

dreamSONGS
and
healing sounds
in the rainforests of
MALAYSIA



Smithsonian
Folkways

Dream Songs and Healing Sounds. In the Rainforests of Malaysia.

Recorded, compiled, and annotated by Marina Roseman

- 1 Bird Songs and River Sounds 0:55
- 2 The Princess of Mt. Sawilu? 11:02
(Along Indan)
- 3 Cincem 3:53 (Abilem Lum)
- 4 Penhə:y 2:46 (Uda A/P Tengah)
- 5 Bamboo-tube zither (kərab)
"Clearing the Fields" 2:23 (Lima A/P Busu)
- 6 Metal mouthharp (geḡḡon), comments 1:02
(Pengahulu Senang A/L Long)
- 7 Metal mouthharp (geḡḡon), "Biray bird"
1:58 (Pengahulu Senang A/L Long)
- 8 Metal mouthharp (geḡḡon), comments 0:10
(Pengahulu Senang A/L Long)
- 9 Biray bird (Magpie Robin, *Copsychus saularis*) 0:47
- 10 Healing Ceremony 10:09 (At+j Apos A/L
Itam and Uda A/L Pandak)
- 11 Noseflute (pənsə:l), comments 1:32
(Angah Pandak and Hitam Angah)
- 12 Noseflute (pənsə:l), "The tuwala? tree"
3:11 (Angah Pandak and Hitam Angah)
- 13 Noseflute (pənsə:l), comments 0:15
(Angah Pandak and Hitam Angah)
- 14 The cicada heḡḡo:d 0:52
- 15 The Way of the Annual Fruits (The Langsat Tree)
4:37 (Abilem Lum)
- 16 Təranə? bird (Checker-throated woodpecker;
Picus mentalis) 0:26
- 17 Tiger genre (Mamu:g) 3:39
(Hitam Tamboh A/L Along)
- 18 Healing Ceremony 7:10 (Ading Kerah)
- 19 Səmpəhka:h Flower 6:39
(Pengahulu Along Uda)
- 20 Hill Rice (Bah Kurə:w) 4:17
(Along A/P Busu)
- 21 Pənjiwək (singing while journeying) 1:18
(4 adolescents from Jelgək)

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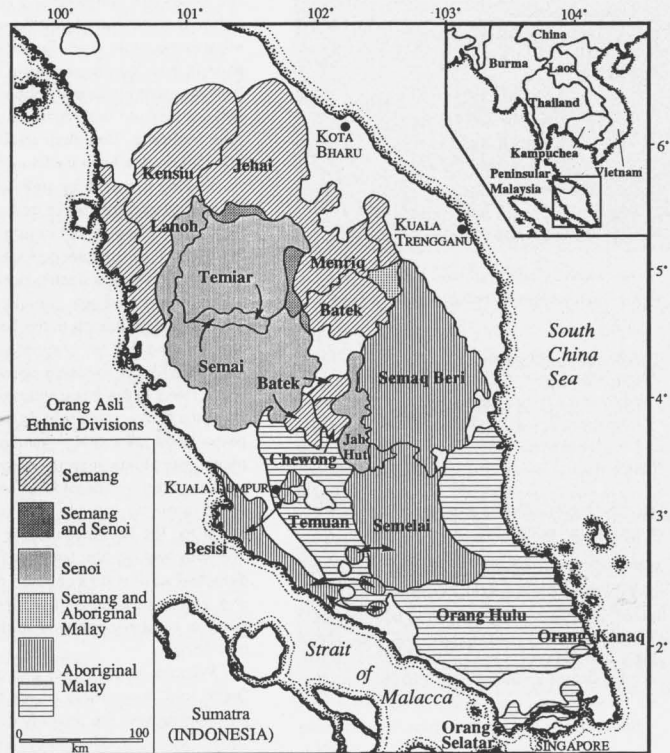


Figure 1.
Orang Asli Ethnic
Divisions and
Regional Locations.

Key to Pronunciation

Temiar stress the last syllable of a word.

Vowels:

- /a/ as in English father
- /ε/ as in English bet
- /ə/ as in English the
- /e/ as in English bait
- /ɔ/ as in English or
- /u/ as in English boot
- /ɨ/ as in English "tune"

Vowel length is indicated with a colon:/a:/

Vowel nasalization is indicated with a tilde:

/ã/

Consonant nasalization:

/ɲ/ = /ny/

/ŋ/ = /ng/ as in English sing

/ʔ/ = glottal stop, as in Brooklynese "li'l" for "little"

Kg. = Kampung, Malay term used by Temiar to designate "settlement" or "village"

A/P; A/L When formally identifying themselves, Temiar adjust to the Muslim convention of noting parentage by using the abbreviations A/P ("anak perempuan", daughter of) and A/L ("anak lelaki", son of).

The Malaysian rainforest is a vibrant environment, rich with sound from forest floor to canopy, river's edge to mountain crest. Temiar dreamsongs emerge from their engagement with the spirits of their resonant landscape, about 2500 square miles of lowland and highland rainforest in peninsular Malaysia. Here their small communities of 20–150 people have traditionally been scattered.

Cutting rice stalk by stalk, climbing through the foliage of a tree while gathering fruits, knowing the feel of each root or turn in a path in their bare feet, Temiar hunter-gatherers and horticulturalists easily sense a kinship between themselves and their surroundings. The approximately 12,000 Temiar belong to the Senoi ethnic division of the Orang Asli or "original peoples," indigenous Mon-Khmer speaking populations dwelling along rivers in the forest still remaining in the center of the Malay peninsula. In the Temiar theory of personhood, all entities—humans, other animals, plants, mountains, insects—embody bounded souls that can be liberated as unbound spirits. The world resonates with life, with potentially animated being. The bound soul is the condition of everyday waking life; temporarily unbound or detached spirit is the condition of dreams, trance, and singing and dancing ceremonies. An excessively or suddenly unbound spirit results in illness and danger.

When a Temiar sleeps and dreams, his or her "head soul" temporarily leaves the body. It travels, meeting with the similarly detached "head" or "heart" soul of another entity, also taking the

shape of a small human figure. The spirit sings a phrase, and the dreamer repeats it. Line by line (or, as Temiar say, "mouthful by mouthful") the spiritguide sings, and dreamer repeats until, upon awakening, the song is firmly embedded in the dreamer's memory.

