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**Culture as Adaptation:
Change among the Bhuket of Sarawak, Malaysia.**

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by

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Chapter 1: Introduction.

1.1 Hunter-gatherers Today.

In the past few years detailed field research has been carried out among contemporary hunting and gathering populations of Borneo. This study concentrates on one such people, the Bhuket.¹ The Bhuket today are involved in various activities such as swidden rice agriculture, the cultivation of cash crops and wage labour, but hunting and gathering are also maintained. Their current circumstances have changed but this has not in anyway stopped them from being hunter-gatherers. They farm like their agriculturalist neighbours, although they are not as committed or expert; furthermore, this has not led to a change in the perception of their agriculturalist neighbours as seeing them other than as hunter-gatherers, or even in their own perception of themselves as hunter-gatherers. Although most hunter-gatherers of Borneo farm today and might even live like their settled neighbours, this has not resulted in them being other than hunter-gatherers. Subsistence activities have undergone diversification but elements of their hunting and gathering lifeways and attitudes seem to persist and they adapt to change in a flexible way. These features are often commented on by neighbouring sedentary communities in their concept "macam Punan" (meaning "like hunter-gatherers"). This is usually not only a reference to the past hunting and gathering practices of forest nomads but also to the flexibility that is observed in their lifeways at the present time.

Being hunter-gatherers in Borneo today is not only related to engagement in a particular mode of subsistence but also has something to do with the flexibility of the hunting and gathering culture. Hunter-gatherers live in a modern and changing context, as farmers, wage labourers, lorry drivers, chain-saw operators, teachers, clerks and so on, but paradoxically they remain hunter-gatherers through the persistence of their flexible attitude to life. For the anthropologist, projection backwards in time is not the only way to understand the dynamics of hunting and gathering lifeways; one must also try to understand hunting-gathering culture by examining the consequences of transformations, which are, in turn, elements in the flexible cultural matrix of hunter-gatherers.

1.2 Punan: the Hunter-gatherers of Borneo?

My purpose in rekindling the discussion of the term "Punan" at this early point in the thesis is to bring the voices of hunter-gatherers themselves into the debate and, in so doing, to contextualize the ethnographic context in which this term exists and is used in current discourse. First, I will present early accounts of the use of the term "Punan" and the ensuing debate that emerged over the application of this nomenclature to hunter-gatherers of Borneo. Secondly, views gathered from Bhuket, Lisum,² Sihan,³ Baketan,⁴ Punan Busang,⁵ Kercho⁶ and Hovongan⁷ (Bungan) about the cultural category "Punan" and the various contexts in which the term is used by their agriculturalist neighbours and others will be examined. Finally, the numerous conversations held with Kayan, Kenyah and Malays about their hunter-gatherer neighbours provided valuable insights into what the term "Punan" really means to them today.

The earliest appearance of the term "Punan" in print, referring to nomadic peoples living in central Borneo, was in the work of J. Leyden. He described these peoples as living "in the very rudest stage of savage life" (1814:93). Another early traveller, J. Dalton also claimed to have met the nomadic people of Borneo (1831). The term "Punan" also appears in the list prepared by Robert Burns of smaller tribes in north-west Borneo; this categorisation also helped him to narrow down his definition of the Kayan. His list recorded Kanowit, Bukitan, Lugat, Tanjong, Tatau, Balingan, Punan, Sekapan, Kajaman, Bintulu and Tilian (1849:141). It is interesting to note that Burns separated the Bukitan and Lugat, who are also hunter-gatherers, from the Punan. Carl Bock also gave an early description of the Punan in 1882, whom he encountered on his journey up the Mahakam river in south-eastern Borneo:

....I was intending to penetrate into the forest and endeavour if possible to solve for myself the mystery of the Orang Poonan, or wild people of the woods.....My stay among these primitive wild people of the woods was limited to a single afternoon.....I believe these savages to be the true aborigines of Borneo. They live in utter wildness in the central forests of Borneo, almost entirely isolated from all communication with the rest of the world (Bock, 1882: 69-71).

The *Sarawak Gazette* of March 1 1882 gave information on the diversity that existed within the category Punan:

.....The names Ukit and Bakatans are what they call themselves but [they] are ignorant of the origin of the terms. Although Mr. Bock takes the credit to himself of being the first white man to meet this people, perhaps a very natural and excusable piece of pride in a traveller in a new country, yet the fact is certain that the officers of the Sarawak government stationed in and in charge of the upper districts of the Rejang river have known these people and constantly met them for the last 25 years, one house of Punans being situated near the Kapit fort (1882: 11).

Charles Hose's travels in the Baram district in north-west Borneo and his encounter with the Punan there led him to state, "I have no doubt in my mind that this wandering race of people are the aboriginals of the country" (1893:157). In his classification published in 1912, Hose included Punan, Ukit, Siduan and Sigalang in his "Punan group". The Baketan (Bukitan, Bakatan, Mengketan) he classified as a central group which included Seping, Tanjong, Kanowit, Baketan and Lugat. (Hose, 1912, ii: 320). Subsequently Raymond Kennedy classified Punan as comprising Aput, Basap, Boh, Bukat, Bukitan, Busang Kelai, Lisum, Lugat, Ot and Tenyabong (1943). Mervyn Beech also described them in an article in the anthropological journal *Man*:

The Punans live in the dense jungle beyond the Sagai in the interior of Bolongan, on the east coast of Borneo. They are a hunter tribe...., and will not come into a village but always live in the jungle, as they are unable to bear the heat and glare of the sun....They are rapidly becoming extinct... (1911:17).

Just over a decade later, in the *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, in an article entitled "The Gypsies of Sarawak", Captain E.L. Andreini remarked:

All the time you will have the feeling that unseen eyes are watching you and so indeed they may be...for Punans are timid people and greatly fear the roving Sea Dyak [Iban] and it is said they have the art of cammouflage in its most perfect form..... A people of the jungle living very much like animals, hunting and with fear of the hunted in their hearts. One leaves their primitive encampment with the thought that here is a link with man's origin, but realizing what tremendous progress man has made since our forefathers too lived the life of the hunters, and with pity in one's heart for these simple people who are slowly, like the wild beast, being exterminated by the ravages of man and disease (1924: 76-77).

However, Miller's later description of the Punan showed them not as timid and vulnerable but as "Rough, tough, and physically fearless, they will run only from

spirits"(1942: 263). Then in 1945 an anthropologist, Fay-Cooper Cole made the provocative assertion that the "Punan" did not exist. He said:

It is certain that....these authorities [referring to early travellers and anthropologists] and others did see people called "punan", but the writer is inclined to doubt their [Punan] existence as a distinct people. In central Borneo any party gathering jungle products and making temporary camps is known as "punan" or campers (1945: 99; cited in Hoffman, 1983: 7).

Therefore, Cole suggested that there was a possibility that the early travellers were misled into believing that the Punan were a distinct people. Cole's proposition was immediately challenged by Robert Heine-Geldern, who remarked that "[Cole's] doubts are wholly unfounded. The Punan have been seen, described, and photographed by numerous observers" (1946:161).

Cole then responded to Heine-Geldern in the following terms:

Despite the fact that people called Punan have been seen and reported by reliable parties I am still inclined to doubt their existence as a distinct people.....I went to Borneo looking for Punan. While in central Borneo I sought in vain for any such people, but I did find that any group which was away from home gathering jungle products and living in temporary camps was known as Punan....Under the circumstances I believe that in Central Borneo the term has no other significance than our word "camper". It is possible that in Sarawak and elsewhere there may be truly nomadic Punan, but for the moment I think there is reasonable doubt that this is true (1947: 340).

Cole's continued denial of the significance of the category "Punan" was roundly dismissed by anthropologists, but in 1949, Tom Harrisson, who was the then Government Ethnologist of Sarawak, admitted that the disputes needed to be informed by detailed ethnographic data. He said:

No outside investigator has ever made a protracted study of any Punan group, and we do not even know if the persons so termed really represent a culturally, a linguistically or physically related people, or whether they have several origins and are uniform only in a common habit of nomadism (1949: 131; cited in Hoffman, 1983: 9-10).

Harrison's call was met by Rodney Needham. Needham provided valuable ethnographic materials on the hunter-gatherers of Borneo, especially on their social organization (1954a, 1954b, 1954c, 1966, 1971a, 1971b, 1972a, 1972b) and their

religion (1964). Based on prolonged anthropological field research, Needham's findings on the distinction between the Penan and Punan hunting-gathering peoples led to an awareness of the problematical use of the term "Punan" to denote all hunter-gatherers in Borneo. Needham argued that it was misleading to use the term "Punan" in the overarching manner in which it had been popularly applied. He maintained that the hunting-gathering people with whom he had worked referred to themselves as "Penan" and considered themselves different from "Punan" (1954c, 1955). He also remarked that there were distinctions even within the category "Penan" (1972b:177). Needham's pronouncements then led to an interesting exchange.

Harrisson found Needham's distinction "absurdly amusing" and doubted that the two terms "Penan" and "Punan" reflected ethnic differences. He asserted that the differences were due to dialect variation in the pronunciation of the same word (1974: 42). Another anthropologist, Herbert Whittier (1973), who studied the Long Nawang Kenyah of East Kalimantan, then tried to clarify Needham's distinction between the terms Penan and Punan. He stated that:

In Sarawak there may be a case for a distinction between "Punan" and "Penan", in Kalimantan, however, I found that some Kenyah groups referred to the "nomads" as "Penan" while other Kenyah groups referred to the same group as "Punan". The distinction "Penan/Punan" here seems to be a matter of dialect differentiation among the Kenyah groups (1974: 42; cited in Hoffman, 1983:11-12).

Harrisson reinforced this evidence:

As Whittier points out for Kalimantan, so it is....and always was...for Sarawak too: the distinction in vowel sounds is in the beholders. One and the same group may be called Penan by some (settled) group and Punan by another adjacent (settled) group. Where the Kayans dominate, Penan probably rules? Most Kenyah and others, including all earlier European writers, prefer Punan. For any serious student to base ethnic classification on such flimsy semantics is naif, if not faintly frivolous (1975: 4; cited in Hoffman, 1983: 12).

Yet, what Harrisson and Whittier seemed to have missed in Needham's finding is that the distinction was indeed made by the Penan themselves, and were not Kayan or Kenyah distinctions in their terms of classification for the hunter-gatherers. In this regard Needham wrote:

Until 1951 no white man had ever spoken the Penan language, and when they are asked about the name "Punan" the Penan smile and say ; "The white men do not know our language, and this is certainly a different people. We are Penan (1954c: 82).

Needham was leading us on the right path and onto something important, for quite simply, he was giving the views held by the hunter-gatherers themselves, while both Whittier and Harrison based their arguments on the way in which these terms were used by settled agriculturalists. Needham's further observation that there was also a distinction between the Eastern and Western Penan, that they were different from the Punan and that the settled Punan Bah, in turn, were unrelated to the nomadic Punan helped clarify some of the inconsistent and muddled ways in which the category Punan had been used. Needham demonstrated the cultural heterogeneity of the hunter-gatherers of Borneo (Hoffman, 1983: 11). Yet if one looks closely this heterogeneity can also be observed in the early reports of colonial officers, who had used a myriad of terms for the interior hunter-gatherers (see for some example in *The Sarawak Gazette* March, July, August, September, October and November 1882 and July 1898).

Hoffman's contribution to this debate was to accept both sides of the argument :

...it is simply that both sides of the argument are probably correct. It is reasonable to suppose, on the one hand, that dialectical variation probably was the initial factor in the emergence of the two variant terms. On the other hand, Needham's own observation in the field seems to indicate that the Punan/Penan distinction is sociologically real and meaningful to the "Penan" themselves (1983: 12).

My own reading of the debate leads me to conclude that Whittier and Harrison were arguing on the grounds of dialectical variation in the *identification* of hunter-gatherers by their agriculturalist neighbours, while Needham was concerned with the actual difference in *identity* among the Penan and Punan as stated by the Penan themselves. The debate was based on two different premises - *identification* and *identity*.

More recently Peter Brosius has agreed with Needham in this exchange. He has said:

The inconsistent or confused usage of the terms Penan and Punan continues in works by Hose and McDougall (1912), Haddon (1901),

Harrison (1950), Urquhart (1951), Hoffman (1986) and others. Needham's 1954 article resolved this issue, and his conclusions were further affirmed by Nicolaisen (1976b:43). (1992: 55).

Brosius then continued with a clarification of the reason for the confusion:

A major source of confusion in the correct use of the ethnic nomenclature has been the variations in usage between Penan themselves and among longhouse peoples such as Kayan and Kenyah. This is particularly the case in the Belaga District, where Kayan is the lingua franca. The Kayan refer to all of these groups, both Penan and Punan as Punan. Kenyah tend to refer to these groups generically as Penan, though knowledgeable individuals will make the correct distinction between Penan and Punan.....Among all groups - Kayan, Kenyah, Penan and others - the words Penan and Punan are used in a generic sense to include such non-Penan/Punan former hunter-gatherers as Buket (Ukit), Sihan, Lisum, Bukitan and even, following my description of them, Philippine Negritos (Penan Pilipin) and American Indians (Penan Merika). The fact that the term Penan is used by Penan themselves as a generic term does not diminish its significance as a meaningful ethnonym among them. Considering the above, it is little wonder that there has remained a great deal of confusion with regard to proper terminology as applied to Penan and Punan. To further confuse the situation, it appears that Punan is the more standard usage in Kalimantan (1992: 56-58).

Brosius dismisses as completely fallacious (1992: 58) Hoffman's statement that the word Punan was commonly a term of reference applied to nomads by sedentary peoples rather than an actual label of identity for the nomads themselves (Hoffman, 1983: 17). Brosius also considered Hoffman's attempt to find an original meaning of the word Punan wholly absurd, for Hoffman states that

....for native peoples of Kalimantan, the use of the word Punan to designate groups of people involves more a description of locational and behavioral characteristics than assumptions of ethnic origin (1983: 18) (see below).

Brosius rejects Hoffman's views because the words "Penan" or "Punan" are also used in a generic sense, even among Penan themselves. Thus, Hoffman either missed or ignored the significance of the word as the ethnonym applied by the majority of hunter-gatherers in central Borneo to themselves, excluding groups such as the Bhuket, Sihan, Lisum, and Bukitan (Brosius,1992: 59).

Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that Brosius failed to address two very interesting points raised by Hoffman, although Brosius was clearly correct in saying that Hoffman

had muddled his own field data (see Brosius 1988 for a detailed critique of Hoffman), for example by calling the Lisum "Punan Lisum" when they, in fact, refer to themselves as "Lisum" and not as "Punan". Hoffman certainly uses the term Punan in an ethnic sense throughout his thesis in contradiction to what he had said earlier.

I wish to develop the argument a little further by drawing on my own field observations in relation to the two points raised by Hoffman which unfortunately he himself later contradicts; first, that the term "Punan" is a term of reference applied to nomads by sedentary peoples rather than an actual label of identity used by the nomads themselves, and secondly, that the term "Punan" is concerned more to describe certain locational and behavioural characteristics rather than assumed ethnic origins. It is also interesting to note from Brosius' own observations that the word Penan/Punan is used by Kayan, Kenyah, Penan and others to include non-Penan/Punan groups such as Bhuket, Sihan, Lisum, Baketan and even the Philippine Negritos and the American Indians (1988; 1992: 58).

Here we can see that the word "Punan/Penan" is an all-embracing term for a particular type of lifeway and certain behavioural characteristics, which was initially used by the sedentary neighbours of the nomads, but eventually adopted by the hunter-gatherers themselves. I am not denying the existence of the ethnonym, Punan, for these terms have been internalised by some of the hunter-gatherer groups. Needham (1972b) has clarified for us the groups which belong to the category "Penan", but that of "Punan" is considerably more problematic. It is obvious that the contexts in which the term "Punan" is used are rather confusing ones. What both hunter-gatherers and sedentary farmers are expressing through the term "Punan" is the commonality of lifeways and attitudes shared by all hunter-gatherers; the sedentary neighbours are also making a statement about the flexibility prevalent in the hunter-gatherer culture through the use of the term "Punan". The term also changes in meaning depending on the context of usage. My discussions on this matter with the Kayan, Kenyah and Malays led to very interesting findings. The word "Punan" may have different meanings in the different contexts in which it is used;

1. As a term for hunter-gatherers whose specific identity is not known.
2. As an all-embracing label of reference for hunter-gatherers.
3. As a referent for individuals who show particular types of behavioural characteristic such as extreme generosity, demand-sharing, sago-eating and low social position; in this connection the term "Punan" can be used both for hunter-gatherers and even sedentary people who show such traits.
4. As a confirmatory term for hunter-gatherers who call themselves "Punan" such as the Punan Busang.

I conclude from my discussions with the Bhuket, Lisum, Sihan, Baketan, Kereho and Hovongan (Bungan) that they are not "Punan" if the term refers to ethnic origin or comprises a label of identity. They do not want to be called "Punan" for they insist that they have their own identity. Furthermore, they asserted that the term "Punan" can also be used in a derogatory manner. The Kereho and the Hovongan usually carry the label "Punan" for they are on the Kalimantan side of Borneo, and government has always insisted on the usage of the term Punan for administrative purposes. The Kereho and Hovongan only used the term "Punan" when they had to elaborate further their identity which most researchers or government officers seek in their desire to classify; in this sense they have internalised the label of identification and use it if asked by an anthropologist or a government officer to identify themselves. In my conversations with the Bhuket in West Kalimantan they referred to these two groups as "Kereho" and "Bungan" and, what is more, these two latter groups insisted that the Bhuket were not "Punan". During my fieldwork the only group of hunter-gatherers I encountered which called itself "Punan" were the Punan Busang and the Punan living in Long Belangan, upper Balui and I am aware that there are other hunter-gatherer groups who refer to themselves as Punan. The time has come for anthropologists to take into account the views of the hunter-gatherers themselves, for it is to do with the most basic issue for them; of their identity. If most of the hunter-gatherer peoples we have included in the category "Punan" do not want to be classified as such then we should respect their wishes and not impose it as an ethnic indicator or as a cultural category. However, if the term "Punan" has been internalised by certain groups in Kalimantan and Sarawak, and if

they have come to accept it as an ethnic label for themselves then it seems permissible for these groups to be referred to as such.

The commonality in lifeways and attitudes among hunter-gatherer groups is not only expressed by their sedentary neighbours, anthropologists and government administrators but is also recognised by the hunter-gatherer groups themselves. But the question remains: should this commonality be given the label "Punan" and used as an all-embracing cultural or ethnic category? In my view it should not, and certainly the Bhuket, though they are hunter-gatherers, are not ethnically Punan, and do not wish to be so designated.

1.3 The Bhuket.

Bhuket as an ethnic group comprise five communities living quite far apart from each other in West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan and in the headwaters of the upper Balui in Sarawak. They live physically dispersed in the interior of central Borneo. However, the vastness of space between these communities has not isolated them one from another; they are interrelated and interaction between them has always been maintained.

To establish the original homeland of a hunting and gathering people who are highly mobile is a most taxing problem. However, according to Bouman (1924a) the Bhuket originate from the sources of the Balleh, a tributary of the Rejang river in Sarawak. He referred to them as "Menyimbang".⁸ They then moved to the Mendalam in West Kalimantan, and then to the Mahakam, where some still live (cited in King, 1974b, refer to maps in Appendix II and III). Bhuket have been mentioned together with other nomadic groups of Borneo. Hose and McDougall refer not only to the Punan but also to the Ukit (Bhuket) and the Bukitan (Baketan) as belonging to nomadic groups (1912, i: 35n and ii: 178). Haddon states that "all the tribes, except the Punans and the Ukits, are agriculturalist" (1901:323). Furthermore, the Bhuket are said to be related to the culturally extinct Seru (Sru).⁹ According to F.de Rozario¹⁰

The Sru Dyaks appear to have originally belonged to some branch of the Ukit tribe. In former days perhaps some three or four hundred years ago, the Ukit lived in the Balleh (then known as the Jengian) at the mouth of the

Lugat. For many years they appear to have lived there in peace, but were at last surprised and attacked by the Kayans, at that time a most powerful tribe. The result of this attack was that many of the Sru people were killed or captured, and the remainder fled that part of the country and dispersed (1901:341).¹¹

De Rozario also stated that the Seru language differs very little from that of the Bhuket and that "The Sru Dyak words which were printed in the Sarawak Gazette were read out to some Ukits who understood every word as belonging to their language"¹² (1901: 342). De Rozario also remarked that the Bhuket, Baketan, Seru, Bliun,¹³ Sagalang,¹⁴ Lisum,¹⁵ and Lugat¹⁶ were culturally related¹⁷ (1901:175).

The Bhuket, like the Seru, lived in the Balleh before invading Ibans drove them out of the area. Iban migrations were mingled with headhunting raids directed against the Bhuket and other forest nomads,¹⁸ who were the previous inhabitants of the Rejang region. The Bhuket resisted Iban migration into the Balleh but by the mid-1880s were driven into the Kapuas, while some Bhuket retreated to the extreme upper Rejang-Balui (Low, "January Diary", *Sarawak Gazette* 2 June 1884:221; "March Diary", *Sarawak Gazette* 1 July 1884: 222). This group of Bhuket lived with Lisum in Long San, upper Balui, but left to join the Bhuket in the Kapuas after the Iban from Sut attacked and massacred the Lisum¹⁹ in the early 1900s. The Kayan of Uma Belor and the Kenyah of Uma Kelap also suffered a severe attack from the Iban during the massacre of the Lisum. Iban wanted revenge for an earlier murder of three Iban working rattan in the Naha Nyabong area. The present Bhuket settlement in the upper Balui was formed from a completely new migration which began from Kapit in the early 1900s.

The Bhuket, unlike other nomadic groups, contested the Iban advance into the Balleh area. In his examination of Iban history, Freeman made a contrast between Ukit-Iban and Bukitan-Iban²⁰ relationships in the Balleh. He states

A very significant feature of the Iban migrations into the Rejang basin, was the special relationship - symbiotic in character which existed between the Iban and the Bukitans. The nomadic Bukitans, whose ancestral territory the Rejang was, acted as guides and allies to the more numerous and accomplished Iban, and under Iban influence they gradually came to follow the Iban methods of cultivating rice, and ultimately, to live in longhouses of their own making. The nomadic Ukits, on the other hand, were inveterate opponents of the Iban, and contested their advance at many points, especially in the Balleh area (1955b:14-15).

Their resistance to Iban migration into the Balleh had earned them a reputation for being wild and dangerous people and they were much feared by those working forest produce (see Chapter Two). The *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 March 1882 reported that

They [Bhuket] are often tall well-made, stout fellows, with rather pleasant countenances and manners, and although often barbarous in their acts with that never failing poisoned arrow, the dread of the Dyaks who can never see or hear the blower - who are knocked over when in search of gutta percha or other jungle produces, and have no hope of making any retaliation (1882: 11).

Further early information on the Bhuket, though limited and fragmentary, can be gleaned from scattered references (Haddon, 1901: 320-323; Ling Roth, 1896, i: 17-19; Urquhart, 1955a: 193-204; 1959: 75; Runciman, 1960: 226). The basic features of their lifestyle and character are described by Baring-Gould and Bampfylde who state that:

The Ukits, Bukitans and Punans with the exception of the Punan Bah of the Balui, are the wildest of all the races in the island. The Ukits are light in complexion, tall and well knit, and better looking than other inland tribes. Formerly they did not reside in houses, or cultivate the soil, but roamed about in the jungle, and subsisted on wild fruit and the animals they killed. But some of these have begun to erect poor dwellings, and do a little elementary farming. They are expert with the blow-pipe, and in the manufacture of the upas-poison, with which the points of their needle-like arrows are tinged. But it is quite open to question whether these poor savages may not be a degenerate race, driven from their homes and from comparative civilisation by more powerful races that followed and hunted them from their farms to the jungle (1909:13-14).

Another early observer, Beccari, confirmed their main characteristics:

They are savages in the true name of the word, but they are neither degraded nor inferior races in the series of mankind. Their primitive condition depends more than anything else on their nomadic or wandering life, and on the ease with which they live on the produce of the forest and on that of the chase which the sumpitan (blow-pipe) procures for them. This has no doubt contributed to keep them from associating with their fellow-beings, and from settling in villages or erecting permanent houses. I believe that these, although they must be considered as the remnants of an ancient Bornean people, are not descended from autochthonous savages, but are rather the present-day representatives of a race which has become savage (1904: 363).

The present-day Bhuket of Sarawak have settled along the Ayak river, a tributary of the upper Balui. The Bhuket, who are involved in diverse subsistence activities, still spend much time foraging and hunting in the forest. This longhouse

settlement of Long Ayak has Kayan, Kajang and Kenyah people as its neighbours. However, the distance between this settlement and its nearest Kayan neighbours both upriver and downriver is still substantial so daily social life is mainly within the community, either in the longhouse or the farm sites. Needless to say, those Bhuket in the logging camps live in a more multi-ethnic situation.

More recent literature pertaining to the Bhuket have given further brief information on their nomadic life, history, interaction with their agriculturalist neighbours and on cultural and economic change (see King, 1974a, 1974b, 1979b; Sellato, 1986a, 1989, 1994; Rousseau 1990). This study of the Bhuket hopes to further enrich our knowledge of Bornean hunter-gatherers and provide detailed data on a little known indigenous people of Sarawak.

1.4 Population and its Distribution.

Some 50 years ago the Bhuket population in Sarawak was low, as the census taken in 1941 gave a total population of 60 souls. In the past Bhuket had few children and there were some cases of couples with no children at all. Besides that they had suffered severe attacks from the Iban who migrated into the Balleh from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. They had also experienced several epidemics which had reduced the population significantly; the most recent was in the late 1930s, which, according to Bhuket oral history, decimated the population. The census taken in May 1941, when Bhuket were living in Long Taman, showed that there were only nine *kajan* (households)²¹ with 60 individuals. (Belaga Information Book 28 April-3 May 1941; the census is not very accurate). In the last two decades the population has gradually increased. However, health still seems to be a major problem among the Bhuket. Some old people told me that in former times people lived longer, but today they are dying at a younger age and this they attribute to the increase in salt, sugar and alcohol consumption. Currently some Bhuket are also addicted to paracetamol, penicillin and a migraine medicine which is high in caffeine.

In 1993 there were 276 Bhuket in Sarawak, 161 of them in Long Ayak, 76 in logging camps and 39 living elsewhere. Children from inter-ethnic marriages into Bhuket

communities have been assumed to be Bhuket in the census. Those living in the logging camps returned to the longhouse frequently and it is there that they kept their material possessions; of the 39 living elsewhere three nuclear families and two individuals had not returned to the longhouse for some time. One of these Bhuket is married to a Kenyah woman in Long Busang, the other is a headmaster at a primary school in Lusong Laku and the third is married to an Iban from Sut and is currently working in Papua New Guinea. His sister is married to a Kayan and had settled in Tubau. The population of 237 (inclusive of those living in the logging camps and excluding those living elsewhere) was divided into 24 *kajans* (a shared space - apartments or huts).²²

A census of the Bhuket population of West and East Kalimantan has also been taken, that from the three settlements in West Kalimantan was personally taken by me, but that of one settlement in East Kalimantan was obtained from two informants from the settlement of Naha Tivab. The following comprises the information that I managed to gather:

1. Sibau (Taviou): there is no longer a Bhuket settlement in the Sibau, most of them have moved to Nanga Hovat in the Mendalam. Only four individuals have remained; one man is married to a Taman woman from Tanjung Lasah and the remaining three are married to the Dayak Mentabah. They are all living in their spouses' communities.

2. Nanga Balang: there were 16 *kajans* (huts) in Nanga Balang, comprising two Bhuket *kajans* with eight and ten members respectively; seven *kajans* of Bhuket with non-Bhuket spouses with a total of 45 members; the remaining seven *kajans* were of Suruk, Kalis and Kereho origins. Assuming the children of the inter-ethnic marriages to be Bhuket, the total Bhuket population in Nanga Balang was 63.

3. Matelunai: there were 31 *kajans* in Matelunai and 11 inter-ethnic marriages; assuming all the children to be Bhuket, the total population of Matelunai was 220.

4. Nanga Hovat (Mendalam): There were 23 *kajans* and four inter-ethnic marriages. Assuming the children of inter-ethnic marriages to be Bhuket the total population was 148.

5. Bhuket living elsewhere in the Kapuas: a total number of 15 individuals were traced, comprising seven men married and living with the Hovongan; two men in Nanga Enap; one in Nanga Lapung; two in Putussibau; one in Semanggut; one woman in Siut and one man in Uma Pagung in Data Dian (Mendalam).

6. Naha Tivab, Mahakam (East Kalimantan): the settlement is made up of 21 *kajans* and has 12 inter-ethnic marriages; the total population was 133 individuals.

Therefore, the Bhuket population in West and East Kalimantan was 578 individuals, and in Sarawak was 267. The total Bhuket population in Borneo therefore comprises 845 individuals.

1.5 Aims and Objectives.

This research is an attempt to understand the processes and forms of adaptation and other internal dynamics of the Bhuket of Sarawak as a consequence of change. It is an examination of the choices and adjustments made by the Bhuket. Its purpose also coincides with the policy of the Sarawak Museum as enunciated by Dr. Peter Kedit, the Government Ethnologist, and formulated in the mid-1970s. According to him :

We in the Sarawak Museum...have recognised three essential kinds of research we would undertake in the near future. They are namely :

- i. Urgent anthropological research on minority groups.
- ii Researches pertaining to development policies of the government. This will cover such research on social-cultural change, modernization processes and cross-cultural studies of national integration, and
- iii more general ethnological studies of the various ethnic groups, so as to update our Sociological and Anthropological material that have so far been collated (1975:33).

My choice of working with the Bhuket people was also based on the advice of the research personnel at the Museum. They had suggested that I work either with the Sihan, Baketan, Tatau or Bhuket. No detailed ethnographic description had yet been provided on the Bhuket of Sarawak and therefore "salvage" ethnographic work was required. Besides that the State Government has also been in the process of considering the feasibility of resettling various of the remote groups of the upper Balui due to the proposed Bakun hydro-electric dam project in the area.

Since change and impermanence will continue for the Bhuket there is, therefore, a need to know more about the methods by which these people respond to change. Those who call for and create dramatic changes among local peoples generally know little about their ability to adapt to them, and information of this kind is vital for planned social intervention to ensure its appropriateness to the needs of the people.

1.6 Fieldwork.

Fieldwork data was collected from 26 October 1992 to 10 November 1993. Some time (10-25 October 1992) was spent reading in the archives of the Sarawak Museum before embarking on field research. I also made brief visits to longhouses of communities historically connected to the Bhuket such as the Kayan settlements of Uma Belor, Uma Juman, Uma Daro, Uma Balui Ukap (also known as Batu Carlow) and Batu Keling, and Kenyah settlements of Uma Kelap and Uma Baka (Long Bulan). In addition, I visited the Sihan of Belaga, the Lisum and Tanjong of Long Pawa, the Iban of Nanga Nyimoh (Katibas), and Nanga Pillah, the Baketan of Nanga Merit and Nanga Metah and also the Punan Bah. I had on several occasions met and spoken to the Punan Busang and the Punan Long Belangan in Belaga town. I spent some time in Bhuket settlements of Nanga Hovat, Nanga Balang and Matelunai in the Kapuas, West Kalimantan (11 April to 28 May 1994). I had a few days in a Kayan settlement (Data Dian) of the Mendalam while arranging transportation to visit the Bhuket of Nanga Hovat; one day was spent at the Taman settlement of Siut. During my stay in Matelunai I had the opportunity to talk and discuss with a group of Kereho and Hovongan who were visiting the school in Matelunai.

Information was gathered by participant observation based on interviewing and social participation within the longhouse and also with clusters of people living in their farms. Fieldwork was mainly carried out in the longhouse of Long Ayak and in the farms at Long Sunen (harvesting), Long Beto (clearing, burning and planting) and U Jet Havet (weeding). I was able to observe the whole agricultural cycle among the Bhuket community and my inclusion in their activities allowed me to come to know every individual Bhuket by name and their relationships to each other.

During field research I stayed most of the time with the family of the headman Bawa Paren and some time was spent with groups of families living in their farm huts. The headman's wife appointed herself my guardian and teacher and also became my best friend in the field. She was a very knowledgeable person and had a very good memory, besides being an excellent *pebusui* performer (ritual singer). She took me on most of her foraging trips and also taught me how to prepare rattan for weaving mats. Under her tutelage I learned how to weave plain and chequered mats. She also instructed me in shredding tobacco, which she said I did very skilfully, but considered it a wasted effort for I had turned down the offer to enjoy the efforts of my labour. She was very concerned about my vegetarianism, but she got used to it as she got to know me better. Unfortunately, she fell ill and passed away on the 25 December 1993 after I had left the field. I also had three of the oldest people in the community as my main informants, Doh Berahang and her husband Adum Botik, and Diruei Enum (Uku Uring). Doh Berahang and Adum Botik were the direct descendants of the famous Janen²³ and were the first generation pioneers from the Balleh. Doh, the daughter of the influential Bhuket leader Berahang, who held the post of *Penghulu* of the upper Balui, was very knowledgeable about inter-ethnic relations. She was partially blind; she had suffered a stroke and had become very weak. I spent a lot of my time with her and her husband not only to extract information from them but also to help out in any way possible. They were most appreciative of my assistance and when I left they gave me a beautifully decorated shield (*telavang*). Doh Berahang passed away on 12 December 1993 (32 days after I left the field). Matu Bawa, the headman's son, and his wife Sara helped me in many ways especially with my mail and transportation. Recently I was informed that Matu had fallen victim to the rapids of the upper Balui and had drowned on 10 July 1994. He was the only Bhuket representative at the Bakun Development Committee and his death is a great loss for the Bhuket people. Lajun Tinggang and Lijap Lohot, the great storytellers of the Bhuket community, allowed me to record their *suket* (oral stories) and *musui* (ritual singing).

The difficulties of collecting data in unfamiliar situations with an unfamiliar language placed me in a somewhat uncomfortable social position, but I used this to

increase awareness of my subjective attitudes towards the field. An incident that happened during fieldwork was an 'anthropological experience' worth mentioning here. I had injured myself and was not feeling very well; I had decided to stay in my loft. Missing my presence, streams of people came to visit me. They had concluded that I had kept away from them because I was missing my own kind; those were the exact words that they used. Four women Tipong, Unang, Serongon and Icu came up to me and started singing in Nepalese, thinking that I was a Nepalese; they also performed the stick dance. I was pleasantly surprised by their performance. They had learned the songs and the dance from Gurkha soldiers in the early 1960s during the confrontation with Indonesia. Here I was trying to understand their culture and they wanted to show me that they knew my culture too. It was the most memorable moment of my field research.

The study comprises predominantly qualitative data. Participation within the community provided a frame for testing themes which emerged from personal accounts and to seek explanations which were more consensual. But my checking of the data from several individuals, usually led me to conclude that the material was indeed contradictory and full of inconsistencies and conflicting positions.

Initially the Malay language was used in communication and subsequently I learned and used the Bhuket language. The primary means of producing data in the course of fieldwork was through the collection of oral history and life histories - what people have done in the past, and the meanings which people employ to order, interpret and negotiate their way through life (see Ellen, 1984:215). Although the context in the past is frozen, knowledge of it is required to understand the processes and forms of change that have taken place. There was a strong element of oral history to my fieldwork. Jan Vansina has examined the difficulties involved in the treatment of oral tradition in ethnological literature (1965:8-18), and I have paid due attention to his findings. Bernard Sellato has also used this method most successfully in his study of various hunter-gatherer groups of Borneo (1994), and I make frequent reference to his work.

Field notebooks were used in the process of collecting information. A personal diary was also kept. A tape recorder was used. Some of the data collected during fieldwork were analysed in the field, especially when writing interim reports; feedback

from my supervisor led me to re-examine my interpretations in the field. I adopted an open approach to analysis and discussed this with groups of Bhuket from at least three generations. This gave me an opportunity to observe and hear the variations and contradictions that emerged from Bhuket explanations of their life (see M.H. Agar (1981) for an introduction to this interpretative approach). Such discussions, although most of the time ending up in noisy arguments, provided me with some useful further insights into understanding Bhuket life.

I have tried to develop, at certain points in the thesis, the variation and contradiction which I observed and also which emerged from my discussions with the Bhuket, especially between what people think they should do and what they in fact do (see, for example, the principles of ranking versus egalitarianism discussed in Chapter Five) and between social reality and ideological justification (see the discussion of individual interest versus sharing in Chapter Four). Such variations and contradictions at both ideological and behavioural levels create inconsistencies and a blurring of cultural patterning. Moreover, they certainly hold the key to understanding and observing change. In my view, by concentrating on change I have tried to give Bhuket their own history.

1.7 Analytical Issues.

This study presents an ethnographic description of the Bhuket and, in particular investigates the processes and effects of change among them. There have been three recent major works in English on the hunter-gatherers of Borneo by Hoffman (1983), Brosius (1992) and Sellato (1994). However, Hoffman's work suffers from major faults; he manipulated his data, and sometimes even misused the material to fit into a predetermined interpretation; some of his data are also unreliable.²⁴ Hoffman, examining the history of commercial contacts, suggests that Punan may once have been farmers who had "devolved" into a nomadic existence to exploit opportunities for trade in forest products. Hoffman states:

It is trade, I say again, that has been what these "Punan" of Borneo are all about. It is trade, I believe, that has generated the particular type of hunting and gathering adaptation known to three generations of western

travellers and scholars. It is trade that has created and perpetuated a specific ecological niche that has been occupied by groups of people known as "Punan" (1983:164).

Hoffman also suggested that:

It has been the contention of this study that the existence of "Punan" groups in Borneo arose initially from the demand for various jungle products desired by Chinese. As such, a significant problem relating to the emergence of these groups is the economic basis of ethnicity (1983:197).

In his critique of Hoffman, Brosius rejects these claims; Brosius states:

Other than detailed genealogical and oral historical accounts and external historical documents linking Penan to agricultural ancestors, which to my knowledge do not exist, I cannot think of any type of evidence that would resolve this issue. As noted, the existing historical evidence suggests precisely the opposite trend, that of hunter-gatherers settling and adopting agriculture (1988: 87).

Brosius concludes:

I do not wish here to underemphasize the importance of trade to Penan/Punan. Certainly trade has been an important facet of their forest adaptation for untold generations. But it is one thing to say that trade is important to them, and even that they cannot exist in the forest without it, and something else again to claim that this is what they are "all about" (a less than rigorous concept), their *raison d'etre*, or that this explains their origins (1988: 99).

Sellato too rejects the possibility of devolution:

As I worked to reconstruct their history, one fact became obvious; all these groups, as far back in time as it is possible to go, have been nomadic, and all have more or less recently, more or less completely, taken to a sedentary way of life. A generalised process of devolution is therefore out of the question, at least over the course of the past two or three centuries (1994: xviii).

Hoffman's thesis on the devolution of farmers into nomads for purposes of trade in Borneo is indeed not supported by any firm evidence, as has been clearly argued by Brosius and Sellato.²⁵ My own fieldwork among the Bhuket revealed that trade was one of many Bhuket activities and certainly did not give rise to their nomadism. Trade was incorporated into their subsistence activity and it did not deprive them of their autonomy for they were already engaged in collecting as hunter-gatherers. What is more, their oral history and myths of origin indicate that they were and have always been hunter-gatherers, and that agriculture was superimposed onto their hunting and gathering

lifeways. However, their involvement in agriculture was a conscious choice on their part and should not be seen as an overarching evolutionary tendency (see Chapter Four).

Placing this controversy in the wider context of hunter-gatherer studies, we are able to see that in the early anthropological investigations of hunter-gatherers, their social system was conceived of as a result of or an adaptation to the hunting and gathering economy and its organisation arising out of the exigencies of subsistence procurement under given environmental conditions (Steward, 1936; 1955; Service, 1962). Steward's classic exposition of cultural ecology discusses "the interrelationship of productive technology and environment" (1955: 40). He declares that "Technology and environment...prescribe that certain things must be done in certain ways" and the constellation of these ways of doing things makes up what he calls the cultural core (1955: 37,41; cited in Ingold 1986a:7). However, according to Ingold, Steward converts the cultural premises of production into its cultural consequences (1986a:7). Steward, in effect, looked at how "culture is affected by its adaptation to the environment" (1955:31). So the early contributors to hunter-gatherer studies considered culture (and more narrowly social organisation) as a result of the hunting-gathering economy.

However, later anthropologists concentrated on how the hunter-gatherer social system and more broadly their cultural system was influenced or even caused by contact, specifically as a result of trade (see Fox, 1969: 142; Gardner, 1966; Morris, 1977). More recently Nurit Bird-David has commented on both these approaches. She says that to regard hunter-gatherer social system as generated by a foraging economy is too "isolationist" and to present them as the outcome of trade-contact with adjacent societies can be seen as too "integrationist"(1988:19). She criticizes both explanations as partial, simplistic and anachronistic and has suggested an alternative approach:

Thus the question of whether, and to what extent, the hunter-gatherer social system is causally related to contact with adjacent societies, does not fully realize the implications of growing new data and an emergent paradigm.....contemporary hunter-gatherers have maintained contact with adjacent societies for centuries, indeed, according to an increasing number of scholars, possibly millennia. Contact, in other words, is now generic to their social system and not an exogenous factor (1988: 19-20).

This study will try to apply Bird-David's emergent paradigm because this alternative approach allows for a better understanding of contemporary hunter-gatherers who are neither isolated from nor completely integrated into surrounding societies, nor are they passive recipients of externally generated changes.

As part of this analytical approach to understanding hunter-gatherers we also need to place them in history. Sellato (1994) has begun the important task of giving the hunter-gatherers of Borneo their own history and identity, through the use of oral traditions. Previously many studies of hunter-gatherers have been ahistorical. However, as I have already noted Sellato's construction of the cultural category Punan (1994:163) is problematical, for it is a category that is not perceived by the peoples whom he locates within it. Identity and identification can be seen to be interactive and need to be placed within a historical context; this I try to do in Chapter Two.

In Sellato's examination of Punan history, the processes of change are seen as

the conversion of the Punan from a food-oriented, hunting-gathering economy to one heavily dependent upon commercial collecting; then the process of change to various forms of agriculture; and finally, the transformations affecting Punan society during these periods of transition.....It is one among a number of possible ways of making sense of a vast array of facts from different spheres - political, social, economic, commercial, and religious - and of their causal relationships and development over time (1994:163).

These are important subjects for study and I also address them in this thesis. However, my emphasis is not only on processes of change, but also on the internal dynamics of change. I try to demonstrate that change has not always been generated from outside, but that Bhuket have been conscious agents who have engaged with the forces of change and, in some instances, as in the adoption of agriculture, have consciously and purposefully adopted and transformed certain social and cultural elements (see Chapter Four). With this dynamic perspective in mind, I shall now explain the way in which I use the concepts culture, change and adaptation.

1.8 Culture, Change and Adaptation.

In its traditionally accepted meaning, culture denotes all historically created designs for living and is transmitted from generation to generation. But it is constantly being modified by activities from within the culture and from outside. Culture in its more dynamic aspect provides for adaptation and adjustment to change, and I assume this to be the case with the Bhuket. This study examines individuals variously learning and interacting, accepting and rejecting old and new experiences, undergoing conflicts and readjusting to circumstances. In their studies of the dynamics of culture many scholars have emphasized the pervasiveness of change (Boas,1927; Linton, 1936; 1940; Kroeber, 1948). To quote Linton :

Cultures are infinitely perfectible and everything indicates that all cultures are in a constant state of change. The rate of this change will, of course, differ from one culture to another and at different points in the same cultural continuum, but some modifications are always under way.....Cultures are the most flexible of adaptive mechanisms (1940:467 and 517).

Change is inevitable and there are forces at work in every society leading to cultural transformations. According to Barth "Traditional anthropological description in terms of pattern and customs, convenient as it is for certain purposes, results essentially in accounts that do not adequately portray change"(1967:661). Instead of seeing change as something external to culture, Barth argues that we have to give priority to the study of processes and therefore concern ourselves with how cultures persist, maintain themselves and transform.

Attention has also been devoted to the aspect of variability in the experience of change, and culture as a moment in a multi-centred process and not as a system. In this regard Keesing provides a useful and interesting formulation of culture :

Culture.....is then not all of what an individual knows and thinks and feels about the world. It is his theory of what his fellows know, believe, and mean. His theory of the code being followed, the game being played, in the society into which he was born... It is this theory to which a native actor refers in interpreting the unfamiliar or the ambiguous, in interacting with strangers [or supernaturals], and in other settings peripheral to the familiarity of mundane everyday life space; and with which he creates the stage on which the games of life are played. [With this approach] we can account for the individual actor's perception of his culture as external [and as potentially constraining and frustrating]; and we can account for the way individuals

then can consciously use, manipulate, violate, and try to change what they conceive to be the rules of the game....We can recognize that not every individual shares precisely the same theory of the cultural code, that not every individual knows about all sectors of the culture. Thus a cultural description is always an abstracted composite (Keesing,1974:89 also cited in Rousseau,1990:48)

It is important to point out that "adaptation" is not necessarily synonymous with advantages for all the members of a group. According to Keesing, for example, some practices may be adaptive in the sense that they contribute to the reproduction of the system, but in so doing they act to the immediate disadvantage of certain groups and individuals within it. It may also be to the long term disadvantage of those who benefit initially from the reproduction of the cultural and social system as a whole because of internal contradictions which may only work themselves out over time (Keesing, 1952).

In their examination of processes of change and adaptation Brown (1979) and Friedman (1979) have emphasised diversity, competition and expansiveness as part of a situation of dynamic non-equilibrium. Furthermore, Fox (1979) and Ellen (1979) cast extreme doubt on the existence of simple equilibrium systems which do not allow for non-homeostatic processes. In this regard Tim Ingold (1979) has also argued that adaptation is a temporary condition; in practice social systems have never been adaptive and their internal dynamics have always tended to be of an accumulative nature. He rejects the application of the concept of adaptation to systems but uses it for practices, such as patterns of cooperation, skills, organisational techniques and knowledge.

My study is based on the premise that adaptation is individual in nature and therefore allows for choice and the prevalence of behavioural diversity. Because adaptation is individual in nature it is not a temporary condition but a permanent feature of culture and therefore leads to the emerging character of culture. However, at the level of social systems I accept Ingold's view that it is accumulative and this would allow for individual choices to prevail in relation to cultural processes. If these systems are sets of ideal rules or systems of expectations, these abstractions do not adapt but are accumulative in nature; this, in turn, accounts for the non-pervasive nature of change among the Bhuket for it does not deny the possibility of behavioural diversity at the

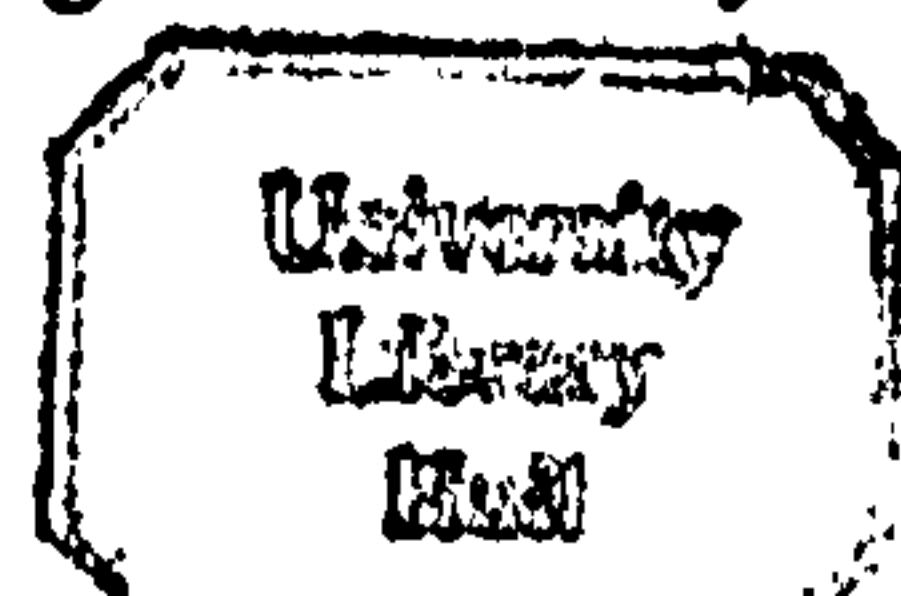
level of culture or practices. The accumulative nature of social systems has also allowed for individuation and variations to co-exist within the social or cultural system.

My overall aim in this study is to understand "creative phenomena" such as change, maintenance, resistance, revival and accommodation as conscious choices. Following Ingold (1986a: 20) I wish to examine social action as directed by conscious purpose.

There has been disagreement within anthropology over the ways in which culture affects the individual and the nature of the individual as an innovator who creates his or her social and cultural world. It is almost a cliché to say that the individual is not just the producer of culture but its product (Geertz 1965:42). Both focusing on the individual or focusing on culture are too narrow. The two levels interact with one another. Specifically, although cultures by and large shape individual behaviour, attitudes and emotions, they do not determine them. Individuals can accept, select or reject cultural influences. Individuals also contribute to maintaining, synthesizing, and changing the existing culture. Individuals and culture should therefore be viewed as interactive entities (Giddens, 1984).

1.9 Hunting-gathering Culture.

I have had to deal with the concepts of culture, the individual, and the interaction between individuals and culture among hunting-gathering people because the latter seem not to be particularly interested in formalising their existence. When I started fieldwork among the Bhuket I was rather puzzled about the lack of emphasis given to formalised institutions. Later on I discovered from discussions that Bhuket did have certain generally recognised practices but the degree of adherence to these was a more problematic issue. Other ethnographers studying hunter-gatherers have encountered the same problem. Brian Morris, who studied the Hill Panderam of South India, states that they appear to have no interest in formalising their culture (1976:544; 1982:39). He found it "difficult to get a clear idea of a generally accepted moral order" (1982:161). Similarly, Peter Gardner in his work on the Paliyan, who live to the north of the Hill Panderam, describes them as having no formalised bodies of knowledge and hardly any



verbalised rules of behaviour (1966:397-8). Kirk Endicott, in his study of the Batek Negrito of Peninsular Malaysia also observed "enormous variation of beliefs between and within dialect groups"(1979:26), although he contradicts himself in the same work by saying that "their world view is a unified body of ideas" (1979: 25). In a similar vein Colin Turnbull says that there is "extreme diversity of opinion on many religious matters, even within any one band or family" among the Mbuti Pygmies (1966:246). Lee also found uncertainty and innovation in !Kung beliefs and practices (1984:103-7). All this points to the fact that the anthropological concept of culture among hunter-gatherers must be flexible and accumulative in nature.

Seeing culture as flexible and accumulative in nature provides a better framework for studying hunter-gatherer culture, rather than seeing it as an enduring, discrete and complete entity. This perspective therefore denies the notion that ideal rules and systems of expectation are permanent features of culture, and it acknowledges and affirms the significance of the egalitarian nature of hunter-gatherer societies. These societies remain egalitarian because they are flexible, and this flexibility seems paradoxically to have a function of conserving certain cultural elements, especially their egalitarianism. According to Ron Brunton, in his study of egalitarian societies:

The products of creativity cannot be differentiated so as to enhance the likelihood that they will be communicated. Neither can people attempt to ensure a correct version or interpretation of that which is communicated. By definition, any attempt to distinguish valuable from worthless, or truth from falsehood, or right from wrong, is an act of evaluation. As Beteille reminds us, evaluation implies inequality (1977:11). In effect, there can be no publicly communicable discrimination between individuals or their works (1989:678).

Ron Brunton discusses the cultural instability of egalitarian societies and their structural inability to mount a defence against cultural loss (1989). Referring, among others, to the Mbuti, the Batek, the Paliyan and the Hill Pandoram (Turnbull 1983:21; Kirk Endicott 1979:2-3; Gardner 1972:407; Morris 1982:38), he shows that "cultural loss has gone as far as to have led to the loss of their original language" (1989:675). He uses this evidence of cultural loss to counter Woodburn's claim that egalitarian societies are "profoundly conservative" and that "there is no easy transition from non-competitive

egalitarianism to competitive egalitarianism" (1982a: 447; see also 449, and 1980: 114; 1988:58 cited in Brunton 1989:674).

There seems to be an inherent contradiction in Brunton's view of the culture of egalitarian societies but these contradictions provide invaluable insights into understanding hunting and gathering culture. He argues that hunter-gatherers avoid evaluation for this practice implies inequality, and that they do not formalise their culture. Yet, in contrast to these observations he says that their culture is unstable and incapable of mounting a defence against cultural loss. For me the unstable nature of their culture results from the fact that they do not formalise their culture, and by not formalising or evaluating they have managed to remain egalitarian. Instead of seeing their culture as unstable, I prefer to see it as flexible and emerging. It is the very nature of egalitarian cultures to be flexible. The flexible nature of the hunting and gathering culture allows for variations to co-exist. What we have is the old, new and emerging elements of culture co-existing. Adoption and learning is not loss; for example, besides speaking their own language Bhuket can speak several other languages²⁶ and they certainly would not perceive this as a loss. Defending themselves against cultural loss would deny the individual his or her various possibilities and alternatives, and by doing so would end their egalitarianism. The co-existence of variations accounts for change but their flexibility is maintained and this has both a transformative as well as a conserving function. Hunting and gathering culture are momentary beginnings which have a predecessor but never a beginning.²⁷

This study looks at the unique and creative ways in which one hunter-gatherer community, the Bhuket, respond to change. I demonstrate that they are not merely passive recipients of change or that they perceive change as something inflicted upon them; instead they are involved in designing some of this change themselves. The forces of external change interact with the individual and this may lead to various forms of response and reaction. What will be evident in this thesis is the flexibility of Bhuket culture and from these ever-present processes of change we shall view Bhuket culture as a constantly emerging phenomenon.

1.10 Overview of the Chapters.

This thesis is a discussion of culture, adaptation and change. It describes the emergent nature of culture by examining the internal processes and dynamics of the Bhuket culture. The thesis contains seven chapters inclusive of the introduction. The following are summaries of each chapter:

In Chapter Two, the ethnic category Bhuket is discussed as an emerging phenomenon. I use oral history and historical records to throw light on the Bhuket past and their migrations, and, in the process, identify inter-group relations between Bhuket and others. What I do ultimately with this information is to show how events in inter-group relationships contributed to Bhuket history and eventually to their formation as an ethnic category. In addition to the changes in the political-economic context in which Bhuket bands (*puhuk*) lived, there were also internal forces operating within Bhuket culture that were important as adaptive strategies in the face of changing circumstances.

In Chapter Three, I examine the domain of kinship and explain that the emphasis on the conjugal pair and nuclear family is a feature of their hunting and gathering lifestyle that has persisted through time, although their current living arrangements are in the form of extended family groups. The Bhuket do not have a notion of household, in contrast to such other Bornean peoples as the Iban who comprise *bilek*-families, as independent economic entities (Freeman, 1970:9). Rousseau says that the household among the Kayan and other central Borneo groups, also maintains its identity through the generations (Rousseau, 1990: 86). Bhuket do not seem to have such conceptions but they do refer to a shared space or a residential unit which they call *kajan*. More recently there is evidence that certain processes of change are leading to the inception of the notion of the household from the Bhuket concept of *kajan* through the practice of keeping the provision of the daily subsistence within the confines of the members of the *kajan* which has begun to emerge. Agriculture, wage labour and sedentarization are also contributing towards the formation of the household for the Bhuket, in that the subsistence needs of a particular household are the concern of only the members of that household. Previously a strong ethic of sharing made the subsistence of an individual a communal matter and not only the responsibility of close kin. The decline in sharing is

leading to a household-based lifestyle, but the prevalence of generalised reciprocity is hindering a decisive formation of the household among the Bhuket.

Among the Bhuket marriage brings two individuals together to pursue a common goal, that of companionship. The importance of the relationship of the conjugal pair is discussed. I discuss that marriage and postmarital residence seem to be a matter of personal choice of the couple. However, the prevalence of uxorilocality is not a result of borrowing; it is a consequence of the adoption of farming by the women, which has, in turn, restricted their physical mobility.

I also demonstrate that equality in the value of relationships based on the cognatic principle does not lead to the formation of descent-based relationships. Furthermore, kinship relations do not carry the burden of claims and obligations. In a community where independence is highly valued, relations of dependence have a covert or hidden existence. What we see here is the maintenance of relationships which have emerged within a hunting-gathering lifestyle.

In Chapter Four, it is argued that individualism has led to the prevalence of variations in Bhuket economic activities today. I place Bhuket involvement in agriculture in a historical perspective and show that the adoption of agriculture was a conscious and purposeful action on their part and not a consequence of an evolutionary tendency. Those who took up agriculture did so of their own volition. Historical evidence shows that the Bhuket have been moving in and out of agriculture depending on particular circumstances. Indeed, agriculture has been grafted onto the hunting and gathering lifestyle. Thus, the niche that had sustained the foraging mode of production was modified and expanded to encompass agriculture.

The variations observed in the Bhuket annual cycle of economic activities today can be understood as a result of individual responses to opportunities. Economic diversification has led to variability in levels of material wealth. Yet, Bhuket individualism is far from being incompatible with a commitment to the community as my examination of their sharing practices and the lack of rigidity in their notion of ownership demonstrates. Certainly the social relations of sharing have changed through time, but Bhuket have managed to maintain generalized reciprocity and collective access to

resources through their practice of "demand sharing", and through the processes of asking, taking and taking without permission (*pekahin*).

In Chapter Five on the political domain, I explain Bhuket egalitarianism and attempt to understand the reasons for the emergence of Bhuket claims that they possess a ranking system similar to their stratified neighbours, the Kayan. Ranking among the Bhuket is deployed in interaction with stratified societies, because they need to portray themselves as being more organized to render the interaction less intimidating. In other words, the ideology of rank can be abandoned or activated depending on the circumstances. Although the ideologies of egalitarianism and rank are quite explicit, the maintenance of both is not a conscious product of community consensus. The co-existence of both the ideologies is possible because of the prevalence of Bhuket individualism; because all Bhuket claim to be aristocrats (*maren*), this equalizes the effects of rank. Furthermore, among the Bhuket of Long Ayak we can also observe a hereditary transmission of prestige as a consequence of the rank ideology, but this is not an inevitable corollary of power within the community. Using two points from Sahlins' definition of egalitarianism that: (1) the qualifications for higher status may lie in personal characteristics; and (2) being egalitarian means that every individual has an equal chance to succeed to whatever statuses may be open, I show that Bhuket claims to rank can be understood in terms of the internal dynamics of their egalitarianism. Frontier circumstances as well as the acknowledgment of rank from their stratified neighbours and the Brooke administration have both contributed to present-day Bhuket claims that they possess a stratified social order. A complex interplay of processes both internal and external have therefore led to the co-existence of both egalitarian and stratified ideologies.

In Chapter Six I demonstrate that the Bhuket explanations and expressions of their religion are ever changing. Religion for the Bhuket is not an imposed body or a fixed set of knowledge. Their explanations and knowledge of the supernatural world are cumulative. For the Bhuket the cosmos is an expanding domain, although at the same time, certain elements of religious knowledge are constantly forgotten. Therefore, among

the Bhuket, one cannot discern one correct and unified cosmology for it is always subject to adaptation, innovation and change.

Individuation is clearly present in the experience, expression and interpretation of religion. There is a high degree of uncertainty and self-contradiction in Bhuket religious expression and practices. This variability and diversity could also be interpreted as an adaptational outcome for among the Bhuket responses have been individual in nature. Thus, religion for the Bhuket is a variable that is constantly coming into being or emerging.

In Chapter Seven I conclude with some recommendations for further research by drawing attention to firstly, the interaction of the individual Bhuket with his or her culture by examining Bhuket individual autonomy; secondly, to the attempts by the Bhuket at interacting with anticipated changes resulting from the planned Bakun hydro-electric dam project; and, finally, by providing some possible suggestions for using the concept of culture within the changing ethnographic landscape of Borneo.

¹Bhuket are also known as Bukat and Ukit; this matter will be further discussed in Chapter Two.

² There is a small group of Lisum living in Long Pawa, Belaga. Most of the Lisum people live in the Apo Kayan area. They suffered severe attacks from the Iban.

³Sihan were formerly nomadic and were originally from the Balleh. Today they are settled near Belaga town. Their former settlement and burial sites were pointed out to me when travelling up the Pillah river. The Pillah river today is settled by the Iban and is the furthest upriver of the Iban settlements on the Rejang river.

⁴The Baketan were a nomadic group that lived in the Balleh; there were also groups of Baketan in the upper Kapuas region of West Kalimantan. Today there are two settlements in Nanga Merit and Nanga Metah. There are also Baketan in the Bintulu region.

⁵The Punan Busang live in the upper reaches of the Linau river above the settlement of the Penan Lusong Laku.

⁶Kereho are hunter-gatherers living in the Kereho river, a tributary of the upper Kapuas. There are also Kereho living in the upper Mahakam.

⁷Hovongan live above the Bhuket and the Kereho in the upper Kapuas on a tributary called Hovongan. They are also called Bungan. Both the Kereho and Hovongan are known as Olo Ot outside the region.

⁸ Menyimbang is also known as Menyivung by the Bhuket and today it is called Mengiong by the Iban.

⁹ Seru lived along the Krian river and had put up a hard fight against Iban encroachment into their territory (Pollard and Banks 1935: 406). Charles Brooke (1866, ii: 335) pronounced them all but extinct in the mid-nineteenth century with only 30 or 40 doors in small communities. Deshon (*Sarawak Gazette* November 1 1882) reported the existence of one village of around 12 doors near Kabong, on the Kalaka.

Bailey (1901: 48) reported that after the depredation of cholera they were reduced to one village of 18 men, 11 women and 4 children. The last Seru (Sru) died in 1949 but many of the Malays of the Krian are of Seru stock (Pringle, 1970:40). However, Chin (1980: 21) has stated that the last individual claiming Seru identity died in 1954.

