It is not possible to give an exact figure for the number of different ethnic groups in the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago, partly because of problems of definition and boundary recognition very similar to those discussed for languages. Also, the ongoing assimilation of small groups to large majorities and urban lifestyles probably means that the overall number has been continually decreasing this century. The major Human Relations Area Files compilations (Lebar et al. 1964; Lebar 1972) describe about 100 groups for whom there exist good literatures, and Hildred Geertz (1963) has given a total figure of 300 for Indonesia (some of the more important are shown in Chapter 4, Fig. 4.2, and Chapter 8, Fig. 8.7). As one would expect, there is considerable cultural variation, due in part to differences that developed between Austronesian societies in prehistoric times and in part to the varying influences of Indian, Islamic, and European traditions during the past 1,500 years.

I should perhaps explain here my basic stance on the background to cultural variation in the small-scale traditional societies of the archipelago. Many ethnologists in the past adopted a view that observable variations reflected the successive migrations into the region of different cultures and their associated racial groups (e.g., Hose 1926; Loeb 1935; Kennedy 1937; Cole 1945). This is true in part, but sometimes the enthusiasm for cultural “strata” overflows. I am still surprised at how often these “waves” of Veddooids, Proto-Malays, and Deutero-Malays, together with their cultural idiosyncrasies, are repeated without question in modern books on the history and peoples of the region, but this is a matter that I will not pursue. My own view is simple: the Negritos and their traditional hunting and gathering lifestyle must be considered as autochthonous to the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago, whereas the agricultural lifestyles of
the Austroasiatic Senoi of Peninsular Malaysia and the Austronesian speakers are to a great (but not total) extent the results of cultural and population expansion from more northerly latitudes. The explanations for variation in the Austronesian group require not mixing between clearly differentiable and successive races and cultures, but the slow expansion and adaptation of an originally relatively unified, early Austronesian ethnolinguistic population, combined with intergroup contact and the successive influences of external civilizations. In the terminology favored by Moore (1994), the generation of cultural diversity in the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago has been both rhizotic (via interaction between adjacent groups) and bifurcative (via diversification through population radiation) (see Bellwood 1996d for some theoretical discussion of these concepts).

The ethnolinguistic complexity of the Indo-Malaysian region makes the process of prehistoric reconstruction more difficult than for an area of relative cultural homogeneity such as Polynesia. Furthermore, in Indonesia and Malaysia the boundaries between cultures were perhaps more diffuse in prehistoric times than now. Much of the ethnic consciousness that characterizes the region today may have become sharpened in recent centuries as groups have symbolized their different identities in response to degrees of pressure from other migrating groups or incorporation in state and colonial systems (e.g., see Dentan 1975 for the Senoi Semai; King 1982, Rousseau 1990, and King 1993 for Borneo). Nevertheless, I do not hold to the view, proposed most forcefully by Fried (1975), that "ethnicity" is almost entirely a product of state-level outsider pressure. Group identity through common origin, common language, and common territory surely existed in prehistoric societies, even if we have difficulty in identifying nodes of such identity in the archaeological record.

While factors of ethnic identity can serve to differentiate populations, separate identities can also be "pooled" against outside pressures, as Nicolaisen (1977–1978) has described for small groups in Sarawak in the face of recent Iban and Kayan expansion (see also Sellato 1994 for Borneo nomads). Indeed, on large islands such as Borneo where population densities are low and ethnic groups seek to attract rather than repel outsiders as new members, ethnicity can be decidedly fluid (Rousseau 1990, Tillotson 1994). As Rousseau points out for central Borneo (Rousseau 1990:302):

> It is erroneous to expect a priori a specific correspondence between ethnicity, culture, language, common origin (or belief in common origin) and social systems. It is preferable to see these various elements as overlapping plates which move in different directions while influencing each other.

One cannot of course generalize very usefully about ethnic identity on a pan-archipelagic scale because every region has followed a different course of development. Large-scale assimilatory societies such as those of the Javanese
and the widespread Malays have undoubtedly expanded over a great deal of earlier diversity, while on the other hand the Asian peoples of Peninsular Malaysia have apparently stressed their ethnic identities in order to resist such assimilation (Benjamin 1986). Each region now presents an ethnic "picture" that reflects its settlement and cultural history and its degree of incorporation into a native state or colonial polity. Each cultural region must therefore be considered on its own merits.