Song and Ceremony

(Bands 2–4, 8, 13, 15, 16–18)

Dream songs form the basis for community-wide singing and trance-dancing ceremonies, held variously to celebrate the fruiting season; mark points in the agricultural cycle; welcome or send off travelers; end a period of mourning; greet and dance with the spirits and each other; rejuvenate the community generally; or heal specific patients.

A person who receives a dream song becomes an intermediary for the spirits. During ceremonies, the medium shares the song with community members. He or she sings an initial phrase, which is then repeated by a female chorus ranging from young girls to older women. The female chorus also provides essential percussive accompaniment: pairs of bamboo-tube stampers (gɔ : h) beat against a log in duple rhythm (Plate 1). One or two singled-headed drums (b a r a n ɔ ʔ, Plate 6; b a t a k) and/or a small hand-held gong, played by males or females, often add resonance or elaborate the tube rhythms.

Each member of the chorus holds a pair of bamboo-tube stampers, which she strikes against a log stretching across the front of the line of seated chorus members. The longer tube, producing a



Plate 1. Healing ceremony. (Roseman 1982)

lower tone, is termed "male"; the shorter, producing a higher pitch, is termed "female." Drums elaborate this rhythm, with a low "male" pitch resounding in the center of the drumskin, and a high "female" pitch damped at the rim. While "female" tube and drum strokes are damped, they also receive a dynamic accent.

Relative pitch, associated with the length of the tube producing the pitch, musically encodes the "longer" and "shorter" geographic range traversed by the different genders in the course of their subsistence activities. Men, with access to the blowpipe, go long distances through the rainforest to hunt. Women gather jungle products in larger, noisier groups that stay closer to the settlements. Yet even as they are differentiated, both male and female tubes—and male and female ceremonial participants—are necessary for the production of spiritually charged ceremonial activity.

The aboriginal populations of the Malay peninsula were gradually enveloped by later arrivals: seafaring Malayo-Polynesian peoples who intermarried with the aborigines to varying degrees. Those migrants who mixed less are the ancestors of the present day Malays, who now comprise about 55% of Malaysia's population of nearly 17 million. The over 84,000 Orang Asli now form less than 1% of Malaysia's current population; the balance includes 33% Chinese, and 10% Tamil Indians, originally brought by the British colonial administration to work rubber plantations and tin mines. The aboriginal peoples are suspended between conflicting goals of the developing Malaysian nation, and have been deeply affected by the subsequent stress on natural resources and rainforest lands where they have traditionally lived.

Dreamers, given the leeway of individual revelation in their relatively egalitarian rainforest society, dream their songs in response to personal and historical experiences. Temiar musico-choreographic genres thus vary according to geographical location, historical time period, and even individual dreamsong composer-receivers. They range from those associated with Tiger Spirits (m a m u g, Band 15) to those

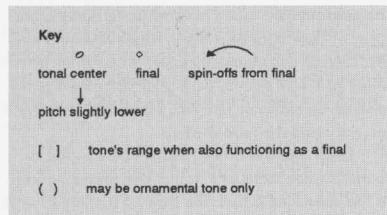


Plate 2. Hunting with blowpipe.
(Roseman 1991)

associated with mountains and rivers (t a n g a : y, Band 2), from those emerging from the annually blossoming fruit trees (p e n h a : y, Band 4; t a n g a : y, n a r t a h u n, Band 13) to those which flow from commodities (like airplanes or canned sardines) and concepts (like statehood or nationhood) brought into the forest by more recently arriving foreigners. These genres conjoin particular tone-rows (see Fig. 2) and percussive styles with other performance parameters, including leaves used for ceremonial ornaments, dance styles, extent of male and/or female participation,

and whether the spirit prefers a lit or darkened performance space.

Ceremonies are usually held in the central, multipurpose room of a Temiar extended family



	Original Pitches	Transposed for comparison
BAND 2. T a n g a : y (Semai-style)		
BAND 3. C i n c e : m		
BAND 4. P e n h a : y		
BAND 5. K a r a b		
BAND 10. D u r i a n (Semai-style)		
BAND 10. B a m b o o - T u b e s (Semai-style)		
BAND 12. P a n s a : l		
BAND 15. T a n g a : y (Langsat Fruit)		
BAND 15. T a n g a : y (Annual Fruits)		
BAND 17. T i g e r G e n r e		
BAND 18. T a n g a : y (P e g a s c h F l o w e r)		
BAND 19. S e m p a h k a : h F l o w e r		
BAND 15. T a n g a : y (Annual Fruits)		

Figure 2. Song Scales (Tone-rows)

dwelling. The floors, made from bamboo slats lashed together about 8 feet above the ground, provide a flexible, rebounding surface for the dancers (Band 19). The walls are traditionally made from bamboo tubes or woven bamboo fragments with spaces through which the pulsing nighttime insect sounds enter the ceremonial arena, while the pulsing of the bamboo tubes pass through and out into the night.

Dream songs may be sung in other contexts: children playing, a sleepless person singing solo into the night, or groups walking through the forest (Band 21). In these cases, the songs do not attain the potency they have within the ceremonial context, when the spiritguide who originally gave the song becomes present through the voice of the medium, in the body of a patient, or in concert with the dancers.

Understanding Song Texts, Song Style and Structure

The narrative coherence of a song text is best understood not as a continuously unfolding plot, but rather as an evocative series of impressionistic images, which jump sporadically from scenes viewed by the traveling spiritguide, to feeling states, to descriptions of the ceremonial arena, or messages for participants.

Temiar comment that a good melody, like a good hike, should have varied contours. They describe melodic movement in terms reminiscent of footpaths and river routes: straight stretches; bending and curving; rising; falling. Two or three

melodic phrases are repeated to form verses. The phrases of a verse follow one another in an orderly fashion, "like the bodies of hikers molded front to back as they move along a path."

Periodically, a song phrase termed $j\epsilon n h o:k$ is inserted. This phrase works in more extensive text that won't fit within the melodo-rhythmic confines of the other song phrases. It begins on a recitation tone, often the fifth above the tonal center (or "home tone" in Temiar terminology), then descends through the scale to the tonic or the fourth below the tonic.

