

THE JAHAI NEGritos AT SUNGAI RUAL RESETTLEMENT, KELANTAN.

A BRIEF STUDY ON THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF A TRIBAL COMMUNITY IN
MALAYSIA WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THEIR INSTITUTIONS OF MARRIAGE
AND KINSHIP.

A GRADUATION EXERCISE PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT
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" Cinta.....

adalah yang murni,

yang suci,

yang datang hanya sekali dalam seumur hidup."

Untuk:

Ayahanda dan bonda serta keluarga,

yang sering mendoakan akan kejayaan ku,

dan,

buat Yati, yang tidak pernah jemu mencintai diri ku.

Department of Anthropology and Sociology,

University of Malaya,

Kuala Lumpur,

1975.

Dari;

ARY

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Department of Anthropology and Sociology,

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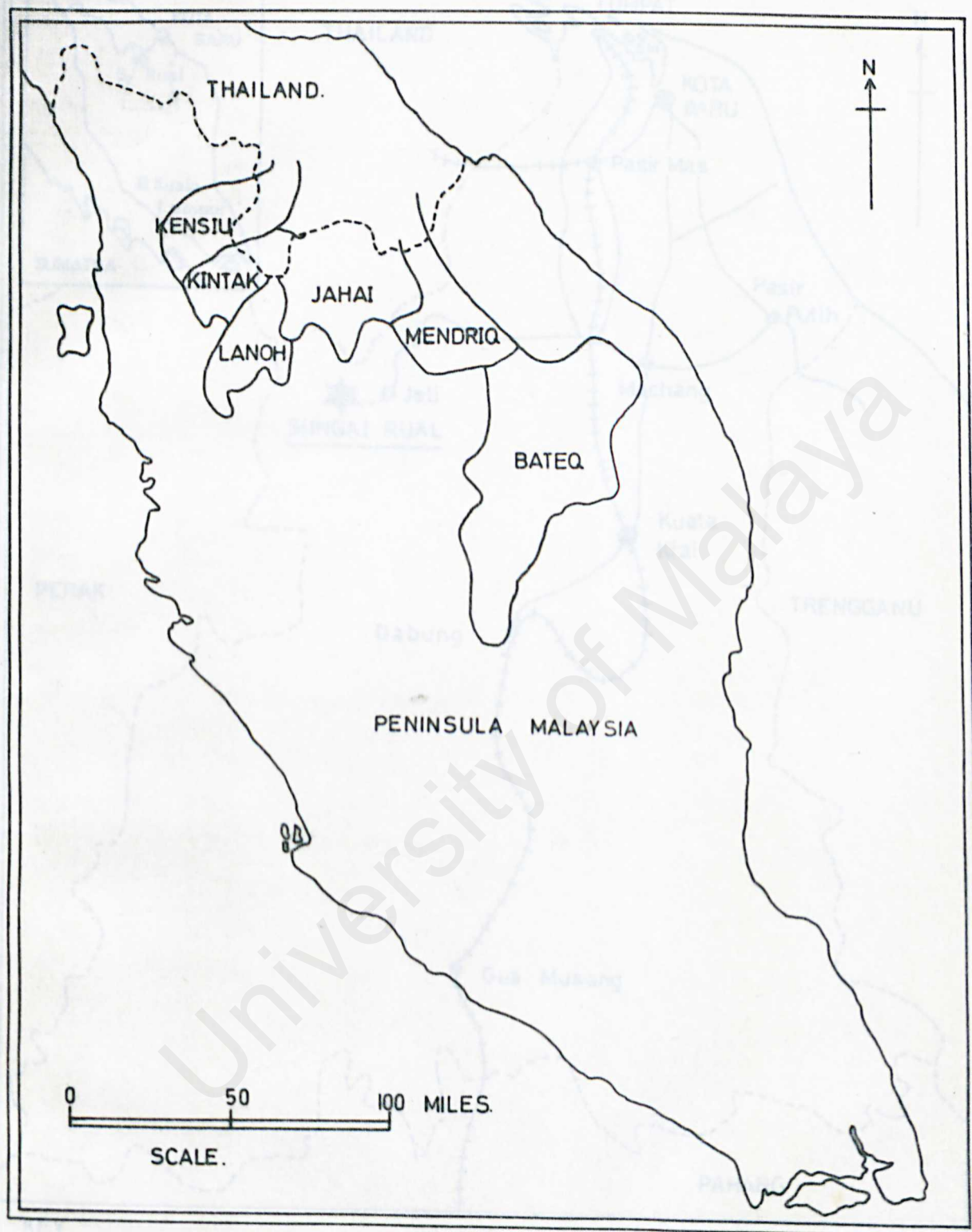


FIG. 1. DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRITO SUB-GROUPS IN PENINSULA MALAYSIA.

FIG. 2. MAP OF KELANTAN SHOWING THE LOCATION OF AREA OF STUDY, ABORIGINAL RESETTLEMENT SCHEME OF THE SUNGAI RUAL POST.

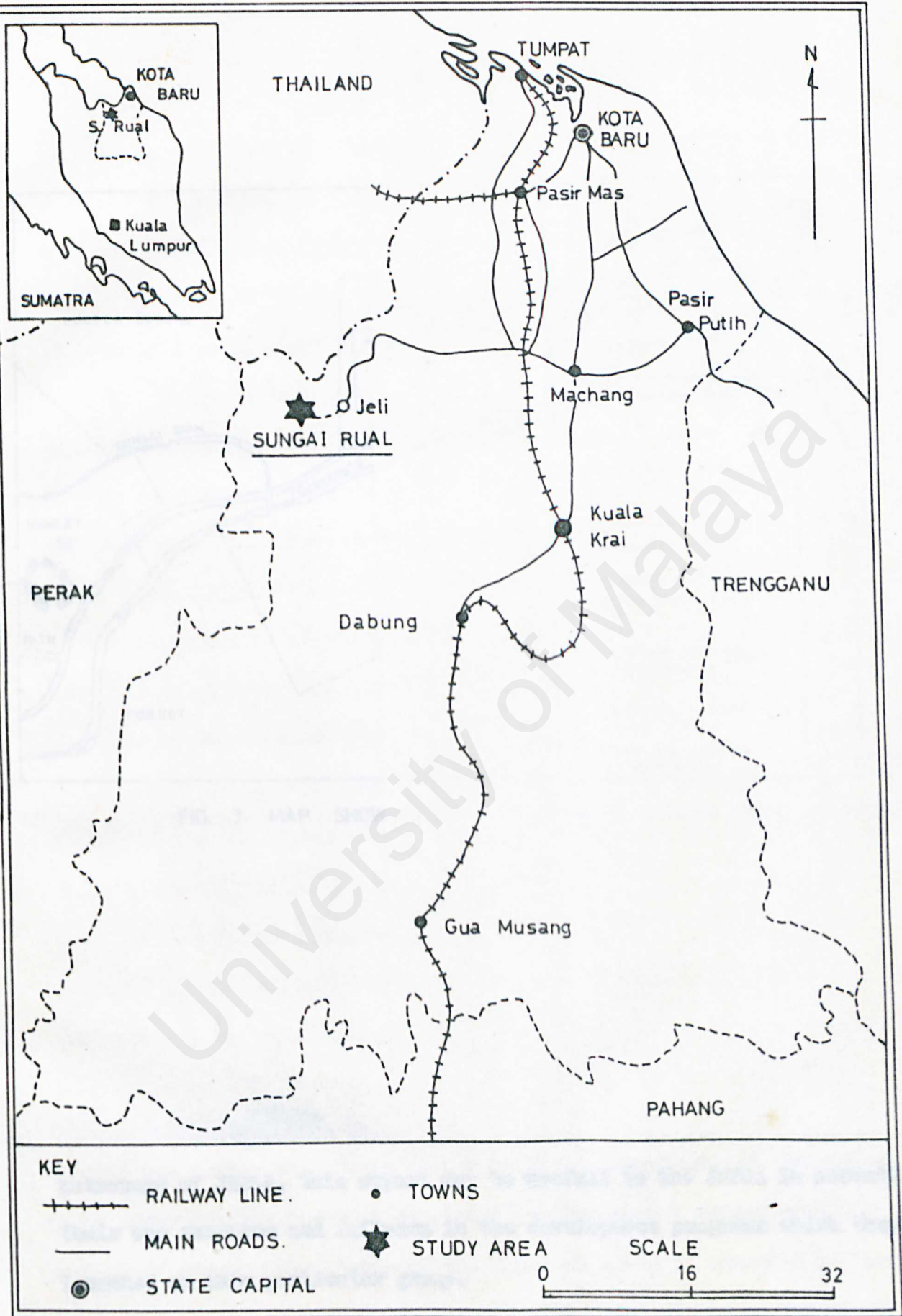


FIG. 2. MAP OF KELANTAN SHOWING THE LOCATION OF AREA OF STUDY, ABORIGINAL RESETTLEMENT SCHEME OF THE SUNGAI RUAL POST.

