

# みんなくりポジトリ

国立民族学博物館 学術情報リポジトリ National Museum of Ethnology

## LIVING ON THE PERIPHERY; Development and Islamization among the Orang Asli in Malaysia

メタデータ	言語: en 出版者: 公開日: 2009-05-22 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 信田, 敏宏 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10502/2061">http://hdl.handle.net/10502/2061</a>

## Chapter 6

# *Economic Relationship*

When Baharon undertook his study in Kampung Durian Tawar at the beginning of the 1970s, economic disparity among the villagers was not particularly marked, despite the existence of the ruling social stratum of *adat* leaders (*lembaga adat*) headed by the Batin. When I undertook my anthropological study in the village (1996-98), however, economic disparities among the villagers had increased, due to the state-led development projects and the introduction of the market economy.

Before I undertook my study of Kampung Durian Tawar, I lived in Kampung Banning. Kampung Banning has a primary school (with a dormitory) for Orang Asli children. Orang Asli children from the various districts in the area stay there. One such child was Salim, the son of Arif (No. 42) from Kampung Durian Tawar, with whom I became friends. He later went on to middle school (lower secondary school in Malaysia) but dropped out soon after that.

When I heard Salim say that “The upper people in Kampung Durian Tawar are wealthy (*kaya*) and the lower people are poor (*miskin*)”, I was at first a little puzzled, given that all Orang Asli are supposed to be “poor”. However, any doubts I had about the veracity of his comments were dispelled when I actually went there. The upper people and the lower people were indeed different. The appearance of their houses, the clothes the people wore, and even the way they thought were all so polarized that it was hard to imagine that they were people from the same village.<sup>1</sup>

When I first settled into Kampung Durian Tawar, I frequently heard people making distinctions between the upper people and the lower people. Examining the situation more closely, however, I discovered instances in which the formula of upper people equals wealthy and lower people equals poor did not necessarily apply. Nonetheless, among themselves



**Plate 43: Catching a snake.** Haji Konin, seen here handling a snake, is an Islamic convert and the son of Batin Deraman. For all intents and purposes, he is an Islamic convert in name only. [NT-1998]

many villagers certainly subscribed to the upper/wealthy, lower/poor stereotype. It should be noted, however, that when I speak of wealth here, this only refers to the economic ability, within the context of wider Malaysian society, to live an ordinary life.

Not long after settling into Kampung Durian Tawar, I began to collect data regarding rubber sales at the rubber trader's shop in the village. I would go there in the mornings and record the amount and price of the rubber sold that day. When I was temporarily away from the village I asked the manager, Aman,<sup>2</sup> to record the data for me, but apart from that I did this almost every day during my fieldwork.

I recorded this information because I wanted to gain a picture of the economic situation in Kampung Durian Tawar from the perspective of rubber-tapping work. Underlying this, however, was the more basic aim of verifying whether, in fact, there really was economic disparity between the upper and lower people. A month of this recording work would probably have made clear the situation regarding any economic disparity. However, this recording activity became an integral part of my daily activity, and I ended up continuing this for over a year. This enabled me to obtain some unexpected results.

The data presented in this chapter regarding income obtained from durians is based on data I collected from October to December 1997.



**Plate 44: Cooking a monkey.** This picture was taken at a camp in the forest during a rattan gathering trip. While the men gathered rattan, they also hunted for wild animals such as monkey and wild pig. The women also helped in gathering rattan and did the cooking (having brought rice, seasoning, dried fish, etc., to the camp). The man on the left is a Semelai from Pahang. He married a woman of Kampung Durian Tawar and while his parents have converted to Islam, he did not. [NT-1997]

I asked my fieldwork assistant, Asat, to help me with this but he was busy harvesting his own durians. Therefore, I mainly collected the data by going around to the various places where the durians were sold and asking the durian wholesalers and villagers about the volumes and prices of the durians sold. This was difficult when people threw away the notes provided by the wholesalers that recorded the numbers sold and prices paid. Selling would also often occur simultaneously in a number of places and I would have to go around to the villagers later and ask them for this information. As a result, my data collection was not complete, but I believe that I managed to obtain a general picture of the relevant information for all of the villagers.

The purpose of my survey of durian sales was, of course, to collect information regarding the income obtained from durians. But this survey also provided additional material. Walking around the durian orchards every day over a period of about two months, chatting to the villagers as I went, a number of impressions regarding their relationship to the forest emerged. In addition, going out to the durian orchards in the forest and actually carrying durians from there to where they were to be sold, and then selling them, gave me an understanding of how difficult it is to transport durians. These side benefits of my durian survey are reflected in this chapter.



**Plates 45-47: Cutting up a wild pig [NT-1997]** In Plate 45, men pour hot water on a hunted wild pig to make it easier to scrape off its bristles. It is then cut up. The young man in Plate 45 is helping out even though he had converted to Islam (in order to marry a Muslim Orang Asli woman from another village) and so cannot eat pork any more. [NT-2003, 2003, 1997]

In this chapter I present and examine data regarding the details of the rubber tapping, of the durian harvest and of household incomes. The conclusion I draw regarding economic disparity within the village is that, generally speaking, the upper people form an economic upper class and the lower people form an economic lower class. Having first provided an overview of the features of the means of livelihood pursued in Kampung Durian Tawar, I then report on the information obtained regarding rubber-tapping work and the durian harvest.

### **Livelihoods**

Villagers' means of livelihood in present-day Kampung Durian Tawar are as follows: (1) agriculture centered on rubber tapping, on fruit tree cultivation of durian (*Durio zibethinus*), rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*), bananas (*Musa spp.*) and so on, and on the cash crop cultivation of vegetables and so on; (2) gathering forest products such as rattan (*Calamus*), *petai* (*Parkia speciosa*) and *kerdas* (*Pithecellobium microcarpum*) (varieties of the bean family), aromatic wood (*Aquilaria sp.*), honey and so on; (3) hunting wild pigs, monkeys, squirrels, birds, tortoises, monitor lizards (*Varanus spp.*), porcupines, snakes, frogs and so on; (4) fishing in fresh water rivers and streams; (5) day laboring (road construction, housing construction and agricultural work involved in rubber tapping, sugarcane cultivation and so on) as coolies (*kuli*) under Chinese and Malay boss (*tauke*) employers; (6) factory and seasonal work away from the village; (7) cultivating cassava (*Manihot dulcis*) and vegetables for personal consumption; and (8) farming fish in fishponds and breeding domestic animals such as chickens.

The villagers' ancestors' primary means of livelihood were hunting and gathering, dry rice cultivation and the swidden cultivation of cassava. By comparison, the present-day village economy is characterized by the predominance of the cash economy and the marginalization of the subsistence economy. Most symbolic of the increasing presence of the cash economy has been the abandonment of wet rice cultivation, which began in the 1970s, and the increase of rubber-tapping work.

Kato (1991) has written that during the British colonial period the introduction of rubber-tapping work in Negeri Sembilan brought about a corresponding decline in wet rice cultivation. Although I am focusing on the recent decades, the same shift is occurring in Kampung Durian Tawar. In parallel with the abandonment of wet rice cultivation, there was a progressive development of rubber smallholdings.<sup>3</sup> The villagers had previously grown their own rice but began purchasing rice from the money they earned from rubber tapping.

For the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar, most of the above-mentioned means of livelihood are premised on “looking for money” (*cari wong, cari duit*) (cf. Gomes 1986). “Looking for money”, the villagers say, is the same as the “looking for food” (*cari makan*) they pursue when hunting and gathering. The cash economy, in other words, has to a large extent penetrated their daily lives.<sup>4</sup>

### Yearly Cycle

By looking at the monthly data for the amount of rubber sold and the income received from rubber sales across the year, we are able to get a broader view of rubber-tapping work and of other means of livelihood pursued in the village (see Figure 9).

When I was staying in Kampung Durian Tawar between 1996 and 1998, the beginning of February was a long holiday, this being Chinese New Year (the old lunar New Year) and Malay Hari Raya Puasa. Because of these festivals the rubber-processing plant was closed, as was the rubber trader’s shop as a result of the closure of the plant.

In relation to rubber-tapping work in Kampung Durian Tawar, Chinese New Year (rather than Hari Raya Puasa) has the greatest impact because the rubber trader’s shop closes for about a week. By contrast, if the Chinese owners do not take a holiday during Hari Raya Puasa, the rubber trader’s shop remains open at that time. Therefore, the yearly calendar for Orang Asli livelihoods is forced to fit in with the annual events celebrated by the Chinese.<sup>5</sup>

When business recommences after Chinese New Year in late February, the price fetched for rubber is generally high. This continues through to March and April. At this time of year, however, new leaves are shooting on the rubber trees, and tapping the younger rubber trees would hinder their growth. Although apparently there is no problem with tapping older rubber trees in these months, the trees’ nutrients are absorbed by the new leaves, resulting in less rubber being available for tapping. For this reason, the amount of rubber tapped in March and April is low despite the good prices during these months.

Viewed the other way around, it is precisely because the amount of rubber tapped is low that the price is good. Among the Chinese traders, there are those who close their businesses during this period, viewing it as a holiday period for rubber tappers. According to the manager of the rubber trader’s shop, Aman, not many trees or plants in this area, being the tropics, follow an annual cycle, but the rubber tree, originating from Brazil, does do so.<sup>6</sup>

From May through to July, rubber tapping maintains a stable output. In May, however, the increased amount of rubber tapped is accompanied by a downward trend in the price it fetches. As a result, in June and July there is a slight drop in the desire to carry out tapping work. This results in less rubber being tapped, and a further decrease in the amount of money that can be attained through this kind of work. To make up for lost income in August, some of the villagers gather forest products. This enables them to bring their income back to the level it had previously been with the rubber-tapping work. Some of the villagers gather forest products in conjunction with rubber tapping, while others devote themselves solely to gathering activities. Of the people I observed who were engaged in gathering activities at this time of year, most devoted themselves largely to gathering *petai*, a vegetable of the bean family.<sup>7</sup>

As incomes are being supplemented through gathering activities in the forest, September comes around and the price of rubber returns to its previous levels. Increases in the amount of rubber tapped in September are in part due to rises in the rubber price. However, it is due primarily to the major Hari Kesedaran festival (modeled on Hari Raya Puasa) held in Kampung Durian Tawar on October 1. Each household prepares a variety of dishes and sweets for the festival, with most of the money for this coming from income obtained through rubber tapping. Towards the end of September large numbers of villagers gather at the rubber trader's shop and sell rubber for this purpose.

In October and November the volume of rubber tapped again declines, despite high rubber prices. This is because in Kampung Durian Tawar the durian harvest occurs at this time of year. In addition, the rambutan harvest occurs during the later part of the durian harvest. Both naturally growing trees and cultivated trees bear fruit at this time of year. As we shall see, income obtained from the durians is well in excess of that obtained from rubber tapping. The villagers are extremely busy harvesting the durians during these months, leaving no time for rubber tapping. The only people undertaking rubber tapping at this time are those villagers who do not own a durian orchard.

In December, when the durian harvest is almost complete, the wet season arrives. Because of the weather, rubber tapping is not possible on many days, even though the rubber price is good. Unlike August, however, when people have to switch to forest product-gathering activities to supplement their incomes, most people have put aside money obtained from the durians over the previous month or two. They can therefore manage financially at this time, despite the lack of rubber-tapping work.

