

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

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Chapter 5

Social Relationship

Kampung Durian Tawar is a village of people who, within the overarching ethnic category of Orang Asli, fall under the sub-category of Temuan. Although Orang Asli society is regarded as egalitarian relative to Malay society, Temuan society is nonetheless hierarchical and, as such, has received much attention given this difference to wider Orang Asli society (Hood 1989). Despite this, in discussions on social organization among the Orang Asli, Kampung Durian Tawar has often been considered as representative of Temuan society.

In present-day Kampung Durian Tawar the villagers divide themselves into a number of stratifying categories. The villagers talk about themselves on the basis of these categories. The major categories are (1) the upper people (*orang atas*) and the lower people (*orang bawah*), (2) the *adat* group (*puak adat*), the religion group (*puak agama*) and the drunk group (*puak mabuk*), and (3) the *enekbuah pusaka*, the *enekbuah bakar* and the *enekbuah mendatang* (explained below).

The first category arose as a result of the housing construction project undertaken in the village in the 1970s, and refers to those who came to live on the hill in the village (the upper people) and those who came to live at the bottom of the hill (the lower people). As this chapter shows, this categorization reflects both geographical and social differences. In other words, “upper” and “lower”, as used by the villagers, also reflect a class consciousness in the village: an upper class and a lower class.

The second category arose with the increase of Islamic converts in the village, and represents a split between the villagers who follow *adat* (the *adat* group), those who follow a particular religion such as Islam or Christianity (the religion group), and those having no beliefs (the drunk group).

The third category arose from matrilineal kinship principles, and refers to the legitimate inheritors (including women) of ancestral property (*enekbuah pusaka*; *pusaka* refers to titles or land such as durian orchards); the children of titleholders who have remained in Kampung Durian Tawar (holders of titles do not necessarily follow the practice of uxrilocal residence) (*enekbuah bakar*); and the husbands living in the village due to the practice of uxrilocal residence or who are newly arrived in the village (*enekbuah mendatang*).

As we shall see in this chapter, while the categories of upper and lower people are clearly defined and well established among the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar, the other categories were introduced by Batin Janggut. Additionally, while it is true that many villagers have adopted the categories, not all villagers accept or apply them. Villagers belonging to the lower people category understand themselves as belonging to the lower people, for example, but people categorized as belonging to the drunk group do not see themselves as members of the drunk group. I use the categories here because I believe that one can thereby show how Kampung Durian Tawar is not a single, unified community. The fact is that factional oppositions are evident among the villagers and are influential in village politics. Rather than draw on my own terms, I use these categories of factions or groupings because these are the ones accepted and used by many of the villagers themselves.

Family and Kinship

The basic unit of life in the village is the nuclear family (*kelamin*), consisting of a husband (*laki*), a wife (*bini*) and unmarried children (*enek*). In most cases nuclear families occupy a single house (*rumah*).¹ When children marry, they usually build a new house and live independently of their parents. The married couple is the basic economic unit of production and consumption (Baharon 1973: 65).

People in the village have a clear understanding of the specific kinship relations they have with relatives living in the village. For relatives living outside the village, however, they are only aware that some kind of blood connection exists and tend to forget the specifics of the kin relationship. Although it is difficult to generalize, the villagers seem to see those relations within a range extending to third cousins (*tiga pupuk*) as relatives (*saudara*),² whereas they talk of “having ties” (*tali*) with relations who fall outside this range. It is at the *tali* level of awareness that we hear comments such as, “I have forgotten exactly what relation he/she is, but there is some sort of blood relation”.

Baharon (1973: 373) suggests that kin terms used by the Temuan in general are essentially bilateral and classificatory. At times the range of kinship relations stretches quite far. The limits of the range of kinship relations, however, are not fixed. Seen in terms of the network of relatives, the villagers' kinship relations can be classified, at the level of everyday life, as bilateral. In this sense, the great majority of kinship terms and relations in Kampung Durian Tawar share the same characteristics as the bilateral society that Tachimoto (2000) has described among the Orang Hulu.

However, the concept of womb or belly (*perut*, here referring to a matrilineal descent group) operates in the village, and there is debate over whether or not this is due to the influence of the surrounding Malays' matrilineal *adat*. In addition, the kinship terms of mother's brother (*ibubapa*) and sister's son/daughter (*enekbuah*) indicate the operation of matrilineal principles (see Table 14 for a comprehensive list of kinship terms). *Ibubapa* and *enekbuah* are also used to refer, respectively, to the "head of a matrilineal descent group" and a "member of a matrilineal descent group". *Enekbuah* is also used simply to refer to "people (villagers) who follow the Batin".

Waris refers to those members (inheritors) of a matrilineal descent group who have the right of inheritance or succession to ancestral property (*pusaka*). In Kampung Durian Tawar *waris* and *perut* are often used interchangeably, and *waris* is often used in the place of *perut* when referring to a matrilineal descent group. The matrilineal descent group is also the unit of exogamy. There is a particularly strong prohibition against marriage between members of the same matrilineal descent group (Baharon 1973: 69-70). In other words, marriage rules operating in the village adhere closely to matrilineal principles. Further, uxori-local residence is regarded as the ideal. Husbands, referred to as *orang semenda*, are the ones who enter a new household after marriage, and they are prohibited from involvement in matters regarding the wife's matrilineal descent group (*tempat semenda*).

According to the earliest records of the village, inheritance of the titles of leaders and of land (such as rice fields) began under matrilineal principles. As such, it is feasible that the villagers' kinship relations are matrilineal as well as bilateral. Baharon (1973) commented that the village is a bilateral society at the practical level, while at the ideal level it is matrilineal. In Kampung Durian Tawar the practice of these once-ideal matrilineal principles has recently gained strength.