¹⁰F.de Rozario served in the Brooke Government from 1864 to 1911. For more than thirty years he was in sole charge of the upper Rejang station, first located at Nanga Balleh and later at Kapit. He was an authority on upper Rejang ethnography and wrote extremely colourful reports. (Runciman, 1960: 204; Pringle, 1970: 40, see also his obituary in *Sarawak Gazette*, 2 January 1925: 856 and for an example of his knowledge of the upriver tribes, his "The Sru Dyaks", 1901, in Richards, *The Sea Dyaks and Other Races of Sarawak*, 1963: 341-343). A volume of letters from officers at Kapit covering the period 1879 to 1892, is preserved in the Sarawak Archives. It includes many letters from de Rozario and graphically illustrates the character of his government (Pringle, 1970: 257n).

¹¹Information collected from the last surviving Seru and now on file in the Sarawak Museum indicates that: i. the Seru did not originally call themselves Seru; the name was imposed by early Brooke officers; ii. the Seru believed they were related to other peoples of the Melanau family in the lower Rejang, including the Beliun and Segalang; and iii. they claimed an original homeland in the Kapuas, where most Bhuket have lived since the Iban migrations drove them out of the Balleh (Pringle, 1970: 40n).

¹²A Seru wordlist is given by D.J.S.Bailey (in Richards 1963: 334-340) and a Bhuket wordlist by Urquhart (1955:193-204).

¹³Tuton Kaboy (1969) reported that there were no living people claiming descent from the Bliun in the late 1960s.

¹⁴The Seduan, Segalang, Banyok and Bliun were related and were living close to the Melanau by whom they were eventually absorbed. The Segalang were the followers of the major enemy of the Sarawak regime in the time of James Brooke. They were allies of Serif Massahore who was plotting to overthrow James Brooke (see Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, 1909:223-224, 265).

¹⁵According to Low, the Lisum were related to the Sihan and the Lugat (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1 Nov. 1882: 96). The Lisum and Sihan claim the Rejang region as their homeland (see Sandin, 1985). In the Apo Kayan the Lisum are known as Punan Lisum (Elshout, 1926:243).

¹⁶The Lugat like the Baketan allied themselves with the Iban.

¹⁷De Rozario's categorisation is based on linguistic similarity between these groups. In certain cases a linguistic relationship can be demonstrated (e.g. between Seru and Bhuket and between Lisum and Bhuket); in others given the lack of data, I would not wish to speculate about linguistic or indeed broadly cultural relationships.

¹⁸The Balleh was inhabited by Baketan and Bhuket (Brooke, 1866, ii: 250; *Sarawak Gazette* September 1901:175; *Sarawak Gazette* November 1 1882:96). The Sihan, Lugat and Punan also lived in the Balleh (see *Sarawak Gazette* 1 November 1882: 11 and also Mr.Low's January 1884 diary, *Sarawak Gazette* 2 June 1884). The history of Iban occupation of the Balleh region is detailed by Freeman (1955b: 11-20). Sandin (1967b) has documented the migrations of the Baketan.

¹⁹The Iban attack on the Lisum, the Kayan of Uma Belor and Kenyah of Uma Kelap and the Bhuket at Naha Nyabong was around 1900 for the *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 December 1900 reported the murder of three Dayaks by Lisum (p.227). After this incident the Lisum were attacked several times by the Iban for revenge against these murders (see Elshout, 1926: 243-4; Rousseau, 1990: 223).

²⁰Ricketts has discussed Iban-Bukitan relations briefly (*Sarawak Gazette* July 1 1898: 138-139). The Bukitan were driven out of the Balleh and were the victims of both the Iban and the Kayan (*Sarawak Gazette* July 1 1882: 5-54; August 1 1882: 62-65; September 1 1882: 72-73; October 1 1882: 81-83; November 1 1882: 93-96). By the efforts of the Brooke Raj they were moved out of the Balleh to live apart from the Iban (*Sarawak Gazette*, 23 May 1879).

²¹The Bhuket term *kajan* specifically refers to a shared space, but the members of a *kajan* are in the process of acquiring the characteristics of a household; see Chapter Three for more information on these social changes and the formation of households.

²²For more on the range of *kajan* forms that are emerging, and the distribution of the Bhuket in Sarawak, the number of members and nuclear families per *kajan* and the age structure of the population, see Chapter Three.

²³Janen was the Bhuket leader who collected the Bhuket scattered in the Balleh and Mahakam and led them on a migration to the upper Balui. The *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 March 1882 called him "Janin the friendly Ukit." The *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 April 1891 reported him as being the envoy of the Penihing chief who requested the government to release the captives taken during the Penihing expedition. The role played by Janen in Bhuket history will be discussed in Chapter Two.

²⁴For a critique of Hoffman see Brosius (1988), Sellato (1988 and 1994) and Kaskija, (1988).

²⁵For a review of Hoffman and comments on trade and nomadism see Rousseau (1984). Rousseau says that "...in the interior of Borneo, opportunities for trade are usually too limited to make it the centre of nomadic economy...the Punan claimed to be too occupied with their daily subsistence to spend time on collecting jungle produce. This may have been just an excuse, but the fact remains that those Punan could hardly be said to put trade to the forefront"(1984: 90).

²⁶According to Rousseau "Borneo nomads have a reputation for being polyglots. They learn the languages of the groups with whom they have regular contact. Thus, even children in the Bukat village of the upper Baluy can speak Kayan, and some of them know other languages; the chief speaks several Kenyah dialects as well as Iban" (1990: 240-241).

²⁷For a critique of origins in the theory of culture, see Kroeber (1952b).

Chapter 2: Ethnohistory and Ethnicity.

In this chapter I wish to link Bhuket ethnic identity to inter-ethnic relations and to understand the notion of ethnicity in Bhuket terms. I shall also make a conceptual distinction between ethnic identity and ethnic category and between ethnic category and ethnic group. In the process I shall attempt to clarify the Bhuket sense of identity both from an individual Bhuket point of view and from the viewpoint of the whole community. To do this I shall present first an account of Bhuket history based on events that took place from the 1840s onwards, which, in turn, led to their migration from Ulu Balleh to the upper reaches of the Balui. Most of these events are instances of contact with other ethnic groups within the region which were locally determined and also at times a creation of outside forces from such agents as the Brooke Raj. Thus, for the Bhuket, their ethnic category is a creation of the circumstances of history. But first, Bhuket myths of origin will be discussed to establish and confirm their identity as hunters and gatherers and I will try to clarify some of the confusion over Bhuket nomenclature.

2.1 Myths of Origin.

In the beginning when *Minang* (the creator) wanted to make humans, he went to the headwaters of the Uheng (Kapuas). There he made stones and rocks. He made rocks so that he could use them to make humans. When he was making the first man, he made the hands, the legs, the head and before he could complete making the left foot, there came a mousedeer (*Telaluk*) and a frog (*Jah'i*). The deer called out to *Minang* "*Ranu mek nua* (what are you making)?", but *Minang* did not answer to several of his calls. The deer thought to itself "There is nobody greater than *Minang*, he can make life (*nyalung*)". The deer got closer to *Minang* and told him that only he could make rocks, water and humans. But the deer thought to itself again "I will be greater than *Minang*". The deer told *Minang* if he made man from rocks, the whole world would be full. *Minang* pondered over what the deer had said. The deer said "Why don't you just make rocks?", but *Minang* did not listen to the deer's advice. By this time *Minang* had already made the first walking man. The deer asked *Minang* to make blood. *Minang* asked the deer how to make blood. The deer replied "It is easy you just have to use *okar pengahang*" (a root yielding red dye from a primary forest plant). The deer collected the root for *Minang* and that is why humans have blood. Then *Minang* asked the deer, what if there were too many humans. The deer replied, "Now that they have blood they will eventually die". The deer had deceived *Minang* for he did not intend for humans to die. *Minang* after making humans felt very sad that they would eventually die. *Minang* did not make more humans so there are many rocks and rapids in the headwaters of

the Uheng today. That is also the reason why Bhuket say that humans can become rocks during *huvén*¹ (thunder storms) (narrated by Lajun Tingngang, U Jet Havet, Thursday 23/9/93).

This myth shows that there is a recognition among the Bhuket of the common humanity, a fundamental sameness of all humans. They are all made of the same substance and will all die. The Bhuket origin myth explains human equivalence and, interestingly, the common origin of everyone. Given this assertion of commonality what then of cultural differences? When did humanity differentiate? Bhuket have a myth explaining this differentiation. It is as follows:

Minang collected all the people. Before that he had already made the "*Tiveng Pare*" (a large bark container for storing paddy). He asked the people whose it was. Most of the people claimed it to be theirs. As they claimed it they became Tory, Ivan and Kayan. Many more people claimed it to be theirs. So they all each got the *tiveng pare*. However, Bhuket said that they did not want the *tiveng pare* and instead took the "*busung alok*" (container to keep sago) (Narrated by Lajun Tingngang, Thursday 23/9/93).

Differentiation began when the individuals claimed the *tiveng pare*, automatically they became Tory (Taman), Iban and Kayan. All the unselfish individuals who did not put in a claim and consciously rejected the *tiveng pare*, opting instead for the nomadic lifestyle by taking the *busung alok*, became Bhuket. Co-equal status and interrelatedness came to an end when humans became selfish.

In an article entitled "Myth, History and Modern Cultural Identity among Hunter-Gatherers : A Borneo Case (1993:18-43), Sellato published a Bhuket myth (from a manuscript written by the Bhuket leader, Sawing Gemala²) in which he shows their manipulation of historical tradition in the context of their changing circumstances. He says that Bhuket use the myth to legitimize the nomadic way of life and improve the low status of the nomadic Bhuket in the eyes of their farming neighbours. On the contrary, I would like to show that the legend has a valid historical origin and that Sawing used it to state a historical reality and did not manipulate anything. Relating the myth to the existence of old artifacts in Nanga Balang is not a manipulation on the part of the Bhuket for they have been known to bury their prestige goods in the past or keep them in caves. I believe that Bhuket might have been the first to discover the artifacts. Besides that most agriculturalists who find antique beads also say that these come from the earth and are

given to them by their ancestors. I will present the myth as translated by Sellato from Sawing's manuscript and link it to a real historical event. The following is the myth of "The Victory of the *Kensurai* Tree":

Once upon a time (in Nanga Balang), there was an elder by the name of Pak Halangi³, who is acknowledged as one of the ancestors of the Bukat of the Kapuas. As an elder, Pak Halangi was often seen resting on the river bank, watching the canoe traffic in front of the village. He made himself more comfortable by sitting in a rattan seat hanging from the branches of a *biyu* (original emphasis) tree, which grew (just) across the river from the upstream end of Balang Island.

One day, resting in his seat, he noticed a splendid red flower swaying on the opposite bank. He said to himself: 'What a beautiful flower. Could it be that my best clothes, if I wear them, would be less beautiful than this flower?' The flower was that of the *kensurai* tree. Pak Halangi went back home, and put on all his best clothes, then returned to his swinging seat. 'Let's make a contest', he said (talking to the tree), 'to see which is more beautiful, the colour of your flower or my clothes.'

He sat there a long time, alternately watching his clothes and the *kensurai* flower. After a long time, he bravely recognized that his clothes were not as beautiful as the colour of the flower. He began to hate his clothes, and he threw them away, with his jewelry, and all his daily tools and implements. Where Pak Halangi went afterwards is not told (1993:21).

The Bhuket group called Halangi were farming from the time of Liju⁴ around the 1830s to 1879. In the year 1879 there was scarcity of rice and many people died of starvation (*Kapit Letters Book*, 31st January 1879). In January 1879 Bhuket were killed for trespassing into Iban gardens in the Balleh. In February 1879 Bhuket living in the Ulu Balang were attacked by Ibans and many Bhuket died. The legend of the victory of the *Kensurai* tree⁵ relates to a real historical event. The flowering of the *Kensurai* symbolises a time of abundance for the nomadic people for it is the sign of the beginning of the fruiting season and wild boar migration. The Halangi, who were dependent on farming (symbolised by the *biyu* tree), died of starvation and were also attacked by Iban so they gave up agriculture and reverted to a nomadic lifestyle (symbolised by the victory of the *Kensurai*).

The myth shows that the adoption of farming and its later abandonment is a choice the Bhuket made, and that they also acknowledged that their hunting and gathering culture should not be given up, for if any misfortune were to occur they could revert back to the old culture; hunting and gathering has never been abandoned by the Bhuket

through all the transformations that they have undergone; everything else has been superimposed on their hunting and gathering culture. The myth suggests that the Bhuket are hunter-gatherers and will continue to be so even with the diversification of subsistence activities. This is an alternative interpretation of the same myth.

Sawing attempted to show that the legend was not very old by saying that "The *biyu* tree of the legend has died, and a new tree has stemmed from the old stump. But a very strong *sengkuang* tree also grows there, overshadowing the *biyu* tree. The (Pak Halangi) episode should then be only a little older than the age of the *biyu* and *sengkuang* trees" (1993:21-23). However, I do agree with Sellato's interpretation of the tree symbolism in that he relates the *biyu* to the swidden agricultural environment, *kensurai* to upstream primary forest and *sengkuang* to a downstream low plains environment (1993:37).

This section on the myths of origin of the Bhuket clearly demonstrates that the cultural identity of the Bhuket is that of hunter-gatherers and they continue to perceive themselves as such even with the diversification of subsistence activities.

2.2 Nomenclature.

Before the mixing of the different Bhuket sub-groups each one differed in respect to several characteristics. These include their identification as a separate unit by a group name usually associated with a discrete territory, for example Sivo, Koyan and Metevulu. Even now Bhuket say that they can tell the difference between the Sivo, Koyan or Metevulu from their distinct characteristics and behaviour. However, these dispersed groups had two overall factors in common, that is kinship ties through cognation and marriage and a common language. But they rarely acted in concert and each group had an independent identity.

Bhuket seem always to have identified with the band, that is, with the family in the broadest sense rather than the entire ethnic group (see Sellato 1994:55). Each band or local group was an autonomous entity. This raises an interesting point about Bhuket ethnic identity. This wider identity is a recent phenomenon in Bhuket history. A sense of consciousness of kind developed after the emergence of composite bands and with the

sedentarization of all the Bhuket bands or local groups. Bhuket as an ethnic group, as perceived by the Bhuket, is based on linguistic and genealogical links.⁶ There are at the moment five Bhuket settlements, one in the Mahakam, two in the Kapuas, one in the Mendalam and one settlement in the Balui. There is a lot of movement between these communities and a great level of interrelatedness between them today. At the present time there is not only a feeling of oneness due to "likeness" and interrelatedness but also interrelationships between members due to historical and cultural sentiments. This is actually a result of the regional emphasis on ethnic pride, especially among such groups as the Kayan and Kenyah, which has made the Bhuket, in turn, need a wider sense of identity. Therefore, a consciousness of ethnic identity is beginning to emerge among the Bhuket.

The terms "Bukat" and "Ukit" were exonyms which have contributed to the creation of the endonym "Bhuket". Bhuket seem not to be concerned with the names used to refer to them, and Sellato has observed this among most nomadic groups (1994:16). Tom Harrison's distinction between "subjective" or self-imposed and "objective" or externally imposed categorization (1950: 271-80) for the Bhuket case is instructive in this regard. An interaction of the processes of identification at both levels led to a group of people internalising the objective categorization. Originally these terms had no meaning for the people who were identified as such, but have now acquired a meaning. It seems likely that the general use of these terms by the Iban, Kayan and others goes back ultimately not to a specific ethnic reference but rather to a term for "hill people" in the region or to nomads. There are a variety of terms used by agriculturists to refer to nomads. Baring-Gould and Bampfylde state that the word "Ukit" is from the Malay word "bukit" which means hill; hence "Orang Ukit" means "hill people" (1909:33). Stolk (1907) also makes a similar observation; he said that "orang bukit" is used in Malay dialects to refer to the Bhuket of the Mahakam. According to King (1985:52) Maloh categorize forest nomads of the upper Kapuas as *tau'ukit* (hill people) or *tau toan* (forest people). Sellato provides further concepts that farmers have for nomads:

nomads live farther upstream, in the mountainous highlands; they live in the forest; they have no village, but are constantly moving. Hence the most common terms of reference: "upriver people" (olo ot), in Central Kalimantan; "mountain people" (ukit, tau' ukit, bukit) in Sarawak and West Kalimantan; "forest people" (tau toan) in West Kalimantan; and the terms penan, pennan, punan (of controversial etymology, but which some authors say may mean "to wander in the forest"), used in Kalimantan, Sarawak, and Brunei. The term Basap is also used, referring to the nomads who live close to the coasts of East Kalimantan (1994:15-16).

It may be possible that phonetic convergence related to the term bukit/ukit is the reason for the variation present in the exonyms.

The Bhuket refer to themselves at present as "Bhuket" in Long Ayak, Matelunai, Nanga Balang, Nanga Hovat and Naha Tivab. This information was obtained from Bhuket living in these dispersed areas. The first syllable "bhu" is gently nasalised (a rather breathy tone); sometimes this nasalisation is not emphasised so "Bhuket" might even sound like "Buket". However, they are referred to as "Ukit" in Sarawak, which is actually the name given them by the Iban. The Kayan of the Balui refer to them as Buket. They are referred to as Bukat in East and West Kalimantan by the Kayans and other ethnic groups. The Bhuket in the Mahakam (Naha Tivab, East Kalimantan) refer to the Bhuket in Long Ayak as "Bhuket Baliu". The Long Ayak Bhuket call the Bhuket from the headwaters of the river Mahakam "Bhuket Keheyang". The Mahakam river is referred to as "Keheyang" by the Bhuket. Interestingly the Mendalam river where there is a Bhuket community at Nanga Hovat, was originally called "Bukot". But the name of the river was later changed by the Dutch administration. This river might have been called "Bukot" by the Aoheng after the people who were living there. Formerly, there was another settlement in the Sibau river, also a tributary of the upper Kapuas, but today most of the Bhuket in the Sibau have moved to Nanga Hovat. Bhuket call the Sibau river "Taviou" (Taviyau). Bhuket also used to live in the Kereho in the upper Kapuas, but most of them have moved to Matelunai and Nanga Balang. Today the Kereho river is settled by another hunting-gathering group called Kereho. However, part of the Kereho is considered to be in Bhuket territory. Bhuket were living in caves when they were in the Kereho. The Ibans used to call the Bhuket Kereho "Keriau Ukit" and they feared them very much. The headwaters of the Sibau, Mendalam and the Kapuas are very close to the Balleh which the Bhuket call "Jengayan". The connecting river between the Balleh and

the Mendalam is called "Belatai" by the Bhuket (see map in Appendix II) and Ibans used to launch their attacks in the Kapuas through the Sibau and Mendalam, the shortest route from the Balleh.

Bhuket used to be divided into sub-groups or bands and each band had its own name usually taken from the river which was their foraging territory. These bands were, in effect, extended families; they were the primary ethnic units. In former times the named bands were Sivo, Koyan, Metevulu, Helangi (Balleh), Hovut (Sibau), Belatung, Tainkiat, Tisit, Rerungo, Heloyi (Mendalam), Tayong, and Tevalui (Ulu Kapuas). Bhuket even today can claim identity to some of the above-mentioned bands. Bhuket use the term "*puhuk*" to refer to these groups, which means "origin" or "root". For example, an individual is said to be *puhuk* Sivo, *puhuk* Koyan, *puhuk* Tisit and so on. The Sivo are the most influential in Long Ayak and in Naha Tivab (Mahakam), and the Koyan are known for their skills in oratory. The present headman in Long Ayak is a Koyan and his wife is a Sivo.

It is interesting to note that Bhuket still recognise the *puhuk* to which they belonged before their final disintegration and the later random remixing of individuals and nuclear families from the various *puhuk*. The autonym is usually a toponym, that is the name referring to the foraging territory of the *puhuk*. Originally an individual's sense of identity was derived from this territory. Bhuket would say I am a Sivo, Koyan, Belatung and so on, which, if directly translated, would mean "This river or land is me" or "I am the river". Sivo⁷ is the name of a river, and instead of saying "I am from the river Sivo" they say "I am Sivo". They were, therefore, an extension of the territory. Here we can see the role of space in identity formation. Yet, as we shall see, identity is also a process or a dynamic phenomenon.

In the following section I attempt to use Bhuket oral history and historical records to demonstrate, in particular, how events in inter-group relationships contributed to Bhuket history and eventually to their wider ethnic identity. The focus is particularly on the relationships of the Bhuket to the Iban and the Kayan. It was the upheaval in the Balleh, Kapuas, Mahakam and Mendalam river basins that led to the mixing of the Bhuket bands. This reconstruction only applies to the former bands that later

amalgamated into mixed composite bands and which were later brought together by a man called Janen to settle in Sarawak. The history of the Bhuket as stated by Sellato "is actually the history of Bukat bands, each one deciding its movements for itself, joining another band or parting from it on the basis of criteria specific to each" (1994:55). But the events of the nineteenth century changed the course of their history.

2.3 History and Migration.

Prior to the second half of the nineteenth century, some Bhuket bands originated from the sources of the Balleh river, a tributary of the Rejang in Sarawak. Bhuket refer to the Balleh as "Jengayan" and in their conversation with other Bhuket, they use the word "Jengayan" synonymously with Balleh. Their traditional territories stretched from the Ulu Balleh to the Ulu Kapuas in West Kalimantan. They lived there in peace but were attacked by the Kayan in the late eighteenth century. This attack dispersed them. Iban migrations into the Balleh commenced in the early nineteenth century and resulted in the Bhuket moving further down the Kapuas and Mahakam. But the Bhuket used to return to the Balleh whenever they wished to do so.

The Bhuket and the Iban, or Dayak (Dyak) as they were called, were engaged in hostilities against each other from the 1850s onwards. According to F.D. de Rozario, the officer in-charge of Fort Balleh, in 1879 there was scarcity of food and Ukits trespassed into Iban gardens. He reported that two Ukit heads were brought back by Ramians [possibly an Iban war leader] (*Kapit Letters Book*, Fort Balleh, 31 Jan. 1879). The following month Rejang, an Iban living in the Mujong, returned from "mengayau" [headhunting] and brought back one Ukit head and a five year-old captive girl. They killed Ukit living in the Ulu Balang a branch of the Kapuas. Ukit also wounded and killed some of Rejang's men (*Kapit Letters Book*, Fort Balleh, 6 Feb. 1879).

By May 1879, the Brooke administration was seriously considering bringing order to the borders of the Raj. Karun [Kaharun, according to my informant, was an Aoheng chief from the Mahakam] was recommended to collect the Ukit living in the Mekam [the Iban term for the Mahakam] who were enemies of the Dyak [Iban] and bring them to the

Balleh to make peace with the Baketan (Bukitan, Baketan, Mengketan) and Dyak. *The Sarawak Gazette* of 23 May 1879 reported that

...Karun was recommended to collect the Ukits living in Mekam waters and who are at present enemies to the Dyaks and bring them to Balleh to make peace with the Bakatans and Dyaks. Should the Ukits refuse to avail themselves of this offer and persist in reprisal, then the Government would no longer feel itself called upon to restrain the Dyaks from carrying on the feud, the Government having to secure the frontier from invasion and prevent further annoyance.

On 29 May 1881 in a letter written by de Rozario to H.B.Low the Resident of the Rejang he stated that many Dyaks were going up the Balleh to work rattan, but he was suspicious that they were fortifying the Ukit. In an earlier letter dated 10 April 1881, he reported the killing of Ukit for taking Dyak paddy and that only a few of the Ukit were left (*Kapit Letters Book*, 10 April 1881 and 29 May 1881).

The *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 March 1882 reported a massacre in the Sut of three Dyak on 6 February 1882 by a band of Ukit, and on the 21 February 1882 Janen, the friendly Ukit, returned from the Mahakam and requested permission to settle in the Serani (see map in Appendix III). According to Bhuket oral history, by this time a small group of Bhuket moved from the Mahakam and began erecting dwellings in Long Layi, Ulu Balleh under Janen's leadership. Iban-Bhuket relations worsened from then on because a Bhuket woman named Heyat was murdered by Saran, her Iban husband. This incident took place in Long Layi (Laei see map in Appendix III).

By May 1883 there were government efforts to resettle the Bhuket, and a Tanjong man named Ukat was sent to Ukit country to bring down Janen for negotiations. He returned unaccompanied by Janen, for Janen was not yet ready to move. Ukat reported that:

.....some five Ukit families only intended to come down, the rest some forty families not following Janen but being under Kesiun, Amai, Ubong and Tujai [Tehujai] their own headmen and living in the watershed of the Kapuas and the Mahakam about 3 days walk from the head of the Jalunge refuse to move (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1 June 1883: 60).

After the incident at Long Layi Bhuket attacks on the Iban increased. For example, in October 1883, three Dyak were murdered by Ukit in the Baduli, a branch of the Mengiong, while the Iban were collecting gutta percha (*Kapit Letters Book*, 26

October 1883). The *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 April 1884 reported that "Janin the Ukit is of the opinion that the three Dyaks killed in the Mengiong were killed by Lohi Ukit."

Mr. Low reported that "The war between the Dyaks and Ukits is one of extermination, unless the latter evacuate their country, and retire to the left bank of the Kapuas" (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1 April 1884, Mr. Low's November 1883 Diary).

On Friday, November 9 1883 a band of Ukit, ten or so in number, assailed but was unable to take a Dyak "*langko*" [farm hut] in Sut. The Dyak followed the trail of the war-party but were recalled for fear of ambush (*Sarawak Gazette* 1 April 1884. Mr. Low's Nov. Diary). A week later on Friday, November 16 1883 permission was granted for the Ukit to remove to Mujong to live with Sihan and Punan. According to Mr. Low, "It is clear they cannot exist here on the main river unless they are fed. And I have done more for them in this way than I have ever done for any other tribe. They are a perpetual drain upon the Treasury and do not promise to become a producing tribe" (*Sarawak Gazette* 1 April, 1884, Mr. Low's November Diary).

The Sarawak Gazette of 1 April 1884 reported the following on 7 November 1883 (Mr. Low's November Diary):

The Dyaks here appear much incensed with the Ukits who have killed their people upon five several occasions, and for which they have been unable to obtain adequate revenge. Five years ago a relative of Sanggau's was murdered by them at Pulo Wun in the Balleh, the year after 3 more Dyaks were killed in the Sut, the year before last an Iran Dyak [Iban from the Iran river near Kanowit] was killed in Katibas, this year Galau of Kapit was killed and decapitated on a war-path, and now a Salidong and two Ensilais have been killed in Mengiong. The Penghulu^s are given to understand that no overwhelming bala [army] will be allowed to march in Ukit country for fear of misadventure but the "kayu anak" [ngayau anak means a small scale attack usually launched by people who have had their family murdered to seek revenge] will not be forbidden.

By January 1884 many Iban war-parties were going into Ukit country. *The Sarawak Gazette* 2 June 1884 (Mr. Low's January Diary 1884) reported

Penghulu Ujung and Penghulu Igo have gone on the war-path into Ukit country. So many having gone on this errand, it will be a wonder if they do not fall foul of each other or of some other tribe.

On 1 March 1884, eight Dyak men who went up to Bukit Batu returned with eight Ukit heads. They reported to the officer in-charge of Fort Kapit that there were no more

Dyak living up there except Ukit (*Kapit Letters Book*, 1st March 1884, Fort Kapit). The Ukit retaliated on the 9 of March 1884; Kling, son of Unggal, informed the officer in-charge that three of Ramians *anak biak* [followers] were killed by the Ukit at the head of the Sut (*Kapit Letters Book*, 9 March 1884, Fort Kapit).

Ukit continued their attack on the Iban; the *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 August 1884, reported that in March 1884

....the wild Ukits have again succeeded in killing three Kapit Dyak, a man and two boys. Igoh, a Government Penghulu returned from an authorized expedition against the Ukit. He had some of his party wounded and killed.

By April 1884 "more parties who were sent in search of the Ukits returned. Mancha's party from Kaniau [Kanowit], Antas from upper Kapuas and Unjung from Mendalam. They found no Ukits" (*Sarawak Gazette* 1 August 1884, Mr. Low's official diaries). Mr. Low's January and March Diary of 1884 mentioned that "the Ukits resisted Iban migration into the Balleh but by the mid 1880s were driven into the Kapuas, while some Ukit retreated to the extreme Upper-Rejang-Balui" (*Sarawak Gazette* 2 June 1884 and *Sarawak Gazette* 1 July 1884).

By July 1884 Janen with nineteen men and two women arrived in Kapit. He informed the officer-in-charge of Fort Kapit that he had collected all the Ukits in all 43 doors; they were left at Nanga Bakakap and ten more doors were on their march to make up 53 doors. They were awaiting permission to stay there (*Kapit Letters Book*, 14 July 1884).

In January 1886, two more Dyak were killed in the Bagalo a branch of the Bloh in the Katibas, by Ukit (*Kapit Letters Book*, January 9 1886, Fort Kapit). In December 1887 several Dyak boats had gone up the Katibas river to go over to the Kapuas headwaters and the officer-in-charge of Fort Kapit was not certain of their intention (*Kapit Letters Book*, 5 December 1887, Fort Kapit). My informant in Nanga Hovat, the grandson of Sirai chief of the Bhuket in the Mendalam in the 1880s, said that this expedition from the Iban of Kanowit received a severe counter attack from the Bhuket. The Iban war leaders Galau and Tedong led the war-party. Tedong, who had had a bad dream, left with his men, but Galau was killed by Bhuket, which brought to a halt Iban

expansion into the Kapuas. The Iban were attacked by Bhuket upriver and by the Kayan from downriver (who by then had cannons provided to them by the Dutch); the Iban caught in between were not able to retreat. After this war there were many attempts to make peace with the Bhuket. My informant told me that Temenggung Koh's⁹ father Kannyan who was considered to be of Bhuket descent (a Lughat), was sent by the Brooke administration to encourage Sirai to come down to Kapit for a peace settlement.

The Sarawak Gazette of June 1888 reported that Sirai, chief of the Lohe Ukit of the upper Mendalam, came down to Kapit as a preliminary to making peace. The Resident remarked that "some difficulties will arise as the Lohe tribe have always shown themselves inveterate enemies of the Dyaks who are still smarting under murders recently committed." The peace talks were not successful for Sirai committed fresh murders on his way back to the Mendalam, and Bhuket say that, before leaving, Sirai performed a stunt of jumping and leaving his hand-print on the wall of Fort Kapit. Two years later in June 1890 it was reported that three Ukit leaders, Mieng, Apai Lasan and Nyabong, were determined not to make peace (*Sarawak Gazette* 1 August 1890).

These records show that, although the Bhuket were massively outnumbered by the Iban, they were not a defeated people. Instead, there was great fear of the Bhuket; for example, the *Sarawak Gazette* of April 1889 reported that Apai Bejau and a party of Iran Dyak collecting gutta came across a number of strange footprints and, fearing Ukit, they kept a "bright look out at night."

Reference to the Long Ayak Bhuket in the *Sarawak Gazette* of July 1889 called them "Janieng's Ukits of the upper Balleh." Through the 1890s Bhuket ranged throughout the Ulu Balleh in search of their staple diet, forest sago (*jamak, tajuk or nyivung*). Janen came down to Kapit in 1891, as an emissary of the Ulu Mahakam Penihing (Aoheng)¹⁰, who were believed to have massacred ten Malays in the Ulu Kapuas (*Sarawak Gazette* 1891: 303). In 1891 Ukit took three Seputan¹¹ heads (*Sarawak Gazette* 1891: 304) and then, the following year, another two Iban heads. Chief Sirai himself killed a Memaloh¹² in the Kapuas in February 1892 (*Sarawak Gazette* 1892: 317). According to Bhuket oral history Sirai did it as a favour for the Taman¹³

who were in very bad relations with the Maloh. Sirai later married Ongngak, a Taman woman of aristocratic rank.¹⁴

From 1892 to 1901 there was a long period of peace with the Iban and in June 1901 the *Sarawak Gazette* reported that the Ukit visited Kapit and the Resident observed that "These people since they have enjoyed a long spell of friendship with the Dyaks are constantly coming down to trade at Kapit" (*Sarawak Gazette* June 1901).

Five months later, November 1901, the Bhuket were again in Kapit, this time to learn the way to plant paddy: "A large party of Ukits were in the Bazaar. They came from Leh in the Balleh, and their main object in coming down river was to learn the way to plant paddy, which these jungle people had hitherto cultivated" (*Sarawak Gazette* 1 November 1901).

Sometime after this, the Iban-Bhuket relationship deteriorated again due to Iban expansion and Bhuket insistence on remaining in the Ulu Balleh. Iban from the Ulu Ai began to range into the headwaters of the Kapuas and Balleh. The Bhuket forged an alliance with Aoheng and continued to take Iban heads. Bhuket concentrated their activities across the border in the Ulu Mahakam. In 1908 Rajah Charles Brooke wanted trusted Iban chiefs to keep order in the Balleh, the principal danger being "collision with wild tribes of Ukits and others living near the border" (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1908: 514). By 1908 Ukit wanted to return to their country in Ulu Balleh and Janen came down to Kapit to request such a return with 30 or 40 doors. Janen had been gathering these people together since July 1884. They were living in Long Layi, Bukit Batu and Nanga Bakakap. The Brooke administration said that if they wanted to return to Sarawak territory, they would have to live in the vicinity of Kapit Fort (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1908: 515).

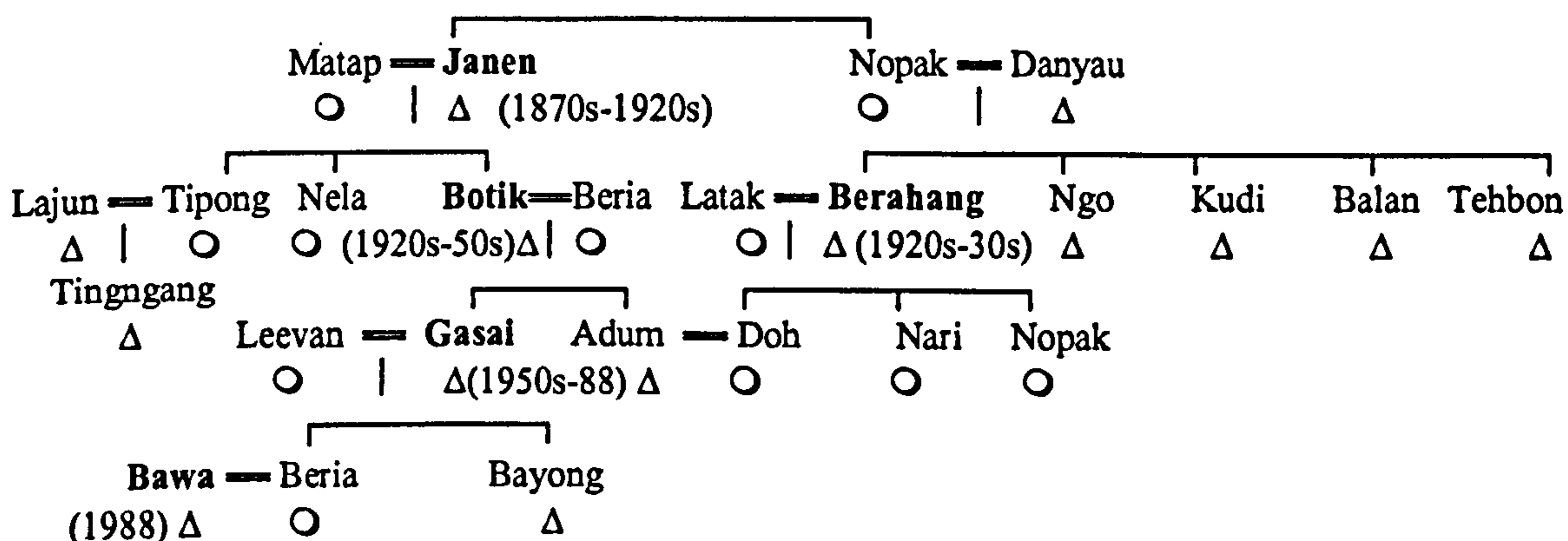
In about 1911 the Bhuket did indeed move down to Kapit but did not settle well, for the Third Division Resident remarked, "A tribe called the Ukits who moved into Balleh some two years ago from the Makam [Mahakam] have continually been giving trouble to Government. They have now been told that they can either settle down in the Rejang or return to their country, the Makam" (*Sarawak Gazette* 16 August 1913: 634). These records show that Bhuket were determined not to give up their territory in the

Balleh; but with the intervention of the Brooke government, this group of Bhuket were finally removed from the Balleh and started to live along the Balui.

The Bhuket lived across from Kapit at Batu Seputin for four years (1911-1915), and here they were attacked by Iban from the Kapit area and not the Balleh. In 1915, pushed by the Brooke administration, the Bhuket moved to Giam Mikai above the Pelagus rapids on the Rejang where almost immediately they were attacked by Ga'at Iban rebels under the leadership of Kasau, Kalat and Tabor. Ga'at rebels attacked a small party of Bhuket at Sungai Ari. A Bhuket by the name of Boang was killed and the leader of the Iban also lost his life. The *Sarawak Gazette* reported three Bhuket killed and that the Bhuket had "put up a very good fight and the enemy had considerable losses" (*Sarawak Gazette* 1 December 1915: 278).

After this battle and with the whole of the upper Rejang and Balleh greatly disturbed by raiding parties of Iban, the Bhuket moved further upriver to Belaga where they remained for about two years. According to Bhuket oral tradition they were led by Janen (of Melanau and Baketan descent) who married into their group and became its leader on the death of his father-in-law, Surek. Janen's sister, Nopak, also married into this group; she married Danyau and had five sons, Berahang, Tehbon, Kudi, Balan and Ngo. Janen had a son and two daughters, Botik, Nela and Tipong. Nela married a Brooke officer whom the Bhuket call Tuan Siput. Janen and Nopak established something of a "dynasty" in an egalitarian community, for their descendants have provided leadership ever since (see Figure 1). Their leadership has also received acknowledgment from their neighbours and the Brooke administration, but not so much from the Bhuket themselves.

Figure 1: Summary Genealogy of Janen and Important Members of his Family.



At Belaga from 1900 to the 1930s the Bhuket had two very strong leaders, one was Janen and the second was Berahang, the son of Janen's sister Nopak. Berahang served the Brooke government and participated in one of the last major wars between the Iban and Kayan at Nanga Pilla. The Iban suffered a severe attack from the Kayan and this halted Iban migration to the upper Balui. However, the Iban got their revenge when they attacked the Kayan at Long Taman, above Belaga. Berahang later became the *Penghulu* of the Ulu Balui, after proving himself to be committed to helping the Brooke government to bring stability to the Balui; he was a man who was respected by both the Kayan and the Iban. The Ulu Balui was at that time deserted and Bhuket migration up the Balui began around 1916. According to the Bhuket, they were asked by the Brooke administration to form the vanguard (*pala menoa*) into the ulu Balui because of their reputation for courage. The Kayan confirm that the position of *pala menoa* was given to the Bhuket. *Penghulu* Akom Deng from the Kayan community of Uma Juman provided the boats to carry the Bhuket from Belaga to Batu Biyang. These Bhuket comprised a small and mobile group and Iban raids were not very successful. What is more the Bhuket served as a buffer group to insulate the Kayan from their traditional enemies, the Iban and the Kenyah. The Bhuket were used to test how safe the area had become for settlement.

Being furthest upriver also served the Bhuket well. They were still essentially a hunting and gathering group, although they also undertook a little farming. They hunted the rhinoceros that provided them with cash and wealth through the sale of the horns and hooves to Kayan and Chinese traders. The *Sarawak Gazette* reported the imprisonment of ten Bhuket for being without passes for their guns and for shooting five rhinoceros.

In their progress up the Balui, the Bhuket first settled at Batu Biyang, above Long Murum. They were already cultivating paddy and their farms ranged from Long Murum to Long Na. After about three years there they moved further up the Balui above the great Bakun rapids to Long Belangan (which today is a Punan settlement), enabling the Kayan to move to Long Linau and Long Murum. The Bhuket remained at Long

Belangan for about four years before moving further upriver to Alung Beh. There in the late 1920s they established three settlements, one at Long Beh, and another at Rata Mesak, while one large extended family settled at Ahit Puyak. Janen died in Long Beh and was buried there. His grave is now in the Temenggung's land near present-day Uma Juman. After Janen's death his son Botik replaced him as their leader at Long Taman, and Berahang was the leader at Ahit Puyak. Berahang was removed as the Penghulu of the Balui for he could not keep his people united; they dispersed into smaller groups.

At Long Beh, the Bhuket population suffered from an epidemic¹⁵ in about mid 1930s, and Bhuket oral history records that as many as ten deaths a day were experienced at this time. Berahang died in this epidemic. One result of these losses was that the three Bhuket settlements merged into one under the leadership of Botik.

From Long Beh, Bhuket moved further up the Balui to Rata Mesak, where they remained for about five years, and thence to Long Dupah where they remained for about eight years. By this time, with peace reigning in the Balui and the Balleh, the Kayan were beginning to cast envious glances at the Bhuket's position of *pala menoa*. For example, the *Sarawak Gazette* of September 1936 reported that the Kayan were complaining of persistent thieving by Bhuket of vegetables and fruits but were unable to prove anything. The Brooke Resident commented that the Kayan would be delighted to have the Ukit moved for they occupied a very fertile area of land.

By 1940, the Bhuket had moved once again, this time to Long Taman where Botik died and was buried next to Janen in Alung Beh. Botik was succeeded by Usup but many Bhuket say that Gasai replaced his father. By this time, the Bhuket clearly were not happy in the Balui; the *Belaga Information Book* of 28 April-3 May 1941 records that Usup asked the District Officer if he could move to the Balleh, a request which was awaiting the decision of the Rajah. *The Information Book* also recorded that Gasai (Botik's son), wanted to move to Dutch territory while other Bhuket seemed content to stay where they were. The District Officer commented on this in the Information Book:

These people do not seem to know quite what they do want, as one asks if the house can move to Balleh, another asks to move to Dutch Borneo, while others seem content where they are, and want to bring friends and relations over from Dutch Borneo to live with them! The house has only just

moved to Long Taman, and they are living in a bamboo and bark langkau [hut] with the exception of one room. They say they will build a proper house after the next harvest.

The *Belaga Information Book* also recorded that the Bhuket paddy harvest in 1941 was fair and sufficient for six months approximately. The same year a census was taken which recorded that there were nine Bhuket families, numbering some 60 persons, living at Long Taman (not very accurate, for it recorded that four household heads were in Dutch territory. The families of two of these were recorded in the census and the other two were not).

Then came the Second World War. The Bhuket were used by the Brooke government to fight the Japanese. Usup was killed at the end of the Second World War attacking an armed Japanese soldier near Sungai Muring and in the process saving some lives. At the end of the war the Bhuket moved from Long Taman to Long Benalui where they remained until 1949. From Long Benalui, they moved to Long Saan about one kilometre away from Long Benalui. The Kayan also started to advance up the Balui and settled just below the Bhuket.

In about 1955, Gasai, the grandson of Janen, with the permission from District Officer Philip¹⁶ (Belaga), moved above the Ayu rapids, which became the boundary between the Bhuket and the Kayan of Uma Daro. They settled some distance above Long Ayak near Long Kebuhoh. There Gasai made a very bad strategic decision. Shortly after settling near Long Kebuhoh, there was an unfavourable omen (*burung* in Iban or *beiyerk* in Bhuket) which caused many deaths. Gasai decided that its meaning was that the Bhuket should move no further upriver and, therefore, he settled slightly downriver. Gasai's children and peers strongly urged him to move upriver to Batu Keling (which is now a large Kayan settlement), but he was adamant that the *beiyerk* meant that they were to move downriver and he chose the present site at Long Ayak. With peace reigning in the area, Gasai also voiced no objections to Kayan moving above the Bhuket when he was called down to Kapit by the British administration to discuss Kayan requests to make such a move. Thus, the Bhuket lost their commanding position as the *pala menoa* of the Balui. With Kayan upriver and downriver of them, the Bhuket were now hemmed into a steeply dissected area of the Balui.

2.4 The Emergence of the Ethnic Category Bhuket.

From the above history of migration of the bands that were regrouped under the leadership of Janen, we can see that the political-economic upheaval in the Balleh, Kapuas, Mahakam and Mendalam brought the Bhuket sub-groups onto a stage where the Iban, Kayan and the Brooke administration took significant notice of them. In addition to the changes in the political-economic context in which Bhuket sub-groups lived, there were also internal forces that operated within Bhuket bands that were important as adaptive strategies in the face of changing circumstances. Out of this interplay of external and internal forces and processes emerged the Bhuket ethnic category. Importantly it was not contact alone that made the Bhuket significant to the Iban, Kayan and the Brooke Raj, rather it was the recognition of Bhuket as a distinctive ethnic element by them; this, in turn was due to the unique adaptation that the Bhuket made to the domination of the Iban and the Kayan. It is the historical development of Bhuket adaptation to changing circumstances that created the ethnic category Bhuket.

These processes ultimately served to bring into realisation a collectivity of people newly cognizant of their status as an ethnic category. The bands, which were a chain of cultural instances, became a loose category in the context of interaction with other dominant groups. However, I believe that the individual Bhuket did not undergo much change in terms of behaviour to accommodate themselves to this category.

Each of the *puhuk* was linked to one another but they had a separate existence.

According to Sellato

It must, however, be stressed that the Bukat groups have always remained in contact with each other across the mountain ranges. Traditionally, though, the Bukat were divided into many bands, which sometimes entered into conflict with each other. Each band, a descent group, was an autonomous political and economic entity. The Bukat seem always to have identified with the band, that is, with the family in the broadest sense, rather than with the ethnic group. Indeed, there has apparently never been a Bukat coalition against an enemy, never any policy or action involving more than one band, never any concerted migratory movements, and therefore never any form of political organization above the level of the band, up to recent times. Each leader of a band managed his people as he liked (or rather, as they liked) (1994:55).

The lack of collectivity above the level of the band is apparent in the above quotation. For the Bhuket formerly the collectivity of all the sub-groups was an abstraction that did not have an objective or concrete reality in their experience.

However, being referred to as a collectivity and treated as such gradually led to a realisation of a wider identity. Although the *puhuk* were interrelated and in contact they did not see the significance of this wider, abstract Bhuket category in concrete terms until the great upheavals of the mid-nineteenth century when the existence of the *puhuk* came under threat. As attacks became serious enough to wipe out entire *puhuk*, brief periods of bounded Bhuket inclusiveness were experienced as a response to political events; scattered Bhuket came together for protection and safety after a raid on a particular *puhuk*. It is likely that, at this time, episodes of strong apparent consciousness of kind emerged, but these were short-lived instances.

These events also coincided with the intervention of the representatives of Brooke administration who defined ethnic and group boundaries in terms of specific cultural markers; they assumed the existence of exclusive boundaries and homogeneous groups. The permeable nature of group boundaries was not recognised for it was untidy for administrative purposes. In this regard Babcock (1974) argues that identity came to be based less on geographical factors, and more on ethnicity due to the administrative practices of the Brookes. He states that:

We have seen how the Europeans in Sarawak history have tried to impose their own ideas of bounded, permanent and stable ethnic identity on the very different Sarawak scene. The Brookes did their best to keep various peoples separate, to make neat and tidy categories that were more in keeping with their orderly British minds (1974:197).

It is highly likely that Janen of Melanau and Baketan descent was sent by the Brooke Raj to collect the disintegrated *puhuk* groups and form a bounded unit where no such entity existed before. European attempts at the stabilization of identities became increasingly successful with an associated rise in the level of ethnic consciousness. However, at the individual level this bounded existence is an abstraction in the mind and even today it does not have much of a concrete, objective reality. Moreover, the individual Bhuket is more concerned with pragmatic rather than conceptual matters.

2.5 Inter-ethnic Relations and Bhuket Identity.

Interaction consists either of hostile relations, alliance, marriage and kinship, friendship or neutral co-existence. Inter-group hostility was a common phenomenon in Borneo. Bhuket enjoyed good relations with some of their neighbours and hostile ones with some others. But this situation was highly variable. For example, the Bhuket Sivo were in very bad relations with the Aoheng (Penihing) at some points in their history, but later they became allies. It was a similar situation with the Iban. Some Bhuket bands had hostile relations with them in the Balleh, but enjoyed better relations with the Kanowit Iban. However, this situation also changed with the war between the Bhuket of Nanga Hovat in the Mendalam and the Iban of Kanowit when alliances were beginning to be made with the Iban in the Balleh. Hostilities and alliances were temporary and situational and did not involve the whole ethnic group. For example, the Bhuket under the leadership of Berahang and Ngo were not attacked by the Iban, but the other Bhuket groups were. In the Balleh relations between Iban and Bhuket were initially very bitter until the Brooke administration intervened and moved the Bhuket away (Sarawak Gazette 2 June 1884:31-32). Elsewhere Iban had better relations with Bhuket; for example "there were Iban [living] among the Bukat of the upper Hubung" (Nieuwenhuis, 1904: 384, cited in Rousseau 1990:241).

It was necessary to make formal alliances, called "*petutung*" in Bhuket, to put an end to hostilities. Intermarriages were contracted for this purpose. According to Sellato

It is notable that in alliances at this early stage women moved from Bhuket to the farmers, rather than the reverse.....Little by little, however, along with their intermarriages, nomads and farmers developed a form of association that has been characterized by certain authors as symbiotic, but which is so only in part. A corollary of their alliance is that the nomad band took the side of its farming allies in regional politics (1994:51).

This pattern can be seen in Bhuket-Kayan relations in the Balui when Bhuket were made sentinels and vanguards against Iban attacks. Bhuket patrolled the hinterlands and accompanied Kayan expeditions. Marital alliances were also made for trade purposes and not just to settle hostilities.

Inter-ethnic marriages influenced the Kayan, Iban and the other ethnic groups as much as they affected the Bhuket. There was also one case in which Sirai, the chief of the Bhuket in Nanga Hovat, brought his aristocratic Taman wife to stay with him. This shows that the influence was not unilateral. Indeed, inter-ethnic marriages have not threatened Bhuket identity today, because for them identity is not based on a bounded and closed list of traits but it is one which is subject to processes of learning and adaptation. In this regard Bhuket identity comprises a "feeling" of being a Bhuket; it does not require the demonstration of distinct Bhuket cultural traits.

Intermarriage with non-Bhuket has been a common phenomenon among all generations of Bhuket, and its frequency has been on the rise recently. Intermarriage is most often governed by practical factors rather than ideological considerations about the nature of inter-group relationships. The non-Bhuket who have married Bhuket and settled with them for a long period are not simply assumed to be Bhuket. In this situation the Bhuket category is flexible - the individual can continue within the community without losing his or her original identity. The same applies to Bhuket who have married elsewhere - ethnic categories are flexible and accommodate individuals without them having to give up their original identity.

The *Belaga Information Book* has an interesting case of an intermarriage between a Bhuket woman and an Iban man which was not approved by the Brooke administration; the report states that

Gilieng anak Lumbok from Rumah Ambun of Sut a Dayak married for 4 years to an Ukit woman named Tali of Rumah Usop of Ulu Baloi and has two children by her. Abang Ahmat representing the administration ordered him to return to Sut. But Tua Rumah Gasai (Ukit) does not want him to leave the Ukits and if Gilieng is ordered to leave and divorce his wife he wants to take one child with him, which of course the Ukits will not agree. After an inquiry Gilieng was told that he may stay with the Ukits, on the understanding that he becomes an Ukit and follows their customs etc. The document ends with, no reason now why he should not be allowed to stay with the Ukits. Permitted (24/7/40).

From this we can see that the local government wanted an Iban to assume Bhuket identity when it was not an issue for the Bhuket themselves. This attitude on the part of

the local government was seen in Iban-Malay relations too. Pringle mentions an unwritten law forbidding Malays from living among the Iban (1970: 297).

Although there were intermarriages, the general contempt that farmers felt for nomads has often been noted (Nieuwenhuis, 1904: 255; King 1979a: 19). This contempt is still felt today because farmers and sometimes civil servants find the Bhuket unpredictable and very prone to flare-up in anger when they are pushed to conform to particular rules. However, the farmers needed nomadic friends and allies, and Bhuket say that their own reliance on the farmers for protection was an exaggerated claim made by the farmers. It can be seen that inter-ethnic relations between Bhuket and their farming neighbours have been rather interpersonal in nature and have also led to friendships.

Most research on nomad-farmer relationships has tended to present them as the outcome of trade contact between neighbouring societies (Fox, 1969: 142; Gardner, 1966, 1972; Morris, 1977; Rousseau, 1975: 41, 1990; Hoffman, 1983). But besides this type of economic contact there were also political relations, and, in most cases, interaction was usually established on the basis of individual friendships before economic or political relations were established. These friendships then sometimes led to adoption or marriage, trade links, and political alliance. There were also particular Bhuket individuals who gained the respect of the farmers because of their courage, bravery, oratory and hunting skill and the extraordinary feats they performed. Therefore, interaction is not only a group phenomenon but is also individual and personalised in nature. In her study of the hunting-gathering Naiken of South India, Bird-David has shown that contacts with the outside are personalized social interactions (1988: 26).

Many customs from the farming community were adopted only in principle and on an individual basis. Bhuket might not attach much importance to them in practice. This flexibility in the Bhuket lifestyle is not new but is in the nature of Bhuket culture; it allows for the assimilation of cultural elements from their neighbours in a less profound way, and their ramifications throughout the community are less pervasive than they may appear.

Bhuket do feel different from their neighbours and are made to feel so, particularly by the stratified agriculturists. But we should not assume simplistically that relations

between farmers and nomads are ones of superiority-inferiority and of assimilation of one by the other. An observation in the early 1970s of the Bhuket by Rousseau raises the issue of Bhuket assimilation by the Kayan. He states that

the Bukat form a single small village..., and they are cut off from the other members of the same group..., in the Mendalam river (Kapuas basin, Kalimantan)....Their nomadic origin gives them a sense of inferiority and, surrounded by the Kayan, they consider that they have no chance of maintaining their ethnic identity, and are convinced that they will become Kayanized in the near future. Indeed, of all the non-Kayan in the district, they are the most fluent speakers of their language. Despite their recent arrival in the area, their assimilation has been more rapid, and this seems to be due to the absence of an ethnic group with which they could identify (1975: 41).

In contrast, my observation of them nearly 20 years later shows that Bhuket have become more conscious of their identity and the Kayan seem not to be interested in assimilating them. The non-Bhuket influences and the learning of the Kayan language do not deprive Bhuket of an identity for their adaptation to them has become part of their flexible culture. Their agriculturist neighbours equate this flexibility with nomadic social organization and frequently use the term "*macam Punan*" (like Punan) to refer to the lack of rigidity in social life.

Bhuket have a strong sense of identity especially when they are among themselves and outside any contact situation. It is during interaction with the more organized and stratified groups that they start to hesitate in revealing certain distinct traits relating to their nomadic past. Bhuket, particularly the younger generation, resist attempts by the government to classify them as Kajang¹⁷ or Punan. Furthermore, Kajang and Punan consider Bhuket as being different from them linguistically and culturally. Among the older generation, there seems to be no problem when they are referred to as "Punan" but younger Bhuket do not like being labelled thus because the term is used in a derogatory manner.

2.6 What it Means to be a Bhuket.

Sellato posed this issue but retreated from answering it. He said

What sense the Bukat themselves have of their ethnic identity is a question easier to ask than to answer. Still recently nomadic, probably to this day not very good at farming, and viewed by the agricultural people with a

certain paternalistic contempt, they picked up a variety of exonyms (most of them toponyms), in particular on the Balleh and the Mahakam, and adopted some of them for their local use (1994:54).

This does not help much in explaining the Bhuket sense of their own ethnic identity.

The evidence above on self-identification clearly suggests some sense of separateness on the part of the Bhuket from the numerically and culturally dominant groups of the region. It is evident that Bhuket use language as one marker of ethnic identity, but language is insufficient as a defining feature because Bhuket consider the Lisum, who speak a mutually intelligible language with the Bhuket, as different from them. Interestingly Bhuket insist that the Lisum speak a different language. I visited the Lisum at Long Pawa, Belaga district and realised how similar the language was. I then compiled a wordlist of a hundred items and discovered that the language was very closely related to Bhuket indeed, with a cognate percentage of 97%. This situation confirms what Rousseau has said in relation to ethnicity in Central Borneo to the effect that "... we cannot assume a priori that linguistic relationships necessarily entail a common culture or history" (1990:49).

Distinctive cultural traits as markers of ethnicity also pose problems. Is there such a thing as a list of cultural traits that all Bhuket will agree on as distinctively Bhuket? Among the Bhuket this leads to an extremely idiosyncratic listing because the ethnic category Bhuket emerged from interaction; various cultural traits are not solely Bhuket for they are the result of cultural exchange and adoption from neighbours, or an adaptation to contact or the outcome of generic expressions and needs due to changed circumstances. Furthermore, these cultural markers are often formulated and expressed on an individual basis among the Bhuket. The similarities in culture and language between nomads and agriculturalists today further complicates any attempt at trying to identify ethnic-specific cultural traits. Sellato states

Apart from this characteristically meager array of ethnographic source materials, and because of it, we have little understanding of exactly who the Punan are, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically. A further complication is that contacts between Punan and various major groups of sedentary Dayak farmers have led to indisputable similarities between the cultures and

languages of the different Punan groups and those of their more settled neighbors (1994:14).

From all of this I conclude that it is impossible to come up with a list of cultural features based upon Bhuket responses that can be defined as distinctively Bhuket. In a conversation I had with a group of people from different generations on the 5 November 1993 I tried asking them what it means to be a Bhuket. Some said "Because we are different from the Kayan"; to pursue this further I asked them in what ways they were different; some said "Because we ate sago and not rice" though many members of the younger generation disagreed. From an earlier observation I noticed Bhuket, especially the older generation, have a craving for sago and try to eat it discretely as if they were ashamed of it. To console the furious younger people, I asked, "But now that you eat rice why then do you say that you are different from the Kayan?" They responded "Because we hunted and collected our food in the past and did not farm"; again this was followed by a noisy argument and the younger people did not agree. But I said, the Kayan hunt and collect too. By this time most of the people who were gathered in the *soah* (verandah) were bored with the discussion and went away to their apartments, uninterested or possibly seeing the futility of my exercise in trying to discover what makes them Bhuket and therefore different from the Kayan.

At this time I was still unaware that their notion of ethnicity is not based on exclusiveness but rather on inclusiveness. Perhaps this was the reason for their lack of interest in my line of questioning for they did not perceive ethnicity in the form of structural opposition. Following the departure of several members of my discussion group there were only five of us left: there was a primary school teacher, a form five school-leaver, the headman's wife and her sister-in-law and me; they stayed back to try to help me solve my problem. The headman's wife remarked that it was now my problem not theirs, because they know they are different but I don't know. I continued the discussion and said, "Could it be that the Kayan have *marens* (aristocrats)?" All of them united for once and said "We have *marens* too." The headman's wife said that Bhuket feel different from the Kayan, and the Kayan make them feel different too. She said we are Bhuket because "*suang sangngak pepiang*", which refers to "a feeling of togetherness or oneness". She continued by saying that even though "we live

individually”, “*murip pesenangen nangen*”, when we are with the Kayans we pretend (*maliyau*). She said this in a very intellectual-sounding tone. Thus, it seems to me we are dealing not with a question of attributes but of feelings. Being a Bhuket is not necessarily being objectively and categorically different from the Kayan but is an internal feeling of oneness.

It is interesting to note the depth of feeling Bhuket express about their identity when they are by themselves. However, this feeling is suppressed when they are with other ethnic groups because they try to be like them. I think it is appropriate to mention in this context that, during my farewell gathering, several speeches were made and I recorded them. In two of the speeches there was mention that other people who had visited the Bhuket like Redmond O'Hanlon, author of *Into the Heart of Borneo* (1985), and several journalists who have written articles in the local newspapers, had left and written bad things about the Bhuket; they said that they were sure that I would be more careful in what I write; and that I would not give an unfavourable impression of them to the outside world because I had stayed with them longer and understood them better. Listening again to the speeches when writing this chapter I realised that it could have either been a subtle warning or a certain confidence they had in me. This shows how sensitive they are to the question of their identity and seems to me to be a confirmation of their feeling of identity as members of the category Bhuket.

Overall there seems to be an apparent paradox here in which Bhuket ethnic identity is firmly in place but without any possible objective way of defining it. Therefore, ethnicity does not create the idea of a culture or history for the Bhuket because they are unable to define their culture or ethnic identity in any objective terms. As mentioned above ethnic identity for an individual Bhuket is a feeling and what constitutes this feeling is arbitrary.

2.7 What Ethnicity is to the Bhuket Today.

From my observations and discussions with the Bhuket I think ethnicity for them is concerned with interrelatedness and not so much about a common history, language or culture. An interesting observation from King and Wilder about ethnicity and how it

closely resembles kinship provides an alternative way of understanding ethnicity. They said

A sociological category that closely resembles ethnicity is kinship. Like ethnicity, kinship commands primary loyalties, is largely premised on birth to one or both specified parents to establish social identification, and often uses biological justification. Indeed, the two categories may act as symbols of each other (1982: 2).

In the Bhuket case these two categories in fact explain each other, in the sense that kinship or cognatic ties are equivalent to ethnicity, but this does not carry with it what is suggested in the above quotation. The difference between the Bhuket notion of ethnicity and the widely accepted views of ethnicity is that theirs is based on the premise of inclusiveness while the commonly accepted view of ethnicity has been premised on concepts such as exclusiveness, boundary maintenance, structural opposition and, more recently, on the elasticity and permeable nature of ethnicity (see Barth, 1969; Cohen, 1978; Nagata, 1975; Nicolaisen, 1977-78; Drummond, 1980; King and Wilder, 1982; King, 1982; Rousseau, 1990). I wish to demonstrate how Bhuket perceive ethnicity for it provides an alternative understanding to the complexity of the concept.

For the Bhuket today ethnicity and their perception of the ethnic group Bhuket is based on the inclusive genealogical links presented in Appendix VIII. The Bhuket comprise five interrelated communities. Their notion of ethnicity is based on establishing "we" relationships and not so much "we-they" ones. Relationships with outsiders is not the primary means they would use to define their ethnic group, however, it might be a discourse they would engage in establishing their identity or separateness for it certainly contributed to the creation of the ethnic category Bhuket.

If kinship divides people into groups and categories in most societies, it unites the Bhuket. However, it is not a conscious process of unification. Real kin ties are used to establish and make sense of the ethnic group. If a Bhuket marries into another ethnic group and adopts the lifeways of his or her spouse's community, Bhuket would say that that particular individual could not stop being a Bhuket. A Bhuket is always a Bhuket no matter where or how he or she lives; therefore an individual's "Bhuketness" cannot be erased because it is based primarily on a kinship link and not on cultural features. Bhuket

are not concerned with boundary maintenance but are more interested in establishing inclusiveness.

