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BETWEEN FRONTIERS:
The Formation and Marginalization of a Borderland Malay Community
in Southwestern Sarawak, Malaysia, 1870s - 1990s

by

Noboru Ishikawa

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of
New York

1998

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Acknowledgments

My field research in Malaysia (1993-1994) was conducted under the auspices of the Economic Planning Unit of the Federal Government of Malaysia, the State Government of Sarawak, and the Sarawak Museum, and financially supported by a Japanese Government Scholarship for Asian Studies from the Japanese Ministry of Education (Monbusho). Fieldwork in Indonesia (1995 and 1996) was carried out under the auspices of the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (the Indonesian Council of Sciences) and funded by Grants-in-Aid for Overseas Research from the Japanese Ministry of Education (Monbusho). I wish to thank Dr. Napsiah Mahfoz and Dr. Sanib Said of the State Planning Unit, Department of Development of the Sarawak State Government, and Dr. Taufik Abdullah, of the Indonesian Council of Sciences, for their support of my research.

The length of the acknowledgment which follows is indicative of the great personal debts I accumulated in the course of my fieldwork and dissertation writing.

I owe my deepest gratitude to the people of the villages of Telok Melano, Telok Serabang, and Sematan, Lundu District, in the First Division of Sarawak, East Malaysia. They allowed me to live in their midst, to ask questions which at times invaded their privacy, and they patiently discussed things with me at great length. Although many people helped me in this field research, I would like to mention especially Puan Rabīnah Sahari, the late Pak Dol Razak,

Tua Kampung Pak Seba, the late Ahmat Dol, Tua Kampung Pak Kerem Mat Raya and the late Puan Siti Mariam Baharuddin.

In Kuching, Sarawak, and Pontianak, West Kalimantan, a substantial number of people and institutions assisted me. Without them, my project would have been impossible. First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Awang Hasmadi Awang Mois of the National University of Malaysia for his guidance and support in my study of Sarawak Malay society and for his critical reading of the entire draft. I also thank Dr. Peter Kedit and the Sarawak Museum for facilitating my research at Telok Melano. Special thanks are due to Mrs. Khoo and Puan Nora Safiee for their assistance at the Sarawak Museum Library where everyday for almost six months I searched through volumes of the *Sarawak Gazette* and other archival materials covering more than one hundred years of Sarawakian history. I would also like to thank Haji Mohammed Tazuddin Hj. Junaidi, the Resident of the First Division, Mr. Ik Pahon, District Officer, Lundu, and Mr. Syed Junaidi, Second Assistant Officer, Sematan Sub-District for their support of my research. Haji Awang Mois Pengiran Marali and Haji Mawardi Rivai and their families always made us feel that Kuching and Pontianak were our second home. I benefited a great deal from their knowledge of Malay culture.

In New York, I thank my advisor, Professor May Ebiara, and committee members Professors Delmos Jones, Glenn Petersen and Shamsul A. B. of the National University of Malaysia (outside reader); their comments and criticism have made this a better product than it otherwise would have been. I am most grateful to Dr. May Ebiara

for her moral support which, over and above her academic role, enabled me to complete this dissertation outside the US. My deepest gratitude is also extended to Dr. Eric Wolf and Dr. Marvyn Meggitt who blended the American and the British anthropological totems and traditions for me. I thank Thomas Burgess for his careful reading of an earlier draft, his critical comments and friendship. Special thanks are also due to Terri Vulcano, Judith Attride and Ellen DeRiso for their assistance with paperwork over the years in the Ph.D. Program in Anthropology, Graduate School and University Center, the City University of New York.

Outside CUNY, I also contracted many significant intellectual debts. My undergraduate and graduate advisor Professor Makio Matsuzono of the Tokyo Metropolitan University first taught me social anthropology; his guidance has been unwavering. I am indebted to Professor Kazuo Ohtsuka of the Tokyo Metropolitan University for his meticulous reading and comments on Chapter 4. Professor Motomitsu Uchibori of Hitotsubashi University was generous and conscientious in reading my research proposal, and encouraged me throughout my fieldwork and dissertation writing. Professor Tsuyoshi Kato of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, always rendered important advice and generously shared his deep knowledge on Malay culture with me. Throughout my labors, my colleagues at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, provided me with a stimulating setting for research, writing and the exchange of ideas. I benefited greatly from the comments of Dr. Wendy Smith of Monash University on Chapters 3 and 10. I also appreciated the help of Dr. Wil de Jong of

the Center for International Forestry Research in Bogor, Indonesia in translating Dutch colonial documents.

Finally I owe the greatest appreciation to my helpmate, wife and co-fieldworker, Mayumi who gave unstinting intellectual and moral support at every stage of this project. Without her, this study could not have been imagined. In Tokyo, New York, Borneo, Jakarta and Kyoto, in the most difficult times, she was always there. I dedicate this dissertation to her with deepest gratitude.

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PART I.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1. Inquiry : Marginality and Socio-economic Displacement

By examining the one-hundred-year history of a Sarawak Malay society adjacent to the Sarawak (Malaysia)-Kalimantan (Indonesia) border in western Borneo, this thesis aims to discuss the marginality of frontier Malay peasants, their displacement and their exclusion from the nation and the state system. It is written as a historical ethnography of a community on the periphery of the state's control of territory. By focusing on the impact of political power play for over a century at the borderland, I examine the process of economic and cultural dislocation of the peasantry. I give particular attention to the change and persistence in elements of socio-cultural expression of the hinterland Malays in the context of the invention of "Sarawak Malay" as an ethnic category, the impact of modern market forces, and the consolidation of state power.

This study analyzes how facets of social marginalization are interrelated. The social dislocation of the Malay population on the border is explored in three contexts; the economic, the ethnic, and the national. They are subject to selective influence from state and global processes, which are filtered and skewed by the fact of their geographical locale. The coastal Malays in question were first excluded from cash crop production within a segmented agricultural production system created by the Brooke family's colonial regime. Their exclusion from capitalist agriculture led to further differentiation within the Malay ethnic category and the class

structure. This economically marginalized population on the fringe of state territory then became culturally stigmatized, being pushed to the outer rim of the ethnic category "Sarawak Malay". The formation of the newly independent nation-states, namely, the Federation of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia, further exacerbated their marginality in the domain of nationality and citizenship.

The basic premise of this study is that the emergence of political and economic center-periphery relationship under a state system with a fixed territoriality is a prime factor in creating a culturally invalidated and disempowered peasant class. While the discussion is grounded in a particular example from the frontier region in western Borneo, the issue is general, and my argument is intended to raise questions for the comparative analysis of peripheral capitalism, state formation, and class and ethnic configurations under colonial and post-colonial polities.

2. Unit of Analysis and Subject

2-1. Macro-system and Locality: Borderland and its Implication

Marginality generated in a center-periphery relationship has been an important concern in recent discussions of colonial discourse, class, ethnicity, and gender. Especially by turning attention from centers to peripheries, recent anthropological thinking has explored the intersections of social margins as sites of exclusion from central authority, the state (cf. Tsing 1993). In this study, I shall focus on the border area in the hinterland of western

Borneo as an analytical locale. Looking at a map of the islands Southeast Asia, we find only two borders dividing nation-states, i.e., the one between Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya (Indonesia) and the other between East Malaysia and Kalimantan (Indonesia). This study intends to deal with the latter border society and conceptualizes it as a social type, which is not exceptional but a frequent regularity as a social niche created whenever two or more states share their boundary in common (cf. Wijeyewardene 1990). This attention to borderland leads to the exploration of fragmented and hybridized identities of those who must live within the nationally-bounded dominant social order, from which they are nevertheless excluded.

A borderland study has a potential to widen the scope of anthropological study, by getting away from the study of supposedly bounded and timeless social space. As Ortner rightly points out:

Borderland work emphasizes the movement of, and the encounter between, potentially transnational, or even global, in scope, it is -- ideally -- at the same time local and ethnographic (e.g., Rouse 1991, Kearney 1991, Gupta and Ferguson 1992), looking at real places and asking what kinds of things happen on the ground when people who started from very different places (literally or metaphorically or both) wind up people, images, and so forth across cultural and political spaces (e.g. Appadurai 1991, Chambers 1990, Clifford 1992, Hannerz 1992, Pratt 1992). While always occupying the same place. (Ortner 1995a:181)

In this study, the history of the western Bornean borderland will be examined from the 1870s at the beginning of influence from a colonial state, to the 1990s when I conducted my fieldwork. This study, however, is not about the macro-economic history of the region. Instead I will portray social dynamics at the margin of two

states, based on conventional anthropological participant observation. In this sense, I try to present an ethnography. Setting local history within a special socio-economic niche generated by two nations enable this study to deal with the state system from a quintessentially ethnographic viewpoint (cf. Wolf and Cole 1974:1).

Furthermore I would like to bridge a gap between a community study, which fails to examine the determining power of exogenous and global forces, and grandiose macro-global theories incapable of dealing with the response of indigenous people, their strategies, and resilience to state apparatus. Attention to periphery has first derived from the anthropological endeavor to structure a center-periphery relationship in the global political-economic system. This binary conceptualization has found inspiration from world-system theory (Wallerstein 1974) and dependency theory (Santos 1970, Frank 1964), whose analyses envisioned history as the unfolding of relationships between nations and their colonies, between developed and underdeveloped nation-states, and among core-semi-periphery zones.

Though these macro-theories have generated much interest among anthropologists, they quintessentially do not comply with an anthropological approach to fieldwork in the following three points. First, both theories set their units of analysis at the national level, where a nation or an aggregate of nations are the smallest units of analysis. Secondly, the juxtaposition of center and periphery itself is problematic. The current globalization process prompted by migration, commerce, tourism and so forth entails a re-organization of the bipolar imagery of space and time of modern world. Recent

transnational movement requires a theoretical shift from center-periphery duality with sharp boundaries to a multidimensional space with unbounded and discontinuous sub-spaces (Kearney 1995:549). The third point, much related to the second, concerns the intrinsic differences within the periphery itself. As the spatial and categorical distinction between center and periphery has lessened its meaning in current anthropological thinking, we tend to neglect the innate difference among the peripheries. For instance, tension and conflict between two marginal sites which are not always homogeneous and often divided by national boundary have been given little attention. Any inquiry on their rivalry, political conflict, and symbiosis needs an analytical device beyond the conventional dichotomy of the center-periphery model to fully investigate a non-homogenous periphery where people have contesting identities and consciousness.

In contrast to current global/macro-oriented approaches in anthropology, my research is more concerned with social dynamics locally observable on the frontier of western Borneo. This does not mean, however, that the following account is a locality-bound conventional "village ethnography." Dealing with frontier peasant communities and an outlying provincial district adjacent to an international border, this study takes a transnational or "trans-statal" approach (Kearney 1995: 548). By focusing on the border region which had been geo-politically divided by conflicting powers, i.e., the Brunei Sultanate and Sambas Sultanate, and later by Sarawak (subsequently the British Crown Colony and the Federation of Malaysia) and Dutch Borneo (subsequently West Kalimantan, the

Republic of Indonesia), the unit of analysis inevitably goes well beyond a single community, ethnic group or state. Transnational interaction and the regional political economy are thus given due attention. I intend to reexamine the conventional anthropological analyses on Bornean societies which tend to have overvalued the social units and therefore undervalued the interconnectedness of the historical contingency of the units.¹

Though much inspired by the current global and transnational analyses², my research focuses on geographically fixed communities and a population becoming sedentary after the initial migration from Dutch Borneo to Sarawak territory about a century ago. People have long been settled in the border region. What is mobile and dynamic are not these peoples but the sovereign powers themselves.

In recent years, a number of scholars suggested that the study of political-economic change requires a new style of "middle range" analysis (Orlove 1977, Hefner 1990:xv) as well as "multi-local" community studies (Marcus and Fisher 1986:91, Tsing 1993:65) to

¹ For the general discussion on the ethnographic literature on Sarawak, see Appendix A.

² "The bifocal" research strategy employed in this study is one of the characteristics which distinguishes it from other anthropological studies of nation-states. My research covered both Sarawak (subsequently a part of the British Crown Colony and the Federation of Malaysia) and western Dutch Borneo (subsequently West Kalimantan of the Republic of Indonesia), and is different from a single-country study. Recent migration studies have questioned "one researcher / one country relations," and productive research has emerged, for instance, from studies on Mexican diaspora communities both in the United States and Mexico (cf. Kearney 1995), and on Third World migrant workers who regularly travel between major U.S. cities and their hometowns (cf. Harvey 1989, Sassen 1991). The current movement toward global theory corresponds to postcolonial displacement, and to the subjects of historiography from central elites to locals of the periphery, even as the spatial and categorical distinctions between center and periphery lessen. Contemporary anthropologists have tried to distance themselves from a rigid dichotomy between center and periphery in asymmetrical power relations (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc 1992, 1994).

fill a gap between village ethnography and sweeping macro-historical analysis.³ In this study, layered frames of analysis, i.e., community, regional, national, as well as transnational, will be used. As a single community study, I exclusively focus on Telok Melano, a coastal Malay peasant village located on the western edge of the Sarawak delta. As a middle range unit of analysis, I chose a provincial district, Lundu District, the First Division of Sarawak. The community study is an ethnographic description of a coastal Malay peasant community based on my fourteen month field research from October 1993 to November 1994, and the regional study gives historical depth to the examination of the formation of frontier peasantry in southwestern Sarawak since the 1870s. The historical account of Lundu District is based on my archival research at state archives and the Sarawak Museum from April 1993 to October 1993. These studies are supplemented by my research in an Indonesian village of Temajuk across the border. I have also conducted fieldwork in Sambas District in West Kalimantan, Indonesia for one month in 1995 and for two months in 1996.

2-2. Subject: a View from the Margin and Below

One problem inherent in the macro-theories is the subject. "The history of the modern world as portrayed by dependency theory and world-system theories is somewhat of a subjectless history"

³ These new trends in field research, although seemingly suggestive, could also be an excuse for justifying insufficient commitment in collecting data on a single community. I believe community study and participant observation will remain the most important anthropological endeavors, despite current innovations in research method.

(Kearney 1995: 551). Along the same line, Ann Stoler pointed out that macro-approaches have only dealt with homogenous, not internally differentiated subject:

In attending to both global processes and local practices, the units of analysis have also shifted to the extra village, regional, national, and global ties that bind seemingly discrete peasant populations to the world economy (Nash 1981; Vincent 1982; Roseberry 1983), and to a rejection of the notion that categories such as nation, tribe, and culture are, as Eric Wolf puts it, "internally homogenous and externally distinctive and bounded objects" (1982:6). Curiously, in spite of this innovation, the objects of our study, if not the units of our analysis, have remained much the same (Stoler 1992:320).

It is important to note that the political authenticity of the dominated social group as well as their own forms of inequality and asymmetry has often been given less attention. For instance, subaltern studies from India in the 1980s were hailed as a new historiography. They supposedly portrayed the world from the perspective of the experience of the underclass by incorporating the dominated social group as a subject of analysis.⁴ The subaltern approach is effective in restoring a sense of agency, a sense of activity, a sense of the capacity of the dominated and the repressed (Hall 1978:9). However, the approach may be blamed for creating a monolithic category of subaltern people presumed to have a unitary identity and consciousness (Spivak 1988a, 1988b; Ortnner 1995b).

⁴ In the studies of Malaysian society, the subaltern approach is also found among works of Shaharil Talib (1984), *After Its Own Image: The Trengganu Experience 1881-1941*, Sullivan (1982), *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State*, James Scott (1985), *Weapons of the Weak*, and Donald M. Nomini (1992), *British Colonial Rule and the Resistance of the Malay Peasantry 1900-1957*.

The subaltern approach, in sum, is "thin on the internal politics of dominated groups" (Ortner 1995b:190).

In this study I shall pay special attention to the historical process of internal differentiation observable in the ethnic and class formation of Sarawak Malay society. The social dismantling of hinterland Malay peasants, who have been economically stigmatized, politically disempowered and culturally-invalidated, will be given due attention, in addition to the formation process of a Malay elite class in Kuching which has monopolized cultural assets as Sarawak Malay. In so doing, I will focus on a border coastland as an isolated peripheral region in a state system where the gap between the state's goals and their local realization is widest and where the economic and political apparatus of two conflicting states acting against each other is most clearly seen (cf. Tsing 1993). The resilience and manipulations, if not direct confrontation, by peasants on the border, their withdrawal and distancing from state hegemony will be discussed in detail (cf. Adas 1992:89-92).

3. Borderland in Western Borneo: a Sketch of Historical Reconfiguration between Two Frontiers

The modern European concepts *frontier*, *state* and *nation* are interdependent but they are not necessarily applicable to all state-like political organizations everywhere (Leach 1960:49). It is particularly true when we put the borderland of western Borneo in the complicated historical matrix. The following account aims to clarify the nature of, 1) the multiple sets of center-periphery

relations of western Borneo from the 1870s to the 1990s, and, 2) the social dislocation generated at the borderland between frontiers, states, and nations. Focusing on the continuity of the domination during a period of transitional polities including local sultanates, colonial states, and subsequent modern nation-states, the discussion will center on the social transformation induced by political changes resulting from boundary making -- from the zonal to the linear.

3-1. Dislocated Territoriality: Genesis of Displacement

The word "frontier" originates from the notion of "in front" as the "spearhead of civilization," while "boundary" derives from "bounds" meaning territorial limits. From the perspective of any particular government, "frontier" is outward-oriented and "boundary" inward-oriented. Whereas a boundary is a definite line of separation, a frontier is a zone of contact. With the emergence of colonial states, pre-colonial zonal sovereignty, which was loosely demarcated, was resolved into a clear-cut linear boundary (cf. Sahlins 1989:4-5, Solomon 1970:2). The genesis of social displacement in the case of the western Bornean borderland lies in the transformation of its territorial condition from a frontier as a site of mere contact to boundary where conflicting claims are imposed on an otherwise undifferentiated local population.

Since the decline of the Majapahit Empire in the 14th century, western Borneo had been a place where the dominions of two sultanates, Brunei and Sambas (presently in West Kalimantan,

Indonesia), overlapped.⁵ During the reign of her fifth prince, Brunei Sultanate, no longer a vassal state of the Hindu Majapahit, had the most expansionist period in her history. This prince ruled over the areas now comprising Sarawak and Sabah, voyaged to Java and Malacca, and established control over the Sulu Archipelago and the islands of the northwest tip of Borneo (Hughes-Hallett 1940:23).⁶

The power of the Brunei sultanate, however, gradually waned and its influence over the rest of Borneo and Sulu diminished in the 16th and the 17th centuries. By the time the European colonizers landed on the island of Borneo in the 18th century, the Sultanate of Brunei was plagued by rampant piracy and internal strife. Europeans took advantage of the situation and soon controlled most of Borneo: the Dutch in what is now Indonesian Kalimantan; the Brookes family in Sarawak; and the British North Borneo Company in Sabah.

Transition from pre-colonial to colonial domination gave a fundamentally different political picture to western Borneo. During the pre-colonial period, the preservation of state sovereignty was less dependent on the maintenance of absolute territorial integrity as demarcated by borders. The relation between the sultans and their dependencies was generally zonal and concentric.

⁵Islam reached the archipelago from India, being established first in Sumatra and later in Java. It spread along established trade routes to many of the islands. Hinduism and Buddhism had been introduced to Borneo's coastal kingdoms due to the area's centuries-long relation with Java, and when the Hindu Majapahit fell to the Muslims in the 14th century, the new faith spread to Borneo as well. Local rulers, who had previously assumed the Hindu title of *raja*, then became sultans.

⁶Three factors were chiefly responsible for Brunei's rise to eminence. One was trade with China; the second, the coming of Islam; and the third, the capture of Malacca by the Portuguese, which gave Brunei new importance as a possible successor to Malacca in the Malayo-Muslim world (Singh 1991:19).

It followed the pattern of center and periphery of Southeast Asian predecessors conforming to the concentric cosmological world conception of Hindu mythology, with the throne as the center of the kingdom, and with the capital and the outlying provinces, vassalages, and neighboring realms represented as a series of concentric rings (Anderson 1972, Geertz 1983, Moertono 1968).

According to Solomon, the moving frontier was:

a means of gauging and aligning the internal equilibrium. Sovereignty was not defined in a rigorous territorial sense. Marginal territorial concessions were not viewed as fatal to the kingdom. As long as the essence of sovereignty -- the nuclear kingdom -- was unimpaired, such concessions were a legitimate instrument of polity. (Solomon 1970:15)

Before western colonizers came into power, the study area was located where two circles of power domain of the Brunei and the Sambas sultanate met at each other's fringe with Cape Dato. When the zonal and fuzzy frontier was replaced by a linear boundary of colonial states, the social displacement of the region began to take its root.

Pre-colonial western Borneo was a crossroads for people and commodities, linking the Philippines, the Malay Peninsula, the Great Natunas, Singapore, Sumatra, the Riau Archipelago, and Java. The expansion of the Malay maritime world by the trading networks of the *nakoda* (ship captain) merchant class was a major contributing factor for the formation of Malay communities in the frontier region

of Borneo.⁷ The pre-colonial expansion of the Malay socio-economic formation, however, was severely restricted after the British-Dutch Treaty in 1824. Malay supremacy in regional trade was subsequently put to an end by the economic policies of colonial governments.

The Malay maritime world was then divided into the politically demarcated territories of Sarawak and Dutch Borneo. Sarawak had been ceded to the White Rajah, James Brooke, in 1841. Brooke was an idealistic young man who had retired early from the British army in India and was influenced by the Rafflesian idea of a strong British presence in the Indonesian archipelago. He had sailed to Sarawak in July 1839 after learning that the Brunei prince was amicable to the English and that Sarawak had valuable antimony ore. Brooke intervened in a civil war and sided with the Brunei Sultan. In return he demanded and obtained the governorship of a part of what is now Sarawak.⁸

On an other coast of Borneo, the Dutch sent an expedition in 1818 and put down a rebellion against Holland's ally, the Sultan of Pontianak. That force also stopped a large-scale pirate raid directed against Pontianak, headed by the Sultan of Sambas. For the Dutch it

⁷ On historiography and general discussion of the maritime world in Southeast Asia, see Warren (1981:xi), Tachimoto (1996:132-137), P. Lim Pui Huen (1986). Also see Tachimaoto (1996:137-144), and Maeda (1989) on the Malay maritime world.

⁸The Sarawak River basin, from which the present-day state takes its name, was in its pre-Brooke days a nominal part of the Brunei Sultanate, which caught little attention from rulers until the discovery of antimony ore, which aroused Brunei interest early in the 19th century. With this discovery, a Brunei prince designated an administrative ruler for Sarawak in the late 1820s. His presence and tax demands evoked resistance from the local Malays, and from the land Dayaks who were coerced to mine the ore. The conflict reached a stalemate and the Brunei Sultan sent his uncle and his prime minister to Kuching. However, their presence made little difference to the situation for the fighting among the warring factions remained unresolved when James Brooke arrived in 1839.

was a time of increased commercial competition with British merchants from Singapore established by Stamford Raffles. Although Holland tried to establish her sovereignty in western Borneo, the great Javanese Rebellion of 1825-30 absorbed all available resources and manpower for several years. Holland's plans for a stronger presence in the region were thus stalemated for a time. It was the establishment of the Brooke kingdom of Sarawak in the 1840s that motivated the Dutch to take assertive measures in western Borneo. The power base of James Brooke was the town of Kuching, just north of Sambas. The presence of another western power in its proximity was enough to make the nervous Dutch take action.⁹

3-2. Social Displacement of the Borderland Peasantry

In Southeast Asia many of the colonial boundaries bore a superficial resemblance to the outlines of earlier indigenous states, though this was "the outcome not of any particular desire to preserve the older units, but ... rather [a result of] the controlling influence exerted in this area of extremely accidented relief by the great riverine and sea routes, which had likewise moulded the earlier patterns" (Fisher 1962:335). Western Borneo is not an

⁹In 1842, after China's defeat in the infamous Opium Wars, its ports were forced to open for international commerce. The west coast of Borneo was an ideal base from which to exercise control over the China-Singapore-India sea trade. The British crown was thinking seriously about a foothold in Borneo, encouraged by James Brooke who called several times on the Royal Navy to wipe out nests of pirates. The pirates had been preying, quite effectively, on both European and native shipping (Muller 1990:32).

exception. The colonial boundary between Sarawak and western Dutch Borneo followed the old frontier between Brunei and the Sambas Sultanate. Ill- or well-defined, the imperial frontier system was thus the last resort maintained by colonial power.

In the ecological niche characterized as "the Outer Islands," with extremely low population density and dense tropical forest (Geertz 1963a:13-37), the borderland became a political and economic vacuum between two states. The border region was created fortuitously as a buffer zone between two states.

A vital function of the colonial boundary system was to separate the respective colonial spheres, to avoid abrasive contact between competing powers. Boundaries were drawn where buffers could not be found. It mattered little that the boundaries thus agreed upon had scant relation to the local way of life, as colonial boundaries were shaped mainly by the needs of the colonial powers. (Solomon 1970:6)

Peasant communities on the borderland in question have been trespassing into territory held by two sovereign powers. Furthermore these communities are not fully integrated in either. The way in which the Malay peasantry was created and subsequently dislocated from a single state system can only be understood by looking into regional history and that of a specific village as well. This study is particularly concerned with aspects of the social displacement of frontier peasant population induced by the emergence of arbitrarily demarcated boundary between colonial as well as post-colonial states.

Under the second Rajah, Charles Brooke (1871-1917), the indigenous Malay and Dayak population as well as Chinese immigrants were gradually transformed into small-holders for the

development of cash crop production in Sarawakian territory. The expansion of the market economy and state intervention by Brooke led to the formation of an ethnically segmented labor market where the immigrant Chinese became dominant in agricultural, fishing and trading industries with the exception of government administration positions preferably assigned to the Malays of the traditional elite (*perabangan*). On the other hand, the majority of the Malays and the Dayaks were encouraged to cultivate cash crops on a small-holding basis.

In examining the genesis of the dislocation of Malay peasantry, I shall focus on two kinds of state intervention: labor mobilization and the territorial enclosure of Sarawak as a distinctive economic unit. The state, in this thesis, is seen as "an apparatus installed to maintain and further the strategic relationships governing the capitalist deployment of social labor" (Wolf 1982:308). The state and the expansion of the capitalist mode of production in peripheral areas will be discussed with reference to the state's labor mobilization by which local communities are geared to function as an agricultural labor reserve for cash crop production. In the initial period of state formation, foreign migrants were brought as agriculturalists to Sarawak. After the gradual formation of a peasant class, state policies on immigration and naturalization then were enacted to regulate the flow of people and the formation of commodities across the state boundary.

The economic, ethnic and national dislocation of frontier Malay peasants has its root cause in their exclusion from the state's labor mobilization. With the establishment of a cash crop production

system in the territory at the turn of the 20th century, the downfall of the Malay economy was accelerated. The elite segment of Sarawak Malays who traditionally enjoyed privileged political status under the Brooke rule was able to maintain the economic status by becoming colonial administrators. On the other hand, the majority of Malay commoners, who were active in the riverine as well as the coastal trade in traditional forest produce, lost their economic potency due to the rapid development of the Chinese trading network which dominated the circulation of cash crops produced by new immigrant Chinese planters. Such structural change in the sphere of commodity production contributed to the emergence of an ethnically segmented economy in the region of southwestern Sarawak. Different cash crops were produced by different ethnic groups, i.e., coconut by the Malays, and gambier, pepper, and rubber by the inland Chinese and a small number of Dayaks.

The coconut economy in the Cape Dato area was mainly developed by the coastal Malay peasants who were brought in from the Sambas region in Dutch Borneo. Gambier and pepper were cultivated by Chinese coolies who migrated from Dutch Borneo and from Southern China via Singapore. Unlike gambier, pepper, and rubber, which became major international commodities exported outside of Sarawak, coconut gradually lost its significance as a cash earning crop due to the discovery of a chemical substitute for copra in soap production for the international market.

For the inland Dayak population, the production of hill rice by swidden cultivation was the core of their ethnic symbolism and

identity. The economic expression of their ethnicity had been kept intact or further enhanced despite their incorporation into newly introduced commodity production under Brooke's colonial rule. The ethnic consciousness of Iban swidden cultivators in the up-river area was maintained in the wake of the development of cash crop production in Sarawak. Traditional hill rice cultivation become a cultural token in their re-ethnogenesis. Unlike the Ibans who found a new niche for their subsistence involution (Geertz 1963a) which functioned to strengthen the cultural expression of their economic activity, the Malays on the southwestern coast of Sarawak failed to find their proper economic niche for expressing their ethnic and historical consciousness. Their traditional economic activities; maritime and riverine trade undertaken by the *nakoda* commercial class and fishing by coastal commoners, had lost their salience as the economic expression of Malay identity because migrant Chinese came to dominate both fields.

Peasant communities on the borderland adjacent to Cape Dato took a further oscillating turn to swidden rice production from the initial coconut plantations after the collapse of the plantation economy previously developed under Malay *nakoda* entrepreneurship at the turn of the 20th century. The gradual economic downfall caused them to become heavily dependent on subsistence-oriented swidden cultivation of hill rice in the woods as practiced by the neighboring Dayak population. Subsequently these Malays came to lose the ethnic indicator of being coastal dwellers.

Their dislocation was further aggravated due to their geographical setting. Adjacent to the Dutch Borneo-Sarawak border,

they were far from the new political center of the colonial government. By regulating the transnational traffic of commodity goods and people, the Brooke government created a new political category of "Sarawakians." Regardless of ethnic background those in the Sarawak territory were all considered subjects of the kingdom. The new notion of Sarawakian citizenship would later be replaced by "Malaysian" for the independent nation-state. While the new national identity of "Sarawakian" emerged, the identity of those in the borderland remained ambiguous, neither belonging to Sarawak nor Kalimantan.

While the economic boundary developed as the colonial government intervened in the movement of dutiable goods across the border, the marginal position of borderland Malays to the politico-economic core of the state was further enhanced. Having little access to cash commodity production, some of the border population eventually associated themselves with smuggling for survival. This economy of the borderland Malays based on a cross-border informal economy and non-capitalist swidden cultivation has contributed to ethnic peripheralization and exclusion from the state system, and thus stigmatized the population on the border. Even with the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, their identity has continued to be dissociated from that of mainstream "Malaysians" in the continuing process of economic and territorial enclosure by the Malaysian nation-state.

4. From an Economic to a Socio-cultural Domain: the Search for a Theoretical Synthesis on the Exclusion of Peasantry

4-1. Theoretical Overview

As seen above, the discussion of this study centers on the social dismantling of a borderland peasantry. Their social exclusion will be examined in economic, ethnic, and national domains, both historically and ethnographically. In the following section, I shall briefly discuss the theoretical orientation of this study.

The literature on peasantry has thus far considered these populations from the viewpoint of *incorporation* into the world commodity market. This work will examine not only *incorporation* but also the process of *exclusion* from the production system. The complicated interplay between the state apparatus and local economic formation will be explored at the periphery of the state system.

It is my intention to put both Southeast Asian peasant social formation and the agrarian question in perspective. Dealing with a peasant community created and eventually excluded from the state economic system with the establishment of its territorial boundary, this study draws inspiration from some previous works on the political economy of peasantry. It intends to provide an example from a Third World social formation on the situation of the peasantry under the domination of a specific variant of capitalism, i.e., peripheral capitalism.

This case study of peasant social formation does not fit any previous theorizing advanced by scholars concerned with peasant differentiation. As will be discussed below, the complex history of the coastal Malay communities disallows the simple application of models emerging from various debates including the classical Marxist approaches to the agrarian question, and the dualist-modernization theories and their neo-Marxist challenges.

I will present historical ethnography of the Sarawak Malay peasantry in order to provide a theoretical antithesis to the simplistic and overly abstract formulation of "the agrarian problem," which assumes a unilinear transformation of mode of production. In my view, the classical approach that postulates the disappearance of peasants as a class under ever-expansive capitalism is overly schematic and simplistic. By taking a specific example of the Malay peasantry in western Borneo, my thesis serves as an antithesis to Marx's theoretical elaboration:

The peasant who produces with his own means of production will either gradually be transformed into a small capitalist who also exploits the labour of others, or he will suffer the loss of his means of production..., and be transformed into a wage worker. This is the tendency in the form of society in which the capitalist mode of production predominates. (Marx 1951:193-4)

The peasants in the frontier region have neither disappeared nor become laborers in an industrial sector, nor have market forces led them to establish capitalist family farm enterprises generating micro-class differentiation among themselves. They have rather been ossified and have taken oscillating one turn further back to a

subsistence economy based on primitive swidden cultivation of non-commodities.

Looking into the history of agrarian change in the border region of western Borneo inevitably leads to the examination of the transitional nature of peasant economy; the transformation from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist social formation. It is neither possible nor necessary to summarize or discuss all the theories on the "transition debate" and the "sociology of underdevelopment," as some are only indirectly relevant to the present purpose. The works of major neo-Marxist theorists have, in fact, been well surveyed elsewhere (Wan 1988, Roxborough 1979, Brewer 1980). However, the critique of dualist-modernization theory by neo-Marxist theorists will be considered below as their views are directly relevant to this thesis.

Modernization theorists postulated a dualistic nature of society where one sector is regarded as "traditional" implying backwardness, homogeneity, stasis, and conservatism, while the other sector is "modern" with traits of progressiveness, heterogeneity, dynamism, and liberalism. The traditional sector has to be integrated fully with the modern sector by breaking down the isolation and destroying their subsistence economy in order to be incorporated in the national and international market economy.

The major objection to the modernization theorists was put forward by the neo-Marxist school of thought. In their view, modernization theory, the sociology of development, and neo-classical development economics do not take into account the historical root cause of the phenomenon of underdevelopment, the

relationship of subordination/domination between the advanced capitalist countries and the Third World countries. The foremost critic of modernization theory was A. G. Frank (1964). For instance, Frank's conception of the "development of underdevelopment" denies the orthodox Marxist theory that capitalism is "homificient," or having the same effect everywhere. The development of capitalism effects on metropolitan countries differently than satellite countries.

The Latin American dependency theorists and the world-system theorists made almost a similar line of argument to that advocated by Frank. For instance, by dividing the world-system into core states, peripheral states, and semi-peripheral states. Wallerstein suggested that the only viable unit of analysis is the world as a system. Both Frank's underdevelopment theory and Wallerstein's world-system theory, however, suffer a similar limitation attributed to modernization theory; they take nation-states as a unit of analysis and regarded societies as homogenous and not internally differentiated by class. This view obscures the reality of the internal structure of each society and fails to identify its matrix of social relations of production. Both world-system theory and dependency theory rule out the utility of conducting substantive micro-level anthropological research which would focus on the internal structures of societies.¹⁰

¹⁰In 1970s some French Marxists introduced an entirely new approach to the issues of the impact of capital on peasant production, *articulation* of modes of production. Although quickly "burnt out" (cf. Roseberry 1989:158-169), the theoretical implications have some relevance to the present study.

Differently French structural Marxists use the term "articulation" (see. Foster-Carter 1977). For Meillassoux, it means a symbolic co-existence of modes of production. Rey's use of the concept postulates that in a social formation where a pre-

The emergence of an economically peripherized population adjacent to the border between colonial Sarawak and Dutch Borneo in this thesis requires us close scrutiny of creative and destructive historical encounters. Since these encounters are so complex in nature I have abandoned simplistic and homificient neo-Marxist approaches as well as ahistorical modernization theory. The top-down over-determinism of world-system theory and the overly-teleological and system-oriented articulation approaches were simply not applicable to the studied society. Social stigmatization of a sub-group within Sarawak Malays needs to be examined within an analytical framework that can equally accommodate the broad historical process of state intervention and the local resilience of a specific peasant community.

4-2. Theoretical Synthesis: from Economic to Cultural Domain

One major shortcoming of the conventional approaches mentioned above is their narrow economism and their neglect of the importance of the culturally marked phenomena and the state

capitalist mode of production is articulated with the capitalist mode of production, the latter becomes increasingly dominant while the former dwindles. Although the treatment of the concept is varied according to each theorist, the discussion that evolved under the notion of articulation has one limitation in common. These structuralists "have endowed the structure or system with an absolute teleology ('structural causality'), which moves people as carriers of the system but leaves no room for human consciousness or history (Wolf 1982:401)." Moreover exclusive attention on the inner causality among relations of production prevents these theorists from examining the function of state responsible for social transformation in bringing a new labor process to local communities. In this study, the economic history of a Malay community reveals transition to a capitalist plantation economy was interrupted and followed by self-sufficient swidden rice cultivation. These events cannot be explained by "laws of motion" abstracted in timeless causal relationships between forces and relations of production.

(Schneider 1995:26). In the following, I shall provide the theoretical perspectives used in this work regarding state capitalism as well as cultural and national logics of capitalism.

First, culturally marked phenomena will be discussed in relation to separate but closely related social differentiation such as class and ethnic stratification among the Sarawak Malays, which was initiated and accelerated by the intervention of state. Specifically I will analyze the way a downward economic turn caused the ethnic peripheralization of a particular segment. Here my discussion will focus on the social process in which economic stigmatizing leads to cultural one. Being engaged in a specific economic activity regarded as non-authentic by elite members of the same ethnic group, a localized social segment consequently becomes culturally peripheralized and stigmatized to be pushed to the fringe of the ethnic boundary or even beyond. I will elaborate on this social process as it is revealed in ethnographic as well as historical contexts.

As a certain ethnic group is created and maintains its identity, a specific relation composed of the following elements becomes exclusive: 1) those who construct authoritative narratives of the ethnic category, 2) a specific social segment which represents the ethnic nomenclature and 3) the cultural traits, and the history of the ethnic category. As the relation becomes permanent and structurally fixed in relation to those of other ethnic groups, whatever does not fit into the relational construction becomes a subject of exclusion.

It is important to note that this process of exclusion is essentially political. It is closely related to the emergence of state power and subsequently to the unequal distribution of economic resources among social groups. In the framework of the state, this process generates stratification *among* ethnic groups and *within* a single ethnic group, and then leads to class division.

The state is a basic unit in which ethnic narratives are generated and function to differentiate social class (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983, Thompson 1963). It is within a territory of a state that differences in class and ethnic gradation emerge among social group. Those who are positioned distantly from the political center and closer to another sovereignty are more likely to be peripheralized in both categories -- class and ethnicity. Malay peasants on the borderland are, in this sense, doubly peripheralized in the Sarawak Malay society. They are placed at the bottom of class structure as subsistence-oriented peasants and also on the outer rim of ethnic identity as far as being Sarawak Malays.

In the Sarawakian context, the general history of state formation is marked by capitalist penetration to rural societies creating a peasant class as commodity producers. However, as an exception to this history, the frontier Malay peasants in question gradually increased their dependence on swidden rice cultivation after the initial coconut plantation economy of the early colonizing period and have suffered from treatment that could be described as "cultural invalidation". With the formation of an urban elite Malay segment, *perabangan*, coastal peasants traditionally engaged in fishing and coconut production were accorded lower status.

Authorized ethnic and cultural assets consciously assigned by and to the elite Malay class have been monopolized by elites of the non-productive sphere such as the traditional ruling class who allied with the colonial government and religious leaders. The elite, particularly the Malays residing in the political center of Kuching formed a distinct social group who "have always prided themselves as being at the pinnacle of Malay culture" (Abang Yusuf Puteh 1996:25). "It [Kuching Malay culture] can be characterized as a sophisticated elevation in dress, dialect, education, economic status and social etiquettes" (Abang Yusuf Puteh 1996:25). The peasant class on the other hand are given nomenclature such as *orang laut* (people of the sea) or *orang hutan* (people of the forest), who "are the coastal and rural Malays, and were generally regarded by Kuching as primitive in the pre-war days" (Abang Yusuf Puteh 1996:25).

The economic peripheralization has continued to accelerate ethnic dislocation within the Malay ethnic category under the newly independent nation-state. The swidden cultivators on the international border became further peripheralized due to their involvement in smuggling taxable agricultural commodities across the border. Despite the state's enclosure of commodity flow in its territory, the studied region has historically functioned as a smuggling point for rubber sheets from Western Borneo beginning in the 1930s through the 1960s and for logs, now scarce and most valuable, from West Kalimantan in the early 1990s. In addition to the illegal flow of commodities, Cape Dato area has also been a gateway for foreigners to enter Sarawak territory. The entry of a substantial number of Indonesians into Sarawakian territory, local

interaction in cross-border petty trade, and intermarriages have made the nationality of locals ambiguous.

In exploring the facets of economic, ethnic and national dislocation of border peasantry in western Borneo, I should make further clarification on the meaning of *making* (as well as *unmaking* or *dismantling*). In contemporary social and cultural studies, the double meaning of *making* stands between "constructionism" and the "actor-oriented approach".

In current anthropological endeavor, "we have a variety of constructionism in which cultural categories, or historical subjects, or forms of subjectivity are -- passive voice -- made, where subjects are seen as constructed by, and subjected to, the cultural and historical discourses within which they must operate" (Ortner 1995a:1). In this thinking, culture, ethnicity, class, and national affiliation, are duly perceived as something to be made and imposed in historical conjuncture (Anderson 1983, Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Ranger 1983, Thompson 1963, Wagner 1975). On the other hand there is also *making* from the actor's point of view. "The question is how actors 'enact,' 'resist,' or 'negotiate' the world as given, and in so doing 'make' the world (Ortner 1995a:1). In this sense, "agency" becomes a crucial subject of inquiry, and people are not regarded as a mere passive periphery (cf. Nash 1981:398).

This thesis is structured to address both aspects of *making* as described above. Part I is based on historical materials gathered through six months of archival research with an aim to examine the transformation of the Malay peasant society in the Sematan area of the Lundu District from a constructionist viewpoint. The main

concerns of Part I are the origins of Sarawak as a closed political unit and the Malay ethnic category as well as the subsequent displacement of a Malay peasant class in the process of formation. Chapter 2 is a historical analysis of the cultural constructing of an urban elite and rural peasants. Chapters 3 and 4 historically explore the socio-economic transformation of the Malays of southwestern Sarawak with special reference to the construction of peasantry. Chapter 3 primarily examines the agro-economic policies under the second Rajah Brooke (1871-1917), while Chapter 4 deals with the emergence of an informal economy based on smuggling of commodities and the transformation of the local peasantry from a capitalist to non-capitalist agricultural economy. Chapter 5 is intended to portray the Lundu District after 1963 which became a politicized frontier where Indonesia-Malaysia military confrontation and the Chinese communist activities gave profound effect on the local economy as well as national and ethnic affiliation of the borderland peasants.

Part II is an ethnographic account of a frontier peasant community. As compared with Part I, the description is more specific and the analysis is more concerned with the actor's point of view. After Chapter 6 which focuses on the ethnographic context of my fieldwork, the rest of Part II turns to a specific locality in the borderland sub-district of Sematan in Lundu District. A peasant community, Telok Melano, is the stage where faces and voices of agents will be duly seen and heard to substantiate the analysis of Part I. After an overview of Telok Melano in time and space, the facets of the social displacement of the studied community -- the

spatial, ecological, economic, genealogical, and national -- will be examined in detail.

CHAPTER 2. WHO ARE THE SARAWAK MALAY?

1. Introduction

The historical process in which a certain ethnic category is invented and takes its shape as an established social group inevitably involves bipolar shifting: *inclusion* and *exclusion*. A certain group within a single ethnic category which succeeds in monopolizing cultural resources is likely to develop the representative expression of *the* ethnic group. The remaining sub-groups, on the other hand, gradually lose track of their historical and cultural connections to this core group and become ethnically ambiguous.

In the Sarawakian context, those who had monopolized cultural assets as "Sarawak Malay" were aristocrats and their offspring. They form a distinctive social group called *perabangan*, whose social status was created and politically backed up by the Brooke colonial government. These *perabangans* served the Brooke administration as elite local officials.

Sarawak Malay society had been shaped into a conical-structure where the ethnicity of non-*perabangan* Malays in the Sarawak colonial territory became blurred as their actual kinship ties to these core aristocrats were non-existent or disconnected (cf. Kirchhoff 1959). Historically, at the most peripheral and the bottom of this social formation there existed slaves (*gundik*) who were war captives of Dayak descent.

In the contemporary context, the ethnically asymmetrical relationship within Sarawak Malay society is most noticeable in its class structure and spatial distribution of the community. On the one hand, the majority of the offspring of *perabangan* aristocrats reside in the state capital, Kuching, and are engaged in the urban service and government sectors. On the other hand, numerous Malay communities are found in the rural coastal and riverine region where peasants are engaged in fisheries and agriculture. In the framework of the nation-state, the most marginalized Malay category in cultural distance from the core urban Malays are those rural Malay peasants living on the most ignored Malaysia-Indonesia borderland.

In the following section, my discussion aims to answer the question "Who are the Sarawak Malay?" by focusing on two types of Malay descent shaped historically in modern Sarawak after colonization. Analysis of the social formation of urban Malay aristocrats and the rural Malay peasants leads to an examination of the power domain of the Sarawak Malay society, which anthropological works on Sarawak have thus far failed to address.

2. Structure and Situation: The Concept of Ethnicity and Cultural Description

Anthropological contributions to the concept of ethnicity have shaped the way we describe culture-bearing social groups. However, we have not sufficiently presented a theoretical alternative going beyond what Leach discussed in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954), in which he rightly pointed out that *society* and *culture* do

not necessarily form a one-to-one relationship. In other words, in describing ethnic groups, we cannot use these two concepts interchangeably. Members of a society grouped under a specific ethnic nomenclature do not necessarily possess many cultural elements in common, and their affiliation to a specific social group depends on their subjective identification rather than existence as primordial cultural traits. According to Leach, cultural difference cannot be a primal factor for the formation of an ethnic group. This discussion had led to the denial of conventional anthropological procedure (Naroll 1964:283), in extracting an analytically meaningful social unit by pinpointing a specific distribution of cultural elements (Moerman 1965). The discussion went further to Barth's analysis of ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969). Barth argued that ethnic group boundary is not a fixed position and that even though changes in identities of group members frequently take place, the boundary itself is kept intact.

After another series of discussions initiated by Leach's argument (cf. Cohen 1987, Keyes 1976, Williams 1989), the focus of the study of ethnicity gradually involuted to the debate between the positions of "primordialist" and "instrumentalist." The latter attributed ethnic identity to the cultural manipulation of a political interest group, while the former saw the genesis of ethnic identity in primordial sentiments (Geertz 1963b) such as kinship, language and religion. The long-lasting debate between these two camps, however, turned out to be unproductive in the sense that both failed to include the historical dimension in the formation of ethnic groups.

Contemporary studies of ethnicity in the 1990s no longer provide important theoretical nor empirical stimulus to anthropology because of the current scholarly emphasis on identity and strategy manipulated by individuals. Although the concept of "situational identity" is quite useful to examine the behavior of individuals maneuvering for maximization of political and economic profit in a certain ethnic niche, the concept is useless for analyzing anything "structural" beyond individual adaptation, i.e., ethnic category, social group, as well as political and economic change surrounding these individuals.

As Vincent wrote more than 20 years ago, what we ought to do is to *structure ethnicity* since the nature of the relationship between situation and structure needs to be established. "Process, status, the impact of power upon the emergence and structuring of social relationships, and the manipulation of ideas by those in power to legitimize the existing order and their own domination are crucial to the analysis of ethnicity" (Vincent 1974:376). Ethnicity is situational and fluid, but this fluidity is a historical product often constructed and imposed by the hegemonic inscription and power relations of a society. The focal point of an analysis of ethnicity is "not to declare ethnicity invented and stop there, but to show in historical perspective how it was invented and with what consequences" (Rosaldo 1990:27).

3. Narratives and Ethnicity: The Inclusive and the Exclusive

In the process of one ethnic category being differentiated from others while being structured in relation to them, an ethnic name, a history, and cultural elements specific to the social category are invented and become fixed. When an ethnic category with a specific nomenclature comes into being, a narrative concerning the ethnic category is also created. The narrative inevitably defines a fixed relationship among those who construct the ethnic narrative, a specific sub-group as a carrier of the narrative and ethnic nomenclature, the cultural and the historical contents to be included in the ethnic label and contents. Once any other narrator, any other sub-group, and any other set of historical and cultural elements emerge, they become subject to denial and neglect by the previously established hegemony. When the sub-group becomes invisible and pushed out to the periphery of the ethnic category to which it ostensibly belongs, its cultural and historical variants, not being directly related to the hegemony of the state, are often excluded from the dominant narrative of ethnicity.

The official narrative of an ethnic group is given its historical continuity by the official speech of politicians, religious leaders, museum interpretation, publications of ethnic media, and the writings of social scientists. On the other hand, narratives which are not considered "ethnographically correct" are gradually put aside as exceptional and deviant.

I should reiterate that the process of ethnic peripheralization always involves the uneven distribution of power, which leads to

stratification among ethnic groups within the state as well as internal class differentiation within a single ethnic group. The social nexus where ethnic and class stratification takes place is the state. Thus there should be no discussion on the formation of an ethnic group and class without taking the state into consideration. In the following section, by posing the question of "Who are the Malay?" in the context of the Sarawakian state system, we shall look into the uneven distribution of cultural and historical resources among the Sarawak Malay people.

4. The Ethnic Category and Definition of the Malay

The most conventional way to describe "the Malay" is to presume the existence of a social group and then to assign the definition of historical and socio-cultural contents to it. We have long extracted a social unit designated as "tribe A " and "People B" by looking at criteria such as geographical proximity, cultural elements, ecological adaptation, and community structure (Naroll 1964:283). If we, for example, describe "the Malay" as such, the definition of the social group would be as follows:¹

Among conflicting explanations of the origin of "the Malay" (*Melayu*), the dominant explanation centers on the emergence of sultanates in the Malay world. Specifically, the word "*Melayu*" is believed to be derived from the name of the Melayu River in Palembang, South Sumatra which powerful sultanates such as Palembang (later Singapore, Melaka, and Johore), Minangkabau, and Tanjung Pula claimed as their homeland.

¹ The following is the summary I made from various writings on the Malay.

In terms of genetic and linguistic affiliation "the Malay" belong to the Mongoloid stock and the Malayo-Polynesia linguistic family. In terms of physical characteristics "the Malay" are divided into Proto-Malay and Deutero-Malay, and the geographical distribution encompasses the Malay Peninsula and island Southeast Asia. Proto-Malay includes the Sumurai and the Jakun of the Orang Asli in the Malay Peninsula, the Batak and Toraja in Indonesia, Ifugao in the Philippines. Deutero-Malay includes the Malay of the Malay Peninsula, Eastern Sumatra, the Riau/Lingga Islands, and coastal Borneo, as well as the Ache, the Minangkabau, the Bugis, the Javanese, the Balinese in Indonesia, and the Muslim population of the Southern Philippines.

