanggung Merah Mato dengan Orang Kayo Hitam, dimana yang akhir ini memenangkan segala-galanya.

Temanggung Merah Mato empunyai dua orang anak, seorang laki-laki bernama Raden Kuning Megat di Alam yang elok dan gagh susuai dengan namanya, dan seorang putrid bernama Myanang Mengurai yang cantik, sesuai pula dengan sebutannya dan memang tak puas mata memandangnya. Demikian dikisahkan.

Orang Kayo Hitam teringat akan rambut yang panjang melilit puntung yang dilihatnya hanyut di sungai beberapa hari yang lalu, maka dapatlah dipastikannya, bahwa jelaslah

gadis yang cantik ayu yang ada di rumah itu adalah anak enak atau putri dari Temenggung Merah Mato.

Menghadplah ia kepada Temenggung Temuntan saudara Merah Mato sebagai mamak dan tengganai dari gadis tersebut, meminang sang Putri Mayang Mengurai untuk dijadikan permaisurinya. Temenggung Temuntan pada waktu itu meminta waktu kepada Orang Kayo Hitam untuk menjawab pinangan itu guna bermufakat terlebih dahulu dengan saudaranya yaitu ayah Mayang Mengurai, Temenggung Merah Mato. Serba sulit bagi kedua bersaudara ini mempertimbangkannya; diterima pinangan ini, Orang Kayo Hitam tidak sepadan dengan anaknya yang molek itu, maklum Orang Kayo Hitam orang pantai yang selamanya diterpa oleh panas laut, berkulit hitam, berwajah seram. Tidak mererima pinangan ini, tidak sanggup menolak, karena sudah kalah di gelanggang. Oleh kedua bersaudara ini diambil jalan secara halus untuk tidak mererima pinangan itu dengan menyodorkan pengisian adapt/mahar, yang diduga tidak akan terpenuhi oleh Orang Kayo Hitam, yaitu; emas selesung pesuk, seruas buluh telang dan selengan baju. Ditambah dengan kepala tungau segantang ulang a ling.

Setelah tiga hari Orang Kayo Hitam pun menghadap kembali dan menerima jawaban dari Temenggung Temuntan selaku mamak dan tuo tengganai dari keluarga itu.

Berkatalah Temenggung Temuntan: “Dari maksud anado wahai Orang Kayo Hitam, telah mamand jalani segalo ahli waris dan suko atau setuju segalonyo, idak seorangpun menolak, kareno hal iko adolah bagaikan padi jatuh ke ladungnyo atau bak kuah telimbak ke nasi. Dari pengisian adatnyo; emas selesug pesuk, seruas buluh telang dan selengan baju, ditambah kepalo tungau segantang ulang-aling (digoyangkan). Maitulah adatnyo mamando di siko, sudah buruk dimemake, sudah habis dimakan, sudah bersesap berjaerami, sudah berpandan berkuberan, bertitian teras bertanggo batu, jalan berambah nan berturut, baju berjait nan berpake, sudah gayun pinang, sudah rekah kelapo, maitulah adapt kami disiko”.Orang Kayu Hitam adalah seorang arif bijaksana juga, kilap ikan damal air tahu jantan betinanya, tahu kilat beliung ke kaki dan kilat cermin ke muka. Karena itu ia tidak menyangga segala apa yang dijatuhi sebagai adapt mahar kepadanya itu, semuanya diterimanya dengan mentak putus memakan habis, batas kepela akan dijunjung, batas bahu akan dipikul, hanya ia minta agar adapt yang akan diisi, lembaga yang akan dituang itu bertempo selama enam bulan pulang-pergi.

Menurut Sahibul Hikyat, Orang Kayu Hitam itu sebelum ia meniki tanta kerajaan telah mengadakan hubungan erat dengan Jawa dan teleh pernah menundukkan beberapa negergi di Jawa, di daerah kerajaan bekas Majapahit dulunya, yaitu: Materam, Pamalang, Tumenggung, Kendal, Jepara dan Demak. Ia pernah menjadi menantu dari raja Materam dan nikay dengan Tarumas Pernalang. Orang Kayo Hitam berangkat dari negari Temenggung Merah Mato terus ke Ujung Jabung kembali, beristirahat sebentar dan mengatur segala sesuatu berkenaan dengan pemerintahanya dan perkembangan Islam. Kemudian ia berlayar menuju tujuh negeri tersebut di atas tadi di Jawa untuk meminta bantuan emas sebanyak adapt yang diminta sebagai mahar Putri Myang Mengurai itu. Beberapa bulan kemudian diterimanya barang-barang tersebut dan kembalilah Orang Kayo Hitam ke Ujung Jabung dan dari sana terus ke negeri Temenggung Merah Mato di sungai Air Hitam (Sarko) untuk mepersembahkan yang diminta kepadanya dulu itu.

Selesai segala upacara perkawinan, kedua pegantin baru ini didampingi adik iparnya Raden Kuning Megat di Alam, berangkat meninggalkan negeri Temenggung Merah Mato di Air Hitam Sarko, dengan dibekali oleh sang mertua beserta segenap rakyatnya

dengan dua ekor angsa putih yang berenang lebih dulu di depan perahu kajang lako, seakan merupakan voorreider kata orang sekarang, dan amanah ayahenda: -Dimana angsa ini singgah naik tebing dan langsung mupur ditempat itu selama dua hari dua malam, disanalah ananda mulai mengampak parang sebagai permulaan membuat negeri ibukota kerajaan yang bau, sebab itulah sebagai petunjuk tanah bertauh.

Selama perjalanan milir, angsa putih itu singgah pertama kali dan naik ke tebing Muara Tembesi, tetapi segera turun kembali dan milir terus menuruti arus sungai Batang Hari Akhirnya sampai kesatu tempat sebelah hilir kanjung yang disebut namanya-Jam- yaitu di kampong Tenadang namanya pada waktu itu. Kedua angsa putih itu naik ke tebing dan mupur disana selama dua hari dua malam. Berdasarkan amanah ayahenda mertua tadi, disitulah Orang Kayo Hitam pertama kalinya menghayunkan parangnya ke bumi sebagai pembukaan kerja membuat negeri kerajaan di atas tanah yang diberi nama Tanah Pilih. Cerita rakyat, bahwa kapak pertama Orang Kayo Hitam ke bumi itu mengenai sebuah meriam kuno dan kapak kedua mengenai sebuah Gong. Pada waktu itu, detengah rakyat bergotong-royong menebas dan menebang, membersihkan Tanah Pilih tersebut, membangun keratin dan perumahan-perumahan, datang utusan dari Air Hitam tadi membawa berita bahwa Temenggung Merah Mato suami isteri hilang secara misterius.

Karena itu timbullah faham pada saat itu juga, bahwa kedua suami isteri itulah rupanya yang telah menjadi meriam dan gong terkapak dalam tanah tadi sebagai penjelmaan. Karena itu meriam ini dinamai- Si Jimiat- dan gong itu dinamai- Si Timang. Dalam hal ini menurut pikiran kita sekarang sudah jelas tidak diterima akal dan berkemungkinan besar faham tersebut dituskan segera secara spontan sekedar untuk membujuk hati Mayang Mengurai dan saudaranya Raden Kuning Megat di Alam.

Bukan tidak mungkin Temenggung Merah Mato suami isteri merasa patah hati atas perjodohan anaknya itu yang dianggapnya kurang sepadan ditilik dari rupa, lalu melarikan diri ke hutan, disamping berangkali tidak ingin menukar kepercayaan lamanya dengan Islam yang dibawa oleh Orang Kayo Hitam itu, lalu menjadi cikal bakal suku Kubu yang berada di daerah Sarko (Air Hitam dan Tabir), sebab kita dengar juga pemimpin-pemimpin Kubu disitu ada yang memakai gelar Temenggung. Atau pindah dari kampong itu masuk ke sungai Mentawak di negeri yang hilang dipandang mata menurut keyakinan orang disana, akibat perang dengan Sriwijaya dulu (Nasruddin 1989: 83-87).

II. *Orang Batin Kubu* Legend

The Legend of King *Bawah Sawoh* and the *Bulian Kubu*

This legend was recorded in the early 20th century by van Dongen, the former Dutch Resident of Jambi. This story was collected from *Orang Batin Kubu* who lived along the *Bulian* River, many of which had settled and at least nominally entered Islam by this time. At the time, these people were no longer living along the *Bulian* River, most having moved to the *Melayu* villages of *Muaro Bahar Tanjoin*, *Muaro Bulian* and *Maruwo*, as a result of the Jambi rebellion in the early 20 century. During van Dongen's time, there were 86 people who identified themselves *Bulian Kubu* who were living in *Muara Bahar Tanjung* and formally listed as taxpayers to the Dutch.

A long time ago, before the royalty had begun to use the title Sultan, there was a very powerful king named *Penembahan Bawah Sawoh*, who received this name because his palace was located near a group of fruit trees. Near the mouth of the *Bulian River*, a sub branch of the *Jambi River*, there were a group of villages that were referred to as *Muara Bulian*. These villagers did not yet know that there were other people living along the upstream rivers of *Muaro Bulian*. However, one day while fishing upstream, they came upon a field that had recently been burned and later, returned to tell the King the news. The King ordered *Lurah Bonteng* to return to where he had seen the burned field and to investigate the matter, and upon looking into the matter, he found that there was a group of around one hundred and fifty people living at the location, but what caught his eye was the most beautiful women he had ever seen. Upon seeing the King's servant, she was very startled and ran away into the forests. After returning to the palace, *Lurah Bonteng* described that there were indeed around one hundred and fifty people living upstream, as well as a very beautiful women whose name was *Bayan Lais*. After hearing the story of the women, the king then ordered *Cengkaruk Batu*, one of his best soldiers, to return to the location, find the girl and bring her to him. *Cengkaruk Batu* returned to the upstream, found the girl alone in the forest, and took her back to the king. Upon hearing the news that their sister had been abducted by a man with red eyes and a moustache. Her brothers *Si Ceran* and *Si Rompak* were extremely angry and set out to find her with a spear in one hand and a *keris* in the other. Upon arriving to *Muaro Bulian*, and asking *Cengkaruk Batu* on the matter, they were told that the princess was being held in palace in the kingdom of Jambi, a place that downstream and across a large river. The brothers then set out to the kingdom and with fury and rage alone confronted the King's forces killing fifty of his soldiers. After it became apparent that the King would not be able to hold back the two brothers, the King relented telling them that they could take back their sister if they did not agree to stop their rage. However, he had one condition. Since the women was already pregnant, the King told the brothers that when the child was born, and old enough to make the journey, that they bring him back to the kingdom so that he could give the child a name. When the child was born, they waited till it could walk and speak and then brought the child back to the King and he named the child *Raden Nagasari*, the King of *Bulian*. The two brothers and the child then returned to *Lubuk Pelang*, but before they returned the king told the brothers to return with the child when he was a teenager, so that he could be circumcised and have his teeth filed. When it was time, they once again returned and the King assembled his subjects to observe the ceremony. During the first attempt to circumcise the teenager, the knife shattered and this repeatedly happened with nine different knives. They then tried to circumcise the teenager with a special sharp stone but this also failed. Eventually, the King came up with a different solution to bring the boy into adult hood, and told his assistants to sacrifice a goat and to rub the blood onto his body and that

would be the end of the matter, so they did, and it was done. After returning to the forest, *Raden Nagasari* was considered by all to be the King of *Bulian*, from the upstream to the mouth of the *Bulian* River and ruled the groups from *Dusun Tuwa* to *Dusun Lubuk Pelang*. Later he married and conceived a child which he named *Raden Lontar* who later also became the king of *Bulian*. *Raden Lontar* had two children, *Singa Menggala* and *Udo Menggala* and *Udo Menggala* later became the new leader. However, due to new policy in the Kingdom and the change of title to Sultan, *Udo Menggal* was no longer considered a King, but one of *Sultan Keramat's* officials. *Udo Menggala* then had a son whom he named *Regending* and who also became the leader of the *Bulian* region; however, his title and name was changed to *Depati Jentikan*. The title of *Dapati* later switched to be called *Pasirah*, and his son whom he named *Gemar*, took this title. *Gemar* had a son named *Gedik* which became the new *Pasirah*. During van Dongen's time in Jambi, *Pasirah Dangkap* was still alive, although the title no longer entitled him too much authority (Dongen 1910).

