

MALAY AND ORANG ASLI INTERACTIONS: VIEWS FROM LEGENDARY HISTORY

Marina Roseman, May, 1979/2003, Cornell University

INTRODUCTION

The records of the past found in oral and written histories attest to the predominant human preference for order in experience. Within these historical traditions, human beings impose order upon situations and manipulate the past to explain the present. The structuring of the past presented in history reveals the themes and categories considered crucial by the chronicler or storyteller. Among certain cultures and time periods, oral or written history is considered best explained in terms of chronological, biographical, and situational accuracy. However, history also contains a record of the subjective dynamics surrounding the recorded event.

In the present study, we focus upon the meaning of history as it is revealed in the storyteller's concept of his characters. This approach emphasizes the cultural conceptions of the storyteller by analyzing the qualities and roles delegated to the various objects, characters, and actions. Our intent is to explore Malay and Orang Asli (aborigine) conceptions about each other through an analysis of their respective historical traditions.

The central sources employed in this study are the Malay legend of the founding of the Perak Dynasty and the Orang Asli legend of the war between the monkeys. Neither legend has been committed to writing by indigenous authors. Our versions of the legends are thus filtered through travelers and ethnographers, and we must recognize this limitation. Furthermore, we do not have access to the context in which the story was told. This restricts our access to the various levels of meaning which might be imbedded in the storyteller's vocal tone and gesture, or the audience's response (Sweeney 1972: 61-64). These constraints will be partially overcome in the following analysis by the interspersal of ethnographic observations within mythical analysis.

Our analysis of Orang Asli/Malay interactions as expressed in legendary history revolves around the early Malay settlers' penetration into Orang Asli territory in Perak, a northwest state of West Malaysia. The Orang Asli, or aborigines of the Malay Peninsula can be divided into three main ethno-cultural divisions: the Negrito, Senoi, and Proto-Malays. These three divisions are further subdivided into approximately twenty linguistic-cultural units (Carey 1976: 11-24; Baharon 1964: 39, n. 1). The languages of many groups are collectively referred to as the Aslian languages. The Aslian languages are considered to be one of the twelve branches of the Mon-Khmer (or Austroasiatic) family (Diffloth 1977: 1).

The first legend to be discussed below concerns the relations between Malay immigrants of the 16th century and the resident Negritos of Perak. According to the 1969 census conducted by the Department of Orang Asli Affairs of the Malaysian government, 16,700 Orang Asli—nearly 32% of the total aboriginal population—are located in Perak (Carey 1976: 11). The ethno-cultural divisions represented in Perak are the Negrito (900) and the Senoi (15,800) (ibid). Of the six Negrito groups in Malaysia, three are present in Perak: the Kintak, Jahai, and Lanoh (ibid: 30). The Temiar and Semai groups of the Senoi division are also found in Perak.

The term “Semang” is used to denote the aborigines in the Perak Dynasty Legend. The early terms for aborigines found in the literature until about 1930 are “Sakai” and “Semang.” These terms are ambiguous, for they were sometimes used to refer to the ethno-cultural units “Senoi” and Proto-Malay, on the one hand, and ‘Negrito’ on the other, and sometimes applied indiscriminately to the aborigines as a whole, regardless of ethnic or linguistic affiliation (ibid: 3). The term “Semang,” usually applied to the Negrito, means debt-slave or dependent, and was abandoned in the 1930’s in favor of the term “Negrito,” or little Negro. The early term for the Senoi and others, “Sakai,” also meant slave or dependent (ibid).

By the late 1950’s, the aborigines of the Malay Peninsula were referred to collectively as “Orang Asli.” The word *orang* means “people,” while *asli* comes from the Arabic word *asali*, meaning “original,” “well-born,” or “aristocratic” (ibid). The movement through time was thus away from terms implying pejorative or inferior status to a term that recognizes the aborigines as the original inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula.

The theme of the Orang Asli as “original” or “well-born” figures prominently in the Perak dynasty legend. The legendary account of the founding of the Malay kingdom of Perak gives us insight into the modes of interaction between the Malays and the aborigines. An analysis of the nature of these interactions as they are presented in the legend allows us to penetrate subjective Malay conceptions about the Orang Asli. Close examination of the legend will be interfaced with accounts of Malay/Orang Asli interactions by colonial administrators, anthropologists, and other observers. Structural analysis of the mythical material is thus presented within an ethnographic background. This procedure both constructs the range of reference necessary to render the myth meaningful (Douglas 1967) and isolates the themes which render the ethnographic context intelligible.

The first version (“I”), printed in 1881, was collected by W. E. Maxwell while he was Assistant Resident to Hugh Low in Perak. Maxwell, whose father was also a British colonial administrator, spoke fluent Malay. His attentive observation of Malay customs was informed by lengthy local experience commencing with magisterial posts on the Peninsula in 1867 (Barr 1977: 51-60; 104). However, in his presentation of the Perak dynasty legend, Maxwell does not state the identity of his informant, nor does he clarify whether his presentation is a composite from several storytellings, or an isolated account. He introduces his “traditionary account of the founding of the kingdom of Perak” as “the local legend current among the people of this state” (Maxwell 1881: 510):¹

¹ Footnotes listed within the text of the legend are Maxwell’s own, reproduced below:

1. Johor Lama was the old capital of the State of Johor, which is the southernmost of the Malay States of the Peninsula.
2. Tobacco was first introduced into the Eastern Archipelago by the Portuguese at Malacca in the sixteenth century. Anachronisms of this kind are common in native histories.
3. *Teh*, short for *Puteh*, white; *Pûrba*, or *pûrva*, Sanskrit, first.
4. Another anachronism. So, cannons are mentioned in several places in the Thousand and One Nights. See Lane’s translation, vol. ii, p. 329, note 100. The *istinggarda* (Portuguese *espingarda*) is the old-fashioned matchlock, specimens of which may still be found in use among the Malays. In former times a

Baginda Dai reigned in Johor Lama.¹ He despatched a trusted counsellor, one Nakhodah Kasim, to sail forth and look for a suitable place for a settlement, for there were plenty of willing emigrants. Nakhodah Kasim got ready a fleet of prahus and sailed up the Straits of Malacca, hugging the coast, till he reached Bruas (a district and river in Perak). While there, he saw that a brisk trade was being carried on between the coast and the interior, imported goods being dispatched up the country and native produce brought down from the inland districts. He made inquiries and was told there was a big river in the interior. His curiosity was now aroused and he penetrated on foot into the interior and discovered the Perak river. Here he traded, like the natives of the country, making trips up and down the river, and selling salt and tobacco² at the villages by the river-side. On one of these trips he reached Tumung in the north of Perak, and made fast his boat to the bank. After a few days the Semangs (Perak was not yet populated by Malays) came down from their hills to buy salt. They came loaded with the produce of their gardens, sugar-canes, plantains and edible roots and brought their wives and families with them.

A Semang girl, while her father was bargaining at the boat, took up a sugar-cane and commenced to strip off the rind with a knife; in so doing she accidentally cut her hand. Blood issued from the wound, but what was the astonishment of all around her when they saw that its colour was not red but pure white! A report of this prodigy quickly spread from mouth to mouth, and Nakhodah Kasim landed from his boat to see it with his own eyes. It occurred to him that this was a family not to be lost sight of; he loaded the father with presents and, in a month's time, by dint of constant attentions, he had so far won the confidence of the shy Semangs that he was able to ask for the girl in marriage. The father agreed and Nakhodah Kasim and his wife settled at Kwala Tumung, where they built a house and planted fruit-trees.

Now, the Perak river overflows its banks once a year, and sometimes there are very great floods. Soon after the marriage of Nakhodah Kasim with the white Semang, an unprecedented flood occurred and quantities of foam came down the river. Round the piles of the bathing-house, which, in accordance with Malay custom, stood in the bed of the river close to the bank in front of the house, the floating volumes of foam collected in a mass the size of an elephant. Nakhodah Kasim's wife went to bathe, and finding this island of froth in her way she attempted to move it away with a stick; she removed the upper portion of it and disclosed a female infant sitting in the midst of it enveloped all round with cloud-like foam. The child showed no fear and the white Semang, carefully lifting her, carried her up to the house, heralding her discovery by loud shouts to her husband. The couple adopted the child willingly, for they had no children, and they treated her thenceforward as their own. They assembled the villagers and gave them a feast, solemnly announcing their adoption of the daughter of the river and their intention of leaving to her everything that they possessed.

The child was called Tan Puteh, but her father gave her the name of Teh Purba.³ As she grew up the wealth of her foster-parents increased; the village grew in extent and population, and gradually became an important place.

One day some Semangs were hunting at a hill near the river Plus called Bukit Pasir Puteh, or Bukit Pelandok. They heard their dogs barking furiously but, on following them up found no quarry, only a large

bow and four arrows may probably have occupied the place given to the matchlock and bullets in this narrative.

5. *Magat*, a Malay title of Sanskrit origin. *Magadha* (Sansk.)=the son of a Viagya by a Kshatriya woman. In Malay *magat* is applied to a chief who is noble on one side only.

6. A superstitious observance found among more than one Indo-Chinese nation. "Le général en chef doit se conformer à plusieurs coutumes et observances superstitieuses; par exemple, il faut qu'il mette une robe de couleur différente pour chaque jour de la semaine; le dimanche il s'habille en blanc, le lundi en jaune, le mardi en vert, le mercredi en rouge, le jeudi en bleu, le vendredi en noir, et le samedi en violet."—Pallegoix, *Description de Siam*, vol. I, p. 319.

7. The legendary war of Tan Saban with the second king of Perak owes its origin probably to mythological accounts of the wars of Salivahana and Vikramaditya, which Hindu settlers, not improbably, brought to Malay countries. *Saban* is a natural corruption of Salivahana.

8. *Bendahara*, treasurer (Sansk. *bhandagara*, treasure), the highest title given to a subject in a Malay State.

9. This recalls the account in Northern mythology of the four rivers which are said to flow from the teats of the cow Audhumla. In a great many Malay myths the colour white is an all-important feature. In this legend we have the white Semang and the white river. In others white animals and white birds are introduced.

bamboo (*buloh betong*), small at the top and bottom, and having one large thick joint, which seemed to be attracting the attention of the dogs. They split open the thick part of the stem and found in it a male child, whom they forthwith took to Nakhodah Kasim. The latter adopted him as his son, and when the two children were grown up they were betrothed, and in due time were married. The marriage, however, was merely nominal, for Tan Puteh Purba preserved her virginity, and Toh Changkat Pelandok, her husband, returned to his native district, Plus. Nakhodah Kasim at length died, leaving Tan Puteh mistress of the whole of Perak. As he lay dying, he told her his history, how he had come from the land of Johor, of the Raja of which he was an attendant, and how he had been despatched to find a suitable place for a settlement. He declared the name of his master to be Sultan Mahmud of Johor, and with his dying breath directed that a Raja for Perak should be asked for from that country.

Tan Puteh now called one of her ministers, Tan Saban, whom she had adopted in his childhood. He came of a noble family, and belonged to the district called *Tanah Merah* (Red Earth). A wife had been found for him by Tan Puteh, and he had two children, both girls. Tan Saban was commanded by his mistress to open negotiations with Johor, and this having been done, a prince of the royal house of that kingdom, who traced his descent from the old line of Menangkabau, sailed for Perak to assume the sovereignty. He brought with him the insignia of royalty, namely, the royal drums (*gandang nobat*), the pipes (*nafiri*), the flutes (*sarunei* and *bangsi*), the betel-box (*puan naga taru*), the sword (*chora mandakini*), the sword (*perbujang*), the scepter (*kayu gamit*), the jewel (*kalama*), the 'surat chiri,' the seal of state (*chap halilintar*), and the umbrella (*ubar-ubar*). All these were inclosed in a box called *Baniman*.

