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

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Chapter 4

Village History

Movement before Independence

In the 1870s Batin Baning, the founder of Kampung Durian Tawar, moved with his relatives from the Tampin area in Negeri Sembilan to an area west of present-day Kampung Durian Tawar (Movement 1) (on the villagers' movement referred to in the following discussion, refer to Table 12). This was more than a century before Baharon undertook his study (for the location of *dusuns* and places of habitation, refer to Figure 6).¹ At the first place in which they settled, Dusun Ilam, they carried out swidden cultivation of dry rice, cassava and corn. They also planted durian tree seedlings (although there is a story that they first settled in an area where durian trees were already growing).

Batin Baning and his wife were attacked and killed by a Malayan tiger while on a trip to Ulu Beranang to gather durians (Ulu Beranang is an Orang Asli village located near the border between present-day Negeri Sembilan and Selangor). After the disappearance of the Batin, Batin Siuntung, the Malay husband of Pindah, one of Batin Baning's matrilineal cousins (i.e. a relative belonging to the same matrilineal group) succeeded to his title (Siuntung himself was not a member of this matrilineal group). Batin Siuntung was a Malay warrior of high rank. He had fled to the Kampung Durian Tawar area from Pahang and had relatives living in the Malay villages in the area. In addition to being Malay, he was a pious Muslim who apparently never missed his daily prayers.

In the 1880s a group of people under the leadership of Batin Siuntung moved from Dusun Ilam to present-day Kampung Durian Tawar (Movement 2). One of the reasons given for this move is that Batin Siuntung wished to be closer to his relatives in the surrounding Malay villages. In this new location the group under his leadership began wet

rice cultivation. During the durian harvest season he invited his Malay relatives to the new village to eat durian and other fruit with him and his people. The custom of inviting Malays to the village during durian harvests continued until the Orang Asli took refuge in the forest during the Japanese invasion.

Around 1920 Bongsu, the husband of Batin Siuntung's daughter, succeeded to the title of Batin, and Batin Siuntung's son, Ali, took the title of Jekerah. The Malay rulers (the Undang) of Jelebu in this period, Dato' Syed Ali (18??-1905) and Dato' Abdullah (1905-45), referred to Batin Bongsu and Jekerah Ali as "relatives from the interior" (*waris didalam*), and are said to have built close relationships with them.² Dato' Abdullah was from Pahang and was, in fact, related to Batin Siuntung. The villagers say that he enjoyed participating in gathering resin (*damar*) with the Orang Asli. As mentioned, Ali's father, Batin Siuntung, was Malay. The villagers say that Batin Bongsu had Malay blood. Both Jekerah Ali and Batin Bongsu were, therefore, in one way or another, related to Malays.

During the period of Batin Bongsu's leadership (1920-40), leaders from surrounding villages were invited to Kampung Durian Tawar during the durian harvest season; for example, Batin Dulang came from nearby Kampung Akai and Batin Keset (Batin Bongsu's older brother) came from Chergon (which was located near present-day Kampung Dalam, but no longer exists). As a result, the people of Kampung Durian Tawar intermarried with the people of Kampung Akai and Chergon.³

A group led by Jekerah Ali left Batin Bongsu's group and moved to an area near present-day Sialang (Movement 3). Jekerah Ali's son, Deraman, succeeded to the title of the next Batin and remained in Sialang. Jekerah Ali continued to hold influence during the period of the leadership of Batin Deraman. Batin Bongsu's son, Lewat, succeeded to the title of Menteri and became the leader of Bongsu's group. This is how the Jekerah Ali group and the Menteri Lewat group were formed. They are referred to from here on as the Ali group and the Lewat group.

During the Japanese occupation, Panglima Seng, the Chinese husband of Batin Bongsu's daughter, was captured and killed by Japanese forces. The villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar (i.e. the Ali group and the Lewat group), thinking they had angered the Japanese forces by harboring Panglima Seng, fled deep into the forest (Movement 4). At the sites of present-day Dusun Pah and Dusun Gati, they met up with people from Kampung Dalam and Chergon who had also fled to the forest after harboring Chinese and fearing attack. When the turbulent, early stages of the Japanese occupation subsided, these Orang Asli moved from deep

within the forest to the slightly less isolated area of Dusun Sergah. This period of refuge in the forest has been described as a “period of desperate, of extreme harshness and hardship” (*da’ asat*) for the villagers (Baharon 1973: 61).

When British Commonwealth soldiers told the villagers of the surrender of the Japanese, they emerged from the forest. The Ali group returned to Sialang and the Lewat group settled in the area of Old Kampung Durian Tawar (i.e. in an area different from that in which they had lived prior to the Japanese occupation) (Movement 5).

During the Emergency period the villagers lived under British Commonwealth military policy as refugees in a resettlement area near Peradong (Movement 6). There is a record of a Jelebu District Officer application to the State Department of Forestry at the time, requesting land to enable the Orang Asli to undertake wet rice cultivation and to grow cassava and bananas in Peradong (Jabatan Hutan Negri Sembilan 24/54 1954). As well as villagers from Kampung Durian Tawar and Kampung Akai, Orang Asli were taken by the British to Peradong from areas around Kenaboi and Kuala Kelawang. The total number at Peradong was about 400.

Of particular note regarding this period, Peradong was the first place in which the Temuan economy was introduced to the practice of working for a cash income (through rubber tapping). In addition to work within the subsistence economy, which had existed previously, people began to undertake wage labor by planting rubber trees and tapping rubber in Malay-owned rubber plantations.⁴ By 1956 most of the Orang Asli villagers at Peradong were allowed to return to their respective home villages. The Ali group returned to Sialang and the Lewat group to the area of Old Kampung Durian Tawar. Soon after this, the Ali group split into two, with part of the group moving to the area of present-day Jelawai (Movement 7).

In 1966 Batin Deraman died, and in the following year Batin Janggut succeeded to the title of Batin.⁵ Prior to this, Batin Janggut was an employee of the JHEOA in Kampung Baning and was based in Kampung Dalam (his first wife died and his second and third wives lived in Kampung Dalam). After succeeding to the title of Batin, he switched his base to Kampung Durian Tawar, and moved one of his wives (his third wife) and her children there. When he was working as a JHEOA official he stayed in the Pertang area branch office of the JHEOA in Kampung Baning; when undertaking duties as Batin, he would visit Kampung Durian Tawar.

Under a housing construction project in 1970, the people from the Lewat group who had been living in Old Kampung Durian Tawar moved to their present location (Movement 8). The Ali group, which had been living in Sialang, then moved (somewhat later) to Jelawai, though some remained where they were.