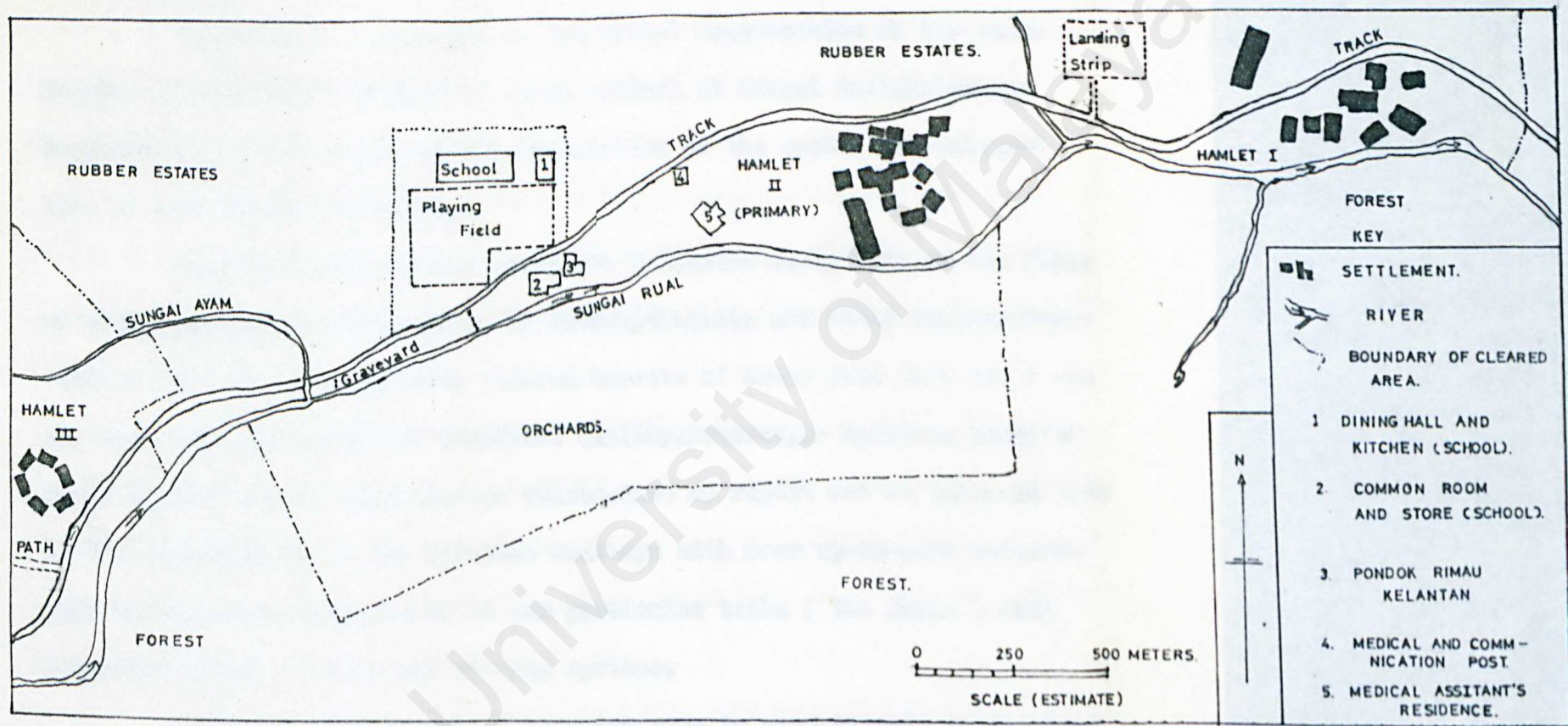


FIG. 3. MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF SUNGAI RUAL RESETTLEMENT SCHEME.

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

This study is focussed on the social organisation of the Jahai Negrito, a Malaysian aboriginal group settled at Sungai Rual, Kelantan. Basically, it tries to give detail description of the social and cultural life of this particular tribe.

Much has been written about the Malaysian Orang Asli in the forms of books, monographs, and articles by anthropologists and other writers. These studies were aimed at exposing various aspects of Orang Asli life and I can say that they were often of excellent quality. However, no specific study of Jahai Negrito social organisation exists. Thus my report can be taken as both as the continuation of the previous writings with more up-to-date information and as a new description of one particular tribe (the Jahai) with emphasis on the marriage and kinship systems.

In doing this report, I have two aims in mind. Firstly it is aimed at fulfilling the requirement of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Malaya as one of the conditions for achieving the Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) Degree, and secondly; this report will hopefully be regarded by any authority concerned as "a collection of informations and suggestions" in carrying development and modernization projects on this particular Orang Asli group.

Finally, since this group of indigenous people are under the direct patronage of JHEOA, this report may be useful to the JHEOA in assessing their own successes and failures in the development programs which they have launched on this particular group.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on information collected by observation and informal interviews. The field work was carried out at Sungai Rual for a period of one month starting from 10.4.1976 to 11.5.1976. A preliminary five day study had been made in August, 1975.

During the period of study our team stayed at the JHEOA rest house which was only 100 yards from the main settlement. Information was collected during the day time only for after dark, even the Jahai themselves were forbidden from wandering around the camp.

As I went along making friend with the Jahai, I put forward my questions whenever there was an opportunity. The questions were asked in Bahasa Malaysia with the degree of understanding of almost 100%. Whenever we were stuck somewhere, I would draw diagrams on the ground and sometimes used stone pebbles as models in breaking the deadlock.

In selecting respondents, no systematic sampling plan was followed. My respondents were everybody in the settlement, irrespective of their age and sex. However, most of my respondents were males because the female Jahai were hard to be approached due to their shyness and the males too were disturbed if the women talked to outsiders.

2.1 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Throughout the study, it took some time for me to adjust myself towards the living conditions in the settlement. That was not the main problem in my study however. The most difficult problem that I encountered was the problem of winning the hearts of the Jahai so as to be accepted by them. This was my prime concern in approaching the Jahai. I was so concerned about this matter because I was fully aware that the Jahai were the tribe most recently exposed to the modern world, thus their traditional characteristics

of shyness and timidity were still strongly embedded strongly in their in their souls. And this is the reason why I favoured the informal method of interviewing without prepared schedules for I feared that the formal method would frightened them. They have reacted with uneasy feeling to the formal method of the other researchers.

Generally, the response from the Jahai was extremely good but varied from one respondent to another. To ensure the validity of my data, I always asked the same question to several different respondents. The Jahai too were keen listeners, and were ready to interfere any communication between me and my respondents, of course with their own explanations. These explanations were felt to have some influence on the answers of my respondents. As the result, the answers given by one respondent may vary in different situation.

Although most of the information in this report was collected by the author, existing facts about the Jahai presented by previous writers are included here. This is done with the intention of providing a comparative views of the Jahai. The items from other resources can also be taken as the basis for understanding the present Jahai. And from this method of presentation too I hope my readers will be able to come up with ideas of the degree of social changes that the Jahai have undergone within a specific time period.

3. STUDY SITE

The Jahai population discussed in this report are residing in a resettlement established by JHEOA in 1972 with the sole purpose of re-grouping into one location the whole population of the once nomadic Jahai from the jungles at the north-eastern part of Malaysian Peninsular. This resettlement is situated at the eastern part of Kelantan State, not very far away from the border of the State of Perak, and only a few miles away from the Thai border to the north. (See map no.2).

This settlement is known as Sungai Rual Resettlement, and the name is after the name of a small but panoramic mountain stream that flows through the site. JHEOA coded this settlement as Sungai Rual Post.

This settlement together with settlements for other Orang Asli tribes throughout the country were set up with the main objective of containing such people so as to make it easier and more effective for the government in carrying out its material and mental development programs for the Orang Asli. This objective is in fact have become the government policy towards the Orang Asli since independence.

The government concern over the affairs of the Orang Asli life can be seen clearly when a new Act was passed by the Parliament. This act is referred to as The Aboriginal Peoples' Act where all the rights and privileges of the Orang Asli are stated. And this Act too recognises the Orang Asli as Bumiputras. The government have spent well over \$7.38 million dollars during the Second Malaysia Plan that ended last year (1975) in financing development projects for the Orang Asli.

The Sungai Rual Post covers an area of about 62 acres.

Approximately 4 acres is used for dwelling sites and the rest for plantation or the "ladang". The plantation area is being fully exploited for both subsistence and cash crops. Rubber is the main cash crop and is planted on the terraces of burnt over hill slopes surrounding the camp. Hill paddy, coconut, durian, rambutan, maize, manioc, sugar cane and many other tropical crops for daily consumption are planted intermingled with each other on the rest of the ladang.

3.1 The Dwelling Sites

There are 42 houses and huts at the camp but only 29 of them are presently occupied. The houses are for the population of about 230 as estimated by JHEOA. The style of some houses is that of the Malays, which are of course constructed with technical and material aid from JHEOA. Wild bamboo is the most important building material as it is used for the walls and floors. The stilts are from hard trees found around the camp and the roof are of attap. Many other huts or shelters are today still constructed in the same simple form described by Schebesta fifty years ago.²

Besides the houses of the Jahai, there are other buildings built by JHEOA with the help of the villagers. About a hundred yards west of the main dwelling site is a school building of two classrooms. Facing the school about 30 yards away is another building that is used as the food store where the rations for the school children is kept. It is also for the living quarters of the school teachers.

2. Paul Schebesta, Among The Forest Dwarfs Of Malaya, Oxford University Press 1973, p. 195.

Five yards east of the store house is a small rest house for visitors. The rest house is where we stayed during much of our research.

30 yards east of these three houses and closer to the main dwelling site is a medical clinic which is also as the communication room. The medical assistant whose house is 10 yards behind this clinic is responsible for both giving treatment to the Jahai and for sending or receiving JHMOA messages through a battery-powered radio.

The only common means of reaching this settlement is by land. From Jeli, the nearest Malay town, a timber track runs in six miles to the settlement and finally ends up at a logging site three more miles east of this settlement. This is the track that links the settlement with the outside world and is the only normal route for visitors. There are almost a dozen river crossings with slippery rocky beds and almost the same number of steep hills must be climbed.

A visitor can sometimes hitch a ride on one of the timber lorries that plying from Jeli to the logging site. But the sight of a timber lorry passing through this settlement is quite a rare occasion for the logging operation there is very dependents on good weather. Rainy days definitely stop the operation for the hill slopes that the lorries have to scale up get very slippery and may endanger the life of the loggers traveling on the lorries. And for a note, it rains almost everyday during the North-Eastern Monsoon in the months of August to December.