The Bhuket notion of ethnicity raises interesting questions about certain widely accepted views of ethnicity in Borneo. These views suggest, for example, that if a Bhuket marries a Malay then that individual becomes a Malay.¹⁸ Is this possible? What are the processes involved in an individual shedding his/her former identity and adopting another? In contrast, Bhuket would say that that individual could learn the ways of the Malay, adopt Islam, and even live like a Malay, but this does not stop that individual from being a Bhuket; one cannot stop being what one is, even though there is always room to learn and adopt the ways of others. Bhuket say that one cannot forget the language and attitudes that one grows up with just because one marries into a different community, and certainly not within an individual's lifetime. In any case, learning and adopting the ways of others is not seen as an exogenous factor but as generic to their social life.¹⁹ As Rousseau has very clearly stated for central Borneo, "There is no reason to assume that population boundaries, or endogamy, are closely related to ethnic identity...." (1990: 45). So anybody can be considered a Bhuket if genealogical links can be established, and anybody will be accepted or considered as a Bhuket if that individual claims a genealogical link. Bhuket are not particular about it and usually they will not set out to investigate genealogies. But there are certain individuals within the community who are very knowledgeable about such matters. For example, Bhuket claim that nearly ten households among the Kayan of Uma Belor are Bhuket because genealogical relations can be established, even though they speak a different language and certainly have a different culture. This interrelatedness may cross cultural boundaries but if a genealogical link can be established then the individual or group are said to be "*puhuk Bhuket*".

Ethnic categories can change over time but an individual's identity cannot. For example, from the Bhuket point of view, the ethnic category Bhuket can become the category Malay in time. However, individuals cannot in their lifetime make such a switch in their identity, though the Bhuket might have learned Malay ways. This is so even when one hears talk of dual ethnic ascription; for example, the headman's wife, Yak, would say

that she is "*puhuk* Baketan" because she is the great-granddaughter of Janen, who was a Baketan; and she used to complain to me that her poor eyesight was due to her Baketan origin. In this sense she is certainly suggesting dual ethnic ascription, but there is no doubt of her Bhuket identity. In the case above, Yak may choose to associate with both Bhuket and Baketan but she is a Bhuket in identity, and it is certain that Baketan are aware of her identity as a Bhuket. On the other hand, their children can assume a different ethnic identity if born into a different ethnic group. Even then they still have a choice of belonging to the ethnic group which does not contribute to the formation of their identity. This is how the Bhuket principle of inclusiveness may accept individuals from different cultural backgrounds into their ethnic category.

In summary, I have argued that possessing or claiming a different non-Bhuket identity does not exclude that individual from the ethnic category Bhuket unless the link is forgotten or denied by both parties. Furthermore, the ethnic category Bhuket is very flexible and can accept individuals from any cultural origin without that individual having to give up his or her original ethnic identity. Bhuket would say that these individuals may come to live with them and learn Bhuket ways and language, but they will not stop being what they already are. In the Bhuket context, integration through which one party loses its identity would mean a lack of tolerance for cultural and social variation and to them it is not possible for an individual to lose his or her original identity. The ethnic category Bhuket allows for diversity and variation in its social and cultural composition, and that is why today all the five Bhuket communities contain many in-marriage members from surrounding communities. For the Bhuket, ethnicity has nothing to do with cultural uniformity. It is based on the principle of inclusion.

¹ *Huven* refers to thunderstorms that occur as a retribution for mocking animals. The reference to thunderstorms or *huven* (*uven*) is also common among the Iban (Frecman, 1968), Penan (Needham, 1964; Brosius, 1992: 400), Kayan and Kenyah. Sandin, in his article on the Baketan, gave a Baketan myth in which a whole community was transformed into rock for mocking a cat (1967: 111-21).

² Sawing is the Bhuket headman at Nanga Balang. Sellato interpreted Sawing's manuscript as Bhuket manipulation of historical tradition; one man's interpretation of a Bhuket myth was taken as an ethnic group's attempt to improve its status. Some Bhuket were not even aware that Sawing had written about the myth.

³ Halangi was also a name of a Bhuket band.

⁴Liju was a Long Gelat leader from the Mahakam who came to the Kapuas to wage war against the Taman of the Kapuas (see Sellato, 1986a: 317, 326-7). He is also known as Leju Aya (for more on him and the Long Gelat people see Nieuwenhuis, 1904: 274-5). Leju's expedition to the Kapuas was to free the Kayan of Mendalam from Taman domination (Bouman, 1924a: 182). There are many versions of the story of Leju's expedition to the Kapuas (see Mudiyono Diposiswoyo, 1985). Georg Müller met Leju in 1825 (Nieuwenhuis, 1904: 280; cited in Rousseau, 1990: 333)

⁵Interestingly Sawing used an Iban word; the Bhuket call the Kensurai-Kecohei.

⁶See genealogical charts in Appendix VIII which demonstrate the interrelatedness of the entire ethnic group.

⁷Sivo is also the name of a wild fruit tree which Bhuket are fond of. The leaves of the Sivo tree are also used to dye the rattan for plaiting mats and baskets. The leaves yield a black dye.

⁸Penghulu is a government appointed local leader in Sarawak.

⁹Temenggung Koh was the Iban paramount leader in the Balleh. He was born in about 1870, at Pulau Ensulit, in the headwaters of the Kanyau, a tributary of the Kapuas river. In 1913 he was appointed to be the Penghulu by the Rajah. He had the intelligence to realize the superiority of the Rajah and had the foresight to perceive the inevitable outcome of defiance. Compliance and co-operation with the Rajah was his guiding principles (see Freeman, 1970:141, 150).

¹⁰Aoheng or Penibing are from the uppermost reaches of the Mahakam. They are also called Peng, and Bhuket call them Deheng. Penibing is an exonym and they call themselves Aoheng. They are a conglomerate ethnic group which emerged from the amalgamation of agricultural groups such as the Amue and Auva with nomadic groups like the Bhuket, Baketan and Semukung (see Sellato, 1986a:329; Rousseau, 1990: 65-66)

¹¹The Seputan are from the upper Mahakam. The Seputan are part of the Bahau group. The Seputan started to settle at the turn of the century under the influence of the Aoheng (see Lumholtz, 1920: 74).

¹²The Maloh complex comprise Embaloh, Kalis, Leboyan, Palin and Taman (see King, 1985).

¹³Taman claim to be the original inhabitants of the Kapuas and dominated the Kayan of the Mendalam. They were attacked by Leju Aya of Long Gelat (see Nieuwenhuis, 1904: 278)

¹⁴The present Taman Temenggung at Siut in the Kapuas is Temenggung Mensuka, an elderly man who said that he was over 90 years old. He is the son of Ba'u, who was Ongngak's younger brother.

¹⁵Bhuket said that the epidemic was not cholera or smallpox but a disease brought by rats.

¹⁶Bhuket said that District Officer Philip was a European officer stationed in Belaga. Some Malays in Belaga and the Kayan also confirmed that there was a District Officer named Philip in Belaga, but I could not find any document referring to such a person.

¹⁷Kajang is a term referring to an association of groups living in the middle and upper Balui; they are the Bah Mali, Kejaman, Lahanan, Punan Bah, Sekapan and Seping. Rousseau (1990: 17) has also suggested the inclusion of the Lepo Pu'un into this association for they are linguistically and culturally related (see Pollard and Banks, 1937). The term Kajang is used for classificatory purposes and despite common traits they should not be considered as sharing a common origin.

¹⁸A good example would be the Seru. The category Seru has become the category Kerian Malays over a long span of time, but the individual Seru died a Seru. The last Seru claiming an identity to the category Seru died in 1954. This points to the fact that the individual Seru did not become something else, in this case Kerian Malay, but the category Seru has been absorbed by the category Kerian Malay through inter-marriages and through time. Ethnic categories can be formed, can change and become something else but identity is a completely different matter. An individual cannot erase or forget his or her identity but it might be denied. However, I must admit that what constitutes this identity is difficult to verify.

¹⁹Bhuket show great ability to learn the languages of their neighbours. Most Bhuket are polyglots. Bhuket children can sometimes speak three or four languages, but this does not entail the loss of one's identity.

Chapter 3: Kinship.

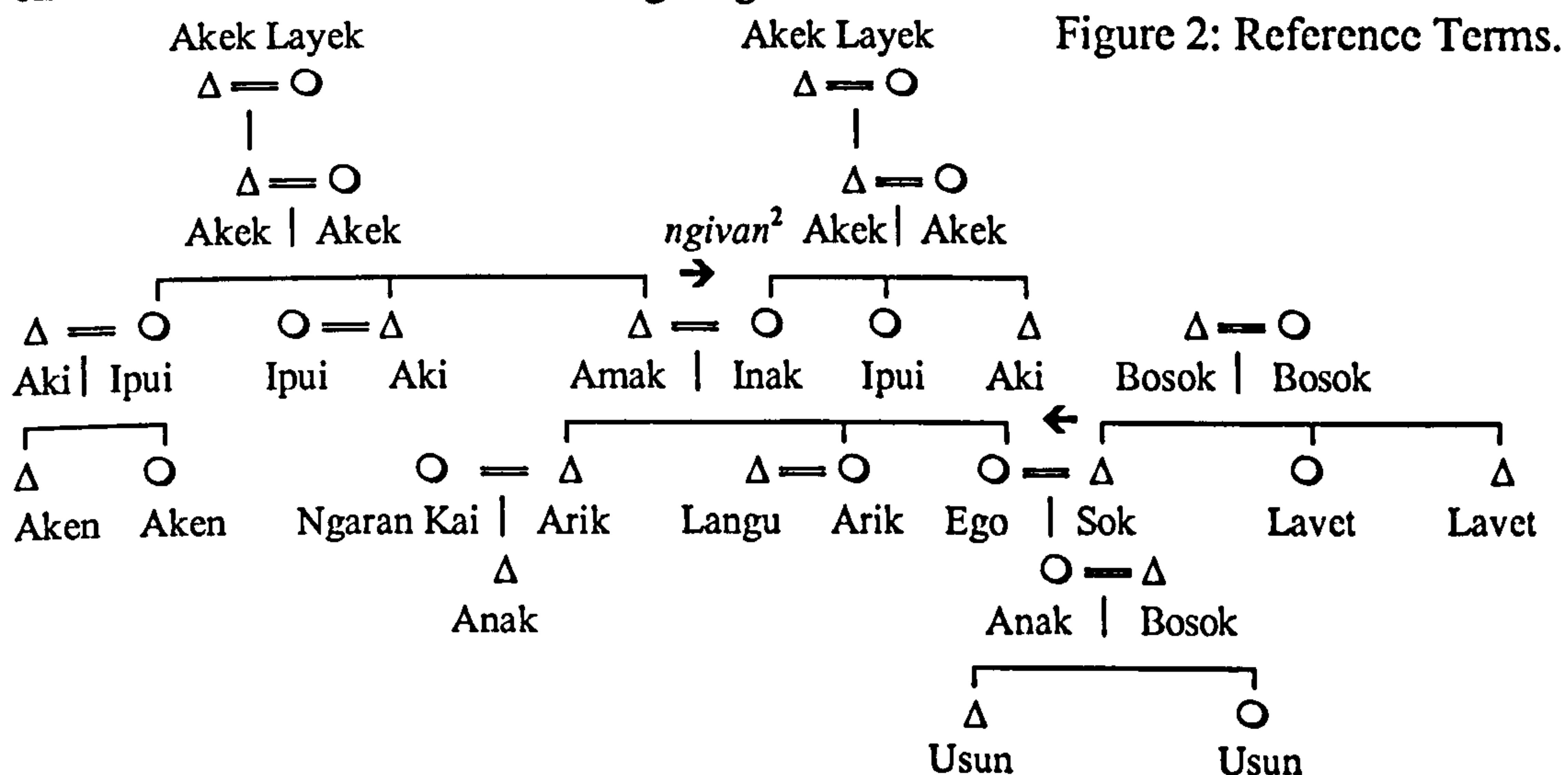
This chapter is intended to show that in a very small community like that of the Bhuket where everyone is related, kinship is not significant as a mechanism for distinguishing individuals; the interrelatedness cancels out the significance of expressing differences in social relationships for the relatedness is a known fact. The fundamental bond is coresidence and companionship. Kinship for the Bhuket does not place people under obligation but rather is a relationship based on companionship¹ that does not in any way hinder individual autonomy. Bhuket social existence within the community is not significantly structured by kinship relations. For the Bhuket experience is more important than rules, where free choice and individual autonomy override the rules. This does not mean that they do not have rules, but rather that they do not formalise them like their agriculturalist neighbours. In Bhuket society these rules do not form an instituted order and are not an entity that transcends the spontaneous association of individuals. Rules are not supported by strong jural sanctions. Social control is not so much a societal device for controlling individuals; most of the time individuals exercise a form of self-imposed control which arises out of concern for the well-being of another party with retribution from any transgression operating in the mystical realm.

In this chapter I wish to explain that kinship in the Bhuket sense is more about companionship and coresidence. What is obvious about kinship within the Bhuket community is the importance of the conjugal pair and the nuclear family as the basic social units. There are no kin groups or categories above the conjugal family unit because of the equality in the value of all relationships in the community. Differences in closeness of interaction within the community are not structured on the basis of kinship or descent principles. I will continue to use certain concepts in kinship studies, for example nuclear family, household and marriage. However, I will not take the household as a given but instead examine the concept of the household as emerging from the Bhuket concept of *kajan*, which refers to a space shared by a group of individuals. Indeed, processes are at work for the coming into being of the household, because the provision of the daily subsistence of its members is increasingly kept within the confines of this emerging household. Nevertheless, the equality in the value of relationships based

on the cognatic principle does not lead to descent-based relationships. Kinship relations do not carry the burden of claims and obligations in a community in which independence is highly valued. I shall use kinship categories and concepts to aid the analysis of social relationships, but a word of caution is needed; this does not necessarily mean that Bhuket see themselves in these terms.

3.1 Reference Terms.

Bhuket kinship nomenclature is bilaterally symmetrical (Figure 2), the same terms are used to denote kin on the father's side as on the mother's side, and relationships are traced through both male and female links, a principle which Murdock (1960) refers to as cognation. Mother is referred to as *Inak* and father as *Amak*. Maternal and paternal grandparents are referred to as *Akek*, but nowadays Bhuket are beginning to use the Kayan term *Uku* and sometimes both terms are used interchangeably. Great-grandparents and ancestors are referred to as *Akek Layek*. Ego's mother's brother and father's brother are *Aki*. Ego's mother's sister and father's sister are referred to as *Ipui*. Ego's father's sister's husband is *Aki* and father's brother's wife is *Ipui*. Cousins are referred to as *Aken*. Ego's brother and sister are referred to as *Arik*; the word *Pari* is used to express siblingship. A sister's husband is referred to as *Langu* and a brother's wife as *Ngaran Kai*. The term *Sok* refers to husband or wife. Parents-in-law and a child's spouse are referred to as *Bosok* and the spouse's brother and sister *Lavet*. Ego's children and ego's siblings' children are referred to as *Anak*. Ego's grandchildren are *Usun*.



Bhuket reference terminology extends laterally outwards and is patterned in terms of genealogical levels and not so much in terms of gender, generation or relative age. According to Sellato's general summary of Punan kinship terms:

These systems often do not distinguish birth order, and the contrast between elder and younger sibling therefore appears to be irrelevant; for consanguines, sex is distinguished only for parents and, though not in all cases, for parent's siblings; there may be no specific term designating the spouse, and when there is one it is reciprocal-that is, without mark of gender; nephews are sometimes, in a wrench of the generational principle, assimilated to grandson; and there are generally no specific terms for great-grandparents and great-grandchild, five generations only being recognized (1994:154).

Among the Bhuket of Long Ayak there are some similarities with the description provided by Sellato, but the differences are that a sibling's children are referred to as *Anak* (child), Bhuket do have a term for great-grandparents who are referred to as *Akek Layek*, great-grandchildren are referred to as *Usun* (the same term for grandchild) and seven generations are recognised. As for affinal terms of reference for Punan Sellato states that

...terms of reference for the parent of a spouse and the spouse of a child seem usually to be borrowings, while the equivalent terms of address refer to blood relationships; and finally, for affines of ego's generation, systems of two or three separate terms take into account both the sex of the speaker and the sex of the person addressed or referred to (1983b also cited in Sellato 1994:154).

This can be observed to a certain degree in Figure 2 where three different terms are used for affines of ego's generation. The gender of ego's siblings' spouses is differentiated (*Langu* and *Ngaran Kai*), but it is not distinguished for the siblings of ego's spouse (*Lavet*). The term *Bosok* for the parents of a spouse and the spouse of a child shows that no distinction in these genealogical levels is made by the Bhuket.³ Some of these reference terms, such as *Arik*, *Langu*, *Ngaran Kai*, *Lavet*, *Aken* and *Pari* can be found in non-Bhuket languages; for example in Kayan, Baketan and Penan.

Bhuket seldom use these terms of reference when speaking to one another; they usually have pet names which they give to their elders. For example, children never call their father's and mother's siblings *Aki* or *Ipu*; they usually give them very interesting names; the headman's wife was called by people of all generations and genealogical levels

Yak; even her nieces and nephews and grandchildren called her by that name, and the headman was called Chi or Chiwa. Some of the children just call the adults, whether related or not, by their personal names, or names that they conjure up. Even the adults use these pet names to refer to one another in a relaxed atmosphere of interaction. The terms of reference are only used when people need to clarify or explain relationships to an outsider. But I have also observed that Bhuket use these terms of reference when they want to express affection, and sometimes in a playful way. When an individual calls his brother *Arik* or his wife *Sok* or his father-in-law *Bosok* he is expressing feelings of affection in public. But in normal circumstances the preference is to remain informal and call each other by given or pet names. Sometimes teknonyms⁴ are used in the presence of people from other villages; for example, the headman is called *Aman Matu* which means the father of Matu.

3.2 The Nuclear Family and the Household.

The Bhuket term for nuclear family is *anak panak* which is also a term used by their Kayan neighbours but for a different kinship grouping. Bhuket use it to refer to the unit of husband, wife and children, sometimes with a widowed parent included; sometimes it comprises a single parent with children. However, among the Kayan, according to Rousseau, *panak* means descendants of a common ancestor or cognates, and Kayan also use it to include the affines of cognates (1978: 88-90). Bhuket also use the term *kajan*, which refers to a shared space. Sellato states that the term *kajan* refers to the nuclear family among the Bhuket (1994: 68) and that it is related to the Maloh term *kaiyan*, (referring to King, 1985: 103). However, King uses it to refer to a household unit. In the context of the Bhuket of Sarawak *kajan* refers to the apartment in the longhouse and among those of the Kapuas to individual huts. During fieldwork in both Long Ayak and the Kapuas I became aware that the word *kajan* specifically denotes shared space. It is not used to refer to the nuclear family, although the group sharing a *kajan* may comprise a nuclear family.

I prefer to use the term *kajan* to refer to the emerging households specifically in the context of a group of people sharing a space in the apartment of a longhouse but not

necessarily living together. Thus, the group sharing space can be highly variable in composition. For example, some members of a *kajan* might reside in the apartment, some might live in logging camps and others in the farm huts or elsewhere; yet they share the same *kajan*. I shall discuss below the process by which the *kajan* is becoming a household. Table 1 shows the distribution of the Bhuket between Long Ayak, the logging camps and other places, the number of members per *kajan* and the number of nuclear families per *kajan* living in three different places.

Table 1: Distribution of the Bhuket in Sarawak.

| No. <i>Kajan</i> | members per <i>kajan</i> | nuclear families per <i>kajan</i> | members in L. Ayak | nuclear families in L. Ayak | members in logging camp | nuclear families in logging camp | members in other places | nuclear families in other places |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| 2 | 15 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 1 | - | 4 | 1 |
| 3 | 11 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 4 | 17 | 5 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 5 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 1 | - |
| 6 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 7 | 14 | 3 | 11 | 3 | 1 | - | 2 | - |
| 8 | 15 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 9 | 11 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | - |
| 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 1 | - |
| 12 | 17 | 3 | 9 | 1 | - | - | 8 | 2 |
| 13 | 15 | 5 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 2 | - | - |
| 14 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| 15 | 22 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 2 |
| 16 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| 17 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| 18 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 2 | - | - |
| 19 | 14 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| 20 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | 1 |
| 21 | 12 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| 22 | 11 | 2 | 11 | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| 23 | 12 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| 24 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| Total | 276 | 71 | 161 | 43 | 76 | 19 | 39 | 9 |

As we can see the 24 *kajan* comprise 71 nuclear families of which 43 live in the longhouse at Long Ayak, 19 are in logging camps, and there are nine nuclear families in other places. Of the 43 nuclear families living in the longhouse some of these spend a substantial amount of time during the year in their farms, and there are also three nuclear families who permanently reside in their farm huts. There has also been a recent

emergence of single parent nuclear families (there are four in number) as a result of divorce. Marriages contracted with men working in the logging camps are extremely unstable. There were also two cases of unmarried women with children, one of whom had subsequently married. In the case of widowed parents whose children have all married, then they are attached to the nuclear family of one of their children, usually into a daughter's *kajan*. When there is a fission in the *kajan amoi* (lit: old or former *kajan*), a widowed parent will usually move and stay with one of his or her daughters. There is one case in which a widowed parent is living in her *kajan* by herself because her son had married and moved to his wife's *kajan*. Bhuket say that it is the female child that continues the *kajan* (*iten kajan* lit: "carry the *kajan*/household"). If they do not have a daughter or if the daughter is married and has moved out of the longhouse, the widowed parent will be attached to the nuclear family of a son. Even if fission does not occur the widowed parent is automatically attached to one of her daughter's nuclear families. But at the same time some parents prefer to stay by themselves after all their children have married out. The old people are sometimes left alone and their children have no obligation to care for them. During the period of my fieldwork there were two such old married couples living in relative isolation from other Bhuket in Long Payak. They are included in the *kajan* of one of their daughters but live apart and quite independently of their children. It is during festivals or funerals that all the members of a particular *kajan* might congregate. Children who have left and are staying elsewhere are also included in their respective *kajan*, which provides them with a place to stay if they return.

It is important to note that quite a substantial number of the younger people live in logging camps and most of the time the entire nuclear family will join a particular individual employed by a logging company. Table 2 shows the age structure of the population distributed between the longhouse and the logging camps, which clearly indicates that Bhuket in the logging camps belong to the younger age category. The data exclude the nine nuclear families (39 individuals) in other places because during my fieldwork most of them did not return to the longhouse. I will only deal with the 62 nuclear families (237 individuals) living in the longhouse and the logging camps. Tables 3

and 4 summarise these data and show the number of nuclear families and the number of members per *kajan*.

Table 2: Age Structure of the Bhuket Population.

| Age Group | Long Ayak | | | Logging Camps | | | Total | | | Total % |
|-----------|-----------|--------|-------|---------------|--------|-------|--------------|--------------|-------|---------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | |
| 65+ | 2 | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2.11 |
| 60-64 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | - | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2.95 |
| 55-59 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 1 | - | 1 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 3.38 |
| 50-54 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 1 | - | 1 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 5.06 |
| 45-49 | 5 | 8 | 13 | 1 | - | 1 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 5.91 |
| 40-44 | 2 | 8 | 10 | - | - | - | 2 | 8 | 10 | 4.22 |
| 35-39 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 10 | 4.22 |
| 30-34 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 13 | 9 | 22 | 9.28 |
| 25-29 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 5 | 17 | 16 | 9 | 25 | 10.55 |
| 20-24 | 9 | 6 | 15 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 15 | 12 | 27 | 11.39 |
| 15-19 | 8 | 12 | 20 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 17 | 29 | 12.24 |
| 10-14 | 11 | 12 | 23 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 13 | 25 | 10.55 |
| 5 - 9 | 9 | 7 | 16 | - | 1 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 17 | 7.17 |
| 0 - 4 | 3 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 16 | 13 | 16 | 29 | 12.24 |
| Total | 75 | 86 | 161 | 49 | 27 | 76 | 124 (52%) | 113 (48%) | 237 | 100% |

Table 3: Number of Nuclear Families per *Kajan* Inclusive of Families Living in the Logging Camps.

| Number of nuclear families | Number of <i>kajan</i> | Total |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| 1 | 5 | 5 |
| 2 | 7 | 14 |
| 3 | 6 | 18 |
| 4 | 5 | 20 |
| 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Total | 24 | 62 |

Table 4: Number of Members per *Kajan* Including those Living in Logging Camps.

| <i>Kajan</i> sizes (individuals) | Number of <i>Kajan</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | - |
| 3 | 1 |
| 4 | - |
| 5 | - |
| 6 | 1 |
| 7 | 1 |
| 8 | 3 |
| 9 | 3 |
| 10 | 2 |
| 11 | 4 |
| 12 | 3 |
| 13 | 1 |
| 14 | 3 |
| 15 | 1 |
| Total | 24 |

The mean *kajan* size is 10 and the range is 1 to 15. The large *kajan* size is an indication that the Bhuket population is increasing. Bhuket prefer to live in relative seclusion from each other, and most live at their farms, although they keep their material possessions in the longhouse. This might be one of the reasons for certain large *kajans* not breaking up to form new ones. Some *kajans* have members living at the farm, in the logging camps and a few are left in the longhouse, especially the older folks. Living at the farms away from the over-crowded longhouse could be an expression of the old band organization, but, at the same time, maintaining a large *kajan* is conducive to the agricultural mode of subsistence.

I was drawn to observing nuclear families because of their eating arrangements. Each nuclear family within the *kajan* is served separate trays of the main carbohydrate dish of rice or *lut* (sago paste). The members of the nuclear family eat from the same tray but they have separate bowls of soup or meat. Meal-times showed the closeness of the conjugal pair and the younger children who are fed by the parents from the same tray.

The emphasis on the nuclear family is a continuing feature of the Bhuket hunting and gathering lifestyle that has persisted through time. These nuclear families cannot be defined as households because their daily subsistence is not provided by the members only, but instead is based on sharing with people outside the family. A household unit which confines the provision of daily subsistence among its members has not yet emerged generally among the Bhuket, but there are signs that *kajan* members' are attempting to keep agricultural products for their own consumption. Agriculture, wage labour and sedentarization are contributing towards the gradual formation of the household, whereby the subsistence needs of a particular *kajan* are becoming the concern of its members only. However, a strong ethic of sharing persists and continues to work against the trend towards making the subsistence of an individual the sole responsibility of close kin. We can assume that the community as a whole continues to be organised on the same principles as the band. There is still sharing of food, either hunted, gathered or purchased, with members of the community. However, there is also an increasing reluctance to share cultivated and purchased food voluntarily, but this is subject to "demand sharing" (i.e. asking and taking).

The social life of the hunting and gathering Bhuket is not divided into discrete and autonomous economic identities, which, in Sahlins' scheme, are called households, each of which is credited with "a certain autonomy in the realm of property", leading it to assign priority to its own particular interests (1972: 92; cited in Ingold, 1986a:231). By contrast, in hunting and gathering society there is no such division and generalised reciprocity appears in quite another aspect: namely it extends outwards the kinds of relations that, under the domestic mode of production, are internal to the household (Ingold, 1986a:233 referring to Service, 1966:24). The formation of a household leads to the division or separation of access to the means of subsistence, which is fundamental to the constitution of the domestic unit, and which the norm of reciprocity serves, in this instance, to override (Ingold, 1986a:233).

The notion of the household is an external concept expressed by the Bhuket term *kajan*, which is developing and acquiring a loose form with the development of an agricultural mode of subsistence; previously there was no such concept in Bhuket culture. This sets Bhuket apart from other agriculturalist communities who have a concept of household and domestic unit. For example, Freeman says of the Iban that

The members of a *bilek-family* are always intimately related by ties of kinship and affinity, but it is a unit primarily defined by the criterion of local residence. Its members - as a group - own and occupy one, and only one, of the separate family apartments of a long-house,The *bilek-family* is also a domestic family, that is its members constitute a single household. Food is prepared and cooked for the *bilek-family* as a whole, and its members usually eat together, sharing a common meal. The *bilek-family* is also an allodial unit, possessing both land and property in its own right. It is likewise an independent entity economically, cultivating its own padi, and a wide variety of other crops. Ritually, each *bilek-family* is a disparate unit with its own magical charms (*pengaroh*),.....Among the Iban there are no clans or other large-scale corporate kin groups, and so the *bilek-family* is a social unit of primary and paramount importance (1970:9).

From the above quotation I draw on six criteria used by Freeman to define his *bilek-family* which he says is a domestic family and therefore a household. I will demonstrate that the Bhuket *kajan* has none of these properties, though it is in the process of achieving some form of economic identity by trying to confine subsistence to the members of the *kajan*.

The six criteria are :

1. **members are related by ties of kinship and affinity.** While most Bhuket *kajan* consist of kin, both affinal and consanguineal, it is wrong to assume *ipso facto* that *kajans* may be equated with residential family units. Unrelated individuals may sometimes be co-opted.

2. **it is a unit defined by the criterion of local residence.** Members of the *kajan* share a space in the apartment of the longhouse but they do not necessarily live together. Some members of the *kajan* might reside in the apartment, some might live in logging camps and others in the farm huts or elsewhere. Although members of a *kajan* share the same residence, this is not always the case.

3. **the sharing of consumption.** The *kajan* is not a unit of most forms of consumption. Members of one *kajan* may, for example, eat elsewhere, and the subsistence of an individual is not only the concern of the members of the *kajan* to which that individual belongs, but is the concern of the community. However, this practice is undergoing processes of change.

4. **it is an allodial unit, owning property in its own right.** Among the Bhuket property is owned individually but there is collective use or access to it. The *kajan* does not own property collectively, not even land.

5. **it is an independent entity economically.** The *kajan* is not a corporate economic unit.

6. **it is a disparate unit ritually.** Bhuket are not a ritually inclined people and the *kajan* does not have a separate ritual significance (see Chapter Six).

One is able to identify the household from the *kajan*, but making sense of its internal logic and structure is difficult for it is still coming into being.

The notion of the household is emerging through the initiative of women who settled first on taking up agriculture, and who needed a more permanent home base. That is why Bhuket say that women “carry” the *kajan*. Among the Bhuket, women are more actively involved in agricultural activities while the men remain nomadic and pursue other activities, though they also help at various stages of the agricultural cycle. While

the product of hunting is subject to sharing, in contrast the product of agriculture is kept for the consumption of a group of people; but it may be subject to demand sharing.

Cash and land are individually held but the produce of the land and food purchased with cash are shared within the *kajan* and might be extended to certain other *kajans*. However, Bhuket try to keep most of the cultivated food for the consumption of this group of people. Material possessions, especially modern appliances, are individually owned but used by all members of the *kajan* and are commonly used by members in other *kajans* too. Most constituent nuclear families have separate farms, and some are in the process of seceding from the natal *kajan*. However, there are also other nuclear families joining the *kajan* of a relative or even an unrelated *kajan*.

Since the establishment of logging companies in the area and the availability of wage work, the *kajan* has come to be divided into smaller units. Each nuclear family wants to form its own *kajan* (apartment) for its members do not want to share the monetary benefits and other cash goods with the members of other nuclear families in the *kajan*. Bhuket do not like sharing with a few individuals even if they are close kin; they prefer to practice generalized reciprocity covering the whole community. There is, therefore, a general trend and preference towards the formation of nuclear family-based *kajans*. If the problem relating to the land on which the longhouse stands can be resolved (for the owners are demanding payment or replacement of the land if it is used for building new *kajans*), *kajan* partitioning will increase, and this will eventually lead to the formation of more *kajans*. There are officially 33 *kajans* in Long Ayak (33 doors paying "pupu" or tax) but at the moment all these actually live in 24 *kajans*.

Change in the *kajan* form is generated by changes in the relative advantage of joint procurement over separate procurement. Since the introduction of wage labour by the logging companies Bhuket find separate production more advantageous. However, there are still some *kajans* that are organised on the principle of joint procurement. If the *kajan* organizes itself on the basis of separate procurement and manages its subsistence by itself then the Bhuket *kajan* would become a household.

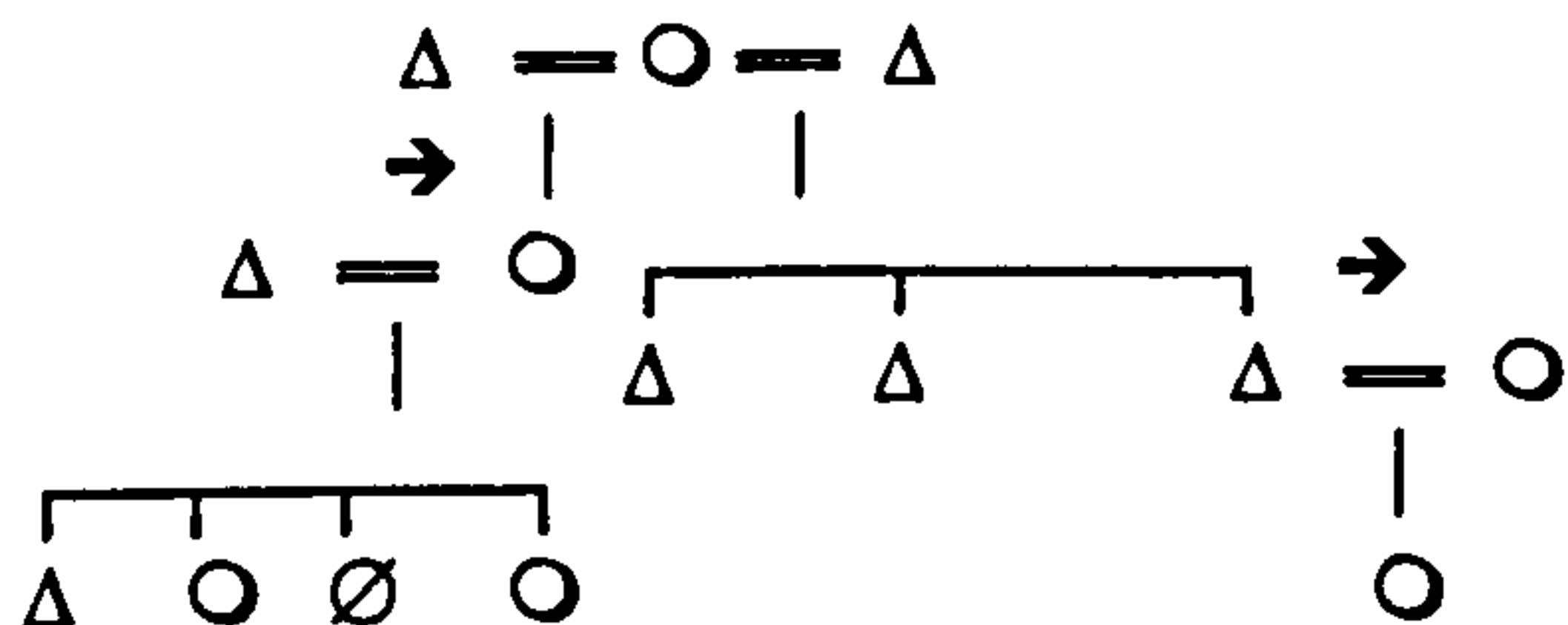
Bhuket are able to arrange their life in a variety of ways, according to different circumstances, and this shows the flexible nature of their culture. The variation in the

ways in which Bhuket organise their living shows features of egalitarianism, individualism and a high level of autonomy in decision-making. We can observe this in the variability of *kajan* size and form. The following are household or *kajan* forms observed at a particular point in time during fieldwork.

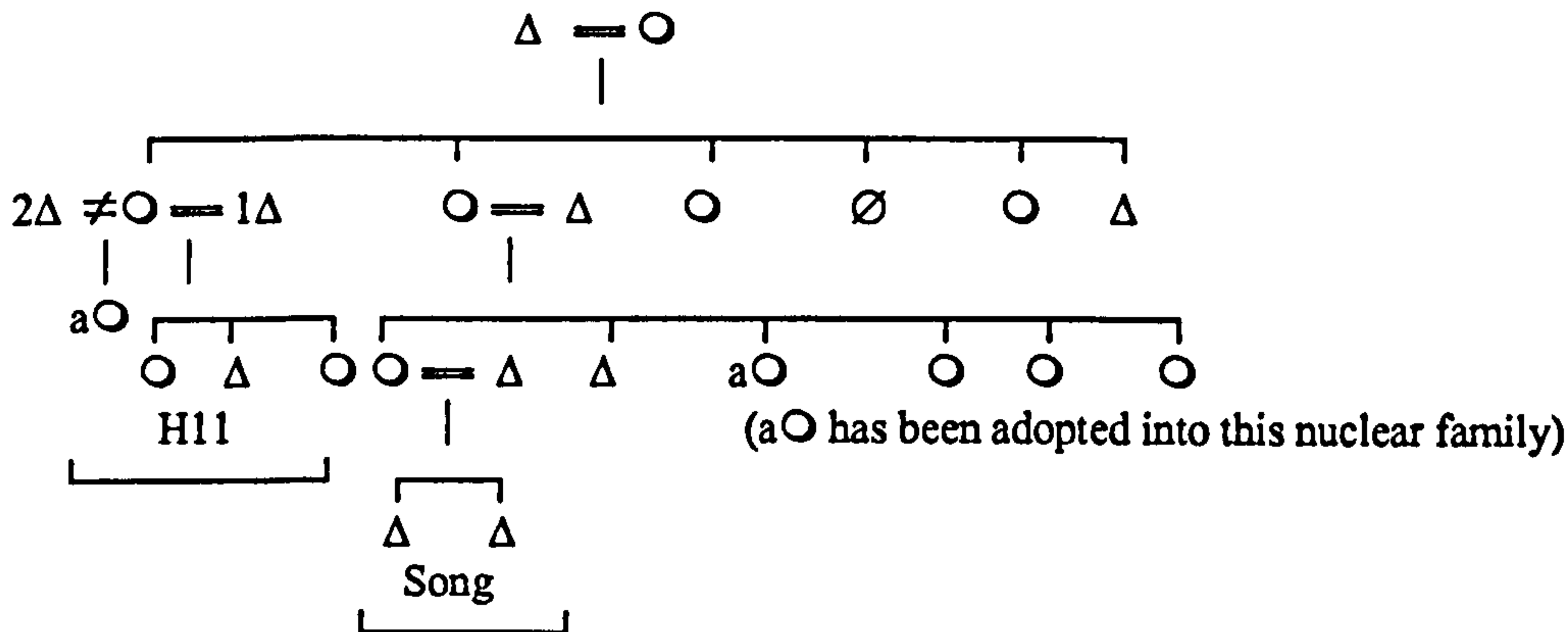
Figure 3: *Kajan* (household) Forms.

(In certain diagrams I indicate changes in household forms by cross-referencing, e.g. in the case of H2, H11 is shown as derived from it).

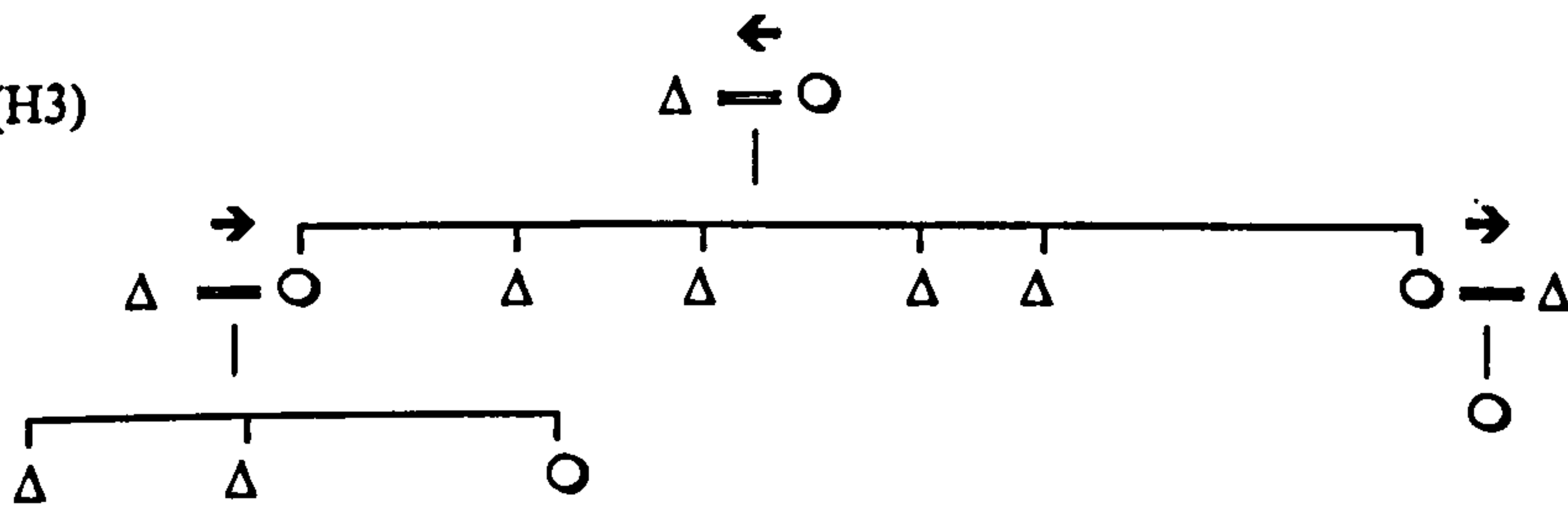
(H1)



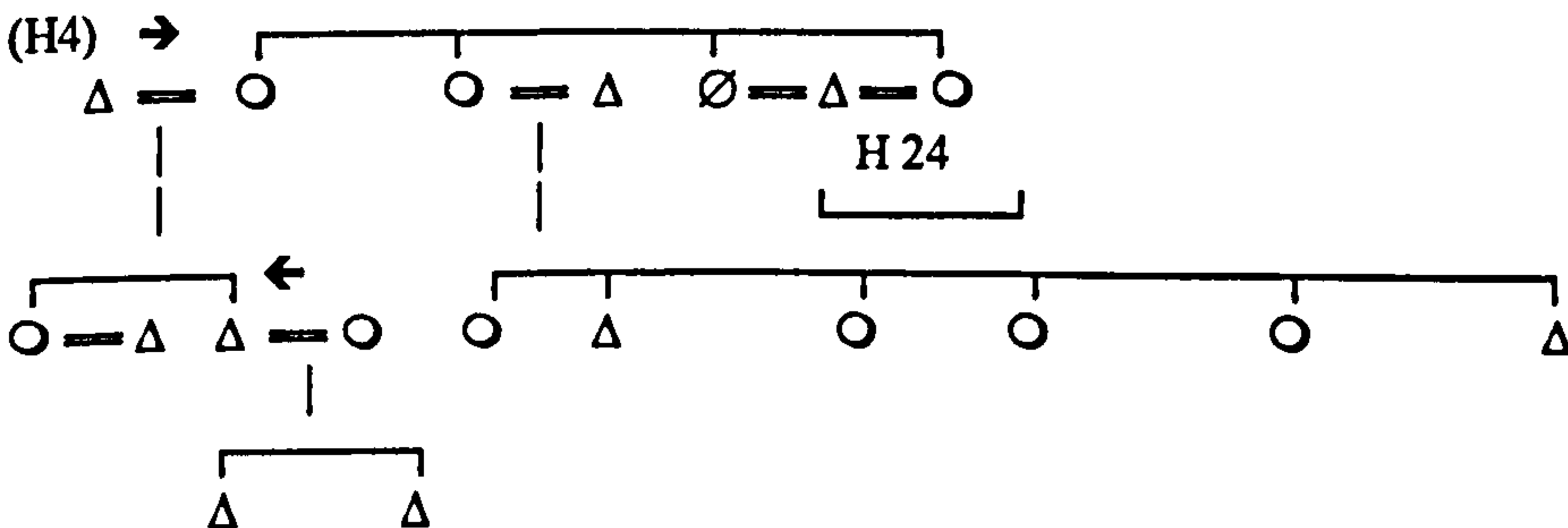
(H2)

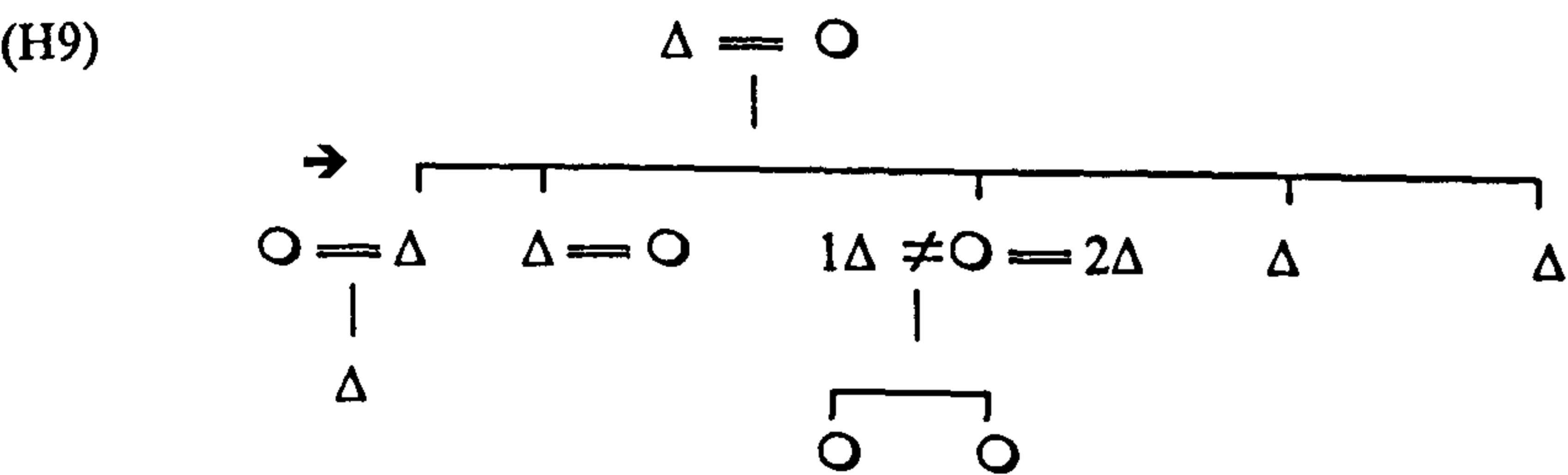
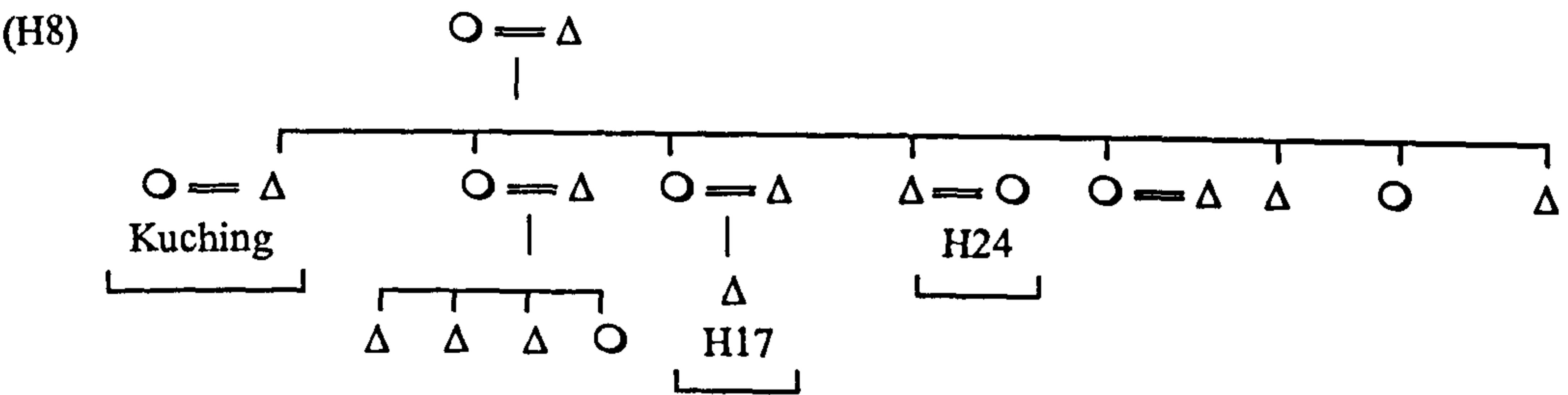
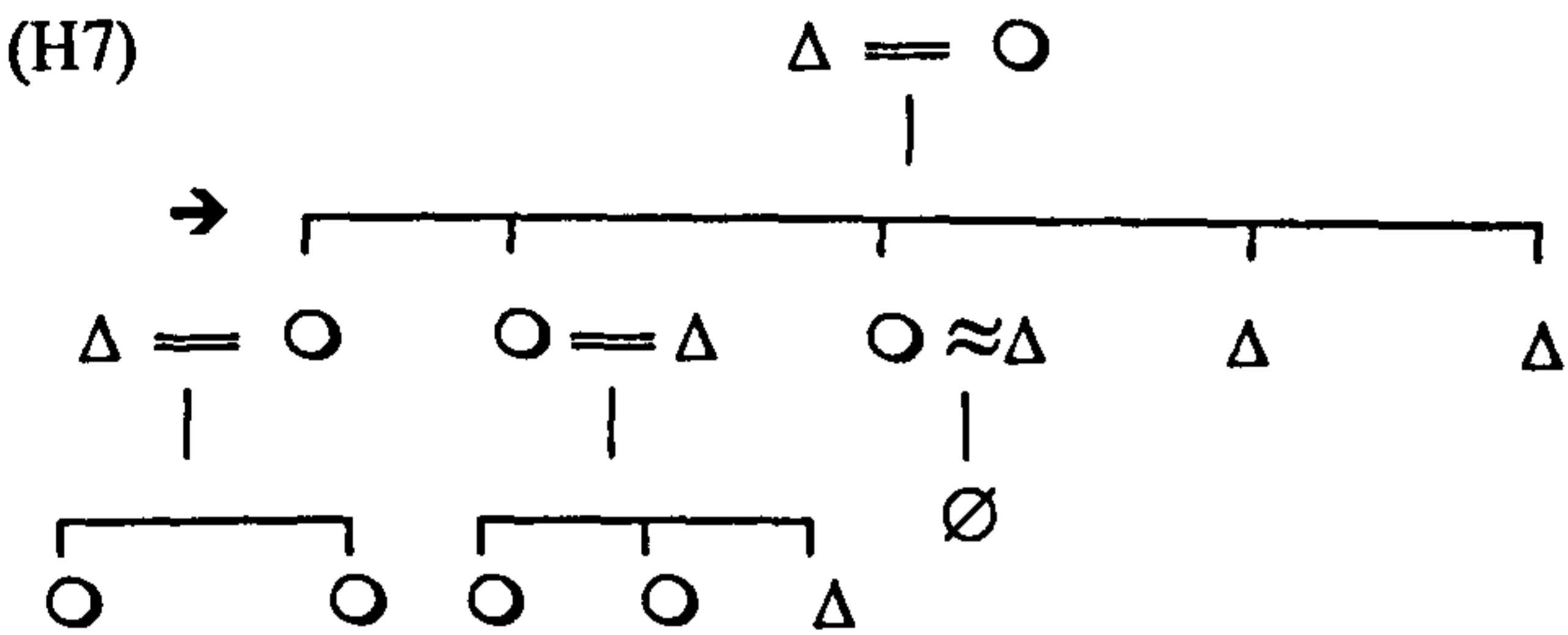
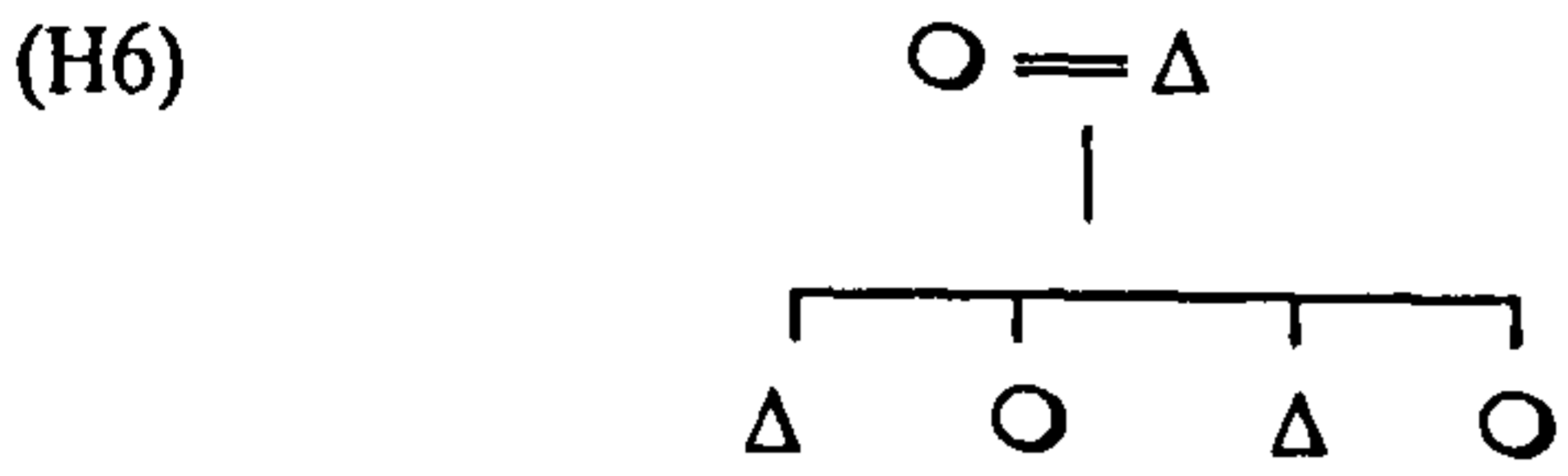
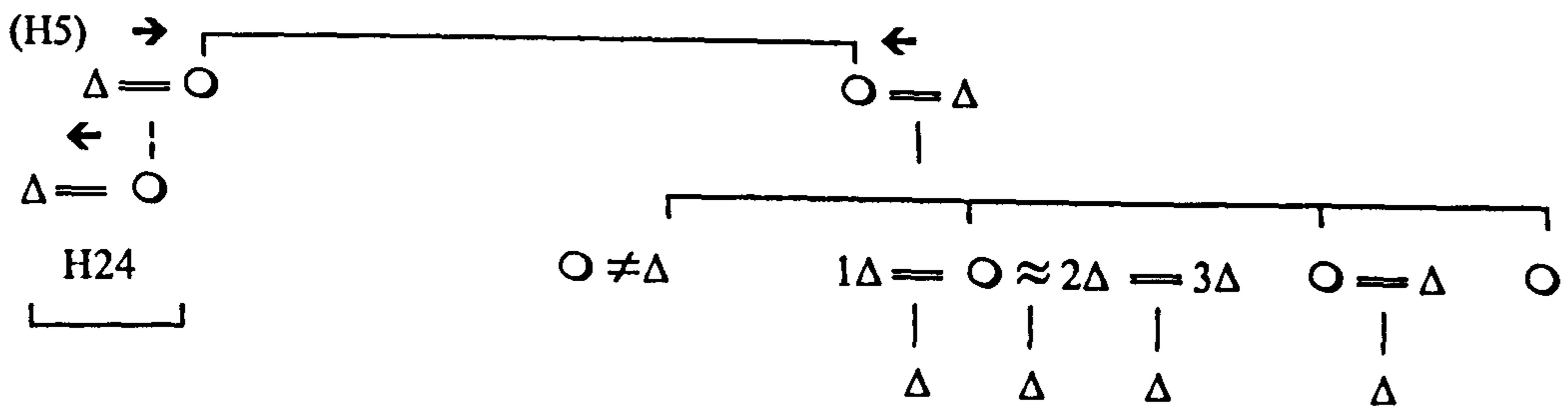


(H3)



(H4)

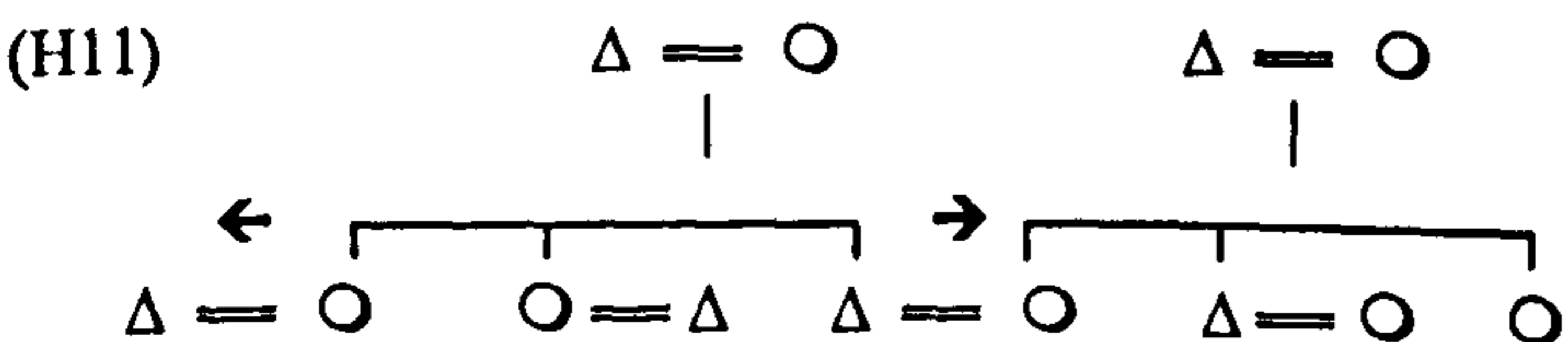




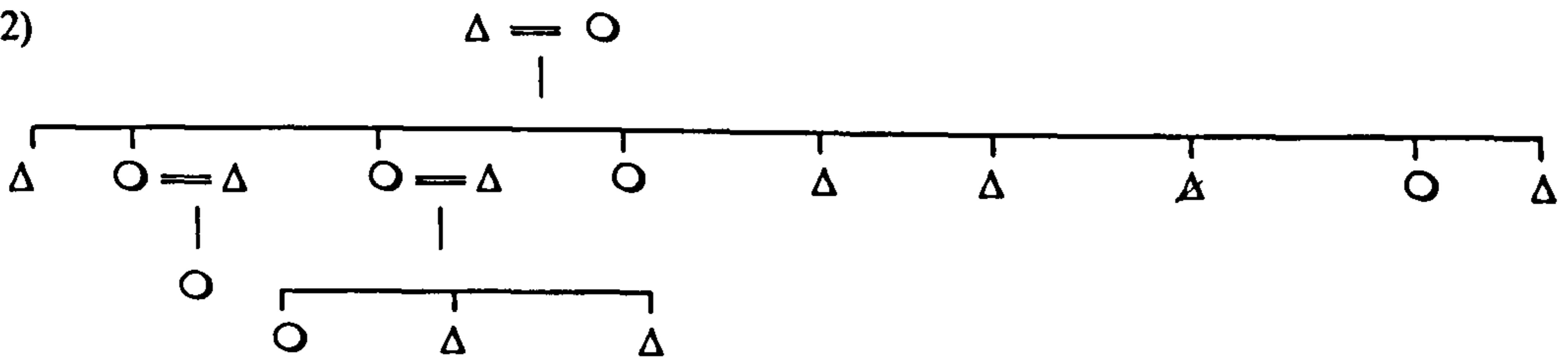
(H10)

$$\begin{array}{c} \Delta = bO \\ | \rightarrow \\ \Delta = O \end{array}$$

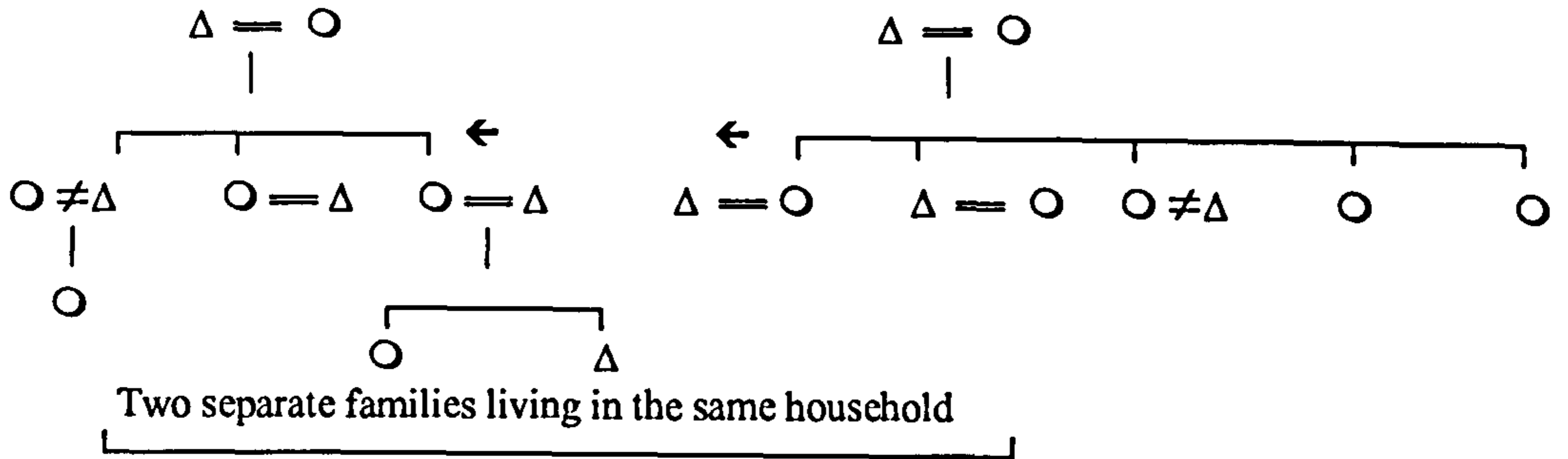
bO - is a widow who lives alone.