Table 14
Kinship terms in Kampung Durian Tawar

Number	Kinship term	Kinship relation	English translation	Notes
1	<i>enek</i>	S, D	Son, daughter	No particular gender differentiation. When differentiating <i>enek jantan</i> is used for son and <i>enek betina</i> for daughter.
2	<i>enekbua</i>	ZS, ZD	Sister's son, sister's daughter	Also refers to a member of a matrilineal descent group (<i>perut</i>), and also to those (villagers in general) who follow the Batin.
3	<i>enek sedara</i>	ZS, ZD, BS, BD	Nephew, niece	Used as a term of address
4	<i>moli/ma'</i>	M	Mother	
5	<i>bapai/bah/ay ah</i>	F	Father	
6	<i>chuchu'</i>	SS, SD, DD, DS, ZSS, ZSD, BDD, BDS	Grandchild	Classificatory
7	<i>genoi/wan</i>	MM, FM, MMZ, MFB	Grandmother	Classificatory
8	<i>aki</i>	FF, MF, FFB, MFB	Grandfather	Classificatory
9	<i>chichid</i>	SSS, SDD, DDD, DSD, ZSSS, ZSDD, BDDD, BDSS	Great-grandchild	Classificatory
10	<i>moyang</i>	MMM, FMM, MMMZ, FMMZ	Great-grandmother and great-grandfather	Also includes his or her spouse. Also has the meaning of ancestor.
11	<i>pupu'</i>	FBS, FBD, FZS, FZD, MBS, MBD, MZS, MZD	First cousin	In the form <i>se pupu'</i> means first cousin.
12	<i>ade/adik</i>	FFBS, FFBSD, FMBSS, FMBSD, FFZDS, FFZDD, FMBDS, FMBDD, etc	Second cousin	In the form <i>dua pupu'</i> means second cousin. Third cousin is <i>tiga pupu'</i> .
13	<i>ge-e'/abang</i>	Younger B and Z, and younger <i>pupu'</i>	Younger sibling or cousin	
14	<i>ga-o'/kakak</i>	Older B and older male <i>pupu'</i> Older Z and older female <i>pupu'</i>	Older male sibling or older male cousin Older female sibling or older female cousin	<i>Abang</i> is a Malaysian national language (frequently used nowadays) <i>Kakak</i> is a Malaysian national language (frequently used nowadays)

15	<i>tiri'</i>			Non-blood relation through remarriage	<i>Moi tiri'</i> means stepmother
16	<i>inak</i>	Parent's <i>ade'/adik</i> (female) and younger D of MMZ, MMB, MFZ, MFB, FFZ, FFB, FMB, FMZ	Aunt	Usually used to refer to younger aunts	
17	<i>mamak</i>	Parent's <i>ade'/adik</i> (male) and younger S of MMZ, MMB, MFZ, MFB, FFZ, FFB, FMB, FMZ	Uncle	Usually used to refer to younger uncles	
18	<i>tua/tuo</i>	Parent's <i>ga-o'/kakak</i> and older S of MMZ, MMB, MFZ, MFB, FFZ, FFB, FMB, FMZ	Aunt	Usually used to refer to older aunts	
19	<i>wak</i>	Parent's <i>ge-e'/abang</i> and older S of MMZ, MMB, MFZ, MFB, FFZ, FFB, FMB, FMZ	Uncle	Usually used to refer to older uncles	
20	<i>ibubapa</i>	MB	Mother's male sibling	Also refers to older males within a matrilineal descent group	
21	<i>menantu'</i>	S and D -in-law	Child's spouse	Son-in-law and daughter-in-law	
22	<i>mentohak</i>	F and M -in-law	Spouse's father or mother	Father-in-law and mother-in-law	
23	<i>ipar</i>	B and Z -in-law	Spouse's sibling	In-laws	
24	<i>biras</i>	BWB, BWZ, ZHB, ZHZ	Sibling's spouse's sibling	In-laws	
25	<i>bisan</i>	DHM, DHF, SWM, SWF	Parent's of child's spouse	In-laws	
26	<i>kawan</i>		Spouse	Term of address used when introducing one's husband or wife to someone not known well	
27	<i>bini</i>	W	Wife		
28	<i>laki</i>	H	Husband		
29	<i>waris</i>		Relative	Also used to refer to members of the same matrilineal descent group. Also used to refer to Malays with which one has a close relationship.	

Based on Baharon (1973: 373-376)

Teknonymy: Teknonyms are in common use in Kampung Durian Tawar and other Orang Asli villages in the surrounding area. For example, expressions such as “older child mother” and “older child father”, *mah Wira/ayah Wira*, are standard, these two expressions showing that the person is married and that they have children. Even when a parent’s own child marries and a grandchild is born, he or she then refers to his or her married child using a teknonym. In such a case the person who has become a grandmother or grandfather changes to being referred to with the expressions *Wan* and *Aki* in front of his or her name. As we can see, the teknonyms are used to indicate a person’s generational position.

I was called Rantau by the villagers, but often I was called *wak Rantau/mamak Rantau* by couples with young children. These expressions mean “Uncle Rantau”. This was uttered to teach the couple’s young children the appropriate term of address to use towards me, but on many occasions the terms *wak/mamak* were used towards me even when the children were not about. I am often called *wak/mamak* by people who should call me *abang/adik/gao*. This seems to be because it is probably more polite to call me *wak/mamak Rantau* rather than *abang/adik*. In contrast, however, it is not possible for me to use *wak/mamak* towards people who I should term *abang/adik*. This is because I was not married and I had no children.

This kind of use of these kinship terms can be seen as a teknonymy-related phenomenon. In any case, as we can see here that the use of kinship terms often prioritizes the generation factor. This means that one comes across situations where an older brother uses the term “uncle” towards his younger brother despite their actual relationship. This seems confusing to outsiders, but for those using the kinship terms it reflects a clear understanding of the mutual kinship relations between them.

In their everyday lives in Kampung Durian Tawar, the villagers tend to be conscious of bilateral kinship relations. By contrast, in the succession to titles or in the passing on of property such as durian orchards (and in weddings), the tendency is to follow *adat* and its emphasis on matrilineal principles. We can therefore say that a unique situation concerning kinship relations has arisen in Kampung Durian Tawar. Matrilineal *adat* has been “introduced” into a situation where the principle of a bilateral society is maintained (involving at the most basic level the tracing of kinship relations bilaterally). As a result of this, matrilineal principles operate in several important situations within village society.

Although the surrounding Malays basically follow matrilineal *adat*, their matrilineal principles are disappearing due to the effects of social change and Islamic rules. However, in Kampung Durian Tawar the stance of maintaining the “borrowed” matrilineal *adat*, in contrast to the situation in Malay society, results in the throwing into relief of the “matrilineal society” characteristics.

Taking a broader view of kinship relations in Kampung Durian Tawar,



Plates 37 & 38: The author's "relatives" . Plate 37 is a picture with my sister's family. On the right of the picture is Milong, my brother, who married into this village. The couple now have one daughter and one son. On my right is Wira, who became the driver of the Negeri Sembilan state government's official car. Based on his recommendation, his brother and sister later also worked for the state government. [NT-1998]

we can see several larger kinship groups.³ In these, women rather than men occupy the central role of linking people. In the village, uxorilocal residence is the norm. As a result, we can discern kinship groups centered around the kinship relations between mothers and daughters and between sisters.⁴

The concept of leader selection by the women of a particular matrilineal descent group (women known as *telapak waris*) also exists in the village.



