BATEK NEGRITO SEX ROLES

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By

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This thesis is my own work and all sources used have been properly acknowledged.

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Orthographic Note:

' indicates glottal stop

, indicates nasalization of vowel

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Batek

The Batek De' Negritos, who number about 350 persons, occupy approximately 720 square miles of tropical rain forest lying mainly in the southeastern corner of Kelantan in the Malay Peninsula. Occasionally they camp in adjacent parts of Trengganu and Pahang. The Batek De' are the largest of several related dialect groups of Batek Negritos, "Batek" meaning "person" and "De'" meaning "this" in their dialect. Their language is in the Aslian branch of the Mon-Khmer language family. They also speak the local dialects of Malay. The Negritos are generally thought to be the most ancient inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula and to be related to the Negrito populations in the Andaman Islands and the Philippines. They are thought to have once ranged more extensively over the Peninsula, even reaching to the coastal areas. With the influx of other groups into the Peninsula, including the other aboriginal inhabitants and the Malay population which largely moved into the Peninsula from parts of present-day Indonesia within the last 500 years, the Negritos gradually fled into the interior of the peninsula, into areas of virgin forest. Today even this last homeland of the Batek is being penetrated by logging companies, major roadways, and palm-oil and rubber plantations. In spite of these recent intrusions, they still live in relative isolation from other ethnic groups. They have some contact with the Malay swidden farmers who live along the Lebir River downstream from the Batek. Occasionally the farmers trade cultivated food for thatch or rattan the Batek collect from the forest. Malay rattan traders

periodically travel upriver to engage the Batek in rattan collecting contracts. The only other ethnic group with whom the Batek have regular contact at present is the Semaq Beri of northeastern Pahang. The Semaq Beri are an aboriginal group of the Senoi language family who live by a combination of swidden agriculture and foraging (see Kirk Endicott 1977). Intermarriage between the Batek and Semaq Beri is fairly common, there being no great religious barrier as there is with the Malays.

Racially distinct from the other groups in the Malay Peninsula, the Negritos (Spanish for "little blacks") are short people with the Negroid features of curly short hair, broad noses, and dark brown skin. The men average two or three inches taller than the women, but rarely exceed about five feet two inches in height. There has been enough intermarriage between the Negritos and other races to cause non-Negrito features, such as straight hair, to appear in some individuals.

To the general Malay population of villages and towns, downstream from the Batek, the Batek are savages, "Pangan", thought to eat meat raw like animals. As Moslems the Malays look down upon the Batek for their non-Islamic diets and habits, viewing with disgust that the Batek eat monkey and pork, if they can get it (they do not actually hunt pigs). The Malays fear the forest, which they believe is filled with evil spirits, hantu, and seem by extension to fear the main human inhabitants of the forest, the Batek. One of the other aboriginal groups in the Malay Peninsula, the Temiar, regard the Batek as mysterious forest people, with the power to work black magic and sorcery on others (Geoffrey Benjamin: personal communication). The Batek in actuality are a gentle and non-violent people whose culture does not include sorcery.

In recent years some Batek children, both boys and girls, have

been sent by their parents to Malaysian schools, either in the town of Kuala Krai or at Post Lebir, a medical and resettlement post run by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli, "J.O.A."). Most of these children left school of their own accord when they felt that the pressure to "masuk Melayu", to become a Malay by embracing Islam, became too great, although this is not an official policy of the schools. Batek parents have become increasingly wary of sending their children to school because of this. The majority of Batek De' today appear to want to limit their contact with other ethnic groups so they can continue to live by their own culture.

The Batek derive their living in the rain forest through an opportunistic mixture of hunting, gathering, and trade. The forest, while appearing to the Malays as the terrifying home of evil spirits (hantu), is looked upon by the Batek as their proper home, a home which provides them with sufficient, even abundant food, shelter from the scorching heat of the tropical sun, and a home in which they are truly at ease. As will be explained in detail later, the Batek have at times engaged in agricultural work, both in their own swiddens and in the employ of Malay farmers, necessitating their living in clearings. Usually these ventures have been quickly abandoned, and the people have returned to the forest. The Batek have a stated preference for the coolness of the forest, believing coolness to be a property of health. They further believe that their superhuman beings want them to live in the forest and that if they abandon the forest, this would cause the earth to be destroyed.

The Batek, who are nomadic, live in camps of from five to eight nuclear families. Each nuclear family has a separate lean-to shelter. The shelters are constructed of palm fronds lashed horizontally across

three sticks driven into the ground at an angle. The living area is about seven feet wide by four feet deep. The lean-tos are open on three sides but provide sufficient cover from rainstorms. Some families build sleeping platforms out of smooth sticks or sections of split bamboo, while others simply sleep on pandanus mats on the ground. The family's possessions are stored on the ground or tucked into the thatch. A cooking fire is situated to the front or side of each shelter with just enough cover to protect it from rain. Batek camps do not have a fixed layout, as each family selects the site of its shelter more or less independently. In camps of larger than normal population, families that are more closely related genealogically may choose to build their shelters near each other, but generally there is little regard to an overall camp configuration. Families clear only enough space to accommodate their own shelters. When a new camp forms and the thatch of the shelters is still green, it is almost indistinguishable from the rest of the forest. No effort is made to clear a bounded area for the camp. Conceptually, if not in physical layout, the Batek view their camps as distinct from the rest of the forest. They speak of going into the forest from camp or returning to camp from the forest, even though to an outsider it appears that the camp is very much in and part of the forest. Over a period of several days after a camp is established, paths are trampled between shelters and more and more trees are chopped down for firewood or simply through children's play. There are no separate areas for men or women, no men's house or women's house or central plaza. The shelters are open, within sight of everyone in camp. Each nuclear family cooks, eats, and sleeps separately from the other families in camp, although they share food, cooperate economically, and socialize with the other families in camp. Camps generally last about a week to ten days, or

until the resources of an area are exhausted. Sometimes camps last as long as three weeks. Moving camp is a simple matter, the family's possessions being easily packed into pandanus baskets or cloth slings and carried by all the family members. Information about where people are moving rapidly reaches other camp groups through the frequent visiting that occurs between camps.

A typical day in a Batek camp begins in the hours shortly after sunrise. People gradually begin to stir until by about 7 a.m. the whole camp is awake. The first in a family to rise usually pokes their smouldering fire into a warming flame. Some people may go down to the river or stream, on which the Batek always camp, to bathe and fetch water or may wander off into the forest to relieve themselves. If a family has any food left over from the previous day, it is cooked for breakfast. People discuss what they want to do that day, those with similar interests forming work parties. Men who plan to hunt make darts and make sure their blowpipes are in good order. Women wanting to forage for tubers sharpen the metal blades of their digging sticks and get their children assembled for the outing. By 8.30 or 9 a.m. most people have left camp for their various activities, which generally occupy them until mid to late afternoon. Those people remaining in camp may take the opportunity to rest, or they may work on crafts and look after their children. When the workers return to camp, cooking fires are once again stirred up and the day's food is cooked and shared with other families. From then until dark, about 7 to 7.30 p.m., people relax and visit with one another, converse, groom themselves and each other, work on hunting equipment or weave pandanus objects, and talk about what they have in mind for the following day. After dark cross-camp conversations continue and some people keep on with their crafts by the light of resin torches and

store-bought battery-powered flashlights (torches). Some nights conversations and singing continue until midnight, but usually by 9 or 10 p.m. the camp has settled into sleep amidst the chorus of cicadas, frogs, and other forest creatures.

Previous research

The Negritos of the Malay Peninsula have been studied by several researchers over the years. Almost all of this work centred on the western Negritos rather than the eastern Negritos. Evans and Schebesta both published extensive accounts of the western Negritos in the early part of this century. Of the researchers who have studied the Kelantan Batek, the Russian ethnographer and explorer Miklouchо-Maclay was the first, visiting the upper Lebir and Aring River areas in 1875 and publishing a short vocabulary of the Batek De' in 1878. A few ethnographic notes on the people were published in Russian in the early 1950s. Two more vocabularies of Batek De' were collected by Clifford in 1894 and in 1900 by Skeat, who also recorded a small amount of ethnographic information (Skeat and Blagden 1906). In 1970 Geoffrey Benjamin briefly visited the Batek, recorded a word list and studied some aspects of their culture. The most extensive research on the Batek was done by Kirk Endicott from 1971 to 1972 and again in 1975-6. His doctoral dissertation "Batek Negrito Economy and Social Organization" (Harvard, 1974) and his book Batek Negrito Religion (1979) are the most complete ethnographic accounts to date of the Batek.

Research aims

The principle aim of this thesis is to describe and analyze the sex roles of the Batek De', a topic which has not been fully and system-

atically treated by any of the previous researchers on the Batek. Woodburn proposes that it is by studying hunters and gatherers who have an "immediate-return" economy, like that of the Batek, rather than a "delayed-return" economy that "we can reasonably expect to find 'elementary forms' of sex role" (1978:12). Interest in hunting and gathering societies has heightened in many circles recently, including in the field of the anthropology of women. The recording of clear information on sex roles is becoming an accepted and expected dimension of general ethnographic study. The problem of this thesis is to present Batek ethnography in terms of the activities and roles of Batek men and women and to try to understand and explain the configuration of these sex roles through Batek exegesis and anthropological analysis. Much of this thesis is devoted to the description of the Batek organization of labour and presentation of quantitative economic data collected jointly by Kirk Endicott and myself. The analysis of this data is my own, with key attention being paid to the light it throws on Batek sex roles. Other topics included in this thesis are Batek ideas about the sexes, the degree to which the sexual distinction enters into principles of social organization, cultural treatment of reproductive matters, and the development of sex role behaviour in children. Where appropriate in the text I discuss the relevance of the Batek material to recent works on sex roles in other societies and the anthropology of women.

CHAPTER 2

BATEK IDEAS ABOUT THE SEXES

The Story of the Origin of Humans

The following story was recorded by Kirk Endicott from the Aring River Batek.

> Once two superhuman brothers, Allah (the elder) and Ta' Allah (the younger), came to earth. They each took some soil and moulded it into the shape of a human body. They called out the names of the body parts as they made them. The elder brother created a man with soil from the place where the sun comes up, and the younger brother produced a woman with soil from where the sun goes down. But the bodies were not alive; they could not stand up. So Allah went to see Tohan, who lived where the sun goes down, while Ta' Allah stayed to guard the lifeless bodies. Allah asked Tohan to give him some ñawa', the life-soul, and, after much persuasion, Tohan agreed. He gave Allah some ñawa' tòm, water life-soul. Allah took the ñawa' tòm in his hands, but on the way back he tripped and spilled it. Tohan quickly spat on the place where it fell and somehow was able to draw it back to himself, whereupon he hid it under his seat. After looking for the ñawa' for seven days, Allah went back to Tohan and asked for more, but Tohan refused. Allah borrowed some ñawa' from a banana plant; this was ñawa' 'angin, wind life-soul. He took it back to the inert bodies in a bottle (botol) and blew some of it on their fontanelles (lekèm kuy; the soft, throbbing spot on the crown of a baby's head) and some on their chests, over the heart. After the ñawa' was absorbed into the bodies, they came to life and stood up. Later these first humans married, following the instructions of Tohan as conveyed by Allah, in order to have children. The children married each other and likewise produced children until another superhuman being came down and told them it was forbidden for brothers and sisters to marry. After that people did not marry relatives closer than first cousin (Kirk Endicott 1979:83).

The main concern of this story is to show how the first human beings came into existence and why they are not immortal. The water life-soul which would have made humans immortal was unfortunately lost. In all versions of the creation story men and women are created separately but by essentially the same process (Kirk Endicott 1979:84-5). They are both

created at the same time, from the same substance--the earth--and both receive the mortal wind life-soul. This makes an interesting contrast with the creation in the Judeo-Christian Bible in which man is created first and woman is then created from his rib. The symbolic associations of male and female in the Batek creation stories are not consistent in all stories and do not carry differential value connotations. Kirk Endicott writes that the "explicit connection of the male with east and the female with west...is unusual...; this is not a consistent association in Batek symbolism" (1979:84). The division of labour in which the older brother forms the man and the younger brother forms the woman is a more common feature of different versions of the story. Yet it does not imply an inferior beginning for woman. In fact, in Batek mythology it is commonly the younger of a pair of siblings who is considered the more clever and refined (Kirk Endicott 1979:62, 164). Thus the main message regarding the sexes in the Batek creation stories is that men and women are distinct in form but essentially the same in composition, being formed of the same material and animated by the same kind of soul.

Batek Treatment of Differences Between the Sexes

The Batek naturally recognize the obvious genital and secondary sex differences in the physiology of men and women. In addition, they believe there are two further physiological differences between males and females. First, they say that the blood of men and the blood of women smell different. The smells are not described further nor do the Batek say that one smells better or worse than the other. The reason for the difference in smells, according to the Batek, is that women do not eat salt during their menstrual periods (see Chapter 5). Menstrual blood,

however, has a different smell again from ordinary female blood. The menstrual blood is sometimes said to have a bad (pel'eng) smell, a smell offensive to the thundergod, Gobar (see Chapter 5). The stench of menstrual blood, however, does not negatively taint women or womanhood in Batek cultural thought; the smell simply is treated as a physiological fact. Women are not thought to be polluted or polluting because of menstruation. The other significant difference between male and female physiology is said to be the difference in the strength of the breath of men and women. This difference is mentioned primarily in the context of explaining why men rather than women perform blowpipe hunting (see Chapter 3). Essentially, the Batek believe that men can blow darts more forcefully because they have stronger breath (napas) than women. Again, this distinction is not elaborated into an evaluative statement about men and women; it is seen merely as another physiological fact. The Batek do not make stereotypical assumptions about intelligence, personality, or ability because of sex differences. They regard these qualities as matters of individual variation rather than attributes of gender.

Obvious physical maturation brings with it the only gender-specific classifications in Batek references to people (aside from kinship terms). Before puberty both boys and girls are called simply "children" (ken or 'awa') or "babies" ('awe'). There are no words for "boy" and "girl" as such. If gender distinctions are necessary, the Batek say "male-child" ('awa' temkal) or "female-child" ('awa' yaluw). When people begin to show signs of reaching puberty, they become known as "youths" (jemaga') or "young women" (kedah). The change in terminology is the only cultural marker of the onset of puberty. There are no puberty ceremonies or rites. The words jemaga' and kedah apply until a person has a child, when he or

she becomes known as maber. Parents of more than one child are called mawong, and elderly people are known as bakes, "old person". The only gender-specific terms, then, are those referring to physically mature persons before they become parents. Persons who marry but never have children are still known tnroughout adulthood until old age as jemaga' and kedah.

Personal names of men and women show some degree of gender distinction. Names are usually taken from objects in the natural environment, often referring to an object or area where a baby is born. Women are often called "Flower" (Bunga') or are named after specific types of flowers (e.g., Rantey or Bunga Rantey). Men's names usually come from other objects in the environment, such as palms (Pales), leaves (Daun), and fruit (Tebu). Some names are given to either men or women (e.g., Sipay). The Batek, in addition to their personal Batek names, also use explicitly Malay words as everyday names, such as Dusun ("Orchard", a woman's name), Batu ("Stone", a man's name), and Sungay ("River", a man's name). These Malay word names are used in discourse with outsiders and to avoid calling each other by their personal Batek names, which is considered improper after early childhood. Teknonyms are employed after the birth of one's children (see Chapter 4). Parents are usually addressed and referred to as the father, 'ey, or mother, na', of such-and-such a child. The teknonyms make gender distinctions but treat both sexes in the same way. It is usually the name of the first-born (living) child that is used in the teknonym, whether the child is male or female.

It was noted above that the creation story reports that men and women both have the same type of soul. This belief is evident in the Batek ideas of the afterworld and in the funerals of men and women.

The Batek believe that all Batek people become hala', superhuman beings, after death and populate an afterworld in the firmament. As hala' they enjoy the freedom from having to eat and work for food, and they live in coolness, a condition much desired by the Batek. In order for one's soul to rise to the afterworld from the corpse, it must be buried in a tree, not interred in the ground. Both men and women are buried in the same way, the only differences being in the bodily adornments placed on the corpse (see below). The body is wrapped in a sarong and a pandanus mat, carried on a stretcher, and placed on a platform in a tree. Men may be buried with their blowpipes and quivers, and women with their bamboo combs, flutes or other items they used in life (Kirk Endicott 1979:116). The soul is thought to acquire a new, youthful body in the afterworld and to be able to find and rejoin deceased spouses and friends. As hala', deceased Batek can visit earthly friends in dreams and teach them useful skills and spells. Men and women, then, having identical souls, are subject to the same fate and have identical roles as superhuman beings. (For more details on Batek funeral practices and their beliefs about the afterworld, see Kirk Endicott 1979:110-123.)

Clothing and Body Decorations

There are some clothes and decorations worn by both sexes among the Batek and some distinctive to one sex or the other. The usual outfit for men consists of a loincloth made from a piece of sarong material gained through trade, or the more modern equivalent, knit swimming trunks which Malay traders bring in great supply to the Batek. Before they had access to woven cloth, the Batek made loincloths from barkcloth,

which they still know how to make although they seldom do it. Men wear a single sarong batek waistband, to which they affix their kris knives and quivers of poison darts. On the upper art they wear a plaited rattan armband. They keep their hair short, sometimes shaving it completely to fit themselves of lice. Some men have acquired western clothes such as shoes, shirts, and trousers--through trade. These are worn whenever desired, but are usually saved for trading trips into Malay villages. Women wear garments similar to those of the men and sometimes wear a full sarong over it. The garments are held up by a plaited multiple strand belt (bell) made by the women. The women sometimes give their husbands or children part of their old waistbands to wear. The belt is worn further down on the hips than the men's waistbands. The women wear bracelets of woven leaves on their wrists. They usually go barebreasted, although in the presence of Malays they may cover themselves with a sarong. Some women have bought brassieres which they wear mainly for fun. Young boys occasionally wear these brassieres on their backs as a joke. When women go on trading trips to Malay villages, they are careful to wear sarongs wrapped above the breasts in Malay style. Women leave their hair a bit longer than the men and cut out a short fringe around the forehead. They seldom shave their heads even when plagued by lice, preferring instead to have someone pick out the lice. Men, on the other hand, shave their heads when they think it necessary. Women pierce their ears in order to wear flowers and leaves as a means of beautification. The ear-piercing is done whenever the girl feels she is old enough and wants to have it done: there is no particular time when it should be done. The piercing is done with a pointed spill, is accompanied by curative spells, and may be performed by a man or a woman.

Some types of personal adornment are the same for men and women. A few Batek file their teeth horizontally to make them even, though most do not consider this worth the trouble and pain. Most young men and women have their nasal septums pierced, with a porcupine quill, so they can insert flowers, leaves, or quills in it. Both sexes may wear decorated bamboo combs in their hair, though this is more usual for women than for men. Both men and women occasionally paint lines and dots across their foreheads with charcoal and lime paste, and even tattoo lines across their foreheads and wrists (this is more common for women than men, but is not done by all women). Men and women, especially adolescents, preen and groom themselves to about an equal extent. During the flower season almost everyone adorns himself or herself with the lovely forest flowers, sometimes making elaborate headbands that cover the entire head with colourful flowers. They also wear flowers and fragrant leaves in their waistbands. Trinkets, such as necklaces and bracelets, obtained through trade, are worn by men and women alike, regardless of whether outsiders would consider them appropriate to only one sex.

The body decorations worn in ritual are also similar for the two sexes. During the special singing sessions, which may culminate in trancing and communication with the superhuman beings, both men and women don bandoliers of fragrant leaves and wear flowers or fragrant leaves in their waistbands and hair. The wearing of these decorations is thought to be greatly appreciated by the superhuman beings, as it is the way they themselves dress. In fact, all the methods of body decoration used by the Batek are believed to be modelled after the practices of the superhumans.

Certain body decorations are thought to be prescribed for one sex

or the other by the superhuman beings. These sex markers (tenah) are supposed to be worn by corpses and may also be worn during life. Women are supposed to wear flowers in their pierced ears, and men should wear flowers in their armbands. The Batek say that if a corpse wears an inappropriate sex marker when the shadow-soul (bayang) of the deceased goes to the afterworld, the deity Tohan will be angry, although they do not explain why.

Infants and young children do not have to wear clothes or adornments. Parents, however, enjoy dressing their young children in waistbands or beaded belts. If young children want to wear clothes, in imitation of their elders, they may be allowed to have some clothing, unless they consistently manage to lose the clothes. Most often young children simply run around naked. Older Batek are very modest about their genitals, and they are always supposed to keep them covered. Even while bathing or swimming, the genitals are hidden by a hand or by clothing. The Batek say that children begin to wear clothes when they become aware of this modesty and are embarrassed by their lack of genital covering, usually at about four or five years of age.

Batek Culture and Sexual Symbolism

The Batek make little use of the sexual idiom in their view of the world. They do not classify the cosmic or natural worlds according to a male-female distinction. Animal species are recognized as having both males and females, and plants are regarded as neuter. The firmament is not normally divided into male and female components, although some Batek tell the Malay story of the male moon being married to a female star (Kirk Endicott 1979:40). The one use of a gender-specific idiom is the

use of the word na', which is used in such expressions as the "main river" (tom na'), the "mother star" (bintang na', also called bintang 'asal, "original star", probably the Pleiades [Kirk Endicott 1979:41]). This usage of na' is undoubtedly the Batek equivalent of the Malay use of ibu, "mother" in reference to something being central, major, or main (e.g., ibu pejabat, "main office", and ibu sungai, "main river"), rather than being a term truly implying female gender.

Batek art is confined almost exclusively to the incised decorations on bamboo combs, blowpipes, and dart quivers. The designs used are based mostly on the patterns of leaves, fruits, and flowers, rather than on human themes. Sexual designs or symbols thus do not form part of the decorative repertoire of Batek art.

The Batek believe that their world was created and is maintained by numerous superhuman beings, hala'. Some superhuman beings are individualized enough in Batek stories to be distinguished as named deities (see Kirk Endicott 1979:161-2). Even in the cases of named deities, however, little attention is paid by the Batek to the gender of the superhumans. In the few instances where gender is distinguished, different versions of stories about the superhuman characters assign different genders to the same being. The two most prominent such beings are the thundergod, Gobar, and the earth deity/naga', Ya' ("Grandmother"). Gobar, who holds a central place in the Batek pantheon because he punishes those who break prohibitions by unleashing a thunderstorm over the camp of the wrong-doer, is variously described as being a single male, two brothers, a married couple, and a brother and sister pair (Kirk Endicott 1979:163). Usually Gobar is referred to by the singular third-person pronoun 'o', which covers both "he", "she", and "it" (Kirk Endicott 1979: 163). While the roles of Gobar in punishing wrong-doers and in producing

seasonal fruit are strong themes in Batek thought, the gender of the deity is simply not crucial to these roles or stories. In some stories of Gobar's time on earth as a human, he is described as a male who had an aunt who dug tubers for him to eat. Stories also tell of two superhuman sisters who built a shelter, which became Batu Keñam, one of the homes of Gobar and one of the two main stone pillars that are primary structures in the Batek conception of earth (Kirk Endicott 1979:164). The female gender of the tuber-digger and shelter-builders are appropriate to the organization of labour of human Batek, as women are the persons who usually, although not exclusively, perform these tasks.

Some Batek say that when Gobar ascended the stone pillar, Batu Keñam, and became a superhuman being, his aunt became the earth deity residing underground (see Kirk Endicott 1979:168-9). The earth deity has the dual image of a naga' snake which supports the earth while lying in the underground sea and a grandmother or old woman. Different Batek groups emphasize one or the other image. The Aring River Batek emphasize the human image while the Lebir River Batek emphasize the naga' image. Although the Lebir Batek refer to the naga' with the respectful term Ya', "Grandmother", they do not equate the naga' with Gobar's aunt on earth. The Lebir Batek do not specify the gender of the naga'/earth deity, and they maintain that there are also numerous naga'-snakes under the ground, some of which are male and some female. The earth deity is thought to help Gobar in punishing wrong-doers by releasing floodwaters from the earth while Gobar creates a thunderstorm. The old woman form of the deity does this by digging up through the ground to release the floods and the naga'-snake by shifting position and opening a fissure to the underground sea. The role of the earth deity, like that of Gobar, is important to the order of the Batek world, but the gender

of the deity is not a crucial enough element to be a consistent theme for all Batek believing in the deity. The Aring Batek, in associating the grandmother image with digging tubers, seem to suggest an association between fertility and the earth-woman. This theme is not developed in any of their stories, however, and is completely absent from the Lebir Batek image of the earth deity.

Summary

The brevity of this chapter is testimony to the small extent to which considerations of gender distinctions influence Batek cultural thought. The Batek accept the physical differences between the sexes as natural. Gender is culturally marked in very simple ways, mainly through personal names and some distinctions in clothing and body decoration. The answer to why the Batek do not culturally elaborate differences between the sexes to any great extent, as do most other societies, both simple and complex, cannot be derived simply from the material considered in this chapter. The following chapters on the activities and roles of Batek men and women present information that will point toward that answer.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORGANIZATION OF LABOUR

Introduction

The economy of the Batek De' is an opportunistic mixture of hunting, gathering, trade, and working for outsiders. In the last twenty-five years or so these latter activities have been primarily helping Malay farmers harvest their rice fields and collecting and selling rattan to Malay and Chinese dealers. As Kirk Endicott has pointed out (1974:255), the Batek, as well as most other modern-day foragers, should be termed hunters and gatherers on the basis of their economic methods rather than on the basis of how much wild food they consume (cf. Struever 1968:92). The Batek De' at present spend much of their time collecting rattan, an activity that is well-incorporated into their overall foraging cycle, as will be seen. The Batek economy is flexible enough to take advantage of a variety of economic opportunities but ultimately rests upon a reliably productive foundation of hunting and gathering, which provides them with most of their food.

The Batek eat a wide variety of animal and vegetable foods found in the rain forest. Animal foods include monkeys, gibbons, bearcats, civets, squirrels, birds, bats, pangolins, porcupines, bamboo rats, monitor lizards, tortoises, frogs, and fish. Vegetable foods comprise several species of wild yams, many species of palm cabbage, wild ginger, nuts, honey, and numerous species of wild fruits. Honey and fruit are the two food types which are seasonal, honey being available from April to June and fruits from late May to August and some fruits again in January. The other foods

are available throughout the year, although during the flood months of December to February hunting and fishing are extremely difficult and the Batek depend primarily upon digging up wild yams, also an arduous task in the heavy rains. The food resources are scattered fairly evenly throughout the forest, so the Batek can normally find something to eat no matter where they camp. When the foods near a campsite are exhausted, usually after about a week to ten days, the Batek move camp to a new area. They almost never camp in the same place twice. The involvement of the Batek in the rattan trade allows them to obtain rice, flour, sugar, tea, and cooking oil, which supplement their diet of wild foods.

This chapter is divided into two main sections, the first dealing with male and female roles in food-getting activities, and the second describing the non-food-getting activities performed by the sexes. The former section includes quantitative data on Batek economic activities. Batek normative and explanatory views will be included in the analysis of the organization of the labour of men and women.

Participation of Males and Females in Food-getting Activities

The following is an examination of Batek food-getting activities and the degree of participation in and contribution made to these activities by the two sexes. Kirk Endicott and I jointly collected economic data for ninety-three days over a period of nine months. All seasons except the fruit season of July and August and the flood months of December and January are represented in the data. We weighed and recorded all the foods obtained through foraging and trade that were brought into camp, the only foods absent from these records being those the Batek consumed away from camp. We also recorded when people left camp to work at food-getting and when they

returned. Some days we accompanied them on their foraging outings. During the period of data collection, the population of the camps was constantly shifting. In order to overcome this problem, the data in the following tables are presented in terms of instances of work by men and women without concern with who the individuals were or the population of each camp. It should be noted at the outset, however, that the average camp population was 11.25 men and 8.62 women per day, which means that if everyone worked every day, the numbers of instances of men's labour during the ninety-three days would exceed the maximum number of instances of women's labour (1046 potential man-days versus 802 potential woman-days of work). Because we were not able to time every instance of work done by the Batek, the following tables include a "timed instance" category separate from the "total instance" category. The total hours of work recorded in the tables are based upon the timed instances only, not the total instances of each activity. The recorded weights of animals are the whole, unbutchered weights; the weights of vegetable foods are the raw, unprocessed weights. The tables are divided to show the amounts of food procured and work done by the two sexes. Where men and women worked together, the weights of foods were divided equally between the workers in the following calculations.

Blowpipe hunting

The Batek use several methods to obtain game: blowpipe hunting, smoking animals out of holes, clubbing, spearing (occasionally), and chopping down trees in order to reach nesting game. Of these hunting methods, blowpipe hunting is the most frequent and productive type. Blowpipe hunting represented 60% of all hunting trips during our period of study and provided 71% by weight of all game procured by the Batek. The following section concentrates on this method of hunting.

Blowpipe hunting involves shooting poison darts by means of a bamboo blowpipe. The Batek manufacture blowpipes from narrow sections of bamboo, one half to one inch in diameter, fitted together to form a straight tube from five to six feet long. The mouthpiece end is fitted with a bulb of resin to allow the hunter to form an airtight seal between his lips and the blowpipe. Darts are manufactured from the stems of palm fronds and are capped with a cone of pith. The sharpened end is coated with a poison made from the sap of the ipuh tree (Antiaris toxicaria). The blowpipe enables hunters to shoot game high in the forest canopy, often over 100 feet above the ground; the blowpipe is well suited to such vertical distances. Moreover, it is a lightweight, easily portable weapon. The most frequent quarry among the arboreal animals is monkeys. Other game animals hunted by blowpipes include gibbons, squirrels, birds, civets, and bearcats. For reasons which will be explored later, most blowpipe hunting is done by men.