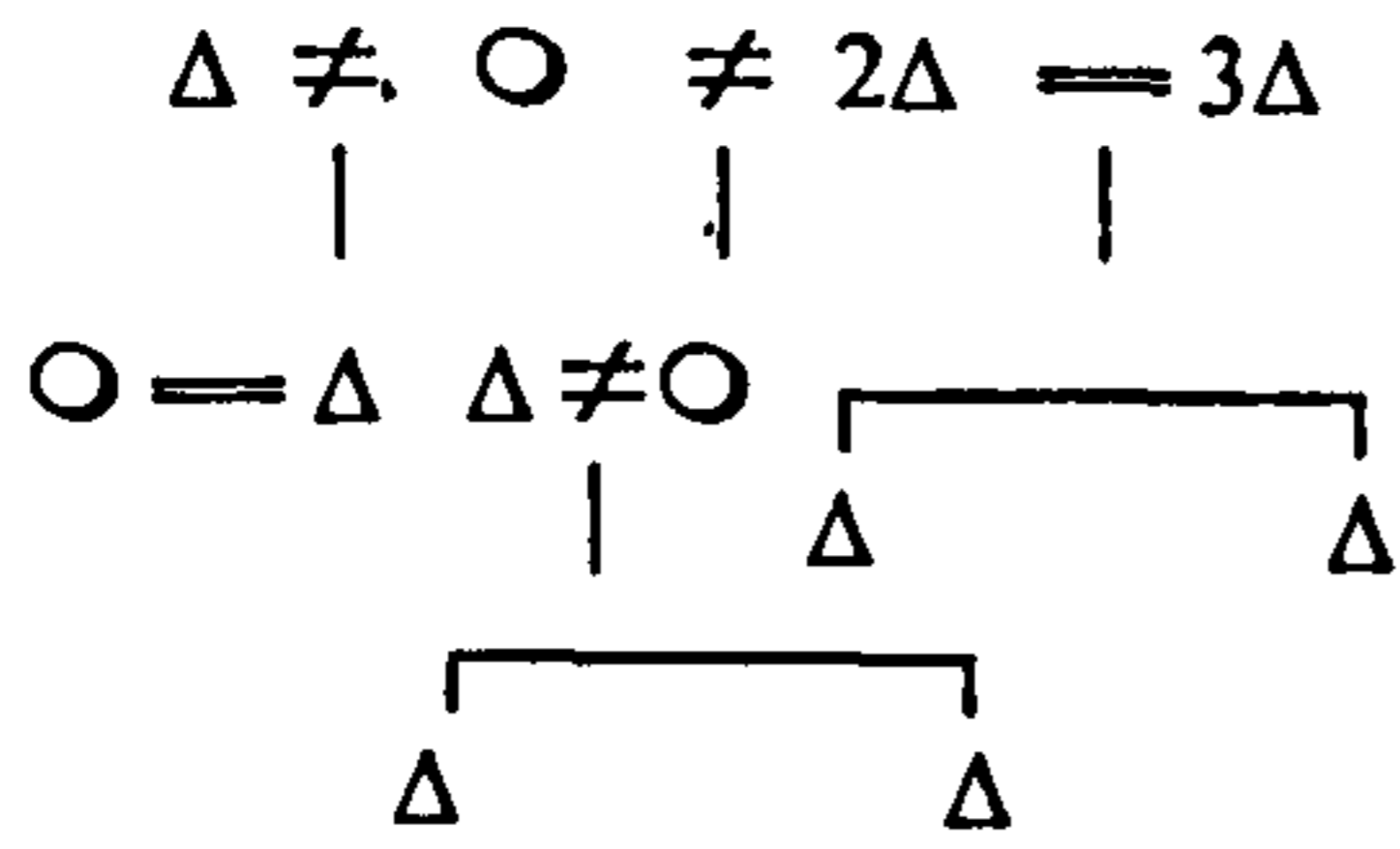
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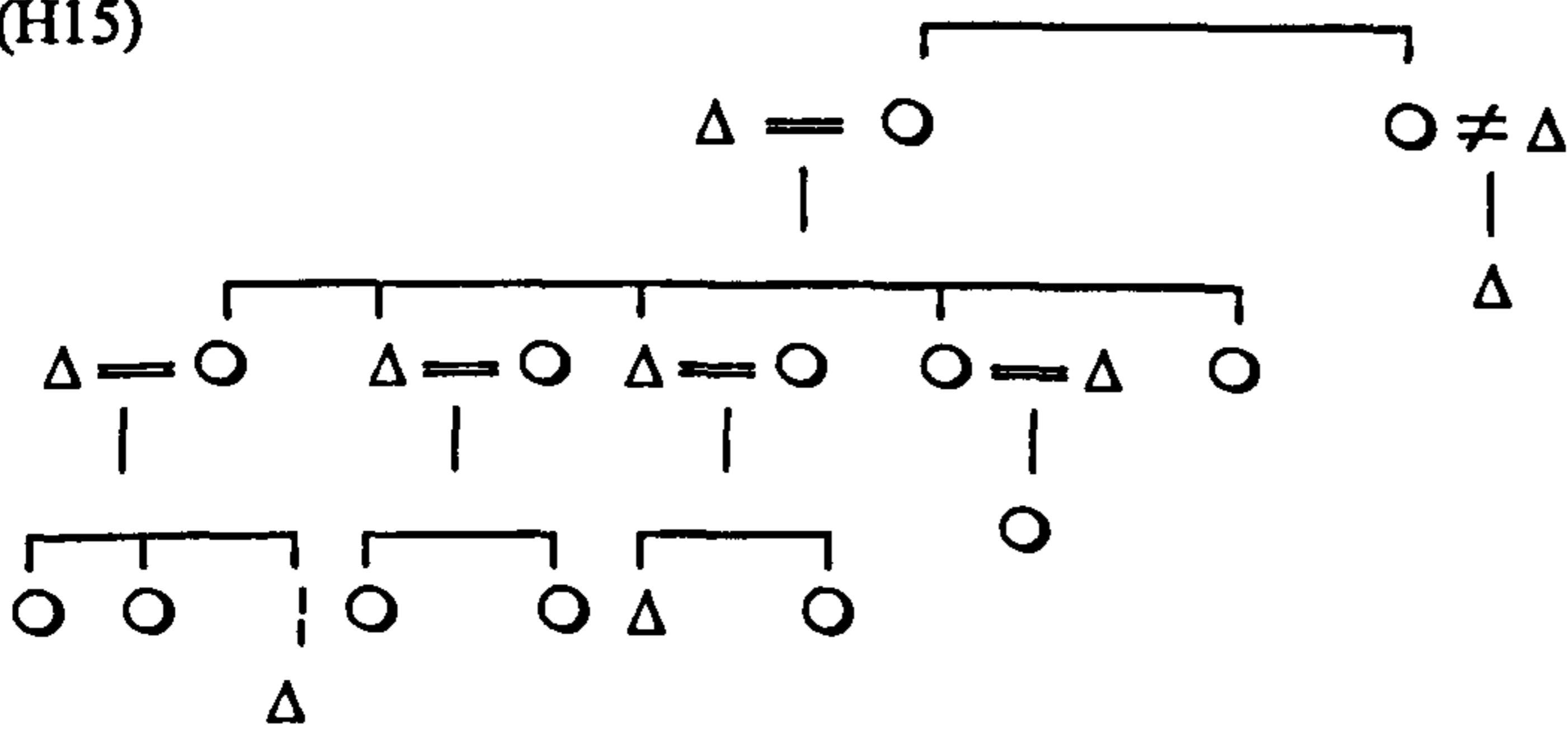
(H13)



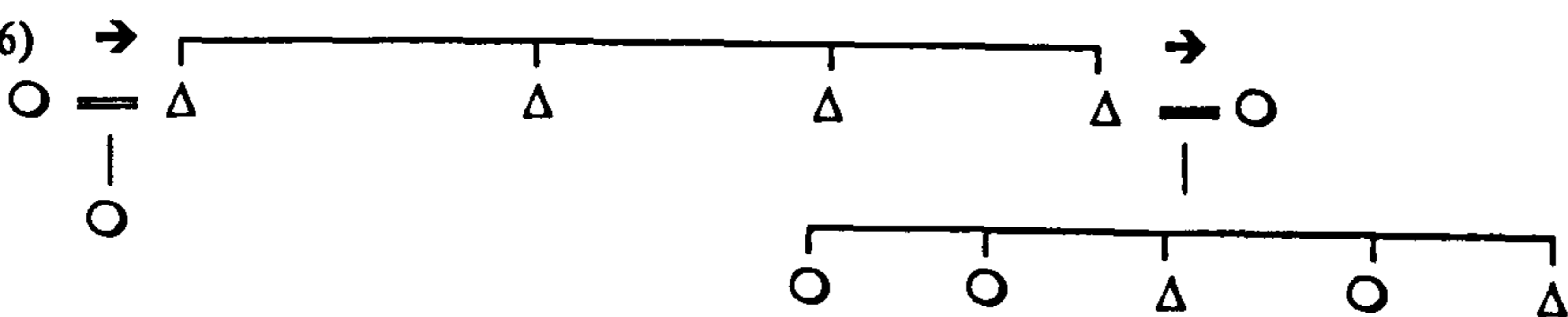
(H14)



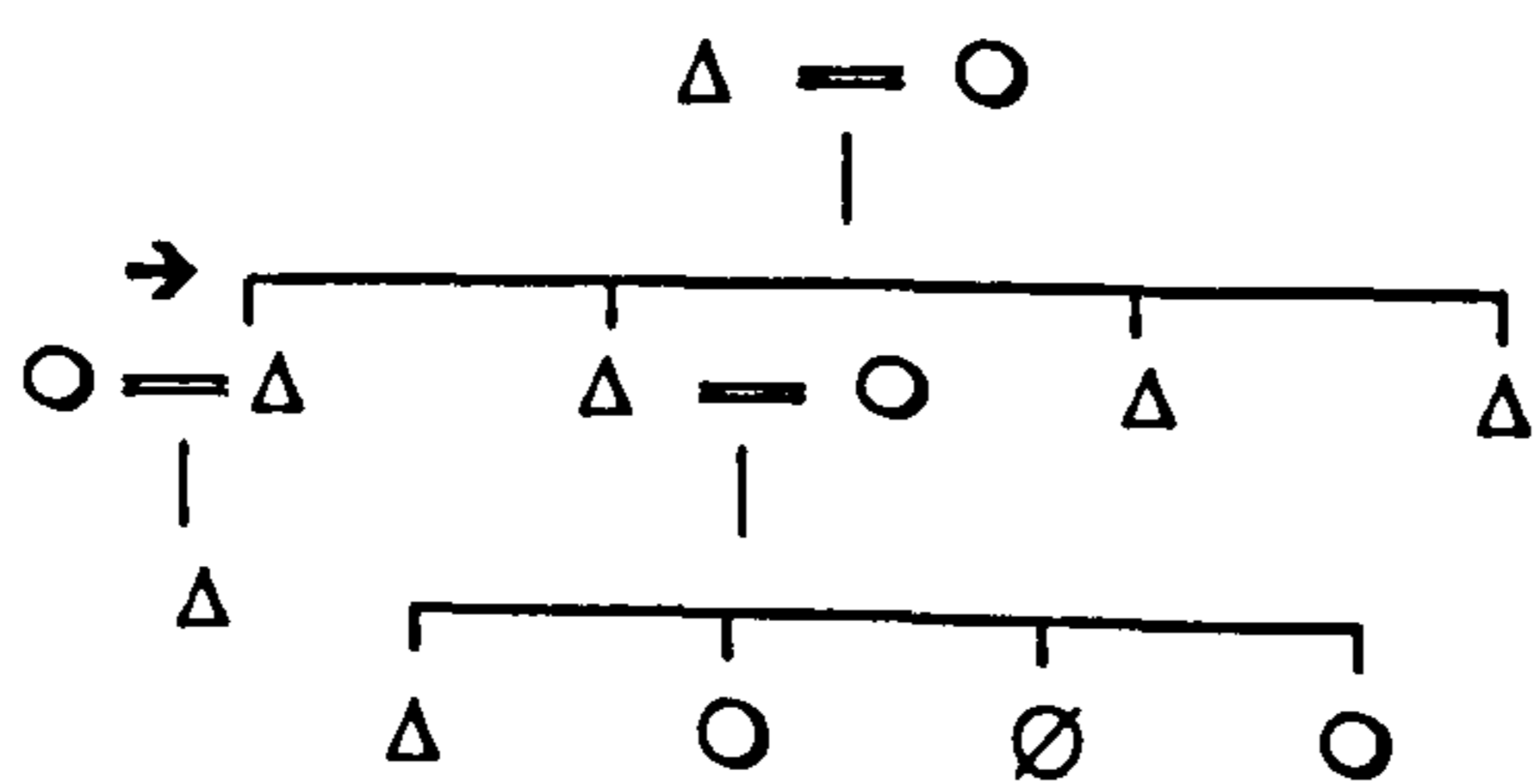
(H15)

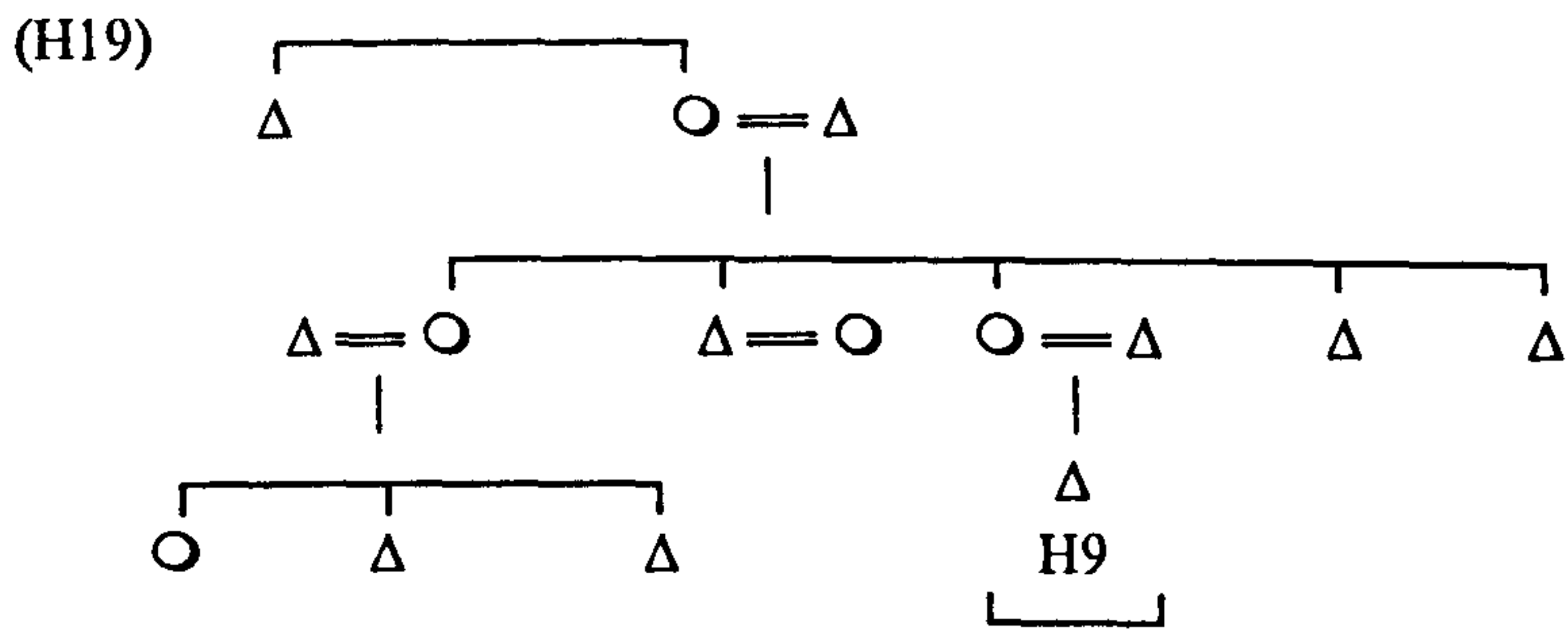
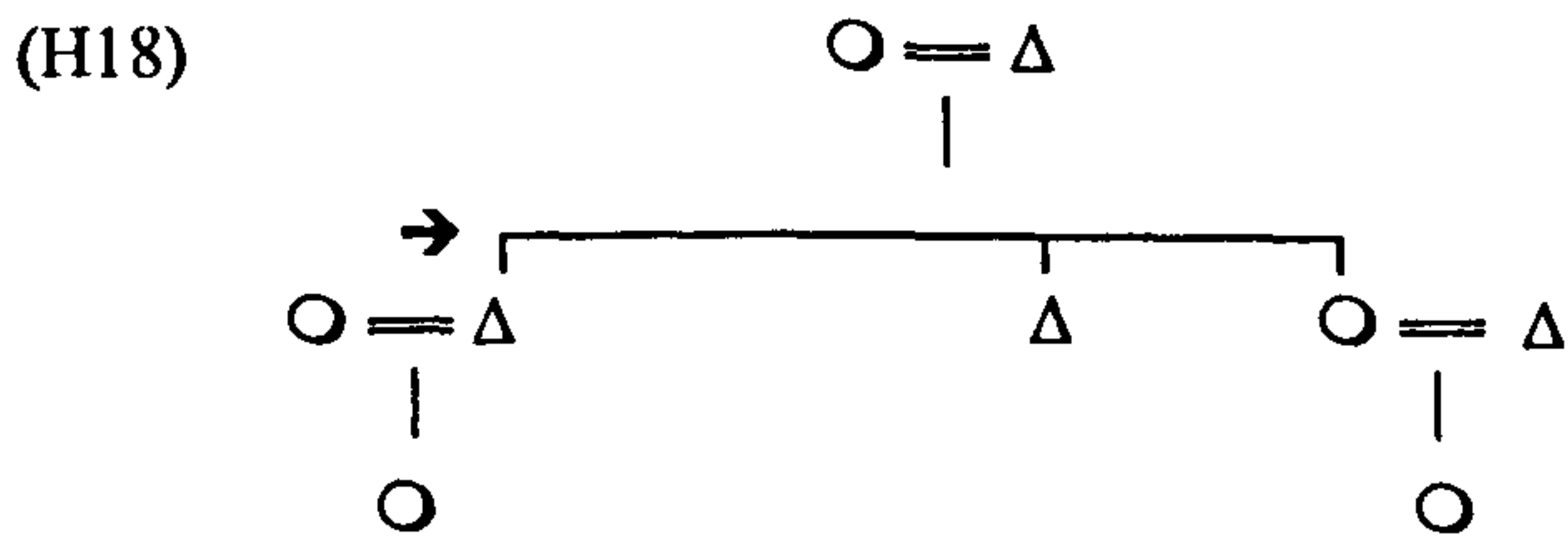


(H16)

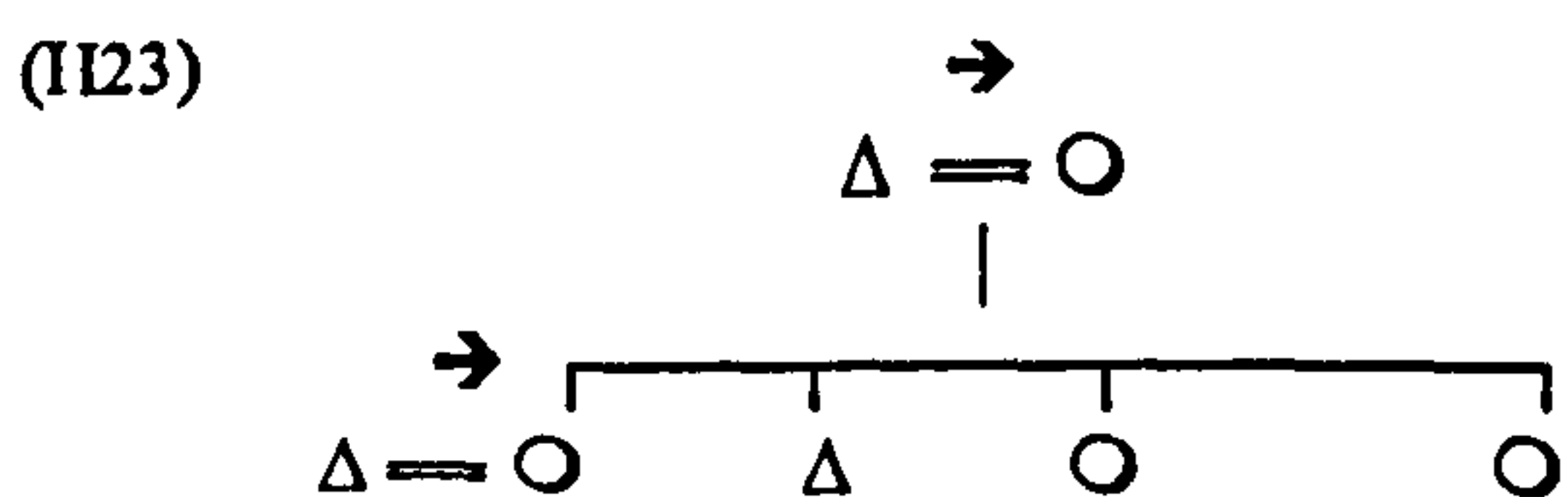
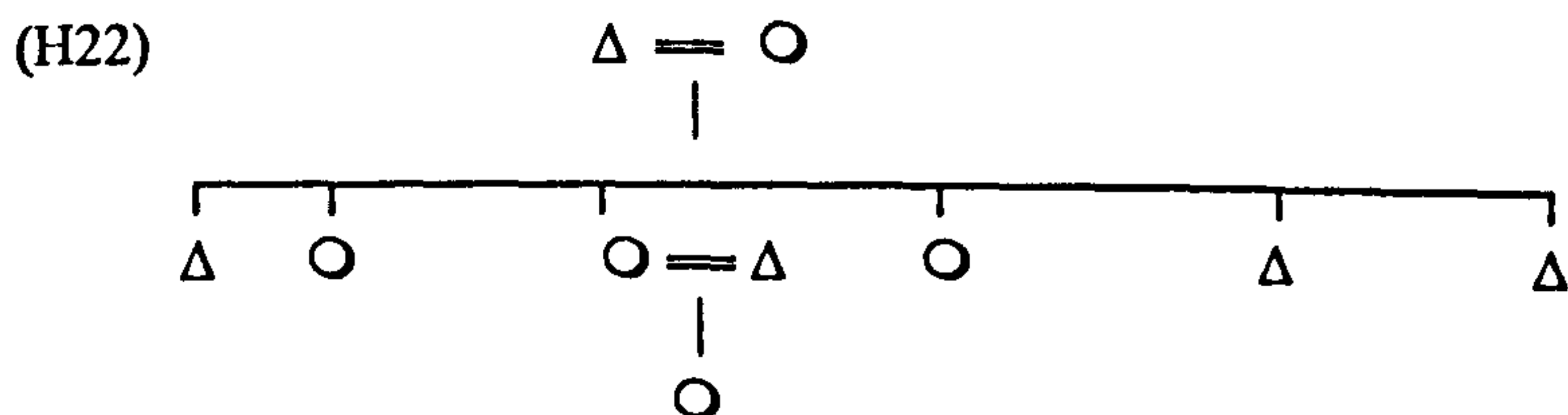
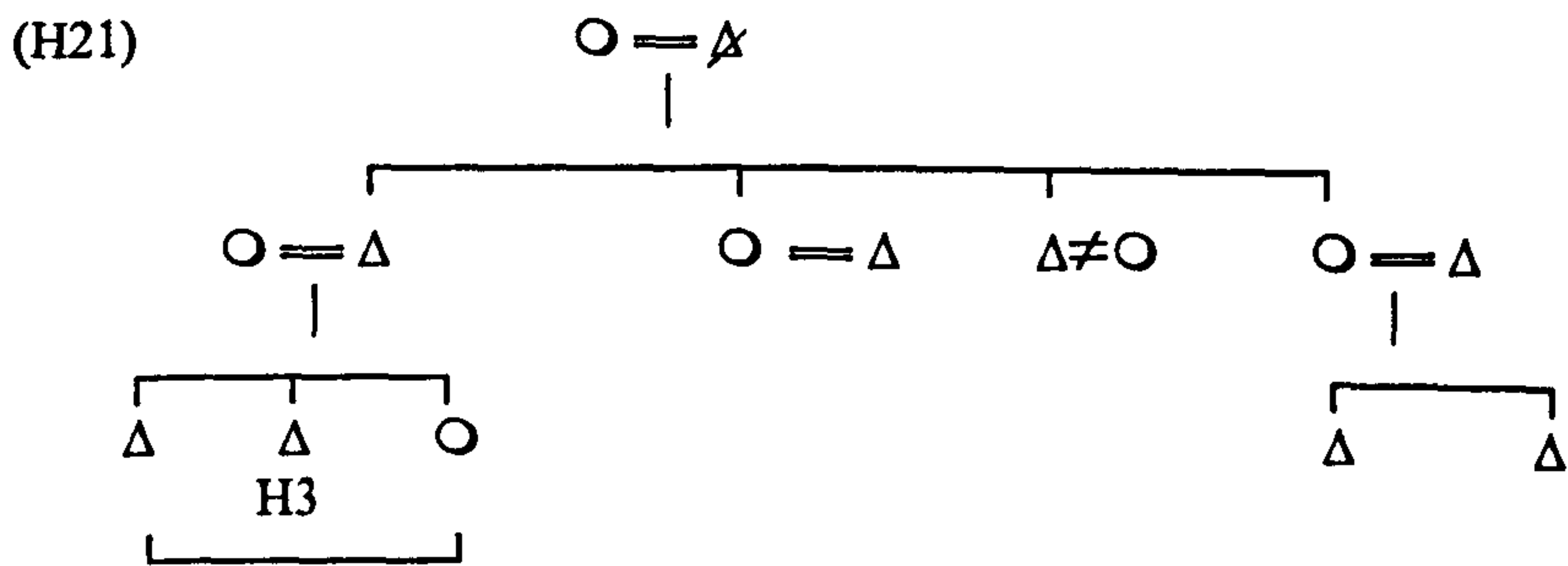
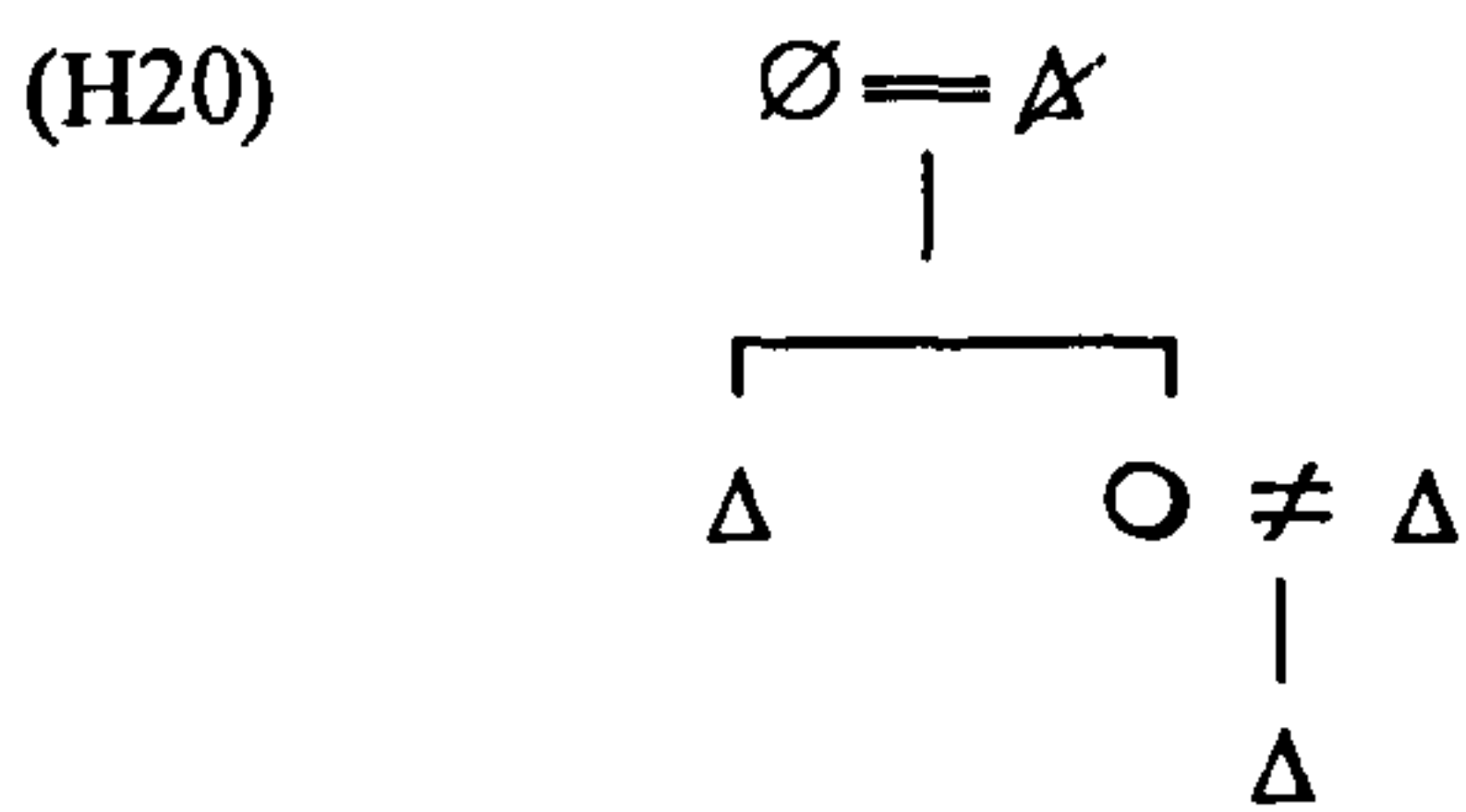


(H17)

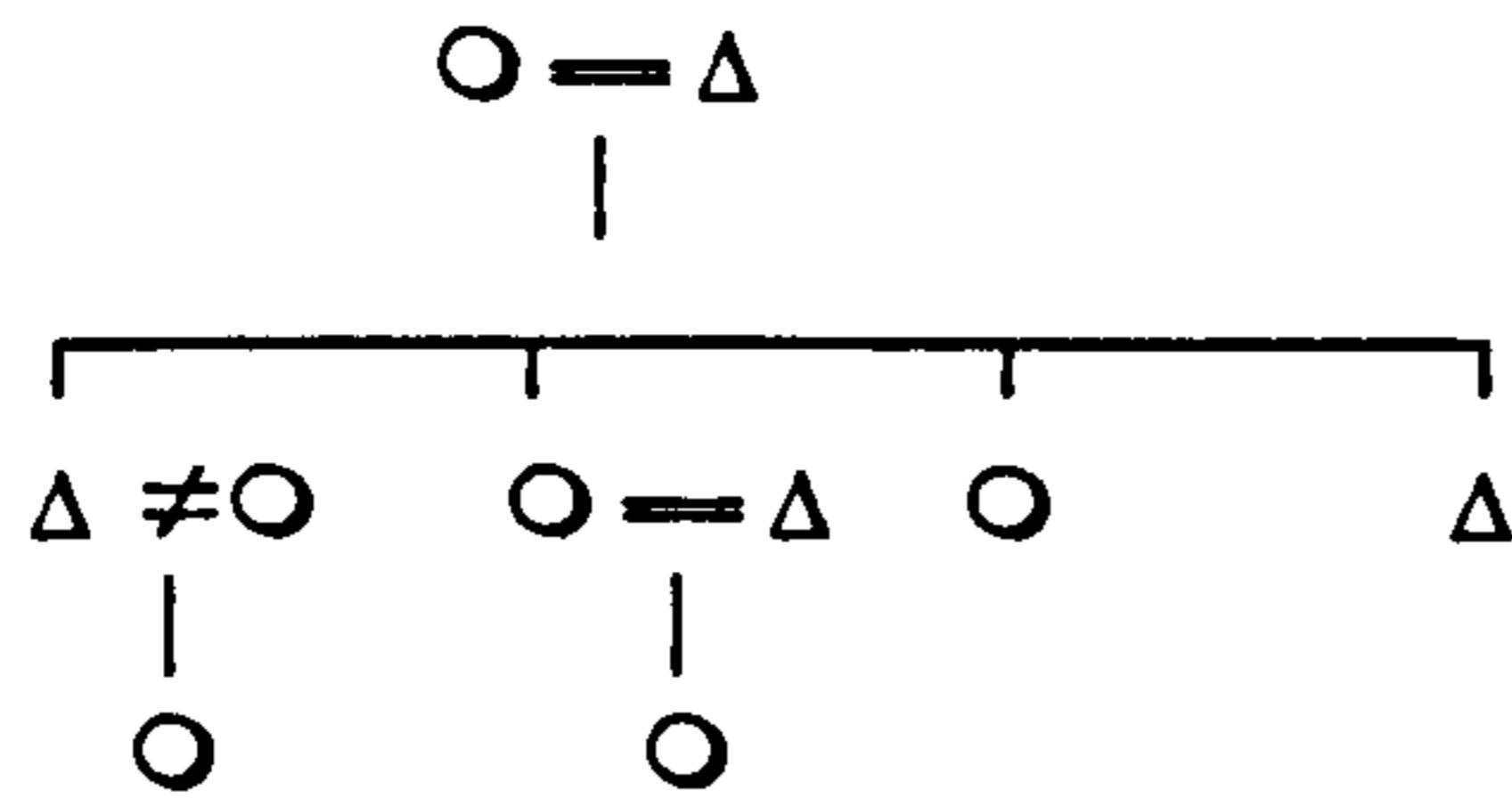




This household has also taken in an unrelated male migrant from the Kapuas.



(H24)



The diagrams above show that we can observe particular patterns; firstly, that the Bhuket community is monogamous and so there are no compound families. There are among the Bhuket married siblings possessing children and still living together as members of the same *kajan* (*kajan* 4, *kajan* 5, *kajan* 7, *kajan* 8, *kajan* 19, *kajan* 21, a total of 6 instances). The development of extended families is precluded by a strong tendency towards partition as soon as a *kajan* increases in size. Instead, most Bhuket *kajans* comprise stem families containing three generations, that is grandparents, parents and children (19 instances); this is followed by the nuclear family composed of parents and their children (4 instances) and one *kajan* was occupied by a widow who lives alone. This pattern can be observed from the diagrams above but the ways in which an individual relates to these patterns are highly flexible and variable. For example, people within a *kajan* do not necessarily live or eat together or follow certain generally accepted modes of behaviour in their relationship to these patterns. In this realm individual Bhuket autonomy in decision-making is constantly upheld.

A reasonable conclusion to draw is that *kajan* composition is varied and not restricted to any particular principles of organization. For example, when an individual marries he brings his whole family to join his wife's family. Bhuket practice inclusive principles in their conception of the *kajan* but at the same time do not impose restrictions on its members leaving to form their own *kajans*. *Kajan* composition is not rigid because relationships are based on affection and companionship not on obligations or corporate economic relationships. There may be coordination in work activities among *kajan* members; but there is also individual autonomy in work practices. This can be clearly observed in the weaving of mats within a *kajan*; each woman who can weave will work on her own mat rather than cooperate. It was rather strange at first to observe two sisters, both married and living in the same *kajan*, who did not have enough rattan to

weave mats of their own. They could have easily combined their piles of rattan to weave a mat but instead waited for some time before going and collecting more rattan to weave individually. This type of behaviour can also be observed in farming activities. It leads one to conclude that Bhuket *kajans* are not corporate economic units.

Recruitment to a *kajan* is usually by birth, adoption, and marriage; in some instances, out of concern for people who for that moment do not have a dwelling place of their own, a particular *kajan* might accept them. For example, certain Bhuket *kajans* have incorporated unrelated nuclear families or individuals or an in-law's family. A child is given up for adoption if he or she is constantly falling sick. Childless couples or unmarried individuals prefer to claim a niece or nephew in their own *kajan* as theirs.

Bhuket do not have a strong value in ensuring the continuation of a *kajan* through time. They do not worry if a *kajan* is without issue. *Kajans* do not continue if they do not have a daughter to "carry the *kajan*"; this is the dominant response received from informants. The term used by the Bhuket to explain the extinction of a *kajan* is "*kajan pajep*" (*pajep* = *vanish*). This circumstance is the result of a low birth-rate and a preference of the older generation for smaller families. Bhuket also have a highly flexible process of group formation that probably contributes to the lack of importance given to the continuation of the *kajan* at present. Moreover, the household is an emerging notion and Bhuket do not attach importance to it; this, in turn, reflects their past mobile hunting-gathering existence and their sharing hinders the development of households. This is not typical of other Bornean societies for whom "The household is more than the sum of its members; it is a perennial unit, which maintains its identity as personnel are replaced by the passage of generations"(Rousseau 1974a:220-3; Huntington and Metcalf 1979:134; cited in Rousseau 1990: 86). Freeman also says that "This continuity through time of the *bilek-family* is a cardinal feature of Iban social structure" (1970:13). For the Bhuket one cannot be definitive or render a precise meaning to the concept of the *kajan* or household for it is in the process of emerging. However, there are also contradictory processes at work which are impeding its formation.

3.3 Marriage.

The Bhuket term for marriage is *pesoo*. I was informed by the headman's wife, Beria Gasai, that to be married is "to eat together from the same leaf or tray and to sit next to the fire together". So, for the Bhuket, marriage brings two people together as independent individuals in a relationship as companions. Gibson studying the Buid in the Philippines showed that the idiom of companionship "implies that social actors come together as autonomous agents to pursue a common goal" (1985: 393). This then differs from kinship rules which place people under obligation. Marriage is a union for companionship and does not entail any elaborate form of obligations or rights; but instances of interdependence are observable. The personal autonomy of the individual is not terminated upon marriage; this is as a consequence of two main features of the Bhuket marriage transactions, namely that marriage payments are given at the time of marriage and that there is a lack of importance given to having children. This minimises the interference of kin in the affairs of the couple. Marriage remains an essentially personal matter. However, it can be said that obligations and dependence, which are hardly observable in Bhuket relations, are found covertly in marriage. As Woodburn and Barnard have said for hunter-gatherers in general:

Small though these obligations are there are no other relationships in these societies in which as much emphasis is placed on rights and obligations, on formal commitments between specific individuals linked by kinship, marriage or contract..... the closest approximations to formal obligations, to dependence, to control are found in the marriage nexus (1988: 19 - 20).

This dependence can be seen in the Bhuket practices of bridewealth and brideservice. Bridewealth is referred to as *buleng*. It is usually paid at the time of marriage. Traditionally the bridewealth was in the form of *tatak*, the sago-like flour from the seed of the *tatak* tree, which is very difficult to accumulate, and *sugang*, the resin of a tree that is used to make fire. Sometimes human heads were also requested. But today bridewealth comes in the form of large gongs (*tawak*), cash, chainsaws, generators, outboard engines and so on. A practice called "*petehaven*" among the Bhuket is no longer practised. *Petehaven* is one way that two individuals can express interest in each other and also to increase the mutual proximity of the couple rather than a means for the parents-in-law to extract services from the couple. This is like brideservice but both the

men and women perform it prior to marriage. For example, a man would build a hut for his future in-laws and a woman would help her future mother-in-law collect firewood or weave a mat for her. The duration of the *petehaven* was not fixed but would usually end in marriage. There was also in the past a practice of mutual gift-giving between the couple.⁵

Bhuket do not perform elaborate rites for marriage; when two individuals come to live together it is considered a marriage. Sellato states that among the Punan

Marriage often occurs informally, with the young couple taking up residence together and simply being considered married. Marriage rituals, when they exist, appear similar to a neighbouring settled group though in a shorter form. Besides common first-cousin marriages, some uncle-niece and aunt-nephew marriages, sororate, polygyny, and locally polyandry have been noted in Punan groups, whereas monogamy is the rule among agriculturalists (except for some high chiefs) (1990: 56).

My own fieldwork among the Bhuket shows that they are monogamous like their agriculturalist neighbours. A relationship with more than one partner is considered to be *paho* (lit: adultery) and Bhuket say that this type of relationship and incest bring misfortune to the community. It is widely expressed by Bornean people that incest and adultery would bring serious calamities (Rousseau, 1990:88). For the Iban, Freeman has said that "Incest, it is believed, brings dire misfortune to the entire countryside, and all its inhabitants" (1970: 70). Among the Bhuket *paho* has also led to warfare; for example, the Bhuket war with the Iban at Long Layi, Balleh (see page 42) was because of adultery. In my collection of Bhuket genealogies for all the five communities, covering several genealogical levels, I did not encounter a single case of polygyny or polyandry. However, the practice of sororate (*mulik asik*) was encountered and this practice is not prohibited. Marriages between consanguines, cousin marriages and inter-genealogical marriages between uncle-niece and aunt-nephew are all prohibited and are called "*petisik*" by the Bhuket. Another prohibition is that individuals are not supposed to marry into a *kajan* from which their siblings or any consanguines have already acquired spouses. However, the rule is not always followed. Marriage is prohibited in theory with cousins (*aken*) up to the third degree, although in practice many exceptions are made to this rule. According to Sellato marriage between first cousins is practised among the Bhuket (1986b:274), but he confirms that "perhaps under the influence of sedentary

neighbors,[they] prohibit this type of marriage" (1994:155; see also Seitz 1981:297). *Ipu* (aunt) and *Aki* (uncle) cannot marry their nieces or nephews (*anak*). Bhuket say that great misfortune and natural disasters will befall the people and that there would be less game available and the fruit trees would not bear fruit. *Petisik* may have a function to distribute people of any band through an area and between the bands or it might even be related to exogamous band marriages. But if this was so Bhuket are unaware of this function of the *petisik*, and it is entirely my speculation.

However, among the Bhuket we can see deviations from this rule. People from different genealogical levels can sometimes be found to belong to the same generation and they sometimes marry. These prohibitions are a hindrance to many potential marriages among the Bhuket; this is leading to more inter-ethnic marriages. If a cousin or inter-genealogical level marriage is contracted (even after objections from the elders), it is believed that the couple will be childless or a senior member of either family might die. However, *petisik* is quite common among the Bhuket today, where free choice and individual autonomy override the rule. There were five instances of cousin marriage and one inter-genealogical level marriage (they were both of about the same age) in Long Ayak. Sororate, in which a man marries his deceased wife's sister, is also practised by the Bhuket and the term used by them to refer to such marriages is *mulik asik*. There is no prohibition against this type of marriage and there was one such instance in Long Ayak.

In a marriage neither partner has authority over the other in any regard; neither has greater property rights; greater rights to divorce; greater freedom in sexual matters and so on. Couples can live together with little or no economic cooperation, except perhaps in taking care of children. Bhuket men are usually ridiculed for the independence of their women. Bhuket men usually say that it is the women's own business and do not interfere to check on the independence of their women folk. When a Bhuket woman feels that her rights to independence are being challenged within the community or in her interaction with other people (*lino baken*), she will defend her rights forcefully, sometimes with help from men.

The following tables summarizes the marital histories of 163 Bhuket individuals⁶.

Table 5: Frequency of Marriages.

| No. of marriages | Male | Female | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------|--------|-------|------------|
| Not married (all above age 16) | 25 | 16 | 41 | 25% |
| 1 union | 51 | 50 | 101 | 62% |
| 2 unions | 9 | 7 | 16 | 10% |
| over 2 unions | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3% |

Table 5 shows the number and percentage of individuals who had never married and those who had contracted one, two and three or more marriages. We can see that 62% of Bhuket have married only once. Spouses' age differences were never more than 15 years, with husbands most of the time being senior. Most Bhuket, both male and female, marry individuals who are not very much older than themselves. However, age is not in any way a deterring factor in marriage. Table 6 shows the age differences of 51 couples:

Table 6: Age Difference of Married Couples.

| Age difference of couples (in years) | Male older than Female | Female older than Male | Total |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| 1-2 | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| 3-4 | 11 | - | 11 |
| 5-6 | 10 | 1 | 11 |
| 7-8 | 6 | - | 6 |
| 9-10 | 6 | - | 6 |
| 11-12 | 3 | - | 3 |
| 13-14 | 2 | - | 2 |
| Total | 45 | 6 | 51 |

From the above table we can see that 45 men married women who were younger than themselves and 6 women married men who were younger, but age differences are not that great for most couples fall within the 1-6 years age difference category.

Table 7: Age of Unmarried Bhuket Individuals

| Age | Male | Female | Total |
|-------|------|--------|-------|
| 16-20 | 14 | 8 | 22 |
| 21-25 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| 26-30 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 31-35 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| 36-40 | - | 2 | 2 |
| 41-45 | - | - | - |
| 46-50 | - | - | - |
| 51-55 | - | - | - |
| 56-60 | 2 | - | - |
| Total | 26 | 15 | 41 |

There are more unmarried men than unmarried women. This could be a result of women marrying men from other ethnic groups and bringing their husbands to live within the Bhuket community. Some Bhuket men remain unmarried in case they have to move to their wives' longhouse and then conform to the lifestyles of other people (*lino baken*). Bhuket show a preference for endogamy. Needham states that whether or not this is explicitly stated to be the ideal, it is preferred (1971a:204, also cited by Sellato 1994:154). Of the 39 endogamous marriages, six partners have been widowed and have remained unmarried and three endogamous marriages have ended in divorce; all the partners remarried. Out of the 16 instances of two unions, nine instances entered the second union after a divorce from a spouse from a different ethnic group. Endogamous marriages are more stable and, as Bhuket say, will persist if both partners are from the same community; therefore, they express a preference for endogamy.

There is preference for men and women to marry within their own community but from my observation there was also a marked tendency for inter-ethnic marriages. Jayl Langub (1972b:220) reported that marriages between ethnic groups are rare, at least as long as the Punan are still nomadic. But in the Bhuket case there have always been inter-ethnic marriages, as the genealogical charts in Appendix VIII demonstrate. Bhuket have not found inter-ethnic marriages a problem and the five Bhuket communities have an interesting internal diversity.

3.3.1 Inter-ethnic Marriages.

Inter-ethnic marriages are prevalent among the Bhuket. Because they are a small group they have to look for spouses outside their community. Another reason for such marriages is the present influx of male migrant workers (Kayah, Kenyah and Aoheng from the Mahakam) to work for the logging companies. Most of the Kayah and Aoheng males who have married into the Bhuket community have moved into their wives' households; they are recent male migrants from the Mahakam.

Inter-ethnic marriage has not threatened Bhuket identity. Most of the in-marrying males or females learn the Bhuket language, but they maintain their own ethnic identity. Bhuket recognise them as being from a different ethnic group. However, the children of

inter-ethnic marriages assume Bhuket identity if they remain within the Bhuket community. Most of the in-marrying Kayan are not from the Balui. There is only one Balui Kayan woman married to a Bhuket man. Table 8 below shows that, out of the 41 inter-ethnic marriages, 32 have persisted and nine have resulted in divorce.

Table 8: Number of Marriages Contracted with Non-Bhuket.

| Ethnic group | Married | Divorced | Total |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Kayan | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Kenyah | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| Iban | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| Chinese | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Aoheng | 5 | - | 5 |
| Murut | 1 | - | 1 |
| Penan | 1 | - | 1 |
| Lisum | 1 | - | 1 |
| Kadazan | 1 | - | 1 |
| Total | 32 | 9 | 41 |

3.3.2 Postmarital Residence.

Bhuket would say that upon marriage, the husband moves to his wife's *kajan* and remains there until his death or divorce, or until the couple, usually after the family is well established, leave the parental *kajan* to set up their own *kajan*. Of the 65 marriages of those still alive, 65% had the husband moving to the wife's household (uxorilocal), 15% had the wife moving to the husband's household (virilocal) and 20% established their own *kajan*⁷ (neolocal) after a period of uxorilocal residence. Of the ten virilocal cases, seven were due to marriages with non-Bhuket women who had moved with their husband; and three were cousin marriages that resulted in the women's parents not wanting their daughters' husbands moving into their *kajan* for fear of death of one of the members of the *kajan*. Of the 15% virilocal residence two men, one of whom was the headman's son, established virilocality by paying a huge brideprice. The headman's son married an aristocratic Kenyah women from Long Urun and the second man married the Temenggung's granddaughter from the Kayan settlement of Uma Juman. Table 9 below shows the post-marital residence of all the marriages (of all still alive) contracted in Long Ayak according to each *kajan*.

Table 9: Postmarital Residence of Members in All *Kajan* (of those still alive).

| <i>Kajan</i> | Uxorilocal | Virilocal | Neolocal |
|--------------|------------|-----------|----------|
| 1 | 1 | - | 1 |
| 2 | 2 | - | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | - | 1 |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | - |
| 5 | 3 | - | 1 |
| 6 | - | - | 1 |
| 7 | 3 | - | - |
| 8 | 2 | - | 1 |
| 9 | 3 | 1 | - |
| 10 | 1 | - | - |
| 11 | 1 | - | 1 |
| 12 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 13 | 3 | 1 | - |
| 14 | 2 | - | - |
| 15 | 6 | - | - |
| 16 | - | - | 1 |
| 17 | 1 | 1 | - |
| 18 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 19 | 2 | 1 | - |
| 20 | - | - | 1 |
| 21 | 2 | - | - |
| 22 | 2 | - | - |
| 23 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 24 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 42 | 10 | 13 |
| (%) | (65%) | (15%) | (20%) |

Alternation between uxorilocal and virilocal residence (called "*pekayang*" by the Kayan) is not practised by the Bhuket. "*Pekayang*" means providing labour for both the parents and the in-laws and this practice is not in line with Bhuket preference for the establishment of independent *kajans*. From my observation I would say that all Bhuket have a desire for neolocality.

Bhuket say that traditionally they practised uxorilocality but my statistics show that although the claim of uxorilocality is dominant, there is a possibility for virilocality. I observed a trend towards virilocality and other types of post-marital residence depending on individual circumstances. Among the Bhuket it is very much up to the husband-wife sets to make their own choice of where and how they prefer to live, and a preference for neolocality by the pair is usually encouraged by the parents or in-laws. According to Jayl Langub young Penan couples join the parents of either partner (utrolocality⁸), but they may also establish neolocal residence (1972:220).

Initial uxori-locality may change through time. In many cases, women who claim uxori-local residence live with their husbands in the logging camps and most of those who claim viri-locality do not live in the longhouse but have separate households due to the requirement of employment. But at the ideological level the Bhuket seem to have a strong claim for uxori-locality. However, from my observation they have a highly variable and flexible post-marital residence.

It is interesting to note that post-marital residence in inter-ethnic marriages is one in which Bhuket, both women and men, have managed to bring their spouse to live with them. Out of the 32 cases of inter-ethnic marriage only seven Bhuket (five women and two men) have moved out to stay with their spouses. One Bhuket man married to a Kenyah woman established his own household in Kuching. Of the five Bhuket women, they have established independent households with their husbands away from their husbands' community. One is in Bintagor, two in Song, one in Tubau, and one lives with her Murut husband in a logging camp near the Sabah border.

I believe that the claim of uxori-locality among the Bhuket is not a result of borrowing but is a consequence of the adoption of farming by the women which has, in turn, restricted their movement. In this regard I disagree with Sellato who said that "If certain Punan groups state that they have a rule of uxori-locality, this is almost certainly a borrowing from agricultural groups, as among the Kereho Busang" (1994:158). But I do confirm his finding that "Residence seems to be a matter of the personal choice of the couple....." (1994:158). He also cites Seitz (1981:294) who says that there is no rigid rule of residence among the Penan.

Sellato's observations on the settled Punan groups is in agreement with my own of the Bhuket post-marital arrangements (with the exception of the use of the concept of utrolocality) that

In the case of those Punan groups which are already settled, living in huts in small villages, it is probable that neolocality, dominant in the nomadic bands where the residential unit is the nuclear family, gives way to utrolocality, since the huts, being larger and more permanent, can accommodate stem families or extended families (1994: 158).

Bhuket couples initially join the parents of either partner due to sedentarization which has resulted in an increase in the size of the *kajan* in order to accommodate the newly-weds. But they will eventually establish neolocal residence, especially when their families get larger. Nevertheless, from the Bhuket point of view, they stress that the initial postmarital residence was either uxorilocal or virilocal, and they would not perceive utrolocality.

The postmarital residence rule of uxorilocality among the Bhuket is certainly not borrowed but is, in fact, the creation of circumstances following the adoption of agriculture. However, Bhuket are flexible and make decisions depending on individual circumstances in a way that does not undermine individual autonomy. Since the adoption of wage work there is a tendency for women to follow their husbands. However, most Bhuket women have continued with farming while their husbands are away in the logging camps. Some couples have separate living arrangements when the husband works in the logging camp and the wife remains in the longhouse to attend to agricultural activities; they would then join their husbands after the harvesting.

3.4 Interrelatedness and Cognation.

Bilateral kinship ties outside the circle of the conjugal family are of equal value for the Bhuket due to their cognatic system. It is interesting to note that in a small community where nearly everyone is related daily life is not organised in terms of kin ties. Bhuket do not form kin groups or categories within their community because everyone is related to one another.

The whole Bhuket community of Long Ayak is made up of eight sibling sets. However, cognatic ties and sibling sets are purely analytical categories and do not in any way mean that Bhuket see themselves in these terms. These sets do not determine social relationships or interaction. However, these categories are useful to demonstrate the extent of interrelatedness. Table 10 shows the sibling sets and the *kajans* which fall into these sets:

Table 10: Sibling Sets.⁹

| Sibling set | Number of <i>kajan</i> |
|-------------|--|
| A | H3, H4, <u>H23</u> , <u>H24</u> , <u>H19</u> |
| B | H5, <u>H23</u> |
| C | H10, H9, H18 |
| D | <u>H19</u> , H22 |
| E | H20, H16 |
| F | H13, H17, H15, <u>H24</u> |
| G | H2, H11 |
| H | H12, H6 |

The remaining five *kajans* (H1, H7, H8, H14, H21) can be related to the sibling sets above through cousinship or step-siblingship:

Household 1: step-sibling with sibling set A (H4)

Household 7: second cousin with sibling set G

Household 8: second cousin with sibling set G and A

Household 14: first cousin with sibling set A and sibling set G

Household 21: first cousin with sibling set B

Sibling set A, G and H are first cousins

Sibling set H are children to set C

Sibling set E are nieces to sibling set B

Given this degree of interrelatedness, an individual can have numerous relatives. It is interesting to note that Bhuket living in the Kapuas and Mahakam are also related to the Bhuket of Long Ayak. For example, sibling set A have relatives in both the Mahakam and Kapuas; sibling set F have relatives in the Mahakam; sibling set D have relatives in the Kapuas.

Among the Bhuket, relationships are traced cognatically or bilaterally through both mother and father; this is similar to the Penan system (Brosius,1992: 216) and to all other agriculturalist peoples of Borneo. But Brosius also says that " As is the case for many other Bornean societies, there is some degree of emphasis on patrilineal connections among the Penan" (1992:216). In contrast, among the Bhuket, kin ties on both the maternal and paternal sides are equally valued, no matter what the degree of

relatedness. Therefore, kinship among the Bhuket is based on an equality of relationships and it does not lead to the formation of social groups that can be distinguished from one another through kinship ties. In any case, because everyone in the community is related, any attempt to form kin or descent groups will not be possible; there would also be too many overlapping connections. Cognation in the Bhuket context of interrelatedness dilutes the significance of kinship as an organisational principle. In this regard Needham has pointed appositely out that

cognation is not in itself a mode of social organization, in that it does not permit the formation of enduring corporate descent groups or the definition of absolute statuses, but provides merely a contingent jural nexus focused on the individual....(1966:29, also cited by Brosius 1992: 212).

Affection is extended out to everybody not only to close kin; so too are feelings of hatred and jealousy. Being family does not give a Bhuket individual certain privileges or preferential treatment. The following observations illustrate these situations better.

Observation 1

A owns a rice mill and receives a payment in rice for his service of dehusking paddy. B who is A's brother did not want to pay a portion of rice as payment for A's service because B was running short of paddy. But A insisted that B pays like everyone else. It does not matter even if B is his brother. So B paid.

Observation 2

C and D are a couple in their late 60s. When C's wife D fell ill C had to take care of her by himself without any assistance from their children. As an outsider I had assumed that the children would care for their elderly parents, but this was not the case.

Observation 3

E who does not make large farms usually asks for paddy from A . E would not demand from her children to share their paddy with her but would demand from distantly related relatives like A to give her some rice. A was always willing to give rice to E but as mentioned in observation 1 A demanded that his brother pay him in rice for his services.

Observation 4

X, a close relative of Y, was visiting from the Mahakam. However, X does not live with Y but enjoys the hospitality of Z who is distantly related to X.

The observations above demonstrate that kinship is not necessarily an important organizing principle. Keesing, explaining the Iban cognatic kindred,¹⁰ states that "In theory, it includes all...known blood relatives; in practice only fairly close kin are likely to be socially relevant" (1975:99). In contrast, to Keesing's observation the Bhuket seem to defy the principal existence of socially relevant people outside the context of the conjugal family. The point that I am trying to make here is that in the Bhuket context where nearly everybody is related, the role of kinship just disappears. Appell (1976:vii), King (1978:5) and Rousseau (1978:6) have showed in their work that kinship is not necessarily an important organizing principle in cognatic societies. Furthermore, according to Freeman, Iban are not interested in preserving lengthy genealogies (1970a:32) and become foggy on relationships beyond the second ascending generation (1960:72). Rousseau notes the same for the Kayan that, "knowledge of exact kinship relations is not of central importance, and only close relatives are easily identified" (1978:89). However, Bhuket, unlike various other Borneo communities are able to trace relationships with great precision, even if it involves links with people of other communities. Brosius too contrasts the Penan with these other societies who are vague about kinship relations. He says, "The Penan stand in contrast to these other societies in the extent to which kinship can be traced and in the emphasis placed on descent" (1992:217). This is certainly in line with the Bhuket case. On the other hand, Bhuket do not translate this ability to trace kinship ties into a concrete principle which dictates their social relationships. This differs from the Penan for whom "kinship is a principle of utmost organizational significance" (Brosius, 1992:206).

This seems to suggest that Bhuket social existence is without any kind of committed relationship. However, forms of commitment do exist at the ideological level in the mystical realm. Bhuket believe in the concept of "*pali*" which refers to the prohibition on certain individual actions for the sole reason of protecting another

persons' health or welfare. It is interesting to note that this prohibition is not a mechanism of social control imposed by the society but is actually a self-imposed control that emerges out of concern for another individual or for the community. For example, Bhuket believe that adulterous behaviour (*paho*) will cause the community to suffer from the lack of fruit and wild boar. These prohibitions are most common in the relationship of the husband and wife when the wife is pregnant.¹¹ This also shows the importance of the relationship of the conjugal pair. For example, the couple are not allowed to eat deer meat when the wife is pregnant, nor to cross a tree that has been felled but which has not completely fallen to the ground; the husband cannot burn a kind of resin called *damar*. Here we can see that the husband is mystically committed to his wife's reproduction and the wife in her husbands' hunting. Another practice of the Bhuket called *Tung Mate*, shows the importance of the conjugal relationship in which a widow or widower is not formally separated even upon the death of one of the partners and if he or she wishes to remarry a gift or payment has to be given to a member of the dead spouses' *kajan*. Bhuket are, in general, not linked to one another by binding relationships but are mystically involved in one another; this, in turn, creates bonds which are simple and voluntary.

Among the Bhuket there is a general tendency among individuals to expect food, or something to be done without having to ask for it or order it to be done. Bhuket call this state "*pekalan*" - an assumed state of commitment or expectation. This is not elaborated or discussed but left in the assumed state for if there is overt commitment this might deny the individual Bhuket his or her autonomy.

In summary, among the Bhuket kinship is interrelatedness and nothing more or less. All relations within the context of the community will be kinship relations and this has a neutralizing effect on the capacity of kinship to serve as an organizational principle. Brosius says in this connection, that

For Penan, descent based on cognatic principles provides the primary conceptual base for the establishment of relationships. Kinship thus viewed can be conceptualized more as an equation, both accurate and manipulable, with parameters of time and genealogical distance: indeed the equational nature of kinship is all that is really implied when speaking of 'cognatic principle' (1992:221).

However, among the Bhuket we find that the equality in the value of relationships, which is the outcome of the cognatic principle, does not lead to the formation of descent-based sets of relationships. Kinship relations among the Bhuket, to use Woodburn's words, "do not carry a heavy burden of goods and services transmitted between the participant in recognition of claims or obligations"(1980:105). Therefore the autonomy of the individual is not undermined by kinship ties and relations. In a community where independence is highly valued dependence has a covert or hidden existence.

¹ The Bhuket term for companion or friend is *sakai* and companionship is *pesakai*.

² *Ngivan* refers to movement upon marriage.

³ This usage is similar to the Penan *kivan* (see Needham, 1966: 7) which is not genealogically specific. Needham seems to stress the importance of relative age. However, Bhuket do not think in terms of age in their relationship to one another. Age becomes insignificant when children interact with their elders in a relaxed way by giving them pet names or by calling them by their personal names.

⁴ For more on the use of teknonyms see Pollard and Banks (1935: 395-409).

⁵ These mutual gift-giving practices between couples have been reported by Bouman for the people in the Sintang area (1924b).

⁶ The sample for this account of marital histories was taken from all living Bhuket above the age of 16.

⁷ The statistic for this type of residence was established from tracing the instance to the former *kajan*.

⁸ Among the Iban Freeman argued that utrolocal means a balance of both virilocal and uxrilocal residence and that both forms are fully permissible. He says, " To put it another way, men marry out of their natal *bileks* almost as frequently as do women. We may, then, describe Iban marriage as being utrolocal, meaning, by this term, to denote a system of marriage in which either uxrilocal or virilocal residence may be followed...."(Freeman, 1970: 25-26). The equal distribution of postmarital residence described by utrolocality is arrived at by sheer chance and is not a product of conscious community consensus. Utrolocality therefore can only be seen at the statistical or analytical level and not as a lived reality. The Bhuket people do not perceive this themselves.

⁹ There is sometimes a repeat in the *kajan* when two members of the same *kajan* belong to different sibling sets.

¹⁰ See Freeman (1961) for the concept of the kindred . See King (1976) for an explanation of the analytical and conceptual problems in relation to the kindred. See King (1991) for a critical survey of both literature on Bornean egalitarian societies and stratified societies in relation to the notion of 'cognatic kinship' and how rank reduces the capacity of kinship relations to be the general form of social relations.

¹¹ Sandin gave a list of 20 items from which a Baketan woman and her husband should abstain to ensure the safety of the wife and the unborn child (1967-68: 228-42).

Chapter 4: Economics.

