OLD WAYS - NEW WAYS : TALANG MAMAK OF TIGA BALAI, INDERAGIRI HULU, PROPINSI RIAU, SUMATRA

William Singleton

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of St. Andrews

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OLD WAYS – NEW WAYS

TALANG MAMAK OF TIGA BALAI, INDERAGIRI HULU, PROPINSI RIAU, SUMATRA

by

William Singleton MA

Thesis presented for the degree of PhD

University of St Andrews March 1998
DECLARATIONS

I, William Singleton, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 150,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date: ...6-3-98....... signature of candidate:

I was admitted as a research student at St Andrews University in October 1990 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in October 1991; the higher study for which this is a record carried out in Tiga Balai, Kecamatan Pasir Penyu and Kecamatan Rengat, Kabupaten Inderagiri Hulu, Propinsi Riau, Sumatra and the University of St Andrews between 1990 and 1998.

date: ...6-3-98....... signature of candidate:

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I place detailed descriptions of Talang Mamak lives in an historically reconstructed context which focuses upon the Talang Mamak's status as debt-bondsmen of the Sultans of the kingdom of Inderagiri (1509–1963). Information about current Talang Mamak lives is presented in the form of five life-histories, or biographies, in which both local issues (development; deforestation; drought; crime; relationships with wider, Muslim, society; debt-management;) and local practices (leadership, rice-farming, rubber cultivation and tapping, cock-fighting, shamanism, marriage, etc) are described in terms of the biographical subjects' experiences of them. Preceding the life-histories and forming a context in which they can be understood, is an historical reconstruction of Minangkabau and Malay settlements along the Inderagiri river, the establishment of the kingdom of Inderagiri and its relationship with the Dutch and the Republic of Indonesia. In this history I re-describe both the well-documented Minangkabau and the as-yet undocumented Talang Mamak, in terms of relationships between rulers and their debt-bondsmen subjects and show that forms of social organisation such as matrilineal inheritance, duolocal residence and bride-price were enforced, by rulers, upon their debt-bondsmen subjects as a means of maintaining and manipulating social inequalities. After the five life-histories, by way of a conclusion, I suggest that the 'culture' of many isolated, non-Muslim groups on both sides of the Straits of Melaka, including Talang Mamak and Kubu in Sumatra, and Semai and Temuan in Malaysia, can be best understood in terms of their economic relationships with Malay and Minangkabau rulers and recent changes to these ties introduced by modern nation-states. Using this perspective I reject the label 'Proto-Malay' which has been customarily used to describe isolated non-Muslim populations in Sumatra, such as Talang Mamak, and in Malaysia, such as Semai, in terms of so-called ethnic characteristics. I propose that what these groups of people have in common is not an ascribed ethnicity but rather similar historical relationships with Muslim kingdoms who they served as debt-bondsmen.
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LANGUAGE AND NAMES

All translations in this thesis are, unless otherwise stated, my own work and have, for the most part, been arrived at with the assistance of the following dictionaries: *A Malay-English Dictionary* (Wilkinson 1955 Parts I and II), *Kamus Indonesia-Inggris* (Echols and Shadily 1990) and *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Luckman Ali et al. 1993). The language used by Talang Mamak has been variously classified as: 'bahasa Talang Mamak' ([a language in its own right] Yunus Mela Latoa 1986 p.193); as 'Melayu tua' ([Old Malay] Arief p.25); and as a dialect consisting of elements of the *Melayu Riau-Lingga* dialect and the *Melayu Minangkabau* dialect (Hamidy 1991 p.123). None of these seem adequate because while many Talang Mamak speak mostly heterodox Indonesian with an accent that is distinct from that of surrounding populations, they also make use of another 'language', especially in magic spells, songs and stories. In writing Indonesian, Malay and Talang Mamak words, I use *ejaan baru* (modern Indonesian spellings [see Kato 1982 p.15]) except in quotations where I always follow the spelling, use of capitals and the tense used by the authors from whom I borrow. With regard to my own use of tense, the present refers to the period around the end of 1993 and the beginning of 1994. My references to Indonesian currency, *rupiah*, are based on an exchange rate of approximately Rp.3,500 to 1 pound sterling.

With regard to the names that I give to people (both individuals and groups) who appear in this thesis, the following points should be noted. Firstly, many Talang Mamak adults are known by a variety of terms, the most common being *pak* (father) for a man and *mai* (mother) for a woman. Most married people are simply addressed as *pak* or *mai* by most people. However, when referring to an adult, *pak* and *mai* are also often used as prefixes before other names or titles (e.g. *pak Batin, pak Panca*, etc). As well as having a name, or names, that they were given as a child, after they get married and have children, people are normally referred to and addressed using the name of any one of their children (e.g. Nian is commonly known as *mai Tomin*, after her son, Tomin). Unmarried people are always referred to using the epithet *si* (e.g. *si Nar*). *Si* is never used in forms of address, where familial terms are usually used (e.g. *adik* [younger sibling]) for unmarried people younger than the speaker. Young children usually address their unmarried older peers as *abang* (older brother) or *kakak* (older sister), terms which, along with *adik*, are also used between adults who share family ties (e.g. a husband may call his wife *adik*). To avoid confusion and repetition, most Talang Mamak who
appear in this thesis are referred to by only one name without the use of the epithets pak, mai and si.

Secondly, the names I use to refer to many ‘groups’ of people are problematic, both because they often imply low status and are not part of the ways the people subsumed under these categories talk about themselves, and because the boundaries of these groups remain ill-defined. I acknowledge the difficulties associated with naming lowland swidden farming peoples on both sides of the Straits of Melaka (see Carey 1976 p.223, Gomes 1988 p.112, Sandbukt 1984 p.97, etc), yet for the most part I use the names that most commonly appear in anthropological literature both to characterise groups in this region and to engage with literature about these peoples. In the comparison of peoples living on both sides of the Straits of Melaka (see chapter nine) I use the word ‘group’ in a loose way to discuss people I have not visited. However, when I use the name ‘Talang Mamak’ I am referring to a specific group who, though recognising divisions within their population, describe themselves as ‘Talang Mamak’ and associate themselves with an area they call ‘Tiga Balai’ which is inland from the southern bank of the River Inderagiri in the east Sumatran province of Riau. There is one other group (I use the term loosely here) of people known as Talang Mamak (Usman 1985) who live to the south of Tiga Balai around the rivers Cenaku, Gangsal, Seberida and Retih and whom I have not visited. Talang Mamak of Tiga Balai have little knowledge of, and see themselves as distinct from, Talang Mamak of the river systems to the south, who they usually refer to as orang Gangsal (people of Gangsal) or orang Seberida (people of Seberida). In this light, this thesis is a study of the Talang Mamak of Tiga Balai and, unless otherwise indicated, my use of the name Talang Mamak applies only to the population of Tiga Balai. I also discuss several other groups of people both in Sumatra (in particular Minangkabau [de Josselin de Jong 1980] and Kubu [Sandbukt 1988[A]]), and in Malaysia (such as Orang Hulu [or Jakun], Orang Kanak, Temuan, Semelai, Temok, Semai and Mah Meri [Carey 1976]). In the conclusion of this thesis I examine the use of the ethnic categorisation Proto-Malay in relation to these groups.

To contrast Talang Mamak with people living in the surrounding area, I characterise the latter (as do Talang Mamak) as Melayu, the defining characteristics of Melayu-ness being ‘speaking the Melayu language, using Melayu traditions and being Muslim’ (Suparlan 1986 p.497). While I use the term Melayu to describe a people, I employ, following linguistic traditions (e.g.
Wilkinson 1955), the term Malay to refer to a language. This distinction may not be followed by some of the authors I refer to, many of whom also prefer different spellings, use of capitals and tenses than are used in the main body of this text.
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to both describe the lives of some of the Talang Mamak I have met during two periods of fieldwork and to situate these lives in a historically reconstructed context which focuses upon economic relationships and inequalities of status. The first of these periods of fieldwork was in 1988 when, as a member of an Anglo-Javanese expedition called Project Soma, I spent about three months travelling around the area inhabited by the Talang Mamak, which is known as Tiga Balai. During the second period of fieldwork, which lasted about twenty-seven months, Adriani (my wife) and I were able to set ourselves up in a house in Tiga Balai, which brought us into daily contact with a number of families — in particular our neighbours. Conversations with these people, amongst others, are, together with observation, the source of the information that I present, in edited form, as five biographies, or life-histories, which focus upon the lives of some of the people that we got to know best. These biographies are the centre-piece of this thesis.

My use of a fieldwork methodology that prioritised conversation as a means of acquiring knowledge also inevitably prioritised interaction over reflection and relied more upon an indefinable range of social and conversational skills than upon any particular literary or philosophical techniques. Consequently, although I recognise that the appearance of Talang Mamak in this thesis is the result of my motivations and my desires, I do not stress ‘reflexive’ thinking (Hobart 1990 p.305), ‘the critique of representation from power’ (Fardon 1990 p.7) or ‘[t]he inaccessibility of the Other’ (Gellner 1992 p.56). I regard these ‘convoluted and technical debates’ (Marcus 1986 p.26) as the result of ‘an undue concern with recent trends ... in literary theory’ which ‘was originally provoked by a recent collection of essays on anthropology as literature entitled Writing Culture (Clifford and Marcus 1986)’ (Spencer 1989 p.145). If these trends towards literary criticism were brought to their logical conclusion, they would lead to a rejection of representation and ‘non-representation, including its most radical form, not writing, graphic silence, would have to be an inescapable consequence’ (Fabian 1990 p.761). Given that my aim is representation, critiques that explicitly, or implicitly, advocate (ethno)-graphic silence have not directly informed my methodology.

The over-emphasis of negative aspects of ethnographic writing found in Writing Culture and other similar works (see Spencer 1989 p.158) has resulted from a mis-guided, puritanical
examination of methodology in its own terms, or, in Spencer's words (ibid.), from 'analysing the internal structure of anthropological texts as things in themselves'. Rather than having been formulated in a social vacuum with no particular aims in mind, the methodology I employ evolved out of social encounters in which I acquired knowledge about Talang Mamak through conversation with them. This methodology is directly related to my overall aim which is to 'render intelligible the ideas and actions of [specific] people' (ibid. p.151). With this practical aim in mind, methodological critiques developed solely through textual criticism seem both pointless and perverse because, although they appear to be 'notionally concerned with how we distort the other', they actually end up 'indulging our seemingly endless passion with ourselves, our language, metaphors and intellectual spectacles, and oddly leave ... other peoples even more remote than before' (Hobart 1990 p.306).

The aims, methodology and contents of this thesis are in direct opposition to the 'discernible shift from trying – however imperfectly – to represent other people in other places, to an exclusive concern with representing people who try to represent other people in other places' (Spencer [1989 p.161] on Rabinow [1986]). My goal is to try to represent certain Talang Mamak from Tiga Balai and, in order to achieve this aim, I adopt an approach which attempts both to portray 'native point[s] of view as richly as possible' and to relate them to the '"cold", "hard", issues of power, interests, economics and historical change' (Marcus and Fischer 1986 p.77). With these aims in mind, this thesis concentrates on knowledge acquired in social encounters and my efforts to contextualise this knowledge in such a way that Talang Mamak appear to the reader, as they did to Adriani and I, as reasonable and understandable human beings. In an attempt to invite and cultivate empathic readings of Talang Mamak experience, information about Talang Mamak is not organised around certain institutions or a particular theoretical stance. Rather it is presented in terms of the life-histories of particular Talang Mamak, most of whom were our neighbours.

The raw materials of this thesis have been gleaned from two, basically different, types of source, each of which is associated with a different method of knowledge acquisition. While the biographies of Talang Mamak are based upon information obtained in conversation, my efforts to contextualise the lives of these people contains knowledge obtained mostly through reading. Except for the final chapter, in which Talang Mamak are compared with other people living on both sides of the Straits of Melaka, generally speaking, I try to keep these two
types of information separate. Literate and academic sources form the basis of the first chapter and constitute a major part of the last chapter, and conversational and other social sources are almost exclusively used in the other chapters.

Of the written sources used, only a few concentrate solely upon the Talang Mamak, namely: Rakit Kulim (Tengku Arief, undated)^1; Orang Talang Mama [sic] (Usman 1985)^2; Suku Talang Mamak (Hamidy 1991)^3; Orang Talang Mamak (Ahmad Yunus and Siti Maria 1985)^4; and KTT Bumi dan rimba larangan (Tatiana 1992)^5. I also refer to several other books which mention the Talang Mamak, in particular: Sejarah Riau (Lufti et al. 1977); Tambo* Alam Minangkabau (Datoek Toeah 1989); Masyarakat Melayu Riau dan Kebudayaannya (Budisanto et al. 1986); and Rantau Nan Kurang Esa Dua Puluh (Asmuni 1983). I make use of other, mainly historical,

footnotes

1 Tengku Arief, who claims descent from the kings of Melaka, is alone in suggesting that the establishment of the Tiga Balai settlements came about solely through Melakan intervention in Inderagiri and had nothing to do with the activities of Minangkabau (p.12). He has been criticised for the ambiguous way that he treats relations between Talang Mamak and Minangkabau (Hamidy 1991, p.110). Tengku Arief deals mainly with his own genealogy and a journey made by a Talang Mamak leader to Melaka in order to collect Inderagiri’s fourth (or, according to most other sources, first) king – this journey is described from a Talang Mamak point of view in chapter eight of this thesis. In writing his book, Tengku Arief acknowledges the help of ‘Batin Buta’, a Talang Mamak leader who also features in this thesis (see chapters three and eight).

2 While Usman has produced a timeless yet ‘archaic’ ethnographic sketch of Talang Mamak, it is not clear whether or not he has ever visited Tiga Balai. In his introduction he makes reference to the work of the Dutch colonial author V. Obedyn and says that he has used ‘almost all his information’ (p.5). Usman also uses phrases such as ‘according to people who have visited Talang Mamak’ (p.57).

3 Hamidy’s work on the Talang Mamak takes the form of a short chapter in a book describing ‘terasing’ (isolated) groups in Riau. Much of his information was obtained from ‘Patih Sutan Pangeran’ (p.107) who features in the life-story of his younger brother Sutan Mohammad which appears as chapter nine of this thesis.

4 This is a short chapter in a book describing traditional death ceremonies in Riau which deals solely with laying out of corpses, burial and grave construction in Talang Jerinjing, a Talang Mamak settlement in Tiga Balai (see chapter three).

5 This is a very short paper which appeared in the student magazine of Andalas University, in Padang, and which describes, amongst other things, the way Talang Mamak categorise different types of forest.

6 Tambo, which are usually associated with Minangkabau, are ‘an assortment of origin stories and adat rules and regulations’ (Kato 1982 p.33) which, while being ‘a historiology ... of the past, an account of how people interpret it’ (Vansina 1988 p.196), have been described by Yakub (1987[A] p.18), who has written a tambo, as being ‘2% historical fact and 98% mythology’. A Talang Mamak tambo appears in chapter nine of this thesis.
sources which, while not directly dealing with Talang Mamak, describe conditions which I suggest have affected them.

Information from these sources is generally dealt with on its own terms, with the result that much of the language that I use in the first and last chapters is associated with forms of historical discourse which, often out of necessity, involve broad generalisations, a focus on the fortunes of royal houses and causal-type explanations. Despite these limitations, I wish to ‘avoid portraying abstract, ahistorical “others” ’ (Clifford 1988 p.23). Therefore, I engage with and reproduce forms of writing related to history in a relatively uncritical fashion (a critique of the philosophy of history being beyond the scope of this thesis). However, I do examine the content of these writings and I criticise some of the ways that forms of social organisation associated with Sumatra’s past have been reconstructed and represented. Although much of the information about the past that appears in this thesis can be read as a history, I see it more as a collection of hypotheses related to one another chronologically. Rather than being a fixed, objective record, these hypotheses represent an ongoing and never-ending process of reconstruction. In this reconstruction, the form of language I use to describe events in the past is very much a result of the fact that these events can only be apprehended through the sources that refer to them, many of which seem to presume that objectivity is somehow built into the methodology of history. I suggest that the ‘conjectural history’ (Rambo 1988 p.23) or ‘mythology’ (Friedman 1992 p.837) that I have produced should neither be viewed from the perspective ‘that there is a real, narrative history, documented or not’ (ibid. p.848) nor ‘simply accepted at face value’ (ibid. p.854). Rather, I suggest that it should be evaluated in terms of its usefulness in regard to interpreting the biographies presented in part two.

The first chapter of this thesis (which may be read as a history of the Talang Mamak) is an attempt to reconstruct events which took place in the past in such a way that they inform my descriptions of Talang Mamak lives. Rather than being simply ‘history’, this chapter is ‘the construction of a meaningful universe of events and narratives’ (ibid. p.837) for a specific purpose – the contextualisation of Talang Mamak biography. This (re)construction deals, in some detail, with the best known of all Sumatran peoples, the Minangkabau, who many sources, including oral traditions in Tiga Balai, regard as having played an important role in the establishment of Talang Mamak settlements. While I would not go as far as Usman (1985
p.12), who says that ‘[i]n the study of the history of the Talang Mama[k], it is very clear that they come from ... the Minangkabau highlands', I do follow the majority of writers (Lufti et al. 1977, Asmuni 1983, Suparlan 1986, etc) who suggest that the organisation of Tiga Balai was strongly influenced by the activities of Minangkabau. These writers date the establishment of the Tiga Balai settlements by a Minangkabau nobleman at around the beginning of the sixteenth century when, with Minangkabau assistance, the first kingdom of Inderagiri was established by the Melakan royal house. In order to relate the origins of Tiga Balai to events in the Minangkabau highlands, I have reinterpreted, in basically economic terms, information presented by de Josselin de Jong (1980), Kato (1982) and others concerning the Minangkabau world of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with its 'extreme' (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.84) 'matrilineal kinship system' (Kato 1982 p.204). This period, which is known as the 'time of adat' (Kahn 1993 p.71), is usually regarded as having reached its peak, in terms of social development, during, and for about a hundred years after, the reign of king Aditiawarman (1347–1376). While in most studies of the time of adat 'great stress was laid on the principles of matrilineal clanship as a defining characteristic of Minangkabau culture' (ibid.), in my reconstruction, wherein 'cultural “values” have more to do with power and politics than with morality and aesthetics' (Benjamin 1985 p.219), the Minangkabau matrilineal system appears as an idiom which described economic bonds in familial terms. I recognise the 'dangers' that stem 'from the positivist preference for treating kinship as an “idiom” for other realer things', which include 'the danger of reifying the other things' (Hobart 1983 p.9). Despite this, I suggest that for Minangkabau, as well as for many other peoples on both sides of the Straits (including Talang Mamak), in times of extreme economic hardship – famine, war, slavery, etc – the need to acquire essential foodstuffs, such as rice and salt, became the realest thing. I maintain that while discourse may have remained familial, 'the underlying dynamics were essentially economic' (Anderson and Vorster 1983 p.443). In my view, economic hardships, precisely related to famine, war and slavery, have had a significant effect on Talang Mamak opportunities for self-determination. Consequently, many aspects of 'Talang Mamak culture' can best be understood not as something that the Talang Mamak made up themselves to ‘fit’ with either their ‘natural environment’ or their own needs but rather as part of a system of social organisation that was forced upon them by their rulers.
In this light, much of Talang Mamak adat (tradition, custom) can be seen not just as something Talang Mamak 'culturally constructed' but as a set of rules conceived and enforced by Sultans of the Kingdom of Inderagiri who had their Talang Mamak subjects memorise them. In sum, chapter one contains a reconstruction of events, both ecological and historical, that led up to the establishment of the Talang Mamak settlements and subsequent changes in the organisation of these settlements which were either introduced to the population of Tiga Balai by the various royal courts and colonial administrators that have governed them or developed by the Talang Mamak themselves, usually in response to their rulers' policies.

While the first chapter deals mostly with events that occurred outside living memory, chapter two, which begins with the declaration of Indonesian independence, outlines changes inside Tiga Balai within the past fifty years. Information in this chapter is mainly based on conversations with both Talang Mamak and people from outside Tiga Balai, who include local government officers, businessmen and their employees (usually loggers) and people from the Melayu villages that surround Tiga Balai. As in the first chapter, information in chapter two is organised chronologically, but while the former focuses on the development and maintenance of relations between Talang Mamak and the kingdom of Inderagiri in its various forms, the latter concentrates on Indonesian government initiatives within Tiga Balai and Talang Mamak reactions to them.

Following on from chapter two, which outlines government developments in Tiga Balai, chapter three describes how these policies have been received by Talang Mamak, with special attention being given to the introduction of salaried government titles and the subsequent division of the population into two groups; one that wants to maintain links with the kingdom of Inderagiri; and another that only recognises the authority of the republic of Indonesia. Information contained in the third chapter is, once again, organised chronologically, to produce 'histories' which are based on conversations with Talang Mamak title-holders and other senior men. These reconstructions describe the selection of leaders in each of the eight

footnotes

7 Much of contemporary Talang Mamak adat still consists of lists of rules and formal speeches which men menghafal (commit to memory).
settlements, or talang, within Tiga Balai. Much of this chapter makes use of information collected in 1988 (and updated in 1992–1994), when I visited title-holders in every talang, which formed the basis of my MA dissertation in which I discussed and compared, in terms of the notion of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1977), the ability of both government title-holders and holders of adat (traditional) titles to attract followers.

The start of the fourth chapter marks the beginning of the biographical section of this thesis, which contains five life-stories, each one taking up a chapter. Each of these chapters focuses on the life of an individual or a married couple and, in these biographies, various aspects of Talang Mamak lifestyles are described in terms of the biographical subject's experiences of them. For example, I begin with the couple who lived opposite us, Jari and Sariyah, whose stories include a description of their rice-farming techniques, not because the way they cultivated rice was in any way peculiar or particularly representative, but in order to create a portrayal of rice farming that relates to specific people in a specific place at a specific time. Thereby, I avoid ascribing what I had seen and heard Jari and Sariyah doing to all other Talang Mamak in all other places at all other times. Likewise, the succeeding biographies emphasise a variety of topics (including marriage, divorce, rubber-tapping, relations with the Indonesian state, shamanism, etc) which are described in terms of the biographical subject's experience of them as recounted in conversation. Although information about Talang Mamak was mostly acquired through conversation, it is not presented in the form of actual conversations. Rather, it has been used to construct life-histories, or biographies, written in 'free indirect speech' — 'the style which allows the author to tell a story “from the point of view of the actors” and the reader to identify with them' (Spencer 1985 p.19). I adopt this approach, over others, as it fits in with my aim, which is to represent some of the ways that Talang Mamak conceive of themselves and their concerns. Biography seems well-suited to this aim in that it results in descriptions of people that are directly based upon the ways that these same people describe themselves. Thus, while the life-histories I construct are based upon Talang Mamak conversations, they are not word for word translations of those conversations — of the sort that Dwyer (1982) has produced. Although I regard Dwyer's 'dialogues' (which are the result of tape-recorded, structured interviews with a Fakir, who was Dwyer's only 'subject') as an important experiment in ethnographic techniques, I reject it as the basis of a methodology because of its limitations and inflexibility. While Dwyer's dialogues might be 'accurate' in the sense that they are translations of recorded interviews, they fail to engage with the concerns of
the Fakir, who brings this home to his interviewer when he says, 'As for me, I know that I'm not concerned with a single one of your questions. I know that these questions serve your purposes not mine' (Dwyer 1982 p.225). Rather than attempt to set up and record interviews with a single subject I sought to take part in Talang Mamak conversations which, unlike Dwyer's structured 'dialogues', could go on for indefinite periods, often covered a wide range of topics and usually involved more than two people. Taking part in these conversations, as opposed to controlling them, I did not attempt to record any information whilst they were going on. As well as introducing inequalities of status and wealth, the use of recording devices (tape, film, note-book, etc) would have hindered my efforts to become a good conversational partner.

While I suggest that, as a methodology, the construction of life-histories, from information obtained in conversations, has many advantages over other approaches, I also recognise that it has its weaknesses. For example, I do not record or analyse the conversational contexts within which statements occurred and consequently both the mood and the ebb and flow of conversations from which information was obtained are rarely highlighted.

In Tiga Balai there are many rules, which I did not challenge, concerning the segregation of men and women that both prevented me from getting to know many women well and made Adriani one of my main sources of information about Talang Mamak women. As a result, women are under-represented in the biographies included in this thesis. Shamanism, about which I have quite a lot of information, is also not adequately covered in this thesis, due mainly to a lack of space. Talang Mamak shamanism requires further research, particularly regarding how the two different shamanic traditions found in Tiga Balai relate to more orthodox religious practices found in other parts of Sumatra and Malaysia.

The biographies deal mainly with the issues that were talked about most by our friends and acquaintances and of these topics financial hardship was probably the most prominent. Since the late 1980s, most Talang Mamak have suffered a series of rice crop failures which has led to the majority of families entering into debt relationships with Melayu rubber dealers in order to obtain supplies of rice. Given the levels of poverty that exist in Tiga Balai, establishing even relatively equal relationships with our neighbours would have been difficult had massive economic disparities existed between us. Economic inequalities between anthropologists and
the people they study can have a crucial effect on fieldwork, often preventing certain ideals – ‘to live as much like the local people as possible’ (Dentan 1979 p.110) – from being seriously pursued and disallowing open, sharing relationships. They can also lead to anthropologists in the field being seen as ‘nothing more than a source of desirable items’ (Chagnon 1983 p.15) and may reduce social interaction to a series of ‘incessant, passioned, and often aggressive demands … [which] would become so unbearable at times that I [Chagnon] would have to lock myself in my hut periodically just to escape’ (ibid.)8.

The most extreme and distasteful example of inequalities between an anthropologist and his or her fieldwork neighbours is found in Turnbull’s *The Mountain People*, in which the author actively and deliberately maintains ‘a status situation in regard to wealth and comfort far above that of the people being studied’ (Geddes 1975 p.350). This ‘status barrier’ (ibid.) formed the basis of the ‘Bwana complex’ (Barth 1974 p.10) that Turnbull is accused of displaying and most certainly played a significant part in his ‘misunderstanding of the Ik’ (Heine 1985 p.12). While I do not discuss in any detail our economic relationships with our Talang Mamak friends and acquaintances in the main body of this thesis, where time and space limit my concerns to describing enduring economic ties rather than chance encounters, I do recognise that they had significant effect on the ways that Talang Mamak perceived us. I also recognise that commensality, sharing and relatively equal economic relationships are generally conducive to more intimate and empathic relationships between anthropologists and their fieldwork neighbours. In this light, rather than ‘selfishly hoarding a huge surplus’ (Dentan 1979 p.128) and consequently having to ‘develop strange defence mechanisms and strategies’ (Chagnon 1983 pp.13–14) in order to avoid sharing it, Adriani and I tried to maintain an open and honest economic relationship with our Talang Mamak neighbours. In this we were aided by

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8 Chagnon’s experiences appear to represent an extreme case which was probably not helped by either his desire to eat ‘[his] foods’ ‘in relative peace’ (Chagnon 1983 p.13) or his stash of ‘locked up provisions’ (ibid. p15). The ‘begging’ (ibid.) that Chagnon claims characterises Yanomamo was not exhibited by Talang Mamak who, like other, so-called, Proto-Malays on both sides of the Straits of Melaka, tend to be both wary of strangers and timid in their presence, probably as a result of centuries of subjugation at the hands of ‘Malays’. During this time, Proto-Malays probably learnt that in the presence of outsiders ‘the only safe posture to assume … was that of a passive, supplicating inferior. To act aggressively would have been to invite injury or even death’ (Endicott 1983 p.238).
the fact that my research grant, while being very generously donated and gratefully received, was not adequate to fund the length of stay in Tiga Balai that I had in mind.

I spent much of my grant during the early period of my stay when I bought a house, dug a well and fenced and terraced our garden in preparation for fruit, vegetable and tuber cultivation. While tools (hammer, saw, machete, etc), materials (wood, nails, paint, etc) and the cost of their transport took a proportion of my budget, a great deal also went on labour costs. While I occasionally employed a Javanese resident of a nearby Melayu village to help me with woodwork, well-digging, etc, I also employed several Talang Mamak men, all of whom lived close by, to help with fencing or terracing which, coincidentally, took place during a rainy period when wet tree-trunks prevented them from tapping rubber and thereby denied them an income. Because of the recent rice failures, during any wet spell that lasted for more than a week or so many Talang Mamak families were forced to increase their debt to their Melayu rubber dealer in order to feed themselves. Under these conditions, when I had sufficient funds, I employed Talang Mamak and thereby became their patron. However, later in our stay, when we had less money and we had got to know people better, these roles were often reversed on the many occasions when our considerate neighbours helped us out.

Having invested in a house, a safe supply of drinking water and a garden, Adriani and I were able to live by spending a little money each week at the local market on cooking oil, salt, rice, kerosene, etc and by growing most of our own fruit and vegetables, which put us at a similar economic level to that of our neighbours. The main differences were that we did not tap rubber or farm rice and we were not in debt. Inevitably our money ran out and, in order to continue our research, I began to make weekly trips to the nearest town, Air Molek, where I was able to earn a little money teaching English, much of which went on the cost of travelling to and from the town. This journey could take about four hours (each way) when conditions were good but it usually took much longer. Adriani often accompanied me, in all weathers, on these trips and having neither transport of our own nor money to pay someone to come and collect us, we usually had to walk from our house to the riverbank. Travelling on foot between the river and Tiga Balai is something that usually only Talang Mamak do. Most other people who have to make this journey will only do so if transport — at least a bicycle — is available. Our neighbours were well aware of changes in our economic fortunes. They often loaned us rice when we had none and they also shared fruits and vegetables, that they collected
in the forest or grew in their gardens, with us. Although I found growing vegetables quite difficult, despite occasional investments in fertilisers, I did manage to produce a surplus of some crops, most of the time, which we would share with our neighbours. Occasionally my efforts brought forth a bumper crop which we could share with a much wider group.

In the first chapter I build up a picture of the Talang Mamak as former debt-bondsmen and suggest that many of the differences that exist between Talang Mamak and the Muslim populations that surround them can be explained in the context of this categorisation. While I see the Talang Mamak's former bondsmen status as having a crucial effect on present conditions in Tiga Balai, our friends and acquaintances did not talk about themselves in this way and rarely used words associated with slavery. Although little evidence of Talang Mamak former bondsmen status can be found in their day-to-day conversations, descriptions of their relationship with the royal court of Inderagiri, which were given to me by senior title-holders (see chapter eight) and which include details of homage and tribute paid by Talang Mamak to their king, provided me with some indication of the Talang Mamak's former economic/social/political status. At present Talang Mamak do not discuss their lives in terms of slavery but the subject often appears in stories told by women to their children, of which, due to a lack of space, only one is included in this thesis (see chapter seven). While Talang Mamak do not categorise themselves as debt-bondsmen, and only rarely talk about themselves as former debt-bondsmen, Tengku Arief, the son of the last king of Inderagiri (who had been deposed and removed of all privileges by the administration of the republic of Indonesia) did talk about them in this way, using the term hamba raja (royal slaves) to describe the status of his Talang Mamak subjects.

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9 In this thesis, following Matheson and Hooker (1983 pp.184-186), I use the term 'slavery' to include a variety of forms of enslavement and debt-bondage, in particular: hamba raja ('royal slaves' [ibid.] or 'royal bondsmen [Reid 1983(A) p.19]); bujang or muda-muda ([young, unmarried, male court slaves] Matheson and Hooker ibid.); and orang masuk ulur (criminals punished with enslavement [ibid.]). In relation to Talang Mamak, I suggest that hamba raja is the most significant of these three categories as all married men were, up until the Dutch abolition of slavery, debt-bondsmen of the royal house of Inderagiri. Bujang and masuk ulur servitude were also enforced upon the population of Tiga Balai and in chapter nine I discuss the distinction between hamba raja, bujang and orang masuk ulur in regard to Talang Mamak relations with the royal house of Inderagiri.
In the final chapter I develop an approach which attempts to unite various isolated groups of non-Muslim swidden farmers, who live in a region I call the Melayu basin (which includes much of east Sumatra and south and west Malaysia) in terms of their shared experiences as former hamba raja. I appreciate that the terms 'Melayu basin' and 'former hamba raja' are clumsy, imprecisely defined characterisations that do not feature in the conversations of the people that I subsume under these categories. However, I use these terms to both replace cruder, less appropriate terms, such as 'Proto-Malay', and to suggest a field of study in which people, usually discussed in terms of their peculiarities and differences, can be both compared in terms of what they have in common (e.g. a range of titles which have little or no relationship with modern state administration, bride-price payments, systems of fines, tributary trade relations, etc) and described in the context of having once been the debt-bondsmen of a royal court. Implicit in the creation of a unifying, comparative approach based on shared historical experiences is a disagreement with 'the treatment of the Orang Asli [original or aboriginal peoples] as a people or society apart, when in fact they have been intimately involved in the social currents flowing throughout the [Malay] Peninsula [and in Sumatra] for centuries and millennia past' (Benjamin 1988 p.24).
PART ONE.

BACKGROUND:

HISTORIES
CHAPTER ONE

TRADE AND SETTLEMENT ALONG THE INDERAGIRI

Archaeological evidence in the area of the present Talang Mamak settlements, most of which has not been examined by experts, suggests that the region probably became an important site for Buddhists during an interglacial period when sea levels were higher than at present and the rivers Cenaku and Gangsal, (which are both tributaries of the Inderagiri) emptied directly into the sea (Usman 1985 p.83). Two large stone footprints, one near Sungai Limau (Tatiana 1992 p.25) and one near Sungai Tonuh1 (Asmuni 1983 p.12), two small seated Buddhas, one in Gunung Langsat and one in Belimbing, and a large cave with seven entrances and a lengthy inscription (which resembles inscriptions found in Minangkabau), in the region of hulu (upstream) Gangsal (Usman op. cit.), testify to an early Buddhist site, which must have been based on trade since sedentary agricultural subsistence would probably not have been profitable on the infertile swampy soil.

This chapter begins with a description of the Inderagiri river system and develops into an account of its significance in the creation of trade links between the Minangkabau highlands and the Straits of Melaka. In this account, the establishment of the Tiga Balai settlements is described as a result of the expansion of these trade links (which were developed by Buddhists), and the subsequent establishment of trading posts along the banks of the Inderagiri.

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1 These footprints, which are cleaned and decorated twice a year (Tatiana 1992 pp.25–26), probably date from a Buddhist period when they were used as a sign of conquest (Slamet-Velsink 1986 p.269). 'In several places the Buddha and other saints... left their foot prints in the rocks. This belief signifies that the weight of the Buddha’s spirit and knowledge is such that his body sinks in rock as if it were soft mud' (Knappert 1992 p.278). There are other stone footprints in the Melayu basin, Skeat and Blagden (1906 vol. 2 p.270) note the presence of one at Dusun Besar near Malaka Pindah where 'to show that the land was his own' a Sakai Batin 'called a medicine-man, and made, deep in the stone, an impression of his foot and also of the bottom of his betel-leaf pulper, both of which may be seen to this day'. Wolters (1970 p.99), who recognises that the 'symbolism of the feet as a token of divine and royal power is a pervasive element in South East Asian language and art', says that near Palembang, where 'royal footprints have survived in popular tradition until today' (op. cit. p.100), there is a 'footprint of Iskandar Shah' (op. cit p.101). Wolters (op. cit. p.100) also notes that 'Allusions to Vishnu’s feet appear in the epigraphy of the Sailendra family, the rulers of Srivijaya/Palembang from the middle of the ninth century'.
The Inderagiri\(^2\) river rises in the Minangkabau\(^3\) highlands and flows eastwards down the slopes of the Bukit Barisan (line of hills or marching mountains) range and through its swampy lower reaches before disgorging into the Straits of Melaka. The river, which is now about two hundred and fifty kilometres long and between six and twelve metres deep (Lufti et al. 1977 p.31), probably found its present course some time between 7,000–10,000 years ago during the final retreat of the glaciers at the end of the last ice age, when the sea levels rose by about 187 metres (Jumsai 1988 pp.3-4)\(^4\). Jumsai (ibid.) suggests that the rise and fall of the sea levels caused by successive glacial periods (the earliest known being 600 million years ago) produced radical changes in land-mass shape. He maintains that when the ice was at its thickest the sea retreated so far as to reveal an Asian mainland that extended as far south as Bali and as far east as the Philippines. In response to the continual but gradual changes in the landscape — the Pleistocene ice-age consisted of twenty secondary glaciations and a corresponding number of interglacials (Jumsai 1988 p.3) — the people of this ‘South-East Asian Continent’ (Jumsai ibid.) tended to migrate, which Slamet-Velsink (1986 p.11) notes, was prompted by factors which are difficult to ascertain, as even when sea-levels were at their highest there was always plenty of land available. During more recent interglacial periods, the sea reached heights far above its current levels and occasionally covered most land in this area below one hundred metres in elevation. Jumsai (1988 p.16–45) maintains that the tendency to migrate, coupled with the rise and fall of water levels, resulted in a division of population into two groups which, he

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2 Lufti et al. (1977 p.14–15) suggest two possible etymologies for Inderagiri: Inderagiri comes from the Sanskrit words Indra and giri, meaning king and mountain respectively — here Inderagiri means the kingdom (or empire) governed by the kings of the mountain; Inderagiri comes from the Malay Pengandalan diri (self-reliant), the name of a tributary of the present-day Inderagiri at the site of the first capital of the first kingdom of Inderagiri (1508) at Pekan Tua. As the kingdom got larger, Batang Kuantan (the Inderagiri’s previous name) became known as Sungai Inderagiri (River Inderagiri). Self-reliant or pengandalan diri is a description of Hinayana or Theravada Buddhism (see Knappert 1991 p.247).

3 Minangkabau has a number of possible etymologies. Navis (1984 p.8) traces Minangkabau to early Srivijayan archaeological remains near Palembang where the words Minanga Tamvan, seen as the origin of Minangkabau, appear. Some sources translate Minanga Tamvan as twin rivers and place Minangkabau on the upper River Kampar. Others translate it to mean newly acquired Inderagiri and site Minangkabau near the source of the Inderagiri. Loeb (1972 p.97) notes a common interpretation which relates to a war between Minangkabau and Java. In a fight between two buffaloes the Minangkabau buffalo won. Minangkabau comes from Minang Kerbau — victorious buffalo. Loeb also mentions an older meaning — original home from pinang kauhlu.

4 Slamet-Velsink (1986 p.11) gives a more conservative estimate of the rise in sea level: 75–100 metres.
stresses, were aware of a cosmological distinction between mountains (signified by Mt. Kailas or Mt. Meru\(^5\)) and water (signified by the naga\(^6\) or water-serpent). While one of these groups retreated from the threat of flood up the rivers, to establish relatively permanent settlements in the mountains, the other group remained more mobile, sticking to the coastline and river-banks and living, for at least part of the year, above or on the water.

In the warmer interglacials when the sea level rose, Sumatra became separated from both the Malay Peninsula and Java and its land mass was reduced to less than half of its current size. Nearly all of the land east of the Bukit Barisan foothills is below an elevation of one hundred metres and would have been flooded. The only high ground in this area lies between the Inderagiri and Batang Hari river systems where the land rises to an elevation of five hundred and eighty-seven metres at Bukit Besar. This is about one hundred and fifty kilometres from the foothills of the Bukit Barisan and would have been an island off the east coast of Sumatra when sea levels were at their highest. As the water levels receded, the water running east off the Bukit Barisan began forming the channels of the lower courses of the six main rivers of the east coast (Rokan, Siak, Kampar, Inderagiri, Batang Hari and Musi) which became separated from one another during dry weather as slightly higher areas of swampy ground began to emerge between them.

The earliest descriptions of the population of Southeast Asia give a picture of people who spent much of their time on water. For example, Chinese records note that in the third century AD the population of the Funan kingdom, at the mouth of the River Mekong included people who ‘shift their abode according to the seasons and have no fixed place of residence … [but] water … [T]hey only eat fish and meat and know nothing of agriculture. In cold weather they wear no clothes but cover themselves with sand. Sometimes they collect pigs, dogs and fowl … Though they have the appearance of human beings, they are as primitive as tame animals’ (from Wolters 1967 p.53). The same sources also note that these

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5 Kailas or Meru is ‘the golden mountain, the great central mountain of the world, the navel of the earth, adorned by three luminous peaks’ where Indra, or Siva, has built his paradise (Knappert 1991 p.171).

6 Naga is a mythical serpent or dragon which is often represented as having five heads and is associated with Buddha-Vishnu (Knappert 1992 p.199).
people were interested in trade and that they 'look for ships passing by and come flocking to them with fowls, pigs and jungle fruit in exchange for metal articles' (ibid.) Further west, on the east coast of Sumatra, similar people lived on the waterfront of the Straits of Melaka. 'All sources agree that the littoral populations of the Straits were fisher folk and pirates predisposed to plunder, who lived much of their lives on their canoes hollowed out of tree trunks' (Anderson and Vorster 1983 p.448). These boat people are probably the ancestors of the Orang Laut\textsuperscript{7}, 'sea gypsies' (Wolters 1970 p.12), 'sea nomads', or 'Celates' (Anderson and Vorster 1983 p.446), who still inhabit some areas of the Straits coastline today. Amongst other Orang Laut groups, Carey (1976 p.227) mentions Orang Selitar who 'spend their entire lives on boats' off the coast of South Johor and around Singapore and who call themselves 'Kun'. The word kun also appears in the earliest Chinese reference to 'Indonesia' which was written in the second century BC and mentions a 'Western Queen Mother' who lived in the 'K'un-lun mountains' (probably Bukit Barisan) and 'traded in 'twelve kinds of perfumes' (Wolters 1967 p.98).

While the 'sea people', who fished, foraged and hunted using blowpipes with poisoned darts (Anderson and Vorster 1983 p.445), and spent most of their time on the water, occupied the bays and estuaries of the Straits, the mountainous interior of Sumatra was probably first explored by Indian-influenced Thais and Myanmarese who landed on the west coast, entered the Minangkabau highlands via the Anai valley and established temporary settlements around Pariangan Padang Panjang (Yakub 1987[A] p.17). Arriving with the north-east monsoon in October, they probably collected valuable goods – minerals, resins, etc – in the Minangkabau highlands and returned to their capitals with the south-west monsoon in April. As Minangkabau resources became better known, more permanent settlements that practised forms of agriculture were established by Indian-influenced traders. These inland populations, which, by about 500 AD, had become known as Melayu\textsuperscript{8}, traded via the west coast and had little contact with the Orang Laut of the east coast. One of the first Europeans to enter the

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\textsuperscript{7} For an account of modern day Orang Laut in Riau Province and their relationship to their Melayu neighbours, see Wee (1988 pp.197-226), and for a general description of 'sea people' in the vicinity of Melaka, see Anderson and Vorster (1983 pp. 445-447).

\textsuperscript{8} Navis (1984 p.6) suggests that Melayu comes originally from Sanskrit and means mountains.
Straits of Melaka suggested that '[i]n the beginning these two groups (Celates and Malays) avoided one another because of the difference in their manner of living, but because of the women, who were becoming scarce among the Celates, they joined to form one settlement, each group retaining the occupation to which it was accustomed, the Celates living on the products of the sea and the Malays living on the fruits of the earth' (Anderson and Vorster 1983 p.446).

These 'fruits of the earth' almost certainly included domesticated plants, the first of which, in Sumatra, were probably indigenous tubers (Hill 1976 p.40) and bananas (Bray 1984 p.37). Sometime after the establishment of root crops and bananas, rice also began to be cultivated in Southeast Asia. Hill (1983 p.536) writes that the centre of origin of domesticated rice was the freshwater swamp-lands of the northern parts of the Bay of Bengal, lower Burma and the valley tracts of Thailand and Indochina. Te-Tzu Chang (in Hill 1976 p.44) adds Java to this list and suggests that rice has been cultivated there since the first millennium BC from where it probably spread to Sumatra. The possibility of diffusion from Java 'is reinforced by the ... use ... of the term sawah for a wet rice field' (Hill 1983 p.536), which is of Javanese origin and is used throughout Sumatra. While wet-rice agriculture was being practised in Thailand and Myanmar by, at the latest, 3000 BC (Bray 1984 p.486), the varieties grown there are not suited to Sumatran conditions (see Hill 1983 p.537). Although early Thai and Myanmarese settlers probably tried to grow rice in the Minangkabau highlands, it did not become a subsistence crop there until the introduction of Javanese varieties, which was some time between 3000–1000 BC.

While the sea people hunted, foraged, cultivated a few plants (such as tubers and bananas) and planted fruit trees (such as durian) on areas of higher ground near the coast, most of the land was swampy, prone to flooding and relatively infertile. Far better conditions for agriculture existed in the interior of Sumatra where, in the fertile volcanic valleys of the Minangkabau

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9 Scarcity of women among the Celates could be accounted for by three things: a fatal disease which only affected Celates women; capture of Celates women by slave traders; or by Celates women marrying out of their group into the other – Melayu – groups, that had a different 'manner of living' which may have been based around different gender values to those common in Celates society.
highlands, land around the edges of flooded crater lakes offered ideal conditions for agriculture, particularly rice cultivation. While most of the Bukit Barisan range is covered with a thin layer of acidic soil, in the high plateau of the Minangkabau highlands the 'eruptions of Mt. Merapi have greatly enriched the soil of both Agam and Tanah Datar' (Dobbin 1983 p. 3) which are the largest of the region's four fertile upland basins. All of these valleys have 'damp, swampy or partially lake-filled bottoms, and must at one time have been covered with water which gradually receded' (ibid. p. 2). Rice was probably first planted in Sumatra, where 'it cannot have been domesticated ... because it is basically a long day plant' and 'wild rices, progenitors of domesticated rice, are notably lacking' (Hill 1983 p. 536), by migrants from central Java's sawah centres. These Javanese migrants entered the Minangkabau highlands (keeping in contact with their homeland via the Batang Hari and Inderagiri rivers) and established rice-growing settlements in Tanah Datar where they also began exploiting mineral resources. Using seed introduced by the Javanese, who may have also brought the name Melayu with them, Thai and Myanmarese settlers were also able to take up sedentary sawah cultivation in the valleys of the Minangkabau highlands: the Myanmarese in Agam; and the Thais in the basin now known as Lima Puluh Kota. By the beginnings of the Christian era, there were probably relatively sedentary rice-growing populations to be found on the margins of 'half lakes half swamps' (ibid.) in Thailand, Myanmar, Campa10, Tongking11, Java and Minangkabau.

As well as offering the best conditions for rice cultivation in Sumatra, the Minangkabau highlands were also attractive to migrants because of the 'existence of small but widespread deposits of gold, and the considerable deposits of iron' which are 'unparalleled elsewhere throughout the entire length of the [Bukit Barisan] mountain range' (Dobbin 1983 p. 4). Easy access to these minerals provided the highland population of Sumatra with the raw materials to manufacture highly sought after goods which they probably exchanged for salt with the coastal

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10 Campa, or Champa, was situated on the coast of modern Vietnam, somewhere between Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.

11 Tongking was situated in the Red River delta, near the site of present-day Hanoi.
population, who may well have traded some of these iron and gold articles on to visiting merchants from other regions.

While some of these foreign merchants came from China, where records from the beginning of the Sung dynasty (960 AD) note the importation of produce from 'the Southeast Asian seas and strands, including pearls, tortoise shells, coral, giant clams and coconuts' (Anderson and Vorster 1983 p.446), the majority of early foreign traders to Sumatra were probably under Indian influence. Navis (1984 p.2) suggests that the first people to settle in the Minangkabau highlands were attracted by the mountains which had magical significance, offered escape from flood and the possibility of finding minerals. Indian-influenced adventurers may well have entered the Minangkabau highlands via the west coast which, despite heavy seas, few harbours and difficult access to the interior (Dobbin 1983 p.5), was probably favoured over the east coast where, although the rivers afford easy access to the Minangkabau highlands, many parts of the coastline of the Straits of Melaka 'were avoided at all costs by foreign ships: first, because they were considered hiding places of dangerous pirates; and second, because they were areas generally hazardous to shipping' (Anderson and Vorster 1983 p.445).

Wheatley (1961 p.184) notes that 'trade and commerce must have been a supreme passion in India in the centuries immediately preceding and following the Christian era.' He also records, from Puranic12 accounts, that 'Indian sailors visited the shores of South-East Asia in very remote times, probably far back into the prehistoric period and it is hardly less certain that Indonesian traders, a sea-faring folk par excellence, frequented the Indian coast equally early' (ibid.). High caste Hindus, who held 'rigid ideas of racial purity' (Wheatley 1961 p.189), would not have undergone the long voyage from India to Sumatra, as sea-voyages were prohibited by Hindu law and punishable by a three-year penance (ibid.). Kernial Singh (in Wheatley 1962 p.44) notes that '[w]hereas these influences operated against all foreign travel they were particularly formidable with regard to emigration eastwards as this necessitated the crossing of the dreaded kala pani (Black Waters = Andaman Islands)'. Indians and Indian-influenced traders from ports along the coast between Sumatra and the Bay of Bengal probably

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12 The Puranas are a distinct category of ancient Sanskrit religious literature (See Knappert 1991 p.198).
began regularly visiting Sumatran harbours after the rise of Buddhism, particularly the Hinayana Buddhist\textsuperscript{13} Mauryan dynasty of Pataliputra (324–187 BC), which was on the site of modern Patna (Knappert 1991 p.169). The Mauryan emperor Ashoka (273–232 BC) ruled almost the whole of India, was very interested in Buddhism, and sent emissaries to South-east Asia (Jumsai 1988 p.80). These emissaries were Buddhist merchants who established settlements and sought converts. Unlike their Hindu counterparts, the Buddhists, having no prohibitions on sea-voyages, would have been rich noble-men, probably travelling with monks and other court officials.

The arrival of the Buddhists saw the beginnings of long-term contact between India and China, via the southern seas, and the relaxation of Hindu prohibitions on sea-voyages which allowed both Brahmins and Hindu nobles to travel to Sumatra. Due to the seasonal swing of the monsoon winds, Indian-influenced traders, who arrived in April with the south-west monsoon, had to spend several months in Sumatra waiting for the north-east monsoon (which would take them home), to begin in October (Wheatley 1961 p.xviii). Because these traders had to spend months waiting with their valuable cargoes for the monsoon to change, they were very vulnerable to attack by pirates. Hence relations with the Sumatran populations of the harbours where they traded, who could offer them protection against attack, became crucially important to successful trade. Long-term ties may well have been established between Orang Laut and Indian-influenced foreign merchants by a system of trade relations based around rich merchants marrying influential Orang Laut women whose families both organised the collection, distribution and storage of trade goods and guarded the harbours. Under Mauryan influence, Hinayana coastal trading centres were established between India and China which were organised into groups of three, which together controlled trade in their combined territories and rotated overall leadership between the member states. In this federation system, Java was probably linked with Campa and Tongking and Sumatra with Thailand and Myanmar. Hinayana philosophies spread from merchants to Orang Laut who benefited from the increase in trade and did not disturb Buddhist traffic in the Straits. With

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\textsuperscript{13} Hinayana, known as the lesser vehicle which is based upon Pali literature, is the older form of Buddhism. Nowadays it is called Theravada (the Lore of the Elders) and is practised in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, etc.
the risk of piracy removed, the east coast became Sumatra's trading centre and the sawah communities in the Minangkabau highlands began to send regular shipments of trade goods, particularly gold, down the east coast rivers.

In the first half of the first millennium AD, while Indians were developing trading links with Sumatran ports, China began to play a more important role in the Straits of Melaka after it lost control of overland trade routes to Persia and Arabia in the fifth century and started to establish tributary relations with harbours in Sumatra and other parts of Southeast Asia. Navis (1984 p.5) maintains that in the fourth century AD Mahayana Buddhists from Gandhara in South India established a kingdom called Kuntala, or Kan-t'o-li, in eastern Sumatra. Kuntala, which was centred somewhere near the Jambi-Riau border (Navis 1984 p.5), was probably visited by both Chinese and Indian merchants. While Chinese traders arrived in Sumatran ports with the north-east monsoon, which starts in October and which took their Indian counterparts home, Indians appeared with the south-west monsoon which begins in April and which Chinese traders took advantage of for their return journey. As Chinese and Indian Mahayana traders began to dominate Javanese and Sumatran trade, the Java-oriented Melayu settlement in the Minangkabau highlands became influenced by Mahayana principles and began trading solely with Kuntala which dominated Straits trade. Sumatra's Hinayana Buddhists did not recognise the authority of the Mahayana king at Kuntala and they probably came into conflict with Kuntala officials who tried to tax and control their trade. To avoid the Mahayana-dominated Straits, Hinayana trade moved further south and established a centre at Palembang, which they reached by reverting to their old west coast route. They probably also settled harbours in the extreme north of the island. Chinese merchants brought mostly silks and porcelain to Sumatra which they traded for bdellium (myrrh) which was being shipped by Indian traders to Kuntala from Sassanid Persia (Wolters 1967 p.121). Because their travel was regulated by the monsoons, both Indians and Chinese relied upon the assistance of Sumatran middlemen to store goods and protect their ships. In order to create peaceful ports and stable

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14 Mahayana or Great Vehicle is founded on a later Sanskrit tradition and relies upon many Chinese translations of lost Sanskrit texts. It is practised in China, Tibet, Japan, Sikkim, Bhutan, etc.

15 The location of Kuntala is unknown. It was probably in the vicinity of Bukit Besar. Navis (1984 p.5) suggests that the name Kuntala is derived from the Buddhists’ home – Gandhara.
trading relations in the Straits, China accepted Kuntala as a subject state, assisted it to gain control of Straits traffic and piracy, received its tributary missions between 441 and 563 and allowed it a monopoly over Chinese trade in Sumatra (ibid. p.211).

The Chinese consumed a lot of resinous incenses and it was due to high Chinese demand that Sumatran substitutes for Persian resins began to be sent from Kuntala to China. *Kapor barus* (camphor) was probably the first of these Sumatran tree resins but it was soon joined by *keminyan* (benzoin gum)\(^{16}\) which became known to the Chinese as *An-hsi* perfume (Wolters 1967 p.115) and came to replace Persian imports as the most popular myrrh in China. Wolters (ibid. pp.115–119) notes that the Chinese associated *An-hsi*, which they regarded as a magical substance, with dragons and water and that it ‘expelled demons and brought the benevolent spirits’. Marco Polo, who visited Sumatra in 1292, estimated that Sumatran camphor was worth its weight in gold or silver (van der Meulen 1974 p.23). *Tampang* (large cakes of camphor or benzoin) which had a standard value were an early form of money in Sumatra (Marsden 1811 p.155).

Kuntala was probably the first centre of the Sailendra\(^{17}\) dynasty in Indonesia and its king, who bore the title *varman*\(^{18}\) (Wolters 1967 p.222) introduced court-centred Mahayana Buddhism (which was also developing in China) to Sumatra. With the introduction of Mahayana came closer ties between Western Indonesia, India and China and due, at least in part, to the wait between winds. ‘[D]uring the early centuries of the Christian era there was established a cross-

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16 According to Wolters (1967 p.114), there are two qualities of *keminyan*, the whiter and more highly valued of these coming from the *Syrox sumatronus* tree and the poorer-quality reddish-brown resin from the *Syrox benzoin* tree.

17 Navis (1984 p.9) suggests that Sailendra was not the name of a kingdom – rather it was the name of a *bangsa* (caste). Sailendra comes from the name of the *Saila* people who came to Indonesia from Mt. Mahendragiri in South India. Lufti et al. (1977 p.15) say that Sailendra means kings of the mountain. Navis (ibid.) also notes that the Sailendran kings had the title Vishnu. Loeb (1972 p.323) associates Sailendra with Vijrayana Buddhism.

18 Asmuni (1983 p.43) suggests that the title ‘warman’ was introduced into Sumatra from Campa whose capital, Pandurangga, under Javanese and *Melaka* influence, had become a Mahayana centre by 767 with a king called Po Klung Pilih.
cultural link between certain chieftains in Southeast Asia and the ruling *varna*\(^{19}\) [castes] in some parts of India' who 'introduced the concept of the god-king' and built fortified towns (Wheatley 1962 pp41–42). Members of the Sailendra dynasty also established a Mahayana centre on Java with a royal court in the rice-growing interior.

These early Sumatran rulers 'who measured their political status in terms of labour rights' (ibid.) 'summoned the [Hindu] Brahmin priesthood to their [heterodox Buddhist] courts' in an 'attempt at legitimising their interests involved in international trade (in the first place vis-a-vis Indian traders themselves), and (though this was probably of secondary importance) organising and domesticating their states and subjects, they called Indian civilisation to the east' (van Leur in McKinley 1979 p.316). Wheatley (1961 p.185) suggests that there can be 'no doubt that the seasonal visits of merchants had been implemented by the arrival of priests and literati, and probably also of simple adventurers, who now appeared as an aristocracy ruling over an indigenous population'. Many native Sumatrans must have made the journey to India, returning as highly trained religious specialists or rich merchants to become powerful and respected men. Winstedt (1935 p.18) describes a merchant ship just arrived from India: '[h]ere and there a passenger practised magic that proved potent in love or war or disease. Another won regard as a warrior. Some married local brides. Priests taught a new ritual in Sanskrit, awe-inspiring ... because it was unintelligible to the multitude.' The influence of the Brahmins spread out from the courts in the fortified towns as 'the peasants called in to labour in national temples or the shrines of the aristocratic families could not have returned home totally ignorant of Indian iconography. And there is no doubt ... that they adopted the gods of that tradition in modified form into the pantheon of the villages' (McKinley 1979 p.318).

In the latter half of the sixth century, internal problems reduced China's influence over Sumatran trade and Kuntala lost control of Straits traffic which became disrupted as pirates and other raiders flourished. During this period, the Sailendra dynasty at Kuntala probably moved its capital to a site (which they had occupied earlier) in Java where it had access both to the

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\(^{19}\) *Varna*, which means colour in both Sanskrit and Indonesian, signifies caste and came to refer to the four main castes of India which are Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra or casteless (Knappert 1991 p.257).
wealth of the sawah-rich interior and trading ports of the north coast, from where it began sending missions to China. From Java, the Mahayana king continued to disrupt the Hinayana trading federations which had been established in the last centuries BC. Around the start of the seventh century, Java developed close ties with the gold-producing Melayu settlements in the Minangkabau highlands and established a centre known as Melayu or Melayapura, whose king had the title Mauliawarmadewa (Asmuni 1983 p.40), on the Batang Hari river which gave easy access to both the gold fields and sawah land of the Minangkabau highlands. It is likely that the first Javanese to arrive in Minangkabau came from the region of the 'Brantas, Bengawan and Solo rivers, whose valleys probably developed a wet-rice culture in very early times' (Wolters 1967 p.201) and from where rice was probably introduced into Sumatra and first cultivated in the fertile Minangkabau highlands. While these inland Javanese agricultural centres were 'not trade oriented at first' (ibid.), they maintained good relations with China and probably benefited (via Java) from Chinese advances in rice-farming technology. As their populations grew and their food surpluses began to attract merchants from coastal trading kingdoms on other islands, the Javanese became involved in Straits trade.

While China suffered internal problems and was not able to effect a Mahayana domination over Sumatran trade, Hinayana business flourished and a Hinayana king was established in Palembang with the title Sri Tri Buana (Wolters 1970 p.128) and private Chinese trade began to centre on this port, which offered the best harbours for direct return journeys to China. After the Chinese tributary trade was re-established in the first half of the seventh century, the Sailendra dynasty (based on Java) began to dominate Sumatran trade and, under the name Sriwijaya20, Palembang became a Mahayana centre. In 671, its bodhisattva (enlightened) king was able, after several 'bitter battles', which must have been against Hinayana Buddhists, to secure a monopoly over Chinese tributary trade in Western Indonesia (Wolters 1970 p.128). Unlike kingdoms in Java, Sriwijaya did not have an agricultural hinterland and it remained dependant upon Java for supplies of rice to feed its growing population. Despite being 'on a waterlogged and underpopulated coast, it was able to draw its manpower from coastal Malays

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20 Navis (1984 p.9) suggests that Sriwijaya is from Sanskrit and means exalted wealth or big win. Sriwijaya appears as San-fo-chi in Chinese writings and as Zabaj in Arabic works (Wheatley 1961 p.60, p.300).
scattered among many maritime settlements south of the Straits of Malacca’ (ibid. p.239). By monopolising Chinese tributary trade, Sriwijaya was able to attract many Orang Laut to its harbours as ‘missions placed the trading state under at least nominal Chinese protection. The tribute served to advertise the range of trade goods handled by the merchants frequenting the tributary kingdom. The tributary relationship played its part in persuading the coastal Malays to concentrate their activities on an established trading settlement in Western Indonesia’ (ibid. p.224). Sumatran rulers also recognised the importance of Chinese patronage and were ‘prepared to allow the Chinese to regard them as vassals for a very practical reason. The Chinese trade was the source of their power’ (Wolters 1970 p.37).

After they defeated Palembang, the Javanese returned their interests, in Sumatra, to the Melayu centre on the Batang Hari and the gold-producing settlements in the Minangkabau highlands where they probably established a royal court and fortified towns in the gold-producing regions of east Tanah Datar. At this time, the majority of the population of the Minangkabau highlands were Hinayana, governing themselves through a council of elected tungganai (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.51), with overall control probably still being rotated between the three original settlements which were known by ‘matrilineal totems’ (ibid. p.102). The best known of these were the Thai settlement, which was associated with the cat and the colour blue, and the Myanmarese group, which was represented by the dog and the colour red (Yakub 1987[B] p.15, de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.101). Melayu should be added to this list – it was probably associated with yellow and elephants which became symbols of royalty once Mahayana began to dominate the Minangkabau highlands. These three varna (Melayu, Thai, Myanmarese) were early caste groups which functioned as ‘exogamous unit[s]’21 (Levi-Strauss 1969 p.396) in which women were associated with black, rice cultivation and material properties and men with white, mineral extraction and work and magical properties.

The three varna employed a ‘two-three principle of partition’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.108) in which overall authority rotated around the three groups, the leader having three wives, one

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21 While modern castes are usually described as being endogamous, Levi-Strauss (1969 pp.396–397) suggests that castes were formerly exogamous.
from each group. This type of administration, in which leaders were responsible for maintaining equal status between varna through council meetings and elections, dates back to early Hinayana administration which was probably first developed in Thailand and Myanmar. Hinayana administration of the Minangkabau highlands was disrupted when Java began to dominate western Indonesian trade and to increase its influence over Melayu settlements in Tanah Datar where a 'four-five partition' (ibid.) was introduced by Mahayana kings from Java. This was achieved by the introduction of another varna from Java's vassal, Campa, which was known by the sign of the tiger, supplied the king's armed forces and became associated with the colour red. These Campa migrants were given sawah land in Agam where they displaced the older Myanmarese inhabitants who probably, with the king's permission, moved down to the Solok valley. Sailendran royal blood was introduced into the four varna in the form of a Mahayana king who was either a younger brother of, or the son of, the Sailendran king in Java. He took a wife from each of the four varna, passed his title on to his eldest son and prevented the formation of rival dynasties by ensuring that all titles outside the royal court were passed down through women. Brothers of the king's wives governed their respective varna on behalf of the king who gave them titles and trading rights.

In 743, a member of the Sumatran royal house of Sriwijaya (which was known as Sailendra), called Wishnu, married a Mataram Sailendran princess (Navis 1984 p.8). This began a period of peaceful relations between the Javanese and Sumatran branches of the Sailendran dynasty and, in 767, their combined forces undertook a joint venture against Tongking (Asmuni 1983 p.32). During this expedition, the Sailendran forces stopped at the Campa capital Pandurangga, which the Javanese had probably conquered shortly before entering Palembang in 671. At Pandurangga, a Javanese king, called Po Klung Pilih, married a Campa princess, who had the title Ratu Tribuvanaderi, which reinforced Sailendran (Mahayana) control of the old Hinayana trading centres (ibid. p.43). Later, in 853, a Sailendran king called Balaputra, who was a descendant of Wishnu, left Mataram and established himself as king of Suwarnabhumi22 ([Sumatra] op cit. p.38) with the Mataramese title Sri Maharaja (Navis 1984

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22 The word Suwarnabhumi has Sanskrit origins and means land of gold. It appears in the Jataka (Wheatley 1961 p.179), an ancient collection of stories about the Buddha's past lives (Knappert 1991 p.129).
Suwarnabhumi was on the site of the *Melayu* capital (known as Sriwijaya) and its development probably marked the increased importance of the settlements in the Minangkabau highlands as a source of gold, steel tools and weapons and rice. The latter was in continual demand at harbours and ports, most of which lacked agricultural resources.

Sriwijaya soon became well known, not only as a centre of trade but also as a centre for Buddhist learning. I-tsing, who was on a Buddhist pilgrimage to Nalanda in India, spent six months in Sriwijaya in 671 (Asmuni 1983 p.12). During his stay, he noted that while the majority of people in 'Laut Selatan' (South Seas) were Hinayana Buddhists, *Melayu* was the only Mahayana kingdom (ibid. pp.33-34). This, Asmuni suggests (ibid.), came about as the result of contact with Java which itself was heavily influenced by Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. In the royal courts of the Mahayana centres in both Nalanda and Sriwijaya, Tantric hybrids of Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism began to develop (ibid. p.47). While Mahayana Buddhism was flourishing in Sriwijaya, Muslim traders were living in Canton and had established similar enclaves in many ports between Arabia and China by 738 (Lufti et al. 1977 p.138). According to Yakub (1987[A] p.22), Islam first arrived on the shores of Sumatra, in 670, AD in the form of Sunnah Muslims from the Persian Gulf and the Ummayyah dynasty of the Arab peninsula maintained trading relations with Sumatra throughout the first half of the eighth century, until it was overthrown by the Abbasiyah dynasty in 749 which disrupted Muslim trade to Sumatra until the tenth century (Navis 1984 p.24).

As the trading centres established near the mouths of the Batang Hari and the Musi attracted more foreign business, trade goods – in particular gold and tree resins – from the interior were transported to these capitals using Sumatra’s riverways and trading posts, and loading stations.

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23 Even though Sriwijaya was no longer either an independent state or Sumatra’s leading port, as it had been replaced by the Mahayana capital of *Melayu* on the Batang Hari towards the end of the seventh century, Sumatra’s east coast trading centre continued to be referred to as Sriwijaya in Chinese texts where it was ‘conservatively retained to refer to the Sumatran mercantile empire’ until the beginning of the fourteenth century (Wolters 1970 p.90).

24 Nalanda was the centre of the Gupta dynasty (320–647) which had close links with China. I-tsing and other Chinese pilgrims (such as Fu-hien) visited Sumatra on their way to Nalanda, which, like Sriwijaya, was a centre for Mahayana Buddhism. I-tsing noted that, although the Guptas worshipped the Buddha, they referred to him using the Hindu names Bhavagad or Vishnu (Knappert 1991 p.19).
were set up at strategic points along these routes. While the west coast of Sumatra may have been used by early Indian-influenced traders, after the Chinese became involved in Straits trading the south-east coast of Sumatra became the island's trading centre, which traders from the north and west could visit (without having to negotiate the Straits and run the risk of pirate attack), by going down the west coast and through the Sunda Strait. For the Chinese, the south-east coast of Sumatra offered the best point of departure for direct journeys home and it was far enough away from the Straits of Melaka (where many groups of Orang Laut waited for ships to trade with or plunder), to offer relatively safe storage and trading facilities. The east coast also had other advantages over the west: calmer seas; fairer winds; better harbours and easier access to the interior – in particular the sawah- and mineral-rich Minangkabau highlands, to which the Inderagiri offered the most direct route. Gold, iron, steel goods and rice were assembled at pangkalan (loading stations) on the headwaters of the Inderagiri (such as Siluka and Durian Gedang) for transportation downstream (Dobbin 1983 p.61). Here, goods were loaded onto rakit (rafts) for the journey to downstream pangkalan (such as Lubuk Jambi) where they were transferred to perahu (canoes) which took them into the lower reaches of the Inderagiri. Rather than sailing out of the Inderagiri and down the coast to either Jambi or Palembang (and running the risk of pirate attack), perahu stopped at a pangkalan at the point where the Cenaku25 river joins the Inderagiri. Here, trade goods from the interior were transferred back onto rakit and punted up the Cenaku as far as Lubuk Kandis26 where they were taken overland to the headwaters of tributaries of the Batang Hari for the journey either to Jambi (Asmuni 1983 p.51) or to Palembang which could be reached by sailing up the Tembesi river (a tributary of the Batang Hari), whose headwaters are near the basin of the River Musi (van der Meulen 1974 p.35).

In the first centuries AD, most of the population of Sumatra was living along the coast and in river mouths. The swampy land between the Bukit Barisan foothills and the east coast

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25 Asmuni (1983 p.90) says that Cenaku comes from Caniago of Bodi-Caniago. Skeat and Blagden (1906 vol.2 p.132) say that 'Chenaku" (or "B'lian") is the name given to a man who conceals his identity as a tiger under the semblance of a human form (Malay "Jadi-jadi-an"), this belief being widespread among the Malays as well as among the aboriginal tribes.'

26 Lubuk Kandis is in modern-day Kecamatan Inderagiri Hulu.
probably contained no permanent settlements. In order to establish and maintain their pangkalan, rulers offered royal favour to induce Orang Laut groups to take up permanent or semi-permanent residence at loading stations. These Orang Laut came under the authority of a representative of the royal court who probably married the daughter of an Orang Laut leader, gave him a title and many exclusive trading rights. In return, the Orang Laut leader and his followers protected the trading post and provided the watercraft and manpower needed to transport, load and unload goods. The court representative supervised the collection of taxes on goods that passed through the pangkalan — some of which he gave as tribute to the ruler, the rest being divided between the Orang Laut leader and himself. While gold, iron and rice went down the Inderagiri to Cenaku, Chinese pottery and Indian cloth, over both of which the court official and the Orang Laut leader had exclusive trading rights, arrived there from the capital, at Jambi. Markets, such as Pekan Tua near Cenaku, were established downstream of the main pangkalan and they attracted Orang Laut groups from the coast. They exchanged forest produce (tree resins, ivory, rhino horn, honey, wax, etc) and marine produce (turtle shell, coral, pearls, etc) for metal goods, cloth and pottery. The coastal trading capitals of Jambi and Palembang, lacking agricultural hinterlands, were reliant on supplies of rice from Java (and occasionally Thailand) to feed their populations. Consequently, Orang Laut groups that lived around pangkalan were encouraged to grow rice which became more widespread along the lower courses of the rivers after the introduction of dry-rice cultivation into Sumatra. Dry rice, which arrived after sawah, probably came from China, where, in the sixth century, it was being recommended for use in low-lying fields which had a tendency to waterlogging ‘less because they are inherently suited to rice cultivation than because rice is the only crop that will grow there’ (Bray 1982 p.498).

While Orang Laut groups were rewarded for moving inland to pangkalan near the east coast, people from the Minangkabau highlands, where wealth from rice agriculture and minerals helped to increase populations, headed downstream and began colonising the Bukit Barisan foothills where they ‘had settled from time immemorial around the headwaters and along the banks of the three main rivers, the Siak, the Kampar and the Inderagiri’ (Dobbin 1983 p.46)27.

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27 Dobbin (1977, 1983), who concentrates on a later period (1784–1847), neglects the importance of the Batang Hari which many writers, for example Asmuni (1983 p.76) see as being one of ‘sungai nan tiga
This area became known as rantau,²⁸ the trading frontier that lay between the low-lying swamp forest and the Minangkabau darek, or darat (interior), which consists of the four valleys of Agam, Tanah Datar, Singkarak-Solok and Lima Puluh Kota. In the darat, the Javanese had established permanent settlements in the Tanah Datar valley which grew rice, collected gold and manufactured weapons. Using the most fertile land and new rice technologies learnt from the Chinese,²⁹ these Javanese enclaves produced large rice surpluses, some of which was sent down the Inderagiri to be either given as tribute to the ruler or sold to Orang Laut living around pangkalan. The rest was used to support a court, a variety of mineral-seeking specialists, military personnel and slaves in the darat.

Hinayana Buddhism was probably first brought to Sumatra by emissaries and traders from Asoka’s Mauryan kingdom (273–232 BC) who introduced a ‘casteless and cosmopolitan influence’ (Wolters 1967 p.65) to the coastal and riverine people they traded with. During the first millennium AD, as Sumatra became both an important staging post in east-west trade and a major market centre on the north-south trade route, a Javanese-influenced Mahayana trading centre and royal court was established on the east coast. Mahayana brought with it the concept of the god-king who ruled the whole island (if not the whole world) from an inland centre on high ground or a hill (associated with Mahameru³⁰) by the banks of a river. This Mahayana kingdom became known as Melayu and its rulers, who were members of the

Footnotes continued from previous page:

juran’ (three main rivers) of the early Minangkabau eastern frontier. Siak did not become of major importance in Minangkabau trade until after the eleventh century when trading activity in Aceh drew the commercial centre further north.

²⁸ Navis (1984 p.104) suggests that rantau meant small inlets on the coast used for loading ships. He claims the word comes from the Sanskrit word for residence. Kato (1982 p.22) has a similar view. He says that rantau originally meant shoreline, or the reaches of a river, while Lufti et al. (1971 p.144) state that the first meaning of rantau was to move fields, as is the practice of all slash and burn cultivators who abandon or rest a plot, usually after only one season’s use.

²⁹ Although rice was probably introduced into China from Southeast Asia, the former quickly became a centre for rice-farming technology which it exported back into Southeast Asia (Hill 1976 p.44).

³⁰ Mahameru, or Meru, is ‘the golden mountain, the great central mountain of the world, the navel of the earth, adorned by three luminous peaks. On its summit Indra has built his Swarga or Paradise where the celestial spirits live’ (Knappert 1991 p.171). In India, Mahameru was associated with Mt. Kailas and in Sumatra with Bukit Si Guntang Mahameru where it became associated with the king (Asmuni 1983 p.36). For many Hindus and Buddhists, Mahameru was the centre of the cosmos, the mountain down which the waters of life flowed and model Mahameru were built for the coronation of Buddhist kings (see Junisat 1988 p.23).
Sailendra dynasty, were able to both attract Orang Laut groups to ship goods and guard harbours and establish stable trading relationships with Chinese emperors and Indian kings. While the royal courts became relatively isolated Mahayana centres, the Orang Laut populations living on the coast or around pangkalan, who were open to a variety of influences, maintained basically Hinayana philosophies.

Mahayana Buddhism became increasingly influenced by Hinduism. Consequently, Tantric hybrids of the two, in which the majority of the rites centred around Devi, wife of Siva, in her manifestation as Shakti 'procreative power' (Knappert 1991 p.243), began to develop in the royal courts of South and East India and South-east Asia. Tantric Boddhisattva kings obtained potency, or Shakti, in sex rites with their consorts who were regarded as representatives of Kali or Devi. Through their communion with powerful sources of Shakti, in the forms of their consorts and wives, Tantric Buddha-god-kings 'became saviours as well as frightening deities who had to be propitiated ... and magical methods were introduced by means of which ... the deity could be induced to grant boons to their worshippers' (ibid.). By the time that Sriwijaya became well-known, vassal states were sending princesses (or they were taken) to the ruler where they became his wives and consorts, the source of his Shakti and the symbol of his ability to control the procreative forces of the princesses' homeland.

Around the end of the first millennium, increased contact with the Sri Lankan centre of Anuradhapura (Wolters 1970 p.92) brought about a Hinayana revival in Sumatra which undermined the position of the god-king. Sri Lankan Buddhism, which stressed the ancient Hinayana principle of 'spiritual independence', as opposed to the Mahayana focus on 'hierarchical superior[s]' (Knappert 1991 p.161), was 'able to reach the laity in a closer way than did the royal cult and the masses ... quickly and ... readily adopted Sinhalese Buddhism' which brought about a 'shift from Hinduism to Theravada [Hinayana] Buddhism and Islam' (McKinley 1979 p.319). Fluctuations in the tributary trade with China allowed kingdoms on Java, Sumatra and Thailand to compete for control over Chinese trade (see Wolters 1967 pp.19–49) and 'with kingdoms of approximately equal might on all sides, the claim of any particular kingdom to being the absolute centre of the universe was greatly weakened' (McKinley 1979 p.320).
During most of the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Sumatran Sailendran royal court, on the Batang Hari, paid tribute to the Javanese who controlled Chinese tributary trade. In 1025, a Cola\textsuperscript{31} king attacked the Suwarnabhumi capital and captured its king. There then followed several decades during which most of Sumatra was free from Javanese control and a few independent kingdoms were able to attract trade away from the tributary capital. Java reasserted its control over the flow of gold coming out of the Minangkabau highlands with the establishment of the Darmasraya kingdom (whose king bore the title \textit{Mauliawarman Sri Maharaja di Raja}) in the 1070s, at first on the upper Batang Hari at Siguntur (Navis 1984 p.9) and then later, nearer the gold source, on the upper Inderagiri, at Lubuk Jambi (Asmuni 1983 p.48). Yakub (1987[A] p.24) suggests that it was during this period that Syi’ah Islam was brought to Sumatra by traders from Egypt where members of the Fatimyyah dynasty (979–1168) commissioned merchants to go to Sumatra in search of spices. Muslim traders established relationships with Hinayana \textit{Orang Laut} populations around the northern tip of Sumatra (which gave access to both the east and west coasts) and the first Islamic Sultanate in Sumatra was established at Daya Pasai in Aceh in 1104 (ibid. p.24) where there was a ‘shift of religious centre – away from the king and court to church-like institutions’ (McKinley 1979 p.320).

In the thirteenth century, the Sailendra dynasty in East Java established a kingdom known as Singosari\textsuperscript{32} and, in 1275, its king Kertanegara sent the \textit{Pamelayu}\textsuperscript{33} political and military expedition to Darmasraya (Navis 1984 p.10) to drive Arab traders off the east coast rivers where they were disturbing Javanese tributary trade (Lufti et al. 1977 p.167). A few years later,

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\textsuperscript{31} Cola, or Chola, is the name of a dynasty of kings from Southeast India. Their kingdom was called Chola-Mandala from which comes Coromandel (Knappert 1991 p.67).

\textsuperscript{32} At this time there were at least two branches of the Sailendra royal house, one on Java and another, probably older, one on Sumatra. It is probable that conflict often arose between them as they vied for control of Chinese trade. While the Javanese branch dominated for most of the time, some periods of calm existed when they both sent missions to China – Sumatra usually acting as Java’s vassal. Both of the dynasties frequently changed both the location of their capital and the name of their trading state. The Sumatran dynasty was called \textit{Melayu}, Sriwijaya or Darmasraya and the Javanese dynasty Singosari or Majapahit. Navis (1984 p.9) suggests that this kind of name changing was a feature of Sailendra kingdoms based upon a Javanese tradition wherein new kings gave their kingdoms new names.

\textsuperscript{33} Navis (1984 pp.10–11) suggests that \textit{Pamelayu} comes from the Malay \textit{perang melawan Melayu} (war against the Malays).
a Javanese ambassador, called Wiswarupakumara, was sent from the Singosari court to take up residence in Darmasraya (Navis 1984 p.11). Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Singosari became involved in a war with Kublai Khan which resulted in internal conflict, the murder of the king and the withdrawal of Singosari's forces from Darmasraya. As they retreated, Singosari ministers took two princesses, Dana\textsuperscript{34} Petak and Dana Jingga, with them to Java, where they were married to the new king, Raden Wijaya\textsuperscript{35} at his new court which he called Majapahit (ibid.). While Dana Petak remained permanently at the Majapahit court where she bore a son Jayanegara who succeeded his father, Dana Jingga was made pregnant and returned to Darmasraya where, in 1295, she gave birth to a son named Aditiawarman (ibid.).

In 1133, Orang Laut from Bintan, who paid tribute to a Hinayana Thai king (Lufti et al. 1977 p.132), gave their support to a king who claimed descent from the Hinayana kings of Palembang. This king had been driven out of his capital (Palembang) by the Javanese in the ninth century. Many other Orang Laut groups in the Straits rallied round the new king who was given the title Sang Nila Utama Sri Tri Buana (Arief p.2). He ruled over Palembang, Bintan and Tumasik (Singapore) from a court on Singapore\textsuperscript{36} island (Lufti et al. 1977 p.133). At this time, while Java still controlled the south-east coast of Sumatra, many Muslim traders, using Daya Pasai as a base, were visiting small ports in the Straits of Melaka where they were coming into conflict with Hinayana Buddhist merchants from Thailand. Sang Nila Utama and his descendants ruled at Singapore throughout the thirteenth century\textsuperscript{37}, by the end of which

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\textsuperscript{34} Dana means unmarried girl.

\textsuperscript{35} Raden was a title used by non-reigning princes in Java (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.931) and the name Wijaya implies that he had a connection with Sriwijaya in Sumatra. While Raden Wijaya's father was king Kertanegara (Navis 1984 p.11), his mother was probably a Sriwijayan princess taken to the Singosari court as a sign of the former's subservience to the latter. The rule of succession between the two Sailendra dynasties probably allowed the crown to pass to the eldest prince of the Sumatran line if the king, who was from the Javanese line, died before he had produced a son.

\textsuperscript{36} Singapore, which was probably first occupied and given its name by Mahayana settlers from Java, has a double meaning: one is derived from singgah pura (meaning 'the city where one breaks one's journey') while the other comes from 'Esoteric Bharaiva Buddhism' which was practised in the Mahayana court and means 'Lion City' (Wheatley 1961 p.304).

\textsuperscript{37} While most historians agree that Melaka was founded by Parameswara (who later became known as Iskander Shah), in around 1399–1400 (Wolters 1970 p.147), Tengku Arief, who claims descent from the Kings of Singapore and Melaka, suggests that Raja Sabu, or Sambu, who was also known as Raja Iskandarsyah Zulkarnain, the fifth king of Singapore, moved his capital to Melaka in 1230.
Thai forces had driven Muslim traders off the Malay Peninsula (Wake 1983 p.142) and out of the Riau archipelago. After the Thais took control of the Straits, Muslim traders, still based at Daya Pasai, began to concentrate their activities on Sumatra’s north-west coast where they could get access to valuable goods coming out of the interior.

After Javanese troops had been withdrawn from Darmasraya, Thai and Orang Laut ships entered the Inderagiri and established a trading centre at Padang Candi, near Lubuk Jambi, which controlled the river banks between Cerenti and Lubuk Ambacang and which was put under the authority of the king of Singapore (Lufti et al. 1977 p.141). This trading centre became known as Kandis and it organised the transportation of Minangkabau gold from the Bukit Barisan foothills to Singapore and Thailand. With Thai help, the king of Singapore was able to secure another vassal state on mainland Sumatra. This kingdom, which was known as Karitang, was centred on the Gangsal and Retih rivers, which have their headwaters on the high ground around Bukit Bakar and Bukit Besar where the land is suitable for rice farming. The population of Singapore, having no agricultural hinterland, needed to import rice, usually from Thailand, and, in order to reduce this expense, Orang Laut labour was used (probably at first under Thai supervision) to put all the suitable land in Karitang into rice production. A proportion of each crop was given as tribute every year to the king of Singapore.

Aditiawarman, who was the son of the Majapahit king and a Melayu princess, was taken from his birth-place in the Darmasraya capital when he was a young boy and brought up in the Majapahit court (Dobbin 1977 p.10) – where he was trained as a Buddhist monk (Asmuni 1983 p.53) – presumably because, due to internal problems concerning succession to the Majapahit crown, troops could not be spared to defend Darmasraya from Thai attack. In the first quarter of the thirteenth century, while disputes about the throne continued, Gajah Mada

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38 Lufti et al. (1977 p.150) say that the name Karitang comes either from Sanskrit or from the Malay words akar, which means root or vine, and itang, which is the name of a plant that choked the banks of the river Gangsal.

39 Syahbuddin (1986 p.536) says that the sub-districts of Retih and Karitang are still the biggest rice producers in the district of Inderagiri Hilir.
became *Patih*\(^{40}\) (first minister) to the Majapahit king. In 1328, after the murder of king Jaynegara (*Raden* Wijaya's son), who left no male heirs, Gajah Mada had Kertanegara's grandson, Hayam Wuruk, who was still only a child, installed as king of Majapahit. This consolidated Gajah Mada’s position as senior minister (Navis 1984 p.14). He then sent troops to Sumatra to regain control of the Batang Hari and Inderagiri rivers and secure access to Minangkabau gold. Under his orders, Majapahit forces occupied the old Darmasraya capital and brought the kingdoms of Kandis and Karitang under Majapahit control (Lufti et al. 1977 p.150). Aditiawarman was Gajah Mada’s peer and he was twice sent to China as a an ambassador of Majapahit (Asmuni 1983 p.57). Aditiawarman left Java in 1343 and returned to his birthplace, Darmasraya (which was also known as Melayapura [Navis 1984 p.15]). In 1347, he entered the gold-producing areas of Tanah Datar, by way of the Inderagiri and its upland tributaries, and established a new capital called Pagarruyung\(^{41}\) on the eastern edge of the Minangkabau highlands.

Dobbin (1977 p.10) concludes that 'gold seems to have provided the initial impetus' for Aditiawarman’s entry into the Minangkabau highlands, which was not achieved without some kind of struggle. What took place is not known but an inscription at Padang Candi (1347) mentions Aditiawarman’s and *Dewa Tuhan Prapatih*’s 'victory over their opponents' (Asmuni 1983 p.65). The inscription also mentions the names of other high functionaries who accompanied Aditiawarman: notably *tumanggung* (Dobbin 1983 p.62) which, according to Asmuni (1983 p.63), was the title of the highest rank in the kingdom. The two functionaries, *Dewa Tuhan Prapatih* and *Tumanggung*\(^{42}\), who were Aditiawarman’s two highest ministers,

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40  *Patih*, *pati* or *poti* comes from Sanskrit and means the respected (Asmuni 1983 p.63). Wheatley (1961 p.28) says that it means ‘chief’. It was a common title for dignitaries in Indonesia and Malaysia.

41  Pagarruyung means a palm-wood fence (Asmuni 1983 p.73). It became the name of all subsequent Minangkabau palaces.

42  *Tumanggung* or *temenggung* (there are a wide variety of spellings) was in charge of defence and security (Asmuni 1983 p.63) and was probably a Brahman as they held the highest ministerial positions in Indian caste systems (Knappert 1991 p.146).
became known, in the Minangkabau highlands, as Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and Datuk Ketemanggungan respectively. As well as having played a crucial role in the establishment of the new court at Pagarruyung, they came to dominate the Minangkabau political world. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang’s father was a Majapahit minister (Asmuni 1983 p.63) and his mother was Dara Jingga who remarried on her return to Sumatra (Yakub 1987[B] p.30). Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang was related to Aditiawarman through a female line (Navis 1984 p.12). Datuk Ketemanggungan, on the other hand, whose father was a member of the Sailendra royal house, was related to Aditiawarman through a male line and may have been one of his younger brothers (see Yakub 1987[B] p.30 and Datoek Toeah 1969 p.43). Aditiawarman’s position was consolidated when he married Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang’s youngest sister, Putri Jamilan (Datoek Toeah 1989 p.95), and was crowned king and given the title Mauliawarman in 1347. The two highest ministers, Aditiawarman’s Patih (Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang) and his Tumanggung (Datuk Ketemanggungan) both played crucial roles in his accession to the Minangkabau throne and his ability to control the Minangkabau highlands and the main trade routes. Although they may have served Aditiawarman well during his reign, in later periods there was much conflict between Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and Datuk Ketemanggungan.

At the time of Aditiawarman’s arrival in the Minangkabau highlands, the population was still divided into the four varna (castes), which had become known as suku (matri-clans), and which included other groups such as ‘chettis’ who arrived from South India in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries.

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43 Datuk comes from the Sanskrit da, which means noble or sublime, and to, which means person (Navis 1984 p.134).

44 Asmuni (1983) suggests that the word Sebatang (one river) in this title refers to the Inderagiri.

45 In Minangkabau oral traditions, Datuk Ketemanggungan is also known as Sutan Paduko Basa, Maharaja Basa, Sutan Maharaja Basa and Sutan Cadiak (Yakub 1987[B] p.31).

46 Aditiawarman had many names and titles when he became king including Udityarwarmodayan and Udayadityarwarman (Asmuni 1983 p.11). Dobbin (1983 p.62) mentions Maharajadiraja and Kanakamedinindra. Datoek Toeah (1969 p.92) says that Aditiawarman was the anggang dari laut (the hornbill from the sea) who appears in the oral tradition of the tambo. Asmuni (1983 p.58) maintains that aditia comes from Sanskrit and means sun.

47 While Kato (1982 p.44) gives the meaning of suku as a ‘group of related lineages who share a common unknown ancestress’, Slamet-Velsink (1986 p. 230) says suku had a ‘rather vague original meaning of “leg”, and subsequently one of the four divisions of a tribe, but also later used for clan or tribe’.
thirteenth centuries (Dobbin 1983 p.61). These chettis, or cati, probably brought jati (caste [see Levi-Strauss 1969 p.397]) specialisations with them, in particular those related to gold production (Datoek Toeah 1969 p.43). While the majority of the population remained Hinayana, the Mahayana royal court attracted many soldiers from the Campa suku and religious specialists from the Melayu suku. Under royal patronage, members of these two suku began to settle around the Mahayana centre which is also where the cati specialists lived. While two suku concentrated around the gold-producing areas and became dependent on mining and trade, the rest of the population remained more widely dispersed and less reliant on gold production, economic security being obtained through rice cultivation. These two groups (Hinayana and Mahayana) came to represent different interests: the Mahayana court being hierarchically arranged, oriented towards Java via the east coast and based on trade and mining controlled by patrilineally-related men; and the Hinayana rice farmers and independent traders forming a federation (Asmuni 1983 p.73) based upon female ownership of land wherein overall leadership was passed between leaders in a system known as gadang begilia ([large by turns] Navis 1984 p.144).

Aditiawarman, like other members of the Majapahit royal house, was a devotee of 'a Tantric form of demonic Buddhism with Shivaite elements'48 (Dobbin 1983 p.118) which was mainly practised in the court by members of the royal household. Along with the court system, Aditiawarman, who was 'transformed by the miracle of his accession into a divine being and became the sustainer of the cosmic order' (ibid.), brought change to the democratic federation of independent villages based on sawah (wet-rice) cultivation that he found in the Minangkabau heartland. He introduced absolute autocracy and a hierarchy of Rajas who governed much of the production and all of the transportation of gold (Datoek Toeah 1969 p.94). Aditiawarman was probably able to have such an impact in the Minangkabau highlands both because he had the support of the powerful Majapahit kingdom and because he brought with him new technologies, which he may have learnt about on his visits to China as a Majapahit ambassador. He both improved sawah cultivation, probably through irrigation and

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48 ‘The most notorious aspects of this cult ... included rites of human sacrifices, the drinking of blood and the rattling of bones in ecstatic dances which took place at night in graveyards, all as part of ceremonies designed to produce mystic union with the godhead’ (Dobbin 1983 p.118).
the introduction of new seed types, and greatly increased gold production, probably through the manufacture of improved tools and the opening of mines. In order to increase rice production and gold output, Aditiawarman introduced a form of government that was based on the Majapahit system (Navis 1984 pp.16–17) but which also utilised older, Hinayana, elements that were in existence before Aditiawarman’s arrival, in particular the tendency to pass sawah rights on to daughters and magical or religious abilities on to sons.

Aditiawarman became king through an alliance with his matrilineally-organised subjects which was symbolised in his marriage to his Patih’s sister and female relatives of other influential men of the four suku. As a result of these marriages, the suku were given new names. The varna of the dog, which was probably relatively small and isolated due to Thai subjugation of the Myanmarese Mon Haripunjaya kingdom in 1290 (Luce 1965 p.150), became known as suku Bodi (Buddhist’s clan), possibly because the Myanmarese were the first to introduce Buddhist ideas into the Minangkabau highlands. The varna of the cat, which consisted mainly of independent merchants who maintained ties with Thailand, was called suku Caniago (Tradesmen’s clan). The varna of the tiger, which enjoyed the special favour of the king, probably in recognition of the close ties between Java and Campa, became known as suku Piliang (Chosen clan). The royal varna of the elephant, most of whose members were already living around the court and many of whom were members of suku Melau, the oldest suku (Kato 1982 p.80), took the name suku Koto (Town clan). Other minor, related, suku were also formed at this time, as every marriage between an incoming high-caste man and a subject low-caste woman could, potentially, give rise to a new suku (see Levi-Strauss 1969 p.417).

Aditiawarman governed the Minangkabau highlands with the assistance of his two chief ministers, his Patih (Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang) and his Tumenggung (Datuk Ketemanggungan), from the centre of his kingdom, Pagarruyung, the royal court, which was divided into three sections, one for the king and one for each minister. Each section of Pagarruyung, or Nagari nan Tigo Balai (district of the three council halls), had its own balai ([council hall] Asmuni 1983 p.61): Aditiawarman, who was also known as Raja Alam (king of the realm), resided in Balai Gudam in the east; his Patih, or Raja Adat (king of custom), at Balai Djanggo in the west; and
his Temanggung, who became known as Raja Ibadat⁴⁹ (king of religion), between the other two at Kampung Tengah (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.14, p.103). This administration became known as Raja nan Tiga Selo (Kings of the three territories) (Asmuni 1983 p.61). Aditiawarman’s two chief ministers were ‘representatives of two different forms of social organisation’ (ibid. p.113), the Patih representing the ‘matrilineal grouping which is predominant in social and political matters’ and the Tumenggung representing ‘the community as organised for sacral purposes, in which case patrilineal grouping is predominant’ (ibid. p.111).

While caste distinctions may have existed in royal enclaves before Aditiawarman’s arrival, it was during his reign that they began to have significance in other parts of the Minangkabau highlands. When Aditiawarman, who was a Kshatriya⁵⁰, entered the Minangkabau highlands, he was no doubt accompanied by a large army which included many high-ranking Kshatriya and a group of ministers and religious specialists who were Brahmin⁵¹. While many of the soldiers came from Campa, most of the ministers and Brahmins came from the Majapahit royal court where both Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and Datuk Ketemanggungan had been educated, the Patih as a Kshatriya and the Temenggung as a Brahmin – the former being taken there as a child, probably at the same time as Aditiawarman, while the latter was born there. All the Kshatriya and Brahmin men who accompanied Aditiawarman replicated their king’s alliance, married women of the four suku and passed their caste on to their sons and daughters. Consequently, after Aditiawarman’s coronation, the vama began to contain patrilineally-organised caste statuses. Aditiawarman’s arrival was not welcomed by all of the population of the Minangkabau highlands and the ‘intruders do not seem to have been able to establish

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⁴⁹ The titles Raja Adat and Raja Ibadat are Arabic-influenced and relate to a much later Muslim period. The titles of the men who held these positions in Aditiawarman’s reign are not known but Datoek Toeah (1969 p.72) suggests that Tuanku may have been a pre-Islamic title for a religious leader which has since been revived, by the Padris in the early nineteenth century, and used in a Muslim context (Navis 1984 p.52).

⁵⁰ A Kshatriya is ‘a member of the second caste or hereditary class of warriors’ which usually included the cavalry and officers of the army. ‘A better translation for kshatriya might be “nobleman”, since most of the kings belonged to the kshatriya caste’ (Knappert 1991 p.146).

⁵¹ A Brahmin is a member of the first or highest caste, ‘who never does manual labour’, ‘aspires to be a scholar’ and usually found work as a minister or religious advisor (Knappert 1991 p.56, p.146).
themselves without a struggle ... force was necessary' (Dobbin 1977 p.11). The ‘opponents’ (ibid.) of Aditiawarman and his Patih, who was in command of the armed force from Majapahit, were probably Thai merchants and their Hinayana trading partners who resented the intrusion of an autocratic Mahayana king who imposed taxes and duties on trade and controlled many goods such as gold, salt and cloth. While the majority of the population of rice farmers and independent traders opposed the invasion, many others, especially those who had established relations with Darmasraya, sought the patronage of the Mahayana king and invited his ministers, officers and religious specialists to marry their daughters.

Most of the men who welcomed Aditiawarman were members of the Melayu and Campa groups who had already been influenced by Mahayana and who wished to secure wealthy and influential patrons by adopting a Patih-style role and inviting high-caste members of Aditiawarman’s court to marry their sisters, thereby replicating the royal marriage. Many of these bride-givers already held the title Penghulu52 (Minangkabau suku leader) which they, according to the law of groups subject to Majapahit control, passed onto one of their kemanakan (maternal nephews). By marrying into the Melayu and Campa vana, the Majapahit urang babangso ([aristocracy] Kato 1982 p.62) established powerful patrilineages outside the royal court53. The sons of the first Kshatriyas and Brahmins to marry into the vana inherited both their fathers’ caste and their mothers’ brothers’ titles and became known as Penghulu Asal, Penghulu Suku or Penghulu Pucuk ([caste Penghulu] Navis 1984 p.131). A Penghulu Asal’s sisters also inherited their father’s caste and were able to attract other ‘urang baie (good men)’ and ‘urang patui (decent men)’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.61) – both names for members of the two highest castes – as husbands and, as a result, their sons also represented the coincidence of a matrilineal Penghulu line and a patrilineally inherited caste distinction and were likewise potential Penghulu Asal or ‘penghulu bertambah baie’ ([a high caste Penghulu] ibid. p.87).

Aditiawarman divided his territory into kampung (villages) and nagari (districts), giving lands

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52 Penghulu, which means headman or leader of a settlement, is derived from the word hulu, meaning head or upper part.

53 The following rules applied to inter-caste marriages: ‘A Sudra woman alone (can be) the wife of a Sudra, she and one of his caste (the wives) of a Vaisya, those two and one of his own caste (the wives) of a kshatriya, those three and one of his own caste (the wives) of a Brahmana’ (in Levi-Strauss 1969 p.397).
around Pagarruyung, the main gold-producing regions and the major trade routes east to Penghulu Asal.

While the Mahayana-influenced suku were drawn towards the court and the gold trade, the Hinayana Buddhist majority were allowed to keep their own leaders called tunggana54, or kepala parui55 ([head of family group] de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.76), and Penghulu Tua ([village leaders] Navis 1984 p.131), as long as they paid taxes and obeyed the laws. Holders of these titles were elected at rapei ([councils of Penghulu] de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.177), overall leadership being rotated between all the suku present. The Penghulu Tua were under the authority of the king’s Patih who settled disputes between them and collected taxes (paid in the form of tribute) on the goods over which the king had control – gold, iron, cloth (Dobbin 1983 p.68) and probably salt.

During Aditiawarman’s reign, the trade routes linking the Minangkabau highlands and the lower courses of the east coast rivers were brought under the direct control of the royal court. This area, which was known as rantau (outlying regions), included the Inderagiri where the kingdoms of Kandis and Karitang were incorporated into Rantau nan kurang esa dua puluh [the nineteen towns] (Asmuni 1983) which were organised into three districts. The region nearest to the Minangkabau royal court was called empat koto di atas (four towns at the top) and was centred at Lubuk Ambacang. It came under the authority of the Patih. The area immediately downstream was called lima kota di tengah (five towns in the middle). It came under the command of Datuk Bendahara Lelo Budi, who lived in the old Kandis capital of Kari and who had been a Kandis Patih before he invited Aditiawarman to marry one of his female relatives. The district that was furthest from Pagarruyung, known as empat koto di hilir (four downstream towns), was under the authority of the Temenggung. It had Inoman as its capital. Later, after Aditiawarman’s death, during the conflict between the Patih and the Temenggung, Rantau nan

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54 Tungganai is derived from the word tunggak meaning pillar (Navis 1984 p.131).

55 Kepala means head and parui means womb or stomach. A kepala parui is the person in charge of a group of people related by one line of women (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.10).
kurang esa dua puluh also contained five market towns known as luhak⁵⁶ (deep pools in rivers that serve as harbours) which were under the authority of five Orang Gedang (big men) who were high caste 'king's representatives', possibly his sons, who were 'free to make their own laws' (Asmuni 1983 pp.76–85). The king had direct control over one town, Lubuk Jambi, which was in the upstream region controlled by the Patih (ibid.). The rantau region of the Inderagiri which contained the nineteen towns also became known as Kuantan.

When Aditiawarman took control of Inderagiri, the king of Karitang, Merlang I, fled from his capital, on the river Gangsal, to Singapore where he joined the court under Thai protection. Aditiawarman then installed an official called Raja Tuban (Lufti et al. 1977 p.152) at a site on the Inderagiri beyond Kuantan, probably around Kuala (rivermouth) Cenaku, which became the focus of trade for the Gangsal and Retih populations. Raja Tuban, who came from the Riau-Lingga islands, paid tribute to Aditiawarman, as did his successors until they were replaced by the first king of Inderagiri (ibid.).

Through the rantau, valuable goods such as cloth, porcelain, pottery and salt were imported into the Minangkabau highlands. Down these same routes the highly sought-after products of the darat (interior), chiefly gold, steel goods and rice were exported. Most of the rantau land was not suitable for sawah cultivation and its towns were mostly dependent both upon attracting trade and obtaining supplies of rice from the interior.

At the heart of the rantau trading system were the rice and metals produced in the darat. During Aditiawarman’s reign, methods of labour organisation were refined which greatly increased production of these goods. Men were organised for work in mines, along the trade routes and in sawah fields by Penghulu Asal through the kemanakan (nephew) system which allowed Penghulu Asal access to four categories of men: firstly, kemanakan bertali darah ([nephews tied by blood]) Datoek Toeah 1969 pp.79–81) or kemanakan di bawah daguak ([nephews beneath the chin]) Navis 1984 p.136) who consisted of a Penghulu Asal’s high caste

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⁵⁶ Yakub (1987[B] p.24) says that luhak means well. There were originally three luhak: Agam, Tanah Datar and Lima Puluh Kota which correspond to the three main valleys in the Minangkabau highlands.
maternal relatives. One man from this group would stay in the village and inherit his uncle’s title. The rest usually left to begin new nagari (districts) or sub-suku in either the darat or the rantau. Secondly, kemanakan bertali akar ([nephews tied by roots] Datoek Toeah ibid.) or kemanakan di bawah dado ([nephews beneath the chest] Navis ibid.) who were low caste or casteless maternal nephews of a Penghulu Asal who sought his patronage; thirdly, kemanakan bertali emas ([nephews tied by gold] Datoek Toeah ibid.) or kemanakan di bawah pusek ([nephews beneath the navel] Navis ibid.) who were men employed by a Penghulu Asal but were not in debt to him. Most of these men had access to sawah lands and, as well as working these fields, they worked in the Penghulu’s fields for a share of the crop; fourthly, kemanakan bertali budi ([nephews tied by kindness] Datoek Toeah ibid.) or kemanakan di bawalc lutuit ([nephews beneath the knees] Navis ibid.) who consisted of ‘debt-bondsmen, prisoners of war or purchased slaves’ (Kato 1982 p.63) that a Penghulu Asal had acquired.

Most manual labour, in particular mine work, loading and carrying goods, and infantry soldiering was carried out by kemanakan bertali budi at the request of their Penghulu Asal who, in return, often allowed them to grow their own crops, settled their disputes and advanced them the funds they required to pay the ministers and religious specialists who officiated at their weddings, births, funerals, etc. Debt-bondsmen who had no land of their own were given some by their Penghulu Asal on which to cultivate crops, both rice for subsistence and cash crops for trade (Datoek Toeah 1969 p.81). This land was usually of low quality and could not provide enough for debt-bondsmen and their families to live on. Consequently, they were often reliant on their Penghulu Asal to provide them with food in times of shortage.

Penghulu Asal enjoyed royal favour and were given rights over: fertile sawah land; gold and iron-rich mining areas in the Minangkabau highlands; and harbours and markets along the trade routes of the rantau. Kemanakan bertali darah who moved into the rantau and became Penghulu Asal took groups of debt-bondsmen with them. These bondsmen were encouraged to grow agricultural crops, including, wherever possible, rice (a percentage of every crop being given to the Penghulu Asal) and also cubeb pepper (Wolters 1967 p.234) and keminyan trees (Dobbin 1983 p.179), the former being used as an adulterant of Indian peppers and the latter producing a valuable resin. Peppers and resins were important trade goods which, along with the forest produce debt-bondsmen were encouraged, obliged or forced to collect, Penghulu Asal traded on behalf of his kemanakan bertali budi. During Aditiawarman’s reign, the rantau
expanded beyond *Rantau nan Tigo Jurai* ([the Inderagiri, Batang Hari and Kampar rivers] Asmuni 1983 p.49) to include other rivers on the east coast (e.g. Siak, Rokan), trade routes to west coast ports, such as Pariaman (Dobbin 1983 p.64), and many rivers on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula where, using technologies developed in the Minangkabau highlands, tin and silver were mined.

Aditiawarman seems to have been able to keep a balance between the interests of his *Patih* and those of his *Tumenggung* and, during his reign, the success of the *kemanakan* system greatly increased rice, iron and gold production, spread the *rantau* across the Straits into the Malay Peninsula and improved trade. This allowed for the development of a ‘higher culture, with its own art, language and script in which Javanese and Malay were synthesised’ (Dobbin 1983 p.62). However, after Aditiawarman’s death in 1375 (Navis 1984 p.16), harmony between *Patih* and *Tumenggung*, Hinayana and Mahayana, low-caste and high-caste, matrilineal and patrilineal was lost and a ‘civil war’, which lasted for several centuries, broke out (Dobbin 1983 pp.62–63).

The repeated bringing together of certain matriline (in particular those associated with *suku Piliang* and *suku Koto*) with certain patriline, significantly those of *Brahmin* and *Kshatriya* from the royal court, resulted in most of the high-caste members of Minangkabau society maintaining long-term relationships with *suku Piliang* and *suku Koto*, while the majority of the other two *suku, Bodi* and *Caniago*, contained mostly low-caste people who were subject to taxes on their land, rice, fruit trees, houses, etc (Kato 1982, p. 56, p.65) and who could not conduct mining activity or trade on their own initiative.

The initial marriages that facilitated the entry of patrilineally-held caste distinctions into Minangkabau matri-clans were between high caste men – kings, ministers, military leaders and religious specialists – and low caste women who represented the subjugated matrilineally organised population. The children of these marriages inherited their father’s caste and, as the number of high caste men and women grew, they began to marry amongst themselves and form a ‘loosely-defined class of people whose main characteristic is a sense of their own importance, derived from their own or their close relatives’ *Penghulu* dignity’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.61). This class tried to avoid *mesalliances* with the *urang banja* (‘commoners’) (Kato 1982 p.62). Aditiawarman’s first *Patih* was of the *Kshatriya* caste, which he inherited
from his father (who was not the father of the Patih's sister who Aditiawarman married) and passed on to his son. After inter-caste marriages became unpopular, the Patih's title had to be passed on to the son of a low-caste sister in order that he could continue to fulfil the 'ritual role of indigenous chief minister', who was 'classified as a subject or “peasant” (hamba [debt-bondsman] jahat [casteless or Shudra])' (Bowen 1983 pp.166-167), which included 'preparation of the royal installation ceremony' and the 'provision of a non-royal wife to the ruler (ibid.).

Towards the end of Aditiawarman's reign, the Majapahit harbour of Jambi became the main port for Minangkabau goods. After his death, Aditiawarman's successor, Ananggawarman, ruled as Melayu king from the port of Jambi. From Jambi he continued to send tribute to China as his father had done, leaving his two chief ministers – Patih and Temenggung – in control of the Minangkabau darat and rantau. The Temenggung represented the king's Mahayana high-caste subjects who 'identified themselves with the royal family, with hierarchy in village government and with the gold trade and the need to regulate both production and the routes to the east' (Dobbin 1983 p.62). This group began to separate itself from the Patih and his low caste Hinayana-influenced followers who 'identified themselves more with pre-Javanese Minangkabau, with matriliny and with Indianised [Hinayana] elements in the population [and] who presumably had suffered in the period 1347–1375 (ibid.). These two groups became known as larek, or laras\textsuperscript{57}, the Temenggung and his followers being called laras Koto-Piliang\textsuperscript{58} because its most influential members were from suku Koto and suku Piliang, and the Patih and his group Bodi-Caniago\textsuperscript{59} after the suku of their leading men.

footnotes

\textsuperscript{57} Larek, or laras, means uniformity or conformity (Navis 1984 p.55) or harmony, harmonious or belonging together (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.12).

\textsuperscript{58} Koto-Piliang can be translated as chosen towns. Navis (1984 p.122) says that koto is from Sanskrit kotta meaning fortified town and Piliang is also from Sanskrit pele hiang meaning chosen. Kato (1982 p.35) says that Koto Piliang means chosen words.

\textsuperscript{59} Bodi-Caniago can be translated as Buddhist merchants. Asmuni (1983 p.70) says that bodi is from Sanskrit meaning Buddha, ca is from Sanskrit meaning custom and niago is from Tamil meaning merchant or trader. Navis (1984 p.12) agrees that a Sanskrit translation is most appropriate but he also suggests other meanings, all of which include the word Buddha. Kato (1982 p.35) says that Bodi-Caniago means valued character.
After the king’s departure, the form of administration known as Raja nan Tigo Selo was abandoned and the Patih and the Temenggung no longer lived in adjoining balai in Pagarruyung but maintained separate centres. To replace Raja nan Tigo Selo, the Temenggung (who still enjoyed royal favour) introduced Basa Empat Balai (the four large meeting halls), a form of administration based around four title-holding high-caste men who passed their titles on to their sons (Asmuni 1983 p.71) and who each dealt with a different department of government: the Temenggung took the title Datuk Bendahara (also known as Pamuncak60 Koto-Piliang) of Sungai Tarab and was the overall head of government (Navis 1984 p.57); Datuk Indomo (also known as Pura Penuh61 Koto-Piliang [ibid.]) of Suruaso took the role of the king in his absence (Asmuni 1983 p.62); Datuk Mangkudum (also known as Alung Bunian62 Koto-Piliang [Navis ibid.]) of Sumanik was in charge of administering the law and took the role of the Patih; Tuan Gadang (known as harimau63 Campa Koto-Piliang) of Batipuh was in command of military forces (Asmuni ibid.). The Bendahara64, or Temenggung, had six assistants, who (himself included) were orang gadang nan batujuh (seven titled noblemen), to assist him (Navis 1984 p.58). All these high-caste government leaders were members of Koto-Piliang and they occupied blocks of land at strategic points along the trade routes and around the areas associated with gold and iron work, with the result that all the important functionaries in Pagarruyung, in the towns along the trading routes and in the rich gold-bearing areas were Koto-Piliang (Dobbin 1983 p.62)

While many Koto-Piliang men made large profits from the import and export of goods, most Bodi-Caniago men found themselves marginalised and excluded from lucrative trade, in a society that was dominated by high-caste titled men who looked upon Bodi-Caniago mainly as a source of tribute (paid in rice), tax revenue and labour. While some Bodi-Caniago villages

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60 Pamuncak means summit or apex (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.836).

61 Pura is from Sanskrit and means town (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.934) and penuh means full.


63 Harimau means tiger.

64 The Bendahara was the ‘most senior chief’ who had the ‘responsibility of administering the laws of the country to the higher echelons of society’ (Datuk Zainal Abidin Abdul Wahid 1983 p.105).
were allowed to govern themselves, undertake small-scale gold-panning and iron-smelting and to farm rice and other crops as long as they paid their taxes and obeyed the laws, none of them could take part in large-scale gold production or trade without the patronage of high-caste title-holders who exercised a monopoly over these activities and would only recognise Bodi-Caniago men as, at best, *kemanakan bertali emas* (paid labour) or, more usually, *kemanakan bertali budi* (bondsmen). Bodi-Caniago settlements in the *darat* that owned *sawah* land could remain relatively independent of Koto-Piliang patrons by farming rice and other agricultural produce and by the small-scale production of gold and iron and other commodities (such as woven baskets, mats, etc) and slaked lime, for use in *sirih* (betel), from shells found on the shores of Lake Singkarak (Dobbin 1983 p.19). The relative independence of sawah-owning Bodi-Caniago in the *darat*, some of whom may have been able to pay their own taxes and ceremonial expenses (ibid. p.26), was more difficult to achieve in the *rantau* where sedentary agricultural subsistence was rarely possible and most men had to engage in trade, through a system of patronage, in order to gain economic security. Since Aditiawarman’s reorganisation of the *rantau*, the *Patih* had been granted land, trading and taxation rights on the upper course of the Inderagiri between Lubuk Ambacang and Taluk Kuantan where most of the population, who recognised the *Patih* (who they called *Datuk Patih*) as their representative in Minangkabau government, were Hinayana Buddhists who had been subjects of Kandis, and trading partners of Thai merchants, before they were incorporated into *rantau* Kuantan. While the upper reaches of the Inderagiri were populated by a majority of *Bodi-Caniago* and former Kandis merchants and farmers who resented paying taxes, the lower course of the river, around Cerenti and Inoman, where the largest-scale trading took place, attracted many *Penghulu Asal* and other nobles and aristocrats as new opportunities for making wealth became harder to come by in the highlands. These *urang babangso* (aristocrats) usually brought with them from the *darat* an assortment of *kemanakan* who were known as their *anak buah* (followers). These included: a few nephews tied by blood (who acted as the *Penghulu*’s ministers and religious specialists); a small group of nephews tied by roots (who organised some commercial and agricultural activities on behalf of their *Penghulu*); and sometimes a few nephews tied by gold, who were occasionally, when profits were high, employed for a *moesim* (monsoon), which left them free to grow rice in the *darat* for the rest of the year (Dobbin 1983 p.26). The majority of migrants to the *rantau* were nephews tied by favour, or debt-bondsmen, and each *Penghulu Asal* took with him from the *darat* as many bondsmen as he could afford to subsidise until his trading ventures showed a profit, after which, as agricultural
producers, labourers and consumers, nephews tied by favour became an important source of tribute, tax-revenue and trading profits for Penghulu Asal.

As most nephews tied by favour were members of laras Bodi-Caniago, many of the Minangkabau towns of rantau Kuantan became populated by a majority of Bodi-Caniago who recognised the Patih as their leader and practised forms of Hinayana administration while being debt-bondsmen of title-holding Koto-Piliang. With most mining and trading opportunities in the darat already monopolised by Koto-Piliang, Bodi-Caniago families who did not own sawah land usually had little alternative but to submit themselves as debt-bondsmen to a rich Penghulu Asal who helped with their subsistence, paid their taxes and ceremonial obligations and employed the men, usually either as orang bangsat65 ([gold carriers] Dobbin 1983 p.69) or anak tambang ([gold miners] ibid. p.26). Mining was a hated job that no high-caste person would undertake, although they did have a monopoly over the use of mining technologies and gold production. They also supervised and sponsored all mining operations (ibid. pp.25–26). While low-caste men worked in the mines, low-caste women were either allowed to work land (which if they did not already own they were provided with), in order to produce food and a few cash crops, or employed as weavers, dyers, potters, etc (ibid. pp.30–31). In the darat, economic opportunities for Bodi-Caniago men and women were very rare as trade and mining were under the control of Koto-Piliang nobles who ‘formed a fraternity, members of which alone knew the secret signs of gold and could perform the magical feats necessary for the successful prosecution of a mining venture’ (Dobbin 1983 p.118). This situation made the kemanakan system viable with many men actively seeking patronage. In 1688 the situation had changed little and although ‘only the virtually destitute would work in the mines’, a Dutchman noted that ‘many thousands of poor people could be recruited for a large mine in a time of hardship’ (from ibid. p.26). The economic conditions of non sawah-owning Bodi-Caniago men in the darat made the prospect of migration to rantau, under the patronage of a Penghulu Asal (who would help with subsistence, payment of taxes, etc and might allow his bondsmen some minor trading rights), a relatively attractive prospect.

footnotes

65 Bangsat means poor person or pauper and was used to indicate low caste-people.
Before the arrival of the *Koto-Piliang* exodus from the Minangkabau, which was stimulated by increases in gold production and trading, the population of Kuantan were mostly the Hinayana Buddhist subjects of the king of Kandis whose kingdom had been incorporated into the *rantau*, as *Lima Koto di Tengah* (five towns in the middle), by Aditiawarman. With the arrival of high-caste Mahayana nobles from the *darat* into *rantau*, the former royal house of Kandis and its subjects formed an alliance with the *Patih* and his followers and, together they attempted to avoid taxes and maintain their independence. For many *Bodi-Caniago* in the *darat*, migration to *rantau* offered an opportunity to escape the ‘oppression and terror’ they had to endure in the highlands (Navis 1984 p.121) and *Koto-Piliang Penghulus* began to find it difficult to control their *Bodi-Caniago kemanakan* (bondsmen) who, whenever they could, switched their allegiances to *Bodi-Caniago* or former Kandis leaders.

With disruptions to trade monopolies and the collection of tax revenue (called ‘emas manah’ [Lufti et al. 1977 p.149]) which was collected by the king once every two or three years (Rahim 1986 p.282) on a raft known as *rakit kulim*66 (Arief p.14), the four leaders of *Basa Empat Balai*, who each had tax-colllecting rights in the *rantau*, installed five *Koto-Piliang* nobles in *rantau* towns who became known as *orang gadang berlima di rantau* (five big men of the *rantau*). These five aristocrats were: *Datuk Paduko Raja*, who was responsible for collecting taxes at Lubuk Ambacang, the capital of the upstream *rantau* controlled by *Datuk Patih*; *Datuk Habib*, who controlled taxes in the king’s trading centre at Lubuk Jambi; *Datuk Mudo Bisai*, who collected taxes in the region of the former Kandis leader, *Bendahara Lelo Budi*, at Taluk Kuantan; and *Datuk Dano Sekaro*, at Inoman, and *Datuk Dano Puto*, at Cerenti, who both collected taxes in the region controlled by the *Koto-Piliang* leader *Datuk Temenggung* (Lufti et al. 1977 pp.148–149). The appointment of the *orang gadang berlima* brought immediate protest from the *Bodi-Caniago* and former Kandis *rantau* leaders who refused to accept their authority as it was not directly sanctioned by the king. As a result, civil war broke out which quickly spread to the *darat* where *Bodi-Caniago* also began rebelling against *Koto-Piliang* monopolisation

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66 Tengku Arief (1963 p.14) maintains that *Rakit Kulim* was made by lashing three sampans together to make a raft. This seems unlikely as there would have been a number of more seaworthy craft available (Jumsai 1988 p.52–56). *Rakit Kulim* was probably a large double outrigger canoe, one large sampan being the hull with two smaller sampans as outriggers. A deck or raft of *kulin* wood could be laid between the outrigger poles (see Crook 1990 p.66).
of trade and gold. Unlike the *darat*, which was relatively isolated from outside influence and relatively easy to govern, the *rantau*, where *Koto-Piliang Penghulu* were finding it difficult to make the *kemanakan* system work, was open to the Straits and its international traffic and also contained vast unpopulated forests, between the main rivers, into which rebellious bondsmen could escape.

In the *darat*, labour was organised for mine, trade and *sawah* work through an idiom of matrilineal ties known as the *kemanakan* system and many *Koto-Piliang Penghulu* who tried to export this system to the *rantau* discovered that outside the *darat* ‘kinship proved to have little effect in controlling mixed populations’ (Kato 1982 p.155) and, despite *Penghulu’s* efforts to enforce the *kemanakan* system in *rantau*, ‘the conjugal nuclear family, father, mother and child ... [was] of greater importance, and ... [was] also more independent of the larger units there’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 pp.54–55). *Koto-Piliang* gained the advantage in conflict between themselves and *Bodi-Caniago* and former Kandis residents of Kuantan, probably because they had greater resources and could, through control of the downstream areas, deprive their upriver rivals of essential imports, such as salt. The *Koto-Piliang* officials called the *Bodi-Caniago* and ex-Kandis leaders to a meeting at the former’s capital, Inoman, where the *Bodi-Caniago* were told that as long as they paid taxes they would not be disturbed (Lufti et al. 1977 p.149). *Datuk Patih* and *Datuk Bendahara Lelo Budi* were not happy with *Koto-Piliang* taxation and they, and their followers, retreated from Kuantan and established an alternative trade route using the rivers Petai and Peranap which are tributaries of the Inderagiri. This route linked the Minangkabau highlands to the lower course of the Inderagiri. It began on footpaths which came down the Bukit Barisan foothills, avoiding Lubuk Jambi, and ended at the headwaters of the river Petai, from where goods were taken by *rakit* (*raft*) to Cengar (at the confluence of the Petai and Peranap rivers) and loaded into *sampan* (river boats) for the journey down to Peranap, on the Inderagiri, which is downstream of Cerenti, the market town that marked the limit of *Koto-Piliang* control. The upstream section of this route was called *sembilan koto di mudik* (nine upstream towns) and was under the *Datuk Patih’s* authority. The downstream section, which was known as *sembilan koto di hilir* (nine downstream towns), was under the control of *Datuk Bendahara Lelo Budi*. Between these two territories lay Lubuk Rama, the
main market town which was under the authority of *Datuk Timbang Tahil*67 (Asmuni 1983 p.85). By opening their own trade route and establishing an outlet to the sea, independent Hinayana traders in the *darat* and *rantau* could trade freely with Thai merchants who controlled both much of the Straits and the Minangkabau *rantau* settlements on the rivers of the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, the Thai vassal kingdom on Singapore island was attacked by Majapahit and, with Thai help, it was moved north to Melaka (Lufti et al. 1977 p.133) where the Thais were having difficulty preventing Muslims, based on north Sumatra (and already controlling the island’s north-east and north-west coasts), from disturbing their trading monopolies.

