

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
MONOGRAPHS ON SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Managing Editor: Dr A. Gell

The Monographs on Social Anthropology were established in 1940 and aim to publish results of modern anthropological research of primary interest to specialists.

The continuation of the series was made possible by a grant in aid from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and more recently by a further grant from the Governors of the London School of Economics and Political science. Income from sales is returned to a revolving fund to assist further publications.

The Monographs are under the direction of an Editorial Board associated with the Department of Anthropology of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

MA' BETISÉK CONCEPTS
OF LIVING THINGS

MA' BETISÉK
CONCEPTS OF
LIVING THINGS

FOR
MY PARENTS
DR A. KARIM AND BISMILLAH BEGUM

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
MONOGRAPHS ON SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

No. 54

MA' BETISÉK
CONCEPTS OF
LIVING THINGS

BY

WAZIR-JAHAN BEGUM KARIM



THE ATHLONE PRESS
HUMANITIES PRESS INC: NEW JERSEY

1981

Published by
THE ATHLONE PRESS LTD
90-91 Great Russell Street
London WC1

USA and Canada
Humanities Press Inc.
New Jersey

© Wazir-Jahan Begum Karim 1981

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Karim, W.

Ma' Betisek concepts of living things. -
(Monographs on social anthropology, ISSN 0077-1704: 34)
I. Ethnology - Malaysia - Carey Island
I. Title II. Series
959.51 DS595

UK SBN 0 485 19554 2
USA SBN 0 391 02424 8

W1
959.51
KAR

573296

Printed in Great Britain by Biddles Ltd., Guildford.

16 MAR 1982
Perpustakaan Negara
Malaysia

Preface

The Ma' Betisék are a group of aborigines, who live on the mangrove coastal areas of Selangor in peninsular Malaysia. This research however is mainly focussed on the Ma' Betisék communities on Carey Island, off the west coast of Selangor and in particular three villages called Sungei Sialang, Sungei Mata and Sungei Bumbun.

My research on the Ma' Betisék began in 1973, when I was given a grant by the University of Malaya, to conduct research on religious aspects of the lives of the Betisék people of Selangor. In 1974, the Ford Foundation awarded me a fellowship to continue with my research on the Ma' Betisék. The major part of my fieldwork was completed in 1975 and my thesis was written up in London with the help of a Scholarship from the Association of Commonwealth Universities. This monograph is a modified version of my thesis, 'The Belief System of the Ma' Betisék of Carey Island, Malaysia', submitted at the London School of Economics in 1977. I had the opportunity to update some of my material in 1978 when I returned to Malaysia to take up a teaching post.

It is remarkable that so few changes have taken place in the beliefs of the Betisék people on the island since 1975. Despite increasing deforestation and new urban influences on the island, the Betisék people continue to uphold their naturistic ideas of how humans should live with plants and animals – the problem which this study attempts to unravel. On the mainland however, the Ma' Betisék are busy keeping pace with development and modernity and express a concern for the backwardness of their friends in the mudflats. I should like, given the time and opportunity, to follow up this study with a comparative analysis of the island and mainland Ma' Betisék and the apparent differences in their world view.

1871

1872

1873

1874

1875

1876

1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1888

1889

1890

1891

1892

1893

1894

1895

1896

1897

1898

1899

1900

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to Dr Stephen Morris, Dr Maurice Bloch and Dr Geoffrey Benjamin for providing me with all the necessary assistance and guidance in my research.

To Professor Rodney Needham, I wish to express my appreciation for his useful comments and suggestions in interpreting Ma' Betisék ethnography. My thanks also to my friend and colleague Salmi Nazerali for her constant support and help in my work and to Wahid Karim and Gulrose Begum for their assistance in the organization of my material. Also, a special note of thanks to the staff and my fellow students at the Department of Anthropology of the London School of Economics for their numerous helpful suggestions and comments.

I can only hope to mention some of the names of the various people who have helped me in some way or another during the period of my fieldwork. I am indebted to Dr E. Soepadmo from the School of Biological Sciences, University of Malaya, for so kindly helping me identify some of the plants which are used by the Ma' Betisék for rituals and herbal medicine. My thanks to the Staff of the Department of Geography and the Department of Anthropology and Sociology from the University of Malaya for assistance offered during the Economic Survey conducted in 1975 and for photocopying and mapping documents and charts used in the field. I also wish to thank the staff of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Kuala Lumpur, the Orang Asli Hospital at Gombak and the managers of Pataling Estate on Carey Island for their invaluable co-operation and assistance during my fieldwork.

It is difficult to express my gratitude to the Ma' Betisék on Carey island. All I can say is that, for people who feel so intensely proud of their own culture, I can only hope that I

have presented it in the way they would have wanted it to be told. To my Ma' Betisék family at Carey Island, Ahmad Kassim, Mijah, Jaman, Milah and Johan, my deepest love and affection.

W.A.K.

Pronunciation Guide

Stress in the Betisék language is usually on the last syllable of the word and this includes words which have recently been adopted from Malay. For example, the word for 'chair' is derived from the Malay word *kerusi* but pronounced as *kusik*. Here, it should be mentioned that a number of Malay words adopted into Betisék are shortened in this way, i.e. by removing the second syllable in the word but retaining the second vowel in the first syllable. Thus, the Malay word *belukar* ('secondary forest') becomes *bukar*, *pelandok* ('deer') becomes *pandok* and *perahu* ('boat') becomes *pahuk*. Malay words are also shortened by dropping the first syllable. Thus *sekolah* ('school') becomes *kolah* and *kemarau* ('drought') *marau*. Sometimes, two Malay words are joined to form a new word. Thus *bela hantu* ('to rear spirits or ghosts') becomes *belantuk*. Malay words ending with the consonant *ng* are modified to end with a glottal check. Thus *memang* ('sure') becomes *mema'* Malay words ending with a vowel are usually modified to end with a *k*. Examples are *kaluk* ('if'), *maluk* ('shy') and *hatik* ('heart').

The Ma' Betisék, particularly the women, speak at a very high pitch and run their words together, finally drawing out and lengthening the last syllable in the sentence. As a result, their speech has a nasal, humming quality but without much variation in tone. Exceptions are in statements of commands, fear or anger.

Certain accent signs have been used to differentiate some of the vowels used.

The English vowel sounds that approximate those used in Ma' Betisék are as follows:

- a, as in 'large'
- e, as in 'kerb'
- i, as in 'sit'
- o, as in 'long'

u, as in 'loot'

é, as in 'sex'

ê, as in 'cave'

Most of the consonants in the Ma' Betisék language are similar to English but the following differences should be observed:-

k, as in 'cur'

ʔ, as in Cockney 'lit' (glottal check)

A dash is used to indicate the distinct separation of syllables within a word, e.g. *jo-oh*. 'R' at the beginning and in the middle of words are pronounced as in French e.g. *ra* and *niréh*. All words ending in 'm' and 'ng' are nazalized.

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE MA' BETISÉK	13
Name and classification	13
The spread and development of Ma' Betisék settlements	17
Ma' Betisék village organization	23
Patterns of marriage	30
3. MA' BETISÉK CONCEPTS OF TULAH AND KEMALI'	
The concept of <i>tulah</i>	32
The concept of <i>kemali'</i>	43
4. MA' BETISÉK MYTHS	67
Myths of origin	67
Myths of plants and animals	84
5. THE ECONOMY OF THE MA' BETISÉK AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO TULAH BELIEFS	102
Rice cultivation	104
Rice harvest ceremonies	107
<i>Jo-oh</i> songs and dances of the rice harvest	113
The cultivation of root crops and vegetables	117
Fruit cultivation	118
Fishing and gathering	119
Game hunting and trapping	123
The extraction of forest products	130
6. KEMALI' BELIEFS IN THE CONTEXT OF ILLNESSES AND SHAMANISTIC CURES	136
The interpretation of illnesses and injuries	137
The treatment of illnesses and injuries by medicines and curative spells	155

Shamanism and spirit-possession	159
The performance of the ritual offering: the <i>anchak</i> , <i>sembuang</i> and <i>balé</i>	182
7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	188
APPENDICES	208
GLOSSARY	260
BIBLIOGRAPHY	265
INDEX	269

MAPS

1. Ma' Betisék permanent villages in Selangor	XVI
2. Sketch map showing the pattern of economic activities of the Ma' Betisék of the villages of Sialang, Mata and Bumbun	103
3. Sketch map showing distribution of the languages of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula	208

FIGURES

1. <i>Pelimun</i> birds	41
2. Some animals with anthropomorphic origins	47
3. Some plants with unusually strong powers of <i>kemali'</i>	55
4. Ma' Betisék view of the cosmos	69
5. Spirit leaves woven for shamanistic seances	169
6. The <i>Taman Bungak</i> - spirit flowers woven for shamanistic seances	173

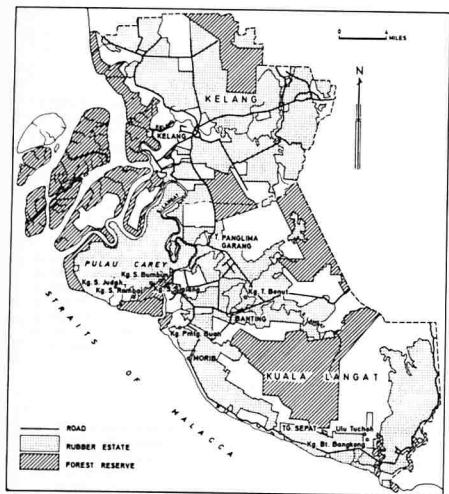
TABLES

1. <i>Pelimun</i> birds and animals	42
2. Plants with unusually strong powers of <i>kemali'</i>	52
3. Animals with unusually strong powers of <i>kemali'</i>	54
4. The interpretation of winds and rains in relation to soul-transference, spirit-attack and sorcery	77
5. Animals with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack recorded in Ma' Betisék myths	85

CONTENTS

XV

6. Plants with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack recorded in Ma' Betisék myths	90
7. Other animals which appear in Ma' Betisék myths	93
8. Other plants which appear in Ma' Betisék myths	99
9. Rice prepared during the <i>Meluat</i> ceremony	110
10. Ma' Betisék explanations of afflictions and their treatment	139
11. Food items in an <i>anchak</i> ritual offering	182



Map 1. Ma' Betisek permanent villages in Selangor

I

Introduction

This study focusses on that aspect of the belief system which is concerned with two fundamentally opposing views, expressing the Ma' Betisék relationship to plants and animals. The first view is contained in the concept of *tulah*. The word *tulah* literally means 'curse'. It expresses the idea that plants and animals have been cursed by the forefathers of the Ma' Betisék to become food for humans. To illustrate, a man who hunts an animal and subsequently eats it will explain his behaviour in the following way. 'It is alright to hunt an animal and to eat it because it has been cursed to become food. Our forefathers made it into a law that plants and animals must become our food, so when we kill and eat them, we are practising our ancestral law.'¹

The second view refers to the concept of *kemali*'. The term is generally used to describe objects, situations and behaviour which are tabooed and which, when violated, are likely to cause or to lead to dangers which appear in the form of illnesses, injuries and death. The *kemali*' view expresses the idea that acts involving the killing and destruction of plants and animals bring humans misfortune and death because both plant and animal life are derived from, and are essentially similar to, human life. In other words, the exploitation of plants and animals as food resources is fundamentally wrong because it is conceived as the exploitation of humans as food. For example, when a person is affected by a particular illness and does not get better, inspite of being treated with a medicinal cure, he will explain his illness in the following way. 'It is because I hunted that animal that I got ill. Since it is also human, it avenged the wrong I did by casting a spirit-attack on me.'

When the *tulah* and *kemali*' views are compared, they

¹ Contained in the notion of *adat moyang* that humans cannot practise incest and cannibalism.

appear to express an ambivalence in the Ma' Betisék attitudes towards using plants and animals as food. This is partly revealed in the way in which two separate sets of terms are used to describe plants and animals within each conceptual view. When the *tulah* view is being expressed, the Ma' Betisék are referred to as *ma'*, a word which means 'people' or 'humans'. Plants and animals are called *lo'* or *natang* respectively. Here human categories (*ma'*) are conceptually set apart from plant (*lo'*) and animal (*natang*) categories. However, plants and animals are collectively known as *lau'*. The term *lau'* is normally used to refer to a cooked dish of either meat or vegetables. Consequently, when *tulah* ideas are being reinforced, humans are conceptually differentiated from plants and animals by the criterion of edibility – they are a non-food category whereas plants and animals are a food category. Since humans eat their food cooked, in contrast to plants and animals which do not cook their food, it becomes apparent that the term *lau'* in the *tulah* context, conceptually categorizes plants and animals as human food.

When the *kemali'* view is being expressed, the same conceptual distinctions are not apparent. Humans continue to be referred to as *ma'*. Plants and animals, however, are collectively referred to as *moyang*. The term *moyang* is normally used to refer to living members of the generation of great-grandparents and to the ancestors of the Ma' Betisék. It may also be used to refer to kinsmen who have recently died. Further, deceased humans who are believed to be reborn into this world as plants, animals, and wandering spirits, or those deceased who are reborn in the overworld as transparent human beings may be referred to by the term *moyang*. The use of this term in relation to plants and animals reinforces the *kemali'* concept that plants and animals are derived from humans and, therefore, cannot be destroyed, killed or eaten. Plants and animals are said to react negatively to such forms of destruction by subjecting humans to mystical forms of attack known as *tenong*. Humans who are subjected to *tenong* become afflicted with illnesses and injuries of various sorts. In the most severe cases of *tenong* such afflictions would ultimately lead to death. Plants and animals are also referred to by other terms like *hinkik ma' kele* ('they are also human')

and *tuhan* ('that person') but these terms are only alternative ways of expressing both the human and spiritual aspect of plants and animals.

In this study I argue that Ma' Betisék beliefs relating to the plant and animal world are influenced by the kind of activities which the Ma' Betisék are engaged in, at any one moment in time. When *tulah* and *kemali'* beliefs are compared, ideas relating to plants and animals manifest fundamental contradictions on the ideological level. However, when both these sets of beliefs are viewed contextually, each appears to be invoked in two separate domains of experience which contain bodies of ritual. Hence, the ideological oppositions are not manifested on the ritual level. The term 'ritual' is used to refer to acts which are symbolically distinct and expressive of activities (e.g. food collection, healing and curing) contained within the different domains of experience of the Ma' Betisék. When the Ma' Betisék are preoccupied with activities relating to hunting, gathering, fishing and cultivating, their behaviour is explained in terms of the *tulah* view. *Tulah* ideas are also reinforced in the context of the rice and *durio* fruit harvests as well as the learning and practising of love potions and charms. However, when the Ma' Betisék are afflicted with illnesses, injuries, and misfortunes connected with natural contingencies such as drought, thunderstorms and whirlwinds, they tend to explain their actions in terms of the *kemali'* view. *Kemali'* ideas also dominate rituals connected with shamanistic forms of healing and curing. Although the ritual acts contained in these two separate domains by no means encompass the total range of rituals which are performed, they nevertheless represent two bodies of ritual which are fundamental to the Ma' Betisék way of life.

The Ma' Betisék are adapted to a mangrove ecology which allows them to maintain an extremely varied economic system; one which is dually orientated to the land and the sea. For this reason, the Ma' Betisék are not only active hunters and gatherers in the lowland rain forests and mangroves, but also keen fishermen and sedentary agriculturists. Their preoccupation with these different forms of economic activity is reinforced by a pragmatic view of the natural environ-

ment – *tulah* ideas stress the separation of the human world from the plant and animal world and support the notion of plants and animals as customary sources of food for humans. On the other hand, the constant occurrence of illnesses and injuries amongst adults, children and infants, renders an appeal for beliefs expressing the similarities between humans, plants and animals, and the mystical dangers which are connected with acts of exploitation of important natural resources. Significantly, it is in the context of *kemali'* beliefs that anthropomorphic ideas of plants and animals are given much importance. Thus, the way in which the human world and the plant and animal world are at certain times set apart and opposed and at other times conjoined, is dependent on the kind of activities which are being performed at a particular moment in time. I maintain that the *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas are only conceptually meaningful when they are seen in terms of the appropriate sets of activities which they uphold. Hence, *kemali'* ideas of plants and animals are ignored when economic activities are performed. In the same way, *tulah* ideas are not given much importance in the context of misfortune and suffering. This suggests that *tulah* and *kemali'* beliefs are mutually exclusive to each other. As individuals move from one domain of experience to another, corresponding changes are manifested in the contents of the ideology relating to plants and animals. It may be said that the structure of Ma' Betisék beliefs concerning plants and animals is extremely flexible, capable of adjusting and accommodating to the different kinds of activities which take place.

The concept of 'structure' as used in this study refers to the underlying rules which guide changes in the contents of the ideology of a particular culture. Amongst the Ma' Betisék, the 'structure' of the ideological system is expressed in the way in which two sets of ideas (*tulah* and *kemali'*) have been constructed to deal with different kinds of experience. Each domain of experience reinforces the process of conceptual ordering and reordering of ideas concerning the Ma' Betisék relationship with plants and animals. Here, it may be seen that the concept of 'structure' is similar to that viewed by Levi-Strauss (1962:68–69) in that it relates to the system of

sorting out ideas according to underlying principles. According to Levi-Strauss, even when the actual contents of the ideas change in space and time, the 'structure, itself remains unchanged. In *The Raw and the Cooked* (1964: 64-78), Levi-Strauss supports his argument by analysing a series of Bororo myths explaining the origin of the cooking of food. He shows how the variations existing in the contents of these myths, are a consequence of the processes of borrowing and adaptation which take place spatially and over a period of time. However, when these different versions are compared, the same form of binary opposition between the raw and the cooked, man and animal, culture and nature, is manifested. This suggests that an underlying principle of Bororo thought is a concern to keep cultural and natural categories separate and distinct. However, he shows that these myths also contain mediatory symbols which serve to conjoin categories which are opposed. Opposition on one level of conceptualization may be met by conjunction on another. By using Bororo myths as a case in point, Levi-Strauss argues that the processes of separation and recombination of conceptual categories reveal the way in which ideological systems are transformed from one kind to another, changing only in content but not in structure.

It should be clarified that in this study no attempt is being made at a structural analysis of the kind with which Levi-Strauss is concerned. In his studies of primitive systems of thought and classification (such as mythology and totemism respectively), he is concerned with explaining the universal features of the thought processes of people of all cultures from the simplest to the most complex form of organization. For this purpose, he employs the comparative type of analysis and diachronic perspective to understand the process of transformation of ideas from one culture to another, over a long period in time. This study, however, is concerned with the way in which ideas contained within a particular culture change from one situation to another. The way in which human, plant and animal categories are sorted out and expressed on the symbolic level is studied synchronically but in situational terms. It is important to note that in *Mythologiques II*: (1966:35-47) Levi-Strauss restricts his study to the

analysis of myths from a particular culture. Here he shifts his focus from the general to the specific but his study is still concerned with understanding the 'structural' features of mythological thought. In the present study an analysis of Ma' Betisék mythology is attempted mainly to see if the human, plant and animal categories which are symbolically important on the ritual level are also manifested on the mythological level. Thus when a structural type of analysis is used in the discussion of Ma' Betisék mythology, it is to show the way in which symbols contained within the *tulah* and *kemali'* ideology are brought out in Ma' Betisék myths. An important focus is the analysis of the symbolism of plants and animals within the *tulah* and *kemali'* context and the way in which plants and animals change from being symbols of nature in the *tulah* context to symbols of culture in the *kemali'* context. For the purposes of this study, I shall refer to the human order of *ma'* and *moyang* as the cultural order and the plant and animal order of *lo'natang* and *lau'* as the natural order.

The study of symbols in anthropology has been attempted in a number of different ways by anthropologists concerned with analysing specific forms of ritual behaviour found in different societies. By symbols I mean objects, words, or physical behaviour, regarded as representing or typifying something else by virtue of analagous qualities or associational characteristics. Turner in *The Forest of Symbols*, defines a symbol as 'the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour; it is the ultimate unit of specific structure in a ritual context' (Turner 1967:14). Turner's definition contains the same notion of analogous reference as the definition used here.

In *The Ritual Process* Turner attempts to analyse the symbols contained in Ndembu rites in terms of intersecting sets of paired or triadic groupings (1969:41). He argues that when the symbols are viewed holistically, they do not constitute consistent and permanent items of grouping. His argument for the importance of viewing symbols in contextual terms has an important bearing on the present study. Here, he is not only concerned with the way in which symbols express and reinforce the social institutions which

are contained within Ndembu society but also with the way in which the symbolic references of ritual objects change in different social context. However, Turner's study differs from the present study in that he focusses mainly on the multi-referential character of ritual symbols – the way in which the same symbols are used to express different ideas. This study, however, is not so much a contextual study of ritual symbols as a study of the system of ideas relating to plants and animals, in contextual terms. A symbolic analysis of the language, ritual objects and ritual behaviour is attempted only to show the way in which these ideas are structured in different domains of experience.

The symbolic associations of plants and animals differ significantly in the *tulah* and *kemali* context. The emphasis placed on their actual physical attributes, edibility, and economic utility, differentiates them from humans. On another conceptual level, plants and animals are perceived as a category of nature in opposition to humans who are perceived as a category of culture. It is significant to note that the Ma' Betisék do not have a general term to describe nature. Animate objects which are non-human (plants and animals) and inanimate objects which are part of the physical environment (wind, sky, thunder, rain, water, etc.) are not collectively categorized as objects of nature. This is partly because, in the *tulah* context, objects are symbolically differentiated from each other in terms of their human utility. Inanimate objects which are part of the physical environment are perceived as inedible. This sets them apart from plants and animals which are seen as edible. On the analytical level, plants and animals are conceptually viewed as objects of nature or a category of nature because they are symbolically set apart from humans by being things which are cooked and eaten. Humans, on the other hand, represent the cultural order because they eat their food, derived from plants and animals, in a cooked form.

In the *kemali* context, however, plants and animals and other inanimate objects which are part of the physical environment are generally referred to as 'ancestors' and are therefore accredited with both human and supernatural qualities. Once referred to in this particular way, they cannot be

differentiated from each other by their economic utility (edibility) since ancestors are a human and non-edible category. As 'ancestors', plants and animals are perceived as human entities, but it is their essentially spiritual or supernatural quality which sets them apart from humans. These mystical and supernatural qualities of plants and animals express the symbolic oppositions between the world and the underworld, the human and the spiritual. To the Ma' Betisék, the 'overworld' represents the seventh and uppermost layer in the universe where human ancestral spirits dwell. The sixth layer or the 'world' contains humans, while the first five contain cannibals and subterranean creatures. It will be seen that in the *kemali'* context, the symbolic opposition between culture and nature is not manifested. Plants and animals are symbolically integrated into the human world but differentiated from humans by their spiritual or supernatural attributes.

The world/overworld opposition in the *kemali'* context is dynamically brought out in the shamanistic seances of the Ma' Betisék. Here, plant and animal spirit-guides are symbolically represented as ancestors from the underworld who are equipped with mystical powers to heal humans. Humans, on the other hand, are seen to be devoid of these powers. They become completely dependent on the mystical powers of plant and animal spirit-guides. The shaman's functions are primarily to mediate between the world and the underworld by symbolically incorporating his spirit-guides and other helping spirits into the world and the human order.

In the context of *kemali'* beliefs, food is offered to plants and animals because they are perceived as humans who have been wronged and who have subsequently shown their wrath by inflicting humans with bodily injury and illnesses. Since plants and animals manifest qualities which are both human and spiritual, the food which is prepared for ritual offerings is differentiated from ordinary human food. *Firstly*, the offerings are prepared in extremely small portions. *Secondly*, single items of food form miniature representations of the ones normally consumed by the Ma' Betisék. *Thirdly*, the food items are presented in odd numbers (1, 3, 5 or 7), whereas in the usual situation no attempt is made to present

food in even or odd numbers. *Fourthly*, each food item is prepared in both its raw and its cooked form. These four factors serve to differentiate food for spirits from food for humans. Here again, the world/overworld opposition is symbolically reinforced. The presentation of food in small portions and in a miniature form reveals the way in which physical categories are reversed to express the spiritual aspect of the situation. Similarly, the presentation of food items in odd numbers symbolically separates the spiritual from the human or worldly order. The presentation of food in ritual offerings in both a raw and cooked form, symbolically mediates between the human and plant/animal order, on one conceptual level, and the cultural and natural order, on another. In the *tulah* context, humans consume their food cooked. Plants and animals, however, consume their food raw. In the *kemali'* context, however, while humans consume their food cooked, plants and animals consume their food raw and cooked. This immediately changes the conceptual categories of plants and animals from *lau'* to *moyang*. In analytical terms, the presentation of food for ritual offerings in both its raw and cooked form removes plants and animals from the natural order and places them in the spiritual (overworld) order.

The way in which human and plant/animal categories are defined within the *tulah* and *kemali'* view, suggests that the Ma' Betisék support two opposing notions of hierarchy. Within the *tulah* set of beliefs, humans are perceived to be more powerful than plants and animals. This is because they are attributed with powers of cursing or *tulah* which enable them to use plants and animals as food. On another conceptual level, the cultural order is seen to be hierarchically superior to the natural order. The hierarchical superiority of the cultural order is reinforced by the idea that humans subscribe to a strict moral code, contained in their ancestral laws, which prohibit incest and cannibalism. Conversely, plants and animals do not adhere to any moral code. To the Ma' Betisék, this makes them essentially different from humans. Animals, in particular, manifest these forms of behaviour for they are incestuous and eat one another. Indeed before they were cursed by the ancestors of the Ma' Betisék,

they ate humans. Since that time they avoid humans but will still attack and kill them if humans experience certain states of deprivation known as *punan*. A person is *punan* if he or she is not able to eat a particular type of food which has been longed for, or if a close kinsman or lover does not fulfil certain promises which have been made. In these circumstances, they are likely to be attacked by an animal or encounter some other kind of misfortune.² However, the *punan* phenomenon is mainly manifested in the context of *kemali*' beliefs when plants and animals are conceived as ancestors who impose checks and constraints on behaviour which does not conform to the prescribed set of social rules. In the *tulah* context, by contrast, plants and animals are seen to be socially inferior to humans because they do not possess powers of cursing and do not practice the human ancestral laws.

In the *kemali*' context, plants and animals enjoy the status of ancestors. The term *moyang* conveys the notion of reverence and respect. It grants plants and animals an honorific status equivalent to that of living elders of the great-grandparent generation. Furthermore, their ability to inflict illnesses and injuries on humans makes them mystically more powerful than humans. In this context, the *tenong* powers of plants and animals impose constraints on human behaviour. Individuals who perform activities relating to the exploita-

² More specifically, the Ma' Betisek use the term *punan* to mean states of deprivation which result from any one of the following – the inability to eat a desired food, to see or meet a loved one, to have a child, to attend an important ceremony held by a close kinship or rejection from a kinsman, parent or child. A warning of an oncoming misfortune (*hua*) may be expressed in *punan* terms when the act or situation is one which manifests deprivation. This implies that a *punan* state is a specific form of *pantang* or taboo. Dentan (1968: 107) in his study of the Semai defines *punan* in the same way except that he also includes a more general definition of *punan*, 'taboo at all times'. Wilkinson, suggests that the term *punan* and the Malay term *kempunan* are derived from the Malay word *ka-ampunan*, signifying to 'ask pardon' (in the sense of excusing oneself when one is in formal company) or to ask forgiveness. Evans, I. (1923: 294–296) however, sees the term to be derived from the Maori-Polynesian word *punipuni*, meaning, to hide oneself, to be besieged or to be hemmed in. This would imply that the term *punan* is conceptually linked with the Malay word *buni* or *bunyi* which has the same meaning as *punipuni*. However, the semantic association between the words *punan*, *punipuni* and *buni* (*bunyi*) remains speculative, particularly when one notes that in the Malay context the words *kempunan* and *sembunyi* (root, *bunyi*) have different semantic references.

tion of natural resources are particularly vulnerable to spirit-attacks from plants and animals.

The hierarchically superior status of plants and animals in the *kemali'* context is symbolically manifested in the behaviour of the shaman's spirit-guides. Here, animal spirit-guides behave in the authoritative manner of Ma' Betisék titled elders and Malay aristocrats. They express their superior status by using the language of members of the Malay royalty and aristocracy and by demanding attention, entertainment and food. The members of the audience, in turn, are completely servile and attentive. In the context of the seance, not only are plants and animals treated as humans, they are also attributed with a higher social status than that which the majority of the Ma' Betisék enjoy. As spirit-guides, the ability to cure humans of their illness emphasizes their spiritual or supernatural qualities and places them in a much more dominant position over humans. On the analytical level, while the cultural order is conjoined with the natural order, the opposition between the world and over-world is revealed.

These two notions of hierarchy are clearly revealed in Ma' Betisék mythological thought. Generally, while one set of myths expresses and supports *tulah* ideas, another set of myths upholds the *kemali'* view. The former contains themes showing how plants and animals have attempted to destroy and annihilate humans from this world, but were eventually subjugated by humans using their powers of cursing. The latter set, however, describes how certain plants and animals aided humans in the past by curing them of illness, by bringing them food, or by combating other plants and animals which attempted to kill humans and procure them as food. These myths exist alongside a number of others concerning Ma' Betisék ancestors who were benevolent and unusually brave. Generally these myths define *kemali'* ideas in a positive way, for it is not so much the ability of plants and animals to bring on spirit-attacks which is being emphasized, but their ability to remove states of suffering from the human world. On the analytical level, these two sets of myths express the contextual significance of notions of hierarchy and power in humans, plants and animals. Those myths

which stress human dominance over the plant and animal world are concerned with defining human categories and natural categories as separate and distinct from each other. However, those which stress the mystical powers of plants and animals are concerned with conjoining human and natural categories while maintaining a separation between the world order and the overworld order.

The Historical and Cultural Background of the Ma' Betisék

NAME AND CLASSIFICATION

The term Ma' Betisék, meaning 'people with scales',¹ has not been previously used to refer to this group of Selangor aborigines; they have been more commonly referred to as *Besisi* or *Mah Meri*. The former term, *Besisi*, used by earlier writers such as Skeat, Blagden and Evans is unsatisfactory, for it does not phonetically represent the Ma' Betisék word to which it corresponds.² In their own language, the word 'with scales' is *betisék* rather than *Besisi*. The latter is probably derived from the Malay word *bersiseh*, which has a similar meaning. Both the Ma' Betisék on the Selangor mainland and Carey Island refer to themselves as *Ma' Betisék* and rarely ever use the word *Besisi*.

The term *Mah Meri* is presently used by researchers of the Malayan aborigines and the officials for aboriginal affairs. In the Betisék language, the *Ma' Meri* (from which Malay officials have derived the term *Mah Meri*) literally means 'people of the forest'. This term, however, is even less acceptable as the Ma' Betisék use it to refer to *all* the existing groups of aborigines found in Peninsular Malaysia. They use the term when they wish to distinguish the aboriginal groups as a whole from the other ethnic groups found in Malaysia,

¹ Where the word *ma'* means 'people' and the word *betisék*, 'with scales'.

² Evans I (1913: 2) states that the name *Besisi* does not refer to a 'tribal designation' but a language spoken by the Kuala Langat aborigines; the term used by the people themselves is *sehabat* or *sabat*. However, the term *sehabat* is a Malay word, meaning 'friend' and has probably been adopted by the Malays and Chinese in Kuala Langat as a convenient term to refer to the aborigines there. According to the mainland Ma' Betisék, the local Malays and Chinese call them *sehabat* but they themselves use the word *betisék*; this isolates them from others, as a language and ethnic group.

namely the Malays, Chinese, Indians and Europeans. This term immediately ranks them in the same ethnic category as the other aboriginal groups. However, when they wish to separate themselves from other aboriginal groups, they invariably use the term *Ma' Betisék*. Sometimes, they may use the term *Ma' Heh* instead of *Ma' Betisék*, meaning 'we people'. This term is simpler to use and carries a more intimate in-group feeling than *Ma' Betisék*.

The *Ma' Betisék* give various explanations for the origin of their name. One account is that of a *Ma' Betisék* who was cleaning a red snapper (*Lutianidae roseus*, Day) on the beach when a scale flew into his eye. A few minutes later, he told his friend that they were in imminent danger from a ship owned by Malay pirates which was approaching the shore. 'But I do not see any ship,' protested his friend. The man pointed, 'There, way over yonder, I can see the white sails'. His friend strained his eyes but still could see nothing. Suddenly, he understood the reason for his friend's calamity. He laughed and said, 'It is the *tisék* ('fish scale') on your eyelid which gives you the impression that a ship with white sails is approaching the shore. You are *betisék* ('with scales')'. Later, people heard of the story and teased him. From that time on, the name *Ma' Betisék* stuck on to the group and has been kept ever since.

Although this myth is popular and is frequently recalled and laughed over, some elders believe that the name only comes from the fact that they are sea people or people living close to the sea. They have never been known to settle far inland and have always preferred to live along the coastal lowlands and mangrove creeks. Since one of their favourite occupations is fishing, they eventually came to be known as *Ma' Betisék*.

The classification of the *Ma' Betisék* has always posed a problem to anthropologists who use physiognomy and language as variables in classifying. The problem mainly arises from the fact that the *Betisék* language is structurally marginal to other aboriginal languages spoken in Peninsular Malaysia. In the past, in classifying an ethnic group, the usual stress has been on bodily features rather than on language; and on this basis, three principal aboriginal groups have been

distinguished. Skeat and Blagden (1906:21) distinguish a Semang or Negrito type, a Sakai or Dravido type and a Jakun or Proto-Malay type. They refer to earlier research on the Malayan aborigines (Logan: 1841:336, 1847:242-50) in which the Ma' Betisék group were placed in the Jakun category. However, their own research on the Betisék vocabulary showed a strong connection with the Senoi-Sakai dialects, a feature not found in the languages spoken by the other Jakun groups in the South. These he found to be more Malayanized than the Betisék language and in general to have a broad and uncouth pronunciation of Malay. They therefore concluded that 'the Besisi speak Sakai but are physically Jakun' (1906: 396).

The classification by physical type of aboriginal groups was followed by other ethnographers after Skeat and Blagden. Evans (1923: 135-6) recognizes the Negritos, the Sakai and the Jakun as distinct physical types, categorizing the Ma' Betisék in the last group. Cole (1945: 92-110) similarly divides the Malayan aborigines into three physical types, the Pygmy Blacks or Semang, the Sakai or Senoi and the primitive Malayan or Jakun. She places the Ma' Betisék in the third category but admits that their language is closely related to Senoi.

Since the aboriginal groups have had very prolonged physical contact with one another, and have inter-married with one another, the practice of using physiognomic characteristics to distinguish one group from another has recently been reconsidered with some care. As Dentan (1964: 176) pointed out, the variations within one group and those between it and other groups detract from the usefulness of the criterion of physical type. The criterion of language type appears to be a much more realistic way of classifying the different aboriginal groups. Generally, the linguistic evidence available shows that the Betisék language is related to the Senoi-Sakai languages which has connections with the Mon-Khmer or Mon Annamese languages (Austroasiatic), spoken in the countries north of Peninsular Malaysia (See Appendix 1). Earlier writers like Clifford, H (1891: 14-29), Logan (1850: 456-82) and Schmidt (1903: 339-45) have attempted to show that the Betisék language belongs to the Austroasiatic

group rather than to the languages of the south, particularly those spoken by the Johore Jakun, the Orang Laut and the Malays (Austronesian). Recently, anthropologists have attempted to construct a more meaningful classification combining the older and newer material. Benjamin (1974: 40-85) adopts a system of classification based on language types and takes into account, the loan rates and borrowing of words amongst the various Semang, Senoi and Jakun languages of the peninsula. His study shows that the Ma' Betisék language is clearly a language of the Senoi. Its vocabulary is more strongly affiliated to the southern Senoi languages spoken by the Semaq Beri, Semelai and Temoq rather than to the Jakun languages spoken by the Johore Jakun, Temuan, Orang Laut and Orang Seletar.

Events in the recent history of the Ma' Betisék indicate that during the last two centuries, they also occupied areas south of Selangor, particularly Malacca and Johore. Evidence of their occupation of the Johore-Malacca areas has been confirmed by Skeat and Blagden (1906: 165). They give accounts of Betisék-speaking people in the Batu Pahat area in Johore and along the Malacca coast.³ This period saw the influx of Malays and Bugis from Sumatra, the Rhio-Lingga Archipelago and the Celebes Islands. Several writers have shown that during this period, the Malayan aborigines were threatened with persecution, piracy and slavery from these fierce and technologically more advanced groups (Cole: 1945: 110; Mills, L. A.: 1925: 75-7). They speculate that the aborigines in the south probably dispersed and fled in small numbers northwards. The Ma' Betisék, who were then living in Johore and Malacca, could have moved northwards, towards the well-camouflaged mangrove creeks and estuaries in Selangor. During this period, their language could have been considerably more vulnerable to changes from outside and have seen modifications in syntax and vocabulary along the lines of the Jakun and Malay languages with which they came into contact. This probably accounts for the fact that

³ A certain headman, Lempar is described to have come from Batu Pahat, Johore, to settle in the Ayer Hitam area on Carey Island. This confirms the Ma' Betisék's own accounts of the arrival of 'Limpa' from Batu Pahat and the consequent development of the villages in the Sialang-Bumbun region.

though the Betisék language is Senoi, it tends to borrow more words from the Malay language than from the Southern Senoi languages. Since the present location of the Ma' Betisék settlements corresponds to a more recent period in their history, there is reason to believe that they occupied a more northerly position earlier on. Indeed, they are the only Senoi group which has ventured so far southwards into Jakun territory in the peninsula. Before the migration into the Johore-Malacca territory, the Ma' Betisék could have lived in greater proximity to the southern Senoi groups in the states of Pahang and Negri Sembilan.

THE SPREAD AND DEVELOPMENT OF MA' BETISÉK SETTLEMENTS

Accounts of origins from Indo-China and Medina

The Ma' Betisék in Carey Island and the mainland believe that they originally came from Indo-China. However, there are some who think that their forefathers came from Medina. The latter is less seriously maintained and is probably a result of the long cultural contact they have had with the Malays on the mainland. Significantly, it is a belief which is asserted in the presence of Malays and other outside communities when the need to elevate their own aboriginal culture to the level of other cultures is strongly felt. Unlike other aboriginal groups in Malaysia, the Ma' Betisék do not openly admit that the Malays are culturally superior to them. Indeed, when the Malays assert their cultural superiority, the Ma' Betisék immediately claim a heritage similar to that of the Malays. This assertion could stem from a deeply rooted sense of inferiority though that is never expressed. One of the ways in which the Ma' Betisék explain their cultural differences from the Malays is to say that the Malays have robbed them of their material culture – that the songs, dances, music and poetry associated with Malay culture are Ma' Betisék in origin. Similarly, the Ma' Betisék argue that they were originally Muslims but, unfortunately, the Malays took the Islamic religion from them and this made them pagans.

Two versions of their myth of origin from Indo-China are given below. The first was narrated by an elder in Sungei Sialang during the period of my fieldwork and the other was

obtained by Skeat (1897: 326) from an elder in Sepang before the turn of the century.

Myth 1: origin from Indo-China

A long time ago, there were two brothers who sailed in a ship from Indo-China and drifted into an unknown part of the world in the south. The ship sailed up a river and became entangled in reeds and in the roots of mangrove trees. The brothers climbed out and wandered into the forest. They were soon lost, and eventually were separated from one another. The younger brother finally found his way back to the ship and left again for Indo-China without his brother. The elder was forced to live in the forest and eventually raised a family there.

One day, a ship from Indo-China arrived in the region where the elder brother lived. He excitedly rushed out to welcome it, and to his amazement and delight, saw that it was his younger brother. The latter told him that Indo-China was a richer and better country to live in and asked him if he wanted to return. The elder brother was happy to go home and asked his family to prepare immediately for the journey. However, he realized that they could not fit into the ship and told his brother so. The latter said, 'We can make a ship from the inflorescence of the betel-nut palm' (*mayang pinang*). He cut off one of the flowering branches of the palm and patted it seven times; it changed into a ship. His elder brother and family then climbed aboard. Before they left, the younger brother told him that they all had to close their eyes during the journey, so that the route back to Indo-China would remain unknown. However, just as they approached the sea, a storm broke out; they were frightened and opened their eyes to find out what was happening. The younger brother was angry and said 'Since you did not keep your word I cannot take you back with me.' His brother was sad but accepted his fate. The younger brother converted a part of the sea into an island and the ship into a fish and left his elder brother on the island. There he remained, living off the produce of the island and the fish in the sea and soon raised a large family of forest dwellers who came to be known as the Ma' Betisék.

Myth II: origin from Indo-China

The second myth does not tell the story of the two brothers from Indo-China but describes the travels of the Ma' Betisék from Indo-China to the coast of the Malaysian Peninsula. The details of these travels are, to some extent, supported by the probable patterns of migration of the aboriginal groups in the peninsular. Skeat (1897: 326) records his informant's explanations of these travels:

'We first came from a country, lying at the edge of the sky, where the sun rises, beyond the country of Siam, a country lying at a distance of more than one man's life-time (*mati balik hidup*), and we spread thence (down the Peninsula) to Johor, but were driven north again by a cruel Malay Raja. At the edge of the sky, in the country we first came from, there stood a giant, whose work was to prop the heavens (*tungkatkan langit*), and who devoured the clouds (which kept falling downwards from the edge of the sky), cutting off those which overhung with his knife. In those days, we were taller than we are now, and slept in caves of the rocks on a big plain which had no grass or trees growing upon it, and upon which no rain ever fell, and which was not like the earth here, but glittered like silver. The next place we came to was a place called Padang Berimbun, where the whole earth was covered with deep dew which was as cold as ice. Here also we slept among the rocks. Thence, we reached the mountains of Keluntong (?), which also had no trees or grass upon them, and were very close to the sky; thence we reached, one by one, the hills of the giants (Gunong Gasi-Gasi), Gunong Mentujoh (?), and the hills of Kelantan, Ulu Pahang and Johor; and in Johor, we first met with the Malays. The titles of Batin, Jinang, and Jukrah were first distributed at Gunong Mentujoh (?) beyond Siam. At Ayer Tawar the Raja Lumba-Lumba Puteh (White Dolphin), who had come from Pagar Ruyong, drove out our Batin, Siamang Puteh (White Ape), so that he fled to Semujong, where his daughter married and became the mother of Toh Klana.⁴ From Semujong we came

⁴ Pagar Ruyong is the name of a town in Sumatra. The titles of *batin*, *jinang* and *jukrah* refer to the village headmanship, deputy headmanship and the village enforcement officer respectively. This will be described in greater detail in the discussion of village organization.

to the land of Klang and have dwelt there since. The shore of the sea has greatly changed since we arrived here; the sea formerly reached inland to Ulu Klang. Bukit Galah and Bukit Benuang were both once on the sea coast, Bukit Galah taking its name from a post to which boats were tied.'

The myth of origin from Medina does not attempt to link the events described to those in the two previous myths, though some of the places mentioned are similar.

Myth III: origin from Medina

The first Ma' Betisék settlement was at Medina. One day some 'Arab-Malay chiefs' (*Jubo' Arab*) visited Medina. They observed that the land was dry, the earth cracked, and the grass withering: 'This will be Malay land,' they said, 'the arid conditions here show that the land was intended for the Malays'. It was then that the Ma' Betisék realized that 'cracked earth' was, in Malay, *tanah merkah* and 'land with withering grass', *tanah layu*. Combined, the two phrases meant, *tanah merkah, tanah layu* ('cracked land is withering land') which was close to saying, *tanah merkah, tanah Melayu* ('cracked land is Malay land') or *tanah Mecca, tanah Melayu* ('Mecca land is Malay land'). Since the Malay chiefs told them that this was a prophesy, the Ma' Betisék acknowledged their defeat and moved away to a place in Sumatra.

Here they were again driven out by the Malays, this time forcefully, after a stay of only one and a half years. The Ma' Betisék group then branched into two, one migrating northwards, along the west coast of the peninsula and the other to *Tumasik* or Singapore. A parting song was sung by a Ma' Betisék chief:

'If it is saliva, let it be saliva,
Take a tray, and grind some spices
What is done, let it be done,
We want to meet but the Malays have cursed us.'

This song conveyed the message that they would always lead a nomadic existence since the Malays would not let them settle anywhere. Furthermore, they felt that they had been cursed by the Malays to wander from land to land and in the process of it, to be parted from their kinsmen. The group which moved to Singapore settled, for a time, in the land of

the Bataks in Sumatra but they did not stay for more than fifteen days there. They could not stand the harsh Batak laws, especially the penalty for adultery which ordered the guilty couple to be chopped up and distributed to the villagers as food. When they left the Batak community, they were led by Batin Kambu', also known as Chari', who became the first Ma' Betisék chief in Singapore. At Singapore, they again encountered fierce Malays who tried to drive them out. At this time, Singapore was invaded by thousands of garfishes (*Belone*, *Oken*). This was a strategy to drive the Malays out of the island. The Ma' Betisék appealed to their ancestors to help them to drive the Malays from the island and their ancestors responded by sending garfishes to attack the Malays. Unfortunately, the siege failed because the Malays were able to counter the attack. They were aided by a little boy who overheard a Ma' Betisék child singing a song about garfishes:

'Singapore is invaded by garfishes,

The garfishes run into banana stems.'

The Malays immediately took action and laid hundreds of banana stems along the coast. As the garfishes came up from the sea, they rammed into the soft banana stems and soon died. Once more it was a victory for the Malays; the Ma' Betisék again took off and roamed the northern coasts of the peninsula.

In the peninsula, the Ma' Betisék fought a series of battles with the Malays and Bugis. The Malays with whom they fought were the Tembusai Malays (*Jubo' Tembusai*), who were equipped with iron weapons and knives.⁵ Since the Ma' Betisék had only blowpipes, the Malays eventually won but hundreds of them died from poison darts. When the Ma' Betisék saw that they were heavily outnumbered, they left

⁵ A short account of the *Tembusai* can be found in notes written by Skeat (1897: 307) in *The Selangor Journal*, Vol. V. The group was mentioned following complaints that they were harrassing settlements at Sungei Tangkas in Ulu Langat, near Kajang, Selangor. Skeat describes these Malays as warlike and fierce; they were responsible for the deaths of several Americans who had opened up tin mines in the area without the permission of Toh Bandar Hilir, the headman of Sungei Tangkas. If the Ma' Betisék had indeed encountered with the *Tembusai*, it suggests that they must have moved from the interior of Selangor (Ulu Langat), to the coast at Kuala Langat.

their settlements for new sites. Some went to Endau on the Pahang-Johore border and some to the Carey Island region. Those from Batu Pahat fled up the Malacca coast, and, except for Rawang, in Johore, all the other Ma' Betisék settlements were abandoned. Those who remained behind in their former settlements established a peaceful co-existence for a time with the Malays, but they eventually left those settlements to join their kinsmen who were now mostly in Selangor.

Because of their nomadic existence in the past, the Ma' Betisék believe that most of the places in the peninsula have actually been named by them. Batu Pahat, for example, is named after a fierce Ma' Betisék *batin* who was thought to have eyes carved from stone. Since the word for carve is *pahat* and stone *batuk*, the place which he lived came to be known as Batu Pahat. Kuala Lumpur is thought to be named after a certain *batin* called Lumpu, who opened up the area.

This story, tracing the origins of the Ma' Betisék to Medina, tells of a temporary stay in Sumatra on their way to the peninsula. In addition, there is also a Ma' Betisék song which places their origin in the mythical village of Gobang Goben in Sumatra (see Appendix 2). In the light of the linguistic evidence and the pre-history of Peninsular Malaysia, the myths, tracing Ma' Betisék origins to Indo-China, have a certain plausibility. Even if they did not in fact migrate from the Mon Khmer region and have been the most southerly of the Austroasiatic speaking populations, the myths indicate that they are more closely related to the northern populations than to the Austronesian speaking populations in the south.

The pervasive theme of harassment by Malay groups refers to more recent history – the history of the last three centuries. Many of the events narrated in the Ma' Betisék wanderings can reasonably be related to the expansion of Sumatran and Rhio Malays into the peninsula during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, stories of their origins in or wanderings into Sumatra do not seem to support the evidence that the Ma' Betisék are historically and linguistically allied with the northern aboriginal populations of Malaysia. These accounts are probably

derived from Malay sources since they coincide with the early expansionist period of the Sumatran and Rhio Malays in the fifteenth century.

MA' BETISÉK VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

The village (kampung)

Compared to the surrounding Malay villages, Ma' Betisék villages tend to be small; the population of the villages ranges between fifty and three hundred. The villages of Sungei Bumbun, Sungei Mata and Sungei Sialang have a total population of two hundred and ten.⁶ The small size of the villages is partly a result of locational factors. The villages on the mainland and island are generally situated on the coastal areas immediately behind the mangrove forests which provide natural shelters against the storms and variable winds. For this reason, the villages do not expand beyond the mangroves and the mudflats along the Selangor coast. Furthermore, although the houses are dotted along the upper creeks of meandering rivers, they are seldom built very far inland because the Ma' Betisék are still dependent on river transportation. Consequently, the upper creeks of the rivers also determine the limits of growth of the villages. Since the houses are situated along the river banks, the villages tend to be linear; nuclear settlements have developed in recent years as a result of the demarcation of physical boundaries between aboriginal reserves and estate land (or government land reserves). This has prevented the Ma' Betisék villages from expanding along the river creeks as before, forcing them to build their houses more closely to each other. Today, the Ma' Betisék settlements are hemmed in between the mangroves and the rubber and oil-palm estates.

Traditionally, the Ma' Betisék have no clearly defined notion of territoriality. The physical boundaries of the villages were approximately determined by the edges of the ricefields and fruit gardens; as more plots of jungle land were cleared beyond these cultivated areas, they became incorporated into the village area. Although the Ma' Betisék are

⁶ This figure is obtained from the census which I conducted in the three villages in June 1975. During this time, some villagers (approximately ten) were absent from the village and were living on the temporary settlement of Pulau Ketam.

now confined in aboriginal reserves, this practice is still carried on to a certain extent in Sialang, Bumbun and Mata where rice, coconut and fruit cultivation has been extended into estate and state forest reserves.⁷ However, this had led to conflicts between the management of the estate and individuals who have cultivated the land and have discouraged other Ma' Betisék men from doing the same.

In 1972, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs introduced the standard housing scheme for the villagers of Sungei Bumbun, Mata and Sialang, and this changed the physical layout of the villages radically. The traditional Ma' Betisék houses, made from attap or thatched leaves of the *nipah* palm (*nipa fruticans*, *Wurmb*) were dispersed along the river banks, but the new houses were built in two rows facing each other at right angles to the direction of the rivers. However, the old houses were not fully abandoned and a few are still occupied. Some serve as supplementary units to the new houses while others have been rebuilt beside or attached to the new houses. Since the Ma' Betisék prefer the attap roofing of these older houses to the corrugated iron roofing of the standard houses, these additions to their new houses have become the focal point of all domestic activity within the household.

Theoretically, each village is recognized as an independent political unit. The majority of the members of a village are related by consanguinial and filial ties so that a village also forms a local kinship grouping known as *opoh*. The village also contains men and women from other villages who have married members of the *opoh*; but it is the *kampung* rather than the *opoh*, which exists as a unit of political organization since such affines (men from other villages) may acquire political positions in the village of their wives. Occasionally, villages which are adjacent to each other may form a village cluster and develop into a single political entity. The villages of Sungei Sialang, Mata and Bumbun fall within this category.

⁷ This is particularly manifested in the inland estate forest reserves of South Estate. In 1974, reports from the manager of South Estate showed the difficulty this caused when the land had subsequently to be cleared for a housing scheme for the retired workers of the estate. The Ma' Betisék men whose coconut and fruit trees were damaged by tractors wanted compensation but the manager felt that it was not fully justified since the land belonged to the estate.

A village or village cluster is administered by a Council of Elders known as *mengge*.⁸ This Council of Elders is composed of men who hold formal titles based on ascription and achievement. Their statuses are based on a hierarchical ranking procedure. The highest position within the Council is accorded to the *batin*, a position acquired by succession on the male line from the founding ancestor of the village. The position is inherited by the first born son who is in a direct line of descent from the founding ancestor. The *batin* merely functions as a figure-head and leaves most of the administrative and judicial matters in the care of the deputy headman or *jenang*. The *jenang* is normally a male collateral of the *batin*. He is assisted by a *jugra*, whose task is to see that his decisions and plans are effectively carried out. The position of the *jugra* is open to election but normally a male collateral of the *batin* is favoured for this position. The title of *penghuluk* (from *penghulu*, Malay village head) has recently been introduced into the Ma' Betisék political system and the functions of such an elder are still not clearly defined. Generally, the *penghuluk* tends to enjoy the same political status as the *jugra*. Another new title is that of *semene* corresponding to the Malay title *laksmana* or 'commander of the navy'. The title is always opened to election within the village. The *semene* occupies the lowest ranking position within the Council. It is also an elected post and commands very little authority except when a village is without a *jugra*. The *semene* assists the *jugra* and *penghuluk* in their various village duties. The titles of *penghuluk* and *semene* have been adopted only superficially and have not altered the traditional system of political organization to any significant degree.

It is worth noting that the shaman (*bekutai*) does not have any special status or authority within the Council. As a village elder, he may sit on the Council in a case involving members of his household but his function as a village shaman does not give him a privileged position within the

⁸ The term *mengge* generally means 'respected elders'. However, it also implies the notion of 'a group' consisting of elders who form a consensus of opinion over an issue which is subject to conflict. Furthermore, the consensus of opinion is always formed formally, during a hearing at the village meeting-place or *balai*. It is in the context of this explanation that I have chosen to interpret the term *mengge* as 'Council of Elders'.

Council. Significantly, his shamanistic powers are completely ignored in the context of political activities involving the village.

Local descent group (opoh)

The *opoh* is recognized as a kinship group, in which membership is obtained by tracing one's descent, bilaterally, to a common ancestry (*yan*).

Members of the *opoh* hold corporate rights over land. The *opoh* is invariably a local descent group since the common ancestor of the members of the *opoh* is also the founder of the village in which they reside. Each Ma' Betisek village contains one *opoh*; the majority of the members of the village are also members of the *opoh*. Village members who are not members of the *opoh* constitute men and women from outside villages who have married members of the *opoh*. Other village members who are not members of the *opoh* are kinsmen of these men and women who have married into the *opoh* of the village. Although the *opoh* is ideally reckoned as a non-exogamous group, in practice affinal links are established with members of other *opoh* from neighbouring villages.

Residence is an important operational principle for the establishment of corporate rights and functions within the village, but it does not qualify one for membership in the *opoh* of the village. Consequently, though affines from outside villages have corporate rights in the village of their spouses, they are excluded from membership in the *opoh*. Similarly, these men and women lose their corporate rights over land in the villages whence they come but retain their theoretical membership in their *opoh* groups. Thus, rights over the use and cultivation of land are obtained only from the village in which the person is settled or has established his residence. However, this does not apply to fruit trees; a person has permanent rights over the fruit trees which he or she has planted in the village of origin or the village of residence.

Although all members of the village are supposed to co-operate in a number of ceremonial activities, it is the members of the *opoh* who actively participate in these

activities. However, affines may be drawn into the ceremonies, particularly when their spouses are female members of the *opoh*. This happens because most of the rituals are based on a clearly defined sexual division of labour in which men and women perform different but complementary roles. The annual festival of ancestral spirits (*ari' moyang*) requires that the hut of the village guardian spirit (*hadu' moyang*) be cleaned, swept and decorated with plaited leaves by the men of the village. A feast is then held to commemorate ancestors and the recently deceased. It generally happens that the people who come for the ceremony are from those households which are bound by ties of consanguinity and filiation to the title-holders of the village. This involves most of the members of the *opoh* of the village.