Looking back over the early movements of the people of Kampung Durian Tawar, an immediate question arises. The history of the village, seen in this way, begins with Batin Baning and his people when they moved from the Tampin area to Dusun Ilam, but there is no mention of where Batin Baning and his people came from, nor any mention about their roots. It is possible that they were “Malay”. At a later period, the people of the village began to have contact with the Malays under the leadership of Siuntung (he was Malay, as will be recalled, but his Malay name is unknown), who had come to the village after fleeing a war in Pahang. Under Siuntung’s leadership, the village came under the tutelage of the Malay ruler. Towards the end of the British colonial period, we also begin to see the existence of Chinese in the village. Inter-ethnic connections are, then, a feature of the early history of Kampung Durian Tawar.

According to the records, in 1915 the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar were regarded as different from the Malays. This is evident in Evans’s fieldwork report as director of the Perak Museum, in which he visited this area in 1914 (Evans 1915). Based on information gained from “Jakun” living in the area, Evans presents the following findings in his report: (1) durian were already being cultivated at that time, as were cassava, and rattan and other forest products were being sold by local Chinese in Pertang; (2) people from the village were purchasing rice with money obtained from selling wild animals caught through hunting; (3) various titles of leadership existed among them; and (4) intermarriage occurred between the people of the village and the villagers from Kampung Simpang Pertang, Kampung Akai and Kampung Air (Evans 1915: 101-04). For a number of reasons, however, Evans did not visit Kampung Durian Tawar.⁶

From Evans’s report, it seems clear that the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar were regarded as being different from the Muslim Malays and were referred to as “Sakai” or “Jakun”. But from the oral histories passed down by the people of the village, there is also evidence of widespread intermarriage with Malays and the Chinese, and of a close relationship between the village and the Malay political structures of the time.⁷ Yet, despite the actual connections between the villagers of

Kampung Durian Tawar and the Malays and local Chinese, the view of them as “Sakai” or “Jakun” was to be decisive in their future fate.

The Japanese invasion of the Malay Peninsula came as a shock to the villagers, and was to have a significant effect on their society. Taking refuge deep within the forest, their ties with Malay society were completely severed. Pre-Japanese occupation relations between villagers and Malays, such as visits of Malays to the village during durian harvests, were not resumed after the occupation.

During the Emergency period, the forest changed from a place of domicile to a battle zone between Chinese-led Communist insurgents and British Commonwealth forces. This also had a decisive effect on the future of Orang Asli society. In contrast to the situation during the Japanese occupation, in this later conflict they were suspected of assisting the insurgents and were taken by the government from the forest and relocated to resettlement areas (such as Peradong). The government at the time felt it necessary, for both military and administrative reasons, to somehow deal with the Orang Asli.

The foundations for the administration of the Orang Asli were put in place during this period. The JHEOA (at the time known as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs) was established in 1950, was enlarged in 1954 and, in the same year, the Aboriginal Peoples Ordinance (later the Aboriginal Peoples Act) was enacted. In the midst of these developments, the image of the Orang Asli that has since held sway can be said to have emerged.

When the villagers returned to Kampung Durian Tawar at the end of the Emergency period, they were no longer the “forest people”. Their lives as refugees had changed their basic means of livelihood. In addition, most of the rites and magic they had once practised had gradually disappeared, and most of the knowledge regarding these had been lost. Being banned from living in the forest, most of the knowledge and skills they had developed in this earlier life were also lost.

After Independence

With Malaysian independence the Malays took political control and the relationship between the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar and Malays changed yet again. Categorized as Orang Asli, the villagers were now identified as constituents within the nation-state and were identified as being in need of economic development and as a people who should in the future be assimilated with the Malays. In the 1960s, when Batin Janggut succeeded to the title of Batin, a new relationship between the Orang Asli and the Malaysian state was being established.

Batin Janggut

Batin Janggut and his older brother Jenang Misai led the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar from the late 1960s onwards. As mentioned above, their father was Chinese. They were, in other words, of mixed blood, born of a Chinese father and an Orang Asli mother. During the Japanese occupation they took refuge in the forest, living under the guidance of their mother's people. Before that, they had lived with their father, a carpenter, in a Malay village. Their father's brothers also married Orang Asli women and their "cousins" joined the Communist insurgents during the Emergency period and died fighting the British Commonwealth forces.

Batin Janggut's life has followed an unusual path. Suspected of assisting the Communist insurgents, he was arrested by the British forces during the Emergency period and spent about three months in jail. After being released, he became a guide and porter for the British forces, guiding them through the forest. Later he was employed by the newly formed JHEOA. He worked for the JHEOA as a field assistant, taking on the job of encouraging development in the Orang Asli villages of Negeri Sembilan. Through Batin Janggut's information, the JHEOA gained knowledge of Orang Asli society, and Batin Janggut in turn was given on-site command of specific development projects. In all projects undertaken, from school, housing and hall construction to the opening up of land for cultivation (such as for rubber smallholdings), Batin Janggut acted as chief mediator.

Although he was a JHEOA official, the villagers also recognized Batin Janggut as having leadership qualities. His succession to the title of Batin in 1967 signified his ability to act as a true mediator between the government (the JHEOA) and the Orang Asli community. Previous Batins had also acted as intermediaries with the outside world (the traditional Malay polity or the British colonial government) in addition to holding traditional authority. Their role, however, was always symbolic and the extent of their authority limited. Prior to Batin Janggut's time, the "modern" authority that comes with working for a government department did not exist.

By the time Batin Janggut took on the title of Batin, the situation had changed. Now the title of Batin was recognized not by the Undang (the traditional Malay ruler) or the British colonial government but by the JHEOA within the Malaysian government. Indeed, the influence of the JHEOA can be seen in Batin Janggut's very inheritance of the Batin title. The history of development in Kampung Durian Tawar from the 1970s onwards cannot be discussed without consideration of the relationship

between the Director-General of the JHEOA, Baharon, and Batin Janggut. Moreover, Baharon's study of the village was made possible by the assistance of Batin Janggut. The fact that Kampung Durian Tawar became a model of village development is also connected to Batin Janggut's mediator role.

History of Development

The primary incentives for the development of infrastructure in Malaysian villages are the national elections held every few years. The situation in Kampung Durian Tawar, where political connections influence the provision of infrastructure and the undertaking of development projects, has been no exception. An example of this is the provision of water supply to houses, which occurred due to the involvement of a Chinese federal parliamentarian (that is to say, a parliamentarian with kinship ties to Batin Janggut's father). It is sufficient for our purposes to note that these political connections and involvements are influential in Kampung Durian Tawar, and further detail is not given here.