However, the condition of the timber track was much better in April 1976 than it was during the first trip that I have made in September 1975. The track at that time appeared to be the remains of a track built years ago. Only in February 1976 was the track improved by the logging company after the logging work was resumed. Thus the journey now from Jeli

to this settlement and back though on foot takes a shorter time than it did at the time of my first visit there. And the track too is now passable for Land Rovers.

Once a month, a HMAF helicopter will visit the camp bringing the 'flying doctor' for routine monthly visit. The doctor will make his round visiting all Orang Asli settlements starting from JHEOA hospital at Gombak, Kuala Lumpur. A helicopter can also be summoned by contacting the headquarters with the radio at the clinic whenever there is a serious case of illness. The same means of transportation is sometimes used when JHEOA is sending food rations to the settlement but more often the rations will be dropped from a HMAF Caribou plane.

CHAPTER 2

1. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MALAYSIAN ABORIGINES

The Jahai Negrâtes are classified as being one of the aboriginal peoples of Malaysia. According to the National Museum of Malaysia, the present aboriginal peoples in Malaysia are the remnants of the earliest settlers that had migrated down the Peninsula from Central Asia. Archaeological evidence shows that their ancestors were already here some 10,000 years ago.

Until a few years back, the terms "aborigine" and "primitive" were used in referring them. But after realising the facts and the real nature of the so-called people, the term "Orang Asli" was used which carries the meaning of "the original people". The terms "aborigine" and "primitive" were felt to have certain pejorative connotations and thus had unfavourable social and political implications. The term "sakai" that the Malay once used in referring to these peoples was also rejected for it means slaves and the Orang Asli too did not favour the term.³ At present, the term "Orang Asli" is being widely used and the Orang Asli themselves do not show any sign of objection to a such term of reference.

1.1 The Orang Asli Population and It's Distribution

The most recent census on the Orang Asli population was done in the year 1969 by JHEOA and it estimates that they number almost 53,000. They are found scattered all over the country except in the States of Penang and Perlis.⁴ Not all Orang Asli can be regarded as jungle dwellers for there

3. Is andar Carey, Orang Asli, Oxford University Press, KL, 1976, p.3

4. Carey, ibid. p.10

are quite a number of them who are living in settlements along the coastal areas in the states at southern part of the Peninsula and living as fishermen.

Genetically and culturally, the total population of the Orang Asli is divided into 3 categories; -Negritos, Senoi and Proto-Malays. The Senoi are the largest in number and the Negritos the smallest. For a clearer picture of the Orang Asli classification and population distribution, please refer to map no.1 and table no.1.

TABLE 1

THE ORANG ASLI POPULATION IN 1969

State	Negritos	Senoi	Proto-Malays	Total
Kedah	100	-	-	100
Perak	900	15,800	-	16,700
Kelantan	650	4,100	-	4,750
Tringgarnu	20	180	-	200
Pahang	150	9,000	10,350	19,500
Selangor	-	1,270	3,290	4,560
M. Sembilan	-	-	3,120	3,120
Malaka	-	-	400	400
Johor	-	-	3,670	3,670
Total	1,820	30,370	20,830	53,000

Note: All figures are rounded to the nearest ten.

2. THE DISTRIBUTION AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE NEGritos

Before proceeding to describe the Jahai in particular, for better understanding it will be worthwhile to describe briefly the distribution and tribal divisions of the Malaysian Negritos.

The Negrito population is centralized at the northern part of the Malaysian Peninsula, specifically in the States of Kedah, Trengganu, Pahang, Kelantan and some parts of Perak. A few Negritos are also found in the jungles in Southern Thailand.⁶ Apart from the Jahai, other Negrito tribal groups are the Kensiu, Kintak, Lanch, Mendrik and Batek.

The most current figure of the Negrito population and distributions can be seen in this following table.

TABLE 2

THE NEGrito TRIBAL GROUPS IN MALAYSIA ⁷

State	Kintak	Kensiu	Jahai	Mendrik	Batek	Lanch	Total
Kedah	-	100	-	-	-	-	100
Perak	120	-	500	-	-	260	880
Kelantan	-	-	200	120	330	-	650
Trengganu	-	-	-	-	20	-	20
Pahang	-	-	-	-	150	-	150
Total	120	100	700	120	500	260	1,800

source: JHEOA 1969 census.

6. Ivor H.N. Evans, The Negritos of Malaysia, London Cambridge University Press, 1937, p. 9

7. Carey, *ibid.* p. 39

The Negritos are believed by some ethnologists to be the earliest migrants into this country and may be akin to the dwarf in the Andaman Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Aeta of The Philippines and also to the Kubus, a nomadic tribe in Sumatra of Indonesia.⁸

It is strongly believed that the Negritos are the only tribe in Malaysia with their natural and traditional characteristics still intact. This I believe is due to the lack of contact with other settlers, namely the Malays and the Chinese though Evans stated that the Negritos usually build their camps close to the settlements of the Malays.⁹ This lack of contact with other ethnic groups makes them slow in assimilating themselves into the life style of the other "modern" groups.

The Negritos originally are jungle nomads with hunting and gathering^{he-} are their two main economic activities. And of course their social structure is influenced by this type of living as are their system of belief.

The Negritos today are mostly, if not totally, different from what the previous writings had described. They have undergone social changes through time and the speed of such changes has been faster since they were put under the direct protection of the Malaysian Government. And for the case of the Jahai, they too are showing interesting prospects of becoming a fully developed ethnic group in Malaysia in the near future.

8. The National Museum of Malaysia, the Orang Asli section

9. Evans, *ibid*, p. 10

3. ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE JAHAI NEGrito

The Jahai are one of the tribal divisions of the Negritos. They share many cultural characteristics with other Negrito tribes.

The Jahai at Sungai Rual are the most recently to be brought under direct government control. However, attempts to coax them into accepting the government direct surveillance had been made as early as a decade ago. En. Abdullah Hashim, a JHEOA field representative, was responsible for this task. Only in 1972 however, was the attempts successful.

The Jahai settlers, along with a few Mendrik and Temiar, were gathered from various places around this camp. They were from Lobok Bongor, Ayer Lanas, Bording and a few other places. Interestingly, there was a group from northern Perak who voluntarily came to this camp after hearing about the good life that the first settlers were enjoying at the camp.

JHEOA estimates that the Jahai population at Sungai Rual consist of 250 individuals. This figure is an overestimate, however. Mr. Albert G. Gomes and I calculate on the basis of a careful census that the population is only around 180. The JHEOA estimation appears to have involved considerable double-counting.

3.1 Linguistics

The Jahai speaks a largely mono-syllabic language of the Mon-Khmer family. The language however has borrowed many words from Malay. For example, when I did the test for colours, none of the six colours shown to them has it's name in Jahai. The names of the colours are all Malay words. Most Jahai also speaks excellent Malay. And surprisingly, some English words have found an accepted place in the Jahai vocabulary. Words such as "air-drop", "estimate", "nation", "straight", "project" and many others can be heard in their daily communication, which is of course otherwise in Jahai.

3.2 The Jahai's Physical Appearance

The description of the Negritos' physical appearance in general as had been done by many writers is representative enough in describing the Jahai's.

The Negritos in general are described as people with "dark skin, short in built, with black and wooly hair upon round or almost round head." ¹⁰ And for a more detailed description, I quote Schebesta:

"..... they are squat and ill-proportioned with powerful and short bodies on long legs. The shoulders are broad while the arms are long, the hands being well formed. Beards are extremely weak with no hair on the chest. The hair is either wooly or curls in fine spirrals. A childish facial expression is not uncommon. The forehead is usually vertical, though low. The nose is very broad and triangular in shape with deep depression at the root. The eyes are big and wide open with the iris of a reddish-yellow colour. The face is sometimes rounded in form, it's lower part is protruding, but with cheekbones that are not prominent."¹¹

The majority of Jahai at Sungai Rual look the way Schebesta described them but there a few exceptional individuals. A few men have height well above the average for they stand at the height well over 5' 6". There are women too who are not "short and ill-proportioned". Some individuals are found to be with light brown skin colour. Though the majority of them having wooly and black hair, quite a number of them have almost straight hair and brownish in colour. There is a woman too whose

10. The National Museum of Malaysia.

11. Schebesta, *ibid*, p.44.

skin is very much lighter in colour than any other Jahai. In fact, she is even fairer than most Malays.

3.3 An Overviewed of Jahai Cultural Pattern

Economically, the Jahai were formerly hunters and gatherers with a nomadic way of life. They, along with other Negrito tribes, are known as the ethnic groups that generally practiced no cultivation of any kind. Thus as the result of their nomadic way of living, the Negritos' bands¹² are small, with each band having its own leader.

But after nearly four years of living under the guidance of JHEOA, this culture is now on the process of changing. At Sungai Rual, they are being taught of cultivation of crops. The crops are not only for subsistence consumptions but also for cash.

However, although in the process of being transformed into peasantry, the Jahai still practice the activities of hunting and gathering, but of course not as their dominant culture anymore. These activities are done occasionally and seasonal according to the items of jungle products that are available. Among these products, is rattan which is available throughout the year and which fetches a higher price than other products after being sold at Jeli. The other main items that are collected by the Jahai are the jungle fruits such as "petai" (*parkia speciosa*), "keranji" (*dialium indicum*) and "kerdas" (*pithecellobium bubalinum*). The JHEOA, as to avoid exploitations, has appointed certain shop-keepers at Jeli to whom the Jahai may sell their products. And JHEOA too has set the standard price for each item in accordance with the price in the local market. At the time of the study, the price of those items is flexible from time to time according to the

12. Carey, *ibid.* p. 15.

demand and supply in the local market. And during the period of this study been conducted too the price of "kerdas", which was is season at that moment, fetched a price of 50 cents per one "cupak".* Petai had fetched the price of \$1.00 per cupak at the maximum. Keranji are sold to the appointed "brokers" at the same price level as kerdas. The price for the rattan is according to the species with Standard measurement of nine feet.