The *lanchang kuning* ceremony involves the ritual sending off of the spirits in the village and forest and demands the active participation of every member of the village. However, it has not been performed in the villages during the last five years because the elders find it difficult to get everyone present for the ceremony. Here again, this ceremony formally stresses the ritual co-operation of the villagers as a whole but also invariably obtains the active support of members from the *opoh*. The discrepancy between the ideal and real pattern of solidarity and co-operation is probably related to the fact that the village is ideally an endogamous unit which theoretically restricts its membership to those from the *opoh*. The cohesiveness of the *opoh* is not manifested on the village level because of the regular occurrence of exogamous marriages which invariably introduces members of other *opoh* into the village. Furthermore, the most cohesive unit of organization within the village is the *kelamin* or household and not the *opoh*. It is the *kelamin* which intrinsically binds individuals into complementary and interdependent relationships within the context of economic, social and religious forms of activity.

The household (kelamin)

The word *kelamin* is derived from the Malay language in which it literally means 'a married pair'. To the Ma' Betisék, the term *kelamin* refers to a co-residential unit based on and

derived from a marital union between two persons. An indigenous Ma' Betisék term which conveys the same meaning as *kelamin* is *odo'*. Traditionally, the term was used to refer to a co-residential family unit in which the main members of the household comprised a man, his wife and their children; but this term has now fallen into disuse and is only occasionally employed by the elders of the village.

The cohesiveness of the household unit is manifested in the traditional practice of adopting a household name known as *gelah odo'*. More specifically, the married couple jointly adopt an *odo'* name which is quite different from both their original and birth names (*gelah puni'*). Thence forward, the couple are referred to and addressed by their *odo'* name.

Members of a *kelamin* are closely bound by ties of affinity, filiation and consanguinity which order the nature of social and economic relationships within the household. *Odo'* names demonstrate the egalitarian nature of the husband-wife relationship. Here both houses share a common name which is not in any way linked to the name of the husband and which can be used for both men or women – the name does not specify a gender. It attempts instead to define the status of the household, as a family unit, instead of the individual status of its members.

Affinal ties between the marital couple are based on an egalitarian principle of mutually sharing out duties and responsibilities within the *kelamin*. Though most domestic duties fall upon the wife, her husband readily and regularly assists in such tasks as cooking, fetching and chopping firewood and the caring of children. Similarly, the wife is active in such economic pursuits as fishing and the gathering of bivalves and may, on occasion, even partake in the hunting of small game. Most wives accompany their husbands in fishing and crab-gathering, even if it involves staying away from the village for several days or months. Perhaps the only economic activity which completely excludes women is the hunting of big game, particularly wildboar and deer. The wife is as important an economic provider for the household as her husband. The birth of children hampers her role as an economic provider but only temporarily. Once the child is able to walk, it is slung on its

mother's back and taken on the fishing and gathering trips in the mangroves and mudflats.

As the children grow up, the major share of the domestic chores of the wife is transferred to the first born child whatever its sex. A child of three may already begin to take care of a younger sibling. Between the ages of five and ten, a girl learns to cook for the household, fetch firewood, wash the clothes and attend to the garden plot and the rice fields. Consequently, as soon as the children are able to fend for themselves, they are left alone in the house while the couple hunt, fish and gather.

Perhaps the greatest stabilizing factor in a marriage is the birth of children. The Ma' Betisek consider children to be the primary purpose of marriage and openly pity those who are barren or who have experienced many deaths in the family. The parent-child bond is a particularly strong one and is manifested in the open show of affection and indulgence of parents towards their children. Children are regarded as an important potential source of help, as a means of curbing loneliness and as security for the future. Although they are encouraged to participate in the domestic work of the household at an early age, they are seldom forced to perform any tasks they are unwilling to do. A little girl or boy can slap or kick at her or his mother and incur only a mild rebuke or a threat of punishment. Since little discipline is exercised over children, particularly when there are elder siblings to undertake the domestic chores, they indulge in all kinds of escapades – they hunt and gather shellfish on their own, cook their own food, roam the mangroves and the forests and eat wild fruits and insects which are found. As a result, children are prone to illnesses and injuries of various sorts. This fact creates considerable anxiety and even consternation in the household, for such illnesses and injuries are usually explained in terms of spirit attack (*tenong*) to which children are said to be particularly vulnerable. An illness of this kind involves all members of the household in ritual activities aimed at removing the illness from the body by propitiating the spirits.

Generally, the socio-economic and ritual activities performed by the *kelamin* make it the most cohesive grouping in

the village. It has an identity and unity that is distinct and separate from the *opoh* or any wider kin grouping of which it may be a part.

PATTERNS OF MARRIAGE

The Ma' Betisék adhere to the principle of endogamy within the *opoh*. Since the majority of the *opoh* members live within the village, the principle implies that the village is an endogamous unit. In fact, even when the village contains households belonging to members of other *opoh* groups, members of the village *opoh* still prefer to marry into these households rather than into households in other villages. Polygamous marriages occur but the incidence of polygamy is low.

The preferential rule of marriage is with first or second cousins and as the Ma' Betisék reckon, in accordance with the principle of kinship bilaterality, no distinction is made between parallel and cross cousins. However, the rules of cousin marriage are made more complicated by a principle of avoiding marriage with first cousins when the girl is the child of an older male sibling or the boy is the son of a younger male sibling. The rule does not apply to the children of two sisters or maternal parallel cousins. The reason given for the avoidance of such marriages is that if they occurred, the couple would obtain children who were deformed or very prone to illnesses. Such relationships between cousins are often explained in terms of their physical incompatibility, defined in such concepts as *hangat* ('hot') or *bajau* ('unhealthy'). Conversely, the preference for cousin marriages, excluding these avoided categories, is explained in terms of concepts like *sihat* ('healthy') and *lép* ('good'). Furthermore, the Ma' Betisék believe that it is easier to instruct young couples when their parents are bound by ties of consanguinity than when they are distant kinsmen. The degree of conflict, resentment and misunderstanding that invariably develops when the young couple are given formal and informal instruction in the art of matrimony is said to be considerably less in the case of first cousin marriages than in that of marriages between more distant kinsmen.

The explanation of the avoidance of certain types of first

cousin marriages in terms of 'hot' and 'unhealthy' is related to Ma' Betisék notions of incest or *suba'*. The rule of incest is applied to siblings or those who have 'sucked from the same breast' (*nèk tu samak*). Ego's female first cousins from an aunt who is elder to ego's father are in the category of *ka-u'* or elder sister to ego. They are therefore subject to the same rule of incest as are his elder sisters whom he also addresses as *ka-u'*. All women in the *opoh* who are senior in age or generation and to whom he refers by terms denoting seniority are under the rule of incest, not marriageable partners. More specifically, a man avoids sexual relations, on the grounds that they will be *suba'*, with the following categories of kin – his sisters, his mother (*gadèk* or *gendèk*), his parents' elder and younger female siblings (*gomo'*), his paternal and maternal grandmothers (*nénèk*). Similarly, the males in the generation above ego will, by the same rules of incest, be forbidden partners for ego's female consanguines or collaterals, since they address these women as 'child' (*kenon*).

The rule of residence is generally matrilocal; the husband joins his wife in her village and, in the first few years of marriage, forms part of the household of the parents of the girl. During this time, the boy prepares to build a house of his own. He contributes his share to the household by bringing food in the form of rice, sugar, fish and game. He also helps his wife's father to cultivate the garden plots and to clear the ricefields for planting. Once the house is completed, the couple move to their new home and set up an independent household. Thus, the tendency is for young couples to live neolocally after a few years of marriage.

The spread and development of Ma' Betisék villages over the last few centuries have given rise to a particular form of village organization based on the *opoh* or local descent group. However, marriages contracted with men and women from other villages in recent years have introduced new members in the village who are not members of the *opoh*. The social groupings based on village and local descent group membership are on the micro-level expressed in the household which remains their most cohesive unit of grouping.

Ma' Betisék Concepts of Tulah and Kemali'

THE CONCEPT OF TULAH

The term *tulah*, is generally used in two senses. Firstly, it refers to individual or group retribution for transgressions associated with the moral order. More specifically, men, women and children who show disrespect for elders in the village are said to be cursed by human, plant and animal spirits who bring on natural calamities as a form of punishment. In this sense, the term *tulah* is specifically concerned with the breach of codes of behaviour between juniors and elders.¹ Secondly, it refers to the violation of the moral code set up between the human world and the plant and animal world. This refers specifically to the Ma' Betisék notion that plants and animals have been cursed by their ancestors to become food for humans. For this reason, plants and animals cannot be part of the human social world and must remain separate and distinct.

The first meaning of *tulah* is based on forms of conduct which follow the generational principle. A person is, at all times, in a junior-elder relationship to his kinsmen. Although he may maintain congenial ties with his parents and parents' collaterals and a joking relationship with his grandparents and grandparents' collaterals, there are nevertheless certain forms of behaviour which he should avoid when he relates to them. An example of a breach of conduct which is explained in *tulah* terms is incest with a member of ego's *opoh* from a higher or lower generation from ego. A person is also said to

¹ The extension of the relationship between juniors and elders to living kinsmen and ancestors does not amount to ancestor worship as such, but a way of using the eldership complex in situations when plants and animals cannot be viewed as food resources but as spiritual entities which are perceived to be powerful and dominant. In the context of *kemali'* ideas, plants and animals are conceptually viewed as *moyang* or ancestors and given the honorific status ascribed to Ma' Betisék elders.

commit an act of *tulah* when he or she openly defies the decisions of elders in selecting him a marriage partner. Again, a man or woman who remarries after the death of his or her spouse and does not wait for the prescribed interval of a year before doing so, is said to commit an act of *tulah*. Children who mock elders when they talk, tease them when they defecate, conceal their faces with their sarongs when elders are present, or who tease and ill-treat domesticated animals are said to commit acts of *tulah*.

These forms of behaviour described have the effect of bringing on natural calamities such as thunderstorms and squalls (*luha* or *chulau*), drought (*marau*), floods (*bah*) and whirlwinds (*puting belong*) which may injure or kill the person guilty of the offence as well as cause physical harm to other members of the village. Since natural calamities are also said to occur when certain offences are committed on the plant and animal world, it is clear that a relationship between offences on elders and offences on plants and animals is seen. Significantly, when natural calamities occur, the situation is defined as *kemali'* and the *kemali'* state is immediately linked to an act of *tulah*, whether it be caused by an offence against an elder or an offence against the plant and animal world. However, in situational terms, whenever a natural calamity occurs, it is invariably linked to an act of *tulah* on the plant and animal world. Doubtless the incidence of natural calamities in the villages is less than the incidence of illnesses and injuries but, even so, explanations for natural calamities in terms of offences against elders are rare. During the period when the study was undertaken in Carey Island, there was only one case of *tulah*, involving an offence against elders. This was attributed to a man who had decided to marry a woman a few months after the death of his first wife. The thunderstorm broke out a few hours after his marriage ceremony was performed and the villagers said that it occurred because he had not waited for a year before marrying the woman.

The second aspect of the notion of *tulah* is derived from the idea that humans have ritually cursed plants and animals so that they may become sources of human food. This is related to the belief that, formerly, plants and animals attempted to

annihilate humans for the world. They believe that plants and animals were capable of changing into human forms. Whenever plants or animals assumed human forms they entered into sexual or matrimonial relationships with humans and settled down as members of the village. Once they were fully accepted by the rest of the villagers, they waylaid them and ate them. They were able to do this quite easily since they were already accepted and trusted by the villagers. In order to prevent plants and animals from assuming human forms, Ma' Betisék elders used their ritual knowledge to curse them, thus causing them to remain as plants and animals. Since then plants and animals are unable to destroy human life. Although most elders have lost these powers of cursing, plants and animals now cannot assume human forms or establish sexual or matrimonial relationships with humans. The Ma' Betisék have a myth about almost every common plant and animal in the region, describing how these plants and animals tried to destroy human life by assuming human forms, and how they were eventually cursed by humans and forced to remain as plants and animals indefinitely. Subsequently, humans were able to exploit plants and animals as food.

Implicit in this *tulah* idea is the belief that the human world and the plant and animal world ought to be kept physically distinct from each other. This *tulah* concept gives emphasis to the physical differences between humans and plants and animals. It also stresses the irreversibility of the two kinds of forms – humans cannot assume the form of plants or animals and plants and animals cannot assume the form of humans. In this notion of *tulah*, plants and animals are grouped into one physical category and humans into another; the two categories are maintained in a mutually exclusive way. The *tulah* idea also suggests that plants and animals have a fixed and constant position within the total cosmos and that they belong to a different physical domain, from humans. The human world is associated with the village domain, while the plant and animal world is associated with the forest domain. The human world and the plant and animal world is set apart in both physical (in the sense described above) and spatial terms. This symbolic opposition is reinforced by the per-

ceived differences in the way of life of humans and plants and animals. The Ma' Betisék argue that part of the reason why humans are different from plants and animals is that humans uphold the rules against incest and cannibalism whereas plants and animals do not. While humans order their relationships according to a fixed moral code, plants and animals do not attempt to order their life in the same way. Furthermore, the institutions of marriage, the family, inheritance, leadership and group co-operation, as found within the village, are not manifested in the plant and animal world. In other words, plants and animals do not have ancestral customs; these are handed down by the Ma' Betisék ancestors only for humans to practice and enjoy.

The physical irreversibility of plant and animal forms, their spatial segregation from the human world and their apparent behavioural differences give humans a hierarchically dominant position over plants and animals. Plants and animals can no longer enter the village domain and kill and eat humans at random. Instead, humans are able to enter the plant and animal domain in the forest and exploit them as they wish. The *tulah* concept emphasizes the powers which humans have in exercising their ritual knowledge and completely ignores the mystical powers with which plants and animals are attributed in the context of *kemali'* ideas. The ritual curse which was performed by Ma' Betisék elders is called *chinchang moyang bantut*. This term can be translated as 'chopping the leaves of the ancestral plant which retards growth'. The plant referred to is known as the *moyang bantut* (*Homalomena Coerulescens*, Jungh?). The ritual which is performed involves chopping up the leaves of the *moyang bantut* plant and the *terong pipit* or *terong duri* plant (*Solanum torvum*, Swartz) and mixing them with uncooked rice of seven different colours. These colours are black, yellow, green, brown, red, purple and white. These represent the total range of colours which are contained within Ma' Betisék triadic colour groupings – *mamba'* ('yellow'), *melah maham* ('red') and *hitem* ('black'). The colours white, brown, yellow and green are grouped together under the *mamba'* colour group; red and purple under the *melah maham* colour group and black on its own, in the *hitem* colour group. The colours

grouped under *mamba'* symbolically represent plants and animals and other objects found outside the human world. Significantly, the term *mamba'* also refers to a certain atmospheric condition which is caused by the setting sun's rays shining through a moisture laden air. This happens when rainfall occurs and stops abruptly just before sunset. The sun's rays, which filter through the drops of moisture in the air, emit a yellow light which lasts for several minutes. In the context of Ma' Betisek colour symbolism, the term *mamba'* refers to objects which are conceived as yellow. Significantly, they often refer to the green in leaves and grass by the Malay term *kuning* which also refers to the colour yellow. Also, the colours of the skin of animals in the forest and mangroves may vary between yellow, green and various shades of brown but they are referred to as *kuning* or *mamba'*. The term for 'moon' is *mamba'* – which is also the term for the colour of the moon. In the context of illness, when the natural order is symbolically incorporated into the human order, objects which are directly associated with human activities and possessions such as knives, ear-rings, cooked food, attire, and cultivated gardens are all prepared in *mamba'* or yellow. These objects are made from the plaited shoots of the coconut and *nipah* palm and appear in various shades of yellow and green. In analytical terms, the representation of 'cultural objects' by the colour *mamba'* or yellow expresses the symbolic incorporation of the natural order into the human order. On another conceptual level, it also expresses the spiritual or supernatural aspect of the activity. This is particularly brought out in shamanistic seances when the shaman puts on a yellow attire the moment his animal spirit-guides descend to the scene of the seance. This rite associates the colour *mamba'* or yellow with the underworld, the domain of spirit-guides. The shaman always wraps a yellow cloth over his shoulders when he walks about in the village, as an indication that he has a permanent relationship with spirits from the underworld.²

² The shaman's spirit-guides are identified with the underworld (*dunia' lapih tuju*) but are said to ride on the shaman's shoulders when he ventures into the fields or forest. The yellow cloth is worn over his shoulders also to indicate that his spirit guides use them when they descend to the world.

The colour white (*putih*) is seldom used to depict objects of the natural order or to express things which are spiritual and associated with the overworld. However, because of the growing Malay and Muslim influence in the area, the colour white has been increasingly substituted for the colour yellow. This is in accordance with the tendency for Muslim communities in the area to represent objects which are identified as spiritual or sacred by the colour white. Thus, while the Ma' Betisék use a yellow cloth to wrap the body of a dead kinsman, there is an increasing tendency today to use a white piece of cloth instead. Also, while a shaman normally wears a yellow shirt to conduct a seance, he may wear a white shirt when a yellow shirt is for some reason or other not available.³ White is then a colour which is substitutable for yellow. The representation of the colours white, yellow, green and brown in the potion of rice and leaves which form the curse, collectively represent the plants and animals which are the subject of the curse. In analytical terms, these colours symbolize the natural order of which plants and animals are part.

The colours grouped under *mélah maham* represent objects or things which are identified with the human world. The term *mélah maham* may be translated to mean 'blood red' (*mélah* meaning red, and *maham*, blood).⁴ The Ma' Betisék associate the colour *mélah maham* with human life and activity, in situations when a relationship is established with the spiritual order. A blood sacrifice is performed when a thunderstorm or squall breaks out. They believe that these thunderstorms are brought on by angry human, plant and animal spirits, because certain offences have been committed against them. The thunderstorms warn the people that they are in danger of being physically harmed by these spiritual entities. Here blood is associated with human life and the termination of it by physical harm. The shedding of blood in the blood sacrifice symbolically assures these spiritual entities

³ Usually the patient gives the shaman a new shirt and sarong and since yellow shirts are less readily available in the shops, a white shirt may be bought instead. Traditionally, the Ma' Betisék would buy white cloth, dye it yellow and make shirts and sarongs from them.

⁴ The term *mélah* is derived from the Malay term *merah* which means red.

that a human has already been physically harmed, and encourages them to stop the thunderstorm. The loss of blood also assures the human, plant and animal spirits that humans have terminated the physical activity which causes them harm. Thus, blood and the colour red is symbolically associated with human life and activity and the constraints upon them when a relationship is established with the spiritual world. In the context of illnesses, whenever a patient expels blood from the mouth, nose and ears or has blood in his faeces or urine, it is recognized to be an extremely grave sign (*bajau*). The illness is immediately said to be terminal. Normally, such an illness is associated with sorcery, an art about which the Ma' Betisék say they know nothing and which they cannot cure. Sorcery is usually associated with other aboriginal and Malay communities in the area. Here, the loss of blood is associated with the loss of human life. In the *tulah* context, the rice grains are also coloured red and purple because these two colours together symbolize the human world, human life and the continuity of human life forms. It should be noted that the colour purple is easily obtained from the juices of the *senduduk* fruit (*Melastoma polyanthum*, Blume). The plant grows wild in the area and when the fruits are crushed in a bowl, they make a bright purple dye that is like the colour of blood. For this reason, the colour purple is categorized as red.

The colour black is associated with the occurrence of misfortune and suffering – events which are explained in *kemali'* terms. The colour denotes states of danger which are caused by human, plant and animal spirits associated with the world. The blackness in the sky which precedes a thunderstorm is interpreted as an inauspicious sign – that certain spirits are angry at humans for causing them harm and seek vengeance by bringing on a thunderstorm. Again, the wandering human spirits of the forest which are believed to be malevolent and vindictive are associated with the black shadows (*balam*) which are cast on the walls at night when the room is lighted only by an oil lamp. One is forbidden to play with these shadows because it is seen as teasing or mocking the wandering human spirit. In the context of the seance, when the healing rite is performed, the patient is made to spit

into a piece of black cloth which is then placed in the basket containing the ritual offering. Here, the black cloth is directly associated with the illness. The expulsion of saliva onto the black cloth symbolizes the expulsion of the illness from the body of the patient. Hence, when the black cloth in the ritual offering is carried away, it symbolizes the permanent removal of the illness from the body of the patient.

In the *tulah* context, the presence of all the three colour groups, in the rice and leaves potion clearly expresses the functions of the *chinchang moyang bantut* curse. The human world (depicted in the colour red) meets the plant and animal world (represented by the colour yellow) in a situation of grave danger (represented by the colour black). On another level, it denotes the opposition between human life and spiritual entities and the symbolic separation of the two physical domains with which they are associated (human-village; spirits-forest). When the curse is performed, the elder is supposed to shout the following warning aloud, 'If an animal, be an animal; if a human, be a human; but do not be both human and animal'. The name of the specific animal which is being cursed is always mentioned in the spell. Similarly, if the spell is directed at a plant, the name of the plant which is being cursed is mentioned. This spell is repeated seven times, at the end of which the animal or plant loses its powers to assume human forms.⁵ The Ma' Betisék believe that, formerly, animals and plants were many times the size which they are now and that the curse has had the effect of reducing their size to that which they now assume. The curse then acts as a symbolic assurance that human life and plant and animal life are essentially different and that the present life forms of plants and animals are ordered by man's ritual knowledge and skills. For this reason, human life continues at the expense of plant and animal life. Humans are free to kill and destroy plants and animals as they wish and to procure them as food. Significantly, plants and animals are in the context of hunting, gathering and fishing referred to as

⁵ The constant occurrence of the number seven in ritual objects, ritual activities and mythical stories, is a manifestation of the symbolic distinctions made between odd and even numbers. The opposition between odd and even numbers is manifested in a number of societies in South East Asia. It will be taken up in greater detail in Chapter 6.

'cooked food'. The symbolic significance of this conceptual idea will be taken up in a later chapter.

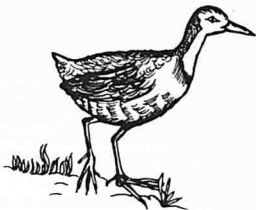
It may be important to note that the powers of cursing which humans have used in the past, to constrain the life of plants and the activity of animals, is still said to be found among some elders. The Ma' Betisék argue that since most of the plants and animals in the world have already been cursed, such powers are no longer essential but some men still possess these powers and can curse animals and plants as before. These men are called *kebel* and are said to be able to change the forms of plants and animals, including other physical objects, into anything they desire.

In the *tulah* context, the hierarchically dominant position which humans have over plants and animals is manifested in the way in which plants and animals are manipulated in charms used in the context of hunting and courtship.⁶ The manipulative aspect of charms used in hunting is brought out by the idea that animals will, once the correct spell is cast on them, obediently place their heads in the noose of traps or enter the nearest traps which they can find. Animals are also used as agents to transfer a love charm to a man or woman who is physically inaccessible. One of these charms, known as the *si-ooi*, is performed when the coppersmith barbet (*Megalaima haemacephala indica*) is found in the forest (Fig. 1a). The person then catches the bird and charms it by making a detailed description of the bird aloud, starting from its beak down to its feet. Each feature of the bird's body is described in rapturous terms. When this detailed description ends, the bird is said to be completely at the mercy of the person, a condition described as *ékse*, which means 'to suffer indefinitely'. The person then instructs the bird to find the man or woman whom the charm is meant for. Apparently, the bird will hover around the house of the person and sing for days from a nearby tree till the person ventures out and

^{*} The term charm is used to refer to spells which attempt to make animals obedient, and to spells, objects and potions which are used to make a person submissive or to draw a person's attention, affections and love. I have chosen to use the term 'curative spells' in the context of healing rites, to distinguish between spells used for illnesses and spells used in love and hunting. Generally, love charms cannot be performed without the use of plants and animals or plant and animal substances, whereas curative spells derive their power mainly from the words which are used.



Coppersmith Barbet



Slaty-breasted Rail

Fig. 1. *Pelimun* birds



Lesser Racquet-tailed Drongo



Blue-breasted Button Quail

makes his or her way to the house of the woman or man who has performed the charm. If the charm does not have this effect on the person it is meant for, the person and the bird will be cursed to die. The *si-ooi* love charm ends in the following way,

'... I am using the charm that makes you submit and desire me

If it fails, you will die a death ultimately,

If it succeeds, enter my body,

Kur... wai... wait... (name of person desired is stated),

Enter my body.'

All love and hunting charms invariably end with this curse. It expresses the *tulah* idea that humans are able to exercise their ritual knowledge in such a way that they can control, manipulate and subjugate the plant and animal world in any way they wish.

Animals may also be used to advance a person's good fortune. This is manifested in the practice of hunting certain animals for magical objects which they are said to possess. These magical objects not only grant humans good fortune and wealth but also give them powers of invisibility and invulnerability. The good fortune, wealth and mystical powers which humans are said to obtain from these objects are collectively known as *pelimun*. Only a few animals are

TABLE 1 *Pelimun* birds and animals

Common name	Ma' Betisek name	Species
1. lesser-racquet-tailed drongo	<i>chiwang</i>	<i>Dissemurus remifer peracensis</i>
2. blue-breasted button quail	<i>puyu</i>	<i>Excalfactoria c. chinensis</i>
3. coppersmith barbet	<i>si-ooi</i> or <i>tuntung</i>	<i>Megalaima haemacephala indica</i>
4. slaty-breasted rail	<i>kua'</i>	<i>Rallus striatus gularis</i>
5. reticulated python	<i>tijau sawe</i> or <i>tijau t'elon</i>	<i>Python reticulatus</i>

described as *pelimun* and the majority of these are birds, among which are the lesser-racquet tailed drongo, the blue-breasted button quail, the slaty-breasted rail and the copper-smith barbet (see Fig. 1 and Table 1). Among these *pelimun* animals, however, is the reticulated python which is thought to be the most effective of all the *pelimun* animals. It is said to contain a magical stone in the region of the eye which may be obtained from its freshly cast skin. This stone has to be ritually treated before its magical properties are displayed. It should first be moved round in a circle seven times in the smoke of the benzoin and the following words should be said aloud: 'O spirit, give us the powers; my household, my wife and children, protect them, let them be well; O spirit we ask you, give us the powers.' The stone is then pressed on the head of the person performing the ritual and the moment this is done, the person acquires the powers of invulnerability and invisibility. He, together with the members of his household will regularly obtain good fortune and come into wealth.

The *pelimun* birds are said to contain in their nests certain sticks which may grant humans the same powers as the magical stone from the python. However, the Ma' Betisék say that it is more difficult to obtain these magical sticks than the magical stone from the python's freshly moulted skin, mainly because their nests are very difficult to find.

Generally, it may be seen that in the context of *tulah* ideas the human world is symbolically set apart from the plant and animal world and placed in a hierarchically superior or dominant position over it. In analytical terms, the human order is symbolically opposed to the natural order. The moral order in the *tulah* context, upholds activities which enable men and women to seek personal or group advancement by exploiting the plant and animal world.

THE CONCEPT OF KEMALI'

The term *mali* or *pemali* is explained by Gimlette and Thomson (1939: 156, 206) as 'something which is tabooed'. More specifically, it refers to states of danger associated with the breach of certain taboos. The term conveys the idea of retribution – a person is exposed to certain mystical dangers when he does not observe the taboos associated with certain

objects or actions. Gimlette and Thomson (1971: 156, 206-7) mention a particular illness known as *sakit salah pemali* in Malay. When translated, this means 'an illness obtained from a *pemali* ignorance or wrong'. This illness is explained as the early stages of maculo-anaesthetic leprosy, when maculae (insensitive stains or spots on the skin) make their appearance. The disease is abhorred by the Malays because of the slow gradual way in which it disfigures and cripples a person. Since the breach of a *pemali* taboo is said to cause such illnesses as leprosy, it suggests that the retribution for such offences are manifested in severe and often mortal illnesses.

Among the Ma' Betisék, the term *kemali'* is more often used than the Malay term *pemali*. The prefix *ke* in the Betisék language indicates a noun. In the Ma' Betisék context, the term *kemali'* may be taken to mean the act of putting oneself in a state of danger, caused by the breach of taboos associated with plants and animals. This may be illustrated by the following example. A hunter may hunt in the forest daily and suddenly one day fall ill. His routine of hunting in the forest daily will be described as *kemali'* – an act which has put him in a situation of danger. They will describe his actions in the following way, 'He always goes to the forest to hunt wild boar; that is *kemali'* obviously.' The term is also used as an adjective in a more general sense, to refer to the supernatural dangers which are associated with plants and animals. In the context of illness and injury, the Ma' Betisék will say that all plants and animals are dangerous because they subject humans to spirit-attacks. They explain these mystical qualities of plants and animals in the following way, 'Animals, plants, all of them, they have supernatural powers which bring us danger, obviously because they are our ancestors; that is why they subject us to spirit-attacks.'

The notion of *kemali'* is subject to varying meanings among the aboriginal groups in the peninsula. Among the Semai, Dentan (1965: 208, 451-60; 1968: 36-7) states that the word *penali'* (which is similar to the Ma' Betisék word *kemali'*) refers both to the mixing together of certain classes of food and to the misfortunes said to attend such a danger. He adds that the term is occasionally used in the sense of the Malay word *pali* or *pemali* from which it is derived, to mean

taboo at all times. The four major types of food which are mutually immiscible are *menhar* ('meat'), *dieb* ('fowl'), *ka* ('water food') and *betiis* ('fleshy fungus'). It should be noted that the Ma' Betisék also refer to the mixing together of different classes of food in *kemali'* terms. For example, meat obtained from the mudflats or sea (fish, turtle, sea tortoise and shellfish), categorized as *juma' bakau*, cannot be cooked with *belachan* or strong smelling pastes made from extracts of prawns or fish. Here, the two classes of food which are set apart are fresh seafood and preserved seafood. Two other classes of food which are not mixed are *juma' meri* ('forest meat') and *tau'* ('water-gourds, pumpkins and vegetables which are cultivated'). Here, the two classes of food which are dangerous to mix are wild game and cultivated vegetables. However, the Ma' Betisék ideas of immiscible types of food are not well developed and do not play an important part in the actual interpretations of *kemali'* states on the situation level.

The concept of *kemali'* among the Ma' Betisék is related to the belief that all plants and animals originate from the souls (*mangat*) of dead humans. For this reason, plants and animals possess human characteristics. The component of the soul of dead humans called *mangat lajin* ('energetic soul') which does not make the journey to the first stop in the underworld, *Pulau Buah*, is said to enter the womb of pregnant animals and to creep into young plants. Plants and animals, therefore, share a component of the souls of humans. If they are killed or destroyed it will be seen as an act wrongfully committed upon humanity rather than upon plants and animals as such. It is thought that all plants and animals seek vengeance whenever humans attempt to destroy them in any way. This view is symbolically manifested in anthropomorphic beliefs surrounding the animal and plant world. In plants, these beliefs revolve round the concept of plant souls (*mangat lo'*). Plant souls are similar to human souls in that they are the source of basic needs and drives which have to be constantly satisfied – the need for shelter, food, love and affection. In humans, when these needs and drives are not satisfied, the soul causes bodily harm to the human who is responsible for this state of deprivation or sometimes punishes the person by

causing bodily harm to itself, i.e. its own person. Similarly, in plants and trees, plant souls cause bodily harm to the human who deprives them of these needs. If the causing agent is from some source other than man, the plant or tree would come to physical harm. Humans may annoy plants in several ways; by brushing against the leaves, by damaging the roots or stems, by cutting them down, by defecating nearby. Plants may avenge these offences in two ways: firstly, by injuring a human directly by using a part of the plant as a weapon; and secondly, by invoking their supernatural powers and causing illness to the offender. Fruit trees which bear thorns use their thorns to scratch and injure humans who try to pluck their fruits. Some trees are said to 'spit' at humans as they pass by. The most dangerous of these is a mangrove tree called *lo' butak* or 'the blind tree' (*Excoecaria agallocha*, Linn), which can cause blisters, sores and other severe skin reactions. The illnesses which plants may cause vary a great deal, from mild fever and stomach upsets to permanent bodily injuries. Other evidence of the human qualities of plants may be derived from certain physical features which they possess. For example, certain trees are said to reveal their human origin from the red sap which they contain. Trees of these species are referred to as *lo' maham*, literally 'bleeding trees' (*Knema*, Lour) – the red sap which trickles out when the trunk is slashed is associated with human blood.

Plants may also indicate and predict certain events by changing their physical state. To illustrate, they wilt during periods of drought to tell the winds to bring the rains to relieve them of their thirst. The Ma' Betisék believe that when the leaves begin to wilt, it is an indication that the rains will come again. Flowers do not like non-virgins or married women and they show this by wilting when they are adorned. Consequently, when a woman wears flowers in her hair and the petals fall or droop, it means that she is either married or is no longer a virgin. The *moso'* tree (*Lumnitzera coccinea*, Ridley) is said to bloom at the end of the year to indicate the beginning of the crab season. The edible asiatic crab (*Scylla serrata*, Forsk) becomes abundant at the end of the year in the mangrove tidal creeks and the Ma' Betisék

Fig. 2. Some animals with anthropomorphic origins



Malayan Tiger



White-handed Gibbon



Dog



Dugong



Pangolin

normally give up all other forms of economic activity to indulge fully in crab gathering. The flowers of the *moso'* tree which bloom in umbellate clusters are scarlet in colour and the shape and colour of the blooms are symbolically associated with the bright orange eggs of the crab. Significantly, the crab is full of eggs only at this time of the year.

As in plants, the interconnectedness between animals and humans finds symbolic expression in anthropomorphic notions of origin. The *kondok* or pangolin, (*Manis javanica*, Linn) is said to have been formed from the after-birth of humans. The Ma' Betisék normally wrap the after-birth in a mat and bury it in the ground. Hence, the scales of the pangolin resemble the texture and weaving patterns of the pandanus mat (Fig. 2d). The *ka duyung* or dugong (*Halicorn dugong*, Illiger) is believed to have originally been a man. The story goes that a couple had a quarrel after the husband accused the wife of adultery. Though she denied it, he refused to believe her and swam into the sea to nurse his hurt. She ran after him to plead with him to come home but he swam deeper into the sea. Eventually she climbed a coconut tree to call out to him but to her shock and dismay, saw that he had turned into a dugong. She was broken-hearted and became a white-handed gibbon (*Hylobates lar*, Linn). This incident explains why the dugong is always popping its head above the water, like a man who is swimming. It also explains why the dugong cries distressfully when it is hauled up the shore by fishermen. The dugong's tears are associated with the reluctance of the man to return to his wife. Similarly, the white hands and face of the gibbon are symbolically associated with the powder which the woman wore when she ran after her husband.⁷ The loud, hooting noises which gibbons make in the forest are said to be echoes of the cries of the woman when she saw that her husband has changed into a dugong. Myths of origin of the tiger are invariably linked to humans who have powers of invulnerability and invisibility, shamans and the legendary princess of

⁷ Note that it is an animal with unusually strong *kemali'* powers. The black-handed gibbon (*siamang*) is symbolically associated with men rather than women. This is because it does not possess white hands and a white rim of fur on its face and is larger in build.

the mountain, *puteri* Gunong Lédang. Tigers are said to originate from these humans who have mystical powers which can be used in both a constructive or destructive manner. For this reason, Ma' Betisék myths on tigers sometimes stress their human qualities and, at other times, their animal characteristics. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. The idea that a shaman turns into a tiger upon his death is associated with Malay ideas of the were-tiger, but the Ma' Betisék argue that part of the reason why the shaman is so dependent on his tiger spirit-guides is because he is anthropomorphically related to the tiger. Then again, the dog is said to have originated from the collar bone of a man. For this reason, the dog is like a man, a skilful hunter and has a good understanding of humans (Fig. 2c).

The *kemali*' aspect of plants and animals suggests that they are always potentially dangerous to humans. This danger is manifested in illnesses, injuries or natural calamities. The time lapse between the act of exploiting the plant or animal and the actual occurrence of the injury, illness or misfortune is not explicitly stated. As long as a person is afflicted with an injury or illness which cannot be explained in any other terms than a *kemali*' offence, the affliction will be explained in terms of a spirit-attack by the plant or animal which the person has used or destroyed.

The Ma' Betisék believe that the *kemali*' quality of plants and animals is also indirectly brought out by the wandering human spirits called *moyang mangat jain*. As explained earlier, these spirits are derived from the 'lazy souls' of dead humans. While the *mangat lajin* (energetic souls) of dead humans travel to the overworld, the *mangat jain* (lazy souls) prefer to remain in the world, to lead the life of a wandering human spirit. These wandering human spirits are invisible and are said to live in the forests, mangroves and mudflats. Since they live upon the resources of the land and sea, they enter into a regular competition with humans for these limited resources. They may even venture into the village to extract garden produce and fruits from the orchards. For this reason, every time humans perform some kind of economic activity, they are faced with the danger of annoying or displeasing a human

spirit which is also engaged in a similar economic activity. To illustrate, if a man sets up a trap for a wild boar and a wandering human spirit does the same, the man will immediately be placed in a state of danger if a wild boar enters his trap. This is because the wild boar could have entered the trap of the human spirit instead of the trap set up by the man. He will then be subjected to a mystical attack through either of the following ways:

- a) the animal may subject him to a spirit-attack for the attempt made to trap it as game;
- b) the wandering human spirit may subject him to a spirit-attack for the attempt made to deprive it of its game.

Sometimes a wandering human spirit may change its form into that of an animal merely to waylay humans who venture into the forest and to cause more mischief and harm. Another way in which a person may be placed in a dangerous situation is when a wandering human spirit passes by a human who is handling a captured animal. When this happens, the wandering human spirit immediately allies itself with the animal and inflicts a spirit-attack on the person. The mystical retribution in this case is obtained from an allied spirit rather than from the animal which is being harmed by the human.

It may be seen that the states of danger explained in *kemali'* terms may be brought about by several different situations involving the human exploitation of plants and animals. The interference of wandering human spirits in the daily economic pursuits of the Ma' Betisék introduces an added complexity to the term *kemali'*. The behaviour of wandering human spirits suggests that spirit-attacks do not only come from plants and animals which are being harmed by humans. Human spirits too, disapprove of such acts by humans and subject them to spirit attacks. Virtually all forms of physical activity which take place outside the house and which are directly or indirectly related to the exploitation of plants and animals will subject humans to a state of danger. A hunter who kills an animal may be subjected to a spirit-attack from the animal or from an allied human spirit. He may also be subjected to a spirit-attack from a tree if he were to damage it in some way. Should the tree be the home of a wandering

human spirit, he may also suffer a spirit-attack by that spirit. If he passes a pit containing snakes, he may again be the victim of a spirit-attack from the snakes for intruding upon their privacy. If he stumbles over an earth-mound (*busut*) made by the *ketab gedeng* (*Thalassina anomala*), revenge will also be taken on him for the same reason.⁸

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to define the term *moyang* as it is used within this domain of experience. Plants and animals are referred to by the term *moyang* (*moyang lo'*; *moyang natang* respectively) when they are seen as supernatural forces capable of causing serious misfortune to humans. The wandering human spirits described are also referred to as *moyang* though they are differentiated from plant and animal spirits by the term *moyang mangat jain* (lazy soul spirits). Similarly, the human spirits associated with the *mangat lajin* or 'energetic souls' are distinguished from these *moyang* categories described, (*moyang mangat jain*, *moyang lo'*, *moyang natang*) by the term *moyang mangat lajin*. Finally, there are a number of semi-human creatures or ogres which are said to inhabit the forest. Unlike human spirits, which are said to be invisible, these are visible to the human eye. However, the Ma' Betisék state that they rarely come across them since there are very few of them left. These ogres are also called *moyang*. They have their own peculiar forms and habits and are recognized by these external traits. *Moyang jaboi* has a nose which has been fixed wrongly so that his nostrils face upwards. His feet also point backwards instead of to the front. Another ogre, *moyang degoh*, has a habit of greeting humans from graves and can use his voice in such a manner that he appears to be in two places simultaneously.

⁸ These mud lobsters maintain a network of narrow canals under the ground and on rainy days burrow their way to the surface. This burrowing action causes mounds to appear all along the river banks and areas close to the river creeks. They form a striking landscape feature in the mangrove. These earth mounds should be distinguished from anthills which are also called *busut* and which are commonly found in the forests and forest periphery. It is also significant that the *ketab gedeng* is subjected to verbal abuse in the *tulah* context, but referred to as *moyang* in the *kemali* context. The Ma' Betisék say that the earth mounds made by the *ketab gedeng* are physical hindrances when they hunt, fish and gather. They poke and kick the mounds and gleefully try to pull the *ketab gedeng* from the earth mounds. However, these mounds are avoided by persons who are subject to illnesses or injuries of various sorts. The *busut* derived from anthills are subjected to the same ambivalent attitudes but mounds from old graves are generally avoided.

TABLE 2 Plants with unusually strong powers of kemali'

Common name	Ma' Betisék name	Species
1. Casuarina	eru	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i> Linn
2. Anona (?)	Kinchong	<i>Annonaceae goniotala</i> (?)
3. Banana (wild)	Hentot	<i>Musa malaccensis</i> , Ridley
4. Nipah palm	Nipah	<i>Nipa fruticans</i> , Wurm
5. Gaharu	Gaharu'	<i>Aquilaria malaccensis</i>
6. Kempas	Kempas	<i>Koompassia malaccensis</i> , Benth
7. Ara	Jenang	<i>Ficus</i> , Linn
8. Coconut palm	Niyor	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> , Linn
9. Betel-vine	Chamai	<i>Piper caninum</i> , Blume
10. —	Moyang bantut	<i>Homalomena coerulea</i> , Jungh?
11. Terong pipit	terong duri'	<i>Solanum torvum</i> , Swartz
12. Betel-nut palm	Pinang	<i>Areca catechu</i> , Linn
13. Singgang	Singga'	<i>Kuema malayana</i> , Warb?
14. Keranting	Seranting	<i>Smilax myosotifolia</i> , Ridley
15. Keredok	Kerodo'	<i>Cyrtostachys lakka</i> , Becc
16. Nyarum	Daong	<i>Leptonychia glabra</i> , Turcz
17. Semelit	Minik	<i>Dalbergia tamarindifolia</i> Roxb
18. Rice	Be'	<i>Oryza Sativa</i>
19. Pumpkin	Tukal	<i>Cucurbita Pepo</i>
20. Durio fruit (wild)	Dian	<i>Durio malaccensis</i> , Ridley
21. Teruntum	moso'	<i>Lumnitzera coccinea</i> , Ridley
22. Buta-buta	Lo' butak	<i>Excoecaria agallocha</i> , Linn.
23. Epiphytic plants, Pitcher plants	Tekoh lo' chawan moyang	<i>Egs. Coelogyne species</i> Lindl, <i>Nepenthes gracilis</i>

Common name	Ma' Betisék name	Species
24. Radical roots of mangrove plants	<i>jangka bakau</i>	<i>Rhizophora</i>
25. Hibiscus, hati-hati	<i>tekoh kumuit</i>	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> , <i>Linn and coleus</i>

Although all plants and animals are regarded as dangerous in the *kemali'* context, some are thought to have unusually strong mystical powers. These plants and animals are said to bring on illnesses and injuries which are terminal. Lists of these plants and animals are given in Tables 2 and 3. They include trees like the *moso'*, casuarina, coconut-palm and animals like the tiger, elephant and skink. These plants and animals fall into two categories:

- a) those which cannot be utilized in any way;
- b) those which can be utilized subject to certain *pantang*.

The second category, however, includes only plants. This implies that in the context of *kemali'* ideas, the ritual prohibitions against animals with unusually strong mystical powers are absolute.

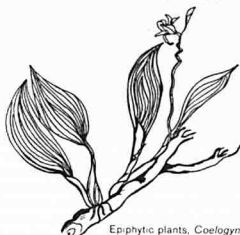
Table 2 shows that not all plants with unusually strong mystical powers are individually named. Some constitute parts of plants which grow in the mangroves. Item 24, for example, refers to the radical roots of mangrove plants. Item 23 constitutes epiphytic plants which grow on large tree trunks, and certain unusual types of creepers, namely the pitcher plant. These epiphytes are very conspicuous since they grow off other trees and have a thick foliage of leaves which spreads radially outwards like an open flower. The leaves of some of these epiphytic plants form a protective wall round the centre of the plant, and it is believed that wandering human spirits like to make it into their living abode. The pitcher plant is said to act as a utensil for the plant spirit and wandering human spirits (Fig. 3b). Similarly, the radical roots of mangrove plants are unusual in the sense that they are exposed and spread out rather thickly over the ground (Fig. 3c). The Ma' Betisék believe that human spirits like to dwell under these roots since they form a natural wall

TABLE 3 Animals with unusually strong powers of kemali'

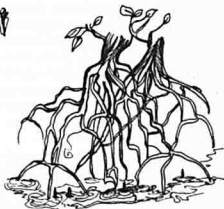
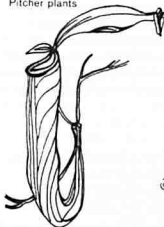
Common name	Ma' Betisek name	Species
1. Agamid lizard (green-crested)	<i>jungkui</i>	<i>Calotes cristatellus</i>
2. Skink or sun lizard	<i>mengkaum</i>	<i>Mabuya multifasciata</i>
3. Black-handed gibbon	<i>siamang</i>	<i>Symphalangus continentis</i> , Thomas
4. White-handed gibbon	<i>tembo'</i>	<i>Hylobates lar</i> , Linn.
5. Tiger	<i>a-a'</i>	<i>Felis tigris</i> , Linn.
6. Indian elephant	<i>merat</i>	<i>Elephas maximum</i>
7. Sambhur (wounded)	<i>rusa' maham</i>	<i>Cervus unicolor</i> , Kerr
8. Serpent eagle	<i>cheep elang kwait</i>	<i>Spilornis cheela bassus</i>
9. Sharp-tailed munia	<i>cheep e-ereit bé'</i>	<i>Munia striata subsquamicollis</i>
10. White-headed munia	<i>cheep e-ereit koi putih</i>	<i>Munia m. maja</i>
11. Black-headed Munia	<i>cheep e-ereit koi hitam</i>	<i>Munia atricapilla sinensis</i>
12. Fluffy-backed babbler	<i>cheep pong-pong</i>	<i>Macronus p. ptilosus</i>
13. Blue-throated bee-eater	<i>cheep onyo'</i>	<i>Merops v. viridis</i>
14. Emerald dove	<i>cheep dekot</i>	<i>Chalcophaps i. indica</i>
15. Praying mantis	<i>tado'</i>	<i>Tenodera aridifolia</i>
16. Night-wasp	<i>Kawai</i>	<i>Provespa anomala</i>
17. Giant honey bee	<i>tebel</i>	<i>Megapis dorsata</i>
18. Dog	<i>chow</i>	<i>Canis familiaris</i> , Linn.
19. Dragon	<i>naga'</i>	—

against outside intrusion. Also, these roots are a source of consternation since they very frequently cause serious injuries in the mangroves. They associate the roots with spreading hands. They say that the roots reach out and grab them as they pass by and in the course of doing so, inflict

Fig. 3. Some plants with unusually strong powers of kemali'

Epiphytic plants, *Coelogyne xerkes*

Pitcher plants

Radical roots of the *Rhizophoras*

them with illness. Plants which are found on grave sites (Table 2, Item 25) are said to have unusually strong powers of *tenong* because they are directly associated with the 'lazy soul'. These plants are said to 'suck up' the 'lazy soul' directly from the corpse, with the help of their roots. For this reason

they are regarded as more dangerous than other plants of the same species which grow on other sites. A hibiscus plant which grows on a grave site is said to have stronger *tenong* powers than one which grows in the garden plots. The plants, which are individually named, have unusually strong powers of *tenong* because of certain mythical events which they are linked with. This will be brought out in the following chapter in the discussion of mythological beliefs in the context of *tulah-kemali'* ideas. Similarly, the unusually strong *kemali'* property of certain animals is reinforced by mythical explanations of their origin and characteristics.

The *mangat jain* ('lazy soul') manifests two opposing 'soul states', the *mangat gèhék* ('hard soul') and the *mangat lemah* ('weak soul'). The *mangat gèhék* is said to be more dominant in plants and animals with unusually strong *kemali'* powers. Significantly, the *mangat gèhék* is said to be the source of the vindictiveness of plants and animals. When humans die from a spirit-attack, it is explained in terms of the *mangat gèhék* of plants and animals. The term *mangat gèhék* is applied to humans in a different sense. When men and women are said to have *mangat gèhék*, it suggests that they are particularly strong-willed and aggressive. It also implies that they are able to resist illnesses more easily than other people. The term *mangat lemah* is used to refer to people who are very timid and easily startled. It is said that *mangat lemah* is more dominant in infants and children than in adults.

The notion of tenong

The actual occurrence of a *tenong* or spirit-attack is sequentially manifested by the following danger states:

- a) *hua* – a warning given of the breach of a particular taboo associated with a plant or animal;
- b) *tenong* – the actual infliction of a spirit-attack by a plant, animal or wandering human spirit, leading to a condition of illness or injury, referred to as *sula'* or *hala' moyang*;
- c) *sula' hala'* – an illness, or injury, resulting from a spirit-attack;
- d) *bentan* – the breach of a taboo after a ritual offering is

made, leading to another spirit-attack or the outbreak of a new illness.

These will be discussed in greater detail to show the way in which they are sequentially manifested.

a) *Hua*

A warning of the breach of a particular taboo is shown in one of the following ways:

- i) a verbal warning or accusation by an elder or kinsman at the time after a taboo has been broken, and an illness or injury develops;
- ii) through omen dreams (*mamain bajau*), either one's own or the dreams of an elder or kinsman, soon after the performance of the activity;
- iii) through omen birds (*cheep tenong*) which act as inauspicious signs;
- iv) unusual features of the environment such as drifting logs in the river which are unaccounted for, sudden changes in light in the atmosphere, thunderstorms and squalls, circulating winds and drought; these occurring after the breach of a taboo to warn humans that certain spirits are offended.

It may be necessary first to explain the term *pantang* as it is used in the context of *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas. In its most general sense, the term *pantang* refers to rules which impose physical restrictions on the behaviour and activity of individuals. In the *tulah* context, these *pantang* have two sets of references. Firstly, they refer to rules which set about controlling the physical conditions in which acts of planting, fishing, hunting and gathering occur, to ensure that objects of the environment can be exploited to their fullest advantage. For example, taro or yam should not be planted on a rainy day for the crops will be poor. It should instead be planted on a cloudy day so that the crop will be plentiful and well shaped like the clouds in the sky. Sugarcane should not be brought to and eaten in the rice fields when the grains are ripening for it only encourages rats to eat up the grain, nor should it be dragged about the footpaths for the rats will also be encouraged to drag the ricestalks along with them. In the context of *tulah* ideas, men and women who practise love

charms have to comply with certain *pantang* to ensure that the charm will be effective. For example, they have to perform on a full moon night and in complete privacy. The second set of *pantang* refers to rules which impose restrictions on the utilization of plants and animals with unusually strong mystical powers (*tenong*). For example, the *moso* plant cannot be used for house construction. The *nipah* palm, however, can be used for house construction and thatching but it cannot be planted; the palm leaves have to be gathered from the wild.

In the *kemali*' context, however, the term *pantang* is used in a rather different way. Generally, when the term *pantang* is used in situations of illness, it conveys the idea that *all* acts relating to the exploitation of plants and animals are tabooed; the rules restrict behaviour relating to the killing and destruction of all plant and animal life. The term *pantang* is also used in a more specific way to refer to individuals who are thought to be particularly vulnerable to spirit-attacks because of their own physical conditions. Pregnant women, or those who have recently delivered, are prohibited from indulging in any kind of economic activity that takes place outside the house. Furthermore, they cannot eat any wild vegetables or game meat. Pregnant women are said to be in a state of *kemali*'; they are in a state of danger because they have lost a lot of blood, a condition associated with ill health. Also, shamans who are called upon to perform a series of seances are prohibited from indulging in any kind of economic activity. This is associated with the belief that the shaman's spirit-guides will refuse to help him in the seances if he engages in activities which harm plants and animals in some way. For men and women who are ill, any kind of economic activity is subject to *pantang* because it is thought that they have already harmed certain plant, animal and human spirits. Furthermore, these spirits are said to be more prone to inflict illness or injuries on persons who are already ill.

When an elder or kinsman wishes to draw a person's attention to the state of danger he or she is in, he will mention the word *hua* once or several times. Sometimes, the *hua* warning may be expressed in the following way, 'Don't do that, you will be subject to *tenong*'. Such a *hua* warning,

however, is only given when the person is already afflicted with a particular illness or when a number of other people have already been afflicted with conditions of various sorts. Such a *hua* warning can only be given after a state of *kemali'* is perceived. Its aim is to prevent the person from experiencing another spirit-attack. When a *hua* warning is expressed in dreams, however, the person may already have committed an offence against a plant or animal but has not yet experienced an illness or injury which may be described in terms of *tenong*. If a person obtains an omen dream following a day of hunting and gathering, fishing or cultivating, he will immediately assume that he is about to get an illness or meet with an injury. A *hua* warning through omen dreams occurs after a taboo has been broken but before an illness or injury develops. For example, an enthusiastic crab-gatherer from the village of Sungei Mata migrated to Pulau Ketam during the crab season. He gathered crabs daily and sold them to a Ma' Betisek middle-man from the village of Sungei Musang. One night, he dreamt that he kicked a lump of faeces near a river bank. The next morning, he looked extremely worried and told his wife that he was going to be ill. He said that in the process of crab-gathering, he must have been subject to *tenong* from the crab. Dreams associated with substances which are expelled from the body (faeces, blood, urine, perspiration, saliva, vomit and semen) are taken to be omen dreams. They predict misfortunes, and states of poor health. In contrast, dreams which relate activities connected with placing or adding things on the body, such as dressing, bathing, eating and drinking are said to predict events which are good.⁹

Omen birds include the bay-headed bee-eater, the fluffy-

⁹ The interpretation of dreams (*mamain*) is given much importance in the context of daily affairs. They are normally predictive of good or bad events and are seldom dismissed as of no consequence. In the context of illness, dreams enable a person to know if his or her illness has been the consequence of a spirit-attack. For example, a person may, during or after a bout of illness, obtain a dream with an inauspicious sign - combing lice away from one's hair, defecating or removing one's clothes. This will immediately lead them to think that the illness was caused by a humarl, plant or animal spirit rather than merely physical negligence or carelessness. The dreams of a close kinsman within the household (husband, wife, daughter, grandfather, grandmother, sibling) may also help one to explain the causes of one's illness.

backed babbler, the serpent eagle and the cliff-swallow (Table 3). The bay-headed bee eater and fluffy-backed babbler are night birds while the serpent eagle and cliff swallow are day birds. It is believed that when the day birds are heard at night, it is a sign that someone is going to be ill or severely injured. The night birds are an inauspicious sign when they are heard at night or during the day.¹⁰ The people who are afflicted after a warning of this kind are those who have already committed an offence against a plant or animal. The omen birds, then, warn the villagers of a coming physical misfortune rather than of a coming mystical attack. When they see or hear these day birds at night, or night birds during the day or night, it is also taken to be an inauspicious sign, and those who subsequently become ill will attribute the illness to a spirit-attack, and confirm it by referring to the incident of sighting or hearing one of these birds. It is important to note that those who hear these birds and then proceed to hunt, gather, or cultivate will explain any condition which subsequently develops in terms of *tenong* by a plant or animal spirit. They will argue that it is because they did not heed the warning that they subsequently fell ill or were injured. Usually, when one of these night birds or day birds is heard the villagers as a whole will be warned; they will know that they have aroused the wrath of certain spirits, and that if they continue to indulge in a particular economic activity, they will most likely fall ill or obtain an injury of some sort. Since no one actually knows who has been subjected to a spirit-attack until somebody falls ill or is injured, the tendency is to abstain from any kind of activity that may bring on a spirit-attack or illness.