In 1970 the JHEOA undertook a project to build twenty-five houses in Kampung Durian Tawar (on specific development projects referred to in the following discussion, refer to Table 12). Given that this project occurred in the middle of Baharon's study of Kampung Durian Tawar, it is appropriate to see it as a "repayment" for Batin Janggut's granting of permission to Baharon to undertake the study.⁸

The important thing to note about this housing construction project, however, is that the houses were allocated to the people of the Lewat group. As mentioned earlier, the people of the Lewat group, who had been living in Old Kampung Durian Tawar, first moved to their current area of residence in the mid-1970s. They delayed their movement into the new houses because the area of residence had no vegetation and the lack of shade made the houses hot and uninhabitable. They planted fruit trees (some of which came from the JHEOA in the form of aid) and, after testing the new houses, eventually all completed the move.⁹

Water was supplied to houses in Kampung Durian Tawar in 1979. Before that, people in the new residential area (Kampung Durian Tawar) used water from a well. Given that the older residential area (Old Kampung Durian Tawar) has a stream running through it, there is no doubt that it would have been easier to live there because of the convenience of living near a stream. Since its installation, the water supply has frequently broken down, in which case people living in the new residential area go to the stream in the older area to collect water and to wash.

Table 12
Significant village events and Malaysian history

Year	Malaysian history	Significant Orang Asli related events	Significant village events
1870s			Arrival of the original ancestors of the villagers under the leadership of Batin Baining
1880s			Movement of the villagers under the leadership of Bating Stunting
1914		Evans visits the Perang area	
1920		Noone "Report on the Settlements and Welfare of the Ple-Temiar of the Perak Kelantan Watershed"	
1936		Aboriginal Tribes Enactment, Perak	Batin Bongsu succeeds to the title of Batin
1939			Batin Bongsu dies
1941	Invasion of the Malay Peninsula by Japanese forces		The villagers take refuge in the forest
1945	End of the Second World War (end of the period of Japanese occupation)		
1948	Establishment of the Federation of Malaya, declaration of "Emergency"		
1950		Major Peter D.R. Williams-Hunt appointed as the first Federal Advisor on Aborigines	
1954		Department of Aboriginal Affairs expanded. The Aboriginal Peoples Ordinance promulgated.	The villagers move to Peradong
1956			Return of the villagers to the village
1957	Independence of the Federation of Malaya from Britain		
1960	Rescinding of the declaration of "Emergency"		
1961		The separation of Senoi Praaq from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Statement of Policy Regarding the Administration of the Aborigine Peoples of the Federation of Malaya	

1963	Establishment of the Federation of Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak join the Federation)		
1965	Secession of Singapore		
1966		Orang Asli is used as an official name by the government	Batin Deraman dies
1967		Amendment to the Aboriginal Peoples Act: no change from the previous Ordinance in terms of content	Batin Janggut appointed as Batin
1969	Outbreak of race riots between the Malays and the Chinese		
1970			JHEOA housing construction project (25 houses constructed)
1974		Review and Notes on Policy and Development (Confidential). Amendment to the Aboriginal Peoples Act: no change from the previous Ordinance in terms of content	Water supply connected
1979			
1980		Seminar Dakwah Islamiah Di Kalangan Orang Asli Malaysia (Held by PERKIM)	Construction of a rubber-processing plant (by RISDA)
1981			Rubber project: 50 acres (JHEOA)
1982			Electricity connected
1983		Strategi Perkembangan Ugama Islam Di Kalangan Masyarakat Orang Asli	General Store, goat (kambing) project
1984			Roads in the village are paved. <i>Sepak Takraw</i> court built.
1986		Speech by Prime Minister Mahatir at the Orang Asli Museum	Fishpond project (53 lots constructed), construction of a new <i>balai adat</i> , joining of UMNO
1987			
1988		The JHEOA transferred from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the Ministry of Rural Development	Construction of a new <i>surau</i> and a residence for the <i>Pengerak Masyarakat</i> by JPM (Jabatan Perdana Menteri)
1989	Peace agreement between the Communist Party of Malaya and the government		PPRT housing projects
1991			
1992			
1993	International year of indigenous peoples	The JHEOA relocated to the the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development. <i>Surau</i> established in Orang Asli villages (265 in total)	PPRT housing projects
1996			
1997		Pelan Strategi Pembangunan Orang Asli 1997-2005	Chicken coop project, fishpond project
1998			

In 1984 electricity arrived at the village, and houses were connected to the electrical supply. For safety reasons, however, connection was not permitted to self-built huts made from materials such as palm leaves, bamboo or rattan.

With the provision of the infrastructure of water and electricity came the problem of paying for the use of these resources and services. Provision of infrastructure is fruitless if the users of the utilities do not have the economic means to pay for their ongoing use. In Orang Asli villages electricity and water are frequently cut off due to overdue or unpaid electricity and water bills.

In 1986 the general store (operated by Jenang Misai) was opened through government assistance. In 1987 roads in the area of the first housing construction project were paved. Also in 1987, the earlier mentioned *sepak takraw* court was constructed through a donation made by a federal parliamentarian.

In 1988 the wooden *adat* hall (*balai adat*) was demolished and on the same site a new hall of reinforced concrete was built. The money for the construction of the new *adat* hall came primarily from the sale of timber obtained by the clearing of forest land for a new rubber tree planting project and the felling of existing rubber trees. The Batin held the rights concerning land in the village and it was he, therefore, who acted as the representative of the village in the sale of the timber. Most of the money obtained went towards the construction costs of the new hall, but some was divided between the *adat* leaders and their relatives. At the time, a split occurred in the relationship between the Batin and his son Tikak over the method of distribution of the money and over bribes paid to officials for the logging permission.

Rubber development projects were undertaken in the 1980s. In 1981 RISDA built a rubber-processing plant. Prior to that, rubber tapping was carried out under the leadership of Menteri Lewat and Batin Janggut, but then government aid began to be directed towards individually operated rubber-tapping activity. In 1982 the JHEOA undertook a rubber development project, with rubber tree seedlings being planted on approximately fifty acres of land. Money for fertilizer, replacement crops and the like was allocated to the recipients of the project. Following this, and up until 1992, RISDA undertook a number of rubber development projects, which involved land being opened up for plantations and the planting of rubber trees.