On looking at the societies of the region in broad terms—with respect to descent, political systems, influences from Indian and Islamic civilizations, and so forth—it is apparent that there are three major groupings, defined most clearly by H. Geertz (1963). These are: (1) the partly Indianized wet-rice cultures centered on Java (now Muslim) and Bali; (2) the coastal Islamic societies (especially Malay and Buginese) that have become very widespread through the archipelago as a result of the trade and commerce focused on the Islamic sultanates since the fifteenth century; and (3) the small-scale traditional and mainly interior or remote island populations. In the following pages I will concentrate attention on some of the societies in the third category, as in many ways these have remained closest to their Austronesian cultural ancestries. The cosmopolitan societies of the first two categories, such as present-day Javanese and Malays, will only be mentioned in certain historical contexts. Furthermore, most of the small-scale traditional groups have undergone at least some change as a result of contact with modern civilization. My descriptions will clearly favor traditional customs and behavior as described in historical or ethnographic records.

In terms of descent, the most commonly used terminology divides the small-scale traditional societies of the region into unilineal (patrilineal or matrilineal) and cognatic (including bilateral) categories (Murdock 1960a, 1960b). This terminology is now enshrined in the literature and it does of course refer to differences in descent reckoning that are of social significance for determining marriage and inheritance patterns. But this does not necessarily mean that all Austronesian societies can be placed unequivocally in distinct unilineal and cognatic categories, or that such categories imply totally separate evolutionary trajectories. Furthermore, the dichotomy does not always reflect Indo-Malaysian reality, because in practice many societies follow both unilineal and cognatic principles, depending upon context. Examples of the real-life multitude of cross-cutting contexts include affiliation to a corporate group, location of post-marital residence, inheritance of swidden land or of wet-rice fields, inheritance of status, and membership in burial or irrigation associations.

I will first introduce the surviving hunting and gathering societies, whom I believe do demand separate consideration, and then document the arrival and distribution of Indian and Islamic influences, before turning to the main discussion of the small-scale traditional agricultural populations of Indonesia and Malaysia.
I. THE HUNTERS AND GATHERERS

The equatorial rain forests of the region shelter a number of hunting and collecting societies that have either survived assimilation by, or have adapted out of, the ever-expanding agricultural economies. Some of these groups, such as the Negritos of Peninsular Malaysia and the northern Philippines, are no doubt "pristine" hunters and gatherers who have long resisted total acculturation by surrounding cultivators. Others, such as the Austronesian-speaking hunters and gatherers of interior Sumatra and Borneo, have probably adopted this way of life as a result of change from a partial agricultural ancestry.

The Negrito peoples of the Andaman Islands, Peninsular Malaysia, and the Philippines are of course of great significance in any discussion of the overall prehistory of the archipelago. Although all the Philippine Negritos have now adopted Austronesian languages and some groups have become partly acculturated to a lifestyle of shifting cultivation (for example the Pinatubo and Aya of western Luzon; Fox 1953; Brosius 1990), there can be no doubt that the Negrito populations as a whole have local ancestries that long predate those of the Southern Mongoloid Indonesians, Filipinos, and Malaysians. Recent linguistic research on Luzon Negritos suggests the existence of a non-Austronesian substrate according to Reid (1994a), and it also seems likely that the Malaysian Negritos have adopted their present Mon-Khmer (Aslian) languages from their agriculturalist Senoi neighbors (see Chapter 8). Some of these groups have long been in contact with agriculturalists (Headland and Reid 1991) and have clearly intermarried with them in some cases (especially in the Philippines), yet only in rare cases have they adopted systematic agriculture (for studies of forager-agriculturalist interactions see Headland 1986; Eder 1987). There is much empirical fodder here for those interested in the origins and spread of agriculture, and I will return to these matters in Chapter 7.