Among the Ma' Betisék, augural birds indicate inauspicious rather than auspicious signs. However, if *pelimun* birds can be included in bird augury, they may be regarded as omen birds which predict the coming of good fortune. Indeed, if a *pelimun* bird is sighted or heard, the Ma' Betisék

¹⁰ In Malay bird augury, it is an inauspicious sign if certain day birds are heard at night or night birds heard during the day – a phenomenon which is regarded as unusual and ominous. However, among the Ma' Betisék, the sound of the night birds, the blue-throated bee-eater and fluffy-backed babbler are ominous even if they are heard at night.

believe that their nests are within reach, and in them will be found those magical sticks which bring good health and good fortune. The problem of classifying *pelimun* birds as omen birds is that it is not enough merely to sight or hear them to predict good fortune; one must also obtain the magical sticks in their nests in order to be sure that one will obtain good health and good fortune. It is important to note that omen birds are often discussed as though they are able in themselves to cause harm. This is misleading since they use metaphorical forms of speech in the context of augury. Generally, it may be said that in bird augury the Ma' Betisék associate certain birds with good health and good fortune and others with ill health and misfortune and that it is only the latter category which reinforces beliefs concerning the mystical powers of plants and animals.

Hua warnings may also take the form of unusual features or conditions of the environment. Generally, such features or conditions are noted only after certain offences have been attributed to the plant and animal world. Drifting logs which tend to clump together on the river are known as *lo' penyakit* or *lo' sakét*, terms which literally mean 'illness logs'. These are said to indicate an oncoming illness or injury caused by a spirit-attack. Again, thunderstorms and squalls, are interpreted as acts of *tenong* or spirit-attacks on persons who have committed offences against plants and animals. These thunderstorms cause great fear in the village and certain rites are immediately performed to counteract the mystical attack. Normally, an elder rushes out into the storm with a lock of hair and stabs at it with a black unsharpened knife referred to as *hau kanténg*. As the elder stabs the lock of hair on the ground, he calls out, 'O *moyang*, this is your grandchild, take it, let it be well, O *moyang*.' According to the Ma' Betisék, this act serves to pacify the spirits since it indicates that a ritual sacrifice has been performed. The stabbing of the lock of hair symbolically demonstrates the loss of human life. It is said that traditionally a person would be sacrificed but previous research done on these blood-sacrifices does not bear out this fact well. Studies of other aboriginal groups in Malaysia and Borneo have shown that while blood-sacrifices are performed during thunderstorms, they are not meant to

cause death. Needham (1964: 138), in his study of the Penan of Borneo observes that blood-sacrifices are performed during thunderstorms because of offences associated with the mockery of certain animals. The blood-sacrifice is meant to right such offences which probably occur quite frequently in Penan society. These blood-sacrifices are similarly performed by the Semang and Semai of Malaysia. Schebesta (1928: 252-3) describes a similar incident when a woman performed a blood-sacrifice during a thunderstorm, because she caused pain to a leech. Dentan (1968: 22) records that the Semai perform such blood sacrifices for a number of reasons, one of which is the mockery of animals. According to Dentan, acts amounting to the 'violation of the social order results in an upheaval in the natural order'. These acts include the violation of the incest taboo, food taboos and disrespect for humans and property.

Among the Ma' Betisék, thunderstorms and squalls are said to be caused by acts committed against the plant and animal world, where the mockery of animals constitutes one of these such offences. Animals which are particularly dangerous to mock are those which have unusually strong powers of *tenong*. These include the white-handed gibbon, the tiger, the dog and the skink. However, it was shown earlier that disrespect for elders and the mixing of food categories also bring on such thunderstorms or squalls. The important thing to note is that when thunderstorms do occur, they are normally explained in terms of offences committed against the plant and animal world.

The performance of the rite involving the stabbing of a lock of hair into the ground was said formerly to be accompanied by the rite of removing an ear or a portion of the ear of a person and letting the blood drip onto the ground. According to an informant, the person who performed this rite was someone who admitted committing an offence against a particular plant or animal. The ear (or a portion of the ear) and a lock of hair was cut off just when the storm began to gather. The person then rushed out into the storm and allowed the blood from the ear to drop on the ground. He or she then dropped the lock of hair beside the ear and stabbed at them with the *hau kanténg*. As the rite was

being performed, the words mentioned earlier were shouted out aloud. Here the blood-sacrifice symbolically expressed an act of human retribution; blood was associated with human life and human activity and the expulsion of blood expressed the loss of human life and the termination of human activity. The lock of hair was also a symbolic representation of human life and the act of stabbing it into the ground expressed an act of retribution. The black knife symbolized the presence of supernatural forces and the states of danger which they bring. The association of the expulsion of blood with the termination of human activity was reinforced by the *pantang* or prohibitions placed on any kind of physical activity during the thunderstorm. Men, women and children were prevented from eating, drinking, sleeping, talking, laughing and performing any kind of domestic activity in or around the house.

The phenomena of *mamba'* described earlier is also interpreted as a form of mystical attack from wandering human spirits and from the plant and animal world. It is described in terms of *hua*, in the sense that it is a warning or a sign that certain people are going to fall ill or be injured in some way. The moment the bright yellow hue appears in the atmosphere, after a rain storm just before sunset, the villagers run indoors and sit quietly till the light disappears. They refrain from all forms of physical activity in or around the house. Probably one of the reasons why the Ma' Betisék fear *mamba'* is because it is a very rare phenomenon. Furthermore, the bright yellow light is associated with the spiritual order; it indicates that the spiritual entities of the world have collectively expressed their wrath against humans. Significantly, the plants and trees are bathed in a similar colour and this also reinforces the belief that spiritual entities are present in the world. Other unusual types of natural phenomena are whirlwinds, circulating winds and rainfall occurring when the sun shines. These three conditions are explained in terms of mystical attacks from the plant and animal world. They predict the occurrence of illnesses and injuries in individuals who have harmed the plant and animal world in some way. They also serve to warn other individuals against committing similar offences on the plant and animal world. The Ma'

Betisék also refrain from performing any kind of physical activity during the time when these conditions last.

b) and c) *Sula'/hala'*, resulting from *tenong*

Generally, any illness or injury which is attributed to a plant or animal spirit is explained as an act of *tenong*. When the Ma' Betisék describe a case of spirit-attack, the name of the plant or animal is normally added to the word *tenong* so as to indicate the type of spirit-attack to which the person is subject. If a man gathers crab and later falls ill, he will be said to be afflicted by a *tenong ketab*, that is, a 'spirit-attack by a crab'. Similarly, if a woman cuts the leaves of the *nipah* palm for thatching and is injured while doing it, she will be said to be afflicted by a *tenong nipah* (spirit-attack from the *nipah* palm), if the injury does not heal after medicinal cures have been tried. However, a spirit-attack may simply be described in terms of *tenong moyang* or 'spirit-attack from an ancestral spirit'. Spirit-attacks which are said to be caused by human spirits are also described by this term.

While the term *tenong* refers to the infliction of a spirit-attack, the affliction itself is described in terms of *sula'* or *hala'*. These two terms should be distinguished from the Malay term *penyakit* which means illnesses. The Ma' Betisék used the term *sakét* to refer to illness in a general sense, but the terms *sula'* or *hala'* refer only to those forms of illness, including injuries, which are said to be caused by spirit-attacks. They usually make a distinction between *sula'/hala' ma'* and *sula'/hala' moyang*. The former refers to afflictions caused by human sorcery while the latter, those caused by spirit-attacks. It is only when a particular affliction does not respond to a line of treatment for a spirit-attack that it is explained in terms of *sula'/hala' ma'* or human sorcery. Acts of sorcery are usually said to be caused by outsiders. This upholds the *kemali'* view that humans are unable to subjugate spirits under their power and to command them to harm other individuals. It is important to note that the shaman's ability to subjugate certain plant, animal and human spirits is not in any way linked with sorcery.

d) *Bentan*

When a person undergoing treatment for a particular illness or injury breaks one of the *pantang* or ritual prohibitions associated with food or physical activity, any deterioration of the condition is explained in terms of *bentan*. A shaman who performs a series of seances is also subject to certain ritual prohibitions and if he or the patient break any of them, any deterioration in the condition of the patient is also explained in terms of *bentan*. States of *bentan* are also manifested in the *popoit*, a ritual for removing illness, performed by village elders. Both the patient and the elder who performs the cure may bring on a state of *bentan*.

The same ritual prohibitions apply to the patient, the shaman and the elder who performs the *popoit*. Activities relating to hunting, gathering, fishing and cultivating are all prohibited. These activities are said to make them more vulnerable to spirit-attacks from plants and animals. Also, the *pantang* specify that sharp or spiky objects such as knives, thorns, splinters and stones should not be handled or crossed over. This is related to the idea that sharp objects aggravate the illness or pain with which the person is afflicted. The foods which are prohibited are chillies, spices, salt and coconut-milk. The patient, shaman and the elder performing the *popoit* are also forbidden to eat food obtained from thorny plants, such as lemon and *nipah* shoots. These types of food are believed to be *pedih* ('pain giving') and *tajam* ('sharp'). Significantly, the taste of the food and the physical appearance of the plant are believed to have a direct physical effect on the person who eats them. Thus food with chillies, spice and salt are said to be 'pain-giving' since they have a distinctly pungent taste. Food obtained from trees with thorns, on the other hand, is supposed to aggravate the person's condition because they are associated with sharp objects.

A state of *bentan* reinforces the *kemali*' idea that humans who are afflicted with illnesses or injuries become more vulnerable to further spirit-attacks or *tenong* from plants, animals or human spirits. The state of *bentan* ends when the patient is eventually cured of the affliction. When this occurs, all *pantang* on economic activity and food are lifted and the

person carries on with his daily chores as before. It may be said that at any one moment in time, some villagers uphold the *tulah* view, while others uphold the *kemali'* view. As those who uphold *tulah* ideas obtain afflictions, explained in terms of spirit-attacks, they move from the *tulah* into the *kemali'* domain of experience, while those who are cured of their afflictions uphold *tulah* ideas once again. On a more general level of conceptualization, the Ma' Betisék maintain *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas contextually and in a mutually exclusive way. In situations of natural calamities *kemali'* ideas may be upheld by the villagers as a whole, including individuals who are actively engaged in economic tasks relating to hunting, gathering, fishing and cultivating. These individuals refrain from the performance of such activities till such a time as the calamity ends.

Ma' Betisék Myths

This discussion of Ma' Betisék mythology attempts to establish the relationship between myths of humans, plants and animals and the *tulah* and *kemali'* ideological view. The study is divided into two sections. The first section deals with Ma' Betisék myths of origin relating to the evolution of human life, the growth and expansion of the human population in the world and the origin of natural phenomena and other features of the environment. The second section concerns individual myths of plants and animals which are known to the Ma' Betisék. When the two sets of myths are analysed and compared, it is found that while the first set of myths contains mainly *kemali'* ideas, the second contains ideas which express both the *tulah* and *kemali'* view. The number of myths of individual plants and animals is too large for any kind of structural analysis to be undertaken but it is possible to discern *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas by reviewing the contents of these myths systematically.

MYTHS OF ORIGIN

Myths of origin of the Ma' Betisék express the idea that humans, plants, animals and other features of the environment are physically and mystically linked by the processes of life creation and rebirth. Plants are seen as originating from humans at an early stage in the process of human expansion on earth. More specifically, half the human population was magically converted to plants when land pressure prevented humans from expanding their physical abodes any further. Animals were sent down later, by Ma' Betisék ancestral spirits and made to live amongst the trees and plants. However, the continual maintenance of animal life on earth is directly dependent on the process of human rebirth when the souls of dead humans are transferred into the wombs of expectant female animals and are subsequently reborn as

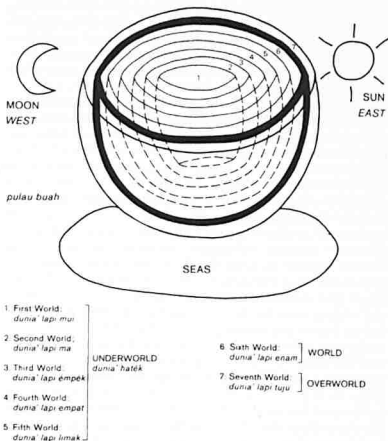
animals. Although the souls of the dead may be transformed into plants and inanimate objects such as water, stone, rock or sand, such forms of rebirth are less frequently manifested than those of animals.

It was shown earlier that the belief in the continuity between human, plant and animal life is given symbolic expression in anthropomorphic descriptions of plants and animals. Plants and animals are humanized and consequently subjected to the same ritual taboos which order relationships within the human world. Humans, by destroying plant and animal life, expose themselves to the same dangers as plants and animals faced when they subjected humans to the same kind of treatment. This is constantly expressed in the notion of *tenong* where plants and animals are seen to have the power to cause humans illnesses, misfortune and death when their very safety is threatened. It was explained earlier that although all plants and animals are endowed with *kemali'* properties, there are a number of plants and animals whose powers of spirit-attack are believed to be fatal to humans. The way in which this category of plants and animals is depicted on the mythological level is discussed in the second half of the chapter.

Myths of the creation of human life

The Ma' Betisék view the universe as an onion, containing seven layers, floating on a pool of water (Fig. 4). Each layer represents a world containing a particular form of life. These layers or worlds form a kind of life-progression scale. Starting from the innermost layer, the quality of life is said to improve with each successive layer. Humans occupy the sixth world. The first five worlds together form the underworld while the seventh world forms the overworld. The sun and the moon are located outside the seventh world or overworld. The skies form an expansive padding, separating the world from the overworld. Together, the underworld, world and overworld float on an expanse of water which constitutes the seas. Their positions are fixed and stationary, though the sun and moon move constantly. In the Ma' Betisék cosmos, the sun moves from east to west and the moon from west to east. The daily movement of the sun

Fig. 4. Ma' Betisék view of the cosmos



from east to west causes night and day. Human life is thought to be non-existent in the underworld. All five layers are infested with maggots and pests of the most dreaded sort. However, the incidence of squalor and disease is less in the fifth world, where maggots and pests are not found in such abundance, as they are in the first four worlds. In the fifth world, cannibalistic creatures resembling humans are also found. These creatures, called *kain*, do not practice Ma'

Betisék ancestral laws since they commit incest and eat up their kinsmen. Though animals and plants are found in the fifth world, they differ from those in the sixth by being incestuous and cannibalistic. The fifth world, then, lacks the human and non-human, culture and nature oppositions which are manifested in the sixth world. Generally, it is associated with all things which are 'natural' and which oppose or act contrary to culture.

In contradistinction to the underworld, the overworld is inhabited by human ancestral spirits which resemble humans except that they are transparent. These ancestral spirits, also referred to as *moyang*, are benevolent and free of all the weaknesses and failings which are manifested in humans in the world. Forms of social conflict such as economic or political competition are completely non-existent. In fact, the seventh world contains a way of life which is completely egalitarian, an ideal state which is said to occur if culture is practised without individual selfishness or greed. The seventh world represents the Ma' Betisék idealized notion of human life. It is significant that in the overworld, although plants and animals do exist, the human ancestral spirits do not exploit them in the same manner as humans do in this world. Plants and animals have similar rights and privileges as the *moyang*. Food which is already cooked appears on a tray the moment a *moyang*, plant or animal is hungry. The human ancestral spirits then do not hunt animals or gather plants or vegetables for food. In turn, plants and animals do not destroy human ancestral spirits or consume them as food. On the analytical level, the culture-nature opposition which is manifested in the world is not found in the overworld. Symbolically, then, the overworld represents all things which are common to culture in opposition to the underworld which represents all things common to nature. The world is symbolically ordered to mediate between these 'cultural' and 'natural' forms of life, found in the overworld and the underworld respectively. This appears to be a symbolic extension of the two opposing views which are upheld by the Ma' Betisék on the world level, namely, the opposition on the one hand and the unity on the other between humans and plants/animals, and on another concep-

tual level, the opposition and unity between the cultural and natural order.

The creation of human life is attributed to the benevolence of the original *moyang* called *tuhan*.¹ He had an assistant who was always lonely. One day, *tuhan's* assistant asked *tuhan* to provide him with a companion. *Tuhan* agreed to do so and told him to carve out from rock a figure in the shape of a man. His assistant did so and when the task was completed, went back to *tuhan* to tell him about it. *Tuhan* told him to extend his hands and placed in the palms of the assistant a small object which the latter could not see. Closing his palms over it, he said, 'On no account should you open your palms to see what the object is. Just bring it to the figure you have carved and place it over its head'. His assistant agreed to obey these instructions, thanked him and left. On the way, however, he was overcome with curiosity and took a peep at the object in his hands. He then proceeded along his way and when he reached the figure, placed his hands over its head. He waited but nothing happened. After a while, he became worried and ran back to *tuhan*. 'I did as you said but nothing happened', he said. *Tuhan* asked him, 'Did you peep to see what it was?' His assistant looked ashamed and replied, 'Yes, I did, but only for a while.' *Tuhan* was angry and said 'You should never have done that for what you carried in your hand was the *niawa*' ('life') of the figure you carved. When you opened your hand, it flew away, so of course the figure cannot come to life. You have lost your chance to get a companion.' Agitated, his assistant asked to be given a second chance. Finally *tuhan* gave in but said that this time, he would only loan him a companion and not give him a permanent one. Also, he gave instructions to his assistant to make a figure from earth rather than rock. When this was done, he extended the *niawa*' into the palms of his assistant and the latter ran back to the figure and placed his hands over its head. The figure immediately sprang to life. This was the

¹ The term *tuhan* also exists in the Malay language, meaning 'God' and in accordance with Islam, 'Allah, the Almighty'. In the Ma' Betisék language, however, it means, literally, 'that person', a polite and honorific way of referring to various plant, animal and human ancestral spirits, without disclosing their specific names.

first human to inhabit the world. Later, *tuhan* made another human, this time a woman. The two humans became lasting companions. After some time they had two offspring, a boy and a girl. It is said that the human population which subsequently inhabited the world was descended from these two.

According to the Ma' Betisék, they were the first people to inhabit the world, being the first-born of the two humans described in the myth. From the remaining offspring branched several groups of humans who, because of their travels to distant lands, ultimately forgot the Ma' Betisék language and developed languages of their own. These were, significantly, the Arabs and the Malays. Following the spread of the Arabs and Malays in the world, the Chinese began to occupy the regions in the north, particularly Indo-China. After them came the Indians and Africans. The last people to inhabit the world were the Europeans. These various ethnic groups are descended from the seven offspring of the original siblings. The myth describing the exploits and wanderings of the original siblings explains, also, the origin of natural phenomena found in the world.

In the early days, the world was devoid of land, water, fire, night and day. Similarly, animals and plants were not found anywhere, save maggots and pests which crept up the cracks on the earth's surface from the fifth world. Since there was no land to live on, the first-born siblings of the human race lived in a banana stem which was provided by *tuhan*. The water around them was not fresh or sea water, but oil. To keep themselves alive, they sealed up the banana stem and floated on the oil. Since food could not be found, they lived upon the juices of the banana stem and their faeces. However, as the days went by, the juices from the banana stem dried up. They became very thirsty and found the banana stem to be increasingly uncomfortable. Suddenly, they felt the banana stem hit upon something hard. 'We must have hit upon land', they said excitedly and climbed out. However, they soon saw that it was only the branch of a *jelutong* (*Ervatamia corymbosa*) tree. There was still no land in sight. Desperate, they pleaded with the *moyang* to help them. 'O *moyang*, give us some water to drink, we are thirsty', they said. *Tuhan*

replied, 'There is water around you, why don't you drink it?' 'It is oil', they replied. 'Try again', said *tuhan*. They tried it and immediately spat it out. It was oil. *Tuhan* laughed and changed it to water. The man and woman immediately quenched their thirst with the water from the sea. After a while, they felt cold and said, 'O *moyang*, why don't you give us some fire, we are cold.' *Tuhan* replied, 'Blow upon the *api'-api* flower' (*Avecennia intermedia*). They blew with all their might and after a while, the flower became a small fire. They were then able to warm themselves and felt very happy.

The man and his sister then waited for day and night but there appeared to be no sign of it. Finally, they called out to *tuhan*, 'O *moyang*, why don't you give us day and night?' *Tuhan* agreed to do so and with the *api'-api* flower in one hand and an egg in the other, told the boy to stick the objects in the sky. He was told to place the flower in the east and the egg in the west. The sky was very low in those days and the boy managed to reach it easily. However, the objects would not stick in the sky. They kept on falling out and, finally, feeling very frustrated, the boy said, 'O *moyang*, please do it for me, they would not stay in the sky.' *Tuhan* laughed and the moment he placed the flower and the egg in the sky, they remained there. The *api'-api* flower immediately became the sun and the egg the moon. After that, the couple were able to enjoy day and night. Since the sky was low, they found it to be extremely hot in the day-time. They complained to *tuhan* and he shifted it further up in the sky.

The man and his sister then asked for land. *Tuhan* agreed to give them land and sent down a *munia* bird to drop some mud in the water. *Tuhan* then asked them to step out of the stem, but the moment they did so their feet sank into the water. *Tuhan* sent the bird to fetch more mud, and when the layers of mud were sufficiently thick, the couple stepped out to test it once more. Though it was water-logged, they were able to walk on the mud with relative ease. They were very happy and called out to *tuhan*, 'Now that we can walk about quite easily, won't you give us some shade so that we may rest when we feel like it?' *Tuhan* called for the *cheep gunting* or peacock-pheasant (*Polypection malacensis*) and it flew to his

attendance. Tuhan asked it to drop some seeds in the mud. Soon little seedlings began to sprout out which in no time grew into shady trees.² The couple were able to lie under the trees away from the direct rays of the sun. As time went by, the mud advanced into the sea and portions of the sea became land. Food could be directly obtained upon request from their *moyang* in the overworld. Although *tuhan* later sent down animals to inhabit the forests and seas, these were not hunted since food could be obtained very easily from the *moyang*. The latter would lower trays of cooked food through the sky and humans had only to observe the taboo of not defecating in the trays, to enjoy this privilege. Unfortunately, some time later, a man broke this taboo and the privilege was removed forever. From that time onwards, humans had to grow their own food and hunt in the rivers and forests.

In this myth, plants are seen as originating from the overworld, with the help of the peacock pheasant. In another myth related to the Ma' Betisék, plants are seen as originating from humans. The two views are probably not contradictory since they appear to refer to different stages in their history of development and expansion. This myth describes how the human population expanded so fast that there was scarcely any land for the Ma' Betisék to live on or to grow their crops. They directly appealed to the *moyang* to help them get more land. However, the *moyang* replied that they could not give them more land but could solve their problem if half the human population became trees. They agreed to this, and immediately half of the population in the world was changed to trees. It is significant that the trees mentioned in the earlier myth are not recorded here, supporting the view that this myth probably refers to a later period in the expansion of the human population in the world.³

These myths of origin described so far, appear to be

² The Ma' Betisék identify four plants in this myth, *semelit* (*minik*), *keranting* (*seranting*), *nyarum* (*daong*) and *keredok* (*kerodo'*) (see Tables 2 and 8). These plants have one feature in common in that they are all shrubs or climbing plants. The Ma' Betisék believe that the first plants could not grow very tall and remained merely a few feet off the ground.

³ The trees associated with this myth are the 'bleeding trees' mentioned earlier, in Chapter 3.

concerned with the process of creating and ordering things linked to the natural order. Humans are included in this category of natural objects. They are created from earth and share a life of impermanence with plants and animals. Their existence in the world, like that of plant and trees, is made possible only by the direct intervention of supernatural forces from the overworld. Their continual presence in the world is also dependent on supernatural forces which guide the process of soul-transference (*kai-ai' mangat*) from one human to another. This will be more clearly understood if the relationship between the process of procreation and soul-transference is understood. Humans have three essential components – the body (*kerét*), the soul (*mangat*) and the life-force (*niawa'*). The body is derived from the human foetus which is formed as a direct result of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. In other words, the Ma' Betisék believe that pregnancy is the result of physiological factors alone. However, when a human foetus is formed, it contains no life (*niawa'*) and only obtains it when a *moyang* sends down a soul, through the winds or rains, to enter the womb of a pregnant woman. This implies that the life essence of the human, is derived from the soul. Death or the loss of life (*kebes*) is brought about by a permanent soul loss. The body then is created by the physiological process of procreation, but it obtains its life only after it acquires a soul through supernatural forces.

It is important to note that the process of soul-transference requires the use of two important elements of nature, the wind and rain. The types of winds which are generally associated with the process of soul-transference normally occur between the two monsoonal periods, namely the north east monsoon (*bua' utare*) which blows between October to March, and the south west monsoon (*bua' barat*) which blows between May to September. These are calm and variable winds which are generally accompanied by mild rain. Land and sea breezes are also associated with the process of soul-transference. Winds and rains experienced in between monsoonal periods which are stormy are not associated with the process of soul-transference but with the work of certain angry and vengeful spirits, particularly *moyang pohoit* ('thun-

derstorm spirit') and *moyang puting beliong* ('whirlwind spirit'). These two spirits are said to be instructed by certain plant and animal spirits to bring on the storms. The former invokes these storms when humans break certain taboos relating to respect for elders, the teasing of animals or the imitation of animal sounds. The latter may bring rain-bearing winds as an act of benevolence during periods of drought but may, if it chooses to do so, aid the thunderstorm spirit in punishing humans who have broken the taboos mentioned. Winds which are linked to the process of soul-transference are again differentiated from those associated with sorcery. Since the Ma' Betisék believe that sorcery is caused by outsiders casting spells in their villages, they argue that winds blowing from inland areas where Malay and Temuan communities are located, are the agents for the transference of these spells into their villages. These are generally local variational winds which occur on the mainland and which may be felt on the island from time to time. The general interpretation of winds according to source of origin and physical characteristics is illustrated in Table 4. It seems possible that the process of soul-transference is associated with calm rather than stormy or circulatory winds because it is seen to be a process which is regular and creative in opposition to sorcery or spirit-attacks which are viewed as irregular and destructive.

The idea expressed in the myth of origin that the human soul and human life are borrowed is also directly linked to the concept of rebirth (*gantik mangat*). Ideas of rebirth again demonstrate the continuity perceived between human, plant and animal life. Generally, only the souls of good humans are reborn as humans in the world. These humans have to be free from such vices as greed, ambition, physical abuse, violence and jealousy. Since such humans are rare, the majority of human souls are reborn as animals. Some may be reborn as plants and certain elements of nature, but these forms of rebirth are said to be less frequent.

The process of transformation of human souls to the souls of animals, plants and other objects of nature is complicated by the fact that humans possess multiple souls. Furthermore, these souls are manifested in different forms at various stages

TABLE 4 The interpretation of winds and rains in relation to soul-transference, spirit-attack and sorcery

<i>Type</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Local wind forms, land and sea breezes	Mild breezes and winds, moderate rain, intermittent showers	Soul-transference
Mainland, north	Local variational winds, heavy conventional rain accompanied by stormy winds, squalls	Human witchcraft from other communities
Monsoonal, south west, south	Stormy and violent rain bearing, whirlwinds, squalls	Spirit-attack from the thunderstorm spirit, whirlwind spirit and other plant and animal spirits.

of the life cycle of an individual. The human soul is at all times made up of the lazy soul and the energetic soul. These two souls are directly opposed to each other in characteristic and function. The lazy soul is associated with human frailties while the energetic soul is associated with human strength. They are symbolically represented in the shadows which humans cast in the day and night. The energetic soul is represented by the light shadows which are cast by humans in the day (*baya' putih*). The lazy soul in turn is symbolically linked to the dark human shadows which are cast on the walls by night (*baya' hitem* or *baya' balam*). During infancy, a person's energetic soul is said to comprise four sub-components, the feet soul (*mangat jo'*), hand soul (*mangat ti*), head soul (*mangat koi*) and the heart soul (*mangat geréh*). These soul components are not present in the lazy soul. This is mainly because it is the energetic soul rather than the lazy soul which protects the human body. However, since the soul components of the energetic soul are constantly subject to attacks from other spirits, they may leave the body

gradually. Consequently, by the time a person reaches adulthood, only the head soul remains. The lazy soul, on the other hand, constantly threatens to leave the body during adulthood. When a person contracts an illness, it is the lazy soul which first attempts to leave the body, making it more liable to attacks from other spirits. Because of this tendency, the lazy soul is said to aggravate illnesses which are caused by other spirits. Indeed, a human is in a constant state of danger of soul loss because of it. It is believed that such acts as teasing or playing with one's shadow at night would subject one to soul loss. The lazy soul takes offence and immediately leaves the body, returning only in the day. When this happens, the sub-component of the energetic soul, the head soul has to defend the body alone against illnesses and disease.

When the death occurs, this component of the energetic soul leaves the world after seven days. It then travels to *Pulau Buah*, the intermediary world between the sixth and the seventh world. On the way, some souls may be carried away by winds and rain and mystically enter pregnant women, pregnant animals and seedlings. Other energetic souls which make their way to *Pulau Buah* are prevented from entering it by human ancestral spirits who guard its entrance. These human ancestral spirits gather the energetic souls together and send them to *tuhan* who separates the better energetic souls from the others. These superior energetic souls are then allowed to enter *Pulau Buah* while the others are sent back to the world to be reborn as humans, plants and animals.

The superior energetic souls which enter *Pulau Buah* are put to several tests before they are allowed to remain there permanently. *Pulau Buah* is believed to contain a number of pathways which are treacherous. They are said to be covered with stones, sharp knives, fire and snakes. There are also a number of ancestral spirits who would waylay the energetic soul and try to lead it in the wrong direction. If the energetic soul manages to find the correct pathway, leading to the seven crossings, the seven lemon trees, the seven walls and the seven wells, it will qualify as an ancestral spirit. The energetic soul is first made to bathe in the seven wells. It is then led to a hut where it is made to choose a particular attire.

If the attire it chooses is the correct one, it is immediately transformed into a transparent human spirit.⁴

The lazy soul, however, does not leave the world after death. It prefers to live on, in the world, as a wandering human spirit. As explained earlier, these wandering human spirits are exactly like humans in form but are invisible to the human eye. Though their favourite abode is the mangroves and forests, they constantly wander into Ma' Betisék villages to join in the activities of humans there and to cause mischief and harm to those who annoy them.

It should be noted that though it is only the energetic soul which is reborn in humans, a lazy soul will naturally emerge from it, the moment the energetic soul enters the womb of a pregnant woman. Plants and animals are derived from the energetic soul but, as explained earlier, they are symbolically associated with the 'hard soul' (*mangat géhéék*) which is found in the lazy soul of humans and wandering human spirits. When a plant or animal dies, their souls may be recycled back into other plants and animals. It will be seen that Ma' Betisék ideas of rebirth express the close symbiotic links between humans, plants and animals. Since plant and animal souls are derived from human souls, the human order is symbolically integrated with the natural order. Significantly, Ma' Betisék theories of human origin, on the mythological level, and ideas of soul-transference and rebirth are symbolically interlinked. Here, no attempt is made to distinguish humans from plants and animals by cultural variables. Indeed, the only norms which are upheld appear to be concerned with the need to regard plants and animals in the same way as humans. In the context of *kemali* ideas, humans were originally devoid of culture. The ancestral laws became known to them at a much later stage in their history. The way in which humans were able to differentiate themselves

⁴ In order to become a transparent human spirit, the energetic soul should choose dully-coloured attire. If it chooses bright and glittering clothes, it will immediately be transformed into a snake or a butterfly. The journey to the hut where the clothes are kept is symbolically reinforced in the seance when the shaman's spirit-guides use the same pathway in *Pulau Buah* to descend to the scene of the seance. The symbolic significance of this journey and the emphasis on the numeral seven are discussed in Chapter 6. Significantly, the act of putting on the attire is symbolically associated with the way in which the shaman discards his own clothes and puts on a new set of clothes, after he is possessed by his spirit-guides.

from plants and animals is explained in the myth of *moyang melur*. This myth describes how the Ma' Betisék acquired their ancestral laws through theft and trickery, emphasizing the idea that humans were not originally intended to be separated from plants and animals by cultural norms.

Myth of the origin of culture

Moyang melur is a spirit who lives on the moon and who is believed to be half-human and half-tiger. Before *moyang melur* descended to the sixth world by pure accident, humans lived exactly like animals. There were no rules of marriage, incest or adultery. Murder and other kinds of atrocities were regularly committed by men and women. Humans were cannibals and thrived on human meat. The rules of human conduct and behaviour were closely guarded by *moyang melur* on the moon. Every night, he would peep down and watch humans commit incest, adultery and murder. Since he enjoyed watching humans behave in this particular way, he was careful not to disclose the rules of human conduct to them. He kept these rules in a bag under his sleeping mat, a place which he felt to be safe.

One night, as *moyang melur* peeped down at humans in the world, he leant out too far and fell out of the moon. He landed in the world where humans lived. He wandered into a forest and came across a hunter called *moyang kapir*. Anxious to return to the moon, *moyang melur* told *moyang kapir* that if he was not immediately sent back to the moon, he would destroy all humans in the world. *Moyang kapir* promised to send him back and flung a liana, which he had obtained from the forest, at the moon. He then assisted *moyang melur* up the liana and they soon reached the moon. There, they were greeted by *moyang melur's* wife, called *moyang engko'*. She invited *moyang kapir* to eat with them, but the latter soon realized that she intended to eat him instead. However, he agreed to join them at the meal and sat on *moyang melur's* sleeping-mat. He suddenly noticed the bag of rules under the sleeping-mat. When *moyang engko'* was busy pretending to cook the meal he grabbed the bag of rules under the mat and fled from the house. *Moyang melur* pursued him but he managed to escape down the liana. When he reached the

world again, he cut off the liana and told the people what had happened. He then distributed the rules among his kinsmen. His kinsmen learnt these rules very quickly and taught them to their children. From that time on, humans lived by rules and laws and were duly punished when they were broken.

In this myth, the rules which order the Ma' Betisék society are seen to be derived from supernatural rather than from human sources; the rules are obtained from the overworld rather than from the world. In the first part of the myth, objects of the world, humans, plants and animals are all conceived of as non-cultural while objects of the overworld are conceived of as cultural. Here, the myth expresses the conjunction between the human, plant and animal world. On another conceptual level, it expresses the opposition between the world and the overworld. The world/overworld opposition, however, is mediated by the theft of rules which eventually brings about the separation between the human world and the plant/animal world.

In the earlier myth of origin described, fire, shade, food and water were things which were requested rather than given to humans. The pair of siblings had to undergo suffering before these items were finally granted to them. Similarly here, Ma' Betisék rules of social organization were stolen from an ancestral spirit rather than given. It appears that these two myths express the idea that humans did not originally lead a life very different from animals, and that the cultural elements which are found in the human world are more a product of human choice and preference rather than a characteristic which is inherent in them.

The beginnings of culture in the human world coincides with the beginnings of illness and disease in the world. Illness and disease in the world are again said to have originated from *moyang melur*. When *moyang melur* was lost in the forest, he went in search of food and finally came across some *hélak chuai* or wild sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea*?). Since the roots of the plant were deep, he dug a deep hole. He fell in it by accident and landed in the fifth world. He was immediately eaten up by the cannibals known as *kain*, who inhabited the fifth world.

Moyang melur's brother, *moyang metang* went in search of

him in the forest. He came across the deep hole and realized that his brother must have fallen in. Very carefully, he extended a long liana into the hole and lowered himself into the fifth world. He came across one of the cannibals and asked him if he had seen his brother. The latter said that he had not, but invited him to stay with him and his family. *Moyang metang* agreed to do so and followed him to his dwelling. The cannibal then ran off and told the rest of the cannibals the good news that there was more human meat available. They decided to wait a week before eating *moyang metang* for they did not want him to suspect them immediately of being cannibals.

Meanwhile, *moyang metang* came across the skeleton of his brother. He quickly got hold of a sun lizard or *mengkaum* (*mabuya multifasciata*), cut off its tail and smoothed it into a soft skin. With it, he dug into the nose of *moyang melur*. The latter began to breathe again and was soon restored to life. The cannibals, by then, had discovered what had happened and ran after the two brothers. The brothers, however, managed to escape up the hole. Some of the pests, maggots and diseases which also took chase managed to climb up the hole, and although the brothers covered up the hole, these creatures managed to make their way to the sixth world. Hence today, the world is infested with diseases and illnesses of all sorts. Humans fall ill and die, mainly on account of these diseases which have come up from the fifth world.

The dualistic representation of *moyang melur* as the source of both rules of organization and disease is depicted in his physical appearance or form. As mentioned earlier, he is made out to be half a tiger and half a human. The human quality which he is seen to have is probably linked to the fact that rules of social organization are derived from him. His animalistic quality, on the other hand, is related to the idea that he is the source of disease and social discord which is created when diseases spread amongst humans. On another conceptual level, these creative and destructive qualities of *moyang melur* express the ideological conflicts apparent in *tulah* and *kemali* ideas. By acquiring culture, humans have managed to dissociate themselves from the natural world, a condition which readily justifies their physical exploitation of

plants and animals. This, however, renders them open to spirit-attacks from the natural world, subjecting them to misfortune and illness. The use of the tiger as a symbol of destruction is consistent with the notion of the tiger as an animal with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack. In the first part of the myth, *moyang melur* is depicted as a human. His animal qualities are disregarded and he is the preserver of rules of organization. These *kemali*' attributes of *moyang melur* are again expressed in his potentially mystical powers; he is seen as capable of destroying human life if his wish to return to the moon is not granted. However, when the myth describes the theft of the bag of rules, the animal or natural characteristics of *moyang melur* are emphasized. With the help of the bag or rules, humans are able to differentiate themselves from plants and animals in the world. Similarly, since *moyang melur* is now deprived of the bag of rules, he is no longer the preserver of rules of social organization and is placed in the same position as the animals in the world. Just as humans are set apart from animals in the world, so are they different from the tiger. Humans and tigers are symbolically differentiated from each other in the same way as culture and nature are opposed.

In the second half of the myth, *moyang melur* is associated with the origin of illnesses and death in the world. Here again, the *kemali*' attributes of *moyang melur* are emphasized, by showing how his follies bring on states of discordance in the human world. Here, the tiger is associated with the underworld and with diseases and death. This expresses the *kemali*' view that the natural world is equipped with mystical powers capable of destroying human life. Generally, then, the ideological contradiction between *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas is symbolically manifested in the way in which *moyang melur* manifests both human and animal qualities and behaviour which is both benevolent and destructive. The opposition and conjunction between the cultural and natural order and the overworld and world are expressed and resolved in processual terms. The myth starts off by describing the similarity between humans, plants and animals – a *kemali*' notion. It then attempts to make a distinction between the human and plant/animal world and the cultural and natural

order; a view which is essentially *tulah*. The separation of the human order from the natural order, however, has negative repercussions for animals bring humans disease and death. Conclusively, the end of the myth expresses a *kemali'* idea. The sequential arrangement of *kemali'*, *tulah* and again *kemali'* ideas in this myth symbolically manifests the way in which *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas are maintained in a mutually exclusive manner, on the ritual level.

MYTHS OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The study of individual plant and animal myths is divided into two parts. The first part deals with myths of animals and plants which are believed to have unusually strong powers of spirit-attack. The second deals with animals and plants to which are attributed normal powers of spirit-attack. It is hoped that by dividing the myths of individual plants and animals in this particular way, it may be possible to see if the unusually strong mystical powers which some plants and animals are believed to have are in any way expressed or manifested on the mythological level. More specifically, since these mystical powers are revealed, on the ritual level, in the context of *kemali'* ideas, this analytical exercise may help to determine the nature of the relationship between the conceptions of this category of plants and animals on the mythical, and ritual level.

Myths of animals with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack or tenong

Table 5 gives a list of animals including birds and insects which have appeared in Ma' Betisék myths and which are, in the context of *kemali'* ideas, attributed with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack or *tenong*. The Ma' Betisék believe that they have myths of every animal which is known to them, whether they are attributed with ordinary or unusual powers of spirit-attack. Consequently, when the myth of a particular animal which is known to them is not found, they argue that the myth has been forgotten, or that they had not bothered to obtain it from elders who have subsequently died.

Table 5 shows that a number of animals with unusually

TABLE 5 Animals with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack recorded in Ma' Betisék myths

<i>Name of animal</i>	<i>Myth</i>	<i>Physical abode in myth</i>
1.0 Tiger (a-a')	<i>moyang melur</i>	moon, forest
1.1	<i>moyang pongkol</i>	forest
1.2	<i>moyang tampang keladik</i>	forest
1.3	<i>moyang tenong jerat</i>	forest
1.4	<i>moyang sesak (yong)</i>	village
1.5	<i>moyang sawai</i>	mountain
1.6	<i>moyang Puteri' Gunong Lé dang</i>	mountain
1.7	<i>moyang boi</i>	village
2.0 Elephant (merat)	<i>moyang hulubalang gajah</i>	forest clearing
2.1	<i>moyang gajah</i>	forest clearing
2.2	<i>moyang badi gajah</i>	forest clearing
2.3	<i>moyang gajah lembéng</i>	forest clearing
3.0 Black-handed gibbon (siamang)	<i>moyang siamang tunggal</i>	forest
	<i>moyang siamang gantik</i>	forest
3.1 White-handed gibbon (témbo')	<i>moyang témbo'</i>	shore
3.2	<i>moyang mengidap</i>	forest
4.0 Green-crested lizard (jungkui)	<i>moyang jungkui</i>	forest
5.0 Skink; sun or yellow lizard (mengkaum)	<i>moyang mengkaum</i>	mangrove
6.0 Honey-bee (tebel)	<i>moyang tebel</i>	mangrove
6.1	<i>moyang awan</i>	forest
7.0 Night wasp (kawai)	<i>moyang kawai</i>	mangrove
8.0 Praying mantis (tado')	<i>moyang tado'</i>	rice-fields

TABLE 5 Animals with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack recorded in Ma' Betisék myths

<i>Name of animal</i>	<i>Myth</i>	<i>Physical abode in myth</i>
9.0 Black-headed munia (<i>e-èreit koi hitem</i>)	<i>moyang pipit</i>	rice-fields
9.1 White-headed munia (<i>e-èreit koi putih</i>)	<i>moyang pipit</i>	rice-fields
10.0 Serpent eagle (<i>elang kuwait</i>)	<i>moyang elang kuwait</i>	forest clearing
11.0 Bay-headed bee-eater (<i>onyo'</i>)	<i>moyang onyo'</i>	forest clearing
12.0 Fluffy-backed babbler (<i>pong-pong</i>)	<i>moyang pong-pong</i>	forest clearing
13.0 Emerald dove (<i>dekot</i>)	<i>moyang dekot</i>	mangrove
14.0 Dog (<i>chow</i>)	<i>moyang keléwét</i>	forest
	<i>moyang hapit</i>	forest
	<i>moyang chow asal</i>	village
	<i>moyang rotan bahai</i>	village
15.0 Mythical dragon (<i>naga'</i>)	<i>moyang miskin</i>	sea
	<i>moyang naga'</i>	forest
	<i>moyang rusa' maham</i>	forest
16.0 Mythical bleeding deer (<i>rusa' maham</i>)		

strong powers of *kemali'* appear in more than one myth. They are the tiger, elephant, black-handed gibbon, honey-bee, dog and mythical dragon. When the contents of the myths of each of these animals are analysed, it appears that both *tulah* and *kemali'* themes are depicted. Some myths emphasize the human qualities of these animals while others emphasize their non-human qualities. When the human qualities of these animals are emphasized, the animals are depicted as either originating from humans or as being benevolent towards humans – they are described as kind, dependable and concerned with helping humans in situations of misfortune or illness. When the non-human qualities of the

animals are emphasized, the myths depict the animals as greedy and grasping, constantly hungry for human meat and generally destructive in their attempts to assume human forms and to enter into matrimonial relationships with humans (see Appendices 4, 12 and 13). These two contrasting themes are clearly revealed in the tiger myths. While the myths of *moyang pongkol*, *moyang tampang keladik* and *moyang tenong jerat* (Appendices 3, 4 and 5) bring out the *tulah* theme, the myths of *moyang sesak*, *moyang sawai*, *moyang Puteri Gunong Lé dang* and *moyang boi* (Appendices 6, 7, 8 and 9) bring out the *kemali'* theme. From the total set of tiger myths presented, it will be seen that although the tiger is attributed with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack, in the *kemali'* context, it is, on the mythological level, associated with both *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas. This suggests that while one set of tiger myths reinforces activities associated with the exploitation of plants and animals as food, another set reinforces activities which are associated with the avoidance of plants and animals as food. Significantly, tiger myths which contain *tulah* themes are linked with the forest while those which contain *kemali'* themes are linked with the village and mountain. In the context of tiger myths, the two opposing ideas which are developed are symbolically brought out in two contrasting types of physical abodes – while the forest abode expresses the animal or non-human aspect of the tiger, the village and mountain abodes express the human aspects of the tiger. On another conceptual level, the village and forest are associated with the overworld while the mountain is associated with the world. The myth of *moyang melur*, which places an emphasis on activities which occur in the moon, the forest and the fifth world, expresses the overworld, world and underworld symbolic distinctions. It serves to mediate between these two sets of tiger myths. Generally, the tiger is mythically represented as an animal with both human and animal qualities. On a higher conceptual level, it may be argued that the way in which *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas are contained in two separate sets of myths allow the Ma' Betisék to use mythological evidence to reinforce ritual activities at different moments in time.

In the same way as the opposing *tulah* and *kemali'* themes

are revealed in tiger myths, so do they appear in the myths on elephants. The myths of *moyang lulubalang gajah*, *moyang gajah* and *moyang gajah lembéng* bear *kemali'* ideas while the myth of *moyang badi gajah* contains a *tulah* theme. The gibbon appears in four myths, two of which are associated with the black-handed gibbon and two with the white-handed gibbon. The myth of the *moyang siamang gantik* concerning the black-handed gibbon is given in Appendix 14. Here, it may be important to note that it is the black-handed gibbon which is linked with *tulah* ideas while the white-handed gibbon is linked with *kemali'* ideas (Appendix 15). This brings out the Ma' Betisék symbolism of colours that black is associated with misfortune and death while white is associated with spiritual or supernatural forces. Again, the dog is linked with the *kemali'* theme in the myths of *moyang kelewét* and *moyang chow asal*. However, in the myth of *moyang hapit*, it is neither linked with the *tulah* nor the *kemali'* theme. This myth merely shows the way in which flying-foxes are derived from the carcass of a dead dog (Appendix 16). The mythical dragon is linked with *tulah* ideas in the myth of *moyang miskin* and *moyang naga'* but with *kemali'* ideas in the myth of *moyang rotan bahai*. Thus these animals with unusually strong powers of mystical attack tend to depict both *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas on the mythological level. Again, as in the tiger myths, *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas are generally represented in different sets of myths; the same animals depict opposing qualities and forms of behaviour. Here, it may be seen that Ma' Betisék mythology is structurally related to the way in which their conceptualization of animals changes according to different experiences or situations. Myths expressing *tulah* ideas are conceptually linked to situations connected with the exploitation of plants and animals as food, whereas myths with *kemali'* ideas are linked to situations connected with the healing and curing of the sick. So far, the discussion has not shown the way in which the unusually strong powers of spirit-attack of these animals may be expressed on the mythological level. When the total list of animals is examined, it appears that 23 of the 35 myths recorded depict the animals to be benevolent and human-like in behaviour. This implies that while myths of animals with unusually strong powers of mystical attack

depict both *tulah* and *kemali*' themes, the majority of the myths represent the animals as benevolent and human-like in character and behaviour. Generally, it may be argued that animals which are in the *kemali*' context, attributed with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack, are on the mythological level conceived as benevolent rather than malevolent or destructive. The human aspect of animals which are emphasized in the context of illnesses, injuries and natural calamities is also expressed on the mythological level in animals which are believed to have unusually strong powers of *tenong*. On the mythological level, the tendency is to view animals which are thought to bring on fatal illnesses and death, in terms of the *kemali*' rather than the *tulah* view.

The physical abodes which these animals are associated with relate to these differences in their character. Animals which are benevolent, are generally associated with the mountain, village, rice-fields, forest clearings and mangroves. Among these various physical abodes, the mountain is symbolically linked with the overworld. The physical abodes which are normally associated with destructive animals are the forest and sea (or shore). It should also be noted that though the mangroves are, in these myths, linked to animals with benevolent qualities, they may also be associated with animals with destructive qualities, as will be shown later. This expresses the physical marginality of the mangrove zone which may be depicted as either a forest or a forest clearing. Furthermore, the details of the physical abodes in which the myths of animals are set are not always brought out clearly so that it is sometimes possible to give an approximate description of them.

Myths of plants with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack

As in the myths recorded of animals in Table 5, the list of myths of plants given in Table 6 does not cover the total range of plants with unusually strong powers of *kemali*'. With the exception of the rice plant, the *moyang bantut* plant and *terong duri*' plant, the majority of the plants appear in only one myth each.

The *gaharu*' and *kinchong* trees are depicted in the myth of *moyang pelangi*' (Appendix 17). Generally, it appears that

TABLE 6 Plants with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack recorded in Ma' Betisék myths

<i>Name of plant</i>	<i>Myth</i>	<i>Physical abode in myth</i>
1.0 Singgang (<i>singga'</i>)	<i>moyang tenong asal</i>	forest
2.0 Gaharu (<i>gaharu'</i>)	<i>moyang pelangi'</i>	forest
2.1 Anona(?) (<i>kinchong</i>)		
3.0 Keranting (<i>Seranting</i>)		
3.1 (?) (<i>Kerodo'</i>)	<i>moyang asal</i>	clearing
3.2 Nyarum (<i>daong</i>)		
3.3 Semelit (<i>minik</i>)		
4.0 Nipah palm (<i>nipah</i>)	<i>moyang nipah</i>	mangrove
5.0 Hill rice (<i>bé'</i>)	<i>moyang tenong tupat</i>	clearings
5.1	<i>moyang isayin</i>	rice-fields
6.0 Banana (<i>hentot</i>)	<i>moyang jantong</i>	village
7.0 Pumpkin (<i>tukal</i>)	<i>moyang tukal</i>	village
8.0 Durian or durio fruit (<i>dian</i>)	<i>moyang dian</i>	village
9.0 Betel-vine (<i>chamai</i>)	<i>moyang kalong</i>	village
10.0 Coconut (<i>niyor</i>)	<i>moyang niyor</i>	village
11.0 (?) (<i>moyang bantut</i>)	various myths of plants and animals	—
11.1 Terung pipit (<i>terong duri'</i>)	which were cursed	—

most of these plants and trees are mythically represented as benevolent, non-destructive and human-like in character and behaviour. However, the tendency to maintain *tulah* and *kemali'* ideas in separate sets of myths is not as clearly manifested here as in animal myths, particularly in the myths of the tiger. This is probably related to the fact that the Ma' Betisék tend to place more emphasis on animal myths, particularly on myths of the tiger, than on plant myths. Indeed, the total number of myths collected for animals with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack is approximately twice the number of those collected for plants with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack.

The myths of the banana (*moyang jantong*), pumpkin (*moyang tukal*) and durio fruit (*moyang dian*) do not have clearly defined *tulah* or *kemali*' themes. (See Appendices 18, 19 and 20). For example, the myth of *moyang jantong* describes how a man slept under a banana tree for seven days and seven nights and eventually changed into a banana tree. Subsequently, a human tried to slash it but was warned that if he did so, the banana tree would fruit only once in its lifetime. He did not heed the warning and chopped down the tree. When he did so, the tree changed into a human again and tried to kill him but the man uttered the *chinchang moyang bantut* curse and saved his life. However, from that day onwards, the banana tree had been a source of frustration to humans for it only bears fruit once in its life-time and there is never enough fruit to go around.

Similarly, the myth of *moyang tukal* describes how a man suffering from a state of *punan* was eventually converted into a pumpkin plant. The man was subsequently cursed to remain a pumpkin plant and never to be a human again. The *punan* state which the man was suffering from is based on the idea that humans who suffer from certain states of deprivation expose themselves to mystical attacks from human, plant and animal spirits. In the case of humans suffering from *punan* states, the retribution is expressed in their mystical conversion to plants and animals. The *punan* concept is again brought out in the myth of the *durio* tree. Similarly, the tree is cursed to retain its essentially plant form and not to assume the human form again. It is interesting that *punan* themes have the effect of blurring the distinctions made between *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas. Although all myths with *punan* themes contain a *tulah* curse, these myths refer to plants and animals with human origins. However, these plants and animals do not have unusually strong powers of *kemali*' despite their anthropomorphic qualities.

It may be important to note that plants which are ritually important, such as the betel-vine, coconut, *nipah* palm, *moyang bantut* plant and *terong duri*' have *kemali*' themes. More specifically, plants which are used in ceremonies concerned with the healing and curing of the sick are mythologically represented as beneficial to humans. In the same way, a

relationship may be seen between their unusually strong powers of spirit-attack and their ritual importance in the *kemali'* context. Consequently, the emphasis given to their benevolent and human-like qualities on the mythological level is related to the idea that they subject humans to fatal forms of injuries and death when they are exploited for food or destroyed in any way.

When the physical abodes of which these plants with unusually strong powers of spirit-attacks are compared, a significant difference is seen between those which contain *kemali'* ideas and those with *tulah* ideas. The myth of *moyang pelangi'* associates the *gaharu'* and *kinchong* with the forest. However, myths of plants like the betel-vine and the coconut link them to the village domain. Other myths with *kemali'* themes such as the *moyang asal* and the *moyang tenong tupat* are associated with clearings and rice-fields respectively. Similarly, trees like the *seranting*, *kerodo'*, *daong* and *minik* are linked with cleared forest areas outside the village, while the rice plant is linked with cultivated land outside the village. Generally, plants and trees with *tulah* ideas are associated with the forest domain, while those with *kemali'* ideas are associated with the village or parts of the forest which have been subjected to human activity, that is, cleared or cultivated by humans.

It was shown that animals and plants with unusually strong powers of mystical attack are generally, on the mythological level, represented as benevolent to humans and human-like in character and behaviour. There are, however, a number of Ma' Betisék myths of plants and animals where it is not so much *kemali'* but *tulah* characteristics which are expressed. These myths concern plants and animals which are not thought to have unusually strong powers of mystical attack, but which, in the *kemali'* context, are believed to be capable of subjecting humans to spirit-attacks, leading on to illnesses and injuries of various sorts.