The female chorus, singing in unison, responds interactively to each song phrase sung by the medium. Temiars describe the interactive moment when medium and chorus's voices overlap as a "crossover" movement: one voice's phrase descends "from sky to the earth," while the other's ascends "from earth to sky." During that period of overlap, certain notes—the tonic, the fifth above and the fourth below below the tonic—are extended in duration. In this interactive moment, differences between male and female, spirit and human, self and society, person and environment are simultaneously stated and eclipsed.

While Temiar pitches do not conform strictly to those of the Western diatonic scale, I will use these tones as approximate reference points.

Instrumental Music

Nature inspires vocal music when Temiars dream the spirits and sing with the voices of the landscape, its flora and fauna. The natural world is

musically embodied in Temiar instrumental music mostly through stylized imitation of environmental sounds. The instrumental repertoire is also differentiated in terms of time: singing ceremonies are nighttime events, which must conclude by the time day is firmly established, or about an hour after sunrise. Instrumental music, usually played solo, occurs during the day. To play or ceremonialize at the wrong time would breach the cosmic order, precipitating illness or death.

In addition to the drums, gongs, and bamboo-tube stampers accompanying singing ceremonies, Temiar musical instruments include the noseflute ($p\epsilon n s o:l$, Band 11, Plate 5), mouth-blown flute ($s\alpha\tau\alpha y$), metal mouthharp ($g\epsilon r g o n$, Bands 6–9, Plate 4), a mouthharp made from the mid-rib of the palm *Eugeissona tristis* ($r\alpha g g o n$, $r\alpha g g o c$), and a two-stringed tube zither ($k\alpha r \alpha b$, Band 5, Plate 3). There is no general Temiar term for music; rather, specific terms are formed from instrument names and refer to the acts of "singing," "fluting," or "zithering."

Programming Potential

Compact disc format opens a variety of programming possibilities for study or pleasure:

Natural Sounds: 1,9,14,16

Vocal genres: 2,3,4,15,17–21

Instrumental selections: 5,7,12

Women's genres and performances: 4,5,20

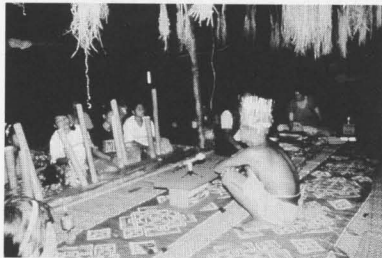
Temiar spoken language: 6,8,11,13

Perak-oriented genres: 3,4,19,20,21

Kelantan-oriented genres: 2,10,12,15,17,18,21

Temiar genres influenced by Semai style:

2,10,12



Recording session in Bawik. (Roseman 1992)

Individual Selections

Band 1

Bird Songs and River Sounds

Recorded: July 10, 1981. Berok River; Kg. Belau, Kelantan

At the river's edge, in the morning, birds and insects sing. The swaying duple rhythm of one bird's song (*Trichastoma Abbotti*; Abbott's babbler) inspires its Temiar name: buwəŋ buwəh. Its clear song is interspersed with the arioso complexity of two baroh birds (*Pycnonotus zeylanicus*; Straw-crowned bulbul, entering at 2:23), who sing their bubbling melody in antiphonal interlocking duet. Cool river water streaming, joined by the pulsing of cicadas, frogs and other insects, forms an ambiance peculiar to the rainforest that changes subtly throughout the day. These are the sounds and forest beings from which the Temiar musical world emerges, as they creatively elaborate on the sights, sounds, and their sense of the forest.

A river charts a path through the dense forest growth; so, too, songs are "paths" (nəŋ); in the voice of the singing medium, a spiritguide traces a route through the density of life. The female chorus interactively responds to the medium's song phrase, "following the path" (wədwa:d nəŋ).

The morning chorus of birds and insects by the river's edge leads into the ambient sound of night-time cicadas (2:44), the sound that precedes, underlies, and follows singing and trance-dancing ceremonies.

Band 2

Singer: Along Indan A/L Agun

Song: The Princess of Mt. Sawilu:?

Recorded: March 5, 1981. Kg. Belau, Berok River, Kelantan

Along Indan received this song in a dream from the female spirit of the crest of Mt. Sawilu:?. It is an example of the Təŋgə:y genre prominent in Kelantan. The spirits who inform this genre tend to be from the mountains, rivers, birds, and other forest animals. This is the first song that Along Indan received from a spiritguide, and he sings it at the beginning of each ceremony in which he participates. He subsequently received about 14 dreamsongs, and is considered a major medium on the Berok River.

Song Style and Structure

Using a four-note scale and an octave range, melodic phrases emphasize the movement from the fifth and major third above, down to the tonic, often continuing on to the fourth below the tonic. Temiars call this "Semai-style" singing (also heard on Band 10), referring to another Orang Asli cultural and linguistic group, the Semai, who dwell on the perimeters of Temiar territory in areas of Kelantan and Perak. Another characteristic of Temiar songs in "Semai-style" is the emphasis on a final tone (in this song, the A below the tonal center, D). Also characteristic of Təŋgə:y sung "Semai-style," the female chorus repeats the text, but varies the melody slightly,

abstracting its general form from the more ornamented version sung by the medium. In the context of Temiar song genres, this song has a slower tempo ($\downarrow = 66-68$), as do most songs in the Temiar version of "Semai-style."

Three melodic phrases are repeated to form verses (a musical transcription of verse six is found in Roseman 1991, pp.111-114). However each verse does not need all three phrases.

Dance

Dance movements are coordinated with the high-low pulsation of the bamboo tubes; a strolling-in-place movement is initiated as the accented "high" tube sounds. One foot steps, shifting the body's weight forward on this accented beat. The other foot steps forward on the sixteenth-note elaborations of the high-tube beat, then steps back on the first low-tube beat. Dancers often carry a leaf whisk that waves and rustles as the hand opposite the foot stepping forward swings gently in front of the body.

Song Text

The song text describes the long-range vision of the spiritguide as she leaps across mountain crests and soars above the forest canopy, a metaphor for the knowledge of the spiritguide. She describes her rainforest travels, and her view of the ceremonial setting. She talks about her feelings, and those of the patient.

In the segment translated here, the number before the dash marks the placement of a verse

within the entire song. The number after the dash marks which of the three melodic phrases are used to construct that line. The "J" marks a jənhə:k song phrase.