Batek men usually hunt individually or in groups of two or three, rarely more. The hunting party often consists of an experienced hunter and a youth who is learning to hunt and acting as the older man's assistant and carrier. The successful hunt partly depends upon the quietness of the hunting group so that the animals do not detect the presence of the hunters. Thus the smaller the group, the less likely are the animals to run off before the Batek can shoot them. The hunters normally leave camp for the hunt around 8:30 to 9:00 a.m., although they may get off to a later start if they have to make a large supply of new darts to replace the darts used up on previous hunts. The men take with them their blowpipes, quivers of darts, cloth slings or pandanus baskets which will be used to carry the game, bush knives, and a firestick or store-bought lighter to light their cigarettes and to start fires if they need to

smoke an animal out of a hole or cook the animal before returning to camp. The procedure[1] for hunting monkeys, the usual quarry, is to travel into the forest a considerable distance from the camp to areas which are likely to yield game. This may be as close as half a mile or as distant as five or more miles. The search for game may take the hunters on a circuitous route that is longer than these direct distances. The Batek climb to a vantage point at the top of a ridge in the hilly forest, observe the tree-tops and listen for signs of animal life. When an animal has been detected, the hunter creeps along to the base of the tree that the monkey is in. He then aims his blowpipe up towards the quarry, often in an almost vertical position. He shoots a series of darts until confident the victim has been hit, preferably more than once. Since the blowpipe makes only a quick popping sound and the darts are almost silent in flight, the animals are not generally frightened off, even when one of their number has been hit. Once shot, the monkey will slowly begin to suffer the weakness induced by the poison. It may try to run away, but usually goes only far enough to get out of sight of the hunters. The hunters then sit, relax, and have a cigarette while talking in whispers as they wait for the monkey to die. It may take a mature monkey as long as 45 minutes to fall though usually it happens faster. The loud crash as the monkey falls from the trees gives away its location, and the hunter moves to where it has landed. When a wounded monkey spots the hunter, it may try to run away, but will eventually collapse as the poison stops its heart. A wounded monkey may be caught by hand and clubbed, choked, or stabbed to death. On a good day hunters may kill six or more monkeys. Sometimes, however, hunters hit animals but the victims do not die. This may happen if the poison is too

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[1] This information about the hunting trips was recorded by Kirk Endicott, who has accompanied Batek men on hunting trips.

weak, something which cannot be known ahead of time, if the dart does not penetrate well enough and does not enter the victim's bloodstream, or if the animal pulls the dart out. In such cases the animal escapes unharmed, and the hunter is left empty-handed. Successful or not, hunters generally return to camp by late afternoon, although sometimes it may be after dark before they arrive back in camp. The average length of time for blowpipe hunting trips is six hours.

If game has been killed, the hunters may butcher and cook some of it before returning to camp. They may eat some of the faster cooking parts, such as the internal organs. If the animal is very small and/or the hunters very hungry, they may eat more or even all of the animal. Usually, however, most, if not all, of the animal is brought back to camp where it is shared with as many people as possible. Hunters, like all Batek food-getters, are under obligation to share the meat they have procured. Considering the amount of meat that was brought into camp during the ninety-three days of data collection (see Table 1), Batek hunters seem to take this obligation seriously. The sharing of meat will be discussed further below.

There are many activities auxiliary to hunting that keep hunters busy between their hunting trips. They spend many hours maintaining their blowpipes by carefully drying them over low fires to stave off rotting resulting from the humid tropical climate. However, the blowpipes must not be dried to the point of cracking. An adequate supply of darts must be constantly available, so hunters work on darts for some time almost every day. The materials for darts--pith for the cone end and the proper wood for the shaft--are collected whenever found and kept for future use. Collecting the sap from which the poison is made may necessitate a full day's work if the proper trees are far from camp. Preparation of the

poison involves partially drying it over the fire on bamboo spatulas until it reaches a sticky consistency, after which it may be kept in a covered bamboo container for future use. If too old, however, it will become increasingly weak until it is virtually useless, so poison must be procured fairly often. While these tasks are not overwhelmingly burdensome and the Batek seem to derive a sort of pride in their work, they must allot enough time for these activities if they are to be successful hunters. At any given time during the day, someone may be observed spending his time carving darts or straightening and drying his blowpipe. Sometimes men continue to work on darts far into the night, working by the light of a resin torch in anticipation of an early start to hunting on the following day.

Table 1 summarizes the blowpipe hunting activities of the Batek.

TABLE 1

BLOWPIPE HUNTING

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCES	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE)	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	909.69	179	5.08	103	618.40	6	0.85
WOMEN	0	3	0	1	2	2	0

Table 1 clearly shows that men play the dominant role in blowpipe hunting, accounting for 98% of it while women did only 2% of it. Even though men failed to procure any game at all during ninety-two hunting instances, a failure rate of 51%, they were considerably more successful than women in hunting. The Batek say that women who hunt with blowpipes do it mainly for fun rather than as a serious attempt at food-getting.

The male domination of serious blowpipe hunting stems from a number of reasons which will be explored later in the chapter. Here it should be noted that men dominate hunting in a statistical rather than a categorical sense. Women are not prohibited from hunting and they do hunt whenever they want. They lack the intensive training men get in hunting, however (see below). Partly because of this, most women do not sustain an interest in hunting beyond childhood, when they may have borrowed adults' blowpipes and tried to hunt birds and squirrels with their male contemporaries or by themselves. Some women (we have seen three) do keep up an interest in hunting in their adult years. The hunting these women do differs from the hunting the men do in a few significant ways: women's hunting is more recreational than serious, they mainly go after birds and squirrels as young boys and girls do, rather than attempting to hunt larger game, and they hunt in short spurts close to the camp rather than spending long hours in the distant reaches of the forest where the larger game is most likely to be. Women rarely actually manage to kill any animals, but seem to enjoy the hunting regardless of return. They may not even hunt with the expectation of killing anything. Since no one depends on them for animal food, they can simply have a good time without worrying about success. Any food they get is supplementary to the meat brought in by the men, rather than being a counted-on portion of the total meat supply. Women may simply borrow a man's hunting equipment if they see an animal near that they want to try to shoot. Some women have their own equipment which either they may have made or which has been made for them by someone else. One such enthusiastic woman hunter is Cinloy, a young married woman about sixteen years of age. She owns her own blowpipe which was made by Langsat, a man recognized for his expertise in making quality blowpipes. Langsat has made blowpipes for many of the men as well as for Cinloy. One morning

we observed Cinloy and her friend Lesoh, a young woman about Cinloy's age, carefully making darts and tipping them with poison, a job which many women know how to do whether they hunt or not. Later in the day we saw Cinloy emerge from the forest with her blowpipe slung over her shoulder and her remaining darts stored in her hair. She had been out hunting. Even though she had no kill to show for it, she came back smiling broadly. She walked across the camp to her shelter, put down her equipment, and began to talk with her husband. At the time her husband, a good hunter, was lying down in the shelter leisurely cooking some tubers over the fire! Whereas in most hunter-gatherer societies such a case would represent a gross breach in sex role behaviour, in the Batek context this was simply a perfectly acceptable change of routine resulting from personal inclinations of the moment, without further implications.

The Batek depend upon the men rather than the women to succeed in the hunt and provide meat for the group. Although for the men hunting is a serious responsibility, many men genuinely enjoy hunting and spend most of their time at it. When the Batek move to a new camp, the first thing most of the enthusiastic hunters do upon arrival is pick up their blowpipes and look for game before it is frightened off to more distant areas by the presence of humans at the new camp. The first day or so in a new camp most of the men devote their time to hunting, with an excited "first chance at the game" atmosphere prevailing. After that some men may turn primarily to other activities, such as rattan collecting, but keep their blowpipes in tow in case they come across game or decide to divide their time between their other work and hunting. Some men, who are usually the most successful hunters, prefer hunting to any other activity and spend long hours at it many times a week.

Hunting, by blowpipe and other methods, while an important part of

Batek food-getting, has not been imbued with the value and cultural emphasis that some other foraging societies have placed on hunting (see, e.g. Lee 1968:40). Hunting is viewed by the Batek as one of a range of vital economic activities. There are no special social rewards, such as status or prestige, for being successful at hunting. Good or exceptional hunters are acknowledged as such but not held in higher esteem than those who try to hunt but produce little meat. The Batek recognize that there are many factors--such as poor eyesight, differences in strength in blowing darts, old age, differences in physical abilities, and even poor luck--which cannot always be overcome in hunting. There is no shame in being an unsuccessful hunter. Such persons generally turn their attentions to other food-getting activities and leave hunting to those better suited to it. The lack of cultural emphasis on hunting will be discussed further below.

Other methods of hunting

Four common foods--hornbills, bats, tortoises, and bamboo rats--are hunted without blowpipes. When hornbills nest, the female and her young remain in a hole in the tree, the male having walled them into this safe haven by sealing the hole with mud. Only a beak-sized hole is left so the male can pass food into the female and her brood. For several months during the year the female and the nestlings remain in their hole. The Batek detect their presence by seeing where the male hornbill goes to deliver its supplies of food. Once the tree is found, the Batek climb the tree and plunge a bush-knife into the hole, killing the trapped and helpless birds. The Batek then chop through the mud wall and pull out their quarry. If any nestlings are still alive they may be given to the Batek children as pets. Usually, however, the nestlings are killed and eaten for they are

sizeable birds even when young. Occasionally, especially if the tree housing the hornbills is too large to be climbed easily, the tree will be chopped down and the startled birds clubbed to death. The male hornbill, which is not as vulnerable as the trapped female and young, may be killed with a blowpipe when perched on a branch. Since hornbills are procured by climbing or chopping down trees or by blowpipe, it is usually the Batek men rather than the women who do this work.

Bats live in great numbers in holes in trees. Their homes can be spotted as the bats leave them at dusk for their nocturnal activities. The Batek, having discovered a bat tree, chop it down during the day when the bats are asleep within. As the tree hits the ground, the surprized bats try to fly away, but many are clubbed to death by the group of Batek waiting for them. The Batek do not bother climbing the bat trees because too many bats would escape through the open hole from the nest and fly away. Batek men usually do both the felling of the trees and clubbing of the bats, although sometimes women, especially young women, help with the clubbing. As is the case with bamboo rats and hornbills, young bats may be spared and kept as pets.

Tortoises may be found on the land near streams and rivers or in shallow water. When any of the Batek men, women, or children come across one, they catch it by hand. Some of the larger tortoises, which may weigh over sixty pounds, are found in deeper pools and holes in the streams and necessitate a greater effort on the part of the Batek. Such tortoises are usually captured by the men who must dive for them, spear them, and bring these heavy creatures to the surface. The tortoises, both large and small, are killed by cutting off the head if the head can be reached, or by throwing the live tortoise on to the fire. The very large tortoises, if caught far from camp, may be butchered and cooked in the forest so that

only the edible parts need be carried back to camp. The shell is not used for anything.

Bamboo rats (Rhizomys sumatrensis), called layam by the Batek, are rodents which grow to five or six pounds in weight, thus making them a worthwhile catch. Bamboo rats can be detected by hearing them eating the bamboo underground or finding their holes or droppings near clumps of bamboo. The Batek, working alone or in groups of two or even three, use digging sticks to dig down one of the entrances to the bamboo rat's burrows. If there is no sign of the animal, they dig down into another entrance, and so on until the animal is found. The bamboo rat either decides to escape by coming up to the ground and running away, in which case it can be chased and caught, or it decides to fight from its burrow, in which case the Batek thrust their metal-tipped digging sticks into the burrow until the animal is wounded or killed. If brought up from the burrow still alive, it is clubbed to death with the digging stick or the blunt edge of a bush-knife. Young bamboo rats found with the adult animal may be brought back alive and kept as pets rather than eaten.

Tables 2 and 3 show the participation of men and women in hunting other than blowpipe hunting.

TABLE 2

OTHER HUNTING METHODS (EXCLUDING HUNTING BAMBOO RATS)

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCES	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	263.87	64	4.12	40	225.75	5.64	0.73
WOMEN	6.51	7	0.93	5	8	1.6	0.06

TABLE 3

HUNTING BAMBOO RATS

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCE	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	89.15	28	3.18	15	60.25	4.02	0.79
WOMEN	24	16	1.5	11	30.5	2.77	0.54

As is the case with blowpipe hunting, men dominated these other hunting methods both in terms of frequency and yields. Women hunted bamboo rats more often and with greater success than they hunted other animals by other methods. They procured 27% by weight of all the bamboo rats hunted whereas they procured less than 1% by weight of all the other animals gained through non-blowpipe hunting methods. The greater role of women in digging up bamboo rats than in any other hunting is most likely because it is an activity that can be done under the same conditions under which women perform their more frequent foraging work. Digging up bamboo rats can be done under noisy conditions, by individuals or by larger groups, with young children present, and relatively quickly. It is therefore compatible with the larger work parties in which Batek women usually do their gathering (see below). Furthermore, digging up bamboo rats requires the same equipment necessary for digging up tubers, so women can try for bamboo rats if the opportunity arises without having to plan in advance and carry special equipment.

Fishing

The Batek catch fish by several methods, chiefly by rod and line,

hand, net casting, and poisoning. Rod and line is the most frequent method and is the main method by which women fish. Fishing rods are easily made, whenever people decide to go fishing, by attaching store-bought lines and hooks (obtained through the rattan trade) to the central stems of palm fronds. Women often take their children fishing as a way of filling in an hour or two after other work has been completed. Line fishing is usually done either early or late in the day, when the stream is in shadow, and, according to the Batek, the fish cannot see the people. The Batek try to find a school of fish, following them up and downstream several yards until some are caught. The anglers let each other know whether they are getting any bites so everyone can take advantage of a promising location. They continue in this way until they have caught several fish or until they give up completely if no fish are biting. The fish in the forest streams generally are very small and hourly yields of fish are low (see Table 4). Even a few small fish, however, are enough to make a welcome sauce if boiled in a bit of water. Usually the yield of fish is enough to feed only the angler's family, although when the amount is great enough it is shared with other families as well.

Fishing by means of nets, obtained from the Malays through trade or sale, is normally done only by men. Why only men do this is not explained by the Batek, but may be in imitation of the Malay fishermen whom they see using nets. One type of net fishing involves setting a gill-net out in the late afternoon or evening and hauling it in the next morning. This usually yields a few good-sized fish. Circular casting-nets are also used in shallow waters, and this sometimes produces a good catch. Not many Batek own fishing nets, however, and those who do own them do not always use them even when they are camped near suitable waterways. Thus, net fishing, which the Malays near the Batek use extensively to get a large

share of their food, is not a frequent source of food for the Batek.

The Batek sometimes poison fish with a poison (toba') obtained from some types of bark and roots. A large group of men, women, and children work together to pound the poison out of the bark or roots, release a concentration of poison into a stream, and then pick the stunned fish out of the water. This poisoning is most effectively done in a section of a small stream which can be easily dammed or which has a natural dam, such as a fallen log or leaf-clogged rocks, to help retain the poison in the pool into which it has been released and to stop the stunned fish, so large numbers of them can be picked up at one time. Although yields from poisoning can be substantial, the Batek do not use this method very frequently.

Table 4 gives details of Batek fishing.

TABLE 4

FISHING

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCES	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE)	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	40.32	43	0.94	22	73.5	3.34	0.28
WOMEN	36.09	82	0.44	60	170	2.83	0.16

Table 4 shows that women fished twice as often as men and provided 47% by weight of all fish caught. In all the methods of procuring animal foods, then, the most significant role played by women was in fishing, which, however, accounts for only 6% by weight of the animal foods eaten by the Batek.

Summary of procurement of animal foods

Tables 1 to 4 are summarized in Table 5, which provides an overview of the role of Batek men and women in providing animal foods.

TABLE 5

COMBINED TOTALS FOR ALL BATEK HUNTING AND FISHING

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCES	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE)	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	1303.03	314	4.15	180	977.9	5.43	0.76
WOMEN	66.59	108	0.62	76	208.5	2.74	0.23

Table 5 shows that men worked for animal food almost three times as often as women, and on the average worked twice as long as women each time they did work. The average hourly yields by weight were 3.3 times higher for men than women. Men produced 95% by weight of all animal foods, the women accounting for only 5%. Men clearly statistically dominate the procurement of animal foods. However, the involvement of women in hunting and fishing, despite their small contribution to the total supply of meat, has implications for the economic interdependence of the sexes, as will be discussed further below.

Gathering tubers

Wild yams, or tubers, form the vegetable staple of the Batek diet throughout the year except during the fruit season. The Batek eat at least twelve species of wild yam, the most frequently procured and well-liked being takop (Dioscorea orbiculata). The distribution of wild yams in the

forest is such that one or more species normally can be found reasonably close to any Batek camp. Occasionally once a camp has been made the Batek cannot find enough tubers to support them. Rather than ranging further out from the camp in the search for food, the Batek relocate to what is hoped will be a more promising area, even if the previous move took place only two or three days before.

In gathering tubers the Batek use digging sticks (dal) which usually have a chisel-like blade or a small shovel blade lashed on one end. Sometimes simply a stick with a sharpened end is used. Blades are made out of old bush-knives or pot lids, which the Batek hammer into the desired shape. The only other equipment necessary for gathering is a pandanus basket or cloth sling in which to put the tubers. Although the tool kit for digging tubers is simple, considerable knowledge goes into gathering. The gatherers must first of all know where to dig. They must be able to distinguish the vines put up by the different species of yams, determine from the state of the vine whether or not the tubers are mature enough to eat, and detect the direction in which the tubers lie underground. Gathering is far more involved than the phrase "digging up tubers" superficially suggests.

Gathering tubers is more frequently done by women than by men (see Table 6). Work groups usually comprise three or four women with their babies in cloth slings on their backs and their young children walking with them. Unlike hunting, gathering can be done under noisy, crowded conditions and does not usually necessitate traveling great distances from camp or walking at a pace too fast for children. Children, considered an absolute hindrance to hunting, are not usually considered a disadvantage to gathering, although at times mothers try to leave their children behind in camp when they go gathering (see below). One reason the Batek prefer women and children to gather in large groups is that they think larger parties are less likely

to be attacked by tigers than lone individuals or small groups. Men take this risk in hunting alone or in pairs, but women generally take the precaution larger work groups afford. Gathering expeditions have a lively, sociable air to them, the women conversing and laughing as they work and their children playing together at various activities. One day one woman who already had an ample supply of rice and therefore had no need to dig tubers, went along on a gathering expedition anyway because, as she said, she was "tired of sitting at home" ("ye' males ngok ba haya'").

Women's gathering expeditions begin around 9 a.m., often an hour or so after men leave to go hunting. Each woman takes her digging stick, accompanying children who are old enough to want to dig bringing additional digging sticks. The group walks for about twenty minutes to an hour, until they locate the vines that indicate the presence of tubers. Sometimes the women go directly to a spot where someone had previously seen the vines of tubers. Such information may have been picked up by the women on previous outings or by the men on their hunting or other work treks. Sometimes people return to spots they first came across one or two years previously when the tubers were not yet mature enough to eat; they memorize the spot, decide when the tubers will be ready, and return when the time comes. Often, however, women simply search until they find some tubers and then begin to dig. When a site has been found, they unload their equipment and get their young children settled by spreading out cloths or large leaves for them to sit on. Each woman traces a vine to the ground and commences to dig with the digging stick to loosen the dirt, which she then scoops up with her hands. In a short time she will come across the tuber and examine it to see whether or not it is worth digging up. If it is, she continues to chop with the digging stick and scoop up the earth as she follows the tuber on its underground path. If she thinks the tuber is not worth eating, she

discards it, digs up another section of the tuber to examine, and either decides to continue to dig it up if it looks edible or decides to try another tuber altogether.[1] In the case of takop, the tuber is long and thin; it twists and turns tortuously and can go down as deep as five feet. Often more than one hole must be dug to get at the whole tuber. Either one woman will dig all the holes or another woman may join her. When the tuber has been completely dug up (the Batek do not leave or replant part of the tuber to regenerate it), the woman decides whether to dig somewhere else or gather up the tubers in her pandanus basket or cloth sling and return to camp. Many factors influence this decision. If the first hole has yielded enough food, sufficiency usually being about fourteen pounds of tubers, the woman may decide to stop work regardless of how early in the day it might be. There is no point in getting too many tubers because they spoil within two or three days; therefore the Batek do not attempt to dig more than what their families and other camp members can eat in a day or two. If it is getting late or a thunderstorm is threatening, the women will stop work, regardless of yields, and return to camp. Sometimes children are the cause of an early return to camp. If a child constantly frets and cries because of sickness or discomfort, the mother may return early. Occasionally mothers stated that their short working hours and small yields were the result of one of their children having defecated in the forest while on the digging expedition. They said this caused bad luck and that if the child had defecated near the camp it would have been alright. The Batek could offer no further explanation of this statement except that the defecation caused bad luck. Usually, however, the women work without interruptions from their children. Normally they return to

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[1] The "chop, scoop, examine, discard or keep" sequence used in digging tubers was articulated for us by Dr. Peter Reynolds when he accompanied us in the forest.

camp from about 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., after a work day of just under five hours (see Table 6).

Three species of large tubers that can be dug up in a matter of minutes are rem, kasut, and gadong (Dioscorea hispida). Each of these tubers lies under only a shallow covering of earth and are thus easily dug up. Rem and kasut may weigh thirty to forty pounds each. The drawback to these large tubers is that they may be bitter or tasteless, in which case the Batek consider them inedible even when no other food is available in camp. Sometimes children will eat these bitter tubers even when the adults reject them. When rem and kasut are not bitter, they are well-liked by the Batek and are a welcome source of food obtained with little effort on the part of the Batek. If men come across these tubers in the course of their other work, they almost always stop to dig them up. Gadong is also easily dug up in large quantities, but it is poisonous in its natural state and must be meticulously processed. This tuber, which is known to rural Malays as a famine food, contains the toxic alkaloid dioscorine (Burkill 1966:823), which must be fully leached out before the tubers are edible. The leaching process will be discussed later. At this point it should simply be noted that whereas over 100 pounds of gadong can be dug up from the sandy soil near streams and riverbanks by a few women and/or men within twenty minutes, the processing requires at least one full day and usually two. Once prepared, however, gadong is a well-liked food. The Batek do not bother with it unless they have the time to process it in large amounts, but it is a dependable food source when the more commonly eaten tubers are not available in an area.

Apart from sometimes causing their mothers to return from work early, children do not seem to interfere greatly with the tuber digging routine. Usually they spend their time watching their mothers dig, playing at digging

with small digging sticks, even digging in earnest if they are older, or playing in the trees with the other children. Mothers may carry some toys with them with which to amuse the children. On one expedition, when a woman stopped for a cigarette break, she took out her pandanus pouch and proceeded to empty out a plastic baby bottle, flashlight, bamboo comb, bottle of hair oil, two empty bottles, two knives, a metal file, her cigarette and fire-making equipment, and the children's live pet bat. All these items kept the children busy while the mother worked. Mothers do not normally stop their work to suckle young babies. Babies in their cloth slings on the mother's back or side can be swung into the nursing position while work is being done. Older nursing infants may be placed on the ground with their older siblings, so the mother can work unrestricted. If they want the mother's breast, they cry or lower themselves into the hole and try to hang on to the mother as best they can while she continues to dig. Sometimes mothers do not want their non-nursing children to accompany them on the digging trips. At times they can persuade a child to remain in camp with another adult and sometimes the child simply does not want to go along. However, if the child becomes upset over being left behind, the mother may return for it. Other times the child will be left regardless of how much it cries to go along. There is no set pattern to how often or when mothers leave their children behind when they go off to dig. Some mothers say that the reason for leaving a child behind on a particular trip is that the child will not be able to walk far or fast enough and will just want to be carried. One effective way some mothers induce their children to stay at home is by telling them that there are many leeches in the forest, which the young children do not like. It should be noted that when mothers do leave some of their children behind or when the children decide not to go along, the yields of tubers are not always greater than when mothers have

a full entourage of children with them.

Unless they are particularly hungry, the gatherers, whether male or female, do not usually cook and eat the tubers they have collected until they return to camp. Most of the yield of tubers is thus brought into camp to be shared with the gatherers' families and other members of the camp, as is true of most food. If people want to eat some of the tubers before returning to camp, they may do so. We never came across a case of people eating all the tubers themselves before reaching camp.

There are several circumstances under which men dig tubers rather than hunt or work at other activities. If the hunt proves unsuccessful or if a hunter comes across a tuber site, he may decide to dig. Men occasionally take along a digging stick when they go hunting, but usually they simply carve a crude one on the spot if they want to dig. Older men, whose eyesight may be too poor for them to be effective hunters, may dig tubers frequently. If a man is a bachelor, he may dig tubers for himself. Sometimes husbands and wives spend the day digging together. If a man's wife is sick or simply wants to rest on a given day, the husband may go out and dig tubers for his family. One Batek man whose wife is from another aboriginal group, the Semaq Beri, does a lot of the digging because his wife generally prefers not to. The husband says that she is used to having rice to eat and is unaccustomed to digging regularly, despite her proven ability to find tubers and dig them up. Most importantly, if a camp is hard pressed for food, men turn to gathering rather than spend their time hunting or doing other tasks, as digging tubers is far more likely to be successful than is hunting. Whereas the failure rate for all men's hunting (by all methods) was 41%, the failure rate for men's gathering tubers was a low 7% (the women's failure rate for gathering tubers was an even lower 4% and their failure rate for all hunting was 30%, this latter figure being

lower than that of the men most likely because it represents a smaller sample). Lee's statement, based upon the Bushman economy, that "hunting is a high-risk, low-return subsistence activity, while gathering is a low-risk, high-return subsistence activity" (Lee 1968:40) accurately describes the Batek situation.

Table 6 shows the involvement of Batek men and women in gathering tubers.

TABLE 6

GATHERING TUBERS

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCES	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE)	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	1531.75	144	10.64	89	415.75	4.67	2.28
WOMEN	3026.25	340	8.9	257	1148.76	4.47	1.99

Women gathered tubers 2.3 times as often as men and produced 63% by weight of all the tubers. Men accounted for 37% by weight of all the tubers, which is particularly striking for it shows that Batek men, though gathering tubers less often than women, produce a significant rather than incidental amount of tubers. When men did gather tubers, they averaged higher hourly yields than women, greater yields per instance of gathering, and they generally worked slightly longer than women. Most likely this is due at least in part to their being unaccompanied by children. Also, much of men's gathering consists of opportunistically collecting large tubers, such as rem and gadong, which are easily and quickly dug up. Men worked harder and more effectively at gathering tubers, which is an activity dominated

in frequency and overall weight yields by women, than women worked at the male dominated activity of hunting.

Procuring other vegetable foods

Vegetables other than tubers that the Batek collect include banana flowers, ferns, wild ginger, mushrooms, nuts, and palm cabbage. The first three are picked whenever found throughout the year. Mushrooms are seasonal and are collected whenever possible. The most important nut, penace' (Pangium edule, known as kepayang in Malay), is collected during its season from September to November. It is poisonous in its natural state but after processing (see below) is edible. Palm cabbage, from several species of palms, is the "fast food" of the forest. It is obtained by slashing away the tough outer layers around the palm shoot until the soft, inner, edible shoot is reached. This food can be eaten raw or can be cooked as a vegetable and is available all year round. Collection of these vegetable foods is done by anyone--man, woman, or child--who comes across them. Table 7 gives details of this gathering.

Also included in Table 7 are the few vegetables, mainly corn, that the Batek managed to grow during two short-lived agricultural stints sponsored by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs during the period of my study. For several years the Department has tried to get the Batek to give up their nomadic foraging and become swidden agriculturalists like the Malay farmers who live downriver from the Batek. The Batek have been exposed to farmers since before 1900 (Kirk Endicott 1974:122) but have made only sporadic and unskilled attempts to plant crops of their own over the years. Recently some Batek have tried to comply with the Department in their desire to launch the Batek into agriculture. Other Batek dialect groups, such as the Batek Teh, have had enough success with agriculture

to depend on it to the near exclusion of their traditional means of foraging for food. The Batek De', however, have been more resistent to such change. They tend to treat agricultural efforts as but one more foraging technique. During the pre-harvest stages, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs supplies the Batek with food, mainly rice, to tide them over until the harvest. While the Batek are willing to begin agricultural attempts if the Department supplies enough food during this period, it has usually worked out that the Batek have not been able to survive on the government-supplied food alone and have had to move away from the swiddens into the forest in order to forage for wild foods. The move to the forest means that the fields are left unattended and become prey to the ravages of wild pigs, elephants, and other animals. The Batek return periodically to their gardens to see if anything edible is there, but the takings are usually very slim, seldom more than a few ears of corn. In this sense, the gardens are viewed merely as one more possible resource in the foraging economy. Agriculture, when undertaken, involves both men and women to whatever extent the individuals wish to be involved. Both sexes help to clear fields, the men felling the larger trees and doing most of the burning. Those less interested in establishing their own plots may help others or continue to forage for wild foods. Seeds and stalks of cassava (Malay ubi kayu, Manihot utilissima) are supplied by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Both men and women plant crops and weed the gardens. Whatever food is produced is shared with as many people in camp as possible, just as with wild foods.

Also included in Table 7 are the few fruits the Batek managed to collect before the onset of the fruit season proper. During the fruit season, June to August, the Batek live off fruit to the near exclusion of all other foods, though, unfortunately, we have no quantitative data for the fruit

season proper to bear this out. Fallen fruit is collected off the ground by men, women, and children. Men often scale the trees to cut down fruit which is then recovered by the women and children waiting below. Less frequently women climb the fruit trees; when men are present the climbing is generally left to them. During the fruit season large amounts of food can be procured with little effort from either men or women. It is an especially easy period which is eagerly anticipated by the Batek each year.

TABLE 7

COLLECTING OTHER VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCES	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE)	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	198.75	19	10.46	-	-	-	-
WOMEN	307.2	35	8.75	27	43.5	1.61	5.45

In the collection of other vegetables and fruit, the same pattern emerges that was evident in collecting tubers. The women worked almost twice as often as the men, provided a total weight that was about 1.5 times that of the men, but the men's yields per instance of collection averaged higher than the women's. Men accounted for 39% by weight of these foods, which is similar to the proportion of tubers they gathered.

Collecting honey

Honey, available from April to early June, is collected by the Batek for their own consumption and for trade. During the honey season the Batek may go for days at a time eating only honey and bee larvae soaked

in honey. Honey in excess of what the Batek can consume is sold to Malay traders by the collectors, who then buy rice and goods for their families. Honey collection is a difficult job, necessitating the cooperation of three or four people. The bees' nests may be located 120 feet high in a tree, and only the best climbers attempt to get honey. Usually this job is taken up by the younger men, with young women who do not have children sometimes helping out. Women never collect honey by themselves. Honey collection is usually carried out at night when the bees are less active. One or two men scale the tree, either by simple climbing, if the tree is small enough, or by employing an elaborate system of climbing ladders made from a strong rattan (_'awey leng_) used especially for this purpose. They take an unlit torch of dry leaves, a special bark basket on a strong rattan line, and a bush-knife. When the hive is reached, the torch is lit with a cigarette or a store-bought lighter and is then held under the hive, which usually hangs from a limb. The smoke and heat cause the bees to tumble stunned to the ground in a cascade of embers. Once the bees have been smoked out, the hive is cut loose and placed in the basket which is then lowered on the rattan line to the people waiting below. The basket contains the hive, honey, larvae, and a mass of bees which are stunned beyond the stinging point. The climbers may get a few stings before the bees are smoked out, but they seem to think the honey is worth it. When the honey basket is carried into camp, the Batek dip their fingers into the honey, discard the stunned bees, and suck on their fingers and pieces of the comb, spitting out the inedible wax. Large chunks of wax may be kept for making simple candles. The larvae of the bees are eaten along with the honey, either raw or boiled. Table 8 gives details of Batek honey collection.