On his way up the Perak river the new Raja stopped at Selat Lembajayan for amusement. One of his attendants happened to point out some fish in the water, and, by leaning over the boat's side to look at them, the Raja lost his crown, which fell from his head and immediately sank. His people dived in vain for it, and from that day to this no Sultan of Perak has had a crown. Near Kota Setia the Raja was received by Tan Puteh, Tan Saban and all the chief men of the country, who escorted him to Kota Lumut. Here he was formally installed as Sultan of Perak under the title of Ahamad Tajuddin Shah, and one of the daughters of Tan Saban was given to him in marriage. It is this Raja to whom the Perak Malays popularly ascribe the political organization of the country under the control of chiefs of various ranks, each having definite duties to perform. After a short reign Ahamad Tajuddin Shah died, leaving one son about two years old.

As soon as the Sultan's death was known in Johor, a nephew of his (who was afterwards known as Sultan Malik Shah) started at once for Perak. Having reached his late uncles *cistana* (palace) at Tanah Abang, to which place the capital had been removed from Kota Lumut, he called for the nurses and attendants of the infant Raja and demanded permission to visit his young cousin. He was accordingly introduced into the prince's apartment, and seizing the child by violence broke his neck and killed him. He then seized the royal sword and other insignia and established himself as Raja under the title of Sultan Malik Shah. By degrees all the chiefs and people came in and accepted the usurper as their sovereign, with the single exception of Tan Saban, the grandfather of the murdered boy. His obstinate refusal to recognize Malik Shah led to a sanguinary war, which lasted for three years. Tan Saban was gradually driven further and further up the Perak river. He fortified numerous places on its banks, but his forts were taken one after another, and on each occasion he retreated to another stronghold. His most determined stand was made at Kota Lama, where he fortified a strong position. This was closely invested by the Sultan's forces, and a long siege ensued. During the siege an unknown warrior joined the Sultan's army. He came from Pagaruyong in Menangkaban [sic] and was the illegitimate son of the Great Sultan of that country, by a concubine. In consequence of his illegitimate birth he was driven forth from his native country, having for his sole fortune a matchlock (*istinggarda*)⁴ and four bullets, on each of which was inscribed the words, 'This is the son of the concubine of the Raja of Pagaruyong; his name is Magat Terawis;⁵ wherever this bullet falls he will become a chief.' Magat Terawis did not declare his name or origin to the Perak men, but served with them as an obscure soldier. At length, having selected an auspicious day, he asked one of the Sultan's followers to point out Tan Saban to him. This the man had no difficulty in doing, for Tan Saban was frequently to be seen on the outworks of his fort across the river dressed in garments of conspicuous colours. In the morning he wore red, at midday yellow and in the evening his clothes were green.⁶ When he was pointed out to Magat Terawis, it was the morning, and he was dressed in red. Magat leveled his matchlock and fired, and his bullet struck Tan Saban's leg. The skin was hardly broken and the bullet fell to the ground at the chief's feet; but, on taking it up and reading the inscription, he knew that he had received his death-wound. He retired to his house, and, after ordering his flag to be hauled down, despatched a messenger to the opposite camp to call the warrior whose name he had read on the bullet. Inquires for Magat Terawis were fruitless at first, for no one knew the name. At length he declared himself

and went across the river with Tan Saban's messenger, who brought him into the presence of the dying man. The latter said to him, 'Magat Terawis, thou art my son in this world and the next, and my property is thine. I likewise give thee my daughter in marriage, and do thou serve the Raja faithfully in my place, and not be rebellious as I have been.' Tan Saban then sued for the Sultan's pardon, which was granted to him, and the marriage of his daughter with Magat Terawis was permitted to take place. Then Tan Saban died, and he was buried with all the honours due to a Malay chief.⁷ Magat Terawis was raised to the rank of a chief, and one account says that he became Bandahara.⁸

Not long after this, the Sultan, taking Magat Terawis with him, ascended the Perak river to its source, in order to fix the boundary between Perak and Patani. At the foot of the mountain Titi Wangsa they found a great rock in the middle of the stream, from beneath which the water issued, and there was a wild cotton-tree upon the mountain, which bore both red and white flowers, the white flowers being on the side facing Perak and the red ones on the side turned toward Patani. Then this Sultan climbed up upon the big rock in the middle of the river, and drawing forth his sword *Perbujang*, he smote the rock and clove it in two, so that the water ran down in one direction to Perak and in the other to Patani. This was declared to be the boundary between the two countries.

On their return down-stream the Raja and his followers halted at Chigar Galah, where a small stream runs into the river Perak. They were struck with astonishment at finding the water of this stream as white as *santan* (the grated pulp of the cocoanut mixed with water). Magat Terawis, who was despatched to the source of the stream to discover the cause of this phenomenon, found there a large fish of the kind called *harnan* engaged in suckling her young one. She had large white breasts from which milk issued.

He returned and told the Raja, who called the river 'Perak' ('silver'), in allusion to its exceeding whiteness. Then he returned to Kota Lama. (Maxwell 1881: 501-507)

Another version of the legend of the founding of the Perak dynasty ("II") was collected in 1884 by J. de Morgan, a French mining engineer. De Morgan was commissioned by the English government to survey Perak. He traversed the Perak watershed from its western mountain chain to the eastern chain in Patani. His traveling party was composed of both Malays and aborigines, and his travels included many encounters with aboriginal bands. His knowledge of the aborigines far exceeds that of Maxwell, while Maxwell remains the superior in the area of Malay traditions. De Morgan's lack of access to Malay referents for cross-checking may explain the variations between Version I above and the following rendition. The story was told to De Morgan by To Pangkou, the Malay *datou* (chief) of Kampong Lassa, a small Malay settlement in the Kinta Valley near the confluence of the rivers Plus and Tchiah:

An officer of the Raja of Johore, named Nada Kassin, having committed a misdeed, was exiled by his master and sent by sea into the Peninsula. His master counseled him to seek another home by taking possession of the unoccupied territory he would find in the north, to make of it a royal kingdom.

Nada Kassin (Nakhoda Kassim) set sail, and after several days of travel, reached the mouth of the River Brouas. He left his boat there, continuing on foot through the jungle for several days until he struck the Perak River near Kuala Kangsar. The Semang had constructed a village on the banks of this river. He gave them presents, and they offered to him the products of their gardens—bananas, sugar-cane, potatoes, etc. The Semang accepted him into their midst.

One evening, the two daughters of the Semang chief were quarreling over a stick of sugar-cane, each of them attempting to break it in turn, when another child snatched up a knife and severed the sugar-cane, at the same time, however, cutting the hand of one of his sisters, at which milk-white blood (*sang blanc comme du lait*) immediately issued from the wound.

Nakhoda Kassim, who was a spectator at the scene, was surprised by this prodigy, and thereupon demanded that the Semang chief sell his daughter to him, in order that he might make her his wife. The chief agreed, but persuaded Nakhoda Kassim to remain with him. The chief aided Nakhoda Kassim in constructing a house, and furnished him with provisions until his gardens were fully productive.

The Malay accepted this arrangement and stayed in the Semang village. When the young daughter reached marriageable age they finally were married, but for four years they had no children. One day, however, his wife going down to the river to bathe, found upon the bamboo raft a new-born infant couched

in foam. She therefore took the child back to her husband, who adopted it and gave it the name of Pouteh Buisseh (*Putri Busu*).² During the time that these events occurred on the tributaries of the River Perak, the Semang chiefs reigned over all the region.

Now about this time a dog belonging to To' Hidong (Gaffer Long-nose), a relation of the Raja of Pahang, took to barking every day at the same hour in the direction of the sunset, and one day To' Hidong let the animal loose and followed it. In seven or eight days he reached Yang Yup in Ulu Plus, and the dog coming to a clump of bamboos began barking all round it. To' Hidong took his knife and slit up one of the stems, and therein found, to his great surprise, a new-born (male) infant, which he at once extracted and took along with him on his journey toward the west, descending the River Plus, his dog always leading him.

A few days later, To' Hidong met with the Semang, and hearing from them of Nakhoda Kassim established on the River Perak, went to meet the latter. To' Hidong showed him the child, whom he had named Bukit Pandok (Mouse-deer Hill). Nakhoda Kassim had himself adopted the small girl from the foam and desired to marry the children together. When they came of age a few years later, the two children were married, and Nakhoda Kassim died. At the death of Nakhoda Kassim, Bukit Pandok found in his father's papers a document recounting the history of his birth, and another signed by the Raja of Johore authorizing Nakhoda Kassim to elect as a king in that region whomever he saw fit. Bukit Pandok proceeded to Pahang, but finding himself incapable of governing it, he went to Johore and requested the Raja to appoint one of his sons in his stead.

The Raja first sent his two youngest sons, who disembarked at Perak and commenced the organization of the area. But following a dispute, the older son killed the younger, and seeing that the friends of his brother pursued him, the elder committed suicide at Tanjong Batu. The Raja then sent one of his grandsons,³ Salim Balik, to take charge.

At this time, Bukit Pandok had a son, who by the heritage of his grandfather had a right to succession. The young prince of Johore assassinated this child. A desperate conflict followed this assassination, with the Semang using poisoned arrows. The struggle lasted several years, and the Malays from the Nicobars came over to assist the Semang. The chief of the Nicobar Malays, Megat Terawis ("Mecca-Traves") brought with him a wonderful gun, on the bullets of which he wrote his name. Salim Balik being wounded by one of those, agreed to make peace, and gave his daughter to Megat Terawis in marriage. In the course of time Megat Terawis obtained a daughter, and Bukit Pandok having married again and obtained a son, the two children were wedded, and their offspring became the royal family of Perak. (Morgan 1886: 58-61)⁴

If we look at these two versions of the legend merely for a point by point account of the founding of the Perak dynasty, we will be disappointed. Winstedt points out several historical inaccuracies, which merge nineteenth century information into this story about a sixteenth century event (Winstedt and Wilkinson 1934: 123-124). Yet, the story crystallizes the dynamics of the extension of the Malay dynasty into an area previously occupied by aborigines. If we search the legend for its themes, and observe the manner in which the Semang (Negritos) are presented in relation to the Malays, we can begin to construct an idea of the roles these two cultures have played for one another. Furthermore, we can call into question the naïve assumption that the aborigines are an isolated culture, devoid of contact with the dominant Malay population.

The legend unfolds on various levels: (1) geographical; (2) economic; (3) kinship and marriage; and (4) cosmological.⁵ These various levels, and the themes they

² *Putri Busu*, Princess Foam.

³ "uns de ses petits fils": grandson, stepson?

⁴ Translated from the French by M. Roseman. A translation of Morgan's account is incorrectly presented as a "Semang tradition" in Skeat and Blagden's chapter on aboriginal "Natural Religion and Folklore" (1906, II: 220-221).

⁵ I draw upon Claude Levi-Strauss (1967) for the organizational approach of this analysis.

introduce, lead us into the various modes of interactions between the Malays and the Orang Asli.