The activities of hunting and gathering are not done on a communal basis. A family is the most common work team in these activities. However a team may comprise of as many as four or more families, with a total membership of around twenty persons. In some cases, hunting is somewhat communalistic in character. Hunting with blow-pipes is, of course, the work of an individual, but hunting with shot-guns is usually the task of men from a whole band. Thus the game that is brought back is shared equally among the hunting party members. Wild boar and mousedeer are the main game that the Jahai look for.

Politically, the Jahai are still following their traditional pattern of band organisation and leadership. At Sungai Mual, even though the Jahai are gathered in one settlement, they are politically united under one authoritarian leader. They still stick to the bands to which they belonged before they were resettled. There were supposed to be seven bands at the time of my study there. However one band, which will be described later was not in the camp. It had gone somewhere else to do odd jobs for the Malays and may well not return to Sungai Mual in future.

Each band has its own leader and is independent in its actions. The relationship between members from different bands can be regarded as particularistic in the sense that they only interact or cooperate with each other during certain times and for certain purposes.

* A cupak is a measurement that weighs one and a half katis.

3.4 Beliefs

The Jahai are animists with a wide conception of spiritual beings, godly punishments, and the world after death. Huge rocks and trees alongside with other gigantic natural objects such as hills and mountains are believed to have spirits. However they do not worship these spirits but only show their respect.

Man will go to the other world to see his god after death. The soul of the dead man may be turned into butterflies, grass-hoppers and many other insects. Hurting these insects may anger ("tulah") the god. Evil men will find themselves be turned into other ferocious animals such as the wild pig and tigers or centipedes. Thus, killing these creatures is not forbidden and will not creat "tulah".

Their supreme being or high god is "Karei". According to Schebesta, Karei is the most superior being that lives in heaven. Karei is regarded as evil for he requires blood sacrifices and kills people by lightning. His son, "Ta Pedn" is not evil and is more respected but rarely mentioned for he is less powerfull than his father. Karei's wife is "Manoid" who lives in the earth and thunder is the means of communication of these two dieties. Karei is both the thunder and the being who makes the thunder. He is most feared on account of punishments he sent for sins. His wrath however, can be averted by blood offering.

The "Hala" or shaman is a person who possesses¹³ the power of contacting Karei and understands his demands. And this medium determined the offerings needed to please Karei. Karei prefers shining objects such as the mirrors as the offering to him.

13. Schebesta, ibid. p. 188.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE JAHAI NEGritos

Introduction

The Jahai, and the other tribes of Negritos in Malaysia have social organisation that is closely links to their economic activities. A simple "band" form of organisation is their basic social characteristic and this form has remained largely unchanged although the Jahai are otherwise undergoing drastic changes.

Their economy of hunting and gathering is a prime factor determining the form of their social organisation. Carey in his book had given a clear picture of such an organisation where he stated that the hunting and gathering activities of the Negritos, and the nomadic ways of life implied by it, naturally set a strict limit on the complexity of their social organisation. The requirements of this style of life can be summed up as the needs to have only a small number of people in the basic form of their social structure, i.e the family and to be as mobile as possible. These twin needs are of prime importance and have to be forever upheld just for the sake of their survival. This fact is undeniably true for the Malaysian jungles do not abound with food stuff and fruits.

Carey also has stated that the dual needs of maintaining a small number and mobility dictate a simple organisation without an elaborate system of leadership but with a high degree of social equality. Other than distinctions based on sex and age there is little division of labour and thus all Jahai individuals share a common background. Their organisation reflects this similarity. Their state of livelihood is such that

15. Carey. *ibid* p. 36

16. Carey. *ibid* p. 37

relationship between individuals are personal and quite intimate. Consequently serious disputes or conflicts rarely arise. Thus the absence of an elaborate system of leadership is less felt.

1. Social Stratification

Carey has presented a good model of Negritos social structure (figure 1) which is confirmed by my own research, as applying to the Jahai.

FIGURE 1

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE NEGritos

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Kinship Units	Residential Groups	Leadership
1. Elementary Family:- A man, his wife and th their children.	Wind-screen Group:- Same as nuclear family, but elder boys have their own shelters.	The father.

II. The Band:- An old man, his wife, plus married sons or daughters. A bilateral family extending over three generations.	The Camp:- Collection of five to ten wind-screen huts. includes friends, visitors, elderly dependents.	The Elder.
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III. The Horde:-

Two or three related bands, very closely associated.

The Track:-

None.

Large piece of jungle over which hunting and gathering rights are claimed. Largely defined by ownership of fruit-trees.

IV. The Tribe:-

All the people who consider themselves, for example, as Jahai and who speak a common dialect.

Tribal Area:-

None.

Large, vaguely defined area which a tribe claimed as its own in terms of hunting and gathering rights.

These are the layers in the Jahai social structure. Now let us look into them accordingly.

1.1 The Elementary Family

An elementary family is the smallest and lowest level of the Jahai social organisation. The elementary family however, plays a greater role in their day to day social life than any of the units.

Before I proceed any further, let us look at the structure of a particular Jahai elementary family. The size of a family as been demanded by the form of economic activities, is relatively small in membership. On the average an elementary family is made up of only 5 members. Members are

either related by blood or through adoption where the later are also considered as rightful members and will enjoy the same privileges and rights as the original members. As far as leadership is concerned, the father is regarded as the head of the family. He is expected to shoulder the responsibility of looking after the material welfare of the family. Though the status and expected role of the father is such, he is not the sole breadwinner in the family. Cooperation between him and his wife or his able children always takes place in the matter of food accumulation.

Anyway, a strict set of division of labour in a family exists and the members are loyal to it. The father, on one hand, is responsible for providing cash and bought-goods or food for the family with the assistance of his capable sons or daughters, while on the other hand, the mother is responsible for looking after the house-hold. She prepares food for the family and if the food is other than rice (i.e. manioc, maize, green bananas and other vegetables) she has to collect it by herself, with of course the daughters will render their assistance. And for the children, while still being under the custody of their parents, will help their parents in the daily work but with the sons concentrate more on helping the father and the daughters on the mother.

And the members of an elementary family will form a very effective working unit in regards to the gathering activity. Every one has the consciousness of the fact that the only means of providing cash to the family lies in this activity. Thus when a family goes out with their gathering mission, all members will put as much effort as possible in collecting the fruits or the rattan and together they will take the collection out to Jeli for sale.

The father bears the primary responsibility for socializing the male children while the mother concerns herself primarily with the

female children. Male children, however are soon considered as independent and do not rely on the father anymore once they have reached the age of twelve or so. They have their own shelter to live and have to work on their own in order to fulfill their needs of getting food or clothing.

In relation to the other elementary families, a family is largely independent in its economic activities. A family does not rely on the other families in any situation. The well being of a family lies in the hands of its members. From this fact is what makes me derive a conclusion that an elementary family is more significant in its economic roles compared to the other social units in their social structure.

Their state of livelihood has a great implication on the pattern of their residence. Because of the fact that the Jahai families are not dependent on each other, a family is free in choosing the spots for its shelter. This will result in all the shelters of the Jahai families are intermixing with each other, disregard in which band they belong to. Though the Jahai are seemed to be organised under bands organisation, there is no rule set even by the leader of the band itself which requires all the families in a band to foreverly stay grouped together in it. Therefore the incidents of where quite a number of families keep on moving from one spot to another is a very common habit of the Jahai. Only the families with the Malay style houses always remain at the first spot chosen while the families with wind-screen shelters are always on the move. It is not a custom among the Jahai however, to move their dwelling places. Cockroaches is among the chief reason for such a habit of moving from one spot to another. During the time of the study, most shelters and houses as well are infested by thousands of such insects. Thus, the moving of a family to new places besides other reasons, is to get away from these insects.

1.2 The Band

A band is usually made up from six to seven elementary families. And this is the only unit in the Jahai social structure that the element of leadership appears. The elder (only male Jahai) is always the leader of a band and is known as " Penghulu ". The table below shows all the bands at Sungai Rual with the names of each penghulu and the total number of members.

TABLE 3

THE BANDS AT SUNGAI RUAL RESETTLEMENT

Names of previous penghulus.	Names of present penghulus	Number of families	Total number of members
KUNYIT	MERAJU	8	40
KELUBI	MAT DIN	7	31
PUTEH	TERAS	6	39
BUKIT	LAMAS	9	26
-	BERNAS	7	42
PISANG	MACHANG	7	31
DAUN	PUSU	8	36
TOTAL		32	245

Source: JHEOA File at Sungai Rual Post.

During the time of this study, there were actually only six bands present at Sungai Rual. The band under Penghulu Bernas was not in

in the settlement. According to the other Jahai, the band was away doing odd jobs for the Malays at the neighbouring villages. Working for the Malays with cash and food reward was the other activity that the Jahai once engaged (though not all of the bands ever involved in this activity) as to make their living. And it happened that this particular band that was away was the most recently brought under the government protection at Sungai Rual and I suspect that the band may not be returning to this settlement in the near future for the traditional characteristic of nomadic life style is still strongly embedded in the souls of it's members due to the late arrival to this settlement.

Each of the six bands was supposed to have it's own separate compound or camp, with ~~much~~ the shelters of each elementary families built closely together. Protection is the reason given for having such a nucleated settlement. In one case, (the band under Penghul Mat Din), several families share one long house built cooperatively by the members. The still nomadic band under Penghulu Texas had it's camp built isolated from the others. The shelters of the members of this band are in the form of traditional lean-to huts.