Much of the gold, iron and agricultural produce brought down the *rantau* controlled by *Datuk Patih* and *Datuk Bendahara Lelo Budi* found its way to the Thai-controlled port of Melaka, which by 1403 was competing for Chinese tributary trade (Wake 1983 p.140) with Majapahit which had been in decline since the death of Gajah Mada in 1364 and which was further weakened by the demise of Hayam Wuruk in 1389 (Navis 1984 p.16). Melaka, which had no agricultural hinterland and was, therefore, dependant upon supplies of rice, mostly from Thailand, attracted many Muslim traders from the Islamic ports on the north-east coast of Sumatra who competed with the Thais for Minangkabau gold. During the first half of the fifteenth century, while the Melakan court (which was at an elevated site inland from the port and market) paid tribute to a Thai king, the harbour itself was inhabited mainly by Muslim merchants who brought Indian cloth which they traded mostly for gold (Wake 1983 p.143). With the older kingdoms of Majapahit and Thailand on the wane and Muslim traders based on north-east Sumatra beginning to dominate Straits trade, the kings of Melaka started using Islamic titles – beginning with Parameswara, who became known as Iskandar Shah68 sometime in the first decade of the fifteenth century (Wolters 1970 p.147). The Melakan court subsequently became divided between those who upheld older Buddhist traditions and wished to maintain links with Thailand, and those who welcomed the Muslims and the lucrative trade

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67 As timbang means weigh or balance, and tahil was a weight for measuring gold, it is likely that *Datuk Timbang Tahil* had a significant role in the gold trade.

68 Wake (1983 p.143) suggests that there was ‘nothing specifically religious about either the name [Iskandar] (which is not Islamic in the strictly religious sense) or the Persian word for king [shah]’. 
they brought with them. Conflict developed between these two groups which resulted in the
murder of the last Buddhist king of Melaka (who only ruled for one and a half years) and the
installation of Raja Kasim, who took the title Sultan Muzaffir Shah and made Islam the official
religion of the royal court, in around 1446 (Wake 1983 p.146).

While all court members had to nominally follow the religion of the new king, many of them
still maintained Buddhist ideas and had many Buddhist-influenced subjects. One of the
members of the Melakan court who did not welcome Islam was Raja Merlang II, the grandson
of the last king of Karitang, Merlang I, who had fled to Singapore and married into the island's
royal family. Raja Merlang II's son, Nara Singha II, who was born in 1473 (Lufti et al. p.840),
was also at the palace (Arief p.40) where he was a candidate for the throne (ibid. p.63),
representing the interests of many Buddhists in the court. Under the stimulus of the increase
in Minangkabau gold reaching Melaka via the Inderagiri, Nara Singha was sent to establish a
kingdom on the Inderagiri in order to direct the flow of goods coming down the river to
Melaka. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, Nara Singha, who was already married to
a daughter of the king of Melaka (Suparlan 1986 p.499) and who had been given the title
Paduka Maulana Sri Sultan Alauddin Iskandarsyah Johan Zinullah Fil Alam69 (Arief p.40), set sail
with an armada of Orang Laut, under the authority of a Laksamana ('admiral of the fleet'
[Datuk Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid 1983 p.105]). After crossing the Straits, they entered
the Inderagiri and sailed up as far as Kuala Cenaku where they were met by a force made up of
Raja Isab (a descendent of Raja Tuban [Arief p.40] who was governing the old Karitang
kingdom from the Riau-Lingga islands) and his followers, and a group of Koto-Piliang who had
sailed down from Cerenti to assist Raja Isab. The combined forces of Cerenti and Riau-
Lingga were enough to force Nara Singha to retreat to the mouth of the Inderagiri to wait for
reinforcements from Melaka. When news of Nara Singha's attempt to enter the Inderagiri
reached Datuk Patih, he, together with a group of followers, sailed down the Inderagiri to
meet Nara Singha (Asmuni 1983 p.88), who had already been joined by more Orang Laut and,
possibly, Thai reinforcements. When Nara Singha's reinforced armada sailed up the

footnotes

69 Nara Singha's name and the first part of his title Paduka Maulana Sri are Buddhist influenced (Singha
being an avatar of a Vishnu-Buddha [Arief p.16]). The latter part of his regnal style contains elements of
Islamic origin.
Inderagiri, they defeated Raja Isab, who Tengku Arief (who claims descent from Nara Singha II) describes as being ‘arrogant and conceited’ and ‘a cheat in trade’ (Arief p.14), and forced him to flee to Lingga (Lufti et al. 1977 p.206). The Koto-Piliang forces were also made to retreat back to Cerenti from where, despite maintaining control of the Kuantan mainstream, they had to face the prospect that all goods that they sent down to, or received from, the Straits would have to pass through Nara Singha’s territories where they could be taxed.

Together with Datuk Patih and his followers, Nara Singha and his Laksamana sailed back down the Inderagiri to Perigi Raja, which is an island in the river estuary, where Datuk Patih, as a descendent of Aditiawarman’s bride-giver Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, bathed Nara Singha in preparation for his coronation. Perigi Raja marked the extreme eastern border of Nara Singha’s kingdom and the Laksamana and the Orang Laut who had accompanied him from Melaka agreed to stay there and guard the mouths of the rivers Inderagiri and Retih. From Perigi Raja, Datuk Patih and Nara Singha sailed upstream to Suka Meninjau, where a bathing pool was constructed, which marked the extreme western edge of Nara Singha’s territory and in which Nara Singha was again washed by Datuk Patih as part of the coronation ceremony (Arief p.20). After having been bathed at the perimeters of his kingdom, Nara Singha was made king of Inderagiri in 1508 (Lufti et al. 1977 p.151) by Datuk Patih at Pekan Tua on the banks of the river Pangandalandiri, a small tributary of the Inderagiri (ibid.), where a palace was built and a harbour, from where trade was conducted directly with Melaka, was constructed (Arief p.20). Using regalia, known as nobat (ibid.) that he had brought with him, Datuk Patih made Nara Singha king of Inderagiri after he had married one of Datuk Patih’s sisters, Dang Purnama (Asmuni 1983 p.89). Once he had installed Nara

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70 Suka Meninjau means likes to observe or watch.

71 Bathing was important in the coronation of Southeast Asian Hindu-Buddhist kings (See Jumsai 1988 p.33–34). All the kings of Inderagiri from the first, Nara Singha in 1423, to the twenty fifth, Mahmudsyah in 1912, were bathed at Keloyang (Tengku Arief p.20) where the remains of the royal bathing pool can still be seen. Keloyang means brass and people from Keloyang say that the pool was originally screened with sheets of brass. Some families in Keloyang possess brass trays which they say came from Minangkabau with Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang.

72 Pangandalandiri is a possible origin for the word Inderagiri (see note 2).

73 See Jumsai (1988 p.32) for a description of the regalia used to crown a Buddhist king.
Singha as king, Datuk Patih, and his followers, returned to Suka Meninjau where, under Datuk Patih's authority, a market was established and he and his followers settled the riverbank. This upstream border of Nara Singha's kingdom became known as Keloyang, losing its name Suka Meninjau (Arief p.20). While the Orang Laut stayed around the river mouth and ferried goods to and from Melaka, and Nara Singha and his entourage resided at Pekan Tua, Datuk Patih and his followers settled around Keloyang where they began to farm bendang (flood water) rice\(^74\) on the borders of the swamp, inland from the river's naturally-raised banks.

Like other Mahayana kings, Aditiawarman had taken the throne because he was able to 'demonstrate his incipient Buddhahood, or ... his incarnate divinity as an avatara of Siva or Vishnu' and was 'ipso facto justified in seizing supreme power' (Wheatley 1964 p.73). While Mahayana kings valued their asal (descent) from the Buddha, Siva or Vishnu, Hinayana Buddhist kings, such as Nara Singha, were offered kingdoms by king-makers such as Datuk Patih because of their 'good karma acquired in this and previous lives. A Hinayana king ruled because that was his destiny and the aura of charisma enveloped him' (ibid.). The caste hierarchies that had distanced the Patih from the royal house of Aditiawarman were not present in Nara Singha's court. Consequently, Datuk Patih was given the titles Perdana Menteri (First Minister) and Mangleubumi ('custodian of the realm' or 'upholder of the world [Wake 1983 p.144]). He was 'called mamak or memanda [maternal uncle]\(^75\) Patih by the king' (Asmuni 1983 p.63) because he was the leader of a subject group that the king had married into. Arief (p.24) maintains that originally no-one but the king was allowed to call Datuk Patih 'mamak' but, in spite of this, gradually mamak was used to refer to both Datuk Patih and his followers who, some time later, became known as Talang Mamak. At one time Datuk Patih and his followers were known as orang langkah lama (people of the old step or old way), in contrast to orang langkah baru (people of the new way) which was probably a name for Muslims when they first arrived in Inderagiri (Asmuni 1983 p.90).

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74 Unlike sawah cultivation, where water flow can be controlled, bendang farming relies upon the natural flooding of the land which occurs every year along the banks of the Inderagiri in January-February.

75 While mamak, of which memanda is a polite form, has become associated with maternal uncle in Minangkabau (Kato 1982 p.52), it is also a 'conventional term for a prince to use to his aged ministers' (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.733).
To consolidate their relationship, Datuk Patih and Nara Singha swore an oath known as 'sumpah sakti' (Usman 1985 p.57), 'sumpah setiah adat pusaka' (Arief p.47) or 'sumpah bisa kawi' (Hamidy 1991 p.119) in which the king promised to melindungi (protect) the adat (tradition, custom) of Datuk Patih and his followers which was based on heterodox Hinayana philosophies. On behalf of his followers, Datuk Patih promised to menjunjung kedaulatan Raja (pay homage to the sovereignty of the king [Usman 1985 p.57]).

After swearing the sumpah (oath) with the king, Datuk Patih and his followers were given the status hamba raja (royal bondsman [Reid 1983[A] p.19]) which was a 'specific class of slaves who were answerable to the ruler alone, or to a member of the royal family. They were under the ruler's direct protection and anything thus classed was sacrosanct' (Matheson and Hooker 1983 p.184). Datuk Patih and his followers enjoyed certain privileges (probably trading rights) as hamba raja 'because government was so personalised that much of the ruler's authority and inviolability rubbed off on his bondsmen' (Reid 1983[A] p.19). They also enjoyed higher status than that of other slaves such as 'hamba orang' (slave of a non-royal) and 'sakai raja' or 'budak-budak raja' ([lower royal slaves] Matheson and Hooker 1983 p.184, p.195).

While women were probably not included in the hamba raja category (ibid. p.198) every

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76 Sumpah sakti translates as oath, or ordeal, of supernatural, or procreative, power.
77 Sumpah setiah adat pusaka means the traditional oath, or ordeal, of loyalty.
78 Sumpah bisa kawi was an oath, or ordeal, which involved 'drinking water in which a piece of iron had been placed' (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.1134).
79 While the word adat is from Arabic, 'what is designated by the word certainly is not' (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.87). It probably came to have its present meaning and associations when Islamic kings incorporated local traditions, which they named, defined and manipulated, into their realms..
80 The position of women in hamba raja communities requires more investigation and Matheson and Hooker's suggestion (1983 p.198) that there were 'probably no female hamba raja' glosses over the very significant part played by women in a form of social organisation where women were the owners, controllers or guardians of property — houses and their contents, rice-stores and their contents, fruit trees, and children, etc. With women owning almost everything, men had only their bodies and their labour to offer in return for the patronage they required in order to gain access to the things owned by women — including their bodies. While men were reliant upon women for access to things produced inside a hamba raja settlement — rice, children, etc — women were reliant upon men for access to things from the outside world — trade goods. While women in a hamba raja community could be viewed as being of lower status than men, in terms of the 'abject female inferiority prescribed by adat law' (Sandbukt 1988[B] p.116), they were probably not spoken about in this way as, according to Asmuni (1983 p.80), women in the Melaka world of the fourteenth and fifteenth century were associated with 'sakti' ('procreative power' [Knappert 1991 p.243]) and queens held the highest authority. Asmuni
man in this group could expect 'his own house and considerable freedom in the management of his own time. Typically he was married at the time he was put on the land. He worked harder but under freer conditions than a domestic slave' (Reid 1983[A] p.23). While all hamba raja enjoyed some privileges, their leaders [such as Datuk Patih], because of their 'closeness to the king' were 'among the most powerful in the realm' (Reid 1983[B] p.172).

With the king's permission, Datuk Patih and his followers established dusun (settlements) on the right-hand bank (looking downstream) of the Inderagiri, downstream from the newly created market site of Keloyang which marked the eastern border of kerajaan (kingdom of) Inderagiri. Some of the land behind the Inderagiri's levee was suitable for bendang rice cultivation using flood water from the river, and Datuk Patih organised his followers into three settlements based around bendang plots along the river bank. The settlement furthest upstream and nearest Keloyang was called Durian Cacar, the one furthest downstream and nearest the king's palace was named Parit and the settlement in the middle was known as Perigi. Each of the three settlements, because they were built on slightly elevated ground, were called talang (small village near the forest). Datuk Patih's followers (who may well have come from three

footnotes continued from previous page

(1983 p.80) suggests that the 'important position' of women is evident in the word perempuan (woman, female), which is based on the root tuan meaning master [mistress?] or lord [lady?] (ibid.). Women did not take part in tributary trade, leave their settlements, or give service at the court. While women were not 'legally responsible', they did play an important part in adat law which was 'extensively concerned with the control of females or, more accurately, male access to female sexuality and reproductive capacity ... the main import of which is that a high bride price can be exacted from suitors' (ibid. p.114). It appears that the only sense in which women were jurally responsible was in terms of their own sexuality as bunting tidak belaki (becoming pregnant while unmarried) Hamidy 1991 p.121) was the only offence for which a women could be brought to trial, all other offences being the responsibility of men. Women who became pregnant outside marriage were taken to the court where they either became concubines to the king or 'they led a life of prostitution, with the knowledge and consent of the Raja and his household, and by their means a number of male attendants were always about the court, and the importance of the Raja was thereby outwardly increased' (Maxwell in Matheson and Hooker 1983 p.199). The children of these women also became court slaves.

81 Dusun means small village. Skeat and Blagden (1906 Vol. 1 p.5) suggest that the word originally meant the 'half-wild fruit orchard of the aborigines'

82 Right and left, as determined when looking east (Levi-Strauss 1969 p.402) probably had special significance in the court (see Hoadley 1983 p.107) and in the king's territories – different groups being associated with different sides.

83 According to Asmuni (1983 p.89) talang comes from the Malay terhalang or tahalang which means obstructed or prevented. There are many towns and villages with the prefix Talang, e.g. Talang Semut in Palembang where the residents say Talang means small hill.
different places) were organised into three groups, each consisting of about six families, every one of which was headed by a Tua Tuah⁸⁴ (elder) who was chosen to represent his family. At the head of each group (called suku) were leaders called Batin⁸⁵ who were elected by Tua Tuah. Batin were assisted by a Mangku⁸⁶ who were Datuk Patih’s representatives in each suku. They passed their titles on to one of their sisters’ sons. Each suku also had a Kemantan, a religious specialist who passed his title on to one of his sons (Usman 1985 p.24). The holders of the two inherited titles in Tiga Balai, Mangku and Kemantan, received gifts of rice for their services: Mangku for organising the collection of trade produce; and Kemantan for acting as religious specialists. Batin could impose fines, payable in valuable trade goods (in particular Chinese pottery and Indian cloth) on any man who committed a crime or an offence. Central to the administration of each suku was a balai (council hall) in which meetings were held concerning the internal management of the suku. All external affairs were handled by Datuk Patih who lived at Keloyang. As well as the population of the three talang, which were also known as Tiga (three) Balai, Datuk Patih also had authority over both the former subjects of Karitang, who inhabited the upstream banks of the rivers Retih, Gangsal and Cenaku, and a small population on the banks of the river Limau who were swidden agriculturists. This latter group had probably been associated with the pangkalan (trading post) at Kuala Cenaku but had retreated far upriver due to raids on the trading site, which were either related to conflict in the Straits or the result of piracy. During periods of instability in trade, slave-raiding was often rife and inland groups, who were surviving on trade and agriculture, retreated back from the navigable river and the pangkalan where they used to trade and ‘would wander about in the inhospitable areas up the smaller rivers where they were safe from pursuit’ (Endicott 1983 p.224). Datuk Patih brought these people from Sungai Limau into his administration, probably not without a struggle, and put them under the authority of Batin Parit.

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⁸⁴ Tua Tuah means a respected elder or an old person ‘endowed with magic powers’ (Dobbin 1983 p.140).

⁸⁵ Batin, which means internal or spiritual, is a common name for local leaders in both Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. For a description of Batin in a Malay context see Endicott (1983 pp.220–221).

⁸⁶ Mangku, from pangku, means to nurse or to hold on one’s lap (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.842).
On their behalf, Datuk Patih organised the tributary trade between his followers and the king, the population of the dusun giving rice, keminyan and other resins, honey, ivory, wax, etc to the king who sent a portion of it to Melaka as tribute. In return for tribute, the king gave gifts of cloth, pottery, metal goods and salt to the Datuk Patih. The tributary goods coming from the talang under Datuk Patih's administration, which were collected under the organisation of Tua Tuah (who gave them to their Mangku who then took them to the Datuk Patih at Keloyang) were given to the king once every year, probably after harvest, when Datuk Patih met Nara Singha and reinforced the sumpah (oath). On his return from the palace, Datuk Patih brought with him gifts from the king which he distributed to the Batin who then handed them out to their Tua Tuah. As well as controlling tributary goods, Datuk Patih was probably allowed to trade in forest produce, such as rotan, and fruits, such as durian, which Tua Tuah collected and gave to Datuk Patih in exchange for kapor (slaked lime for betel) and other goods outside the tributary system. Each Batin had to supply male labour either for work in the royal court or at Keloyang. To meet these needs, bujang (unmarried teenage boys) of Durian Cacar, the suku that included members of Datuk Patih's family, were sent to Keloyang to help with the running of the market and the harbour. Bujang of Parit and Perigi were sent to the royal court where the former became soldiers and the latter served food and waited on the king. After being in service for a few years, bujang were allowed to return to Tiga Balai and get married. Returning bujang brought with them a variety of gifts, given to them by their patron, which they gave to their Batin who passed them on to the Tua Tuah of the household into which the bujang married.

During the first few years of its existence, kerajaan Inderagiri flourished as a result of the tributary trade it conducted with Melaka which was organised by Nara Singha's Tumenggung who was known as Datuk Temenggung Kuning (yellow) and who came from a subject state of Melaka on the Riau-Lingga islands (Hamidy 1991 p.109). Rice was always in short supply at Melaka and the Melakan kings' association with Islam was threatening their relationships with the Buddhist and Hindu (Thai and Javanese) kings who supplied them with rice. Consequently, the annual rice tribute sent by the king of Inderagiri to Melaka was of great importance, as was the large quantity of Minangkabau gold passing through kerajaan Inderagiri which was the mainstay of Melakan trade (Dobbin 1983 p.63).
In the first quarter of the sixteenth century, control of Straits trade was being contested between various states including agrarian kingdoms, such as those of central Java, Thailand and Myanmar, and maritime kingdoms, such as Aceh, Inderagiri and Siak on Sumatra (Huk Ham 1986 p. 182). The balance of power between these states was radically altered by the arrival of Europeans, the first of whom, the Portuguese, defeated Melaka in 1511. This led to a decline in Melaka’s influence over Straits trade, the breakdown of tributary relations between Inderagiri and Melaka and an increase in the number of Muslims visiting Inderagiri. While Nara Singha was a nominal Muslim, he made no attempt to convert his subjects and probably maintained aspects of Buddhist life in his court. After the fall of Melaka, its tributary states (such as Inderagiri, which was attacked several times by Raja Isab from his base on the Riau-Lingga islands [Wolters 1970 p. 176]) were subject to a range of influences from the Straits which included an influx of many Muslim Indian traders from Gujerat. These traders sailed under Melakan flags and sought to exchange cloth for gold (Dobbin 1983 p. 64). Muslim Indian merchants were welcomed at all ports in the lower course of the Inderagiri, including Keloyang, where Datuk Patih took advantage of the new trading opportunities they presented. Without the support and patronage of Melaka, Nara Singha and his descendants had to open their ports to visiting merchants in order to obtain the goods they formerly received from Melaka. These now had to be obtained through trade based around the exchange of goods formerly sent as tribute. The Muslims were not welcomed by the Koto-Piliang Temenggung of Cerenti who remained loyal to the Majapahit-influenced Melayu capital of Jambi. Although no attempts were made to convert the Buddhist-influenced population of Inderagiri, many people, including those living in the settlement of Tiga Balai, were influenced by the cosmopolitan Muslim traders who shared with their Hinayana-influenced trading partners a dislike of god-kings and a preference for free trade. As the subjects of a king who was becoming increasingly influenced by Islam, some residents of Tiga Balai, especially the bujang and title-holders who worked at or visited the market and the court, may have been introduced to aspects of Islamic lifestyles and etiquette in order to conform with the fashions
of the court. These probably included circumcision\textsuperscript{87}, which may have been carried out by a court specialist on \textit{bujang} as part of their preparation for marriage. Elements of law which governed the new non-tributary trade with Muslims were adopted by the title-holders who took part in trade. The healing practices of Islamic-influenced \textit{Dukun} (shaman) may also have been introduced by title-holders returning from court. Around this time, the \textit{adat} (custom, tradition) used by \textit{Datuk Patih} and his followers, which was called \textit{adat Perpatih} (in contrast to the \textit{adat Ketemanggungan} of \textit{Koto-Piliang} [de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.12]), was described as ‘\textit{adat bersendi alur dan patut}’ (\textit{adat} based on appropriateness and propriety). Later, as it became linked to Islam this changed to ‘\textit{adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi adat}’ (\textit{adat} is based on Islam, Islam is based on \textit{adat}) (Kato 1982 pp.100–101).

While Melakan trade was being disrupted by the Portuguese, Aceh, Melaka’s main rival as chief Islamic port of the Straits, grew stronger and Muslim merchants under Acehnese patronage began to enter the Minangkabau gold trade via the Kampar river. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the Acehnese were channelling much of the flow of gold away from the Malay Peninsula towards their own capital. Around 1560, under Acehnese influence, the king residing in the Minangkabau palace, who was a representative of the \textit{Melayu} king at Jambi, entered Islam with the title \textit{Sultan Alif} (Navis 1984 p.17). All the centres associated with the gold trade and the villages with a high proportion of gold merchants followed suit (Dobbin 1983 p.119). Once Islam had been embraced by the Minangkabau royal court, \textit{Koto-Piliang} title-holders, including \textit{Basa Empat Balai}, also entered Islam (Navis 1984 p.19) and \textit{Koto-Piliang} trading sites on the Inderagiri became Muslim.

The earlier Melakan-based Muslims had been welcomed by \textit{Datuk Patih} as they represented an opportunity to increase \textit{Bodi-Caniago} trade and status in the face of \textit{Koto-Piliang} dominance. Before 1560, the \textit{Koto-Piliang} markets and harbours of Kuantan, remaining loyal to their royal house, had not welcomed Muslim traders. However, after the king of Pagarruyung entered

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87 While circumcision is usually linked to Judaic traditions, which include Islam, Usman (1985 p.23) suggests that it was practised in Sumatra long before Islam arrived when forms of penis decoration which involved cutting or removing the foreskin were common throughout Southeast Asia (see Cotterell 1993 p.103).
\end{footnotes}
Islam, Koto-Piliang leaders were quick to invite Muslim-trained officials from Aceh into their courts and to open their markets to Muslim traders. The Acehnese-influenced Islam that entered the Koto-Piliang courts was a more sophisticated, town-centred, autocratic religion than the merchant-based Islamic ways that had come up the Inderagiri from Melaka. The refined court-based Islam of Aceh was well-suited to the hierarchical organisation of Koto-Piliang and many aristocrats soon discovered that their new religion need not disturb the status quo or their relationship with their bondsmen as 'the tradition of Islam is in fact filled with a spirit hostile to the peasantry' (Dobbin 1983 p.118). Under Acehnese patronage, and financed by the new Muslim trade, the kemanakan (nephew) system of the darat (Minangkabau interior) probably underwent a revival as the population became organised around the categories 'Muslim' and 'non-Muslim', which led to the reformation and revival of other institutions, such as Raja Tiga Selo and Basa Empat Balai – which had been formed during Aditiawarman's reign (Navis 1984 p.18).

While the ministers and officials of the Koto-Piliang rantau towns entered Islam and enjoyed the trade benefits it brought, the majority of the population of rantau Kuantan were relatively unaffected by Islam as it remained centred on the courts and palaces. Koto-Piliang soon became associated with Islam and Islamic forms of patrilineal inheritance (Navis 1984 p.7). Its nobles were able to manipulate Muslim/non-Muslim distinctions in such a way that the privileges and status they enjoyed before Islam were not altered by its arrival. For followers of Koto-Piliang adat Temenggung, Islam came to represent the basis of their social organisation and had greater importance than the older traditions of adat. For these Muslim aristocrats, 'adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi kitabollah' (adat is based on Islam, Islam is based on the holy text) (Kato 1982 p.101). After the title-holders of Cerenti and Inoman entered Islam, Muslim merchants from Aceh and Johor (whose royal house claimed descent from Melaka) began to compete for east Sumatran trade. They became involved in a series of disputes over the control of tax revenues and trading rights on the Inderagiri and other east coast rivers. With the main stream of the Inderagiri open to Muslim trade and very little business being conducted on the right-hand rantau, much of the Bodi-Caniago population of the Petai and Peranap rivers were drawn to the Inderagiri, where they made relationships with Muslim Koto-Piliang ministers and officials who controlled trade and organised labour in the market towns. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, most of the population of Kuantan and
Inderagiri had not entered Islam but had entered into bondsman-type relationships with rich court-based Muslims.

After the fall of Melaka, Nara Singha’s successors (see Lufti et al. 1977 p.840 and Arief p.40) had established trading links with Melaka’s successor, Johor, who was competing for trade along Sumatra’s east coast rivers and in the Straits with Aceh who had direct access to Minangkabau gold and who controlled trade over most of north Sumatra (Andaya 1975 p.22). While Aceh dominated the northern trade routes out of the Minangkabau highlands and Jambi still had a strong influence over the Batang Hari trade routes that began in the south of the Minangkabau highlands, Johor began to dominate the Inderagiri and its royal court. Sometime around 1600, Sultan Jamaluddin Kramatsyah (Lufti et al. 1977 p.840), who was probably the son of an Inderagiri princess taken to the Johorese court and married to a member of its royal house, was sent, by the king of Johor, to take the throne of Inderagiri after the death of Sultan Muhammad Syah around 1599 (ibid.).

Sultan Jamaluddin’s installation as king of Inderagiri marked the establishment of tributary trading relations between Inderagiri and Johor which allowed the kings of Johor to gain access to much-needed supplies of rice and to monopolise all trade in gold, cloth, pottery, iron and salt passing through Inderagiri. Jamaluddin brought with him a large entourage of Muslim ministers and religious experts who replaced the highly heterodox Islamic court at Pekan Tua. The new, more orthodox, Muslim court was welcomed by the small Muslim population of Inderagiri who had been establishing kampung (villages), based on bendang rice farming and trade in forest produce, on both banks of the river since about 1550. In the region of the Tiga Balai settlements, Muslim villages such as Batu Rijal, Batu Sawar and Dusun Tua were giving tribute to the court and paying taxes. Before the arrival of Sultan Jamaluddin, these kampung had probably endured lower status and fewer privileges than the hamba raja (royal bondsmen) of Tiga Balai who maintained a close relationship with Nara Singha’s successors through Datuk Patih who was their Perdana Menteri (First Minister). The status relationship between Tiga Balai and the Muslim kampung, which prior to Jamaluddin’s arrival favoured Datuk Patih and his followers, was dramatically reversed after the establishment of the Johorese Muslim court at Pekan Tua which brought with it well defined Muslim/non-Muslim distinctions which became the basis of the system of bonded labour employed by the court. In a labour system reliant on debt-bondage, Islam, which ‘forbids the enslavement of fellow Muslims’ (Reid
threatened to challenge the established hierarchies between masters and their bondsmen and slaves. The creation of 'the dividing line between Muslim “insiders” and non-Muslim “outsiders”' (ibid.) was therefore crucial to the maintenance of slavery and bondage as 'the supply of new slaves ... now had to be provided chiefly by non-Muslims' (ibid.).

Jamaluddin’s administration introduced radical changes into the organisation of Tiga Balai, whose population, although maintaining the status hamba raja, found that it did not carry the same influence and privileges that it had previously implied. Hamba raja now signified a lower status in relation to the Muslim populations of the riverbanks. The Muslim court of Johor and the Muslim immigrants into Inderagiri from its territories called themselves Melayu and they brought with them the ‘symbolic economy of their Melayu-ness’ (of which Islam is a central part) ‘which is expressed as a hierarchy of derajat ["ranks"]’ (Wee 1988 p.210). The highest of these were ‘aristocrats’, who used the titles ‘tengku’ or ‘raja’; below them were the commoners or ‘orang biasa’ and at the bottom were the ‘serfs’ who included groups of hamba raja and hamba orang (private slaves [ibid.]). This was ‘a hierarchy of, among other things, rights of self determination, of freedom of action and control over one’s life’ (Endicott 1983 p.239). Muslim immigrants into Inderagiri, whose numbers greatly increased during Jamaluddin’s reign, all considered themselves to be orang biasa and therefore above both types of hamba-class citizens, which consisted of hamba orang (of which there would have been few as they were expensive to maintain and mostly restricted to the courts [Hoadley 1983 p.94]) and hamba raja, groups of which existed in Tiga Balai and on the Gangsal, Retih and Cenaku rivers.

Jamaluddin regarded the Talang Mamak population as sources of labour and tribute. By moving them to permanent inland sites he took them away from the cosmopolitan influences of the riverbank markets and harbours and brought them more closely under the control of the royal court, whose representatives he also established in each settlement. The Datuk Bendahara (chief minister) who arrived with Jamaluddin from Johor (into whose family the king probably married) took over all the duties of Datuk Patih who was no longer considered related to the royal house. Rather, he was regarded by the court as being of a lower status than all other Muslims.
The Datuk Bendahara was responsible for collecting tribute goods (for export to the Johorese capital) from hamba raja and for distributing gifts from the king among that class of subject. In order to fulfil these duties, the Datuk Bendahara split each of the three original Tiga Balai suku into two – each of the three new suku being both under the supervision of and consisting of members of one of the three original suku\(^88\). The three new suku, were called: Sungai Limau, under the authority of Batin Parit; Gedabu, under the authority of Batin Perigi; and Tujuh Buah Tangga, under the authority of Datuk Patih. The three new suku were given leaders: a maternal relative of Batin Parit was made Batin of Sungai Limau; one of Batin Perigi's maternal relatives was given the title Batin Gedabu; and one of Datuk Patih's maternal relatives was made Batin of Tujuh Buah Tangga. The Batin were made responsible for all aspects of hukum (law), including criminal offences, marriage and divorce. They were answerable in these matters to an Islamic specialist, known as a Kadi, who had been introduced into the Pekan Tua court by Jamaluddin. Just as the Batin and Datuk Patih had provided leaders for the new suku, so the three Mangku of the three original suku did the same, giving each new suku a Mangku related to the Mangku of their suku of origin. The Datuk Bendahara also introduced the title Manti\(^89\), or Pegawai\(^90\) (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.52), into each suku and the holders of this title were, like the Mangku, accountable to the Datuk Bendahara: the Mangku being responsible for reporting any problems in their suku to the Datuk Bendahara; and the Manti being responsible for informing the members of their suku of the Datuk Bendahara's wishes (Usman 1985 p.76). Each of the six suku was given a bounded area of land on which to grow ladang (dry) rice, the whole area being policed by a representative of the Laksamana (military leader) of the court called a Dubalang\(^91\) who organised the defence of the settlements, patrolled and enforced the law and conscripted men for use in the armed forces. While all the other title-

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88 While Minangkabau is usually associated with four suku (see de Josselin de Jong 1980 pp.68–84), here there are six suku which gives weight to Slamet-Velsink's suggestion (1986 p.230) that 'the Indonesian word suku is rather vague, the original meaning being ‘leg’ and subsequently one of the four divisions of a tribe, but later also used for clan or tribe.

89 Manti, Menti, Monti or Munti is a shortened form of menteri which means 'minister of state' (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.765).

90 Pegawai means court official or agent.

91 Dubalang or hulubalang, which has 'often been translated as warrior' (Datuk Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid 1983 p.112), was a name given to professional soldiers in general.
holders in the Tiga Balai were *hamba raja*, the *Dubalang* was a Muslim *orang biasa* (commoner) who passed his title on to his son (Wee 1988 p.210) and he lived at Keloyang, where one of the king’s relatives was put in command with the title *Raja Mangkuta* (Usman 1985 p.73). All the title-holders lived in the newly-formed *dusun* (settlements), including *Datuk Patih* whose status in the court was now the same as the *Batin*, as were his functions – the collection of tribute, most importantly rice, making decisions on minor aspects of law and organising marriages. As well as losing his privileges, the *Datuk Patih* also lost authority over the *hamba raja* settlements on the rivers Gangsal, Retih and Cenaku where the *Datuk Bendahara* appointed new leaders.

The *Datuk Bendahara* also had to supply *hamba raja* labour for service in the royal court and, to meet these requirements, he took all young boys away from their homes and organised them into working parties. He gave them specific tasks – collecting firewood, preparing *sirih* (betel), serving food, etc.92 – and accommodated them in dormitories near the court (see Matheson and Hooker 1983 p.196). At around age fifteen, these *bujang* (bachelors) were circumcised at the court, after which they were allowed to return to their *suku* every year for the months January–April during which time they helped with the rice harvest and cleared new *ladang* sites. When they returned to their natal *talang*, *bujang* slept either in a *balai* outside their *Batin*’s house or in *pondok* (huts) constructed on the land they were working. This allowed them opportunities to meet the marriageable girls of their *suku* and to establish relationships which, if the *Batin* approved, would result in marriage. These *bujang* were not returned permanently to their *dusun* until they were about twenty, when they were married and put on the land to farm rice. All the *bujang* of a *suku* returning in a particular year were married at the same time, to girls from their *suku*, at a large wedding organised by their *Batin*. These marriages could not be contracted without gifts, known as *alat adat*, being given by the groom to his bride’s family – into whose house he moved. These gifts, which consisted of trade goods monopolised by the king, mainly pottery, cloth and metal goods, some of which (items of jewellery, spears, etc.) marked the couple’s status. They could not be sold and probably

92 Andaya (1971 p.47) says that in the Johor court of the seventeenth century, *Orang Suku Nam* (six), who may have been Talang Mamak as they had six *suku* or *talang* and were probably also known as *suku nam*, were responsible for ‘service in the kitchens and the furnishings of water and firewood’. 
accompanied their owners into their graves. They were given to bujang at the end of their court service by the king as a loan (which the bujang could never pay off, having no other means of access to these goods) which signified their bondsman status in relation to the king. After men got married, they became bondsmen in their own right and their sons, who inherited their father's status (Reid 1983[A] p.12), were taken, as bujang, to the court to serve as sons of bondsmen, becoming bondsmen themselves only after they married. Once they had been married, men moved into their in-laws' house where they worked to produce rice crops for use both as subsistence and as tribute — which was paid to the king. Under their Batin's guidance, and with the help of bujang labour from the court, the married men cleared large plots of forest, burned them off and helped the women plant them with rice. After the men had completed this initial work, solely wives and daughters were responsible for weeding and caring for the rice plants until they were ready for harvest when the men, again with bujang assistance, returned to work in the fields and helped with reaping the crop. During the months between sowing and harvesting, married men were employed in the collection of forest produce, some of which — ivory, keminyan, honey, etc — was given as tribute to the king while other, less valuable goods — rotan, damar (tree resins)\footnote{Damar is the name given to a variety of tree resins which are usually used to make torches or lamps.} — were traded to the Datuk Bendahara (at rates fixed by him) in exchange for salt and other goods, such as slaked lime (for use in betel), which were not part of tribute.

The populations of the talang were confined to their bordered territories, forbidden to carry weapons and only ever taken off their land, to fulfil duties at the palace, under the Dubalang's supervision. Young men who were to inherit a leadership title — Batin, Datuk Patih, Mangku or Manti — did not undergo bujang service but were taken to the court to be trained for their duties. When they returned to their suku, they married one of the daughters of the man they were to succeed (who was their mother's brother) and moved into his house. Title-holders, in particular Batin, enjoyed some privileges including: a percentage of all game, fish and forest produce collected in their territory; a portion of all the fines that they gave out as punishment to men who broke adat regulations; and the right to call upon their suku members to work on their rice fields. Through the system of law enforced by the Batin (called hukum adat...
which was based on court interpretations of Muslim law, men became involved in further bondage relationships with either their Batin or a court official—depending upon the seriousness of the offence and the severity of the punishment handed out. Minor offences—stealing, etc.—were punishable by fines imposed by the Batin. These were payable in china plates and bowls that men could only get access to by entering into bondage with their Batin, who would have a large stock of crockery which he had accumulated as the result of his receiving a portion of all the fines that he handed out (Logan in Endicott 1983 p.221). More serious offences—murder, etc.—were punishable by 'hukuman mengolor' (being made a slave) which was administered by the Kadi (Islamic specialist) at the court. This resulted in the offender becoming a budak (slave) of the court for a period of at least three years94 (Usman 1985 p.75). While the Batin, Datuk Patih, Mangku and Manti maintained relationships with court officials, the religious specialists, or shamans, who held titles in the talang—Kemantan, who specialised in ensuring good rice crops, and Dukun, who healed the sick—had little contact with their Muslim patrons who held them in very low esteem.

Every year, the Batin and the Datuk Patih (who in the court had the same status as a Batin) were taken to the palace to reaffirm the sumpah (oath) and to pay tribute to the king in a ceremony known as semah which took twice place every year during the Islamic festivals of Idul Fitri and Idul Adha. The oath that they made with the Muslim king, Jamaluddin, differed from the first oath sworn by Datuk Patih and Nara Singha in that the Talang Mamak leaders now swore to 'use adat Melayu [Muslim]' whenever they visited the palace but in their kampung (village) 'they would always use their own adat' (Suparlan 1986 p.499). This new clause fixed the Talang Mamak's status as non-Muslims while it also exposed them to aspects of Islamic lifestyle such as circumcision, law, etiquette, etc. As a non-Muslim group, the Talang Mamak had low status in relation to the Muslim populations in the region, some of whom were probably tempted to raid the inland dusun and try to capture Talang Mamak and take them as slaves. Slaves were a valuable commodity in markets throughout Southeast Asia (Reid 1983[A] pp.30–31). In these surprise attacks, it was usually 'just the women and

94 Hukuman mengolor is similar to Minangkabau hukum bangun (see Datoek Toeah 1969 pp.319–320). For a discussion of punishments and fines in Tiga Balai, see chapter eight.
children who were captured, the men being murdered on the spot' (Endicott 1983 p.221). Among ordinary Muslim villagers, non-Muslim groups (such as Talang Mamak) were 'viewed as a natural resource, an especially valuable forest product that could be collected for domestic use or converted into cash' (ibid. p.222).

The Talang Mamak's main defence against such attacks was their status as hamba raja which offered protection both in the form of the Dubalang, who regularly patrolled the settlements with an armed force, and in the form of the threat of punishment, magical or otherwise, which would befall anyone who defied the king and harmed his hamba. The king was keen to protect his bondsmen, which he swore to do in the sumpah, as 'slave labour, especially in agriculture, was a crucial underpinning to the traditional social and political system, for it provided the surplus necessary to maintain the ruling class in a non-productive military and political role' (Endicott 1983 p.216). While being hamba raja brought many obligations to the Talang Mamak, it also offered them some security now that they were in the vulnerable position of being non-Muslims in a Muslim-dominated world.

While Johor, Aceh and Jambi were contesting for control of the Minangkabau gold trade, the Dutch arrived as a force in Straits trading. In 1615, they opened a loji (warehouse) at Kuala Cenaku (downstream from the capital of kerajaan Inderagiri), which was closed shortly afterwards in 1622, due to interference by Portuguese and English (Lufti et al. 1977 p.217). The Dutch were interested in controlling the valuable trade goods coming from the Sumatran interior and they signed a series of treaties with Minangkabau, Melakan and Johorese kings (which came to favour the latter [Andaya 1975 p.65]) in their attempts to monopolise Minangkabau gold. The Sultan of Johor, who was the king of Inderagiri's patron, signed the first treaty between his kingdom and the Dutch in 1639 (ibid. p.56), ten years after the Acehnese (Johor's main rival) had been defeated by the Portuguese (ibid. p.25). In 1641, Johor's subject kingdom Inderagiri invited the Dutch to reopen the loji at Cenaku, which they did in 1664 (Lufti et al. 1977 p.217). In that same year, possibly sparked off by Dutch interference in trade, Minangkabau Kuantan forces attacked kerajaan Inderagiri (ibid.) which probably led to Talang Mamak men being conscripted into military service to defend their Sultan. This left the women and children, who remained in their dusun working on the rice fields, very vulnerable to slave-raiding. Minangkabau inflicted several heavy defeats on the Sultan of Inderagiri, who requested assistance from the Dutch in 1666. By this time, the
Dutch were also making inroads into the Minangkabau highlands to gain direct access to gold and agricultural produce (such as coffee). In 1667, the Dutch defeated the Acehnese and ended their influence in the Minangkabau highlands where the Dutch revived the Minangkabau royal line (Andaya 1975 p.110). In the 1670s, Jambi joined Minangkabau in their struggle against the Johor-Dutch sponsored kingdom of Inderagiri (Andaya 1975 p.90) and invaded the region of Gangsal-Retih where they took many slaves and established a trading centre. They also introduced Chinese toke (middlemen) to organise trade (Usman 1985 p.56).

The Johor-influenced kingdom of Inderagiri contained Muslim populations outside the palace. However, further upstream, in Kuantan, Islam remained a court- and town-centred religion throughout most of the seventeenth century, until a man named Haji Utih returned to Sumatra from Mecca in the 1680s and began teaching Islam to people in the area of Taluk Kuantan (Lufti et al 1977 p.171). The Islam taught by Haji Utih differed from that being used by Kuantan nobles as it was less court-centred, being directed more towards the farmers and traders who lived in the villages and used adat Perpatih (traditions associated with Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang). Despite opposition from many rich Muslim nobles who practised adat Temenggung (traditions associated with Datuk Ketemanggungan) and who feared to lose their bondsmen, the non-Muslim majority of the population of Kuantan, under Utih's leadership, were able to enter Islam and achieve Muslim status (ibid.). With their former bondsmen now Muslim and subject to the same laws as themselves, the Muslim nobles of Kuantan had to look elsewhere for slave labour and, during the war between Inderagiri and Kuantan, they began sending slave-raiding parties to Tiga Balai, which the king of Inderagiri sought to protect so that he could continue to use its population as a source of unpaid labour.

The conflict between Inderagiri and Kuantan became part of a larger struggle between Johor, and her dependants, and Minangkabau, and her rantau territories (which spread out from east Sumatra, across the Straits and into the Malay Peninsula). This conflict culminated in Raja Kecil (who claimed descent from a Minangkabau king) taking the throne of Johor in 1717 (Andaya 1975 pp.250–320). The war between Minangkabau and Johor, during which the Buginese were able to gain considerable influence in the Straits (ibid.), probably included several attempts to put a Kuantan king on the throne of Inderagiri. Conflict in Inderagiri reached a peak in the period 1700–1715 when there were three different kings, none of
whom was able to rule for more than seven years (Lufti et al. 1977 p.840). When Inderagiri's patron, Johor, fell under Raja Kecil's control, a Minangkabau (or Minangkabau-influenced – possibly Bugis [ibid. pp.200–201]) king was put on the throne by Raja Kecil, who took charge of the Talang Mamak bondsmen, using the same administration as his Johor-influenced predecessors had done. He moved the capital of the kerajaan upstream from its old site at Pekan Tua, which he probably destroyed, to a new position at Kota Lama95 (Arief pp.40–41).

Johor was not able to bring Inderagiri fully back under its control and re-institute tributary trade until about the middle of the eighteenth century when Sultan Hazan Salehuddin, with a large armada from Johor, under the authority of Datuk Denang Lelo, Datuk Jomangkuto and Datuk Lelo Diraja, finally defeated the Minangkabau forces, made them retreat and extended the borders of Inderagiri upstream as far as Peranap (Lufti et al. 1977 p.260). After the Minangkabau withdrawal, Sultan Hazan organised the administration of Inderagiri around tributary trade with Johor. He awarded land and trading rights to both the king of Johor and the three Datuk (and their followers) who had led the campaign against the Minangkabau. These Datuk had probably been driven out of their previous settlements (which were somewhere in Johor's Straits territories) by Raja Kecil's forces. The royal house of Johor took direct control of the Gangsal-Retih region, which ended Jambi's influence in that area and brought it back into Johor's tributary system. On the Inderagiri, Datuk Denang Lelo (Lufti et al. 1977 p.26), or Dana Lela (Arief p.45), was made Penghulu (headman) of Peranap, which became the upstream border of Inderagiri (Lufti et al. ibid.). He was also given control of the lands around Pematang (Arief ibid.). Datuk Jomangkuto (Lufti et al. ibid.), or Yang tua Raja Mahkota (Arief ibid.), was made Penghulu of Batu Rijal hilir (downstream). Datuk Lelo Diraja (Lufti et al. ibid.), or Lela Diraja (Arief ibid.), became Penghulu of Batu Rijal hulu (upstream).

Once Sultan Hazan had brought peace to the kingdom, he moved the site of his palace away

footnotes

95 According to Usman (1985 p.86), Kota Lama is linked to a fort and pathway that led into the forest and ended at the site of Talang Jerinjing. It is likely that a settlement at Jerinjing was begun at the same time that Kota Lama was built, by the new king moving a group of Talang Mamak to an inland site opposite the palace which could provide a retreat and last line of defence should the palace be attacked. The present sites of other Talang Mamak populations may also be linked to the defence of palaces and trading posts on the Inderagiri. For example: Talang Parit, opposite Japura, where paths lead to the headwaters of the Cenaku near Talang Sungai Limau, may have been linked defensively to trading posts around kuala Cenaku; and Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga could have offered a safe hiding place to residents of Peranap.
from the Minangkabau-built court at Kota Lama (which he probably destroyed) to Jayapura, or Japura (Lufti et al. 1977 p.261). Sultan Hazan brought a new Bendahara (chief minister) with him who took charge of the administration of the king’s hamba subjects – the Talang Mamak. After several decades of conflict, during which Talang Mamak may have been both subject to slave raiding and attack and expected to provide large numbers of men for the king’s army (the combination of which may have led them to rebel on several occasions), Talang Mamak leaders were able to reaffirm the sumpah with a powerful Johor-influenced king who offered them protection against slave-raiders in return for their unpaid labour.

While the east coast rantau (outlying districts) population was nearly all Muslim by the middle of the eighteenth century (except for groups of non-Muslim debt-bondsmen such as the Sakai [see Yunus Mela Latoa 1986 p.190] along the lower course of the Kampar and the Talang Mamak on the Inderagiri), the situation in the Minangkabau darat (interior) was different. Here, the population was ‘mostly Pagan, or rather without religion, with the exception of the notables who consider[ed] themselves Mahometans’ (from Dobbin 1974 p.327). Minangkabau title-holders had kept Islam as a court-based religion and continued to rule over a mostly non-Muslim population which consisted mainly of groups connected with lara Bodi-Caniago (Minangkabau political grouping associated with Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang). Unlike rantau leaders, who had Muslim subjects and were required to present an image of religious piety and dedication, Muslim aristocrats in the darat were not so reliant upon religious devotion and ‘Islamic obligations such as the five daily prayers and the puasa fasting were laxly observed and mosques were poorly attended’ (ibid.). In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, this situation altered with the rise of the Padri movement which began in Bodi-Caniago areas where people ‘rose up to reorganise village groupings and equalise the balance of power inside Minangkabau’ (Dobbin 1977 p.12) and spread Islam throughout the Minangkabau highlands. While most towns and villages, especially those associated with lara Bodi-Caniago, accepted this new, liberating Islam peacefully, ‘the penghulu of the Tanah Datar sawah villages, wedded as they were to the existing royal system ... were almost universally hostile’ (Dobbin 1983 p.137). Much fighting took place between followers of the royal family and the Padri who killed many members of the royal court and burnt Pagarruyung down at least three times (ibid.).
By the time of the Padri the Minangkabau gold supply had almost dried up (Dobbin 1977 p.16). This greatly reduced both the wealth and the status of the nobles, who relied on this trade, and probably contributed to their downfall at the hands of the Padri. Under Dutch supervision, coffee was promoted as a cash crop and it overtook gold as Minangkabau’s most valuable export in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, by which time the Dutch had plans to monopolise the trade in this commodity by cutting off all the east coast trade routes and channelling all coffee exports to their west coast harbours. In order to block the east coast rivers, the Dutch signed treaties with Sultans on these trade routes and built forts on the rivers. In 1838, the kingdom of Inderagiri, whose palace had been moved to Rengat, under Dutch supervision in 1815 (Lufti et al. 1977 p.261), joined the Dutch trading alliance when the Sultan signed a treaty giving the Dutch, amongst other things, a monopoly over salt. As a consequence of this treaty, all trade coming down the river passed under Dutch ‘protection’ and as a result many Minangkabau lost interest in the Inderagiri as a trade route (Dobbin 1983 p.219). The Dutch attempt to block the Inderagiri had almost immediate effects and, although they were never able to completely stop Indian Muslims trading on the river (ibid. p.70), the Dutch brought trade at most markets along the Inderagiri to a standstill and greatly reduced the revenue of the royal court which went quickly into decline (Lufti et al. 1977 p.287). In 1858 the populations of Retih and Gangsal, whose rivers were probably being used by the Sultan of Inderagiri to smuggle goods to and from Johor, came into conflict with the Dutch which resulted in war and an unsuccessful attempt, by the king of Inderagiri, to break out of the treaty of 1835 (Lufti et al. 1977 p.310).

As a result of its treaties with the Dutch, the royal house of Inderagiri lost its daulat96 (sovereignty) Suwardi 1986 p.215 and the Dutch took over the running of the kerajaan, choosing kings who suited their policies (Lufti et al. 1977 p.362) and installing a resident Controleur at Rengat in 1878 (ibid. p.360). In the Dutch administration, the Talang Mamak populations remained under the control of the Batin of their suku. However, Talang Mamak Batin were made responsible to a Muslim Penghulu Muda (Usman 1985 p.74) who was given

footnotes

96 Daulat endows a king with many rights and privileges and places him above society, beyond reproach and criticism. It also demanded unquestioning loyalty from his subjects.
land in Talang Durian Cacar (which became known as Talang Selantai). He was responsible for relations between Talang Mamak and Dutch representatives at the Rengat court. Denied access to the imported goods which had been the basis of the tributary trade between himself and his Talang Mamak subjects, the king could no longer monopolise the goods his bondsmen desired (or were required to possess) and the Dutch began to supply the Talang Mamak with essential trade goods, such as salt and cloth, probably in exchange for rotan and other forest produce.

In 1883 the king of Inderagiri, Sultan Husin tried to break free from trade controls and was removed of his title by the Dutch. To replace Sultan Husin, they installed a temporary government, under a Raja Muda (young, or unmarried, king), until they made Raja Isa Sultan at Rengat in 1885. They then moved the Raja Muda to Peranap and gave him the title Wakil (Deputy) Sultan or Sultan Muda (Lufti et al. 1977 pp.362–363). The Sultan Muda, who was also known as ‘Raja [h]amba’ (ibid. p.365) had control over the populations between Cerenti and Japura, which included the Talang Mamak who became his main source of wealth and labour. When they came under the authority of Sultan Muda, the Talang Mamak lost their status as hamba raja, which they probably tried to maintain (in order to obtain trade goods) by continuing to pay a small tribute to the Sultan at Rengat. The Sultan Muda ran into problems with both Raja Isa and the Dutch when he began misusing his government funds and entering in secret negotiations with the Minangkabau inhabitants of Kuantan (ibid.) to whom he may have been selling Talang Mamak slaves. In 1912, the title Sultan Muda was abandoned and the Dutch established a number of Amir in his former territory, including one at Simpang Kelayang (ibid.) – on the newly-built Dutch road that joined Taluk Kuantan and Rengat – who had jurisdiction over the Talang Mamak population (ibid.).

The removal of the Sultan Muda or Raja hamba, was the result of changes in Dutch policies regarding slavery which were stimulated by changing attitudes in Europe. The Dutch had made slavery illegal in 1860 but it still continued for many decades and it was not until 1910 that they began serious attempts to suppress slave-trading and the owning of slaves throughout east Sumatra (Reid 1983[A] p.34). The end of the Sultan Muda, in 1912, freed the Talang Mamak from their patron-master but left them without access to essential supplies, such as salt, which they now obtained, in exchange for rotan and other forest produce, from Dutch-sponsored middlemen stationed at Keloyang who probably occasionally visited the talang and
did business with the Batin. Markets on the Inderagiri, such as Keloyang, were doing very little trade at this time, mostly dealing in local produce, salt, and a little imported cloth, as the Inderagiri had lost importance as a trade route both as a consequence of the Dutch trade blockade and as a result of silt in its lower course which reduced its depth and prevented large ships from reaching Rengat. After the Dutch had freed them from centuries of bondage, Talang Mamak encountered great difficulties obtaining supplies of trade goods such as salt, cloth, pottery, metal, slaked lime, tobacco, etc and were reliant on the sporadic visits of toke (middlemen) who probably brought only a few products which they exchanged for forest produce. Although there were no longer any restrictions on the Talang Mamak which prevented them from visiting the market, they were probably too afraid to do so for fear of capture and enslavement at the hands of Melayu villagers. During this period the Talang Mamak maintained contact with the Sultan through his representatives who escorted Talang Mamak men to and from the palace. At the palace, Talang Mamak leaders paid a small tribute and reaffirmed the sumpah, in return for which the king was able to supply his former hamba with a few valuable goods, in particular cloth.

In the early part of the twentieth century, after the crowning of Mahmudsyah (who had been educated in a Dutch school in Batavia [Jakarta]), the kingdom of Inderagiri came fully under Dutch control and military titles, such as Dubalang, were abolished and all the kingdom’s weaponry was taken over by the Dutch. With the Sultan Muda gone and the Sultan no longer allowed to extract labour or significant amounts of tribute from his former hamba raja, Talang Mamak bujang no longer went for court service and young men began encountering difficulties securing the gifts they needed to marry into a woman’s household. Consequently, many of these men were forced out of their suku territory in order to establish a relationship with a Dutch-sponsored toke who would give them what they needed on credit. Men who obtained the gifts they needed for marriage independently had more choice in who they married and, like all other bujang (now that they no longer did court service), they had plenty of opportunities to spend time with girls. Large groups of bujang began making the journey to Keloyang, taking forest produce with them, which they hoped to exchange for goods that would help them obtain a wife. These non-Muslims were not welcomed by Melayu villagers and trading trips were probably hazardous for the bujang drawn to the market which, as well as offering access to trade goods, also involved the threat of attack by Melayu Muslims.
Gradually, Talang Mamak men became a common site at Keloyang, a group of them appearing most weeks to trade rotan goods and other forest produce with their toke creditors. While Talang Mamak men were being integrated into Dutch-financed market trade, through toke who offered credit, rubber was beginning to be planted along the Inderagiri. Due to high prices after the first world war, it quickly spread to Melayu kampung around Keloyang. After a slump, in 1925, rubber prices picked up again and, by 1935, rubber was booming once more (Lufti et al. 1977 p.393). Around this time, some Talang Mamak men, attracted by the profits Melayu rubber-tappers were making, began to plant rubber in their talang. By the mid-1930s, a few of them had become independent traders at Keloyang, selling their rubber for cash to the mostly Chinese and Arab rubber Dealers who frequented Inderagiri’s markets. Rubber invigorated trade along the river (which had been in decline since the Dutch blockade) and those few Talang Mamak who had been bold enough to visit Keloyang on their own initiative and plant rubber now had access to a wide range of goods. These young men, who were probably led by a relative of the Datuk Patih, came into conflict with older Talang Mamak, especially Kemantan (shaman) who were responsible for ensuring good rice harvests, and who disliked young men disengaging from subsistence production in order to collect forest produce for trade.

With the beginning of world war two, the market at Keloyang again went into decline. This situation worsened in 1942, when Japanese forces sailed up the Inderagiri from Tanjung Pinang (Lufti et al. 1977 p.418). The Japanese, who based their administration on the Dutch model, emptied Melayu rice stores along the river and extracted forced labour (ibid. pp.412–413). Throughout the Japanese period and during the struggle for Indonesia’s independence that followed, trade was again restricted at Keloyang and the market became a dangerous place once more. With no access to trade goods all Talang Mamak, including those with rubber to sell, had to rely on the cultivation of dry rice and the collection of forest produce for consumption in order to provide themselves with subsistence. This situation continued until after the Republic of Indonesia was firmly established and Keloyang market was reopened. Under the auspices of the new regime, those Talang Mamak men who had productive rubber trees could return to selling their latex for cash. The profits they were able to make attracted other Talang Mamak families to plant rubber.
CHAPTER TWO

THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

On August 17th 1945, Sukarno proclaimed the formation of an independent Indonesia from outside his Jakarta home and, two weeks later, the first Indonesian government was formed with Sukarno as President. This was during the period between Japanese withdrawal and British and Australian occupation when heavy fighting took place between the British (most of whom were Indian) and the Indonesians which continued when the Dutch began arriving in 1946 to reclaim their colony. The British withdrew in November 1946 and the Dutch continued military operations against Indonesian nationalists until December 1949 when international pressure (particularly from the USA), which threatened the Dutch with economic sanctions, forced them to transfer sovereignty of the former Netherlands East Indies to the new Indonesian Republic. The new government formulated a system of administration which came to be implemented throughout Indonesia. In this system the territories of Indonesia are divided into various Propinsi (provinces), each with its own Gubernur (governor) who resides in the provincial capital. The Propinsi are split up into Kabupaten (regencies), each headed by a Bupati (regent), which are further sub-divided into Kecamatan (sub-districts) under a Camat (sub-district head). Kecamatan are further partitioned into Kelurahan, each administered by a Lurah or Kepala Desa. In towns, Kelurahan may consist of a few streets or a district while in the countryside they are usually associated with kampung (villages). The title Lurah is commonly used in an urban setting and its equivalents Kepala Desa (rural leader) and Kepala Kampung (village head) are mostly used in a rural context – the title Penghulu is also commonly used to denote a man of the rank of Lurah. Every Kelurahan is split into Banjar, or Dusun, which are administered by Ketua (elders), or Rukun Tetangga (neighbourhood leaders). There are also other government posts below the level of Ketua, e.g. Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa (head of rural security), or LKMD, and Masyarakat Desa (representative of a rural population), or MD, both of which were introduced in 1979 to assist Kepala Desa administer government development projects (Rahim 1986 p.289). Modern Sumatra has seven Propinsi: Aceh; Bengkulu; Lampung; Riau; Sumatra Barat; Sumatra Selatan; and Sumatra Utara. The Talang Mamak live in Propinsi Riau, which has an area of 94,561 km² and a population of 3,480,025 (Riau Pos 15·10·93). Propinsi Riau is divided into five Kabupaten, the Talang Mamak region being in Kabupaten Inderagiri Hulu, which has a population of 96,454 (Riau Pos 15·10·93). The Bupati of Inderagiri Hulu has his offices in Japura near Rengat which is also the site of Inderagiri Hulu’s only airport. Kabupaten Inderagiri Hulu is divided
into ten Kecamatan and, in this division, seven Talang Mamak settlements (Talang Durian Cacar, Talang Perigi, Talang Parit, Talang Sungai Limau, Talang Gedabu, Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga and Talang Selantai) have been put under the jurisdiction of the Camat of Kecamatan Pasir Penyu (population 47,662 [Yunus Mela Latoa 1986 p.193]) who resides at Air Molek, while the remaining talang, Talang Jerinjing, is under the authority of the Camat of Kecamatan Rengat.

It was some time before this administrative hierarchy could be introduced into remote areas and it was not until 27th February 1958 that Propinsi Riau\(^1\) was formed after Propinsi Sumatra Tengah, which had its capital at Bukittinggi in the Minangkabau highlands, was split into Propinsi Sumatra Barat, with its capital at Padang, and Propinsi Riau, with its capital at Tanjung Pinang (Lufti et al. 1977 p.9), which, in the 1960s, was moved to its present site at Pekanbaru. As well as Talang Mamak, Riau also includes other suku terasing (isolated groups) – ‘Orang Sakai, orang [sic] Hutan, Orang Laut, ... Orang Akit, Orang Bonai’ (Suparlan 1986 p.458). In the 1950s Sultan Mahmudsyah, the twenty-fifth king of Inderagiri, still had some influence over affairs along the Inderagiri, especially around Rengat, the site of his palace. Although Indonesia’s independent administration did not recognise the authority of the Sultan, he continued to live in his palace in Rengat up until his death in 1963, after which his youngest son, Tengku Arief, who had moved to Jakarta, where he worked for the American oil company Cal.Tec. (he is now retired), returned to Rengat and began to establish links with his father’s old kingdom. Tengku Arief still returns to his father’s palace in Rengat twice a year to meet Talang Mamak leaders and reinforce the sumpah (oath) made between their ancestors when the first kingdom of Inderagiri was begun in the early sixteenth century. Before every Hari Raya (the Islamic festival of Idul Fitri) and Raya Haji (the Islamic festival of Idul Adha), leaders from Talang Mamak bring gifts of chickens and rice to the palace in Rengat where they stay with Tengku Arief for up to a month. These meetings, called semah, are organised by the Temenggung (chief minister) of the former royal house of Inderagiri, Cik Oemar, who

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1 Lufti et al. (1977 p.11) suggest the following etymologies for Riau: from the Portuguese word Rio, meaning river; from the Melayu word meriau, a fishing technique practised on the Inderagiri; and from the Melayu word nioh, used to describe the noise created by the voices of foreign traders at markets along the Inderagiri.
still lives in Rengat. At the semah the authority of Talang Mamak leaders associated with kerajaan Inderagiri is sanctioned and legitimated through Tengku Arief’s daulat (sovereignty). These leaders’ titles are: Datuk Patih; Batin; Manti; Mangku; and Tua Tuah. Holders of these titles organise kumpulan (gatherings), settle disputes, give counsel and protect Talang Mamak adat (custom, tradition)². Datuk Patih is the title given to the leader of the area known as Durian Cacar, who, as well as administering affairs within Durian Cacar, oversees the whole region and liases with the Sultan. At present there is a dispute, over the line of descent of the title Datuk Patih, between those who maintain that the title should pass from father to son and those who argue that mother’s brother to sister’s son is the correct line. The leaders of the other regions in Tiga Balai have the title Batin. The title Batin is usually inherited from mother’s brother to sister’s son and an elderly Batin will choose a successor from among his nephews. If this candidate receives the support of enough people, he will become Batin. To help him organise affairs within his talang (inland settlement), each of the Batin (and the Datuk Patih) has either a Manti, a Mangku, or both, to assist him. The duties of Mangku and Manti are the same and both titles are spoken of as being inherited by men from a maternal uncle. Whether a particular talang has a Mangku or a Manti (or both) depends upon its adat. Every group of houses, or dusun, has an elected Tua Tuah who is chosen by his neighbours and family to represent and advise them at kumpulan (gatherings) or in disputes. In this hierarchy, any issue that cannot be organised or resolved at Tua Tuah level is taken to a Manti, or a Mangku, who then discusses the matter with his Batin. Most matters are resolved at this level, but, occasionally, the Datuk Patih is called upon both to settle disputes between Batin and to sanction the installation of a new Batin. The Sultan, who sat at the top of the Talang Mamak hierarchy, had no direct contact with Talang Mamak people other than Batin, Datuk Patih, and

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² Navis (1984 p. 85) provides several possible etymologies for adat: from the Arab adah, meaning customs or deeds that are carried out repeatedly; from Sanskrit a, meaning not, and dato, meaning having the characteristics of matter; and from Greek a, meaning not, and dat, meaning tangible. Nagata (1974 p. 335), writing about adat in a Malay context, says that ‘[t]he term adat has a variable domain of meaning. It is sometimes understood to cover all aspects of Malay culture and social life, from style of dress and housing to rules of etiquette and social interaction, but it is most commonly restricted to the major life crisis ceremonies of birth, engagement, marriage and death ... It should be noted, however, that much of the non-Islamic content of Malay adat, including the major ceremonies mentioned, is clearly of Hindu origin’. Kahn (1980 p. 25–26), writing about adat in a Minangkabau context, says ‘[i]n its most general form of reference, adat can mean simply “the way” – as in “the way we Minangkabau do things”...Most often when adat is discussed, the speaker is drawing attention to what he considers to be unique about Minangkabau society’. 
other title-holders who met him at the bi-annual *semah* in Rengat. These Talang Mamak title-holders, together with *Dukun* and *Kemantan* (Talang Mamak shaman) were the most influential men in Tiga Balai (the introduction of *Kepala Desa* administration has added new elements into this hierarchy), and their positions are endorsed by *Kebenaran Lima* (Five Truths)$^3$, ‘*Daulat Kepada Raja, Andeka Kepada Batin, Kadar Kepada Dubalang, Pengenal Kepada Tuah Alim, Arah pepatuh Kepada Dukun Kemantan*’ (‘Sovereignty is with the Muslim king, Authority is with non-Muslim leaders, Control is in the hands of military leaders, Give recognition to Islamic scholars [and] follow the wise sayings of the shamans’). While most of the above titles are all still in use, the titles *Dubalang* (military leader), *Pengawas* (District Officer [Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.877]) and *Batin Muda* (Junior Batin), which once had significance in Tiga Balai, have all fallen into disuse since independence. The last *Dubalang* was a man called Jatum who lived in Talang Perigi and died around 1970. The last *Pengawas* was a Melayu man called Saril, who still lives in Talang Parit. He was given the title some time in the mid-1960s by Tengku Arief who later took it from him after Saril was caught appropriating funds (he collected these at *kumpulan*, as a *pajak* [tax] on Melayu gamblers) which he should have taken to the palace. The title *Batin Muda* became defunct after the departure of the Dutch who probably first introduced it into Tiga Balai, around 1888, at the same time that they established the title *Sultan Muda* in the administration of the kingdom of Inderagiri (Lufti *et al.* 1977 p.363).

In the 1960s, the Talang Mamak came under the administration of the *Camat* of *Kecamatan* Pasir Penyu, based at Air Molek (later, in 1990, a * Wakil* [assistant] *Camat* was introduced with offices at Simpang Kelayang), but, as Tengku Arief continued to meet Talang Mamak leaders, they felt no real effects from the establishment of *Kecamatan* Pasir Penyu until around 1967 when the Talang Mamak region was divided into *Kelurahan* and *Kepala Desa* were appointed. In order to assist with the task of bringing the Talang Mamak under state control, a Melayu man, Umarudin, or Umar, was given the title *Koordinator* Talang Mamak by the *Camat* and asked to choose five *Kepala Desa* to represent the Talang Mamak and become waged

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$^3$ These five truths were told to me by *Batin* Gandung. Many other men, including Laman and Sutan Mohammad, also told me similar versions of *Kebenaran Lima*.
government employees. Umar does have some qualifications for this post as he is married to a Talang Mamak woman from Talang Gedabu who entered Islam just before she married Umar. Umar is the only wealthy Melayu with a Talang Mamak wife and, although marriages between Talang Mamak and Melayu are becoming more frequent (I know of three couples), when Umar married (some time in the 1960s) it would have been very unusual. Umar duly selected five respected Talang Mamak leaders to become *Kepala Desa* of their respective talang: Gandung, *Bat* in of Talang Perigi (who died in 1993 and has been replaced by Tomin); Rusian, *Bat* in of Talang Parit; Maiyan, *Bat* in of Talang Sungai Limau (who has been replaced by Canto); Sandang, *Bat* in of Talang Gedabu (Sandang died in 1984 and has been replaced by Urusan), and Mohammad Dinan, *Datuk Patih* of Talang Durian Cacar (Mohammad Dinan died in 1970. Gagah is the current *Kepala Desa* of Durian Cacar).

During the 1970s, government development of Tiga Balai began to occur more quickly after the American oil company Stan.Vac. ran a pipe-line through the region, between Talang Parit and Talang Sungai Limau, built several pumping stations in the area and erected a permanent depot in Talang Parit. As a consequence of these, and other, developments, Talang Parit's population now contains many non-Talang Mamak residents. The 1970s also saw the arrival of the first funds specifically provided by the Indonesian government for the development of Tiga Balai, each of the five Talang Mamak *Kepala Desa* receiving Rp.100,000 per year in an initiative known as *Sumbangan Desa* (assistance for rural communities). In the late seventies *Sumbangan Desa* was replaced by *Pembangunan Desa* (rural development), or *Bangdes*, and the amount of money put into the Talang Mamak region by central government began to increase rapidly. These government funds are administered by Umar and distributed to the five *Kepala Desa*. In 1994 each Talang Mamak *Kepala Desa* received Rp.5,000,000 from *Bangdes*. According to the *Camat*, this money is for building bridges, repairing tracks, etc and a *Kepala Desa* can withdraw up to half of it at a time from *Bank Rakyat InHu*, at Air Molek, provided he has written permission from both his *sekretaris* and the *Camat*. These funds have been used for a variety of purposes. For example: *Bat* in Gandung of Talang Perigi bought a motorcycle, which he gave to his grandson Mijan, a small generator and a television, which has never worked; and Gagah, *Kepala Desa* of Durian Cacar, is currently building himself a new house using *Bangdes* money.
Government funds are not the only source of cash currently available to Talang Mamak as most men cultivate and tap rubber which they exchange for money and goods with Melayu rubber dealers. Kato (1990 p.58–60) suggests that rubber first arrived in Indonesia in 1906 when rubber seedlings were smuggled out of British Malaya where the British, who first brought the rubber tree (Hevea brasiliensis) to Asia, were trying to monopolise rubber production and trade. The Dutch first began large-scale rubber production in Sumatra (using Chinese and Javanese labour) in the area around Deli, south of Medan, from where rubber quickly spread south, reaching the Inderagiri in about 1915. Initially, Talang Mamak resisted giving over their land to rubber cultivation, but by the late 1930s a few Talang Mamak men were selling rubber for cash in the Keloyang market. The market at Keloyang, being on very low ground, was prone to flooding and, in 1980, a new market place was built upstream at Petonggan using money from Departemen Pekerjaan Umum (Public Works)4. Every year, between the months of December and February, the Inderagiri floods the low-lying land adjacent to it. Although the land inland from Petonggan may be flooded for up to a mile from the river bank, the market place itself, which is built on an area of high ground about 50 metres from the river bank, usually remains dry. During floods, the people of Petonggan, whose houses are under water, paddle to the raised stalls of the market and stay there until the water recedes. Petonggan market was built by CP (Ltd) Dharma Karya who brought fifty contracted labourers from Kuningan, in West Java, to carry out the work. At this time, Umar owned a kedai (small shop) in Petonggan which was a small kampung (village) like many others along the Inderagiri. Since the market was moved, Petonggan has prospered and Umar has won every election for the post of Kepala Desa of Petonggan. After the market was completed, Umar used money from the Bangdes funds of Petonggan, Talang Perigi, Talang Durian Cacar and Talang Gedabu to raise a path from Petonggan through Talang Perigi and into Talang Durian Cacar. Another path was also made from this new track to Talang Gedabu and, at the junction of these two paths, Umar built himself a new house, about half a mile

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4 Much of the information about buildings and developments in Tiga Balai was given to me by Jusar, a Javanese man from Kuningan who first moved to Petonggan to work on the market. Since then he has assisted in the building of the first path, Inpres school and Tran Perigi. He has also worked with logging companies and was Project Soma’s cook. He is married to the eldest daughter of Udin, sekretaris of Talang Gedabu. She is also one of Umar’s nieces and together with her husband lives in Petonggan with their three sons.
inland from the market. After the Petonggan market was opened and the paths cleared, Talang Mamak men began to sell their rubber solely to Petonggan rubber dealers who soon monopolised the Talang Mamak rubber trade. The path was also constructed by *CP Dharma Karya* using the same men who built the market. For the first mile or so it had to be raised above swampy ground. All work was done by hand, using local materials and the track took one year to make and was about ten kilometres long and six metres wide. It stretched from Petonggan to the Gelugur river on the border between Talang Perigi and Talang Durian Cacar. Once complete, no further work was done on the path and it soon became both damaged by flood and overgrown. In 1984, this road was extended to the *transmigrasi* (transmigration) camp, *DK5*.

The opening of pathways into Tiga Balai cleared the way for further government initiatives and in 1984 *Departemen Pekerjaan Umum* built a school in Talang Perigi. This school is about sixty metres long, ten metres wide and took six months to build. It is divided into three large classrooms, with a toilet and small store room at one end. It was built by a company from a nearby *Melayu kampung*, Batu Gajah, using trees felled in Talang Perigi. Men from Petonggan and some of *Batin* Gandung’s *anak buah* (followers) earned money carrying wood from the forest to the school site. The school has never been well-attended. The children of Sutan Mohammad and the children of some of Gandung’s followers are the only Talang Mamak to have studied there. Although average daily attendance is as low as five or six pupils, at present there are three part-time teachers, all of whom live in Petonggan. Teachers’ attendance at the school is sporadic, dictated as it is by the condition of the road, and, even in dry weather, the school may only be open for two or three mornings a week. Adjoining the school, a row of three small houses, each divided into two two-roomed apartments, was also constructed. They were originally built for the use of teachers but are now little used. One male *Melayu* teacher did take up residence with his wife in the late 1980s but he was beaten and chased out

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5 *Transmigrasi* is a system of population redistribution that was first introduced into Indonesia by the Dutch. At present there are many *transmigrasi* sites in Sumatra where migrants from over-populated regions of Java and Bali have been provided with houses and either land or work on plantations. *DK5* is part of a large *transmigrasi* site occupied by Javanese, to the east of Tiga Balai, which will probably be expanded to provide labour for the oil-palm plantations that are currently being developed in Riau in conjunction with the construction of the East Sumatran highway. For a discussion of Indonesian *transmigrasi* projects, see Evers and Clauss (1990).
of the area after raping his sister-in-law. Nowadays, all teachers live in Petonggan and travel to the school by moped when the road is passable. After the school was completed, houses were built for all the Kepala Desa in their respective talang. The school and the houses are of similar construction (raised on stilts, with walls of whitewashed planking, and corrugated iron roofs) and were built with funds specially allocated by a particular presidential initiative known as Instruksi Presiden, or Inpres. Since the school was built, it has become the usual place for pegawai (government officials) to meet Talang Mamak and, on the rare occasions that their duties require them to enter Tiga Balai, pegawai forewarn Kepala Desa of their arrival and tell them to assemble their anak buah at the school at the appropriate time. While the most recent of these meetings was held to inform Talang Mamak, of whom there were about twenty present (most of whom were anak buah of the Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi), about the introduction of a government loan scheme called IDT (discussed later in this chapter). Other meetings have been held to notify Talang Mamak of presidential elections and to distribute kartu tanda penduduk or KTP (identification cards). As a result of attempts to give Talang Mamak KTP, which most adult Indonesians possess, a few government title-holders and their families in Tiga Balai now own KTP.6

Not all Talang Mamak approved of the government’s development of the area and the Datuk Patih and the four Batin who received salaries from the state as Kepala Desa began to find themselves isolated from a larger group who resented the moving of the market, the raising of the paths and the building of the school. This majority did not recognise the authority of the Camat and disliked the orientation of Talang Mamak affairs towards him which, they claimed, threatened adat. In the mid-1980s, as a result of the introduction of Indonesian state initiatives and authority into their lives, the Talang Mamak began to split into two groups. The smaller of these groups consisted of the five Talang Mamak leaders who received wages as Kepala Desa and their anak buah. Since their appointment as Kepala Desa, most of these government title-holders who lives in Perigi and who is in his sixties, showed me his KTP. It gives his age as twenty-six while his youngest son’s KTP states that Panca’s son, who is about twenty-two, is thirty-eight and, therefore, older than his father. Like other Talang Mamak who possess one, Panca’s KTP gives his religion as kepercayaan (belief in a variety of heterodox gods that are usually subsumed under the term tuhan [god]), which is one of five officially recognised religions along with Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism.
holders (who also hold the adat title Batin) have had their positions undermined by rivals from the larger group who argue that by accepting the title, wages and duties of Kepala Desa they have forfeited their right to be Batin. Of these five, only Rusian, Batin of Talang Parit, has managed to hold both titles (Batin and Kepala Desa) without a challenge to his authority. All the rest found themselves more or less isolated in government-built houses near the main paths with only a few anak buah. Some fared worse than others. While Gandung, Batin of Talang Perigi, maintained the support of a lot of people in Talang Perigi, Maiyan of Talang Sungai Limau and Urusan of Talang Gedabu had the support of only a small minority of the people in their talang. Datuk Patih, Sutan Mohammad, was probably the most isolated. Having only the support of his younger brother Cuan and a few friends and relatives in Talang Durian Cacar (the talang traditionally associated with the title Datuk Patih), he moved into a house built for him by the government on the main path near the school in Talang Perigi. Here he was surrounded by anak buah of Gandung, who, like Sutan Mohammad, welcomed the involvement of the Indonesian state in Talang Mamak affairs. Most of the families in the smaller group (who welcome government initiatives) have at least one man who receives a wage from the Indonesian government. They are also more likely to benefit from the use of Bangdes funds and to send their children to school. Leaders of this minority do not meet with Tengku Arief. Rather they look to the Camat, his pegawai (local government officers) and Umar to resolve problems in Tiga Balai.

The majority group came into being mainly through the efforts of one man, Laman, who titles himself Wakil Patih (Deputy or Assistant Patih), keeps regular contact with Tengku Arief and always attends the semah in Rengat. Many Talang Mamak say that Laman is the only man ever to have been Wakil Patih and that this is a title he made up and gave himself. Laman rejects the authority of Kepala Desa in internal affairs and has installed Gagah, as Datuk Patih, and Rapan, as Batin of Talang Perigi, to help administer the people who wish to uphold the sumpah (oath) with Tengku Arief. Laman gave them their titles at ceremonies he arranged. Laman, Rapan and Gagah each have a large group of anak buah who do not recognise the authority of Kepala Desa and who want to uphold the sumpah. Generally speaking, people in this group do not send their children to school, do not have any contact with the Camat, his pegawai or Umar, and tend to live in the interior away from the main paths.
In 1984, Talang Mamak affairs became more directly oriented towards Petonggan with the appointment of sekretaris to each of the five Talang Mamak Kepala Desa. The sekretaris were chosen by Umar, at the request of the Camat. They are all literate, Melayu men resident in Petonggan. Although they took up their posts in 1984, sekretaris did not get their first salary from the Camat until 1986 when they received Rp.3,500 per month. Since their appointment, all communication between Talang Mamak and the Camat has gone via the sekretaris. Missives from the Camat are delivered first to the sekretaris, who then give them to their Kepala Desa. Sekretaris also have to read and explain letters from the Camat to illiterate Talang Mamak, and communications from Talang Mamak Kepala Desa to the Camat have to be spoken aloud to the sekretaris, who then type out formal letters which they then send or take to the Camat's office. The main tasks of the sekretaris are to oversee the allocation of Bangdes funds, the distribution of salaries and, since 1988, the collection of pajak bumi dan bangunan, or PBB, (land and property tax). According to some sekretaris, PBB should be collected by Tua Tuah from their anak buah and given to sekretaris who then take it to the Camat. As the Camat and his pegawai know very little about the position of houses and the ownership of land in Tiga Balai, they are reliant upon Talang Mamak men coming forward and claiming ownership of land or property before they can be taxed for it. As a result, the Camat knows only the position and owner of houses in Tran Perigi and houses occupied by salaried Talang Mamak. During the two years I lived in Tran Perigi, PBB was not collected and (as far as I know) nobody has paid it regularly, with only Kepala Desa making sporadic payments. Some people in Petonggan suggest that by not paying PBB regularly, the Talang Mamak are incurring large debts, which they will be expected to pay.

Talang Mamak had their first prolonged contact with Europeans in 1988 when the Project Soma expedition, of which I was a member, arrived in Talang Perigi. This expedition comprised fourteen British and five Javanese who stayed in Talang Perigi for about three and a half years. The main tasks of the sekretaris are to oversee the allocation of Bangdes funds, the distribution of salaries and, since 1988, the collection of pajak bumi dan bangunan, or PBB, (land and property tax). According to some sekretaris, PBB should be collected by Tua Tuah from their anak buah and given to sekretaris who then take it to the Camat. As the Camat and his pegawai know very little about the position of houses and the ownership of land in Tiga Balai, they are reliant upon Talang Mamak men coming forward and claiming ownership of land or property before they can be taxed for it. As a result, the Camat knows only the position and owner of houses in Tran Perigi and houses occupied by salaried Talang Mamak. During the two years I lived in Tran Perigi, PBB was not collected and (as far as I know) nobody has paid it regularly, with only Kepala Desa making sporadic payments. Some people in Petonggan suggest that by not paying PBB regularly, the Talang Mamak are incurring large debts, which they will be expected to pay.

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half months between June and September. The expedition used the Inpres school as a base for eating, sleeping and storage, while a botanical survey was made of an area of rainforest and a large quantity of ethnomedicinal specimens were collected. At this time, attendance at the school was very low and only one classroom was in use for a few hours a day. Project Soma occupied the other two classrooms and the store. Jusar, who lives in Petonggan and is married to one of Umar's nieces, was employed as a cook and he used the house nearest the school as a kitchen. The expedition enjoyed the full co-operation of Gandung and many of his anak buah helped the expedition – especially Panca and his brother Bunga who also took up residence in the school buildings. Panca moved into the house furthest from the school and Bunga often stayed there with him. Panca frequently spent all day helping the expedition and he became well-liked by all the team. I spent most of this period visiting Talang Mamak families and collecting information about leadership and authority. The five men who received wages as Kepala Desa were introduced to me by pegawai from the Camat's office and they were all friendly and helpful. However, Laman's anak buah were, generally speaking, reluctant to meet with or talk to me, especially Rapan and Gagah. However, Laman himself was a notable exception and I stayed at his house in Ekoh Hulu on several occasions. Canto, Batin of Talang Sungai Limau, and Madun, Kemantan, Talang Perigi were also very helpful.

Some time during the early 1990s, the Talang Mamak region was surveyed and the government began to make plans for the development of Tiga Balai. Large areas of land in Riau are currently being cleared to make way for oil-palm plantations. The introduction of large-scale kelapa sawit (oil-palm) production into Riau is taking place at the same time as the construction of the East Sumatran Highway which will run from Palembang to Medan, via Jambi, and pass just to the east of Tiga Balai. A branch road is also being built from Belilas to Peranap which will cross Talang Durian Cacar. When I arrived in Tiga Balai in 1992, none of the Talang Mamak I spoke to knew anything about the survey or its results. However, it was a talking point in Petonggan, where many people suggest that the whole of Tiga Balai has been marked down as tanah kosong (empty or unused land) and that Talang Mamak houses, cultivated fields and rubber plots were not recorded in the survey. It appears that, based on this survey, the government has made plans for the whole of Tiga Balai to be cleared of trees so that the land can be given over to kelapa sawit (oil-palm) production. When news of this reached Petonggan, men who have acquired plots in Tiga Balai and rubber-dealers (who rely on Talang Mamak rubber) began to put pressure on Umar, their Kepala Desa and Koordinator
Talang Mamak, to protect their interests in Tiga Balai. While he is always ready to make money from his connections with Tiga Balai, Umar also needs to keep the support of the people of Petonggan, especially the influential rubber dealers. Consequently, while he organises the clearing of the land around Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga, he is also negotiating to save some of Tiga Balai from the chainsaw. Umar says that he hopes land to the east of the road from Petonggan to Talang Durian Cacar will not be cleared. Exactly how much, if any, of Tiga Balai will remain in Talang Mamak hands is not yet known. The land around Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga, in the far west of Tiga Balai, has already been completely cleared of trees, under the supervision of Umar, and several logging companies have been given contracts to take wood from the Talang Mamak region since the land was surveyed. In 1990, *PT (Ltd) Dewi Esah Indah* set up a base in Petonggan and cleared a new section of road between the Inpres school and *rimba* Sejerni in Talang Durian Cacar. This company stayed for about two years and took approximately fifteen thousand cubic metres of wood. *PT Dewi Esah Indah* is run by a man called Goh, who comes from Medan and is Chinese – he is called *Mister Goh* by many Talang Mamak. It was the first logging company to win a long contract in Tiga Balai and the first to improve and stabilise the condition of the road such that Petonggan rubber dealers could travel into Tiga Balai and collect rubber using motorised vehicles.

Logging companies first establish a base on the river bank, which includes accommodation for workers and a piece of ground where logs can be unloaded and bulldozed into the river. A gang of men then build a second base in the forest and begin to cut down trees while bulldozers begin work making a road from the main track (from Petonggan to Talang Perigi) to the forest base. As soon as the bulldozers arrive at the second base lorries can start bringing wood from the interior to the riverbank where they are sorted into logs that float (these are pushed straight into the river and towed downstream in massive rafts pulled by tugs) and logs that sink (which are loaded onto large pontoons before being towed away). Riau has about 9.45 million hectares of forest, of which about 1.5 million hectares are being destroyed each

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9 Talang Mamak distinguish between three different types of forest: *rimba* is used to describe forest that has never been cleared for rice cultivation and contains mostly very large trees; *belukar, bekas ladang* and *sesap* are all used to signify recently cleared areas where most trees are young and small; *butan* is used to describe areas that have been cleared in the past but which now contain trees with a diameter that is greater than a man’s thigh. (For a discussion of Talang Mamak forest categorisation, see Tatiana [1992].)
Logging companies, whose contracts usually only last for six to twelve months, rely on fast transport from the forest to the Inderagiri. Consequently, they spend a lot of time flattening and surfacing the tracks between Petonggan and the interior of Tiga Balai which need continual maintenance as every heavy rainfall renders them impassable. During the dry season (July–September) it may be weeks between such downpours but in the wettest months (December–February) they occur every day. The resulting improvements to the roads allowed Departemen Pekerjaan Umum (Public Works) easier access to Tiga Balai and, in 1990, fifty-seven houses, a mosque, two wells and two toilets were built on an area of bekas ladang (fallow fields) — which was last planted by Sutan Mohammad in the early 1980s — in the Air Sakti region of Talang Perigi, using wood from the nearby rimba Senayau (Senayau Forest). These houses have cement floors, planked walls, corrugated iron roofs and a quarter of a hectare of land. None of the home owners in Tran Perigi is happy with the original construction of their house. Cement for the floors was not mixed with sand but with soil and is too thin. Wood for planks, pillars and beams was not seasoned or sorted, quality hardwood being used alongside unsuitable softwood. Consequently, most houses in Tran have crumbling floors riddled with holes, walls where some planks are split or rotten and beams and pillars that are being eaten by insects. This development was originally built to provide settled accommodation and permanent gardens for Talang Mamak families. However, few Talang Mamak have occupied houses in Tran Perigi as Laman’s anak buah dislike the construction of government buildings (especially the mosque and school) in Tiga Balai, and most of this group will not even enter the area of Tran Perigi. Of the Talang Mamak who approve of government developments in the area, many consider Tran Perigi to be too far from their rubber plots and rice fields to make living there practical. As a result, only about ten Talang Mamak families moved into Tran Perigi, the other houses being taken by people from Petonggan. The allocation of houses in Tran was administered by Gandung and Umar and, once it became clear that only a few Talang Mamak wanted to live in Tran, Umar offered the remaining houses to people in Petonggan. When Tran first opened, about twenty families from Petonggan lived there but now there are only two, most of the rest having left in early 1992 when a young boy died after having been bitten by a snake which was in a hole in the cement floor of his house.

Since the building of Tran, two more logging companies have won contracts to take wood from Tiga Balai. In September 1992, a firm from Pekanbaru moved into Petonggan and
began extending the road from Rimpahan to Dusun Sengkila where they felled thousands of trees. However, as their contract was only for six months, which coincided with the wettest season when all roads in Tiga Balai are impassable, most of the trees they cut down never reached Petonggan and the Inderagiri. This firm is run by Yatan who received his contract (which was for eight thousand cubic metres of wood) later than he expected – at the end of the dry season. As a result, by the time the road had been prepared it was raining heavily almost every day. The road flooded, the base at Petonggan flooded and cut logs waiting in the forest could not be transported to the river before Yatan’s contract ran out. The following September, PT Prijadi, a logging firm from Medan, suffered similar misfortune. They arrived in Tiga Balai to find that the area they had been contracted contained no suitable trees, being mostly bekas ladang (fallow fields) and rubber plots. This was probably a result of the aforementioned survey which made no account of the Talang Mamak, their houses, their rubber plots or their fields. Umar suggested to PT Prijadi that they take wood from the swamp forest between Talang Gedabu and the Inderagiri. Consequently, they widened and surfaced the path between the main track (from Petonggan to Talang Perigi) and Talang Gedabu and extended it to Talang Parit. They did fell some trees but, before any of them could be taken to the Inderagiri, their stay in Petonggan was cut short after a fight broke out between PT Prijadi workers and Petonggan residents. This fight took place late at night during celebrations for the marriage of a PT Prijadi worker and a Petonggan girl. One Petonggan youth was beaten almost to death and several others were badly wounded. By daybreak, a large group of Petonggan men had laid siege to the firm’s base, which was right outside Umar’s house, and, although the men who started the fight had already fled, the night-watchman (who had not even been at the wedding) was attacked and hospitalised. Later that morning the police arrived and PT Prijadi left Petonggan.

Although these logging firms were not able to transport much wood, they did improve the general condition of, and extend, the roads from Petonggan to the interior of Tiga Balai. These logging companies have cleared and flattened tracks using bulldozers but they have not used any sand or aggregate. Consequently, after every heavy rainfall the roads become flooded mires and without continual maintenance they will fall into permanent disrepair. The improvements in the condition of the path have led to an increase in the number of Melayu using resources within Tiga Balai and, at present, a chainsaw is one of the most valued items in Petonggan as any man who owns one can be guaranteed lucrative employment cutting trees in
Tiga Balai to produce timber for sale to Talang Mamak or Melayu. As well as going kedarat (to the interior) to collect wood, bamboo, rotan, etc, a few Petonggan men have recently begun entering Tiga Balai to buy durian from Talang Mamak which they take by honda (moped) to Air Molek market. The improvements to the roads have also lead to major changes in the rubber trade between Talang Mamak men and Petonggan's two main rubber dealers, Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim, both of whom rely on a regular supply of rubber from Tiga Balai. Haji Nasir, who is blind in one eye, became involved in the rubber trade when, after his childless first marriage ended in divorce, he married the eldest daughter of Petonggan's major rubber dealer, Moncat, who bought rubber in Petonggan and sold it at Keloyang market. Haji Nasir now owns the largest building in Petonggan, a long two-storey house and shop which faces the river. When the market moved to Petonggan, Haji Nasir's father-in-law, Moncat, began buying Talang Mamak rubber and entering into credit relationships with Talang Mamak men. When his father-in-law died without a male heir, Haji Nasir and his wife inherited the shop and rubber business which they have expanded to take full advantage of the growth in Talang Mamak rubber production. Nowadays Haji Nasir buys as much rubber as he can, usually between fifteen and twenty-five metric tons a week at about Rp.600 per kilo. Every Monday, Haji Nasir's Talang Mamak debtors begin arriving in Petonggan with their rubber which is weighed and stored in a fenced pond behind his shop. Haji Nasir continues to buy rubber until the market closes at midday on Tuesday. Some time on Wednesday all his rubber is taken from his store to the river bank where it is loaded onto a large pom-pom (motorised river boat) which Haji Nasir owns. From Petonggan the rubber is taken across the river and upstream a few kilometres to Teluk Sejuah where it is loaded onto two lorries (which Haji Nasir also owns) for transportation to a Chinese-run rubber-processing plant at Simpang Haru, in Padang. Here the rubber is graded and sold for up to Rp.1,200 per kilo for top quality latex. Before returning to Teluk Sejuah, the lorries are filled with rice, other foodstuffs, cigarettes and other goods to be sold at Haji Nasir's shop. From this business, Haji Nasir has become one of the wealthiest men in Inderagiri Hulu. In 1991, he visited Mecca and built a large domed mosque in Petonggan. He also owns a range of motorised vehicles and generates his own electricity which he uses to power his fridge, lights, fans and a large television with

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10 Haji means one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca.
three-metre satellite dish. *Haji Nasir* has only one son who has inherited a foot deformity from his mother.

*Haji Nasir*'s rival, *Haji Ibrahim* inherited his rubber business from his father, Jusuf, and his shop is part of a row of wooden buildings that run perpendicular to the river on the left of *Haji Nasir*'s shop (looking from the river). *Haji Ibrahim* is *Haji Nasir*'s only rival for control of the Talang Mamak rubber trade and he is probably Petonggan's second wealthiest man (although Umar might challenge him). *Haji Ibrahim* collects rubber, usually between ten and twenty metric tonnes, mostly from Talang Mamak on Monday and Tuesdays, which he then takes by hired *pom-pom* downstream to Rengat where it is sold (for up to Rp.900 per kilo) to a dealer who transports it for processing to Pekanbaru. *Haji Ibrahim* also buys the goods available in his shop on these trips to Rengat. His business and profits are comparable to those of his rival, *Haji Nasir*, but are on a smaller scale (in 1992 *Haji Ibrahim* also made the pilgrimage to Mecca) and generally speaking he has a similar lifestyle to *Haji Nasir*. One big difference between the two men is that while *Haji Nasir* has only one son, *Haji Ibrahim* has eight children.

Before 1990 and the arrival of the logging company *PT Dewi Esah Indah*, who were the first to regularly use motorised vehicles between the interior and the Inderagiri, *Haji Nasir* and *Haji Ibrahim* had to wait for Talang Mamak to carry their rubber to Petonggan. During *PT Dewi Esah Indah*'s stay in Petonggan, both *Haji Nasir* and *Haji Ibrahim* bought small flat-bed trucks which they now use to transport rubber from Tiga Balai to Petonggan. These vehicles are two-wheel drive Indonesian-built *Kijang*. By using tyre chains, ropes, winches and human labour, *Haji Nasir* and *Haji Ibrahim* are able to negotiate the roads between Petonggan and Tiga Balai in most weathers. In 1993, both *Haji Nasir* and *Haji Ibrahim* bought four-wheel drive Japanese-built Toyota land-cruisers which were also put into service collecting rubber. Most of the rubber traded by these men is not bought for cash. Some of it comes from their own extensive rubber gardens, which they have accumulated since they began trading (they usually try to take possession of a man's rubber plots if he breaks a credit agreement). A small proportion is collected by the residents of Petonggan, most of whom own a small rubber garden. The vast majority of the rubber traded by *Haji Nasir* and *Haji Ibrahim* is collected by Talang Mamak, who plant and cut rubber in the forest. Every Talang Mamak man who uses Petonggan market trades his rubber to either *Haji Nasir* or *Haji Ibrahim*, both of whom own
large shops which stock a wide variety of foodstuffs and hardware goods\textsuperscript{11}. Each week Talang Mamak men coagulate the rubber they have collected, by adding formic acid to the latex which is left in pits in the ground to solidify, ready for transportation to Petonggan. If the road is passable, they will bring their rubber to the roadside on Monday morning and wait for either Haji Nasir or Haji Ibrahim (depending on which one they usually deal with) to transport them and their rubber to Petonggan ready for the market on Tuesday morning. Some Talang Mamak men spend every Monday night in Petonggan where card and dice games take place. They sleep on the raised and covered market stalls and return home the next morning with any supplies they have bought at the market.

Rubber cannot be tapped if a tree’s trunk is wet, and during the rainiest season (December to February) there are often weeks when no rubber is cut. Without rubber, most Talang Mamak families have no income and they must borrow money in order to buy the essentials they require each week (rice, kerosene, cooking-oil, sugar, salt, tobacco, etc). Interest-free credit is offered by Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim to anyone who owns a rubber plot (this is the usual guarantee of payment in these credit deals). Once a credit arrangement has been made between either Haji Nasir, or Haji Ibrahim, and a Talang Mamak man, that man must sell all his rubber to his creditor at a price fixed by his creditor. These credit deals are usually arranged on a Talang Mamak man’s behalf by his Tua Tuah who will himself already be involved in a similar arrangement. On a market day there are usually one or two visiting rubber dealers hoping to buy rubber. Although these men offer the best prices, only a few rubber tappers (who do not have debts) from Petonggan are free to sell their rubber to them – Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim buy rubber from their debtors at Rp.600–650 per kilo, visiting dealers offer Rp.700–750 per kilo.

If a Talang Mamak family has enough healthy rubber trees and the weather is dry, they can decrease their debt if they dedicate their energies to cutting rubber. The best time for rubber-tapping is also the time when rice fields must be cleared and burned off. Consequently,

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\textsuperscript{11} Petonggan is not the only market used by the Talang Mamak. Many men in Talang Parit and Talang Sungai Limau sell their rubber in Sungai Parit or DK5 and some men in Ekoh Hulu and south Talang Durian Cacar sell their rubber in Sungai Jirak.
people cannot spare the time from their work in the fields to cut rubber and most families live in continual debt. As rubber and debt relationships with Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim have become more important, more and more land has been given over to rubber cultivation. This, coupled with widespread logging, has greatly decreased the land available for rice farming. The fallow periods, during which the fields are allowed to return to forest, are also decreasing as fields are re-used after only a few years because of a lack of land. In recent years, many families have had very poor harvests (which have not been sufficient to feed them for a full year) making them partially reliant on their rubber dealer to supply them with rice, on credit and at prices twenty to thirty percent higher than prices in the market.

Most Talang Mamak enjoy attending the frequent kumpulan (gatherings) that are held to mark special occasions – marriage, death, birth, healing, etc. At kumpulan, which may be attended by hundreds of people and often last for three or four days, the host family or families provide food and drink for many guests. If rice stocks are low, a large amount (up to two hundred kilos) must be bought on credit from a rubber dealer and many Talang Mamak have incurred quite large debts through hosting big kumpulan for a daughter’s wedding or a parent’s death. Another feature of large kumpulan which may involve heavy expenditure is gambling. Cock-fighting takes place at all large gatherings, and at weddings there may be more than fifty fights over three or four days. Talang Mamak men bet most frequently and most heavily on cocks owned by themselves, their families or their neighbours and, as bets between rivals have to be matched, cock owners ask their family and friends to support their bird. After each fight, the losing cock is taken to the kitchen and cooked for the guests to eat. In the evening, when the day’s cock-fighting is over a variety of dice and card games get started. Unlike cock-fighting, which is organised entirely by Talang Mamak men, these card and dice games are run by Melayu men from Petonggan and further afield – Air Molek, Lirik, Rengat, Peranap, etc. Petonggan has a small group of full-time gamblers, the most famous of these being Demek who has been a full-time gambler for over ten years. Nowadays, there are more than ten men in Petonggan who do no work other than gambling and who take advantage of the special dispensation granted to the Talang Mamak by the government (gambling, especially cock-fighting, is forbidden by both state and Islamic law) by financing card and dice games at large gatherings. Police from permanent police posts at Simpang Kelayang and Sungai Parit also often attend gatherings both to pick up a little baksheesh from the card and dice games and to gamble. Many Talang Mamak are attracted to the card and dice games and some gamble
heavily, incurring debts which, because Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim refuse to lend money to known or suspected heavy gamblers, can be very difficult to manage.

In February 1992, I returned to Tiga Balai and, after spending a couple of months living with Batin Gandung and his family, I bought a house in Tran Perigi and began clearing the land and repairing and improving the condition of the house. While major structural changes were being made to the house, I slept in an empty house (also in Tran, on the main track near the school) owned by Umar's brother, Kharudin, who is known to the Talang Mamak as Panjang (which means long). He is called this because he is tall (about five feet eight), in contrast to his elder brother Umar, who is only about five feet tall. When my house was habitable, I moved in and started making furniture and preparing the land for farming. Making furniture for the house and gardening were long-term jobs which my friends and neighbours took a great interest in. In February 1993, my wife Adriani joined me in Tran where we stayed until March 1994. During my time in Tiga Balai I made several journeys to Padang in order to visit Andalas University, Padang and meet my academic sponsor. Many students in the anthropology department of Andalas University are interested in the Talang Mamak and one group of friends organised several fields trips to Tiga Balai to visit Adriani and me. Altogether there have been four field trips from Universitas Andalas to Tiga Balai. The first was made in 1992 by Lely and Aida, who ate and slept with a Muslim family in Sungai Parit and spent two weeks studying child-rearing techniques and forest utilisation (see Tatiana 1992) in Talang Sungai Limau. The three other visits have all involved a group of friends lead by Sri and Dedi. The first time they visited, in 1992, I was in Padang and they spent one uncomfortable night (during which they heard mysterious voices) in Panjang's empty house before returning to Petonggan. On their next two visits they spent three or four days with Adriani and I while they collected data about forest resources and land use, took photos and tried to buy barang

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12 I bought the house and the quarter of hectare of land that came with it from Johan, (who lives in Tran) for Rp.120,000. He had bought it from Nawar whose daughter and son-in-law occupied the house for a short time in 1990 before they divorced. Jusar helped me renovate the house. Our first job was to dig an irrigation ditch to prevent the house from flooding after every heavy rainfall. After that we replaced all inferior timber, raised a wooden floor, built interior walls, replaced the doors, added more windows, repaired the roof, erected a porch, and mosquito-proofed the interior. We also dug a well and built a wash-house and a toilet.
antik (old handicrafts) from our neighbours. Flora, from Medan, also spent a week conducting research in Tiga Balai during our stay. 

In 1993, a new development initiative called Gerakan Pembangunan Desa Mandiri (the movement for autonomous rural development), or Gerbangsari, was introduced into Riau. According to the Bupati of Rengat, Ruchiyat Saefudin, all the roads to Talang Mamak settlements were repaired and upgraded as a result of Gerbangsari (Riau Pos 30-1-94). Although the roads were not repaired, the occasion was marked by a small concrete monument built at the junction of the roads to Talang Durian Cacar and Talang Sungai Limau, outside the Inpres school in Talang Perigi. This is a four-sided stepped pyramid of whitewashed concrete about a metre tall and a metre wide at its base. A labu (vegetable gourd), which has since been smashed, was cemented on top. Later that year, in December, Pekan Budaya Masyarakat Pedalaman (exhibition of isolated cultures) was held in Pekanbaru and Talang Mamak were invited to take part. (A group of Talang Mamak from the Gangsal-Seberida region was also invited to Pekanbaru.) This exhibition featured displays and performances by people from the Philippines, Malaysia, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Irian Jaya and Sumatra and was mainly sponsored by ASEAN (the Association of South East Asian Nations).  
At the request of the Camat of Pasir Penyu, Umar chose people from three different talang to represent the Talang Mamak at the exhibition: from Perigi, Batin Tomin, Sutan Mohammad, about five other men and a group of unmarried women – which included one of Umar’s (Melayu) teenage daughters; from Gedabu Batin Urusan and a similar group of his anak buah; and from Sungai Limau Batin Canto and several of his anak buah. Before leaving for Pekanbaru, Umar took these Talang Mamak to the Bupati’s office complex near Rengat where they spent two days deciding what to perform and rehearsing their acts. The exhibition opened with a parade through the streets of Pekanbaru, for which Talang Mamak were given flags, pennants and costumes consisting of black drawstring trousers, black shirts and black sarongs. The exhibition lasted for two days, during which time Talang Mamak danced, sang and gave a demonstration of cock-fighting on stage and displayed a variety of exhibits and skills in a partitioned enclosure. Umar managed all, and took part in most, of the Talang Mamak stage performances, for which the men were asked to wear their black sarongs like cawat (loincloths). Although Umar complied, Sutan Mohammad and other men flatly refused, considering it degrading. The Talang Mamak and Umar ate and slept in a nearby boarding-house where they were supplied with meals, cigarettes and sirih (betel). Most of the Talang
Mamak did not like the city and few went out on their own. The weather was extremely hot and when not working at the exhibition, which was very crowded, they relaxed at the boarding house where the men slept on the floor in one large room and the women shared two smaller rooms. Vehicles were supplied to drive them from the boarding house to the venue. When they returned to Rengat, each person received Rp.10,000 from the Bupati, Ruchiyat Saefudin, who said that the exhibition had given the Talang Mamak an opportunity to get acquainted with ‘other worlds’ (Riau Pos 30.1.94). 1993 also saw the introduction of Pendidikan Ketrampilan Keluarga (family welfare education program), or PKK, into Tiga Balai wherein a woman is selected by the Kepala Desa of each talang (in all cases Kepala Desa have chosen their wives) to organise meetings where Talang Mamak women can learn new skills (cake-making, sewing, etc) from women from Petonggan who are paid for their services. Each talang now receives Rp.100,000 a year for PKK which is collected by the Kepala Desa.13

In January 1994, the government increased its efforts to educate Talang Mamak children by building two sekolah kunjung (visiting or temporary schools) in Tiga Balai. Under Umar’s supervision, Mahyuzak and Rekani Ihsan, both residents of Petonggan, were chosen as teachers and given Rp.500,000 each to build two small school rooms. The teachers oversaw the building of their schools while the Talang Mamak provided all labour and building materials free. Mahyuzak’s school-house is in Talang Gedabu in front of Kepala Desa Urusan’s house and Rekani’s is in Dusun Keminyan in Talang Perigi. While the new school in Talang Perigi has walls of woven bamboo, the school in Talang Gedabu has walls of tied poles. Both buildings have roofs of rumbia (sago-palm leaves). Each teacher is to be supplied with a trail-bike for journeys to and from their school. By March 1994, only the school in Talang Gedabu was open (Rekani’s bike had not yet arrived) and with the incentive of free uniforms, which were donated by Stan.Vac., daily attendance was in the low thirties.

In April 1994, large amounts of government money may appear in Tiga Balai as a result of Inpres Desa Tertinggal (Presidential Program on Underdeveloped Villages), or IDT, ‘an attempt to liberate 27.2 million Indonesians from the vicious cycle of poverty’ (Jakarta Post 29.11.94).

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13 For more information about PKK in Riau see Aziz (1986 pp.263–281)
In IDT each talang will have access to Rp.20,000,000 from which they may borrow in order to start up business ventures such as animal husbandry or opening kedai (small shop). From the profits of these enterprises, the Talang Mamak will be expected to pay back their initial loans.\textsuperscript{14}

Since the formation of the Republic of Indonesia, many changes have taken place in Tiga Balai. As a result of the introduction of state administration into the Talang Mamak region, conflict has arisen which has divided the Talang Mamak into two groups: one of which welcomes the money and authority of the Indonesian government and orients itself towards Petonggan, Umar, sekretaris and the Camat; and another which wants to maintain the historical links between the Sultan of Inderagiri and Talang Mamak, uphold the sumpah and meet Tengku Arief at the bi-annual senah in Rengat. The building of roads, schools and Tran Perigi (especially the mosque) has not been welcomed by those Talang Mamak who wish to remain loyal to the Sultan and has helped to define the boundaries between the two groups.

While open conflict between these groups is rare, tension (especially evident in marriages between the two groups) does exist and is, in a sense, sanctioned by the state through its reluctance to intercede, on behalf of its Talang Mamak representatives, in disputes in Tiga Balai. Although, inside Tiga Balai, there are both terms (adat, desa, etc) and social groupings (evident at kumpulan) which indicate a political split in the population, pegawai do not recognise any such divisions among Talang Mamak and have never intervened on behalf of their loyal charges in disputes between the two groups. Although they have been unable to elicit direct action from pegawai, government supporters in Tiga Balai, who all enjoy some benefits from the increasing amount of government funds entering the talang, see their future in terms of their relationship with the new republic and their past in terms of links with kerajaan Inderagiri. What both separates this group from their Melayu neighbours and allows them to manage changes in patronage is their adat, which is seen as being in the hands of title holders and their nenek moyang (ancestors), independent of external authority and unchanging.

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\textsuperscript{14} I don’t know why the money available for each talang is limited to Rp.20,000,000. According to the Riau Pos newspaper (30-1-94) every desa (rural community) should have Rp.60,000,000 to draw upon, after permission has been granted from the relevant sekretaris and Camat.
This view of adat is in contrast to that held by those who wish to uphold the sumpah as they see adat as being intimately connected with the Sultan who is both its source and protector. For this group the intrusion of the state has already been damaging for adat, which it is up to the Talang Mamak to defend and uphold by maintaining links with the Sultan and rejecting, whenever practical, kerajaan ([the] kingdom [of]) Inderagiri’s rival, the new republic.

While the supporters of Tengku Arief are trying to maintain an authority structure which has the Sultan at its head and has no direct links with government administration, holders of government titles and their followers have formulated a much larger hierarchy which incorporates both government officials and local leaders. At the top of this new structure sits the Presiden, the modern equivalent of the god-king or the distant Raja who once ruled from Melaka or Johor. While the Presiden is a potential rival of Tengku Arief (as they belong to different political parties) the Presiden’s authority is indirectly acknowledged by leaders of the group of Talang Mamak who wish to remain loyal to the royal house of Inderagiri. They describe him to their followers as a kind of elder brother-cum-adviser to Tengku Arief, whose activities he sanctions. While the Presiden is known only through pictures hanging in offices and shops and is generally regarded as being entirely good, many of the pegawai, who government title-holding Talang Mamak meet every few months, are considered to be dishonest, lazy, or at least guilty of maintaining a policy of deliberate inactivity and of working in alliance with Tengku Arief to frustrate and undermine government supporters in Tiga Balai.

The place that the palace and court once held in the lives of the pro-government group has been taken by the Camat’s offices, from where the pegawai, as did court ministers before them, administer Tiga Balai. Representing the state in the Talang Mamak region and, like his predecessor the Bendahara, making large profits from his position, is the new republic’s Koordinator installed to oversee the implementation of its policies. Beneath the Koordinator, new titles have also been introduced in to the administration of Tiga Balai, along with a new form of favour which is paid in cash. The state has also encouraged Talang Mamak to occupy a more permanent site, called Tran Perigi, which was cleared and built with government
money and which includes a mosque\textsuperscript{15}. As well as moving the centre of local government, the state has also developed a new market site at Petonggan which has become wealthy and renowned through trade in a new tree resin (rubber) most of which is collected by Talang Mamak who trade it for goods, such as salt and rice, with Melayu rubber dealers who fix the rates of exchange. Most Talang Mamak men are in debt to a rubber dealer. While most men have become bonded by debt to Melayu rubber dealers, the introduction of IDT (government sponsored loan programme) offers a new form of debt-bondage to Talang Mamak men, the new patrons being powerful government departments which have vast amounts of money at their disposal.

Another major factor, which continues to affect and shape conflict between those Talang Mamak who support the government and those who uphold the sumpah, is the allocation and distribution of government funds in Tiga Balai. Since the 1960s, the amount of money put into Tiga Balai has steadily increased and nowadays each Talang Mamak Kepala Desa receives: his own wage of Rp.35,000 a month; the wages of his five or six Ketua (Rp.12,500 each a month); Perangkat Desa funds of Rp.17,500 a month, which is divided up between government employees below the rank of Ketua, e.g. MD; PKK funds of Rp.100,000 per year; Bangdes at Rp.5,000,000 a year; and IDT at up to Rp.20,000,000. In 1994 up to Rp.26,630,000 of government money will arrive in each talang. Such amounts of money are beginning to attract attention: both from leaders of the group who wish to remain loyal to the Sultan (some of whom are starting to appreciate the advantages of being a Kepala Desa); and from a few men in Petonggan who are becoming interested in taking a more active role in the administration of Tiga Balai. Each talang has been affected differently by changes introduced since the formation of the Republic of Indonesia. While some have been divided over disagreements directly resulting from government policies, others have remained politically stable but have been radically altered by the development of local resources.

\textit{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{15} For a discussion of the successes and failures of government resettlement projects in Indonesia see Sumardjan (1990 pp.3–16).
CHAPTER THREE
LEADERS AND TITLES

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

I first heard about the Talang Mamak in 1988 from a taxi-driver in Rengat when I was visiting the town as part of the preparations for Project Soma. He pointed across the Inderagiri and said that there was a *suku terbelakang*¹ (uncultivated tribal group), called Talang Mamak living on the other side. I had a permit, from LIPI², which allowed me to conduct research in the district of Inderagiri Hulu and instructed me to report to the Camat, in Air Molek, upon arrival. The Camat confirmed that there was a *suku terasing*, called *suku* Talang Mamak, living in the forest inland from Petonggan. The Camat advised me not to go and stay with the Talang Mamak because, as he said, it was too dangerous on two accounts: firstly, the forest was a hostile environment containing many harmful creatures such as mosquitoes, tigers, leeches, snakes and ghosts; and, secondly, the Talang Mamak were dirty and poor, possessed *ilmu*³, practised *magik*⁴ and might poison me.

Once the Camat understood that I wanted to meet some Talang Mamak, he kindly ordered two *pegawai* (government officers) to take me across the river and introduce me. Although initially, the *pegawai* did not seem too pleased at this, they were friendly and helpful. They took me, on the back of a moped, upstream from Air Molek to Bongkal Malang, where we left the metalled road and took a narrow path towards the river. After a few miles we reached the Inderagiri and headed downstream to Dusan Tua, where we took a *sampan* (motorised river-boat) to Petonggan on the other bank. We stopped in Petonggan, where the *pegawai* hoped to introduce me to Umar, the *Kepala Desa* of Petonggan and *Koordinator Talang*

footnotes

1 *Suku terbelakang* is a common Indonesian categorisation for isolated communities that are not members of Indonesia’s four recognised religious groups and are not thought to share mainstream Indonesian values. It means an ethnic group with an underdeveloped culture.

2 LIPI is the Indonesian Academy of Sciences who kindly provided me with the necessary documentation to live with and report on the Talang Mamak.

3 *Ilmu* means knowledge but in this context, and when applied to Talang Mamak generally, it implies esoteric knowledge, mysticism and occultism (see Dobbin 1983 p.121).

4 *Magik* or *magi* is used by many urban Melayu to mean magic.
Mamak, but he was not at home. The pegawai told me that Petonggan was the last Melayu village before the Talang Mamak region and that from there we must walk.

Leaving the river behind us, we walked out of the back of Petonggan on a narrow, raised track through a swamp-forest. After about a mile the land rose slightly and there were a few houses and huts with cultivated plots and rubber gardens. This was Dusun Jaya, a mixed Melayu and Talang Mamak village. After Dusun Jaya the path cut across a series of gently sloping tree-covered valleys. We saw no-one for several miles, until we came upon areas that had recently been cleared of trees. These tracts had small stilted huts in the middle of them and small smoking fires here and there.

About two hours after leaving Petonggan we walked up a valley slope and into a large clearing in which stood a long, white-washed, tin-roofed building. This was the recently established school, built to educate Talang Mamak. Walking past the school we came to a house, of similar design to the school, where the pegawai stopped and called out. A man looked out of the house and came out pulling a shirt on, over his shorts. Some mats were brought from the house and we were invited to sit in a shady spot not far from the house. The man was introduced to me as Sutan Mohammad, Datuk Patih of Talang Mamak. We shook hands. A moment later three more men arrived and one of them was introduced to me as Gandung, Batin of Talang Perigi. We shook hands. Sutan Mohammad then took out a small woven bag from which he produced tobacco, newspaper and a lump of reddish-brown resin which he invited us to smoke. Gandung also got out a packet of cigarettes and offered them round. Both men lit up. Someone cut down some green coconuts and the pegawai and I were given one each to drink straight from the shell. Having been formally requested, by the pegawai, to do so, both Sutan Mohammad and Gandung agreed to let me, and the other members of the expedition (who they had not yet met), live in the Talang Mamak area and do research.

footnotes

5 Both Gandung and Sutan were aware of the pegawai fear of eating or drinking anything that could be contaminated by the Talang Mamak. The coconuts which the pegawai opened themselves were considered pure and safe.
I stayed in Tiga Balai for about three months and became interested in competition for leadership titles and the effects of the introduction of salaries and uniforms for leaders. During this period I travelled extensively throughout the Talang Mamak region, living in Talang Mamak houses and enjoying their hospitality. I visited all the Talang Mamak settlements but I spent most time in Talang Perigi, with Gandung, and in Talang Sungai Limau, with Maiyan and Canto.

When I returned, four years later, much had changed. Logging companies were active in the Talang Mamak region and the tracks from Bongkal Malang to the river, and from Petonggan to Perigi, and beyond, had been widened to accommodate logging trucks. In Perigi itself, a large area of land, about one mile from the school, had been cleared and more than fifty tin-roofed houses and a small mosque had been erected on the site. This settlement is called Tran Perigi. It was built by the government to provide permanent housing for the Talang Mamak. Many of the houses in Tran Perigi were unoccupied and, after I had spent a few months living in Gandung's house, I moved into one of these empty houses where, about six months later, my wife, Adriani, joined me. Altogether I was in Tran Perigi for about two years. Most of this time was spent with our immediate neighbours, in particular Jari and his wife, Sariyah, Bagum and his family, Panca and his family, Sutan Mohammad and Nian and her daughters Likur and Nar.

TALANG MAMAK HISTORIES
What follows are histories of each of the eight talang in Tiga Balai which focus upon two different periods. Each history begins with an account of the founding of the talang in question which has been reconstructed using information obtained in conversations with older men who are generally regarded as having expert knowledge about the past. Not many men claim to possess such expertise and most people refer to and endorse the knowledge of a few senior title-holders (or former title-holders). Everyone I spoke to agreed that Sutan Mohammad possesses the most detailed and lengthy account of the establishment of Talang Durian Cacar, Talang Parit and Talang Perigi which, although few people have heard it in its entirety, can be very briefly summarised by most men. Knowledge about the founding of Talang Gedabu, Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga, Talang Jerinjing and Talang Selantai (which are seen as having been established after Talang Durian Cacar, Talang Parit and Talang Perigi) is less widespread and does not feature prominently in Sutan Mohammad's memorised history of
Tiga Balai. Generally speaking the stories I include about the establishment of these four, later, *talang* are translations of the most detailed accounts that I came across.

In Tiga Balai, Talang Sungai Limau is widely regarded as being the site of the oldest settlement in the area. This is endorsed in Sutan Mohammad's history where the region of Sungai Limau is said to have contained a settlement that was established before Talang Durian Cacar, Talang Parit and Talang Perigi. According to Sutan Mohammad, the settlement at Sungai Limau was incorporated into Tiga Balai by *Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang*. In Sungai Limau one old man called Biduan, who is a *Tua Tuah* of *Batin* Canto, is widely recognised as having expert knowledge of the founding of that *talang* and my reconstruction of the beginnings of Talang Sungai Limau is based upon conversations I had with Biduan, many of which also involved Canting – who was born in Sungai Limau and is now *Mangku* of Talang Parit. Panca, who was also born in Sungai Limau but who now lives in Talang Perigi, added more detail to the story I got from Biduan and Canting when I recounted it to him.

After describing the founding of a particular *talang*, each history then leaps forward to deal with the period within living memory, where I focus upon the fortunes of the holders of the most important leadership titles in that *talang*. This division of information about the past into two distinct periods mirrors the ways that Talang Mamak discuss the past. There appears to be very little general knowledge in Tiga Balai about the centuries between the founding of the *talang* and the present day. Although many people, especially older women, know stories that are situated in the past (presumably some time between the founding of the *talang* and the present day), these stories have a timeless quality and are not related to any particular event of wider chronological significance.

The accounts of current political situations within Tiga Balai are mostly based upon conversations held with the men who feature in them, and include different opinions and viewpoints. Apart from conflict associated with government intervention, the most

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6 An edited translation of Sutan Mohammad's history of Tiga Balai appears in chapter eight.