TABLE 8

HONEY COLLECTION

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCES	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE)	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	509.51	78	6.53	42	172.0	4.10	1.59
WOMEN	73.3	8	9.16	4	12.75	3.19	2.87

Men collected 87% by weight of all the honey and were involved in nine times as may instances of honey collection as woman. The women's average yields per instance and per hour were higher in this sample, probably because the sample of women's participation was so low compared to men that it is distorted relative to the sample of men. Furthermore, the women's yields here represent their share in the work they did jointly with the men, as women never collect honey by themselves. The importance of Table 7 is that it shows that women are not as active in collecting honey as men, most probably because it is one of the more dangerous of Batek activities, necessitating a great deal of tree climbing under night conditions.

Trade

In addition to their hunting and gathering activities, the Batek take advantage of various trade opportunities presented by the Malay and Chinese demand for certain forest products. For the Batek, collecting tradeable products is basically an extention of collecting forest products for their own use; they simply expand the number and types of goods they normally collect for themselves. Most of the trading transactions

take place in the forest, the Malays coming to the Batek to arrange deals and make the actual exchanges. The Batek, however, may take their goods, especially large amounts of rattan, directly to the Malay and Chinese merchants in the towns. Since it only takes the Batek one or two days to raft a load of rattan down to the nearest town, this is an easy matter. Usually Batek who go into the towns in this way can find a motorboat ride back upriver with Malay traders or with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The Batek like to make occasional trips into the towns because there they can purchase cloth, food, knives, and other goods they want to buy with the proceeds of the trading. When the transactions are done in the forest, the Malay traders bring these desired items and cash upriver with them so the Batek are able to get outside goods even when they do not go all the way into the towns.

Both Batek men and women engage in the two phases of trade--the collecting and selling of the trade goods. Some forest products are collected and sold by both men and women. These include rolls of thatch made from the cemcom palm (Calamus castaneus); plants thought by the Chinese and Malays to have medicinal or erotic properties; resins; special woods, such as the fragrant gaharu wood; certain foods, such as the seed-pods of the legume hentaw (Malay petai, Parkia speciosa). Some forest products are generally collected by one sex only because only the one sex is involved in associated activities. For example, pandanus is normally collected by Batek women, for they are the specialists in weaving pandanus articles. The pandanus they collect for trade is the type the Malays prefer (haki' kajang, Pandanus artocarpus?; see Burkill 1966:1675). The Batek themselves use a stronger pandanus (haki' remadul). When Batek women collect the haki' kajang, it is specifically for trade with the Malays. The Batek men, as the main hunters, have access to certain products

wanted by the Malays and Chinese. For example, one type of hornbill (Rhinoplax vigil) has a solid casque on its beak which can be carved like ivory. These are highly valued by Chinese craftsmen and are said by the Batek to fetch a good price. Whenever a Batek hunter kills one of these hornbills, he carefully saves the beak until he gets a chance to trade of sell it.

The actual trade transaction may be carried out by members of either sex, usually by the individuals responsible for the collection of the goods. Sometimes the Batek let a few people handle the trade for the larger group, especially if the trade involves a trip downriver into the towns. The money, food, and goods received are then divided proportionately among all those people who collected the trade products. More men than women usually make the trips into the towns, but there is no rigid rule about this. Any woman who wants to make the trip may do so. Not many women do, however, and usually those who do make the trip are unmarried teenage girls or young married women who do not have any children. Married women with children simply let their husbands know what they want from the towns if the husbands decide to go downriver. When the Batek go all the way to Kuala Krai, the major town of the upper Kelantan area, they normally stay at an aboriginal hostel which houses school boys. This male-oriented housing may be a reason why more Batek men than women travel to Kuala Krai. If, however, the Batek plan to trade in Manek Urai, which is a village and is closer than Kuala Krai, they may simply sleep on their rafts or in the homes of friendly Malay traders. In such cases, Batek women may decide to go along on the trip. The only other problem a person of either sex has in deciding whether to go into the towns is the matter of having western or Malay-style clothes to wear. The Batek like to dress as well as the Malays in the towns, which means that men try to

get hold of a pair of trousers, a western-style shirt, and sandals, if possible. While they could simply wear sarongs, they seem unwilling to do so, probably because they are afraid of being considered "country bumpkins" at best or savages (pangan) at worst. One Batek man planned to accompany us to the town when we left the field, but at the last minute he changed his mind. Our suspicions were soon confirmed by other Batek: he had decided not to go only because he did not have any western-style clothes. When we gave him a pair of trousers, a tee-shirt, and a belt to keep the oversized trousers up, he immediately decided to go with us and did, in fact, make the trip. When Batek women go into the towns, they can simply wear sarongs, either tying them above the breasts, which are usually left exposed in the forest, or by using the sarong as a skirt and wearing a Malay or western-style blouse.

At the present time the Batek are very active in the collection and sale of rattan. They themselves make use of various types of small diameter rattan for lashing and as rope. For the trade market, they collect both the large rattan, 'awey manaw (Malay rotan manau, Calamus manan? or C. ornatus?; see Burkill 1966:404), which is used by the Malays and Chinese primarily for furniture frames, and smaller species of rattan, 'awey barang, which are used for fish traps and for lashing the furniture frames together. The Malays are quite happy to let the Batek pull the rattan out of the forest, for the Malays are generally wary of the forest, which they think is inhabited by evil spirits (hantu). Malay rattan dealers usually come up the main river in motorboats and then try to locate the Batek, who may be living along side-streams at the time. When contact has been made, the Batek may contract to supply the Malays with hundreds or even thousands of sticks of rattan. The traders may advance the Batek some rice, money, or goods, the balance of payment being reserved

until delivery of the rattan. The Malays either return at an arranged time or camp on a nearby sandbar until the rattan has been collected. The Batek carry or raft the rattan to the agreed collection point and then the Malays take it downriver. Sometimes the Batek simply collect rattan without being under contract and then raft it downriver to the traders. The Batek can get a higher price for the rattan if they take it downriver themselves, but often sell it to the Malays who come to them in the forest because it eliminates the trip downriver and the uncertainty about getting a ride back upriver. Money from the rattan trade is spent on rice, which is one of their favourite foods, flour, salt, sugar, tea, tobacco, and manufactured goods, such as cooking pots, metal knives, fish hooks, and cloth.

The collection of rattan is done by both men and women, although men are more frequently involved in it than women (see Table 9). The first step in the collection of the large-diameter rattan (_'awey manaw_) is to climb the tree by which the rattan vine is supported. Since the top of the larger rattan vines may be fifty to a hundred feet high, usually the men do the climbing, although women may if they want to. The climber cuts the vine free from the crown of the rattan plant. The vine can then be pulled out of the tree by the men and women on the ground. Usually a few people are required for this task as the vine may be tangled in the branches of the tree. The rattan is dragged to a cutting place, where someone, either a man or woman, cuts the rattan into nine-foot lengths. Each person then carries his or her own bundle of rattan to the collection point or to where the rattan will be placed on rafts and floated down the stream or river. The small-diameter rattans (_'awey barang_) can usually be pulled out of the trees by one person, although if necessary the supporting tree will be climbed and the vine cut from the crown. Both men and women perform

this work. One variety of the small-diameter rattan can be coiled into large hoops called galong, which are easily carried out of the forest. Most of the small-diameter rattans are cut into 21-foot lengths, tied in bundles of twenty-five strands, folded in the middle, and dragged out of the forest by either men or women. If the rattan is to be floated downstream, the Batek make the necessary bamboo rafts. Usually only the men make the rafts; few women profess to know how. The rattan is loaded by both men and women, who then pole the rafts downstream, a husband and wife often working together if both have been involved in the collection of the rattan.

Table 9 presents data on the rattan work of the Batek.

TABLE 9

RATTAN WORK

	TOTAL WEIGHT (LBS.)	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	AVERAGE LBS. PER INSTANCE	NO. TIMED INSTANCES	TOTAL TIME RECORDED (HRS.)	AVERAGE TIME WORKED (HRS. PER INSTANCE)	AVERAGE YIELD (LBS. PER HR.)
MEN	-	282	-	151	836.25	5.54	-
WOMEN	-	86	-	62	290.02	4.68	-

Men are more frequently involved in rattan work than women, accounting for 3.3 times as many instances as women. Moreover, the number of men who work rattan exceeds that of the women. Only some young women without children and a few older women with grown children regularly collect rattan for trade, as it is an activity that cannot be done while carrying children. Most mothers of young families simply do not work rattan and instead continue to forage for foods for themselves and the rattan workers. The

involvement of the men in the rattan work is so great that the total number of instances they worked rattan, 282, is greater than the number of instances they did any other activity and is greater even than the total instances of all hunting they did, which amounts to 271. The rewards for this heavy involvement in rattan work are shown in Table 10, which documents the foods the Batek obtain through trade, mainly the rattan trade, but also from the more sporadic sale of pandanus, incense, honey, and other forest goods for which we have no quantitative data. Some of the money men and women earned from us also was spent on traded foods.

TABLE 10

FOODS OBTAINED THROUGH TRADE

	WEIGHT OBTAINED	TOTAL NO. INSTANCES	LBS. PER INSTANCE
MEN	1524.05	172	8.86
WOMEN	538.15	85	6.33

As would be expected from the rattan work figures, men were involved more frequently in trade and received nearly three times as much food as women. Perhaps the most interesting thing about the Batek's great involvement in the rattan trade is that the foods they receive in return are vegetable foods, mainly rice, flour, and sugar. Men could spend more time hunting rather than collecting rattan. The economic decision to work rattan instead of hunting more suggests that the Batek think they are getting enough meat and do not have to put more effort into hunting. Indeed, as Table 11 (below) shows, the Batek seem to gain enough meat from the amount of hunting they do undertake and they are free to work rattan as much as they please.

The involvement of the Batek in the rattan trade raises some noteworthy points about the nature of economic cooperation within Batek society. Their hunting and gathering activities closely correspond to the immediate return foraging model delineated by Woodburn (1978:12-23). These activities do not require long-term pooling of labour to produce a return of food. There are, of course, delays of reciprocity, depending upon the success or failure of each person's foraging efforts, but each day the group manages to procure at least some food. The rattan trade represents what Woodburn calls a delayed return economic system. The Batek have managed to incorporate this into their immediate return foraging economy. As noted above, the work itself is little more than an extension of collecting rattan for the Batek's own use. The difference lies in the implications for the organization of labour. When collecting for their own use, the Batek immediately have the use of the produce. At most a day or two is taken out from food-getting activities to collect the rattan. In the rattan trade, however, it may take several weeks to collect the thousand or more lengths of rattan that comprise a tradeable amount. A delay of return is thus introduced into the economy. If the Batek receive an advance of food or goods from the Malay traders, as often happens, the delay is offset partially. However, the advances of food normally are not enough to last the entire period of rattan collection. The Batek must arrange for some people to collect rattan and others to continue to forage for food both for themselves and for the rattan workers over the extended period the rattan collection requires. Those gathering food, as well as those working rattan, receive no immediate return from the labour expended in collecting rattan. The benefit to everyone eventually comes when the trade transaction is completed. Then, even though it is the rattan workers who receive direc[illegible]yment for the rattan, all the members of the camp who

supported the rattan workers receive part of the earning, in the form of rice, goods, or money shared between camp members. The rattan trade, even with its intrinsic delayed return, is accomplished by the Batek by depending upon the continued immediate sharing of food between foragers and non-foragers and the sharing of trade goods between rattan workers and non-workers when the trade eventually takes place.

Summary of quantitative data on food-getting activities

The total amounts in weight of foods provided by each sex and the proportions of the diet they represent are shown in Tables 11 and 12.

TABLE 11

TOTAL YIELDS OF FOOD BY SEX

ANIMAL FOODS

ACTIVITY	MEN'S YIELD (LBS.)	WOMEN'S YIELD (LBS.)
BLOWPIPE HUNTING	909.69	0
OTHER HUNTING	263.87	6.5
BAMBOO RAT HUNT	89.15	24.0
FISHING	40.32	36.09
TOTAL	1303.03	66.59

VEGETABLE FOODS

ACTIVITY	MEN'S YIELD (LBS.)	WOMEN'S YIELD (LBS.)
GATHERING TUBERS	1531.75	3026.25
OTHER VEGETABLES	198.75	307.2
HONEY	509.51	73.3
FOOD FROM TRADE	1524.05	538.15
TOTAL	3764.06	3944.90

TABLE 12

PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTION TO FOOD SUPPLY BY SEX

MEN'S WORK

	WEIGHT	PERCENTAGE
ANIMAL FOODS	1303.03	26%
VEGETABLE FOODS	3764.06	74%
TOTAL	5067.09	100%

WOMEN'S WORK

	WEIGHT	PERCENTAGE
ANIMAL FOODS	66.69	2%
VEGETABLE FOODS	3944.49	98%
TOTAL	4011.49	100%

One of the most striking facts to come out of this data is that Batek men obtained such a high proportion of vegetable to animal food. They actually accounted for 49% of the total weight of vegetable foods the Batek procured. Women, most of whose work was directed at vegetable foods, accounted for the other 51%. Vegetable foods actually comprised 85% of the Batek diet, while animal foods comprised only 15% of the diet. Even so, however, the amount of unbutchered animal food available per person per day[1] was 0.43 lbs., or 195 grams. If we consider that the protein proportion of the animal foods is approximately 24% (based on the average of Davis's figure of 28% and Osmond and Wilson's figure of 17.5% by weight for lean beef), the amount of protein available per person per day is 46.8 grams (Davis 1954: 250; Osmond and Wilson 1968:18). According to Alland, hunters and gatherers need only 45-50 grams of animal protein per day "and possibly a bit more in vegetable protein" (1968:93). The Batek are within this range. The amount of raw vegetable food available per person per day was 2.42 lbs., or

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[1] This was calculated on the basis of 34.24 persons, including children, which was the average camp population during the period studied. The breakdown was 11.25 men, 8.62 women, and 14.37 children.

1098.68 grams. The range of economic activities done by Batek men and women clearly supplies them with an adequate diet in gross terms.

The food totals in Tables 11 and 12, while showing that men produced a greater total weight of food than did women in the ninety-three days of study, do not take into account that there are 1.3 times as many men as women in the average daily adult camp population (11.25 men and 8.62 women). There were thus more men than women to contribute to the food supply. Had there been an equal number of women and men, the contribution by women to the total food supply would have been proportionately greater. In fact, if the 4011.49 pounds of food produced by women is multiplied by the population differential of 1.3, the women's yield rises to 5214.94 pounds, which exceeds the total weight of food supplied by men by almost 200 pounds. Table 13 shows the amounts of food each man and woman produced.

TABLE 13

YIELDS PER INDIVIDUAL DURING 93 DAYS

	TOTAL WEIGHT PRODUCED (LBS.)	AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION	AVERAGE YIELD PER INDIVIDUAL (LBS.)
MEN	5067.09	11.25	450.408
WOMEN	4011.49	8.62	465.37

Individual yields of food by weight were slightly higher in the ninety-three day period for women than men. This shows that although men produced a greater total amount of food by weight, at the level of individuals men and women produced almost the same weights of foods in the period of study. It is particularly interesting that this is so because men as a group and as individuals accounted for more instances of work than the women, as

Tables 14 and 15 show.

TABLE 14

TOTAL INSTANCES OF WORK

	MEN	WOMEN
BLOWPIPE HUNTING	179	3
OTHER HUNTING	64	7
BAMBOO RAT HUNTING	28	16
FISHING	43	82
COLLECTING TUBERS	144	340
COLLECTING OTHER VEGETABLES	78	35
GETTING HONEY	19	8
GETTING RATTAN	282	86
TOTAL	837	577

TABLE 15

INSTANCES OF WORK PER PERSON IN 93 DAYS

	AVERAGE NO. OF PERSONS IN CAMP PER DAY	TOTAL INSTANCES OF WORK BY SEX GROUP	AVERAGE NO. OF INSTANCES OF WORK PER INDIVIDUAL	% OF DAYS WORKED
MEN	11.25	837	74.7	80%
WOMEN	8.62	577	66.9	72%

Table 14 shows that men accounted for 260 more instances of work. Even if the number of instances of women's work is multiplied by the population differential of 1.3 to calculate how many more instances of work could

have been done by women if there were as many women as men, the total number of work instances is 750, still eighty-seven instances less than the men's total. Similarly, Table 15 shows that at the level of individuals, men worked more times during the period of study than women. If the information in Table 15 is converted into weeks, men work 5.6 days per week while women work 5.0 days per week, a matter which will be discussed further below. This was the case even though, it will be recalled from Table 13, women as individuals produced slightly more food by weight than men as individuals, a finding that Table 16 documents further.

TABLE 16

AVERAGE YIELDS PER INSTANCE OF WORK

	NO. OF WORK INSTANCES	TOTAL YIELD (LBS.)	AVERAGE YIELD PER INSTANCE (LBS. PER INSTANCE)
MEN	837	5067.09	6.05
WOMEN	577	4011.49	6.95

The average yields of food per instance were almost one pound higher for women than men.

It seems paradoxical that men worked more often, had greater hourly yields, and worked longer each instance of work than women but that women actually produced more food by weight each instance of work. In order to understand how this can be so, let us consider the following.

TABLE 17

AVERAGE YIELDS PER INSTANCE OF WORK

	MEN		WOMEN		AVERAGE YIELDS (LBS. PER INSTANCE)	
	INSTANCES OF WORK	TOTAL WT. PRODUCED (LBS.)	INSTANCES OF WORK	TOTAL WT. PRODUCED (LBS.)	MEN	WOMEN
BLOWPIPE HUNTING	179	909.69	3	0	5.08	0
OTHER HUNTING	64	263.87	7	6.5	4.12	0.92
BAMBOO RAT	28	89.15	16	24.0	3.18	1.5
FISHING	43	40.32	82	36.09	0.94	0.44
COLLECTING TUBERS	144	1531.75	340	3026.25	10.64	8.9
COLLECTING OTHER VEG.	78	198.75	35	307.2	2.55	8.7
COLLECTING HONEY	19	509.51	8	73.3	26.82	3.35
TOTAL	555	3543.04	491	3473.34	6.38	7.07
RATTAN WORK (AND YIELD FROM TRADE)	282	1524.05	86	538.5	5.40	6.26
TOTAL	837	5067.09	577	4011.49	6.05	6.95

Table 17 shows that in almost every activity men had higher yields per instance than women, yet the totals, both without and with rattan work and trade figured in, show the women to have higher overall yields per instance than men. Let us consider the reasons for this apparent paradox. The activity for which there are the greatest number of instances of work

is women's gathering of tubers. This activity has a high yield per instance, although it is not the highest. Excluding rattan work for the moment, there is no other activity category that approaches the frequency of this high yield gathering. Thus women spend most of their time working at an activity with a high return. Men's work is more frequently diversified to cover a range of activities, most of which have a lower yield per instance than women's gathering. Excluding rattan work, men spend the greatest number of work instances on all types of hunting, the combined total being 271 instances. Yet the yields per instance for the different types of hunting are substantially lower than the yields for women's gathering. Men thus work more frequently at a variety of activities with lower yields per instance than gathering tubers, while women more frequently concentrate on this high yield activity. Men work for foods that are more "expensive" in terms of the amount of return for the time worked, and they more frequently diversify their activities than women. This accounts for men's lower total yields per instance of work. Rattan work and the resultant trade are also low yielding activities: it takes a lot of rattan work to produce even a few cups of rice. When these activities are figured in, both men's and women's total yields per instance of work are lowered, although the women's still exceed the men's. What does not show up in the trade figures are the non-edible goods which rattan work purchases. Yet it is certain that rattan work follows the pattern of men working more frequently at lower yield activities than women.

Table 18 presents information on the contribution by each sex to the calorie supply of the Batek diet.

TABLE 18

CALORIES SUPPLIED BY MEN AND WOMEN

	CALORIES PER GRAM	CALORIES SUPPLIED BY MEN	CALORIES SUPPLIED BY WOMEN
BLOWPIPE HUNT.	1.9	784,698.1	0
OTHER HUNTING	1.9	227,614.3	5,606.9
BAMBOO RAT	1.9	7,690.079	2,070.24
FISH	1.0	18,305.28	16,384.86
TUBERS	1.0	695,414.5	1,373,917.5
OTHER VEG.	0.3	27,069.75	41,840.64
HONEY	2.86	661,568.16	95,175.65
TRADED FOOD	3.6	2,490,907.3	880,124.4
TOTAL	—	4,913,267.2	2,415,120.0

As we were unable to obtain the actual caloric values of Batek foods, the figures here are an approximation, based upon the western foods listed in caloric charts most closely resembling them. The figures for hunted meats were based upon the caloric value of lean beef, fish was based upon non-fatty fish, tubers upon the figures for yams, other vegetables upon figures for silver beet, and traded food upon the caloric value of rice, which comprises most of the food the Batek receive through trade. Sources of caloric information were Coursey 1967:169, Osmond and Wilson 1968, and Davis 1954. Although these figures are only approximations, they do allow a comparison to be made between the calories supplied by men and women. Men's contribution to the caloric total was twice that of the women. The only caloric production by women that exceeded caloric production of men

were gathering tubers and other vegetables. Men not only produce more food by weight but also dominate the production of the higher calorie foods. This is particularly striking in the case of traded foods, which have the highest caloric value of any foods obtained by the Batek. If we omit traded food from the calculations to see what the caloric values of foraged food alone are, men still produced 1.58 the number of calories that women produce.

As has been seen, there is no one all-encompassing way of assessing the roles of the sexes in the Batek economic system. The different ways of viewing their work and their productivity--hourly yields, yields per instance, frequency of activity, type of activity, caloric values of foods produced--point to how complex the workings of this system are, even though on the surface the organization of labour and the productive success of the system appear simple enough. What is clear from the data is that men and women share the responsibility for food-getting almost equally. Batek men average 3.7 food-getting days per week and women 4.3 food-getting days per week. When rattan work is added on to the foraging activities, the averages rise to 5.6 work days per week for men and 5.0 work days per week for women. This is clearly higher, for example, than the 2.5 work days per week of the !Kung Bushmen (for food-getting alone) (Lee 1968:37). But the Batek do not seem to think that they work particularly hard, nor do they view work as a burden. The Batek do not have a term for "work" that covers all types of productive activity. The Malay term for work, kerja, is used by the Batek only in reference to rattan work, kerja' 'awey. Most men and women approach their economic activities enthusiastically and good-naturedly. To them their means of food-getting are far more attractive and far less arduous than the alternative of doing serious agricultural work.

Batek sharing and valuation of food

Even though the productive labours of Batek men and women are usually directed at separate, complementary activities, the foods produced are distributed through a single sharing network. Each person's primary sharing responsibility is toward one's immediate household, and then toward one's parents and parents-in-law if they are resident in camp. The household unit then shares any remaining food with the other households, that is, with the other nuclear families and unmarried persons of the camp. All food is subject to the strong sharing ethic of Batek society unless the food is of such a small amount, as is the case with such foods as frogs or banana flowers, that it is considered enough for only the producer to eat. Besides ensuring that everyone, regardless of productive capacity, has food regularly, the sharing network ensures that all men and women, whether married or not, can easily gain access to the type of foods usually produced by the opposite sex.

The sharing of meat and vegetable foods is done with little ceremony. Usually it is the producer's children who take portions of food to each family in camp. Meat is usually cooked (see below for more detailed information on cooking) by the hunter or his wife before it is given to camp members, although if a particularly large quantity of meat has been produced a portion of uncooked meat may be given to each household to cook for itself. The Batek generally try to give equal portions to each household, although at times a bit extra may be allotted to families with several children. The recipient's kinship relationship to the hunter has no bearing on the cut of meat given. Vegetable foods are also usually cooked before being given to other households, but sometimes uncooked tubers are given to families that have not managed to produce any tubers of their

own. No matter how many families produce meat or vegetable foods, each family still gives part of whatever they have managed to produce. The sharing ethic of the Batek is so strong that sharing occurs even when people have food, not just when they truly need it.

That each family shares whatever kind of food it has produced, whether it is meat or vegetable, and in return receives whatever foods other families have procured, suggests that the different foods of the Batek have an equivalent exchange value.[1] Hunters do not just exchange meat with other hunters, for example. They, like people who gather foods, put into the system whatever they procure and get out of it whatever others produce. Since some people are more successful at hunting than others, they may actually end up producing most of the meat for a camp. A very good hunter might not ever receive as much meat in return as he himself produces. Yet this imbalance does not seem to bother or even occur to the Batek. There is no evidence that they keep track of the amounts and kinds of foods given or received. Hunters, for their efforts, receive mainly vegetable foods in return. Women gatherers, on the other hand, may receive far less meat in weight than what they share in vegetable foods. As long as each person receives something in exchange for his or her labour, however, the Batek seem to be satisfied. In this sense the productive efforts of the sexes are equally rewarded and are of equal standing.

Each person's and each family's contributions to the sharing network are rewarded simply by entitlement to continued participation in the network. Men and women are not additionally and separately rewarded socially for their productive efforts. Neither sex gains prestige or status for producing and sharing food. The sharing network cuts across sex lines and

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[1] The notion of exchange value rather than just value is taken from Sahlins' analysis of trade in non-monetary systems (Sahlins 1972:227-8n.).

does not place separate exchange values on the foods produced by each sex.

That the Batek do not differentially evaluate the foods produced by men and women is borne out by the arbitrariness of and variation in Batek statements of their food preferences. Numerous instances of questioning the Batek about their food preferences yielded as many different listings of favoured foods, depending upon the individual asked and, at times, depending upon what foods they had recently been eating. Contrary to the popular stereotype that all hunters and gatherers culturally value meat above all other foods (see below), meat has its place in the Batek diet but does not dominate their desires and thoughts. The Batek always welcome meat, and may even get excited when someone manages to produce meat after several days without it, but the same can be said to be true of their other foods, including staple vegetable foods, as well. Hunting, as detailed above, does not always take precedence over other activities the Batek can choose to do. Rattan collecting--one of the end products of which is rice gained through trade--often occupies men who could otherwise spend their time hunting. Indeed, rice is frequently said to be their favourite food. Yet, I have seen women who have rice on hand go gathering tubers because, as they said, they wanted a change of food. The Batek often cite fruit as their favourite food. The Batek like the flavour of the fruit and the ease of food-getting during the fruit season. They culturally emphasize fruit through songs and stories involving their superhuman beings, who are thought to play a role in fruit production, an emphasis that does not apply to meat or their other foods. It should be noted that fruit is collected by both men and women rather than by just one sex.

Productive capacities--the husband-wife partnership

The productive capacities and the actual productivity of the husband-

wife unit, the basic productive unit in Batek society, undergo many changes over the span of a couple's life together. The relationship of each spouse's productivity to that of the other spouse is not static but rather is in a state of continuous compensation and flux. An obvious factor influencing the productive relationship is the health of the husband and wife. If one is ill, then the other must procure enough food for both of them as well as for any dependent children. There are some less obvious social and personal factors involved in the productive relationship of spouses, however. These will now be discussed.

Young, newly married couples basically continue the work patterns of their bachelorhood. The men spend many hours hunting and collecting rattan. The main activities of women in their pre-motherhood years are digging tubers and collecting other foods for herself and her husband, working rattan, making pandanus mats and baskets, and constructing the family shelter at each new camp. When a couple have children, they have to produce more food to feed their growing family. Children are not expected by their parents to work at food-getting, but whatever small contributions children make of their own accord are welcome. Not until the children are about fourteen years old do they provide much of their own food. During the teen years the children become increasingly independent, but this independence does not imply severance of food-sharing ties. As the children are able to provide more of their own food, they begin to give food to their parents. Teenagers may in turn receive food from their parents whenever they need it. The dependency relationship of children to parents thus gradually changes into a relationship of mutual sharing and helping each other out. As the parents grow older and may begin to suffer from loss of strength and endurance, poorer eyesight, and generally lessened productivity, their children will increasingly compensate for this.

As the couple grows older, whoever is the stronger of the two tends to become the more productive. Most likely this will be the younger one, but not necessarily. Thus, in many older couples the wife will be the main food-provider. Older men do not make very good hunters and may spend their time digging tubers with their wives or alone. When they do go hunting or fishing, they may spend long hours working, but often return with nothing. Older women generally keep up their gathering activities, with differing yields depending on their strength. Husbands and wives adjust to these changes in productive capacities with understanding and even compassion. In the case of one older couple, the wife Tanyong, who is about forty-seven years old, is stronger and more productive than her husband Langsat, who is about fifty-five. Whatever Langsat's efforts in food-getting are and whatever their result, Tanyong stands up for him. She explains that he is old and therefore cannot work hard. When his efforts are unsuccessful, she attributes this to bad luck rather than to any fault on the part of her husband. Tanyong works hard and provides large amounts of food for her family, which includes two partially dependent children, and also works collecting rattan with or without Langsat. She is clearly the main productive partner at this stage in their married life.

Most, but not all, husbands and wives pull their own weight in their cooperative food-getting. There is at least one Batek man, whose young wife comes from another Aboriginal group, the Semaq Beri, who must do most of the food-getting for his family because his wife seldom digs tubers, and on the occasions she does dig, she does not usually get very much food. He does not expect her to act any differently. He simply attributes her non-industriousness to the fact that she was born and raised among non-Batek, who do not dig wild tubers. He accepts her lack of effort and compensates for it by doing more work himself so that he, his wife, and two

young children have enough to eat. While this was the most striking case of laziness (males kerja', "anger towards work") among Batek families, there are other Batek men and women who do not work as hard as others simply out of apparent laziness. They get along with extra help from spouses or other relatives and friends. Toleration of laziness seems to have its limits, however. Some Batek said they had given up trying to help one man work off his debt owed to rattan traders because he did not bother to work much himself.

Work groups

The Batek do their food-getting and other activities in groups comprising members of either a single sex or both sexes. The actual composition of the work groups depends upon the nature of the work being performed and the friendships and common interests of the persons involved. People with similar work interests who enjoy working together do so. This may or may not cut across sex lines. For example, a hunting group consists of men who want to go hunting together. Women who want to dig in a particular area on a given day go off together to work. Rattan collecting parties may consist of both men and women, that is, whoever wants to work rattan that day. There are no rules about who may or may not work together. Every imaginable configuration of workers occurs at one time or another: husbands and wives, teenagers of one or both sexes, old people with young, mothers or fathers with opposite sex children, married persons with other married or unmarried persons of opposite sex. There are no kinship-related restrictions or prohibitions on work group composition. Neither men nor women guard their spouses from working with someone who could potentially be a sexual partner. Similar work interests, however, usually mean that men work together and women work together. Work groups continually shift

in composition depending on individuals' interests of the day and depending on who is still in the camp. The flexibility of Batek work groups ensures variety in the performance of everyday tasks and parallels the flexibility of the Batek economy which promotes the taking advantage of timely opportunities.