1-1 Leaping across and into the ceremonial house/1-2 Feeling tired, weary in spirit/1-3 Each participant circling, following the lead of the spiritmedium/1-J Welcome to you [the ethnomusicologist] whose country is so far away; remember [chorus members] to play the bamboo tubes well, for many songs will follow; young, flirtatious women of the chorus, listen well!

2-2 I travel across the wide country/2-3 I verse beautifully.

3-1/Many people look for flowers; we prepare the ceremonial ornaments/3-2 Feeling harmonious as we return home, chattering/3-3 Disparitize, the vastness of this country.

4-1 I sing about the baroh bird [heard on Band 1], whose ornamented song is like the bamboo-tube percussion/4-2 Sheltering the weary soul of the patient from the midday heat/4-J Endlessly/4-3 I blow above in the cold wind.

5-1 We prepare the ceremonial ornaments/
5-2 Respond quickly, chorus: it will be morning soon/5-3 I see far, from the other side of the sky.

6-1 The long, wavy hair and curving body of the princess of the mountain is like the slanting path

of the falling rain, firming the leaves/6-2 The princess spirit of Mt. Pahmah has hair and body long and curving like falling rain/6-3 I verse of a weary feeling in the heart/6-J We search for leaves and flowers, then prepare the hanging ornaments; the chorus responds with gracious accompaniment. ■

Band 3

Singer: Abilem A/L Along Lum

Song: c i n c e : m

Recorded: September 7, 1982. Kg. Bawik, Kelantan

The medium Abilem Lum learned this song as a young boy from his grandfather, Bawan, when they lived together in Jalong, Perak, an area central to the emergence of the c i n c e : m genre. Songs of this genre are received from the spirits of people who have died.

Song Style and Structure

In comparison with most Temiar song genres, c i n c e : m has a slower tempo ($\downarrow = 68$). The haunting melody of the two song phrases comprising each verse stresses the minor third between B (the tonal center) and D. As he rocks back and forth between B and D, Abilem's vocal ornamentation creates what could almost be considered an auxiliary tone slightly below the B; the chorus, in their unornamented rendition of the melody, eliminates this auxiliary tone.

Periodically, a j e n h o : k phrase uses all four

tones of the scale. Characteristic of the j e n h o : k phrase of c i n c e : m is the vocable, "Lil-lil-lil." As the medium pauses while the chorus repeats the phrase he has just sung, he often blows or whistles audibly.

Song Text

The spirit sings of the cool ethereal liquid set loose from the mountains to reach the ceremonial participants, and of seeing a long vista "to the other side." She describes the leaves and flowers of the ceremonial ornaments releasing their soothing refreshment.

Abilem Lum intersperses his song with explanatory comments, expanding upon poetic vocabulary specific to c i n c e : m. The spirit describes a Temiar grave, with a door-like opening. In an ironic play upon what Temiars have learned from observing British colonial and Malay postcolonial government officials, the Temiar grave—an interior shelf dug into the side wall of a rectangular hole—is compared to the stifling, small, rectangular "office space" of these bureaucrats. Abilem explains: "o p i s k a n d a n", that's a rectangular hole like an office, we say that's how we bury the corpse...we dig a hole and bury the corpse, covering it well, it's like an office down below, inside that hole. That's why we verse "o p i s k a n d a n."

Dance

Two dance movements are characteristic of the genre c i n c e : m. In the first, a line of dancers fol-

lowing one another circle the space beneath a central hanging leaf ornament. A step is taken on every other beat of the bamboo-tube stampers; each step is followed in the next beat by a slight bounce in place. Hands are held loosely at the sides of the body, and follow the wave of motion sent up through the body by the step-bounce, step-bounce rhythm, replicating in the body the high-low, high-low alternation of the bamboo tubes.

The other type of movement is performed by individual dancers, not in line. The body is on a diagonal axis: one foot in front, the hip jutting out in the direction of the foot in the rear. The weight is in the balls of the feet, which stay in place, while the heels of both feet circumscribe an arc towards the right, progressing with a slight bounce on each tube beat for three or four beats. The heels then circumscribe an arc to the left for three or four beats of the bamboo-tube stampers. The dancer's body is basically rotating right and left around its own axis. Arms are held out at shoulder height, with a slight lift in the shoulders on each beat, while open hands rotate gracefully at the wrists.

Band 4

Singer: Uda A/P Tengah

Song: P e n h a : y

Recorded: July 29, 1991. Kg. Telor, Kelantan

Moving through the forest in larger, noisier groups with children in tow, women are consid-

ered less likely to have the intimate moments in the jungle that might lead to later dream encounters with the spirits of the landscape. But, as the young female medium and healer Uda Tengah comments, "We (women) also go walking, up into the mountains we walk, when we go looking for leaves and flowers for ceremonies we walk, and we meet with spirits." (See Roseman 1989 for a fuller discussion of gender and Temiar music.)

The genre P e n h a : y emerges from the spirit of the Perah fruit tree (*Elateriospermum tapos*). P e n h a : y originated among the Perak Temiars in the 1940's and spread in popularity, finally reaching Kelantan. Over the past two years, Uda Tengah has received several songs from P e n h a : y, who appears to her as a male spirit. She received the song on Band 4 in a dream two days before I recorded it here. The song is a good example of how researchers enter local history, even as they record it.

Two days earlier, I had recorded a ceremony at a nearby settlement, Ipos, where Uda Tengah was singing. As is my usual practice, I alternated between recording, joining in the female chorus, and dancing. After the ceremony, Uda Tengah returned home and slept. She dreamt that the male Perah spirit appeared and asked about me, then gave this song to me through her. He wanted us both as his wives, together, he said. This song would bring us all together, she said, and whenever I heard it, after I had returned home, I would remember my friend Uda Tengah and our spirit-husband, the Perah tree. Just as I recorded Uda

Tengah's songs and stories in my notebooks and on my tapes, so had she recorded my presence in the historiography of Temiar song.

Song Style and Structure

Pεnhə:y is a lively genre, with a faster tempo (♩ = 100). Different mediums dream songs within the genre of Pεnhə:y, but their melodies vary in what Temiars term "color" (which we might translate as a combination of "scale" and "melodic contour") from dreamer to dreamer. This melody emphasizes major seconds, major third, and a delightful octave leap in the second of the song's two melodic phrases. The vocal attack in Pεnhə:y is less elaborate than the more highly ornamented and melismatic genres represented on Bands 2 and 3. Through the bamboo walls of the home in which this song was recorded, near the source of the Betis River, the sound of the rapids below can be heard.