As in practice, one cannot simply assumed that all the member families of a particular band in fact have their shelters built together in only one compound. In actual life, the families, as I have mentioned it earlier, are " allowed " to have their shelters built at any place they prefer. Thus, the situation makes it difficult to determine the exact compound of a band.

Membership in a band is largely determined through consanguinal and affinal kinship ties. The inclusion of affinal kins in a band will be discussed further under the next chapter. As been

pointed out by Carey, a band is actually a bilateral extended family covering normally over three generations.¹⁸

From the economic point of view, relationship between bands are unimportant. Members of different bands will only become a single working unit on occasions of large scale gathering or hunting missions, as well as working on JHEOA projects. Meat is shared equally among the members of a hunting team but in gathering activity, the collection of fruits or the rattan is on individual basis. It is only in social activities that the significance of interband relationships can be seen. Events such as death or marriage turn all the bands into a single cooperating group.

Even though the relationship between bands is quite loose (especially in the economic sense), a band is expected to notify the other bands about whatever it plans to do; economically or socially. The notification is always about the time or day when a certain activity is to take place and the destination of the band should it plans to carry out a gathering or hunting activity.

1.3 The Horde

Carey pointed out that a horde is a collection of two or three bands living closely with each other and forms another social unit in the Jahai social structure.¹⁹

Among the Jahai at Sungai Bual, there are two principal hordes visible; one is the combination of three bands under the leadership of Penghulu Mat Din, Penghulu Lanas and Penghulu Machang, the other one as pointed out map no. 3 belongs to the horde combining the bands under

18. Carey, *ibid.* p. 43.

19. Carey, *ibid.* p. 40

Penghulu Merajju and Penghulu Pusu. A third independent vadd is that of Penghulu Texas.

A horde is the other working unit in regard to an activity that I termed as large scale economic activity. The bands making up a horde are always related either by blood or marriage. And as I will describe later under their marriage system, all the bands at Sungai Rual are related through these kinship ties.

In the aspect of horde possession, the only criteria which is a bit contradictory to the model given by Carey (figure 1) is the ownership of fruit trees. No horde or any other unit can claim that a particular fruit tree belongs to it. And in their context of living, the jungle surrounding this settlement is free to all Jahai (and the Malays from Jeli whom used to enter the Jahai territory for mousdeer trapping are not rejected with even the feeling of uneasyness,) and the Jahai have a principle that whoever gets to a tree first is the rightfull plucker of it's fruits. But in most cases , two or three family sharing the fruits from a tree is a very common practice of the Jahai. In fact, as I was told, should any stranger appears while they are plucking the fruits, the stranger may join them too . And the possession of an Ipoh tree (from which trunk ^{poisonous} liquid is drawn for the darts of their blow-pipes) is communal. This again contradicts to statement made by many writers.²⁰

From the absence of an elaborate system of leadership for a horde, I can say that a horde is not a strong social unit and it carries a loose social intergration. Neither it has any institutionalised rules or obligations which the bands under it must obey. The families under this unit are only tied to their own bands' needs and have no obligation to the horde. Thus for example, if the leader of a band decides to move away from Sungai

it's members will obey this decision and will leave their horde behind.

In Jahai social organisation, the band is the most distinctive and most significant unit whereas the horde is poorly defined and relatively unimportant.

1.4 The Tribe

In the table worked out by Carey, the tribe is composed of people who consider themselves to be Jahai and who speak a common dialect.

But further study on this matter reveals that the "tribe" has little significance to the Jahai. In reality, though they are practicing a common culture, they are people who consider themselves as non Jahai.

Ethnocentric feelings from particular individuals are still very strong. What I mean here is that those who are Temiar in origins but with a husband or wife who are Jahai, do not consider themselves as Jahai, but still refer themselves as Temiar. And so is with those who are Mendrik. However, as I looked into this matter from my own point of view, all the people are Jahai for in the sense of territory and culture, they are alike.

Birth is the prime factor in determining the tribal membership. A child born to a couple of which either parent is Jahai, will automatically be considered as Jahai. Marriage is the other determining factor, i.e. of tribal status. As the Jahai follow an exogamous pattern of marriage, the perimeter of their social system covers other tribes as well. Thus it is not surprising that there are members in the tribe who are culturally Jahai but in origins, they are Temiar, Mendrik or Batek.

Even though the members in the tribe are very loosely associated, nevertheless they share a common feeling of consciousness and togetherness.

They claimed that they will fight till the end their common enemies or any

element that tries to disintegrate them. And if necessary, they will retreat together back into the jungle should any treat arises that is beyond their resilience and tolerance. To retreat is the most common method of defence strategy. This is the criteria that the Jahai and most other aboriginal tribes in Malaysia have been showing, thus they are described as being non-violent people.

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Another characteristic of the Jahai that I found is the social segregation between the elderly and the younger tribal members. Though the segregation does not appear with a clear cut division, it is common enough to see the elders only concentrating their leisure time among themselves. While the youngsters for their part also form their own group with which they spend their free time. And if in grouping of the elderly folks and they are some younger members in it, the later will remain as listeners only. The female members, especially those who are still single, do not mix with the male members so much. The married ones will only be present among a male grouping only if they are accompanied by their respective husbands. The females in general are passive in conversation and they spend most of their time in their shelters.

The whole tribe cannot be regarded as an effective social or political unit for it does not have a centralised leader. The tribe is very much different in characteristics with most tribes in Africa where besides their number are greater, politically, a tribe is united under one absolute leader. However, to become a single Jahai unity is not impossible and I am very optimistic about it. It is only a matter of time for the tribe to become an absolute union. Right now, I suspect that the time is still very early for them in becoming one, for besides they are still "green" with this new ways of life i.e. peasantry, they in general are still under the influence of

their respective bands and still are maintaining their own traditions. Judging from the tremendous changes that they are undergoing, in the near future they will become a single and united Jahai tribe i.e. after they have adjusted themselves to this new environment and will understand each other more deeply. Another reason for the criteria of the absence of unity among the Jahai is due to the fact that the settlement is always open for any other bands from other places to join in. Therefore as the result of such a situation, new faces are always moving in, just as in the case of Pengulu Texas and his band. And the newly arrived band will definitely takes some time before they can be accepted by the earlier settlers. And to make the matter even worse, the Jahai, as been described in the first chapter of this report, are timid and have quite a suspicious attitude towards strangers, disregard the strangers are non- Orang Asli or the Orang Asli themselves.

2. Leadership

The Jahai, as I have mentioned about it earlier, is a loosely coordinated tribe and lack of centralised or elaborate system of leadership. Leadership, which is institutionalised, only makes its appearance within bands.

A leader of a band is usually the eldest male in it. And the most likely candidate to succeed him is his eldest son. But choosing the successor is not necessarily limited to the family of the deceased or retired leader. The members in a particular band will look into the other families as well, for their leader must be of good personality and regarded as the most capable in taking up the post. The appointed leader after he receives recognition from the JHEA will bear the title "penghulu" which is similar in status to the head-man of a Malay village.

In appointing someone as their leader, age or seniority however is not the prime consideration. Good personal qualities such as intelligence, wisdom, fairness, generosity and ability to convince people to follow his directions, are what counted for. This is the reason why the eldest son of a penghulu will not be the only choice for a successor.

A leader is supposed to lead his band and acting as decision maker in both social and economic matters. Carey stated that a leader is also responsible for maintaining social order and for both prevention and punishment of crime, but in reality, among the Jahai, the leader does not possess such authority and the band's state of affairs do not allow the leader to play such roles. Therefore, as I see it, the leadership institution

is merely a symbol of political unity, not more than that. JHEOA too had realised this fact and in trying to strengthen the institution by making it more formal. Thus, the title "penghulu" is awarded with the intention of putting the Jahai bandhead at par Malay village headman.

And the institution too is maintained for what I suspect as "for the sake of tradition". Besides there is little role to play, the penghulu will not be respected with special attention. He is just like the ordinary Jahai, having to work on his own for his family's survival. And as Schebesta had put it, the penghulus do not enjoy any special material privileges.

But nevertheless, it is improper to say that Jahai band leaders do not have any social or political functions at all. From the JHEOA point of view, the leaders are important to carrying out it's plans for the improvement of the Jahai life. To be more exact, the leaders are the intermediaries between the JHEOA and the Jahai commoners. The penghulus are the first to be approached by JHEOA before launching any development schemes. And the penghulus in return will direct their men to participate in the schemes. And the final words of any decision must come from the penghulus, with of course, exception on some family matters. Even on matters of marriage, though the parents of both parties have agreed to any marriage proposal, it will be cancelled if the penghulu of the bands concerned do not agree.

There is no one to blame for the lack of roles the penghulus have to play. It is the condition and the situation of the Jahais in general and the bands in particular, that does not permit the leaders to function as they are supposed to. The Jahai at this moment are still in the process of change and individual welfare state is their prime concern. Therefore, irrespective of their status, they have to work individually to achieve this aim.

Thus, the penguin and the common are equal in this matter and it is not an uncommon sight to see the penguin toiling along with everybody else. In relation to this fact of life, the question of the penguin to practice their roles as expected is something that is regarded as secondary concern.

Marriage is one of the most important social institutions. Although scientists had pointed out that marriage among the Jaki creates a loose bond, this institution still plays an important role in their social life and even significantly in their economic life.

The importance of the role of marriage is simply multi-faceted. As such, the Jaki consider marriage as a very important institution in their world. And their acceptance of this marriage institution is such to show in their system of marriage. As early as possible, though marriage is considered as a necessary social procedure for both males and females, i.e., after reaching fully the matured status of this institution in social, and economic institutions there is no more of force behind any marriage. The Jaki are free in determining their own conjugative future and there is no social sanction placed upon anyone who decides not to marry or to marry late.