III. Makekal Orang Rimba Origins and Legends in Bahasa Rimba and English

The People of the Flood (*Or'ang Kabanjiron*)

Sebolum Tuhan meciptako nio, laut segelo. Weketu kebanjir'on waktu zaman kiamat, ketur'unon asalnye mula pejedi di nio kito beder'i, kalo tanoh nio disebut or'ang, artinye, tanoh setumpang tajak, ado sebut or'ang, langit, langit selebur payang. Ambun sebut or'ang bisa menyedi lout iyoi, nio lout. Loutnye tibo tibo dihambut or'ang, kalo kemdukon lout, kelur'uon lout godong. Kalo lout dilemparko oleh kito anak rimba delom di nio, iyoi lah bilang getong sungoi. Jedi, nang bor'i hidup artinye asal bedua iyoi. Pehidupnye kalo loutnye, dulu or'ang, or'ang beduo, nio di mininjak bolum Jambi, bolum ado. bedok seiko, ahhh, kalo kekayuon rumahnye, kalu kayu apinye, iyoi sekunduk ser'umput, kalu hatop, kedungdungon tujuh huluy. Or'ang beduh, gedjoh siku, bedok seiku, keduduk sebetong, kedungdungon tujuh huluy, awal bedir'i, asal mula meciptako deri Tuhan Kuaso. Or'ang Kelumpang meshi di ujung lagi, ini awal bumi nio, wektu langit selebur payang, bumi setumpang tajak. Tuhan meciptako kayukayuon der'i r'umpit bungo r'umput satu kaki, dikebor oleh Tuhan Kuaso, bisa melayo bumi, untuk menyedi iko, seler'uhon lamo ke lamo, lamo ke lamo, ado benyok or'ang, dan or'ang Kelumpang bedir'i.

The Split between *Nabi Adam* and *Nabi Mohamad*

Nabi Adam nang Nabi Mohamad satu per'ut, satu ibu lah, Nabi adam iyoi nang kakok, dan Nabi Mohamad adiknye. Cer'itonye waktu bumi setumpang tajak, langit selebur payang, disitu cer'ito bediri, cer'itonye seperti nio. Nabi Adam tangkop bebi, tapi hopi bor'i tentu adiknye. Nabi Mohamad betanyo Nabi Adam, "Nabi Adam, ado bebi?". Nabi Adam ujur, "bebi piado. Har'om kalu ado bebi". TERNYATO bebi ado, dia makon dikit, tapi hopi kasih pado adiknye. Setalah Nabi Mohamad tentu itu, mer'eka bepisah, artinye bebi har'om. Cakopnye Nabi Mohamad, "Kini kito bepisah, bebi dan segelo binatang lain di hutan har'om, segalo binatang har'om untuk ugamo Islam, tapi halal untuk or'ang rimba. Nabi Adam ujur, "kokok, hopi endok makon ker'bau, gamping, hayom. Nabi Adam pohor'it sebonornye, nio asal pohor'it bedir'i, karena itu bepisahon bediri, nang or'ang duson dan or'ang rimba. Kalu di duson, bedinding pakot, kao hatop, hatop genteng, kalu di rimba, bukon. Nang balik ke rimba, hatopnye, hatop cikoi, kalu dindingnye, dinding bener, kalu lantoinye, lantoi gembut, kalu behayom, hayom awok, hayom hutan. Kalu kambing, kambing kijang, kalu beker'bau, beker'bau, beker'bau r'uso. Kalu di kampung bukon, kalo di kampung, memang, ayom duson lah, kalu itik itik duson lah. Kalu kambing, kambing duson lah, kalu ker'bau, ker'bau duson lah. Antak bepisah, nang balik ke duson, nang di pegong ker'bau, nang balik ke rimba pogongnye biowak, disebut podo adat ikat ker'bau, ikut biowak. Itu nang pegong adat di rimba.

One God, Two Prophets

Duso ujur nabi dengen bemalekat iyoi mehatopko sumbang, ahhh, sumbang pemambiq urang sumbang nang duso. Mener'ut delom di nio, satu Nabi, dua bemelakat. Bemelekat ar'tinye kami or'ang rimba. Nabi ketur'unan deri Nabi Mohamad iyoi lah or'ang mer'u. Nabi awok, Nabi Adam, bukon Nabi Mohamad, bukon Nabi kito, kito Nabi Adam. Sebab Nabi Adam kito Cuma tokang sebagai mebuat apo kito tokang. Nang tokang bor'i nyamo nang tukang bor'i nafai der'i Tuhan, Tuhan nang kuaso.

Tuhan Kuaso iyoi bukan nang kuaso langsung podo kito per'antau, bukan. Cuma melawati dengen Nabi dengen memelakat belangsun ke awak tur'un delom nio. Hawoh dibor'iko oleh Tuhan nang kuaso dibor'iko delom tangon bemelekat dibor'iko di tangon Nabi langsung di delom nio, ber'ah menjadi nafai awak. Kito tokan buat. Kalo Islam deri Nabi Mohamad, kalo deri rimba der'i Nabi Adam. Nabi Adam or'ang rimba, nabi Mohamad or'ang mer'u, or'ang Islam. Keturunan der'i rimba, Nabi Adam. Kalo di dusun, Nabi Mohamad. Sebonornye Nabi Adam dan Nabi Mohamad samo tinggi. Cuma ketur'unan der'i Nabi Mohamad der'i bemelekat or'ang mer'u lah, dan Islam. Kalo awak bemelekat awak lah. Sebab bemelekat awak dengan bemelekat or'ang mer'u, satu tempat. Satu tempat Cuma de delom pado satu rumah, Cuma or'ang bor'i sama tangan tapi piado bulih lewat campur. Tuhan Kuaso bisa untuk rimba, bisa untuk dusun jugo, samo lah. Or'ang dusun jugo lah, biar lah di kampung, biar lah rimbo der'i Tuhan Kuaso segelo. Pomogong Ciaq Mencipaiy dan Pomogong Kayu Kayuon melewati dua Nabi, Nabi Adam lah tur'unon kami. Kar'ena ugamo sudah bedah. Tuhan nang samo, kar'ena lah piado depot benefai, tuhan kuaso bikin ciptako segelo binatang, kayu kayuon ciptiko pohon pohon untuk hidup. Sebonornye diciptako oleh Tuhan jugo, or'ang dusun panggil Allah, tapi Tuhan nang samo. Kalo kami, momogonye Urang Pomogong Ciaq Mencipay. Ciaq Mencipay artinya semoa binatang bisa berger'ap, bisa benefai. Pomogong Kayu Kayuon ciptakan segelo untuk hidup, mer'eka ker'jo samo. Kalo hanyo tanoh piado mungkin bisa hidup. Jedi waktu pebuatan bepisahon awak dilangsungko oleh der'i sejak der'i bemelikat sampoi lah podo nabi turun turun. Belanksungko mebuat apa setijak sungoi melebori bumi nio. Lebor bumi lebor lah sungoi bumi selebor tijak. Kalo pucuk undang der'i Mininkabau, teliti duabelay der'i Jambi. Ujur bemelekat, jinye, kami bori adat. Kami bor'i adat sepayo adat nang jengon ado bisa kehalang adat nang piado bisa habiy. Jedi ujur tadi nang pegawai pegawai keterunon awak ujur jinye jedi bemelekat pomono pogong adat? Pogong adat kalo pogong adat artinya kami teliti duabelay. Nang boleh dijelonko nang boleh dibuat ar'tinye mono jelon nang bonor, piado nang saloh. Saloh langko piado bulih, saloh tijak piado bulih, saloh ambong ger'om piado bulih, saloh tikom piado bulih, saloh tenchang pokok piado bulih, saloh bunting bori piado bulih, saloh ewot buntal piado bulih, saloh sambun sakal piado bulih, saloh sumpah setio piado bulih, segalo dilar'ong oleh teliti duabelai. Cuma kalo pucuk undang lain, adik, kalo ketur'anon der'i pucuk undang. Sebab nang mula, dipakai or'ang, pucuk undang. Mula da pogong or'ang pucuk undang jedi ujur pucuk undang ujur jinye or'angnye saloh. edi pomono salohnye? Kalo saloh kaki mompano kalo minijak koin urang betina. Kaki totok. Sebab kaki nang saloh, kaki totok. Kalo saloh tangon, tangon totok, ar'tinye. Ayy, buka hato, meningjapi urang, ar'tinye mato nang saloh, jedi pomono? Ujur pucuk undang, kalo pogong pucuk undang matonye cuke, kami buang. Ujur pucuk undang saloh pado mulut, ar'tinye cakopnye, saloh mulut lidah digunting. Jedi tur'un tur'un teliti dar'i mono tur'un tur'un, dar'i pucuk Jambi Sembilan Lurah, tiba tur'un adat teliti diminta dar'i ujur adat apo pucuk undang depot kami minta jedi pomono pintak mika adat pintak. Kami adat ar'tinye kami pintak, kalo depot kami pintak nang sekali nio mika pucuk undang empat nang di bewoh kami pintak lah. Empat di pucuk piado bulih kami pintak. Jedi pomono lah? Nio lah. Ulor ar'tinye kito saloh jengon ado mati, tanoh kito saloh jengon ado lembab, pemalu jengon ado patok. Kito melar'i rambut delom tembung tembung piado tebayar, rambut jengon ado putuy. Jedi pomono seloko nye, seloko mikai adat ar'tinye jengon tejual ado sampoi jauh. Kalo tebunuh jengon ado sampoi mati. Jedi boleh nang dipogong mika pucuk undang, satu mencar'ak telor, ar'tinye kito ambiq anak, dua ar'tinye mandi di pancung gedeng, pamonye ambiq dulur. Tigo ar'tinye melebu delom, ar'tinye kito ambiq induk. Jedi nang empat par'tai iyoi, piado bulih nang dipintak oleh adat, sebab, ar'tinye, bar'ang nang piado buik sian, buik siang, bar'ang nang piado buik malom, buik malom. Mampomono buik malom, piado hukumon sejak dari kampung