In January, when the wet season has passed, rubber tapping recommences and the amount of rubber tapped again increases. The Chinese New Year holiday period begins in the second half of January. The amount of rubber sold increases in January and February. This is in part because the rubber is sold before the holiday period commences, and also because rubber stored up during the holiday period is sold in bulk after the holiday is over. The amount of rubber tapped and sold then remains high through February, and continues until the new leaves are again in bud.

## Rubber

### *Rubber and Other Cash Crops*

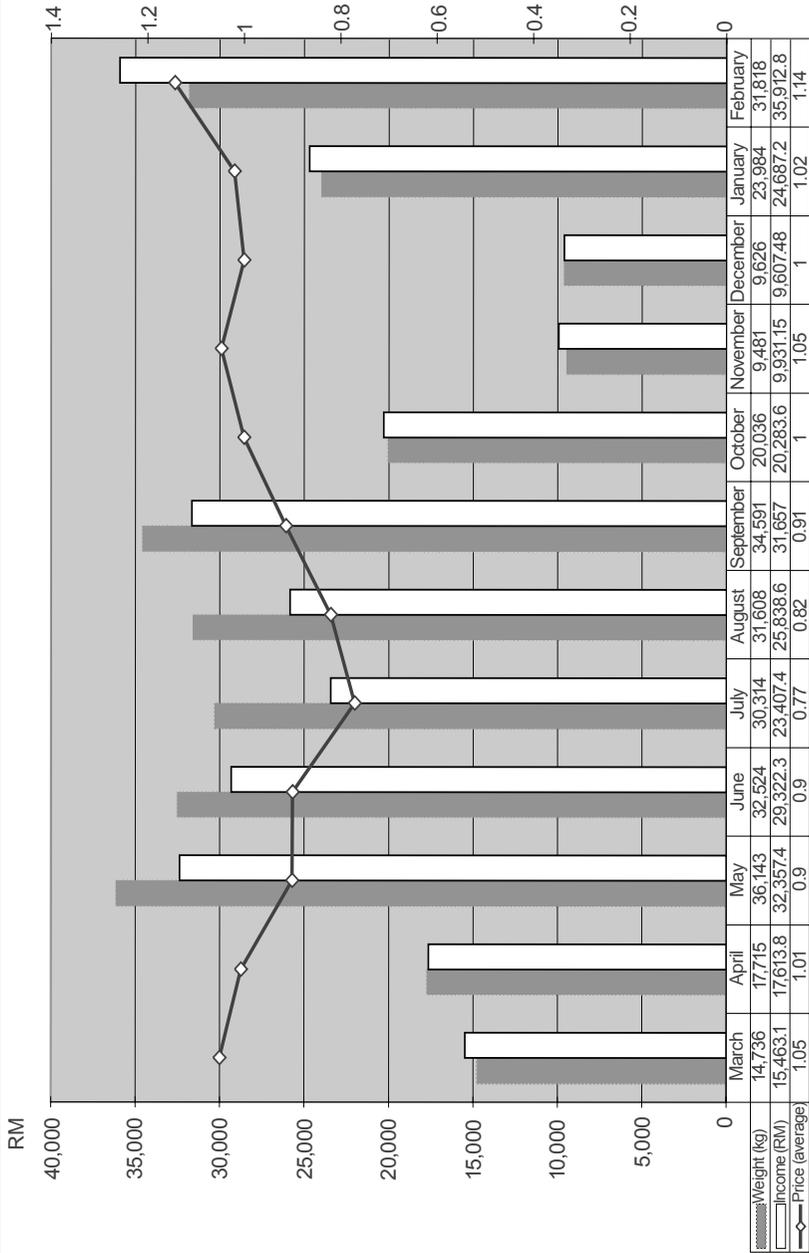
Rubber tapping is the primary means of livelihood in Kampung Durian Tawar.<sup>8</sup> The villagers describe rubber tapping as, “like going to the bank and withdrawing cash”. For those who own them, the rubber trees are like a bankbook. When in need of money to purchase everyday items or to pay the water and electricity bills, they do some rubber-tapping work, sell the rubber at the rubber trader’s shop and receive the cash. Setting aside the labor expended, the process of rubber tapping is, for them, just like going into town and withdrawing money from the bank or post office.

Edibility is the primary difference between rubber and other cash crops. Durians, bananas and vegetables can be eaten if they are not sold as commodities. If rubber is not sold as a commodity, however, it remains simply resin. During Baharon’s study in Kampung Durian Tawar, he asked Ali why he rejected rubber-tapping work, to which Ali replied, “we can’t eat rubber” (Baharon 1973: 203). Ali’s reply is interesting, as it goes to the heart of what rubber-tapping work means to the villagers.

Forest products such as rattan, aromatic wood (*gaharu*) and resin (*damar*) are, of course, similar to rubber in that they are inedible. In the past, however, rattan was used in the construction of houses. It came to be sold as a commodity later, when an external demand for it arose. In response to that external demand, excessive amounts of rattan were gathered indiscriminately and most of the supply growing wild in the forest was soon exhausted. Once a product of the forest, nowadays rattan is cultivated to be sold as a commodity.

Similarly, *gaharu* and *damar* was gathered indiscriminately and, like rubber, are purely goods for exchange. In terms of being a resin, *damar* is the same as rubber. The difference between *gaharu* and *damar*, on the one hand, and rubber, on the other, is that a stable supply of *gaharu* and

Figure 9  
A Rubber tapping annual income cycle



NB: Based on data recorded from March 1997 to February 1998



**Plates 48 & 49: Rubber tapping.** Asat incised the bark of a rubber tree with a rubber tapping knife, carving from upper left to lower right. The white latex drained into a vessel where it soon solidified naturally. Having tried my hand at tapping (Plate 49), I realize that tapping rubber is a skill in itself. [NT-1997, 2007]

*damar* cannot be supplied in response to external demands for them as commodities. Gathering these forest products requires special knowledge and skills concerning the forest; even then, results are, to an extent, determined by chance.

### *Rubber Tapping*

In comparison to the gathering of forest products, rubber tapping requires no special forest knowledge or skills. Apart from days when it is raining, it can be done almost every day and simply involves going to the rubber gardens each morning and following the fixed practice of making a mark on the surface of the rubber tree with a special rubber-tapping knife.

A white latex oozes to the surface of the bark where a mark has been made, usually diagonally from upper left to lower right. A series of marks is called a “*pelan*” (plan in English). The latex that oozes out flows down the mark and into a bowl placed securely below. One *pelan* is complete when these marks, which begin from higher up the tree, reach the bottom of the tree. When one *pelan* is complete, the tapper begins a new one on the opposite side of the tree. The rubber latex accumulated in the bowl solidifies naturally, but it is sometimes washed away by rain before this occurs. As a result, the rubber is usually solidified by adding formic acid (*cuka getah*) as a solidifying agent. The act of adding the solidifying



Plate 50: Rubber garden [NT-2007]

agent is called mixing (*godek*). The solidifying agent is often added without waiting for all of the latex to flow into the bowl, and this act often completes a day's work. When the solidifying agent is not used, however, the work finishes earlier.

The greatest amount of rubber latex flows during the cooler hours before dawn and in the early morning. This is the best time to carry out the work, as one can efficiently produce the greatest amount of rubber for the energy invested. Hard-working (*rajin*) people, such as the Chinese, tie a lamp to their heads and begin rubber tapping before dawn.<sup>9</sup> In the days when rubber prices were particularly good, many of the villagers from Kampung Durian Tawar also began tapping work before dawn. When I undertook my study in the village, however, the price of rubber was low<sup>10</sup> and few people began rubber tapping before dawn. Lazy (*malas*) people, such as the Malays, head off to do their rubber-tapping work after their morning sleep-in, and as such do not collect much rubber.<sup>11</sup> Overall, the Orang Asli fall into the latter of these two types, although there are some, particularly among those with Chinese ancestry (e.g. a Chinese father), who do the "hard-working" type of rubber tapping.

The villagers carry out their rubber-tapping work as follows. They set off to work in the same way as the Chinese, but most commence a little later (although almost all upper people do commence early in the morning). They carry out the tapping work in the rubber gardens but do

not collect the solidified rubber from the previous day as they go. Instead, they take the solidified rubber out of the bowls and leave it on the ground (usually at the foot of the tree). They “rest” the garden trees, either by doing the tapping every second day or by tapping for two days and then leaving it a day. In either case, it is the norm to give the rubber trees a rest. When the rubber-tapping work is finished, the villagers rest, and then they mix the solidifying agent. Some people regard the solidifying agent as too expensive, and so do not do the mixing work. The decision over whether or not to mix in the solidifying agent is also influenced by the weather; by whether, in other words, it looks like it is going to rain in the afternoon. If it rains, the liquid rubber one has gone to the trouble of tapping will be washed away. If it seems that rain is unlikely, however, they do not mix in the solidifying agent.

After carrying out tapping work in this way for two or three days, the solid rubber is collected and transported, usually by motorbike, to the rubber trader’s shop and sold. The children are usually mobilized “to take up” (*tating*) the rubber during the collection work, so most of this is carried out on Saturday or Sunday when the schools are closed. Most often, therefore, the parents do their tapping work during the week and then the whole family sets off together to do the rubber collection work on the weekend.

Those who rent rubber smallholdings, such as the Chinese and Mandailing, make a particular effort to sell the rubber on the day it is tapped.<sup>12</sup> This is both to avoid conflict and to obtain cash for their work as quickly as possible. The rubber gardens used by renters are well looked after, in order that work can be done as efficiently as possible. However, maintaining the rubber gardens in good condition (e.g. by using chemicals on weeds) provides an opportunity for thieves, who can see the tapped rubber waiting to be collected. With the exception of the rubber gardens of Batin Janggut, Jenang Misai, and those of the Mangku and the other *adat* leaders (and their close relatives), the rubber gardens used by the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar have a general impression of being untidy and disorderly. Grass grows to waist height, water collects here and there due to poor drainage, and fields spread up the slopes of hills.

Swarms of mosquitoes usually inhabit the rubber gardens because of the dark shade of the trees and the rain water that collects in bowls and puddles on the ground. It is essential to use mosquito repellent coils while working in the rubber gardens. In the cool of early morning, work can be carried out in relative comfort, but after 10 am the tropical climate makes its presence felt and a sweat-inducing heat pervades even the dim and



**Plate 51: Rubber trader's shop.** The rubber trader's shop is operated by Aman (Plate 51. at left), grandson of Menteri Lewat. Menteri Lewat was the first person who planted rubber trees. During the Japanese Occupation, Aman's mother was adopted by the Orang Asli because her Chinese parents were killed by the Japanese soldiers. Because of his Chinese descent, Aman has become a member of the Chinese rubber traders' group in Pertang. [NT-1998]

shady rubber gardens. I have experienced this myself; working in these conditions is harder than one might imagine. As if this was not enough, rubber has an unpleasant smell. Rubber latex that gets onto your clothing or skin is difficult to remove, even with soap. The smell is so strong that, no matter how many times you scrub your clothes and wash your hands with soap, it does not go away. The monotony of the work, the mosquitoes, the heat, the smell, any number of reasons can be given for why the villagers dislike rubber-tapping work.

In comparison to rubber-tapping work, traditional hunting and gathering is seen in a positive light. Though physically demanding, the work is not monotonous, and hunting in particular is regarded as exciting. In the forest, especially where there are large trees, it is cool during the daytime, there are not many mosquitoes and there are no noxious smells. For the men of the village, hunting and gathering activities provide opportunities for testing their skills against each other. These factors influence whether a person chooses to foreground the monotonous but financially secure work of rubber tapping, or conversely chooses the financially insecure but stimulating and exciting activities of hunting and gathering. However, even those who prefer hunting and gathering activities have been forced to switch their "livelihood" to rubber tapping and agriculture.