Song Text

The male spirit of the Perah tree sings flirtatiously about his feelings of shy longing for the two women he desires, Uda Tengah and the visiting ethnomusicologist, "the woman of the marketplace". The conflation of identity, as the male spirit sings through the female medium, makes it difficult to know to whom the first person singular pronoun "I" refers. In all verses except verse 4, it refers to the male spiritguide; in verse 4, the "I" refers to the female medium.

- 2-1 I feel shy here/2-2 Shy before my women
 3-1 See how the women dance/3-2 Beautiful women
 4-1 I feel longing/4-2 Thinking about my man (the spiritguide)
 5-1 I'll run off, run away/5-2 Run away from my women
 6-1 I'm longing for the woman of the marketplace/6-2 When she goes back to the other side tomorrow
 7-1 She'll go to the town of Ipoh/7-2 And my heart will be sad

Band 5

Instrument: Bamboo-tube zither (kəɾəb)
 Instrumentalist: Lima A/P Busu
 Song: Clearing the fields
 Recorded: July 3, 1982. Kg. Kεηkɔη, Kelantan

The kəɾəb is constructed from a bamboo tube strung with two strings made from forest vines. The longer string is termed "male", the shorter, "female". This solo instrument is played exclusively by women during the day (Plate 3); in the background, we hear a rooster and chickens as they feed below the house. In this tune, Lima Busu imitates the sounds of clearing the fields. She musically mimics the repetitious labor of cutting trees and brush with small adzes and bush knives. Yet the actions of clearing, while repetitious, harbour slight variations in angle, effort, and duration. With three notes, Lima Busu captures the subtle variations of these actions in her rendition.

Bands 6–9

Instrument: metal mouthharp (gεηgɔη)
 Instrumentalist: Penghulu Senang A/L Long
 Song: Biray bird
 Recorded: July 3, 1982. Kg. Saηway, Kelantan

While the tube zither is reserved for women, the mouthharp—whether made from metal or palm—is played by men. Part of the instrument is inserted inside the player's mouth; the projecting metal tongue is plucked, creating a sound rich in overtones (Plate 4). By changing the shape of the oral cavity and the tension in the lips, the overtones can be shifted. The fundamental, constant in pitch through the song, functions as a drone, but its timbre changes as respective overtones are emphasized to create the melody.

Band 6: In response to my queries (MR) about his instrument, the headman of Kg. Saηway, Senang



Plate 3. Lima Busu plays kəɾəb. (Roseman 1982)

Long (SL), introduces his song in Temiar, an Austroasiatic, Mon-Khmer language:

MR: What's the name of that...?

SL: gεηgɔη.

MR: gεηgɔη?

SL: gεηgɔη. This mouthharp goes back to the origins of we forest people. We play it for entertainment, or if our hearts are lovesick, homesick, melancholy, then we make it better, as it was during the peaceful times; we clear our hearts.

There are tens of songs, not just one. The only problem is, my teeth are bad, makes it hard to pluck, it defeats me, doesn't come out right. Now then, I've said enough.

This instrument here is for us men. Women have the bamboo-tube zither, or the flute. This here is for us men.

MR: Play us another one.

SL: Oh, I can't do it very well...

Woman from side: Play us another beautiful one...

Band 7: Senang Long plays the metal mouthharp, in stylized imitation of the Biray bird (Magpie Robin, *Copsychus saularis*), whose song is said to announce visitors. The overtones are manipulated to construct three melodic motifs.

Band 8: Senang Long identifies the bird as one who dwells on the forest's edge, in habitats near settlements. On Band 9, we hear the song of the Biray bird. The bird's song also has three motifs:

one moves upward in a narrow interval, the other two fall, one a narrow and one a wider interval.

Band 10: A Healing Ceremony at Kg.

Keŋkɔŋ.

Mediums: A1+j Apɔs

A/L Itam (Ta?

Rəgəl) and Uda

A/L Pandak (Ta?

?ac+j)

Recorded: June 28,

1982. Kg. Keŋkɔŋ,

Kelantan

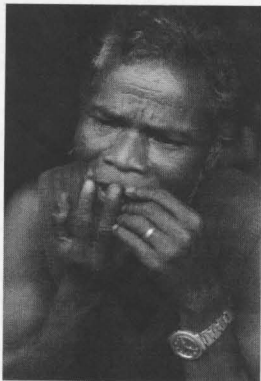


Plate 4. *Senang Long* plays gɛŋgɔŋ.
(Roseman 1982)

When a medium sings the song he or she has received in a dream, the medium becomes imbued with the long-range vision and knowledge of the spirit who gave that song. Thus empowered, the medium becomes a healer. For Temiars, illnesses come from animated spirits of the landscape; to counteract these illness agents, they call upon those animated spirits with whom they have entered into benevolent relationships, as spiritguides. When a medium sings, his voice and vision are those of a spiritguide who can see and extract illness agents from a patient's body, or find and return a patient's wandering soul.

In this healing ceremony, two mediums work

as a team. While chorus and other community members converse on the sidelines, the first medium (nicknamed Ta? ?ac+j "Old Man Bitterness" for his biting humor), blows through his fist onto the patient's body, then intones a chant (at 0:05) taught to him by his spiritguides, ordering the illness agent to depart. He yelps to frighten the illness into running away. Blowing, sucking, working over the patient's body, he draws the illness out, then claps his hands (0:36) to send it back out beyond the community. A chorus member complains, "Oh...you sent in my direction!" Another onlooker replies, "No, he released it up into the ceremonial leaf ornaments hanging from the rafters!"

The second medium, known as Ta?

Rəgəl after the tree that is his primary spiritguide, now begins to work over the patient (0:40). He too blows, sucks, clicks, yelps, whistles, and claps to release the illness agents—all part of the soundscape of healing. As Ta? Rəgəl ministrates, Ta? ?ac+j begins a song he received from the Durian tree spirit (0:49). At 5:43, Ta? ?ac+j shifts into a new song received in a dream from the bamboo tubes used to accompany the ceremonies. The spirit of the tubes emerged as a young woman who invited him to dance, then began to sing this tune. Both songs, in the Semai-style, are similar in tempo and melodic structure to that heard in Band 2. Periodically, a gong enriches the bamboo tube rhythms, which are ornamented with sixteenth

beats at this slower tempo (♩ = 56).