Cooperative planning

Although individuals can and do make their own decisions about the types of work they want to do and when and where to do it, these decisions are not made in isolation from the rest of the camp. The very fact that families camp together indicates some discussion and congruence of individual interests. Basically, people interested in doing the same activities in a certain area tend to camp together. When it comes to deciding individual activities each day, a similar consideration is made. Such cooperative planning takes place at various levels. Husbands and wives equally share the decision-making about their own daily activities, about where to move, about whether one will rest and one will work on a particular day. Members of different families make decisions about working together: they must decide where to work and whether there is enough food to allow them to do the work if it is not the kind of work that yields an immediate food return (such as rattan work). The families in a camp plan moves together, each person indicating where he or she would like to move and why. Families that have similar inclinations move together, while dissenting families may go elsewhere. The most striking level of cooperative planning by the Batek is the group decision to leave a certain region unexploited during the year so that they can go there during the difficult flood season and expect to find food. Unlike the stereotype of hunter-gatherers thinking only of today and not planning at all for the future, the Batek do plan

their activities, both in the short term and the long term. Batek planning allows for both individual autonomy and cooperation between members of the camp group. When persons make decisions that match the decisions of others, they camp or work together. When people make divergent decisions, they pursue their own inclinations until such time as their interests again coincide.

Participation of the Sexes in Non-food-getting Activities

Food preparation and cooking

Batek cooking is basically very simple. Foods are roasted directly on the fire, boiled in a cooking pot or cooked in a length of bamboo placed on the fire. Everyone knows how to do this basic cooking. Even young children are able to cook food and frequently do so. There are a few specialization tendencies in cooking, however, which prevail much of the time but not always. Each family cooks its own food in its own shelter; food is not placed into a common pot and cooked communally by or for the entire camp. In the family shelter, the wife is considered responsible for cooking rice or tubers in large quantity for her family. In fact, one teenaged girl who did not want to marry a certain man gave the excuse that she did not know how to cook for him, even though for years she had been cooking her own food. Even though the wife is in charge of such cooking, anyone can do it. People simply cook for themselves and their companions or family members when they get hungry. When a family cooks tubers, the wife may begin the cooking but the husband and children put more tubers on the fire and take them out and scrape the ashes off when they are cooked. Hunters sometimes butcher and partially cook game in the forest, so when they reach camp it is simply distributed. When game is brought back uncooked,

the hunter and his companions or older children, usually boys, prepare and cook the meat, though women may do it as well or instead of the men. This is especially likely if it is a woman who has procured the meat, as in the case of bamboo rats. The preparation of a monkey, for example, involves singeing the hair of the animal by placing it directly on to the fire and then scraping the hair off. Then the carcass is cut to expose the entrails. These are taken out, the edible parts being roasted over the fire or boiled in a cooking pot and the inedible parts discarded. To the children frequently falls the task of cleaning the intestines. The children go about this with great enthusiasm as they do for other activities of questionable desirability, such as plucking the feathers from flea-ridden hornbills. After this basic preparation, the animal is simply placed on sticks over the fire to roast. It is then cut into pieces and distributed to as many people as it will feed. When there are large quantities of meat, more than enough to go around the camp, simple drying racks may be made from green wood by any man or woman and some of the meat placed on it to dry out. Meat is said to keep for four or five days if dried in this way, but usually it gets eaten well before that.

The processing of poisonous foods is the only food preparation that is time consuming. Both men and women process such foods, the most common of which are the large tuber gadong and the nut penace'. Gadong (Dioscorea hispida) is processed in large quantities to make the work time worthwhile. Usually a camp as a whole decides to devote the necessary one or two days to processing gadong. The camp members take into consideration how much food they have in camp already before beginning the work on gadong. If there is sufficient to last until the gadong is ready, they do not bother to collect more readily edible foods that day. If not, some people may try to get non-poisonous tubers to tide them over. Even though gadong is

processed in large enough quantities--often over 100 pounds--to feed a whole camp for at least a couple of days, not everyone in the camp helps in the processing work. Usually a few men and women dig up the tubers and bring them into the camp, and then one or two people begin to do the processing. Usually the women initiate the processing labours, but men may do so. During the processing, workers come and go. It is not uncommon for one person to work steadily throughout the day while other Batek men and women who are perfectly capable of helping out simply lounge around the camp. The workers do not seem to mind this. Whoever wants to work does so; whoever does not simply does not join in. Many Batek say that they do not mind doing such work, although they would not like to do it every day. Some people have little patience for it, however. On one occasion a woman got so fed up with doing the processing that she went off digging for non-poisonous tubers, and her husband took over the processing and minded one of their children at home while she was out in the forest. The first step in processing tubers is to cut off the skins. The tubers look like large, irregularly shaped potatoes and are about six inches across on the average. These are boiled whole or cut into large chunks and then sliced very thinly or are sliced paper-thin first and then boiled. The boiling takes about half an hour regardless of which procedure is used. The Batek do not bother to change the water between batches until it becomes too dirty. They say the water in which the gadong is boiled contains poison. After all the gadong has been boiled and sliced, it is placed in an open-work rattan basket that has been lined with large leaves to hold in the gadong slices. The basket is then taken to the nearby river or stream and secured in the water. It is left there for twelve to twenty-four hours, depending on how fast the water is flowing. When the Batek suspect it has been long enough, they take the basket out of the water and boil

some of the gadong slices in fresh water. These boiled slices are then tasted. If anyone feels a bit dizzy or sick (mabo') after eating them, the basket of gadong is placed in the river again and the test tried again at a later point. When the gadong is at last finally leached of its poison, it is eaten freely, but only after another cooking, either by boiling or roasting over the fire in a green bamboo. The Batek say that large quantities of it can be eaten without ill effect, unlike the poisonous nut penace', which is said to cause stomach aches if eaten in large quantity. Once the gadong has been processed, a camp may soon decide to move to a new location where they hope to find non-poisonous tubers. The Batek do not like to have to depend on gadong for too long because of the lengthy preparations it requires.

Penace' (Pangium edule; known as kepayang in Malay) is a seasonal nut available from September through November. It contains the poison hydrocyanic acid (Burkill 1966:1682) and thus must be thoroughly processed before it is edible. Both Batek men and women perform the processing work. The nuts are usually procured by the men, who climb the trees to get them and bring them back to camp. The penace' nuts grow within a husk about four to six inches in diameter. This fairly soft husk is cut open to expose the approximately twenty-four seeds which are embedded in pulp. The seeds are cut away from the pulp and any excess pulp scraped off the seeds. The unshelled seeds are then boiled whole. The Batek place a few of the green palm leaves used for thatch in the boiling water, their reason being that the process works this way. I do not know what, if any, effect the leaves actually have on the process. Once boiled, the shells of the seeds are cracked open. Usually the seeds are then cut into slivers and placed in a leaf-lined rattan basket or a cloth sack. Sometimes the kernels are left whole and merely strung on a rattan fibre like a necklace. The seeds are

then placed in the river to leach for one night if the seeds have been slivered or for two nights if they have been left whole. After the leaching the penace' is boiled again and then tasted to see if the nuts are indeed ready to eat. If no one feels ill after the initial tasting, the penace' is safely eaten. Like all nuts, penace' is a good source of proteins and fats. The Batek say that a person can eat only a little of it or else he will get a stomach ache. This may be due to the relative richness of the nuts or perhaps to a less than complete leaching of the poison from the nuts even when they have been processed as thoroughly as possible by the Batek. Most likely, however, the nuts spoil rather rapidly. Burkill (1966:1682) reports that the oil that can be processed from the nuts turns rancid quickly and can cause diarrhoea. Although the Batek do not process penace' into oil, the fats of the nuts probably turn rancid much the same as the oily form of the fats does. Even so, the Batek keep the penace' in bamboo containers for as long as the supply lasts, making sure to eat only small enough amounts of it so they feel well afterwards.

Collecting water and firewood

Both men and women collect the everyday necessities of water and firewood. The women seem to fetch water in long bamboo containers more frequently than the men, but this is not a job that is considered to be the special responsibility of the women. Water is fetched as frequently as is necessary by whoever in the family wants it or sees that a water container is empty. It is not an onerous job since Batek camps are always situated on the bank of a river or stream. Firewood is collected by anyone who is in the forest. Most men and women return to camp from their food-getting or other activities with a load of firewood slung over their shoulders. When a family's firewood supply is low, any member of the

family may go into the forest to get more. Both men and women make fires in the family hearth; this job is not the province of one sex or the other. Children of both sexes help out with both water and firewood collecting when so inclined or when asked by their parents to do so.

House-building

Construction of the simple lean-tos that house each family is usually done by the women. Wives are responsible for making a new house each time a family moves, the husbands usually immediately going off to hunt when a new campsite is reached. Bachelor men and teenaged boys who are living without a female companion may construct their own shelters, although sometimes a closely related woman will do it for them or help them with it. The actual house site is selected by both husband and wife on their arrival at a new camp. The husband may cut the saplings for the supports before going off hunting, and the wife goes into the forest to look for the cemcom palm, the fronds of which are made into thatch. The wife cuts the palm fronds and piles them up. She then drags the pile on her back, making her look like an oversized beetle, back to the camp. She makes the palm fronds into thatching shingles by first cutting off any thorns on the stem with a quick stroke of a bush-knife and then firmly folding over all the leaflets on one side of the frond so that they diagonally overlap the leaflets on the untouched side of the frond. When all the palm fronds have been treated in this way, she begins to lash them on to three upright supports made of saplings which have been stuck in the ground at about a 45 degree angle. Three palm fronds are held together and then placed on the upper side of the uprights, starting from ground level, and secured by twisting one or two leaflets around each upright. This process is continued until the shelter is fully covered. The wife may place some large-leafed plants over

the thatch to make the shelter extra rain-proof. She may construct a platform floor, but usually leaves this job for her husband if they decide to have one. These are made by placing split bamboo or a series of smooth, strong plant stems (called boman) across some small logs. It is most common during the non-flood times of the year to live and sleep right on the ground. The woman's part of the house-building work takes about one to one and a half hours. When the new shelter is ready, the wife moves the family possessions into it and makes a fire to one side of the shelter. During the course of living at the camp, repairs may be made on the shelter, by either the wife or the husband. Repairs range from adding more leaves to the roof if there are leaks to completely rebuilding the shelter in the same or a new location.

On the few occasions that the Batek decide to make more permanent houses, as they may if they intend to try to do some swidden agriculture, the men usually construct more substantial Malay-style houses. These are constructed of wood and split bamboo and take a considerable amount of time to make. The houses are raised on stilts, have four walls and a double-pitched roof. The walls and floor are constructed of split bamboo or sheets of tree bark. Such a house is worth making only when the Batek think they will be in a place for many weeks, as is the case when they try to plant gardens. It is certainly not a practical construction for nomadic forest life since the building is so time-consuming. The Batek do not always make such elaborate houses when they attempt agriculture, however. Sometimes they simply construct their typical forest camp lean-tos. Making a Malay-style house seems to be just a novelty for them, something to do for a change. They are quite willing to abandon these elaborate houses when they decide to move on, even if they have just completed constructing them. There are times when the Batek prefer to live in lean-tos even when

they have Malay-style houses. When Kirk Endicott lived with some Aring River Batek at Post Aring in 1971 during one of their agricultural attempts, the Batek had constructed a number of Malay-style houses in the clearing at the behest of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. They did not live in them, however, as they much preferred to live in lean-tos in the coolness of the nearby forest. The Malay-style houses were only used when a department official made an inspection of the area.

Moving

When a family or a camp group decides to move, the people pack up their possessions in pandanus baskets or cloth slings. The job of carrying these possessions falls to everyone who is capable of doing it. Thus both men and women act as their own beasts of burden. As nomads, the Batek keep their possessions few and light. Women normally carry their infants and perhaps one other young child. If they can also manage to carry some supplies, they do so. Otherwise the men carry most of the household goods. If a family has more young children than the wife is able to carry, the husband or an older child may carry a youngster. Children carry as much as they can or want to handle. Even three- and four-year-olds sometimes carry small cloth slings with a few light items inside. Moving is a cooperative effort, without one sex or the other having to carry all the supplies for the family.

Tool-making

Batek tools are made and repaired by both men and women. Specialized tools, primarily hunting equipment, tend to be made by men since they are the persons who use the equipment all the time. However, women know how to make darts and some can do basic blowpipe maintenance. Digging sticks

are made by both men and women by cutting a sapling to the desired length and either carving one end to a point or lashing on a metal blade with rattan. The blades are hammered out of old bush-knives or even lids from cooking pots that have been obtained through trade. Both men and women do this metal-work by heating the metal and pounding it into the desired shape with a hammer, using the butt of an axe for an anvil. Both men and women sharpen knives and digging stick blades on sharpening stones. When a bush-knife needs a new wooden handle, the men usually take care of carving it, but women can and do perform this task as well. Everyday equipment or spontaneous tools are made by anyone who needs them. These tools include such things as tongs made out of bamboo, raspers made out of thorny stems, and torches made out of leaf-wrapped resin held in place by a forked stick. Batek men, women, and children simply make whatever such tools they need or want from the products on hand in the forest.

Crafts

As is the case with tool-making, some of the Batek crafts are performed by both men and women while a few crafts are the specialties of one sex or the other. Men and women make their own loincloths by simply tearing pieces of material acquired through trade or at village shops into the required lengths. All Batek men and women can do very simple sewing repairs to any store-bought (or traded) clothing they have, the sewing being done with store-bought needles and thread. Even children of either sex do their own sewing when necessary. Both sexes make flower headdresses, the same designs being worn by men and women. Rattan armbands are also made by each sex, although men wear them more often. Some of the Batek crafts will now be described in more detail.

Barkcloth was the traditional clothing material before commercially

made cloth was obtained from the outside. The Batek do not normally bother to make barkcloth any more although many of them know how. They prefer to trade for or buy cloth as it is easier than making barkcloth, and woven cloth lasts longer than the barkcloth. When we asked the Batek about barkcloth, Tanyong, a woman, said that of course they knew how to make barkcloth and immediately asked the older teenagers to make some for us so we could see how it is done. The teenagers, both boys and girls, climbed the appropriate trees and cut off sections of the trunk about five feet long. There are a few types of trees that are suitable for barkcloth, but the Batek say they prefer the ipuh tree, from which their dart poison comes, because the barkcloth made from it is white. After the teenagers got their log sections, they pounded the bark with sticks and the blunt edge of bush-knives in order to loosen the bark. A slice was then made down the length of the log and the bark carefully cut away from the wood in one piece. The bark was pounded with heavy sticks for about an hour in order to soften and spread the bark fibres into a cloth-like state. The pounding requires a smooth surface. In one case this was a felled tree that had been stripped of bark. In another case a young man had cut down a tree, smoothed the top of the tree stump and done the pounding on this surface. When the Batek made barkcloth seriously for regular use, they cut cross-hatch designs into the pounding sticks in order to achieve a smoother, even decorative, spreading of the bark fibres. One of the Batek, an older man, made such a pounding stick for this demonstration and his barkcloth was indeed the best in texture. It should be noted that he was the most experienced of all the people making barkcloth that day. Some of the teenagers working on the barkcloth periodically held up their lengths of cloth so a parent or other adult could see them, and asked if they needed more pounding. Apparently these teenagers knew the basic process but had

not had to make barkcloth enough times, if ever at all, to make it without advice from the older Batek. When the barkcloth had been sufficiently pounded, it was taken to the stream and rinsed over and over again, being wrung and twisted during the rinsing. The Batek said that it was necessary to be so thorough because the ipuh bark would otherwise still have poison in it. When the rinsing was completed, the barkcloth was put out to dry. The Batek say that a good piece of barkcloth will last several months. Traditionally it was used for loincloths and for slings for carrying babies and possessions, uses to which manufactured cloth is now put.

The Batek make baskets out of three different forest materials: bark, rattan, and pandanus. Bark baskets are made by both men and women by taking sections of bark from the trees, folding over the corners, and stitching them in place with lengths of rattan. These baskets are used primarily for collecting honey, but may be put to other uses as well. Rattan baskets are made by the men only. These are open-work baskets with a hexagonal pattern much like that used in the cane chair seats known to westerners. The Batek say that a few women may know how to make rattan baskets, but they are definitely a male specialty, and men make them whenever anyone, male or female, needs them. They are used as receptacles for holding foods that are to be leached in the rivers, the open-work design allowing the free flow of water over the food. Cruder rattan baskets are sometimes made on the spot for carrying game back to camp if a hunter does not have a cloth sling or pandanus basket for this purpose. Rattan baskets are made fairly quickly, the actual construction taking from half an hour to an hour once the rattan has been found and split into is useable form, a procedure which is also quickly completed.

Pandanus baskets, as well as pandanus mats and pouches, are the

specialty of the women. Pandanus work is very time-consuming, as the pandanus strips are tightly woven into a strong, solid mat. It may take several days to complete a large sleeping mat. Pandanus is cut by the women in the primary forest where it grows. The Batek women prefer the variety of pandanus they call remadul, because they like its strength. The remadul pandanus is said by the Batek to have been given specifically to them by the deity Tohan. The pandanus leaves are about five feet long and taper to a point from the maximum width of about four inches. There are thorns along the edges and the centre spines of the leaves. These are sliced off with a bush-knife. The narrow pointed ends of the leaves are also discarded. The Batek women then cut the leaves into strips, using the strong stem of the pati' tuber as the cutting instrument. This stem is made into a cutting tool by drying it over the fire and then twisting it to separate it into fibres. A knot is made at each end of the stem and then it is slipped over the hand. One fibre is held forward by the index finger and used to slice the pandanus. The reason this stem is used instead of a knife is that it causes the pandanus to split along the grain of the fibres in the leaf, thus producing an even strip. If a knife is used, it can too easily cut across the fibres and produce an uneven edge. The stem splits the pandanus quickly and easily with far better results than a knife would produce. As the fibres of the pati' stem break, another is used as the splitting tool. The width of the pandanus strips is adjusted depending upon whether they are to be used for baskets, sleeping mats, or small pouches. When all the pandanus leaves have been split, they are cut into the desired lengths, also according to the use to be made of them. The strips are dried over the fire and then softened by pulling each strip over a smooth piece of wood or bamboo a few times. The strips are then folded in half and piled up, ready for use. The basic weaving

technique is the same regardless of what kind of object is being made. The weaving is done on the diagonal, which is a method that allows tight weaving without requiring a frame. Only the square bottom of the large baskets called hape' are woven on the square, and the Batek women must employ a special technique of folding over the pandanus strips in such a way that a tight weave is achieved with that shape. Such measures are not necessary for diagonal weaving used in the upper part of the hape' baskets, the sleeping mats, and pouches. The outer edge of each type of pandanus item is finished off in a different way. The hape' basket edge is the most involved, requiring five steps to finish it cleanly. Batek pandanus items are functional in design and usually are not decorated except for the occasional simple change in the weaving pattern or the dying of some of the pandanus strips with natural vegetable or store-bought dyes. Some of the Batek like to have one special dyed mat for use in the ritual singing and dancing sessions, when they may sit on it while singing to the super-human beings.

Pandanus weaving is a skill that requires instruction and practice rather than trial and error attempts. Girls begin to learn the techniques when they are about eight to ten years old. An older women, not necessarily the girl's mother, shows the girl how to weave and supervises her efforts. The girl also helps with the easier jobs in the preparation of the pandanus, such as cutting and softening the strips. By the time a girl is about sixteen, she will most probably be quite skillful at making pandanus items. While proficiency at weaving is not a requirement of wifehood per se, it is expected by Batek men and women that all the women know how to weave pandanus. The Batek women thus supply the pandanus sleeping mats, baskets, and pouches for all the members of the group. Bachelor men, who do not have wives to make pandanus items for them, acquire whatever woven items

they need from some close female relatives or may buy or exchange them from an unmarried teenaged girl. Pandanus products are used every day, and everyone needs them. They are carried from camp to camp and discarded only when they become too tattered for further use.

The Batek say that men do not know how to do pandanus weaving, that it is something the women do. However, occasionally a man or boy will sit by a female relative who is weaving and begin to play around with weaving some of the scraps of pandanus or even start to work on one edge of the object the woman is making. I have seen boys around four and five years of age being shown how to weave by an older woman. They were laughing at each other's attempts and gave up after a few minutes, saying they could not do it right. The woman said she was just teaching them in play and that the children would just play around (Malay main-main) at it. It was obviously a game for them, however. One married man in his late twenties knows how to do some of the pandanus work, the basic diagonal weaving. He spent a few hours one day helping his mother weave a large sleeping mat. His mother told us with obvious pride that he knows how to do the weaving, something most men do not know how to do. It should be noted that the son is an excellent hunter. That he also knows how to do some pandanus weaving was considered a special achievement by his mother, though other men and women did not remark either positively or negatively on his skill and interest in weaving. A fuller look at female specialization in pandanus work will be reserved until later in the chapter.

Another craft that is the specialty of women is plaiting rattan waistbands, called nem. Women wear waistbands that consist of a long plaited strand that is wrapped around the body just below the waist as many times as it will go, usually between ten and twenty times. The waistband is made of a narrow type of rattan called tengweng. The rattan is scraped

of its thorns and then cut into to get at the usable fibres. The fibres are pulled down and off the core of the rattan. They are then pulled through a stick which has been split part way down the centre and stuck into the ground. As the fibres are pulled through the stick, the useless fibres (which are too fine or short) are separated from the stronger strands that will be made into the waistband. The waistband is made by tying the ends of several of the rattan fibres to a shelter support or a stick placed in the ground and plaiting them, splicing in more strands as the ends of the previous strands are reached so that one long, continuous cord is made. When the woman thinks the waistband is long enough, she knots the end of it. The woman then dyes the waistband. Usually the fruit of the kaltu' palm is used for the dye, but there is at least one other fruit, the bofyɛf fruit of a climbing rattan, that also produces the orange colour that is used for women's waistbands. The fruits are placed whole into a pot of water and the waistband added. They are boiled together for about half an hour, after which time the waistband is taken out and allowed to dry over the fire, without any previous rinsing. Batek women replace their old waistbands whenever they want a new one and the proper rattan is available. The same waistband is usually worn for several months, however. When a woman makes a new waistband for herself, she may give the old one to a young daughter or to her husband so he can take part of it to wear as a single strand waistband (see Chapter 2).

Explanations of Organization of Labour

Batek explanations

If one asks Batek men or women why men hunt or why women do not normally hunt, the same answer is always received: Batek men hunt and women

do pandanus work. If one questions why women do pandanus work, Batek of both sexes respond that women do pandanus work and men make rattan baskets. These are the unvarying basic summations of the division of labour according to Batek men and women of all ages. The Batek never opposed hunting to gathering, the usual anthropological stereotype of foraging peoples' division of labour, but only to pandanus work.

If one pursues the question of why men rather than women hunt, the answers most frequently given by Batek of either sex are that women do not know how to hunt and that women do not have strong enough breath to blow the darts well. The Batek say that some girls and women know a little about hunting, giving as examples those women who do indeed do some hunting. However, both men and women say that these women just play at hunting and do not know how to do it seriously or for real (bener). Tanyong, one of the strongest and most energetic women I have ever met anywhere, elaborated the reasons she did not hunt. Firstly she stated that she could not blow the dart strongly enough to pierce the skin of an animal and penetrate to the blood where the dart poison must reach to be effective. Her husband, Langsat, added that women do not have the power to blow the darts hard enough for this. Tanyong also said that she did not know how to sneak up on the game as her husband did. She explained that when she goes along with her husband when he hunts, she waits in one spot and he sneaks up on the animals. She said that she could sneak up but only slowly. When questioned about the presence of children on a hunting trip, both Tanyong and Langsat pointed to the example of a younger couple which had small children. They explained that when the wife and her children go along with her husband on a hunt, she and the children stay far from the husband, who goes much further away, because the children laugh and make too much noise. It should be noted that men do not take their children on hunting trips,

even when the children beg to go with their fathers, except on those rare occasions when their wives go along. The Batek explain that a child would tire quickly on the long walk and would want to be carried by the father who is trying to hunt. In short, having children along on a hunting trip is a nuisance and a hindrance to successful hunting.

The Batek further explain their organization of labour in terms of knowledge. Both men and women say that the deity Tohan and the original people (Batek 'asal) taught the Batek how to do certain tasks, this knowledge having been transmitted through dreams. Some of the tasks were taught to only one sex. The Batek say that Tohan taught the men how to procure and use dart poison and hunt, and did not teach the women because they do not have strong enough breath. They also say that Tohan taught only the women how to weave pandanus and how to make thatch for their shelters and the large ritual shelter (haya' tebew). Some tasks, such as making bark-cloth, were taught to both sexes. And many of the tasks the Batek perform were not taught by Tohan at all but were merely figured out by the Batek themselves or were learned from the Malays. The most significant of the tasks the Batek learned by themselves is digging wild tubers. The Batek say that the original couple were hungry as they walked around the forest, so they dug up some tubers and cooked them over the red flower that was used as "fire" until true fire was obtained from the rusa deer. Similarly, the Batek say they figured out for themselves how to smoke out bees and get honey. The Batek say that early Batek learned how to process the poisonous gadong tuber from Ya' Kedat, a Malay hantu (evil spirit) whose husband made the gadong poisonous in order to kill her. Fishing was learned from the Malays, according to the Batek.

In addition to acknowledging the specialized knowledge supposedly given to each sex group by Tohan, the Batek recognize individual expertise

in tasks. Thus, within a sex group, certain people are recognized as being extremely skillful or knowledgeable in the jobs that all members of that sex group perform. For example, some men are known as excellent hunters. Yet those who are not successful are not denegrated. The Batek further acknowledge that individual ability and interest may cut across sex lines. Thus, the Batek say that men and women are permitted or are able to (boleh) do the tasks of the opposite sex, but that usually most men and women do not know how. Potential or ability is held quite separate from knowledge in Batek reasoning on sex roles. The Batek do not draw strict boundaries in their organization of labour. Rather, they allow for the possibility that individuals may want to learn and may even successfully perform the tasks usually undertaken by the opposite sex.

Analysis

In this section I will discuss why the Batek organization of labour is as it is and why the Batek explain it as "men hunt and women do pandanus weaving". As we have seen, most economic activities can be and are performed by Batek of both sexes, though in varying degrees for some activities. While men are the main participants in most types of hunting, women do manage to procure some animal foods through their own efforts. Similarly, men perform some collecting of vegetable foods even though the women gather far more regularly. Most of the non-food-getting activities are performed by both sexes, the most notable exceptions being the weaving of baskets from rattan and pandanus. That so few tasks are specifically the realm of only one sex means that all Batek individuals can be self-sufficient, for a short time at least, if necessary. The greatest implication of this is that men and women do not necessarily have to be married in order to have food, shelter, and goods. Sharing of food-getting responsibilities between

spouses makes life easier, however; having one sex concentrating on hunting while the other concentrates on gathering appears to be the most convenient and practical way for the Batek to procure food over the long run.

In order to understand why Batek men, like men in most foraging societies, do most of the hunting, it is necessary to examine physiological explanations. The Batek themselves explain male hunting in physiological terms, saying that men can blow the darts harder because they have stronger breath than women. Although I have no quantitative data to bear this out, it may well be that Batek men, who are generally larger than Batek women, have greater lung capacities and may be stronger in the diaphragm than the women, thus enabling them to more consistently shoot darts further and more forcefully. This is not to say that individual women are not capable of shooting darts as well as individual men, but that in terms of the sexes as groups, experience may well have shown the Batek that men tend to be far more effective as hunters than the women, even after equal training. Still it may be that, because of their being taught hunting skills and because of greater practice, men simply develop the capacity to blow darts more forcefully rather than this being an innate physiological difference.

Hunting is the most dangerous of Batek activities. The conditions that are necessary for successful hunting--going considerable distances from camp, being alone or with only a few people, and travelling in silence --are also the conditions conducive to attacks from tigers. Although today the tiger population is much reduced from what it was only decades ago, when the danger was sometimes so great that the Batek would camp in trees, hunters come across tigers far more frequently than other Batek. In case of an attack by a tiger, men have a better chance of survival than women because they can fight back with greater strength or can climb trees or run

away with greater speed. A further consideration in why men rather than women take on the risk that hunting entails is that in terms of group survival, men are more expendible than women. One reason is that there are more males than females in Batek society (1.47 to 1 in the group I studied). Such a preponderance of males was noted among the western Negritos, early in this century, by both Evans (1937:14) and Schebesta (1928:16) and recently among the Semai by Fix (1977). The reasons for this imbalance, whether genetic or medical, are not clear, but it appears to be an enduring condition among the forest-dwelling Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula. Thus a group could afford to lose more men than women before its biological survival was endangered. Even if the number of males in a group fell below that of the females, this would not necessarily be disastrous. It only takes one man to impregnate several women, whereas each woman takes nine months to produce a child, no matter how many men are present to impregnate her. Moreover, because men are not needed to nurture infants, the loss of a hunter would not endanger the life of his young child. It is unclear from my informants' statements whether the greater expendibility of men in Batek society is consciously recognized and is a causal consideration in the specialization of men in blowpipe hunting. But the Batek are intelligent people, and it seems likely that at least some of them realize this. Whatever the conscious reasons for the original establishment and later perpetuation of this division of labour, the protection of women from tiger attacks would have adaptive advantage in an evolutionary sense, if only as a fortunate, unintended side-effect.

Hunting is one of the few activities in Batek life that require years of training and practice before the necessary skills are mastered. It makes practical sense for only those persons who will be able to hunt the most frequently during their productive years to devote this time to learning

to hunt. It so happens that the most productive years for hunting are also a person's reproductive years. While women are certainly capable of learning how to hunt, it is not efficient for them to spend their time doing so because for much of their adult life they would have to forego hunting while they bear and nurture children. As pointed out earlier, it is not conducive to successful hunting to be accompanied by young children, especially nursing infants. The facts that men do not bear children and do not lactate mean that they are free at all times of their productive life to hunt in the required, unencumbered way.

Just as men predominate in hunting activities, so they take on most of the activities that necessitate climbing trees. Some Batek women can and do climb trees, but many women say that if they climb trees, they will not make it to the top. The men seem to find tree climbing easier, probably because of greater upper body strength. It should be noted that there are rarely any climbing accidents, possibly because only those people who are confident about their own abilities to climb actually do any climbing.

Although the Batek do not consider gathering to be "women's work", Batek women do gather on a far more regular basis than the men. Since the Batek rely heavily on foods which are obtained by gathering, there is a need for someone to concentrate on gathering on a permanent basis. Procuring enough tubers to serve as a staple is a time-consuming task. By taking over this task, the Batek women essentially enable men to spend more time hunting, which is an activity most effectively done by men, as we have seen. There are a number of practical reasons why gathering activities suit the women. Gathering is a job that can be performed at any time during a woman's life. Childbearing and nursing of infants do not interrupt a woman's gathering efforts of any length of time. Children, even very young

infants, can accompany their mothers on gathering trips. Babies can even nurse while their mothers are digging, as the babies are held near the breast by a cloth sling. The presence of noisy children actually increases the safety of the gathering group. Tigers are less likely to attack a large, noisy group of people than a small, quiet group. Thus women and all their children can form a gathering group. Unlike the situation in hunting, tubers will not be frightened off by the presence of a large, loud group! Moreover, gathering can be done fairly close to camp, thus further decreasing the risk of exposing the women and children to attacks by tigers. The fact that gathering can be done without travelling too far from camp also makes it easier for young children to accompany their mothers. If this were not the case, someone would have to remain in camp with the children every time women went out gathering.