In addition, aid for goat farming was provided and a development project to establish fish breeding was carried out. According to official records,



Plates 20 & 21: Fishponds of Ukal and Manyo. Ukal and Manyo owned these fishponds. They used nets to catch the fish which was then sold to the Chinese middleman. In 1998, a joint project between some businessmen and the JHEOA focused on rehabilitating the abandoned fishponds, including that of Ukal and Manyo. The villagers essentially rented out their fishponds for an annual rent of RM300. [NT-1997]

an aid project for the development of goat farming was implemented in 1986. However, this seems to have ended in failure.¹⁰

In 1988 a development project to establish fifty-three lots of fishponds was undertaken. The ponds were built on land previously used for wet rice cultivation (wet rice cultivation was abandoned in the 1970s). However, as with the goats, this farming has been all but abandoned (the villagers give

reasons such as “the water supply to the ponds is bad”, “there is no money to purchase food for the fish” and “no money is to be made out of this”).¹¹

Most of the development projects mentioned thus far were carried out with Batin Janggut and the upper people as the primary recipients. Although the government intended the development projects in Kampung Durian Tawar to be carried out “fairly”, at the village level Batin Janggut and the *adat* leaders held de facto authority over who would be the beneficiaries of particular development projects. As a result, there was a strong tendency for projects to be directed towards relatives of the *adat* leaders.

In 1988 most of the people in the village joined Malaysia’s ruling party, United Malays National Organization (UMNO), and one of the Batin’s son, Tikak, became the Kampung Durian Tawar Branch President (*Ketua Cawangan*).¹² When this happened, the previous tendency for development projects to go to the upper people shifted, if subtly. The emergence of Tikak as the local UMNO Branch President saw the creation of a distribution route for development aid other than that which went through Batin Janggut.

Along with other factors in their father–son relationship, Batin Janggut and Tikak came into conflict over the issue of leadership in development matters within the village. This manifestation of the discord between father and son caused subtle cracks to appear in the interpersonal relationships of the upper people. Exacerbating things even further, Tikak, having taken on the position of representing RISDA within the village, expanded the recipients of rubber development projects to include some of his friends among the lower people.

In the 1990s there was a dramatic decrease in the development projects undertaken by the JHEOA (in other words, through the Batin). This signified Batin Janggut’s reduced leadership role in development matters. In contrast to his traditional leadership within the village, a new form of leadership, which was symbolized by the linking up of UMNO and Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (JKKK, Village Development and Security Committee), was becoming influential, and development aid through this route increased. This type of change is frequently pointed out as having occurred in Malay society rather than in Orang Asli society (e.g. Shamsul 1986).

The JKKK system has been in operation since 1972 (Mohd. Tap 1990: 58), and it now supervises major projects. Projects in Orang Asli villages are most often undertaken as part of projects being carried out in neighboring Malay villages. The majority of JKKK committee members

Table 13
Spiritual (*kerohanian*) program

	Project	Recipients	Period	Responsible officer
1	Follow-up projects for villagers who have converted to Islam	20 villages	1997	Research and Public Relations Office Director/Branch Head
2	"Good Family Relations Day"	6 occasions	1997	Branch Head
3	"Experience Ramadam" event	30 villages	Ramadam	Research and Public Relations Office Director/Branch Head
4	Hari Raya religious ceremony	Each area	10th month of the Islamic calender (Syawal)	Branch Head
5	Religious ceremonies on Islamic festival days	10 occasions	According to the Islamic calender (Hijrah)	Branch Head
6	Muslim Orang Asli "student" at the Centre for Islamic Missionary Studies run by the PERKIM	30 people	1997	Research and Public Relations Office Director
7	Sending of Muslim Orang Asli on pilgrimage (Umrah)	12 people	1997	Research and Public Relations Office Director

Source: JHEOA 1997 *Pelan Strategi Pembangunan Orang Asli 1997-2005*

are Malay, with only one Orang Asli member having been appointed to the committee. As a result, Malays have effective control over who receives development projects, and the Orang Asli tend only to get part of the leftovers. Being a committee member means that one has great influence within one's Orang Asli village. Tikak was appointed a member of JKKK. UMNO and JKKK are closely linked as a conduit for development not only in the case of the Malays, but also for the Orang Asli.¹³

In 1992 and 1996, when national elections were looming, a PPRT project to provide housing aid for the poor was undertaken as part of UMNO's election campaign in the village. Most of the recipients of the project were from the lower people. In the 1990s, meanwhile, some of the lower people converted to Islam, and development assistance through Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM, Department of Islamic Development) and the joint semi-governmental organization PERKIM was provided. In 1991 the Prime Minister's Office supervised the construction of a second-story Islamic prayer house (*surau*) in the village, in conjunction with the construction of a kindergarten on the first floor. An office and dwelling

for the Muslim missionary (*Penggerak Masyarakat*) posted to the village by the Islamic Centre (*Pusat Islam*) was also constructed in the village. It was through the posting of the Muslim missionary that Islamic converts began to appear in the village.

Specific development projects in the village undertaken through Islamic bodies have so far only amounted to the provision of financial aid to the Muslim poor and a project undertaken by PERKIM to construct chicken coops (eating chickens is not against Islamic precepts). As a result, by 1998 development from this type of source had not had much effect on economic relations within the village. Development projects likely to be undertaken through Islamic bodies in the future, however, will no doubt have a significant effect on the political economy of the village (see Table 13).

Kampung Durian Tawar in the News Press

As we have seen, since the early 1970s the government has undertaken a variety of development projects in Kampung Durian Tawar. However, substantial development in Kampung Durian Tawar really began in the 1980s. Newspaper and magazine articles from this period describe the situation in the village at the time and show that the JHEOA promoted activities to publicize the “successes” of the development of Kampung Durian Tawar.

I present here segments of a newspaper article from the *New Straits Times*, July 13, 1987. It presents Kampung Durian Tawar as a model of village development, one that represents Orang Asli society as a whole. As such, we also see the position it occupies within the broader Orang Asli society.

Orang Asli of a different class (by Rosli Zakaria and Shukor Rahman, *New Straits Times*, July 13, 1987)

Orang Asli conjures an image of jungle dwellers, shifting cultivators and people who know very little about the value of products they gather from the jungle.

Twenty years ago this might have been true. The Orang Asli of today are of a different class altogether. They not only know how to value things but have developed quite a sophisticated economic lifestyle.

Take the case of a settlement in Kampung Durian Tawar in Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan, which Haji Amirruddin bin Jaafar,

director of the Department of Orang Asli in Negeri Sembilan, describes as the most advanced in terms of economic growth and social development.

Kampung Durian Tawar has a population of 320. There are 64 families, most of them inter-related by marriage.

“This group of Orang Asli is very hardworking and disciplined. They are receptive to new ideas introduced by the JHEOA, the district office and agencies such as RISDA,” he said in an interview.

The Orang Asli of the Temuan tribe has moved away from their traditional economic activities such as gathering rattan and other forest products, to cultivation of rubber trees, cash crops and fruit on a large scale.