The characteristic daily life of "the Malay" is that they speak Malay, have faith in Islam and follow *adat* (moral code and customary law). The majority of "the Malay" are engaged in the cultivation of wet rice on irrigated plateaus and fishing at coastal areas. Their houses are usually built on stilts, spread along rivers or roads, which form ribbon-shaped communities. In the village there is a politically dominant elder called a *datu* and a religious leader called an *imam*. The society tends to be stratified, based on an aristocrat/commoner distinction. Except for some matrilineal societies such as the Minangkabau and the Malay in Negri Sembilan, the Malay kinship organization is bilateral (cognatic). There are two modes of property inheritance, the customary and the Islamic. In the former case, property is equally divided between both sexes and the latter allows women to receive only the half the property men are entitled to inherit. Ritual life consists of weekly prayer at a mosque, religious feasts called *kunduri*, a series of rites of passage, religious fasting lasting one month (*puasa*), the *Hari Raya* festival after the break of fasting, and the celebration of pilgrimages to Mecca (*Hari Raya Haji*). Eating pork is taboo and contact with dogs is also prohibited.

The above describes "the Malay" as a social category presumed to exist by anthropologists. It is, however, nothing more than a series of etic definitions; it does not mean that all Malays possess essentialized characteristics of "the Malay" cited above. Some of these features are not applicable to "the Malay" in Southeast Asia. In actuality there is no single social group which possesses all the above cultural and historical criteria. In other words, we are no

longer able to "find any kind of priority among these criteria which make a certain group the representative of an ethnic entity" (Uchibori 1989:29).

Social groups categorized as "the Malay" have regional variations. It is not my intention to classify and sort out these differences according to each ethnic division, let alone the numerous local communities which are historically specific products. What is crucial is not the examination of socio-cultural and historically diversified elements which have often been regarded as deviant from the essentialized ethnic stereotype, but to clarify the historical process of the *inclusion* of one sub-group into an essentialized ethnic category and the *exclusion* of another sub-group from it. The process of *inclusion* and *exclusion* inevitably involves an aspect of power relations within a single ethnic entity where the most powerful division is defined as culturally "authentic" group and occupies the center of the ethnic category, while others are gradually pushed to the periphery.

5. The Descent of the Sarawak Malay and the State

5-1. Parallel Evolution of the Colonial State and Sarawak Malay Society

If we look at the history of Sarawak, we can point out that there is a clear convergence between the ethnic descent of the Malay and the descent of the state. The emergence of the Sarawak Malay as a distinctive ethnic category has its root in the political transformation induced by external political forces. Sarawak society, in its century and a half history, has undergone a series of

political transformations from the Brooke colonization (1841-1941), through the Japanese military occupation (1941-1945), the British colonization (1946-1963), to incorporation into the Federation of Malaysia (1963-present). Among these the more powerful interventions on the formation of ethnic groups were the Brooke colonization in 1841 and the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. For Sarawak the descent of territorial borders and Malay ethnicity have the same historical root. The Brooke government and the Federation of Malaysia fundamentally differ from the two short administrations by the Japanese and the British in the sense that the first two structured Malay ethnicity in relation to other ethnic groups and created cultural and historical expressions assigned to that ethnic category.

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, Sarawak was ceded by the Brunei Sultan to a British ex-East India Company officer, James Brooke in 1841. The first "white Rajah," James Brooke resorted to indirect rule based on the principle of "divide and rule" in order to secure his sovereignty over newly-acquired Sarawak. Much of his power depended on the leaders of various ethnic communities, particularly those from local Malay elites who in pre-Brooke days fought against Brunei rule. "Over time this *datu* elite class and the English Rajah developed what might be termed a "symbiotic" relationship; this relationship in turn had a strong influence on Malay social and political structure" (Lockard 1987:20).

To secure political cooperation from the *datu* class, James Brooke assigned the local Malay community leaders to political offices in his colonial administration and gave them regular

salaries. Salaries to local Malay chiefs had another function. Because of the regular payment from the new government, they no longer needed to extort revenue from the Dayak. However, they retained symbolic leadership over indigenous peoples of the state, both Malay and Dayak (Lockard 1987:20). The inclusion of traditional Malay leaders into the new colonial government's power structure reaffirmed the legitimacy of the Malay class system. This in part was responsible for the retention of the traditional Malay social structure throughout the early years of the Brooke rule.

Sarawak Malay society had historically been divided into four social classes: aristocracy, the middle class, peasants, and slaves. The aristocrats, at the top of the social pyramid, were the rulers and religious leaders. Among them those called *perabangan*, led by the *Datu Patinggi*, *Datu Bandar* and *Datu Temenggong* were of the highest rank. All male members of this group bore the title *abang* and females *dayang*; all descended from *datus*. Endogamy was a norm, adhered to more strictly by female members. Those who claimed descent from Brunei were called *pengiran*, ranked slightly below the *perabangan* group under the Brooke regime. Male children of this group were called *awang* and females *dayang*. Then followed those who boasted Arab ancestry and claimed direct descent from the Prophet Mohammed. They were assured the title of *sherif* or *tuanku* in Sarawak.

The middle class of traditional Malay society was composed of two major groups in the early Brooke period, *nakoda* and *orang pereman*. *Nakoda*, literally ship captains, were international traders whose enterprise made them the wealthiest of the Malay society.

Therefore they were highly respected and constituted the most prestigious commoner group. Indeed, some observers considered them almost equal in real status to the *datus* and *abangs* (Lockard 1987:20). Because of their travels, the *nakoda* were known for their deep knowledge of Islam and of world affairs; they gradually emerged as the educated elite amongst the Malay. This merchant class monopolized the coastal and riverine shipping trade.

The second commoner group, *orang pereman* or free citizens constituted the majority of the Malay population. This diverse lower class group included peasants (including those engaged in fishing on the coast), laborers, and retainers to the aristocratic families. The slaves (*gundik*) formed the lowest class. They constituted only a small section of the Malay society. Their function in society was restricted to serving their masters, the aristocrats. They performed every kind of domestic chore (Sanib 1984:7-8).

5-2. Colonial Creation of Ethnic Nomenclature

The nomenclature, *Sarawak Malay* in English and *Melayu Sarawak* in Malaysian, is used to denote the Muslim population in Sarawak. Any individual who calls himself and herself Malay is by definition Muslim.²

²However, the reverse is not true; not all Muslims are Malay. For instance, the people called the Melanau consist of pagans (originally animistic, a great deal of conversion to Christianity is under way) and Muslims. The majority of Muslim Melanau prefer to call themselves Melanau not Malay.

Even though there is no definite answer as to the origin of the words "Malay" and "Sarawak Malay," a suggestion by Pringle is worth noting.

The word "Malay" "is widely used in Sarawak today only because in 1841 James Brooke brought it with him from Singapore, where it had been vaguely applied to all the coast-dwelling, seafaring Moslems of the Indonesian archipelago, particularly to those of Sumatra and the Malayan peninsula. What lends credence to this theory is the fact that in Sabah (formerly British North Borneo) there are no "Malay," but only a variety of Moslem sub-groups: Bajaus, Sulus, Bruneis and so on. This is apparently because the administrative vocabulary of the Chartered Company which governed Sabah differed from that of the Brooke regime. If Sabah "Brunei" moved to Kuching today, he would instantly be called a "Malay" in Sarawak terminology." (Pringle 1970: xix)³

According to Pringle, the establishment of the nomenclature "Malay" used for the Muslim population in Sarawak coincides with the formation of the Brooke colony in Sarawak in 1841. In other words, there was no ethnic category of "Sarawak Malay" before the coming of the Brooke family to Sarawak.

In addition to the Brooke colonization, the incorporation of Sarawak into the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 also brought a fundamental change to the ethnic position of the Malay in Sarawak. By the formation of a Malay-dominant government in the Malay Peninsula (West Malaysia) and the subsequent participation of Sarawak in the Federation of Malaysia, two kinds of Muslim social

³The word Malay (Dutch: Maleier, Maleische) was also used by the Dutch colonial administrators for the Muslim population on the western coast of Dutch Borneo adjacent to Sarawak. The possibility exists that the word Malay has its origin in the Dutch colonization of the region.

groups with different historical backgrounds were suddenly categorized under the same ethnic name "Malay."⁴

6. Historical Construction of Social Category of "Sarawak Malay"

6-1. "*Masuk Melayu*": Becoming the Sarawak Malay

"Malay" is defined today in the Malaysian Constitution as follows. The Malays are those who speak Bahasa Melayu (Malay language), have "faith in Islam," and follow *adat*, the customary codes of the Malay. It is intriguing that the definition is based solely on language, religion, and custom, and has no reference to the historical descent of the Malay.

The origin of an ethnic group is based on a people's collective recognition of their descent. The ethnic group is "a type of descent group whose members validate their claim to shared descent by pointing to cultural attributes which they believe they hold in common" (Keyes 1976:208). Thus, this clan-like idea of shared descent abstracted from the web of kinship is basic to the concept of an ethnic group. The collective affiliation to a social category by which people share specific cultural elements gives the ethnic category historical continuity. In the case of the Sarawak Malay, the major cultural element shared in common is the commitment to

⁴The present political unit led by the politically dominant Malay in the peninsula traces the origin of "Malaysia" back to the city state of Malaka which arose around 1400 and was conquered by Portugal in 1511 (Kato 1994:75,79-80). The state hegemony of the present Federation of Malaysia finds its hegemonic as well as ethnic roots in the sultanate of Malaka which fell into the hands of the Portuguese, which is quite different from the historical experience of Sarawak at the north corner of Borneo Island.

Islam, which is the most important ethnic marker distinguishing the Malay from the Dayak and Chinese.

The Sarawak Malays do not to any significant degree represent any kind of evolutionary group, or even relic, of a distinct 'Malay' people who 'came in from the west' within any memory, or before. Rather, they reflect the movements of a few authoritative, aristocratic or able (*guru*, trader, etc.) Moslems -- not necessarily always from Malaya or elsewhere in Indonesia. These individuals or small groups converted or led local, indigenous (in Miss Hahn's sense 'aboriginal') populations or parts thereof, to embrace Islam, become Moslem, and thus in latter-day terminology *masuk melayu*, become Malay (Harrison 1970:648)

"Being a Muslim" as a crucial ethnic criterion for the Malay differs from other cultural elements gradually acquired in the process of socialization. Unlike other primordial attachments such as language, this ethnic marker can be obtained literally overnight through religious conversion. Religious conversion has been a driving force for the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia. It makes the formation process of the Malay as a distinctive ethnic category more complicated, compared to the Dayak and the Chinese. In the circumstance where being a Muslim means being a Malay, the procedure to become a Malay is quite simple; any person who wishes to be a Malay recites twice in front of two witnesses "there is no God other than Allah. Mohammed is a messenger for Allah." This conversion process is locally called "*masuk Melayu*" literally meaning "to enter the Malay." Precisely speaking, the conversion should be called "*masuk Islam*" instead of "*masuk Melayu*." But the common local expression inadvertently combines "becoming Muslim" with "becoming Malay."

“The Malay” as an ethnic category based on personal religious affiliation lacks the concept of “blood” or a built-in primordial ethnic sentiment. The lack of an ethnically specific descent line is found among the majority of the Malay in Sarawak. In circumstances where a majority of ancestors of the present Sarawak Malay were both Malayo-Muslim immigrants with a diverse cultural and historical background and Dayak converts, the maintenance of the ethnic category requires a manipulative strategy in creating the authenticity of their descent which asserts a historical continuity of the ethnic category. The crucial characteristic of ethnic narratives of the Sarawak Malay leads to the denial of multiple descent lines of the present Muslim population, especially those from the Dayak.

6-2. Emergence of the Kuching Malay

Throughout the reigns of James Brooke and subsequently the second Rajah, James' nephew Charles Brooke, colonial indirect rule was applied to the Malay in Sarawak. No ambiguity existed in Malay leadership structure, with the *datu* clearly recognized by all as the ruling Malay. During Charles Brooke's rule, datuships were divided into four titles and Malay in Kuching filled all of them; thus the *datu* and the Kuching Malay elite overlapped. Aristocrats outside of Kuching held *datu* rank, but none received titled datuship or had state-wide authority (Lockard 1987:51).

The biggest change the colonial intervention brought to the local Sarawak Malay society was the formation of the Malay in

Kuching as a distinct social category leading to their cultural dominance. The Sarawak River basin had been a backwater by northwest Borneo standards and the location of no important settlements before the Brooke colonization. A Dutch visitor in 1823 just prior to the establishment of Kuching as a new capital recorded about a hundred Malay in the main settlement, mostly "pirates," with three houses of Chinese (Blume 1843:147-48, cited in Lockard 1987:9).

Under the Brooke rule, Kuching became not only the political center of a growing state, but a primary trading port for a growing hinterland as well. The initial years of colonization marked the beginning of new social, economic, and political developments that paved the way for the emergence of a larger, more heterogeneous urban society where Malay, Chinese, Dayak, Indians, and Europeans all play major roles.

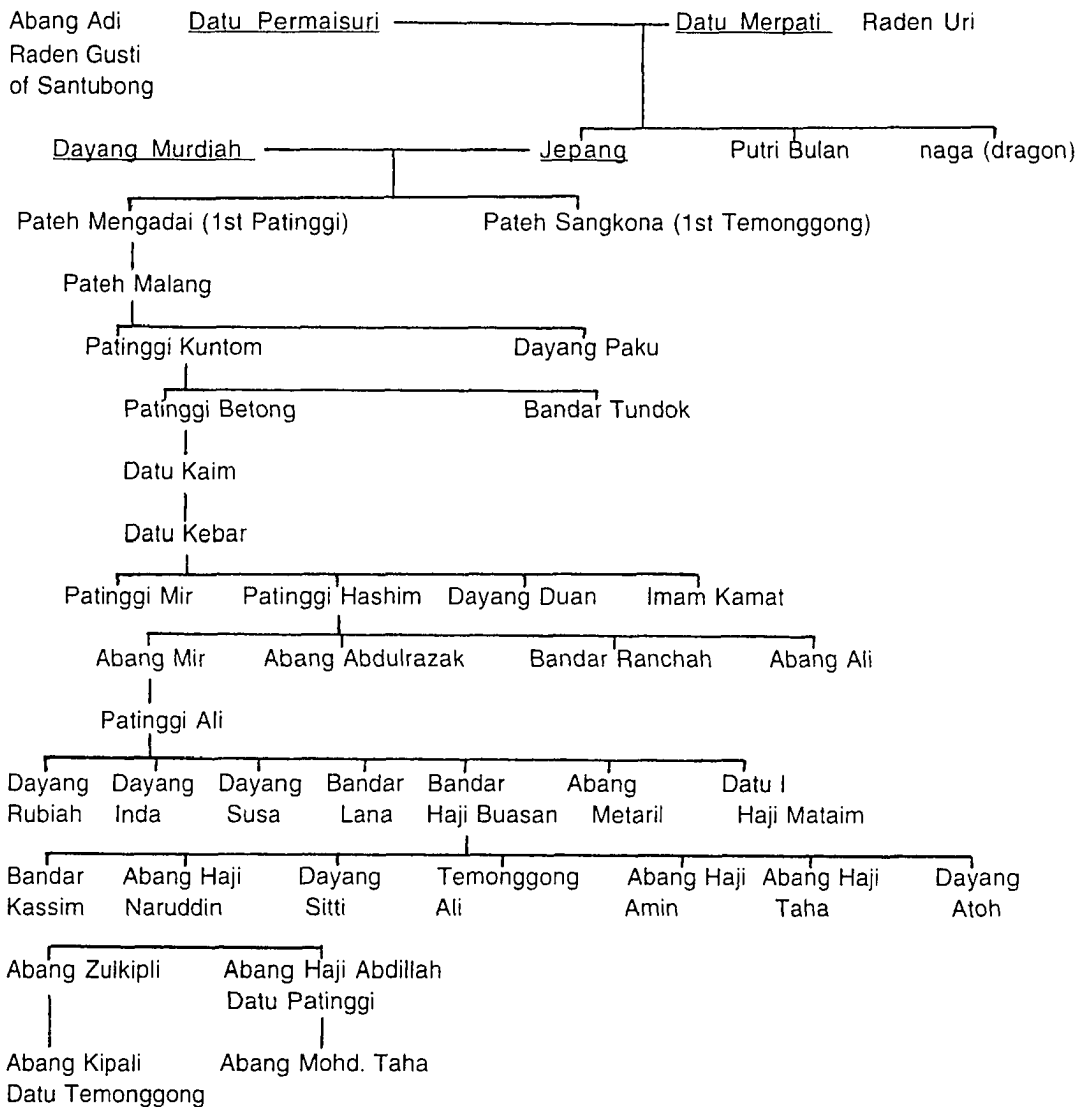
Although Chinese and Indians were the most prominent immigrants, many Malayo-Muslims settled in Kuching between the mid-19th century and early 20th century. Several thousand probably arrived from western Borneo, Brunei, and various parts of the archipelago, as well as other parts of Sarawak territory.

The influx of Malayo-Muslim immigrants to Kuching did not weaken the basic Malay social structure since this period saw the gradual development of a cohesive Kuching Malay community out of mixed Malayo-Muslim accretions. The ease with which Malays integrate and assimilate immigrants with a similar language and identical religion had long been demonstrated in the pre-Brooke period, when newcomers from Java, Sumatra, Brunei, and elsewhere

joined Islamized Dayak, sometimes through intermarriage, to form Malay settlements. This assimilation continued into the middle Brooke period, when the number of Malayo-Muslim immigrants increased considerably. These immigrants merged rather imperceptibly into the Malay group within a few decades, normally within a generation (Lockard 1987:58-59).

According to Keyes, those cultural attributes claimed as shared by a group stand in "diagnostic" relation to the claim of shared descent because such a claim must be marked by some particular attributes. Although no single set of attributes will always diagnose ethnic distinctiveness, claims are most commonly based upon language, origin myths, and folk histories (Keyes 1976:208, Williams 1989:424).

In the case of the Sarawak Malay, their historical continuity is commonly confirmed through their origin myth; a story of the legendary Datu Merpati and his family. Datu Merpati is believed to be a member of the royal family of Minangkabau and a grandson of Raja Jawa. Datu Merpati came from Sumatra with his wife, Datu Permaisuri, daughter of Raja Jarom of Johor, to Cape Dato and settled at Santubong in Southwestern Sarawak. Their sons subsequently became rulers of the riverine settlements from the Sarawak River eastward to the Rejang River. Merpati's eldest son, Merpati Jepang, married Dayang Murdiah, daughter of Abang Adi of Santubong, moving later to Lida Tanah near the convergence of the two branches of the Sarawak River.

Datu Undi (Raja Jarom of Johore)Perbaita Sari (son of Raja Jawa)

(Mohammed Yusof Shibli 1950:264)

The repeated theme in the sojourn of the nobles is their foreign origin and their close relationship with the sultanates of the Malay Peninsula, Sambas (present West Kalimantan), and Brunei. Although the "historical likelihood is that *nakoda* or merchant-captains with aristocratic connections came from Sumatra or Johor to Sarawak during the Srivijaya period and intermarried with Melanaus, Bidayuh and Sebuyau Dayaks living along the coast from

Tanjung [Cape] Dato to the mouth of the Rejang River" (Reece 1993:1), the oral tradition conceals the local elements in Sarawak Malay: primarily the fact that there were a substantial number of Dayak converts at some point in their genealogies⁵.

The origin myth has functioned in particular to legitimize the historical continuity of the Malay aristocratic *perabangan* class in Kuching. They have often claimed a direct genealogical linkage with Datu Merpati (Reece 1993:1). For instance, a genealogy of elite Kuching Malays collected in 1940 claims a kinship tie to Datu Merpati as well as to other mythical and supernatural figures (Mohammed Yusof Shibli 1950:264).

For some Malays, their ostensible kinship ties with the apical ancestor legitimizes their claim to represent authentic Sarawak Malay culture and society. In other words, the *perabangans* are at the pinnacle of Sarawak Malay culture and class. They are the canon which defines ethnic virtue. On the other hand, other Malays are progressively marginalized ethnically as their actual kinship ties to the *perabangan* core group become distant (or non-existent).

⁵ The foreign origin of the Malay in Sarawak is a recurring theme of the ethnic discourse in contemporary Sarawak. The image of the Malay as "outsiders," for example, presented itself at the official opening ceremony of the second Malay Seminar held on the 29th of June, 1993. With the demonstration of traditional Malay martial art - *silat*, and the welcoming sound of Malay drums - *gendang*, a boat, in which the Chief Minister of the Sarawak State, Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, and his wife were on board, was carried by several Malay youths with authentic Malay costume and entered the seminar hall. In fact the Chief Minister is a Melanau and his wife is from Australia, both of them Muslims.

7. The Unmaking of the Sarawak Malay Peasantry

Generally speaking, many studies have discussed the uneven distribution of political and economic resources *among* ethnic groups (cf. Chivers 1985, Cohen 1969, Brass 1974), but not nested hierarchies *within* an ethnic group. This is partly because the anthropological discourse on ethnicity has tended to center on the power relations between ethnic groups. The competition for scarce resources was generally attributed to ethnic stratification, and inner hierarchy within a single ethnic entity was usually classified as "class analysis," not a popular subject of inquiry as compared to ethnicity (William 1989:401).

As an ethnic category emerges with a specific ethnic nomenclature, I have hitherto argued, two polarized movements usually take place, i.e., inclusion and exclusion of members, into and out of the ethnic category. In the Sarawak Malay context, it was a process in which the *perabangan* aristocrats gradually occupied the core part of ethnic hegemony on one hand, while other sub-groups were pushed to the periphery of the ethnic entity.

It is important to note that the gradation proceeds within the state boundary and that the dissociation of the periphery from the core takes place along with the class differentiation process. For instance, in the Sarawakian context, peasants as well as hunters and gatherers in hinterlands have been historically peripheralized both in the class structure of Sarawakian society and in the social space designated as a national territory.

In terms of demography, the *perabangan* class is a minority and the Sarawak Malay society has a much larger rural population.⁶ As stated elsewhere, the Sarawak Malay are typically coastal and riverine dwellers whose main subsistence activity is fishing, while agriculture is usually considered the traditional occupation of the Dayak in the interior. In the ethnic discourse molded over one and a half centuries of Sarawak history, rural Malay agriculturalists have been doubly peripheralized in relation to the urban Malay as well as to fisherfolk in Kuching Delta. As a result, the presence of land-based Malay peasants does not fit comfortably with the authentic ethnic expression of the Sarawak Malay though villagers themselves never question their ethnicity as the Sarawak Malay.

From the establishment of the Brooke rule to the present, accounts regarding the origin of the Malay peasant population are scarce:

The greater part of the Malay population was peasantry. Contrary to common belief, this class was not entirely made up of poor agriculturists and fishermen. In Sarawak the peasant class largely comprised petty riverine traders and to a lesser extent agriculturists. The petty traders were mainly involved in riverine trade with the Dayak of the interior. They bartered salt, beads and cloth for jungle products such as rattan, camphor, gambier and damar. (Sanib 1958:8)

In the 1860's and 1870's, the Kuching Malays were still largely a maritime or riverine people. Apart from a small number who worked for government, most pursued traditional livelihoods as fishermen and small traders. Unlike the Dayaks, they were not farmers and did not engage in the collection of jungle produce. At

⁶ The coastal Malay who are engaged in fisheries are included as peasants in the following analysis (cf. Firth 1946).

this rate, they would never have been able to compete with the Chinese who were successful farmers as well as traders. (Reece 1993:22)

The essential cultural expression of the Malay in Sarawak is engagement in fishing and coastal or riverine trading but decidedly not in land-based cultivation. The Malay peasantry created by both Western colonization and the newly independent state has no voice that represents them. Instead any indications of Malay peasantry have been concealed by the elite hegemony in Kuching in order to differentiate themselves from "others" such as the Dayak.

In the case of the Dayak population, swidden agriculture as an cultural expression of their economy has contributed to the ethnogenesis:

It is evident, therefore, that the Iban in up-river areas who seem to be clinging to a traditional subsistence economy are in a sense being compelled to do so. Surrounded by a predominantly cash economy, and themselves willy-nilly encroached upon by it, they are trapped in the impasse of an involuted subsistence economy. At the same time it is true that they are also consciously attached to traditional Iban subsistence ethics.

One might even say that the up-river inhabitants in question are, in their consciousness, subsistence cultivators *per excellence*. And yet this form of consciousness is a reaction, a kind of anxiety reaction, to their own transformed and threatened existence. The meaning of subsistence economy, both subjectively and objectively, for these "traditionalized" cultivators is totally different from that of the genuinely traditional cultivators of former days. (Uchibori 1988:258)

The image of the Malay in the frontier, that is, those who clear thick jungle, set fire to it, and plant hill rice by digging holes with a stick, is very close to that of the Dayak who traditionally reside in longhouses in the interior. This is quite contradictory to the

established cultural mode of the coastal Malay who engage in fishing and commerce. Although the subsistence diversification within a single ethnic group is the result of ecological adaptation (Barth 1969), and the coexistence of different subsistence modes is not particularly special (Galaty 1982:6), in the case of the Sarawak Malay the presence of land-oriented, Dayak-like Malay peasants generated much confusion as to their ethnic affiliation .

As elaborated in previous sections, during the initial period of the Brooke colonization, a Malay *perabangan* class was established in Kuching. This social category not only formed a quasi-descent group symbolically affiliated to a legendary founding father, but also succeeded in establishing a hegemonic expression of the Sarawak Malay ethnicity. While the Malay elite class emerged at the urban political center, a large segment of rural Malay peasantry was also created in the latter half of the 19th century. Their emergence, however, has been largely ignored in the Kuching-centered discourse on the Sarawak Malay and their social history hardly heard because they were considered ethnically deviant.

In the following chapter, based on archival materials and oral history collected from villagers in the Lundu and Sematan areas in the First Division of Sarawak, I shall reconstruct and analyze the historical process of the increasing marginalization of peasant population on the border; their social making and dismantling as an excluded class and ethnicity. Chapter 3, "The Regional Economic History of Lundu District, Southwestern Sarawak" deals with the formative period of the Brooke colonization and the local response

to their agro-economic policies. The emergence of ethnically-segmented agricultural communities will duly be discussed since the information is indispensable in understanding the historical genesis of a marginalized Malay peasantry. Chapter 4, "The Coming of Rubber: The Decline of the Malay *Nakoda* Economy and the Formation of a Borderland Informal Economy" presents an ethnographic description of peasant villages situated on the Sarawak side of the border. The coastal communities which previously supplied a labor force to local coconut plantations functioned as smuggling points receiving rubber sheets from Western Borneo. With the decline of the coconut plantation industry, the Malay there began turning to swidden rice cultivation and persistently avoided the production of commercial crops such as rubber even during boom periods.

CHAPTER 3. THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC HISTORY OF LUNDU DISTRICT, SOUTHWESTERN SARAWAK

1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the development of cash crop production in Lundu District during the four decades between the 1870s and the 1910s, which roughly corresponds with the reign of the second White Rajah of Sarawak, Charles Brooke. Lundu District was one of a few frontier regions where a substantial number of agro-economic policies were implemented by the second Rajah with an intention to transform Sarawak into a commodity-producing colony.

The chapter is meant to shed some light on the impact of state economic policies felt at the district level. The resulting social change and confusion among locals will be recreated largely from piecemeal yet detailed written accounts of colonial District Officers of the Brooke Administration.

The district-level analysis of Chapters 3 and 4 will then lead to the village-level study in Part II, where the formation of a Malay community, Telok Melano, and its exclusion by and socio-economic marginalization in the state system will be discussed. By looking into regional economic history, I intend to bridge the gap between state and village-level analysis.

This chapter begins with an examination of the agro-economic policies of Charles Brooke in the 1870s to present a picture of how his colonial government contributed to the creation of a peasantry in Sarawak. Following the description of pre-Brooke Lundu and its

encounter with the colonizer, the development of pepper, gambier, and coconut plantation economy in the district will be discussed. The focus of analysis is on the social process in which the borderland population in Lundu was transformed to an ethnically segmented agricultural labor reserve for cash crop cultivation under the state economic apparatus.

2. The Sarawak Frontier and the Modern World System

The development of export-oriented commodity production in Sarawak has been discussed primarily in comparison with other dominant regimes in the region which exploited the natural resources and labor power of their colonies. Sarawak is indeed unique in that it never witnessed the establishment of large-scale exploitative plantation industries in its history. Previous studies have evaluated Sarawak under the Brooke administration as not yet incorporated into the modern world system. The implementation of the agro-economic policies was slow and gradual, demonstrating their aversion to the plantation industry style normally supported by foreign capital (Bampfylde and Baring-Gould 1909, Pringle 1970, 1971). One of the most important Bornean specialists in anthropology, Victor King, pointed out:

we are therefore not dealing with a Gunder Frankian condition and historical process of underdevelopment in Sarawak -- the exploitation of a given region and population by a rapacious, dominant European colonial regime which has extracted substantial surpluses at the expense of the local people, and who, in consequence, have become impoverished and proletarianised, and whose economy has been

distorted by and harnessed to the needs and demands of world capital. (King 1990:114)

Although Sarawak's economy has thus received much attention from scholars for its unique underpinnings, the socio-economic impact of Brooke's colonial policies at the local level has seldom been analyzed in full detail (cf. Moy-Thomas 1961). Although seemingly benign in comparison to other Western colonial powers in Southeast Asia, the Brooke government and its policies had in fact a profound impact on the local peasantry.

In this chapter, I examine the Brooke administration's agrarian policy and its effects on local communities under the reign of the second white Rajah, Charles Brooke (1871-1917). More specifically, Lundu District in the First Division at the end of the 19th century will be the focus of discussion. Unlike other outstations deep in the interior, which were free from the Rajah's frequent interference due to lack of communications, the First Division was under the close supervision of the Rajah. The government's economic policy and its effect at the local level is therefore more apparent here.

The interpretation of economic policies in Sarawak tends to be based on bibliographic studies of the philosophy of the first Rajah, James Brooke (1841-1870). Sources of information are the writings of James Brooke, ex-officers of his government and his sympathizers. (Baring-Gould and Bampfylde 1909, St. John 1862, Templer 1853). Although these are useful, the objectivity of their assessment of the effects of the Rajah's policies is questionable.

It was during the reign of Charles Brooke that the economic transformation of Sarawak took full effect. Under his predecessor, James Brooke, Sarawak was still in political turmoil, the colonial administration being at war with the Iban and other native populations. The first Rajah was thus not in a position to implement land reform and other agricultural policies. However Charles Brooke was able to start the process of nation building through a series of economic policies, to be discussed in detail below.

Charles Brooke's reign coincides with the expansion of Sarawak's regional trade with Singapore as its mainstay as well as the early development of export-oriented commodity production in Lundu District. At this time the district functioned as an experimental area for new cash crops such as pepper, gambier, coffee, and coconut. After the Sarawak government became eager to try out new agro-economic policies, Lundu was one of the first places where they were implemented. Lundu therefore is an ideal place to observe the formative period of Sarawak's cash crop economy and the social change resulting from the fundamental transformation of the production system.

3. Charles Brooke and His Agro-economic Policy in the 1870s

The near absence of registration or administrative instructions concerning agro-economic policies before 1871 has been well documented in a study on land administration in Sarawak by Porter (1967:17-31). The situation changed after the coronation of Charles Brooke in 1871 when he outlined a series of new policies. Charles

Brooke was "bold and more practical than his uncle and the effect of his confident approach to his duties begins to be seen almost immediately after he assumed responsibility for administrative government" (Porter 1967:32). The new policies of Charles Brooke mainly aimed at improving land administration and mobilizing the labor force, both of which were crucial elements in promoting commodity production in the territory of Sarawak.

The first significant measure taken by Charles Brooke was the publication in 1871 of a revised version of the land regulations. These new regulations had the clear intent to nationalize unoccupied land in the territory. They were proposed by the Rajah himself, passed unanimously by the Supreme Council on Jan. 21, 1871, and duly printed in the *Sarawak Gazette*.¹

1. All unoccupied and waste lands, the property of Government, required for agricultural purposes, beyond the township and with the exception of such tracts as may be reserved or disposed of by Public Sale, shall be granted to applicant pleasure of the Government in Fee simple for S 1 per acre or on lease of 900 years on payment of 50 cents per acre, with an annual quit rent of 10 cents per acre, exclusive of a survey fee of fifteen cents per acre.

2. Persons taking land on lease of 900 years to have the option after the expiration of 3 years, of purchasing the land in Fee simple on payment of the additional sum of S 1 per acre, and with the understanding that --

3. All lands granted, whether upon lease or in Fee simple, are liable to revert to the State, in the event of one-fourth not being cleared and brought under cultivation or otherwise made use of for pasturage, or building purposes within 10 years of the period of possession; the State will return survey fees on its re-claiming such lands.

4. All mortgages upon land to render them legal, must be duly registered. Registration fee 1/2 dollar per cent upon each mortgage.

¹The *Sarawak Gazette* was the compendium of official documents and issued monthly from 1870.

5. Squatters will have no actual right to the land, but in the event of the Government taking over such lands the temporary possessors will receive compensations for their plants, arbitrarily fixed by two or more persons, nominated by Government: all buildings run up on such lands are to be limited in value to S 25, and to be liable to be called upon for the payment of rent and taxes (Item 6 - 13 omitted). (SG Jan. 24, 1871:39)

Under this regulation, all unoccupied land became the property of the Sarawak government and was granted to local applicants only if the land was to be used for agricultural purposes. In cases where one-fourth of the land granted was neither cleared nor cultivated within a designated period, it reverted to the state.

In addition to the land administration laws which clarified the government's authority to grant land to Sarawak subjects, a series of more detailed agrarian policies were drawn up to encourage agricultural production. For instance, in 1872 the government issued a proclamation to encourage the cultivation of pepper and gambier. Under this proclamation, Chinese agricultural laborers were publicly invited to Sarawak at the government's expense.

Know all men by these presents that I Charles Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak, do hereby engage and stipulate on the part of the Sarawak Government that the following points shall be enforced in good faith to all Chinamen who may come to the Territory of Sarawak for the purpose of making gambier and pepper gardens.

1st. That they shall have land free of all payments and to any extent, if they engage to bring it under cultivation however gradually.

2nd. That coolies who stipulate to serve masters for certain periods will be obliged by the laws to do so or incur punishment.

3rd. That the leading Chinaman of each river shall hold power from the Government to exercise authority over coolies. The gardens will be visited periodically by a Government officer.

4th. That no tax shall be levied on exports of gambier or pepper for the first six years; and in the event of an export duty being levied after that time on pepper it shall not exceed 20 cents per pikul.²

5th. That the Government engage to allow gambier and pepper gardeners to have salt and tobacco free of duty on the spot for the term of six years.

6th. That the Government engage to assist to recover runaway coolies and in all other ways to assist the planters in accordance with rules of justice.

(SG June 17, 1872:47)

Subsequently, on January 3, 1876, the government issued another proclamation with the intention of further boosting the cultivation of pepper and gambier by Chinese merchants and laborers:

1st. The Government are prepared to make grants of lands suitable for planting gambier and pepper for ninety-nine years at a nominal rent, each lot will be of a 1000 fathoms³ square or thereabouts & the grants will be subject to a condition that not less than 300 fathoms square to be opened & planted with (gambier in p.120, Rajah's Order Book version) during the first year & a proportionate quantity for pepper in each successive year in a proper course of farming & bona fide system of gambier & pepper cultivation be carried out. On breach of either condition or in the event of the grantees abandoning the land or any part of it by permitting it to return to jungle the grant will become null & void, & the Government be entitled to execute upon the land & take possession there again.

2nd. The Government will provide for free passages from Singapore to Kuching for all Towkays⁴ and coolies intending bona fide to cultivate gambier & pepper in Sarawak.

6th. For the term of four years from the present time, there will be no export duty on gambier & pepper & after the expiration of that time, the tax will not be exceeding twenty cents per pikul on pepper & ten cents on gambier, persons coming to Sarawak & there opening gardens with their own capital (that is without advances

² 1 pikul = 133 1/3 lbs. (60.5 kg).

³ 1 fathom = 1.8 m.

⁴ *Taukay* is a common word of Hokkien origin, meaning the head of a firm or shop.

from Government) will be allowed to export their produce free of duty for 12 years from the present time....(Porter 1967:38-39)

Both proclamations specified pepper and gambier, crops which commanded a good price in the international market at that time, to be cultivated on granted land. Pepper and gambier were usually planted together.⁵ Gambier required much firewood for its processing, while pepper exhausted the soil within fifteen years of cultivation. The search for firewood and new plantation sites requires a substantial labor force with planters moving inland and clearing virgin or secondary forest in fallow.

For the establishment of a pepper and gambier plantation economy, Charles Brooke provided Chinese merchants and their coolies with free passage from Singapore to Kuching. Export duty on gambier and pepper was also exempted. These incentives were indicative of Brooke's strong desire to introduce export-oriented agriculture to Sarawak.

Furthermore in 1876 the Rajah sent instructions to his officers to allow sago cultivators to obtain titles to their land. The instructions also permitted land titles to be granted to those who produced rice, coconuts, or other "native culture," provided that the land was at least one-half to one mile from the township.

As seen above, the 1870s was a crucial decade for the development of Sarawak's agricultural landscape. Brooke and his

⁵ The reasons for the companion planting of these two species were: 1) gambier produced refuse that acted as fertilizer for pepper vines, 2) the sale of fast-growing gambier provided income before the peppers matured for harvest, and 3) gambier plants required little attention compared to labor-intensive pepper production, thus their demand for labor was complementary rather than competitive.

government took active measures to promote cash crop production in Sarawak. The migration of the Chinese to Sarawak was encouraged to secure enough agricultural labor. Virgin and secondary forests were transformed into vast cultivated fields. Unlike the large-scale plantation industries developed in British and Dutch colonies, the expansion of cash crop agriculture in Sarawak was left largely in the hands of local and Chinese entrepreneurs.

4. Lundu District and Its Encounter with the Brooke Colonization

Situated in the western corner of the First Division and covering an area of 722 square miles, Lundu is a district with one of the longest histories of colonization. As early as 1841, the district had already been incorporated into Sarawak territory, when it was granted to James Brooke by the Sultan of Brunei. For the first Brooke administration, the western district of the First Division was a relatively unproblematic colonial territory compared to the Second Division where constant Iban resistance plagued the authorities. It was in Lundu where Brooke's first fort was established in the early 1870s. Lundu also functioned as a place where young British officers gained experience and from which they were transferred further afield after a few years of duty. Unlike other outstations in the interior, Kuching and the First Division were under the direct governance of the White Rajahs.

There was a European Resident and his two European assistants, who were responsible for the administration of the First Division which surrounded Kuching. Resident of the First Division was the highest post in the Sarawak Civil Service.

Under Charles Brooke this was a post of great trust and confidence. The Resident in Kuching was usually called upon to give advice on matters affecting other Divisions or the country as a whole. Often he was placed in charge of the government when the Rajah was absent. However, the Resident of the First Division was usually unable to administer Kuching or the First Division *without the Rajah's continuous interference*. [italics mine] (Ward 1966:94).

Before Brooke administration came to power, the Lundu region had long been the land of the Dayaks.⁶ One of the earliest accounts of Lundu District is found in a travel journal written by St. John. In the 1860s he visited Lundu and left a vivid description of a longhouse there:

No village in Sarawak is blessed with greater prosperity than this. The old Orang Kaya, being of a most determined character, has reversed the usual order of things; and the Malays, instead of being the governors, are the governed. Having for years been little exposed to exaction, they are flourishing and exhibit an air of great contentment. (St. John 1862:8)

The vast land leading to Cape Dato adjacent to the Dutch Borneo border was under the jurisdiction of the chief of the Lundu Dayaks, who controlled all the Dayak population there. The chief imposed levies on commodities such as beeswax and edible bird nests. Fines were imposed in the case of a fruit tree being destroyed, as all fruit trees were said to have been planted by his ancestors (SG May 1, 1882:31).

The Lundu Dayak chief's jurisdiction over his land, however, was completely abolished by the second Brooke government. On March 23, 1882, government officials brought a proclamation from the Rajah

⁶ Throughout this dissertation the term "Dayak" is used in a general sense to refer to the indigenous peoples of Sarawak including the Iban but excluding the Malays.

which deprived the Lundu Dayak chief of all jurisdiction over his subjects in the area (SG May 1, 1882:31).

The local political structure in Lundu was thus changed under Charles Brooke's rule. In the 1870s Lundu experienced an economic take off from production for local consumption to an orientation to cash crop production for export.

Here it is important to note that even during the reign of James Brooke, a large number of Chinese came to the country, mainly from Dutch Borneo, and found work in the Bau gold-fields, about ten miles from Kuching, or else they settled in farming communities in many places in and around Kuching, Bau, and Lundu (Porter 1967:28). The early description of conditions in Lundu before 1870s are also reported by Spenser St. John:

...there were about 200 Chinese working on gardens extending over about a hundred acres of ground, and neatly planted with various kinds of vegetables, among which beans and sweet potatoes appeared most numerous. A large market was found for their sweet potatoes among the sago growers and workers of the rivers to the north. (St. John 1862:8)

It is assumed that they were Chinese who fled Dutch Borneo where the Chinese gold miners were constantly at war with the Dutch throughout the 1840s and the 1850s (Chew 1990:21-22). According to St. John, Chinese agricultural products were not export-oriented at the time but were sold mainly for local consumption within regional markets. Later, under Charles Brooke, the government further encouraged the migration of Chinese merchants (*tau kay*) and workers to Lundu District. According to the *Sarawak Gazette*:

The last Royalist brought us a number of Chinese Taukays from Singapore and Rhio with the professed purpose of looking for land suitable for gambier and pepper planting. They returned to Singapore by the same steamer, and before leaving expressed themselves much satisfied with what they saw. Free passages were granted them by Royalist and Heartsease conveyed them to Lundu and back. It is their intention to form a company in Singapore in which Sarawak merchants would join. (SG June 17, 1872:46)

The district was an open gate for immigrants from the other side of the border. Immigrants-cum-peasants were an important labor reserve for the expansion of the Lundu plantation economy. Within a decade numerous Chinese estates were established in Lundu. A district officer reported that "the scheme for planting gambier and pepper now in process of trial with the Chinese will, if fairly successful, provide a good starting point, from which to initiate a wider plan of introducing the cultivation of the same and the other products among the Malays and Dayaks" (SG Dec. 8, 1877:85).

Throughout the 1880s, both Lundu locals and the new settlers remained quite responsive to the new production system although not without the occurrence of some problems. According to a district report sent to the Rajah, "land disputes and collision between Chinese gardeners and Dayaks are somewhat constant and from the number of pepper gardens opened all around Lundu such disputes will increase" (SG July 1, 1887). A series of land regulations originally implemented in the 1870s caused a great deal of confusion among locals in Lundu as they had previously managed their swidden fields under their own customary law.

The officer who was stationed at Lundu was kept busy explaining the meaning of the land regulations to the local people. He reported that "I sent all these men into Court and explained to them Land Regulations and the system of permits to open and to extend gardens and gave orders that no clearing was to be made without application to the Government authorities at the Fort" (SG July 1, 1887:121).

Despite the local officer's efforts, further confusion among the natives inhabitants lead Rajah Brooke to issue an order which states:

Whereas it has come to my knowledge that land lying at the foot of Lundu mountain is being appropriated by Malays under pretense that it has been given or sold to them by Dayaks. I hereby make known to all denominations of people living in Lundu that any-one clearing land lying between Lundu River and Gading Mountain and planting on it without permission from the Government does so at his own risk; and in the event of such land being required by the Government will receive no compensation. (SG. Jan. 1, 1889:7)

In June 1893, opening a garden without application to the District Office became subject to fine. Three months after the implementation of the law, the Police Court recorded two cases of breach; in one case a Chinese planter was fined \$5 and in another a Dayak was fined for felling jungle without permit (SG Sept. 1, 1893).

The purpose of the land regulations was twofold: to grant land to planters and to reclaim land in cases where the land is left uncleared. Thus officers stationed at Lundu Fort were busy administering the granting of land as well as transferring granted but unused land to other planters. The *Sarawak Gazette* of the 1890s gives glimpses of the continuing confusion in the daily routine of an officer in Lundu:

A good deal of my time has been taken up with surveying gardens in the vicinity. Principally marking out land for which permits have been granted. Sibuyaw Dayaks living at Lundu have been given land between Simuring and S'Kati, the land has been laid out in a way that will give them plenty of space for extending, and the allotments, numbering fifteen, join each other. The Dayaks have been given to understand that they will receive no other land if they fail to give this every attention or allow it to become a field of "lalang"[weeds]. The soil is exceedingly good, and the land, covered with young jungle, of their own choice. (SG. Oct. 2, 1893)

Between Sompa and Rambungan a good deal of land of out here has been given to Malays for coconut planting but none has yet got beyond planting a small path with watermelons. All permits however are given on the understanding that if no real work is done in six months, the land may be granted to others" (SG Oct 1, 1898: 194)

A good many permits have been issued to Malays for coconut planting but appear to have done anything yet. As this land has been especially reserved to Malays for two years and none have yet done anything, I shall now grant permits to Chinese to plant of any should wish to do so. (SG Dec. 1, 1898:224)

As a result of these land regulations, new cash crop areas mushroomed. For instance, an officer who inspected various up-river and coastal areas of Lundu reported that over 70 gardens containing nearly 60,000 pepper vines had been opened up:

At	Jangkar	11	containing about 9,000 vines	(818 vines per garden)
	Sibeirs	2	1,000	(500)
	Serayan	6	5,000	(833)
	S'Larat	11	5,500	(500)
	Sibako	4	3,500	(875)
	Timaga	5	1,700	(340)
	Simatan	9	16,000	(1777)
	from Siar -Lundu	24	18,000	(750)

(SG Sept. 2, 1889)

Between 1893 and 1895, as many as 293 land permits were issued in the district (SG Dec 2, 1895:220). The majority of applicants were Chinese planters, with a small number of Dayaks such as Subuyow, Jagoi, Selako, and Larah.

The Malays in the district were not represented in this mainstream agricultural development. It was not until the mid-1890s that the Malay settlers finally began to involve themselves in copra (dried coconut) production. After this there was a drastic growth in the Malay population of Lundu and the Sematan coast region adjacent to Cape Dato.

5. Pepper, Gambier, and Coconut: the Development of an Ethnically Segmented Agricultural Economy in Lundu

The Lundu plantation economy developed work processes in which different ethnic groups participated: the Chinese, the Dayaks and the Malays. The differences stemmed mainly from the way in which labor was mobilized for the operation of the agricultural estates. Chinese plantations were operated by wealthy merchants from Singapore and Kuching, who employed coolies for the maintenance of their gardens. The Dayak work process followed the logic of the kin-ordered mode of production (Wolf 1982:88-96); the recruitment of labor did not go beyond a longhouse or a group of kinsmen. Malay plantations were opened by Malay peasants from Sambas and other coastal areas in Dutch Borneo. They worked under the leadership of a Malay or Bugis *nakoda* (the master of a sea vessel) who became merchants.⁷ Except

⁷The social and historical significance of these *nakoda* traders will be examined in section 5-3.

for a small number of Dayak and Malay laborers employed in the Chinese-owned fields, the Lundu plantation industry was largely based on an ethnically segmented agricultural labor force.

5-1. The Development of Chinese Plantations

According to a census of 1889,⁸ the Chinese population in Lundu was 947 with 765 males and 182 females. Thus the population was male-dominated with a ratio of five to one. The majority of the Lundu Chinese were indentured laborers working on the pepper and gambier plantations. With the special incentives offered by the Sarawak government, Chinese planters applied to open plantations under the new land registrations. Although indentured laborers were mostly Chinese from Western Dutch Borneo, some Dayak and Malay coolies were employed on the plantations as well (SG Nov. 1, 1893:173, Lockard and Graham 1992:28).

In describing Chinese-owned cultivated fields, terms such as "plantation," "garden," and "estate" were often used interchangeably in the Lundu District reports. The size of Chinese cultivated land and the number of employed laborers varied significantly. Some areas seemed to be mere smallholdings in terms of the size and the number of workers. No definite answer is therefore available as to whether the cash crop cultivation by Lundu Chinese could be regarded as a plantation system. However it was smaller and quite different from

⁸ For the population of Lundu District in 1889, see Appendix C.

the “plantations” operated by colonizers in the neighboring countries. Let us examine a few cases from the *Sarawak Gazette*:

A registry having been made of pepper plantations in the Simatan district, it is found that those with over 100 vines numbered 37. The number of vines on the said plantations amount to 50,250, and the aggregate number of labourers employed on the same appear to be 81 males. (SG July 1, 1893:114)

These pepper gardens have, on average, 1,350 vines per field, which requires a labor force well beyond household size, especially in the harvest season. As for coffee, a Potianak Chinese was reported to have employed 28 coolies and to have cleared 600 acres for his coffee plantation, one of the largest coffee plantations in the district (SG April 1, 1895:66-67).

Gambier fields recorded in 1893 ranged between 3 and 8 hectares:

Planter	the size of cultivated land	
Wa Ha, Liam Kim,	160 fathoms square	[8.29 ha.]
Seng Ha, Ah Low	100	[3.24 ha.]
Ngo Wa, Ah Low	130	[5.48 ha.]
Kim Eng, Hop Pan	150	[7.29 ha.]
Liang Heng, Ah Jew	100	[3.24 ha.]

[figures in brackets mine]

(SG October 2, 1893:163)

These plantations were often under the management of wealthy Kuching merchants. For instance, in 1892 the property of the firm Ban Hin Long, which contained seven pepper gardens with more than 5,500 vines, two shop houses in Lundu bazaar, and one dwelling house in

Kuching, was sold by public auction (SG Aug. 1, 1892:143). Large plantations usually had on-site clerks who supervised the daily operations. To improve labor-management relations, these merchants-cum-plantation managers obtained special permission from the government to supply *arrack* (hard liquor made from rice) and opium to their indentured laborers. These plantations were often described by colonial officers as “firms,” equipped with residential facilities for the coolies:

... visited Bong Keh Sam's coffee plantation at S'nibong and found that a substantial building with bilian shingles was in the course of construction for the accommodation of his coolies, half of the building finished was occupied by the coolies. The coolies numbering twenty-eight I found to be in good health. Six of their number who had been giving trouble received punishment. (SG April 1, 1895: 67)

Some of the Chinese-owned firms were even called *kongsi*,⁹ independent units which were patterned after their clan-based organizations in China (SG April 1, 1895:66). It is difficult to reconstruct an account of plantation operation due to the scarcity of reliable archival materials. However, the following extract from a report by the Resident of Lundu District gives a glimpse of how Chinese coolies were mobilized to work for plantations. Indentured laborers were often bonded to plantation owners through a system of advanced payment and debts incurred through their gambling and opium smoking.

⁹ For a discussion on *kongsi*, see Chew (1990).

A bad system of opening gardens is in vogue, a system which is bad all round, doing good to neither Towkay nor coolie and eventually ending in the loss of the garden opened up.