ANALYSIS

(1) GEOGRAPHICAL

On the geographical level, we are presented with patterns of movement and placement that mark the progress of Malay migration. The placement of Malays in relation to Orang Asli is phrased in terms of “settled” versus “unoccupied,” coast:interior, and downstream:upstream. Consequently, Nakhoda Kassim is sent forth by his master from the settlement of Johore to the “unoccupied territory” in the north, to transform it into a Malay settlement a royal kingdom (version II). A conceptual mythology is here revealed: the Semang, though inhabitants of an area, are considered inconsequential occupants. In the mind of the Malay Raja of Johore, the territory inhabited by the Negritos is “unoccupied.” Partly this fallacy arises from the difficulties a sedentary population such as the Malays has in extending the concept of “territory” or “occupancy” to a semi-nomadic people such as the Negritos.

Pearce documents the manner in which westward-moving colonialism on the North American continent was rationalized by equating “farming” with meaningful civilization and “hunting” with inconsequential Indian savagery:

This was the tradition of the natural and divine superiority of a farming to a hunting culture. Universally Americans could see the Indian only as hunter. That his culture, at least the culture of the eastern Indians whom they knew best until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, was as much agrarian as hunting, they simply could not see. They forgot too, if they had ever known, that many of their own farming methods had been taken over directly from the Indians whom they were pushing westward. One can say only that their intellectual and cultural traditions, their idea of order, so informed their thoughts and their actions that they could see and conceive of nothing but the Indian who hunted. (Pearce 1965: 66)

The colonialist’s tendency to typify the American Indian as a hunter—“inefficiently” requiring many square miles on which to live, as opposed to the few acres needed by the more “economical,” “intelligent,” and “civilized” white farmer—was based on an inability to comprehend or respect the Indian’s concept of territory. This viewpoint also denied the cultivational attributes of the aborigine’s “controlled forest,” and refused to incorporate exhibited indigenous agricultural behavior where this clashed with the typification.

Though the Negritos are essentially a nomadic people, they do have a concept of their own “territory” which is central to their self-definition as an ethnic unit. This “country” is defined by geographical features such as streams, rivers, and mountains. It “consists of a large number of jungle paths, with a surrounding hinterland,” and designates hunting and gathering rights (Carey 1976: 37-38, 45). The Negrito concept of “country” incorporates the presence of non-Negrito populations, but distinguishes their domain of ownership. A Negrito of the Jahai people in Kelantan expresses this:

We, the Jahai, have never stayed in a place for more than three or four days. We cannot stay for a longer period, otherwise our children will go hungry. So we are always on the move and we cover long distances. My group is often in Perak, but we have also been to Kelantan and Thailand. But wherever we go, it is our country, the place of the Jahai. The villages belong to the Malays, and the towns to the Chinese, but the jungle is ours—it belongs to us. (ibid: 37; collected in 1957)

In II, Nakhoda Kassim encounters a Semang village in the “unoccupied territory” of the North. In I, N. Kassim is sent to look for a “suitable place for emigrants” and meets Semang who “came down from the hills” to trade. What were the demographic consequences of the immigration of Malays into “unoccupied” territory inhabited by the aborigines? According to Senoi tribal elders encountered by de Morgan, one aboriginal response was withdrawal:

Formerly the Sakais inhabited all the peninsula, but they retired before the Malay invasion and went to the mountains—the valleys became Malay country. (De Morgan 1887: 52; collected 1884)

Another manner in which the gap between the conceptual fallacy of “unoccupied” regions and the physical reality of Negrito inhabitants was bridged is discussed below in the section on “Kinship and Marriage.”

The geographical relations of Malay:Orang Asli expressed in the legend in terms of settled:unoccupied is also phrased in terms of coast:interior (jungle) and downstream:upstream. The course of Malay migration is symbolized in the movement of N. Kassim from Johore Lama (Map 1, Pt. 1) along the coast, from downstream to upstream on the River Bruas (Map 1, Pt. 2), inland to the River Perak (Map 1, Pt. 3), and further upstream to Tumung (Pt. 4). *Movement into the domain of the Semang is thus movement upstream.* Similarly, the prince sent from Johore to be installed as Raja of Perak (who traces his descent from Minangkabau) sails up the River Perak, as does the later Sultan Malik. The warrior who joins the forces of Sultan Malik Shah travels upstream from the geographically extreme point of Pagaruyong in Minangkabau (I).

The movement of the Semang to meet with the Malay N. Kassim is from further inland down to the River Perak: they “came down from the hills” (I). This movement down to meet the Malay contributes the dynamic of “migration,” further reflected in the marriage of N. Kassim to the daughter of a Negrito. The mediation between extremes is again expressed when the Semang-related Tan Puteh, Tan Saban and all the chief men of the country sail downstream to Kota Setia (Pt. 5) to meet the prince from Johore, escorting him to Kota Lumut (Pt. 6?). *The meeting of Malay and Orang Asli is thematically expressed in movement upstream by Malays and downstream by Orang Asli.*⁶

The source of the supernatural elements such as the princess of the foam (Tan Puteh) is from even further upstream than the Negrito. The princess of the foam is found by N. Kassim’s wife, the White Semang, when the infant floats downstream to Tumung during the floods. In the same way, the bamboo prince comes from far upstream on the River Plus (Pt. 7; as far as Pahang in I), moving downstream to the confluence of the River Plus and the River Perak to the settlement at Tumung. The bamboo prince is found by a relative of the Raja of Pahang in II but is found by the Semang in I.

That these supernatural beings come from further in the direction associated with the Semang (upstream), and that in several instances the Semang are the finders of these supernatural beings, points to the identification of the Semang with the supernatural.

⁶ This paper, originally written in 1979, has been superseded by further thought on the questions of geographical interrelation and symbolism between Orang Asli and Malays. See, for example, Roseman 1998. The bibliography of that article includes work by many other scholars as well, containing updated historical and ethnographic materials unavailable at the time this paper was written.

This structural similarity of Semang-upstream-supernatural as compared to Malay-downstream-mundane is validated in the ritual realm. The Negritos are perceived by the Malays as in greater contact with the spirits (Endicott 1970: 80), and portions of Semang rituals involving spirit possession have been incorporated into Malay spirit séances (Cuisinier 1936: 38-39).

Connections are also apparent among the color “white,” the supernatural, and the most extreme point upstream—the source of the river. In I, Megat Terawi and the Sultan Malik Shah ascend the Perak River to its source. There they find a wild cotton-tree with white flowers facing Perak and red flowers facing Patani. On their return downstream, Megat Terawis is sent up a tributary of the Perak to its source, where he discovers the phenomenon causing the stream to be white: a large fish suckling her young, who “had large white breasts from which milk issued.” The significance of these correlations will be further developed in Section (4).

In summary, on the geographical level we find in the legend of the founding of the Perak dynasty the following parallel pairs of contrast:

Malay:Orang Asli
settled:unoccupied
coast:interior
downstream:upstream

The contribution of these contrasts toward unearthing the conceptions of Malays about Orang Asli begins to emerge when we recognize the identification of upstream (and thus Orang Asli) with the supernatural and the color white.

(2) ECONOMIC

The trade network through which Nakhoda Kassim establishes contact with the Negritos in I gives evidence of a longstanding trade relationship between the Malays and Orang Asli. We are told that N. Kassim observes a brisk trade between the coast and the interior on the River Bruas, in which imported goods are traded for native produce. N. Kassim engages in this trade along the Perak River, “selling salt and tobacco at the villages by the riverside.” Maxwell comments that the mention of tobacco is an anachronism since “tobacco was first introduced into the Eastern Archipelago by the Portuguese at Malacca in the sixteenth century.” Winstedt dates the ascendancy of the Raja of Perak at ca. 1528 (Winstedt 1934: 125), thus the excursions of this exploratory Malay are on the brink of the period that included trade of tobacco. The likelihood of these early trade relations is upheld by several sources (Skeat and Blagden 1906, II: 523).

In exchange for Malay goods, the Semang of I bring “the produce of their gardens, sugar-canes, plantains and edible roots.” In II, the exchange is phrased in terms of “presents.” Again, Semang garden products are mentioned: bananas, sugar-cane, and potatoes. Nineteenth century ethnographers verify the complementary trade relationship of Malays and Orang Asli (Croix 1882, 1: 317, 337, 340; Croix 1885: 394; Begbie 1834: 8, 9). Malay articles offered include cloth, salt, kitchen utensils, and knives. The Orang Asli contributed items such as tree-gum, resin, eagle-wood, canes, rattans, elephant’s teeth, ivory, rhinoceros horns, gutta, caoutchouc, beeswax, honey, and vegetable-based medicinal preparations.

Considering the extent to which the production of items for exchange with Malays affects the structure of daily Jahai existence, and the historical depth of Orang Asli/Malay

trade relations, as attested by the Perak dynasty legend, it is imperative that we not be led astray by romantic notions of jungle isolation. Schebesta notes the substantial amount of time dedicated by the Jahai of Bersiak, Perak, to the weaving of *hapoi* mats and splitting of rattan. These activities are described as their “chief occupation,” and, he continues, “From time to time they appear in the Malay kampongs to sell or barter these products” (Schebesta 1928: 61). An informed conception of Orang Asli existence must take into account the manner in which aboriginal daily life and subsistence strategies are tempered by socioeconomic networks that include the Malay population.

Indeed, this interaction is not limited to the exchange of items, but includes the hiring by Malays of Negrito men and women as temporary laborers for clearing jungle, threshing rice, helping with the harvest, etc. (Schebesta 1928: 32). This temporary relationship can develop into a semi-permanent bond between a Malay “protector” and a particular band of Negritos:

All over the peninsula the Semang, it must be explained, live in a state of more or less dependence upon the Malays. Wherever I encountered a group, I discovered that they had made some sort of a pact with a Malay. To him they brought from time to time the products of the forests, which they exchanged for rice, iron knives, or cloth. The Malay in this way exercises a certain degree of protectorship in regard to the forest drawfs, which, it goes without saying, he does not always treat honourably, and so often reaps great personal profit from this arrangement...Of course, the Semang to-day are not compelled to leave the forest in order to work for the Malays, but hunger and the craving to eat rice at least once a month drives them out. Others again have committed themselves to an agreement with the crafty Malay. He may have talked them into taking cloth valued according to his own estimate. The Malay does not demand immediate payment; that would not suit his purpose. This, of course, involves complications. The Semang is often not in a position to pay and therefore avoids his creditor as long as he can. It may even happen that whole groups, in order to evade their obligations, completely disappear from a district. But, since without the Malays they are unable, or scarcely able, to live, they reappear in some entirely different spot whither their creditor cannot follow them, and there conclude another dubious bargain with other Malays. (ibid: 32-33)

Schebesta wryly concludes:

If one wishes to get into touch with any group of Semang, it is necessary to establish good relations with their Malay protector. Success finally rests with him. (ibid)

The propensity of the Negritos to establish such situations of institutionalized dependency may arise from a predisposition of their social organization towards “contact.” Participating variably in hunting, gathering, and horticulture, the Negritos are accustomed to adapting to whatever is available. Commodity and labor exchange are another of the many options to which the Negritos may turn. Commenting on this composite construction of mode of subsistence, Benjamin characterizes the Negrito approach to life as “opportunistic foraging”:

Whereas the neighbouring Malays and Temiars may wish to devote themselves mainly to farming, with a little subsidiary hunting and fishing, the Negritos prefer to leave themselves free to fit into the ecological interstices left unoccupied by their neighbours, by *not* overly developing any one branch of technology. This would explain the paradox that Schebesta found it less difficult to contact the Negritos than he did the Temiar or the Semai—it is a condition of Negrito life that they should be able to attach themselves at will to their technologically more dominant neighbours whenever there is some bounty to be gained. (Benjamin 1973: viii, italics added)

Thus we find not the Perak Temiar (“Sakai”), but the Perak Negrito (“Semang”) coming down to the river to meet Nakhoda Kassim in the sixteenth century.