Other animals mythically depicted as cursed by humans

These animals are each associated with only one myth. In the list of thirty-five animal myths provided in Table 7 twenty-five depict a *tulah* theme. They are presented as

TABLE 7 Other animals which appear in Ma' Betisék myths

<i>Name of animal</i>	<i>Myth</i>	<i>Physical abode in myth</i>
1.0 Monitor lizard (<i>giyang</i>) (<i>Varanus salvator</i>)	<i>moyang bijawak</i>	forest
1.1	<i>moyang chicha' kubin</i>	forest
2.0 Honey-bear (<i>buang</i>) (<i>Ursus malayanus</i> , <i>Raffles</i>)	<i>moyang buang</i>	forest
3.0 Frog (<i>katak bentong</i>) (<i>Bufo melanostictus?</i>)	<i>moyang kata'</i> <i>bentong</i>	forest
4.0 House-rat (<i>kane' du'</i>) (<i>Rattus rattus</i>)	<i>moyang tikus paneh</i>	village
4.1 Bamboo-rat (<i>kane' di'</i>) (<i>t. robustula</i>)	<i>moyang dekan</i>	forest
5.0 Bat (<i>lang kuwait</i>) (<i>Rhinolophus</i>)	<i>moyang lang kuwait</i>	forest
5.1 Flying-fox (<i>hapit</i>) (<i>Pteropus edulis</i> , <i>Geoffrey</i>)	<i>moyang hapit</i>	forest
6.0 Goat (<i>kambing</i>) (<i>Capra hircus</i> , Linn)	<i>moyang kambing</i>	forest
7.0 Cow (<i>lembu</i>) (<i>Bos indicus</i>)	<i>moyang lembu</i>	village and forest
8.0 Deer (<i>pandok</i>) (<i>Tragulus</i>)	<i>moyang pandok</i>	forest
9.0 Striped squirrel (<i>tupai belang</i>) (<i>Callosciurus</i> <i>mccllellandi?</i>)	<i>moyang tupai belang</i>	forest
10.0 Wild boar (<i>ketu</i>) (<i>Sus cristatus</i>)	<i>moyang ketu</i>	forest
11.0 White ants (<i>anai</i>) (<i>Lacessiti termes</i>)	<i>moyang anai</i>	forest
12.0 Cicada (<i>gaya'</i>) (<i>Pomponia</i> <i>imperatoria</i>)	<i>moyang gaya'</i>	forest

TABLE 7 Other animals which appear in Ma' Betisék myths

<i>Name of animal</i>	<i>Myth</i>	<i>Physical abode in myth</i>
13.0 Cricket (<i>geret</i>) (<i>Brachytrypes portentosus</i> , Licht)	<i>moyang geret</i>	forest
14.0 Tortoise (<i>yoh</i>) (<i>Batagur baska</i> , Gray)	<i>moyang yoh</i>	forest
15.0 Python (<i>telon</i>) (<i>Python reticulatus</i>)	<i>moyang miskin</i>	forest and village
16.0 Great-eared nightjar (<i>cheep tibau</i>) (<i>Eurostopodus temminckii</i>)	<i>moyang tibau</i>	forest
16.1 Large crow-pheasant (<i>cheep bo'</i>) (<i>Centropus sinensis eurycercus</i>)	<i>moyang bo'</i>	forest
16.2 Hornbill (<i>cheep engang</i>) (<i>Aceros</i>)	<i>moyang engang</i>	mangrove
16.3 Heron (<i>cheep jangau</i>) (<i>Ardea</i>)	<i>moyang jangau</i>	forest
17.0 Crocodile (<i>baya'</i>) (<i>Crocodylus</i> , Gronov)	<i>moyang baya'</i>	mangrove
18.0 Ray (<i>ka pari'</i>) (<i>Trygon</i>)	<i>moyang ka pari'</i>	sea
18.1 Mud fish (<i>ka tembakul</i>) (<i>Periophthalmus</i>)	<i>moyang ka tembakul</i>	mangrove
18.2 Grouper fish (<i>ka hapo'</i>) (<i>Epinephelus</i>)	<i>moyang hapo'</i>	sea
18.3 Dugong (<i>ka duyung</i>) (<i>Halicore dugong</i> , Illiger)	<i>moyang ka duyung</i>	sea
19.0 Mud lobster (<i>ketab gedeng</i>) (<i>Thalassina anomala</i>)	<i>moyang ketab gedeng</i>	mangrove

<i>Name of animal</i>	<i>Myth</i>	<i>Physical abode in myth</i>
20.0 Sea prawn (<i>hudang kerteh</i>) (<i>Palaemon</i>)	<i>moyang hudang kerteh</i>	sea
21.0 King crab (<i>ketab belangkas</i>) (<i>Limulus</i> or <i>Tachypleus</i>)	<i>moyang ketab belangkas</i>	shore
21.1 Ghost crab (<i>ketab tipak</i>) (<i>Sesarma</i>)	<i>moyang ketab tipa'</i>	shore
21.2 Calling crab (<i>ketab impai</i>) (<i>Uca manii</i>)	<i>moyang ketab impai</i>	shore
22.0 Cockle (<i>kerang</i>) (<i>Anardara granosa</i>)	<i>moyang kerang</i>	shore
22.1 Mollusc (<i>lokan</i>) (<i>Polymesoda</i>)	<i>moyang lokan</i>	shore
22.2 Mollusc (<i>kepah</i>) (<i>Meretrix</i>)	<i>moyang kepah</i>	shore

destructive and malevolent to humans. Again, the themes of these myths express the *tulah* notion of plants and animals; they attempt to consume humans as food or annihilate them by assuming human forms so that their true identities may be concealed. Because of their destructive nature, they were cursed by humans to remain plants and animals and never to assume the human form again. This has enabled humans to distinguish themselves physically from plants and animals and to exploit them as food.

Animals which are mythically conceived as destructive include a number of important game animals. These are the monitor lizard, the bamboo rat, the bat, the flying-fox, the deer, the wild boar, the tortoise, the great-eared nightjar, the crow, pheasant and the heron. It should be noted that the birds in this category, the great-eared nightjar, the crow pheasant and the heron are not omen birds which warn the villagers of an oncoming misfortune or illness. Conse-

quently, unlike omen birds which are conceived as benevolent, these birds are depicted as destructive. For example, the myth of the great-eared nightjar (Appendix 21) describes how a man became a great-eared nightjar because he was lazy and would sleep during the day. Subsequently, he flew away to take vengeance on humans. The myth of the crow pheasant similarly describes how the bird changed its appearance into a tiger when it wanted to attack humans (Appendix 22). A domestic animal which is depicted as destructive is the goat. A number of fishes and shell-fishes are also mythically represented as destructive to humans. These are the ray fish, the mud lobster, the ghost crab, the cockle and the mollusc. All these are popular types of food. The Ma' Betisék regularly gather these various species of sea food which constitute an important part of their daily food intake.

A number of the animals recorded in Table 7 do not have clearly defined *tulah* or *kemali* themes. Again, in this ambivalent category, the *punan* theme is brought out, where the animals are mythically depicted as being human in origin. Men or women who have suffered from states of *punan* are subsequently transformed into animals then cursed, to ensure that they did not assume the human form again. Though this expresses the notion of *tulah* that human life has to be physically set apart from animal life, the idea that these animals initially attempted to destroy humans is not brought out. These animals which are believed to be derived from humans suffering from *punan* states include the cow, the striped squirrel, the hornbill, the crocodile, the sea prawn, the mud-fish, the dugong, the grouper fish, the king crab and the calling crab. Significantly, these different varieties of fish and shell-fish are also regularly sought by the Ma' Betisék as food. It appears that although some myths bring out the *kemali* aspects of animals, the majority are concerned with emphasizing their *tulah* aspects. Generally it may be argued that there appears to be a tendency for popular game animals and shell-fish to be mythically depicted as destructive rather than benevolent to humans. Animals which are derived from humans in *punan* states are not conceived as benevolent to humans. Although they are of human origin, they are believed to be potentially destructive to humans. This sets

them apart from other animals which are of human origin but which are mythically represented as benevolent (see the tiger in Items 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 1.7; and the white-handed gibbon in Items 3.1; 3.2; in Table 5).

The only animal myth with a *kemali* theme is the myth of *moyang miskin* which describes how the python gave certain magical objects to a human who had been benevolent to him (Appendix 23). In the myth, the python is symbolically humanized by its integration into social institutions like the family and marriage. Its integration into the human world is made permanent when it loses its animal form for that of a young man. The magical properties of the python are manifested by the knife and the yellow cloth which it presents to the old man, both of which destroy the dragon which is endowed with characteristics which are destructive to humans. It may be important to note here that yellow is a colour associated with things which are sacred or supernatural. The python is mythically linked to the world and the underworld. Generally, then, the *pelimum* property of the python is associated with positive rather than negative forms of supernatural power.

It should be noted that with the exception of the myth of the house rat (*moyang kane* in Item 4, Table 7), the animal myths in Table 7 are associated with the forest, mangrove and shore rather than the village or cleared and cultivated areas of the forest. This again reinforces the *tulah* theme in the animal myths, that animals which are destructive are from the wild. The house rat is associated with the village mainly to differentiate it from other varieties of rats whose activities are mainly focussed in the forest. In this myth, the house rat attempts to have sexual intercourse with a woman by pressing its rear end against a hole in the floor (Appendix 24). This event can only occur within the confines of a house which has a basement where rice is stored and where house rats are normally found. The myth of *moyang lembu* (Item 7) occurs in both the forest and the village. The human eats grass at the forest edges and turns into a cow when it reaches the village. The dualistic representation of the physical abodes of the cow is related to the fact that the cow is the only domesticated animal which is associated with *punan*

states. Again, the myth associated with the python (*moyang miskin*) is set in both the forest and the village. This expresses the *pelimun* characteristic of the python, as an animal which is hunted not for its meat but for its magical stone.

Other plants which appear in Ma' Betisék myths

The majority of plants which do not possess unusually strong powers of spirit-attack are associated with *tulah* ideas. These include the *keludang*, the *jure* bean plant, the *pakuk* fern, the *tampang kayuk*, the wild sweet potato (*hélak kejél*), the Ipoh and the wild ginger. Those with no clearly defined *tulah* or *kemali'* theme include the *ara*, the bamboo, the sugar-cane and the *kelubi*. With the exception of the Ipoh plant (Table 8, Item 10.0) which is used as a dart poison for the hunting of game, and the *ara* Table 8, Item 1.0) which is used for wood-carving, the roots, shoots and fruits of these plants and trees are regularly gathered for food. Of these plants and trees which appear in the myth, only the sugar-cane and bean plant are cultivated. The rest of the plants and trees are wild. Generally, it appears that plants and trees with a utilitarian value are mythically depicted as destructive rather than benevolent to humans. These plants and trees have also been subjected to a curse which enables humans to exploit them for food and other kinds of economic uses. Furthermore, with the exception of the bamboo and sugar-cane, the rest of the plants and trees are mythically associated with the wild – the forest or mangrove domain.

The way in which plants and trees with destructive qualities are linked with the wild reinforces the *tulah* aspects of these plants. Generally, the myths of plants and trees with no clearly defined *tulah* and *kemali'* themes are, like those animal myths in Table 7, linked to humans suffering from *punan* states. Myths which contain *punan* themes do not depict the plant and trees as destructive but rather potentially destructive. As in animal myths containing *punan* themes, these plants and animals are not conceived as benevolent or beneficial to humans. The physical abodes with which these plants and trees are associated do not reinforce *tulah* and *kemali'* characteristics in any significant way. For example, the *ara* tree is symbolically linked with the forest, the

TABLE 8 Other plants which appear in Ma' Betisék myths

<i>Name of animal</i>	<i>Myth</i>	<i>Physical abode in myth</i>
1.0 Ara (<i>are</i>) (<i>Ficus</i>)	<i>moyang are</i>	forest
2.0 Bamboo (<i>di'</i>) (<i>Bambusa</i>)	<i>moyang engong</i>	clearing
3.0 Keludang (<i>keludang</i>) (<i>Artocarpus lanceifolia</i> , Roxb)	<i>moyang tewa'</i>	forest
4.0 Sugar-cane (<i>boi</i>) (<i>Saccharum officinarum</i> , Linn)	<i>moyang boi</i>	clearing
5.0 Bean plant (<i>kachang jure</i>)	<i>moyang kachang jure</i>	forest
6.0 Pakuk fern (<i>tau' pakuk</i>) (<i>Aspidium</i> , Swartz)	<i>moyang tau' pakuk</i>	forest
7.0 Tampang kayuk (<i>tampang kayuk</i>) (<i>Artocarpus lakoocha</i> , Roxb.)	<i>moyang tampang kayuk</i>	forest
8.0 Kelubi (<i>kubi'</i>) (<i>Zalacca conferta</i> , Griff)	<i>moyang kubi'</i>	mangroves
9.0 Wild sweet potato (<i>hélak kejél</i>) (<i>Ipomoea digitata</i> , Linn?)	<i>moyang hélak kejél</i>	forest
10.0 Ipoh (<i>chéh</i>) (<i>Strychnos</i>)	<i>moyang chéh</i>	forest
11.0 Wild ginger (<i>tepes gantung</i>) (<i>Zingiber spectabile?</i>)	<i>moyang tepes gantung</i>	forest

bamboo and sugar-cane plant are with clearings areas in the forest and the *kelubi* tree with the forest.

This analysis of Ma' Betisék myths is an attempt to see if *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas are expressed on the mythological level. Also, the study was made to see if the way in which *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas operate on the ritual level is also borne out on the mythological level. More specifically, since *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas are contained within different sets of ritual activity, an attempt was made to see if the myths of plants and animals were also similarly contained in two sets, one reflecting the *tulah* conceptual view and another the *kemali*' conceptual view. In this study, when a particular plant or animal is associated with more than one myth, each of the myths were analysed to see if *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas were expressed in different myths of the same plant or animal. Another important aspect of the study is an analysis of the way in which plants and animals with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack are described on the mythological level, and if their mythical depiction is significantly different from those of other plants and animals which are not attributed with these unusually strong powers of spirit-attack.

Generally, it was found that myths of origin, in which certain plants and animals appear, tend to manifest *kemali*' ideas more strongly than *tulah* ideas. Myths of individual plants and animals tend to contain both *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas. However, it was found that myths of plants and animals with unusually strong powers of spirit-attack tend to reveal *kemali*' ideas more frequently than *tulah* ideas. Here, when a particular plant or animal is associated with more than one myth, the themes of the myths are not consistently uniform. The analysis of tiger myths for example, shows that while *tulah* ideas are dominant in some myths, *kemali*' ideas are dominant in others. When such myths are viewed in terms of the different domains of experience, it is possible to isolate the appropriate theme to suit a particular domain without causing apparent contradictions in the mythical conception of the plant or animal. Thus, while some plants and animals have two sets of myths, each of which are ideologically opposed, others have only one myth within

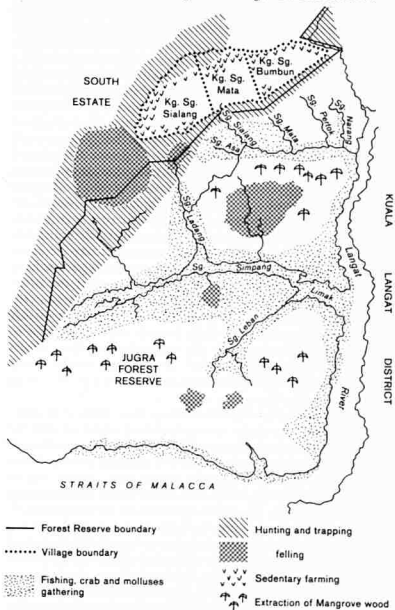
which the ideological oppositions exist. Generally, it may be argued that *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas are expressed on the mythological level within an individual myth or within a set of myths. The way in which these ideas are structured within a myth or within different sets of myths corresponds to the way in which the Ma' Betisék maintain *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas in two separate domains of experience.

Plants and animals which do not have unusually strong powers of spirit-attack tend more often to manifest *tulah* ideas. Since the majority of these plants and animals are popular types of food which are regularly sought by the Ma' Betisék, it may be possible to argue that the exploitation of plant and animal resources is strongly reinforced by mythical explanations of their destructive qualities; the idea that they have been cursed to make them different from humans in form and function. In this context though the kind of activity which humans perform is destructive, it is plants and animals which are mythically depicted as destructive. In the context of illness and suffering, plants and animals rather than humans are destructive since they inflict them with mystical attacks. However, plants and animals are mythically depicted as benevolent and human-like while humans are said to be destructive. It appears that mythical explanations of the character and nature of plants and animals are designed to resolve the problems which are contained in different domains of experience, in contextual terms. This will be more clearly revealed in the following chapter when, in the context of the performance of economic activities, the Ma' Betisék are seen to conceive plants and animals in terms of food categories. The conceptual view that plants and animals are food for humans is also extended to the category of plants and animals which are mythically depicted as human-like and benevolent.

The Economy of the Ma' Betisék and its Relationship to *Tulah* Beliefs

In the Carey Island region, the Ma' Betisék are almost completely dependent for their livelihood on the environment in which they live. The nature of their economic activities manifests the regular utilization of the physical and natural resources around them. The mangrove environment allows them to maintain a highly diversified economy orientated around sedentary agriculture, hunting, gathering and fishing. Hunting and gathering activities are very varied and range from the exploitation of animal and forest products in the lowland rainforests and mangroves to the gathering of crustaceans and shellfish along the estuarine areas and mudflats beyond the mangrove belt (Map 2). The Ma' Betisék make little attempt to specialize in these economic activities and prefer to occupy themselves in as many activities as they can. The majority are physically mobile and move from one area to another, within and outside the village. For this reason, the Ma' Betisék organize their time in such a way that those occupations which are considered to be most important and viable can be attended to in the most efficient manner. Therefore, few economic activities are practised every day. The majority of the men shift from one to another and in a week, a number of varied tasks have been carried out. At certain times of the year the pattern of economic activity described is modified to coincide with the crab-gathering season, the planting, harvesting and threshing of rice and the harvesting of the *durio* fruit. During these periods, the pattern of distribution of time between the various economic occupations changes significantly. A number of economic activities are neglected to enable men and women to perform

Map 2. Sketch map showing the pattern of economic activities of the Ma' Betisek of the villages of Sialang, Mata and Bumbun



those which are immediately necessary or important. The following discussion of the economic activities of the Ma' Betisek attempts to show how the economic system and the *tulah* ideology reinforce one another.

RICE CULTIVATION

The cultivation of hill padi involves all the members of the household in a number of corporate tasks from the period of planting to harvesting. In the early stages of burning and clearing the ricefields, the working party may be made up of a number of households forming an ad hoc co-operative group for the necessary period. The fields are slashed and burnt by the men. This may take place at any time of the year but it is generally at the end of the rainy season in August. During this month, the men from a few households get together under the informal leadership of an elder from one of the households. These groups do not normally constitute more than five men and though the men may be close kinsmen or cognates, it does not mean that such groups have to be formed on kinship principles. Indeed, they are often based on neighbourly ties even when they do not coincide with close kinship ties. The men work on each other's fields jointly, spending between three to four days in each field. Once the task is completed, the group breaks up until the same kind of help is again needed. Even when a similar group is formed in the future, the same individuals may not be in the group.

The period of slashing and burning may take up to three weeks, depending on the amount of help obtained and the weather conditions. In August it is generally dry, facilitating the task of burning and clearing away the long grass and tree stumps. This work may take about two weeks but if interrupted by heavy rainfall, can take a longer time. Hoeing is normally done by the female members of the household. A wooden stick is used to dig the holes in the ground and rice seed, set aside from the previous harvest, is placed in each of the holes prepared. The task of hoeing and sowing may be completed within a few days. Once it is done, the fields are left unattended, except for the occasional weeding.

The rice begins to ripen approximately five months after

planting. If planting begins in September, by February the women are occupied in the task of guarding the rice against pests, particularly munia birds and rats. These not only eat the rice grain but also reduce the yield by a significant proportion. During this period, the household may shift into a little hut constructed in the middle of the ricefield. This is done mainly to ensure that the crop is guarded more efficiently. Cooking items, bedding and clothing are brought to the hut for the duration of the period. When the harvest begins, some members of the household may move back to the house to guard the grain while the rest stay in the hut. On the whole, the length of time a household spends in the hut is approximately one month from the time the rice grain begins to appear to the end of the harvesting season.

Once the harvesting is completed, the women use a sharp bamboo stick to shred the rice grains from the stalk. The grains are first roasted and then pounded in a wooden mortar. These tasks may all be performed in the fields so that the rice need not be carried back to the house every day. The rice is winnowed by pouring the grains onto a winnowing tray made from bamboo. It is then poured into large bamboo baskets and stored in the kitchen or a backroom. The fields are left to fallow for the rest of the year. A system of shifting cultivation is practised and the fields are cultivated to bear about three crops. They are then abandoned for a period of three to four years. During this time, adjacent fields which have been previously abandoned are cleared and recultivated.

The increasing shortage of land in the village has prevented this system from working as efficiently as it should. The increasing number of households over the past years have created a shortage of rice fields. The extension of the existing ricefields invariably results in an encroachment on estate and government forest reserves. Increasingly, some households wait only a year before cultivating the same plot of land again. During the time when rice is not planted, it is bought from the local shops on the island and mainland. When they cannot afford to do so, they supplement their diet with cassava and yam. Horticulture, particularly the cultivation of cassava, yam, sweet-potato and sugar-cane, is given greater importance when rice is not planted.

Activities centred around the cultivation of rice are governed by beliefs surrounding the notion of *tulah*. In this context, it is not so much the threat of intervention from supernatural forces which seems to influence the nature of the ritual activity performed as the idea that ritual activity will allow or enable supernatural forces to aid humans in the production of food. Indeed, the Ma' Betisék constantly refer to the acts of production and utilization of plant resources as correct and necessary rather than mystically dangerous. Here, the Ma' Betisék attitude towards land is that it was given to their ancestors to be cultivated. In cultivation, what is important is not so much the particular set of *pantang* or ritual prohibitions which set out to propitiate plant, animal and human spirits as those which help to ensure the success of the production.

The ritual prohibition associated with rice farming in the different stages of clearing, cultivating and harvesting, has the function of controlling the natural or physical forces in such a way as to ensure optimal conditions for production and utilization. A number of these prohibitions are concerned with the way in which the rice grains should be protected from pests. The Ma' Betisék symbolically associate the dragging of sugar-cane stems along the village paths with rats dragging rice stalks from the fields. Thus a taboo is placed on eating sugar-cane on village footpaths during the period when the rice grains are ripening. Another ritual prohibition concerns the way in which munia birds are scared away from the ricefields. One should not wave one's hand or use a cloth to frighten the birds away. One should also not hit the walls of the attap hut to frighten the birds. The Ma' Betisék believe that these forms of behaviour will make the birds all the more determined to stay in the fields and eat the grain. The correct procedure is to pull at the long strings attached to the edges of the attap hut in the middle of the field. These connect to other strings and rattan poles which encircle the fields and make it an effective form of protection against the birds. According to the Ma' Betisék, the act of pulling at the strings makes the birds realize that they are encroaching on human territory and forces them to move to another area. This belief is related to the myth of origin of the

siblings on Tahan mountain described in the previous chapter. It may be recalled that in the early days when there was no land yet available on earth, the munia bird brought land to the Ma' Betisek ancestors under the directions of the original ancestor, *tuhan*. However, its charitable act was not acknowledged nor rewarded by *tuhan*. For this reason it collects its dues by flying into ricefields and carrying away the grains. Even if humans shout or wave at them, they will not be frightened off. They will only keep away from the ricefields if they are reminded of the fact that the land was originally created for humans to live on and to exploit. The strings round the ricefields symbolically show that the ricefields are owned by humans and are part of human territory. It also has the effect of separating the physical domain of humans from that of animals.

RICE HARVEST CEREMONIES

The rice harvest festivities express the same symbolic distinctions between the human and the animal order. In these festivities, animals are conceived as spirits but they are symbolically set apart from humans. On one conceptual level, the human world is separated from the plant and animal world by the idea that plants are a part of human food resources and that animals have no right to procure them as food. On another conceptual level, the human world is set apart from the plant and animal world by the idea that the latter are spiritual entities and different from humans in form and behaviour. Here, the supernatural order is kept separate and distinct from the human order and no attempt is made to mediate between the two. While spirits are invited to participate in the ceremonial activities, they are not symbolically integrated into the human world. This is manifested in a number of ritual procedures performed during the rice festivities.

The rice festivities comprise three separate rites which are performed in sequence – the *meluat*, the *kembang bungak* and the *hua' serbak*. In the first rite, the separation of the human order from the spiritual order is symbolically manifested in the way in which food for humans is separated from food for spirits. The spirits are given food in order that they may be

more willing to help humans obtain a bountiful harvest the following year. A small portion of the harvest is set aside for the spirits. It comprises broken pieces of burnt roasted rice which are not consumable by humans. Thus, although the spirits obtain a share of the harvest like humans, they are given food which humans do not as a general rule consume. In the second and third rites, the emphasis is on the productivity and success of the forthcoming harvest. These rites are performed after the *meluat* because it is thought that the spirits are more willing to guarantee humans a good harvest the coming year, if they are first given a portion of the harvest to eat. Notably, when the harvest is poor, the spirits are neither given food nor approached to ensure that the harvest for the following year will be a better one. A poor harvest is not interpreted as a sign that the spirits are displeased or offended, merely that the various prohibitions associated with cultivating and harvesting were not performed in the manner required.

During the *meluat* ceremony, a piece of yellow or white cloth is tied round the first five or seven sheafs of rice which have been planted in each field. These are normally planted in a circle in the middle of the field to differentiate them from the other rice plants. These rice sheafs bounded by the yellow or white cloth are collectively known as *mangat bé*. The rite is normally performed by the various heads of the households owning the ricefields. The *mangat bé* is cut at its base and handed over to the wife of the head of the household. She cradles it carefully in her arms like a newly born child and carries it back to the house. Here she is greeted by her spouse who calls out the ritual greeting, 'Oh, who is it, who do you have there?'. The bearer of the rice soul replies, 'This is your child'. The *mangat bé* is then ceremoniously handed over to the head of the household who hangs it in a corner of the kitchen. Occasionally, it is brought back to the attap hut and hung from the centre of the ceiling. The explanation given for this practice is that the *mangat bé* will feel more at home when it is near to the ricefields. Benzoin is then burnt underneath it for three successive nights.

Explanations of the *mangat bé* focus on two main ideas. Firstly, it is believed that the *mangat bé*, in the form of rice

sheafs is the rice soul. It is from this sheaf that the rice plants derive their life and have the capacity to grow and produce grains. However, accompanying this is the notion that the rice sheafs contain a *tado'* or brown grasshopper which is in actuality, the rice soul. According to this explanation, the rice plants derive their life source from the *tado'* rather than from the rice sheafs. The variation in these two explanations is probably a result of the influence of Malay beliefs relating to the *mangat bé'*. These relate to the idea that the rice soul is contained within the rice sheafs rather than the grasshopper.¹ The Ma' Betisék, however, tend to favour the latter idea. They assert that the rice sheafs merely form the permanent home of the *tado'*, though it is from this base that the rest of the rice plants obtain their life source. Significantly, these are the only rice stalks which are preserved from the harvest every year, to ensure that the *mangat bé'* is never deprived of its permanent home.

Once this part of the ceremony is over, the Ma' Betisék cut off a *gemang* of rice stalks. This unit of measurement of rice is equivalent to the amount which will make a comfortable sheaf on the arm. The *gemang* of rice is removed from the stalks, roasted and then pounded. The pounded rice is winnowed and soon boiled. One or two meat dishes are prepared and the food is then ceremoniously eaten with the members of the other households who have prepared the rice in the same way. Before the ritual feasting begins, a titled village elder, either the *batin*, *jenang* or *jugra*, makes a symbolic gesture to invite the human, plant and animal spirits to join them in the feast. He calls out to the spirits, 'Oh you spirits, come and eat with us, the new rice. Do not be hesitant, do not be shy. We hope for a good harvest the

¹ The *mangat bé'* is known in Malay as *semangat padi* or the 'rice soul'. The Malay ceremony associated with the rice soul is rather similar to that performed by the Ma' Betisék. See W. Skeat (1900: 235-49) for a detailed account of the Malay ceremony associated with the 'rice soul'. Throughout south-east Asia, various ideas appear to be associated with the rice-soul. The Minangkabaus of Sumatra think that the rice is guarded by a female spirit called *Saning Sari*, who is also known as *indoea padi*, literally, 'Mother of the Rice'. The Karens of Burma believe that the soul of the rice guards the rice plant but leaves it when the rice ripens. Consequently, the ritual procedure performed during the harvest involves calling the rice soul back to the field. The Iban belief in the rice soul is associated with the *tado'* as in the Ma' Betisék.

TABLE 9 Rice prepared during the *meluat* ceremony

<i>Rice for humans</i>	<i>Rice for animal spirits</i>
Boiled (cooked) rice	Roasted (uncooked) rice
White rice	Black rice
Whole grains	Broken grains
Sweet tasting	Bitter tasting

following year.² Everyone then picks up a handful of boiled rice and swings it round and above their heads thrice uttering, 'Ra, ra, ra'. This gesture is an invitation to the human, plant and animal spirits to eat the food. The invitation is particularly directed at the *tado'* or the *mangat bé'*. The *tado'* and the other spirits are invited to eat the tasty portions of the rice but the Ma' Betisék argue that they offer these rice portions to the spirits only because they know that the spirits will reject this offer and eat instead the black bitter grains of rice which have been prepared. The black bitter grains of rice are unboiled and merely roasted till they are burnt. Also the portion for the spirits comprises broken rice grains and the residue which is normally left at the bottom of the winnowing tray. These roasted rice grains are placed in little containers, in contrast to the whole rice grains which are boiled and transferred into large bamboo baskets.

Table 9, shows that rice for humans, which is boiled, is differentiated by four main features from rice for spirits, which by contrast is roasted and burnt. Significantly, rice which is roasted rather than boiled is regarded by the Ma' Betisék as uncooked, that is, not yet ready for human consumption. It is important to note that the rice which is boiled has already been roasted. They tend to treat the roasting of rice as a preliminary stage in the process of the preparation of rice as food. The tendency to burn the rice which is prepared for spirits brings out the symbolic contrast between black and white; while white rice is associated with human food, black rice is associated with spirit food. Though the colour white is generally associated with things which are spiritual and sacred, it is, in the context of the *meluat* rite,

² The complete charm used to invite animal spirits to attend the *meluat* is given in Skeat (1900). The Ma' Betisék in Carey Island do not remember it.

associated with the human world. Black is generally associated with things which are disruptive such as physical injuries, illnesses and death brought on by non-human or spiritual forces. In the context of this rice, black rice is associated with specific animal spirits. The animals which are invited to eat the rice are those which are capable of destroying the rice harvest. Here they are conceived of as animal spirits with potentially destructive qualities. The contrast between whole and broken grains expresses the contrast between the human and the animal world, and the human and spiritual order. Generally, the Ma' Betisék tend to feed domesticated animals such as poultry and dogs with left-over food or inferior foods. Chickens, in particular, are fed with broken rice grains and the burnt portions of rice scraped from the bottom of the pot. Thus, in the context of the *meluat* rite, broken rice grains are identified with animal food and food for animal spirits. Similarly, sweet tasting foods are within the category of popular or preferred foods while bitter tasting foods are avoided and given to animals when they are found. Consequently, in the ceremony the tasty portions of rice are reserved for humans while the bitter portions are reserved for animal spirits. Generally, the *meluat* ceremony symbolically reinforces the contrast between the human and the animal world and the human and the spiritual order.

The symbolic exclusion of spirits from the human order is again seen in the *jo-oh* ceremony which takes place immediately after the *meluat* ceremony. However, the *kembang bungak* and *hua' serba'* rites will be analysed first since they each precede a further set of *jo-oh* festivities which mark the end of the rice harvest.

The *kembang bungak* rite which literally means the 'bloom-ing of the rice flower' takes place three days after the *meluat* ceremony. The members of each household gather seven sheafs of rice on the fourth morning after the *meluat* ceremony. The next day, nine sheafs of rice are gathered, while a higher number, eleven or thirteen are gathered the following day. For this rite, it is important that the amount gathered increases proportionately each day. These sheafs of rice are brought to the house where the grain is; they are then

pounded and poured into a small basket. The pounded rice is then scattered along the boundaries of the fields and the narrow pathways which criss-cross the fields. This rite ensures that the rice stalks for the following harvest will be even thicker and the grains fuller than those of the following year. The emphasis on preparing odd numbers of rice sheafs expresses the Ma' Betisék concept of numbers that things which are odd are linked with good fortune and success while things which are even are linked with misfortune and bad luck. The odd numbers of rice sheafs, seven, nine, eleven or thirteen act as a symbolic assurance that the rice harvest will be successful the following year. The importance placed on maintaining a proportionate increase in the number of rice sheafs gathered during the three days symbolically ensures that the yield for the following harvest will show a similar proportionate increase.³

Once this rite is over, the harvesting proper begins. As described earlier, the rice grains are separated from their stalks and roasted in a deep pan. This procedure, which is always performed by women, is known as *lua' serba'*, a term which literally means 'to roast well'. As the rice is being roasted, the women ask the spirits to make the rice for the following harvest tasty and wholesome. The rite is completed by making offerings, in the form of rice cakes and tobacco, to the village guardian spirit, so as not to exclude it from having a share in the rice harvest. The Ma' Betisék make the offerings in the huts of the guardian spirits of their respective villages. The villagers of Sungei Sialang give offerings to *moyang ambai*, while those from Sungei Bumbun give their offerings to *moyang gadeng*. Since Sungei Mata extends into Sungei Bumbun, the members of the former village give the food offerings to the guardian spirit, *moyang gadeng*. Traditionally, the end of the rice harvest coincides with the annual festival of spirits (*ari' moyang*) so that food offerings are made once annually but on a larger scale.

³ Consider Barnes' study of the Kédang (1974: 167-8) where he views 'uneven numbers as the numbers of life, and even numbers the numbers of death'. In Needham's study of Nyoro symbolic classification (1967: 425-52), it is seen that the Nyoro associate odd numbers with the feminine and even numbers with things which are masculine. For the Ma' Betisék, odd and even numbers do not in any way indicate sexual differences.

JO-OH SONGS AND DANCES OF THE RICE HARVEST

Jo-oh songs

The songs which are sung during the *jo-oh* are different from the *kutai* songs which are sung during the shamanistic seances. In fact, the Ma' Betisék recognize them as two opposing sets to be used on different occasions and to convey different messages to the spirits. While *kutai* songs are concerned with the invocation of spirits to aid humans in times of illness and suffering, *jo-oh* songs merely invite plant, animal and human spirits to celebrate an occasion of great rejoicing. The former use spirits to help end states of *kemali* while the latter only express their mythical importance in the human world. The spirits which are invited to participate in the *jo-oh* celebrations do not change their identity or character as supernatural beings. More specifically, they are not humanized in the way they are during the seances but made to maintain their non-human character. They are ritually treated as separate and distinct from the world of human life and activity.

The context and form of those *jo-oh* songs are also different from the *kutai* songs. They tend to dwell more on certain specific activities of animals, humans and semi-humans or ogres. Their supernatural powers of attack or healing are not brought out the way they are in *kutai* songs. The activities which these songs stress are hunting, courtship, parental love or rejection and food. The songs also focus on the physical characteristics of animals, plants and natural phenomena such as rain and wind. Some go into lengthy details of the sounds and movements of animals and birds and the way in which humans hunt and trap them for food. When a song focusses on the behaviour of a particular spirit, the emphasis is on the way in which its physically observable characteristics differ from those of humans. The song about the ogre spirit *Jaboi*, for example, describes how this ape-like human lives as an ogre in the forest and leads the life of an animal; he uses red ants to light a fire, walks like an ape and hunts humans for food. The song of the old man *Naning* depicts him to be an ancestor who lived in the forest, and finally married the wife of the spirit *Jaboi*. Generally, then, the themes of the songs

are not concerned with the incorporation of spiritual entities into the human world. Objects of the natural order become the central theme of the songs and are depicted in such a way that the human world is dissociated from the plant and animal world, on one conceptual level and the spiritual world, or another. This sets up a symbolic contrast between the world and the overworld and no attempt is made to mediate between the two.

The *jo-oh* songs from the villages studied form a set of seven (Appendix 25, i-vii). It is important that all seven songs are completed before any one song is repeated. They are normally sung in the following order:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| i) <i>Laguk Si-ooi</i> ⁴ | - Song of the coppersmith
barbet |
| ii) <i>Laguk Jaboi</i> | - Song of the ogre <i>Jaboi</i> |
| iii) <i>Laguk Gemah Lebat</i> | - Song of the heavy rain |
| iv) <i>Laguk Cheep Gunting</i> | - Song of the peacock-
pheasant |
| v) <i>Laguk Siamang Timbong</i> | - Song of the black-
handed gibbon |
| vi) <i>Laguk Tok Naning</i> | - Song of the ancestor
<i>Naning</i> |
| vii) <i>Laguk Titik Musang</i> | - Song of the civet cat |

Generally, the themes of these songs are concerned with the physical and secular rather than the supernatural and mystical aspects of ancestors, plants and animals. The different themes which are manifested in *jo-oh* and *kutai* songs are also expressed in the different kinds of musical instru-

* The *si-ooi* song given in the appendix is only one of the many versions of the *si-ooi* song, known by the villagers. These songs should be distinguished from the *si-ooi* love charm mentioned in Chapter 3 which is specifically used to capture the soul of a person, rather than merely express one's love for someone. The *si-ooi* song is often sung when one experiences rejection, not necessarily rejection in the context of courtship and romance. Children generally sing the *si-ooi* song when they have been scolded by their parents or teachers. They creep out and sing in the garden plots and bushes, loud enough to be heard. Their parents invariably call them back for they believe that children who experience love rejection express their hurt by disappearing into the forest, and consequently dying. This belief is associated with a myth which is sung in one of the *si-ooi* song versions, concerning a girl who took her younger brother with her to the forest after their mother forbade him to suck milk from her breasts. They were adopted by tigers in the forest but eventually died.

ments which are used for the songs. The musical instruments which are used for *jo-oh* songs are the violin (*birole*), the drum (*tabe*), two bamboo sticks of different lengths (*tuntung*) and a kind of xylophone made from various bars of light wood bound by a string (*gèngong*). The musical instrument which is used for the *kutai* songs is a zither-like instrument called *bangèng*. It is forbidden to play the former set of instruments during the shamanistic seances. Conversely, the *bangèng* cannot be played during the *jo-oh* celebrations. Also, it is important to note that whereas the *jo-oh* songs exist in several different versions in the various villages, both in terms of their content and melody, the *kutai* songs have only one version which cannot be changed or modified in any way. This will be elaborated in greater detail in the following chapter. However, it may be important to note at this stage that the *jo-oh* songs maintain their popularity by the singer's ability to improvise words and verses which have been forgotten or outmoded. *Kutai* songs, however, derive their value by the meticulous consistency of the words in place and time. For this reason, the verses of the *jo-oh* songs have been adapted to popular Malay songs such as the *joget* and *ronggeng*. The melody of these songs also corresponds to the *joget* and *ronggeng* melody.

Jo-oh dances

During the *jo-oh*, young boys wear facial masks to represent some of the spirits which are mentioned in the songs – *Jaboi* and *Tok Naning*. The boys who put on the facial masks wear old clothes and grass skirts to separate them from the other men wearing everyday clothes. Female dancers, on the other hand, wear their best clothes and the emphasis is on making themselves as lovely as possible for the occasion. When the women wear grass skirts (*bajuk dendan*), they plait flowers from the shoots of the coconut and *nipah* palm and decorate their skirts with them. These flowers are also made into headdresses (*sonkok*). Here again, the emphasis appears to be on conveying an attractive appearance rather than identifying with the spirits represented by the masked dancers. The facial masks serve to differentiate spirits from humans in the dances. Significantly, the facial masks are

made in such a way that the spirits appear to be grotesque and animal-like in appearance.

The physical movements of these masked dancers are also very different from those of the other male and female dancers. Their movements are unpredictable, unlike the male and female dancers who move their feet and hands in a consistent and controlled manner. The masked dancers perform an animal-like prance where the stomach and buttocks are constantly joggled and the hands moved about in an awkward and clumsy manner. Occasionally, they pause to stare and to gape at the audience and the other dancers before joining in the dance again. These masked dancers also threaten to attack the onlookers with their hands and sticks. As each song describes the physical attributes and exploits of the animals, humans or ogres, they act out the story by gesticulations and mimicry.

The intention of these *jo-oh* dances is to entertain the spirits rather than to utilize their mystical powers for a specific purpose, as it is in the seances. This is brought out in the way in which states of spirit-possession and trance are carefully avoided in the *jo-oh* dances. Throughout the *jo-oh* dances, there is the constant fear that the masked dancers will be suddenly possessed by the spirits they are made to represent. Such an event is deliberately avoided by the observance of a certain ritual procedure. The masked dancers dance outside the circle formed by the other male and female dancers. This rule prevents the masked dancers from participating fully in the *jo-oh* ceremony. The masked dancers make their exit and appearances at any time they wish, and this may occur several times in any one dance.

Both the masked dancers and the other male and female dancers move in an anti-clockwise direction round the mound. This rite is related to the myth that the original Ma' Betisék siblings moved in opposite directions round the mountain Tahan and married when they remet on the other side of the mountain. In this dance, humans and spirits move in the same direction to prevent a similar event from occurring. Since humans and spirits can never meet one another if they keep moving in the same direction, the opposition between the human and the spiritual world can be

maintained. On one conceptual level, this ritual procedure maintains the incest rule that was not adhered to by the original siblings described in the myth. On another, it maintains a symbolic separation between the human and the spiritual world, the world and the underworld. The movement of the dancers round the earth-mound expresses the myth of the original siblings who married each other. It serves to oppose the myth by moving ritually, in a manner contrary to the siblings in the myth. This expresses the idea that the present Ma' Betisék do not behave like their ancestors; they adhere to the rule of incest unlike their ancestors who committed incest by marrying their siblings. Consequently, the behaviour of humans is differentiated from the behaviour of human ancestors. However, two sets of dancers move around the mound – male and female dancers representing humans and masked dancers representing spirits. These two sets of dancers express the symbolic separation of the human world from the spiritual world by forming two concentric circles; the male and female dancers form the inner circle and the masked dancers form the outer circle. Generally, the *jo-oh* dance symbolically acts out the differences in the activities and behaviour of humans and spirits without attempting to incorporate the spiritual order into the human order.

THE CULTIVATION OF ROOT CROPS AND VEGETABLES

Garden plots are normally located within the house compound, the amount of land devoted to gardening being approximately half the size of the compound. Hence garden plots are seldom larger than an acre. The major portion of the land for gardening is devoted to the cultivation of root crops such as cassava, yam and sweet potatoes. Next to rice, these root crops form the staple diet of the Ma' Betisék. Most households attempt to plant vegetables like the water-gourd, bitter gourd, chillies, long beans and cucumber. The vegetables are planted in small quantities and are usually supplemented by wild shoots gathered from the forest and cassava shoots gathered from old garden plots.

Planting of vegetables and root crops is normally done by women and takes place throughout the year. The soil is

normally tilled with the help of a *changkul* or iron spade. Occasionally the women make some attempt at weeding but generally the garden plots are left untended. During the period of planting, the Ma' Betisék observe certain ritual prohibitions, designed to ensure healthy growth and high yields. These ritual prohibitions are mainly directed towards root crops.

The planting of sweet potatoes necessitates the observation of certain cloud formations in the sky. If it is an exceptionally cloudy day, and the cloud formation is cumulo nimbus, the Ma' Betisék believe that the sweet potato should be planted immediately. Here, a symbolic association is made between the spreading of clouds and the spreading roots of the sweet potato plant. The planting of sweet potato is not undertaken on cloudless days. The association between certain forms of cloud formation and sweet potato planting is made to ensure optimal conditions for growth and high yields. Rites concerned with the propitiation of human, plant and animal spirits are completely absent. Similarly, yam cultivation bears a reference to *tulah* beliefs. During planting, one should sprinkle ash on the yam cuttings to ensure that they do not rot but remain as dry as the ash which is sprinkled on them. Furthermore, one should not plant yam on a rainy day for the crop would be spoilt. More specifically, it will cause itchiness when handled or eaten, just as wet grass or leaves cause skin irritations when one brushes or rubs against them. Finally, one should not, during the period of planting, divide the day between yam cultivation and game hunting. This will cause the crop to ripen only on one side. Generally, the ritual prohibitions associated with the cultivation of root crops seem to be concerned with controlling the physical conditions of growth rather than removing supernatural forces from the physical environment which may cause harm to either the cultivator or the crop.

FRUIT CULTIVATION

Most Ma' Betisék households own orchards of two acres or more. However, the orchards are normally spread out in separate smaller plots since a number of them are located in former housing sites. Newly planted fruit trees normally

border the home compound, in the areas fringing the garden plots. Ma' Betisék orchards include a variety of fruit trees, the most common of which are the durio fruit, banana, coconut and guava.

Like root crop and vegetable cultivation, fruit cultivation is associated with certain prohibitions which are meant to ensure that the trees bear bountiful fruit. Coconut seedlings for example are planted in pairs or clumps but never singly. This observance is related to the belief that the trees will always be guaranteed of companionship and hence bear fruit. The seeds of the durio fruit should not be thrown but placed on the ground. This will encourage the seedlings to sprout out faster. A number of these prohibitions relate to the cultivation of the durio fruit which is valued more than any other fruit not only for its rare taste but also for its economic importance. Furthermore, durio fruit trees form an important source of inheritance and property for members of the *opoh*.

As in rice cultivation, the durio fruit festival is performed only when the fruits are bountiful. The *jo-oh* songs and dances again constitute the most important part of the festival. When the harvest is satisfactory, the durio tree is decorated with plaited leaves and flowers and becomes the focal point of activity of the ceremonial singing and dancing. When the trees are sited away from the village, an earth mound (*busut*) is built instead, and decorated in the same way. The decoration of the earth mound acts as an invitation to the spirits to attend the celebrations. Men and women sing the *jo-oh* songs and dance round the tree or mound. When the durio fruits are particularly poor for that year, the durio fruit festival is not performed or is done on a small scale.

FISHING AND GATHERING

Activities related to fishing and gathering require the Ma' Betisék to move beyond the cultivated areas into the mangrove forests, the lowland rain forests and the mudflats and shore. Map 2 shows that the areas of fishing, crab-hunting and the gathering of snails and various varieties of bivalves are concentrated on the upper creeks of the rivers and the mudflats of the coastal areas. During the crab-gathering

season, the majority of the Ma' Betisék venture beyond the mangrove estuarine areas into the neighbouring island of Ketam and Lumut. These islands are the hunting grounds of the edible asiatic crab which is of great commercial value. Fishing, however, is rarely attempted beyond the mouth of the Langat river and is concentrated mainly on the lower stretches of the rivers and the Langat river itself.

The most popular method of fishing is the hook and line. This is because the activity can be attempted singly or in pairs and does not require members from other households to be recruited. When the hook and line method is used, the Ma' Betisék may walk to the rivers or take their boats to the lower stretches of the rivers where the chances of obtaining larger fish are greater. They often sleep in their boats overnight and return the next evening with the catch. The most popular type of fish sought is the fresh water mudskipper (*ka tembakul*). The fishing of mudskippers requires a special technique with the hook and line. The boat is kept stationary near the mangrove bushes and the rod is lowered into the water. It is then shaken vigorously up and down. This practice causes the fish which sleep under the mangrove roots to rush for the bait.

Another popular method of fishing is known as the *rawai*, which requires between four to six people to work it efficiently. A long, loose line with about 500 hooks attached to it, unbaited, is let out from a boat and kept stationary as long as the current is propitious. The fish get entangled in the hooks and are so caught. An average catch by this method of fishing is between ten and fifteen kilograms. The fish are distributed equally amongst the various fishermen, with the owner of the line getting a larger share.

Net fishing known as *jaring* is also practised by the Ma' Betisék. The net has numerous hooks attached to the lower end. It is stretched vertically across a narrow river mouth and the two ends are tied to tree trunks or bushes. The fishermen draw the fishes towards the net by scooping up water at a spot further up the river. This stirs the fishes and causes them to swim towards the net. This fishing technique is again popular because it requires only two people to operate it successfully. The Ma' Betisék prefer to keep fishing activities

within the household and for this reason have not been encouraged to try other methods of fishing which are economically more productive. Moreover, the larger nets which are commonly used by the Malays and Chinese are expensive to buy and to maintain.

Although the women normally gather alone, men occasionally join their wives when they want to fish inshore. Gathering normally takes place in the early morning. Food is prepared and eaten on the way to allow them to work all morning without long breaks. They return only when the tide comes up on the shore but, because of the distance which they cover, they normally arrive back at the village in the late evening.

The bivalves which are commonly gathered are the *lokan* and *kepah*, while univalves include snails like the *sipot hisap* (*Corithidia cingulata*) and the *sipot batut* (*Bursa rana*). A long knife is used to slash and hack the mud. When they strike a shellfish, they scoop it up with the edge of the knife. The shellfish are thrown into a bamboo basket and when it is filled, the men and women make their way back to the village. The mudflats may be combed for miles when this activity is combined with crab-gathering.

The gathering of the *pahat* or razor shellfish requires a different technique. The Ma' Betisék use an iron rod or *pulé* which is about thirty-five centimetres in length and has a hooked edge. The hooked end of the rod is pushed into the sand and immediately pulled out when a razor-shellfish gets hooked to it. The technique requires a lot of skill for the breathing holes of the shellfish are almost identical to the breathing holes of other shellfish and care has to be taken to locate the correct breathing holes before the rod can be driven into the sand. Furthermore, the Ma' Betisék have to avoid hitting the hard shell. Should this happen, the razor-shellfish will withdraw immediately and move deeper into the sand. The rod then has to be driven straight into the soft core of the shellfish which is not covered by the shell.

In crab gathering, two techniques are normally employed, the *pulé* and the *bintoh*. The *pulé* is a hooked rod while the *bintoh* is a rectangular shaped net with cross bamboo handles bearing weights of shells and stones on its four ends. When

the *pulé* is used, the general practice is to thump hard on the mud with both feet, in order to drive the crab out of its hole. The crab is then hooked up and its claws tied together with a bit of string. Alternatively, when the mud is softer, the holes are spotted and the *pulé* is then pushed into the mud to hook the crab out. During the crab-gathering season when the edible asiatic crab is more abundant, the *bintoh* may be used to scoop the crab from the mud. The Ma' Betisék crab-gatherers who use the *bintoh* normally have boats and are able to move about the shore edges without much difficulty. A few who live in the temporary Ma' Betisék villages of Ketam Island and Sungei Musang during the crab season either own or borrow motor boats and are then able to use the *bintoh* to its maximum advantage. The majority of the villagers still prefer to use the *pulé* since they are more skilful with it. The *bintoh*, however, allows the Ma' Betisék to obtain a larger haul since the crab may be caught in the nets two or three at a time.

The Ma' Betisék who gather crab on a commercial basis normally bring their catch to the jetty where Chinese middlemen wait to buy it from them. It is sold at a price much lower than that offered in the market in the nearest town. The villagers of Sungei Musang specialize in crab-gathering and they have their own middleman who buys the crab from them at approximately the same price offered by the Chinese middleman at the jetty.

The kinds of ritual prohibitions that accompany fishing and shellfish gathering are similarly geared towards ensuring a good catch. The Ma' Betisék feel that they are always in competition with ancestral spirits when they fish and gather and practice certain forms of ritual behaviour to keep them away from the fishing and gathering sites. To prevent the spirits from accompanying them, they leave small amounts of food on a leaf close to the boat. The food is supposed to distract the spirits from fishing and gathering activities; once they are full, they will be reluctant to follow the Ma' Betisék to their fishing and gathering sites. The Ma' Betisék also take care to remove all traces of food and disposable items when they rest to eat, to prevent the spirits from knowing their routes. Other prohibitions relates to the physical behaviour

of the Ma' Betisék during their trips. They avoid arguing or quarrelling for fear that they might frighten the catch away. Children who accompany them are not allowed to sit in the boat with their feet apart. This is related to the belief that the fish will easily escape or slip away from the net. Generally, their ritual observances have the function of creating optimal conditions for fishing and gathering.

GAME HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Generally a variety of small and big game is hunted. Of the former, the most important is the long-tailed macaque (*Macacus fascicularis*, *Raffles*) while in the latter category, the wild boar is the most valued. Wild boar meat is the only source of luxury meat which is fairly easily available. It also has a high commercial value among the local Indians and Chinese and forms an important source of cash for the Ma' Betisék hunters. Other kinds of game which are important are the mouse-deer (*Tragulus rufus*), the spotted deer (*Cervulus muntjak*), the rusa' deer (*Cervus unicolor*), the monitor lizard and the pink-necked green pigeon (*Treron vernans griseicapilla*).

Three techniques of hunting are employed for the wild boar. These are trapping, spearing and shooting. Wild boar traps are erected in various spots in the forest. Since the traps are made from *nibong* stakes they are extremely strong and may last up to three years. They contain a trap door which falls shut the moment the wild boar enters the construction to eat the bait which has been left there. Each of the men who hunt wild boar have, on the average, about five traps, although those who own rifles may have far less since they tend to depend more on shooting than trapping. The men who own rifles hunt only wild boar. They visit their traps occasionally but spend most of their time trailing the wild boar along the narrow tracks they make in the forest.

Spearing is a method employed only when a big party is organized by the Indians in the estates. The Ma' Betisék men normally join these hunting parties since the Indians in the estates are dependent on them for their hunting skills and detailed knowledge of the forest. These hunting parties normally comprise ten to fifteen men, one of whom owns a

rifle. As the Indians are unable to obtain licences for rifles, the rifle owner on the hunt is always one of the two Ma' Betisék men who own them. Their possession of a rifle makes them indispensable on these hunting trips since they guarantee the safety of the rest of the members of the hunting party. The other members of the party who are important are the owners of hunting nets and spears. The rest of the men may join in to assist the men who plan the hunting strategy. Once the locality is decided upon, the tracks left by the wild boar are carefully examined to distinguish those which have been recently made from those which are a few days old. A couple of nets are then tied to tree trunks on the path where the recent tracks have been made and subsequently camouflaged with leaves. A few men stand close to the nets while a couple of others climb trees to try to locate the wild boar. Once the wild boar is sighted, they attempt to drive the animal in the direction of the nets by shouting and hooting at it. When the boar is entangled in the nets, the men close in and spear it in the stomach. The dying boar is disentangled from the nets and slung on a pole. Occasionally, the hunting party may split into two groups to increase the chances of success.

The distribution of the meat is dependent on the degree of participation of the men in the hunting. When shooting is the method of hunting employed, the owner of the rifle normally takes two-thirds of the share of the meat. His partner obtains the remaining third. Even though hunters normally have regular hunting partners, their partners only get a share when they are actually present at the time of the shooting. If they are away or join their partner after the boar is shot, they may get only a token share which can be less than half a kilogramme. When the owner of a trap examines it in the presence of his partner, he keeps the major portion of the game for himself but gives his partner a certain amount, enough to last his family a few days. When a hunting party is organized, the owners of the rifle and spears usually get double share, provided that the hunt has been a particularly successful one. If the game caught is small, the owners of the weapons sacrifice their double share and everyone is given an equal share of the meat. The meat may be consumed or resold to Indians on the estates or to the Chinese on the

mainland. Normally, the Ma' Betisék keep the inferior portions of the meat and sell the rest of the share. The money which is obtained is used to buy essential food items such as rice, sugar and flour.

Other kinds of game such as deer and crocodile are hunted more rarely because they are now scarce on the island. Although crocodile meat is not eaten, it has a high commercial value and the Ma' Betisék continue to hunt them along the mouths of the rivers Sialang and Langat. Deer meat is another luxury but success in deer hunting is very low. The Ma' Betisék use several different kinds of traps for deer; spearing or shooting is rarely employed. These traps are also used for the spotted deer, the mouse-deer and squirrels, but are modified to accommodate the different sizes of the animals.