“Economically, this tribe is probably the richest among the Orang Asli in settlements in the country. Some are earning about \$1,000 a month from tapping rubber trees and selling their cash crops such as bananas and pineapple direct to wholesalers.”

The Orang Asli have no problem selling their cash crops outside the settlement. Wholesalers visit them during harvesting periods, usually once a week, to buy the bananas and pineapple.

They grow *pisang emas*, *pisang rastali* and *pisang tanduk* while the pineapples are of the Sarawak variety. They also plant garlic, chilli, and tapioca.

During the fruit season, the villagers sell durians and rambutans by the truckload to wholesalers.

“These Orang Asli are quite calculative when it comes to marketing their products. They will not sell them to middlemen, but to wholesalers who normally give them better prices.”

The community also has 20 fish ponds about 0.2 hectares [half an acre] each, which they dug themselves last year. Another 20 ponds will be dug soon. The drains to supply water to the ponds have already been dug by the Temuan.

“Their efforts in fish rearing will be rewarded in one or two months time,” he added.

They get their supply of *jelawat*, *ketutu* and red *tilapia* fish fry from the Fisheries Department.

In addition to fish rearing, the Orang Asli were also given 124 sheep by the Veterinary Department. The sheep graze in the rubber plantations.

Encik Amirruddin added that the Orang Asli have a 120-hectare [almost 300 acre] “traditional” rubber plantation. Another 70 hectares [173 acres] were planted with rubber with the help of RISDA and 20 hectares [fifty acres] with the JHEOA’s assistance.

The JHEOA has donated three motorized rollers for making rubber sheets to help the Orang Asli cope with the increasing latex production.

“Some of the Temuan can produce 60 sheets of rubber per day. They work from 2 am until noon daily and tend to their cash crops after that. Idling is not their way of life,” said Encik Amiruddin.

The Temuan also plant cocoa trees in between the rubber trees. There is also an 80-hectare [200 acre] fruit orchard planted with durians, rambutans and cash crops.

Kampung Durian Tawar village chieftain Batin Janggut said his villagers have nothing against development as long as their customs and traditions are not affected.

“I want to see my followers taste the fruits of their labor and live like any other race in the country but I will not tolerate influences which could affect the dignity of my men,” he said.

He is strongly against alcoholism and gambling in the village. He has warned the villagers on numerous occasions that he would not hesitate to evict them if they committed the “crime”.

Batin Janggut organizes a meeting each week to find out the latest development in the village and the daily problems faced by the villagers.

“I work like the rest of the villagers. In fact, I had to work more because I have set an example to the villagers and make sure that all the projects introduced by the authorities are fruitful.”

For example, the villagers were not very keen to tap rubber trees until he proved to them that it is a profitable venture. The same goes for the planting of bananas, pineapple and other cash crops.

He is very appreciative of the authorities who “opened the eyes” of his villagers – that there was more to improving their economic condition than gathering just rattan and bamboo.

“Give me any idea that will benefit my people and train me. I will go back to my people and prove it to them that it can work to their benefit.”



Plate 22: Children are resting in the shade under trees. Trees in the village sometimes provide resting places for villagers in the afternoon when it can get too hot in the house for comfort. In the afternoon, children spend their time resting, playing in the field, or going to the village shop to buy sweets and biscuits. [NT-2007]

Present¹⁴

Everyday Life

Dawn comes late in Malaysia; daybreak is not until approximately 7 am. The villagers' day, however, has already begun. At first light, when the crowing of roosters sounds across the village, you can hear the quiet sounds of people washing. After 7 am, when the sun has risen, the village soundscape is filled with motorbikes and the voices of children who have finished washing and preparing themselves and are now in their school uniforms and on their way to school. Riding in a minibus owned by Jenang Misai and purchased to take the village children to school (obtained through aid received from the JHEOA), the children go off to school in the neighboring town. For breakfast the children usually eat cookies or bread and drink tea or coffee.

Not accustomed to getting up before dawn, I get up around the time that the children are heading off for school. While I wash and prepare myself for the day, villagers are heading off for the rubber gardens. Rubber tapping is more effective in the cool of the morning, so having sent their children off to school a little after 7 am, husbands and wives set off together, by motorbike or on foot, for the rubber gardens. In cases

where the children are still very young and dependant, however, only the husbands go to work. Unmarried men and women do rubber-tapping work in the rubber smallholdings owned by their families.

In cases where households own several separate rubber smallholdings, they visit each rubber garden in turn. The tapping work usually is complete by 9 or 10 am and the villagers return home. The men then set off on their motorbikes for the town of Pertang, where they drink tea (*minum teh/godeh*) in the cafes. Most of the men set off for Pertang on the days (Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday) when you can purchase a ticket in the four-numbered lottery called “number” (*nombor*), which the villagers think of as gambling (*main judi*). In fact, no lottery shop (*kedai nombor*) exists in Pertang. There are, however, “black marketeers”, and a well-established system exists whereby each marketeer approaches the same particular villagers having tea in the cafes, and sells them *nombor* tickets. This practice means that the villagers do not have to travel to the lottery shop in Simpang Pertang. There are four digits in this lottery system – the same number of digits as on car and motorbike number plates (it seems that the lottery system uses four numbers for this very reason) – and many people purchase a ticket using the numbers of their own cars or motorbikes.

While the men are in Pertang having tea and buying lottery tickets, the women are at home washing, cleaning and having tea. It is also the case that some of the villagers do not return home from the rubber gardens but continue tapping work, having rested for a while.

Having finished my morning field notes, I head off after 9 am to the rubber trader’s shop located in the village. This is one of the main places that most villagers visit at some point each day. I chat with them as I take down data regarding the amount of money received from the sale of the rubber to the trader. This is my main daily activity.

Among the men in Pertang who have either completed their morning work or who are about to go off into the forest to hunt and gather, some start drinking Chinese liquor or beer at the back of the Chinese-operated shops. Returning to the village after shopping at lunchtime, on more than one occasion I have come across men from the village lying drunk on the road. Drunk men often barge into the rubber trader’s shop located at the village entrance and involve themselves in conversation with other villagers or myself.

As noon approaches, the number of people coming to the rubber trader’s shop to sell rubber drops off. There are, however, people who began their tapping work about 9 or 10 am. Men who have had no luck



Plates 23 - 25: Selling bananas. Before the rubber or durian trees matured, the villagers often intercropped them with bananas or sugarcane. These were then sold to the Chinese wholesalers. The unit price was RM1 per kilogram for grade A and 40 sen per kilogram for grade B. [NT-2007]

hunting and gathering during the night or early morning, and have therefore been unable to obtain cash, then turn to rubber-tapping work. When this happens, their rubber-selling activities are sometimes delayed and the rubber trader's shop remains open until 1 pm, when the last of the rubber-selling activities occur.