The system is based on what is the invariable custom in the east, i.e., the advance of wages and other sums of money before any work has been done to warrant such payment. In this way any broken down coolie can relieve his immediate wants by clearing a few fathoms of jungle, putting in young pepper vines, and then borrowing money on the security of his garden, with a promise to sell all his crop to the mortgagee at a price considerably below market value, the mortgage in the meantime supplying him with food till vines bear. By this time he is hopelessly in debt on account of his original advance, now swelled by the value of the provisions he has meanwhile been supplied with by the Towkay. (SG June 1, 1889:77)

Securing revenue from levies on export commodities was very important to the Sarawak government.¹⁰ The government therefore introduced two measures to ensure the smooth operation of the Chinese plantations. One was the control of the distribution of agricultural produce in local markets, and the other was the control the movement of plantation workers.

One of the issues that plagued Chinese plantation managers at the time was the illicit sale of crops by coolies. Many coolies secretly sold crops to Chinese merchants instead of their employers.

Apparently in the Lundu district one or more Towkays has overreached himself and the harm of this not only affects himself but also the district, by unsettling a part of its population and laying them open to great temptation to dishonesty in the way of fraudulently selling crop to those who are not entitled to it, from which it is but a step to robbery and other crime. Coolies also, when in a despondent frame of mind have a tendency to go bad altogether, spending their last cent on opium or gambling

¹⁰The importance of revenue from taxation levied on export-oriented commodities for the Sarawak government treasury will be examined in Chapter 4.

and finally putting an end to a wretched existence by suspending themselves to the rafters of their Bangsal [warehouse]. (SG June 1, 1889:78)

District officers tried to restrict the distribution channels of commodities within local networks based on patron-client relationships (*taukay*-plantation laborer) and to contain growth of the illicit marketing of commodities. In spite of their efforts, the illicit sale of crop by coolies and their arrests were repeatedly reported in the monthly reports of Lundu officials:

I have had the honour of communicating with you on the subject of two cases in which Chinese have been arrested for bringing pepper for illicit sale from Simpadi, Lee Kai Juh in the employ of Messrs Tap Soon Seng of Kuching, and Sio Chang and Ah Siam in the employ of Messrs Ghee Soon & Co. In the former case the purchaser has been brought to light but he is at present in Kuching. (SG September 1, 1893:146)

two Chinese had been arrested during my absence, found bringing pepper to Lundu from Simpadi for illicit sale. I have had the honor of corresponding with you with regard to these arrests. (SG October 2, 1893:163)

In addition to controlling commodity transactions, arresting runaway coolies was an important function of the District Office in Lundu which was located adjacent to the Dutch Borneo border. The main sources of labor recruitment at the time was Singapore and the Sambas region in western Dutch Borneo. From there indentured laborers were transferred to other parts of the Malay Archipelago and Borneo. As previously discussed, in the latter half of the 19th century, political turmoil in Dutch Borneo caused an exodus of the Chinese population to the territory of Sarawak. Immigrants were welcome to work on Chinese plantations in Lundu, thus no legal

measure was taken to restrict their influx. On the other hand, the drain of the labor force from Sarawak territory was a matter of serious concern for the Rajah and his government.

A government order regarding passports was first announced by the Rajah in 1876. It reappeared in the *Sarawak Gazette* in 1894. The passport system was meant to stop runaway criminals and Chinese coolies from fleeing to Dutch Borneo.

Order: Pass Ports

It is hereby directed that, for the better apprehension of runaway criminals and coolies under contract, each individual or head of party shall before leaving the Sarawak territory for Sambas take out a pass from the Government office at either Kuching, Paku, Simunjan, or Lundu; these passes are to be shown to the Dayak chiefs through whose villages the party may have to pass; and that in the event of any individual being found without a pass, he shall be apprehended and brought as a prisoner by the Dayak chief to Kuching. (SG Jan. 2, 1894)

In the 1890s, government officers in Lundu were busy reporting cases of coolies who run away from work and their subsequent arrests. For example:

On the 10th, Bong Keh Sam's clerk reported that six of their coolies had made off into the jungle. A search party was instituted, but nothing was heard of these men until they were brought in on the 24th by Pa Newlim and a party of Malays. Three of the number were found at the pankallan S'tungkaor; and the others a little below that stream on the banks of the river. These men must have traveled a considerable distance to have got from the S'nibong range to the S'tungkor streams, and is a wonder they didn't perish in the attempt. They asked Pa Newlim to take them to Sambas. One of these men named Lin En has given trouble on several occasions; and was in June last sent down for sentence in Kuching. (SG April 2, 1894:56)

On my arrival I found Nialon, a Sibuyau Dyak, with a Chinaman he had picked up in the Sekambal River in distress. The Chinaman gave his name as Tan Ah Ngo and said he was on his way to Simatan. On inquiry it was discovered that he was a Sinkeh coolie in the employment of Fong Chu a timber worker, and that his real name was Lee Ah Jee. He received a short sentence of imprisonment and has since been returned to his employer. (SG January. 2, 1894:10)

The government immigration policy on Chinese plantation workers in Lundu created a labor market which was easy to enter but hard to get out. When coolies ran away from hard labor, they were searched and reprimanded not only by the *taukays* but also by the government, which was keen to secure a labor force for the plantations in Lundu. In the periphery between Sarawak and Dutch Borneo, the border functioned as a valve open to immigrant laborers but a barrier to their leaving.

5-2. Encroachment upon Native Land and Dayak Participation in Cash Crop Cultivation

The vast tract of land leading to Cape Dato was under the jurisdiction of the chief of the Lundu Dayak. The abolition of his sovereignty by Rajah Brooke in 1871 was welcomed at least initially by the Lundu locals (SG May 1, 1882:31). The Dayak, especially the Selako, who had newly migrated from western Dutch Borneo, repeatedly complained about the Lundu chief's claim on land and forest produce (SG May 1, 1882:31).

The Lundu chief's jurisdiction was, however, nominal. The source of his power was limited within a regional tributary system

based on kin relations. It was only after the establishment of the Brooke government that a fundamental transformation in the way of Dayak life took place in the region. Unlike Chinese and Malays who migrated to Lundu under the Brooke government's economic incentives, the majority of Dayak had already been engaged in swidden rice agriculture there for some time. The land regulations of the Brooke government deprived these native swidden cultivators of their customary rights to the secondary forest. Locals could no longer automatically claim rights to land for swidden cultivation outside their existing domain (Hong 1987:40). The new government's claim on the land, which had been hitherto managed by the customary land tenure system, caused great confusion among the Dayak in Lundu.

The Sibuyau Dayaks do not seem to appreciate the land regulations having always looked upon land in this neighborhood as their own property. The permit system I feel sure will encourage the natives in bringing the soil under regular culture for they now seem to understand that reckless felling of jungle is prohibited. (SG September 1, 1893:146)

Some Sibuyau Dayaks claiming that they had been unjustly fined by the Court for breaches of land regulations, in felling forest for planting without taking our permit. (SG Dec. 2, 1895:220)

The revised version of the land regulations which was announced in 1893 gave further recognition to "squatters" who "could be dealt with leniently" or be permitted "to take out title" for the land they occupied. "Squatters" were actually nothing more than commercial planters who were legally allowed to take over land which had been cleared and abandoned by others. In view of the fact that Dayak swidden cultivators were known to leave their fields in long fallow,

the regulations had the effect of giving planters access to secondary forest which had been initially cleared by the Dayak. In this sense, the order represented the government's deliberate attempt to curtail Dayak shifting cultivation and customary tenure.

The Dayak in Lundu were incorporated into cash crop production at a relatively early stage in history. This was an inevitable response to the land encroachment by the Brooke regime. Even prior to the 1890s "land disputes and collision between Chinese gardeners and Dayaks are somewhat constant and from the number of pepper gardens opened all around Lundu such disputes will increase" (SG July 1, 1887:121).

Though the Dayak in Lundu District may have been drawn unwillingly into cash crop production, some of them were quite responsive to the development of an export-oriented plantation economy in the region. Their gardens flourished, according to many of the colonial officers who inspected the Dayak plantations:

I was struck with the appearance of the pepper cultivated by Silakau Dayaks though not on a large scale, what there was equaled Chinese. (SG February 1, 1893:26)

the pepper planted by these Selakau Dyaks seemed to be doing exceedingly well, and they deserve great credit for the way some of them keep up their gardens. (SG January 2, 1894:10)

The average size of the Dayak plantations were much smaller than those of the Chinese:

Simatan:	Chinese	29	containing 28,500 vines	(983 vines/estate)
	Dayaks	10	4,500	(450 vines/estate)
Lundu:	Chinese	91	127,700	(1403 vines/estate)
	Natives ¹¹	8	2,800	(350 vines/estate)

According to the above figures, the average number of pepper vines per Dayak garden ranged from 350 to 450, which could easily have been managed by a family unit. Although the majority of Dayak gardens were relatively small, there were exceptions. The *Sarawak Gazette* reported the case of a Selako planter who owned more than 3,000 pepper vines in Sematan (SG Jan. 2, 1895:11). To maintain 3,000 vines of pepper requires intensive labor, especially for weeding and harvesting. The work is well beyond an individual domestic group. There are, unfortunately, no historical documents on the Dayak mode of large-scale commercial cultivation at the turn of the century.

5-3. Malay Coconut Plantations and Nakoda Entrepreneurs

The origin of Malay commercial activities on the coast of Lundu District was part of the development of a larger trade network in the region, encompassing the east coast of Riau, Singapore, the Natunas and the western Dutch Borneo ports of Sambas, Mempawah, Pontianak, and Sarawak. The coastal area between Lundu and Cape Dato was directly linked to the commercial hubs of Java and Singapore by the trading network of the Sambas and Bugis *nakoda* (ship captain) merchants:

¹¹The meaning of the word "Natives" is not clear in this record. They are very likely Dayaks.

There was a string of Malay trading settlements, along the coast of Borneo on the South China Sea side, from Tg. [Cape] Dato at the northern side. The archipelago-wide trade was in the hands of local Malays and Bugis who sailed in prahu of 800 to 1,200 pikul burden, carrying from 40 to 60 men each. These boats made two voyages a year. Each consignment, according to the individual size of the vessel, was worth from 2,000 to 8,000 Spanish dollars annually. (Moor 1837:13)

Even after Rajah James Brooke came into power, Malay trading activities survived for some time, linking Pontianak and Brunei via Cape Dato. The ports of Sematan and Lundu functioned as strategic points connecting western Dutch Borneo and Sarawak. Especially from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the trading activities of *nakoda* accelerated in response to a mounting demand for timber in the Singapore market. In the Lundu coastal district, *nakoda* were first engaged in the timber business and subsequently in coconut cultivation.

During the early 1890s a substantial number of *nakoda* contacted Lundu officials regarding their business interest in timber and ship-building. These *nakoda* employed Sambas men as coolies and carpenters. Cases concerning *nakoda* in the *Sarawak Gazette* are as follows: they asked for monopolies in obtaining timber (especially tengar bark and pinaga wood) and jungle produce; the Brooke government ordered them to pay an export duty for each shipment of goods to Singapore and Java; and the Sambas Malays were ordered to pay tax on *sampan* (boats) which they had built (SG February 1, 1893:26, September 1, 1893:146, December 1, 1894:208, April 2, 1894:56, August 1, 1895:144, December 2, 1895:220).

Logging activities by *nakoda* on the coastal line between Lundu and Cape Dato as well as major river lines such as Kuala Lundu, Kuala Sematan, and Kuala Samunsam laid a basis for the development of coconut plantations in the area (see Map 2).

Unlike Chinese and Dayak peasants, Malays in the district did not participate in inland pepper cultivation. They only planted coconut and a small number of banana trees in the coastal areas. For instance, in January 1894, when the amount of pepper produced for export in Sematan reached 1,122 pikuls (67,881 kg.), there were no pepper gardens registered under a Malay name (SG March 1, 1894:41).

There are two factors which led to the opening of coconut fields by *nakoda* in the 1890s. 1) In that decade, the pepper price on the international market had collapsed dramatically, hitting an all time low. Thus the *nakoda* could not expect profit from pepper cultivation. 2) It is probable that the Sambas *nakoda* had already been engaged in the coconut plantation business in the coastal districts of western Dutch Borneo, such as Pontianak and Mempawah, and so had the expertise necessary to open plantations.

The new enterprise of opening coconut plantations further encouraged Malay migration from the Sambas area. The migration of the Sambas Malays to the coast between Lundu and Cape Dato eventually led to the formation of numerous new Malay *kampung* (villages) throughout the 1890s.

The whole coast from S. [Sungai = River] Blinsah to Telok Milano has now been practically taken up for cocoanut planting and these cocoanuts that have been planted some two or three years ago are looking very well. (SG July 1, 1898:142)

Major plantations aggregated at the river mouths or along the sandy beaches such as Bakuching, Belingsah, Bedaun, Sungei Limo, Kuala Samunsam, Telok Serabang and Telok Melano. The newly established Malay coastal settlements, without exception, corresponded with the location of major coconut estates. By the year 1899, six *kampungs*, namely Belinsah, Bedaun, Sungei Cina, Samunsam, Telok Serabang, and Telok Melano, were established with officially appointed *tua kampung* (village head) and a *penghulu* (district head). Plantations and villages were virtually on the same spot, a characteristic of Malay operations in the region (see Map 2).

Population in Lundu District (1889/1898)

	Male	Female	Total 1898	Total 1889	+ / -
Chinese	629	168	798	947	- 150
Malays	737	659	1,396	1,023	+ 373
Sibuyau	429	436	865	844	+ 21
Silakow	366	333	699	804	- 105
Larah	135	120	255	333	- 78
various	61	66	127	149	- 22

(SG August 1, 1898: 166)

The Malay population in Lundu District increased by another 40% in the 1890s. As indicated by the comment by a colonial officer who stationed in Lundu in 1898, the actual increase of the Malay population was more than what was recorded in the above statistics.

The falling in the Chinese population is chiefly men and about corresponds with the number of coolies employed on the Experiment Tobacco estates in 1889. The increase in the Malay population is very satisfactory and is really bigger than it looks as in 1889 a number of people were included who were only temporarily in the

district whereas the above figures only include people *bona fide* living there. The increase is partly to immigration from Sambas and partly to natural increase as families of five and six children are very common among the Malays here. (SG August 1, 1898:166)

Opening new coconut plantations along the previously uninhabited coast required the clearing of virgin forest. Intensive labor was also required for planting seeds and for the daily maintenance of estates, especially weeding as well as harvesting, husking, and drying seeds for copra production. *Nakoda* plantation owners therefore brought Malays across the Sarawak-Dutch Borneo border to be on-site estate caretakers. Unlike Chinese *taukays*, these entrepreneurs were actually setting up communities rather than work camps.

The *nakoda* provided their workers with food staples for the initial settling-down period. *Nakoda* brought along fellow community members of the workers including their children and grandchildren, traditional medicine men (*bomoh*), midwives (*bidan*) and carpenters (*tukang*). The bond between the early settlers and *nakoda* is characterized as a patron-client relationship.

It is worth noting that the majority of the *nakoda* held the title of "*haji*,"¹² and were often literate. The ability to read and write *jawi* script was indispensable in applying to open coconut gardens

¹² Lundu District office recorded the following names of *nakoda* traders who registered their coconut estates: Tuanku Jin, Haji Taha, Haji Matarip, Haji Usin, Haji Sleman, Nakoda Hitam, Haji Matsalleh, and Taip. Five among the eight traders were Haji. With the exception of Tuanku Jin of Sungei Cina (origin unknown) and Haji Sleman (a Sarawak man married to a Natuna woman), all of them were either from the western Dutch Borneo coast or the Natuna Islands.

under Sarawak land regulations, since the registration forms were available in *jawi*, English, and Chinese.

The size of the coconut plantations varied greatly. As the following accounts show they were all lined up along the coastal areas to a short distance from the ocean front.

[between Kuala Sematan and Kuala Blungai] there are altogether 17 plantations aggregating a little over 1 1/4 mile in length and averaging about 400 yards deep. (SG August 1, 1899:261)

Between S. Puguh and Simatan there are about half a dozen cocoanut plantations made by Malays. These clearings extend for 1 1/4 mile along the beach with a depth of 300 or 400 yards, they are fully planted up and the cocoanuts are doing very well. (SG January 3, 1899:11)

The participation of *nakoda* traders in the Lundu plantation industry was the last resort for their survival under the Brooke colonial rule, which tried to annihilate the maritime economic prosperity of the Malays. Before the Brooke colonization, *Nakoda* merchants had long thrived from their exclusive engagement in trading. However, the establishment of the Brooke regime and the influx of Chinese *taukey* signaled the demise of their commercial activities. As a noted Sarawakian historian, Sanib Said indicates, the Sarawak government took decisive measures to deprive Malays of their economic power:

One of the important steps taken was to close the source of production as well as the market to Malay traders. This involved breaking the mutual dependence between Dayaks and the Malay traders. This was achieved by a resettlement policy implemented by the formation of a fort system in every major river settlement.... Hence movement of population could easily be observed and controlled. The fort,

always manned by one or two European officers and a Kuching Malay Native Officer, then acted as the strategic and administrative center of the river system.

In turn, the Malay traders were encouraged to take up subsistence farming round the fort. The result was that the Malay community living in that river system would be under constant observation from the Government and they had no alternative but to concentrate on mere passive and sedentary occupations. (Sanib 1984:21-22)

Losing their commercial supremacy to Chinese capital, *nakoda* traders were forced to participate in agricultural production. In Lundu, *nakoda* from Dutch Borneo were fully incorporated into the Sarawak government-led plantation economy by the end of the 19th century. Malays had maintained a non-capitalist labor organization under the leadership of *nakoda* and had migrated to open new plantations which were to become their home villages.

6. Sarawak and the Growth of the International Commodity Market

The development of the plantation industry in Lundu was greatly encouraged by the rapid growth of the Singapore commodity market during the latter half of the 19th century. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, two years before the coronation of Charles Brooke in Sarawak, significantly boosted worldwide trade. As shown below, the trading volume of the Singapore market increased by another 154% within five years of the opening of the canal.

1868	\$ 58,250,915	
1869	\$ 58,944,141	
1870	\$ 70,789,586	
1871	\$ 68,768,337	
1872	\$ 82,435,504	
1873	\$ 89,632,235	(Moore and Moore 1969: 371)

Singapore was the regional center for the inter-ocean trading vessels, the Bugis *pinisi*, the Chinese *junk*, and the steamships that cruised the South China Sea during the northeast, as well as the southwest monsoon. Cape Dato, the western extremity of Lundu District, was located at the heart of the trading network linking Singapore, the west coast of Dutch Borneo, Sarawak, and Brunei.

The economic expansion of Lundu District was a product of the Brooke government's agro-economic policies as just discussed. However the transformation to commodity production was not induced only by domestic socio-economic factors. As the Singapore market thrived, the development of the maritime commercial network also played a key role in transforming the district economically. It is therefore necessary to discuss commercial production in Lundu within this larger context.

Figure 1 (Appendix D) shows price fluctuations in pepper and copra exports in the Kuching Foreign Trade Returns from January 1890 to December 1900. Copra was indeed a low profile commodity without drastic price increases in the international market although it had been a stable source of income for the coastal population in Sarawak, especially for the Malays.

The percentage of pepper and copra exports in the Kuching Foreign Trade Returns during the same period is shown in Figure 2

(Appendix E). The sharp ups-and-downs in pepper exports reflect international price fluctuations. Compared with pepper, copra was insignificant in terms of its profitability in Sarawak's international trade returns.

Pepper production was a speculative enterprise, subject to sudden ups-and-downs in market price. Pepper planters in Lundu District took measures such as keeping dried seeds in stock when prices were low. However local merchants often exploited local peasants by buying pepper at a price much lower than that of the Singapore market as exemplified below:

As I find the pepper planters here have been getting very low prices for their pepper, in some cases less than half the price current in Singapore, I now put a notice in bazaar every fortnight showing the prices current in Singapore in the hope that it will enable them to get better prices from their Taukays. (SG August 1, 1899: 261)

Under Charles Brooke and his government, Sarawak as a whole saw a drastic increase in commodity production. In fact between the 1870s and 1890s, just as his agro-economic policies were taking effect in local areas such as Lundu, the Sarawak economy changed fundamentally. In 1871, export items listed in the government report include gutta percha, Indian rubber, bee's wax, *trepang* (sea cucumber), sago, gold, rice, camphor and bezoar stone, most of which were uncultivated forest products. Some 10 years later in 1886, forest products made up only 8% of the total export value from Sarawak.¹³

¹³ I have extracted these figures from "Export Items in 1886" (SG April 1, 1886:67). (See. Appendix F).

Breakdown of Export Items in 1886 as a Percentage of Total Export Value

Forest products	8.0%
Minerals	9.7%
Cultivated products and manufactured goods	52.9%
Maritime products	0.6%
Imports re-exported	8.8%

In other words, during Charles Brooke's reign, and as the Singapore commodity market enlarged, Sarawak transformed its resource-exploitative economy based on the sale of forest products to an export-oriented cash crop economy. In the case of Sarawak, with its sparsely populated hinterland and tracts of inaccessible primary jungle, the expansion of a cash crop economy would not have been possible without state intervention. Without the apparatus of a colonial government, albeit sloppy and ineffective at times, the Sarawak interior could not have been transformed into the cultivated region it became.

7. Benevolent Protector or Failed Exploiter?: The Agro-economic Policies of Charles Brooke and the Formation of a Plural Society

"The Brooke Raj did not have the personnel, finances, skills, nor the desire to carry through substantial social economic and political transformations in Sarawak (King 1990:113)." Charles Brooke himself was well aware that his government's efforts towards economic development were far from satisfactory. He admitted after four decades in power that:

I do not flatter myself when I say that I have tried my best to advance agriculture, but I have most signally failed, and am, in consequence, much disappointed. Nevertheless, I still entertain hopes that the time for its development is not far distant, and I am prepared to take any pains, to receive any amount of advice and to undergo any trouble if only I can see my way to successfully spread gardens and plantations in the place of our vast jungles. (Bampfylde and Baring-Gould 1909:302)

From the latter half of the 19th century to the mid-20th century, commodities produced in plantations owned by colonial governments and foreign entrepreneurs in places such as Java and British Malaya brought in huge profits. But compared to what the British and Dutch colonizers achieved in neighboring regions, the outcome of the socio-economic transformation of Sarawak was rather disappointing for Brooke and his officials. It is often said that the Brooke administration created only minimal changes in the way of life of the Sarawak natives. According to previous scholarly discourse, Sarawak slumbered peacefully under the eccentric despotism of the White Rajahs who were dedicated to the preservation of the vast jungle in their colony (Moy-Thomas 1961:50)

This view does not, however, describe Lundu District at the turn of the 19th century. As just discussed, the shift to an export-oriented economy brought fundamental changes in the demography and political economy of the local communities. The introduction of a foreign labor force as well as the implementation of a series of land policies for the development of unoccupied land and for granting usufruct to the natives only for agricultural purposes, are typical colonial policies which were implemented there, as in the neighboring colonies of Southeast Asia.

The establishment of predominately male Chinese indentured laborer communities, the encroachment upon Dayak lands, and the formation of coastal Malay communities were all by-products of the social engineering deliberately conducted by the Sarawak government in Lundu, starting in the 1870s. Two decades under Charles Brooke and his government transformed Lundu's vast forest into export-oriented commercial estates. In the shifting political and economic climate, locals tried to accommodate the inevitable changes in their lives by planting new crops, selling their produce for cash, or migrating and settling on yet another frontier.

Under the government's incentive scheme, Chinese invested capital from outside for the development of cash crop production in the district. Chinese plantations were firm-oriented, based on a contract between bonded coolies and wealthy *taukays*. The government controlled the movement of agricultural produce from coolies to *taukays* in order to secure tax revenue.

A series of land regulations also brought fundamental changes to Dayak agriculture in the region. As a result of the government's encroaching jurisdiction over the secondary forest which had been previously managed under customary law, their swidden agriculture, which is migratory in nature, was severely restricted. Their mode of production became more sedentary, shifting from traditional hill rice cultivation to export-oriented commodity production, though the scale of Dayak production was smaller and its labor organization was limited to the domestic sphere, not extending beyond the longhouse members.

The development of Malay plantations was closely related to the traditional *nakoda* maritime activities in the region. Malay and Bugis venturers from Sambas, Dutch Borneo tried their luck on the frontier of Sarawak. The cultivation of coconuts was based on patron-client relations between *nakoda* traders and mobile peasants who also migrated across the colonial border. The opening of plantations in the region led to the formation of Malay peasant communities along the coastline between the Lundu River and Cape Dato.

The structural change in Lundu's agricultural landscape under the economic policies of Charles Brooke was a prime factor for the formation of Chinese and Malay communities in the hinterland region. The newly emergent "plural society" was based on an ethnically segmented plantation system. The coconut cultivation was mainly developed by coastal Malay peasants from the Sambas region of western Dutch Borneo, while pepper and gambier were planted inland by Chinese coolies either from western Dutch Borneo or Southern China via Singapore. The parallel development of a small-scale plantation economy led to the uneven distribution of economic resources among ethnic groups. Chinese trading and peasant communities were supported by the Brookes who found the Chinese marketing force indispensable for Sarawak's economy. On the other hand, the Malays suffered from a fundamental economic dislocation; the *nakoda* trading class gradually lost its saliency, and the traditional maritime economy was replaced by land-based agricultural production.

The next chapter will continue the examination of the transformation of Lundu District economy into the 1920s when the

rubber boom finally reached Sarawak. Incorporation of Sarawak peasantry into the world rubber market drastically changed the fate of local people, especially the borderland Malay peasants engaged in the declining coastal coconut cultivation under the leadership of the degenerating *nakoda* merchant class.

CHAPTER 4. THE COMING OF RUBBER: THE DECLINE OF THE MALAY NAKODA ECONOMY AND THE FORMATION OF A BORDERLAND INFORMAL ECONOMY

1. Introduction

1-1. The Decline of the *Nakoda* Class and the Coastal Malay Economy

The last two decades of the 19th century witnessed the formation of an ethnically segmented peasant society in Lundu District. The fact that coconuts were cultivated by the Malays in the coastal region and pepper and gambier by the Chinese and the Dayaks inland was historically a by-product of locally implemented policies of the White Rajah, Charles Brooke.

The rise of the Chinese *taukay* and the demise of the Malay *nakoda* proceeded concurrently in the latter half of the 19th century. The establishment of coastal coconut plantations in Lundu was a strategic shift from maritime trade to commodity production by *nakoda*. This attempt was their last resort to retain Malay supremacy in maritime affairs and thus survival, but to no avail. At the turn of the 20th century the *nakoda* merchant class disappeared rather quickly -- an event followed by the demise of Malay peasantry who turned from the initial plantation economy back to a subsistence-oriented swidden agriculture with minimal involvement in cash crop cultivation in the hinterland of Cape Dato.

The establishment of the Brooke rule was the biggest blow to the Malay dominance in trading activity. In the Sarawakian context *nakoda* merchants along with a few *perabangan* aristocrats were traditionally known as the most talented traders. Their "taste for the pursuit of trade is quite a passion, and during all their life they

look steadily and anxiously forward to the time when they shall be able to indulge in it with profit themselves" (Low 1848:136). "A few of the *nakodas* traded as far away as Java and Bali as well as Singapore and West Borneo, exchanging sago procured from the Sarawak coast for European goods, Javan cloth, Chinese pottery, and brass work" (Lockard 1987:29). A European observed that "Malays would rather trade than work," (ibid 1987:29) "their common goal consisted of getting together enough money to invest in stock so as to proceed upriver to trade among Dayaks, exchanging beads, salt, and brass for rice and jungle produce (ibid 1987: 29)."

Nevertheless in the latter half of the 19th century, the Chinese migration and commercial success had an even greater impact on the Sarawak's social history. Chinese achieved dominance by competing with the Malays. Prior to the 1860s, the Malay *nakoda* had monopolized the trade in sago cultivated by Melanaus on the coast of today's Second Division of Sarawak. The Malay traders had carried sago to Kuching and made a considerable profit. However, after the first Chinese sago refinery was built in Kuching in 1856, Chinese *taukay* entered the sago trade and eventually dominated it.

By 1900, nearly all trade in Sarawak territory was taken over by Chinese *taukay*. Traditional Malay trade had been based on barter, and its scale did not go beyond the individual *nakoda* entrepreneur. The most important reasons for Chinese success lay in the combination of their capital, organization, and attitudes:

Most Kuching Chinese traders had ties with Chinese business interests in Singapore, enabling them to procure credit in cash or goods in exchange for the promise of future goods to be delivered. A credit relationship therefore lubricated

the Chinese economic system. Chinese held a better position for investment than Malays and also for financing operations of other Chinese acting in various outstations as agents for Kuching firms while indebted to their patrons. Whereas a Malay trader generally worked on his own, and without any significant investment capital, a Chinese trader, through his patron-client relationships, could operate on a low profit margin because of backing by patrons. Furthermore, a Chinese could usually count on support from members of his family, clan, and speech group, and later from mutual help associations of various kinds. (Lockard 1987:46)

Moreover, as I described in Chapter 3, Chinese enterprise included planting and exporting gambier and pepper, which constituted the mainstay of Sarawak's economy until the introduction of rubber in the early 20th century. The second Rajah, Charles Brooke, and his officers believed that Chinese trading activities would bring benefit to the government's revenue through export duties. On the other hand, they showed little sympathy for Malay traders with a view that "as soon as the Malay gives up the empty form of trading *nakodah* without capital and credit, he will take up his proper position, which he is fast doing" (SG Jan. 22, 1878). Brooke regarded agriculture as a suitable occupation for Malay commoners who were unfit for government positions (Lockard 1987:46).

The birth of *nakoda*-led coconut plantations in the Lundu coastal region was a direct consequence of Brooke's policy intended to convert Malay traders to planters. The Malay coconut plantation industry which developed during the last two decades of the 19th century could therefore be seen as the last survival strategy of the declining *nakoda* class. However, with the introduction of rubber

cultivation to Sarawak at the turn of the century, further change was in store for the Malays.

1-2. The Rubber Boom, International Market, and State Encroachment: The Rise of the Informal Economy

The following section examines the introduction of rubber to Sarawak and its profound socio-political implications. Several key issues will be discussed in detail. One is Sarawak's incorporation in the world-wide commodity market under the International Rubber Agreement (later abbreviated as INRA) in 1934. The participation of Sarawak and Dutch Borneo in INRA transformed the agricultural landscape of Lundu District. The objective of INRA was to limit the amount of rubber production as well as exports to stabilize rubber prices in the international market. Both governments prohibited new rubber planting and strictly controlled the rubber market by introducing the coupon system, which will be discussed in Section 3.

At the same time Sarawak became incorporated into the modern world system through rubber production, another crucial issue related to state consolidation arose: the boundary demarcation between Dutch Borneo and Sarawak, which will be examined closely in Section 4. During the initial period of colonization, both Sarawak and Dutch governments were primarily concerned with the affiliation of the native population in the border area for the purpose of securing head tax revenue. With the increase in export-oriented cash crop production in both colonies, the movement of commodities across the border became a serious offense against the

state treasury. Thus the need arose for strict encroachment of territory.

Facing both the regulation on rubber and tighter control of state boundaries, local people in Lundu District responded to the rubber boom by resorting to smuggling. They obtained rubber sheets from Sambas in western Dutch Borneo and sold them in the territory of Sarawak. Rubber smuggling into Sarawak was further boosted in the 1950s by the economic chaos of newly independent Indonesia. The focus of the discussion of Section 5 is the historical process of the exclusion of peasants from the state-led system of commodity production and distribution; through their manipulative strategies and resilience, local people engaged in cross-border rubber smuggling while relying on non-commercial swidden rice cultivation. The nature of political and economic interaction among Malay peasants, Chinese merchants, and state power in the region, both colonial and post-colonial, will be also examined.

The establishment of an informal economy based on the smuggling of an export-oriented commodity in the 1930s and the 1950s left a profound effect on the local Malay peasantry. Section 6 will bring a focus to the economic situation of peasant villages situated on the Sarawak side of the border. The coastal communities which previously supplied a labor force to local coconut plantations functioned as smuggling points receiving rubber sheets from western Borneo. With the decline of the coconut plantation industry, the Malays became heavily dependent on swidden rice cultivation and did not participate in rubber cultivation even during the boom periods. Their reversion to self-sufficiency does

not fit the theoretical premise of macro-economic history which tends to presuppose linear capitalist penetration and to describe local peasants as a passive periphery in the modern world system. The non-committal attitude of frontier peasants towards commodity production had its root in this period and led to a long-term transformation in the agriculture sector.

2. The Early Years of Rubber Production: The Incorporation of Sarawak in the World Commodity Market

Rubber came originally from Brazil, where it was tapped and traded by the local population. It was known and used in Europe but did not become an important commodity until after 1841, when a process called vulcanization was discovered which prevented rubber from degenerating into a soft and sticky mass. In 1876 some rubber seeds were smuggled from Brazil to Kew Gardens in England where they were germinated. About 2,000 seedlings were sent to Ceylon and India; some of these were then sent to Singapore. It is from these seedlings that practically all the rubber in Malaya and Borneo today has come (Rawlins 1969:219).

Rubber was first brought to Sarawak in 1881. Bishop Hose obtained three rubber seeds from Singapore and planted them in the mission compound in Kuching (Rawlins 1969:219). It was no more than an experiment, since the Sarawak government did not become interested in rubber production until the 20th century. In 1902 the government-funded Borneo Company acquired a concession of land near Tegora, Bau in the First Division, which later became the Dahan

Rubber Estate. This was the first rubber planting initiated by the Sarawak government.¹

The development of the automobile industry generated a huge demand for rubber tires. Consequently a rubber frenzy spread to planters and peasants in British Malaya and other tropical countries. Sarawak was a late-comer in rubber market in Southeast Asia. When the Sarawak government planted a few thousand rubber trees on a trial basis, other Western colonies had already established large scale plantations with foreign capital. The following table shows the total rubber acreage in South and Southeast Asia at the turn of the 20th century.

¹Unfortunately there is no further information available on the Borneo Company's activities in Bau and elsewhere. The Sarawak government established the experimental Para Rubber Plantations in Sigu and Satap. The *Sarawak Gazette* recorded the government's involvement in cultivation and commercialization of rubber:

There are in all about 650 trees fit to tap and these will be from 7-10 years old, and about the same number more will in a short time be of sufficient size. Meanwhile some 3,000 young trees some 2 years old are doing extremely well at Sigu, and be planted, roughly, 4,000 at each place. (SG October 1, 1908: 247)

Rubber samples were obtained from the government's estates and forwarded to Singapore to examine their commercial value:

Today's market value of the samples is as follows: No.2, \$270 per pickul, No.1, \$260 per pickul, No.3 & 4, \$250 per pickul. No. 2, is nice quality and would, we think, fetch top price for sheet on the London market. The yellow colour is, however, unusual and no doubt due to the water used. We enclose a sample of No.1 sheet, the colour of which is generally liked.

Sample No.1 is also of nice quality but the small spots are not liked. These are probably caused by some dirt in the pan. The sample is not quite dried at one end. Samples Nos. 3 & 4 are of fair quality but are not property dried. (SG December 1, 1908:297)

TOTAL RUBBER ACREAGE: SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA, 1898-1922

year	Malaya	Ceylon	N.E.I. ²	India/Burma	Brit-Borneo	Indo-China	Total
1898	2						2
1900	6	1					7
1902	15	7					22
1904	28	33	2	1			64
1906	97	128	22	14	2		263
1908	255	215	101	32	7	1	611
1910	541	258	246	50	21	9	1,125
1912	942	280	461	87	42	30	1,842
1914	1,168	290	606	103	51	40	2,258
1916	1,430	334	746	113	60	48	2,731
1918	1,886	403	979	119	74	61	3,522
1920	2,181	433	1,153	119	97	75	4,058
1922	2,260	443	1,229	122	113	83	4,250

(,000 Acres)

(Drabble 1973:219)

The delayed inception of a rubber plantation economy was a reflection of an anti-European sentiment of the second White Rajah, Charles Brooke. He remained highly skeptical of plantation-based rubber production. He resolutely refused all applications which aspired to begin foreign-financed rubber enterprises in Sarawak, including one in 1910 by his youngest son, Harry, on behalf of a British consortium. In his letter to Harry, he wrote:

I have had frequent applications of a kind from many others within the last month -- but not believing in the performance of the Rubber Boom I don't wish Sarawak to be a great producer of this article -- except it can be planted by natives who could afford to sell it a 20th part less than European Companies.... I hate the name of rubber and look upon it as a very gigantic gamble, as is now turned to account in making the fortunes of many and another day will be the means of depriving the poor and ignorant shareholders of their hard-earned savings. (Reece 1988:28)

²N.E.I. = Netherlands East Indies

Later that year the government prohibited “native inhabitants of Sarawak, and settlers of Chinese, Indian, Eurasian or any Eastern nationality” to sell their rubber gardens to any European firm or individual for the following reasons:

The Government order about the sale of Rubber plantations planted by the inhabitants of Sarawak is issued with the object of proving on a future day what the absolute and bona-fide value may be reduced to when planted by the native races, the real workers of the soil, without the extraneous and surrounding influences connected with companies floated by promoters and supported by shareholders. The object of the Sarawak Government is to develop the cultivation of the land for the good of the inhabitants in order that they may have the profits and benefits in the possession of such gardens as an inheritance or pesaka to their descendants -- and this object would not be achieved or realised unless the plantations were protected and strictly prohibited from falling into the hands of the richer and more speculative class of the white races. The above policy may be criticised and objected to as not being very loyal to the white man's interests but on the other hand it may be said that by selling wholesale the land of the dark races to foreigners and speculators an injustice is done to the inhabitants of these eastern countries. (SG Nov.1, 1910)

3. The Rubber Boom and the Local Agricultural Economy in Lundu District

Although he refused the entry of foreign capital into the operation of rubber plantations in his colony, Charles Brooke encouraged rubber smallholdings by distributing rubber seeds to his subjects. In the Lundu District, he personally inspected rubber gardens and promised to send seeds from Kuching for free (SG July 15, 1910:151).

Despite the government's incentives, the local people of Lundu seem to have been reluctant to shift to rubber cultivation. A colonial officer stationed in Lundu reported the neglected condition of rubber gardens in 1913:

government rubber plantation trees had grown well considering the short time they have been planted, but the ground around trees was in many cases getting rather overgrown with lalang [a weed], and required attention. (SG September. 1, 1913:213)

It was not until the mid-twenties that the Lundu economy came to be dependent on rubber production on smallholdings. The following District Reports show that pepper and coconut remained the major cash crops in Lundu District:

It was noticeable that the pepper and other gardens here seemed in a flourishing condition, more so than last year, being well supplied with fruits. There is a good deal of cultivation in coconuts and pepper observable in the district. (SG July 15, 1910:151)

The registry shows that there are over 300 of these [coconut] gardens now in the district. In about 5 years time the coast between Rambungan and Simatan [Sematan] will be one long line of plantations. Seedlings are fetching \$5.00 to \$6.00 per hundreds. (SG July 1, 1908:169)

I left for Simatan on the 6th, all the cocoanut gardens as far as Tg. Datu were inspected. The largest garden is one belonging to a Malay woman at Lubok Gadong, who has planted out 6,000, and as a catch crop hundreds of bananas. (SG May 16, 1916:100)

By 1916 "the recent rise of the price of rubber" was reported by the *Sarawak Gazette* (February 1, 1916) which added that the rise

"has taken practically everybody by surprise." A Lundu District officer, however, reported cool local response to the rising rubber price and adherence to pepper production among Lundu peasants:

There is not much rubber planting to be noticed. Only one garden has been registered this year, one in 1916 and five in 1915. Several of the Government rubber trees are ready for tapping but they might be left till a large proportion reach the tapping stage.

The number of new pepper gardens registered this year is 19 and the number of new vines 6,000, whereas in 1916 50 new gardens were registered with roughly 17,000 new vines. The existing gardens appeared in good condition. I was informed the gardens opened last year were chiefly small ones of 200 vines and owing to the wet season and the planters not being under advances to the local shops, many of them had to be abandoned for want of sufficient capital to tide them over the bad season. About 200 gardens paid vine tax this year. (SG Sept. 1, 1917:223)

The 1920s were a turning point for the economy of Lundu; the focus of production finally emphasized rubber over pepper and coconut. Following the short slump in prices of 1920-22, the demand for rubber in the market rose by the restriction of supply through the Stevenson Scheme (1922-28)³ leading to a recovery in price, which peaked in 1925 before diminishing toward the end of the decade. The beginning of rubber cultivation in Lundu District apparently was a response to the high price of 1925 in the international market as a result of the Stevenson Scheme.

³The Stevenson Scheme was implemented by the British government, whose colonies (Malaya and Ceylon) then produced 72 % of the world rubber output. According to Pringle (1970:334), Sarawak participated in the Scheme, but the kind of policies implemented by the Sarawak government is unknown.

The station seemed to be very prosperous and numerous applications to plant rubber, coconuts and pepper were received.

It appeared that in the past very little rubber has been planted in the district, and now the natives see the Government rubber estate being opened up and worked they are all applying for permits to plant. Mr. Baxter brought down a gang of Tamil coolies to commence working this estate. (SG Jan. 2, 1925:10)

14 permits to plant rubber and 1 to plant pepper were issued during the month. (SG Aug. 3, 1925:193)

However, the Great Depression beginning in 1929 resulted in a prolonged slump of the world rubber market and further government intervention on rubber production and export. The production of automobile tires declined drastically. Accordingly the rubber price plummeted from \$4.17 in 1925 to \$0.13 per kg in 1932.

By 1932, the total area of rubber in Sarawak reached an estimated 86,000 ha, of which 90 % was planted by smallholders. Of the estimated 75,000 gardens, about 80 per cent belonged to natives (Cramb 1988:114). The Great Depression was felt even in the remote areas of Sarawak, located at the periphery of the modern world system. The market price of rubber dropped so low that many Lundu smallholders abandoned their rubber gardens:⁴

All the farmers are now busy and all the hill land has been cleared and burnt -- in many cases far more than the actual farms have been burnt, including numbers of rubber gardens. (SG Oct. 1, 1930:254)

⁴ It takes 6 years or more for rubber tree to produce latex. The maturity of rubber planted in Lundu District coincided with the plunge of the rubber market price in the thirties.

The slight rise in the price of rubber has started most of the natives tapping and has had one beneficial effect, in that many have cleared their gardens which very much resembled jungle. (SG July 1, 1933:90)

In 1934, Sarawak reluctantly joined the International Rubber Agreement under pressure from the British Colonial Office. The British and the Dutch governments mediated between rubber producing colonies such as British Malaya, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon, India, French Indo-China, Thailand, British North Borneo, and Sarawak forcing them to participate in comprehensive control of production rubber to prevent further price declines in the international rubber market. Under the terms of INRA, all new planting was forbidden and state-wide Tapping Holidays were declared every fourth months (Pringle 1970:334). The government first controlled the amount of raw rubber export by quota.⁵ In the case of Sarawak, a quota of 30,000 tons per year was set, and the export amount for each month was calculated.

The regulations based on the Tapping Holidays system, on the other hand, proved ineffective. In 1937 a far more complicated Coupon System was introduced in Sarawak. The Coupon System was intended to regulate the amount of rubber trees to be planted and rubber sheets to be sold to local dealers. Both rubber producers and dealers were given a certain amount of government coupons with which they could market a limited quantity of rubber.

By the introduction of the Coupon System in 1937, the demarcation of the colonial boundary became more important than

⁵ In addition to the export quota Rubber Occupation Ticket was designed to limit and regulate applications to plant rubber.

ever to regulate the production scale of peasants in Sarawak territory, in addition to levying duties on export commodities. The 1930s were a turning point in the history of the Sarawak, which previously had enjoyed relative autonomy with little foreign capital and intervention by the other colonial governments of Southeast Asia. Now Malay, Dayak, and Chinese peasants in the Lundu District were fully incorporated into the dynamics of international commodity transactions with their well-being susceptible to the fluctuations of rubber price.

4. State Consolidation and the Origin of a Transnational Economy in Lundu District

The process in which the Sarawak colony became a full-fledged, independent state included two closely related but analytically separable movements. The first was the incorporation of Sarawak in the world-wide commodity market system through rubber production as just examined. Its participation in the rubber production scheme inevitably gave Sarawak an internationally recognized status as an independent economic unit, which must, by itself, control the amount and the distribution of rubber. The other crucial development was a formation of an internally cohesive economic system which controls the flow of people and export-commodities. As I shall closely examine in the following, the state apparatus of the Sarawak government used in securing revenue transformed its nature drastically at the turn of the 20th century. Previously taxation on locals (the head tax) and on non-cultivated forest produce was the

main source of government's income. Export duties on agricultural commodities came to replace them in importance.

For the economic enclosure of Sarawak colony, the demarcation of a geo-political and economic boundary with western Dutch Borneo became of utmost importance. It naturally had a profound effect on the borderland peasantry in Lundu District. While the borderland adjacent to Dutch territory became incorporated into the state-led commodity production system, there was a movement to break free from the tightening state control. The trans-national smuggling of the rubber and other dutiable commodities between Sarawak and Dutch colony became rampant.

4-1. Two Colonial Governments and Their Boundary

During the early years of colonization, the boundary between the western part of Sarawak and Sambas (Dutch Borneo) was unclear, and often vexed district officers stationed in the border region. The oldest demarcation goes back to 1841, when the Sultan of Brunei offered James Brooke the province of Sarawak or "Sarawak Proper," which roughly coincides with today's First Division of Sarawak. Like so many dotted lines which crisscross maps of the Malay world ruled by Muslim sultanates before Western colonization, the boundary between Sarawak and Dutch Borneo followed the boundary of their predecessors, the Brunei and Sambas Sultanates. The pre-colonial boundary was at best arbitrary with territorial demarcation

following the division of watersheds in the mountains of the region.⁶ The ambiguity of border demarcation, however, diminished as Sarawak and Dutch colonial governments tried to clarify it for the sake of securing tax revenue from the head tax and export/import duties.

The first recorded border dispute between Sarawak and Dutch Borneo regards the affiliation of Jagoi Dayak engaged in swidden cultivation in the border area. Both governments claimed the Jagois as their subjects upon whom they were entitled to collect head tax. As early as 1874, the Committee of Administration of Sarawak Government discussed issues such as the Jagoi Dayak's border crossing (SG May 16, 1874:n. p.) as well as the Sarawak-Sambas boundary (SG July 24, 1874:n. p.). The dispute continued and occasionally surfaced such as with this case recorded a decade later. The action of the Sultan of Sambas annoyed Sarawakian officials:

The Sultan's object is undoubtedly, to absorb the Jagui tribe, one of the largest tribes of Land Dayaks in upper Sarawak, and he has already demanded and received revenue from a portion of this tribe. Considering that the boundary between this portion of Sarawak and Dutch Borneo was years ago determined by Netherlands and Sarawak officials, the Sultan's claim is somewhat irregular, and, consequently, the Committee of Administration has refused to acknowledge it.... It is not only the Jagui farming ground that the Sultan now seeks to obtain but also a portion of the Jagui

⁶Both the Sarawak government and the Dutch East Indies colonial government established the "Committee of Administration" which discussed the Sarawak-Sambas boundary demarcation in 1874 (SG July 24, 1874). The same committee again discussed the Dutch government's proposal for a new Sarawak-Sambas border in 1884 (SG July 22, 1884:81). The details of both meetings, however, are not recorded. In 1926 a Sarawak government official had an expedition around Cape Dato area with coolies to find the *rentis*, a narrow jungle track which was said to be cut by the Dutch authority as the Sarawak-Sambas boundary. No villagers in Telok Melano and Telok Serabang, however, knew the whereabouts of the track. The official himself came back to Lundu without finding it after a week's wandering in high forest (SG September 1, 1926:219-21).

villages; were he successful the whole of this tribe would be compelled to become subjects to Sambas. (SG Aug. 1, 1884:80)

The affiliation of the migratory Jagoi population on the border area remained a recurring political as well as economic issue chiefly because of the importance of head tax revenue at that time.⁷ The following figures show the principal means of revenue in Lundu District for 1892, in which the head tax on Dayaks was a significant source of revenue.

Dayak Revenue	\$786	
Exemption Tax	342	
Court Account Fees and Fines	692	
Licenses	92	
<u>Assessment</u>	<u>84</u>	
	\$1,726	(SG May 1, 1893:78)

From the initial period of the Brooke rule, the territorial claims of the Sarawak government were crucial even in the sparsely populated mountain region of the First Division. What mattered was

⁷ Jagoi issue was also discussed repeatedly in the 1930s involving high-level officials both in Kuching and Pontianak, capital of both colonies:

The Jagoi Land Dayaks are growing very short of land for farming purposes, and are anxious to take up land across the Dutch border, where there is a large area of old jungle available. They were informed that permission for them to do this would have to be obtained from the Netherlands Indies authorities, and that in any case, if they farmed over the border, they were liable to find themselves paying two separate sets of taxes. (SG April. 1, 1935:51)

The Dayaks in the Jagoi area appear to have taken rather more trouble with their farming this year than formerly, but to the west of Jagoi farming land is scarce, and the inhabitants have been compelled to plant their padi over the border; several families have for the reason moved to Kampong Babang in Dutch territory. (SG December. 2, 1935:228)

the income from taxes levied on the population residing and farming in the border area. In addition to encroachments upon the native population now claimed as Sarawak subjects,⁸ the imposition of duty on commodities coming in and out of the territory also became a crucial issue to the local government in Lundu District.

4-2. Colonial Encroachment upon Commodities and the Imposition of Duties.

No less important during the initial period of the Brooke colonization than taxing their subjects was the protection of timber and jungle produce. The commoditization and subsequently the taxation of natural resources became crucial only after the formation of colonial governments on both sides of the Sarawak-Dutch Borneo border.

⁸Immediately after Charles Brooke's coronation in 1871, the supreme council of Sarawak government set out a law on civil marriages which determined the legal status of non-Sarawakian spouses:

4. That no Registration of such marriage will be permitted, if either party has been previously married either in or out of the territory of Sarawak, unless a legal divorce has been obtained and can be produced or proved.