In this settlement, when the female chorus sings Semai-style, they improvise additional song text, elaborating textual themes raised by the medium. Thus, in one phrase during the Song of the Bamboo Tube Stammers, Ta? ?ac+j warns "Don't lose yourselves completely when you ceremonialize, like you'd lose yourselves to longing hearing the pulsing song of the cicada" [heard in Band 14] (8:09). The female chorus responds, "The feeling of longing, as when we hear the song of the Biray bird" [heard in Band 9]. A female chorus member, enjoying the groove, adds a short jɛnhɔ:k (9:22).

For Temiars, the head-soul travels with the voice; thus, during healings, the curative head-soul of a spiritguide flows through the medium's vocalizations into the patient. Temiars were often reluctant to have their voices recorded, fearing their head-souls would be captured on the tape. In a demonstration of bravado, Ta? ?ac+j suddenly picks up the microphone and sings directly into it [9:43], and we hear the increase in volume.

Bands 11–13

Instrument: noseflute (pɛnsɔ:l)

Instrumentalists: Angah Pandak and Hitam Angah (also known as Malam)

Song: The trunk of the tuwala? tree

Recorded: June 26, 1982. Kg. Kelaiyit, Kelantan

Temiars say they adopted the noseflute from a neighboring aboriginal group, the Semai. To play

this transverse flute, one nostril is depressed by the tip of the flute, while the airstream from the other nostril is concentrated across and into the end of the flute (Plate 5). Four holes are burned into the bamboo flute, but only three are used; overblowing produces higher pitches.

Both men and women play the noseflute, usually solo but sometimes in duet; here, two men play together heterophonically. Playing the noseflute clears one's heart of longing; it can also be used to signal or ignite desire. During the fruit season, when groups of young men and women go off gathering fruits, a man might bring his noseflute up into the tree. After he's loosened the ripe fruits, he takes his flute and plays it, to impress and attract one of the women gathering up the fruits from the ground below. Women, too, might express or ignite attraction by playing their noseflutes.

Band 11: A young man, Malam (also known by the nickname Tagɛs), comments on the customs surrounding the noseflute:

"The custom of the noseflute is the custom of women, of courtship and longing. So, if a girl is waiting expectantly while I've gone far off, she waits, her heart is sick, lovesick. So she looks toward her noseflute, she takes it and plays it, she plays the noseflute in the late afternoon. The sound of the noseflute can be heard from house to house; hearing it, people say, "Now, listen to that young woman, she misses that man, so she's



Plate 5. Malams plays *pensoi*. (Roseman 1982)

playing her flute." Playing the flute, she remembers him.

"That's how it is, the noseflute. It's the same for us guys. We men, if our woman is somewhere else, while we're in another house here...so we're awaiting, desiring the one who isn't there. These noseflutes, they have to do with the woman you care for. We await, desiring her. We go bathe, then return home and comb our hair. We young men nowadays, we put on shirts and pants. All dressed up, we take our noseflute. That woman has gone somewhere; desiring her, we play the noseflute.

"The story of the noseflute concerns the relationships between women and men. This is not a *sa?oy*; that flute is played from the mouth. The mouthflute is played in Perak; it also has to do with women and men.

"So we [Temiar of Kelantan] follow along,

but the origin of the noseflute is from the Semai. It came here to us on the Berok River, we took it on, we here in Kelantan, as well. When we hear a beautiful dreamsong melody, we play it on the noseflute. That's our tradition."

Band 12: Malam and Angah Pandak play the melody of a dream song received from the trunk (and thus, the heart-soul) of the *t u w a l a ?* tree. The scale of this Semai-style melody is similar to those on Bands 2 and 10.

Band 13: In a closing comment, Malam jokes flirtatiously with me, a female "audience" to his flute playing: "There now, you'll go home and listen to this when you're on the other side of the world, you'll get the feeling of the Semai noseflute. In your heart, you'll feel sad. Girl, you'll feel wistful, remembering how you desired to hear the noseflutes of we forest people."

Band 14

Having ventured via the noseflute into the Temiar space of desire, we hear a sound that quintessentially evokes for Temiar listeners the feelings of longing and wistfulness: the pulsing song of an insect, the cicada *h e r r o : d*. During the fruit season, in the late afternoon, the pulsing of these cicadas resonates through the forest and hills surrounding a settlement. Temiars caution one another to listen with a "strong heart"; otherwise, the sound will draw the listener off into the forest.

From several cicadas chorusing, we focus in on one cicada's song.

Pulsating sounds are particularly poignant in the Temiar valuation of their soundscape; pulsing sounds of forest birds, insects, and frogs beat with their hearts, Temiars say, and take them into the "heart-soul" space of memory, stored emotion, and longing.

This sound is patterned into the high-low, high-low duple pulse of the bamboo tube stampers that accompany dreamsong performances. The tube rhythms are musically calculated to intensify longings of the heart, then fulfill those longings through spiritguide visitations. The shorter, higher-pitched "female" tube alternates with the longer, lower-pitched "male" tube, articulating the language of courtship and desire as the two tones, in alternation, form the percussive foundation for singing ceremonies. And so the spirits arrive, sing through medium and chorus, dance with trance-dancers, and give strength to patients seeking to be healed.

Band 15

Singer: Abilem A/L A l u n j Lum

Song: The Way of the Annual Fruits (The Langsat Tree)

Recorded: September 9, 1982. Kg. Bawik, Betis River, Kelantan

The annually fruiting trees, flowering after the rains and fruiting before the dry season, mark the seasonal changes for forest dwellers. The fruit

season is a time of plenty, of pleasant outings to scattered orchards marking past settlement sites, of group efforts gathering and consuming the fruits.

In the mid 1970's, when Abilem Lum was under the employ of the Department of Orang Asli Affairs and posted along the Aring River, he received the first song of the "Annual Fruit" genre from the Rambutan tree. When he returned to his wife's village of Bawik on the Betis River, he dreamt and received a second song of this genre from the Langsat Tree (*Lansium domesticum*; Temiar, *g i y e s*). This tree's yellow-skinned fruits sheath an opalescent interior—a sweet treasure of the fruiting season. Texts of fruit songs celebrate the weighty boughs of fruit in the trees, the swaying of leaves in the wind. Dancers' bodies bend and sway, like the weighted boughs and shivering leaves. Ornaments made from leaves of the fruit trees and bright orange flowers fill the ceremonial arena with their color and fragrance; dancers shaking leaf whisks add to the ceremonial soundscape.