Although men do some of the gathering work--especially when the foods are to be found high in the trees, when the women are ill or tired, or when there is not enough food from the women's gathering efforts alone--it is more efficient in terms of the overall economic labours of the Batek for women to take over most of the gathering work. Gathering is a relatively safe task for the women to perform on a regular basis. And this division of labour enables the men to devote more time to hunting than would be possible if they had to divide their time between hunting and gathering.

As we have seen, the Batek oppose male hunting to female work on pandanus objects. The reason for this opposition is not very obvious at first glance. However, if we consider that these are the two activities the Batek perform that require the most intensive learning of technique of any of the Batek tasks, the opposition makes more sense. Pandanus work is an acquired skill, much the same as hunting is a learned skill. That only the women consistently learn how to weave pandanus objects may be in part

a fluke of history: it may be that a woman or women developed the techniques or learned them from outsiders, such as Malay women, the knowledge then being passed on to other women. This, of course, is speculation, although it is not unreasonable to consider this possibility. Burkill's description of the Malay method of preparing Pandanus tectorius for weaving, in fact, closely resembles the above description of Batek preparation of remadul pandanus (1966:1679). More likely, however, the women rather than the men specialize in this time-consuming activity because the men must spend a comparable period of time making darts and maintaining their blowpipes. The women do not have to devote time to these hunt-related crafts; thus they are free to spend the hours necessary for weaving pandanus objects for themselves and the men. Rattan baskets, on the other hand, are quickly made, and most likely were developed for carrying game back from the forest after a hunt. This connection with hunting is most probably the reason that rattan basketry has become a specialty of the men.

Summary

Most of the activities of the Batek are performed by members of both sexes. In some food-getting activities one sex or the other dominates in frequency of performance of the activity and in yields. This statistical dominance is not matched by a cultural stereotyping of the particular activity as man's work or woman's work, however; both sexes are allowed to do the work. The Batek specifically sex-type only two activities--blowpipe hunting and pandanus weaving--for physiological, time-efficiency, and child care reasons. Yet even in these activities there are no prohibitions preventing members of the opposite sex from trying or doing them. By not sex-typing most of their activities and by not being strictly prohibitive

about those tasks that are sex-typed, the Batek allow themselves great flexibility in the organization of labour and in getting work done. The number of persons who can perform a particular task is at a maximum rather than the minimum that would be the effect of limiting most work activities to one sex or the other. This affords great efficiency in food-getting and also means that each individual can support himself or herself if necessary. Correlated with the sparsity of sex-typing of activities is the fact that the Batek do not differentially evaluate the work of men or women, for their work is largely the same. Even where the work is sex-typed, it is not evaluated asymmetrically. No special status or prestige applies to any activities nor to the persons who perform them. In the organization of labour men and women are socially and culturally treated as equals even when they perform different activities.

CHAPTER 4

MALE - FEMALE SOCIAL INTERACTION

This chapter is devoted to the ways in which men and women interact in Batek society. The most important social roles of adult men and women are those of husband and wife. Much of this chapter will deal with the dynamics of marriage and divorce, in order to convey some understanding of how individual Batek men and women act towards each other in these roles. The other social roles that the Batek play will also be examined in this chapter, with emphasis on who is filling the roles. Before presenting this material, however, I offer a brief view of the social organization of the Batek. The social organization of the Batek De' has been fully described and analyzed by Kirk Endicott (1974). Here, however, I will simply discuss the main points of the social organization that provide the background to understanding how the sexes interact in Batek society.

Social Organization

Levels of organization

Batek social organization has three discernable levels: the nuclear family, the camp, and the river-valley group. The nuclear family (kemam, "husband-wife unit"; Malay kelamin, "married couple") is the basic socio-economic and residence unit. Each nuclear family has its own shelter in the camp and makes its own decisions about when and where to move about the forest. As soon as a couple decide to marry, they live in a shelter of their own. Dependent children live in their

parents' shelter until they are about ten years of age, old enough to become aware of the sexual nature of their parents' marriage and old enough to join other young people in a separate shelter. In situations of divorce or widowhood, the lone spouse maintains his or her own shelter, never lodging with another nuclear family. Even very elderly people maintain separate shelters, though they may not be able to be economically independent any longer, and must rely upon their younger close relatives for food. Provided they are both healthy and strong, a husband and wife team is capable of providing themselves, their children, and, if necessary, their dependent elders with food. The nuclear family would be a perfectly self-sufficient unit if they did not have to face the vagaries of disease and aging, natural dangers in the forest, and the very real chances of ill luck in hunting and gathering food. In order to overcome these problems, as well as to enjoy the company a larger group affords, Batek nuclear families live in camp groupings.

Batek camps are clusters of nuclear families that choose to live together at a given time. Although each nuclear family is responsible for taking care of its own needs first, the families in the camp aid each other in significant ways. The fortunes and the misfortunes of the foraging life are shared by the camp, food being given to the have-nots by those who have been successful at their hunting or gathering efforts. This insures the long-term survival of everyone in the group. As seen in Chapter 3, this sharing ethic is so strong that the Batek families exchange food with the other camp members on a routine daily basis, whether anyone is short of food or not. Another advantage of living in camps is that camp members can pool their knowledge of the resources of the area, thus making it easier for everyone to find sure supplies of food. Living in camp groups also gives the Batek greater protection

from wild animals than would living as isolated families. The Batek rightly say that there is safety in numbers, for tigers, elephants, and other dangerous animals are much less likely to attack a larger group of people than a lone individual or family.

The camp composition shifts according to the movements of each nuclear family. Individuals and families may join or leave a camp at will. There is no formal camp membership, one's presence and participation in the social and economic interaction of the camp being the essence of membership. Camp groups generally form on the basis of close kinship and friendship. A camp normally includes several members of what could be an extended family, although the autonomy of each nuclear family in economic responsibility, in all decision-making, and in nomadic movements plus the presence of more distantly related persons makes it more correct to regard the camp as a clustering of families rather than as an extended family unit. Often a camp contains a core of three or four families that are closely related through an elderly parent or grandparent, whom they are supposed to help economically. For example, the married children of an old widow may tend to camp together so that they may help to provide food for her. Similarly, the married children or siblings of a well-liked and respected couple may tend to camp together much of the time. In none of these circumstances, however, are the families or individuals required to always camp together. People may camp with others whenever they want a change or decide to join others for a particular economic pursuit. Camps usually exist for a week to ten days, or until the resources in the area have been exhausted. When a camp is abandoned, any number of families may continue on together to a new campsite or may go separate ways to join up with other relatives or friends. While camp composition is fluid, the structure of sharing

and mutual aid that defines the camp as a social unit remains constant.

The third level of Batek social organization is what Kirk Endicott and I have termed the river-valley group. This term refers to those Batek who share a feeling for a home area. Although the Batek have no such name for this group, they do speak of the lands around a particular river as being best-known to them, most frequently lived in, and most longed-for when they are elsewhere. Those persons who share such sentiments may be considered a group. Thus the Batek De' dialect group can be considered to consist of the Lebir River Batek and the Aring River Batek. Interaction between the two river-valley groups is as frequent as the members choose. Most often, however, the Lebir River Batek are off in their area and the Aring River Batek in theirs. The river-valley group is not territorial in the sense of owning the land they inhabit; they do not consider that they own their land or the resources of the area and they do no prohibit others from camping and foraging there. The only sense in which the Batek talk about land ownership is in relation to outsiders. They say that they are the original inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula and that they wish the Malays would go back to where they came from. River-valley groups can be said to be territorial in sentiment only, and even this is not strong enough to set up social barriers between the groups. Lebir and Aring people sometimes camp together, frequently visit each other, and often intermarry. There are several differences in religious custom and thought between the groups, as Kirk Endicott has documented (1979), but these differences do not interfere with the interaction between the groups any more than differences in the ideas of individuals interfere with their interaction.

I have chosen not to use the term "band" in analyzing Batek social organization because of the range of meanings that other writers

have given the term. For example, in Marshall's usage, "band" would describe a group of families linked together consanguineally or affinally who own the food and water resources of their territory (Marshall 1976: 184, 187). Marshall's "band" is what Lee refers to as a "camp" (Lee and DeVore 1976:77). Turnbull's "band" denotes a territorial and political unit (1965:24, 26-7). None of these usages describes the Batek social organization accurately. In order to avoid confusion, therefore, we have discarded the term band and have used nuclear family, camp (this term is not to be confused with Lee's Bushman "camp"), and river-valley group as the terms that most clearly describe Batek social organization. While "band" and hunter-gatherer society have been linked frequently in the past (see, e.g., Service 1966:7), such a stereotyped association is misleading. As more studies of hunter-gatherer societies point out the variations in the social groupings of those societies, it will become increasingly obvious that the use of a single term, band, is not enough to describe these societies precisely.

Kinship system

The simplicity of the Batek social organization is matched by the simplicity of their kinship system. The Batek do not delineate descent groups, there being no need in Batek culture to trace claims to land, resources, social rights, or marriage partners through ancestors. Genealogies are shallow, the members of previous generations tending to be forgotten by succeeding generations because of a taboo on speaking the names of the deceased. The emphasis of Batek kinship seems to be on fitting individuals into a network of relatives with the present as the focus rather than joining individuals to maintain age-old groups whose structure remains constant while the personnel come and go with

birth and death.

The Batek reckon kinship bilaterally as follows:

ASCENDING:	CONTEMPORARIES OF EGO:	DESCENDING:
na' - mother	to' - older sibling	'awa' - child
pa' - father	ber - younger sibling	'awa' sadara' - niece, nephew
ya' - grandmother	to' - cousin (older)[1]	kanco' - grandchild
ta' - grandfather	ber - cousin (younger)[2]	mehsaw - child-in-law
be' - aunt	keneh - wife	
bah - uncle	kasuy - husband	
ken'ac - parents-in-law	habang - sibling-in-law	
ya' - great grandmother		
ta' - great grandfather		

It can be seen from the kinship terminology that the distinction of kin according to sex is made in only ten out of twenty terms. Where gender is communicated by the kin term, the persons referred to are in ego's ascending generation, except for ego's spouse. At the contemporary and descending generation levels, relative age is the key information imparted by the kin terms. The terms for affines in all generations make no sex distinctions. There are no clear-cut explanations for the use or non-use of gender in the kinship terms, but the following is an attempt to understand this puzzle.

The first problem of the kinship terminology is why ego's consanguineal kin in the ascending generation are distinguished by sex

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[1] According to relative age of parents; see below for explanation.

[2] According to relative age of parents.

when ego's own siblings are not. The difference to ego, as a child, between ego's ascending generation kin and ego's siblings is that the ascending generation kin are the people who serve as ego's role models for adult interaction and cooperation between the sexes. The ascending generation kin live as married couples, as the nuclear family dyads that serve as the basis for residence and social and economic life. These persons are precisely the persons defined by gender specific terms in the kinship terminology. The terminology seems to be calling attention to the fact that ego relates to these persons as married couples rather than as individuals. It will be noted that rhyming or similar words (na'/pa', ya'/ta', be'/bah) are used for these kinship terms, making the association of the pairs even more obvious. Reference to one member of the nuclear family dyad brings to mind the other as well. Another line of explanation is that gender is incorporated into the terms for ego's ascending generation kin because these people must be sexually avoided. Parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and aunts and uncles are within the incest parameter. The Batek prohibit a sexually mature ego from lying or sleeping next to persons in the above categories of opposite sex to ego. While it would be obvious to ego who the opposite sex kin would be, even witnout a distinct gender term for him or her, the terminology may express the differential in expected behaviour toward the two members of each pair. A third line of explanation for the use of gender in the ascending generation terms is that a gender distinction, at least for parents, is imperative for the use of Batek teknonyms. The Batek consider it to be a breach of etiquette to call adults who have children by the names they were given as children (for details see Kirk Endicott 1974). Instead they use nicknames or teknonyms. The teknonyms are formed by calling a person father or mother of a

specific child, for example, pa' Galas or 'ey Galas (father of Galas; 'ey is another term for father) or na' Galas (mother of Galas). The child referred to may be either a son or a daughter, usually simply the oldest child who is still alive. The use of the two terms pa' and na', rather than simply one term for parent, allows the teknonym system to specify each parent unambiguously. Thus teknonyms can take the place of personal names without leading to confusion.

That siblings and cousins are equivalent in the terminology and are not distinguished by sex is surprising. Relative age is the only communicated message of the terms. When referring to ego's own siblings, to' means older sibling and ber means younger sibling. Cousins, however, are termed older or younger according to the relative age of whichever parent is consanguineally related to ego's parent, not according to the cousin's age relative to ego. If the cousin's parent is an older sibling of ego's parent, the cousin is termed to'. If the cousin's parent is a younger sibling of ego's parent, the cousin is termed ber. The importance in the terminology of relative age of siblings, both of ego's own siblings and ego's and ego's cousin's parents who are siblings, seems to indicate that ego's behavioural relationship with his or her older sibling and with his or her younger sibling is somehow different. When ego is a young child, he or she is often looked after by an older sibling of either sex, and an older sibling may become his or her foster parent if the true parents die. When a younger sibling is born, ego in turn must help to look after that sibling. The difference in the relationship is whether ego helps or is helped. While the Batek do not have a stated rule that younger siblings must respect or show indebtedness to older siblings who helped care for them, the kinship terminology seems to convey the notion that ego should view older and younger siblings somewhat differently.

The difference, I have suggested, is tied to the matter of childcare responsibilities for siblings. It should be noted that in adulthood, younger and older siblings help each other equally. In the case of cousins, the terminology seems to be referring to those same sibling responsibilities the cousin's parents had toward each other. An incidental benefit arising from the use of the to' and ber terms is that by fitting together the sequence of older and younger siblings, the correct birth order of a family can be reconstructed, even after the parents, who are the most likely to remember this information in the absence of calendrical dating, are dead. The same can be done for the parents of cousins, the relative age relationship of siblings in the ascending generation being preserved in ego's generation kinship terms.

By calling both cousins and siblings by the same gender-less terms, the kinship terminology for ego's contemporary generation does not in itself indicate whom ego may marry, as do some kinship terminologies. Ego is permitted to marry cousins, even first cousins, but not, of course, his or her siblings, who are referred to by the same terms as the marriageable cousins. The terminology, in not distinguishing between male and female siblings and cousins, exercises an economy of terms where it is unquestionably obvious to ego who the women are and who the men are. Ego simply behaves differently towards siblings and cousins of the opposite sex--he or she sexually avoids opposite sex siblings and marries opposite sex cousins--even though ego calls all the siblings and cousins by the same terms to' and ber. From ego's point of view, the terminology does not encapsulate marriage rules. If the marriage rule is transmitted at all by the terminology, it is at the parental generation level. Ego's parents refer to ego and ego's siblings as their children, 'awa', but refer to ego's cousins as niece/nephew, 'awa' sadara' (literally

"your children"). At this level, then, the necessary distinctions are present for stating a marriage rule, namely that those persons I (ego's parent) call 'awaʔ' may not marry each other, but they may marry those I call 'awaʔ' sadara'.

Ego calls both his or her affines and the consanguineal kin in his or her descending generation by gender-less terms. There is only one term for parent-in-law (ken'ac), sibling-in-law (habang), and child-in-law (mensaw). These persons must be treated by ego with respect, sexual avoidance (although ego may marry a sibling-in-law once death of the spouse severs the avoidance rule), and economic help. The nature of the relationship of each generation level of affines to ego is the same whether the affine is male or female. This may be the rationale for the economy of affinal kinship terms. Similarly, descending generation consanguines, ego's children ('awaʔ') and nieces and nephews ('awaʔ sadara'), are treated the same way by ego, regardless of the sex of the youngster (see Chapter 6 for details on the child-raising of both sexes).

Like all kinship terminologies, the Batek terminology utilizes age and gender as organizing principles. Yet, unlike many other terminologies, gender is a minimal feature of Batek terminology. The gender of the individual is referred to only where the terminology seems to be making a statement about the dominant way the sexes interact in Batek society, namely, the joining of men and women in nuclear family units that act as the basis for social and economic life. The limited use of gender in the terminology suggests that gender is a significant consideration to the Batek only in certain limited contexts, rather than as a major theme in Batek thought.

Leadership

Batek society, with its emphasis on the nuclear family as the primary economic and social unit, requires little if any organized authority. The kinship system, which is the major basis of organization for Batek society, contains no built-in authority system, and there are no political hierarchies to exercise authority. The independence of the nuclear family unit and the individual to make decisions and plan economic activities and nomadic movements seems to be a primary value in Batek culture. The themes of independence of action and the lack of authority of any one person over another even go so far as to greatly limit parental authority over children. Children need not heed their parent's wishes. The parents accept their own lack of authority over the children by saying, essentially, that children will be children and that there is nothing the adults can do about that. Proper behaviour in Batek society is sanctioned by the belief that the thundergod, Gobar, will punish offenders against the social or moral order rather than by policing by other Batek. The lack of human authority among the Batek, however, does not mean there is no leadership in their society.

There are two types of leadership in Batek society, natural leadership and headmanship (cf. Benjamin 1968). The former has developed within Batek culture and the latter has been introduced from the outside. Although the Batek have no term for natural leaders, it is readily apparent who they are. The natural leaders are generally older, intelligent, capable persons who have strong, charismatic personalities. They are leaders by token of the fact that people respect them and regard their judgement as sound. People tend to defer to their knowledge and opinions and generally consider it worthwhile to heed their advice. Natural leaders cannot force their will on anyone else, however. Those who follow them do so voluntarily

and reserve the right to act independently whenever they feel justified. Gender is not a consideration when it comes to the recognition of natural leadership: either men or women may emerge as the natural leaders of their groups. In fact, the Batek with whom we camped most often had a natural leader who was a woman.

The institution of headmanship has been introduced by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, which has designated certain Batek men--not women--as penghulu, the Malay term for headman. The headmen are supposed to represent the Batek population in dealings with the Department and other outsiders. Although theoretically the Department bestows the title penghulu upon the natural leaders of Batek society, in fact this does not always happen. Some Batek penghulu do not have true followings at all, and some of the natural leaders are not designated as penghulu by the Department. Moreover, this Malay style headmanship is supposed to be passed down to the oldest son of the headman, whether the son has any true leadership qualities or not. This differs greatly from the situation of natural leadership, which is not an inherited status at all. The Department has overlooked the possibility of women being headmen. It is interesting to note, however, that some of the Malay rattan traders, who have more frequent contact with the Batek than does the Department, do refer to women who are natural leaders as penghulu.

Leadership fits into the social organization framework as follows: within each collection of nuclear families that tend to camp together there is usually a natural leader who may or may not bear the title of penghulu. Within the river-valley group, there may be several clusters of leaders and camp group followers. These associations of leaders and followers are not static, however. The flow of Batek life is determined by each individual making his or her own decisions about nomadic movements

and economic and social activity. Leadership serves as a way for people who decide to camp together to coordinate their efforts by generally going along with the initiative set forth by one person, the leader. When individuals disagree with the leader or have disputes with other members of their usual camping group, they simply exercise their own freedom of opinion and action and move away for a while. Leaders have no power to settle disagreements, although they may try to reason with each party. The Batek values of non-agression and non-competitiveness are upheld by this freedom of the individuals to do what they want--including moving away from persons they dislike or with whom they disagree. Leaders do not form the basis for divisiveness between groups, all disagreements being solved by the individuals directly involved long before they could flare up into disputes and aggression between groups. Leadership is a constructive, coordinating role in Batek society, based on the freedom of individual action, rather than a means of mobilizing people and usurping their rights to their own decisions.

This, then, is the social setting in which the following male-female interactions occur.

Marriage and Divorce

Batek marriage serves the minimal purpose of joining individuals into productive and reproductive couples. The Batek do not utilize marriage as a means of creating or maintaining alliances between social groups. People are thus not forced into marriages they do not want. Batek marriage is geared very highly to the compatibility and happiness of the married couple. Most marriages are monogamous by preference.

Occasionally polygamy is attempted; at least one case of attempted polygamy foundered when the first and older wife decided to leave her husband to the new wife and find a husband all to herself. There is no political purpose to be served or power or status to be gained through polygamy. Rather, it appears to be a novelty that is occasionally attempted by one of the spouses.

During the years of adolescence and early adulthood, the Batek form sexual liaisons with other young people. Teenagers are allowed to indulge their sexual desires without being confined to marriage. The couple may meet in one or the other's shelter at night when the rest of the camp is thought to be asleep, or they may arrange a tryst in the forest during the day. Virginity for either sex is not revered in Batek culture, nor is it a desired prerequisite for marriage. The number of sexual partners and the choice of partners are matters for each young man or woman to decide. The relationships of early adulthood may be very casual or experimental in nature or may endure as marriage. Sometimes it is difficult for an observer--and apparently for the Batek, too--to label the relationships of young people as premarital affairs or marriage. Young adults tend to go through three or four short-lived marriages, which may last only a few days or may continue for a year or more. Sometimes a couple have an on-again, off-again marriage for a few years before either joining together as a true married couple or divorcing once and for all. This will be further discussed below.

The Batek are free to marry anyone outside the immediate kin covered by the incest prohibition (see above). Foremost among the criteria by which persons select spouses is mutual attraction. The Batek say that love or friendship (sayeng) and physical desire or lust (hawa') have a lot to do with the choice of marriage partners. One man stated that in

addition to such an attraction, he and other men look for women who are industrious, who fetch water, firewood, and thatch, and who weave pandanus mats. He said they prefer to marry Batek girls, rather than girls from other aboriginal groups (such as the Semaq Beri), because the Batek women work harder. He also stated that they like Batek girls who have very curly (typically Negrito) hair, because these girls can wear flowers and bamboo combs in their hair. It is interesting to note that this man did not say that Batek men expect women to dig tubers. When we asked him what he thought Batek women considered when choosing a spouse, he replied that he thought girls preferred industrious men who fetch firewood and thatch, dig tubers, and collect rattan. He said nothing about whether or not women want to marry good hunters. Women, when asked what they look for in a man, gave responses that were very much based upon the qualities their own husbands possessed. Thus one woman whose husband is an excellent hunter said that she liked a man to be a good hunter. Another said she married her husband because he had been to many towns (that is, he was worldly and sophisticated) and that she did not care that he was not a superior hunter. These women told us that my husband and I liked each other because we can both write! All the women reported that physical attraction was a large factor in selecting marriage partners.

When marrying for the first time, the Batek usually try to observe at least a few points of etiquette. According to older informants, the man is supposed to ask the permission of the girl's parents and his own parents before setting up house with the girl. One woman reported that in her day everyone did this, whereas today many young people simply do not bother. Unfortunately we have no statistical data to bear this out. She also said that if the parents deny permission, the marriage would not take place. She reported that when she was young she had wanted to marry

a man whom her mother did not like. Since her mother expressed such displeasure, she did not marry the man, instead remaining fond of him and extending help and friendship to him throughout their adult years. She married another man with whom she has had a companionable, loving relationship for around thirty years. While this woman had respected her mother's opinions on her choice of husband, there were no means by which her parents could have enforced their opinion and prevented her from the marriage if she had been determined to go through with it. Parents may try to influence a child's choice of spouse, but do not have actual control over it. In this particular case, the woman, who is intelligent and perceptive, most probably took into consideration that a marriage unpopular in the eyes of the parent could be strained by affinal dislike. It is questionable just how often such actions occurred in the past. Recently, in any case, several first marriages have occurred without the couple either asking for or receiving parental consent.

Another point of etiquette that may mark the beginning of a first marriage is the giving of gifts. The woman weaves pandanus sleeping mats and baskets for her husband and herself to use in their new household. The man is supposed to give gifts to his wife and her parents. Usually the gifts are a few pieces of store-bought cloth (barkcloth used to be made and given) and some rice or other purchased food. The wife thus contributes to the marriage those products that are the speciality of women, and the husband presents purchased goods to which he has greater access than women because of the greater likelihood of his having worked in the rattan trade. Although gift-giving is usual, it is not obligatory, and some marriages do proceed without it. There is no special Batek word to describe this gift-giving. The Batek say that the man gives gifts to the wife's parents in order to help them, especially since they may be

elderly. The giving of gifts to the wife's parents is not bridewealth; it does not involve purchase of the woman, her sexuality, or rights to her children. Rather, this gift-giving is a gesture of good will and the first step in a son-in-law's obligation to help his parents-in-law. If the marriage breaks up, the gifts need not be returned, although some people expressed mild indignation about this when we asked them about it. Subsequent marriages may or may not occasion gift-giving.

The beginning of a marriage is not marked by a special ceremony. Couples are considered by others to be married when the partners consider themselves married. Sometimes the couple give a small feast when they marry, with their friends but not necessarily their parents included. Often, however, marriages simply go uncelebrated. Action rather than ritual or festivities delineates marriage. The new couple set up house together and assume the economic and social roles of husband and wife. They cooperate in food-getting and share their meals. Wives are supposed to cook for their husbands, even though men as well as women know how to cook all the foods and do so during bachelorhood. The married couple share a shelter and jointly own their household goods. Newly married couples begin to use the appropriate terms of reference and address for their affines, adopt the proper avoidance behaviours toward them, and offer them economic help. Usually most of the first year of the marriage is spent camping near the wife's parents so that the husband can help his parents-in-law. Then the couple usually spend their next year with the man's parents, in order to fulfill the obligation to help them as well. After this the couple reside where they want, although they usually try to spend some time with both sets of parents.

Divorce is as casual and almost as frequent as marriage in the years of early adulthood. Most marriages of young people are in a sense

simply experimentations in relationships and playing adult roles, and most of them founder after a short time. Sometimes one partner, usually the girl, is simply too young to be willing to act as an adult married person. One girl who first married at around thirteen years of age has had a series of separations from and reconciliations with her husband who is a few years older than she. Her reasons for not wanting to be married to him are that she doesn't know how to cook for him and doesn't want to sleep with him. The first reason is unfounded if taken literally, for she definitely knows how to cook all the foods the Batek eat. The statement suggests, however, that she does not want to act the role of wife. Her not wanting to sleep with him probably implies that she wants to keep on with the unattached ways of childhood as well as expressing a real lack of attraction to the particular boy. Another strong reason for divorce among young people is that the husband and wife may each want to camp with their own parents, who may be living in separate camps from each other. If neither the husband nor wife is willing to compromise by leaving the parents to live where the spouse wants to live, the easiest solution may be divorce. Sometimes parents exert an influence over their children to divorce if they do not like the child's spouse. Few people would actually divorce for such a reason if they were very fond of their spouse, however.

After a series of marriages and divorces in early adulthood, most Batek enter into a more stable marriage, or, as the Batek put it, they find someone who "sticks" with them. Such a marriage may last until one of the couple dies, though some end in divorce after a period of years. A characteristic of these more stable marriages, which the marriages of early adulthood normally lack, is the presence of children. Whether finding oneself in an agreeable and therefore enduring marriage gives rise

to one's having a child or whether the arrival of children solidifies the marriage cannot be definitely answered here. Undoubtedly both possibilities are realized in actual cases. Usually early marriages produce no children, even though the couple has sexual relations. Possible explanations are that the girl is so young that her reproductive cycle is not yet well established, that the couple does not engage in sexual relations as often as older married persons, or that negative emotions on the part of a wife or husband who is not sure of the marriage may inhibit conception.[1] The couple may also be using native contraception methods, the efficacy of which is questionable but possible (see Chapter 5). Young couples who do manage to conceive, however, may possibly be influenced by the pregnancy to remain together even if they might have divorced had the pregnancy not occurred. The Batek are well aware of the importance of the economic contributions of both husband and wife to the support of a family; the existence of a child might encourage a young man and woman to "stick together" in marriage and adopt full adult responsibilities and duties toward each other and their child. Whichever way around the causality may be, early marriages and divorces seldom involve children and more stable, lasting marriages usually do involve offspring.

Divorce is easily carried out in Batek society. Since there is no bridewealth or ulterior group or family interests vested in the marriage, there are no great social barriers to divorce when the couple do not want to remain together. Spouses are not dependent upon each other to the extent that divorce would cause them economic problems serious enough to keep them in an otherwise undesirable marriage. Women and men can procure

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[1] Cowlishaw reports that "it is known that stress (tension, anxiety) can lead to anovulation in women and lower sperm counts in men" (1978:21).

their own vegetable and amimal foods and can call upon other relatives for help when necessary. Both spouses can also build their own shelters; they are not dependent upon each other for a roof over their heads. Thus divorce does not present any extreme hardship to Batek men or women, although economic cooperation between spouses does, of course, make life easier for them. The presence of children complicates divorce somewhat but does not present a severe obstacle to divorce. Breastfeeding infants and very young children remain with the mother, while older children may live with either parent or alternate between them. Divorced parents may live in the same camp or fairly nearby, thus facilitating visits with their children. When a divorced parent remarries, the new spouse takes on a parental role toward the children that continues even if they divorce. Thus the more divorces and remarriages their real parents undergo, the more people the children acquire who interact with them as parents. Similarly, affinal ties are maintained after divorce, with the result that one's affinal network increases with each divorce and remarriage. Divorce in Batek society thus has a constructive side to it that paradoxically helps create more, not fewer, ties between people.

The Batek say there are both good divorces, in which there are no bad feelings afterward, and bad divorces, in which one or the other partner harbours some bitterness towards the other. Most former spouses seem to regard each other amicably, as if they simply accept that peoples' emotions toward each other can and do change. When looking back on previous marriages and divorces most Batek are remarkably unbitter. Almost everyone maintains that it was the other person, not oneself, who rejected the marriage. No one expressed any anger toward the former spouse for initiating the divorce nor seemed to feel embarrassed or humiliated that he or she was the one who was rejected by the spouse. It is questionable

just how much hurt, anger, jealousy or disappointment is felt or suppressed, however. We happened to be present when one man's wife decided to leave him and sleep with another man, a situation that might have developed into divorce, although in this case the wife did return to the husband. While the affair was going on, the husband was uncharacteristically sullen and obviously very upset. Undoubtedly even in good divorces there are some emotional tolls, and in bad divorces even more distress and resentment. Yet, former spouses who have had bad divorces as well as those who have had good divorces often live in the same camp and seem to interact with their former spouses in a genial and quite normal manner. From early childhood the Batek are not encouraged to display anger, although it is not actually prohibited. Either the Batek learn to control, disperse, or bury their negative emotions or they learn to "walk away" from anger, both in a figurative and literal sense. Indeed, when people disagree strongly with others, they may just remove themselves from the situation by camping elsewhere. Whatever way the Batek actually deal with negative emotions, the observable result is that former spouses can usually continue to live near each other in friendship and apparent harmony as if there had been no marriage or divorce to influence their relationship at all. In a population as small as the Batek and in a hunter-gatherer situation this is vitally important for the continuation of the group.