In this chapter I shall argue that Bhuket individualism has led to the flexibility and variability in Bhuket economic activities today. Individuals are conscious, purposeful actors and they make conscious, purposeful choices. The external pressures, forces and opportunities interact with the individual in various ways, and the individual responds to these externalities in highly variable ways due to a high level of individual decision-making and autonomy. Individuation in economic activities has also led to economic inequality among the Bhuket population. Inequality in material wealth has its roots in the activities of Bhuket who traded with their agriculturalist neighbours and also in warring activities.¹

I shall firstly describe each economic activity in turn and also place Bhuket involvement in agriculture in a historical perspective. Secondly, Bhuket economic decisions and attitudes and the changes brought about by the diversification of subsistence activities will be examined. Finally, I will discuss the ways in which individualism in Bhuket economic activities is grounded in the social totality, in the changing practices of reciprocity and sharing, and in the blurring of the notion of property and ownership. Even though the social relations of sharing have changed, Bhuket have managed to maintain generalized reciprocity and collective access to resources through "demand sharing" and also through the processes of asking, taking and blurring ownership (*pekahin*²).

4.1 Economic Activities.

The principle economic activities of the Bhuket are:

1. Swidden rice farming.
2. Weaving of mats.
3. Hunting, fishing and sago-processing.
4. Wage labour particularly working for the timber companies.
5. Cultivating estate crops.
6. Collecting rattan for direct sale.³
7. Trade in other forest products.

Before describing Bhuket farming practices and the flexibility and variability present in them, I wish to place Bhuket involvement in agriculture in a historical context.

4.1.1 Bhuket Involvement in Agriculture in Historical Perspective.

Economic opportunities available to the Bhuket have varied over the years, and this is reflected in their life-style today. Bhuket were previously a hunting and gathering group. Although they were nomadic, they carried on a certain amount of trade with their agriculturalist neighbours, exchanging resins, rattan, incense wood and rhinoceros horns for such items as iron, cloth, salt, tobacco, betel nut, cultivated foods and firearms.

Bhuket also worked for their agriculturalist neighbours, especially the Kayans, for short periods during the period of the paddy harvest and the clearing of new farms. Bhuket usually received a payment of rice for their agricultural labour. According to Sellato:

Liju Li the chief of the Long Gelat group who came from the upper Mahakam river around 1830 to wage war on the Taman and Ot Danum groups of the upper Kapuas put some of the local nomadic groups (Kereho, Hovongan, Bukat) to work to help make swiddens (1993:30).

This means that by at least the 1830s Bhuket were learning the skills required for swidden farming.

Sellato also states that

The Bukat who lived with Liju at Nanga Balang left in the 1830s and no Bukat community ever settled there again before the early 1910s, when the very first attempts at swidden farming were made.....We know that the Halangi band, when they left Sarawak, joined the Belatung band of the Mendalam (ca. 1850) and then we never hear about the Halangi again.....If it were to be speculated that some of Liju's Bukat, after going back to the Mendalam, left again in the 1830s for the Balleh River basin to become the Halangi, then Sawing might truly count among his direct ancestors some of the Bukat who stayed in the Nanga Balang area with Liju's armies, and perhaps even a real band chieftain named Halangi (1993:30-31).

Extending Sellato's suggestions further, it is possible to postulate that the Bhuket who were living at Nanga Balang with Liju's armies around the 1830s left for the Balleh river to farm there from the 1830s to the 1850s. By this time Ibans were already migrating into the Balleh; Bhuket who were there then moved around 1850 to join the Belatung band of the Mendalam and became nomadic again. However, it is possible that

a band might have left again and moved back to Nanga Balang to lead a less mobile life-style and revert to farming (1850s). What leads me to make such an assumption are some statements made by de Rozario in the *Kapit Letters Book*. According to de Rozario, in 1879 there was scarcity of food and Ukit trespassed on Iban gardens and he reported that two Ukit heads were brought back (*Kapit Letters Book*, Fort Balleh, 31 January 1879). This suggests that Bhuket were farming and dependent on cultivated food. I believe, that this group of Bhuket, who were living in the Ulu Balang, had already acquired a taste for rice, which most hunting-gathering people disliked. The scarcity of food was a result of their dependence on cultivated food or agriculture, as Sawing's myth in Chapter Two would suggest. Besides that, historical evidence suggests that the year 1879 was a year of famine.⁴ De Rozario's letter to A.R. Houghton, the Resident of the Rejang, in Sibu, reported that there was scarcity of rice in the Mahakam and in many other places and that many had died without food and there was bloodshed because of some people trespassing on another's garden (*Kapit Letters Book*, Fort Balleh, 31 January 1879).

A week later, on the 6 February 1879, Ibans living in the Mujong " returned from mengayau and brought back one Ukit head and a five year old captive girl. They killed Ukits living in the Ulu Balang a branch of the Kapuas. Ukits also wounded and killed Rejang's men" (*Kapit Letters Book*, Fort Balleh, 6 February 1879). This statement suggests that this group of Bhuket were farming and leading a less mobile life-style because of their inability to escape attacks and headhunting raids against them. They were even taken as captives by the Iban.

I believe that the Bhuket Halangi who survived the Iban attack returned to their former territory in Sarawak - the Halunge, where they later joined the Bhuket Sivo and became hunter-gatherers again.⁵ The Bhuket Sivo were at this time in conflict with the Aoheng and were attacked by them. They later formed an alliance through marriage. This group gave up farming and reverted to a nomadic life-style and they moved to the

Mahakam at the peak of Iban migration into the Balleh in the 1880s, which was the best strategy to adopt to fight and harass the Ibans. For in 1879 the *Sarawak Gazette* reported that ".....upper Mahakam chiefs had two Bukat stoned to death because the two had refused to accept a fine from some Iban in reparation for several murders and wanted to retaliate. The chiefs wished to avoid problems with Sarawak and found it polite to dispose of the potential trouble makers" (cited in Rousseau, 1990 :198).

It is possible that the Bhuket Halangi (Ulu Balang), who suffered a severe attack from the Ibans, joined the Bhuket Sivo to resist Iban migration into the Balleh. For by May 1879, Brooke administration was seriously considering bringing order to the borders. Kaharun, a Aoheng chief from the Mahakam, was recommended to collect the Ukit living in the Mahakam waters, who were enemies of the Dyaks (Iban), and bring them to the Balleh to make peace with the Bakatans and Dyaks (*Sarawak Gazette* 23 May 1879). Kaharun failed in bringing the Ukit for peace-talks and, on April 10 1881, the officer-in-charge of Fort Kapit reported that a few Ukit were killed for stealing paddy (*Kapit Letters Book*, 10 April 1881, Fort Kapit).

All these references suggest the possibility that some Bhuket were farming in the Ulu Balang before 1879 and were leading a less mobile life-style. During the great Iban expedition against the Mahakam in 1885, Bhuket and Penihing (Aoheng) moved to the upper Serata. Sellato states that

Initially meant as a punitive action against the upriver Aoheng and the Bukat, this war soon lost all semblance of order : mobs of Iban warriors burned all the villages of the Aoheng and also one Kayan village (for details, see Sellato 1986b; also Elshout 1926:265). Aoheng and Bukat took refuge in the upper Serata. There, the Bukat mingled even more closely with the Aoheng , and also with the Punan Kuhi (or Kohi) who had been living there for some time. It was there, tradition has it, that these Bukat had their first experience with agriculture (1994: 32).

I believe that the Bhuket Sivo started farming again in the Mahakam around the late 1880s and/or early 1890s.

Between 1901 and 1910, these Bhuket Sivo moved to the Balleh and farmed there; they planted maize, rice, cassava and bananas. While this was happening among the Bhuket Sivo, there was still some Bhuket who did not plant or cultivate; those who planted did so of their own volition and did not give up hunting and gathering. For the most part other Bhuket groups continued to live by hunting and gathering.

Table 11: A Chronology of Bhuket Involvement in Agriculture 1830-1910.⁶

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Prior to 1830 | Hunting-gathering, trading, horticulture. |
| 1830s | Some groups were farming for agriculturalists (Liju Li). |
| 1830s -1850 | Farming for themselves in the Balleh (Halunge). |
| 1850 | Became nomadic again, moved with the Belatung. Sometime after this one group left again to farm at Ulu Balang. |
| 1879 | Scarcity of food, Bhuket killed in Ulu Balang, a girl taken captive. |
| 1881 | Bhuket killed for stealing paddy. |
| 1880s | Bhuket Sivo started farming in the upper Serata, Mahakam. |
| 1901 | Bhuket Sivo moved to Balleh and farmed there. Bhuket were in Kapit to learn the way to plant paddy. This shift in and out of farming could have led to the following observations: Beccari, and Baring-Gould and Bampfylde had this to say of the Bhuket: |
| 1904 | “I believe that these [Bhuket] although they must be considered as the remnants of an ancient Bornean people, are rather the present-day representatives of a race which has become savage” (Beccari, 1904: 363). ⁷ |
| 1909 | “But it is quite open to question whether these poor savages may not be a degenerate race, driven from their homes and from comparative civilisation by more powerful races that followed and hunted them from their farms to the jungle” (Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, 1909 : 13-14). |
| 1910 | Bhuket were farming again. |

In 1911 the Bhuket under the leadership of Janen moved down to Kapit, but did not settle well, and in 1915, pushed by Brooke administration, they moved to Giam Mikai above the Pelagus rapids on the Rejang where they were attacked by the Ga'at Iban rebels (*Sarawak Gazette*, 1 December 1915: 278). After this battle Bhuket moved further upriver to Belaga in 1916 where they farmed with the Sckapan people. They also traded actively, especially in rhinoceros horns.

My field information goes back to the 1920s and 1930s; during that time Bhuket did not live in one longhouse or hamlet but were scattered, and whenever they wanted tobacco, salt or cultivated foods, they camped near Kayan longhouses and worked for

them in such tasks as harvesting paddy and weeding. They also traded in jungle products. At the same time some Bhuket were also making their own farms in the Murum.

In the 1930s Bhuket moved above the Bakun rapids and held the position of *pala menoa* (vanguard of the upper Balui). They farmed actively in this period and started fruit orchards in all the places in which they farmed. In the 1940s, Bhuket were farming quite successfully. The *Belaga Information Book* of 28 April - 3rd May 1941 recorded that the Bhuket paddy harvest was fair and sufficient for six months approximately.

In the late 1940s to the 1960s Bhuket lived by hunting and gathering, trading small quantities of forest products and cultivating rice. Throughout their migration from the Balleh up the Rejang, Bhuket had two modes of livelihood which they moved between with ease. One group was leading a more settled life-style, farming hill paddy as their main economic activity, while the other group was still actively maintaining a more mobile life-style. By the late 1960s Bhuket were already involved in wage-work in rubber plantations and there were also some working for the logging companies. Wage-work was usually taken up by the more mobile group. Bhuket use their unstructured existence to experiment with alternative life-styles. This shows the extent to which choice is integral to social action among the Bhuket. The outcome of the balancing of choices and alternatives is the variation that is observed in Bhuket economic activities today. This is not particular to the Bhuket and is observable in other societies too, but among the Bhuket because their social action is not so much confined by abstract rules and customs, they seem to have more alternatives and therefore greater choice in their social action.

4.1.2 Swidden Farming.

Hill paddy farming is currently the central economic activity of most families at Long Ayak. Bhuket farm individual blocks of land cut out of primary or secondary forest. Often individual nuclear families farm their own blocks, the produce of which passes into the household (from here onwards I am using the term "household" interchangeably with *kajan*) store of paddy. Talking about and comparing Bhuket farming practices with those of the Kayan is a sensitive issue for the Bhuket. But after I had participated with them in harvesting they were more willing to reveal the

differences. Bhuket do not have a ritual calendar. Unlike the Kayan they do not observe or practise the Bungan⁸ rituals, for they are all Christians now. These rituals indicate the various stages of farming. The Kayan start clearing and selecting land for their farm in May or early June, and most Bhuket wait for the Kayan to indicate the new farming year. Bhuket who clear *tu'an* (primary jungle) start clearing earlier than those who clear *sepitang* (secondary forest). After clearing and burning they wait for *Butit Halap* (a Kayan concept whereby they wait for the moon to be in the shape of a fish's stomach) before they start planting (*nugu*). There is usually no consensus when the *Butit Halap* appears among the Bhuket; some Bhuket ask the Kayan when to start planting; and others plant whenever they wish. Among the Kayan farming is a community affair but to the Bhuket most of the decisions are made by individual families or households.

Among the Kayan there is a gathering to decide the location and time to start farming. According to Rousseau

Field areas are selected collectively under the guidance of the chief, after which households delimit their fields. The chief does so first; in large communities where there is a village chief and lesser chiefs for each longhouse, the longhouse chief makes his choice first, followed by his colleagues. Tampering with field boundaries entails both secular and supernatural sanctions (1990:126).

However, among the Bhuket there is hardly any discussion. The Bhuket who had their farms in U Jet Havet in the farming year 1992/1993 cleared primary forest in the adjacent area for the farming year 1993/1994. Another group farmed in Beto for the farming year 1993/1994. The headman's family hesitated for Beto is a disputed area with the Kayan of Uma Daro. However, the other households managed to persuade the headman to join them.

The Kayan try to harvest as fast as possible but Bhuket tend to take their time in harvesting, even if this means losing some of their paddy to pests and weather. They have also adopted the Kayan cooperative work group system (see Rousseau; 1974a: 124-7, 327-35; 1977 : 137-9), called *potang* by the Bhuket, but its functioning is not as orderly as the Kayan system. It is convenient to cooperate, and families with

neighbouring plots often do so. But the *potang* does not function in an efficient or fair manner. Those with smaller farms get their harvest in faster than the ones with larger farms, and sometimes they do not return the labour time provided by those people with the larger farms. Once their farms have been harvested they stop providing the labour time due to the others. There are certain individuals who participate actively in the *potang* system and others who do not. One household in particular did not join in the *potang* system at all.

Bhuket farms are made on three types of land:

1. *Tu'an* - primary forest.
2. *Bak'eh* - the previous year's farm becomes a *bak'eh* after harvesting.
3. *Sepitang* - secondary forest that grows on the old farm sites.

According to the Bhuket *bak'eh* of the *ume tu'an* is still good for farming and can be used again, but the *bak'eh* of the *sepitang* is very difficult to clear for *lalang* takes over and the land is less fertile. If the farm is made on a *tu'an* weeding is minimal, but if it is made on a *sepitang* weeding is a burdensome task. Bhuket do not work in cooperative work groups for weeding. Each household weeds its own farm. Some Bhuket households do not weed as such but spray weeds with the herbicide Gramoxin.

Fertile land can be planted two or three years in succession before it is abandoned for fallow. Bhuket allow a shorter fallow period for fertile land. Bhuket do not remember when they last farmed a particular tract and it is difficult to determine their rotation cycle; some land is laid to fallow for more than 20 years before being cleared again; other areas are fallowed for 15, 10 or even four years; it all depends on their fertility. Fertility is judged from the harvest. If the harvest on a particular plot of land was excellent that land might be laid to fallow for a shorter period because Bhuket believe that it will rejuvenate faster. A longer fallow period is allowed when Bhuket get a poor harvest

from that farm site; it is likely that they will not return to the site again for they still have ample land to be selective.

Bhuket still have a lot of *tu'an* along the tributaries of the Balui river that has not been cleared yet; but they prefer to clear *sepitang*. There are cases where *sepitang* and part of an adjacent *tu'an* is cleared to make a larger farm. There is also great variation in the size of the farms that are cultivated by the Bhuket as Table 12 shows:

Table 12: Size of Farms for the Farming Year 1993/1994.

| Farm Size | Number of Households |
|---------------|----------------------|
| 1 - 2 acres | 3 |
| 3 - 5 acres | 9 |
| 6 - 8 acres | 8 |
| 9 - 11 acres | 1 |
| 12 - 14 acres | 1 |
| Not farming | 2 |

Two households did not farm in 1993; one did not farm due to the confidence they had in the income they were earning from the logging company. They purchased all their consumption needs. The other household comprised a widow who stayed alone; her son who had moved to another household provided for her needs.

Only two households had large farms, the others had moderate ones and there were three households which did not join in the *potang* system so their farms were small. These three households were not very keen on making farms for they found the work too heavy and too demanding on scarce labour so they avoided joining other groups which made larger farms. Out of these three households, one is still actively involved in processing sago. The households with most of their men working in logging camps have small to moderate sized farms. It is the larger households that make large farms to meet the needs of their members. Most of the time the size of the farm is determined by the consumption needs of that particular household. Bhuket seem not to be interested in making large farms in order to have a large enough surplus so that they could sell their

rice for cash⁹; rice farming is purely for subsistence needs. Rice is not traded by the Bhuket but certain individuals will occasionally exchange it for such items as tobacco, salt or alcohol when they have no cash. Individuals respond differently to farming according to their particular circumstances, preferences and also according to different levels of needs. Table 13 shows the farm sites, quantity of seeds planted and estimated farm size for the farming year 1993/1994 for all the households in Long Ayak.

Table 13: 1993/94 Farm Site, Quantity of Seeds and Estimated Farm Size (4.4 gantang per acre¹⁰).

| Household | Farm site | Seeds (in gantang) | Estimated size (in acres) |
|------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Beto | 15 | 3 |
| 2 | Liu and Sekavuk | 36 and 30 | 14 |
| 3 | Beto | 36 | 8 |
| 4 | Beto and Beto | 25 and 20 | 11 |
| 5 | Harp and Beto | 16 and 16 | 8 |
| 6 | Not farming | - | - |
| 7 | Beto and Angang | 5 and 24 | 7 |
| 8 | U Jet Havet | 24 | 6 |
| 9 | Liu and Sangngo | 7 and 3 | 3 |
| 10 | Not farming | - | - |
| 11 | Angang | 36 | 8 |
| 12 | U Jet Havet | 9 | 2 |
| 13 | Angang | 36 | 8 |
| 14 | Livo Sengang | 24 | 6 |
| 15 | U Jet Havet | 15 | 3 |
| 16 | Liu | 8 | 2 |
| 17 | Beto | 20 | 5 |
| 18 | Beto | 15 | 3 |
| 19 | Beto and Liu | 15 and 15 | 6 |
| 20 | Beto | not available | - |
| 21 | Rata Mempelam | 18 | 4 |
| 22 | B.Muti and Beto | 18 and 6 | 5 |
| 23 | Beto | 32 | 7 |
| 24 | Beto | 14 | 2 |
| Arek/Ngila | U Jet Havet and Beto | 36 and 2 | 9 |

Bhuket yields were excellent for the farming year 1991/1992 when most of them had enough for a year's supply of rice. There were also two households that did not farm because they had the cash to purchase rice. The 1992/1993 harvest was good for some

households and bad for those who had large tracts of their farms destroyed by wild boar, deer and monkeys.

Not all Bhuket are able to farm to meet their needs; there were two households which depended on charity and a rice supply from relatives. Sometimes they had to purchase it. Rice is sometimes sold to buy other types of food. Some young men sell rice without their parents' consent to purchase alcoholic drinks. There seem to be different levels of adaptation to farming which will be discussed later on in the Chapter.

4.1.3 Weaving of Mats.

Weaving features prominently in Bhuket oral stories. Innya and Kenujong are usually portrayed in the stories as great weavers. The process of weaving plain mats, using the larger diameter rattans called *wi berirai*, is the work of Kenujong. These mats called *jali tehpu* are used for drying paddy and for sitting on in the *soah* (verandah). The weaving of the finer mats, using the smaller diameter rattans called *wi letikan*, is the work of Innya. Bhuket say that the patterns for the fine mats were revealed by the fine spirit of Innya through the medium of dreams. They claim that traditionally patterned mats were the mark of an aristocrat. Such dreams were usually only experienced by a woman claiming such rank. They say only aristocrats can sit or sleep on these mats. This is what they say, but what they do is a completely different matter where claims of rank are not ordered by rigid rules or customs. The number of women competent at making patterned mats (*jali hudo*) are few (only five in Long Ayak). They also weave plain and chequered mats from the *wi letikan*, which all Bhuket women are able to weave.

Before a woman begins to weave a *hudo* mat, an offering of a chicken and a *parang* (machete) should be given to her body (*Ketu'a Kareng*). If this offering is not made the weaver might become mute or seriously ill. If a commoner uses this mat he or she will suffer from *tulah*. The concept of *tulah*¹¹ is used to refer to calamity or illness that befalls an individual due to ritual misbehaviour and if the proper procedures are not followed. It is believed that if a commoner sleeps on the *hudo* mat he will become mad (*pawan*).

Patterned woven mats (*jali hudo*) are traditional to the Bhuket; they can be said to be better *hudo* weavers than the Kayan. This is because the art of weaving patterned mats is limited to only the *maren* (aristocrat) women among the Kayan of the Balui. It is possible that the Kayan learned weaving patterned mats from their nomadic neighbours. Kayan women usually need examples of patterns to copy but among their nomadic neighbours the common patterns are memorized and some women are able to create new ones. It is also possible that the restrictions on weaving and use of the patterned mats are an expression of a borrowed Kayan ranking complex. However, Bhuket are quite flexible regarding the restrictions. Here we can see an interesting cultural exchange between nomads and swiddeners; one teaches and shares the art of weaving, the other puts restrictions on the use and production of the art.

The following list summarises the processes involved in mat-making :

1. **Collecting:** usually the men collect the rattan but there are some women who do so too. The small diameter rattans (*wi letikan*) can simply be pulled down, the crown cut off and the stem cut into measured sections. A measured section is usually one and a half *depa*. One *depa* is one arm's length. The lengths of rattan are tied together in bundles (*galung*). One *galung* is made up of 25 pieces of the cut sections. These bundles are carried or dragged out of the forest. For a mat one *asak* of rattan is needed. One *asak* is ten *galung*. Currently all rattan cut is wild; three households have planted rattan but it has not been collected yet.

2. **Routing:** in the house the rattan is routed (*ngaseng bukun wei*), a task performed by men and women. The hips (*bukun*) are scraped off.

3. **Splitting:** the rattan is split manually using a blade. The split rattan is passed between two blades that are fixed onto a stump of timber called *tapak wei*.

4. **Splaying:** the rattan is splayed (*ngei'het wei*) so that a fine length is ready for weaving.

5. **Dyeing:** the rattan is dyed for patterned and chequered (*pelikat*) mats; the rattan is boiled for more than four hours in leaves yielding a black dye. The preferred leaf is from a primary jungle tree called *notek*. The most commonly used leaf is from a secondary jungle tree called *tebangau*. After boiling the rattan in this leaf for four hours or more a

kind of black clay called *tenek* is added to get a deeper black. This clay is added to the boiling rattan and leaf. In the old days the dyed rattan was buried for a day or two in the black clay which is available at the banks of most rivers in order to fix the colour.

6. **Weaving:** mats are woven on working boards. The boards provide a backing on which the woven rattan is pulled tightly together using a flat-headed nail embedded into a wooden handle called a *tui*. Bhuket weave row-by-row and try to complete a row before putting it away at the end of a day's work. If a row is not completed and kept away to be continued the next day, they say that the work will *selivit*, meaning that it will take a longer time to finish for the spirit of the mat has been dampened. A mat that can be finished in a week takes more than two weeks to finish if the mat is *selivit*, according to my informants. Once a mat has been woven, the ends are folded and returned into the weave. This final stage is called *silet* and is also performed by children.

It takes about seven to ten working-days to complete a mat. Most mats are sold to the Chinese shopkeeper in Long Ayak who is willing to give credit in advance if the Bhuket sell their mats to him. Prices range from \$80 -\$120.¹² The mats command a better price if taken to the handicraft centres. There are about eight prolific weavers who can weave three to four mats a month; most of them weave one to two mats a month and there are three women who do not weave at all.¹³ Most of the young girls know how to weave and will do so if they are not in school. They usually help their mothers weave the mats. These young girls usually like to weave in groups in order for them to complete the mats faster. There is variation in the ability to weave and it is obvious that some women weave better than others. There is also variation in the production of mats by each household. These good weavers are highly skilled and their mats fetch a better price. The term used to refer to a well made mat is *jan panak* which means finely and closely woven. Good mats are said to be able to hold water because of the tight and close weave.

4.1.4 Hunting, Fishing and Sago-processing.

Bhuket are skilled hunters. They generally hunt with spears and dogs. A few have shotguns. Blowpipes¹⁴ are no longer used however; some older people keep their

blowpipes in their farm huts. Hunting is done on an individual basis. Only a few expert hunters bring back meat regularly to the longhouse. Hunting at night is preferred to hunting in the day. Sometimes the hunters leave at night and return the next morning. Bhuket have no reservations in eating certain types of game. They eat wild boar, barking deer, gecko, snakes, lizards, monkey, wild cats, bears, anteaters, beavers and other small game. However, there are certain individuals who are selective in what they eat.

Bhuket also fish and spend much of their time fishing. Methods used are with *pukat* (drift nets), *jala* (net), *tuba* (poisoning), *bubu* (trap), and the women and children usually use a hook-and-line. Large fish that fetch a good price are always sold. Two *sapan*, also more commonly known as *empurau*, were caught in the month of November 1992, one weighing 7.5 kilograms, was sold for \$375 and one weighing slightly above 6 kilograms was sold for \$300. These fish are sent to the logging camps or taken to the bazaar immediately. The price of a kilogram of *empurau* in Sibu is \$80 to \$90.

All Bhuket men hunt but only 12 men are very successful hunters. All Bhuket men fish but not all fish for cash income. Only six men have drift nets used for the catching of the larger fish. Game and fish are shared. I have not seen Bhuket selling meat to one another. They do sell wild meat and fish to the Chinese shopkeeper who has a cold storage.

In 1992-93 sago-processing was done only occasionally by the older Bhuket, but there was one household that was actively involved in processing for they did not like farming. Processing sago is called *mahap* by the Bhuket. There are many types of sago palm; the most commonly worked sago are the *Jamak*, *Tajuk* and *Nyivung*. Bhuket say that the tree that produces the most sago flour is the *Jamak*. The flour obtained from the sago tree is called *alok*. The process involves first selecting a sufficiently mature tree; it is felled and the trunk is cut into sections. A tool called *baguk*, resembling a hammer with a very large handle, is made on the spot where the tree is felled from a type of wood called *kiyon malem* before the sago sections are halved. At the same time one person will be preparing the place (*apan penalu*; *penalu* is sago sap) on which the sago is going to be scraped from the trunk using the *baguk*, and another would be preparing an area (*ketagan*) where the sago will be trampled to extract the flour. The *apan penalu* is

covered with two types of leaves called *avung bulei* and *daun titi* to keep the *penalu* from touching the ground. All this activity usually takes place next to a stream. The *ketagan* is also close to the stream where the person who is doing the *momok* (trampling) can scoop the water from the stream and pour it into the basket carrying the sago. The sago flour in the water that comes out of the basket is collected in a mat or a piece of plastic sheet placed under the *momok* basket; the water is released slowly as the flour settles to the bottom. Bhuket usually work from mid-morning to very late in the evening when they go to extract sago; it is a very time-consuming and tiresome activity, but Bhuket enjoy eating sago. The most common way of cooking sago is to make it into *lut*; the flour is mixed with wild boar blood and fat and cooked into a sticky paste.¹⁵ The *lut* is eaten using an instrument called *belak* which is made from the branch of the sago palm (*pelepah jamak*).

4.1.5 Wage Labour

Two Bhuket men are teachers in Batu Keling (primary school teaching jobs). One is a headmaster in Lusong Laku in a Penan primary school. Out of the 24 households, 20 of them had one or more men working for the timber companies. A timber company had set up logging operations to the east of Long Ayak and employs most of the young Bhuket men. Most of the work done is on contract work as chainsaw operators, tractor drivers, lorry or trailer drivers and surveyors; some receive monthly wages such as the road supervisors and store-keepers. There are some who are employed on a temporary basis, especially in the work that requires hard labour for most of those employed work under very dangerous conditions. Wages constitute a significant source of income for individual households.¹⁶ Precisely what proportion of an individual's wage is used to supplement a household budget is difficult to determine. The women can buy food on credit on their husband's or son's accounts at the logging camp canteen and this will be deducted from their wages. Food bought is usually rice, cooking oil, salt, monosodium glutamate and canned food.

Although working for the logging camp is considered prestigious among the younger Bhuket men, there are some young men who do not want to work for logging

companies. There were four young men who could have had jobs at the camps but decided to stay away from any form of logging work.

4.1.6 Cultivation of Estate Crops.

Types of cash crops cultivated by the Bhuket are cocoa, coffee, pepper and rubber (see Appendix VII). Most of the cash crop seedlings were provided to the Bhuket under a special government subsidy scheme. Little income is derived from cash crops, especially from coffee and rubber. Cocoa and pepper are also fetching very low prices. It was extremely difficult to count the cash crop holdings for most of the gardens were in a secondary forest state. However, I provide an indication of cash crop holdings below (for more detail on the variability in cash crop holdings see Appendix VII) :

1. Cocoa.

Most of the cocoa plants were very tall and not bearing any fruits. There is striking variability in the cocoa holdings. 21 out of 24 households have planted cocoa.

2. Coffee.

Out of the 24 households only 12 had planted coffee. Nine households had less than 100 coffee plants. Two households had between 101-200 plants and one between 301-400 plants. Only two households out of the 12 who had planted coffee were tending their coffee plants.

3. Pepper.

Only six households out of 24 had planted pepper. One household had 100 poles, three had 200 poles and two households had 400 poles of pepper plants. All the pepper gardens were tended; two households had harvested their pepper and the rest had just planted.

4. Rubber.

Only three households had rubber trees. One had chopped down its rubber trees to make its cocoa garden. Two households had less than 100 trees and one had 500 rubber trees planted on five acres of land. All the rubber trees were now in a secondary forest state.

In the period between October 1992 and October 1993, only two households worked on their cash crops. There was one household that had not planted any cash crops. The kind of discipline and attention to inputs such as fertilizers and weedicides necessary for the successful cultivation of cash crops were lacking. Bhuket receive a fertilizer subsidy that is left in Uma Juman, which is about two hours by river from Long Ayak. They are reluctant to go and collect it. Knowledge about the development of cash crops is also lacking with little extension advice being available.

4.1.7 Collection of Rattan for Direct Sale.

A small source of income is from the collection of rattan for direct sale. Most women are not keen on their men selling the rattans for cash for it fetches a good price if woven into mats. Rattan is the only forest product that is actively collected as an income-generating activity among the Bhuket of Long Ayak and no other forest product is given as much importance as the rattan.

4.1.8 Trade.

Trade in forest produce is minimal today. Bhuket find venturing deep into the forest searching for commodities for exchange an arduous task as the return for the work done is low. Usually the commodities that they trade in are found during their hunting or gathering trips. They do not make trips into the forest specifically to look for forest products for trade. There is historical evidence that Bhuket were great rhinoceros hunters and used to trade in rhino horns with Chinese traders. Mats and baskets used to be and still are items of trade with swiddeners who need the large *berirai* rattan harvesting baskets called *teyat* by the Bhuket and *ingngen* by the Kayan. Kayan come searching for *teyat* near harvesting time. Bhuket seldom sell their *teyat* for cash but prefer to exchange them with tobacco grown by the Kayan. According to Rousseau "most nomads seek tobacco from swiddeners" (1990 :233). Bhuket plant their own tobacco but they are not preoccupied with quantity and sometimes they go looking for tobacco from the Kayan. However, the Kayan believe that the tobacco planted by the Bhuket is of better quality, which they say is *bisa* (intoxicating) for the plants are well

spaced and the soil the Bhuket choose to plant is very fertile. Kayan pay a good price for the tobacco prepared by the Bhuket.

Today among the Bhuket of Sarawak only rattan is collected to be made into mats and baskets for sale. From October 1992 to October 1993, only one man sold the antler of a large deer to a Chinese man working in the logging camp. During my fieldwork I saw the beginning of the illipe nut season and two fruit seasons. All fruits collected were consumed locally and not traded because Bhuket are very fond of eating fruits. Bhuket told me that the demand for illipe nuts was very low and prices are so low that Bhuket did not bother to collect them. Among the Bhuket of the Kapuas I noticed a greater involvement in trade activities especially in items such as birds' nests. They were also involved in the collection of incense wood (*gaharu*) and actively involved in the panning of gold dust (see King, 1974b:41).

The sale of wild meat and fish is another source of income. Bhuket usually sell it to the Chinese shopkeeper at Long Ayak. There was an attempt by a Bhuket man to open a canteen in a logging camp. He was doing well for a year but got into debt with an Iban man and he had to close the shop.

The Bhuket in Sarawak today get cash in return for all their trade items. Sometimes Bhuket sell their rice for money or exchange small quantities of rice for tobacco, salt, and sugar. In the Kapuas when large quantities of birds' nests were collected during the peak season (*panen*, lit: harvest), Bhuket usually sold it for cash in Putussibau. *Gaharu* and gold was also sold for cash if large quantities were obtained. If the quantity is small, it is usually traded with the local Malay, Kayan or Chinese traders in the villages. I saw a Bhuket man in Nanga Hovat exchange some meat for tobacco with a Kayan trader who was visiting.

4.2 Economic Attitudes and Decisions.

A certain confidence in their economic attitudes and decisions can be seen in the way Bhuket dispose of food on hand; for example, they throw away large quantities of cooked rice which causes most of the Bhuket households to face rice shortage even in years of excellent harvests. Their original confidence in the natural environment has now

grown and extended to other realms too. Aspects of this confidence can be observed in their behaviour :

1. Bhuket make small farms.
2. They quit jobs as they wish.
3. They have substantial confidence in themselves; they speak as if they had it made.
4. They are optimistic and exaggerate about their material possessions and cash crop holdings.

Bhuket today seem not to be interested in collecting forest produce for trade but they care about going on forays; in other words, there is a concern with the activity itself more than with its yield (cf. Bird-David, 1990). They go on excursions into the forest every now and then, even though they often collect little. Most men and women approach their hunting and gathering activities enthusiastically for they consider this as a break from farming and other subsistence activities that are perceived as burdensome. Sometimes they say that they are tired of sitting around the longhouse or their farm huts and they organise fishing, hunting and gathering trips into the forest, a quest for food they relish or yearn for. There is great excitement when young men and women go looking for frogs (*nyiluk bujak*) at night or go fishing, collecting shells, mushrooms, ferns, bamboo shoots, fruits, and so on. They usually have a picnic (*paruk*) before they return to the longhouse or their farm huts (*lapo ume*). They bring back very little or sometimes they eat up everything they have collected during the foraging picnic¹⁷.

Besides searching for what they want, Bhuket also appropriate what they see. During their hunting or gathering trips they always observe what has happened since last they were there, especially looking out for fruit trees that have blossomed in order to return when they are ripe and ready for picking. They also watch out for fresh animal footprints, so that they can hunt their prey down. They might plan a fishing trip but collect mushrooms, bamboo shoots and ferns that they see on their foraging route.

Bhuket delight in abundance when circumstances afford it. The lack of foresight is apparent in their propensity to eat right through all the food they have, which in turn leads to instances of food shortage. During times of abundance or after receiving their wages, they lead a life of affluence but do not bother to keep aside or stretch their stores

to make them last. Regardless of what they actually have, Bhuket frequently complain of hunger and other insatiable needs.

Bhuket have possessions but display a notable tendency to be careless about them as they are with their food and traditional equipment. Today they express unlimited demand for shotguns, generators, chainsaws, outboard engines, T.V., V.C.R., cassette recorders, refrigerators, expensive cloths and other sophisticated equipment, at least in part because they want and expect shares in what they see in their present environment. "Demand sharing" influences their response to contemporary circumstances.

Working in the logging camps or wage work is seen as a break from farming. In the logging camps they retain their autonomy. They are nomadic in their work, they move from one camp to another and from one company to another. Thus, the management personnel of the logging companies find them troublesome.

4.3 Change Brought about by the Diversification of Subsistence Activities.

The variations in the Bhuket annual cycle of economic activities today can be understood as individual responses to opportunities, some regular and others irregular in occurrence, that are exploited in the following order of preference:

Economic activities in preferred order.

1. Wage labour especially in logging companies or government jobs
2. Hunting
3. Gathering of fruits and other edible sources
4. Fishing
5. Collection of rattan and other forest products and weaving for trade.
6. Agriculture - (i) Hill paddy farming
(ii) Cash cropping

Most Bhuket can be found involved in all six activities but the basic focus of work will be determined by the ranking shown above. They will change to a new activity only if it can provide more food sources or income than that in which they are currently engaged. For example, Najoh would give up his job as a chainsaw operator at the beginning of the fruit season or when the *kecohei* trees are flowering for they signify an

abundance of fish. He would set his drift net and go hunting and come back later to check on his nets. If he was to continue working in the logging company, this would deprive him and his family of good food and more money for less work done from the sale of the fish while waiting for the fruit season. This observation accords with what Endicott has said about the Batek "Normally, they will be found living on the highest category of food available at the moment" (1984:46).

Following Endicott's method of analysis for the Batek economy (1984), I found that the variation in the yearly cycle of economic activities among the Bhuket can be explained in terms of a hierarchy of work preference. It seems that the Bhuket also have this complex shifting economy out of choice, and they combine and flexibly move between hunting and gathering and various other strategies including cultivation of hill paddy, wage work, trade and so on. They lack long-term commitment to any one activity. Similarly Endicott has stated

The frequent shifts in economic activity that characterize the Batek economy depend upon the people's avoiding long-term commitments to any one activity, commitments that would prevent them from taking up new and better opportunities that might arise. Batek attitudes toward planning and long-term projects are entirely consonant with this requirement (1984:46).

Bhuket view farming as something that operates in their favour. Far from having agriculture forced upon them or being forced into it by circumstance, Bhuket adopted it voluntarily, for the opportunity it provided to supplement a foraging diet. They never relinquished their claims to forage in the collectively owned hunting lands. In fact agriculture was superimposed on the hunting and gathering lifestyle. Thus, the niche that had sustained the foraging mode of subsistence was modified and expanded to encompass agriculture (cf. Bird-David 1992a; 1992b: 22-23). Agriculture, in turn, led to the emergence of economic differentiation. Now wage work is also contributing to this. Since the taking up of agriculture Bhuket have differentiated between two kinds of living arrangements :

- i. Band-like multifamily units whose members engage in farming, foraging and wage work. These are Bhuket families who seldom stay in the longhouse. They prefer to stay in their farm huts (*lapoh ume*) and rarely go back to the longhouse. For example, the

five households which farm in U Jet Havet have been staying at their farms for more than three years and seldom return to the longhouse. In the farming year 1993/1994 two more groupings of households emerged, one headed by the headman himself at Long Beto (six households) and the other at Long Liu (three households). All three groupings made their farms along logging roads. Those at Beto and Liu stayed at the farm from June to November. There was another grouping at Long Payak (two households) comprising elderly people who do not like staying in the longhouse.

ii. The rest lived in the longhouse and concentrated more on farming with involvement in wage work usually in the period after harvesting and the next planting season. In the farming year 1993/1994 this grouping decided to farm near the longhouse along the Ayak river and its tributaries.

Agriculture required the Bhuket to adapt to sedentarization, and the living arrangements of the Bhuket show that the flexibility in the nature of their living made it possible for Bhuket to take up agriculture which they made to operate in their favour without having to change completely their hunting and gathering lifestyle. The need to be involved in diverse activities was the Bhuket strategy to spread risks and minimise food shortages. Their mobility was not given up entirely after taking up agriculture. They could live in the longhouse, farm huts or in logging camps and still be involved in agriculture. They could still hunt and gather no matter where they lived, and agriculture was used to supplement the irregularities of wage labour or foraging.

It is also important to note that among individuals or units within a household or extended family there might co-exist some who farm, some who are involved in wage labour, some who are more actively involved in hunting and fishing and some women weaving mats for sale. A household may have individuals involved in various activities. Thus, Bhuket are, in effect, 'nomadic' in their choice of economic activity. This situation was observed by King and latter by Sellato. For example, King reports (1979b :19) that at the start of the 1970s, although the majority of the former nomads of the Kapuas were then settled in semi-permanent villages and spent "at least some time" cultivating rice, they were still significantly involved in nomadic pursuits such as collecting wild sago and forest products and hunting. Sellato also notes that "It is true that the Bukat, compared

to other "Punans," may be the most dedicated of all to the nomadic way of life" (1994:62-63).

Wage employment in the logging companies has become a source of significant income and it provides opportunities for some adult males to work on a permanent or an intermittent basis. Some men take leave from work during the peak time of harvesting and slashing and burning the farm, but there are also some young men who do not return to help their parents in farming.

Bhuket disposable income is exceptionally high, since they can continue to use freely available forest resources such as vegetable food, meat, fish, firewood, building material, and their main source of carbohydrate is from their farms. Wild meat and fish provide for nearly most of their protein intake. Bhuket therefore incorporated wage work into their own local world of farming, and hunting and gathering. Bird-David has also observed similar adaptation to the diversification of subsistence activities among the Nayaka of South India who did not settle for good into new modes of subsistence, but incorporated them into the hunting and gathering mode of subsistence (1992b:30).

Wage work for the Bhuket is simply another means of getting food and other material requirements. Most of the contract or monthly paid workers did not save the money they earned. On the whole they used it to obtain basic edible food from the camp shops or in the nearest bazaar (Belaga or Kapit). However, there were two individuals who were said to have some savings and another five individuals invested in the Amanah Saham Bumiputera¹⁸ during the government drive for investment. The sum invested was negligible about \$10 to \$20. Most of the money seems to be spent on expensive branded clothes, beauty products, jewellery and food. They also spend a lot of money on alcohol and sometimes most of their wage goes towards paying off their drinking debts.

Despite their financial prosperity, there is no obvious change in their attitude to money and possessions, which still exhibits an "immediate return" mentality. Bhuket are not keen about regularity; they are flexibly open to other opportunities that present themselves so long as these do not preclude their pursuit of individual autonomy.

To the Bhuket resources exist *a priori* and activities follow to suit. They say "resources are out there, we just need to go and take them." This is how they relate to

the environment and it is extended to their other activities. Bhuket prefer working for the logging companies because they are able to procure resources in quite the same manner. This is because the logging camps have established shops and canteens that extend credit to them. Sometimes their credit exceeds their wage, and most of them hardly receive any wage after their credit has been deducted.

It is not only those working in the logging camps that are resource-biased, it is the same with the women who weave mats; they start buying goods on credit from the local Chinese shopkeeper before they start or complete their mats. When the mats are ready they are swapped for the debts.

Working for the logging companies also involves a heavy commitment to contract work; this often conflicts with the seasonal demand for male labour within agriculture. Bhuket used to have relatively large farms but since their employment in the logging companies their farms are getting smaller in size. The households with most of their men working in the logging camps have small farms and those who can earn large wages have stopped farming. Their ability to earn cash and purchase rice is one of the reasons contributing to this. Intensity in farming is related to the other subsistence opportunities available. Because most of the men employed in logging companies are contract workers they cannot abandon agriculture for they will return to it when their contract ends or when they are sacked for not keeping up with the production targets.

Although individuals shift between means of procuring resources, hunting and gathering are visibly maintained by those living in the longhouse or the logging camps in a two-fold fashion; even those who have stopped farming are still hunting and gathering. Most adults hunt and gather at least every now and then. When they themselves do not hunt and gather some of their relatives do. Therefore, there is a continuous presence of hunting and gathering. Many men working in the logging camps also hunt and collect rattan between periods of work.

Those employed with the timber companies or working in government service, for example as teachers, are likened to hunters for they bring back provisions such as edible food, soap and so on at the end of each month (except for those employed very far from the longhouse). The reception given them at the time of arrival is similar to the return of

a successful hunter, filled with laughter and noise. However, there is a difference, for the product of hunting is shared but purchased food is hardly ever shared. However, there are relatives from different households who sometimes come and help themselves to the provisions brought back. I have seen on several occasions some of the younger people of the household hiding some of these items, especially soap.

Trade brought about interesting cultural exchange between the Bhuket and other neighbouring groups. Trade was more advantageous and important to swiddeners than to the hunter-gatherers for Bhuket used to be too preoccupied with their daily subsistence to spend time on collecting forest produce for trade. Trade items were collected as a supplementary activity during their hunting or foraging. These items were then traded with their agriculturalist neighbours, or today with the Chinese trader in the longhouse or with other interested people in the logging camps or in the nearest bazaar. To hunter-gatherers trade is also important to maintain friendly relationships with their neighbours and because hunter-gatherers are amused by the traders' visits. Besides that traders also bring stories and tales of what is happening outside the forest, which hunter-gatherers listen to enthusiastically. Bhuket till today like having visitors and ask them to tell stories of distant places. They are especially amused by the peculiar behaviour of their strange visitors. Traders have also brought stories of their encounter with hunter-gatherers to the longhouse that has created the present-day impression swiddeners have of the forest nomads.

Swiddeners also introduced tobacco and rice wine to the Bhuket and before becoming sedentary Bhuket, who relished it, used to visit Kayans or Ibans for a smoke and drink and occasionally bring items to trade. Bhuket today go to Kayan longhouses in Batu Keling, Batu Carlow and Uma Daro for Kayan rice wine. They themselves do not brew good rice wine.

Contact was predominantly in the sphere of exchange, not production, and intervention in the Bhuket life-style remained limited. The level of trade was modest and the element of coercion was little or absent. Trade did not lead to incorporation and loss of autonomy. In fact, many exchanges were initiated by Bhuket themselves. They are only ready to trade when they have found items to exchange. By autonomy I do not

mean isolation; no social formation is hermetically sealed; Bhuket may be dependent and have to work for someone at sometime, but they retain some choice of when to work and for whom. Furthermore, even in trade, as Sellato notes,

if the nomads were dissatisfied with the way in which trade was carried out, or with what they were given in exchange for the produce, they could look for other customers. This may be why the Bukat Hovut found (or went back to) another outlet for their goods, an alternative to the Mendalam, in dealing with the Taman of the Sibau. Similarly, they could take an item of trade to any river basin where a market for this product existed. Thus the present-day Bukat of the Mahakam prefer to go to Sarawak to sell (to the Chinese covertly) products such as deer antlers or the casques of helmeted hornbills (1994:59).

The diversification of subsistence activities has also brought about an increased spatial dispersion of kinship networks. Children tend to leave the longhouse or to marry elsewhere. This dispersion of kin is of great social significance since it seriously disrupts the network of sharing among the Bhuket. Sharing is a means by which individuals meet personal crises. The obligation to share is seriously weakened by spatial distance. This has made some Bhuket more vulnerable to personal misfortune.

Although Bhuket are egalitarian in many respects, the diversification of subsistence activities has led to increasing economic inequality. The diverse subsistence activities are pursued in varying manners by the Bhuket who are highly individualistic, and elements of competitive egalitarianism are beginning to prevail. Many Bhuket seem to have the view that each individual will have to strive by his or her own efforts for a comfortable life; this is not necessarily for the future but it is comfort in the present that they seek, which in turn, leads to a highly wasteful lifestyle and high levels of alcohol consumption. Saving and reinvestment are seldom considered; future misfortune is dealt with when it occurs and most of the time Bhuket are not able to handle it on their own and need the help of others.

Bhuket while desirous of wealth still have a predominantly 'immediate-return' attitude in their economic performance and activity. According to most but not all Bhuket sustained and concentrated work activities over long periods of time are unnecessary to provide for the necessities of life. Bhuket do not work consistently and are usually periodically sacked by logging companies, except for a few who are able to

cope with the latter's production-oriented policy. Activities like weaving fill in the time and can be interrupted at any time to pursue more fruitful or pleasant tasks. Much time is devoted to social pursuits such as gossip.

The diversification of economic activities has led to variability in levels of material wealth among households. These differences can be traced to numerous factors including the sequence in which households actually began clearing and farming the longhouse territory, different levels of adaptation to agriculture (and thus the gaining of rights over land), and the differential access to wage labour for the demand for such work still greatly outstrips its supply. For example, there is striking variation in land ownership due to the various factors mentioned earlier. The number of farm sites cleared to make farms by each household from 1960 to 1993 are detailed in Table 14.

Table 14: Number of Farm Sites from 1960 to 1993.

| Number of farm sites (<i>sepitang</i>) | Number of households |
|--|----------------------|
| 5 to 10 | 4 |
| 11 to 15 | 2 |
| 16 to 20 | 7 |
| 21 to 25 | 4 |
| 26 to 30 | 1 |
| 31 to 35 | 1 |
| 36 to 40 | 2 |

Information is not available for two households, and a widow who lived alone had passed all her land to her son who had moved to another household.

Cash income brings with it the prestige of material affluence. However, core values of the Bhuket in terms of internal liberty and individual integrity are still maintained. The great majority of Bhuket still refuse to engage in any kind of money transaction among themselves and resentment of the practice was often expressed. For example one man put it this way, "I will never buy meat from another Bhuket because, when I bring back game, I won't expect him or any one to pay me for the meat I give him."

In the following section I wish to explain how Bhuket individualism is far from being incompatible with a commitment to the whole community. Indeed, individualism may in reality depend on this commitment to the whole. I shall demonstrate this through

an examination of their lack of rigidity in the concept of property and ownership and their sharing practices.

Although there is undivided access to the means of subsistence, as Ingold states "individualistic property concepts, far from being unknown to hunters and gatherers, are a ubiquitous feature of their societies. So, too, are prescriptions that enjoin them to share whatever they may have procured with other members of the local group or band" (1986a:223). Bhuket do have individualistic property concepts and this is expressed in their elaborate use of the possessive in their language in which words change in the context of the association of the individual to an object or to another individual.¹⁹ Bhuket do have a concept of possession but rights or control over the possession is not rigid and there is no formal restriction on consumption or use of other peoples' possessions by others, although individuals may complain over their lack of control. I shall elaborate this matter further in the following section.

4.4 Inheritance, Property and Possession.

Inheritance of heirlooms and other possessions is determined by a parent. If a parent dies before announcing how his or her possessions are to be shared among the children, the *ketangan kajan* (head of household) or any other child in the deceased's household would be expected to negotiate a distribution of the deceased's property. Children, regardless of whether or not they are living in the deceased's household, would be expected to get a share.

Control over land is based on use. The community as a whole has exclusive control over its territory. Bhuket say that each household maintains separate possession of its fallow land. Bhuket are able to tell which tract of land belongs to which household. Bhuket also allocate land for communal purposes; for example, a large tract of land downriver from Long Ayak on the Balui has been set aside to provide the Bhuket with timber for house and boat construction purposes. This land is not available for farming. Two areas have also been set aside as graveyards.

Land is used or worked by the household, but power of disposition is individual. In a house consisting of more than one nuclear family, the family that takes the lead in

clearing a piece of land obtains use rights to it, although it is farmed for the benefit of the whole household. Land is inherited by individuals and passes from individual to individual.

Land is worked together by members of the household or nuclear family but upon the death of a parent, land is distributed to individual children. Distribution is based on plots or sites and not based on acreage or any other particular form of measure. It is the individual who inherits and owns the land and it is the nuclear family that uses it. Land that is cleared and worked together by the nuclear family is owned jointly by the husband and wife, but land that is inherited is held separately by individuals. A field observation may help give a clearer picture of Bhuket inheritance, power of disposition and use rights: I was once taken on a tour of all the former farm sites and fruit orchards owned by the headman's family. He said pointing to a piece of land: "That is my land which I inherited from my brother who died when his boat capsized in the Bakun rapids, and this is my wife's land which she inherited after her father's death and that one along the Beto river is our land for we have worked on that land together after we got married." This made me realise that among the Bhuket power of disposition and inheritance is individual in nature but use rights are collective or communal.

However, ownership and possession are blurred by the Bhuket practice of *pekahin* and it is the cause of many quarrels. The Bhuket sense of ownership is not rigid; for example, a fruit tree may belong to a particular individual or household but all Bhuket enjoy collective access to its fruits even if the owners might grumble over the loss of control over the produce. The following situations will explain the concept of *pekahin* better :

1. A takes B's chicken and declares it as hers when confronted by the owners.
2. A uses B's land (*sepitang*) to plant paddy without B's permission and when confronted by the owners (the people who first cleared the land) A would declare that the land belongs to her or her family.

Bhuket individualistic responses to economic activity create individual possessions and in certain instances some are able to accumulate more possessions than others. But in failing to recognise the exclusive privileges of consumption and use of the owners of

an item of property, Bhuket individualism is contained for the collective well-being of the Bhuket people. But what is the purpose of having concepts of possession and property? According to Ingold it "has to do with their function in creating and upholding a distinction; there can be no basis for the extension of generosity, nor for the influence and renown that flows from it. To give away.....one must first have, and others must not. A pretence of appropriation has therefore to be constructed ideologically, in order that it may be cancelled out socially" (1980:160; 1986a :228).

Individually inherited rights to land can be seen as an attribute of individualism, but one which is compatible with a commitment to the whole through its distributive character. Because individuals move due to marriage or conflict no particular household is able to accumulate, and this leads to the lack of importance given to household accumulation. This also spreads the use rights of the land (*sepitang*). It serves to regulate the exploitation of farmable land and denies exclusive use rights to any particular household. There is "borrowing" of land for farming among the Bhuket and also the widespread occurrence of *pekahin*, which blurs land rights. One may have property but the rights of use or access to the property is open to all. This is particularly true when relating to other forms of possession like vegetable plants, fruits, animal resources, tools and equipment including modern appliances.

Generosity is highly valued by the Bhuket and this can be observed in their sharing practices, which, nevertheless, are inevitably changing due to sedentarization and other factors. Because of the decline in individual generosity Bhuket practice "demand sharing" and extensive "asking" and "taking" to compensate and regulate variability in economic performance, skills or success in the procurement of food, especially wild game. Sharing of meat is still extensively practised among the Bhuket of Long Ayak and is a central activity in community life.

4.5 The Complex of Sharing.

The hunter who returns with game passes it on to his family, and a man or woman sometimes helped by the hunter, divides each part of the animal into small pieces. The butcher places the pieces in piles, each of which will be distributed to all households if

there is plenty and also to anyone who is present at the time of distribution. However, closeness of relationship is not the only basis for sharing. Most of the time there is not enough meat to distribute to all in the longhouse even if it is a large game because sedentarization has led to an increase in population. Only if more than one game animal is brought back, would it be distributed to all in the longhouse. A Bhuket hunter is able to hunt more than one animal but usually it is the transportation of the game to the longhouse that is the problem; one hunter can usually only carry back one animal in his *kevo* (a rattan sack or basket) or on his back. He will inform others of the place at which he has left the other game and anyone can go and fetch it. The pile of meat received is not distributed in proportion to the size of the *kajan* as was previously done, but depends on the disposition of the butcher. Some households seem to be offended if they receive a small portion of meat. People stand around the butcher while he works and help to assess the quality and quantity of the meat being shared out. The butcher or hunter usually keeps his favourite parts for himself and his family.

The sharing of meat is becoming more of an act of reciprocity. Those who receive the biggest shares are:

1. Those who help the hunter in the hunt.
2. The person who provides the shotgun.
3. The person who provides the bullets.
4. Those who usually reciprocate.

If the shotgun and bullets belong to the hunter or if a spear was used in the hunt, it is up to the hunter's family or the butcher to determine the proportion that is to be shared out.

Previously sharing implied nothing about any personal obligations of the recipients towards the providers of meat. This kind of sharing still exists. I know two individuals who give without expecting anything in return, and they give to people who never reciprocate. I have also seen them give to visiting Kayan. However, the giver nowadays usually gives to those who are able to reciprocate. The old and the infirm might receive a share depending on the generosity and disposition of the giver. Bhuket share meat

because it would rot if they did not and by sharing they usually obtain meat in return the next time someone brings back game. Bhuket are less enthusiastic about sharing food that does not rot, however; sometimes they do share this kind of food but most of the time it is taken away in "demand sharing". Sharing of food is the norm and if it is not given Bhuket do not hesitate to ask and, in some instances, they simply take it. Bhuket do not associate taking without permission as stealing. Schebesta observed similar patterns of behaviour among the Batek (1928 :22) and, according to Endicott, " Their attitude seems to be that it is more immoral to withhold food from those who need it than to take it without permission" (1988:117). Thus, Bhuket are engaged in reciprocity with people in the community and they also give to anyone present at the time of sharing; yet the transaction does not reaffirm and reproduce obligations between them.

Bhuket feel an obligation to give when they are asked specifically for something. This feeling is reinforced by their belief that to refuse a request can cause supernatural harm to the person refused. The concept used by the Bhuket to explain this is *tengngen*²⁰. This is similar to the concept of *punan* among the Semai (Dentan, 1968: 55) and *pohnen* among the Batek (Endicott, 1988: 117). Invitations or offers should not be turned down. The person offered the food should at least take a bite or a handful of food or at least touch the food before leaving the place or turning down the offer. If they refuse they might suffer from a misfortune or bad luck. But obligations to give, and offers and invitations are diminishing. Generosity used to be a cherished characteristic; it still is but the tendency nowadays is to associate it with wastefulness.

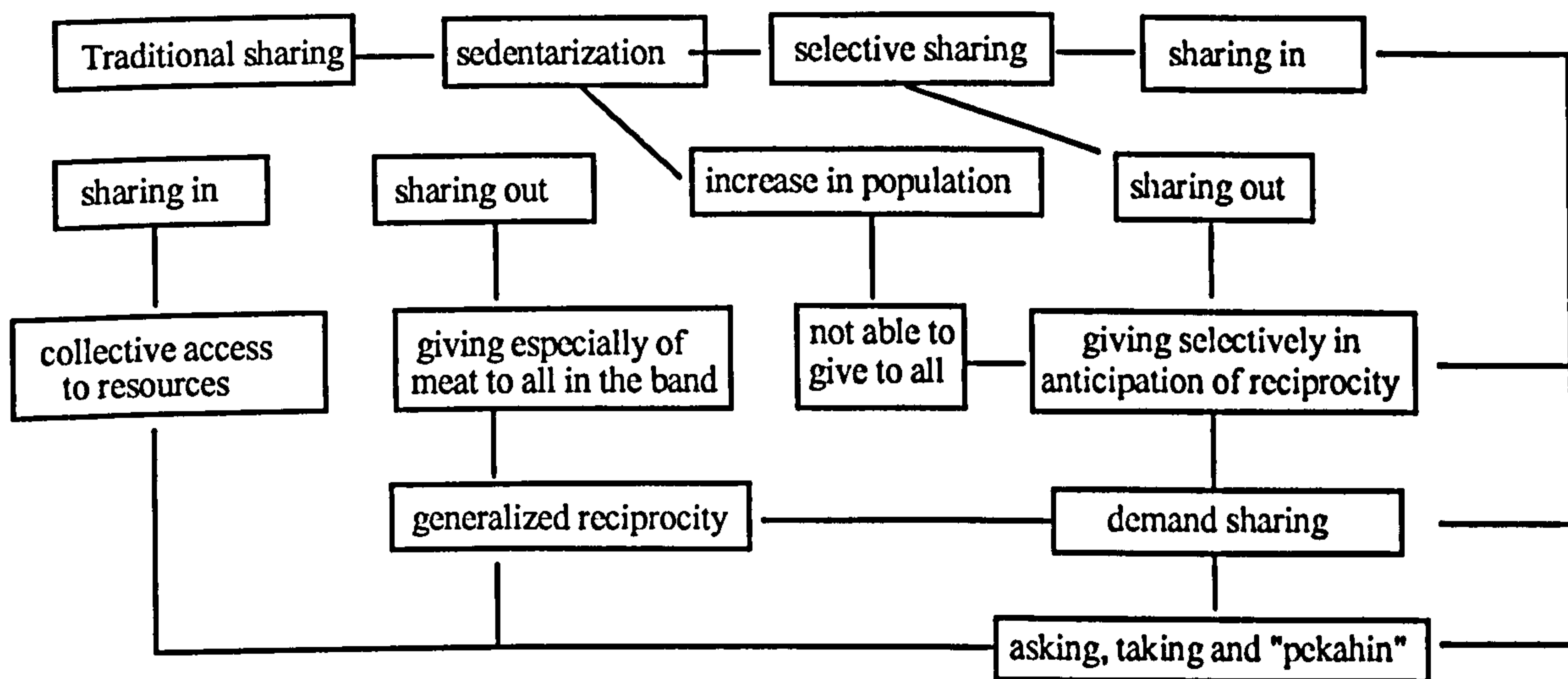
Bhuket have a strong ethic of sharing and at the same time practice "demand sharing"; they make demands on people to share more but not to produce more. Permission to take or use is usually granted, for Bhuket feel obliged to give what they are being asked for and expect to get what they request. Sometimes permission is not

obtained for the use of certain objects or for the collection of fruits or vegetables that are planted by others. Relatives take things as keepsakes. This causes some tension for they do not ask for permission beforehand.

Bhuket praise generosity in general and generous individuals in particular. At the same time in "demand sharing" they moan excessively about their needs. Would-be recipients request what they see in the possession of others and do not try to produce what they do not have. Demand for food and other goods from outsiders as well as amongst themselves is also very great.

The hunter-gatherer social relations and the taking up of agriculture have led to a transformation of the relations of sharing among the Bhuket. Figure 4 below describes the change :

Figure 4: The Complex of Sharing.



It is interesting to note from the above diagram that, even though the social relations of sharing have changed, Bhuket have managed to maintain generalized reciprocity and collective access to resources through their "demand sharing" and also through the processes of asking, taking and *pekahin*.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter the equality of opportunity that individuals enjoy in their access to resources and the flexibility and variations present in Bhuket economic

activities lead to economic inequality due to variations in skill, luck, persistence, capacity to work, different levels of adaptation to agriculture and on other factors. But sharing acts as a control in the development of inequality among the Bhuket. Sharing also has cohesive properties through which Bhuket individualism is embedded in the social totality of Bhuket existence. Material possessions that individuals obtain vary greatly, but sharing, which manifests itself in various forms such as giving, asking, taking, and *pekahin* among the Bhuket dilutes the social significance of economic inequality. This is most aptly described by Susan Kent for hunting-gathering societies in general:

Sharing is an important institutionalized mechanism to maintain and enforce an egalitarian milieu, even in those situations that are inherently unequal, such as those related to success and skill in hunting, sharing maintains and reinforces social relationships (though this view does not necessarily extend to non-egalitarian societies). As a consequence, sharing nullifies the social and economic significance of variations in hunting skill and success. Whereas in some societies kinship and friendship may divide people, in highly egalitarian societies they unite people. Egalitarianism is necessary for the cohesiveness of these societies and sharing is necessary for that egalitarianism (1993 : 503).