Plates 39 & 40: A growing girl. This girl was three years old in 1998 (Plate 39). In 2008, she stayed in a hostel to attend lower secondary (middle) school, having done well at primary school the previous year. [NT-1998, 2007]

This is a practice where the women themselves select the leaders to protect them. Titleholders should relinquish their titles if they incur opposition to their leadership from the women within their own *waris*. In short, the women decide who the leaders are.

While power relations in village politics are most evident among the men, the categories existing among the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar are, in fact, based on the relations between the women, not the men.

Titleholders: Upper People and Lower People

In this section I examine the inheritance of titles as a means of understanding the historical formation of the upper people and the lower people categories. The titleholders in the village have the authority to settle village-level conflicts. They are also the practitioners of various rites and ceremonies. In particular, the people of the village recognize the holder of the Batin title as the inheritor of the descent (*keturunan*) of the villagers' ancestors and of knowledge of magic (*ilmu*, including sorcery in this village's context).⁵

In Kampung Durian Tawar the *adat* norm for the inheritance of the Batin title occurs under matrilineal principles. Accordingly, two of the earliest holders of the Batin title, Siuntung and Bongsu (whom we



Plates 41 & 42: Twin girls and their elder sister. These twin sisters were two years old in 1998 (Plate 41). In 2008, they will enter lower secondary (middle) school. They have dreams of becoming school teachers. [NT-1998, 2003]

encountered in my outline of the history of the village), can be seen as temporary titleholders who filled the position until the legitimate inheritors grew to maturity. In other words, only those who belong to the same matrilineal descent group as the first Batin, Baning, are regarded as legitimate inheritors to the title. Considering the actual process of the inheritance of titles in Kampung Durian Tawar, however, we can see that not all titles were inherited under matrilineal principles. It is evident that inheritance to titles was manipulated, so to speak, according to the village politics of the time.

Having described the line of inheritance of the title of Batin (from Batin Baning to Batin Janggut), in the following section I examine the history of the inheritance of other titles in Kampung Durian Tawar, basing my examination on Baharon's discussion (1973: 115-27) (see Figure 7).

Primarily the Batin or the person with the most influence at the time decides who is granted the other village titles. In this sense, the history of title succession is also the history of politics within the village. It is also important to note here that in the past the Batin position was one of leadership of the people (the kinship group), not of controller of the land (the village). The leadership of present-day Kampung Durian Tawar does, indeed, extend to the physical area of Kampung Durian Tawar itself. Yet for the villagers, whose history is one of repeated movement from place

to place, the idea of leadership arguably centers on the binding together of the kinship group.

Titleholders can be viewed in terms of the periods of the five Batins of Kampung Durian Tawar.

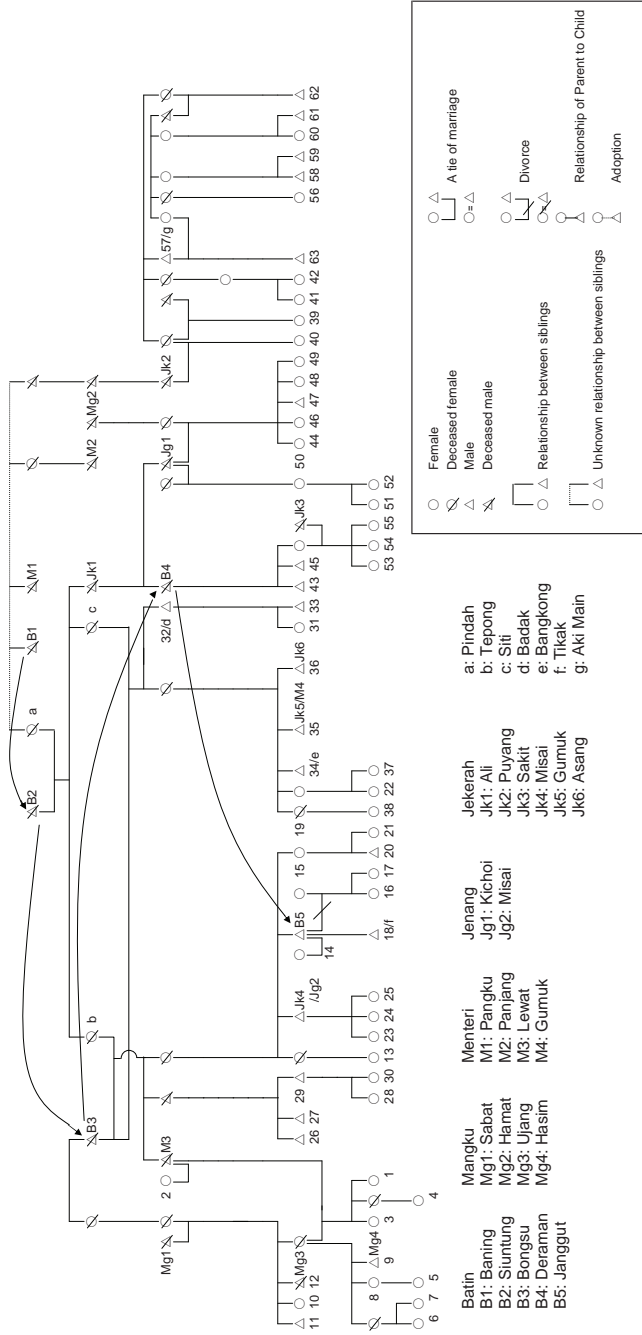
(1) *The period of Batin Baning*: During the period of Batin Baning (B1) there was only one other titleholder in the village, this being Pangku (M1), who held the title of Menteri. Pangku was a matrilineal cousin of Batin Baning.

(2) *The period of Batin Siuntung*: When Batin Baning was attacked and killed by a Malay tiger, the candidates for succession to Batin were Ali (Jk1) and Panjang (M2). However, both were too young for the role. As a result, Siuntung (B2) succeeded to the title of Batin, even though he should not have, given that he was Malay and was not in the appropriate kinship position. After Siuntung became Batin, Ali became the holder of the Jekerah title, and Panjang succeeded to the title of Menteri. Two influential factors in Siuntung's succession to the Batin title were his individual ability and the fact that his succession was recognized by the Malay ruler, the Undang.