7 A translation of one of these stories, as told by Nian to her daughters, is included in chapter seven.
significant difference of opinion featured here is that between Sutan Mohammad, and his few anak buah, and the rest of the population of Tiga Balai, regarding the inheritance of the title Datuk Patih. While Sutan Mohammad maintains that this title should be passed down through, what he calls, keturunan bapak (patrilineal inheritance), everyone else in Tiga Balai seems to agree that the title Datuk Patih (like the title Batin) should turun ke keponakan (be passed down to a nephew).

Events in these reconstructions of the recent past are arranged chronologically following the ways that Talang Mamak organise this information. In Tiga Balai the passage of years is reckoned in terms of tahun padi, or pandak, which specifically refers to the approximately six month period between planting and harvesting rice, but is more generally used to refer to the roughly twelve month period between planting one crop and planting the next. Both important events (such as the Japanese occupation) and major kumpulan (e.g. large weddings, funerals, etc) also play a significant part in the calculation of temporal distance.

TALANG DURIAN CACAR

Talang Durian Cacar was founded by Si Bunga, the youngest son of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, who gave Si Bunga the title Datuk Patih, put him in overall charge of Talang Mamak affairs and told him to pass his title and duties on to one of his maternal nephews, or, according to Sutan Mohammad, his youngest son. Since the establishment of the kingdom of Inderagiri, holders of the title Datuk Patih have confirmed their allegiance to the Sultan of Inderagiri at the bi-annual semah. At these meetings, each Batin and the Datuk Patih make offerings of rice, chickens, vegetables and herbs to the king. The offerings made to the Sultan differ both between talang and between the Islamic festivals.

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8 Most of the information included in the following account of leaders and titles in Durian Cacar was obtained in conversations with Sutan Mohammad, Mangku Cuan, Datuk Patih Gagah and Laman.

9 This population figure and the ones that follow for Parit, Perigi, Gedabu and Sungai Limau were given to me by Umar who says that they are the result of a government survey conducted in 1985.

10 Tengku Arief (1963 p.41) maintains that although Nara Singha was the first Sultan of Inderagiri to live on the river, he was, in fact, the fourth Sultan of Inderagiri, his three predecessors having ruled from Melaka. While other writers disagree with him on this matter, maintaining that Nara Singha was the first king of Indragiri, several agree with him that Nara Singha was collected from Melaka by a character called Datuk Patih (See Asmuni 1987 p.87, Lufti et al. 1977 p.151).
on which the semah is held. Talang Durian Cacar, Talang Perigi and Talang Parit always give more rice than the other talang and more is given by all talang on Raya Haji than on Hari Raya. For his part the Sultan swears to protect Talang Mamak adat from outside interference, to defend the territory of Tiga Balai and to preserve Talang Mamak autonomy — currently, for the majority of Laman’s anak buah, the most important responsibility of the Sultan is to protect the Talang Mamak and their adat from Islamic conversion. At the semah, the Sultan also gives the Datuk Patih and each of the Batin kain serahan — two metres of black cloth and two metres of white cloth. The relationship between the Datuk Patih and the Sultan, established through the sumpah, has been maintained through twenty-six generations of Datuk Patih and twenty-two different kings. It is still preserved in the biannual semah which is attended by Tengku Arief, Laman and several of his title-holding anak buah.

Towards the end of the Dutch occupation, after the European colonialists had undermined the daulat (sovereignty) of the Sultan, disagreements between the royal house and the Datuk Patih began to occur. In the late 1930s, after conflict had developed between himself and the Sultan, the then Datuk Patih, Singkop, left Tiga Balai and entered Islam in Keloyang. Most people say that Singkop inherited his title from his maternal uncle, Intan, the twenty-third Datuk Patih, and that Singkop had no sisters and therefore no maternal nephew to pass his title onto, so, by general agreement, his title was given to his son Ma’Ijin. However, according to Sutan Mohammad, the title Datuk Patih has always been passed down patrilineally and he claims that Intan was Singkop’s father and that Ma’Ijin inherited the title Datuk Patih by right as Singkop’s son. Having seen his son inherit the title Datuk Patih, Singkop left Tiga Balai and went to live in Keloyang where he became a Muslim and died some time in the early 1940s. His son, Ma’Ijin, governed Tiga Balai from Durian Cacar and upheld the sumpah at the biannual semah until the Japanese arrived, some time around 1943, when invading forces captured the twenty-third Sultan of Inderagiri, Mahmudsyah, and held him prisoner at

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11 I got this figure from Sutan Mohammad, who claims to be the twenty-eighth descendant of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, the founder of Tiga Balai. Amongst other documents that he has inherited from his father, Sutan Mohammad has a list of the names of twenty-seven men who have held the title Datuk Patih — the last being Mohammad Dinan.

12 In Tengku Arief’s account (1963 p.41) the twenty-fifth Sultan of Inderagiri reigned in the 1940s.
Pekanbaru. According to Sutan Mohammad, Ma'Ijin saw this as the end of the reign of the royal house of Inderagiri and refused to accept the authority of the Sultan when he returned to Rengat after having been released by the Japanese. Sutan Mohammad says that at the first semah after Mahmudsyah’s release, Ma'Ijin demanded of the Sultan that Talang Mamak be taught to read and write. Ma'Ijin refused to make offerings to the Sultan until these demands were met. After his requests had met with an angry response, Ma'Ijin never returned to the palace and major conflict erupted between Mahmudsyah and Ma'Ijin which resulted in the Sultan ordering Pajar, Batin of Talang Parit to select a replacement for Ma'Ijin, who was stripped of the title Datuk Patih. Temanggis, son of Dusan (Ma'Ijin’s sister), was duly chosen by Batin Pajar and he became Datuk Patih in about 1944. With the appointment of Temanggis (which was sanctioned by Pajar, Batin of Talang Parit and Nulan, Batin of Talang Perigi), the inheritance of the title Datuk Patih returned to the matrilineal line that most people say it has followed since Si Bunga, the first Datuk Patih. Sutan Mohammad, who maintains that every Datuk Patih from Si Bunga to Ma'Ijin had inherited the title from his father, is in disagreement with the vast majority of the population of Tiga Balai on this point. Up to the time of Ma'Ijin’s conflict with Mahmudsyah, Datuk Patih had always lived in Durian Cacar. Temanggis, who had left Durian Cacar when he married a woman from Talang Parit and took up residence with her family, became the first Datuk Patih not to reside in Durian Cacar. Most Talang Mamak men, except Datuk Patih, Batin, Manti, Mangku, Dukun and Kemantan (who usually remain near their mothers and sisters), move to their wife’s families house when they marry and, according to many current title holders, instead of staying in his wife’s family’s house, Temanggis should have returned to live near his mother’s house in Talang Durian Cacar when he was made Datuk Patih. While Temanggis held the title Datuk Patih, and resided in Talang Parit, Ma'Ijin and a large group of his anak buah continued to live in Durian Cacar until 1960, when Ma'Ijin died, after passing his claim to the title Datuk Patih on to his son Mohammad Dinan who was married to Serong (who lived with her son Sutan Mohammad until her death in the early 1990s) and was living with her in Talang Perigi. According to Panca, before Ma'Ijin died he moved to the Cenaku region where he entered Islam.

In the mid-1960s, the Camat’s administration began to collect information about the Talang Mamak in preparation for the division of Tiga Balai into Kelurahan and the appointment of Kepala Desa, a government initiative which may have been linked with the death of Sultan
Mahmudsyah in 1963. Subsequently, Umar, who was given the title Koordinator Talang Mamak, set about choosing five men to become Kepala Desa. While Umar was gathering information for the Camat, Pajar, Batin of Talang Parit, and Nulan, Batin of Talang Perigi, organised a large kumpulan at which Mohammad Dinan was formally installed as Datuk Patih. At this time, just after Sultan Mahmudsyah’s death, Tengku Arief, newly arrived from Jakarta, was trying to establish himself as his father’s successor and the rightful head of the Talang Mamak authority structure. During this period of uncertainty in the royal house of Inderagiri, when Temenggung Cik Oemar acted as its temporary head, Pajar and Nulan were negotiating with Umar to become Kepala Desa — as was Mohammad Dinan. The appointment of Mohammad Dinan as Datuk Patih, which was not sanctioned by Tengku Arief, may have been a prerequisite for his appointment as Kepala Desa. Despite the fact that Temanggis attended this ceremony, many of his anak buah were angered by Mohammad Dinan’s appointment and suspicious of the activities of Umar and pegawai (local government officers) in Tiga Balai. Temanggis probably sanctioned the appointment of Mohammad Dinan in order to comply with the wishes of Pajar who had made Temanggis Datuk Patih and in whose talang Temanggis lived. Pajar and Nulan may well have made Mohammad Dinan Datuk Patih at the request of Umar who was probably under orders to give the position Kepala Desa only to the most senior holders of adat titles. Although Mohammad Dinan never became a Muslim, to many Talang Mamak he represented Islam in Tiga Balai, as he had inherited his claim to the title Datuk Patih patrilineally through two men who did enter Islam. During the mid-1960s, a man called Laman began to emerge as the leader of a growing number of Talang Mamak who were suspicious of the activities of Mohammad Dinan, Umar and pegawai. Laman was born in Talang Perigi in about 1940 and married Pulan, who was also from Talang Perigi, in the late 1950s. According to many people, Laman’s marriage to Pulan was kawin sumbang (forbidden marriage) and this was the cause of the physical deformities evident in their first, stillborn, child which, Sutan Mohammad says, looked like a turtle.

Despite being made Datuk Patih, Mohammad Dinan never attended the semah and the death of Sultan Mahmudsyah, in 1963, strengthened his conviction that the reign of the royal house of Inderagiri was over. Many Talang Mamak did not agree with Mohammad Dinan. Through the offices of Cik Oemar (who has been Temenggung to both Sultan Mahmudsyah and Tengku Arief) and under the growing influence of Laman, Temanggis began meeting Mahmudsyah’s son and successor Tengku Arief, who installed Temanggis as Datuk Patih and Laman as Wakil
Patih. After this, Laman began both to organise support for Tengku Arief within Tiga Balai and to encourage Batin to meet him at the bi-annual semah as they had met his father Mahmudsyah. Laman, who is a charismatic man and a good talker, has become both the focal point of support for, and the voice of, Tengku Arief within Tiga Balai. After Batin Pajar had sanctioned Mohammad Dinan’s installation as Datuk Patih, Temanggis, whose wife had recently died, married a woman from Durian Cacar, left Talang Parit and went to live in his wife’s talang. Around the same time, Laman and four other families decided to leave Talang Perigi. They established a settlement in Ekoh hulu (upstream of the river Ekoh) in south Durian Cacar. Laman and Pulan may have been the subjects of gossip in Talang Perigi regarding their allegedly improper marriage and both Sutan Mohammad and Panca maintain that the possible threat of hukuman (judgement) from Batin Nulan, influenced Laman’s decision to quit Talang Perigi. However, Laman claims that his only motive for leaving Perigi was to be close to a large durian orchard he had inherited near to the house of his maternal nephew, Kantor, who was Tua Tuah in Ekoh hulu. Not long after Laman and his anak buah had established themselves on the banks of the Ekoh, Temanggis and his new wife also moved to Ekoh hulu to join Laman. News of the Ekoh hulu settlement spread quickly throughout Tiga Balai and other families who wished both to uphold the sumpah and to support Temanggis as the rightful Datuk Patih began to move to Ekoh hulu and, as the settlement got bigger, Tengku Arief and Laman started to implement changes in Tiga Balai.

According to many people (both Talang Mamak and Melayu) Tengku Arief still has considerable influence over some sections of the Melayu population of Inderagiri Hulu and many government posts in the region are held by members of his family. In the 1960s, Raja Amat, the former Amir (Emir) of the royal house of Inderagiri and a relative of Tengku Arief, held a minor government post in Simpang Kelayang. In 1966, Laman arranged a meeting at Raja Amat’s offices where Mohammad Dinan was removed of the title Datuk Patih and replaced by Temanggis. Soon after this, in 1967, Mohammad Dinan, who continued to live in Talang Perigi, became Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar which accelerated the division of Durian Cacar into two groups: one larger group led by Laman and Temanggis, centred in Ekoh Hulu and oriented towards Tengku Arief, and one smaller group led by Mohammad Dinan, centred in both the Rimpahan area of Durian Cacar and in Talang Perigi and oriented towards the Camat. By this time, both Temanggis and Mohammad Dinan, who were first cousins, were old men and thinking about who would succeed them.
Just before Mohammad Dinan died in Talang Perigi, in 1970 (with his eldest son being already dead) he passed his claims to be Datuk Patih and Kepala Desa on to his next son, Sutan Mohammad. Through the support of Umar, Sutan Mohammad replaced his father as Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar and took up residence in his father's house in Talang Perigi. Just before being given the job of Kepala Desa, Sutan Mohammad sold a large rubber plot (owned by his wife, Siti Hamidah) to Umar, who then gave it to his brother Panjang. At the naik tambak (funeral)\(^\text{13}\) of Mohammad Dinan, which took place about one month after his death and was presided over by Gandung, Batin of Talang Perigi, Sutan Mohammad was given the title Datuk Patih and his younger brother, Cuan, was made Mangku of Talang Durian Cacar.

According to Sutan Mohammad and Cuan, they both have a legitimate claim to the titles Datuk Patih and Mangku, the former from their father and the latter from one of their maternal uncles. In 1980 Temanggis died, having chosen Gagah as his successor. However, Gagah was considered too young and inexperienced (he was about twenty) to be Datuk Patih, one of Temanggis' brothers, Sanut, temporarily took the title until Gagah was ready to be Datuk Patih. While Gagah was initially a reluctant candidate for the title Datuk Patih, under the guidance and support of Laman who, says Gagah, taught him about adat and the role of Datuk Patih, he began to attend the semah. A few years after Temanggis died, Gagah was given the title Datuk Patih at a ceremony organised by Laman and attended by: Rapan (who Laman had recently made Batin of Talang Perigi); Rusian, Batin of Talang Parit; and Canto, Batin of Talang Sungai Limau. These same men also went with Laman and Gagah to Rengat to meet Cik Oemar and swear allegiance to Tengku Arief. (In 1983, this group of Talang Mamak leaders tried to crown Tengku Arief as the twenty-sixth Sultan of Inderagiri at Keloyang, but before the ceremony was completed the police arrived.) As support for the new Datuk Patih, Gagah, grew, Sutan Mohammad, who lived in Talang Perigi where he had the support of the majority of Gandung's anak buah, began to find himself increasingly isolated from affairs in Durian Cacar, his own anak buah being reduced to a small group of families centred around the house of his younger brother Cuan in the Rimpahan region of Talang Durian Cacar.

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\(^{13}\) Naik tambak or naik tanah takes place after the corpse has been buried in the forest. When the family of the deceased has enough rice, coconuts, tea, sugar, etc, to entertain the guests who will attend naik tambak, a kumpulan is organised at which a wooden structure is raised above the grave site and decorated. (For a description of naik tambak, see chapter seven.)
Although he was, at first, unwilling to be a candidate for the position of Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar, Gagah, who in 1988, said that he didn’t want to be Kepala Desa because the job held too much responsibility, did take this post when Sutan Mohammad was removed of the title by the Camat in 1990. Laman says that Sutan Mohammad was fired as the result of communications between himself and the Camat wherein Laman informed the Camat that according to Talang Mamak adat Sutan Mohammad was not Datuk Patih and that having such a man as Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar was causing strife within Tiga Balai. Laman put Gagah forward as the true holder of the title Datuk Patih and as a more appropriate candidate for the job of Kepala Desa. The Camat duly invited Gagah to his offices in Air Molek (along with Umar and Ramlie Shaleh, sekretaris of Talang Durian Cacar) and made him Kepala Desa of Durian Cacar. It took several letters (which Laman began sending in 1988) before Gagah was installed as Kepala Desa14 – Laman says that he has never received a reply to any of the letters that he has sent to the Camat’s office. Gagah had always been reluctant to meet with Tengku Arief or attend the semah (in 1988, two years before he was appointed Kepala Desa, he did not attend either of the semah) and, once he was appointed Kepala Desa and began going to Air Molek regularly to meet the Camat and collect his wages and other funds destined for Talang Durian Cacar, he stopped going to the palace in Rengat altogether.

As a consequence of Gagah’s failure to uphold the sumpah, by 1992 Gagah and Laman were no longer in contact. Gagah now lives the life of a Talang Mamak Kepala Desa, frequently visiting both Umar and the sekretaris in Petonggan and the Camat and his pegawai in Air Molek. He enjoys the money handed out to him via the Camat’s office, which he is currently using to both build himself a large house and pay off debts accumulated chiefly through the gambling activities of his sons. While Laman says that he stopped supporting Gagah when Gagah stopped attending the semah and began fulfilling the duties of Kepala Desa, Gagah maintains that the reason why Laman wanted him to be Kepala Desa in the first place was so that Laman could get access to government funds. Gagah says that Laman stopped supporting him because

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14 Laman says that he cannot read or write and I don’t know who writes his letters but it is not Ramlie Shaleh, sekretaris of Talang Durian Cacar, who Laman distrusts. Ramlie is one of Laman’s nephews who entered Islam and moved to Petonggan. Laman doesn’t know how Ramlie became sekretaris and as far as Laman is concerned he is an ally of Sutan Mohammad.
he refused to give Laman money. Laman now gives his support to Jusuf who began attending the semah in 1993, shortly before being given the title Datuk Patih at a ceremony organised by Laman and attended by Rapan, Batin of Talang Perigi, and Rusian, Batin of Talang Parit. Laman says that he is disappointed in Gagah, who he describes as malas dan mahu (lazy and humble), and that he feels more confident that Jusuf will be loyal to Tengku Arief. In the same year that Laman made Jusuf Datuk Patih, he also installed Mayur as the first ever Batin of the Sungai Jirak region of Durian Cacar which had previously only ever had a Tua Tuah. Since he married into Durian Cacar and became Batin of Sungai Jirak, Mayur, who is a maternal nephew of Bebas (the last Batin of Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga), like Jusuf, pays tribute to Tengku Arief at the semah. Laman says that Talang Mamak Kepala Desa are a threat to adat and that, in order to maintain adat, he must install Batin in every talang that has a Kepala Desa. Many people, including Gagah, believe that Laman wants to have Gagah removed and Jusuf installed as Kepala Desa of Durian Cacar. (Like Gagah, I first heard about this from sekretaris in Petonggan who knew that Laman had been in contact with the Camat.) During 1993 Gagah did not have any contact with Laman but at the beginning of 1994 he heard from a mutual acquaintance that Laman wanted to see him to discuss IDT funds for Durian Cacar.

Since its formation in 1971, Tengku Arief has been an active member of Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party), or PDI, which, along with Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party), or PPP, is one of two parties in opposition to the ruling Golkar party. Laman is also a supporter of PDI and he and many of his anak buah vote for them in presidential elections, while government employees, including Kepala Desa, vote for Golkar, which, since the inclusion of Tiga Balai in Presidential elections, has always won the majority of Talang Mamak votes. According to people in Petonggan, PDI won more votes in Tiga Balai in the 1992 Presidential elections than ever before. As well as maintaining his political interests (he is currently trying to get into Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat [the People's Consultative Congress or Indonesian upper house] or MPR), Tengku Arief is also committed to the sumpah and he has established a close relationship with Laman (who has made several trips to Jakarta to meet with Tengku Arief) and he stays in Rengat for at least a month at each semah. Together, Tengku Arief and Laman have been able to maintain the pre-independence authority structure of Sultan, Datuk Patih and Batin despite the introduction of Kepala Desa. Although he is not a recognised title holder Laman is at the pinnacle of this structure in Tiga Balai and he keeps it alive by installing new Batin to uphold the sumpah as
other Batin become Kepala Desa and employees of the Indonesian State. Although appearing to represent an alternative to the government's administration, Laman and Tengku Arief have also been able to influence many local government decisions. Sutan Mohammad's sacking as Kepala Desa and Mohammad Dinan's loss of the title Datuk Patih are two such examples and, in both cases, local government action was taken against descendants of Ma'Ijin, the first Datuk Patih (in living memory) to challenge the authority of the Sultan. In 1988 Laman already knew about the government's plans to clear most, if not all, of Tiga Balai to make way for kelapa sawit (oil-palm) plantations and he maintains that this is the major source of conflict between Talang Mamak adat and local government employees.

Despite having rejected the authority of the Sultan and backing the development of government posts and initiatives in Tiga Balai, Ma'Ijin's descendants have not been able to maintain the support of the Camat and other local government officers. Nowadays Sutan Mohammad has no desire to be either Kepala Desa or Datuk Patih although he maintains that he is the rightful holder of the title Datuk Patih. He owns a shirt, a sword and some documents which he claims prove the legitimacy of his inheritance. Although Sutan Mohammad has very little to do with events in Durian Cacar, he does take an active role in affairs in Talang Perigi, especially since his keponakan (nephew) Tomin became Batin in 1993. Sutan Mohammad still has a few anak buah who live in Rimpahan near the house of his brother, Cuan, and Gagah has a group of anak buah in the Gelugur region but for the most part Talang Durian Cacar is still administered through the authority structure that was begun by Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and the first Sultan of Inderagiri, Nara Singha.

TALANG PARIT

Talang Parit (population 650) was founded by Si Besi, the eldest son of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, who gave Si Besi the title Batin, put him in charge of affairs in Talang Parit and told him to pass his title and duties on to one of his maternal nephews. Descendants of Si Besi

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15 Talang Parit is also known as Talang Sei Parit or Talang Sungai Parit.

16 Most of the information included in the following account of leaders and titles in Parit was obtained in conversations with Batin Rusian, Mangku Canting, Tua Tuah Biduan and Laman.
swore to uphold the *sumpah* and to pay tribute to the *Sultan* at the *semah*. Holders of the title *Batin* of Talang Parit, being descended in a female line from Si Besi, have a special importance in Talang Mamak affairs. The *Batin* of Talang Parit should always be present at the *semah* and at the appointment of a new *Datuk Patih* or *Batin*.

At the time of Indonesian independence, Pajar, or *Batin* Buta, was *Batin* of Talang Parit and he remained loyal to the *Sultan* until just prior to his death in the mid-1960s. As *Batin* of Talang Parit, Pajar played an important role in events in Tiga Balai, especially those connected with the title *Datuk Patih*. Although he had sanctioned the passing of the title *Datuk Patih* from Singkop to his son Ma’Ijin, Pajar was chosen by Mahmudsyah to find a replacement for *Datuk Patih* Ma’Ijin after Ma’Ijin refused to accept the authority of the *Sultan*. Following Mahmudsyah’s orders, Pajar selected one of his *anak buah*, Temanggis, to be the next *Datuk Patih*. Temanggis, who was Ma’Ijin’s sister’s son, had moved into Talang Parit when he married a woman of that *talang* and he continued to live there after having been made *Datuk Patih*. During this period, Pajar, as the senior Talang Mamak leader, had a lot of influence over affairs in Tiga Balai and played an important role in maintaining the pre-independence authority structure up until just before his death. Having the *Datuk Patih* as one of his *anak buah* and being much older than Nulan, *Batin* of Talang Perigi, Pajar was the most influential Talang Mamak leader at that time. After Mahmudsyah died, Pajar remained loyal to his successor, Tengku Arief, and supported Laman’s appointment as *Wakil* (deputy) *Patih* and, prior to his own death, Pajar chose one of his sister’s sons, Rusian, as his successor and began taking him to the *semah* and preparing him for the other duties of *Batin* of Talang Parit.

Around this time, Umar began the process of choosing *Kepala Desa* for each of the *talang* and Pajar, together with Nulan, organised a *kumpulan* at which they sanctioned the appointment of Mohammad Dinan as *Datuk Patih*. After this ceremony, which ended Pajar’s loyalty to the *Sultan*, Temanggis moved to Ekoh Hulu in Talang Durian Cacar, where Laman and his followers were already living. Pajar may well have ended his loyalty to the *Sultan* and helped appoint Mohammad Dinan *Datuk Patih* as a result of negotiations he was having with Umar regarding the selection of a *Kepala Desa* for Talang Parit.

After Pajar’s death and Temanggis’ move, which both took place in the mid-1960s, Talang Parit played a less important part in the maintenance of the pre-independence authority structure. Pajar’s successor to the title *Batin*, Rusian, became the first *Kepala Desa* of Talang
Parit in 1967 (a title which he still holds today) and he began fulfilling all the duties of Kepala Desa and maintained cordial relationships with both Umar and the Camat. Despite being Kepala Desa, Rusian has been able to keep on good terms with Laman and Tengku Arief and he says that he has managed this by attending the semah and making offerings to Tengku Arief and sanctioning changes introduced into Tiga Balai by Laman and Tengku Arief. Laman says that the paying of tribute to the Sultan at the semah is the foundation of adat. He also says that if a Kepala Desa makes offerings to Tengku Arief, he will not challenge his position as Batin. Rusian maintains that he helps Laman appoint leaders because that is what people want. and that if a group of people want a new leader, he will sanction the appointment. This serves to strengthen Rusian's position as it puts him in a position of seniority to any Batin he installs. The first of these appointments was the installation of Rapan as Batin of Talang Perigi, in the late 1970s, which was followed by the appointment of Gagah as Datuk Patih in 1980. Rusian has more recently helped Laman appoint Jusuf as Datuk Patih and Mayur as Batin of Sungai Jirak. In 1983 Rusian attended a ceremony in Keloyang which was organised by Laman in order to crown Tengku Arief king of Inderagiri and which was interrupted by the police before it could be completed. Although Rusian does attend the semah where he pays tribute to Tengku Arief, he rarely stays in Rengat for more than a few days and he has not attempted to form a close relationship with either Tengku Arief or Laman. Similarly, although Rusian carries out the duties of Kepala Desa, he has not cultivated friendships with either Umar or pegawai.

Because Rusian has been able to hold both the title Batin and the job Kepala Desa of Talang Parit, its population is not divided into two groups, as has happened in other talang. However, despite being able to accommodate a Kepala Desa within the pre-independence authority structure, Talang Parit has been the site of major changes since the 1970s when the American Oil company Stan.Vac. began laying pipelines through Talang Parit and built a depot there. This oil company's activities have led to the construction of several roads in Talang Parit and the improvement of communications with Melayu towns in the vicinity. As a result, Sungai Parit is now connected by ferry with Jayapura and by road from there to Lirik where Stan.Vac has a base. Since Stan.Vac. became active in the area, the nearby Melayu kampung (village) of Sungai Parit, which is on the banks of the Inderagiri, has expanded and prospered and it now has a weekly market and several rubber dealers with whom many men in Talang Parit trade their rubber. Both Sungai Parit and Talang Parit now lie on the same road, built by Stan.Vac,
and the boundary between the two is no longer distinct. Talang Parit now has a large non-
Talang Mamak population made up of both Melayu families, who have moved inland, and
Javanese families, many of whom have moved to Talang Parit after leaving transmigrasi camps
in the area. Although many of Talang Parit’s Talang Mamak population, including Rusian
and his Mangku and Manti, currently live along this road, a large group also live in the forested
area between the road and the Ekoh river which marks the border between Talang Parit and
Talang Gedabu.

Unlike his predecessor Pajar, Rusian does not take a leading role in affairs in other talang and,
while he sanctions Laman’s activities, he does not promote them. For his part, Laman remains
suspicious of Rusian and his relationship with the Camat. Rusian’s anak buah present such a
united front that Laman would probably be unable to win support for a candidate to challenge
Rusian, should Laman wish to appoint a Batin in Talang Parit who, unlike Rusian, is loyal
solely to Tengku Arief. As a result of the apparently unanimous support for Rusian within
Talang Parit, no-one from within Tiga Balai (including Laman) interferes in its affairs. Talang
Mamak, Melayu and Javanese appear to live in harmony in Talang Parit and Rusian and his
anak buah say that in spite of the incomers and Stan.Vac.’s activities they have upheld the
principles of adat within their talang.

TALANG PERIGI
Talang Perigi17 (population 780) was founded by Si Kelopak, the middle son of Datuk Perpatih
nan Sebatang, who gave Si Kelopak the title Batin, put him in charge of affairs in Talang Perigi
and told him to pass his title and duties on to one of his maternal nephews. Descendants of Si
Kelopak swore to uphold the sumpah and to pay tribute to the Sultan at the semah. Holders of
the title Batin of Talang Perigi, being descended in a female line from Si Kelopak, have a
special significance in Talang Mamak affairs and the Batin of Talang Perigi should always be
present at the semah and at the appointment of a new Datuk Patih or Batin.

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17 Most of the information included in the following account of leaders and titles in Perigi was obtained in
conversations with Batin Gandung, Sutan Mohammad, Batin Rapan, Mangku Panca, Tua Tuah Bagun,
Kemantan Madun, Seran and Laman.
In the 1940s, Nulan was Batin of Talang Perigi, having inherited the title from his mother’s brother, Suman. Nulan remained loyal to the Sultan until the mid-1960s when, with Pajar, Batin of Talang Parit, he sanctioned the appointment of Mohammad Dinan as Datuk Patih. Mohammad Dinan had become one of Nulan’s anak buah when he married Serong and moved to Talang Perigi which allied him, and his successors, to the holders of the title Batin of Talang Perigi. At that time, the other candidate for the title Datuk Patih, Temanggis, was living in Talang Parit as one of Batin Pajar’s anak buah. Just after Nulan helped appoint Mohammad Dinan Datuk Patih, Laman and his anak buah left Perigi and moved to Ekoh Hulu where they were later joined by Temanggis. Laman may well have left Perigi after he and his wife Pulan became the subjects of gossip concerning their allegedly sumbang (prohibited) marriage, for which Nulan may have been about to punish the couple. At the same time as these events, Umar, under instructions from the Camat, was selecting candidates for the post of Kepala Desa and Tiga Balai was beginning to divide into two groups, one under Temanggis and Laman, oriented towards Tengku Arief, and one under Nulan and Mohammad Dinan, oriented towards the Camat.

Since the late 1950s Nulan had been preparing his successor Gandung to take up the duties of Batin of Talang Perigi and after Mohammad Dinan’s appointment as Datuk Patih and Laman’s and Temanggis’ move to Ekoh Hulu, which took place in about 1965, Nulan stepped down and Gandung was installed as Batin of Talang Perigi. Nulan had selected Gandung from an early age and by 1960 he was attending the semah, accompanying Nulan to large kumpulan and playing a significant role in affairs in Perigi. In contrast to most Talang Mamak title holders, who, according to my information, pass on their title at or around their death, Nulan was quite young when he handed over to Gandung – he died in 1990. Nulan’s decision may well have been affected by the imminent appointment of Kepala Desa, the death of the Sultan and the growing rivalry between Mohammad Dinan and Temanggis. In 1967, soon after his appointment as Batin, Gandung was also made Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi, and Mohammad Dinan, who was living in Perigi, became Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar. In 1970 after Mohammad Dinan’s death his son Sutan Mohammad, who had moved to Perigi when he married Siti Hamidah, became Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar and at the naik tambak (funeral) of Mohammad Dinan, Gandung appointed Sutan Mohammad as Datuk Patih. This appointment both cemented the ties between Gandung and Sutan Mohammad and heightened the rivalry the two incumbents of the title Datuk Patih: Temanggis, who was living in Ekoh
Hulu and had inherited his claim matrilineally; and Sutan Mohammad, who claimed patrilineal
descent. It also established Talang Perigi as the centre of the group oriented towards the
Camat and reaffirmed the position of Sutan Mohammad and Gandung as the leaders of this
group. For the first three years of his term of office as Batin, Gandung’s Mangku was Panta\(^\text{18}\),
who had inherited his title from his mother’s brother. Panca told me that Panta didn’t really
want to be Mangku and as a result he wasn’t very diligent in carrying out his duties.
Consequently, Gandung and several of his anak buah considered him unsuitable for the role of
Mangku. It was decided to replace him with Gandung’s maternal cousin Rapan, who was
made Mangku, despite having no inherited claim to the title. Rapan, like Gandung, is one of
Nulan’s sisters’ sons, and he was, therefore, also a candidate for the title Batin of Talang Perigi
but Gandung was preferred over him. Gandung said he chose Rapan as his Mangku both
because he was a close relative and because he wanted a position of authority.

As Mangku, Rapan would usually accompany Gandung to the semah and during these visits he
established a relationship with Laman and Tengku Arief which led to a major difference of
opinion between Mangku Rapan and his Batin. In the late 1970s, after he had been Kepala
Desa for a couple of years, Gandung stopped attending the semah but, despite this, his Mangku,
Rapan, continued to meet Laman and Tengku Arief regularly. Gandung said that he stopped
attending the semah because the kingdom of Inderagiri had finished when Indonesia got its
independence and the Presiden replaced the Sultan at the head of the Talang Mamak leadership
hierarchy\(^\text{19}\). After Gandung had declined invitations from Laman to accompany him to
Rengat on three separate occasions, Laman and his anak buah challenged his position as Batin
of Talang Perigi and, with the sanction of Tengku Arief, installed Rapan as Batin of Talang
Perigi. Laman says that he helped Rapan become Batin because Rapan and his anak buah
asked him to. Gandung told me that this incident took place after he had received an order
from Tengku Arief, via Laman, to report to him at Rengat on Hari Raya 1979. As Gandung

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\(^{18}\) This is not Dukun Panta, who appears in chapter six.

\(^{19}\) Gandung told me that he began holding semah outside his home after he stopped attending semah
organised by the royal house of Inderagiri. He maintained that although he no longer paid tribute to
the Sultan, he still upheld adat by holding his own semah at which he asked his nenek moyang for their
protection and guidance by making offerings to them on a semahan (tray).
was officiating at a large kumpulan at that time he did not attend — rather, sent his Mangku, Rapan, in his stead. When Rapan returned to Perigi, instead of reporting back to Gandung, he began telling people that Gandung was no longer Batin as he had broken the sumpah. Rapan says that he has always been opposed to government intervention in Tiga Balai and that he was particularly displeased at the government’s plans to raise a path from Petonggan through Perigi to Durian Cacar, which he had heard about from Tengku Arief. Despite telling me that he disliked the appointment of Kepala Desa and the subsequent building of the road, school and Tran, Rapan was keen for me to understand that he thought that the Camat’s work was good. Gandung moved back to Perigi, just over the border from Gedabu. After Rapan’s appointment as Batin, Gandung moved into a large house in Binjai in central Perigi, near the house of his daughter Jarun and her husband Cindai. As Gandung was now without a Mangku, Panca, who was married to a maternal cousin of Gandung’s wife but had not inherited a claim to a title, was made Mangku. Panca was born in Talang Sungai Limau and he and his wife Tambal had recently moved from Tambal’s home in Gedabu to Perigi in search of a good site for rice farming and rubber cultivation.

While Panca was being installed, Rapan was choosing his own Mangku and establishing himself both as Tengku Arief’s representative in Talang Perigi and as Laman’s main ally. In 1980, Rapan, as Batin of Perigi, together with Rusian, Batin of Talang Parit and Canto, Batin of Talang Sungai Limau, appointed Gagah as Datuk Patih at a large kumpulan organised by Laman. Although, by this time, Rapan had anak buah in most regions of Talang Perigi, Gandung still held the support of the majority of its population. Backing for Rapan and Laman grew, while, as they had predicted, the government introduced new developments and initiatives into Tiga Balai. Many people disapproved of the Inpres school built in Perigi in 1984, which was one of the first corrugated-iron roofed buildings in Tiga Balai (for many Talang Mamak, shiny metal roofs are associated with mosques and Islam), and its construction served both to unite support for Rapan and to emphasise the division of Talang Perigi into two groups, one, under Gandung, oriented itself towards the Camat and the other under Rapan, oriented towards Tengku Arief. As Rapan’s anak buah increased and Laman’s position became more secure, they began to further undermine Gandung’s authority. In 1987, at the gawai (wedding) of Panca’s son, Cal (to a girl whose family were anak buah of Laman), which was held at the bride’s family’s home in the Gelugur region of Durian Cacar, Rapan and Laman broke up the kumpulan and openly challenged Gandung’s right to officiate at adat
ceremonies. As this wedding was held near Gagah's house, he had agreed to represent the bride's family while Gandung represented the groom's family. According to both Gagah and Gandung, neither the bride's family nor the groom's family wanted Langan and Rapan to disrupt proceedings. After Laman and Rapan had interrupted this gawai, Gandung and his anak buah, which included the groom, returned to Perigi. The resulting stand-off between Gandung's and Laman's anak buah was resolved by the bride's parents who approached Sutan Mohammad and asked him to act on their behalf and organise another gawai at Gandung's house. In 1989 a similar situation arose at the gawai of Raguan, the son of Bagum (a Tua Tuah of Gandung), and Jungkir (whose family is both headed by Madun, a very influential Kemantan (shaman) in Talang Perigi, and made up mostly of anak buah of Rapan). On this occasion the ceremony went ahead but many of Gandung's anak buah were angered by the lack of respect shown to their Batin by Rapan's anak buah and some people recall Madun squatting on his haunches in front of Gandung which is considered very disrespectful. As Talang Perigi has divided into two groups, several marriages have taken place between families who support different Batin and, on several occasions, these marriages have been the focus of conflict between the two groups – Raguan and Jungkir have split up several times as the result of disputes between Madun and Bagum.

At this time the division in Tiga Balai into two groups was often spoken of in terms of a distinction between adat and desa. According to Laman, while it is appropriate that Kepala Desa should officiate at any desa (state-organised) ceremony, adat is the sole preserve of Datuk Patih and Batin, and, therefore, Kepala Desa are not qualified to deal in adat affairs. The distinction adat/desa became redundant in 1990 when the adat leader, Datuk Patih Gagah, took, through Laman's intervention, the post of his desa rival, Sutan Mohammad and became Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar while still holding the title Datuk Patih.

In 1988 the Impres school became the base for the Project Soma expedition which conducted most of its research within Talang Perigi. The five Talang Mamak Kepala Desa (who at that time were Gandung, Rusian, Urusan, Maiyan and Sutan Mohammad) were introduced to the expedition members as the Batin and Datuk Patih of Tiga Balai by pegawai from the Camat's office. During the three months that Project Soma was in Talang Perigi, while Gandung and some of his anak buah visited the team every day, none of Rapan's anak buah visited Impres or sought contact with the expedition members. Although Rapan was, at that time, usually
reluctant to meet me, I did talk with him at his house on a few occasions. On most days a couple of Gandung's anak buah worked with the expedition team in the forest, collecting specimens. and men such as Panca, Bunga and Jidan received a wage for their work and became regular guests at meal-times. The territorial division between the Rapan's and Gandung's anak buah became clearer when Tran Perigi was built in 1990. While Gandung welcomed and administered this housing project, allocating houses to most of his anak buah that wanted one, Rapan and his anak buah refused to even enter the Tran area and I have only ever seen two of Rapan's anak buah in Tran. Seran, an elderly, well-respected man who owns many rubber trees, became a regular caller at our house in Tran which (instead of using the main path) he always approached and left via the rubber plot adjacent to our land. While Seran comes and goes as he pleases, Sulin, another of Rapan's anak buah, has to live in Tran. Sulin is Kemantan Madun's grandson and he was expelled from his grandfather's dusun after being caught stealing. Having nowhere else to go, Sulin asked Bagum for help and Bagum agreed to present Sulin's case to Gandung, who decided to give Sulin a house in Tran – where he now lives while remaining loyal to Rapan. Panca told me that when Sulin first arrived in Tran, his conduct was good but recently he had begun stealing food and tobacco from his neighbours. As well as all the buildings in Tran having corrugated-iron roofs, the presence of a mosque and a group of Muslims in Tran has also angered many of Rapan's anak buah who now choose not to enter the area of their talang occupied by Tran. About twenty-five Melayu families moved from Petonggan to Tran when it was first opened and many of them worshipped at the mosque with Janin as their ustad (Islamic teacher). Other people who also occasionally visit the mosque are Talang Mamak who have recently entered Islam (e.g. Johan, Alihan and Abu). 1990 also saw Gagah installed as Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar, after Sutan Mohammad had been stripped of the title, which left Gandung as the only Kepala Desa living in Talang Perigi and ended the close relationship (begun by Nulan and Mohammad Dinan in the mid-1960s) between the Kepala Desa of Perigi and the Kepala Desa of Durian Cacar .

In the early 1990s Gandung chose Tomin as his successor and began teaching him the duties and responsibilities of both Batin and Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi. At that time, many of Gandung's anak buah considered Tomin an inappropriate choice to succeed Gandung. However, after the Batin died, in September 1993, his anak buah unanimously chose Tomin to succeed him. Tomin was considered by many as an inappropriate candidate for two reasons:
firstly, he was not one of Gandung's sisters' sons; and secondly, being in his mid-twenties, he was too young and inexperienced to fulfil the duties of both Batin and Kepala Desa which required him to present a strong front to Rapan and his anak buah, to maintain the obedient support of the sekretaris and to win the respect of Umar, the Camat and his pegawai. Many of Tomin's anak buah say that after Gandung died, they accepted Tomin as a legitimate successor because, although he may not be a nephew of Gandung, he is related to Gandung through a female line. Since Gandung's death, despite being unable to either trust his sekretaris or persuade the Camat to assist him, Tomin has been able to win the confidence of all Gandung's former anak buah. Like Gandung, Tomin recognises the Camat as the head of the Talang Mamak authority hierarchy, and he has never attended the semah. At a large kumpulan held in Gandung's old house and attended by most of Gandung's senior anak buah, it was decided that local government officials should be invited to Gandung's naik tambak (funeral) so that Tomin could be officially elected as both Batin and Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi. Consequently, one month after Gandung's death, more than three hundred people gathered in Binjai for his naik tambak. They included pegawai from the Camat's office in Air Molek, the Wakil Camat from Simpang Kelayang and representatives of the local police and army, along with Gagah, Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar, Rusian, Kepala Desa of Talang Parit and Canto (who replaced Maiyan), Kepala Desa of Talang Sungai Limau. After Gandung's naik tambak, all the guests witnessed the election of Tomin as both Batin and Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi and of Sunin (who, like Tomin, is a young, recently married man) as his Mangku. In pengangkatan Batin (election and appointment of a new Batin), Tua Tuah and other senior household heads approach the candidate, who remains seated cross-legged on the floor, hold his right hand in theirs and say 'Setuju' ('agree'). After this, other Batin, or the Datuk Patih, if present, give their agreement and everybody eats together. Before this ceremony took place, Tomin's senior anak buah made it clear to the visiting dignitaries that they wanted them to witness Tomin's election as both Kepala Desa and Batin of Talang Perigi. According to Tomin and his senior anak buah, the pegawai present agreed to this arrangement.

After Gandung died, the Camat installed Sulaiman, sekretaris of Talang Perigi as Kepala Desa sementara (temporary Kepala Desa) and he began to take more interest in affairs in Talang Perigi, especially those regarding Gandung's succession. Tomin, who had been introduced to the Camat by Gandung, visited the Camat's offices in Air Molek several times in order to establish himself as Gandung's rightful successor. On these visits, Tomin was always
accompanied by Tua Tuah Bagum. After his election at the *naik tambak* of his predecessor, Tomin asked Sulaiman to write to the *Camat* requesting the *Surat Keterangan* (identification papers) which would formalise his appointment as *Kepala Desa* of Talang Perigi. *Surat Keterangan*, or *SK*, can take a long time to appear—Udin, *sekretaris* of Gedabu, had to wait two years for his. This document was not forthcoming and Tomin and many of his *anak buah* began to suspect that Sulaiman wished to become *Kepala Desa*, especially after rumours that Sulaiman had ambitions for the job of *Kepala Desa* of Talang Perigi began in Petonggan. It was suggested by several people in Petonggan, including other *sekretaris*, that Sulaiman was deliberately delaying matters while he established good relations with the *Camat* and his *pegawai*. In March 1993, Tomin sent another letter to the *Camat* (which this time did not go via Sulaiman), requesting Tomin's *Surat Keterangan*, accusing Sulaiman of intentionally obstructing communications between Tomin and the *Camat* and asking that Sulaiman be replaced by one of Tomin's *anak buah* who had been educated at the *Inpres* school. There are several candidates, both male and female, for this job. Because Tomin does not like having to rely on a *Melayu* man, he is determined to buy a typewriter and have one of his *anak buah* taught to use it. When I left Talang Perigi the matter of Tomin's succession had not been resolved and Tomin and his *anak buah* were still waiting for the *Camat*'s decision.

At the same time as Tomin was endeavouring to obtain official confirmation of his election as *Kepala Desa* news broke that Rapan had committed a major indiscretion. Rapan's wife has several children by her previous husbands and, in late 1992, one of her daughters got divorced (the man she divorced was Enkeh, one of Panca's sons) and returned to live with her mother and Rapan. A year after this, at a *kumpulan* organised by Rapan and held in his own house, Rapan's wife publicly accused him of having a sexual relationship with his *anak tiri* (step-daughter). This story quickly spread to Tomin's *anak buah* who demanded that Rapan attend a *kumpulan* in Binjai where Tomin would pass *hukuman* (judgement) on him for his *salah* (offence, mistake). This, and other news regarding Rapan's activities reached Tomin's *anak buah* from members of their families (such as Raguan) who are married to *anak buah* of Rapan. According to Sutan Mohammad, the punishment for *menyumbang* (incest) should be for the man and woman to be tied inside a bamboo cage and thrown into the Inderagiri. However, most of Tomin's *anak buah* felt that Rapan should simply be exiled from Tiga Balai. After accusing her husband, Rapan's wife left him to stay with one of her sisters where she told how she had caught Rapan having sex with her daughter on several occasions but had kept quiet.
until now that her daughter was pregnant. This news brought action from Rapan's anak buah who began their own investigations into Rapan's relationship with his step-daughter. Once it was known that his anak tiri was pregnant, Rapan left Perigi to stay with Laman in Eko hulu. Feeling frustrated that punishment could not be administered through adat channels now that Rapan had moved to Eko hulu, where he was surrounded by Laman's anak buah, Tomin's anak buah decided to call upon the Camat to intervene. Sulaiman was duly instructed to send letters to the Camat asking for his help in this matter which was causing strife in Tiga Balai. Although many rumours circulated about what the police might do to Rapan, no action was taken and after about a month in Eko hulu, Rapan returned to Perigi where his wife rejoined him. While Rapan was in Eko hulu some discussions took place between his and Tomin's anak buah and, for a time, it did seem as if Rapan might be exiled from Talang Perigi. However, when he eventually returned to Perigi, with his wife, most of his anak buah gave him their full support once again. By the time Rapan returned to Perigi, Tomin's anak buah were occupied with the issue of Tomin’s succession and the imminent arrival of IDT funds.

Although he may have lost the respect of some of his anak buah, Rapan still has the support of Laman, Tengku Arief and a large group of anak buah and he will probably continue to be Batin and Tengku Arief's representative in Talang Perigi, although there were rumours that Laman was making secret plans to have Rapan replaced. Tomin, too, faces an uncertain future. Despite having the unanimous support of Gandung’s former anak buah, Tomin has been unable to confirm his appointment as Kepala Desa, can no longer trust his sekretaris and has been generally unable to motivate the Camat to take action on his behalf. The Camat’s indifference to their requests for assistance has produced some resentment among Tomin’s anak buah who feel that despite their having obeyed all the Camat’s instructions and their having helped him in every way they can, he deliberately refuses to reciprocate and help them. Although the Camat and his pegawai administer the funds allocated to the Talang Mamak, they are reluctant to enter Tiga Balai or meet its occupants. The only times that I have ever heard of them responding to requests from Talang Mamak were on the occasions of the removal of Mohammad Dinan as Datuk Patih and the dismissal of his son, Sutan Mohammad, as Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar. In both of these cases, action was taken at the request of Laman and not at the request of a Kepala Desa. Since the mid 1960s, a large group of people in Perigi have broken the sumpah and accepted the authority of the Republic of Indonesia. Having
dropped the Sultan and put the Camat at the top of their authority structure, these people expect the Camat to fulfil his role and intervene in Talang Mamak affairs when internal solutions cannot be found – as in the case of Rapan and his anak tiri. However, despite their loyalty, Tomin’s anak buah find themselves without the active support of the Camat and fearful of Sulaiman, or another Melayu, becoming Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi.

TALANG GEDABU

Talang Gedabu (population 570) was founded after the establishment of the three principal talang (Durian Cacar, Parit and Perigi) by families from Talang Parit and Talang Perigi. As their populations grew, people from Parit and from Perigi began using the land between their settlements for growing rice. Relationships were established between families who returned to this area year after year and they elected a Tua Tuah to represent them and to request permission from Batin Perigi and Batin Parit to establish a permanent settlement near their fields. With the sanction of the Sultan and Datuk Patih, Talang Gedabu was formed and a maternal relative of the Batin of Talang Perigi was appointed as its first Batin, instructed to pass his title on to one of his sister’s sons and taken to the semah where he swore to uphold the sumpah. Because the first Batin was an anak buah of the Batin of Talang Perigi, Talang Gedabu was (and still is) under the jurisdiction of the Batin of Perigi. Important decisions concerning affairs in Gedabu should only be taken after consultation with the Batin of Perigi. Nowadays, Urusan, Kepala Desa of Gedabu, does not keep close contact with Tomin, Kepala Desa of Perigi, but Gajian, Batin of Gedabu, does consult Rapan, Batin of Perigi, on all important matters.

In the 1960s Sandang was Batin of Talang Gedabu, having inherited the title from his mother’s brother, Jatam. Sandang was also an influential Dukun (shaman), a title he inherited from his father, and he was able to bring the entire population of Gedabu together as his anak

footnotes

20 Some men told me that gedabu was the name of a type of tree, no longer found in Tiga Balai, which was abundant in this talang.

21 Most of the information included in the following account of leaders and titles in Gedabu was obtained in conversations with Batin Malaka, Tua Tuah Palembang, Batin Rapan, Batin Urusan, Tua Tuah Bagum, Batin Gandung, Batin Anip, Batin Gajian and Laman.
buah. In the mid-1960s, Umar, Koordinator Talang Mamak, married one of Sandang’s nieces who entered Islam and went to live in Petonggan with her husband. Marriages between Melayu men and Talang Mamak women are still unusual – Bagum’s daughter, Wis, is the only Talang Mamak woman I know to have a Muslim husband. Nowadays, many bachelors in Petonggan consider Talang Mamak girls suitable as sexual partners but not as brides. Since Umar married, he has moved away from the market site and the river to the junction of the tracks (from Petonggan) to Gedabu and to Perigi. Umar’s marriage was the start of a close relationship between Umar and the holder of the title Kepala Desa Talang Gedabu which still continues today and it is quite likely that Sandang’s appointment as Kepala Desa had something to do with Umar marrying into his maternal family and obtaining several large rubber plots in Gedabu. Soon after Umar’s marriage, Sandang became the first Kepala Desa of Gedabu and he started to orient his affairs towards Umar and the Camat but like his counterpart in Perigi, Gandung, he continued to attend the semah until the late 1970s.

When Sandang did break the sumpah, probably around the same time as Gandung (in about 1977), Laman began to attract the support of people in Gedabu who wished to maintain a relationship with Tengku Arief. After Rapan’s appointment as Batin of Talang Perigi, more than thirty Gedabu residents shifted their allegiance from Sandang to Rapan and became his anak buah. According to Laman, it is acceptable for people from Gedabu to become anak buah of the Batin of Perigi but only as a temporary measure. In an attempt to prevent Talang Gedabu from splitting into two groups (as Talang Durian Cacar and Talang Perigi had already done), Sandang gave up the title Batin in 1982 and, while he remained Kepala Desa, Sandang chose one of his sister’s sons, Malaka, to succeed him as Batin and to attend the semah on his behalf. Malaka, who had only a small group of anak buah, was never accepted by Laman and Tengku Arief and he was unable to gain the support of the group who had become Rapan’s anak buah. Laman says that he did not accept Malaka’s candidature for Batin, because he was appointed by and remained loyal to Sandang who had broken the sumpah. After the appointment of Malaka had failed to win back his former anak buah, Sandang chose Urusan to succeed him as Kepala Desa of Talang Gedabu in 1984. Apparently, shortly after Urusan’s appointment, Sandang died a gruesome death, his body covered in boils and eruptions. Laman maintains that this was punishment meted out on Sandang by his nenek moyang (ancestors) for breaking the sumpah.
Although he performed all the duties of Kepala Desa and kept up good relations with Umar, Urusan had little support in Talang Gedabu where, apart from a few families who followed Malaka, the majority were anak buah of Rapan and Laman. By the late 1980s, this group had elected one of their Tua Tuah, Anip (who was a maternal relative of Malaka), to become their Batin and uphold the sumpah on their behalf. In 1988, Laman took Anip to Rengat to meet Tengku Arief and take part in the semah. After Anip, who was already an old man, had established himself as the head of the group who wanted to uphold the sumpah, he chose his sister's son, Gajian, to replace him and become Batin of Talang Gedabu. After Anip's decision to step down, he, Laman and Rapan organised a large kumpulan in Gedabu where Gajian was confirmed as Batin of Talang Gedabu. Since he became Batin, Gajian has maintained a close relationship with Laman and Rapan and he regularly attends the semah. In spite of this, some of his anak buah have recently begun switching their loyalties to Urusan who has developed a close relationship with Umar based around rubber. Umar owns many large rubber plots in Gedabu which men from that talang tap. Urusan organises this work which allows many of his anak buah access to a source of cash apart from their own rubber plots. As most men's rubber is already promised to Haji Nasir or Haji Ibrahim as a result of long-standing debt relationships, the opportunity to cut someone else's rubber for a two-thirds share of its value offers access to cash in spite of long-term debts. This extra money and the steady increase in government funds coming into Tiga Balai has attracted many of Sandang's former anak buah away from Gajian. These people now recognise Urusan as both Kepala Desa and Batin. The increase in Urusan's anak buah has been behind the initial success of the sekolah kunjung (temporary or visiting school), built near Urusan's house in 1993, which, when it was opened, attracted over thirty pupils a day. Although the majority of Talang Gedabu still follow Laman and his anak buah, Gajian and Rapan, and still wish to uphold the sumpah, Urusan, through his relationships with Umar and the Camat, has been able to build a steady following.
TALANG TUJUH BUAH TANGGA

Talang Tujuh BUAH TANGGA was formed some time after the establishment of the three principle talang by seven families who were anak buah of the Datuk Patih. They travelled west where they founded a settlement beyond the borders of Durian Cacar and appointed a Batin, who remained an anak buah of the Datuk Patih. The Datuk Patih took the first Batin of Talang Tujuh BUAH TANGGA to the semah where his appointment was confirmed by the Sultan and he swore to uphold the sumpah. Sutan Mohammad told me that Talang Tujuh BUAH TANGGA was originally established to protect Talang Durian Cacar's western border. However, he does not know when this took place or who it was that threatened the security of Tiga Balai.

Being in the far west of Tiga Balai, Talang Tujuh BUAH TANGGA has been affected by developments in the Peranap region which have resulted in Tujuh BUAH TANGGA becoming isolated from the other talang and exposed to development. Peranap, which, like all large towns in Inderagiri Hulu, is on the road that runs along the north bank of the river, has become a busy crossing point where large vehicles and heavy machinery can be ferried from the road to the south bank for use in development projects. After the government survey of Tiga Balai, plans were made for Talang Tujuh BUAH TANGGA to be cleared of trees to make way for kelapa sawit plantations. In the early 1990s, under Umar's supervision, heavy machinery was moved into Tujuh BUAH TANGGA, via Peranap, and work began clearing the land of trees, which are taken for processing to a nearby wood-pulp plant. Most of the population of Tujuh BUAH TANGGA has since moved east into other talang but the Batin, and Kepala Desa, Bebas, has stayed behind to help Umar with the opening of the land. One of Bebas' sister's sons, Mayur, married into the Sungai Jirak region of Talang Durian Cacar, where, with Laman's support, he has become the first Batin of Sungai Jirak and now attends the semah.

footnotes

22 Tangga means ladder or steps and refers to the wide ladders of horizontally tied poles that lead up to every Talang Mamak house which are built on stilts between one and two metres high. Tujuh means seven and buah is a classifier of objects. Tujuh BUAH TANGGA refers to the seven sets of steps of the first seven houses in the settlement.

23 Most of the information included in the following account of leaders and titles in Tujuh BUAH TANGGA was obtained in conversations with Sutan Mohammad, Jari, Sariyah and Umar.
TALANG JERINJING

According to Bunga\textsuperscript{24}, Talang Jerinjing (population 400 [Ahmad Yunus and Siti Maria 1985 p.8]) was formed about two hundred years ago by a group of people under the leadership of a man called Ingris who was born in Talang Perigi. Ingris and his younger brother, who were both very competitive, married women from Sungai Limau and lived in that talang. One day they both began making tikalak (a fish trap which should have a ring of thorns fixed around its entrance to prevent fish from escaping) in preparation for a fishing trip. While Ingris made his trap from rotan (smooth rattan)\textsuperscript{25}, his brother made his from onak (thorny rattan)\textsuperscript{26}. As soon as their traps were ready, they went to the river to set them and then they returned home. When they came back the next day and lifted their traps, Ingris had caught only one fish which escaped when he tried to take it out of his tikalak. His brother's trap, however, was full of fish and the sight of this angered Ingris who immediately destroyed his brother's tikalak, which began a heated quarrel. The Batin of Talang Sungai Limau was called to make peace between the brothers but he was unable to calm them down, so he asked the help of the Datuk Patih, who was also unable to stop the conflict between the two brothers. In the end Ingris led five families, who had chosen him as their Batin, into the forest where Ingris changed his name to Pulai and he and his anak buah swore an oath not to follow the adat of either Talang Sungai Limau or Talang Durian Cacar because neither the Batin of Sungai Limau nor the Datuk Patih of Durian Cacar could resolve the conflict between Ingris/Pulai and his brother. The Datuk Patih reported Pulai's move to the Sultan who ordered him to report to the palace. Pulai duly went to Rengat where he told the Sultan that he wanted to start a new settlement. The Sultan gave Pulai permission to move into the region of Puntiala, which became known as Talang Jerinjing, and sanctioned Pulai's appointment as its first Batin. For his part, Pulai swore to uphold the sumpah and to attend the semah. At the palace, Pulai met the Batin of Perigi (his natal talang) and an agreement was made between the two men that people from Pulai's group could marry people from Perigi.

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\textsuperscript{24} Bunga is Panca's brother and he was born in Talang Sungai Limau and married into Talang Jerinjing about twenty years ago. Other men in Tiga Balai also know this story.

\textsuperscript{25} This is Calamus caesius.

\textsuperscript{26} This is Plectocomia griffithii.
When Propinsi Riau was formed in 1958 and Kecamatan (sub-districts) established, Talang Jerinjing was incorporated into Kecamatan Rengat, while the other talang became part of Kecamatan Pasir Penyu. Since independence, Jerinjing has become more and more isolated from the other talang and today it is surrounded on all sides by Melayu kampung and has a metalled road running through it. Being more accessible than the other talang, Jerinjing has been more effectively incorporated into the Indonesian state. At present, Talang Jerinjing has a Melayu Kepala Desa and none of its residents, who now include many Melayu families, attend the semah or uphold the sumpah. For most of Laman’s anak buah Talang Jerinjing is just another Melayu kampung.

TALANG SELANTAI

Talang Selantai was formed in the early 1940s after the Datuk Patih, Singkop, left Talang Durian Cacar to live in Keloyang, where he entered Islam. Singkop left one son, Ma’Ijin, and one daughter, Selasih, in Durian Cacar. Selasih and her husband, Badul, also entered Islam and established Talang Selantai which is within the borders of Durian Cacar. As an Islamic settlement within Tiga Balai, Selantai has never had a Batin. Rather, it is under the authority of a Penghulu who never attends the semah.

In 1967, with Umar’s approval, the Penghulu of Selantai, Mawar, became its first Kepala Desa. While Mawar does have a few Talang Mamak anak buah who have been given government posts (e.g. Ketua), he administers to so few people that some people in Petonggan say that his only duty as Kepala Desa is to collect his wages. Selantai has always been a small talang (its present population is twenty-two) inhabited by both Muslims and Talang Mamak and it has not been involved in the conflict resulting from the introduction of Kepala Desa into Tiga Balai. Mawar does not interfere in the lives of most of the few Talang Mamak that live in Selantai, some of whom are anak buah of Laman. A few of Selantai’s younger Talang Mamak residents orient their lives towards the nearby transmigrasi camp DK5 where they sell their rubber and spend much of their free time.

footnotes

27 Most of the information included in the following account of leaders and titles in Selantai was obtained in conversations with Sutan Mohammad, Penghulu Mawar, Mawi and his brother, Misi.
According to most people, Talang Sungai Limau\(^{28}\) (population 1,125) is the oldest settlement in Tiga Balai. It was established before Durian Cacar, Parit or Perigi by a man called Paragunah (probably a title rather than a name) who probably moved into this area with his anak buah from a trading settlement at the mouth of the Cenaku river some time before 1500. Paragunah had three children, two daughters and a son who produced three grandsons between them: Paragunah's eldest daughter's son was called Peminyak; his youngest daughter's son was named Gendurahan; and his son's son was known as Kumara\(^{29}\). Paragunah's three grandsons became influential men, each associated with a different region in Sungai Limau: Peminyak with Talang Gading; Gendurahan with Talang Tengah; and Kumara with Darat Balai\(^{30}\). When Paragunah died, he chose Kumara to succeed him and Kumara duly governed the Sungai Limau settlement from Darat Balai. Kumara had a younger sister who married one of her cousins, Gendurahan, and they had one son, during whose lifetime Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang arrived in the area. The Minangkabau noble introduced some changes to the adat of Paragunah's descendants, which included the appointment of Gendurahan's son as the first Batin of Talang Sungai Limau. Like the other Batin (who were Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang's sons) Gendurahan was told to pass his title and his duties on to one of his maternal nephews. Talang Sungai Limau adat still differs from the adat of other talang with regard to marriage: in Sungai Limau sembilan adat (nine gifts) are given to the bride by the groom's family; while in other talang only enam adat (six gifts) are used. After the inauguration of the title Batin Sungai Limau, holders of this title have, under Datuk Patih's guidance, joined the descendants of Si Bunga, Si Besi and Si Kelopak in attending the semah and upholding the sumpah. Since Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang's time, descendants of Kumara, Gendurahan and Peminyak have been the most influential men in Talang Sungai Limau and sometimes disputes have occurred between them over who is the rightful holder of the title Batin.

footnotes

28 Most of the information included in the following account of leaders and titles in Sungai Limau was obtained in conversations with Batin Canto, Batin Maiyan, Batin Jalip, Manti Lajak, Mangku Panca, Tuah Biduan, Mangku Canting, and Laman.

29 Kumara was the title of an official in the Majapahit administration (see chapter one).

30 Of these three regions, only Darat Balai remains a dusun in modern day Sungai Limau.
In the 1930s, Simbih (who had inherited his title from Simpang, his mother's brother) was Batin of Talang Sungai Limau. His father had been married three times and, as a result, Simbih had one sister and two half-sisters. While Simbih and his sister were descendants of Gendurahan, one of their half-sisters was of Kumara’s line and the other was descended from Peminyak. When Simbih died in the 1940s, he chose Odah, one of his full-sister’s sons to succeed him as Batin of Talang Sungai Limau. Odah, who as well as being the legitimate inheritor of the title Batin, was also descended from a recently dead Kemantan, fell sick before he could be installed. As a result of his sickness, Odah was taken by his family to be trained as a Kemantan and consequently he gave up his claim to be Batin. Simbih’s former anak buah, who were all descendants of Gendurahan, chose Sidang, who was Odah’s brother, as Odah’s replacement and tried to install him as Batin of Talang Sungai Limau. According to Panca, Sidang was only installed as Batin sementara (temporary Batin) because Odah’s son, Ma’Urup, was too young to hold the title and, once Ma’Urup was ready to become Batin, Sidang stepped down. However, the other two groups in Sungai Limau (the descendants of Kumara and the descendants of Peminyak) would not accept Sidang as a replacement for Odah and they appointed Tampin, who was one of Simbih’s half-sister’s sons and a descendant of Kumara, as Batin of Sungai Limau. According to Tua Tuah Biduan, Odah, having been chosen by Simbih, was the rightful inheritor of the title Batin, but when he turned it down Tampin became the legitimate candidate. After Tampin’s installation, Sidang and his anak buah, including Odah, left Sungai Limau and moved to Talang Parit where they became the anak buah of Pajar (who was Batin of Talang Parit at that time). The Datuk Patih, Temanggis, was also living in Talang Parit as one of Pajar’s anak buah.

As Batin of Talang Sungai Limau, Tampin attended the semah and paid tribute to the Sultan. He held his title for over twenty years, during which time Sidang and his anak buah remained in Talang Parit. When Sultan Mahmudsyah died in 1963, Tampin and his sister’s son Gabal, who he had already chosen to succeed him and who he had begun preparing for the role of Batin, remained loyal to the royal house of Inderagiri and continued attending the semah where

footnotes

31 The title Kemantan, like the title Dukun, is inherited through a male line. Candidates for either title, who are always male, fall sick before being taken to a recognised shaman for healing and initiation.
they paid tribute to Mahmudsyah's son Tengku Arief. While Tengku Arief, with the help of Laman, was establishing himself in Tiga Balai, Umar, under the orders of the Camat, was selecting candidates for the posts of Kepala Desa in the Talang Mamak area. By this time Sidang had passed his title on to Ma'Urup, Odah's son, who became Batin of the descendants of Gendurahan who were still living in Talang Parit as Pajar's anak buah. According to Panca, Ma'Urup was a legitimate candidate for Simbih's title both because his father, Odah, had never been officially made Batin and because Ma'Urup was considered as being descended from Simbih in a female line. When Rusian became the first Kepala Desa of Talang Parit, Ma'Urup was chosen as the first Kepala Desa of Talang Sungai Limau and, together with his anak buah, he moved into Sungai Limau. Ma'Urup fulfilled the roles for both Kepala Desa and Batin of the descendants of Gendurahan, but he neither attended the semah nor established a relationship with Laman.

The return of Gendurahan's descendants to Sungai Limau divided that talang into two groups, one larger group consisting of the descendants of Kumara and Peminyak under the leadership of Gabal who upheld the sumpah and attended the semah, and a smaller group made up of Ma'Urup and his anak buah who oriented themselves towards the Camat. Just after Ma'Urup's arrival in Sungai Limau, Gabal lost the support of the descendants of Peminyak who appointed Dunih as their Batin. According to Lijah, a Mangku in Sungai Limau, Dunih (who was also known as Semuh) was not descended from a title-holder and had become Batin on his own initiative after he won the support of Peminyak's descendants. After Dunih's installation there were three Batin in Talang Sungai Limau, two of whom (Gabal and Dunih) upheld the sumpah while the other (Ma'Urup) supported the Camat's administration. Despite attending the semah, Dunih did not get the backing of either Laman or Tengku Arief who both sanctioned Gabal as Batin of Talang Sungai Limau. Laman said that he only supports one Batin in every talang as, according to adat, each talang should have only one Batin. Gabal, who held the support of the largest group of anak buah, lived in Sungai Limau hilir and Dunih and Ma'Urup lived in different regions of Sungai Limau hulu (hilir means downstream and hulu means upstream).

In the late 1970s, Dunih died, leaving one of his sister's sons, Jalip, as his successor and although he attended the semah when he was first appointed Batin, Jalip soon stopped going to Rengat and began putting himself forward as a candidate for the job of Kepala Desa of Talang
Sungai Limau as Ma’Urup, the title holder at that time, was old enough to be considering who would succeed him. Jalip told me that he welcomed government initiatives in Tiga Balai and supported the Camat’s administration. Although he wanted to be Kepala Desa, he did not know how candidates for the post were selected. By breaking the sumpah, Jalip angered many of his anak buah who subsequently switched their allegiance to Gabal, who became the only representative in Sungai Limau for people who wished to uphold the sumpah. When Ma’Urup died in 1978, he was succeeded by one of his maternal nephews, Maiyan, who also became Kepala Desa of Sungai Limau. Maiyan was probably introduced to Umar by Ma’Urup who helped his nephew succeed him when he stepped down. During the 1970s Laman’s popularity and influence increased steadily, and by the end of the decade he was beginning to affect affairs in Sungai Limau. As Laman’s chosen candidate, Gabal began to attract the support of some of both Maiyan’s and Jalip’s anak buah. In the early 1980s, Gabal chose Canto to be his successor and began taking him to the semah both to meet Tengku Arief and Laman and to uphold the sumpah. Although only in his mid-twenties Canto, who was Gabal’s sister’s son, was a very popular candidate for the title Batin of Talang Sungai Limau and when Gabal died in 1982, Canto was given the title Batin at a ceremony organised and sanctioned by Laman.

Without the support of either Tengku Arief or the Camat, Jalip now has very few anak buah and little influence in Sungai Limau. When he first became Batin, Jalip appointed Lajak as his Manti and Lijah as his Mangku. However, after only a few years, Lijah retired and Lajak switched his loyalty and became Maiyan’s Manti and LKMD. In the mid-1980s most people in Sungai Limau followed either Batin Canto or Kepala Desa Maiyan. There was an element of rivalry between these two men which was evident in their desire to attract each other’s anak buah. Canto wanted to be Kepala Desa and Maiyan wanted to be an influential adat leader. When I spoke to them, neither man expressed any dislike for the other. They both simply said that they wanted the other man’s title and to be both Batin and Kepala Desa of Sungai Limau. At that time Canto had the most anak buah and a Manti and Mangku who were both close family members. When Canto became Batin, he appointed his brother Agakan as his Mangku and Bunut, who is married to his younger sister, as his Manti. He also had the support of Laman and Tengku Arief, who already had large groups of anak buah in Durian Cacar, Perigi and Gedabu. In comparison, Maiyan had relatively few anak buah, most of whom lived in the vicinity of his government-built house, one of three buildings constructed in Sungai
Limau for Maiyan’s use – Maiyan lives in one of these buildings, stores rice in another and his wife’s brother uses the other as a kedai (small shop). Maiyan never attended the semah. Rather, he met Umar and other Petonggan men including his sekretaris, Zainal Arifin, every Tuesday at the Petonggan market. Visiting the market also gave Maiyan the opportunity to meet his fellow Kepala Desa, Gandung and Sutan Mohammad.

Although he did have a legitimate claim to the title Batin, Maiyan’s appointment as a leader in Sungai Limau was never secure because most of the population were anak buah of Canto. Consequently, Maiyan and his family used their connections in Petonggan in order to try and reinforce his position. In 1978, the year of Maiyan’s appointment as Kepala Desa of Talang Sungai Limau, Ramlie Shaleh, sekretaris of Tiga Balai, typed two documents which aimed to authenticate Maiyan’s claim to be the sole leader in Sungai Limau. The first of these is a list of the names of the Batin of Talang Sungai Limau according to the ‘ancient’ adat handed down in Tiga Balai. There follows a list of fifteen names which ends with Maiyan, the last four names on this list being, in descending order, Simpang, Simbih, Laman [Sidang] and Ma’Urup. The letter goes on to say that the list was compiled according to information provided by Ma’Atur. Ma’Atur was Ma’Urup’s brother, and Maiyan’s uncle, and he had Ramlie Shaleh type this document in Petonggan in October 1978. Eight days later, Ramlie Shaleh typed a Surat Keteranagan (a document which gives information about a person’s status) which says that, according to adat, Maiyan is the rightful inheritor of the title Batin of Talang Sungai Limau and that Gabal and his successor, Canto, are not appropriate adat leaders. This document carries the thumb-print and name of Temanggis who titles himself Datuk Patih Tiga Balai. Maiyan, who cannot read, keeps these documents safely in his house and produces them to anyone who shows an interest. In Sungai Limau, where very few people can read, Maiyan’s documents are not a focus of attention and, despite his efforts to preserve them, they are beginning to decay. Lajak, Maiyan’s Manti, also owns a typed document, which was written in 1987 and carries the stamp of the Camat’s office in Air Molek. This paper lists the names of the Kepala Desa, sekretaris, LKMD and PKK of Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga, Talang Selantai,

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32 The actual words are ‘Canto adalah menggantikan Gabal dan hubungan dengan adat lama pusaka usang tidak bersesuaian.’
Talang Gedabu, Talang Perigi, Talang Sungai Limau, Talang Durian Cacar and Talang Parit. For Sungai Limau, Maiyan is named as Kepala Desa, Zainal Arifin as sekretaris, Lajak as LKMD and Maiyan's wife, Nara, as PKK.

Despite the existence of these documents, support for Maiyan in Sungai Limau decreased during the 1980s as Canto, with the help of Laman, attracted more anak buah. By regularly attending the semah, Canto had won the full support of Laman and Tengku Arief and, in 1990, at the same time as Gagah was made Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar, Canto became Kepala Desa of Talang Sungai Limau. Canto said that he didn't know whether or not Laman had interceded with the Camat on his behalf as the first Canto heard about his appointment as Kepala Desa was when he was called to the Camat's office and given the job – like Sutan Mohammad, Maiyan was also removed of his title by the Camat. After he became a government employee, Canto began to orient his affairs towards the Camat and to attend the semah less regularly. By 1992, Canto no longer upheld the sumpah and had lost the sanction of Laman but, despite this, he had managed to gain the support of almost the entire population of Sungai Limau. Canto currently has a position similar to that of Rusian, Batin and Kepala Desa of Talang Parit, in that although he does not attend every semah, he is still considered by their anak buah to uphold adat. As Canto gained anak buah, Maiyan lost many of his followers. Nowadays, without either his wages or his title, he no longer visits Petonggan market or maintains relationships with Umar or the other Kepala Desa. During my stay in 1988, when Maiyan was Kepala Desa, he visited the Petonggan market every week where he did a little gambling and some shopping. However, when I returned in 1992–94, Maiyan was no longer Kepala Desa and he did not visit either Petonggan or Talang Perigi during that period. Maiyan now finds himself in a similar situation to Jalip, in that both of them have only a few anak buah who call them Batin and both of them are relatively isolated from the majority of the people in Sungai Limau who are the anak buah of Canto, who allows both Maiyan and Jalip the status of Mangku.

Canto fulfils the duties of both Kepala Desa and Batin, and his position seems very secure, both from rival candidates within Sungai Limau, and from Laman's influence. It appears that the introduction of Kepala Desa into Tiga Balai has helped bring about a period of stability in Sungai Limau. While there will probably always be more than one legitimate candidate for the title Batin, there can be only one Kepala Desa of Sungai Limau, and since Canto has held
both titles, he has been able to win the confidence of the majority of Sungai Limau who are now united as his anak buah. Although Sungai Limau is one of the most unified talang, its future is still uncertain. It is already the closest talang to the DK5 transmigrasi camp and plans to expand this development could see much of Talang Sungai Limau cleared to make way for plantation development. Sungai Limau will be the nearest talang to the East Sumatran Highway and will probably, like most of the other land on either side of this road, be given over to kelapa sawit (oil palm) plantations.
PART TWO.

FOREGROUND:

BIOGRAPHIES
CHAPTER FOUR

JARI AND SARIYAH

I got to know Jari and Sariyah after I bought the house opposite theirs in Tran Perigi. Before I moved in, I spent several months improving the house and, while that was going on, Jari gradually became a regular visitor. At first he was not very talkative or forthcoming, preferring to sit quietly and watch the work going on but he gradually got involved in conversations between myself and other visitors such as Bagum and Panca. While I got to know Jari, I had few opportunities to speak to Sariyah, who only called round to talk to her husband. When the house was ready and Adriani joined me, she immediately became friends with Sariyah and, along with Bagum and his family, Panca and his family, and Nian and her daughters, Jari and Sariyah are among our closest friends in Tiga Balai. Adriani and I spent several hours every day and most evenings in their company.

When Jari visited our house during the day, he would sit with me, and any other men who were present, on the back porch, while Sariyah usually went into the house, and sat, either in the dapur (kitchen) or in ruang haluan (sitting area), with Adriani. After dark these arrangements changed – both Jari and Sariyah would naik rumah (enter a house) and sit in the ruang haluan with Adriani and I. When we visited them, I always entered by the lapang tangga (main door) at the front of the house and sat with Jari in the ruang haluan while Adriani often went round the back and entered by the tangga dapur (kitchen door) and sat with Sariyah in or near the dapur.

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1 Our house, like all the others in Tran, was built by the government and was not constructed along the same lines as houses built by Talang Mamak. All Talang Mamak who own houses in Tran, except Nian, have carried out alterations to make their houses more like the homes they construct themselves. Although I changed many aspects of our house, it only very loosely followed the layout of a Talang Mamak house. (For information about the layout of a Talang Mamak house, see chapter six.)

2 Naik means to mount or go up and rumah means house. Naik rumah describes climbing the tangga (ladder) that leads up to a house doorway.

3 Lapang tangga are the main doorways of a house that open into the ruang haluan which is the area where the men of the household, together with any male guests, sit and relax.

4 Tangga dapur means the steps and doorway of the dapur (cooking area).
Jari and Sariyah have many banana plants around their house and every time they cut a tandan (a stalk laden with fruit) they brought us a few sisir (bunches). They also gave us a share of most other foodstuffs they harvested. Once our own garden was producing fruit and vegetables, Adriani and I were able to share them with Jari and Sariyah and our other neighbours and friends. If Sariyah cooked a special dish (often fish) she would bring some round. Adriani also regularly took food across to Sariyah’s kitchen. After we had known each other for a few months we ate together frequently.

Jari was born in the Dusun Jaya region of Talang Perigi in about 1950. His father died when he was very young and, as a child, Jari lived with his mother, his eldest brother Nawar (who was Tua Tuah of the Balai Desa region of Perigi until a recent fall, which left him mentally unstable), who still lives in Dusun Jaya, and his two elder sisters Lebak (who is a well-known Bidan (midwife)) who also still lives in Dusun Jaya, and Anjak (who is Bagum’s wife) who now lives next door but one to Jari and his wife Sariyah. Jari remembers his childhood as a time of plenty, when bekas padi (rice stores) were full and his household obtained more than enough cash from his mother’s rubber trees, which had been planted by Jari’s father and became the property of his mother when his father died, after which were tapped by one of her brothers. One of Jari’s earliest memories is of the rebellion that took place in Sumatra in 1958\(^5\). Although no-one in Tiga Balai was directly involved in the uprising, some rebels fleeing government troops hid in the forest and begged food from Talang Mamak. Jari can remember Indonesian soldiers searching houses in Talang Perigi looking for signs of the rebels. He also recalls that, during the rebellion, trade at Keloyang market was restricted and few goods were available. In 1958, Jari had not yet been to the market and he learnt about restrictions on goods at Keloyang from conversations at home.

As a young child, Jari accompanied his mother to their ladang (dry rice field) whenever she worked there. At first, he slept on his mother’s back wrapped in a sarung but when he was old enough he played with his friends in and around the pondok (hut) that had been built in the

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\(^{5}\) This uprising, which was against Sukarno’s ending of democracy, and which was centred in Sumatra and Sulawesi, only lasted a few months before government troops defeated the rebels (Lonely Planet 1990, p.24).
rice field. Before he was a teenager, Jari was helping his mother with simple tasks, such as weeding, and, as he learnt about rice farming, he began to take part in the activities associated with rice growing that men specialise in – cutting big trees, burning, dibbling and *ilmu* (knowledge) about rice. When the rice is nearly ripe, it is watched over all day and all night to protect it from animal predation. One of the first times that Jari sat watch over maturing rice, he stubbed his toe on a hidden tree-stump and swore *'Dayung gajah'* ('elephant oar')\(^6\).

Two nights after uttering this curse, when Jari was again on watch, about twenty *gajah* (elephants), which were the main danger to ripe rice at that time, arrived and began to eat Jari’s rice which was almost ripe. Jari immediately went to get help, but the elephants were not chased away until they had damaged nearly all his crop.

When he was in his late teens, Jari was circumcised, had his teeth filed and began to meet girls at large *kumpulan* (gatherings)\(^7\). In about 1970, Jari married a woman, Ajaran, from Talang Gedabu, and they had their *gawai* (wedding) at *Batin* Gandung’s house, which was near the Perigi-Gedabu border. After the wedding, Jari moved into his in-law’s house in Gedabu and began cutting their rubber and working in their fields. Most Talang Mamak men, except leaders (whose wives move in with them), move to their wife’s family home after marriage, where they live for a few years helping their in-laws farm rice and tap rubber before moving into their own house and establishing their own rice fields and rubber plots. Jari and Ajaran had been married for about a year when she gave birth to a daughter. However, their marriage ended before the child was a year old. Jari says that his wife was too jealous and that one day, after several arguments, he left her and went back to his mother’s house in Dusun.

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\(^6\) Jari said that *'Dayung gajah'* is a *sumpah* (which means curse as well as oath) the saying of which, especially in rice fields, usually brings bad luck. Jari explained that elephants are really people who have dressed in elephant skins (which they occasionally take off). They are easily offended. Many people agreed that cursing animals, particularly elephants and tigers, is dangerous as they would hear the curse and take revenge on the speaker. Saying such a curse in a *ladang* is especially dangerous as rice can also take offence and may wither and die as the result of people failing to show due respect. According to Loeb (1977 p.123), similar ideas were common in Minangkabau where *'[t]o speak unchastely in the rice field’ was forbidden as ‘[t]he rice would become ashamed and lose its odor and taste’* (Loeb 1977 p.123).

\(^7\) All Talang Mamak men are circumcised and, as in many other parts of Indonesia (e.g. Bali), some people in Tiga Balai have their *siong anjing* (canine teeth) filed. Another form of permanent tooth decoration found in Tiga Balai and used by Jari is *salut platina*, a platinum-alloy crown that completely encases the upper-front teeth.
Jaya. The next day he returned to his wife’s house, left a tengkelang (basket) of sirih (betel) there and announced that he wanted cerai (divorce). A couple of days later some members of his wife’s family arrived at Jari’s mother’s house to try and persuade him to return with them but Jari wanted cerai and his in-laws returned to Gedabu without him and later formalised the divorce with Batin Gandung. The collection of a man by a woman’s family is called jemput laki and occurs both just before a wedding, when the bride’s family collect the groom, and in this form of divorce, when the wife’s family try to persuade the husband to return to his spouse. Jari says that in Tiga Balai divorce procedures differ, depending upon whether it is the husband or the wife who wants a divorce. If a husband wishes to end his marriage, he leaves his wife’s home, which usually happens after an argument. If he is determined to get a divorce, he returns to his in-laws’ house with a tengkelang of sirih which he gives to his wife, or a member of her family, and says these words, ‘Ini sirih saya, saya mau mundur dulu karena untung tak ada’ (‘This is my sirih, I want to withdraw/retreat because there is no benefit/profit’). One or two days later, members of his wife’s family arrive at the place where the husband is staying, which is usually the house of one of his close maternal family, and try to persuade him to return with them. If the husband refuses, the wife’s family take the sirih that the husband took to their house to the Batin who organised and sanctioned the marriage, where it is shared and eaten, which finalises the divorce. This kind of divorce is called kurungan (confinement), while divorce initiated by the wife is known as halau (expulsion). If a wife orders her husband out of the house and she wants to divorce him, one of her male relatives, usually her father or brother, takes a tengkelang of sirih to the Batin, which they eat together, and thereby settle the divorce.

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8 A tengkelang is a small basket, woven from rotan, which is usually only used to hold the ingredients for sirih and Gandung told me that the ingredients for sirih—daun sirih (Piper betle leaves), pinang (Areca nuts), gambir (an astringent powder made from the leaves of Uncaria gambir), kapur (slaked lime) and tembakau (tobacco)—represent rukun lima Talang Mamak (the five principles, or foundations of Talang Mamak life). He also said that sirih must be offered to title-holders by their anak buah whenever they seek their assistance. For this reason, kumpulan are often called pasirihan (the offering of sirih to a title-holder). All the ingredients of sirih, except kapur, are still grown by a few people in Tiga Balai and the area was probably self-sufficient in these items before the introduction of rubber. Like other places in interior Sumatra, Tiga Balai lacks a source of lime (see Rooney 1993 p.3) and kapur would only have been available through trade with either Minangkabau, who produced lime from shells around the shores of Lake Singkarak (Dobbin 1983 p.19), or Melayu, who made lime from coral in the Riau-Lingga islands (see Rooney 1993 p.22). For more information about betel-chewing traditions in Southeast Asia, see Rooney (1993).
After his divorce, Jari lived with his mother in Dusun Jaya, where he worked in her rice fields and tapped her rubber. When a man leaves his wife’s house after divorce, he usually takes few things with him. On this occasion, Jari left with his clothes — which amounted to one pair of trousers, one shirt and one sarung — and a parang (machete). It was at this time that Jari first met Sariyah, who had moved to Dusun Jaya in about 1971. Sariyah was born, around 1960, in Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga where she lived with her mother, Ukah, her elder sister, Daur, and her father, Jamak, who was originally from the Sungai Tonuh region of Talang Durian Cacar. When Sariyah was still very young, her mother died and, together with Daur and her father, she moved to Jamak’s mother’s house in Sungai Tonuh. Jamak’s mother had no rubber plots and so he was forced to cut someone else’s trees for a two-thirds share in order to get cash. With few relatives in Sungai Tonuh, Jamak had to grow rice with only the help of his daughters. Sariyah says that Jamak’s mother, who was a widow, came from a small family and lived in an isolated dusun with few neighbours or relatives in the vicinity. This meant that Jamak had to walk a long way every morning to the rubber plot where he worked and that, although he could clear ladang near his house, having only his daughters’ help, they were always small. The family managed to survive in this way until about 1971, when Jamak died, just before he was about to harvest his crop. At the time of his death, Jamak, Sariyah and Daur were living in the pondok they had built on their ladang and the two girls remained there for several weeks on their own after their father died. Anjak, Jari’s sister, and Nuraiyah, Jari’s niece, suggest that after Ukah’s death, the two sisters were not looked after properly and that Sariyah, being the youngest, suffered the most, as she was left to her own devices much of the time because her father and Daur were busy working. After a few weeks, news of Jamak’s death and Sariyah and Daur’s situation reached Lamsi, one of their mother’s brothers who had married into Dusun Jaya, and he went to Sungai Tonuh to collect the two sisters. When he found Sariyah and Daur, they were both very thin and dirty. Sariyah had so many kutu (lice) that Lamsi shaved her head bald before he took the sisters to his wife’s home. When she first arrived in Dusun Jaya Sariyah, who was a young teenager, says that she was embarrassed by her baldness, her thinness and her lack of clothes. People such as Bagum, his wife Anjak and Nuraiyah remember Sariyah’s arrival in Dusun Jaya. They all say that she looked strange, being bald, thin and in dirty rags, in sharp contrast to most girls of that age in Tiga Balai who have already accumulated some fine clothes and jewellery and enjoy dressing up and meeting boys.
Sariyah and Daur settled in with Lamsi, his wife and their children and began helping with household tasks and with work in the household’s rice fields. Sariyah says that she had three important tasks in Lamsi’s household which were *masak* (cooking), *najak* (weeding) and *memaron* (gathering wood for the second burning of a field). Life in Dusun Jaya was easier and more comfortable than it had been with Jamak because Lamsi’s family had more rice and more money. Sariyah remembers that one day on her way home from working in the *ladang*, she saw a tiger eating a deer it had recently killed. She was very frightened and ran to tell her uncle, Lamsi, who scared the tiger away and took the deer home for the family to eat. After a few years in Dusun Jaya, Sariyah’s hair had regrown and she began smoking and having boyfriends like other girls of her age. For most unmarried girls their only access to a regular supply of cigarettes is through boyfriends who earn cash cutting their parents’, or someone else’s, rubber trees. Cigarettes are an essential part of *betandang* as a girl will accept a gift of cigarettes from a boy if she wants to spend the night with him. In Tiga Balai, going out at night to meet a girlfriend or boyfriend is called *betandang* and large *kumpulan* provide the best opportunity for young men and women to get to know each other. At *kumpulan* boys and girls meet in the forest away from the house where the main activity, usually a wedding, is taking place. Sariyah says that the first time she went *betandang* she was shaking with fear and excitement even though she was with her elder, and more experienced sister, Daur. Sariyah met her first boyfriends at *gawai* (weddings) and *belian* (shaman’s performances) that Lamsi’s family attended in Talang Perigi and Talang Gedabu. One night, when Sariyah was still quite young, a young man, who had met her at a *kumpulan*, called at Lamsi’s house hoping to see her again. However, Sariyah was refused permission (by Lamsi) to see the man and Daur went outside instead and told him that Sariyah had been refused permission to see him. A man who wants to meet his girlfriend at night calls at her parents house, usually after ten o’clock, and either plays a *ginggung* (a type of Jew’s harp made from bamboo) or throws small stones onto the roof. All young girls (and their parents) recognise these sounds and know that a man has

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9 In Indonesian, *betandang* means visiting or making social calls but in Talang Mamak *betandang* means to spend the night with a member of the opposite sex who is not your spouse.

10 *Belian* is the name given by the Talang Mamak to the *kumpulan* held when a *Kemantan* asks his nenek moyang to help the people of his talang secure a good rice harvest. According to Skeat and Blagden (1906, vol. 2) the word ‘*Belian*’ is of ‘Malayan origin’ (ibid. p.225) and is a term used by the Semang of Malaysia to address their ‘great magicians’ (ibid. p.91).
come to see them. If there is more than one unmarried girl in the house, then the eldest will usually turun rumah (go down the steps of the house) and see who the caller is and who he wants to see. She then tells her parents who the young man is and, if they approve, he is allowed to enter.

During her early teens, Sariyah had many boyfriends and she especially liked one young man who she hoped to marry. However, Lamsi did not approve of him and he and Sariyah never married as Sariyah says that they could not marry without Lamsi’s consent. Sariyah still talks about this man, whose name she will not mention but who, she says, is still alive. One young man Lamsi and his wife did approve of was Jari, who had been betandang with Sariyah about four times. In Tiga Balai, a man who wishes to marry a woman leaves a tanda bibit\(^\text{11}\), usually an item of clothing or a knife, with her which she then shows to her parents as evidence of the man’s intentions and, if they approve, a gawai is organised. According to Sariyah, Lamsi’s wife took Jari’s songkok (hat)\(^\text{12}\) and put it in Sariyah’s sleeping mat. Later, when Lamsi was present, she showed him Jari’s songkok which he accepted as tanda bibit from Jari\(^\text{13}\). Sariyah knew nothing of this – until she overheard Lamsi and other men discussing the arrangements for her marriage to Jari. Sariyah, who was in her mid-teens at the time, went along with her uncle’s wishes and accepted Jari as her tunangan (fiancé) even though it meant giving up the man she really loved. Sariyah sometimes talks about this episode with regret. She says that she accepted Lamsi’s choice because she was takut (scared) and bodoh (stupid). The man Sariyah loved but did not marry was very upset to learn that Sariyah had become engaged (to Jari) and, according to people who can recall these events (such as Nuraiyah), he put a curse on Sariyah telling her that all her children would die young.

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\(^{11}\) In Indonesian, tanda means sign or symbol. Bibit is more difficult to translate as it has a cluster of meanings, the most common being seed but it can also mean livestock used for breeding, a prospective candidate or a cause or origin. For Talang Mamak, tanda bibit is a sign of a man’s wish to marry a particular woman.

\(^{12}\) Songkok are brimless black hats made from velvet or similar material. Nowadays songkok are worn by most Muslim men in Indonesia when they visit a mosque and on other special occasions such as weddings, funerals, etc. In Tiga Balai, headgear is popular and some men wear songkok all the time. Every man either owns, or has access to, a songkok for wearing to kumpulan.

\(^{13}\) Sariyah used the words langsung dibibit (langsung means direct or straightaway and dibibit means to be made a wife-to-be by someone else) to describe the way she became engaged to Jari.
Lamsi decided that after their wedding, Sariyah and Jari should go and live with her maternal relatives in the Sungai Rotan region of Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga. Usually Talang Mamak men move in with their wife-to-be’s maternal relatives a few weeks before their wedding and the newlyweds remain there for a year or so after their gawai after which time they are allowed (and usually helped) to make their own house. Jari says that in arranging for himself and Sariyah to live with her maternal relatives, Lamsi was following adat. Jari and Sariyah’s gawai, which took place in about 1974, was held in Sungai Rotan and Sariyah and Jari moved in with her mother’s sister straight afterwards. At their gawai, Gandung, Batin of Talang Perigi, represented Jari and his family, while Sariyah and her maternal relatives were represented by the Batin of Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga. Sariyah did not like living in Tujuh Buah Tangga because she felt lonely in a small talang where many of the population were Melayu. Without any rubber trees of their own in Tujuh Buah Tangga, money was also difficult to come by for Jari and Sariyah. After they had been married for about a year, Sariyah gave birth to their first child, a boy called Ingkaran. When he was only a few months old, Jari and Sariyah returned to Dusun Jaya where they moved back into Lamsi’s house. During their stay in Dusun Jaya, Jari and Sariyah began to farm their own ladang (which was always adjacent to Lamsi’s) and this gave Jari the opportunity to plant rubber trees on his plot once the padi (rice) had been harvested. In 1976, when Sariyah and Jari had been in Dusun Jaya for about a year, their son Ingkaran fell sick with diarrhoea and within a week he was dead\textsuperscript{14}. Shortly after Ingkaran’s death, Sariyah fell pregnant again and in the following year she gave birth to their first daughter, Jelia. 

In around 1979, Kilan, one of Sariyah’s maternal uncles, came to Lamsi’s house and persuaded Jari and Sariyah to return with him to Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga. Kilan, who was born in (and married a woman from) Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga, was the senior man among Sariyah’s maternal relatives and a Tua Tuah. As Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga had only a small Talang Mamak population, Kilan was keen to enlist Jari and Sariyah as anak buah who could help him tap and plant more rubber trees and farm larger ladang. Kilan argued that, according to adat,

\textsuperscript{14} Diarrhoea and similar complaints are common causes of death in Tiga Balai for both children and adults. For a discussion of some of the major health problems associated with life in this kind of environment, see Dentan (1979 pp.115-117).
Sariyah and Jari should be living in her natal *talang* with her female relatives. As the young couple had no house or source of cash in Dusun Jaya, they returned with Kilan to Talang Tujuh Buah Tanga. Leaving the young rubber trees Jari had planted in Dusun Jaya behind them, Sariyah, who was pregnant again, Jari and Jelia moved back to Sungai Rotan where the young couple worked in Kilan's *ladang* and helped cut his rubber. They had been in Kilan's house less than a year when Jelia, then aged three, fell ill with diarrhoea and died. Not long after the death of their daughter, Sariyah gave birth to another son named Nilai. Jari and Sariyah were not happy in Talang Tujuh Buah Tongga where they had no rubber, rice or house of their own and where they were isolated from the majority of Talang Mamak in an area with a high Muslim population. Whenever he had the time, Jari returned to the rubber plots he had planted in Dusun Jaya to check on their progress. By about 1982 the first rubber trees planted by Jari (in about 1975) were approaching maturity and he and Sariyah decided to return to Dusun Jaya to be near their rubber trees which Jari could begin tapping. Jari, Sariyah and Nilai left Talang Tujuh Buah Tanga, moved to Talang Perigi and built their first house in Dusun Jaya behind the house of Jari's niece, Nuraiyah, and her husband, Taksiran (who now live next door to Jari and Sariyah in Tran Perigi). Sariyah was happy to be back in Dusun Jaya, especially now that the market had been moved to Petonggan and the path to Perigi, which runs through Dusun Jaya, had been built.

Tapping their own mature rubber trees gave Jari and Sariyah direct access to a source of cash for the first time and Jari had to establish a relationship with a Petonggan rubber dealer in order to sell his latex. Up to this point, Jari and Sariyah had only been able to obtain cash as *anak buah* or close relatives of someone with both mature rubber trees and a steady relationship with a rubber dealer. In order to obtain a credit agreement, Jari first consulted Bagum, who is the *Tua Tuah* of Dusun Jaya and his sister Anjak's husband. Bagum agreed to help Jari negotiate a debt relationship with Haji Nasir of Petonggan (to whom Bagum sold his own rubber). When this deal was complete, Jari began taking his rubber to Petonggan every week where he sold it to Haji Nasir who gave him some cash and goods in return. Once they had a more or less regular supply of money Sariyah also began to go to the market for the first time where she enjoyed spending the cash Haji Nasir gave them. With their own *ladang*, house, and rubber plots, Jari and Sariyah considered themselves an independent family. Although they were now dependant upon Haji Nasir and Bagum, they were free from manipulation by other members of their families who might have hoped to enlist them as *anak buah*...
In around 1983, after Jari and Sariyah had been in Dusun Jaya for about a year, she gave birth to Jimoto, a younger brother to Nilai who was then about three years old. In that same year, just after his son was born, Jari, together with his brother-in-law Bagum, attended a large *gawai* in Sungai Limau as *anak buah* of Gandung, *Batin* of Talang Perigi. Both Bagum and Jari say that they were poisoned at this *kumpulan*, which was held to mark the wedding of Canto, *Batin* of Talang Sungai Limau. Bagum talks about this episode more than Jari does. Neither of them know how, or with what, they were poisoned but they both think that something was put into their food or drink. As a result of this incident Jari contracted elephantiasis in his right leg. A few years later, in 1985 Sariyah became pregnant again but before she had given birth, her eldest son, Nilai, who was then six, caught a fever and died. Within a few days of Nilai’s death Sariyah’s second daughter Niti was born. Jimoto, who was about three years old at the time of his sister’s birth, outlived her as Niti came down with a fever and died before she was one year old.

In late 1989, work began on *Tran* Perigi and all Talang Mamak who wanted a house there were advised to report to the *Camat*’s office in Air Molek for *penataran* (training). Information about *Tran* Perigi and the allocation of houses came from the *Camat* and his *pegawai* who passed instructions onto Umar and Gandung. As the government’s representative in Talang Perigi, *Kepala Desa* Gandung was responsible for ensuring that houses were made available to all those Talang Mamak who wanted one. For *penataran*, which took several weeks, Talang Mamak were transported from Air Molek to Pekanbaru and Kampar where they received instruction about farming, rubber cultivation, birth control, etc. Jari and Sariyah decided that they wanted a new government house but could not attend *penataran* as Jimoto was sick with diarrhoea at the time. Jari went to see Gandung and asked him for a house. Gandung agreed to let Jari and Sariyah have a house and Jari began planting fruit trees in the garden of the house he and Sariyah had chosen. Cultivated fruit trees are both a source of food and a sign that the land they stand on is being used. Although Talang Mamak do not own land, they do

footnotes

15 In allopathic terms, elephantiasis, like filaria, is caused by an infestation of nematode worms whose eggs are carried and transmitted by mosquitoes.

16 Nilai’s fever was probably a type of malaria which is a common cause of death for both adults and children in Tiga Balai.
own trees and orchards which may not be cut down or damaged by others. Before they could move into their new house, Jimoto, who was then six, died leaving Sariyah and Jari childless. After a couple of weeks, everyone who had attended penataran returned and it seemed, to Jari, that only those Talang Mamak who had been to penataran would get houses, in spite of the fact that Gandung, who didn’t want to move to Tran and didn’t attend penataran, did end up with two houses; one of which he gave to his nephew Lancap; and the other is currently being used by an elderly Javanese man who arrived in Perigi from a nearby transmigrasi camp. The house that Jari and Sariyah had hoped to take had already been allocated to someone else and Jari had to uproot his trees and return to Dusun Jaya, where he learnt that his brother, Nawar, and Nawar’s son Ajaran (who had both attended penataran), had been given a house each. Nawar gave one of these houses to one of his daughters and her husband who had just got married. However, after only a couple of weeks of married life Nawar’s daughter returned to Dusun Jaya wanting a divorce. Also, around this time Johan and his wife returned to Talang Perigi from a transmigrasi camp in Binjai17 and took a house in Tran Perigi.

Johan, and his wife (who is one of Gandung’s sisters), left Talang Perigi in the late 1980s to take a house and a plot of land in Binjai, an established transmigrasi camp in Kecamatan Rengat which is populated mostly by Javanese. At the camp, Johan was able both to earn a good wage tapping rubber and to learn farming techniques from his Javanese neighbours. While they were in Binjai, Johan, his wife and their children entered Islam. Johan, who was quite wealthy when he first arrived in Perigi, wanted to invest in another house and he bought, from Nawar, the house recently vacated by Nawar’s daughter. Johan has owned three houses in Tran: one that he sold to me; one that he has improved and now lives in; and another that he had dismantled and re-erected opposite his house for his eldest daughter and her family to live in. Jari and Sariyah were very keen to join their friends and family in Tran Perigi but were unable to get a house, many of which had already been given to people from Petonggan by Umar. Although Tran Perigi was built to re-house Talang Mamak, over twenty of the fifty-plus houses were given to Melayu from Petonggan, and some Talang Mamak, such as Jari and Sariyah, could not get a house. Jari and Sariyah say that the reason that they did not get a

footnotes

17 This should not be confused with Dusun Binjai, the site of Gandung’s home, in Talang Perigi.
house is because they did not attend penataran. However, they also recognise that many people, such as Gandung, Umar, Johan and Batin Urusan of Talang Gedabu did not go to penataran either but were able to get houses. Nawar, who still owned an empty house in Tran Perigi but did not want to leave Dusun Jaya, was eventually persuaded by Bagum, whose help Jari had enlisted, to let Jari and Sariyah live in his empty house which Jari wanted to buy but Nawar refused to sell. Bagum explained Sariyah and Jari's situation to Batin Gandung, who called Nawar to his house where the three men discussed the matter. Although at present they live in Tran Perigi, Jari and Sariyah do not own their own home and, now that they have made improvements to the house and their fruit trees are well established, Nawar has decided that he wants his house back. Nawar, Jari's eldest brother, suffered a blow to the head some time around 1990, when he fell off the back of a trailer being towed by Haji Nasir's Kijang truck. People who have known him for a long time, such as Jari and Bagum, say that Nawar has been mentally unstable since his fall and this is the reason for his unreasonableness regarding the house and in other matters. After his accident, Nawar, who is Tua Tuah of Balai Desa, stopped tapping rubber, working in ladang and representing his anak buah. He now spends most of his time sitting quietly inside his house. Nawar's inability to fulfil his duties as Tua Tuah has resulted in many of his anak buah now regarding Bagum as the leader of their dusun and, although no open challenge has been made to Nawar's position (he still receives a wage as a government employee), his advice and assistance are no longer sought by his former anak buah.

When he and Sariyah first moved to Tran, Jari would walk the couple of miles to Dusun Jaya every morning, weather permitting, in order to tap his rubber trees but, recently, as his leg has become more swollen and more painful, Jari has had to allow one of his young nephews (Lebak's son) to cut his rubber which has reduced Sariyah and Jari's income to a one-third share of the rubber collected each week. Since he gave up tapping his own trees, Jari has only been able to get irregular work cutting other people's rubber in Tran Perigi. On the quarter hectare of land that surrounds their house, Jari and Sariyah have planted mostly pisang (bananas) and nanas (pineapples) but they have also one or two fruit trees and some young coconuts. Bananas are an everyday food and over twenty different varieties are cultivated in Tiga Balai and there are also two species of wild banana which grow in the forest. Pineapples, of which there are two basic varieties, are very common while coconuts, which are highly prized, are very difficult to grow as the young plants are a favourite food of forest pigs. Like
everybody in Tran, Jari and Sariyah would like, and have tried, to plant food crops such as *ubi jalar* (sweet potato) and *ubi kayu* (manioc) but forest pigs, which now raid gardens in Tran regularly, eat them before they can be harvested. Since Tran was cleared, much soil erosion has taken place which has greatly decreased the fertility of the land, which, like much of Sumatra, has only a few inches of fertile humus on top of acidic red soil. This, combined with the frequent raids of monkeys, pigs, tapirs, deer, civet cats, bears, etc makes farming in Tran very difficult. Jari recognises the need for, and would like to construct, a fence which would protect at least some of his land from forest animals but like most men in Tran he has been unable to complete such a large job. Fencing can prevent pigs, deer, tapirs, etc, entering gardens but it cannot keep out monkeys, bears, civet cats and other animals that can climb. The most effective form of fencing is made from straight hardwood poles between five and six feet long and two or three inches in diameter. Young *merpoyan* (*Rhodamnia trinervia*) trees, which usually grow straight and are very hard, make the best poles as they can withstand decay for many years. The poles are sharpened to a point at one end and sunk into the ground to a depth of about a foot with only a couple of inches gap between each pole. Much longer poles, (twenty feet plus) are then lashed horizontally to the uprights binding them together. To erect this type of fence around a quarter hectare Tran garden takes over two hundred metres of fencing, consisting of thousands of poles and hundreds of yards of *rotan* ties. It also requires many hours of work. This type of fencing, which is called * pagar*, is usually much taller and stronger than *papah* (fencing around *ladang*).

Every year since they arrived in Tran, Sariyah and Jari have farmed their own *huma* (rice field). In 1991 and 1992 they cleared a field next to Bagum’s *ladang* but in 1993 they farmed a one and a half hectare plot (which was near Tran and had last been cleared about two decades ago by Nian and her first husband) with Nuraiyah and Taksiran (who had also farmed with Bagum in 1991 and 1992), Nian, and Tulin and his wife. In 1993, because of poor

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*footnotes*

18 In Tiga Balai, the word *huma* is interchangeable with the word *ladang* but in Indonesian they have slightly different meanings. *Ladang* means a rice field that is not permanently flooded like *sawah* (wet-rice field), but may be under water for part of the year. The rice fields owned by Melayu on the banks of the Inderagiri, which are flooded every year by the river, are known as *ladang* or *bendang* which both mean a rice field that is not *sawah* but which can be wet or dry, while *huma* means specifically a dry rice field.
harvests in the two previous years, Bagum decided to clear a patch of *rimba* (old forest) which he hoped would be more fertile than *bekas ladang* (fallow fields). As Bagum’s proposed plot was quite far from *Tran* and would take months to clear, Sariyah and Jari decided to farm a site nearer to home which would require less work. The plot Jari, Sariyah, Nuraiyah, Taksiran, Nian, Tulin and his wife chose was about a kilometre south of *Tran* on the edge of an area of forest (containing both rubber and native trees) which lay between it and *Tran*. The plot’s northern and southern edges were bounded by streams and a third stream dissected the site. To the east, west and south of the plot lay older forest that had not been cleared for forty or fifty years and contained productive fruit trees such as *durian*. This site was the closest available to *Tran* and was valued highly for this reason. Since moving to *Tran*, Nian (who was the last to farm this plot) had shared *huma* with Sutan Mohammed and his wife who is Nian’s mother’s sister’s daughter. Although she is not closely related to Jari, Sariyah, Nuraiyah, Taksiran, Tulin or his wife, Nian shared a *ladang* with them because, as the last person to farm the chosen site, which contained several mature rubber trees owned by her, she was seen to have some rights over it. Sariyah and Jari could not use this site without first asking Nian’s permission and, after some discussion, they decided to farm together. The last people to farm a particular plot have some rights over it and, if someone else wishes to farm it they must first ask the permission of the previous farmers, who, if they are not using the site themselves, cannot refuse. No-one can clear a *ladang* site if it contains mature trees, (rubber, *durian*, etc) planted by someone else without their permission. If rubber or *durian* trees not actually on the *ladang* but around the edges are accidentally damaged during clearing or firing, the *Batin* is informed and he fines the man who damaged them. Sharing gave Jari and Sariyah access to *huma* near their home and provided Nian with the help she needed in order to clear, burn, plant and harvest her own *ladang*. Tulin and his wife (who is one of Nawar’s wife’s relatives) moved from Dusun Jaya to a house very near, but not in *Tran*, in 1992. In 1993 they farmed two *ladang*, one being that which they shared with Jari and Sariyah, and the other being a field of rice they cultivated around their new house.

Arrangements for farming *huma* were made in February and March before work was started on the new fields. At this time, most people decided who they would share *ladang* with and
where their huma would be situated and before any work began, everyone seemed to know where their friends, family and neighbours would be farming and who they would be working with. In April, after the appearance of bintang tiga (Orion's belt) in the morning sky, Sariyah, Jari, Nuraiyah, Taksiran, Nian, Tulin and his wife began work on their ladang. Jari's first job was to cut long straight bamboos and lay them down to mark out the borders of his ladang. Once the boundaries of the four huma had been marked out, Jari began to clear his plot of vegetation. Starting at the edges and working towards the centre, he nabas (cut down) all the small plants and trees. Jari, Taksiran and Tulin finished clearing their ladang of undergrowth before Nian and they helped her remove the last of the small vegetation on her plot before decisions were made about how the remaining trees should be cut. As a divorced mother, Nian needs help with the rice farming activities that are regarded as men's work (e.g. cutting trees, firing the land and dibbling holes for the rice seed). As the land had only been fallow for about twenty years, there were no very large trees but there were three mature rubber trees on Nian's huma which she did not want to damage. However, despite Nian's efforts to protect these rubber trees, which were planted by one of her husbands, they were badly damaged during the firing. Felling large trees, which is called nabang, is carried out by erecting a scaffolding to a level above the buttresses, where one or two men stand and chop it down, a task which can take a couple of days. (For a description of tree-felling techniques in Sumatra, see Marsden [1811, p.68-69] and in Malaysia see Freeman [1970, p.173-177]). In Tiga Balai some large trees on ladang plots are not felled — rather, all their lateral branches are cut until only a small crown remains. This process greatly reduces the amount of shade provided by the tree and is not considered to adversely affect the growth of rice around it. Without large trees to cut, which requires co-operation, Jari started to cut down the trees on his ladang by himself, beginning on one edge, cutting each tree so that it fell against another and its weight made cutting the second tree easier. Kapak (axes) are rare in Tiga Balai and Jari does not own one.

footnotes

19 Jari told me that he did not look for bintang tiga. Rather, he simply started clearing the land at the same time as other people — Kemantan Madun did look out for the appearance of bintang tiga and he said that he made the decision, based upon its arrival, for the whole of Perigi, as to when land clearing should begin.

20 This is a common method for clearing land of trees of rice farming which is also found in Malaysia, where 'aborigines' select a tree of the largest size and then 'fell it in a particular direction so as to bring down with it a number of smaller trees in its fall' (Skeat and Blagden 1906, vol. 1, p.340).
but, like every Talang Mamak man and woman, he does own a *parang* (machete) which he
takes with him nearly everywhere he goes. Nearly all the *parang* blades in Tiga Balai have
been made by Nasruddin, the blacksmith in Petonggan, or his father who is a blacksmith in
Keloyang. To the blade of the *parang* (which is usually bought), Talang Mamak fit a wooden
handle. A good *parang*, which has a convex blade about eighteen inches long that keeps its
edge and a secure, comfortable handle is a valued item in Tiga Balai. Although there are few
*kapak* in Tiga Balai, most men have access to a *beliung* (*beliong* in Indonesian) which has a
wedge-shaped head of metal about two inches wide and four inches long, which is lashed to a
flexible *rotan* handle about two feet long. Jari felled the trees on his *huma* using just his
*parang*. When he had finished, he helped the others, especially Nian, and when all the
vegetation had been cut down, it was left to dry, ready for burning. This drying period,
which takes place in May–June, ideally coincides with *kemerau* (dry season) when the
prevailing winds are from the east and less rain falls.

The 1993 *kemerau* brought more rain than usual, which encouraged new growth and
prolonged the drying period. (See Freeman [1970, p.177–180] for a discussion of the
problems associated with wet *kemerau* and difficult drying conditions.). It was not until early
July that Jari, Taksiran and Tulin were ready to burn their *ladang*. In the late afternoon of a
hot dry day, Jari, being the senior man (he is older than both Taksiran and Tulin and he is also
a senior, male, maternal relative of their wives) made preparations for the burning. First, he
put an *ancak* (bamboo stand) in the middle of the *huma*, then he prepared a *limas* (small
container) which he placed on top of the *ancak*. Jari put burning coals and *keminyan* into the

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21 Freeman (1970, p.175) includes a picture of a *beliong*, which are used with great skill to cut down large
trees: 'they never seem to miss their stroke even by a hair's breadth, the cutting being done so cleanly
that the top of the stump looks as smooth as a billiard table' (Skeat and Blagden 1906, vol. 1, p.339).

22 *Ancak* are used by Talang Mamak on many different occasions when offerings are made to *nenek mayang*. Small *ancak* are made of bamboo but larger ones, on which *semahan* (wooden trays) and other gifts of
food are placed, are usually made from a section of tree trunk which is driven into the ground and split
crossways for about half its length. The four split sections of wood are then wedged apart to form a
level platform upon which *semahan* can be placed.

23 *Limas* are only used for burning *keminyan* (benzoin gum). They are usually about four inches long by
two inches wide and made from fresh banana leaf, folded to form a tray which is held in shape with
small bamboo pins.
limas and, as the keminyan burnt and the smoke rose upwards, Jari asked his nenek moyang to help him call up a wind from his nyawa (life-breath, soul) which would fan the fire he was about to start but which could still be controlled. Having called up a wind, Jari, Taksiran and Tulin began setting fire to their huma. They started on the upwind edge of the field and, by using very dry, split bamboo canes as torches, the three men began following the wind across the clearing, poking their torches into the dry vegetation and shouting out as they went—telling the wind which way to go. After a few minutes the huma was a smoky, raging inferno and all that could be heard above the roar of the flames were bamboos exploding and the shouts of the men. When a ladang is being fired, children often wait around the perimeter catching and roasting the many large grasshoppers and locusts which try to escape the flames. Just as the fire reached the downwind edge of the ladang, where the cut vegetation had been pulled back about ten metres from the living forest to prevent damage to trees or houses, a light rain began to fall which dampened the flames. Out of the smoke emerged Jari, Taksiran and Tulin who were black with soot. Although the firing had gone well, Jari was not pleased that rain had begun to fall as it would put out the fire before the larger pieces of wood had been thoroughly burnt.

The next morning, Jari, Sariyah, Nuraiyah, Taksiran, Nian, Tulin and his wife returned to their ladang to assess the firing and begin gathering paronan (unburnt wood) into piles for a second burning. After the initial burning, small fires, which help to keep animals and mosquitoes away, are kept alight all the time right through to harvest. Because kemerau had been quite wet and rain had fallen the previous evening, Jari and Sariyah's second burning took almost two weeks. Jari wanted to begin planting rice as soon as possible after the first firing when the entire huma is inches deep in ash which is an important fertiliser. Like most tropical rain forest, the soil of Tiga Balai is very poor, all the vegetation being supported by a few inches of humus lying on top of acidic soil. (See Benjamin [1986, p.12] for a discussion of the relationship between rainforest soil and swidden techniques.) The longer memaron (gathering unburnt wood)24 takes, the greater the chance of losing this ash through erosion.

footnotes

24 While memarun is the common Indonesian spelling, Usman (1985 p.68) says that the Talang Mamak word for secondary burning is 'menurun', which usually means to descend or to go down.
Once Jari was satisfied that most of the wood had been burnt off, he began making preparations for *nugal* (planting). On the day before *nugal*, Jari went out to look for *alat tugal* (planting equipment) – *tugal* are the poles used for dibbling and these, together with several medicinal plants, make up *alat tugal*. From the forest he collected five small trees: *kayu tebung-tebung*; *pula*; *sedingin*; *setawar* and *setajam*. From his garden, he took a small *serai* plant and a stick of *tebu kapor*. Jari calls these plants, which all have medicinal uses, *kawan padi* (friends of rice seed). Later that night, Jari spread twelve *canting* (small rice measures) of *padi* on a woven mat and poured *santan* (coconut cream) over them. To this he added a measure of hair oil and then began combing through the rice seeds with the plastic comb he uses for his hair. When he had finished combing the rice seed, he put it in a large *kambut* (woven basket), placed a length of *belacu* (white cloth) over it, and then put a piece of wood on top of the *kambut*. Not all men prepare their *padi* in the same way and some aspects of his technique are unique to Jari. While soaking in *santan* is common, the use of hair oil and comb is probably only practised by a small group of men in Perigi, which includes Bagum. While Jari combed the *padi*, he recited a *tawar* (charm) to himself, which, as well as being secret, is also only used by a small number of his close male relatives.

**footnotes**

25 This is Glochidion laevigatum.

26 This is Alstonia scholaris.

27 This is Bryophyllum calycinum.

28 According to Wilkinson (1955 Part II p.1092), *setawar* is the name given to a range of plants ‘that are regarded as spiritual antiseptics’. *Setajam* is a similar kind of plant.

29 This is lemongrass (Gramineae).

30 This is a dusty, green sugarcane (Saccharum officinarum) called *tebu kapur* in Indonesian.

31 In Tiga Balai, the usual measure for a *canting* is a small empty tin. Twelve *canting* are equivalent to four *sayak* (a Minangkabau word meaning coconut shell bowl [Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.1029]) or one *gantang* (a common measure of rice in Sumatra equivalent to 3·125 kg [Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia 1993 p.291]).

32 Large *kambut* are usually made from split *rotan*, while smaller ones are made from *numbia* (leaves of the sago palm *Metroxylon sagu*).

33 *Belacu* means unbleached cotton but, like most Talang Mamak, Jari used dyed white cotton.
The following morning, Jari carried the kambut (containing the rice seed soaked in santan) to the huma on his head (men usually carry things on their shoulder). He then took the remainder of his padi to the field, again on his head, and finally he brought the seven medicinal plants, known as kawan padi, that he had collected the previous day. Before nugal began, Jari put the kambut in the middle of the ladang and planted kawan padi around it. He then made four limas, balanced them on the four corners of the kambut and burnt keminyan in them. As the smoke rose from the keminyan, Jari, Taksiran and Tulin began menugal (making holes in the ground) while Sariyah, Nuraiyah, Nian and Tulin’s wife memenih (dropped seeds into the holes)\(^{34}\). To make holes for the padi, the men used tugal (dibbling sticks) which are usually between four and five feet long, bluntly pointed at one or both ends and with a slight hourglass shape so that they are thinner in the middle – which is where they are held. Tugal are usually made from the wood of anau (sugar palm \([\text{Arenga saccharifera}] - \text{enau} \text{ in Indonesian}) which is very hard and heavy. Making tugal is a skill not all men possess – Jari’s tugal were made by Bagum. Jari, Taksiran and Tulin made holes with their tugal, about two inches deep and two inches across, every three or four inches over all their huma, except along pathways and on the site where their pondok would be built. Alternating between left and right hands and using a slight twisting action, the men quickly covered the entire ladang with holes, working between exposed roots and right up to unburnt logs. Following behind the men came the women, each with a small kambut full of padi, a few seeds of which they dropped into each hole. While stooping only slightly more experienced women can deftly flick between six and ten seeds into each hole but less experienced women have to bend down low and carefully drop seed into the holes. When the men had finished nugal, they helped the women with sowing. The first seeds planted were those that Jari had soaked and combed the night before. Like most Talang Mamak, Jari and Sariyah planted two varieties of rice, padi and pulut (sticky rice)\(^{35}\), which are always stored, planted and cooked separately. While padi provides the staple food, pulut is usually only eaten at kumpulan where it is made into sweets.

footnotes

34 The word memenih is an unusual construction not found in Indonesian dictionaries. It is a verb formed by adding the prefix men to the root benih which means padi or other seed. Menenam, the common Indonesian word for planting, is also used in Tiga Balai but only for trees and vegetables.

35 According to Hill (1983 p.562) pulut are ‘varieties of rice with soft dextrinose grains: often miscalled glutinous rice’.
(Marsden [1811 p66] gives a description of the many varieties of padi and pulut found in Sumatra.) Padi, which takes up at least three quarters of the land, is always planted before, and in a different part of the ladang to, pulut which is always kept to one edge of the huma and usually takes up about a quarter of its area. If a man wishes to use a site adjacent to one of his old fields on which he grew pulut, his new plot can only come into contact with the old one along the edge furthest from where his pulut was planted. This means that, when new fields are cleared next to old ones, the development is in a straight line, with pulut always being planted on the side of the new ladang that is adjacent to the previous field. Jari told me that breaking this rule is called patah dirapohan (broken [because] trodden-on) and that rice grown in a huma that is next to but not in a straight line with a previous huma will become sick. To cure this type of sickness an older man (such as Bagum) plants five bunglai (Zingiber cassumar) plants in a cross shape in the centre of the new ladang. The work of planting all the land shared by Jari, Sariyah, Nuraiyah, Taksiran, Nian, Tulin and his wife went on for most of the day, in about one hour sessions which were interspersed with long breaks when everybody retired to the shade of the temporary shelter the men had built on the space put aside for the pondok. During these intervals the men and women smoked and chewed sirih and, in the middle of the day, rice was cooked and everyone ate together.