sampoi lah rimba. Nang kito pintak, nang depot kito todo ar'tinye empat nang di bewoh. Sebab empat nang di bewoh iyoi, adik, nang dijelonkonye, dipogongnye, sisi hukom nang seratuuy simbilan puluh, ser'atuy delepan puluh, ser'atuy enam puluh, ser'atuy duapuluh. Ado hukom nang enam puluh enam, enam puluh ber'sih, ado hukumnye enam puluh enam kupang. Ado hukom nang duapuluh ber'sih, ado nang duapuluh dua kupang. Hukom lima puluh, hukom kini. Kalo tesebut hukom lagi, nenek puyang awok, empat petamo hukom, ar'tinye hukom enam puluh enam kupang, atau enam puluh bersih atau duapuluh dua kupang, atau duapuluh ber'sih. Ahhhh, iyo nang dipogong nenek puyang awok. Kito mengamo pado anak gedy, kalo duapuluh kupang. Kalo kito mengaram pado jendo rando piado hukomny dua puluh dua kupang. Pado anak gedy, duapuluh bersih, pado jendo rando dua puluh dua kupang. Ini adapt ditur'unke sejak der'i bemelekat sampoi pado nabi. Jedi tiba di tengah ulor, ulor lagi sejak nenek puyang awok. Jedi uje ulor, ketika pucuk undang mika adat kami nio. Ulo buik, uje ulor, na, na, nango. Nango pado mahabok, tiba mahbok pado piker. Jedi ujur ulor ujur jinye biar adat, biar mikai or'ang pucuk undang kitiko mono masalah jinye pado kami tangkop nio piado bisa matinye, mesih hidup. Ahh, dikijur dar'i adat, ujur adat, tiap iyoi artinye kalo tejual jengon ado kemano memenkap mompomono membunuh or'ang tapi piado nang bunuh, hanyo hukomon. Ahhh, ujur pucuk undang, kami bori lah empat nang di bewoh, empat nang di bewoh ar'tinye bisa ado sambut bisa pogong telit duabelay. Jedi pucuk nang dilarang oleh mikai teliti duabelay, apo mikai lar'ong? Lar'ongnye teliti duabelay ar'tinye cacang pakoi piado kami dibuat. Tawat buntil piado bulih kami buat, siur bekor piado bulih kami dibuat, bunting kemian piado kami dibuat, sajat piado kami dibuat, tijur halom piado kami dibuat, amor geram piado kami dibuat, ado benyok duabelai bangso, duabelai benyok iyoi delom tejego oleh teliti duabelai bedepot siapa ar'tinye menjelonko nang setumgkong iyoi. Nang boleh dijelonko delom di nio mono nang har'uy jelon nang bonor langkoko, mono nang saloh jengon ado nang buat. Dibuat jelon nang saloh kito beduso, dibuat jelon beduso kito mati. Kalo beduso awok ar'tinye mati, kalo awok saloh awok dihutang, iyio telap kito bayar. Saloh kito behutang, beduso kito mati. Sebab nang paling kijak. Waktu Bujang Per'antau detong nio, dusun ado, Minangkabau iyoi dusun. Gelar dusun itu asalnye der'i Padang. Bedir'i Bumi kito iko, lah Minangkabau. Jedi ketur'unon itu asalnyo nang pehat pehat itu memuat deri Kalumpang itu, itu nang beru. Dusun sudah benyok, tanoh sudah labor, ber'u, Or'ang Kalumpang iyoi, Or'ang Kalumpang dewo. Dusun nang tetua der'i Minangkabau. Sudah iyoi, Kalumpang, dewo deri Setiau beanak iyoi, tedir'i Jambi, nang adat ketur'unon der'i Jambi. Kepala adat Jambi iyoi ketur'unon der'i Setiau.

'The Buah Kelumpang Story', Shared Origins of the Makekal Orang Rimba and Tanah Garo Villagers, as told by Cilitai of the Upstream Makekal in Bahasa Rimba

Asal Asal Or'ang di Makekal yoya dar'i Bujang Per'antau. Bujang Per'antau iyoi seor'ang bolum ado bininye. betina hopi ado, Islam hopi ado. Islam iyoi ke unjung, agamonye agama rimba, dia O'rang Rimba lah. Bujang Per'antau mer'antau deri Minangkabau sebab hopi ado bini, dia mer'antau r'antau, mer'antau r'antau tibo ke Sako Tuha (sometimes it is Sako Rompong) di dear'ah Makekal. Tibo di Sako Tuha, dia memuat pondok dan buka ladang. Satu har'i, dia bejejelon di rimba, dan betemu buah kelumpang. Jedi, ujinnye, ohhh godong buah kelumpang nio. Dia ambiqnye di catuck catuknye, buah kelumpang pecah. Kebetulan ado betina delom buah kelumpang iyo. Ahhhh tapi kulumpang iyoi or'ang dewo. Namonye betina iyoi Setiau. Sebab Setiau iyoi dewo sebutnye Setiau, sebut kito dewo. Betina iyoi hitom, kulitnye jehat lah. Badennye panjang, dan benyok kulitnye. Jedi, sampoi betemu betina delom buah kelumpang, katonye namonye siapa? Akehnye Setiau. Ahhh Setiau, aowwlah. Jedi dia mer'antau, apo maksudnye mer'antau? Maksudnye mer'antau, Akeh beharu seor'ang

akeh lah hopi katek bini. Boleh lah jininye kawin dengan aku. Cuma ujin Bujang Per'antau, "ahhh siapa endok ambiqku, piado or'ang endok kawin, sebab bar'unye dua iyoi. Ndelok urang untuk kawin hopi ado". Jedi pikiron dua iyoi totok betung beyu, lintak podo sungoi. Seper'ti sungoi nio. Lintek podo aik sungoi Tuha, sako Tuha. Jedi Bujang Per'antau mula dari pangkol, Setiau mula dari ujung, belar'i di mano betemu koning (kepalo) samo betemu, hopi ado titik iyoi, titik jatuh, asalnye kito kawin. Kalu ditelecek der'i kayu nang licen iyoi piado kawin. Jedi, Cuma di kawinko kayu nan licin iyoi, ahhh langsung kawin. Sebenornye mikai dua endok. Jedi, sodah kawin iyoi, ahh beanak beempat. Namonye anak iyoi, seurang peti Gedy (betina), seor'ang iyoi Bujang Melapangi (jenton), seor'ang iyoi Peti Selaro Pinang Masok (betina), seor'ang iyoi Dewo Tunggal (jenton).Ahhh, jedi, diator oleh induk bepoknye, pomono kito melawinko or'ang empat nio. Kalu endok dikawinko seper'ut piado mungkin, atur kami sumbang. Ahhh pomono? Jedi pikir'on Bujang Per'antau dengen Setiau iyoi, nan tuha, nan pertama lahir, dijediko dengen nomor tigo. Jedi, nan terahir dijediko dengen nomor kedua. Jedi, sumbang iyoi pecah. Nan dua di tengah iyoi piado endok diaturan iyoi. Jedi, induk, bepoknye halang berinduknye piado diatur'on. Jedi sumbang iyoi piado pecannyo. Jedi nan diaturonye, induk bepok diatur'nye nan tuha jedi dengen nan busunye. Kalu iyoi kito buang dua di tengah nio. Dia sumbang. Ahhh...endok ke hilir, tiba empat maholw saro sumpah, empat or'ang nio bepisah. Induknye, bepoknye beduah aturanye lah. Nan duah anaknye di tengah iyoi dibuang ke Jambi. Tibo empat mahalow sar'o sumpah ado taman, ado taman kalu mompa dia besumpah. Ado kito melabuko besumpah disio. Melabuko besumpah disio, nikah nan kepingin masuk Islam, bepadang pinang, bepadang kelapo, bedusun belamun lah. Kami nan tinggal di rimba iyoi hatop kami, hatop cikai, bedingding, bedingding danai, kemano aik bunkul kayo, disano kami endok. Owwwlah. Jedi, nan beduah piado depot hatop iyoi. Kalu endok bedusun belamun, bepadang pinang, bepadang kelapo, ternak gabling, mikai, kami buang ke hilir mikai dua. Jedi, di taman nio, kito bepisah, kito mebuat taman keter'ih bayu, taman keter'ih bayu memuat celano. Jedi nan cancut iyoi di sasanye dimuat celano. Jedi nan ketinggal di rimba di malabuko sumpah. Ujinye, kalu nan di kampung melancun kami dengen der'oh hitik, der'oh ker'bau, deroh hayom, deroh sepi, ditunduko bedusun belamun bepadang pinang bepadang kelapo, ke aik piado depot minum ke derot piado depot makon, ke der'ot dikijah tebot kayu, ke aik ditangkop buayo kumbang. Dia disuntainye tanoh kutuk hayom betur'anon di sumpah seler'u Jambi. Jedi sumpah seler'u diso. Jedi kalu mika melancung kami, kami di rimba, kalu melancung di dusun. Anuh. Kami lancung dengen dero puya, kami lancung dengen ker'bu, kami lancung dengen der'o bebi, iyoi, ke aik hopi depot minum, ke der'ot hopi depot makon. Jedi, dengen sumpah iyoi, kalu empat iyoi malah kito bepisah. Nan di kampung, pangkol gedung, untuk ujionye. Kami nan di rimba menang pangkol nio. Sesodah bepisah, huuu katonye. Ber'uh nan or'ang nan beduah iyoi ke hilir entah berapo lamo ke hilir bedusun belamun. Asal Asal or'ang rimba nan Tanah Garo iyoi di Makekal Iyoi kepecakepechon iyoi lah. Cuma ado nan tinggalnya ado nan tinggal tinggal di Tanah Garo. Ado jugo nan pogi ke Jambi.

'The Buah Kelumpang Story', told by the Former Rio Syayuti (Pak Haji Syayuti or Pangkol Waris) in the Melayu village of Tanah Garo

Asal usul orang di Tanah Makekal, namanyo adalah Bujang Perantau asalnyo dari Pagarunying (near Padang in Minangkabau), maka membuatlah ia sebuah pondok di dalam hutan tersebut. Pada suatu hari Bujang Perantau bertermu dengen sebuah buah kelumpang, maka diambilnyo buah tersebut dan dibawahnyo ke pondok. Pada malam harinya, pecahlah buah kelumpang itu dan menjadi seorang Putri. Kemudian Putri itu mengajak Bujang Perantau kawin, tetapi Bujang Perantau tidak mau kawin dengen

alasan orang yang akan mengawinnya tidak ada. Maka yang Putri berkata, “Letakkanlah batang kayu bayur, kemudian dikocek kulitnya, dilintangkan di atas sungai maka kita berdua sama-sama berlari di atasnya. Maka Bujang Perantau berlari dari pangkol dan sang Putri berlari dari ujung. Maka apabila kita berdua berada kepala itu berarti sahlah kawin kita.