In the category of small game, monkey trapping is the most popular activity. The long-tailed macaque is sought not so much for its meat as for its sale value. This has mainly been a result of a recent demand for standard sized macaques by local Chinese middlemen. It is important to note that it is only when such a demand is created that monkeys are hunted for commercial purposes. In normal circumstances monkey trapping is indulged in only because it is an easy source of food.

The traps are placed at various sites in the forest and each trapper visits his traps daily to see if any monkeys have been caught. The traps operate by a level mechanism which shuts the door of the trap down the moment the monkey moves in to take the bait. The traps are easy and quick to make and the wood used is easily obtained from the forest. They are nailed together to form a little box with a trap door. The bait consists only of bits of cassava or sweet potato and occasionally of oil-palm seeds picked from the surrounding estate. It is an important form of hunting also because little time is needed to be spent on it to make it a success. A trapper has only to spend a couple of hours a day visiting the traps. This allows him to devote the rest of the day to other activities such as cultivating and the gathering of shellfish. The monkeys which are caught are handed to the Chinese middleman who comes to the village once a week to pay the

cash owing to the trappers. The owner of the shop of the village of Sungei Bumbun has taken over some of the functions of the middleman by collecting the animals from each house before handing them over to the Chinese when he comes to the village.

Birds are trapped by the use of gummed sticks called *legéh*. These are prepared from the centre stalks of the *nibong* palm leaves which are smoothed and gathered into a bunch. The sticks are then securely tied at one end and smoked over an open fire. A mixture of gum from the *ara* tree and crude rubber is boiled over the fire. When the gum is ready, it is scooped up with a flat stick and twirled round the sticks. The sticks are then pulled and spread out like a fan to ensure that the centre layers are properly covered with gum. They are then wrapped round a broad piece of *nibong* pod and placed in a *tombak* or bamboo vessel. When a man wishes to trap birds, he slings the vessel over his shoulders and looks for fruit trees where the birds tend to gather. Once a suitable tree is chosen, he climbs to the higher branches and slashes them with a knife. The stick is then carefully placed in the grooves and he descends from the tree and waits. After a while, some of the birds are caught in the sticky grooves and the man extracts them immediately and places them in a sack. Birds which are trapped are seldom sold and form an important source of food for the Ma' Betisék.

During the time when the Ma' Betisék are actively engaged in hunting and trapping, they are unconcerned with *kemali* beliefs and ideas concerning the plant and animal world. This is clearly brought out by the kind of terminology which is used in the context of hunting. Animals are referred to as *lau'* or 'cooked food'. Occasionally, the word *juma'* which refers to a dish of cooked meat, is used. The sound of a wild boar in the forest will evoke the comment, *lau' ming* ('cooked food is near') rather than *ketu ming* ('the wild boar is near'). Here, when the term *moyang* is used, it is not used to refer to animals or plants but to wandering human spirits who may happen to pass by at the time of the trapping or hunting of an animal or who may be occupying a particular tree which is being felled.

The *pantang* associated with animals with unusually strong

powers of mystical attack are not as clearly expressed, with the exception of the honey-bee. This is mainly because these animals are not popular game animals and are not normally hunted. However, the *pantang* associated with game animals are elaborate and are invariably concerned with the ways in which the animals may be trapped or hunted more effectively. In wild boar and deer trapping a number of taboos are observed from the time the traps are set. The trapper should not comb his hair for this will cause the wild boar or deer to slip away from the trap. Also, he should not look into a mirror for the animals will spot him immediately and bolt. For deer trapping, the trapper should not wash his hands for it will cause the deer to slip from the noose of the trap. Finally, for both deer and wild boar trapping, he should not bathe for just as the water flows down his body, so will the animals run away from the trap. Here, human activities such as the removal of dirt from the body, combing one's hair or gazing into a mirror are symbolically associated with parallel activities in the animals such as escaping from the trap, slipping away from the noose and spotting the trappers in the forest. These human activities are therefore seen as triggering off a similar set of activities in the animals.

Hunting charms

The emphasis on the physical or natural characteristics of animals is shown in the way in which charms are used to lure animals into traps. These charms aim to make the animals obedient and submissive to the hunter. The ritual powers of humans are given dominance over the mystical powers of animals. In fact, these mystical powers which animals are believed to possess and which appear in the context of *kemali* ideas are not at all brought out in the hunting charm. This may be manifested in the following charm used to trap mouse-deer (Appendix 26 i).

Come out of the mountain

The entrance is open, ask to enter.

Cross over the entrance, ask permission to leave

The entrance is open, ask to enter

Ask to enter the bangle of love

If you do not obey, climb the mountain; you'll be denied
food

Go down the well; you will be denied drink

If you do not enter the bangle of love

You will die a death untimely.

This charm aims to make the mouse-deer submit to the ritual powers of the hunter. Through the magical use of words, the hunter attempts to entice the mouse-deer to place its head in the noose. Here, the noose is depicted as a love bangle, an object which is normally given to a woman by her lover. The charm contains two sets of ideas, the first of which is concerned with establishing the hunter's powers over the animal and the second with the negative repercussions which the charm will bring to the animal, should it not obey the charm. The first idea is contained in the first five lines of the charm and the second, in the last four. The occurrence of odd and even sets of lines is consistent with the Ma' Betisék notion of numbers that things which are good or promising should be represented by odd numbers while things which are bad or unchanging should be represented by even numbers.

The structure of the content of hunting charms are similar to love charms which also operate by the principle of subordinating animals and subsequently humans. It appears that to the Ma' Betisék, hunting a woman is no different from hunting a wild pig. Consider the following love charm aimed to make a person obedient and submissive (Appendix 26 ii).

Number of
lines in verse

The Charm of Submission

- (The leaf *penduduk* (*melastoma polyanthum*), the leaf
kepayang (*pangium edule*)
- 4 (The leaf *selaseh* (*ocimum sanctum*) grows on a stone
(The more you submit the more you love
(The more desire you have for me
(The white elephant across the sea
(Chop up its hair
- 5 (Chop up its tusk
(If the white elephant can submit to me

- (What more you
 (The tiger in the deep forest
 (Which is strong
 5 (Which is brave
 (If the tiger can submit and desire me
 (What more you
 (The cobra with the fatal venom
 (Which is strong
 5 (Which is brave
 (If the cobra can love, submit and desire me
 (What more you
 (I am using the charm that makes you love, submit and
 desire me
 (If it fails, you will die a death untimely
 6 (If it succeeds, enter my body
 (If it succeeds, enter my body
 (Kur-wai-wait . . .
 (Enter my body.

The first four lines are referred to as *bukak tangkal* or 'the opening of the charm'. It follows the structure of Malay love verses or *pantun* which are very popular among the Ma' Betisek and from which the verse is derived. These four lines serve to indicate that the charm is concerned with love and submission. The first two lines of the verse indirectly convey the message contained in the next two lines.

The potency of the charm is derived from the verses which follow the first four lines – the idea concerning the establishment of one's dominance over the tiger, the elephant and the cobra. It suggests that once these animals are empowered by the spell, a man or woman will also submit to it. Significantly, the tiger and the elephant are in the context of *kemali* ideas attributed with unusually strong powers of mystical attack. This suggests that the charm is powerful enough to subjugate dangerous animals. Generally, the charm symbolizes the dominance of humans over animals and the cultural over the natural order.

It is important to note that hunting and love charms cannot be employed in any way in seances or ritual ceremonies which the spirits are said to attend. They may only be used in the context of activities relating to the hunting and gathering

of food or in the context of courtship and marriage. Similarly, the songs sung by the shaman during the seance cannot be sung in the mangroves or forests or in any other situations, for fear that the person may become spirit-possessed by a plant or animal spirit. While these states of possession are desired in the context of shamanistic seances, they are avoided in the context of hunting, courtship or marriage. Love charms aim at captivating the soul of a loved one in such a way that the person becomes completely subservient. However, this is different from states of spirit-possession experienced in individuals other than the shaman, when the person becomes uncontrollable and cannot be mastered or dominated in any way.

THE EXTRACTION OF FOREST PRODUCTS

The most important forest product is the *nibong* palm. The extraction of the palm is concentrated in the lowland rain-forest in areas where Chinese loggers have obtained licenses to extract the palm for timber. The Ma' Betisek are employed by these Chinese who pay them according to the amount of wood they fell. The men work individually rather than in groups and it is only when help is needed to transport the timber out of the forest that a few men may co-operate to load and unload the timber on the *nibong* tracks. This track is arranged like railway sleepers and is lubricated with oil to enable the cart bearing the wood to be pulled away more easily. The cart has long ropes fastened to it and allows two men to pull it along the tracks without much difficulty. The tracks open out to the edge of the river where a large barge waits to collect the timber which has been unloaded from the cart.

The amount of *nibong* palm wood felled per person is on an average ten logs for every two weeks employed in the activity. Most of the men employed in *nibong* palm felling are not completely dependent on it as a source of economic livelihood. It is a common practice to take time off for hunting, fishing and shellfish gathering. However, the relationship established with the Chinese middlemen is based on a patron-client tie so that even if the men indulge in other economic occupations, they will still have to work for the

Chinese loggers indefinitely. The latter encourage the men to take cash loans so that when payments are made, previous debts are still not cleared. Consequently, the men are constantly indebted to them and work as long as it is required for them to do so. This indebtedness to Chinese loggers is one of the reasons why the Ma' Betisék do not freely work as cash labourers in the oil-palm and rubber estates.⁵

The extraction of mangrove wood only involves the collecting of wood for boat-building. On the mainland, mangrove wood is collected for both boat-building and charcoal but the latter has not been exploited on the island for some time. The unit of measurement for the former is known as *po'*. This is equivalent to the load capacity of the barge which is a hundred *pikul*.⁶ The wood is piled up at the side of the river and arranged into stacks known as *pasung*. Each of these *pasung* is approximately equivalent to thirty-three and a third *pikul* so that a barge can accommodate three *pasung* at the most. Payment is made in terms of a *po'* rather than a *pasung* unit. The men in this occupation are similarly indebted to the middlemen and work as long as they have debts to be settled.

Other than the *nibong* palm and mangrove wood, the Ma' Betisék also extract wood for carving, building and trapping. The two most common types of wood used for carving figurines and masks of spirits are the *nirèh* (*Carapa moluccensis*) and the *tingkong* or *pulai* (*Alstonia Spathulata*, Blume). The *nipah* and *pandanus* palms are also sought for their leaves which are used to make attap, mats and baskets. Carving is essentially a male activity and is an increasingly lucrative occupation because of the tourist demand. It is attempted

⁵ Such ties which the Ma' Betisék have with the Chinese are old and may be traced right back to the early stages of development of the villages in Carey Island. The present middleman is the grandson of the first Chinese who established economic ties with the villagers in Carey Island. The long-standing economic ties of the Chinese with the Ma' Betisék have resulted in a number of mixed marriages. When Ma' Betisék women commit adultery with Chinese men on the island, it is usually a result of their familiarity with the Chinese middleman and his friends. Ma' Betisék women may flirt with these Chinese men individually but feign fear when they are in the company of other women, they flee from the men, shouting and shrieking in unison. The Chinese claim that the Ma' Betisék are sexually desirable because they eat a lot of chillies and consequently have 'hot bottoms'.

⁶ One *pikul* is equivalent to 133 lbs.; this is .05952 imperial tons or .060496 metric tonnes. One *po'* (100 *pikul*) is therefore 5.952 imperial tons or 6.050 metric tonnes.

only by men and the technique is passed down from father to son. Generally, each carver specializes in figurines and masks of specific animal and ancestral spirits. In contrast to carving, attap making is a female activity and very rarely attempted by men. Since most of the attap is sold to a Chinese middleman, women enjoy cash earnings from attap making and manage to maintain a certain amount of financial independence. It is also an extremely competitive venture with the result that the *nipah* palm has become rapidly depleted, particularly in areas closest to the villages.

Plants with unusually strong powers of mystical attack are subject to a number of ritual prohibitions which do not so much prevent them from being exploited as control the conditions and extent to which they may be utilized. For example, the *moso*¹ and casuarina tree may be used for all purposes except for the building of houses. The *nipah* palm, on the other hand, may be used for houses but it cannot be planted in the village; it can only be gathered from the mangrove forests. The results of disobeying these prohibitions normally take the form of unforeseen natural calamities which affect a number of the villagers rather than a specific individual. This differs from the way in which plants are thought to inflict humans with spirit-attacks in the *kemali*² context.

The Ma' Betisék believe that ritual offerings should be made before trees are felled. These ritual offerings take the form of a *sembuang* or a tray of food containing rice, tobacco, betel-nut, betel-vine leaves and some water. This tray is placed under a tree close to the one which is to be felled. As the tray is laid down under the tree, the following words are said aloud: 'O *moyang*, this tree is yours, that is mine, eat the food.' Symbolically, the *sembuang* attempts to compensate the loss of one tree for another; it seals the transfer of the home of the human spirit to another tree. Significantly, the ritual procedure is known as *tukah gantik* or 'to replace'. In reality, the general practice is to chop down a tree the moment one finds a suitable one, without making any kind of ritual offering. When questioned if this would not evoke the wrath of the wandering human spirit, the Ma' Betisék reply that they cannot possibly carry little trays of food with

them every time they go into the forest. They add that it is difficult enough finding the kind of tree they want without having to worry about trays of food for wandering human spirits.

Economic activities suggest one domain of experience where animals and plants are regarded as potential sources of food. The belief that plants and animals have been cursed and so become food for humans does not only include the category of popular game animals, vegetables and fruits but also animals and plants which are avoided as food. Animals like the tiger, elephant and the yellow skink are attributed with unusually strong powers of *kemali'* but they are invariably, in the context of economic activity, conceived as potential food sources. However, their *tulah* characteristics are not asserted in the same way as popular game animals. The Ma' Betisék argue that because they are cursed, they avoid humans for fear that they will be hunted for food. Since they avoid humans, they are difficult to hunt in the forest. Consequently, they assert that their meat is far more difficult to obtain than other animals which have been similarly cursed. Animals which are not popular game including those with unusually strong mystical powers are believed to have bitter meat (*kedei'*), in contrast to game animals which are said to have sweet meat (*sio'*). The contrast between bitter and sweet tasting meat seems to be the only important categorical distinctions made of food in the economic situation.

Significantly, all cultivated crops and fruits including those with unusually strong mystical powers are regarded as sweet-tasting. Vegetables and fruits picked from the wild and which are regularly consumed are regarded as *niit*, a word which also means 'sweet' but which is specifically used for non-meat foods. The Ma' Betisék tend to explain their avoidance of poisonous plants and fruits in terms of the concept *bul*. This term refers to a condition which causes giddiness, vomiting and diarrhoea. Thus these plants and fruits are not so much regarded as inedible but rather, capable of producing unpleasant side effects. Notably, there are a number of plants and fruits which are avoided because they are *kedei'* or *bul*, but rather than regard them as non-food or

inedible, the Ma' Betisék stress that they may be eaten but do not have a pleasant taste.

It appears that mystical explanations of plants and animals are important in economic situations in so far as they show how many plants and animals are different from humans and become their major sources of food. Consequently, myths of plants and animals containing themes of anthropomorphism or their benevolence to humans are upheld in the *tulah* context only because they also show how these plants and animals were cursed not to assume human forms. Where certain animals like the tiger and elephant are associated with a number of myths, it is only those myths with *tulah* themes that have an appeal in this context. For example, when the Ma' Betisék argue that the tiger avoids humans for fear that they will be hunted as food, this assertion is based on the idea that the tiger has in the past been destructive rather than that the tiger is the source of the Ma' Betisék knowledge of shamanism. Indeed, in the context of economic activities, hunters and trappers conceptually disregard accounts of animals which reveal an anthropomorphic or close link with humans. If a *kemali'* type of explanation is put forward, the response will be that of exasperation and impatience. They say that plants and animals are there to be exploited and that if they do not do so someone else will.

Generally, the *pantang* concern a completely different set of prohibitions from those which are manifested in situations when *kemali'* ideas are dominant. In the *kemali'* context, men and women who are ill avoid a number of foods, particularly food obtained from wild game, fish, wild vegetables and fruits. The same applies to the shaman and women who are pregnant or in their confinement period. These ritual prohibitions illustrate the contrast between two sets of behaviour, one concerned with the effective exploitation of plants and animals as food, and another with the effective avoidance of plants and animals as food. In the economic context, only the former is operationally relevant. While the physical characteristics of plants and animals are emphasized in the economic context, it is their mystical characteristics which are emphasized in the context of illness and other kinds of misfortune.

Tulah ideas are also expressed by the way in which rituals or propitiation are performed. These rituals are not directed towards plant and animal spirits. On those occasions when they are performed, they are directed towards human spirits. These rituals are performed mainly because the human spirits are believed to behave like hunters and gatherers in the forest. The Ma' Betisék say that when humans exploit plant and animal resources, human spirits are tempted to do the same. In the context of misfortune however, the physical attributes of human and nature spirits give way to the mystical and spiritual.

Kemali's Beliefs in the Context of Illnesses and Shamanistic Cures

THE INTERPRETATION OF ILLNESSES AND INJURIES

An illness or injury is seen, at a particular stage of the condition, to be caused by a mystical attack from a particular plant or animal which has been destroyed or killed. Sometimes, these illnesses and injuries may be attributed to mystical attacks from wandering human spirits who wish to procure the plant or animal as food. In this context, plants and animals are no longer perceived as potential sources of food but as humans with mystical powers. Though plants and animals are in this context referred to as *moyang* they may also be referred to by the terms *hinkik ma' kele* and *tuhan*.

The term *hinkik ma' kele* (literally, 'they are also humans') draws on Ma' Betisék ideas of rebirth that plants and animals are derived from the souls of the dead. The component of the human soul from which plants and animals are derived from, the 'lazy soul' is attributed with mystical powers which are potentially destructive to humans. Thus though the term suggests that plants and animals are humans, it also conveys the idea that they are malevolent ancestral spirits. This term has a different connotation from the term *moyang* in that it stresses the malevolent characteristics of human ancestral spirits rather than their benevolent qualities. The term *moyang* however, stresses the hierarchically superior status of plants and animals as human ancestors. The need to refer to plants and animals by this honorific term implies that in the context of illness, the Ma' Betisék recognize the mystical dangers attached to plants and animals. By according them the status of ancestors, plants and animals are said to be less

easily provoked to inflict harm upon humans. Furthermore, since human ancestors are associated with attributes which are benevolent rather than malevolent, the term suggests that plants and animals are similarly likely to use their powers in ways which are more beneficial to human life.

The term *tuhan* which means 'that person' does not make any direct reference to the mystical or spiritual qualities of plants and animals. Rather, the term likens plants and animals to people whose proper names are deliberately avoided to prevent situations of open conflict from arising. The extension of the term to plants and animals suggests that the Ma' Betisék are similarly concerned with a need to conceal the names of plants and animals in their everyday conversations. Since plants and animals do not know that they are being referred to, they do not take offence and attempt to cause humans harm with their mystical powers. The deliberate attempt to avoid any reference to the actual physical forms of plants and animals also expresses the importance of viewing plants and animals as human, in form and characteristics. Generally, these three terms suggest that in the context of illness, disease and death, the plant and animal world is conceived as part of the human world. However, the plant and animal world is also bestowed with mystical qualities which are capable of creating disorder and dissension within it. In this respect, it is significant to note that the words to describe human sorcery, namely *hala'* or *sula'*, are also used to describe mystical attacks from plants and animals. Human sorcery and spirit-attacks are regularly differentiated by adding the words *ma'* and *moyang* after the word *hala'* (or *sula'*) respectively, so that the former is referred to as *hala' ma'* (or *sula' ma'*) and the latter *hala' moyang* (or *sula' moyang*). In the context of this discussion, the term sorcery will be taken to mean the use of certain types of ritual knowledge on specific individuals to bring about states of suffering or death.

The Ma' Betisék do not at first immediately explain all illnesses and injuries as being the result of spirit-attacks. In the initial stages of their occurrence, some illnesses and injuries are seen to be caused by physical neglect or carelessness while others are immediately explained in terms of

spirit-attacks. Generally, illnesses which are attributed to physical factors are treated by *hubat* or medicinal cures. However, if a patient does not show any signs of recovery after a course of medicinal cures, the illness is then explained in terms of a spirit-attack. Table 10 shows the way in which the Ma' Betisék explain different kinds of illnesses and injuries and the way in which explanations change after a certain course of treatment has been attempted.¹ Conditions which are initially explained in terms of physical factors include those like minor rashes and sores (Items 1a and 2), choking and vomiting (Items 6 and 7), diarrhoea and constipation (Items 12a and 13a) and insomnia (Item 15). In the early stages (Stage 1), they are seen as minor conditions which can be remedied by medicine or curative spells (*tangkal*). The criteria for differentiating between the first and the second stage of explanation is based on the nature of the patient's response to a particular course of treatment. Generally the shift from State I to Stage II occurs when a particular line of treatment, thought to be appropriate to that condition, fails to bring about the expected cure. Such an illness would then be viewed as serious. Conditions which are immediately diagnosed as being caused by a spirit-attack are always described as serious. The term also suggests that death may result if the condition is not treated immediately.

It is significant to note from Table 10 that all conditions which occur in infants are immediately explained in terms of spirit-attacks. This is because infants are thought to be more prone to attacks from human and nature spirits than are adults or children. These spirits are said to venture into Ma'

¹ The table attempts to list the most common afflictions suffered by the Ma' Betisék. The afflictions are described in Ma' Betisék terms and the broad groupings which I have used to differentiate one type of affliction from another are only meant to give the reader a guide to the general nature of the afflictions. Illnesses which are described in modern terms such as *kure kure* (malaria), *jerih* (asthma) and 'T.B.' (tuberculosis) have been excluded from the analysis because they are dealt with differently, that is, the development of explanations and types of remedies is not found. For example, a man may be diagnosed at the Orang Asli Hospital in Gombak to be suffering from typhoid but the illness will not be attributed to a spirit-attack despite the fact that high fever (Item 10) is one of the signs of typhoid. However, if a man has all the signs and symptoms of typhoid, the affliction will be attributed to a spirit-attack if he is treated in the village where there is no one to diagnose it as a case of typhoid.

TABLE 10 Ma' Betisék explanations of afflictions and their treatment

	Type of affliction	Cause		Treatment	
		Stage I	Stage II	Stage I	Stage II
External injuries and skin conditions	1 <i>Miyang</i> : rashes, minor skin irritations, inflammation of skin or eye in –				
	1a) Adults and children	a) Mosquito, ant or other insect bites; heat; prickly grass	a) Spirit-attack by the 'good' spirit	a) Medicine	a) Water spell
	b) Infants	b) Spirit-attack by the 'good' spirit (<i>ma' lép</i>)	b) Spirit-attack by the 'good' spirit	b) Medicine, water spell (<i>tangkal do</i>)	b) Water spell; <i>popoit</i> ceremony
	2 <i>Kudih</i> : sores, boils in –				
	a) Adults and children	a) Dirt, poor hygiene	a) Spirit-attack by the 'good' spirit	a) Medicine	a) Water spell
	b) Infants	b) Spirit-attack by the 'good' spirit	b) Spirit-attack by the 'good' spirit	b) Water spell	b) Water spell; general illness spell (<i>tangkal tatak</i>)

TABLE 10 Ma' Betisék explanations of afflictions and their treatment

Type of affliction	Cause		Treatment	
	Stage I	Stage II	Stage I	Stage II
3 <i>Sakét Ma' lép</i> : chicken-pox and measles in adults, children and infants	Spirit-attack by the 'good' spirit	Spirit-attack by the 'good' spirit	Water spell	Water spell; general illness spell (<i>tangkal tatak</i>); <i>popoit</i>
4 <i>Lukak</i> : wounds, skin ulcerations and bleedings, dislocations and fractures in adults and children	Personal negligence, spirit-attack by plant or animal-spirit, spirit-attack by wandering human spirit	Spirit-attack by plant or animal-spirit, spirit-attack by wandering human spirit	Medicine, general illness spell (<i>tangkal penawah</i>)	General illness spell (<i>tangkal penawah</i>); <i>popoit</i> ; leading if necessary to seance (<i>sawai</i>)
Abdominal swelling 5 <i>Oo-oit kadam</i> : abdominal swellings in adults, children and infants	Spirit-attack by the 'paunchy' spirit (<i>moyang busuh</i>), spirit-attack by plant or animal-spirit	Sorcery	General illness spells (<i>tangkal tatak</i> and <i>penawah</i>), earth spell (<i>tangkal ték</i>), <i>popoit</i>	Seance

Type of affliction	Cause		Treatment	
	Stage I	Stage II	Stage I	Stage II
6 <i>Sedu'</i> : choking over food in –				
a) Adults and children	a) Eating too rapidly	a) Spirit-attack by the wind spirit	a) Remedy by swallowing rice	a) Swallow spell
b) Infants	b) Spirit-attack by the wind spirit (<i>moyang bua'</i>)	b) Spirit-attack by the wind spirit	b) Swallow spell (<i>tangkal goloit</i>)	b) Swallow spell; general illness spell (<i>tangkal penawah</i>)
7 <i>Ku-up</i> : vomiting in –				
a) Adults and children	a) Eating disagreeable foods	a) Spirit-attack by mangrove plant spirit	a) Medicine	a) Nausea spells
b) Infants	b) Spirit-attack by mangrove plant spirit (<i>moyang sambah</i>)	b) Spirit-attack by mangrove plant spirit	b) Nausea spell (<i>tangkal ceka'</i> ; <i>tangkal sambah</i>)	b) Nausea spells; general illness spells

TABLE 10 Ma' Betisék explanations of afflictions and their treatment

	Type of affliction	Cause		Treatment	
		Stage I	Stage II	Stage I	Stage II
Bleeding from orifices	8 <i>Maham oo-it maham pa maham mu, maham manum:</i> (bleeding in faeces; bleeding from mouth; bleeding from nose; bleeding in urine, respectively) in adults, children and infants	Spirit-attack by the giant spirit (<i>moyang serang</i>). Spirit-attack by plant or animal spirit	Sorcery	Earth spell, general disease spells, <i>popoit</i>	Seance
	9 <i>Gohop-ki-ip; gohop bua': gohop gemoi</i> (Shooting pains, numb localised pains, gnawing pains respectively) in adults and children	Heavy work or strain	Spirit-attack by plant or animal spirit, and ultimately sorcery	Medicine	<i>Popoit</i> , leading if necessary to seance

	Type of affliction	Cause		Treatment	
		Stage I	Stage II	Stage I	Stage II
General illnesses associated with fever	10 <i>Soh</i> : fever, in adults, children and infants	Spirit-attack by the fire spirit (<i>moyang oos</i>), spirit-attack by plant or animal spirit	Spirit-attack by the fire spirit. Spirit attack by plant or animal spirit	Water spell	Water spell: <i>popoit</i>
	11 <i>Hawa</i> : influenza, in adults, children and infants	Spirit-attack by mangrove plant spirit	Spirit-attack by mangrove plant spirit	Water spell	Water spell: <i>popoit</i>
	12 <i>Lengat</i> : diarrhoea in –				
Conditions relating to bowel movements	a) Adults and children	a) Eating disagreeable foods	a) Spirit-attack by mangrove plant spirit	a) Medicine	a) Nausea spell (<i>tangkal sambah</i>)
	b) Infants	b) Spirit-attack by the mangrove plant spirit (<i>moyang sambah</i>)	b) Spirit-attack by mangrove plant spirit	b) nausea spell (<i>tangkal sambah</i>)	b) <i>Popoit</i>
	13 <i>Oo'oit géhé</i> : constipation in –				
	a) Adults and children	a) Eating disagreeable foods	a) Spirit-attack by mangrove plant spirit	a) Medicine	a) Nausea spell (<i>tangkal sambah</i>)

TABLE 10 Ma' Betisék explanations of afflictions and their treatment

	Type of affliction	Cause		Treatment	
		Stage I	Stage II	Stage I	Stage II
Insomnia and sleeplessness in infants	14 <i>Sawan</i> : persistent crying and sleeplessness in infants	After-birth buried too far away from infant's home; unsuitable name; mother with 'hot body' (<i>kerét hangat</i>)	Spirit attack by teasing spirit (<i>moyang sawan</i>); the spirit of the plant offshoot (<i>moyang tangih</i>); the spirits of breathing roots and parasitic plants (<i>moyang sakat</i>)	Remedial measures (reburying after-birth; renaming infant; fostering infant)	Nightmare spell (<i>tangkal mamain</i>); grave spell (<i>tangkal kubu</i>); replanting stump; the spell of breathing roots and parasitic plants (<i>tangkal sakat</i>); a nightmare spell
	15 <i>Sawan</i> : insomnia in adults and children	Worry, thinking over too many things in one's mind	Spirit-attack by teasing spirit (<i>moyang sawan</i>)	Medicine	The spell of breathing roots and parasitic plants (<i>tangkal sakat</i>); nightmare spell.
Fits	16 <i>Baja'</i> : fits or convulsions in adults, children and infants	Spirit-attack from plant or animal spirit. Spirit-attack from wandering human spirit	Spirit-attack from plant or animal spirit. Spirit attack from wandering human spirit.	<i>Popoit</i>	<i>Popoit</i>

	<i>Type of affliction</i>	<i>Cause</i>		<i>Treatment</i>	
		<i>Stage I</i>	<i>Stage II</i>	<i>Stage I</i>	<i>Stage II</i>
Madness	17 a) <i>Gila' ejen'</i> ; memory loss, excessive dreaming, poor rapport	a) Attraction by male or female plant, animal or wandering human spirit.	a) Attraction by male or female plant, animal or wandering human spirit	a) <i>Popoit</i>	a) Seance
	b) <i>Gila' bua'</i> ; hyper-active, restless, bold	b) Spirit-attack from plant or animal spirit; spirit-attack from wandering human spirit	b) Sorcery	b) <i>Popoit</i>	b) Seance
	c) <i>Gila' sé-éh</i> ; radical change in behaviour expressed sexually		c) Sorcery	c) <i>Popoit</i>	c) Seance

Betisék houses in order to tease and to frighten sleeping infants. In the course of doing so, they bring serious afflictions upon them. Item 14 requires further clarification for it is not, in Stage I, attributed to an attack from a human or nature spirit. The condition *sawan* concerning persistent crying and sleeplessness in infants is associated with certain human acts and relationships which are thought to be harmful to the child's soul. To illustrate, if the afterbirth is buried in a place far away from the infant's house, say in another village, the soul of the infant is said to pine for the afterbirth. This eventually causes the infant to fall ill. The Ma' Betisék explain this condition by the belief that the afterbirth is the source of the infant's nourishment. It is believed to nourish the infant in the same way as the mother nourishes her child with milk. For this reason the infant would suffer as much physical harm when it is separated from the afterbirth as it would were it to be separated from its mother. The child's physical link with the afterbirth is carried into childhood, indeed until it is fully weaned from its mother. In fact, the afterbirth is sometimes referred to as *gendék* or 'mother'.

However, if the afterbirth has been buried in the vicinity of the village, persistent crying and sleeplessness in infants may be attributed to the rejection of the infant's birthname (*gelah puni*) by the infant's soul. This condition is normally treated by renaming the infant. Once the infant is given a new name its soul is believed to be appeased. Sometimes, a mother is thought to have a 'hot' body, a condition known as *kerét hangat*. Women who suffer from such a condition are said to have bodies which are physically harmful to infants and children. No matter how loving or attentive they are to their children, they are never able to keep their children for long for the latter would be constantly ill or die at an early age. The notion of a 'hot' body describes a kind of physical incompatibility which a mother has with her child. The mother is believed to possess a soul which is capable of destroying the body of an infant or child. In this context, the term actually means 'consuming'. When such a situation arises, the infant is temporarily taken care of by a close female relative. It may be left in her care until it is old enough to take

care of itself and is not dependent on its foster parent for food.

It is only after all the above explanations of *sawan* are exhausted and the appropriate remedies have been attempted that the condition is attributed to a spirit-attack. The spirits which are associated with the condition are *moyang sawan*, *moyang tangih* and *moyang sakat*. The first spirit, *moyang sawan*, is said to inflict nightmares and sleeplessness upon infants, children, and adults.² *Moyang tangih*, however, only disturbs infants. This spirit comes from the offshoot of a plant or tree which has grown from a stump. It is said to lure the infant's soul away from the house where it is sleeping. This is because it wants to play with the infant's soul. Here, the offshoot of a tree stump is conceived as a young child or infant. Its soul, conceptualized in the form of *moyang tangih*, is also similar to that of an infant or child. Consequently, the offshoot is always looking for playmates and gets a lot of pleasure in teasing and playing with infants. Infants' souls which are lured away from the house in this manner are said to be reluctant to return. When the infant is separated from its soul in this way, it cries and is unable to sleep till its soul returns. This condition is remedied by planting a tree stump bearing an offshoot in the compound of the house. Once this is done, the infant's soul will not wander too far away since it can play with *moyang tangih* in the compound of the house.

Moyang sakat is the spirit of plants and trees with breathing roots. It is said to make infants cry by frightening it with its roots. It does so when women carry their infants into the mangroves, forests and fields where trees with radical roots or parasitic plants with extended roots may be found. The condition caused by such a form of spirit-attack is treated by curative spells. These spells are specifically intended to remove the illness caused by *moyang sakat*. Sometimes, these spells are performed in the *popoit* ceremony, a healing ritual which may be performed by any elder who has a knowledge of Ma' Betisék curative spells. It differs from the seance in

² *Moyang sawan* is not described as a plant the way *moyang tangih* and *sakat* are but it could well be associated with a certain type of flora since the affliction it causes is the same as that attributed to *moyang tangih* and *moyang sakat*. Furthermore the spell, *tangkal sawan*, is called *tangkal sakat* (see Appendix 28, No. iv).

that it does not make use of helping spirits except in those rare situations when the elder performing the *popoit* is suddenly possessed by a spirit-guide of the shaman of the village.

All afflictions are, in Stage I, attributed to either physical factors or mystical attacks from human and nature spirits. The exceptions are those discussed in Item 14 which has been previously explained and conditions contained in Item 4 concerning body injuries, wounds and blisters. In Item 4, both physical and mystical causes are dominant in Stage I. Furthermore, a third cause, *punan*, is offered for injuries which occur just after the patient has been deprived of a certain type of food or has been disappointed by a close kinsman or lover. The conditions in Item 4 are multi-causal, mainly because each kind of injury is accounted for separately, in terms of the actual circumstances in which they occur. For example, the way in which a case of physical neglect is distinguished from a case of spirit-attack depends on the attitudes of the persons performing the activity. The distinction also depends on whether one or a number of individuals are affected by the condition. The speed with which a patient recovers from the injury is also another factor which is taken into consideration. In order to understand the way in which injuries are interpreted, three different types of injuries which occurred to various villagers will be described.

Case I: Injury attributed to personal negligence

While cutting leaves of the *nipah* palm, a woman was scratched in the eye by the edge of a leaf. Her eye hurt unbearably and immediately became swollen. She returned home, washed her eye and prepared to cook the evening meal. The next day the pain and swelling in her eye subsided. The villagers said that she obtained the injury only because she was in too much of a hurry to get the task completed.

Certainly here, the woman's attitude in performing the task seemed to be an important point of consideration. She was known by the women in the village to cut the palm leaves carelessly. She seldom cut them at the base of the palms nor did she take care to see that the young shoots were not damaged in the course of cutting the leaves. Further-

more, the pain and swelling subsided within a day even before any medicine was applied. Here, it is obvious that if the pain and swelling had lingered on for a few days, the injury would have been accounted for in terms of a spirit-attack. This incident differs significantly from that described in the following case where the affliction worsened after a course of herbal and Chinese medicine was given.³

Case II: Injury attributed to physical strain in Stage I and spirit-attack by an unnamed spirit in Stage II

A woman was working in the ricefields one day when she suddenly felt a hitting blow on her chest. She immediately fainted and was subsequently discovered by her husband. Her husband carried her back to their house and asked his son to fetch a glass of water. When she regained consciousness, he asked her what had happened. She told him that she was feeling very tired and had paused to rest in their old disused house in the fields. She said that she felt the hitting blow after she had resumed work in the fields. Her husband said that she must have had *pitam* (sunstroke) and advised her to wear a protective cover on her head. However, since the pain in her chest persisted, he made her drink some Guinness stout, Chinese medicine and a brew from guava leaves (Appendix 27). However, several days passed by and the pain in her chest worsened. The villagers argued that it could not be *pitam* since she would have recovered from it after following the course of herbal and Chinese medicine. Her husband suggested that it could have been caused by a human spirit who had also been resting in the abandoned house and was annoyed at her for trespassing on his abode. When a *popoit* ceremony was performed by her brother, he was suddenly taken possession (*segop*) by his deceased father's spirit-guide, *moyang cheep dekot*, a spirit of the emerald dove (*Chalcophaps indica*). It confirmed that the spirit responsible was a human

³ Chinese medicine, in either a herbal or powder form, is normally combined with local herbal medicine rather than used as an alternative for it. However, the Ma' Betisék find it expensive and resort to it only when they can afford it. It is, however, used more frequently than Western medicine. Tablets and mixtures for complaints like cough, stomach-ache and asthma are handed out from time to time by the Orang Asli Hospital but they are not always available when they are needed. When Western medicine is taken, it is again used as a supplementary medicinal cure rather than as an alternative to the local medicines available.

spirit living in the abandoned house. A tray of ritual food (*anchak*) was given to the offended spirit and the pain in her chest gradually disappeared.

In this case, although the injury was initially attributed to physical factors, it was later seen to be an incident of spirit-attack. Attitudinal factors did not seem to play an important part in determining the nature and cause of the injury. This was because the woman concerned did not display any kind of attitude which could have hindered her performance, or which could have contributed to the injury in some way. She was known to be efficient and hard-working, unlike the woman described in the first case. However, since she did not use a protective cover over her head, it was immediately assumed that she had a touch of sunstroke. It was only because she did not respond to the treatment of herbal and Chinese medicine that her condition was subsequently thought to be caused by a spirit-attack.

Case III: Injuries attributed to spirit-attacks from moyang kera' the macaque spirit

When a Chinese middleman informed the Ma' Betisék that a large number of macaques were needed by a European on the mainland, there was a sudden rush to trap them on the island. Men and women who were normally not interested in hunting and trapping began to set monkey traps in the mangroves and rainforests. Within the first week of the rush, two men were injured while setting the traps. One had fallen and incurred severe back pains, whereas another had injured his foot and was unable to walk. These injuries occurred within a day of each other. They were immediately seen as being caused by spirit-attacks by *moyang kera'* the macaque spirit.

The injuries were directly incurred in the course of monkey trapping. For this reason, the villagers assumed that the injuries had something to do with the trapping activity itself. Furthermore, *two* injuries were incurred, a factor which, to the Ma' Betisék, immediately eliminated personal negligence. It was obvious to them that the injuries were an indication that the animal hunted was expressing its annoyance in being trapped in such large quantities.

It is significant to note that the extra-strong *kemali*' powers which certain plants and animals are said to possess do not influence the way in which afflictions are explained. For example, the *nipah* palm which appears in Case I has extra-strong *kemali*' attributes. This implies that a spirit-attack from the *nipah* palm would bring on a mortal injury. Yet, because of the individual circumstances of the case, the injury was not attributed to a spirit-attack from the *nipah* palm. The extra-strong *kemali*' attributes of the palm would have had relevance in the case if the injury obtained was prolonged and showed no signs of response from a medicinal cure. This seems to suggest that such mystical powers which certain plants have are only retrospectively sought as explanations for the occurrence of certain injuries. Conversely, in Case III, the monkey which was trapped, namely the long-tailed macaque, is not endowed with extra-strong *kemali*' qualities. However, the injuries which were incurred were immediately explained in terms of spirit-attacks from the monkey spirit. This meant that in the situation described in Case III, the long-tailed macaque had exercised its powers of *kemali*' over the trappers.

It will be noted that contagious diseases like chicken-pox and measles (Item 3) and influenza (Item 11) are, in Stage I, explained in terms of spirit-attacks. This is mainly because such afflictions do not affect isolated individuals but spread to a large section of the population of the village. The explanation of contagious diseases seems to be consistent with the interpretation of injuries described in Case III. In both these situations, the afflictions are seen as *kemali*' in the initial stages of their occurrence because they affect a number of people simultaneously.

When an affliction is accompanied by more than one symptom simultaneously, it is said to be caused by a number of spirits. For example, chicken-pox accompanied by fever (Items 3 and 10 respectively) is said to be the result of spirit-attacks from *ma' lép* and *moyang oos* simultaneously. This is related to the belief that once a particular spirit attacks its victim, other spirits are encouraged to do the same. Also, a spirit-attack normally paves the way for another so that a person may recover from one, only to be afflicted again by

another spirit. Consequently, illnesses which manifest different symptoms at various stages of their occurrence are attributed to a series of spirit-attacks from named and unnamed spirits.

The general preoccupation with states of *tenong* or spirit-attacks in illness and injuries reduces the role of sorcery to one of secondary importance. In fact, the Ma' Betisék believe that only Malays and other aboriginal groups in Malaysia practice sorcery. Illnesses which are attributed to sorcery are always said to have been caused by Malays or Temuans living in the village or in a neighbouring settlement. During the period of my fieldwork, there were only three occurrences of sorcery in the three villages. All were attributed to a Temuan man who had married a Ma' Betisék woman in Bumbun. When she died, it was said that he had performed sorcery on her to enable him to marry a younger woman. This was confirmed by several elders who said that she had vomited blood a few minutes before she died. When an illness has been prolonged, bleeding from the orifices is normally seen as a symptom of sorcery. The second case of sorcery concerned a young woman who had gradually lost the use of both her legs. In the early stages of her illness, she had been admitted into the Orang Asli Hospital at Gombak, Kuala Lumpur, for observation and treatment. Although she was treated for her condition, she did not really make any positive recovery and was finally taken back to the village by her husband. A *popoit* ceremony was performed but her condition continued to deteriorate. Finally the villagers said that she was a victim of sorcery. The same Temuan man was accused, the motive this time being that he desired her and made her a cripple so that she would cease to be attractive to her husband. Since the Ma' Betisék themselves are not able to cure conditions diagnosed as sorcery, her husband took her to a Javanese medicine-man (*bomoh*). He confirmed the suspicions of the villagers and said that it was not done by a Ma Betisék. This inevitably made the Temuan guilty of sorcery for the second time. Her condition improved slightly after her visit to the *bomoh* but she never recovered the full use of her legs.

Cases of sorcery normally arise in the secondary stages

(Stage II) of the interpretation of illnesses relating to abdominal swellings (Item 5), bleeding from the orifices (Item 8), prolonged pains (Item 9) and madness (Items 17b and 17c). This was brought out in the second case of sorcery involving the woman suffering from paralysis of the legs. It was only when her condition did not improve after the *popoit* ceremony was performed that the villagers attributed it to sorcery. Even in the first case of sorcery described, no suspicion was cast until the final moments of death when she started to bleed from the mouth and nose. The third case of sorcery involved a woman who became mad (*gila'*). Generally madness (Item 17) can be a consequence of three factors. *Firstly*, a person can be born with a propensity to attract certain spirits (Item 17a). This quality is known as *ejen* and can be detected during childhood. If a person with powers of *ejen* does not perform the necessary rituals to tame the spirit or to send it away, he or she is permanently possessed by the spirit and goes mad. *Secondly*, a person can become mad as a result of a spirit-attack (Item 17b). A plant or animal spirit occupies the body of a person causing temporary loss of the soul. When this happens, a radical change takes place in the behaviour of the person. If this condition is allowed to linger on indefinitely, the person will eventually become mad. *Thirdly*, madness can be caused by sorcery (Item 17c). A person who performs sorcery on another is normally motivated by sexual jealousy or unrequited love. When madness is caused by sorcery, the condition is very prolonged and efforts to cure the victim by the healing rites set aside for spirit-attacks (*popoit* and *sawai*) may prove to be futile. Consequently, a case of madness is said to be caused by sorcery only after the *popoit* ceremony and seance is held and the possibility of it being a spirit-attack ruled out. This may be illustrated in the following case of a young woman whose madness was initially explained in terms of a spirit-attack but was finally attributed to sorcery.

The girl showed signs of madness soon after her marriage to a young man of her village. She would walk into the houses of her kinsmen and friends and carry off their knives, pots and other personal possessions. One day, during a ceremonial *jo-oh* dance she suddenly took off all her clothes

and began to dance about in the nude. This sudden lack of inhibition caused her father much anxiety. He sent her to the Orang Asli Hospital in Gombak for treatment. She returned to the village several months later, subdued and apparently cured. However, she soon began to behave strangely again. For example, her father had to fetch her from the village school one day when she frightened both the children and the teachers by climbing up the walls of the school and shouting at them through the ventilation bars.

After a few weeks, the girl's father called some of the elders from the village and discussed her condition with them. He said that he recalled an incident which occurred soon after her marriage and which may have had some relevance to her present condition. She was gathering firewood on the edges of the forest when she stumbled near a pit containing a snake. The elders thought this over and concluded that she must have been subject to a spirit-attack from the snake. A *popoit* ceremony was held but when her condition did not improve, her father decided to hold a seance. During the seance, the shaman's spirit-guides confirmed that she had been attacked by a snake spirit. A ritual offering in the form of the *balé* was made and her condition gradually improved.⁴ However, a year later she began to show the same signs of mental illness. The reason given for it this time was that she had broken a food taboo. A series of further seances was held but her condition became worse. By this time, she could not take care of her child nor manage her house. She also began to neglect her appearance and personal hygiene. Her hair lay in a tangled mass round her shoulders and she took to wearing her husband's trousers without a blouse. The women in the village ran away whenever she approached them for fear that she would suddenly turn violent. Her condition was daily discussed by the villagers and some began to suggest that she was a victim of sorcery. It took some time for her husband to accept the idea that she had become mad through sorcery. However, since the

⁴ The *balé* is one of the three ritual offerings (the other two being the *sembuang* and *anchak*) given to spirits who have inflicted humans with illness. It assumes the form of a miniature house and is offered when a condition is thought to be mortal or extremely prolonged. It will be taken up again in a later section of this chapter.

seances did not help her he was forced to admit that she was the victim of sorcery and sought help from a Malay *bomoh* on the mainland. The *bomoh* treated her but said that she would only fully recover if the person who made her mad removed the charm. At this stage, everyone was convinced that the Temuan had been responsible. They added that he was the sort of person who would never be satisfied with one woman, and could not bear his advances to be rejected by anyone. Consequently, since the woman's condition developed immediately after her marriage, it confirmed the villagers' suspicions that the Temuan was jealous to see her married to the young man.

THE TREATMENT OF ILLNESSES AND INJURIES BY MEDICINES AND CURATIVE SPELLS

Knowledge of medicinal cures is not restricted to the shaman or to the village elders. Most of the men and women in the village are able to administer it since it does not require ritual knowledge of a highly specialized form. It is normally administered at the level of the household. The desired leaf, root or fruit is sought and prepared in the manner required. The medicine is then given to the ill or injured person immediately. Mixtures which are not applied externally are normally mixed with water and drunk. A course of herbal medicine is normally followed before curative spells are utilized, but when the appropriate medicine cannot be obtained, curative spells are immediately sought from a village elder. The Ma' Betisék range of medicines also includes the use of certain animal fats and biles, raw meats and dried crustaceans. Appendix 27 gives a list of the types of medicinal cures which are utilized by the villagers.⁵ It will be seen that the medicines are more frequently derived from plants than from animals. It is significant to note that a large number of plants known to have medicinal value are not used by the Ma' Betisék despite the fact that they are available on the island and are freely used by the Malays and the Chinese on the island. It suggests that the Ma' Betisék do not place

⁵ This list is by no means complete and it is possible that the Ma' Betisék from other villages would have additional knowledge of medicinal cures from plant and animal extracts.

much importance on medicinal cures and tend to emphasize instead treatments based on curative spells.

Curative spells (*tangkal*) require ritual knowledge of a more specialized kind. Firstly, the spell has to be learnt from an elder in its ritually approved form. Secondly, it has to be administered correctly for it is said to work only if the words are repeated in the precise manner in which they are learnt. Most men and women specialize in one or two spells so that when a certain condition develops, there is bound to be an elder in the village who can administer the spell appropriate to the condition. Some spells like the *penawah* and *tatak* cover a wide range of illnesses. These are thought to be more potent than those which are used for specific kind of illness such as the *sambah* and *sawan*.

It was earlier mentioned that spells are used for conditions which are said to be caused by spirit-attacks. Since such conditions are normally prolonged, it is usual to resort to several different spells until the condition improves. Should the spells fail to cure the patient the failure is not taken as a sign that the spells are unreliable but rather, that the plant or animal which brought on the attack was unusually vindictive. The patient will then resort to the *popoit* healing ceremony. During the *popoit* ceremony, the spells are accompanied by ritual offerings in the form of the *sembuang* or *anchak*.

The most common administering agent used in spells is water. It helps the elder to 'fix' a spell, a procedure known as *isi tangkal*. A glass is filled with water and the elder repeats the spell three times. Each time he repeats the spell, he spits into the glass of water. The act of spitting into the glass of water symbolically transfers the potency of the spell into the water. The spell is now said to be 'fixed' in the water. The water is drunk by the patient to ensure that the spell is effectively transferred to the patient, and brings about the desired cure. Certain spells are applied directly onto the body of the patient by pressing the stroking motions of the hand. This action symbolically transfers the potency of the spell onto the patient. Once this is done, the illnesses is 'removed' from the body of the patient by outward sweeping motions of the hand. It is also possible to 'fix' a spell by murmuring it

into a betel-vine leaf three times. The potency of the spell is transferred to the patient when he or she eats the betel-vine leaf.

Spells are normally administered for three successive nights. At the end of the course of treatment, the patient is closely watched for any signs of improvement. If the patient's condition improves, the treatment is discontinued. However, if there is no visible improvement, the elder may repeat the treatment for another three nights. A Ma' Betisék normally seeks more than one spell as a cure. There is always an element of doubt that the patient's symptoms have been correctly interpreted or that the spell has been properly administered. Consequently, it is usual to try a number of spells to ensure the possibility of at least one working. General spells, like the *tatak* and *penawah*, are usually combined with specific spells like the *sambah* and *ték* to ensure a fuller recovery.

The popoit ceremony

The *popoit* ceremony is always performed on the third and last night of the spell treatment. This is because a *popoit* ceremony normally completes a course of treatment by curative spells. Before the ceremony begins, benzoin is burnt. All the items used for the ceremony are passed slowly over the smoke from the benzoin. The smoke acts as a medium of communication between the world and the overworld. It indicates to objects in the overworld that a healing ritual is being performed and that their support is needed to make the person well again. This act does not so much request human and nature spirits to attend the ceremony as to alert them to the dangerous situation the patient is in. Though spirit-guides are not used in a *popoit* ceremony, the elder performing it may be suddenly possessed by a human or nature spirit. The phenomenon of spontaneous possession or *segop* suggests that states of possession which occur during the *popoit* are involuntary and uncontrolled. The Ma' Betisék explain the *segop* by the idea that some spirits, when alerted, choose to wander to the scene of the *popoit* and suddenly decide to participate in the healing ritual. The spirits which possess the elder may be the shaman's

spirit-guides or any other nature spirits which are interested to attend the ceremony.

Before the elder repeats the spells to be used, he performs an act of divination to see if the patient has a chance of a speedy recovery. He picks up a handful of roasted rice from a bowl and throws it on the mat. He then arranges the rice which is scattered on the mat in pairs. If there is an odd grain of rice left behind, it is taken to be a good sign, for it means that the illness will be almost immediately cured. However, if all the grains match, it suggests that the illness will linger on indefinitely. A negative prediction suggests that the spirit is not fully satisfied with the ritual offerings given. The divination act is repeated several times and if the predictions which follow are still negative, another *popoit* ceremony will be performed after a period of time. A bigger ritual offering is usually made in the later *popoit* ceremony. This is because the first ritual offering is thought to be too small since it did not effect a cure.

After the divination act is completed, the elder repeats the spells silently three times. As he does so, he chews betel nut and blows in the direction of the patient. This ensures that the spell is properly transferred to the patient. The rite of removing the illness from the body of the patient is done with the *lambai* made from a bunch of *angkap* leaves (*Zallacca wallichiana*). These leaves, which have been finely cut and tied into a bunch, are slowly rolled over the right, then the left limbs of the patient. The leaves are then shaken over the ritual offering and the elder says aloud, 'This tray is yours, not the body over there; eat this and not that.' The act of rolling the leaves over the body of the patient symbolically ensures that the illness leaves the body. The act of shaking the leaves over the tray ensures that the spirit feeds on the food in the tray and not the patient's body. After this, the patient is made to spit into the tray. The expulsion of body liquid in this way expresses the expulsion of the illness which is contained within the patient's body. Significantly, it marks the final removal of the illness from the patient's body. At the end of the ceremony, the ritual offering is carried to the spot where the patient was thought to have been attacked by the spirit and left there.

If the patient does not show any signs of recovery after the *popoit* treatment is completed, a shaman is approached to hold a seance. The seance is the final course of treatment open for curing a person of an affliction. It differs from the other types of treatment mentioned in that it depends on the intervention of nature spirits from the forests and mangroves and human spirits from the overworld. It is regarded as the most important healing ritual because the spirits which bring on the affliction are now appealed to directly, with the help of the shaman's spirit-guides. Furthermore, the shaman's spirit-guides themselves possess the mystical powers which are necessary to cure afflictions of this kind. For this reason, the success of a seance is said to be completely dependent on the kind of co-operation and help which the shaman obtains from his spirit-guides.

SHAMANISM AND SPIRIT-POSSESSION

The shaman is referred to by the term *bekutai* which means 'a person who becomes spirit-possessed'. The actual state of being spirit-possessed is known as *chelui kutai*. The word *chelui* literally means 'to go down or to descend'. In this context, it refers to the act of descending of a spirit while the term itself expresses the descent and entry of a spirit into the body of a person. This term is used to refer to three different states of spirit-possession. *Firstly*, it may be used to refer to a shaman who becomes spirit-possessed by his spirit-guides during a *sawai* or seance. *Secondly*, it is used to refer to individual men and women who are suddenly possessed by human or nature spirits during a particular ceremonial activity. Such states of spirit-possession are known as *baja'* during the *jo-oh* and *segop* during the *popoit* ritual. *Thirdly*, forms of madness which manifest a radical change in the behaviour and personality of a person and which are accompanied by violence, exhibitionism, or promiscuity are also described as *chelui kutai*. This implies that illnesses termed as madness involve a state of spirit-possession where the person is completely mastered or controlled by a particular spirit. The exceptions to this are forms of madness said to be caused by sorcery. Madness brought on by sorcery may be explained in terms of a man sending out certain ally spirits to harm the

victim. Such a spirit will take over or invade the soul of the victim, eventually causing the person to go mad.