The following is an account of the marriage and divorce of a young couple. I am including this to show the light in which the Batek discuss these topics and to show the discrepancies that exist in different peoples' versions of what happened. The characters are the husband Cong, the wife Sayang, Sayang's mother Bunga, and Sayang's father Tebu. Cong was about twenty at the time he discussed his marriage with us and Sayang

was about fourteen.

Cong's version is that he and Sayang were married the previous year. The day they married he gave two cloths to Sayang's parents, one to Sayang, one to his mother, and he kept one. With money he got from trading rattan he also bought a large amount of rice, a sack of flour, and some sugar and cooking oil. Cong and Sayang announced the marriage to her parents, his mother, and his elderly half-brother who had raised him after his father died. (Note that Cong did not report seeking permission to marry from any of the parents.) Cong and Sayang made a shelter beside Sayang's parents' shelter. They cooked a lot of food and shared it with as many of their friends as there were plates. Everyone ate at Cong and Sayang's shelter rather than taking the plates of food back to their own shelters as is the usual custom. Then Cong and Sayang slept together. They remained together for two months. Then her parents moved away and the young couple remained with Cong's half-brother's family. Sayang, who was young, missed her father (this probably refers to her parents, as there is no single term for parent and Sayang's parents were still living together), so she went off to camp with them. Cong said he would have missed his half-brother if he had moved away from him since he, too, was young. So Cong and Sayang divorced. He considered that Sayang rejected him and said that he still loved her. They later got back together for about a month and then she wanted to separate again. Cong said he went back to Sayang six times but that Sayang just did not lust after him any more and did not want to sleep with him. He reckoned that it was because she was still young. There was no other man involved. He said he would wait for her because he still loved her and wanted her, not other women.

Sayang and her parents gave slightly different accounts of what

happened. Sayang's mother Bunga said that Cong did not ask their permission before marrying Sayang, but Sayang's father Tebu said he gave his permission at first and then began to dislike Cong after Cong married and rejected Sayang twice. Sayang's mother first said Cong gave her nothing but then recalled that he had given her a knife and a mirror when he first married Sayang. The father said Cong gave him raw rice and cloth, but then stated that Cong had given cloth to Sayang only and not to him. Sayang reported that Cong gave her cloth but later took it back when they divorced. Sayang's parents maintained that Cong's mother took back their presents too. Sayang's mother said that when Cong and Sayang were married, he refused to eat the food Sayang prepared, preferring instead to eat with his mother. Her father stated that Cong rejected Sayang and then that Sayang rejected Cong because Cong was looking for sex. Sayang herself said that Cong rejected her because he was angry at her, although she did not know why.

While these stories disagree with Cong's account only on a few points of detail, they do show the perspective from which each of the characters viewed the marriage and divorce. The parents were concerned with the gifts they had--or had not--received. Sayang and Cong each reported that it was the other who did the rejecting. Cong presented the story as if he had observed all the proper points of etiquette and was willing to be a devoted and loving husband to Sayang. Whatever actually did happen, it is clear that the Batek do not always see things the same way and may even hold a grudge, as might be expected. However, this need not interfere with daily interaction between people. Indeed, Cong, Sayang, and Sayang's parents lived very amicably in the same camp for extended periods. Some day Cong and Sayang may even remarry for good.

The Batek consider that people should wait some time before

remarrying. Following the death of a spouse, one is supposed to wait two or three years. If one deeply loved the deceased spouse, the waiting period might be even longer, according to an informant who is extremely fond of her husband. There is nothing to prevent a widow or widower remarrying sooner, however, if the opportunity arises. In the case of divorce, it is considered proper to wait a month to three months before remarrying. Sometimes the interval is much longer, and sometimes considerably shorter however. The reason for the waiting period is said to be so that the smell of the old spouse would not mix with the smell of the new spouse. It is prohibited (lawac) to sleep with or marry two siblings simultaneously or in rapid succession because the mixture of smells of the two siblings through the spouse would be offensive to the thundergod Gobar. Breaking this prohibition would result in Gobar's sending a crippling disease to the offender by means of a spark of lightning that lies on the ground underneath a cover of leaves. When the offender treads on it, it enters the foot and cripples the person. The proper interval between marriages to siblings is a month, although if there are children by the first spouse the interval is a year because the children's smells would mix with the new spouse's smell, too. The concern with mixture of smells,[1] in these cases, is predicated upon

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[1] The Batek make great use of smells as a way of talking about the order of their world. Many of the lawac prohibitions, which are punishable by thunderstorms sent by the thundergod, Gobar, are concerned with the improper mixture of smells. Despite the Batek emphasis on smells, there is no consistent Batek view of what combinations of smells are offensive to the thundergod nor why certain substances have odours which alone or if mixed with certain other odours are offensive to the superhuman beings. Of the offensive smells of some foods, Kirk Endicott writes:

> The special concern with odours is not because they are the most basic defining features of the food-species, but because they are the features most prone to intermixing, even when the substances of the food-species are kept apart. Also, odours are the most communicable features of species, those which are capable of

incest parameters. Even though the siblings are not having a sexual relationship, nor are the aunt/uncle and niece/nephew, the mixture of their smells through the spouse resembles actual incest. The Batek circumvent this by waiting long enough for the smells to disappear. They are probably more cautious about remarriage to siblings than they are about the interval before remarrying someone not closely related to the former spouse, i.e., in cases in which the thundergod is not thought to interfere. Some people remarry almost immediately after divorce. Indeed, some divorces are precipitated by one spouse obviously wanting to be with someone else or actually running off with someone new.

Extramarital affairs do occur among the Batek. The Batek try to be discreet about them. They say, for example, that such affairs are fine unless the couple have their tryst on the main path! Spouses of the lovers may express jealousy if the lovers are found out and other relatives may not be too happy about the situation because of their fondness for and/or economic cooperation with the spouses. Still, there is no means by which the Batek can prevent men and women from engaging in extramarital relationships. If people decide to have affairs, it is at the risk of divorce, which they might welcome anyway, but no social ostracizing or serious bodily harm (see below) will be inflicted by the spouses or anyone else. This is not to say that people do not get upset over affairs. Rather, they take no drastic measures to prevent or punish them. Ultimately, no one has exclusive sexual rights over anyone else. Sexuality is an

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reaching the hala' (1979:75-6).
This also appears to be the reason the Batek talk about smells of people mixing in an offensive way when they explain why people must wait an appropriate period before marrying the sibling of a former spouse. Although the former spouse is no longer with the person, the smell is considered to linger on for some time. The mixture of smells of the former spouse, the person who wants to remarry, and the intended spouse is as communicable to the hala' as is the mixture of smells of food-species.

individual matter in premarital, marital, and extramarital situations. Obviously, however, it may be emotionally trying to people who are fond of their spouses and do not want them to form liaisons with others at the expense of their own relationship. It should be noted at this point that the Batek do not keep guard over their spouses nor prohibit them from working in the forest away from the camp with people of the opposite sex. Suspicion of sexual daliance does not seem to be foremost in the minds or social rules of the Batek, even though (or perhaps therefore) there is plenty of opportunity for extramarital relationships.

The following is an account of an extramarital affair that lasted a few weeks. It should be noted that the first that we were aware that anything unusual was happening was that we noticed that the husband, Pay, seemed depressed and low-spirited, unlike his usual jovial manner. We knew his wife was out of camp at the time and thought perhaps he just missed her. Within a few days the following story unraveled. Pay and his wife, Cingcong, had been married at least five years. They were a young and companionable couple. They were childless, one or the other thought by the Batek to be sterile. Cingcong began to have a sexual relationship with Tayur, an unmarried teenage boy. They held their trysts in the forest. Later Cingcong left Pay's camp, ostensibly to visit her father and other relatives in another camp. Pay remained behind, apparently thinking that Cingcong was simply off visiting for a few days. Cingcong and her lover Tayur, however, went on with their affair while away from Pay's camp. News of what was occurring reached Pay. One of the women had seen Cingcong and Tayur making love in the forest and she reported it to Pay. This was when Pay's behaviour changed from his usual lively manner to a state of being very quiet and melancholy. He went to where Cingcong was staying in an attempt to get her back. He did return with her and his behaviour

seemed much more like his normal manner. Cingcong, however, seemed troubled and uncertain about her welcome in the camp. She ran off once when she thought Pay's mother, Tanyong, was angry at her. Tanyong was angry at the time, but she said it was not directed at Cingcong but at another incident that had nothing to do with either Pay or Cingcong. Cingcong returned to Pay's camp and acted very quiet and reserved. The next day she slept late and spent most of the day in her shelter. By late afternoon, especially after Pay had returned from his work in the forest, she was livelier and spoke and laughed a lot. The next day she and Pay's mother went fishing together. Cingcong simply slipped back into the usual routine of camp life. No one snubbed her or acted in an unusual way toward her. Later we found out that Cingcong's lover, Tayur, had been ordered by Cingcong's father to pay Pay $40 Malaysian as harga' teng, literally "vulva price". Tayur gave the money because, according to his friends, he was ashamed. The friends claimed that if Tayur and Cingcong had not been found out, Tayur would not have paid anything. They said that whenever adultery is found out, the man must pay the vulva price, but that if the couple have an ongoing sexual relationship the result is a divorce and remarriage. The $40 was given to Cingcong to hand on to Pay, probably so that Tayur could avoid a direct confrontation with Pay. Our informants claimed that if Tayur had given the money directly to Pay, Pay could have hit him. They reported that Pay threatened to hit Tayur on his backside with a piece of bamboo because Tayur and Cingcong had copulated. Whether this was a fictional detail for our benefit, one of Pay's jokes, or a serious threat is unanswerable. Tayur also gave Cingcong's father 150 lengths of rattan as "shame price", harga' 'o' yop, because the affair occurred close to where the father was living. Cingcong's parents were said to be angry about her behaviour because they liked Pay and wanted her

to remain with him. Cingcong's father was also said to have ordered her to return to Pay.

A number of implications arise from this account. First, the Batek do not seem to be especially moralistic about their sexual relationships. They do not seem to worry about doing "the right or the wrong thing", as westerners would say, when it comes to sexual lust. They only try to make amends if they are found out and the adulterous couple are not serious enough to want to get married themselves. Second, it could be argued that the vulva price is a clear indication that the women's sexuality is a commodity to be bought, and in the case of adultery, to be paid for if the owner/husband finds out about it. This would also suggest that the gifts the groom gives to his future parents-in-law could be considered bridewealth and payment for the bride's sexuality. The non-interest of the Batek in virginity and premarital sexuality, however, do not support the argument that women's sexuality is a purchasable commodity. The Batek have few notions of ownership of anything material or non-material. As noted above, the Batek stated that the gifts usually given at a first marriage are to help the bride's parents. They are not a precondition for marriage nor are they necessarily given in subsequent marriages. As I suggested above, they are a good-will gesture to mark the beginning of a son-in-law's relationship with his parents-in-law. I suggest that this is the light in which the vulva price should be viewed. It is not a husband's right to his wife's sexuality that is being acknowledged and compensated, but rather the intrusion into the overall husband-wife relationship and the affinal relationships it generates that is being smoothed over. Whether or not a vulva price is paid if an affair is discovered, the people involved must reach some sort of social accord, either an acceptance of an ongoing affair, a reconciliation of the spouses, or the divorce of the spouses and marriage of the lovers.

Payment of a vulva price may facilitate the accord and the renewal of friendship with the lover, but it is not a necessary condition for it. This, as in matters of premarital and marital relationships, is up to the individual men and women involved.

Batek men and women, whether married or not, are free to interact socially and economically with members of the opposite sex. Men and women are not limited to their own sex group for friendship, companionship, or work partners. Men and women who are married to other people may work together in the forest, out of sight of their spouses. Men and women may freely visit one another in camp or may journey to another camp to see each other if they are living in separate camps. Gifts, such as bamboo combs, may be given to members of the opposite sex out of friendship, without an obligation to reciprocate. Friendships may be maintained with people who could have married but did not, as in the case described above. The reason for the freedom of male-female interaction may be that the Batek simply do not care if people have sexual relationships, as long as extramarital affairs go undiscovered, or may be that the Batek believe that non-sexual relationships between men and women are possible. Most likely, the Batek maintain both views at once. One point that probably has a significant bearing on this is that all the Batek consider themselves to be related. To be suspicious of all male-female contacts could prove disruptive to such a small and closely-related society.

Perhaps an understanding of Batek attitudes toward male-female relationships can be reached by examining their attitudes toward actual physical contact between people. A look about a Batek camp reveals many instances of close physical contact. Family members, in their small shelters, the floor space of which is only about seven feet by four feet, are constantly and unavoidably jostling one another. Babies are carried

in slings that keep them pressed against the mother's body. At night parents and their young children sleep close together. Children playing in camp usually form a tight cluster of bodies, often sitting on each other's laps, leaning against each other, or standing arm in arm. When around adults, young children often nestle into the adults' arms. Teenagers of both sexes loll around in their shelters together in close bodily contact. Physical proximity seems to be the norm of Batek behaviour. One of the most intriguing of Batek physical contacts is that which occurs during delousing, which is an extremely common activity. The person being groomed either sits or lies in front of the groomer or lies with his or her head right in the lap of the groomer. What is so striking about this is that anyone is allowed to groom anyone else, regardless of sex, age, marital status, or closeness of relationship. Thus it is not unusual to see a man or woman lying with his or her head in the lap of a member of the opposite sex who is married to someone else. In many societies, including our own, such close contact would be tantamount to admitting the existence of a sexual relationship between the two or a desire for such a relationship. For the Batek, however, the contact involved in delousing is no different from the other types of physical contact in which they engage from birth onwards. The Batek seem to recognize that physical proximity does not in itself carry sexual overtones. Batek life in their open shelters and open camps is so public that they can readily observe that purposeful contacts, such as in delousing, as well as unavoidable jostlings, do not necessarily indicate sexual intent. Physical contact between the sexes is thus seen by the Batek to have a non-sexual context as well as a sexual context. Indeed, the Batek do not even prohibit delousing between relatives who must avoid each other sexually even though the physical contact necessary for grooming is so close. The observed innocence of commonplace physical

contacts between men and women seems to be the basis for the freedom of interaction allowed between the sexes. The Batek seem to acknowledge that there can be friendship without sexual intent and that physical closeness and sexual interest are not one and the same.

The acceptance of non-sexual relationships between members of the opposite sex, or a lack of interest in persons' sexual activities, has economic and social implications for Batek life. Since any man can work with any woman, a far greater number of work group combinations occur than would be possible if the Batek were suspicious of mixed work parties. Spouses are not limited to working together, thus allowing them to more fully diversify their efforts by joining other men or women who happen to be doing the activities they want to do. A more subtle effect of the lack of restrictions between the sexes is that it provides the Batek with opportunities for cross-sex interaction in a demographic situation of too many males for the number of females in the population. If men had to be married in order to have contact with women, those who could not marry because there are not enough women to go around would then be cut off from interaction with females. The freedom of interaction enables even unmarried men to have access to female companionship and to goods, such as pandanus sleeping mats and baskets, that are made exclusively by women. Unmarried men are also able to call upon women relatives and friends to build shelters for them in a new camp so that they can go hunting right away, as the married men do. Similarly, any unmarried women can gain access to male companionship and to rattan baskets made only by men. Being unmarried is thus not as great a social and economic disadvantage as it is in some societies. A further effect of unrestricted interaction in Batek society is that there is not much social distance between the sexes. Batek male and female lives are far more integrated than in societies in which men

and women can only turn to their own sex group for companionship and in which the sexes consequently lead very separate and distinct lives.

The Filling of Social Roles

The social roles in Batek society aside from the domestic and economic roles already described are those of leaders, religious experts and performers, and curers. These roles do not require people to specialize in them full-time to the exclusion of family duties and food getting activities. The persons filling the roles do not form an elite supported by others. Rather, the roles are taken on in addition to a person's normal daily tasks and are performed when necessary. Individuals choose for themselves whether or not they want to fill any of the social roles. The Batek do not groom certain people--of one sex or the other--for the roles. Any person who has developed the requisite knowledge and has the appropriate personal qualities for the enactment of the roles is welcome to fill them.

As discussed above, natural leadership falls to charismatic, intelligent persons to whom others voluntarily look for decisions and guidance. Leadership is not defined as a masculine or a feminine quality and people do not mind following a person of the opposite sex. The leaders may be of any age, but usually are older persons whose experience and accumulated knowledge of economic matters are well-respected by others.

Religious expertise may be developed by any man or woman who is interested in religious matters. Some people think more seriously about religion than others and these are the people to whom others defer when in doubt about religious questions. Batek religion is an eclectic collection of stories, prohibitions, and cosmological ideas which are transmitted to

each generation in a very piecemeal fashion (see Kirk Endicott 1979). Children learn about the religion by hearing songs and stories, being taught the prohibitions, and by asking questions. Some people pursue these topics more deeply than others and gradually build up a sizeable store of religious knowledge. Dreams about religious matters are considered to be communications from the superhuman beings who are thought to guide Batek life and as such are accepted as legitimate sources of knowledge. Through conscious thought about religious matters and through dreams, individuals may make unique and innovative additions or changes to the store of ideas that comprise Batek religion. Any man or woman is welcome to exercise his or her opinions. Frequently individuals put forth very different views of the same matter during lively discussions. Neither men nor women as a group are considered to be the guardians of religious knowledge or the experts on all religious issues. Any man or woman who seems to have competent, satisfactory views may be regarded by others to be worth consulting about religion.

Both men and women participate in Batek ritual life. A few times a year communal singing sessions are held to communicate with certain superhuman beings (see Kirk Endicott 1979:150-5). The men construct a large shelter (haya' tebu'), similar in design to the ordinary living shelters but of much greater size, with a bark floor that can be used for dancing. The women gather sweet-smelling leaves to decorate the haya' tebu' and to make into body decorations for the singers and dancers. The singing session itself involves everyone in camp. The women play log drums and bamboo flutes, the men play nose flutes and jew's harps, and both sexes sing and dance. If a shaman is present, he or she may go into trance to communicate at will with the superhuman beings and ask them to provide the Batek with abundant seasonal fruit and to look kindly on the Batek. There are not

many people who can go into trance. The Batek say that any person is capable of being a little bit hala' (shaman, also superhuman being), that is, each person can communicate with the superhuman beings to some extent even if not to the degree made possible by trancing. Much of Batek ritual life thus consists of people who are "a little bit hala'" performing particular rituals. For example, one Batek woman is a hala' 'angin, a wind shaman. When a strong wind hits the camp she invokes the thundergod to stop the wind. Another person may intervene at the beginning of a thunderstorm to tell the thundergod that there should not be a punitive storm because no one in camp broke any prohibitions. The Batek have spells and invocations for almost all aspects of their life. and these are recited on behalf of the group by any man or woman who has learned them and who is thought by others to get results. There are spells recited for such diverse causes as keeping tigers and other dangerous animals away and keeping bees from stinging the people collecting honey.

The most famous of Batek rituals in anthropological literature, the blood sacrifice, is performed by any person who thinks he or she may be the cause of a thunderstorm sent by the thundergod, Gobar, as punishment for breaking certain prohibitions. If a thunderstorm occurs very close to camp, thus seeming to be purposely directed toward the members of the camp, the Batek try to figure out who has broken a prohibition. They do not do so vindictively, but rather try to evaluate whether they themselves have acted in a manner offensive to the thundergod. If anyone thinks so, he or she performs the blood sacrifice that will make the thundergod stop the storm. If none of the adults thinks himself or herself to be at fault, one of the mothers, or occasionally a father, of young children may perform the blood sacrifice on behalf of one of the children who may have broken a prohibition such as laughing at butterflies. The thundergod is thought

not to get angry at children who break prohibitions out of ignorance, but the Batek seem not to want to take any chances. Children sometimes do continue to break prohibitions even after being told not to, as if they are trying to see what will happen. Since thunderstorms are so common, a thunderstorm usually does result! The blood sacrifice is performed as follows: the person cuts the calf of either leg by tapping the blade of a knife against the skin. Only a small wound, enough to draw a small amount of blood, is required. It is not necessary to seriously slash the leg. The blood is scraped on to the knife blade and then mixed with water in a bowl or bamboo container. If a mother is performing the ritual on behalf of a young child (the father may do it, but women say the men are not brave enough to do it first), she scrapes the blood from her leg on to the knife, rubs it on the child's leg to pick up the child's smell, and then mixes it with water in a bowl. The blood and water mixture is then thrown upward while the performer invokes the thundergod to acknowledge the blood and stop the storm. Sometimes, particularly during a severe close thunderstorm, several persons will independently perform the blood sacrifice. As with the recitation of special spells discussed above, the blood sacrifice does not require the presence of a shaman capable of trance. The rituals of Batek life are open to anyone to perform on behalf of the whole camp.

Curing is done by whoever seems to know how to treat the condition in question. Men and women develop skill in curing by learning from others about medicinal forest plants, curing spells, massage and other treatments. Some people introduce curing ideas supposedly passed on to them by the superhuman beings through dreams. People are allowed to treat members of the opposite sex for all ailments. During childbirth, however, usually only women attend the birth unless complications arise that a skilled curer who happens to be a male may be called in to treat (see Chapter 5). The

Batek are willing to make use of any man or woman whose curing techniques have proven successful in the past. Curers are not blamed if the patient dies and the Batek do not think that curers can inflict diseases on others at will (for more details on Batek curing techniques, see Kirk Endicott 1979:102-10).

These social roles, although important to the smooth functioning of Batek society according to Batek ideas, do not entail special status or prestige. While others appreciate the efforts of leaders, religious experts and ritual performers, and curers, they are not treated as extraordinary. People do not expect payment for performing social roles, as each person is simply expected to do what he or she can do on behalf of the group and to benefit in turn from other people's efforts. If the service performed is aimed at helping an individual, however, as when a midwife aids a woman in childbirth, the performer may be voluntarily given a gift or money by the recipient of the help. Since the social roles do not carry with them any special prestige or treatment, the Batek do not compete among themselves for the roles nor try to exclude individuals--or one sex or the other--from filling the roles. It is to no one's advantage to keep others from performing the social roles. Indeed, the group is best served if each individual man and woman is allowed to develop his or her own interests and talents and put them to use on behalf of the group. By placing individual ability above sex group identity or any other arbitrary category by which many societies exclude people from filling certain roles, Batek society does not limit itself to utilizing the talents of the select few.

CHAPTER 5

REPRODUCTION

In this chapter I will discuss Batek concepts, practices, and attitudes pertaining to reproduction. The Batek do not profess to know all the details of the reproductive process but have developed theories and practices that largely coincide with western scientific knowledge of what is, even for westerners, a quite mysterious process. Where there are holes in the Batek theories, individual Batek sometimes speculate about what really happens. Members of each sex know about and discuss the various aspects of reproduction, including menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and contraception. While women are the focus of much of the reproductive process, knowledge about these matters is not held secret by women, nor are women considered to be mysterious because of their dominant role in the less than obvious sphere of reproduction. The following discussion will show how the Batek deal with reproductive matters and will provide a further means of understanding how the Batek view the two sexes.

Menstruation

Menstruation is known to the Batek as belayar bulan, which literally means in Malay "monthly sailing or voyaging". This is probably just a Malay euphemism that has been borrowed by the Batek. They also use the Malay word pantang, "prohibition", for menstruation. The Batek recognize that a woman cannot conceive and bear children until after she begins to menstruate. The Batek make a clear connection between menstruation and the lack of conception during a particular month. They state that menstrual

blood is the blood that otherwise would have become a baby. The blood that becomes menstrual blood is thus considered to be necessary to the development of a baby. The Batek make a distinction between menstrual blood and the bodily blood of women. Unlike women's bodily blood, menstrual blood is thought to smell bad (jebec). Some people say it is dirty or bad. Women's bodily blood is not considered to share these characteristics of menstrual blood. The Batek explicitly say, for example, that the blood from a woman's leg, that is, the blood used for the blood sacrifice, is good (bed'et). As we have seen, the bloods of men and women are thought by the Batek to have different smells, though both are "good"; the difference in the smells is said to be because women do not eat salt during their menstrual periods or following childbirth, not because women also have menstrual blood.

Some Batek treat menstrual blood in the same way as the supposedly bad-smelling blood of certain animals, that is, they make it subject to the prohibition called lawac yap (lawac = "prohibition", yap = "blood"). The rule of blood lawac states that the raw blood of certain animals--such as the pig-tailed macaque, long-tailed macaque, gibbon, siamang, bearcat, and two types of tortoises--whose blood is thought to smell bad, must not be allowed to enter rivers or streams. If the prohibition is broken, both the sky-dwelling thundergod Gobar and the underground naga' will become angry and cause thunderstorms and severe flooding respectively. The bad smell is thought to rise from the waterways to Gobar or to penetrate underground to the naga' who then sends the offending smell up to Gobar. Although the bad smell of the blood is thought to be offensive to Gobar and the naga', the blood itself is not considered to be polluting or harmful to humans, and, indeed, the Batek eat these animals without worrying about the blood at all. Preventing blood lawac is easy: people who get

the blood of these animals on them, as during butchering, do not bathe in the rivers or streams for a day or two, but, rather, wash themselves by pouring water over themselves while on dry land. Some of the Batek groups, but not all, extend the blood lawac precautions to menstrual blood and prohibit women from bathing in the waterways during their menstrual periods and after giving birth. The Lebir River Batek De' women are allowed to bathe in the rivers at all times, even though the menstrual blood is thought to smell bad. Apparently, these Batek De' do not worry that Gobar and the naga' will be offended by the smell of the blood, although they are well aware that other Batek, such as the Batek Teh, are very strict about keeping menstrual blood out of the water. It is not clear why the Lebir Batek De' are so lax about the application of blood lawac to menstrual blood, although they apparently do not draw too close a connection between the bad smell of menstrual blood and the bad smell of the blood of animals subject to blood lawac.

The Batek do not consider menstrual blood to be polluting to humans. The bad smell of the menstrual blood is considered (by some Batek) to be offensive only to the two superhuman beings mentioned, not to humans, and the offensiveness exists only when the blood is allowed to flow into the water. Thus the idea of menstrual blood as polluting is limited in two ways: it is the smell rather than the substance itself that is offensive or polluting and it is only in a certain context that the pollution is of any concern to the superhuman beings. The menstrual blood itself is not considered to be dangerous to humans, nor is menstruation considered to be worthy of special attention. Except for the food taboos discussed below and the restrictions some Batek maintain against bathing in the rivers and streams during menstruation, menstruating women are subject to no other behavioural rules. They simply go about their activities as

normal: food-getting, cooking, and so on. They may even perform the blood sacrifice and other rituals (see Chapter 4). They are not separated from the other women and men of the camp. They continue to sleep in their normal houses with their husbands and children. Sexual intercourse may occur during menstruation. The women use old loincloths to absorb the menstrual blood and wash them out whenever necessary, the washing being done in a container on dry land where restrictions about menstrual blood entering the rivers are observed. The clothes used during menstruation may be worn at any other time; they are not polluted by their contact with menstrual blood.

All the Batek women, including the Lebir Batek De' women who are so lax about blood lawac, observe a number of food taboos or prohibitions (pantang) for the duration of their menstrual periods, which is approximately one week. The following is a list of what menstruating women can and cannot eat:

CAN EAT	CANNOT EAT
wild tubers (all kinds)	meat
fruits	fish
leafy vegetables (if cooked without salt)	birds
	penace' (kepayang nut)
palm cabbage	bee larvae
rice	honey
flour	cassava (ubi kayu)
medicines	salt
	sugar
	chili peppers
	curry
	oil
	bread
	milk
	tea

If a woman eats any of the prohibited foods during her menstrual period, the Batek say she will suffer from tewin mɐt, "dreamy eyes" or "dizziness". No harm will come to anyone else, only to the woman herself. While tewin mɐt is not a serious condition, the Batek women apparently think that it is worth avoiding, for they are careful during their periods not to eat any of the foods that would bring it on. Menstruating women do not go hungry, as they are allowed to eat the vegetable carbohydrates that normally form the staple of the Batek diet. Some menstruating women occasionally grumble when there is plenty of meat in camp and they should not eat any. The prohibition on eating meat, fish, and birds cannot be considered a male plot to reserve more protein for themselves by keeping it away from the women. The Batek explicitly state that when women are not menstruating they are given larger portions of meat than the men in order to make up for the time each month that they cannot eat meat.

The Batek do not have any extensive explanations for the particular food prohibitions observed by menstruating women. The foods in the list are simply considered to be unhealthy for a woman during her period. Occasionally the Batek sum up the foods that are allowed as belhɐt, "bland" or "tasteless", and those that are prohibited as gehet, "sweet", or piyas, "hot, strong-flavoured". Their explanations go no further than this. Why the Batek apply these categories is unclear. It may be a simple matter of their own ideas of what substances contribute to health and what foods do not. The foods that are allowed certainly satisfy hunger, but contain little protein, which in western medical thought is considered to be extremely important in the diet, especially during times of phvsical stress such as menstruation. The fruit that is allowed could be considered by us to belong more appropriately to the sweet category of prohibited foods; certainly in western terms, fruits are far from being tasteless or

bland. The probable reasons fruits are allowed is that for at least two months of the year they are the staple of the Batek diet. To prohibit them would be to cut off women from the main food supply during the months of the fruit season. In order to understand why the Batek prohibit meat, fish, and birds--the main protein sources of the Batek diet--it is necessary to introduce some speculation. The Batek have a great number of lawac prohibitions on cooking the flesh of certain animals together (see Kirk Endicott 1979:73-6) because they believe that the mixture of the cooking smells is offensive to the thundergod Gobar. Gobar is said to produce a thunderstorm to punish the breach of these cooking rules. It may be, although I have no direct evidence of it, that the Batek prohibit menstruating women from eating meat because the bad smell of menstrual blood should not be mixed with the smell of cooked flesh, which could be a mixture offensive to Gobar. While such a hypothesis may offer a useful analytic perspective, it should be treated with caution for two reasons. The first is that the Batek are generally very interested in the property of smell and the mixing of smells, yet they do not actually refer to smells when discussing the menstrual food taboos. While their terms for bland, sweet, and hot foods may connote smells as well as refer to flavour, it would be expected that they would explicitly talk about smells. The second reason for caution is that whereas breaking the cooking prohibitions results in a thunderstorm affecting the whole camp, breaking the menstrual food prohibitions results in the particular woman suffering from dizziness (tewin met), consequences which are quite different. Still, there may be something to the hypothesis offered above. The Batek simply do not give us much to go on, however. The non-traditional foods that are prohibited--cassava, sugar, chilis, curry, oil, bread, milk, and tea--probably fall into the prohibited category precisely because they are non-traditional

and non-essential to the Batek diet (unlike rice and flour, two non-wild foods which can be considered allowable because they form the staple of the Batek diet at certain times). The Batek do treat "new" foods with caution since they are unsure of the consequences of cooking them with other foods or with each other. The Batek have actually asked us if it is alright to cook packaged Chinese noodles we gave them over the same fire they used for cooking meat. The wariness accorded to cooking new foods may be behind their being prohibited from the diets of menstruating women, although, again, I have no explicit evidence of this. Honey and bee larvae definitely fall under the category of sweet, therefore raising no problems for our understanding of their being prohibited foods. The kepayang nut is prohibited most likely because, as seen in Chapter 5, it can easily cause stomach-aches and may thus be considered to be likely to cause the tewin met dizziness as well.