However, the hypothesis that says that marriage is for satisfying sexual intercourse and as institution for socialization is invalid in the context of the Jaki. From what I have discovered, sexual intercourse is not among their most important biological needs. A husband and wife engage in sex at relatively infrequent intervals and there was a case of marriage between a young Jaki couple that had taken place for almost three months before this study was made but the husband (as I was told by his parents) had yet to have relations with his wife.

THE JAHAI MARRIAGE AND KINSHIP SYSTEMSIntroduction

Marriage is one of the most important Jahai social institutions. Although Schebesta had pointed out that marriage among the Jahai carries a loose bond, this institution still plays an important role in their social life and more significantly in their economic life.²⁴

The importance of the roles of marriage is deeply realised, so much so, the Jahai consider marriage as a must for everyone that exists in their world. And their conception of the marriage institution as such is shown in their custom of marrying at the earliest age possible. Though marriage is considered as a compulsory livelihood procedure for both males and females, i.e. after realising fully the intrinsic values of this institution in social, and economic situations; there is no means of force behind any marriage. The Jahai are free in determining their own respective future and there is no social sanction place upon anyone who decides not to marry at an early age.

However, the hypothesis that says that marriage is for justifying sexual intercourse and as institution for socialisation is invalid in the context of the Jahai. From what I have discovered, sexual intercourse is not among their most important biological needs. A husband and wife engage in sex at relatively infrequent intervals. And there was a case of marriage between a young Jahai couple that had taken place for almost three months before this study was made but the husband (as I was told by him personally) had yet to have relations with his wife.

24. Carey, *ibid.* p. 45.

And the rejection to the hypotheses of marriage is a socialisation institution is due to my findings of the nature of the ways Jahai children are brought up. It is only at the early stage of a child's life that he is under direct parental guidance and control. And this parental control too is actually a sex-based orientation. After he is weaned, a boy is mostly under the responsibility of the father whereas the girl is under the mother's. And as the boy reaches the age of ten or so, he is already considered as an adult and thus is no longer under the wings of the father. He may have his own shelter and have to look for his own food and clothing. But the girls, mostly they will remain close to the mother until they are married. Anyway, there was a shelter built by the men for quite a number of girls to stay. Under this case, the girls too will be just as the boys where they have to look after their own personal requirements. Therefore the learning process of the young Jahai is not achieved under direct family's socialisation process. They have to grow and learn mostly all by themselves and experience teaches them more than their own parents.

I suspect that the above aspect of practices regarding the marriage institution is very closely related to their economic pattern of hunting and gathering. As I have mentioned earlier, to have a small number in any social unit is for their own conviniences. This is a very correlative adjustment between economics and social life of the Jahai for a small number in any social unit will enable them to share the small amount of food collected or bought adequately. And as mobility is concerned, a small number is most favoured. Under this circumstances, therefore we see that they consciously try to limit the size of a family by practicing family planning(post-partum abstinence and use of contraceptives). Therefore living with relatively few children in any family is something which is a mere coincidence, but it is something that they purposely created.

1. The Jahai Marriage System

The nature of the Jahai marriage system is very much associated with the pattern of their social structure. Living under "bands" is their tradition and is maintained even after they have been brought together at Sungai Rual. And in origin, a band is actually a family by itself, thus the members are akin to each other by blood. Therefore marriage between members in the same band is considered as an incest and is strongly prohibited. Thus, as the resolution to this restriction, the members of a band have to find their life partners from other bands, and from other territory. From this point, I can say that such a system has the criteria of exogamous system of marriage.

At Sungai Rual Resettlement, the mate-selection is not limited within the resettlement alone. In the other words, they can marry anyone; irrespective of age, race and places. And marriage between an original member of a band and a stranger who came to live with it(if there is any), is also permitted. In short, marriage in any form is permitted as long as the marriage is not between individuals belonging to the same "stock", as Graham Sargent put it.²⁵ Members who are considered as the same stock of Ego can be seen in the figure overleaf. These individuals can be considered as close kins to Ego. Marriage between Ego and anyone from outside this kindred group is permitted.

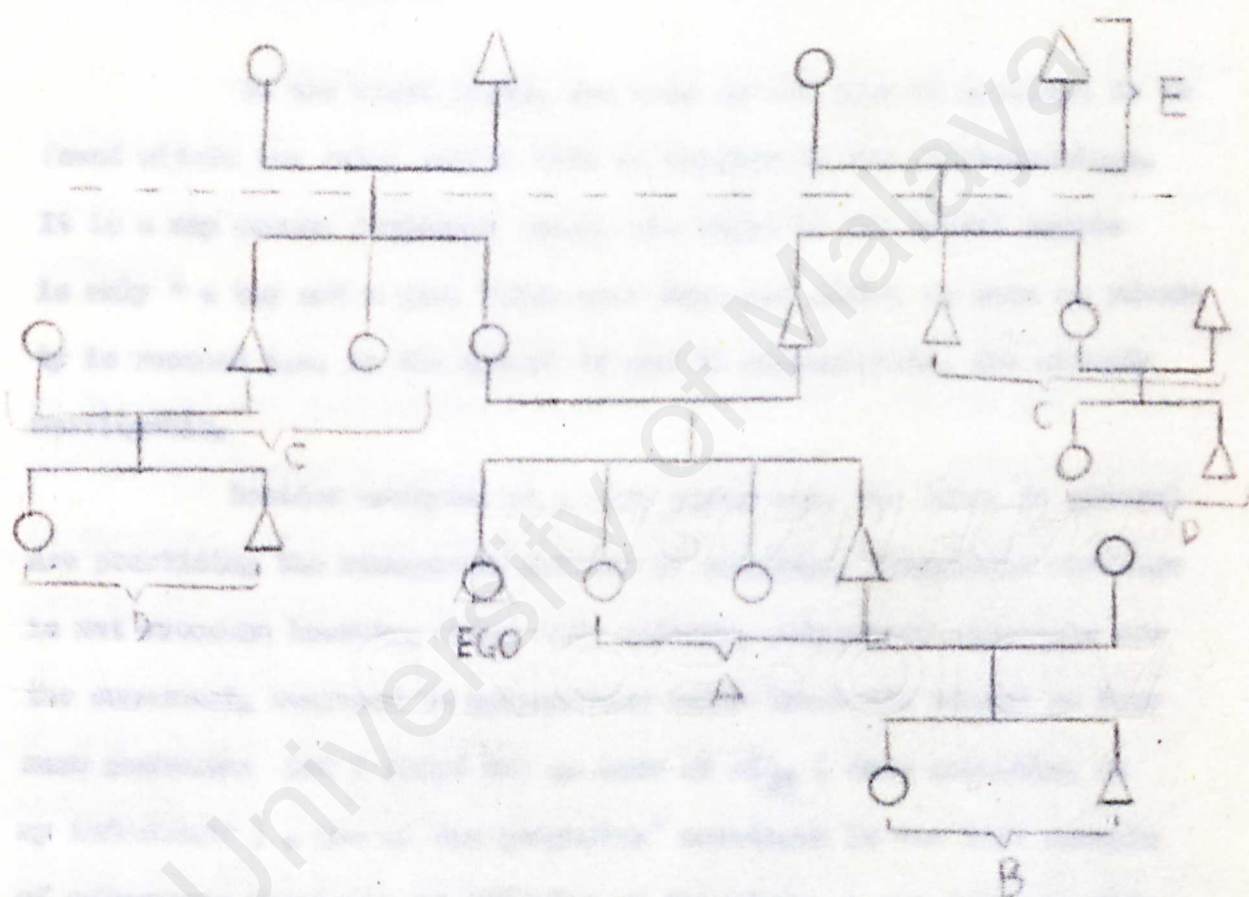
The restriction to close kins marriage is very strongly upheld and it carries a death penalty should anyone tries to overlook this taboo. The rationality behind this is that sexual intercourse between close kins is an incest and will create a "tulah". Karei will be offended and

25. Graham Sargent, A Textbook of Sociology, McMillan Education Ltd.

the punishment he sends in the form of thunderbolts will not only be effecting the couple concerned, but also the whole village. That is the reason why such practice carries the heaviest penalty. Adultery too will be threatened with such a manner for the same reason regarding Karei.

FIGURE 2

ADIAGRAPH SHOWING THE STRUCTURE OF THE JABAI CLOSE KIN



Key:

Male

Female

A= Ego's sbblings. B= The off-springs of Ego's sbblings.

C= Ego's maternal and paternal uncles and aunts.

D= Siblings of Ego's uncles and aunts (from both paternal and maternal), or cousins.

E= Ego's grandparents.

All individuals appear in the diagram under figure 2, are close kins to Ego. Thus marriage between Ego and either one of these individuals is an incest and strongly forbidden. Anyway, he may marry his sister-in-law after the latter had divorced from her husband. If Ego is a girl, she too is permitted to marry her brother-in-law under similar condition.

1.1 Patterns Of Marriage

In the first place, the most common type of marriage to be found within the Jahai social life or culture is the youth-marriage. It is a very common phenomena among the Jahai if the bridal couple is only "a boy and a girl". For both boys and girls, as soon as puberty is reached i.e. at the age of 14 and 12 respectively, are already marriageable.

Besides marrying at a very young age, the Jahai in general are practicing the monogamous pattern of marriage. Polygamous marriage is not uncommon however. Under this pattern, polygynous marriages are the commonest, compared to polyandrous which Schebesta stated as very rare phenomena and I found out as none at all²⁶ (None according to my informants). One of the penghulus' marriages is the best example of polygynous marriage. At the time of the study, a penghulu was discovered to have three wives living together with him under the same roof. And there was a penghulu (who is dead now) is said to have thirteen wives altogether and no one knew the exact number of wives that the penghulu had at a time, but it was said to be more than four.