(3) *The period of Batin Bongsu*: When Batin Bongsu (B3) succeeded to the title of Batin, the above factors were again influential. On this occasion, Ali and Panjang again arose as candidates for succession to Batin. Although they were now both of an appropriate age, people at the time did not see them as possessing the necessary leadership characteristics. Ali, himself, explained to Baharon that succeeding to the title of Batin after his father Siuntung would have incurred *tulah* (the belief that an act of disrespect to the elders of the village, by someone of his age succeeding to the position of Batin, would bring calamity upon them). Batin Bongsu was the husband of Batin Siuntung's daughter (*menantu*). In this position, he should not have been eligible to succeed to the title, but was able to due to his support among the people.

The title of Mangku was introduced during this period. When Sabat's (Mg1) daughter Murai married Batin Bongsu's son Lewat, Sabat moved to Kampung Durian Tawar from Kenaboi and continued to use his title of Mangku, as he had in Kenaboi. He later moved back to Kenaboi. When he died, Hamat (Mg2) succeeded to the title of Mangku. Hamat was Malay but he moved to Kampung Durian Tawar when his daughter Lebar married Ali's son Kichoi. He lived in Kampung Durian Tawar for several years, though he eventually returned to his home village, where he later died. We can see, then, that in the beginning the title of Mangku was used by Batin Bongsu and Jekerah Ali as a way of showing respect for their in-laws.

Figure 7
A genealogy of title succession



Note 1: Batin is the highest *adat* leader, Mangku represents the Batin when the Batin is not in the village, Menter is the Batin's deputy, Jenang is an executor and protector of the *adat*, and Jekerah is a protector of the villagers as a whole.

Note 2: The numbers refer to house numbers. Unofficial residence is the standard practice in the village, though there are exceptions. The genealogy shows kinship relations between households; for the most part spouses (husbands and wives) who have married into a household have been omitted.

(4) *The period of Batin Deraman:* When Batin Bongsu died, his sons became candidates for succession to the Batin title. This was in keeping with the view that the legitimate successors were those belonging to the same matrilineal descent group as Batin Baning. Jekerah Ali is said to have opposed Batin Bongsu's sons as candidates because succeeding to the title of Batin after one's father would incur *tulah*. Jekerah Ali was already an elder of the village and, as such, his words carried particular weight. Because of his influence, Ali's son Deraman (B4) succeeded as the next Batin. In addition, Ali's son Kichoi was given the title of Jenang (Jg1). Lewat (M3), who had been one of the candidates for succession to the Batin title, succeeded to the title of Menteri. The Lewat group saw Ali's influence on his son's succession as being "against *adat*" (*melanggar adat*).

Ali's own title of Jekerah was succeeded to Poyang (Jk2), the grandson of a matrilineal cousin of Ali's mother. Therefore, all the titles in Kampung Durian Tawar were held by members of the Ali group, with the exception of Menteri Lewat. By this time, the people of the Ali group had moved to Sialang. The villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar were thereby split both physically and psychologically into the Lewat group and the Ali group. Later, during the period of Batin Deraman, conflict arose between Batin Deraman and Jekerah Poyang, and the latter came to be banished (*halau*) from the village.

(5) *The period of Batin Janggut:* When Batin Deraman died, Misai, Janggut, Badak and Bangkong arose as candidates for the next Batin. Once again, Ali had the greatest influence over the final selection. Badak and Bangkong were removed from the list due to age and lack of ability, the choice then being between Misai and his younger brother Janggut. A messenger was first sent to Misai, announcing his selection as candidate for Batin, but he declined the offer, saying, "I'm not sufficiently familiar with the *adat* and I cannot leave Dusun Kubur, my wife's village" (succeeding to the title meant returning to one's home village). The messenger was then sent to Kampung Dalam, where Janggut was living, and Janggut agreed to the offer to succeed to the title of Batin.

Given that succession to a title is decided on matrilineal principles, the fact that Misai and Janggut's father was Chinese was no obstacle, although Ali had reservations about Janggut's behavior. Misai and Janggut were both employees of the JHEOA. Additionally, they were eloquent speakers, and were recognized as having leadership qualities.

At the same time as the decision about the next Batin was carried out, Ujang (Mg3) succeeded to the title of Mangku, which had been vacant.

He was from Chergon, near Kampung Dalam, and he and his siblings' relations formed a distinct group in Kampung Durian Tawar. It was as the leader of this group that he was chosen to succeed to the title of Mangku. His older sister is Menteri Lewat's wife, Murai. Succession to the title of Jekerah, which the banished Poyang had held, was also decided at this time. Sakit (Jk3) (from Pahang) was the successor. He was the husband of Deraman's daughter Entak. After Batin Deraman's death, then, the Lewat group came to hold the three titles of Batin, Menteri and Mangku, while the Ali group held the two titles of Jenang and Jekerah.

Following Ali's death, Batin Janggut stripped (*lutur*) Jekerah Sakit of his title on the grounds that he lacked the ability to do the job properly. Sakit had not been performing his duties as Jekerah and had lost the people's trust. Badak and Bangkong (members of a matrilineal subgroup descended from Siti) were the first to be approached as candidates for the next Jekerah. According to the *adat*, it is considered ideal that the matrilineal descent subgroups take turns in holding titles. It was for this reason that members of Siti's matrilineal descent group, Badak and Bangkong, were approached first. However, they turned down the offer on the grounds that they were too young and did not "know the *adat*".

In the end, Misai, a member of the matrilineal descent subgroup that has Tepong as its original ancestor (a group to which Menteri Lewat and Batin Janggut also belong), arose as a candidate, and he agreed to succeed as the next Jekerah (Jk4). Later, after the death of Kichoi, Misai succeeded to the title of Jenang (Jg2), and Gemuk (Jk5) succeeded to his Jekerah title. Gemuk (Bangkong's younger brother) is a member of the matrilineal descent subgroup of Siti.

After the death of Ujang, Hasim (Mg4) succeeded as the next Mangku. He was Menteri Lewat's stepson (a son of Murai by her previous husband). Ujang and Hasim belong to the same matrilineal descent group and it was agreed that succession to the title of Mangku would come from within that matrilineal descent group. It was also agreed at this time that the other titles would be succeeded to alternately by two matrilineal descent subgroups contained within the matrilineal descent group that has Pindah as its ancestor. This meant that the Ali group no longer had any titleholders. When Menteri Lewat died in November 1996, Gemuk (M4) succeeded to the title of Menteri. The title of Jekerah, which Gemuk had held, was succeeded to by his younger brother, Asang (Jk6).