Anaknya ada empat orang yaitu:

Bujang Malapangi (seorang laki, keturunan Tanah Garo)

Dewo Tunggal (seorang laki, keturunan Orang Rimba)

Putri Selero Pinang Masak (seorang wanita keturunan Tanah Garo)

Putri Gading (seorang wanita keturunan Orang Rimba)

Maka diantara empat beradik ini, terpisah menjadi dua, yaitu:

Bujang Malapangi di Tanah Garo, disebut pangkol waris dan Putri Selero Pinang Masak di Serengam-Tembesi disebut ujung waris. Keduanya berkampung dan masuk Islam. Dewo Tunggal dan Putri Gading, keduanya tinggal di rimba (sungai Makekal) dan disebut Orang Rimba.

Mulai membuat perkampungan

Mulai membuat kampung, yaitu di Muaro Kembang Bungo di Makekal. Disitulah mulai perpisahan, yang tinggal di rimba dan yang tinggal berkampung. Di atas tanah Gunung Sikembang, dibawah Taman Putri Sango Bayo, untuk mencuci kancut membuat celana. Disitu pula mengadakan persumpahan yang tinggal di rimbo dan berkampung. Membuat ikat buatan dalam persumpahan masing-masing.

Bunyi sumpah yang berkampung

Bujang Malapangi yang menunjukan kepada Dewo Tunggal, katanya, “Tidak menyambut arah perintah dari waris di dusun. Bila waris di dusun menemui di rimbo, dilancarkan dengan makan seperti bebi, tenok, ular, dan lain lain maka dalam persumpahan ini berbunyi, keno kutuk ayam bertuan, keno sumpah seluruh Jambi, huu kato Dewo Tunggal yang tinggal di rimbo.

Bunyi sumpah yang tinggal di rimbo

Sesudah Bujang Melapangi bersumpah, seperti yang tersebut di atas, maka dari itu pula persumpahan dari Dewo Tunggal kepada Bujang Malapangi yang berbunyi, “berkampung, berpadang pinang, berpadang kelapo, di puluso, diislamkan, rafat di luar reong di dalam, bersuruk budi bertanam akal, berdacing dus, bercupak dua dari bergantung dua. Maka dalam persumpahan ini berbunyi, yaitu, “di air ditangkap buayo kumbang, di darat ditangkap harimau kumbang, ditumpu pungur, ke atas di kutuki pisau kawi, ke bawah keno mesrum kalimah Allah, diarak terbangiang, ditimpo langit berbelang, ke atas tidak berpucuk, ke bawah tidak”. Berurat huuu, kata Bujang Melapangi. Sesudah kedua-duanya megajukan persumpahan, maka, yang berkampung, Bujang Melapangi menerkam pangkol ubi, serta mengerggam ekor kerbau. Yang di rimba, Dewo Tunggal menerkam pangkol gadung serta menenggam ekor biowak.

Ketunan dan kepemimpinan

Anak dari Dewo Tunggal:

Mayang Balur Dado itulah moyang Sigayur anak dari Berbalur Dado, sesudah itu moyang Tungkal dan sesudah itu lagi mengadakan depati-depati, antara lain:

Depati Sinjo Jayo, Depati Payang Alam, Depati Payung Agung, Anaknya Payang Alam, Anaknya Depati Payung Bungo, Depati Payung Bulan, Depati Singo, Depati Pemuncuk, and Depati Pagar Alam.

Pengangkatan Temenggung

Temanggung Besar Singo Jayo, Temanggung Karti Singo Jayo, Temanggung Bedinding Besi, Temanggung Mirak.

Manku di Rimbo

Manku Muhammad, Manku Batusung, Mangku Besuai, Mangku Mirak, Mangku Ngidin.

Susunan Rio di Kampung

Rio Badar, Rio Bungkok, Rio Timpang, Rio Gundar, Rio Sindir, Rio Bujang Intan, Rio Daim, Rio H. Zahari, Rio Tahir, Rio Bedul, Rio Karim, Rio Syayuti, Rio Samidin, Rio Bujang.

Kampung belum Berpechah

Kalko, Benteng Durian Takelis, Benteng Kembang Bungo/Dasa Buluh

Susunan mulai berkampung dan masuk Islam

Kampung Muaro Kembang Bungo (di dalam Makekal)

Kampung Empang Tilan (“ “)

Kampung Cempeduak Emas (“ “)

Kampung Perumah Beruh (“ “)

Kampung Limau Sundai (“ “)

Kampung Tanah Garo (di luar Makekal)

Udang Udang yang tinggal di rimbo

Berlantai gambut beratap sikai, berpadang pinang berpadang kelapo, bersunat berbersihkan, mengaji dan bersekolah. Apa bila yang tinggal di rimbo (orang rimba) ingin masuk Islam tidak di halangi, asal mau menurut aturan berkampung.

Pepatah Orang Rimba

Gagak hitam, sikuntul putih, sundut bersundut kukat berukat sehingga buruk ujang seekor mati puar jelupang tunbuh semenjak beritian keras bertanggo batu berjenjang naik, bertanggo turun. Pulai bertingkat naik meninggalkan bukudengen ruas. Manusia berpangkat turun mininggalkan gelar.

Udang-Udang teliti

Pucuk undang-undang delapan, teliti duabelas empat di atas, empat di bawah.

Yang empat di atas yaitu:

Mencarak telur: berzinah dengan anak sendiri, hukumnya dibunuh mati

Mandi di pancuran gading: berzinah dengan saudara kandung, hokum dibunuh mati

Melubang dalam: berzina dengan bini orang lain, hukumnya dibunuh mati atau lima ratus koping kain.

Menikim bumi: berzinah dengan ibu kandung, hokum dibunh mati

Yang empat di bawah, yaitu:

Upas racun: ado bukti hukumnya lima ratus koping kain. Tuntut bangun orang ganti orang, kalau jantan digant jantan

Luka gores: hokum duapuluh koping kain
Amaar geram: hokum enam puluh koping kain
Menentang-nentang lawan: hokum enam puluh koping kain
Siur baker: hokum enam puluh koping kain
Kapak sayup pencung leput: hokum enam puluh koping kain
Lembam balu: hukum seratus dua puluh koping kain
Empar patah: hukum seratus dua puluh koping kain

Teliti yang enam di atas yaitu:

Udang undang yang empat di bawah menyatakan:
Ditanam dalam-dalam
Dibuang jauh-jauh
Dibunuh mati-mati
Digantung tingi-tingi

Dipinta oleh yang enam di atas sebagai berikut

Ditanam jangan dalam-dalam
Dibuang jangan jauh-jauh
Dibunuh jangan mati-mati
Digantung jangan tinggi-tinggi

Teliti yang enam di bawah yaitu:

Tunjuk ajar
Ingat tangis
Tepuk tamper

Hukumnya masuk muko keluar belakang

Hukum Hukum

Hukum lamo berserap berjerami berpendam berperkuburan itu hukumnya diputuskan dalam mufakat. Hukum pertama adalah tunjuk ajar. Hukum seragamo adalah hokum yang berdiri selamo-lamonya. Saloh hokum, penghulu pecat mengubah hokum yang ditetapkan lamo. Benar menghukum penghulu pecat membenarkan kata sendiri. Sendang hokum penghulu pecat tidak mengurus pengaduan orang.

Kata kata pepatah

Asal tanah pulang ke jati, asal bukit pulang ke lumpor, asal orang pulang ke kampung. Bujang Malapangi yang tertua asal keturunan Tanah Garo, itulah yang dikatakan pangkal waris. Putri Selaro Pinang Masak, itulah yang dikatakan ujung waris. Dewo Tunggal dan Putri Gading yang tinggal di Makekal, adik saudara, itulah yang dikatakan dulur. Tanah Garo dikatakan pangkal waris. Kejasung Besar dikatakan tempat berjenang, Kajasung Kecil dikatakan tempat ujung waris. Air Hitam tempat berjenang.

Perbatasan perkampungan Orang Tanah Garo dan Orang Rimba

Tanah Garo yang ditentukan Sultan Taha:

Dari bukit duabelas terus ke tanah peluang, terus ke bukit tergang, terus lagi ke tulung hulu sungai Kejasung Besar, terus ke talon sungai Kejasung Besar, terus ke lubuk dalam sungkai, terus lagi belukar durian daun, sungai Makekal, terus ke Kedondong bungkuk sungai bernai, langsung mudik ke embayar anak sungai bernai, terus ke durian bekampung, bertemu dengan Bukit Duabelas.

The Tiger God and the Legend of the Year of the Tiger

The *Makekal Orang Rimba* often refer to a semi-mythical period called the 'year of the tiger' (*tahun mer'ego*) or sometimes 'the year of fifty' (*tahun limopuluh*) referring to a year when fifty people were killed by tiger attacks. According to this legend, someone along the *Makekal* River committed a major *adat* that strongly offended a particular village of the tiger god, and led to vicious attacks by tigers, in which fifty people along the upstream *Makekal* region were killed by tigers in one year. After a big shaman helped a tiger, an oath was made that the tigers would move their village from the jungle to the heaven. According to the legend,

'Because of all the deaths caused by tiger attacks that year, the people along the *Makekal* gathered together to live in one settlement at *Sako Naku*. There must have been over four hundred people living there, the settlement was huge, like villages outside the forests. Around the settlement we built a huge wooden fence that must have been ten meters high, and on the top of the fence we placed *dur'i* stickers so that the tigers could not climb over. The women and children would sleep in the middle of the settlement, and the men would stay up at night guarding the fences with their spears, stabbing at tigers who attempted to climb over the fence. Someone committed a major *adat* violation, which had offended the tiger god (*mato mer'ego*). Back then, we were not familiar with the tigers that were attacking our villages. There are actually two tiger villages, and these days shamans can visit these realms in order to ask for knowledge, good luck, favours, health, protection, or mercy if they are causing us harm. After a long time, there was a very powerful shaman (*dukon nang sakti*), who had been hearing the cries of a tiger in his dreams for the last few nights. Curious, the next night, he dreamt and visited the village of the tigers at the 'Blood River' (*Sungoi Beder'o*), to see what the problem was. There he was told that there was also a tiger village located at a place called the 'Raining River' (*Sungoi Penghujan*) and that these were the tigers that had been attacking your village. In order to stop the tiger attacks, he was told that he must visit the village. Upon visiting the village at Raining River, the shaman was told by the tiger king why so many tigers had been attacking his people. Indeed, it was because someone in his group had committed a major *adat* violation, but the tiger king told the shaman that the attacks would end if he would help him with a problem with one of his subjects. A tiger had caught his paw in the hole of a tree while digging for bats to eat. The shaman had formally heard these cries in his dreams. Before leaving, the tiger god made an agreement with the shaman. If he freed this tiger's paw from the hole in the tree, then they would no longer be attacked by the tigers from his village. The next day the shaman awoke and went to the place where he was told and found a tiger with his paw stuck in a hole, whimpering and crying. The shaman freed the tiger, and since then the oath between the sacred shaman and *mato mer'ego* (tiger god of the Raining River) has not been broken. In the past, this would happen quite often, tigers catching people here, tigers catching people there, but never as many as in the year of fifty. Since that day, few have been killed by tiger attacks.... unless they break with *adat*. The *dongen*, the year of the tiger, this tells us why the tigers attacked our people...it was because many people had broken *adat* (*mer'uba adat*) or mixed up the realms between the villagers and the forest people (*mer'ubu halom*). Before, *mato mer'ego* (the tiger god) stayed in this world as tigers, but now he mainly resides in his village in the god world. This is because of the oath we made with one another, he respects this oath, and now he mainly resides in the god world. When he comes to this world it is generally a sign that someone has broken *adat*, this is when he will disturb us.'