The contact between the Malays and the Negritos recounted in the Perak dynasty legend is not marred by the accounts of economic exploitation of the Orang Asli by the Malays found throughout the ethnographic literature (Skeat and Blagden, I: 225ff.; Logan 1847: 286-288). Furthermore, the method of bartering described in the legend for the sixteenth century is markedly different than the conduct of trade relations described by nineteenth century ethnographers. In Version I, we are told that the Semang brought their wives and families with them to the river, where the father of the White Semang proceeded to bargain at the boat with Nakhoda Kassim. We may assume that these early contacts, devoid of the precedent of Malay maltreatment of the Orang Asli, may have been conducted in person, with the entire band including wives and children attendant to the exchange. But by the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the Orang Asli deposited their jungle produce on the banks of rivers at times and in places which were “tacitly understood.” They withdrew, while the Malays approached to fetch the aborigines’ produce and leave articles in exchange. Only after the Malays had withdrawn did the Orang Asli return to collect their goods. This method of barter, carried out in a number of steps, protected the location of the aborigines’ camp (Croix 1882, 1: 337, 340).

The reason for this latter-day suspicion, underlying the roundabout method of bartering described above, may have to do with the slave trade, another aspect of Orang Asli/Malay relations largely absent from the Perak legend. The lack of reference to practices of enslavement or their resultant effects on methods of bartering may indicate that these practices began later, when the Perak dynasty was well-established and the Malay population more numerous. Or, this omission may be indicative of what Levi-Strauss refers to as the myth’s “negative reflection of social reality.” The myth, in this view, presents an idealized and unattainable version of social reality, rather than the “positive” image of empirical reality (Levi-Strauss 1967: 29).

Nevertheless, an analysis of the relations between the Orang Asli and the dominant Malay population must address the capture and enslavement of the aborigines. The Negritos appear to have been hunted and enslaved less than the Senoi (Wray, to Skeat and Blagden 1906, I: 526). The Senoi of Selangor reportedly led a transient existence to evade Malay slavers in the mid-1800’s, burning their huts after use, and never walking on the beaten paths. If a Malay suspected their presence in an area, he would build himself a shelter and keep watch until he discovered their night camp. The Malays would raid the discovered camp while the Orang Asli slept, taking their captives as slaves (Letessier 1892: 101).

Two classes of slaves existed on the Malay Peninsula: (1) slaves (*abdi*), primarily Batak, Orang Asli, and Ethiopians (“Abyssinians”), and (2) debt-slaves, persons who had contracted an unpaid debt and were committed to slavery with no payment for work done or credit toward reduction of their debt. The spouses, children, and all descendants of the two classes inherited the position of slave or debt-slave (British Sessional Papers, C3285).⁷ The Orang Asli, as “infidels,” were prime subjects for slavery, since Islamic law forbids enslavement of Muslims.

⁷ See Bibliography, Documents, British Sessional Papers, for index of Command Papers. Hereafter, we will cite only the Command Paper Number, e.g., C3285.

J. W. W. Birch, the first British Resident of Perak, describes the slave trade as it affected the aborigines in his correspondence to the Colonial Secretary in Singapore, 1875:

I would call attention to another practice by which men and women of the country of the Sakkais or wild people of the interior are captured after being hunted down, and are then sold, and made slaves. These poor people, from what I have seen, are worse treated than any other slaves. This must be called a species of debt slavery, as it is generally alleged that some money has been expended on them in food and in the scant clothes they wear. They are, however, as a rule, badly fed, badly clothed, and made to work hard. They have little or no chance of escape, and they know well that the Malay would be sure to ill-treat them if caught, and would not hesitate for a moment to kill them, while not the smallest notice would be taken of his doing so. (C3285)

The early British colonial government considered the abolishment of slavery to be one of their prime contributions to the upgrading of Malay morality. Still officially functioning within their "Advisory capacity" to the native rulers, they were hesitant directly to enforce a program of slavery abolishment. In Selangor, the procedure adopted in 1874 for debt-slaves was to bring them before the magistrates and set the total term of work down against the original debt proved, which resulted in the almost immediate liberation of all slaves. By 1882, slavery was reported to be extinct in Selangor. However, the Orang Asli population of Selangor was only 5 % of that in Perak, and the institution of slavery was a firmer constituent of Malay custom in the Perak area (C3285).

In contrast to the direct arbitration of slave status in the courts of Selangor, the basic procedure followed in Perak was not to free existing slaves but to prevent the application of slave status to any fresh case, whether actual debtor or child of any class of slave parents. By 1880 British notification that women were prohibited to be kept in enforced servitude by owners of brothels had been accepted without the occurrence of the projected violent disturbances of the Chinese community of Larut, Perak (ibid). Slavery was formally considered abolished in Perak by January 1884 (C4192; Swettenham 1906: 237).

The experience of slavery remained ingrained in the minds of the Orang Asli, though they began to emerge from their self-imposed protective isolation following its abolishment. Schebesta recounts the recollections of this persecution by a Negrito in Upper Perak:

In this connection I enquired of Pa Loa what he knew of the persecutions that they had to suffer in the old days from the Malays and the Siamese. Pa Loa remembered very well this terrible time when the Siamese descended upon them from the north-east, driving the Semang like wild game before them and carrying off their children. Pa Loa was a boy at the time. Then none of the members of his tribe was to be found on the bank of the Perak; they were all wandering in the inhospitable areas up the smaller rivers, where they were safe from pursuit. (Schebesta 1928: 148; collected 1924-25)

Another Negrito informant related that as late as 1921 he was approached by a man from the Ipoh tin mines who offered to buy all the Negrito women from their Tadoh camp for two hundred Mexican dollars (ibid). Such practices may have influenced Version II of the Perak dynasty legend to phrase Malay Nakhoda Kassim's acquisition of the daughter of the Semang chief in the following terms:

Nakhoda Kassim...thereupon demanded that the Semang chief sell his daughter to him, in order that he might make her his wife.

(3) KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

We have reviewed geographical patterns of movement and placement **that** brought Malays and Orang Asli into a mutual physical domain. The movement of Malays upstream into the interior Negrito domain was countered by Negrito movement down to the riverbanks and downstream. The ecological strategy of “opportunistic foraging” practiced by the Negritos—who engaged in hunting, gathering, and cultivation—facilitated the initiation of economic exchange between these aborigines and the Malays. Exchange of jungle produce for Malay commodities was thus one mode of interaction engaged in by these two cultures. According to ethnographic reports, the exchange of commodities referred to in the Perak dynasty legend was later modified when aborigines began to be contracted as physical laborers.

Though reputedly exploited in labor and commodity exchanges, the Orang Asli were most brutally treated by the Malays within the context of the slave trade. A possible reference to slave trade practices is expressed in the text by Nakhoda Kassim’s demand to purchase the daughter of the Negrito chief (II) to become his wife. This brings us into another domain of Malay/Orang Asli interaction highlighted in the Perak dynasty legend: intermarriage.

In both versions of the legend, Nakhoda Kassim marries a Negrito woman with white blood, the “White Semang.” We will address the theme of her white blood in the next section; here the marriage of the immigrating Malay with the occupant Orang Asli is of central concern. In Version I, after a month’s attention, Nakhoda Kassim receives the Negrito father’s agreement to the marriage of his daughter with the Malay. The couple settle at Kwala Tumung, “where they built a house and planted fruit trees.” The White Semang of II is additionally daughter of the Semang chief. The chief agrees to “sell his daughter” to Nakhoda Kassim for marriage, persuading N. Kassim to remain with him in the Negrito village. In the legend the chief aids N. Kassim in constructing a house and furnishes the couple with provisions until their gardens are fully productive.

Nakhoda Kassim’s marriage with the Negrito woman thus brings him into a kinship network which is articulated in terms of produce, land use, and occupancy rights, and significantly, inheritance of leadership. Through his Semang wife, Nakhoda Kassim would theoretically have access to the inheritance due his wife through her father, for descent among all Negrito groups is reckoned bilaterally (Carey 1976: 55).⁸ This means that a child traces its descent from both the father’s and the mother’s side. Property can be inherited by both sons and daughters. Among the Negritos, personal property is limited, the most important being ownership of Ipoh and durian trees. The former produces the poison anointing the darts of the Negrito’s blowpipe; the latter is a fruit tree. The reference to the couple’s planting fruit trees (I) is probably the interpretation of jungle fruit-tree inheritance filtered through a story teller accustomed to Malay “planting” and cultivation techniques, rather than the aborigiculture of the forest peoples.

Through his marriage to the White Semang, Nakhoda Kassim thus had access to his wife’s bilateral inheritance of individual property. However, another type of inheritance was perhaps more important to an immigrant Malay in search of new areas for Malay settlement. Through this marriage Nakhoda Kassim also tapped into Negrito

⁸ An exception to bilaterality among the Negritos is found among the Jahai, who emphasize the patrilineal line (Carey 1976: 55).

community ownership of hereditary property—that tract of jungle upon which the group members are free to roam (ibid: 86). The story teller of version II reminds us:

During the time that these events occurred on the tributaries of the River Perak, the Semang chiefs reigned over all the region.

Carey specifies that the Negrito concept of territorial ownership excludes the actual ownership of the land but includes the claim to hereditary rights to hunt in it, gather jungle fruits, and to fish (ibid: 84). Among the more agriculturally-inclined groups, especially those in greater contact with the Temiar Senoi, the concept of hereditary community territorial ownership includes cultivation rights. The emphasis, then, is on land *usage*.

Nakhoda Kassim also gained the participation of a workforce related through marriage. Primary responsibility for amassing the proceeds from hunting and gathering lay with the elementary family; however, large projects could activate the communal work force of the kinship-oriented nomadic band (ibid: 44, 79). We see this workforce activated in II when the chief aids in constructing a house for Nakhoda Kassim and his Negrito wife. Access to such an extended workforce would of course be a great boon to numerically impoverished Malay immigrants.

Finally, Nakhoda Kassim theoretically entered into the line of succession as leader of his particular Negrito social unit. The most important Negrito leader is the elder male of a nomadic band. The nomadic band usually extends over three generations and consists of an older man (the elder), his wife, and their married sons and daughters. Leadership within this band is defined in terms of descent. Normally the elder is succeeded by his eldest son; however, if the eldest son does not have the necessary qualities of leadership, another son or *the husband of one of his daughters may be chosen by the adult males of the group as the elder's successor* (ibid: 44-46). In Version II, as husband of the chief's daughter, Nakhoda Kassim is clearly positioned to ascend into such a status.