Lunch at the Chinese restaurants is served from about 11.30 am, perhaps to fit in with the routines of the Chinese, who also begin their



Plates 26-28: Teaching at the village night school. Genreh and the Batin's daughters are primary school teachers. In March 1998, they voluntarily started the village classes both for children and adults who could not read and write in the Malay language. Later, Genreh started special classes for Orang Asli pupils who could not keep up with their school work at the primary school in Kampung Baniang. [NT-1998]

working day early in the morning. Before 1 pm all the packed lunches (*nasi bungkus*) have been sold and the restaurants have finished business. I eat lunch almost exclusively at these Chinese restaurants, but when they are closed at 1 pm I often go to an Indian stall in the area or to Chinese restaurants in Simpang Pertang to have lunch. In contrast to the demand for Malay restaurants in the cities, rural areas have very little demand for them. In Pertang there is a Malay cafe (*kedai minuman*) but no Malay



Plate 29: Gathering honey. Gathering honey is very dangerous work because a skilled gatherer has to climb tall trees and drive out a swarm of bees with smoke to get at a honey comb. Most of the honey is sold to the Chinese middleman; the rest is consumed at home. [NT-1998]

restaurants. This is probably because Malays generally eat at home and, as such, it is economically difficult to run a Malay restaurant.

The villagers have tea in the morning after finishing the rubber-tapping work, and so they often have lunch slightly later, at some time after 1 pm. The children return home from school after 12 pm, having eaten the lunch provided at school. For them a meal is “eating rice” (*makan nasi*). If they do eat other items, such as bread or noodles, it is not regarded as a meal but as “having tea” (*minum teh*).

By the approach of noon, it is already hot enough to make one’s awareness of being in the tropics unavoidable. By this time, agricultural work is difficult, and the unbearable heat continues through the afternoon. Taking a nap after lunch or resting in the shade under trees is a way of trying to endure the heat. The children, however, run around the village playing, in spite of the glaring tropical sun. The village is otherwise surprisingly quiet, wrapped in a midday stillness.

Men “going into the forest” (*masuk hutan*) to hunt and gather set out quite early, as soon as they have finished their rubber-tapping work (there are, of course, those who do no rubber tapping prior to going into the forest). Rubber tapping in the morning and then hunting and gathering in the afternoon is considered an ideal way of making a living. Those who achieve this ideal balance, however, are rare; on days when hunting and

gathering occur, many of the participants abandon their rubber-tapping work.

There are hunting and gathering seasons, particular times when people devote themselves to these activities.¹⁵ For example, the durian season is the fruit season, when the men of the village are kept busy protecting the durians from the monkeys and squirrels that come to eat them. Another example of this type of focused activity relates to the *petai*, a plant of the bean family. As the *petai* is in season every three to four months, at these times the men devote themselves to gathering it.

Additionally, when the success stories of others circulate (“so and so gathered some aromatic wood and made quite a bit of money”; “you can catch snakes there”; “someone caught a lot of fish”), everyone is busy with the same sort of hunting or gathering activity (everyone apparently thinking, “if he can get some, I can get some too”). Traders also turn up at certain times and encourage the men to gather certain forest products, such as rattan, aromatic wood and honey, which they claim will fetch a good price at the time.

The villagers do not only hunt and gather in the forest close to the village; they also travel as far as the forest reservation in the Titi area. When this involves staying overnight and setting up camp, they usually go in male and female (husband and wife) pairs. The women take care of the meals and the washing, and the men hunt prey. However, the gathering work is done together. When collecting rattan or aromatic wood, the income gained from these goes to each individual depending on the amount he or she has collected.

In the late afternoon, from 4 to 5 pm, work in the fields takes place. Some villagers do rubber-tapping work at this time, but most work in banana fields or vegetable fields. Most husbands head off for this work with their wives seated on the back of their motorbikes. Kampung Durian Tawar follows matrilineal *adat* and in most cases the women own the fields. Given this, the men truly are “chauffeurs”.

Both husband and wife do the actual work in the fields, but the wife decides whether or not they will work. If a woman says, “I want to do some work in the fields”, her husband takes her there to do the work.

The afternoon work in the fields generally finishes as daylight fades, at which time each couple returns to the village. Some of the men, having taken their wives home, then go into the town, either to have tea or to drink liquor or beer. In most cases, going to town in the evening means drinking liquor or beer.

The cooler hours before the evening meal are a time for socializing.



Plates 30-33: Gathering petai. Gathering petai is dangerous and difficult work even for a skillful gatherer. It is also very hard work to carry bunches of petai (no less than 60 kilogram) on one's shoulder. In this case, 700 pods of petais were sold at RM17 per 100 pods. The income was distributed among gatherers and carriers, including me (plate 33) who was merely the camera man on this outing. [NT-1997]



Plate 34: Village general store. In 1998, there was only one general store in Kampung Durian Tawar. Later, one more store opened in the residence area of the lower people. In the evenings, which are pleasantly cool, the village women and children come to the store to buy snacks, biscuits and foodstuffs. The men, however, who have motorbikes and cars, prefer to go to the nearest town (Pertang) for their purchases. [NT-2007]

People stroll about the village and visit each other. This is the time of “emerging” (*nimbul*; in Malay, *timbul*). It is not, of course, a fixed activity that occurs every day; people visit others if they feel inclined to do so. The evening meal usually occurs after 8 pm; as such, *nimbul* lasts until that time.

The evening meal is taken late because there is a habit of “having tea” in the evening. There is also a narrative, however, that people eat so late because they do not want to feel hungry while trying to sleep during the night. Another narrative is that this practice is modeled on the eating habits of the Malays; that it is modeled, in other words, on the practice of Muslim Malays, who eat their evening meal after finishing their evening prayers.

After the evening meal, people tidy up and wash the dishes, bathe, watch television and chat. Most go to bed about 10 pm. I visit houses to conduct interviews either during *nimbul* or after the evening meal. When I interview Batin Janggut I usually visit his house before the evening meal and, accompanied by my field assistant, Asat, am treated to dinner before the interview is conducted. Batin Janggut talks at great length, sometimes until 1 or 2 am, at which time the roosters have begun crowing. Even on these occasions, however, Batin Janggut is up early the next morning and working in the fields. Asat and I, however, sleep in.

Some of the men in the village hunt during the night. This is particularly the case if they are going to collect frogs (which they catch using electric torches). Having hunted for frogs during the night, they sell them the following morning to Chinese traders. They then drink liquor or beer at the Chinese shops in the town and return home to the village drunk. This is usually what has happened when one sees Orang Asli men drunk; they have gone hunting during the night, sold the prey to Chinese businesses in the town, and then used the money to buy liquor and beer.