The kind of spirit-possession associated with shamanism differs significantly from that expressed in *baja'*, *segop* and madness. The difference is contained in the belief that the shaman is able to control and use certain nature and human spirits to assist him in the task of diagnosing and treating people who have been subject to spirit-attacks. In *baja'*, *segop* and madness however, the possessed person merely acts as a medium through which the spirits make their demands and needs felt. Furthermore, the state of possession is recognized to be voluntarily caused in the case of the shaman but involuntarily caused in people seized by *segop*, *baja'* or madness. Hence not all forms of spirit-possession are associated with shamanism. Generally, shamanism refers to specific forms of spirit-possession where a person voluntarily evokes a state of possession in order to procure the help of spirits in diagnosing and treating persons who are believed to have been spirit-attacked. The mental state of the performer whether in trance or not is not given much relevance; the state of spirit-possession is culturally explained by the audience according to set symptoms which appear in the seance. Trance-like states, here taken to mean involuntary and often hypnotic behaviour and actions are not an essential characteristic of a shamanistic seance. A shaman may enter into a trance or trance-like state during a seance but this is not a regular occurrence. When such a trance-state occurs, it is usually manifested a few hours after the seance has begun. By then, the hypnotic rhythm of the *bangèng*, the choral singing of the women, the chewing of the wild betel-nut, which has a psychotropic component, and the shaman's own vigorous dancing has the combined, cumulative effect of putting him into a state of trance. Significantly, the Ma' Betisék often distinguish between this form of shamanism and those which they have observed in other groups around them. For example, they comment that their shaman is not required to enter into a state of hypnotic trance the way Hindu fire-walkers do. Trance-like states may be manifested during the *popoit* and *jo-oh*. These trance-states appear in the form of unusual physical strength, spasmodic movements of the head

and body and the compulsive utterances of words and obscenities.⁶

The shaman's relationship with his spirit-guides

A man normally acquires shamanistic skills by inheriting helping spirits from a close kinsman or through *ejen*, described earlier as the natural propensity, on the part of certain men and women, to attract spirits. These spirits are said to follow the men and women to whom they are attracted everywhere and to attempt to establish a high intimate relationship with them. This description of such spirits is derived from the mystical experiences of men with *ejen* qualities. Once a man has a mystical encounter with such a spirit, he may, if he wishes, procure the spirit as a spirit-guide. Men, more often than women, inherit their father's or grandfather's spirit-guides when they possess certain qualities which the spirits like. Such a man would have to be generous with food and material possessions, and not express envy or jealousy when he sees others having more than him. Furthermore, he would have to be faithful to his wife at all times, and, if unmarried, refrain from premarital sexual relations and adultery. Spirits are reluctant to attach themselves to males who are promiscuous or to those who do not attach much importance to marriage rules. Finally, he would have to be clean at all times and wash himself daily. When a man possesses all these qualities which are needed to become a shaman, the spirit-guides of his deceased father or grandfather voluntarily seek him out. They indicate their wish to become his spirit-guides by appearing in his dreams. When a man experiences such a dream he burns benzoin the next morning and strokes his body upwards with the smoke from the benzoin. This is repeated three or five times, to seal, as it were, his relationship with the spirits. As he does so, he coaxes the spirits to attach themselves to him and to live with him on his shoulders. This is symbolically manifested by a

⁶ The compulsive utterances of words and obscenities is described by the Malays at *latah*. The Malays, however, do not associate it with spirit-possession the way the Ma' Betisék do. They treat it as a nervous condition which has a tendency to occur in older women and which is manifested when the women are startled or goaded on by someone.

yellow cloth which the shaman wears round his neck as a means of protecting his spirit-guides from physical blows or jolts.

The *ijen* quality in a man or woman may be discovered at an early stage in childhood. However, it tends to be more strongly manifested in men than in women, with the result that men are more able to procure spirit-guides this way. Furthermore, even if a man has powers of *ijen*, his spirit-guides will only continue to assist him if he has those personal qualities mentioned earlier. The *ijen* attributes also need to be guided according to certain ritual procedures which, if not performed, may bring about certain types of mental illness. For this reason, from the time a child learns to walk, its behaviour is anxiously observed to see if *ijen* symptoms are manifested. An indication of it is the child's tendency to wander off on its own. Another is when the child rejects the company of other children and develops interests in activities which are normally performed by adults. Some of the activities are cigarette-rolling, wood-carving and the learning of curative spells and love charms. Day-dreaming, aimlessness and poor health are also indications of *ijen*. During adolescence, a decision is normally made to keep or reject the spirits which one has attracted. If a decision is made to keep them, the ritual performed is similar to that held to procure the spirit-guides of one's close kinsmen. If one decides to reject them, a ritual offering is made to pacify the spirits. These spirits will then attempt to attach themselves to another person.

Spirits inherited or acquired through *ijen* may be both male or female human or nature spirits. However, in the village studied, there appears to be a greater number of nature spirits who become spirit-guides than human spirits. The shaman has a sexual relationship with his female spirit-guides. Once a male human or nature spirit becomes a spirit-guide, the shaman forms an intimate physical relationship with his spirit's spouse. It is said that the shaman has regular sexual relations with the wives of the spirits. For this reason, the shaman is careful not to sleep with other women except his own wife, for fear of offending his female spirit-guides and the wives of his male spirit-guides. Once

annoyed, the male spirit-guides, their wives and female spirit-guides will not descend to the seance to help the shaman. The shaman has sexual relations with his female spirit guides and the wives of his male spirit-guides through mystical encounters. They smile and beckon at him to follow them to the overworld. In some of these mystical encounters, the shaman describes visits to the Lédang mountain where the spirit-guides are believed to live when they are not with the shaman. Here, he is entertained to a feast of wild boar and monkey meat. Female spirits entertain him to music and dance and he finally ends up by sleeping with all of them. After spending a few nights on the mountain, he is sent back to the village riding on the back of a tiger. Afterwards, he recalls the events which have taken place as some kind of vivid dream.

The mystical encounters experienced by shamans with spirit-guides are very similar to those experienced by men who are not shamans but who have *ejen* qualities. The following account of such a mystical experience is rather similar to those experienced by the shaman when he communicates with female spirits.

This man displayed symptoms of behaviour associated with *ejen* soon after returning from a trip to the jungle. He became moody and distracted and refused to eat his food. The next day, he did not speak to his wife and when she asked him if anything was wrong, replied in broken, incoherent sentences that he wanted to be left alone. He spent all his time gazing out of the window. Suddenly, he told her that he was going to climb up the window because he wanted to fly away into the jungle where a woman was waiting for him. When he attempted to do so, she restrained him and made him go to bed. The next day, he told her that he wanted to sleep in the jungle and disappeared. When he returned, he said he had seen visions of a beautiful women who kept on beckoning to him to follow her into the jungle. The woman, he recalled, had long, black hair and wore a white dress with long sleeves. He then told his wife that he had followed her and slept with her that night, in the deep jungle.

Mystical encounters with such spirits continue after these

spirits become spirit-guides. These experiences which men have with female spirits and which the shamans have with the wives of spirit-guides and female spirit-guides suggest that the same sexual roles which are found between men and women are displayed between the shaman and his female spirits. Female spirits are in this context treated as wives of the shaman. The shaman's relationships with male spirit-guides do not express sexual roles but rather kinship roles. The shaman has a definite kinship status with each of his human and nature male spirit-guides and behaves towards them in the manner accorded to kinsmen of the statuses described. This will be brought out in a later section of the chapter. The background and character of the male spirit-guides of the shaman from Sialang illustrate the way in which these mystical encounters differ from those described earlier for female spirits. Altogether, he has five spirit-guides (excluding their wives). These are *moyang tunggal*, *moyang dampam*, *moyang chulau*, *moyang menteri* *muyeng*. Of these, only *moyang dampam* is inherited; the rest were obtained by *ejen*.

The spirits with the exception of *moyang dampam* formed attachments to him when he ventured into the different physical abodes which they frequented. *Moyang tunggal*, a tiger spirit, attached itself to the shaman when he went into the forest to gather some wood. The tiger spirit, realizing that its appearance would frighten the shaman, changed itself into a bamboo plant with seven shoots (*di' tunggal*). As the shaman chopped down a tree, his axe struck the bamboo plant. In a flash, *moyang tunggal* entered the shaman through his neck. When this happened, the shaman fainted. When he came round several minutes later, he felt a strange gripping sensation on his neck. He felt tired and heavy and decided to return to the village. That night, he dreamt that a tiger gazed at him for several minutes before disappearing. The shaman then realized a tiger spirit was trying to attach itself to him so he returned to the forest and burnt benzoin on the spot where he had fainted. He took the hard pith from the bamboo shoot back to the village and wrapped it in a yellow cloth. Since the bamboo plant had seven shoots, he smoked the pith for seven days. At the end of the seventh day, he asked the spirit to

come and live with him. Immediately, he felt a sensation on his neck and knew that the spirit had come to stay with him as a spirit-guide. Subsequently, the shaman made contact with the wives of *moyang Dempam* and *moyang tunggal* in the Lédang mountain.

The shaman's experiences with the other animal spirits occurred in the mangroves and on the shore. The encounter in the mangroves concerned the spirit *chulau*. Though a python, it did not attempt to assume another physical appearance to delude the shaman. It merely glided round the shaman's waist, and stretched its head upwards; its tail encircled the shaman's legs. It stayed in this position for a while before gliding away into the mangroves. The shaman realized that the python was an *ijen* spirit and the same night burnt benzoin, to persuade the python to become a spirit-guide. The incident with *moyang kepah* occurred several months later at the shore. He was gathering shellfish and bent to pick up a *kepah* shellfish. However, it suddenly disappeared and moments later, he felt a lump in his leg. He realized immediately that the shellfish was an *ijen* spirit and had entered his body through his leg. He repeated the same ritual procedure of burning benzoin for three nights. At the end of the third night, he felt a lump in his neck and knew then that the spirit had come to live with him. On both these occasions, he had dreams of silent old men. These dreams were interpreted as signs that the spirits were coming to live with him permanently as spirit-guides.

The shaman's experience with *moyang menteri' muyeng* occurred in a river beside the Aborigine Hospital at Gombak. This spirit was trying to attach itself to another man who also had *ijen* qualities. However, since the shaman's powers were stronger, it detached itself from this man and went for the shaman. It came before the shaman in the water as a human apparition. He immediately fainted and had to be carried back to the house. That night, he dreamt that he was taken to an old hut where a man fed him with rice. This was taken to be a sign that the human spirit was benevolent. After this experience with *moyang menteri' muyeng*, the shaman made it into a spirit-guide.

When these mystical encounters are compared, it will be

seen that they express the mediatory functions of the shaman, in establishing a continuity within and between the following domains:

- a) *the world*, comprising different physical domains, namely the human (village) and natural (forest, mangrove and shore);
- b) *the overworld*, comprising the mountain Lédang (of animal or nature spirits) and the *dunia' lapi tuju* (of human spirits).

On the world level, the shaman masters spirits from both the human and natural domains. *Moyang menteri' muyeng* is associated with the human domain while *moyang dampam* and *moyang tunggal* are linked with the forest within the natural domain. Within the natural domain, *moyang chulau* represents the mangrove abode while *moyang kepah*, the shore or sea. On another conceptual level, since all these are spirit-guides, they also belong to the overworld. In the overworld, the nature spirits represent the domain of mountain Lédang while the human spirit-guide, *moyang menteri' muyeng* belongs to *dunia' lapi tuju* or the seventh world. It follows that not only does the shaman mediate amongst the different domains in the world and the overworld, he also establishes a continuity between the world and the overworld. His spirit-guides are physically recruited from the world but they represent the overworld. When compared with other humans, the shaman enjoys the unique position of being able to mediate between the human and natural domain, on the world level, and, on a higher conceptual level, the world and overworld.

It was shown how the symbolic oppositions between the human and natural domains are neutralized by the shaman's ability to master spirits from both these domains. Here, these domains are conceived in terms of physical abodes – the human domain is represented by the village and the natural domain is represented by the forest, mangrove and shore. However, on another conceptual level, these domains may be conceived in terms of human and animal categories. In Ma' Betisék terms, according to the *tulah* ideology, humans are set apart from animals (and plants) by their ancestral laws which prohibit incest and cannibalism. In analytical terms,

humans are part of the cultural order, in the sense that they relate to each other according to a common moral code while animals are part of the natural order where such constraints on behaviour do not apply. Thus, by controlling both human and nature spirits, the shaman symbolically mediates between the human and animal world and, similarly, between the cultural and natural order. This reaffirms the *kemali* ideology that humans and animals (including plants) are similar in character and form. Indeed, when the shaman summons his animal spirit-guides and coaxes other animal and plant spirits to attend the seance, he addresses them in human terms – they are conceived as respectful elders, benevolent men and active players and dancers. Each animal spirit-guide has a personality of its own. Their characters are consistent with the different kinship statuses ascribed to them. In fact, in the attempt to incorporate animal spirits into the human world and the cultural order, human spirit-guides play a secondary role in the ritual proceedings which appear in the seance. This will be brought out more clearly in the following discussion on the shaman's mediatory functions in the seance.

The mediatory role of the shaman in the seance

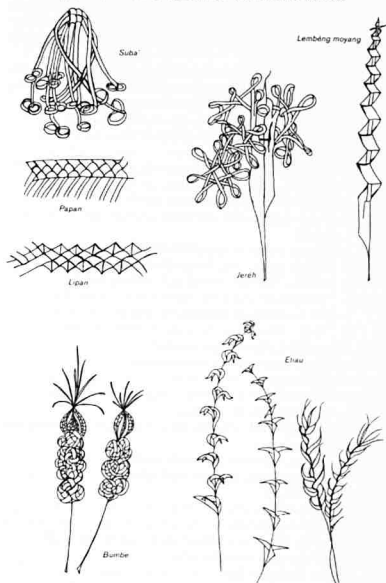
The summoning of the spirit-guides and other human and nature spirits

The seances follow certain set procedures which vary from time to time only in the way they are elaborated or simplified. Generally, they begin with the spirit-calling song, when the shaman calls upon his spirit-guides to assist him. Here the audience has a vital role to play in preparing and handing to the shaman all the necessary items he needs for the rite – the *lambai* or 'calling leaves', smoked benzoin, roasted rice, food, drinks, betel-vine and cigarettes. These items encourage the spirit-guides to descend and enter the shaman through his neck. The shaman is 'possessed' by his spirit-guides when he coughs, and begins to speak in a different voice and changes into a yellow attire. This marks the beginning of the next phase in the seance when the spirit-guides are entertained by the female members of the audience with food, humming, teasing and flirtation. The shaman

keeps up a long repartee with the audience until it is time for him to begin the curing ceremony. In this third phase of the seance, the curing ritual is enacted by a dance which the shaman keeps up till he believes that the illness bearing spirit has left the body of the patient. The dance is performed dramatically, changing from one which is slow and graceful to a frenzied, violent kind. This whole procedure is repeated for each spirit-guide which descends to the seance. Since they do not all appear simultaneously the seance may drag on for several hours before all the spirit-guides are suitably attended to and possess the shaman. The seance ends when the ritual sacrifice is blessed and sent away to the forest.

For the seance to be fully effective, it has to be held three or five nights in succession. The preparations are normally made a day in advance. The members of the household which the patient belongs to are responsible for obtaining and preparing the items to be used in the seance. Mats are rolled out on the floor and pillows arranged against the walls to enable the shaman to sit or to lie down in comfort during the ceremony. Several layers of plaited coconut or *nipah* leaves are stuck against the wall. These comprise a number of set patterns or designs which are only woven for ritual ceremonies where nature and human spirits have been invited to attend (Fig. 5). These leaves act as landmarks for the descending spirits to find their way to the world. They are symbolically important for the success of the seance party depends on whether these spirits manage to find their way down to the house where the seance is held. The Ma' Betisék believe that since these leaves represent things typical or characteristic of the world, the spirits will know, once they see them, that they have left the overworld and entered the world. The leaves then symbolize the continuity between the world and the overworld. The use of these plaited leaves to represent things of this world is consistent with the view that in the context of illness, human and plant/animal distinctions should not be made. The leaves are derived from plants, but when plaited they represent objects commonly used as humans. For example, the *suba'* and *jeréh* represent ear-rings and head decorations respectively. The *papan* and *lipan* represent forms of attire worn by both men and women; the

Fig. 5. Spirit leaves woven for shamanistic seances



lembéng moyang represents a knife used by men in hunting while the *etiau* and *bumbe* represent bird game and fruits respectively. These collectively typify the personal adornments, clothes, weapons and food which are commonly sought.

The symbolic incorporation of animal spirits into the human and cultural order is brought out in the following *kutai* or spirit-calling song of the shaman:

Number of
lines per
verse

The Spirit-Calling Song

1. One call, two calls, three calls, four calls, five calls, six calls, seven calls.
2. I am not calling malicious spirits,
- 3 3. I am calling the supreme players of the seventh world.
- 1 4. Come, come to the sixth world.
5. 'Pialak pialu', the leaves in the ricefields rustle and crackle, like the sound of breaking twigs.
- 7 6. 'Melinchau', hear the sound of the birds bathing.
7. See the blossoming flower near the stone well,
8. 'Wah, Wah', is that the sound of the drongo-cuckoo? (*Surni culus iugubris*)
9. 'Wait, wait', is that the sound of the green-leaf bird? (*Chloruspsis c. cyanopogon*)
- 7 10. 'Terambiau, terambiau', that is the sound of the monkey leaping on the tree?
11. 'Teléngkeng, teléngkeng', that is the sound of the frog.
- 1 12. Come, come to the sixth world.
13. I am calling the original players of the seventh world,
- 3 14. I am calling our ancestors of the seventh world,
15. Follow the patch of the seven fences, the seven crossings, the seven lemon trees, the seven wells.
16. Bring with you the dew,
17. To bathe, to heal,
- 5 18. Come, change your clothes with mine,
19. Come, change your shadow with mine,
20. Come, come and enter me.

- 1 21. Come, come to the sixth world.
22. There's a sweet fragrance in the air,
23. It is the fragrance of the *antoi* flower(?).
- 5 24. It is the fragrance of the *kenanga* flower, (*Cananglum adoratum*)
25. It is the fragrance of the *senduduk* flower,
26. Come and see the young virgins bathing near the well.
- 1 27. Come, come to the sixth world.
28. Cross over the *lipan* string,
29. Cross over the *papan* string,
- 5 30. Cross over the *etiau*.
31. Cross over the *lembéng moyang*
32. The *suba'* flower hangs on the wall.
- 1 33. Come, come, to the sixth world.
34. Your child is sick,
35. Take a look, have a peep,
- 4 36. Your child is ailing,
37. Your child has a fever.
38. Come, change your clothes with mine,
- 3 39. Come, change your shadow with mine,
40. Come, come and enter me.

The song begins with the shaman calling the spirits of the overworld to the world. In the context of the seance, the spirits are all associated with the overworld, rather than with the various domains in which the shaman's spirit-guides were recruited. For this reason, they have to be called to descend to the world where the seance is being performed. The shaman calls the spirits by flicking the *lambai* leaves alternately over his shoulders. Each gesture he makes coincides with a call. He repeats the call seven times to express the seven worlds which exist within the Ma' Betisék cosmology. Although the shaman is only concerned with the seventh world which, in the context of the song, represents the overworld, he goes through the procedure of mentioning each world before calling on the spirits of the seventh world.

In the first verse (lines 1 to 3), the contrast between the world and the overworld is brought out by the association of the former with 'malicious spirits' and the latter with 'supreme players'. Here, all spirits of the overworld are treated

as human ancestral spirits. This is probably because human ancestral spirits are associated with acts of benevolence, in contrast to nature spirits which are associated with spirit-attacks. The spirits of the overworld are lured to the seance by the contrasting physical forms of life which are found in this world. The song brings out the physical attractions of the world by dwelling on the sounds and movements of plants and animals in the fields and forest. Lines 5 to 11, 22 to 26 are concerned with these forms of life and activity on the world. The emphasis appears to be on plants and animals rather than human life. Line 26 mentions virgins bathing near the well but here again, this form of human activity is linked with the fragrance of flowers, that is, objects contained within the natural domain. Generally then, the world is made to appear to contain all things which are earthy, in contradistinction to the overworld which is made to contain all things which are spiritual.

The helping spirits are guided down to the world by land features which are associated with *Pulau Buah*, the intermediary world, between the sixth and seventh world, which takes care of the souls of the dead. It implies that the journey from the seventh to the sixth world necessitates crossing over *Pulau Buah*, where the route of the seven fences, the seven crossings, the seven lemon trees and the seven wells has to be attempted.

The emphasis on the number seven here expresses the Ma' Betisék concept of numbers that things which are odd are good while things which are even are bad. Since odd numbers symbolize events or situations which change in a positive direction, the Ma' Betisék always ensure that ritual objects, items of food and the numbers of people attending the seance appear in odd rather than even numbers. This is indicative of the idea that the situation will change for the better. However, when even numbers appear in the context of illness, it suggests that no change will occur in the situation which is experienced; the illness will not get better or worse. It is meaningful that the spirit-calling song constantly draws on the number seven, when objects of the overworld are mentioned. This relates to the idea that it is the objects from the overworld which will bring the cure. The

Fig. 6. The *Taman Bungak* – spirit flowers woven for shamanistic seances



optimistic note of the song is further expressed in the way in which each set of ideas is narrated in lines of three, five or seven. More specifically, the activities of animals, the fragrance of flowers or the actual call of the spirits from the overworld appear in clusters of three, five or seven. Each

verse contains three, five or seven lines which form a set of interrelated ideas. Each of these is punctuated by the actual calling of the spirits which forms a total of five lines (lines 4, 12, 21, 27 and 33). It is only when the patient is mentioned that the verse contains four lines (lines 34 to 37). This manifests the unchanging state of the illness of persons who have been subject to attacks from spirits.

The individual spirit leaves which are mentioned in the song express the spirits' journey from *Pulau Buah* to the actual scene of the seance. As mentioned earlier, they symbolize the continuity between the world and overworld on one conceptual level, and the continuity between culture and nature on another. These leaves exist alongside an elaborate artificially constructed 'flower garden' (*taman bungak*), presented like a flower vase. The 'flower garden' is made from the young shoots of the *nipah* and the coconut palm which are cut out into intricate shapes and designs and pierced through soft sticks to form flower sprays. These sprays are stuck into the soft stem of the *betam* palm (*eugeissona triste*) and arranged in five different parts (Fig. 6). The soft stem of the *betam* palm is laid on a pitcher of water and placed in the centre of the room where the seance is held. The 'flower garden' is supposed to be the final destination of the spirits in this world; here, they are supposed to relax and contemplate the beauty surrounding them before assisting the shaman in the seance. This beauty will, it is said, make the spirits more eager or willing to assist in the seance. The 'flower garden', like the 'spirit leaves' earlier described, represents a recreative spot where humans commonly venture. It also symbolizes the cultivated garden plots in the village. In this sense, though the 'flower garden' is derived from plants which are found in the natural domain, it is concerned with an aspect of human life which is linked to activities which are recreational. Here again, cultural and natural categories are symbolically interlinked, through the depiction of 'natural objects' in a cultural form.

The extension of the kinship order to the shaman's spirit-guides

When the spirits finally descend to the world and make

their way to the seance, they are immediately incorporated into the human world by an extension of the Ma' Betisék kinship terminology. Once this is done, their social statuses are elevated to that of village elders. This is manifested in the kind of role behaviour which is maintained between the spirit-guides and the audience. Furthermore, the superior hierarchical position of the spirit-guides is reinforced by the use of Malay terms of address which are specifically reserved for members of the Malay aristocratic class and royalty.

The tiger spirits are normally the first to arrive at the seance. The audience know that they have arrived when the shaman coughs after the spirit-calling song, assumes a completely different voice and proceeds to put on his yellow attire. Their presence is believed to act as a positive inducement to the other spirits to attend the seance, mainly because the tiger spirits are known to be equipped with extraordinary powers of healing and prediction. In fact, the shaman of Sialang maintains that if his tiger spirit-guides do not want to attend the seance, the patient will never ever be cured since the other spirit-guides will also refuse to attend the seance. The importance of the tiger spirits in Ma' Betisék seances is related to the idea discussed earlier in the chapter that tigers have extra-strong *kemali* powers. Consequently, since they are able to cause humans mortal harm, they are also able, once they become spirit-guides, to cure them of mortal injuries or illnesses.

The arrival of *moyang dampam* and *moyang tunggal* is signified by a highly ritualized form of greeting accorded to elders. They are addressed by kinship terms based on their relative statuses to the shaman. *Moyang dampam*, being the grandfather of *moyang tunggal*, is placed two generations above the shaman while *moyang tunggal* is placed in the same generation as the shaman but in a younger age category. The audience addresses the two spirits in exactly the same way as the shaman himself refers to them. *Moyang dampam* is addressed as 'grandfather' (*nénék*) while *moyang tunggal* is addressed as 'younger brother' (*adi*). The former, in turn, addresses the audience as 'grandchild' (*kenchét*) while the latter uses the term 'elder brother' (*ké-é*) for the men in the audience and 'elder sister' (*Ka-u*) for the women. The wives of *moyang*

dempam and *moyang tunggal* are addressed as 'grandmother' (*gendoi*) and 'younger sister' (*adi*) respectively. However, they seldom address the audience directly so that corresponding kinship terms of address for the audience are hardly used.

The human spirit, *menteri muyeng*, is placed a generation above the shaman. It is addressed by the term 'uncle' (*ibah*). While his wife is addressed as 'aunt' (*gomo*). *Moyang menteri muyeng* in turn addresses the audience as 'child' (*kenon*). *Moyang chulau* and *kepah* are placed in the same generation as the shaman and like *moyang tunggal* in a younger age category. They are addressed as 'younger brother' and address members of the female audience as 'elder sister' and members of the male audience as 'elder brother'.

The symbolic extension of the Ma' Betisék kinship terminology to the shaman's spirit-guides is further brought out by the way in which they behave towards the audience. This is again more elaborately expressed in the tiger spirits than in the other spirit-guides, whose presence is generally ritually insignificant. *Moyang dempam* announces his arrival with a low, painful cough characteristic of that of elders. He mutters and grumbles and asks for water and food. He complains that he has come a long way and is tired, 'I have climbed up and down mountains to come to this place because you told me that a grandchild of mine is ill. Give me food and water. We can talk about it later.' Once he makes this ritual greeting remark, the women in the audience begin to fuss around him and to offer him food, drink and tobacco. They light him a cigarette and hand him a betel-vine leaf containing tiny pieces of betel-nut. After eating, he makes an elaborate show of annoyance at being summoned to the seance. He also complains that the young have forgotten their respect for the elders, this being the reason why he dislikes helping out in the seance. The term *bajuk lamak*, which literally means 'old clothes', is constantly used by *moyang dempam* to express the negligence of old customs and institutions by the younger generation.

In contrast to *moyang dempam*, *moyang tunggal* presents a picture of youthful exuberance and joviality. He arrives at the seance in a good humour and immediately asks the women how their husbands are. This is in accordance with the joking

behaviour expected between members of the opposite sex of the same generation. He then proceeds to make a few cheeky comments on some of the women present. They respond with laughter and offer him food and a cigarette. He then asks them if he can replace their kindness with a monkey. Deliberately to harass them, he refrains from commenting on the patient and persuades them instead to sing for him, adding that he loves to hear their sweet voices in a chorus. Finally, after much coaxing and teasing, he agrees to help cure the patient of his illness.

The respective statuses of the tiger spirit-guides are elevated by the use of the Malay terminology reserved for members of the Malay aristocracy and royalty. When they are called upon to eat, the audience uses the term *santap* instead of *nachah*, despite the fact that the latter term is normally used when an invitation to eat is being extended. The term *santap* emphasises the superior status of the tiger spirits in relation to the audience. The spirit-guides, in turn, use the common term *nachah* when they invite members of the audience to join them in their meal. This is probably an attempt to differentiate between the relative statuses of the tiger spirit-guides and the audience. Another term which is commonly used in the Malay term *mengadap*, which refers to a wish to be granted an audience from those of noble ranks. During the seance, the audience tends to use this term instead of *kahei*, which means 'to ask' or 'to request'. Both these terms are constantly used throughout the seance by members of the audience, including titled elders who are present. Generally, then, the spirit-guides and the audience are differentiated by a ranking system where humans are placed in a hierarchically lower position than spirit-guides. In this way, the spirit-guides are symbolically integrated into the human world and, like the shaman, made to enjoy an elevated position within it.

During the seance, the mediatory function of the shaman is brought out by the way in which he interchanges his physical appearance and behaviour between that of a man and a tiger. Significantly, when he is possessed by his tiger spirits, he puts on the attire of a titled elder. This emphasises the 'humanizing' aspect of the seance when the tiger is depicted

as a man. During this period, the possessed shaman wears a grass skirt, sash and black headgear. These garments are similar to those worn by titled elders in the early days before cloth was used for daily wear. The grass skirt and sash are made from the shoots of the coconut palm and are yellow in colour. In the ritual context, yellow symbolizes events which deal with or which are part of the supernatural order. However, it refers only to positive features within it, namely those forms of mystical power with which humans are equipped. In the context of the seance, it specifically refers to the mystical powers associated with the shaman. Black, however, expresses the supernatural order in a negative sense. The black headgear used symbolizes things which are dangerous and which are, on the whole, harmful to humans. On one conceptual level, then, the use of yellow and black garments manifests the union between the shaman's magical skills and the tiger's mystical powers. However, since it is worn only after the shaman is possessed by his tiger spirit-guides, it also expresses the idea that the tiger is equipped with powers of healing, though it is still potentially dangerous to man on account of its innate *kemali* characteristics. This is dynamically shown in the shaman's dance performed during the act of treatment.

The shaman's ritual dance

This dance is performed by the shaman alone after he is possessed by his tiger-spirits. It comprises a series of slow and quick movements which are rhythmically sustained by the use of two bunches of *lambai* leaves. The shaman swishes these leaves over his shoulders and across his body as he whirls round on a fixed spot in the centre of the room. As he dances, the women sing a slow, melancholy song, calling upon the tiger spirits to cure the patient. Every now and again, they pause to sing and to cry at the sad fate of the patient. As the women sing in chorus, the shaman slowly dances towards the patient and moves round him, once clockwise, then anticlockwise, and finally, once again, clockwise. He then dances towards a clay pitcher containing rainwater and 'spirit leaves', then picks a lemon from a plate beside the pitcher. He drops the lemon into the pitcher and

then peers into it, swinging his head from side to side. This is an important divination rite which is performed to see if the patient has been subjected to a spirit-attack. If the cut surface of the lemon is revealed, it is a sign that certain spirits have harmed the patient seriously. Also, it suggests that the spirit-guides would have difficulty in trying to cure the patient. However, if the cut surface of the lemon is concealed, it is a sign that the attack is from a less harmful spirit and that a cure could be obtained without much difficulty. The shaman then uses a lighted candle to look out for further clues of treatment of a positive or negative kind. He removes the spirit leaves from the pitcher and looks at the tiny plaited leaves which are floating in the water. If these plaited leaves have a tendency to float together, it is a sign that the illness will linger on indefinitely. However, if they float away from each other, it is a sign that the illness will lead to a speedy recovery. The shaman then dances with the lighted candle under his chin and slowly moves away from the patient.

The dancing continues for a while and the shaman again returns to the patient to perform the cure. He extends his hands over the benzoin smoke and places them on the patient's head, shoulders, arms, thighs and finally, feet. The same rite is performed with the *lambai* leaves, though this time, the leaves are rolled across and away from the patient's body. The shaman repeats this three times before resuming his dancing. At this stage in the dancing, the tempo changes gradually and the shaman's movements become faster and more vigorous. He begins to beat his body with the leaves and as he thrashes about the floor, claws at the mat and tears at it with his nails. It is important to note that it is only at this stage of the dance that the shaman begins to exhibit the mannerisms of a tiger. This occurs only at the end of the dance when the tiger spirit-guides are about to take their leave and return to the overworld.⁷

Generally, it may be seen that when the shaman is possessed by his tiger spirit-guides, the kind of behaviour which he

⁷ In the Malay version of tiger shamanism (Winstedt, 1927: 343-5; Maxwell, 1883: 224-6) when the shaman (*pawang*) is possessed by a tiger spirit, he exhibits the mannerisms of a tiger immediately and licks the patient, to cure him or her of the illness.

expresses is essentially human. However, when this state of possession is about to end, the kind of behaviour expressed by the shaman is animal-like. This is manifested when the shaman is possessed by his other animal spirit-guides. It suggests that the tiger and the other animals which form the shaman's spirit-guides are humanized only in the context of the seance but resume their animal state when they leave it. This supports the argument that the symbolic continuity between humans, plants and animals, and culture and nature, is relevant only in contextual terms. When the dance is being performed, the shaman clearly avoids movements like leaping, jumping and shrugging so that animal-like mannerisms are not shown. The shaman maintains a slow steady pace in his dancing, making sure that his hand and feet movements are in perfect symmetry with one another. When the right hand is raised, the left foot is raised at the same time, and the alternative raising of the hand and feet is consistently maintained throughout the dance. However, the end state of possession is expressed by movements which are both vigorous and unco-ordinated. It appears that during the seance animals as spirit-guides are believed to have mystical powers which are more effective and potent than those possessed by humans. By incorporating human features and forms into animal spirit-guides, such forms of mystical power, which are in other circumstances dangerous, may be positively directed to cure people from illnesses.

During the seance, the shaman relates the stories or events of the past through singing. In his songs, he laments the callousness of juniors towards elders and the indifference of the present generation of the Ma' Betisék to their ancestral laws. The shaman is accompanied by his wife and son on the *bangèng*, a chordophone or zither-like instrument, with a bamboo frame and flat sounding board with three strings. The shaman's wife and son strum if simultaneously. It is regular to use two *bangèng* instead of one, the explanation being that the spirit-guides might not descend if the music is too soft or low. The instruments are played by a plectrum on the right thumb. The shaman's singing follows the musical arrangement of the *bangèng*. Generally, the arrangement of the music is heterophonic in the sense that the two players

attempt to intensify the same notes but without deliberately aiming at simultaneity.

The heterophonic melody of the *bangèng* is superimposed by the use of the tonic drone. This is a hummed instrumental, where the singing is done without a text. It is performed entirely by the female members of the audience. The melody of the tonic drone is brought out by two principal singers who hum a continuous drone on the keynote (tonic) of the music. The melody is polyphonic, comprising a raga-like structure. It maintains a slow descent down the scale, with points of dissonance against the drone held on to, and played around musically. The transition from one note to another is legato, that is, slurred or carried in a smooth and gliding manner. The phrases which the two women maintain are much longer than those sung by the shaman. Generally, the melody has a tessitura range and covers at least an octave.

It is significant that in the context of spirit-calling and spirit-possession, the music is meant solely to accompany the shaman in his singing, and not the female members of the audience. This immediately structures the shaman's singing according to the heterophonic arrangement of the music. The two female singers, however, maintain a polyphonic arrangement by singing independent parts; one at least an octave above the shaman and the other, at least an octave below the shaman. In this way the music and the shaman's own singing is medially arranged, between the musical phrases of the two female singers. Significantly, the women sing phrases which make a wavering descent and ascent to the keynote of the music. This melodic structure is maintained continuously throughout the seance. The singing stops only when the shaman begins to dance but continues again when the dance ends.

Generally, the melodic arrangement of the singing, by the shaman and the female chorus, reinforces symbolically the function of the seance in merging things which are in the *tulah* context, distinct and apart. Since the shaman sings in order to be possessed (spirit-calling) and to maintain a state of possession, he expresses the essentially non-human or spiritual order. In contrast to the shaman, the female singers are

not possessed during the singing. They express the human order and the worldly. The combination of the two melodies expresses the symbolic conjunction between objects of the natural order, here perceived as spiritual and objects of the human order, here viewed as non-spiritual or worldly.

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE RITUAL OFFERING: THE ANCHAK SEMBUANG AND BALÉ

The *anchak* and *sembuang* are trays of food offered to spirits who have been harmed by humans. They are generally offered to the offended spirits at the end of the seance. The *balé*, however, assumes the form of a miniature house fully equipped with bedding equipment, bowls of food and a light. It is also a form of ritual offering given to spirits who are said to be responsible for the illness of injury of the patient. The choice between a *sembuang*, *anchak* or *balé* depends on the parting instructions of the spirit-guides. Since the *anchak* is a more elaborate tray of food than the *sembuang*, it is more likely to be offered where the illness is prolonged. A *sembuang* then is normally offered when a seance is held for a patient for the first time. If after several courses of treatment, the patient still shows little sign of recovery, the ritual offering will be an *anchak*. A *balé* is normally prepared when both the *sembuang* and *anchak* have been offered and the patient still shows little sign of recovery. It is regarded as the final form of ritual offering possible so that if the patient's condition does not improve after it is offered, a new series of seances is held and the three forms of offerings are given again in the same order. Generally, then, the more serious and prolonged the illness, the bigger and more frequent the ritual sacrifices prepared.

TABLE 11 Food items in an *anchak* ritual offering

<i>Food items</i>	<i>Portions raw</i>	<i>Portions cooked</i>
1 <i>Tembok</i> or <i>lojo</i> ¹ (banana flour cake wrapped in banana leaves)	7	7
2 <i>Lepat pulot</i> ² (glutinous rice wrapped in leaves)	7	7

<i>Food items</i>	<i>Portions raw</i>	<i>Portions cooked</i>
3 <i>Tupat</i> (hill rice wrapped in coconut shoots)	7	
4 <i>Hentot</i> (banana slices)	7	7
5 <i>Yét</i> (yam slices)	7	7
6 <i>Boi</i> (sugar cane pieces)	7	7
7 <i>Kueh tepong</i> (plain flour cake)	7	7
8 <i>Kueh pap</i> (stuffed pastry)	7	7
9 <i>Nale</i> (cassava pieces)	7	7
10 <i>Nale lepat</i> (cassava wrapped in banana leaves)	7	7
11 <i>Pulot</i> (yellow glutinous rice in cockle shell)	0	1
12 <i>Tepong</i> (white flour in cockle shell)	0	1
13 <i>chamai</i> (betel-vine leaf)	3	0
14 <i>Bakau</i> (tobacco)	3	0
15 <i>Be'</i> (white hill rice in cockle shell)	0	1
16 <i>Bé' So'</i> (loose white hill rice) ³	1	1
17 <i>Bé' So'</i> (loose hill rice coloured red)	1	1
18 <i>Bé' So'</i> (loose hill rice coloured purple)	1	1
19 <i>Bé' So'</i> (loose hill rice coloured black)	1	1
20 <i>Bé' So'</i> (loose hill rice coloured light yellow)	1	1
21 <i>Bé' So'</i> (loose hill rice coloured dark yellow)	1	1
22 <i>Bé' So'</i> (loose hill rice coloured green)	1	1
23 <i>Bertés</i> (roasted rice)	0	1
24 <i>Sonkot</i> (candle in coconut shell)	1	0
25 <i>Gambah</i> (human figure moulded from flour)	1	0

Notes:

¹ and ² These items are normally tied to strings and hung along the handles of the basket or tray.

³ Where loose rice is itemized, one portion indicates a small handful.

Three main rules apply in the preparation of these ritual offerings. *Firstly*, the portions of food within each have to be prepared in extremely small quantities. *Secondly*, the items are always prepared in odd numbers. *Thirdly*, each portion of food which is arranged in the trays or *balé* have to be prepared half raw and half cooked. Before analysing the implications of these rules, it may be necessary first to examine the actual food contents within the ritual offerings. The following is a description of the food items offered in an *anchak* for a woman who was suffering from paralysis of the lower limbs.

Table 11 shows the number of food items which were prepared for the *anchak*. The items total up to an odd number, twenty-five. This is in accordance with the belief mentioned earlier that things which are good appear in odd numbers whereas things which are bad appear in even numbers. The *anchak* tray covered the main food items consumed by the Ma' Betisék daily. An emphasis was placed on rice and root crops. The *sembuang* also comprises these items of food but a few which are considered to be extras, such as Items 4, 7 and 8, may be excluded. The final item (Item 25), comprising a human figure moulded from flour, may also be excluded from the *sembuang* since it is considered to be something which is only sacrificed for prolonged illness. Betel-vine leaves and tobacco are essential for both the *sembuang* and the *anchak*. They are not food items for sustenance but are an important part of a meal. They are normally eaten before and after the main meal. Item 24, which is a lighted candle in a coconut shell, is also offered for both the *sembuang* and the *anchak*. Though it is not a food item it is an essential item in the preparation and cooking of food. In the *balé*, the food which is offered may not be as extensive as the other two but the most important food items such as rice, fish or shellfish, water, tobacco, cigarettes are always included.

Again, when the portions of each individual item are examined, it becomes apparent that the emphasis is on odd numbers. Food items derived from root-crops are prepared in seven portions. Those prepared from rice comprise one portion each while supplementary food items such as betel-

vine and tobacco are prepared in portions of three. This shows the constant emphasis on odd rather than even numbers in the presentation of objects used in the seance. Since even numbers are associated with the occurrence of misfortune and illnesses, they are avoided in the preparation of these ritual offerings. Furthermore, they express the state of completion of acts and events, or conditions and situations, that remained unchanged or permanent. Odd numbers, however, are associated with good health and fortune and events which are unfixed or changing. This symbolically acts as an assurance that the illness will improve and the patient make a positive recovery.

The tendency to represent objects of ritual offerings in small portions rather than in the normal portions in which they are consumed is explained by the concept of *mét asi'*. This refers to the notion that spirits see things in a reversed form from humans. Consequently, large portions of food will be seen as small, while small portions of food will be seen as large. This concept of *mét asi'* extends to other items such as clothing, sleeping mats, light, water, dwellings, etc. It accounts for the fact that in the *balé*, these items are prepared in a miniature form. However, it is important to note that in the seance, this notion extends to all objects which are within the spirit-guides' view. Consequently, the small human figure moulded from flour will appear to the spirits to be a human of normal size. Though the preparation of spirit-food in small quantities is explained in terms of *mét asi'*, it also serves, on the symbolic level, to differentiate food for humans from food for spirits. The preparation of food normally consumed by humans in small portions for the spirits suggests that though the food is typical of and derived from the human order, it is specifically designed for spirits. Again here, the *kemali'* ideology is reinforced. Spirit food mediates between human food and animal food, in the sense that it is prepared for non-humans but is derived from human sources, that is, food which is cultivated and forms the major part of the diet of the Ma Betisék. However, spirit food is opposed to both human and animal food on another level; the spirits eat cultivated food in small portions, unlike humans who eat cultivated food in large portions and animals which

eat food from the wild in large portions. The cultural and natural orders in this world are symbolically interlinked by the spiritual order in the overworld.

This argument is reinforced by the rule that food presented in ritual offerings has to be prepared half raw and half cooked. The only exception to this rule is in such items as betel-vine leaf and tobacco. The ritual offerings appear to focus on those forms of food which are cultivated in order to emphasise their essentially cultural form. However, although the food offered is cultivated, it is also presented in a raw form – half of the portions of rice, yam, banana, cassava and sweet potatoes are left uncooked. This again serves categorically to differentiate human food from spirit food. While humans eat cultivated forms of food cooked, spirits eat these cultivated forms of food half raw and half cooked. Animals, however, eat food from the wild in a raw form. The *kemali* ideology is symbolically sustained by the way in which the spiritual order mediates between the human order and the plant and animal order.⁸

Generally, when the Ma' Betisék experience illness or suffering, the anthropomorphic and mystical attributes of plants and animals become more acute and dominant, suggesting that the balance and separation between man and nature has been temporarily upset. It is a situation which calls for the help of ritual specialists, particularly the shaman, who can master and befriend creatures of nature. Through an elaborate ritual procedure, he forces humans to admit their folly and acknowledge the supreme mystical powers which plants and animals have over them. Once gratified and

⁸ Wilder (1963: 174) suggests that the offering of both raw and cooked food in the *anchak* is an attempt to satisfy spirits who like their food raw and spirits who like their food cooked. This is explained in relation to the 'Wild Huntsman' spirit who has a following of 'ghostly' birds. The 'Wild Huntsman' spirit eats food only in a cooked form while the ghostly birds eat their food only in a raw form. Though this explanation may hold for the Malay *anchak*, which Wilder is concerned with, it does not explain the offering of raw and cooked food in the Ma' Betisék *anchak*. On the manifest level of explanation, the Ma' Betisék say that the 'Wild Huntsman' spirit is a giant (described as *moyang serang*) who inflicts upon humans illnesses causing bleeding from the orifices (see Item 8 of Fig. 38). *Moyang serang*, however, eats his food raw. His birds, which act as his guards, also eat their food raw. Thus, in the Ma' Betisék version of the 'Wild Huntsman' spirit, the explanation provided by Wilder does not apply. Ma' Betisék wandering human spirits do not necessarily take their food cooked.

compensated, by ritual sacrifices these nature spirits withdraw, allowing the human/natural order to be restored and maintained once again. In this domain of experience, humans who have been affected by illnesses or injuries refrain from activities relating to the destruction of wild life till such a time when they are properly cured. Once they recover, plants and animals are conceptualized in *tulah* terms and *tulah* dominated activities begin.

Summary and Conclusion

The main purpose of this study has been to analyse the belief system of the Ma' Betisék in the context of ideas relating to the plant and animal world. These ideas contained in the concepts of *tulah* and *kemali* are ideologically opposed, for while the *tulah* view reveals that plants and animals are fundamentally different from humans and therefore can be exploited as food, the *kemali* view expressed the idea that plants and animals are similar to humans and consequently should not be exploited as food. These two views were analysed contextually to see the way in which ideological oppositions were expressed on the level of symbolic thought and ritual activity.

It was found that *tulah* and *kemali* ideas were expressed in a mutually exclusive way; each idea appealed to a different domain of experience and was symbolically expressed in the context of the activity which was performed at that particular moment in time. More specifically it appears that when economic activities – such as hunting, gathering, fishing and sedentary cultivation are performed, the *tulah* view is upheld. In the context of these activities, plants and animals are symbolically conceived as 'cooked food'. This expresses the idea of plants and animals being sources of human food. Humans eat their food cooked in opposition to plants and animals which do not cook their food. Significantly, all plants and animals are, in the context of *tulah* ideas, regarded as edible. The categorical distinctions which are important are not so much those between edible or inedible types of food as between sweet-tasting and bitter-tasting fish, meat and vegetables and between food which causes illnesses symptomatic of poisoning and those which do not. Whenever ritual activity attempts to control or direct the production and exploitation of plants and animals in a particular way, it

is not performed to propitiate human, plant and animal spirits. Rather, it attempts to maximize the conditions in which crops, fish and game may be obtained from the wild. Therefore ritual prohibitions of this kind attempt to channel economic behaviour in such a way that plants and animals may be more effectively exploited as human food.

The idea that plants and animals are sources of human food is brought out on the mythological level. Certain myths of plants and animals contain themes of their destructiveness. They attempt to assume human forms and enter the human world in order to kill men, women and children. Because of their destructive qualities, they have been cursed by the ancestors of the Ma Betisék and forced to become food for humans. This ritual curse has made them lose their mystical powers, with the result that now humans are able to exploit them in any way they wish. Significantly, plants and animals which are regarded as sweet-tasting and which are therefore popular types of food are depicted in the myths as destructive. This suggests a relationship between plants and animals which are mythically depicted as destructive and cursed and those which are regularly sought as food.

In the context of ceremonies relating to the harvesting of rice and durio fruit, *tulah* ideas are again expressed. The same symbolic distinctions between humans and plants/animals are expressed. Plant and animal spirits, referred to as *moyang* are invited to partake in the harvest festivities but they are symbolically conceived as entities separate from and opposed to humans. This is manifested in the way in which food is offered to spirits and in the way in which the dancing and singing festivities are carried out. Rice for spirits is separated from rice for humans by presenting it in an uncooked form. Though the rice prepared for spirits is roasted till it is black, it is regarded as uncooked. In contrast, rice for humans is mildly roasted and then boiled. Since it is not roasted till it is burnt, it is white in colour. It also differs from the rice prepared for spirits in being whole grain rather than broken grain. Such ceremonial feasting has the effect of emphasizing the differences between the human and the natural order on one conceptual level and of contrasting things which are worldly from things which are spiritual on another.

During the *jo-oh* festivities, the spirits are invited to join the dancers but they are spatially and physically set apart from the other dancers. Youths who represent the spirits wear facial masks, old clothes and badly matted grass skirts, in contrast to the other dancers who do not wear facial masks, but put on their best attire and finely woven grass skirts. These dancers are physically contrasted with the masked dancers who not only look grotesque but also behave in an animal-like manner. They prance about like wild animals rather than dance the way the unmasked men and women do. The symbolic separation of humans from animal and semi-human spirits is also brought out in the way in which the masked dancers are made to dance away from the rest of the dancers. The masked dancers move round the centre mound in the same direction as the other dancers but maintain their distance from the latter. The emphasis on the natural or animal like characteristics of these masked dancers is further brought out in the care taken to ensure that they do not become spirit-possessed. Spirit-possession in the context of harvest ceremonies is avoided and feared. Although the masked dancers represent spiritual entities, they are dissociated from the mystical powers of *tenong* which spirits are attributed with in the context of *kemali* beliefs. The avoidance of spirit-possession in the context of *tulah* beliefs is explained by the idea that it occurs in an uncontrolled and unpredictable manner in contrast to spirit-possession in shamanistic seances which is guided and controlled by the shaman.

The contents of the harvest songs also bring out the secular aspects of the rituals. The emphasis appears to be on the physical features and behaviour of plants and animals rather than on their mystical attributes. The melody of these songs also expresses their popular features for they are, for the most part, adapted from popular Malay dances. Malay love verses are also incorporated into the songs and these again express the secular features of the harvest rituals. Significantly, these songs are also sung in the context of courtship and marriage when the Ma' Betisék attach a great deal of importance to sexual and physical attraction. Just as charms are used to direct animals into traps, so are love charms used to captivate

the souls of certain men and women for the purpose of marriage and adulterous relationships.

Generally, it will be seen that in the context of the exploitation of plants and animals as food, the human world is set apart from the plant and animal world. On another conceptual level, an opposition is maintained between the human and the spiritual order and the world and overworld. This is mainly brought out in harvest ceremonies when spirits from the plant and animal world are invited to attend the ceremonies. However, although a world/overworld opposition is here maintained, the mystical powers of the plants and animals and wandering human spirits are symbolically underplayed though certain ritual procedures. What is given primary importance is the contrast between the human and the plant and animal life and the way in which the human order is made to enjoy a hierarchically dominant position over plants and animals. Ritual activity designs at controlling, directing and manipulating plants and animals rather than subjugating human behaviour to spiritual forces from the plant and animal world.

In the course of the performance of these economic activities, a number of villagers may experience misfortunes in the form of illnesses and injuries. Furthermore, natural calamities, in the form of thunderstorms, whirlwinds and drought may occur from time to time and affect the villagers as a whole. In these situations, a less pragmatic view of the plant and animal world is upheld. This view is orientated round the *kemali'* concept that the killing of plants and animals is a violation of the moral order. In this context, anthropomorphic beliefs in the origins of plants and animals become dominant. *Kemali'* ideas are also expressed on the mythological level when certain plants and animals are depicted as benevolent rather than destructive. Plants and animals which appear in Ma' Betisék myths of origins are normally depicted as good, having aided humans in the task of establishing a suitable and proper physical environment to live in. Those which are attributed with unusually strong powers of mystical attack are also, for the most part, mythically depicted as benevolent rather than destructive. It appears that the opposing conceptions of plants and animals

in different domains of experience are manifested on the mythological level in the different ways in which plants and animals are depicted. Some animals are described in a series of myths where *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas are manifested in separate myths. This expresses the mutually exclusive characteristic of *tulah* and *kemali*' ideas of plants and animals. Myths which contain both ideas are few but when they occur, these ideas are expressed in sequence, in different stages of the myth. Although both ideas are expressed in the myths, the contents which are referred to at a particular moment in time are those which are ideologically appropriate to the situation the Ma' Betisék find themselves in.

The rituals which are performed in the context of illness and injuries are those which are concerned with propitiating spiritual forces in the plant and animal world. These are performed so that human, plant and animal spirits may remove the illness or injury or recruit help from other spirits to do the same. In the *popoit* or illness removing ceremony, ritual offerings are presented to the spirits which have inflicted a particular illness or injury on the patient, in the hope that the spirits will remove the affliction from the patient. During the *kutai* or shamanistic seances, the shaman attempts to recruit help from his animal spirit-guides and other human and nature spirits with which his spirit-guides are in contact. In order to encourage them to assist in the healing and curing, he incorporates his spirit-guides into the human world and, in doing so, removes the hierarchical dominance which humans maintain over the plant and animal world. The animals spirit-guides in particular are treated with reverence and respect and are given the status accorded to Ma' Betisék elders and members of the Malay aristocracy. Consequently, the patient and members of the audience are placed in a junior-elder and commoner-royalty relationship with the shaman's spirit-guides. In this way, animal spirit-guides are made to enjoy a hierarchically superior status over the patient and members of the audience. All spirit-guides are referred to as *moyang*. Animals which are individually named and which constitute the shaman's regular spirit-guides are not in this context referred to as *lau'*. The idea that plants and animals are food resources for

humans is not in any way brought out in the context of the seance.

The symbolic incorporation of the shaman's animal spirit-guides into the human world is also manifested in the extension of the Ma' Betisék kinship order into the natural and spiritual order. The shaman's spirit-guides are conceived as members of his local descent group. Each spirit-guide enjoys a different kinship status and behaves according to the status he is given. The members of the audience do not assert their respective statuses within the descent group or household and behave as juniors, thus emphasizing the relative inferiority of their status.

The emphasis on spirit-possession in the context of the seance may be contrasted with the avoidance of spirit-possession in the context of harvest festivities. The seance is only effective if the shaman is possessed by his spirit-guides. In other words, the success of the seance depends on the shaman's ability to channel the mystical powers of his spirit-guides in a positive way. If he is unable to achieve a state of spirit-possession during the seance, it implies that he has not obtained the co-operation of his spirit-guides and, consequently, cannot cure the patient of his illness or injury. For this reason, when the shaman calls his spirit-guides to attend the seance, he tempts them to come down to the world by singing a melodious song. The melody of this *kutai* song is raga-like in structure and is completely different from the melody of the *jo-oh* songs which are to a large extent based on popular Malay dancing music. The differences in the melodies of these two sets of songs are brought out by the taboo placed on singing these songs out of context. The *kutai* song can only be sung during the seance while the *jo-oh* songs can only be sung in the context of hunting, harvest festivities, courtship and marriage. The instruments which are used for these two types of songs are also different and cannot be interchanged. The *bangèng* is the only instrument which is used for the *kutai* song while the *jo-oh* song requires the use of the drum, bamboo sticks, the violin and the xylophone.

The contents of the *kutai* song emphasize things which are earthy – sounds and movements of animals, the fragrance of flowers, the rustle of leaves and tall grass and the sexuality of

women. This clearly shows that the aim of the *kutai* song is to encourage spirit-guides to descend to the world; things which are earthy are thought to attract the spirit-guides. In contrast to these images created of the world, the overworld is, in the song, associated with spiritual and human characteristics. The spirit-guides are referred to as supreme players, benevolent ancestors, and humans with mystical powers of healing and curing. The contrast between the world and the overworld is brought out by emphasizing the earthy characteristics of the world and the sacred features of the overworld. Consequently, while the symbolic distinctions between the human and the natural order on the world level are underplayed, the symbolic distinctions between the world and the overworld are brought out. On one conceptual level, the shaman's spirit-possession song symbolically mediates between the human and the natural order while contrasting the distinctions between the world and the overworld. However, on another conceptual level, the shaman's subsequent state of possession mediates between the world and the overworld and simultaneously the human and the natural order. These categorical distinctions are neutralized for the animal and human spirit-guides of the overworld behave as humans. This is particularly brought out by the tiger spirit-guides which behave like humans when they assist in the seance and suddenly show their animal qualities when they are about to leave the seance. When the shaman is spirit-possessed by his tiger spirits, he performs a slow graceful dance; the movements of the hands and feet are not unlike the Malay *silat*. This dance is not performed by the male or female dancers during the *jo-oh* and, in fact, is considered improper. The shaman changes his movements into that of a tiger when his stage of spirit-possession is about to end. The movements of the shaman are now similar to the movements of the masked dancers in the *jo-oh*. This implies that at this stage in the seance the animal spirit-guides lose their human qualities and become animals again. The symbolic depiction of the tiger as a human and a shaman, in the context of the seance, brings out the way in which animals are, in situations of misfortune, conceptualized as objects of the human order, rather than the natural order.