A Story of the Last Tiger Attack along the *Makekal* River

There is an old lady who lives in a group around two hours from here who is around eighty years old. She can still talk but only very slow, she has no teeth and can only be fed very soft foods and water. She is very skinny and cannot walk, she defecates where she sleeps and has to be cleaned and fed by her family members. When we were very small she used to tell many stories, this was really the time of great story telling. People don't tell stories like they used to. They say that a tiger killed her husband while he was hunting tapir. It is said that before he died he had a had a dream and in that dream he was given a (*r'antau*)¹ a piece of rattan as a sign that the next day he would find tapir, but in this dream he was also warned that he would also run into great danger during the hunt. Despite the threat of danger, the next day the man set out on the hunt and walked all day searching for tapir. He met the tapir three times during the trip but could not get close enough to catch it, little did he know that the tiger was following him the whole time. On the fourth attempt he got close enough to spear the tapir, and it almost died, but in doing this the spearhead broke off, and the tapir ran off. As the tapir ran off, the tiger jumped out of the foliage and chased the man up a tree, where he climbed to the top and slept that night. However, without his spear, he could not defend himself, and because tigers can also climb trees, eventually he was killed and eaten by the tiger. Because the man never returned home everyone in his group was very worried, so a very pure shaman, dreamed one night and saw what had occurred, that he was already dead, killed by a tiger. Learning the location of where the struggle took place a group of men walked for one day, to the place where the event took place and came upon a tree, which had evidence of what had occurred. Ohhhh this is where he was killed, one of them said. During the struggle, blood from the tiger, the tapir, and the man dripped onto the tree, and formed into three nodes, which to this day show an account of the events that occurred. The top node is in the form of a man, the middle one a tiger and the bottom one takes the form of a tapir. This was probably the last person to be killed by a tiger.

The Story of the *Kuwo* (Argus pheasant) who Turned into a Beautiful Women

According to Skeat, the Peninsular Malay believe the *Kuwo* or Argus pheasant ito have been metamorphosed from a women, "the reason of whose transformation is not known" (Skeat 1900:123). The *Orang Rimba* version of this story is as follows,

There was a bachelor named *Bujang Per'antau*, who alone came to the forests to open a field and become a farmer. One day he heard the call of a *kuwo* in the forest, and exited at the chance of finding game, went into the forest to look for it. He followed the *kuwo* all day meeting it several times, but each time it ran away. (something about the *kuwo* meeting a turtle, and the turtle running away). Eventually, the man finally caught the *kuwo*, but instead of eating eat, he instead brought it to his field and put it in a cage next to his house. The man worked hard everyday in his field, and tired, had to come back and cook for himself. Being the only one around the field, he was also very lonely. After a month of this routine life alone in his field, he prayed and danced raised mound of earth (*tanoh tumbuh*, the dwellings earthbound spirits) all night, and plead with the gods to bring him a wife. The next day, when going to the cage to feed his *kuwo*, he found inside the most beautiful women his eyes had ever seen. "Ohh *kuwo*, you are a *bidodari*", he said, "The gods have decided to give me a women". That day the women cleaned his house, washed his cloths and that night she cooked him a wonderful dinner. Then after cooking she entered the cage and became a *kuwo* again. The next day he prayed again, and the women reappeared and performed all his domestic duties and after returned to the cage and again took the form of a *kuwo*. Eventually, he grew very fond

of the women, and prayed to the gods, asking them to keep her here in the form of a woman so that he could marry her. This wish was granted and the next time she came out of the cage they were married. As time passed they had a child, and life was much better with a family. One day, as both parents were harvesting the rice, their baby started to cry. The man asked his wife to return to the house and watch the baby, but the woman was busy and asked her husband to do it. The baby continued to cry and the husband again asked her to return, barking out “*Kuwoo!* hurry up and tend to the baby.” This insulted the woman and she quickly returned to the house, picked up her child and left this world through the door in the sky. *Bujang Per’antau* was extremely sad, cried every day while looking at the sky. Eventually, after one month he died of grief. In the past, stories like this were a more common occurrence in our lives. The gods and the spirits were more interested in coming to this world and taking human form in order to be or to help humans. These days this is less common.

How the Hunters Outwitted the *Hantu Pendek*

The villagers surrounding the forests of *Bukit Duabelas* strongly believe in the existence of the *Orang Pendek* (short man), a hairy ape about half the size of a person that walks upright like a human. The *Makekal Orang Rimba* also believe in the presence of the *Orang Pendek*, although in a slightly different manner. While the villagers see them shy ape like creatures who will run away whenever spotted, the *Orang Rimba* see them as demons or ghosts (*hantu pendek*) who have their own language, understand and speak the *Orang Rimba* language, and cunningly hunt humans. According to the *Orang Rimba* along the *Makekal* River,

‘The *hantu pendek* are like small people, with light red hair on their bodies. They are the size of children who have their own language but also understand and speak our language and sometimes try and hunt people. Usually, the *hantu pendek* travel in groups of seven, and carry a machete which they use for hunting, defending themselves and killing and eating humans. The villagers believe they are real, but we believe they are ghosts. In the past, when we went out hunting, we had to be careful when we stopped to rest. *Hantu pendek* would often follow people, wait for them to rest and then come up behind them and kill them with their machetes. Long ago, a group of hunters were being followed by seven *hantu Pendek*, and came upon a big river. Aware that they were close behind they quickly crossed the river and waited for them to arrive. When the *hantu pendek* arrived at the river bank they scattered up and down looking for a point to cross the river. The *Or’ang Rimba* hunters on the other side of the river, called out to them, to give them their machetes so that it might be easier for them to cross. The hunters crossed the river, and the *hantu pendek*, handed them the machetes. Then as the *hantu pendek* attempted to cross the river, they had a very difficult time and one of them was swept away in the current. Because their bodies are so short and they do not know how to swim, they were not able to cross the river. The others quickly returned to the bank of the river, and without their machetes, they were unable to hunt and died of starvation. This is why the *Makekal River Or’ang Rimba* are known for having a lot of reason (*akal*), and is how we received our name. The *hantu pendek* are stupid, but they are killers so you have to be careful. But these days, we are not bothered by *hantu pendek*, this happened more in the past, when my father was a boy.’

The Story of How *Setunjuk* Brought Rice to the *Makekal Orang Rimba*

A long long time ago, before we knew the rice god, before we knew how to plant rice, there was an unmarried man who was wandering through the forests. Eventually, he met a girl, worked for the wife's family (*besemendo*) married her and had a child. The child never grew to be very big. He was only as big as a finger. The father thought it was very strange that his son was so small, but whenever he went out to hunt or work in the field his son would join him. While in the forest, the father tried to abandon him many times, but later in the day the son would always seem to make his way home. One day before the father was going out to open his field and plant it with taro, yams, sugarcane and bananas, *Setunjuk* came to his father and jumped up onto a log, Oh father I want to help you, I will plant rice. His father said to him, '*Setunjuk*, we do not know how to plant rice, you go to your room, I want to go to the field and clear the vines (*manca*).'
Setunjuk replied, 'Let me *manca*, you stay here, I will *manca*' The father looked at him and laughed, not thinking much of it, but said to him, 'Ok *Setunjuk*, you go and *manca* and I will go home and wait.' *Setunjuk* walked for a while decided on a spot to make his field, and as he walked through the forest, was cleared of its vines and undergrowth, far and wide, at least seven *tanoh* (or around eighteen hectares). After a short while he returned to his father, who asked him, '*Setunjuk*, you are finished clearing the vines?' *Setunjuk* replied, 'ohhh yes father, I am finished *manca*.' Not taking his son too seriously, the father went out to the field to look and sure enough his father was shocked to see the forest cleared of all vines and undergrowth. The next day he came to his father and asked him where he wanted to go. 'I want to go cut the trees (*nobong*)', his father replied. 'Ohhh Father, you stay here, I will go cut the trees.' 'Auw, you go *nobong*', his father replied. *Setunjuk* then grabbed a small axe (*beliung*) and walked to his field. He lifted the axe and made one swing at a tree, and as he swung all of the trees in the field fell to the ground. Shortly, he returned to his father who asked him, '*Setunjuk* you already finished cutting the trees?' 'Ohh, I am finished father', replied *Setunjuk*. So they both walked out to his field and sure enough all of the trees had been cut down. After letting the field dry, *Setunjuk* did the same thing again, telling his father to stay home while he went to burn his field. Arriving at his field, he took one small piece of wood, lit it at one end and threw it into the field. As the piece of wood fell and started burning, *Setunjuk* took a deep breath and blew. As he blew, the entire field was instantly burned. He returned home to his father who asked him, '*Setunjuk* already burn the field?' 'Owww, father, I have already burned the field.' *Setunjuk* then waited two weeks for the land to cool, before going to his father, 'Father, where are you going?' 'I am going to plant the field with taro', his father replied. 'No you stay here father, I want to go plant the field with rice', said *Setunjuk*. 'But we do not know how to plant rice, but you go ahead', his Father replied. *Setunjuk* then went to the field with one seed of rice, planted it in the ground and as he did the entire field was planted with rice and already sprouting. Later that day, *Setunjuk* returned and told his father he had planted rice, and upon visiting the field he was amazed to see rice already sprouting for as far as the eye could see. After a while, the rice was ready to be harvested and the father was preparing one day to go to the field. 'Where are you going father', asked *Setunjuk*. 'I am going to the field to build a storage shed (*gelubo*) in order to put the rice in', his father replied. 'No you stay here, I will build the *gelubo*', *Setunjuk* called out. So he set out to the field and upon arriving, peeled the bark off of one small tree and stuck it in the ground and as he did this 'seven' (a magical number) completed rice barns stood in the field. Later that day *Setunjuk* returned and told his father that he had finished building the rice sheds and upon going to the field, sure enough, the father was surprised to see that the rice barns had been completed. As the rice was ready to be harvested *Setunjuk* did the same thing, telling his father to stay home while he went to

harvest the rice. 'Ok *Setunjuk* you go harvest the rice, I will stay here'. Upon arriving to the field *Setunjuk* cut off a handful of the rice stalks and as he threw it into the barn, the entire rice field was cut and the 'seven' barns were full. Later, upon visiting the field and seeing the rice barns full, his father was certain. By this time his father had already known for some time that his son was not his own, but a child of the Goddess of Rice (*or'ang de padi*), '*ohhhh ini hopi budakkeh, ini budakdewo...*', god had sent its soul into the man's wife in order to teach the *Or'ang Rimba* how to plant rice. Like the Goddess of Rice, *Setunjuk* was as small as a finger. From that time on, the *Or'ang Rimba* began to pray and establish relationship with the goddess of rice.