7. Should the husband at any time desire to leave the territory of Sarawak, he will be bound to provide for the maintenance of his remaining wife and children, and in the event of his not having sufficiently done so in the opinion of the Court, the Court will be justified in transferring the whole or part of the husband's property to his wife and children. (SG May 12, 1871:68)

In 1900 an Order of Naturalization of Aliens was also announced which was the first attempt to naturalize population as Sarawak subjects who then became subject to the government's head tax:

Any person, who may have resided for the term of five years in the State, may present a memorial to His Highness the Rajah, praying that the privileges of naturalization may be conferred upon him. (SG August 1, 1900:146)

Before Sarawak territory was ceded to James Brooke by the Brunei Sultan, Omar Ali Saifuddin the Second set up a special department to collect tribute due from subjects of the Sultanate. Feudal chiefs, who were given the title *pengiran* by the Sultan were responsible for the collection of tribute from their respective provinces. For instance, feudal chiefs were obliged to pay annual tributes to the Brunei Sultan as specified here:

war boats	2	from	Kalaka district
	1		Saribas
	1		Sebangan
	1		Sadong
	1		Sarawak
padi	800	pasau from	Kalaka
	800		Sadong
	800		Sarawak
	600		Sebuyow
	150		Sebangan
sago	2000	lajang 6 jengkal long from	Muka
	2000	lajang 6 jengkal long from	Patanak
cotton	3	bohara from	Batang Lupar
	1	bohara	Skrang
	12	yuta	other dependencies
gold		paid by people of Oya and Rejang	

(Parnell 1911:127-28)

Under the Brooke government, the tributary system was replaced by taxation on its subjects and import/export duties on natural produce. Since jungle products commanded a high price in the Singapore market then, Sarawak's subjects collected as far inland as Sambas territory. Charles Brooke issued an order in

response to the complaint of the Sambas Sultan, prohibiting trespassing of the border to gather jungle products in Dutch territory;

In consequence of representations having been made from the Resident of Pontianak that the inhabitants of Sarawak are in the habit of working jungle produce in the country of H.H. the Sultan of Sambas without his permission. I hereby direct that all those who are desirous of working in that direction are to take our passports for Sambas, in order that permission may be obtained from H.H. The Sambas Sultan before any work of this kind is commenced. Furthermore a payment of ten per cent on primitive produce is demanded by H.H. The Sultan of Sambas before such produce can be taken out of his country. Translations in Malay and Chinese are to be issued. (SG June 5, 1876:3)

Even two decades after the above order took effect, the trans-colony exploitation of forest resources by Sarawak subjects in the Dutch territory did not cease to exist.

The Assistant Resident of Sambas has notified the Government that produce collecting and timber working in the Paloh District is prohibited, in consequence of that District having been granted by the Sultan of Sambas with the approval of the Netherlands Indian Government, to Mr. T.W. Kaat of Java.

C. A. Bamptylde, Acting Resident of the 1st Division (SG Oct 10, 1890: 125)

Because of the proximity to Singapore and regional commercial centers in Dutch Borneo such as Pontianak, Mempawah, and Sambas, the coastal area in the Lundu District was frequented by non-Sarawakian *nakoda* traders. For example, Sambas Malays were repeatedly reported to be engaged in cutting timber and building *sampan* (small boats) on the coastal area. Therefore they were subject to tax levied by Lundu authority:

In compliance with instructions received in a despatch under date 22nd, a regulation has been enforced with reference to Sambas Malays working "sampans" in this district, by which, in lieu of taxation one boat out of ten is paid to Government. No strangers are therefore permitted to work timber without first obtaining a permit at the Court house. (SG Feb.1, 1893:26)

On the 7th, Tan Ahmat went up-river amongst the Sambas people who are working timber and sampans, the majority paying the 10% ad valorem on their labours, i.e., non-residents in this country. All was found in order. (SG April. 2, 1894:56)

As the timber market expanded in Singapore and Java in the latter half of the 19th century, a substantial number of *nakoda* traders came to Sematan and cut timber on the coast between there and Cape Dato. These exploiters of forest resources were not regarded as foreign intruders. Instead, even outsiders were welcomed to cut logs as long as they paid duties on the timber they exported. Charles Brooke ordered his officials in Lundu to open up forest in Sematan to facilitate timber work by anyone wishing to do so:

On the Oct 20th I received your Highness' letter with reference to tengar bark being worked along the Simatan coast. Your Highness notifying that the working in this product was open to all. (SG Dec. 1, 1894: 208)

Officials stationed at the Lundu District Office were busy collecting export duties as the volume of timber exported from Lundu and Sematan coast increased. They kept an eye on incoming and outgoing vessels to ensure the legal traffic of goods:

Towards the end of the month, a Singapore tonkang arrived at Simatan to cut and load penaga wood along the coast, and payment of \$75 was made in lieu of duty. (SG August 1, 1895:144)

Haji Matsalli, a Sambas Malay, asked and received permission to work tingar bark with 13 companies, and export the same to Java. (SG August 1, 1895:144)

Hearing that a lighter was shortly expected to arrive to load timber at Lebak for shipment to Singapore I despatched a constable to warn the timber cutters against shipping any timber until it had been officially measured and also to give notice of the arrival of the lighter.

The Hon'ble Divisional Resident has since directed that the export duties of the Rambunga River shall be collected from Lundu and to minimise the difficulty of gaining early information at Lundu of vessels entering the river for cargoes of mangrove bark and timber has authorized me to appoint a custom collector for the eastern part of the coast of the Lundu district who living at Sompā will be in a position to see vessels entering the river and to act accordingly. (SG September 1, 1900:175)

As more vessels came to ship timber, they also brought goods from outside Sarawak. Import duties were first levied in 1893 on all articles entering Lundu with the exception of tobacco.⁹

In addition to timber, *engkabang* (illipe nuts)¹⁰ were also an important export commodity whose sporadic fruition even attracted

⁹On the other hand, import duties levied by the Dutch government across the border also affected the Malays in the border area:

At Simatan all the Malays were busy fishing and making blachan. The Court Writer informed me that they are not making much profit this year as no boats are coming over from Sambas to buy blachan [belacan, see footnote 11] as the Dutch Government have put on an import duty. (SG Aug 1, 1912:172)

¹⁰ In Sarawak, the term *engkabang* commonly refers to the oil bearing nuts of the forest tree species *Shorea* spp., which belong to the Dipterocarpaceae family. Owing to its high oil content which amounts to 50% of the nut's total weight, *engkabang* nut is normally in high demand locally and in foreign markets. The oil is used primarily to flavor rice. The principal foreign markets are in Britain, Holland and Japan, mainly in the confectionery industry and especially to manufacture chocolate. In 1973, for instance, Sarawak

collectors from across the border. A Malay tree-owner in Lundu requested the Rajah to prohibit anyone from Sambas to collect the nuts:

He asked to leave to go up-river himself to see that the engkabang trees were not being damaged and was given permission to do so. Tan Ahmat begged that persons from other districts should be forbidden to collect engkabang fruit in this district and the Court Writer at Simatan wrote in asking whether permission to collect this fruit might be refused to natives of Sambas and asking that a notice to that effect might be sent him. (SG February 1, 1912:33)

At the turn of the 20th century, dutiable commodities were mostly uncultivated and non-manufactured produce with the exception of pepper, gambier, *belacan*¹¹, *nipa* sugar¹², and uncultivated *getah* (rubber) leaves which only required simple processing.¹³ The taxation on these commodities generated significant income for the Sarawak government. For instance, the total amount of revenue in 1895 was \$453,800.24, 21.4% of which came from import/export duties (\$96,928.87).¹⁴

The turn of the 20th century can be characterized as the transitional period in terms of state taxation; the main source of state revenue shifted from uncultivated forest produce to cultivated cash crops. As the colony's economy became more export-oriented with the development of Singapore market, the increase of the state

exported a record crop of 28,061 tons of nuts for a total value of \$20,158,938. In 1954 and 1959, its export actually exceeded that of round timber (SG March 31, 1977:45).

¹¹Shrimp paste. Made of small shrimps salted, sundried, and allowed to ferment.

¹² Sugar made from *nipa* palm (*Nipa fruticans*).

¹³ The figures in Appendix G are import and export duties in 1895.

¹⁴For the summary of Sarawak state revenue of 1895 with breakdown of income from each district, see Appendix H.

revenue solely depended on the custom duties levied on commodities.¹⁵

Pepper and gambier¹⁶ stayed as the major commodities for export until the 1920s and were then taken over by cultivated rubber. In 1935, one year after the INRA of 1934 was implemented, the amount of rubber exports had already reached \$7,692,851, which occupied one third of the total exports recorded by the Sarawak government (Takumusho 1938:146-148).

5. The Birth of an Informal Economy in Lundu District: Commodity Smuggling

As seen above, the demarcation of the Dutch Borneo-Sarawak border became an issue, first to prevent exploitation of uncultivated natural resources by outsiders, and later to control the transnational movement of dutiable commodities. The economic apparatus of the Sarawak colony, which took shape between the 1870s and the 1920s, was used to implement a series of regulations on rubber production and export in the 1930s.

¹⁵The available list of government imposition of export duties on commodities shipped from Sarawak is shown in Appendix I. It should be noted that among export commodities whose duty taxes were repeatedly revised by the state authority, pepper and gambier occupied one of the most important items as the source of state income.

¹⁶For instance, the Sarawak government repeatedly raise the export duties of pepper and gambier as the value of these commodities increased in Singapore market.

From the 1st January 1884 and until further notice there will be an export duty on Gambier of ten cents per pikul and on pepper of twenty cents per pikul according to the conditions offered by the Sarawak Government to Gambier and Pepper planters the 8th of December 1875. (SG December 1, 1883:105)

When a series of regulations banned new rubber planting and controlled its production, some Lundu peasants began to replant coconut and pepper.

Applications for coconut land on the coast are on the increase. The embargo on rubber planting is probably partly responsible, but the success of other coconut gardens on the coast which have been under the supervision of the Senior Agricultural Officer is probably the main reason for this demand. (SG October 1, 1936:242)

Some, however, resorted to other measures. While Lundu District as a whole was already incorporated into the state-led commodity production system, there was a movement to break free from the tightening state control especially in the hinterland; transnational smuggling of rubber and other dutiable commodities between Sarawak and western Dutch Borneo flourished.

The first account of smuggling in Lundu District dates back to the 1890s:

Lebi Maludin was detained some 14 days by authorities at Mampawa as the nakoda of the boat in which he took passage was suspected of having smuggled a quantity of salt which was found hidden in the jungle. Lebi Maludin appears to have remembered the passport he received from me, which upon being shown to the authorities he was forthwith released with the nacoda, a Sambas subject. (SG October 2, 1893:163)

On the 19th I received a communication from the Hon'ble The Acting Resident directing me to pay a sum of \$20 to the Mampawa people who were wrecked on their passage to Serabang last August. And the muskets brought in by Hj. Taha were to be detained for 12 months. (SG January 2, 1896:12)

The goods smuggled into Sarawak territory up to the turn of the century seemed to have been limited to muskets, salt and others:

IMPORT DUTIES 1895

Brassware, &c.	\$2,571.28
Chanangs & Tetawaks	95.06
Excise	2,450.45
Jars	1,184.38
Kerosene Oil	3,579.76
Guns and Muskets	96.40
Salt	8,729.45
<u>Tobacco & Cigars</u>	<u>27,972.63</u>
	\$46,679.41
	(SG April 1, 1896:80)

With the expansion of the local rubber economy in the 1930s, not only the daily necessities listed above but a dutiable commodity, rubber sheets, began to be smuggled at an unprecedented scale. Among the government's restrictions on production and distribution, the Rubber Coupon System is the primary cause triggering a smuggling economy in the Sarawak-Dutch Borneo borderland.

In order to implement the Coupon System, officials from British Malaya helped count and survey more than 90,000 smallholdings in the country, and each owner received coupons entitling him/her to market a specified amount of rubber, in accordance with the size of the holding. Colonial officers seem to have tried hard to explain to locals how the Coupon System operated. Locals soon understood its limiting nature as well as its potential to beat the system.

During the month the specimen coupons were received and intensive propaganda work has been carried out with their assistance. They are really of immense value in enabling the propagandist to convey the essentials of the system to his audience, previously the ubiquitous match had invariably to provide the necessity and as an exhibit.

Malay have been particularly quick to understand the principles involved and on the whole the response of the Dayaks is most gratifying. The word "coupon" seems to be preferred to ticket *jual getah*,¹⁷ and if this is the experience of other districts, perhaps the official terminology will have to be altered accordingly. (SG December 1, 1937:252)

Coupons were attached to rubber sheets by cultivators and then sold to Chinese *taukay* dealers-cum-exporters. They were only allowed to export a quantity equivalent to the added amount of coupons they possessed. Soon coupons became merchandise although it was illegal to buy and sell them. Some rubber smallholders sold coupons to dealers without planting, and others sold more rubber sheets than their allowance. There were dealers who exported more than their government allocation by illegally buying coupons. As a result, coupons and rubber sheets without them were marketed separately, which gave grounds for the rise of informal economy. In the Lundu District, it became an important task for officers to arrest those who were engaged in illegal transaction of rubber and coupons (SG 1936 April 1:86, May 1:107, June 1:132).

Smuggling has locally been called *smokel*, which may have derived from a Dutch word "smokkelen". Its meaning was the act of illegal trafficking in commodities from Dutch Borneo and selling them to the Chinese *taukay* shops on Sarawakian side.

Smokel was conducted both overland and by sea. Goods were brought in from Dutch territory to Kuching by sea, smugglers' boats usually came round Cape Dato. Two Malay villages which were located in the proximity of the cape, Telok Melano and Telok

¹⁷*jual* = sell, *getah* = rubber

Serabang, thus functioned as smuggling transit points. The majority of traffickers from Dutch Borneo were Sambas Malay peasants who carried rubber sheets by boats to these relay points where larger and well-equipped Chinese vessels were waiting. Some carried bulky rubber sheets across the border on foot. Those porters entered Sarawak through small villages such as Biawak, Bau, and Sarikin.

The demarcation of the Sarawak-Dutch Borneo border and government intervention on the production scale were factors responsible for the birth of this illegal activity. Smuggling was intolerable for the government's economic policies based on cash crop production and a taxation system. Smugglers neither produce their own crops in Sarawak territory nor pay custom duties to its treasury. Their profit gain is a loss in the government's revenue. Smuggling of rubber appeared to have annoyed officials at the Lundu outstation in the latter half of the thirties:

There is little doubt that a considerable amount of rubber smuggling is going on in upper Sarawak, Chinese and Land Dayaks being concerned. While on a border patrol Corporal Ali succeeded in arresting two Chinese and 16 Dutch Dayaks, who had some seven pikuls of rubber bearing Sarawak stencil numbers which clearly could not have been produced by the stencil holders. One of the Chinese had a letter in his possession signed by the Kapitan China, Ong Tebang, warning him to be careful, as the police were rather inquisitive! (SG April 1, 1936:86)

On March 3rd, a Malay named Talip bin Abas was fined \$500 at Lundu for smuggling rubber into Sarawak. (SG May 1, 1936:107)

The abundant rubber supply from Dutch Borneo was a prime factor for the emergence of the smuggling industry in the district.

According to *Handboek voor de Residentie Westerafdeeling van Borneo*, rubber cultivation in western Dutch Borneo started much earlier than that of Sarawak, and produced an amount considerably larger. The first rubber exports from Pontianak, the political center of western Dutch Borneo, were in 1911 and the export amount virtually skyrocketed in the twenties:

Amount of Rubber Exported in Western Dutch Borneo

<u>year</u>	<u>amount (ton)</u>
1911	128
1912	132
1913	96
1914	147
1915	412
1916	876
1917	1,325
1918	2,671
1919	2,571
1920	2,087
1921	2,079
1922	4,675
1923	9,056
1924	15,247

(Uljee 1925:75-76)

In the latter half of the forties when rubber smuggling into Sarawak was at its peak, western Borneo occupied as much as 15% of the total rubber acreage of the Netherlands East Indies excluding Java (Aikawa 1944:188). In the Sambas region of western Dutch Borneo, rubber production was mainly carried out by the Malay peasants along the major rivers such as the Sambas, the Duri, and the Paloh (see Map 3). There are three reasons why the Malay peasants on the Dutch side became active players in cross-border rubber smuggling. The first is the price difference in the Dutch and Sarawakian market. As stated above, in the thirties Dutch rubber

had already reached maturity, while in Sarawak the scale of cultivation was smaller with rubber trees finally beginning to be productive. This led to the influx of rubber into the Sarawakian market where it commanded a higher price. The second derived from the political geography of western Borneo and the peripheral location of the Sambas Malay peasantry. The market network of western Borneo was Pontianak-centered due to its close connection with the thriving Singapore market. Compared to the Pontianak market, the Sarawak market was closer and more accessible for local rubber cultivators. Thirdly, Dutch rubber producing communities and the Chinese *taukay* in Sarawakian territory shared common interests. To adhere to the INRA of 1934, both Sarawak and Dutch colonial governments tightened their production control by introducing the Coupon System. Taking advantage of the new situation, some Sarawakian dealers increased rubber exports by accumulating coupons. Rubber to be exported to Singapore was supplemented with cheaper rubber smuggled from Dutch Sambas territory. The Dutch peasants had a surplus they could not sell without coupons. Selling it to Sarawakian merchants therefore brought pure profit for the cultivators.

After the Japanese military occupation (1941-45), during which the local population was suppressed, and shortages of foods and commodities plagued the area, the informal economy in the Lundu area revived. Varieties of goods were brought in from across the border: clothes, foods, tobacco, livestock, and other items besides rubber. Although the ruling government changed from the Dutch colonial government to the Republic of Indonesia in 1945,

transnational smuggling from West Kalimantan (the former western Dutch Borneo) remained quite active in the frontier region both on land and by sea:

There have been reports of increased activity by Indonesian Police patrols on the border, and the Kandai route into Sarawak is now used very little due to the difficulties the smugglers experience avoiding these patrols. (SG June 30, 1952: 135)

Profits from dealing in smuggled goods are high enough to make threats of prosecution for illegal trading small deterrent. Colonies of bamboo trading huts mushroom overnight and fines imposed seem to be accepted as an unfortunate kind of tax. (LDR 2nd Half Year 1959)

Throughout the fifties and early sixties, the economy of Lundu and Sematan continued its dependence on smuggling from Kalimantan, Indonesia to the extent that one official noted "Lundu exists on smugglers" (LDR 3rd Quarter 1954). In 1959, the value of smuggled goods "reached almost a million dollars. It is said that smuggling has been an unprecedented scale. Fluctuations in border trade alter the whole economy of the District and affect almost every aspect of Government" (LDR 2nd Half Year 1959). Because of their remoteness from the Kuching-based distribution network, bazaars on coastal frontier obtained Indonesian goods from smugglers and redistributed them to local people. Patrols by both the Indonesian and the Malaysian government could not quite control these activities, and smuggling flourished:

Several leading merchants told me how difficult it is for the local traders to carry on when dutiable goods are seized and smugglers punished; after all, they say, Lundu exists on smugglers and if the latter are all to go to prison when caught

Lundu Bazaar will be put out of business. (LDR 3rd Quarter 1954)

Import of goods from Indonesia has now slackened due to the border incident. Only those Land Dayaks close to the border could manage to bring in their own rubber for sale to Lundu. (LDR 1st Half Year 1956)

Lundu bazaar seems sadly hit in recent years by energetic patrols on the Indonesian border bringing a heavy decrease of smuggled goods arriving here and a consequent fall in quick profits. (SG July 31, 1959:164)

The smuggling of rubber and other dutiable commodities from the Republic of Indonesia became prevalent and remained an underground industry in Lundu until 1963, when a military confrontation (*Konfrontasi*) between Malaysia and Indonesia took place in the border region.

Smuggling in the Lundu borderland can be divided into three phases. The first stage is between the 1880s and the 1920s, when the *nakoda* illegally marketed muskets, tobacco, salt, and other daily necessities. The second period witnessed rampant trafficking of rubber sheets from the Sambas region of western Dutch Borneo, activated by production as well as distribution controls of rubber under the INRA of 1934 and lasted until the Japanese military occupation in 1941. After the formation of the Republic of Indonesia, border smuggling activities were invigorated further due to the economic instability of the newly independent country. The local economy on the Kalimantan side became heavily dependent on the Sarawakian distribution network, and a substantial amount of Indonesian goods were brought and sold to the Chinese *taukay* dealers.

6. The Informal Economy and the Local Peasantry in the Border Area

Sarawak's incorporation in the world-wide market economy through rubber export left a marked effect on the local peasantry of the Lundu frontier. Incorporation at the macro-level, i.e., the participation in the International Rubber Agreement did not transform rubber cultivators into a "passive periphery" as supposedly created under capitalist penetration (cf. Nash 1981:398). Rather it led to the detachment of borderland peasantry from the sphere of agricultural production. Unlike the majority of rubber producing colonies whose rubber cultivation was based on large-scale plantation systems, the Sarawak colony did not have the means nor enough personnel to impose strict controls that effectively penetrated to all local communities and smallholders. What we see instead is an economic marginalization of the peasants and merchants who break away from the state-led system of commodity production and distribution.

Many locals of the border area in the Lundu District gave up planting any commercial crops and chose the more profitable smuggling business: "farms are deserted for the more lucrative work of portering; labour grows scarce and expensive; and it becomes impossibly difficult to demonstrate that attendance in school is a worthwhile occupation in areas where a child can earn dollars in a day" (LDR 2nd Half Year 1959).

Particularly, at the utmost periphery of the district, the coastal area between Sematan and Cape Dato, the demise of a Malay

peasantry and the oscillating turn to a subsistence economy occurred with minimal involvement in cash crop cultivation. The coastal Malay communities which previously supplied labor to local coconut plantations functioned as smuggling points that received rubber sheets from western Borneo. Smuggling was highly organized by Chinese traders equipped with “portable radios to keep them in touch with the latest Singapore prices” (SG March 31,1960:59).

Compared with the land border there is even less control over coastal trade round Tanjong Dato. It is operated by rich, clever and well-organized men from Kuching and is big enough to justify the continual hiring of a Chinese vassal plying between Telok Serabang and the capital. The nearest custom point is in Sematan, which is avoided on the direct run to Kuching, and the possibilities for duty evasion are, consequently limitless. This is an isolated area, expensive to patrol at any time, and almost impossible over which to exercise control during the long season of monsoon from a station which is still without a launch. (LDR 2nd Half Year 1959)

After the fall of *nakoda* entrepreneurship in the region at the turn of the 20th century, the Malays who lacked alternative leadership for labor mobilization and the capital for investment began to turn to swidden rice cultivation and persistently stayed away from rubber cultivation even during the boom periods. The ethnographic details of the economic stagnation of coastal Malay peasantry will be described later in Part II, taking a case from Telok Melano village, where I conducted my fieldwork.

CHAPTER 5. THE EMERGENCE OF A POLITICIZED NEW FRONTIER IN POST-COLONIAL LUNDU DISTRICT

1. Lundu District in the Post-independence Era: The Emergence of a Politicized Frontier

The reign of the third and last white Rajah of Sarawak, Charles Vyner Brooke (1917-1941), came at a time of complex political and economic changes. During his era, Sarawak came under even tighter control by the British Colonial Office, which eventually lead to the post-war cession of the territory to the British in 1946. What terminated a century of colonial rule by the Brooke dynasty was not internal strife but the military intrusion and subsequent occupation by the Japanese from 1941 to 1945.

The Japanese invasion of December 1941 was an epoch-making incident in Sarawakian history. The main political impact of the Japanese occupation was the demise of European supremacy. After Japan surrendered in September 1945, officials of the Colonial Office in London decided that Sarawak would be ceded to the Crown by the Rajah. By July 1946, a new colonial government was established in Kuching, and Sarawak became a British Crown Colony.¹

Political development towards independence from the British colonization was slow during the first post-war decade. In December 1961, Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaya proposed a plan to establish a federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. Local sentiment in Sarawak at that time favored a smaller Borneo

¹On the political turmoil caused by the cession to British colonial rule, see Sanib (1985) and Mohammad Hasbie Sulaiman (1989). For a historical analysis on the British rule in Sarawak, see Porritt (1997).

federation as an alternative to, or an intermediate step towards, a wider federation with Singapore and Malaya. Nevertheless, as will be mentioned below, Indonesia's *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation) policy, which opposed the formation of Malaysia, and the Brunei Rebellion of December 1961 worked to diminish the internal resistance and paved the way to Sarawak's incorporation into the Federation of Malaysia. Sarawak achieved independence from British colonial rule when the new federation was officially established in August 1963.

During the post-independence period, the Lundu District experienced unprecedented political turmoil. Located right on the border between two now-independent nation-states, the Federation of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia, the region became a bilateral political frontier which functioned as a front line of strife and feud. In the two decades following independence, two closely related political developments enhanced economic, ethnic, and national marginalization of local Malay peasants in the borderland of Lundu District in western Borneo: the military confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia (*Konfrontasi*) and the guerrilla activities of the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) in Sarawak, Malaysia and West Kalimantan, Indonesia.

2. *Konfrontasi* and Communist Guerrilla Threat

The new Federation of Malaysia was not born without trouble. In Borneo, there were those who opposed the formation of the federation on the grounds that plans to make "Malaysia" were premature and that Sarawak and Sabah should gain their

independence first and consider joining a federation afterwards. In December 1962, a revolt led by Inche Azahari broke out in Brunei. Azahari hoped to find enough support in Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah to overthrow all three governments and unite the territories under one government and one head of state, the Sultan of Brunei. In Sarawak, he found support in some areas of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions. The rebels seized Limbang and the area around Niah and Subuti. British troops then intervened, and the rebellion was quashed. The incident caused unrest, however, which led to further political change. A secret communist organization, which had been working in Sarawak for some years, became more active. Indonesia also became more hostile towards the proposed federation and encouraged Azahari's supporters.

President Sukarno of Indonesia vehemently criticized the new federation as being neo-colonial, since Malaysia would still be greatly influenced by Britain and rely heavily on British finance and military bases. He also accused pro-federation political leaders of not consulting the people of Sarawak and Sabah beforehand and demanded a referendum in both countries. The government of the Philippines joined in the opposition, and a top-level meeting was held in Manila in August 1963. Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaya, President Sukarno of Indonesia and President Macapagal of the Philippines attended the meeting to settle the differences, and it was decided to request the United Nations to dispatch a team of officials to Sarawak and Sabah to ensure that the people were in favor of joining Malaysia.

On August 16, a United Nations working party arrived in Borneo, and in mid-September it submitted a report which confirmed the support of the people of Sarawak and Sabah for joining the Federation of Malaysia. On September 16, 1963, the last Governor of Sarawak, Sir Alexander Waddell, left Sarawak, and Malaysia Day was celebrated throughout Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah. A new nation was thereby born.

Even after the official proclamation of the new Federation of Malaysia, the governments of Indonesia and the Philippines continued their opposition. The Philippines refused to recognize the new federation and claimed part of Sabah as its territory, although the Philippine government never attempted to force their claim by military measures. Talks were held between the two countries in Bangkok in July 1968, but no agreement was reached.

The opposition from Indonesia was more persistent, reflecting the strong sentiments of its leader, President Sukarno. Although it was at Sukarno's request that the United Nations working party had been sent to Borneo, he did not accept their verdict. Sukarno insisted that the Azahari rebellion in Brunei in 1962 was an indication that people did not support the federated Malaysia and that he wanted to free Southeast Asia from neo-colonialism. He called his policy *Konfrontasi*, and early in 1963 he started sending armed groups of "volunteers" (and later trained soldiers) across the border to attack local communities in Sarawak. Some Indonesians managed to infiltrate Sarawak's countryside and persuade locals to oppose the Malaysian Government. Support from Sarawak was meager, however, except from Chinese communist elements in

Sarawak, whom the government later labeled the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO). At that time there was a large and powerful communist party in Indonesia that was legally recognized and politically active. Some thousands of Chinese youths therefore left Sarawak and underwent training in the jungles of Indonesia to liberate their homeland with communist ideology. During this "confrontation" period, which lasted for more than three years, between 10,000 and 15,000 British troops were stationed in Sarawak. Australia and New Zealand also sent troops to protect East Malaysia, and soldiers from West Malaysia came in large numbers².

"Confrontation" ended with a drastic political change in Indonesia. On October 1, 1965, a group of soldiers attacked and murdered several generals and high-ranking officers of the Indonesian armed forces. This attempted *coup d'etat* was foiled by the prompt action of General Suharto and other loyal officers, who restored calm. Sukarno was ousted and replaced by Suharto, who started negotiations to bring military confrontation to an end. Finally a peace agreement was signed on August 11, 1966.

3. The Experience of Borderland Malay Communities during the *Konfrontasi* and Communist Periods

During *Konfrontasi*, the Malaysia-Indonesia border area was plagued by the fighting throughout Sarawak. Lundu District was no exception. More than a dozen outbreaks of military confrontation

² For a historical description and analysis of the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation, see Mackie (1974), Dickens (n.d.), Jackson (1991).

were officially recorded (Dickens 1983), and in addition there were numerous hostile encounters between Malaysian allied forces and Indonesian soldiers. Border villages were guarded by British Gurkha soldiers and Malaysian soldiers from the Malay Peninsula. The locals were placed under a strict curfew, and their daily activities were severely restricted.

There were by then two villages adjacent to Cape Dato, which marked the western end of the border. In early 1963, Indonesian forces advanced to the villages of Telok Melano and Telok Serabang and killed three locals. All villagers were immediately ordered to evacuate the villages by the Malaysian authorities. Most villagers moved to Sematan, Lundu, or Kuching in the First Division of Sarawak. Subsequently, all the Malay peasants between Sematan and Cape Dato were ordered to relocate to safer areas. As a result, the coastal areas became completely deserted for almost five years. After the peace agreement was signed between Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur in 1967, villagers were first allowed to return to their villages during the daytime to collect coconut seeds under the strict supervision of the Malaysian authorities. In 1968 the authorities finally allowed them to resettle at their home villages.

Peace and tranquillity in the Lundu borderland were, however, short-lived. From the early 1970s to the late 1980s, communist insurgents were particularly active in this remote border area, inviting suppression by both the Indonesian and Malaysian governments. Communist guerrillas found an ideal refuge in the dense forest of the area.

The presence of communists in the surrounding jungle was well known to and, in a way, condoned by the villagers. Their contacts with guerrillas were rather casual; guerrillas often came down to the villages to purchase foodstuff and bathe. Villagers did not have much against these communists as long as they did not bother, hurt or steal from them. However, friction became inevitable as communist-hunting by both the Malaysian and the Indonesian authorities intensified. The communist activities in the border area of Lundu District continued until the last guerrillas surrendered to the authorities in 1988.

4. The Forgotten Frontier: Nation-state and Marginalized Locals.

The confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia, and subsequent communist activities on the border left large scars on the local Malay communities. In the following, two especially notable socio-economic effects will be discussed: 1) the emergence of the forgotten economic frontier, passed over by the post-independence national development; and 2) the discrepancy between nationality imposed by the newly independent state and ethnic identity as Malays in western Borneo.

4-1. Back to Subsistence Economy: The Emergence of an Economic Vacuum at the Margin of the State

Konfrontasi and the communist alert in the border area paralyzed the local transportation system connecting the regional

bazaars in Lundu and Sematan with the State Capital of Kuching, the distribution center for commodity export. The consequent exclusion of the Lundu hinterland from national commercial networks resulted in economic stagnation of the local Malays. Instead of finding a niche in the newly emerging national commodity market, they turned to swidden agriculture as a sustainable subsistence system and away from cash crop cultivation. The military zone became an untouchable frontier, and CCO activities on the border made the implementation of economic development policies by the government almost impossible until the early 1980s.

As seen in Chapter 4, even before the military confrontation, the Cape Dato area remained on the outskirts of the growing colonial economy, where Malay villagers continued to clear jungle for swidden cultivation. Their participation in the commodity market was limited to sporadic selling of copra and wild rattan at the Sematan bazaar. The five-year evacuation from the village during *Konfrontasi* further disrupted the economic life of locals. Those who fled to town were deprived of means of production and survived by borrowing small patches of land to plant cassava and banana.

When the local villagers were finally allowed to go home after *Konfrontasi*, they found fully regenerated secondary forest on land previously utilized for hill rice cultivation. In addition, there was a drastic decline in village population. This politically induced decline in population pressure functioned to rationalize swidden agriculture as their choice for subsistence and subsequently delayed their participation in cash commodity production.

The economic stagnation of the borderland Malays enhanced the marginalization of their ethnicity. Their exclusive dependence on land-based subsistence activities made their ethnic affiliation ambiguous. In the Sarawakian context, as examined in Chapter 2, ethnic categorization depends on ecological adaptation. Apart from religion, what has traditionally distinguished the Malays from the Dayaks is the difference in their economic activities, i.e., Malays are coastal fishermen and Dayaks inland swidden cultivators. Swidden cultivation and the economic stagnation of the Malays also have affected their positioning in the Malay class structure in Sarawak, particularly vis-à-vis relatively better-off Malays in the Kuching area, where the majority are forming an urban middle-class. Peripheralization of hinterland Malay peasants in both the ethnic categorization and the class structure of Sarawak Malay society is an important issue that will be examined in the ethnographic account of Part II.

4-2. Being "Malaysians" and Being "Malays" on the Border: Discrepancy between Imposed Nationality and Traditional Ethnic Identity

Konfrontasi and communist insurgency led not only to the exclusion of local peasants from the Kuching-based commodity distribution network but also to the marginalization of local Malays in the Sarawak-Kalimantan borderland in terms of national identity. The military confrontation swiftly and violently drew an absolute boundary between Malaysia and Indonesia, which resulted in the formation of new national identities as "Malaysians" on one side and

"Indonesians" on the other. Unlike the porous colonial boundary between Sambas District of western Dutch Borneo and Lundu District of the First Division of Brooke's Sarawak, the border demarcation between the two new nation-states became more concrete and permanent during the military confrontation. In western Borneo, Malays who shared the same ethnic nomenclature and cultural elements became divided between two warring geo-polities. In Sarawak territory, as the borderland population was incorporated into the Federation of Malaysia, locals became the subject of Indonesian military attacks as enemy "Malaysians," even though they were brother "Malays" sharing historicity dating back to the Sultanate era.

The sudden boundary demarcation further aggravated the marginalization of locals living on the border. In the borderland, the discrepancy that emerged between imposed nationality and traditional ethnic identity resulted in two opposing social processes: hegemonic separation on the nation-state level and local-level symbiosis between Malaysian and Indonesian communities on each side of the border. Nationalism imposed on the locals divide them, yet the cross-border social interaction of the Malays in the peripheralized borderland has remained strong and even became critical for survival in the Cape Dato region, where two national territories are juxtaposed.

As seen in Chapter 4, an informal economy built on illegal commodity transaction across the border has been actively pursued by locals. In the post-colonial era, especially with the emergence of migrant communities on the Indonesian side in the 1980s, border

trading has further intensified. In addition to the economic symbiosis, transnational socio-cultural ties have been strengthened through daily interaction as well as marriage alliance.

The borderland between Indonesia and Malaysia is, however, not a closed and isolated social space free from state intervention. From the early 1990s onwards, with stable politics and economic development, the Malaysian Government and Sarawak State have become better equipped with the state hegemonies necessary for making "Malaysians" and "Sarawakians" through implementation of the education system, national radio and television networks, and development programs such as agricultural schemes. While the hinterland of Lundu District has gradually become incorporated into the social space whose inhabitants enjoy various social services rendered by the government, Indonesian migrant communities across the border receive far less governmental assistance for their survival.

On a daily basis, social interactions between Malaysians and Indonesians continue, yet at the national level, the economic gap between them, which is well represented by stronger Malaysian currency against the Indonesian Rupiah, has widened. In such circumstances, nationality and ethnicity are not metaphorical and abstract entities, but something to be situationally selected based on the calculation of gain or loss. Tension, hatred, envy, and suspicion often mount and are manifested in many aspects of daily life in the borderland.

5. Prelude to Part II: Viewpoint

In what follows, I shall present an ethnographic account of a Malay community adjacent to Cape Dato, the village of Telok Melano. Part I mainly dealt with the regional history of the administrative district of Lundu over more than one century. My aim was to analyze colonial economic policies, the regional response to their implementation, and the ethnic configuration of Sarawakian society under colonial capitalism. In Part II, I shall investigate social change at the village level, paying special attention to individual initiatives taken to cope with the state apparatus in the post-colonial context. In a new phase of Sarawakian history, restructuring of society under the nation-state brought significant changes, which I shall examine at the local level. The emergence of the new citizenship and its relationship to the previously dominant social category of ethnic groups created under the Brooke regime will also be investigated with detailed ethnographic accounts based on my fieldwork.

In Part I, I have reviewed the process in which indigenous society was transformed and restructured economically, politically, and culturally during the colonial era. In doing so, I strategically focused on two social fields, one at the core of colonial hierarchy and the other at the periphery. The core in this context was the elite segment of urban Kuching society, while Malay peasants in the hinterland of Lundu District represented the periphery. In the following, I shall present an ethnography of a Malay community adjacent to the Sarawak-Kalimantan border, through which I will

take a even closer look at people at the periphery. What distinguishes the following from the conventional anthropological studies is the setting or the social field it deals with: the post-colonial borderland. From the methodological point of view, it is a community study in the sense that the basic unit of analysis is a single community. The community in question is "bounded" or "closed" geo-politically. It is, in fact, even isolated, physically and logistically, from the rest of Sarawak and ultimately from the rest of Malaysia. However, this particular social field is "open" and "transnational" at the same time. I shall examine these contrasting characteristics of a borderland community by observing people's daily life.

PART II.

CHAPTER 6. TELOK MELANO ETHNOGRAPHY: INTRODUCTION

1. Anthropological Encounter with Telok Melano

I still remember the day when I first got a glimpse of Cape Dato from the beach near Pue Village in the First Division of Sarawak. It was my first trip to the area with the intention to select a coastal Sarawak Malay community for my fieldwork. I was with my local advisor who is also a Sarawak Malay anthropologist. After a 4-hour ride from the state capital of Kuching on a dusty mountain road on the back seat of his 125 cc motorcycle, I was more than relieved when we finally reached a Dayak longhouse near the port of Sematan. After exchanging greetings with the headman and village folks, we walked down to the beach to stretch our aching backs. The beach was picturesque with white sand and casuarina trees. After showing me the direction of Mt. Pue and other points of interest, my local advisor pointed far to the north over the ocean and said that there was a cape named Dato which demarcated the border between Indonesia (West Kalimantan) and Malaysia (Sarawak), and that there exist two Malay communities where dwellers plant hill rice by swidden cultivation in complete seclusion (see Map 2).

Cape Dato at “hujung Malaysia (end/edge of Malaysia)” was hardly visible in the distance. What first intrigued me was the remoteness, the absolute isolation of these communities from other Malaysian villages and towns. Indonesian territory is much closer than Sematan, the nearest Malaysian town. Nor there is any road or path connecting them with Sematan. Between the communities and

Sematan, there exists a long stretch of abandoned coconut plantations and the fully grown secondary forest, but no other communities are to be found. The villagers usually come to Sematan by boat to buy market goods. During the north-east monsoon season (October to March), extremely rough currents and high waves prevent them from using boats. They have no choice but to walk eight hours along the beach at low tide to reach Sematan.

The Malays of the two communities adjacent to Cape Dato are the only ones who practice swidden agriculture in the First Division of Sarawak. In the Sarawak delta where Malay communities are concentrated, their economic activities are very much sea-oriented. They typically fish and plant coconut trees along the coast. I had, however, never heard of Malays engaged in swidden agriculture. My understanding of Sarawak Malays at that time did not go beyond the "essentialist" definitions in ethnographic and historical writings which underlined the coastal/riverine economic niche of the Malays in Sarawak. In orthodox ethnographies Malays are typically depicted as coastal fishermen, coconut/rubber planters, or petty traders, but never as subsistence farmers in the tropical forest.

When we sat down at a coffee shop at Sematan bazaar later, I was told, "If you check the Identification Cards of the people in this area, you may know that many of them are Indonesians and former Indonesians who applied to become Malaysians." I observed the port traffic and actually noticed several ships with the Indonesian flag hurriedly coming in and out with goods from and to Indonesia. Tanned and thin yet strongly built Indonesian sailors carrying fuel tanks and other daily necessities back to their wooden boats was a

common sight. Sematan is essentially a frontier port of entry for foreigners where the Indonesian accent is a part of local daily life.

"Telok Melano" is the name of one of the hinterland Malay communities which I remembered from my Sematan trip. It is situated at the heart of the Indonesian and Malaysian borderland which has been geo-politically divided by two conflicting ancient sultanates as well as by colonial and post-colonial states. The village seemed to be a tiny historical enclave left out in the middle of nowhere.

When I returned to the state capital, Kuching, I informed local scholars and government officials of my interest in conducting fieldwork in the Malay village, Telok Melano. Upon my explaining that the villagers are not fishermen but land-based peasants and that the subsistence largely depends on cultivation of hill rice with minimal involvement in cash crop production, one of the officials who originally suggested a pilot study trip to Sematan area made a rather apologetic statement that a foreign researcher might conduct two years of research in a community which may not offer an authentic "ethnographically correct" picture of Malays. Some implicitly suggested that I choose another field site because I would not find any "Sarawak Malay culture" among these Malay folks in the border region.

Some of our Malay friends in Kuching suspected the real ethnicity of the people of Telok Melano on hearing that they live near the international border and practice swidden agriculture. They asked me, "Are they really Muslims?" By then it was already clear to me that the villagers did not represent typical Sarawak Malays.

Any association with slash and burn agriculture in the forest is a distinctive cultural trait of inland Dayaks, whose religion, pagan or Christian, distinguishes themselves from Muslim Malays. Their geopolitical isolation from the state capital and the close proximity to Kalimantan, Indonesia, have much to do with the formation of their marginal ethnicity as Sarawak Malays.

When my wife Mayumi and I were busy with last minute shopping and packing before leaving for Telok Melano, our Malay neighbor in Kuching who knew the borderland warned us by saying, "Just be careful dealing with village folks there. They are already mixed with Indonesians as well as local Dayaks and their *ilmu* (magical power) is quite strong." They kindly prepared a Muslim amulet for us to fend off misfortunes caused by "*ilmu hitam*" (black magic often used for sorcery). We put several pieces of shallot in our baggage on the advice of another neighbor who believed that they would protect the wearer against sorcery.

We headed for Telok Melano with the amulet and shallots, secretly hidden in our bag. We did not want to offend people by bringing them to the village but were too nervous to leave them behind. It was already October and the beginning of *landas*, the north-eastern monsoon season. Our journey at sea was extremely rough. Right after leaving the port of Sematan, it started pouring, and waves become bigger the further we went. On top of that, the Yamaha engine in our chartered boat broke down. After the boatman struggled with a small puddle for what seemed like an eternity, we finally landed on the shore not far from the Sematan port where we began our journey. The boatman hurried back to borrow an engine for

the further trip to Telok Melano. When we finally reached the village, it was late at night. The Islamic scripts (*Jawi*) on both sides of the amulet, after exposed to sea water for so long, became unreadable red stains. We still keep it; we are grateful that it fended off the dangerous magic of the South China Sea. Thus we began 14 months of fieldwork in Telok Melano from October 1993 to November 1994.

2. In Search of a Displaced Social Field: Rethinking Village Ethnography

In the following chapters of Part II, I shall present an ethnography of a Malay peasant community, Telok Melano, situated on the coast between Sematan and Cape Dato, adjacent to the Indonesian border, with the intention to record the faces and voices of people within the larger story told in Part I. Two kinds of history, the regional history of Lundu District discussed in Part I, and the local history and contemporary ethnography of a specific Malay community in the district, are basically complementary in this study, adding detailed description of the everyday life in a community to the larger historical configuration observed in the hinterland district of Lundu.

The ethnography of Telok Melano demonstrates a rather disassociated and contradictory social field generated by the particular socio-economic niche located between two nation-states, the Federation of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia. The following account distinguishes itself from conventional anthropological ethnography in three points.

Firstly, the following Telok Melano ethnography does not intend to present the ethnographic account of "the Sarawak Malays." In other words, the following description is a particularistic account of a community with a specific historical experience. Even though the present study is the first ethnographic account of the Sarawak Malays since Harrisson's work (1970), it does not claim authority as the ethnography of the Sarawak Malays. The "essentialist" presentation of the history and the culture of a coastal peasant village is thus consciously avoided. Rather, my description will center on the untold historical experience of peripheral Malays whose ethnic expression has been excluded from and denied by Kuching-based Malay hegemony.

Secondly, the following ethnography does not seek any structural causality among social institutions such as kinship, economy, religion and so forth. In other words, the picture I am drawing from Telok Melano is not a closed coherent whole, which conventional anthropological writing has tended to pursue. Processual approach is thus pursued throughout the following presentation. The processual stance in writing about a specific social group requires a shift of analytic focus from social institution to agency; I shall pay more attention to social process and social relations rather than social structure and normative aspects of social behavior.¹

¹Following Firth's classic distinction between social structure and social organization, I shall pay attention more to social organization where actor-based decision-making models have been pursued by anthropologists. Constructing rigid social structure which has no room for maneuvering individuals is not the objective of this study (cf. Firth 1951).

The above approaches inevitably lead to the question of the unit of analysis. Although the description is strictly a conventional "village ethnography," its unit of analysis goes well beyond the community and even the nation-state. Dealing with a community connected to the other side of state sovereignty in terms of its socio-economic relations, my analysis is intended to be relational in order to examine the transnational nature of a peasant community whose history, culture, and ethnicity are quite different from nation-bound ones.

Taking Telok Melano as an example of an extremely peripheral social segment within a national unit, I shall focus particularly on the question of how a specific segment of an ethnic group has been dislocated in the following four domains: the spatial, the ecological/economic, the genealogical, and the national. These four domains are closely related but need to be separated analytically in order to examine a social process in which, despite their self-identification, the social standing of this segment's members as "Sarawak Malays," "peasants," and "Malaysians," get blurred, if not denied, after the emergence of the state border.

3. Contents of Part II

Chapter 7 first presents a sketch of Telok Melano, introducing its location, settlement structure, and statistical data on the population. The following discussion deals with the genesis of spatial dislocation of Telok Melano in colonial territory, focusing on the history of village formation dating back to the 1880s. Chapter 8

turns the focus to the ecological and economic dislocation of the peasant community with an ethnographic account of the agricultural activities. To understand the Telok Melano villagers' dissociated national identity and their ethnic relations with both their fellow Malaysians and Indonesians on the border, Chapter 9 presents an transnational ethnography of Telok Melano. In its special transnational socio-economic niche, Telok Melano has maintained closer social ties with Temajuk, an Indonesian migrant village across the border, than with other Malaysian villages. Sharing the same Malay ethnic and cultural traits, Sarawak Malays of Telok Melano and Sambas Malays of Temajuk formed symbiotic relations for their survival, yet they are torn apart by the fact that they belong to different nation-states.

CHAPTER 7. TELOK MELANO IN THE MAKING

1 Telok Melano: Location and Environment

The research site, Telok Melano, is situated in the administrative unit (*Daerah Kecil*) of Sematan, Lundu District, the First Division of Sarawak. Sematan has 23 villages in 150 square miles, which are inhabited by Malay, Selako Dayak and Chinese populations. As of 1991, the population composition in Sematan by ethnic group is as follows:

	population	no. of household
Malay	2,553	436
Selako	2,581	343
Chinese	686	103
Total	6,102	882

(District Office, Sematan 1991)

Malays in the area are mainly coastal dwellers, although a few villages are located inland, Selako Dayak settlements are scattered along the slope of Mt. Pue inland. The Chinese are concentrated in Sematan market area.

Telok Melano, described as “hujung Sarawak” (the edge of Sarawak) by villagers themselves, is one of the most isolated Malay villages in the First Division, occupying the westernmost part of Malaysian territory near the border with Indonesia (see Map 2). The border runs from the northern tip of Cape Dato, passing within approximately 30 minutes’ walk of Telok Melano. The village is doubly marginal in the sense that it is located on the edge of

Sarawak state, which is in turn marginal in relation to Kuala Lumpur, the political and economic center in the Malay Peninsula.

The Indonesian village adjacent to the border, Temajuk, lies along a small path crossing between Malaysia and Indonesian territory, only 30 minutes' walk from Telok Melano, in contrast, the nearest town on the Malaysian side, Sematan, is approximately 35 km from the village. Sematan is a gateway to the outside world for locals, being directly connected by bus to the state capital of Kuching, about 140 km away. Apart from Telok Serabang, the coast between Cape Dato and Sematan is uninhabited. There is not even a footpath, let alone a road, connecting these two villages with Sematan. The journey normally takes a few hours by boat, depending on the size of the boat's engine and the weight of the passengers and the load. During the *landas* northeastern monsoon season from November to March, high waves and rapid currents in the South China Sea make the trip between Telok Melano and Sematan extremely hazardous. At this time of year, villagers have no choice but to walk for eight hours on sandy beaches at low tide to reach Sematan town, unless they want to take their chances at sea. For almost half of the year, Telok Melano is virtually cut off from other Malaysian towns and villages, except for Telok Serabang, which is about 45 minutes' walk away.

As of November 1994, the village consisted of 41 households (40 Malay and 1 Chinese), with a population of 210, including unmarried youths who work or attend school outside of the village. There are 107 males (including 28 children of primary school age

and below) and 103 females (including 25 children of primary school age and below).

Villagers are all Muslims, except for the one Chinese, who earns his living by hunting wild boars and selling their meat to Chinese shopkeepers in Lundu, a district center about 20 km from Sematan. Since Muslim Malays do not hunt wild boars, they were abundant in the forest surrounding the village until quite recently.

Swidden rice fields and coconut trees lining the coast dominate the landscape of the village. The subsistence activity of the village centers on land. Villagers actually have no zeal for fishing and are not skilled fishermen, although a few of them fish for their own consumption. Electricity is supplied by a village-owned generator from seven to eleven o'clock at night. Due to the lack of maintenance work and the shortage of fuel during the monsoon season, the generator is often down for several weeks. The lack of a constant supply of electricity precludes storage of surplus fish for sale in Sematan market. In addition, the cost of transport usually well exceeds the profit from sale of fish.

Villagers engage in small-scale production of cash crops such as pepper, cacao, coconut, and clove with the assistance of the Agricultural Department of Sarawak State Government. These cash crops do not support the household economy of the majority of villagers at all, and the basis for their survival still depends on the cultivation of swidden rice. The physical isolation of Telok Melano from Sematan, especially from the Sematan market, is one of the factors responsible for the stagnation of Telok Melano's economy.

2. Spatial Dislocation of Telok Melano

The political territory of the state is geographically defined by its boundary, within which a spatial opposition between the center and the periphery is inherent. The emergence of anomalous communities at the Malay ethnic margin is attributed to their location at the geographical periphery of Sarawak Malay society. Telok Melano villagers in the borderland between Malaysia and Indonesia fall into this social entity.

Coastal Malays in western Borneo are arbitrarily divided into two ethnically differentiated social categories with distinct nomenclature, *Sambas Malays* in Indonesia and *Sarawak Malays* in Malaysia. The elite Sarawak Malay class in Kuching area was, as we closely examined in Chapter 2, historically created and gradually became a fixed category under the century-long Brooke colonial rule. In the social process in which these elite Malays came to represent the essential core of Sarawak Malay identity, the people at the margins of Sarawak state were peripheralized.