The symbolic opposition between human food and plant and animal food is not emphasized in the context of the seance. Here food offerings to spirits constitute items of food which are normally consumed by humans. However, the food is prepared half raw and half cooked. Since raw food is linked with plants and animals and cooked food with humans, this suggests that the food prepared in ritual offerings acts as a mediation between the human world and the plant and animal world. The mediatory functions of the ritual offerings are also brought out by the care taken to ensure that the food items are derived from domestic sources rather than from the wild. Human food, however, is derived from both the domestic and the wild. Consequently, plant and animal spirits (including wandering human spirits) are offered food which has been cultivated because it symbolically removes them from the domains which they are associated with (forest, mangroves, shore, etc.) and makes them part of the human domain (village). Since plants and animals consume food derived from the wild, they are categorically set apart from plant and animal spirits which consume food derived from the village. This reinforces the *kemali* view that in the context of illness or misfortune, plants and animals are conceived as spiritual entities rather than as things which are essentially non-domestic or wild and which may be eaten. Other factors also serve to differentiate the food given in ritual offerings from the food which is normally consumed by humans or animals. The food items are prepared in proportions which are too small for human consumption. Furthermore, each food item is offered in odd rather than even numbers, a characteristic which is not manifested in food prepared for normal human consumption. On the conceptual level, it may be argued that food prepared for ritual offerings, in the context of illness-removing rituals such as the *popoit* and the seance symbolize the mediation between the human and natural order while simultaneously differentiating objects which are human and secular from those which are spiritual and sacred. While the distinctions between humans, plants and animals are not observed, the distinctions between the world and the underworld are emphasized.

From the above discussion, it will be seen that though *tulah* and *kemali*' beliefs are ideologically opposed, they are each reinforced in different situations so that at any one moment one view may be upheld while the other is ignored. *Tulah* beliefs reveal a pragmatic view of plants and animals, and it therefore follows that the times when they are asserted are during activities relating to the production of crops, the gathering of forest products, fishing, the gathering of shellfish, and the hunting and trapping of animals. The practice of love charms is another activity in which *tulah* ideas dominate and here again, the activity is orientated around the manipulation of plants and animals for one's own fortune or gain. Wedding festivities also bring out *tulah* ideas, particularly in the context of *jo-oh* ceremonies. Although it is likely that *tulah* ideas may be reinforced in the context of other situations, it is in these spheres of activity that *tulah* ideas appear to be given a great amount of importance. *Kemali*' ideas, however, are more strongly reinforced in the context of illness and other kinds of misfortunes. Significantly, situations of misfortune render an appeal for ideas which are less pragmatic. Here, rather than humans being regarded only as dominant over plants and animals, the reverse view is maintained, that plants and animals are dominant and mystically more powerful than humans. This view appears to be ideologically more appropriate to the nature of events which occur. Funeral rituals also reinforce *kemali*' notions; but because of the practical limitations of the study, these rituals have not been discussed in this book. Although not all the different kinds of ritual situations have been explored, those which were mentioned have been studied and discussed in detail in order that a sufficient insight and understanding of the structure of the Ma' Betisék belief system may be obtained.

The emphasis on the situational or contextual aspects of symbolic language and behaviour has been made in an attempt to show how beliefs which are ideologically contradictory may be maintained in the long term. It was shown that these beliefs can be maintained and perpetuated indefinitely, mainly because each set of beliefs is situationally maintained. Since they are mutually exclusive to each other,

only one view is given importance at any one moment. On the level of individual behaviour, it implies that while some men and women within the village uphold a *tulah* view of plants and animals, other are, simultaneously, only concerned with *kemali*' ideas. Individuals who are ill or injured are subject to ritual prohibitions on hunting animals, gathering forest products and shellfish, fishing and cultivating, but those who are not ill or subject to any kind of illness or injury do so freely without any restraint. As individuals recover from their illnesses, these ritual prohibitions are lifted and they begin to perform the same economic activities as before. Meanwhile, others who cultivate, gather and hunt may, in the process of doing so, obtain certain injuries or fall ill. Once the condition is diagnosed to be the result of a spirit-attack, they immediately stop these economic activities and observe the ritual prohibitions associated with *kemali*'. It appears that only when natural calamities occur do the villagers as a whole observe *kemali*' beliefs. Individuals who observe ritual prohibitions without actually being ill are the shaman and women who are pregnant or who have recently delivered. However, here again, pregnancy and the loss of blood is often described as an affliction. Also, since the Ma' Betisék believe that pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to spirit-attacks, they are in a state of danger throughout their pregnancy.

The constant ordering and reordering of rules of behaviour makes it theoretically difficult to understand Ma' Betisék beliefs of plants and animals out of the context of experience. Generally, the shift from a more pragmatic view to one which is anthropomorphic suggests a kind of belief system which functions like a simple pendulum. Both systems of ideas have equivalent statuses but neither system can ever be maintained for long since they both refer to events or activities that occur daily or which are concerned with the every day task of living. The kind of life the Ma' Betisék lead makes activities relating to food gathering as important as activities relating to misfortune and illness, which are ultimately concerned with ending states of poor health. Indeed, two fundamental issues which are constantly discussed are food and illness. Their obsession with the procurement of

food and understanding illness could lead one to assume that it is essentially the *tulah* state with which the Ma' Betisék are concerned, that they are apparently aware of the synergistic aspects of illness and injuries. More specifically, illness and injuries make it difficult for them to hunt and gather, with the result that they experience food shortage and hunger and consequently get more ill. However, nowhere, in the whole period of my research, did the Ma' Betisék use such an argument. They would see the connection if one worked it out with them but their beliefs about food gathering and their conception of plants and animals in this context are totally separate from their beliefs about illness and their conception of plants and animals in illness situations. It can be said that the emphasis on pragmatism and anthropomorphism reflects one way in which a society, which lives in such close proximity to nature and which is dependent on it for its members' livelihood, adjusts to various events which are both predictable or necessary and unpredictable or unfortunate.

Generally, the symbolism of plants and animals in other cultures has been studied rather intensively by a number of anthropologists. However, not all these cultures which have been researched on, have the same kind of combination of physical and social variables; namely, a mangrove environment, which allows for a wide range of activities relating to food procuring, from the land, forests, mudflats and sea; which encourages a kaleidoscopic spread of animistic and anthropomorphic ideas and which supports practices relating to spirit-possession and shamanistic cures. If meaningful comparisons are to be made between the Ma' Betisék ethnography with such studies of plant and animal symbolism, it may only be possible to draw upon the more theoretical aspects of treatment of data in these societies.

It has been shown, in the earlier sections of this study how Levi-Strauss's use of linguistic theory has revealed the underlying structure contained in myths of plants and animals. Since Levi-Strauss's analysis of these myths is essentially a theoretical exercise to formulate a general theory of primitive thought, it does not attempt to draw on other central or salient features of the ethnography of these societies. If an

anthropologist is concerned with presenting a more integrated and in this sense, empirical view of the belief system, an analysis of other features of the symbolic system would be crucial towards developing such an understanding. For this reason, Turner in his study of Ndembu religion placed important emphasis on the contextual and variational aspects of symbols. By relating changes in the symbolic structure to changes in ritual behaviour, the underlying complexities in Ndembu symbolic concepts and ideas have been revealed.

A more recent study on ritual symbolism in Gell's work in Melanesia, on the *Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries* (1975), which focusses on the analysis of a sago fertility rite, known as *ida*. In this study, a linguistic analysis is attempted of the *ida* rite, by examining the various meanings contained in single lexical items and seeing the ways in which those items interconnect to convey ideas about the Umeda world view. This method of analysis helped him to discern oppositions between centrality and laterality in the Umeda world view, oppositions between men and women, clan kinsmen and non-kinsmen and living abodes and the wild. The study reveals that such oppositions are not only expressed in terms of social structure but also plant and animal characteristics and features of the human body. The Umeda symbolic system consequently reveals a triple analogy, where plant, animal and human symbols are seen to play an integral part in Umeda thought. While this approach is clearly innovative and expresses a painstaking exercise to understand ritual behaviour not in social structural terms alone but in the context of all living things that the Umeda view with importance, it presents a picture of the Umeda belief system from an external model that demonstrates a structural continuity between human, plant and animal forms and the social system. The oppositions within each, for example, clan and non-clan kinsmen in the social system, are reinforced in the other categories; hence the cassowary is identified with the wild, anti-social behaviour and the hostile category of non-clan kinsmen. Since an analogous relationship is seen between these three sets of ideas, the model gives the impression that the Umeda belief system forms a coherent harmonious framework. This brings to mind the

recent comment by Brunton (1980) that the model developed by Gell probably does not give a true picture of Umeda thought since very often, Melanesian informants 'appear uninterested in topics about which they might have been expected to have very definite views; people contradict themselves and each other, and appear unconcerned when this is pointed out; there may be a high rate of ritual obsolescence and innovation' (1980: 113). Brunton's argument is that the systematization of ideas and beliefs in a certain cultural system is very often created by the anthropologist, that the people themselves see no order in their beliefs. He also suggests that his comments have wider applicability beyond the scope of Melanesian cultures. Perhaps part of the problem of handling material of this kind is that the theoretical approach which is used represents either the existing current schemes used by anthropologists or a diversion away from it. If the theoretical framework has a shaky foundation because the people studied do not have stronger convictions in their ideas, sooner or later, the anthropologist builds around this foundation and fortifies it. But if no harmonious scheme in fact exists in the minds of the people being studied, does this imply that the beliefs do not have a 'system' or occur along a predictable pattern? Rather than worry about whether people see an order or not in what they say or do, it may be more meaningful to evaluate their ideas in terms of the way or ways in which they operationalize them, and then to test them for their reliability and predictability. Thus if inconsistencies and contradictions govern a people's world view one then needs to know the trend or ways in which these inconsistencies and contradictions occur. For example, the Ma' Betisék world view is based on two contradictory notions of how humans, plants and animals relate to each other, but on the basis of the Ma' Betisék way of life both are equally relevant and important. These views are only coherent when they are operationalized, not otherwise. Their notions of the world are not explicitly expressed in *tulah* or *kemali* terms all the time, nor do they care to do so, to enlighten the observer. However, after prolonged research it is possible to see a kind of situational logic in their thinking. In reality, they do not see an order within their belief system

but they certainly know the most convenient and appropriate concepts and expressions to use at the right time. The predictability and reoccurrence of this pattern of thought and behaviour is easily tested once its contextual forms are understood.

It is significant that studies of belief systems are becoming increasingly concerned with preserving the variations and contradictions that exist in interpretations of native concepts within a certain culture and in seeing these variations as an essential characteristic of the belief system of the group. Another important study in the context of the Ma' Betisék beliefs is Endicott's study of Batek Negrito religion in Malaysia (1979). Here, Endicott attempts to grapple with the numerous Negrito ideas and interpretations of the natural environment and world in which they live. Although the Negrito are hunters and gatherers, their world view is like the Ma' Betisék and other aboriginal groups in Malaysia both 'natural' and anthropomorphic. Since the Batek De is only one of the many Negrito groups found in Peninsular Malaysia, Endicott is faced with the task of understanding their religious expressions in relation to other Negrito groups. His general complaint is that previous writers on Malaysian Negritos have ignored the differences that exist in their beliefs, in order to present the data in a coherent or well ordered scheme. By preserving the variations, Endicott gains a deeper understanding of Batek religious concepts and the way in which they are used, but maintains that, there is no 'correct' order in the Batek world view. They learn and describe it in bits and pieces and 'any wider integration of ideas seems to be done individually or at least largely independently' (1979: 30). What emerges from his study of Batek religion is the view that they see the natural order as an 'ideal-type' concept but do not believe that the world is stable and harmonious. Hence superhuman beings and anthropomorphic concepts are brought in to 'help explain deviations from what is assumed to be the normal run of events'. This implies that anthropomorphic concepts which are only relevant or meaningful in the context of calamities, misfortunes or illness, exist as a set of peripheral ideas within the Batek world view. Here a rather significant difference is discerned

between Negrito and Ma' Betisék thinking; anthropomorphic concepts completely take over the Ma' Betisék world view in similar dangerous or uncertain situations so that it becomes a major obsession for the individual or group concerned. The 'natural' view of the world, as a place meant for humans to enjoy and exploit given the abundant availability of plant and animal resources, has no scope or relevance in these situations; since these situations occur almost daily, in no way can the 'natural' *tulah* view be seen as an ideal-type construct.

Here, it is important to see that states of trance, spirit-possession, shamanistic language, music, songs, dances and the presence of helping spirits in situations of illness and misfortune all reinforce the importance of seeing the natural environment as supernatural or anthropomorphic. Nothing is really excluded from this view for changes even occur in the Ma' Betisék self-perception. Their self-perception demonstrates humility, inferiority and weakness, in relation to other living things. Thus it is insufficient to understand *tulah* and *kemali* concepts by merely examining the way in which the Ma' Betisék view natural objects around them for the concepts also suggests changes in self-perception. When plants and animals are 'food', humans are hunters and gatherers but the inverse is also true – plants and animals can become superior 'humans', making humans seem like animals that are hunted.

The understanding of a people's world view in terms of indigenous concepts that express attitudes and behaviour towards the natural environment and human life invariably draws attention to language, semiology, symbolic analogies and metaphors. In cultures where people uphold animistic beliefs and rely heavily on anthropomorphic descriptions and explanations of the origin, characteristics and behaviour of plants and animals, the study of the symbolic system supporting these descriptions and explanations is important in order to obtain a deeper understanding of their world view. However, one could also simultaneously study these ideas in a contextual framework, for this enables the anthropologist to understand better the existing variations and contradictions in the people's conceptualization of living objects,

physical events and behaviour. Thus the symbolic analysis undertaken merely acts as a tool for research, it does not imply that religious ideas and behaviour are always or invariably symbolic. Where a culture is rich in symbols the symbolic system reveals a latent dimension in the structure of ideas. This argument leads to a more fundamental problem in the anthropology of religion which is mainly concerned with the need to see religious ideas in the context of specific theories. The view that religious ideas and ritual belong to a separate mode of thought concerned with 'spiritual beings' (Tylor, 1837; 1979), of things which are sacred' in opposition to the 'profane' (Durkheim, 1912; 1976), of ideas which are based on unscientific or non empirical experiences (Malinowski, 1931) has given way to formulations which employ a tighter cognitive model where such dichotomies of modes of thought are ignored. Geertz's definition of religion as 'a system of symbols' which has the power to convert subjective experiences into seemingly real situations (Geertz, 1966) suggests that religion is a logical world view within the context of experience. Geertz's view has a functional rationale but like Turner (1967) and Douglas (1966) sees the importance of understanding religion as a symbolic system of ideas, or a system of symbolic communication best understood through linguistic theories or models (Levi Strauss, 1965; Gell, 1974; Leach, 1976). Then again, other definitions of religion (Horton, 1960; 1967) see it as the application of a 'human model', (essentially by using and transferring human characteristics and behaviour) to a 'non human world'. Here human symbols are used to express religious ideas. Guthrie (1980) asserts a similar kind of view where he attempts to develop a cognitive theory of religion by arguing that 'anthropomorphism is inevitable in human thought'; that it is, 'though by definition mistaken, not especially irrational'; and that it characterizes 'religious thought' in particular (1980; 184). He concludes that religion is 'typically anthropomorphic'. It appears that anthropologists, in seeking to develop a widely applicable and predictable theory of religion have begun to think of it as an expression of a world view, rational and logical within the constraints of culture, using explanations and descriptions that are often symbolic and

generally applying human-like models to a non-human phenomena. However, there is also increasing awareness as in Endicott's study of the Batek Negrito that even members of a particular culture may not need to see an order or logic in their beliefs or behaviour and may prefer to develop (and utilize) their views and concepts in a fragmented way. Furthermore, as shown in this case study, members of a group may see two or more rational system of explanation of *similar* phenomena, since it may be contextually meaningful or situationally logical to do so. If South-East Asian cultures are accused of upsetting the theoretical constructs developed by anthropologists elsewhere, it would be possible to agree that animistic cultures in South-East Asia have developed and borrowed their world views from each other over centuries but have learned to adjust their conceptual ideas to the diversity of experiences and activities that are found. The oscillating world view of the Ma' Betisék for example, clearly varies from the Malay world view in Peninsular Malaysia. The Malays maintain a syncretic world view where Islam and animism continue to contribute to the wealth of ideas and explanations about physical and social phenomena. These two systems of ideas appear fused in both ritual thought and behaviour; when the explanations are magical the ritual that follows may rely on Koranic views and expressions and vice versa. Many religious groups are beginning to question the validity of animistic thought in an increasingly Islamic dominated culture and yet in many situations animistic ideas become an important consideration. Magic based on animism is used increasingly among both rural and urban Malays coming to grips with an rapidly changing society. Consequently, a growing Islamic fervour is equally balanced by an increasing interest in magic.

Similarly, in the context of changes taking place in Ma' Betisék society on Carey Island, it is significant that the equilibrium between *tulah* and *kemali* ideas continue to be maintained. Rapid urbanization, deforestation, population pressure, land scarcity, increasing competition for forest products and increasing scarcity of game are some of the many problems faced by the Ma' Betisék today. On the mainland, these problems have gradually forced the Ma'

Betisék to become sedentary agriculturalists enabling them to integrate with the surrounding Malay and Javanese communities.¹ The island Ma' Betisék see their problems increasing daily but express hope that the authorities will bring economic development into the villages. However, although their increasing merge into the cash economy is viewed with optimism and hope, the problems relating to deforestation and land scarcity are viewed with great anxiety. Economic development is seen as their prerogative, a necessary step towards procuring food items and material goods which are necessary for their livelihood while deforestation and land scarcity are seen as two dangerous events that eventually increase the wrath of ancestral and forest plant and animal spirits. They claim that these spirits will find it increasingly difficult to obtain shelter and game and this would lead to a situation of over-crowding in the remaining patches of forest. Some may leave for the towns while others may move into the villages. This, they say, will increase the incidence of misfortune and suffering in the village since the spirits will now attack indiscriminately with violent vengeance. This anxiety reflects events which are viewed in *kemali'* terms while the eagerness for economic development, reflects a *tulah* view. Although a balance is still discerned, it is possible that if economic development cannot counteract the growing ecological imbalances faced by the Ma' Betisék, a more dismal and pessimistic view of the future may be expressed in which the *kemali'* world view will strengthen. Shifts in the balance of ideas between *tulah* and *kemali'* are already discerned on the mainland.

Significantly, on the mainland, *tulah* views are not emphasized to the same extent as on the island. Here, a possible relationship may be seen between their decreasing participation in economic activities such as hunting, trapping, gathering and fishing and the relative unimportance of *tulah* ideas. Beliefs in the *adat moyang* which explain the differences

¹ It is important to differentiate the kind of economy which is maintained by the Ma' Betisék on the island from that on the mainland. Writers, like Carey, I. (1976: 168, 193-5) describe the Ma' Betisék as a whole as sedentary cultivators but this is inaccurate, even in the light of the changes which are gradually taking place in the economic system of the Ma' Betisék on the island.

between human life and plant and animal life are not reinforced in the context of economic activities. Furthermore, mythical explanations of the separation and distinction between human life and plant and animal life and the human order and the spiritual order are not upheld in the same way as on the island. Though certain myths of plants and animals may be known, these are not consciously referred to when economic activities are being performed. More emphasis is placed on their myths of origin rather than myths which surround individual plants and animals.

Similarly, rituals associated with cultivating, harvesting and hunting are not performed to the same extent as before. Since hill rice is not cultivated on the mainland, rice harvest festivities have been discontinued. Durio harvest festivities are still performed and other than weddings, provide the only occasion when *jo-oh* dances and songs are performed. Here, facial masks made from the pod of the *nipah* and betel-nut palm depict actual animals rather than ancestral spirits. Although the traditional *jo-oh* songs are sung during weddings and the durio fruit festivities, a number of changes have occurred in the way in which the Ma' Betisék on the mainland organize their wedding ceremonies. The tendency today is to perform the traditional *jo-oh* dances for a short period, before the wedding rites are performed and to employ a band to play popular Malay music so that they can sing and dance the *joget* and the *ronggeng*. For this reason the emphasis is now purely on music for entertainment rather than for expressing the kind of relationship which humans have with human and nature spirits in these situations.

Although *tulah* ideas appear to be under-emphasized by the Ma' Betisék on the mainland, *kemali* ideas are invoked as before. Situations of illness and injuries are invariably explained in terms of spirit-attacks by human, plant or animal spirits. Illness-removing rites like the *popoit* and shamanistic seances are normally resorted to, in cases when the affliction takes a particularly long time to cure. Doubtless, the increasing influence of Islam on the mainland may stimulate changes in the Ma' Betisék world view but at present, there is a conscious reluctance to adopt Islamic ideas and ways so that

kemali' ideas continue to render appeal in the context of misfortune.²

It is possible to say that belief systems like the Ma' Betisék eventually show their vulnerability in the face of severe imbalances of ecology and socio-economic adaptation. When these changes show maldistribution, scarcity or rapid destruction of the very same natural resources on which the beliefs are based, a more dismal view of the future and a loss in self-esteem will upset the balance of ideas between pragmatism and anthropomorphism. However, if suitable alternatives in economic livelihood are provided, the Ma' Betisék belief system will continue to show a similar pendulum structure even if changing socio-economic activities bring on new symbolic and ritual references to plants and animals.

² The concept of *Allah*, 'God the almighty' is commonly used by the Ma' Betisék on the mainland though the actual attributes of this spiritual being are not fully understood. However, the Ma' Betisék completely reject the idea of converting to Islam and regard the idea of circumcision with a certain amount of horror. They argue that it is wrong to remove a part of the anatomy which has already been given by their ancestors. The penis is symbolically associated with an iron tool and is believed to be the source of strength and vitality for men. Attempts by Muslims to convert them to Islam are viewed with suspicion and seen as a plot to remove their strength as a group. Indeed, a number of elders believe that Muslims would like them to convert to Islam because they suffer from penal envy. Another reason why the Ma' Betisék are against conversion is because they do not see themselves to be similar to the Malaysian Muslims in culture and sentiment. They argue that they are as different from the Muslim Malays as the other ethnic groups are and see no reason why they have to convert when other ethnic groups retain their own religions. Islam, they argue, is unsuitable for jungle-dwellers. Here the mutually-exclusive nature of *tulah* and *kemaki*' beliefs is indirectly expressed. 'We cannot pray when we hunt', one informant said, 'as we stoop to pray, our bottoms will be attacked by animals and where will that get us? God (*tuhan*) can help us if we are sick but he cannot help us when we hunt.'

Appendix I

Sketch Map showing the Distribution of the Languages of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula.



Appendix 2

Song of Origin From Sumatra

Gobang Goben, Buluh Bohal,
 From Gobang Goben, from Buluh Bohal
 Tanah Jati, Tanah Hendau,
 From the land of Jati, to the land of Endau,
 Terjatoh ka-tanah Johor;
 We came to the land of Johor the ancient,
 (Naning) Naneng Batin Barius;
 At Naning-Naneng dwelt Batin Barius,
 Batin Banggai punya asal
 And chieftain Banggai at the
 Bukit Nuang, . . . ;
 Hill of Nuang, . . . ,
 (Tarun) chelui Batin Galang.†
 Then chieftain Galand came from inland,
 Tolak kalaut jadi raiat laut,
 Those who pushed to the sea became the Sea Folk,
 Raiat laut jadi Bajau.
 And the Sea-Folk became Pirates
 Sumah mukah Sembatang Semujong?
 Who was it made the land Semujong?
 Adik Bertechap Penghulu Klambu.‡
 Sister Nyai Techap and the village head Klambu.
 Mukah Tonah Semujong.
 Together made the land Semujong,
 Lep baju jala juandak
 Those who donned the 'round coat', became retainers,
 Jadi Jeboh Rembau;
 And mixed with strangers, Malays of Rembau:
 Lep baju blah chakap 'Sisi'
 Those who donned the 'split coat' speak 'Besisi'.

Source: Skeat and Blagden, (1987: 325)

Appendix 3

The Myth of Moyang Pongkol (The Tiger Myth)

Long ago, there was a couple who lived near the forest. One day they left their home to go fishing, leaving behind their young child in the care of their two elder children. The child cried for its mother but the father, annoyed, told the child to keep quiet. The child, however, continued to cry and *moyang pongkol*, in the forest, overheard the child's cries. It changed its form into that of the child's parents. The child, thinking that its parents were back, ceased to cry and went to sleep.

That night, *moyang pongkol* became a tiger again. It attacked the sleeping child and killed it. It then attacked the second brother and ate up the boy. The eldest brother, seeing what had happened, climbed up the roof of the house and waited for his parents to return. However, several hours passed by and they had still not returned. He then ran as fast as he could and told the villagers what had happened. The villagers quickly prepared the leaves of the *moyang bantut* and *terong duri* and uttered the following curse on the tiger, 'If a tiger, be a tiger; if a man, be a man; but do not be both.' Since then, the tiger has never been able to change its form again into that of a human and shuns human contact.

Appendix 4

The Myth of Moyang Tampang Keladik (The Myth of the Yam-Eating Tiger)

Once there was a tiger who was fond of eating the human heart with baked yam. However, humans were not always available as food in the forest for hunters seldom came into that part of the forest where the tiger lived. One day, unable to control its craving any longer, it changed itself into a handsome young man and went to the King's palace. The young man's looks caught the eye of the King's eldest daughter. She agreed to marry him and *moyang tampang keladik* took her back to the forest, built a little hut and went to look for yam. After a while, it returned with a bucketful of yam and set about to prepare a fire to bake it. When the yam was cooked, it changed into a tiger again, and pounced upon the princess. It tore out her heart and ate it with the cooked yam.

After a few days, *moyang tampang keladik* returned to the palace and called out to the second sister, 'Oh, sister, come with me quickly, your sister is ill.' Hearing this, the second sister hurriedly gathered her things and accompanied it to the forest. The moment they approached the hut, it killed her and ate up her heart with the yam. It did the same to the third, fourth, fifth and sixth sister. When the youngest princess followed it to the forest, she noticed a pile of skeletons which it had failed to hide. She thought to herself, 'These must be the remains of my sisters. He must have eaten them up. I must try to kill him.' She then made a bucket from the bark of the *nibong* palm, filled it up with water and hung it on the roof of the hut. She then climbed a tall tree and waited. When *moyang tampang keladik* returned, it started to bake the yam and called out to her, 'Oh, the food is ready, come and get it.' She did not answer. *Moyang tampang keladik* went to the hut and, noticing the water container, poked it with a knife. The water spurted out and it began to curse her.

Spotting her on the tree, it called out and climbed the tree, 'So you have cheated me, now I am going to kill you.' She deftly cut off the branches and it was thrown to the ground and immediately died.

When she climbed down from the tree, she saw that the man had changed into a tiger. She cut the leaves of the *moyang bantut* and *terong duri* plant, burnt benzoin and prepared roasted rice in seven different colours. She sprinkled these ingredients over the tiger and uttered the curse, 'If a tiger, be a tiger; if a human, be a human; but not both.' Since that day, the tiger has not been able to change its form into that of a human, and has remained a tiger forever.

Appendix 5

The Myth of *Moyang Tenong Jerat*
(The Myth of the Trapped Tiger)

Long ago a man was wandering in the jungle and came across some drops of blood. He followed the blood trail and came across a dead tiger which had been caught in a trap. The tiger's body had been eaten up and all that was left was half a thigh. The man saw that it was fatal to eat the meat since he would be avenged by *moyang tenong jerat*. He quickly prepared the potion for the *chinchang moyang bantut* curse and uttered the following words, 'If a tiger, be a tiger; if a human, be a human; but not both.'

(Source: Werner, (1973: 263), rephrased.)

Appendix 6

The Myth of *Moyang Sesak* (The Myth of the Lost Ancestor)

Once a hunter went into the forest to hunt game with a blow pipe. He hunted for seven days and seven nights and did not get any game. Frustrated, he wandered about the forest and climbed a tree. He looked down to see if there was any wild boar or deer but did not spot any. Feeling very tired, he went to sleep on the tree.

When he awoke the next day, he peered below and, to his shock, saw that there was a family of tigers below him. He could not go down from the tree since he was too afraid and waited in the tree for seven days and seven nights. Finally, when he thought that the tigers had gone, he climbed down the tree. Sure enough the tigers had gone but they had left behind a number of dead animals under the tree. He gathered some, made his way quickly back to his home and had a feast of game animals.

(Another version of this myth appears in Werner (1974: 384.)

Appendix 7

The Myth of *Moyang Sawai* (The Myth of the Tiger Shaman)

This myth describes how humans learnt the art of shamanism through the tiger. In ancient times, a hunter went to the forest to hunt game. He lost his way and stayed in the forest for seven days and seven nights. While trying to find a route back to the village, he came across a mountain which contained a number of tigers. Afraid that they might spot him, he climbed a tree and watched the tigers performing a ritual in their den. He saw a tiger waving some leaves over its shoulders while it tried to cure an ailing tiger. The hunter then realized that the tiger was a shaman and that he could help the villagers if he could steal the leaves from the tiger shaman. He decided on a plan. He detached a beehive from the tree, tied it to a liana and lowered it slowly into the den. He then dropped the beehive abruptly so that the bees would be startled and fly out. Sure enough, the bees flew out and stung the tigers. The tiger shaman was badly stung and died. The hunter then climbed down the tree, grabbed the leaves belonging to the tiger shaman and ran away. He soon found his way back to the village and told the people what had happened. He repeated the ritual in the same manner as the tiger shaman and cured an ill man. Thus humans learnt their shamanistic skills from the tiger. However, one should not now drop a beehive on the ground for it will turn into a tiger. Since the first beehive killed the tiger shaman, a beehive will now turn into a tiger who will kill the person who drops it.

Appendix 8

The Myth of *Moyang Puteri* *Gunong Lédang* (The Myth of the *Lédang* Mountain Princess)

This princess lives on the Lédang Mountain and has a pet tiger who carries her wherever she wants to go. She herself can also turn into a tiger but she seldom does so because she is afraid to harm humans.

The princess came to live on the mountain a long time ago. A hunter who lived on the mountain was lonely and decided to adopt a child. The little girl was very beautiful and he called her 'princess'. One day he left her in the care of an old lady who was an old woman by day and a tiger by night. However, this fact was not known to the hunter. The next morning, when he returned to the hut, he saw that there was blood everywhere on the floor. He also saw blood stains on the clothes of the old woman. 'What have you done to my child?' he cried out in anger. 'She was eaten up by a tiger last night', the old woman replied. Unconvinced, the man killed the old woman and went away, sad and lonely once again. However, his little daughter was not dead. She was subsequently brought up by tigers who became her lasting companions. Now the princess assists the shaman cure the ill by sending down her tigers to assist him in his seances.

Appendix 9

The Myth of *Moyang Boi* (The Myth of the Woman who Gave Birth to a Tiger)

Once there was a woman who lived in the forest with her child who was a tiger cub. She would sleep in a tree while her child, the tiger cub, slept underneath it. The woman gave birth to a tiger in the following way. She had a longing to eat the leaves of the wild betel-vine which grew in the deep forest. One day, she went into the forest to gather the leaves of the wild betel-vine which climbed round a tree. Unknown to her, the betel-vine leaves had been urinated upon by a tiger. She took the leaves back to the village and ate them. A few months later, she became pregnant and subsequently gave birth to a tiger cub. The villagers, however, did not like the tiger cub because it became a nuisance in the village. Finally, they drove the woman and her child away. The woman and the tiger cub went into the forest and lived there permanently.

Appendix 10

The Myth of *Moyang* *Hulubalang Gajah* (The Myth of the Elephant and its Followers)

In ancient times, the elephant spoke many languages and could communicate with the Ma' Betisék. Because of its size, it became an adviser and leader of the Ma' Betisék. It advised men, women and children not to venture out when the moon appeared. This was because the moon emits a yellow light which encourages spirits to come out and roam the villages. These spirits were vindictive and would inflict men, women and children with disease, which often led to death. However, it told them that if they wished to go out, they should do so before the moon was high. Because of this valuable advice, humans are able to avoid a number of illnesses and diseases, they could not do so otherwise.

Appendix II

The Myth of *Moyang Gajah*
(The Elephant Myth)

One day, a man cooked some bamboo-shoots and asked his wife to eat them. She refused to eat them and so he ate them himself. Consequently, the man became an elephant since he had eaten the bamboo-shoots which his wife had rejected.

Later his wife was expecting a child. She gave birth to a baby boy who resembled a human and not an elephant. When the boy reached adulthood, he wanted to marry but no one wanted to marry him because he was the son of an elephant. Finally, he came across an old man who lived near the forest. He had a daughter with animal-like features. She agreed to marry him and the wedding-date was arranged and food prepared with the help of human ancestral spirits. On the day of the wedding, no one could recognize the couple for both of them suddenly became very good-looking.

Appendix 12

The Myth of *Moyang Gajah Lembéng* (The Myth of the Speared Elephant)

Once there was a headman who lent his bamboo spear to a boy from the village. He told the boy that under no circumstances was the spear to be broken. 'It should not be left in the elephant but pulled right out', he said. The boy agreed to do as requested and set out into the forest clearing to hunt an elephant. Soon he caught sight of an elephant and aimed the spear right at the elephant's abdomen. The spear, however, split and it only wounded the elephant which rushed off with the spear in its abdomen. The boy was afraid to go home without the spear and set out into the forest to track the elephant down. Soon he came across a village of elephants and asked them for the house of the headman. They directed him to the house and the boy was invited up. The headman looked troubled and upset and the boy asked him if something was wrong. The headman replied that one of their kinsmen had an injury from a bamboo spear and that they did not know how to cure him. The boy said that he would try to cure him although he could not promise him any results. The headman persuaded him to try. The boy then pulled the bamboo spear from the elephant's abdomen and after a few days the elephant was completely cured. The headman was so grateful he invited him to stay on with him in the village. The boy agreed to do so and eventually married one of the female elephants from the village. After a few years he told the headman, 'I have to go home now to my people. They will be wondering what has happened to me.' He bade them farewell and set off. He parted with his wife at the forest clearing and returned home to his village with the bamboo spear.

Appendix 13

The Myth of *Moyang Badi Gajah*
(The Myth of the Elephant with Evil
Soul Substance)

There was an old woman who became deaf because caterpillars had entered her ears. Since she was deaf, she was disliked by all the villagers. Eventually, the woman became stupid and was disliked by all.

One night she dreamt of an old man who told her to look for the trunk of an elephant. He said that this would cure her of her deafness. She was a little afraid to venture into the forest clearings where some elephants lived because she knew that the elephants would kill her. Eventually she summoned up her courage and left the village. In the clearings, she came across an elephant and quickly cut off its trunk. She ran away with it and left the elephant screaming with rage and pain. Finally exhausted, the woman laid down to rest, using the trunk as a pillow. The caterpillars in her head smelt the blood from the elephant's trunk and crawled out slowly. Immediately she was able to hear again. However, her skull was empty since the caterpillars had eaten up her brain. When she died, her skull became an elephant. This was because she had destroyed an elephant whose *badi* or evil soul substance was now taking vengeance on her by transforming her corpse into an elephant.

Appendix 14

The Myth of *Moyang Siamang Gantik* (The Myth of the Black-Handed Gibbon which Was Replaced)

Long ago, there was a hunter who went hunting in the forest and killed a black-handed gibbon with his blow-pipe. Immediately it began to rain, and the sky went dark for seven days and nights. Thunderstorms and squalls broke out and men, women and children were killed. As the storms raged on, the dead gibbon grew into a hundred fierce gibbons and the hundred grew into a thousand which set out to destroy mankind. One night, the hunter had a dream. The gibbon spirit told him that if he did not compensate for the death of the dead gibbon immediately, the thunderstorms and darkness would go on and more men, women and children would die. The next morning he went with another villager into the forest to look for the root of the *pulai* tree. When they found one, the hunter carved out a mask of the gibbon and left it at the spot where he had killed it. He appealed to the ancestors to forgive him for his wrong deed and begged them to restore life in the gibbon. However, the carved image of the gibbon did not come to life. That night, he had another dream and was told to look at the beam of the house where there was a drop of blood from the gibbon. He was told that when the blood was smeared on the mask with incantations, it would come alive.

The next morning, the man did as he was told and the mask came alive. Daylight appeared and the storms stopped blowing. Thus, had it not been replaced, all the humans would have been destroyed. This gibbon which was created from the mask cannot be killed but has been cursed by humans to remain a gibbon permanently.

Appendix 15

The Myth of *Moyang Témbó'*
(The Myth of the White-Handed
Gibbon)

There was once a young woman who was expecting her first child. Her husband desperately wanted a son and he told her that if the child was a girl, it was not his child but that of her lover. Eventually, when the child was born, it turned out to be a girl. The husband was enraged and accused her of adultery. In spite of her pleas and attempts to explain to him that it was his child, he became more dejected and angry and prepared to kill the baby. He sharpened his knife for seven days and nights and on the seventh night killed the baby. Having killed the baby, he walked out of the house through the forests and made his way towards the sea. The wife followed him and pleaded with him to go home but he refused to listen to her. He said that she had hurt him and that he felt rejected and unloved. He swam into the sea and eventually became a dugong. She climbed several trees to call him but with no success. Finally she climbed a coconut tree and saw that he had turned into a dugong. Sadly she went into the forests and eventually became a white-handed gibbon. The white rings round the face of the gibbon and its white paws are traces of the powder which the woman wore when she asked her husband to return to her. Today, the white-handed gibbon makes loud hooting noises in the forest, in the same manner as the woman calling out to her husband.

Appendix 16

The Myth of the *Moyang Hapit* (The Myth of the Dog which Developed into Flying Foxes)

Once there was an old woman who had a black pet dog. Since she lived in the forest, the dog was her only companion. One day after gathering some wood in the forest, she found that her dog was behaving strangely, as if it had eaten something poisonous. She was afraid that it would become ill and went back to the hut immediately. The dog, however, just lay on the floor and would not move. For days she tried feeding it but it refused to eat and became more ill. Eventually, it died. The old woman was heart-broken and felt very lonely. One night she had a dream and in the dream an ancestor asked her to place the carcass of the dog in a large, round pan and to cook it slowly. She did as requested and, as she stirred, the maggots from the carcass of the dog turned into hundreds of flying foxes which flew out of the pan. She was surprised and immediately cursed the flying foxes by preparing leaves of the *moyang bantut* and *terong duri* plants and rice in seven different colours and said, 'If a flying fox, be a flying fox; if a human, be a human; but do not be both.' This was how the flying fox originated from a black dog. The dog is the elder of the two animals. Though the old woman did not get her dog back again, she was never lonely since the forest was full of flying foxes from that day on.

Appendix 17

The Myth of *Moyang Pelangi*
(The Rainbow Myth)

Long ago, some plants and animals were buried underground and were eventually covered with water from the sea. The rotten wood from two trees which were buried underground, the *gaharu* and *kinchong*, eventually developed pearls and from these pearls sprang dragons which were large and ferocious.

The fire which oozed from the mouth of these dragons became rainbows. The rainbow actually comprises a male and female rainbow spirit in the act of making love. The rain stops when the rainbow emerges mainly because it is ashamed to see the rainbow copulate. Humans who attempt to chase the rainbow would discover that it can run very fast. Because of this, humans have never ever managed to catch the rainbow.

The rainbow curves and stretches across the skies mainly because it seeks for its original abode, the layers of rotten wood underneath the water. The rainbow cannot be pointed at because the fires from the dragon are fatal to humans. For this reason, a person who points at the rainbow will lose his or her fingers and a pregnant woman who does so will give birth to a child with some of the fingers missing. Similarly, the wood underneath the sea cannot be touched or used for tobacco, for the person who does so will die immediately.

Appendix 18

The Myth of *Moyang Jantong* (The Banana Tree Myth)

Once a man felt very tired and slept under a banana tree. He was so tired that he slept for seven days and seven nights. On the eighth day, he sat up and discovered that he had changed into a banana tree. His body resembled the trunk of the banana palm, his hands the banana leaves and his face the banana fruit. His heart became the purple inflorescence of the banana. When word got around in the village that a man had become a banana tree, the villagers realized that they could not destroy it or cut the banana fruits. However, one man was determined to cut the banana fruit. He picked up his knife and walked towards the banana tree. The spirit of the banana tree, *moyang jantong* said, 'Ay, why do you want to kill me? Don't you know that if you do, all the banana trees will fruit only once in their lifetime? You'll always be short of food if you kill me.'

The man did not heed the warning and proceeded to cut the banana fruits. Immediately, the banana tree changed to a man again and tried to kill him. The man performed the *chinchang moyang bantut* curse and the *moyang jantong* became a banana tree permanently. However, from that day onwards the banana tree only fruits once in its lifetime. Humans have to wait till the sapling matures before they can enjoy the banana fruits again. Hence there is always a shortage of banana fruits in the village.

Appendix 19

The Myth of *Moyang Tukul*
(The Pumpkin Plant Myth)

Long ago, there was a man who was so ugly that no one wanted to have anything to do with him. He was very unhappy, particularly because his own kinsmen rejected him. Everywhere he went, the children would laugh at him and run away.

One day, he saw a beautiful girl in a neighbouring village and fell in love with her. He went up to the girl and said, 'I like you very much, please marry me and come home with me.' The girl looked at him and said, 'Ay brother, how can I marry you, you are so ugly, your face is like the pumpkin fruit.' 'In that case, then', said the man sadly, 'I'll be a pumpkin plant.' He went away dejected and sad and eventually became a pumpkin plant. When the villagers saw what had happened, they performed the *chinchang moyang bantut* curse and said, 'If a *tukul*, be a *tukul*; if a man, be a man; but do not become both.' From that day onwards, the pumpkin plant has remained a plant and has never been able to assume the human form.

Appendix 20

The Myth of *Moyang Dian* (The Durio Fruit Myth)

A man went to the forest and found a durian fruit on the ground. He smelt it and was excited to find that it was sweet-smelling. He brought it home and, without letting his wife know, split it open. He ate the fruits and discovered that it had a lovely taste. He was so happy to taste the rare delicious fruit that he ate the flesh with the seeds. Later, he hid the skin of the fruit and went to sleep under a tree. His wife came to him and said, 'Why are you sleeping under a tree at this time of the day, why don't you do some work?' 'Oh wife,' he replied, 'I've just eaten the durian fruit, I feel so full and have become sleepy.' His wife was annoyed to learn that he had tasted the fruit without asking her to share it. She flashed at him and said, 'Since you have eaten up all the fruit without me, you can go to sleep and become a durian tree.' He was shocked at her words and unhappy that she had taken it badly. He presently went to sleep for seven days and seven nights. When he awoke, he found that he had turned into a durian tree. Sadly, he said, 'Do not cut down the tree for the fruits will make our grandchildren happy.' Subsequently, the villagers performed the *chinchang moyang bantut* curse and the man remained a tree for ever.

Appendix 21

The Myth of *Moyang Tibau*
(The Myth of Great-Eared Nightjar)

Once there was a man who was very lazy and would sleep during the day while others worked in the ricefields and forest. At night, he would gather his knife, axe and various other tools and work in the forest. This used to exasperate the villagers and they felt that he should behave like the rest of the men in the village. This man would keep the villagers awake at night as he chopped the trees in the forest. Finally the men gathered together and told him that he was behaving like a great-eared nightjar. 'If you cannot behave like a human, be a great-eared nightjar,' they said angrily. This man knew that the villagers hated him and sadly, decided to become one. He changed into a great-eared nightjar bird and lived in the forest. He decided to take vengeance on the men and women in the village by changing into a human and attacking them at night. However, one night he was subjected to the *chinchang moyang bantut* curse and became a great-eared nightjar permanently.

Appendix 22

The Myth of *Moyang Bo*
(The Myth of the Crow Pheasant)

The crow pheasant annoys fishermen by making a deep sound, 'bo', 'bo', 'bo', which scares all the fishes away and forces the fishermen to return to the village empty-handed. Once, a man was fishing at a river creek and the crow pheasant began to call. The fisherman was driven to distraction and shouted out to the bird, 'Bo', 'bo', 'bo', if you really want to make all that noise, go and call at my house but just leave me to fish.' Soon the bird stopped calling and went to the man's house. Meanwhile, the fisherman obtained a good catch for the fishes began to bite on his line.

Once the *bo* bird arrived at the man's house, it changed its appearance into that of the fisherman. The fisherman's wife saw it coming up to the house and said, 'Oh, are you back already?'. The bird replied, 'Yes, open the door.' When she did so, it changed into a tiger and pounced at her. She was killed instantly. It buried her, and covered her with some banana leaves. Then it changed its appearance into that of the fisherman's wife and waited indoors. Soon afterwards, the fisherman returned with his catch of fish and called out to his wife: the *moyang bo* opened the door and asked him, 'Did you get a good catch?' 'Yes,' replied the fisherman happily, 'cook the fish now. I'm very hungry.' The *moyang bo* began to chop up the fish and when it thought that the fisherman was not looking, swallowed a mouthful. The fisherman glanced up and muttered to himself, 'Strange, why should my wife do that, she must be pregnant.'

When the food was ready the fisherman began to eat. As he was eating the food, he realized with a shock that his wife's tummy was swollen. Furthermore, he noticed that she did not have a cleft above her lip, an indication that the person has the ability to assume the appearance of a tiger. However, he did not say anything but asked her to fetch his betel-vine basket. She got up in a hurry and brought it to him. When she was not looking, he let the container of lime fall between

the cracks in the floor to the ground. He said, 'I've dropped my lime container.' *Moyang bo* replied, 'Have you dropped it, why are you so careless, go underneath the house and look for it quickly.'

The husband went underneath the house and pretended he could not find it. *Moyang bo* was getting impatient and called out, 'Have you found it yet?' 'No, not yet,' replied the fisherman. Just then a pig came up and asked the fisherman what he was looking for. He said '*Moyang bo*' is waiting for me in the house and wants to kill me'. The pig said, 'In that case then, run quickly and I'll cover up for you.' The fisherman ran into the forest as fast as he could. Meanwhile, *moyang bo* was getting impatient and went under the house to find out what was happening. When it saw the pig, pretending to look for the lime container, it realized that it had been fooled. It cursed the pig and ran after the fisherman.

Meanwhile, the husband met a skink. When the skink asked him why he was running, he replied that he was being chased by *moyang bo*. The skink promised to mislead the *moyang bo* and the fisherman ran further into the forest. *Moyang bo*, now in the form of the crow pheasant came across the skink and asked it if it had seen the fisherman. 'No, I haven't,' replied the skink loudly. However, *moyang bo* did not believe him and went off in pursuit of the fisherman.

The fisherman came upon a small hut in the forest and called out, 'Oh, let me in, I am being pursued by the *moyang bo*.' The men and women quickly opened the door for him and let him in. 'Tell us how you came across the *moyang bo*,' they said. The fisherman told them what had happened to him when he went fishing and how he found *moyang bo* in his home, in place of his wife. 'In that case, then, your wife must be dead,' they said sadly. 'We'll hide you and destroy *moyang bo* forever.' The women hid the fisherman while the men loosened the fourth step leading up to the house. *Moyang bo* presently appeared in the form of the fisherman's wife and asked the men if they had seen the fisherman. They said that they had not seen him but invited *moyang bo* in. It climbed the steps and, since the fourth step had been loosened, immediately stumbled and fell to the ground. The moment it did so, it changed into a tiger. The men gathered

the leaves of the *moyang bantut* plant and the *terong duri* plant, chopped up the leaves and mixed them with rice of seven different colours. They threw this mixture at the tiger and said, 'If a crow pheasant, be a crow pheasant; if a human, be a human; but do not be both.' Immediately the tiger changed into the crow pheasant. From that day onwards, the crow pheasant cannot assume the form of a human or a tiger and remains forever a bird.

Appendix 23

The Myth of *Moyang Miskin* (The Myth of the Poor Ancestor and the Python)

There was once an old man who was very poor. Each day, he went hunting but met with very little success. His traps were always empty so that he was always short of food. One day, he went to check his traps and he saw something in one of them which looked like a snake. When he took a closer look, he saw that it was only coconut husk. Sadly, he turned away and went home. He gathered some wild vegetables and banana shoots and boiled some rice for a meal. Just as he was about to eat, a python crawled up and said to him, 'I am hungry, can I eat with you?' Although the old man did not have much to spare, he put some rice and vegetables on a banana leaf and offered it to the python. The python ate till it was full and left after thanking the old man for the meal.

The next day, when the old man went to check his traps, the coconut husk had disappeared. Instead, a deer was caught in the trap. He was very pleased and went home immediately to cook it. Again, just as he was about to eat, the python suddenly appeared and asked him for food. The python continued to eat with the old man for several days and soon the old man became so attached to it that he invited the python to stay with him. The python agreed to do so and became the adopted son of the old man. From that day onwards, the old man was successful in his hunting and trapping and brought a deer home each day for food.

One day when he and the python were having their evening meal, an eagle fluttered down and asked the old man if he could join them in the meal. The old man invited the eagle to eat with them and eventually the eagle stayed on as the adopted son of the old man. The old man told the eagle, 'Eagle, you can be the younger brother of my adopted son the python.' A few days later a forest rat scurried into the hut and asked the old man for a meal. Very soon, the rat stayed

with the old man as his adopted son. The old man told the rat, 'Rat, you can be the younger brother of my adopted son, the eagle.' The old man, the python, the eagle and the rat lived peacefully and happily together.

Years went by and the python grew bigger and bigger. It became as broad as the thigh of the old man, and eventually grew as fat as the trunk of the *nibong* palm. The old man watched the python growing and sighed, 'Oh python, you are growing very big, what am I going to do with you?' The python asked him to dig a pit for him and to fill it with water. The old man dug a pit as big as a pond at the back of the hut. The python was happy to play and swim in the pond and he was soon joined by the eagle and the rat. The eagle would flutter back and forth across the pond while the rat perched on the head of the python. One day, the python went up to the old man and said, 'Father, I am big now, I want to get married, please get me a wife.' The old man shook his head sadly and said, 'Oh python, where can I get a woman who would want to marry a snake?' The python thought for a while and said, 'In that case, then, I think I'll find myself a wife.' It said goodbye to the old man, the eagle and the rat and glided down the river creeks into the mangroves. It began to rain continuously for several days and the land began to flood. The old man was worried because the python had still not returned and told the eagle and the rat, 'Go and see what has happened to your brother.' The eagle and the rat asked the old man to join them and the three of them soon left for the mangroves. The water was so high, it reached the chest of the old man. Since they could not see anything, the old man asked the eagle to fly higher to see if the python was anywhere nearby. The eagle spotted the snake in the distance, gliding in the water. The old man, eagle and rat went after the snake. Seven days, seven weeks and seven years went by and they still did not catch up with the snake.

One day, the old man, eagle and rat came across a clearing and saw a marriage ceremony being performed. When they went closer, the bridegroom came up to the old man and said, 'I am your son the snake who has turned into a man.' The old man was overjoyed to see his adopted son again. The

python gave him a knife wrapped in a piece of black cloth and told him that it had magical properties. It could be used to fight any dangerous animal which threatened the old man. The old man thanked him and left with the eagle and the rat.

Soon afterwards, the eagle said that he wanted to get married too. The old man said, 'Oh eagle, where can I find a woman who would want to marry an eagle?' The eagle then said that he would look for a wife himself and bade the old man farewell. Some time later, the rat said that he too wanted a wife. The old man said that he could not find him a woman and very soon the rat left to look for a wife for himself. The old man felt very lonely and decided to abandon the hut to seek a new life. One day, he came across an old hut where an old woman lived. She called out to him, 'Why are you wandering about all alone, come inside'. The old woman then asked him to stay with her. She told him the story of the *Naga* Laut or sea dragon. This dragon, she said, wanted a virgin every day from the village. Otherwise, it would destroy the whole village and everyone inside it. She said that all the virgins of the village had been sacrificed and the only remaining one left was the youngest daughter of the king of the country. The old man heard the story and said that he would try and save the princess from the jaws of the dragon. He took out his knife and seasoned it with lime and appealed to the ancestral spirits to help him kill the dragon. On the day of the sacrifice, the princess was brought before the dragon and wept with fear. By then everyone in the village had heard of the old man and his magical knife and came to see the fight between the old man and the dragon. The old man faced the dragon and said, 'Oh dragon, I am going to save the princess and kill you.' The dragon replied, 'Many have tried to kill me but have failed.' Immediately, the old man whipped out his knife from the black cloth and threw it at the dragon. The cloth wound itself round the feet of the dragon and held it down while the knife cut off the dragon's seven-forked fangs, one by one. After the seventh slash, the dragon fell dead and the sea was covered with its blood. The princess was happy to see the dragon dead and thanked the old man for saving her life. However, the villagers started cutting bits from the dragon to present to the king to collect the reward.

Although the old man did not go forward to claim his reward, the princess told her father that it was the old man who had saved her from the dragon. The king thanked the old man and asked him what his reward was to be. The old man asked for the hand of the princess in marriage. The king agreed and the old man immediately changed into a young handsome man. Her elders sisters were jealous of her because they too wanted to get married, but the old man found them husbands and they were all very happy. Soon the couple went up to the seventh world and lived there for a long time.

Appendix 24

The Myth of *Moyang Kane*
(The House Rat Myth)

A woman would urinate through a hole in the floor every night before going to sleep. This hole opened out to the basement in the house where the rice was stored. After a while, the woman discovered that she was pregnant. She peeped through the hole and saw that a rat lived in the basement. The rat told her that when she urinated, he would press himself against the hole. The woman then realized that the rat had had sexual intercourse with her every night. 'Since I have done so,' said the rat, 'you'll have to marry me.' The woman thought about this and said that she would. Then she quickly prepared the leaves of the *moyang bantut* and *terong duri* and threw them over the rat, saying, 'If a rat, be a rat; if a human, be a human; but do not be both.' From that day onwards, house rats were never able to enter into sexual relationships with women.

Appendix 25

Songs

i) Song of the Coppersmith Barbet

Dinang dinang dinang dinang ai
 'Dinang dinang dinang dinang' Oh
 'Kua'-Kua' hantuk batak¹ ai
 'Kua'-Kua' calls the batak ghost, Oh
 Peléh léh maman² chamai gasik³ ai
 The *maman* fruit and the *gasik* betel-vine, Oh
 'Uwa'-Uwa'', eru' katak ai
 Uwa'-Uwa'', calls the frog, Oh
 Ede' kenang temai kenang temai ai
 Don't recall the past, recall the past, Oh
 Ee, ai . . .
 Ee, Oh . . .
 Dinang dinang dinang dinang ai
 'Dinang dinang dinang' Oh
 Ah ekse gak!
 Ah what suffering it is, still!
 Ma' hagah ngot héh liau
 When the person does not want us, really
 Malum leh héh bajau ai
 What can be done, we are not attractive
 Hinkik sudik ngot adi' memang ai
 He does not want to accept me, little sister, really Oh
 Kaluk sudik ngot tanya lah héh ai
 But if you don't want to accept, can't you ask me first Oh
 Hinkik timbul ngot
 He does not appear
 Ai manik pin?
 Oh where is he?

¹ *hantuk batak* - A ghost which is believed to live near graveyards and to eat humans - associated with Malay tales of the Bataks of Sumatra who are still today believed to eat humans. The Ma' Betisék have probably been influenced by Malay beliefs and superstitions of the Batak.

² *maman* - Wild fruit, *Gynandropsis pentaphylla*?

³ *chamai gasik* - A wild betel-vine, piper?