The marriage between the Malay Nakhoda Kassim and a Negrito woman within the legend of the founding of the Perak dynasty provides a convenient justification for the acquisition of land rights by the subsequent Malay settlers. That such intermarriage occurred is documented in ethnographic reports (Evans 1937: 19; Skeat and Blagden, I: 529). Schebesta reports comments from both Negritos and Malays on the subject of early settlers' intermarriage:

According to the Semang, the Malays of Temengor claim to have penetrated into the interior from the east coast. Their leader, Temengor, was only able to make headway with the Orang-Utan by taking a wife from among them. In this way he was tolerated, and later acquired leadership by cunning and force. The Malays, of course, will have nothing to do with this story. What Malay in these days would take a Semang wife! In their view such a thing is obscene, for they do not regard the Orang-Utan as human. Formerly, however, this was not the case. I saw many Malays whose Negrito origin was written on their faces, and on enquiry I have found their mothers were Semang. But it would have been an insult to remind them of their origin. True, a few Malays related freely how their forefathers, when, scarcely sixty or eighty years before, they first pushed their way into the interior, took wives from among the dwarfs.

They entered the country in search of booty and wealth. In the forest they were more helpless than children. They therefore attached themselves to the Semang, lived in their encampments, cleared the forest with their help to sow crops, and married their daughters. Then better days came; the labour of the Semang bore fruit and the Malays grew rich. They rowed downstream on rafts heavily laden with the produce of the forest and then brought women of their own race back with them as wives. Thus it went on for decades

until their own progeny were sufficiently numerous for the children to intermarry. Now that the poor forest dwarfs are no longer needed, marriage with them is regarded as the most bestial of crimes. (Schebesta 1928: 41; collected 1924-25)

The legendary history of Sungei Ujong, one of the leading districts of the Negri Sembilan confederacy, was committed to writing about 1910 under the direction of the indigenous ruler Dato' Klana at the suggestion of D. J. Campbell, then British Resident (Gullick 1949: 6). This legendary history presents a genealogy for the Malay chiefs (*waris*) of Sungei Ujong which combines descent from both Orang Asli and Malay nobility (ibid: 8-9). The aborigines of this area—Mah Meri (Senoi) and Jakun (Proto-Malay)—were reported to be its sole inhabitants in 1613 by Godinho de Eredia, a Portuguese traveler (Godinho de Eredia, 1930[1613]). By means of the dynastic legend of Sungei Ujong, the Malay chiefs in Negri Sembilan claim to derive titles to land by means of descent from “Sakai” (Senoi and Jakun) ancestresses who were said to have intermarried with Malay immigrants, specifically the visiting Sultan of Johore and the Bendahara Sekundai.

Gullick surveys available legendary and historical sources and rejects the theory that the *waris* of Sungei Ujong derived their title from the marriages of their ancestors to “Sakai princesses.” He does find that the Bendahara Sekundai visited Negri Sembilan from Johore in 1644, but only to confirm or revive titles of Malay territorial chiefs—not to marry or propagate children. However, Gullick considers the legendary history:

...interesting in its double-decker arrangement of Sakai chiefs and Malay founders of later states. It was remembered later that the former preceded the latter, and Menangkabau custom made it important that the one should be deemed the forbearers of the other. The story is a good illustration of what are thought to be the finer points of a good Negri Sembilan pedigree. (Gullick 1949: 9)

Gullick claims that the proposed marriages with Orang Asli are “of later falsification designed to justify the claims of the *waris* to be inheritors of the land under the Menangkabau custom which they came to adopt” (ibid: 13). His conclusion is based partly on a catalogue of historical inaccuracies, and partly on the observation that marriage to Sakai wives occurs in the early generations of the legend but not in the later generations of the pedigree. His assumption is that the later generations of the pedigree, situated closer to the present time, are thus a more trustworthy brand of history. Yet perhaps we are dealing in the later generations with a different historical circumstance, one in which the Malays were self-sufficient to a greater degree and less in need of aboriginal assistance. In this connection, we are reminded of the changing patterns of intermarriage as early settlers became well-established, as reported above by Schebesta's informants. It would seem that we need to focus less upon the specifics of exactly who did and did not marry Orang Asli, and instead view the dynamics of an immigrant population establishing itself in an occupied territory.

Here we enter another question pertaining to intermarriage. Is intermarriage symptomatic of a peaceful contact between Malay and aborigine, a contact in which the customs of marriage were followed in order to mediate the gap between the two cultures? Or is marriage presented in the myth as a negative image of reality, symptomatic of an unrealized ideal of peaceful convergence?

An Orang Asli legend, “Putri Buloh Betong” (Princess of the Bright Yellow Bamboo), presents an example of the former of these two possibilities: marriage as

peaceful mediation between disparate cultures. This legend was collected among the Jah Hut, a Senoi group, in the district of Temerloh, Pahang. The legend contains several similarities to the Perak dynasty legend. In this legend, an Achenese prince seeks to marry the Princess of the Bright Yellow Bamboo, the adopted daughter of the Jah Hut chieftess, Batin Perempuan. The Batin agrees only if the Achenese prince will join in Jah Hut ceremonial practices. These ritual actions consciously imprint on the minds of the participants the momentous event of bridging the gap between the two cultures:

All at once the young man spoke to the Batin. "My esteemed host, I, the youngest son of the Raja of Acheh, would be the happiest man on earth if you would accept my proposal: would your daughter be my wife?"

The Batin having heard the words of the young Achenese Prince, pondered. After a while she spoke. "It is not possible. We are greatly honoured by your proposal; however, as much as we would like to have you for the husband of our daughter, we cannot allow her to be your wife. We are Orang Darat,⁹ it would be a most unsuitable union."

The young prince was not to be discouraged, he persisted and insisted, "Whatever be our difference, I still want to marry your daughter. Do not let our difference be a barrier."

Finally the Batin spoke, "Your Highness, if we accept your proposal to marry our daughter, would you be willing to sup with us from a turtle-shell plate and a tortoise-shell cup?" The Prince agreed to the condition. Once agreement was reached, the Batin called for Putri Buloh Betong to appear before the honoured guest. Arrangements were made, the young Achenese Prince and Putri Buloh Betong were married. The Prince, the Putri, the Batin and her husband, all the four of them ate a meal together from one plate, a turtle-shell plate, and drank from one cup, a tortoise-shell cup. (Baharon 1964: 42-43)

Gullick, while disbelieving the specifics of the legendary history of Sungei Ujong, nevertheless reviews the possibility of Malay/Orang Asli intermarriage within what he concludes was a peaceful context of interaction:

Immigrant parties often have a preponderance of males and equalize the sexes by intermarriage with women of other races. A marriage is a good old-fashioned political expedient for setting the seal on a treaty, and the Sungei Ujong legends describe these unions as no more than that...But whether or not the immigrants did at some stage intermarry with the Sakai, for the Malacca families were not immigrants at the time of the Bendahara Sekundai but earlier, relations between the two races were fairly friendly. There were relatively few Sakai and they did not grudge the Malays the padi land which they did not use themselves. Hence the ubiquitous quarrel between the aboriginee (sic) and immigrant over land did not arise in this case. (Gullick 1949: 13)

Josselin de Jong (1951) suggests an alternate perspective. He considers the legend of peaceful land acquisition by intermarriage to be a negative image of reality, a fantasy of an unrealized ideal of cooperative convergence. Each of the districts of Negri Sembilan has one clan that is supposed to be descended from aboriginal women. The clan descendants of the legendary mixed marriages with these aborigines supposedly inherited the rights to ownership of the land from their mothers. This privileged clan (Biduanda or waris) is considered to have owned all the land through their aboriginal inheritance, and from this clan the district chief or *Undang* is drawn (Josselin de Jong 1951: 121).

Josselin de Jong considers this legend to be undoubtedly a fiction, with the intent of justifying the immigrant's possession of the land (ibid). Instead, he counters, the

⁹ *Orang Darat*, upland or hill people, as opposed to the Malays, who are referred to as *Orang Baroh*, the lowland people (Baharon 1964: 43, n. 9).

idealized legend of peaceful acquisition of land by the colonists through intermarriage must be placed against “the many descriptions of the manner in which the simpler tribes were exploited and oppressed by the Malay and Minangkabau population, beginning with Jan Jansz. Menie, who in 1642 described the ravages caused by the ‘Manicabars’ among the ‘inlanders’” (ibid: 122; see also Martin 1905: 128, 858, 881, 1015; Skeat and Blagden 1906, I: 537). In addition, ethnographers Wray and Evans mention Orang Asli/Malay intermarriage within the hardly-peaceful context of slavery. Aboriginal women were observed in the houses of Malays before the emancipation of slaves in 1882-85 (Wray in Skeat and Blagden 1906, I: 529; Evans 1937: 19).

A compromise between “peaceful acquisition through intermarriage” and the “ravages” caused by the immigrants among the aborigines may be found in the Perak legend when armed conflict follows the assassination of the descendant of Nakhoda Kassim and the White Semang, by the Sultan Malik Shah from Johore. Tan Saban, grandson through adoption to the White Semang and grandfather to the assassinated child, leads the insurrection against the usurper, Sultan Malik Shah (version I). The climax occurs when Tan Saban, driven further and further upstream (in the direction identified with the Orang Asli), makes his most determined stand at Kota Lama (Map 1, Pt. 8). Here he is overcome by the Minangkabau warrior Megat Terawis. The legend attempts mediation once more through the marriage of Tan Saban’s daughter, related (barring adoption) to the White Semang, with Megat Terawis. Tan Saban also bequeaths his property and position of leadership to Megat Terawis.

In version II, the infant assassinated by Salim Balik (Sultan Malik Shah) is the grandchild of Nakhoda Kassim and the White Semang. War ensues, with the Semang pitted against the Malay forces of Salim Balik. The Semang are joined by Malays from Nicobar, including Megat Terawis. In this version, the Semang emerge victorious. Mediation is again consecrated through marriage, as a descendant from the Sultan of Johore marries a descendant of the White Semang. From this union following conflagration descends the royal line of Perak.¹⁰

(4) COSMOLOGICAL

The legend of the founding of the Perak dynasty posits a genealogy for the ruling Malay families of Perak which combines a white-blooded Negrito ancestress, the supernaturally born Bamboo Prince and Princess of the Foam, and royal but seemingly “natural” blood from the Malaccan dynasty by way of the Sultan of Johore. The White Semang ancestress is biologically separated from her descendants by (a series of) adoption(s). The historian Winstedt, faced with the historical inaccuracies in the legend, concludes:

The story of the Negrito girl is a compromise between the matrilineal predilections of Malay jurists and the aristocratic preferences of the Perak court, which drew the line at Negrito blood in the veins of the royal family. (Winstedt and Wilkinson 1934: 123)

While the adoptions may indeed be interpolated in order to *distance* the dynastic legacy from Negrito genes, the adoptions might instead function to bring the dynastic

¹⁰Chart 1 outlines the line of descent presented in the Perak Dynasty Legend, Version I (Maxwell 1881), and Chart 2, the Perak Dynasty Legend, Version II (de Morgan 1886).

legacy *closer* to divine countenance. The Negrito ancestress whose blood was white would then serve as the mediator between the Malay and the realm of the supernatural. This interpretation is confirmed by the Malay identification of the color white with divinity and royalty (Skeat 1900: 18, 37, 51, 92). This interpretation gains further credibility from a Malay classification of the world that groups Negritos with spirits and animals, placing the Negrito on the boundary between man and non-man (Endicott 1970: 80-81). We have referred to the geographical connections of the supernatural with the “extreme upstream,” and the identification of Orang Asli with “upstream” in midpoint relation to the Malay “downstream.” In addition, Orang Asli influence on the Malay spirit séances (*belian*) provides some validation in ritual practice for a view of the White Semang as mediator between the Malay rulers of Perak and the divine realm (Cuisinier 1936: 38-39).