The studied Malay community is composed of the descendants of immigrants from the Sambas region in former western Dutch Borneo. Before the Brooke and Dutch governments came to power, the coastal region was a Malay maritime trading zone, and subsequently it was divided between two distinct colonial territories. Under the political division, Sambas Malays (*Melayu Sambas*) who migrated into Brooke's colony were ethnically incorporated into the social category of Sarawak Malay (*Melayu*

Sarawak) in Sarawakian territory and disassociated from their original genealogical connection with their ancestors.

In the following sections, I shall explore the genesis of spatial dislocation of Telok Melano community, placing the process of village formation within a century of history of the region's political economy.

3. Pirate Bay: Maritime Frontier of Sarawak Colony

The Cape Dato region, where Telok Melano is located, was called "Pirate Bay" by the Brooke colonial officers. Several bays near the cape were frequented by pirates from the southern Philippines who sought fresh water and firewood as well as refuge from storms. Piracy was prevalent in this region. In particular, the coast between Sematan and Cape Dato was:

annually infested by fleets from the Sulu Archipelago, which, leaving their own islands, situated on the N.E. of Borneo, about the middle of the N.E. monsoon, sail round the island with a fair wind, stretching across to the coast of Java, Banca, Singapore, and the Peninsula, and visiting all the islands in the way, attacking all the trading boats they meet, and carrying their crews into slavery, frequently landing and capturing the whole of the inhabitants of small villages. (Low 1848: 129)

According to Low, Serabang Bay, located next to the present Telok Melano village, attracted many of them:

Teluk Serban, a bay inside of Tanjong Datu, and opposite to the islands of Telang Telang, was a station occupied during the S.W. monsoon by the pirates of Soolu and Magindanau. Here their principal fleet lay anchored, while small and fast cruisers

in the offing constantly communicated to them the appearance of a sail: a force deemed sufficient was immediately sent out to capture it, when, if it proved to be from a distance, the slaves or goods were sent into Sarawak or Sadong rivers to the Sereibs, who then governed this part of the coast, in exchange for provisions and other necessities, of which their long absence from home had exhausted their stock; the prisoners captured in the neighborhood were handcuffed and bound until their captors were ready, on the approach of the boisterous monsoon, to return to their island homes. Thus the whole trade of the coast was destroyed, and it was for protection against these people that the government of Borneo stipulated with Mr. Jesse, when it granted to the settlement of Balamgangan the monopoly of the pepper of Borneo. (Low 1848:128-129)

They generally pass the western coast of Borneo about June or July, arriving in August at the Soolu islands laden with plunder. The number of boats which sail from this Archipelago cannot be accurately ascertained, but they must be very numerous, as not less than six squadrons of from five to eleven boats each, were seen to pass the Sarawak river during the past season. A large trading boat belonging to a native merchant of Sarawak was captured a little to the eastward of the river; her valuable cargo being taken out, she was scuttled and sunk; the crew saved themselves by the boats. This was in April last. Another boat, coming from the Natunas to Sarawak laden with oil, was chased by the five boats to the small island Satang, opposite the entrance of the Sarawak river, and two large boats, the property of merchants of this town returning from Singapore in March, sustained an action which lasted several hours, but the boats being well armed, and containing cargoes which rendered them worth defending, succeeded in beating off the pirates. (Low 1848:129-130)

Like other Europeans in 19th century Southeast Asia, the first White Rajah, James Brooke, was inclined to label all of his numerous and varied native opponents "pirates." He used this word partly because he deeply and sincerely believed that his enemies were the willful, lawless adversaries of free trade and good government, and partly because he hoped that public opinion in maritime England

would be disposed to support “anti-piracy” campaigns (Pringle 1970:66-67). James Brooke left a vivid description of his encounter with pirates at Talang Talang Island and Siru in 1842. His journal reads:

In the evening the Tumangong came over with certain news that the pirate Budrudeen was at Siru with eight followers; his band ashore, and he living in a house in the village. Abu Bakar, with a crew of fifteen men, chiefly Illanuns, I found living ashore at Talang Talang, with a small boat, and a huge long six-pounder in her, which, fired twice, must have separated her planks. I learned, also, that six Balinini boats had been to Talang Talang, and had a friendly conference with Sheriff Abu Bakar. (Mundy 1848:306)

The Tumangong came with many excuses, begging not to be employed against the pirate Budrudeen: he evidently dreaded the consequences. The two patingis, therefore, I sent on, with orders to catch them, if possible; if not, to kill them. (ibid.:307)

Arrived at Siru, I found the patingi waiting till the pangeran and the Illanun panglima came to the beach; and to prevent suspicion, my party kept close in the boat, whence I could observe what was passing without. The pangeran and Illanun walked down, both well armed, and the latter dressed out with a variety of charms. Once on the beach, retreat was impossible, for our people surrounded them, though without committing any hostile act. The suspicion of the two was, however, raised, and it was curious to observe their different demeanour. The Borneo pangeran remained quiet, silent, and motionless; a child might have taken him; the Magindinao Illanun lashed himself to desperation, flourishing his spear in one hand, and the other on the handle of his sword, he defied those collected about him: he danced his war-dance on the sand: his face became deadly pale: his wild eyes glared: he was ready to amok, to die, but not to die alone. His time was come, for he was dangerous, and to catch him was impossible; and accordingly, Patingi Ali, walking past, leaped forward, and struck a spear through his back, far between his shoulders, half a foot out his breast. I had no idea that after such a thrust, a man could, even for a few instants, exert himself; but the panglima, after receiving his

mortal wound, rushed forward with his spear, and thrust it at the breast of another man: but strength and life failed, and the weapon did not enter. This was a work of few seconds. (ibid.:309)

Until the 1890s, when numerous Malay communities were established by Sambas Malays who had migrated from the Dutch territory, the Sematan-Lundu coast was sparsely populated with a small number of Malay communities consisting of local Dayak converts and migrants. When James Brooke first visit Lundu from Singapore in 1839, he asked a Lundu Dayak man how many of them had converted to Islam, and he answered "a good many" (Mundy 1848:24).

Brooke also left an early description of Sematan in 1842:

Siru and Sematan are both fishing stations. At the former place is a colony of Kadayans from Borneo (Brunei: author) - originally, only six or seven men, now amounting to thirty families, from having intermarried with the Dayaks and Malays. The Kadayans are Islamites, and form the rural population of Borneo, where they are numerous. (Mundy 1848:310)

At that time, Malays in Sematan were consisted of immigrants from Brunei and Trengganu (the Malay Peninsula), and Dayak converts. Their communities were widely scattered on the coast as well as inland and coexisted side-by-side with those of Selako Dayaks. Even later in 1894, there were only 34 Malay houses in the Sematan area:

9 houses at	Simatan
9	Sabahat, where sub-Magistrate of Sematan, Lebi Maludin resides
8	S'Larat, near the westerly slopes of Lundu mountain
6	Poi, about six miles along the coast
2	S'bako pankallan

(SG Jan. 2, 1894)

4. The Creation of the Periphery: Telok Melano and Telok Serabang

The Malay communities in Cape Dato area were doomed to be excluded from the realm of the state right from their formation. The earliest account of Cape Dato area was left by an Italian botanist who visited this hinterland to collect samples in 1864. There still were no villages there:

We came to anchor near the westernmost extremity of Borneo, in a small cove, which my Malays called Telok Saruban, or Serban.

Here we found a spring of excellent water, and used it at once to cook our rice. After our very frugal breakfast, I started to climb the small mountain which rose at our backs. Naturally, in such out-of-the-way and uninhabited places, there were no paths. The place, and, indeed, the whole coast as far as Santubong, had a bad name for being the habitual resort, during the fair season, of the prahus [boats] of the Lanuns and Balagnini, the boldest and most dreaded pirates of the whole archipelago, and Telok Serban was their favourite anchorage. (Beccari 1904:225)

Telok Serabang, the older of the two villages near Cape Dato was established by migrants from Dutch Borneo territory. Subsequently migration extended to Telok Melano. No Sarawak subjects but only outsiders were allowed, by Rajah Charles Brooke himself, to settle in this frontier region of his colony. The

following account by a village elder in Telok Serabang gives us some clues to understand how Telok Serabang and Telok Melano were formed on the periphery of Sarawak under the direct supervision of the Rajahs:

Until lately this place was not inhabited, except by a party of pirates originating from Kepayang, Manila, and stationed at Tanjong Pirate (as on the map) which is known as Tanjong Keramat by the local people now. The chief of the pirates was Batin Begentar. This pirate caused great trouble to vessels sailing between Sarawak, Java, Sumatra, Brunei, Malaya, etc. During the reign of the First Rajah this news came to him. He not long after equipped his steamer with fighting armed men, headed by Panglima Seman; they sailed for Tanjong Pirates, to attack the pirates there.

On sighting a steamer approaching the land, the pirates thought she was a merchants ship and went out to sea in full strength, to attack her. When the two parties clashed, a fierce fight ensued. During the fighting, Batin Begentar met Penglima Seman; and after a long fight, Penglima Seman was able to defeat him by catching him alive.

The Rajah noticed, during the fighting, that Batin Begentar was a very strong man. No weapon could pierce his body. When the pirate was defeated, the Rajah ordered those arrested to be bought to Kuching, but Batin Begentar to be killed on the spot, by tying a piece of iron to his body and throwing him into the sea, then towing him with the steamer. This was done. But it did not caused him any harm. The next order was to throw him into the steamer's boiler. This caused him no harm, too. Then he was placed in the funnel of the steamer, head downward, until killed by choking of smoke. The body was buried at an unknown spot.

On arrival at Kuching, the Rajah ordered his men to select each of the remaining pirates to be taken as servants. Some of the good-looking ones were selected. Those who appeared to be fierce and bad were ordered to be slain. *When this was over, the Rajah ordered that Telok Serabang was not to be inhabited by Sarawak people, but open to any person or family from outside Sarawak. The reason was, that Sarawak people naturally did not know the characters of outside people, but the outsiders surely knew the habits of their own.*

As soon as this order was made known, people from Sambas and the Natuna Islands removed here and made this place their home, to start gardening, farming and fishing.

During the reign of the Second Rajah, approximately fifty families, headed by Penghulu Taha from Kampong Melano, Mempawah (West Borneo), obtained permission to reside here. As the place was fully occupied, these people then were given permission to make a new settlement at Telok Melano, which was named according to their original homeland. The name Telok Melano remains as it is now [*italic mine*]. (Harrisson 1964:418-19)

After the Rajah Brooke had defeated the chief of pirates, Batin Begentar, and his followers, Telok Serabang (Serabang Bay) was opened exclusively to outsiders, mainly from Sambas and the Natuna Islands, Dutch Borneo. From the viewpoint of administrators in Sarawak, these frontier communities settled by non-Sarawakians were marginal to the colonial apparatus, and yet were given a crucial function as a buffer zone between Sarawak and the Dutch Borneo territory.

The formation of frontier Malay communities corresponds to the first two decades of the Second Rajah's reign, which was the critical period for Sarawak's state formation. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, under Charles Brooke, the territorial encroachment by the colonial administration proceeded. Also the immigration and naturalization policies were tightened. The movement of people across Sarawak-Dutch Borneo border was restricted through the regulations on passport-holding¹ and marriage regulations.²

¹ In the frontier region, the restriction of the movement of people without passports was crucial. For instance, as early as June 27, 1876, the Brooke administration issued an Order in the *Sarawak Gazette* in the wake of illegal traffic of indentured laborers across Sambas-Sarawak border:

In the 1890s when Telok Serabang was newly settled by Malays from across the border, the Cape Dato region was no longer infested

It is hereby directed that, for the better apprehension of runaway criminals and coolies under contract, each individual or a head of party shall before leaving the Sarawak territory for Sambas take out a pass from the Government office at either Kuching, Paku, Simunjan, or Lundu, these passes are to be shown to the Dayak chiefs through whose villages the party may have to pass, and that in the event of any individual being found without a pass, he shall be apprehended and brought as a prisoner by the Dayak chief to Kuching. (SG June 27, 1876)

The border crossing of migrant laborers between Sarawak and Dutch territory was under the close scrutiny of the chiefs of Dayak villages.

[at Sematan] I found some fifty Silakow Dayaks awaiting my arrival, when the matter about people proceeding across the frontier without pass ports was discussed. (SG April 2, 1894:56)

Dutch authorities across the border also restricted the movement of people crossing the border without passports and detained Sarawak subjects in her territory:

Lee Lip and Lee Young, who have for many years traded with Dayaks in the vicinity of Pengkallan Ampat, both Sarawak and Netherlands Borneo, were lately arrested by one Abang Mat at Sunkong, in Netherlands territory. Lee Yong has been detained, but Lee Lip was permitted to return. All their trade goods were seized. Lee Lip says that the Abang's action was that they were unprovided with passports from Kuching. (SG May 1, 1885:42)

² Marriage between Sarawak and Dutch Borneo locals became subject to state control as early as 1871. The following is an excerpt from Proceedings in the Supreme Council, Sarawak 1st May, 1871:

4. That no Registration of such marriage will be permitted, if either party has been previously married either in or out of the territory of Sarawak, unless a legal divorce has been obtained and can be produced or provided.

7. Should the husband at any time desire to leave the territory of Sarawak, he will be bound to provide for the maintenance of his remaining wife and children, and in the event of his not having sufficiently done so in the opinion of the Court, the Court will be justified in transferring the whole or part of the husband's property to his wife and children. (SG May 12, 1871:68)

Bigamy by non-Sarawakians was of particular concern to the authorities, and a severer judgment was passed on a bigamist who had migrated from Dutch Sambas territory:

On the 11th the Hon'able the Acting Resident held Court. Haji Oman, a Sambas Malay, was sentenced to six months imprisonment, he having represented to Tan Ahmat [a government official: author] that he was a freeman and had no wife in Sambas, on the strength of which he was allowed to marry a Lundu woman; it is now proved by sergeant Bloto that Haji Omar escaped from Sambas gaol about 6 months ago and has a wife and family there. (SG Aug.1, 1896:101)

with lawless pirates, but instead placed under the influence of social engineering of the Sarawak government. Communities there were formed with the intention on the part of the colonizer of developing an export-oriented plantation economy.

It was only with the Rajah's permission that Dutch Borneo subjects were allowed to settle in Telok Serabang:

A half an hour's pull to the north [from Samunsam: author] lies Tanjong Serabang where Serasan Islanders have, I understand, His highness the Rajah's permission to settle. (SG Feb.1,1893:26)

Throughout 1890s, Telok Serabang and Telok Melano were developed by several *nakoda* traders. As stated in the village elder's account cited above, one of the pioneers was Haji Taha from Mempawah in western Dutch Borneo. His name is still remembered in Telok Melano as one of the founders of the village. Haji Taha's activities are well recorded by the colonial office:

On the 16th a man named Pengeran Seman reported that he had come over from Sambas directed by one Haji Taha to look at the land at Simunsan, as the later wished to come over with a following of 30 families. I advised P. Sean to look at the land and coffee in this neighborhood adding that during the N. E. monsoon the people would find themselves a good deal shut in at Simunsum. He reports that there is likely to be a movement after the harvest. (SG Feb. 1, 1894:24)

On the 28th I [Assistant Resident; author] left Simunsam arriving there next morning. Hj. Taha, the chief, has planted 600 cocoanuts which are looking well; he is clearing land for more. A number of small clearings have lately been made along the coast by Sambas people who are said to be going to settle here. (SG October 1, 1896:202)

The Plantations made by Hj. Taha and his followers at Telok Serabang and Telok Melano are doing exceedingly well and are expected to fruit a little in another two years. More people are coming to join Hj. Taha this year and will settle at Telok Serabang or near Kuala Samunsam where Hj. Taha has now made a second plantation. (SG. August 1, 1899:261)

As discussed in Chapter 3, opening a new coconut plantation on the uninhabited coast required hard labor to clear the virgin forest. All phases of copra production, from planting seeds, to weeding, harvesting, husking and drying seeds, also required substantial labor. *Nakoda* entrepreneurs thus brought Malay peasants from the Dutch territory as on-site caretakers who supplied labor necessary for the operation of their plantations. The scale of the labor migration was rather large. Several dozen families moved together to the new frontier under the direction of one *nakoda*. The sailing off Cape Dato can be quite dangerous because of rapid currents and high waves. Even today, not a small number of motor-equipped Indonesian ships are wrecked each year. Some perished on their way to a new land:

On the 13th I visited Simatan and on the 5th I proceeded to Telok Serabang where I met Haji Taha of Mempawa, who arrived at the same time with a number of his people. He reported that seven boats, with seventy men, women and children, left Mempawa on the 6th instant. Unfortunately one boat, the day before, (14th) struck a rock off the mouth of S. Temajok during a squall, the occupants - four men - escaping with their property with the exception of 100 gantangs of padi. Two boats had arrived; two were with the people who came to grief, and two, for some reason or other, had been delayed en route. The Haji reported that one Merali, a Sambas Tuah, intends coming over with fifteen families to settle in Telok Serabang. (SG Oct. 1, 1895:185)

The Acting Resident directed me to pay a sum of \$20 to the Mempawa people who were wrecked on their passage to Serabang last August. (SG January 2, 1896)

According to local stories collected in Telok Melano, Haji Taha brought along his children, grandchildren, a traditional medicine man (*bomoh*), a midwife (*bidan*), and carpenters (*tukang*) on migrating Telok Melano from Semudun village near Mempawah in Dutch Borneo. Descendants of these pioneers in Telok Melano without exception still claim their place of origin as Semudun village. It is also recorded in the government gazette that:

Pioneers will shortly arrive from Simudun with a view to looking for land, it being the intention of some 50 families to take up land and settle in this district. (SG Oct. 2, 1893:163)

A 95-year-old Telok Melano villager remembers the pioneering period of the village. When he migrated from Semudun to the village with his father, there were only five households there. It is speculated that a substantial number of Semudun villagers migrated to Telok Melano under Hj. Taha's direction, and that many migrants also left Telok Melano, either to return home or to move elsewhere.³

Pioneer settlers of Telok Melano and other communities established on Sematan-Cape Dato coast were virtually "mobile peasants" seeking a better future in the new frontier. High mobility of a speculative nature, movement in search of a better living, has been one of the characteristics of coastal peasants in the region.

³ Chinese rebellion in the Sambas region was reported in the *Sarawak Gazette*: "Chinese rebellion [is] reaching Mandor" (SG July 1, 1895:126). Mempawah, where Semudun village is located, was under the threat of Chinese attack, "Rumours have come round from Sambas to the effect that the Chinese at Mandore were about to attack Dayaks of Mampawah and that the Dutch would side with the latter" (SG July 1, 1895:126). However, the relationship between Malay migration from Mempawah and the political turmoil in the region remains unclear due to the lack of further information.

Newly developed communities were often surrounded by thick virgin forest which caused sickness amongst the inhabitants. The hazardous environment was also a factor promoting high mobility of peasants in the region:

Foolish superstitions about this part of the coast led these people to believe they had built their houses on paths used by spirits causing sickness amongst them. It has been explained that settling on newly felled virgin forest generally causes sickness at first. (SG November 1, 1895:20)

A good many people have gone away on account of sickness, about a dozen death having occurred last year among the small community scattered between Blinsah and Telok Milano. (SG August 1, 1899:261)

At Sematan, Johari, the Sub-Magistrate, reported that three more families, out of the number who left sometime ago on account of the scare [of sickness: author], had returned from Paloh, Sambas. (SG November 1, 1894:189)

In today's Telok Melano, Haji Taha is remembered as one of the pioneering settlers but not as an entrepreneur who brought people to the village with the intention of opening new plantations. None of the present families is known to be descended from Haji Taha. The *nakodas'* commercial activities which contributed to the formation of Malay communities in the region have vanished from the villagers' collective memory.

It seems that the village organization gradually took its shape from loosely structured aggregates of several coconut plantations. The *nakodas* usually developed more than one plantation. For instance, Haji Taha opened coconut plantations not only in Telok Serabang and Telok Melano but also in Samunsam further to the south. He was recognized

as a *penghulu* (chief/superintendent) by the Brooke administration. He often applied for land use for his plantations in Sematan and functioned as a broker linking local peasants and the Brooke government's administrative staff in the Lundu Fort.

I visited Simatan in compliance with your Highness' instruction with regard to the land Haji Taha wishes to take up in that locality. (SG July 1, 1895:126)

Nakoda went back and forth between Dutch Sambas and Sarawak and brought in more people for their plantations. They were also engaged in trade and brought trading goods to the Sarawak territory while shipping timbers from Sematan coast to Singapore and Java. For instance, a *nakoda* named Haji Usop, who developed a coconut plantation with 600 trees in S'apong near Lundu, was engaged in logging activities on the coast of Samunsam:

Tek Him, a billian worker, who has a number of coolies in his employ, asked and received permission to work timber in the Simunsam river. This is the first application that has been made to work timber in this river with the exception of Haji Usop, who, having received Your Highness's permission, gave out that he had the monopoly of the river. (SG Aug 1, 1895:144)

Haji Usop has asked to have the monopoly of working timber and jungle produce in the head of the Stunggang river for the term of 5 years, he estimates it would cost him about \$300 in making paths and damming the stream. (SG Nov. 2, 1896)

It is intriguing that the expansion of coconut plantations started from the very edge of Sarawak's territory, mainly from Cape Dato area, where unexploited forest was still abundant.

Subsequently the development expanded eastward to Sematan and the Lundu coast.

The whole coast from S. Blinsah to Telok Milano has now been practically taken up for cocoanut planting and those cocoanuts that have been planted some 2 or 3 years ago are looking very well. (SG July 1, 1898:142)

The Malays and Chinese still continue to apply for permits to open cocoanut plantations. The registry shows that there are over 300 of these gardens now in this district. In about 5 years time the coast between Rambungan and Simatan will be one long line of plantations. Seedlings are fetching \$5.00 to \$6.00 per hundred. (SG July 1, 1908:169)

It is very likely that the opening of coconut plantations was closely related to timber extraction from the virgin forest on the coast. Cutting timber required the government's approval. Instead of applying for the concession directly, the *nakodas* applied for new plantations. This served two purposes at one time: the cultivation of coconut for copra production and the extraction of timber. Coconut plantations were concentrated at the mouth of a river, such as at Samunsam, Bedaun, Belinsah, with good access to the upriver forest.

5. Abandoned Peasantry on the Border

The participation of *nakoda* traders in plantation management in Lundu District was a part of their strategy to survive the Brooke's rule, which tried to diminish their position in maritime trade.

Nakoda quickly lost their supremacy in trade as Chinese merchants started to dominate the regional commerce.⁴ From the onset of colonial rule, the government supported trading activities by Chinese. The *Sarawak Gazette* claimed that “the last Malay trader” died as early as in 1886:

All will receive with regret the news of the death of Haji Bani bin Haji Bijak, who died on the 6th Ultimo, aged 46 years. The deceased was an energetic and hard working trader, the owner of two or three vessels, and was a very popular man both with natives and Europeans. His death will be a loss to the country, he being about the last Malay trader of any standing and credit. (SG May 1, 1886: 72)

While promoting the plantation economy, the government placed restrictions on the trading activities of *nakoda* in the 1890s:

Order No.V, 1893

I HEREBY direct that the Masters of all sailing vessels shall carry these certificates of Registry with them and in the event of their not being able to produce it at any time during a voyage, the Nakodah, a Master will be liable to a penalty not exceeding one hundred dollars. (SGG: Order No.V, 1893)

Under the Brooke administration, “it is safe to say that in every area of Sarawak, the advent of Brooke rule and the consequent influx of Chinese traders reduced the Malay element to a position of marginal importance in commercial life” (Pringle 1970:287).

In Lundu District, the *nakoda* started participating in agricultural production in the 1890s, which brought them into the

⁴ For example, “When the Brooke regime first brought peaceful conditions to the Oya River, the purchasing and further refining and export of sago was in the hands of Malay traders. Today this is, for practical purposes, entirely in the hands of Chinese dealers.” (Morris 1953:44)

government-led production system. However, these Malay entrepreneurs maintained a rather non-capitalistic labor organization under their charismatic leadership of *nakoda*.

Some of the *nakoda* migrated to the Sarawak frontier to open new plantations. The majority of the coconut estates, however, were left with caretakers. *Nakoda* absentee landlords were not sedentary in nature, being engaged in trading and shipping business. The following account on coconut plantations in Santubong near Kuching sheds light on the management of estates:

It should also be mentioned here that where absentee landlords let others collect for them on a share basis, as is usual, quite frequently serious disputes arise and charges of cheating. This has tended to decrease since 1947, as young people have learned to "keep accounts" which the older folk seem in general to find more assuring. (Harrisson 1970:464-65)

Labor relations between the *nakoda* plantation owner and local villagers were loosely structured. Those who worked for the plantations were not "indentured laborers" by definition in terms of their relationship with their employer-cum-village headman. There was no strict labor contract between the *nakoda* and villagers. The stereotype of plantations in the colonies, where workers were strictly supervised by either plantation owners or on-site managers, did not exist. Labor relations were very much mystified by the local belief system where magico-, proto-religious elements surpassed a capitalistic employer-employee relation. A descendant of a female *nakoda*, Nakoda Hitam ("Black Captain"), who developed a coconut plantation at Labuan Gadong near Telok Melano, once told me, "there

was no *gaji* (wage) paid. The *ilmu*⁵ (magico-supernatural power) of Nakoda Hitam was so strong that people were simply happy working under her protection and followed her anywhere she went."

Charismatic Nakoda Hitam left many stories in the village and is often talked about by elder villagers.

Nakoda Hitam was a successful, brave nakoda. She was good at piloting various types of sailing vessels of the time, such as *kapal*, *motor* and *perahu*, and often reached as far as Singapore and Java. Not only could she read the wind, but she could control it in her favor and reached her destinations safely. Her crew members were all men. When Nakoda Hitam opened her mouth, everybody listened. Nobody dared to speak against her, for they were all scared of her.

Nakoda Hitam was a tall and strongly-built woman who usually wore trousers. She married seven times; six earlier marriages ended in divorce. Nakoda Hitam simply *ambil dan buang laki* [took in and then dumped her husbands]. Only with her seventh and the last husband, Jamal, did she stay married until her death. Jamal was said to be of Minangkabau origin. Unlike his outgoing wife, Jamal usually stayed home and did not seek to become a nakoda. They had no children.

Nakoda Hitam was capable of changing her looks in any way she wished. She could look evil. She could look pretty and innocent. One day she looked fifteen years old, and the next day she had a look of seventy years old. She sometimes borrowed the look of somebody she was acquainted with and had it as her own for one whole day (Ohta 1994:15).

When absentee landlords, who did not have any contractual relationship with their plantation workers, gave up their estates for some reason and never returned, the settlements left behind became "natural villages." Collective memory of the formation of each

⁵ According to A Malay-English Dictionary by R. J. Wilkinson, *ilmu* is defined as follows: *ilmu* = Knowledge; solid learning; science; magic; any branch of knowledge or magic. (i)(ii)(iii) omitted, (iv) In popular speech *ilmu* is used with a special suggestion of magic; cf. i. *panas* (black magic); *membuat i.* (to use sorcery). Branches of this *ilmu* are very numerous (Wilkinson 1959: 421).

community to which migrants came as a labor reserve for coconut plantations would subsequently have been lost within a few generations.

The withdrawal of the *nakoda* can be attributed to the low profitability of copra production, the difficulty of maintaining estates, and the disappearance of quality timber which *nakoda* had sought. Damage of young coconut trees by wild boars was a major hazard faced by Muslim planters, which was often reported by the district officers:

Haji Sleman, Tuah of Samunsam reported that several plantations at Kuala Samunsam had been destroyed by pigs. The plantations belonged to Haji Usin and other Sambas men. When I was last at Samunsam, Haji Usin had a plantation containing some 1,500 cocoanuts but had not fenced it in, though it would have been easy to do as he and his companions had planted on a narrow piece of land with the Samunsam running behind it. (SG May 1, 1899:118)

A number of plantations made two years ago at Kuala Samunsam and which last year appeared to be flourishing have been abandoned on account of the attacks of wild pigs though they might easily have been fenced in. (SG August 1, 1899:261)

Telok Melano, at the turn of this century, had already lost its initial characteristic as a coconut plantation village. The chain migration of villagers still continued, but the village was not under the management of Haji Taha and other *nakoda* entrepreneurs.

The population here [Telok Melano], although small, is still steadily increasing; more people arrive from the Dutch Island and settle in this part. The

banana estates⁶ have multiplied considerably since last year. (SG August 1, 1908:200)

As is apparent in the recollection of Pak Mundung, aged 95, who migrated to Telok Melano in 1908, Telok Melano had only five families in 1910s, all of whom are apical ancestors of present-day villagers. Villagers resided inland rather than on the coast, where coconut palms were planted. These five families lived separately in the forest. They had no choice but to live in the vicinity of their swidden padi fields to protect them from the constant intrusion of wild boars. Swidden padi cultivation, sporadic small-scale copra production and sale, and fishing for home consumption remained the basic economic features of Telok Melano. A sailing trip to Lundu or Sematan to sell copra took one whole day or more. They had to bring rice to cook on the boat in case the wind died and the journey took longer.

In the late 1910s, a Hong Kong-based logging company started operation in Serabang Bay. The Chinese capital changed the economy of the hinterland. By then, the *nakodas'* plantations had ceased to function in the region, and they simply gave way to the Chinese entrepreneurs.

Nenek Ayong, aged 96, whose father opened Telok Serabang and lived there from the age of 21 recalls:

⁶ Telok Melano villagers distinguish many kinds of banana (*pisang*): pisang tanduk, pisang raja, pisang siam, pisang otel, pisang emas, pisang emas kering, pisang bodol, pisang susu, pisang jernang, pisang awak.

Before the company came, the village was small. There were only two Chinese, Ah Chong, Serion, and four Malays, Mariam, Tarif, Pak Mentua and my father, Pak Baharuddin. Gradually people moved from Sematan, Kuching. One person came, two came and finally the village became crowded. Chinese, Malays, Dayaks entered the forest and worked timber. The forest used to be so thick that it was difficult to walk even on the coast. A ship from Hong Kong came to the village every 3 - 4 months to ship timber. There was a Chinese manager named Sin Jang and his clerk, Ah Chong. They built 20 houses for workers to stay. I sold home-made cake to these workers and I made good money, hundreds of dollars! These coolies quarreled often. A Chinese was killed in a fight and was buried at Telok Serabang. The timber was exhausted within five years.

Some Telok Melano villagers also went to Serabang to work as coolies. Another villager Pak Dol, in his late 70s, recalls the state of Telok Serabang and Telok Melano in the 1920s:

A long time ago, the life of Telok Serabang was very difficult. When I was small, there was no shop. We just looked for food, caught fish. Cultivating fields was also difficult. There were wild boars everywhere. They were many, just like the dogs running around our village now.

Telok Serabang villagers used to say "Telok Melano is like a village of Dayaks". At that time there was neither pepper nor cacao planted in Telok Melano. Villagers went to the forest in search of rattan canes. They just lived from hand to mouth everyday. They sold these canes in Sematan and bought rice, kerosene lamp oil, sugar and then went to the forest again, working timber. Life was hard. A logging company started operation in Telok Serabang. A Chinese named Hon Sin Jang opened the company. A ship from Hong Kong collected the timber. Telok Serabang became crowded with coolies. All the Telok Melano villagers who knew the logging at Serabang then have passed away, except Pak Piee. Pak Bodang was still young. Serabang people said "Pak Bodang was like a Dayak." He did not dress quite adequately. He wore his clothes until they got really dirty. Telok Melano villagers usually went down to Serabang and worked as coolies.

Telok Melano people cleared the forest for padi cultivation. That's all. From grandparents to parents to children to grandchildren, they cultivated hill padi only. No rubber, no clove... planting padi and catching fish only.

After the initial plantation economy ceased to function, Telok Melano's economy was subsistence oriented; they planted hill rice, exploited forest product, fished for their own consumption and cultivated coconut. Copra production was carried out on a small scale, but it did not generate a steady income.

As discussed in Chapter 4, when the regional rubber boom finally reached Lundu and Sematan in the late 1920s, coastal Malay communities failed to take advantage of it. After a short-lived boom, the government restricted the scale of production in order to comply with the International Rubber Agreement signed in 1934. According to Pak Mundung, colonial officials strictly prohibited new cultivation of rubber even in the hinterland communities such as Telok Melano and Telok Serabang.

There were people who planted *getah* (rubber) before the Japanese occupation. But only in Sematan, not in Telok Melano. We could get rubber seedlings from Sematan, but could not plant them. The Brooke government prohibited the cultivation of new rubber. If we planted rubber, we were punished (*kena hukum*). There were a few villagers who planted rubber in Telok Serabang, but all of their plants were immediately cut down by government officials.

Besides the INRA, practical calculations kept villagers from shifting from hill rice cultivation to rubber planting.

We chose to continue planting rice despite the rubber frenzy at that time. We did know that rubber sheets fetched a good market price. But we also knew that

rubber took a long time to mature. If we cleared the secondary jungle for rubber, where could we plant rice for next year's harvest? We could not afford to risk the labor involved in opening extra virgin forest. (Interview with Pak Mundung)

Telok Melano villagers thus continued their conventional life style during and after the rubber boom, cultivating padi inland, fishing for their own consumption, and selling copra to Sematan Chinese taukays to get cash necessary to purchase daily necessities such as kerosene oil and sugar.

After the Sarawak government began to implement a series of restriction schemes along with other rubber producing colonies, smuggling in the Lundu District became endemic, as we closely examined in Chapter 4. The smuggling of raw rubber sheets and other commodities from Dutch Borneo (and later from the Republic of Indonesia) remained the main underground industry in the border area until 1963, when the Malaysia-Indonesia military confrontation (*konfrontasi*) took place.

Telok Melano was no exception. At the height of this smuggling boom, two Chinese merchants moved to the village to receive smuggled goods. Situated right on the border, the village functioned as one of the smuggling entrepôts between the rubber-producing region of Dutch Borneo and the underground commodity market in Sarawak:

Before *Konfrontasi* it was crowded here in Telok Melano. There were boats equipped 25 cc, 50 cc and 100 cc engines. There were two Chinese shops here. Smugglers' shops! The shop owners smuggled things from Indonesia. A lot of motor-equipped ships came here everyday. Rubber from Indonesia was brought straight to Telok Melano. I do not remember how many tons of rubber... Before

Confrontation, from the 1950s to the 60s, 1961, '62, or '63, Telok Serabang and Telok Melano were really crowded. Those who worked as boat drivers and helped to smuggle rubber earned 150 ringgit per night. Rubber sheets and other commodities were shipped to Kuching by bigger ships. Chinese taukays waited for goods and bought them, then shipped them to Kuching. Rubber, pigs, rifles,... Things were smuggled into Sarawak from Tanah Hitam, Sambas, Pemangkat, Java...

I already had a child. Atik was not yet married. We stole gasoline from smugglers' boats. Atik went to the seashore. If a nightwatch was on duty, he just returned. Every night we stole gasoline from boats. Since we only used a small boat, we did not have to buy gasoline. We just stole it.

At high tide, they started to load their ships. There were soldiers on alert on the coast, looking for smugglers. Smugglers just waited when soldiers were nearby. There were two Chinese taukays here. Ni Hon and Cimi Kei. In Serabang, Ban Jo Hong. Rich Chinese. Look at my brother in Serabang. He worked as a driver for these taukays. His engine was 30 cc. He got 150 ringgit per night, dropping off and picking up people. His gold ring was this big! Most villagers were not brave enough to work with them. Sometimes they were shot by soldiers. (Interview with Pak Dol)

At that time smuggled rubber sheets fetched the price of 18 cents per kati, 18 ringgit per pikul. A pack of cigarette was 5 cents. One kati of sugar was 8 cents. If you had 90 cents, you could buy 1 gantang of rice. (Interview with Pak Mundung)

There were no governments, so that smuggling across the border flourished. It was before Malaysia and Indonesia came into existence. There was no cooperation between governments across the border. Nowadays, how come such a thing [smuggling] can no longer take place? People on this side of the border can telephone immediately. People on the other side of the border can call back immediately. No more today. Do not think of even trying it. The relationship between the Malaysian and Indonesian army is already back to normal. (Interview with Pak Dol)

Just like the old days when "pirates" from the Philippines attacked trading vessels sailing between Sarawak and Dutch territory, the Cape Dato area was again infested with maritime

smugglers whose activities were not confined within a single state boundary. This time they brought goods by sea across the border without paying export and import duties to the governments on either side. Authorities were well aware of the fact that from the 1930s to the early 1960s, Telok Melano and Telok Serabang functioned as major smuggling points, but they could do little about it:

At Telok Serabang it was reported that rumours had been received from Dutch Borneo to the effect that smugglers were now afraid to use the sea as means of importing rubber and tobacco. (SG Aug. 1, 1936:188)

It is almost impossible to carry out customs work really efficiently in the District owing to lack of transport. The areas which need watching and in which most of the smuggling activities take place are inaccessible by land; a sea going launch is required. (Lundu District Quarterly Report 3rd Quarter: July-September 1951)

Financial chaos over the border and a decrease in patrolling by the Indonesian police livened conditions in Lundu's second economy -- smuggling. Rubber began to come in as the illipe nut harvest ended, which helped to maintain the newly-awakened air of confidence in Lundu bazaar. It is said that this has been the heaviest smuggling since the boom time of eight or nine years ago and is expected rapidly increase towards the year end when swollen rivers make transport to the border an easy matter. The trade is highly organised and competitive. Big business from Kuching is represented and agents on this side of the border are equipped with portable radios to keep them in touch with the latest Singapore prices. (March 31, 1960:59)

Trade in the district relied mainly on goods imported from Indonesia, the major part of which was rubber which came through several smuggling points such as Kandaie, Biawak, Pueh, Telok Melano and Telok Sebang. (SG April 30, 1963:78)

The informal economy based on commodity smuggling bought profit to some villagers in Telok Melano. But beneficiaries were limited to those who risked working as boat drivers or coolies of the Chinese merchants. The long term effect of the smuggling economy on the agriculture of Telok Melano was profound. Witnessing tons of raw rubber sheets smuggled from the other side of Cape Dato, people naturally lost interest in planting rubber themselves. During the rubber boom of the 1950s, which was boosted by the war in the Korean Peninsula, villagers' response was minimal. A few villagers planted rubber in Telok Melano, but today only abandoned rubber gardens remain in the vicinity of the village. The scale of the gardens was much smaller than those of the inland Dayak, who actively engage in rubber cultivation in the wake of rubber boom of the fifties.

According to data on land use of Telok Melano in the fifties, which was obtained through the survey conducted by the Sarawak Museum (Harrison 1970: 464), 13 of the 15 households in Telok Melano had an average holding of 1.92 acres of coconut garden, 2.2 acres of padi fields, and 1.15 acres of fields for other crops, the remaining 2 households may have been those of two Chinese merchants engaged in smuggling, even though they were categorized as "Malays."

At the other end of the great bay, thirteen of the fifteen Malay households in Telok Melano have coconut gardens covering about 25 acres; compared with about 29 acres of padi, 15 of other crops. Further into Sarawak along the Tanjong Datu coastline, 9 of 12 Malay households have about 40 acres of coconuts; compared with 24 rice and rather under 10 of other crops. (Harrison 1970:464)

Unfortunately the above data does not specify what kind of "other crops" were cultivated on the 15 acres of fields. They are likely to have been traditional plants commonly cultivated in the village, such as banana, corn, cassava, engkabang, durian, rambutan, vegetables, and other fruit trees. A small number of rubber trees might have been included. The small plots of 1.15 acres on average may have been used to plant green vegetables, root crops, corn, bananas, and so on for daily consumption.

The history of Telok Melano portrayed above has revealed that the cultivation of coconut, the first cash crop ever introduced in the area, did not bear fruit. Then the villagers failed to take advantage of high rubber prices in the international market not once but twice. During the booms in the late 1930s and the early 1950s, peasants there were overwhelmed by the massive amount of raw rubber sheet smuggled in from across the border.

Throughout the rubber-producing countries of Southeast Asia, the rubber boom greatly contributed to the establishment of local peasantry. Smallholders were directly connected to the international market through their rubber cultivation. As local Sarawakian agriculture became increasingly specialized in rubber production, the hinterland community which failed to participate in the rubber economy further increased its dependence on swidden hill rice.

6. National and International Politics and Local Peasantry

Telok Melano, although situated in a remote corner of Sarawak, has gone through rough periods of national as well as international political turmoil.

Due to the remoteness of Telok Melano from the administrative center, the villagers' daily contact with colonial government officials was minimal. The weak, if not benign, sovereignty of the White Rajah regime was followed by daily struggle and hardship under the Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945. Villagers experienced severe shortage of necessities. They were forced to give away their rice to the authorities and had nothing but cassava and banana to eat. Selling rice at Sematan bazaar required permission from the Japanese military authority. Shortage of clothes forced them to make use of tree bark (*kulit kayu*). One village elder still recalls the Japanese occupation as the most difficult time in his life.

A change in village formation took place during the Japanese occupation. Until that time, villagers had lived separately in the forest near their rice fields. To minimize contact with Japanese soldiers who came to Telok Melano to extract rice, the villagers gradually moved their houses further inland. About 20 houses were built deep in the forest adjacent to the present Indonesian-Malaysian border. They did not form a village cluster, and the occupants engaged individually in swidden agriculture.

After the World War II, Sarawak was ceded to Great Britain and became a Crown Colony. In Telok Melano, villagers continued to

clear the jungle for hill rice cultivation. The British colonial administration which ruled Sarawak from 1946 to 1963 enforced strict regulation of forest exploitation. Since villagers were not allowed to cut down the virgin forest (*hutan tua*) at their disposal, they were forced to reuse the secondary forest (*jerame*) repeatedly.

Independence from white colonial rule in 1963 and the birth of the Federation of Malaysia were expected to bring prosperity to Telok Melano villagers. Life near the border was, however, soon jeopardized by *Konfrontasi* between Indonesia and Malaysia. Telok Melano, due to its proximity to the border, inevitably became entangled in the confrontation. After two villagers had been abducted and killed by the Indonesian army in early 1963, the Malaysian authorities ordered all villagers in Telok Melano and Telok Serabang to evacuate the area. Not exactly knowing to which side of the border they belonged, some fled to Indonesian territory, though the majority chose to go to the Malaysian side to avoid imminent danger. In some cases, family members and kinsmen went different ways. As they hurriedly escaped with the few belongings they managed to bring to their boats, they saw their houses burnt down by the Indonesian military. Most villagers of the two villages moved to Sematan, Lundu, or Kuching.

The peace agreement signed on August 11, 1966 between Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur brought *Konfrontasi* to an end. In 1967, villagers were first allowed to go back to the villages during daytime to collect coconut seeds under strict Malaysian military supervision. Two years after the peace agreement, the authorities finally allowed the villagers to resettle at Telok Melano and Telok

Serabang. In Telok Melano a headman and two others and their families were the first to return. Gradually others followed suit.

Before the confrontation, there were 20 families in Telok Melano. Six families settled in their new locales and chose not to return. In addition, five persons passed away without seeing their former homes again. Village demography thus changed. The five-year evacuation also allowed swidden fields to regenerate to thick secondary forest, which contributed to the maintenance of the low population pressure in the settlement. Villagers were thus able to continue to exploit *jerame tua* (old secondary forest) for swidden agriculture.

Within a decade of the end of *Konfrontasi*, another tragedy struck Telok Melano. A village man was shot to death at his home by communist guerrillas who were hiding in the jungle near the border. The presence of communists in the surrounding forest was known to villagers for a few years prior to the incident. Some villagers even seem to have had a rather amicable relationship with the communists. They recall that "communists did not steal but only bought foodstuff at a reasonable price." "Communists were mostly Chinese, but some Dayaks and Malays of mixed blood were among them. There were women, too. They were well-educated. There were even a doctor and an accountant."

However, friction became inevitable as communist-hunting by both Malaysian and Indonesian authorities intensified in the border area. The authorities ordered villagers to report immediately if they encountered a communist. After incidents in which communists were killed or arrested in the Cape Dato area, the communists

suspected betrayal by villagers. For the villagers it was no longer good to provide necessities to communists against the government's order. As suspicion mounted on both sides, tension grew, which in the end triggered the tragic incident in which a villager of Telok Melano was shot to death by the communists who suspected that he was an informant, responsible for their comrades' arrest and death. It happened in the early evening in November 1977 at his home, in front of his wife and infant son. After the shooting, the village was on immediate alert. Although villagers did not flee this time, many countermeasures were immediately taken by the government. Telok Melano and Telok Serabang became literally a front-line of defense against communist aggression: a volunteer village security force was formed, a rifle was provided to each household, and a radio transmitter was installed at the village police station to alert the central authority in an emergency. Villagers were ordered by the Kuching authorities to reconstruct their homes close to each other on the coast, where previously only two houses stood. The communist activities continued until 1988, when the last guerrillas surrendered to the authorities.

The five-year evacuation from the village during the Confrontation and the subsequent communist activities had long lasting effects on the agricultural mode of production in Telok Melano. The Impact of these historical events will be discussed in the following chapter.

7. The Dislocation of Hinterland Peasantry in the State System

The history of Telok Melano village is in one sense a microcosm of the Lundu District discussed in previous chapters, yet it presents a more extreme case of displacement and dissociation. With a view directed outward from local historical experiences, or rather “memories,” which have not or would never become part of an official history of the state, the above reconstruction of village history from the 1890s has revealed how villagers have coped with a web of complex, changing center-periphery relation under the state power, both colonial and post-colonial. The spatial exclusion of a hinterland peasant community, as represented by Telok Melano, was caused by two kinds of reconfiguration of space in the state system, the economic and the political.

The formation of Telok Melano as a peasant village in state territory was a product of the state's mobilization of labor. The village was designated by the Rajahs as an outsiders' village, where only non-Sarawakians were allowed to migrate to work the land. Under the economic policies implemented by the second Rajah, Charles Brooke, the formerly pirate-infested coast between Cape Dato and Sematan was developed into a belt of coconut plantations, and Malay communities were established which functioned as labor reserve for estate management. Plantations were mainly developed with the foreign entrepreneurship of the *nakoda* merchants and Malay peasants, both from Dutch Borneo territory.

The demise of the *nakoda* class at the turn of the 20th century, however, brought the dislocation of these Malay peasants from the

commodity production sphere. The rapid withdrawal of the *nakoda* from plantation management deprived plantation workers-cum-villagers of their means of production and led to their turn to subsistence cultivation of hill padi. As the state gradually succeeded in fixing its borders through its control of the movement of people and commodities, Telok Melano villagers were left stranded on the frontier of Sarawak. Land registration policies bound the villagers to an unproductive coastal ecological niche which was good only for coconut cultivation. Their mobility was then completely curtailed by the immigration and naturalization policies.

From the 1920s, with the rise of the rubber economy and the subsequent implementation of international production restrictions, Sarawak was incorporated into the global system of commodity production led by the British and the Dutch governments. However, due to its geographical location on the border between two states, the Cape Dato area escaped state economic control and functioned as one of the major transnational smuggling points of raw rubber in Lundu District. The region became a mere point of passage in illegal commodity trafficking and never saw the growth of rubber-producing communities throughout the rubber boom. In the process of the center-periphery structuring of the capitalistic world system, Borneo was incorporated into the rubber production system, which was governed by international fluctuation of the market price. However, spatial dislocation of hinterland communities in the state did not allow them to be even in the periphery of world-wide commodity production system; rather, they remained an

economically abandoned hinterland between two states, where locals failed to participate in cash crop cultivation.

Telok Melano has also experienced difficult periods in its history because of national or international political turmoil. A series of political conflicts not only took the lives of Telok Melano villagers but also fundamentally damaged the local economic formation. More than four decades of violence, from the Japanese military occupation (1941-45), post-independence *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation) (1963-66), to the guerrilla activity of Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) (1970s-late 1980s), paralyzed both the agriculture of Telok Melano and the regional market economy.

In the following chapter, I shall explore how the spatial dislocation molded the ecological and economic niche with which the villagers have to cope for survival. Having examined historically why they came to live in absolute isolation at the margin of the state, I shall move on to depict how they continue to survive against all the odds in today's Telok Melano.

CHAPTER 8. COASTAL MALAY COMMUNITY AND ITS SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

1. Ecological and Economic Dislocation of Telok Melano

As seen in previous chapters, foreign laborers from the Sambas region of Dutch Borneo were mobilized under the Brooke administration to develop the whole coast between Cape Dato and Sematan into a belt of coconut plantations. With the opening of estates, more than a dozen Malay communities were formed. However, after the decline of Malay entrepreneurship, the rise of rubber as a new commodity in the world market, and a series of political upheavals which paralyzed the local economy, these locals were left out in the barren hinterland and had no choice but to rely on swidden rice cultivation for their survival. In this chapter, I shall examine the ecology and the economy of Telok Melano, one of the two remaining Malay villages that were established back in the *nakoda* era of the late 19th century. The examination of the land-based adaptation of the sea-faring Malays will give us a clue to understand the genesis of the ethnic and national dislocation of the Malays of Telok Melano, which will be explored in Chapters 9 and 10.

2. Ecological Characteristics of Telok Melano: Three Agro-Economic Zones

Agriculture in Sarawak is carried out in widely different agro-economic zones. For simplicity these can be grouped into three: 1) the coastal and riverine zones, incorporating narrow coastal, deltaic and alluvial plains in which wet rice, coconut, sago, some rubber, oil palm, and a range of other crops are grown; 2) the

midland zone, in which low hills are interspersed with small alluvial plains, and crops include wet rice, rubber, pepper, cocoa, oil palm and others; and 3) the inland zone, predominantly dissected hills and mountains, but including small inland valleys and intermountain basins (e.g., the Bario highlands), supporting the cultivation of hill rice, some wet rice, rubber, pepper, and some cocoa. It is important to realize that none of these zones is particularly favourable for agriculture, by Southeast Asian standards. (Cramb 1989: 6-7)

Located at the tip of Sarawak, the area adjacent to Cape Dato, which forms a watershed between Indonesia and Malaysia, has a peculiar ecological composition. It includes, on a smaller scale, all three of the ecological zones mentioned above. In such an ecological setting, Telok Melano villagers have chosen a distinctive mode of subsistence activities.

3. Land and Sea: A Land-Based Coastal Community

The traditional occupation of the Malays is fishing and their ecological niche is largely confined to sandy coastal areas, swamp land, and mudbanks (Harrisson 1970:59). Among coastal Malay communities in southwestern Sarawak, Telok Melano and Telok Serabang are quite different from other coastal Malay villages in that its economic activity largely depends on land-based activities rather than fishing (Harrisson 1970:59, 79-80).

For instance, Telok Melano's strong orientation toward land was formerly reflected in the residential patterns. Currently, the village compound is located near the seashore giving new visitors the impression of "a typical fishing village". With the exception of a few houses located inland, the settlement lies along the path

connecting Telok Melano with neighboring village of Telok Serabang and with Temajuk village in Indonesia.