While their padi was germinating, Jari, Taksiran and Tulin built a pondok (hut) together on high ground at the intersection of their plots. Pondok are built on stilts between two and three metres off the ground. The basic structure is made of poles lashed together with rotan, to which a roof, usually of dawn rumbia (sago palm leaves), walls of kulit kayu (tree bark) and a floor of thin straight poles with mats on top is added. Pondok are always built in a position that gives a good view of the surrounding ladang. The size and condition of the pondok usually depends on its distance from the owner's house. If a ladang is more than two hour's walk from home, some members of the family farming it will almost certainly take up permanent residence in the pondok when najak (weeding) begins. Pondok that are lived in are generally bigger and more comfortable than pondok that are only used for a few hours a day. More time and care is spent on their construction and they contain more plates, cooking pots, mats, mosquito nets, lamps, etc. People who take up residence in their pondok often grow a lot of vegetables on their huma. As their ladang were neither very big nor very far from their homes the three men decided to share both a small pondok and the responsibilities of guarding their rice. When they had finished their pondok, they helped Nian build her own in the middle of
her huma. After both of the pondok were completed, the three men each began to build a papah (fence) along parts of the external perimeter of their respective ladang. Papah means any kind of fence-like obstacle around the perimeter of a huma and while some men construct a bamboo fence lashed to wooden uprights, others just pile up thorny vegetation. Unlike pagar (fencing around houses or gardens), papah are not erected to prevent animals entering a ladang – rather they are constructed in order to encourage them to follow particular paths. Jari, Taksiran and Tulin did not spend much time on papah construction as they were more interested in taking advantage of the period of dry weather that followed nugal to cut rubber. Some men erect papah on all the borders of their ladang but Jari, Taksiran and Tulin only gave this protection to the eastern and western perimeters of the clearing which were not bounded by streams. The three men concentrated their papah-building around the places where tracks used by animals entered their ladang. While the tracks themselves were not fenced, the papah was made strongest on either side of them, which encouraged animals to stick to the tracks where various types of siding (snares) and ranjau (stakes) were set in the narrow gaps between the papah. Many Talang Mamak men are experts at making snares and traps. The simplest and most common of them is the siding, a sliding noose attached to a springy branch bent over and held in tension by a trigger string which is positioned across the opening of the noose so when it is touched the branch is released and the noose tightens. The basic trigger mechanism of the siding is also used in other traps such as lapal (Indonesian lapun) where it causes a net to fall, perangkap where a cage falls and belantik where a bamboo arrow is fired. Ranjau are made from short lengths of bamboo cut at an angle to leave a razor sharp edge and then stuck in the ground so the blade is left pointing upwards between six inches and a foot off the ground. Ranjau are usually positioned just inside the papah at points where it is low. Animals often try to jump over papah at these low points where they impale themselves on waiting ranjau. Ranjau are also often set at the bottom of pelobang (steep-sided holes) concealed by a covering of light sticks and leaves which will give way if trodden on.

While pondok and papah work was going on, Jari frequently took time to examine his young rice plants for signs of insect damage. Jari told me of two common insect pests which cause damage to padi in Tiga Balai and that he knows how to get rid of: ulat pucuk, which eats young leaves and is treated by burning a few pucuk enau (leaves of the palm Arenga saccharifera) on the ladang; and ulat tanduk, which can be removed by burning finely cut tanduk (horn) in a similar way. If other types of pest attacked Jari’s rice he would seek the help of a senior and more
knowledgeable man such as Bagum. Although his *padi* was not badly affected by pests, its rate of growth was slow due to a lack of rain in June and July. After their rice had been in the ground for a few months, Jari and Sariyah planted vegetables such as *timun* (cucumbers), *labu* (gourds), *kacang* (beans) and *jagung* (sweet corn) on their *ladang*. While every family keeps some seeds from the previous year's vegetable crop for sowing on their new *ladang*, some people take a much greater interest in growing vegetables than others. Keen vegetable growers trade or buy seed either from itinerant, usually Minang, traders, Javanese farmers from nearby *transmigasi* camps or local *Melayu* at Petonggan market. While Jari and Sariyah were not keen vegetable growers, Nian grew a greater variety and quantity on her *huma*. By the beginning of August, Jari and Sariyah's rice was about a foot tall and Sariyah began the work of *najak* (weeding), which she did using a *tajak*, a short hoe, about a foot long, with the blade at right angles to the shaft. Once *najak* was underway, Sariyah, Nuraiyah and Tulin's wife met at their *huma* every morning to help each other weed their *padi*. While the three women who shared a *pondok* shared their *najak* responsibilities, Nian weeded her *huma* with the help of her eldest daughter Likor. As their *ladang* were near their homes, the women did not cook a midday meal at their *pondok* as many other people do – rather they returned to their houses to eat their meals. While Sariyah was busy *najak*, Jari had his mornings free to *nakik* (tap rubber) and, although he was unable to walk to his own rubber plots in Dusun Jaya, he was able to make an arrangement with Nian to tap her trees near Tran for a two-thirds share. Occasionally Nian cut her own rubber but she usually had an arrangement with a man who tapped her trees for a two-thirds share. In these relationships Nian was often cheated and, as her friendship with Sariyah and Jari developed through sharing *huma*, they made an agreement which would benefit both parties. Jari was pleased to have the opportunity to tap rubber near his house and Nian was confident that Jari would not steal from her. As Nian owned a large rubber plot adjacent to his and Sariyah's house, Jari could *nakik* on any dry day without having to endure a long and painful walk. At this time of year, everyone hopes for plenty of rain to encourage growth of the young *padi* and, on rainy days, both Sariyah and Jari stayed at home making mats, baskets, traps, etc out of *rotan*, pandanus and bamboo. Weaving *tikar* (sleeping mats), *karong sirih* (sirih pouches) and other household or personal items, is a task many women carry out in their spare time every day. While most men weave large baskets such as *ambung* and *kambut* for household use, some men such as Jari make other goods as well, such as *lukah* (fishing traps), which they sell in Petonggan. Whenever the rain stopped, Sariyah would return to her *huma* to resume *najak*, which she carried out without assistance from Jari.
Although *najak* is usually organised and carried out by women, men sometimes help, especially older men such as Gandung whose *ladang* were large. Occasionally, if the family farming the rice are sick or the *huma* is exceptionally big, hired-hands, who are paid in *padi* after the harvest, assist with the weeding. Title-holders usually have the biggest *ladang* and they can call on their *anak buah* (followers) to help with sowing, weeding, harvesting, etc. *Huma* are only weeded once and, when Sariyah, Nuraiyah and Tulin’s wife had finished weeding their *padi*, they spent time tending the vegetables they had planted, some of which were ready for harvest. Sariyah told me that the systematic weeding of the whole plot is only carried out once as any weeds which appear after weeding will not affect the growth of the *padi*.

Despite careful weeding, Jari and Sariyah’s *padi* (like everyone else’s) suffered from a lack of rain during the months of August and September, which were quite dry. As a result, their rice was not strong and healthy and Sariyah and Jari began to feel that 1993 would be another poor harvest. In October, just after Sariyah had finished weeding, heavy persistent rains began to fall, the *padi* started to grow more quickly and Jari began to make preparations for protecting his crop from animals and birds. He examined the *papah* along the edge of the *huma* for damage or signs of animal activity and he repaired and reset his *siding*. Neither Jari or Sariyah are fond of red meat and consequently Jari was not very interested in trapping or snaring animals. Compared to some men Jari put little effort into protecting his *huma* and his *papah* was just a line of dried vegetation and partially burnt bits of wood piled up with a few *ranjau* and *siding*, which he rarely reset, at strategic points. In order to keep birds off his crops, Jari made a variety of bamboo rattles and clappers, which were either set to catch the wind or could be activated by pulling long lengths of *rotan* which stretched from the bird-scarers to the *pondok*. By pulling these *rotan* cords, Jari could produce loud bangs and clicks around the perimeter of his *huma* while still remaining in his *pondok*.

By the beginning of November, the *padi* had branched and the young seed was emerging. As soon as the rice panicles appear, the *padi* should be guarded to prevent it being eaten by birds and animals. At this time many households split into two parts, one which moves to take up residence in the *pondok* and another that remains in the house. As their *huma* were near their homes, Jari, Sariyah, Taksiran, Nuraiyah, Tulin and his wife did not move to the *pondok* they shared, preferring to remain based at home while they guarded their *padi*. During the daytime, when the rice must be protected from monkeys and birds Sariyah kept watch at the
Returning home in the evening. In Tiga Balai there are three species of monkey which can cause serious damage to rice crops. *Simpai* (*Presbytis hosei*) are the most common and, like *Cigak* (*long-tailed Macaca fascicularis*), they will raid unattended gardens or huma. Both *Simpai* and *Cigak* are generally shy of humans and will flee if disturbed. *Beruk* (*short-tailed Macaca nemestrina*), however, is a larger and more aggressive monkey which can intimidate and scare people and cause serious damage to crops. Flocks of small birds can also eat a lot of rice in a short time, but they are easily scared away and usually only cause damage to huma that are left unattended. While Sariyah was watching the rice, Jari cut Nian’s rubber and, during each night, he made a few visits to the *ladang* to refuel the half-dozen or so fires that burned continuously on the *ladang* and to scare away any animals that might be in the vicinity. These visits became more frequent and longer the riper the rice became. About two weeks before harvest, when the rice was reaching full maturity, Jari began spending the whole night in his pondok, trying to guard his padi against pigs, deer and other animals. Like many other Talang Mamak men, Jari is finding it increasingly difficult to protect his crops from herds of forest pigs which can eat and damage a lot of rice in a short space of time. Apart from his traps, Jari’s main defence against the pigs is noise. So, at regular intervals throughout the night, he shouted and sounded his clappers and rattles to scare them away. At night, close to harvest time, a variety of sounds can be heard coming from huma as people who are guarding the padi shout, yell, bang drums, beat gongs and sound rattles. These methods did not work well for Jari in 1993 and, on a few moonless nights when heavy rain was falling, pigs entered his huma and damaged about a third of his crop. Jari and many other men often complained that pigs are becoming braver and more cunning. Although they are rarely seen during the day, at night especially when heavy rain is falling, they now regularly raid Talang Mamak crops. The other households farming alongside Jari and Sariyah also suffered from heavy crop damage due to pigs entering their huma: Taksiran was unable to guard his rice because his eldest son was very ill with a skin disease during the period just before harvest and he wanted to spend his nights at home with his family rather than in the pondok guarding his rice; Tulin was busy protecting the padi growing around his new house; and Nian, whose youngest daughter, Nar, did not like sleeping in pondok (where she felt scared) was unable to spend a single night guarding her rice.

The dry weather after sowing prolonged the growing season and it was not until mid-January that the padi began to fully ripen and Jari, Sariyah, Nuraiyah, Taksiran, Nian, Tulin and his
wife could choose a convenient day on which to start *menmai* (harvest). Because their rice was late ripening Jari and Sariyah had to harvest in the wettest season of the year when the *padi*, although mature, was damp. Jari was loath to reap wet rice but he figured that if he waited for dry weather, which might be a long time coming, he risked having all his crops destroyed by pigs. On the morning of the appointed day Jari and Sariyah took a large *kambut* (woven basket) and decorated it by weaving threads of red, white and black cotton into it. Cotton thread, called *benang*, is bought in a variety of colours at Petonggan market and is used mainly to decorate *karong sirih* (*sirih* pouches) and *karong rokok* (tobacco pouches). Thin slivers of *buluh temiang* (bamboo)\(^36\) and *kayu sepang* (sappan wood)\(^37\) were also woven around the opening of the *kambut*. Once the *kambut* had been decorated, a *tuai* (reaping knife), usually about four inches long, and crescent-shaped, with a small metal blade in the middle of the outer part, was put inside the *kambut*, which Jari then carried on his head to the *huma* and put in the *pondok*. Sariyah accompanied him, carrying some pandanus leaves which she also put in the *pondok*. Jari then gathered some *bunga merah* (red flowers), some *bunga kuning* (yellow flowers)\(^38\) and a few leaves of *tenung asam* (a type of aubergine)\(^39\), which were growing on the *ladang* and took them inside the *pondok*. There he arranged the plants he had gathered into a bunch, with the flowers on the inside surrounded by the pandanus leaves, which was then folded inside *tenung asam* leaves. Holding the plants in his right hand and his *parang* (machete) in his left hand, which also helped support the *kambut* balanced on his head, Jari went down the steps of the *pondok* backwards. When he reached the bottom, he turned round, put the *kambut* on the ground and made a small hole in the ground with his *parang*, into which he planted the flowers and leaves. Jari then stood up, tied the *kambut* around his waist, took out the *tuai* and began cutting the ripest heads of rice. Once Jari had reaped a few ears, Sariyah, Nuraiyah, Taksiran, Nian, Tulin and his wife, who had been waiting by the pondok ready with *kambut* and *tuai*, also

\footnotes

\(^36\) This is Bambusa wrayi.

\(^37\) This is wood from the thorny sappan–tree (*Caesalpinia sappan*). In other parts of Sumatra this wood was used to make a red dye. (See Marsden 1811, p.95).

\(^38\) *Bunga merah* and *bunga kuning* (both unidentified) are grown by most people near their houses, in their gardens and in their *huma*. They are often used at *kumpulan* (gatherings) to decorate offerings of food on *semahan* (trays), etc.

\(^39\) *Tenung asam* (*Solanum ferox*) has small spiny fruit and thorny leaves.
started harvesting the ripest of their *padi*. Whenever Jari or Sariyah's *kambut* became full, they emptied it into a large *kapuk* (storage bin)\(^{40}\) which Jari carried to the house as soon as it was filled.

Jari and Sariyah's crop from the previous year had been small, producing only enough rice to last them a few months. Consequently, they had been dependent on rice obtained from *Haji* Nasir for several months by the time Jari carried home the first full *kapuk* of *padi* from the 1993 harvest. Jari and Sariyah wanted to stop buying rice and begin eating their new crop as soon as possible but, because of the damp condition of the ears and the continuing wet weather, Sariyah could not dry the fresh *padi* in order to pound and winnow it ready for cooking. As more and more freshly harvested *padi*, which could not be processed or stored, accumulated at Jari and Sariyah's house, Sariyah decided to stay at home and concentrate on drying the rice while Jari harvested alone. Sariyah spent the next few days spreading the damp *padi* on mats which she laid outside whenever the sun came out and brought indoors when it rained. Once the rice was sufficiently dry, Sariyah removed the grain from the stalk by treading on the *padi* and rubbing it between her feet, which is called *mengirik*. Sariyah then pounded and winnowed the grain to remove the husk, which made it ready for cooking. *Padi* husk is removed by *menumbuk* (pounding) and *nampi* (winnowing). Although there are a variety of ways of dehulling rice in Tiga Balai most women, including Sariyah, pound their *padi* in a *lasung* (wooden mortar) using an *antan* (long wooden pestle), and then winnow it by dropping it from a *niru* or *nyiru* (flat woven tray) on to a *tikar* (mat). Once the rice has been cleaned in this way it is no longer called *padi*. It is known as *beras* until it is cooked when it becomes *nasi*. Although they knew that their harvest would not be large, Jari and Sariyah enjoyed eating their own rice which was tastier and more filling than the rice bought at Petonggan. Not all the rice was de-husked immediately. Most of it was stored away, some still on the ear and the rest as grain, which Sariyah would pound and winnow as and when she needed it. Most Talang Mamak houses have a *bekas padi* (rice store) built onto, or near, them at the opposite end to the *dapur* (kitchen). *Bekas padi* are built on stilts and usually have

\(^{40}\) *Kapuk* are cylindrical bins usually about three feet tall and eighteen inches in diameter. They are made from a length of hard outer tree bark, the ends of which are sewn together to form tubes one end of which is then closed with layers of soft inner tree bark laid on top of a net of woven *rotan*. 
rectangular walls of woven bamboo or tree bark and ridged roofs of *rumbia* (sago palm *Mitroxylon sagus*) or *salak* (*Zalacca edulis*) leaves. The walls slope outwards slightly so that the top is bigger than the bottom and small doorway situated high up under the eaves is the only means of access. The government-built houses in Tran do not have a *bekas padi* so Sariyah and Jari keep their rice in *kapuk* (storage bins) inside their house.

1993 was not a good harvest for Jari and Sariyah. Their crop was badly affected by the lack of rain just after sowing and a lot of grain was lost to forest pigs. On their one and a half hectare plot Jari and Sariyah had sown twenty-three *gantang* (seventy-two kilos) of seed from which they only reaped thirty *gantang* (ninety-four kilos) of rice. For about ten months work on their *ladang*, Jari and Sariyah got a return of about twenty-two kilos of rice which, they predicted, would not last a month. This was a very poor harvest. Dry rice farming can give returns of over sixty fold on seed planted (Freeman 1970 p252). Crawfurd (1820, vol. 1, p.365) gives average yields of twenty five to thirty times seed sown. Nuraiyah, Taksiran, Nian, Tulin and his wife, who farmed alongside Sariyah and Jari, all got similar returns from their *huma*. Even though they were not optimistic about getting a good yield from their efforts, Jari and Sariyah decided to put the majority of their rice harvest (over twenty *gantang*) away to use as seed in 1994. Sariyah and Jari did not eat the remainder of their rice straight away: they stored most of it and went back to buying rice from Haji Nasir. Despite their poor harvest, Jari and Sariyah still had hopes of getting some *untung* (profit) from their *huma*. After the last of the rice had been harvested and before forest regrowth took over the plot, Jari planted it with young rubber trees (between one and three feet tall) which he had been collecting from the forest for several months. If these trees survive (they can be stripped of their bark and killed by both pigs and deer) Jari and Sariyah will, in about ten years, have a one and a half hectare plot of rubber trees within easy reach of their house. They see this as being an important source of cash in the future when Jari might find walking very difficult.

Although Jari and Sariyah rarely talk about it, Jari's elephantiasis is having an increasing impact on their lives and this, together with their childlessness, which again they very rarely speak about, is having a major influence on the way they view both their present predicament and their future. While Jari's foot and his and Sariyah's childlessness are seldom mentioned by anybody, Sariyah does have more to say about both subjects than Jari does. Jari sees his *kaki gajah* (elephant foot) as the result of being poisoned by an anonymous man at a *gawai*
(wedding) in Talang Sungai Limau. He told me this in a conversation which took place when Bagum was describing how he had been poisoned at the same gawai. Bagum mentioned that Jari was also poisoned at that time. Jari agreed, adding that, after eating in the house where the gawai was being held (he had been sitting next to Bagum), he felt dizzy and faint and his foot began to swell. Bagum did report the matter to the police, but, as far as I know, neither man has been able to identify or exact any form of punishment (or revenge) on their poisoner. Although Jari has done so in the past, he does not at present visit Dukun (healers) in the hope of finding a way of counteracting the poison, nor has he visited the Puskesmas (local government clinic) which is open in Petonggan on some market days. The Puskesmas, or Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat, in Petonggan is in a small government building near the market place. For some Talang Mamak, an injection from the Puskesmas nurse, which costs between one thousand five hundred and three thousand rupiah, is the most effective obat (medicine) available. Talang Mamak patients are sold injections for every kind of complaint and although they might not effect a cure they usually seem to bring some relief. Every time the Puskesmas opens there are about half a dozen or so Talang Mamak patients wanting an injection, usually people either from Talang Perigi or Talang Gedabu who recognise the authority of the Camat. No one I spoke to knew what they had been injected with but most agreed that it was worth the money. Pills and potions manufactured by multinational drug companies (usually out of date) are sold, alongside local remedies, at Petonggan market by a Minangkabau trader who gives his own instructions for use with every sale. Jari probably knows from personal experience that he has an irreversible affliction which will continue to debilitate him and shorten his life as kaki gajah is not uncommon in Tiga Balai and Jari knows men (such as Malaka of Talang Gedabu) who have had it for many years. Jari prefers to keep his kaki gajah out of sight. He never wears shorts – only long trousers (which have to be baggy at the bottom to accommodate his foot) or a sarung (sarong) which he wears long. Most Talang Mamak men wear shorts all the time except for special occasions such as kumpulan or going to the market when they wear long trousers, if they own a pair. Manufactured garments such as skirts, shorts, trousers and shirts are most often bought second-hand, unlike sarung and other lengths of cloth which are always bought new. There is usually at least one trader selling imported second hand clothes and three or four selling sarung at every Petonggan market. Jari always sits cross-legged with his kaki gajah tucked under his other leg and, if he is wearing a sarung, he covers his swollen foot up with the cloth. Jari suffers a lot from fevers and headaches which are probably related to his elephantiasis and he says that he does not have the
energy of other men his age. His only mature rubber trees are in Dusun Jaya which is about three-quarters of hour's walk from his house. Several men (such as Bagum’s son-in-law, Nasir, whose house is about fifty metres from Jari’s) walk to Dusun Jaya every morning to cut rubber. However, Jari, who did try to make the journey each morning when he first moved to Tran, has recently had to allow one of his nephews (Lebak’s son) to cut his rubber, for a two-thirds share. Jari never gave his kaki gajah as the reason for allowing his nephew to cut his rubber. He described it in terms of the development of economic ties with his sister Lebak since his brother Nawar became incapable of managing her affairs – Lebak has no husband. Jari’s agreement with his nephew has not brought the cash he and Sariyah hoped for. Instead it has put additional strain on their tight budget and jeopardised Jari’s relationship with Haji Nasir.

Jari’s nephew, like many other Talang Mamak men, is fond of gambling and he incurred debts of Rp.300,000 at two gawai (weddings) which took place within the space of a week in early 1994. Lebak’s son, who has no other income apart from the money he earns tapping his mother’s and Jari’s rubber, got these debts playing dice and cards with professional Melayu gamblers, who accepted his mother’s rubber plots as collateral. Although both men and women usually talk about the ownership of rubber trees in terms of the men who trade the rubber they produce, most men can only get access to rubber plots through relationships with women. During a marriage, a husband may plant rubber trees. However, if he gets divorced, they become the property of his wife. Upon divorce, a man usually returns to his natal talang and lives with one of his female maternal relatives (mother or sister) and cuts the rubber that their husband (or husbands) have planted. If he remarries, he can cut any rubber trees planted by his wife’s previous husbands. When Lebak realised that due to her son’s gambling activities she could lose her rubber trees, she turned to her abang (older brother) for assistance. Although Nawar is Lebak’s eldest brother, she did not request his help because of his mental instability. Rather she asked Jari, who was already involved in her son’s finances, to save her rubber trees and get her son out of debt. Both Sariyah and Jari knew that helping Lebak and her son would put extra strain on their debt relationship with Haji Nasir but both agreed that it was something they should do. Jari turned to Bagum, who had helped Jari establish a debt
arrangement with Haji Nasir, for advice and, together, the two men decided that Jari would have to enter into another debt relationship with a toke (rubber dealer)41 in Talang Parit and borrow Rp.300,000 from him. This would allow Jari to pay off his nephew’s gambling debts quickly but it would also leave him with the problem of managing two long-term debt arrangements. Because of the danger of Haji Nasir finding out about his plan, Jari set off on a dark, rainy night pushing a bicycle loaded up with about eighty kilos of rubber. He returned the next morning with the cash having, for the first time, entered into a debt relationship on his own. If Haji Nasir were to find out that Jari was selling his rubber to another dealer he might try to punish both Jari and Bagum by refusing them further credit, taking more profit off them or confiscating some of their rubber trees. By lowering the price of rubber and raising the price of goods in their shops, Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim can increase the profit that they make from any individual. Now it is up to Jari and his nephew to cut enough rubber every week to keep both Haji Nasir, in Petonggan, and the toke, in Sungai Parit, happy. Each week Jari must sell enough rubber to Haji Nasir to get the cash he needs to buy his and Sariyah’s weekly provisions and pay off some of his long term debt. He must also take some rubber to the toke in Parit every week to pay off his new debt.

Like almost every other Talang Mamak man, Jari keeps chickens and breeds fighting cocks. There are chickens scratching around outside most Talang Mamak houses and many people said that a house without chickens would not be a nice place to stay, as it would be very quiet and lonely without the clucking and crowing of the chickens. Jari told me that it was against adat (tradition) to sell chickens and that, due to predation and disease, it was very difficult to build up a large stock of birds. Jari and Sariyah’s chickens are only killed and eaten at kumpulan (gatherings) held by themselves or their relatives. Kumpulan are also the only occasions when Jari fights and bets on his cocks, although he does preen and massage them every day. Stroking and massaging a fighting cock is called paut and most men usually spend time every day with their favourite cocks, stroking and preening them. They also often recite tawar (charms, spells) to their cocks while they paut. While young cocks and chickens are

footnotes

41 Toke, or tauke, has Chinese origins and means a person who finances an enterprise. In Tiga Balai a toke is a rubber dealer and almost every man has a toke to whom they owe money.
allowed to run free, fighting cocks are tied up (by one foot) usually to the roots of a fruit tree in whose shade they spend the day. At night, fighting cocks always sleep inside the house while the other birds are cooped up outside. Jari says that he feeds his cocks only padi and no matter how low the padi stocks are, he always sets some aside for his fighting cocks to eat, as if his cocks ate anything else they would not fight so well. If they are not being prepared for a fight, he washes his cocks, which is done by stroking water through their feathers with the hands (which is called uras), about once a fortnight. However, as a fight nears, Jari starts washing his cocks every night. Jari rarely fights his cocks as he rarely has money to bet on them but, if one of his relatives or neighbours holds a kumpulan, he will usually take a cock along with him. Although Sariyah does not help her husband select, care for or fight his cocks, she does not disapprove of cock-fighting. Rather she sees it, and the gambling that accompanies it, as an important feature of large kumpulan and an opportunity to show support for family and neighbours. Despite being part of their everyday lives, most women never touch fighting cocks, which are only handled by men. While men often discuss the qualities of different birds and recall recent fights, women do not take part in these conversations nor do they appear to discuss cock-fighting among themselves. Like handling cocks, talking about them is carried out exclusively by men. Sariyah’s interest in cock-fighting centres around how much Jari bets and whose cock he backs. She wants to ensure that her husband does not bet too much and put strain on the household budget but she also wants to show support for her relatives and neighbours, especially if they are hosting a kumpulan, by backing their cocks. Although women do not stand around outside with the men and watch cock fights at kumpulan, some may take an interest in the outcome of a particular fight, especially if they know that their husband, or another of their male relatives, has money on it. Women often watch cock-fights through the window slats of a house in which a kumpulan is taking place. While Sariyah approves of her husband making small bets on cock fights at kumpulan, she does not like him taking part in the card and dice games, run by Melayu, which also take place at kumpulan. Men who bet, and lose, beyond their wife’s recommendations risk divorce, especially if a large debt is incurred. They may also be refused permission to use their wife’s family’s resources (usually rubber trees) to pay back a gambling debt. In both cases most men try to obtain help from their maternal family, usually their mother, whose rubber they cut and sell to repay their debt.
One morning, Jari returned home from a gawai (wedding) in Talang Gedabu, which Sariyah had not attended, with a Rp.20,000 debt which he had incurred playing cards. Sariyah was angry, but she did not raise her voice to Jari who was very quiet about his loss. When she talked about Jari's debt, Sariyah did not blame gambling itself, or describe it as bad. Rather she viewed the debt as being entirely Jari's fault and his responsibility – he was bodoh (stupid). With Bagum's help, Jari was able to settle this debt quickly by borrowing money from a small-scale rubber dealer in Petonggan and paying him back in rubber over a period of two weeks. Although neither Haji Nasir nor Haji Ibrahim offer credit if they think it will be used to pay off a gambling debt, both men finance small-scale rubber-dealers in Petonggan who offer short term loans to Talang Mamak men needing to pay off a debt quickly. Sariyah maintained a similar attitude to gambling with regard to the much heavier debt incurred by Lebak's son which occurred about a year later. She did not complain about gambling itself, or the Melayu men who organise card and dice games. Instead she described the debt as the result of Jari's nephew's stupidity and accepted that her husband should help his sister's son. Unlike most women Sariyah does not live with her maternal family. Her few female maternal relatives used to live in Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga which has been recently cleared, its population dispersing to either Melayu kampung (villages) or other talang, and Sariyah does not keep in regular contact with any of them. Most of her neighbours and friends are members of Jari's maternal family. Sariyah is also different from most other women in that she has no children.

While Jari preferred to remain silent about having no descendants, Sariyah would sometimes talk about it when her husband was not around, most often when she was in our house with only Adriani present. On these occasions, she often seemed to regret having been persuaded to give up the man she loved and marry Jari. However, she never talked about divorce and seems resigned to both her childlessness and her husband's failing health. Sariyah's neighbours, Nuraiyah (Jari's niece) and Anjak (Jari's sister), are sympathetic towards Sariyah's predicament and have encouraged her to develop a close relationship with Nawar's youngest daughter who is about twenty and, having been recently divorced, single. This young woman frequently visits Jari and Sariyah, who have begun calling her their anak tiri (adopted child), and she often spends the night with them. Since his elder brother Nawar's fall and subsequent unreliability Jari has become a more important figure in his family and, with the support of his brother-in-law, Bagum, he has recently begun receiving a government salary. Since his bang on the head, relatives have rarely sought Nawar's assistance and advice and nowadays they are more
likely to go to his sister's husband, Bagum, and to recognise him as their permamam tua (head of a family). Nawar, who like his younger brother remained in his natal talang after marriage, has been Tua Tuah of the Balai Desa region of Talang Perigi for many years and he was a trusted friend of Gandung. Although no one has removed Nawar of his title, he no longer fulfils any of the duties of Tua Tuah which are now carried out by Jari and Bagum. People who previously sought the assistance of Nawar for advice and help now turn to Jari and Bagum, who have recently begun to act on their own without first seeking Nawar's approval. Although Jari has never been directly involved in conflict over leadership his whole family were loyal anak buah (followers) of Gandung, Batin and Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi. When Gandung died in 1993, his successor, Tomin, chose Jari for the post MD and both the wage and the uniform that go with the job have become sources of satisfaction to Jari and Sariyah.

Unlike most Talang Mamak, Jari does not like rokok kretek (factory-made clove cigarettes)\(^\text{42}\). He smokes rokok putih (plain factory-made cigarettes) which he buys by the selop (carton of ten packs of twenty) every week from Petonggan market – Jari smokes Hero, a common brand of rokok putih which cost between 150 and 200 rupiah for a pack of twenty. Sometimes he does not have enough money to buy his cigarettes and, when he runs out, he rolls his own, using Sariyah’s tembakau (tobacco), which she buys at the market, and her keminyan (benzoin gum), which she collects in the forest\(^\text{43}\). Various types of tobacco are sold at the market, in folds of about two hundred grams which range in price from 200 to 400 rupiah each. Like Sariyah, most Talang Mamak buy a light, dry, cheap variety of tobacco which they both smoke and chew as an ingredient of sirih (betel). The mix of tembakau and keminyan, which Sariyah rolls in manufactured papers, if she has any, or newspaper, if she does not (both of which she buys at the market) is Sariyah’s usual smoke but she also enjoys an occasional rokok kretek if she is given one. Both Sariyah and Jari chew sirih (betel), especially at kumpulan, when nearly

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42 Rokok kretek contains a mixture of cloves (usually between 30 to 50\%) and tobacco. In Tiga Balai and many other places in Sumatra Gudang Garam’s Surya, which are sold in packs of sixteen and cost between 800 and 1,000 rupiah are the most popular brand. See Eiseman (1990 vol. 2 p265–271) for a description of kretek manufacture.

43 Keminyan is the dried resin or gum of the keminyan tree (Styrax benzoin) and, like rubber, it is obtained by cutting the bark of a tree and collecting the sap that exudes. Keminyan is one of Sumatra’s earliest known exports.
everyone eats at least some of the ingredients. However, either of them chew it all the time as many people do. While Sariyah has some sirih a couple of times every day, Jari only chews it occasionally.
BAGUM WITH A PIG HE HAS SNARED

(left to right) JUSAR, BAGUM, ANJAK, JON
CHAPTER FIVE

BAGUM AND ANJAK

On my first visit to Tiga Balai in 1988, I met Bagum only once but he made an immediate impression on me. He was the loudest (his voice is lively and sharp and his laugh carries a long way), best dressed, most confident Talang Mamak I met. When I returned to Talang Perigi in 1992 and became one of Bagum's neighbours, I found him quieter and thinner but still confident and outspoken. After I appeared in Tran Perigi and began work on the house I had just bought, Bagum was among the first to get to know me. He often came round twice a day and after exchanging greetings, he would sit or squat, light up a cigarette and watch what was going on, occasionally cracking a joke or asking a question. As we became more familiar with each other, our conversations developed and we became good friends.

Bagum has been both the holder of a Talang Mamak title and a government employee for almost thirty years and, although many people disagree with his positive attitude towards government initiatives in Tiga Balai, a lot of people, especially in Talang Perigi, respect his opinion and often seek his advice. Through his dealings with the Indonesian state and local government officers, he has learnt about the significance of paper and writing in the government administration of Tiga Balai and he recommends his children to attend school. Towards the end of our stay, Bagum began to make use of Adriani's and my literacy and every evening he brought his youngest sons, Jusar and Jon, round to our house where he would sit smoking and watching while Adriani and I taught the boys bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian). Bagum persuaded other title-holders in Perigi that I could be of service helping to write and type letters to local government officers. Through helping out in this way, I became involved in discussions between pro-government title-holders in Talang Perigi. By early 1994 Bagum was organising small kumpulan at our house once or twice a week, which were attended by Batin Tomin and Mangku Sunin of Perigi and other members of their administration (Sutan Mohammad, Bagum, Jari, Panca, Barisan, Anggur, Raguan, etc) and where issues affecting Perigi were discussed (IDT, Rapan, Sulaiman, etc).

Bagum likes receiving his government salary which he usually uses to buy his cigarettes and finance his gambling activities. Like most Talang Mamak men, Bagum enjoys fighting, and betting on, cocks and playing dice or cards at gawai (weddings) but he never allows himself to incur debts from gambling, saying that losing large amounts of money is bodoh (stupid). He
also enjoys playing cards in Petonggan, and Bagum goes there every Monday evening, in order to play cards that night, before he sells his rubber at the market the next day. Nowadays Bagum leaves it to his sons-in-law, Tandil and Nasir, to take the family's rubber to Petonggan. He makes his own way to the marketplace, where he meets friends from both Tiga Balai and Petonggan, and where several casual card games are organised. Every market day there is also a card school in Petonggan, which can last for several days and where millions of rupiah can change hands. These games are organised by Demek, Petonggan's most famous gambler, and they used to take place in his house, which is near the market place, until they started attracting too much attention from the police who began making regular calls to collect baksheesh. In 1993, with Umar's consent, Demek moved the card school about a mile inland to the house and kedai (small shop) of one of his Melayu friends, Hitam, where it is rarely visited by police. While Talang Mamak men do not usually play in these games, they regularly attract men from Air Molek and other towns who often stop in Petonggan, to gamble at cards or dice, on their way to and from Tiga Balai where they like to attend gawai and bet on cock-fighting. On Tuesday morning, after having slept with other Talang Mamak men on the covered market stalls, Bagum buys his cigarettes and the essentials that his family needs for the week. Every week, Bagum buys, for his own use, one selop (carton of ten packs of twenty) of Kansas, a brand of rokok putih (plain factory-made cigarettes), which cost about Rp.200 for a pack of twenty.

While Bagum was easy to get to know well, his wife Anjak spends far less time sitting around chatting than her husband and is a lot less talkative. Anjak has a deserved reputation for being a hard worker and she is rarely to be found relaxing doing nothing in particular, which is a favourite pastime of her husband. While Bagum's only contributions to the household economy are his salary, some ladang work and a little gardening, Anjak is very industrious, doing most of the work on their ladang, all the household tasks and often travelling to Dusun Jaya to help her oldest daughter Cantik. Although Bagum does not contribute very much physically these days, most of his family's cash is obtained from the sale of rubber collected from trees that Bagum planted when he was younger and stronger. Bagum blames his inability to do hard work on his failing health which has weakened his body and he is very concerned about his general well-being and vitality and he often asked me questions about allopathic medicines, especially bitamin (vitamins) which he occasionally buys at Petonggan Market. During the rice-growing season, Anjak leaves her house at first light, spends all day at her
ladang without eating a mid-day meal and returns home as it is getting dark. Many people, including Bagum who likes to eat regularly, comment on Anjak’s ability to go without food and still work hard. While Bagum is an avid smoker who only chews sirih (betel) at kumpulan, Anjak rarely smokes but chews sirih almost continually and her ability to fast is attributed to her fondness for sirih. Bagum often gets bad toothache and, when he cannot sleep because of the pain, he makes a wad of sirih, to which he adds kerosene, and chews to ease his discomfort. When Anjak is not busy she prefers lying down to sitting and, although Adriani and I saw Anjak on most days, neither of us spent regular long periods sitting chatting with her as we did with her husband. The only occasions when I did see Anjak seated for a long time were at kumpulan, when she could be found sitting with other women from Perigi, helping with the preparation of food and drink, and chatting and chewing sirih.

Bagum was born in the Dusun Jumanti region of Talang Gedabu in about 1940. His mother, Lada, already had two daughters, Pinjut and Pingit, and one son from a previous marriage which had ended in divorce. Lada’s second marriage also ended in divorce soon after Bagum was born and she did not remarry. Lada’s house, where Bagum lived with his sisters, had been built during Lada’s first marriage and stood in a large durian orchard near houses occupied by her sisters. Stands of mature fruit trees, most commonly durian [Durio zibethinus] but often including cempedak [Artocarpus polyphema], are the most enduring signs of human occupation in Tiga Balai. Many families own durian orchards that are reputed to be hundreds of years old. Bagum’s earliest memories are of the Japanese invasion when many Melayu families from Keloyang, Petonggan and other kampung (villages) on the banks of the Inderagiri entered Tiga Balai in search of food after Japanese troops had taken their supplies of rice¹. These Melayu offered money, goods and labour to Talang Mamak in exchange for rice, bananas, root crops and other foodstuffs. Many Melayu families attached themselves to Talang Mamak families, building a pondok (hut) near their house and working in their ladang in exchange for food. As the Japanese did not destroy or occupy their homes, most Melayu could return to their kampung on the banks of the Inderagiri but some of them had to continue to work on Talang

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¹ Kato (1990 p.61) reports that the Japanese emptied rice granaries in other towns and villages along the Inderagiri.
Mamak ladang for several months while they replenished their own rice stores. During Bagum’s childhood most Talang Mamak avoided contact with Melayu and many practices associated with their lifestyle, such as drinking boiled water, tea or coffee, or drinking from a glass, were forbidden in Tiga Balai. Older people in Tiga Balai recall that many aspects of Melayu lifestyle were (and some still are) associated with Islam and were prohibited by Talang Mamak adat (custom, tradition). Many elderly men (e.g. Kemantan Madun) explained that if adat is not followed, nenek moyang (ancestors) will be angry and rice crops will fail. Planting rubber trees was also disapproved of and most of the first trees to be planted by Talang Mamak were uprooted by other Talang Mamak who feared that rubber would make the soil hot and reduce padi crops. Despite these prohibitions, many Talang Mamak families, like Lada’s, provided the starving Melayu with food in exchange for brassware and pottery (which most Talang Mamak value highly) or money, which was of little use as during the Japanese occupation few goods were available in Keloyang market. At this time, some Talang Mamak acquired brassware (including talam [large trays], cincin [rings], keris and other knives, and various items of pottery (including pinggan [plates], mangkok [bowls] and large vases). Cloth was completely unobtainable at this time. Consequently most Talang Mamak, including Bagum, had to make and wear cawat (loin cloth) from tree bark. Cawat are made from the soft inner bark of terap (Artocarpus kunstleri) or puduh (I have been unable to identify this tree, which has a red bark) which is soaked and beaten before being tied round the waist and between the legs. Nowadays, cawat are rarely seen and some men, such as Bagum and Sutan Mohammad, consider cawat too embarrassing to wear. Apart from the lack of cloth Bagum remembers his childhood as a time of plenty when bekas padi (rice stores) were full. Many other old people also remember their childhood as a time when rice and other foodstuffs were plentiful and people enjoyed a more peaceful and more secure life.

footnotes

2 While Sandbukt (1984 p.87) suggests that Melayu 'is of uncertain etymology', he says that among the Kubu he studied ‘orang me-layu ... denotes a destructive or “withering” kind of humanity’.

3 The idea that offences against adat could result in a heating of the soil was common in other parts of Indonesia and Malaysia. Matheson and Hooker (1983 p.200) note that the ‘Kutai laws’ maintain that if adat rules are broken, ‘land will become “hot”, the fruits will not set and the plants will not thrive, as a consequence of it’. 
Lada’s first husband was the first man to plant rubber trees in Gedabu and not have them uprooted. By the time Bagum was born, these trees were well established and when he was a small boy they were tapped for the first time. Before he was ten years old, Bagum was earning cash helping to tap and collect his mother’s rubber and, around this time, he made his first visit to Keloyang, accompanying his uncles who took their rubber there to sell at the Wednesday market. It is common for young boys to help their father, brothers and brothers-in-law to tap rubber and Bagum’s second youngest son, Jusar, who is thirteen, often helps his brothers-in-law, Nasir and Tandil, cut rubber. Rubber was traded at Keloyang in the form of pressed latex sheets and every Talang Mamak family that sold rubber in Keloyang was provided with a press for their manufacture. Nowadays, rubber is sold to Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim as getah (coagulated latex) which, although being of less value per kilo than sheet latex, requires far less processing. Apparently, rubber presses were owned by some families in the 1940s although few remain today. These presses, which must have originally come from the Dutch, were given to Talang Mamak by Tuan (master, sir) Saleh, a rubber dealer in Keloyang when Bagum was a child. The journey from his home in Gedabu to Keloyang market took over seven hours, as the path from Gedabu to Keloyang ran through the low-lying swamp situated inland from the Inderagiri. Bagum recalls that men carried up to fifty kilos of rubber each, on a pole over their shoulder, as they walked for several hours through the waist-deep waters of the swamp. (The transport of rubber was made a lot easier when the path between Talang Durian Cacar and Petonggan was raised in 1980.) After walking all day, Bagum and his uncles arrived in Keloyang on the evening before market day and met Tuan Saleh who bought their rubber and provided them with shelter for the night. Tuan Saleh, who Bagum describes as orang Arab (an Arab), was the first rubber dealer to buy rubber from Talang Mamak. He began business at Keloyang and, although by then an old man, he moved with the market to Petonggan in 1980 where he continued trading until he died in the mid-1980s. As there were few goods available at the market, most of the money obtained from Tuan Saleh, which was in the form of sin (cents) was taken back to Gedabu. While the coins,

footnotes

4 Rubber tree cultivation in Tiga Balai probably began during the second of ‘two rubber booms during the colonial period’ which occurred in 1937–1939 (Kato 1990 p.61).

5 Sin (Malay – sen) was a monetary unit used for amounts below the level of ringgit, guilder and rupiah.
especially those with holes through them, were (and still are) used to decorate labu (drinking gourds), sumpit rokok (tobacco pouches) and other objects, the notes, which had no practical use, were used to stuff pillows or stored in bakul (bamboo baskets). All these notes became worthless when Bagum was about twelve as a result of the then recently established government of Indonesia's introduction of new currency. Bagum can remember basketfuls of notes being burnt and thrown away but, despite having lost their savings, Bagum's family still had access to cash. As one of the few families in Gedabu with mature rubber trees, they could still sell rubber every week to Tuan Saleh and buy what they wanted from the increasing range of goods that began appearing in Keloyang after Indonesia's independence.

As a young man, Bagum took a keen interest in memburu (hunting) and menyiding$^6$ (trapping) and he quickly learnt the skills associated with them. Bagum told me that hunting is usually only carried out at times when men are not busy with ladang work and that it often takes place at night. In Tiga Balai hunting is usually carried out with the help of dogs and for many years Bagum kept and trained dogs for this purpose. (Bagum no longer hunts and no longer keeps dogs.) He says that there are fewer dogs in Tiga Balai than there used to be both because men, being busy tapping rubber, have less time to train dogs and because many Talang Mamak have been influenced by Melayu attitudes which generally disapprove of dogs. Bagum recalls that he never went hunting alone – he was always accompanied by three or four friends, each armed with a lembing (spear)$^7$, and three or four dogs. Gandung, Batin of Talang Perigi, said that hunting with dogs and spear was secara adat (according to custom, tradition) and that groups of men who wish to go hunting should both first inform their Batin and share any meat...

$^6$ This is a verb form of the noun siding (snare).

$^7$ Apart from knives, guns and catapults, spears are the only weapons that Talang Mamak use. They have no practical knowledge of the bow and arrow, which are used in Peninsula Malaysia by Semang, etc (Skeat and Blagden, 1906 vol.1 p.201) and in north-east Sumatra by Batak (Loeb 1935 p.27) Talang Mamak also have no knowledge of blow-pipes which are common in both Malaysia (Skeat and Blagden, 1906 vol.1 p.201) and Sumatra (Loeb 1935 p.134, 291, 296, 300). Usman (1985 p.79) suggests that at some time in the past Talang Mamak used sumpitan (blow-pipes).
they obtain with him. On a hunt Bagum allowed his dogs to wander around freely in search of the scent of prey and, during the early stages of a hunt, Bagum had to rely on the ability of his dogs to ignore dangerous animals (*harimau* [tiger, *Panther tigris*], *beruang kapor* [sun-bear, *Helarctus malayanus*] and *binturun* [binturong, *Artictis binturong*]), other animals that he does not eat (various species of *musang* [civet, *Viverridae*] and *landak* [porcupine, *Hystricidae*], etc) and to only follow the scent of deer and pigs, which Bagum, like most other Talang Mamak, enjoys eating. *Rusa* (Sambar, *Cervus unicolor*) is the largest and preferred species of deer, although others, including *kijang* (muntjac, *Muntiacus muntjak*), *kancil* (lesser mouse deer, *Tragulus javanicus*) and *napoh* (large mouse-deer, *Tragulus napu*), are often hunted. *Babi* (Eurasian wild pig, *Sus scrofa*) is the pig most commonly encountered in Tiga Balai but *nangui* (bearded pig, *Sus barbatus*) are also hunted. Bagum says that once his dogs found and began to follow a suitable trail they started yelping and howling and he could tell from their noise whether it was a deer or a pig they had disturbed. If his dogs were chasing a deer, Bagum and his friends would make their way towards the nearest river. Once there, Bagum called to his dogs who then chased their quarry towards Bagum and his friends. According to Bagum, when a hunted deer tires it usually makes for the nearest river which it enters, forcing it to slow down. Once a deer was in the water, Bagum says that it was up to his dogs to keep it in the water long enough for him and his friends to arrive and spear it. Bagum says that hunting large deer is difficult and requires both excellent dogs and *nasib baik* (good fortune) as the dogs have to turn their quarry into a watercourse that is both close by and accessible to the hunters.

Unlike hunting deer, hunting pigs often involves confrontation between hunter and prey. If his dogs picked up the scent of a pig Bagum and his friends followed them as quickly as they could because they knew that there would not be a long chase as a pig usually turns and fights the dogs before it tires. Bagum would know from the sound of his dogs when the quarry had turned and would try to get there as fast as possible before too much damage was done to his dogs. When the men arrived they separated, got close to the cornered pig, climbed up trees

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8 There are two types of spear in Tiga Balai: *lembing rumah* (house spear), which usually have long blades with decorated brass mountings and which are kept inside a house to protect its occupants from *hantu* (ghosts, spirits); and *lembing buru* (hunting spear), which are lighter, of more simple construction and have a shorter blade. When not in use, all spear blades are kept sheathed.
or creepers so that they were off the ground, and then let fly with their spears. If the pig was not killed outright by the spears (some of which might not have found their target), Bagum had to wait and watch from his perch to see who won in the ensuing battle between pig and dogs. If the pig managed to kill or injure the dogs the men had a worrying time waiting for it to either die or go away before they could safely climb down. When they are hunting, men usually only carry one spear and a small knife (which they always have on them). A large cornered boar is a dangerous animal and, once their spears are thrown, hunters will rarely move to attack one with only their knives, unless it is obviously dying.

While hunting can be very dangerous, the use of siding (snares and traps) and ranjau (sharpened stakes) rarely involves confrontation and is much more common. Like most Talang Mamak men, Bagum is a expert in the building a variety of traps based around a siding mechanism. While some of these are designed to catch particular species (puyuh [bustard-quail, Turrix taigoor] are often caught in specially designed traps to be kept as pets), other traps will snare any creature that sets them off and can be used to catch and kill animals that raid crops or kill chickens. Bagum usually has siding positioned around his ladang and in the garden surrounding his house. Like siding, ranjau are also used, often in conjunction with papah (low fencing) to protect crops but, while siding can be designed to catch a particular species, ranjau work more indiscriminately and may kill or wound any animal. Bagum recalls that he once found a dead tiger that had jumped over a papah he had built and caught one ranjau in the paw and another in the chest. Whenever a large edible animal is killed by hunting or trapping, it is brought to a house, usually that of the senior hunter or the owner of the siding, where it is cut up, washed and scorched to remove hair in preparation for cooking or smoking. News that an animal has been caught quickly spreads and people who want meat usually gather to help with its preparation and are given a share of it.

By the time Bagum was in his mid-teens, he was a wealthy young man who could afford to buy cloth, pottery, metal goods and other items valued highly in Tiga Balai. Bagum's wealth was due to his mother's ownership of mature rubber trees which her first husband had planted before 1940. These were among the first rubber trees to be successfully raised to maturity in Tiga Balai. Many seedlings planted by Talang Mamak men in the late 1930s and 1940s were uprooted by people who feared that rubber cultivation would make the earth hot and result in poor rice crops. The prohibition on rubber began to be applied less frequently in the 1950s,
probably because more and more people wanted to share in the wealth that men such as Bagum were enjoying. It wasn’t until the early 1960s that the prohibition against rubber cultivation vanished completely and by the end of that decade the current state of affairs, with every family owning or having access to rubber trees, was in evidence throughout Tiga Balai. Bagum recalls that as a teenager he often went betandang (spending the night with unmarried members of the opposite sex) and had many girlfriends. Young boys and girls usually get their first experiences of betandang at large kumpulan when they meet after dark in the forest near the house where the kumpulan is being held. In 1957, when he was about seventeen, Bagum married a young woman from Gedabu called Nor. Just before the gawai, Bagum moved into his mother-in-law’s house, where he helped with rice-farming activities, and, after he had been there for just over a year, Nor gave birth to a daughter. Nor’s mother did not own any mature rubber trees so Bagum returned to his mother’s house every morning to tap her trees and he also went to Keloyang once a week to sell his mother’s rubber. For tapping his mother’s rubber Bagum received a two-thirds share of the rubber he collected. This arrangement is still in use today and when men tap trees they don’t own, they get a two-thirds share, the remaining third going to the owner of the trees. Bagum was the only member of his mother-in-law’s household with a regular cash income and he and Nor began to argue over how he spent his money. The decades prior to the arrival of rubber in Tiga Balai are described by many old people as a time when cash was not important as most people relied on farming, supplemented by trapping, fishing, hunting and collecting in the forest, to supply their needs. Goods were traded by Talang Mamak at Keloyang during this period but only on an irregular basis. Men took finished goods (fish-traps, mats, chicken coops, etc), which were usually made from rotan, and other forest produce (gahum [eagle-wood], sirih [betel leaves], madu [honey], etc) to the market to trade for cloth, metal and pottery. Bagum was accused by his wife of spending too much money on himself and his maternal family and not enough on Nor and her family and as a result they divorced after two and a half year’s marriage and Bagum returned to his mother’s house where he lived as a bujang (bachelor) for a further two

footnotes

9 Talang Mamak men probably learnt of this method of dividing the profits of rubber collection between tapper and owner when they learnt other aspects of rubber technology. It is also possible that it is based on the division of forest products collected as tributary goods and given to the Sultan, who took a one-third share, the rest being traded by his ministers.
and a half years. Bagum remembers that his life as a *bujang* at his mother's house was one of relative ease as he had a regular cash income and time for *betandang*, hunting and gambling. In 1962, when he was about twenty-two, Bagum remarried. His second wife, who was also called Nor, was from Perigi and Bagum moved into her mother’s house just before the wedding and did not return to Lada’s house to cut rubber, as Nor’s father had mature rubber trees which Bagum helped him tap for a share of the money obtained from the sale of the rubber they collected. Moving into a family who had access to cash through rubber both allowed Bagum to maintain his standard of living without recourse to his mother’s resources and made for more equal relations between Bagum and the other men of the household.

When Bagum moved into Perigi, he became an anak buah of Nulan, the Batin of Talang Perigi, whose *keponakan* (nephew and eventual successor), Gandung, had recently married Bagum’s sister Pinjut and moved into Lada’s house. In 1965 Nulan chose Gandung to succeed him as Batin of Talang Perigi and Gandung and Pinjut moved out of Lada’s house in Dusun Jumanti, Talang Gedabu to a site just across the River Ekoh in Talang Perigi. When Gandung became Batin, Nulan was still alive and in good health and he continued to play an important part in the administration of affairs in Perigi for many years, advising Gandung on many matters regarding *adat*, *hukum* (law) and relations with *nenek moyang* (ancestors). Nulan also introduced Gandung to the Camat, his *pegawai* (local government officers) and Umar, the *Koordinator* Talang Mamak. In 1966, after just over four years of marriage, during which time Nor gave birth to two sons, both of whom died before they were six months old, Bagum and Nor divorced and Bagum returned to his mother’s house in Dusun Jumanti, Talang Gedabu. Bagum said that he and Nor split up by mutual agreement as, after the death of their two sons, neither of them could see a future for their relationship, a situation he described as ‘*kasih abis, untung ta’ada*’ (‘affection had gone [and] there were no benefits’). During this stay in Gedabu, Bagum became good friends with his *ipar* (brother-in-law) Gandung (who had recently been appointed Batin of Talang Perigi), as the two men worked together in Lada’s *ladang* and rubber gardens. The friendship between Gandung and Bagum lasted until Gandung’s death in 1993. It was an important feature of Gandung’s administration for most of the time he was Batin of Talang Perigi. When they lived near each other on the Perigi-Gedabu border, they spent every day in each other’s company tapping rubber, opening and firing *ladang*, hunting, fishing and going to market. At this time Umar, under instructions from the Camat (local government head), was selecting candidates for the new posts of *Kepala Desa* (rural
government leader) in Tiga Balai. Gandung, the Batin of Talang Perigi, was chosen by Umar to be the first Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi and as a result he began to frequently visit the Camat's offices in Air Molek. Bagum accompanied Gandung on all his early visits to the town which is where Bagum had his first experiences of government administration. At this time, many prohibitions about mixing with or adopting the lifestyle of Melayu were still common in Tiga Balai and many men would have been (and many still are) too fearful to go to the Camat's offices in Air Molek. Bagum's friends and neighbours all acknowledge his courage, his confidence and his ability to speak his mind. These characteristics, coupled with his willingness to help his Batin, probably played a great part in Bagum's rise to prominence in Gandung's administration.

In 1967, after eight months at his mother's house, Bagum, who was about twenty-seven, married Anjak of Dusun Jaya, Talang Perigi. Anjak, who is a sister of Jari, Nawar and Lebak, had recently divorced her first husband and was living in her mother's house which stood close to the path that ran between Gedabu and Keloyang and passed through Dusun Jaya. Anjak says that she first noticed Bagum when he was walking past her mother's house on his way to market. She recalls that he was very handsome and very well-dressed and she began looking out for Bagum every week as he passed her house on his way to and from Keloyang. It was not long before Bagum began visiting Anjak at night and they decided to get married. After their wedding, Bagum moved into Anjak's mother's house in Dusun Jaya where he helped tap the household's rubber and farm their ladang. By this time opposition to the planting of rubber seedlings had almost ended, rubber was becoming increasingly common and most families owned trees, although many of them would still have been too young to tap.

When they got married, Anjak already had one son, Anggur, from her previous marriage and now, after over twenty-seven years together, Anjak and Bagum have eight children including Anggur, who is about twenty-eight and married to Panca and Tambal's daughter, Gunjah. Tambal is Lada's sister's daughter and Bagum's sanak ibu (maternal cousin). Her husband, Panca, was born in Talang Sungai Limau and moved to Gedabu when he married Tambal. The couple took up residence in Talang Perigi in the 1970s. Anggur and Gunjah now live in Tran Perigi (near both Bagum and Anjak and Panca and Tambal), with their daughter and son, in the house behind the one we lived in. Bagum and Anjak's second eldest son, Raguan, is about twenty-six and is married to a woman from Perigi called Jungkir, who is a cucu
(grandchild) of Madun who is both Tiga Balai’s oldest Kemantan (shaman) and one of Rapan’s most loyal supporters. Raguan and Jungkir live with their children in the Kampung Tengah region of Talang Perig near Madun’s house. Bagum and Anjak’s eldest daughter, Cantik, is about twenty-four and, having been divorced once, is now married to Tandil, a man from Sungai Limau. They now live in Dusun Jaya in the house that Bagum built when he first married Anjak. Cantik is Tandil’s second wife. His first wife, who he divorced before marrying Cantik, is a step-daughter of Rapan. Bagum and Anjak’s second eldest daughter, Wis, who is about twenty-two, is married to Nasir, a Muslim Melayu man from Petonggan. Before marrying Wis, Nasir lived near the border of Petonggan and Perigi, which is not far from Bagum’s house in Dusun Jaya. Wis and Nasir have a young daughter, Dewi, and an, as yet, un-named new-born son. They live opposite Bagum and Anjak in Tran Perigi. Bagum and Anjak’s third eldest son, Rikenan, is a nineteen year old bujang who rarely stays with his parents, preferring to live with Cantik and Tandil in Dusun Jaya. Rikenan secretly left Tiga Balai in 1994 after his girlfriend’s family refused to accept his proposal of marriage and he got involved in a fight over another girl. Bagum and Anjak’s third eldest daughter, Bainar, is about seventeen and unmarried, although she attracts a lot of attention from bujang who want to go betandang with her. During our stay in Perigi, Gandung’s cucu (grandchild) Mijan developed a steady relationship with Bainar. Bainar also rarely sleeps in her parents’ house. She usually stays with Cantik and Tandil but she also often spends the night at Wis and Nasir’s house. Bainar has two younger brothers, Jusar, who is about thirteen, and Jon, who is about ten and they both live with Anjak and Bagum in Tran Perigi.

When Bagum married Anjak and moved back into Talang Perigi, he was already on good terms with his ipar (brother-in-law), Gandung, who was Batin of Talang Perigi. Living in Dusun Jaya, he soon got to know his wife’s pemaman tua (male head of a family), Nawar, who, having married a woman from Balai Desa (which is adjacent to Dusun Jaya) was still living near his mother and his sisters. In 1968, Bagum was chosen by Gandung to be Tua Tuah of Dusun Jaya and as Bagum already had a reputation as an energetic, loyal, confident and outspoken supporter of the new Batin and he was able to gain the support of Anjak’s family and his neighbours in Dusun Jaya who elected him as their Tua Tuah at a kumpulan held in Gandung’s house. At the same time, Nawar was elected Tua Tuah of the neighbouring Balai Desa region of Talang Perigi. (It is usual for a new Batin to introduce a new administration after he has been elected. After Tomin succeeded Gandung as Batin of Talang Perigi in 1993,
he chose a new Mangku and replaced all the Tua Tuah except Bagum and Nawar.) As well as
being elected Tua Tuah, Bagum (and Nawar) were chosen by Gandung to receive the
government title Ketua. Bagum began receiving honor (government salary)\(^\text{10}\) of about
Rp.1,000 per month (which reached him via Umar and Gandung) from the Camat. At this
time, Gandung still met Tengku Arief twice a year in Rengat to attend the semah and uphold
the sumpah. Although Bagum never accompanied the Batin on these trips, which Gandung
usually made with his Mangku, Panta (Gandung's first Mangku who was replaced by Rapan in
around 1968), he always went with the Batin to Air Molek whenever he visited the Camat's
office.

In the early 1970s, Bagum, with the help of Nawar and some of Bagum's neighbours who
were now his anak buah, built a big house which soon became the regular site for kumpulan
held in Dusun Jaya. Title-holders usually have large houses which can hold as many as two
hundred people. The biggest houses in Talang Perigi are owned by Batin Gandung, Batin
Rapan, Tua Tuah Bagum and Kemantan Madun. After moving into their new house, Bagum
and Anjak began farming their own ladang. As a Tua Tuah, Bagum could attract anak buah,
either to farm smaller ladang around his larger field (and help with the day-to-day maintenance
of it), or to arrive on specific occasions and assist with particular tasks (such as sowing or
harvesting). Bagum and Anjak would make similar visits to both Nawar's and Gandung's
ladang to help with important tasks. Bagum and Anjak's big, new house had a large bekas padi
which Bagum recalls was always well-stocked and, every year, after their padi had been
harvested, Bagum planted rubber seedlings on their empty ladang. At that time Bagum was
still helping to tap Anjak's mother's rubber trees, the profits from which (together with his
honor) provided him with enough money both to pay for his trips to Air Molek with Gandung
and to keep him in smart clothes and cigarettes. At this time, the journey to Air Molek
involved walking through the swamp to Keloyang, crossing the Inderagiri by sampan, walking
from the river to the road and catching a bus from there to Air Molek. Much of Bagum's
wealth was expended on kumpulan held at his house at the request of his anak buah. Leaders
usually organise kumpulan at the request of either their followers or their superiors (the Camat
footnotes

\(^{10}\) Honor is called 'honorarium' by Kato (1990 p.57).
or Tengku Arief) and, as Bagum attracted more anak buah, who wanted either his help in organising gawai, naik tambak (funerals), etc or his assistance in solving disputes, so more of Bagum and Anjak's resources (rice, money, time, etc) were used up hosting kumpulan on behalf of his anak buah. A title-holder, in whose house a kumpulan is held, usually provides most of the food and drink, although he can generally expect a contribution from his anak buah, especially those on whose behalf the kumpulan has been organised. At kumpulan, anak buah who helped farm their leader's ladang eat the reserves of padi and pulut (both varieties of rice) he has been able to accumulate as a result of their having helped clear, burn, sow, weed and harvest his ladang.

In the late 1970s, Gandung stopped attending the semah in Rengat, and his cousin and Mangku, Rapan, with the support of Laman, began proclaiming himself Batin. Bagum describes this incident as a plot by Laman and Tengku Arief to discredit Gandung and gain support for Rapan. Bagum maintains that at that time many government posts in Kecamatan Pasir Penyu (including Camat) were held by members of Tengku Arief's family (many people, including Melayu from Petonggan, say that this still is the case). Bagum also said that Tengku Arief was able to gain their support in his plan for each talang to have both a Batin (who remains loyal to the royal house of Inderagiri and upholds the sumpah) as well as a Kepala Desa who works for the Camat. Around this time Laman and his anak buah began describing these two types of leader as Batin adat (traditional leader) and Batin desa (government leader). While Rapan, with the endorsement of Tengku Arief, proclaimed himself as Batin adat of Talang Perigi, Gandung found himself labelled as Batin desa, accused of having broken the sumpah and considered, by some, as no longer being fit to administer adat affairs. I only heard the Batin adat/Batin desa distinction being used during my first visit to Tiga Balai in 1988, when neither term was used as a form of address – both Gandung’s anak buah and Rapan’s anak buah simply addressing their respective leaders as Batin. The terms were mainly used by Rapan and his anak buah, both to describe the differences between Gandung and Rapan and to legitimate Rapan’s title. All of Gandung’s anak buah regarded him as an adat leader and never referred to him as Batin desa, even though he held the government post Kepala Desa. When I returned to Tiga Balai in 1992, the adat/desa distinction was no longer in use. It probably became redundant in 1990 when Gagah was appointed Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar while he still held the title Datuk Patih. Soon after Rapan became a Batin, Gandung and his wife, Pinjut, moved from near the Perigi-Gedabu border to a more central position in the Dusun
Binjai region of Talang Perigi where Gandung was near his uncle Nulan and the majority of his anak buah. Bagum remained loyal to Gandung and managed to keep the support of the majority of Dusun Jaya, while Rapan, who promised to uphold the sumpah and meet Tengku Arief twice a year in Rengat, attracted the support of some families in Perigi who began choosing their own Tua Tuah and orienting themselves solely towards Rapan, Laman and Tengku Arief. Rapan’s anak buah were (and still are) mostly from two regions in Perigi: one of these is in the vicinity of Rapan’s house on the banks of the river Ekoh close to the borders of Talang Perigi with both Durian Cacar and Gedabu where he has a large group of followers; and the other contains another large group of Rapan’s anak buah living in Kampung Tengah under the leadership of Madun who is Tiga Balai’s oldest Kemantan (shaman). Gandung maintained the support of most people in the other regions of Talang Perigi: Binjai; Balai Desa; Dusun Jaya; Gelugur; and Keminyan. Rapan’s appointment, by Laman, as Batin left Gandung and his anak buah without a Mangku. Gandung resolved this situation by putting forward Panca (who is married to Tambal, a sanak ibu [maternal cousin] of both Bagum and his sister, Pinjut who is also Gandung’s wife) as a candidate for Mangku, and Panca, who had moved from Gedabu to Perigi in the 1970s, was duly elected Mangku by Gandung’s anak buah.

While rivalry between Gandung and Rapan was developing in the late 1970s, Bagum became an increasingly important member of Gandung’s administration, especially with regard to dealing with the Camat and his pegawai (local government officers). In 1977, Gandung sent Bagum to represent Talang Perigi in local government elections which were being held in Air Molek. Bagum often talks about this and other, similar encounters with government administration and he frequently describes, in a general way, how he learnt about the world of local government. Regarding these elections, each of the five Kepala Desa in Tiga Balai had been asked by the Camat, via Umar, to attend or send a representative. While a few other Talang Mamak men did appear on the first day, only Bagum stayed in Air Molek for the full five days that the election lasted. Nowadays, although quite a few Talang Mamak visit Air Molek for shopping, few will go alone and even fewer would stay the night there. Bagum’s spending five days and nights, on his own, in Air Molek in the late 1970s was a much talked about event in Tiga Balai. This was the first time that Bagum had spent more than a few hours in the town and, although he does not remember what the elections were about, he does recall that there were hundreds of people in attendance. After having his thumbprint taken each morning, Bagum spent each day hanging around the government buildings where
the meetings, ceremonies and elections were taking place, watching what was going on and generally avoiding conversation. Bagum says that, on these first visits to large government functions, he was *malu* (shy) and did not initiate conversations. He spent each night in dormitory style accommodation, which he shared with other representatives, where he also took his meals. Bagum says that although he was appropriately dressed (clean shoes, clean long trousers and clean shirt) he still felt overawed by the bureaucratic administration of the Indonesian government and fascinated by the significance of paper and writing. He says that he was also a little scared at being on his own surrounded by *Melayu* Muslims. Bagum often talks about his understanding of the *Melayu* style of dress appropriate for official occasions and he owns all the suitable items of clothing: shoes; socks; long trousers; and *batik*\(^{11}\) shirt, — all of which he bought in Air Molek. Nowadays, he wears the uniform he has been provided with for many of his official duties, most of which involve pieces of paper. Bagum had come into contact with the paraphernalia of writing and typing during his first visits to the Camat’s office, when he was accompanying Gandung, where paperwork is on a relatively small scale when compared to these elections which gave Bagum his first real idea of the central part that paper and writing played in the administration of the Indonesian government.

In 1980, after the market moved to Petonggan, Bagum began selling his rubber to a *Melayu* dealer called Moncat, whose business was later inherited by his son-in-law, *Haji* Nasir. Visiting the market every week also gave Bagum the opportunity to see Umar regularly and to talk to him about events in Tiga Balai. At this time, Umar, who had been appointed *Koordinator* Talang Mamak in the mid-1960s, owned a small *kedai* (shop) in Petonggan. (He did not become *Kepala Desa* of Petonggan until 1983.) Bagum welcomed the raising of the path from Petonggan through Perigi which was built after the market, especially as it passed very close to his house. Bagum realised that the track would make both the transportation of rubber and communications with Petonggan and Air Molek much easier. After the path was built, bicycles became popular in Tiga Balai as a means of transporting rubber. By lashing a one-and-a-half metre pole to the stanchion that supports the saddle, a bicycle loaded with up

footnotes

11 *Batik* is a ‘wax-remove’ dyeing process and batik designs are common throughout Indonesia. *Batik* shirts are the usual attire of most government officials on formal occasions when uniforms are not required.
to one hundred and fifty kilos of rubber can be supported and pushed to Petonggan by one or two men – if the path is dry. As Tiga Balai has come under the administration of the Indonesian government, the places where Talang Mamak come into contact with Melayu have changed. The old market site at Keloyang was abandoned and a new one established at Petonggan and while Rengat (the home of the Sultan of Inderagiri) is still visited regularly by some Talang Mamak title-holders and their anak buah who recognise Tengku Arief as their Raja, for many other Talang Mamak, Air Molek has become the most important local town. When the workmen, who were building the path between Petonggan and Durian Cacar, first reached Dusun Jaya, which is near the border of Talang Perigi and Petonggan, most people fled. Bagum, however, went to meet and talk with them. He became friends with some of them and he and Anjak decided to name their newly born son, Jusar, after one of them. Bagum also offered the men refreshment. (Jusar, who now lives in Petonggan and is married to one of Umar’s nieces, remembers that Bagum’s house was one of the few places in Tiga Balai where he and his fellow workers could get a drink of boiled water.) The path became a source of tension between Gandung and his anak buah, who supported government intentions in Tiga Balai, and Rapan and his supporters, who resented the intrusion of the path and the fact that it was built without their having been consulted. Bagum says that disagreements over the path ended when Rapan’s anak buah began using it regularly as they travelled to and from Petonggan.

In 1981, Bagum was called to the Camat’s offices in Air Molek and given the title RT, or Rukun Tetangga (local administrator), issued with a khaki uniform and told that from now on he should collect his wages in person from a bank in Air Molek. Bagum was also informed that his responsibilities as RT included reporting to the Camat’s offices when called, assembling

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12 Many people in Tiga Balai, especially women and children, still run away into the forest and hide at the approach of strangers.
people for elections\textsuperscript{13}, censuses\textsuperscript{14} or meetings with local government officials and spreading any information the Camat wished the Talang Mamak to know. Occasionally, senior local government officials enter Tiga Balai to address the Talang Mamak population personally. The opening of the Inpres school in 1984 was such an occasion. In early 1994, officials, including the Camat, again entered Tiga Balai to speak to a group of Talang Mamak who had assembled in the school. This time the talk was about the forthcoming IDT (Presidential Program on Underdeveloped Villages). The meeting was only attended by supporters of Gandung's successor, Tomin, who were assembled by Bagum and other members of Tomin's administration. At this meeting Bagum and Sutan Mohammad were the only Talang Mamak to say anything. In 1982 Bagum was again sent by Gandung to represent Talang Perigi in elections that were being held over five days in Air Molek. On this occasion, Bagum was accompanied by three other men from Tiga Balai who were representing other talang: Canting, from Talang Parit; Pasang, from Talang Gedabu; and Malis, from Talang Sungai Limau. Bagum often recalled to me that each morning all the participants (over four hundred) assembled in a large hall after first having signed a register. Bagum, like the other Talang Mamak men he was with, had never used a pen, and, being too malu (shy, ashamed) to admit this to the doorman, they made no attempt to enter the hall for the first two days. Bagum felt frustrated. Having made an effort to appear like the other representatives with appropriate clean clothes, polished shoes and oiled hair, he was still unable to join them because he could not write his name. On the third morning Bagum overcame his embarrassment, approached the doorman, explained the situation and asked for the doorman's help. Overcoming his initial surprise, the doorman put a pen into Bagum's hand which he then clasped and together they wrote Bagum's name in the register. The doorman did the same again for Bagum and his

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\textsuperscript{13} Presidential elections are held once every five years, and on these occasions representatives of the ruling Golkar party visit Tiga Balai to canvas votes and distribute gifts – usually t-shirts. Block votes are often cast by leaders on behalf of their anak buah. Generally speaking, Talang Mamak who orient themselves towards the Camat vote Golkar while some of those who wish to uphold the sumpah have recently begun to vote PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party) which is the party Tengku Arief supports.

\textsuperscript{14} A population census was conducted in 1985 and Umar has a copy of this document which gives the following figures for talang populations: Durian Cacar 1,187, Perigi 780, Sungai Limau 1,125, Gedabu 570 and Sei [Sungai] Parit 650. Neither Selantai nor Tujuh Buah Tangga, which are both in Kecamatan Pasir Penyu (the administrative area centred at Air Molek), are mentioned. Jerinjing does not get a mention either but that is probably because it is in a different administrative region – Kecamatan Rengat.
friends on the two remaining days of the election. Judging by the amount of times Bagum recalls this event, it had a big impact on him. Nowadays Bagum can write his name.

For the first forty years of his life, Bagum was fit and strong but his health took a dramatic turn for the worse when he was poisoned at a large *kumpulan* in Talang Sungai Limau held for the *gawai* of Canto, who had been appointed *Batin* of Sungai Limau the previous year. Bagum attended this *gawai* as an *anak buah* of Gandung, along with other men from Perigi, including Jari. At that time, the Sungai Limau population was divided between those who wished to uphold the *sumpah* under Canto’s leadership and those who welcomed government initiatives in Tiga Balai under Maiyan who was the *Kepala Desa* of Talang Sungai Limau. Canto had the support of Laman and most of the people at the *gawai* were supporters of Tengku Arief. Gagah and Rapan, who had both recently been given titles by Laman, also brought large groups of *anak buah* with them. As Maiyan did not attend, Gandung and Rusian, *Batin* of Talang Parit, were the only *Kepala Desa* at Canto’s *gawai*. Inside the house Laman, Gagah and Rapan presided over the *gawai*. Gandung, accompanied by Bagum and Jari, went into the house and took up a place among the other senior men. At *kumpulan*, senior men sit in the *ruang haluan* (front of a house). The man presiding over a gathering sits with his back against *tiang tua* (central pillar) and other title-holders (*Batin, Manti, Mangku, Tua Tuah, Dukun, Kemantan*, etc) who are present sit near him, also in *ruang haluan*. While Gandung, Bagum and Jari were in the house, all the guests ate together and it was during this meal that both Bagum and Jari were poisoned. By this time, Bagum was probably well known throughout Tiga Balai as a government supporter and he may have been poisoned by followers of Laman and Tengku Arief because he was seen as a threat to *sumpah* (oath) and to *adat*. Jari, on the other hand, was probably neither very well known nor associated with government administration and he may have been poisoned simply because he was sitting next to Bagum and shared food with him. Bagum recalls that as soon as he had finished eating, he suffered a bout of diarrhoea, his anus swelled up and he started coughing up blood. Gandung and his *anak buah* returned to Perigi immediately after these events where Bagum continued to cough up blood for several days. Although he did not know who poisoned him, Bagum took some of the blood he had coughed up, first to Umar and then to Air Molek, where he showed it to *pegawai* in the *Camat*’s office. Bagum told me that the *Tua Tuah* of Canto’s wife’s family, in whose house the *gawai* was held, was subsequently called to the *Camat*’s office but no action was taken. While the *Camat* and *pegawai* recognise that poisonings do occur in Tiga Balai
(they have warned me on several occasions of the dangers of being poisoned by Talang Mamak), it seems unlikely that they would take action on Bagum’s behalf without first knowing the identity of the accused poisoner. Bagum says that his health deteriorated rapidly after being poisoned. He lost weight and he became less able to do physical work. At the time of Canto’s *gawai*, both Anggur (who was about eighteen) and Raguan (who was about sixteen) had been helping their father tap the rubber he had planted in Dusun Jaya for several years. After the poisoning, Bagum began to rely more and more on their assistance both to farm rice and collect and transport rubber.

In 1984, work began on the *Inpres* school in Talang Perigi and it immediately became a source of tension between Gandung’s *anak buah*, who welcome the school, and Rapan’s *anak buah*, who see it as an unwelcome intrusion. Bagum and other men from Perigi, including Panca, helped carry cut timber from the forest to the school site for a small wage. The school was the first building in Tiga Balai to be given a *seng* (corrugated iron) roof, all other constructions being roofed with materials from the forest. The school’s *seng* roof was particularly disliked by most of Rapan’s *anak buah*. For many Talang Mamak, especially *anak buah* of Laman, *seng* is a building material associated with *Melayu* lifestyles and these people feel that it should not be used in Tiga Balai. They maintain that *seng* is a roofing material specifically associated with *mesjid* (mosques) whose domes (like the one on the *mesjid* that Haji Nasir built in Petonggan) are frequently covered with flattened *seng* sheets. For these people, the sun’s rays reflecting off a *seng* roof are seen as dangerous and as being able to transmit an Islamic influence which can turn anyone who looks at them towards Islam. Bagum put a *seng* roof on his house in Dusun Jaya, which stands right by the path, in the late 1980s. As the school stands on the path between Perigi and Petonggan, most people from Perigi, and beyond, walk past it on their way to and from the market in Petonggan. At Talang Perigi, in front of the school, the path splits, one fork passing through Dusun Keminyan on its way to Sungai Limau and the other fork crossing Dusun Gelugur and ending in Durian Cacar. For several years after the school was built, the majority of Rapan’s *anak buah* would not look at it and they held up pieces of cloth or large leaves to avoid catching a glimpse of it whenever they walked past. Although the school is still disliked by many people, it has never been vandalised or wilfully damaged. While the majority of the population in Perigi were, at least, wary of the school, Bagum sent his children there as soon as it opened. Most of Gandung’s *anak buah* did not send their children to school when it first opened and many have only recently begun advising their
children to attend. Rapan and most of his anak buah have never entered or sent their children to the Inpres school. For the first few years after opening, the school was only attended regularly by Sutan Mohammad’s children, Gandung’s grandchildren, Panjang’s children and Bagum and Anjak’s daughters, Wis and Bainar, and their son, Rikenan. Raguan did attend the school for a short time but he was more interested in earning cash cutting rubber. Anggur had just got married and did not attend, while Cantik only went to school irregularly for a few years before marrying, for the first time, when she was about seventeen. As soon as they were old enough, Bagum sent his youngest sons, Jusar and Jon, to join their brothers and sisters at school. Wis, Rikenan, Bainar, Jusar and Jon can all read and write and they have taught Bagum how to write his name, a skill he uses in his dealings with government administration. Bagum’s continued interest in reading and writing has resulted in his being one of the few men in Tiga Balai who can sign his name and who has adult children who can read and write. While Anjak supports Bagum’s insistence on sending their children to school, she does not share her husband’s general fascination with paper and writing.

In 1986, Anggur married Panca’s daughter Gunjah at a gawai held in Gandung’s house. This marriage, which was between the son of the Tua Tsah of Dusun Jaya and the daughter of Gandung’s Mangku, helped to strengthen the Batin’s administration in the face of growing opposition from Rapan and his anak buah. While the marriage of Gunjah consolidated Gandung’s position, the marriage of Panca’s eldest son, Cal (who, by 1992, had been married and divorced three times), a year later, provided Laman and Rapan with an opportunity to further undermine Gandung’s authority. Cal’s bride was from the Gelugur region of Durian Cacar and she was represented at her gawai by Gagah, Datuk Patih of Durian Cacar, while Cal,  

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15 Panjang, Patah or Kharudin, is Umar’s younger brother. He first appeared in Perigi in the early 1980s and was given permission, by Gandung, to build a house in Binjai. After the school was finished, he moved to another house which he built in front of the school and sold his large house in Binjai to Cindai, Gandung’s son-in-law. While he was living in front of the school, Panjang established himself as a small-scale rubber dealer. Like several other Melayu men, Panjang specialises in lending money to men with gambling debts. Although Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim, Petonggan’s main rubber dealers, do not lend money directly to men with gambling debts, they do finance men such as Panjang who lend to debtors and charge interest of between 10% a week and 10% a day. Panjang requires security, usually rubber trees, on money lent. If a loan is not paid back with interest, Panjang takes the rubber trees. Through his son’s heavily gambling losses, Gagah incurred a debt of Rp.300,000 to Panjang which, with interest, became Rp.1,000,000 before he could repay it. In 1993 after a dispute with Panca’s family, Panjang and his wife Ai left Perigi and moved to Petonggan.
her husband-to-be, was represented by Gandung. Although Gagah had the support of Laman at that time, he says that he had no argument with Gandung and that he recognised Gandung as a Batin and showed him appropriate respect. The gawai was held at the house of Ciligin, the bride’s pemaman tua (male head of a family), in Gelugur and, while all the pre-marriage meetings and arrangements went off smoothly and the first couple of days of the wedding passed without incident, during malam besar (the final night of the wedding) Laman and Rapan arrived together with a group of their anak buah and stopped the wedding. As Bagum recalls, Laman and Rapan entered the house, shook hands with a few men and then Laman announced in a loud voice that Gandung did not uphold adat and could not sanction a wedding. Gandung replied that if his anak buah wished him to give up his title he would do so but until that happened he would continue to witness the weddings of his anak buah – Bagum describes Gandung’s role as a Batin representing his anak buah at a gawai as that of a saksi (witness). Rapan and Laman remained in the house and refused to allow the gawai to continue, so Gandung, Bagum and Panca went outside (where they noticed Rapan’s and Laman’s anak buah) to discuss the situation. Bagum did not want a fight to occur and, despite the fact that it was already late at night, he suggested getting police help from Air Molek. Bagum says that violence was considered as a response to Laman and Rapan but was rejected both because of the large number of women and children present who might have been hurt and because alternative strategies were available. The three men decided that Panca should wait at the gawai with his son Cal, the groom, and the rest of Gandung’s anak buah while Gandung, his son Usir, and Bagum set off for Petonggan. They stopped at Umar’s house, which is about one mile inland from the Inderagiri at the junction of the paths to Talang Gedabu and Talang Perigi. He advised them not to go to the police but to withdraw all Gandung’s anak buah, including Cal, from Ciligin’s house and to kill anyone who tried to stop them from doing so. Umar probably realised that a journey to a police post would be fruitless.

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16 Malam besar (big night) is the last night of a gawai, when the couple share a fermented drink. There are usually hundreds of people sitting inside the house on malam besar.

17 Bagum says that Laman’s words were ‘Gandung tidak benar, tidak bisa urus gawai.’ (Gandung is not [a] true [follower of adat and], cannot organise weddings.)

18 Usir lives with his wife in Talang Perigi. Many men in Perigi, including Bagum and Panca, say that Usir is, like his father before him, keturunan rajin (an inheritor of an industrious nature from male ancestors) and will probably die young as a result.
as police rarely enter Tiga Balai and have never done so at the request of Talang Mamak. Gandung stayed at Umar's house while Bagum and Usir returned to Gelugur, arriving there at sunrise. Although Laman, Rapan and their anak buah were still at the gawai, they did not offer any resistance when Bagum and Usir escorted Panca, Cal and the rest of Gandung's anak buah (over sixty people) out of the house and back to Perigi. Bagum says that when he returned to Ciligin's house, he was scared and that it took a lot of courage to tell Gandung's anak buah to follow him and leave. When Panca and Cal left, they took alat adat (gifts from the groom's family to the bride's family) with them. After Gandung's anak buah had left his house, Ciligin complained to Laman that all the money he had spent hosting the gawai had been wasted and that his niece (who was very upset) might never marry Cal as Panca had taken the alat adat.

A few days later, Ciligin went to see Sutan Mohammad, probably because he knew Sutan Mohammad could both stand up to Laman and influence Gandung, and asked him to approach Gandung on behalf of the bride's family so that another gawai could be arranged. About a week after the aborted wedding in Ciligin's house, another gawai was held in Gandung's house. Although some members of the bride's maternal family did attend this second gawai, neither Laman nor Rapan nor any of their anak buah arrived and the wedding was sanctioned without further incident. Bagum says that he and other followers of Gandung wanted to revenge the humiliation of their Batin by Rapan and Laman and that they lay in wait along the tracks to Perigi, armed with wooden poles, ready to ambush Laman, Rapan or any of their anak buah who approached Gandung's house. Bagum says that if Laman or Rapan had appeared, they would have been killed as lembing (spears), parang (machetes) and pisau (knives) were sharpened and dried chilli had been ground up to throw in their eyes. Since Cal's wedding, marriages between Gandung's and Rapan's anak buah have continued to be sources of friction between the two groups.

In 1989, Bagum and Anjak's second eldest son, Raguan, got married and, because his bride Jungkir's family are anak buah of Rapan, their gawai was also difficult to organise. Women are not usually spoken about as being anak buah, which is only used to describe relationships between men. However, women, such as Jungkir, are often affected by the loyalties of men in their families. Raguan's wife is a cucu (grandchild) of Madun, who, as well as being a respected Kemantan (shaman), is also a supporter of Laman and Rapan. Bagum recalls that discussions about this wedding between himself and Madun, who lives with his large family in
Kampung Tengah, Talang Perigi, were very strained. The two men agreed that the *gawai* should take place at Madun’s house but they could not agree over who should preside, Rapan or Gandung. When a bride and groom come from different *talang*, it is usual for the *Batin* of the wife’s family to preside over their *gawai* but, despite the fact that the *gawai* was being held in Madun’s house, Bagum refused to let Madun’s *Batin*, Rapan, sanction the marriage and a stalemate was reached. Bagum says that Rapan and Laman went to Rengat to get help from *Tengku Amat* (a former member of the Sultan’s administration19) who reported the situation to the *Camat*. Bagum and Gandung were subsequently called to the *Camat*’s office in Air Molek. Bagum recalls that he was *takut* (frightened) but he was also determined not to give in – even Bagum describes his attitude in this matter as *keras* (hard, obstinate). After talking the matter through with Gandung and Bagum, the *Camat* ordered Gandung to return to Perigi and complete the marriage as soon as possible20. The *gawai* duly went ahead in Madun’s house with Gandung presiding as *Batin*. Neither Rapan nor Laman made an appearance but Madun made his feelings plain when he squatted on his haunches while he was talking to Gandung who was seated, which is one of several activities, including whistling and shouting, which should not be carried out in front of a *Batin*. Bagum has not forgiven Madun for this insult to Gandung and he does not want his son Raguan to become an *anak buah* of Madun. Bagum’s attitude makes life quite difficult for Raguan who, having married into Madun’s family, should look to Madun to supply him with a house, rubber trees to tap, rice seed and a *ladang* site.

While the rivalry between Gandung’s *anak buah* and Rapan’s *anak buah* was increasing during the late 1980s, most people in Tiga Balai experienced a series of rice-crop failures. Bagum says that he and Anjak first suffered a poor harvest in 1988 when no rain fell between July and September causing many of the young plants to wither. Although Bagum remembers poor harvests before 1988, they were never as bad and only occurred sporadically. In the following year, dry weather again damaged young *padi* plants and most people in Tiga Balai suffered

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19 *Tengku Amat* or *Raja Amat* was the *Amir* (Emir) of the royal house of Inderagiri and nowadays he holds a government post in Simpang Kelayang.

20 I don’t know why the *Camat* went against Rapan’s and Laman’s wishes and supported Gandung. Neither Laman nor Rapan attended this meeting and the *Camat*, who was probably not very concerned about Talang Mamak disputes, may simply have sought the quickest and easiest solution.
another poor harvest. Since 1987, Bagum and Anjak have not had a good return on rice seed planted. Most other Talang Mamak families are experiencing the same problem and nowadays few bekas padi (rice stores) are full. While most Talang Mamak have no rice stocks, Laman’s bekas padi seems to be always full. Sutan Mohammad says that Laman’s bekas padi are never empty because they contain powerful charms that he obtained from a snake. Laman does not follow the rice farming calendar used by the majority of Talang Mamak – he plants his rice much later. Laman clears his land in July–August and has been able to use the successive kemerau that have occurred in recent years during these three months to dry cleared ladang and to ensure a good burning which he usually carries out in September–October, just before the end of kemarau and the return of consistent rain. Bagum’s inability to grow enough rice to feed his family for more than a few months in each year since 1987 has made Bagum increasingly reliant on his relationship with Haji Nasir, Bagum’s rubber dealer in Petonggan. In order to provide food for his family, Bagum has had to take rice on credit from Haji Nasir, promising to repay him with rubber. Bagum is no longer a wealthy man since the advantages he enjoyed as one of the first young men in Tiga Balai to have access to rubber have gradually disappeared as prices have dropped and rubber has become more popular. The rice failures of the late 1980s, and the subsequent poor harvests, have left Bagum with a large debt, owed to Haji Nasir. During the late 1980s, most men in Perigi entered into similar debt relationships with either Haji Nasir or Haji Ibrahim. Since the late 1960s, when opposition to rubber planting ended, thousands of rubber seedlings have been planted in Perigi and nowadays every married or divorced woman owns at least one rubber plot. Opposition to rubber planting did not end abruptly but seems to have gradually died out as more and more people became attracted by the cash available to the owners and tappers of rubber trees, since money was itself becoming more valued as an ever-increasing range of goods began to appear at the market in the 1960s. By the 1970s, almost every ladang was being planted with rubber seedlings after its rice had been harvested. Nowadays, many of Perigi’s richest and most successful rubber farmers are members of Rapan’s anak buah, the majority of whom sell their rubber to Haji Ibrahim: Kabuk, who is establishing himself as a small-scale rubber dealer; Madun; and Seran all sell large quantities of rubber each week and all are anak buah of Rapan. Gandung’s son-in-law Cindai, who died suddenly in 1990, was a successful small-scale rubber dealer in Binjai. Although Gandung did not take over Cindai’s business, he did take charge of all the rubber trees Cindai had acquired and these, together with the rubber trees he himself had planted,
made Gandung one of the largest producers in Perigi. Gandung's rubber is now managed by his young sons-in-law, Tarasan and Sabuk, and his grandson, Mijan.

In late 1989, Cantik, Bagum and Anjak's eldest daughter, married Tandil, a young man from Talang Sungai Limau. This was the first gawai that Bagum and Anjak had hosted as parents of the bride. A week or two before the wedding, Bagum and a group of his anak buah went to Tandil's mother's house in Sungai Limau to jemput laki (collect the groom). Bagum recalls in detail how well he and his anak buah were catered for by Tandil's family who offered them tinned milk, biscuits and Gudang Garam cigarettes. Prohibitions against adopting Melayu habits such as drinking boiled water, tea or coffee, which were in effect in the 1940s and 1950s, have, like prohibitions against rubber planting, also gradually died out. Nowadays, tea and coffee are served at every kumpulan – milk is still a rarity in Tiga Balai. Bagum had never seen such manufactured foodstuffs used at kumpulan in Tiga Balai and he was both impressed and determined that when Tandil's family came to his house for the gawai they would be hosted in a similar style. Consequently, on the last market day before Cantik's gawai took place, Bagum gathered his anak buah and asked the bujang (bachelors) to buy one packet of Gudang Garam each and the married men to buy one packet of biscuits each, while Bagum spent his honor (government salary), which he had recently collected, on several tins of condensed milk. Honor usually appears, in lump sums, two or three times a year – in 1990, Bagum's honor was about Rp.8,000 per month. Bagum says that it was important for him to match Tandil's family's generosity and with the help of his anak buah he organised a gawai that was much talked about. The hosts of a kumpulan are expected to make the largest single contribution towards its cost, which may amount to Rp.300,000 for a large gawai, but they can also expect gifts of food, cigarettes and cash from Melayu stall-holders and gamblers who set up their businesses on the host's halaman (flat, open piece of land outside a house). Big gawai are remembered for many years afterwards, particularly if something unusual occurred. Significant events in the past twenty years are often remembered by linking them with a particular kumpulan that took place at around the same time.

While Cantik's gawai became well known through Bagum having served tinned milk and biscuits, the wedding of Bagum and Anjak's second eldest daughter, Wis was talked about for a different reason – she wanted to marry a Muslim Melayu from Petonggan called Nasir. When Bagum first heard of Wis' desire, he was saddened because he did not want his daughter to go
against *adat* and marry a Muslim\(^{21}\). However, he says that he had to let his daughter have her way. In early 1990, Wis entered Islam and married Nasir at a ceremony held in both the groom’s family’s house and the nearby mosque, a small, one-roomed, cement building in the *Melayu* part of Dusun Jaya, close to the border between Petonggan and Perigi. Bagum and Anjak did not attend Wis’ wedding to Nasir, because, as Bagum says, he was very sad. However, now that Wis and Nasir have settled down in *Tran* Perigi and lead a life similar to other young Talang Mamak couples he feels more comfortable with his daughter’s choice of husband.

While Cantik was getting married, work began on the government housing development called *Transmigrasi Lokal* (local transmigration site) Talang Perigi, or *Tran* Perigi, and Bagum contacted Gandung to let him know that he wanted two houses. As part of this development, twelve men from Perigi, including Bagum, were taken by *pegawai* (local government officers) to *Departemen Kehutanan* (forestry department) in Pekanbaru where they stayed for a week, being taught about family planning and basic village administration, before going to the Kampar region where they spent a further two weeks learning simple farming techniques\(^{22}\). Bagum got the two houses he requested, which stand opposite each other, and he and Anjak immediately moved into one of them leaving Cantik and Tandil in the house in Dusun Jaya. Bagum’s original intention had been for Raguan to move into his other house in *Tran* Perigi but Jungkir’s family, which includes Madun, flatly refused to allow her to enter *Tran* Perigi. Raguan and Jungkir actually split up as a result of Bagum’s plan for them to move to *Tran*. Raguan returned to Anjak’s house after Madun refused to allow Jungkir to accompany him to *Tran*, but went back to Kampung Tengah soon afterwards when he realised that Madun would not be swayed. Consequently, Raguan offered the house Bagum had obtained for him to his recently married sister Cantik, but Cantik and Tandil were happy in the big house in Dusun Jaya and did not want to move to *Tran*. Bagum then gave the choice of either of his two

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\(^{21}\) According to Talang Mamak *adat* all marriages should be *hanus* (between cross-cousins).

\(^{22}\) The agricultural centre in the Kampar region that Bagum visited was built to teach farming techniques to *Sakai* (*Melayu* name for people, with a lifestyle similar to Talang Mamak, who live in the region between the River Kampar and the River Siak) who have recently been located in permanent villages as part of the forest clearance projects that are taking place either side of the East Sumatran highway.
houses in Tran to Wis and Nasir who were about to marry. Wis and Nasir chose the house that Bagum and Anjak were already in. Consequently, they moved into the empty house across the path and Wis and Nasir moved to Tran straight after their wedding. Wis and Nasir now have similar lives to other young couples in Tiga Balai in that they live with, farm rice with and cut rubber with the wife's parents. Although they identify themselves as Muslims, they do not go to the mosque regularly – neither do they attend kumpulan organised by Dukun or Kemantan (shamans).

Tran Perigi is not a popular place among Rapan's anak buah and many of them will not even enter it. I have only seen two of Rapan's anak buah in Tran Perigi: Sulin; and Seran. Sulin is one of Madun's grandsons who was banished from Kampung Tengah by Madun for persistent petty theft. He went to Gedabu where he was also not made welcome and, being unable to find somewhere to stay, he went to Bagum to ask for his help. Bagum discussed the matter with Gandung and they decided to offer Sulin an empty house in Tran which was near the mosque. Sulin accepted and for a couple of years he maintained a good reputation in Tran but recently he has been accused of stealing fruit, vegetables, tobacco, sugar, etc. The other of Rapan's anak buah that I saw in Tran was Seran who often came to our house. Seran, who is in his sixties, owns many rubber trees and is comparatively wealthy. On his visits he often brought gifts and things he wanted to trade, such as honey and vegetable seedlings and cuttings, in exchange for which he wanted empty paint tins, Gudang Garam cigarettes (for his wife) and imported seeds. All of the houses in Tran have seng (corrugated iron) roofs and the development includes a mosque which is seen by Rapan, Laman and their anak buah as a direct threat to adat. Rapan and his anak buah (except Sulin) would not consider taking a house in Tran and some of Gandung's anak buah also considered it impractical to move there. Many people who might have moved to Tran decided not to because Tran is too far from their rubber plots and moving there would mean a long walk for the men of the household every morning that they wanted to tap rubber. Consequently, many houses were unfilled and Umar offered them to Melayu from Petonggan. When Tran first opened, about thirty of its fifty seven houses were occupied, about twenty by Melayu and about ten by Talang Mamak. In early 1992 most of the Melayu families left Tran after a young boy suffered a fatal bite from a snake concealed in a hole in the cement floor of his house. All the houses in Tran share major structural problems. The cement used for the floors was mixed with soil rather than sand and consequently all Tran houses have crumbling floors full of holes. The Melayu boy who died
was sitting on the floor and idly toying with the crumbling cement around one of these holes with his toes. Inside the hole was a snake, probably hunting rats, and it bit the boy on his big toe. Within two minutes he was dead and despite digging up most of the floor the snake was never found. Everyone who still lives in Tran wants to build a raised floor and, by taking down interior walls and removing the bottom three planks of the external walls, men, such as Bagum and Jari, have been able to raise planked floors. After the death of the boy Bagum took it upon himself to organise a kumpulan in his house in Tran with the aim of preventing further deaths from snakebite. This kumpulan took place just after I arrived in Perigi in 1992. A semahan (offering tray) was built outside Bagum's house and Sutan Mohammad recited a very fast monologue in front of it, before a goat's head was buried in the earth at the foot of the semahan.

In September 1993 Bagum’s friend and Batin, Gandung, died leaving his anak buah without a leader. Gandung had chosen his successor, Tomin, in the early 1990s and had been teaching him the duties and responsibilities of both Batin and Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi since that time. While Gandung was still alive there was some opposition to his choice of successor which suggested that Tomin was too young and that he was not a keponakan (nephew) of Gandung. For several months before his death Gandung’s anak buah were very concerned for their Batin’s health which had been deteriorating since the death of his wife Pinjut in 1991 and, soon after his cucu (granddaughter) Upik miscarried her first child, he died. Most people say that Gandung’s health began to fail in 1991 after his wife Pinjut died and he moved into his daughter Sarum’s house. During 1992, when two of his granddaughters got married and their young husbands, Sabuk and Tarasan, moved in with Gandung, he began to spend more and more time on his own, eventually building a pondok (hut) on his ladang and living there. In 1993 Gandung started to complain of pains in his chest and Adriani and I took him to a doctor in Air Molek. After this he seemed to get better for a few months but his health failed rapidly after Upik miscarried. Since Gandung’s death, misgivings about Tomin seem to have been forgotten and Gandung’s former anak buah have transferred their loyalties to Tomin – who is about twenty-six. Bagum and Sutan Mohammad, who are both contemporaries of Gandung and experienced title-holders, became spokesmen for Gandung’s former anak buah who wanted Tomin to be made both Batin and Kepala Desa as soon as possible. Bagum told me that it was important to install Tomin quickly because there was a danger that Laman and Rapan might try to interfere in his appointment. Consequently, Bagum and Sutan
Mohammad began organising support for Tomin. They held a *kumpulan* at Gandung's house where Bagum suggested that he and Tomin report Gandung's death to the *Camat* and inform him that Tomin was to be Gandung's successor as both *Batin* and *Kepala Desa* of Talang Perigi. During this *kumpulan*, Tomin's *anak buah* decided to invite local government officials to Gandung's *naik tambak*23 (funeral), which they would hold on the same day as Tomin's installation as *Batin* and *Kepala Desa*, in order for the government officials to witness and sanction Tomin's appointment. It was also agreed that Tomin should choose a new *Mangku*. Sunin, a young man who has recently married one of Gandung's granddaughters, was picked to replace Panca as *Mangku* of Talang Perigi. Panca resented the way Sunin was chosen to replace him as he was neither included in the selection process nor invited to help train Sunin in the duties of *Mangku*. Panca has a long term disagreement with Sutan Mohammad and he suspected Sutan Mohammad and Bagum of conspiring to remove him of his title. Unlike Panca, Bagum did not lose his title as a result of Tomin's succession — rather he grew in status. Nawar, *Tua Tuah* of Balai Desa, also kept his title but Tomin recognised that Nawar had been incapacitated as a result of his fall and he put Bagum in charge of affairs in Balai Desa. Once Panca was removed of his title Bagum became the senior titled representative of Dusun Jaya, Balai Desa and *Tran* Perigi. While Tomin did not change any of his *Tua Tuah*, he did give minor government titles to several younger men in Perigi including Jari, Barisan (Sutan Mohammad's son), Usir, Anggur and Raguan. As Nawar's brother and Bagum's brother-in-law, Jari, through his support of Bagum, played an important role in Bagum's assuming seniority over Nawar. Giving Jari a title helped to ensure that Nawar's *anak buah* remained loyal to Tomin. Barisan is Sutan Mohammad's eldest son and his appointment drew Sutan Mohammad further into Tomin's administration. Usir is Gandung's son and, although many people think he would make an excellent leader, he is reluctant to take a title and only after much persuasion from Bagum and others did he agree to join Tomin's administration. Usir's appointment meant that Gandung's close family had a representative in Tomin's administration. Anggur is Bagum and Anjak's eldest son and he is married to Panca and Tambal's daughter Gunjah. Giving Anggur a title meant that, despite Panca no longer being

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23 *Naik tambak*, or *naik tanah*, is the name of the *kumpulan*, which takes place some time after the corpse is buried, at which the *kubur* (grave) is constructed.
Mangku, his household (which Anggur has married into), now has two members of Tomin's administration, Panca, who is LKMD, and Anggur, who is an MD. Bagum has great hopes that his son, Raguan, will become a leader and he was very disappointed when Raguan married one of Rapan's followers, Jungkir, which means that he cannot be trusted by many of Tomin's anak buah, some of whom (such as Panca) are already suspicious of his involvement with Madun. Bagum feels that if Raguan had not married Jungkir he could have been a possible candidate for the title Batin, or Mangku. If Raguan divorces Jungkir he may well yet be incorporated into Tomin's administration as Tua Tuah of Balai Desa, a title upon which, as Nawar's sister's son, he has an inherited claim.

Gandung was buried the day after he died and his naik tambak was organised quickly (they usually take place about two or three months after burial) because Gandung's former anak buah wanted to see Tomin installed as Batin and Kepala Desa before anyone interfered in his appointment. Just as he had accompanied Gandung to Air Molek when the latter was made Kepala Desa, Bagum went with Tomin on all his first trips to the Camat's offices. On the day after Gandung's burial, Bagum and Tomin went to Air Molek, stopping at Petonggan on the way, where they met Sulaiman Zar, (a Melayu Muslim who lives in Petonggan), sekretaris of Talang Perigi, who accompanied them to the Camat's office. Bagum told the Camat that Gandung's former anak buah wanted Tomin to be both the next Batin and the next Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi and invited him and other pegawai to witness Tomin's appointment and Gandung's naik tambak. The Camat agreed to attend and appointed Sulaiman as Kepala Desa sementara (temporary Kepala Desa) of Talang Perigi. Although I have not heard of Kepala Desa sementara being appointed in other parts of Sumatra, the Camat may have been following government guidelines when he gave Sulaiman this title. Bagum and Tomin were immediately suspicious of Sulaiman's appointment, especially when rumours began circulating Petonggan that Sulaiman had ambitions to be permanent Kepala Desa of Perigi. However, Tomin and Bagum trusted that the Camat would be true to his word and that Tomin would soon be officially recognised as both Kepala Desa and Batin of Talang Perigi. According to talk in Petonggan, soon after Gandung's death Sulaiman began receiving private letters from the

24 See chapter seven for a description of burial and grave construction.
Camat's office and began making regular visits to Air Molek. When Bagum and Tomin returned to Tiga Balai preparations were made for Gandung's *naik tambak* and Tomin's *pengangkatan Batin* (appointment of a Batin)\(^{25}\) which were both scheduled to take place on the 30th September, about three weeks after Gandung's death.

On the day of Gandung's *naik tambak*, over three hundred people, including seven government officials and five Talang Mamak *Kepala Desa*, gathered in Binjai, Talang Perigi. The officials present were: Yunan and Saharuddin, from the Camat's office in Air Molek; M. Salih Jalil, *Wakil* (deputy assistant) Camat from Simpang Kelayang; Bastan and Barum, from *Kalpolsek* (local police headquarters) in Simpang Kelayang; Pirdaus, a local military leader from Simpang Kelayang; and Mudianto from a hospital in Polak Pisang. Of this group Yunan, Saharuddin, M. Salih Jalil and Pirdaus (who often visits Tiga Balai to gamble at *gawat*) are known to Bagum, who had hoped that the Camat himself would appear. The five *Kepala Desa* were: Gagah, *Datuk Patih* of Talang Durian Cacar; Rusian, *Batin* of Talang Parit; Canto, *Batin* of Talang Sungai Limau; Urusan, *Batin* of Talang Gedabu; and Mawar, *Penghulu* of Talang Selantai. While Umar, who no longer spends much time in Petonggan, did not appear, Sulaiman did arrive. Gandung had been buried in a patch of forest about half a kilometre from his house and many of Gandung's *anak buah* gathered there in the early morning to begin preparing the *papan* (planks) and *tiang* (upright posts) they needed for Gandung's grave. By mid-morning everything was ready and a large crowd had gathered, which included many tearful women. Bagum said that crying at the *naik tambak* of a Batin could bring misfortune but, in spite of, this many women, including Gandung's daughters Sarum and Siti and his granddaughter Upik, wept at Gandung's *naik tambak*. Under instructions from Bagum and Sutan Mohammad four white, notched planks were fitted together to form a rectangle over the grave. The space inside the box formed by the planks was then filled with earth and levelled off. Once this was finished, four posts (about one and a half meters) tall were sunk into the ground at the corners and a length of white cloth was tied between them. Title-holders' graves are not as elaborate as some non-title-holders graves, which may be up to

\(^{25}\) *Pengangkatan* means appointment or elevation. The word *digadangkan* (make big, enlarged) is often used in the same context, *Batin digadangkan* meaning the same as *Pengangkatan Batin*. 
seven papan high, decorated with arang (soot) and kapur (slaked lime) and given a roof of rumbia (sago leaves). The burial sites of Batin and other leaders are considered especially keramat (sacred or possessing supernatural qualities) and are periodically cleared of undergrowth. Gandung told me that he often left pieces of cloth at the grave site of Suman, who was Batin of Talang Perigi before Nulan from whom Gandung inherited his title. After the completion of Gandung’s grave, everyone returned to the halaman (flat clearing) outside Gandung’s house where chairs had been put out for the officials, including the Kepala Desa from other talang, and mats had been laid out for everyone else to sit on. Gandung’s naik tambak ended after pulut (sweet rice), tea and coffee were served to the Talang Mamak guests – pegawai and other visiting officials avoid eating or drinking anything prepared by Talang Mamak. A small cock fight was also held which, unlike cockfights held at gawai, did not draw a crowd and no betting took place. Sutan Mohammad and Bagum then told the officials that they wished them to witness Tomin’s pengangkatan Batin which began with Tomin seated cross-legged on mats laid on the ground. Sutan Mohammad sat down in front of him and, taking Tomin’s right hand in his own, he talked to him for a few minutes. He then declared that Tomin was the choice for Batin of Talang Perigi and asked those who agreed to say ‘Setuju’ (agree). One by one all the Kepala Desa and married men approached Tomin, dropped to their knees, put their right hand in his and said aloud ‘Setuju’. Sutan Mohammad then told the officials that Tomin had been made a Batin according to Talang Mamak adat and the people of Perigi wanted them to now formally recognise Tomin as their choice for the vacant post of Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi. According to Bagum, he and Sutan Mohammad had two intentions here. Firstly, they wished to appoint Tomin as Batin secara adat (according to adat) and this was achieved when Gagah, as Datuk Patih, and Rusian, as

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26 Pulut is cooked with coconut and gula merah (palm sugar) to make a variety of sweets which are usually only served at large kumpulan.

27 Formulaic conversations between men who are holding each other’s right hand while sitting cross-legged facing one another are an important feature of most kumpulan.

28 This is similar to shaking hands except that, once joined, the hands do not move. When they join hands, especially with a title-holder, many men put their left palm on the back of their head or neck. After they let go of one another’s hand most men touch their chest with the fingertips of their right hand.

29 The process of saying ‘Setuju’ is also called pilihan (selection, choice).
Batin of Talang Parit, along with Gandung's former anak buah said 'Setuju'. Secondly, they wanted the pegawai present to recognise Tomin's appointment as an official election for the post of Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi. After the kumpulan, the officials returned to Air Molek and Tomin's anak buah waited for confirmation of Tomin's appointment as Kepala Desa, in the form of surat keterangan, or SK (identity papers), to arrive in Petonggan. By mid-October Tomin had heard nothing from the Camat's office and Bagum accompanied him to Petonggan on the 26th October to ask Sulaiman to send a letter to the Camat requesting Tomin's SK. Tomin and Bagum dictated a letter to Sulaiman who typed it out and said that he would take it to the Camat's office. Although both Bagum and Tomin were already suspicious of Sulaiman, they could think of no other way of sending a letter to the Camat. Bagum hoped that this letter would be more effective than their verbal communications had been.

In December 1993, Bagum first heard of Inpres Desa Tertinggal (Presidential programme on underdeveloped villages), or IDT, while he was at Petonggan market. As Bagum understood it, each talang would receive Rp.20,000,000 from the government. However, nobody was sure how this money was to be spent and there followed much speculation in Tiga Balai about who would receive this money and what it was for. At a kumpulan held to discuss IDT, it was agreed that the money should be used to build a large house for Tomin, to improve the houses in Tran Perigi and to buy a typewriter and woodworking tools. It is usual for leaders to have big houses which can hold hundreds of people and can be used for large kumpulan. When Gandung died, Tomin was living with his wife and child in a small house and, as Gagah was in the process of using Bangdes (rural development) funds to build himself a large house, Tomin and his anak buah thought building Tomin a large house would be an appropriate use for IDT funds. All Talang Mamak who live in Tran are anxious to upgrade their houses, which are not well built. In particular everyone wants to raise a planked floor above the crumbling cement and most also want to enlarge their houses so that they resemble the houses built by Talang Mamak. Tomin is very keen to buy a typewriter and he asked me to try to find him a cheap second-hand one in Air Molek. He felt that if they owned a typewriter...
someone could be taught to use it and Tomin could then dispense with Sulaiman in written communications with the Camat. Very few people in Tiga Balai own tools such as axe, saw, hammer, plane and drill and many people have no experience of using them. During our stay some men in Talang Perigi became interested in learning woodworking techniques and often borrowed tools from me. Tomin’s anak buah wanted to buy some tools (which they would own collectively) so that they could build shelves, cut floorboards, etc. In January 1994 Sulaiman and several pegawai held a meeting, which was attended by Tomin and some of his anak buah, in the Inpres school where they explained the purpose of IDT to their Talang Mamak audience. They said that IDT was a loan to be administered by Kepala Desa and Tua Tuah for the purposes of buying livestock, seedlings or stock for a kedai (small shop). Cows, buffaloes, goats, ducks, chicken and fish were among the types of animal suggested as a good investment for IDT funds and chillis, coconuts, rubber and alai (Parkia roxburghii) trees (which produce large edible seeds) were mentioned as suitable farming investments for IDT funds. It also became clear that the government expects recipients to begin paying back their initial loans as soon as their investments show a profit. Bagum and Sutan Mohammad were the only people to respond to the pegawai’s monologue, both men suggesting that they had more urgent uses for the money, such as improving conditions at Tran Perigi. In reply the pegawai made it clear that the money was not to be used for non-profit making ventures. After this meeting Bagum assembled his anak buah, in Cantik and Tandil’s house in Dusun Jaya, to discuss IDT and they decided to refuse the loan as they could not see a way of using it profitably and they did not want to take on such a large debt. Bagum considered that the options suggested for IDT funds were not suited to conditions in Tiga Balai. Livestock such as cows, buffalo, goats, ducks, chickens, etc, would require constant supervision both to protect them from forest animals and prevent them from eating poisonous plants or entering ladang and destroying crops. He also doubted whether enough food for these animals could be found in the forest, where there is little grass. Livestock such as cows, buffaloes, etc would probably not do well in Perigi, and fish, in a low-lying area prone to flood, are completely unsuitable. Farming was also rejected because poor soil, unpredictable weather and attack by forest animals were likely to destroy an investment. Rubber was considered, as the only option that Talang Mamak have experience of. However, since most men already work hard tapping rubber and cannot make enough money to pay off their debts, it was rejected as a means of making a profit. The option of opening a kedai, which no Talang Mamak has ever tried before, was also talked about but, as no one was prepared to take the responsibility of keeping accounts, buying and
transporting stock from Air Molek and security, it was also turned down. Bagum said that since so few goods (a little sugar, a few cigarettes) were bought locally it would be a long time before any profit was made. Bagum reported this decision to Tomin who was holding similar discussion with both his anak buah in Binjai and his other Tua Tuah. IDT was being talked about in Petonggan, which has also been offered IDT funds. Petonggan will receive IDT (which Umar will administer). However, many other nearby Melayu kampung (villages) which do not have markets, rubber dealers, or large mosques, have not been offered IDT. While they were considering IDT, Bagum and Tomin were told by residents of Petonggan that Sulaiman was visiting the Camat regularly. People in Petonggan also said that he has plans to get himself appointed Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi in order to control IDT and other government funds destined for Perigi – in 1994 the Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi will have access to over Rp.25,000,000 of government funds. Bagum and Tomin know that Talang Jerinjing has a Melayu Kepala Desa and they fear that Sulaiman has similar ambitions. Consequently, they have decided not to use him in any further communications that they might have with the Camat regarding Tomin’s SK. They also want to get Sulaiman replaced as sekretaris. Despite there being still no sign of Tomin’s SK, it became known, from people in Petonggan, that Sulaiman had already received an SK officially acknowledging him as Kepala Desa sementara of Talang Perigi. Tomin’s intention is to have Sulaiman replaced as sekretaris by one of his anak buah. The possibility of a Talang Mamak sekretaris in Perigi is the result of the building of the Inpres school and Bagum’s, Gandung’s and Sutan Mohammad’s insistence that their children and grandchildren attend it. There are now several people in Perigi who can read and write and are willing to learn to type and take on the duties and salary of sekretaris.

While IDT was being discussed and Tomin’s anak buah were waiting for their Batin’s SK, Raguan brought news to his father, Bagum, of a scandal that had just broken in Rapan’s household. At a kumpulan organised by Rapan in his house, his wife openly accused him of

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31 When I left it looked as if Tomin would decline the offer of IDT funds on behalf of the whole of Talang Perigi. However, as Tomin had not yet been officially recognised as Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi it is not certain that he will be the one responsible for accepting or refusing IDT in Perigi.

32 Talang Jerinjing, which is in Kecamatan (sub-district) Rengat, has a tarmac road running through it and, since about 1991, it has had a Melayu Kepala Desa who, as well as being Kepala Desa, is also the main rubber dealer in Jerinjing and most men there are in debt to him.
having sex with her eldest daughter. She was very angry and left the house to stay with one of her sisters in Durian Cacar, whose family, like the majority of people in Durian Cacar, are anak buah of Laman. There she told her sister the whole story, how she had discovered Rapan having sex with her daughter several times but kept quiet about it until now that her daughter was pregnant. It became apparent that Rapan had been having sex with his step-daughter while she was married to Enkeh (one of Panca and Tambal’s sons) who was living in Rapan’s house until mid-1993 when he and Rapan’s step-daughter divorced. Rapan’s behaviour provoked discussion amongst both his and Tomin’s anak buah. Once the details of Rapan’s conduct became public he disappeared, leaving his anak buah to explain his actions. Through intermediaries (such as Raguan) Bagum, Sutan Mohammad, Tomin and Panca (who described Rapan’s behaviour as sumbang [incest, illicit sex]) made it clear to Rapan’s Tua Tuah that they felt that Rapan should be brought before Batin Tomin to face hukuman (judgement). However, after discussion, Tomin’s anak buah decided that Rapan was the guilty party in this case and that he was the only one they wanted to see face hukuman. They agreed that banishment from Tiga Balai would be suitable punishment for Rapan. At first Rapan’s anak buah, under pressure from Tomin’s anak buah, seemed to agree that Rapan should be punished but once it became known that Rapan was staying with Laman in Ekoh hu lu, it seemed unlikely that he could be persuaded to come before Tomin. After Rapan left Perigi, Bagum visited several of Rapan’s anak buah and said that according to adat, which Rapan and his anak buah claim to uphold, Rapan should face hukuman. According to Bagum, hukuman cannot be forced – rather a person has to volunteer themselves for hukuman – and if someone suspected of salah (mistake, offence) refuses to come forward, hukuman cannot be imposed upon them. Although Bagum would have preferred to keep the matter within Tiga Balai and see Rapan punished according to adat, he decided that he should go to Air Molek to seek assistance from the Camat because Rapan could not be punished through internal adat procedures. It was important to Bagum that Rapan’s anak buah recognised that Bagum had tried adat procedures before calling on state officials to intervene. Bagum informed the kalpolsen (regional police headquarters) in Simpang Kelayang and the Camat’s office in Air Molek of Rapan’s deeds and how they had caused tension within Talang Perigi which could erupt into violence. While violence was sometimes talked about as a way of dealing with Rapan, neither Bagum or any of Tomin’s other anak buah seriously considered it as a strategy for bringing Rapan to Perigi for hukuman. However, Bagum was slightly concerned that fights might break out between bujang (bachelors), who were anak buah of Rapan, and bujang of Tomin’s anak buah, who could come
into conflict over girls. Bagum hoped that mentioning the possibility of violence would increase the chances of the police responding to his call for assistance. When Bagum returned to Perigi from the police post, he and the rest of Tomin's anak buah waited, expecting the police to arrive at any time. Many people in Petonggan followed Rapan's story and Bagum heard from one of them of a case of incest committed by a Melayu man that had recently been dealt with by the police in Simpang Kelayang who beat the accused man almost to death. Neither the police or any representatives from the Camat's office came to Perigi and, after a week or so, a meeting was arranged (by Bagum) between Rapan's wife and Enkeh, her daughter's ex-husband. Rapan's wife told Enkeh that although she felt sorry for him she would not act as a witness against her husband. According to Bagum and Panca, Rapan's wife dropped her accusations against her husband after Laman threatened her, by saying both that Rapan would divorce her and that he (Laman) would banish her if she continued to complain. About one month after the story first broke, Rapan's step-daughter moved out of Talang Perigi (I don't know what happened to her) and Rapan and his wife moved back into their old house. Rapan was welcomed by his anak buah who now said that, with Rapan's step-daughter gone and his wife not prepared to speak against her husband, no hukuman would be made on Rapan who seemed to maintain the support of Tengku Arief and Laman. Tomin and his anak buah were not satisfied with this outcome since they felt that, according to adat, Enkeh could (and should) bring Rapan to Tomin for hukuman because Rapan (Enkeh's father-in-law at that time) had sex with Enkeh's wife. This is a salah (mistake, offence) that should be punished. However, without police intervention, which did not appear, there was no way that Tomin's anak buah could punish Rapan for his breach of adat. Bagum was very frustrated that he had been unable to either bring Rapan to Tomin for hukuman according to adat or persuade the Camat or the police to intervene.

By March of 1994, official confirmation of Tomin's appointment as Kepala Desa had still not been sent from Air Molek and Bagum and Tomin were increasingly suspicious of Sulaiman's intentions. Although Sulaiman might have ambitions to be Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi, it is also likely that the pegawai who attended Tomin's pengangkatan Batin did not recognise it as a formal election for the post of Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi and consequently have not acknowledged the appointment. Local newspaper reports (Genta 31.12.93) stated that 'Talang Perigi, Talang Gedabu, Talang Sungai Parit dan [and] Talang Tujuh Tangga' had not yet formed 'Panitia Pemilihan Pilkades' (election committees for Kepala Desa) and would have
elections in the near future. No-one in Perigi knew anything about either these elections (which had never been held before in Tiga Balai) or these committees. After discussions with his Tua Tuah, Tomin sent a letter to the Camat, without Sulaiman knowing\(^{33}\), which asked both why Tomin's SK was taking so long to appear and how to have Sulaiman replaced as sekretaris of Talang Perigi. This was the first time a Batin of Perigi had sent a letter on his own initiative which was not typed by his sekretaris. Like Bagum, Tomin is convinced of the importance of being able to read and write and is currently being taught these skills by people such as Bagum and Anjak's daughter Wis, who have been educated at the Inpres school.

Bagum is very disappointed at the local government's lack of response to his requests for assistance regarding Tomin's succession and Rapan's salah (mistake, offence). Since Gandung's death, Bagum has been determined to unite Gandung's anak buah behind Tomin and to see him installed as both Batin and Kepala Desa. Bagum feels that since Indonesian independence, when the Sultan of Inderagiri was deposed, the President of Indonesia has replaced the Sultan as the Talang Mamak Raja and loyalty should now be shown to him and his pegawai\(^{34}\). He stresses to the young people of Perigi that they should learn to read and write and he advises older people to seek the assistance of local government officers in dealing with matters that cannot be resolved through adat procedures. Despite his loyalty, over almost thirty years, Bagum has been unable to get the response he wants from the Camat's office. In spite of this, and even though events in the 1990s have made Bagum more sceptical of the motives of local government officers, he still sees government intervention in Tiga Balai as inevitable and enjoys spending his salary. Bagum, like many other Talang Mamak, believes that the Presiden is good and that his government has good intentions which are often spoiled by the laziness and corrupt practices of local government officials. He feels that government developments in Talang Perigi, such as the path and the school, are positive attempts to improve the situation of Talang Mamak which he sees as becoming increasingly difficult.