Since Batin Janggut's succession to the title of Batin, the titles used in the village have become concentrated among members of the Lewat group (to the point that nowadays it can be described as the Batin Janggut

group). As discussed previously and in the next section, the people of the Lewat group (the upper people) came to live on the hill in the village as the result of a housing construction project.

Batin Janggut, with the backing of the JHEOA and utilizing the ideology of the matrilineal *adat*, returned the situation in the village to one where the titleholders belonged to the Batin Baning matrilineal descent group (the core of the Lewat group). Batin Janggut concentrated the titles among his close relatives, and made these changes in order to emphasize that he was the truly legitimate successor to the title of Batin. As the one who asked the JHEOA to undertake development projects in Kampung Durian Tawar, he also had tight control over development matters in the village, in particular over the distribution of development funds.

Categorization

As mentioned above, the people of the Lewat group moved, as a result of their participation in the 1970 housing construction project, from the area of Old Kampung Durian Tawar to their current residential area on the village hilltop. These were the people, in other words, who followed Batin Janggut's leadership and participated in the JHEOA-promoted housing construction project (the upper people in houses Nos. 1-39 in Figure 5). The people of the Ali group, on the other hand, did not participate in the housing project and at that time remained in Sialang. Later, however, most of them moved to the Jelawai area of Kampung Durian Tawar.

The people of the Aki Main group (Nos. 56–63), who had moved from Kampung Bukit Lanjan in Selangor to Kampung Durian Tawar in the second half of the 1970s, lived initially in the residential area of the upper people. Later, however, strains emerged in their relations with the upper people and they moved to the edge of the Jelawai area.⁶

The people of the Ali and Aki Main groups live at the bottom of the hill and, as already mentioned, have come to be known as the lower people (Nos. 40-63).

The above categorizations of the villagers are based on the geographical positions of the particular areas of residence, but also reflect, at a fundamental level, the oppositional split between the kinship groups of the Lewat and Ali groups. In the context of succession to the titles in the village, the Lewat group has, at its core, the legitimate successors to the first Batin, Batin Baning. The Ali group, as the name suggests, is a kinship group centered on the descendants of Ali. According to the kinship principles of the matrilineal *adat*, members of the Ali group should not be successors to the village titles. The fact that the titles of Batin, Mangku,

Jenang and Jekerah have been bestowed on members of the Ali group is largely due to Ali's influence (Ali himself was a legitimate successor to Batin Baning).

Viewed from a different perspective, the categories of upper people and lower people express differentiated economic classes. As can be surmised from their participation in the JHEOA housing construction project, the great majority of the upper people have actively participated, under the leadership of Batin Janggut, in state-led development projects since the 1970s. These residents of the village switched their livelihood from a subsistence economy centered on hunting and gathering activities to agriculture centered on rubber tapping. The lower people, on the other hand, opposed initially to the development projects and having declared that they would not participate in them, subsequently became excluded from the development projects. As a result they have been forced, whether they like it or not, to continue pursuing livelihoods centered on a subsistence economy.

The economic relationship between the two groups is discussed in the next chapter. To rush to a conclusion, however, it can be said that as the number of development projects has increased, the economic inequality between the two groups has expanded.

The land cultivated by the lower people, including that of the new members, the Aki Main group, is much smaller than that of the upper people, who have actively opened up new land (in regard to the scale of land under cultivation per household see Table 15, and for a comparison of the land under cultivation between the upper people and the lower people see Table 16). For those lower people without land, livelihoods center on hunting and gathering activities for cash, and day laboring for Chinese or Malay employers.

As a result of forest logging, deforestation and the development of areas of forest land, the forest environment around Kampung Durian Tawar has changed. This has caused a reduction in the animals available for hunting and forest products for gathering. As such, it is now difficult to live solely on a subsistence economy. Seen in this way, the lower people are the victims of development, and have been forced into greater poverty.

***Adat*, Religion and Drunk Groups**

The categorization of the villagers into the *adat* group, the religion group and the drunk group reveals a process of reconstitution of the existing class order of upper people and lower people in Kampung Durian Tawar (see Figure 8). This reconstitution occurred under the influence of the government's Islamization policy.

Table 15
Land under cultivation

House number	Number of householders			Interview survey		Rubber smallholdings under development project				
	Male	Female	Total	Durian orchards (acres)	Rubber smallholdings (acres)	JHEOA (acres)	RISDA(1) (acres)	RISDA(2) (acres)	RISDA(3) (acres)	Total (acres)
1	3	3	6	3	10	3	2.2	5	3	13.2
2	0	2	2	0.5	2	0	0	6	7.7	13.7
3	1	3	4	2.5	8.5	0	0	3	2.7	5.7
4	1	2	3	0	2.5	0	0	0	0	0
5	3	3	6	13	11	3	0	8	4.8	15.8
6	1	2	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
7	2	3	5	1	2	0	0	0	2	2
8	4	2	6	10	6.5	0	2.2	2.2	2.7	7.1
9	3	6	9	13	25	0	2	3	0	5
10	5	6	11	2	10	0	3	4	10.1	17.1
11	5	3	8	0.5	9	0	2	3	0	5
12	2	4	6	10	10	0	0	3	0	3
13	6	3	9	10	19	0	6	5	4.8	15.8
14	11	11	22	39	14.5	0	8.2	3	0	11.2
15	0	2	2	4	5	0	3	3	0	6
16	2	5	7	3	3	3	0	9	8.9	20.9
17	2	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
18	2	5	7	10	18	3	5	0	0	8
19	2	4	6	13.5	25	4	4	8	9	25.0
20	2	4	6	4	5	0	0	0	0	0
21	2	4	6	0.5	9	0	5	0	0	5
22	5	1	6	0.5	9	0	4.2	2	2	8.2
23	2	2	4	0.25	3	0	0	0	0	0
24	4	3	7	1.75	30	0	3	8	11.8	22.8
25	3	4	7	4	5	3	0	0	0	3
26	2	1	3	6.25	8	0	7	4.4	2	13.4
27	1	0	1	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	6	6	12	5	12	0	4.2	5.2	6.5	15.9
29	2	1	3	3	2.5	0	5	0	0	5
30	1	4	5	0	2.5	0	0	2.2	2	4.2
31	3	1	4	0.5	7.5	0	2.2	0	4.6	6.8
32	1	1	2	0.25	5	0	0	2.2	2.2	4.4
33	4	4	8	0	3.5	0	0	0	1.8	1.8
34	3	5	8	2	10	0	3	1.2	5.5	9.7
35	7	4	11	8	18	4	3	0	2.5	9.5
36	6	1	7	1	12	3	0	0	6.7	9.7
37	3	2	5	2	7.5	3	6.2	2	0	11.2
38	4	3	7	0.5	5	0	2	0	0	2
39	0	2	2	3	5	0	0	2	2	4
40	2	1	3	0.5	5	0	0	3	2	5
41	3	3	6	2	6	3	0	3.2	0	6.2
42	4	3	7	2	9.5	3	0	0	3.5	6.5