Yearly Cycle

Wet rice cultivation was abandoned in Kampung Durian Tawar in the mid-1970s due to a reduction in water retention in the forest and also to the switch to rubber tapping as the primary agricultural practice. As a result, it is difficult to discern natural, annual cycles in the work undertaken. Apart from Chinese New Year (the old lunar New Year) in February, when the rubber trader's shop is closed for business, rubber tapping can, in principle, be undertaken throughout the year. If rubber tapping stops, it is due to falling rubber prices (around August) or because it is the durian season (in 1997 this was in October and November) or the wet season (rainfall is highest in December). On mornings of continuous rain it is not possible for the villagers to undertake rubber tapping that day. However, this does not mean that one can relax and enjoy the day. The income gained from rubber is directly connected to the villagers' daily budgets. Unless a person has a supplementary source of income, a day off from rubber tapping has a direct impact on the money available for daily living.

Therefore, although it may seem that life in Kampung Durian Tawar follows a monotonous pattern throughout the year, the yearly cycle is, in fact, divided into various events and seasons. There are events such as a festival (held on October 1) modeled on the major Malay festival held at the end of Ramadan (Hari Raya Puasa), weddings held during school holidays, and the Chinese New Year in February. In terms of seasons, August is devoted to gathering forest products such as *petai* and rambutan. At this time, supplementing the household income through gathering activities becomes necessary due to falls in the price of rubber. There is also the durian season, which now comes irregularly, and the wet season in December. These seasons add a subtle coloring to daily life in Kampung Durian Tawar, which otherwise does not experience major climatic change across each year.

Given that the major means of livelihood in Kampung Durian Tawar is rubber tapping, Chinese New Year in February has a direct effect. The



Plate 35: Hari Raya. Hari Kesedaran (or Hari Raya) is a special holiday for villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar. The youths who are working outside return to the village to celebrate Hari Raya with their families. Children dress up and visit their relative's houses. They eat lemang (glutinous rice steamed in bamboo) and special biscuits. At night, 'disco' dancing is held in the open. The villagers usually look forward to Hari Raya with pleasure. [NT-2003]

rubber trader's shop closes for business, so it is not possible to sell rubber. On top of that, all Chinese-operated businesses in the town close, making it difficult to sell things obtained from the forest. Due to the strong reliance of many Orang Asli villagers on Chinese businesses, many hold Hari Raya in February to fit in with Chinese New Year. During Hari Raya relatives come to visit (as is the case with the Malay Hari Raya Puasa), banquets are given and discos (*joget*, meaning "dance") with live music are held at night (for religious reasons, discos are no longer held in Malay villages). As local Chinese also come to visit, many other villages provide beer for these events.

In the case of Orang Asli villages, Hari Raya is not only held during the Chinese New Year. I am aware that Muslim Orang Asli in some villages also hold Hari Raya at the same time as the Hari Raya Puasa of the Malays after Ramadan. In many villages where there are numerous Christians, Hari Raya is also held on Christmas Day, and there are also villages where Hari Raya is held on the calendar New Year (January 1). As such, from the end of the year 1997 through to Chinese New Year in February 1998, Hari Raya was held on most weekends somewhere in Orang Asli villages.

A disco is held on nights when there has been a ceremony, especially after a wedding or during Hari Raya.¹⁶ At the discos, young people and



Plate 36: Wedding of Batin Janggut's daughter at Balai Adat. This was a Malay-style wedding with wedding costumes rented from a Malay wedding agency. The bride, Batin Janggut's daughter, is a primary school teacher and the groom, who comes from an Orang Asli village in Kuala Langat, Selangor, is a truck driver. After marriage, they lived together in the Batin's house (i.e. the bride's house), in keeping with the adat of Kampung Durian Tawar. [NT-1998]

children dance to the singing and the music. Sometimes you also see drunken older men dancing. The discos continue through the night, and are places for young men and women to meet.

In most cases, young men will go to discos in their own village, but will also travel to other village discos. The young women, however, only attend discos held in their own village. Attraction between a young man and young woman who have met at a disco will sometimes lead to sexual intercourse on the same night. Alcohol-related fights, often over women, usually occur. In order to keep things in the village "safe and peaceful", the older men holding the discos must supervise the proceedings very carefully. If trouble does occur, they have to calm down the parties involved, or order them to leave. If a fight begins to get out of hand, the police are sometimes called in.

Recently, alcohol-consumption and fighting at discos in Kampung Durian Tawar have become such a problem that they are no longer held. Young Malay men and others, despite having no affiliation with the wedding or Hari Raya held during the day, come to the village to attend the disco for a fun night out. In fights involving such third parties, the village *adat* leaders do not have the authority to control the situation. The supervisors of the village have to scramble to call in the police. Discos are

the major source of this kind of problem, and as such have been cancelled. The police have also given notice that discos should not be held after midnight.

Weddings are usually held when the children of the village are on school holidays. According to my notes, May, August, October and December (in 1997) are the most frequent times of year for weddings to be held in one village or another. On weekends during these months, young men of the village head out on motorbikes or in cars for discos being held in Orang Asli villages as far afield as Pahang and Selangor states. The areas to which the young men travel match almost exactly those with which Kampung Durian Tawar has a history of intermarriage. In other words, they travel to villages with which they have kinship networks; most often, to where a married brother, sister or other relative lives.¹⁷

In Kampung Durian Tawar the durian season is very important for the villagers' socioeconomic, cultural and religious lives. In the past a ceremony was held at the end of the durian season. This was known as the "durian harvest ceremony". In Kampung Durian Tawar the durian harvest ceremony occurred irregularly and has since ceased altogether. In its place, a "relatives visiting ceremony" (*Hari Kesedaran*) takes place each year on October 1.¹⁸

When I was living in Kampung Durian Tawar, the durian season ran from July to September in 1996, October to December 1997, and from July to September 1998. Other fruits also grow during the durian season, such as rambutan. Combined with income from rubber, gains from selling such fruit make this a relatively financially blessed time of year.

The fruit season is also a hunting season because monkeys and squirrels that come to eat the fruit can be caught using blowpipes. Although hunting animals such as deer is prohibited, these animals can be shot and caught in the name of chasing them away from the fruit. Hunting is usually restricted to the forest, but at this time of year the prey come out to the fields. In addition to eating the fruit itself, the villagers can also eat the meat of such prey, and the prey can be sold to the Chinese businesses in town.