Another Version of the *Setunjuk* Story Told along the *Makekal* River

A long time ago there was a man hunting game in the forest with many dogs. The dogs had caught the scent of and were chasing a white *napu* (greater mouse deer). As they were chasing the white *napu*, the dogs came upon a small child in the middle of the forest. He was very confused on how the child got there, was it a ghost or a god? Why was it there? A little confused on what to do with it, he decided to leave it there and continue chasing the white *napu*, but after a while, the dogs continuously led him back to the child. After several times coming upon it, the child called out, 'Father, father!' The hunter was astonished, 'why does he call me father?' He was also a little afraid, he didn't know if this child was a ghost and what he wanted with him. Regardless, he decided to take the child home with him to his room. Arriving at his room, he thought to himself again that this might be a ghost and decided to run away. So he waited a while until the child fell asleep, gathered his belongings and was about to leave the house, when the child awoke and asked him, 'what is the matter, father?' The man felt very guilty that he was about to leave the child and told him he was only going to hunt the white *napu* again. The child said to him, 'stay in the room father, let me go catch the white *napu*.' So the child went to hunt the white *napu* and after a short while he returned with the white *napu* in his hands. This made the father even more scared, and he thought to himself how did this small child catch the animal? He must surely be a ghost. But both of them ate the *napu* and both went to sleep. Early the next morning the father planned to run away but as he was about to leave the child awoke and called out, 'Father where are you going?' Again, the father came up with an excuse, 'I saw a big *kijang*, I was going out to try and catch it.' 'Oh father, let me catch the *kijang* for you.' So the child went out, and after a short while he came back with the *kijang*. Again the father was very scared, how did he catch the *kijang*? He must definitely be a ghost. One day the father decided to open a field in the forest in order to plant crops and went out to clear the vines, but the child again pleaded to let him go out and do the work. The father sat in his room and after a short while, the child came back saying that he had finished the work. This was impossible, the father thought to himself, he doesn't lift a hand and he finishes so quickly. He must be a ghost or a god, but if he was a ghost then he would have already eaten me, if this is a god then it is a blessing. Later, he told his son that he was going out to cut down the trees in the field, but again the child wanted to do it for his father. So they both went out to cut the trees down, and when they arrived to the field the child simply waved his hand over the field and as his hand passed the trees fell. 'Ohh, this child is definitely a god', the father thought, 'but why is he here?' Later the father was ready to plant the field, but as he was about to plant the field, the child said to his father, 'I will make 'seven' rice sheds and we will plant rice, you go out and pick 'seven' stalks of rice so that we have seeds to plant the field.' The father was confused, he had never planted rice and did not know of its existence, but he went out to look for rice and there he found 'seven' coconuts hanging from 'seven' stalks of rice. He cracked them open and inside of the coconuts was rice, bigger than the

rice we have today, and clean without the husk. When he came back there were 'seven' rice sheds in the field, six larges ones and one small one. The child told his father, 'place the rice in a bamboo container and put them in the small rice shed with me.' The father did this and closed the small rice shed as he was told. After 'seven' days he went to look in the small rice shed, and the child was gone, but all seven rice sheds were filled with rice. While the father missed the child, he realized that he was indeed the child of the goddess of rice, sent to the *Or'ang Rimba* to teach them how to grow rice. And to this day, the *Or'ang Rimba* still grow rice.

Appendix I

Poems, Honey Collecting Songs, Magic and *Seleko Adat* Couplets Surrounding the 'Beating'

Pantun sung by bachelors and maidens

Although one thousand cats run (*Ajen seribu belari*)

Summary: Although there are a thousand women, there is only one like the first love. This song is sung by a bachelor who wants to court a girl from another camp, but his parents will not allow it.

although one thousand cats run
they are not the same colour
although a thousand cats, my
girl can not be exchanged

ajen ser'ibu belar'i
tidak samo kucing kucinn blang
ajen ser'ibu kundangu begenti

my long time girl
although a thousand, my girl can not
be exchanged
they are not the same as my long time girl
small leaves form a *Benkal* tree
although small she has a sad heart

kundagn aku lamo
ajen ser'ibu kudangu begenti
tidak samo kudang aku lamo
keciq keciq daun benkal
sungupun keciq keciq pangibo hati

small so small, girl from *Makekal*
although small she has a sad heart
small so small, girl from *Makekal*
although small she has a sad heart

keciqu la keciq gadiy Makekal
sungupun keciq pangibo hati
keciq la keciq gedis Makekal
sungupun keciq pangibo hati

The tall durian: *Durian tinggi*

This *pantun* is usually sung by a bachelor when not received well by a person or community.

tall durian grows to and fro
there is a road through my field
where there is forest that is quiet
there a place where my body is unfortunate
where the forest is quiet
there is the place where my body is
unfortunate

der'ian tinggih tunbuh diolak
de situ jalan laluh ketalang
de mano rimba yang sunyi
de situ tempat badan ku malang
de mano rimba yang sunyih
de situ tempat baden ku malang

the banana is too ripe to be picked
a banana put on a tray is too ripe to put
to put on a tray
we are worn out, allow us to be quiet
if there are many problems in a persons group
we are worn out allow us quiet
if there are problems in a persons group
two long cloth hung on a line
bring the rice pounder to change the day

lincin pisang lincin masak dilincin
pisang de dulang masak didulang
kamilah bur'uk biak menyipih
kalu mor'osak kampung or'ang
kami lahh bu'ruk biak menyipih
kalu mor'osak kampung or'ang
koin panjang duo ser'entang
bawah numbuk begenti har'i

two long cloth hung on a line
bring the rice pounder to change the day

*koin panjang duo ser'entang
bawah numbuk begenti har'i*

whichever one is handsome, it is used
that which is not good, allow them to leave
whichever is handsome, it is used
that which is not good, allow it to go

*mano nang eloh itu de pakai
kanbur'uh biah menyipih
mano nang eloh itu de pakai
kanbur'urh biah menyipih*

the cry of a cat floats down the river like a log
eat spicy fish
the cry of a cat floats down the river like a log
eat spicy fish

*mengeong kucing dir'akit
makon ikan sambal balidoh
mengeong kucing dir'akit
makon ikan sambal balidoh*

not thin, to not want to eat
eat less, know the hearts desire

*bukan kur'us segan nah makon
makon kur'us mengenang mekesut
hati*

not thin, not wanting to eat
less to think of the hearts desire

*bukan kur'us segan nah makon
kur'uy mengenang mekesut hat*

Love pantun

cooking *pot mengko* bought
muidak belangu java
here *ngilu* like to be changed
if not, *ngelamo* also
if not, do not half the coconut in Jambi
look at the halves of the coconut in the
Tabir River
if not, then don't cut our coconut in half
look at the water that goes downstream

*per'iuk mengko dibeli,
muidak belangu jawo.
na ngilu suka digenti,
kalo idak ngelmo juga.
kalo n'dok nengok belukung Jambi,
tengoklah belukung sungoi Tabir.*

*kalo n'dok nengok belukung kami,
tengoklah air yang menghilir.*

Sad song (*pantun*) sung by male and female when male rejected

The male sings

leave me first, the pair is lost
I will not go to the land of Jambi
leave me first my love
I will not throw my body in misfortune

*tinggallah dulu padang ilalang,
awok n'dok pogi ke tanoh Jambi
tinggallah dulu kasih sayang,
awok n'dok buang baden celaka*

The female answers

It also is not the fault of the rice
It is a problem of the earth which rejected
the spear
It is also not the problem of us
It is the problem of the parents, you
are not a negotiator

*bukan pulo salah de padi,
saloh de tanoh lelak lembing*

*bukan pula salah de kami,
salah or'ang tuo, kau kur'ang
per'unding.*

The male again answers

already long *mengejam* hand

sudah lamo mengejam tangon,

until it is not brought to the bath
already long since we have shook hands
If not it is brought to be

*sampe idak dibawo mandi.
sudah lamo bejabat tangon,
kalo idak dibawo jadi*

The female responds

truly search for the thread
if searched for, the thread is rotten
truly search for the small river
If searched for, the river is polluted

*benor-benor mencar'i benang,
kalo tecar'i benang bur'uk
benor-benor mencar'i kundang,
kalo tecar'i kundang bur'uk*

The male responds

choose the road not to bath
one pond, two slopes
choose the path not to be
one intelligence, second beauty

*pilih-pilih jalan n'dok mandi,
satu lubuk kedua landai.
pilih-pilih jalan n'dok jadi,
satu cer'dik kedua elok.*

Two boys who like the same girl

The first boy

to lose the tip of sugarcane
to get a measure of sweetness from a person
a dog *bekilang* the knife is broken
black sweetness, I will not forget

*nghilangko tebu sepucuk,
depot maniy segantang seurang.
ajin bekilang ker'is de r'usuk,
hitom maniy kelupo idak.*

The second boy

grind the sharp sword
for cutting a piece of tobacco
sweet and black, all the more to fight over
for a steep slope may I make

*asahlah par'ong tajam-tajam,
untuk penebay batang tembeko.
hitom maniy rebutlah kian,
untuk tebing boleh kubuat.*

Pantun for those with a sad heart

if *ade bekuto* large bamboo
handsome *bekuto* a palm tree with acacia nuts
ade betuah, wait in the village
we wait in a spot which is lonely

*kalo ade bekuto betung,
elok bekuto ruyung pinang.
ade betuah tunggulah dusun,
kami penunggu rancau lenggang.*

friends pull out the nail
sae-sae bathe in the space
friend friend, my grandson
if *terimboh* to the earth of a person

*sanak-sanak seruntun paku,
sae-sae mandi de r'uang.
sanak-sanak cucungi aku,
kalo ter'imbo ke bumi or'ang.*

put a fish on a plate and it dies
struck down, rolled up into a ring
in an interlude the person is thrown
unun also is a poor family

*ser'ua ikan di dulang mati,
ditimpo gulungan cincin.
selingtang dibuang or'ang,
unun pula kaum miskin.*

a peg is the rafter of the door
words of wisdom are the path to the leader
ask to be shown to the quiet shore
there is the founder, my body will cross

*selentuk kasauh di pintu,
seloko jalan ke talang.
minta tunjuk ke r'antau sunyi,
situ peletak badanku malang.*

When separating from a friend

the tip of the *gitun*, all through the *gitun*
the tip of the durian in the *yapi* forest
stay on the premise stay in the village
stay *tepi*an the place to bath

pucuk gitun selar'o gitun,
pucuk durian di rimba yapi.
tinggal laman tinggallah dusun,
tinggal tepian tempat mandi

***pantun* sung by a leader**

small monitor lizard fall to the mud
old child, *begaso-gaso*
I am old, forget to be measured
the water is unclear, body destroyed

anak biawok jatuh ke lumput,
anak tuoh begaso-gaso.
awok tuo lupa diatur,
aik lambat badan binasa.