**Plates 52 & 53: Rubber trader's shop.** A unit price of rubber in 1998 was RM1 per kilogram. But in 2007 the unit price went up to RM3.50 per kilogram in response to the skyrocketing world petroleum prices. This allowed the rubber trader to expand his shop. However, rubber prices fell again in late 2008 due to the world economic downturn. [NT-2007]

### *Ownership*

Not all the rubber smallholdings owned by the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar contain rubber trees that can be tapped. This is because it takes more than seven years from the time of planting until the trees can be tapped. Almost all the rubber smallholdings in Kampung Durian Tawar were established through aid received for government development projects. Aid for the establishment of rubber smallholdings began in 1982, but the majority of rubber development projects undertaken by RISDA have occurred since the 1990s. To the extent that not all the rubber smallholdings a person owns can be tapped, having a large number of rubber smallholdings does not mean that one is undertaking tapping work in all of them. Additionally, having tappable rubber smallholdings does not necessarily mean that rubber tapping takes place in them.

In particular, some households (Nos. 10, 18, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 42, 47, 48 and 60; see Figure 5) rent out (using a method called *pajak*) rubber smallholdings to the Chinese and others.<sup>13</sup> These households supplement the household budget with the rental money (e.g. 150 ringgit per month, or 1,500 ringgit per year). There are also cases where the owners undertake rubber tapping themselves and rent out part of their rubber smallholdings to the Chinese. As such, there is not necessarily a direct correlation between ownership of rubber smallholdings and income gained from them.

Owning a rubber smallholding certainly has an influence on income obtained from rubber tapping. The significant amount of land owned by the successor of Menteri Lewat, Mangku Hasim (No. 9), and by Batin Janggut (No. 14) and his female siblings (No. 13 and No. 19) is particularly striking. Many of these rubber smallholdings are held in the names of their sons and daughters. The influence of *adat* leaders in development projects can be seen in this kind of distribution of the rubber smallholdings.

The amount of labor devoted to rubber tapping is directly reflected in the income received for the work. We see here an obvious fact: regardless of how many fields a person owns, if that person does not actually do the rubber tapping, then he or she will not earn money. Additionally, the energy expended on rubber tapping does not guarantee a fixed amount of rubber latex, as the amount of latex that can be obtained varies according to physical terrain and other factors. Some rubber gardens are located on level ground, while others are on the sides of hills and mountains, with each terrain requiring differing expenditures of labor.

Therefore, in addition to ownership of rubber smallholdings, the labor involved and the condition of the rubber trees and of the rubber gardens all need to be considered. These factors combine in a complex way to influence the income obtained from rubber-tapping work.

### *Income*

With the exception of certain people, income obtained from rubber tapping is an important source of cash income for the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar. Indeed, in most cases income from rubber tapping is the mainstay of the villagers' household budgets. Without the incomes from rubber tapping, in fact, economic life in Kampung Durian Tawar would collapse. The subsistence economy represented by hunting and gathering activities, which were previously the primary means of livelihood, has now become marginal. Even hunting and gathering have changed in that these are now undertaken, for the most part, to obtain cash.<sup>14</sup>

Village politics has a direct influence on the incomes obtained through rubber tapping. Particularly influential is the distribution of rubber smallholdings by *adat* leaders in the development projects, as well as their leadership in promoting rubber-tapping work based on the ideal of "hard work".

Close relatives of Batin Janggut and other *adat* leaders have generally taken up the work ethic promoting "hard work". Viewed the other way around, the degree to which this work ethic has been taken up reveals the extent to which people follow the advice (*nasihat*) of the *adat* leaders.

Among the upper people who have benefited from the development projects, the income received from rubber tapping by those who have followed the *adat* leaders' advice and who work hard is, unsurprisingly, high. Conversely, the rubber tapping income of "lazy" people who have not followed the leaders' advice is low. Rubber-tapping incomes are also low for those who give priority to hunting and gathering and rent out their rubber smallholdings; incomes are also low for those people (most of them members of the lower people) who do little rubber-tapping work.

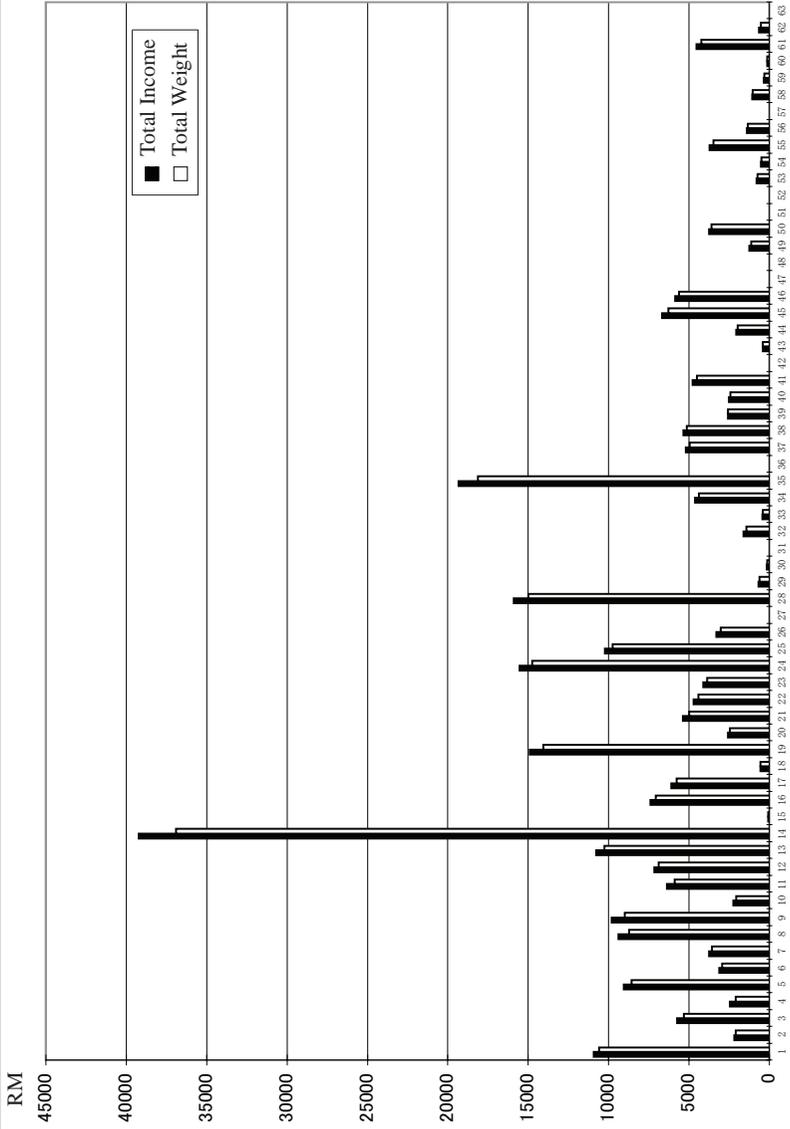
Data regarding rubber-tapping income per household are represented in Figure 10 and Table 17. Batin Janggut's household (No. 14) has the highest level of income obtained from rubber tapping. However, it is not only Batin Janggut himself who undertakes rubber-tapping work but also his wives, their children and his daughters' husbands. Apart from the rubber smallholdings he owns in Kampung Durian Tawar, Batin Janggut also owns rubber smallholdings in Kampung Dalam. For the most part, his rubber tapping work is done in Kampung Dalam.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, the income shown for rubber tapping in Kampung Durian Tawar for his household is not the total income that his household receives for rubber tapping. In addition, his children, who undertake rubber tapping in the smallholdings in Kampung Durian Tawar, have an agreement to pay their father a variable percentage (generally around forty per cent) of their rubber-tapping income per month for the use of these fields. This differs from the rental method of *pajak*, where monthly payments are fixed. *Pajak* is regarded as a rental method that originated with the Chinese. However, the Chinese also introduced the variable payment system in recent years, and Batin Janggut borrowed the idea from them.<sup>16</sup>

Menteri Gemuk's household (No. 35) has the next highest level of income obtained from rubber tapping, followed by the households of Ajoin (No. 28), Jenang Misai (No. 24) and Ukal (No. 19). As is the case with Batin Janggut and his children, Jenang Misai's rubber smallholdings and durian orchards have been passed on to his married children (Nos. 22, 23, 24 and 25). This is also the case with Ukal and his children (No. 20 and No. 21).

Most of the new rubber smallholdings established through development projects have been distributed either to married households or to the children (mostly daughters, married or unmarried) of the *adat* leaders. Mangku Hasim (No. 9) has also passed his rubber smallholdings on to his children. Mangku Hasim and his wife, and his daughter and her husband obtained an average income from rubber tapping, but if we add the income obtained by his sons Darap (No. 5) and Aman (manager of

Figure 10  
Rubber tapping income per household



the village rubber trader's shop) respectively, his rubber-tapping income certainly ranks in the upper levels.

Other households ranking in the upper levels of income received from rubber tapping are those of Menteri Lewat's daughter and her husband (No. 1); Menteri Lewat's daughter-in-law and her husband (No. 8); Batin Janggut and Jenang Misai's deceased younger sister's daughter and her husband (No. 13); and Jenang Misai's daughter and her husband (No. 26).

Therefore, most of those whose incomes from rubber tapping rank in the upper levels are relations of the *adat* leaders. More specifically, those ranking in the upper levels are primarily from the kinship groups of Batin Janggut and Jenang Misai, and from those of the children (including Mangku Hasim) of the now deceased Menteri Lewat. These members of the *adat* leaders have secured the distribution of their rubber smallholdings to the next generation within their kinship groups. They have also distributed rubber tree replanting projects, which in a few years will be ready for tapping.

In contrast, most of the households whose rubber-tapping income falls well below the average are those whose kinship relations are distant from the *adat* leaders. In the distribution of rubber smallholdings established through development projects, those apportioned to these households have mostly been no more than one lot in area (in Kampung Durian Tawar this equates to about three acres). This may be sufficient to provide for the current generation, but not for the next. This is, at least in part, because many of the previous generation showed no interest in rubber tapping. This lack of interest is reproduced from the parents through to their children's generation. On top of that, in the context of power relations in Kampung Durian Tawar, those whose kinship relations are distant from the *adat* leaders have been largely excluded from the distribution of rubber smallholdings established through development projects.

Because of these factors, these people undertake rubber tapping only when they need cash, and even if they happen to own a rubber smallholding, they rent it out. Being unable to make a living from owning the smallholding, they engage in hunting, gathering and other activities in the subsistence economy. As a result, their incomes from rubber tapping are inevitably low. For them, rubber tapping is a temporary, secondary activity undertaken when cash is necessary. This is reflected in the income from rubber tapping shown above.