Niat e'cit hahah cheroh hinkik ai

I prayed I would find him here, Oh

Cho' hakék⁴ hagar neliau ai

I'll go to the pandanus palm bushes to look Oh

Nihi janjik e'cit ai

Yesterday he promised me Oh

Cho' e'cit hab mo, liau ai

I go but there is no one, really Oh

Dinang dinang dinang dinang ai

'Dinang dinang dinang dinang' Oh

Bagik e'cit enel ai

Give me just half of it, Oh

Ohokleh, ede' bedike ai

Come here, don't be that way, Oh

'Riau-Riau' hak bukar!

'Riau-Riau', the sound from the forest!

Ohokleh, kedai ede' ai

Come here, don't hide Oh

Bungak sigan⁵ ede' layuk ai

The *sigan* flower, don't let it fade, Oh

Mate pinang mate seraséh⁶

The eye of the betel-nut, the eye of the betel-vine

Ede' sigan ede' maluk ai

Don't be inhibited, don't be shy, Oh

Bile léh ale héh bekaséh?

When again are we going to make love?

Meri manik pen?

In which forest?

Ohok léh ta!

Come here, there!

Ohok léh ohok léh ai

Come here, come here, Oh

Ede' biar nahok, ohok léh ai

Don't leave it like this, come here, Oh

Mémang suke e'cit dengan léh hik ai

It is obvious that I like you, Oh

⁴ *hakék* - The *pandanus* palm.

⁵ *sigan* - In Malay, *sigam*, a mangrove plant, of the species *Gonocaryum longiracemosum*.

⁶ *seraséh* - Adopted from a Malay term, *serasa*, which is a polite way of referring to betel-leaf.

Mémang janjik héh temai dah léh
 It is obvious, I had promised you long ago
 Dinang dinang ee. . ai . .
 'Dinang dinang ee.' oh . .
 Dinang dinang dinang dinang ai
 'Dinang dinang dinang dinang' Oh
 Dinang dinang dinang dinang ai
 'Dinang dinang dinang dinang' Oh
 Kaluk bedike chéh hagah kagét hik
 As it is, I wish to follow you
 Kaluk bedike hik suke ngot behentik koh
 If it is so, that you like me not, then let us end it.

ii) Song of the Spirit *Jaboi*⁷

Oh ketab bangsal⁸ di ha bangsal
 Oh the crab has a house, it has a house
 Telo' kanjik⁹ ditekoh boi
 Look for the *kanjik* fruit, near the sugar-cane plant
 Laguk nahok asal dilaguk asal
 This song is a traditional song, a traditional song
 Sebab léh janjik Jaboi di moyang Jaboi
 Because of the request from the spirit Jaboi
 Telok kanjik boi ditekoh boi
 Look for the *kanjik* fruit, near the sugar-cane tree
 Peléh pepat¹⁰ niréh tekoh niréh
 The *pepat* fruit and the *niréh* tree
 Sebab janjik Jaboi dimoyang Jaboi
 Because of the request from the spirit Jaboi
 Nakéh tempat geréh begantong geréh
 That is the place where the heart is
 Ehéh main lamai biar dilamai
 We play together, let us be many

⁷ Each verse is repeated before the next verse is sung.

⁸ *ketab bangsal* – a mangrove crab, unidentified.

⁹ *kanjik* – in Malay, known as *kanjus*, of the species *Anacardium occidentale* (cashew-nut)

¹⁰ *pepat* – in Malay, *perapat*, of the species *Sonneratia Griffithi*, a mangrove plant commonly found on Carey Island.

Daun niréh chamai didaun chamai
 The niréh leaf and the betel-vine leaf
 Peléh tulak boi bauk diboi
 Throw away the sugar-cane, the sugar-cane's bad
 Ehéh main lamai biar dialamai
 We play together, let us be many
 Daun niréh chamai didaun chamai
 The nireh leaf, the betel-vine leaf
 Nakéh gelah Jaboi, laguk Jaboi
 This is the song Jaboi, the song Jaboi

iii) Song of the Heavy Rain¹¹

'Keléchok', ketab tipak¹²
 'Keléchok', - the *tipak* crab falls
 Lo' tuntung nale, isik léh nale
 The bamboo and cassava, stuff the cassava in it
 Chok bakau kerét kechampak
 One goes to the mangroves only to fall
 Nelok lanténg wakle kob wakle
 Before obtaining firewood, before obtain firewood
 Ka chukak saguk miye
 Marinate the fish and scrap the sago
 Po-oh hagar tepik bébéh
 Boil the seaweed at the riverside
 Hentot mai¹³ ka-ai belayar
 The golden variety banana is transported by sea
 Ngoi tepes tekoh tepes
 The ginger-plant is shipped, the ginger plant
 Hutang mai kob bayar
 A debt of gold can be repaid
 Hutang budik kebes, ka-ai kebes
 But a good turn is remembered till death, remembered till death

¹¹ Each verse is repeated before the next verse is sung.

¹² *ketab tipak* - small mangrove brightly coloured crab of the species *Sesarma*.

¹³ *hentot mai* - *musa sapientum*, this variety has small fruits with an even yellow colour.

Iték dengut balam-balam

The duck bobs now out of sight and now in view
Ka tandah¹⁴ Lamat di Tanjung Kelamat

The *tandah* fish from Lamat, Kelamat Promontory
Enchik yut angkat salam

As you leave sir, we give you salutations
Nakéh tandah Lamat, biar selamat

That is the sign for a safe journey, let it be a safe journey
Po-oh hagar tepik bébéh

Boil the seaweed at the riverside
Péléh ludat payak, lenak payak

The *ludat* fruit has hit the ground
Laguk jo-oh ehéh kabéh

The *jo-oh* songs are our own creation
Laguk moden punyak ma' asi' punyak

The modern songs belong to others, belong to others

iv) The Song of the Peacock Pheasant

'Ting, Ting', eru' léh gunting

'Ting, Ting', calls the *gunting* bird
Bile eru' panéh ari' léh panéh

When it calls, it is hot, the day is hot
Mémang eru' ari' léh panéh

It is true when it calls, the day is hot
Hinkik nelok kejél, hélak kejél

It searches for *kejél*, the *kejél* sweet potato
Bile telo' léh hélak léh kejél

When one searches for the *kejél* sweet potato
Bile sebot ngot lép, isik lép lép

When there is no call, the sweet potato is far
Kejél lép, batang bedong

The *kejél's* stem twines round and round
Jangka dak lép isik lép lép

When there are roots, the sweet potato is far
Batang duri', jangka dijelang

The stem is thorny and the root is long
Bile cheroh isik kob dikachah

When one finds the sweet potato, it can be eaten

¹⁴ *ka tandah* - freshwater fish, identified.

Ohok léh chéh dilamai
 Come here, let all of us
 Ehék pakat hagar kachah hélak kejél
 Let us all plan to eat the *kejél* sweet potato
 Bile kejél, lép dijelang
 When the *kejél* is tasty, it is long
 Bile lép jelang isik, léh kumpu
 When it is nice and long, the flesh is tender
 Nakéh héh pakat dilamai
 That is why we plan together
 Memang héh perét untuk nénék moyang
 Of course we grate it for the ancestors
 Bile eru' gunting cheep gunting
 When the *gunting* calls, the bird *gunting*
 Bile kejél eru' isik léh ming
 When it calls, the *kejél* sweet potato plant is close
 Ming memang hinkik daun buntat
 Of course it's near, it has round leaves
 Puchok inge, hinkik beinge
 Its shoots are upright, its shoots are upright
 Bile sebot cheep léh gunting
 When it calls, the *gunting* bird
 Bile hélak nakéh kabéh kachah
 This is when the *hélak* can be made into food.

v) The Song of the Black-Handed Gibbon

'Mong-Mong' siamang
 'Mong-Mong', *siamang*
 Siamang timbong
 The *siamang timbong*
 Siamang eru' Sindong Kalék
 The *siamang* calls from Sindong Kalék
 Jo' melénték jemu ampah
 With spreading feet; hang out the mat
 Siamang timbul Sindong Kalék
 The *siamang* appears in view at Sindong Kalék
 'Dimpang dimpong', cho' siamang
 'Dimpang-dimpong', goes the *siamang*

Siamang ratuh siamang libuk

The hundredth *siamang*, the thousandth *siamang*

Siamang tunggal hinkik tibak

Then the lone *siamang* it arrives

Hagah nachah peléh ludat

It wants to eat the *ludat* fruit

Jampak, 'periau', puchak belantik¹⁵

It throws, 'periau', the shoots of the *belantik* tree

Jampak, 'periau', puchok lidan¹⁶

It throws, 'periau', the shoots of the *lidan* tree

Dak melidak peléh ludat

The fruit falls, the *ludat* fruit

Siamang tibak

The *siamang* arrives

Hagah nachah peléh ludat

It wants to eat the *ludat* fruit

Dem du', daging siamang

Run quickly with the *siamang* meat,

Kaluk cheroh, daging siamang

If you find the *siamang* meat

'Tangkoi, hondoï' ka-ai hadu'

'Tangkoi hondoï', carry it to the house

Telo' telo', lanting lengai

Look, look for twigs and firewood;

Telo', telo', lanting ludat

Look, look for twigs from the *ludat* tree

Hagah mengayu daging siamang

Want to smoke the *siamang* meat.

Ee, ai . . .

Ee, oh . . .

Mui, énak, telo', telo', pedas hitem,

Aunt, one of you, look, look for black pepper.

Hagah melapah daging siamang

Want to season the *siamang* meat

Oi, ka-u', telo' telo', pedas kacang

Oh elder sister, look, look for hot pepper

Telo', telo', pedas hitem,

Look, look for black pepper.

¹⁵ *belantik* - in Malay, *meranti*, *Shorea*?

¹⁶ *lidan* - Unidentified

Hagah mengulai daging siamang,

We want to cook the *siamang* meat

Kaluk chin, hangkit léh,

If it is cooked, please lift it,

Sukak la héh sukak lamai

We like it, it is liked by many

O hok léh, héh lamai,

Come on here, the lot of you,

Hagah nachah daging siamang

We want to eat the *siamang* meat

Hagah nachah, daging siamang

We want to eat the *siamang* meat

Manik mahum, chéh kawin

The bad portion we will throw away

Manik kedei', chéh kawin

The bitter portions we will throw away

Manik mele', chéh nachah

The tasty portions we will eat

Bagik léh, muntét – muléh

Distribute it, a little to everyone

Kaluk bagik ngot, jadik punan

If not distributed, one would suffer *punan*

Jadik punan, daging siamang

Suffer *punan* from the *siamang* meat

Mari léh, héh main

Come please, let us sing and dance

Balé kadei, balé kenin,

On the large platform, on the small platform

Pijak genah lantéh langung

Step singly on the swaying platform

Pijak genah, lantéh betam⁴

Step singly on the *betam* platform

Pijak genah, lantéh tenong

Step singly on the ancestor's platform

Adat nénék, adat sungut

It is the law of our ancestors, their strict law

Sungut baik adat moyang

Strict but good is our ancestor's law

'Sintak', di', di', belau

'Sintak, the sound of the bamboo, the bamboo blowpipe

Belau namak', belau bungak

What is the blowpipe? It is the blowpipe with a dust-cloud
Hagah menyubai chéh keteb

Try to aim with planted ipoh poison

'Ungayip Siyap!' kenak wok

'Ungayip Siyap!' it has not yet been hit

'Uwayip-tengang!', kenak wok

'Uwayip-tengang!' it has not yet been hit

'Uwayip-petip!' baruk kenak!

'Uwayip-petip!' – now it is hit!

Jampak, 'perau'

It throws, 'perau'

Puchok belantik

The shoots of the *belantik* tree

'Tenong, tenong', siamang du'

'Tenong, tenong', the *siamang* runs

'Ka', keluwa!' siamang bul dah

'Ka', keluwa!' the *siamang* vomits

'Kelempat, genting', bede' dah

'Kelempat, genting', it has fallen.

Mui énak, tungguk léh

Aunt, one of you, please wait.

Ede' pekéh,¹⁷ ede' 'pelang'

Don't 'pekéh', don't 'pelang'

'Ngom, sengongom', entai, biar lép

'Ngom, sengongom', peep, make sure it's safe

Ede' 'pekéh', ede' 'pelang'

Don't 'pekéh', don't 'pelang'

Sungut baik adat nénék

Strict but good is our ancestors' law

Main belaguk baléh kadei

I sing and dance on the large platform

Jadik léh, peléh dian

For the harvest of the durio fruit

Peléh lambai peléh buan¹⁸

¹⁷ *pekéh-pelang* – sound of people moving in the forest when the leaves and twigs are dry; note that all Ma' Betisék words which are untranslated refer to specific sounds made by animals and humans.

¹⁸ *buan* – in Malay *rambutan*, of the species *Nephelium lappaceum* or *Nephelium eriopetalum*.

The *lambai*¹⁹ fruit, the *rambutan* fruit
 Jadik léh, sebelak taun
 For the annual harvest
 Jadik léh, peléh dian, peléh bongkoh²⁰
 For the annual harvest of the durio fruit, the *bongkoh* fruit

vi) The Song of the Old Man Naning²¹

Héh Tok Naning bangkuk léhok²²
 Our old man Naning carries a water-container
 Isi' peléh nénék, peléh nénék
 He fills it with his fruits, fills it with his fruit
 E'eit koi pening mét gohop
 My head aches, my eyes are painful
 Tolong tangkal nénék kehei nénék
 Please grandfather make me better, I ask you grandfather
 Iték pandok, iték baték
 The deer duck, the spotted duck
 Meri pandok iték baték
 The forest deer, the spotted duck
 Tempat ma' ngeteb, ngeteb nale
 The place where humans plant, the plant cassava
 Nasib e'eit ngandong hatik
 My luck is borne to my heart
 Budik lép kele, ingat kele
 For a good deed, I feel gratitude

vii) Song of the Civet Cat²³

Hayam di' kachah musang
 The chicken in the bamboo coop is eaten by the civet cat
 Di' lebat emui lebat emui
 One bamboo coop, one bamboo coop

¹⁹ *lambai* – in Malay, *rambai*, of several species, the most common on the island being *Baccaurea brevipes*.

²⁰ *bongkoh* – in Malay *langsai*, of the species, *Lansium domesticum*.

²¹ Each verse is repeated before the next verse is sung.

²² This water container is always made from the long pod of the flower of the *nibong* palm. It is a characteristic feature of the ancestor Naning who was said to have filled it with all his personal possessions instead of water and to have carried it about with him wherever he went.

²³ Each verse is repeated before the next verse is sung.

Nakéh gelah laguk musang

That is called the song of the civet cat

Mémang hinkik adat mengge' temai

Of course it is the law of our ancestors long ago

Tau' gage²⁴ belanak kawah

The vegetable gage, the grey mullet in the trap

Nakéh tau' temai mengge' temai

That is the vegetable of our ancestors long ago

So' Jugra so' betuah

The Jugra hill is a luck-bearing hill

Nakéh gelah Sialang doh gendék Sialang

That is called Sialang the river Sialang

Niat ede' layuk

Pray that we don't fall ill

Batang pinang nale, daun nale

The trunk of the areca nut tree and cassava, the leaf cassava

Ede' segan ede' maluk

Don't feel inhibited, don't feel shy

Bile senang kele esok hal kele

One would achieve contentment but that's a future matter.

Udik chapék pahuk lempong

Paddle the lightwood boat

Pelung puchok pujuk, gendék puchok

The young attap leaves weave, mother weave

Tabék enchik tabék tuan

Salutations to you mister, salutations to you sir

Kaluk salah tunjuk, tolong tunjuk

If we are wrong, correct us, please correct us.

²⁴ gage - the *Mesua ferrea* plant.

Appendix 26

Charms

i) Tangkal Kanchil¹

Kelakap gung pluar
 Bojoi mukak mintak lép
 Lintar mukak minta kuar
 Bojoi mukak mintak lép.
 Kotak gelang jabéh, mintak lép.
 Kaluk ngot, yal gunong tak dapat makan.
 Chelui payah, tak dapat minum
 Kaluk lép ngot gelang jabéh
 Hik kebes belagen.

ii) Tangkal Penunduk²

Daun penunduk, daun kepayang
 Daun selaséh keteb dibatuk
 Lagik tunduk hik, lagik hayang
 Lagik kasih hik pada aku.
 Gajah putih seberang laut
 Chinchang buluk
 Chinchang gadéng
 Kaluk gajah tunduk pada aku
 Ini pulak hik.
 Rimau di rimba rayong
 Yang gagah
 Yang belanik
 Kaluk rimau tunduk dan kasih ku
 Ini pulak hik
 Ular tedong garang bisak
 Yang gajah
 Yang belanik
 Kaluk ular tedong bejabéh, tunduk dan kasih ku

¹ This charm is given in the Ma' Betisék language but because of borrowing contains a number of Temuan words.

² This is a Ma' Betisék version of a Malay love charm.

Ini pulak hi.

Aku paké lumuk jabèh, limuk penunduk, limuk pengasih

Kaluk sut ngot, hik kebes belagan.

Kaluk sut, lép kerét ku

Kaluk sut, lép kerét ku

Kur - wai - wait . . .

Lép, Kerét e'ait.

Appendix 27

List of plants and animals used as Medicinal Cures

<i>Ma' Betisék name</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Medicinal use</i>
1. <i>a-a'</i>	<i>Felis tigris</i>	Meat eaten raw to cure physical weakness.
2. <i>bakau akék</i>	<i>Rhizophora conjugata</i> , Kurz	Leaves boiled in water and mixture drunk, to cure stomach aches and cough.
3. <i>balam</i>	<i>Jussiaea linifolia</i> , Vahl	Leaves boiled in water and mixture drunk to cure swellings.
4. <i>baro'</i>	<i>Caryota mitis</i> , Lour	Hair from cuticle applied on body, to cure rashes and blisters.
5. <i>bé'</i>	<i>Oryza sativa</i>	Rice roasted, mixed with water and drunk, to cure diarrhoea.
6. <i>beluntas</i>	<i>Erythroxylon burmanicum</i>	Leaf mashed, mixed with water and drunk, to cure heart pains.
7. <i>chabo'</i>	Unidentified	Latex rubbed on body to cure insomnia.
8. <i>chekor</i>	<i>Kaempferia galanga</i> , Linn	Leaves mashed and applied on body for swellings, pains in joints and sore eyes.
9. <i>dudu' anak</i>	<i>Phyllanthus niruri</i> , Linn	Root, boiled in water and mixture drunk to cure stomach aches.
10. <i>hatik-hatik</i>	<i>Coleus</i> , Blumei	Leaves boiled in water and mixture drunk to cure heart pains.
11. <i>hudang heni'</i>	<i>Squilla</i> , Fabr?	Dried and pounded, mixed with water and drunk to cure difficulty in breathing.
12. <i>hudang ketos</i>	<i>Squilla</i> , Fabr?	Dried and pounded, mixed with water and drunk, to cure difficulty in breathing.
13. <i>hulat ték</i>	? (earth worm)	Baked, mixed with water and drunk, to cure cough.

List of plants and animals used as Medicinal Cures

<i>Ma' Betisék name</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Medicinal use</i>
14. jambu'	<i>Psidium Guajava</i> , Linn.	Shoots boiled in water and mixture drunk to cure pains in chest and abdomen; also water used to clean wounds.
15. jawa'	Unidentified	Root boiled in water and mixture drunk to cure abdominal pains.
16. jengau	<i>Acorus calamus</i>	Root boiled in water and mixture drunk to stop diarrhoea.
17. ketab gedeng	<i>Thalassina anomala</i>	Dried, pounded, mixed with water and drunk to cure difficulty in breathing.
18. koron	<i>Finlaysonia maritima</i> (?)	Root placed under pillow to cure insomnia.
19. kuang	<i>Pteropus edulis</i> ; Geoffroy	Fat rubbed on skin to cure sting of catfish (<i>imang</i> ; <i>Plotosus anquillaris</i>)
20. lanchang	<i>Ixonanthes icosandra</i> , Jack	Wood boiled in water and mixture drunk, for conditions connected with discharge in urine.
21. lumput maluk	<i>Mimosa pudica</i> , Linn	Root burnt and mixed with water, mixture drunk to abort foetus; burnt roots can also be rubbed on body to cure rashes.
22. nipah	<i>Nipah fruticans</i>	Flower eaten to cure stomach aches.
23. Nireh bungak	<i>Carapa obovata</i> , Blume	Fruit grated and applied on wounds and sores; also stops bleeding.
24. niyor	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Water from coconut drunk to cure rashes.
25. Nuju	Unidentified	Bulb eaten to cure bleeding in faeces resulting from constipation.
26. Petai meri	<i>Parkia speciosa</i> , Hassk	Leaves boiled in water, mixture drunk to stop diarrhoea.

<i>Ma' Betisék name</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Medicinal use</i>
27. <i>Hentot belangan</i>	<i>Musa malaccensis, Ridl.</i>	Juice from stem applied on skin, to cure blisters.
28. <i>Tau' pakuk</i>	<i>Aspidium, Swartz</i>	Fur from shoots gathered and applied on skin to stop bleeding.
29. <i>Tujok</i>	<i>Acanthus ilicifolius, Linn.</i>	Fruit swallowed to cure persistent cough.
30. <i>Minik</i>	<i>Cnestis ramiflora, Griff.</i>	Root boiled in water and drunk to cure pains round waist.
31. <i>Tawa'</i>	<i>Epiphytic ficus</i>	Root boiled in water and mixture drunk, to cure coughs.
32. <i>Telon</i>	<i>Python reticulatus</i>	Bile used to stop headaches, poor health, physical weakness.
33. <i>Temakau</i>	<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	Directly applied on wound to stop bleeding.
34. <i>Tepes sesat mian kedoh</i>	<i>Hedychium coronarium, Koenig</i>	Root boiled in water and mixture drunk to abort a foetus; flower eaten with betel vine to cure coughs.
35. <i>Tijai</i>	<i>Cinnamomum, Blume</i>	Latex rubbed on body to cure insomnia.
36. <i>Yet hitem</i>	<i>Colocasia antiquorum, Schott</i>	Leaves used to clean wounds.
37. <i>yoh</i>	<i>Cuora amboinensis</i>	Fat rubbed on skin to cure sting from catfish.

List of plants and animals used as Medicinal Cures

Ma' Betisék name	Species	Medicinal use
14. jambu'	<i>Psidium</i> <i>Guajava</i> , Linn.	Shoots boiled in water and mixture drunk to cure pains in chest and abdomen; also water used to clean wounds.
15. jawa'	Unidentified	Root boiled in water and mixture drunk to cure abdominal pains.
16. jengau	<i>Acorus calamus</i>	Root boiled in water and mixture drunk to stop diarrhoea.
17. ketab gedeng	<i>Thalassina</i> <i>anomala</i>	Dried, pounded, mixed with water and drunk to cure difficulty in breathing.
18. koron	<i>Finlaysonia</i> <i>maritima</i> (?)	Root placed under pillow to cure insomnia.
19. kuang	<i>Pteropus edulis</i> ; <i>Geoffroy</i>	Fat rubbed on skin to cure sting of catfish (<i>imang</i> ; <i>Plotosus anquillaris</i>)
20. lanchang	<i>Ixonanthes</i> <i>icosandra</i> , Jack	Wood boiled in water and mixture drunk, for conditions connected with discharge in urine.
21. lumput maluk	<i>Mimosa pudica</i> , Linn	Root burnt and mixed with water, mixture drunk to abort foetus; burnt roots can also be rubbed on body to cure rashes.
22. nipah	<i>Nipah fruticans</i>	Flower eaten to cure stomach aches.
23. Nireh bungak	<i>Carapa obovata</i> , Blume	Fruit grated and applied on wounds and sores; also stops bleeding.
24. niyor	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Water from coconut drunk to cure rashes.
25. Nuju	Unidentified	Bulb eaten to cure bleeding in faeces resulting from constipation.
26. Petai meri	<i>Parkia speciosa</i> , Hassk	Leaves boiled in water, mixture drunk to stop diarrhoea.

<i>Ma' Betisék name</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Medicinal use</i>
27. <i>Hentot belangan</i>	<i>Musa malaccensis</i> , <i>Ridl.</i>	Juice from stem applied on skin, to cure blisters.
28. <i>Tau' pakuk</i>	<i>Aspidium</i> , <i>Swartz</i>	Fur from shoots gathered and applied on skin to stop bleeding.
29. <i>Tujok</i>	<i>Acanthus ilicifolius</i> , <i>Linn.</i>	Fruit swallowed to cure persistent cough.
30. <i>Minik</i>	<i>Cnestis ramiflora</i> , <i>Griff.</i>	Root boiled in water and drunk to cure pains round waist.
31. <i>Tawa'</i>	<i>Epiphytic ficus</i>	Root boiled in water and mixture drunk, to cure coughs.
32. <i>Telon</i>	<i>Python reticulatus</i>	Bile used to stop headaches, poor health, physical weakness.
33. <i>Temakau</i>	<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	Directly applied on wound to stop bleeding.
34. <i>Tepes sesat mian kedoh</i>	<i>Hedychium coronarum</i> , <i>Koenig</i>	Root boiled in water and mixture drunk to abort a foetus; flower eaten with betel vine to cure coughs.
35. <i>Tijai</i>	<i>Cinnamomum</i> , <i>Blume</i>	Latex rubbed on body to cure insomnia.
36. <i>Yet hitem</i>	<i>Colocasia antiquorum</i> , <i>Schott</i>	Leaves used to clean wounds.
37. <i>yoh</i>	<i>Cuora amboinensis</i>	Fat rubbed on skin to cure sting from catfish.

Appendix 28

Spells

i) Tangkal Mamain (Nightmare spell)

'Seliling, Selelang'¹

'Seliling, Selelang'

Besik betempah

The iron bar is hammered

Siah kirik, siah kanan

Avoid the left, avoid the right

Siah belakang siah depan

Avoid the back, avoid the front

Meniah mamain humpah

Avoid the curse in dreams

Tulun bisak, naik penawah.

Remove the illness, bring the cure.

ii) Tangkal Penawah (General illness spell)

Dua engkau dua gelop talik

I count two, with you and the string

Tulun aku tiga

With me, it makes three

Kene tebe pechang ku tawah

It strikes lightning, I cure it

Kene angin ku tawah

It strikes the wind, I cure it

Kene embon ku tawah

It strikes the dew, I cure it

Buke uwai kob belai

Open the spell, obtain the potion

Sekian bisak ku menawah

All illnesses, I can cure

Tulun bisak naik tawah

Remove the illnesses, bring the cure

¹ The sounds made of iron being hammered.

Aku menawah sekian bisak tekene

I cure all types of illnesses, they will heal

Bisak kenak uwai kob belai

When illnesses strike open the spell, release the potion

Tulun bisak naik tawah

Remove the illness, bring the cure

Aky menawah sekian bisak tekene

I cure all types of illness.

iii) Tangkal Menyimah Tenong Tawah or Tangkal Penawah
(General illness spell)

Burong mera' terbang ke Jawe

The peacock flies to Java

Lampong lang beigin

The eagle longs for a raft.

Lagik tepok lagik ku ingin

The more I pat the more I desire

Hilang tuboh begantik niawa'

The loss of a body is replaced by a life.

Tepok tepong tawah

Pat the flour that brings the cure

Menawah semule jadik

A natural cure

Giling papan lopi

Grind on the *lopi* plank

Tepok tawah semule jadik

Pat the flour that brings the natural cure.

iv) Tangkal Sakat or Tangkal Sawan (Spell for sleeplessness
and crying fits)

Hum sawan, mula' sawan

Bathe the sleeplessness and the crying fits when they begin

Adak anak musang bawak tanggak

There is a young civet cat underneath the stairs

Sawan kasu sawan atap

The sleeplessness and crying fits that linger on the rafters
and attap

Sawan tihang sawan lanté

That linger on the poles and floor

Sawan jikah sawan halong

That linger on the mat and wall frames

Sawan jijak jenang sawan bebas

That linger on the uprights of the door and windows and the ventilating holes

Sawan dinding sawan genu, sawan tasop

That linger on the wall, the floor-corners and the flooring poles

Sawan tumang

That linger on the supporting beams of the ceiling

Apak menjadik sawan?

What becomes ill with sleeplessness and crying fits?

Ibuk kepalak tanggak jadik sawan

The posts of the stairs become ill with sleeplessness and crying fits

Belapak sawan? Sembilan puluh sembilan sawan

How many illnesses of this kind? Ninety nine illnesses of this kind

Lepas sebalék awan

Let them go behind the clouds.

Asam gugu² asam kandé³

The *asam* fruit and the wild mangosteen

Daun bulu jatuh charap

A furry leaf falls with a gentle rustle

Daun terénténg⁴ jatuh melayang

The leaf terénténg falls to the ground

Apak menjadik sawan?

What becomes ill with sleeplessness and crying fits?

Orang matik bunu

The person who died from a murder

Kepalak untuk menjadik sawan

His head will get the illness of sleeplessness and crying fits

Lisan baharuk, lisan lamak

A new tombstone, an old tombstone

Papan baharuk, papan lamak

² A yellow-orange fluted fruit of the *Garcinia atroviridis* species used as a seasoning for curries and for cleaning the kris.

³ This is also a sour fruit of the *Garcinia* species used for the same purpose as the above.

⁴ A plant of the *Lepisanthes* genus.

A new plank, and old plank
 Tanah baharuk, tanah lamak
 A new plot of land, an old plot of land
 Pacha' baharuk, bacha' lamak
 A new post, an old post
 Gelénténg baharuk, gelénténg lamak
 A new ridge, an old ridge.
 Sawan jikah, sawan kain
 The illness of sleeplessness and crying fits that linger on
 mat and clothes
 Belapuk puluh menjadik sawan?
 How many illnesses of this kind?
 Sembilan puluh sembilan sawan lepas sebalék awan.
 Ninety-nine illnesses of this kind released behind the
 clouds.

v) Tangkal Buang Anak (Abortion spell)

'Téng ketang tang'
 'Téng ketang tang'
 Timpa marik tepik jalan
 The earth collapses beside the road
 Oooi . . .
 Oooi . . .
 Chanak! Tanjung Chanak, teluk chanak
 Remove! Remove the promontory, remove the bay.
 Rantau chanak, pamah chanak.
 Remove the inlets and stretches of the coast, remove the
 meadows.
 Gaung chanak, gunung chanak
 Remove the valley, remove the mountain.
 Oooi . . .
 Oooi . . .
 Datang léh sini
 Come here
 Makan léh
 Eat this
 Anak mati belanak
 A still-born child

Kurang bisak, tambah lagi

If the spell is less potent, add more

Chanak mati belanak.

Remove the still-born child.

vi) Tangkal Tatak (General illness spell)

Hum tatak, tekene tatak

Bathe the illness, if one gets the illness

Kene sakit bukak unwai, luke belai

When illness strikes, open the spell, release the potion

Kene daging ku chabut

The illness strikes my body, remove it

Tatak lemas ku chabut

The illness which makes one weak, I remove

Kene tanah, pulang tanah

It strikes the ground, let it return to the ground

Kene lumput, pulang lumput

It strikes the grass, let it return to the grass.

Aku menawah sekian tatak

I am curing all types of illnesses

Tulun bisa' naik tawah

Let the pain go, let the cure enter

Bukan aku punya penawah

It is not my cure

Nénék punya guru' punya penawah

It is the cure from the teacher, my grandfather

Sakit ma' boléh jampik

It can heal the illnesses of people

Sakit adi' boléh jampik.

It can heal the illnesses of the young.

vii) Tangkal Kubu (Grave spell)

'Kebunku, kebangkah'

'Kebunku, kebangkah'

Siah kirik, siah kanan

Avoid the left, avoid the right

Meniah hantuk kubu

Avoid the spirit of the grave

Jangan kabah!

Don't tell!

'Unku, unku, angka, angka'

'Unku, unku, angka, angka'

Hantuk kubu hantuk kelaut

The spirit of the grave, the spirit of the sea

Saorang Batak saorang bangkai

A Batak man dead then another corpse

Meniah sebalek kubu bangkai

Avoid the other side of the corpse's grave.

Glossary

- a-a'*. Tiger
adat. Law, ancestral law
adi'. Younger sister or brother
anai. White ants
anchak. Food tray, presented as a ritual sacrifice
angkap. Flowering palm, *Zalacca wallichiana*
api'-api'. Mangrove tree, *avicennia intermedia*.
are. Ficus tree
ari' moyang. 'Day of ancestors'

bah. Flood
baja'. Madness
bajau. Bad, terrible
bajuk dendan. Grass skirts
bajuk lamak. 'Old clothes'; traditional ways
bakau. Mangrove
balé. Miniature house, presented as a ritual sacrifice
bangèng. Zither-like instrument
batin. Village head
batuk. Cough
baya' Hitem/balam. Dark shadows
baya' Putih. Light shadows
bé. Padi
belachan. Prawn paste
bekutai. Shaman
bertés. Roasted rice
betam. Palm, *eugeissona triste*
betan. Breach of taboo
Betisék. With scales
bintoh. Bamboo scoop for gathering crab
biolé. Violin
boi. Sugar-cane
bomoh. Village healer (Malay)
- bau' barat*. Westerly winds, south-west monsoon
bua' utare. Northerly winds, north-east monsoon
bul. Nausea, food poisoning
bula'. Moon
bumbe. 'Spirit leaves' plaited from the *nipah* palm.

ceka'. Nausea
chamai. Betel-vine
chawan moyang. Pitcher plant
cheep bé'. Crow pheasant
cheep dekot. Emerald dove
cheep e-èreit koi hitem. Black-headed munia
cheep e-èreit koi putih. White-headed munia
cheep elang kwait. Serpent eagle
cheep etiau. Cliff swallow, cf *etiau*
cheep gunting. Peacock pheasant
cheep jangau. Heron
cheep onyo'. Bay-headed bee-eater
cheep pong-pong. Fluffy-backed babbler
cheep tibau. Great-eared nightjar
cheep tuntung. Coppersmith barbet
chéh. Ipoh poison
chelui kutai. Spirit-possessed
chinchang moyang bantut. Ancestral curse on plants and animals

daong. tree, *Leptonychia glabra*, Turcz
daun moyang. Spirit leaves used in seances

- degoh*. An ogre who lives in graves
dempam. A tiger helping spirit
di'. Bamboo
dian. Durio fruit
do. Water
dunia'. World

ejen. Qualities to attract spirits
ékse. Suffer
elang kwait. Serpent eagle
émpék. Three
enam. Six
eru. Casuarina tree
etiau. Spirit leaves, plaited from the *nipah* palm

gadék/gendék. Mother; afterbirth
gaharu'. Tree, *Aquilaria malaccensis*
gambah. Human figure moulded from flour
ganti' mangat. Soul exchange
gaya'. Cicada
géhék. Hard
gelah odo'. Name taken by man and woman after marriage
gelah puni'. Name given at birth
gemah laut. Rain at sea.
gemang. A unit of measurement, approximately a comfortable sheaf of rice on the arm.
gemoi. Teeth
gendoi. Grandmother
gèngong. Xylophone
gerét. Cricket
gila'. Madness
giyang. Monitor lizard
gohop. Pain
goloit. Swallow
gomo'. Aunt

hadu'. House
hala'isula'. Sorcery
hapit. Flying fox
hau kanténg. Black iron knife (mythical)
héh. We

hel. Very
hélak chuai. Wild sweet potato
hélak kejél. Wild sweet potato, *Ipomoea digitata*
hentot. Banana
hinkik. They, them
hitem. Black
hua. Warning of an oncoming misfortune
hua' serba'. Rice roasting ceremony
hubat. Medicinal cures
hudang kertéh. Sea prawn
hulubalang. Soldier

ibah. Uncle
ipoh. Plant strychnos
isi' tangkal. To fix a spell

jaboi. An ape-like ancestral spirit
jain. Lazy
janka bakau. Mangrove roots
jantong. Inflorescence of the banana tree.
jarung. Net.
jelutong. Tree, *Ervatamia corymbosa*
jenang. Deputy headman of village
jerat. Trap
jerèh. Asthma; head decoration made from the *nipah* palm.
joget. Malay dance
jo-oh. Ceremonial dancing and singing
jubo'/Melayu. Malay
juga. Village enforcement officer
jungkui. Sun lizard, skink

ka-ai mangat. Soul transference
ka duyung. Dugong
ka hapo'. Grouper fish
ka merah. Red snapper
ka tembakul. Mud skipper
kahei. Ask
kain. Cannibalistic/human-like creatures

- kambing. Goat
 kampung. Village
 kané di'. Bamboo rat
 katak bentong. Frog
 kawai. Night wasp
 ka-u'. Elder sister
 kebel. Powers of invulnerability and invisibility
 kebes. Death
 kedéi'. Bitter tasting foods.
 ké-è. Elder brother
 kelasan. Married pair comprising a household
 kele. Also
 kemali'. Danger or misfortune brought on by a spirit
 kembang bungak. 'Blooming of the rice flower'
 kempas. Tree, *Koompassia malaccensis*, Benth
 kenchét. Grandchild
 kenon. Child
 kepah. A mollusc, *Meretrix*
 kepayang. Plant, *pangium edule*
 kera'. Short-tailed macaque
 kerang. Cockle
 kerét hangat. 'Hot body', incompatibility
 kerodo'. Tree, *Cyrtostachys lakka*, Becc
 ketab batut. Edible asiatic crab
 ketab belangkas. King crab
 ketab gedeng. Mud lobster, *Thalassina anomala*
 ketab impai. Calling crab
 ketab tipak. Ghost crab
 ki-ip. Centipede
 kinchong. Tree, *Annonaceae goniiothala*(?)
 kubi'. Tree, *zalacca conferta*, Griff
 kudih. Sores
 ku-up. Vomiting
 kuéh tepong. Wheat cake
 kumuit. Grave
 kuning. Yellow
 kure-kure. Malaria
 laguk. Song
 lajin. Energetic
 lambai. Wave; spirit-calling leaves
 lanchang kuning. Village cleansing ceremony
 lang kwait. Bat
 latah. Compulsive utterance of words and obscenities
 lau'/juma'. Cooked food
 legéh. Gummed sticks used for bird trapping.
 lembéng. Sword
 lembu. Cow
 lengat. Diarrhoea
 lép. Good
 lepat. Leaf-wrapped glutinous rice cake
 lipan. Spirit leaves
 lo' butak. The buta-buta tree, *Excoecaria agaliocha*, Linn
 lo' maham. 'bleeding trees' *Knema*, Lour
 lokan. A mollusc, *Polymesoda*
 lukak. Wounds
 ma. Two
 ma'. People
 mamba'. Yellow
 mangat bé'. Rice soul
 mangat géhé. Hard soul
 mangat jain. Lazy soul
 mangat jok. Feet soul
 mangat koi. Head soul
 mangat lajin. Energetic soul
 mangat ti. Hand soul
 marau. Drought
 mayang pinang. Inflorescence of the betel-palm
 mélah maham. Red
 meluat. A rice harvest ritual concerning the rice soul
 mengadap. To grant an audience (royalty)
 menge'. Elders, Council of elders
 mengidap. To be threatened with an illness
 mengkaum. Sun lizard

- menteri'* *muyeng*. A Malay helping spirit
merat. Elephant
meri. Forest
mét asi'. Eyes that see objects inversely from humans
ming. Near
minik. Tree, *Dalbergia tamarind folia* Roxb.
misikin. Poor
miyang. Rashes, minor skin irritations
moso'. Tree, *Lumnitzera coccinea*, Ridley
moyang. Spirit (human, plant or animal)
mu. Nose

nachah. Eat
naga'. Dragon
natang. Animal
nik tu samak. To suck from the same breast
nénék. Grandfather
niawa'. Life, life-force
niit. Sweet-tasting
nipah. *Nipa fruticans* palm
niréh. Tree used for carving (*Carapa moluccensis*)
niyor. Coconut palm

oo-oit kadam. Abdominal swellings
oos. Fire
opoh. Local descent group

pa. Mouth
pahat. Razor shell fish
pandok rusa'. Deer
pantang. Ritual prohibition on food/behaviour
pantun. Malay love verses
pasung. A stake of mangrove wood
peche'. Shadow
pedih. Smart, pepper hot
pelimun. Magical properties in birds and animals

penawah. Spell to cure illness
penduduk. Plant, *melastoma polyanthum*.
penghuluk. Malay village head
pikul. Unit of measurement; pikul is equivalent to 133.3 lbs.
pinang. Betel-nut
pitam. Sunstroke
po'. Full load capacity of a local barge; 6.050 metric tons
pohoit. Illness-removing ceremony
pongkol. Tiger (mythical)
Pulau Buah. Island of fruits, between the world and the overworld
pulé. Iron rod used to gather shell-fish or crab
pulot. Glutinous rice
punan. A state of deprivation
Puteri' Gunong Lédang. Princess of the Lédang mountain (mythical)
putih. White
puting beliong. Whirl wind

ronggeng. Malay dance
rotan bahai. A tiger spirit (mythical)
rusa'. Deer, *Cervus unicolor*
rusa' maham. Bleeding deer (mythical)

sambah. Illness-bearing mangrove plants
santap. Eat (royalty)
sawai. Seance
sawan. Persistent crying and sleeplessness
sedu'. Choking over food
segop. Spontaneous possession by spirits
sekat. Illness-bearing roots of mangrove trees
selaseh. Plant, *ocimum sanctum*
sembuang. Food tray

seranting. Tree, *Smilax myosotifolia*, Ridley
siamang timbong. Black-handed gibbon (mythical)
sihat. Healthy
singgang/singga'. Tree. *Knema malayana*, Warb(?)
sio'. Tasty
soh/sakét. Illness
sonkok. Head-dress
sonkot. Container for burning benzoin
suba'. Earrings
sungei. River

tabe. Drum
tado'. Grasshopper
tajam. Sharp
taman bungak. 'Flower-garden'
tampang keladik. Yam-eating tiger (mythical)
tenah merkah. Cracked land
tangih. Cry
tangkai. Branch
tangkal. Curative spell
tatak. General illness
tau' pakuk. *Pakuk* fern, shoots
tebel. Honey wasp
ték. Earth, land, earth spell
tekoh kumuit. Grave tree
tekoh lo'. Branch from a tree
témbo. White-handed gibbon

tembok/lojo. Banana flour cake wrapped in banana leaves
tenong. Spirit-attack
tepes gantung. Plant, *Zingiber spectabile*?
terong duri'. *terung pipit*.
tingkong/pulai. A light wood used for carving masks, *Alstonia Spathulata*, Blume
titik musang. Civet cat
tok Naning. The old man of Naning
tombak. Leaf wrapped rice cake made for food trays used in ritual sacrifices
tuhan. That person; original ancestor
tuju. Seven
tukah gantik. 'To replace'; a ritual sacrifice
tukal. Pumpkin
tunggal. Solitary, single
tuntung. Bamboo sticks of different lengths used as a musical instrument, bamboo container for cooking
tupai belang. Striped squirrel
tupat. Leaf wrapped rice cake

yan. Founding ancestor of village
yét. Yam, taro
yoh, Tortoise

Bibliography

- Badcock, C. R., 1975. *Levi-Strauss, Structuralism and Sociological Theory*, Hutchinson, London.
- Barnes, R. H., 1974. *Kédang: A Study of the Collective Thought of an Eastern Indonesian People*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Barthes, R., 1964. *Elements of Semiology*, Jonathan Cape, 1969 edn.
- Benjamin, G., 1967. 'Temiar Religion', Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge.
1968. 'Headmanship and Leadership in Temiar Society', *Federated Museums Journal*, N.S., Vol. XIII.
1974. 'Austroasiatic Groupings and Prehistory in the Malay Peninsula', *Austroasiatic Studies* (ed. P. Jenner), University of Hawaii Press, Hawaii.
- Blagden, C. O., 1894. 'Early Indo-Chinese Influence in the Malay Peninsula', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 27.
1903. 'The Comparative Philology of the Sakai and Semang Dialects of the Malay Peninsula', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 39.
- Brunton, R., 1980. 'Misconstrued Order in Melanesian Religion', in *MAN*, Vol. 15 No. 1.
- Burkill, I. H., 1935. *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula*, Vol. I (A-H), Vol. II (I-Z), Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives, Kuala Lumpur, 1966 edn.
- Carey, I., 1976. *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur.
- Chuang, S. H., 1961 *On Malayan Shores*, Mawu Shosa, Singapore.
- Clifford, H., 1891. 'Notes on the Sakai Dialects of the Malay Peninsula', *Journal of the Straits Branch of The Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 77.
- Cole, F., 1945. *The Peoples of Malaysia*, Duon Nostrand, Princeton, New Jersey.
- Dentan, R. K., 1964. 'Senoi-Semang', in *Ethnic Groups of Mainland South East Asia*, ed. F. M. Lebar, G. C. Hickey, and J. K. Musgrave, Human Relations Area Files Press, New Haven.
1965. *Some Senoi-Semai Dietary Restrictions: A Study of Food Behaviour in a Malayan Hill Tribe*, Yale University Ph.D., University Micro, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
1968. *The Semai: A Nonviolent People of Malaya*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.
- Diffloth, S., 1968. 'Proto-Semai Phonology', *Federated Museum Journal* (N.S.), Vol. 13.

- Douglas, M., 1966. *Purity and Danger*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
1970. *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, Barne and Rockcliffe, Cresset Press, London.
- Durkheim, E., 1912. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1976 edn.
- Eliade, M., 1958. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. Sheed and Ward, London.
- Endicott, K., 1979. *Batek Negrito Religion*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Evans, I. H. N., 1913. 'Notes on the Besis of Tamboh, Kuala Langat, Selangor', *Journal of the Federated Malay States Museum*, Vol. V.
1923. *Studies in Religion, Folk-Lore and Custom in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula*, Frank Cass, London, 1970 edn.
- Firth, R., 1959 'Problems and Assumptions in an Anthropological Study of Religion', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society*, Vol. 89, Part II.
- Fox, J., 1975. 'On Binary Categories and Primary Symbols: Some Rotinese Perspectives' in *The Interpretation of Symbolism*, ed. Roy Willis, Malaby Press, London.
- Foxworthy, F. W., 1932 *Dipterocarpaceae of the Malay Peninsula*, Malayan Forest Records, No. 10, Federated Malay States Government Publication, Kuala Lumpur.
- Freeman, J. D., 1960. 'Iban Augury' in *The Birds of Borneo*, ed. B. E. Smythies, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh and London, 1968.
- Geertz, C., 1966. 'Religion as a Cultural System', in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. M. Banton, Tavistock, London.
- Gell, A., 1975. *Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries*, London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology, No. 51, Athlone Press, London.
- Gimlette, J. D., 1915. *Malay Poisons and Charm Cures*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1971 edn.
- Gimlette, J. D. and Thomson, H. W., 1939 *A Dictionary of Malayan Medicine*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971 edn.
- Glenister, A. G., 1951. *The Birds of the Malay Peninsula, Singapore and Penang*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1974 edn.
- Guthrie, S., 1980. 'A Cognitive Theory of Religion', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 21 No. 2.
- Henderson, M. R., 1949; 1950; 1951. *Malayan Wild Flowers: Monocotyledons*, The Malayan Nature Society, Kuala Lumpur, 1974 edn. (first published in three parts in *The Malayan Nature Journal*, in the years cited above).
- 1949; 1950; 1951. *Malayan Wild Flowers: Dicotyledons*, Part I., The Malayan Nature Society, Kuala Lumpur, 1974 edn. (first published in three parts, in *the Malayan Nature Journal*, in the years cited above).

- Leach, E., 1976. *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which symbols are connected*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Levi-Strauss, C., 1962. *The Savage Mind (La Pensée Sauvage)* Weidenfeld and Nicolson, English translation 1966, London.
1964. *The Raw and the Cooked (Mythologiques I: Le Cru et le Cuit)*, Harper and Row, English translation 1969, London.
- Levi-Strauss, C., 1966. *From Honey to Ashes (Mythologiques II: Du Miel aux Cendres)*, Harper & Row, English translation 1973, London.
- Linch, W., 1928. 'Some Discoveries on the Tembeling', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. VI.
- Logan, J. R., 1841. 'The Ethnology of the Johore Archipelago', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*, Vol. I.
1847. 'The Orang Binua of Johore', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*.
1848. 'An Account of the Wild Tribes inhabiting the Malayan Peninsula, Sumatra and a few neighbouring Islands', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*, Vol. II.
1850. 'The Ethnology of South-Eastern Asia', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*, Vol. IV.
- Maxwell, W. E., 1883. 'Shamanism in Perak', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*.
- Medway, L. 1969. *The Wild Mammals of Malaya and Offshore Islands Including Singapore*, Oxford University Press, London.
- Mills, L. A., 1925 'Piracy in the Straits Settlements', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. III, Part II.
- Morris, H. S., 1964 'Shamanism among the Oya Melanau', in *Essays on Social Organization and Values* ed. R. Firth, London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology, No. 28, Athlone Press, London.
- Needham, R., 1964. 'Blood, Thunder and Mockery of Animals', *Sociologus*, (N.S.), No. 14.
1967. 'Right and Left in Nyoro Symbolic Classification', *Africa*, Vol. 37.
- Paiget, J., 1968. *Structuralism (Le Structuralisme)*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, English translation 1971, London.
- Records of Administration in the West Estate Office on Carey Island (1965-75).
- Records of Correspondence between the District Officer at Klang Land Office and the Estate Department of Jugra-land and Carey Island Co. Ltd., in 1964, and the Estate Department of Pataling Estate Company Ltd. in Dec. 1966.
- Robins, R.H., 1971 'Malinowski, Firth, and the "Context of Situation"', in *Social Anthropology and Language*, ASA Monographs, No. 10, Tavistock, London.
- Schebesta, P., 1928 *Among the Forest Dwarfs of Malaya*. Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1973 edn.

- Schmidt, P. W., 1903. 'The Sakai and Semang Languages in the Malay Peninsula and their relation to the MonKhmer Languages', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 39.
- Skeat, W. W., 1896. 'Vocabulary of the Besis Dialect', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 29.
1897. 'The Traditions of Ulu Langat', *The Selangor Journal*, No. 21, Vol. V.
1897. 'Sakai Tribes in Selangor, Kuala Langat District', in *The Selangor Journal*, No. 21, Vol. V.
1900. *Malay Magic, being An Introduction to the Folklore and Popular Religion of the Malay Peninsula*, Dover Publications, New York.
- Skeat, W. W. and Blagden, C. O., 1906. *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*, Vols. I and II, Frank Cass, London 1966 edn.
- Turner, V., 1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
1969. *The Ritual Process*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London
- Tweedie, M. W. F. and Harrison, J. L., 1954. *Malayan Animal Life*, Longman, Berhad, Kuala Lumpur, 1970 edn.
- Tylor, E., 1873 'Animism', in *Reader in Comparative Religion*, ed. W. A. Leisa and E. Z. Vogt, Harper and Row, New York, 4th edn. 1979.
- Watson, J. G., 1928 *Malayan Plant Names*, Malayan Forest Records No. 5, Federated Malay States Government Publication, Kuala Lumpur.
1928. *Mangrove Forests of the Malay Peninsula*, Malayan Forest Records No. 6, Federated Malay States Government Publication, Kuala Lumpur.
- Werner, R., 1973. *Mah-Meri: Art and Culture*, Museum Department, Kuala Lumpur.
- Wilder, W. D., 1963. 'Magic in Malaya', Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of London.
- Wilkinson, R. J., 1923. 'A History of the Peninsular Malays with Chapters on Perak and Selangor', in *Papers on Malay Subjects*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1971 edn.
- Winstedt, R.O. (undated), *An Unabridged Malay-English Dictionary*, Kelly and Walsh, Singapore.
- 1927, 'More Notes on Malay Magic: The Shaman's Possession', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 5.
1962. *A History of Malaya*, Marican, Kuala Lumpur, 1968 edn.
- Wyatt-Smith, J., 1952. *Pocket Check List of Timber Trees*, Malayan Forest Records, No. 17, Forest Research Institute Publication, Kuala Lumpur.

Index

- afterbirth, 146
- ancestors, 2, 7
- ancestral law, 1
- attap-making, 131-132
- bamboo, 164
- birds, augury, 60-61; charm
birds, 53; luck bearing,
42-43; trapping, 125-126
- birth; birth names, 146; rebirth,
76
- black, 38, 110
- blood-sacrifice, 62-63
- charms; love, 40, 128-130;
animal, 127-129
- children; socialization, 29; ill-
ness, 146-147
- Chinese, 124-125, 132
- cow, 97
- crocodile, 125
- cultivation; rootcrops and
vegetables, 117-118; fruits,
118-119; rice, see rice plant-
ing
- curative spells, 155
- curse; definition, 32; ritual, 35
- dances; harvest, 115-117; sha-
manistic, 178-180
- danger-states, 43-44
- death, 78
- deer, 123, 125, 127
- dreams, 57
- descent group, 26
- dog, 49, 88
- dragon, 88
- dugong, 48
- earth mounds, 51, 119
- elders, 25, 32, 158
- elephant, 86
- fishing, 119-123
- flying fox, 88
- food; for humans, 7, 102;
spirits, 182-186; sweet tast-
ing, bitter-tasting, 133
- gathering, 64, 119-123
- gibbon; white-handed gibbon,
48; black-handed gibbon, 88
- household; structure, 27-28;
organization, 28-30
- hunting, 123-125
- illness; cause, 64-66; origin, 83;
category, 146-148; diagnosis,
136-138; treatment, 155-159
- incest; origin, 117; rules, 31, 117
- kinship, 26, 174-176
- madness, 153-154, 160
- Malay, 17, 152, 155
- mangroves, 3, 102, 119
- marriage; rules, 30-31; resi-
dence, 31
- middleman, 125, 132
- monkey, 125, 150-151
- moon, 80
- musical instruments, 115, 180
- myths; origin, 18-23, 88-94;
plant, 89-92, 98-101; ani-
mals, 84-89, 92-98; structure,
8-9
- natural calamities, 3, 33
- numbers, 112
- ogre, 51
- omens, 57, 59
- overworld, 70, 166
- palms; *nibong*, 123; *nipah*, 24,
148, 151, 168; *pandanus*, 48;
betel-nut, 92; *betam*, 174;
angkap, 158; coconut, 36, 168
- pangolin, 48
- procreation, 75

- python, 43, 97
- rat, 97
- red, 37-38
- rice; planting, 104-105; harvests, 105; ceremonies, 107-112
- ritual; sacrifice, 132, 154, 182-186; prohibitions, 53, 57, 58-59, 106
- seances, 154, 167-170
- shaman, 154, 159-161
- shell fish, 96, 165; see gathering
- skink (sun lizard), 82
- songs; harvest, 113-115
- sorcery, 76, 153
- soul; rice soul, 109; lazy soul, 51, 77-79; energetic soul, 29, 51, 77-79; soul states-weak soul, 56; hard soul, 77, 56; feet soul, 77; hand soul, 77; head soul, 77; heart soul, 77; plant soul, 45
- spirits; ancestral, human, 49-51; plants, animals, 50-51
- spirit-attack, 2, 56
- spirit-attraction, 162-165
- spirit-flower, 174
- spirit-guides, 8, 161-166, 172
- spirit-leaves, 168-170
- spirit-possession, 159-160
- structure; definition, 4
- Temuan, 152
- thunder storms, 75
- tiger, 86-87; spirits, 175
- trance, 160
- trapping; techniques, 125-126 (see bird trapping)
- underworld, 83
- village; development, 17, 23-26; leadership, 24-26; ceremonies, 26-27
- white, 37, 110
- wild boar, 123
- winds, 75-76
- wood carving, 131-132
- wood felling, 130
- yellow, 35-36