The Malay concept of the ruler as a semi-divine being, deriving legitimacy in his political role from his supernatural connections, underscores the expediency of constructing a dynastic genealogy which includes divine predecessors.¹¹ In this section, we will explore the themes employed in the legend of the Perak dynasty that identify the White Semang as one of several conveyors of supernatural forces into the dynastic legend.

Maxwell (1881) isolates the themes of the “Princess of the Foam” and “Raja of the Bamboo” from the legendary history of Perak. His intent is to uncover patterns of diffusion of mythical material which will explain the accessibility of these themes to the compilers of the Perak dynasty legend. Myth, in his view, consists of a substratum of themes which can be conveniently interwoven by the native chronicler.

The theme of the princess of the river is found within a rather restricted distributional range, namely, the “more civilized Malay states” influenced by “Brahminism” (Maxwell 1881: 511). Maxwell suggests that the Princess of the River is of Aryan origin, reminiscent of the birth of Lakshmi. The theme of the Raja of Bamboo, however, is more widely extended and “found among wild tribes who have been wholly unaffected by Hindu influences. It has originated from an ancient (Turian) belief as to the mode of the creation of mankind” (ibid). The theme of humans emerging from bamboo is listed by Maxwell as occurring among the “Orang Benua of South Siam” (a reference to the Negrito in southern Thailand?), “the Manatawe Islanders” (Mentawi) off the west coast of Sumatra, in the *Galigas* (a native history of the Bugis, Celebes), among the “Bolaang Mongondow” of the Celebes, and others (ibid: 514-515). From his perusal of the diffusion of the themes of the Princess of the Foam and the Raja of the Bamboo, Maxwell extracts the following procedure for the construction of history from myth:

Here, then, is the rude traditional beliefs [sic] common to the races of the Eastern Archipelago, a geographical expression including the twenty-five degrees of latitude, [where] we have the conception from which sprung the legends preserved to us by the Muhammedan historians of [the] Malay States. In the latter, metaphysical ideas have altogether disappeared, and the main incident survives, incorporated in the history of human adventures. No longer accepted as a superstitious belief, it has been unconsciously retained as an historical episode. (ibid: 519)

¹¹ See Gullick 1958, Chapter 3 for further discussion of the divine attributes of the Malay Sultanate.

The themes of the princess emerging from foam and prince from bamboo are also found in the *Hikayat Bandjar*, a chronicle pertaining to the Malay kingdom which existed in South-East Borneo until 1860 (Ras 1968). Ras examines these themes found in the *Hikayat Bandjar* in relation to instances of the Foam Princess/Bamboo Prince occurring in other “historical or quasi-historical texts” concerned with the early history of the local royal dynasty (ibid: Chs. IV and V). Among these are (1) the *Salasilah Kutai*, concerning the Kutai dynasty of Borneo; (2) the story of Sukadana; (3) the *Sejara Melayu*; (4) the *Marong Mahawangsa* of Kedah; (5) the *Hikayat Radia-Radia Pasai*; and (6) the *Hikayat Atieh*, Sumatra. The two themes are also explored as they occur in the Malay *Hikayat Seri Rama* and the Javanese story of Rama as told in the *Serat Kanda* (ibid: 100-118).

Ras’s exploration of the themes’ diffusion includes an attempt to uncover the “prototype” or clearest articulation of the myth. The intent of his enterprise, however, is to undertake the functional approach to mythical analysis in order to determine the role these themes play in the construction of the dynastic legacy:

Concerning the Rama elements encountered in some of these stories, we posited the necessity to try to establish first the exact nature of the stories into which they were introduced and the position and possible function of these in the various societies in which they originated. Only after this has been done can we examine whether the “foreign” epic elements which are discernable in the stories are really mere ‘flotsam and jetsam,’ or whether perhaps their incorporation was a process conditioned by factors which have hitherto passed unnoticed. (ibid: 98)

This approach may hold the key to unraveling the role of the White Semang in the Perak dynastic legend.

Ras considers the *Salasilah Kutai* to be the story which most faithfully reflects the proto-story from which the narratives in the Malay texts surveyed are assumed to derive. This judgment is based on the observation that the *Salasilah Kutai* is the more detailed and lucid of the various texts, the most archaic in form (genre and meter), and is not a profane text subject to arbitrary change. Furthermore, this story furnishes the explanation and format for the central and most sacred ceremony of the annual Kutai court ritual feast (ibid: 92, 98).

The *Salasilah Kutai* features the adoption of three supernatural beings—a small boy descended from heaven, a foam-lotus princess, and a princess emerging from bamboo—by the chiefly couples of three major communities later to constitute the country of Kutai Kerta Negara (see Chart 3). The three adopted supernaturally-born children later intermarry in two successive stages to produce the royal descendants of Kutai. The function of the story is to symbolize by the marriage of the princess of the foam to the prince descended from heaven, “the creation of a union between two opposite cosmic elements: waters (nether world) and sun (heaven). The first marriage is then followed by a second in which the son of the first couple marries the bamboo princess, symbolic daughter of the earth:

Since the latter princess may be considered as a daughter of the earth, the entire myth must be assumed to have symbolized a threefold union involving the cosmic elements of sun, water and earth, which was effected in two stages. This mythical union was represented as the origin of the local royal dynasty and, by extension, that of the entire community. (ibid: 99)

The *Salisilah Kutai* maintained its integrity through time, Ras posits, by virtue of its yearly reenactment at the annual Kutai court's ritual feast. Other stories containing fragments of these themes, such as the Kedah *Marong Mahawangsa*, became comparatively vague reflections of the prototype because the lapse of a functional link between the story and its ritual reenactment obscured the cosmological significance of the genealogy (ibid: 97). This theory, in which loss of function results in fragmented configurations of mythical actors and their roles, may explain the isolated reference to a Lady White-Blood, foam princess, and bamboo prince at the end of the Inland Dynasty in the *Hikayat Patani* (Teeuw and Wyatt 1970, I: 128; II: 197, 259-264). The role of the Lady White-Blood will become clearer as we discuss the function of the white-blooded Semang.

A slightly altered configuration of the above prototype occurs in the Perak dynasty legend. Both versions include the marriage of a bamboo-born male and a female emerging from the foam, which we may now interpret as a union of earth and water. We can now see that *adoption is a structural phenomenon* endemic to nearly all entrances of bamboo princes and foam princesses in the numerous texts surveyed. The adoption is therefore not a deliberate slight against the Negrito ancestress, but a necessary structural event highlighting the cosmological origins of the supernaturally-born children.

But where is the cosmological link with the heavens, symbolized in the *Salisilah Kutai* by Adji Batara Agung Dewa Sakti, the small boy who is lowered from heaven in a ball of gold? I suggest the white-blooded Semang is the cosmological link with the heavens. In the Perak dynasty legend, it would seem that the adopted character in the prototype story merges with the cosmological representative of the heavens in the figure of the Negrito woman with white blood coursing through her veins. White is considered by Malays to be a royal color (Skeat 1900: 18):

...royal blood is supposed by many Malays to be white, and this is the pivot on which the plot of not a few Malay folktales is made to turn. (ibid: 37)

The white umbrella, as a royal symbol, is superior to the yellow umbrella. The white umbrella is reserved for the Raja himself, whereas yellow is reserved for the members of his family (ibid: 33). The exalted and sacred color "has been adopted by Malay medicine-men as the colour most likely to conciliate the spirits and demons with whom they have to deal" (ibid: 51).

Malay cosmology consists of an interplay between animism, Hinduism, and Islam. Forces of nature are imbued with divine status and are sometimes further identified as manifestations of Hindu deities. These practices conspire with the tenets of Islam to produce a complexly interwoven religious fabric among the Malays. One of the natural forces imbued with divine status is the sun; the "White divinity," of the high rank of "Mambang," dwells in the sun (Skeat 1900: 92). Could the White Semang be identified with the White Divinity who dwells in the sun? If so, the Perak dynasty legend would then complete the cosmological union of heaven(sun)/water/earth. This cosmological union would legitimize the descending dynasty in terms of the deified forces of nature. Thematic similarities with the Rama story bespeak the legend's connections with Hinduism. Additional legitimization in Islamic terms is provided through the genealogical link with the Sultan of Johore. The Perak dynastic legend

thereby unifies rival mythological systems to provide validation for the Malay rulers in the terms of all theological contributors to the Malay concept of the divine.

Whether the white-blooded Negrito is specifically the representative of the Sun divinity remains debatable. However, the relation of the White Semang to the deified forces of nature and the world of the spirits is unquestionable. We have charted the identification of the color white with the supernatural. Within the legend, this identification is confirmed by the story of the white- and red-flowered tree found at the source of the Perak River (I). The white flowers facing toward Perak and the additional reference to the white milk of a nursing fish flowing into the Perak River (I) express the specific association of the color white with the sacred forces of nature within the Perak region.

The significance of the Negrito ancestress as a vessel through which deified natural forces enter the Perak dynasty find additional confirmation in the Malay classification of Negritos with animals and spirits, on the boundary between man and non-man (Endicott 1970: 80, 81). Negritos are considered to have active *badi*, one of the three components of the Malay “soul” concept (Endicott 1970: 70; Annandale and Robinson 1903: 8, 9, 101). *Badi* is usually released at death, and it animates beings such as birth demons and familiars. The Negrito *badi* is considered to be active while they are still alive, a representation of the extension of non-life (non-man) into life. The identification of the Negrito with *badi* thus connotes their marginal position in the transition between the primordial and the “human” (Endicott 1970: 73). The blood characteristically contains the *badi*. The blood itself is intermediate between the formless, liquid state and the organized physical body (ibid: 82). Thus, the Negrito with white blood symbolically articulates the channeling of formless, primordial force into the physical embodiment of the Malay ruler.

There is further evidence supporting the typification of the relationship between Negritos and that which is “more-than-human.” The Negritos are considered to be able to transform themselves into were-tigers, another transgression of the boundary between the human and the non-human (Endicott 1970: 82; Annandale and Robinson 1904: p. 29 n.). The Negrito shaman or *halak* communes with the spirit world during spirit séances involving trance possession, exorcism, and music (Skeat and Blagden 1906, II: 227-229; Evans 1923: 210-217; Evans 1937: 186-219).¹² Several authors have pointed to the possible influence of these Negrito ceremonies upon the Malay spirit séances. This outlines another area of interchange between the Orang Asli and Malays: ritual practice.

The Malay *belian* (*Main Puteri*), a shamanistic possession and curing ceremony, is considered to be derived from or influenced by the Negrito shamanistic ceremonies (Cuisinier 1936: 38-39). The Malay *pawang* (shaman) may also be associated with the were-tiger, or tiger familiar. Various features of the *belian* performances observed by Cuisinier suggest Negrito/Senoi influence, such as the *lupa* (trance) in which the chief practitioner is controlled by various spirits; the employment of Negrito tunes and the word *halak*; and the Malay-Negrito mixed descent of two observed performers. Evans outlines further features of ornamental dress and paraphernalia that suggest Negrito influence upon this Malay ceremony (Evans 1937: 216-217, 135, 194-201, 233). Maxwell describes Orang Asli characteristics and language, used by a Malay *pawang* during the curing séance:

¹² See also Schebesta 1926; Schebesta 1928: 223-229; Oesch 1974.