Let us look at those households whose incomes from rubber tapping are particularly low. One is that of Batin Janggut's divorced third wife (No. 15). She does her rubber-tapping work together with her daughters

Table 17  
Rubber and durian data

House number	Rubber		Durians	
	Weight(kg)	Income(RM)	Weight(kg)	Income(RM)
1	10.908	10.873.15	2.377	3.624.00
2	2.171	2,081.50	106	159.00
3	5.724	5,319.60	1,373	2,148.20
4	2.440	2,091.50	0	0.00
5	9.042	8,568.65	908	1,376.40
6	3.104	2,923.15	674	1,032.80
7	3.723	3,563.81	345	537.80
8	9.360	8,719.56	2,938	4,446.20
9	9.794	8,993.20	7,719	10,801.50
10	2.238	2,048.00	1,077	1,509.55
11	6.361	5,889.60	1,986	2,888.20
12	7.149	6,859.66	3,443	5,077.40
13	10.760	10,258.25	3,575	5,541.80
14	39,214	36,906.22	2,911	4,617.50
15	51	46.90	213	434.40
16	7.379	7,067.84	97	151.20
17	6.084	5,744.00	0	0.00
18	545	550.96	806	1,477.95
19	14.897	14,035.05	3,488	5,199.60
20	2.553	2,441.50	472	752.50
21	5.379	4,987.73	329	577.50
22	4.699	4,410.68	93	173.50
23	4.087	3,844.70	46	75.00
24	15,515	14,738.10	2,709	4,796.60
25	10,208	9,743.82	518	1,017.10
26	3.274	3,025.71	837	1,180.90
27	0	0.00	105	139.65
28	15,876	14,976.81	5,320	7,677.30
29	667	597.05	1,463	2,228.70
30	148	131.44	1,331	1,891.65
31	0	0.00	1,282	1,970.50
32	1,590	1,427.90	0	0.00
33	415	404.40	272	479.20
34	4,597	4,368.74	243	394.80
35	19,307	18,119.10	1,653	2,554.30
36	0	0.00	1,390	1,931.40
37	5.173	4,949.75	102	125.40
38	5.338	5,111.59	2,063	2,952.00
39	2,560	2,553.70	694	787.00
40	2,505	2,423.45	1,171	1,370.00
41	4.775	4,495.85	70	145.00
42	0	0.00	63	96.00
43	401	396.20	1,339	1,833.90
44	2,038	1,970.00	608	822.40
45	6,648	6,262.05	567	852.10
46	5,859	5,598.10	672	1,284.46
47	0	0.00	1,329	2,295.70
48	0	0.00	1,698	7,564.60
49	1,248	1,124.60	649	1,242.75
50	3,735	3,575.65	2,145	2,914.85
51	0	0.00	0	0.00
52	0	0.00	0	0.00
53	784	718.90	532	724.40
54	523	473.70	20	25.80
55	3,693	3,461.40	701	1,025.95
56	1,380	1,313.49	0	0.00
57	0	0.00	672	1,000.10
58	1,055	1,033.10	0	0.00
59	324	313.20	0	0.00
60	133	122.70	24	39.00
61	4,523	4,224.40	0	0.00
62	622	501.50	437	550.20
63	0	0.00	423	678.90
Total	292,576	276,381.61	68,073	107,194.61

RM = Ringgit Malaysia

NB: The rubber data is based on data recorded at the village rubber trader's shop from March 1997 to February 1998. The durian data is based on data recorded during the durian harvest season from October 1997 to December 1997.

(No. 16 and No. 17), with their separate names (and therefore households) being used when they sell the rubber. The household of Batin Janggut's son Tikak (No. 18) is another whose income from rubber tapping is meager. He rents out two lots of rubber smallholdings to the Chinese (receiving approximately 3,000 ringgit per year). In addition, Tikak rents out a rubber smallholding to Ajoin's household (No. 28) using the variable payment method.

Bolok (No. 27) is deaf and is cared for by the households of Poteh (No. 26) and Ajoin (No. 28). Kedai's (No. 45) household looks after Ajam (No. 43), who is regarded as "mad". The household of Surak (No. 29) contains only Surak and his wife, both of whom are elderly. Only their son-in-law, who has a disabled left foot, does any rubber-tapping work, and he only does so when they are in need of cash. The household of Sieu (No. 30), an Islamic convert, owns rubber smallholdings, but few of these rubber smallholdings could be tapped at the time of my study and were rented out as security for a loan. The households at Nos. 31, 32 and 33 also rented out their rubber smallholdings as security for loans. Most of the income from rubber tapping for these households was obtained either with or without the permission of the people to whom they had rented out their rubber smallholdings.

Asang (No. 36), the holder of the Jekerah title, had also rented out his rubber smallholdings as security for a loan. Having done so, he engaged in hunting and gathering activities. This was a practice following that of Tikak. Once bestowed with the title of Jekerah, however, he followed Batin Janggut and the other *adat* leaders' advice and ceased renting out his rubber smallholdings. In April 1998 he began rubber-tapping work himself. Arif (No. 42), once bestowed with the title of Panglima Perang, also turned away from the Tikak group and began to do rubber-tapping work, probably because he had begun to follow Batin Janggut.<sup>17</sup>

No. 47 and No. 48 are the households of the son and daughter of the former Jenang, Jenang Kichoi. These households do not undertake rubber tapping; instead, they rent out their rubber smallholdings. Doyes's (No. 48) husband is Chinese and is more interested in durian cultivation than rubber tapping. The household at No. 49 is also that of a daughter of Jenang Kichoi (Gat's wife is Jenang Kichoi's daughter). Nos. 50, 51 and 52 are the households of the children of Jenang Kichoi's daughter. They owned five acres of rubber smallholding, but I did not ascertain the labor and income flows stemming from them. In any case, the total income for these three households is shown under No. 50 in Figure 10.

No. 53 is the household of Batin Deraman's daughter, and No. 54

is, in turn, that of her daughter. Her husband, Inan, does not do any rubber tapping. The income obtained from rubber tapping for these two households comes from the women in the households. It is well known that Inan is a drunk (*mabuk*). He often gets into fights with people and causes a lot of trouble for the villagers. According to village gossip, most of the income he obtains by gathering *petai* or through day laboring is spent on alcohol. No. 55 is the household of Entak's daughter. Her husband, Gobek, was showing signs of leaving the Aki Main group and following Batin Janggut. He has relatively numerous rubber smallholdings and obtains a reasonably good income from rubber tapping. The household at No. 56 is a member of the Aki Main group but its income from rubber tapping, in the smallholding given to it by Batin Janggut, is small.

Aki Main's household (No. 57) generates no income from rubber tapping. Apart from the income received from Aki Main's work as a "medicine man", the members of the household gain their livelihood from hunting and gathering or day laboring. Aki Main's income as a "medicine man" was apparently at least 100 ringgit per "consultation". His son, Sudin (No. 63), is dependent on his father's income and, as far as I could observe, his job was as a chauffeur for his father. In addition, part of their income also came from compensation for land they had owned in their home village of Kampung Bukit Lanjan.<sup>18</sup>

Kioop, the younger brother of Lodoh at No. 62, is, like Inan, known as a drunk, and is also something of a troublemaker in the village. He has rented out to a Chinese trader the rubber smallholding he received from his parents, and engages in day laboring. He also apparently spends all the money he earns on liquor and beer. Kioop's older brother Awas (No. 61) has started, in the same way as Gobek, to follow the Batin Janggut group, and as a result has even moved house. This change to following Batin Janggut is arguably reflected in the income he has obtained from rubber tapping.

### **Durian**

Durian Tawar means "tasteless durian". It is a pseudonym, but is also the name the village had before it moved to its present site.<sup>19</sup> Nearby is a town called Simpang Durian. Given that a town and a village have "durian" in their names, this district evidently has a long history of being renowned for its durians. The majority of durians from Kampung Durian Tawar are sold to Chinese wholesalers, who then sell them in Singapore.<sup>20</sup> Durians have a special significance for Orang Asli. When Orang Asli land is taken for freeway or airport construction, the compensation they receive is not



**Plate 54: Distant view of a durian orchard.** This area is a durian orchard owned by Tikak, one of Batin Janggut's sons. The durian orchard is located in the middle of the basin, which is referred to as the stolen cultivated land (*cerobo*). Tikak rents out this durian orchard to a Chinese, who takes care of the durian trees. Beyond this durian orchard, there is a rubber garden owned by a daughter of Jenang Misai. [NT-1997]

for the land itself.<sup>21</sup> Rather, it is in the form of a sum of money for each durian tree on that land.<sup>22</sup> In other words, for the Orang Asli durians are symbolic of property.

#### *From Forest Product to Cash Crop*

Durian trees originally grew wild in the forest, and in the past were harvested as follows. The people led a nomadic life, moving through the forest and practicing swidden cultivation (of cassavas, dry rice and so on), and hunting and gathering. When the durian season (*musim durian*) arrived, they would settle temporarily in the area of the durian trees (over which they claimed “ownership”). When the durian season was over, they would again move on in search of forest resources. Nonetheless, their basic areas of habitation were the places where durian trees grew. They would live there and eat the durians and the wild animals that came in search of the durians.

Some of the seeds cast aside from the durians would germinate and grow into new trees. Seeds having passed through the digestive systems of wild animals and then excreted would also germinate and produce new durian trees. As a result, the durian trees naturally tend to grow in groups. This is how the “durian orchards in the forest” (*dusun durian dalam hutan*) gradually formed, around which the people temporarily lived.



**Plate 55: Inside the durian hut of Kedai with Asat.** Kedai, in the middle, lives separately from his wife and children, but he is not divorced from his wife. When this picture was taken, he lived in the durian hut, but I did not know of Kedai's family situation. Kedai is a master of traditional handicrafts and blowpipe making. Asat, at left, seems to like him and sometimes visits Kedai and tries to learn traditional knowledge and skills from him. [NT-2003]

If they were able to gather many durians, the people would apparently invite their relations living in neighboring areas and distribute (*bantai*) the durians among them.

Originally, the people would collect the durians from the ground (where, when ripe, they fall naturally) and eat them – they were a fruit for people's own consumption. They were, at that time, truly a forest fruit, and any left over fruit would simply be discarded. Durians only came to be seen as a cash crop after their value as a commodity was discovered.

When I asked the villagers about this, they told me that durians first came to be salable (*boleh jual, laku*) when Chinese laborers arrived from outside and worked at the nearby tin mines. This was during the British colonial period. The villagers at the time would sell durians to these laborers. At this point, however, commodification was simply a matter of receiving money for excess durians given to the Chinese.

When the Japanese forces invaded, the villagers fled to the durian orchards in the forest. Most of the current durian orchards in and around the village are located where the ancestors of the present-day villagers lived before they were relocated during the housing construction projects in the early 1970s.

After the Emergency period, the people returned to the village and recommenced durian harvesting. In the resettlement areas they had learned

to do rubber-tapping work; they now began to think of undertaking the proper selling of the durians as a commodity. They planted (*tanam*) durian trees enthusiastically, with a view to their future sale as commodities. The villagers' conscious planting of durian seedlings marked the change from durians as forest product to durians as cultivated cash crop. According to the villagers, Kampung Durian Tawar's durian harvest began to increase from the second half of the 1980s.

### *Durian Harvesting*

Harvesting durians as a forest product simply involves collecting the durians that have fallen to the ground. When the durians were gathered simply for personal consumption, the collection process was straightforward. Fallen durians that were not eaten would begin to rot within two or three days, and so were simply discarded. With the arrival of the market economy, however, the potential exchange value of durians increased. Soon the villagers no longer saw the durians as a self-sustaining forest product but as a cash crop.

When durians are considered as a cash crop, the work involves, in addition to collecting them, protecting them from wild animals and insects, and transporting them to wholesalers or consumers. First, the villagers have to protect the durians (*jaga durian*). I initially thought this meant protecting them from thieves. However, it actually involves protecting the durians from wild animals such as monkeys (of the *buruk* type), squirrels (*tupai*), wild pigs (*babi hutan*) and porcupines (*landak*).