Superficially, the Negrito lifestyle is simple: Small bands of families with rather fluid membership and informal leadership move in a nomadic fashion through the forest, sleeping in camps of lean-tos and shelters. Cultural simplicity is expressed partly through an absence of many features characteristic of the surrounding cultivators. Some of these, such as the absence of headhunting, land tenure, pottery (except in the Andamans), weaving, and alcoholic beverages (Cooper 1941) are no more than one would expect given the nature of Negrito society and economy. Other features, such as the practices of body scarification amongst the Philippine Aeta, face painting, and the wearing of porcupine quills through the nose by the Peninsular Malaysian Negritos (Carey 1976) and the general absence of ear ornaments, tattooing, and dental mutilation, all serve to set these groups apart from surrounding Austronesian cultivators.

While there is not space here to list the many details reported about Negrito hunting and gathering lifestyles, I do wish to question an old view that the
Negritos represent a direct and totally static window on the Pleistocene past, as implied by some earlier authors (e.g., Cooper 1941; Burkill 1951). It is true that the hunting and collecting economy and the associated band forms of social organization are of great antiquity, but the Negritos have been in contact with outsiders for several millennia and those who survive today, especially in Peninsular Malaysia and the Philippines, have clearly done so by adapting to changing circumstances and pressures (Headland and Reid 1989). Alas, they will not be able to adapt for much longer and most in the Philippines are now facing cultural extinction (Headland 1988; Eder 1987). Peterson (1978) has described how the Aeta of northeastern Luzon have formed trading and labor relationships with Philippine agriculturalists; the Aeta provide hunted meat and labor in return for cultivated produce. But this is clearly a temporary adaptation, similar to that described succinctly by Sellato (1994) for the Punan (non-Negrito) foragers of Borneo. The ultimate fate of the hunters, after centuries and perhaps even millennia of living in sporadic contact with agriculturalists, seems now to be assimilation into low-status membership of the agriculturalist populations.

In central Peninsular Malaysia the pressures have not been as great, and the Negritos here (often called “Semang”; see Endicott 1979, 1984; Rambo 1988 for recent descriptions of their lifestyle) have been able to continue their forest lifestyle through a conscious emphasis on differences between their culture and those of adjacent Malay and Senoi cultivators. This is a conclusion recently drawn by Benjamin (1986), who shows how certain features of Negrito social life, such as avoidance practices and prohibitions that promote marriage outside the group, wide social contact, and freedom of movement, help to ensure the mobility that these people need for survival.1 The Negritos have no corporate descent groups and the independent nuclear families are thus allowed to move and make new camp relationships freely. In recent years some of these Negrito groups have become settled and partially converted to agriculture, a process leading to rapid population growth (Gomes 1982), but one that seems to have been far less common in precolonial times amongst the Semang than among the Philippine Negritos. No Semang are known to have made precolonial shifts to agriculture.

The hunters and gatherers of the Indonesian islands are in a different category from the Negritos. Both biologically and linguistically, they are relatively undifferentiated from their Austronesian-speaking agriculturalist neighbors (Indonesia has no Negrito populations). The Indonesian foragers dwell mostly in the inland forests of Borneo and Sumatra, but their general avoidance of cultivation is not a good reason for assuming that they necessarily represent an ancient stratum of Austronesian-speaking hunters and gatherers. The best-known groups of these Indonesian hunters and gatherers include the Kubu of the lowland swamps of Sumatra (who speak dialects of Malay; Loeb 1935), the
Punan of interior Borneo, and the rather controversial Tasaday of interior southern Mindanao. In eastern Indonesia there are also the Togutil (Papuan speakers) of northern Halmahera. I will restrict my comments to the Punan and Tasaday because they have both spawned rather voluminous recent literatures.