Menstruation begins for Batek women when they are about fourteen years old. The Batek say they have spells and wild medicines which can bring on menstruation. The medicines are certain roots that the pre-menstrual girl can eat. One girl is said to have taken a medicine to induce menstruation and within two months began to menstruate. She was around the age when menstruation probably would have begun anyway, however, so it is unclear whether the medicines actually have any efficacy. The Batek do not try to induce menstruation in very young girls by giving them medicines. It should be noted here that by trying to hurry menstruation in young teenaged girls, the Batek show that they welcome menstruation to some extent. If they dreaded it as something terrible, it would be expected that they would attempt to ward it off with medicines and spells for as long as possible. Menstruation continues for Batek women until they reach about fifty years of age. We know of at least two

women in their late forties who are still menstruating and at least two women in their late fifties and early sixties who have undergone menopause. The Batek say that when a woman gets old she simply stops menstruating and they explicitly state that once this happens a woman can no longer bear children. The cessation of menstruation is thought of simply as a condition of age; it is not thought to transform a woman in any other way, either physically or socially.

Sexual Relations

The Batek say that the deity Tohan ordered them to have sexual relations. He is said to have instructed the Batek to copulate often in order that the women could conceive and have children. There are no restrictions on when the Batek may engage in sexual relations; the sex act is not thought to affect adversely or favourably any of the activities of the Batek, such as hunting. The Batek simply have sexual relations whenever they desire to. Usually this occurs at night within the shelters, but people can and do find opportunities for sexual meetings during the daytime out in the forest. The Batek say that it is fine to have such daytime sexual relations in the forest as long as the couple is careful not to do so on or near the main path! The Batek apparently view sexual relations as pleasurable for both partners, as they say they use a variety of positions; women are not just "taken". Premarital sex is an expected occurrence, the young people choosing their partners on the basis of desire or lust (hawa'), a reason that is also given to explain why particular married couples chose each other. Despite the rather casual attitude the Batek seem to have towards sex, there is usually a ripple of seemingly embarrassed laughter whenever the words for copulation (toy, noy) are

mentioned. Whether the laughter was because my husband or I spoke the words or whether sexual relations are truly embarrassing in some sense to the Batek, I do not know. Neither of us detected overt use by the Batek of swearing words or slang referring to parts of the body or to copulation.

Conception, Pregnancy, and Childbirth[1]

The Batek, while aware of the connection between sexual intercourse and conception, do not profess to know exactly how conception takes place. Surprisingly, the Batek do not seem to know what semen is. They do not have a word for it nor do they recognize the Malay word for semen. The men did not even seem to know that the penis secretes anything other than urine. One woman, however, was aware of the existence of a substance other than urine but she did not know a word for it. She suggested that perhaps the men know the word but then admitted that her own husband didn't know and that she didn't know of any men who did. She speculated on the function of semen, however, saying that perhaps without this substance, there could be no children. She was careful to state that this was only a thought and that she did not actually know for sure. Rather than having well-developed theories about semen, the Batek say that the blood that would otherwise become menstrual blood is the substance that becomes a baby. Although the term for pregnancy, mako', also means "egg",

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[1] It should be noted that I was not present for a birth. This information derives from interviews rather than direct observation of Batek births.

the Batek never refer to the existence of an actual egg within the mother's body. Some Batek say that the blood that becomes the baby coagulates into a ball at the outset of pregnancy; perhaps this is the "egg". Despite the uncertainty about the details of the process of conception, the Batek seem to believe that somehow the father and mother play a joint role in the actual development of the foetus: they fully expect the baby to look like the biological father if it is a boy and like the mother if it is a girl. Rather than speculating on how these resemblances come about physiologically, the Batek say that the baby's face is a gift from the deity Tohan, who takes care to make the proper facial resemblances. In the question of the role of each parent in the development of the foetus, then, as in the explanations of why people copulate, the ultimate mystery of the matter is resolved by reference to the will and actions of Tohan, who, as a deity, can be expected to act in ways not obvious to humans. The Batek elaborate no further.

Pregnancy is detected within the first few months. The Batek women say they can feel it and that their menstrual periods stop. They know that pregnancy lasts for eight months, which indicates that they count from the first skipped menstrual period. Some say it lasts seven months, which would be the count from when the second period is skipped. There are no prohibitions on a woman's actions or eating habits during pregnancy. Sexual intercourse may continue. The woman basically continues her activities as normal for as much of her pregnancy as she feels able. If a woman is still breastfeeding a previous baby when she becomes pregnant, she notices a steady decline in her milk supply from about the third month onward. By the fifth month the milk is dried up. The previous child thus has a forced, though somewhat gradual, weaning brought about by the natural processes of pregnancy. The diminishing of the milk supply is not due to

the Batek diet, as this phenomenon has been reported for western women as well and is based on hormonal changes (Phillips 1976:137). The Batek women, incidently, do not absolutely force a child to give up milk when the breast milk gives out during pregnancy. If a young child seems to strongly want milk, the Batek try to buy tinned powdered milk to tide the child over until the mother is again producing milk. The child may then be allowed to continue to suckle even though there is also a new baby dependent on the breast milk. By the eighth month of pregnancy, the Batek mother is producing "milk", actually colostrum, in preparation for the production of real milk after the birth of the baby. This, too, is the normal pattern for western women as well.

The Batek term for the womb is haya' 'awa', "baby house". While in the womb, the baby is very small but all the parts of the baby's body are there, according to Batek thought. They do not, for example, believe that one part of the baby develops first and then other bodily parts follow in sequence. They say the baby grows because it wants to become bigger, and to emerge from the womb. They say that it is difficult (payah) for the baby in the womb because it is dark there and the baby does not yet know milk or food. When the baby is born, however, it sees the daylight and becomes healthy.[1] While still in the womb, the baby breathes softly and does not have to eat or drink. The Batek believe that the foetus has a soul (ñawa') but they are not concerned about when or how the soul is acquired. The Batek say that the umbilical cord (tali'

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[1] While the "difficulty" for the baby in the womb and the fact that the Batek say that the baby becomes healthy after birth might suggest that the womb is an unhealthy, dangerous, diseased place, the Batek never actually speak of the womb in this way. They do not speak of pregnancy or childbirth as a disease, either. "Becoming healthy" after birth may be a reference to the change in skin colour of a newborn that occurs soon after birth (cf. Llewellyn-Jones 1978:239), although I have no evidence of this.

pusat) is attached to the womb and to the baby but has no function other than enabling the placenta to be expelled from the mother's body after the baby is born. The baby is said to be born through the "big path" (har bew) which is the same as the urethra (har kenom) and the vagina (pew, teng) (cf. Meigs 1976:394-5).

When a Batek woman begins to go into labour, a special birth house is made for her by her husband, with a few helpers if necessary, in the forest outside the camp. Even if labour begins in the middle of the night, a special birth house is erected. The Batek say that the superhuman beings (haia' 'asal) instructed them to have their babies in the forest. The birth house may be situated only a few hundred yards from the camp. The reasons given for having a separate birth house are that giving birth in the ordinary shelter would make the shelter physically dirty and that after the birth the house is a prohibited place to which only the mother is permitted to return to keep a fire going beside the placenta (see below). Another probable, although unstated, reason the birth house is located away from the camp is so that the mother and the camp members will not be disturbed by one another during the birth, which could be a lengthy affair. Care is taken not to build the birth house right next to a stream in order to ensure that the house will not be washed away after the birth. If this were to happen, the Batek say, the baby would miss its birthplace and would suffer uncontrollable crying spells called saben.[1] The birth house

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[1] The Batek believe that certain parts of a child's body, such as the umbilical cord, milk teeth, and first hair, must be retained for a long period (months, even years, or until the item is lost) or else the child will miss them and suffer the crying spells of saben. The placenta, which housed the baby for so long may fall into this category as well, although I have no direct evidence for it. This could be the reason that care is taken to dispose of the placenta and the birth house in which it lies in a proper way.

is constructed in the same way as an ordinary lean-to shelter, but it always has a platform of bark, sticks, or bamboo. A backrest is constructed out of sticks driven into the ground at an angle so that the woman can lean against it during the birth. An old mat or cloth may be placed on the platform, but often this is not done because, according to the Batek, the mat would just get dirty. A fire is made close to where the mother will lie, and then all is ready for the birth.

At all stages of childbirth the mother is aided by other Batek. Before the husband takes the woman to the birth house, medicines and spells are administered to her in order to prevent her from suffering post-natal fevers called meryen. There are several different medicines used to prevent meryen fevers, some being drunk as teas, some being burnt near the mother's abdomen, and others being burnt and the ashes made into a black paste which is applied to the mother's body in horizontal lines across the abdomen and back and in vertical lines below the breasts. The medicines are used even if no one in camp knows the appropriate spells, for the medicines are said to be effective by themselves. The medicines and spells are used only when the woman commences labour, not during pregnancy. The recitation of spells and the application of medicines may be done by either men or women. This, however, is the only male role in the childbirth procedure. In the birth house the woman is attended by women only, a midwife and two or three other assistants. The Batek say that it is not appropriate for men to be present for the birth. This is probably linked to Batek modesty concerning the genitals: the genitals are supposed to be hidden from view at all times after infancy and early childhood. During the birth the mother is covered by a cloth at all times, so that her genitals are hidden even to the women attending her. At some point during the birth, however, it is likely that the genitals could be

exposed. This is probably why men are not supposed to be present. The midwife is generally a woman who has had children of her own and has attended enough other births to be well acquainted with the procedure. Usually this is an older woman, but young women, including teenagers, may serve as midwives. One woman stated that she began acting as a midwife when she was about fifteen and that she had not studied midwifery but simply knew what to do.

In the birth house, the mother reclines against the backrest and spreads her legs underneath a draped cloth. The midwife reaches around the mother's abdomen and massages it in the direction of the pelvis. The Batek say this is an attempt to bring together the knees and elbows of the baby. The midwife then presses downward on the abdomen to push down the baby. While it is doubtful that this has any actual effect on the foetus, this massaging probably helps distract the mother from the pain, a technique basic to psychoprophylaxis practiced by western women (see Wright 1964:132-4). When the baby begins to emerge, the midwife reaches one hand over the mother's near leg and the other hand under it and receives the baby. She does not pull the baby or otherwise assist in its actual birth; one Batek midwife appeared to be quite shocked when I asked about this. The Batek state that the baby comes out of its own accord, along with the umbilical cord and then the placenta. They say the baby cries as soon as it is born, without any outside help. The midwife immediately places the baby between the feet of the mother. She then bathes the mother with cool water and the mother moves a few feet away so the midwife can bathe the baby with cool[1] water. The midwife clamps the

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[1] The Batek are concerned that the baby should not develop a fever after birth. This is probably why they first wash the baby with cool water, rather than warm, for they think that fevers should be countered by providing a cool environment. After the first bath, however, they do wrap the baby in a cloth to keep it warm; this is in keeping with western treatment of neonates.

umbilical cord by tying a piece of thin rattan called 'awey riyuh around it and then cuts it with a sliver of bamboo called a semilu'. The Batek say that if a metal knife were used it would cause a burning sensation inside the baby. The baby is then wrapped in a cloth to keep it warm. A cloth is tied around the mother's waist and a heated stone placed on the cloth to warm her. The midwife or her assistants may massage the mother to make her more comfotable. The baby is put to the mother's breast and when the mother feels ready to walk back to camp she rejoins her family in their shelter. The midwife is given gifts such as cloth in return for her help, though she may be given less if the baby dies.

The Batek practice several measures to guard against post-natal health hazards to both mother and baby. In order to prevent the mother or baby from suffering meryen fevers, which are high fevers accompanied by chills, a fire must be kept going by the placenta, which is left in the birth house and covered with a pandanus mat. The mother returns to the birth house to keep the fire going for three or four days or until the placenta has shriveled and dried. Another post-natal measure against meryen is for the mother to drink hot medicinal teas. The hot drinks are said by the Batek to also stimulate the flow of milk. Another health measure taken by the Batek is to keep the umbilical cord stump after it has fallen off, which they say takes four to six weeks after birth. The stump is wrapped in a cloth and this bundle is worn as a bracelet by the baby until the baby is about walking age. If the umbilical stump were simply discarded after birth, the Batek say the baby would miss it and would suffer uncontrollable crying fits called saben. For a month to two months after childbirth, probably until the cessation of the lochia flow of blood, the mother maintains the same food prohibitions that women follow during menstruation. If a new mother eats prohibited foods she and/or her

baby will suffer dizziness. The midwife must not eat meat the same day as she assists with the birth and washes the baby lest the smell of the meat cause the baby to suffer dizziness (see below). The father and family of the new baby are not subject to any prohibitions. The mother can resume all her normal activities whenever she feels well enough, though some Batek say that she must not bathe in the streams or rivers for a month to two months after birth, as during menstruation.

While the Batek did not explain further why the smell of meat eaten by the mother or midwife after a birth would cause dizziness in the baby, it may be that they are making an association of menstrual blood and the blood that accompanies birth. Menstrual blood is thought to be the blood that would have become a baby. It is possible, although I have no direct evidence of it, that the blood at birth is thought to be residual or new menstrual blood or like menstrual blood. As I suggested above, mixing the smell of meat with the smell of menstrual blood, which could prove an offensive smell to the thundergod, may be the reason women avoid meat during menstruation, the woman suffering dizziness if she does so. After birth, the mother, who shed the blood at the baby's birth, and the midwife, who touched the blood on the baby, could be thought to retain the smell of the blood even after it has been washed off. Mixing that smell with the smell of meat, therefore, would create a situation potentially offensive to the thundergod, as in the case of menstrual blood. That the baby would suffer dizziness if the mother or midwife eat meat could be a reflection of the precarious state of health of newborns, that could be affected by any dangerous situation. It should be noted, however, that this explanation is my speculation, rather than Batek reasoning.

At some point soon after the birth the baby is given a Batek personal name (for a discussion of the other names Batek receive during their

lifetimes, see Kirk Endicott 1974:199-204). Some people report that the baby is named immediately after birth, while others say that this is delayed for a few days or even weeks. It may be the case, though I did not think to ask along these lines, that the babies who are born without complication and who appear to be strong, healthy, and likely to live are given names immediately, whereas those babies who are small, sickly, or thought likely to die shortly after birth are not named until their survival is more certain. Some Batek say that the midwife does the naming, while others say the father or both parents of the baby name the child. There seems to be no one "correct" naming procedure, the name in most cases probably being the result of a discussion between parents and midwife or whoever thinks of a likeable and appropriate name. Often the name refers to something the mother or baby saw the day of birth, such as a particular flower, rock, or leaf. The name is often taken from the stream near which the birth took place. The name is announced to the camp with little or no ceremony, although occasionally new parents will provide a small feast for camp members.

The Batek allow any child that is born to live. They do not practice infanticide for any reason--demographic or social. The Batek population is small enough and the resources of the environment rich enough that the Batek do not have to resort to infanticide to keep their numbers down. Babies who are born with gross deformities probably die within hours of birth, but no babies are killed because of abnormalities. A few Batek children do have abnormalities, such as a second thumb growing off the normal thumb, but these children are treated like normal children. The Batek are not disgusted, afraid, superstitious, or cruel about deformities. Twins are also accepted as normal children and not as something unnatural or horrible. The occurrence of twins is not considered dangerous

to the group in any way. Rather, the Batek simply regard twins as a health danger to the mother, as they know of Batek and Malay women having died from bearing twins. There are cases of Batek women successfully giving birth to healthy twins. The Batek try to avoid having twins, however, by taking care not to "twin" firesticks, that is, not to carry two firesticks at once, this being their explanation for the occurrence of twins. One woman explained that twins were caused by a woman having two lovers at the same time, though at a later date she said that a woman's having two lovers would not cause twins but only a divorce.

The difficulties of birth and disease do take their toll on the Batek. About 25% of Batek children die within the first two years after birth. Malaria is one of the prime killers of infants. If a child lives to age five, it will most likely survive into adulthood. Dead infants and children are given adult-type tree burials (see Kirk Endicott 1979:114-9) among the Lebir River Batek. The neighboring Aring River Batek bury infants in the ground even though all the Batek groups say that this will cause the dead baby to become a kewaʔ, a ghost that sucks people who pass by it. The kewaʔ is said to be making up for sucking the baby would have done had it lived. I have never seen a stone said to be a kewaʔ and do not know how many there are thought to be. The kewaʔ will indiscriminately suck on anyone, not just the mother of the deceased baby. Any part of the body may be sucked, although the Batek say that breasts or testicles, which are not normally associated by the Batek in any way with breasts, would be preferred. While the kewaʔ is not dreaded, the Lebir Batek seem not to want to cause kewaʔ to develop. They insist upon tree burial for dead infants rather than interment in the ground precisely to avoid the occurrence of kewaʔ.

The Batek use various roots as contraceptives ('obet neng 'awaʔ,

"medicine no children"). Most couples do not bother with contraceptives, for they say that they like having children. The contraceptive roots must be used by both the man and the woman in order to be effective, according to the Batek. The couple must eat a small piece of the contraceptive root each day. The contraceptives seem to be of dubious efficacy however, as the only people named by the Batek as being successful users of contraceptives were two couples who despite having been married for many years never produced any children. At other times the Batek referred to these two couples as sterile. It is difficult to gauge whether the contraceptives have worked, however, to prevent too close spacing of children. Most likely the lengthy breastfeeding practiced by Batek women acts as a suppressant of ovulation for some months after childbirth (see Phillips 1976:18).

The Batek consider the ideal spacing of children to be approximately three to four years. They say that this way the child no longer needs milk and can walk far from its mother. In other words, a child of three or four years is not as dependent upon its mother as a younger child would be. The ideal spacing, however, is not always the reality. Many Batek siblings are only a year or two apart in age. Close spacing of babies is considered to be a hardship by some Batek, but those to whom it happens cheerfully go about their business as parents. The Batek do not resort to abortion. Some Batek say that they avoid sexual intercourse for several months following childbirth, but others say that people engage in it right away.

Summary

The Batek treat reproductive matters in a quite straight-forward

manner. They do not highly develop themes of pollution or danger from menstrual blood, as do many societies, instead regarding the smell of menstrual blood as offensive to the superhuman world only. Reproductive matters are not elaborated into symbolic statements or value systems; women are not considered polluting, dangerous, inferior, or "closer to nature" (cf. Ortner 1974:73-83) because of menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation. Men and women are thought to play equal roles in the production of babies and in the prevention of babies, even though they do not completely understand how copulation leads to the development of a child. Birth is the one area of reproductive matters which is most exclusively the realm of women. The men are excluded from being present at the birth scene unless a particular man's curative knowledge is deemed necessary. This exclusion of men seems to be based primarily on the modesty about genitals maintained by both sexes.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIALIZATION INTO SEX ROLES

This chapter explores how Batek children learn sex roles. In a society which makes so few marked distinctions between the activities of the sexes it is important to see just how similar or different the socialization of boys and girls is and how children fall into the appropriate sex role patterns of behaviour. Parental attitudes and roles as well as children's activities will be examined here.

Childhood

The period of infancy, from birth until about two years, is a time of indulgence and constant physical contact for both boys and girls. The Batek say they equally desire male and female babies, and their affectionate behaviour toward infants of each sex supports this view. Because of breastfeeding, which may continue for three or four years if there is no subsequent pregnancy to disrupt it, infants spend most of their time with the mothers. The father, however, also plays an important part in the social life of the infant. Fathers hold, cuddle, and chatter to their sons and daughters with as much obvious enjoyment as is evident in the mother's behaviour. Most of the working day infants are carried in a cloth sling on the mother's back or at her breast so the baby can suckle whenever it wants. If the mother must be absent temporarily, the baby is carried by someone else and may even be offered the breast by another woman, although it may not take the milk. Most people in a camp take an active interest in the babies, admiring and cuddling them, reciting rhymes

for their amusement, and lavishing affection on them. These interactions are the same and of equal frequency for male and female infants. From the observable interactions, in fact, it was impossible to tell whether the baby was a boy or girl unless the baby's genitals could be seen.

Babies of both sexes are allowed to do the same activities as their motor skills develop. For instance, they are allowed to crawl equally far from the family shelter before being brought back by another child or a parent. Girls are not confined in their explorations any more than are boys. They are allowed to play with the same objects--all the family possessions except quivers of poisoned darts, which are kept out of reach. The favourite toys of children about eighteen months of age are knives, including large bush-knives. It is a common sight to see boys and girls hacking away at everything within reach, including the support poles of the family's shelter.

There is no obvious difference in the treatment of male and female infants in Batek society. If there are any differences they are at a level so subtle that I could not detect them despite paying careful attention to the many interactions between babies and adults and older children. The similarity of treatment is especially interesting when it is considered that studies of hermaphrodite children in western society indicate that "the very first years are of crucial importance for sex-role development. Once established, the individual's sex role appears to be fixed and irreversible. In this sense, the first two years seem to constitute a critical period in sex-typing" (Mussen 1969:710). Just how much of an awareness of sex roles and gender concepts Batek children gain during their first two years is not easy to tell. The similarity of overt treatment of the two sexes in these first critical years suggests that the Batek s[illegible]o need to emphasize gender in the socialization of children

into a society whose adult sex roles are not highly differentiated.

In early childhood, from about two to six years, boys and girls spend much time together doing the same activities. Two and three year-olds of both sexes tend to stay close to their mothers rather than ranging further afield. Mothers at this time, however, begin to foster independence in their children by not heeding every cry, by letting children deal with their own minor frustrations and difficulties and intervening primarily when the cry is indicative of pain, fear, or intense frustration. During this period, boys and girls are not cuddled quite as frequently as during infancy, especially if the mother has a new baby. By about three and a half to four years of age most children range further from their mothers, playing in mixed-sex groups, often with five and six year-olds, without direct supervision from adults or older children. As long as the children remain within earshot they are allowed to do almost anything they please. Activitie include chopping at trees with bush-knives, building fires, pretending to cook or actually cooking small amounts of rice or other food, digging as if digging for tubers, climbing trees, gathering sticks as if they were rattan, and such activities imitative of the skills they see performed by adults in and out of camp. It should be noted that all young boys and girls frequently accompany their mothers on tuber-collecting trips, so they learn early just what is involved in digging. Both boys and girls practice this skill through play, without direct instruction or suggestion from adults.

Children of both sexes play together at a variety of imaginative games as well as play/practicing useful skills. Pretending to move camp is a favourite for both boys and girls. They pack up a few items in baskets or cloth slings, carry them to another part of camp, and proceed to construct shelters out of a few leaves and sticks. They place cloths or

mats on the ground and then lie down on them to "sleep". One young boy went through a period of constructing shelters out of upright poles and all the cloths he could find. Other children joined at this, although he initiated the activity each time. Not all games have leaders or are consistently begun by only one child. Much play activity flows from one game to the next, one or a few children simply shifting activity after about ten minutes and the others joining in the new game. Thus, the play of a mixed group of young children may, for example, start with swimming in the shallow streams (children learn to swim mainly by observing older children, and possibly through some instruction by adults; the most common stroke is the simple "dog-paddle"), change to jumping off logs into the stream, shift to running after each other in a "tiger chasing Batek" game (children voluntarily take on either role and switch whenever they want), revert back to swimming, and then end up by pretending to be motorboats traveling up and downstream before the children gradually drift off to their own or each other's shelters to rest. Quiet activities in camp may include grooming each other, or while we were there, listening to our tape recordings of Batek songs, an activity which kept children occupied for an hour or so at a time. Young children often play with older children if they are in camp, sometimes actively joining them and sometimes simply watching them and then imitating their activities when the olderchildren leave to do something else.

Play groups of young children form at the will of the children themselves. Parents do not set up the groups or games for them to play. Whenever children, both boys and girls, decide to do a particular activity, other interested children spontaneously join in. No child is excluded from play by other children. Youngsters who cannot keep up because of their age and more limited abilities simply drop out of the play and find something else to do. Children of both sexes are welcome to participate in all the play

activities; one never hears children taunting others by saying "you cannot join us because you are a girl (boy)", as happens in our own society. Children do not rely upon suggestions of activities from adults, nor do adults have to intervene in children's play very often, except to warn them when they are breaking lawac prohibitions. The range of games children are allowed to do is so great that they are rarely at a loss for an idea to fill their time.

Batek children's play is strikingly non-competitive. Games do not have actual rules; children simply create and then repeat activity patterns as they go along. Play is not structured so as to produce teams of winners and losers. Even in constructive play, when children make darts or other items, there is little if any concern with producing "the best" objects, each child simply working at his or her own level of proficiency. The non-competitive nature of play parallels the non-competitive nature of adult work activities on which most play is actually based. An implication of non-competitiveness in play for sex role development is that children are not pitted against each other in their activities, which in western society often takes the form of "the girls against the boys" competitions and separate categories of games appropriate to boys and girls.

A type of activity that is largely absent from Batek children's play is "playing house" as western children do. The Batek often pretend to move and build houses, but they do not frequently designate one child as the father, another as the mother, and others as children, as, for instance, American children often do. Batek children pretend to do adult tasks, possibly even thinking of themselves as adults during play, but the imitation is not just derived from the nuclear family model. The reason for this seems to be that they see adult tasks being done by older children and unmarried adults as well as by mothers and fathers. Thus

they can imitate adult behaviour without pretending to be husband and wife, father and mother. Children also do not often pretend to have children of their own. Since they have to do a certain amount of child-minding of siblings, they seem not to reproduce it through play, seldom pretending to be families with children or playing with dolls. It should be noted that minding younger children is not a job left largely to children. Boys as well as girls, however, may sometimes be expected to look after younger siblings if the parents want to work without them.

During later childhood, from about six to ten years, boys and girls practice more intensely the skills they will use as adults. This is still largely in the form of play, but it is sometimes actually productive. During these years boys and girls learn much more about their environment and culture, through direct observation and questioning of adults and some informal instruction from them. In camp boys and girls observe hunters making blowpipes and darts, and they see blowpipes being used on birds and squirrels found nearby. The children, including girls, try to make darts and may borrow someone's blowpipe to try them out close to camp. Some of the children, especially the boys, may become quite proficient at shooting birds, sometimes climbing trees to get a better shot at them. Fishing, digging tubers, catching frogs, and other food-getting activities are practiced and played at, often with considerable success. Although parents do not expect children to produce food, the youngsters enjoy doing so when they can. Swimming, pretending to move, singing, dancing, and other activities done in early childhood continue to form part of the activities of the older children. Imitating animal sounds, learned from hunters, is a favourite activity. As in their early years, the older children spend much of their time in mixed sex groups because of similarity of interests.

By about ten years of age a change in the interests and activity-group composition is detectable. Boys spend more and more of their time hunting birds and squirrels increasingly far from camp and spend more of their in-camp hours making darts and quivers. Boys also begin to accompany various men on the hunt after about age ten. Girls gradually spend less time making darts as the boys increase their out of camp hunting activities. Instead, girls accompany women more frequently on gathering trips, not as children tagging along, but rather as workers in their own right. Often girls go along with women other than their own mothers. In camp girls begin to be taught (not necessarily by their mothers) how to weave baskets and mats from pandanus, a slowly-learnt skill which requires a great deal of practice. By about twelve years of age, the frequency of boys accompanying hunters and girls going with women on their activities is so great that they are essentially already in the adult behaviour patterns. Some girls may continue to keep up an interest in hunting, but, as far as I know, they rarely if ever actually accompany skilled hunters on hunts. There is no evidence that girls are actively discouraged from going on real hunts, however. Probably most girls do not bother to try to accompany male hunters and the hunters do not ask them to go along. Sometimes girls do go with boys their age on hunts, and pick up hunting skills in this way. Boys still accompany their mothers on gathering trips whenever they want, but they generally maintain a greater interest in furthering their hunting skills. Rattan work begins to occupy both boys and girls during their time. By about fourteen to sixteen years of age the Batek are no longer just children and novices in their activities, but, rather, are truly adults. As they live in separate shelters from their parents and may even begin to engage in trial marriages, their food-getting activities take a serious turn from the practice and play of the early years

to the productivity expected of adults.

A striking characteristic of the gradual change from the mixed-sex play groups and identical activities of childhood to the frequently single-sex work groups and complementary activities of adulthood is that it happens without overt pressure, coercion, or influence from adults. One never hears parents giving their children such directives as "act like a girl" or "boys do not do that". Children seem to sort out sex role behaviours by themselves. What they do have as an influence is the fact that they see very positive role models in women as well as men. Both men and women appear to be self-confident, enthusiastic about their activities, high-spirited, and generally satisfied with their work and lives. The activities and personal qualities of neither sex are down-graded or given lower cultural evaluation than the activities and qualities of the other. Batek children, then, have no obvious reason not to readily adapt to the behaviour patterns of their appropriate sex group, even though some of the activities of one sex not usually done by members of the other sex are not actually prohibited to them. The two activities which comprise Batek definitions of sex roles, that men hunt and women weave pandanus objects, undoubtedly shape Batek youngsters' images of their sex roles, but not even these are areas strictly prohibited to the other sex. The fact that these two skills must be actively taught to young people is what probably perpetuates this more definite division of activities by sex.

It could be argued that male hunting and female weaving are symbolic statements of how the Batek see themselves, not just their activities, and that this is how Batek children come to view themselves. For instance, it could be considered that hunting symbolizes the public domain while weaving symbolizes domesticity, as in the public vs. domestic polarity of sex roles put forward by Rosaldo (1974:23). Yet there seems to be no ethnographic

evidence of such a symbolism. First of all, it is very difficult to define just what the domestic realm is in Batek life. Men as well as women work in and for the home. Similarly, women's food-getting activities, and, indeed, their collecting of pandanus, takes them out of the camp setting into the forest just as men's activities do. Moreover, "public" in Batek life could be considered the camp itself, rather than the forest. Hunting vs. weaving could also be seen as a symbolic directive that men should be aggressive and women non-aggressively constructive or creative, symbolically derived from a notion of woman as creator of life (cf. Ortner 1974:75). Yet, again, Batek evidence for this symbolic dichotomy is lacking. Hunting is approached in a most non-violent way. Blowpipes are silent and clean weapons. Killing of food animals is treated as a necessity, not an objective valued in itself. The hunting complex is not given particular value in Batek culture, in fact. Moreover, aggression toward humans is shunned and discouraged in Batek culture (see below). While female weaving is definitely a constructive, creative matter, so too are male weaving of rattan baskets and any of the tool-making or craft activities done by both sexes. Male hunting and female weaving are part of the socialization message of Batek culture, but they do not appear to be symbolic stereotyping messages of deeper, more extensive expectations of male and female behaviours and attitudes.