It should be noted that this location of Telok Melano near the beach is rather new. Seventeen years ago, after a villager had been shot to death by communist guerrillas who were hiding in the jungle near Melano Bay, villagers were ordered by the authorities to relocate their houses near the sea for protection. A coconut garden where only two houses previously stood was chosen as the site of the new village compound. Before Telok Melano assumed its present shape, villagers lived separately in the jungle, cultivating swidden rice fields.

As discussed in the previous chapters, Telok Melano was established by Malays from Dutch Borneo and the Natuna Islands who migrated there under the leadership of *nakodas* around the 1890s. They originally came as foreign laborers and cultivated coconuts on *tepi laut* (the edge of the sea). They also cultivated padi adjacent to their coconut fields and built their houses in the middle of the coconut gardens. Many pioneer settlers are known to have lived quite close to the seashore. Their locations are still remembered because each has old durian trees which the pioneers planted. Some houses were located between the present village compound of Telok Melano and Telok Serabang, less than a mile from the sea.

After initially residing on the shore, settlers moved inland. Two factors were responsible for their move. One was the expansion of their padi fields, the other was the damage caused to their crops by wild boars. After the initial clearing of the coastal fields, swidden farms were gradually moved further inland where

unexploited primary forest was still abundant. If padi fields far from home were left unattended, wild boars, which were abundant in the forest, would destroy the crop. So some decided to build their houses near their rice fields in the forest.

The move inland progressed during the Japanese occupation in the early 1940s. Villagers fled inland to minimize contact with Japanese soldiers, who frequented the region in search of rice. At that time there were about 20 houses in the primary forest adjacent to the present Malaysia-Indonesia border, far from the sea. These were scattered through the forest rather than congregated together.

Even after the Japanese surrender in 1945, villagers continued to reside inland, engaging in hill rice cultivation. Under the British colonial government, the opening of primary forest for planting padi was strictly forbidden, so villagers had to work the same secondary forest repeatedly. The legacy of this exploitation remains today; a vast area around the Indonesia-Malaysia border is treeless, barren-looking, and overgrown with *lalang* (*Imperata* sp.) and other weeds. This is where the villagers' forefathers lived and cultivated during the Japanese and British eras.

As mentioned in previous chapters, during *Konfrontasi*, villagers were forced to leave their homes and settled in Sematan, Lundu, Santubong and other places. When they returned to the village after the five-year evacuation, they again chose to live separately. With the exception of a small cluster of houses near the graveyard not far from the sea, their houses were scattered both along the coast and inland. Then, in 1977, a village compound was formed

artificially following the government's order to congregate at the present village location.

If we examine the case of a specific household, the mobile character of this Malay community becomes more apparent. Pak Sute, who is in his early 60s, has moved seven times since his boyhood:

1. near the beach of Melano Bay (early childhood)
2. inland (boyhood)
3. near the present international border (Japanese occupation period)
4. six-year evacuation to Sematam (*Konfrontasi* era)
5. near Melano River (after evacuation)
6. near village graveyard
7. present village location (communist era)
8. near the beach of Melano Bay (present)

He has been quite mobile, although in many instances he was forced to move rather than chose to do so. It should be noted that Pak Sute and his family prefer not to live near the beach. Most villagers have relocated as many times as Pak Sute, if not more. They, likewise, say that they traditionally lived inland and preferred to do so. This land-orientation is quite strong in their ethos. According to the village head, in the old days, those who were reluctant to cultivate land were regarded as lazy. Villagers who fished through the night and slept during the daytime were ridiculed. The land has been the source of livelihood in Telok Melano for generations.

4. Population Pressure and Historical Experience in Telok Melano

Several historical and socio-economic factors are responsible for the maintenance of low population pressure in Telok Melano, which has contributed to the persistence of swidden agriculture for more than a century. In the following, I shall examine demographic change and the mode of land use in the village.

4-1. Population Increase in Telok Melano over a Century

Though no demographic record of the village's past is available, it is possible to speculate about demographic change in Telok Melano through the recollection of village elders.¹

The earliest information on the village population is available from Pak Mundung, aged 95, who migrated to Telok Melano at the age of 8. When he first arrived in Telok Melano with his father, there were only 5 households. By the time the Japanese came to Sarawak (1941-1945), the number had increased to approximately 20. At the time of Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation in 1963, all 21 households were ordered to evacuate the village. Fifteen of them had returned by the end of the 1960s, but the other 6 households never did so.²

¹ Elders usually recall the number of households, rather than the population. Years are estimated based on crucial events in the village life, such as the Japanese occupation and *Konfrontasi*.

² The destinations of evacuee households that later returned to Telok Melano are as follows:

Santubong	1
Kuching	1
Pugu	4
Siru (Sg. Kilong)	6
Setoh	1

Within some 50 years since the end of World War II, the number of households has doubled. As of November 1994, Telok Melano has 41 households (210 persons). The increase is due to natural proliferation and the formation of independent households by the younger generations and to immigration.³

4-2. Under-exploitation of Forest and the Persistence of Swidden

Agriculture

Although the population has increased over the years, it still remains small for the area the village occupies. The village compound is still surrounded with accessible virgin forest and the old secondary forest.

Two historical factors have affected the mode of land use in Telok Melano: the restriction placed on exploitation of the forest by the colonial government, and the evacuation during *Konfrontasi* and the subsequent population decrease. In addition, two socio-economic factors are also responsible for the under-exploitation of the forest land: the lack of mechanical agricultural tools, and the weak cooperative ethics in the local agricultural practice.

Because the terrain often utilized for swidden rice cultivation is steep, mechanical devices such as bulldozers and power tillers are difficult to use. There are no roads connecting the village with the local town nor boats large enough to carry bulky agricultural machinery. Even if transportation were available, it would be too

³ During my fieldwork, two families left the village. Due to the death of her husband, a widow and her children went back to her parents' home in Kuching. The other left to seek employment in Sematan.

expensive for subsistence farmers. Even a chain saw is seldom used for clearing swidden fields due to its cost as well as cost of fuel.

Inactive agricultural cooperation (*gotong royong*) can also be attributed to the low degree of forest utilization. Except for planting padi seeds, all stages of hill rice cultivation are carried out by individual household members. For instance, clearing the field, the most labor-intensive of all the phases of hill rice cultivation, is usually conducted by a household head and his sons (if any), taking 30 days or more for one plot on average.

According to the villagers, before the evacuation caused by *Konfrontasi*, *gotong royong* was practiced among community members for almost all stages of swidden rice cultivation. The evacuation and the demographic change during the military confrontation brought an end to the institutionalized work-sharing along with agricultural rituals.

5. Swidden Rice Cultivation in Telok Melano

In the western region of the First Division of Sarawak, Telok Melano and its neighboring village of Telok Serabang are the only two Malay peasant communities where the swidden cultivation of hill rice (*padi bukit*) is practiced. There are no irrigated rice fields in the village, except for one small plot near the stream, where a family is experimenting with wet rice (*padi paya*) cultivation.

5-1. The Techniques of Swidden Rice Cultivation

The swidden rice cultivation of the Malays in Telok Melano consists of the following phases:

- 1) clearing undergrowth and felling jungle (late July - early September)
- 2) firing fields (late August - mid September)
- 3) planting padi (early September - early October)
- 4) weeding
- 5) harvesting (early March - early April)

The commencement of the agricultural year in Telok Melano is not marked by any special natural phenomenon such as the dawn rising of the Pleiades as in the case of the Ibans (Freeman 1955:40). The operation is wholly individualistic: neither consultation among villagers nor agricultural rites are held before any of the above phases. However, the agricultural cycle proceeds at about the same time each year since there are two distinct seasons, wet and dry, in that part of Borneo, and no agricultural work is possible without taking the changing weather into account.

1) *Clearing the Undergrowth and Felling the Jungle*

The clearing of undergrowth (*tebas*: v.f. *nebas*) and felling of bigger trees (*tebang*, v.f. *nebang*) begin in late July through early September. Only when *nebas* is completed does *tebang* begin.

Villagers distinguish three kinds of forest land. Primary forest is called *hutan tua* (literally "old forest"). Secondary forest is classified into two categories according to its age. *Jerame tua* is

old secondary forest, which is usually over 6-7 years old; and *jerame muda* is younger secondary forest.

The duration of clearing and felling operations depends on the kind of forest and the size of the swidden field (*umah*). For instance, it takes an adult approximately one week to clear the undergrowth of one acre of secondary forest (*jerame*). Felling trees (*tebang*) takes another week. *Nebas* and *tebang* are monotonous and backbreaking work, carried out manually, with *akar upak*, a stick for lifting the bottom part of the undergrowth, and *parang*, a machete.⁴ It involves cutting ferns whose roots are tightly entangled with other weeds. *Nebas* can be done by women as well.

After cultivation and fallowing, *jerame* appears as a patchwork or mosaic of fields in various stages of regeneration. For instance, a large plot of cultivated land cleared by five villagers during the 1993 agricultural season had mixed-*jerame muda* (aged 1 year, 3 years, and 5 years) and *jerame tua* (aged 6-8 years and over 10 years) side by side.

In old *jerame* of, say, 10 years, trees reach 15-20 cm in diameter, which villagers cut down with 10-15 strokes of the *parang* machete.⁵ Cutting vines encircling trees is another tedious task. They must be removed completely, otherwise a cut tree may remain half-fallen, suspended in vine mesh.

⁴ With a chain saw, one acre of *jerame* can be cleared within a day or two. During my research in Telok Melano, however, I observed only one instance where a chain saw was used for *tebang*.

⁵ For cutting trees of more than 30 cm in diameter, villagers still use the word *clearing* (*nebas*), not felling trees (*tebang kayu*), in case of secondary forest, *jerame*.

Opening *hutan tua*, virgin forest, is called *rimba*. Working on *hutan tua* is far more labor intensive. For example, in order to fell approximately 7,500 square meters of primary forest, Pak Tua in his 40s worked a week to clear the undergrowth and a whole month to fell trees manually with an ax, *kapak*.⁶ Compared to the secondary forest, clearing the undergrowth is less troublesome, because the dense forest canopy suppresses the growth of weeds and ferns.

To fell bigger trees, a temporary scaffold (*panggal*) is built to give access to the upper trunk, which is smaller in diameters and easier to work with. With an ax, a tree of 1 meter in diameter can be felled in 30 minutes. Then big branches have to be cut from the trunk to speed drying. Even a skilled and industrious villager can fell only three trees a day.⁷

The intensive labor associated with *rimba* discourages many villagers. In 1992, six men opened primary forest. In 1993, only two did so. The plots opened in 1993 are on a steep hill about 20 minutes' walk from the village compound. The remaining 25 villagers who opened swiddens that year worked on secondary forests. No one tackled *hutan tua* in 1995. This is indicative of how hard it is for villagers to clear virgin forest manually.

Clearing the undergrowth and felling the jungle, whether *jerame* or *hutan tua*, are carried out by individual families. Villagers do not organize work-sharing groups. Likewise, they seldom hire outside labor for their own swidden farms. In the 1993

⁶ In addition to *kapak*, *bliong* (ax) was used for chopping down trees.

⁷ When a chain saw is used, felling a bigger tree takes less than 10 minutes. However, the cost of a chain saw and the cost of fuel prevent villagers from using it for swidden operation. For instance, one day operation for felling the primary forest requires 1 gallon of gasoline (M\$6).

season, there was only one case where someone was hired for clearing *jerame*. Mak Ngah, a widow aged 47, whose two children are both away from village for schooling and work, always has a problem finding help with her meager rice field. She paid M\$42 to an Indonesian man for clearing and firing her secondary jungle. For Mak Ngah, whose husband was killed by communists 17 years ago, M\$42 accounts for almost half of her monthly income, most of which comes from the government's allowance for a widow with school-age children.

The other case observed in 1994 was that of a young couple who run a village grocery shop. They were overwhelmed by their first attempt to clear *jerame* and hired a fellow villager who owns a chain saw. Besides the cost of fuel, they paid M\$10 a day for the labor.

The lack of rotational work-sharing among households and the high cost of hiring extra-household labor deter over-exploitation of both *jerame* and *hutan tua* for swidden cultivation in Telok Melano. The under-exploitation of agricultural fields is also closely related to the stagnation of cash crop production in the village. This issue will be discussed later in section 6-3.

2) Firing the Fields

A good burn of felled *hutan tua* or *jerame* is prerequisite for a good padi harvest. The success of the burn (*tenu api*) solely depends on the good weather after felling the forest. It takes about two weeks for fallen *jerame* to dry. In the case of *hutan tua*, it is

necessary to wait for at least one month for a good burn. Inadequate burning results in both quick regeneration of weeds and the need for backbreaking work to remove half-burnt tree trunks and branches from the field. The firing is carried out in August and September at the end of the dry season (*musim panas*), usually after a long drought (*kemarau*).

In 1994, the first firing was done on August 23 and the last in late September. Firing that year turned out to be quite successful thanks to an exceptionally long drought. Between mid-August and mid-September, which is the most crucial period for firing, it rained only five times including short, insignificant showers. A dry spell with scorching sunshine twisted and buckled the bark of fallen trees, and turned the leafy floor of the jungle brown.

Before setting fire, a *rintis* (path/ditch) needs to be cut around the field. Dry branches and weeds are removed from this zone to prevent fire spreading to adjacent cultivated fields and forest. Firing requires careful reading of the wind. It is usually begun about noon. In the morning wind is usually still, so villagers wait until midday, when *angin laut* (wind from the sea) starts blowing from the east. Firing should be completed before 2 o'clock when the wind suddenly changes to *angin barat* (west wind).

Unlike clearing the forest, firing is carried out by a team of men and women, young and old, who have different tasks. They are: those who set fires with *sutoh*, a large torch made from coconut leaves and bamboo, those who extinguish fires at the edges of fields by beating with the lower stem of coconut tree, and *orang bomba*, "fire fighters" who carry herbicide spray tanks filled with water.

The fire is set at several different places by men walking backward against the wind. They shout “hoo, hoo” at the top of their voice. This is not a warning signal to fellow villagers but rather meant to encourage the spirit of the wind.⁸ Setting the fire must be done against the wind, otherwise fire setters would be chased by blazing fire.⁹

3) *Planting Padi: Dibbling and Sowing*

After the firing, villagers wait for rain, which is said to soften the dry earth. If the burning was done well, the process of sowing is greatly simplified. If not, unburned brushwood should be cleared (*buang kayu*). Planting consists of two procedures, dibbling and sowing. There is a clear division of labor in this operation: men dig holes on the field with a dibbling-stick (*tegal*; v.f. *negal*), and women follow behind dropping seeds into the holes (*meneh padi*). The following data may be of some help in understanding the sowing and dibbling procedures in Telok Melano:

⁸ A small ritual called *Sembahyang Hajat* is also carried out to call the wind when firing a plot. The same ritual is conducted to quiet waves at the sea or to ask for rain during a draught.

⁹ There have been several casualties in neighboring villages due to neglect of this basic rule.

sowing

No. of seeds per hole (average)	20.7
Range in No. of seeds per hole	13 - 31
No. of holes sown per minute	35.2
Range in No. of holes sown per minute	22 - 45
Distance (approx.) of hand from hole	32 cm
No. of holes sown per handful of seed (average)	11.2
Range in No. of holes sown per handful of seed	8 - 17

dibbling

No. of dibbling holes per square meter (average)	16
No. of holes dibbled in one minute (average)	42.2
Range in No. of holes dibbled in one minute	36 - 51
Range in the depth of holes	6-9 cm
Range in the diameter of holes	4-6 cm

The above data were collected when 7 women and 5 men worked to plant padi. The operation was completed in 3-4 hours. The size of the field was about 0.5 ha and the amount of padi planted was 23 *gantang* (69 kg).

This is a part of *gotong royong* (work-sharing) organized by several households. Planting padi is the only stage where agricultural labor is shared by Telok Melano villagers. They work on one household's field one day, another's the next day, and so on in succession until all participating households' fields have been planted. The host family offers homemade cakes and beverages to all workers. If planting is not finished in a day, task will be finished by the individual household.

Thirteen kinds of padi seed (*ampak*) are currently cultivated by Telok Melano villagers: *padi hitam*, *padi ruwan*, *padi Sematan*, *padi narjas*, *padi melawi*, *padi mokok*, *padi sanee*, *padi bajak*, *padi kunpang*, *padi pulut*, *padi serendah*, *padi putih arus*, and *padi berat*

kasar. As cash crops, cucumber, pumpkin, and corn are interspersed on the same land with padi. All of them are harvested before the padi ripens.

4) *Weeding swidden fields*

One of the least pleasant chores with which swidden cultivators have to cope is weeding. The rainy season (October-March) begins around the time of padi planting. Rain is necessary for the growth of padi, but it also promotes rapid growth of weeds. The young secondary forest, especially if it has been used continuously for cultivation, is prone to the invasion of *alang* (*Imperata sp.*) and other fast-growing weeds.¹⁰

Immediately after burning the land, this most irksome operation starts. The months of November and December are critical for the growth of young padi. Clearing the undergrowth, felling the jungle, firing fields, and planting padi are standard operations which every household must perform to proceed to the next phase. Weeding, however, is not an absolute requirement, though it is desirable. Therefore, one finds wide variations among families in Telok Melano in the time and effort invested in weeding. Villagers say, "*Mun alang kuat, padi sik manis* " ("if weed is thick in the field, rice is not sweet"), but not all practice frequent weeding.

Unlike the case of the Iban reported by Freeman (Freeman 1955), villagers in Telok Melano use a machete (*parang*) only. The

¹⁰ For instance, *alang* in our kitchen garden grew 30-40 cm in 10 days in mid-February 1994.

short-bladed bush-knife used for weeding by the Ibans is not found here. While weeding, villagers often make a fire, using rubber latex as a starter. Although its effectiveness is greatly questionable, the smoke is believed to drive away vermin.

In a rather neglected plot, situated quite far from the village compound, the owner did not give much attention to weeding. The following is information on weeding given by one of the least devoted villagers. The plot was approximately 900 square meters. Between seeding in late October 1993 and harvesting in late March 1994, weeding was done on a total of 6 days (Nov. 13, Nov. 27, Dec. 5, and Dec. 29-31). The last weeding in December was carried out on three consecutive days by two Indonesian women hired for M\$ 4 a day with lunch.

The successive exploitation of the same field leads to quick weed growth and the decline of padi productivity. The mode of land utilization, i.e., frequency of cropping and length of fallow period, which determines the productivity of rice, will be discussed later.

5) *Harvesting*

A whole month between early March and early April is devoted to harvesting rice in Telok Melano. Every day people come back from their fields with harvested ears of padi (*tankai*) in their baskets and spread them on mats for drying. The commencement of harvesting (*potong padi*) is marked by no special ritual. The whole business is undertaken individually, although villagers know exactly who has started and ended harvesting.

The ears of padi are cut manually with a small hand knife, or *ketam*, which has a thin blade of tin. The blade is set firmly in the center of wooden handle. The handle is held upright in the palm of the hand, with the blade protruding slightly from between the second and third fingers; the stem of the padi plant is grasped between the two upper fingers and the thumb a short distance below the lowest node of the panicle, then, by exerting slight tension and sudden pressure with the fingers, the stem is severed.

Reaping at normal speed yields some 40 panicles per minute. This speed is greatly reduced easily when the crop ripens unevenly, since reapers have to choose only the ripe panicles and take care not to step on unripened padi. Cutting panicles and putting them in a basket tied to the waist is monotonous, hard labor. Padi ears dampened by rain are hard to sever, so that reaping is usually carried out under the blazing sun.

Harvested padi panicles are immediately dried on woven mats made from *apong* (*Nipa fruticans*) or on plastic sheets. When dry, they are threshed by treading. Villagers stand on the mat and repeatedly gather up panicles with the instep and inside of the foot and ankle. In this process of *tinjak padi* (stepping on rice), the grain (*ampak*) is gradually separated from the branches of the panicles.

Separated *ampak* is next winnowed. Due to damage by birds, mostly sparrows, an appreciable number of *ampak* are empty,¹¹ and these have to be sorted out before storing. Winnowing consists of skillful tossing of grains in a large circular basket. Gradually empty

¹¹ For example, the farm which I worked with my adopted mother had more than 5% empty *ampak*.

husks are tossed over the edge of the basket, leaving behind a heap of sound padi. The other method of winnowing observed in the village is to tip the grains down onto the mat from the basket raised above the head of the bearer. When wind is strong enough, the empty husks are blown away from the main stream of sound padi.

Repetition of this action results in heap of rice on the ground with light empty husks scattered around. These padi grains are again dried (*jumor*) in the heat of the sun before final storage. When the grains are dried under the blazing sun, one day of drying is enough to remove excess moisture.

5-2. Land Use and the Productivity of Swidden Fields

As discussed above, clearing the undergrowth and felling the forest is the most labor intensive phase of swidden padi cultivation. Under normal circumstances, villagers in Telok Melano prefer to use the secondary forest because it is usually nearer to the village and easier to work than primary jungle.

Continued utilization of cultivated land, especially the repeated planting of padi on the same field, results in rapid weed growth and a drastic decline in productivity. Swiddens are thus usually cultivated for only one or two years and then left fallow. Although the fallow period depends on the individual cultivator, it is usually between one and eight years.

Due to the coastal setting, cultivated fields in the vicinity of the village are quite sandy. The sandy soil, called *tanah segup*, is planted only with coconut, pineapple, and watermelon. Inland

cultivated fields, though of slightly better soil quality, tend contain admixture of barren sand. Elsewhere, they often contain either small rocks or clayey soil of high viscosity. Continuous utilization of the poor quality land for swidden cultivation results in the rapid decline in soil nutrition. Thus, villagers who cultivate padi on soil of inferior quality usually use a plot for only one year, then leave it in fallow. In the case of fields reclaimed from *hutan tua*, some villagers use a plot for two consecutive years, but the harvest drastically declines in the second year.

Two crucial factors affect the yield of padi: the amount of padi seeds (unhulled rice) planted, and the productivity of the swidden field. Most previous assessments of padi yield have been based on the average yield per acre of field. In the course of fieldwork in Telok Melano, I realized that the assessment based on padi yield per acre did not make much sense. The yield per acre greatly varies according to the amount of padi planted, the quality of soil and the density of the weed growth. The number of holes dibbled and the number of padi grains sown in the holes also differ greatly. Two adjacent rice fields I observed in 1993, for example, differed greatly in terms of the amount of rice planted. Both were located in *jerame* (secondary forest) on a hillside. In one, a 2-acre plot, 23 *gantang* (69 kg) of rice was planted by *gotong royong*. In the other, a 1-acre plot, 20 *gantang* (60 kg) rice was planted by family members. Thus, the ratio of padi input *per acre* between these two fields is almost 2 : 1.

The following figures show a great variation in the amount of rice planted *per field* in the 1993 season (figures in *gantang* = 3 kg).

Pak Tua	1 0	primary forest
Pak Dunan	2 0	old secondary forest
Abu	9	old secondary forest
Pak Juli	2 0	old secondary forest
Pak Putih	14	young secondary forest
Pak Lon Mat	1 0	on average (total of 40 in 4 fields) young & old secondary forest
Pak Saii	3 0	young secondary forest
Pak Rena	14	secondary forest
Haji Muren	1 1	secondary forest
Pak Bogo	2 8	old secondary forest
Pak Sute	2 0	old secondary forest
Gondol	1 0	old secondary forest
Mak Ngah	2.5	on average (total 5 in 2 fields) young & old secondary forest

According to villagers, planting 1 *gantang* (3 kg) of rice seeds yields 1 *guni besar*¹² (100 kg) of unhusked rice. This traditional estimate of rice input/output ratio, however, appears optimistic in the light of today's actual yields. The table below summarizes padi yields (unhusked rice harvested per *gantang*) in the 1992 season.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Pak Putih	50 kg/gantang	40 gantang - 2000 kg	(1000 kg)	secondary forest
Pak Saii	10 kg/gantang	20 gantang - 600 kg	(300 kg)	young secondary forest
Pak Rena	100 kg/gantang	14 gantang - 1400 kg	(700 kg)	old secondary forest
Pak Tua	78 kg/gantang	13 gantang - 1000 kg	(500 kg)	primary forest
Pak Mail	100 kg/gantang	3 gantang - 300 kg	(150 kg)	old secondary forest
Mak Ngah	50 kg/gantang	2 gantang - 100 kg	(50 kg)	young secondary forest
	38 kg/gantang	3 gantang - 115 kg	(57.5 kg)	young secondary forest

¹² Guni ("sack") besar ("big") is a large plastic bag used for keeping agricultural produce.

- (1) output (yield of unhusked rice) ratio/input (padi planted)
- (2) amount of padi planted (*gantang*) - yield of unhusked rice
- (3) net amount after husking
- (4) kind of cultivated field

As shown above, the padi yield in no case exceeded traditional 100 kg/*gantang* ratio and in most cases was far less. The village elders often recall good old days when they had better harvests. The oldest of them, Pak Mundung talks about the pioneering days in Telok Melano: "We planted padi every year using only *hutan tua* (the primary forest). Planting 1 *gantang* yielded 3 or 4 *guni besar*".

Such a yield is exceptionally good and could be the record-high in Pak Mundung's life as a rice cultivator. While not matching this record, the villagers seemed to have planted several dozen *gantang* of rice each year and enjoyed quite good harvests until the late 1970s.

Planting half a *gantang* of padi could easily yield 1 *guni besar*. My house was full of large bags of stored rice which were piled up to the ceiling before *Konfrontasi* (1963).

Villagers worked on padi, coconut and rubber. My father and his fellow villagers never bought rice. They opened *hutan tua* and planted 30 *gantang* every year. Only lazy people opened *jerame*. When my husband was killed by communists (1977), he left 23 *guni besar* (2,300 kg) of padi. People usually planted 20-30 *gantang* of padi at that time.

In today's Telok Melano, only one out of 39 households maintains 100% self-sufficiency in rice every year. A few others are nearly self-sufficient, although they rely on packed rice sold at Sematan or Indonesian Temajuk for one or two months before the harvest. According to the caretaker of the village-owned electric

husking machine, the yearly consumption of unhusked rice is about 350 kg - 400 kg (3.5 - 4 *guni besar*) per household. The majority of families in Telok Melano produce about half that amount, which means they have to buy commercial rice for half a year after consuming their own.¹³ The factors responsible for the decreasing yield will be discussed later along with the current condition of cash crop production in Telok Melano.

6. Cash Crop Production in Telok Melano

6-1. The History of Cash Crop Production

It is not long since the production of export-oriented commodities started in Telok Melano. The shift toward cash crop production in this remote community began under the agricultural schemes supported by the Department of Agriculture in the late 1980s. The government's assistance increased after the village was officially selected as a model village for the Agricultural Department Project (ADP). In the process of implementing various schemes, the villagers have received generous in-kind grants such as seeds/seedlings (pepper, rubber, rattan, cacao, clove, fruit trees and corn), livestock (goat and rabbit) and farm inputs (fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide). In addition to these schemes, incentive programs such as agricultural courses at Semangok Agricultural Center in Kuching are offered to village youths.

¹³ The price of 10 kg of rice is M\$15 at Sematan market and Rp.8,000 in Temajuk (approximately M\$11). Indonesian rice brought in from Temajuk is sold at a village shop in Telok Melano at the price of M\$1.5/kg.

The monthly income of villagers (excluding those who work for the police and the Samunsam Wild Life Sanctuary) mostly ranges from M\$200 to M\$300, with the highest of about M\$800 to the lowest of M\$50 (1991 Report of the Agricultural Office, Sematan). By the government's standard, many fall "below the poverty line" (monthly income of less than M\$250).

At present the most important income source for many villagers is the production of pepper and cacao. Thus their income level is always subject to the fluctuation of commodity prices in the international market.

The following is a brief history of the cultivation of different cash crops in Telok Melano. Until the 1980s, when several subsidy programs were first implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Telok Melano's contact with the export-oriented market economy was limited to the occasional sale of copra and forest produce such as rattan and *engkabang*.

1) *Rubber*

Rubber never played a major role in Telok Melano agriculture, as discussed in Chapter 4 and 6. Even in the 1920s, when Chinese and Dayak peasants responded to the regional rubber boom and shifted from pepper to rubber, coastal Malays failed to take advantage of the higher price commanded by this crop. For one thing, the coastal area where they inhabited was not suitable for rubber cultivation.

The first rubber in Telok Melano was planted in 1953. It was started by one man, and others followed suit. In the late 1950s,

however, the price of rubber sheet fell to as low as 30 cents per kati,¹⁴ and the villagers lost their zeal for rubber. Rubber trees planted in the late 50s or early 60s still stand near the village compound, most of which remain untapped since then.

In 1994, a large-scale rubber scheme was implemented by the Kuala Lumpur-based Rubber Research Institute of Malaysia (RRIM), which provided 24 households with 450 high-yielding rubber seedlings each.¹⁵

2) *Cacao*

Cacao is also a new cash crop in Telok Melano. In the 1980s a few villagers planted cacao on their own initiative. Subsequently many trees were planted under the cacao subsidy scheme in 1990, when 13 applicants each received 1,100 seedlings. After two additional schemes, there are now 20 cacao cultivators, each attending more than 1000 trees.¹⁶

3) *Pepper*

There are three successful pepper cultivators in Telok Melano with yearly income ranging from M\$4,000 to M\$10,000. All of them started planting with their own capital. For many other villagers, the government's subsidy is the only way to start planting peppers. Free fertilizer and pesticide are granted only if a recipient maintain a minimum of 200 vines in good order. Between 1987 and 1991, 29

¹⁴ 1 kati = 1 1/3 lbs.

¹⁵ This is a five-year project by which a total of MR3,090 in in-kind grants will be provided to each applicant.

¹⁶ To be entitled to receive a subsidy such as fertilizer and herbicide, an applicant has to maintain at least 1,000 trees.

villagers received the subsidy. However, by 1993 19 of them had lost their trees. Under new subsidy schemes in 1993 and 1994, 10 villagers tried pepper cultivation once again. The current condition of pepper production in Telok Melano will be discussed in section 6-2.

4) *Coconuts*

For many years, coconuts had been the only export-oriented commodity produced by villagers since Telok Melano was formed in the 1890s. In the early 1960s the price of copra was relatively high: M\$10 (the first grade) and M\$8 (the second grade) per pikul¹⁷. At that time several Chinese also started planting coconuts at Samunsam. After the confrontation, the first thing villagers did for a living was to collect coconuts from their gardens, which had become thickly covered with *lalang*.

However, after the Indonesia-Malaysia *Konfrontasi*, the market price continued to decline. Many evacuees found no reason to return to their villages to resume copra cultivation, and thus they resettled elsewhere. Telok Melano villagers had no choice but to sell copra at Sematan market. Despite its low profitability, coconut was the backbone of Telok Melano's cash economy. After the government's subsidy programs were implemented to diversify the cash crop production in Telok Melano, many villagers turned their back on the copra production. The price of copra at Sematan market was too low to warrant the hard labor required to produce it. Copra production ceased to be a worthwhile venture. Only four households produced

¹⁷ At that time 1 *gantang* of rice was M\$1.

copra for sale in the 1993 season, when the selling price of copra was 40 cents/kg at Sematan bazaar. To produce 1 kg of copra needs approximately six coconuts. Copra production involves several stages of processing, all of which are done manually. First, coconut are collected from the garden, often in the bush. The husk is removed with a *sui* or *kapak*, the hard inner shell is split, and the meat is removed with a *penyngkit* knife. The meat is then sun-dried for several days.

Not only the low price but also their physical isolation from Sematan market prevents Telok Melano villagers from generating a profit from copra sales. The cost of fuel for the return boat trip to Sematan is high. For instance, 100 kg of dried copra need approximately 600 coconuts. Selling 100 kg of copra generates a profit of M\$40, which is equivalent to the cost of fuel necessary for one round trip to Sematan.

The majority of Telok Melano villagers still own coconut trees and use the nuts for cooking and making oil. Practically everyone in the village produces coconut oil for home consumption, while it has become a luxury among other coastal Malays who purchase commercial oil made from peanuts.

6-2. Implementation of Agricultural Schemes and Reality

The government's agricultural subsidies have benefited almost all families in Telok Melano. In order to apply for the government's subsidy, villagers have to prepare their field in advance and meet certain criteria set by the government. For instance, to receive a

pepper subsidy, they have to plant vines themselves. Only after the officials of the Agricultural Department confirm that their fields are in satisfactory condition, can they receive free herbicide and fertilizer. The majority of pepper subsidy recipients have only 200 pepper vines, which is the minimum number required to apply for the three-year government assistance for pepper cultivation.

Each subsidy program sets a minimum number of plants required. For cacao, it is 1,000. A cultivator who maintains 1,000 cacao trees can receive fertilizer and herbicide for three years, which in total are equivalent to M\$320 in cash.

In Telok Melano, fertilizer and herbicide are necessary for the maintenance of padi fields. If an *umah* (swidden rice field) is planted two years in a row, agrochemicals are necessary in the second year due to the rapid decline of soil nutrients and weed proliferation. Some villagers thus maintain the minimal "magic numbers" to remain eligible for the subsidy programs.

The following figures show (1) the number of plants necessary to maintain the government subsidy, (2) the year of subsidy entry, and (3) the actual number of plants of the cash crop in the recipient's garden as of October 1994. The minimum number of plants needs to be maintained throughout the scheme. If a recipient fails to do so, the subsidy will be withdrawn before the completion of the scheme.

- (1) the number of plants necessary to apply for the subsidy
- (2) the year of entry
- (3) the actual number of plants of the cash crop in the recipient's gardens as of October 1994

ex 1. (1)200(2)(1987) This shows that 200 plants are necessary to apply for the subsidy; that the recipient applied in 1987; and that the recipient had no plants of the cash crop in October 1994.
(3) 0

ex 2. 0 This shows that 800 plants of the were planted without a subsidy from the government.
800

recipient	pepper	cacao ¹⁸	rubber	rattan	clove	coffee
A	<u>200</u> (1987) 0 <u>200</u> (1994) 200		<u>450</u> (1994) 0	<u>370</u> (1991) 0	<u>70</u> (1993) 0	
B			<u>450</u> (1994) 400			
C	<u>0</u> 800					
D	<u>200</u> (1987) 0 <u>200</u> (1994) 300	<u>1100</u> (1990) 2000	<u>450</u> (1994) 450	<u>740</u> (1991) 500		<u>440</u> (1992) 0
E	<u>200</u> (1987) 100	<u>1100</u> (1993) 600	<u>450</u> (1994) 450	<u>370</u> (1991) 100	<u>70</u> (1991) 0	
F	<u>200</u> (1987) 0 <u>200</u> (1993) 0	<u>1100</u> (1990) 1000	<u>450</u> (1994) 450	<u>740</u> (1991) 700	<u>70</u> (1991) 80	
G	<u>200</u> (1989) 0					
H	<u>200</u> (1987) 0					
I	<u>200</u> (1987) <u>200</u> (1993) 100		<u>0</u> <u>200</u>			
J	<u>0</u> 200	<u>1100</u> (1992) 1200	<u>450</u> (1994) 400		<u>0</u> 200	<u>0</u> 60
K	<u>200</u> (1987) 0 <u>200</u> (1994) 200	<u>1100</u> (1987) 1200	<u>450</u> (1994) 450	<u>740</u> (1991) ?	<u>70</u> (1991) 80	<u>440</u> (1992) 300
L		<u>1100</u> (1990) 1000	<u>450</u> (1994) 450	<u>370</u> (1991) 400	<u>70</u> (1991) 80	
M	<u>200</u> (1993) 200	<u>1100</u> (1992) 1000	<u>450</u> (1994) 400		<u>80</u> (1994) 80	

¹⁸ 1100 cacao seedlings were provided by the Department of Agriculture. The requirement to receive a subsidy is to maintain 1,000 cacao trees.

The above figures indicate that 1) the majority of recipients cultivate cash crops only if they receive a subsidy from the Agricultural Department, and 2) there is a discrepancy between implementation of the subsidy program and cultivation practice among recipients; the actual number of the plants is much less than the subsidy requirement and a substantial number of villagers abandoned their plants due to natural causes such as pests, diseases, and negligence.

Case Study: Pepper Cultivation and the Government's Subsidy

In the First Division, pepper has been one of the most important sources of income for local peasants for over a century. For some Telok Melano villagers, it has also been a crucial income-generating crop, although there are only three pepper planters who are commercially successful in the village. The first pepper was planted in Telok Melano by Pak Pani in 1975. Two others, Pak Dol and Pak Atik, followed suit in the 1980s. Starting pepper cultivation requires investment of money to buy vines, fertilizer, herbicide and so on. For instance, Pak Dol borrowed his initial capital from a Chinese merchant at Sematan bazaar, to whom he still sells his agricultural produce. Pak Atik had moved to Sematan during *Konfrontasi*, worked there as a carpenter and recently came back to Telok Melano. He started planting pepper in 1989. In the first year he lost all his pepper vines, worth M\$30,000, due to floods. But from the second year, his garden prospered.

These three entrepreneurs are among the wealthiest peasants in Telok Melano, thanks to their success in pepper cultivation. Every year they make substantial profits, while others struggle with dying seedlings. In 1993, they harvested peppers worth M\$4,000, M\$7,000, and M\$10,000 respectively.

They stand out in Telok Melano, where villagers still follow in their forefathers' footsteps and continue to cultivate padi. They are, in fact, all from outside Telok Melano and settled or resettled there relatively recently. They do not cultivate hill rice like others do and they hire Indonesian laborers.¹⁹

Planting 1,000 vines costs approximately M\$4,000 for seedlings and vine posts. It usually takes two to two and a half years for pepper vines to mature and bear fruit. The cost of fertilizer per year is about M\$1,000. Thus the total expense for fertilizer before the first harvest would be M\$2,000 - 2,500. The total capital invested for 1,000 pepper vines before the first harvest is M\$ 6,000-6,500. The productivity of vines varies in the range of 3 to 5 kg of seeds per vine.

Harvested seeds are sorted by size. Well ripened large size seeds are soaked in water for two weeks, and the skin is removed manually. After sun-drying, the skinned seeds are sold at Sematan bazaar as *lada putih* (white pepper). The smaller seeds are dried in the skin to become black pepper, which commands cheaper price in Sematan market due to its inferior quality. As of March 1993,

¹⁹Labor relations between Telok Melano villagers and Indonesians across the border will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

pepper price at Sematan market was M\$7/kg for white pepper and M\$3/kg for black pepper.

Suppose that 1,000 vines planted two years ago bear fruit and produce 4,000 kg of seeds (4 kg per vine), of which 60 percent is processed as white pepper and the rest as black pepper. In the Sematan market, they would fetch M\$21,600 in total. The initial capital investment for seedlings and vine posts is M\$6,000. Thus, the net profit would be M\$15,600.

2,400 kg (white pepper) x M\$7/kg = M\$ 16,800	
1,600 kg (black pepper) x M\$3/kg = M\$ 4,800	total M\$21,600
initial capital investment	<u>M\$ 6,000</u>
net profit	M\$15,600

Planting 200 vines, which is the most common practice among Telok Melano villagers, would, if successful, yield approximately 480 kg of white pepper and 320 kg of black pepper with the total market price of M\$4,320. This would be a substantial income in the village, where in most households yearly income does not exceed M\$3,000.

The initial investment of M\$800 for planting 200 pepper vines is beyond most subsistence farmers' reach. The government's scheme is thus meant to provide assistance to farmers with capital. The subsidy program provides recipients with free fertilizer and herbicide, and the recipients need to supply seedlings and posts. Posts are usually bought from villagers who have already given up pepper cultivation. Actually, the majority of the subsidy recipients of 1994 scheme had their own posts they had used previously.

Seedlings are usually cut from pepper vines of other villagers, so the expense is minimal. For instance, in 1993, Mak Ngah applied for a pepper subsidy after having prepared a plot with 200 posts standing on it. She had her own posts previously used for the 1987 scheme, which had failed. She obtained 200 seedlings from an Indonesian, whom she paid in kind with 200 coconuts.

Seemingly profitable pepper planting with government assistance has yet to generate much income in Telok Melano. In the case of the pepper subsidy program of 1987, 22 villagers participated and eventually all abandoned their farms. Abandoned pepper fields with remaining posts and dead vines are overgrown with weeds.

Why have villagers not succeeded even with the preferential treatment of the Agricultural Department? There are two answers to this question: the lack of initial capital of individuals and the reluctance of individuals to use their own capital for maintenance of their gardens. For instance, most subsidy recipients usually plant inferior seedlings cut from neighbors' pepper vines. The mother-vines are often not healthy enough, so many of the seedlings sooner or later die. In contrast, successful Chinese planters in Lundu will pay as much as M\$3 per seedling, for they know that choosing good seedlings is very important for the success of their garden.

Furthermore, insufficient fertilizer is applied to these inferior seedlings, which prevents them from becoming healthy. While 3-4 kg of fertilizer per vine is recommended for a good harvest, many recipients of the pepper subsidy apply only about 1 kg per vine, which means they use the subsidized fertilizer provided by the

government but never purchase additional, regardless of instructions and recommendations by the department officials.

After the first scheme in 1987, new pepper subsidy programs were introduced again in 1988, 1989, 1991, 1993 and 1994.

Although the outcome of the earlier schemes was disastrous, the more recent '93 and '94 schemes may produce a better result. The introduction of the capital-intensive pepper cultivation in Telok Melano has so far not succeeded in generating enough cash income for most villagers to have a sustainable commitment.

6-3. The Other Side of the Coin?: The Continuity between Swidden Rice Agriculture and Cash Crop Production

Traditional swidden padi cultivation and the new cash crop production are often conducted in one set of operations in Telok Melano. Cash commodities such as rubber, cacao, and clove are usually planted in a swidden plot after the padi harvest. In 1994, 450 rubber seedlings were given as subsidies to 24 villagers by the Department of Agriculture. Among the recipients, 19 opened the secondary forest and planted padi with the intention of planting these seedlings after harvest.

This agricultural practice, padi planting and subsequent cultivation of a long-term cash crop on the same plot is, however, regarded as "malpractice" by officials of the Agricultural Department. For instance, cacao, which originated in the South American jungle with a thick canopy, needs shading trees around it. Young cacao seedlings, if planted on a former rice field with no

trees around, are exposed to the blazing sun and often lose the tips of their leaves due to the heat. Furthermore, planters in Telok Melano are not so concerned about the spacing of cash crops on the cultivated field. Rather, they plant crops randomly in a former padi field. Cacao trees need proper spacing. If the spacing is too great, weeds immediately proliferate. Thick undergrowth of weeds deprives them of soil nutrients, and moisture from the weeds promotes the spread of diseases to the vulnerable cacao trees.

Opening the forest for padi and the subsequent use of the cultivated field for cash crops will remain a common practice among Telok Melano villagers. When cultivated fields and usufruct become the subject of trans-generational transmission, this practice results in some confusion among villagers. The complex interplay between traditional padi cultivation and newly introduced cash crop production observable in Telok Melano will be examined later in the section 7-2.

7. Social Relations of Agricultural Production in Telok Melano

7-1. Social Organization of Telok Melano

Before examining the social relations surrounding agricultural practices in Telok Melano, I shall briefly discuss social organization in the village. Social organization here means the whole network of social relations in which members of Telok Melano community are involved at a particular time. It is not my intention to cover all aspects of social life observed in the village. Rather, I shall confine myself to social institutions and norms such as family, marriage,

kinship, and inheritance, which are closely related to the agricultural mode of production there.

Keluarga is a roughly defined social group consisting of a father and a mother and their children, whether they live in the same household or not. It is normally the basic social unit within which the two primary links of kinship, i.e., parenthood and siblingship, are formed. The formation of *keluarga* is based on marriage. In Telok Melano all villagers are Muslims, except for one Chinese, who lives with relative isolation in the village compound. Although Islam permits a man to have more than one wife, I know of no case of polygyny in the village, either at present or in the past.

The post-marital residence as a norm is uxorilocal. A husband marries into his wife's household living with her natural family members. After several years, the young couple usually build and move to their own house, when they can afford to do so. This rule is not observed strictly at present because villagers often work outside the village and choose a neolocal residence right after marriage. If there is no factor affecting the selection of the post-marital residence such as the husband's work, crowding in the house of the wife or the husband, or marriage without formal engagement, uxorilocality is still favored. Even when an uxorilocal arrangement is not possible because the husband works in town, some newlyweds stay in the wife's parents' house for at least a few days, possibly up to a month or two, thereby abiding by the tradition.

The bonds of marriage, parenthood and siblingship which connect members of the *keluarga* with one another result in a network of relationships of a kin group or *saudara*. The mode of

recognition of kin members is cognatic (bilateral), whereby all descendants from the same ancestor are recognized as kin by tracing either the male or female line.

Equal inheritance is the norm: all siblings regardless of gender and seniority have an equal right to inherit property from a parent. This practice coupled with the cognatic kinship system leads to the fragmentation of land property. Eventually, after several generations, the land is divided into small pieces.

However, in Telok Melano, another system of transmission of land property based on usufruct often prevents land from being fragmented. Under the usufruct system, inherited land is not divided among descendants but utilized by them under communal management. All descendants have a right to cultivate the secondary forest opened by their apical ancestor. This usufruct system functions especially in swidden rice cultivation, where land is left fallow after being used for a year or two.

7-2. Land Ownership and Usufruct Operation

“Land ownership” and “usufruct” are clearly differentiated by Melano villagers, as are “inheritance” and “succession to land title.” Like other societies in Borneo where swidden agriculture is practiced, land title is granted to the person who first clears the primary forest for hill rice cultivation. The mode of land transmission to descendants is two-fold. The first is the inheritance of *jerame* (secondary forest), where the cultivated land is divided equally among the offspring of those who cleared the land.

The land is passed down through bilateral kinship recognition, thus all the male and female offspring are entitled to claim the *jerame*. The divided lands are registered officially when officials of the Department of Land Survey come to the village for this purpose.²⁰

The second mode of land operation is based on the usufruct communally shared by the descendants of those who cleared the land. Under this kin-based system, the land called *tanah peninggalan alur X* (the land left by late Mr./Ms. X) is utilized by X's descendants only for cultivation (*makan sama*, literally means "eat together"). One can clear and cultivate the land with the consensus of all the legitimate usufructuaries. In actual cases, when hill rice is cultivated on communally managed land, a casual notice to the eldest kin member would suffice to commence clearing *jerame*. The usufruct operation prevents lands from being fragmented by the equal inheritance and also functions to avoid land disputes among descendants.

However, this communal land management by kin members does not always keep a holding intact. *Tanah peninggalan* can be converted into a privately owned property (*hak milik*) when a member of the usufruct sharing group clears *jerame* and cultivates certain kinds of crops. The usufruct can be transformed into land ownership when *tanaman jangka panjang* (long-term plants) are cultivated on *jerame*.

The following is a list of the long-term plants which function to establish private ownership of cultivated land in Telok Melano.

²⁰Actual survey (*sukat*) and documents (*surat*) may not be indispensable for the official recognition of land possession among villagers. A survey team from the State capital of Kuching rarely visits the village.

The information on both "duration before bearing fruit" and "life expectancy" was given by the villagers of Telok Melano.

kind of plant	duration before bearing fruit	life expectancy
long term		
durian	7 - 8 years	30 - 50 years
mango	3	30
clove	3 - 4	30
engkabang	10	30 - 40
langsar	10	30
coconut	5	80
short term		
cocoa	4 years	
pepper	2 - 3	
corn	1 term only	
banana	1 term only	
peanut	1 term only	
watermelon	1 term only	

It is worth noting that cash crops such as pepper and cacao promoted by the agricultural schemes do not function to establish the private ownership of land, even though they are the main source of cash income for Melano villagers at present. Although cacao and pepper are regarded as short-term crops, the villagers actually do not know their life expectancy. This is partly due to the fact that these cash crops are relatively new in the village and are considered to have an ambiguous status in terms of their importance and life expectancy. This is also one reason why, despite the subsidy schemes, these income-generating crops are often neglected or abandoned in a short period of time.

Besides the above, there is another mode of land use based on *pinjam* (borrowing) or *numpang* (free riding). *Pinjam/numpang*

enables the usufruct of land to be lent to non-relatives, that is, non-members of the *tanah peninggalan*-holding descent group.

Pinjam /num pang is based on the mutual agreement between a lender and a borrower of the usufruct of *jerame*. The borrower is required to inform the lender of the kind of plant to be cultivated and the duration of usage in an official letter bearing the signature of the village head or the sub-District Officer in Sematan. However, this procedure is rarely followed. When the usufruct agreement expires, the cultivated land should be returned to the lender together with cultivated plants on it. Though a borrower usually cultivates hill rice and short-term plants such as corn, banana, peanut, watermelon, and pineapple, there are cases when cash crops such as pepper, cacao, and rubber are planted on the borrowed land. In the latter cases, the usufruct agreement lasts many years, but it is strictly applicable to the present generation. Thus, the land with cash crops will be returned to the owner of the *jerame* if the borrower and his/her spouse pass away.

This system of usufruct benefits to the lender in two ways. First, the lender obtains a cleared field ready for the cultivation of cash crops if the borrower plants padi and returns the plot after harvest. Second, after the agreement expires, the owner may acquire cash crops with the land returned. The *pinjam* practice is, therefore, often manipulated by the usufruct possessors. For instance, in 1993, a villager lent the usufruct of his *jerame* to an Indonesian woman to let her plant hill padi for a year. He intended to use the land she had cleared for rubber cultivation under the agricultural scheme the next year. Thus by lending his usufruct, the

land owner prepared for the next year's rubber cultivation without lifting a finger.

8. Political Ecology of Telok Melano Peasantry

Telok Melano has experienced a historical process of economic exclusion. Its incorporation in the commodity market through copra production in the 1890s was gradually brought to an end by a multiplicity of factors, such as: 1) the decline of Malay's supremacy in maritime trade; 2) the emergence of the rubber-dominated economy in the region, from which Malay peasants were virtually excluded; 3) hardship caused by the Japanese military occupation; 4) a five-year evacuation from the village during the Indonesian-Malaysia *Konfrontasi*; 5) clandestine communist guerrilla activities in the region, which paralyzed Lundu-Sematan market economy and threatened lives of villagers; and 6) the establishment of a Kuching-based economic system, a new nation-bound market distribution system, to which Telok Melano does not have easy access.

Traditional swidden padi cultivation still forms the backbone of agriculture in Telok Melano. Even though the degree of self-sufficiency in rice has been declining over the years, people continue to clear the forest and plant padi. The recent cash crop cultivation under the government's schemes and the traditional swidden agriculture do not conflict with each other but rather are practiced in such a way as to complement each other. The current land surplus economy of Telok Melano allows both swidden agriculture and the

cash crop cultivation to exist side by side.²¹ Its tropical ecological niche, coupled with the small population and the land surplus economy, contributes to the stable and rather quick regeneration to secondary forest of both padi fields and abandoned cash crop fields.