House number	Number of householders			Interview survey		Rubber smallholdings under development project				
	Male	Female	Total	Durian orchards (acres)	Rubber smallholdings (acres)	JHEOA (acres)	RISDA(1) (acres)	RISDA(2) (acres)	RISDA(3) (acres)	Total (acres)
43	1	0	1	0.25	4	0	0	0	0	0
44	3	4	7	0.5	3.5	0	0	0	0	0
45	5	6	11	4	9	0	4.3	0	2	6.3
46	4	5	9	1	6	3	0	3	7.2	13.2
47	4	3	7	2	5	0	3	3	6.5	12.5
48	1	2	3	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
49	5	4	9	2	4	0	0	2	3	5
50	2	2	4	2	5	0	3	3.2	2.7	8.9
51	4	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
52	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
53	2	5	7	5	3	0	0	3.2	3.2	6.4
54	5	1	6	0	2.5	0	0	0	0	0
55	3	2	5	6	9	3	0	0	0	3
56	5	1	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
57	3	3	6	1.5	3	3	0	0	0	3
58	3	4	7	0.5	3	3	0	0	0	3
59	2	2	4	1.5	3	0	0	0	0	0
60	6	6	12	0.5	3	0	0	0	0	0
61	5	1	6	0	8	3	2	2	1.1	8.1
62	5	1	6	0	2.5	0	0	3	0.7	3.7
63	1	4	5	1	3.5	0	0	0	0	0
Total	197	191	388	217.25	448	50	94.7	120	139	403.9

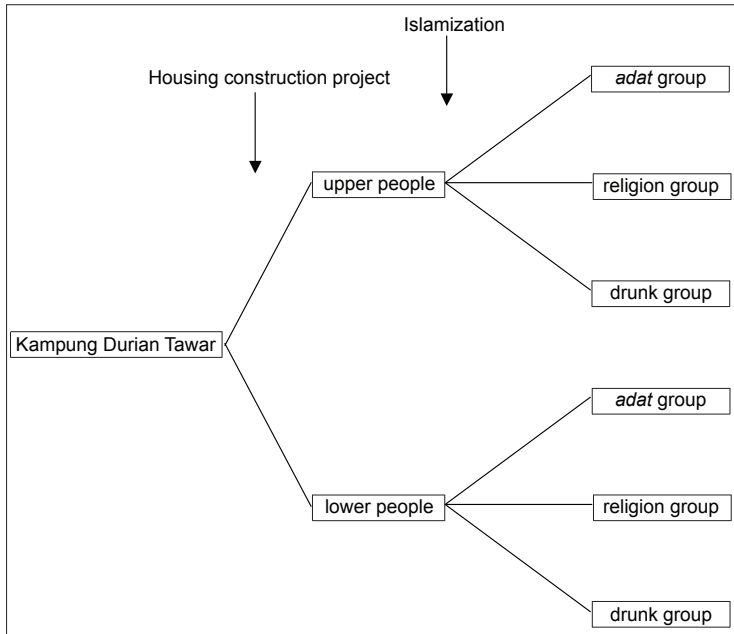
NB: Based on the author's survey of household and source material of JHEOA and RISDA.

Table 16
Comparison of land under cultivation

	Number of householders			Interview survey		Rubber smallholdings under development project				
	Male	Female	Total	Durian orchards (acres)	Rubber smallholdings (acres)	JHEOA (acres)	RISDA(1) (acres)	RISDA(2) (acres)	RISDA(3) (acres)	Total (acres)
Upper people	2.97	3.15	6.13	4.6	8.9	0.7	2.1	2.4	2.7	8
Lower people	3.38	2.83	6.21	1.5	4.2	0.9	0.5	1.1	1.4	3.9
Village as a whole	3.13	3.03	3.16	3.4	7.1	0.8	1.5	1.9	2.2	6.4

NB: A comparison of the average figures per household.

Figure 8
Categorizations of the villagers



Batin Janggut spoke of these categories in public at a village meeting held in January 1997. Below I discuss the content of that village meeting.

On January 11, 1997, I attended a village meeting held in the *adat* hall. It was held in the wake of an Islamic missionary meeting held the previous December under the auspices of the JHEOA. In keeping with the custom of such discussions, almost all the matters covered were pronouncements delivered by Batin Janggut. Of the various items discussed at the meeting, I provide a summary of three items.

(1) *Regarding the current situation in Kampung Durian Tawar:* Batin Janggut said that the village was currently split into an *adat* group (those who followed *adat*), a religion group (those who had converted to Islam or Christianity) and a drunk group (those who ignore the Batin's advice and warnings and spend their days drinking). He also remarked that the religion group had a tendency to not follow *adat*, and that the drunk group

followed the leadership of a different “Batin” (Aki Main). He further commented that his son Tikak was planning to be the next Batin, and that some people in the village supported him.

(2) *Regarding adat*: Batin Janggut said that Kampung Durian Tawar should follow matrilineal *adat* (*adat mempatih*), not the so-called patrilineal *adat* (*adat temenggung*).⁷ If matrilineal *adat* is followed, he said, the villagers divide into *enekbuah pusaka*, *enekbuah bakar* and *enekbuah mendatang*. *Enekbuah pusaka*, he said, are the legitimate successors to Kampung Durian Tawar’s ancestral property (*pusaka*: land and the titles used in the village, and so on). *Enekbuah bakar* are the descendants of the titleholders who, according to the uxorilocal residence rule, should otherwise be living in other villagers. And *enekbuah mendatang* are those who have married into families in Kampung Durian Tawar or who have moved to the village from somewhere else. The only ones who can succeed to the titles of *adat* leaders, he said, are *enekbuah pusaka*.

(3) *Regarding religion (Islam)*: The original purpose of the village meeting was to consider how to respond to the government policy of Islamization. In relation to this, Batin Janggut said that conversion to Islam was permitted, but that nominal conversion for cash or aid was not permissible. He also said that situations where family members followed different religions led to trouble within the family. To deal with this, he continued, a request from a wife for a divorce, which had been forbidden under *adat*, would now be permitted. He said that obtaining a divorce would also be made easier. He went on to say that rites and ceremonies held in accordance with *adat* would no longer be held for those who had converted to Islam or Christianity. For example, those who had converted to Islam would have to find someone else to hold rites and ceremonies (such as those for weddings and funerals).