¹During war Bhuket captured slaves, who were sold to their agriculturalist neighbours, and they also seized valuable goods. Valuable goods obtained in the act of war are called *oli*. Although Bhuket have a strong ethic of sharing, goods like valuable gongs, beads and jars were not shared, and therefore this led to inequality in material wealth.

²*Pekahin* is a different concept from *nyiko* which means to steal or *ngalen* which means to take without permission or asking for it first.

³I have distinguished the collection of rattan for direct sale from trade in other jungle produce because today in Long Ayak rattan-gathering is the one forest-based activity which the Bhuket do solely for trade. Rattan is the only forest produce that the Bhuket collect individually or in groups but they do not organise themselves for the collection of other forest items. The collection of other forest goods for trade today is a residue of Bhuket hunting and foraging activities.

⁴De Rozario also predicted famine because of floods and also pest infestation (*Kapit Letters Book*, January, 1879).

⁵As the myth provided by Sawing in Chapter Two of the victory of the *kensurai*, symbolic of the hunting-gathering life-style, would suggest.

⁶Only for the group that eventually settled in Sarawak.

⁷Beccari's observation of the Bhuket was made around 1865 - 1868.

⁸Religious prohibitions were a significant element in traditional agricultural practices. These religious rules were profoundly changed by the Bungan religious reform which did away with time-wasting taboos and periods of ritual inactivity. The introduction of Christianity led to the development of the Bungan

reform by Juk Apuy, a commoner who became the Bungan prophet. Rituals were reformed and simplified. The Bungan religion had its greatest success in the Balui (Rousseau, 1990: 202-203).

⁹Unlike the Kenyah who make very large farms and are currently the only people in the Belaga District who produce rice not only for their consumption needs but also for cash. Kayan do not like selling their rice.

¹⁰This estimate of 4.4 gantang of seeds for an acre of land was provided to me by the District Agriculture Department in Belaga.

¹¹The term *tulah* is also used by the Iban and the Kayan to refer to mystical retribution due to ritual misbehaviour.

¹²One sterling pound is approximately four Malaysian Ringgit.

¹³This information is for the months April to June, after harvesting and before the selection of the new farm sites when the Bhuket were completely free of farm work.

¹⁴The process of making the poison for the blowpipe is complex. The famous *ipok* poison is called *konnyong* by the Bhuket. The poisonous latex from the tree is cooked in a leaf called *koyan*. The darts, which are called *tageh*, are made into different sizes and the size of *tageh* used for hunting depends on the size of the game hunted. The Bhuket seem to have different dosages of poison for different animals. The process of dipping the *tageh* into the poison is called *periru*; great care and attention is needed to make the different sets of darts for the different animals. Poison can also be obtained from *keya urang* (the most poisonous), *keya kelimut* and *keya buhak*. Another type of poison called *tajem* is used for hunting small animals living in the trees like birds and monkeys (see also Needham for the longevity of Penan dart poison 1988: 129-34).

¹⁵*Alok* can be made into many types of *lut* called *kora*, *seleburup*, *telonyong*, *amo* and *lut totak*. *Alok* can also be made into *sagok bok*, *sagok burai*, *sagok tekepek*, *kelesivo*, *kelekasai*, *kehavok*, *buyun*, *e'sum*, *kekapit*, *bovan*, *e'sum betuken bavui*, *isak alok*, *cek korek* and *selepin leilang*. The older Bhuket certainly prefer the variety they get from sago and say that "rice is not food; it is like eating sand".

¹⁶The annual income (1992/93), as indicated in the income tax clearance documents for four Bhuket men who were employed as a chainsaw operator, tractor driver, lorry driver and surveyor, are as follows \$13007.50, \$11587, \$24000 and \$8545 respectively.

¹⁷Bhuket still enjoy their hunting and gathering activity. Jayl Langub gives a very good illustration of hunter-gatherer perceptions of their life-style: "I would like to begin ...by sharing with you a few personal experiences regarding hunter-gatherers' perception of hunting and gathering. The first of these occurred in August 1983 when a visiting dignitary asked a group of hunter-gatherers in the Magoh River, Baram District why they had to carry on their cumbersome tradition of moving from one place to another carrying all their belongings with them over rugged terrain, hunting and gathering as they moved, but uncertain about the outcome of such activities. The hunter-gatherers did not answer the question immediately but asked if the distinguished visitor liked *kuma bahe'* (Kayan words for picnic). When he answered in the affirmative, they told him in great jest that hunting and gathering is [a] picnic everyday!" (1990: 101)

¹⁸It is a government investment scheme for indigenous peoples (*Bumiputra*).

¹⁹Bhuket recognise personal association between individuals and between individuals and material objects in their language. There are certain words (usually nouns) that change according to the nature of association with a particular individual, for example

Between individuals and objects

Siyo- chicken

Arek siyo hinikse. There are many chickens here.

Siyok ena na. It is my chicken.

Ama siyom rei? Where is your chicken.

Siyon hek ena? Whose chicken is this?

Siyon ena na. It is his/her chicken.

Siyon re/de. Their chicken.

Farm - ume

Umek - my farm

umem - your farm

umen - whose/his/her/their farm

Polo - broad bladed oar/paddle

polok - my paddle

polom - your paddle

polon hek eni? Whose paddle?

polon en. His/Her paddle.

polon de. Their paddle.

Personal association between individuals.

Arik - brother/sister , *doro* - female *loleh* - male

Q. *Arim dorom?* Your sister.

A. *Arim dorok.* My sister.

Q. *Arim lolem?* Your brother.

A. *Arim lolek.* My brother.

Arik - My brother/ sister

Arik ena na. He is my brother/ She is my sister.

Arim ena na. That is your brother/sister.

Arim hek enise? Whose brother is he? / Whose sister is she?

Arim en. His/her brother/sister.

Arim re. Their brother/sister.

²⁰The Iban term for *tengngen* is *punik*. This practice is widespread among the people of Borneo. The Malay word for this term is *kempunan*. This practice inculcates generosity and sharing through concern for the safety of another person if generosity is not extended to that person.

Chapter 5. Politics.

In this chapter I wish to explore the complex interrelations of rank and egalitarian ideologies among the Bhuket. I will explain Bhuket egalitarianism and also try and attempt to understand Bhuket claims to rank. Although the egalitarian and rank ideologies are quite explicit, the maintenance of both is not a conscious product of community consensus. Using two points from Sahlins' (1958) definition of egalitarianism that 1. the qualification for higher status may lie in personal characteristics and 2. being egalitarian means that every individual has an equal chance to succeed to whatever statuses may be open, I show that Bhuket claims to rank can be understood in terms of the internal dynamics of their egalitarianism. A complex interplay of processes both internal and external have led to the co-existence of both the egalitarian and rank ideologies among the Bhuket.

5.1 The Question of Rank and Egalitarianism in Borneo.

In Borneo discussions of both rank and egalitarianism have been contextualised by Leach's early survey of Sarawak societies in which he made a broad distinction between the egalitarian and stratified societies (1950: 46-84). We have often had the tendency to reduce the two concepts or principles of organisation, egalitarianism and hierarchy or rank to a convenient rhetorical contrast. The Kayan and Kenyah are labelled as stratified because leadership is hereditary and social statuses are inherited (Whittier, 1973; Rousseau, 1979). The Iban on the other hand are egalitarian because of their "aggressive individualism" and an absence of ascribed rank and hereditary chiefship (Freeman 1970, Sutlive 1978:3, Uchibori 1984). Nevertheless, Freeman has shown how egalitarianism can still continue under conditions of inequality (1981). King (1978, 27-29) has also pointed to a decline in the significance of rank among the stratified societies due to the abolition of slavery and headhunting, the spread of the Bungan cult,¹ Christianity, education and a cash economy. Nicolaisen, on the other hand, argued that, in some respects, colonial rule formalised ranks (1986:83-84). So in more recent work we can see that egalitarianism does not entail the absence of inequality and hierarchy does not mean a complete absence of egalitarian principles. Some have argued that the contrast

between such societies has been overemphasized (Rousseau, 1980; Armstrong, 1992; Alexander, 1992, Sather, n.d.). Rousseau has stated that:

a historical approach to Iban society indicates that they were much more similar to other groups of Borneo shifting cultivators than is superficially evident, and while it is clear that the Iban demonstrate less inequality than many others, their characterization as an egalitarian society is not adequate (1980: 61).

He continues by saying that "Such a contrast between egalitarian ideology and unequal social structure should not surprise us: it is to be found in a more extreme form in our own society" (1980:61).

What is more, there has even been some attention given to hierarchy among egalitarian nomadic groups of Borneo (Needham, 1971c: 204, 1972:219 ; Jayl Langub, 1972:219; Nicolaisen, 1986; Rousseau 1990; Sellato 1994). For example, according to Needham the Penan speak of rank :

There are no social classes, though certain groups speak in terms (copied apparently from longhouse tribes) of aristocrats, maren, and commoner, panyin, in describing the difference between elders and others. There are not, and never have been, any slaves (ulun) among the Penan (1972b:179)

It is interesting to note Needham's observation that the Penan speak of rank but that there are no social classes and that they apparently copied rank from settled peoples. What then are the processes involved in this copying? Do they copy individually or as a community? How long has it taken them to copy and why then, even after copying, are there no social classes? These are some of the questions that I wish to examine in this chapter. Rousseau gives many more examples of emerging hierarchy among forest nomads in the context of processes of sedentarization. He says:

Sedentarization brings about stable communities with a greater need for political co-ordination, hence stronger leadership. This need can bring about the development of social inequality, as the leader seeks a higher status to become an effective representative of his group vis-à-vis his aristocratic counterparts. The community may welcome this differentiation if it recognizes its collective advantage. ...These emerging chiefs enter into marital alliances with agriculturalist chiefly families and they enslave captives. We see here the kernel of hereditary chiefship, stratification, and exploitation (Sellato 1986a: 534-5). The Seputan now recognize the opposition between nobility and commoners (ibid. 206), as do the Punan Ratah; among the latter, this has not developed into a real stratification system (ibid. 273). The Baketan have four

strata: marin (noble), panyin (middle), satengah linou (low), and areh (slaves), and a preference for stratum endogamy (Sandin 1967-8: 242). The settled Bukat of the upper Baluy recognize the distinction between hipuy and panyin; already in 1895 an upper Baleh Bukat owned a slave (Bampfylde 1895:71). The process of sedentarization has put pressure towards establishing aristocratic lines, but this is counteracted by elders, and in some cases leadership alternates between two families (ibid.) (1990: 250-251).

Sellato also shows how nomadic egalitarian groups have borrowed, adopted or, as he puts it, are "tempted" (1994:199, 202) to adopt a stratification system similar to their stratified neighbours, and Rousseau argues that there was pressure towards the conceptual development of ranking among nomads and that they talk as if they had a stratification system, possibly to show how "civilized they are" (1990: 229). I wish to explore these debates about rank among hunter-gatherers and the Bhuket material provides us with an opportunity to examine further how the concepts of egalitarianism and rank could co-exist. Bhuket hold strongly to an ethos of egalitarianism but claim to possess a ranking system similar to their stratified neighbours the Kayan.

5.1.1 Ranking among the Bhuket.

Bhuket state that they have three ranks; these are:

- i. *Maren*; these are leaders and those who can trace their descent from a famous Bhuket personality.
- ii. *Panyin*; these are commoners.
- iii. *Lipen*; these are slaves.

Note that Bhuket use the same terminology as Kayan. All Bhuket trace descent from seven leaders (*menuak* or *larkin* or *maren*). They are :

1. **Savai** : the brave Koyan leader, grandfather of the present headman.
2. **Sekudan** : the famous Bhuket hero who helped the Kayan of Uma Belor in their fight against the Iban from the Sut at Naha Nyabong. He later became the chief of the Bhuket in the Kapuas.
3. **Meng** : one of the Bhuket leaders who was called by the Brooke administration for the peace negotiations with the Iban in the Balleh.

4. **Janen** : he brought the Bhuket from the Balleh to the Balui. He was a Baketan who married Surek's daughter Matap and later, upon the death of his father-in-law, became the leader of the Sivo Bhuket.

5. **Danyau** : the Bhuket leader from the Mahakam who married Janen's sister Nopak. Danyau had five sons (Berahang, Ngo, Tehbon, Balan and Kudi) who established close relations with the Iban from Balleh and Kanowit. Berahang became the Penghulu of the upper Balui. Ngo, also called Ingau by the Iban, was adopted by the Iban paramount chief in the Balleh, Temenggung Koh, through a formal exchange of gifts.

6. **Bine** : the brave Bhuket who killed many Iban in revenge for the Iban attack at Long Layi (Balleh). He was ambushed by a group of Iban who were working *nyelutong* (a type of resin). Both Bine and Janen managed to kill all the Iban and, due to some confusion, Bine was accidentally killed by Janen. It is said by the Bhuket that Bine was brought back to life by a tiger (*singngiro*).

7. **Tehujai** : the legendary Bhuket who killed seven Iban single-handed in an attack. He had tattoos (*ulei*) all over his body and even on his face. He had caused many problems for the Bhuket in the Mahakam for killing a boy and refusing to pay a fine.

Savai, Sekudan and Meng were from the Kapuas. Savai and Meng stayed on in the Balui but Sekudan returned to the Kapuas. Janen, Danyau, Bine and Tehujai were leaders in the Mahakam and Balleh. Janen led the Bhuket migration up the Balui and both Bine and Tehujai returned to the Mahakam. Tehujai was a leader who was determined not to make peace with the Iban. Bine became the Bhuket leader in the Mahakam. There is a river in the Ulu Balleh that is named after him (see map of Balleh in Appendix III).

All Bhuket say that they are related to these seven leaders. Table 15 below shows how they trace their ancestry to one of these leaders or famous Bhuket *menuak* (brave individuals). I have chosen only the head of *kajan* (*ketangan kajan*) or sometimes the oldest member of the *kajan* as a representative of the other members of the *kajan*. I had the opportunity to check out genealogical information when I visited the Bhuket living in the headwaters of the Kapuas and was surprised by the precision of the genealogical data

collected in Long Ayak (for more detail for each individual see genealogical chart in Appendix VIII) :

Table 15: Bhuket and their Seven Brave Ancestors.

| | |
|----------|---|
| Kajan 1 | Nuhai- Paran- Savai |
| Kajan 2 | Diruei (Uring)- Layu- Sekudan |
| Kajan 3 | Dari- Gasai- Botik- Janen |
| Kajan 4 | Bawa ² - Paren- Savai Ping (Beria)- Gasai- Botik- Janen |
| Kajan 5 | Doh- Berahang- Danyau=Nopak- Janen Adum- Botik- Janen |
| Kajan 6 | Bujang- Nyudap- Ngerika- Paren- Savai |
| Kajan 7 | Alau- Sambup- Ngerika- Savai |
| Kajan 8 | Jelawai- Tali- Paren- Savai |
| Kajan 9 | Serarai- Tingngang- Tipong- Botik- Janen Nyudap- Ngerika- Savai |
| Kajan 10 | Napi- Ngerika- Savai Nihong- Narok- Sekudan |
| Kajan 11 | Tedong- Meng Munai- Diruei- Layu- Sekudan |
| Kajan 12 | Lajun- Nyudap- Ngerika- Savai Tingngang- Tipong- Botik- Janen |
| Kajan 13 | Lejap- Sa'eng- Bine |
| Kajan 14 | Ngeripun- Tenahan- Layu- Sekudan Ngeripun - Nyipak- Bine |
| Kajan 15 | Lema- Sa'eng- Bine Suking- Payak- Tehujai Negulun- Nihong- Narok- Sekudan |
| Kajan 16 | Meriam- Payak- Tehujai |
| Kajan 17 | Lahare- Sa'eng- Bine |
| Kajan 18 | Menangau- Ngerika- Savai |
| Kajan 19 | Mapun- Gasai- Botik- Janen |
| Kajan 20 | Dok- Meju- Balan- Janen |
| Kajan 21 | Bunga- Madu- Tehbon- Janen |
| Kajan 22 | Lajap- Mijam- Laut- Tehujai |
| Kajan 23 | Bayong- Gasai- Botik- Janen Guhan- Nari- Berahang- Danyau |
| Kajan 24 | Tipong- Gasai- Botik- Janen Siru- Sa'eng- Bine |

All the 24 *kajan* trace their ancestry through both males and females to these seven leaders. There were nine instances in which a *kajan* traced to Savai, five to Sekudan, 11 instances to Janen, one to Meng, four to Bine, two to Danyau and three instances to Tehujai. These Bhuket heroes belong to several different *puhuk* - Savai was a Koyan; Sekudan a Metevulu; Janen, Meng, Bine and Danyau were Sivo; and Tehujai was a Rerungo. I must stress that this is purely my tabulation and does not in any way suggest

the formation of ambilineal descent groups, for within the community today there are no such groups or categories. Even these seven leaders are interrelated through present links of kinship and marriage.

Social equality prevails and is not something that the Bhuket assert or are conscious about. However, the concept of rank is used by Bhuket according to context and in a strategic way. Most Bhuket justify their claim to high rank through a genealogy studded with famous leaders and heroes, even though their ranking system is based on a very precarious foundation. Bhuket had already adopted a ranking system before they came to the Balui.³

Most Bhuket say that Sivo is the Bhuket *puhuk* that is highest in rank and all Sivo seem to claim a cultural relationship to the Baketan. The reason for this claim could be their very good relations with the Baketan through Janen's marriage to a Sivo woman; in addition, the Sivo comprise the *puhuk* which led the Bhuket to the Balui besides being the group that took up agriculture first; they have also provided leadership for the past 100 years. Nevertheless, this claim of high status by the Sivo does not translate into any form of unequal or differentiated social relationship within the community. Today those claiming to be of Sivo origin are the majority of the population; besides that they also seem to have a Baketan as their apical ancestor (Janen). Those who have ambitions to succeed the present headman are mostly of Sivo origin; they are as follows:

Table 16: Bhuket Individuals Interested in Becoming the Headman.

| | |
|----------|---|
| Kajan 2 | Ngajang - Diruei - Layu - Sekudan (Metevulu) |
| Kajan 5 | Adum - Botik - Janen (Sivo) |
| Kajan 11 | Tedong - Meng (Sivo) |
| Kajan 12 | Lajun - Tingngang - Tipong - Janen (Sivo) |
| Kajan 15 | Negulun - Nihong - Narok - Sekudan (Metevulu) |
| Kajan 17 | Bit - Lahare - Sa'eng - Bine (Sivo) |
| Kajan 20 | Kuna - Meju - Balan - Nopak - Janen (Sivo) |
| Kajan 23 | Bayong - Gasai - Botik - Janen (Sivo) |

The present headman, who is not a Sivo (he is a Koyan), is married to Gasai's daughter Beria, who is a Sivo and a direct descendant of Janen (Baketan). She justifies her husband's position as headman due to his alliance to the Bhuket paramount chief in

the Kapuas, Temenggung Janen, who is his brother-in-law. It is also interesting to note that the Punan Busang headman uses his blood ties with the Baketan to justify leadership.

Although Bhuket claim that they have a ranking system, investigation reveals that there is confusion as to which *kajan* belongs to which rank. At the operational level the function of the ranking system is minimal. For example, there are no rules according the *maren* a central area at formal occasions and they do not receive any differential privileges. Bhuket intermingle as equals in their day-to-day affairs. There is also a high degree of interrelatedness of all the households in Long Ayak (see Appendix VIII). Bhuket do not display the sorts of attention to rank found among the Kayan.

5.1.2 A Comparison of the Kayan and Bhuket Ranking Systems.

This section will show that, although Bhuket use the same rank terminology as the Kayan, they do not follow the Kayan ranking system in any other way, especially in their intra-community relations. According to Rousseau, when the *marens* of a Kayan village are particularly prolific and form several households then this represents a demographic imbalance between *maren* and commoners. But among the Bhuket all of them claim to be *marens* and their claims are justified by a genealogy studded with heroes. According to Rousseau, an unusually large proportion of *maren* families does not disrupt the stability of the Kayan stratification system (two out of 13 villages of the Balui displayed a departure from the normal ratio), because the existence of a middle stratum of *hipuy* provides a structure which, in the long run, maintains an acceptable ratio of *marens* to *panyins* (commoners). Rousseau states that:

The *hipuy* stratum acts as a device which makes it possible to regulate the ratio of the dominant to subordinate classes without endangering the ideology of stratification. If *maren* could be reclassified as *panyins*, the social bases of stratum ascription would become obvious, there would be no reason to believe that *marens* are intrinsically different. But if they become *hipuys*, their ritual and therefore "natural" - specificity is reaffirmed at the same time as they are denied any real social prominence (1979: 230).

In contrast, Bhuket do not recognise the *hipuy* stratum and there is no consensus about who belongs to which stratum. Anyone can claim to be a *maren* if they can trace their descent ^{from} to a brave Bhuket. Rousseau shows how functional the stratification system

is to Kayan social organization, while among the Bhuket it is only activated in contact situations with stratified people. Within the Bhuket community rank does not interfere in their day-to-day social relationships and their relations of production. However, economic inequality is prevalent among the Bhuket.

Rousseau weaves a class analysis into the Kayan stratification system but it is impossible to undertake a class analysis of the Bhuket ranking system. This is so particularly because Bhuket ranking is the creation of the internal dynamics of their egalitarianism besides being a response to interaction and contact. Furthermore, Bhuket economic inequality is a phenomenon that does not fit very well with their adopted ranking system.

It is difficult to detect classes in the Bhuket community. Classes are basic social aggregates with contradictory interests. Among the Bhuket I could not delineate these social groupings. Instead, what I found was not social aggregates with contradictory interests, but rather individuals who have contradictory interests. What we discover are individuals in situations of competitive self-interest and it is extremely difficult to lump them into social aggregates called classes.

Current economic conditions in Borneo provide for economic mobility. A successful individual either through farming, wage work or education can obtain prestige within the community. Thus, there is the emergence of status differentiation. But for the Bhuket economic inequality is the product or the manifestation of individualism, and it is also modified by demand sharing and reciprocity.

Finally, Rousseau (1979) states that among the Kayan political inequality leads to economic inequality (that is, class system). However, for the Bhuket the emergence of economic inequalities have led to the beginning of status differentiation (the concentration and accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, which is not based on political inequality and is open to anyone) but this economic inequality will eventually lead to the blurring of a ranking system that was not in the first place firmly institutionalised. Anyway the social significance of economic inequality is diluted through Bhuket sharing practices (see Chapter Four). However, status differentiation can better

be explained in terms of the internal dynamics of Bhuket egalitarianism and also to frontier circumstances, which will be dealt with later in the chapter.

5.1.3 The Ways in which Hierarchy is Expressed, Maintained and Lost.

The differentiation in status among the Bhuket is due to the influx of cash. Comparison of material possessions and wealth is one way in which rank is expressed. For example, the younger women who have husbands working in the logging camps and therefore considerable cash income consider weaving as inferior work. Women who are still weaving mats for sale are considered to be poorer and of lower status. Yet, previously the weaving of patterned mats was used to justify female prestige.

Status is also associated with farming. One household that has been exceptionally successful in their paddy harvest to the extent that they have in their stores three-year old paddy asserts that it is superior to the rest of the Bhuket. Furthermore, this household has Baketan and Sivo ancestry, and, on this basis, argues that it should provide the next headman or even *penghulu*. Senior members of the household have also not returned to the longhouse for nearly three years, although the children go back for festivals, funerals and other functions held in the longhouse. They have built themselves a comfortable farmhouse along the logging road, but while the head of the household shows interest in succeeding to the village headmanship, he is extremely unpopular among the Bhuket.

The ability to earn money has become a means of acquiring prestige rather than being a good farmer who produces surpluses. Bhuket who are able to secure enough income to purchase their rice are considered to have a better life than those who are still farming. There is one household that could be said to be the richest of all from the income obtained from working logging work; it also has political ambitions. The son-in-law, who claims to be the direct descendant of Sekudan, shows interest in succeeding the present headman. The downriver half^d of the longhouse usually go to him for food or financial assistance.

Association with the Kayan and the support given to a particular Bhuket family by them also contribute to some Bhuket claiming to be *maren*. One household claiming ancestry from Sekudan, is forging close ties with the Kayan of Uma Belor (the headman

of Uma Belor is a descendant of Sekudan's brother Semukau). This household is the only one that is actively proclaiming that they are *marens* because of their close links with the Kayan. This household also claims to have had slaves, which other Bhuket deny.

Rank is also expressed at funerals. Doh (Berahang's daughter) passed away on the 4 of December 1993. I was informed that she was kept in the longhouse for a week and she was given a grand funeral because she is considered to be a *maren*. Some families made a contribution of money and rice to enable the family that has suffered the loss to carry out a proper funeral. People returned from the farms to attend her funeral; even the neighbouring Kayan contributed and participated. However, Madu, her cousin (Tehbon's daughter), who passed away on the 24 October 1993 was given a simple funeral. She was sent to the grave the day after her death. This shows that there is flexibility in the use of funerals to express rank.

I have never heard a Bhuket calling another Bhuket a *panyin* (commoner). Only on one occasion was I informed that a particular household belonged to the slave (*lipen*) stratum due to envy over their economic success.

All this talk about rank within the community is not reflected in Bhuket actions, and in the way they relate to one another. In the course of fieldwork I have seen a few individuals (children included) being disrespectful to the headman, not obeying the headman's requests and advice, and others not paying fines. They deal with one another as equals. Even the members of the poorest household (which is the only household that is actively involved in processing sago) disobeyed all the requests from the headman. This particular household never participated in any co-operative activities during the duration of the field research.

Economic inequality, which is leading to status differentiation, does not disrupt the egalitarian nature of Bhuket social relationships. The poorest household might be looked down upon by the others for being poor, lazy, still processing sago, making small farms, and not wanting to work in the logging camps, but this is the same household that usually defied the headman's requests.⁵ Being poor does not deny them equal standing with other more successful Bhuket in their social relationships. No Bhuket could be discriminated against or subjugated by another. Exploitation within the community is

non-existent. The poorest household also practised "demand sharing", but never reciprocated. I once heard a female member of this household saying to the headman's wife "What is the point of calling yourself a *maren* if you can't even provide me with five *kongs* of rice." The headman's wife gave in to the demand and gave her what she asked for.

In a conversation I had with Aki Adum (Janen's grandson) on the 19 March 1993, he talked about "*raja duit*" (an aristocrat because of wealth or acquired status) and "*raja keturunan*" (an aristocrat because of descent or ascribed status). He said that the "*raja duit*" might eventually have more say in community matters than the "*raja keturunan*". He also said that the "*raja duit*" might replace the "*raja keturunan*" as leaders, and interestingly that the former will not be successful in leading the Bhuket as his predecessors, the reason being that all Bhuket want to be "*rajas*" and not followers. This clearly demonstrates the Bhuket egalitarian ethos for everyone wants to be *raja* or is a *raja* in any case.

5.2 The Egalitarian Political Order.

The inability of any individual Bhuket to exercise power or authority over another demonstrates the egalitarian nature of the Bhuket political order. Woodburn, in his discussion of "egalitarian societies" (1982; see also Cashdan 1980), delineates the main reasons why immediate-return foraging societies, which do not store food or engage in protracted production processes, are egalitarian, actively suppressing distinctions of wealth, power and status, at least between adult males (relations between the sexes and between different generations vary from one group to another). Political equality, it appears, is due largely to the absence of any basis for the individual exercise of power or authority over others; one reason is that these groups are highly nomadic, and this permits people to move away "at a moment's notice from constraint which others may seek to impose on them" (Woodburn, 1982:436). Woodburn says individuals make most of the decisions affecting themselves autonomously, and "there are either no leaders at all or leaders who are very elaborately constrained to prevent them from exercising authority or using their influence to acquire wealth or prestige" (1982: 444).

Among the Bhuket, although they have given up pure nomadism, they have the immediate-return features described by Woodburn. Consequently we find individuals making most of their decisions independently from others, and leaders are prevented from exercising authority. Thus, the Bhuket comprise a collection of politically autonomous individuals. Power, which is a crucial element of any political system, is not to be found in any particular individual but is in the possession of every single individual.

In the following section I will show that political equality is pervasive among the Bhuket based on my observations of the way disputes were settled and the nature of their concept of leadership.

5.2.1 Disputes and Dispute Settlement.

Judicial hearings are an infrequent political activity. Bhuket do not have a strong ideology of communal harmony. Whenever conflicts arise, a procedure is not set in motion to solve them, but instead there is much loud argument and gossiping. Most conflicts within the community remain unresolved. The following were the only attempts at trying to settle disputes during my fieldwork in Long Ayak:

1. Divorce (7.00 a.m. 26 December 1992).

A and B had an argument because A was jealous and accused her husband B of having an affair with another woman. However, she could not point to who this woman was. Jealousy is rampant among the Bhuket and is an important aspect of marital relationships. Besides this A also accused her husband of being lazy and not wanting to hunt and fish. In addition, she charged him with attempting to kill their two year old daughter. The divorce was initiated by A's father. The headman fined A's father \$15 and the whole sum went to B. B did not defend himself even after being asked to speak out by the headman's brother-in-law. The day before Christmas A and B were drunk and they had a fight in public. They were divorced on the 26 December 1992, but B moved back to his wife A's household on the 28 December 1992. The headman was not informed of this. No hearing was held to discuss the matter of them living together again.

2. Family dispute (25 December 1992).

The dispute was between C and her parents (D and E). D is C's stepfather and E's third husband. D wanted C to pay a fine because she hit him. The cause of the fight was because C's mother E accused C's husband, an Iban (Y), of being a drunk and abusive. C, offended by her mother's remarks, attacked her mother, and when her stepfather interfered she started to hit him too. The headman fined C \$50 but she refused to pay. C moved out and stayed with her husband in the logging camp. She took all her belongings from her parents' *kajan*.

A few months later C divorced her husband. Because she initiated it, she did not receive any compensation, but C took both her children, even though Y wanted one. The divorce was not discussed in a hearing. C moved back to her parents' *kajan*. The reason for the divorce was again jealousy. C accused her husband of having an affair with the female cook at the logging camp. Y quit his job, packed up and left.

3. Meeting (9.00 p.m to 12.00 midnight, 26 December 1992).

The generators that were promised by Abang Johari before the General Election arrived on the 18 December 1992 when the headman was away. The headman was annoyed with the man who received them because the equipment was not complete. The meeting also accused the civil servants in the town downriver of not providing the wiring for the project for it would cost the Bhuket \$8000 for the wiring alone. But nobody came up with any suggestion of what to do with the generators or how to raise the money for the wiring.

They also discussed the need to build a small house to place the rice mill as part of a government project and to begin repair work on the bridge that had been washed away by the river. The longhouse committee agreed to begin work on the bridge and the house on Monday 28 December 1992. Nobody turned up on Monday morning and the headman said nothing.

On the 27 and 29 April 1993 the headman went to Lanjak logging camp looking for building materials (nails and zinc). On 30 April 1993 a group of boys helped the headman carry the building materials from U Jet Havet to Long Ayak on foot. The headman later built the house for the rice mill by himself with very little help from the

others. The headman's wife was angry because very few helped and she told me that "to be a leader you will have to be the *anak biak's lipen* (slave)". The bridge was not repaired, however, the headman made steps on a large log as a substitute for the bridge.

From my observations over 12 months, the headman had only imposed a fine three times, once on his nephew who did not pay, another on his son-in-law's sister who refused to pay; the third, a fine for a divorce, was paid once. Fines are a means of institutionalising social control and Bhuket dislike the very idea of them. Even the headman was reluctant to fine and never kept or wanted a share of the fines for himself. *The Sarawak Gazette* of 1879 (cited in Rousseau 1990:198) reported that ".....upper Mahakam chiefs had two Bukat stoned to death because the two had refused to accept a fine from some Iban in reparation for several murders and wanted to retaliate. The chiefs wished to avoid problems with Sarawak and found it polite to dispose of the potential trouble makers."

Bhuket seldom confront their conflicts in order to resolve them; they usually fight them out and let them die off slowly with time. Many disputes within the community are not settled; arguments and fights are thus regular affairs among the Bhuket. However, Bhuket are quick to forgive and forget. The only long-standing dispute is over the land on which the longhouse is built. The people (from several households) who claim the land to be theirs do not want it levelled to create more space for building a proper longhouse. At the moment the longhouse is congested with two rows of houses facing each other. There are a few families who want to build their own *kajan* but are unable to do so because of the lack of land. One particular household is demanding payment for any use of the land but, according to the headman, they have already been compensated with an alternative piece of land in order for the people to be able to use the area around the longhouse. This dispute has remained unsettled since 1988.

In the hunting and gathering past disputes used to be settled by one or the other of the contesting parties simply leaving the band. But now fighting and on-going arguments are common due to a settled lifestyle. Forms of social control within the community are lacking. However, in inter-community conflicts and disputes there is a control mechanism, namely the Kayan *adat*⁶ law, which keeps the Bhuket in check. Yet, even

this is not adhered to at times. On the 22 September 1993 a group of Bhuket primary school boys from Batu Keling took a Kayan boat and paddled themselves to Long Ayak, a very dangerous journey. The Kayan from Batu Keling sent the parents of these children a letter stating that they were fined \$20 a day for taking the boat without permission. The parents involved sent the boat back after three days and did not pay the fine. They decided to keep their children away from school.

5.2.2 Leadership among the Bhuket .

Leaders among hunter-gatherer groups have very little formal authority⁷, and this certainly applies in the Bhuket case. According to Hoffman:

Within a nomadic Punan group, each local encampment of two or three households usually featured one senior male generally as the head of the settlement...The headship of an encampment was....a temporary and ad hoc position...A man assumed the leadership of a settlement through personal attributes alone; he could neither inherit the position or pass it on (1983: 72-3).

A single individual usually occupies the headmanship in any given village in the upper Balui. Formally this is also true for the Bhuket, but there are a few Bhuket who have claimed to be leaders⁸ to get special treatment from logging workers and the company. I have seen two Bhuket men on different occasions claiming to be the headman :

- 1: one man claimed to be the headman to ask for free fuel (diesel)
- 2: and the other said he was the headman to get a tractor driver to level the land on which he was planning to build his farm hut.

Bhuket leaders do not appropriate surplus labour from commoners. They participate actively in farming. Their farms are usually among the largest in the community. Bhuket leaders do not obtain corvées, and they have to provide for their own subsistence, as well as having to give assistance to other members who might ask for it and also provide for the needs of visitors.

Among the Kayan Rousseau notes that "...the *marens* prefer to live in their farmhouse most of the year, returning to the longhouse only for ceremonies and official functions. Even when they are with their people, a distance is maintained : a commoner does not casually touch a *maren*" (1979:227). This distance is not observable among the

Bhuket. It is not only the headman's family who likes to stay in their farmhouse but most Bhuket prefer to do so too.

Among the Kayan the economic and political contrast between *marens* and commoners is linked to specific patterns of interaction between the two groupings. For example "Daily contacts are curtailed by the non-participation of *marens* in co-operative work" (Rousseau, 1979:226). In contrast, the Bhuket headman and his family participate actively in co-operative work, and sometimes they work alone even when they should have been involved in co-operative work groups.

5.3 The Possibility of Rank in an Egalitarian Setting.

Bhuket rank, which they claim to be modelled on that of the Kayan, does not provide effective power for those in positions of leadership. Being a *maren* or *sipoi*⁹ among the Bhuket does not provide differential access to wealth or other socially valued resources, nor does it give the *maren* the right to control the labour or resources of others. The ideological statements concerning the existence of rank do not imply that rank differences will be realized in practice. In exploring Bhuket expressions of rank, we are able to see that the processes governing the political order within the community are full of contradictions; the system does not handle its own contradictions in a homeostatic manner; on the contrary the contradictions define the system.

According to Sahlins :

In certain societies, e.g., Australian aboriginal communities, the only qualifications for higher status are those which every society uses to some extent, namely age, sex, and personal characteristics. Aside from these qualifications, there may be no others. A society in which the only principles of rank allocation are these universals can be designated "egalitarian," first, because this society is at the stratification minimum of organized human societies; second , because given these qualifications, every individual has an equal chance to succeed to whatever statuses may [be] open (1958:1-2)

There are two important points here for the Bhuket case; they are that: the qualifications for higher status may lie in personal characteristics and that an egalitarian society is one in which every individual has an equal chance to succeed to the available statuses.

Bearing these points in mind, I wish to show that Bhuket claims to rank can be understood in terms of the internal dynamics of their egalitarianism. However, in contrast

to Sahlins' position that egalitarianism is "at the stratification minimum of organized human societies", I argue that it is precisely the internal dynamics in an egalitarian society that allow for the possibility of rank or stratification.

First, let me say something about certain prominent Bhuket individuals. Formerly, personal characteristics such as being a good warrior or a good collector of trade items were qualifications for higher status among the Bhuket in the context of interaction with other ethnic groups. However, this status did not translate into authority or power within the community. Bhuket had some very charismatic personalities who were popular and famous in the regional context. Sekudan, the Bhuket hero who fought the Iban at Naha Nyabong, is well known among the Kayan of Uma Belor, the Kenyah of Uma Kelap and the Lisum at Long Pawa. Sekudan, because he undertook to unite his group in the Kapuas, even had the confidence of the Dutch government (Sellato, 1994:198). Another Bhuket personality was Janen, who is still known today by the Baketan of Sungai Anap, Tatau and Nanga Metah, the Melanau of Bintulu, Kampung Abang Galau and the Kayan of the Balui. Janen was responsible for gathering the Bhuket in the Balleh and the Mahakam and bringing them to Kapit. He had the help and the support of the Brooke administration. Sirai, leader of the Bhuket in Nanga Hovat in the Mendalam, was not very popular with the Dutch and Brooke governments but had a good relationship with the Kayan of the Mendalam and the local Taman. He married an aristocratic woman from the Taman settlement of Siut and took her to Nanga Hovat after paying a huge bride price. Janen's nephews Berahang, Ngo and Tehbon are famous among the Kayan of Uma Juman and the Iban of the Balleh and Katibas. Some Kayan, Baketan and Iban have even named their children after these famous Bhuket personalities. The following are accounts I gathered from five different communities about some Bhuket personalities :

1. Berahang and the Kayan of Uma Juman (Long Dupah).

When the Kayan of Uma Juman were in Long Taman they were attacked by Iban; they suffered a severe loss of life and property. The Kayan paramount chief then was Akom Dian; he requested the help of the Bhuket who were at that time living near Belaga. Bhuket were brought upriver from Giam Mikai, one group under Berahang at Ahik Puyak supplied the sentries - stationed to keep guard against any further Iban

attacks. Another group was placed near Long Taman as the vanguard. The group in Ahik Puyak was more settled and their leader, Berahang was later appointed as the Penghulu of the upper Balui. He was later stripped of the title when he was unsuccessful in keeping his people together. Today Temenggung Talik Lisut's family consider Berahang's daughters as their family. There was a marriage contracted between a Bhuket man and a Kayan woman of Uma Juman about 30 years ago and they named their son Berahang.

2. Sekudan and the Kayan of Uma Belor (Long Sah).

The Kayan of Uma Belor migrated from Juman Tibo (Batang Kayan, Apau Kayan) to Long Punuan near Long Bulan.¹⁰ From Long Punuan they moved to Long Bulan and from Long Bulan to Naha Nyabong.¹¹ At Naha Nyabong the Kayan of Uma Belor had as their neighbours Lisum, Bhuket and the Kenyah Uma Kelap who at that time stayed at Apo Telingan near Naha Nyabong. The Iban men from the Balleh (Sut) were working rattan at Naha Nyabong, and three of them were killed by Sekudan who was assisted by Anyie Imang of Uma Belor, the other three were left to the Kenyah of Uma Kelap. But they only managed to kill two and the one survivor returned to the Balleh and brought back a war party. The Iban burned down the Kayan and Kenyah longhouses and attacked the Bhuket and the Lisum. The Bhuket fought with very few casualties on their side. Many of the Lisum and Kenyah of Uma Kelap were killed. Sekudan and his brother Semukau saved part of the Kayan population and took them into the safety of the forest. After the war an aristocratic marriage between Semukau (Sekudan's brother) and Malan (Diang Nyipak's sister) cemented the relationship between the Bhuket and the Kayan of Uma Belor. Diang Nyipak, Malan's brother, married Sudang, a Bhuket woman (some say she was a Lisum). Diang Nyipak was replaced by Semukau, the Bhuket, as chief of Uma Belor. Semukau's son, Lah Uko, succeeded his father, followed by his grandson Bit Ngo, and then his great-grandson, Saging Bit, who is the current headman of Uma Belor. There are ten households in Uma Belor claiming to be of Bhuket descent today.

3. Tehbon and Ngo (Ingau) with the Iban of Nanga Nyimoh, Katibas.

The present headman of the settlement in Nanga Nyimoh is of Bhuket descent. There were many intermarriages between Bhuket and the Iban of Katibas. Jimun married

a Bhuket woman; the Iban called her Insimau and she was related to Ngo who was called Ingau by the Iban. Tehbon, another of Ngo's brothers, stayed with the Iban in Katibas for nearly ten years. This alliance was made to prevent other Iban from attacking them and also to improve the bad relations with the Bhuket of Nanga Hovat, Mendalam who were attacked by the Iban from Katibas. Ngo adopted Jimun's grandson Jugah. Jimun was replaced by his son Lapit, and Lapit was replaced by Bantan as the headman (tuai rumah); Jimun's grandson Jugah became the Penghulu at Nanga Nyimoh.

4. Ngo (Ingau) and the Iban of Nanga Entawau, Balleh.

Ngo, better known as Ingau, by the Iban was formally adopted by the paramount chief of the Balleh, Temenggung Koh. There was a formal exchange of gifts; the Temenggung gave Ingau a *tajau* (jar) and a shirt and trousers, and Ingau gave him his blowpipe. This improved Iban-Bhuket relationships in the Balleh and reduced fear of Bhuket attacks from the Kapuas and Mahakam. Ingau and his four brothers brought stability to the upper Balui by creating a buffer between the Iban and the Kayan.

5. Janen and the Baketan of Nanga Metah.

The Baketan at Nanga Metah said that Janen, the Bhuket leader, was a Baketan who had married a Bhuket woman and became their leader. Very little is known of Janen. He was a guide for the Brooke administration in the Balleh. He was used to gather the scattered Bhuket in the Balleh and the Mahakam, which made government control of the borders less troublesome. Some said that Janen's father was Abang Galau and his grandfather Orang Kaya Tingngang; these were Melanaus from Tatau. His mother was a Baketan from Balleh. Janen married a Bhuket woman named Matap and, upon the death of Surek, his father-in-law, he assumed the leadership of the Sivo Bhuket and later attracted Bhuket from other bands to join his migration down from Ulu Balleh to Kapit and later up the Balui.

Bhuket individualism and the regional political circumstances in which the Bhuket were located led to the emergence of these personalities. Their qualification for higher status was based on their personal characteristics; and Bhuket egalitarianism, in turn,

allowed for such personalities to emerge without any constraints from within the community. Sellato also confirms this situation:

In this open, unorganized context, a notable individual may come to the fore. This may be simply the leader of the band, well known for his leadership skills, his convictions, and his capacity for furthering change, who gains power through his influence over others and who is accepted as leader by other bands. Charismatic personalities such as these, uniters of their people with a vision of the future, are long remembered: Sekudan, leader of the Bukat of the Kapuas; Bulan Jihat, "queen" of the Punan Murung (Sellato, 1986b:248); Tingang Senean, the first historic chief of the Aoheng (Sellato 1986b:310). Sandin reports that a local Baketan leader, Nyalang, became chief of all the Baketan of the region after having brought them all together (1967-1968: 230) (Sellato 1994; 198).

These individuals made their influence felt in the region, as the cases above have illustrated. Nevertheless, this did not amount to them securing any special privilege within their own local groups. Attempts at converting this status into power were part of the processes of adaptation to interaction and contact (war, farming, sedentarization, frontier circumstances) with neighbouring stratified societies; and these latter provided a model for Bhuket. They realised the advantage of a ranked polity in the regional context when they encountered politically powerful neighbours. Therefore, interaction and the political upheaval of the mid-nineteenth century created a need for ranking among the Bhuket. The stratified neighbours and the Brooke Raj also actively supported Bhuket claims of rank, by acknowledging them.

Once agriculturalists created links with Bhuket through marriage they also tended to impose their own ideas of hereditary rank or status on the Bhuket. An example of a conversation which I once listened to can explain this situation better :

A group of Kayan who visited this particular Bhuket family, who in turn, had close ties with the Kayan of Uma Belor through an aristocratic marriage, told the older people in this household that they were of *maren* rank and therefore they should not let their children marry non-*maren*. The visiting Kayan talked about Sekudan and his bravery and the "inherited status" of this household from their blood relationship with Sekudan.

Sellato has also given examples of the possibility of a hereditary transmission of rank among the Punan. According to him

.....a pursuit of reputation and prestige based on the accumulation of goods and aristocratic alliances, leads to the establishment of a line, or "house," of leaders in the community.....Enormous prestige accrues to the descendants of a Punan leader through such a marriage, especially when the group lives in close association with stratified farmers. A certain tendency to rank endogamy makes itself felt, which serves to draw yet tighter the ties between the Punan leader's descendants and noble farmer families (1994:200).

Among the Bhuket of Long Ayak we can also observe a hereditary transmission of prestige and rank, but it is not an inevitable corollary of power within the community.

The very idea of hereditary rank has been suggested to the Bhuket by their neighbours. This might be the reason why present-day Bhuket talk about their inherited rank being derived from a particular brave and famous ancestor. For example, when Berahang's daughter and Gasai's daughter died they were given grand funerals similar to those given to the Kayan *marens*. All the neighbouring Kayan longhouses attended and contributed to the expenses of the funeral. The Kayan recognised these two women as being of high rank due to their inherited status from these famous Bhuket personalities.

The Kayan also gave the Bhuket the idea of hereditary status because they wanted to safeguard their own stratification system. There is evidence that the Kajang people too have been incorporated into the Kayan stratification system, through several aristocratic marriages and the adoption of Kajang children by the Kayan *marens*. These households from which the Kayan aristocrats have adopted children or have intermarried were given "*marens*hip" and absorbed into the wider Kayan ranking system. However, in the case of the Bhuket this *marens*hip is extended to particular families and they remain outside the Kayan stratification system.

The influence from the neighbouring stratified societies was strong but the Bhuket claim to rank was also an internal adaptive strategy in order to bring the Bhuket together and protect themselves from the Kayan, Iban and other enemies. They needed strong and effective leaders who had the reputation for bravery and organization and oratorical skills. These leaders captured slaves to enhance their prestige. It is widely known that Bhuket had slaves and the last Bhuket slave died when Ga'at Iban rebels attacked the Bhuket near Giam Mikai above the Pelagus rapids in 1915. Bhuket also needed leaders to negotiate with the colonial governments and their stratified neighbours during peace

settlements. Leaders like Janen, Sekudan, Berahang and Sirai were sought after by the colonial governments for peace negotiations.

The Bhuket ranking system was a creation of the internal dynamics of their egalitarianism and it acquired a loose structure due to interaction with their stratified neighbours. However, the ranking system was never firmly institutionalised due to Bhuket egalitarianism and individualism. Furthermore, this Kayan-type stratification is losing its appeal to the Bhuket today. With peace the function of a ranking system becomes less significant. What is more the egalitarian nature of the Bhuket people was never threatened or replaced by hierarchy. Individual decision-making was and is central to Bhuket behaviour and not even an influential leader could take away this individual autonomy. Furthermore, because all Bhuket claim to be *maren*, this equalizes the effects of rank. The egalitarian ideology is maintained through their universal claim of rank.

It is important to note that the movement towards social inequality among the Bhuket led to a devolution towards a less controlled community. For example, the Bhuket group under Janen later on broke up into smaller groups that led to Berahang being removed as the Penghulu of upper Balui for he could not keep the Bhuket population together. Sellato has this to say about the shift towards social inequality among the Aoheng, Seputan, and the Kajang, as follows,

This nascent social inequality, the natural outgrowth of kinship ties and marital alliances, soon gives rise, in the appropriate regional social circumstances, to stratification. All that is necessary is for one of these Punan leaders to buy or capture slaves for himself, in imitation of the farmers and to enhance his prestige: the society then finds itself (in practice if not in the ideal) divided into three categories- slaves, those who own them, and everybody else. All the elements of classic social stratification are present: aristocrats, freeman (or commoners), and slaves. It is in this way, or so one may suppose, that the Aoheng, the Seputan, the Kajang, and others became stratified societies (1994: 201).

But with the Bhuket of Long Ayak there is no transition in this manner from egalitarianism to a stratified society. Instead, among the Bhuket ranking and egalitarianism co-exist. Ranking is only expressed when dealing with Kayan or Kenyah or other stratified peoples. Bhuket need to portray themselves as being more organized when in contact with stratified people in order for the interaction to be less intimidating.

In the case of the Bhuket today the ranking system is a convenient ideology that can be abandoned or activated depending on the circumstances. Bhuket maintain the complementary concepts of rank and egalitarianism as a problem because this then maximizes individual opportunities and acts to maintain egalitarian relations (see Flanagan 1989; Poyer,1993). According to Sellato :

The Bukat, for their part, explicitly and firmly rejected every attempt by their leaders to establish hereditary chiefships, as their recent history adequately shows. In spite of their close acquaintance with the strictly stratified society of the Kayan, they remained in a permanent state of "gumlao revolt"^[12] (see Leach,1954) against attempts to import their neighbours' social system into their own. They have preserved and put into practice their ideas of equality and individual autonomy up to the present day (1994: 202).

He shows how the egalitarian ideal is preserved and the temptation to social inequality will be sharper in contacts with stratified farmers (1994:199). However, he does not demonstrate the possibility of both the political ideologies co-existing within a single social system.

Among the Bhuket there is no neat compartmentalization. Although the egalitarian and rank ideologies are quite explicit, the maintenance of both is not a conscious product of community consensus but involves individual choices and decisions. The co-existence of both the ideologies is possible when individualism is the prevalent feature of the social structure. Furthermore, Bhuket do not compartmentalize rank and egalitarian ideologies because they are not necessarily incompatible. In the Bhuket context it was their egalitarian political nature that gave rise to the possibility of rank, for the Bhuket egalitarianism did not suppress but allowed for the emergence of charismatic personalities. This squares with Alexander's comment on Lahanan society, when she says

As both equality and inequality are culturally constituted, there is little heuristic value in assuming that either one is the natural condition of society, indeed, as several accounts of Balinese society have demonstrated, values of hierarchy and equality are not necessarily incompatible (Geertz and Geertz 1975; Warren 1989) (1992: 208).

¹The Bungan cult was started by a commoner, Juk Apuy, and, according to Rousseau (1990: 202), it was fuelled by class antagonisms.

²Bawa Paren is the current headman and he is the grandson of Savai.

³ It is possible that they were influenced by the Baketan (through Jancen) who had a ranking system (see Sandin, 1967-68) and later by the Kayan, because when they were in the Balleh they were in contact with the Baketan who were later removed from the Balleh by the Brooke Raj. The *Sarawak Gazette* of 23 May 1879 reported " I also recommended that the Bakatans should be removed out of the Balleh and Mujong and be placed to live apart from the Dayaks this will be considered after the harvest."

⁴The downriver half of the longhouse are SIB (Sidang Injil Borneo) Christians and the upriver half are mostly Roman Catholics.

⁵These are seldom orders; I have never seen the headman order anyone not even his children or other members of his household.

⁶*Adat* is the body of custom determining the social life of a community, religious practices, and dispute regulations, and is a mechanism of social control.

⁷ Hose and McDougall (1912:ii, 182) and Needham (1972b: 179) stated that nomadic leaders had very little authority and had to rely on persuasion. However, leadership could be hereditary (see Needham 1972b; Tuton Kaboy 1974: 290)

⁸ Cashdan studying the //Gana, a Bushman group, also encountered the problem of many people claiming to be the headman. She said : " I was thus totally unprepared for my first encounter with the //Gana, in which several individuals each claimed to be the "headman" of Molapoand attempted to speak for others, including those in other Molapo bands. As such behaviour would indicate, there are no clear-cut positions of authority among the //Gana...." (1980: 119).

⁹ According to Sellato to call a Bhuket leader *sipoi* (aristocrat) is a form of criticism (1986a: 160). Sellato also stated that the term *sipoi* used by the Bhuket is a loan word and corresponds to nothing in their social organization (1994: 150).

¹⁰ Long Bulan is today settled by the Kenyah Uma Baka.

¹¹ Naha Nyabong is near Batu Keling; now it is one of the largest Kayan settlements on the Balui and is settled by the Kayan of Uma Lusong.

¹²Sellato is using Leach's concept of *gumlao* to mean egalitarianism, and by a permanent state of *gumlao* revolt he means a resistance to any attempts at establishing ascribed ranking, and through resistance maintaining egalitarianism.

Chapter 6: Religion and Cosmology.

In this chapter I will discuss the flexibility present in Bhuket religion and how the explanation and expression of religion is relative in nature from one individual to another. Religion for the Bhuket is not an imposed body or fixed set of knowledge. Bhuket explanations and knowledge of the supernatural world are expanding and cumulative. Sedentarization has led to religious influences being adopted by the Bhuket from their agriculturalist neighbours for it enriches the possibilities of religious explanation. However, they are rather reluctant to adopt the rituals that accompany the explanations. For Bhuket the cosmos is an expanding domain and at the same time certain knowledge of it is constantly forgotten. Therefore, among them there is no one correct cosmology for it is always subject to adaptation and change. Variations and contradictions are prevalent and in presenting their cosmology based on a basic corpus of Bhuket knowledge I hope not to create an impression of coherence in a situation filled with uncertainty and contradictions. I hope not to over-systematize Bhuket religion; Brunton has pointed out that the stress on order in the description of Melanesian religion has been a major failing in the investigations of traditional religions. He says

Most accounts of traditional Melanesian religions stress their systematic aspect. But the evidence suggests that many Melanesian religions are weakly integrated, poorly elaborated in a number of sectors, and subject to a large degree of individual variation and a high rate of innovation and obsolescence (Brunton, 1980: 112).¹

For the Bhuket religion is an attempt at explaining nature and is subject to innovation and individual variation and is a stimulus to knowledge; this has been aptly stated by King for most Bornean groups, when he says

It is a rational response to the world in which rainforest dwellers live; it helps them to explain and come to terms with nature; it helps give meaning to existence; it is born out of contemplation of life and nature; it is a stimulus to further knowledge (1993:246).

6.1 Some Religious Expressions.

Bhuket say that there are evil and good *uboh* (spirits). Evil spirits or the soul of the dead are *bu'jen*. According to Sellato "The Bukat of the Kapuas believe in a single soul (*bujon*) of the living or the dead"(1994:73). However, the soul or spirit of the living

among the Bhuket of Long Ayak is called *tujen*, while the soul of the dead is *bu'jen*. The soul of the dead becomes a dangerous spirit and Bhuket see death as a serious spiritual danger (see Sellato 1994:160-161). Good spirits are *uboh busui* (*pebusui* is the verb for the noun *busui* or *musui*). The good *uboh busui* help men; these include *Burung*, *Labang*, *Ngasing*, *Nyekaling*, *Nyevaring*, *Mapun*, *Negulun* and *Nyepakin*. The good spirits live in three different terrains or domains. The deity *Lasan* lives in *Tehinan* in the sky; *Burung's* home is called *Arung Nuhung Arung Nyeropan* in the *Belengahan* that is the place under the river; spirits also live in hills, mountains, huge rocks and caves and other natural landmarks. For example, *Nyekaling* lives with his wife *Debatu* near *Liang Bukau* about 30 minutes by boat from Long Ayak. Children who are often falling sick are given names of the good *uboh busui* so that these spirits will protect them from the evil sickness-causing spirits.

There are three types of *musui* or ritual singing :

1. *Pebayu*: for healing, predicting and bringing one out of misfortune or illness.
2. *Nyalit*: songs of praise. Songs sung to boost the spirit of the people on the warpath or headhunting raid. They are performed today to praise the deeds of a person or sometimes to insult a person in a more subtle manner.
3. *Musui*: long, individually and spontaneously created poems that tell of the work of the *uboh busui*. It is said that the specialist is aided by his or her *uboh* to be able to perform this creative singing.

The individuals who perform this ritual singing are not possessed by spirits and do not extract the illnesses through the medium of trance. What they actually do is call upon certain deities or spirits to help cure the illness. These individuals say that they can hear the spirits but are not in trance or possessed by them. What they do is sit down surrounded by a group of people who respond at certain points in the singing. The performance can be interrupted by a child crying or the *pebusui* specialist needing a break to smoke. Bhuket do not have a concept or term to refer to this ritual specialist for they are not shamans or mediums; instead they are extremely gifted individuals who can master the *uboh* (spirit) language and the complexity of communicating with the

supernatural world. For the Bhuket these are actually expressions of profound insight used to summon the spirits to help in the healing or to tell a story.

All three types of *musui* are sung in a ritual language and are rhymed. There are standard refrains that are repeated at various steps in these tales of the works of the *uboh busui*. These *musui* are hymns of praise for the *uboh busui* and at times they include long narrative myths, for example, the myth of *Burung Kave*. This myth was told by Tingngang who was given the story by *Burung* one of his *uboh*. *Burung* is a spirit discovered by Tingngang and was subsequently used by Tingngang to aid him in his *pebayu* and *pebusui*. The following is a summarised excerpt of the poetical *musui* of *Burung Kave* performed by Beria Gasai from memory (without the assistance of an *uboh*) of Tingngang's performance :

Ngasing Liling flew using his shield to the Apo Kayan.² He was directed by the glow of a beautiful woman living in the Apo Kayan. Her name was *Lanying de Loying*, the daughter of a chief living in the Apo Kayan. *Ngasing Liling* had to fly fast; however, the people in the Apo Kayan already knew of his journey from the Balui because the decoration on the shield was making a lot of noise when he was flying. The chief of the people in the Apo Kayan prepared himself for war (*ngayau*). He dressed himself in his best war tunic (*sunung* and *labung keriang*)³ to meet *Ngasing Liling*. The chief's name was *Kuli Juk Bam* and he could not be wounded (*kebal*⁴). The chief walked out of the longhouse and it started to rain when the sun was shining bright (*aloh lengavan*). He opened his arms and looking up to the sky said "If we were to die in this attack the rain should turn into blood and if victory be on our side, it should rain as usual". When the rain fell as usual the chief waited for *Ngasing Liling* with a certain confidence. *Ngasing Liling* landed in the downriver part of the longhouse (*butung arung*) and attacked and killed a man. The women in the longhouse started to wail and cry upon seeing the man die. *Ngasing Liling* walked like *itun kunung* (a thin paddy leaf) very boastfully towards the chief. Both of them started to fight (*periring tavang*). The glow from both their swords was like the sun. Both were undefeatable. Both of them gave up fighting and the chief married his daughter *Lanying de Loying* to *Ngasing Liling*. *Ngasing Liling* became the chief of the Apo Kayan after marrying the chief's daughter. After a very long time *Ngasing Liling's* brother *Burung* came to the Apo Kayan on a headhunting expedition. Not knowing that they were brothers they fought. They fought for a long time and *Burung* realised that *Ngasing Liling* was his brother, so he decided to give-up. *Burung* could not be killed by other peoples' swords, only his own sword could kill him. So *Burung* gave his sword to his brother *Ngasing Liling* and asked his brother to kill him. *Ngasing Liling*, not knowing that *Burung* was his brother killed him. *Ngasing Liling* only realised that he had killed his brother when he saw *Burung* lying on the ground dead. So *Ngasing Liling* tried to bring *Burung*

back to life (*penyalung*) by calling upon *Lasan*, *Labang* and *Lasan's* adopted daughter *Lanying de Kelamiyan* who are the healing spirits. After many trials and tribulations they finally raised *Burung* from his death (*musui* performed by Beria Gasai, 18 March 1993).

The above summarised excerpt of the *musui* "*Burung Kave*" was a *pebusui* performed by Tingngang to convey the story of the life and journeys of the spirit *Burung*. I was told that Tingngang had many spirits that aided him in both the *pebayu* and the *pebusui*. The agriculturalist neighbours too had reverence for Tingngang's ability to communicate with the spirits, and his ability in using them in healing were much talked about by the agriculturalists. Hose and McDougall have mentioned the reputation enjoyed by hunter-gatherers as shamanistic healers among their sedentary neighbours (1912, ii :190). This ability to communicate with the spirit world by certain Bhuket had led to them gaining respect from their neighbours. As Sellato observes of the Punan :

Considered by these neighbors as beings intermediate between human and animal, between culture alienated from the realm of spirits and raw nature in constant contact with them, the Punan are by their very essence the best of mediators. It is not uncommon to find, in the myths of the farming groups, Punan playing the role of messengers of the spirits (see Revel-Macdonald 1978, Sellato 1983a). Looked down upon for their way of life, Punan regain a little respect due, paradoxically, to the animal qualities ascribed to them by their farmer neighbors (Sellato, 1994:161).

If this ritual singing is used for healing purposes the *uboh busui* is praised and called to help that particular individual who is suffering an illness. Usually the *pebusui* specialist needs the help of a group of people to repeat the standard refrains (*nyabei* or *nahan*) to induce the specialist into a conversation with the *uboh busui*.⁵ The specialist is said to be able to hear the *uboh busui* speak, and see them too, and he or she relays it to the audience in the form of *musui*. Sellato and Lumholtz have observed this practice among the Bhuket of the Kapuas and Mahakam

For cases of serious illness, the Bukat have a choice of two types of ritual healing, one in which the illness is symbolically extracted (*pevayu*), the other in which a specialist makes a spiritual journey (*musui*) in search of the straying soul. In the latter case, the healer is assisted by special spirit helpers (*atu busui*). Lumholtz reports that the Bukat of the Mahakam have healers (which he calls by the regional name of *belian*, here inappropriate), of whom some are women (1920:216). He notes elsewhere that the ideas of the Bukat with regard to these "*belian*" and to illness and its treatment are identical to those of the Aoheng and possibly are derived from them (1920:434) (Sellato, 1994:74).

Bhuket say that the spirits that are called in the singing can extract the illness; the specialist himself does not go in search of the straying soul by making a spiritual journey. They also say that by renaming a sick child with the name of the *uboh musui* will protect the child from evil spirits.