Temiars are open to both gifts of song and attacks of illness from the fruit spirits, as they gather and consume the fruits. Dancing momentarily with the spirits, and experiencing their visitation through trance during ceremonies, is an ecstatic and desired experience. It may be too enjoyable to give up; if the head-soul of a Temiar prefers to remain in the fruiting forest living with the fruit tree spirits, his or her body is left drained and lifeless. Songs of the Annual Fruits are pow-

erful in healing ceremonies held to counteract the "soul loss" that occurs when a stricken Temiar's head-soul prefers the fruiting forest to his body.

Many types of fruit trees have since gifted Abilem with their songs, and he is a reknowned medium and healer of his region. The genre is known as the "Way of the Annual Fruits" (nɔŋ t̪əhun; nɔŋ bəɾək). The female spirit of the Rambutan tree, who also gives her name (Tangɔ:y) to the genre, remains the paramount spirit of Abilem's "Annual Fruit" songs.

Song Style and Structure
Abilem's fruit-tree songs are characterized by use of half steps, as heard in this *Langsat* song, and in the melody of the next fruit tree song he sings (E,F#,G), whose first phrase is linked to the end of this example (4:28).

The duple rhythm in the bamboo tubes, accenting the higher-pitched member of the pair, is elaborated by the drums (Plate 6) and accompanies the strolling-in-place movements of the dancers. A gong is played on the



Plate 6. Abilem Lum, wearing ornaments of the Annual Fruits genre, plays *berano?*. (Roseman 1982)

beat of the lower tube. The tempo in this segment of the ceremony is relatively moderate ($\downarrow = 72$). Over the course of a ceremony, the tempo would increase, and the bamboo percussion might further the excitement by subdividing the beat to accompany periodic surges in the dancers' intensity (as heard on Band 19).

Bands 16 and 17

The fruit season, a time of desire and joy, also harbors the illness of soul-loss and other dangers for Temiars. Tigers, drawn by the smell of fruits and the small animals coming to eat them, stalk the forest. The tiger is one of the most powerful spirit familiars for a medium to encounter.

The chirping, scratchy call of the *Təranə?* bird (Checker-throated woodpecker; *Picus mentalis*) announces the tiger's presence to the Temiar listener. He is said to ride on the shoulder of the tiger. The song of this bird, the tiger's companion, is heard on Band 16, entering at 12:14.

On Band 17, a song from the Tiger genre follows.

Singer: Hitam Tamboh A/L Along

Song: Tiger genre (Mamu:g)

Recorded: July 25, 1991. Kg. Ladoy, in the vicinity of Hau, Kelantan.

Tiger songs are performed in darkness, with wafting fragrances from pungent ceremonial leaves thickening the atmosphere. Fires

in the hearth are damped; even an inhaled cigarette's glow is cupped and hidden. A small hut may be built within the performance space to further obscure the medium, who sings, squatting within. Late at night, in the darkness of a tiger ceremony, I've often looked over my shoulder with a shudder, sensing the tiger's presence in the singer's gravelly vocal timbre and low-pitched song.

Hitam Tamboh received this song from his father. In dreams, the tiger appears as an old man. Its connection is not through the head-soul, but through the heart-soul. When a member of the community has received songs of the Tiger genre, real tigers are less likely to prowl around that community or bother its members.

Song Style and Structure

The first song phrase highlights the minor third (C, E-flat); the second rhythmically accentuates the tonal center (C). Periodically, a *jenhək* phrase descends from B-flat, quivering through the five scale notes to the tonic. (Tempo: $\downarrow = 88-92$).

Song Text

A *jenhək* phrase with the vocables "dey ɔɔ:y ɔɔ:y," "ɔa:w, ɔa:w" or, as in this example, "ɔih, ya:h," marks the Tiger genre.

Song phrases in the Tiger genre are characteristically short, with only one or two words per phrase. The unison chorus (Jemilah, Angah, Rasi-dah, Asim, and Andak) imitates each phrase, to

the best of their abilities—the young members of the chorus are unfamiliar with this older song. Images are built up over the course of several phrases, often through metaphoric implication. Certain textual references signal the Tiger genre: predominant among these is the image of the tiger awakening, arising to stalk its prey—often in the late afternoon, under a darkened, cloudy sky. The tiger's awakening is also metaphorically linked with the blossoming and spreading of the *Tanjok* flower, its reddish color like blood. The tiger mentions its forest companion, the *Təranə?* bird, whose voice is heard in Band 16. The spirit also reflects upon the ceremonial performance, describing the women's hair decorated with the bittersweet-smelling *labag* leaf, associated with the genre. The act of "forgetting", referring to the trance state experienced in spirit ceremonies, is emphasized in Tiger genre texts.

Band 18

Singer: Ading Kerah

Song: Healing Ceremony, Tangə:y genre,

Pərasəh Flower song

Recorded: June 10, 1982. Menrik, Berok River, Kelantan

A young boy suffering from fever, chest congestion, and headache exacerbated by breaking food restrictions surrounding earlier treatments is the focus of this healing ceremony. This segment captures the slow tempo of the beginning of the ceremony, as Ading Kerah begins to serve as a

conduit for the voice of the spiritguide. Ading Kerah begins standing, waving his leaf whisk and singing. At 3:39, the child comes to sit before him (as in Plate 1). Ading Kerah sings into the crown of the child's head; we hear him sucking, blowing, clicking his tongue, waving and clapping his leaf whisk—drawing from his leaf whisk the cool spiritual liquid that flows along with song from the spiritguides, and blowing it into the head of the child. He works up and down the child's torso, focusing on the head, chest, and back, then draws cool spiritual liquid from his breast, and blows it into the child's head-soul area. Speaking with the voice of the spiritguide—higher in pitch, with greater vocal constriction than his normal speaking voice—he queries the child's relatives about the circumstances surrounding the child's illness. He also asks about the strange apparatus: my microphones hanging from the rafters above.