Below I explore the particular background to these three pronouncements made by Batin Janggut.

(1) *Regarding the current situation in Kampung Durian Tawar*: Among the upper people, conflict has arisen between Batin Janggut and Tikak, his son by his first wife, over leadership regarding development projects. Batin Janggut’s comments here are a public reference to the conflict that has been causing discord among the upper people.

The categories of upper people and lower people refer to those who, respectively, did and did not participate in the development promoted by Batin Janggut. During the development projects, however, conflict arose among the upper people themselves, which in turn has had an effect on the lower people. In opposing Batin Janggut, Tikak sought to expand his

power and influence not only among the upper people but also among the lower people. This resulted in the formation of a group that supported Tikak.

Batin Janggut's reference to the drunk group arises from the following background. Although Batin Janggut is not Muslim, he drinks neither liquor nor beer, and is very critical of alcohol consumption. Tikak is not Muslim either but he does drink. In fact, he is known for his liking for liquor and beer. The members of the Aki Main group are not Muslim either, and many are alcoholics who frequently get into fights. Batin Janggut's mention of the drunk group is a veiled reference to the members of the Aki Main group, which supports Tikak.

Batin Janggut's reference to a religion group is connected to the emergence of Islamic converts among the lower people, a phenomenon stemming from the state-led policy of Islamization that first appeared at the village level in the 1990s. Batin Janggut says that Tikak encouraged the lower people to convert to Islam. He claims that Tikak did this in order to fulfill a "promise" he made to outside (Malay) forces (those in the JHEOA supporting Islamic missionary activity and members of UMNO, which permits Islamic missionary activity), whose backing he had obtained. Therefore, Batin Janggut insinuates that the category of religion group applies to those Islamic converts who support Tikak.⁸

As we can see, then, Batin Janggut's categorizations of the villagers results from Tikak having brought under his own influence the groups of people who had challenged Batin Janggut's authority. In bringing anti-Batin groups under his influence, Tikak is mounting a challenge to Batin Janggut's authority. Batin Janggut has labeled the people in the Tikak group as constituting either a religion group or a drunk group, while referring to his own supporters as an *adat* group. In doing this, he has made clear the opposition between his own group and the Tikak group. Neither Tikak, the people of the Aki Main group referred to as the drunk group nor the Islamic converts attended the meeting.

(2) *Regarding adat*: In response to the emerging Islamic converts, Batin Janggut's pronouncement regarding *adat* was aimed at constructing his own supporters' identities through highlighting an *adat* emphasizing non-Islam-ness. As a discourse opposing the Islamic forces behind the religion group, which supports Tikak, Batin Janggut's comments emphasized that the *adat* group was supported by the *adat*.

The drunk group comprises people from the Aki Main group who have moved to Kampung Durian Tawar. They tend to follow the bilateral *adat* of their home village and not that of Kampung Durian Tawar. Batin

Janggut regards their *adat* as patrilineal (*ikut ayah*) and makes a clear distinction between it and matrilineal (*ikut mah*) *adat*. A second aim of Batin Janggut's pronouncements was to emphasize, in response to the confusion expressed over *adat*, that the *adat* followed in Kampung Durian Tawar is matrilineal.

Batin Janggut's comments regarding the *enekbuah* classifications relate to Tikak's method of distribution of development funds, and to the emergence of *adat* leaders from among the younger generation who are opposed to Tikak's high-handed way of doing things. Batin Janggut's pronouncements on *enekbuah* reflect the fact that the fortunes of the *adat* leaders (*enekbuah pusaka*) from the younger generation and that of Batin Janggut are one and the same. Under matrilineal *adat*, *enekbuah bakar* such as Tikak, and *enekbuah mendatang* such as the members of the Aki Main group, cannot succeed to the village *adat* leader titles such as Batin. Naturally, those who have converted to Islam are also unable to succeed to these titles. The younger-generation candidates of *adat* leaders support Batin Janggut, for he guarantees the legitimacy of their authority.

(3) *Regarding religion (Islam)*: Batin Janggut had received a letter, via the JHEOA, from the Malay traditional ruler, the Undang. The gist of the letter was that Orang Asli *adat* could not be applied to Islamic converts among the Orang Asli. Batin Janggut's pronouncement regarding *adat* rites and ceremonies, and Islamic converts in the village, was a public announcement, in response to the JHEOA's policy, of the fact that *adat* would no longer be applied to the Islamic converts in the village.

Politics of Title Succession

In his study, Baharon (1973: 123) wrote that "it is clear that the requirement of *keturunan* (descent), let alone matrilineal descent, had not been adhered to consistently in all the successions to the five offices". In other words, he points to the process of succession to titles in Kampung Durian Tawar as evidence that matrilineal *adat* had become something followed in name only (Baharon 1973: 123-25). At the same time, however, he also points out that the villagers continue to be ever-conscious of matrilineal *adat* as the ideal model of title succession (Baharon 1973: 127).

The situation he is pointing to here, namely the intention to follow matrilineal *adat* in the process of title succession, has become much more of a reality in Kampung Durian Tawar since Baharon's study in the 1970s. Indeed, following matrilineal *adat* in the process of title succession has become much more pronounced. This is manifested in the concentration of the titleholders among the Batin Janggut group. During the period of

my study (1996-98), the norm that title succession should occur under matrilineal principles was put into practice to a most complete degree.

Under Ali's influence, there was a time when several members of the Ali group held village titles. Since Batin Janggut succeeded to the title of Batin, however, there has been a concentration of titles among the members of the Lewat group (now the Batin Janggut group). In other words, this is a tale of the regaining of power, within the context of title succession, by the Lewat group, these being the legitimate successors to the first Batin, Batin Baning.

The concentration of titles among the members of the Batin Janggut group has occurred in Kampung Durian Tawar in parallel with a progression of development projects undertaken with Batin Janggut acting as mediator between the JHEOA and the villagers. Because the people of the Ali group declared at the outset that they would not participate in the initial housing construction project or in rubber development projects, they became excluded from development projects. The recipients of distributed development funds in such projects were concentrated among the Batin Janggut group. It was because of this economic development and the authority gained from having the support of the JHEOA that the Batin Janggut group came to hold the reins of political power.