Musui can be used for healing and it also has a purely entertaining feature. Some *pebusui* specialists perform the *musui* to entertain themselves or some others who request them to perform. Nowadays most of the *pebusui* specialists perform when they are alone for it does not attract much interest among the younger generation. They said that they still had to perform for the purpose of entertaining their *uboh musui* and also it gives the specialist a certain satisfaction in revealing the works, journey or life of the spirits.

The *musui* is full of complex imagery and metaphor. Bhuket say that the words used are aesthetically pleasing. Very few Bhuket understand this ritual language and its rich symbolism. It involves a highly developed aesthetic sense that brings joy to those involved.

The following are some examples of the difference in the *uboh* and the ordinary Bhuket language :

Table 17: Spirit Language.

| English | Bhuket | <i>melain uboh</i> (spirit language) |
|---------|-----------------------|--|
| child | <i>anak</i> | <i>onik</i> |
| death | <i>kave</i> | <i>suleh, ngivan avang, nachun</i> |
| eat | <i>kuman/ngepasuk</i> | <i>ngetajan, nesukik</i> |
| fruits | <i>buak</i> | <i>kaung</i> |
| machete | <i>malat</i> | <i>bulong, kilam, bajo</i> |
| man | <i>loleh</i> | <i>kuli, ahung, aran, singngiro</i> |
| shield | <i>telavang</i> | <i>tavang, tepakun, singngo, kovo, teravai</i> |
| sibling | <i>pari</i> | <i>sa'oh</i> |
| sky | <i>avang</i> | <i>sulei, tehinan</i> |
| wind | <i>salit</i> | <i>haying, tuvung, pesilo, beveyang, muhan</i> |
| woman | <i>doro</i> | <i>lanying, mutung, nya'oh, nya'ang, dihi</i> |

The *uboh* language is very different from ordinary Bhuket. For example, the name given to Long Ayak by the *uboh busui* is "*Niting Pesemin Horung Niting Pesemin Liang.*"

The relation of humans and animals is also an important dimension in Bhuket religion. Bhuket say that offending or mocking an animal brings about *huven*, a storm which is accompanied by thunder (*duru*) and lightning (*ilar aloh*), and it is said that humans can be transformed into rock in such storms. It is interesting to note here an incident I observed on 17 September 1993: a boy playing with a dead crab (*keivang*) was reprimanded by his mother; she asked him to throw it away for fear of a *huven*. That night while having our dinner there was a thunderstorm and his mother reminded the boy that the thunderstorm was because he had been playing with the dead crab and had offended the soul of the animal. The concept of petrification is expressed by many other groups in Borneo (see Freeman, 1968:353-9; Needham, 1964:136-49). Brosius states a similar view held by the Penan:

In the Penan view, both human life and all forms of animal life presumes the presence of a soul. Even such creatures as sago grubs, hairy caterpillars and frogs are believed to have souls. In the case of insects and other forms of animal life, it is their souls which may potentially be offended by mockery, reporting transgressions to Bale' Gau and causing thunderstorms (*liwen*) (1992:400).

Besides animals Bhuket say certain types of trees and plants have souls or spirits.⁶ Bhuket say that the sago grubs have souls and when extracting sago there should not be noise or much talking for it might offend the soul of the sago. During my first trip to extract sago (*mahap*) I asked many questions; and I was told that we did not get much *alok* (sago flour) that time because they were busy answering my questions and might have offended the soul of the sago. Two other types of trees that are considered to have strong spirits are the *Tekuli* (incense-producing tree) and the *Ara*. Another mythical tree is the *Belitok* which Bhuket and other hunter-gatherers say, if chopped down could cause the death of all the people in the district of Belaga. They say that there is only one such tree in the whole district and loggers are warned to be careful. There are also certain types of plants that are said to be able to keep evil spirits away, one such plant is *sawob*.

Although they have been Christians for more than 20 years, this does not stop the Bhuket from expressing the existence of spirits and ghosts. There is a strong fear of evil spirits. Amulets or charms are also kept (*pengaroh*)⁷ and can be strange objects (stones,

horn, bone, etc) worn or kept which are used as charms against evil and for fortune or luck.

The Bhuket also talk about witchcraft and sorcery. They say that they themselves do not practice it, but it is the Kayan from Mahakam (who have married Bhuket women) who have brought this practice to Long Ayak. They also say that their agriculturalist neighbours also possess such powers. Witchcraft (*beliyau*) and magical fears are rampant among the Bhuket. They have a strong fear of being poisoned by sorcery and some deaths were said to have been caused by sorcery.

There are two other religious concepts which relate the supernatural to individual behaviours; they are *tengngen* and *pali*. Certain behaviours like not offering food can result in *tengngen*, which refers to misfortune or sometimes even death befalling the person who is not offered food. *Pali* refers to prohibition in certain types of behaviour, especially in the relationship between the husband and wife when the wife is pregnant (see Chapter Three). Both the concepts relate to supernatural harm that will befall individuals within the community due to certain inappropriate behaviour. This seems to be a form of self-imposed social control on an individual's behaviour; it arises out of concern for another individual or the community as a whole and draws attention to retribution in the mystical realm. These types of mystical retribution have also been observed among the Semai (Dentan 1968: 55) and the Batek (Endicott, 1988:117), especially related to the offering of food to others.

6.2 The Individuation of Religion.

Individuation is present in the experience, expression and interpretation of the *musui*. Only a few Bhuket can *pebusui*. Bhuket say that only those who have *uboh busui* can perform the *pebayu* and the long complicated *musui*. Most of these specialists have their own style of performing the *musui*. Only the elderly appreciate and understand it.

I witnessed five *pebusui* specialists perform; two of them are said to possess *uboh busui*. Each one says that the others' *musui* is not good enough. Some do not agree with the content of each others' *musui*, and a few say that the tune in which the *musui* is sung

is not correct for the specialist will have to change the tune in which he or she is singing everytime a different *uboh* is present in his/her *musui*.

Individuation is not only present among the performers but also in the responses of the audience to the *musui*. Some smile, some sleep, some cry, some shout at various points of the performance; some say that they feel young again when they listen to the *musui* and have a longing for the old ways. I was told that when the late Tingngang used to perform, the audience would be moved to the extent that they would jump up and chop down a tree or the audience would all *ngarang* (dance).

I once listened to Nyudap, Tingngang's wife, *nyalit* at the view from our farm hut, when she was all alone; the rest had gone weeding. She was praising the mountains and the evening sky. She is said to have the most beautiful voice in Long Ayak. She performed it for herself and for the *uboh busui*. We had an interesting conversation following this incident. She told me that the hill behind our farm is the home of *Lelanying De Chaho Aloh*. We could also see Liang Bukau which she said is the home of *Debatu, Nyekaling's* wife. She told me that her husband gave the headman's wife Beria (Ping) Gasai life after she was slashed by an evil spirit. He used his *musui* to *penyalung* (a *pebayu* performed to give life to the dead). The headman's wife confirmed it; she told me if not for Tingngang she would not be alive today. He also rescued his sister-in-law Napi who was kidnapped by an evil spirit. She was missing in the forest for nearly two weeks. He rescued her with the help of his *uboh busui Burung* and *Nyekaling*⁸ by performing the *musui*. He performed the *musui* for days to bring her back to Long Ayak. His sister-in-law Napi was brought back by *Tuan*, and *Burung* stayed on and fought with the evil spirit. Napi lost her voice in the event and Tingngang performed the *pebayu* to return her to her normal self. Napi later married Nihong, the grandson of the famous Sekudan.

The long complicated *musui* has no set of messages to be deciphered; it is an endless conversation between the *uboh* and the *pebusui* specialists. Usually the conversation is about the wars (*mangngiau*), travels and loves of a particular *uboh*. Each specialist has a different set of *uboh* to help them perform.

What leads me to propose that there is individuation in *musui* is because of the uncertainty about its interpretation; the frequent instability of decision on the interpretation, and the instability of what words mean, as well as their extension and change in meaning. This causes the specialists to contradict one another. Bhuket religious expressions are usually based on individual religious experiences or religious experiences surrounding a situation or event.

Bhuket have adopted Christianity since 1973; all the *pebusui* specialists told me that they were Christians, but they have continued to perform their *musui*. Christianity has resulted in divisions in the community. The downriver half of the longhouse is SIB (Sidang Injil Borneo) and the upriver half is Roman Catholic. One sect in particular refuses to take part in such activities because they contravene the teachings of Christ. Bhuket adoption and adaptation to Christianity has also led to the individuation of religion.

The following is a summarised excerpt of the initial passage of a *musui* performed by Lijap Lohot who is said to have *uboh musui* to help and guide him in his performance of the *pebusui* and *pevayu*. The initial passage of a *musui* is usually a journey summoning all the spirits to gather in the *Tehinan* (a gathering place of all the spirits before the beginning of a story-telling or a healing ritual) and also a conversation between the *pebusui* specialist and the spirits he is summoning to clarify his intentions. This *pebusui* was recorded upon request from me so the specialist had to clarify my presence to the spirits:

Wind : Why is this woman interested in *pebusui*?

Lijap: She wants to take the conversations and the games of the *uboh* to her land.

Lijap continues to sing : the wind moves from this house to the sky to summon the other *uboh*, the wind reaches the confluence of the Bukau.⁹ The wind reaches the huge rock in Bukau and woke the *uboh* there. The wind and all the *pevayu uboh* travelled from the Bukau to the top of the sky (*Avang, Sulei, Tehinan*).The wind touches a branch on the canopy of the trees in the *avang*, the branch that points to the sun. The sound in *Tehinan* is like *Milei aloh nyalung kaung*.¹⁰ When the wind woke the *uboh* in *Tehinan* the environment was filled with thunder and lightning, which, according to Bhuket, makes the trees bear fruits.

Uboh in Tehinan : Who woke us up?

Wind : Do not misunderstand, it is a person from *niting pesemin horung, niting pesemin liang*. They want to know about the *pebusui*.

Uboh : We will tell her a story.

Lijap continues to sing and relay to us what he sees and hears: *De Uling (uboh)* woke the other *uboh* up and asked them to prepare tobacco for him for he will be going headhunting. There were many female *uboh* there: *Letaak* from Batu Tibang which is the centre of the world, *Turi Uving* from the moon and *Ngonam* (the healing *uboh* used by Lijap in his *pevayu*). They came to join in the *pebusui*.

Ngonam : We will prepare the tobacco; it is not a problem but what a pity this woman who has asked us to *pebusui* does not understand our language.

Ngonam cursed herself because of this unfortunate situation "*Atang Lanyan Atang Kaung*" (which means death to the fruits). She went over to give the tobacco to *De Uling* and his friends.

Ngonam : If we tell you a story the whole night, can all of you keep awake.

All the *uboh* : We miss the games and the conversations we used to have with the Bhuket people; they have ignored and abandoned us. Why have they called us, they all follow the teachings of Christ and they all pray and have forgotten us; they miss us in the *Tehinan* too.

The wind started to move . The spirits started to dress up in their war tunics. All the trees were uprooted because of the strong winds. All the *uboh* are flying with their shields (*teravai*). The *uboh* will begin their travels to the headwaters of the Mahakam for headhunting (*mangngiau*). The wind reaches the confluence of the Balleh.¹¹ The adventures of *De Uling* and his friends begin (Performed by Lijap Lohot, Saturday, 4 September 1993)

Lijap Lohot who performed the above *musui* was said to have acquired the assistance from such male spirits as *De Uling, Nyabun, Tavantari, Tekasing*, and female spirits such as *Ngalot, Mavon* and *Ngonam*. He discovered some of them and had also taken over some of his father's *uboh*. He was discouraged by his children from performing, but he secretly performed with a group of his friends or when he was alone in the *parung* (loft). He told me that he dreams that the spirits ask him to perform and only after a *pebusui* does he feel content and satisfied. We can see here that the *musui* is inspired by dream experience and this contributes to the individuation and the variability present in Bhuket religious ideas. Freeman points out the importance of dreams in Iban religious ideas and how they contribute to the variability observed in religious experience in his review of Erik Jensen's monograph *The Iban and their Religion* (1974). He dismisses Jensen's constant emphasis on ordered pattern:

Because of the extent to which they [Iban] are inspired by dream experience, the religious ideas of the pagan Iban evince great variability. As Howell observed (Sarawak Gazette, 1 April, 1909): "Each tribe has its own

peculiarity." And within tribes there is variability between long-house communities, and within long-houses between *bilek* and *bilek*, and within *bilek*, between individual and individual - most of this variability being [sic] directly attributable to the variability inherent in dreams, dreams being essentially protean and not characterized by repetitive patterning (1975:286).

What is interesting about the *musui* is that the religious idea or knowledge is expressed by only one individual at a time, and this individual conveys the idea to the rest of the community through his or her *pebusui*. It is up to the other individuals whether they accept the idea or not. Most of the time the listeners do not even bother to remember the details of the *pebusui*. I have observed certain individuals who doubt and question religious knowledge generated through *musui*. For the Bhuket such knowledge is not a power beyond human control which intrudes upon their minds. These spirits and deities are not a symbol of force and domination having power over humans. Bhuket religious knowledge is not authoritative but is relative in nature. What is clear here is the 'democratic' element of their mystical thinking.

I use the terms spirits and deities to refer to *uboh*. When I use the term deities it is usually to refer to the *uboh* living in *tehinan* (sky). However, Bhuket do not distinguish the status of the *uboh* or class them into important and not so important *uboh*. Each *pebusui* specialist will have different sets of *uboh* who will be significant to each one of them. So for example, *Burung* would be a very important *uboh* for Tingngang but not to Lijap, all this points to individuation and to the fact that Bhuket are egalitarian even in their mystical thinking by not giving any one of the *uboh* extra power or importance over another. It is actually a special relationship of the *pebusui* specialist with their own set of *uboh* that makes each one of their performance individual and distinctive in character. Some *uboh* have special functions like *Lasan* who is the *uboh* who is most often called upon for healing purposes. In this case I have used the term deity for he is an *uboh* who lives in *Tehinan* and has a specific function. My use of the terms spirits and deities is not meant to contrast them on the basis of importance or status but more on the basis of difference in the dwelling place but Bhuket themselves would not make such a distinction.

There appears to be no generally accepted moral order among the Bhuket and it is difficult to get any agreement about the nature of their performing arts and rituals. Life-

cycle rituals are highly variable and may not even be performed upon the birth of a child, a marriage or the death of a person. For example, *Sapak Sao*, a Bhuket dance performed at funerals, is not performed at most funerals. They are flexible about the rules upholding a particular ritual.

Some elements of the life-cycle rituals appear to be adaptations of Kayan rituals, especially in marriage and funerary rites. Staying awake the whole night before the burial, restriction on travelling and hunting during the mourning period and so on seem to be similar to Kayan practices. The Kayan *parap* (songs of praise) and *ngajat* (dance) are performed at Bhuket marriages but they are an innovative and creative experience for the individuals who perform them.

In particular, each individual experience is left in the felt or emotional dimension and seldom expressed in verbal form. If discussed it brings about a variety of opinions. Rituals are highly variable and may be dispensed with altogether. Thus, Bhuket knowledge of rituals (especially dominant in *musui*) is based on personal experience rather than on collective representations. There is a high degree of uncertainty, innovation and self-contradiction in Bhuket religious expressions and practices.

6.3 Cosmology and the Pantheon.

Tehinan (sulei or avang) is the gathering place of the deities. *Minang* is from a different and separate world. *Tingngai* also known as *Tipang* lives in the uppermost part of the human world, which is known as *Tulik*. There are also deities living under the river and this underworld is called *Belangahan*. Humans, animals and plants live in between *Tehinan* and *Belangahan*. *Tehinan* and *Belangahan* are closer to the human world but *Minang's* and *Itoh's* world is separate and is made of gold. *Minang* has closed his world to humans; humans cannot communicate with *Minang* like they can with other spirits. A similar situation is referred to by Sellato among the people of the Muller mountains :

The Bukat and Punan groups of the Muller mountains recognize a couple or pair of creator deities (whose relationship and gender vary), *Kito* and *Minang*. They are viewed as having withdrawn from the affairs of the world and are rarely or never called upon (1994:161).

Ngesukun is the deity from *Belangahan*, and he holds the earth when it shakes from earthquakes and tremors. The deity in *Tehinan* is *To'o* and her husband *I'vung* is from the place between *Tehinan* and *Belangahan*, the place where the water falls. *Tipang* holds the sky.

The domains close to humans comprise

1. *Tulik* (*Tingngai* also known as *Tipang*)

2. *Tehinan* (*To'o*)

3. The place where the water falls (*I'vung*)

4. The place of humans, animals, plants, *bujen* (soul of the dead or evil spirits),

uboh busui and *uboh pevayu*

5. *Belangahan* (*Ngesukun*, *Burung*, *Ngasing Liling*, *Nunie*, *Nyaban*)

A world away and separate from humans is inhabited by

6. *Minang* and his wife *Itoh*

From the above we can see six different dimensions; five close to the human world and the sixth is an abstracted and distant one. The first five domains are dimensions that seem to have a real functional existence and spirits dwelling there interact with humans, but the separate dimension inhabited by *Minang* and *Itoh* does not seem to have any importance to the *Bhuket*; they were creators and their purpose and function seem to have ended. They are not worshipped or called upon. The first five domains expand because spirits dwelling there intermarry and new spirits are constantly discovered and added to the pantheon, but some of the spirits are also forgotten over time.

To'o and *I'vung* have many children; three of them are *Kemalun*, *Ngealoh* (sun), *Kejemoing* (stars). *Minang* is said to have created *Labang* from an egg. *Labang* is a healing spirit and eggs are used in *pevayu* for healing purposes. *Labang* is married to *Lanying Nya'ong De Kelamiyan*. *Lasan* is another *pevayu* deity who is said to hold the knowledge of all forms of medicine. *Minang* is also said to have created *Burung*, *Ngasing Liling*, *Nunie*, and *Nyaban*. *Burung* is said to be married to *Lelangit* a spirit from the horizon (*batin avun*).

Minang is also said to have created augury (*beiyerk*); birds or other animals warn humans of a misfortune or provide an auspicious sign.¹² Some of these are *Mengulung*,

Bukang, *Beraga* and *Sehkek*, which are bad omens. For example, *Sehkek* is the sound of laughter from an invisible animal which Bhuket say is the sound of evil spirits in the vicinity and that it might rain. There are also good omens; for example, *Telajan* (a type of bird) is a good sign for hunting and signifies that the hunt will certainly be a success. The importance of signs and messengers from animals is prevalent among Bornean people as King noted "...Borneo peoples hold to the importance of signs or augurs from the gods, usually communicated by birds, but also by certain animals" (1993:235; see also Freeman, 1970: 116 -20).

For the Bhuket, there is another spiritual plane which is intimately related to the world of the humans usually associated with natural landmarks, extraordinary natural formations and aesthetically pleasing geographical locations. This phenomenon is also common among other Bornean groups. Dayaks identify certain geographical locations and natural features with the life and events of the deities and spirits (King, 1993:234). In the following I will list the *uboh* (spirits) dwelling in real geographical locations.¹³

1. Bukau

Negulun the great carver, carved the tiger-shaped stone in the Bukau. Bukau is the dwelling place of *Debatu* and her brother *Nyepakin*. *Debatu* married *Nyekaling* (also known as *Sina Tuan*) and they have a son *Nyevaring*. *Nyevaring* married *Diu Nyaban*, *Burung's* sister from *Belangahan*. Bhuket used to live in the Bukau but now it is the territory of the Kayan of Batu Carlow. However, Bhuket still go there to gather fruits during the fruiting season for they had planted many trees there. Bhuket also tell a story which explains the abundance of wild fruits there. It is said that *Eling-Eling* (*Dirang's* brother), a character from Bhuket *Suket* (oral story), threw a huge basket full of fruits in the area. These seeds were scattered everywhere and that is the reason why Bukau has many fruit trees.

2. Liang Jalin

In a cave in the headwaters of the Bukau lives a male spirit named *Terenanyun Terenyulan*.

3. Long Saan

De Manok Lelatang Saan lives in the headwaters of the Saan. She is said to control the flow of the river. *Manok* refers to a gentle flowing river with fine gravels and sand. There are more rapids above the Saan than downriver. One such rapid, less than 30 minutes above the Saan, is the Ayu, which the people of the upper Balui say is more dangerous than the Bakun when the level of the river is high.

4. Batu Tibang

The female spirit in Batu Tibang is called *Letaak*. Other spirits living there are *Luang Pinang Kuli Lelehong Tibang*. His mother is *Atun Bukung* and his sister is called *Paruk Nutung Pemasing Bulan*. Batu Tibang is said to be the centre of the world and all the spirits living in the spiritual plane close to humans have to go to Batu Tibang before going up to the *Tehinan*, if summoned by humans to perform the *pebusui* or the *pevayu*.

5. Long Taman

Near a lake called Takung Pelajo lives *Kuli de Takung*. It is said that Tingngang the great *pebusui* specialist, felled a *tekuli* tree that was in the centre of Takung Pelajo. In the headwaters of the Taman river lives *Olan Jang* and his sister *Murung Urun*.

6. Benalui

Bhuket were living in the Benalui in the 1950s. Now it is the Kayan settlement of Uma Daro. The waterfall in the headwaters of the Benalui is called Telang Gagarun and the sand there is fine and glitters like gold. The spirit said to be dwelling there is *Ahung Mapun Ahung Mapan*.

7. Long Ayak and U Jet Havet.

The spirit living here is a female spirit called *Lelanying De Aloh Chaho*.

These are just some examples given by Bhuket of the spirits dwelling in real geographical locations. There are some other spirits in other places which have already been forgotten and new spirits are constantly discovered.

6.4 The Innovative Nature of Religious Knowledge.

Bhuket cosmology and religious ideas are not fixed but expand and change. For example, when I asked Lijap Lohot certain questions related to Bhuket cosmology he

would say that he does not know it at the moment but may be able to provide an answer to the question some time in the future. The information has yet to be communicated to him by the spirits or deities through dreams or in his *pebusui*. According to King "Dreams are also an important mechanism of religious innovation and change, since one's dreams can produce wholly new ideas and practices" (1993: 234, referring to Freeman, 1975:284-7). Freeman also stresses, "...the fundamental importance of the dream in the religious life of the Iban, and the remarkable extent to which dreams produce not "ordered pattern", but innovation and change"(1975: 285).¹⁴

Religious knowledge tends to grow, but this knowledge is held by only a few people who sometimes are not able to recall past knowledge, which will then be lost forever. Sellato mentions a half-forgotten pantheon among the Punan (1994: 162), which is also true of the Bhuket pantheon.

Religious knowledge or ideas are in the possession of certain individuals and held individually. The significance of this knowledge in controlling their daily lives and in determining Bhuket action is minimal and not observable. Innovation and individuation are features of Bhuket religious expressions and explanations.

Religion for most Bhuket is much more an intellectual pursuit and of rather less spiritual significance. Rituals are not performed for the deities or the spirits but are usually performed for humans with the help of the deities and spirits. It is also interesting to note the entertaining nature of these performances, especially the *pebusui*. There is no form of worship or prayer or offerings to the deities among the Bhuket. What is obvious is a lack of rituals among them. This feature of hunter-gatherers has been observed by others (J.Nicolaisen 1976a:215; Barth 1964; Douglas 1982 cited in Sellato,1994:162). Aptly Sellato views "the Punan band as a 'secular' society, pragmatic and little given to religious belief or behaviour..."(1994:162).

Although I have outlined briefly Bhuket cosmology I must emphasise the pragmatic and non-religious attitude of most Bhuket in their past headhunting practices and in their present agricultural activity. Bhuket had a warlike reputation, but, headhunting did not have any religious or ritual significance. Headhunting was part of

feuding and warfare and in most cases among the Bhuket it was to seek revenge and comprised a political response. According to Rousseau :

Unlike swiddeners, nomads retaliated against the actual culprits, even if they had to wait for years to do so (Hose and McDougall 1912: ii. 180-1): while settled groups tried to maintain some kind of cosmic balance by replacing victims with trophies, nomads were motivated by straightforward revenge (1990:272).

Rituals which required the use of the trophy heads were absent among the Bhuket unlike among the agricultural communities of Borneo (see King, 1993:237; Rousseau 1990: 275). The religious aspect of headhunting does not appear in Bhuket explanations and expressions of their religious life. However, some Bhuket say that headhunting was practised to end the mourning period. This might have been an outcome of influence from their sedentary neighbours, especially the Kayan and the Iban with whom the Bhuket have had various forms of contact.

Bhuket have also been reluctant to borrow rituals related to rice farming or to longhouse dwelling. Rice is treated with great respect among the agriculturalists but this practice is not something the Bhuket exhibit, even after the adoption of agriculture. Sellato has mentioned this feature as well among the Punan:

Their evident reluctance to grant a sacred character to a material object like a house or to an economic activity like rice farming (two spheres closely linked and highly ritualized among the settled peoples but secular among the Punan), along with an absence of any inclination towards their neighbours' cosmogonic beliefs and theories, the notable minimalism of the ritual and religious sphere in the Punan traditional culture, and their lack of enthusiasm for borrowed rituals, all lead to the conclusion that Punan societies are fundamentally non-religious and solidly pragmatic (1994:206-207).

6.5 Variability in Rituals.

Among the Bhuket we can see that rites of passage are minimal and if a certain ritual is being performed it does not mean that it is a common practice in the whole community. Individuals might or might not perform it; life-cycle rituals do not seem to acquire any importance in the life of an individual Bhuket. As Sellato states for the Punan:

It has been said that rites of passage in traditional Punan culture are virtually absent, and in fact almost no reference is found to rituals concerning, for instance, pregnancy or birth. A discussion of life-cycle rituals must therefore centre on marriage and death (1994:204).

Bhuket have few rituals, but the few they do perform are highly variable. What is difficult to decide is what is long-established and what is a product of recent change. I am not certain if the rituals were variable in the past; but they are highly variable today. For example, mourning rites (*nyalim*) after a death are highly variable between individuals, even within the same family. In the past, some deaths did not even receive a burial; the dead person was left in the settlement site and the whole community moved. This confirms information available in other written sources which states "that Bukat funerary ritual was extremely minimal or even nonexistent altogether. The Bukat abandoned the dying person and the camp" (Bouman, 1924:175-176; cited in Sellato, 1994:74). Lumholtz also observed that when a person died, everyone else fled, leaving the corpse behind (Lumholtz 1920:219; cited in Sellato 1994:74). However, Bhuket do have a concept of a funeral, which is called *pamoh*, and of mourning referred to as *nyalim*. The person who is mourning cannot do any work; if it is a man who is mourning, he cannot *ngetavak*, which means that he cannot cut his hair or go hunting until the next full moon. Some deaths are celebrated with masked dancing (*bajing*), which is a different form of dance from the *sapak soa*. Bhuket also have a form of ritual singing and wailing called *lematang* at funerals. As Sellato says

Present-day Bukat bury their dead and may practice a ritual in which the soul is escorted to the afterworld. This ritual (*lematang*) is probably borrowed from the people of the Muller mountains (*lomatang* in Hovongan; *nemotang* in Aoheng) (1994:74).

However, I think that death is and was treated in variable ways by the Bhuket. For they do have their own concept of a funeral, a form of celebration for the dead and of mourning for the dead. They also told me that in the old days some corpses were placed in *tepiruk*, in rocks and caves which were carved. Different *puhuk* had different practices and external influences also varied. For example, the Sivo were more influenced by the Aoheng, the Metevulu by the Iban and most other groups were subject to Kayan influence. I was also told that to come out of mourning, Bhuket used to go headhunting: a practice prevalent among the Iban and the Kayan. According to Hose and McDougall

trophies had a role in funerary rites (1912; i:158) and headhunting marked the end of mourning among the agriculturalists (1912; i:176; ii:38). Thus, certain Bhuket *puhuk* might have been influenced in their contact with people who had such practices. Sellato also notes the varied sources of religious influence on the Punan

It is important to note that some Punan groups may have been subject to multiple or multiphased religious influences, according to the contacts they had with different major ethnic groups (1994:204).

Variations can also be encountered in the *musui* singing. The disagreements and contradictions encountered amongst the *pebusui* specialists arise because the *musui* acts on the senses and emotions; it provokes responses. The messages in the *musui* do not necessarily suggest solutions to problems or answers to questions. Indeed, there may be no set message to be deciphered. Among the variety of responses evoked, some people may think of answers to satisfy an intellectual impulse. The question is whether there is one correct answer or many partial answers. My investigations to find the 'right' interpretation or answer might have also led to the disagreements. Doubt implies the existence of alternatives or choice which accounts for the variability present in religious explanations and practices; there is freedom to deviate from the acts enjoined for a ritual or to change them so as to fit a particular situation or circumstance.

There could have been variability in the past due to the processes of fusion-fission of the hunting and gathering Bhuket. This allowed for the flourishing of diversity. Variability could also have been due to the vast extent of territory in which Bhuket bands used to live. They were highly dispersed and rather isolated from one another. Where settlements were sparse Bhuket generally maintained more options and greater cultural and religious diversity.

The coming together of previously separate Bhuket bands because of such processes and events as war, disease, and sedentarization, could also have been responsible for the variability in life-cycle rituals and in other aspects of Bhuket life. For example, Bhuket say that there are differences in the performance of the *musui* between the Bhuket of Semukung descent, of Heng descent and the Koyan and Sivo. Although it has been nearly 100 to 150 years (in some cases more recently) that Bhuket bands have

amalgamated, they still say that they can distinguish the difference in the *puhuk*, especially in language, behaviour and attitudes for the religious adaptation of each *puhuk* might have differed from one another.

Finally, Bhuket have been converted to the Christian religion since the early 1970s, but their old pre-Christian religious expressions and explanations have by no means been eliminated. Christianity interacted with the old religion and blended with it in many ways due to the accumulative nature of Bhuket religious expression and needs. This too has led to variability in rituals and religious explanations; the level of adherence to Christianity and its dogmas varies from one individual to another. However, Christianity and modern education are beginning to dominate the younger generation's thinking with its powerful and authoritative presence in the region.¹⁵

6.6 Collective Representations and Personal Experience

Religious expressions for the Bhuket arise from the continuous flux of experience. Religion is a fluid and interdependent phenomena. What is experienced does not exist in an absolute sense, but only in a relative way, as a passing phenomenon.

Experience, with its qualitative character, varies continuously along particular dimensions. For example, in the various responses of the audience in a *musui* performance, the participants will enjoy a sequence of experience whose qualitative character varies with changes in the orientation of the *musui* to the individual's perception or appreciation. An individual's experience will contain certain features with certain properties which are collectively shared. The task of explaining an experience is actually a search for the representational content of the experience; this representational content belongs to the explanandum rather than to the explanans.

In order to explain religious experience it will not suffice to take as given the representational content of experience. This content must be grounded in its phenomenal or qualitative dimensions. The content of a religious experience is not a purely conventional matter. There is a need to understand the distinctions in the phenomenology of experience itself. But explaining this is a task of no small magnitude.¹⁶

There are certainly distinctions in the phenomenology of religious experience for the Bhuket for they manifest themselves in the forms and processes of variation and individuation that are prevalent in Bhuket religious expression and explanation.

¹ Brunton also quotes Worsley who says " A spurious unity is projected on to other people's belief systems by outside observers - sociologist and anthropologistThis over-systematization of belief ...is a natural disease of academics, a consequence, again, of their specialized role in the social division of labour as dealers in ideas" (1980:113 referring to Worsley, 1970:301)

²The Apo Kayan is one of the most inaccessible parts of central Borneo, and is considered its historical core (Rousseau, 1990:21). Many groups place their origin in the Apo Kayan. According to Rousseau "...an assumption of origin in the Apau Kayan is a way of dreaming of having been a conqueror rather than the conquered" (1990:71).

³ *Sunung* is an animal skin cloak usually made of bear skin and the *labung keriang* is an elaborate head dress for men.

⁴ *Kebal* is also a term used by the Iban (Uchibori, 1984: 21). The Kayan use the term *keben* for a person who cannot be injured or killed by metal weapons.

⁵ The setting of a Bhuket *pebusui* is similar to the performance of an Iban *lemambang*, which comprises a lead bard, answering bard and chorus (see Sandin, 1975: 6 - 14)

⁶ The belief that animals, plants and other objects have a soul is common in Borneo. Freeman said that Iban have an "unshakeable ...belief that all objects - animal, vegetable and mineral - possess a separable counterpart, called *semengat..*" (1970: 35)

⁷ The term *pengaroh* is also used by the Iban to refer to magical charms (see Freeman, 1970: 9, 120, 228 and Sandin, 1966)

⁸ *Nyekaling* is also known as *Tuan* for he is a spirit who dresses like an European.

⁹ *Danum Pukung Kaung* is the name given to Bukau by the *uboh* living there.

¹⁰ *Milei aloh nyalung kaung* means to borrow a day to give life to fruits - *Milei* = borrow, *aloh* = day, *nyalung* = to give life, *kaung* = fruits. *Milei aloh* is poetic language for the lightning. The spark of light from the lightning is said to be a borrowed day. Bhuket say that it is the lightning and thunder that cause the trees to blossom and later bear fruit. It is this type of complex imagery and metaphor that makes the *musui* aesthetically pleasing. The older people always informed me of how much they were moved by the beauty of the *musui* language and felt sorry for me because I could not understand the sophisticated language. However, my keen interest in it was appreciated.

¹¹ In the *uboh* language the Balleh is called *Sulong holah loh holah nulang* which means the confluence where the sun goes down : *Sulong* = confluence, *holah* = go down, *nulang* = sun.

¹² The belief in augury is common in Borneo. According to Freeman "The Iban system of augury is a highly specialized manifestation of their general magico-religious beliefs, and it can only be understood in this comprehensive context.For the Iban there are scores of different creatures - animals, birds, reptiles and insects - whose behaviour may, in certain circumstances, be fraught with meaning. But the over-ruling concept is not that these creatures are significant in themselves, but rather that they are representatives, or messengers of supernatural beings" (1970: 117).

¹³ Some of these locations can be located in maps provided in Appendix IV and V.

¹⁴ An excellent example of innovation and change caused by dreams in Iban religion given by Frecman is the dream that revealed the death of *Pulang Gana*, the Iban god of *padi* and fertility. The dream revealed that *Pulang Gana* was killed by *Antu Tuah* and Iban mourned the death of *Pulang Gana*. It was later revealed, in another dream, that the son of the fallen god had succeeded his father (1975:285).

¹⁵ Christian missionary activity has also weakened traditional religion among the Kenyah (see Conley, 1973:296; Whittier, 1973:40).

¹⁶ The monumental task of explaining belief and experience was taken up by Needham (1972). He started this investigation to answer Wittgenstein's (1958) question : "Is belief an experience?" This rather provocative question has made me avoid using the word belief in this chapter on religion.

Chapter 7: A Tentative Conclusion.

It is in the nature of this study that there can be no final conclusions. Change is essentially an on-going process. What I have done is to make general observations of the present and also by looking back to the past, try to understand the internal dynamics of the changes in the present. Culture is constantly changing and developing; in this study it has also been described as 'emerging'. Individuals within the culture select, reject or accept cultural influences besides constructing and maintaining their cultural complex; this accounts for cultural dynamism. In this regard, Appell, referring to Freeman, argues for an interactionist paradigm :

Freeman in a series of publications (1970[b], 1973, 1979, 1983) has pointed out that the doctrine of cultural determinism is inadequate on the one hand for its failure to consider the nature of choice behavior, which is a crucial element in the human ethogram; and on the other hand for ignoring the biological drives and constraints that form the ground for human behavior. He thus argues for an interactionist paradigm in which choice behaviour is fundamental, being intrinsic both to our biology and basic to the formation of cultures - for cultures are the accumulation of socially sanctioned past choices.... (1988:34).

This study has emphasized the unique history and experiences of the Bhuket people by tracing actual historical relations rather than searching for logical and psychological origins. These unique histories of culture shape individual attitudes, behaviour and emotions but do not necessarily determine them.

In conclusion I wish to emphasise the areas of study which I find interesting and worthy of further research by drawing attention to firstly, the interaction of the individual Bhuket to his or her culture by examining Bhuket individual autonomy, secondly, to the attempts by the Bhuket to relate with an anticipated change - the planned Bakun hydro-electric dam project; by drawing on the past in order to counter processes which deny them their autonomy, and finally to some possible ways of using the category culture within the ethnographic landscape of Borneo. I will draw upon comparisons with hunting-gathering cultures found in other parts of the world, but not in terms of a grand scheme, but for mutual insight (see Strathern, 1988; and also Bird-David, 1994).

7.1 The Autonomy of the Individual and Bhuket Culture.

The pursuit by hunter-gatherers of individual autonomy has been observed by anthropologists studying in Asia, Africa, North America and other parts of the world. The Bhuket, who are today involved in diverse subsistence activities, also portray the individual-autonomy syndrome which is a major feature of foraging cultures (see Gardner, 1991). Gardner has explained the terminological problems arising from this phenomenon. He notes that

There are precedents for calling the syndrome "individualistic" (Mead 1937, Gardner 1966b), "atomistic" (Honigmann 1946, 1968; Rubel and Kupferer 1968), "loose" (Embree 1950, Pelto 1968), or "egalitarian" (Leacock 1978, Woodburn 1982). Although each of these terms is suitable in some way, each is problematic. Western ideological traditions complicate extending the terms "individualistic" and "egalitarian" to band-level societies (Dumont 1966, Morris 1978, Nelson and Olesen 1977), despite the ironic fact that foragers are better able and more likely to exhibit extreme, consistent, uncompromised individualism and egalitarianism than people of Western societies (1991:550).

This terminological problem arises from the fact that such a syndrome does not have a parallel in our society, which reflects our difficulties in defining it. Gardner had to settle for the term individual autonomy to describe this phenomenon. I am also using the term individual autonomy and individualism to refer to this syndrome.

I have emphasised Bhuket individualism throughout the thesis (especially in Chapter 4) but I wish to draw special attention to it here, and note Ingold's important observations:

In most hunting and gathering societies, a supreme value is placed upon the principle of individual autonomy. Opportunities for the expression of hierarchical dominance are systematically denied, and equality is actively asserted (Woodburn, 1982). Should we, then, classify hunters and gatherers as 'traditional' representatives of *Homo aequalis*? And if not, how are we to express the difference between their kind of individualism, and our 'western' kind? To anticipate our conclusion: it is that theirs is an individualism grounded in the social totality...(1986:223).

Ingold has helped solve the problem raised by Gardner in that he takes the view that the difference in hunting-gathering individualism and the western kind is that theirs is

embedded in the social totality, which means, in turn, that their individualism is far from being incompatible with the whole.

Patterns observed at the individual level are different from patterns observed at the structural level; therefore, Bhuket social structure reveals little about Bhuket individuals, what they are like and how the community works. This issue has been examined among other hunting-gathering groups. Whiting (1968), for example, has commented on the atypicality of the social structure of Australian foragers,¹ which stresses individual initiative rather than responsible behaviour. This individual initiative and independent behaviour fits well with the hunting and gathering totality. In the case of the Bhuket they prefer to live away from the longhouse in the relative seclusion of their farm huts, although they come and go from Long Ayak frequently. Many Bhuket find the living conditions at Long Ayak overcrowded. They prefer to live in reasonably isolated seclusion with easy access to the forest for hunting and collecting purposes.

Bhuket households (see Chapter 3) or rank (see Chapter 5) are labels we put on particular observable patterns; but the households and the ranking system have diverse forms and are expressed and experienced differently by different individuals. The patterns give us an impression of order in social forms that are variable. For example, the Bhuket views of their ranking system are filled with contradictions and their households have diverse forms. We have to impose some sort of order or pattern in our ethnographic descriptions but must accept that there are always variations, deviations and breaches to the pattern. It is also the very possibility of variations that accounts for change.

Although I have delineated the nuclear family or household, it is the individual who makes decisions on his or her relationship to it. Minimal importance is given to knowledge about descent lines; only a few individuals seem to remember the genealogy of the entire community; some of them do not even bother to remember their grandparents' names. Therefore, Bhuket do not bother to create descent groups or corporate categories. A high level of individual autonomy among the Bhuket dilutes or nullifies the need for such cultural patterns.

The present-day Bhuket are a residue of composite bands integrated from thinly distributed populations. Composite bands are known for their social structural simplicity

and flexibility and this leads to structural inconsistencies (see Gardner 1991:545; also Service 1962:86, 88, 97, 101). Bhuket in trying to emulate their more organised and stratified neighbours have brought about diverse forms of adaptation and divisiveness in their social life. A ranking system is said to exist but there seems to be no consensus as to who belongs to which rank, nor does it have a function in the day-to-day social relationships of the Bhuket. Emulation and adaptation are undertaken on an individual basis not by the culture as a whole.

The ranking system and the *adat* are used in contact situations with their more organised stratified neighbours. *Adat* as an underlying means of social control within the community is hardly adhered to by most Bhuket, although there is much talk about it. Most Bhuket do not lead their lives in line with *adat* law or permit the *adat* to take over their autonomy in making their own decisions on matters related to their lives; they seem to perceive the *adat* or any form of advice as domination; Bhuket constantly express anti-authoritarian views. *Adat* is therefore a discourse but it is seldom put into practice. If a person is fined for a wrong doing under the *adat* law he or she is free to pay or refuse; this also depends on the personality of the individual; there is no form of coercion used to make him or her comply with the *adat* and it is only used or activated in inter-ethnic situations (see Chapter 5).

Bhuket are egalitarian with a great respect for individuality; they have marked flexibility in living arrangements (see Leacock and Lee, 1982: 7-9). However, individual autonomy is not enthusiastically proclaimed; it is observed in their action. What is more "status inferiority" in recent inter-ethnic situations might have contributed to Bhuket anxiety and led to an even greater emphasis on the individual (see Gillin, 1942:545-54; James 1961:735).

Pressure on children to be self-reliant and independent is an expression of individualism; and anti-authoritarianism is a manifestation of egalitarianism (see Barry, Child, and Bacon 1959:52, 55-63; see also Whiting 1968: 336-39; Rohner 1975:115-18). There is also age and gender egalitarianism. For example, I observed the case of a ten year-old girl who had a serious verbal exchange with the headman; my view at that moment was that the girl was being very rude, but, after pondering the event, I came to

the conclusion that from a Bhuket perspective the child had the right to voice her opinion in whatever manner she wished in their egalitarian context. It is in the child-rearing practices of the Bhuket that we find the seeds of individualism, which, in turn, is closely related to a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Children are given much independence; they are allowed to wander around on their own from a very early age. They join in adult conversations or gossip. Children have a right to voice their opinions and quarrel with adults if they are not satisfied with a particular matter. They participate in subsistence activities such as foraging and in farming; this was especially obvious during weeding when they provide a considerable amount of the labour. However, with modern education children are becoming more dependent and this leads them to feel alienated, and the parents confused and uncertain of their responsibility towards their children. Tensions are now developing in parent - child relationships.

Bhuket individualism can be observed in that they have independent nuclear families and bridal gifts only at marriage, and a greater prevalence of monogamy; these arrangements offer Bhuket relative independence of other kin (see Gardner, 1991:551). The basic social unit among the Bhuket is the conjugal family and marriage does not terminate their individual autonomy for the couple are autonomous agents who come together to pursue a common goal that of companionship. This union does not entail predetermined rights, and obligations are kept to the minimum. The importance of the conjugal relationship frees the individual from other kin. There is a high degree of individual discretion about the choice of partners and a high degree of individual control of sexual behaviour. Elders do not involve themselves in the choosing of wives or husbands for their children. Sometimes parents do try to control their children's post-marital residence, but with very little success for post-marital residence is usually a decision made by the husband-wife sets.

Individual autonomy can also be observed in decision-making about subsistence activities and in their expression of values, and there is much interpersonal variability in concepts, beliefs and manners of expression.

Individually inherited rights to land can also be seen as an attribute of individualism. Before sedentarisation the Bhuket enjoyed a flexible residential and

territorial organization with the absence of individual land ownership and with no constraints on the individual's access to resources.

Individuals usually hunt and fish alone. Game is shared but fish is seldom shared unless people go fishing in groups using *tuba* poison.² Gathering is done in groups, but the collected food is used for individual or household consumption. Hunted game is considered as a windfall and is shared. Sharing is an important cohesive mechanism among the Bhuket. It is in sharing that we can see that individualism is embedded in the social totality (see Ingold 1986a: 222-242, see Chapter 4).

It is important to note that individual autonomy depends largely on the individual personality and that the term egalitarianism can serve to describe one aspect or another of a culture but it cannot be used to characterize the whole culture. For example, there are economic inequalities among the Bhuket, but in many other respects they are egalitarian, especially in their social relationships which are free of domination, subjugation or oppression from within the culture.

Most Bhuket would express Christian values when they judge a particular behaviour or action. However, they are flexible in their adherence to these values in their own actions. Bhuket lack social consistency at the community level. Their more organised neighbours view this as a lack of social standing or principles³. Bhuket are not always absolutely committed to what they say, and their relations may vary from the statements about those relations, sometimes because of changes in their needs, emotions or mood; this causes contradictions in the statements or behaviour of a particular individual. For example C and D have an argument and the day after the fight they are back on talking terms and show great affection for one another. The hatred or jealousy is put aside and it is renewed whenever the two individuals wish to let off steam. These kinds of arguments are a regular affair between siblings, in-laws and friends; one day they are enemies and the next day they are the best of friends. This shows that relationships are simple and voluntary among the Bhuket and subject to minimal suppression, pretension, manipulation and constraints.

A Bhuket in most of his or her decisions does not give into pressure, nor simply conform to or copy others, or is dictated to by ulterior motives. Relations arising from

love, care, affection, sympathy, responsibility, hatred and jealousy, and so on may constrain individualism but at the same time they might not. The concept of individualism comprises the notion that a person acts in a certain way only because it suits him or her. The individual may please, oblige, obey or even sacrifice for the sake of others, but only because that is what he or she wants to do, or believes to be right. An individual Bhuket will not be pushed into a course of action dictated by necessity external to his or her will. Bhuket individual will is rarely manipulated. Their agriculturalist neighbours and visiting civil servants find this most unacceptable for Bhuket will openly voice their feelings of dissatisfaction towards any matter that confronts them; and usually they express it individually.

Nevertheless, although Bhuket are separate from each other insofar as they are individuals in their own right and have separate identities, they can sink their separate identities in their personal relationships. In particular, Bhuket have an alternative mode of relatedness or social life from agrarian societies. They have a distinct mode of sociality (see Ingold 1986b: 258 for discussion of this idea). Current discussions on the diversity of sociality, and 'society' and 'person' as cultural concepts, provide both an impetus and new conceptual context for the discussion of bands (Carrithers 1992; Goody 1995; Kuper 1992; Strathern 1988; Wolf 1982 also cited in Bird-David 1994:584). Recent research shows that band formation often persists while subsistence activities undergo diversification (see Bird-David 1983; Guenther 1986; Kent forthcoming; Peterson & Matsuyama 1991; Sansom 1980; also cited in Bird-David 1994:584).

Bhuket cultural emulation and adaptation is individual, uneven and divisive. The individual seems not to be interested in formalising his or her culture. Many cultural elements are developed as a consequence of adaptation to circumstances usually in the practices or processes of culture and also subject to the process of individuation. However, a given practice undergoes change before it is firmly institutionalized. For example, Bhuket stratification is an adaptation to certain frontier circumstances and also arises from the internal dynamics of Bhuket egalitarianism. But it was never firmly institutionalised. In other words, the processes of adaptation comprise the culture of the Bhuket at a particular point in time. At a different moment another process of adaptation

either in maintaining that particular element of culture or attempting to change it becomes the culture of the Bhuket at that time. Adaptations either through maintenance, persistence or transformation are all creative phenomena that go to make up the culture. In this sense culture is like an event that takes place at a single point in space at a specific point in time, but it is part of an on-going process which changes through time and is constantly emerging.

7.2 Change in Anticipation of Change : the Bakun Dam Project.

Internal change is usually the outcome of human action. Change can also occur due to decisions made elsewhere which have not taken local voices or views into consideration; it is change imposed from outside. In this connection Appell states that

The more usual type of change arises as a result of human action.....For society is an emergent phenomenon, arising from the choices that are or are not made (1988:35)

There is currently a major event of change facing the people of the upper Balui; this is the construction of the Bakun dam. It will lead to the resettlement of the local people there. This event will result in radical social change, and its impetus is externally derived. Nevertheless, it will result in choices and decisions for the Bhuket. Again, according to Appell

There is another order of choice behaviour that goes beyond the confines of the sociocultural system. This is the realm of what Freeman calls "radical choice".....The very conception of these choices are not delineated by the individual's sociocultural system, and they can lead to radical social change (1988:35).

Although the resettlement programme has not started, knowledge of it has already triggered many internal changes among the people of the Balui. The incidence of land disputes has increased, within the same community or even within the same household. Conflicts over land have also intensified between communities. For example, the land dispute between the Kayan of Long Liko and the Punan of Long Belangan has led to the Punan losing most of their land to the Kayan. The dispute between the Kayan of Uma Juman and the Kayan of Uma Daro over the land in Long Taman has led to the area being declared as the Taman Protected Forest. At the moment Bhuket are facing the same problem for the Kayan of Uma Daro have encroached onto their land and are

claiming it to be theirs on the basis that Bhuket were hunter-gatherers and should therefore give the land up to them. All this arises from the fact that people believe that the compensation paid as a result of resettlement will include compensation for land and cash crops owned.

In a conversation I had with a group of Bhuket on 17 December 1992 I realised the anxiety that the Bakun dam project had created for them. One woman observed that Bhuket use money differently from other people. She said that "Money is like food, we do not store food, so we do not know how to store money. We will eat it all up the way we do with food. Our land and the forest will feed us and our children forever but compensation will not." Two elderly women said that if they were asked to move to the *pasar* (bazaar or town) they would not be able to survive. When I asked them why they said something which I found amusing, but which was very real to them. They replied that they cannot bear the "smell" of the *pasar*; it is not the food, the noise or the traffic which disturbs them but the poor quality of the air. One man stated, with great insight, that Bhuket will experience many problems for the way they live is very different from other people. Another man added that their new neighbours in the resettlement scheme will not understand their ways, which might lead to fights.

Very little information has been made available to the people of the upper Balui with regard to the matter of compensation and resettlement. All this uncertainty and great social anxiety is creating much animosity within the community and between communities. On the 25 April 1993 Yak, the headman's wife, told me that she did not agree with the Bakun dam project for she is afraid that it will lead to the dispersion of the Bhuket people and the ultimate disappearance of the Bhuket as a community. Bhuket who like living individually (*murip pesenangen-nangen*) will go away to a place that pleases them. Some of the older people said that they might join the other Bhuket groups in Mahakam or Kapuas if they faced problems in the resettlement schemes.

Rumours of construction sacrifice⁴ and kidnapping were rampant during the fieldwork period. These signs of anxiety are not new for they have been reported by several observers. Needham (1976:77) referred to a panic among the Penan Seliu of Borneo in 1952; they abandoned their possessions and fled for five days in the conviction

that headhunters were after them. This *penyamun* (kidnapper) scare was reported much earlier as Pringle stated:

Iban produce seekers continued to visit the Baram in large numbers, but they did not clash openly with the local people until 1894, in the wake of a great *penyamun* scare. Such scares, which have recurred periodically in wide-spread areas of Borneo, usually start with rumors that the Government needs a human head to bury in the foundations of some construction project. *Penyamun* (literally 'robbers') are reported everywhere: mysterious black-clad headhunters who prowl in the night, thrusting spears through the floors and walls of houses. The 1894 scare began in Kuching, where the Rajah was constructing a new waterworks, and spread throughout Sarawak (1970: 269).

In the early part of fieldwork I was told not to wander off with children for there were *penyamun* who were in need of human sacrifice. I did not take this seriously for I thought it was to frighten the children so that they would not stray too far. Bhuket fear and anxiety was at its peak during the weeding period. They said that there were people employed by the government to kidnap children and young girls to be used as human sacrifices for the dam. Even people who represent SAM (Sahabat Alam Malaysia - Friends of the Earth Malaysia) were thought to be agents of the government charged with abducting children for sacrificial purposes. They said that people in the other longhouses had seen them and had asked Bhuket to be cautious and keep a look out for them. While I was in U Jet Havet during the weeding period I observed that the fear was very real for the Bhuket. A young man who wanted to go hunting asked his father for his two remaining bullets but the latter refused, because he needed the bullets for defence against *penyamun*. Men followed the women during the weeding period and their duty was to look out for the *penyamun*. Children were asked to keep quiet because noise would draw the *penyamun* to them. Genuine concern for my safety was expressed when I had decided to follow a government boat to visit the Kenyah Uma Baka of Long Bulan.

On 3 October 1993 I heard of the sightings of the *penyamun*. It seems that a child had been kidnapped at Long Gang and people in Batu Keling had seen strangers lurking around in their area. Two men who went hunting met two Indonesian men (because they spoke Indonesian Malay) asking for directions to the graveyard. There was great fear among the Bhuket of strangers. Two girls did not come out of their farm hut for days because they were frightened by the stories. Tension was building up as there were

several visits from SAM to inform the people of the consequences of the dam and I was told that the government had called for a meeting in Batu Keling for the people of the upper Balui to discuss the project. There were suspicions of both SAM and the government representatives. On 1 November 1993 most of the people who were living in their farm huts returned to the longhouse because they thought it would be easier to protect themselves if they were together.

Drake has analyzed these types of rumour panics that have been reported in the literature on Borneo going back for more than ninety years.

There have been reports of curious rumor panic about headhunting and kidnapping that appear sporadically and spread from society to society. Terror-stricken communities frequently become paralyzed for days or weeks by the special precautions taken to guard against the threat (1989:269).

He argues that the rumour panics are related to the construction of an ideology of tribal-state relations.

The analysis of this Bornean kidnapping rumor panic yields a state government construction sacrifice motif. It is argued that the construction sacrifice is a widespread folklore motif and, as folklore, is related to the construction of an ideology of tribal-state relations. In the context of the sociopolitical stress and cultural conflict marking these relations, the rumor panics can be viewed as a sort of ideological warfare. The plausibility of this analysis is supported by an interpretation of the semantics of the rumor. The substantive contents of the rumor are shown to be not only conducive to the construction of an ideology of tribal-state relations, but also, to be expressive of the principles and practices of traditional intertribal relations which were embodied in headhunting (1989:269).

Rumours in connection with construction sacrifice are not only a phenomenon of Borneo but they have also been observed in many parts of Indonesia. Barnes (1993) presents further information on such rumours in Flores and elsewhere in Indonesia which largely confirms Drake's interpretations. However, Barnes does not see it as a new phenomenon or a product of the colonial era but as characteristic of Indonesia from ancient times and as typically associated with offices of political and military potency (Barnes 1993:146 see also Forth 1991; Erb 1991).

In the context of sociopolitical stress and cultural conflict due to the anticipation of drastic changes in their life the people of the Balui are engaged in ideological warfare

with the state due to the loss of autonomy. There seems to be a retaliation against their sense of powerlessness by using rumour panics to unify the populations affected by the dam project and express an awareness of and the capability to defend themselves against state encroachment into local sociopolitical and cultural domains. These rumour panics can also be used by the people to deny the state a supernatural status for it too has to rely on the spirits for such constructions. By doing so local people have made the state's present power equivalent to the power that they once had. This might also be an attempt to glorify their past or a reverse psychological attack on the state that had initially shamed them of their past. By using the rumour panics they are heaping shame on the state's actions. In this connection, Geertz (1973) has pointed out that ideologies must be deviant reflections of social reality.

This example of the reaction of a people towards a change in which they have very little influence shows that they are using a cultural expression that has long gone - that of headhunting and human sacrifice to deny their lack of autonomy. Realising the radical choice that they would have to make and the uncertainty that this radical change might bring with it has made them want to revive the past, at least at the ideological level. This radical change will nevertheless result in choices and decisions for the Bhuket. This is another area that would be worth further investigation to arrive at a better understanding of change, adaptation and cultural expressions in the context of radical change.

7.3 The Study of Cultures in Borneo.

Very early on in the history of anthropology, cultures were seen in terms of a dynamic process and not as static and bounded. According to Boas (1896) cultures were the product of associations, exchanges, and accretions; they had individual histories which explained their development. Similarities in cultural phenomena were to be explained on the basis of contact and borrowing (see also Kroeber 1952a; 1952b). This explanation in turn led to the invention/diffusion debate that then preoccupied many anthropologists (see for example Dixon 1902; G.Smith 1928:98).

The overlapping nature of cultures, the recognition of the absence of clear boundaries and the need to understand the wider cultural setting have also been

discussed by anthropologists. According to Drumond (1980:352) "cultures are neither structures nor plural amalgams, but a continuum or set of intersystems. The cultural continuum, like the linguistic continuum, is particularly evident in poly-ethnic societies, but is present in all societies" (cited in Rousseau 1990:47). Cultural identification and boundaries subsequently became a problematic issue, particularly in the works of Naroll (1964) and Barth (1969). Doubts emerged about the reality of the units of ethnographic study called 'cultures'. In the current period of experimentation, reflection and self-criticism in anthropology (see Marcus and Fisher 1986; Clifford and Marcus 1986), anthropologists are finding new ways of showing the emergent and interactive qualities of cultural realities. These experiments are exemplified in the works of Shostak (1981) in which she based her ethnography on individual viewpoints, Rosaldo (1980), in his examination of historical change among the Ilongot, and Sahlins (1981) in his study of the dialectical interplay between cultures. A more daring example can be seen in the work of Kahn (1990) who proposed that traditional notions of peoples and cultures should be abolished as a misleading construct, just as a previous generation's notion of races has now fallen by the wayside (cited in Mahmood and Armstrong, 1992).

There seems to be a paradox in the world today where cultural categories seem to be firmly in place while attempts at defining them as discrete entities are becoming impossible. This paradox is a dilemma for both the anthropologist and the people we place within a particular cultural category. Cultures certainly have a reality for their participants but there is a need to understand the diversity, flexibility and the cumulative nature of the category. Mahmood and Armstrong in their cognitive perspective on the concept of culture say that

There must be a certain irony in the fact that just when the importance of culture, a concept held in trust by anthropology for over a hundred years, is dawning on people across a range of disciplines and in various spheres of public life, a key set of thinkers in anthropology itself is challenging its theoretical hegemony.While it is clear that the classic anthropological paradigm of "cookie cutter" cultures was heavily determined by colonialist politics, we remain uneasy about a new insistence on polyphony that Western intellectuals now seem to be imposing on people whose most heartfelt identities are tied up in their sense of membership in groups. These identities, which many in the world today seem to be willing to fight and die for, can be excused as ideologies so as to conform more neatly with the current mood in

some sectors of academia. Or they can be rigorously investigated for what they are - an aspect of the human cognitive process of categorization which, though much more complex than traditional models imagined, will persist through all the ups and downs of intellectual debate and political fortune (1992:11).

Mahmood and Armstrong suggested that the Mahayana Buddhist philosophy (Nagarjuna's Madhyamika-Karika school), might deal with many of the epistemological issues now facing postmodern academia. They note :

Nagarjuna developed the concept of *sunyata*, often translated as emptiness, to highlight the arbitrariness and artificiality of categorical (entitative) ways of thinking about the world. To believe that our logocentric perceptions which identify separable things correspond in any way to reality is a delusion which limits and constrains us, and the Buddhist *nirvana* is not a place (as some tend to imagine it) but a state of mind liberated in recognizing the essential emptiness of our categories. If we try to define particular things in the world, we lose sense of the "dependent-co-arising" (*pratitya samutpada*) through which identity and alterity - that is, all categories - are created. Nagarjuna's is a highly ecological view of concept formation, recognizing the embeddedness of individual concepts in complex systems - the entirety of which, however, hang like Geertz's web of significance over an empty reality (1992:11-12).

In a world of entities which are discrete and with own-nature, all change and activity would be impossible; everything would be static and eternal. The world of cultures is not like this. The chaos of the cultural world due to internal diversity and flexibility can be overcome by the human propensity to categorise. Needham (1975) recognizes this diversity in his discussion of the concept of polythetic classification and his support for the general applicability of non-Aristotelian types of categories to cultural phenomena.⁵

How does all this contribute towards helping us who are working in Borneo? The ethnographic landscape of Borneo is certainly a fertile ground for testing out all the above assertions. Cultures in Borneo can be seen as "dependent co-arisings" (*samutpada pratitya*), for example the taking up of agriculture by the hunting-gathering groups of Borneo could have led to religious reforms among agriculturalists. It is not merely a simple process of borrowing or diffusion but a complex co-dependent arising. The political upheavals of the mid-nineteenth century led to the emergence of ethnic categories in the sense that we know them today. But the cultural categories Bhuket, Iban, Kayan, Baketan, Kenyah, Penan and so on overlap, and their overlapping nature

can be investigated in the spheres of religion, myth and folklore. Much has been said about how the Baketan for example have been Ibanised, but very little information is available on to what degree and in what ways the Iban are Baketan; nor is this a matter of Leachian structural opposition; because in this way we also recognise the internal diversity within the category we call Iban; we should note that Sandin once said that there is Baketan blood in virtually every Iban. This issue deserves further research with a sensitivity towards acknowledging the cultural diversity that characterizes Iban as a whole. The categories Iban, Kayan and Kenyah are culturally diverse in themselves. One way of avoiding the problem of the discreteness of categories is to examine them as “emerging.”

Grouping all the hunter-gatherers into a category called “Punan” as opposed to all other agriculturalists, is a conventionalization of ethnicity in the form of structural oppositions. This does not capture the arbitrary nature of both culture and ethnicity in Borneo. Again this is not something new, for cultural boundaries are known to be fuzzy and they allow for multiple affiliations (for example see Babcock, 1974:196-197 and King, 1982). Barth provides a valuable suggestion on how to explain the co-existence of ethnic diversity :

.....anthropologists have reasoned from a misleading idea of the prototype inter-ethnic situation. One has tended to think in terms of different peoples, with different histories and cultures, coming together and accommodating themselves to each other, generally in a colonial setting. To visualize the basic requirements for the co-existence of ethnic diversity, I would suggest that we rather ask ourselves what is needed to make ethnic distinctions emerge in an area (Barth, 1969:17).