The Punan (some groups are called Penan, as reviewed by Needham 1954) occupy many forested areas of inland Sarawak and northern interior Kalimantan (see Fig. 4.2). They dwell in temporary camps (Plate 11) of a few families, hunting with blowpipes, exploiting stands of a small dryland species of wild sago (Eugelissaona utilis) that grows below 1,000 meters, and collecting the fruits of wild rambutan, durian, and mangosteen trees (Hose and McDougall 1912; Sellato 1994; Sather 1995). Linguistically, there is no apparent unity; many groups seem to be related closely to nearby cultivators, an important point stressed by Hoffman (1986). Many groups collect forest items such as beeswax, birds’ nests, camphor, and rattan for trade purposes, often leading to close relationships with surrounding agriculturalists such as the Kayan. Such close relationships may have caused acculturation in some Punan societies, as witnessed by their sporadic adoptions of horticulture (Nicolaisen 1976), ironworking, and systems of ranked headmanship (Arnold 1958). It is my own belief, however, that these features need not in totality be the result of recent acculturation, but may simply reflect the fact that the Punan have always straddled the boundary between settled horticulture and forest hunting and gathering, with only some groups shifting entirely toward the latter economic mode.

Since the first edition of this book was published, the Punan have played an important role in two important international debates. The first, which also encompasses the Negritos, concerns the question of whether or not hunters and gatherers could ever have lived in interior equatorial rain forest without regular access to agricultural foodstuffs via trade. According to Headland (1987; for the Philippines), Rambo (1988), and Kuchikura (1993; both for Peninsular Malaysia) they could not. The debate has been given worldwide significance by Bailey et al. (1989), who suggest that interior wet rain forests in Africa, Asia, and America were generally uninhabited before agriculture began. However, the archaeological record for Peninsular Malaysia indicates that foragers did inhabit such regions (as accepted by Bailey et al.), albeit in small numbers and probably not everywhere, and have done so for at least 10,000 years (Endicott and Bellwood 1991; and see Chapter 6). It is quite possible that these foragers practiced clearance activities in order to encourage useful plant growth, especially of fruit trees and tubers, but there are no signs of agriculture in the archaeological record prior to about 2000 BC. On the other hand, much of interior Borneo has evidently never supported human populations to judge from modern population distributions, so the hypothesis may work in part for the Punan. The issue is a complex one to which I shall return.
This brings up the second question. If the present Negritos (who are not represented in Borneo) are descendants of ancient and preagricultural forest foraging groups, then who are the Punan? Are they "genuine" hunter-gatherers like the Negritos, or the products of "devolution" from a partially agricultural ancestry? According to Hoffman (1986), the Punan developed initially as commercial hunter-gatherers linked to and derived from agricultural populations. Sellato (1994) has presented a diametrically opposed view—that the Punan have always been hunter-gatherers and have only recently come into contact with cultivators. There is no archaeological record in support of either view, and neither seems fully convincing. With Sather (1995), I prefer a middle road.

If the linguistic reconstructions of early Austronesian society described in the previous chapter have any merit at all, then clearly there is little scope for any widespread and ancient Austronesian hunting and gathering adaptation in Indonesia without any linkage to agriculture. Unlike the Negritos, the Punan have probably not been foragers since the Pleistocene, and their ancestors could not have entered Borneo as isolated foragers. However, as Sather points out, the initial Austronesian expansions into the archipelago probably combined economies of agriculture, fishing, and foraging. As Austronesians penetrated upriver into the rain forests of Borneo, with their extensive stands of sago and varied animal fauna, some groups—especially those already accustomed to a coastal foraging economy—might have been tempted to turn to upriver foraging nomadism (Brosius 1988). From this viewpoint, Punans have always had some contact with cultivators, but as subsistence foragers rather than as the commercial foragers suggested by Hoffman. If the Punan adaptation was totally independent of the Austronesian agricultural tradition, we would expect to find independent populations of Punans throughout the deep interior rain forests of Borneo. Yet if one looks at the distribution of population on the island, as presented very clearly in sheets 41 and 42 of Wurm and Hattori (1983), it becomes clear that Punans live only where there are relatively close agricultural populations (see also Fig. 4.2). There are extensive areas of quite uninhabited rain forest in interior central and northern Borneo where neither type of population occurs. I see little alternative to regarding the Punan as having penetrated the rain forest right from the start, hand in hand with agriculturalists.