The monkeys knock the durians from the trees and come back to eat them several days later when they have split open. Squirrels bite into the skin and eat only part of the fruit. In such a state, the durians cannot be sold as a commodity. Small white worms called *ulat* also eat the durians. Additionally, in the past a large number of wild animals such as tigers, bears and deer would come to eat the durians. Protecting the durians involves driving off these wild animals and ensuring that they can not return to eat them.

The durian season is also the hunting season. It is because of the durian season that wild animals can more readily be hunted. The villagers do not have to go out and look for the game – in search of durians, the game comes to them. The hunters usually use blowpipe darts, but they also use hunting rifles to drive off the animals or to catch them.

During this time of year, you frequently see the villagers eating such game or earning income by selling it to Chinese traders (which is illegal). In the durian season, therefore, the villagers obtain income from hunting,

as well as the durian harvest. Indeed, it is a season when nature provides them with a great “blessing”.

In addition to protecting the durians, transporting the durians (*dukung durian*) is a labor-intensive aspect of durian harvesting. If the durian orchards are close by, this is not a particularly demanding task. But for durian orchards in the forest, or if the roads are muddy, this is hard work. Just as when rattan is gathered in the forest, harvesting durians from the forest requires the villagers to set up camp in the forest and to protect the durians, as well as gathering and transporting them.

In 1997 when I was collecting data, transporting durians during the durian season was extremely difficult. This was because of the smoke haze that covered large parts of Indonesia and Malaysia, and because the durian season coincided with the wet season, making the roads very muddy.<sup>23</sup>

It is certainly true that durian harvesting in the present day is a repetitive process of picking up and collecting the durians, and then selling them to the wholesalers. This work nonetheless requires quite a lot of physical strength. In the tropical heat, the transporting work is particularly demanding. In the past, the villagers would carry the durians by foot to where the wholesalers (Malay or Chinese) were waiting at the edge of the forest. The durians collected in the early morning would be sold to the wholesalers in the afternoon, and the villagers who had carried them to the wholesalers would again return to the forest.

The durian orchards were usually located on hilly or mountainous parts of the forest. The villagers would transport the durians by foot along the steep paths through these mountains and hills.<sup>24</sup> More recently, motorbikes have made the transporting work less onerous, but it still requires heavy labor. The major work for the villagers is still that of transporting the durians from the orchards to where they are sold to the wholesalers (the durian wholesalers’ cars (jeeps) can generally not get very near to the orchards). Women, as well as men, pick up and collect the durians, but generally only the men transport the durians by motorbike. Regardless of this, any income from the durians goes to the individual who collects them.

The strong-legged (*kaki kuat*) elderly, both men and women, do not seem to mind these mountain paths, but since the introduction of motorbikes (in around 1985), the young, who do not like the transporting work, no longer go into the durian orchards in the forest. Where the transporting work can be done by motorbike, this is done so.<sup>25</sup> In all other places, the durians have to be transported by foot; this is why some young people no longer

go into the durian orchards in the forest. Even nowadays, villagers who do not own a motorbike transport the durians by foot or by bicycle.

#### *From Forest to Village Area*

Durian orchards in the forest are only tended during the durian season, when the weeds and grass around the trees are cut. For the rest of the year they are abandoned, with no particular maintenance occurring at all. In the case of the durian orchards in the forest, protecting the durians from wild animals and transporting the durians to the wholesalers symbolize the Orang Asli as forest product gatherers.

However, people who feel that transporting the durians from the forest is too difficult focus instead on the durian orchards in and around the village, where the task of transporting them is relatively easy. In addition, these people have given up their durian orchards in the forest to younger people in their kinship group who did not own any (or at most, very few) durian orchards and wished to transport the durians. No matter how many durian orchards in the forest a person might own, if he or she cannot transport the durians, the situation is no better than if he or she owned no orchards there at all.

In comparison to durian orchards in the forest, transporting durians in areas close to the village is relatively easy. Having discovered the commodity value of durians as a cash crop, the villagers began to plant durian seedlings for durian orchards, which until then had only seen wild, natural trees. When these new seedlings were planted, the durian orchards in the area around the village, which can be harvested more efficiently, began to supplant those in the forest.

In other words, with the arrival of the market economy, emphasis was placed on how the durians could most efficiently be sold as a commodity. The villagers were no longer the “forest people” who gathered forest products; they had now become “farmers” who cultivated durians as a cash crop. The movement away from durian orchards in the forest and towards those in the area around the village shows the connection between the arrival of the market economy and the villagers’ increasing distance from the forest.<sup>26</sup>

#### *Ownership*

Most of the durian orchards owned by the villagers are located either in the areas of Old Kampung Durian Tawar and Sialang, where the villagers used to live (the village area orchards), or in forest areas (the orchards in the forest). There is a correlation between where the durian orchards are

now located and where the villagers lived in the past. The households of the upper people own many durian orchards in the area of Old Kampung Durian Tawar. The durian orchards owned by Batin Janggut and the upper people in the Sialang area were apparently “purchased” from lower people.<sup>27</sup>

For those durian orchards in the forest and in the village area where the transporting work is comparatively difficult, ownership of the orchards is not the only influence on the income obtainable. Individual ability also has an influence. For example, even if one owns (*pegan*) a durian orchard in the forest (owns, that is to say, the durian trees), such an orchard is “useless treasure” if one does not have the ability to protect and transport the durians.

Most of the durian orchards whose durians can be transported comparatively easily have been inherited as ancestral property (*pusaka*) and are owned by individuals (mostly women). When family members and relations participate in the harvesting at such orchards, they pay the owner of *pusaka* a commission of a certain percentage of the money they earn.

What matters in the case of durian orchards in the village areas, then, is not individual ability and strength (as is the case of those in the forest), but rather the owner’s lineage. The durian orchards are inherited under matrilineal principles. In addition, the owner of the durian orchard can receive commissions, through which people have begun to rent out their durian fields to outsiders, such as the Chinese. In the past, one generally obtained money for transporting durians, but now one can obtain money from the durian trees themselves. In other words, the durian trees have become “money trees” for their owners.

### *Selling*

Durian harvesters in Kampung Durian Tawar (and Malaysia generally) wait for the fruit to ripen and fall (*gugur*), and then collect them from the ground. Due to the nature of the fruit, the durians have a commodity value for only two or three days. Because of this, durians of Kampung Durian Tawar are not commodities sold in response to changes in the unit price.

Rather, as commodities the challenge is how quickly they can be converted into cash by being sold efficiently and at the highest possible price. If the durians are not sold quickly, they soon have no value.

When the durian season arrives the villagers devote themselves solely to the harvesting work. The challenge lies entirely in swiftly collecting

and selling as many durians as possible. If the fruit is rotten, damaged or unripe (*tak masak*), it is unsuitable as a commodity.

The unit price of the durians is highest at the beginning of the season, due to the relations of supply and demand. After the beginning of the season, demand decreases and supply increases, causing the unit price to drop in value. The unit price does not rise again towards the end of the season when supply again decreases because by the end of the durian season demand for durians has almost disappeared. (Regarding the correlation between weights, monetary amounts and prices for Kampung Durian Tawar as a whole, see Figure 11)<sup>28</sup>

The villagers have quite a lot to say about the selling of the durians, an activity that has brought them much annoyance and trouble. There have been countless instances of the wholesalers cheating the villagers and, conversely, of villagers cheating the wholesalers. This situation continues today.

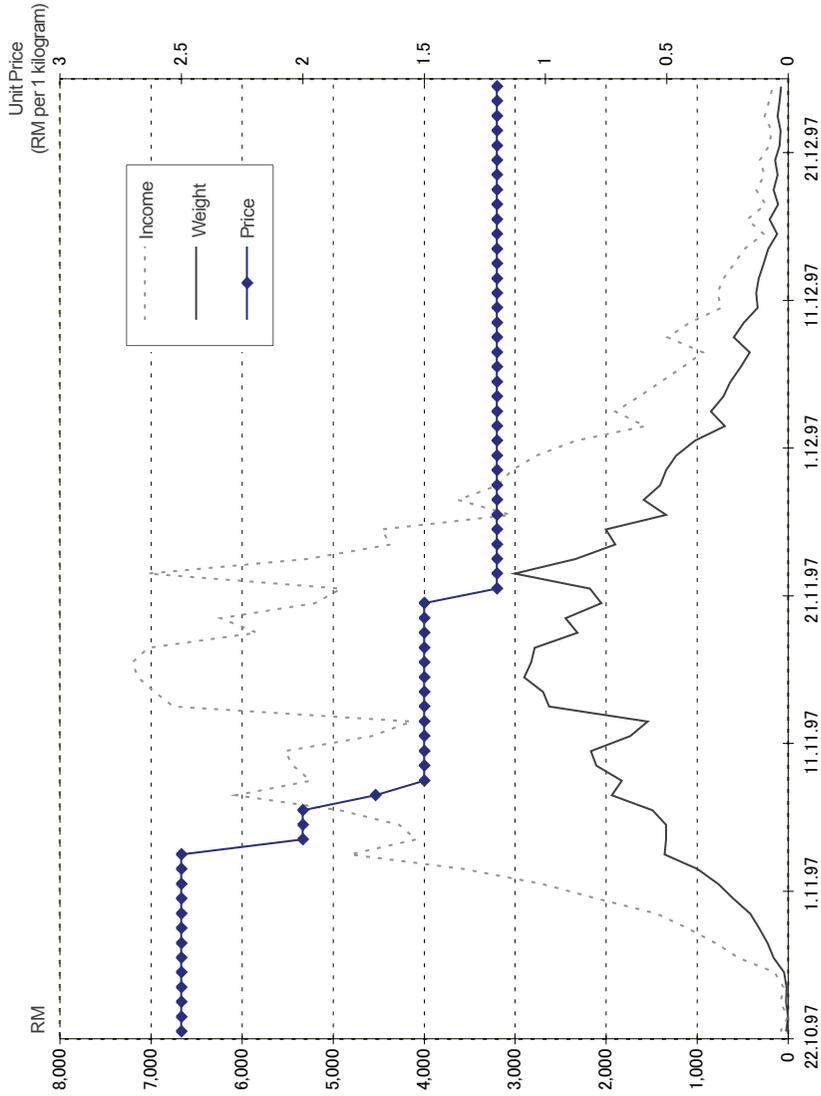
As one would expect, there have been cases of wholesalers (the Chinese or Malays) taking an “extra cut”. In part this is because, regardless of whether the villagers trust a particular wholesaler or not, they have no choice but to sell them the durians they have collected.<sup>29</sup> It is also because, prior to the current system, other methods of selling the durians made it easy for the wholesalers to take an extra cut. These included the wholesaler making a lump sum payment before the durian harvest season,<sup>30</sup> or buying all the fruit harvested from a durian tree at a set lump sum per tree. I was also told of cases in which parents and children made separate contracts for the same durian trees with more than one wholesaler (i.e. “double booking”), and cases where Malay wholesalers had paid the villagers late or not at all. Looking for a “good” wholesaler (*cari tauke*) when brokering or selling is an important element of the durians as commodity.<sup>31</sup>

### *Income*

The ability to protect and to transport durians is reflected in the income figures obtained from them, as is the number of durian orchards one owns. As is the case with other forest products, cash income obtained from durians is in most cases the income of those who have collected them (strictly speaking, of those who have been given permission to gather durians by the orchard owner). That is to say, it is the income of an individual.