The cultural construction of identity among the peoples of Borneo has much to do with mutual and interdependent definitions besides the dynamics of internal constructions. When it comes to discussing the identity of the people then the voices of those peoples themselves should be heard. It would certainly be interesting to consider Barth's recommendation in Borneo, for example when, how and why did the ethnic distinctions emerge and how were these distinctions internalized by the people so distinguished?

In characterizing the social life of modern hunter-gatherers it is not enough to show how one culture resisted or embraced another but how the current social, economic and political relations of hunter-gatherers came to be as they are.

¹ Whiting (1968) stated that foragers tend to press for self-reliance, independence, and individual achievement. He also argued that responsible behaviour is advantageous to those who rely upon accumulated food resources. By contrast, independent initiative in procuring food is advantageous to foragers because their food quest begins each day anew.

² *Tuba* roots (*Derris alleptica*) are used when Bhuket go fishing in a group. They pound the root and extract the juice and pour it into the slow-flowing part of the river that is dammed up, and within a few minutes they can gather the stunned and poisoned fish.

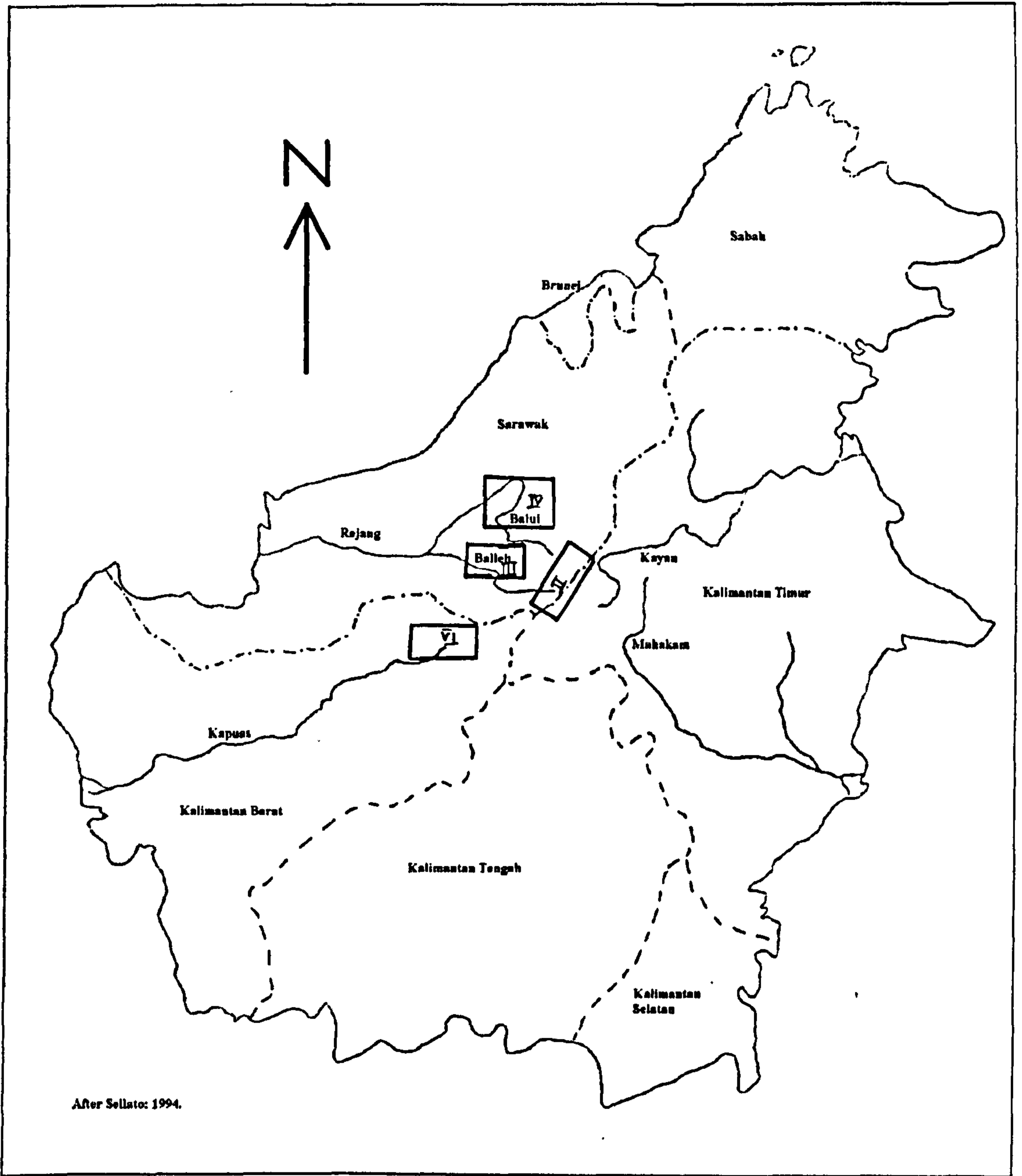
³ For example, their agriculturalist neighbours and some civil servants find Bhuket individual demands and requests quite unacceptable and not in line with the decorum of their own culture. The inconsistency of the Bhuket is commented on as one of the problems the government agencies face when dealing with the Bhuket, especially when some Bhuket turn down the offer of extension services or even show reluctance to collect their subsidy projects.

⁴ Construction sacrifice is a local folklore which claims that a sacrifice has to be made for any form of construction; for example, the building of logging bridges are rumoured to have been the sites of sacrificial rituals and the local people say that such constructions would not be possible if the spirits dwelling at these sites were not appeased.

⁵ See also Zadeh (1965) and Pierce (1977) on the application of "fuzzy set" mathematics to categories relating to culture.

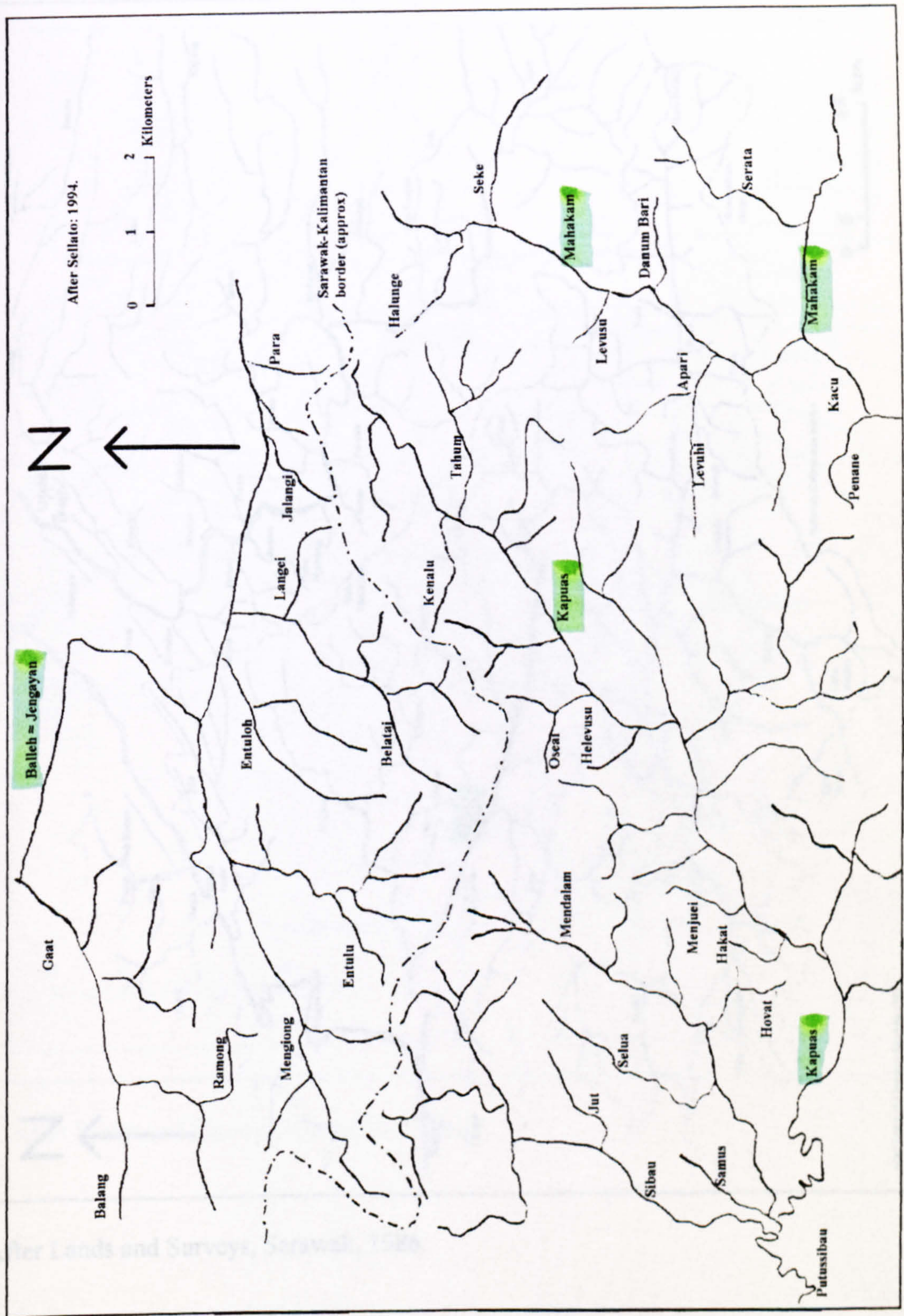
Appendixes

Appendix I: Major Rivers of Central Borneo and Modern Political Boundaries



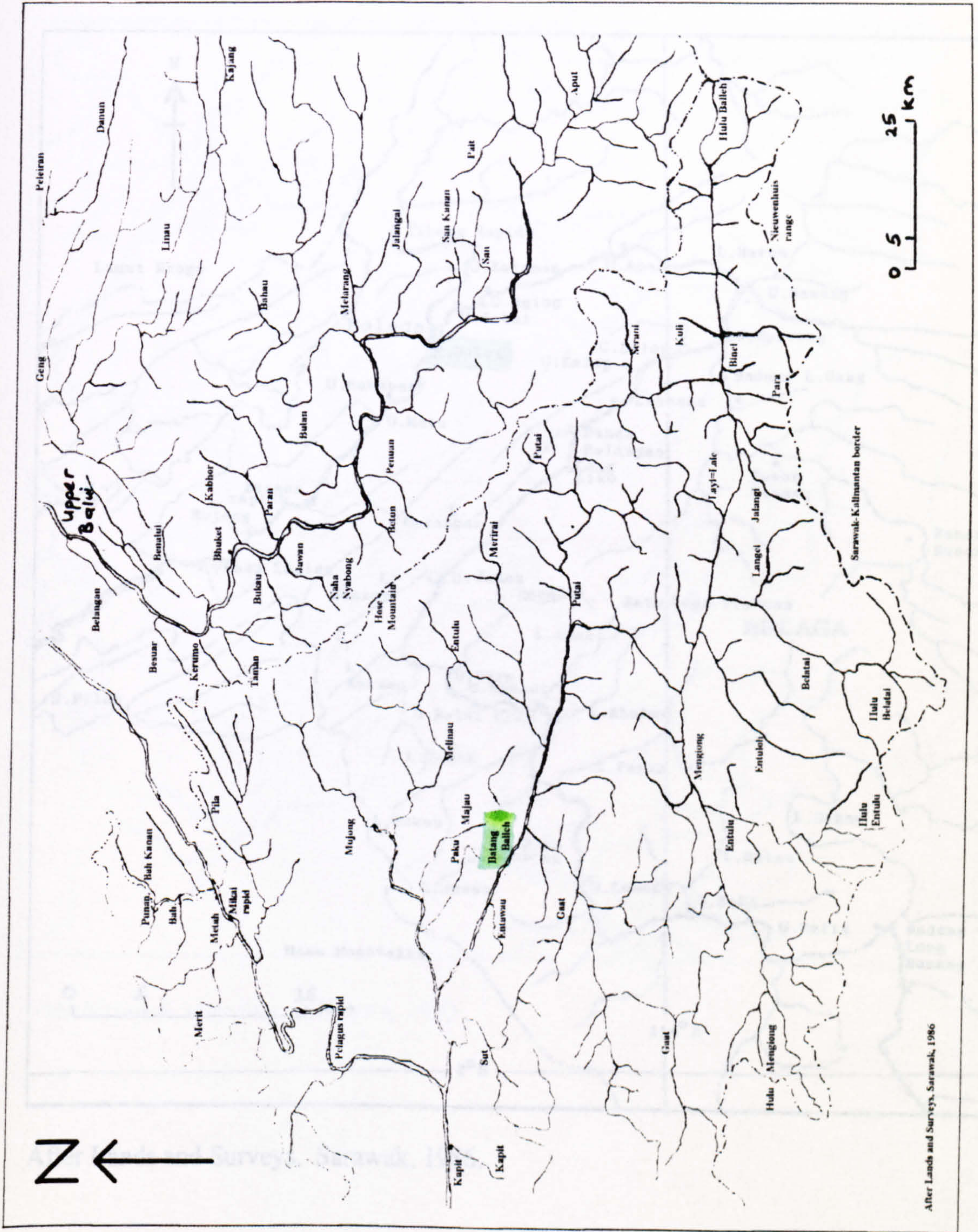
After Sellato: 1994.

Appendix II: Rivers in Central Borneo (Balleh, Kapuas and Mahakam)



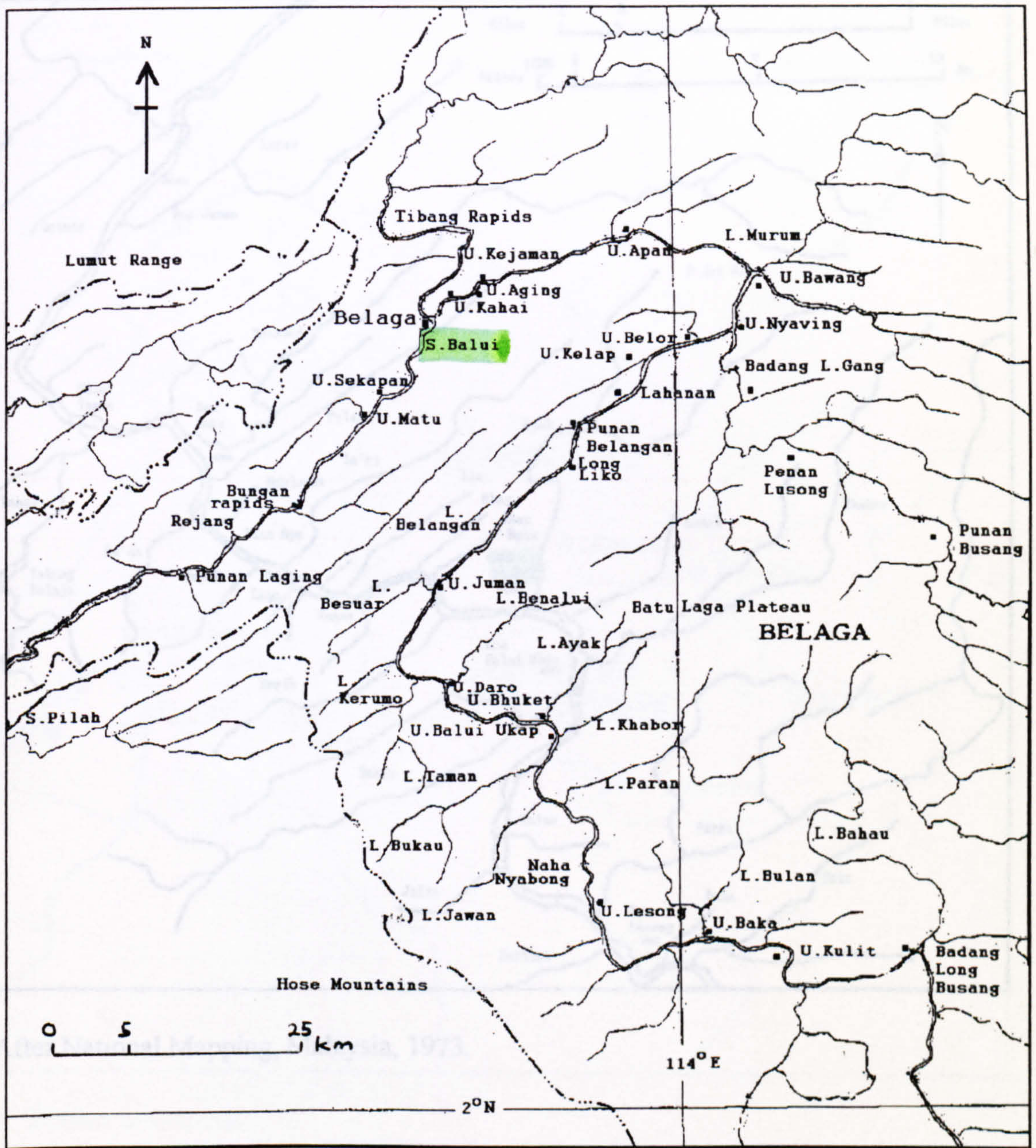
After Sellato: 1994.

Appendix III: The Balleh



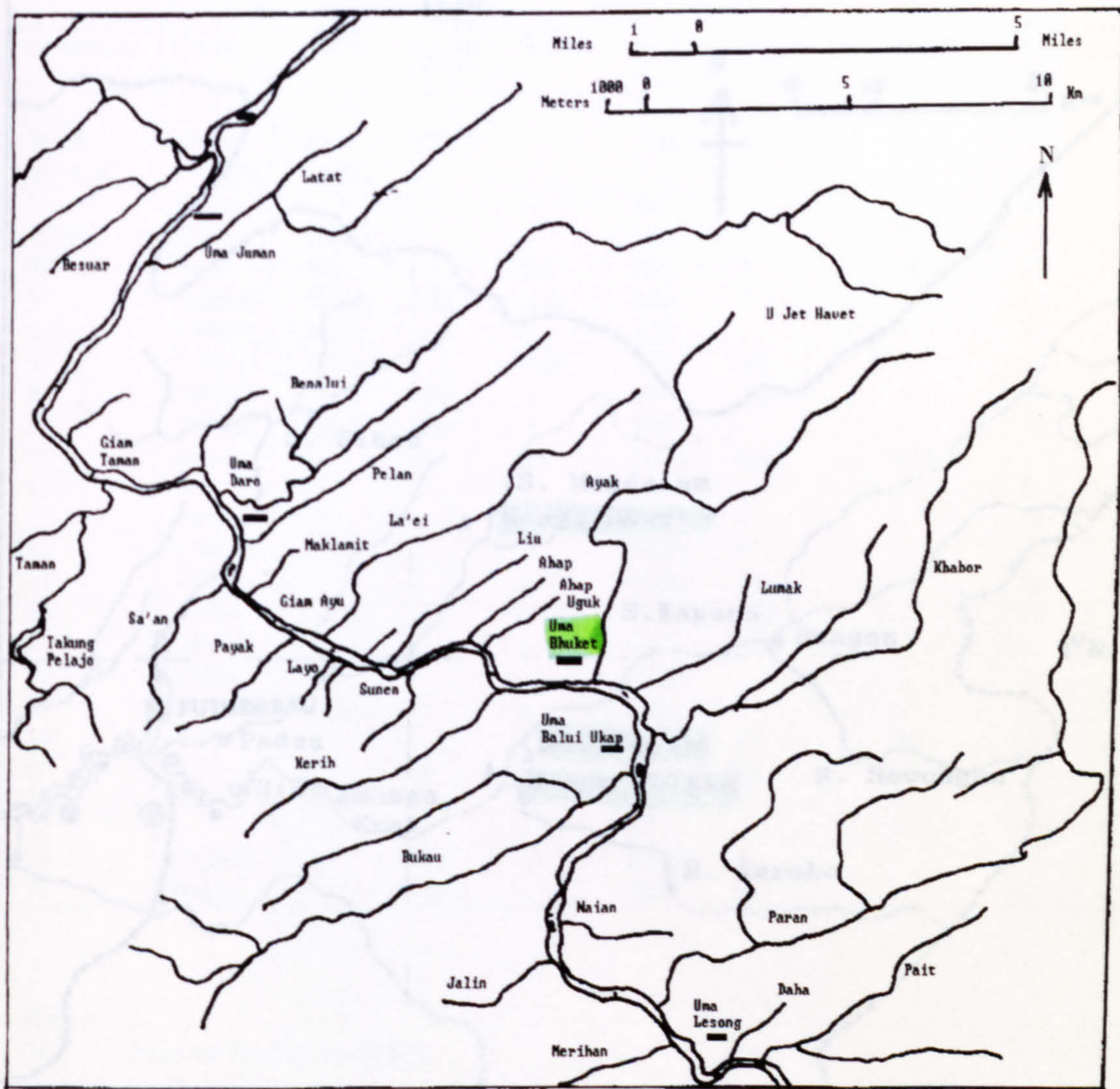
After Lands and Surveys, Sarawak, 1986.

Appendix IV: The Upper Balui



After Lands and Surveys, Sarawak, 1986.

Appendix V: Uma Bhuket Territory



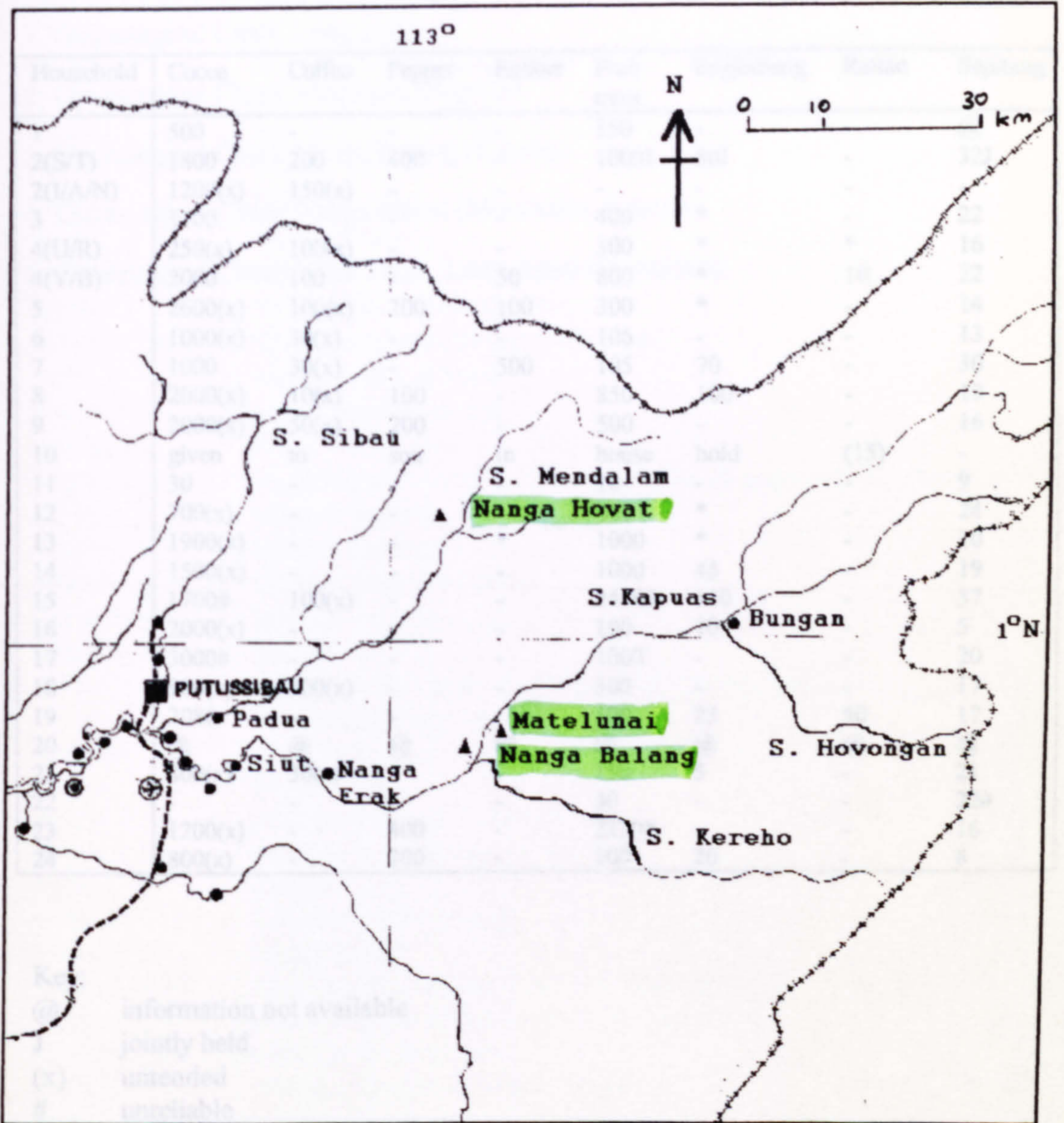
After National Mapping, Malaysia, 1973.

▲ Bhuket settlement

ART C.V. JUANDA LMC 1990

Appendix VI: Kalimantan Barat (Kapuas).

Appendix VII: Cash Crop Holdings



▲: Bhuket settlement.

After C.V. JUANDA LMC 1990

Appendix VII: Cash Crop Holdings

| Household | Cocoa | Coffee | Pepper | Rubber | Fruit trees | Engkabang | Rattan | Sepitang |
|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|-----------|--------|----------|
| 1 | 500 | - | - | - | 150 | - | - | @ |
| 2(S/T) | 1800 | 200 | 400 | - | 1000J | 50J | - | 32J |
| 2(I/A/N) | 1200(x) | 150(x) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | 1100 | - | - | - | 400 | * | - | 22 |
| 4(U/R) | 250(x) | 100(x) | - | - | 300 | * | * | 16 |
| 4(Y/B) | 2000 | 100 | - | 50 | 800 | * | 10 | 22 |
| 5 | 2600(x) | 100(x) | 200 | 100 | 300 | * | - | 14 |
| 6 | 1000(x) | 30(x) | - | - | 106 | - | - | 13 |
| 7 | 1000 | 30(x) | - | 500 | 105 | 70 | - | 30 |
| 8 | 2000(x) | 10(x) | 100 | - | 850 | 100 | - | 19 |
| 9 | 2000(x) | 50(x) | 200 | - | 500 | - | - | 16 |
| 10 | given | to | son | in | house | hold | (15) | - |
| 11 | 30 | - | - | - | 10 | - | - | 9 |
| 12 | 700(x) | - | - | - | 400 | * | - | 24 |
| 13 | 1900(x) | - | - | * | 1000 | * | - | 10 |
| 14 | 1500(x) | - | - | - | 1000 | 45 | - | 19 |
| 15 | 1700# | 100(x) | - | - | 2450# | 130 | - | 37 |
| 16 | 2000(x) | - | - | - | 100 | 20 | - | 5 |
| 17 | 3000# | - | - | - | 1000 | - | - | 20 |
| 18 | 900(x) | 300(x) | - | - | 300 | - | - | 17 |
| 19 | 2080 | - | - | - | 500 | 23 | 50 | 17 |
| 20 | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ |
| 21 | 800(x) | 30(x) | - | - | 150 | 5 | - | 21 |
| 22 | - | - | - | - | 30 | - | - | 22# |
| 23 | 1200(x) | - | 400 | - | 2230# | - | - | 16 |
| 24 | 800(x) | - | 200 | - | 100 | 20 | - | 8 |

Key:

- @ information not available
- J jointly held
- (x) untended
- # unreliable
- * not certain of the number of trees

Appendix VIII: Genealogical Charts.

1. Genealogical Chart: Long Ayak
2. Genealogical Chart: Matelunai (Kapuas)
3. Genealogical Chart: Nanga Balang (Kapuas)
4. Genealogical Chart: Nanga Hovat (Mendalam, Kapuas)
5. Genealogical Chart: Naha Tivab, Long Apari (Mahakam)

Appendix IX: Glossary.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Akei | grandfather or grandmother. |
| Aken | cousin. |
| Aki | Ego's mother's brother and father's brother. |
| Alok | sago flour. |
| Amak | father. |
| Amoi | old or former. |
| Anak panak | nuclear family or conjugal family. |
| Anak | child or ego's siblings' children. |
| Apan penalu | the place where the sago is worked. |
| Arik | ego's brother or sister. |
| Asak | one <i>asak</i> is ten <i>galung</i> . |
| Avang | sky. |
| Baguk | an instrument used in the extraction of sago which resembles a large wooden hammer. |
| Bajing | masked dancing. |
| Bak'eh | the previous year's farm. |
| Batin avun | horizon. |
| Beiwerk | augury. |
| Belak | chopstick-like instrument used for eating sago paste made from the branch of the sago tree. |
| Beliyau | witchcraft. |
| Bisa | intoxicating. |
| Bosok | parents-in-law or a child's spouse. |
| Bu'jen | evil spirits or the soul of the dead. |
| Buak | fruits. |
| Bubu | fish trap (Malay word). |
| Buleng | bridewealth. |
| Busui/Musui | ritual songs, usually long and individually and spontaneously created poems that tell of the works of the spirits. |
| Busung alok | container to keep sago. |
| Depa | one arm's length (measurement). |
| Doro | woman. |
| Duru | thunder. |
| Engkabang | illipe nut. |
| Gaharu | incense wood. |
| Galung | 25 pieces of cut sections, the length of a <i>depa</i> each. |
| Huven | thunderstorms. |
| Ilar aloh | lightning. |
| Inak | mother. |
| Ingngen | harvesting basket in Kayan language. |
| Ipui | Ego's mother's sister and father's sister. |
| Iten | to carry. |
| Jah'i | frog |
| Jala | net (Malay word). |
| Jali hudo | patterned mats. |
| Jali tehpu | mats for drying paddy. |
| Jali | mats. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Jan panak | finely or closely woven mats. |
| Kajan | a space or apartment where a group of people live. |
| Kave | death. |
| Kebal | an ability or power to protect oneself from injury or death. |
| Kecohei | the Bhuket term for the <i>kensurai</i> . |
| Keivang | crab. |
| Kejemoing | stars. |
| Kensurai | an Iban word for a very common tree found along the banks of the upriver region. |
| Ketagan | the place where the sago is placed in a basket and trampled upon. |
| Ketu'a Kareng | offering made to a person to strengthen the spirit of that person. |
| Kevo | a rattan sack for men. |
| Kuman | eat. |
| Labung-keriang | headdress for men. |
| Langu | a sister's husband. |
| Lapo ume | farm huts. |
| Larkin | a brave leader. |
| Lavet | spouse's brother or sister. |
| Lematang | ritual wailing. |
| Lino baken | outsider or unknown person. |
| Lipen | slaves. |
| Loleh | man. |
| Lut | cooked sago paste. |
| Mahap | sago processing. |
| Malat | machete. |
| Maliyau | pretend. |
| Manok | gentle flowing river. |
| Maren | aristocrats or leaders. |
| Menuak | a man who has participated in headhunting. |
| Minang | creator spirit. |
| Momok | the trampling of sago sap. |
| Mulik asik | sororate. |
| Murip pesenangen nangen | live individually. |
| Ngajat | to dance in Kayan and Kenyah languages. |
| Ngaran Kai | a brother's wife. |
| Ngarang | dance. |
| Ngaseng bukun wei | to scrap off the hips of the rattan. |
| Ngayau anak | small scale attacks for seeking revenge. |
| Ngayau | war/ headhunting. |
| Ngei'het wei | to splay the rattan. |
| Ngepasuk | eat. |
| Ngivan | movement upon marriage. |
| Notek | leaf of primary jungle tree used for dying rattan black. |
| Nugu | planting. |
| nyabei/ nahan | repeated standard refrains in ritual singing. |
| nyalim | mourning. |
| Nyalit | songs of praise. |
| Nyalung | make life or give life |
| Nyelutong | a type of resin. |
| Nyiluk bujak | looking for frogs. |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Okar pengahang | a root yielding red dye from a primary forest plant. |
| Paho | adultery. |
| Pajep | vanish. |
| Pala menoa | Iban term for vanguard or for being furthest upriver. |
| Pali | prohibition in certain types of behaviour. |
| Pamoh | funeral. |
| Panyin | commoners. |
| Parap | Kayan praise songs. |
| Pari | sibling, siblingship. |
| Paruk | picnic. |
| Parung | loft. |
| Pawan | mad. |
| Pebayu/pevayu | ritual singing for healing, predicting and bringing one out of misfortune or illness. |
| Pebusui | ritual singing. |
| Pekahin | the blurring of ownership. |
| Pekalan | an assumed state of commitment or expectation. |
| Pekayang | Kayan term for alternation between uxori-local and viri-local residence. |
| Pelikat | chequered mats. |
| Penalu | sago sap. |
| Pengaroh | amulets and charms, also in Malay and in Iban. |
| Penyalung | give/make life. |
| Penyamun | a Malay word meaning robber. |
| Periring | to fight in poetical language. |
| tavang | |
| Pesoo | marriage. |
| Petehaven | brideservice. |
| Petisik | incest. |
| Petutung | formal alliances or peace talks. |
| Potang | cooperative work group. |
| Puhuk | origin or root, and in some contexts it can mean bands. |
| Pukat | drift nets (Malay word). |
| Ranu mek nua | what are you making? |
| Salit | wind. |
| Sapak soa | a type of dance performed at funerals. |
| Sapan | very large and valuable freshwater fish, also commonly known as <i>empurau</i> . |
| Selivit | delayed work. |
| Sepitang | secondary forest or fallow land. |
| Silet | the process of folding and returning the weave into the mat to complete the mat. |
| Singngiro | tiger. |
| Soah | verandah. |
| Sok | husband or wife. |
| Suang sangngak pepiang | a feeling of togetherness or oneness. |
| Sugang | the resin of a type of tree. |
| Sunung | cloak made of animal skin. |
| Tapak wei | a stump of timber fixed with a blade to pass split rattan through. |
| Tatak | a sago-like flour from the seeds of the <i>tatak</i> tree. |
| Tawak | gongs. |
| Tebangau | leaf of secondary forest tree used for dyeing rattan black. |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Telaluk | mousedeer |
| Telavang | shield. |
| Temenggung | paramount chief |
| Tenek | black clay. |
| Tengngen | the misfortune that befalls a person who is not offered food. |
| Tepiruk | burial in rocks or caves. |
| Teravai | shield. |
| Teyat | harvesting basket. |
| Tiveng pare | a large bark container for storing paddy. |
| Tu'an | primary forest. |
| Tuba | a type of derris root used for stunning fish. |
| Tui | an instrument made from a flat-headed nail embedded into a wooden handle used to pull the rattan weave together. |
| Tujen | soul or spirit of the living. |
| Tulah | calamity or illness that befalls an individual due to ritual misbehaviour. |
| Uboh busui | good spirits used in ritual singing. |
| Uboh | spirits. |
| Uku | Kayan term for grandparents. |
| Ulei | tattoos. |
| Ume | swidden farm. |
| Usun | ego's grandchildren. |
| Wi berirai | larger diameter rattans. |
| Wi letikan | finer smaller diameter rattan. |

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Abbreviations.

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BKI: Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie (KITLV), Amsterdam, The Hague, Dordrecht, Leiden.
BRB: The Borneo Research Bulletin, East Lansing, Michigan; Phillips, Maine; Williamsburg, Virginia.
JIAEA: Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia, Singapore.
JMBRAS: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Malaysian Branch, Singapore.
OM: Objets et Mondes, Paris.
SMJ: The Sarawak Museum Journal, Kuching.
S.West.J.Anthrop.: Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, Albuquerque.
TBG: Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde (Bataviasch Genootschap), Batavia.
TNAG: Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Leiden.

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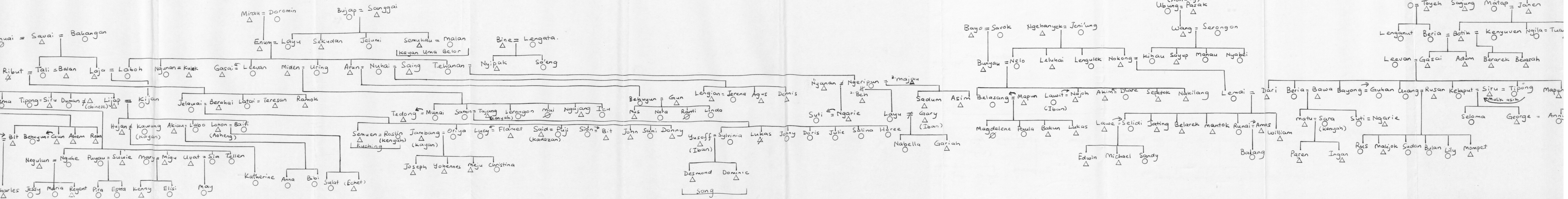
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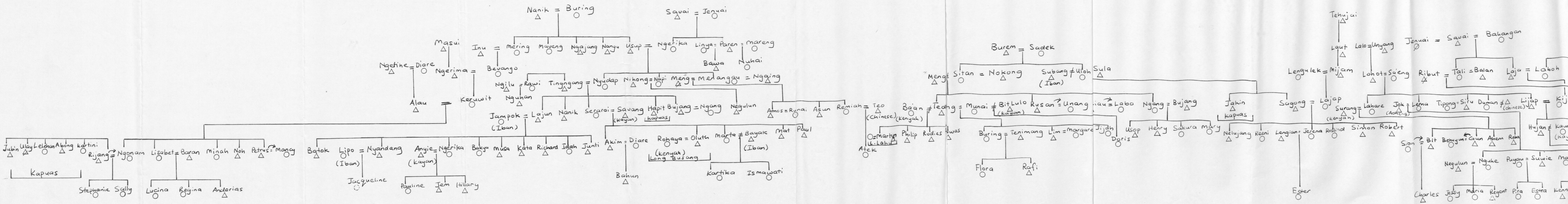
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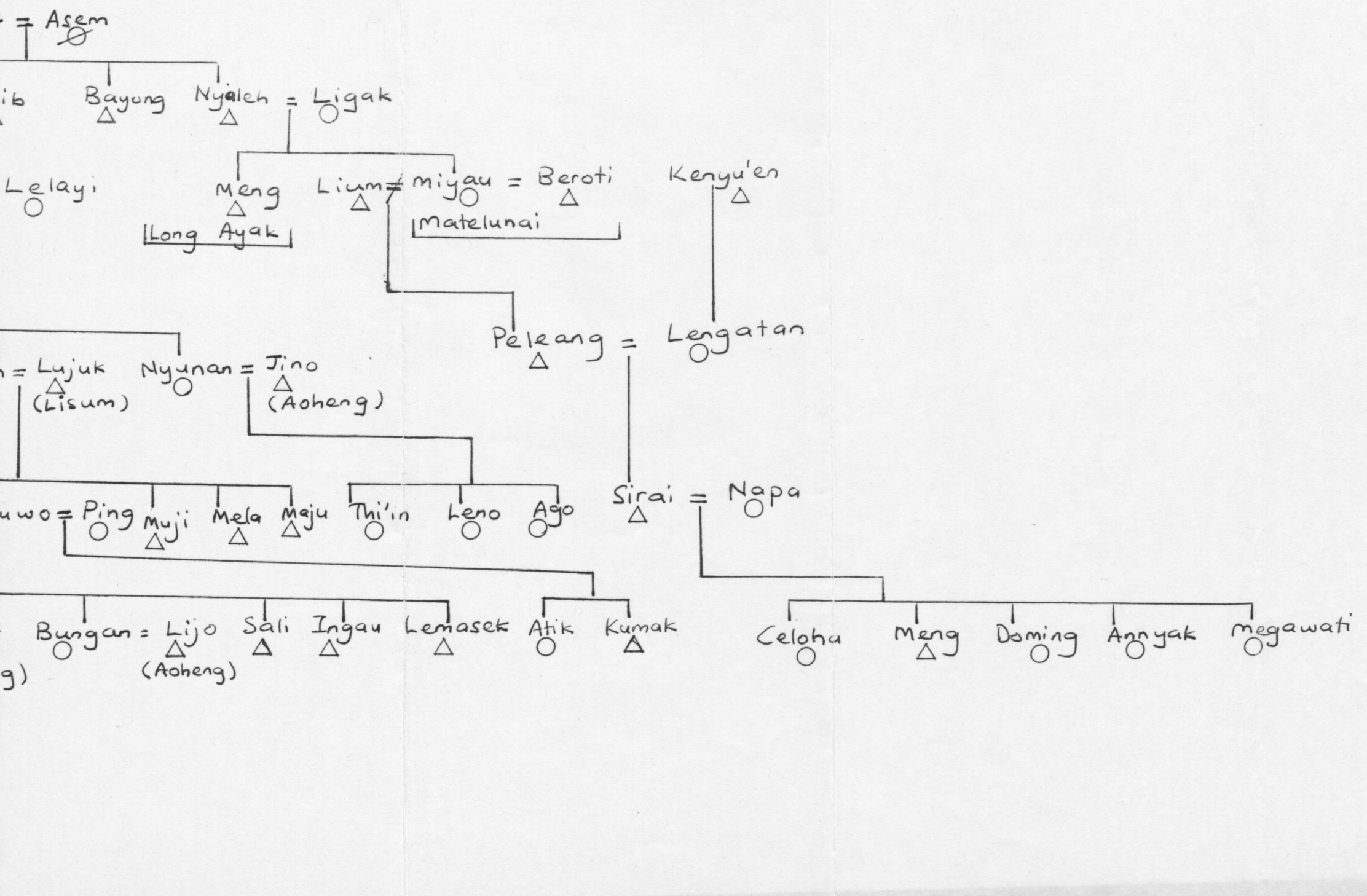
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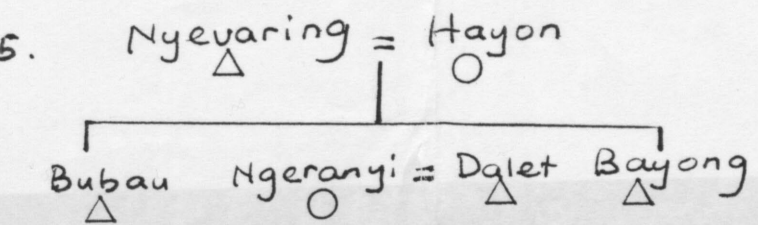
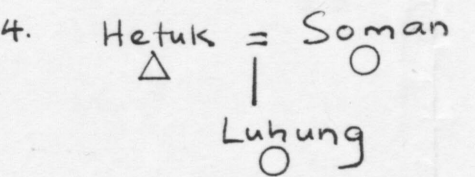
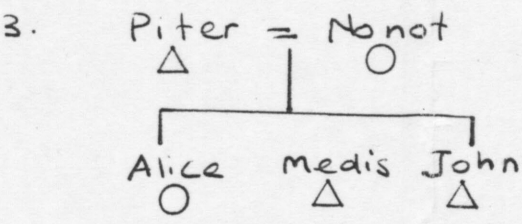
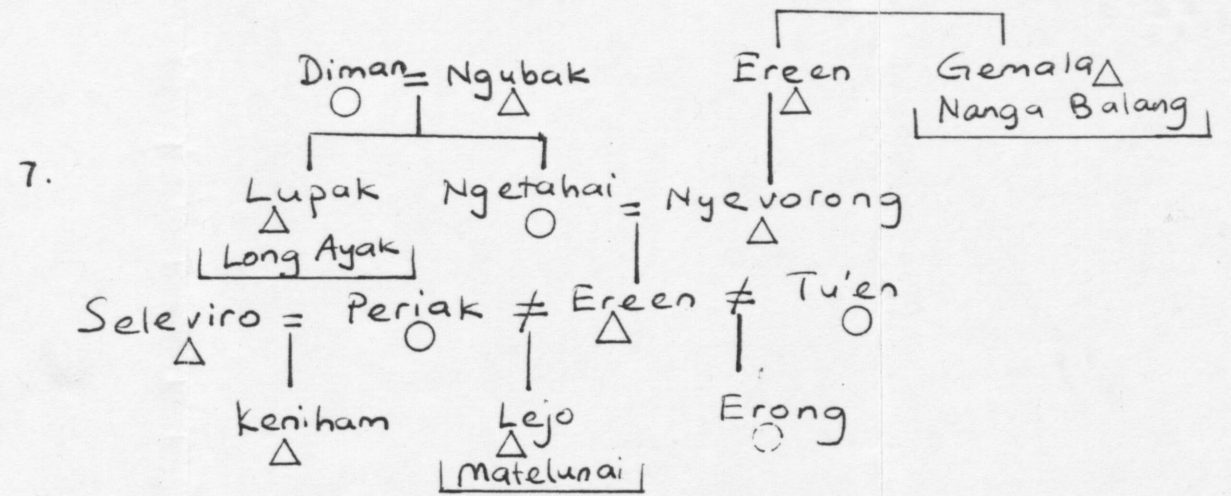
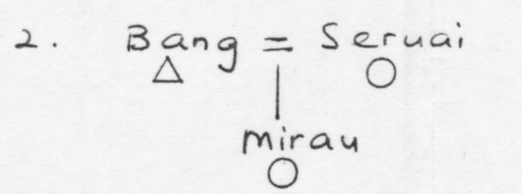
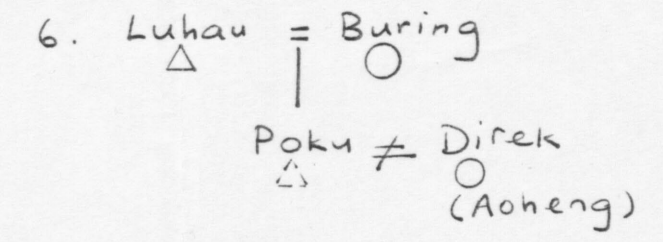
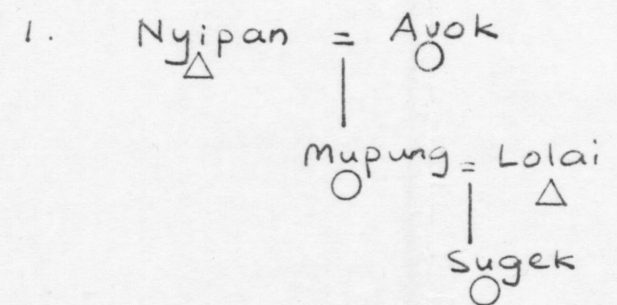


Long Ayak, Upper Balui. Sarawak.

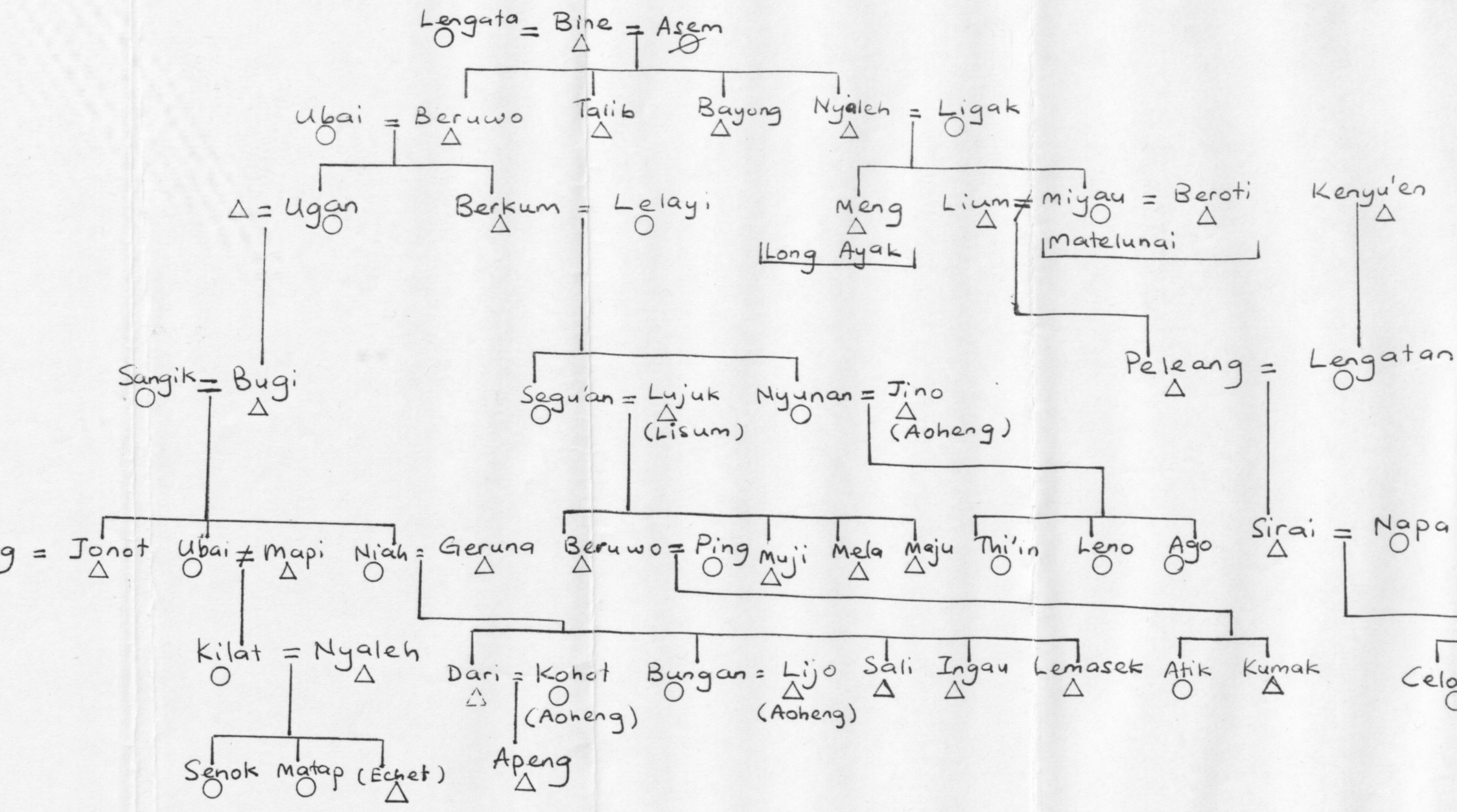
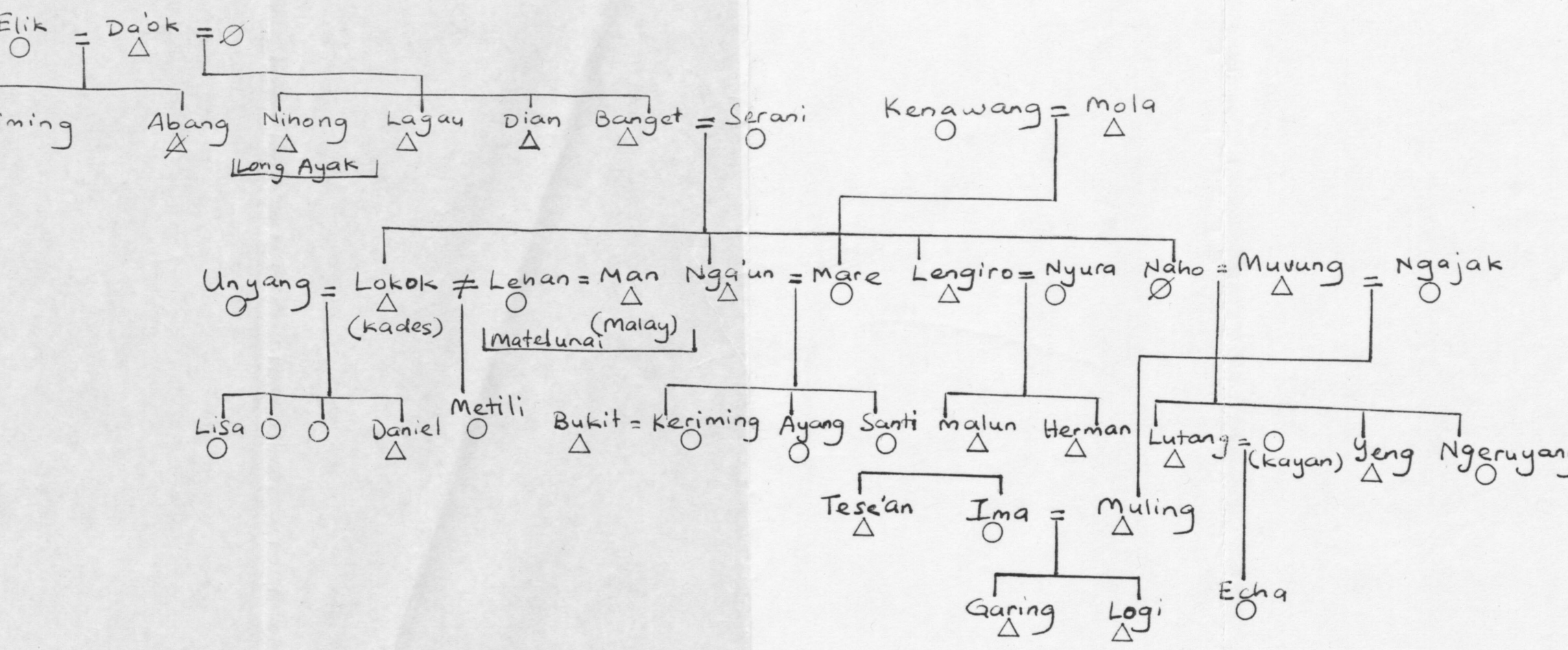
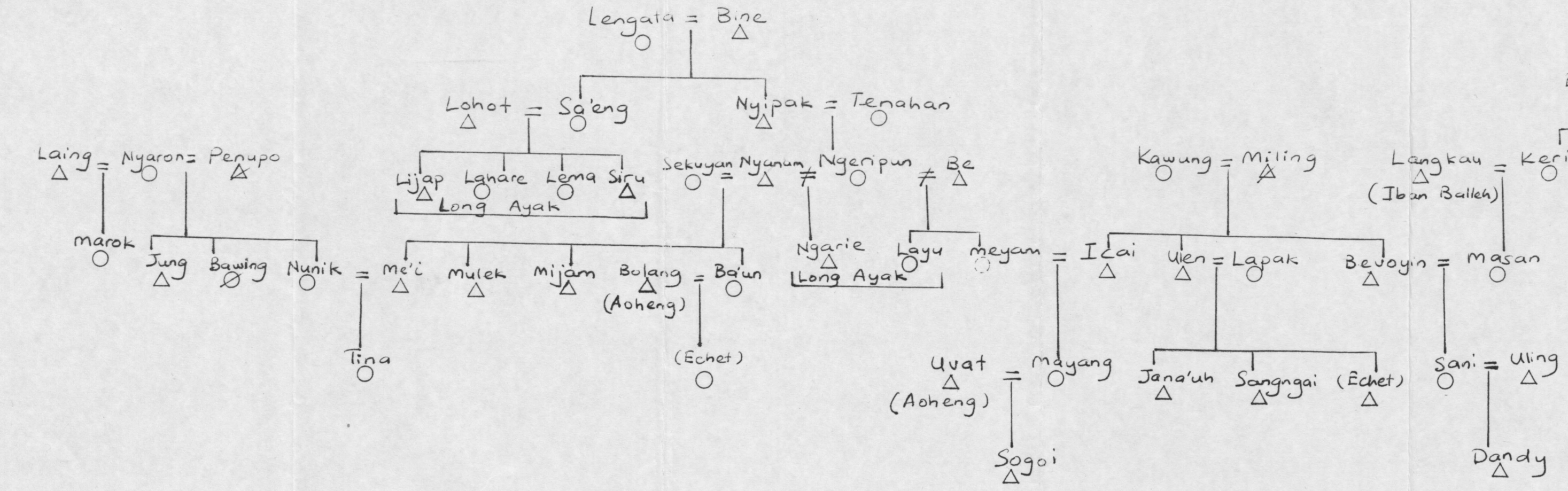


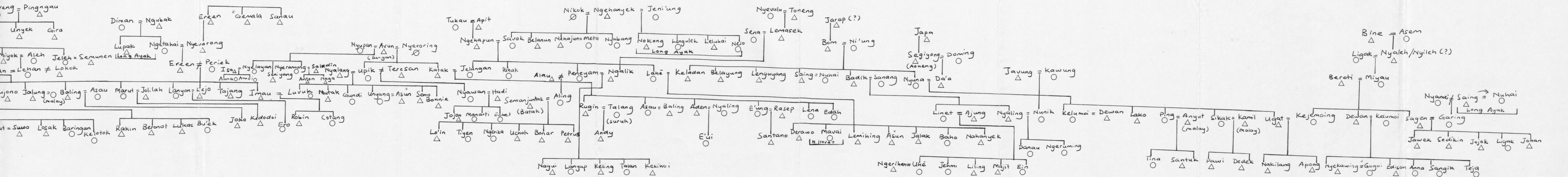


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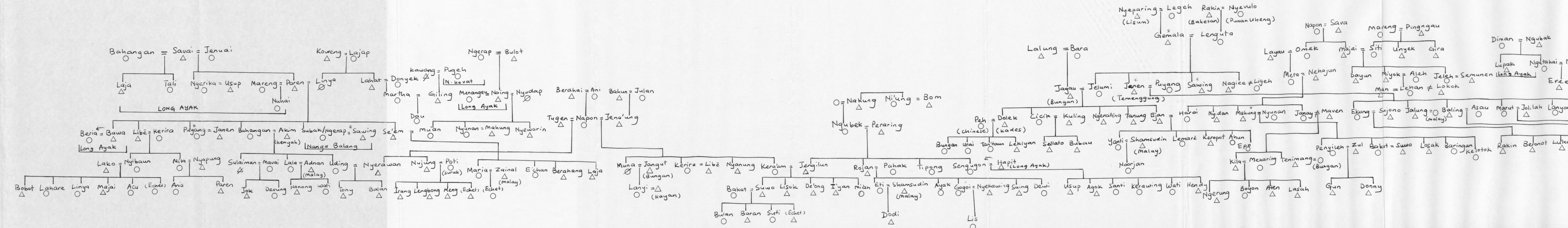


Naha Tiwap / Long Apari, Mahakam. East Kalimantan

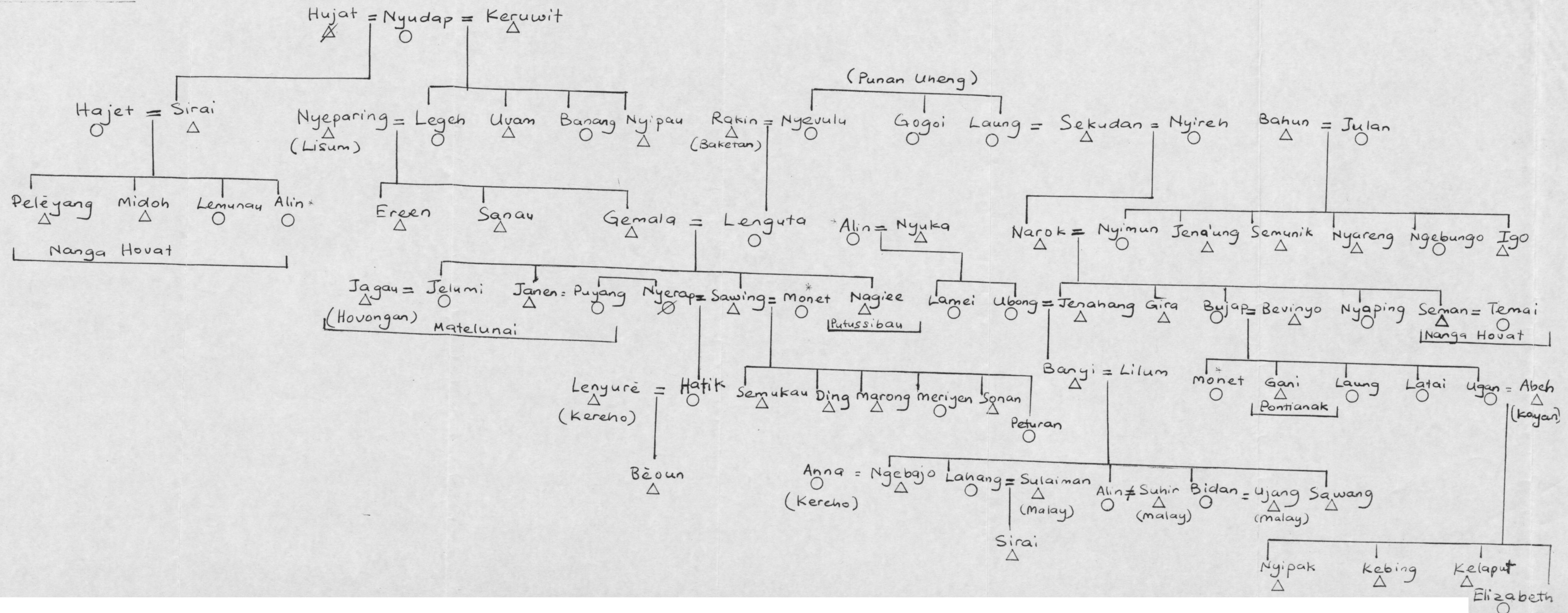


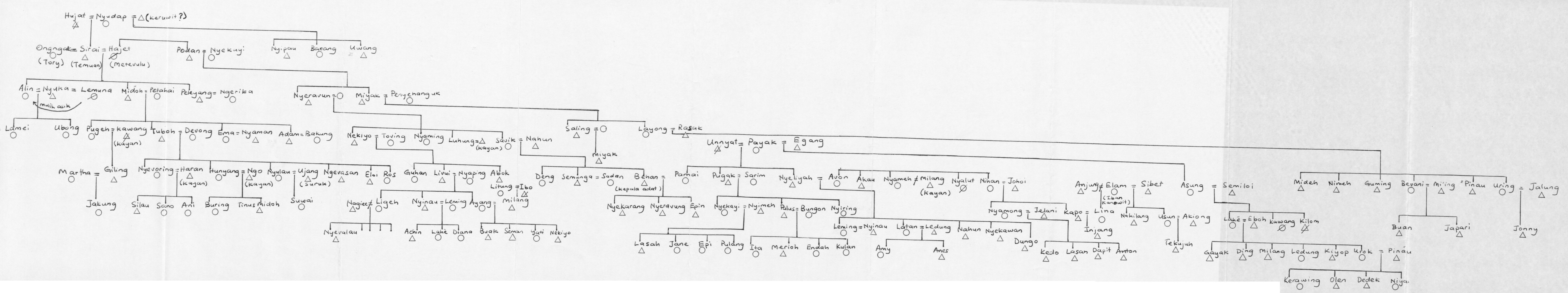


Matelunai, Kapuas. West Kalimantan.



Nanga Balang, Kapuas. West Kalimantan





Nanga Hovat, Mendalam. Kapuas West Kalimantan.