26. Schebesta, *ibid.* p. 127.

In addition to the polygynous pattern of marriage, sororal polygyny too was found. The only case of such marriage is the marriage of the penghul with three wives. His present third wife is actually the younger sister of his first wife who had died a few years ago.

1.2 Marriage Procedure and Ceremony

A marriage proposal can be made in many ways. But the most common is by the man approaching a girl with a small gift of food or clothing. The girl's response to this gift implies her response to the man's proposal.

After that "first stage", the man may approach the father of the girl and again presents a small gift to him. Tobacco and a sarong are the two favourite items. This is the time when the father's consent is sought. No proposal after reaching this second stage was ever turned down by the parents of the girl. Sometimes, the father of the would be groom will do the approach to the girl's parents. Later, the penghulus of both parties will be informed. Both penghulus and parents from both sides will meet to finalise the matter. The rest of the penghulus or elders from other bands will also be present during this meeting for they and their men will participate too in some way or the other during the marriage ceremony.

The date chosen for the big day to be held will be changed should there is a death or serious sickness occurs. For the case of serious sickness, they have to wait until the person suffering from it recovers or dies. And if it is a death, then the marriage will be held after at least one week of the death. This is not for the mourning purposes but

it is about their belief that the soul of the dead man will return to the village and cause trouble during the first week after death. A ceremony or any other sort of festival will attract the soul even more. Usually, if there is a death, the wedding ceremony will be held after one week of the burial of the corpse.

The giving of bride-wealth can be done either before the day of the wedding or on the day of the wedding itself. Among the items included in a bride-wealth are clothes, sarong and cash. Quite a large amount of tobacco and a sarong each for the bride's parents are also included. The amount of cash is relatively small and is always not exceeding \$40.00. A widow will get a smaller amount or no cash at all.

On the wedding day itself, the bride in her fanciest dress and make-ups plus some stalks of flowers arranged in her hair, will be seated next to the groom who is also dressed up in his best clothes. Close friends and relatives will seat at each side of the couple. Dancing and singing will be performed before the couple and to the delight and merriment of the rest of the guests. This is the only time where we can see women really participate in singing and dancing. And they will dance according to the beating of bamboo tubes and to the rhythm of an instrument called "kerin" which only been played by women.* A small feast is held with rice, tapioca (roasted and cooked), fish and the meat of wild animal usually wild boar. The food is coarse contributed by the villagers with the parents of both sides concerned contribute the major portion of it.

* Kerin is an instrument which is very much like the guitar. It is a bamboo tube of one and a half feet to two feet with a diameter of around 4 to five inches. 3 or 4 tiny strings are tied from one end to another and the strings are from the roots of a special tree. Strumming

The highlight of the ceremony will be later in the afternoon where the bridal couple is taken into a procession around the village. Dancing and singing will head the procession and following behind is a man or woman saying some prayers; then the couple plus all the guests. This ceremony is called "belarak". The end of a marriage ceremony is marked by sending the couple to their permanent shelter. The shelter was built very much earlier by the groom's kinsfolk or by the groom himself.

1.3 Patterns Of Residence

In determining the exact pattern of residence that the Jahai are following, I feel that this matter cannot be presented with a 100% accuracy. The reason is the resettlement situation under which the Jahai are now living where the area of the village is just only four acres in area and thus they are living very close to one another and intermixing into each person's house compound. Though the Jahai are living with a clearly defined band system, but the way they are confined into a small area makes it difficult for me and anybody else to trace the exact boundary of each band's compound. Therefore, in presenting the patterns of their residence, due to the unfavourable factor, it is only done based on some rough definitions and assumptions.

In most cases, the newly-weds use to take up residences nearer to the place of the husband or the husband's father. And among these cases, nearly the majority of them have their shelters built adjoining the shelter of the groom's father. And there were two cases at the camp of Pengulu Mat Din where the newly-weds are taking up permanent residences in the same longhouse as the groom's father.

This pattern of residence as Murdock put it is called patrilocal residence. 27 And after studying almost all cases of residential pattern it is summed up as the tendency is more towards patrilocality rather than other patterns. And Schebesta too had found out the same criteria where he said that patrilocal pattern of residence is most preferred. 28

The strong tendency towards patrilocality does not suggest that the Jahai are a pure patrilineal tribe. In other words, the males are not considered as occupying a superior status than the females. Both sexes are almost equal in almost everything. For instance, though towards patrilocality, matrilineal pattern of residence tendency is also practiced. This is a situation where the newly-weds decide to reside at the compound belonging to the bride's parents. A penguin who is a Temiar in origin is living with the band of his wife and later he becomes the leader of the band.

In the book by Evans, he stated that it was a common practice of the Negritos in Malaysia where the husband of a newly-wed couple is required to stay with the parent of his wife and must work for them for a period sometimes reaching two years. Only after completing this 29 "bride service" as Graham Sargent put it the couple can take up their permanent residence and usually will return to the husband's folks.

Such a pattern of residence is called "bride service" or "bride-wealth". 30 Further more, the marriage of a daughter is no longer considered as "a loss of a hand" in the father's household, therefore the

27. Graham Sargent, *ibid.* p. 104

28. Schebesta, *ibid.* p. 255

29. Evans, *ibid.* p. 215

30. Graham Sargent, *ibid.* p. 105.

son-in-law is not required to pay to the bride's father as to make up for the "lost".

However there are a few cases where the couple take up residence away from the parents of both sides. The word "away" here does not mean that it covers a large distance and living totally isolated from their parents. "Away" in the context of the Jahai at Sungai Rual is only one or two shelters away. The reason is the nucleated pattern of residence that the Jahai in general are applying makes every shelter is linked or almost linked to one another. At the main settlement where there is a horde of three bands are living, three couples were found to be practicing this pattern of residence. Such a pattern of residence as have been termed by many anthropologists as neolocal residence.

In short, the Jahai are free in choosing the place upon which they will reside though tendency is more towards patrilocality. Any pattern chosen will receive no objection from anybody in the village, disregard whoever he is. Nor the penghulu is powerful enough in stopping this.

2. Life After Marriage

Once the newly-weds have taken up their residence, they soon start to form another typical Jahai elementary family.

The wife usually does not conceive during the first year of marriage. This is due to the infrequency in sexual relationship and the using of contraceptive techniques. The family planning method prove to be quite effective for they can achieve the aim of having small family and to space up their children for their own conveniences successfully. The space between their children is usually three years and the wife will stop conceiving after the fourth child.

The family as have been described earlier under the social organisation of the Jahai, is independent in its activities. The father in most cases bears the responsibility of providing food to the family assisted by his wife. The major role of the father is however to provide cash income to the family. In regards to the activities of gathering, the whole family will form an effective working unit. Only in the hunting activity that the father bears the responsibility alone. But this activity is a bit communal in nature for it is done with a team of men.

And it was discovered that if the father is out into the jungle or working under the JHEOA project, the mother at home will look for food from the nearby forest and fish from the stream. She and some other women from other families can be seen making themselves busy with catching the fish just by using their bare hands. And a group of women too can be seen roaming within their ladang to look for manioc or other vegetables.

Among the major roles expected from a wife is doing the family laundry, cooking and fetching water from the nearby stream. If she is sick, then the husband will do all her jobs. And there were instances when both the husband and wife working together with other Jahai on JHEOA projects.

There are many other occasions that require the husband and wife to work shoulder to shoulder. In the task of house building, their cooperation is really necessary. The husband will look for the bamboo from the jungle for their house structure and the wife will collect and weave the "chenchon" leaves for roofing. In any work, that they do, they will be assisted by their children i.e. before the children will be living on their own.

3. Child-birth and Naming The Child

At the time of delivery, the mother at her house will be placed in a sitting position. She will be attended by a midwife ("tohan"). There are two midwives at Sungai Rual when the study was made. Both of them will assist the mother during delivery, together.

Besides the midwives, elderly women will also be helping. But no man, even the husband himself is allowed to be present. The cutting of umbilical cord is done by either one of the midwives, using a sharpened edge of a bamboo split. The practice of cutting the cord by the sharpened rib of a "chemchon" leaf as reported by Schebesta is no longer be applied.³¹

The naming of the child is not necessarily takes place exactly two days after birth, as Schebesta reported.³² And nor is the midwife is responsible in choosing a name for the child, but rather, the parent themselves choose any suitable name for him. And as Schebesta had mentioned, the names chosen are from the names of places or objects near which the child is born. And I noticed that this is quite true though it is not so with some cases. The name of a place or a tree is always favoured. For instance, Lanas is a name taken after a place called Ayer Lanas, Bukit means hill and Langsat is a name of a tree. Anyway, as can be noticed at Sungai Rual, after the child been enrolled into the school, he will get another name. The teachers at the school will choose whatever suitable name for him and the name is a Malay name. And ironically, the school-name will remain forever, rather than his birthname.

The mother will return to her normal life in less than one week after giving birth. The answer to how she manages to regain her

31. Schebesta, *ibid.* p. 125

32. Schebesta, *ibid.* p. 126

health in a matter of that short period, is given to me by their specialist in medicated herbs and roots. He said that there is a special kind of jungle flower called "pok ma" which juice serves as a good blood tonic and highly recommended to pregnant women and the mothers after delivery. During the days before she returns to her normal life again, the mother is not allowed to leave her shelter even for a few seconds. This in fact is a taboo and to go against it will arise anger from Karei. Thus, bathing is done in the shelter with the water fetched by the husband.

As regard to socialisation of their children, it is done according to the manner as I have described in the previous chapter. Carey too had given the same information where he stated that the father has the major responsibility in the respect of the male children while the mother concerns herself primarily with the daughters.