Despite the fact that it is more difficult to transport durians from the forest than from near the village, the price paid for the durians is virtually the same. Therefore, harvesting durians from the forest is relatively

Figure 11: The durian harvest for Kampung Durian Tawar as a whole





**Plates 56-61: Selling durians.** There are several places for picking up durians in Kampung Durian Tawar. The villagers collect durians in the durian orchards and carry the durians by bike or by foot to these places. They sell durians to the Chinese trader or the Malay trader. At the



beginning of durian harvest season, the Chinese traders pick up durians early in the morning. But during the peak season, the Chinese traders pick up the durians twice a day, in the morning and evening, because a lot of durians are collected. [NT-1997]

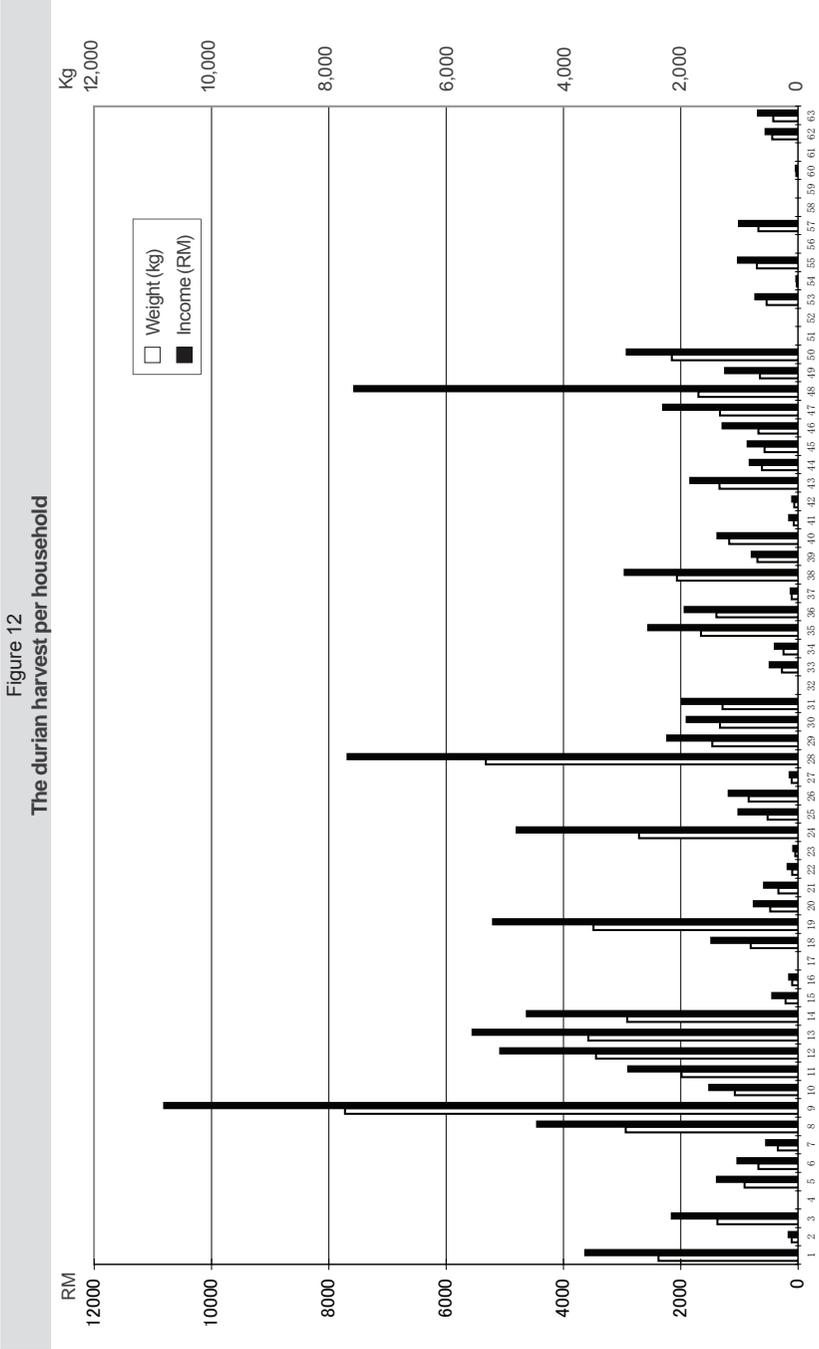
inefficient. Indeed, durians harvested from the forest sometimes receive a lower price. This is because of the cost incurred by the durian wholesalers going into the forest to purchase the durians. The poor roads in the forest often cause damage to the wholesalers' cars. The wholesalers incur a certain degree of risk, then, when they go into the forest to purchase durians.

In this section, I will look at household incomes from durians in the village in light of the above-mentioned characteristics. If income obtained from rubber tapping is comparable to "making a withdrawal from a bank", income obtained from durians is like receiving a quarterly or yearly bonus.<sup>32</sup>

If we look at the income data for durians in Kampung Durian Tawar (Table 17 and Figure 12), we see the prominence of Mangku Hasim's household (No. 9). Mangku Hasim is the son-in-law of Menteri Lewat and his de facto successor, and his household owns many durian orchards that were inherited from Menteri Lewat. However, in addition to the quantity of their durian orchards, another important factor is their agricultural management practices (the planting and maintenance of their durian trees). Mangku Hasim's sons have expanded their durian orchards and planted more durian trees.<sup>33</sup> The high level of income that the Mangku Hasim household obtains from durians reflects its agricultural management practices. By expanding their durian orchards and planting durian trees, they have increased the number of durian trees under their ownership and transformed the durians from being a forest product into a cash crop.<sup>34</sup>

The people in the former Menteri Lewat group (i.e. the current Batin Janggut group) have planted durian trees enthusiastically. The durian orchards of Batin Janggut and Jenang Misai have already been passed on to their children, and so the incomes from these durian orchards appear under separate households. The same situation has occurred in the case of Menteri Lewat and his children. Ajoin (No. 28) is in a "cousin marriage" (a marriage within the village), such that he and his wife both have durian orchards inherited from their parents. Because of this, along with the fact that after inheriting these durian orchards Ajoin and his wife planted new durian trees, their household's income from durians is high.

Doyes's (No. 48) husband, who is Chinese, manages a durian orchard. Although his durian orchard is not large, he grows *durian kahwin*, which are tasty and good in quality and so sell at a higher unit price. For this reason, he receives a high income from durians.<sup>35</sup>



## Economic Disparity

### *Rubber and Durian*

No matter how many rubber smallholdings a villager may own, he or she needs to carry out rubber tapping in order to obtain money from them. Income obtained from rubber reflects actual labor undertaken almost every day. On the other hand, the more durian orchards a person owns, the greater the income she or he will obtain from the durians. In addition, the number of durian trees a person owns, rather than the size of the orchard or orchards, is the primary measure of the income that can be obtained from them.

In contrast to rubber smallholdings, villagers strongly conceive of durians as symbol of inheritable property. The durian orchards planted (or discovered in the forest) by preceding generations of parents, grandparents and ancestors have become the property of their descendants. Durian trees grow naturally from seeds cast aside. In the case of rubber, however, one has to wait about seven years from the time the rubber seedlings are planted before the trees are mature enough to be tapped. In addition, rubber trees can apparently be tapped for approximately forty years, but after that they are no longer productive and so are cut down and the wood is sold. In short, durian trees can be passed on to the next generation; rubber trees cannot.

By comparing the incomes obtained by the upper people and the lower people from rubber tapping and durian harvesting, we see a clear difference between the two groups (see Table 17).<sup>36</sup>

If we look at the upper levels of income obtained from rubber tapping, the following households are prominent: Menteri Lewat's children (Nos. 1, 5, 8 and 9); Batin Janggut and Jenang Misai and their siblings (Nos. 13, 14, 19, 24 and 25); the descendants of Menteri Lewat's younger brother (No. 28); and Menteri Gemuk (No. 35). All of these are the households of titleholders or their close relatives, and all own a large number of rubber smallholdings.<sup>37</sup>

If we look at the upper levels of income obtained from rubber tapping among the lower people, we find that they are all households that follow the leadership of Batin Janggut (Nos. 40, 41, 45, 55 and 61). While the members of these households are among the lower people, they are not in opposition to the upper people. Indeed, they actively engage with them. This stance is reflected in their rubber-tapping work. Most of the households in the upper levels of income obtained from rubber tapping, including the households of Islamic converts (No. 46 and No. 50) are those

Table 18  
**Comparison of income from rubber and durian**

	Rubber		Durian	
	Weight (kg)	Income (RM)	Weight (kg)	Income (RM)
Upper people	6,470.00	6,112.14	1,409.06	2,121.24
Lower people	1,676.92	1,583.68	546.63	1,019.42
Village as a whole	4,644.06	4,387.01	1,080.52	1,701.50

RM = Ringgit Malaysia

NB: A comparison based on average figures per household.

of the children of Batin Deraman and Jenang Kichoi (the Ali group). With the exception of the household at No. 61, which follows the leadership of the upper people, the figures for the households of the Aki Main group (comprising newly arrived inhabitants in the village who have few rubber smallholdings) are low. Most of the people in these households engage in day laboring.

If we look in detail at the income obtained from durian harvesting, the following households occupy the highest positions among the upper people: the children of Menteri Lewat (Nos. 1, 8 and 9); Mangku Ujang's children (No. 12); Batin Janggut's siblings (Nos. 13, 14, 19 and 24); Menteri Lewat's younger brother's descendants (No. 28); Menteri Gemuk (No. 35); and Jererah Asang (No. 36).

In the case of the lower people, on the other hand, the incomes of Jererah Poyang's daughter (No. 40), Batin Deraman's son (No. 43), and Jenang Kichoi's son (No. 47) and daughters (No. 48 and No. 50) are prominent. As Ajam (No. 43) is unable to manage money, his income obtained from durians is included in the household income for his older brother Kedai (No. 45), who manages his money. Doyes's (No. 48) husband, who is Chinese, grows durians that sell for a high unit price; the income for that household is therefore high. The incomes of members of the Aki Main group (Nos. 57, 60, 62 and 63) are obtained solely from the durian trees owned by Aki Main (No. 57).

Income obtained from durians is not connected to actual labor; rather, it is largely connected to a particular household's kinship relations. This is shown by the fact that the households of the descendants of previous *adat* leaders occupy the positions of highest income obtained from durians.

By contrast, young couples' households tend not to own durian orchards. However, if they have kinship relations with the owners of durian orchards, they can receive the benefits of the durian harvest through helping out with transporting and other kinds of work.

If we now compare the average incomes for households of the upper people and the lower people, we see that the income of the former group obtained from rubber is on average approximately four times that of the latter. For income obtained from durians, the average income for the upper people is approximately twice that of the lower people (see Table 18). These relative differences can be attributed to factors such as actual labor expended, the level of ownership of rubber smallholdings or durian orchards, and specific characteristics of each type of income.

Other than couples who have newly established a household, most households own some durian orchards, though the sizes of the orchards vary. In contrast to rubber smallholdings, which have either been developed by individual households or obtained through development projects, most durian orchards have been passed on to children by their parents. The villagers in the former Ali group, who have shown no interest in rubber-tapping work, also own durian orchards. They originally used the orchards to provide fruit for their own consumption, but now use them for cash crops. Even the people of the Aki Main group, who moved into Kampung Durian Tawar from outside, derive some income from durians (from the durian orchards owned by Aki Main), though this is relatively small.

People who do not undertake rubber tapping participate in durian harvesting. Couples who do not own durian orchards are occasionally given some durian harvesting work, and so on these occasions can also obtain income from durians. Though there are certainly differences in income obtained from durians, durian harvesting is nonetheless a benefit enjoyed by all the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar.