This presents one of the great mysteries of Borneo. Why, unlike Peninsular Malaysia and the Philippines, were there no Negritos in the interior here—no apparently autochthonous foragers? Did the Borneo rain forests really keep them out, as suggested by the above proponents of the empty rain forest theory? I confess to not knowing the answer, partly because no archaeological record exists for the relevant preceramic time periods in the deep interior of Borneo. One day, perhaps we will have such a record.

The conclusion about the part-agricultural ancestry of the Punans can be
stressed even more forcefully with respect to the Tasaday of Mindanao in the Philippines, a group who achieved media prominence through their “discovery” in 1970 (Fernandez and Lynch 1972; Nance 1975; Yen and Nance 1976). The Tasaday band was living in a cave in the interior rain forest at an altitude of about 1,300 meters above sea level. In 1972 it comprised thirteen adults and fourteen children (twelve boys and two girls). The culture of this group was described as being simple in the extreme: a number of widespread Austronesian customs such as tattooing, betel chewing, and tooth filing were practiced, but the people did not hunt, had no baskets or carrying devices, lacked the bow, and used only flaked or edge-ground stone tools. The food supply came mainly from fruits, wild yams (the tops of which were replanted after harvest), grubs, and hand-caught fish and frogs.

Since their discovery the Tasaday have moved in and out of controversy, with many scholars claiming that they were deliberately created “fakes” (see Headland 1992 for a full discussion of different viewpoints on this). I regard them as a genuine but very recent conversion to foraging, perhaps as a result of a feud causing their ancestors to flee and hide in the rain forest. Linguistically, the Tasaday speak a dialect of the Manobo languages of the nearby cultivators, and their separation appears to have occurred after the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines (L. A. Reid, pers. comm.).

**A. The Orang Laut**

Other Austronesian groups who once practiced a rather unusual economy on the cultural fringes of the Indo-Malaysian world are the *orang laut* (sea people), who are concentrated in two separate regions: along the coasts of the Strait of Malacca and in the Riau Archipelago, and on the northeastern coast of Borneo and in neighboring Sulu (Sopher 1965; Sather 1995). Smaller groups also live down the eastern side of Sulawesi and in pockets in the Lesser Sundas and northern Moluccas. Favored habitats are protected mangrove or coral reef coasts, especially where there are many small islands, as in Riau and Sulu. Traditionally, each family lived permanently at sea in a houseboat complete with a cabin, sleeping facilities, and a cooking place (the latter often a pottery stove). The Bajaus (Sama Bajaus or Sama Dilaut) of Sulu and eastern Borneo still lived wholly in boats until around 1930, but most groups throughout the archipelago have become settled on land in recent decades.

Traditional Bajau houseboat anchorages comprised a number of independent nuclear families with a very fluid bilateral organization (Nimmo 1972). Large groups of families sometimes combined for major fishing operations, and some groups shared the usage of small islands for burial. But Bajau houseboat families generally lived independent lives fishing, combined with trading with and col-
lecting for landbased Samal and Tausug communities; during the period of the Sulu Sultanate in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they seem to have been used widely as collectors of marine produce for trade (Warren 1981; Sather 1985; Pallesen 1985). The *orang laut* of the Riau-Lingga Islands were also rather heavily influenced and controlled by the Malay sultanates of the region and maintained a mobile trading lifestyle until the turn of this century. However, in all regions the pressures to settle down on land are now so strong that the true houseboat lifestyle probably will not survive intact for much longer.

The *orang laut* lifestyle appears to have developed locally in more than one region. The western groups speak dialects of Malay, but the Bajau language is closely related to the Samal language spoken by many settled agricultural people in the Sulu Archipelago. Hence Sopher's view that the Bajau migrated in Islamic times from the Malacca Strait region cannot be entirely correct (Nimmo 1967, 1968). In the core regions of Sulu and the Malacca Strait, there were certainly *orang laut* communities reported in the sixteenth century (Sopher 1965), and Pallesen (1985) uses linguistic evidence to suggest that the Sama Bajau people were in Sulu by at least AD 800. Recent excavations at Bukit Tengkorak in Sabah have produced evidence for a strongly maritime-focused economy dating back to 1000 BC (see Chapter 7), but whether sea nomads proper were involved at this early date is uncertain. In the first edition of this book I suggested that the sea nomad lifestyle had developed as a specialized economic adaptation within the exchange and trade networks of the archipelago during the past 1,500 years. Now I am not so certain; perhaps this lifestyle contains a tantalizing record of more ancient Malayo-Polynesian adaptations long past.