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33 After requests from Bagum and Tomin, I typed this letter in Air Molek. It was written both from the point of view of, and signed, Masyarakat Perigi (people of Perigi).

34 Pegawai, which nowadays means local government officer, is a Malay word that long predates independence and which was used to describe court officials of rank and court experts in both Islamic and pre-Islamic kingdoms (see Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.861).
Despite having cleared a section of rimba (old forest) for their ladang Bagum and Anjak's padi crop, harvested in early 1994, was again very poor. Bagum and Anjak had hoped that rimba soil would prove more fertile than bekas ladang (old ladang site). The patch of rimba they had chosen to clear coincided with the territory of a large group of beruk (short-tailed Macaca nemestrina) which Bagum thought would move to another area after clearing and firing. However, the beruk, who were quite aggressive, stayed and ate almost everything Bagum and Anjak planted. Bagum says that rubber lies behind the poor rice harvests since 1988 as the continual planting of harvested ladang with rubber seedlings has gradually decreased the amount of land available for rice farming. Consequently, fallow periods have had to be reduced to the extent that fallow fields are not left long enough to regain top soil before they are cleared again. Bagum describes shortened fallow periods in terms of the size of the trees that grow on bekas ladang (old ladang). He says that, nowadays, trees are cut down when they are too small and this leads to poor rice crops. Moving to more fertile land is a strategy employed by the Iban (Freeman 1970 p.130–134) and, while similar migrations are probably part of Talang Mamak history, nowadays, after logging, government plans for kelapa sawit (oil palm) plantations and the establishment of transmigrasi camps and Melayu kampung along the borders of Tiga Balai, there is no more suitable land for the Talang Mamak to occupy. Repeated clearing, in a relatively short period of time, has resulted in species of rumput (weeds, grasses) taking hold in Tiga Balai. Along with the weeds, many new insect pests which cause damage to padi, have also arrived, together with several species of birds which feed on grass and rice seeds. Ilalang (Imperata cylindrica) is the most common grass and the most difficult to get rid of. If land is cleared continually, ilalang usually takes over, as in one old ladang site in Sungai Limau where there are no trees whatsoever. Bagum said that pianggang (a beetle, Leptocoriza varicornis), which eats and damages young rice, is becoming increasingly common in Tiga Balai. The decrease in soil fertility and the increase in weeds and pests has meant that Bagum and Anjak, like most other Talang Mamak, have become more and more dependent on a Petonggan rubber dealer to supply them with rice.

Bagum says that a lack of rice damages security and stability in Talang Perigi and puts pressures on people to do things that they would not normally do. Bagum had to deal with such an
incident in 1993 when his son-in-law, Nasir, and his niece’s husband, Taksiran, were found trying to sell rubber they had stolen from Bagum. Both these men walk from their houses (which are in Tran) to Dusun Jaya every morning to cut Bagum’s rubber and, on this occasion, they began to take a few kilos every week and store it separately. When they had collected more than fifty kilos, they took it to Siberudin (a Melayu man who deals in small quantities of rubber) in order to sell it. Siberudin suspected that the rubber had been stolen from Bagum (most men can identify the owner of a piece of getah just from its shape, consistency, colour, etc) and reported the matter to Nawar, Bagum’s brother-in-law and Tua Tuah of Balai Desa. On hearing this news, Nawar called Jari who, in turn, told Bagum and together Jari and Bagum confronted Nasir and Taksiran who immediately admitted their guilt. Jari and Bagum then took Nasir and Taksiran to Nawar’s house for hukuman (judgement), where the five men ate sirih (betel) together and Nasir and Taksiran, who apologised, were advised not to steal again. Jari said that, although he and Bagum took Nasir and Taksiran to Nawar’s house, Nawar took very little part in the discussion and hukuman which Bagum took charge of. It is usual for minor offences to be dealt with in this way, especially when the accused and accuser are members of the same family. Bagum feels that people are generally less honest and less likely to follow adat than they were in the past. In his view, it is mainly due to problems, caused by a lack of rice, that people are becoming more difficult to control. He also maintains that this is the reason why children no longer follow parental guidance. However, he also acknowledges that there are other influences affecting Talang Mamak. While Bagum sees government developments (such as the school and the paths) as being good influences in Tiga Balai, he also sees Petonggan, especially its youth, as the source of many bad influences which are affecting young Talang Mamak and encouraging them to steal, gamble heavily, not marry Talang Mamak, etc.

Bagum no longer cuts rubber (he uses the word pension, which he must have picked up in Air Molek, to describe his current situation with regards to rubber-tapping) and nowadays he and Anjak rely on Raguan, Nasir and Tandil to cut enough rubber to supply

footnotes

35 Jari told me this story in which he described Bagum, Nasir and Taksiran as ipar (brothers-in-law). Bagum never mentioned the incident to me, neither did Nasir or Taksiran.
their family with sufficient cash to meet their needs. Bagum is anxious to prevent Raguan becoming economically dependent solely on his father-in-law, Madun, and thereby being absorbed into Rapan's anak buah. By encouraging Raguan to cut his trees (as well as Madun’s) Bagum has been able to maintain close ties with his son. Most of Bagum’s trees in Dusun Jaya are getting old and not producing so much getah (raw latex) as they once did. At present, during good weather, when the three men are able to tap rubber on four days, they can collect about one hundred and twelve kilos a week from Bagum’s trees. A rubber tree is usually cut for the first time at a comfortable height for the tapper (about shoulder level) who then works diagonally down the trunk making a new cut each day below the previous one until he gets close to the ground. This first series of cuts is called kulit pertama (first skin) and once it is complete the tapper returns to his first cut and begins to work down the trunk again on kulit kedua (second skin). Kulit pertama is the most productive and succeeding cuts produce less and less. Most of Bagum’s trees are now on kulit keempat (fourth skin). Rubber tappers spend one day coagulating the getah, which they have collected, in pits in the forest floor dug specially for the purpose. In a dry week men can tap rubber on four days and coagulate it on the fifth, leaving two days to transport the lumps of getah to Petonggan where they are sold. Bagum still goes to market every week, where he sells the rubber Raguan, Nasir and Tandil have collected to Haji Nasir for Rp. 600 per kilo. The Rp. 67,200 Bagum gets, on a good week, from his rubber is divided between the households of Raguan, Nasir, Tandil and Bagum which include a total of fourteen people – Bagum, Anjak, Bainar, Jusar and Jon, Cantik, Tandil and their child, Wis, Nasir and their child and Raguan Jungkir and their child. By Bagum’s calculations, each person needs about three and a half kilos of rice a week and so Bagum must buy about fifty kilos of rice every week that his and Anjak’s bekas padi is empty – at Rp. 650 per kilo which totals Rp. 32,500. Like most Talang Mamak, Bagum buys the cheapest variety of rice Haji Nasir has for sale – the rice he and his family eat is the most expensive at Rp. 1,200 per kilo. After buying fifty kilos of rice, Bagum is left with Rp. 34,700 to buy enough kerosene, cooking oil, salt, tea, sugar and soap for the four households. Most Talang Mamak men make similar calculations every week and, although very few people can read or write, most men and boys are good at mental arithmetic. Two or three times a year Bagum gets his government salary (which currently stands at Rp. 12,500 per month) which he uses to buy cigarettes and anything else he and his family need. Any money which remains from Bagum’s family’s collective income is used to pay off Bagum’s debt to Haji Nasir which now stands at Rp. 500,000. Bagum expects to increase his debt when his youngest daughter,
Bainar, marries. He plans to buy plenty of rice, coconuts, tea, sugar, etc for the large gawai he intends to host.

Rikenan’s sudden disappearance in 1994, after a fight over a girl, was a worry for Bagum and Anjak, who knew that their son was upset but were not expecting him to leave Tiga Balai. In early 1994 Rikenan became the centre of conflict between bujang (bachelors) from Talang Parit and bujang from Talang Perigi, which quickly spread to involve bujang from Gedabu. During the night of a bedukun (shamanistic healing) in Gedabu, while Rikenan was with most of the other unmarried boys and girls who had gathered nearby in the forest, a fight broke out between Rikenan and a group of bujang from Parit. Only a few young men from Perigi (who included Gandung’s grandson, Mijan) were present, and they joined in to help Rikenan, but were still outnumbered. A large group of bujang from Gedabu, who were in the vicinity, quickly stepped in and drove the bujang Parit away. Only a few blows were actually exchanged, but the bujang Parit were both angry with Rikenan and Mijan and also aggrieved with bujang Gedabu for siding with Rikenan and outnumbering, and chasing, bujang Parit. The fight originally broke out because of rivalry between Rikenan and a young man from Parit over a young woman, who is also from Parit. Rikenan had been betandang (spent the night together) with her on several occasions, as had his rival from Parit. (Unmarried girls often have several boyfriends at any one time.) At kumpulan a boy will offer cigarettes to a girl who he is interested in and, if she likes him, she will accept them. In this way, highly sought after girls are able to obtain a regular supply of their favourite cigarettes (usually Gudang Garam) from their boyfriends. For unmarried girls, possession of Gudang Garam is an indication of their skill at winning the affections of young men. On the night of the bedukun in Gedabu both Rikenan and the young man from Parit were simultaneously engaged in trying to persuade the young woman to spend time with them. Tension developed, the young man from Parit hit Rikenan and the fight began. Bagum says that men from Parit, being descended from orang bagak (bold, confident people), are themselves orang bagak who try to guard the women of their talang. As a result fights sometimes break out between young men from Parit and men from other talang. Bagum maintains that the fight in Gedabu should have been prevented and if that anyone was at fault it was the Tua Tuah of that region who should have intervened.
A few days after this incident Madun held a large belian (shamanistic rice-healing) in Kampung Tengah. In the evening, as young people began arriving, a large group of young men from Parit turned up, blocked the path to Madun’s house and waited for Rikenan and Mijan to appear. News of the bujang Parit’s actions quickly spread and when Bagum, who does not normally attend Madun’s belian, heard that a fight could break out and that his son could be in danger, he went to Gandung’s old house, to meet Tarasan and Sabuk, who are married to Gandung’s granddaughters. Together Bagum, Sabuk (who was born in Sungai Limau) and Tarasan (who is the son of the Mangku of Parit) approached the bujang Parit, persuaded them to abandon their plan, to shake hands with Rikenan and Mijan and to return to Parit. This was the second time, in less than a year, that Rikenan had been involved in conflict over a girl as, prior to this, he had a relationship with a girl (whose family were anak buah of Rapan) which ended when her family refused to allow the couple to marry. Rikenan was clearly upset by these events and he began to make secret plans to leave Tiga Balai.

When Wis, who was the only person that Rikenan spoke to concerning his plans to leave, told Bagum and Anjak that her brother had gone merantau36 (left Tiga Balai), they were worried but they decided not to start looking for him immediately, rather to wait a few days and see if he returned of his own accord. When Bagum next went to Petonggan market he learnt that Rikenan had crossed the river and that he had probably gone to Air Molek. During his frequent visits to Air Molek, Bagum has made many acquaintances and he suspected that Rikenan was staying with one of these men, namely Pastur Pit (Father Peter) who Bagum had introduced to Rikenan in the early 1990s. Pastur Pit is a European Catholic priest who runs a school, coffee plantation and church complex in Air Molek, which is attended mostly by Chinese and Batak Catholics who run businesses in Air Molek. He has also opened a church in Kecamatan (sub-district) Seberida where another group of Talang Mamak live. On his own initiative, Bagum went to visit Pastur Pit during one of his trips to Air Molek and he was impressed by both the priest’s wealth (he has several servants, cooks, farm workers and a hierarchy of local clergy under him and also owns a large house, a new

footnotes

36 Merantau was originally Minangkabau (see chapter one) but it is now widely used in other parts of Sumatra to mean ‘to leave one’s home area to make one’s way in life’ (Echols and Shadily 1990 p.450). Talang Mamak often use this word to describe the travels of the few men who leave Tiga Balai.
four-wheel drive station-wagon and other vehicles) and his concern for *orang miskin* (poor people). Bagum sometimes talks about himself as being poor, especially when addressing or talking about external authority figures, such as *pegawai* or *Haji* Nasir. Bagum has visited *Pastur Pit* on several occasions and on two of these trips Rikenan accompanied him. The first time Bagum took Rikenan to meet *Pastur Pit* the priest offered to take the young man on as one of his workers and he invited Rikenan to accompany him to Seberida. Rikenan and Bagum returned to Air Molek a few days later and *Pastur Pit* took Rikenan to his church in Seberida where he stayed for about a week. After Rikenan returned to Perigi, he told his father that although he had enjoyed his time in Seberida, he was not keen to permanently join *Pastur Pit*. When Rikenan left Perigi, after the fight in Gedabu, Bagum suspected that he had gone to stay with *Pastur Pit* and Bagum went to Air Molek to confirm his suspicions. At *Pastur Pit's* church, Bagum learnt that Rikenan was with the priest in Seberida and this information eased Anjak and Bagum's concern for their son. When Bagum discussed Rikenan's disappearance with his daughter, Cantik, she said that Rikenan had met a girl on his first visit to Seberida. Bagum concluded that Rikenan returned to Seberida, with *Pastur Pit*, to be with this girl.

When Adriani and I left Tiga Balai in March 1994 Tomin was still waiting to receive his *surat keterangan*, or *SK*, (identity papers), from the *Camat's* office. While Sulaiman's *SK*, which confirmed his appointment as *Kepala Desa sementara* (temporary *Kepala Desa*) of Talang Perigi had arrived in Petonggan within a few weeks of Gandung's death, Tomin's *SK*, which he and his *anak buah* hoped would officially recognise his appointment as both *Batin* and *Kepala Desa* of Talang Perigi, had still not appeared six months after the *Batin* died. Tomin and many of his *anak buah*, including Bagum, fear that the *Camat* might appoint Sulaiman as permanent *Kepala Desa* of Talang Perigi. Although he is totally opposed to a *Melayu Kepala Desa* in Talang Perigi, Bagum does recognise that the *Camat* and his *pegawai* would probably prefer to deal with representatives of Tiga Balai who are Muslim *Melayu* rather than Talang Mamak. Local government officers are regularly promoted and usually move to a different administrative area after four or five years in *Kecamatan* Pasir Penyu. This has made it difficult for men such as Bagum to develop long term relationships with government officials in Air Molek who rarely visit Tiga Balai and then only for short periods on official business. This is in contrast to Laman, who has been able to maintain a constant relationship with Tengku Arief and his *Tumenggung*, Cik Oemar, for almost thirty years. If *pegawai* need to see Talang Mamak men, they usually ride a motorcycle to Dusun Tua, cross the river and wait in Petonggan...
while the men they wish to see are contacted and summoned to Petonggan. Because Air Molek is in a relatively quiet rural setting many pegawai, who generally prefer urban life, do not like working there and hope for promotion to a larger town. Being a pegawai in Pasir Penyu does have some benefits as there is a relatively small population to administer, many natural resources to exploit and quite a large amount of government funds passing through the region. People in Air Molek told me that pegawai were usually moved out of Pasir Penyu after about five years to prevent long-term corruption. The only pegawai who have held a post in Air Molek for more than five years are Azwir (who is from Minangkabau) and Rahmat Rasy (who is a local Melayu). These two men usually deal with the administration of Tiga Balai. Only when duty demands (the opening of a school, announcing IDT, introducing me to Talang Mamak, etc) do pegawai venture into Tiga Balai. I have only seen a Camat in Tiga Balai on one occasion, which was in 1988, when one arrived on he back of a motorcycle and, without asking, took some pasang bumi plants (which some Melayu believe can improve male sexual potency) from the expedition’s botanical samples and left again.

Up until the early 1990s Umar, the Koordinator Talang Mamak, played an important role in relations between the government and Talang Mamak, but as the commercial development of Tiga Balai opened up, he began to spend more time away from Petonggan organising logging operations. Umar has been involved with all the logging companies that have worked in Tiga Balai, supplying them with accommodation, food, cooks, servants, labourers, etc. as well as being employed full-time by them himself. At the moment, he is living and working with his eldest daughter and her husband in Talang Tujuh Buah Tangga where all the land is being cleared. When government administration was first introduced into Tiga Balai in the 1960s, Umar was the main intermediary between Talang Mamak and government officials, both of whom sought his advice and sent their communications to one another through him. In the 1960s, Umar lived near the river in Petonggan, which did not become the market site until 1980, a few years before Umar became Kepala Desa of Petonggan. Umar has since moved into a larger house about a mile inland from the river at the junction of the roads to Gedabu and Perigi. Nowadays Umar is rarely at home and while, in the past, pegawai wishing to communicate with Talang Mamak would always go to Umar's house, these days they usually wait in the house of either Udin, who is sekretaris of Talang Gedabu, or Sulaiman, who is sekretaris and Kepala Desa sementara of Talang Perigi.
Umar’s absence has made both pegawai and Talang Mamak more reliant upon sekretaris in their communications with each other. For Tomin and his anak buah, the increasing importance of their sekretaris has resulted in suspicion and unreliable communications with the Camat’s office. However, for pegawai, having a Muslim Melayu Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi resident in Petonggan has several advantages: they can meet him as soon as they arrive in Petonggan (they don’t have to wait for him to arrive from Tiga Balai or think about going there themselves); and, as Muslims, the pegawai are happier doing business with, visiting the houses of and sharing food with fellow Muslims. Having a Melayu as Kepala Desa of Perigi makes their job easier and more pleasant. Bagum acknowledges that in all the time he has had dealings with pegawai he has been unable to build a friendship with any of them. More importantly he has been unable to motivate any pegawai to act on his behalf despite his efforts to be polite, respectful, obedient and appropriately dressed. Bagum has learnt some Melayu etiquette which he combines with polite forms of address appropriate to superiors when he talks to pegawai. As a mark of respect to the authority of the Camat, every year on Idul Fitri, Gandung (and Tomin), Bagum and other Talang Mamak leaders make unsolicited gifts of chickens, rice and vegetables to the Camat and his pegawai which they take to Air Molek and deliver themselves. This giving of gifts is similar to the paying of tribute to the Sultan by Talang Mamak leaders at the semah, which is still organised twice every year by Tengku Arief and Laman. Bagum realises that to pegawai, and most other Melayu, he will always be orang talang, a phrase I heard being used by Melayu in Petonggan, which means people from talang. While this epithet is never used as a form of address for, or in conversations with, Talang Mamak, Melayu often use it among themselves jokingly, describing someone who is dirty, unkempt or doing something in an unsophisticated way as being seperti (like) orang talang. These attitudes are not new – Bagum says that they have always been an important part of his interactions with Melayu. Bagum feels that his efforts to overcome such attitudes through compliance with the state (etiquette, dress and literacy) have been unsuccessful and his inability to motivate pegawai to act on his behalf is evidence of this failure.
PANCA ON HIS WAY TO SET A BIRD TRAP

PANCA (left) AND ENKEH (right) WARMING UP TWO COCKS
CHAPTER SIX
PANCA AND TAMBAL

On the first night that Project Soma\(^1\) spent in Tiga Balai, Panca arrived at the school with Gandung and invited the expedition team to watch a Dukun (shaman), called Panta (Panca's wife [Tambal]'s brother) perform in Talang Gedabu. After accepting his invitation, the expedition team followed Panca (Gandung did not accompany us), as he led the way, by torchlight, to Gedabu. Our unannounced arrival at Dukun Panta's house was a surprise for the people already there, many of whom had not seen a white person before. After introducing us to a group of older men, Panca, who seemed to be enjoying the occasion, found us a place to sit in the ruang haluan (front part of a house) and brought us some tea and coffee. He then went to sit near the middle of the house where he played drums for most of the night. After leading the expedition members through the forest in the dark to the Dukun's house, where we were made very welcome, and then bringing us all back safely to the Inpres school the next morning, Panca began working with the team everyday and he soon became a trusted friend to many team members. On most days Panca worked in the forest helping to collect and name botanical samples. The team members he worked with appreciated his guidance, knowledge and wit.

When I returned to Perigi in 1992 I did not see much of Panca for the first few months of my stay, which I spent in Gandung's house, but after I started working on my house he became a regular caller, frequently joining Bagum and Jari for a smoke and a chat on the back porch. Panca usually smokes the cheapest tobacco rolled, on its own, in newspaper but he also enjoys adding keminyan to his tobacco and smoking rokok kretek (factory-made clove cigarettes). After Adriani joined me, Panca often ate with us and he began inviting us to spend evenings at his house where we got to know his wife Tambal (who like Anjak, rarely leaves her house after dark, except when attending a kumpulan) and the rest of their family. Along with Jari and Sariyah, Bagum, Nian and her daughters, Panca is one of our closest friends in Tiga Balai.

footnotes

\(^1\) Project Soma was an Anglo-Javanese expedition to Tiga Balai in order to collect ethnobotanical specimens and survey rain-forest.
Panca was born in Talang Sungai Limau in around 1932. His father, Linum, was a cousin of Simbih, who was *Batin* of Talang Sungai Limau, and Linum bore the title *Batin Muda*\(^2\). As a title holder, Linum did not move out of his mother’s house after marriage (as do non-title holders who move in with their wife’s family). Instead, like other title holders\(^3\), Linum married women who were prepared to leave their mother’s home and to go and live with him. In the early 1930s, Linum (who had been married several times before) was married to Kaluih, who was born in Perigi, and they had two sons, Panca, the eldest, and Bunga, who was born about four years after his brother.

During the 1930s, Linum, Kaluih, Panca and Bunga lived together in Sungai Limau and Panca remembers that most of his parents’ efforts went into rice farming with Linum making only irregular trips to the market in Keloyang. Rubber had not yet arrived in Sungai Limau and, like many other Talang Mamak men, Linum made *nyiru* (winnowing trays) and *lukah* (fish traps), from *rotan* he collected in the forest, which he traded at Keloyang for cloth, iron and china plates. Many men still produce *rotan* goods which they sell to *Melayu* in Petonggan and occasionally *Melayu* men ask Talang Mamak men to make something for them, e.g.* lukah*, *nyiru*, *tikar*, etc. While Linum made goods for trade, Kaluih made things for use around the house such as *tikar* (mats) and *bakul* (rice-baskets). She also cultivated a wide variety of plants including *tembakau* (tobacco) and *gambir* (astringent used in *sirih*) for household use. Nowadays nearly all Talang Mamak buy *tembakau* and *gambir* which are essential ingredients of *sirih* (betel). Linum and Kaluih often attended *kumpulan* (gatherings), such as *gawai* (weddings) and *naik tambak* (funerals), and, from an early age, Panca became familiar with the sights and sounds of *kumpulan*.

### Footnotes

\(^2\) *Muda* means young or deputy and *Batin Muda* is a title that was introduced into Tiga Balai by the Dutch, most likely some time after the installation of Sultan Mahmudsyah in 1913. It was probably an equivalent of ‘Penghulu Mudo’, another Dutch-sponsored title in the Talang Mamak region whose bearer ‘was in charge of young people’ (Usman 1985 p.77). Since independence, *Batin Muda*, along with *Dubalang* and *Penggawas*, has ceased to be a recognised title in Tiga Balai. Linum was the last *Batin Muda* in Sungai Limau.

\(^3\) ‘Title-holders’ here applies to *Batin*, *Kemantan* and *Dukun* who usually live in their natal *talang*. Gandung, who was born in Talang Perigi, moved to Gedabu after he married Pinjut but, when he succeeded Nulan as *Batin* of Talang Perigi, he returned to his natal *talang* – bringing Pinjut with him. Holders of other titles (*Mangku*, *Manti*, *Tua Tuah*) often move out of their natal *talang*. For example, Bagum was born in Talang Gedabu and is now a *Tua Tuah* in Talang Perigi where his wife was born.
Sometime around 1940, when Panca was about eight, his parents divorced and his mother Kaluih returned to live with her parents in the Kampung Tengah region of Talang Perigi. When Kaluih left, her two sons, Panca and Bunga, remained with their father in Talang Sungai Limau. Linum was an old man by this time, at least twenty years older than Kaluih (who was probably a teenage girl when he took her as his wife), and he did not marry again. Instead, one of his sisters helped to care for his two young sons by carrying out household tasks (cooking, cleaning rice, etc) and ladang work (weeding, growing vegetables, etc). While Linum remained single, Kaluih remarried soon after returning to Talang Perigi. Her new husband, Bugal, moved from his mother's house in Durian Cacar to Kaluih's home in Perigi just before married.

In the mid-1940s, when Panca was in his early teens, he began accompanying his father to Keloyang market. These trips usually took place after Linum had harvested his padi and had been able to make several lukah (fish-traps) which he could trade at Keloyang. The journey to the market began early in the morning when Linum and Panca, accompanied by other men who lived nearby, set off for Talang Perigi, which they reached in the evening and where they spent the night. The next morning they left Perigi, arriving in Keloyang that evening. They spent that night under the shelter of one of the market stalls and woke early the next morning. After Linum had traded his lukah for sarung and pinggan (china plates), they set off on the return journey. It was on these early trips to the market that Panca first saw pohon karet (rubber trees) and getah (latex). The first rubber to appear in the Inderagiri region was planted sometime around 1915 by Melayu and Minangkabau migrants, who lived in settlements on the banks of the river (Kato 1990, p.60). Men from Keloyang, Petonggan and other Melayu villages near Tiga Balai began clearing patches of forest (inland from and above the swamp which runs parallel to the river) for rubber cultivation. By the mid-1940s, despite Talang Mamak prohibitions against rubber cultivation, some men from Talang Perigi had been able to grow rubber trees which they were already tapping. During his visits to Perigi, on his way to and from the market, Panca became familiar with pohon karet, the skills of nakik (rubber tapping)

footnotes

4 I don't know of any other cases of children who have stayed with their father after divorce. Usually children stay with their mother if she divorces her husband.
and getah which was, at that time, processed into sheets. At Keloyang market, latex sheets were becoming an increasingly common sight as more Talang Mamak families began to give land over to rubber cultivation. Rubber gradually spread from Perigi, Gedabu and Parit, which are the closest talang to the Inderagiri, ke darat (inland) to Durian Cacar, Sungai Limau and Tujuh Buah Tangga. At this time, most of the rubber traded in Keloyang was tapped by Melayu from their own trees. It was not until the early 1960s that Talang Mamak rubber output began to exceed local Melayu output. Unlike forest produce and rotan goods, which were usually exchanged directly for cloth, iron and china-ware through local Melayu middlemen, rubber could be sold for cash to foreign rubber dealers. At that time, foreign trade was mainly organised by foreign (mostly Chinese and Arab) traders who employed local Melayu to collect rotan goods and forest produce for them. Using goods, provided by their foreign sponsors, which they offered to Talang Mamak in exchange for forest produce, these Melayu acted as middlemen in the trade between foreign traders and Talang Mamak. The families of two of the Melayu middlemen who did business in Keloyang have since come to dominate Petonggan’s rubber trade: Moncat, whose business is now run by his son-in-law Haji Nasir; and Yusup, whose business is now run by his son Haji Ibrahim. Both Moncat and Yusup began as middlemen, trading forest produce and rotan goods from Tiga Balai to foreign traders who advanced them money and goods. Nowadays, between them, Haji Nasir and Haji Ibrahim buy about thirty-five tons of getah from Talang Mamak each week which they sell on to Chinese-run processing plants. Linum never planted any rubber and Panca says that rubber trees were not cultivated in Talang Sungai Limau until a few years before his father died in about 1950.

After Linum’s death, Panca (who was about eighteen) and his brother Bunga (who was about fifteen) went to live with their mother, Kaluih, and her husband, Bugal, who had a house in Kampung Tengah, Talang Perigi, which they shared with their two children, Johar (who was about nine) and Maratina (who was about five). By the early 1950s, several men in Perigi owned mature rubber trees and they were able to secure regular supplies of cash from the getah they sold at Keloyang. Bugal, who had moved to Perigi from Durian Cacar in the early 1940s, had not planted any rubber and did not have access to mature trees. However, his step-son, Panca, was attracted by the opportunities to earn cash that rubber production in Perigi offered and he began earning a little money, whenever he could, by helping to tap and transport rubber. Bugal was not happy when Panca obtained rubber work, as it meant that
Panca had less time for rice-farming. Tension between step-father and step-son increased when Bugal quashed Panca’s plans to marry a girl from Talang Sungai Limau by refusing to help organise, or pay, for the wedding. Panca said that while he had wanted to return to Sungai Limau, where he had many relatives, Bugal had wanted Panca to marry one of Bugal’s maternal relatives in Durian Cacar and that, as a result, relations between Panca and Bugal broke down. In 1953, when he was about twenty-one, Panca decided to leave Talang Perigi. Kaluih, who, Panca says, acknowledged that Bugal was the cause of the problems between her husband and her eldest son, was very upset to see Panca depart with little money and few clothes.

After leaving Kaluih’s house, Panca walked to Talang Jerinjing where members of his father Linum’s family lived – one of Linum’s brothers had moved to Jerinjing when he married a girl from that talang. Panca says that in Jerinjing he was free from the influence of Bugal and he could pergi betandang (go out with) any girl he liked. After three months in Jerinjing, Panca married a girl called Labu and, just before their wedding, he moved into her mother’s house and started helping with ladang work. (After Panca’s younger brother Bunga’s first marriage ended in divorce, he too married one of his anak baka [father’s relatives]5, a woman from Jerinjing, who he has lived with for over twenty years.) It was not long before Panca and Labu began to have regular disagreements and arguments. As Panca’s relationship with his wife deteriorated, he became increasingly unhappy with life in Talang Jerinjing. Although he considered divorce he did not want to return to Kaluih’s house where he would probably end up in conflict with Bugal again. Panca says that this marriage broke down because both he and Labu were too young, and, therefore, masi bodoh (still stupid), to be able to maintain a stable relationship.

One day, after Panca had been married to Labu for about six months, he met a Talang Mamak man from Gangsal6, called Jambi, who was visiting Jerinjing. Jambi, who was quite wealthy,

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5 In modern Indonesian, baka, means line of descent, or inheritance. In Minangkabau, baka, or bako, means the father’s family (see Navis 1984 p.194).

6 Gangsal and Seberida are the names most frequently used by Talang Mamak in Tiga Balai both to describe the geographical location of and as a name for the group of Talang Mamak that live to the south of Tiga Balai. Panca says that there are two main differences between Tiga Balai and Gangsal:
took pity on Panca’s situation and invited the young man to come to his home in Gangsal. Panca, who was about twenty-two at the time, divorced Labu and he and Jambi walked south from Jerinjing (out of Tiga Balai), to Gangsal where Jambi had a big house, large ladang and mature rubber trees. Jambi was also a small-scale rubber and rotan dealer who organised the transportation of these products downstream to markets at Kuala Retih, Pulau Kijang, and Tembilahan where they were sold. While Panca lived in Jambi’s house he helped with rice-farming, rubber-tapping and often accompanied Jambi’s investments to the downstream markets. Jambi had several anak buah, with whom Panca worked, and together they loaded Jambi’s rubber and rotan into sampan (canoes) and took them downstream to Kuala Retih where they were transferred to sampan berlayar (sailing boats) and taken to Pulau Kijang or Tembilahan, depending on the quantities involved. Larger amounts were traded at Tembilahan which had the busier market. Panca recalls that they often spent two or three days in Tembilahan waiting for Jambi’s rubber and rotan to be sold before returning to Gangsal and that, during these breaks, he spent most of his time in a large store house where he also slept. Panca remembers that he once spent several weeks in Pulau Kijang. While he was there he struck up a relationship with a Chinese toke (businessman) who lent him a sampan, kapak (axe), parang (machete), other wood-splitting equipment and a few kilos of rice so that Panca could collect firewood for him. This is the usual way for toke to do business. By offering to lend tools, food and money, toke are able to attract men to enter into long or short term debt.

*footnotes continued from previous page*

language; and alat adat. Panca gave the following example of the difference in dialect between the two Talang Mamak regions. He said that while people in Tiga Balai say kemana (where) and kesana (there), people in Gangsal say kemona and kesona. He also said that while adat was basically the same in the two regions, more alat adat were given to a bride’s family by a groom’s family at a gawai in Gangsal than at gawai in Tiga Balai.

7 Kuala Retih is at the confluence of the rivers Gangsal and Retih.

8 Pulau Kijang is near the mouth of the river Retih.

9 Tembilahan is near the mouth of the Inderagiri. Sailing from Pulau Kijang to Tembilahan would involve leaving the river Retih, entering the Straits of Melaka and then sailing up the Inderagiri.

10 Although Panca does not describe himself as having been an anak buah of Jambi, it seems that he lived the life of a man bonded to Jambi in that he worked without pay for board and lodgings.

11 *Sampan* are canoes, usually consisting of, or constructed around, a dug-out log, which are paddled or punted.

12 *Sampan berlayar* are usually larger than *sampan* and constructed from planks.
relationships with them. Toke themselves are usually involved in similar relationships with wealthier traders who both help to finance their businesses and trade with them. Panca paddled the sampan up a small tributary of the Inderagiri, in a deserted part of the forest, a few miles from Pulau Kijang where he found a large fallen tree. He made camp next to the tree and stayed there for about a week while he cut the tree up. When Panca had finished, it took him several trips to Pulau Kijang to transport all the wood to the toke's store and, after returning the sampan and the tools to the toke, he was given some cash for his work. Panca spent about two years living in Gangsal, helping Jambi and some time towards the end of this period his mother Kaluih divorced his stepfather Bugal.

In 1956, when Panca was about twenty-four, he left Gangsal and walked back to Perigi. Panca says that he still has friends in Gangsal and that, despite his never having returned there, some of them have visited him in Talang Perigi. By the time Panca arrived at his mother's house, Kaluih had divorced and was living with her children by Bugal, Johar (who was about fifteen), and Maratina (who was about eleven), in Kampung Tengah. Panca's younger brother, Bunga, had married and was no longer living with Kaluih. In Kaluih's house, Panca was the oldest male and he took responsibility for organising rice-farming. He was also able to get regular employment tapping Nulan's rubber for a two-thirds share of the value of the getah he collected. Nulan, who was Batin of Talang Perigi at that time, had several large plots of mature rubber trees, many of which had been planted by his nephew, Gandung, who lived near Nulan in Binjai. Nulan was among the first Talang Mamak men to plant rubber and from a young age his nephew Gandung had frequently helped him. Panca says that Gandung was keturunan rajin (had inherited an industrious disposition from his father) and that he had first planted rubber when he was about five years old. As a result of his being keturunan rajin, Gandung was both skilled at all tasks and a hard worker. Panca predicted that Gandung would die while he was still relatively young, like most other keturunan rajin, because of all the work he had done. Panca says that keturunan rajin leads to cepat mati (early death). As one of Nulan's anak buah, Panca worked alongside Gandung, tapping, coagulating and transporting Nulan's rubber and the two young men got to know each other, beginning a relationship that lasted
until Gandung's death in 1993. Panca described his relationship to Gandung as *kuontan*¹³ because their mothers were *beradik-kakak* (sisters). Panca spent several years as a *bujang* (bachelor) in Perigi, living in his mother's house and earning cash tapping rubber with Gandung. During this period he also attended many *kumpulan*, became a keen cock-fighter and regularly went *betandang* (spending the night with a member of the opposite sex).

Some time in the late 1950s Panca began spending time with a girl called Tambal from Talang Gedabu. Tambal was born around 1943, during the Japanese occupation. Like most Talang Mamak, Tambal has never seen a Japanese person and the Japanese occupation was something that she has only heard about. As a young girl she lived in Dusun Durian with her mother Tokok, her father Kampai and her two younger brothers Panta and Jidan. Dusun Durian is in the same *durian* orchard as Dusun Jumanti – which is where Bagum and his sisters, Pinjut and Pingit, were born. Tokok was an elder sister of Lada who was Bagum’s mother, making Tambal, Panta and Jidan *sanak ibu* (maternal cousins) of Bagum, Pinjut and Pingit. When Tambal was about seven years old, Tokok died and Tambal and her two brothers went to live with their *penaman* (uncle), Tani (who was also known as Sain) and his wife (who was one of Tokok’s sisters) in a house nearby. Tambal’s father, Kampai, was a *Dukun* (shaman)¹⁴ who was born in Gedabu and he stayed in the house he had built with Tokok in Dusun Durian and kept in regular contact with his children after his wife’s death.

At that time, neither Tani nor Kampai owned any mature rubber trees and their only opportunities to get money came through the sale of *nyina* (winnowing trays), *kisaian* (rice sifters) and other goods which they made from *rotan* collected in the forest. This work was mostly carried out between January, when rice is harvested, and March, when clearing work

*footnotes*

¹³ I have been unable to locate this word in dictionaries. In Tiga Balai, it is usually used, as either *kuontan* or *anak kuontan*, to describe the relationship between people whose mothers are closely related.

¹⁴ In Tiga Balai there are two different types of shaman, one being titled *Kemantan* and the other *Dukun*. While the latter is a title found in many parts of Indonesia and Malaysia (including Melayu villages, such as Petonggan), *Kemantan, or Kumanan*, is an unusual title which is linked specifically to the Inderagiri by Rahim (1986 p.284), who suggests that, when they were part of the Minangkabau rantau, villages in Kuantan held ‘Bulian’ presided over by ‘Gumanan’. Nowadays in Tiga Balai, while *Kemantan* organise *kumpulan* called *belian* (to secure good rice harvests and prevent disease and misfortune), *Dukun* are usually called upon to heal the sick.
begins. While the period between harvest and clearing a new ladang is still the time when most kumpulan (gatherings), especially large gawai, take place, trade is no longer restricted to these months. Getah is currently sold by Talang Mamak every week at Petonggan. When rubber was first planted in Tiga Balai most rubber-farming activities were also carried out in the period between harvest and clearing but nowadays men nakik (tap rubber) whenever the weather permits and, in dry periods, will nakik each morning before they begin ladang work. When she was a teenager, most of Tambal's time was taken up with household tasks and rice-farming activities, mainly najak (weeding) but she also helped with nabas (clearing undergrowth) and maron (secondary burning).

In 1955, when Tambal was about twelve, her father, Kampai, remarried and Tambal and her brothers, Panta and Jidan, began to spend more time with him and often slept in his house. As a Dukun, Kampai often held kumpulan in his house in order to cure sick people. These kumpulan, which are called bedukun, take place at night and attract groups of unmarried young men and women who are looking for betandang partners. Tambal first went betandang when she was about fifteen and about a year later she met Panca at a kumpulan. Panca, who was living with Kaluih in Perigi at that time, became Tambal's regular betandang partner and Panca soon began visiting Tambal at night in Tani's house. Tambal recalls that they went betandang together on about ten occasions before she was terbibit (given a gift by Panca as a sign that he wished to marry her)15.

Tambal and Panca were married in around 1960 at a gawai held in Tani's house in Dusun Durian where Tambal was represented by Sandang, Batin of Talang Gedabu, and Panca by Nulan, Batin of Talang Perigi. Just before their wedding, the young couple moved into Tani's house. Tambal became pregnant soon after their wedding. In 1961, after their first child was still-born, Panca decided that he wanted a divorce and he returned to his mother Kaluih's

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15 Compare Tambal's use of terbibit with Sariyah's use of dibibit. (See chapter four.) Bibit is a root form which has a cluster of meanings (seed, livestock used for breeding, a prospective candidate, cause or origin) and ter and di are verbal prefixes indicating the stative (Johns 1977 p.248) and the passive (ibid. p.133) respectively. Terbibit indicates a state resulting from an action without implying or specifying any particular agent. This is the usual form used by women to describe how they received tanda bibit (the sign of a man's wish to marry them). Dibibit is the object focus and its use by Sariyah implies that bibit was something that someone did to her and relates to Lamsi's wife's interference in her betrothal to Jari.
house in Perigi. Although Panca spent three months at Kaluih’s house, he did not divorce Tambal. He eventually ended their separation by returning to live with Tambal in Tani’s house. During this separation, neither Panca nor Tambal made any attempt to press for divorce. As Panca had walked out on Tambal, the onus was on him to take sirih (betel) to Tani’s house and say that he wanted a divorce. Panca says that his decision to leave was rash and selfish and that he regretted it almost immediately. After Panca apologised to Tambal he returned to live with his wife in Tani’s house. Since that separation Panca and Tambal have remained together for more than thirty years during which time they have had six children. Benging, their eldest daughter, was born around 1962 and now lives with her husband and children in Gedabu in the house that Panca and Tambal built, near Tani’s house, in Dusun Durian. Gunjah, Tambal and Panca’s middle daughter, was born in 1965 and now lives with her husband, Anggur, in Tran Perigi near Panca and Tambal. Sutan Baru, also known as Nasir or Cal, their eldest son, was born sometime in 1968 and he returned to live with Panca and Tambal in 1992 after his third marriage ended in divorce. (Sutan Baru’s first gawai, in 1987, was disrupted by Laman and Rapan who challenged Batin Gandung’s authority.) Misikin, Panca and Tambal’s middle son, was born around 1970 and he now lives with his second wife in Talang Durian Cacar. (His first marriage, in 1988, to Kabiyat, daughter of Maiyan who was also Batin of Sungai Limau at that time, ended only a few days after the gawai due to an argument between Misikin and Maiyan over a fighting cock.) Enkeh, Panca and Tambal’s youngest son, was born in 1972 and he came back to his parents’ house in Tran Perigi in 1993 after the break up of his first marriage. (Enkeh’s wife was Rapan’s step-daughter and after their divorce, it became public knowledge that Rapan had been having sex with his step-daughter while she was still married to Enkeh.) Seset, who was born sometime in 1976, is Panca and Tambal’s youngest daughter. In 1993, she married Cotek, who was born in Talang Sungai Limau, and since then they have lived with Panca and Tambal in Tran Perigi.

In the 1960s, during the first years of their marriage, Tambal and Panca lived with Tani, his wife and their children and shared a ladang with them. Despite several of his neighbours earning regular cash through the sale of rubber tapped from mature trees in Gedabu, Tani was not in favour of rubber and he had not planted any. Bagum, who was living with his mother, Lada, in Dusun Durian, near Tani’s house (between divorcing his first wife [Nor from Gedabu] in 1959 and marrying his second wife [Nor from Perigi] in 1962), had access to mature rubber trees and enjoyed spending the cash he got from rubber tapping. As a result of
Tani’s suspicion of rubber, Tambal and Panca could not plant any rubber on the ladang they shared with Tani and his family after their rice was harvested. Although he did not use his ladang for rubber cultivation, Tani did grow a wide range of crops apart from rice, including tebu (sugar cane)\textsuperscript{16}, ubi (root crops)\textsuperscript{17} and pisang (bananas)\textsuperscript{18}. Although longer term crops such as pisang and ubi can be harvested for several months after a ladang had been deserted, they are no longer popular ladang crops due to the increase in forest animals, particularly monkeys, that raid ladang for food. Older men such as Panca and Bagum recall that, when they were young, elephants were the main danger to ladang crops as most other animals would avoid ladang and other signs of human activity. While Panca and Tambal helped Tani with farming, they also managed to earn some cash tapping rubber trees owned by other people. During the period that rubber was becoming popular in Tiga Balai, many younger men who were interested in earning cash from rubber came into conflict with their father or father-in-law who did not like them neglecting ladang duties in favour of tapping rubber.

In the early 1960s, when Panca and Tambal had been together for a couple of years, Gandung married Bagum’s sister, Pinjut, and moved into her mother Lada’s house in Dusun Durian – where Lada’s son, Bagum, was also living. Bagum already had access to mature rubber trees which, after Gandung’s arrival, they tapped together. Bagum and Gandung spent only a few months together in Lada’s house as ipar (brothers-in-law) before Bagum married Nor (from

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\textsuperscript{16} Tebu is the general name for the many varieties of sugar cane (Saccharum officinarum) grown in Tiga Balai. Older people recall that in zaman Belanda (period of Dutch organisation), tebu was grown in large quantities on ladang. This cane was pressed and its juices collected and boiled to produce gula (sugar). Nowadays, most Talang Mamak buy gula pasir (white, granulated sugar) at Petonggan. Bagum recalls that in the 1940s teh (tea), kopi (coffee) and gula pasir were not popular in Tiga Balai because they were associated with Melayu lifestyles. Tebu is now usually only grown outside houses for use as a refreshing snack (chewed raw) or in medicinal preparations. While producing gula from tebu is now quite rare in Tiga Balai, making gula merah (palm sugar) is still common.

\textsuperscript{17} The most common root crops cultivated in Tiga Balai at present are the imported ubi jalar (sweet potato, Ipomoea batatas) and ubi kayu (manioc, Manihot utilissima). Many varieties of yam (Dioscorea) are found in the forest and some people eat gadung (Dioscorea hispida), a yam that needs several day’s processing before it can be consumed, as a substitute for rice, when padi stocks are low. In recent years, most Talang Mamak have been unable to grow ubi crops on their ladang due to the increasing number of forest pigs raiding ladang at night and only securely fenced plots of ubi near houses produce good crops.

\textsuperscript{18} There are two wild varieties and more than twenty types of cultivated banana in Tiga Balai. All cultivated pisang take at least three months to reach maturity and produce fruit, after which they fruit again every two months or so.
Perigi) and went to live in her mother’s house. Lada did not remarry after she divorced her second husband (who was Bagum, Pinjut and Pingit’s father) and when Bagum left Lada’s house to marry Nor from Perigi, Gandung was the only man left in the household. After Bagum’s departure, Gandung took responsibility for the collection and sale of Lada’s rubber which Panca helped him tap, resuming the relationship they had begun in Perigi in the late 1950s when Panca and Gandung worked together as anak buah of Nulan, Batin of Talang Perigi. Whenever Panca had time free from working on the ladang he and Tambal shared with Tani and his family, which was most often between harvesting rice in January and beginning to clear new ladang in March, he helped Gandung tap, collect and sell Lada’s getah.

For the first six or seven years of their marriage, Tambal and Panca farmed rice with Tani and his family and were unable to plant any rubber of their own. Despite having built their own house and being able to earn some cash helping Gandung nakik (cut rubber), Panca and Tambal had not been able to become independent rice farmers and rubber planters. Most young couples begin their married life living and farming with the wife’s parents and hope to establish their own home and rice field as soon as possible after marriage. In order to achieve these aims, they usually need the assistance of the wife’s family both to construct a house, which requires the co-ordinated labour of several men over a period of months, and to provide rice seed for the couple to plant on their ladang. Any husband and wife who have cleared, planted and harvested their own ladang can plant rubber on it after the rice has been harvested. In around 1968, Tambal and Panca decided to clear a ladang site, on their own, outside the borders of Gedabu in Dusun Puan (which is bisected by the river Antoi and is also known as Sungai Antoi), in Talang Perigi. Panca and Tambal said that they decided to clear a ladang in Perigi because, after several bad rice harvests in the mid-1960s, they had wanted to move to an area where there was plenty of land that had not been cleared for a long time. They were also having difficulty finding a ladang site in Gedabu on which they could plant rubber, due to the influence of Tani who did not want to give rice-farming land over to rubber cultivation. Tambal and Panca’s decision to farm in Perigi may also have been influenced by Gandung’s appointment as Batin of Talang Perigi which took place in the mid-1960s. By farming in Dusun Puan, Tambal and Panca loosened their ties to Tani and his family and began to establish themselves as anak buah of Gandung. Dusun Puan was about two hour’s walk from Panca and Tambal’s home in Dusun Durian and to save time and energy they built a large pondok (hut) on their ladang and lived there while they farmed rice, making
only occasional visits to their rumah (house) – Tambal and Panca still farm ladang in the Sungai Antoi region and most of their rubber trees are also there. After their first harvest, Tambal and Panca planted rubber seedlings on their empty ladang site and they also planted plots of durian and cubadak (Artocarpus polyphema). By planting fruit trees, Panca and Tambal made it known that they intended to maintain a long term connection with Dusun Puan. Fruit trees are regarded as being owned by the people (or their descendants) who planted them and people who damage fruit trees they do not own are liable to a fine. For about eight or nine years, Panca, Tambal and their children maintained their house in Gedabu while spending long periods in Dusun Puan, cultivating rice and rubber. In around 1977, the first rubber seedlings that Tambal and Panca had planted were large enough to be cut for the first time and Panca and Tambal began to enjoy a regular cash income from their own rubber. With mature rubber trees to tap in Dusun Puan, Panca and Tambal spent even less time in their house in Dusun Durian and they began to make plans to move to Talang Perigi permanently in order to be near their rubber plots and rice field. In the late 1970s Panca and Tambal’s eldest daughter, Benging, began betandang and in 1978, when she was about sixteen, she got married. After Benging’s gawai, Panca and Tambal moved to a new house they had built in Dusun Puan, leaving their old house in Dusun Durian to their newly-wed daughter and her husband.

Panca and Tambal’s house in Dusun Puan took them over a year to build as they had to do most of the work on their own. They chose to build far from Tani and his family, who had helped them build their first house in Gedabu and who would probably have helped them again if their new house had not been so far from Gedabu – most women’s parents assist their daughters and sons-in-law build their houses. The rumah (house) that they constructed followed the basic pattern of all houses made by Talang Mamak who build rectangular dwellings on stilts (between one and a half and two and a half metres from the ground) that sit in clearings known as halaman (yard, cleared area in front of a house). While all Talang Mamak dwellings are constructed of wood, tree-bark, bamboo and leaves lashed together with rotan and are of similar proportions, title-holders tend to have larger houses, up to 20m X 15

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19 In 1993–94, Panca and Tambal’s youngest daughter, Seset, and her husband, Cotek, spent about six months living in a large pondok (hut) they had built on the ladang they shared with Panca and Tambal and Gunjah and Anggur in the Dusun Puan region.
m, than their anak buah whose houses are, on average, 10m x 7m. Guests and visitors always approach a house from the front, first walking across the halaman, which is usually planted with flowers, sugar cane and fruit trees. Talang Mamak houses are always built near a sungai (river or stream) and are usually oriented so that the back of the house faces the river — which is where the household wash and take water. Talang Mamak have a general dislike of semak (undergrowth, scrub) near their homes because, as they say, it can conceal snakes, centipedes, scorpions, etc, which are dangerous to children playing around the house. Long established houses have large sandy halaman free from vegetation except cultivated flowers, sugar cane and fruit trees. Halaman are used everyday: by women doing household chores (such as drying and pounding padi); by men preparing rotan, bamboo, wood or bark (for use in house repairs or for making lukah [fish traps], ambung [woven rotan back-packs] etc); and by children playing games (such as gasing [spinning tops]). Halaman are also the focus of outdoor activities associated with kumpulan such as cock-fighting and other forms of gambling. Lapang tangga (doorways)\textsuperscript{20}, which are reached by ladder, are situated at one or both ends of the long front wall of a house and open into the front part of the interior space which is called ruang haluan\textsuperscript{21}. Large houses often have a palantaran (porch), which may be roofed or open, between the steps and the doorway. When no-one is at home the doorways of a house are usually blocked with rectangles of woven bamboo and the tangga are fixed in a vertical position so they no longer rest against the threshold. While large houses generally have two lapang tangga, one at either end, small houses usually only have one. The ruang haluan, which runs through the length of the front part of a house, is an area for male guests and visitors to sit and is the place where the men of the household usually relax and sleep. Ruang haluan usually have a slit (about six inches wide and about two feet from the floor) running along the front wall, through which men sitting in the ruang haluan can look out over the halaman. Ruang haluan is divided from the mid-section of a house by the mentelak (also known as hintelak), a raised floor-beam which runs the entire length of a house, parallel to the main roof beam. Kantihan (pillars that run from the floor beams to the roof) and tiang (pillars which rest on the earth and go up to

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\textsuperscript{20} Lapang means open or empty space and tangga means steps or house ladder. Lapang tangga means entrance which includes both the doorway and the wooden ladder that slopes up to it.

\textsuperscript{21} Ruang means the space between two rows of pillars and haluan means the bows of a boat or the front part of something.
support the roof) are positioned at three- to four-metre intervals along the line of the *mentelak*. The central *tiang* on the *mentelak* is called *tiang tua* and at *kumpulan* the senior title-holding man (either *Batin* or *Datuk Patih*) sits in the *ruang haluan* with his back resting against the *tiang tua*. *Atap* (roofs), which are usually made from *daun rumbia* (sago-palm leaves) slope down either side of a *tulang bebungan* (central roof beam) which runs parallel to the floor-beams and may be up to eight metres from the *lantai* (floor). Behind the *mentelak* is the *ruang tengah* (mid-section of a house), where the men of the household eat and which male guests may enter if invited. It is in this part of the house that small cubicles are screened off for the unmarried girls of the household to entertain their boyfriends in at night. The *ruang tengah* is divided from the back of the house by another raised floor-beam, called *guntelak*, with more *kantihan* and *tiang*. This rear section of a house is called *ruang tempuan* and male guests rarely enter this area, which is where the women of a household and their young children eat, relax and sleep. The *ruang tempuan* has a *dapur* (kitchen) built onto one end – usually on the left of a *rumah* if it is viewed from the front. The *dapur* has its own *tangga* (ladder) and doorway and both the women of a household and female guests enter and leave a house by this route. At the opposite end of a house to the *dapur* stands the *bekas padi*, or *belabur* (rice store), which may be joined to the house or free-standing.

While Panca and Tambal’s initial move into Perigi to *buka ladang* (clear a ladang) and *tanam getah* (plant rubber) in around 1968 coincided with Gandung’s appointment as the first *Kepala Desa* of Talang Perigi, their decision to move permanently to Dusun Puan in around 1978 coincided with Rapan’s split from Gandung and his appointment as *Batin* by Laman and Tengku Arief. Rapan had been Gandung’s *Mangku* for about ten years prior to his becoming a *Batin*, which left Gandung and his *anak buah* without a *Mangku*. Gandung decided to appoint Panca (whose wife, Tambal, was his wife’s cousin) to replace Rapan as *Mangku* of Talang Perigi in around 1979 which was less than a year after Panca and Tambal had moved to Perigi permanently. Panca recalls that Bagum, Nawar and other *anak buah* of Gandung came

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**footnotes**

22 *Tempuan* is probably a shortened form of *tempat puan* which means the place of or for women.

23 Specifically *dapur* means hearth but it is generally used to mean the room that houses the hearth.

24 Many Talang Mamak call *pohon karet* (rubber trees) *pohon getah* (sap or latex trees).
to his house in Dusun Puan and asked him to accept the title Mangku Talang Perigi. Panca-agreed and was then taken to Gandung’s house where he was elected Mangku at a kumpulan organised for that purpose. Panca’s acceptance of this title cemented his relationship with Gandung and brought him into more frequent contact with other title-holding anak buah of Gandung, in particular Baguet who was Gandung’s most trusted and active anak buah.

As Mangku of Talang Perigi and one of Gandung’s titled anak buah Panca gave his support to government initiatives in Tiga Balai such as the raising of the first path between Petonggan and Durian Cacar in 1980. Gandung acknowledged Panca’s support by suggesting to Umar and the Camat that Panca should be incorporated into the government administration of Talang Perigi and given a salary. As a result, Panca was made LKMD of Talang Perigi by the Camat in 1981 and received his first wage in that year – Panca is still the Kepala (head) of the Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa (organisation for rural security), or LKMD, in Talang Perigi. In 1984, the Inpres school was built in Talang Perigi and this construction, which was not welcomed by Rapan and his anak buah, intensified the tension between Rapan and his anak buah and Gandung and his anak buah. Panca and Tambal showed their support for Gandung by sending their youngest son Enkeh (who was about twelve) and their youngest daughter Seset (who was about eight) to the school soon after it opened. Neither Enkeh nor Seset were regular attenders, mainly because, until 1990, they lived in Dusun Puan which is over an hour’s walk from the school.

In 1987, one year after Anjak’s son Anggur had married Gunjah (Panca and Tambal’s middle daughter) and moved into Dusun Puan, Panca and Tambal and their eldest son, Sutan Baru, found themselves at the centre of an attempt by Laman and Rapan to discredit Gandung. This event took place during Sutan Baru’s first gawai when Laman and Rapan arrived uninvited and interrupted proceedings. As a result, Bagum, Gandung and his son Usir went to get assistance, while Panca remained with his family (and Laman and Rapan) at the aborted gawai all night, eventually going home in the early morning with the gawai unfinished. Panca and Tambal
took their *alat adat* (bride payment gifts)\(^2^5\) home with them but they feared that the rice and other foodstuffs they had invested in their son’s *gawai* had been wasted. The food had been consumed but the marriage remained incomplete. This situation was resolved by the intervention of Sutan Mohammad who helped to organise another small *gawai* held in Gandung’s house at which Sutan Baru was married and after which he moved to his wife’s home in Durian Cacar. The cost of this second *gawai* was divided by Gandung between himself and his *anak buah*.

The rice harvest collected by Panca and Tambal in early 1988 was very poor and, consequently, they decided to take a loan from Yusup, their rubber dealer in Petonggan (who passed his rubber dealing business and *kedai* (shop) over to his son, Haji Ibrahim in around 1990), in order to help finance the approaching marriage of their middle son, Misikin, to Kabiyat, the daughter of Maiyan who was *Batin* of Talang Sungai Limau at that time. Panca says that this poor harvest, which was the first since the late 1960s, was caused by very dry weather between July and October 1987. Tambal recalls that she and Panca borrowed Rp.100,000 to buy rice, coconuts, tea, sugar, etc for Misikin’s *gawai* which was held in Maiyan’s house and was attended by many people. Misikin’s marriage to Kabiyat ended a few weeks after their *gawai* when Misikin walked back to Perigi after an argument with Maiyan, his father-in-law, over a fighting cock. Once Misikin had moved into his wife’s family’s house and had begun tapping rubber there, Maiyan agreed to sell him one of his fighting cocks for which Misikin paid using money he had obtained tapping Maiyan’s rubber trees and selling the *getah*. When Maiyan discovered that he had been paid with money acquired in this way, he took his cock back. After an argument with Maiyan about this cock, Misikin returned to Tambal and Panca’s home in Dusun Puan and divorced Kabiyat. When I first met Kabiyat, in 1988, she had not yet re-married after this divorce and she told me that she still loved Misikin and hoped he would return. According to Maiyan, the money that Misikin had earned cutting Maiyan’s rubber trees belonged to Maiyan and Misikin should have first given all this money to Maiyan who would have then given him his share. In Maiyan’s opinion, Misikin

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\(^{2^5}\) *Alat adat* are the gifts of cloth, bracelets, money, spears, etc given by the husband’s family to the wife’s family. While Talang Sungai Limau has *sembilan adat* (nine gifts), all the other *talang*, including Perigi, have *enam adat* (six gifts).
had cheated him by paying for his cock using Maiyan's own money. When Misikin arrived back in Talang Perigi and told his father what had happened, Panca went to Sungai Limau, where he had several heated arguments with Maiyan who flatly refused to return the cock to Misikin. Panca maintains that his son had bought the bird fairly, with his own money, and that, after the sale, Maiyan had simply changed his mind and had taken the cock back. After Panca had returned home, without either the cock or his son's money, Misikin did not return to Sungai Limau. In the early 1990s, Misikin remarried and since that time he has lived in Durian Cacar with his wife.

In his enjoyment of breeding and fighting cocks, Misikin takes after his father, who is a keen and knowledgeable cockfighter. Panca told me that, of his three sons, Misikin is the most like his father. Although Misikin is generally quieter and more reserved than Panca, they both share a keen interest in cock-fighting and often visit one another to discuss cocks and cock-fighting. Like most other Talang Mamak men, Panca always has several ayam jantan (fighting cocks) tied up outside his house which he fights mainly at gawai but also at naik tanah (funerals), belian and bedukun (both kumpulan involving shaman), especially those organised on behalf of members of his and Tambal's family. While kumpulan involving Dukun or Kemantan (both shamans) involve cocks and one or two cock-fights, these contests do not involve betting and do not draw a crowd. In contrast, cock-fights at large gawai go on continually for most of the day, weather permitting. These fights include betting and are watched by an excited crowd. Like most men in Tiga Balai, Panca gives his cocks special care, including di paut (stroking, massaging), di uras (washing) and di tawarkan (protecting by magic spells). Each cock has a tali (string) with which it is betambat (tied up) during the day under a tree, while at night it is brought into the house. Although Panca is not a shaman's assistant, who are called bintara or mintara (which is an inherited title), he does play an important role in many kumpulan involving shamans and he often takes one or two cocks along with him to any gathering he attends. Like other Talang Mamak men, Panca harus (must, should) take cocks to kumpulan that involve his keluarga (family) especially gawai - where up to twenty fights can take place.

26 Like other Talang Mamak, Panca usually used the word keluarga or kaun keluarga to mean family in a loosely defined way which could be enlarged or contracted to include more or less people according to context.
every day for two or three days. While *sabung ayam* (cock-fighting) plays an important part in most *kumpulan*, other birds are also often fought, and sometimes gambled on, in a more recreational fashion (by men who usually live close to one another) at fights held in one of the competitors’ houses. The most popular of these are *puyuh* (bustard quail, *Turnix taigoor*) which are often caught in traps and kept as pets for their long, deep call which many people enjoy. Only female *puyuh* are fought and they do not seem to inflict serious injury upon each other — rather they lock beaks and wrestle until one lets go and begins calling. Male *balam* (turtle-doves), who peck at each other and try to climb on one another’s backs, are also fought and gambled on. Panca also told me that in the past male *kambing* (goats) were fought to the death at large *gawai*. For these battles both goats had a *sakin* (knife) tied on to one of their horns. Panca says that these fights have now been discontinued because of the number of people who passed out at the sight of the wounds the goats inflicted upon each other. A few days before a *gawai* organised on behalf of members of Panca and Tambal’s family is due to take place, Panca selects the cocks he will take with him and starts spending more time massaging and washing them. He also inspects his *taji* (cock’s spurs) and tries to get some money to bet on his cocks. Like many other Talang Mamak men, Panca stores rubber for a few weeks in order to get cash for gambling at *gawai*. After *tekat janji* (agreement between titled representatives of both the bride’s and the groom’s families as to when and where the *gawai* will take place) has been made, which is usually sometime between two or three weeks before a *gawai*, Panca stops taking all the rubber that his family has collected and coagulated to Petonggan. Each week he leaves some *getah*, as much as he can afford, in storage pits near his rubber plots, until the last market day before the *gawai*, when he takes all the *getah* that he has been storing to Petonggan. At the market, Panca attempts to negotiate a deal, wherein his rubber dealer, *Haji* Ibrahim, will (in exchange for this relatively large amount of rubber) give him some of its value in cash, take part of the remainder in exchange for Panca and Tambal’s weekly necessities (which he supplies from his shop) and keep the rest as a payment on Panca’s debt.

I frequently met Panca at *gawai* where there is always an area of the *halaman* (flat, cleared land in front of a house) set aside for cock-fighting. At *gawai*, men of the bride’s family assemble on one side of this space and the men of the groom’s family on the other. These groups usually squat in the shade of some trees with their cocks, weighing up and discussing the strengths and weaknesses of their birds, deciding which ones are ready to fight and how much money to bet on each bird. A cock’s readiness to fight is tested by putting it next to another
cock and watching its reaction. If it lowers its head and ruffles its neck feathers, it is ready to fight. Panca says that care is taken to ensure that cocks are evenly matched and that neither combatant has any noticeable advantage, the aim being to arrange a contest that is adil (fair, just). Those birds selected to fight are taken by their owners to another shady area of the halaman where they meet men from the other group who also have cocks that are ready to fight. Here the men squat down and ayam di padan (match their cocks into pairs) by assessing the weight, height and willingness to fight of the birds. They also discuss how much they are prepared to bet on their cocks. Once a pair of cocks (one from the wife's group and one from the groom's group) have been matched in terms of size and aggression they are taken by their owners back to their respective sides of the halaman where a tukang bulang (specialist who ties on cock-spurs) is chosen and betaroh (betting) begins. One man from each group is chosen to collect and hold the money placed on his group's cock. While the owners and their close male relatives, who are squatting near them with their own cocks on one side of the halaman, place the main bets, other people, including Talang Mamak who are not related to the cock's owner and any Melayu present, can place a bet on a cock by giving their money to the man holding that bird's stake. The main bet is fixed when the birds are matched and represents the minimum both sides are able to put up, which is usually between Rp.10,000 and Rp.50,000. Several Melayu men from Petonggan, such as Demek, regularly attend kumpulan in order to gamble and may bet large sums on cock-fights which can only be matched by other Melayu. While betting is going on, the owner and the tukang bulang take the cock to a quiet place, usually on the perimeter of the halaman, where they both squat down and begin to pasang taji (tie on the spur).

Panca is a tukang bulang and he often ties spurs onto cocks owned by men from Perigi at gawai. He learnt these skills, which include tawar (spells), from his father Linum and Panca has passed them on to his own sons, Misikin and Enkeh. Panca, with Enkeh's assistance, also showed me how to membulang taji (fix a cock spur). While I had witnessed tukang bulang at work on many occasions, I wanted to learn more about their ilmu (knowledge) and I asked Panca to show me

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27 Tukang means a skilled labourer or craftsman, or a man trained in the use of certain tools and bulang means wrapper or enwrapping (Wilkinson 1955 Part I, p.162).
how to tie on a spur, which he did happily and informally. While Enkeh, who represented the owner, held the cock, Panca, as tukang bulang, selected a taji (spur) and got some benang (white thread). A Talang Mamak taji has a flat curved blade between two and three inches long which has notches cut into it (at the opposite end to the point) around which the thread that holds the taji in place is wrapped. All tukang bulang have their own taji which they usually keep in decorated boxes that they have made themselves from bamboo or wood. Taji are kept very sharp and regularly have ointments, oils and sometimes poisons rubbed onto them. When they are removed from their box, a small sheath, woven from pandan (varieties of pandanus) is put over them. Squatting down in front of Enkeh, who was already on his haunches holding the cock up, Panca unsheathed the taji and put it close to the bird's head so that it could see it and said, "This is your weapon, for stabbing that man's cock." Panca then pressed the flat of the blade against the bird's head a few times before Enkeh took the tali (string) from the bird's left foot, put it over his shoulder and lifted the cock's left leg out with its natural spur pointing upwards. Putting a little kapuk (kapok) on the notched end of the taji, Panca pressed it against the inside of the cock's left leg so that it was in line with the natural spur and fixed it in that position, with the blade curving upwards, by winding benang around it. A variety of things may be wound in with the benang to secure a taji, such as pieces of cigarette packet, bits of cloth or specially shaped slithers of wood or bamboo. At gawai I have also seen some tukang bulang spit on the ground, put their finger in it and mix a paste of earth which they then wipe over the benang wound around the cock's foot. Once Panca had checked that the taji was secure by pulling it, he breathed on the blade, flicked it a few times with his right index finger and recited this tawar to the taji, "You must be on your guard seven times a day and seven times a night because I have given you a sharp point and a magical

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28 Some men (such as Sutan Mohammad) expect to be paid (with rice, keminyan and a chicken) for passing on such information.

29 While benang generally means thread of any colour, taji are only tied on with white thread.

30 Panca's words were 'Ini senjata kau untuk menikam kawan itu.' While I translate kawan as man, in modern Indonesian it generally means friend and (in the past), in Muslim royal courts in the region of the Straits (such as Melaka), it used to signify a type of debt-slave (see Matheson and Hooker 1983 p.194).

31 Panca told me that this tawar is called 'Tawar yang ditawarkan Temanggung Besi, Mandahara Besi' (The tawar used by Temanggung Besi and Mandahara Besi). While besi means iron, Temanggung and Mandahara (I translate Mandahara as Bendahara) both mean chief ministers associated with finance and trade.
form. If you want to drink only take blood and if you want to eat only take flesh. You were
given your point by Allah and were sharpened by Mohammad.\textsuperscript{32} While saying this spell,
Panca flicked the blade a few more times and, when he was finished, he put his thumb onto
the roof of his mouth, took some \textit{busa isarat} (invisible spittle)\textsuperscript{33} and, pinching it between his
finger and thumb, pressed it to the tip of the blade. Next, Panca plucked a few downy
feathers from near the cock’s anus and, holding them between the index finger and thumb of
his right hand, he brought them close to his mouth and blew them onto the \textit{taji} – Panca said
that the breath, which is associated with an individual’s \textit{nyawa} (life-breath, soul), can transmit
magical influence. Breathing or blowing on an opponent’s cock is forbidden. Having blown
on the \textit{taji}, Panca stood up and stamped his right foot on the ground, after which Enkeh gave
him the cock which was now ready to fight. Panca said that when a \textit{tukang bulang} stamps his
foot he is demonstrating how the cock will crush its \textit{lawan} (opponent).

At a \textit{gawai}, after he has finished tying on the spur, the \textit{tukang bulang} takes the cock,
accompanied by its owner, who carries its \textit{tali} over his shoulder, to the centre of the \textit{halaman}
where he meets his opponent\textsuperscript{34}. By this time the two men holding the money put on the two
birds have matched their stakes and are not taking any more bets. If the man who is holding
the stake for one group collects more than his opposite number in the other group, the surplus
is returned to the people who made the last bets he received. The two \textit{tukang bulang} squat
down in the middle of the \textit{halaman} facing each other, holding their cocks out in front of them,
and begin to \textit{behuja} (warm up) their birds by nipping and pinching them around the head and
neck. Once they are ready to fight, one of the \textit{tukang bulang} holds the head of his bird to one
side, exposing its neck, and the other \textit{tukang bulang} brings his cock close enough for it to peck
its restrained opponent. After this process is reversed and both birds have pecked each other,

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\textsuperscript{32} Panca’s words were ‘\textit{Jaga tujuh kali sahari, jaga tujuh kali samalan, sabab kau sudah kuberi betuntung
besembilu, besijd bekudarat. Ndak minum betambat darah, ndak makan betambat daging. Kau betuntungkan
Allah bekiliran Muhammad.’}

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Busa} means foam or froth and \textit{isarat} (from Arabic \textit{Isyarat}) means suggestive sign or signal. Nothing is
removed from the mouth as \textit{busa isarat} is invisible.

\textsuperscript{34} Wearing a fighting cock’s \textit{tali} over the shoulder may have had a special significance in Tiga Balai as it
did in other parts of Sumatra. ‘Wilken relates that Toba-Bataks who expected to gamble on market day
would go equipped with a special form of rope (\textit{tali pasa}) as a sign of their good faith that their bodies
were the security for their gambling debts.’ (Reid 1983, p.10).
they are put on the ground facing one another and let go. Panca said that once a fight has started, *tukang bulang* may not touch their bird with their hands. However, they may use their head or their teeth to push or lift a wounded or tiring bird. Usually a fight continues until one bird collapses, whereupon the *tukang bulang* of the other bird picks his cock up and, after a few moments' *behuja*, puts it back down in front of its prostrate opponent so that it can inflict one final *pukul* (hit, peck) and if it succeeds in doing so it is declared the winner. Apart from when one or both cocks refuse to fight there are two types of draw: *balui* (draw), wherein one cock is already dead but its opponent refuses the final *pukul*; and *gawal* (miscalculation, error) in which a cock which appears to be winning is lifted up for the final *pukul* but, upon being set down, collapses and is pecked or stabbed by its opponent. In these cases both parties must agree that the contest is drawn before all bets are returned. I have only witnessed one disputed decision at a cock-fight, which involved Demek, a professional Melayu gambler, who took over an hour to accept defeat and hand his money over to his Talang Mamak opponent. The *tukang bulang* of the defeated bird usually picks it up, cuts off its left leg and sends the body to the kitchen where it is cooked, along with all the other losing birds, and served to guests at either the mid-day or evening meal. He then retires to a shady spot to unwind his *taji*. The winning *tukang bulang* returns the victor to its owner and together they go back to the perimeter of the *halaman* to remove the *taji* and replace it with the bird's *tali*. While this is going on, the man who collected bets on the losing bird goes to his opposite number who is holding the money for the winning bird and gives him the losers' stake which he then returns, at twice the amount staked, to everyone who placed a bet with him. At large *gawai* fights such as this run consecutively for most of the day.

In June 1988, when Panca was about fifty-six, he had his first prolonged contact with *orang putih* (white people) when the Project Soma expedition arrived in Talang Perigi and took up residence in the Inpres school. Panca recalls that the first *orang putih* he saw was a Dutchman

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35 De Josselin de Jong (1980, p.80) includes this description of a 'marriage with a cock-pit' which used to take place in Minangkabau territory before the Dutch made cock-fighting illegal. "[T]he close relatives of a marriageable girl ordered a cock-pit to be built and then let it be known that suitors could take part in the fight to be held there. Several days were then devoted to cock-fights, each suitor bringing his own cock and wagering great sums on the results. During this period the girl's relatives were enabled to make a their choice of a suitable husband among the gamblers."
who visited Tiga Balai when Panca was a young boy in the mid-1930s. When this orang Belanda (Dutch person), who had a long beard and moustache, was in Durian Cacar, he asked Singkop (the then Datuk Patih) what the time was. Panca says the Dutchman roared with laughter when Singkop replied that it was jam tiga puluh (thirty o'clock). Panca, who despite owning a wristwatch, has difficulties reading a clock or watch face accurately, finds this story very funny. Most of the initial relations between the Project Soma expedition members and Talang Mamak were organised by Gandung, who selected some of his anak buah to help with the collection and naming of plant samples and in the surveying of areas of forest. Panca and his brother, Bunga, both worked with the expedition almost every day, acting as guides for team members who went into the forest. For Gandung, Project Soma was the most important duty delegated to him by the Camat in the twenty years that he had been Kepala Desa of Talang Perigi. Before the expedition left Perigi I learnt that Gandung had visited the grave of Suman (who was Batin of Talang Perigi before Nulan), cleared the site and left a length of yellow cloth suspended between four posts over the grave. He told me that he did this to prevent misfortune befalling the expedition. Gandung put his Mangku, Panca, in charge of the expedition's security and Panca called his brother, Bunga, from Talang Jerinjing to help him. After making the journey daily from Dusun Puan to the school and back for a few weeks, Panca, on Gandung's advice and with Tambal's approval, decided to move into one of the empty houses built next to the school for teachers to live in. For about two months while he slept next door to the school, Panca spent most of his time in the company of the expedition team and he recalls that he enjoyed many aspects of this experience: eating well – Jusar was employed as a cook by the expedition and Panca enjoyed eating the relatively rich Javanese-style dishes he prepared; receiving a wage – Panca and the other Talang Mamak who worked with the expedition received a wage of about Rp.3,000 per day; and encountering many new objects and practices – the expedition's equipment included many objects that Panca had never seen before, such as video cameras, head-torches, water-filters, etc. The project team also enjoyed having him around, all of us coming to regard him as our friend. He was probably the most popular Talang Mamak man among both the Javanese and the British members of the expedition team. Panca's love of harmless practical jokes and his ability to make people laugh seemed to bring him especially close to many of the British team members. Just before the expedition left, Gandung, who had been quite concerned for its welfare told me that he had put Panca, his Mangku, in charge of the safety and security of the team and its equipment. He also said that he was pleased with the way Panca carried out this role.
In 1989, more *orang asing* (foreigners, strangers) arrived in Talang Perigi, in the form of the logging company *PT* (Ltd) *Dewi Esah Indah*, and Panca also got to work closely with them. When this logging company (which is run by *Mister Goh*, who lives in Medan) first arrived, its workers refused to employ or take the advice of Umar, *Koordinator* Talang Mamak. Their first task was to extend the road from the Inpres School into Durian Cacar, a job they began without seeking the permission of either Umar or the inhabitants of Perigi. Whilst clearing the first section of road, they destroyed and damaged trees cultivated by Talang Mamak and, during the night, the workers who were sleeping by their vehicles in a temporary camp were visited by a *harimau* (tiger). According to stories I heard in Petonggan, the logging company employees believed that this was *harimau jadi-jadian* (were-tiger) come from Talang Perigi to punish them for damaging *durian* trees. After this incident, the company's workers refused to work in the forest without Talang Mamak guides. Several people in Petonggan told me that this *harimau jadi-jadian* was in fact Umar who, they say, frequently transforms himself into a tiger. They said that Umar learnt these skills at Motah, an area of mixed Talang Mamak and *Melayu* inhabitants to the south-west of Tiga Balai. After the appearance of the tiger, *Mister Goh* approached Umar who agreed to help supply and maintain the logging operations. He also contacted Gandung in order to get guides for the workers clearing the roads. Since this incident occurred, Umar has supplied every logging company that has worked in Tiga Balai with food and accommodation. *After Mister Goh's request*, Gandung put *Tua Tuah Bagum* (Gandung's brother-in-law), *Mangku Panca* (Gandung’s cousin), *Tua Tuah Jidan* (Gandung’s cousin), and himself forward as volunteers to help the company. Together, they were able both to organise compensation for those whose trees had been damaged and to select a route for the road that avoided most cultivated trees. A rate of between Rp.10,000 and Rp.12,000 was paid by *Mister Goh* to Gandung, for each tree damaged, which he redistributed to the people who owned the damaged trees, among whom were some of Rapan’s *anak buah*. This was the first time that heavy plant such as bulldozers had been seen in Tiga Balai and Panca.

**footnotes**

36 Damage to cultivated trees is usually compensated in the form of a fine paid in plates and bowls to a *Batin*. As well as cultivated trees, the forest also contains grave sites which may not be disturbed.

37 Usman (1985, p.30) says that while people who can transform themselves into tigers are known throughout the region, especially in Minangkabau, Negri Sembilan, Jambi and South Sumatra, their centre is in Kuala Cenaku.
Bagum, Gandung and Jidan had to travel on and work in close proximity to these large machines. Panca recalls that Rapan and many of his anak buah did not like the intrusion of the logging company's workers and machines into Perigi and some of them were annoyed to find Panca, Bagum, Jidan and Gandung working with the logging company. Panca says that he received several threats from Rapan during his employment. Bagum also remembers being intimidated by Rapan and some of his anak buah who threatened to kill him if he continued working with the loggers. After the road was complete, Panca and his son, Sutan Baru, were able to get more work with the company helping to identify trees. Sutan Baru, who is also known as Nasir and Cal, picked up the name Sutan Baru around this time. The logging company employees had a radio which often broadcast a modern Minangkabau love-song about a romantic hero called Sutan Baru. Nasir liked this song, quickly learnt all the words, and began singing it and, as a result, his work-mates started calling him Sutan Baru. Nasir still enjoys singing and during our stay in Tran Perigi he could often be heard approaching through the trees singing the song he is named after. While PT Dewi Esah Indah were in Tiga Balai, Panca and Tambal's middle daughter, Gunjah, gave birth to her second child, a son, who Panca named Mister Goh after his employer.

In 1990, while PT Dewi Esah Indah were still taking logs out of Tiga Balai, Tambal and Panca heard of the government's plans to build a housing development, Tran Perigi, and they decided to move there when it was complete. Through Gandung, who was in charge of allocating houses, Panca was able to secure two houses close together, one on the main path that runs through Tran, where Panca and Tambal now live, and the other about one hundred metres behind it where Gunjah and Anggur live. Like every other Talang Mamak family that moved into Tran, Panca and Tambal were not happy with the size, layout and construction of their new home and Panca set about redesigning it to make it more like a house built by Talang Mamak. Panca, with the help of Anggur, raised and extended the floor which they divided with mentelak and guntelak. They also built a bekas padi (rice store) at the back of the house. Soon after Tambal and Panca moved into Tran Perigi with their youngest children, Enkeh and Seset, their daughter began betandang with Gandung's grandson Mijan who Panca was very much in favour of as a prospective husband for Seset. Mijan, who is the son of Gandung and Pinjut's daughter, Sarum, and her husband, Cindai (who died around 1990), is probably Tiga Balai's oldest bujang being about twenty-six and, as yet, unmarried. Because he has not married out of his mother's house, he has been able to take advantage of the resources
coming into the household, through both government funds managed by Gandung and the large number of rubber trees owned by his mother. As a result Mijan has few responsibilities, the only motorbike in Perigi and plenty of opportunities to go to kumpulan or out betandang.

After Mijan had visited Panca and Tambal’s house at night on several occasions, Panca began to make plans for his daughter to marry Gandung’s grandson, which included preparing for jemput laki (bringing the groom to stay at the bride’s home) which usually takes place a few weeks before a gawai. When he heard that Panca and his family were about to come and collect him, in preparation for marriage to Seset, Mijan left Talang Perigi and went to Petonggan. Later, Mijan told me that he had no intention of marrying Seset and that he left Perigi to avoid kawin paksa (arranged marriage with an unwilling bride or groom). As Mijan is on friendly terms with several young Melayu bachelors who live in Petonggan he was able to stay with them for the week or so he spent outside Tiga Balai.

This incident, which occurred in early 1992, caused a rift between Panca and his fellow title holders Gandung and Bagum who both felt that Panca had acted hastily and had not followed adat. According to Bagum, before making plans to jemput laki, Panca should have received (from Mijan, via Seset) a tanda bibit (an object given to a woman by a man as a sign that he wants to marry her) and he should also have made tekat janji (agreement made between a male representative of the bride’s family and a male representative of the groom’s family fixing the time and place of a gawai) with Gandung. Gandung was upset that Mijan had disappeared and he blamed Panca. In this, Bagum supported the Batin, suggesting that Panca was besalah (at fault, guilty) and should be brought before Gandung for hukuman (judgement). Panca did not go to Gandung to receive hukuman (which cannot be forced) and a period of relative isolation began for Panca as his relations with both Gandung and Bagum became strained. When I arrived in Perigi in February 1992 Panca was not on good terms with either Bagum or Gandung. During the couple of months I spent in Gandung’s house before moving to Tran, Panca did not visit nor did he attend a large semahan (kumpulan where a Batin makes offerings to his ancestors) held by Gandung during this period. Panca also did not attend a kumpulan, presided over by Sutan Mohammad, at Bagum and Anjak’s house, which is only about seventy yards from Panca and Tambal’s house.

It was several months before Panca was back on friendly terms with Bagum and Gandung, and it was during this time that I moved into Tran and both Bagum and Panca began to call round
regularly. On these visits, they often met each other and talked. Shortly after my arrival in Tran, Panca voluntarily presented himself before Gandung for hukuman regarding his plans for Mijan and Seset. He was fined sixteen plates and four bowls, all of which (except for one plate and one bowl) were returned to Panca by Gandung. It was also during this period that Tambal and Panca’s eldest son, Sutan Baru, returned to his parents’ house from Durian Cacar (after being divorced by his third wife), where he joined Anggur in helping to tap Panca and Tambal’s rubber and farm their ladang. Shortly after Sutan Baru’s arrival, one of his peers, Lancap (an orphan and a nephew of Gandung), who was living in Tran with his wife, began having marital troubles. Lancap was born in Perigi and had married into Gedabu. He returned to Perigi with his wife after he was accused of stealing, beaten up and then thrown out of his wife’s mother’s home by his ipar (brothers-in-law). Lancap persuaded his wife to leave her mother’s house and accompany him to Perigi where she has no close female relatives. Gandung gave Lancap and his wife a house in Tran and rubber trees to tap. Gandung said that he also advised Lancap not to steal and to follow adat. After his marital problems got worse, Lancap sought Gandung’s advice and the Batin decided to call a kumpulan to discuss the disagreement between Lancap and his wife. That night about twenty adults and their children gathered in Gandung’s house to try to advise the young couple. During the discussion, Lancap’s problem became clear. While his wife, who was born in Gedabu and who spoke for herself from the ruang tempuan (where she was sitting with the other women), adamantly wanted a divorce, her husband did not. Lancap (who was in the ruang haluan with the other men) was clearly upset that Gandung could not dissuade his wife from her plans to divorce him and return to Gedabu. Gandung advised Lancap’s wife to wait before making a decision. However, she did not follow the Batin’s counsel. Instead she divorced Lancap and returned to her mother’s house a few days after the kumpulan.

Lancap lived on his own for a week or two before Panca and Tambal invited him to come and stay in their house. Lancap settled in quickly and became a good friend of Sutan Baru’s, working hard with him tapping and collecting rubber from Panca and Tambal’s trees. Whenever they had the money to buy cigarettes the two young men would go out betandang, calling on girls in their houses at night. Cigarettes are an important part of betandang and a girl’s acceptance of cigarettes from a man is usually taken as a sign that she wants to spend the night with him. Sutan Baru and Lancap helped me terrace and fence the land around our house, which took over a week, and I gave them Rp.7,000 a day for their labour. By local
standards this was a good wage and, after giving Panca and Tambal a share, they used what remained to finance many betandang trips. On an evening when Sutan Baru and Lancap planned to go out visiting girls, they would usually wait until about ten o’clock before setting off, guided by the light of their torches, which are an important part of a bujang’s betandang equipment. Buying batteries is another expense for bujang — along with cigarettes. Sutan Baru and Lancap would be dressed in their best shirts and long trousers, with their cigarettes in their pockets and Sutan Baru carrying his ginggung (a type of Jew’s harp made from bamboo) which he plays in order to let a girl know that he is waiting outside her house. Not all bujang use ginggung. Many, such as Lancap, prefer to throw something onto the roof at the back of a house to attract a girl’s attention. As there are almost no stones, pebbles or rocks in Tiga Balai, Lancap always took a few large seeds with him for this purpose. Buang out at night usually carry a concealed knife with them, which, if they do not own they borrow, and, if they are going far, they often take a lembing (spear) with them. Sutan Baru and Lancap were prepared to walk for over an hour to cari priuk (look for a girl) and often visited Gedabu and Durian Cacar where they called on girls that they had met at kumpulan. While Sutan Baru described all potential girlfriends as priuk (rice-pot), he described himself as sendok (large spoon used for cooking or serving rice).

Sutan Baru explained to me what happened when he arrived at the house of a girl that he wanted to spend the night with. Quietly, so as not to disturb any dogs that were about, he would go around to the back of the house and play his ginggung very quietly to attract the attention of the girl he was looking for, who would be sleeping at the back of the house in the ruang tempuan and who would know immediately, upon hearing the ginggung, that a man was outside hoping to see her. If she wanted a male guest, she would go outside and see who it was. However, if the girl Sutan Baru wanted to see had unmarried older sisters, one of them would usually come out to find out who the caller was. If this happened, Sutan Baru would have to persuade her to fetch the girl he wanted. If things went well Sutan Baru would be invited in, where he had to be very quiet so as not to disturb the girl’s father who, despite having probably already been woken up, usually appeared to be sound asleep. Sutan Baru said

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38 Cari means look for and priuk means rice-pot.
that fathers are often woken by the noise of a bujang's visit and that while some ignore the sound, others expect their daughters to ask their permission before inviting a bujang to enter. Bujang out on a betandang visit usually have no contact whatsoever with their girlfriends' fathers, who stay in their own kelambu (mosquito net). As soon as he entered a girl's house Sutan Baru would get inside the girl's kelambu (mosquito net), in ruang tengah. Once inside the kelambu, which is usually screened off from the rest of the house, Sutan Baru and the girl would communicate in whispers and Sutan Baru would offer her cigarettes. In the morning before the sun rose Sutan Baru would get up and quietly leave the house and, if it had been a good night, he would be singing all the way home.

Another night time activity that Sutan Baru enjoys is hunting. In this he shares an interest with his father, who does not enjoy eating if he has no lauk (meat or fish), and consequently Panca would often take Sutan Baru's air-rifle out with him at any time of night or day to shoot a bird, squirrel, etc to eat with his rice. Tambal smokes large proportions of the pigs, deer and other animals the men of her household kill, which they tend to share only among their large but close family. During the time that Sutan Baru lived with his parents in the early 1990s, he frequently went out with Panca at night to hunt animals and, on these expeditions, Sutan Baru took the air-rifle he had bought in Durian Cacar and Panca took the head-torch he had made. (Sutan Baru told me that he had bought this air-rifle but I later found out, when he had to return it, that he had borrowed it from his ex-wife's brother.) Panca made a head-torch after having seen them being used by Project Soma. He has fixed the bulb, reflector and lens of a torch to a bark head-band which is wired to a small wooden box of batteries he wears over his shoulder. Panca and Sutan Baru usually only hunted at night for one species of animal, kancil (lesser mouse-deer), which Panca would fix in his torch beam so that Sutan Baru could shoot it. The two men worked well together and after an hour or two hunting they would usually return with two or three kancil. Panca says that Sutan Baru has excellent eyesight and is a crack shot, being able to kill a kancil with one pellet from about twenty-five yards.

In early 1993, while Lancap was still living with Tambal and Panca, their youngest son, Enkeh, returned home after divorcing his first wife. Soon afterwards, Seset began betandang with a young man from Sungai Limau, called Cotek, and they decided to get married. With their daughter's gawai approaching, Tambal and Panca planned not to take all their getah to
Petonggan but to keep some back each week to help to pay for Seset's gawai and, with Anggur, Sutan Baru, Enkeh and Lancap all tapping their trees, they were able to accumulate rubber quickly, which was stored in pits dug in their rubber plots. The decision to store rubber was taken with the knowledge of Anggur, Sutan Baru, Enkeh and Lancap who all agreed to allow the rubber they had collected to be used to help pay for Seset's gawai. One morning after he had made tekat janji with Cotek's father, Panca returned from a gawai in Gedabu to find Lancap gone. While he was resting after his walk home, Mawi, one of Panca's neighbours in Tran, called round to tell Panca that early that morning Lancap had sold him thirty kilos of rubber which Mawi thought might have come from Panca's kebun (rubber plot). Mawi, who was born in Talang Selantai, lives with his wife and his brother Misi, in Tran and, although he had already paid Lancap in cash for it, Mawi gave Panca his rubber back. When he went to Mawi's, Panca recognised the getah as being from his trees and immediately went to check his storage pits, which he found empty. Panca then returned home to find that other things were missing from the house including Enkeh's best shirt and Rp.10,000.

There was plenty of talk about where Lancap had gone and where the rubber was. Panca, Anggur, Sutan Baru and Enkeh made several journeys to look for them. After a couple of fruitless days, there was a rumour that Lancap was back in Perigi and the search intensified. Panca told me that Lancap had been seen in the semak (undergrowth, scrub) at the back of the mosque and this sighting coincided with reports of small amounts of food and tobacco being stolen from houses in the vicinity. Lancap later told me that he spent one night on his own in the forest (which scared him) after which he returned to Tran looking for food. One morning while Enkeh was searching in the semak between Anggur and Gunjah's house and the mesjid (mosque) in Tran, he saw Lancap by an empty house and began chasing him across the land at the back of our house and our neighbours Wis and Nasir's house. As soon as Lancap saw Enkeh, he started running and shouting for help in a loud voice that everyone in the vicinity could hear. Enkeh caught him up and, after giving him a blow on the shoulder with the back of his parang (machete), took him back to Panca and Tambal's home. Most people knew what was happening and, while a few women and children such as Nian and her daughters went to watch Lancap being led away, men such as Jari and Bagum, stayed in their houses and did not make an appearance. Panca asked Lancap what had happened to his rubber and he replied that it was still in Panca's kebun. Panca, Anggur, Sutan Baru and Enkeh then took Lancap to their storage pits to look for the missing rubber, which they did not find. Panca decided to take
Lancap before Gandung and the five men set off for the Batin’s house where they all went inside and sat in the ruang haluan with Gandung. Lancap, who looked bewildered and sad, willingly agreed to go to Gandung for hukuman (judgement, punishment) and he was not restrained or threatened in any way as he walked with Panca, Anggur, Sutan Baru and Enkeh in single file to the Batin’s house. Panca told the Batin that Lancap had stolen about two hundred kilos of his rubber, most of which was still missing as he had only got about thirty kilos back. While Lancap remains silent regarding both the amount of getah that disappeared and its whereabouts, men such as Bagum have their doubts that it was as much as Panca suggests. Gandung advised his keponakan (nephew), Lancap, to return everything he had stolen, to apologise to Panca, and to return to Panca’s house and continue to tap Panca’s rubber. After Gandung had finished talking and was waiting for a reply Lancap suddenly leapt up, jumped out of the doorway and ran off. Just as quickly Anggur, Sutan Baru and Enkeh were after Lancap who they soon caught and brought back to Gandung’s house. When Gandung heard them returning, he took a length of rotan and went outside to wait for Lancap who he hit five or six times with the cane.

Panca said that he was quite surprised when Gandung started hitting Lancap as he had never heard of the Batin striking anyone before. Like all other Batin, Gandung’s behaviour could be interpreted in two ways. Usually no distinction was made between, on one hand, Gandung as an ordinary man (as he was before he became Batin) and, on the other, Gandung as title holder, and his actions were attributed to one agent, namely Batin Gandung. Occasionally, however, especially when he did something not in keeping with his position, Gandung’s actions were seen as the work of Gandung the man and not Gandung the Batin. Both Bagum and Panca used this distinction and said that when Gandung hit Lancap he was acting as a man and not as a Batin. They explained that Gandung had taken a fatherly attitude towards Lancap since an early age and it was in this capacity that the Batin struck his keponakan (nephew).

After being hit, Lancap collapsed to the ground and Gandung and Panca decided to put him in palang (stocks). Lancap was taken to a covered balai (wall-less hut) outside Gandung’s house,

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39 Some large houses, especially those owned by title-holders, have balai on their halaman. These buildings consist of a square platform, usually about 5m x 5m, raised a few feet off the ground and given a roof.

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where he was restrained at the ankles by two large pieces of wood nailed together. Lancap’s *palang* were made from two thick poles which Sutan Baru and Enkeh hacked notches into, to allow room for Lancap’s ankles, before putting one pole underneath his ankles and nailing the other one on top of it. The *palang* did not fit tightly round Lancap’s ankles and he could hobble with them on. Up to this point Lancap had remained silent but when Panca, Sutan Baru, Enkeh and Anggur began catching *kerangga* (large red biting ant Oecophylla smaragdina) and putting them down Lancap’s shorts he began to sob. After he started to cry, Lancap was not harmed any more and he was brought mats to sit on, food, drink, cigarettes and *sirih* (betel). Screens were also put up around him. After being shackled, Lancap, whose hands were not restrained, spent his time sitting, smoking and chatting to people who came to see him. These included friends (such as Mijan) and older men (such as Bagum) who were concerned for his well being and who wanted to talk to Gandung about Lancap’s situation. During Lancap’s disappearance, Panca had wanted to bring him before Gandung and get his rubber back. However, now that Lancap had been caught and put in stocks but still refused to say anything about the rubber, Panca did not really know what to do with him. All that Panca would say was that Lancap should remain in the stocks until his rubber was returned. Lancap stayed in the stocks for two days until the arrival of Panjang who said that, as a Muslim, he could not allow a man to be treated in this way. He set Lancap free and took him to stay in his house opposite the *Inpres* school. At Panjang’s house Lancap worked tapping rubber for several weeks before he discovered that Panjang had no intention of paying him anything. Once he realised that he was not going to get any money for his labour, Lancap left Panjang’s house and went to stay with his sister Siam who was living in Tran. Panca was annoyed that Panjang had interfered and set Lancap free and many other men felt the same way. While Bagum thought that Lancap should have been released, he too was angry that a Muslim *Melayu* had interfered in Talang Mamak affairs.

Despite having lost all the rubber they had saved to help pay for Seset’s marriage to Cotek, Tambal and Panca went ahead with the wedding plans and, shortly after the incident with

*footnotes continued from previous page*

Under the shade of a *balai* men and women often do everyday tasks (splitting *rotan*, cleaning rice, etc.) and on some hot, dry days men sit in *balai* and entertain guests and visitors. If a *kumpulan* is being held in a house, its *balai* is usually used for food preparation.
Lancap, they went with their family to Sungai Limau to jemput (collect) Cotek, which took place a few weeks before the gawai. Cotek left Sungai Limau with Seset and her family and moved into their house in Tran where he began helping his ipar (brothers-in-law) Sutan Baru, Enkeh and Anggur tap rubber. One morning, when his gawai was only about a week away, Cotek disappeared, leaving a note which said he was bingung (confused) about whether or not he should marry Seset. (Cotek had learnt some basic reading and writing skills from Javanese friends he had met in the transmigrasi camp DK5.) Panca brought Cotek’s note to Adriani and I to read to him, saying that Cotek’s decision to leave was influenced by a pengharu (trouble-maker, agitator) called Johan, who was living nearby, and who Panca thought may have told Cotek about his attempt to get Mijan to marry Seset. Panca blames Johan for causing Cotek’s confusion which led him to write the letter to Seset and to disappear. Once Panca understood Cotek’s note, he went to Sungai Limau to look for him and the next day he returned with Cotek, whose marriage to Seset went ahead as planned at a gawai held in Sungai Limau. Panca said that persuading Cotek to return with him was easy, because Cotek really wanted to marry Seset, and all that Panca had had to do was advise him not to listen to gunjing (gossip). After their gawai the young couple spent a few weeks in Tambal and Panca’s house before moving to a pondok (hut) on the family’s ladang in Dusun Puan.

Johan, who was born in Sungai Limau, and his wife (who is Gandung’s sister) left Talang Perigi in the mid-1980s to take a house in an established transmigrasi (transmigration) camp, called Binjai40 (in Kecamatan Rengat), which is mostly inhabited by Muslim Javanese migrants. During their time in Binjai, Johan and his family entered Islam and his eldest son married a Javanese woman. Johan, who worked tapping rubber owned by his Javanese neighbours, also cultivated his own plot of land and was able to learn many farming techniques from his fellow Muslims. In 1990, Johan and his family returned to Talang Perigi and Gandung offered them a house in the middle of Tran and the use of the rubber trees Johan had planted in Perigi before going to Binjai. Several people told me that they remembered Johan’s family arriving in Tran Perigi. Johan had hired Haji Nasir’s Kijang truck (and a driver) and arrived in this with

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40 While this transmigrasi camp has the same name as dusun Binjai, in Talang Perigi, the two places are not connected.
his belongings, which included a large glass fronted lemari (cupboard) he had bought in Binjai. Johan and his family moved into the house Gandung gave them, which was near the mesjid (mosque), fenced their land with barbed wire and began planting crops. The first man in Perigi to use barbed-wire was Gandung, who put a few lengths of it (which he got from Mister Goh), round a field of ubi kayu (manioc) next to his house. Johan copied his example by buying hundreds of meters of barbed wire and erecting a two-line fence around the quarter hectare of land that surrounds his house. Johan said this fence was very effective against babi (pigs) who are afraid of barbed wire and do not come near it. Johan had several successful peanut crops while I was in Tiga Balai. Although he does not plant rice, which he buys, he does farm large quantities of ubi kayu. Johan, who was relatively wealthy when he first came to Tran, has bought two more houses since he arrived: one from Sutan Mohammad; and one from Nawar. In early 1993, he dismantled the house Gandung had given him and moved into one of his other houses, which was on the main path through Tran (near the road that runs from Petonggan to Durian Cacar) and began improving and enlarging it. The house that Johan and his family moved into was sold to him by Sutan Mohammad. Johan bought the other house from Nawar and subsequently sold it to me. Around this time Lancap left Panjang's house, returned to Tran and moved in with Johan and his wife where he helped Johan tap rubber and work on his house. Lancap had left Panjang's house as soon as he knew that Panjang expected him to work without pay and had moved in with his sister Siam (who had recently been divorced by her husband and was having difficulty finding food for her three children) where he stayed for a few days before moving in with Johan. Johan re-built the house that he had dismantled, opposite his own house on the other side of the path, in preparation for the arrival of his eldest son, his Javanese wife and their children who were leaving Binjai and coming to Perigi. When Johan's son arrived he brought a stock of cigarettes, matches, tea, coffee, sugar, etc and opened up a kedai (small shop) in the house that his father had built for him. Although they do little business during the day, on most nights they attract a few men, usually bujang (bachelors), who go there to play cards and gamble. While Johan forbids gambling with cash, men are allowed to buy goods, usually cigarettes and sugar (which are also available on credit), and to bet with them instead of money. Several
older men in Perigi, including Panca, Bagum and Sutan Mohammad, agree that Johan should not encourage bujang Perigi to main judi (gamble)\textsuperscript{41} and to run up debts in this way.

When Johan and his son first opened their kedai it was not the only one in Talang Perigi as Panjang, had been running one from his house opposite the school since 1984. When Panjang, who was single (after three divorces), arrived in Perigi in the early 1980s he was the only Melayu in that talang. With Gandung's permission, and with his brother Umar's wood, he built a large planked house in Binjai. Umar also gave his brother several plots of mature rubber trees which he bought from Sutan Mohammad. In 1984 after the school had been built, Panjang and his fourth wife Ai, who is a Melayu from Sorek, Kecamatan Langgam, Kabupaten Kampar, sold their house in Binjai to Gandung’s son-in-law, Cindai, and moved to a smaller house in front of the school and near their rubber plots. Panjang built a kedai (small shop) at the front of his house and began offering cash loans to men with gambling debts and establishing himself as a small-scale rubber dealer. Johan's kedai became the only one in Perigi in October 1993, when Panjang closed his shop and moved to Petonggan after his wife, Ai, had an argument with Panca and Tambal's daughter Gunjah. Many people, both Talang Mamak and Melayu, talked about incidents where Ai had lost her temper and threatened someone (usually Panjang) with a knife. On several occasions, after violent conflict with her husband, Ai has returned to Sorek and spent a few months there with her family, before returning to Panjang. This particular argument took place after one of Ai’s friends in Petonggan saw Panjang pass money to Gunjah at the market and told Ai about it. Ai got very angry after hearing the story and accused her husband of having sex with Gunjah. Ai ordered Panjang to fetch Panca so that she could tell him what had happened\textsuperscript{42}. Panca agreed to accompany Panjang to his home, where Ai, who, Panca says, has a tendency for violent outbursts, accused the absent Gunjah of selling herself to Panjang. Panca replied that he didn’t know anything about Gunjah and Panjang but he did promise to speak to Gandung and to return the next morning with a chicken and some benas (rice) so that they could eat together.

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\textsuperscript{41} Main judi, usually cards or dice, is generally perceived in a different light to sabung ayam (fighting and betting on cocks) which is described as being part of \textit{adat}.

\textsuperscript{42} Neither Panjang nor Ai are comfortable talking about this incident and I do not know what she hoped to achieve by summoning Panca.
and try and settle her problems. After leaving Panjang and Ai, Panca visited Gandung who advised him to settle the matter quickly and to ask Jidan, who was the Tua Tuah of Kampung Tengah (the region of Perigi in which Ai and Panjang lived) to talk to Ai and Panjang. The next day Panca, Enkeh, Gunjah and Jidan took some rice and a chicken to Panjang’s house. When Ai, who was expecting both Gandung and Sutan Mohammad to arrive and pass hukuman (judgement) on Gunjah, saw that only Jidan had been sent to hear her case she felt that she was not being taken seriously enough and she lost her temper and started screaming abuse at Gunjah, who denied having anything to do with Panjang. Panca, Enkeh, Gunjah and Jidan had barely entered the house before Ai started shouting and they immediately turned round and went home. Bagum’s interpretation of these events is that while Ai knew that Panjang was regularly unfaithful, she wanted someone else to blame and, as the result of gossip in Petonggan, she blamed Gunjah. Ai went straight to Sutan Mohammad who reported her unhappiness with the situation to Gandung who subsequently called a kumpulan to discuss the matter. Although both Ai and Panjang knew that this kumpulan was taking place neither of them attended. About thirty adults and their children did attend this kumpulan, where it was decided to send Jidan to Panjang with the message that this matter was a marital problem, which should have been kept between Panjang and Ai, and that it was up to Panjang, not Gandung, to control his wife. The next morning, Jidan delivered Gandung’s message and Panjang and Ai left Perigi immediately to set up home in the part of Dusun Jaya that is in Petonggan. While Panca says that Panjang and Ai left Perigi because they were mala (ashamed, embarrassed), they gave other reasons, ranging from saying that life was better among their fellow Muslims to accusing their former Talang Mamak neighbours of practising evil magic against them. Panjang and Ai’s new home is about five kilometres from their rubber plots and rubber store and this is further than Panjang is prepared to walk. Consequently, since their move they have less money and have been looking, mostly unsuccessfully, for non-Talang Mamak who they can employ to tap their trees in Talang Perigi.

Panca has a long standing disagreement with Sutan Mohammad, a former Datuk Patih and Kepala Desa, who lives in the Binjai region of Perigi between Gandung’s old house and the
school. According to Sutan Mohammad, his dispute with Panca concerns pencak silat (martial arts) and dates back to the late 1950s when both men were bujang in Perigi and were students of different pencak silat teachers. Relations between Panca and Sutan Mohammad got worse in 1993 when Panca began inviting bujang to practise pencak silat outside his house – an area of a halaman, about 5m × 5m, is marked off for pencak silat by erecting a fence of light wood decorated with palm leaves around it. Up to that time there had been two pencak silat arenas in Perigi, one outside Siran’s house (Siran is a relatively wealthy older man who is one of Rapan’s anak buah) and one outside Sutan Mohammad’s house. On some moonlit nights (there are no fixed times for pencak silat sessions, which are organised informally), local men are invited to these halaman to practise pencak silat. After Panca started instructing silat, Sutan Mohammad smartened up the long-disused fence on his halaman and also began inviting men to attend pencak silat classes. Sutan Mohammad (who has no argument with Siran concerning pencak silat) maintains that Panca’s pencak silat instructor had been a student of his teacher and that Panca should have acknowledged this by asking Sutan Mohammad’s permission before inviting bujang to his halaman to practise pencak silat. Sutan Mohammad said that, according to adat, the relationship of seniority between his teacher and Panca’s teacher should be recognised by their former students, and that, just as Panca’s instructor had asked Sutan Mohammad’s instructor for permission to begin teaching, so Panca should ask Sutan Mohammad’s permission before inviting men to practise pencak silat on his halaman. According to Sutan Mohammad, Panca should have brought a chicken and some beras (rice) to his house and requested permission to instruct pencak silat. Panca says that his instructor had no relationship with Sutan Mohammad’s teacher and that he does not need Sutan Mohammad’s permission to hold pencak silat sessions outside his home.

Panca and Sutan Mohammad generally avoid each other’s company and if Panca (who visited almost every day) arrived at our house while Sutan Mohammad (who came a couple of times a

footnotes

43 Pencak silat is a system of self-defence taught and practised in many parts of Sumatra. Panca says that in Tiga Balai where it is also known as just silat, pencak silat has two forms: nari silat (silat dance), the dance performed by pairs of men at large kumpulan; and bela diri (self-defence). Both of these two forms of silat are taught by Panca and other instructors such as Sutan Mohammad and Siran. Navis (1984 p265) gives a description of Minangkabau pencak silat in which he makes a similar distinction between two forms of pencak silat: one, which he describes as permainan (game, performance) and calls pencak; and another that he characterises as seni bela diri (art of self-defence) and names silat.
week) was there, Panca would turn around and depart. Although they rarely appear in public
together, they did both attend Gandung's *naik tanah* in which Sutan Mohammad played an
important role. At this *kumpulan*, Panca kept his distance from Sutan Mohammad and took a
minor part in proceedings, whereas, at *naik tanah* that Sutan Mohammad does not attend,
Panca often takes a leading role. If Sutan Mohammad arrived at our house while Panca was
also visiting, the two men would endure a few uncomfortable moments until Panca slipped
away. Sutan Mohammad never took the main path to our house, which runs past Panca and
Tambal's house. Rather, he always arrived by a different route and often asked the children
playing outside Bagum's house, which is between Panca's house and our house, if Panca was
visiting us.

The tension between the two men grew as Gandung's health declined and the issue of who
should succeed him as *Batin* of Talang Perigi became a common topic of conversation. A few
years before he died, Gandung chose Tomin as *calon Batin* (successor to a *Batin*) and began
preparing him to become the next *Batin* of Talang Perigi. While Sutan Mohammad, who is
Tomin's *pemaman tua* (senior uncle), supported Gandung's choice of *calon Batin*, Panca, who
suggested that Tomin was not one of Gandung's *keponakan* (nephews), did not and he began
to find himself isolated after Gandung's death when Bagum and Sutan Mohammad started to
organise support for Tomin without consulting Panca. Gandung's exact relationship to Tomin
was a matter of debate for a few months before his death, during which time Panca suggested
that Tomin was ineligible to succeed Gandung, as he was one of Gandung's *cucu* (grandchildren) and not one of his *keponakan* (nephews). Panca suggested a range of
alternative candidates to Tomin. These included Bagum and Anjak's sons, his own son,
Enkeh, and Lancap. After Gandung's death, Sutan Mohammad and Bagum organised several
*kumpulan* in Gandung's old house (to which, Panca claims, he was not invited) where
arrangements were made for Gandung's *naik tambak* (funeral) and Tomin's *pengangkatan Batin*
election and installation as *Batin*). It was also agreed that Sunin should replace Panca as

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44 *Calon* means candidate or applicant and *calon Batin*, which refers to a man who has been chosen to
succeed a *Batin*, is often replaced by a *Batin Muda* (*Muda* means young or deputy). While Tomin was
often referred to as *calon Batin* he was never addressed in this way. When he accompanied Gandung at
*kumpulan*, men who wished to acknowledge his status would usually address him as *Batin Muda*. 
Mangku of Talang Perigi. Panca says he knew nothing about these kumpulan or the decision to have him replaced by Sunin, which, he feels, he should have taken part in. He only heard about his replacement from Tambal, who learned of it from women who had attended these kumpulan. Panca was upset, both by this news and the way that it reached him, and he stayed in his house for several days after hearing it. Panca says that he should have helped select the next Mangku, and although he has no inherited claim on the title, Panca feels that the candidate should have been chosen from among his and Tambal’s descendants. Having helped select the candidate, Panca would also have liked the opportunity to prepare him for the role of Mangku. Bagum said that Panca was upset because he thought that Bagum had sided with Sutan Mohammad against him. Bagum told Panca that this was not the case. Rather, he was simply doing what Gandung’s former anak buah wanted, which was to make Tomin Batin and install a new Mangku, Sunin. Bagum eventually went to visit Panca to explain that, although Tomin’s anak buah wanted Sunin to be Mangku, Panca would keep his title (LKMD) and the salary and uniform that go with it. After Sunin had been chosen to replace him, Panca spent his time on his family’s ladang in Dusun Puan and did not socialise much until after Gandung’s naik tambak, when, once again, he became involved in discussions with other title-holders in Perigi (including Tomin and Sunin) regarding several important issues. These included: the scandal of Rapan’s relationship with Enkeh’s ex-wife (in which Bagum took responsibility for representing Enkeh in dealings with Rapan’s anak buah and which helped to bring Panca and Bagum back on friendly terms); Sulaiman’s appointment as Kepala Desa sementara (temporary Kepala Desa) of Talang Perigi (where Panca showed support for Tomin by voicing his genuine displeasure that Sulaiman had been appointed Kepala Desa sementara); and IDT (Presidential programme on under developed villages), for which (as a government title-holder) Panca will be, potentially, responsible.

In 1993, Tambal’s younger brother Panta, who had been a Dukun (shaman) since the death of his father, Kampai, in the mid-1960s, died a few months after a large swelling appeared on the back of his neck. Kampai was a Dukun in Gedabu for about thirty years and after his death Panta became sick with demam (fever). Panca said that all Dukun and all Kemantan fall ill before becoming shaman and that many, in a state of hilang akal (loss of the ability to reason),
run into the forest before being taken to a shaman for initiation. Panta, who was in his early twenties at that time, said that his *demam* was a sign that he had been chosen by *malaikat* (angel)\(^45\) to replace his father as *Dukun* and that, while he was delirious with fever, his family took him to Sandang, an established *Dukun* in Gedabu\(^46\), who agreed to cure Panta by teaching him *kesinian Dukun* (*the Dukun*’s art)\(^47\). Panta stayed in Sandang’s house for about fourteen days, learning how to become a *Dukun*. At the end of this period, Sandang organised a *kumpulan*, called *tagakkan Dukun baru* (*Dukun*’s initiation)\(^48\) at which he and Panta danced together all night. After this *kumpulan*, Panta was both recognised as a *Dukun* and cured of his *demam*\(^49\) and he began holding his own *kumpulan*, called *tagak bedukun* (or just *bedukun*) where he danced and communicated with *malaikat* at the request of people from Gedabu who wanted him to help cure them of illness. The payment for a shaman’s services varies according to the type of *kumpulan* being organised. While *bedukun* usually cost two cocks and about ten kilos of rice, a *kumpulan* organised by a *Kemantan* may be as much as two cocks, two lengths of white cloth and more than twenty kilos of rice.

Kampai was still alive when Panta married and moved to his wife’s family home, in Durian Cacar, where he lived for about three years until his father died and he himself fell ill. When Tani heard that Panta was ill he went to collect him and bring him to Sandang and, after her husband’s initiation, Panta’s wife was persuaded to follow her husband to Gedabu. At the

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**Footnotes**

45 *Malaikat* is an Arabic word meaning angel. Panta used *malaikat* to describe the beings, which are only visible to him while he is dancing, that intercede between himself and *tuhan* (*god*). For many Talang Mamak men, such as Panca, Eduran (*a Dukun* in Gedabu) and Madun (*a Kemantan* in Perigi), *malaikat* has the same meaning as *nenek moyang* (*ancestors*).

46 Sandang also initiated *Dukun* Eduran of Gedabu and *Dukun* Malau of Sungai Limau. As well as being a *Dukun*, Sandang was also *Batin* of Talang Gedabu.

47 While Panta described his skill as a *Dukun as kesinian* (*artistry, beauty*) other shamans such as Malau (*a Dukun* in Sungai Limau) and Eduran (*a Dukun in Gedabu*) describe their performances as *main Dukun* (*to play Dukun*). Eduran and Malau also use the words *pegang pakai* (*hold [and] use*) to characterise the way they heal people.

48 *Tagakkan* means to make, or stand, upright and *baru* means new or fresh. *Tagakkan Dukun baru* is the name of the *kumpulan* at which a *Dukun* is initiated. I have only attended one *tagakkan Dukun baru*, which was in 1988 when Malau, a *Dukun* in Sungai Limau, initiated Ludin.

49 Panta, Eduran and Malau all called this form of inheritance (*sickness-tuition-initiation*) *pepatah peraturan*. *Pepatah* means proverb or old saying and *peraturan* means regulation or system of organisation.
time that Panta became sick with demam, Tambal and Panca were living with Tani and his family in Talang Gedabu. When Panta began practising as a Dukun in Gedabu they both helped with the preparations for and the performance of Panta’s tagak bedukun. After he received the title Dukun, Panta chose a woman and her husband to be his bintara (assistants) who organised the preparations for Panta’s bedukun and attended to him while he danced. Panca and Tambal are not bintara but, through their relationship with Dukun Panta, they have both acquired a lot of knowledge about bedukun and they still regularly attend kumpulan organised by both Dukun and Kemantan. At these kumpulan they perform different roles: Tambal sits, works and performs with the other women present; and Panca sits, works and performs with the men. I have often seen Panca dancing or playing drums at bedukun and belian (kumpulan organised by Kemantan) and we often talked about these events. Adriani also had several conversations with Tambal and other women about the roles of women at bedukun and belian. Panca says that Dukun perform at four different kinds of kumpulan which are known as palis tawar (death rites), bedukun (healings), orang mau jadi Dukun (initiation)

footnotes

50 Bintara, or bentara, is an old Malay word meaning a military rank, a herald at court or a king’s servants. Wilkinson (1955 Part I, p.121) notes that ‘[i]n the modern Sultanates two bintara are usually employed ... they stand on either side of the ruler and proclaim his wishes’. Nowadays in Tiga Balai all Dukun and Kemantan have two bintara who are husband and wife, at least one of whom, usually the woman, is a descendant of a bintara.

51 Belian is the usual name for all kumpulan at which Kemantan perform. Large belian, such as those held by Madun, attract hundreds of people and rival big gawai as the most important kumpulan in Tiga Balai.

52 Palis means to avert the eyes or look away and tawar means spell or charm. In Tiga Balai palis tawar are held by either a Dukun, or a Kemantan after a death. Dukun Eduran of Gedabu performed at Panta’s palis tawar which was held shortly after his naik tanah.

53 While bedukun is the general name for all kumpulan at which Dukun perform, it is also used specifically to mean just the kumpulan at which Dukun heal people, which are also known as obati (treat, give medicine) as opposed to other kumpulan at which Dukun perform (palis tawar, timbang salah, etc).

54 Orang mau jadi Dukun or tagakkan Dukun baru is the kumpulan at which a Dukun initiates a novice, and it involves twenty-two different dances, each one featuring a specially made piece of equipment, is the most complex kumpulan I have attended.
and *timbang salah* (healings for sick shaman)\(^{55}\) and that, at all of these *kumpulan*, *Dukun* become *pasik* (altered state)\(^{56}\) and dance to the accompaniment of drums and gong.

Both Tambal and Panca usually attended *bedukun* held by Panta and on several occasions they invited Adriani and me to accompany them and watch the *Dukun* dance. In March 1993, the family of a Gedabu woman (who were *anak buah* of Urusan) approached Panta’s *bintara* and asked them to help cure her of *sawan* (epilepsy, fits). After the patient’s family had paid Panta’s *bintara* two chickens and about ten kilos of rice, the patient moved into the *bintara*’s house and preparations began for a *bedukun* which was to be held on a day, chosen by Panta, a week or so after the patient (a young woman who had recently given birth) went to stay in the *bintara*’s house. Panta said that this woman had been weakened during labour and that she had gone into the forest too soon after giving birth (before she had regained her strength) and in her weakened state she had been attacked by *setan iblis* (evil spirits)\(^{57}\). *Dukun* Panta told me that *penyakit* (disease, sickness) are caused by *setan iblis* which enter people’s bodies, usually while they are confused or weak and in the forest, and *ganggu sukma* (disturb the life-spirit or soul)\(^{58}\) which results in illness. The *Dukun* said that while many types of *penyakit* can be cured with just *obat* (medicines), administered by his *bintara*, cases of other illnesses (e.g. *sawan*) must be treated with *bedukun*, at which Panta tries to attract a *malaikat* (angel) to help cure his patient. Panta said that he could get the attention of a *malaikat* by burning *keminyan* (the smoke of which *jaga* [wakes up] *malaikat*) and by offering it cooked rice, *sirih* and flowers (which it likes to *cium* [sniff, smell]). Panta told me that while he was dancing and singing he became *pasik* and could see *malaikat* (which are invisible to most people) and that he could communicate

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footnotes

55 *Timbang* means balance or equalise and *salah* means mistake or offence. In Tiga Balai both *Dukun* and *Kemantan* perform *timbang salah* which are held if a *Dukun* or *Kemantan* falls ill.

56 *Pasik* is the word shaman in Tiga Balai use to describe their state when they are dancing. Panta said that this word was part of *bahasa lama* (old language). I have been unable to locate it in dictionaries.

57 Both *setan* and *iblis* are of Arabic origin and mean the same – *satan*, devil or ‘Prince of Darkness’ (Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.417). While some men, such as Panta and Sutan Mohammad, used the words *setan iblis*, many other people, including Panca, Tambal, Nian and Madun, used the word *hantu* (ghost) to describe invisible beings that entered the body and caused sickness.

58 While *ganggu*, from *menganggu*, means to disturb or annoy, *sukma*, or *sokma*, (which has Sanskrit origins) means ‘the soul that passes from body to body in transmigration’ (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.1119).
with them, through the songs that he sings – in a language that is only available to him when he is pasik. In Panta’s view, malaikat are in communication with tuhan (god) – about whom Talang Mamak know nothing59 – and the presence of a malaikat will usually drive off a setan iblis, or persuade them to depart, and thereby effect a cure. The Dukun also said that any obat his bintara gave the patient became much more potent when a malaikat appeared.