We now have before us, not Che Johan (the Malay *pawang*) but simply his body possessed for the time being by the tiger demon—*buyang gelap*—or the dark dragon. Henceforth, as long as the séance lasted, he spoke in a feigned voice, pronouncing Malay words with the peculiar intonation of the Sakai aborigines and introducing frequently Sakai words and phrases unintelligible to most of the Malays present. (Maxwell 1883: 220)

In the intervals of the ceremonies, the *pawang* conversed occasionally with members of the family, always retaining his assumed voice and using Sakai phrases. He even condescended to accept a Malay cigarette (*roko*), which he called by the Sakai word *nyut*. (ibid: 222)

This evidence from the realm of ritual practice emphasizes the complementary position held by the Orang Asli in relationship to the Malays. The Malay concept of Orang Asli proximity to the world of the spirits clarifies the function of the White Semang as a transmitter of supernatural validation to the Malay ruling families in Perak. The symbol of the White Semang enables us to posit another thematic contrast (if read in terms of position on a continuum rather than ends of a pole)—Orang Asli:Malay::supernatural:mundane.¹³ This theme also foregrounds another arena of Orang Asli/Malay interaction—the domain of ritual symbolism and ritual action. Orang Asli identification with the supernatural has ramifications within the mode of economic interaction as well. An economic commodity for which the aborigines received profitable payment was the medicinal preparations they sold to the Malays (Skeat and Blagden 1906, II: 228; Anderson 1824: 425-426).

The identification of the Orang Asli with the “sacred” and the “divine” is transformed into the “royal” when transmitted to the Malay rulers. This progression from Orang Asli supernatural to Malay royalty is developed in the plot of the Perak dynastic legend. It is also apparent in the terminology applied to royal Malay paraphernalia: the sword or dagger of office presented to Perak Malay chiefs bears the name of *baur*, an Orang Asli word for “staff” (Winstedt and Wilkinson 1934: 5). Through the White Semang, the divine forces are channeled into the Perak dynasty, legitimizing the Malay royalty in the cosmological terms of deified nature.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis of the Perak dynastic legend has revealed several arenas of interaction between the Malay and Negrito populations. We have observed the interactions of Malays and Orang Asli in the domains of economic exchange, intermarriage, and ritual practice. Interfacing themes of legends with ethnographic reports, we find a series of complementary associations between these two cultures as they came into greater geographical proximity when Malays penetrated into the interior of Perak. Among these are,

Malay:Orang Asli
downstream:upstream
coastal:interior
human:non-human
mundane:supernatural

The subjective Malay conception of the Orang Asli as transitional between the human and more-than-human clarifies the legend’s use of a white-blooded Negrito as one

¹³ For a:b::c:d, read “a is to b as c is to d.”

of the vessels imbuing the Malay royalty with divine qualities, while both legend and ethnographic report emphasize the role of intermarriage in the staking of land claims by immigrant Malays.

How might Orang Asli conceive of themselves in relation to the Malay population? We briefly present a version of a Negrito legend collected in 1913 from a (Lanoh?) Negrito at Ijok, Selama, Perak by I. H. Evans.¹⁴

Once upon a time the king of the *mawas*¹ monkeys, Raja Mawas, fought with the king of the *siamang*² monkeys, Raja Siamang, in the country where our ancestors lived. Our ancestors ran away from the place, being frightened by the war, and hid themselves in a plain covered by *lalang* grass. The Raja Mawas beat the Raja Siamang, and the latter, with his people, ran away and hid in the same plain as our ancestors. Raja Mawas came and set fire to the grass, and Raja Siamang and his followers fled and crossed the Perak River. Our ancestors did not run away, having hidden themselves in porcupine burrows, in order to escape from the fire. In spite of this, the fire reached them and singed their hair, and this is the reason why we, their descendants, have curly hair to the present day.

After the war was over the king of the *berok* monkeys,³ Raja Berok, became judge between the *siamang* and the *mawas*, and he gave judgment that the *siamang* should stop on the south bank of the Perak River and the *mawas* on the north; and thus they do till the present day, though before they had both lived on the north bank.⁴

The ancestors of the Malays, when the war arose, ran away downstream carrying a rice-spoon with them, and that is why Malays use a spoon in cooking their rice. Our ancestors ran away upstream carrying a pointed stick; and that is the reason why we still use a stick for digging tubers in the jungle. (Evans 1937: 161)¹⁵

Schebesta collected another version of the legend of the war between the monkeys from two Negrito tribes, the Kintak of Kedah and the Jahai of Perak, in 1924-25. In these two accounts, the monkey who sets fire to the grass is the *berok* monkey (Schebesta 1928: 89, 216-217). Evans reports that Negritos of the Kintak and Mendrik rivers interpret a dream in which a *berok* monkey is attacking the sleeper as indicating that a Malay will come to the camp and make trouble (Evans 1923: 167).

As in the Perak dynasty legend, we find the geographical position of Negrito to Malay as “upstream” versus “downstream.” The main contrast between Negrito and Malay is phrased in economic terms—

Negrito:Malay
roots:rice
horticulture:agriculture

The legend relegates a central position to subsistence technology. This is understandable when we realize the far-reaching effects that modes of subsistence have on social organization (Geertz 1963). We could elaborate the roots:rice distinction in terms of shifting:sedentary, hinting at the multitude of implications contained in this legendary distinction phrased in terms of food and cultivation. Wet-rice cultivation generates the

¹⁴ Footnotes quoted within the text are Evans' own, reproduced below:

1. The *mawas* is here probably *Hyobates* sp.

2. The *siamang* is *Symphalangus syndactylus*.

3. *Macacus nemestrinus*.

4. The Perak River, in its upper reaches, runs directly from north to south. It would, therefore, be better to substitute west for south and east for north in the story, but I leave it as it was told.

¹⁵ For other versions of this legend, see Skeat and Blagden 1906, II: 218-220 (includes version collected by Vaughn-Stevens, p. 219 n. 2); Evans 1923: 146 (earlier printing of the same version); Evans 1937: 147-148, 162; and Schebesta 1928: 89, 216-217.

supportability of large populations, with concurrent complexity of social structure. The elaborate agricultural cycle of rice cultivation (planting, weeding, harvesting) requires a sedentary population, larger villages to contribute the specialists and more numerous laborers required by labor-intensive technology, and a social structure composed of closely interrelated units. Tuber cultivation does not have as elaborate an agricultural cycle. Shifting cultivation of tubers or hill rice does not support large, localized populations, but rather a decentralized social structure of relatively independent units. The roots:rice theme thus implies a marked qualitative, though not evaluative, distinction in social organization.

The roots:rice contrast also introduces the possibility of economic exchange, confirmed in the ethnographic material presented above (see ECONOMIC section). This economic exchange transpires in terms of commodities and labor. Indeed, the central position of the roots:rice distinction as a cultural marker in the Negrito legend highlights the prominence of the economic mode of interaction in Negrito/Malay relations.

The theme that the Negritos once had technology comparable to the Malays is foregrounded in Skeat's version of the legend of the war between the monkeys. In the confusion surrounding the fire, the Malays were quicker in getting away, and they annexed the clothes and rice spoons. The Negritos saved only their blowpipes and quivers (Skeat and Blagden, II: 219). Perhaps the legend suggests an attempt by the Negritos to rationalize their inherent capability for the technology they see exhibited by the Malays. According to this legend, rice technology—and all its social ramifications—are only the Malays' by virtue of historical accident; and the absence of rice technology among the Negritos is not due to any inherent differences between Orang Asli and Malays. That cultural difference is presented as a consequence of cultural devolution would seem to support an Orang Asli view of themselves in terms of historical *loss* of capabilities, rather than inherent inabilities. Perhaps it marks their premonition of the future loss of Orang Asli resources as Malays penetrated further into the interior. The theme is reiterated in another Negrito legend which states that the Malays got rice by means of a bird who carried a rice kernel from the Negrito fields to a Malay raja (Evans 1937: 167-168; collected 1935 among the Kintak).

Hood Salleh (1975) presents an analysis of the ideology and oral history of the Semelai, an Aslian-speaking group of the Proto-Malay division dwelling primarily in Pahang and Negri Sembilan. In his study of Semelai moral values and oral tradition, Hood seeks to uncover the Semelai sense of identity in relation to the outside world. So too, through our examination of Malay and Negrito legends, we have attempted to penetrate Malay and Orang Asli respective views of themselves and each other. Themes from the legends highlighted several arenas of Orang Asli/Malay interaction that were confirmed and clarified by ethnographic materials. Focusing on the dynamics of interaction, these legends present a different kind of history—a history not necessarily of chronological or biographical accuracy, but rather an encapsulation of subjective perceptions of “self” and “other.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

JIA	Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia. 1847-1859.
JMBRAS	Royal Asiatic Society. Malayan/Malaysian Branch. Journal.
JSBRAS	Royal Asiatic Society. Straits Branch. Journal.
JRAS	Royal Asiatic Society. Journal.

Anderson, John. 1824. *Political and commercial considerations relative to the Malayan Peninsula and British settlements in the Straits of Malacca. With Appendix: of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Malayan Peninsula, and particularly of the Negroes, called Semang.* Prince of Wales Island.

Annandale, Nelson, and H. C. Robinson. 1903. *Fasciculi Malayenses: Anthropological and zoological results of an expedition to Perak and the Siamese states, 1901-1902; Anthropology*, part 1. London: University Press of Liverpool.

_____. 1904. *Fasciculi Malaenses: Anthropological and zoological results of an expedition to Perak and the Siamese states, 1901-1902; Zoology*, part 2. London: University Press of Liverpool.

Achaimbault, C. 1964. "Religious Structures in Laos," *Journal of the Siam Society* 52(1): 56-74.

Baharon Azhar b. Raffie'i. 1964. "An Orang Asli Legend: 'Putri Buloh Betong,'" *Federation Museums Journal* 9 n. s.: 39-44.

Barr, Pat. 1977. *Taming the Jungle: The men who made British Malaya.* London: Secker & Warburg.

Begbie, P. J. 1834 (1967). *The Malayan Peninsula.* Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Benjamin, G. 1973. "Introduction," in P. Schebesta, *Among the Forest Dwarfs of Malaya.* Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Carey, Iskandar. 1976. *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia.* Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Croix, J. Errington de la. 1882. "Étude sur les Sakaies de Perak." *Revue d'Ethnographie* 1: 317-341.

_____. 1885. "Sept mois ay pays de l'étain, Perak," *Bulliten de la Société de Géographie de Paris* (1885): 394 ff.

Cuisinier, Jeanne. 1936. *Danses magiques de Kelantan.* Paris: Institute d'Ethnologie.

Diffloth, G. 1977. "Aslian Languages and Southeast Asian Prehistory." Paper presented at Seminar Pengajian Masyarakat Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, October 1977.

Douglas, Mary. 1967. "The Meaning of Myth: With special reference to 'La Geste d'Asdiwal,'" in E. Leach, ed., *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*. London: Tavistock. Pp. 49-69.

Endicott, K. M. 1970. *An Analysis of Malay Magic*. London: Oxford University Press.

Evans, I. H. N. 1923. *Studies in Religion, Folklore, and Custom in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1930. "Schebesta and the Sacredo-Therapy of the Semangs," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 60: 115-125.