**II. THE INFLUENCES OF INDIA AND ISLAM**

I will approach my main discussion of the small-scale traditional and agricultural societies of the archipelago by first outlining the transformations that have affected many of the western and the more accessible eastern regions during the past 1,500 to 2,000 years. The phenomena of "Indianization" and "Islamization" in Southeast Asia have long been major fields of historical study (for recent general surveys see Wheatley 1983; Hall 1985; Kulke 1990; Tarling 1992), and here I will only touch on some of the major points.

Indian trading enterprise in Southeast Asia and complementary Austronesian sailing to India (and later to Madagascar) appear to have commenced during the first few centuries AD with the discovery of monsoon sailing across the Bay of Bengal (Wolters 1967; Christie 1984–1985; Glover 1990a; Ray 1991). This is evidenced by the recent archaeological finds of Indian pottery at Sembiran in Bali (to be discussed in Chapter 9). By the fifth century AD, some trade routes may also have linked the archipelago directly with China, and small numbers
of Chinese pottery vessels and bronze items dating from the Han Dynasty and onwards are reputed to have been found in southern Sumatra and eastern Java. The initial Indian trade contact appears to have stimulated the development in some western regions of apparently native trading states from the second century AD onward (see Chapter 9, Fig. 9.4)—states such as Champa in central Vietnam, Funan around the Gulf of Siam (Coèdes 1947), several small states in the narrow isthmus of southern Thailand, and the rather hazy Ko-ying in Sumatra or western Java (Wheatley 1961; Wolters 1967, 1979; Mabbett 1977; Hall 1985; Higham 1989). However, a widespread and early colonization of Indians in the archipelago is most unlikely to have occurred according to the linguistic evidence, for the Indian loan words in Austronesian languages are almost all from Sanskrit—a language that would not have been in everyday use amongst Indian traders at the time. As Gonda (1973) has noted, there are no Prakrit loans and no trade pidgins in evidence, both of which would be expected had heavy colonization or actual conquest taken place.

The major religious and political processes of Indianization at the court level are now agreed by many authorities to have developed some centuries after this initial period of trade. The first indications that the native rulers of these Indo-Malaysian trading states were beginning to model themselves on the Pallava kings of Tamil Nadu and their contemporaries appear around the fifth century, when inscriptions in Sanskrit written in Pallava script record kings with the Sanskrit name ending -varman ("protégé of") in eastern Borneo and western Java (Casparis 1975; Meer 1979). By the seventh century, the sources of the Indian influences seem to have shifted toward northern India and the Pala kingdom of Bengal (Bernet Kempers 1959), and for the first time really tangible Indianized kingdoms with divine rulers and magnificent Hindu or Buddhist monuments began to appear in the archipelago.

The Sumatran Buddhist trading state of Srivijaya, founded about 670 (Wolters 1967; Hall 1976, 1985), was probably the focus of an interlocked group of trading towns in eastern Sumatra (especially Palembang) and the Malay Peninsula. Its trade base was partially derived from the collection and export of native forest products such as pine resin, camphor, and benzoin (Wolters 1967; Miksic 1985), bolstered no doubt by tribute from ships passing through the Strait of Malacca. Srivijaya does not have a very coherent archaeological record (although see Adhyatman 1984 and Manguin 1992 for some recent ceramic finds dating between the eighth and thirteenth centuries from Palembang), and the contemporary Javanese agrarian kingdoms are much better known owing to their superb monuments: the great Buddhist stupa termed the Borobudur was constructed by the Sailendras in the eighth or early ninth century, and splendid Hindu temples were constructed slightly later in the region of Prambanan (Plate 12). After AD 930, the political focus of Javanese civilization shifted to eastern
Java and culminated in the Majapahit kingdom of the fourteenth century, which was eventually to decline under the pressure of Islam.