During her time with the Dukun’s assistants, the patient did no work and stayed inside their house where she was bathed in aek limau mentimun (lime-water) and given plant medicines every day. After the date of the bedukun had been fixed, Panta, who had some siding (snares), set in the semak (undergrowth) at the back of Anggar and Gunjah’s house, which he often visited, came to see Panca and Tambal and told them about the forthcoming bedukun. On the appointed day, at around seven in the morning, Panca and Tambal set off for Gedabu leaving Sutan Baru, Enkeh and Anggar to tap rubber. When they arrived at Panta’s bintara’s house, about twenty people were already there – including Panca’s brother, Bunga, who had arrived in Gedabu, from his home in Jerinjing, the previous evening. Tambal entered the house by the dapur (kitchen) and sat in the niang tempuan (rear of a house) while Panca went up lapang tangga (main steps and doorway) and sat in the niang haluan (front of a house) where, laid out on the floor, were lengths of salak (zalacca palm) stem, short pieces of buluh (bamboo), strips of kulit kayu (soft inner bark) and rotan ties, all of which had been collected by the male bintara in order to make alat bedukun (tools or equipment used at bedukun). After greeting the other men, sharing sirih and cigarettes with them and being served a glass of sweet tea, Panca joined them in stripping the salak of its hard green outer skin to leave white, one-inch diameter sticks

footnotes

59 Asmuni (1983 p.58) links the word tuhan, which is probably an ‘artificial variant of tuan [Master, Sir]’ (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.1243), to the religion of the Buddhist Sriwijaya kingdom (see chapter one). Panca, along with all other Talang Mamak I spoke to on the subject, said that Talang Mamak do not know anything about tuhan whose assistance is sought only through the mediation of malaikat, datuk-datuk, or nenek-moyang, with whom shaman can communicate. Many people told me that their lack of knowledge about tuhan meant that they were reluctant to pray to it/her/him, as Muslims do, and often cited this as a reason for not entering Islam. (For a ruler’s view of why Talang Mamak are not Muslim see chapter eight.)
of *gumbar* (peeled *salak* stem) which they cut to length and pinned together to make a *balai* — a roofed but wall-less model building about 2 feet by 2 feet by 2 feet\(^60\).

While Panca was busy making *balai*, Tambal and the other women prepared *bubur* (sweet of boiled *pulut* flour), *lamang* (*pulut* steamed in bamboo), *amping* (sweet of roasted rice) and *bertih* (parched rice), small portions of which they wrapped in banana leaf and put inside the *balai*. They also used flowers (*bunga merah*, *bunga kuning*, *silasih* [basil], *mayang* [palm blossom], etc) and leaves (*pisang* [banana], *nangka* [jackfruit], *pandan* [pandanus], etc), which had been collected by the female *bintara*, to make arrangements, some of which they put inside the *balai* and some of which were put aside to be used in the evening by Panta. This work carried on throughout the day, with a break for rice at noon. By late afternoon, the *balai* was finished and it had been put in *ruang tengah* (mid section of a house) on a small platform, about a metre high, which had a fringe of *pandan* leaves around its edge. More *pandan* leaves were hung from a length of *rotan* that some men had stretched across *ruang tengah*, directly behind the *balai*, between *tiang* (pillars) of *gun telak* and *mentelak* (both floor-beams), at the same height as the fringe of leaves around the base of the *balai*. This *pucuk* (curtain of leaves)\(^61\), which hung down to the floor, screened off about one third of the house — at the opposite end of the building to the *dapur* (kitchen).

By about six o’clock the *balai* was ready and Panca went outside to look at the stalls (run by *Melayu* from Petonggan) that had been put up around the perimeter of the *halaman*. Here he met Sutan Baru and Enkeh, who had just arrived and were watching *main dadu* (a dice game). Later on, they intended to go *betandang*. Panca also met Bunga outside who told him that Panta had arrived and together the brothers went back into the house and sat down in *ruang* footnotes

\(^{60}\) In *Tiga Balai* the word *balai* has two meanings, one which refers to the wall-less roofed huts that some people construct on their *halaman* and another that signifies the miniature *balai* made for *bedukun*. While all *balai* built for *bedukun* have only one storey, there are variations in design and size between both *balai* built for different *kumpulan* and *balai* built in different *talang*. For example *balai* used at *tagakkan Dukun baru* are longer than other *balai* and the *balai* used at the initiation of Ludin in Sungai Limau was described as being longer than those used in other *talang*.

\(^{61}\) In both Indonesian and Malay *pucuk*, or *pucok*, is generally used to mean shoot, leafbud, or new leaves and, while it has this meaning in *Tiga Balai*, it is also used to refer to the leaf curtains used at *bedukun* and *bellan*. 
haluan, next to the Dukun who was chewing sirih and smoking. The three men chatted until rice was served and, after they had eaten, Panta lay down to rest and Bunga and Panca moved towards the balai and sat down near mentelak where the bintara had laid out drums for the night’s music. While Panta slept his bintara mixed up a bowl of tepung tawar62 (rice and medicinal plants ground to a paste) and passed all the equipment the Dukun would use through keminyan smoke before laying it out on a mat.

By about ten o’clock, preparations were complete and Panta got up. With his male bintara’s help, he began to change his clothes, putting on a pair of blue and white striped trousers, several white sarung, and a head-dress. Panta wore one sarung like a knee-length skirt over his trousers and wound another one around his waist like a cummerbund. His head-dress, which Panta said played an important part in his becoming pasik, and which is called karang suntung, consisted of beads and leaf and flower arrangements wound into a length of white cloth which was wrapped around his head. After the Dukun was dressed, his male bintara used a stick of gumbar to paint white tepung tawar dots on Panta’s arms, face, feet and upper body after which the bintara also marked his own face and the faces of his wife (the female bintara), men playing the drums and other people sitting nearby. While this was going on Panca, Bunga and a few other men began to play gendang (large single-ended drum), and katabung (small double-ended drum) and a woman went and sat behind pucuk where she kept time with a tawak-tawak (gong) that had been suspended from the roof. When the music started the female bintara sat in front of, and facing, the balai, opposite the woman playing tawak-tawak, and her husband guided Panta, who had his head covered with a white cloth, over to sit down between her and the balai. By this time all kerosene lamps had been extinguished, leaving only damar (tree-resin) lamps and lilin (candles), which had been put on the balai, alight. As the lights went down, the male bintara was given a large bowl of red-hot embers, from the kitchen fire, which he put on the floor in front of the balai, and on which he began burning keminyan. As the smoke began to rise, the Dukun began to sing and women (chiefly the female bintara) joined in his song by

footnotes

62 Tepung means flour and tawar means charm or spell. Tepung tawar is made by soaking beras (husked rice) in water and then grinding it with the following medicinal plants: setawar (Costus speciosus), sedgingin (Bryophyllum calycinum), bangun-bangun (Coleus amboinicus), setajam (Erioglossum edule) and pulih (Alstonia scholaris), to form a watery paste which is also used at bedukun and bellian to decorate shaman’s bodies. For information about tepung tawar and its medicinal use in Riau, see Effendy (1986 pp.423–442).
repeating certain lines. After his song, the house fell quiet, except for the jerky, repetitive beat of gong and drum, and in the dark and smoky atmosphere Panta, who still had his head covered, rose up and began a shuffling dance towards and away from the balai (around which bertih had been scattered) occasionally stopping in front of it and, holding onto the pucuk fringe around the balai, placing the sole of first one foot and then the other onto the red-hot coals that were in a bowl on the floor.

After dancing like this for a while Panta threw back his veil and he began to sway and stumble and Panca, who was not playing drums at the time, stood up and joined the male bintara in supporting and dancing with the Dukun, who quickly became unable to stand and was taken to sit between his female bintara and the balai where his head was again covered with a white cloth. Panta sat quietly for about ten minutes, during which time he smoked a keminyan cigarette and chewed sirih, until his female bintara called out and he stood up again and repeated the dance he had just performed. After Panta had danced and rested a few times, he began to sing as he danced and his male bintara, Panca, and other men sitting near the drums joined in by repeating certain lines. While he was singing, his male bintara gave Panta a cock which the Dukun held in front of the balai and encouraged to peck at the rice the women had put inside it. As soon as the cock pecked, Panta stamped his foot. Panta told me afterwards that the cock’s peck was a tanda (sign) that a malaikat was present and was willing to help. While Panta was dancing and singing with the cock in his hands, the patient came from behind pucuk and sat, together with her baby, on the ruang haluan side of the balai where they were covered with a white cloth. Panta took the cock over to the woman and rubbed the bird against both her veiled head and the child’s body after which the Dukun began to stagger and had to be supported by his male bintara and Panca who took the cock away and led Panta over to sit between his female bintara and the balai. After a rest, the female bintara called out again and Panta returned to his dance, approached his patient and imitated the cock’s pecking action over her, then he removed the white veil that was covering her and her infant and put

footnotes

Panca told me that he doesn’t understand the language used by Dukun in their songs and that he, like other men, simply repeats the sounds of the words the Dukun uses without knowing their meaning. Panca also told me that he also doesn’t understand much of the language used by Tambal in many of the songs she sings, usually at night, to help put children – nowadays Mister Goh – to sleep.
busa isarat (invisible spittle), which he took from the back of the roof of his mouth, on both of their foreheads.

Leaving his patient sitting near the balai, Panta continued dancing and singing, with periodic breaks, throughout the night until just before dawn when, while the Dukun was sitting quietly with his head covered, his male bintara approached him, and took off his veil. Then the bintara clapped his hands, stamped his foot and blew on Panta's face which jerked the Dukun back to life and he began slowly taking off his head-dress and changing back into normal clothes. After this, Panca (who had been dancing, playing drums, chewing sirih and smoking all night), together with a few other men, got up, went outside and walked off into the trees around the halaman. They reappeared, a few minutes later, with two cocks that had been tethered there all night. With little preparation, and no betting, the birds were fought on the halaman, the loser being given to Panta who took it home. After the cock fight, Panca went back inside where he and Bunga picked up the balai, carried it outside and threw it into the semak beyond the edge of the halaman. Panca then returned to the house and went over to ruang tempuan and spoke to Tambal who, like many other people, was just waking up. After the women had made and served tea and Panca had refreshed his sirih wad, he and Tambal went home.

While Tambal always accompanied her husband to bedukun at which her brother danced, she does not go to either as many bedukun, held by other Dukun, or as many belian as Panca who regularly attends, on his own, both bedukun organised by Dukun Eduran of Gedabu and belian held by Kemantan Madun. Panca has also been to kumpulan presided over by a female shaman, who lives in Durian Cacar and who has the title Diah64. Unlike most other government title-holders in Tiga Balai, Panca enjoys taking part in Madun's belian and on these occasions he seems to get on well with the other men present – who are mostly anak buah of Rapan. Madun specialises in large belian which are usually held after poor rice harvests and which, in

footnotes

64 This Diah is called Miting and she is the only Diah in Tiga Balai. She says that she inherited the title from her grandmother. While Miting told me that according to adat there has only ever been one Diah in the whole of Tiga Balai, (whose line of inheritance she represents), Biduan said that, when he was a child, Sungai Limau had its own Diah but that, at present, no-one had taken up the inheritance of the Diah of Sungai Limau. I have never seen a Diah perform but Miting told me that she is a female equivalent of a Kemantan and that she holds belian at which she dances with other women in exactly the same way as a Kemantan does.
Madun’s words, aim to membaiki perahu padi (repair the rice boat). He also said that while Dukun obati orang (treat sick people), Kemantan, such as himself, memuja penunggu padi (worship the rice guardian) which they do by calling on the assistance of datuk-datuk (ancestors), who, he says, first brought rice to Tiga Balai from Minangkabau – whose names he is afraid to mention. Madun began holding these belian every year in 1988, when the recent droughts first began to affect rice-crops. He says that before 1988 he had last held this type of belian in 1968 when rice harvests were also poor. Madun says that, at belian, he dances on behalf of everyone in Perigi at the request of its inhabitants who collect Madun’s fee (usually a few chickens, a length of white cloth and about twenty kilos of rice) and take it to Madun’s bintara, Kilan and Kelaki, who make the necessary arrangements for Madun’s belian which are usually held in their large house, which is near Madun’s home in Kampung Tengah.

News that Madun is planning a belian spreads quickly through Perigi and while some men (such as Sutan Mohammad and Bagum) are sceptical of Madun’s powers and do not attend, many other people, including Panca, look forward to Madun’s belian and make a point of going. Even though Madun had held a belian in March 1993 (after a poor harvest), he was asked to perform again in September of that year when very dry weather was inhibiting padi growth. On the morning of the day chosen by Madun for this belian, Panca went to the house of Kilan (Madun’s male bintara) and Kelaki (his female bintara) where he helped other men – all anak buah of Rapan – make sticks of gumbar ready for the construction of a balai which, unlike

footnotes

65 While in both Indonesian and Malay belian means shaman or sorcerer, in Tiga Balai it is the general name for all kumpulan at which Kemantan dance, which include tagakkan Kemantan bau (initiation of a Kemantan – which I have never seen), timbang salah (healing for a sick Kemantan), palis tawar (funeral rites) and bayar kaul (repaying ancestors for their help). Belian is also used specifically to mean kumpulan held by Kemantan in order to improve rice harvests.

66 While Panta used the word malaikat (angel) to describe the single invisible being that came to his assistance at bedukun, many shaman, including Madun, used the words datuk-datuk or nenek moyang (both ancestors) to refer to the many invisible beings who help them. Madun maintains that the datuk-datuk and the nenek moyang who come to his belian are the sukma (souls, spirits) of the men who held his titles before them.

67 While Madun was reluctant to give the names of either his ancestors or penunggu padi, Gandung, who, as well as being a Batin, was also a trained bintara said that penunggu padi was called Putri (princess) Mandu Si Tambunurai.
those used by *Dukun*, has two storeys and is called *gulang-gulang*[^68]. Once the *gulang-gulang* was under construction Panca helped to make a *lancang* (model boat[^69]) by covering a bamboo framework, about one and a half feet long and six inches wide, with bark cloth.

Panca spent all day at Kilan and Kelaki’s preparing for Madun’s dance and, as the day progressed, more and more people arrived to help with preparations. By about five o’clock, the *gulang-gulang* was finished, the *lancang* had been made and both of them were being filled with rice, *sirih* and flower arrangements by the women present who had also been busy all day, on their side of the house, cooking and getting ready for the *belian*. While the finishing touches were being added to *gulang-gulang* and *lancang*, a *pucuk* (palm-leaf curtain) about two metres high, was suspended, parallel to *guntelak* and *mentelak*, between *gulang-gulang*, which had been put in the middle of the house on a raised platform, and the wall opposite the *dapur*. Unlike *pucuk* erected for *bedukun*, which run perpendicular to, and between, *guntelak* and *mentelak*, this *pucuk* divided *ruang tengah* (mid-part of a house) into two halves with the men on one side of the *pucuk*, in *ruang haluan*, and the women, in *ruang tempuan*, on the other. Soon after *gulang-gulang* and *pucuk* were in position, the *lancang* was ready and Panca sat back and watched while younger men scaled the walls and suspended it from the roof, about a metre off the floor, on the side of the *balai* facing *ruang haluan*.

When the *alat belian* (equipment used at a *belian*) were ready and in position, Panca went outside, leaving the *bintara* to make final preparations. By this time it was beginning to get dark and many people were on the large *halaman* which Panca walked across in order to look at the half-dozen or so *kedai* (stalls) that had been set up by people from Petonggan around its perimeter, which were illuminated by powerful *strongking* (pressurised kerosene lamps). At these *kedai*, cigarettes, tea, coffee, *anggur* (factory-produced fruit wine), other bottled drinks

[^68]: While in Minangkabau *gulang-gulang* means ‘a temporary shelter for workers in rice fields’, in Malay *menggulang-gulang* means ‘to raise an altar for sacrifice’ (see Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.379).

[^69]: *Lancang* (also called *perahu*) are fast sailing vessels which were often used in warfare. In Tiga Balai miniature *lancang* (about two feet long) are made for both *bedukun* and *belian* where they are used to transport offerings of rice, *keminyan*, etc to *malaikat* or *nenek moyang*. Panca also calls these boats *lancang kuning* (yellow *lancang*). Unlike *balai* and *gulang-gulang*, which are discarded in the morning after a *kumpulan*, a *lancang* is kept in the house of a *Dukun* or *Kemantan* until a new one is made.
and a variety of both home-made and manufactured sweets and cakes were on sale. Under the
light and shelter provided by these stalls, card and dice games were being run by Melayu
gamblers – many of which would go on throughout the night. While the night’s gambling
was getting under way, unmarried men were gathering in front of the stalls and groups of
unmarried women were forming around the foot of the steps to the kitchen. For as long as
they remained near the house, these two groups kept separate and exchanged only glances and
shy smiles across the halaman. However, later on, after they had moved into the forest for
betandang, they mixed freely.

Panca didn’t spend long on the halaman, where he squatted down in the cool evening air
chatting and sharing cigarettes and sirih with other men. By about seven o’clock he was back
inside the house where Madun, who had arrived about six-thirty, was lying down resting.
Several hours later, after everyone in the house had eaten rice and had drunk a cup of tea or
coffee, Madun, with Kilan’s help, began to get himself ready, putting on one white sarung,
worn full-length, wrapping another around his waist like a cummerbund and winding a third
around his head. After Madun was dressed, Kilan decorated his face, upper body, arms, hands
and feet with white tepung tawar markings. The Kemantan’s costume was completed with the
addition of three large metal gelang (bangles)70, which he wore on his left wrist, and several
strings of manik-manik (beads and small bells) which were wound into his headband. While
Madun was getting ready, many young women were busy, on their side of the pucuk, dressing
up in their finest sarung, baju batina (blouses) and jewellery. When the Kemantan was almost
ready, kerosene lamps were extinguished (leaving only the light given by damar [tree-resin]
lamps) and Panca and a few other men started playing drums. One of Madun’s drums is a long
gendang (single-ended drum) which, according to Panca, is the largest in Tiga Balai and was
brought to Perigi by orang Minang (people from Minangkabau) for safe-keeping during a war
with Aceh.

footnotes

70 Wolters (1970 pp.101–102) translates gelang as ‘armlet’ or ‘anklet’ and suggests that they had ‘magical
associations’. Madun’s gelang are made from an alloy which probably contains silver and/or tin.
When he was ready, Madun left ruang haluan and crossed over to ruang tempuan, on the other side of pucuk, where he sat down near gulang-gulang with his head covered. While the Kemantan was sitting behind pucuk, Kilan burnt large lumps of keminyan, filling the house with perfumed smoke. After about half an hour the monotony of the drums was broken by the sound of Madun's voice as he began to sing a song, some lines of which were repeated by Kelaki and other women sitting near him. When he had finished singing Madun uncovered his head, got to his feet and started dancing, jerking his hands out so that his gelang clanged together in time with the drums. The Kemantan danced through pucuk, into the full view of the men, and approached gulang-gulang, around which bertih (parched rice) had been scattered. He then began shuffling back and forth in front of gulang-gulang until Kilan gave him a cock which he took over to gulang-gulang where, after pressing the back of its head to his face, he thrust the bird out in front of him so that it could peck at the rice in gulang-gulang. As soon as the cock pecked, Madun stamped his foot, Kilan took the bird from him and the Kemantan began a circular dance in front of gulang-gulang, his gelang keeping time and his manik-manik tinkling as he shuffled round. After a few turns, two young men got up and started menarikan gayung71 (pole dance) by dancing, backwards, in front of Madun who, after following the young men around in front of gulang-gulang a few times, began to stagger and fell down – a few days later Madun told me that he had fallen because one of his datuk-datuk had touched his foot. Kilan and the two young men helped the Kemantan stand up and took him back to his mat (on the women's side of pucuk), where they sat him down and covered his head. After a while Madun took his veil off, smoked rokok keminyan (keminyan cigarettes) and chewed sirih before dragging himself forward, still in a sitting position, across the floor through pucuk and into ruang tengah where Kilan had placed an earthenware pot full of aek gelang (fermented drink)72 some of which Madun drank through a straw before returning to his mat. Madun kept up this routine – periods of sitting quietly interspersed with trips across the house for a

footnotes

71 Although menarikan gayung means to dance with a quarterstaff or pole, these men held nothing while they danced. However, they did extend their arms out horizontally as if they were carrying a pole across the back of their neck.

72 Aek gelang, which is also known as aek pengasih, or sayar, is drunk by men and women at gawai, and by Kemantan at belian. It is made by fermenting fruit in green bamboo and is usually served in an inas (earthenware vase), whose neck has been closed with nangka (jackfruit) leaves, and drunk through a reed straw.
drink— for about two hours after which the drums, which had fallen quiet, restarted and
Madun covered his head once more. About ten minutes later, the Kemantan took off his veil,
got to his feet and began to dance, coming through pucuk and circling anti-clockwise, shaking
his bangles back and forth and, with each step, slowly dragging the soles of his feet along the
floor, which was covered in bertih, and then giving a little stamp in time with the repetitive
beat of the drums. As Madun approached pucuk from the men’s side, he stopped in front of it,
grasped a few leaves in each hand and held on to them for a minute or two, still shuffling,
stamping and swaying in time to the drums, before passing through the curtain. After a few
turns like this Madun returned to the gulang-gulang where he sat down with his head veiled
until Kelaki called out, after which Madun uncovered his head, stood up and began to dance
again. As he passed through the pucuk this time, women began to join on behind him, in
single file, and Madun lead this swaying line of women back through the pucuk and into the
full view of the men. The first woman to berarak (progress in single file)\(^{73}\) with the Kemantan
held onto the back of his waistband and followed his movements. Other women joined on by
holding lightly onto the waist of the woman in front, keeping as close as possible, and shuffling
and swaying in time with Madun. The Kemantan and the line of twenty or so women
following him snaked across ruang tengah and circled round so that, at times, Madun was
directly behind the last of the women. After several circuits Madun stopped in front of the
lancang which he swung back and forth across the room three times before continuing with the
dance. Madun told me that although there are no rules governing the amount of times he
should dance at a belian, he has to make three visits to a lancang which he must swing three
times at each visit. Apart from regular breaks, when Madun returned to sit in front of gulang-
gulang where he covered his head, took a few sips of aek gelang, had some sirih and a keminyan
cigarette, the Kemantan and his women followers danced throughout the night. Most of the
women dancers were unmarried and were dressed in fine clothes. After each round of
dancing, while Madun was sitting with his head covered, some of them went outside to meet
bujang (bachelors) who had watched them dance and wanted to go betandang with them.

footnotes

\(^{73}\) This type of dance has two names: berarak, which means processional progress in single file; and
merantah, meaning to stamp the feet rhythmically.
While some people lay down and went to sleep and others sat dozing, Panca and the other men sitting near gulang-gulang took it in turns to keep the drum beats going all night. In the first light of dawn, after Madun's performance had been brought to an end by Kilan when he blew on the Kemantan's face, clapped and stamped his foot, a few of these men went outside where they fought a pair of cocks. After this, Panca, who had stayed inside, watched as gulang-gulang was taken outside to be thrown away and the lancang was tucked behind one of the rafters. Then he had a cup of tea, some sirih and a cigarette before walking home.

During the last few weeks of our stay Panca said that he wanted to take us to visit the perigi (pool) from which Talang Perigi gets its name. One morning, just before we left, Panca, Adriani and I left Tran and walked down the road ke tobing (towards the river)74 until we reached Balai Desa where we left the main path and walked for about a mile through forest until we came to a large durian orchard in the middle of which was a flooded pool about four meters square with stakes marking its corners. The whole area around the perigi was knee-deep in water as the result of heavy rain the night before. Panca said the pool was often flooded and never dried out. Panca also told us that this was the perigi made by Si Kelopak who had founded Talang Perigi75 and that he wanted to burn some keminyan and recite a tawar (spell) to guard Adriani and myself from misfortune while we were away from Talang Perigi. He then began to prepare the things he would need. First he cut a stick and made an ancak (bamboo stand)76 which he stuck in the mud in the bottom of the pool. Then he lit a small fire and made a limas (tray)77 from banana leaf.

footnotes

74 Tobing, or tebing, is the word usually used by Talang Mamak to describe both the bank of the Inderagiri and the Melayu settlements on it. Travelling towards the river is known as ke tobing, while travelling towards the interior is known as ke darat, darat being the word commonly used to describe the land beyond the swamp that borders the Inderagiri.

75 Si Kelopak is one of the sons of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang who began the Tiga Balai settlement (see chapter three).

76 Ancak are made by cross-splitting a stick or length of bamboo down half its length and wedging the splits open to form a level platform onto which limas can be placed.

77 Limas are small trays which are only used for burning keminyan. They are about four inches long and two inches wide and are made from folded banana leaf held in shape with bamboo pins.
After the fire was sufficiently hot Panca put a few red embers in the limas and put it on top of the ancak. Taking some keminyan from a small bag he was carrying, Panca began to crumble it onto the embers in the limas and, as the smoke drifted over the still water, he called us over to stand close to him while he said these words: 'Loyal kings who live on kurendan hill and who were the first to plant rice in Perigi, you, who guard over Talang Perigi, prop up the mine of tradition and custom inherited by the Batin of Perigi [namely] Manggis, Si Jadam, Suman, Nulan, Gandung'. As we stood watching the dying embers and the last wafts of smoke Panca gave me the remains of his keminyan which he told me to keep and burn in times of kesialan (misfortune). Wading out of the pool, Panca led the way home, pausing occasionally, as most people do when walking in the forest, in order to remove the pacet (leeches) that attached themselves to our legs and feet.

footnotes

78 Panca's words were 'Meraja setia diam di bukit kurendan bendang ke Perigi asal, yang menjaga di Talang Perigi sukung tambang adat pusaka Batin Perigi'.
CHAPTER SEVEN

NIAN

Adriani and I got to know Nian and her two daughters, Likur and Nar, when we became neighbours in Tran Perigi. Nian, who has been divorced for several years, has often found it difficult to grow, or otherwise obtain, enough rice and she is among Tran Perigi’s poorest residents. During our time in Tran, we employed Nian to help weed our garden. She takes her tajak (small hoe) and parang (machete) with her almost everywhere she goes and says that she has spent much of her life najak (weeding) and that this type of work is now kabiasaan (habit, daily routine) for her. With Nian working in the garden and Likur and Nar usually playing around our back porch, we got to know them very well. While she worked, Nian chewed sirih and smoked cigarettes which she made from a mixture of tobacco and keminyan rolled in newspaper. After eating lunch, which was usually cooked by Adriani and Likur, Nian, Likur, Nar and Adriani would go inside the house for a siesta, where Nian usually entertained the others with stories and songs.

Nian, who never appeared angry and who likes joking and playing with her daughters, also enjoys conversation, and she was happy to talk about subjects, such as hantu (ghosts), that many people were too takut (afraid) to discuss and kawin (sex), that some people were too malu (shy, embarrassed) to talk about. In fact, Nian says that, as a young woman, she was attacked by hantu and that this was one of the main reasons why the only man she ever loved, Junan, divorced her.

While Nian, Likur and Nar visited us nearly every day and spent many evenings with us, we rarely went to their house as Nian said that she was malu about its condition, particularly the floor which is crumbling away and is riddled with holes. While we were living in Tran, Nian’s son, Tomin, became Batin of Talang Perigi and Nian hopes that, amongst other things, he will be able to help her raise a planked floor in her house.

Nian was born in around 1950 in the Kampung Gedang (another name for Kampung Tengah) region of Talang Perigi and she lived there as a child with her mother, Cahaya Intan, her
Nian recalls that her father did not plant any rubber trees and that he spent much of the time he had free from ladang work collecting rotan from which he made nyiru (winnowing trays), ambung (woven back-packs) and kapuk (rice baskets). Sariyang took his finished rotan products to Keloyang where he exchanged them for pottery, metal goods or cash. While Sariyang and Cahaya Intan cleared and farmed their own ladang, Cahaya Intan was also able to get work menjawat (weeding other people’s rice fields), for which she was paid in padi – she was able to weed other people’s fields because she could rely on her five daughters to weed her own household’s ladang. When Nian was about twelve her father, Sariyang, died leaving his widow, Cahaya Intan, to care for Nian and her five sisters. After living for a couple of years without a husband, Cahaya Intan married a man called Rinti who became Nian’s bapak tiri (step-father). Rinti, who was born in Perigi, had access to rubber trees through his widowed mother who lived nearby. He had already been married and divorced prior to his marriage to Cahaya Intan and he had helped his father plant and tap rubber when he was living in his parents’ house, both before his first marriage and after his divorce. When Rinti’s father died, which was shortly before Rinti married Cahaya Intan, Rinti took charge of the tapping of his mother’s trees. By cutting his mother’s rubber, for a two-thirds share, Rinti was able to bring a regular supply of cash into Cahaya Intan’s household and he also worked hard with his wife and her daughters on their ladang which he planted with rubber seedlings after each harvest.

Around the time of Sariyang’s death Nian began accompanying her elder sisters when they went into the forest after dark at kumpulan to talk to bujang (bachelors). Nian recalls that she was takut (scared) and malu (shy) when she first began going with her sisters to meet young men and, on these occasions, Nian stayed close by her more experienced sisters and did not speak to any boys. Rather, she watched, listened to, and accepted cigarettes from, her sisters — who got them from bujang. If her sisters went off to spend the night with bujang, Nian

footnotes

1 Nian does not keep in regular contact with her sisters and she rarely mentioned them in conversations with Adriani and me. If she did talk about them, whether as individuals or as a group, she usually referred to them as kakak (elder sisters) without mentioning their names.

2 Menjawat means to hold or receive something and Nian said that it described her mother’s use of tajak (short hoe used for weeding) (See Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.452).
returned to her mother, who was usually sitting in the house where the kumpulan was being held. Nian stayed quietly by her sister's side at kumpulan for over a year before she began betandang by herself.

One day, when she was about fourteen, Nian was terkejut (surprised, shocked) by the arrival of her first datang darah (arrival of blood or menstruation) which no one had warned her about. Nian knew that women menstruated but neither her mai (mother) nor her kakak (sisters) spoke to Nian about it or told her what to expect. When Nian told them what had happened, her mother and her sisters talked to Nian about datang darah and explained what to do when it occurred. After the arrival of her datang darah, Nian began to have more confidence with bujang and she started to accept cigarettes from them at kumpulan. Along with other tina (girls) from Perigi, Nian would often dance at belian held by Kemantan Madun and, after dancing, she would go outside to meet tan (boys) who had seen her dance and wanted to go betandang with her.

Most people wear their best clothes to kumpulan and both boys and girls who want to go betandang try to look their best. For boys, this, ideally, means some form of footwear (preferably shoes not sandals), long trousers, shirt and headgear, some boys wearing songkok (black velvet hat) and others preferring to wrap a short piece of cloth round their heads. Girls usually wear a colourful sarung and a sleeveless blouse. They also give their faces a dust with white powder (either bought or made from rice flour), redden their lips (with either bought

footnotes

3 Tina is a shortened form of batina, or bertina, which means female or mother-like. In Indonesian, the use of bertina is usually restricted to descriptions of female animals, but, in Tiga Balai, tina or batina is used to indicate both female humans and female animals.

4 Tan is a shortened form of jantan which means male or masculine and, in Indonesian, jantan is used both in descriptions of male animals and in discussions of masculinity. In Tiga Balai, tan or jantan is used to indicate male humans as well as male animals.

5 Although I have never been betandang, I have, on many occasions, been to the place where boys and girls meet at kumpulan, which I have only ever visited in the company of bujang from Perigi, such as Mijan (Gandung's grandson), Mungkir (Jidan's son) and Sutan Baru and Enkeh (Panca's sons), who seemed to enjoyed watching the girls' reactions to my presence, a few of whom ran off into the trees at my approach. The following account of what happens when boys meet girls at kumpulan is based on my own limited experience and conversations Adriani and I have had with both women, including Nian, Sariyah, Bainar and Wis (Anjak's daughters) and Seset (Tambil's daughter), and men such as the bujang mentioned above.
lipstick or *rotan* flowers) and put on a variety of jewellery (rings, bracelets, belts) which is usually made from aluminium. At *gawai*, *belian* and *bedukun*, which all take place at night, girls wait along a dark path in the forest (chosen for this purpose beforehand by girls who live in the vicinity) usually about a hundred meters or so from the house in which the *kumpulan* is being held. Here the *tina* stand, talking in low voices, in groups of three or four. Once the girls have established their positions, small groups of *bujang* arrive and begin walking along this path, smoking and saying ‘*lalu*’ (pass by) as they approach each cluster of girls. All the boys carry some form of light, usually a torch or a cigarette lighter, which they use, without shining it in the girls’ faces, to try to find out who they are walking past. As a result, the area around this path can be seen from some distance because of the continual flickering, on and off, of lighters, matches and torches. Most of the boys are looking for particular girls and, if a boy finds the girl he is looking for, he will try to engage her in conversation. Many girls also want to meet certain boys and may signal to them as they walk past. If they are meeting for the first time, boys and girls usually begin talking to each other by reciting *pantun* (short verses) in quiet voices. If a boy stops and recites a verse to a girl who is not interested in him, she usually ignores him and one of the girls she is standing with answers. Similarly if a girl attracts the attention of a boy who does not want to go *betandang* with her he will not stop to talk to

footnotes

6 *Pantun* are common in both Malay (see Pe Amanriza and Nizami Jamil 1986), where they have four lines, and Minangkabau, where they have between two and twelve lines. According to Navis (1984 pp.232–242), *pantun* (proverbs, parables) are the principle elements in Minangkabau literature which were also used in daily conversations, in bargaining between traders, during mourning and in chants used while working. Navis (ibid.) lists several types of *pantun*, including *pantun adat* (proverbs about *adat*), *pantun tua* (proverbs containing advice from the old to the young) and *pantun muda* which, like *pantun* in Tiga Balai, are exchanged between unmarried boys and girls. Nian gave us several exchanges one of which follows below along with a tentative translation.

Boys

‘*Senang pandan di labuh, Di hati dengan mata tebuang. Badan nan amuh, Berderai – derai di bantal, Di hati belum menderai, Bercerai-cerai di mata, Dihati belum dicerai.*’

‘A pandanus stem stands alone, Watched by heart and eye, Body that desires, Weeps tears into the pillow, But the heart is not yet shattered. Although they are out of each other’s sight, In the heart they are joined.’

Girls

‘*Aek dalam batang belahan, Banyaklah hanta manguliling, Datang juragi rampak juga, Takanan dihati dapat ditahan, Kalau dimata ada pendinding, Batang dan hati rampak juga.*’

‘A pair of bamboos full of water, surrounded by magical charms, If they get pierced their contents pour out, But pressing the heart can stop the flow, Even if they are out sight, Body and heart pour out their contents as well.’

Several older Talang Mamak, including Nian and Panca, said that in the past *pantun* like the above were used more commonly and that most people memorised many verses, while nowadays most people know only a few verses.
her. Once a girl and boy, who are attracted to each other, have exchanged a few verses of pantun, they usually move off the path and into the forest where they squat or sit down close to each other, continue their whispered conversation and smoke the cigarettes the boy has brought with him. Nian says that in the past sirih played a much more important part in betandang than it does now and that the offering and sharing of sirih between boyfriend and girlfriend took place every time they met. Nowadays, some young people are not fond of sirih and cigarettes have come to replace it as the usual gift from a boy to a girl. If a couple want more privacy they leave the path and slip off to a deserted pondok (hut) on a nearby ladang where they spend the night, returning to the kumpulan at first light. As most large kumpulan take place in the period between harvesting padi (December – January) and clearing a new ladang (March – April), many pondok are deserted but still in a good state of repair.

Several men, including Sutan Mohammad, Bagum and Panca recall that, as a young woman, Nian was muli (pretty, beautiful) and that she attracted the attentions of many young men, one of whom was Umar, who tried to persuade Nian to go betandang with him, on several occasions, before he married a woman from Talang Gedabu. Nian remembers Umar’s advances and says that she refused to go betandang with him because she was too scared to go out with a Melayu man. After Nian had been betandang with a couple of different Talang Mamak bujang, she met a young man called Junan, who was about the same age (fifteen) and they became regular betandang partners at kumpulan, often spending the night together in a pondok. After they had known each other for about a year Junan began to visit Nian at night in her mother’s home. By this time all her elder sisters had already received nocturnal male visitors at home and Nian knew what to expect the first time she heard Junan playing his gonggung (bamboo Jew’s harp) outside the ruang tempuan (rear of a house). Junan’s gonggung woke Nian, her mother and her sisters, one of whom was sent outside by Cahaya Intan to see who the caller was. Nian’s sister returned alone and told Cahaya Intan and Rinti, Nian’s stepfather, who had also woken up, that Junan had come to see Nian. After hearing this Rinti, went back to sleep and Cahaya Intan told Nian to go and talk to Junan who could come in if Nian wanted him to. Nian went out and invited Junan to naik rumah (go up the steps and into a house) and showed him to her kelambu (mosquito net) which he entered. Nian then went to the dapur (kitchen) where she got the ingredients of sirih (betel) and some food and drink which she took to Junan who was waiting quietly in her kelambu. Nian joined Junan in the privacy of her kelambu and, after she had offered him refreshment, Junan took out
the cigarettes he had brought for her and they began a whispered exchange that went on late into the night. In the very early morning, Junan quietly said good-bye to Nian, left the house and went home. While unmarried couples do have sex, falling pregnant while not being married is a source of shame and is punishable by hukuman (judgement by a Batin) – Panca and Tambal’s daughter, Seset, was fined by Batin Gandung for having become pregnant before her marriage to Cotek. Nian says that it is her responsibility to ensure that she does not get pregnant while she is not married. Contraception (pill, condom, injection) has been freely available from the Puskesmas (clinic) in Petonggan for several years and many, mostly married, Talang Mamak women use some form of contraception – most often the pill. Bagum and Anjak’s daughter, Wis, who became pregnant while on a course of contraceptive pills in 1993, said that, like most other Talang Mamak women who use the pill, she often forgets to take it.

As Nian’s relationship with Junan developed and he became a regular caller at their home, Nian’s family no longer took much interest in his visits and she could go outside and invite him in without waking anyone else.

Both Bagum and Panca said that if one of their daughters has a male caller they want to make sure that he is neither one of their wife’s sisters’ sons nor one of their own brothers’ sons, as they are both considered sumbang (incestuous) in relation to their daughters. Both Panca and Bagum said that, provided a nocturnal male caller is not sumbang, they take no interest in his visit and they leave it to their wives and daughters to entertain him. In Tiga Balai, sumbang has two meanings. Firstly and most commonly, it is used to describe the salah (offence, mistake) of bunting tak belaki (pregnancy outside marriage) for which, nowadays, women are fined by Batin. When Panca and Tambal’s daughter, Seset, became pregnant before her marriage to Cotek, Panca, as Seset’s representative, appeared before Gandung who fined him tiga tahil sepaha (sixteen plates and four bowls). Secondly, sumbang is also used in the context of discussions about the suitability of marriage, or sexual, partners, to mean incestuous or forbidden relationships. Generally speaking, members of the same household are not talked about as being actual, or potential, sexual or marriage partners – Rapan and his step-daughter being the notable exception – and the term sumbang is usually only used to describe possible,
but never actual, relationships between *dunsanak*, or *sanak*? *ibu* (maternal cousins) and between *dunsanak*, or *sanak*, *bapak* (paternal cousins) which are, or would be if they occurred, *sumbang*. A man and woman, whose fathers are brothers, or whose mothers are sisters, may not, and do not, marry. While marriages between *sanak ibu* and between *sanak bapak* are forbidden, and marriages between people who are unrelated are tolerated (e.g. Wis and Nasir), marriages between *anak pemaman* (child of maternal uncle) and *anak bako* (child of paternal aunt) are spoken of as being *harus* (preferred, obligatory)\(^8\). Everyone seems to know who they may and may not have sexual and marital relationships with, and I have never heard of *betandang* or marriage taking place either between *sanak ibu* or between *sanak bapak*. While men such as Panca and Bagum told me that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children do not *menyumbang* (commit incest), as far as I know, such relationships never take place as everyone appeared to regard *sumbang* relationships as undesirable and all sexual and marital relationships that take place between Talang Mamak — excepting Rapan’s — are described both as being between *anak bako* and *anak pemaman*, and as being *harus*.\(^9\) While *sumbang* marriage is a recognised possibility, it never seems to happen as I have never heard of anyone going *betandang* with their *sanak ibu* or their *sanak bapak*, and no-one that I spoke to could remember a *sumbang* marriage or accusations of this kind of *sumbang* relationship occurring in Tiga Balai.

After Junan had been visiting Nian, in Rinti and Cahaya Intan’s house, around once a week for about a year, the young couple decided to get married and one night Junan gave a *sakin* (small knife) to Nian before he went home. The next morning Nian showed the knife to her

footnotes

7 Navis (1984 p.150) maintains that *sanak* is from Sanskrit and means brother, sister or cousin of the same generation.

8 In Levi-Straussian terminology, *sumbang* marriage equates with parallel-cousin marriage and *harus* marriage equates with cross-cousin marriage. (For a discussion of Talang Mamak marriage preferences in these terms see Singleton [1989 Appendix]). While most people talked about the differences between these two types of marriage in terms of *adat* — *sumbang* being prohibited by *adat* regulations and *harus* being in line with *adat* — both Sutan Mohammad and Madun told me that marriage between *dunsanak* was forbidden because the children of such relationships would have incomplete *sukma* (souls, spirits).

9 While Sutan Mohammad does accuse Laman and Pulan of having a *sumbang* marriage, he is almost alone in this, as Laman, Rapan, their *anak buah* and everyone else who has an opinion on this matter, deny this accusation. Although Sutan Mohammad suggests that Laman and Pulan committed incest, it seems far more likely that Pulan may have been pregnant when she married, rather than being a parallel cousin of Laman. Had they been *sanak ibu* or *sanak bapak*, Laman and Pulan would not have been able to get married as no title-holder, or anyone else, would sanction such a union.
parents, who recognised it as tanda bibit (a gift given to a woman by a man as a sign that he wishes to marry her). Nian gave the sakin to Rinti, who took it to Nawar, his Tua Tuah, who then accompanied Rinti to Junan’s home where they met Junan’s father and his Tua Tuah, who Junan had already spoken to concerning his tanda bibit. At this meeting, both parties confirmed that they approved of the marriage and very general arrangements were made regarding both when and where the gawai would take place and how much each family would contribute towards its cost. After their talk, Junan’s father and his Tua Tuah went to see their Batin. Rinti and Nawar also went to visit their Batin, Nulan (Batin of Talang Perigi), who decided that Nian and Junan should be married (together with seven other couples) in Nawar’s house after the approaching rice harvest, which was a couple of months away.

After Rinti and Nawar’s visit to Nulan, Nian and Junan became publicly known as tunangan (engaged couple) and on a prearranged day a couple of weeks before their gawai, Nian, her parents, other members of her family (and Nawar) went to Junan’s house, where his own family, neighbours and Tua Tuah had gathered, to jemput laki (fetch the man). Inside the house, kundangan (groom’s family and representatives) were sitting in two groups, the women in ruang tempuan and the men in mang haluan – except for Junan who was sitting, dressed in his best clothes, with one or two of his brothers behind a screen of tikar (mats) at the rear of ruang tempuan. When kurung (bride’s family and representatives) arrived, they too separated into groups and sat down in the appropriate parts of the house. When a group of men and a group of women walk to a kumpulan together, the women usually walk about fifty

footnotes

10 Jemput laki is similar to jemput marapulai, which takes place before a wedding in Minangkabau and also involves the bride’s family collecting the groom from his family’s home (Navis 1984 p 205). The following description of jemput laki is based upon conversations with several people, including Nian, but also includes details from jemput laki I have attended, those involving Jidan’s son, Mungkir, and Seset’s husband, Cotek, in particular.

11 Matheson and Hooker (1983 p. 198) write that, in Acehnese sources of the mid-seventeenth century, kundangan is used to refer to male slaves or ‘young men of the same category as budak’. They go on to say that kundangan has the meaning of ‘control, mastery over’.

12 At that time, Junan was living with his two younger brothers and they kept him company in ruang tempuan. If the groom-to-be has no brothers present, he will be accompanied by other bujang who are usually his cousins. For example, at his jemput laki, Mungkir, who has no brothers, sat with Enkeh. (Mungkir’s father, Jidan, is Tambal’s brother which makes Enkeh and Mungkir dunsanak [cousins].)

13 In Malay, kurong means shutting in or confined space and, in Indonesian, kurung means cage or prison.
yards behind the men, who are always first to arrive at their destination. Once the men had greeted each other and shared sirih and cigarettes Nawar positioned himself in front of Junan's Tua Tuah and the two men began bicara (formulaic dialogue). While this was going on Nian was sitting in ruang tempuan, dressed in her finest clothes, smoking and chatting to her female relatives who were sitting around her. After Nawar and the other Tua Tuah had been speaking for about half an hour they stopped and Rinti (who was sitting next to Nawar) and Junan's father (who was adjacent to Junan's Tua Tuah) took up the bicara. Most men learn and memorise long speeches, for use in bicara, from their fathers, brothers or other men in their family and bicara at jemput laki usually go on for more than an hour with different men taking turns to speak. If a young man is taking part in bicara for the first time, older men usually sit near him listening to and correcting his words.

While the married men were sitting inside the house listening to bicara, giving corrections and talking amongst themselves, bujang and children from both kurung and kundangan were outside playing and chatting. Towards the end of the bicara, bujang kurung took a lembing (spear) they had brought with them and, after banging it against the exterior wall a few times, began poking the blade right through holes in the wall and into the house. Some of bujang kundangan playfully tried to prevent the house from being stabbed by standing between bujang kurung and the wall of the house. They also blocked the tangga (steps) and stood in the lapang (doorway). The two groups of bujang pushed, jostled and made jokes about each other but the atmosphere remained peaceful and friendly as both those inside and outside the house laughed at the remarks made by the bujang, which often drew further comment from the men inside the house. After pushing his way up the tangga, the bujang holding the lembing appeared in the lapang and began a bicara exchange with Rinti, after which he laid the lembing down on the floor between Nawar and Junan's Tua Tuah. Rinti then took out the sakin that Junan had left with Nian as tanda bibit, and put it beside the lembing. Junan's Tua Tuah then reached out and lightly touched both the spear and the knife with the fingertips of his right hand before drawing his arm back in to touch his chest in a similar way. By touching an object and then touching their chest, a person receives or accepts something they do not actually consume and this gesture is often used in greetings when cigarettes and sirih are offered. If a man does not want any of the cigarettes or sirih he is offered, usually because he is already smoking or chewing, he will touch the sumpit rokok (tobacco pouch) or karong sirih (sirih pouch) and then touch his chest. After they had been accepted by Junan's Tua Tuah, the lembing was taken
back outside and a man of kundangan took the sakin and banged its handle seven times against tiang tua (central pillar) which marked the end of the bicara. Hitting the handle of a knife on tiang tua, against which the senior title holder is leaning, is a common way to end a kumpulan, especially where a decision has been reached e.g. hukuman (judgement). By this time it was the middle of the day and food, prepared by women of the kundangan, was served to the married men, beginning with the title holders, by bujang kurung. Whenever food is served at kumpulan, Batin and other title-holders are always served first, by bujang. The bujang then serve the other married men present, before eating with the women and children. After the men had finished eating, the women ate and, while tea was served, tengkelang (sirih baskets) were refilled. After the meal Junan came out from behind his screen and joined the men in ruang haluan, where he sat down, took some sirih and had a cigarette before leaving the house with the men of the kunung. Once the men had left the house, Nian and the other women of kunung went outside and followed the men back to Cahaya Intan’s house where Junan stayed until his gawai. When a groom leaves his family home to go and live with his fiancee prior to his gawai, he takes very little with him. For example, when Mungkir left Perigi with his tunangan (fiancée), he took with him a kilo of gula pasir (granulated sugar) and a selop (carton) of cigarettes.

During the time that Junan spent in Cahaya Intan’s house before his gawai he was not asked to do much work and he frequently went back to visit his family during the day time, returning in the evening to sleep with Nian. About a week before Nian and Junan’s gawai, Rinti, Nawar and some of his anak buah met Junan’s father and his Batin in Nulan’s house for takat janji (agreement on the details of a wedding). At this small kumpulan, Nulan gave Junan’s Batin a keris (dagger) as tabusi tanda and the two Batin made arrangements for the gawai, which included deciding both how many cocks would be fought, how much rice, coconut, sirih, etc each family would provide and the contents of alat adat (which Junan’s family would

footnotes

14 Takat, or nakat, means limit or as far as, and janji means promise or agreement.

15 Tabusi (from Malay tebus) means to redeem, and tanda (as in tanda bibit) means sign or symbol. Matheson and Hooker (1983 p.193) suggest that tabus, or tebus, refers to the transferring of a slave from one master to another. ‘The slave himself was not manumitted, his debt to his former master was paid by his new one, who then took it upon himself’. At tabusi tanda, the tanda bibit, given by the groom-to-be to his wife-to-be when they became batunangan (engaged), is returned.
give to Nian’s parents). As Nian and Junan were getting married at the same time as seven other couples, Nulan had to make similar arrangements with all the other families involved. Once the two Batin and their anak buah had agreed on the details of Nian’s gawai, Nawar stood up and banged on tiang tua (central pillar) seven times with the handle of a keris and the two groups of men went to their homes to finalise preparations. Nowadays gawai are usually scheduled to start on either a Wednesday or a Thursday so that kundangan and kureng have the opportunity to go to Petonggan market on the preceding Tuesday where they can obtain the supplies they need for the gawai.

The evening before the gawai Cahaya Intan, Rinti, Nian and Junan went to Nawar’s house where they met other members of Nian’s family, Junan’s family and the seven other couples who were also to be married. That night the tunangan and their families ate together and slept in Nawar’s house. While Talang Mamak families were gathering inside the house, Melayu families from Petonggan were also arriving and setting up kedai (stalls) around the edges of the halaman. When they first arrive, stall-holders cut poles and erect a framework over which they spread plastic sheets or sections of rumbia (sago thatch), that they have brought with them, in order to provide shelter from rain and sun. Once their kedai is built, they lay mats on the ground inside, make a fire and lay out their goods on a shelf at the front of their stall. The following morning, after the people in the house had been served refreshments, Nawar and some of his anak buah laid a few mats out on the halaman where they sat and began playing musical instruments, which included gendang (large single-ended drum), katabung (small double-ended drum), tawak-tawak (gong) and calimpung (xylophone consisting of a row of tuned horizontal bronze gongs). Once the music started men of Junan’s kundangan and men from Nian’s kureng paired off and began nari silat (silat dance) to the accompaniment of the music. Nari silat is a form of dance based on the movements used in the system of self-defence known as pencak silat. In nari silat, pairs of men combine slow, graceful movements with rapid ones, which are usually accompanied by a stamp of the foot, as they match and parry each other’s movements. After about an hour’s music and dancing, the halaman was cleared and

footnotes
16 The following account of a gawai is based upon both conversations with Nian and the many gawai I have attended, including the gawai gadang (big wedding) of Gandung’s granddaughter Upik to Tarasan. It also includes information obtained in conversation with many of our friends and neighbours.
men began to gather in groups with their ayam sabung (fighting cocks) to begin the day's cock fighting.

While the men nari silat, Nawar's wife, Cahaya Intan and other women from Perigi began gathering in and around a balai (hut) that had been built near the dapur (kitchen) on the edge of the halaman. Some of these women began preparing large fires on the halaman, near the balai. Others began numbuk padi (pound rice) by forming a circle around a lasung (mortar), with each of the women holding their own antan (pounder), which they dropped into the lasung, one after the other in quick succession, round and round the circle. Women usually put on their best clothes for pounding rice in this way at gawai which often attracts the attention of bujang who enjoy watching the women stepping forward and driving their antan into the lasung, then stepping back and lifting it just before the next woman steps forward and drops her antan. The pounded rice was then cooked on one of the fires on the halaman, the others being used to make gulai cubadak (jackfruit curry) and to cook the losing cocks which were brought over to the balai to be plucked and either barbecued over a fire or made into gulai (curry). The nasi (cooked rice), gulai cubadak and ayam (chicken) were served at mid-day and, after the meal, the cock-fighting continued until petang (evening) when the guests assembled in the house to eat again and card and dice games, run by Melayu and illuminated by strongking (pressurised kerosene lamps), began to start up on the halaman which drew some men back out of the house during the night, as did the kedai (stalls) where drinks, snacks and cigarettes were available. Strongking lamps, which give off an intense bright light that attracts many flying insects, are an essential piece of equipment for Melayu who wish to organise a card or dice game, and, as kedai owners are generally the only people who possess strongking, Melayu gamblers usually set up under the light of a strongking which belongs to a stall-holder, from whom they buy cigarettes, coffee, etc throughout the night, and to whom they give some money if they win a large amount. Most married women spent the evening in the house mengumbak pinang (slicing areca nut), making kepicung (slaked-lime containers) and putting them in tipak (brass sirih tray) and tengkelang (rotan sirih basket), along with the other ingredients of sirih, ready for consumption the following day. The second day of Nian's gawai was similar to the first with the men nari silat, nyabung ayam (fight cocks) and main judi (gamble) and the
women numbuk padi, mengukur kerambil (grate coconut), masak (cook) and nyauk aek (collect water)\textsuperscript{17}. Nian and Junan spent these two days apart, Nian sitting in the ruang tempuan smoking, chewing sirih and chatting with her friends, while Junan was with other young men out on the halaman or in the ruang haluan.

On the morning of the third day Nian put on her best clothes which included a new sanung, a baju tina (short cotton vest with buttoned front), a salindung (cloth head-dress) and jewellery. Junan also dressed himself up, putting on shoes, long trousers with a knee-length sanung worn over them, a baju (shirt) batik – with two more sanung folded and worn as crossed sashes over it – and a songkok (black velvet brimless hat) decorated with foil from inside cigarette packets, flowers and small pieces of brightly coloured cloth. While the pengantin (bride and groom) were getting dressed in different parts of the house, pengantin batina (bride) in the ruang tempuan and pengantin jantan (groom) in the ruang haluan, the mid-day meal was being prepared along with a variety of sweets made from pulut (sticky rice)\textsuperscript{18}. Once Junan was ready, he went out on to the halaman where he chatted with other pengantin jantan and watched the cock fights, while Nian stayed in the ruang tempuan with the other pengantin batina. At large gawai young men, who are dressed up in a similar fashion to the grooms but with only one sanung worn as a sash across their chests, are disunat (circumcised)\textsuperscript{19}. After spending a couple of days enjoying themselves at the gawai, these boys (who are usually between thirteen and fifteen years of age) are led away to the house of a man, who lives nearby, who circumcises them. After this, they are taken home.

\textit{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{17} Nyauk means to scoop and aek means water. Labu aek (water gourds) have two holes bored into the top of them so that they fill easily when immersed in a sungai (river, stream) and, once full, four or five of them are carried, at one time, to the dapur (kitchen) in an ambung (potan back pack).

\textsuperscript{18} Pulut is usually only cooked at large kumpulan and is one of the differences between gawai kecil (small wedding) and gawai gadang (big wedding). While pulut is cooked at gawai gadang, which are attended by hundreds of people and last four or five days, at gawai kecil, which only go on for two days, there are fewer guests and no pulut.

\textsuperscript{19} Sunat is an Arabic word which, in Malay, means commendable custom or behaviour, and can be used to describe either extra prayers or circumcision. In Tiga Balai, sunat, which means circumcision, is not often talked about and I have not seen one take place. However, I have been told that circumcisions do not involve a kumpulan pasirihan (sharing sirih) or bicara (formulaic dialogue) and that while circumcisers, who are always Talang Mamak men (whose fathers did the job before them) receive a small payment, they do not have a title or any privileges.
In the afternoon, Junan and Nian went outside and stood underneath a *pohon nangka* (jackfruit tree) where Nian had her arms dotted with *tepung tawar* (rice water). While this was going on, a group of women waved banana leaves around the young couple and Nulan, Nawar and other men wished them good fortune by reciting a *tawar* (charm, spell). This part of a *gawai* is called *disipat ke kepangkal nangka* (measure against a jackfruit tree) and Gandung told me the following *tawar* that he used at this stage of a *gawai*: ‘*Malam, siang, bumi, langit, pohon getah kasih nasib baik*.’ (‘Night, day, earth, sky [and] trees with sap bring good fortune’). That evening both *pengantin* sat in the *ruang tengah*, Nian near the *guntelak* (floor beam separating *ruang tempuan* from *ruang tengah*) and Junan near the *mentelak* (floor beam separating *ruang haluan* from *ruang tengah*). At about nine o’clock Nian and Junan were called over by Nulan and they sat down on a mat near the titled men in *ruang haluan* where an *inas* (earthenware vase) of *sayar* (fermented drink)²⁰ had been placed. The *pengantin* took it in turns to suck the *sayar* through long *resam* (fern-stalk) straws (which, along with some *nangka* leaves, had been put in the mouth of the *inas*), before returning to their positions in *ruang tengah*. After Nian and Junan had drunk some *sayar*, Nulan, Nawar, Junan’s *Batin* and other titled men had a few sips, after which people from all over the house came over to the *inas* and had a small drink. Like *talam*, (large brass trays), *tipak* (brass *sirih* holder) and other large or valuable objects used at *kumpulan*, *inas* are owned by most senior title-holders, many of whom, according to Bagum, obtained them from *Melayu* who entered Tiga Balai during the Japanese occupation.

The next day was *hari gadang* (big day), and in the morning Nian and Junan got dressed in their best clothes again and relaxed with their friends. *After makan siang* (mid-day meal), which again included *pulut* sweets, *Batin* Nulan, Nawar and other titled representatives of *kurung* (bride’s family) seated themselves along the side of *ruang haluan* nearest *mentelak*, facing the titled representatives of *kundangan* (groom’s family) who were also sitting in *ruang haluan* but with their backs to the front wall of the house. Nulan, who was resting against *tiang tua* (central pillar), and Junan’s *Batin*, who was opposite him, agreed that it was time to *timbang adat* (weigh or balance the gifts given by the groom’s family to the bride’s family). The things

footnotes

²⁰ *Sayar*, also known as *aek gelang* and *aek pengasih*, is made by fermenting rice in green bamboo. Hamidy (1991 p.125) says that ‘*air pengasih*’ is ‘stored in pits in the ground for about three months’.
that Junan’s family had brought to give to Nian’s family, along with a tengkelang of fresh sirih, were put in front of Junan’s Batin who began a bicara (formulaic dialogue) with Nulan, which listed enam adat kundangan would give to kurung, which were pamintaan kecil, pamintaan gadang, rambun sepuluh, gelang patah, gelang baik and mas tua. Junan’s Batin laid out the enam adat on the floor in front of Nulan and one of his anak buah took them into ruang tengah. After this Junan approached Nawar, knelt down in front of him, bowed his head and shook his hand before kneeling in front of Rinti and Cahaya Intan (who had moved over into ruang haluan to sit beside her husband) for sembah tintua (worship or pay homage to one’s parents-in-law). Junan then bowed his head, raised his hands, which he held outstretched with his palms together and enclosed the outstretched hands of first Rinti and then Cahaya.

footnotes

21 The following information about enam adat (six gifts) used in Talang Perigi was given to me by Batin Gandung who said that while the names of the gifts have remained the same, their contents have often changed, many people substituting an agreed sum of money for one or more of the gifts. Nowadays white cloth, which is used to make a kelambu (mosquito net) for the newly weds, always makes up a large part of enam adat and Gandung said that white cloth became a common gift during the Dutch colonial period when it was the only cloth available.

22 Pamintaan kecil means small request and consists of six kabung (a length of two meters) of white cloth.

23 Pamintaan gadang means large request and consists of seven kabung of white cloth.

24 While sepuluh means ten, I have been unable to translate rambun. Nowadays rambun sepuluh consists of three spears.

25 Gelang patah means broken bangle and consists of a bangle, usually made of aluminium, in the shape of a broken circle.

26 Gelang baik means good bangle and consists of a bangle, usually made of brass, in the shape of a complete circle.

27 Mas tua means old gold and consists of two kabung of white cloth.

28 Enam adat (six gifts) are used in all the talang except Talang Sungai Limau where sembilan adat or sembilan mata benda (nine gifts or valuables) are used at gawai. Maiyan, who was a Batin in Talang Sungai Limau in the 1980s gave me the following list of sembilan mata benda Sungai Limau:

- Mas tua (old gold) – two kabung of white cloth
- gelang perak (silver bangle) – Rp. 2,500
- pamintaan kecil (small request) – two kabung of white cloth
- pamintaan gadang (large request) – two kabung of white cloth
- penglarang (while larang means forbid or prohibit I have been unable to find a suitable translation for penglarang) – two kabung of white cloth
- bunga pinang (blossom of areca palm) – two kabung of white cloth
- rambun sepuluh (ten unidentified objects) – two pinggan (plates) and one mangkok (bowl)
- lembing sehatang (a spear) – one spear
- gelang patah (broken bangle) – one broken bangle.
Intan with his fingertips. After paying his respects to his tintua (parents-in-law), the groom went round and shook hands with all the titled men sitting in ruang halaun. The two Batin then refreshed their sirih quids, which marked the completion of Nian’s marriage to Junan. That night the guests ate together for the last time before going home the following morning.

After their marriage, Nian and Junan returned to Cahaya Intan and Rinti’s house where together the two couples farmed a large huma and Junan helped Rinti tap and collect his rubber. After two years of married life Nian jadi bunting (became pregnant) and a couple of weeks before she was due to give birth Nian and Cahaya Intan took a tengkelang of sirih to a local Bidan (midwife) to ask for her assistance with the birth. When Nian went into labour the Bidan was called and she helped Nian, who was about nineteen, give birth to her first child, a son called Tomin. A few days after Tomin’s arrival, the Bidan returned to Cahaya Intan’s house for bilas Bidan (repayment of a Bidan) where she washed herself and the newborn baby in aek limau mentimun (lime water), ate together with Nian and her family. The Bidan also received payment of one roast chicken and two banana-leaf packages of nasi (cooked rice) for her services.

When Tomin was a few months old, his parents, with the help of Cahaya Intan and Rinti, began building their own house in the Binjai region of Talang Perigi. About a year later, when it was finished, the young family moved into their new home. As independent householders, Nian and Junan farmed, for the first time, their own huma, which was adjacent to but not part of, Rinti and Cahaya Intan’s ladang. After their first harvest, Junan and Nian planted rubber seedlings on their empty field. Prior to this time, Junan and Nian had helped Cahaya Intan and Rinti farm the latter’s huma for a share of the harvest. After they moved into their own house, Nian and Junan cleared and planted a ladang (with seed supplied by Cahaya Intan and Rinti), which was separated from Rinti and Cahaya Intan’s field by a line of

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29 There are two Bidan in Talang Perigi, Jari and Anjak’s sister Lebak, who lives in Dusun Jaya, and Miri, who lives in Dusun Keminyan. Lebak said that all Bidan inherit their title from their mother or grandmother who teaches them the necessary skills.

30 Limau mentimin or limau timun (cucumber lime -- unidentified) is a small, hard dark green fruit with a thick wrinkled skin from which aek limau mentimun is made, which is also used at bedukun and belian both as medicine and to wash a shaman’s eyes.
bamboos laid flat. Around this time Nian also planted about twenty young coconuts around the halaman of her new house. She still calls the area in which her house stood Dusun Kelapa (coconut), after the coconut trees she planted, which are still growing there.

One day in 1974, when Nian was about twenty-four and she had been married to Junan for about eight years she became pusing (dizzy, confused) and ran into the forest, taking Tomin with her. This was the beginning of a long period of hilang akal (loss of the ability to reason) for Nian, during which she frequently ran into the forest where she stayed for up to two days before returning home in a very confused state. The first few times that Nian behaved in this way Junan followed his wife and son into the forest but Nian resisted all his attempts to bring her home, often became violent and sometimes threw her parang (machete) at Junan. With Rinti and Cahaya Intan's help, Junan was able to force Nian to return to her rumah (house) but once there she had to be restrained to prevent her from running back into the forest. After a few months of Nian's erratic and often violent behaviour, Junan left the house in Dusun Kelapa, divorced Nian and returned to his mother's home. After Junan's departure, Nian and Tomin existed on their own for more than a year, during which time Nian remained in an unstable condition, resisted attempts from her family to take her to either a Dukun or a Kemantan for healing and continued to frequently disappear into the forest. During this time Nian did no work at all and she and Tomin relied upon the charity of her parents and sisters who left cooked food in her house everyday. While Nian says that she can remember little about this period, other people (such as Sutan Mohammad and Bagum) recall that Nian was very unpredictable and often violent and that many people, including her family, gave up hope of her ever returning to her senses and fully expected both her and Tomin to die in the forest. Tomin, who Nian would not be parted from, is often spoken of as having suffered great hardship and danger as a result of his mother's behaviour during this period. About two years after she first became pusing, Nian was given obat sijundai (medicine

footnotes

31 Skeat and Blagden (1906 p.5) suggest that dusun originally meant the 'half wild fruit orchards of the [peninsular Malay] aborigines' and in, Tiga Balai, dusun can be applied to any collection of houses or even, as in this case, to a single house.

32 While obat is used in both Indonesian and Malay to mean drug or medicine, sijundai is a Minangkabau word meaning 'a charm for inspiring love madness' (Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.485).
to counteract a love charm) by bang (brother)\textsuperscript{33} Sutan Mohammad. This consisted of three limau mentimun (forest lime [over which he had recited a tawad]) which Nian used to make aek limau mentimun (lime water) with which she washed herself. This cured her of her confusion and stopped her running into the forest. In the early 1970s Sutan Mohammad, who was in his mid-twenties at that time, was living in Talang Perigi, after having divorced his first wife with whom he had been living in Durian Cacar.

Nian reasons that she became hilang akal as either the result of poison or magic having been used against her by a man whose advances she had refused or through her having come into contact with a hantu (ghost, evil spirit)\textsuperscript{34} in the forest. Although Sutan Mohammad’s successful diagnosis and cure was aimed at counteracting sijundai (charm for inspiring love madness), Nian suggests that she also ketaguran hantu (fell under the influence of an evil spirit) during the time she spent in the forest. Nian thinks that the initial cause of her pusing was probably sijundai given to her by a jealous man whose sexual advances she had declined. The effects of this sijundai led her to run into the forest where, in a confused and weakened state, she was easy prey for hantu whose attacks prolonged and worsened her pusing. Nian says that the form of hantu that most often causes sickness, especially hilang akal, pusing, sawan (fits), lumpuh (paralysis), or bisu (dumbness) is hantu bandan (or just bandan) which can enter the body, usually via the mouth, of anyone who is ill, or afraid or who lacks confidence. Although bandan are invisible, their presence can be detected by the burung hantu (owl) or burung elang (eagle) which always sits on a branch above them. Bandan also make a noise, usually a deep grunt, and this sound, combined with the presence of a bird of prey, is taken as

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\textsuperscript{33} Bang or abang means elder brother and can be applied to any older male relative of the same generation. Nian’s mother Cahaya Intan is a sister of Sutan Mohammad’s mother Serong.

\textsuperscript{34} Hantu, sukma, roh, semangat, nyawa and malaikat are all words meaning soul or spirit and, according to Nian, the relationship between them is as follows. As long as a person is alive their nyawa (life breath), or semangat (spirit of life), remains in their body but when they die it leaves and becomes a sukma (soul) for the duration of its journey from dunia nyata (visible world) to dunia lain (other world) where it becomes a malaikat (angel) and a member of nenek moyang (ancestors). Some sukma get lost or otherwise side-tracked and remain in the visible world, where they usually become hantu (ghosts) and cause problems for people. Hantu is considered an impolite word and many people, such as Jari, are reluctant to use it in case a hantu overhears them and takes offence. Consequently hantu are rarely talked about and, if they are, they are usually referred to as sukma or roh which are considered more polite and less dangerous.
evidence that a bandan is close by. Nian says that in order to avoid falling prey to bandan it is important not to appear afraid when walking in the forest and it is for this reason that many people sing as they walk. Title holders and urang pandai (skilled, knowledgeable people) punya (own) tangkal (protective talisman or charm) which are effective against bandan and other hantu and most people who feel threatened by hantu usually acquire tangkal from either a title holder or an urang pandai to protect themselves. Tangkal are either tawar (charm, spell), which are learnt, or objects, such as rings, books, tigers’ whiskers, bears’ claws, etc, which are either bought or obtained in the forest. Dukun and Kemantan are usually regarded as possessing the most powerful tangkal and most effective tawar for dealing with hantu, although other title holders such as Batin, Datuk Patih, Manti, Mangku and Tua Tuah are also often seen as having both a lot of ilmu (knowledge) and potent tangkal. While most people inherit a few tangkal from their parents, some people, such as Nian, find it necessary to seek expert advice from a title holder in order to keep hantu away. If a family feels threatened by a bandan lurking outside their house at night, burning chilli is commonly considered an effective means of preventing it from entering but, if it continues appearing regularly outside the house, one of the adults of the household usually visits a title holder an or urang pandai who, in exchange for a lump of keminyan, gives them a tangkal which they hang in their doorway. This kind of tangkal usually consists of a small cloth bag containing chilli, limau mentimun and other medicinal plants such as setawar, sedingin, etc which have been exposed to keminyan smoke and have had tawar recited over them.

footnotes

35 One night outside our house I heard an unusual noise, like a mixture between a growl and a grunt, coming from the base of a nearby tree and I immediately went inside to get a torch in order to see what was making the noise. Despite looking all over our land I couldn’t see anything so I went back inside and thought no more about it until early the next morning when Bagum, who had also heard the noise and who said that it was made by a bandan, came round and asked me for the tangkal (spell) I had used to keep the bandan away. Jari also heard the noise and both he and Bagum said that had I looked up into the tree, above where the sound was coming from, I would have seen burung hantu (owl).

36 Urang, or orang, means person and pandai means skilled or knowledgeable. In Tiga Balai urang pandai are usually older married men who do not possess a title but who are recognised as possessing ilmu (knowledge) which they have inherited from their father or their grandfather – the term urang pandai is used in a similar way in Minangkabau (see Navis 1984 p. 96). Men such as Siran, a non-title-holding, but relatively wealthy, anak buah of Rapan who is in his sixties and lives in Talang Perigi, are often referred to as urang pandai, especially at kumpulan where they are usually invited to sit near the title holders in nuang haluan. Siran, who has several anak buah who help him tap his large number of rubber trees, collect honey, farm rice, etc, has many tangkal (protective talisman or charm) which he uses to
Nian mentioned several other hantu that exist in the forest and cause problems for manusia (humanity) including hantu rimba, puntianak and hantu bujang\(^{37}\). Nian says that hantu rimba are formed from angan (stagnant water) which jadi (becomes) lumut (algae), which then becomes sakti (a parasitic plant), which later turns into hantu rimba – which are also known as diri (rise up) sakti. These hantu, which have a human form but with red eyes and thick body hair, kill and eat people they meet in the forest. As protection against hantu rimba, Nian now has both a tangkal she can recite while walking in the forest to prevent ketaguran hantu rimba (meeting a ghost)\(^{38}\) and a tangkal to recite if she does meet one\(^{39}\). While hantu rimba originate from stagnant water, puntianak are hantu, associated with the anak mati lalu (still born children) of budak (slave, servant), who take the form of a dog or a cat after they have been buried. Puntianak only enter houses at night when no men are present, where they prey upon women nursing small babies. After removing her baby to the dapur (kitchen) a puntianak sucks the child’s mother's breast, first drinking her milk and then draining her of blood. If a man returns home to find a puntianak in the house he can only kill it by stabbing it with pisau upih pinang (knife made from areca-palm leaf sheath) as these hantu cannot be injured with metal or any other substance apart from upih pinang. While puntianak feed on women, the invisible hantu bujang, who also enter rumah (houses) at night, only prey on men. Once inside a rumah, hantu bujang go straight to tiang tua (central roof pillar) which they feel in order to check its

footnotes continued from previous page

37 Nian also described five other hantu which are hantu kayu hana, hantu sialang, jengi or mawas, hantu manusia and banang.

38 Nian uses the following tangkal to protect herself from hantu rimba. ‘Binaskan! Muhammad kalam namamu, Muhammad tarang namamu. Bukan aku yang punya tauar, Tauar Allah dan Baginda Muhammad. Patut aku mendapat salawat rimba. Semula jadi isana Allah.’ (‘Destroy! Muhammad the instrument of god is your name, Muhammad the illuminated is your name. It is not me who owns this spell. It is the spell of Allah and noble Muhammad. It is fitting that I obtained this prayer. Since birth I have followed Allah.’) Nian calls this tangkal salawat hantu rimba (salawat is an Arabic word meaning prayer and it is similar to do’a (Muslim prayer used for a specific purpose) used by local Melayu.

39 Nian knows the following tangkal which is used to remove the influence of hantu rimba. ‘Mana pangkal berakit? Tanggak banyak tangga – menyangga. Mana pangkal sianu sakit? Hantu rimba tegur mengapa? Bukan aku yang punya tauar, Tauar Allah dan Baginda Muhammad.’ (‘What keeps a raft afloat? Many logs hold it up. What caused so and so’s sickness? Being accosted by the hantu rimba. It is not me that owns this spell it is the spell of Allah and noble Muhammad.’) Nian calls this tangkal ohat (medicine) hantu rimba and, unlike salawat hantu rimba (see preceding footnote), it seems to be based on a four line pantun (short verse), which contains no Islamic elements, to which the last two very Islamic lines have been added, probably relatively recently.
temperature. If tiang tua is hot, hantu bujang know that there are women present and they run away, but, if it is cold, it means that the house contains only men, whose testicles the hantu bujang then begin to eat.

By 1976, Nian was fully recovered and, although she did not farm a ladang of her own, she was able to earn some padi by helping her parents farm rice and by weeding Sutan Mohammad’s family’s plot. During her pusing, Nian was unable to maintain good relations with her parents and sisters and, after being cured by Datuk Patih Sutan Mohammad, she began to regard him as her pemaman tua (male head of an extended family) and to seek his assistance rather than Rinti’s, whenever she needed advice or representation. Around this time Nian began betandang again and she met a man called Manggis who came from Durian Cacar. After Nian and Manggis had been seeing each other for about a year, they decided to get married and a gawai kecik (small wedding) was organised in Manggis’ mother’s house at which Nian was represented by Batin Gandung and Manggis by Datuk Patih Sutan Mohammad. After the wedding, Manggis, Nian and Tomin lived in Nian’s house in Dusun Kelapa and they cleared a huma nearby and planted it with rice and vegetables. Nian recalls that Manggis was suka pemarah (often bad tempered) and that three times during their marriage she was ditampar (slapped by) Manggis. On the first of these occasions, Manggis was angry because his rice, which he expected his wife to cook, was not ready at the time he wanted to eat. The other two incidents both came about because Tomin, who was about nine at the time, was unable to help Manggis nakik (cut rubber). Nian says that her son usually tapped rubber with Manggis every morning but one day, due to sickness, he refused to go and as a result Manggis lost his temper and slapped Nian. On this occasion, Nian did not retaliate and she let the incident pass but, when the same thing happened again about a month later, shortly after they had harvested their second rice crop, Nian did hit Manggis back, first in the stomach and then in his face, which she cut, and after that Manggis ran away and divorced Nian.

When Manggis departed, Nian’s belabur (rice store) was full and, although in the following season she did not clear a huma, she did obtain some rice by weeding Sutan Mohammad’s family’s ladang. During this, her second meranda (period as a divorcee), Nian (who was about twenty nine) began betandang again, with several different men. Over a period of about a year, she went betandang with Layaran three times, Raphan (who had been one of Nian and Junan’s fellow pengantin at gawai gadang in Nawar’s house in 1966) twice, Muhammad three times and...
Sijam, who she agreed to marry, about ten times. Sijam, who was born in Perigi, and Nian were married along with Gandung’s son Usir and his bride Rumini at a gawai gadang held in Gandung’s house in about 1980. Once they were married Nian and Sijam lived in Nian’s house, in Dusun Kepala, where they farmed liuma nearby. Sijam was able to get some cash tapping the rubber trees Junan had planted, the oldest of which were about eight years old at that time. Shortly after their first rice harvest Nian became pregnant and, in 1982, she gave birth to a daughter, Likur, who was only a few months old when her parents divorced after her father had fled the house. Nian says that one day she and Sijam had an argument during which Sijam lost his temper and hit Tomin. On seeing this, Nian too became angry and, picking up a stick, she hit Sijam with it and chased him out of her house. Nian, who had a new born daughter and a thirteen year old son to look after, regretted having lost her temper and she persuaded Rinti to go to Sijam’s mother’s house to ask Sijam to return to her. However, Sijam was not interested and he promptly divorced Nian.

Not long after Sijam’s departure, Nian received news of Cahaya Intan’s death and she immediately went to her parents’ house to jaga mayat (watch over a corpse) with Rinti, her kakak (sisters), and other members of her mother’s family. Nian, her kakak and the other women present took the body to the sungai (river, stream) at the back of the house where it was washed and dressed in Cahaya Intan’s finest clothes. The mayat (corpse) was then brought back to the house where it was laid out in ruang tengah parallel with guntelak and mentelak and covered with a kabung (two metre length) of white cloth. As the day wore on, more and more people arrived and sat round the mayat (men in the ruang haluan and women in the mang tempuan) where people were crying and stories were being told recalling Cahaya Intan’s life and mentioning the names of her anak (children) and cucu (grandchildren). In the evening, Dukun Petang arrived, burnt keminyan, danced all night in front of a balai and recited palis tawar (spell for reciting over a corpse) over the body. Nian says that it is important to ensure that

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40 The reconstruction of Cahaya Intan’s burial and funeral is based both upon conversations with Nian and other Talang Mamak and upon burials and funerals that I have attended.

41 Gandung told me that, while all non-title holding Talang Mamak have only one white cloth wrapped around their corpse, the bearers of some titles have more. Men who were Manti or Mangku have three white cloths put around them, dead Batin, Dukun and Kementan are wrapped in seven lengths of cloth and deceased Datuk Patih are shrouded in nine kabung of cloth.
the deceased's nyawa (spirit, life-breath) does not get sesat (lost) on its journey between dunia nyata (visible world) and dunia yang lain (other world) and that palis tawar is important because it both helps prepare a nyawa for its journey and points the way.

The next morning people assembled on the halaman outside the house for mayat turun rumah (taking a corpse out of a house) for which an usungan (stretcher) had been made from bamboo and wood. Cahaya Intan's body was laid out on the usungan and bunga merah, bunga kuning (flowers), bertil (parished rice) and padi from the bekas padi (rice store) of the deceased were put on top of her white shroud. The usungan was then carried by four men down the tangga (steps) and onto the halaman where it was held up for Nian and other members of Cahaya Intan's family to walk under three times. After this, Dukun Petang first recited a tawar over the mayat and then led the way to the tempat kubur (grave site) with the usungan and Cahaya Intan's family following behind, scattering padi on the path. Despite being upset, Nian, like the others walking to the tempat kubur, tried to be as quiet as possible because, as she says, it is dangerous for a person to cry, weep loudly or become hysterical while following a corpse to a grave site. This is because perasaan (feelings, emotions) of this kind can both make a sukma (soul, spirit) want to stay near its family and not depart for dunia yang lain (other world), and attract hantu (ghosts) who may attack the mourners and bring sickness.

At the grave site the usungan was set down in a shady spot and the men began gali kubur (dig a grave) which was about five feet deep, with a sloping floor. When it was finished, the mayat was gently laid in the grave with its legs lying out flat and body raised almost to a sitting position. Around the body, on top of the shroud, were placed a pinggan (plate), a mangkok (bowl), a sendok (spoon), a gelas (glass), a sesiisir pisang (a bunch of bananas), a labu aek (water gourd), sebatang tebu (a stick of sugar cane) and the deceased's sumpit rokok (tobacco pouch) and karong sirih (sirih pouch). Kulit kayu (bark cloth) was then laid over the mayat and the grave

footnotes

42 While some of the terms used to describe the soul of a deceased person are derived from Arabic (i.e. malaikat, roh), sukma has Sanskrit origins and means 'soul in the Hindu sense, i.e. the soul that pases from body to body in transmigration' (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.1119).

43 This is not a list of the things that went into Cahaya Intan’s grave. Rather, it is what I have seen being put into Talang Mamak graves and includes gelas which were probably not left in graves before the 1960s when, according to Bagum, boiling drinking water and tea and coffee first became popular in Tiga Balai. Prior to that time, boiling drinking water and using gelas were considered Melayu habits and
was filled in. Once the earth had been packed down, *padi* was sprinkled over the grave and Rinti poured water from a *labu* in a straight line three times along the length of the back-filled hole while Sutan Mohammad recited a *talakin*\(^44\) like this one 'Peaceful greetings earth and sky, Earth is mother, sky is father. Wood be taken by burial pegs.\(^45\) Essence of earth return to the steadfast one. Essence of water return to the yellow one\(^46\). Oil return to the pure one. Gandarusa\(^47\) essence of scents, Put mistakes on the one in the chasm. Give praise if a sinner. Make worship if a wrongdoer. Your soul comes from Allah. Your soul returns to Allah. Your journey is blessed. Entombed by Allah. Blessed *La ilaha illa 'llah*.\(^48\) After this Nian and the other women returned to her parents' house and began to cook food while the men stayed to build a strong *pagar* (fence) around Cahaya Intan's grave before joining the women for a meal at the house.

After Cahaya Intan had been buried, Sutan Mohammad and Rinti went to see *Batun Gandung* in order to *nakat janji* (make an agreement) and decide a date for Cahaya Intan's *naik tanah*. At this small *kumpulan*, which was also attended by *Dukun Petang*, Rinti promised to pay the *Dukun* for the assistance he had given at *jaga mayat*, *palis tawar* and *mayat turun rumah* in rice

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Talang Mamak only drank *aek sungai* (fresh river water) from *labu* (gourds). All the objects left in a grave are taken from those used daily by the deceased and may include other items such as favourite foodstuffs.

44 *Talakin* is the Talang Mamak equivalent of the Melayu *do'a talkin*, which it resembles in form and which is also recited while water is sprinkled over a fresh grave.

45 *Daka* (burial pegs), which are employed in Muslim graves to keep the corpse off the earth, are not used by Talang Mamak, which suggests that this particular *talakin* was introduced into Tiga Balai as the result of, probably quite recent, Melayu influence.

46 *Kuning* (yellow) is associated specifically with the kings of Inderagiri (see Tengku Arief p.49) and, more generally, with Buddhism.

47 Gandarusa (*Yustica Gendarussa*) is a plant with sweet-smelling flowers and Wolters (1967 p.115) notes that the 'insignificant Indonesian gandarusa plant has a name derived from an Indian name for myrrh. The gandarusa plant is said to have vitality and able [sic] to resist evil influences'.

48 This *talakin* was given to me by Gandung, whose actual words were 'Salam di bumi dengan di langit. Bumi ibu, langit Bapak. Kayu di ambilkan daka, Rasi tanah pulang ke nan tetap, Rasi aek pulang ke nan kuning, Minyak pulang ke nan sani. Gandarusa ganda rasi, Tambah salah ke nan di lembah. Berdoa di pujii, Bersalah di semah, Nyawamu datang kepada Allah, Nyawamu kembali kepada Allah, Bekat, *La ilaha illa 'llah.*' Hamidy (1991 p.131) includes a very similar *'talakin' which was collected by the Dutch colonial Assistant Resident in Inderagiri, V. Obedyn.
and chickens at Cahaya Intan’s naik tambak\textsuperscript{49}. A couple of months after her burial, on a date fixed by Gandung and Sutan Mohammad, preparations were made for Nian’s mother’s naik tambak. Early, on the morning of the chosen day, Sutan Mohammad, Rinti and other men built a punduk tiang nam (roofed but wall-less hut) over the grave site. These punduk (or pondok) are usually about one and a half metres wide, two and a half metres long and two and a half metres high (to the ridge of the sloping roof). About one metre from the ground, which is also where the roof starts, a bamboo lattice floor is suspended right over the grave. While the punduk was being built, Nian and her sisters collected and prepared nasi, gulai nangka and sirih which, early the next morning, they left, along with a labu aek (gourd of water) on the raised floor of the punduk. In the evening Nian and her sisters returned to the kubur and replaced the provisions in the punduk with fresh water, food and sirih. During these visits to Cahaya Intan’s kubur (grave), Nian and her sisters often spent time ngumpa (mourning), sitting over their mother’s grave, on the floor of the punduk, crying and lamenting Cahaya Intan’s death. The following day Nian and her sisters again renewed the food, sirih and water over the kubur in both the morning and the evening by which time people were beginning to gather in Nian’s parents’ home for Cahaya Intan’s naik tanah which was scheduled to take place the next day. That night, inside the house, food was served after Gandung, Rinti, and Petang had discussed what to do with Cahaya Intan’s belongings which included sanung, and other lengths of cloth, some jewellery, a talam (brass tray), pecah belah (crockery), a large durian orchard, some padi and a few rubber plots. These were divided between Cahaya Intan’s daughters, Nian receiving a few sanung, some pinggan (plates) and mangkok (bowls) and a large kebun durian (durian orchard) which she shares with Sutan Mohammad and which was first planted by their nenek-nenek (ancestors)\textsuperscript{50}. This orchard is still very productive and every year, during musim durian (durian season, December to January), Nian, Likur and Nar go to the orchard two or three times a day to collect fallen fruits where they often meet members of Sutan Mohammad’s family, who also go there to gather durian. When the season is at its peak,

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\textsuperscript{49} Nowadays, naik tanah and naik tambak seem to have the same meaning.

\textsuperscript{50} In Tiga Balai, nenek-nenek is used to describe the lives of ancestors when they were human beings human beings and lived in dunia nyata (visible world). It is used in contrast to nenek moyang and datuk-datuk which both mean ancestors as invisible beings that now live in dunia lain (other world). Nenek means grandparent and as Sutan Mohammad’s mother, Serong, and Nian’s mother, Cahaya Intan, were sisters, Sutan Mohammad and Nian have common grandparents, a relationship Nian calls sanenek.
they usually build a pondok together under a big tree and live there for several days, gorging themselves on fruits. After distributing Cahaya Intan's possessions, Gandung and Rinti made arrangements for the payment of any outstanding debts held by Cahaya Intan. These included what was owed to Dukun Petang – to whom Rinti gave a cock and some padi. While Gandung, Rinti and Petang were discussing these matters inside the house, the halaman was busy with people either sitting around kedai (where food, drink and cigarettes were on sale and card and dice games were being run) or on their way to and from a path in the forest nearby (where betandang was taking place).

Early the following morning, after eating, Rinti, Pintasan (who is one of Nian's brothers-in-law), Sutan Mohammad, Barisan (Sutan Mohammad's eldest son) and other men of Perigi went to Cahaya Intan's grave and began making the papan (planks) for her papan kubur (construction over a grave). This involved selecting and felling trees of a suitable size and type and then splitting the logs into two metre lengths which, after some work with a parang, were fashioned into papan about one and a half metres long. Like most Talang Mamak graves, Cahaya Intan's kubur had twelve papan: six long ones, made in three pairs (the first pair being about six feet long, the second about five feet long and the third about four feet long); and six short ones, again in three pairs (about three feet, two feet and one foot long respectively). These papan were notched and fitted together to form three different sized-rectangles (the shortest pair of shorter papan being matched with the shortest pair of longer papan, etc) which were then stacked over the grave – the largest at the bottom and the smallest at the top. After filling this wooden structure with tanah (earth), the men departed as Nian, her sisters and other women from Perigi arrived and began membangkah51 (decorate) the papan by painting them with arang (a mixture of ground charcoal and water) on top of which they put white finger dots of tepung tawar.

Nian told me that three basic types of grave are constructed in Tiga Balai, each one being associated with a different naik tanah. Naik tanah kecik (small funeral), at which pulut is not

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51 Membangkah is the verb formed from the root noun bangkah which is an old Minangkabau word meaning a mark (spot, stripe, etc) on the forehead similar to those worn by many Hindus (see Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.79).
cooked, is the most common and is the type which was held for Cahaya Intan. At naik tanah kecik, punduk tiang nam (hut with six pillars) are constructed and two or three layers of papan are built up over the grave. Naik tambak gadang (big funeral) has two forms, both of which include the cooking and eating of pulut but which have different punduk, one being called punduk tiang satu which has one large central pillar and seven layers of papan over the grave. I have never seen a punduk tiang satu, which, Nian says, were more common in the past when they were built above the graves of orang kaya (rich men)52. The other type of punduk used at naik tambak gadang is called punduk tiang dua which resembles the punduk of naik tanah kecik but which has a large central roof support at either end and five carved burung anggang (hornbills), which are suspended, from the ends of the uppermost of five or six layers of papan, facing west and are known as anting-anting53. Punduk tiang dua are usually constructed over the graves of minor title-holders such as Mangku, Manti, Bintara, Bidan, Tua Tuah, etc but not over the kubur of Batin, Datuk Patih, Kemantan, Diah or Dukun which do not have a punduk at all. Rather the graves of people who held these titles have a length of white cloth suspended over them, which is supported at its corners by four posts. Only one layer of papan is erected over these graves and these papan are made of a very white wood which, unlike the wood used to make papan for all other kinds of kubur, is not decorated. While Nian and the other women were membangkah (decorating a grave), the men were organising a few cockfights, without betting, on the halaman outside Rinti and Cahaya Intan’s house using cocks supplied by Rinti and Sutan Mohammad, who drained the losing birds of their darah (blood), which he collected in a tempurung (coconut shell), and took over to Cahaya Intan’s grave. Using a brush of kulit puar (outer sheath of wild cardamom stem), which he dipped in the tempurung of blood, Sutan Mohammad melakat darah (painted the end of the base papan with blood). After this, everyone went back to Rinti and Cahaya Intan’s house where they ate together and shared sirih. After he had eaten, Rinti took some food, water and sirih and left it at his wife’s grave and, according to Nian, this was the last time that Rinti, who later went to live with one of his sisters and lost contact with Nian, or anyone else, visited Cahaya Intan’s grave.

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52 Wilkinson (1955 Part I p.518) suggests that 'the title orang kaya (magnate) [was] given to the highest dignitaries'.

Most dusun have their own tempat kubur, in an area of forest nearby. Nian describes these places as being both keramat (sacred) and bahaya (dangerous). She never visits them except when she is attending naik tanah (funeral) or penguburan (burial). According to Nian, nyawa who get lost on their journey to dunia tak bisa dilihat (invisible world) often stay around grave sites and become hantu (ghosts) which can harm people. While non-title holders usually avoid tempat kubur, Gandung told me that he, like other Batin, regularly visited the grave site which contains the remains of the men who were Batin Perigi before him, in order to ask his nenek moyang (ancestors) for their help. Gandung kept the area around the grave of Suman, who was Batin of Talang Perigi before Nulan, clear of undergrowth and he often burnt keminyan there and occasionally tied a new length of cloth over the grave. Gandung said that Suman’s roh (soul) would stay in the vicinity of Talang Perigi (to protect and help the people who lived there) until Nulan was buried and his roh replaced Suman’s which could then depart for dunia lain (other world) and become a malaikat (angel). Gandung said that Suman’s roh, like the roh of all recently deceased Batin Perigi, was called meraja setia (loyal king) and that it lived with its family (which was not the family Suman had known when he was alive) which included his tunangan (fiancée), Putri (princess) Gendam Seirah, his younger brother Temanggung Kecik and his tunangan Putri Kepit Anintan.

After her cerai (divorce) from Sijam, Nian (who was about thirty-two), Tomin (who was about thirteen) and his new-born sister, Likur, were able to survive on reserves of rice in Nian’s bekas padi (rice store) which she added to by earning padi through working on other peoples’ huma – Sutan Mohammad’s and Pintasan’s in particular. The family also had a regular cash income from the sale of rubber Tomin tapped from his mother’s trees, most of which had been planted by Junan in the early 1970s and were now about ten years old. Sutan Mohammad and his son, Barisan, helped Tomin transport his getah to Petonggan and sell it to Haji Nasir. This was a period of relative affluence for Nian and soon after Cahaya Intan’s naik

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53 *Anting-anting* is more commonly used in Tiga Balai (and in both Indonesian and Malay) to mean drop, or hanging, ear-rings.

54 From the ways that Talang Mamak talk about 'heaven', it appears that the different terms used to mean the place where nenek moyang (ancestors) exist (e.g. dunia lain, dunia yang lain, dunia tak bisa dilihat, etc) all refer to the same place. However, there may be different between some of these terms which relate to the differences between the 'seven layers' of 'the heavens' (see Knappert 1992 p.112).
Nian began *betandang* again — spending time with three men in particular: Raphan (who she knew before she married Junan), with whom she went *betandang* five times; Meja, who she went *betandang* with on about ten occasions; and Kudian, who she married after they had been *betandang* together about twenty times. Kudian and Nian’s wedding took place in Gandung’s house, in around 1984, at a *gawai* which also included the marriage of Jidan’s son, Mungkir, to his bride, Nimi. Before the wedding, Kudian moved in with Nian, Tomin (who was about fifteen) and Likur (who was about two). Together, they farmed rice and Kudian and Tomin tapped Nian’s rubber trees. Nian soon *jadi bunting* (became pregnant), but her child was *mati lalu* (still born) and, not long afterwards, Kudian and Nian divorced after a disagreement which began at Batin Sandang’s *naik tambak* in Gedabu. Kudian’s teenage son by a previous marriage, Akunan, was staying with them in Dusun Kelapa at that time and he accompanied his father, Nian, Tomin and Likur to the *kumpulan* in Gedabu where they arrived in the evening. The following day, having seen Sandang’s *papan kubur* erected and having eaten with all the other guests at mid-day, Nian and her children wanted to *balik* (return home). However, Kudian and Akunan were enjoying spending time together gambling at the *Melayu*-run card and dice games being held outside Sandang’s house on the *halaman*. They refused to leave until just before dark when their money, which Kudian had obtained tapping and selling his wife’s rubber, was finished. On the way home, Nian, who was tired and unhappy at having been made to wait all afternoon, asked Kudian to *dukung* (carry on the hip) Likur, who she was carrying. Nian says that Kudian was angered by this request and that he only begrudgingly took Likur from her. He then made a comment about getting a divorce. When they arrived in Dusun Kelapa, Nian and Likur rested while Tomin *tanak nasi* (cooked rice) and when it was ready, Kudian, Tomin and Akunan ate together. Early the next morning, Kudian took Akunan back to his son’s mother’s house and did not return. After a few days, Nian persuaded her brother-in-law, Pintasan, to help her look for Kudian and try to get him to return to Dusun Kelapa. Nian and Pintasan went to the home of one of Kudian’s sisters where they discovered that Kudian had returned to Gedabu to continue gambling. Nian and Pintasan spent one night in Kudian’s sisters house before Kudian returned from Gedabu and agreed to return with Nian to Dusun Kelapa. However on the first night he spent with Nian, Likur and Tomin after their return to Dusun Kelapa, Kudian asked Nian for a divorce and after leaving *sirih* with Sutan Mohammad’s eldest son, Barisan, he returned to his sister’s house.
With Kudian gone, Tomin (who was about fifteen) again took responsibility for tapping his mother's rubber trees and, with Sutan Mohammad's help, he was able to sell the rubber he collected in Petonggan. As long as Tomin lived with her, Nian could rely on him to bring a regular supply of cash into the house (by tapping and selling her rubber) which meant that she could buy rice (if she needed it), kerosene, cooking oil, tobacco and other goods from Petonggan market. After Kudian's departure, Nian, who was about thirty-five did not spend long meranda before she went betandang again, and, while his mother was looking for a partner, Tomin was also beginning to go betandang. Around this time, Nian met Lagaan and in the following year, 1986, they got married at gawai kecik held at Sutan Mohammad's house. About a year after his mother's fifth wedding, when he was around eighteen, Tomin married a young woman from Perigi and moved into her parent's home. With Tomin gone, Lagaan could not call on his help to clear huma and tap rubber and Lagaan became solely responsible for supplying the household with duit (money). Soon after Tomin's gawai, Nian jadi bunting and, during the later stages of her pregnancy, she began to suspect that Lagaan was having sex with another woman. By the time Nian gave birth to her second daughter, Nar, in 1988, her relationship with Lagaan had broken down and Nian recalls that seventeen days after her youngest daughter's birth, Lagaan minta cerai (asked for a divorce), saying that he wanted to ikut mai Intangan (live with [a woman called] Intangan). Nian says that after he had minta cerai Lagaan left Dusun Kelapa and took sirih to Barisan's house where Lagaan told Barisan that he was divorcing Nian. With Lagaan gone, Nian once again found herself setumpak di rumah (alone with her children).

Despite Nian's insistence that Nar is Lagaan's child, conceived and born while Nian was married to him, several people (including Panca) suggest that Nar is anak gampang (illegitimate child) because (according to Panca) Lagaan had already divorced Nian and moved in with Intangan before Nian became pregnant with Nar. As a result of these accusations, Nian became the subject of gunjing (gossip, abuse) from her neighbours and she recalls this omongan yang enggak-nggak (untrue talk) which usually suggested that Nian had both shamed herself, by footnotes

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55 Gunjing is a Minangkabau word meaning talking evil of a person behind their back (Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.375).
having sexual relationships with *banyak laki* (many men), and gone against *adat*, by allowing herself to become pregnant while she was not married. These stories made Nian very sad, especially at night when she often felt very lonely.

In 1989, Nian, who was still nursing Nar, did not farm rice, and Likur and she lived off the rice that was left in their *belabur* (rice store). During this period, no-one cut Nian’s rubber and she had no money coming into her household. Towards the end of that year, at the time when most people were looking forward to *menuai* (harvest), Nian and her daughters suffered *kesialan* (misfortune, bad luck) when, in the middle of the night while they were sleeping, their house in Dusun Kelapa burnt to the ground. Although she has no proof, Nian maintains that this fire was started deliberately, probably by a man (who she did not name) whose sexual advances she had refused. Nian, Likur and Nar managed to escaped unharmed from the blazing house, and Nian can remember standing on the *halaman* watching the house, that she and Junan had built almost twenty years before, burn down. Having nowhere else to go, Nian turned to Sutan Mohammad for help and he went to see Batin Gandung who made arrangements for Nian and her daughters to move into one of the new houses in *Tran* Perigi – which was under construction at that time. While work was still going on at *Tran*, Nian and her daughters spent a very uncomfortable month or so living for most of the time in a small *pondok* Nian made in Dusun Kelapa from the charred remains of her house – with occasional visits to Sutan Mohammad’s or Tomin’s house on nights when it rained very heavily. By this time Tomin and his wife had built their own house and were living there with their baby daughter. Nian says that her son *dak mau membelia* (didn’t want to look after) her during this time of hardship as he was struggling to provide for his wife and daughter. Nian also recalls that her *kakak*, who had been influenced by *gunjing* about Nar’s legitimacy, did not offer to help their youngest sister.

In early 1990, before *penataan* (training) had been held for people who wanted to move into *Tran* and many buildings were still under construction, Nian, Likur and Nar, moved into the first house to be completed in *Tran* Perigi. The workmen had been using this house as a store for materials, and it is, unlike all other house in *Tran*, constructed entirely of selected hardwoods. Nian was very happy to move into her new house and she planted many fruits and vegetables on her *halaman*, which (now that these plants have grown) is, unlike most *halaman* in Tiga Balai, not a clearing. Rather, it is a shady garden containing a wide variety of
fruit trees and useful plants. About a month after Nian moved in, work finished on Tran Perigi and people began to settle in the other houses: Panca and Tambal taking the house opposite Nian's; and Anjak and Bagum occupying the one next door. Several Melayu families from Petonggan also moved into Tran, including Dinah, his wife and their children, who were given a house in front of the mosque. Dinah had tried several times, while staying in Petonggan, to make a living as a gambler. He did not own any rubber trees and did not have an income. After he arrived in Tran, he offered to tap Nian's trees for a two-thirds share of the getah he collected. Nian agreed and Dinah began tapping her trees and selling the rubber in Petonggan. Once a week, Dinah, who, according to Jari and Bagum, was using Nian's rubber to negotiate personal loans, gave Nian a share of the money he earned. Nian never kept a check on Dinah's financial activities. She owned several, potentially very productive, rubber plots, from which about eighty kilos of rubber a week could be collected in dry weather. However, Nian never received more than Rp.12,000 from Dinah in any one week, which he would give her in the form of rice, cooking oil, kerosene, tobacco, sugar and other provisions he obtained (probably as part of a private debt arrangement), at Petonggan market.

In the first three years that she stayed in Tran, Nian did not farm her own huma but she was able to earn some rice by working on Sutan Mohammad's ladang and this, together with the rice Dinah gave her each week in return for her rubber, was just enough to feed herself and her daughters. During this time Nian, Likur and Nar got to know their neighbours better and, although they do not enjoy particularly good relationships with Panca, who sometimes tries to annoy Nar by asking her who her father is, they have become friends with Bagum and Anjak, Jari and Sariyah and Nuraiyah and Taksiran. In early 1993, Jari and Sariyah, who were thinking of clearing their own ladang after several years of farming with Bagum and Anjak, asked Nian if they could open a ladang on an area of land which had last been farmed by Junan and herself twenty years before. This land was near Nian's rubber plots and contained a few of her mature rubber trees. Nian agreed to allow a five hectare plot to be cleared, which was divided into four huma: one, of about one and a half hectares, belonging to Jari and Sariyah; another, of similar dimensions, belonging to Taksiran and Nuraiyah; one, belonging to Nian, which was about one hectare; and one more, which was also about one hectare, belonging to Tulin and his wife. Nian marked out a plot for herself which was separated from the majority of her rubber trees by a river but which still contained about half a dozen mature trees. In exchange for letting them use the land, Jari, Taksiran and Tulin agreed to help Nian cut down
trees, fire the land and sow her rice. Nian was happy to make this arrangement, even though it would inevitably result in some of her rubber trees being damaged or destroyed, during burning. It would also bring her the opportunity of securing a rice crop for the first time since Lagaan’s departure in 1988, which, she hoped, would provide subsistence for her and her daughters in the following year.

When I first moved into Tran, I rarely spoke to Nian or her daughters and we did not visit each other’s houses. After Adriani arrived, she struck up a friendship with Nian, Likur and Nar and they began to call regularly at our house, usually bringing us a gift of some fruit or vegetable that Nian had collected in the forest. Nian is very skilled at finding food in hutan (forest) and she can remember the locations of many useful plants and trees, some of which are growing on her bekas ladang (old or fallow rice fields). Whenever we gave Nian food or cigarettes or she and her daughters ate with us, Nian always offered to do some weeding in our garden in return and she would often do a bit of weeding near the house while she chatted to Adriani, who enjoyed the company of Nian, Likur and Nar. As we spent more time with them it became clear that Nian and her daughters were having difficulty surviving and Adriani and I decided to employ Nian to help us with gardening work and to pay her a wage of Rp. 3,000 a day. Nian was very happy with this arrangement and she and her daughters began dividing their time between their huma and our house. By working hard at weeding her huma, where she had built a pondok and planted a wide variety of vegetables, Nian was able to spend three or four days a week working in our garden. Nian managed to save some of the money she earned and she invested it in sarung, and other types of cloth, which she bought at Petonggan market and put away for Likur to use when she is old enough to go betandang.

While Nian was farming a huma alongside Jari and Sariyah’s plot and meeting them regularly at our house (whenever they visited while she was working there), Nian and Jari began to talk about her rubber trees and Dinah’s management of them. Over the course of several discussions on the subject, in which Bagum also became involved, it was decided that Bagum would tell Dinah that he could no longer tap Nian’s rubber, which Jari began cutting for a two-thirds share and selling, as part of his and Bagum’s debt arrangement, to Haji Nasir. Nian is pleased with this arrangement as Jari gives her both a supply of provisions and some cash
each week (as her share of the rubber he cuts) which, together, usually have a value of more
than Rp.20,000. Jari says that, if Nian wanted someone to cut her rubber for her, she should
have consulted Bagum, or another Tua Tuah, who would have made sure that she was not
tatipu (tricked, cheated), instead of making a private agreement with a Melayu.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Gandung had been educating Nian's son, Tomin, to succeed
him as Batin of Talang Perigi and, after Gandung's death, Tomin was made Batin Perigi in
September 1993. Although Nian does not enjoy any special privileges as the Batin's mother,
generally speaking, her status has improved since his appointment and people such as Bagum
and Jari have begun to take more interest in her life since her son became Batin. Tomin too
has taken a greater concern over his mother's well-being and, along with Sutan Mohammad,
he has become a regular caller at Nian's house. Towards the end of 1993, Nian's rice was
almost ripe enough to harvest. Much of what was already a poor crop, due to dry weather
earlier in the season, was being destroyed or eaten by babi (pigs). While most people had
similar problems, Nian's padi was particularly badly affected as she was unable to spend any
nights at her pondok guarding her rice because Nar did not like sleeping there, and she and
Likur were still too young to be left on their own. After harvesting her small crop of padi, Nian
decided to put it away for use as seed next year when she hopes to be able to farm with
Sariyah and Jari again. Nian also hopes that she will be able to feed her daughters and herself
with rice bought with her share of the money Jari makes tapping her rubber, until such time as
she can grow enough rice to meet their daily needs.

Likur, who is about eleven, will soon be making her first visits to the paths near kumpulan
where betandang takes place and, while Likur has not yet been betandang, in early 1994 her
mother, who is about forty-four, had a man visit her house at night for the first time in six
years. Although Nian spoke cautiously and unenthusiastically about her visitor and did not tell
us his name, she did seem both quietly pleased and slightly embarrassed to have, once again,
been betandang. Nian is very closely attached to her daughters, from who she is rarely
separated for more than an hour or so, which is usually while she works and they play. Nian
says that she is happiest living like this, without a husband, and that she probably won't marry
again. In the evenings when they are alone together, Nian usually sings or tells stories to Likur
and Nar and she can often be heard by her neighbours or anyone else passing by, entertaining
her daughters late into the night. While Panca, who lives opposite and whose wife Tambal also tells stories at night, thinks that Nian sounds like a mad woman, both Likur and Nar enjoy listening to their mother singing and telling stories such as this one which is called ‘Melayang Angin’ (Flying Wind) and which Nian says is about the relationship between a Talang Mamak girl called Si Bungsu and orang seberang (a man from across the Inderagiri) called Melayang Angin.

Si Bungsu had six sisters who were called Jinkanam and one day her sisters invited Si Bungsu to wash and play in the river. Before they entered the water the oldest sister called out ‘I want to marry a Sutan’ and then jumped straight into the water. Before the second sister jumped into the water she said that she wanted to marry a Raja. The third sister wanted to marry the Raja of Johor, the fourth Datuk Temanggungan, the fifth a Batin and the sixth a Mangku. When it came to Si Bungsu’s turn she only wished to marry Melayang Angin.

After they had washed they went home together. Apparently the Jinkanam were angry with Si Bungsu because they wanted their youngest sister to marry a Raja but Si Bungsu would not agree and so her sisters decided to murder Si Bungsu. Before they set about killing Si Bungsu, the Jinkanam went to ask their father a question: ‘Which one is liked best, is it rice or is it grass?’

‘Rice is liked best,’ replied their father. ‘With rice there is something to eat but with grass there is nothing to eat.’ The sisters agreed to get rid of Si Bungsu but their father said

footnotes

56 Adriani collected many stories from Nian and several from Panca’s wife, Tambal.
57 While Si is a polite term of reference, which is usually applied to unmarried people and is used before a person’s name (e.g. Si Likur, Si Nar), bungsu means the youngest child in a group of siblings – Nar in relation to Likur and Tomin or Nian in relation to her kakak.
58 Melayang (from the root layang) means to be borne in the air like a kite and angin means wind.
59 The name Jinkanam is made up of jin, an Arabic word meaning ghost, supernatural being or genie, and enam meaning six and is probably a shortened version of jin ke enam (the six ghosts).
60 Sutan was a title used to describe Minangkabau nobility and should not be confused with the name Sutan – as in Sutan Mohammad.
‘There is no need to get rid of her, just make yourselves separate houses.’ and the six Jinkanam built a house close to the path while Si Bungsu built one right at the end of the path.

One day, after they had finished making their houses, a molek (handsome, pretty) man went walking by and the Jinkanam greeted him and called out ‘Spend the night here tonight.’

The man replied ‘No’ and kept walking until he came upon Si Bungsu’s house where he spent the night. Si Bungsu felt afraid, could not sleep and just menyangam (wove a mat). Si Jantan, the man, woke up and said ‘Why aren’t you sleeping? Are you scared? Do you want something?’ to which Si Bungsu replied ‘When we were washing, the Jinkanam said that they all wanted to marry a Raja, a Sutan or a Mangku but I want to marry Melayang Angin.’

‘I am Melayang Angin’ said the man. ‘You are betuah (fortunate) – your wish has been granted. Let’s stay together61.’

‘OK’ replied Si Bungsu ‘if you are indeed Melayang Angin.’

Soon afterwards, Melayang Angin took one of his fighting cocks to Capung Banjar62 to fight. He won, and he brought some money and the losing cock to Si Bungsu. When he arrived at her house he asked Si Bungsu if she had washed.

‘Not yet’ she replied, so he carried her to the river and, after washing, Si Bungsu boiled rice and roasted the cock and, after eating, they slept. The next day, before the sun rose, Melayang Angin went cock-fighting again and while he was out, the Jinkanam arrived at Si Bungsu’s house and asked for some lank (cooked meat or fish) to eat. After they had eaten, they asked Si Bungsu where Melayang Angin was and she replied that he had gone

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61 Bejadian is the word I have translated as stay together. The root, jadi, means become, change or transform and jadian means something that has been transformed into something else, which, by adding the prefix be or ber, meaning owning, having, wearing, using, etc, is made into an unusual verb.

62 Nian said that Capung Banjar was a town which no longer exists but which used to be seberang Kuantan (on the other side of the R. Inderagiri).
cock-fighting. Then the Jinkanam asked her if Melayang Angin is angry with her when he comes home from cock-fighting.

‘When we go to bathe, he carries me’ was Si Bungsu’s reply.

Then the Jinkanam said ‘When he comes home, little sister, find some miang tabu (sugar cane hairs) and put them on his sleeping mat.’ After Melayang Angin had won and come home, he invited Si Bungsu to bathe, as on the previous day and, after washing, she cooked and they ate together. After the meal, Si Bungsu rolled out sleeping mats and Melayang Angin lay down but he could not sleep because he felt itchy.

So he asked ‘What’s this, Si Bungsu?’ and she replied that it was her sisters’ doing. Melayang Angin changed his mat and they went back to sleep.

The next morning Melayang Angin went cock-fighting again and, as on the previous day, the Jinkanam arrived and asked Si Bungsu if Melayang Angin had been angry with her the night before.

‘No’ was Si Bungsu’s reply. So they told her to hang a beliung (small axe) in the doorway before Melayang Angin came home. When he returned from the cockfight, Melayang Angin picked up Si Bungsu, who was smoking, and she burnt the string that was holding the beliung and it fell on Melayang Angin’s head and cut him.

Fortunately, Melayang Angin knew the medicine for that type of wound and he asked Si Bungsu ‘Who told you to do that?’

‘The Jinkanam’ was her reply.

‘Just follow your sisters’ orders and I won’t be angry’ said Melayang Angin.

The next day, as usual, when Melayang Angin was out the Jinkanam arrived and ordered Si Bungsu to break the necks of all Melayang Angin’s fighting cocks. Si Bungsu duly killed all Melayang Angin’s birds. When he found out, Melayang Angin said to Si Bungsu ‘If it was you who broke my cocks’ necks I will leave.’ Si Bungsu started crying because she did not want Melayang Angin to balik (go home, return). So Melayang Angin took Si Bungsu across the river and invited her to live with her mother.
When they arrived at Melayang Angin's village, his mother asked her son, 'Child, who is that urang buruk (slave, servant)\textsuperscript{63}? Later, Si Bungsu was given food in a sayak (coconut shell).\textsuperscript{64}

Melayang Angin then said to his mother 'Take three tipak (brass sirih trays), as tanda bibit (sign of betrothal), to Kapas Sababan\textsuperscript{65} whom I wish to marry.'

'Yes,' replied his mother. Melayang Angin then ordered Si Bungsu to gather one hundred bundles of firewood and she was taken to a place where there was plenty of dead wood by Si Lamat\textsuperscript{66}. When she arrived there she started crying because she had to collect so much wood.

A beruk (short-tailed macaque) saw her and said 'What are you crying about, Nile\textsuperscript{67} (girl),'

'I've got to collect one hundred bundles of firewood,' replied Si Bungsu.

'No need to cry' said the beruk. 'I'll help you. I'll collect the wood and you tie it up.'

When the wood was ready, Si Bungsu went home and said to Si Lamat 'I've gathered the wood. Bring it home please.'

'That was very quick' said Si Lamat, surprised. When she arrived home, Si Bungsu was again given her food in a sayak.

The next day, Melayang Angin told her to collect one hundred rolls of banana leaves. Si Lamat took her to a place where there were plenty of banana plants. Once there, she began crying because she had to gather so many leaves. A cigak (long-tailed macaque) arrived and helped her. When she was brought back to the house by Si Lamat, Melayang

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\textsuperscript{63} Orang or urang means person and buruk means bad or ugly. Like the term orang jahat (bad, wicked people), orang buruk was used by nobles to describe hamba (slaves) (Bowen 1983, pp.167–168).

\textsuperscript{64} Sayak is a Minangkabau word meaning a coconut shell bowl and being given food in a sayak is a sign of very low status as only dogs were normally fed in this way. (See Phillips 1981, p.280.)

\textsuperscript{65} This woman's name is made up of kapas, meaning cotton, and baban, meaning load or burden, with the prefix se, meaning one, added to it.

\textsuperscript{66} Si Lamat is a variation on 'Salamat' which is 'a common name for manservants in Minangkabau stories' (Phillips, 1981, p.247).

\textsuperscript{67} Nik is a term of address used for young girls.
Angin said 'You were very fast indeed.' That night she was given her food in a coconut shell.

Melayang Angin then said 'Tomorrow, you orang buruk, go to Punggar Kayu Batu (hardwood tree stump) and pick one hundred bundles of sirih leaf.' The following day, she was taken there by Si Lamat and when she arrived she began to cry.

*A tupai* (squirrel) appeared and said 'Don't cry. I will call my friends to help you.' When the *sirih* was ready, Si Bungsu told Si Lamat to collect it and Melayang Angin gave her food in a coconut shell. The next day, Melayang Angin ordered her to collect one hundred *gantang* of *padi* and husk it all. She started crying in the middle of the rice field and a *pipit* (small bird) said 'Don't cry. My friends and I will help you husk the rice.' and the task was finished that day. When Si Lamat came to bring her home, he saw that all the *beras* (husked rice) was ready and he said to himself 'I feel sorry for this orang buruk'. That night, he gave her food in a coconut shell.

The day of Melayang Angin's marriage to Kapas Sababan arrived and Si Bungsu was just sitting down relaxing. Melayang Angin said to her 'It's better that you work than you remain idle' and gave her two *ambung* (rotan back-packs). However, when she tried to put the *ambung* over her head, they fell and broke. When she saw this, Kapas Sababan became very angry and Melayang Angin had to calm her down.

Then Si Bungsu began to sing 'If I don't work, I am no good. If I do work, people get angry.' Melayang Angin then ordered Si Bungsu to do some washing up but the plates slipped from her hands and were all smashed. When she saw this, Kapas Sababan got angry again and Melayang Angin told her to calm down. That night, Si Bungsu was given food in a *sayak*. Three days later, Si Bungsu was told to carry a *kancak* (large wok) which she also dropped and broke. Kapas Sababan was again angry and Melayang Angin had to calm her down. After another three days, Si Bungsu was told to cook rice and straightaway she entered the fire.

'Isn't the fire *hangat* (hot)?' asked Melayang Angin.

'The thing that is on fire is my heart' replied Si Bungsu and Melayang Angin straightaway fell in love with Si Bungsu, took her to the river, washed her and invited her to sit beside him in the house. On seeing this, Kapas Sababan was very angry and she asked Melayang Angin 'Why did you take *bangsa orang buruk* (person of the slave rank or caste) to bathe and why do you eat and drink with her?' Melayang Angin was very
annoyed at Kapas Sababan and the next day he ordered her, instead of Si Bungsu, to cook rice and Kapas Sababan killed herself by sitting on a stake. After this, Si Bungsu and Melayang Angin went directly to Si Bungsu’s father’s house where, seven months later, they were married.
Sutan Mohammad was the first Talang Mamak I ever met. He shook my hand, offered me a mat to sit on, some dark tobacco and keminyan to smoke and an unripe coconut to drink. The pegawai, who had taken me to his house introduced Sutan Mohammad to me as the Kepala (head) [of] orang Talang Mamak and said that he held the titles Datuk Patih and Kepala Desa. Sutan Mohammad became the first person I spoke to, in detail, about leaders and titles in Tiga Balai. Over the course of a few weeks Sutan gave me a description of a hierarchy of title holders, all of whom both recognised him as Datuk Patih and oriented themselves towards the Camat. While I was having regular conversations with Sutan Mohammad, always in his house with no one but his wife and children present, I began to get to know other men, such as Canto of Sungai Limau, who told me that Gagah was really Datuk Patih and that most people still recognised Tengku Arief as their Raja. When I mentioned these contradictions to Sutan Mohammad he did not seem very pleased and he told me that a small group of Talang Mamak who lived in Ekoh Hulu, under the leadership of a man named Laman, who held no legitimate title, had gone against adat and elected another candidate, called Gagah, as Datuk Patih. Sutan Mohammad claimed that like their Raja (Tengku Arief), who had no kakuasaan (authority) in the government of Indonesia, these people, who did not recognise the authority of the Camat, had no kakuasaan in Tiga Balai.

As I learnt more about Tengku Arief, Laman and Gagah I saw less and less of Sutan Mohammad, mainly because I spent most of my time outside Talang Perigi, but also because I preferred talking to other people rather than listening to Sutan Mohammad’s quite formal repetition of the legitimacy of his claim to be Datuk Patih. When we did meet, most of the things that I was interested in talking about, such as his conflict with Laman, he didn’t want to expand upon. A lot of people, especially those (such as Dukun Panta) who had a disagreement with him, were scared of Sutan Mohammad and several people told me, in a whispered voice, that he possessed banyak ilmu (much knowledge).

During my first visit to Tiga Balai I never saw Sutan Mohammad far from his home. Unlike most Talang Mamak who much prefer being ramai (‘joyously crowded’ Wee 1988, p.207) to being sunyi (‘desolately lonely’. ibid.) and enjoy going to kumpulan I only ever saw him with members of his close family (his brother Cuan, his eldest son Barisan, etc) and never in a
crowd at a kumpulan. When I asked him why he did not go to kumpulan, he told me that as Datuk Patih, he usually delegated his authority to Batin (such as Gandung) who organised gawai, hukuman, etc on his behalf, and that he did not attend bedukun or belian because most Dukun and Kemantan (in particular Kemantan Madun of Perigi) were no longer effective in contacting nenek moyang as they had, by failing to recognise him as the legitimate Datuk Patih, gone against aturan adat (adat regulations) and thereby damaged the relationship between the Talang Mamak and datuk-datuk (ancestors).

When I returned to Tiga Balai in 1992, I saw Sutan Mohammad more regularly. When our house was finished, he came round two or three times every week and often ate with us. On these occasions he seemed far more relaxed than he had been in 1988 and he taught me, amongst other things, about many different types of wood and how to carve them and also about the many different types of knives found in Tiga Balai. During our conversations, which usually took place on the back porch of our house with people such as Bagum, Nian, Jari and Sariyah also present, Sutan Mohammad told me that although he was the true inheritor of the title Datuk Patih, he had given up his claim on both that title and the job of Kepala Desa. He said that the tanggung jawab (responsibilities) and masalah (problems) he encountered while he held these positions had made his life susah (troubled, difficult) and that he was happy now just spending time with his family, in particular his youngest son Wundi, who was born in 1993 and who, Sutan Mohammad hopes, will become the inheritor of adat Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang (the founder of Tiga Balai) which, Sutan Mohammad says, was passed on to him by his father, Mohammad Dinan, who was the twenty seventh descendant of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang to hold the title Datuk Patih.

Sutan Mohammad was born around 1939 in the Binjai region of Talang Perigi where he lived with his mother, Serong, who was born in Perigi, and his father, Mohammad Dinan, who was born in Durian Cacar and whose father was Datuk Patih Ma'lijin. Sutan Mohammad's earliest memories are of orang asing (foreigners, strangers). He recalls that in the early 1940s a party of Dutchmen entered Tiga Balai and, using a handbore, prospected for oil. Musim, which means season, is used in Tiga Balai to signify any period longer than a few days. For example musim padi is the six months (July to January) when rice is in the ground, musim durian is the...
(Dutch period) during which, in about 1941, Serong gave birth to another son called Panggeran\(^2\), was followed by musim Jepang (Japanese period) which began in about 1943 and which Sutan Mohammad describes as susah mainly because the market in Keloyang closed down and Talang Mamak could not obtain cloth or salt. The Japanese invaded many Melayu and Minangkabau towns and villages along the Inderagiri and took all their supplies of rice, which resulted in many starving Melayu families entering Tiga Balai looking for food, mainly padi and ubi (root crops), which they bought or exchanged for pinggan (plates), mangkok (bowls), talam (brass trays), tipak (brass sirih trays) and inas (earthenware vases). The Japanese also penetrated Tiga Balai and extracted kerja pakesa (forced labour) known as romusha\(^3\). Sutan Mohammad says that the Japanese took his grandfather, Datuk Patih Ma'Ijin, Batin Nulan and the other Batin to Simpang Kelayang where they ordered them to organise a Talang Mamak work force of one hundred men. A few days later, the Batin and Ma'Ijin reported back to the Japanese with ninety-five men, who included the teenage Gandung amongst their ranks. As loyal anak buah, these men had volunteered themselves at the request of their Batin or the Datuk Patih. They were taken to Pekanbaru where they were forced to clear a large area of forest for over a year before being allowed to return to their homes. Sutan Mohammad says that, despite being promised a good wage and good working conditions, these men received no pay, little food and endured much hardship, to the extent that about twelve men died there. Although Gandung returned safely, he had the beginnings of a goitre on his throat

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few months (November to December) when durian are ripe, musim kemarau is a period of dry weather that usually lasts about a fortnight and occurs between May and June, and musim hujan is any period of heavy rain that lasts for more than a few days.