33

4. Divorce

Marriage, though greatly regarded as a compulsory procedure in one's life, does not carry significant ties that are expected to last for a lifetime. From the other point of view, as what Schebesta had pointed out in his book, marriage forms only a loose bond between the husband and wife.³⁴ Therefore, although such a loose bond does not encourage divorce, divorce cases are quite common among the Jahai. As the nature of their marriage is such, break-ups in family union occur easily.

However, every husband and wife will try their best to maintain their marriage a success till the end. With the other words, I

33. Carey. *ibid.* p. 42.

34. Schebesta, *ibid.* p. 128.

can say that divorce in any consequences is hopefully be avoided. And if a divorce occurs between a man and his wife, most of the Jahai do not blame either party for the break-up. It is just that their god does not render his blessings on the couple anymore.

Within the period of my study at Singai Rual, there was a case of divorce and a case of marriage that had taken place about a month before I arrived there. And the divorce case, as any other divorces, does not have the possibility of reconciliation. It is not that reconciliation is considered as strange or what so ever, but it is just the Jahai do not believe that a broken ties in a family will ever be mended again. Thus all divorce cases never met any reconciliation. The couple involved will look for new life partners. And according to the Jahai, before the couple re-marry with new mates, they have to wait for at least a period of two months. During this period they can start looking for new mates or if by any chance they decide to reconcile, they may do so.

The rights to divorce lies in the hands of both parties. Here again we can see that patrilineality is not dominant in the Jahai social life. Either party will confess that he or she is walking out of the other and will state that another person will provide a better life than the present partner. Right after the moment he or she stated this, the couple is already considered as divorced and each of them starts to move on their own way. In most cases, the wife will return to her former band, and the same with the husband. They are fully accepted by their former band-folks.

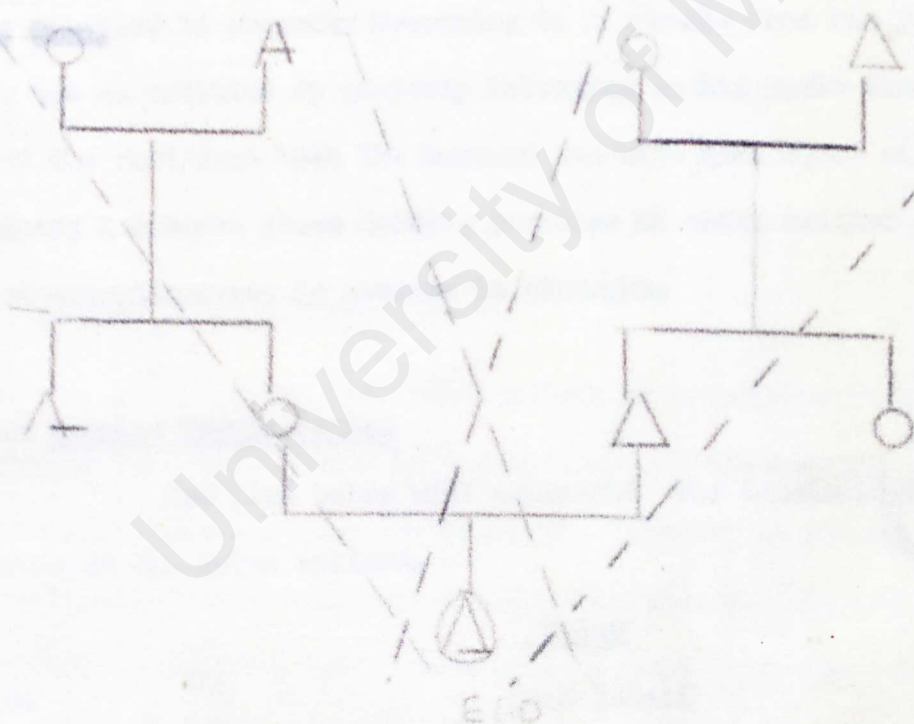
For the children, they are free to follow either the mother or the father, with the nursing children are absolutely taken by their mother. For the older children, the divorce does not seem to make much difference in their life. The reason is that they are used to living

5. KINSHIP SYSTEM

5.1 The Jahai Bilateral Kinship System

I termed the Jahai kinship system as bilateral for neither patrilineal nor matrilineal system of decent is practiced. Father-right and mother-right is equally strong in their social life. And the tracing of decent is done equally for both the mother's and father's kinsmen as shown in the figure below.

FIGURE 3. THE JAHAI BILATERAL DECENT



without direct parental care ever since they are as young as ten years old. And if the wife is pregnant during the divorce, the child is regarded as the legitimate child of her would to be husband.

In any cases of divorce irrespective of from which side it started, the bride-wealth remains in the possession of the wife. The husband will not be refunded with any of the gifts that he had presented to his wife during their stay together. The wife is also forbidden to take any personal belongings belonged to her ex-husband. Immoveable property, as their ladang and shelter, will remain in the hands of the husband. The wife can take the cooking utensils if she likes. This is because the utensils are bought by the husband but the mother is more closely associated to them.

However, there are some elements in the Jahai social life that patrilineality is more followed than matrilineality. In the inheritance of power and immovable property, only the males are entitled to it. Priority is given to the male and eldest children in this context. In the case of property, if the family does not have any male child, the property will be handed over to the eldest nephew of the father, rather than to the mother or the daughters.

In the kinship network among the Jahai, relatives from both the mother and father of an Ego are included in one kindred. And the kinship terminologies are the same for relatives of both the father and mother, i.e. in the aspect of terms of reference and address. Should Ego is entitled to property belonging to his uncle from his father's lineage, he too is entitled to property belonging to his uncle from his mother's side. And the fact that both the husband and wife have equal rights in determining a divorce shows another practice of which neither patrilineality nor matrilineality is greater in strength.

5.2 Kinship Terminologies

The list below will represent the terminologies for the kindred group in the Jahai culture.

	<u>Malay</u>	<u>Jahai</u>
son	anak lelaki	wong
daughter	anak perempuan	wong
son-in-law	menantu lelaki	wong mensau
daughter-in-law	menantu perempuan	wong mensau
adopted child	anak angkat	wong sadara'
grand child	cucu	kanchok

cousin	sepupu	sepupu
nephew	anak saudara (lelaki)	bir
niece	anak saudara (perempuan)	bir
younger sister/brother	adik	bir
elder sister/brother	kakak/abang	kakak/pek
father	bapa	eei
mother	enak	bek
father-in-law	bapa mertua	gimm
mother-in-law	enak mertua	bek tirik
uncle	bapa saudara	beh
aunt	enak saudara	mok
husband	suami	kensui
wife	isteri	kendieh

5.3 Terms of reference and address

Every individual refers to himself or herself as "ydk", whenever he or she is having a conversation with others, irrespective of their age and sex. When the Jahai are referring to others, personal names of the persons referred to, are not mentioned. But the status is normally mentioned should the man referred to is a pengulu for example. And to all Jahai elders, mentioning their names is avoided but they are referred to as "the father or the mother of such child". For example, if the man has a child named Ribon, he is referred to, as "eei si-Ribon", and his wife is "bek si-Ribon". Only among the youngsters their respective names are used.

A very old Jahai male is addressed as "toi" and the same term is used for a very old female Jahai. However, "denn" is thought to be more polite for a child to address a very old man and woman.

Parent-in-law are addressed as "eei" and "bek" by their son or daughter-in-law. The terms are the same ones used for addressing one's blood father and mother. Uncles and aunts from both maternal and paternal sides are addressed as "beh" and "moh" respectively. And if they are older than the parents of Ego, the term "toi" is used.

In short, all the terms used are aimed at avoiding the mentioning of someone else's name. It is their belief that name is a part of a man's soul, thus telling or mentioning someone's name is just like giving or taking his soul. Anyway, for those who bear the names similar to the Malays' (just in the case of school children), their names can be mentioned either by himself or someone else. The Malay names are not their original or "soul names", therefore perhaps, using such names is considered as less dangerous.

CONCLUSION

The Jahai Negritos at Sungai Rual Resettlement are the tribe most recently brought under direct government control. Therefore, as a community which is still in the process of transition, some of their basic social characteristics still remain as they were before their resettlement.

Hunting and gathering are still important economic activities even though the Jahai are now also involved in agriculture. Those traditional economic activities are, however, no longer pursued as extensively as in the past. Much of the time the Jahai are busy in their ladang and only occasionally have time to venture into the forest. The activity of gathering for example is done with the realisation that food (their most immediate need) is quite easily accumulated through this activity.

The social organisation of the Jahai was strongly influenced by their economy. Their traditional hunting and gathering involved hard work and resulted in relatively small returns. Of necessity, they had to adapt themselves to a pattern of life that was nomadic in style. Thus the Jahai were always wandering around the jungle looking for food and could never remain at one spot for a period of longer than a week or so. This nomadic life style with its demand for high mobility to add effectiveness to their activities, strongly limited the size of their population. Therefore, the membership of Jahai bands was limited to a relatively few people. Each band was politically loosely united under one leader and showed certain economic cohesiveness although on the whole, the Jahai are quite individualistic with each person concerned primarily with his own welfare.

These are the characteristics the Jahai brought to Sungai Rual. And as they are still fresh to modernisation programs carried out by

JHEOA, these characteristics remain but, with of course, some changes.

It is still too early to predict how the Jahai society will be transformed. The fact that the Jahai are just recently exposed to modernisation programs must be taken into account first before any speculation on their future is made. But, judging from the present state of the Jahai, it can safely be predicted that they will be transformed into peasantry. What changes will occur in their social organisation and their system of belief etc.etc. remain to be seen. But I do hope that the Malaysian government will do all it can to help the members of this tribe to develop, for they too are citizens of this country and they deserve to benefit from the national development programme.

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