A number of factors combine to explain the different incomes obtained from durians. These include levels and types of investment in the durian orchards (i.e. expenditure on planting trees or maintaining orchards with pest control chemicals), the actual durian harvesting work, and the size of durian orchards inherited from preceding generations. Income obtained from rubber tapping (where the diligence and hard work of the individual is reflected in the income obtained) and that obtained from durians differs in that the individual's kinship relations have an influence on the latter.

If the parents' generation has assiduously maintained its durian orchards, then their children are able to obtain a certain amount of income

even if they undertake no maintenance work on the orchards. This tendency is particularly evident in the case of the descendants of the former Ali group. Though they do not actively plant durian trees, or maintain them, they are still able to receive the benefits of the orchards left to them by their parents' generation. This is also true of the siblings Surak (No. 29) and Poteh (No. 26) and their descendants (including Ajoin's household (No. 28)). They have received the benefits of the durian orchards left to them by their father, who was the older brother of Menteri Lewat. Incidentally, Surak sold part of these orchards to Batin Janggut.

In contrast to the private nature of the rubber smallholdings, the durian orchards are more communal. In fact, some of the durian orchards are the common property of members of a particular matrilineal descent group (e.g. Dusun Sergah and Dusun Ilam). It is no exaggeration to say that in Kampung Durian Tawar relatives are linked together by durian orchards. The durian orchards are inherited through kinship relations, and only the descendants of a particular kinship group are permitted to undertake durian harvesting from a particular durian orchard. In this way, the relatives using the same durian orchards form a type of community.<sup>38</sup>

Apart from the differences in income between the upper people and the lower people, we should also note the high incomes of the households of the *adat* leaders (and their close relations). Through analysis of the incomes of individual households, we can see the development of a stratification, though slight, among the upper people. The phenomenon of wealth being concentrated in the Batin and his family is common in Orang Asli villages, but such a concentration of wealth is particularly striking in the case of Kampung Durian Tawar.

Finally, although incomes obtained from rubber and durians may be low in the case of particular households, this does not necessarily mean that the total incomes for these households are low. Such households gather forest products or engage in day laboring to supplement the household budget. Indeed, there are households where income obtained from such activities is the principal means of livelihood. Even so, in the case of Kampung Durian Tawar it is appropriate to take income obtained from rubber and durians as an index of overall income. This is because, within the economic life of the village, rubber-tapping work (from which the villagers can obtain stable cash income) is the principal means of livelihood, and also because particularly large durian harvests occur there. In addition, the income disparities in rubber and durian incomes are also reflected in the differences in household conditions for the upper people and the lower people. Let us now look at these differences.

Table 19  
Comparison of household conditions

	Upper people	Lower people	Kampung Durian Tawar as a whole	Urban Orang Asli	Rural Orang Asli	Orang Asli as a whole	Malay Peninsula as a whole
Average number of householders	6.13	6.21	6.16	...	...	...	...
Average number of bedrooms	2.74	1.96	2.43	...	...	...	...
PPRT percentage	5.1%	45.8%	20.6%	...	...	...	...
Gas kitchen	69.2%	37.5%	57.1%	...	...	...	...
Electricity	87.2%	50.0%	73.0%	...	...	36.2%	...
Water	100.0%	25.0%	71.4%	...	...	46.4%	...
Telephone	66.7%	12.5%	46.0%	29.6%	1.8%	6.0%	34.0%
Television	76.9%	45.8%	65.1%	75.8%	30.7%	37.6%	82.1%
Video player	7.9%	20.8%	15.9%	28.7%	3.4%	7.3%	32.6%
Radio	79.5%	58.3%	71.4%	72.2%	49.3%	52.7%	78.3%
Refrigerator	33.3%	4.2%	22.2%	59.5%	8.3%	16.1%	63.5%
Washing machine	12.8%	0.0%	7.9%	...	...	...	...
Car	17.9%	8.3%	14.3%	29.2%	4.1%	7.9%	34.2%
Motorbike	89.7%	75.0%	84.1%	39.8%	35.0%	35.8%	52.9%

NB: Data for Kampung Durian Tawar is based on the author's survey of households. Data for the Orang Asli is based on Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia (1997).

### *Household Conditions*

I undertook an interview survey of households in Kampung Durian Tawar in 1997. Here I compare the household conditions of the upper people and the lower people based on the data I obtained. For reference and comparison, I have also provided data from the Malaysian Department of Statistics in 1991.

For electricity and water, statistical data exists for the Orang Asli as a whole. For ownership of telephones, televisions, video players, radios,

refrigerators, cars, motorbikes and bicycles, statistical data from 1991 (with separate data for city and rural areas) exists for both the Orang Asli as a whole and for the Malay Peninsula as a whole (see Table 19). The particular items under consideration have been spreading rapidly among the population. Therefore, any comparisons between the 1991 data and the 1997 data I gathered for Kampung Durian Tawar must be treated with caution. Keeping this qualification in mind, a comparison can offer some general ideas of the economic situation in Kampung Durian Tawar.

If we compare the ownership of items in Kampung Durian Tawar with those among the Orang Asli as a whole, we can see that the former far exceeds the latter. Ownership by the upper people exceeds that of the Orang Asli to an even greater degree. In comparison with ownership among city-dwelling Orang Asli, the rurally located people of Kampung Durian Tawar have higher ownership of several items. In addition, ownership by the upper people virtually equals that of city-dwelling Orang Asli, and on some items even exceeds it. Further, ownership among the upper people, as with city-dwelling Orang Asli, is approaching ownership levels of the Malay Peninsula as a whole.

Ownership by the lower people is at around the same level as that of the Orang Asli as a whole. In the context of the Orang Asli as a whole, therefore, the lives of the lower people are average. Why is it, then, that their lives appear strained when compared to the upper people living in the same village? Is this simply how they seem, relative to the upper people? When compared to ownership levels of the Malay Peninsula as a whole (which includes Malays, the Chinese, the Indians and other ethnic groups), ownership among the Orang Asli as a whole is low. We can therefore see that calling their poverty “relative” is too simple. In addition, the upper people appear to be wealthy only within the context of Kampung Durian Tawar. If we consider them in the context of the Malay Peninsula as a whole, it cannot be said that they are particularly prosperous.

Our main goal here is to compare the household conditions of the upper people and the lower people. If we compare ownership of items between these groups, with the exception of video players, the upper people show a higher rate of ownership.<sup>39</sup> In addition, the lower people have received a higher percentage of housing aid projects distributed by PPRT. These household conditions of the upper people and the lower people are connected to the disparities between them in terms of income obtained from rubber and durians.

If we look at economic matters in present-day Kampung Durian Tawar using such indices as rubber tapping, durian harvesting and general

household conditions, we can identify decisive economic disparities between the upper and lower people. Although not dealt with in this book, children with higher levels of education are also concentrated among the upper people, as are villagers with official positions in UMNO and POASM. In other words, the economic disparity between the upper people and the lower people is accompanied by unequal distributions of political power within the village. The economic disparity is therefore likely to reproduce itself in the future.

### Notes

1. For example, the upper people say that the lower people do not save any money but, rather, spend it as soon as they earn it.
2. The manager of the rubber trader's shop is Aman, Mangku Hasim's son. Aman's mother (Mangku Hasim's wife) is a Chinese whose parents were killed by the Japanese forces. When she was small, she was taken in and raised by the Orang Asli. Mangku Hasim's father-in-law was Menteri Lewat, who owned the rubber trader's shop. Perhaps because Aman has some Chinese ancestry, the rubber trader's shop in Kampung Durian Tawar is a member of a rubber traders' guild in Pertang formed by the Chinese rubber traders. The guild operates as a sort of black market cartel, and due to this the rubber trader's shop in Kampung Durian Tawar is able to maintain financial stability (incidentally, the guild does not permit membership by Malay or Indian rubber traders). The guild controls the price of rubber in the area. As such, even when the price of rubber actually drops, a certain amount of profit can still be made. Aman determines the price paid for the rubber, based on the quality of the rubber (on, for example, how much water it contains). The villagers are unaware that the price paid for the rubber differs slightly depending on which rubber trader one deals with. Once the rubber has been sold to the rubber trader, the guild sells it on to a rubber-processing plant.
3. The villagers themselves, however, do not understand the situation this way, at least that is not how they talk about it. Rather, what they present as the reason for abandoning wet rice cultivation is a change in the forest environment occurring in conjunction with deforestation, the construction of dams and the like. With the damage these

phenomena cause to the forest environment, the forest's ability to retain water is said to have declined. The villagers have experienced this for themselves. Decreased water retention in the forest has led to greater levels of soil and gravel in the rivers and streams, which in turn has led to an increase in the water levels and a loss of stability in the water supply for wet rice cultivation. As a result, the villagers say, the paddy fields became unproductive and, at least for the time being, wet rice cultivation became impossible. Whatever the reason for the abandonment of wet rice cultivation, rubber development projects were being implemented at the same time, and in order to survive the villagers switched to rubber-tapping work.

4. On the surface, the villagers' hunting and gathering activities seem to be based on a subsistence economy. However, they now pursue these activities for cash and, as such, are involved in the market economy. For example, when they catch wild pigs or squirrels they may sell them as game to Chinese traders, and then use the money obtained from the sale to buy vegetables or chickens. This sort of activity exemplifies the economic lives of present-day villagers. The livelihoods of the villagers in Kampung Durian Tawar, then, are now based on the logic of the market economy, and this change has occurred over a period of time. In this situation of livelihoods based on the market economy, rubber-tapping work and the harvesting of durians provide the most stable cash income.
5. A festival was previously held in Kampung Durian Tawar at the same time as Chinese New Year. In some Orang Asli villages that have a close economic relationship with the Chinese, the village festival is held to coincide with the Chinese holidays. Lee (1976) has written about the religious and economic influence of the Chinese on the Temuan in Melaka state.
6. Regarding the introduction of the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) from Brazil in South America to Southeast Asia, the economic effects it has had in Southeast Asia, and differences between rubber and other cash crops, see Ishikawa (1997: 587). Ishikawa discusses from a political-economy perspective the effect rubber cultivation, influenced as it is by the fluctuating unit price of rubber, has had on village economies. In this book I do not deal with a macro perspective but focus on the effects rubber cultivation has had on the village economy at the micro level. Ishikawa's article nonetheless provides many useful insights and

much relevant information for the discussion of rubber in this chapter. Kato (1991) discusses from an historical perspective the influence of the introduction of rubber cultivation on the agricultural economy of Negeri Sembilan.