Since the latter half of the 1980s, especially after Telok Melano was selected as ADP (Agricultural Department Project) model village in 1991, the villagers have received generous amounts of seedling, herbicide, and fertilizer for cash crop production. The ADP program was started to end in 1995 after the preferential implementation of various schemes for five years. At the time of research, Telok Melano peasants had become very much dependent on the government's subsidies. The withdrawal of the in-kind assistance, especially fertilizer and herbicide, would greatly change the landscape of agriculture in Telok Melano. In 1994, cash crop cultivation had not reached the level where villagers could afford or were willing to purchase the agrochemical themselves. Without sufficient capital to secure enough agrochemicals, the tropical ecological niche of Telok Melano, where weeds quickly regenerate and poor soil predominates, will overwhelm villagers' labor input on their cultivated land. If cultivated land does not receive sufficient weed control or nutrients, the cash crop production system, which has not rooted firmly in Telok Melano, is likely to be replaced by capital-free, labor-intensive swidden agriculture.

²¹The key characteristic of surplus land economy is that the marginal product of land (cultivated and fallow) is zero, so that an increase in the ratio of total labor to total land does not lead to diminishing returns. This is because the additional labor can be combined with additional land in constant proportions (Cramb 1989:20).

CHAPTER 9. TRANSNATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY: SYMBIOSIS AND TENTION ON THE BORDER

1. Introduction

Since the early 1980s, the landscape of the border area around Cape Dato has changed greatly. The most significant change has been the establishment of an Indonesian migrant village, Temajuk, adjacent to the border. After communist activities were subdued following a series of arrests and surrenders in 1987, migration of the Sambas Malays to the area accelerated. In search of a better life, they left their overcrowded home villages in the West Kalimantan coastal plain for the Cape Dato frontier region. Sporadic migration of individual families was followed by *en masse* chain-migration. As a result, within a decade six hamlets with a total population of 3,000 were formed.

As discussed in Chapter 8, apart from a few entrepreneurial individuals, the majority of villagers in Telok Melano engaged in swidden agriculture with minimal participation in cash crop production. Although various governmental agricultural schemes were implemented in Telok Melano since the late 1980s, many potential beneficiaries failed to fully take advantage of them. Because of their adherence to traditional hill rice cultivation, the subsidized agro-chemical substances such as fertilizer and pesticide were sometimes used for the maintenance of their swidden fields. Both geographical isolation from commercial networks and the half-year *landas* northeastern monsoon season, which deprives the villagers of all means of transportation, have

continued to be obstacles for their take-off into market oriented economy.

For the Telok Melano villagers, the presence of new neighbors in Temajuk had great significance. Geographical proximity and accessibility are the prime factors which trigger dense and active social interaction between the Telok Melano villagers and their neighbors across the border. In fact Telok Melano is much closer to the Indonesian villages than to the nearest Malaysian town, Sematan. Indonesian village can be reached overland, while Sematan is several hours boat-ride away. Populous Temajuk village has a few shops where folks from Telok Melano can shop in times of need. Indonesians also frequent Telok Melano to buy their vegetables and fish. A new marketing opportunity has thus emerged for the stagnant economy of Telok Melano. Also for the Indonesian border area inhabitants, the easy access to Malaysia enables them to seek employment and sell their goods there for greater profit in the more valued Malaysian currency. Transaction of goods and labor soon became prevalent. As both groups are excluded from major transportation systems and marketing networks, this transnational symbiosis is necessary for their survival.

In this chapter, I shall describe the socio-economic relations between Telok Melano and Temajuk in detail with special reference to the flow of commodities and labor across the border, the reciprocal relations observed in rituals and ceremonial activities, and state hegemonies introduced at the village level and the local response to them. In addition, hidden tension and conflict between the Malays on both sides of the border, who share identical religious

belief and a similar culture and history, and yet are divided between the two nation-states, will be depicted in the following ethnography.

2. The Boundary between Telok Melano and Temajuk: Demarcation of the International Border

2-1. The History of Border Demarcation at Cape Dato

According to the metaphoric expression of the local villagers, the distance from Telok Melano in Malaysia to Temajuk in Indonesia is just the time it takes to smoke a single Indonesian *kretek* cigarette. The words "Selamat Datang di Indonesia (Welcome to Indonesia)" painted on a simple wooden gate are the only indication of the presence of the international border. Without this gate, travelers would never notice their passage into the sovereign territory of the Republic of Indonesia. From Telok Melano village, a walk of approximately 30 minutes along a small path through cultivated fields, secondary jungle and barren grass land takes us to the border point. An abandoned pepper field exists right on the border and stretches out on both sides of the national territories. The border point totally lacks facilities such as an immigration office and police check point. Although one may be disappointed with the lack of any visible signs and the ease of trespassing over the border, this is, in fact, a historically charged borderland, i.e., the intersection of the symbolic power domains of the Sambas and the Brunei Sultanates, a geo-political periphery between Sarawak (later

the British) and the Dutch colony, and a battlefield of the modern nation-states of the Federation of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia.

Locals were told by their parents and grandparents that there had been a stone designating the international border. When I first visited the border, my friends from Telok Melano tried their best to find the stone, which supposedly divided the two territories, but in vain. Only later did I learn that the stone had been destroyed by someone with explosives.

Just one step, without showing one's passport or receiving entry and exit stamps, takes us into Indonesia. Down the path, approximately 10 meters away from the gate, there exist several houses on both sides of the path. The international border between Indonesia and Malaysia is locally acknowledged as the border between the Indonesian hamlet of Tekam Patah and the Malaysian village of Telok Melano. However, this spatial division does not coincide with the officially demarcated national boundary. The border mark designated on the official map is a small stream called Sungai Naning (the Naning River), which runs through Tekam Patah. Inside the Indonesian territory there are still many durian and *engkabang* trees planted by the forefathers of the Telok Melano villagers. These trees are highly valued as *pusaka* (inherited wealth) because of the commodity value of the fruits, but the descendants have no claim to them any more.

As we examined in Chapter 4, the history of border demarcation in the Cape Dato area goes back to colonial era. Under the Sarawak and the Dutch colonial administrations, the triangle-

shaped Cape Dato was divided equally from the top of the cape. However, as the dividing ridge proceeds further inland the border demarcation becomes ambiguous. According to the Telok Melano villagers, the border was determined by the Sarawak (later the British) and the Dutch colonial authorities three times, but none of these designations ever made much sense to the local population. Even colonial officers did not know the exact whereabouts of the border. As recorded in the *Sarawak Gazette* of 1926, a conservator of forests, B.J.C. Spurway who visited the Cape Dato area could not find any "*rentis*" (path/ditch) dividing Sarawak and the Dutch Borneo:

North of the mouth of the Semunsam river to Tanjong Datu (Cape Dato) the hills are covered with excellent old jungle stretching in some cases to the seashore. The district is very thinly populated.... On making inquiries as to the existence of any artificial boundary between Sarawak and Dutch Borneo, I was informed that there was a "*rentis*" as far as was known. No one had ever seen it, which was extraordinary as this "*rentis*" can be not less than a mile and a half from the sea coast at this point. The Tua Kampong [village headman] was away and a Malay by name of Udin acting for him was absolutely useless as regards local information. (SG September 1, 1926:219-220)

The whole area adjacent to Cape Dato, including today's Temajuk village compound, used to be the village territory of Telok Melano. Before the formation of Indonesian migrant village in the 1980s, this frontier region was frequented by Telok Melano villagers for fishing and the cultivation of hill rice. The vast grassland stretching from the edge of Telok Melano across the border indicates the intensive exploitation of the land for swidden cultivation in former days, because of which environmental degradation reached

the point that there has been no regeneration of the secondary forest even now.

It was not until the outbreak of the military confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia (1963) and communist guerrilla insurgency (1970s-1980s) that the actual division of territory in the area became clarified. During the *Konfrontasi*, Indonesian soldiers often captured villagers from Telok Melano and asked money in return for their release. Under such circumstances, the Indonesian territory gradually came to be recognized by the villagers as foreign and dangerous. After the military confrontation, the official boundary was determined by both the Malaysian and the Indonesian governments. Without consultation with the Telok Melano villagers, the Naning River was chosen as the official border between the two territories. The Telok Melano villagers, who were entitled to claim the fruit trees inside the Indonesian territory were given unfulfilled promises of compensation for their loss. During the period of communist guerrilla insurgency, both sides of the border were heavily manned by the military troops of Malaysia and Indonesia for communist manhunts. The presence of these military personnel on each side of the border further enhanced the demarcation. At that time, the communist guerrillas hid in virgin jungle in the vicinity of Cape Dato. Not a small number of them were arrested by the Indonesian authority and eventually executed on site. Many of their graves were later discovered in the bush when the land was cleared for the new migrant village.

As has been described, there is no border check point on the Indonesian side. In the village compound of Telok Melano, a police

station functions as a local immigration office, checking the in-and-out flow of people across the border. Indonesians who enter Malaysia through this gate are required to report to the police station to obtain permission for temporary entry. On their return from other towns in Sarawak to Telok Melano, police officers check the belongings of Indonesian travelers. In case a substantial amount of imported goods such as cigarettes and clothes are found, they may confiscate them. Malaysians who intend to visit Indonesia through Telok Melano must also report to the same police station, write down their names, addresses, and ethnic identities on the police form.

The figures below show the volume of traffic between Malaysia and Indonesia, recorded at the Telok Melano police station between 1989 and 1994.

	1) Malaysia -> Indonesia	2) Indonesia -> Malaysia
1989	75	-
1990	139	-
1991	136	-
1992	202	1,683
1993	78	933
1994 *	4	255

* as of May 19, 1994 (source: Police Station, Telok Melano)

The figures do not include the everyday traffic of locals who reside in Telok Melano and Temajuk. Also Indonesian merchants, travelers, and kinsmen who frequently visit Telok Melano and become familiar figures never report officially to the police.

2-2. The Formation of the Indonesian Migrant Community across the Border

The Indonesian migrant village, Temajuk, consists of the six hamlets of Tekam Patah, Temajuk Besar, Temajuk Sungei, Temajuk Kecil, Camar Bulan, and Kampung Meludin (see Map 5).¹ The majority of the inhabitants are Sambas Malays. In 1994, the population was approximately 3,000, and the number of household was 500. All six hamlets are lined up along a small path which eventually leads to Telok Melano. It takes only 30 minutes on foot from Telok Melano to Tekam Patah which is located on the Malaysia-Indonesia border. From Telok Melano to Temajuk Kecil takes approximately 2 hours. Camar Bulan is 1 hour away from Temajuk Kecil.

These hamlets are also linked by an unpaved road to Paloh, the administrative center of Paloh District, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan. From Camar Bulan, another nine-hour walk takes us to Paloh. From Paloh, access is easier to other Indonesian towns on the coast such as Sekura, Sambas, Pemangkat, Mempawah, and Pontianak, the state capital of West Kalimantan situated 270 km away from Paloh (see Map 3). These towns are all connected by bus.

Temajuk was established in the mid-1980s by Sambas Malays who migrated from 40 villages in the Paloh and Jawai sub-districts. Temajuk was gradually formed by individually-motivated spontaneous chain migration called "spontan," not by the government-led "transmigrasi" (transmigration). Firstly, Temajuk Kecil was opened by Pak Pari from Teba, followed by the opening of

¹ Temajuk is officially categorized by the Indonesian government as *desun* which means "village." Six hamlets are loosely grouped together as Desun Temajuk.

Temajuk Besar by Pak Tapa and his family. Because of the continuous process of migration by different families, there is conflicting information as to when the hamlets were actually established. The best educated guess is that Temajuk Besar came into existence between 1988 and 1989. The estimate is confirmed by the fact that the coconut trees there, which usually need 5-6 years to bear fruit, already produce edible coconuts. Tekam Patah is the newest hamlet in Temajuk, opened between 1990 and 1991. The coconut trees there are still immature.

Temajuk has the air of a typical frontier village. As of 1994, there was no electricity or piped water. In front of the houses, there still remain half-burnt large tree trunks, reminiscent of the hardships experienced by pioneer settlers in clearing thick forests. Before the settlers' arrival, today's Temajuk territory was completely covered with primary forest and the old secondary forest once utilized by the forefathers of the Telok Melano villagers to cultivate hill rice.

Temajuk economy largely depends on the abundant forest resources in the vicinity of Cape Dato. The villagers engage in the collection of rattan and bird nests, logging and ship building. Many still maintain their houses in their home villages in Paloh and Jawai. They are therefore best described as circular labor migrants who maintain dual-residency, that is, one residence in the coastal villages of Paloh or Jawai and the other in the frontier region of Temajuk. During the Hari Raya holidays after the month of fasting, the most important Muslim holiday season, the Temajuk village is

deserted and quiet because inhabitants go home for family gatherings, leaving few behind in the borderland.

Due to its short history of migration, most Temajuk residents are not engaged in agriculture, except for a small number in Tekam Patah which is adjacent to the border. So far none of the government's agricultural schemes have been implemented in Temajuk village. Some of the residents tried to cultivate cash crops such as pepper by obtaining seedlings from Telok Melano, but all failed so far because of the lack of agricultural expertise. Even planting staple foods such as hill rice and cassava is not an easy enterprise in Temajuk because wild boars often destroy the crops. Likewise there are no large scale vegetable gardens in Temajuk. Vegetables are often purchased from Telok Melano villagers. This type of economic transaction will be examined in the following section on the symbiosis between the Indonesian and Malaysian border villages.

Among the six hamlets of the Temajuk village, especially Tekam Patah has developed symbiotic relationship with Telok Melano. The compound of Tekam Patah, which is composed of 50 households, spreads right across the border. Tekam Patah was first established by migrants from Sarang Burung Danau, in the Jawai District of Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan. Like the other five hamlets in Temajuk, the residents are all *Melayu Sambas* (Sambas Malays) except for three Iban males. Tekam Patah maintains a strong tradition of village solidarity based on kinship relations existing in their home village. When the residents migrated to Temajuk, the population of Sarang Burung Danau exceeded 1,000. As

population pressure mounted, chain migration began. Many inhabitants have already sold their houses and lands in Sarang Burung Danau. Even during festive seasons such as Hari Raya, the majority usually stay in Tekam Patah and celebrate the holidays in the frontier. What distinguishes Tekam Patah from other Temajuk hamlets is their engagement in (or at least, their commitment to) cultivation. Along with cassava and banana trees, the residents plant coconut trees which take years to mature. Although they are young, still needing another couple of years to fruit, the existence of the trees exemplifies the long-term perspective of the people. Although the villagers used to plant wet rice in irrigated fields in Sarang Burung Danau, they are now successfully engaged in hill rice cultivation. Their neighbors in Telok Melano have contributed in no small way to their success by giving advice.

3. Symbiosis: the Emergence of a Transnational Social Field

3-1. The Transaction of Commodities and Labor across the Border

Since the formation of Temajuk in the late 1980s, economic transactions between villages on both sides of the border have begun. In the border area where the interaction between Telok Melano and Temajuk inevitably bears a transnational character, a new form of economic symbiosis has emerged. The following section concerns the nature of economic activities at the Malaysian-Indonesian frontier with special reference to the flow of commodities and labor.

1) The Flow of Commodities

1) Petty Trade

As examined in Chapter 3, the transaction of commodities across the border has been an important economic activity in the region for more than half a century. Between Temajuk and Telok Melano the small-scale transaction of goods such as cigarettes, sugar, beverages and cloth is the most common activity. These commodity transactions are mostly personal and parochial. Such interaction has been vital for the economic survival of the inhabitants in the border area.

Indonesian traders often visit Telok Melano. Pak Bujang is one of them, and he visits his Malaysian neighbors very regularly. A skinny man in his 40s, he comes to Telok Melano every day or every other day during the dry season. He travels more than 10 km one way, from the Indonesian hamlets of Temajuk Besar and Tekam Patah all the way to the two Malaysian villages of Telok Melano and Telok Serabang. He procures goods at a shop in Temajuk Sungei and sells them with a margin of profit. He carries a variety of Indonesian products in a carton box tied to his bicycle. The box contains hair-pins, perfume, soap, mirrors, shampoo, talcum powder, vitamin pills, ointment, mosquito coils, lighters, matches, candies, cookies, needles and thread, medicine for headaches, dried fish, cigarette papers, yeast, Indonesian *kretek* cigarettes, brown coconut sugar and other things. He accepts payment either in Malaysian ringgit or Indonesian rupiah. Buying on credit is common among Malaysian

villagers; in fact a substantial number of villagers are in debt to Pak Bujang. On the way home, he buys bottles of home-made coconut oil from the Telok Melano villagers and sells them at Temajuk where coconuts are a scarce commodity. Whenever Malaysian villagers see Pak Bujang riding his bicycle in the village compound, they ask him to stop and open his carton box. This home shopping gives great pleasure especially to women and young girls as they do not have many opportunities for material consumption. They playfully take things out of the box, ask and negotiate prices, joke with the trader, and then usually throw things back into the box.

Less frequent, but no less important in terms of providing opportunities for the villagers to buy commercial goods from the outside world is the coming of traders from the Natuna Islands, located off Cape Dato. Natuna traders come to Malaysian territory via Temajuk. They started visiting the Cape Dato area long before boat engines were invented. The Natunas have been closely linked by blood ties to Telok Melano and Telok Serabang and through commerce with Santubong which is close to Kuching. Telok Melano and Telok Serabang have long functioned as important Indonesian commercial links to Kuching (Harrisson 1970: 234-237). The Natuna Islands are famous for mats made of screw palm (*pandanus*), salt fish and dried fish. Natuna *pandan* mats are much appreciated for their beautiful design and high quality and are used only for important guests or for special occasions such as Hari Raya.²

²In addition, Indonesian traders from Java occasionally visit this area, although their visits are not so frequent as those of traders from West Kalimantan and the Natunas. For instance, one of the traders whom I met during field work sold clocks with two motifs, one with the Cross for Christian Dayaks and the other with a scene of Mecca for Muslims. They would have traveled across West Kalimantan, visiting Dayak longhouses

In addition, Indonesian goods are regularly brought into Telok Melano through transnational agent-to-agent trade. Unlike the sporadic trade undertaken by individual traders, this type of transaction involves fixed relationships between Indonesian suppliers and Malaysian distributors. There are several Temajuk traders who come to Telok Melano on a regular basis and leave Indonesian cloth (*kain*), *sarong batik*, underwear and children's clothes to their sub-agents, usually housewives, who take charge of selling the goods in the village. These Malaysian agents are not obliged to sell all the goods and can return unsold ones to their Indonesian suppliers. The village agents decide the price for each item. The total price of each consignment of goods is fixed and will be paid to the Indonesian traders later when they come back with new supplies, usually in a month or two. When some items are returned, their price will be subtracted from the total. The village agents try to make as much profit as possible by adding their own margin to the original price.

In Telok Melano, there are three women who function as village agents. Their Indonesian counterparts include a teacher who is a part-time trader and merchants who come to Lundu and Sematan via another border crossing point, Tebedu, and leave Indonesian goods for local distribution.

There is yet another way of merchandising Indonesian goods in Telok Melano. A young village man goes to Temajuk Sungei one to

and Malay villages, and then reported to the police checkpoint at Telok Melano for the entry into Sarawak. The presence of these traders is a good indication of Java-based petty-trade networks expanding as far as the frontier of Borneo.

four times a week in order to buy Indonesian *kretek* cigarettes, rice, laundry soap, and so on to sell at his wife's shop in Telok Melano. He has his own motor bike, which gives him a great advantage in getting across the border and bringing Indonesian goods back. A pack of *Gudang Garam*, the most popular Indonesian cigarette among men in the area, is sold at M\$2.00 in Malaysian ringgit at his shop.³ He buys these cigarettes at the price of Rp.1,300 per packet at a shop in Temajuk Sungei, which is approximately equivalent to M\$1.60. At the time of my research, the value of the Malaysian ringgit was going up against Indonesian rupiah, so payment in Malaysian currency was always welcomed by Indonesian shop keepers.⁴

It is worth mentioning the situation of currency conversion near the border. Some villagers, especially those who are engaged in cross-border trade are very much aware of current exchange rates. Others get information from fellow villagers. For example, on 25 January, 1994, the official exchange rate was approximately M\$1 to Rp.750. However, the rate was determined rather arbitrarily in the area. The recorded actual exchange rates at the time were: M\$1 to Rp.700 in Temajuk Besar; M\$1 to Rp.650 in Tekam Patah; and M\$1 to Rp.800 in Telok Melano.

Telok Melano villagers sometimes seek profit by elevating the value of the Malaysian ringgit. M\$1 to Rp.1,000 is the village

³According to the average exchange rate in 1994, U.S. Dollar was approximately 2.60 Malaysian Ringgit.

⁴There are also Indonesian petty traders who come to Chinese-owned shops in the Sematan market and bring back Malaysian goods such as sugar, canned sardines in tomato sauce, condensed milk, and Milo (a powdered chocolate drink). According to shop owners, only these items are cheaper in Malaysia. The rest of the shop items are bought in from Paloh, West Kalimantan.

exchange rate on such occasions as a village festival, *pesta sempadan* (border festival) or *pesta pantai* (beach party) when a substantial number of Indonesians come to visit. During such festivals, Malaysians open food stalls, and visiting Indonesians have to pay more in case they do not have cash in ringgit.

ii) Peasants-cum-Peddlers and Economic Transactions

Since the late 1980s, new opportunities to obtain cash income have emerged for the Telok Melano villagers with the establishment of new migrant village across the border. The newly migrated Temajuk folks on the Indonesian side do not yet produce enough to support themselves and their families, and therefore depend on vegetables and other daily needs from Telok Melano. For instance, the Melano villagers suddenly found that coconuts, indispensable for Malay cooking, are in great demand among their Indonesian neighbors. While the coconut palms in Temajuk have yet to produce fruit, they are abundant in Telok Melano. Fruit and vegetable are also in short supply. Since it is the norm for Telok Melano villagers to produce what they eat, they simply allocate some of the crop or produce more for cash sale in the Indonesian area.

Symbiosis has thus developed first in the domain of small-scale commodity transactions. The most active participants are female Melano villagers who make regular trips to Temajuk to sell vegetables, fruits, coconut oil, and second-hand clothes. One such female peddler lives near her vegetable gardens approximately 200 meters from the border gate. Taking advantage of this proximity to

Indonesian hamlets, she often goes as far as Camar Bulan (the farthest corner of Temajuk which takes 3 hours on foot from the border) carrying vegetables on her bicycle. Transactions are usually conducted in Indonesian currency. She sells vegetables door to door in Temajuk and once made Rp.80,000 within two weeks. In Telok Melano, where the average monthly cash income is between M\$150 and M\$200, well below the national poverty line of M\$250, extra income of Rp.80,000 (over M\$100) is substantial.

During the fruit season, the surplus is brought to Temajuk. For example, a bundle of rambutan fruits is sold to Indonesians at the price of Rp.1,000. To fellow Malaysian villagers, the surplus fruits are usually given away for free. When asked, tree owners simply say "take it!" or "take as much as you want." Fruit had no market value before Temajuk was established, except for durians which usually command a high price (M\$3-M\$5) even among villagers. Now the surplus is usually sold to Temajuk villagers through middlemen. Fruits such as rambutans, durians, and mangos, coconut oil, coconuts, and fresh and dried fish are the main items transacted. The middlemen push their bicycles loaded with heavy foodstuffs into the Indonesian territory.

Pak Mat is such a middleman in Telok Melano. He is married to a Temajuk woman and used to live on the Indonesian side of the border. He was born in Malaysia and has a Malaysian father and an Indonesian mother. He maintained his Malaysian Identification Card even after he moved to West Kalimantan with his Indonesian mother. He came to Telok Melano and settled there with his family about four years ago. Initially it was not easy for him to adjust himself to the

village life and earn his living. As a newcomer, he does not own his farm land. He rents a small agricultural plot from Melano landowners. However, his cacao and pepper trees will take several years to bear fruit. To support his wife and five children in the meantime, he sells surplus fruit in Indonesian villages on behalf of Telok Melano villagers, taking advantage of his Indonesian accent, Indonesian wife, and familiarity with the Temajuk people. He pays visits to Indonesian villages regularly; he often makes painstaking trips three times a day on a bumpy, narrow path. The profits are usually shared equally by the tree owners and himself.

2) The Flow of Labor

Many Indonesians seek employment opportunities in Telok Melano, which is perennially short of labor, and receive cash payment in ringgit. Unlike the bilateral transaction of goods, the direction of labor power is one-way, that is, from Indonesia to Malaysia only. The employment of Indonesian workers in Telok Melano is arranged on an individual basis; there are no brokers involved. Indonesians from Temajuk are usually employed to clear the secondary forest for swidden agriculture, for weeding, harvesting pepper and cloves, and for household chores. These odd jobs are seasonal and occasionally become available. For instance, at the time of the pepper harvest, Malaysians often have trouble finding Indonesian workers. Not a small number of Telok Melano villagers maintain a loosely structured patron-client relationship with Temajuk Indonesians. Each employer has a small pool of

regular laborers who have prior experience of working for him or her. The following are examples of this phenomenon.

A Telok Melano widow whose two children are both away from the village for schooling and work, always has a problem finding a helping hand in her meager rice fields. She paid the total of M\$42 to an Indonesian man to clear and burn off the secondary jungle for use as swidden rice fields. Later she hired two Indonesian women for weeding for three days. They were paid M\$4 per day, and simple food was provided. One month later, the same two women from Temajuk were hired again for weeding. On another plot she hired an Indonesian man to clear the field for the planting of pepper vines. His wife had worked regularly for her. Since the employer, a widow, does not have much cash income, she suggested payment in the form of a packet of coffee, 1 kg of sugar and M\$10. The relationship between this widow and the Indonesians is the loosest type of patron-client relationship, with minimal moral obligation on the side of the employees. She constantly faces such disappointment: broken promises, unfulfilled duties, and requests for overpayment. She was furious when her pepper field was left with undergrowth after many requests, and also when she learned that the Indonesian man used all her herbicide on his own plot instead of hers.

Although limited in number, there are several Indonesians from Tekam Patah who maintain more stable patron-client relationships with rather affluent Telok Melano villagers. Pak Yusof returned from Sematan, where he worked as a carpenter, to Telok Melano. He is a descendent of a pioneering immigrant from Dutch Kalimantan. Being one of the first settlers, his grandfather cleared a large tract

of virgin forest for the planting of hill rice, part of which Pak Yusof inherited. He operates the largest agricultural fields in Telok Melano, mostly used for the production of commodities such as pepper and cacao. His family owns more than five hundred pepper vines as well as a substantial number of cacao trees. The yearly harvest of pepper generates more than M\$10,000. In addition to cash crop production, his family owns a boat, engines, and a dragnet. They often go out to sea for *mukat* fishing, casting a large dragnet. Its catch is usually divided among the helpers with a larger share for the boat/engine owner, and the rest is sold to villagers.

He regularly hires Indonesian laborers, both men and women. There are usually three to six of them working for the Yusof family at any one time. They come to Telok Melano almost every morning (some of them stay overnight) to help the family with washing and cooking, picking pepper seeds in harvest season, and pulling the dragnet for *mukat* fishing. The more than 500 pepper vines which the Yusof family owns produce approximately 2,000 kg of seeds yearly. If left unattended, the ripe seeds ready for harvest fall or are eaten by birds. It is thus crucial to retain enough workers for the labor intensive pepper picking. His *mukat* fishing also requires at least seven people, usually three of whom are Indonesians.

Although the profit from pepper production and fishing is substantial, so is the expense of maintaining an Indonesian labor force. Pak Yusof's wife cooks 2 kg of rice everyday for her family and the Indonesian workers. Monthly payments can reach up to M\$125 per worker, which is quite a large amount in a village where the average income does not exceed M\$200.

It needs to be reiterated that the relationship between the village entrepreneur and the Indonesian workers is not one of strict dominance/subordination. The Indonesians are not bond laborers nor are they in debt, and come to work whenever they wish, although mutual trust is a factor. Malaysian employers often complain about Indonesian workers not showing up to work as promised. Some also claim that Indonesian employees never stop chewing betel nut and chit-chatting after lunch unless they are asked to resume work.

In addition to the Telok Melano villagers, there are three Malays who live in Sematan and occasionally commute to Telok Melano and Telok Serabang to take care of their pepper gardens in the hill over the cape between the two villages. They purchased land from the villagers and own large pepper gardens. They too recruit Indonesians as well as Telok Melano villagers during the pepper harvest.

The Average Wage for One-day's Pepper Picking in Telok Melano and Sematan

<u>employer</u>	<u>work site</u> ⁵	<u>employee</u>	<u>wage (per day)</u>
Melano/Sematan	Melano	Indonesians in Temajuk	M\$3.50 (without lunch) /M\$4.00 (lunch provided)
Melano/Sematan	Melano	Malaysians in Melano	M\$6.00 (lunch provided)
Sematan	Sematan	Malaysians in Sematan	M\$9.00

⁵The pepper gardens where the Indonesians and Melano villagers work under contract are located in Telok Melano and the inland area between Telok Melano and Telok Serabang. In this figure, these gardens are together described as "Melano".

The table above shows the daily wage variation recorded in Telok Melano village and Sematan town in 1994. There is a clear difference in the wage levels between Malaysians and Indonesians. The highest wage is M\$9.00 paid to Malaysians in Sematan, while the wage decreases as the work site gets closer to the border. When Telok Melano villagers work for fellow villagers and for the Malay pepper owners from Sematan, they usually receive M\$6.00 per day and lunch. Indonesian workers receive far less.

According to the Telok Melano villagers, the average payment for one day's odd job work never exceeds Rp.1,000 (approx. M\$1.30) in Temajuk. Malaysians take advantage of the appreciation of their currency to procure cheap labor, while Indonesians come cross the border to receive higher wages. Malaysians are well aware of the economic difference between the two nations, and this is especially obvious in the frontier region. Regardless of the low wages paid to Indonesians, there is a constant labor flow from the other side of the border. Malaysian villagers take advantage of the superior economic power of their nation in determining the wages of the foreign workers. In this way, the frontier villages of western Borneo are incorporated into a nation-bound economic system and affected by international monetary dynamics, as exemplified in the relative value of currencies.

At the periphery of the nation-bound system, Malays on the border have faced the process of both inclusion and exclusion since the emergence of the nation-states. They are incorporated into a single nation-bound economic system through their adherence to Malaysian currency, whose fluctuations against another currency

they are keenly aware of. On the other hand, because of their isolation from the political center, they are often excluded from the basic social service networks rendered by the states. The inadequate infrastructure, especially the absence of roads connecting to the market place, denies the villagers on the border area access to the national network of commodity distribution.

Inhabitants at the periphery of a nation-state resort to locally specific strategies under such circumstances. As exemplified in the discussion of the flow of goods and labor between Telok Melano and Temajuk, economic symbiosis has developed among border communities which are alienated and marginalized at the periphery of the nation-states.

3-2. Reciprocal Exchange and Social Distance in Border Communities

No less important than the flow of goods and labor between Malaysia and Indonesia is another mode of economic exchange deeply embedded in socio-cultural aspects of village life. Reciprocity, a mutual give-and-take among people of equal status, is actually a continuum of various forms of exchange. Three types of reciprocity are distinguishable by the degree of social distance between the exchanging partners (Sahlins 1965). *Generalized reciprocity*, which is usually carried out among close kin, has the highest degree of moral obligation. *Balanced reciprocity* is characteristic of the relationship between friends, or members of different social groups in a peaceable relationship with one another. *Negative reciprocity*

refers to exchange between strangers or peoples hostile to one another. According to Sahlins' rather schematic classification, the most crucial mode of reciprocity observed between Telok Melano and Temajuk is balanced reciprocity, which involves an obligation to return, within a specific time limit, goods of nearly equal value.

For instance, between Telok Melano and Tekam Patah, there is a continuous exchange of goods and service for the construction and maintenance of bridges along the way linking the two communities. As traffic volume between them increased, a greater need arose for the construction of bridges over streams. The people of both communities agreed that Telok Melano should provide chain saws, gasoline and nails and that Tekam Patah should prepare lumber. When materials were ready, they worked together. Bridges were thus made with the cooperation of two communities. At present though, after several rainy seasons, the bridges need repairing. Another *gotong royong* (work sharing) is expected in the near future.

A more frequent exchange of goods and services is observed on such occasions as wedding parties, funerals, and the other Islamic religious ceremonies of Hari Raya and Hari Raya Haji (celebration of the time of pilgrimage to Mecca). The Malays of Telok Melano and Temajuk often participate in each other's rituals because there exist no religious, cultural or customary obstacles. The following is a brief description of some of the rituals where transnational economic exchange, embedded in festivity, can be observed.

The main components of Hari Raya and Hari Raya Haji are the prayer for God's blessing performed at the village prayer-house (*surau*) and the "open house" visiting. During this time, villagers

visit each other's homes freely. From the early morning of the first day, Indonesian children come to Telok Melano and visit villagers' houses (*naik rumah*) to enjoy specially prepared dishes and sweets. In the afternoon of the first day, more Indonesian visitors come to the Malaysian village. Regardless of nationality, all visitors are welcome and are served several kinds of cakes and drinks such as coffee and tea. On the second day of Hari Raya, many of the Telok Melano villagers, in return, go on foot to Tekam Patah and even further into the Indonesian territory to see friends and kin. They are also served cakes and drinks. Hari Raya customs in Temajuk are more or less the same; the only differences are firstly, Indonesian cakes are baked while Malaysian ones are steamed; and secondly, the cakes are sweeter and the drinks are unsweetened in Indonesia. These Hari Raya visits are based on kinship, friendship, and patron-client relationships. This yearly exchange of communal feasting functions to strengthen these dyadic relationships maintained across the border.

In addition to Hari Raya and Hari Raya Haji, weddings and funerals are important rituals where a substantial amount of goods and services are exchanged between Malaysians and Indonesians. Wedding ceremonies, which usually take place at the beginning of dry season (May-July) in the area, are followed by a large scale feast with several hundred attendees. It is not uncommon to find some Indonesians, usually those who work regularly in Telok Melano, helping with the cooking and other preparations for the feast. Later many Indonesians come down to attend the feast. Four or five dishes, including chicken, deer meat, and fish, are served to whoever

attends the marriage ceremony. Such feasts are rare treats which require good planning, a large amount of money, and a large workforce. Guests usually contribute a few ringgit to cover their share of the food. Similarly Telok Melano villagers look forward to Indonesian weddings and attend dressed in their best clothes with some cash to be offered to the newlywed couple. They enjoy the social interaction as much as the feast, meeting with friends and distant kin, and exchanging Muslim prayers and blessings.

Funerals are also occasions where reciprocity is observed between Indonesian and Malaysian villagers. News of a death is delivered immediately across the border. For example, on hearing of the death of a daughter of an Indonesian couple who regularly work for an entrepreneur in Telok Melano, the patron's family quickly went to the house in Tekam Patah with a large sack of rice to be served to guests at her wake and funeral. Many others also went across the border in order to deliver a supply of coconuts, essential for Malay cooking. Not only goods but also a good deal of labor were offered by Malaysian villagers. One of the Malaysians said, "As a Malay, I have to render help, otherwise no one comes and helps when I die."⁶

Because they share many basic Malay cultural elements, Indonesians and Malaysians maintain reciprocal relationships in

⁶Transnational reciprocal relationships are limited to rather specific ritual occasions such as Hari Raya, Hari Raya Haji, weddings, and funerals. In Telok Melano, *Kenduri arwah* in memory of deceased family members and other rituals associated with the prevention of illness, averting evil, house building, and new house warming are usually attended only by Telok Melano villagers with formal or informal invitations. Although Indonesians occasionally participate in those rituals, invitees are basically limited to members of the same village.

certain rituals. For Malays separated by the boundary of the two nation-states, their primordial sentiment as Muslims functions as a strong integrative force. In the following section, I will examine marital alliances across the border, which yield yet another context for liaison between the two social groups.

3-3. Lost Consanguinity in Time and New Marital Liaisons in Space

The consanguineal ties of the Telok Melano villagers have been lost or forgotten in many cases due to a history of migration, separation and confrontation. As examined in Chapter 8, many of their forefathers came from a coastal village near Mempawah in present-day West Kalimantan. They migrated under the leadership of *nakoda* traders who opened coconut plantations along the coast between Cape Dato and Lundu. This coastal area was designated as a migration site for non-Sarawakian settlers by the second Rajah, Charles Brooke. These "Sambas Malays" (possibly of Bugis origin) from the Dutch Borneo territory were gradually incorporated into a new ethnic category of "Sarawak Malays" under the century-long colonial rule by the Brookes. The independence of the Republic of Indonesia and the Federation of Malaysia gave new affiliations to the "Sambas Malays" and the "Sarawak Malays" as "Indonesians" and "Malaysians" respectively. Due to these historical reconfigurations, most consanguineal ties to their forefathers as well as distant relatives and kinsmen in West Kalimantan were discontinued. In Sarawak and West Kalimantan, not all offspring of the same ancestor belong to the same nation. Some kinship relations have

been forgotten over time and space. Many elders of Telok Melano can still recall their ancestral homelands by name, such as Semudun, Arun Medong, Hasbi, places which are all adjacent to the Kunyit River near Mempawah, West Kalimantan. It was from these areas that their grandparents migrated to the frontier coast of Sarawak. However, when I visited Semudun village, I found that few Indonesian villagers there are aware of the existence of Telok Melano, let alone the actual kinship relationships with their Malaysian cousins across the border.

Although their kinship ties with Indonesians, which are at least several generations deep, have been largely forgotten during the colonial and post independence periods, people in Telok Melano are reestablishing lost ties through marital alliances in the younger generations. In Telok Melano there currently live six Indonesians from the Sambas region who are married to Telok Melano villagers. The Indonesian spouses, five women and a man all in their 20s, have already applied for Malaysian citizenship, although the process is expected to take years to complete.

Because of the geographical isolation from other Malay communities, endogamy was common in Telok Melano until recently. The majority of the villagers over thirty years old (as of 1994) had no choice but to find spouses within the village. However, the younger generations have had more options. Young males who feel they are ready to settle down and have their own families go on a trip to the coastal villages in Sambas region, West Kalimantan to "cari cewee" (looking for girls). These trips may take three months or more. As far as I know no youths have been to Kuching and other

Malaysian urban centers for spouse-hunting, although some go to such places for work and eventually meet their future spouses there. They usually go across the border and visit the families of Indonesians who have married and settled in Telok Melano already.

It is said that no Kuching Malay women would dare to come to Telok Melano and marry Telok Melano men. For Telok Melano young men, from an economic point of view, "expensive" Kuching girls are not their first choice. The bridewealth, that is, the necessary payment to the bride in a Muslim wedding ceremony, is set by *adat* (Muslim customary law). Compared to the payment of M\$120 for Malaysian brides, M\$50 is said to be adequate for Indonesian women who marry in Telok Melano. Likewise, at the engagement, a Malaysian man usually needs to pay about M\$3,000 or more to his Malaysian bride's family for the preparation of the reception and other necessities such as kitchen expenses (*belanja dapur*), while in Telok Melano a young man marrying an Indonesian woman pays only M\$300 for his marriage. Some Telok Melano youths had an official Muslim wedding ceremony (*nikah*) at the Indonesian bride's village and simply took the bride back to Telok Melano after a certain period. They did not hold an expensive reception, as they were unwilling to pay a large amount for food and the rental of dresses.

4. Coping with Differences: Hidden Tension and Confrontation at the Border

While symbolic relationships in economic, ceremonial and kinship domains emerged among Malays on both sides of the border,

the fact that they belong to different nation-states generates inevitable tension in their daily life. Membership of a nation-state gives a clearly different identity to the villagers of Telok Melano and Temajuk, that is, they are either "Malaysians" or "Indonesians." The nature of their social interaction depends on a subtle balance between two factors: ethnicity and nationality.

Even though much socio-economic interaction is observed every day, there is a large gap between Telok Melano and Temajuk villagers in terms of wealth. The difference in national economic power is directly reflected in the peripheral economy, where Malaysians enjoy the higher value of their currency and mobilize the inexpensive Indonesian labor at their disposal. According to Telok Melano residents, the folks of Temajuk, especially those of Tekam Patah, the nearest hamlet, are willing to trade their labor for a few secondhand clothes. At lunch break after weeding grass in the field or doing household chores, they are said to be happy with a meal of just plain rice and *sambal belacan* (salty shrimp paste) provided by their employers. Telok Melano folks refer to Temajuk men and women with many children to feed or a big family with little means of subsistence as "people living in hardship" (*orang susah*). However, it is also a fact that Telok Melano villagers are placed at the bottom of the Malaysian national economic hierarchy. This borderland is thus a social field where have-nots exploit other have-nots across the border. The dog-eat-dog situation leads to inevitable tension and confrontation.

In Telok Melano, villagers frequently talk about the theft of marketable crops such as water melons, durians, and peppers.

During the durian harvest season, the owners of trees must keep vigil in a nearby hut to protect falling fruits from thieves. Temajuk villagers are often accused of wrongdoing such as petty theft. The identities of the thieves are never revealed although victims may know who the offenders are in some cases. Only precautionary measures are taken to fend off robbers; a tight guard is kept on the garden during harvest time and rifle shots are fired to scare away thieves. Coconuts also are often stolen from Telok Melano land. A close watch on all a person's coconuts as well as the detection of actual thefts on the spot is practically impossible as most trees are outside the village compound. Coconut palms are abundant in Telok Melano, and a few stolen coconuts never become a serious problem, although ill feelings remain.

There is not much that Telok Melano villagers can do to deal with such trouble with the Indonesians. The difference in population (Temajuk 3,000 vs. Telok Melano 200) is a undeniable threat to the Malaysians who still remember some tragic incidents during the military confrontation (1963-1968), in which three villagers lost their lives. Some Temajuk villagers, especially newcomers, may feel it is easier and indeed justifiable to commit offenses in the foreign borderland where neither Malaysian nor Indonesian law is strictly adhered to.

Indonesian men having casual relationships with Telok Melano women have caused some outcries in the village. There are more than a few women with children born of Indonesian husbands from the Sambas region who go back to Indonesia after a short sojourn in Malaysian territory. Some of these Indonesians already had families

in Indonesia. One Indonesian man pretended he was single and married a Malaysian woman in a formal ceremony in Telok Melano, only to leave this wife and a baby for his family back home.

Some Telok Melano villagers say that Temajuk is a lawless place with no marital duties and responsibilities; men take as many wives as they please, and dump older wives who have lost their sexual attractiveness for young girls. Although Telok Melano males also are able to marry up to four wives under Muslim law if they can support all the families and the prior wives give consent, in fact there are no villagers who do so.

In addition to the negative image of Indonesians as aggressive, a strong provincialism separates Temajuk from Telok Melano. One indicator is the Sambas Malays' strong adherence to their local dialect. Telok Melano people often mentioned to me, "The Indonesians from Temajuk continue to speak their own dialect with a heavy Sambas accent, even though s/he is alone surrounded by one hundred Malaysians." Indonesians who come to Telok Melano never change their Sambas dialect, while Telok Melano villagers, upon entering a Temajuk compound, often change their language to that of the Indonesian villagers, although the difference is quite subtle, one such as a slight change in intonation and accent.

Generally, the Indonesians across the border are described by the Telok Melano villagers as possessors of *semangat kuat* (strong spirit, hard willed). Temajuk villagers show stronger group identity than Telok Melano villagers. Their sense of being Sambas Malays and being Indonesians is a source of pride for the villagers in Temajuk. That this patriotism is often expressed as anti-Malaysian sentiment

surprises Telok Melano villagers, especially when tension emerges even during festivities where young people from both countries have fun. For instance, five Telok Melano youths attended a "karaoke" singing contest held at a village meeting hall at Temajuk Kecil. They were having a good time with the Indonesians, listening to Indonesian popular songs sung by Temajuk youths. However, when one Telok Melano boy stood up and started singing a Malaysian popular song, something totally unexpected happened. The Indonesians started to leave the hall one by one. When the song was finished, there were no Indonesians in the hall; only the singer's Malaysian friends were left, puzzled by the actions of their hosts. It was not because the boy was unpopular among the Indonesians. In fact, he was friendly with many of them and often crossed the border for fun. These Indonesians simply did not like to listen to Malaysian music sung by a Malaysian villager in their homeland, according to a Malaysian witness.

In contrast to this, Indonesian songs are popular in Telok Melano. During my research, the most popular song, which was sung by almost all the villagers, was an Indonesian song named *Cinta Merah Jambu*. The cassette tape of this song had been brought from an Indonesian shop in Paloh. Villagers simply loved this song and sang it on such occasions as the annual school festival and a karaoke contest, as well as at home and garden. It never appeared on the Malaysian pop chart on radio or TV, but became a big local hit among the Telok Melano villagers.

This sense of Indonesian provincialism, *semangat kedaerahan* (*kedaerahan*: "territory/region") is extended to the cultural and

political arena. The "strong spirit" of the Indonesians at Temajuk is often expressed in their Java-orientation, an inclination to locate their cultural heritage in the old Javanese kingdom of Majapahit. At wedding ceremonies, Temajuk brides and grooms wear Javanese-style ceremonial attire, and attendants wear the Javanese *blangkon* (a ceremonial rimless skullcap). At a funeral, they proudly say that they recite the *Koran* in an authentic Javanese way.

This Java-orientation can be attributed to the contemporary Javanese dominance in Indonesian politics. Compared to that of the Telok Melano villagers, their attachment to the Indonesian nation-state seems much stronger. On the walls of small village shops there often are posters of national heroes (*Pahlawan Nasional*) who contributed to Independence and nation building. Not a small number of Temajuk households display pictures of President Suharto and his wife.

While Indonesian nationalism is felt frequently in the daily life of Temajuk, this is not the case in Telok Melano. We hardly encounter any pictures of the *Agong* (King), Dr. Mahathir (the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaysia) and other high ranking politicians of the Sarawak State Government, except on the walls of the policeman's house, the police station, and the classrooms of the elementary school.

In addition, the Indonesian *semangat* is felt quite strongly by Telok Melano villagers in the realm of spiritualism and esoteric knowledge. *Ilmu* is magico-religious power, and its possessors are both respected and feared. If it is possessed by outsiders, locals fear that they may use it to their advantage. That "Indonesians

possess strong magic and are good at using it" is firmly believed in Telok Melano. For instance, in Telok Melano there is a man in his early 40s who is paralyzed and unable to walk nor talk rationally. He looks as if he has barely survived a severe stroke. The man used to be one of the village leaders, famous for his skills in ship building and fishing until he became a subject of Indonesian black magic. According to the villagers, he was quite hostile to the Temajuk villagers, often made fun of their poverty and spoke derogatory words about them in public. One day he suddenly lost his ability to speak, listen, and understand what others say. Gradually his legs and arms became paralyzed. Now he sits all day long at the entrance of his house watching the seashore. His mysterious sickness is believed to have been caused by the black magic of an Indonesian who was humiliated by his words and sought revenge.

While *ilmu* as magico-esoteric power is seen as an attribute of the aggressiveness and the outlaw character of the Indonesians, it is also related to their religious as well as scientific knowledge and world view. When it comes to a discussion of religious knowledge and devotion, it is significant that the Temajuk elders are generally regarded as being better Koran readers than those of Telok Melano. They take the lead in the religious ceremonies which both sets of villagers attend, with strong and precise chanting of the Koranic verses, while the Malaysians just follow them in a low monotonous tune.

5. The Spectrum of Difference: the Positionality of the Borderland

"Sarawak Malayness" is a broad spectrum that covers various social groups ranging from the core to the periphery of Sarawakian society. Kuching Malays represent the hegemonic center, while borderland Malays in Telok Melano occupy the most marginal position on the periphery. In Southwestern Sarawak, there are several key regions with a concentrated Malay population. Among such Malay communities, their geographical proximity to Kuching coincides with their degree of ethnic authenticity as Sarawak Malays. For example, local dialects reflect degrees of recognized difference. Kuching Malays say that the Lundu people speak like birds, while the Malays in Lundu differentiate themselves from the Malays in Sematan, pointing out mutual differences in their accent and intonation. Sematan Malays are, in turn, aware of subtle linguistic differences between themselves and the Malays of Telok Melano. In this sense, Telok Melano occupies the furthest end of social spectrum, where they have no other Sarawak Malay communities to differentiate themselves from.

It is important to note that the images of the Indonesians in Temajuk held by the Telok Melano villagers, that is "aggressors," "outlaws" and "possessors of magico-esoteric power (*ilmu*)," are also applied by other Sarawak Malays to Telok Melano villagers themselves. Because of their geographical location adjacent to the border and their social interaction with Indonesians, they are often regarded as Indonesians and not as Sarawak Malays by the Kuching Malays.

Just like our Kuching Malay friends gave us a Muslim amulet for protection against the *ilmu* of the borderland inhabitants, a Kuching Malay teacher stationed at the village elementary school was warned repeatedly by his friends before moving to Telok Melano, "Be careful in dealing with the village folks who are good at black magic." After returning to Kuching for the holidays, when he spoke in the way the villagers do, for example, adding a specific affix to nouns and verbs and using vocabulary which is not used by Kuching Malays, he immediately became the object of laughter among his Kuching friends. This teacher was one of a few persons who quickly understood the objective of our stay in Telok Melano and helped us by commenting on the differences in custom and rituals between Kuching and Telok Melano. His viewpoint was rather subjective, that of a Malay born and brought up in Kuching, who somehow distanced himself from the locals of Telok Melano. He often attributed the difference between them to Indonesian influence upon the latter. "Telok Melano and Temajuk villagers belong to the same ethnic group (*bangsa Melayu*), even though they are separated by two different governments. They have, however, long mixed with the Indonesians. That is why they are different from us." This was his answer to my question as to the position of Telok Melano villagers in Sarawakian society and the general attitude towards them by Malays who know about this tiny enclave created between the two shifting powers in the hinterland of western Borneo.

The dismantling of Sarawak Malayness under the hegemonies of urban elite Malayness contains the juxtaposition of two independent social categories, i.e., the ethnic and the national. Both their

nationality and ethnicity being ambiguous; the Malays of Telok Melano are not fully incorporated into mainstream Malaysian society nor to an ethnic categorization as Sarawak Malays. They are literally placed in the middle of nowhere in terms of social affiliation.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION

1. Exclusion and Oblivion in the Borderland

Classification of human groups by nationality and ethnicity is somewhat akin to the practice of totemic groupings, which have been crucial modes of recognizing "the other" in human societies. Adherence to a difference, whether inherent or ascribed, leads to the creation of a social boundary that is passed down from generation to generation. Social categories such as family, kin, community, ethnic group and state, all need "others" from which to differentiate themselves and against which to maintain their identity.

Ethnicity and nationality create important social boundaries. In the context of the borderland, such social markings are both inclusive and exclusive. As a buffer zone between states, the borderland is a marginal place where ethnicity and nationality often become the subject of doubt, arbitrary interpretation, and oblivion under the dominant hegemonies of the states. Many of the world's borderlands are left as a blurred and peripheral social field absorbing alien elements from either side.