As development projects progressed, economic inequality began to appear between the upper people, who followed Batin Janggut and who had participated in the housing construction project, and the lower people, who had not participate in the project and who, in opposition to Batin Janggut and the JHEOA, had shown no interest in the rubber development projects. Expressed in terms of the earlier categories, this means that economic inequality began to appear between the people of the Lewat group and the people of the Ali group.

The categorizations of the villagers into the upper people and the lower people arose out of the housing construction project in the early 1970s. Behind it, however, was the conflict between the kinship groups of the Lewat and Ali groups. In the process of accepting the development projects, the people of the Lewat group, with Batin Janggut as their new leader, asserted their legitimacy as the titleholders by utilizing the ideology of matrilineal *adat*. Through this, they came to have a hold on the traditional political power involved with the titles and also on the new political power involved with the development projects. Conversely, the people of the Ali group were excluded from the development projects and lost possession of the titles, and as a result lost their hold on power. This is the process of the formation of the upper people and the lower people categories.

A Brief Review

The history of Kampung Durian Tawar begins with the story of the village ancestors moving into the current area of Kampung Durian Tawar from “somewhere around Tampin”. Following this, the people of the village moved repeatedly, often scattering and regrouping, due in part to splits among them. Having experienced the periods of upheaval of the Japanese occupation and the Emergency, after Malaysian independence the villagers were included in the ethnic category of Orang Asli. Later, when Batin Janggut (a JHEOA official connected to the government department responsible for the village) was appointed Batin, the development projects became concentrated among the members of the kinship group of which he was the central figure (i.e. the descendants of the former Lewat group). Using the backing his position enjoyed from the JHEOA, Batin Janggut used the ideology of matrilineal *adat* and concentrated the *adat* leader titles (which had previously been concentrated among the members of the Ali group) among the members of the Lewat group (the Batin Janggut group).

Before Batin Janggut’s period as Batin, Kampung Durian Tawar was a thoroughly ordinary Orang Asli village, having no particular links with the government. Considering the fact that it had had a Malay Batin (Batin Siuntung) in its past, it could even be said that it was so ordinary as to render it doubtful that it was indeed originally Orang Asli. However, just at the time Batin Janggut was appointed Batin, the relationship between the Orang Asli and the government changed significantly. It was in this historical context that Kampung Durian Tawar transformed, with Batin Janggut playing the crucial mediator role, from an ordinary village into a special one – a model village of development.

The history of Kampung Durian Tawar since the beginning of Batin Janggut’s leadership can be understood as a stratification of village society caused by state-led development projects. It can also be understood in the context of Batin Janggut gaining a firm grip on political power within village society through his active introduction of the state-led development projects. Even more importantly, within this context the ideology of matrilineal *adat* was used in the succession to titles and, through this, it gained greater prominence and strength within the village.

Through the development projects, then, stratification among the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar has occurred and has come to be expressed in the categorization of the villagers as upper people and lower people. More recently, Batin Janggut has put forward a categorization of the villagers as an *adat* group, a religion group and a drunk group.

These new categories are an expression of a process of reconstitution of the class order of the upper people and the lower people occurring under the influence of the government's policy of Islamization.

If the upper people, who have gained greater economic power through the development projects, had converted to Islam and had merged with or assimilated into Malay society, then in the eyes of the relevant government departments the projects would have been a success. This has not been the case. Most of the upper people have rejected conversion to Islam, and in contrast to the JHEOA's initial intention, Islamic converts have begun appearing primarily among those who have been excluded from the development projects, the poorer lower people. In response to the appearance of the religion group, primarily composed of these Islamic converts, and to the appearance of the alcoholics, the drunk group, Batin Janggut and the upper people have begun to reconstruct their identity by highlighting *adat*, which emphasizes non-Islam-ness. The categorizations of the villagers of Kampung Durian Tawar, then, give a direct indication of how the social, political and economic situations of the villagers have changed rapidly through development and Islamization.

Notes

1. The difference between a house (*rumah*) and a hut (*pondok*) is that the former has a sturdy structure and is able to bear long-term use, while the latter is constructed on the spot and is only intended for temporary use. *Rumah sawah* is the term used for a paddy field hut, but the term for a durian hut is *pondok durian*. In addition, in Temuan villages in the past the longhouse style of housing structure was to be seen (Baharon 1973: 65).
2. Baharon is of the opinion that up until the fourth generation people are regarded as being members of the same matrilineal descent group (Baharon 1973: 69).
3. Concerning the kinship groups in Kampung Durian Tawar, see Appendix 1.
4. Pelez (1988) has emphasized the importance of sibling relations in the Minangkabau Malay society in Negeri Sembilan. Applying this to kinship relations in Kampung Durian Tawar, sibling relations such as those between sisters can be said to signify horizontal kinship relations

involving only the living, in contrast to the vertical kinship relations of matrilineal descent (which include the dead). In the sense that they both involve “being born from the same womb/belly (*perut*)”, however, they are the two sides of the same coin.

5. In the past the Batin was endorsed by the traditional Malay leader, the Undang, who bestowed the title of Batin upon him. As such, the position of Batin was contained within the traditional political structure of the Malay Kingdom. Tsubouchi (1984) has argued that in Negeri Sembilan the political structure of the traditional kingdom was maintained through the bestowing of titles. The title of the leader of the Orang Asli, Batin, can be seen as a part of such a political structure.
6. They moved from Kampung Bukit Lanjan, I gather, because most of the land that they had been using for durian orchards and other farming/cultivation there had been taken from them under a development project. While I was undertaking my field research in Kampung Durian Tawar, the newspaper and television media carried items depicting Kampung Bukit Lanjan as ruined, claiming that its location by a freeway construction site and urban renewal development had caused it to cease functioning as a village. The media also discussed the government’s forced removal of houses in the village that were occupied by people staging a sit-in against the development project. Members of POASM attempted to force their way into the Prime Minister’s office in protest against the forced removal, but this was not broadcast in the media (Nicholas 2000: 187).
7. Strictly speaking, *adat perpatih* (in Kampung Durian Tawar *adat mempatih*) refers to matrilineal *adat*, and *adat temenggung* refers to *adat* other than *adat perpatih* and not solely to patrilineal *adat* (Hooker 1972: xi). In other words, all *adat* apart from matrilineal *adat* (i.e. both patrilineal and bilateral *adat*) are *adat temenggung*.
8. In the past there have been Christian converts amongst the upper people. Batin Janggut, who is supported in his position by JHEOA (which is opposed to Christianity), banished them from the village.