2 While Sutan Mohammad told me on several occasions, both in 1988 and in 1992–1994, that Panggeran was his younger brother, several other people, including Saril (the former Pengawas of Talang Parit) maintained that Panggeran was in fact older than Sutan Mohammad and that Panggeran, rather than Sutan Mohammad, had been Mohammad Dinan's first choice as his successor. Despite Panggeran being already dead by the time I first arrived in Tiga Balai in 1988, Hamidy (1991 p.107) claims to have met and interviewed 'Patih Sutan Panggeran, who is the twenty-eighth patih of Suku Talang Mamak and who is still alive at the time of writing this book'.

3 Lufti et al. (1977 p.413) say that every ku (sub district) in Rengat gun (sub regency) had to supply one hundred men, for 'romusha lokal' or 'konrohosyi', who were taken to clear land in preparation for the construction of an airport near Pekanbaru where they were forced to work, often naked, for little food in unsanitary conditions.
During Sutan Mohammad's early childhood, his father worked farming rice and tapping his rubber trees, which were already mature by the time Sutan Mohammad was born. Sutan says that the first man to plant rubber in Tiga Balai was Jatum (who was both Dubalang [military commander] of Tiga Balai and Serong's father) who bought two thousand seedlings at Keloyang market. Not long after Jatum began planting, Sutan Mohammad's father, Mohammad Dinan, followed his example and bought a few thousand young rubber trees which, like Jatum, he planted in Talang Perigi. Sutan Mohammad told me that Mohammad Dinan often accompanied his father Datuk Patih Ma'Ijin when he went to Rengat to meet the king of Inderagiri, Sultan Mahmudsyah, for the biannual semah (reaffirmation of the oath made between the third Datuk Patih and the first king) and it was on these trips that Mohammad Dinan first saw rubber trees which had been planted along the Inderagiri since about 1915 (Kato 1990 p.60), and learnt about tapping and coagulating getah parah⁵ (latex). As the first rubber planters in Tiga Balai, Jatum and Mohammad Dinan were able to take full advantage of the rubber boom in 1937-39 when the Dutch paid high prices for and encouraged the planting of rubber. During this boom, other Talang Mamak men, such as Bagum's father, also took up rubber cultivation. Sutan Mohammad says that, before his father and Jatum began tapping rubber, it was very difficult for them, and other Talang Mamak, to get money, the only avenue open to them being through the sale of forest produce such as rotan (or rotan goods) keminyan, etc, none of which, during musim Belanda, commanded a very high price. Sutan Mohammad recalls that many Talang Mamak, including Kemantan Madun, were suspicious of rubber when it first arrived and that they uprooted the seedlings of most men who wanted to follow Jatum's and Mohammad Dinan's example. Madun says that, at that time, nothing, except a few goods bought at Keloyang market (such as salt, metal, cloth and crockery) was allowed to enter Tiga Balai and that if anything did come into Talang

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⁴ In general, sea salt is much richer than rock salt (as would be found inland) in iodine. Iodine is used by the thyroid gland to make thyroxin, an important hormone whose absence causes goitres.

⁵ Parah is a Minangkabau variant of the Indonesian perah meaning to express or extract (see Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.883).
Perigi, such as a stray Melayu-owned buffalo or some orang asing (Dutch, Japanese, Melayu), Madun would hold a belian in order to membaiki perahu padi (mend the rice boat) and repair the damage done to adat and to datuk-datuk (ancestors) who control the rice crop. Rubber cultivation, which was not seen as being part of adat, was dilarang (prohibited, forbidden) because, as Madun said, it would offend penunggu padi (rice guardians), and result in tanah hangat (hot earth) and poor rice crops.

According to Sutan Mohammad, when Mohammad Dinan first began selling rubber in Keloyang, which was in zaman kapun ('coupon era' 1937–1939)\(^6\), rubber prices were high and he got eighty sin (cents) per kilo from an orang Arab-India (Indian Muslim) who, Sutan Mohammad says, had black skin and was called Tuan (master, sir) Saleh. Sutan Mohammad recalls that at that time there were a variety of currencies in circulation at Keloyang and that his father might be paid with brass coins (either kelip or sin), in silver coins (ketip, rupiah or ringgit) or with fifty sin, one rupiah or one ringgit notes\(^7\).

During the Japanese occupation, trading in rubber at Keloyang ceased. Consequently, for about three or four years, few goods were available and Mohammad Dinan could no longer obtain a regular supply of duit (money). It was about that time that Serong gave birth to a daughter called Masarih who was Sutan Mohammad's and Panggeran's younger sister. According to Sutan Mohammad, when the Japanese first arrived in Inderagiri, they captured Sultan Mahmudsyah, Raja of Inderagiri\(^8\), at his palace in Rengat and Sultan Muda at Peranap\(^9\),

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\(^6\) According to Kato (1990 pp. 62–65), the 'coupon era' derives its name from a scheme, begun in 1934, by which the Dutch government tried to control rubber cultivation by smallholders as well as by estates, and which resulted in a 'tremendous inflow of cash' to rubber growers along the Inderagiri.

\(^7\) While Sutan Mohammad says that a kelip was made of brass and had a value of half a sin, Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (1993 p.49) suggests that a kelip was made of nickel and worth five cents. According to Sutan Mohammad, one ketip was worth ten sin and ten ketip had the value of one rupiah. A ringgit was worth two and a half rupiah, which is the same as twenty five ketip or two hundred and fifty sin.

\(^8\) Lufti et al. (1977 p.367) include a photograph of 'Sultan Mahmud' who, they say, was the last Raja of kerajaan Inderagiri.

\(^9\) According to Lufti et al (1977 pp.363–364), the title Sultan Muda was introduced by the Dutch in 1890 when Raja Ibrahim, who was a rival of the recently crowned Raja Isa, was given the title Sultan Muda, a residence in Peranap and control over the Inderagiri from kerajaan Kuantan (which was upstream from Peranap and was centred at Taluk Kuantan), to Japura near Air Molek. Sultan Muda was assisted by five ministers who resided at 'Koto Baru, Kelayang, Morong, Japura dan [and] Kampung Orang Laut
dethroned them both, tied them up and took them, as prisoners, to Pekanbaru where they were detained for about a year. When news of the Sultan's capture and humiliation reached Datuk Patih Ma'Iljin (who was Sutan Mohammad's grandfather and who lived in Talang Durian Cacar), he told other Talang Mamak that these events marked the end of kerajaan Inderagiri (kingdom of Inderagiri). He also said that the sumpah (oath), originally sworn between his ancestor the third Datuk Patih and the first king of Inderagiri, tak berarti lagi (was no longer of significance) and that title holders should stop visiting the palace at Rengat. While Ma'Iljin did not attend the semah during the time that Mahmudsyah was being held at Pekanbaru, Pajar, Batin of Talang Parit, and Nulan, Batin of Talang Perigi, both kept in contact with the palace through Cik Oemar, Tumenggung of the royal house of Inderagiri. When the Sultan returned he ordered Pajar to bring Ma'Iljin before him and explain his absence from the semah.

Sutan Mohammad maintains that his grandfather, Datuk Patih Ma'Iljin, had, for many years, been unhappy about the way the Sultan governed Tiga Balai and when he went with Pajar to meet Sultan Mahmudsyah, Ma'Iljin voiced his complaints. To begin with, Ma'Iljin no longer recognised Mahmudsyah as king and refused to get down on his knees and menyembah Raja (pay homage to a king). Sutan Mohammad says that before Talang Mamak representatives meet the Sultan at semah, they have to form a line, with the Datuk Patih, who is the first to approach the king, at the front. On entering the room in which the Sultan is seated, the Datuk Patih immediately bows his head and puts his palms together. After holding this position for a few seconds he then drops to his knees and bows down, to touch his head on the floor three times, before pushing his right knee out, along the ground, and sliding his body forward one step. He then touches his forehead to the ground again three times before sliding forward another pace. He repeats these movements, keeping his palms together and eyes down, until he reaches the Sultan's throne where the Datuk Patih lowers his head onto the

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[aboriginal villages in Riau with a distinct maritime culture]. Lufti et al. (ibid.) maintain that the 'orang Laut who lived in the estuaries around the mouth of the Inderagiri were all under the authority of Sultan Muda who governed them through a minister called Engku Togok'.

10 Lufti et al. (1977 p.258) include a photograph of the istana (palace) of kerajaan Inderagiri at Rengat, which used to be on the banks of the Inderagiri but is now, due to shifts in the river's course, far from the water's edge.
outstretched feet of the Raja and says 'Bondsmen have masters, according to adat. The heartland is the head, the outlying regions are the tail'. After the Sultan recognises his presence the Datuk Patih moves to the side to be replaced by the first of the Batin, usually Batin Parit or Batin Perigi, who then begins sliding forward in the same way.

As well as the formal greeting, menyembah Raja also includes tribute which Talang Mamak leaders must pay to the Sultan at the semah every Hari Raya (Idul Fitri) and Raya Haji (Idul Adha). On Hari Raya, the Datuk Patih, and each Batin, should present the Sultan with: four chickens; four gantang (3.1 kilo measure) of beras (husked rice); and four ambung (rotan backpacks) of gulai sayur (vegetables). On Raya Haji, these amounts are doubled and an extra gift of hasil (crop, product) is given to the king by each Talang Mamak leader: eight kampit (large matwork bags made from sago palm leaf) of padi from the Datuk Patih; eight from Batin Perigi; eight from Batin Parit; and one kampit each from the other Batin. On the nights of Hari Raya and Raya Haji, the semah itself takes place and, after the Talang Mamak leaders have eaten with the Sultan, keminyan is burnt, they drop to their knees and, one by one (the Datuk Patih going first) menjunjing duli (put the Sultan's feet on top of their heads) and menuja Sunan (worship a king). Tengku Arief, who is a son of Mahmudsyah and who has attended many semah as Raja Inderagiri, describes the semah as a 'ceremony' which includes 'meeting and eating together with invisible creatures such as orang bunian, jin, etc that protect the kingdom from invisible penetration'. Tengku Arief said that at semah he can see the

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11 The actual words, as given to me by both Sutan Mohammad and Laman are 'Hamba batuan menurut adat, Luhak bekepola rantau bereko?'. While hamba means slave or debt servant, the words luhak and rantau refer to a Minangkabau system of government wherein the king ruled (from the luhak [centre]), the rantau (outlying districts) through a system of lesser kings who were loyal to him.

12 Junjing (junjong in Malay) means supporting on the head and duli means dust under the foot of royalty. Menjunjing duli was a common way for subjects to pay homage to their king in the Malay world (see Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.484).

13 Sunan is a shortened form of susuhunan which is an old Javanese term of respect for the rulers of Mataram (see Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.1141).

14 Tengku Arief, who can speak English and who I visited, in his family home in Jakarta, on several occasions, wrote some notes for me, about his relationship with Talang Mamak, from which the quotes below are taken.

15 Orang bunian is an expression, originally from Johor, meaning 'invisible elves of the forest' (see Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.165).
invisible creatures' which are his and the Datuk Patih's nenek moyang and that together, those present, both visible and invisible, reaffirm sumpah janji adat (the oath of loyalty sworn between Datuk Patih and the king of Inderagiri). Sutan Mohammad says that, in his part of the sumpah, the king promises to be fair, and that Ma’Ijin thought that Mahmudsyah was not keeping his word because he took tribute from his Talang Mamak subjects without bringing them any advantages, such as opportunities to earn money or education. Sutan Mohammad knows the following pantun (proverb) which, he says, Ma’Ijin quoted to the king ‘Just kings are worshipped, Unjust kings are challenged.’

During his meeting with Mahmudsyah, Ma’Ijin, as well as refusing to menyembah Raja, said that kerajaan Inderagiri was finished and that he and other Talang Mamak were now orang merdeka (free, independent people) who no longer had to obey the Sultan’s wishes and could now freely enter Islam, if they wanted to, educate their children and pass titles and valuables on to their male heirs. Sutan Mohammad says that some aspects of adat were enforced by the Sultan in order to make the Talang Mamak easier to rule. Chief among these were the prohibitions on entering Islam and on education which, according to Sutan Mohammad, have both isolated the population of Tiga Balai, and halted their kamajuan (progress, prosperity). Tengku Arief told me that, as Raja Inderagiri, he does not allow his Talang Mamak subjects to enter Islam because, while Muslims (such as himself) worship Allah, Talang Mamak must worship their Raja and his ancestors who communicate with Allah on their behalf. Tengku Arief says that Talang Mamak are forbidden education for a similar reason – if they could read they could study the Koran and may become attracted to Islam. According to Sutan Mohammad, the subject of keturunan bapak (patrilineal descent) had been at the centre of disagreements between his great-grandfather, Datuk Patih Singkop, and Sultan Mahmudsyah in the 1930s when Singkop had wanted both to become a Muslim and to pass on his title to his son Ma’Ijin. While Mahmudsyah forbade him to enter Islam, he did allow Singkop, who had

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16 Sutan Mohammad’s words were ‘Raja adil disembah, Raja tak adil disanggah’. Tengku Arief (p.45) gives the following version of this pantun as part of the ‘traditional laws of the kingdom of Inderagiri: Raja adil, Raja disembah, Raja zalim (tyrannical), Raja disanggah’.

17 Merdeka or merdeheka is from Sanskrit meaning freedom in contrast to servitude. Reid (1983 p.21) suggests that merdeka ‘was in use in seventh century Sri Vijaya as [a title for] a chief or leader over a group of subjects or bondsmen’.
no sisters, to pass his title on to his son. Consequently, Singkop had Ma’Ijin installed as Datuk Patih and left Tiga Balai to live in Keloyang, where he entered Islam. Tengku Arief said that the only reason why property and titles in Tiga Balai are handed down ‘matrilineally’ is to prevent the establishment of male ‘dynasties’ which could, over time, come to rival the royal house of Inderagiri. Tengku Arief suggested that, by forbidding Islam and keturunan bapak, he (and his ancestors before him) prevented their Talang Mamak subjects from producing an ‘Islamic dynasty’ with their own king at its head who could threaten the authority of kerajaan Inderagiri.

Sultan Mahmudsyah, who was angered by Ma’Ijin’s claim for independence, immediately stripped him of the title Datuk Patih and ordered Pajar, Batin of Talang Parit, to return to Tiga Balai and find a replacement. Pajar chose Temanggis (the son of Ma’Ijin’s sister, Dusan), who was living in Parit, to become the next Datuk Patih and, together with Batin Nulan of Talang Perigi, he took Temanggis to Rengat where Mahmudsyah installed him as Datuk Patih. At this time, all visits to Rengat were made by boat and, according to Sutan Mohammad, while Pajar, Nulan and Temanggis were in a sampan (canoe) on their way home from Rengat, Pajar fell asleep and had a dream about a man dressed in black. This man accused Pajar of simply replacing Ma’Ijin and not dealing with the issue of who was going to replace Mahmudsyah as Raja, or Kepala, adat now that he had been dethroned by the Japanese and the kingdom of Inderagiri was finished. After telling Pajar that Ma’Ijin was the true Datuk Patih, whose advice other Talang Mamak should follow, the figure in black threw sand into his eyes. Pajar woke up with a start to discover that he had gone blind and, Sutan Mohammad says, that it is from this incident that Pajar got the name Batin Buta (blind Batin). Once he had been appointed as Datuk Patih, Temanggis returned to Talang Parit where he continued to live with his family, while Ma’Ijin, who still had many anak buah that recognised him as Datuk Patih, remained in Durian Cacar which, according to many people (including Laman), is where Datuk Patih should live.

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18 Gandung told me that while the Sultan had exclusive use of the colour yellow, Talang Mamak titles are also associated with certain colours: Datuk Patih with hitam (black); Batin with putih (white); and Manti and Mangku with pacar (mixed colours).
After the Japanese left Inderagiri, trading recommenced at Keloyang market and Sutan Mohammad began accompanying his father whenever he went to tobing (riverbank) to sell his getah. Sutan Mohammad recalls that the journey to Keloyang was often a hazardous one, not just because the rawang (swamp) had to be negotiated, but also because Talang Mamak men often encountered insults, violence and robbery from local Melayu whenever they went outside Tiga Balai. Sutan Mohammad says that, when he was a boy, women never left the confines of Tiga Balai. Nowadays, while some women, such as Sariyah and Nian enjoy going to Petonggan market, many more, including Sutan Mohammad’s wife Sitihamidah and his daughters Cimpali and Hadaya, have never been outside Tiga Balai. Sutan Mohammad remembers that, when he visited Keloyang with his father, Melayu boys would often throw sticks at him and shout insults, such as ‘pemakan babi’ (‘pig eater’), at him. In 1947, when Sutan Mohammad was about seven, his mother, Serong, gave birth to her third son, who is called Cuan. Around that time, Sutan Mohammad’s grandfather, and former Datuk Patih, Ma’Ijin, of his own accord, contacted an official of the recently-formed government of the Republic of Indonesia, who was stationed in Rengat. As a representative of orang Talang Mamak, Ma’Ijin asked that a school be opened in Talang Perigi. In 1951, Ma’Ijin’s request was granted and a teacher, who lived in Keloyang, was appointed to pay weekly visits to a small wood and bamboo school house which was built by Mohammad Dinan and Ma’Ijin next door to Sutan Mohammad’s parents home in Talang Perigi.19

Sutan Mohammad recalls that this school had about ten pupils when it first opened, who were all children of Ma’Ijin’s anak buah and that only he, his brother Panggeran and his sister Masarih attended for more than a few weeks. In 1954, after they had been attending school for about three years Sutan Mohammad’s brother Panggeran, who was around thirteen, died and being reduced to only two pupils, the school closed down. It was in that year that the newly appointed Gubernur (governor) of Propinsi (province) Sumatra Tengah, who Sutan Mohammad says was called Gubernur Roslan Mahajoko, visited Simpang Kelayang where he met Ma’Ijin, Mohammad Dinan and Sutan Mohammad. Sutan Mohammad remembers this

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19 Hamidy (1991 p.114) maintains that a ‘sekolah dasar’ (elementary school) was opened in Perigi in 1971 and shut in 1972 because of a lack of pupils.
incident well, because the Gubernur asked him if he could write his name. When Sutan Mohammad, who was about fifteen, replied that he could, the Gubernur gave him his own pen and a piece of paper and asked Sutan Mohammad to prove it. As a result of his schooling, Sutan Mohammad could write his name, much to the surprise of the Gubernur. The Gubernur was so impressed that he invited Sutan Mohammad, Mohammad Dinan, Ma’Ijin and seven other Talang Mamak to visit his offices at Bukittinggi in the Minangkabau highlands, where, he said to Sutan Mohammad, they would be able to ‘melihat tanah nenek moyangmu’ (‘see the land of your ancestors’). About a week later Sutan Mohammad, his father and his grandfather were taken, by road, to Bukittinggi (a journey that lasted several days) where they spent a week staying in government accommodation. During this time the Gubernur arranged for his Talang Mamak guests to spend a day at the replica of Pagarruyung (Minangkabau royal palace), which stands near Batu Sangkar, and to visit the zoo which had been built by the Dutch. The Gubernur also made arrangements for Sutan Mohammad to attend the school in Keloyang and for him to sleep overnight in the Penghulu’s (headman’s) house whenever he made the journey to school, which was not very often as Sutan Mohammad did not enjoy either the long walk or sleeping in a Melayu house.

In 1958, during the Sumatran rebellion many Minangkabau rebels – Sutan Mohammad calls them PRI – who were fleeing government troops, sought refuge in the forests of Riau. Sutan Mohammad recalls that some PRI entered Tiga Balai and that, because they were armed, they were given food and shelter by Talang Mamak. When the government troops, stationed at Simpang Kelayang, heard of this they entered Tiga Balai and began shooting at both the rebels and anyone they believed was assisting them. They also beat many Talang Mamak men in order to get information out of them and shot one man in Talang Selantai who, they claimed, was helping the rebels. Government troops also restricted the movements of Talang Mamak who were issued, one to each household, with identity papers without which they could not visit Keloyang market where the sale of many goods (rice, tobacco, etc) was controlled in order to prevent provisions being bought for any rebels that might still be in the vicinity of Tiga Balai. Government troops continued to keep a check on Talang Mamak, especially when they went to market, for over a year and it was towards the end of this period that Sutan Mohammad got married for the first time. His bride, who was called Siulit, was born in Durian Cacar and, after jemput laki Sutan Mohammad, who was about twenty, went to live in Talang Durian Cacar, which is where Sutan Mohammad’s grandfather Ma’Ijin (who was by
then an old man) lived. Sutan recalls that, being twenty, he was quite old when he got married as most people married when they were in their mid-teens. He also says that, in the past, most marriages were between people of the same talang and that men rarely married out of their natal talang because parents did not want their sons to move far away. As a result, gawai, in the past, were usually only attended by people from one talang.

Sutan Mohammad's marriage to Siulit lasted for two years, during which time Ma'Ijin died, passing his claim to be Datuk Patih on to his son Mohammad Dinan, and Siulit fell pregnant and gave birth to a daughter. Two months after his daughter was born, Sutan Mohammad divorced Siulit and returned to his mother's house in Talang Perigi. According to Sutan Mohammad, soon after Ma'Ijin's death, Pajar, Batin of Talang Parit, had another dream in which he saw another man in black who, this time, resembled Ma'Ijin. This apparition warned Pajar that he must right the wrong that he had done to Ma'Ijin and his nenek moyang and by installing Ma'Ijin's son, Mohammad Dinan, as Datuk Patih. Pajar, who was a very old man by that time, was scared by this dream which he described to both Temanggis, who agreed to step down and allow Mohammad Dinan to become Datuk Patih, and Batin Nulan of Talang Perigi, who agreed to help Pajar install Mohammad Dinan, which they did at a large kumpulan attended by Temanggis and organised by the two Batin in Nulan's house in Binjai around 1962.

Temanggis' support for Mohammad Dinan was short lived and within five years Mohammad Dinan had been removed of the title Datuk Patih and Temanggis had been reinstated. During this time, developments took place outside Tiga Balai which had important consequences, both for Mohammad Dinan's candidature as Datuk Patih and for the way that relations between title-holders are generally conceived in Tiga Balai. The first of these was the death of Mahmudsyah which occurred in 1963. Sutan Mohammad says that Sultan Mahmudsyah had four sons, who were called: Tengku Mohammad; Tengku Bayi; Raja Bujang; and Tengku Arief, and that Mahmudsyah had originally intended Tengku Mohammad to replace him and become Sultan of Inderagiri. In 1958, while their father was still alive, Propinsi Riau was formed with its capital at Tembilahan and Mahmudsyah's two eldest sons, Tengku Mohammad and Tengku Bayi, were both incorporated into its administration and given well-paid jobs in Tembilahan and Pekanbaru. Their younger brother, Raja Bujang, had died as a boy. Consequently, after their father's death, their youngest brother, Tengku Arief, who was away attending university
in Jakarta, was the only one of the four brothers in a position to claim his father's title. When he heard about Mahmudsyah's death, Tengku Arief returned to Rengat and began taking over his father's affairs which included meeting Talang Mamak title-holders.

The second development, which also took place in the early 1960s and which was to alter the way rivalry between leaders was characterised by Talang Mamak, also began outside Tiga Balai – in the Camat's new office in Air Molek, which was opened after Kecamatan (sub-district) Pasir Penyu was formed in the early 1960s. Here, Umar was appointed Koordinator Talang Mamak and preparations were made to bring Tiga Balai under more direct Government control through the institution of Kepala Desa. Umar was given responsibility both for informing the Camat (who, like most of his successors, never went to Tiga Balai) about Talang Mamak and for selecting the men that the Camat would install as Kepala Desa. By 1965, Umar had chosen five men to represent the five main talang and had begun to regularly take them, by road, to Air Molek to meet the Camat and learn about the functions of Kepala Desa. Umar told me that he thought that the best men for the job of Kepala Desa were those who already held titles and that it was for this reason that he had begun negotiations with Datuk Patih Mohammad Dinan, Batin Gandung of Talang Perigi, Batin Rusian of Talang Parit, Batin Sandang of Talang Gedabu and Batin Ma'Urup of Talang Sungai Limau who were to become the first Talang Mamak Kepala Desa. During the course of these negotiations, Umar married one of Batin Sandang's nieces and obtained several large rubber plots in Tiga Balai, two of which he bought from Sutan Mohammad's father Mohammad Dinan.

While Kepala Desa were being chosen, Sutan Mohammad got married to Pelangai, who lived near his mother's home in Talang Perigi where Sutan Mohammad and his father were beginning to come into conflict with Laman who was born in Talang Perigi around about the same time as Sutan Mohammad. In about 1961, Laman married a woman, called Pulan, who also came from Perigi and is a sister of Rapan's wife. Sutan Mohammad says that

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20 Laman is often called, because of his short stature, Laman pendek (short Laman) in order to distinguish him from other men with the same name.
Laman's marriage to Pulan was *kawin*²¹ *sumbang* (improper or illegal marriage) because she became pregnant before their wedding and that they became the subject of gossip, especially after the birth of their first child which Sutan Mohammad suggests resembled a turtle.

After Mahmudsyah's death, while Umar was appointing *Kepala Desa* in Tiga Balai, some of the Talang Mamak leaders who were to become *Kepala Desa* stopped attending the *semah* in Rengat, under the influence of *Datuk Patih* Ma'Ijin. Laman says that this represented a significant threat to Talang Mamak *adat*, security and prosperity which were all based on the *sumpah*. In order to counteract this threat, Laman went to Rengat where he met Temenggung Cik Oemar who introduced him to Tengku Arief who had recently returned from Jakarta and who was interested in re-establishing relationships between the royal house of Inderagiri and Talang Mamak. Tengku Arief asked Laman to bring Temanggis, the last man to be installed as *Datuk Patih* by a *Sultan*, and other title holders to the palace so that the institution of the *semah* could be maintained. Laman was able to persuade Temanggis and *Batin* Tampin of Sungai Limau to return with him to the palace in Rengat where, in 1964, they resumed the *semah* and Tengku Arief reinstated Temanggis as *Datuk Patih* and gave Laman the title *Wakil* (deputy assistant) *Patih*. Despite Laman's insistence that he inherited this title from his mother's brother Gambir, Sutan Mohammad, and many other people, say that it is a title, never used before Laman's time, that Laman made up and gave himself.

In around 1965, after he had reaffirmed the *sumpah*, Laman began proclaiming Tengku Arief as the new *Sultan* of Inderagiri and suggesting that title holders who did not attend the *semah* should be replaced. Included in this group were his neighbours Nulan, *Batin* of Talang Perigi, and *Datuk Patih* Mohammad Dinan who, Laman argued, should no longer have any functions within Tiga Balai as he had broken the *sumpah*, and had been replaced as *Datuk Patih*, on Tengku Arief's orders, by Temanggis. Laman's opposition to Mohammad Dinan's candidature as *Datuk Patih* brought the two men into direct conflict. Tension between Laman's family and Sutan Mohammad's family increased until Laman and Pulan left Talang Perigi, along with about four other families who wanted to uphold the *sumpah*. They moved to the Ekoh Hulu.

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²¹ In Tiga Balai, *kawin* means both sexual intercourse and marriage.
region of Durian Cacar where one of Laman’s brother’s sons, Kantor, was living. A few months later, Temanggis, who had recently married a woman from Durian Cacar, joined them. From this new base, Laman began both to attract anak buah (who wished to uphold the sumpah) and to consolidate his relationship with Tengku Arief.

In the same year that Laman left Perigi, Sutan Mohammad’s wife, Pelangai, gave birth to a son called Barisan and Mohammad Dinan was removed of the title Datuk Patih. Sutan Mohammad recalls that one evening in 1966 his father was called to the office of Tengku Amat, who was both Wali Negri (local government head) and one of Tengku Arief’s cousins, in Simpang Kelayang. Sutan Mohammad decided to accompany his father to Simpang Kelayang where they arrived late in the night, to find Tengku Amat, a few pegawai (local government officers), Temanggis, Laman and about a dozen of his anak buah waiting for them in the Wali Negri’s office. Mohammad Dinan presented himself to Tengku Amat who told him that an official election for the title Datuk Patih was about to take place and that Mohammad Dinan, as the current title holder of that title, was a candidate along with Temanggis, who had held the title before Mohammad Dinan. When the votes were cast, Laman and all the other Talang Mamak present voted for Temanggis while Sutan Mohammad was his father’s only supporter. Sutan Mohammad remembers that, before Tengku Amat could say any more, his father gave up his title, left the office and, together with his son, walked home. Just before he was removed of the title Datuk Patih by Tengku Amat, Mohammad Dinan and the other men Umar had picked to become Kepala Desa began taking on the responsibilities of their new jobs but it was not until a year later, in 1967, that they received their first wage and their SK (identification papers).

In 1968, just after his only sister Masarih had died, Sutan Mohammad divorced Pelangai and returned to Serong’s house where, one day in 1970, Mohammad Dinan fell sick. Sutan Mohammad remembers that his father, who had been ill for a few days, was lying down talking to friends when a noise (which Sutan Mohammad describes as a ‘ting’) came from inside his body. After this Mohammad Dinan said ‘Nyawaku putus’ (my spirit is broken) and predicted that he would die in one week’s time. Mohammad Dinan then sent Sutan Mohammad, who was his oldest surviving son, on an errand. He told him to first go to Keloyang market to do some shopping, then go to Dusun Rimpahan in Durian Cacar (which is where Mohammad Dinan was born and where Ma’ljin had lived) to collect some ripe fruits
and then to return home. Sutan Mohammad, who left the following morning and spent that
night in Keloyang waiting for the market to open the next morning, bought the things his
father had asked for and, after spending another night in Keloyang, he set off for Rimpahan.
When Sutan Mohammad arrived at his grandfather’s house that evening, four days had passed
since his father predicted his own death and, after two days gathering fruit, Sutan Mohammad
returned home exactly seven days after his father had sent him on his errand.

When Sutan Mohammad got back to his parents’ house, his father, who was close to death,
said that he wanted Sutan Mohammad to inherit his title and become Datuk Patih. When
Gandung, Batin of Talang Perigi, and Rusian, Batin of Talang Parit, who were both Kepala
Desa learnt of Mohammad Dinan’s death and his final wish, they agreed to install Sutan
Mohammad as Datuk Patih at Mohammad Dinan’s naik tambak, which was held a few months
after Mohammad Dinan’s death, and at which Sutan Mohammad’s younger brother Cuan was
also made Mangku of Durian Cacar. Sutan Mohammad remembers his pengangkatan Datuk
Patih (installation) which neither Laman nor Temanggis (who also held the title Datuk Patih)
attended and he says that his father had not given him any formal tuition for the role of Datuk
Patih. Everything that he now knows about adat, hukuman, and his nenek moyang he learnt
from his father and his grandfather by listening to conversations they had with other men.

With the death of Mohammad Dinan, Durian Cacar was without a Kepala Desa and Umar
(who bought a large plot of mature rubber trees from him around that time) chose
Mohammad Dinan’s son to become the next Kepala Desa of Durian Cacar. Sutan
Mohammad, who had accompanied his father to the Camat’s offices on several occasions, went
with Umar to Air Molek where he was installed as Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar. After
his father died, Sutan Mohammad took control of his mother’s rubber trees and, in 1972,
when he married Sitihamidah, who was born in Dusun Rimpahan, they moved into Serong’s
house in Dusun Binjai.

Since he had first reaffirmed the sumpah with Tengku Arief, Laman had been reasonably
successful in gaining support for the new Sultan. However, he had been unable to persuade
most of the Batin, most of whom were also Kepala Desa, to attend the semah regularly. Only
Datuk Patih Temanggis, who lived near Laman in Ekoh hulu, and Batin Gabal, of Sungai
Limau, accompanied Laman twice every year to meet Tengku Arief in Rengat. In order to
ensure that all the talang were represented at the semah, Laman decided, with Tengku Arief’s
authority, to install a *Batin* in each *talang* who would uphold the *sumpah* and officiate at all *kumpulan adat* (traditional gatherings). Laman says that *Batin* who have broken the *sumpah* and recognise the authority of the *Camat* are no longer qualified to organise *kumpulan adat* because they have damaged the relationship between Talang Mamak and their *nenek moyang* by *tak turut adat* (not following adat). According to Laman, *adat* states that *Batin* must *menyembah Raja* and attend the *semah*. In the mid-1970s, about ten years after Mahmoudsyah’s death and the installation of *Kepala Desa*, Laman introduced the opposition *desa* and *adat*, which he probably learnt about from Tengku Arief, to distinguish between *Batin* who were also *Kepala Desa* and who, Laman claimed, were only qualified to organise *kumpulan* dealing with Indonesian state business – who he called *Batin desa* – and *Batin* who attended the *semah* and were, therefore, according to Laman, qualified to hold *kumpulan* such as *gawai*, *hukuman*, etc, where *adat* procedures were followed – who Laman called *Batin adat*. Laman told me that he only installed *Batin adat* in *talang* where the majority of the population both supported the appointment and wished to uphold the *sumpah* and that all *Batin adat* were chosen and given their titles by *pemilihan* (election). Laman maintains that he is not against the idea of government developments within Tiga Balai. Rather, he rejects initiatives, such as *Tran Perigi* and the *Inpres* school, which were introduced without first consulting Talang Mamak, such as himself. Laman’s major complaint concerns the government’s plans to clear large parts of Tiga Balai in order to make way for a *kelapa sawit* (oil-palm) plantation, which he knew about – probably from Tengku Arief – years before anyone else in Tiga Balai or Petonggan had heard of these plans.

By 1980, which is when the market moved to Petonggan and work began on the path from the river into Tiga Balai, Laman had installed two *Batin adat*, Canto of Sungai Limau and Rapan of Perigi, both of whom had widespread support in their *talang* and attended the *semah* regularly. In that same year, Temanggis died. After a couple of years (during which Sultan

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22 The *adat/desa* distinction is also used in other parts of Indonesia to describe the difference between traditional administration and government administration. Some groups are required by law to have both an *adat* leader and a *desa* leader, as Helliwell (1995 pp.362-363) remarks of the Gerai, ‘a Dayak community of some 700 inhabitants, located in the southern-most district of the Indonesian province of Kalimantan Barat (West Borneo)’ who are required by Indonesian law to regularly elect ‘both a village head (*Kepala Desa*) and a customary law head (*Kepala adat*)’. 
Mohammad was without a rival for the titles *Datuk Patih* and *Kepala Desa* of Durian Cacar), Temanggis' sister's son, Gagah (who lived in Durian Cacar and who was initially reluctant to oppose Sutan Mohammad), was persuaded by Laman both to accept the title *Datuk Patih* and to start accompanying Laman to Rengat to meet Tengku Arief. As support for Gagah grew, Sutan Mohammad began to find himself isolated in Perigi with his few anak buah living in Durian Cacar (which is where most people say the *Datuk Patih* should live) – all of whom stayed near his brother Cuan's house in Rimpahan. The majority of Durian Cacar were, and still are, anak buah of Laman and Gagah. In Talang Perigi, where Sutan Mohammad lived with his wife Sitihamidah, their son Takson and their two daughters Cimpali and Hadaya, Laman and *Batin adat* Rapan had won some support. However, many people in Perigi, under the leadership of men such as Bagum, Nawar and Panca, remained loyal to Gandung (who found himself labelled *Batin desa* by Laman and Rapan) and supported government initiatives in Tiga Balai. While Sutan Mohammad was recognised by the *Camat*, his pegawai and Umar as both *Datuk Patih* and senior *Kepala Desa*, he fulfilled few functions as *Datuk Patih*, most of which were carried out by Gagah under Laman's guidance, and he rarely represented anyone at *kumpulan*. Sutan Mohammad's role in *adat* affairs was generally confined to assisting and advising Gandung, who still organised many *kumpulan*. While he was addressed by Gandung and many of his anak buah as *Datuk Patih*, he seemed to fulfil the role of a respected *Tua Tuah*. During the early 1980s support for Laman and Tengku Arief continued to grow and in 1983 Laman was accompanied by representatives from nearly all the *talang* when he met Tengku Arief at the *semah*. Laman had the support of the following leaders: *Batin* Rusian of Talang Parit (who was also *Kepala Desa* and was the only man recognised by Laman as both *Batin adat* and *Batin desa*); *Batin adat* Canto of Talang Sungai Limau (who had the support of the majority of Sungai Limau, unlike *Batin desa* Maiyan who was *Kepala Desa* and had only a few anak buah); and *Datuk Patih* Gagah (who had the support of everyone in Talang Durian Cacar except for a few families in Rimpahan). While Rusian, Canto and Gagah gave Laman their support, *Batin* Gandung of Talang Perigi and *Batin* Sandang of Talang Gedabu, who were both *Kepala Desa* and had the support of the majority of their *talang*, refused to recognise Tengku Arief as *Sultan* and did not attend the *semah*. Consequently, *Batin adat* Rapan, with the backing of Laman, represented both Perigi and Gedabu at the 1983 *semah* where those
present decided to organise a coronation ceremony for Tengku Arief at which he would be bathed and formally given the title Raja of Inderagiri. Sutan Mohammad says that Laman and his anak buah planned a nobatkan Raja\(^{23}\) (coronation) that was to start at the bathing pool in Keloyang, where most previous kings of Inderagiri had washed before accepting the takhta (throne) and would end at the palace in Rengat where Tengku Arief would be given the title Tengku Raja Arief, the twenty-sixth Raja of Inderagiri. Sutan Mohammad recalls that while Tengku Arief was being bathed the police arrived and, although no one was arrested, the coronation was halted and Tengku Arief’s nobatkan Raja was not completed.

At the time of Tengku Arief’s coronation, Laman was gathering support for him in Gedabu and trying to persuade Batin Sandang to uphold the sumpah (as he had done to Gandung before he made Rapan Batin adat of Talang Perigi) by regularly sending his anak buah to Sandang’s house with a tipak of sirih and an invitation from Tengku Arief to attend the semah. Laman also tried to impose a fine (which Sutan Mohammad recalls was twenty gantang beras [62.5 kg of rice] and one kambing [goat] in his grandfather’s time), on Batin, such as Gandung and Sandang, who did not attend the semah. Laman says that in 1983 he invited Sandang to Rengat six times and that, after he had declined for the sixth time, Sandang fell ill with large ulcers and boils appearing all over his body. A few months later he died. According to Laman, Sandang’s death was caused by tulah\(^{24}\) (disease brought on by an offence to adat). Many people in Gedabu agreed with his diagnosis and they began to support Laman and to ask Rapan to represent them at kumpulan. Sandang was both a respected Batin and a popular Dukun and he was regarded as both possessing a lot of ilmu (knowledge), powerful tangkal and tawar (charms and spells) and having good relations with his nenek moyang. Sandang’s tulah was seen by many as evidence of the dangers of breaking the sumpah. In 1984, the same year as Sandang’s death, the Inpres school opened in Talang Perigi and Sutan Mohammad and

footnotes

23 Lufti et al. (1977 p.256) include a photograph of the coronation drums and coronation jacket of the kingdom of Inderagiri which were, in the sixteenth century, under the guardianship of Talang Mamak.

24 Tulah is an Arabic word which can be used both, generally, to mean misfortune or calamity and, specifically, to mean a misfortune due to breaking an oath or being cursed. A famous example in the Malay Annals records that the Chinese Emperor suffered tulah as the result of mistreating the king of Melaka. (Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.1244).
Sitihamidah’s children Takson, Cimpali, Hadaya and Sadikun attended regularly from the day it opened.

Throughout the 1980s, the three *Kepala Desa* who also held *adat* titles — *Datuk Patih* Sutan Mohammad, *Batin* Gandung of Perigi and *Batin* Maiyan of Sungai Limau — found themselves increasingly isolated as Laman and his anak buah continued to attend the *semah* and organise most of the *kumpulan* held in Tiga Balai. While Maiyan was reduced to about half a dozen anak buah, his rival, *Batin adat* Canto had the support of both Laman and the majority of the population of Sungai Limau. In spite of efforts, by Laman and Rapan, to undermine his authority, Gandung maintained a strong following in Talang Perigi. However, *Batin adat* Rapan did have (and still has) groups of anak buah in most areas of Perigi, except Binjai. Laman also made several attempts to get Sutan Mohammad stripped of the titles *Datuk Patih* and *Kepala Desa* and to have Gagah installed as unopposed holder of both titles by sending letters to the *Camat*. Laman, who says that he cannot read or write, probably got Tengku Arief’s and Temenggung Cik Oemar’s help to write these letters. Laman told me that he never uses Ramlie Shaleh, *sekretaris* of Talang Durian Cacar (who is one of Laman’s *keponakan* [nephews] who entered Islam and went to live in Petonggan), because he assisted Sutan Mohammad in his dealings with the *Camat* and, therefore, could not be trusted. While Laman was trying to get support for Gagah in the *Camat*’s office, an intense personal rivalry, which had its roots in events in Perigi in the 1960s and which reached a peak in the late 1980s, built up between Laman, who was living, surrounded by his anak buah, in Durian Cacar, and Sutan Mohammad, who was living, as an anak buah of Gandung, in Perigi. Sutan Mohammad had very little support in Durian Cacar, the *talang* he was supposed to represent as both *Datuk Patih* and *Kepala Desa*. At this time many of those who acknowledged Sutan Mohammad’s claim to a title, most of whom were anak buah of Gandung, called Sutan Mohammad, ‘*Patih desa*’.

When I visited Talang Perigi in 1988, I visited Sutan Mohammad many times in his house but I rarely saw him outside Dusun Binjai where he lived with his mother Serong, his wife Sitihamidah and their children Takson, Cimpali, Hadaya, Sadikun and Abunaiya. I soon learnt that Sutan Mohammad, who carried his long, razor-sharp *parang* (machete [the handle of which he had carved to resemble a bird’s head]) almost everywhere he went, did not attend any *kumpulan* other than those held at Gandung’s house. The only times he left Binjai were when he went to Petonggan market or to Air Molek. At that time, most people in Tiga Balai
spoke about the opposition between those who wished to uphold the sumpah and those who orientated themselves towards the Camat, or, in Laman's terms, between adat and desa, in terms of conflict between Sutan Mohammad and Laman who were often described as musuh (enemies). While Laman was seen by his anak buah as tampuk25 adat (the stem or stalk that supports adat), Sutan Mohammad was described by many as a desa functionary who had no role in adat. A major point of disagreement between Sutan Mohammad and Laman concerns the inheritance of the title Datuk Patih. While most people in Tiga Balai maintained – and still maintain – that the correct inheritance for Datuk Patih, as for Batin, Manti and Mangku, is turun ke keponakan (passed on to a nephew), Sutan Mohammad argues that the title Datuk Patih has always been passed from father to son and that he, having inherited it from his father Mohammad Dinan, is the rightful possessor of that title.

Sutan Mohammad inherited several objects from his father which, he says, endorse his claim to be Datuk Patih. The most important of these are baju keramat, a black, short-sleeved, collarless shirt embroidered with white designs, and keris keramat, a straight, long-bladed doubled edged knife with a wooden sheath and wooden handle (carved into the shape of a bird's head) both of which, according to Sutan Mohammad, originally belonged to Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, the founder of the Talang Mamak settlement26. Sutan Mohammad also values highly the stories about his nenek moyang, the previous holders of the title Datuk Patih, which he learnt from his father and grandfather. They also left him an exercise book, containing hand-written information about the administration of kerajaan Inderagiri, which Ma’Ijin had dictated to a Melayu from Keloyang in the 1950s. Laman says that Sutan Mohammad, who keeps his pusaka keramat (sacred heirlooms) in his brother Cuan’s house in Rimpahan (where they have been since Ma’Ijin’s days) should give keris keramat and baju keramat over to Gagah, who is the rightful owner, having inherited the title Datuk Patih from one of his mother’s brothers, Temanggis. However, Gagah told me that he does not want Sutan Mohammad’s baju keramat

Footnotes

25 Tampuk (tampok in Malay) means corolla or the point where the fruit and the stalk meet (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.1161).

26 Kato (1982 p.66) says that formerly, in Minangkabau, a shirt and a keris (dagger), together with a tambo (oral history), formed the ‘pusaka keramat’ (sacred heirlooms) of a Penghulu and that a keris was a mark of office that ‘nobody but a penghulu was allowed to wear’.
and keris keramat in his house because, although, like most Talang Mamak (including Laman), he has never seen them, he still fears them and regards them as being watched over by Sutan Mohammad's nenek moyang.

Sutan Mohammad says that Laman possesses two powerful tangkal (charms, talisman) one of which is a stone that meloncat (jumped) out of the water into Laman's lap when he was travelling by sampan on the Inderagiri – which Laman wears on a ring. The other tangkal Sutan Mohammad called tanduk ular (snake's horn) and he described it as a rare, hook-shaped growth that Laman found on the underbelly of a snake. According to Sutan Mohammad, and other men, Laman keeps this tangkal in a small bottle of oil in his bekas padi (rice store) and it is the main reason why he always has a surplus of rice. While they avoid meeting each other, Sutan Mohammad rarely leaving Binjai and Laman only entering Talang Perigi to visit Rapan's house, both men respect each other's knowledge of adat, and Laman acknowledges that Sutan Mohammad knows more about the founding of the talang and the previous Datuk Patih than either Gagah, who claims to know very little about these things, or anyone else. Neither Laman or Sutan would admit to there being any conflict between them but both men spoke about the other as being someone who, having no inherited claim on a title, was trying to menguasai (dominate, control) Tiga Balai.

In 1990, Laman finally got what he had been asking for in his many letters to the Camat's office. With the support of the majority of Tiga Balai, Tengku Arief and the Camat, he got Gagah installed as Kepala Desa of Talang Durian Cacar. Sutan Mohammad recalls that Umar came to see him and took him to the Camat's office in Air Molek where, in front of Umar and Ramlie Shaleh, sekretaris of Talang Durian Cacar, the Camat told Sutan Mohammad that he was being replaced as Kepala Desa of Durian Cacar. Laman told me that Sutan Mohammad was dismissed after Laman had been to Air Molek on several occasions and had told the Camat that having Sutan Mohammad as Kepala Desa of Durian Cacar was causing conflict within Tiga Balai, since the majority of its population wanted Gagah to be Kepala Desa. Sutan Mohammad says that his sacking was the result of interference from Tengku Arief, who has many relatives within the administrative structure of Propinsi Riau, several of whom Tengku Arief has introduced to Laman. Sutan Mohammad says that these relatives of Tengku Arief had also been responsible for Mohammad Dinan's dismissal as Datuk Patih in 1966.
After he returned to Perigi and Gagah had been installed by the Camat and Umar as Kepala Desa of Durian Cacar, Sutan Mohammad gave up his claim to the title Datuk Patih. This meant that, for the first time, Laman's chosen candidate held both the title Datuk Patih and the post Kepala Desa of Durian Cacar unopposed. However, Gagah did not live up to Laman's expectations and, despite Laman having supported him since Temanggis' death in 1980, one year after receiving his first wage as Kepala Desa, Gagah stopped attending the semah and stopped seeking Laman's advice. Gagah's breaking of the sumpah was a major blow to Laman's prestige which greatly reduced the number of his anak buah as more than half the population of Durian Cacar remained loyal to Gagah when he split from Laman. It has taken Laman some time to recover from Gagah's desertion but since about 1992 he has been taking Jusuf, who lives near him in Ekoh Hulu, to the semah and in 1993, with the sanction of Tengku Arief, Laman made Jusuf Datuk Patih at a kumpulan in his house. At present, Jusuf, whom most Talang Mamak do not recognise as Datuk Patih, has few anak buah and does not represent a serious challenge to Gagah's position either as Datuk Patih, because the vast majority of the population of Tiga Balai recognise Gagah as keturunan asli (true inheritor) of the title, or as Kepala Desa, mainly because Laman worked so hard at convincing the Camat that Gagah was not only the rightful holder of the title Datuk Patih but was also the elected leader of Durian Cacar. Despite losing support to Gagah, Laman has been able to establish himself as a small-scale rubber dealer in Ekoh Hulu which has greatly increased his wealth. He has also been to Jakarta several times to met Tengku Arief. Some of his anak buah told me that Laman had told them that he and Tengku Arief always meet the President of Indonesia, during these visits, who, Laman says, fully endorses their activities within Tiga Balai. Laman's trips to Jakarta, which usually take place at rice-planting time, can last for over a month and, according to Laman, in recent years they have forced him to sow his rice later that most other Talang Mamak. Consequently, his crops have not been so badly affected by the recent early season droughts. As well as regular journeys to Jakarta, Laman also often visits both Rengat, where he meets Temenggung Cik Oemar and where his youngest daughter is at boarding school, and Pekanbaru, where his oldest daughter is at boarding school.

When I first got to known Sutan Mohammad in 1988, although he was always polite and helpful, he would only talk to me inside his own house, where his conversation tended to be quite formal and nearly always aimed at legitimising his claim to the title Datuk Patih. However, when I returned to Talang Perigi in 1992 Sutan Mohammad seemed more relaxed
and friendly and no longer so concerned about his title. He told me that he had given up his claim to be Datuk Patih after the Camat had sacked him as Kepala Desa, because he is getting old and no longer has the tenaga (strength, energy) required for the role of Datuk Patih. While he still maintains he is the true inheritor of the title, Sutan Mohammad says that if the people of Tiga Balai want Gagah as Datuk Patih, then, even though they have made the wrong choice, he will follow their wishes. In the late 1980s, Sutan Mohammad, who was trying to keep both the title Datuk Patih and the post Kepala Desa, rarely attended kumpulan, visited other people’s houses or went outside Dusun Binjai. However, in the early 1990s, after he had lost his job as Kepala Desa and given up the title Datuk Patih, Sutan Mohammad began going to kumpulan where, although he still rarely goes inside the house, he enjoys playing cards and dice. The first time that I saw him, on my return to Tiga Balai in 1992, he was presiding at a kumpulan, held in Bagum’s house in Tran, to protect its residents from kesialan (misfortune) such as snake-bite.

At this kumpulan, which Sutan Mohammad called sanggar jaga-jaga, or menyanggar27, and which took place at night, a wooden tray was placed on top of a one metre high bamboo post which had been driven into the ground outside Bagum’s house. Rice, roast chicken, lilin (candles) and limas containing burning keminyan were put on this tray, after which Sutan Mohammad recited a long bicara (memorised speech) while Bagum stood next to him. After Sutan Mohammad had stopped talking, the head of a goat, bought by Bagum in Petonggan and killed by Sutan Mohammad, was buried under the sanggar (offering tray). Then everyone who attended the kumpulan, except for those young men, such as Mijan, and young women, such as Bainar, who were betandang in the forest nearby, went into the house to eat together. Sutan Mohammad’s bicara, which can go on for up to half an hour, usually consists of passages, up to five minutes long, recited very quickly and broken up with shorter, slower sections which usually verify that Sutan Mohammad’s words are sanctioned by adat. Sutan Mohammad says that he recites bicara quickly, as most other men do, so that no one else can understand and

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27 Sanggar, which is of Javanese origin, means a small, usually Hindu, shrine in the courtyard of a house (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia 1993 p.875) and jaga-jaga means to guard or be vigilant. Menyanggar is an unusual verb formed by the addition of the prefix men- to the noun sanggar.
memorise them and that he, again like most other men, prefers to keep many aspects of his
ilmu, such as tangkal, tawar and information about his datuk-datuk, a secret.

In Tiga Balai, Sutan Mohammad is still acknowledged by most people, including Laman, as being a source of knowledge about masa dulu (the past), his datuk-datuk and most aspects of adat, excluding, of course, the semah. After Gandung’s death, although he held no title, Sutan Mohammad’s value as a knowledgeable and respected man was recognised by Tomin and Bagum who sought his help and advice regarding Gandung’s naik tambak and Tomin’s pengangkatan Batin, at both of which Sutan Mohammad took on the role of senior title holder and recited long bicara. Tomin recognises Sutan Mohammad as his pemaman tua (senior uncle) and, since Gandung died, he has consulted his pemaman before most decisions he has made, including those concerning the organisation of both his administration as Batin, which involved Panca being replaced by Sunin as Mangku, and his administration as Kepala Desa which involved making Sutan Mohammad’s eldest son, Barisan, an MD (representative of a rural population). Sutan Mohammad has also become involved in discussions with Tomin, Bagum and other men from Perigi regarding issues such as IDT, Sulaiman’s appointment as Kepala Desa sementara and Rapan’s relationship with his anak tiri (step daughter). Sutan Mohammad’s advice was sought by Tomin, regarding the appropriate hukuman for a case such as Rapan’s, in which a man had sex with his married daughter. Sutan Mohammad said that the adat punishment was for the couple to be put in a bamboo cage and thrown into Kuantan (Inderagiri). Sutan Mohammad is seen by many people, including Bagum and Tomin, as a knowledgeable penghukum (judge) who knows the punishment for all salah (mistakes, offences) from bunuhan (murder) to curi (petty theft). Sutan Mohammad says that when he was Datuk Patih, he would only become involved in hukuman, which usually takes the form of tahil sepaha (fine paid in pinggan [plates] and mangkok [bowls]), concerning serious offences for

footnotes

28 Gomes (1988 p.106) says that, for the Semai of West Malaysia, bicara were ‘[c]ourt trials’ which ‘were convened to punish law breakers by imposing suitable fines. Bicara were also held to resolve disputes among Semai individuals, families, or even villages’.

29 Tahil was the name of a weight used for weighing gold equivalent to a bongkal (37.8 gram). Sepaha means a quarter. In Tiga Balai a tahil consists of five plates and one bowl and a sepaha of one plate and one bowl.
which the punishment was greater than umpat (four) tahil sepaha. All lesser offences being dealt with by Batin, Manti, Mangku and Tua Tuah.

Despite being only directly involved with salah berat (serious offences) Sutan Mohammad knows the fines for most misdemeanours, how they should be paid and who should receive the payment. He told me that most minor offences, such as petty theft of fruit or cigarettes, or arguments, should be dealt with by Tua Tuah who can, in cases where they feel that an apology is not punishment enough, give a fine up of to satu (one) tahil sepaha (six plates and two bowls), five pinggan (plates) and one mangkok (bowl) being returned to the offender and the remaining pinggan and mangkok being kept by the Tua Tuah. If a Tua Tuah is presented with a case that he thinks warrants a punishment of more than one tahil sepaha, Sutan Mohammad says that he must take the offender to a Mangku or a Manti who can impose a fine up to dua (two) tahil sepaha (eleven plates and three bowls) of which satu tahil (five plates and one bowl) is usually returned to the offender. Satu tahil is given to the Tua Tuah, who normally returns it to the offender, and sepaha (one pinggan and one mangkok) is kept by the Mangku or the Manti, who normally impose these fines for theft of small amounts of money or valuables or fights between neighbours. Sutan Mohammad says that more serious misdemeanours, such as damage to mature fruit trees or offences against adat (e.g. not giving a midwife sufficient warning before a birth) must be brought before a Batin who can give punishments of up to umpat tahil sepaha (twenty-one plates and five bowls) which is divided between the offender (who takes satu tahil) his Tua Tuah, his Mangku, or Manti, and his Batin who each take, and usually immediately return to the offender, satu tahil, the remaining sepaha being kept by the Batin. All hukuman include both the eating of sirih, which is shared between the title holders present and both the offender and the offended, and the banging of the handle of a keris or sakin (both knives) against tiang tua (central roof pillar), which is done seven times to mark the end of all hukuman. Each blow is counted out loud by those present who reach a crescendo with the final word ‘tujuh’ (seven).

Sutan Mohammad says that, while damage to any cultivated plant in Tiga Balai is punishable by hukuman, there are four kinds of fruit tree damage to which results in a fine of at least tiga (three) tahil sepaha. These trees are: kedondong (Spondias dulcis), also known as kayu tua (old wood); kepayang (Pangium edule), also known as kayu pusaka (hereditary wood); durian (Durio zibethinus), also known as kayu belembaga (institutionalised wood); and alai (Parkia roxburghii),
also known as kayu larangan (forbidden wood). Sutan Mohammad says that, in all tahil sepaha, the plates and bowls (which the offender must bring along voluntarily) are given over to the senior title holder who may keep them if he wishes. However, usually, a Batin, Manti or Mangku will only keep sepaha (one plate and one bowl), all the rest being returned to the offender with the proviso that, if the title-holder concerned needs them, he will be given all the plates and bowls immediately. He may keep them for as long as he wishes or sell them. In some cases, especially when an offender has not apologised with sincerity or has not taken advice well, a title holder may decide to keep more of the plates and bowls and, if he wants to, can take them all. In other cases, especially when an offence carries a fixed penalty (e.g. damage to a durian tree – tiga tahil sepaha), a man may be allowed to just take sepaha to his Batin and to leave tiga tahil at home. Most men get fined at some stage in their lives, usually because of damage to fruit trees. Consequently, Batin and other title holders own much of the crockery which is used by their anak buah, which they first took possession of as tahil sepaha and which they have returned at their pleasure. Sutan Mohammad says that while, in the past, an offender could be brought before a title holder against their will, nowadays they cannot be forced to accept hukuman and should come before a title-holder voluntarily. He maintains that this is satisfactory in most cases, as most people will admit their guilt and accept hukuman, but it allowed Rapan, in the case of his relationship with his daughter, to avoid punishment, which, Sutan Mohammad says, would not have happened if Rapan had been forced to come before Tomin and himself.

While many Talang Mamak know something about masa dulu (the past), Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and the founding of the talang, most of them recognise Sutan Mohammad as both the source of, and the authority on, these stories. Sutan Mohammad told me that cerita datuk-datuk (stories about his ancestors) belong to his nenek moyang and that he cannot tell them without both his ancestors’ permission and their assistance. He said that, in order to buka cerita (open the stories), which can only be told after dark when his invisible datuk-datuk (who help him remember the stories) are in attendance, he has to kill a chicken, burn keminyan and stay awake all night. Sutan Mohammad said that, if I supplied a chicken and a lump of keminyan, he would buka cerita for me to record. On hearing that Sutan Mohammad, who rarely tells his story, and then usually when only his close family are present, was preparing to buka cerita katurunan Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang at my expense, Tomin, Bagum, Jari and Johan all asked if they could come along, as they wanted to hear Sutan Mohammad’s story and learn about masa
Sultan Mohammad thought it would be good for his sons to hear the story, especially as the two youngest, Abunaiya and the recently-born Wundi, who Sultan Mohammad hopes will take up the inheritance of Datuk Patih, have never heard it.

On the evening fixed by Sultan Mohammad, Tomin, Bagum, Jari, Johan, Cuan, Adriani and I gathered at his house where we ate a meal, which included the chicken I had provided, and shared sirih together. After our meal, Sultan Mohammad burnt keminyan, laid a white cloth on the floor and put baju keramat and keris keramat, which Cuan had brought with him, on top of it. After reciting some words over them Sultan Mohammad put the baju and the keris away in the plastic bags he keeps them in and after burning more keminyan, he began to tell his tale:

If it is true that I have an origin, that I have ancestors, then I am descended from Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang who came down from the Minangkabau world which, at that time, was flooded and consisted of only Mt. Merapi, the floating lands around Sungai (river) Limau and the steep cliffs of Sungai Tonuh. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang looked down from the top of Mt. Merapi, across the water, saw the steep cliffs and the floating land that

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**Footnotes**

30 Sultan Mohammad kept up a monologue from about 10:30pm to around 4:30am which I recorded, with his permission, on a small cassette recorder. What follows is an edited translation of Sultan Mohammad's story, which he calls Katurunan Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and which resembles Minangkabau tambo (see Yakub 1987[B], 1989 and Datoek Toeah 1989) which are also based around the adventures of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and Datuk [Ke]Temenggungan who came down from Mt. Merapi when the world was flooded. Kato (1982 pp.33-34) translates tambo as 'stories of old times or traditional historiography' and he suggests that the tambo is 'an assortment of origin stories and adat rules and regulations' which 'describes the genesis of the Alam Minangkabau (the Minangkabau world), demarcates its boundaries, and specifies the relationship between the darek (the interior) and the rantau (the frontier)'. Kato (ibid. p.65) also suggests that 'supposedly every suku [clan] in every nagari [village] of the Alam Minangkabau possesses its own tambo which details the origins of the suku together with its adat regulations'.

31 Gunung Merapi is an active volcano of 9,500 feet which Dobbin (1983 p.3) calls the 'most distinctive point in the Minangkabau landscape' and of which the says, '[t]his mountain is the legendary place of first settlement [sic] of the Minangkabau people, who gradually descended to the valleys as they became less swampy and waterlogged'.

32 This is the region of Talang Sungai Limau.

33 This is the region around Sungai Tonuh in the south of Talang Durian Cacar.
looked like a limau (lime) and decided to visit them. So, he made dendang bilas mangkar (canoe), put his alat (equipment) in it and set off with one other person, Datuk Temenggung, his dunsanak ibu (maternal cousin) who was older than him. We don’t know if they paddled or punted, but after a long time they approached that land that was floating like a limau and came upon the steep cliffs around Sungai Tonuh. Because these two places were the first things that Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang saw when he looked down from the top of Mt. Merapi, he named them tanah tua (old land) and, after visiting them, he returned to Mt. Merapi.

So the earth was in three pieces, three islands, and slowly, little by little, the land dried out and wherever the land was high it emerged from the water. After that, many islands could be seen from the top of Mt. Merapi and, when Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang looked down from the mountain peak, he saw that the island of Sungai Limau, which used to be small, was now big and he decided to return there. At the same time that the islands were increasing, Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang made another canoe called dendang serawak — because he made it himself, he had many skills — and, when their alat were ready, Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and Datuk Temenggung descended from Mt. Merapi. They travelled far and for a long time until they reached tanah tua in the region of Sungai Limau, which was not yet named Sungai Limau — it just looked like a limau. At the time of this second journey, a river with tributaries had already formed there so the land around the river was given the name Sungai Limau. After that, they went to the area around Sungai Tonuh, which had also got bigger, just like the tanah tua Sungai Limau, which was on the left and

footnotes

34 Wilkinson (1955 Part 1, p.270) describes dendang as a ‘long canoe used by Orang Laut’, bilas means second washing (as in bilas Bidan) and mangkar means hard or unripe.

35 The two sites that make up tanah tua, Sungai Limau and Sungai Tonuh, both contain large stone footprints which probably date back to the time of Sriwijaya (see chapter one).

36 Dobbin (1983 p.64) says that the number three is 'a number of great significance in Minangkabau thought' while Navis (1983 p.57) maintains that three, like all odd numbers, was associated with laras Bodi Caniago (the Minangkabau political group associated with Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang).

37 Serawak means banana fritter or other sweet dish. However, it is likely that serawak is a pun based around the word awak which in Minangkabau means both one of us (or a Minangkabau person) and an areca nut that has been prepared and sliced for use in sirih.
on the right was Sungai Tonuh which flowed from the right\textsuperscript{38}, so it was called the land of Sungai Tonuh. After that, they returned to Mt. Merapi, which was the first land, the area around Sungai Limau being the second and the area of Sungai Tonuh the third.

The islands began to increase and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang said 'Now there are more islands, we should put a sign on each one so that we will have authority over them.'

Datuk Temenggung agreed and suggested that they take sekayu belacu (forty yards of unbleached cloth) and segantang lada hitam (three and a quarter kilos of black pepper corns)\textsuperscript{39} with them. The next day, having no other means of transport, they made a dendang and Datuk Temenggung said 'This could be a long journey as there are so many islands that we must visit because the sky has broadened, the earth has widened and we humans have got more crowded. We must travel to all the islands that are visible so that, in time, they will be under our command.'

The dendang was decorated with coconut leaves and given a roof, so that it looked like a modern motorised sampan. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang named the canoe dendang Serawai\textsuperscript{40} and said that no matter how many islands emerged they would visit them all, beginning with tanah tua. So Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang descended Mt. Merapi in the direction of Sungai Limau and, after going there, he visited Sungai Tonuh again. After that, he travelled in the direction of the smaller islands that could be seen from Mt. Merapi. When he arrived at an island he planted a pepper corn there and left a strip of cotton, about a span long and as wide as a thumb. After visiting one island, he set off for another. It is not known how many days or months it took him to plant pepper on all the islands that were visible from the top of Mt. Merapi, and to leave a strip of cloth on each one, but when all the islands had been visited, the kayu belacu was finished and the lada hitam (black pepper) was used up.

footnotes

\textsuperscript{38} If you had Sungai Limau on your left and Sungai Tonuh on your right, you would be standing in what is now known as Talang Durian Cacar.

\textsuperscript{39} While Kato (1982 p.89) says that pepper emerged as a trade commodity in Minangkabau in the early seventeenth century, Wolters (1967 p.234) suggests that cubeb pepper, which is found wild in Sumatra, was being exported to India by the first half of the eighth century, where it was used to adulterate black pepper.
Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang went home to Mt. Merapi and, when he arrived, he assembled all the people who lived there, Ketua (leaders, elders) and heads of households, and said to them 'I have been travelling with Datuk Temenggung and I have returned safely. In the future when we humans have greatly increased and the world has become more crowded our realm will also be broader and those islands that encircle Mt. Merapi, which surround Tanah Datar\footnote{Tanah Datar (flat land) is a broad valley at the foot of Mt. Merapi which was probably one of the first sawah (wet rice) cultivation sites in Sumatra. As well as being the home of the Minangkabau royal house, Tanah Datar was also the Minangkabau highlands’ chief gold exporting region from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries (Dobbin 1983 p. p. 23–24).} called pulau segantang lada hitam (black pepper islands) or Pulau Perca\footnote{Perca, or taban, was a trade resin obtained from varieties of Dichopsis and Pulau (island) Perca was an old name for Sumatra (see Wilkinson 1955 part I p. 885).} (resin islands) will be under the control of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and Datuk Temenggung.'

From that time it became known that Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang was Raja di Padang (king of the interior) and that Datuk Temenggung was Raja di rantau (king of the outlying regions) because he followed Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang. Every taluk (bay) and every rantau (shoreline) was controlled by Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and Datuk Temenggung, who had travelled to all the islands in dendang Serawai. As the population increased, all the desa (villages) or suku\footnote{Slamet-Velsink (1986 p. 230) says suku had a ‘rather vague original meaning of “leg”, and subsequently one of the four divisions of a tribe, but also later used for clan or tribe’.} (clans) in the Minangkabau realm came under their authority.

According to our adat we say desa but in those days they were called suku. There were many different suku in the Minangkabau world and their leaders were given the following

footnotes continued from previous page

40 Like Serawak, Serawai is probably a pun, which I don't understand.

41 Tanah Datar (flat land) is a broad valley at the foot of Mt. Merapi which was probably one of the first sawah (wet rice) cultivation sites in Sumatra. As well as being the home of the Minangkabau royal house, Tanah Datar was also the Minangkabau highlands’ chief gold exporting region from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries (Dobbin 1983 p. p. 23–24).

42 Perca, or taban, was a trade resin obtained from varieties of Dichopsis and Pulau (island) Perca was an old name for Sumatra (see Wilkinson 1955 part I p. 885).

43 Slamet-Velsink (1986 p.230) says suku had a ‘rather vague original meaning of “leg”, and subsequently one of the four divisions of a tribe, but also later used for clan or tribe’. 
titles: Tuan Gadih of Pagarruyung; Datuk Undarna of Suaso; Datuk Riang of Kota Gedang; Datuk Titah of Sungai Tarab; Datuk Mangkudum of Sumanik; Tuan Kadi of Padang Ganting and Raja Mudu of Siasam. These were the important people in the Minangkabau world. All the suku had a Datuk.

So our world became wider and its contents increased and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang decided to travel down Sungai nan Tiga Laras (the three rivers) which have their source at the top of Mt. Merapi. At that time Sungai nan Tiga Laras did not have their present names: Kuantan (Inderagiri) was called Sungai keruh (muddy river); Sungai Batang Hari was called Sungai deras (river with fast current); and Sungai Kampar was called Sungai deras (river with fast current); and Sungai Kampar was called Sungai deras (river with fast current).

footnotes

44 de Josselin de Jong (1980 p. 111) says that Tuan Gadih means ‘Lord Virgin’ and that the last holder of this title, who was a woman known as Tuan Gadih Reno Sumpueh, died in 1912.

45 Pagarruyung is the name of the royal Minangkabau court, which was probably first established in the fourteenth century by Aditiawarman in the Gombak-Suruaso region, and was gradually moved to sites further west from the 1670s (Dobbin 1983 p.p. 64–65). In 1821, Pagarruyung was surrendered to the Dutch (ibid. p. 11) and earlier this century the last Pagarruyung burnt down and was replaced by a replica which can be seen near Batusangkar.

46 According to Navis (1984 p. 57) ‘Andomo di Suruaso’ was one of four leaders, along with ‘Bandaro di Sungai Tarab, Mangkudun di Sumanik ... [and]... Tuan kadi di Padang Ganting’, of ‘Basa Empat Balai’ a system of administration introduced after Aditiawarman’s reign.

47 Suaso, or Suruaso, was the centre of Aditiawarman’s kingdom founded in 1347 (Dobbin 1983 p. 62) and one of the chief gold producing sites in Tanah Datar. It was linked to the Inderagiri by one of its tributaries known as Sungai Selo or Sungai Emas (Dobbin 1971 p.9).

48 Koto Gedang, or Gadang, is in the south of Tanah Datar and is linked to west coast trade routes.

49 Sungai Tarab is in Tanah Datar and, according to Dobbin (1983 pp.63–64), it is both one of the ‘oldest Minangkabau villages’ and an iron-working centre. From the fifteenth century it became known as the home of the Bendahara yang Putih.

50 Padang Ganting is a ‘gold centre’ in Tanah Datar near Suruaso (Dobbin 1983 p.119).

51 I have been unable to identify Siasam.

52 The Batang Hari river has its source in danau diatas, in the south of the Minangkabau highlands, and it flows into the Straits of Melaka at Jambi.

53 The Kampar river has its source in the north of the Minangkabau highlands and flows into the Straits of Melaka. Dobbin (1983 pp.6–7) notes that, although the Kampar is obstructed at its mouth by a tidal bore, it ‘is an ancient highway into the Minangkabau interior’. Its upper courses divide into Kampar kana (right) and Kampar kiri (left), the latter of which is connected by footpaths to the Inderagiri which ‘can be navigated by local vessels right up to the Minangkabau highlands’.
tenang (calm river). **Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang** said, ‘These are Sungai nan Tiga Laras, we give them their names and we will rule over them, under the authority of Datuk Temenggung’.

To which **Datuk Temenggung** replied, ‘Yes. Hopefully, we will have a long life and will be remembered by our grandchildren. We must travel Sungai nan Tiga Laras many times because it can’t be done in one go.’ So they set off on foot, travelling downstream and, at that time, there were many climbing plants, that were like rotan and were called **akar karimunting**\(^\text{54}\), hanging across the water and obstructing their way, which **Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang** cut down using one of the four **pedang** (swords) they had brought with them. When they reached the first river, it had a very strong deras (current) and they called it Sungai deras. When they arrived in the hilir (lower course) of the other river, it became very keruh (muddy) as **Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang** walked through it, so they called it Sungai keruh. So **Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang** made three dusun (settlements) on Sungai deras: dusun tua (old settlement); Tanjung Bunga; and **Pakek Mayang**\(^\text{55}\). I can only remember one of the leaders in Batang Hari and that is orang kaya Baksamana: the other two are forgotten, I can’t say them now. **Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang** cleared land around Sungai keruh, which he also organised into three settlements: Dusun tua; **Inoman**\(^\text{56}\), tanah kerajaan (the capital); and **Cerenti**, kepunyan tepian Raja (the edge of the king’s territories).

In those settlements,\(^\text{57}\) pillars were made from taras jilatang (nettle stalks); dykes were made from bayam (spinach); drums were made of **selaguri**\(^\text{58}\) (medicinal plant); drumsticks

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\(^\text{54}\) Akar means climbing plant or liana and karimunting (kemunting in Indonesian) is rose myrtle (Rhodomyrtus tomentosa).

\(^\text{55}\) I have been unable to identify these towns, which are probably on the Batang Hari river, in the foothills of the Minangkabau highlands somewhere in Propinsi Jambi.

\(^\text{56}\) According to Lufti et al. (1977 pp.144–145) in Aditiawarman’s time, Inoman was, along with Pangian, Baserah and Cerenti, one of the Empat Koto di Hilir (four towns in the lower reaches of the Inderagiri) which is part of the Minangkabau-centred administration known as Rantau nan Kurang Esa Dua Puluh (19 rantau towns).

\(^\text{57}\) The list, or **pantun** (short verse), that follows is very similar to that given by Datoek Toeah (1989 p.42) which, he says, is a description of ‘Balai Balerong Panjang’ built by ‘Cateri Bilang Pandai’ in the Minangkabau highlands before the arrival of Aditiawarman.

\(^\text{58}\) Selaguri (selguri in Malay) is sida rhombifolia.
were made of pulut-pulut (various plants); rafters were made from tulang pantau (minnow bones); and houses were roofed with sisik badar (fish scales). Nettles were used because the first people to live there were members of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang's family and, if they touched nettle leaves, nothing happened – it didn’t itch. Not like us. If we are touched by a nettle, it stings and in a short time it becomes kudis (rash), we scratch it and we tear our skin. Those were the three settlements of Sungai keruh. After that Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang went to Sungai Kampar and, when he arrived there, he said to Datuk Temenggung 'We will reorganise things here into administered settlements and make three dusun. We will also have to install three leaders who will safeguard the settlements': Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang called the first settlement Kuok, and its leader was Batin Puncak Rantau; the second Bangkinang, under the leadership of Raja Bilang Mangku; and the third Air Tiris, under the leadership of Patih Campuana.

Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang then decided to return to the top of Mt. Merapi and, as he was travelling through pulau nan segantang lada hitam, he came across a man, standing alone in the middle of the sea, whose hair and beard were white. When Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang asked him what he was doing there, he replied, – because he could speak like a human – 'I'm just travelling around, travelling these waters, going where the wind takes me and, if there is no wind, I stop and, if I want to cook rice, I cook rice. I am strong and brave and I can walk on water.' His name was Dubalang (warrior, military leader) Berambut Putih (white haired) and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang took him back with him to the Minangkabau world, where he grew fond of Dubalang Berambut Putih. Wherever Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang went, he took Dubalang Berambut Putih with him.

When Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang arrived in Minangkabau, he called all the leaders, who lived in the area around Mt. Merapi, to assemble in Batu Sangkar and hundreds of

footnotes

59 Kuok, or Kuak, is on the river Kampar kanan (right) in Kecamatan Bangkinang.

60 Bangkinang is on the river Kampar kanan.

61 Air Tiris is on the river Kampar kanan in Kecamatan Bangkinang.

62 Batu Sangkar is in Tanah Datar and is the site of the replica Pagarruyung built earlier this century.
people gathered there, including many Datuk. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang said (indicating Tuan Gadih and Datuk Temenggung) ‘We are your leaders, we three people. First is Tuan Gadih. Second is Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang. Third is Datuk Temenggung and his descendants’. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang then invited Tuan Gadih and Datuk Temenggung to sit with him on three large stones he had arranged for that purpose, with Tuan Gadih on the central stone, Datuk Temenggung on her left and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang on her right. After they were seated, Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang said, ‘Our sky has unfolded, the earth has broadened, the human population has increased and our world has widened. When I stay here I don’t feel so good because I want to travel because I am called Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang. So, I will journey through Sungai nan Tiga Laras, though all the twists and turns that can be seen from the top of Mt. Merapi. I will look for a territory to rule by myself. What is here I will leave behind. Everything encircling Mt. Merapi will be returned to Tuan Gadih because she is bedunsanak ibu (maternal cousin). I will give her the title Raja Tampuk Alam and make her the highest person in Mt. Merapi. To Datuk Temenggung I give the title Raja Ibadat and I will become Raja Adat,’ and since that time Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang has always held the title Raja Adat.

Tuan Gadih replied that she and Datuk Temenggung accepted Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang’s words and from then on she stayed permanently at Pagarruyung (royal palace) – Hilang anak, ganti anak (passing her title on to one of her children) – and her rank was always Raja Tampuk Alam. The one on the left was Raja Ibadat who knew the surau (Islamic prayer house), who respected the mesjid (mosque) and would later embrace Islam. That is the work of alim ulama (Islamic theologian) Raja Ibadat.

footnotes
63 Dobbin (1983 p. 118) describes ‘three stone seats near Lima Kaum’ (which is in Tanah Datat), which were used in Aditiawarman’s time ‘by the king in his own court ceremonial’.

64 Dobbin (1977 p.13) notes that, after the conversion of the Minangkabau Raja to Islam, a ‘royal triumvirate known as Raja nan Tiga Sila’ became the basis of administration with ‘Raja Alam’ being joined by ‘Raja Adat’ and ‘Raja Ibadat’. De Josselin de Jong (1980 p.104) says that ‘Radjo nan Tigo Selo was patrilineally organised and succession was from father to son’ and Asmuni (p.63) notes that the holders of these titles had the same father but different mothers.

65 Hilang anak, ganti anak (‘a lost child is replaced by a child’) means inheritance passed from parent to child.
"As for me" said Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang "I am Raja Adat. I will walk along the batang⁶⁶ rantau (rivers of outlying regions). I will travel the twists and turns that can be seen from the top of Mt. Merapi. I won't stay in the village. Let Tuan Gadih govern all the Datuk in the manner set out in adat Pagarruyung which we have drawn up during our discussions. My adat is also from Pagarruyung and, although I will go to rantau, I will always be orang adat. I am descended from an ancestor who came down that beautiful hill, who descended Mt. Merapi. My father came down the beautiful hill, so I am known as Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang who would, one day, command the realm. That day has now arrived.'

"Thank you Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang" replied Tuan Gadih, "but please remember that we are not rejecting dunsanak kami (our cousin) – we would never do that."

"OK then," said Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, 'Datuk Temenggung and I will leave this place and merantau (migrate) so that he can travel the batang rantau because he is Raja berhuruf (having the sign of) rantau and I am Raja di padang (plain or meadow). Before I leave, I will tell Tuan Gadih and the Datuk all about the adat of the Minangkabau alam (world) because after I leave I will never return to the top of Mt. Merapi. I am leaving Tuan Gadih in charge. Does everyone agree?"

"Yes," came the reply and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang continued, 'So now it is time to tell you, my saudara (family), my dunsanak (cousins) and my adik dan kakak (brothers and sisters) that I am going merantau (travel the outlying districts) again. I will go to the area of Sungai Limau where I will make some dusun. Before we leave tomorrow we will roast a goat, a cow or even a buffalo.'

"Very well" said Tuan Gadih 'but don't forget about us, because, if we have discussions about adat in the future, we will always need abang's (elder brother's) help to settle matters. When we forget we will need reminders, when we make a mistake we will need advice

footnotes

⁶⁶ Batang means both stem, or pole, and river, and Asnuni (1983 p.64) suggests that the title Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang refers to the holder's special relationship with sebatang (one river), that being the Inderagiri.
and assistance. If we sleep wake us. If we are in pain give us a pillow. If we forget give us reminders. That is our adat.\textsuperscript{67}

'Yes,' said Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, 'If we really are suku Sangkar (suku from Batu Sangkar), the people who originally came down from the top of Mt. Merapi and who will visit taluk rantau (coastal harbours) tomorrow, then there won't be any problems because we are in control of things. I order my dunsanak batina (female cousins), who are staying behind in the village, to manage things here, Datuk Temenggung will organise the batang rantau and I will govern all padang. I am its king.' Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang then said to all the orang tua (elders, leaders) and Datuk who were assembled in Batu Sangkar, at the top of Mt. Merapi, that Tuan Gadih of Pagarruyung, Datuk Undamo of Suaso, Datuk Riang of Koto Gedang, Datuk Titah of Sungai Tarab, Datuk Mangkudum of Sumanik, Tuan Kadi of Padang Ganting, Raja Muda of Siasam and orang Gadang of Batipuh\textsuperscript{68} would govern all the suku in the Minangkabau world and keep the alat pusaka (heirlooms) of Pagarruyung while he and Datuk Temenggung were away. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang then told Tuan Gadih that she would remain Raja Tampuk Alam and that her title would be passed on to her children. He also advised her to build a magnificent istana (palace) in Minangkabau and told her that he would take saka dengan pusaka (inheritance and heirlooms) with him which included: a baju (shirt), made of three pieces of sky, which is both the shirt of Rasul (the prophet of) Allah, and the kebesaran (insignia) of 'tuk Patih; padang lemah (soft sword) that is bound with akar karimunting; and gendang pengobat (coronation drum), or gendang nobat as it is known nowadays, which is no longer in the hands of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang's descendants as is it is being kept by the king in Rengat – Tengku Amat's son has probably got it at the moment – who took it during the reign of Raja Isa. If we were to ask for it back now they probably wouldn't give it, but gendang nobat still exists.

\footnotes{67} Sutan Mohammad's words were 'Tidur kami jagakan, Tergantak beri bantal, Lupa beri ingat-ingatan, Itulah adat kami'.

\footnotes{68} This list is similar to that given earlier in the story but with the addition of one more name – that of Orang Gadang of Batipuh. Both these lists contain the names of the four leaders of Basa Empat Balai. Navis (1984 p. 17) suggests that Orang Gadang was an original member of Basa Empat Balai, whose name was replaced with the name Tuan Kadi when the details of Basa Empat Balai were first written in bahasa Jawi (Malay written with Arabic letters).
Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang departed from the place the Minangkabau call Pariangan Padang Panjang\(^69\) which was given that name because hati Datuk riang (the nobles were joyful) when Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang left, and went down to rantau with Dubalang Berambut Putih. This was the fourth time that he had descended from the top of Mt. Merapi with Datuk Temenggung and they went on foot in the direction of kuala (river mouth) Sungai Limau – they didn’t have to use a sampan because the land between the rivers was dry by this time. It is not known how long their journey down Sungai nan Tiga Laras and through pulau segantang lada hitam (black pepper islands) took them, because they were walking and the world had got bigger. At last they arrived at Sungai Limau where there was already a house with an orang tua (old man, leader) living in it with his wife, their children and other relatives. These people were not skilled at making houses. They just used kayuan (any kind of wood). The house was not like this one, it what was we would call balai (wall-less hut). Before they reached the house Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang said to his kawan (followers) ‘Let’s make ourselves a bangsal (temporary shelter) here’ and they set to work.

It’s not known how many kawan were with Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang but the most important ones were Datuk Temenggung and Dubalang Berambut Putih who said to Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, ‘I’ve walked across the waters looking for an opponent and I haven’t found one yet. Help me find an opponent. I want to fight like a cock because I am bagak (bold, brave).’

‘Of course,’ replied Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, ‘I know that you are more bagak than I am because your hair was already white when you were born – stranger than strange\(^70\) – you have asked me to find you a jin (supernatural being) to be your opponent. OK then, I will.’

footnotes

\(^69\) According to Datoek Toeah (1989 pp.50–51), Pariangan Padang Panjang was the site of the first settlement in Minangkabau.

\(^70\) Sutan Mohammad’s words were ‘Ganjil daripada ganjil’. Ganjil, which means strange or odd, was associated (especially in reference to odd numbers) with territories governed by adat Bodi-Caniago (Navis 1984 p. 57).
The next day Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang went to the rumah tua (old house) where he met the orange tua and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang asked him if he had been living there for long.

'I've been here a long time' came the reply. 'I don't work. I just do what I want, the most important thing for me is that I don't have anyone telling me what to do.'

'So,' thought Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang 'This person is the penunggu (guardian spirit) of this place' and he said to the orang tua 'I've already been here before and this land is under my control. You have been here a long time without my permission so I think that you should find an opponent for my Dubalang.'

'What's your Dubalang like?' asked orang tua.

'My Dubalang has white hair, he can walk on water and he can fly. My Dubalang is bagak' said Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang.

To this the orang tua replied 'Whenever you are ready, I am ready because I want to fight this Dubalang' and they made an agreement to meet the next morning. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang told his Dubalang that he had organised a duel with the orang tua who they would chase out of their territory.

The next morning they went to the balai where Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang called out 'I've come to keep our agreement'.

To this the orang tua replied 'OK, whenever you are ready'.

Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang told Dubalang Berambut Putih to stand in the middle of the gelanggang (cock-fighting arena), which is called a halaman nowadays, where he shouted, 'Hey Datuk, come out. I want to see who I am going to fight. If it's not going to be you then send out my opponent.'

So the orang tua came down the steps of his house with sagar jantan tulah — in our language lembing (spear) — and sat in the middle of the halaman holding his weapon out in front of him. Dubalang Berambut Putih then clapped his hands, crowed like a cock and began to fly, round and round, above the orang tua.

'Hey, stand up' said Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang to the orang tua. 'Why are you just sitting there? My Dubalang has already danced, show us your skills. You think you are brave enough to oppose my Dubalang? Well, my Dubalang is bagak.'

The orang tua didn't say anything. He just watched the shadow of Dubalang Berambut Putih as it circled around him on the ground. Because the sun was shining, and it was mid-day, the shadow was clear and when it passed in front of the orang tua he stabbed it
with his spear and clapped his hands and the Dubalang fell out of the sky and died immediately. Then the orang tua went back into his house and sat down. Now that stab of the orang tua, it wasn’t just a lucky shot. It was the stab of Datuk Si Jagat Si Jati, abang (elder brother) of Datuk Berbundar Jati, father of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang. When Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang decided to go into the balai of the orang tua. Once inside, he realised that the orang tua, or Datuk kuala Sungai Limau, was his pemaman (uncle), Datuk Si Jagat Si Jati, the brother of Datuk Berbundar Jati who, his emak (mother) had told him, was his father. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang had never met his father and he didn’t know where he was and when he met Datuk Si Jagat Si Jati he realised that what he had been looking for all his life was his father.

Just then Datuk Temenggung arrived and Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang said to him ‘This is your pemaman, Datuk Si Jagat Si Jati’.

Datuk Temenggung greeted him and Datuk Si Jagat Si Jati said to Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang ‘Your Dubalang, the one you met on your travels, he’s a descendant of hantu setan mambang pari (evil spirit) who humans cannot face up to – we have to control him.’

They buried Dubalang Berambut Putih and gave him a good grave, like a naik tambak that we have nowadays, and Datuk Si Jagat Si Jati said, ‘We probably won’t have long together as you will go travelling through pulau nan segantang lada hitam where you mengatur (organise), mengarang (compose), mengabung (unite), menjajar (structure), menguasai (dominate) mengendalikan (control) and mengatahui (understand things). If you are unsure about anything, ask, and, if you lack the skills, get a teacher. Whenever I’ve got time, we can meet, and any problems you encounter I can help you solve. If you are sesak dengan sempit (under pressure) then burn keminyan and you can saru imbau (call me) here because we are beikat (bound together).’

footnotes


72 This is a list of supernatural beings and while hantu, setan (from Arabic) and mambang are all jahat (evil), pari is an old Minangkabau word which has the same Persian root and meaning as the English word ‘fairy’ (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.849).
Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and Datuk Temenggung went travelling again and, after they had become fathers for the first time, Datuk Temenggung said ‘We have to build permanent houses or we will have nothing to leave our grandchildren.’ Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang agreed with his abang and somewhere nearby, according to the story not far from Sungai Limau, they built a house and cleared a halaman. It is not known how long they stayed there, going far away but always returning, bringing the land on the far shore of Kuantan (Inderagiri) under their control.

Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang had three sons: Si Besi (the eldest); Si Kelopak; and Si Bunga (the youngest). One day, when Si Bunga was just old enough to be able to walk and was beginning to talk, Si Besi said to his father, ‘We three sons want to possess titles like yours – Datuk Patih – we don’t want to become Mangku, Dubalang or Manti.’

‘OK,’ replied his father, ‘But you must first makan ujian (pass a test) set by me.’ The next morning Datuk Patih sat his three sons down facing him with Si Besi on the right, Si Bunga in the middle and Si Kelopak on the left and said to them ‘Sons, I want to sleep now but today I am giving you an opportunity to show me what you can do, go outside and make something, whatever you want.’

Si Besi said that, as he was the eldest, he should go first and, taking a parang (machete) with him, he descended from the house. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang then took a length of buluh betung (large bamboo)73 and, splitting it in half, he made two anggulan (pillows) for his two youngest sons and told them to sleep. When Si Besi went outside he dug a long parit (ditch)74 in the ground and after he had finished he went back inside and said ‘I’ve finished dad, I’ve made something’.

But Si Kelopak said, ‘He’s asleep. There’s no need to disturb him again ‘bang we can do it by ourselves’ and he got up and went outside, taking the parang with him, where he wondered what his brother had made. After walking around for a while, he came across

footnotes

73 This is Dendrocalamus.

74 Rahim (1986 p.289) suggests that, in the past, every ‘Kuantan Koto [town]’ had a parit for defence purposes.
the parit but he didn't know what to do, so he began to walk round again and suddenly he decided to dig a square perigi (pool).

When he had finished the perigi he returned to the house, where his father was still sleeping, and Si Bunga descended from the house, with the parang, and walked around the halaman until he came upon what his older brothers had made and he thought to himself that he couldn't make anything like that because he was too small, so he kept walking until he had completed three circuits of the halaman after which he went back into the house and put the parang down. 'What have you made?' asked his two brothers. 'I can't make anything', he replied and he went over to his father, woke him up and said 'Dad I've been outside but I'm not capable of making this and that. My eldest brother, because he is tall and strong, has been able to dig a parit and my other brother has also been able to make something but I can't make anything like that. What shall I do, dad?'

'Whatever you want, son,' his father replied, 'Whatever you want to make.'

So Si Bunga went back outside, walked over to the parit and the perigi and began thinking what to do. By mid-day he still hadn't done anything and he went back home where his father asked him what he had made. 'I don't know what to make' he replied. 'Give me an idea, dad.'

So his father said, 'Descend from the house, look at the sky, it is mid-day and the shadows are clear. When you set your foot on the ground shut your eyes - between being blind and having sight, block your ears - between deafness and hearing, and lose your reason - between madness and sanity.' So Si Bunga, following his father's advice, went outside, stood near the earth his brothers had dug, shut his eyes tight, blocked up his ears and cleared his mind of thoughts. After a moment, he was surprised when he felt someone touch his hands and when he opened his eyes, he was holding three large tampang kayu (tree seeds) which he took to show his father.

'Dad, as I was following your advice, I was disturbed and these three things appeared in my hands. I don't know what they are.' His father told him to go outside and plant them wherever he wanted. So Si Bunga went outside and planted the seeds beside Si Besi's parit, one in the middle and one at either end. After that Datuk Patih went outside and looked at what his sons had done, the parit dug by Si Besi, the perigi dug by Si Kelopak and the seeds planted by Si Bunga.
Datuk Patih called his three sons together and sat them down as before, with Si Bunga between his two elder brothers, and he said to his sons ‘You asked me for a pangkat (rank, title). You want to be Datuk Patih because I am Datuk Patih. Let it be so, I will make all three of you a Patih’ and they became known as Patih nan betiga (the three Patihs) and their father gave them each a territory to govern. To Si Besi he gave the land around the parit Si Besi had dug and said that its people would be known as suku Parit. Si Kelopak was given the land around the perigi he had dug and its people were called suku Perigi. Datuk Patih then turned to his youngest son and told him that the seeds he had found were tampung durian (durian seeds) and that he too would have the title Datuk Patih and govern a suku, which, because he had planted his seeds bejajar (in a straight line), would be called Durian Bejajar. Datuk Patih then said to his eldest two sons, Si Besi and Si Kelopak, that their titles would turun ke keponakan (pass on to their maternal nephews) who would bear the title Batin. To his youngest son, Si Bunga, he said ‘Your title will always be Datuk Patih, turun ke anak (be passed on to his children), hilang anak, ganti anak and you will mengatur (organise, regulate) these settlements, in accordance with adat Pagarruyung, because you are the youngest.’ Datuk Patih then told his three sons to make a balai each so that they could hold discussions about adat and settle any problems that arose. So, Si Besi made a balai near his parit, Si Kelopak constructed a balai near his perigi and Si Bunga built a balai near his durian bejajar. Datuk Patih named the place Tiga Balai after the three balai adat built by his sons.

75 The world got bigger, the sky unfolded and the population grew and, when Si Bunga was grown up, Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang called his three sons and told them that he was leaving Tiga Balai and that Si Bunga would govern when he had gone. So Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang left the land around Sungai Limau and Sungai Tonuh and Datuk Patih Bunga followed the adat that his father had brought with him from Pagarruyung. Bunga, like his father before him, passed his title on to his youngest son who was called Cangkudin. Datuk Patih Cangkudin decided that the people of Tiga Balai needed a Raja (king) to

footnotes

75 At this point the cassette recorder malfunctioned and stopped recording for a short period. Consequently information about why Datuk Patih needed a king, why he chose Johor, the details of his departure and the first part of the journey was not recorded.
govern their land so he made a rakit kulim (raft of kulim wood) with a balai on it and, taking Datuk Temenggung with him, he sailed down Kuantan on his way to Johor. Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, his Dubalang, Sarinata, Datuk Temenggung and their teman-temannya (followers of lower rank) sailed to Johor. During their journey, after he had bebuat perjanjian76 (make an agreement) with Datuk Patih, Datuk Temenggung left rakit kulim and raib (vanished) to Danau (lake) Pauh77 where he became Temenggung Kecik (small). When they arrived at Johor, they tied their rakit up to a jamban78 (pontoon) near the palace of the Raja of Johor and Datuk Patih told his six companions not to leave rakit kulim. As it was already dark when they arrived, they went straight to sleep. While they slept, many people from Johor used the jamban and they began to talk about rakit kulim and wonder who its passengers were. One man, who lived near the jamban, went to inform the Raja that some people had arrived on rakit kulim. The Raja asked him what he knew about these people, to which the man replied that he only knew that there were seven of them. He didn’t know where they were from or what they were called. So the Raja said ‘Usually new arrivals report immediately. If those people on rakit kulim don’t report soon we will investigate their rakit. Let them be for the moment, let’s see if they report.’

On their second day in Johor, Datuk Patih said to his teman ‘Many people come and go on this jamban but no-one greets us, they take water here, they wash here but they don’t talk to us. We had better not say anything to them either.’ On the third day, anak Raja79 (Raja’s young son) came out of the palace to play. He saw rakit kulim and asked one of his attendants if he could play there. So, the attendant spoke to Datuk Patih’s Dubalang, Sarinata, who invited the young boy on board. The child was fascinated by the many

footnotes
76 Bebuat pejanjian means to make an arrangement or an agreement and, because a section of tape did not record (see previous note) I don’t know what this arrangement concerned.
77 I don’t know where Danau Pauh is.
78 Jamban means toilet or latrine. Jamban, usually made out of a few logs lashed together and used as a toilet and washing place, can be seen tied to the river banks of all the Melayu villages (such as Petonggan) on the Inderagiri.
79 This boy’s status is not clear as Sutan Mohammad calls him both anak Raja (prince) and budak kecil (little slave or servant, or low caste child).
things on board rakit kulim and started asking Sarinata questions. ‘What’s this?’ he asked pointing to something hanging up.

‘Sangkar burung (bird cage),’ replied Sarinata.

‘What kind of bird?’ asked anak Raja. ‘Burung balam (turtle dove) and burung puyuh (bustard quail),’ came the reply and Sarinata began imitating the sounds the birds made and the boy laughed. Anak Raja didn’t want to go home and, in the evening, the Raja had to send attendants to bring his son back to the palace. That night, anak Raja told his father about rakit kulim and how much he enjoyed playing there. However, his father told him not to go there again because they didn’t know what kind of people they were and these people might kill anak Raja.

The next day, without his father knowing, the boy returned to rakit kulim and, at midday, he ate with Datuk Patih and Sarinata and, pointing at one of the dishes, he asked Sarinata ‘What’s this?’

‘Salai babi (roast pork),’ replied Sarinata, ‘Do you want some?’

‘Yes please,’ said the boy, ‘It’s delicious’. That evening anak Raja did not want to return home and his father had to send for him again but still he wouldn’t go home so, in the end, his mother went to fetch him. He said to her ‘Mum, I want to buy some of these birds.’ His mother replied that, if he went home, his father would give him the money. However, when he arrived at the palace, the Raja only told him not to go to the jamban again. That evening, when the anak Raja ate with his parents, he told them that the food was not as nice as that which he had eaten on rakit kulim.

The following morning, anak Raja went down to rakit kulim again where he found Datuk Patih and his teman drinking aek buah tampui80 (alcoholic drink). Anak Raja asked Sarinata for some – just to try it – but Sarinata refused and warned him that aek buah tampui could make him mabuk (drunk). However, anak Raja persuaded Sarinata to give him a little and he kept up his demands until anak Raja fell over drunk – Sarinata didn’t know if

footnotes

80 Buah Tampui are the fruit of the tampui tree (Baccaurea macrophylla) which, according to Wilkinson (1955 Part II p.1198) are ‘much prized especially by the aborigines’.
he was drunk or dead. Someone on the jamban saw anak Raja fall down and ran to tell the Raja who got very angry and cut Sarinata's head off before he had a chance to explain what had happened. Then Datuk Patih, who was sitting nearby was heard to say 'Tampuiana, Tampuiani, kadang tampui dikaliana, Mabuk tampui tidakkan lama, kamu memulang seperti biasa'\(^81\) and straightaway anak Raja stood up. The Raja was surprised to see that his son was not dead. Datuk Patih said that the Raja had committed an offence by killing Sarinata, without first asking him what had happened, and the lightest punishment for such an offence was bangun\(^82\) (bring back to life). As Datuk Patih explained, 'Following our adat, which comes from Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang who organises, structures, composes and unites, Salah cancang bagi pampas, Salah bunuh bagi bangun'\(^83\). (If you wound someone you must pay compensation, if you kill someone you must give life). The Raja replied that he could not bring Sarinata back to life and invited Datuk Patih into his palace to discuss the matter further.

Before Datuk Patih went into the palace, he said to his five remaining companions 'Don't disturb the dead because tomorrow he will bangun (return to life), he's not a carcass: tomorrow someone will menabus (pay for)\(^84\) him. I am going to say to the Raja of Johor, 'Salah cancang bagi pampas, Salah bunuh bagi bangun' and, if he won't grant my request, he will have to take my life. I'm not afraid, I won't give in. Brave enough to act, brave enough to take responsibility.'

footnotes

81 The following is a loose translation of this pantun - Tampui wine, Tampui liquor, Sometimes tampui dikaliana (knocks you out?), Stupor of tampui doesn't last long. Now you will return to normal.

82 Wilkinson (1955 Part I p.82) says that bangun has the meaning of revival, restoration or resurrection and 'refers to the Minangkabau practice of "replacing" a slain man by handing over to his tribe a member of the tribe of the slayer'.

83 This hukuman, which Datoek Toeah (1989 p.236) records as 'Salah cancang memberi pampas, Salah bunuh memberi bangun', was also used in Minangkabau. Memberi bangun or bagi bangun (both 'give life') is derived from 'mega membangun' which means both 'the sun has already risen' and 'the deceased has come back to life or been reincarnated' which was brought about through a 'payment in blood' (ibid. p. 300)

84 Menabas is a verb, formed from the root tebas (tebus in Malay), of which Wilkinson (1955 Part II p.1181) says '[t]o tebus a debt slave meant to buy out his indebtedness to his former master. This did not extinguish his debt but transferred it to a new owner. Hence the expressions hamba tebusan ... and sahaya tebusan ... do not mean "freedman" but debt slaves acquired by payment from other masters, i.e. bought slaves'.

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The Raja overheard Datuk Patih say this and he became afraid. Once they were seated in the house, he said to Datuk Patih ‘Sarinata is dead and although I cannot bring him back to life I can repay you in money or in cloth or, if you prefer people, I can give you many people because there are many here. How many do you want?’

Datuk Patih replied that he was prepared to accept payment in human life. Then he asked the Raja if he knew of his beginnings and his origin. To this, the Raja replied, ‘No, I only know that although I didn’t go to school, I was educated by someone and when I could read and write they made me Raja of pulau (island) Johor.’

Then Datuk Patih asked, ‘So what do you want to pay me with?’

The Raja replied, ‘Whatever you suggest: I won’t disagree with you and I will also selamatkan (bury) Sarinata.’

‘OK’ said Datuk Patih ‘We will bury Sarinata, but there’s just one more thing I need to ask you for and that is the thing that I need in order to bangun Sarinata. It is something that is consumed but never finished, used but never worn out, set alight but never burnt, submerged but never decays,. It will last as long as the world.’

On hearing Datuk Patih’s words, the Raja became more confused and said that he didn’t understand what Datuk Patih meant. Datuk Patih just said ‘I won’t say any more until we after have selamatkan Sarinata. According to adat we must first bury him and then di naik tambakkan (erect a wooden structure over his grave). So, I won’t be back for two days.’

After Sarinata’s naik tambak, Datuk Patih went back to the Raja and said to him, ‘Don’t you know who you are descended from? Well this is your story. When your mother was young, she was bunting tidak belaki (pregnant without a husband) and dibuang (cast out, exiled) from the top of Mt. Merapi to this pulau. You are my keponakan (nephew) and you are anak orang rembah tak belaki (the child of a woman who gave birth before being married). You do not have a father and, because of our embarrassment, your mother was

footnotes

85 As well as meaning to bury someone, selamatkan is more commonly used to mean to rescue, or to save someone.

86 This pantun is a riddle – Nan dimakan tak habis, Nan dipakai tak buruk, Nan dibakar tak hangus, Nan direndam tak lapuk, Tahan selagi dunia – the answer being a sukma (soul).
brought here *rembah tak belaki* 87. Since then, you have become *Raja* and you have killed my *Dubalang*, who I brought from my village. So you must *membayar bangun* (pay back a life). Sarinata was buried because you have agreed to compensate his life. I am *Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang*’s grandson and I ask your permission to take your son back with me. However, I will take him whatever you say because, in my village, I am *Datuk Patih*, *Raja di padang*, and *Datuk Temenggung* is *Raja di rantau*, father of the bays, father of the shorelines. He is *Raja* of all Kuantan. He took without requesting, cut without enquiring, he owns the left hand side, he owns the right hand side, the left bank, the right bank that is his *hak* (property) because he is *Raja di rantau*.  

After hearing *Datuk Patih*’s words, the *Raja* said, ‘If those are the rules ’tuk, then if you want to take my son I can’t say anything because we are of one origin, of one beginning.’  

*Datuk Patih* said, ‘Yes I am taking your son, I will make him *Raja*: he will have the rights of *bangun dalam* (inside, interior) – his flag will be yellow; *Dubalang* will have the rights of *bangun darah* (blood) – his flag will be red; *Manti-Pemangku* will have the rights of *bangun seluruh tubuh* (the whole body except the head) – his flag will be of mixed colours; *Batin* will have the rights of *bangun otak* (brain) – his flag will be white; and I, *Datuk Patih*, have the rights of *bangun rambut* (hair) – my flag is black.’

After they had eaten and drunk with his father, *anak Raja*, *Datuk Patih* and his *teman* left Johor following the river bank, and travelled upstream. It is not known how long their journey lasted but, eventually, they began to enter Sungai Kuantan and *Datuk Patih* said, ‘This river used to be called Sungai *keruh* but now, because we entered it from an estuary on the left, it will be known as *hindar* (turn aside) – *kiri* (left), Sungai *hindar-kiri*.’ They sailed on until they reached Kota Lama 88 where *Datuk Patih* said they should build a *sentana* (palace). He called his *anak buah* from the area around Sungai Limau and together they made a large house called *Sentana Raja*. Once it was finished, *Datuk Patih* said to his followers that they should go to Keloyang to crown the *Raja* and, on the way, they went

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87 *Rembah* means slipping down, or out, untidily and *rembah tak belaki* means the same as *bunting tak belaki* (pregnant before marriage).

88 Kota Lama is to the north of the Inderagiri between Air Molek and Petonggan.
first to tebing Suka Meninjau\(^{89}\), or Batu Kerbau\(^{90}\) (which wasn’t yet known as Batu Kerbau) which was governed by Raja Mangkuta\(^{91}\) who ruled all the tebing (riverbanks) from Kota Baru\(^{92}\) to Batu Sawah\(^{93}\). At that time there were no Penghulus in the area, only orang tua with titles such as Setia Gagah\(^{94}\), Mulia Kaya\(^{95}\), Datuk Tua, etc. According to the story Raja Mangkuta was a woman, adik (younger sister of) Datuk Patih who said to her ‘This is the small boy we brought from Johor, his name is Kasirih. He was small but now he’s big and tall and it is time to make him Raja of our river, the one that’s called hindar-kiri. He will be called Raja hindar-kiri’.

So Batin Perigi, Batin Parit and all the Penghulu, Mantı and Dubalang assembled at Keloyang – Datuk Patih was dressed all in black, Kasirih was dressed all in yellow – and a kerbau (buffalo) was killed and cooked and then its head was placed on a plate that was taken from rakit kulim and was draped with yellow cloth. Datuk Patih got up and stood on Kasirih’s right hand side and gave him the title Sultan hindar-kiri son of Raja Sempurna\(^{96}\) and said to him ‘Raja adil disembah, Raja tak adil disanggah’ (‘Just kings are worshipped. Unjust kings are challenged.’) ‘If you are a fair king we will pay homage to you every bulan Haji (Ramadan) and Raya Haji (Idul Adha).’ From then on, every bulan Haji, all the leaders from Perigi to batang Cenaku assembled at the Raja’s house where they stayed for one week, before returning to darat (interior, inland). A couple of months later, on Hari

footnotes

89 Tebing suka meninjau means the riverbank that likes to keep look out.

90 Batu kerbau is a large buffalo-shaped stone in the Inderagiri at Batu Rijal, which is on the south bank of the Inderagiri immediately upstream from Petonggan.

91 Mangkuta, or mangkota, is a Minangkabau word of Sanskrit origin, meaning crowned or royal (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.738).

92 Kota Baru is on the south bank of the Inderagiri between Keloyang and Petonggan.

93 Batu Sawah is on the south bank of the Inderagiri immediately downstream from Petonggan.

94 Setia means loyal and gagah means strong.

95 While mulia means distinguished, kaya means dignitaries. Orang kaya was a common name for rich nobles.

96 Sempurna, or sempurna, means perfect or complete and the name Raja Sempurna may here imply that Raja Johor was not anak Raja’s father.
Raya, they returned to the *sentana*, where they stayed for another week. Every *Hari Raya* (*Idul Fitri*), after eating, Datuk Patih is invited to worship the *Raja* – he goes first because he crowned the *Raja* at Keloyang – and after him *Batin*, *Manti* and *orang tua* also pay homage. This is in accordance with the *adat* of Datuk Perpatih nan *Sebatang*, which says that every *luhak* (well, pool) is given a Penghulu, every village is given an elder, every country is given a king so that the shorelines are linked together by laws and the riverbanks are stepped with agreements.97

Every *bulan puasa* (fasting month) all the *Batin* go downstream. They include: the nine *Batin* from *Batang* Cenaku – ten with the *Batin* of Anak Talang98; and the nine *Batin* from *Batang* Gangsal – ten with the *Batin* of Genala. They take with them *sayuran* (vegetables), *beras* (husked rice), *rempah* (herbs and spices) and *ayam* (chickens) because that is how we pay homage to the king. When they arrive at the palace, the *Batin* wait on the *jamban* because Datuk Patih has to be the first to *naik rumah* (go inside). *Batin* Parit and *Batin* Perigi must go behind Datuk Patih, as must everyone else except for *Batin* Sungai Limau who can go straight in. In the past, only *Batin* Gedabu had to report to Datuk Temenggung but it's not like that any more. Nowadays Datuk Temenggung is the first to *naik rumah* and that is the cause of *pepecahan* (dissension, split).

After the coronation of *Raja* hindar-kiri, Datuk Patih had the title *Datuk Bendara*, *Raja* *di balai*, Datuk Temenggung had the title *Raja* *di rantau* and the *Raja* had the title *Tuan Raja* *di Sentana*. Datuk Patih went back to the area of *suku* enam, *balai* *nan* tiga (the six clans, with three meeting halls). When he first came down *sungai* *nan* Liga laras, Datuk Perpatih *nan Sebatang* had made the regulation 'Who cuts is cut, who kills is killed'99 but, because people could no longer stand such harsh punishments, Datuk Patih called *Batin* Parit and *Batin* Perigi and said to them, 'People can no longer endure the *hukuman* (judgement) from

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97 Sutan Mohammad’s words were ‘Tiap luhak beri penghulu, Tiap kampung beri betua, Negri beri beraja, Jadi rantau beturut dengan undang, Tebing betingkat dengan janji’.

98 Anak Talang, which is situated on the upper reaches of the Cenaku river, is now a Melayu kampung.

99 Sutan Mohammad’s words were ‘Siapa mencancang, siapa dicancang. Siapa di bunuh, siapa membunuh’.
Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang, that he passed on to Si Bunga, who passed it on to Cangkudin, so we will reduce it to secara (the way of) bangun: bangun darah (blood); bangun urat (sinew); bangun otak (brain); bangun rambut (hair); bangun daging (flesh). If someone of the level of Patih is killed, the hukum is bangun seluruh tubuh (the whole body) which means that for the knees, a cadasan (anvil) must be given; for the hands, tukul (hammer); for the fingers, sepit (pincers); for the thumbs, caca (spell causing confusion); for the head, tempayang (large water jar); for the ear, nyiru (winnowing tray); for the nose, puputan (whistle); for the tongue, gendang (drum); for the navel, tawak-tawak (gong); for the bones, lembing (spear); for the ribs, keris (dagger); and for the short ribs, pisau beladi (knife). ' Datuk Patih said 'Whoever kills someone must become their replacement, don’t kill because, if you do, there is no other method of repayment'.

After Patih Cangkudin came his son, Patih Tagih, who made hukuman harsher, saying that if you wound someone you must compensate twice and if you kill, you must bangun twice\footnote{Sutan Mohammad’s words were ‘Dicancang dua kali pampas, Dibunuh dua kali bangun’.} He also said ‘Kalau salah, dibayar. Menang, diterimakan. Tersuak banyak larang, jadi banyak hantam.’\footnote{Handam means custody, or bondage, or servitude from which there is no hope of release (Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.394).} (‘Mistakes must be paid for. Winnings must be accepted. If you break a lot of rules, you become a debt-bondsman.’) Tagih also organised marriage, saying ‘Girls taking husbands start adat over again, and bachelors taking wives are harmonised by adat.’\footnote{Sutan Mohammad’s words were ‘Gadis belaki memulang adat, Bujang bebini betimbang adat’. He fixed the adat of Sungai Limau suku tua (old clan) at nine adat (gifts consisting of twenty-nine lengths of white cloth) and, for meranda (women who have married before), four lengths of white cloth, three plates and one bowl. The adat of Perigi and Durian Bejajar was fixed at thirteen lengths of white cloth and three spears, whether it be for gadis (unmarried girl) or meranda. In a marriage between a man from Durian Bejajar and...}
a woman from Perigi, the man must bayar (pay) adat and the woman must give her husband a roll of white cloth, subang\textsuperscript{103} (flowers) and kepayan\textsuperscript{104} (fruit).

\textit{Datuk Patih} Tagih was succeeded by Muntap, the fifth \textit{Datuk Patih} — hilang anak ganti anak — and he changed the name of Durian Bejajar to Durian Cacar and the name Raja Hindar-kiri to Raja Indenagiri. In Patih Muntap’s time, hukum bangun was replaced. A new system was introduced and a bubungan (jail) was built, near sentana, where offenders were incarcerated. Soon, other jails were built in darat (interior), which made everyone afraid because this was not hukum adat (adat law) which uses petahilan (fines paid in crockery).

The sixth Patih was \textit{Datuk Patih} Tetap and he organised gawai into three levels: first, gawai balik hari (lasting one day); second, gawai menengah (in the middle), at which pulut is cooked and cockfighting and silat take place; and third, gawai pakai tiang gelanggang (where a cock-fighting arena is built) at which, on the sixth and seventh days pulut is cooked — the eight day being hari gadang (big day). Gawai pakai tiang gelanggang was only used at tobing (riverbank), for weddings involving orang kayu perdana (foremost nobles), such as Raja Mangkuta of Batu Rijal. It included cacak inai (decorating the bride with henna), potong jawi (killing an ox), arak iring (a procession), tabir langit (ceiling cloth), betuduh (sun shade) and perahu-perahuan (different kinds of boats). The people of tobing used to have the same adat as us and, although it’s all changed now, if you look you can see that some things are still the same. Once these three types of gawai had been fixed by Patih Tetap they could not be altered.

At this time the hukuman was also fixed for sumbang (marriage where the bride is already pregnant) and menyumbang (forbidden marriage between parallel cousins). People who commit menyumbang are dibunuh (killed) and people who commit sumbang are disipat (measured) — at their gawai they must pay a fine of tiga tahil (fifteen plates), kill a chicken

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\textsuperscript{103} As well as being a plant (Sphenodesme pentandra) subang also means a ‘[l]arge coin-like ear stud … seldom now worn except ceremonially at weddings, to be discarded when the marriage has been consummated. Among some Kubu Proto-Malays the removal of the subang is the marriage ceremony itself’ (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.1125).

\textsuperscript{104} While kepayan, or kepayang (Pangium edule) fruit is considered beautiful (Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.562) it is also poisonous.
and have a tawar recited over them. The next Datuk Patih, after Tetap, was his son Datuk Patih Said who taught about respect to other people and introduced the following larang pantangan naik ke rumah orang (regulations about going into someone else's house). Before arriving at a house, we must call out or cough. It's not good to arrive without having made a noise first, because every pool was given a sound. All the borders were given polite language. Big houses were given floor beams and broad fields were given boundaries. Equality among friends is supported by adat. If someone enters a house without first calling out a greeting, the fine is tiga tahil. If, after being disorongkan (offered) sirih or rokok by their host, a guest either mencapai (touches) them with his left hand or makes an impolite comment regarding the quality of what he is being offered the fine is also tiga tahil.

Now let me tell you how everywhere got its name, how Datuk Patih, who came down from the top of Mt. Merapi, gave every place a name. First, Sungai Kuantan: it was called this because Datuk Patih was thirsty when he first arrived at Sungai keruh. So, he ordered one his nephews to get him a drink of water and, because his nephew was in such a hurry, he picked up some kuah (gravy), left over from the night before, and gave it to Datuk Patih who, when he tasted the kuah which was basi (stale), said 'Kuah 'ntan!' (Not gravy!) and threw it overboard. So, nowadays, it is called kuah'ntan or Kuantan. Sungai Kampar was previously known as Sungai tenang but, because, when he first arrived there, Datuk Patih was very lapar (hungry), it became known as Sungai lapar and, over time, that name has changed to Sungai Kampar. Sungai Batang Hari was called Sungai deras but, because Datuk Patih arrived there at tengah hari (mid-day), he renamed it Sungai tengah hari which has become Sungai Batang Hari. These three rivers were given the name Sungai nan Tiga Laras because, if its estuaries open into the sea, if its pools lap Mt. Merapi, then it's one of Sungai nan Tiga Laras.

footnotes

105 Sutan Mohammad's words were 'Tiap lubuk diberikan bunyi. Tepian beri bahasa. Rumah gadang kita beri mentalak. Padang lawas kita beri bersempadan. Pentaraan dengan kawan ada sesuai dengan adat'.

106 Sutan Mohammad's words were 'Kalau kualanya langsung ke laut, kalau lubuknya menumbuk Gunung Merapi, Itulah dinamai sungai nan tiga laras'.
Datuk Patih sailed all the rivers, including batang Cenaku, with its two branches, which got its name because Datuk Patih called it batang penguasaanku (under my control), which has become shortened to Cenaku. Datuk Patih had three sons there, to whom he gave the following titles: in Cenaku hilir (downstream Cenaku) he installed his eldest son, Batin Muka-Muka, whose insignia was lembing dua muka (double-bladed spear) – after which he was named; in bagaian tengah (mid-section), at Aur Cina, Batin Pembubung, who was given that name because his mother was a bidadari (nymph) who came from pintu lawang langgit (the entrance to heaven). Batin Pembubung had the insignia cindai jantan\textsuperscript{107} panjang sembilan (nine lengths of decorated cloth); in Cenaku hulu (upstream Cenaku) Datuk Patih gave his youngest son the title Batin Pamuncak and the insignia tanduk ular (snake’s horn) which he took off a snake he had caught in Sungai Antan, one of Cenaku’s tributaries. In Cenaku hulu, Datuk Patih also installed a Dubalang with the title Panglima Sutan\textsuperscript{108} who was ordered to live in Anak Talang and to guard the upper reaches of the river.

When Datuk Patih was travelling down Sungai Gangsal, he built a bangsal (shed) where he spent the night. So, he called that river Sungai bangsal which is now known as Sungai Gangsal. Similarly, when Datuk Patih was on Sungai Seberida, he caught an ikan berida (a kind of fish)\textsuperscript{109} and he gave that place the name Sungai se (one) berida. Sungai Genala got its name because it was dekat kuala (near an estuary) and, over time, its name has changed from Sungai dekat kuala to Sungai Genala. Sungai Genala has a penunggu (guardian) who disappeared into a deep pool in Sungai Genala when he was washing there. He became the Dubalang of the nine Batin of Sungai Gangsal. Orang Genala had great endurance and if he was shot with a bullet, or a spear was thrown into his chest, he did not die, he just kept on fighting back. Even if he was stabbed and wounded thirty times he did not die or even

\textsuperscript{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{107} Wilkinson (1955 Part I p. 227) says that a cindai is a fine silk cloth, imported from India, five or more yards long and about a yard wide with fringed or tasselled ends. A cindai jantan is a cindai with a bold reticulate pattern which ‘was worn as a sash by warriors, gave them some protection from its many folds and was even supposed on occasions to turn into a python and fight for its wearer’.

\textsuperscript{108} Panglima was the title of a military officer who worked under a Penghulu and Wilkinson (1955 Part II p.878) says that the title Panglima ‘is not held in special honour and is often given to aboriginal headmen of Negrito and Proto-Malayan communities’.

\textsuperscript{109} I have not been able to identify ikan berida.
stop retaliating. When Datuk Patih entered Sungai Langsat, he saw that its rantau (shoreline) was long and that it had a langsat\textsuperscript{110} tree growing near the water’s edge, so he called it rantau langsat. In the area of Seberida, Datuk Patih installed three title holders: Ria\textsuperscript{111} Belimbing, in Seberida hilir, who was given the insignia benang tak kusut (thread which is not tangled); in Seberida tengah, in the region of Sungai Tanjung, Ria Tanjung, whose insignia was pelita tak padam (lamp that never goes out); and in Seberida hulu, Pamuncak\textsuperscript{112} rantau langsat.