_____. 1937. *The Negritos of Malaya*. London: Frank Cass.

Geertz, C. 1963. *Agricultural Involution*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Godinho de Eredia, Manuel. 1930. "Eredia's description of Malaca, Meridional India and Cathay [1613]," translated by J. V. Mills. *JMBRAS* 8(1): 22-23, 30-31, 40-41, 46-49.

Gullick, J. M. 1949. "Sungei Ujong," *JMBRAS* 22(2): 1-21.

_____. 1958. *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*. New York: Humanities Press.

Hood Mohamad Salleh. 1975. "The Semelai Sura and Oral History: Myth and Ideology in the Orang Asli World," *Akademika* 7 (July): 1-16.

Jones, Alun. 1968. "The Orang Asli: An Outline of their Progress in Modern Malaya," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 9(2): 286-292.

Letessier, Rev. Charles A. M. 1892. "The Sakais of Selangor," *Selangor Journal* 1: 101ff.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1967. "The Story of Asdiwal," in E. Leach, ed., *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*. London: Tavistock, pp. 1-47.

Logan, J. R. 1847. "The Orang Binua of Johore." *JIA* 1: 242-293.

Martin, R. 1905. *Die Inlandstämme des Malayischen Halbinsel*. Jena: Gustav Fischer.

Maxwell, W. E. 1881. "Two Malay Myths: The Princess of the Foam, and the Raja of the Bamboo," *JRAS* 13 n. s.: 498-523.

_____. 1882. "The History of Perak from Native Sources," *JSBRAS* 9 (June): 85-108.

_____. 1883. "Shamanism in Perak," *JSBRAS* 12 (December): 222-232.

Morgan, J. de. 1886. "Journal de Voyage," in J. de Morgan, *Exploration dans le Presqu'île Malaise: Royaumes de Perak et de Patani*. Paris: A. Lahure, pp. 1-69.

Oesch, Hans. 1974. "Musikalische Gattungen bei Naturvölken. Untersuchungen am vokalen und instrumentalen Repertoire des Schamanen Terhin und seiner Senoi-Leute von Stamme der Temiar am oberen Nenggiri auf Malakka," in Carl Dahlhaus and Hans Oesch, eds., *Festschrift für Arno Volk*. Cologne. Pp. 7-30.

Pearce, R. H. 1965. *The Savages of America*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ras, J. J. 1968. *Hikayat Bandjar: A Study in Malay Historiography*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. (Biblioteka Indonesia: 1).

Roseman, Marina. 1998. Temiar Singers of the Landscape: Song, History, and Property Rights in the Malaysian Rainforest. *American Anthropologist* 100(1): 106-121.

Schebesta, Paul. 1926. "Das Hala- oder Medizinmannwesen bei den Semang auf Malacca," *Jahrbuch of St. Gabriel's College* (1926), Vienna.
_____. 1928 (1973). *Among the Forest Dwarfs of Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

Skeat, W. W. 1900 (1967). *Malay Magic*. New York: Dover.

Skeat, W. W., and C. O Blagden. 1906. *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*, Vols. I and II. London: MacMillan.

Sweeney, Amin. 1972. "Some Suggestions on the Collecting of Oral Literature with Special Reference to West Malaysia," *Federation Museums Journal* 17 n. s.: 61-72.

Swettenham, Sir Frank. 1906 (1955). *British Malaya: An Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Teeuw, A., and D. K. Wyatt, eds. and tr. 1970. *Hikayat Patani: The Story of Patani*. 2 vols. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Winstedt, R. O., and R. J. Wilkinson. 1934. *A History of Perak*. Singapore.

Documents

British Sessional Papers

C3285. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers by Command, C3285, Straits Settlements: Correspondence Respecting Slavery in the Protected Malay States, 1882. (1882, Vol. XLVI, pp. 661ff.).

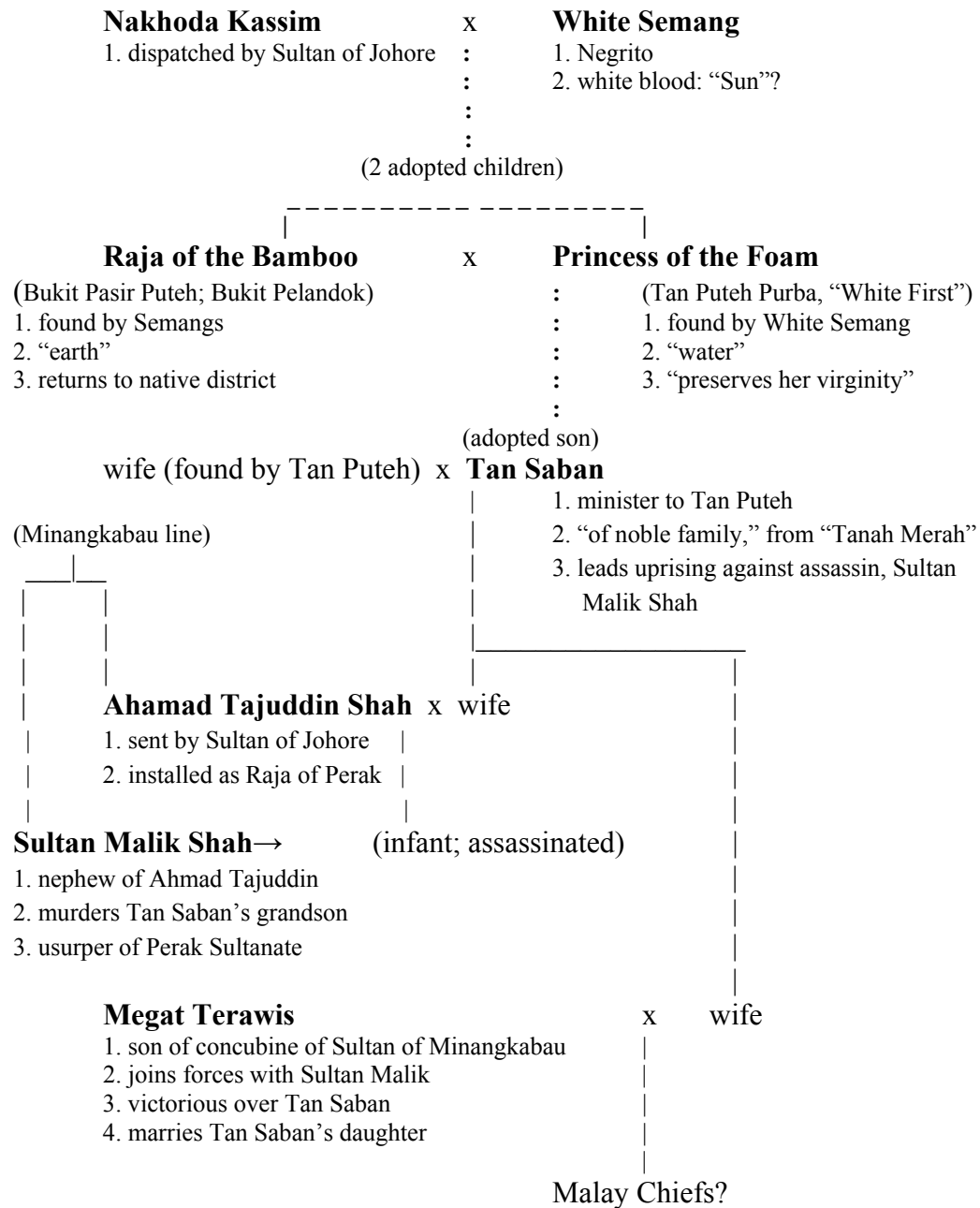
C3429. Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers by Command, C3429, Further Correspondence Respecting Slavery in the Protected Malay States, 1882. (1882, Vol. XLVI, pp. 683ff.).

C4192. Great Britain. Correspondence Respecting the Protected Malay States, Including Papers Relating to the Abolition of Slavery in Perak, 1884. (1884, Vol. LV, pp. 419ff.).

Great Britain. Colonial Papers. Accounts and Papers, 1902, Vol. LXVI.

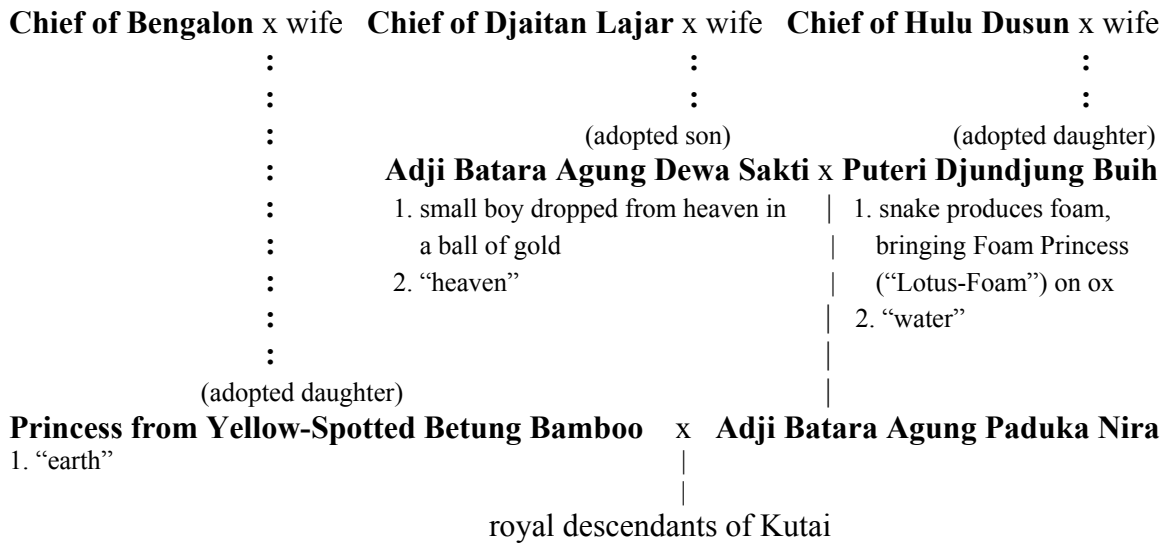
Cd5902. Great Britain. Colonial Papers. Accounts and Papers, 1912-1913, Vol. LX.

Chart 1. Perak Dynasty Legend, Version I (Maxwell, 1881)



		Semang Chief	
Nada Kassin	x	White Semang	
1. exiled officer of Raja of Johore	:	1. Negrito	
2. sent to make royal kingdom	:	2. white blood: "Sun"?	
	:		
		(adopted daughter)	
Raja of the Bamboo	x	Princess of the Foam	(x 2 nd wife of Raja of Bamboo)
(Bukit Pandok)		(Putri Busu)	
1. found by relative of Raja of Pahang		1. found by White Semang	
2. "earth"		2. "water"	
Sultan of Johore			
2 youngest sons: 1 st kills			
2 nd and self; grandson or			
stepson was:			
Salim Balik →	(infant, assassinated)		
1. "petits fils" of Sultan of Johore			
2. assassin			
3. defeated by Semang			
Salim Balik's daughter	x	Megat Terawis	
		1. Nicobar Malay	
		2. aids Semang in war against Salim Balik	
great-great-granddaughter of Sultan of Johore	x	son of Raja of Bamboo by 2 nd wife (granddaughter of White Semang)	
royal line of Perak			

Chart 3. Salasilah Kutai (Prototype) (Ras, 1968)



Map 1. Geographical Movement, Perak Dynasty Legend