The Parental Role

Childrearing is an activity that falls to both sexes, not a matter left almost exclusively to mothers. Although prolonged breastfeeding brings infants into more frequent contact with the mother, and the demands of the hunt require fathers to absent themselves from their children, fathers

still manage to play a significant role in childrearing. Hunts almost never require men to be away from camp all the children's waking hours, so they still can spend some time with their children. Fathers as well as mothers bathe their young sons and daughters, clean up their excrement, and take children out of camp to relieve themselves, jobs which in many societies, including our own, are generally left to mothers. Fathers play with their children, help cook for them and feed them when young, and sleep near them, as do mothers. Fathers sometimes make blowpipes, swings, or climbing ladders for their children to amuse them. Children are as openly affectionate towards their fathers as their mothers. Attachments to fathers appear to be equal in intensity as toward the mothers. It is not uncommon for a man's young son or daughter to wail despairingly for him when he leaves camp to hunt. Such cries go up for mothers, too, if they try to go off to work without taking their children along. Adults explain that children miss their parents when they are away and fear that they may not return. They say that the children miss whichever parent is gone.

That childrearing is not considered just the realm of one sex is borne out by the fact that in cases of divorce children may go with either parent or alternate between them without worry about the child's welfare. Very young children, especially breastfeeding infants, usually stay with the mother, but older children may decide to live with their fathers. As both men and women can provide food for their families, children can be supported by either parent in cases of divorce.

Although parents have the responsibility to teach their children proper social and religious behaviour, they do not have any real authority over the children. Parents expect that children will not obey them if the children do not want to. This is accepted in much the same way that

western parents accept that "boys will be boys". Batek parents normally do not hit their children, unless they feel it is a necessary way of teaching them not to hit others (see below). When children's behaviour annoys parents, they may yell at them to stop, but this often gets no results. Children are more likely to heed if a parent says he or she is upset or angry (ye' males) about the behaviour. It should be noted that fathers are no more successful at controlling their children's behaviour than are mothers. Fathers are not authority figures nor disciplinarians in Batek culture, points which are important in the relationship between the sexes (see below).

The main way in which parents try to control the behaviour of their children is by invoking the authority of a third party, one of which is the thundergod, Gobar. Gobar is the authority figure for both adults and children as he punishes transgressions of the proper social and cultural order with thunderstorms. Parents remind children, often while they are playing, that certain acts are prohibited (lawac) and gradually children adopt proper behaviour. Parents also use the tiger as an authority figure and bogey man to prompt or scare children into proper behaviour. The fear of tigers is real to the Batek and it is also intensified by the use of the tiger as bogey figure. If a child wanders too far away from camp, for example, a parent might call out "tiger, tiger" so the children will run back to camp. While this does teach children to beware of getting into dangerous situations, it also serves as a means of controlling children. It is interesting to note that fear of tigers apparently has not diminished in proportion to the decrease of tigers in the Malay Peninsula, because of or in order to perpetuate the usefulness of the tiger as a third party authority figure. The other bogey man parents use to influence children's behaviour is the stranger (gob). Parents may tell a child that the gob

will come, or if present, is watching, if a child does certain things or continues in an improper behaviour. Resorting to third-party authority seems to be a way that parents can control children, to some extent, even though they themselves as individuals do not have sanctioned authority over others, whether adult or child. In a society that is largely non-aggressive, control and authority are projected upon non-human (non-Batek) figures, the thundergod, tiger, and stranger.

That the parental role is shared so equally by the mother and father is a social fact readily observable by Batek children and undoubtedly important to their development of sex role concepts. Batek children see both men and women interacting with their families in similar fashion. Chodorow, in her paper "Family Structure and Feminine Personality", suggests "that a crucial differentiating experience in male and female development arises out of the fact that women, universally, are largely responsible for early child care and for (at least) later female socialization" (1974:43). She shows that in societies where children have little contact with their fathers and the father's work role is not directly seen by the children, boys develop their masculine identity through fantasizing about the male role and through the rejection, both psychological and behavioural, of all that is feminine and the "feminine" associations of the early childhood. She writes:

> the boy tries to reject his mother and deny his attachments to her and the strong dependence upon her he still feels. He also tries to deny the deep personal identification with her that he has developed during his early years. He does this by repressing whatever he takes to be feminine inside himself, and, importantly, by denigrating and devaluing whatever he considers to be feminine in the outside world (Chodorow 1974:50).

For the Batek, early childhood is not an exclusively or overwhelmingly feminine world. Children are affectionately cared and provided for by both parents. Fathers are not just elusively "out there" while mothers

constitute a child's immediate social world. Furthermore, the woman's role is not just seen to be that of caretaker of children. Batek children see both men and women as having child-care roles as well as food-getting and other social roles. Becoming an adult does not mean, therefore, that boys must develop substantially different views than girls and reject the major part of their early upbringing. Boys must learn to hunt, but this does not occur to the exclusion of their other activities and does not seriously affect their contacts with women and girls. Learning to hunt, like learning the intricacies of weaving for girls, is an activity added to the other activities of a child's life, not something which necessitates psychological trauma and rejection of others. It is interesting to note that Chodorow's conclusions to her paper turn out to be an almost fully accurate description of Batek childrearing and child development, even though she refers to what she sees as an ideal:

> The paper enables us to suggest what social arrangements contribute (and could contribute) to social equality between men and women and their relative freedom from certain sorts of psychological conflict. Daughters and sons must be able to develop a personal identification with more than one adult, and preferably one embedded in a role relationship that gives it a social context of expression and provides some limitation on it. Most important, boys need to grow up around men who take a major role in child care, and girls around women who, in addition to their child-care responsibilities, have a valued role and recognized spheres of legitimate control. These arrangements could help to ensure that children of both sexes develop a sufficiently individuated and strong sense of self, as well as a positively valued and secure gender identity, that does not bog down either in ego-boundary confusion, low self-esteem, and overwhelming relatedness to others, or in compulsive denial of any connection to others or dependence upon them (1974:66).

Batek children of each sex do indeed grow up with a secure sense of independence, self-confidence, and positive views and cultural evaluations of both sexes.

Learning Non-aggression

A striking feature of adult Batek society, and one to which children must be socialized, is that there are few displays of aggression and violence. Writers on non-aggressive and nonviolent societies generally accept that all people, even those living in non-aggressive societies, have experienced aggressive feelings at some point during their life (see e.g. Montagu, Draper, and Dentan in Montagu 1978). In non-aggressive societies, however, there is no cultural encouragement or sanction for or acceptance of aggression. Such societies socialize children in various ways not to be aggressive. It appears that young children everywhere display aggressive feelings and behaviours, even in non-aggressive societies. For example, Montagu write that John Nance's research on the Tasaday of the Philippines

> found that "the children showed the egoism one might expect--arguing over a stick, crying for food, slapping at one another". Dr. Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfelt, who briefly visited the Tasaday, remarked to Nance that he had observed "classic" aggressive behavior between toddlers--striking at one another or pretending to, tugging at the ends of a stick. The key question ... was how the Tasaday managed aggression in their children so that they grew to be loving adults (Montagu 1978:5).

This is a key question, too, in Batek socialization, and one which has a bearing on children's socialization to sex roles. It will become clear just what types of "aggressive" behaviours the Batek discourage, but at the outset let me state that by aggression I agree with Montagu that "aggression" includes "behavior designed to inflict pain or injury on others. The 'pain' or 'injury' may be no more than the snatching of a stick or toy away from another or involve the infliction of bodily harm" (1978:6).

The earliest training in non-aggression Batek children receive takes place between the ages of one and two. Children of this age who are near

each other and hit out at each other in annoyance or even in the wild animation of play are simply retrieved by their mothers or other adults and separated. This is done without comment from the mothers, who then try to interest each child in a new activity. Toddlers and older children may be explicitly told not to annoy other children if they are doing so and parents may still intervene to separate them if necessary.

Batek toddlers seem to have the "classic" toddler tendencies which also befall the Tasaday, according to Nance's research. They may act possessive about an object, be it a stick or a portion of food, and may hit others who come too close while they have the object. Children gradually learn to overcome this aggressive possessiveness. Parents do not generally admonish children about being possessive, which draws attention to it, but usually simply ignore it. It is considered that young children do not know any better, that they are budo' lagi', "still ignorant". Parents seem to think that children will simply grow out of possessiveness and aggressive behaviours. Sometimes aggressive behaviour is laughed at, making what seemed important to the child appear to be trivial and amusing. This also serves to ease the tension of the situation. Aggression may be calmed by others distracting the child. If a child is seen to be about to hit someone, others may cry out "'ala'", which roughly means "stop it". Whatever method is used, no direct comments about the aggressive act or lessons about the right or wrong of the act are made. Parents do not normally punish children for aggressive acts; very occasionally parents may hit a child to teach it not to hit others, as noted above. The Batek appear to think a better way of handling children's aggression is to minimize reaction to it and let children learn at their own pace that aggression is just not something people do. As children become more cognizant of adult behaviour, they see that adults do not hit each other, act possessive about food or

objects, or show anger very often. The absence of an adult aggression model for children to follow is probably the greatest factor in socializing children to be non-aggressive.

The following is an account of an aggressive incident between two siblings, a boy, Kay, about four years old and a girl, Ban, about three years old. Kay was listening to one of our cassette tapes. Ban was playing with a stick, digging with it and whacking it against the ground. Suddenly she hit Kay on the back with it and he cried hard. Ban dropped the stick near Kay and went to her mother, who was sitting about ten feet away from Kay. Kay threw a small stick at Ban, which did not hit her. Still crying, he picked up the stick Ban had dropped and threatened to throw it at her. He held it in the throwing position but hesitated for approximately twenty seconds before finally releasing it. It landed short of Ban. Ban began to cry hard and the mother attempted to get her to stop. She finally took Ban away and after a few minutes she stopped crying. Kay remained where he was, cried for another minute and then resumed listening to the tapes.

When I asked the children's mother and another woman about this aggressive exchange, both said that the children were "still ignorant" and that they did not yet know not to hit (sakel).[1] They explained that Kay threw the stick back at Ban because he was sick and therefore easily

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[1] Sakel means both "to hit" and "to kill". That the Batek use one word for these actions, which in many societies are viewed as quite separate acts of vastly different magnitude, indicates that hitting is considered to be a serious anti-social act and as unacceptable as actual killing. For the Batek there do not seem to be degrees of aggressive action or violence, some of which are tolerable and others not. Dentan reports a similar situation among the Semai, another Malaysian aboriginal people (1978:97).

upset. They also said that there was no particular reason or cause behind Ban's initial hitting in this case (everyone in camp usually can tell the cause, if there is one, of an aggressive display, whether they intervene or not). They added that children learn not to hit others but that they do not study this, that they stop doing it when they realize how it feels.

The main way in which adults vent discontent or anger is to talk about it. People sit in their shelters and loudly speak of what is bothering them, without addressing anyone in particular. All those in camp who want to listen--hearing it is usually unavoidable--pay attention and may add in their opinions. Sometimes loud cross-camp conversations are held, each person expressing his or her own views or discontentment. Children are thus exposed to communication as the chief way to rid oneself of anger.

It should be added that occasionally adult aggressive behaviour does occur. The Batek told us that one woman we knew had soundly hit her six-month-old son on the head with a piece of bamboo during our stay (she was in another camp at the time) and had actually killed another of her children in this way a few years before. This time the child had been knocked unconscious but did survive. I do not know whether she meant to kill the child or whether she hit him out of a fit of rage at him or something else entirely. Some people said the woman was suspicious that her husband was having an affair--or wanted to have one--with an adolescent girl. Ironically, at the beginning of our fieldwork, I had paid close attention to the mothering behaviour of this woman and thought she was an example of "a good mother", as she was attentive and affectionate to her three children and seemed to care for them diligently and properly. A few weeks after the hitting incident we saw the woman and carefully noted her interactions with her children, especially the baby. She again appeared to be a "good

mother", and there was no way of telling from her behaviour that she had done such a violent thing. The Batek made it quite clear to us that the hitting and killing were abhorrent behaviours, yet they did not ostracize the woman after the incidents (the woman's elderly mother reportedly did strike the woman right after the hitting because she was angry with her and very upset about the child). It appears that the woman was unstable and given to uncontrollable fits of anger. This was the only such case we heard of, even after inquiring about whether there were others, and seems to be very uncommon among the Batek.

That children of both sexes are socialized out of aggressive behaviour--in the same way and to the same degree--has implications for the development of sex role concepts. The Batek do not expect men and women to display vastly different types of interpersonal interactions. Men are not supposed to be aggressive and dominating while women are emotional, nurturant, deferring, and meek (cf. Mussen 1969:707-8 on cross-cultural concepts of masculinity and femininity). Batek boys and girls do not have to grow up in radically different ways. Their socialization guides them toward a confident independence coupled with a responsiveness toward others, without distinguishing between masculine and feminine personality types. The right of each individual to make and act upon his or her own decisions and the freedom from authority of others are highly valued in Batek culture. The dislike of aggression and the discouragement of aggressive behaviours seem to be correlated with these values. Were aggression to be allowed and even fostered in some people--or in one sex--authority over others and domination of others would be the logical and probably unavoidable consequences. The Batek would then most likely fall into the widespread pattern of male dominance over women. In decrying aggression in anyone, whether male or female, the Batek have created a social environment in which men

and women can interact as equals and in which the enactment of sex roles does not entail developing vastly differentiated ideas of masculinity and femininity. While the expectation or discouragement of aggression in individuals or in sex groups is not the only factor in determining how the sexes interact in a society, it seems clear that in Batek society the discouragement of aggression in all people is a unifying rather than differentiating factor in the interaction of the sexes and in the expectation of how men and women should act.

Summary

Batek socialization entails no overt pressures, coercion, rituals, or strong undercurrent of the separation of the sexes. Boys and girls share very similar experiences of early childhood, without distinctions being made in what behaviours and personality developments are appropriate to their sex group. As children grow older they seem to sort out for themselves the behaviour patterns that should mark their adult lives. The main influence on this seems to be that from early childhood onwards children see extremely positive role models of male and female adult behaviour. There seems to be no obvious reason--and none was ever expressed or hinted at--why girls should not want to take up the roles displayed by women and boys the roles of men. Boys and girls see that much of what adults do, including parenting, taking up religious, ritual, and curative roles, and acting as natural leaders, is done by members of both sexes. The main differences they see in the behaviour patterns are the frequency of performance of certain food-getting activities, and that men do most of the hunting for the group, and women are the specialists in weaving. Batek children seem to easily take up these activity patterns. To do so they do

not have to undergo traumatic tests, be exposed to prohibitions, or develop vastly different views of the masculine or feminine self. Socialization, like the adult roles to which it leads, allows children of both sexes great freedom of action and thought and freedom from the dominance of others.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The Batek are remarkably egalitarian in the social and cultural treatment of the sexes. As we have seen, the physical differences between the sexes are accepted at face value without elaborating them into evaluative and symbolic statements about men and women. Cosmological and religious ideas pay little attention to the theme of gender. The social organization of the Batek makes little use of gender as an organizing principle. Social roles may be filled by any person, rather than being limited to members of one sex only. Men and women are equal partners in marriage: the choice of spouse is left to the individuals involved, husbands and wives cooperate economically but are not exclusively dependent upon each other, decision-making is a shared responsibility, and divorce may be initiated by either spouse. Neither sex can be said to operate primarily in the public or the domestic domain (cf. Rosaldo 1974:23), as men and women each have familial, domestic roles and activities, including shared child-care duties, and they have food-getting and trade activities which take them out of the camp setting and bring them into contact with outsiders. Socialization to sex roles occurs without segregation of boys and girls, initiation rites, or overtly different parental treatment of their sons and daughters. Lastly, and most importantly, in no aspect of Batek culture or social life are men and women subject to asymmetrical systems of evaluation.

If we are to believe current thinking on sex roles, the Batek could not possibly be as egalitarian as the ethnographic data indicate. Rosaldo and Lamphere categorically state, for example, "all contemporary societies are to some extent male-dominated, and although the degree and expression

of female subordination vary greatly, sexual asymmetry is presently a universal fact of human life" (1974:3). Some writers argue that hunting, seen as a predominantly male activity, inevitably leads to higher status for men, implying that even in hunter and gatherer societies sexual asymmetry is inescapable. It has become an accepted stereotype that foragers value meat highly, and by extension, value the hunting activities that produce meat. Woodburn's statement that "we can safely assume [meat] will be a coveted food" among hunters and gatherers (1978:3) typifies the current view of foragers. Friedl, in a much quoted book, puts forward the following two summaries:

> no matter what proportion of the diet it may represent, meat is always the favored food. It is the food believed to taste best, to be the most satisfying. The giving of meat from big game animals always confers prestige on the givers. This situation has important consequences for sex roles among hunters and gatherers (1975:13);

and:

> First...meat as a scarce resource is valued above all others, second, the hunter of meat is correspondingly valued, and third, honor and prestige are accorded the generous giver (1975:22).

As we have seen, Batek food preferences, the exchange values of the products of male and female activities, and the absence of special or preferential cultural and social treatment of hunters show that the Batek do not fit Friedl's view of hunters and gatherers. In order to understand why, we must examine more closely the notions of value, status, and prestige as they are commonly applied to hunting and gathering societies.

Friedl implies above that meat is highly valued because it is a scarce resource. She predicates a social value system upon the idea of the scarcity of meat, a notion she treats as if it were a given of nature. Similarly, Lee regards the scarcity of meat as one reason "the hunting complex holds a central place in the Bushman ethos and that meat is valued more highly than

vegetable foods" (1968:40). He writes, "Vegetable foods are abundant, sedentary, and predictable...Game animals, by contrast, are scarce, mobile, unpredictable, and difficult to catch" (1968:40). Both Friedl and Lee, however, fail to correctly apply the notion of scarcity because they leave out an important element of the definition of scarcity. As Dalton points out, "in the economist's sense, 'scarcity' does not mean physical shortage, but a condition of insufficiency relative to desire" (1968:166). Friedl and Lee fail to realize that scarcity does not in itself cause something to be valued, that scarcity has no meaning unless a thing is wanted. The desire for something, in this case a particular food, is culturally established. Not all groups desire meat to the same degree, regardless of how much or how little meat is available. At one extreme are the Hindu Brahmins and other vegetarians who reject meat outright for religious/cultural reasons. As shown above, the Batek desire meat but to no demonstrably greater extent than they desire various other foods. The cultural role in determining desire for meat has at least three dimensions, any or all of which may be emphasized by a society: the first is a matter of what foods are considered edible and which of these edible foods are thought to taste good; the second is the society's ideas on nutrition - its ethnonutrition - which may favour and socially value certain foods thought to have desired qualities; and the third dimension is that a society may emphasize desire for a food if the procuring of that food leads to social rewards such as status or prestige (rather than vice-versa; see below).

Friedl's second point, that "the hunter of meat is correspondingly valued" (1975:22), seems to imply that the inherent value of meat, which is itself a false premise, causes hunters to be specially valued. Even if we consider situations in which meat is highly desired and valued, Friedl's jump from the value of a good to the value of the producer of that good is

not justified. In fact, providers of valuable things are not necessarily socially valued themselves. For example, diamond miners in South Africa and goldsmiths in India are groups which do not benefit socially from the high value of the goods they produce. The social value, or social status, of any occupational group is imposed by society or some part of society. In politically developed societies, the group holding greatest political power may determine the social value of particular groups. In societies organized more simply along age and sex lines, elders and/or one sex may impose higher value upon certain activities and workers. In those hunter and gatherer societies reported to highly value meat, hunting, and hunters, it should be considered that those who do the hunting, usually the men, have imbued themselves and their activities with high social estimation.[1] As men are usually in a dominant political position in a society, it is usually their activities which stand out as being the most highly valued. It does not matter what the specific activity is as long as it is one that is essentially associated with men (cf. Rosaldo 1974:19). It could be hunting, but it could be, for example, growing yams, as is the case among the horticultural Abelam of New Guinea (Forge 1970:272) and in the Trobriand Islands. It seems far more likely that the politically established value on men's activities lends value to meat or whatever foods they produce rather

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[1] That such social valuations produced by one interest group can be interpreted by anthropologists to be a society's culture is testimony either to the dominant position of the interest group in the society or to the anthropologist's less than complete renderings of the culture. Isobel White points out "it is an almost universal trait to consider one's own job important, and we might expect women to see their own relative status as higher than men see it" (1974:39). She cites examples of women anthropologists who, by seeking out women informants, present different pictures of cultural aspects than do male anthropologists studying the same culture through male informants, which suggests that there is not just one single view of culture shared by everyone in the society nor by the outsiders who study it.

than that the value of meat lends value to male hunters as Friedl suggests. If this is correct, it follows that in societies in which neither sex can be said to have political dominance over the other, men's and women's work and the products of their work may not be differentially ranked and evaluated. Indeed, this is precisely the case with the Batek.

Friedl's third point, that "honor and prestige are accorded the generous giver" (1975:22), implies that hunters have discretion in how game is shared and receive credit as individuals when game is distributed. Yet most societies have rigid rules about how meat not consumed at the kill site must be shared, even to the extent of designating particular cuts for certain kin. Hunters are locked into a system of distributing meat. Withholding meat brought into the camp would be an antisocial act that would probably result in condemnation and exclusion from receiving future shares of meat brought in by other hunters. Only if sharing meat were not a social norm could a hunter truly act generously toward others in the manner suggested by Friedl. The honour and prestige that may be conferred upon the hunter of distributed meat are in recognition of the fact that the hunter actually produced meat, not that he distributed it, which is unavoidable in most foraging societies.

The prestige and social status societies may confer upon successful hunters may actually be a way of encouraging people to hunt more often or for larger supplies of meat than they might be otherwise. It cannot be assumed that all hunters necessarily like to hunt and are willing to risk their own safety and give up their hours of leisure and comfort. This is especially pertinent to hunting big game. According to Woodburn, Hadza men may just kill a small animal and consume it at the kill site and not bother to try for the larger animals that would take more effort to track and kill (1968:53). Woodburn writes that "of course, if he sees an animal close by which can easily be hunted, he will almost always take the

opportunity" (1968:53). Hadza men prefer to spend their time gambling arrows rather than hunting, however (1968:53). The Hadza have no particular incentive to put more effort into hunting. If, for example, being a successful, industrious hunter were a formal prerequisite for marriage, the Hadza might pay more attention to hunting. In fact, Woodburn states that a man may "find it more difficult to marry a wife, or, once married, to keep a wife, if he is unsuccessful in hunting big game" (1968:54) but later notes that "some men provide their wives with regular supplies of game meat and of trade goods...Other men never provide meat or trade goods and yet their marriages often survive" (1978:20).

An example of a society that fosters the incentive to hunt by conferring social rewards upon successful hunters is the !Kung of Nyae Nyae, as reported by Lorna Marshall (1976). In order to be eligible for marriage, boys must prove their hunting prowess by killing a large game animal. The kill is formally acknowledged and celebrated by the "Rite of the First Kill". Marshall states specifically that "the killing of birds or small animals does not qualify him [the hunter] for the rite: the animal he kills must be one of the great antelopes or a giraffe or buffalo, any one of the large animals killed for meat" (1976:270). It is the hunting of animals that are difficult and/or dangerous to hunt but which supply considerable quantities of meat that is rewarded with the Rite of the First Kill and the eligibility to marry. During the rite the hunter is scarified and magic substances are rubbed into the cuts in order to "give him the will to hunt, good sight, and accurate aim, and also to enable him to find the animal and to prevent him from being seen by the animal" (1976:270). The scarification serves as a means of continually fostering the incentive to hunt big game. Marshall states that the scarification and magic substances "insure that he will not be lazy, that his heart will say to him, 'Why am I sitting here at my fire? Why am I not out hunting?'" (1976:130-1).

The Batek manage to procure a steady, satisfying supply of game without giving special social rewards or overt incentives to hunters. They have no rites of recognition for successful hunting, nor is it a formal prerequisite for marriage. Compared to hunting large game, such as the giraffe, buffalo, and antelope of the !Kung of Nyae Nyae and the lions and leopard of the Hadza (Woodburn 1968:52), Batek hunting is relatively easy, predictable, and safe (the major danger being the risk of attack by tigers, which the Batek do not hunt). There may well be a correlation between the difficulty of hunting certain game, especially big game, and the presence of social rewards, such as prestige, for successful hunters. Further comparative studies of hunters and gatherers could determine this. For the present we know that some societies honour and esteem the hunting of large but not small game. Friedl mentions this fact but avoids the question of why small game hunting, which provides animal protein just as big game hunting does, is not valued highly by simply removing small game from her definition and discussions of hunting (1975:12, 13).[1] As the preceding discussion has suggested, there are several social factors which may enter into differential valuations of foods and food-getting; the problem is not just a matter of weights and measures or how anthropologists choose to define hunting.

The Batek case clearly shows that male dominance -- whether simply statistical or culturally sanctioned -- in hunting does not necessarily lead to higher status for men and sexual asymmetry. It appears that where hunting

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1 Estioko-Griffin and Griffin, in a paper on women hunters among the Agta Negritos of Luzon, point out that women's animal-getting efforts are often not referred to as "hunting". They illustrate this point by stating: "among the aboriginal peoples of Western Australia, women hunt and gather (Richard Gould: personal communication). Game is not large--kangaroos (occasionally) and lizards are the usual fare. Friedl (1975:12) would call this gathering, but classification seems only to enforce artificial boundaries" (Estioko-Griffin and Griffin n.d.:22).

is a prestige activity, there is already underlying it a degree of male dominance over women. Male hunting is not the starting point in the presence or absence of sexual asymmetry in foraging societies. There seem to be several conditions which either allow for or mitigate against sexual asymmetry. Let us explore the conditions of Batek society that seem to mitigate against sexual asymmetry in their culture and society.

First, the Batek economy depends upon the daily food-getting efforts of both sexes. The quantitative data show that women steadily produce staple foods while men diversify more frequently to produce less reliable foods. Together, and only together, do men and women manage to produce an adequate diet over the long run, even though individuals can survive for short periods on their own efforts. Although men's and women's productive efforts are largely directed at different food sources, they are both for immediate use or immediate return, to use Woodburn's term (1978:12). Where production is for exchange, as in the rattan trade and sale of forest products, men and women play active parts, even though the frequency of their participation differs. Both sexes, then, participate in production for immediate use and production for exchange. According to Sacks, Engels considered that a major factor giving rise to male domination of women was the passing of men into production for exchange while women remained in the domain of production for use (Sacks 1974:208-211). This factor is not at work in Batek society.

Second, in the sharing network of the Batek, men and women are equal contributors and recipients. Each man and woman has direct access to shares of all types of foods; meat is not just distributed among male hunters, for example, while women share what they have procured with other women or their own families only. The sharing network treats all food contributions as equal, without regard to the type or amount of food put into the system.

Although men and women usually work at complementary food-getting activities, their direct participation in the sharing network means that they derive equal benefit from the system and are not dependent on intermediaries, such as spouses, for their shares of food. The importance of this is that neither sex dominates the exchange of food nor has economic power over the other sex.

Third, no one in Batek society can be said to own or control anyone else. Batek men do not own their wives, sisters, and daughters; men have no "rights", derived from ideas of ownership, to women's work, sexuality, offspring, nor any rights to make decisions for and about them. This is in line with Gough's statement that "especially lacking in hunting societies is the kind of male possessiveness and exclusiveness regarding women that leads to such institutions as savage punishments or death for female adultery, the jealous guarding of female chastity and virginity, the denial of divorce to women, or the ban on a woman's remarriage after her husband's death" (1975:70). Woodburn cautions that Gough's statement applies only to societies with immediate-return economic systems (1978:22); as we have seen, the Batek economy falls into this category. The lack of notions of ownership of others in Batek society is matched by their limited application of ownership and property ideas toward material objects. They do not consider, for example, that they as a group or individuals own land or have exclusive rights to the natural resources of that land. Ownership applies mainly to personal possession such as food-getting tools (which everyone can make), bush-knives, clothing, flutes, and the like, and also to foods that the individual has produced (despite "ownership", the foods must be shared unless they are of such small quantity as to be enough only for the producer). Personal possessions are freely shared with others, who may even borrow them without seeking permission of the owner.

Property and possession notions are clearly not very important to the Batek. The implication for sex roles is that in a society such as the Batek where there is little emphasis on chattel, women are less likely to be regarded and treated as chattels than in a society where property claims loom large.

Fourth, the Batek value independence, for themselves as a group and as individuals. This is evident in the obvious pleasure they take in being free to move around as they please, even in the absence of economic necessity, something which is perhaps only fully understandable to nomadic peoples themselves. This may be in part a cultural response to Malay attempts over the years to take over for their own use the land the Batek were living in, kidnap their children to use as slaves, and control them. The Batek response to outsiders has been flight and living away from populated areas. Within Batek society the value on independence is evident in the lack of sanctioned human authority over other persons, including children. Each man and woman has the right to make his or her own decisions and do as he or she pleases. Furthermore, the Batek abhor aggression, both amongst themselves and toward outsiders. The importance of this for the relations of the sexes is that without sanctioned human authority, enactment of aggression and the usurping of others' rights to independence, one segment of society cannot dominate another, that is, men cannot dominate women. The Batek value of independence applies indiscriminately to men and women.

The fifth condition present in Batek society that mitigates against sexual asymmetry is that there is no social need for status and prestige. Conspicuously absent from Batek society are the ends to which many societies use status and prestige as qualifying criteria - ends such as wealth, political power and exclusive social positions. The implication

for sex roles of the lack of status and prestige is that there is no need to assess and evaluate individuals and their activities or to use gender as a means of restricting eligibility for these scarce social commodities. This is one more potential source of sexual asymmetry that is absent from Batek society.

For the Batek at present sexual egalitarianism is very much a reality. As long as the social and cultural conditions that provide the basis for this egalitarianism exist, the equality of the sexes will persist. If, however, these conditions change, it is very likely that the egalitarian relationship between the sexes will be altered as well. External pressures are already threatening the Batek foraging life. Malaysia's economic development projects, including logging operations, water control schemes, roadways, and rubber and palm oil plantations, are already nearing the Batek area. As the Batek find themselves with less land to support their hunting and gathering and less virgin forest to supply rattan, they will be forced to alter their economic activities. Some may settle as agriculturalists, as the government has been trying for years to get them to do, while others may become wage labourers in the wider Malaysian economy. Social adjustment to such economic change may bring with it increasing difference in the activities of the sexes, greater social distance between them, and the sexual asymmetry that characterizes so many societies. In the meantime, however, Batek men and women live in a way that truly exemplifies egalitarianism of the sexes.

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