***Pantun* rain to sky (for people who return to the same place)**

already long, not to the gutter
the peel of a fruit in the rice
already long not *besuo*
feelings to change, love

lah lamo idak ke talang,
salak buah di dalam padi.
lah lamo idak besuo
raso beubah kasih saying

Songs of sorrow sung by males (*mantow*)

if there is no rain, then rain during the day
allow us to
if thrown, then throw us
allow us to find another
pantun of sorrow which the male and female
answer one another. It is about a male woe
proposal is rejected

kalo n'dok hujan ujanlah ari,
biar'lah kami betundung kain.
kalo lah buang-buanglah kami,
biralah kami mencar'i yang lain
pantun mer'ajuk saling bejawab
tentang jejenton yan do tolak
pinangannya

Another male song of sorrow

what is the use to have long hair
we also bathe *mengurai*
what is the use to love
tomorrow there is also the parting of death

apo guna beambut panjang,
kita mandi mengur'ai jugo..
apo guna bekasih saying,
isuk mati becer'ai jugo.

if we do not bathe, lets go and bathe
foolishness appears in twos
if it happens, lets let it happen
mentara mother is not yet old

kalo nak mandi payu lah mandi,
bebal timbul duo-duo
kalo jadi payulah jadi,
mentar'a induk belumlah tuo.

baby crow in twos
here they come down to the rice
a child is here
upside down, lost, brave to die

anak gagak duo-duo,
siko tejun dalam padi.
anak seor'ang iko,
tanggung ilang beani mati.

if there is no rain, then rain during the day
allow us to
if thrown, then throw us

kalo n'dok hujan ujanlah hari,
biarlah kami betundung kain.
kalo lah buang-buanglah kami,

allow us to find another

biralah kami mencar'i yang lain.

if there is chili, it flowers
a duck prepares a bud and mango curry
if it is here my friend, use it
no, my body is thrown far

*kalo ado cabe berbungo,
itik menggulai putik pauh.
kalo ado sanak beguno
idak badan kubuang jauh*

crowing *kuai* on land which is high
beauty of having the man from the valley
if not, brush young girls
beauty blossoms, still a child

*kukuk kuai di dataran tinggi,
ilok bejantan dar'i lembah.
kalo idak sikatningning
ilok tebuah masih budak*

Feelings for a friend that is far away

I Bekilat at bush on the cape of the water
biolu the place where the child washes its face
the roof of villager, I again miss you
and also where is the place of origin

*akeh Bekilat tanjung katu air nyah
biolu tempat budak mencuci muko
seng sekampung lagi ku rindukamu
pula jawu dimano*

Sad because not respected by a friend
like pieces of pounded rice outside of the
container
enter, it is not to be added to the outside
it is not to little

*ibar'at lemukut do luwar gantang
masuk. hopi jedi tamba ko luwar
hopi jedi kur'ang*

A friend arrives and we are happy

life is like in the middle of garbage
cowut washed away, a chain there is not
aio which to swim *tongolom*
a puddle, there isn't, there is peace

*hidup mumpa sampa di tangah
cowut hanyut so r'antau hopi
aio yang mir'enang tongolom
solubuk hopi adoh tekang solom*

Further *Orang Rimba* Honey Collecting Songs (*Tomboi*) from the *Makekal* River

(A variant sung during the process of lowering the honey)

it is not the fault of the wind

bukonlah pulo sar'at de angin

it also is not the fault of the dew
the knot is already tied
the thread of the string will be broken
one will break into two

*bukonlah pulo sar'at de ambun
tambat idak ngutar lage
akan putuy tali benang
putuy satu limbako duo*

(Another variant for lowering the honey)

afraid to fry a *seluang* fish
child poison the headstream
one drop is not to be spilled
one bee (larva) is not to fall out
water inside, crosses the peninsula

*gemutup manggang seluang
budak menuba hulu laut
aik setitik jengon tebuang
anak setampang jengon telenca
aik dalam mintay tanjung*

(Calling for the bee maidens to play away from the tree)

quickly play my dear, play deep(in water) ohhhooohh.. this is a section of bamboo play by fours play by tens it will be beautiful my dear.. oiiyehhh...	<i>mainlah cepat dek main ber'edam oohhhohhhh.. ini buku buluh main be'empat main sepuluh elok jadi adik oiiiiyehh</i>
---	--

(Another seductive variant to the honey bee maidens)

a dropping from the <i>sekawan</i> bird (everything has a trace) through all memories that have passed who says my dear is naughty play here, we will have a big discussion	<i>secir'ik bur'ung sekawan nempuh dir'i pematang geding siapo adik ngato piawong main siko kito per'ang-agung</i>
---	---

(A variant of the final *tomboi*: if there are few hives, little honey, etc.)

excuse me god, I give my soul let me in, ghost of the big <i>sialong</i> <i>kedungdung</i> which is big (my knowledge is big but yours is bigger) ghost of the tree go back to the top by stairs of gold I will go down to the bottom peg this year hasn't been productive next year will come again <i>kedudung</i> which is big this tree is already full of leaves cloth made of bark is left here next year will come again my dear, oiiiiii	<i>amitlah tuan amitlah nyawo tao amit diaku hantu kayu sialong rayoku lah kedundun lay besak batang hantu kayu pulang kepucuk betangga emas aku pulang kebawah betanggo lantak tahun iko tahun mer'alang tahun diadap lah mengulang pulo kedundunglah besak batang Lah mer'ilang merambu daun kain nipa tinggalkah siko tahun diadap lah gulung pulo adik oiiiiii...</i>
---	--

(Sung by a bachelor making his first climb)

a small knife is a poisonous digger don't let this poison wilt you small kids begin to try try, don't be shy	<i>pisau kecil penggali tuba tuba jengon dibagi layu budak kecil jolong becuba cubo jengon berbagai malu</i>
---	--

(So that the mother or queen bee (*induk rapah*) produce a new hive in the future)

like a skin fungus, the <i>padi</i> is cut for me skin fungus lively fish, slippery fish skin fungus, my dear will sow	<i>panaulah panau, gunting padi demi ku panau gemilincang gemilincir panau budaklah betabur'an</i>
--	--

Panau can be defined as a skin fungus causing white blotches. In this case they are making an analogy between the ease in which a fungus spreads, and their desire for abundant honey in the future

Partially translated honey collecting songs from a DEPSOS document of the *Sungai Pingai* settlement near the village of *Desa Lubuk* in the southern part of Jambi near the border with South Sumatra (PSBL 1996). The poems may be from *Orang Rimba* in the region and possibly *Orang Hutan* from south Sumatra who also were part of the settlement.

(When the hive is ready to be cut open with a knife)

enjoy the knife my dear, I give the knife
the knife is here, *petetas tenum*
the day is *tertas*, the day is over
If there is little from the *sukatan*
If less from the measure
anggar more from the past

hendak pisau adik, kubagi pisau
pisau ado petetas tenum
sahari tertas sahari sudah
kalau tekurang dari sukatan
kalau kur'ang dari ukuran
anggar telebih deri lamo

(To defend from bees while lowering the hive)

up and down, up and down
come down to me, do not
come down to me,
come down to me, do not the peg
come down to me, do not
come down *memojok*, middle

turun naik, tur'un naik
turunmu jangan malimbang batang
turunmu jangan melimbang pupur
turunmu jangan melimbang lantak
turunmu jangan melimbang lusir
turun memojok tengah-tengah

(After coming down, when the hive is cut open to take out the honey)

lost hope *berjeleman*
lost *saut bersangi*
leleman nak angel on the stone stairs
stone *saut nak melandai* the tall mountain
tinggi
the stairs of stone are not fastened
the high mountain is not *terlandai*
the threat is lost *berleleman*

hilang harap bejeleman
hilang saut besesangi
leleman nak melekat tanggo
batu saut nak melandai gunung

Little sister

tanggo batu idak terlakat
gunung tenggi idak terlandai
hilang ancaman berleleman
sekali meremas kundur busuk
sekali gundah rawang dalam
adiiiiieek....
kutanjo-tanjo adiek kusigi-sigi
kutanjo dengan damar lola,
kutanjo dengan damar loli
kutanjo pintu lalu kekobongan
bukan tanjo ku ado nak nyamun
tanjo ku naiak undang kekasih

Some Personal Magic (*jempi*) collected along the *Makekal* River

Love magic to influence a women and her family to accept bride service

the rights of an expert are sweet
caught in *Juda's* door
Japai is the foundation and also my god
you are drunken by the prophet *Muhammad*
Japai is the foundation and also my god

hak ali manis
tesangkut di pintu juda
Japai alas ser'ta tuhanku
kau dimabuk nabi Muhammad
Japai alas ser'ta tuhanku jugo

my grief (or leaf) wedges my permission
my areca nut is a nut of copper
I am upright like a *beringi* tree
I am upright on the platform, as long as seven
seven will pair, imagine me
I have travelled further
I have more words to speak
use me more
bless me using the words of *anak siawang*

siriku selilit idin
pinangku pinang tembago
aku tegak seperti beringi
aku tegak di balai panjang tujuh
tujuh bebandung bebayang aku
bejalan aku yang belebih
bekato aku yang belebih
memakai aku yang belebih
ber'kat aku makai kato anak
siawang lebih

Magic (*jempi*) for someone who is sick

paper enters to *inggo*
read *tekubuk* to also walk
small religious leader to the *lio* land
there certain bodies *saeso*

kertai masuk ke inggo
baco tekubuk tejelon pula
kitab kecil ke tanoh lio,
situ tentu badan badan saeso

Magic (*jempi*) to cause disaster for a person

flies a bird and the tree,
the earth begins to fly,
the sky comes from the top,
the wind begins to swirl,

tebang seburung dan pucung,
tebang melingkung bumi,
langit iko sapome ujung,
tibo angin bagai tegulung

Magic (*jempi*) to make a person honest when you ask him for something

sacking to ask a question which is real
fire rises from its mouth
actually, *jawaten* is the problem
iron *cekraman* the bony area of the back

mengkar'ung betanyo nang haki-
nyo,
api tebit deri mulutnye.
sebonar-bonar jawaten soalnya,
besi cekraman pembedang tulang
punggung.