Harvesting the durians consists simply of collecting the durians that have fallen from the trees, transporting them, and then selling them to the wholesalers. Although it is very difficult to transport durians from the orchards on the hill slopes to where the wholesalers are able to collect them, this work is easier than rubber tapping. In terms of income, the same can be made in one day of durian harvesting as would take three days of rubber tapping. This income is additional to that from the sale

of other fruit and from hunted prey, so the durian season is one of great bounty for the people of Kampung Durian Tawar.

Notes

1. Concerning the early history of Kampung Durian Tawar, I refer in particular to Baharon's written historical account (1973: 56-64).
2. In *adat* this is expressed by the following sayings: "*Berjinjang di hutan, bertali ke luar*" ("To dwell in the jungle, to be related to those outside"); "*Berjinjang di luar, bertali ke hutan*" ("To dwell outside, to be related to those in the jungle"); and "*Ta' mantara' mata' putih dengan mata' hitam*" ("There can be no separation between the white and the black of the eye"). These sayings express the fact that the relationship between Orang Asli and Malays is close and is characterized by mutual respect (Baharon 1973: 58-59).
3. The villagers of Kampung Baning lived in Sungai Inn near Pahang and so do not share close (kinship) relations with the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar. The villagers of Kampung Akai were scattered amongst the present-day villages of Kampung Air, Kampung Akai and Kampung Simpang Pertang (Batu 12). There was a village of Batu 47 (village name) but the village was destroyed as part of a FELDA development project and the villagers were scattered amongst Kampung Air, Kampung Akai and Kampung Simpang Pertang.
4. In Peradong they could not plant durian trees because of insufficient cultivated land.
5. In March 1997 I attended a ceremony held in Kampung Durian Tawar marking the thirtieth anniversary of Batin Janggut's role as Batin. This enabled me to establish that he formally took over the position on 27 March 1967.
6. The "Jakun" of Kampung Durian Tawar was considered extremely cautious; they preferred living in the forest and they did not understand Malay very well; further, the Batin of the village (Siuntung?) had the ability to place powerful curses on people and was not trusted.
7. There are other examples of this connection with Malays and the local Chinese. Baharon's assistant during his study, for example, was a Malay. Though the assistant's father was a Malay, his mother was Orang Asli.

Furthermore, his mother's father (i.e. his grandfather) was Chinese, and his mother's mother (his grandmother) was Orang Asli (Baharon 1973: 28).

8. Housing construction projects are often undertaken in Orang Asli villages. This is aimed at promoting settled habitation. However, it has also been pointed out that this construction occurs because it provides the most visible form of the results of development (Mohd. Tap 1990: 89-90).
9. It has been pointed out that when new houses are provided for the Orang Asli, they do not remain living in them but instead return to the forest (Kuchikura 1996: 10). It is surely not only the Orang Asli, however, who would not want to live in hot and unshaded houses (made of wood with tin roofs) located on low-lying ground. It is not surprising that it is sometimes more comfortable and convenient to live in the area in which they had previously done so, in huts built close to a stream so that water for washing, for the toilet, clothes-washing, cooking and so on is readily accessible. When a water supply and other infrastructure have not been provided in new areas of residence built under housing construction projects, it is hardly surprising that people prefer their old area of residence.
10. Nowadays there is not a single goat to be seen in the village. When I was living in the village, an aid project for the development of chicken farming was carried out. The recipients of the project, however, ended up selling the chickens they had received to Chinese farmers. In the case of the goats, it is possible that either the villagers were unable to farm them successfully or, as was the case with the chickens, they ended up selling them.
11. In 1998 a joint development project between private businesses and JHEOA focused on these abandoned fishponds. JHEOA acted as mediator in the leasing of the fishponds to private businesses. The villagers who owned the fishponds signed an agreement to receive 300 ringgit per fishpond annually as rent from the private businesses. The rights for farming and selling the fish, however, passed to the private businesses. This development project had only just begun when I revisited the village in March 2001, the delay having been partly caused by the economic crisis (1997) that had set in since I was last there.
12. Nicholas (1990) has reported that when Prime Minister Mahathir formed the New UMNO and launched an election campaign, Orang Asli were mobilized as part of this campaign. Batin Janggut has also participated, as an "Orang Asli leader", in election campaign activities in Pahang. Regarding Orang Asli joining UMNO, see Dentan et al. (1997: 142).

Regarding the development towards the joining of UMNO by non-Muslim aboriginal peoples, such as the Orang Asli and the indigenous people of Sabah/Sarawak, see Shamsul (1996c: 30). In 1987, the year before the formation of the New UMNO, Prime Minister Mahathir gave a speech at the Orang Asli Museum (located in Gombak (in Selangor state), an outlying suburb of Kuala Lumpur).

13. When I made investigations on my revisit to the village in March 2001, Tikak was no longer in the position of Branch President of UMNO. JKKK had also ceased its union with the Malays, so Tikak no longer had any authority as a committee member. There is currently an application pending for Kampung Durian Tawar to form its own JKKK, centered on the younger generation.
14. I present here a field note-based sketch of Kampung Durian Tawar during the period of my fieldwork (1996-98).
15. After his study of the livelihood of the Negrito hunters and gatherers, Benjamin has termed the hunting and gathering activities of the Orang Asli as “opportunistic foraging” (Benjamin 1973). This term indicates a livelihood that, viewed from the outside, is irregular and unpredictable but that actually changes in regard to the particular circumstances and timing to increase profits (Kuchikura 1996: 76).
16. Gambling based on card games also occurs (Mohd. Tap 1990: 492-94). This is regarded as a problem because the men drink liquor and beer and get into physical fights. Discos held on the night after a funeral are often said to get out of hand.
17. At the beginning of my stay, not being very aware of this situation, I wondered how the young people of the village were able to find life partners, especially given that life in the village offered far fewer opportunities than life in the cities. Once I thought about the above situation, however, and understood that the young villagers actively pursue a variety of pastimes in their daily lives and that such opportunities for meeting members of the opposite sex often lead to marriage, I realized that my concern was groundless. Yet there are young men and women who are not good at mixing at discos and some of them remain unmarried, even in older years. This sort of problem is connected to the fact that the previous “marriage system”, whereby marriage partners were brought together by a young person’s parents or by the *adat* leaders, has nowadays been replaced by young people freely choosing their partners.
18. In several Temuan villages in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan, Ancestor Day (*Hari Moyang*) used to be held in conjunction with Chinese New

Year (the lunar New Year). It has been pointed out that JHEOA, disliking “Chinese-ization”, has instructed these villages to hold Ancestor Day in conjunction with the calendar New Year (i.e. the New Year according to the solar calendar) (Nicholas 2000: 131).