7. *Petai* is harvested approximately every three months. At this time, the price at the beginning of each harvest season is about 20 ringgit per 100 bunches of *petai*. Even when the price is at its lowest you can still get about 12 ringgit per 100 bunches. In a gathering of *petai* that I participated in, 600 bunches (17 ringgit/100 bunches) were gathered.
8. Those who engage in rubber tapping usually enter “rubber tapping” as their occupation on documents presented to government institutions such as schools and municipal offices. People who own a rubber smallholding and to some extent engage in rubber tapping work, and even those for whom rubber tapping is only part of their total income, write “rubber tapping”. Most who do not enter “rubber tapping” on these forms enter “forest product gathering” instead. People who write “forest product gathering” either do not own a rubber smallholding or, if they do, do not engage in rubber-tapping work. The fact that so many people enter their occupation as “rubber tapping” is arguably because this is advantageous when dealing with the government; advantageous, that is to say, in terms of receiving development projects.
9. The Chinese who rent rubber smallholdings in Kampung Durian Tawar do rubber-tapping work almost daily, allowing only natural circumstances such as rain to stop them. Coming to the rubber gardens they rent in Kampung Durian Tawar by motorbike early in the morning, they mark the rubber trees with their knives and at the same time collect the rubber that has solidified from the previous day’s work. By the time they finish rubber tapping for that day, they have collected all the rubber tapped on the previous day. They pack this solidified rubber into special rubber-holding containers made of iron, or into old bags previously used for holding chicken feed or rice, and head off to make sales at the rubber trader’s shop. If the Chinese rent more than one rubber smallholding, they then go to the other rubber garden(s) and repeat the same procedure. If they also sell latex (rubber in liquid form), they collect the liquid rubber latex after having first completed the day’s tapping and having collected, during that tapping, the solidified rubber from the previous day’s work. In other words, they collect both solidified rubber from the previous day’s work and liquid

rubber from the present day's work. (When I was in Kampung Durian Tawar there was only one person, a Chinese woman, who collected liquid rubber in addition to solidified rubber.) The solidified rubber is then sold at the rubber trader's shop in Kampung Durian Tawar, and the liquid rubber is sold at a rubber trader's shop that deals in liquid rubber in Pertang. Some of the Chinese renting rubber smallholdings in Kampung Durian Tawar allow the rubber trees a day of "rest" between tapping work. However, most of them do the work almost every day, as, after all, they do not own the rubber smallholding. The villagers once engaged in work producing rubber sheets from liquid rubber. They no longer do this, however, as profits gained do not equal time consumed.

10. When I was undertaking my study, the price was good; a kilogram fetched 1 ringgit 5 sen. When the price is bad, a kilogram only fetches about 90 sen.
11. Differences in methods of rubber tapping appear evident across the racial groups. Indeed, the people themselves see things in this way. It is also the case, however, that rubber tapping is talked about in terms of racial stereotypes, which have nothing to do with how the different ethnic groups actually carry out the work. The "hard-working" Chinese and the "lazy" Malays is one such stereotype. The Orang Asli are generally described as falling into the same category as the lazy Malays. Indeed, the Orang Asli describe themselves as "lazy" in comparison to the hard-working Chinese.
12. The Chinese and Mandailing (Muslim Batak who are regarded as "Malay", but who are in fact different from the Malays) who rent rubber smallholdings in Kampung Durian Tawar sell the rubber they have collected on the same day that they do the rubber tapping. This seems to be either because they do not own the rubber smallholdings, or because they fear that thieves will steal the rubber. In at least one instance, someone stole rubber tapped by the Chinese (the culprit was a villager from Kampung Durian Tawar).
13. Owners rent out their rubber smallholdings for a variety of reasons. They may prefer hunting and gathering activities to rubber tapping, or the rubber smallholdings may be offered as security for a loan to the Chinese traders. In most cases, they do so for the latter reason. When a person has rented out his or her rubber smallholdings, he or she can no longer undertake tapping work and has no option but to

hunt and gather or perform day laboring for the Chinese employers. As far as I was able to ascertain, the only owner renting out rubber smallholdings as a true “landlord” was Tikak at No. 18. All others offered their rubber smallholdings as security for a loan. Loans in which rubber smallholdings act as security are often exploitative, in that unaware Orang Asli take on unlawful loans (Mohd. Tap 1990: 76-77). Many traders coming into the area from outside to purchase durians and forest products perpetrate similar kinds of exploitation, as do several officials from JHEOA (Mohd. Tap 1990: 84).

14. The sayings “no money, no friend” and “no money, no talk” frequently used by the Chinese apply not only to the Chinese society; but to Orang Asli society as well. The expressions “*nyap duit, nyap kawan*” (“no money, no friend”) and “*nyap duit, nyap cakap*” (“no money, no talk”) are frequently heard amongst Orang Asli. Regardless of whether or not one agrees with the money worship suggested by these expressions, this forms a certain sort of economic value in Kampung Durian Tawar.
15. According to rumor, the cultivated land (rubber smallholdings and durian orchards) Batin Janggut himself has opened up, including that which he mobilized his sons to open up, is in total as much as 150 acres. Given that Batin Janggut owns cultivated land not only in Kampung Durian Tawar and Kampung Dalam but also in Kampung Banning, this rumor may well be grounded in fact. At the same time, many of his rubber smallholdings and durian orchards have actually been passed on to his married children.
16. Some of Batin Janggut’s rubber smallholdings have been given to his divorced third wife (No. 15) and her daughters (No. 16 and No. 17), and to his son Tikak (No. 18). At present, the aforementioned variable system no longer exists between Batin Janggut and the children with whom he is in conflict. All the income they obtain from rubber tapping remains their own.
17. The rubber-tapping work begun by these two households, however, does not appear in the data being considered here because they did not begin to do rubber-tapping work until after the period in which I was gathering the data.
18. This was taken from them for a development project; their compensation is not actually for the land itself but for the durian trees that were on it.

19. Although Kampung Durian Tawar was formed under a resettlement policy, its current location is close to where the villagers used to live. The area of the Orang Asli reservation alone in Kampung Durian Tawar is approximately 800 acres, making it the second-largest Orang Asli village in Negeri Sembilan (the largest is Kampung Dalam, which is approximately 1,500 acres). The “forest” (forest reservation) at the center of Negeri Sembilan surrounds Kampung Durian Tawar, and the durians and forest products gathered from this forest support the lives of the villagers. The village where I began my field study, Kampung Baning, did not have many durian trees. This was because in the 1960s an Orang Asli reservation (of approximately ninety acres) was newly established in Kampung Baning, into which Orang Asli from the area were gathered. As a result, Kampung Baning is surrounded by parts of the Malay village in which it was established, and by government land opened up for development projects undertaken by FELDA.
20. During the durian season in Malaysia, it is a common sight nowadays to see durians, with their strong, distinctive aroma, being sold in the markets and by the side of the road. Many Malays, enticed by the aroma of the durians, stop their cars, and buy and eat the durians on the spot. There are various types of durian, with the *durian kahwin* (an improved variety of durian formed through the grafting of different types of durian) selling at a high price. There are even durians sold in hotels, aimed at the tourist market.
21. Most of the land is in the forest reservation and therefore is not regarded as owned.
22. One rate I heard was 200 ringgit per tree. As income earned from one durian tree, this is low.
23. Having watched the transporting work with my own eyes, I can confidently state that carrying durians from halfway up a mountain is very demanding. The villagers carrying several dozen kilograms of durians along narrow, hilly paths could only impress the durian wholesalers and me.
24. There are a variety of types of baskets carried on the back. As examples, *amung* is a basket made of *rotan*, *garas* is a basket made from *langkap* (a tree of the coconut family) and *bankal* is a basket-type container made of *rotan*.

25. Sometimes all the income earned from the durian harvest ends up being spent on repairs to a broken-down motorbike.
26. This shift is also connected to the slight increase in the number of villagers planting an improved variety, developed through grafting, of *durian kahwin* (e.g. the D24 variety). Being of good quality, the price of *durian kahwin* is high, but they require fertilizer, chemicals, and the removal of grass and weeds. The villagers spend practically no money on fertilizers and chemicals for “ordinary durians” (*durian biasa*), and so *durian kahwin* further symbolize for the villagers the switch from durians as a forest product to durians as a cash crop.
27. As already mentioned, some durian orchards were formed through letting the durian trees grow naturally where the villagers had eaten them and discarded the seeds. Others were formed by those who planted new durian trees with a view to selling the durians as a commodity. Still others were formed in places in the forest where their ancestors were thought to have lived, where villagers happened to find the trees growing in the wild. Finally, there are also durian orchards that were formed out of durian seedlings planted in the forest by villagers fleeing the invasion of the Japanese forces.
28. The fact that there are days when the number of durians harvested is low is due to such things as the villagers having stopped harvesting to attend a POASM meeting being held in the village, or due to a change in the unit price.
29. The villagers sometimes have to sell their durians to wholesalers who may be known to take an unfair “extra cut” or are otherwise untrustworthy.
30. A form of advance payment is also seen in the case of the gathering of forest products such as rattan. Sometimes the amount harvested falls short of the amount of advance payment received, causing an increase in debt for the person involved.
31. Batin Janggut’s father was Chinese and Batin Janggut can speak Chinese. He also has an established network with the Chinese in the district, most of whom regard him as a partner (as “Chinese”, in other words). Since wholesalers with close relations with the Batin have become involved in the durian sales, the selling has been conducted relatively fairly. Groups in conflict with the Batin (like the Aki Main group) and those people who do not think that the Chinese wholesalers

can be trusted do business with Malay wholesalers. After I had finished my study and returned to Japan, a wholesaler in Kampung Durian Tawar, a Chinese male, married one of Batin Janggut's daughters.

32. In fact, many of the villagers use their income from durians to obtain a driver's license or to purchase furniture, household electrical goods (such as a radio) or agricultural machinery. In other words, they often use this income for items requiring a substantial amount of money.
33. This was carried out under the leadership of Mangku Hasim's "Chinese" wife. She is particularly skilled at agricultural management, actively maintaining the household's durian orchards and vegetable fields. If there are any unused areas, she ploughs them up and grows fruit trees or vegetables. For the Orang Asli, who in the past lived in a subsistence economy, gathering fruit and vegetables growing wild in the forest was "commonsense", and in this the Kampung Durian Tawar villagers were no exception. The women gathered edible vegetables growing in the wild and tended orchards and cassava fields to provide food for their own consumption and they virtually never cultivated such fruit and vegetables to obtain money. Nowadays, many women continue to grow vegetable and other crops for their own consumption; only a few grow such crops to sell the surplus for cash – the Mangku's wife is a principal example.
34. Although almost all of the villagers in fact harvest durians growing wild in the forest, in Mangku Hasim's orchards in the forest they have planted new durian trees. The durians growing in the forest, therefore, are now a stable commodity. Sometimes a harvest season in the forest occurs outside the usual durian season, at which times the unit price is high because of the small number of durians on the market and the Mangku Hasim household obtains a higher than usual profit.
35. Even though the villagers are aware of the higher unit price for *durian kahwin*, most of them do not grow them because they require investment in chemicals and maintenance to prevent insect damage. As far as I was able to ascertain, Mangku Hasim's son Aman, Ukal and Tikak have recently planted *durian kahwin*, but they are not yet mature enough to provide fruit.
36. A comparison based on the average or mean figure per person would also be possible. However, because in this chapter I am comparing the group of households that participated in the housing construction

project (the upper people) with those who did not (the lower people), the important comparison is that of the average figure per household.

37. The household (No. 18) of Batin Janggut's son Tikak, who is in conflict with his father, has a low figure. This is because he has rented out most of his rubber smallholdings to the Chinese (the rental income received, under yearly contracts, is approximately 3,000 ringgit). Tikak's wife and children do the rubber tapping in that household.
38. Such "communities" are not just formed by matrilineal descent groups, the ideal in Kampung Durian Tawar; they are also formed by kinship groups that follow kindred lines bilaterally. Regardless of how the particular community is formed, common ownership based on kinship relations can be seen in the case of durian orchards. This feature is absent from rubber smallholdings.
39. Ownership of video players is high amongst the lower people because households belonging to the Aki Main group employed in day laboring have received video players as presents from their Chinese employers. In the household survey I undertook, several households amongst the lower people owned video players where electricity was not even connected to their houses.