Magic (*jempi*) that makes it difficult to argue a case in an *adat* hearing

In the name of Allah and his prophet
something about the sky, its appearance
before, god forced the creature to submit
submit said god
fall silent said Muhammad
its heart is suppressed
to catch sight of the body of my creator

bismillahirohmanirohim
munca-minco langit
dulu Allah menundukkan makluk
tetunduk kato Allah
tebungkam kato Muhammad
tetekan hatinnyo
tependang badan tubuh khalikku

In the name of Allah and his prophet
earth *entam*, earth
out comes an ant from the hole in a
black stone
submit, you with who have black eyes
staring at the body of my creator

In the name of Allah and his prophet
sure said god, sure said Muhammad
I am sure said god
piece of coconut shell that wears a
shirt of steel
I wear a shirt of *temiang* hair
I will make assurance said god
before I cause danger

bismillahirrohmanirohim
tanoh entam tanoh
keluar semut der'i lobang
batu hitom
tetunduk kau bemato hitom
memandang tubuh khalikku

bismillahi rohmanirohim
kin kato Allah kin kato Muhammad
yakin kato Allah
tempurung bebaju besi

aku bebaju temiang bulu
aku memakai keyakinan kato Allah
belum aku bebahayo

The Law of the 'Beating' (*adat membunubunuhon*)

Representative of the male (his father, maternal uncle, *manku rykat*) says this to the brother of the (*war'is di atas batin*) female

if sold, not until sold
if killed not until dead
if hung, not from high
if hit, not until bruised

*kalu doh juwal jengon sampoi juwal
doh buno jengon sampoi mati
doh gentung jengon sampoi tenggi
doh poluh jengon sampoi lembom*

kill with our thin gold (*adat*)
throw a ball of gold, we will roll
along with it

*bunulah dengan emas pipeh kami
molanjong koh emal bulot. kami
monguling koh*

Representative of the male/potential groom says this to the leader (*penghulu*) of the wife who is monitoring the event.

the days sun is lit by a torch, which
shining spreads to all of us here
I will spread this information to everyone
it is very important
If there is an injury, it is worth half a life
If there is a death, it is a whole life
If death, death
If an injury, it is worth half a life
The rights of the *batin* leader are reality

*bosulu mato ar'i bogolangang nang
benyok nio.
tr'ang padang, lawut nyata. retinye
podoh nang benok nio
lukah bopampas mati bobengon
kalu mati, mati
kalu lukah, lukah pampas nye
hak batin ponguluh retinye*

The representative of the female (*war'is di atas batin*) replies with,

i am bored with your words
to be brave to step on a sticker
this is our responsibility
to cross a broken path, then go along

*bosoh jingkek do hadop
bor'entak di dur'i
tompu kami nyomak singgo nyeh
telintang patah tebujur lalu*

To warn the representative of the female (*war'is di atas batin*), the representative of the potential groom threaten that if they boy is hit to hard or bruised then they have the right to divorce without paying a fine.

*luka ger'e kami lah ngoli
lombom belu kami lah ngoli
reh tinyoh hopi bobeengun
jedi hopi be'adat sar'ok hopi
boponinggalan*

The representatives of the potential groom clarify,

to be of law, if there is a divorce, I have
the right to fine you

*jedi be'adat sar'ok boponinggalan
pengongon batin pengulu*

The first prohibition (*lar'angan petamo*) the *penghulu* says, if you want to marry this is ok, but if you will divorce then it is my right to fine you.

After the ritual beating, a headman clarifies the obligations of marriage and the household (*adat rumah tangga*)

To the man,
that which must be provided is meat, *yang do kekohoh lauwuk Ikan, hasom*
fish, sour, salt, field and plants. *ger'om*
You are not allowed to visit other women *huma tanom jengon buli tandom andong*

To the women,
never again laugh with another man *jengon lagi tetawah denen jenton lain*
work had in the house, cooked food, *ker'ejoko plan do gawe masok mata*
baskets, mats, must go to the household *ambung, tikor, har'us lah rumah tango,*
of the young man *anak laki*

The *penghulu/dukun* then recites a magical proverb (*bopato*) that wishes sickness and ill being to go far away from the new couple

snakes, poisonous insects, sickness, *ulo, lipan, sakit, ponen, tulak, tunding*
dizziness, be expelled from these people *dir'i or'ang or'ang nio*
small luck, big luck, let good fortune cross *res'ki kecil res'ki godong, lintang the*
scales of these people *panggor'ko untung, lah loboh sisik or'ang*
or'ang nio

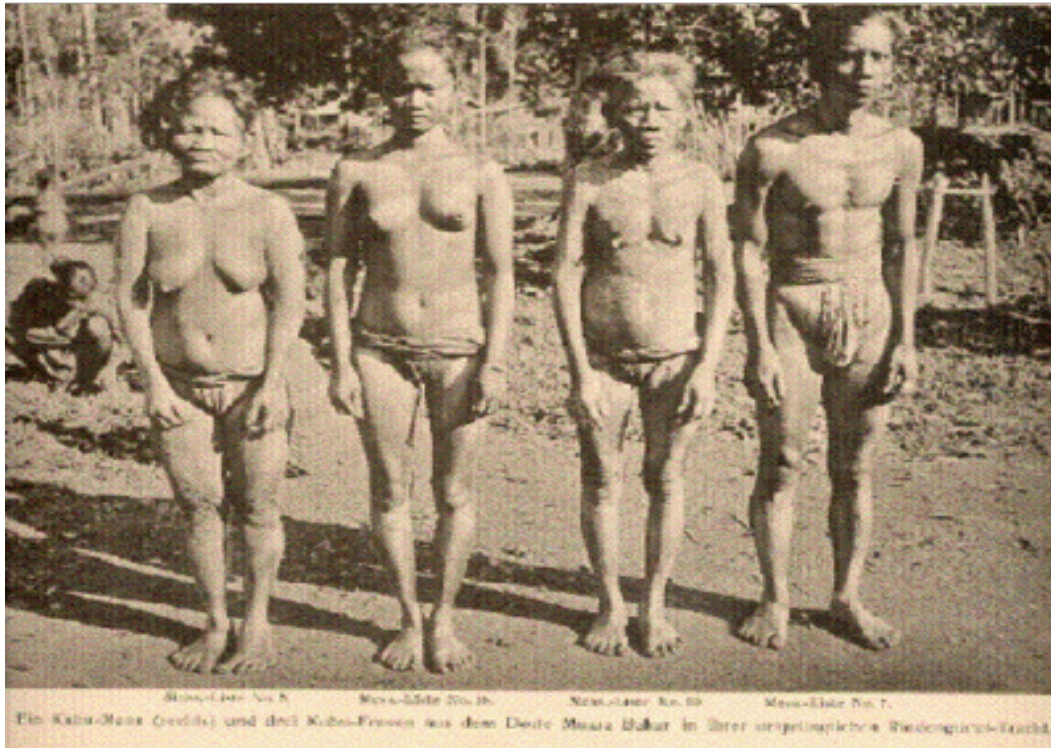
The responsibilities between the parents of the bride and groom (*or'ang bebisen*) are summarized in this *seloko adat* verse, 'sickness/confusion, birth/death, meat/fish, sour/salt, food/drink, these are the responsibilities within the *bisen* relationship'.

Photographs

*Orang Rimba in the Air Hitam region of Bukit Duabelas by the Dutch officials
Watershoot and Graft, 1915*



Orang Batin Kubu along the *Bahar* River in South Sumatra, Bernard Hagan 1906



Men along the Upstream *Kajasung/ Serenggam* River in the Eastern region of *Bukit Duabelas*



The Author with a Camp along the Upstream *Kajasung/Serenggam* River in *Bukit Duabelas*



Mid-Sized Homes (*sungsudungon* or *rumah de tanoh*) When Living a Mobile Life





Tenganai going for a Hunt, Downstream Kajasung River



Tenganai Spearing the Wild Boar



Hunting Dog Checks out a Wild Boar caught in a Noose (*jerot*)



***Bekilat* Carrying a Pig back to the Camp, Upstream *Makekal* River**



The Author Carrying a Pig, Downstream *Kajasung* River



Butchering a Pig and Distributing Game, Downstream *Kajasung* River



Women Collecting the Blood and Interior Organs for the Camp Elder



Smoking Tapir (*tonuk*) Over a Fire so that it lasts Longer



Sunda River Otter that has Just Been Cooked



Bachelor Setting a Rodent Trap (*pelabu*)



Cooking a Tasty Rat over the Fire



Big House (*rumah godong*) in a Swidden, Upstream Makekal



Swidden Field Planted with Rice, Downstream *Kajasung* River



Big House (*rumah godong*) in a Swidden along the Upstream *Makekal* River



Attaching a Roof of *Benal* leaves



Male Sacred Space (*pagu*) in the Roofing

Smaller *ngar'akoh* Fish Dams





Largest *Hompongong* Fish Dam with Rattan Tubes for Catching Fish



Apparatus for Making *Durian Taffy (lempuk)*



Rattan Basket Full of *Lantak* Pegs made from the *Sengori* Tree



Men Climbing a *Sialong* Tree during the Day to Pound the *Lantak* Pegs



Fastening the *Lantak* Pegs along the *Kajasung* River



Lowering the Honey Basket along the *Kajasung* River



Trying the Honey after the Climb, Downstream *Kajasung* River



Man and his Son with a Piece of Honey Comb, Downstream *Kajasung* River



**Overgrown Marriage *Balai* Platform, with Pole for Rattan Offering Receptacle
(*songkot*)**



***Balai* Platform for the Bathing the Baby in the River Ceremony**



Raised Burial Platform (*rumah pasaron*)



Sacred *Kayu Aro* Tree, hung with Deceased Shamans Cloth

Temporary Lean Too's (*belelapiion* or *kememalomon*) for Life on the Move





Wild Yams (*benor*)



The Author Hiking Through the Forest

Visit by Parents to *Temanggung Mirak's* Camp, Upstream *Makekal* River



Students Participating in *Sekola's* Mobile Education Program along the Upstream *Makekal* River





Students along the Upstream *Makekal* River



Young Student Resting on a Fallen Branch, Upstream *Makekal* River



The *Melayu* Village of *Tanah Garo* along the *Tabir* River



The Village of *Tanah Garo*, *Tabir* River



Bekilat and Mijak with head Patron Rio Haji Syoti (*Pangkol Waris*) in the Village of Tanah Garo



Mijak in the Village (nice shirt!)



Mijak Standing on the Buttress of a Recently Logged Tree



Melayu Loggers, Bukit Dubelas



Dispute with Loggers, Downstream *Kajasung* River



***Orang Rimba* from *Bukit Tigapuluh* Protest Logging and Plantations**



Orang Rimba Settlement, Air Hitam Region Bukit Duabelas



Orang Rimba Boarding Students at a Christian Church near the Town of Singkut



***Orang Rimba* Selling Medicinal Remedies at a Bus Stop along the Trans-Sumatran Highway, near the *Margoyoso* Transmigration Settlement**



Women and her Daughter Begging at a Bus Stop near the *Margoyoso* Transmigration Settlement

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