The area around Sungai Ekoh was also divided into three: on the right Si Besi, the eldest; on the left Si Kelopak; and Si Bunga in the middle. The Ekoh is where people menuba (poison fish) and Datuk Patih organised penubaan (rights to poison fish) like this. The people of Parit, together with those of Gedabu, can poison the lubuk (pools) in the area of Ekoh hilir, which are: lubuk Sibedil; lubuk Pekualan; and lubuk Salamanis. In Ekoh hulu, the people from Perigi can use lubuk Ampang Semaga, lubuk Rantau Deras and lubuk Penggeret Kunyit. They also have access to the pools used by Sungai Limau which are: lubuk Langkap; lubuk Cubadak; and lubuk Rantau Hitam. Far upstream are the two biggest pools lubuk Petai and lubuk Tanam, which are both under Datuk Patih’s control. At these two pools, Datuk Patih would call Batin Parit and Batin Perigi and assemble about a thousand people to menuba (catch fish using poison) lubuk seribu (thousand pools). During the night they put akar tuba\textsuperscript{113} (poisonous root) in the water and, the next day, the fish were mabuk (unconscious). Datuk Patih called this kind of fishing lubuk larangan (forbidden pools) and he put his black flag in the pools to show that tuba was being used. The Batin also put their flag, which was white, in the water, as did the Dubalang whose flag was red. So, it was black on the right hand side, white on the left and red in the middle which showed that Datuk Patih, Dubalang and the Batin were all present. Lubuk Petai and lubuk

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\footnotetext{110}{This is Lansium domesticum which has small, sweet pale yellow fruits.}

\footnotetext{111}{According to Wilkinson (1955 Part I p.45), Ria, or Aria, was a Javanese title used by members of the Vaisha caste (farmers, merchants, craftsmen, etc), especially in Mataram.}

\footnotetext{112}{Pamuncak means apex or summit and it was title used by leaders in the headwaters of a rantau.}

\footnotetext{113}{Tuba (Derris elliptica) is a plant with a poisonous akar (root).}
Tanam, which were both over six depak (fathoms) deep, had a penunggu called buaya tembaga (brass crocodile) – who had a yellow body. Datuk Patih could call buaya tembaga to the surface by burning keminyan. There were also many fish there – lampan, papah, luman, jalai, berida and baung. A man called Sabut lived near lubuk Petai and he asked Datuk Patih for beras kunyit (husked rice stained yellow) because he did not want to die and be buried. So his body was dipancangkan (planted upright), while he was still alive, and he became a kemuning tree.\textsuperscript{114}

In between lubuk Petai and lubuk Tanam there is a river called Sungai Tonuh and the first person to live there was tidak orang seperti manusia (a non-human being), called Ragasi, who had a big body, long arms and wide teeth and who liked to eat people. Ragasi lived with his wife and daughter who was called Putri (Princess) Dayang Mandiri. When his daughter was old enough to marry – as we say tua jantan\textsuperscript{115} – Ragasi was suddenly overwhelmed by a desire for human flesh and, as soon as he saw Putri Dayang Mandiri, he wanted to eat her. He quickly jumped out of the house, down on to the ground, where he saw an ibul\textsuperscript{116} (a kind of palm) tree which he bit into. He took a hard bite and his teeth fell out, which brought him to his senses, and he said to his daughter that he was going to an area of Sungai Ekoh called Sungai penyabung and that she, and her descendants, who would bear the title Panglima Sutan, must now pegang (control) the land around Sungai Tonuh, with the help of her parents, who would return if she burnt keminyan and called them. The people in Sungai Tonuh no longer recognise the title Panglima Sutan – like me, nowadays nobody acknowledges that I am Datuk Patih. The Panglima Sutan was orang bebas (free person) and, although he was also called Dubalang, he was free. When he went to sentana, even the Raja treated him as orang bebas, and he could act as a replacement for any absent title holder. If the Datuk Patih was absent, the Panglima Sutan could act as temporary

\textsuperscript{114} Kemuning (Murraya paniculata) is a large tree with fine grained yellow wood which is used for carving and making knife handles.

\textsuperscript{115} Tua means old and jantan means male, masculine or a man.

\textsuperscript{116} This is Orania maerocladus which has poisonous fruit and very hard wood.
Datuk Patih because jabatannya\textsuperscript{117} (what he held) was big – he was Dubalang. It was the same in Parit and Perigi: if there was a gawai and a Batin was not present, because he had been called away by pemerintah (government), Panglima Sutan could replace him and he could do the same for Pemangku\textsuperscript{118}. He could even act as rakyat\textsuperscript{119} (non-title holder). He was known as kecil-besar (small-large) because jabatannya could be small or big. That is the inheritance of the descendants of Sungai Tonuh. This is how Tujuh Buah Tangga got its name. Living a long way from Datuk Patih were suku Pemangku (Datuk Patih's deputy and his clan) which consisted of seven households and, because they were so far away, Datuk Patih installed a Batin there who only had authority over tujuh buah rumah (seven houses), or tujuh buah tangga (seven sets of steps) – Lebih tak mau, Kurang tak mau (Don't want more, Don't want less). Datuk Patih divided the territory of Batin Tujuh Buah Tangga into three parts: batang Sengkila; Sungai Beringin; and Sungai Rotan.

The leader of Selantai is known as Penghulu Muda Selantai and he is named after the river Selantai which is a tributary on the left hand side of the Ekoh, about two and a half kilometres long. Penghulu Muda Selantai was given two lubuk, Utat and Beringin, to use for menuba. Every year during bulan puasa (Islamic fasting month) and Raya Haji (Islamic festival of Idul Adha) the nine Batin from batang Cenaku (ten with Anak Talang) and the nine Batin from batang Gangsal (ten with Genala) must first report to Penghulu Muda Selantai before they are allowed to go to the palace. If they don’t bring Penghulu Muda with them, Datuk Patih will refuse to take these Batin ke hilir (downstream) to pay homage to the Raja. Penghulu Muda Selantai was Muslim and, while all the Batin from Cenaku were also Muslim, some of those from Gangsal were Muslim and some were langkah lama (old way).

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\textsuperscript{117} As well as meaning what is within a person's grasp jabatan also means a handshake.

\textsuperscript{118} Pemangku, from pangku, means to nurse or to serve as deputy for. Pemangku is another name for Mangku.

\textsuperscript{119} According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (1993 p.812) rakyat means common people as opposed to bangsawan (nobles) and hartawan (rich people).
Gedabu came about because people from Parit and Perigi were clearing ladang in the same area. During this time, a batina (woman) Parit married a jantan (man) Perigi and their son was given the title Batin Gedabu. As for Jerinjing, it began when some people were trapping fish in batang Ekoh. This group consisted of a husband, his wife and their two families, who all came from Sungai Limau. One of the wife’s brothers made a tengalak (fish trap) and he told his sister’s husband to do the same, but he couldn’t make one. So, while his brother-in-law caught many fish, he didn’t get any at all and he began merajuk (to sulk). Taking his family with him, he crossed the Ekoh, walked straight in to the forest and kept going – if they came across a hill they climbed it and if they came across a swamp they assailed it – until they reached danau tiga (three lakes) where there was a large pulai tree around which they built houses and cleared ladang. On the journey, the drum that the man was carrying fell to the ground because putus talinya (its string broke) and so the husband’s father was given the title Batin Pulai which was changed, later on, by the Sultan, to Batin Jerinjing.

That is the story of my nenek moyang, my datuk-datuk the story of Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang and his descendants who descended from the top of Mt. Merapi and began the settlement suku enam, tiga balai, bepayung tiga kaki (six villages of Tiga Balai).

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120 This is Alstonia scholaris.

121 While suku enam tiga balai means the six villages or clans of Tiga Balai, bepayung tiga kaki means having a three-legged umbrella and refers to the system of government, used in Minangkabau, whereby founding suku were in charge of more recently formed suku (see Navis 1984 p.131). In Tiga Balai the founding talang of Durian Cacar, Perigi and Parit supervised Tujuh Buah Tanga, Gedabu and Sungai Limau respectively.
PART THREE.

FRAME:

CONCLUSIONS
CHAPTER NINE
TALANG MAMAK AND OTHER HAMBA RAJA IN THE MELAYU BASIN

In this final chapter I shall be comparing Talang Mamak with other groups (on both sides of the Straits of Melaka) with whom, judging by the literature on them, Talang Mamak appear to have much in common. In anthropological studies, these groups are usually described as Proto-Malay and are often discussed in terms of their 'lack of homogeneity' (Carey 1976 p.217). Rather than following anthropological traditions that have characterised Proto-Malay groups as 'unrelated, independent “cultural systems” that require no explanation' (Benjamin 1988 p.8), I shall be both developing a perspective that compares and links these groups in terms of their shared historical, ecological and economic experiences, and arguing against 'the treatment of the Orang Asli [Proto-Malays] as a people or society apart, when in fact they have been intimately involved in the social currents flowing throughout the Peninsula [and Sumatra] for centuries and millennia past' (Benjamin 1988 p.24).

I begin the discussion by redescribing the form of social organisation known as the 'Minangkabau matrilineal system' (Kato 1982 p.51) – one of Sumatra’s best-known cultural exotica – in terms of economic relationships between masters and their bondsmen. Here, I am in general agreement with Anderson and Vorster (1983 p.443) who suggest, with regard to Melayu systems of bondage (which include those used in Minangkabau), that '[w]hile the idiom was that of status, personal trust, and loyalty, often reinforced by kinship, evidence suggests that the underlying dynamics were essentially economic, upon which political support was predicated'. I then go on to compare economic relations in the Minangkabau darat (interior) with those that existed between Talang Mamak and the royal house of Inderagiri (which was established with Minangkabau assistance), emphasising, once again, relationships between bondsmen and their masters and how these have been affected by Islam, European colonisation and Indonesian independence.

In the discussion, I present Talang Mamak as a representative group of, so-called, Proto-Malay, whose experiences can be compared to those of other, similarly labelled, groups found in a geographic area comprising of south and west Malaysia and east Sumatra which I call, for want of a better term, the Melayu basin. Before going on to directly compare Talang Mamak and other Proto-Malay groups in the Melayu basin I briefly discuss the Kubu, as described by Sandbukt (1984, 1988[A], 1988[B]), in terms of the debt-bondage systems of Minangkabau.
and Inderagiri. Then, in the comparison of Talang Mamak with other, so-called, Proto-Malay groups in Malaysia I formulate a context, based on evidence from both Minangkabau and Talang Mamak, within which the seemingly heterogeneous groups that have been designated Proto-Malay can be discussed in more unifying terms, which relates to a system of debt-bondage employed in the Melayu basin that I characterise using the term hamba raja (royal bondsman).

In Minangkabau, the Melayu system of administering subjugated states reached its furthest development due to the Minangkabau darat being the only place in the Melayu basin where fertile sawah lands and rich gold deposits lay side by side. This combination of resources at a site far from the coast, drew the attentions of Buddhist kingdoms in the area (Kuntala, Sriwijaya, Melayu, Thai, Myanmarese, Javanese, etc), which began to establish permanent settlements in the crater valleys of the interior. Javanese from the Brantas, Bengawan and Solo rivers (see Wolters 1967 p.201), who probably first introduced rice cultivation into the Minangkabau darat, came to dominate the production of both gold and rice in the highlands. The revenue obtained from the exploitation of these resources attracted rich Javanese aristocrats who refined existing techniques of labour organisation and introduced new technologies of production which resulted in dramatic increases in the outputs of both rice and gold.

Javanese development of the Minangkabau highlands probably reached its peak around the time of Aditiawarman (1347–1376) – also known as the 'time of adat' (Kahn 1993 p.71) – who became 'sovereign of the land of gold' (Dobbin 1977 p.11). Aditiawarman has become famous as the benefactor of a 'higher culture' (Dobbin 1983 p.62) in the Minangkabau interior which is usually described in terms of its 'extreme' (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.84) or 'rare' (ibid. p.189) form of social organisation which is known as the 'Minangkabau matrilineal system' (Kato 1982 p.204). In many writings about Minangkabau (de Josselin de Jong 1980, Kato 1982, etc), this system is seen as a self-perpetuating, abstract structure of kinship ties which is not directly related to gold production, social inequalities or other institutions – except for sawah production to which it appears 'naturally' related.

By describing these kinship ties as an idiom and discussing them in terms of their relationship with other institutions present in Minangkabau during the time of adat, in particular social
hierarchy and labour organisation, I aim to show that the Minangkabau matrilineal system is a refined example of a mode of production whose basic components, namely economic ties between rulers (who were organised patrilineally) and their subjects (among who, in line with their status, matrilineal ties were important), were probably common throughout Southeast Asia. In order to achieve this aim, I take the four main characteristics of the Minangkabau matrilineal system, as described by Kato (1982 p.204), 'namely, descent and descent group formation are organised according to the female line; a matrilineage is a corporate descent group; the residential pattern is duolocal; and authority is in the hands of the mamak', and relate them to information about gold and rice production, caste and religion, slavery and bondage and other forms of social organisation used by kings in order to control and exploit their subjects. In these terms I produce a description of Minangkabau social organisation in which matriliny appears both as a means of organising labour for the extraction of resources and as a way of preserving social inequalities.

I shall deal with each of the above mentioned characteristics of the Minangkabau matrilineal system in turn, beginning with the proposition that descent and descent group formation are organised according to the female line. In the Minangkabau darat of the time of adat, asal (descent) was associated with patrilineally inherited caste distinctions. It was connected to gold production (and trade) and not with matrilineal ties which formed the basis of an idiom of suku (matri-clan) membership (Navin 1984 p.60). In practical terms, the dominant principles in suku formation were economic ties of bondage and alliance, formed through and symbolised by marriage, and not descent. Suku leadership titles (e.g. Penghulu Asal) were inherited matrilineally. This was enforced in order to 'avoid a perpetual inheritance of the chieftaincy by only one family of the clan' (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.90) and to prevent the development of male dynasties which might come to rival the royal line. However, beyond the small group of candidates for a particular title, principles of matrilineal descent were not as significant, in terms of incorporation, as those of patronage and bondage (which allowed the poor to establish relationships with rich and powerful patrons). While suku membership may have been talked about using an idiom of matrilineal ties – the kemanakan (nephew) system (see chapter one) – the most significant incorporating principle was patronage, stimulated by economic necessity. The majority of the members of a suku were not connected to their leader through descent but were bound to him for mainly economic reasons. In the kemanakan system large numbers of poorer people were incorporated into the trading system,
which was based on gold production, through joining a *suku*, which had a rich and powerful patron, as *kemanakan bertali budi* (bondsmen). These bondsmen were not related to the leader of their *suku* through matrilineal descent but through gifts of 'gold or money' (Kato 1982 p.63) which were given to them through his patronage and which marked their status as debt-bondsmen. Debt-bondsmen status was probably originally associated with the marriage of an aristocratic patron to either the daughter or sister of a *tungganai* or a *mamak* (both heads of a family)\(^1\). However, later, as the distance between rich and poor grew and wealthy high caste nobles disdained to marry low caste women, it was enforced, mainly through the control of trade goods, such as cloth, metal, salt and rice. To regard descent as the main element in the formation of groups (called *suku* in Minangkabau) whose leaders inherited their titles matrilineally denies 'the contribution made by the exchange of women to the interrelation and definition of social units' (Bowen 1983 p.164), fails to relate matrilineal inheritance to bondsman status and does not capture the contrast between *asal* (patrilineal inheritance or descent) and *suku* (matri-clan) (Navis 1984 p.60).

The second characteristic of the Minangkabau matrilineal system, where a matrilineage is defined as a corporate descent group, takes it for granted that matrilineages existed in Minangkabau. While Kato (1982 p.51) maintains that '[a] payung\(^2\) [lineage] is a corporate descent group', other writers who have discussed the Minangkabau matrilineal system in detail (e.g. de Josselin de Jong 1980) do not equate *payung* with matrilineage or even associate the two words. Navis (1984 p.131) suggests that *payung* was the name given to a group which had split off from their *suku* under the leadership of a *Penghulu Payung* who remained subordinate to the *Penghulu Asal* of his *suku*. As I have already suggested, the majority of the followers of a particular *Penghulu Asal* were not related to him matrilineally but had joined the *suku* for

footnotes

1 Although, in a Minangkabau context the word 'mamak' is often taken to mean solely mother's brother and usually implies a close relationship between a maternal uncle and his nieces and nephews, de Josselin de Jong (1980 pp.50–51) concludes that *mamak* meant simply a head of a family and need not refer to any specific matrilineal relationships.

2 *Payung* means both umbrella and 'the autonomous unit under a territorial head' (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.857). It appears in the epithet *suku enam*, *be payung tiga kaki* which is used in Tiga Balai, mostly by title holding men – to describe both the organisation of the Talang Mamak into *talang*, or *suku*, and the relationship between the *suku*, three of them, *Tujuh Buah Tangga*, Gedabu and Sungai Limau each being under the authority of one of the original three – Durian Cacar, Perigi and Parit respectively.
economic reasons as kemanakan bertali budi. The economic base of the payung, as of the suku, was the bonded labour of kemanakan bertali budi who made up the majority of its population. A payung probably consisted of members of a small group closely related to the Penghulu Asal of their suku (from this group the Penghulu Payung was chosen), together with this group's kemanakan, most of whom were their debt-bondsmen tied to them by economic necessity. The ability of a suku or payung to exist over time also depended more upon economic relationships than matrilineal descent, as the fortunes of many Penghulu and, therefore, of their bondsmen were dependent upon budi (favour) extended to them by their own patrons. To claim that Minangkabau matrilineages are corporate descent groups is to presuppose that the Minangkabau have a term equivalent to matrilineage, which the evidence suggests they do not. This claim also implies that the formation and existence of groups — suku, payung — are not dependent upon, or related to, sets of economic relationships.

The third characteristic of the Minangkabau matrilineal system states that the residential pattern is duolocal, which means that, '[a]fter marriage, a husband moves to or near his wife’s house and stays there at night. However, he still continues to belong to his mother’s house. He frequently goes back there during the day time' (Kato 1982 p.51). This residence pattern is related to the economic situation of bondsmen who, as well as inheriting obligations (from their father) to the Penghulu Asal of their natal suku, also undertook obligations to the Penghulu Asal of their wife’s suku when they married. The duolocality of this residence pattern does not embody characteristics peculiar to a ‘matrilineal system’. Rather, it reflects the economic predicament of many debt-bondsmen who, after marriage, had to fulfil obligations to two different patrons: the Penghulu Asal of their natal suku; and the Penghulu Asal of the suku they married into. In other words, duolocal residence, which ‘sacrifices the nuclear family to the demands of the matrilineal descent group’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.84) by rupturing father-son and husband-wife ties, was practised out of economic necessity and reinforced by Penghulu Asal who had labour rights over their debt-bondsmen which continued after the latter’s marriage. When they got married, men had to provide their wife’s family with a gift of ‘money or gold’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.132) which, if it could not be paid, resulted in the husband becoming bonded to his wife’s Penghulu Asal (ibid. p.131). A debt-bondsman, who had no money or gold, could not give his labour to the household he had married into, in lieu of money or gold, as he already had inherited obligations to the Penghulu Asal of his natal suku, and was forced to give his children over to his wife’s Penghulu Asal by way of recompense.
Men who had a choice in who they married preferred to marry one of their Penghulu's daughters as this would allow them both to fulfil their obligations to their natal Penghulu Asal (while living permanently in their wife's house), and to maintain close ties with their children. It is likely that in the Minangkabau world of the time of adat there were a variety of residential patterns after marriage, the duolocal being the one associated with debt-bondsmen who, being bonded to their Penghulu Asal, had to return to their natal suku during the day to fulfil their obligations to him.\(^3\)

While debt-bondsmen were impelled to live duolocally, wealthier men, who enjoyed certain privileges, including patrilineal inheritance of titles and virilocal residence, had more choice over who they married and where they lived and were not alienated from their children. Men of the royal house and other aristocrats had many wives, at least one of whom moved into their residence and became the mother of their sons and heirs. Because of their prestige and value as potential patrons, wealthy men were ‘often invited to marry into a family even if they already had more than one wife’ (Kato 1982 p.66). These men could take as many wives as they pleased, provided that they could pay the bride-price. Such marriages involved a ‘class element’ as ‘[a] man of upper class background is likely to be proposed to by the prospective bride’s family, regardless of her class’ (ibid. p.57). While some of an aristocrat’s wives lived with him permanently, others, presumably from the poorer sections of the population, remained in their family homes to be visited at night by their rich husbands who slept with them and had no other responsibilities towards them. To maintain that the residence pattern in Minangkabau is, or was, simply duolocal is to neglect both the hierarchies of title, status and privilege (and the economic inequalities associated with them) that existed during the period when the gold trade flourished. While duolocal residence was probably confined to the poorest bondsmen who were forced to give up their children, wealthy men both maintained nuclear families, visited their other wives at night and had the freedom of choice with regard to where they lived.

footnotes

3 Other types of bondage, which were distinguished in terms of who provided a bondsman’s brideprice payment, may have allowed some men to spend half the year, or at least a few months of it, cultivating rice and other agricultural produce with their wives and children while the rest of the year was spent working for their Penghulu.
The fourth of Kato’s characteristics (1982 pp.51–52) states that ‘authority is in the hands of the mamak’, a word which, according to Kato (ibid.) ‘literally means “maternal uncle” but it can also refer to classificatory maternal uncles such as penghulu or tungganai’ (ibid.). The distinction literal versus classificatory is significant when discussing ‘the important role of the mama’ in the life of his kamanakan’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.63) because while every Penghulu Asal had some kemanakan under his authority who were related to him by darah (blood), most of his – so called – kemanakan were not related to him at all in terms of kinship but were tied to him economically as bondsmen. Just as mamak has two meanings, one literal and one classificatory, so kemanakan means both maternal nephew and classificatory nephew or debt-bondsman.

In the Minangkabau world of the time of adat, the debt-bondsman/master relationship was conceived of in terms of an idiom of matrilineal ties in which the maternal uncle-maternal nephew relationship and the terms associated with it were manipulated to provide a familial idiom into which slave-master relationships could be incorporated. This uncle-nephew relationship was of greater significance, to bondsmen, than that of father-son because intimate and enduring relationships between fathers and their sons were only permitted among the ruling aristocracy. All subject Penghulu had to pass their titles on through females lines, which both prevented the formation of patrilineal dynasties that could rival the king’s line and marked bondsmen’s lower status in relation to their rulers. A bondsman’s status was reinforced by the payment of tribute and the heavy ceremonial expenses most bondsmen had to submit to their patrons. While the statement ‘authority is in the hands of the mamak’ may appear correct if the terms mamak and kemanakan are regarded in a classificatory sense, which includes master-slave relationships, it is a form misrepresentation because it was not a mamak’s matrilineal ties with his kemanakan which gave him authority over them but his wealth and status.

In the light of the above discussion, the Minangkabau matrilineal system reflects a form of social organisation based around relations between debt-bondsmen and their masters which in its basic form – matrilineally organised subjects bonded to patrilineally organised rulers – was probably common throughout Southeast Asia (Reid 1983[A] p.34). However, in Minangkabau it reached a level of refinement not found elsewhere. The close proximity of fertile sawah land and the rich gold deposits at a site far inland allowed for the development of
forms of social control which could not be enforced in the more open world of the coast. Populations that were attracted, or forced, to move inland became reliant upon supplies of basic essentials such as salt and probably protein, in the form of dried salted fish (Dobbin 1983 p.51), as well as other goods, such as cloth, from the coast. Title-holding aristocrats organised the trade in these goods, and the majority of the population were bonded to Penghulus who would supply them with imported goods in return for their labour. In Minangkabau, as elsewhere in the Malay world, all labour was performed on the basis of obligation and 'because there was no really “free” wage labour category to escape to, slaves who were manumitted reportedly sold themselves again at once. Everybody appeared to be in some kind of bondage relationship' (Reid 1983[B] p.168). While bondsmen status included obligations it could also bring benefits as it provided access to tributary goods and help with subsistence, bride price payments, tax, and ceremonial expenses. The obligations of bondsmen to master and of master to bondsmen may, at times, have been regarded as being mutually beneficial because the 'lack of legal and financial institutions made a powerful patron the most useful security for the poor, and bondsmen were the most valuable asset for the rich' (op. cit p.157).

While some of the ‘traditional systems of bondage and obligation’ (Reid 1983[A] p.34) which existed elsewhere in Southeast Asia may have proved mutually beneficial to both master and bondsmen, the kemanakan system that developed in the Minangkabau darat, especially those elements of it associated with the break up of the nuclear family and duolocal residence, probably benefited the bondsmen only in that it offered him the means of survival. These conditions, which favoured the master at the expense of his bondsmen, were probably only brought about through extreme economic pressure backed up by force. In this light it is not surprising that when the Portuguese-born Dutch emissary, Thomas Dias, entered the Minangkabau darat, in 1684, he was ‘accompanied on one stage of his journey by 4000 royal retainers’ and had ‘3000 armed soldiers accompanying him on his departure ... “who continually fired their guns in the air” ’. A further ‘one hundred soldiers, all armed with guns guarded the palace’ (in Dobbin 1983 p.68). This large number of court officials and soldiers, recorded after the peak period of gold production in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (when presumably the numbers were even greater), testifies both to the amount of wealth generated by the kemanakan system and to the amount of policing and administration required to enforce it. As well as the thousands of well-armed royal soldiers ‘who were prepared to use force on the surrounding population’ (ibid. p.69), every Penghulu/master had a Dubalang who
acted as 'a watchman over the conduct of lineage members [debt-bondsmen]' (Kato 1982 p.46) and ensured that a bondsman's obligations to his Penghulu were fulfilled.

In studies of the Minangkabau, as a result of the failure to relate information about kinship with information about other areas of social life, the rules governing debt-bondsmen have usually been interpreted as a 'matrilineal system'. The presence of this, so-called, 'matrilineal system' has been explained in terms of the 'logic' of kinship rather than in terms of inequalities associated with trade and gold production. While matrilineal ties were important for the inheritance of Penghulu titles and some property, patrilineal ties were equally important for the inheritance of aristocratic titles and wealth. To attempt to sum up the range of economic and familial ties present in the Minangkabau highlands under the rubric 'matrilineal' is to neglect the heterogeneous make up of the population which contained both matri-focal and patri-focal elements.

Under stable conditions, the kemanakan system functioned as a 'closed system' which kept 'the slave class in its dependent position over many generations preventing assimilation despite conditions of considerable intimacy' (Reid 1983[B] pp.163–164). Due to its inland site, which both isolated the population and made them reliant on the importation of essential goods, conditions in the darat remained relatively stable for long periods. During periods of economic stability, the slave population, which were the rich's 'most valuable possession' (ibid. p.157), grew dramatically (Kato 1982 p.73). As the number of bondsmen increased, more of them were put to work exploiting resources in the darat (interior), particularly gold. However, once these economic opportunities had been monopolised, Penghulu began taking groups of bondsmen into the rantau (outlying regions), where Minangkabau settlements already existed, to start up agricultural and trading enterprises. While the rantau provided opportunities for trade and access to, mostly poor quality, agricultural land, it also offered a means of 'escape' for those who 'could not endure the oppression and terror' of the darat administration (Navis 1983 p.121).

In the sixteenth century, Islam was introduced into the economic system of the darat, finding favour in the royal palace and among the nobility, where it 'was merely added to what had gone before, and it exhibited itself in Minangkabau in a highly syncretic form' (Dobbin 1983 p.120). Outside the ruling families, in the 'slave hamlets' (Dias in ibid. p.68) 'the fundamental
influence of Islamification on ... slavery was probably the creation of the dividing line between Muslim "insider" and non-Muslim "outsider" which included the prohibition of the enslavement of fellow Muslims (Reid 1983[B] p.169). The majority of the bonded population of the darat were classified, by their Muslim rulers, as non-Muslims and [f]rom the very beginnings of Islam debt-bondage must have presented itself as an important loop-hole to avoid too fundamental a disruption of the labour system. The supply of new slaves ... now had to be provided chiefly by non-Muslims' (ibid.). By denying debt-bondsmen opportunities to enter Islam, the kemanakan system was maintained and the pattern of patrilineally organised rulers – now Islamic – governing matrilineally organised subjects – now non-Muslim – was perpetuated. In the courts, where it 'could more or less fit in with the accepted way of things', Islam became the idiom of patrilineal organisation which had always been 'bound up with religious or sacred life' (de Josselin de Jong 1980 pp.112-113). As 'sacred affairs were drawn into the Muslim orbit the [pre-Muslim] patrilineal organisation, so closely bound up with the supernatural, dwindled into insignificance' (ibid.).

The economic system of the darat, which was based on rice cultivation, gold production, trade and bonded labour, started to collapse in the late eighteenth century when the supply of gold began to dry up (Dobbin 1977 p.16). Without regular supplies of large quantities of gold, which had been 'the raison d'être for an elaborate system of raja and ministers' (ibid. p.17), the aristocracy of the Minangkabau darat could no longer monopolise the importation of essential trade goods which were the basis of tributary trade in the highlands. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, many debt-bondsmen had broken free from their economic obligations and united under the leadership of Islamic teachers who taught a more orthodox Islam than that practised by the royal house and nobles. These Islamic teachers also had growing interests in the increasingly important trade in agricultural produce, especially coffee. Under the protection of these wealthy Muslim teachers many bondsmen entered Islam and rose up against the aristocracy in a rebellion that became known as the Padri movement (see Dobbin 1977, 1983). While Padri rebels frequently attacked, and burnt down, the royal palace and other buildings owned by the aristocracy, capturing and killing many of their occupants, they also freed large numbers of slaves and bondsmen who entered Islam and joined the rebellion.

When they first arrived in Sumatra, the Dutch were one further group among many (Acehnese, Johorese, Javanese, Portuguese, etc) competing to control the export of gold from
Minangkabau. After the gold supply, and the tributary trade system that developed around it, failed, the Dutch began to get more directly involved with the administration of the darat. They increased village autonomy, encouraged independent trade, and consolidated the influence of the colonial state by developing a large bureaucracy, which penetrated to local and regional levels. This bureaucracy both included large numbers of 'members of indigenous groups' and introduced 'processes by which land was alienated by the state from Minangkabau villages' (Kahn 1993 pp.198–203). As a result of the liberating effects of the Padri rebellion and the subsequent reorganisation of Minangkabau administration by the Dutch, the debt-bondsmen system mostly disappeared from the darat. While the economic significance of the kemanakan system was gradually lost, many of the regulations, terms and titles associated with it remained and were adapted to new forms of village life. At a later date, these regulations, terms and titles were reconstructed by anthropologists, such as de Josselin de Jong (1980) and Kato (1982), as the 'Minangkabau matrilineal system'.

Following on from my own reconstruction of the kemanakan system, in which it appears as a form of labour organisation based around bondsmen-master relationships, I shall now compare the economic system of the Minangkabau darat with descriptions of other groups in the Minangkabau rantau, along the rivers of both east Sumatra and west Malaysia in the region I call the Melayu basin. I begin this comparison with the Talang Mamak, who pass both leadership titles (in contrast to shaman-titles which are inherited patrilineally) and rights to land through women and who, therefore, could be (mis)represented as having a matrilineal system or as being a matrilineal society.

Among the Talang Mamak: women maintain ownership rights over houses, rubber plots and rice land; and men ideally pass on most non-government titles through a female line. While these arrangements could be described purely in terms of a Talang Mamak matrilineal kinship system, I prefer to describe them as a result of several centuries of debt-bondage. Throughout this time, matrilineal inheritance was forced upon Talang Mamak in order to allow a complex of economic obligations to be fulfilled. It also prevented the formation of patrilineages within which wealth could be accumulated and from which a power base to rival the kings could emerge. As debt-bondsmen, the Talang Mamak existed under similar conditions, though not so severe, as people in the same category in the Minangkabau darat where the combination of an inland site, gold mines and fertile rice fields allowed for both state control of outside
influence (including the import and export of trade goods) and the provision of a large number of unproductive military personnel, ministers and officials who could closely monitor the population and control labour. The Talang Mamak, even when in their darat location, were never under such strict control, as bondsmen in the highlands were, because the Talang Mamak could not produce enough rice or trade goods for their king to be able to support either a large bureaucracy or armed force.

Continuing to develop a perspective that concentrates on relationships between debt-bondsmen and their masters, trade, the introduction of Islam and slave raiding, I shall now consider the information given by Sandbukt (1984, 1988[A], 1988[B]) about another group of non-Islamic forest dwellers in east Sumatra, the so-called Kubu, who have a population of about eight hundred and live near the Batang Hari river in Jambi province (Sandbukt 1988[A] p.124). Among the Kubu there are a number of title holders who are called ‘in descending order of importance, temegong, dipati (each with a wakil or deputy), mangku, anak dalam and menti’ (Sandbukt 1988[B] p.113). The appearance of both a temeggong (or Temenggong) and a dipati (or Patih) suggests that, at one time, the Kubu had a close relationship with a pre-Muslim court in the Batang Hari area. This court was probably superseded by an Islamic court which introduced menti (Islamic ministers), who replaced the Temenggong and patih, as court representatives. Menti were under the authority of an external Melayu Jenang (court representative) who organised both tributary trade (Sandbukt 1988[B] p.113) and bondsmen relationships through control of brideprice payments (Sandbukt 1988[A] p.149).

The first Kubu population of the Batang Hari region were probably associated with a Buddhist kingdom on the upper Batang Hari, their needs for salt and other trade goods being supplied by their royal patron, for whom they laboured in return. This relationship, mediated by Temenggong, Patih and Mangku, was probably similar to that between Nara Singha and Tiga Balai (except that Talang Mamak were not represented by a Temenggong) and, like Talang Mamak, the Kubu were probably also encouraged to farm rice. The introduction of Islam to east Sumatra brought similar effects as elsewhere. Older titles (such as Temenggung and Patih) lost both their significance at court and their trading privileges. They were replaced by a Menti who organised trade and relationships with the Muslim court (which, for the Kubu, was centred at the former Majapahit port of Jambi) through Jenang, who were themselves directly under the authority of the Bendahara at Jambi.
A Jenang is still entitled to tribute from his Kubu bondsmen which he obtains through advancing goods as 'obliging gifts', in return for which he receives forest produce – at profits of hundreds or thousands of percent (Sandbukt 1988[B] p.113). As well as being the focus of tributary trade, a position he maintains through his monopoly over barang indah (valuable trade goods) all of which belonged to the Raja (Sandbukt 1988[A] p.147), Jenang can also impose fines, payable in cloth, for offences ranging from theft to damage of a fruit tree. These fines, called bengun (ibid. p.138), which could be as much as sixty sheets of cloth, a trade good that could only be obtained through tribute, probably functioned in the same way as bangun (Datoek Toeah 1969 p.300) in Minangkabau and hukuman mengolor (Usman 1985 p.75) in Tiga Balai, in that they bound petty offenders to their Jenang, who, having accumulated a large stock of cloth, could lend an offender some of it to help pay his fine. Offenders would return this borrowed cloth to the Jenang, who accepted it as payment of the fine, leaving the offender in debt to his patron/judge, the Jenang. Most serious offenders would have been sent (as they were in Tiga Balai and Minangkabau) to the court where they were put into slavery.

While Sandbukt concentrates on the role of the Muslim Jenang in the Kubu's economic relations, little is said of the hierarchy of seven Kubu title holders, probably because they have few functions nowadays, acquiring legitimacy (as in Tiga Balai and Minangkabau), 'through internal competition between incumbents and candidates in which they demonstrate the mastery of adat law and formal oratorial display of its sayings' (Sandbukt 1988[B] p.113). While the significance of matrilineal inheritance in the selection of candidates is not mentioned by Sandbukt, he does say that kinship is 'matrilineally skewed' and that male access to women is contingent both on bride payments and on '[b]ride-service and assistance on a permanent basis in uxorilocal residence' (Sandbukt 1988[A] p.149). This suggests that, for Kubu men (as for men in both Minangkabau and Tiga Balai), marriage implied ties of bondage and prevented the formation of enduring patrilineal relationships. The obligations between the Kubu and their Jenang are reaffirmed both during the appointment of a Jenang, where 'although succession is weighted in favour of sons or sons-in-law, the Kubu are the ones to select and formally install incumbents' (1988[B] p.113), and at the installation of 'headmen' who are 'appointed or confirmed by the jenang' (ibid.).

The role of the Kubu headman in the installation of a Jenang, and vice versa, is reminiscent of the relationship between Datuk Patih and Nara Singha (symbolised by the sumpah –see chapter...
one – during the early years of *kerajaan* Inderagiri) and testifies to the Kubu’s relative independence from their patrons. Kubu autonomy is probably a consequence of their reactions to the introduction of Islam, before which time they (like Talang Mamak) probably enjoyed relatively high status as the matrilineally organised subjects of a Buddhist *Raja* (to whom they were bonded through tributary trade). The *Raja* provided them with a valuable supply of trade goods and offered protection from attack. At this time, the Kubu may well have lived on a main trade route where they practised sedentary rice farming (see Sandbukt 1988[A] p.141), a portion of their crop being part of their tribute along with forest produce.

Some time after the arrival of Islam in the region, the Kubu were (like most other debt-bondsmen in Sumatra) classified as non-Muslim and became subject to slave raiding from neighbouring Muslim populations. In an attempt by their king to isolate, contain and protect his non-Muslim bondsmen, the Kubu were probably moved back from the main trade routes to an inland site into which the Muslim court introduced *Menti* and, presumably, *Dubalang* to extract labour, tribute and fines from their Kubu bondsmen. At some stage, possibly due to a war or a breakdown in tribute, a group of Kubu were able to break free from their bonds and escape into the forest. The Kubu that remained have continued to practise sedentary swidden agriculture and the collection of forest produce for trade and have, probably only quite recently, begun to assimilate themselves into the *Melayu* population (Sandbukt 1988[A] p.118). Those Kubu that fled into the forest had to endure both the threat of slave capture which was ‘real only a few generations ago’ (Sandbukt 1988[B] p.111) and, due to their withdrawal from tributary trade, a lack of essential trade goods. Dutch influence over the Jambinese Sultanate weakened the authority of the king, reduced his armed forces, curtailed slave raiding and stopped direct tributary ties. As a result, the Kubu who had escaped from bondage (who ‘are [still] pagan’, less sedentary than their more mainstream *Melayu*-influenced fellow Kubu and existing through cultivation and collection for trade [Sandbukt 1988(A) p.122]) were able, possibly on their own initiative, to establish bondsmen ties (and thereby get access to trade goods) with *Jenang*. These *Jenang* had probably originally collected taxes for the Muslim court. However, after the decline of the royal house and the introduction of Dutch-sponsored middlemen, they began to cultivate trading links with forest dwelling Kubu.

Relationships between Kubu and *Jenang* have developed along similar lines to other bondsmen-master relationships in Sumatra, in particular that between *Sultans* of Inderagiri and
their Talang Mamak followers many of whom still regard Tengku Arief as their protector and the guardian of their adat. The Kubu have a similar view of the Jenang who they see as the 'personal guarantor of their autonomy ... [they] consider their continual adherence to the customary law, which defines them in relation to the jenang, as constituting a basic legitimisation of their traditional way of life' (Sandbukt 1988[B] p.113). Jenang have been able to maintain their position as patron/masters of the Kubu during the shift from Dutch to Indonesian rule and nowadays, like the Talang Mamak Koordinator (Umar), the Jenang is 'perceived by the government as someone who has the special trust of the Kubu, who is able to communicate with them and ultimately to bring influence to bear on them' (ibid.).

Like the holders of Talang Mamak titles (Datuk Patih, Batin, Mangku, Manti), Kubu title holders (temeggong, dipati [and their wakil], anak dalam[^4], mangku and menti) do not appear to have any direct relationship with the new republic, both hierarchies having been based on relationships with royal courts that no longer exist. After centuries of bondage, the modern, 'free' Talang Mamak and Kubu both maintain 'a socioeconomic organisation typified by status asymmetries and by strong bonding ties and dependencies between specific others' (Sandbukt 1988[A] p.118). Like the Talang Mamak, the Kubu have spent a long time on the margins of the Muslim world. Currently, both Talang Mamak and Kubu populations are similarly divided into two groups: one being nearer the main trade route and market, sedentary, in close contact with Melayu and incorporated into government administration; and the other group living away from Melayu settlements, being less sedentary and not yet incorporated into the new republic. Rather, these latter groups maintain links with specific Melayu which are based upon pre-independence trading relationships. Among both the Talang Mamak and the Kubu who wish to keep Muslim Melayu influence out of their settlements, leaders present their followers with 'an image of an essentially evil and threatening external world' (Sandbukt 1988[B] p.114) which, paradoxically, contains the one person who can offer them protection from the dangers of the outside world, their Melayu patron-protector. Unlike the Talang Mamak, the Kubu have 'not been directly affected by Indonesian independence' (Sandbukt

[^4]: While Sandbukt (1988[A] p.118) maintains that anak dalam is the name of a Kubu title, Persoon (1990 p.18) suggests that Anak Dalam is the name that the Kubu prefer to be known by.
1984 p.94), but, in spite of this, the future prospects of both groups in the new republic look the same. For the Kubu and for the Talang Mamak, '[t]heir forest is becoming the target of timber extractors, oil prospectors and, most ominously of all, land surveyors for a giant transmigration scheme for landless Javanese peasants'5(ibid.) The less sedentary Kubu appear to be a group of former debt-bondsmen who, since the introduction of Islam, have been able to 'avoid or subvert authority and binding ties' by maintaining their '[r]esidential mobility' (Sandbukt 1988[A] p.149). This has both kept them outside the direct control of Muslim kings and government officials and allowed them to establish loose and, somewhat, voluntary debt-relationships with Melayu traders.

The comparison that I have developed, between Minangkabau, Talang Mamak and Kubu, is articulated in terms of debt-bondsmen and their tributary trade relationships with Buddhist and Islamic states. This comparison could probably be expanded to include other east Sumatran non-Muslim populations (such as Sakai). However, due to a general lack of information about east Sumatran peoples, like Sakai, I shall now go on to extend the comparison to include groups, found on the south west of the Malay Peninsula, about whom more is known. I suggest that many non-Muslims populations in the Melayu basin have much in common and represent a field of study in which most of the similarities and differences that are seen to exist between groups can be explained, or understood, in terms of bondage relationships with powerful trading kingdoms, the distinction Muslim/non-Muslim, slave raiding and modern government policies.

Since the beginning of the century, the non-Muslim Orang Asli (original people or aborigines) populations of Malaysia have been divided into three 'basic ethnic groups' known as Semang or Negrito, Sakai or Senoi, and Jakun or Proto-Malay (see Rambo 1988 p.19). In this discussion I shall be concentrating on those groups that fall into the Jakun (or Proto-Malay) category, in particular Orang Hulu (or Jakun), Orang Kanak, Temuan, Semelai, Temok, Lowland (or West) Semai and Mah Meri. Most of these groups speak either Southern Aslian

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5 For a discussion of the social impact of transmigration of large numbers of Javanese into Dayak groups in Kalimantan see Evers and Claus (1990 pp.38–55).
languages or Malay dialects (Benjamin 1985 p.227), use ‘exclusive kinship reckoning’, permit cross-cousin marriage, have a ranked hierarchy of political leaders, exhibit a ‘matrifocal filiative bias’ and practise a Malay type of societal tradition (Benjamin 1986 Table 1). While among these groups, as with Talang Mamak and Kubu, ‘relations with other settlements have been deliberately restricted’, ‘trading relations have usually been [both] concentrated rather than diffused’ and ‘associated with a turning-outwards to the wider world beyond the home area’ (Benjamin 1985 pp.229–230). All these groups (including Talang Mamak and Kubu) live in ‘communities that are relatively closed off from each other’ and employ a ‘system of ranked political offices’ that are ‘distinct from [and] partially independent of the Malay [or Indonesian] political system’ (Endicott 1983 p.220).

Like the east of Sumatra, the south and west of the Malay Peninsula has, since at least the fourteenth century, been a popular destination for Minangkabau immigrants. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the most important of the Minangkabau rantau centres on the Malay Peninsula (known as Negri Sembilan) was under the influence of Melaka and later became a territory of Johor ‘being held in feoff by the Bendahara, whom we might call the hereditary Prime Ministers of those states’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.9). According to Negri Sembilan traditions, the first Minangkabau migrants to arrive there married Sakai women (the traditions assume that the Sakai were already organised matrilineally) and their sons inherited rights to land through their mothers (ibid. p.123). Some Minangkabau, who, through their exploitation of gold and iron resources, had a reputation for possessing refined mineral extraction technologies, including methods of labour organisation, ‘crossed the Straits of Malacca to Johor (probably in the sixteenth century) to collect gold dust and nuggets for the king’ (Hale, in Kato 1982 p.88). As well as extracting minerals, Minangkabau in the Malay Peninsula became ‘middle-men in forest trade’ who ‘inserted themselves between Orang Asli collectors and the coast port principalities on both sides of the Straits’ (Anderson and Vorster 1983 p.450).

In Negri Sembilan (as in the Minangkabau darat and in Inderagiri), patrilineally organised kings ruled over ‘matrilineally organised subjects’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.154) who practised ‘adat perpatih’ ([the traditions and customs associated with Datuk Perpatih nan Sebatang] ibid. p.172). However, in contrast to the Minangkabau highlands, where kings had access to large quantities of rice and gold, which allowed for high levels of social control, rulers of Negri
Sembilan, like leaders of most rantau centres, could not enforce the kemanakan bondsman system. Many rantau leaders ‘found that kinship proved to have little effect in controlling mixed population’ (Kato 1982 p.154), with the result that ‘manifestations of intimate relationships between kemanakan and mama’, so noticeable in Minangkabau, are lacking in Negri Sembilan’ (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.170). For example, in Negri Sembilan (as in Tiga Balai), mother’s brother, father’s brother and father are all known as bapak or pak ([father] ibid. p.127). Taking advantage of ‘a characteristically Southeast Asian acceptance of mutual obligation between high and low or creditor and debtor’ (Reid 1983[A] p.8), Minangkabau rulers established tributary trade relationships over local populations who they married into and ruled over.

After the introduction of Islam to Melaka and other courts on the Malay Peninsula, Orang Asli were classified as non-Muslims and, while some groups (in particular those that maintained a relationship with Negri Sembilan and, later, with Johor) achieved hamba raja (royal bondsman) status, many others were subject to slave raiding. While most of these raided groups tried to avoid contact with Melayu (including Minangkabau) because of the danger of being killed or captured, they were eventually drawn into trading relationships with ‘Malay patron[s]’, who became known as ‘gambala Sakai (herdsman of Sakai)’ (Endicott 1983 p.226), due to lack of essential supplies, such as salt. Captured slaves were taken to ports such as Melaka where, in 1513, it was noted that ‘[t]he greater part of their (aristocrats) riches are slaves, some men even having 600 and 700 slaves’ (Florentine letter, in Reid 1983[B] p.157). From Melaka, many slaves were exported to Thailand (Reid 1983[A] p.131). Minangkabau migrants to the Malay Peninsula were prominent both as patrons in debt-bondage relationships and as slave raiders, their activities being noted by J. J. Menie ‘who in 1642 described the ravages caused by the “Manicabers” among the “inlanders” ’ (in de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.124).

While Orang Asli in the category Semang/Negrito probably had little or no contact with Minangkabau (many being oriented to Thai lords [Carey 1976 p.148]) and those classified as Senoi/Sakai maintained only loose and, therefore, dangerous trading links with them, Jakun/Proto-Malay Orang Asli entered into relationships of debt-bondage with Minangkabau patrons. It is these south-western (Proto-Malay) Orang Asli whom I shall now go on to discuss in the light of what has already been said about Minangkabau, Inderagiri and Kubu. Despite their close proximity to, and long term associations with, Minangkabau and Melayu groups,
'It is surprising that less is known about the Proto-Malays than either the Negritos or the Senoi. It is difficult to say why this is so, especially as many of them are living in accessible areas. It is possible that ethnologists have been inclined to regard them as less interesting than the other two categories of Orang Asli and as being similar to the ordinary Malay population from a cultural and social point of view. This is a great pity, as some of the Proto-Malay tribes appear to have a complex and elaborate type of social organisation' (Carey 1976 p.220).

Most of the land inhabited by south-western Orang Asli is 'swampy country where cultivation is difficult' (ibid. p.218) and this, combined with a lack of protein and salt (Denton 1968 p.11), produced similar living conditions to those found in east Sumatra. The largest Orang Asli group living in the south-western region of the Malay Peninsula are the Orang Hulu, or Jakun, who have a population of 9,100 (Carey 1976 p.218), live in the area north of Johor and are not Muslim. Although originally probably debt-bondsmen of Minangkabau traders, after the introduction of Islam and the fall of Melaka, Orang Hulu became (like Talang Mamak) hamba raja of the kings of Johor, and, due to their protection, were not subject to slave raiding. They were 'more valuable to their Malay overlords as collectors of forest produce than they would have been as slaves' (Endicott 1983 p.234).

It seems similar conditions existed among the Orang Hulu as those experienced by the Talang Mamak during the period of Johorese influence. Logan, who visited Johor's Orang Asli population in 1847, noted that '[e]very outlet from the country of the Binua [Orang Hulu] is occupied and guarded by Malays, who, by preventing the free access of strangers and working on the ignorance and fears of the Binua, keep them imprisoned in the interior. Having effectively locked them up in the jungles, they prey upon them in a most unscrupulous manner. It is probable that if the character of the Binua had been weaker they would long since have been reduced to direct slavery' (in ibid. p.234). Being at the mercy of 'an absolute monopoly over all trade', which was controlled by 'Malay headmen' (ibid.), Orang Hulu were drawn into tributary trade relationships which, due to enforced sedentary isolation and border patrols, were maintained for long periods. Among the Orang Hulu the debt bondage system seems to have been administered in a similar way to the Talang Mamak's relationship with the royal house of Inderagiri, the leaders of both groups being called Batin. As in Tiga Balai, the Orang Hulu Batin enforced the law according to principles laid down in the Johorese court. These both bound men to their Batin and also provided a supply of slaves for the court
through 'masuk (h)ulur'6 (Matheson and Hooker 1983 p.184) in which, for minor offences, fines, payable in Chinese crockery (which was only available through tributary trade), were handed out by Batin (Carey 1976 p.229). Through the manipulation of fines, Batin were able to extract men’s labour for work in their rice fields. More serious offences were dealt with at the court where enslavement was the usual punishment. As well as administering the law, Batin also organised marriages and the payment of bride price which included goods covered by the tribute system – gold ring, bracelet, earrings (Carey 1976 p.233) – that marked a couple’s status as bondsmen. These goods were probably earned by young men in service to the court as muda-muda (bachelors [see Matheson and Hooker 1983 p.184]).

The Orang Hulu’s neighbours, the Orang Kanak, existed under similar conditions of ‘forced labour’ (Endicott 1983 p.235). Coming originally from ‘Battam, just south of Singapore’, Orang Kanak ‘were imported to southern Johor by the Temengong (ruler) of Johor specifically to collect forest produce for him’ (ibid.). Orang Kanak labour was organised by a Melayu ‘who employs them in collecting taban, dammar [both tree resins], rattans, kayugharu [eaglewood], ebony, chandan [a variety of eaglewood] and wax. In return he gives them rice, sago and very rarely a little cloth. Other Malays are directed to trade with them by which means they are supplied with axes, hatchets, earthenware, cooking pots, iron pans, salt, chillies and tobacco’ (Logan, in ibid.).

Little information exists about the inheritance of the title Batin in the Malay Peninsula which, since 1954, has been influenced by Jabatan Hal Elwal Orang Asli (Department of Aboriginal Affairs), or JOA (Gomes 1988 p.100), which currently allows, suggests or enforces patrilineal inheritance of the title Batin which it has introduced into many Orang Asli groups. For example, among the Chewong, Batin who pass their titles on to their sons were introduced (Howell 1984 pp.41–42) either by the JOA or, before Malaysian independence, by a department of the Straits Government which became the ‘paramount authority in the Malay Peninsula’ in 1858 (Turnbull 1962 p.166). Before this time, Chewong had title holders called

footnotes

6 This is the same as hukuman mengolor (Usman 1985 p.75) in Tiga Balai, bangun (Datoek Toeah 1969 p.300) in Minangkabau and bengun (Sandbukt 1988[A] p.147) among Kubu.
'to menteri, to pelima, and to jinang' (Howell ibid.) which suggests that they had not, at least for several centuries, been directly incorporated into a hamba raja category. Rather, by remaining in a state of 'constant flux' (ibid. p.15), they maintained less binding economic relationships (similar to those employed by some Kubu in Sumatra), until they came under the jurisdiction of the Malaysian government.

The second largest group of Orang Asli in south west Malaysia are the Temuan, who are not Muslim (Carey 1976 p.224), have a population of 7,650 (ibid.) and live in two groups, one in Selangor and the other in Negri Sembilan. While both these settlements probably came into being as the result of Minangkabau contact with Orang Laut groups, the most northerly of the two Temuan groups later came under the authority of the king of Selangor, probably as a result of conflict between Minangkabau and Johor, in the seventeenth century (Andaya 1975 p.66, p.109). Those Temuan who entered into tributary trade with the Selangor royal house are organised into clusters of five or six villages, under the control of a Batin assisted by a Pemangku. Subordinate to the Batin and in charge of each village are jinang or Mentri, who are helped by Jukra. While the Temuan still pay a tribute of rice and labour to their Batin, all title holders, probably due to changes in their relationship with the Selangor royal court in the last one hundred years, pass on their titles patrilineally (Carey 1976 pp.242–243). Carey (ibid. p.244) notes that the titles Panglima and Pengawal were also formerly employed to control Temuan of Selangor. Panglima, or Pelima, (military commander), like their Talang Mamak equivalent Dubalang, were probably removed of their titles and authority by the colonial government. Pengawal, or Penggawa, (district officer, commissioner), is a title that was also found among the subjects of the kings of Johor (see Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.877), including Talang Mamak. Pengawal, who used to mediate between the Muslim court and their non-Muslim bondsmen, most likely suffered a similar fate to Panglima.

In contrast to Temuan bondsmen in Selangor, many Temuan in Negri Sembilan remained under the supervision of Minangkabau rulers, despite the territory having become a dependency of the Johorese and the Dutch (Andaya 1975 p.109). As a result of Minangkabau patronage, 'in certain parts of Negri Sembilan, property is not inherited by a man's eldest son [as it is among the Temuan of Selangor] but by his sister's children' and 'the same is true as regards succession to tribal office' (Carey 1976 p.246). This evidence has led Carey (op. cit) to conclude that 'a matrilineal system of descent is thus in operation among the Temuan in
many parts of Negri Sembilan' who 'have adopted it from their Malay [Minangkabau] neighbours', but, for Carey, '[w]hen and how this was done remains a mystery' (op. cit). Following the conclusions that I have drawn regarding the Minangkabau matrilineal system, I suggest that the Temuan matrilineal system is an idiom, used to describe bondage ties and maintain status distinctions between bondsmen and their masters, which, while having a matrilineal form, relates to economic bonds. Here, as in Minangkabau and Talang Mamak, matrilineal inheritance was mainly the concern of 'adat chiefs ... who may be expected to be more meticulous in upholding the old customs' (de Josselin de Jong 1980 p.128). The majority of the bondsmen population were linked to their Batin (adat chief) not through ties of matrilineal kinship but through debt-bondage. Temuan in Negri Sembilan, due to their relatively undisturbed relationship with Minangkabau, have maintained a 'fully matrilineal/matrifocal form of organisation' (Benjamin 1985 p.255). However, after the introduction of Islam, most of the Orang Asli groups under discussion (who, in my view, prior to this time, were also bondsmen of Minangkabau) came under the influence of Johorese and/or Dutch and/or British and/or JOA administration which allowed or prescribed changes in social organisation. As a result, the 'fully matrilineal/matrifocal form of organisation is exhibited in the Peninsula only ... [in] Negri Sembilan ... [but] partial approximations to it are found among all the ... Orang Asli groups that I [Benjamin] have characterised as "Malay" ' (see Benjamin 1985 p.255).

Forms of matrilineal inheritance were probably forced upon Temuan bondsmen by Minangkabau patrons, along with other forms of social organisation – tributary trade, court service, isolation, bride payments – which emphasised distinctions between Muslim rulers and non-Muslim bondsmen. As a result of their relationship with Minangkabau patrons, Temuan (like Talang Mamak) live in 'small villages rather like islands surrounded by a population of Malays' and have 'not in any way been assimilated by their non-Orang Asli neighbours' (Carey 1976 p.240).

The third largest group of Orang Asli in the south west of the Peninsula are the Semelai with a population of 2,300 (Carey 1976 p.218). They live in the region of the Muar river, along the north-eastern border of Negri Sembilan. Of all Orang Asli groups, the Semelai, who claim that they originally lived in Sumatra (ibid. p.251), appear to be the most like the Talang Mamak. '[I]n the past' Semelai had an 'elaborate system of leadership' but, nowadays, they use
only the titles Batin and Ketua (ibid. p.256), other titles such as Menti, Mangku, Dubalang, Panglima, etc, which were once linked to the Muslim court, presumably becoming defunct as a result of colonisation or JOA policies. Semelai Batin can impose a series of heavy fines, up to eighty dollars for minor offences (ibid.), through the non-payment of which, in a similar way to that described for Talang Mamak, men became bonded to their Batin. As there was ‘no machinery for dealing with serious crimes’ (ibid.), men and women who committed such offences were probably, like their Talang Mamak counterparts, sent to court where they were put into slavery. Among the Semelai, who practise matrilocal marriage, ‘there is a significant emphasis which favours the recognition of descent through the maternal line’ (ibid. p.260), which, in my opinion, relates to their former status as bondsmen vis-a-vis Minangkabau patrons as does their use of the term ‘adat perpatih’ (ibid.) to describe their way of life. Circumcision is another interesting similarity between Talang Mamak and Semelai, as in both groups men must be circumcised before they can marry. Carey (ibid. p.258) suggests that Semelai circumcision ‘has no connection with Islam. None of the Semelai are Muslim, and … wild pig is a very popular food among them. Semelai circumcision goes back, in fact, to Pre-Islamic days, and it is regarded as a sign of attaining adult status’. In the Peninsula, as in Sumatra, many different forms and interpretations of Islam arrived over a long period of time before a relatively homogeneous, hierarchical version came to be adopted as an official religion by royal courts in this region. As I suggested in chapter one, with regard to Talang Mamak, circumcision among Semelai is probably the result of either contact with early Islamic traders, or, more likely, an imposition put upon them as part of bachelor service in a royal court. The Temok, who are ‘linguistically very closely related to the Semelai’ and live nearby in ‘a small tribe, numbering about a hundred people’ (ibid. p.264–266), are probably a group who were once Semelai and who (like some Kubu) were able to escape from and remain outside ties of bondage by living an ‘almost completely nomadic way of life’ (ibid.).

The Semai are a well-documented group (Dentan 1968) of whom the majority, known as east Semai, live in ‘deep and hilly jungle’ in long houses (Carey 1976 p.131), and are similar to their neighbours, the Temiar (see Benjamin 1987). The west Semai, who I shall be comparing with the other groups I have already discussed, live in ‘comparatively flat country and individual family houses’ (Carey 1976 p.131). Although this western group, who occupy lands around the Perak, Bernam, Selangor and Kelang rivers, ‘strongly resist being swallowed up in a Malay society, they have nevertheless become in some ways very like the Malays’
Although information concerning the relationship between the Semai and Islamic and pre-Islamic kingdoms in the region is not available, I suggest that many differences between east and west Semai can be explained in terms of their relations to, and involvement with, dominant groups in the area. Chief among these dominant groups are Minangkabau and Johorese who probably incorporated west Semai into _hamba raja_-type bondage relationships while maintaining looser ties with east Semai. As a result of their closer ties to Minangkabau and Johorese, west Semai were not subject to such intense slave raiding as those in the east, who suffered very badly (Endicott 1983 pp.231–233), and western Semai women were not raped by Malays as women in the east were (Dentan 1968 p.63). This last point suggests that west Semai were _hamba raja_, as '[i]njury to, or seduction of these royal slaves carried rather greater penalties than did similar acts to ordinary slaves' (Matheson and Hooker 1983 p.184). These penalties 'were especially high' (ibid. p.172) being seven times greater than those for crimes committed against free men (ibid. p.196) and would have stopped _Melayu_ from raping west Semai _hamba raja_.

A picture of west Semai bondsmen status can be inferred from Dentan's brief descriptions of west Semai law and ceremonies which are administered by Semai leaders called 'headmen' who gained authority through contact with Malays (Dentan 1968 p.67). At the turn of the century, new titles, probably superseding those relating to bondsmen relationships with Minangkabau and Johorese rulers, were introduced into west Semai by the Sultan of Perak (ibid.). Among the west Semai, 'the wedding ceremony which, with some modifications is based on Malay weddings' involves 'a system of payments' made both to the wife's family and the headman (ibid. p.75). While, in the past, bride-price, paid in tribute goods, probably formed an essential part of the bondage system (as it did in Tiga Balai), nowadays 'the payment is essentially symbolic' (ibid.). Headmen among the west Semai have also 'adopted the Malay system of a set schedule of fines for various offences' (ibid. p.57) which, since the decline of the kings who provided the military means to police the system, they have 'no way of enforcing' (ibid.). West Semai headmen are in a similar position to Batin in Tiga Balai who, lacking the military support and economic patronage of the royal court of Inderagiri, can no longer use force to bring an offender to justice. Rather, they must wait for him to volunteer himself up. Burial practises among the west Semai also appear to be similar to those used by Talang Mamak. West Semai also 'bring delicacies to the grave' for several days after a burial.
and return to the site later to 'mark the grave by putting a rectangular frame on top of it and filling the frame with earth' (ibid. p.92).

While Dentan (1968 p.57), like Carey (1976 p.249) in his description of Temuan matriliny, uses the word 'adopted' to describe the appearance of elements of Melayu lifestyle (law, bride-price, etc), I suggest that in Orang Asli 'culture', rather than having been adopted, for no apparent reason, these forms were an important part of a debt-bondsmen labour system which was introduced to west Semai, and other groups in the Melayu basin, by Muslim rulers. This also explains why the west Semai, along with other groups of Orang Asli who have 'adopted' Melayu social forms (I include the Talang Mamak here), have not 'adopted' other elements of Melayu lifestyle, most significantly Islam, and have usually only 'adopted' components that involve payments which were originally made in valuable tributary trade goods. Entering Islam was forbidden to non-Muslim bondsmen who were forced, or induced, into systems of law and bride payment which preserved and deepened their bondage.

Another group in the area under discussion are the Mah Meri, who have a population of 1,200 (Carey 1976 p.133) and who live on the Selangor coast. Carey (ibid.) concludes that the 'Mah Meri are an interesting but somewhat puzzling people, inasmuch as their social organisation and way of life seem to be purely Proto-Malay in character; but their language is undoubtedly Senoi and they themselves recognise their affiliation with other Senoi tribes'. One of the main features of the Mah Meri's 'rather elaborate social organisation' (ibid. p.135) is a 'system of leadership [which] is [also] fairly elaborate' (ibid. p.165), and which features: a Batin ('chief') and Mangku ('assistant chief') in charge of a 'village complex'; a Jinang ('senior headman') and Jukra ('assistant headman') in charge of a 'village cluster', all under the overall authority of a Batin; and a Penghulu ('headman') and Pengawa ('assistant headman') who are under a Jinang (ibid. p.168). This complex of titles probably relates to a series of encounters with powerful states in the region which involved debt-bondage relationships. The Mah Meri themselves say that they originally came from north Johor where they used to be fishermen (ibid. p.167). This suggests that they were brought from the region of the Pahang-Johor border, where they had spoken a Senoi language, to Selangor, probably to catch and dry fish to supply inland populations of bondsmen with protein. A lack of information about the Mah Meri prevents a detailed description of their bondmen status but they did pay a heavy bride-price, which included tributary goods, like cloth and metal (ibid. p.172), and which was
administered by a *jinang*. Bride payments were an important part of the debt-bondage complex as the gifts young men required in order to marry were only available through tributary trade.

Orang Hulu, Orang Kanak, Temuan, Semelai, Temok, west Semai and Mah Meri are groups on the Malay Peninsula that appear to have only relatively recently escaped from debt-bondage relationships which were begun by Minangkabau and, in most places, later taken up by Johor and other kingdoms. I suggest, that these peoples represent, along with groups such as the Talang Mamak on east Sumatra, a field of study. On the borders of this region (in Malaysia) are groups such as Jah Hut, who, although speaking a different language — ‘central Aslian’ — to the above mentioned groups (who use ‘Malay dialects’ [Benjamin 1986 Map 1]), employed a similar system of heavy fines for offences and allowed marriage only after a bride-price had been met. In 1927, Evans noted that for the Jah Hut ‘*p*lates and spears are the media in which tribal fines are paid ... the fine for murder was sixty-six spears, while incest in the worst degree is said to have been punishable by a fine of one hundred and sixty spears. Other minor fines were — for stealing crops, one spear and one plate; unfaithfulness on a woman's part, six spears and two plates ... Payment by a suitor to a father for the hand of a virgin daughter is sixty spears’ (in Howell 1984 p.43). Presumably these payments were, as elsewhere, deliberately outside the means of non-title holding Jah Hut and resulted, due to inevitable non-payment, in an offender, at best, becoming bonded to his leader or, at worst, being sent to the court for enslavement. Since colonial authorities banned slavery and reduced the sovereignty and military capabilities of *Melayu* kings, such fines and payments have been difficult to enforce and now only exist in nominal form (ibid.). This evidence from Jah Hut communities suggests that systems of bondage also had great significance outside the area I am putting forward as containing groups linked by their relationships with Minangkabau-Johorese patrons, and it seems that groups such as Jah Hut could also be examined in the light of relations between bondsmen and their Islamic patrons.

I have been comparing groups, both in Sumatra and on the Malay Peninsula, that have been categorised as Proto-Malay, a label developed as part of a tripartite classification of, so-called, aboriginal people of Malaysia by Schebesta (see Rambo 1988 pp.19–20). This ‘classification scheme reflects the theoretical assumptions of the Vienna school of anthropology, in which ethnic groups are defined by a set of fixed biological, linguistic and cultural criteria’ (ibid.).
The characteristics of those classified as Proto-Malay were listed by Schebesta and include ‘[s]traight, dark coloured hair’. He goes on to say that as ‘[s]peakers of Austronesian languages, the Proto-Malays are culturally the most evolved aboriginal group, engaging in large-scale horticulture with a complex social organisation. They are animists’ (ibid.). Schebesta’s scheme has also been used to characterise non-Muslim groups in Sumatra where, in line with the ‘moribund wave theories’ (Benjamin 1986 p.2) associated with the ethnic categorisation of Orang Asli in Malaysia, groups such as Kubu are described as representing an early wave of ‘weddoid’ immigrants, while Talang Mamak, along with Orang Laut, are seen as the vestiges of a later wave of ‘stone-age’ migrants known as Proto-Malay (Yunus Mela Latoa 1986 p.190). After Comaroff, I see ethnicity not as ‘a function of primordial ties’ (Comaroff 1987 p.302) but as ‘the product of historical processes which structure relations of inequality between discrete social entities. They are, in other words, the social and cultural correlates of a specific mode of articulation between groupings, in which one extends its dominance over another by some form of coercion, violent or otherwise, situates the latter as a bounded unit in a dependent and unique position within an inclusive division of labor; and, by removing from it final control over the means of production and/or reproduction, regulates the terms upon which value may be extracted from it. By virtue of so doing, the dominant grouping constitutes both itself and the subordinate population as classes; whatever the prior sociological character of these aggregations, they are, in the process, actualized as groups an sich’ (ibid. p.308).

While I recognise that those groups labelled Proto-Malay have similar historical and ecological experiences, I reject the designation Proto-Malay, both because of its evolutionary implications and because of the essentialist criteria upon which it is based. Rather than employ a categorisation that is ‘based on the so-called primordial characteristics of the Orang Asli’ (Gomes 1988 p.100), I suggest that what those groups labelled as Proto-Malay have in common are long periods (probably falling between around fourteen hundred and the beginning of the twentieth century) of debt-bondage at the hands of first Minangkabau and then (for most groups) Johorese rulers. These, so-called, Proto-Malay groups can be more effectively categorised and understood in terms of their former hamba raja status in relation to royal courts in the region.
While debt-bondage brought many tributary and ceremonial obligations it also, in stable times, provided some protection from attack and slave raiding. Other groups outside the category Proto-Malay, particularly those labelled Senoi/Sakai, appear to have had much looser ties with Melayu patrons which left them very exposed to the dangers of slave raiding. 'In Negri Sembilan, a state settled by Minangkabau immigrants from Sumatra, who followed a matrilineal system of kinship, the Orang Asli, at least in theory, had an honourable place. They were regarded as waris, the natural inheritors and owners of the land as well as the original settlers. In other states their position was far less favourable, and in this connexion it is significant that they were commonly referred to by the Malays as "Sakai" a term meaning slaves or dependants' (Carey 1976 p.285).

Because the, so-called, Proto-Malays have usually been classified in terms of given characteristics, their social organisation has usually been portrayed as having developed to meet purely internal needs. As a consequence, many of the things that they have in common — bride-price payments, ranked titles, system of fines, etc — have not been explained in a unifying way. Of the characteristics that are seen as defining the Proto-Malays one of the most frequently discussed is the 'efflorescence of ranked political offices in each local community, which seems to be quite otiose when compared to the otherwise slight degree of social differentiation exhibited within communities: the ranking appears to be more symbolic character than concerned with any exercise of real power' (Benjamin 1985 p.256). The complex of titles found in former hamba raja groups relates to relationships they once had with the royal courts both Muslim and pre-Muslim.

Before Islam was officially taken up by Melaka, most coastal ports on the Malay Peninsula were controlled by Thailand and were centres where Orang Laut traded marine and forest produce for metal goods and cloth, etc. In the south and west, Minangkabau migrants opened up inland sites along the main river valleys where they collected minerals and farmed rice. Minangkabau Penghulu were able to establish trading posts and markets using a labour force made up of mostly kemanakan and Orang Laut (who had accompanied them) and a few Orang Asli communities (who were living in the forest around their settlements) who were drawn into trading relations with them in order to acquire essential goods. Through their control of trade, Minangkabau rulers, who gave themselves the title Datuk, incorporated their subjects into a debt-bondsmen system that utilised mineral, forest and agricultural resources.
rise of the royal house of Melaka, most of these Minangkabau Datuk were integrated into Melakan tributary trade, and, to mark their new status as subjects of Melaka, the Datuk were given the title Batin and one of their relatives, probably a sister’s son, was made Mangku and instructed to assist the Batin in administering tributary trade. The bondsmen settlements that produced the most trade goods (minerals, forest produce, etc) were given the status hamba raja and were encouraged, mostly through trade incentives, to take up sedentary dry-rice farming.

Some time after the fall of Melaka, most of the debt-bondsmen populations of the south and west of the Malay Peninsula came under the authority of Johor whose kings defined hamba raja and other Orang Laut and Orang Asli populations as non-Muslim, codified bride-payments, fines and other ceremonial expenses, and introduced Menti and Panglima to the administration of hamba raja populations, giving each settlement, which consisted of five or six dusun (settlements), four title-holding specialists who maintained relations with the court: Batin, in overall control and in charge of marriage arrangements and the law; Mangku, who organised the tributary trade between hamba raja and the court; and Menti, who controlled the distribution of trade goods within bondsmen settlements. After the decline of Johor and the rise of European colonial influence, court-based tributary trade could not be maintained, which brought many hamba raja populations into contact with other Muslim courts who introduced the title Jenang, either by giving it to a Batin who was allowed to enter Islam, or installing a Muslim from the court. As colonial

footnotes

7 According to Sandbukt (1988[B] p.108) the title Batin is associated with several groups on the east of Sumatra, including the ‘Orang Talang’ of Inderagiri, who are ‘known traditionally as Orang Batin’ and ‘are in fact Muslim Malays’. While Batin is an Arabic word, many groups who use this title, such as the Talang Mamak, are not Muslim, chiefly because as hamba raja they were prevented from entering Islam.

8 Mangku is one of a number of titles — Penghulu, Mangkubumi, etc — that are probably pre-Islamic and refer to a Prime Minister or king’s deputy who nursed or looked after the king’s son if the ruler died prematurely. After the introduction of Islam the role of Mangku at court was probably taken over by the Bendahara (see Wilkinson 1955 Part I p.738).

9 Panglima, or Penglima, was a military officer associated with the government of early Muslim provinces and with the authority of the Temenggung (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.878).

10 In Minangkabau, Jenang organised official functions and was the ‘Master of Ceremonies at Minangkabau cockfights’, one Jenang attending to the betting and the other to the conduct of the fight (Wilkinson 1955 Part II p.461). Jenang, some of whom were probably Batin, who had been allowed to enter Islam, were often assisted by Jukra, Jekera or Juru Kerah who organised conscription for building work and defence (ibid. Part I p.454).
authority spread, bondsmen ties with royal courts were ruptured, *hamba raja* lost their status and obligations and began to establish trading relations with British sponsored merchants who were mostly Chinese\(^\text{11}\).

Among groups of former *hamba raja* (Temuan, Semelai, Orang Hulu, Talang Mamak, etc), ‘the overtly-labelled normative, though somewhat unreal, ranking between males in each community’ (Benjamin 1985 p.257) can be explained in terms of the relationships they once had with royal courts whose *Rajas* instituted titles among their debt-bondsmen subjects to extract tribute, labour, etc. Most of these titles (except those endorsed by the JOA) are not articulated into the administration of modern Malaysia (or Indonesia) and no longer have any significance outside of the former *hamba raja* populations who still recognise them. Without tributary trade and the authority of the royal court to endorse their position, *hamba raja* titleholders could no longer maintain the status distinction that existed between themselves and their *anak buah* (followers)\(^\text{12}\) whose voluntary co-operation became the sole foundation of their authority. ‘The sad truth is that the roles of “headman” and “chief” were created more to bolster the importance of ... outsiders ... than in response to needs arising within ... society’ (Benjamin 1987 p.22–23).

In this discussion, an ethnic categorisation (Proto-Malay) has been rejected in favour of an economic classification (former *hamba raja*). I present the Talang Mamak as a representative group of former *hamba raja* whose experiences and opportunities have much in common with other former *hamba raja* populations in the Melayu basin. These former *hamba raja* groups describe their way of life in terms of adat, a word that was probably first introduced by early Muslim traders to describe their Islamic trading regulations. *Adat* later became a system of laws regarding trade, marriage, crime, etc, specifically designed for the administration of non-

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\(^{11}\) European colonials evidently made use of traditional methods of settlement organisation as Chinese merchants were attracted to British territories, such as Penang, through, amongst other things, the promise of being given slave women who they married and whose ‘families attach these men to the soil’ (Anderson 1971 p.298).

\(^{12}\) In relation to bondage relationships the term *anak buah* was probably similar to *kemanakan*, in that while it invoked intimate familial ties it usually referred to economic bonds. As de Josselin de Jong (1980 p.130) remarks the term *anak buah* ‘actually ... means “subordinate”, or person under one’s authority’. 

Muslim populations by their Islamic rulers, whose sovereignty adat came to both legitimate and facilitate. For this reason, adat regulations, in Tiga Balai and among other hamba raja populations, are focused around payments (tribute, fines, ceremonial expenses) which were made either to Batin or to the court.

Most Talang Mamak use the word adat to sum up the differences between themselves and the Melayu communities that surround them. Discussions between Talang Mamak about the contents of adat usually revolve around a set of rules and regulations which are seen as defining their way of life. While, at present, there is disagreement about the relationship between adat and external authority – should it be oriented towards Tengku Arief or the Camat? – the rules and regulations that comprise adat are generally described as being non-negotiable. Although adat includes many routine practices, which, at present, allow for the expression of individual differences, everyone’s life seems to follow the same basic pattern. This pattern is marked by a series of kumpulan, all involving some form of payment.

These kumpulan, of which, for men, there are five, are known as tidak boleh tidak (must be done). They are organised by a man’s family to mark the five significant changes of status in his life. The first of these is the kumpulan that takes place a few days after a baby is born, at which the Bidan (midwife) is paid. Boys remain anak (children) until they are about fourteen when, at a gawai they are besunat (circumcised), after which they become bujang (bachelors) and can begin betandang. Nowadays, sunat (circumcision) is not the focus of a specially organised kumpulan. Rather, it is quietly carried out, without any title-holders present, in a house near to where a wedding is taking place and does not involve significant fixed payments, as all the other tidak boleh tidak do – although gifts of cigarettes, sirih, or food are often given to the man who conducts the operation, who does not have a special title. I suggest that sunat does not involve a kumpulan, title-holders or fixed payments because it used to take place (during the period of the Talang Mamak’s subjugation as hamba raja) at the palace, where it followed court procedure and involved some form of hutang (debt) which marked a bujang’s status, carried obligations and allowed access to girls. During Dutch rule, the ties between

footnotes

13 The following details about tidak boleh tidak were given to me by Bagum.
bondsmen and master were gradually loosened. As a result, bujang service was abolished and sunat, probably initially under the supervision of court officials, began to be carried out in Tiga Balai.

Bujang become laki (husband, man) after their gawai, which is usually the most expensive of all kumpulan. It requires both the payment of gifts from a husband to his wife’s family, including his taking up residence in his in-laws’ house and working in their rice fields and rubber plots for several years, and the provision of large quantities of rice and other foodstuffs to accommodate guests who may be entertained for up to a week. When a person dies, their family must organise another kumpulan, at which the body is buried under the supervision of a shaman, who must be paid. This marks the person’s transition from manusia (human) to sukma (spirit, soul). Sometime after the burial, the family of the deceased have to organise a naik tambak which also requires the specialist skills of title-holders who are paid for their services. A few months after naik tambak, sukma depart for dunia tak bisa dilihat (invisible world) where they join other nenek moyang (ancestors). All these tidak boleh tidak kumpulan (except sunat) involve payments made to title-holders. These payments, along with other financial demands associated with kumpulan, are still the most significant expenditures made by Talang Mamak. Consequently, they are often regarded as the main sources of debt, although long periods of sickness, which are treated by shamans, can also prove expensive, as can salah (offence, mistake) which are punishable by fines, paid in crockery.

The system of payments and fines, known as adat Talang Mamak, was the basis of a form of administration imposed in Tiga Balai by a Muslim court and enforced by title-holders who enjoyed some privileges. Since the abolition of slavery, the decline of the royal house of Inderagiri and Indonesian independence, adat Talang Mamak has lost its significance in relation to external authority – the royal court which legitimised and enforced adat – and, without its sponsor, modern Talang Mamak adat appears both voluntary (in that no one can be made to do anything) and negotiable (in that there are now two higher external authorities – Tengku Arief and the Camat – to appeal to regarding adat). The Talang Mamak I met are exploring their relatively new found status as freed bondsmen, which mainly involves attempting to redefine their relationships with the Melayu communities that surround them. This century has seen the end of a long period of isolation for the Talang Mamak, during which time they had maintained no voluntary relationship with their Melayu neighbours. Since about the
1920s, when bujang service and tributary trade ended, Talang Mamak, who, due to a lack of trade and the dangers of slave raiding, had been reliant on rice cultivation which, because of poor soil and climatic change, has probably always been a precarious existence in Tiga Balai, began to establish independent trading links with Melayu middlemen. These links have developed, with the introduction of rubber, into debt-bondage ties through which Talang Mamak now obtain the goods that they need in order to host the kumpulan prescribed by adat. Drought and subsequent rice crop failures have had devastating consequences in the past, particularly for inland communities reliant on rice cultivation (see Reid 1993 pp.291–292). Anderson (1971, p.297), who visited Sumatra in 1823, noted that, as a result of a scarcity of rice in their highland villages, ‘Battas’ (Batak) ‘brought down their children for sale’. Recent rice failures in Tiga Balai, which began in the late 1980s, have increased Talang Mamak dependency on rubber trade and debt relationships with Melayu rubber dealers. The same group of young men who began rubber cultivation in Tiga Balai also established ties with the Republic of Indonesia and many of their descendants and anak buah (followers) now receive salaries and grants as government sponsored title-holders.

Talang Mamak have probably been through similar transitions in the past, when tributary trade and bondsman status were disrupted during periods between the fall of one state and the rise of another. The past fifty years have marked the end of kerajaan Inderagiri (which, in its decline, was under Dutch, and for a short time, Japanese control) and the beginning of the Republic of Indonesia, in which Talang Mamak are classified as suku terasing (‘unculturated tribal group’ [Echols and Shadily 1990 p.531])14. While trade relations, based on rubber, have been established with the new republic (via Melayu middlemen) by most Talang Mamak men, many of them still reject the authority of the government in favour of maintaining older links with the Sultan and the royal house of Inderagiri. Despite this resistance, it does seem inevitable, both as the result of state policies (enforced sedentariness, logging, transmigration, etc) and the Talang Mamak’s trading links with Melayu rubber dealers, that Talang Mamak will, sooner or later, become incorporated into the wider population and, provided that their Muslim

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14 For a discussion of the meaning of suku terasing in modern Indonesia see Persoon (1990 p.19).
neighbours will accept them, the distinctions associated with *hamba raja* status will cease to distinguish Talang Mamak from the inhabitants of Melayu villages nearby.

Exercising a fairly recent liberty, a few Talang Mamak men and women have begun to enter Islam and marry Muslims and have, thereby, established, perhaps the first ever, family ties between Melayu villages and Tiga Balai. However, many Melayu still regard Talang Mamak as being of low status and at the bottom of 'a symbolic economy of Melayu-ness' (Wee 1988 p.210), a position they share with other Orang Asli and Orang Laut groups in Riau who were all formerly 'hamba raja' or 'hamba orang' (ibid.). As a result Melayu are often 'blatantly obvious about their scorn for ... supposedly low-ranking ... people. For example the former would not even practise commensality with the latter, and would even go to the extent of bringing their own food whenever they visit ... [Orang Asli]. The former also make fun of the way the ... [Orang Asli] talk, walk and dress' (ibid. p.215). These Melayu ideas about Talang Mamak are one of the main barriers preventing those Talang Mamak, who wish to, from becoming assimilated into Melayu society. Most Talang Mamak who do become Muslim, and marry a Muslim, end up living with their spouse in Tiga Balai and not in a Melayu *kampung* (village) – Umar's wife, who lives with her husband between Petonggan and Tiga Balai, being the only exception. While it appears that entering Islam does not equate with entering Melayu society, many Talang Mamak talk about becoming Muslim as if it meant becoming Melayu.

By dismantling the kingdom of Inderagiri, the Indonesian government, and the Dutch before them, have dissolved the category *hamba raja* and brought theoretical freedoms and opportunities for the population of Tiga Balai to change both their *adat* and their status. In spite of this 'liberty', most Talang Mamak still continue to use forms of organisation and regulations that are associated with their former bondsman status. This is not surprising, given both that Muslim-Melayu is the only other lifestyle of which Talang Mamak have long-term practical knowledge, and that, by their own definitions, Talang Mamak reject Islam. In rejecting Islam, Talang Mamak also reject the most significant alternative model upon which they could base change.

The *Kepala Desa* system represents an alternative (to the authority structure of the kingdom of Inderagiri), which has been introduced into Tiga Balai by the government and has been taken up by about a quarter of its population. While this system encourages Talang Mamak to deal
with minor crimes and to organise weddings, funerals, etc according to adat (i.e. without government intervention or assistance) it does not suggest what adat should stipulate, how it should be enforced or who should be in ultimate control of it. Consequently, those Talang Mamak who hold government titles still use adat in the same way as those who reject government developments in Tiga Balai. This latter group, who make up the majority of Tiga Balai’s population and wish to remain loyal Tengku Arief, includes many men (e.g. Laman, Madun, Rapan, etc) who have vested interests in the titles, and the duties and privileges associated with them, employed by kenajaan Inderagiri. Such men exercise a manipulative, but conservative, influence over adat in Tiga Balai and protect their ‘symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu 1977) by actively maintaining links with the former royal house and generally reinforcing inherited conceptions of adat

The main aim of this thesis has been to describe and contextualise the lives of a few Talang Mamak, who, as self-proclaimed members of a non-Muslim community, are presented as being representative of a number of groups (elsewhere described as Proto-Malay but here designated as former hamba raja) in the Melayu basin with whom they share many common experiences as a result of their having been incorporated into, and released from, ties of debt-bondage with royal courts. In literature concerning Proto-Malay, or former hamba raja, differences between these groups and wider Melayu society have been characterised in terms of the former’s: ‘mode of consciousness’ (Benjamin 1985 p.236); kinship arrangements (ibid. p.249); marriage rules (ibid. p.250); certain preferences they hold (ibid. pp.246–247); specific Melayu social forms that never include Islam and have, for some unknown reason, been ‘adopted’ (Carey 1976 p.246); ecological adaptation (Rambo 1988 p.26); ethnic differences (Schebesta in ibid. pp.19–20); a lack of formal religion (Carey 1976 p.202, p.248, p.263); an ‘efflorescence of ranked political offices’ (Benjamin 1985 p.256); and adat, which is the term the Talang Mamak use to talk about their way of life in relation to other lifestyles. These peculiarities comprise an impressive list of how former hamba raja differ from neighbouring communities. However, they do not offer an overarching context within which all these

Footnotes

15 For discussion, in terms of symbolic capital, of the effects of the introduction of government titles into Tiga Balai, see Singleton (1989).
'findings' can be related to one another and in terms of which answers to why questions can be formulated. I suggest that a suitable context can be found in a perspective that views, so-called, Proto-Malay lives against a background of long term debt-bondsmen relationships with royal courts which were affected by the introduction of European colonisation and which, in the last fifty years, have been replaced, to a greater or lesser extent, by relationships with modern independent nation states.
POSTSCRIPT

While work on this thesis is drawing to a close, British television news programmes (Newsnight BBC October 13, 1997) have begun reporting on massive 'forest fires' that are currently raging in east Sumatra and west Kalimantan. While I do not know what effect these fires are having on Talang Mamak lives, it is probable that, in Sumatra, many of them are linked to the construction of the East Sumatran Highway and the vast land clearance projects, in preparation for oil-palm and rubber plantations, that are associated with it (see chapter two). While there is a possibility that Tiga Balai has not been burnt by these fires, it seems likely that many Talang Mamak have, at least, been affected by the prolonged drought that preceded the fires and the 'poisonous smog' produced by the inferno.

BBC 2's Newsnight (ibid.) maintained that these fires, in which one million hectares of forest had been destroyed, were 'deliberately started by rich companies' who had been contracted, by the Indonesian government, to log and clear land. Their involvement was clearly shown in satellite photographs that pin-pointed the exact sources of the fires to areas of land which had been contracted out, by the government, to over two hundred different Indonesian companies. The broadcast ended by suggesting that 'Asia's biggest environmental disaster to date' had been 'fuelled by drought and lit by greed'.
GLOSSARY

abang elder brother
abis see habis
ada there is, are - have, own
adalah am, is, are
adat tradition, custom
adik younger sibling
adil fair, just
aek water
aik see aek
akal reason, intellect
akar root
aku I, me
alam world, realm
alat tools, equipment
amba see hamba
ambilkan get, or fetch, something for someone
ambung rattan back-pack
Amir Emir
amping sweet of toasted, broken rice
anak child
anak tiri step-child
anau a palm
ancak bamboo or wooden stand
andeka authority of non-Muslim leader
angan stagnant water, illusion
anggang hornbill
anggulan pillow
anggur alcoholic drink
angin wind, air
anjing dog
antan rice pestle
antik antique
anting drop earrings
anak go in procession
arang soot, charcoal
asa descent, origin
asam sour, acid
asing foreign, alien
asli original, genuine, indigenous
atap roof
atas on, on top of, upper
aturan arrangement, regulation
ayam chicken
B’lian see belian
baban load, burden
babangso see bangsa
babi pig
badan body
bagai part, share, section
bagak brave, confident
bagi divide, share, for
Baginda the respected
bahasa language
bahaya dangerous
baik see baik
good, fine, kind
baju shirt, blouse
baka father’s relatives
baker burn, set fire to
bako see baka
bakul basket
balai wall-less wooden hut or model used in shaman’s performances
balam turtledove
balik return, go home
balui draw, tie
bandan ghost
Bangdes government development funds
bangkah decorate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bangsa</th>
<th>Race, caste, dynasty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangsal</td>
<td>Shed, hut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangun</td>
<td>Wake up, rise, build</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangunan</td>
<td>Building, construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantal</td>
<td>Pillow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banyak</td>
<td>Many, a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bapak</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barang</td>
<td>Goods, baggage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barat</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baru</td>
<td>New, unused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basi</td>
<td>Stale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batang</td>
<td>Stick, river, trunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batin</td>
<td>Leader's title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batin</td>
<td>Internal, spiritual, heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batina</td>
<td>Girl, female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batu</td>
<td>Stone, rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batunangan</td>
<td>Be engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bawah</td>
<td>Under, beneath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayam</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayar</td>
<td>Pay, pay for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebas</td>
<td>Free, released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebini</td>
<td>Have a wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebuat</td>
<td>Do, make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebungan</td>
<td>Roof beam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedukun</td>
<td>Shaman’s dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedunsanak</td>
<td>To be maternal cousins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behuja</td>
<td>Warm up a fighting cock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beikat</td>
<td>Tied, joined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijalar</td>
<td>In a row, line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekas</td>
<td>Trace, remains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bela</td>
<td>Care for, assist, protect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belabur</td>
<td>Rice store, barn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belacu</td>
<td>White cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belah</td>
<td>Split in two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belaki</td>
<td>Have a husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belanda</td>
<td>Holland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belantik</td>
<td>Spring snare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belian</td>
<td>Shaman’s dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliong</td>
<td>See beliung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliung</td>
<td>Small axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belukar</td>
<td>Thicket, scrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belum</td>
<td>Not yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benang</td>
<td>Cotton thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benar</td>
<td>True, correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benda</td>
<td>Thing, object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendahara</td>
<td>Chief minister in Malay courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendang</td>
<td>Form of rice cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengun</td>
<td>Relying upon flood water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benih</td>
<td>Seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bentara</td>
<td>See bintara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beradik</td>
<td>Siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berak</td>
<td>See arak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berarti</td>
<td>Meaningful, significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beras</td>
<td>Husked rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berat</td>
<td>Heavy, serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berdosa</td>
<td>Sinful, having sins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berekor</td>
<td>Having a tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beri</td>
<td>Give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlayar</td>
<td>Sail, go by boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ber sales</td>
<td>Mistaken, wrong, guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bersempadan</td>
<td>Share or have a border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beresuai</td>
<td>Appropriate, suitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertali</td>
<td>Tied, having a string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertambah</td>
<td>Add, increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beri</td>
<td>Roasted rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertina</td>
<td>See batina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benang</td>
<td>Bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benik</td>
<td>Short-tailed macaque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besalah</td>
<td>Make a mistake, commit an offence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besar</td>
<td>Big, large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besi</td>
<td>Iron, metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besunat</td>
<td>Circumcised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betambat</td>
<td>Tied up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betandang</td>
<td>Spend the night with a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>betian</td>
<td>Member of the opposite sex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
betaroh  bet, wager
betimbang  see timbang
betina  see batina
betua  see tua
betuah  see tuah
betunut  see tutut
biasa  usual, ordinary, common
bibil  seed, engagement gift
bicara  speech, recitation
bidadari  fairy
Bidan  midwife
bilang  speak, say, count
bilas  bathing in lime water
binggung  confused, dizzy
bintang  star
bintara  shaman's assistant
binturun  bear-cat
bisa  can, be able
bisu  dumb, silent
bitamin  vitamin
Bodi  Minangkabau suku
bodoh  stupid
boleh  may, allowed
bongkal  measure for weighing gold
buah  fruit
buaya  crocodile
bubungan  jail, prison
bubur  rice porridge
budak  slave
budaya  culture
bujang  bachelor
buka  open, expose
bukan  no, not
bukit  hill
buku  book
bulan  month, moon
bulang  entwine, tie up
buluh  bamboo
bumi  earth, world
bunga  flower
bungsu  youngest child
bunian  fairy, elf
bunuh  kill, murder
bunuhan  murder
bunyi  sound, noise
Bupati  government administrator
buru  hunt, pursue
buruk  bad, rotten
burung  bird
busa  foam, froth
buta  blind
calimpung  xylophone
calon  candidate, appointment
Camat  local government administrator
cancang  stab, cut
candasan  anvil
Caniago  Minangkabau suku
cari  search, look for
cawat  bark loincloth
cempedak  see cubadak
cepat  quick, fast
cerai  divorce
cerita  story, tale
cigak  long-tailed macaque
cincin  ring
cindai  dyed cloth
cium  sniff, smell, cloth
cubadak  forest jackfruit
cucu  grandchild
curi  steal
dadu  dice
daerah  district, region
daging  meat, flesh
dak  no, not
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dalam</td>
<td>inside, interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>damar</td>
<td>tree resin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dan</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>danau</td>
<td>lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dapat</td>
<td>find, obtain, be able</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dapur</td>
<td>hearth, kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>darah</td>
<td>blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>darat</td>
<td>interior, inland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>darek</td>
<td>see darat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dari</td>
<td>from, of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daripada</td>
<td>than, rather than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dasar</td>
<td>foundation, basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>datang</td>
<td>come, arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Datuk</td>
<td>leader's title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>datuk-datuk</td>
<td>ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daulat</td>
<td>sovereignty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daun</td>
<td>leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dayung</td>
<td>oar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dekat</td>
<td>near, close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demam</td>
<td>fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dendang</td>
<td>canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dengan</td>
<td>with, as well as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depak</td>
<td>fathom, 6 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>derajat</td>
<td>degree, rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deras</td>
<td>strong river current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desa</td>
<td>rural, village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>di</td>
<td>in, of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diah</td>
<td>female shaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diam</td>
<td>live, reside, be silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diatas</td>
<td>see atas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dibakar</td>
<td>see bakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dibayar</td>
<td>see bayar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diberikan</td>
<td>see beri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dibibit</td>
<td>see bibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dibuang</td>
<td>throw away, get rid of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dibunuh</td>
<td>see bunuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dicancang</td>
<td>see cancang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dicerai</td>
<td>see cerai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>digedangkan</td>
<td>install, enlarge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dilarang</td>
<td>forbidden, prohibited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dilihat</td>
<td>seen, visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dimakan</td>
<td>see makan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dinamai</td>
<td>is called/ known as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dipakai</td>
<td>see pakai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dipancangkan</td>
<td>stick in, embed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dirapohan</td>
<td>snapped, broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direndam</td>
<td>soak, steep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diri</td>
<td>stand (up), self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disanggah</td>
<td>challenge, oppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disembah</td>
<td>see sembah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disipat</td>
<td>measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disorongkan</td>
<td>offer, invite someone to take something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disunat</td>
<td>see sunat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ditawarkan</td>
<td>cast a spell over something/someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ditampar</td>
<td>slap, hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dua</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubalang</td>
<td>military commander of Malay court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duit</td>
<td>money, cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dukun</td>
<td>male shaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dukung</td>
<td>carry on the hip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duli</td>
<td>dust (on the feet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dulu</td>
<td>first, before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dunia</td>
<td>world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dunsanak</td>
<td>maternal cousin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>durian</td>
<td>durian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dusun</td>
<td>settlement, small village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ejaan</td>
<td>modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elang</td>
<td>owl, eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emak</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emas</td>
<td>gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empat</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enam</td>
<td>six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enau</td>
<td>see anau</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
en_ggak  no, not  gumbar  peeled palm stalk
  gandang  big, large  gunjing  gossip
  gading  ivory, elephant tusk  guntelak  floor beam
  gadis  girl, maiden  gunung  mountain
  gadung  edible tuber  habis  finish, use up
  gagah  strong, handsome  Hajj  pilgrimage to Mecca
  gajah  elephant  hak  have, have the right
  gali  dig  halaman  yard, clearing
  gambir  astringent ingredient of srih  haluan  front part (of a house)
  gampang  easy, illegitimate  hamba  bondsman
  ganderusa  medicinal plant  hangat  hot
  ganggu  disturb, annoy  hangus  burnt, scorched
  ganjil  odd, strange  hantam  strike hard, collide
  gantang  rice measure  hantu  ghost
  ganti  replace, renew  hari  day
  garam  salt  harimau  tiger
  gasing  spinning top  harus  must, obligatory
  gawai  wedding  hasil  crop, produce
  gawal  mistake, error  hati  heart, liver
  gayung  quarterstaff, pole  hilang  lost, disappeared
  gedebu  a tree  hilir  downstream
  gedang  see gadang  hitam  black
  gelang  bracelet, bangle  honor  government salary
  gelanggang  cockfighting arena  hubungan  relationship
  gelas  glass, drinking vessel  hujan  rain
  gendang  drum  hukum  law
  gerakan  movement, organisation  hukuman  judgement, punishment
  Gerbangsari  government development project  hulu  upstream
  getah  sap, latex  huma  dry-rice field
  ginggung  bamboo Jew's harp  hutan  forest
  Golkar  political party  hutang  debt
  Gubernur  governor  iblis  evil spirit
  Gudang Garam  brand of cigarette  ibu  mother
  gula  sugar  ibul  a palm
  gulai  curry  IDT  government loan scheme
  gulaian  herbs and vegetables  ikan  fish
  gulang-gulang  model house used by shaman
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Malay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ikut</td>
<td>follow, join with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilalang</td>
<td>elephant grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilmu</td>
<td>esoteric knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imbau</td>
<td>call out to someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inai</td>
<td>henna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inas</td>
<td>earthenware jar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indah</td>
<td>beautiful, valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ingat</td>
<td>remember, recall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ingatan</td>
<td>memories, recollections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpres</td>
<td>presidential initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ipar</td>
<td>brothers-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iring</td>
<td>proceed in single file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isarat</td>
<td>sign, signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>istana</td>
<td>palace, royal court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itu</td>
<td>that, those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jabatan</td>
<td>function, duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jadi</td>
<td>become, so, therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jaga</td>
<td>wake up, guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jagung</td>
<td>maize</td>
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<tr>
<td>jahat</td>
<td>evil, wicked</td>
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<tr>
<td>jamban</td>
<td>pontoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>janji</td>
<td>promise, agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>jantan</td>
<td>male, masculine</td>
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<tr>
<td>jari</td>
<td>finger, toe</td>
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<tr>
<td>jawab</td>
<td>reply, answer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jekera</td>
<td>see Jukra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jemput</td>
<td>collect, pick up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenang</td>
<td>official at Malay court</td>
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<tr>
<td>jengi</td>
<td>ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jepang</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jin</td>
<td>ghost, spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judi</td>
<td>gambling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juga</td>
<td>also, too</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jukra</td>
<td>local official of Malay court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>junjing</td>
<td>support on the head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>junjong</td>
<td>see junjing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jurai</td>
<td>bunch, arrangement</td>
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<tr>
<td>kabinasaan</td>
<td>habit, routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabung</td>
<td>measure of cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabupaten</td>
<td>district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kacang</td>
<td>bean, nut</td>
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<tr>
<td>kadang</td>
<td>sometimes, occasionally</td>
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<tr>
<td>kain</td>
<td>cloth</td>
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<tr>
<td>kacak</td>
<td>elder sisters, elder siblings</td>
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<tr>
<td>kaki</td>
<td>foot</td>
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<tr>
<td>kakuasaan</td>
<td>authority, control</td>
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<tr>
<td>kalau</td>
<td>if, when</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalpolsek</td>
<td>police post</td>
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<tr>
<td>kamaju</td>
<td>progress, development</td>
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<tr>
<td>kamanakan</td>
<td>see kemanakan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kambing</td>
<td>goat</td>
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<tr>
<td>kambut</td>
<td>basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kami</td>
<td>us, we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kampit</td>
<td>small sack</td>
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<tr>
<td>kampung</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamu</td>
<td>you, your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamus</td>
<td>dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanan</td>
<td>right (hand side)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kancil</td>
<td>mouse-deer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kantihan</td>
<td>roof support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kantor</td>
<td>office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kapak</td>
<td>axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kapas</td>
<td>cotton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kapor</td>
<td>slaked lime</td>
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<td>kapok</td>
<td>kapok</td>
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<td>kapun</td>
<td>coupon</td>
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<td>kapur</td>
<td>see kapor</td>
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<tr>
<td>karang</td>
<td>bunch, arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karsena</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karet</td>
<td>latex, rubber</td>
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<tr>
<td>karong</td>
<td>pouch, bag</td>
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<tr>
<td>kartu</td>
<td>card, document</td>
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<tr>
<td>kasih</td>
<td>love, affection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katabung</td>
<td>drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katumman</td>
<td>inheritor, descendant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
kau you, your
kaul vow, promise
kaum family, clan
kawan friend, companion
kawin marriage, sex
kaya wealthy, rice
kayu wood, tree
ke to, towards
kebenaran truth, regulation
kebesaran insignia
Kebudayaan see budaya
kebun garden, plot
Kecamatan sub-district
kecik small, tiny
kecil see kecik
kedai stall, small shop
kedarat to the interior
kedondong a fruit tree
kedua second
keempat fourth
kelambu mosquito net
kelapa coconut
kelapa sawit oil-palm
kelip old monetary unit
kelopak sheath, bract
keluarga family
Kelurahan smallest unit of Indonesian government administration
kemanakan nephew
Kemantan male shaman
kematian death
kembali come back, return
kemeraihan drought, dry season
keminyan benzoin gum
kemuning a tree
kepada at, to
kepala head
Kepala Desa government title
kemayang a tree
kepercayaan belief, faith
kepicung conical leaf kapor container
keponakan nephew, niece
kepunyan property of
kerajaan kingdom
keramat sacred
kerambil coconut
kerangga large, red biting ant
keras hard, obstinate
kerbau water buffalo
deris dagger
terja work, occupation
keruh muddy, disturbed
kesialan misfortune, bad luck
kesinian art, artistry
Kesultanan Sultanate
ketaguran come into contact with
old monetary unit
ketip Ketua elder, leader
Keturunan see katurunan
Kijang Indonesian-built truck
kijang antelope
kiri left (hand side)
kisaian rice sifter
kita us, we
Koordinator local government administrator
kopi coffee
kosong empty, unused
kota town
Koto Minangkabau suku
koto see kota
kretek cigarette containing clove
Kshatriyas a Hindu caste
KTP identification papers
kuah gravy, sauce
Kuala river Inderagiri
Kuantan
Kubur grave
kudis | scabies | larek | see laras
kulim | a tree | lasung | rice mortar
kulit | skin, outer layer | lauk | cooked meat or fish
Kumantan | see Kemantan | laut | sea, expanse of water
kumpulan | gathering, assembly | lawan | opponent, opposition
kundangan | bridegroom’s family | lawang | door, gate
kuning | yellow | lawas | broad, wide
kunjung | visiting, temporary | layu | faded, wilted
kunyit | turmeric | lebih | more, addition
kuontan | first (maternal) cousins | lemah | weak, limp
kurang | less, decrease | lembaga | institute, institution
kuring | bride’s family | lembah | valley
kusut | wrinkled, creased | lembing | spear
kutu | head-lice | lilin | wax, candle

labu | vegetable gourd | limau | lime fruit
lada | pepper | LKMD | local government employee
ladang | dry rice field | lokal | local
lagi | again, more | lubok | see lubuk
laki | man, husband | lubuk | deep pool in a river
Laksamana | admiral | lukah | district
lalu | pass by | lumpuh | fish trap
lama | old, former, old-fashioned | lumpit | paralysed, disabled
lamang | sweet of steamed rice | lumut | moss, lichen, algae
lancang | model boat used by shaman | lupa | forget
landak | porcupine | mabuk | drunk
langit | sky | madu | honey
langkah | step, approach | magik | magic
langsat | a fruit | mai | mother
langsung | immediately, straightaway | makan | eat, consume
lantai | floor | malaikat | angel
lapang | wide, spacious | malam | evening, night
lapar | hungry | malas | lazy, reluctant
lapuk | rotten, decayed | malu | shy, reluctant
lapun | net-snare | mamak | mother’s brother, head of a family
larang | forbid, prohibit | mangkok | bowl
larangan | prohibition | mambang | evil spirit
laras | Minangkabau political group | mangkok | bowl
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malay Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mangku</td>
<td>leader's title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manik-manik</td>
<td>beads, necklace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manti</td>
<td>leader's title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manusia</td>
<td>human being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maron</td>
<td>second firing of a clearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masa</td>
<td>time, period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masak</td>
<td>cook, ripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masalah</td>
<td>problem, complication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masi</td>
<td>still, nevertheless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masuk</td>
<td>enter, go in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masyarakat</td>
<td>society, community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mata</td>
<td>eye, edge, point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mati</td>
<td>dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mau</td>
<td>want, desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayang</td>
<td>palm blossom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayat</td>
<td>corpse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melakat</td>
<td>stick or put onto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melawan</td>
<td>oppose, challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melayu</td>
<td>Muslim population of Riau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melihat</td>
<td>see, observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melindungi</td>
<td>protect someone or something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meloncat</td>
<td>jump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memaron</td>
<td>burn a clearing for the second time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memarun</td>
<td>see memaron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membaiki</td>
<td>repair, improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membangkah</td>
<td>decorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membangun</td>
<td>build, develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membayar</td>
<td>see bayar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membelah</td>
<td>see bela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memberi</td>
<td>see beri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membulang</td>
<td>see bulang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membunuh</td>
<td>see bunuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memburu</td>
<td>see buru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menenih</td>
<td>plant seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memuja</td>
<td>worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memulang</td>
<td>repeat, do again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menabus</td>
<td>see nabas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menanam</td>
<td>see tanam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menang</td>
<td>win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menarikan</td>
<td>dance with someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mencancang</td>
<td>see cancang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mencapai</td>
<td>touch, receive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mendapat</td>
<td>see dapat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menengah</td>
<td>see tengah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengabung</td>
<td>join together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menganggu</td>
<td>see ganggu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengapa</td>
<td>why, for what reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengarang</td>
<td>form into a bunch, arrange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengatahui</td>
<td>know, understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengatur</td>
<td>arrange, regulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengendalikan</td>
<td>restrain, manage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menggantikan</td>
<td>replace something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menggulang</td>
<td>see memulang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menghafal</td>
<td>commit to memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengirik</td>
<td>thresh rice with the feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menglor</td>
<td>slavery as a form of punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menguasai</td>
<td>dominate, be in command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengukur</td>
<td>measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mengumbak</td>
<td>slice, cut finely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menikam</td>
<td>stab, pierce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meninjau</td>
<td>keep watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menjaga</td>
<td>see jaga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menjajar</td>
<td>arrange in a row or straight line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menjawat</td>
<td>hold or receive something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menjemput</td>
<td>see jemput</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menjunjing</td>
<td>worship a king by placing his feet on your head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentelak</td>
<td>floor beam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menteri</td>
<td>minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menti</td>
<td>see Manti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentimun</td>
<td>cucumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menuai</td>
<td>harvest, reap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menuba</td>
<td>fish using poison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>menugal</td>
<td>dibble, make holes for seed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
menumbuk: pound in a mortar  
nabas: clear undergrowth or trees  
see: snake, serpent, dragon  

menurun: see turun  
naga: go up, get in/on board  
nagari: weed, hoe  

menyamah: make and use a small shrine  
nakik: tap takat  
nakat: six  

menyembah: make and use a small shrine  
nakik: tap takat  
nam: name  

menyenggar: make and use a small shrine  
naks: tap takat  
nama: name  

menyembah: see sembah  
nakik: six  
nama: name  

medeli: set a snare  
naks: six  
nama: name  

menyumbang: incest, forbidden marriage  
nam: name  
nama: name  

merah: red  
nam: name  

meranda: divorced woman  
nampi: winnow rice  
nan: which, of the, the one  

merdeka: see merdeka  
nanas: pineapple  
nangka: jackfruit  

merdeka: free, independent  
nangui: bearded pig  

merpoyan: a tree  
naroh: chevrotain  

mesjid: mosque  
naroh: dance  

miang: itchy hairs from bamboo  
nari: cooked rice  
nasi: fate, destiny, luck  

mintara: see bintara  
nasib: no, not  

minum: drink  
negri: settlement, district  
nenek: ancestors  

minyak: oil  
nenek moyang: see nggak  

miskin: poor, destitute  
nenek moyang: see nggak  

moesim: see musim  
nenek moyang: see nggak  

molek: pretty, attractive  
nenek moyang: see nggak  

Monti: see Manti  
nenek moyang: see nggak  

moyang: see nenek moyang  
nenek moyang: see nggak  

muda: youth, young  
nirai: value, worth  

mudik: upstream  
nirai: see nyirai  
nobat: see obat  

mudo: go back, retreat  
nobat: see obat  
nobatkan: see obat  

muka: face, front part  
mugal: see menugal  
nobat: see obat  

mulia: pretty, beautiful  
mumbuk: see menumbuk  
nobat: see obat  

mulia: noble, sublime  
nyabung: fight, compete  
nobat: see obat  
mundur: see muda  
nyata: real, tangible  
nobat: see obat  

Munti: see Manti  
nyauk: scoop, collect water  
nobat: see obat  

musang: civet  
nyawa: soul, spirit, life breath  
nobat: see obat  
musim: season, monsoon  
nyi: winnowing tray  
musuh: enemy, rival  

nabang: cut down trees  

nabas: clear undergrowth or trees  
naga: snake, serpent, dragon  
nagari: see negri  
nakik: tap takat  
nakat: six  
nama: name  
nampi: winnow rice  
nan: which, of the, the one  
nanas: pineapple  
nangka: jackfruit  
nangui: bearded pig  
naroh: chevrotain  
nari: cooked rice  
nasi: fate, destiny, luck  
nasib: no, not  
negri: settlement, district  
nenek: ancestors  
nenek moyang: see nggak  
naroh: dance  
nari: cooked rice  
nasi: fate, destiny, luck  
nasib: no, not  
negri: settlement, district  
nenek: ancestors  
nenek moyang: see nggak  
nmok: see menugal  
nmuc: see menumbuk  
nyabung: fight, compete  
nyata: real, tangible  
nyauk: scoop, collect water  
nyawa: soul, spirit, life breath  
nyi: winnowing tray  

mendemahkan: divorced woman  
nam: name  
nama: name  
nakik: tap takat  
nama: name  
nobat: see obat  
nobati: give medicine to someone
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Word</th>
<th>Indonesian Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>omongan</td>
<td>talk, gossip, conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onak</td>
<td>thorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orang</td>
<td>person, people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otak</td>
<td>brain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasar</td>
<td>market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasar</td>
<td>market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasik</td>
<td>trance-like state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pasir</td>
<td>sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pastirihan</td>
<td>offering and sharing betel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastur</td>
<td>pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patah</td>
<td>broken, snapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patih</td>
<td>chief minister in pre-Islamic courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patut</td>
<td>proper, fitting, correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paut</td>
<td>massaging a fighting cock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>payung</td>
<td>umbrella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBB</td>
<td>land-tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pecah</td>
<td>split, crack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedalaman</td>
<td>interior, hinterland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedang</td>
<td>sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pegang</td>
<td>hold, grasp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pegawai</td>
<td>local government officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pejanjian</td>
<td>agreement, promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pekan</td>
<td>market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pekaulan</td>
<td>vow, promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pelima</td>
<td>see Penglima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pelita</td>
<td>lamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pelobang</td>
<td>eater, consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pemakan</td>
<td>uncle, head of family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pemaman</td>
<td>bad tempered, angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pemarah</td>
<td>government development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pembangunan</td>
<td>government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pemerintah</td>
<td>government elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pemilihan</td>
<td>training, instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penataran</td>
<td>form of self-defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pencak silat</td>
<td>short, small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pendek</td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pendidikan</td>
<td>inhabitants, population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penduduk</td>
<td>installation of a title-holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pengangkatan</td>
<td>bride or groom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pengantin</td>
<td>alcoholic drink, love philtre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pengasih</td>
<td>see Penggawas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengawa</td>
<td>see Penggawas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengawal</td>
<td>see Penggawas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian Word</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengawas</td>
<td>supervisor of trade for Malay court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penggawa</td>
<td>supervisor of trade for Malay court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penggawas</td>
<td>supervisor of trade for Malay court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pengharu</td>
<td>troublemaker, bad influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penghukum</td>
<td>judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penghulu</td>
<td>headman, village elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penglima</td>
<td>military commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pengobat</td>
<td>healer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penguburan</td>
<td>burial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pensiun</td>
<td>pension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penuh</td>
<td>full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penunggu</td>
<td>guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penyabung</td>
<td>cock-fighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penyakit</td>
<td>sickness, disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pepatah</td>
<td>proverb, wise saying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pepecahan</td>
<td>see pech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perahu</td>
<td>boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perak</td>
<td>silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perang</td>
<td>war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perangkap</td>
<td>trap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perasaan</td>
<td>feelings, emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peraturan</td>
<td>regulations, rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perdana</td>
<td>principal, premium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perempuan</td>
<td>woman, female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pergi</td>
<td>go, leave, depart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perigi</td>
<td>well, pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perjanjian</td>
<td>see janji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perkembangan</td>
<td>development, expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pertama</td>
<td>first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petahilan</td>
<td>system of fines paid in crockery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petai</td>
<td>a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petak</td>
<td>compartment, partition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petang</td>
<td>evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pianggang</td>
<td>a beetle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piliang</td>
<td>Minangkabau suku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pilihan</td>
<td>choice, selection, election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pinang</td>
<td>areca nut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pindah</td>
<td>move, move house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pinggan</td>
<td>plates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pintu</td>
<td>door, window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pisang</td>
<td>banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pisau</td>
<td>knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>platina</td>
<td>platinum</td>
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<tr>
<td>pohon</td>
<td>a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pondok</td>
<td>see panduk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potong</td>
<td>piece, slice, cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priuk</td>
<td>cooking pot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propinsi</td>
<td>province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puan</td>
<td>see perempuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puar</td>
<td>wild cardamom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puasa</td>
<td>fasting month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pucok</td>
<td>see pucuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pucuk</td>
<td>leaf, bud, curtain of leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pujie</td>
<td>praise, worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pukul</td>
<td>strike, hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pulai</td>
<td>a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pulang</td>
<td>return, go home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pulau</td>
<td>island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pulih</td>
<td>a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>putut</td>
<td>sticky rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panduk</td>
<td>hut built on a rice field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puntianak</td>
<td>a ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punya</td>
<td>own, possess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puputan</td>
<td>whistle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pusaka</td>
<td>heirloom, inheritance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pusat</td>
<td>centre, navel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pusing</td>
<td>dizzy, headache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puskesmas</td>
<td>clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>putih</td>
<td>white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patri</td>
<td>princess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>putus</td>
<td>snapped, severed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puyuh</td>
<td>a quail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raib</td>
<td>disappear, vanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rafin</td>
<td>diligent, industrious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Malay</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rakit</td>
<td>raft</td>
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<tr>
<td>rakyat</td>
<td>populace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramadan</td>
<td>Muslim fasting month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ramai</td>
<td>crowded, noisy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rambut</td>
<td>hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ranjau</td>
<td>sharpened stake used as a trap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rantau</td>
<td>outlying district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rawang</td>
<td>swamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rembah</td>
<td>slip out, flow freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rempah</td>
<td>spices for trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>resam</td>
<td>a fern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rimba</td>
<td>forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ringgit</td>
<td>monetary unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roh</td>
<td>spirit, ghost</td>
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<tr>
<td>rokok</td>
<td>cigarette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ratan</td>
<td>rattan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruang</td>
<td>space, room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rukun Tetangga</td>
<td>government title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rumah</td>
<td>house, home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rumbia</td>
<td>sago palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rampat</td>
<td>weeds, grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rupiah</td>
<td>Indonesian currency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rusa</td>
<td>deer</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sentana | palace
sepaha | one plate and one bowl
seperiti | like, as
sepit | pincers, tongs
sepuluh | ten
serai | lemongrass
seribu | one thousand
sesak | tight, restricted
sesap | undergrowth, scrub
sesat | lost, astray
sesisir | sumpitan
sesuai | appropriate, suitable
setajam | medicinal plant
setan | satan, evil spirit
setawar | medicinal plant
setia | loyal, faithful
setumpak | alone, without companions
si | term of reference for unmarried boys and girls
sialang | a ghost
siang | mid-day, early afternoon
sianu | so and so (as in an un-named person)
siapa | who, whose
siding | snare with sliding noose
sijundai | love charm
silat | dance derived from martial art
timpai | a monkey
tingkah | stop by, visit
siong | canine tooth, fang
sirih | betel
sisik | fish scale
sisir | bunch of bananas, comb
sokma | see sukma
songkok | black velvet hat
strongking | pressurised paraffin lamp
subang | ear-stud
suci | pure, purified
sudah | already, past
suka | happiness, be fond of, like
sukma | soul, spirit
suku | clan, territorial group
sumbang | prohibited marriage, relationship
Sumbangan | government development project
sumpah | oath, curse
sumpit | tight, narrow, pouch
sumpitan | blow-pipe
sunat | circumcision
sungai | river, stream
sunting | head ornament
suni | lonely, deserted
surat | letter, document
susah | troubled, difficult

ta'ada | there is not/are not
taban | tree resin
tabir | screen, partition
tabu | see tebu
tabus | redeem, pay for
tabusi | see tabus
tagak | rise, stand up
ntagakkan | make something rise up
tahan | endure, stand

ta'ahil | measure for weighing gold, or five plates and one bowl
tahun | year, measure of time
tajak | small hoe
taji | cock spur
takat | limit, end
	akhtah | throne
takut | afraid

talakin | burial prayer
talam | tray
talang | small, inland settlement
tali | string, rope
taluk | bay, harbour
| tambak       | bank of earth                          | Temenggong | see Temenggong |
| tambang      | mine                                  | Temenggung | chief minister at Malay court |
| tambo        | Minangkabau oral tradition            | Temenggung | see Temenggung |
| tampang      | cake of tree-resin                    | tempat     | place, location |
| tampok       | see tampuk                            | tempurung  | coconut shell bowl |
| tampui       | a fruit, or an alcoholic drink made from that fruit | tenaga     | energy, strength |
| tampuk       | corolla, point where fruit joins stalk | tenang     | calm, composed |
| tanah        | earth, soil, land                     | tengah     | middle, mid-section |
| tanak        | cook (rice)                           | tengkelang | sirih basket |
| tanam        | plant, cultivate                      | Tengku     | royal title |
| tanda        | sign, signal                          | tepung     | flour, powder |
| tandan       | fruit-producing stalk                 | terap      | a tree |
| tanduk       | horn                                  | terasing   | isolated, secluded |
| tangga       | steps, stairs, ladder                 | terbelakang| backward, underdeveloped |
| tanggung-jawab | responsibilities                   | terbit     | engaged to be married |
| tangkal      | charm, talisman                       | terkejut   | shocked, surprised |
| tarang       | clear, bright                         | tertinggal | left behind, backward |
| taras        | heartwood, xylem                      | terung     | aubergine |
| tatipu       | cheated, tricked                     | tetangga   | neighbour(s) |
| tauke        | see toke                              | tetap      | fixed, permanent |
| tawak-tawak  | gong                                 | tiap       | pillar in house |
| tawar        | spell, charm                          | tidak      | each, every one |
| tawarkan     | see ditawarkan                       | tidakkan   | no, not |
| tebing       | see tobing                            | tidur      | won’t will not |
| tebu         | sugarcane                            | tiga       | sleep |
| tebuang      | thrown out/away                       | tigo       | three |
| tebus        | see tabus                            | tikalak    | see tiga |
| tegur        | meeting a ghost                      | tikar      | fish-trap |
| teh          | tea                                  | timbang    | mat |
| tekat        | see takat                            | timun      | weigh, balance |
| teluk        | see taluk                            | tina       | see mentimun |
| teman        | friend                               | tintua     | girl |
| Temanggong   | see Temenggong                       | tipak      | parents-in-law |
| temanya      |                                      | tobing     | brass sirih tray |
| tembaga      | brass, copper                        | toke       | slope, riverbank |
| tembakau     | tobacco                               | Tran       | middleman in trade |
| temenggong   | see Temenggong                       | transmigrasi | government resettlement projects |
tua  old  wakil  deputy assistant
        magic power, good luck  Wali Negri  government administrator
        reaping knife
        sir, master  zaman  period, epoch
        body
        dibbling pole
        god, superhuman being
        seven
        craftsman, skilled worker
        hammer
        misfortune resulting from a curse
        bone
        see Temenggung
        see Temenggung
        fiancé/fiancée
        squirrel
        go down, descend
        join in, follow
        edible tuber, root
        text, examination
        snake
        caterpillar, larva
        slavery as a form of punishment
        four
        law, ordinance
        for, on behalf of
        luck, fortune, profit
        ceremony, ritual
        leaf-sheath
        see orang
        washing a fighting cock
        tendon, nerve
        arrange matters, organise
        stretcher
        north
### Key to Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swamp</td>
<td>swamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River or Lake</td>
<td>river or lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastline</td>
<td>coastline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-lying Areas</td>
<td>low-lying areas (less than 100m above sea level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Areas</td>
<td>high areas (more than 500m above sea level except map 7: more than 1000m above sea level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups of People</td>
<td>groups of people referred to in this thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber Plots</td>
<td>rubber plots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durian Orchards</td>
<td>durian orchards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road or Track</td>
<td>road or track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town or City</td>
<td>town or city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site of House and Names of Owners</td>
<td>site of house and names of owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border of Dusun or Talang</td>
<td>border of dusun or talang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 1.
Sketch Map of the Aek Sakti region of Tran Perigi (not to scale)
Map 3. Sketch Map of Central Tiga Balai (not to scale)
Map 5.
Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula

Suggested site for Melayu Basin
Map 6. The Malay Peninsula showing Orang Asli groups affected by Hamba Raja status (adapted from Benjamin 1986 Map 1)
Map 7. Main valleys of the Minangkabau Highlands

(adapted from Dobbin 1983 Map B)


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