The song is one he has received from the *Pangaseh* flower, and is sung in a genre characteristic of the Temiar of Kelantan, *Tangay* [also heard in Band 2], which has its source in the spirits of the mountains, flowers, and various inhabitants of the forest.

Band 19

Singer: Penghulu Along Uda

Song: *Sempahkah* Flower

Recorded: July 12, 1991. Kg. Bersah (Kuala Mu), Perak

This segment is drawn from a later point in a ceremony, as the activity of the dancers intensifies and the tempo of the percussion increases (from 96 to 108 beats per minute over the course of this segment). The beats of the bamboo tubes are subdivided, fueling the excitement. The sounds made as dancers' steps rebound on the lashed bamboo slats of the dance floor [4:27] add to the rhythmic soundscape.

The medium, singing as he dances, moves about the dance floor, drifting in and out of each listener's hearing range. His voice, close and then afar, embodies the contradictory presence of the spiritguides, who are present in the ceremonial house while, simultaneously, they leap across mountain crests and fly above the forest canopy. His wife's strong voice is heard in the female chorus (she is the initial singer in Band 20). Indeed, at certain points, as the male lead becomes engrossed in his dancing and trancing, the women take over, combining the functions of lead and chorus [5:47]. From the sidelines, listeners coax the dancers as the excitement mounts.

Song Style and Structure

The 5-note anhemitonic pentatonic scale shifts down a half step over the course of the song. One song phrase, moving from A-flat up a major 2nd to B-flat and down to F, is repeated throughout. Periodically, a *jenhok* phrase on the vowels *ʔeh, yah* falls through the scale, from the F above to the A-flat below the B-flat tonal center.

Song Text

Textual references to water, mentioned in its many forms, emphasize the presence of a cool, healing spiritual liquid that flows, concurrently with song, from spiritguides to humans during ceremony.

[Male in lead:]

Scattering the moist mountain dew/Surging, the rushing river rapids./Reflecting colors, the house walls/Arriving, the cool spiritual liquids./*ʔeh, yah*

Chorus strongly, like the rushing river rapids/Feeling filled with water from the *kamiyan* leaf ornaments,/the shredded lengths of *labag* leaves./Singing playfully/Cooling the hearts of the many races/(Singing) for these many peoples/Traveling safely to the region of Lasah/*ʔeh, yah*

[Speaker urging from the sidelines:]

Rise! Keep it up! Carry on!

[Females taking up lead on their own:]

Add your voices/Like the midday cicada

[Male lead returns:]

Sing, older brother with a female first-born!/My heart shivers/as the spirit's thread reaches inside./

The perfume from Kuala Lumpur so fragrant/*ʔeh, yah*

[Male speaker urges from sidelines, as ceremony intensifies:]

Be careful!

[Females taking the lead:]

Scattering, the waters from the *labag* leaves/Singing playfully/The young woman of the *Sempahkah* flower.

Band 20

Singer: Alang A/P Busu (*Baleh Pasah*)

Song: Hill Rice (*Bah Kuraw*)

Recorded: July 12, 1991. Kg. Bersah (Kuala Mu), Perak

As the ceremony quiets towards its end, and dancers retire to the sidelines, the wife of the village headman sings a song from the spirit of the hill rice, passed on to her by her grandfather. She implies, in her song text, a comparison between the sounds of the rice mortar pounding and those of the bamboo tube percussion stampers. The rice spirit sings of her sadness when she returns and finds her rice-field home emptied by the harvest.

Song Style and Structure

The poignant melody of the hill rice spirit plays with half steps, tritone, and the alternation between major and minor third in relation to the tonal center. The second of the two melodic phrases is often repeated several times per verse. The relatively moderate tempo ($\downarrow = 92$) and the absence of dancers, whose dance steps no longer set the floor slats clacking, indicate the quieting of the ceremony as it moves toward conclusion.

Song text

1-1 The rice mortar pounding/1-2 The rice sifter sounding/1-2 Feeling longing as it sifts side to side.

2-1 Sunlight glitters on the rice knife/2-2 at the rice field of Ləbəh.

3-1 Harvesting rice shaft by shaft/3-2 With five fingers.

4-1 The ripe rice head leans heavily./4-2 The female spirit of the rice/4-2 Drooping with weight, the rice stalks./4-2 I come home to the rice field at Sidu:y/4-2 Feeling sad, my home harvested.

[Segment recorded on Band 20 begins here:]

5-1 The beauty of the river waters at Lasah/5-2 Melancholy after harvest, it's hard to speak,/5-2 Older sister.

6-1 I'm too ignorant to sing./6-2 The waters near our fields at Gəlapə:r;/6-2 Moving from old fields to new.

7-1 Feeling lazy,/ 7-2 then willing to sing each day,/ 7-2 forever.

8-1 The sound of the rice mortar pounding./8-2 The mother of a male child dances/8-2 Singing so clearly.

9-1 Cooling the heart./9-2 I return to the empty rice fields;/9-2 There are no more sərindin

leaves/9-2 Here in the settlement of Bərsah.

10-1 I feel sad remembering the one who first received this song/10-2 Remembering in my heart, then singing;/10-2 Changing from soul to soul at death./10-2 I'll arrive, but don't expect much.

11-1 Sending my voice high into the rafters of the house./11-2 As the morning sun slants from Mt. Kiyə1;/11-2 Singing, scattering cool liquids.

Band 21

Singers: 4 adolescents from the settlement of Jəlgək

Song Form: Singing while journeying (pənjiwək)
Recorded: June 26, 1982, in the forest surrounding Kg. Jəlgək, Berok River, Kelantan.

As we began in the forest in Band 1, so we return to the forest, the source of Temiar everyday, spiritual, and artistic life. Here a group of adolescents—three young men and one young woman—sing in a manner termed pənjiwək. This type of singing, unaccompanied by bamboo tube percussion or the making of leaf ornaments, draws on the dreamsong repertoire without the intention of manifesting the spiritguide. Such unaccompanied singing is often enjoyed mid-journey, while walking or boating. This group draws on songs of the Pənhə:y genre (as in Band 4). In their exuberance, they punctuate the song with whoops, exhalations, and the jənhək phrase,

"Lil-lil-lil!" Waiting in the forest, we hear the group's voices emerging from the distance, then their path passes close by, and fades once more into the distance, leaving us with the sounds of forest near the river's edge.



Songs, like rivers, are paths through the forest.
(Roseman 1981)

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