Under the hegemonic construction of the state, both colonial and post-colonial, in which Malays have occupied the dominant political status, the borderland Malays have been pushed to the rim of the ethnic/national category and alienated from mainstream Malays as well as Malaysians. In the Sarawakian frontier, the villagers of Telok Melano have been perceived as "quasi-Sarawak Malays" who are closer to "Dayaks" and "Indonesians," even though they are accepted as fellows neither by Dayaks nor Indonesians. As

discussed in previous chapters, the ambiguous ethnicity and nationality of the villagers of Telok Melano is reflected in the narratives of urban Malays, which highlight their marginality in "subsistence" and "blood." By these criteria, the status of Telok Melano villagers as "Malays" and "Malaysians" has been brought into a question.

Being a hill rice cultivator is inconsistent with Malayness in the Sarawakian context. Unlike the swidden cultivation associated with Dayaks in the interior, the Malay economy most typically is "non-productive" and "non-land-based," since many Malays have been engaged in trade, maritime activities, and state politics. The fact that Melano and neighboring Serabang people are the only swidden cultivators in the First Division of Sarawak explains how they are perceived by others.

It is intriguing to note how Telok Melano is seen by Selako Dayaks in Pue near Sematan. Telok Melano's adherence to swidden agriculture is irregular and strange in the eyes of these local Dayaks, who have already shifted to irrigated wet rice cultivation. Telok Melano inhabitants are perceived as quasi-Malays not only by urban elite Malays but also by neighboring Dayaks.

Furthermore, close contacts with Indonesians make the nationality of Telok Melano inhabitants ambiguous, although their relationship with Indonesians is not always amicable. The image of Telok Melano as an alien community has much to do with the historical experience of this frontier region. Many Malays on the coast between Cape Dato and Lundu have Dutch Borneo origin. The majority of the original settlers migrated from Sambas and the

Natuna Islands. As Lundu became a regional center under the Brooke administration, traffic between Kuching and Lundu increased. Subsequently social interaction between Dutch Borneo and the region dwindled. The shift of major social interaction resulted in structural amnesia about the origin of these coastal Malays. Nevertheless, the genealogical distance between them and the core "Malays/Malaysians" becomes longer the nearer we get to Cape Dato.

2. The Genesis of Social Displacement

To elucidate the genesis of ethnic and national displacement of the Malay peasant community on the border, I have analyzed two types of state intervention: labor mobilization and territorial enclosure of Sarawak as a distinctive political-economic unit. The mobilization of labor and boundary-making by the state were necessary for the development of a capitalistic economy in Sarawak. While local communities functioned as an important source of agricultural labor, the mobility of peasants was restricted through naturalization and immigration policies. The former led to the formation of an ethnically segmented agricultural labor market, and to the economic stagnation of the Malays on the coastal area; and the latter caused reactionary response in Lundu District, where illegal movements of commodities and people accelerated.

In Part I, these social processes were examined in chronological order. Chapter 3 mainly dealt with the local history of labor mobilization in Lundu District between the 1870s and the 1910s. Chapter 4 turned to the economic enclosure by the states

based on international regulation of rubber production in the 1930s and the development of a smuggling economy, which became a major local industry up to the early 1960s. Economy, however, was not the only driving force behind the enclosure of Sarawak. As discussed in Chapter 5, political incidents such as the military confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia (1963-1966) abruptly made the porous border concrete and permanent. The border inhabitants had to choose allegiance to a nation-state in a war-like situation.

History molded social affiliations of the borderland population. In essence, state power functioned to dismantle ethnic consciousness, although locals have maintained ethnic symbiosis across the border (Chapter 9). With the progression of two social processes, the making of nations and the dismantling of ethnic solidarity, peoples on the border have further been alienated and placed in the middle of nowhere in terms of their affiliation in the eyes of others.

2-1. Labor Mobilization and Ethnic Segmentation

The first and the second white Rajahs were eager to implement effective migration and land policies in order to mobilize agricultural laborers to produce cash crops in Sarawak. Under the colonial land policies, all the native land became state-owned and was allocated to entrepreneurs who brought foreign immigrants and coolies to open plantations. In Lundu District, Chinese *taukay* and Malay *nakoda* were two leading agents who brought in laborers for their respective cash crop production. As a result of the labor

mobilization, ethnic division of labor became quite clear in Lundu in the latter half of the 18th century. Coastal Malay peasants who came from the Sambas region of Dutch Borneo planted coconuts. Gambier, pepper, and rubber were cultivated by both Chinese coolies, who had migrated from western Dutch Borneo and Southern China via Singapore, and a small number of Dayaks. The development of an ethnically specific agricultural economy led to the formation of a "plural society," although not in the sense of Furnivall's conceptualization of coexistent ethnic groups under colonial rule (Furnivall 1939, 1948). Rather, the colonial labor process generated an uneven distribution of economic resources among an ethnically segmented labor market (Wolf 1982:379).

With the introduction of the cash crop production system in colonial Sarawak, the downfall of the Malay economy became irreversible. A small elite segment of Sarawak Malays who traditionally enjoyed privileged political status under the Brooke rule maintained their economic status as colonial officials. The majority of commoners, on the other hand, who had been active in riverine as well as coastal trade of non-cultivated commodities such as forest produce, lost their economic ground due to the rise of a Chinese trading class that dominated the circulation of cash crops such as gambier, pepper, and rubber produced by Chinese planters. The participation of the Malay *nakoda* class in coconut cultivation was indeed the last resort for their survival.

Coastal Malays were gradually excluded from the mainstream of the economy. Due to the land policies of the colonial government, the Malay's niche was restricted to the coastal area. In the process

of this economic enclosure, the coastal Malay peasants in Lundu had no choice but to engage in the declining coconut economy, since the sandy coastal soil was not suitable for the cultivation of other crops. Unlike pepper and rubber, which became major export commodities, coconut declined in market value due to the introduction of chemical substitutes for copra in soap production.

Under such circumstances, the coconut plantation belt and the Malay coastal communities between Cape Dato and Sematan gradually disappeared, except for Telok Melano and Telok Serabang. The studied Malay community, Telok Melano, took an oscillating turn to subsistence economy based on swidden rice production after the withdrawal of *nakoda* entrepreneurs from the area at the turn of the 20th century. Its economic downfall coincided with its deviation from ethnic orthodoxy and villagers became dependent on swidden hill cultivation inland just like Dayaks.

For the inland Dayak population, ethnic identity is closely associated with the production of hill rice in swiddens. Despite their participation in commodity production under the Brooke colonial rule, swidden agriculture remained a positive ethnic banner for many up-river Dayaks. On the contrary, the Malays on the southwestern coast of Sarawak were unable to find a proper niche to express their ethnic and historical consciousness. Their traditional economic activities, maritime and riverine trade undertaken by the *nakoda* commercial class and fishery undertaken by coastal commoners, lost their salience as ethnic markers because of the dominance of migrant Chinese in both fields.

2-2. Territorial Enclosure of Sarawak as a Political-Economic Unit

It was not until the 1930s that Sarawak became a full-fledged independent economic as well as political unit. During the reign of the first and the second Rajahs, colonial states on both sides of the border implemented only rudimentary customs and immigration control. As examined closely in Chapter 3 and 4, when Charles Brooke was in power, foreign migrants were well received as labor for the economic development of Sarawak. Dutiable commodities carried to and from foreign countries were virtually unchecked because they were limited to wild forest produce and did not constitute the major source of state revenue as taxable export/import commodities.

The development of a rubber economy in Sarawak in the 1920s made this commodity an important source of state revenue. The implementation of the International Rubber Agreement of 1934 shaped Sarawak into an independent economic unit, since the movement across the border of people who were potential carriers of dutiable commodities was strictly supervised.

The development of an economic boundary through the colonial intervention in the movement of goods and people served to socially marginalize residents of the borderland. Custom regulations on the transnational traffic of dutiable commodities and the naturalization policies created a distinct social category of "Sarawakians." They were agricultural producers who cultivated cash crops within a designated economic territory of the colonial state.

The borderland's response to the enclosure was quite reactionary. In the Sarawak-Kalimantan frontier in Lundu District, peasants who were long denied access to lucrative cash crop production found a strategy for survival in trans-border commodity transaction, i.e., smuggling of rubber and other commodities from the Sambas region of Kalimantan into Sarawakian territory (Chapter 4). The thriving of this informal economy further marginalized the national affiliation of the borderland. For the government, borderland peasants engaged in the informal economy were tax evaders acting against the establishment of the state-bound economic system and its development.

In addition to the economic enclosure of colonial Sarawak, bilateral conflict between newly independent Malaysia and Indonesia deeply affected the political landscape of Lundu hinterland. The military confrontation (*Konfrontasi*) of 1963 was the most violent state intervention that divided the border population into two opposing camps (Chapter 5 and 7). Though remote from the political centers of Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta, local population suffered heavily during the confrontation because they were right on the spot where warring nations met.

Peace returned, and new neighbors settled across the border (Chapter 9). Telok Melano, where the village police station also functions as an immigration post, is literally the gate for numerous Indonesians who enter the Malaysian territory seeking material gain. More importantly, there is daily social interaction between Telok Melano and Indonesian villages as examined in the previous chapter. The symbiosis between Sarawak Malays and Sambas Malays,

however, requires members of peripheral communities to engage in subtle negotiation and maneuvering as to where they stand in terms of their identity as Malays as well as citizens of each sovereign state. In contemporary Sarawak, the experience of *Konfrontasi* and the influx of illegal immigrants from Indonesian Kalimantan in recent years are largely responsible for creating ambivalent and often negative images of the neighbors across the border. The fact that Malays on both sides of the border share the same ethnic descent tends to be hidden and forgotten by the Malays in Sarawak. Unlike the positive identification with the sultans of Sumatra and Johor by the aristocratic *perabangan* Malays (Chapter 2), the Dutch Bornean (present Indonesian) elements which remained in the post-colonial era are the subject of oblivion and concealment, if not total denial.

3. Borderland as an Anthropological Frontier

Map 6 shows malaria-infected "black areas" (*kawasan hitam*) in the First Division of Sarawak. These areas occur sporadically along the border between Sarawak and West Kalimantan. The studied region, the borderland between Sematan and Cape Dato including Telok Melano, is such area. Villagers often suffer from a sudden bout of severe headache and shivering, even though medical staff from the State Government spray anti-mosquito pesticide in all houses regularly.

The reason why the malaria-infested areas are concentrated near the border is rather simple. Malaria-infected Indonesians enter

Sarawakian territory, where mosquitoes spread the parasite to Malaysians. The occurrence of malaria is thus an indicator of heavy traffic from Kalimantan. The spots on the map coincide with communities along the border which function as local hubs of human movements between the two countries. These villages are pipelines connecting two nation-states, uniting ethnic groups divided by modern geo-politics. As the names of ethnic groups show, each border point is ethnically specific. Just as Telok Melano serves as a linkage point for the transnational traffic of the Malays, Biawak and Tebedu are the territory of the Bidayuh Dayaks. On the border between the Federation of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia, which runs for 2,800 km from Cape Dato to the Sebatic Island situated between Sabah and East Kalimantan, there are numerous communities that are linked by people of the same ethnic origin but divided by two governments.

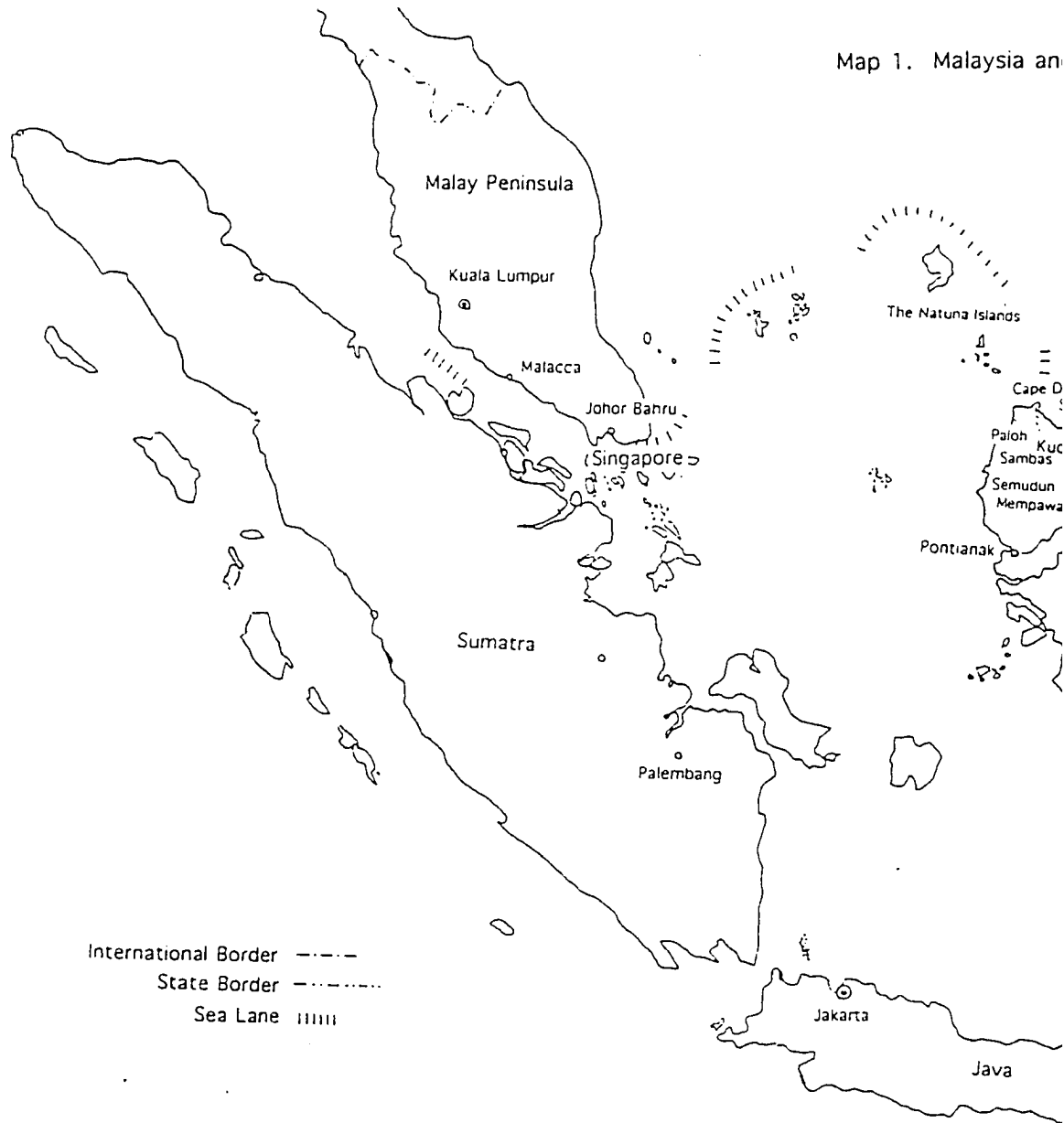
Telok Melano is one of them. I conducted a two-year anthropological study of this community with two questions in mind: how did the village become what it is today, an enclave right on the border between two political systems; and why are the villagers regarded neither as authentic members of their ethnic group nor as citizens. Social exclusion derived from spatial dislocation generated by the arbitrary demarcation of a state boundary has been a main issue in this thesis.

To answer these questions, I turned to history. By tracing more than one century of regional and local history of the borderland in western Borneo, I came to understand the dynamics of historical interaction between conflicting polities. In addition, I intentionally

chose the borderland as an alternative to a conceptually closed functional whole, which anthropologists have long dealt with. Conventional anthropology is inadequate for discussing the historical experience of a borderland community like Telok Melano, which refuses to stay within the analytic limit of "community," "culture," and even "state." The borderland is an analytic locale and not just a geographical place. It is a social field with universal qualities where hybridity is a key issue. Focusing on the nature of the borderland leads to exploration of the fragmented identities of those who must live within the nationally-bounded dominant social order, from which they are nevertheless excluded.

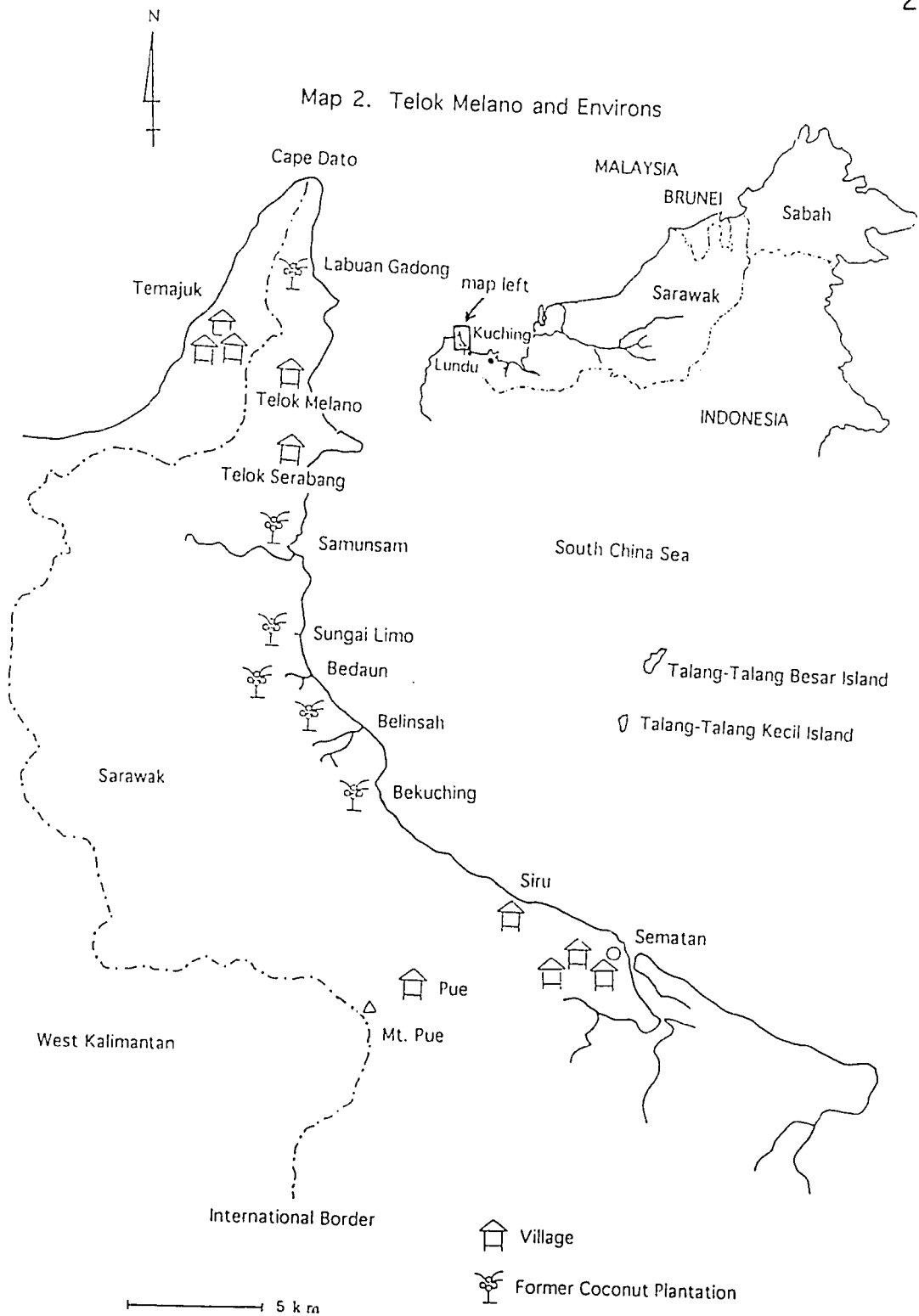
In this study, the borderland has been defined as a linkage point in time and space. As a locale that connects community with the state and larger history, the borderland in western Borneo has been taken as the locus of my analysis. Whenever two or more governments exist side by side, a borderland is present. In this sense, borderland is very common, yet locally specific ecological, economic, and political factors generate considerable variations. By focusing on difference, power, and struggle, borderland studies have the potential to open up a new strategy for understanding the relation between people and history.

Map 1. Malaysia and

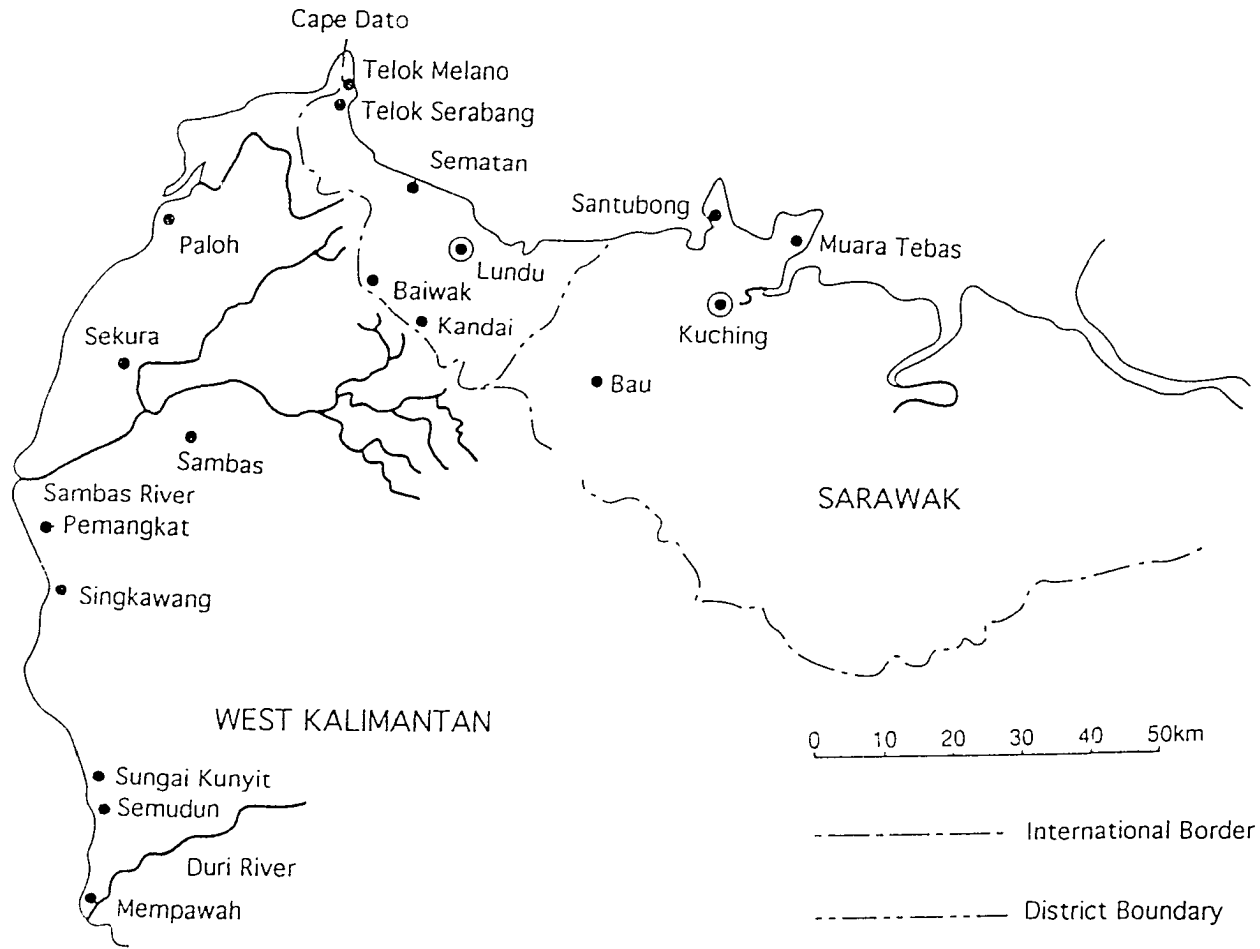


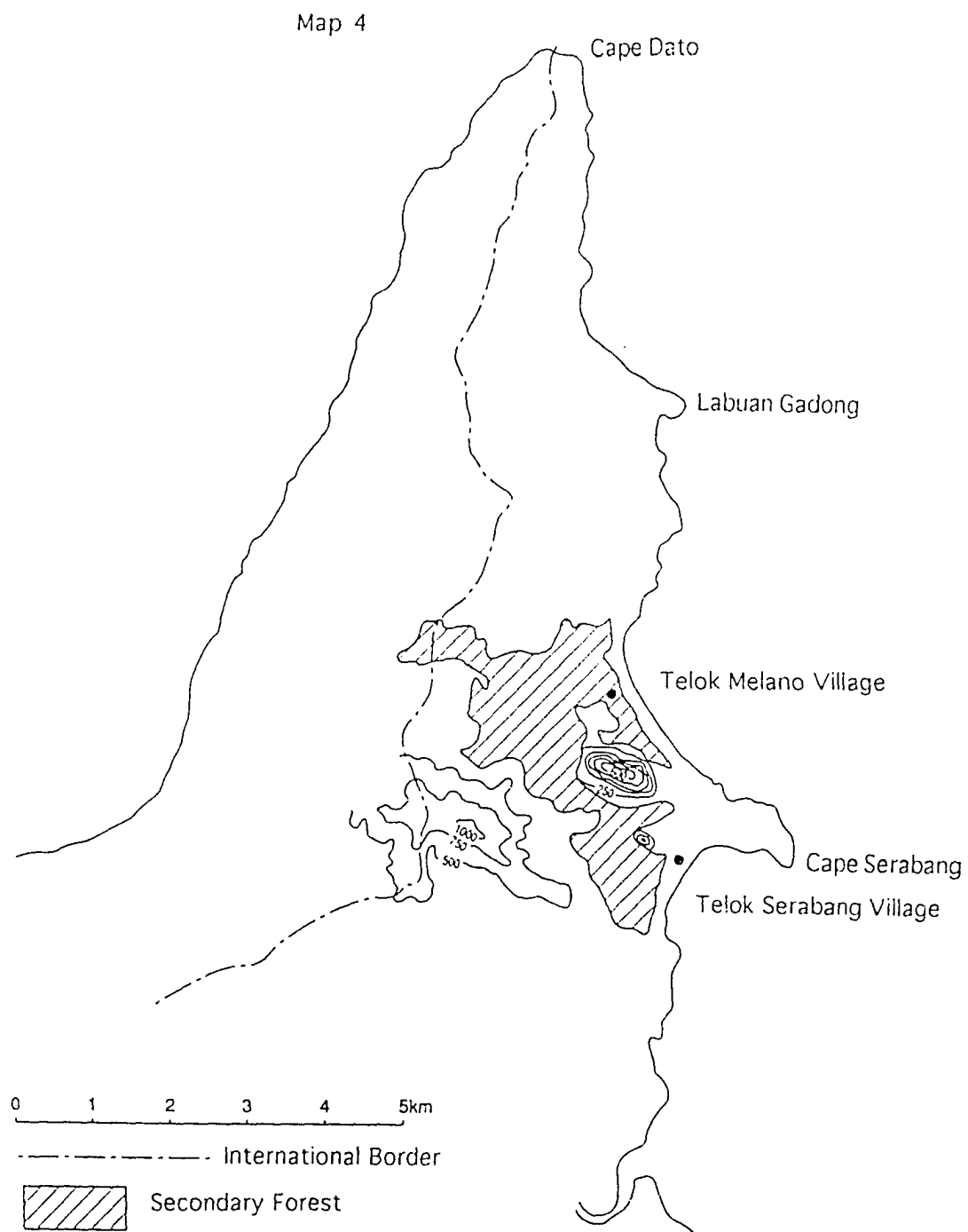
Map 1. Malaysia and Indonesia





Map 3. Sarawak and West Kalimantan





Secondary Forest around Telok Serabang and Telok Melano Villages
(as of 1960)

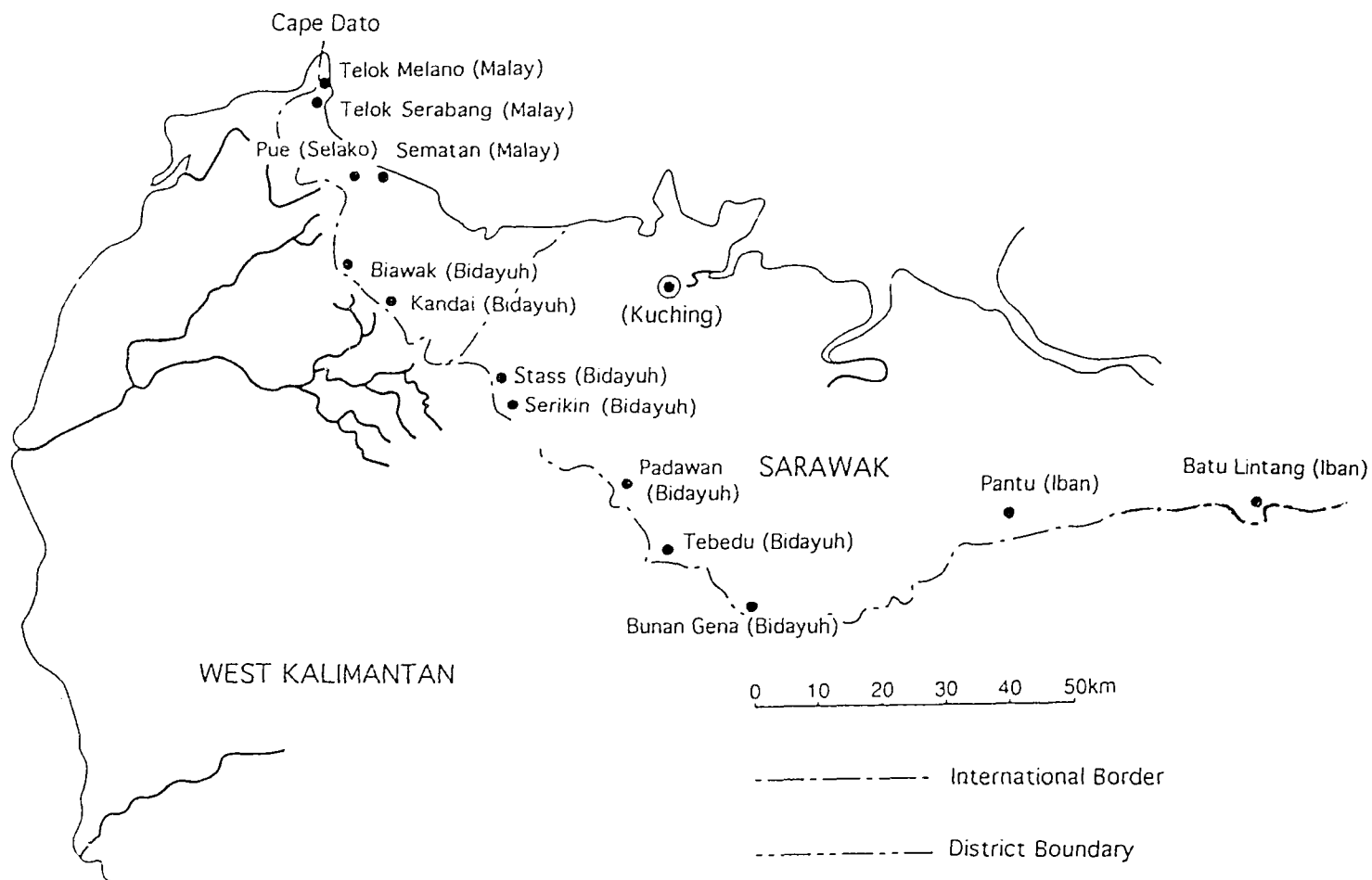
Map 5

Borderland adjacent to Cape Dato



NOTE: Black dots indicate the approximate center of each village/hamlet. Six Temajuk hamlets exist side by side without a clear boundary, along a narrow path which leads to Paloh to the south and Telok Melano to the east.

Map 6



Malaria Infested Areas (Kawasan Hitam) in Southwestern Sarawak

Appendix A. General Discussion of the Ethnographic Literature on Sarawak

As a study of peasant economy in Sarawak, this work benefited from a substantial amount of literature spanning over half a century. Among the earliest works are a series of social anthropological ethnographies presented to the Colonial Social Science Research Council during the British rule. Research projects which were given theoretical impetus by E. R. Leach's *Social Science Research in Sarawak: A Report on the Possibilities of a Social Economic Survey of Sarawak* (1949) covered various ethnic groups in the colony, i.e., the Ibans (Freeman 1955, 1970), the Bidayus (Geddes 1954), the Melanaus (Morris 1953), and the Chinese (Tien 1953). Following these pioneering works by British social anthropologists, social science research in Sarawak has continued to produce a variety of ethnographies on societies based on swidden agriculture that are found widely throughout Sarawak, such as those studied by W.M. Schneider (1987), J. Rousseau (1974), P. Metcalf (1982), H. Whittier (1973), Uchibori (1988), Padock (1982), Kedit (1980). The predominance of Dayak studies in Sarawak is a reflection of the scholarly favoritism toward migratory swidden cultivators and pagan headhunters. On the contrary, Muslim Malays have received little attention from researchers. For Europeans and Americans who monopolized research activities until very recently, the Malays were neither as "exotic" as the Iban nor as "adventurous" as the immigrant Chinese (Sanib 1985:viv). It may also be that Sarawak Malays were regarded as identical to "Malays" elsewhere in the archipelago and

therefore had no novelty. Before the publication of Tom Harrisson's *The Malays of South-west Sarawak before Malaysia: a Socio-Ecological Survey* (1970), anthropological work on the Malays in Sarawak was virtually non-existent except for a short report on marriage customs by Abang Yusuf Puteh (1966).

Though pioneering, Harrisson's work has three weaknesses. The first is the unit of analysis. Harrisson conducted "mass observation" of the Malay population in the Sarawak delta, employing a large number of assistants for data collection, while he largely remained in Kuching as an "armchair anthropologist." Although this study deals with over twenty coastal communities in the south-western Sarawak delta, none are presented as concrete ethnographies.

The second and most crucial shortcoming of his work lies in its neglect of local history. Harrisson provided a macro-level historical background of the Malays in question, covering the Hindu era, the coming of Islam to Sarawak, and colonization by Brooke and the British, but he ignores the interaction between local Malay society and larger historical forces, especially the colonial state apparatus. As apparent in the title, *The Malays of South-west Sarawak before Malaysia*, the time period discussed in his work basically covers the colonial era of Sarawak. Thus, "After Malaysia," that is the social formation of the Sarawak Malays under the Federation of Malaysia, was not a subject of inquiry.

The third point is related to the first and the second. Due to his use of such a broadly defined unit of analysis covering the entire Sarawak delta and encompassing almost 100 miles of coastline, as well as his narrow historical depth dealing with one decade from

1947 to 1957, Harrisson did not adequately investigate social change observable in the region in question. The major weakness of his analysis derives from his failure to heed massive socio-economic transformation which Sarawak had undergone. This is especially apparent in his description of the economic activities of the Malays. The account of Malay subsistence activities was restricted to traditional fisheries, which have suffered less modification during the expansion of international commodity market. The subsequent development of commodity production among the Malays was not given sufficient attention. Throughout the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial eras, the Sarawak Malay peasantry was created and transformed by means of a market economy and state intervention. This simple but crucial historical fact was largely ignored by Harrisson.

After his untimely death in Thailand, the ethnographic study of the Sarawak Malays had been left untouched except for Zinal Kling's unpublished doctoral thesis on the socialization of Saribas Malay youths (1973), until my research on which this dissertation is based.

Appendix B. General Description of Sarawak

Sarawak is one of the thirteen states of the Federation of Malaysia, occupying 124,450 sq. km along the northwestern part of the island of Borneo. Originally falling within the domain of the Sultan of Brunei, from 1841 to 1941, it was the private colony of an English family, the Brookes. After being occupied by the Japanese during the Pacific war, Sarawak was ceded by Vyner Brooke to Britain in 1946. It was thus a crown colony until 1963 when it became part of Malaysia. Sarawak is governed from the state capital in Kuching and until very recently was divided into seven administrative divisions, each headed by a Resident, and 25 districts, each headed by a District Officer.

Physiologically, Sarawak can be divided into three broad regions: the coastal lowlands, comprising extensive peat swamps areas fringed by narrow coastal and alluvial plains; an intermediate region of undulating and broken hill country, ranging up to about 300 meters above sea-level; and the mountainous interior which extends to the border with Indonesia Borneo and reaches its highest point at Mount Murud (2,400 m) in the northeast. These regions are intersected by numerous rivers, most of which rise in the interior mountains and flow through gorges and over numerous rapids before reaching the lowlands, where they slowly meander towards the coast and, in the case of the Sarawak and the Rejang rivers, form intricate delta systems. Traditionally the rivers are the principal transport routes for much of the state.

Settled cultivation includes wet rice, rubber, sago, oil palm, coconut, pepper, cocoa, and horticultural crops. Shifting cultivation includes land currently cleared for hill rice as well as land under various stages of secondary growth and is practiced through the undulating and hilly intermediate region of the state. Agricultural production is dominated by village-based smallholders, most of whom have supplemented their subsistence wet or hill rice production with one or more crops -- principally sago and coconut in the coastal zone and rubber and pepper further inland. Coastal farmers are often also engaged in fishing. In addition, road-based Chinese smallholders specialize in cash crops such as rubber, pepper, cocoa or vegetables, as well as commercial pig, poultry and pond-fish production. Oil palm is mainly grown in estates in the Miri-Bintulu region.

Sarawak's climate is warm and wet, with abundant rainfall, uniformly high temperatures and high humidity levels. The natural vegetation is tropical rain forest, divided roughly into swamp forest on the organic soils of the coastal region and hill forest further inland, with many sub-types. Though the soils are inherently poor, the warm wet conditions and the rapid and efficient cycling of nutrients between the forest biomass and the soil permit luxuriant growth. Once the forest is cleared, however, fertility is quickly lost through oxidation and leaching, and weed growth becomes prolific. Conversely, when left to natural processes of ecological succession, forest regeneration occurs rapidly and leads to the restoration of soil fertility. This, of course, is the rationale of the system of shifting cultivation which is the dominant form of food production

in the state and is also a reason for the importance of tree crops in the agricultural economy.

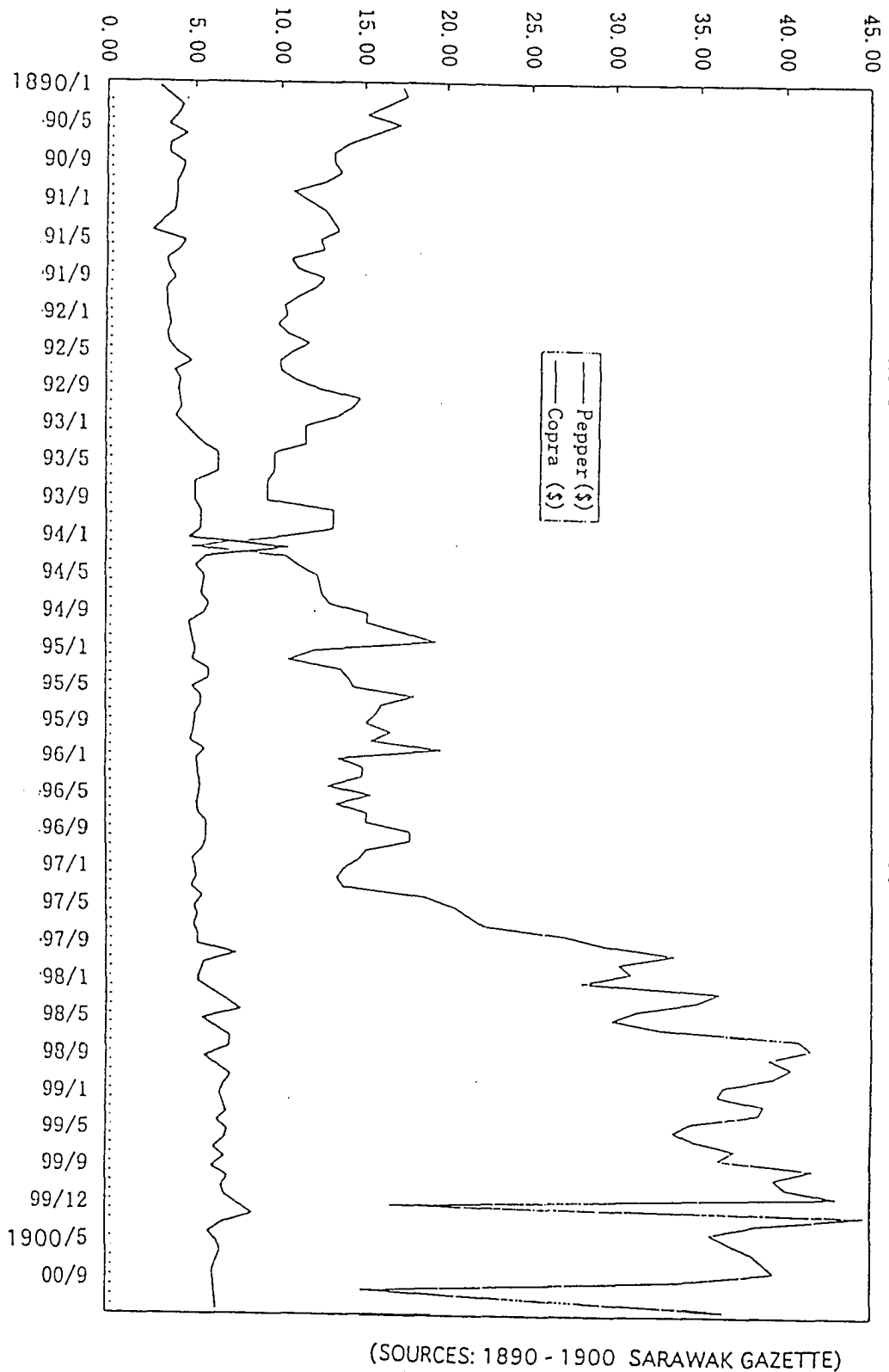
Sarawak's population was about 1.7 million at the time of the 1991 census, having grown at a rate of 2.4 per cent per annum during the previous decade. Eighty two per cent of the population lived in rural areas (including rural towns) and 61 per cent of the work force was concentrated in the western part of the state, with 49 per cent located in First Division and Second Division alone, and 74 per cent in the First, Second, Third and Sixth Divisions. Population density averaged ten persons per sq. km but varied from as low as one person per sq. km in Belaga District to 122 persons per sq. km in Kuching District. Throughout Southeast Asia, this density must be seen in relation to the low carrying capacity of the land, the majority of which is considered unsuitable for agriculture. In parts of western Sarawak population pressure on the land is acute.

Appendix C.

Population of Lundu in 1889

	Male	Female	Total	TOTAL
Dayaks				2,105
Sibuyow	432	412	844	
Larahs	163	170	333	
Silakows	349	348	697	
Silakows at Poi	62	45	107	
Jagui	68	56	124	
Malays	547	476		1,023
Chinese	765	182		947
<u>Klings</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>		<u>25</u>
	2,406	1,694		4,100
				(SG Oct. 1,1889)

Appendix D.



Appendix E.

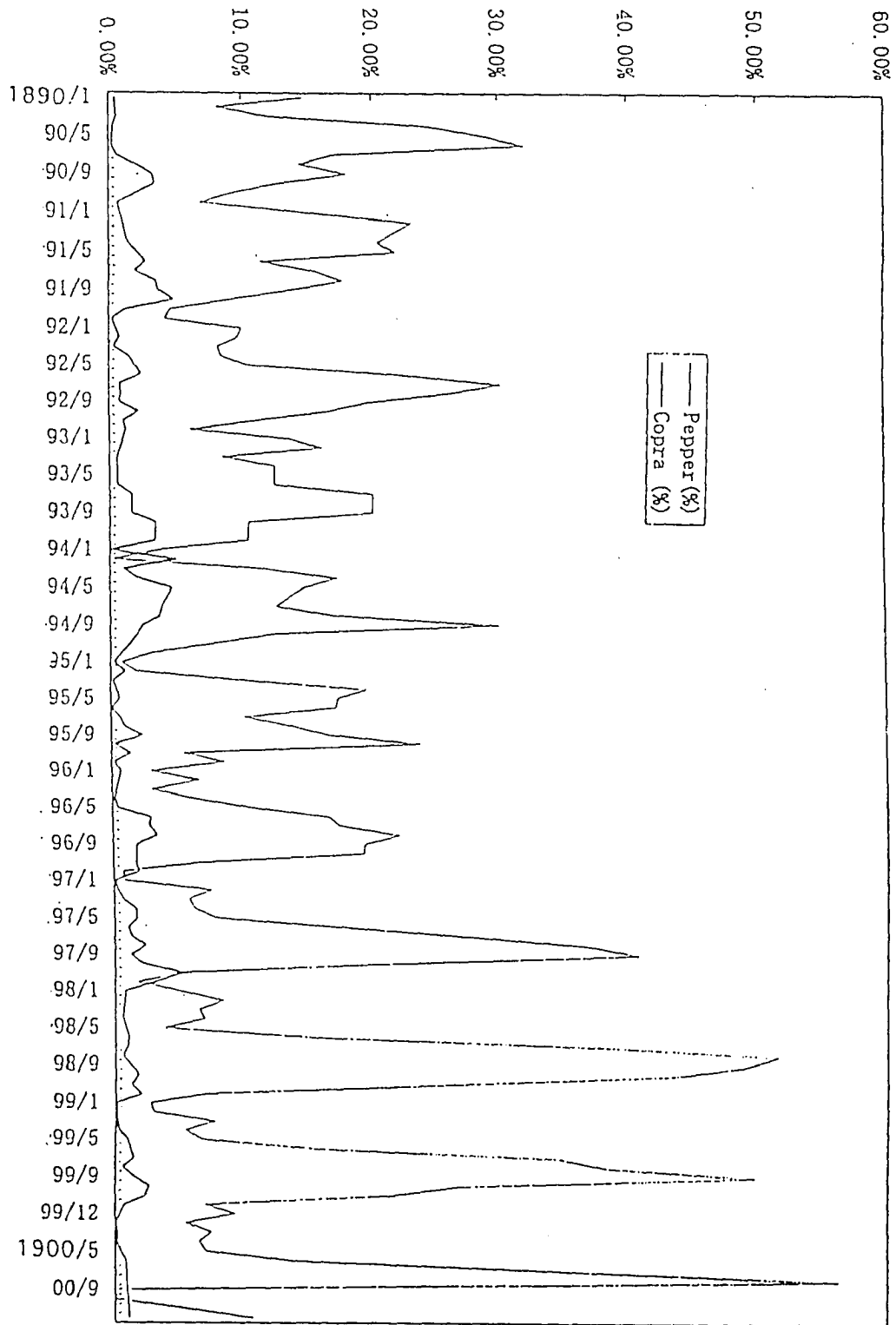


FIGURE 2. THE PERCENTAGE OF PEPPER AND COPRA EXPORT IN KUCHING FOREIGN TRADE RETURNS FROM JANUARY 1890 TO DECEMBER 1900

(SOURCES: 1890 - 1900 SARAWAK GAZETTE)

Appendix F. Export Items in 1886 (weight/value in \$)

Jungle produce	Beeswax	239	pikuls	14,668
	Betel nuts	2,810	pikuls	13,335
	Birds nests	167	pikuls	32,782
	Camphor	233	cities	8,285
	Damar	322	pikuls	548
	Gutta-percha	1,937	pikuls	162,233
	Indian-rubber	1,259	pikuls	85,775
	Rattans	46,868	pikuls	236,421
	Timber			22,742
	V. Tallow & seeds	16	pikuls	150
Minerals	Antimony	590	tons	57,320
	Coal	14,707	tons	73,537
	Gold	1,017	bkls	52,740
	Quicksilver	323	flasks	17,079
Produce of cultivated lands and manufac- tures	Coffee	246	pikuls	8,483
	Coprah	7,230	pikuls	40,043
	Gambier	20,672	pikuls	152,346
	Paddy	3,915	pikuls	5,436
	Pepper	18,621	pikuls	240,211
	Sago flour	259,614	pikuls	641,939
Sea produce	fish	1,340	pikuls	11,992
Imports exported	Cloth			10,126
	Rice	5,348	pikuls	15,725
	Sundries			41,406
	Treasure			117,958

(SG April 1,1886:67)

Appendix G.

Import/Export Duties in 1895

IMPORT DUTIES 1895		EXPORT DUTIES 1895	
Brassware, & c.	\$2571.28	Billian, timber, &c.	\$2,142.17
Chanangs & Tetawaks	95.06	Bee's Wax	893.73
Excise	2,450.45	Birds' Nests	1,934.49
Jars	1,184.38	Camphor	258.90
Kerosene Oil	3,579.76	Cutch	4.20
Guns and Muskets	96.40	Fish, &c.	735.66
Salt	8,729.45	Guliga	.20
<u>Tobacco & Cigars</u>	<u>27,972.63</u>	Gutta P.L. & In.Rub.	13,849.28
	\$46,679.41	Gambier	2,419.15
		Pepper	3,216.54
		Rattans and Canes	6,017.46
		Sago Raw	895.08
		Flour	16,641.20
		Vegetable Tallow	630.71
		<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<u>610.69</u>
			\$50,249.46
			(SG April 1, 1896:80)

Appendix H. Sarawak State Revenue in 1895

Baram	\$10,113.19
Bintulu	9,430.90
Muka	9,180.71
Oya	7,924.03
Trusan	4,174.72
Limbang	5,963.52
Lundu and Simatan	3,101.69
Sadong	7,460.93
Kalaka	6,407.45
Simanggang	12,364.97
Upper Sarawak	1,558.42
Saribas	3,289.47
Rejang	46,859.76
Kuching	325,970.48
	\$453,800.24

(source: The *Sarawak Gazette* of 1895)

**Appendix I. Export Duties on Commodities Shipped from Sarawak
(1875 - 1908)**

<u>NOTICE</u>	<u>DATE</u>
gambier and pepper	Dec.8, 1875
blachan, prawns, and fish	May 19, 1882
bird nests	Nov.27, 1885
sea, jungle and other produce	
transshipped at Sarawak ports	Feb.27, 1886
rattans and other canes	April 20, 1891
gutta percha	Jan.2, 1901
rattans, pepper and damar	June 27, 1901
gutta, jelutong and pepper	June 1, 1902
pepper	Dec.24, 1902
salted fish	Jan.1, 1903
illipe nuts	May 1, 1903
damar	Jan 12, 1904
jelutong, gutta & white pepper	Dec.29, 1904
India rubber	April 29, 1908
 <u>ORDERS</u>	
kulit tengar (bark tree)	Nov.16, 1895
jungle produce	May 30, 1896
cultivated produce	June 24, 1896
nipa sugar	Oct. 18, 1898
working and collecting timber	June 22, 1899
wild gutta and India rubber	Oct. 24, 1901

(source: The *Sarawak Gazette* 1875-1908)

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Abbreviation

LDR *Lundu District Report*

SG *Sarawak Gazette*

SGG *Sarawak Government Gazette*

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