The Hindu and Buddhist beliefs on which these kingdoms were founded were almost certainly brought into the archipelago by Hindu Brahmans and learned Buddhists. The former may well have been invited by native rulers to bolster their authority with the rituals and architecture of a major world civilization. The role of the Brahmans in the process of Indianization is generally agreed to have been crucial—and far greater than that attributable to traders (Bosch 1961; Leur 1967; Gonda 1973). Brahmans were necessary to consecrate rulers, who in many cases were identified with the Hindu gods Siva or Vishnu. It was perhaps through them that the majority of the Sanskrit loan words, which fall mainly into the intellectual and administrative categories, were introduced into Austronesian languages. As might be expected, the languages with the most Sanskrit loans are those associated with long-lived civilizations, such as Chamic and Javanese. Malay also acquired many loans through the kingdom of Srivijaya, which has bequeathed to posterity a small number of seventh-century inscriptions in Old Malay. Malay has also been the medium for the more recent spread of Sanskrit loans to many non-Indianized parts of Indonesia, and even as far as Irian Jaya (Gonda 1973).

The geographical impact of Indian influence in the archipelago was always focused heavily on the lands around the Strait of Malacca and the Java Sea. Hence it was of maximum strength in eastern Sumatra, the western Malay Peninsula, Java, and Bali, but it rapidly dwindled in parts of highland Sumatra (for example amongst the Batak) and was almost nonexistent in Nias and Mentawai. In eastern Borneo, the Kutei kingdom of the fifth century seems to have left few descendants, and in general this island, plus Sulawesi, the Lesser Sundas, and the Moluccas, were only affected by Indian civilization in a most superficial way. Traditions that the fourteenth-century Javanese kingdom of Majapahit once controlled the whole of the archipelago are hard to evaluate; Naarsen (1977) has suggested that it claimed tribute from the whole of Island Southeast Asia except for northern Sulawesi and the Philippines, but this may be a substantial exaggeration (Rausa-Gomez 1967; Hall 1968:87). In the Philippines, some Sanskrit loans appear to have spread as a result of Malay enterprise after the tenth century (Francisco 1965; Scott 1968; Postma 1991), and this period also saw the commencement of extensive trade with China, through which the Philippines were drawn increasingly into the wider Indo-Malaysian world.

Some caution is clearly necessary in interpreting the real significance of Indian influence. The great strength and tenacity of Austronesian cultural tradition are evident throughout the whole period, whether in ancient inscriptions in Old Malay or Old Javanese, in the terraced design of the Borobudur, or in certain cosmological concepts (Alkire 1972). The everyday life of the Javanese
peasant was probably little changed by the far-off existence of a Hinduized court. One major feature of Hindu society in India, the caste system, has had only a limited impact in Southeast Asia, surviving today only in Hinduized Bali. A view that the Austronesian societies adapted certain Indian influences by select invitation only is not without attraction.

Today, the only ethnic group in Southeast Asia to have maintained a coherent—even if highly modified—Hindu tradition is the Balinese (Geertz 1980; Hobart et al. 1996). Prior to Dutch government this island was divided into a number of small statelike domains, with rulers and nobles belonging to widespread, high-ranking, and intermarrying patrilineages. Commoner kin groups have always tended to be localized in individual villages, but commoners also belong to corporate organizations such as temple groups and irrigation societies (subaks; Geertz 1972; Meer 1979) that cross-cut lineage and village boundaries. There is also a priesthood of Brahman derivation, but any visitor to Bali will quickly observe that the picturesque and ubiquitous temples owe little to Indian styles of architecture; there are even indications that some of them preserve aspects of a more ancient “megalithic” tradition (Sutaba 1976) that is widespread throughout the Austronesian world and that received one of its most coherent expressions in the shrines (marae) of late prehistoric Polynesia. The importance of ancestor worship has always characterized Balinese society (Sutaba 1996), just as it has all the other far-flung Austronesian societies that have not converted entirely to Islam or Christianity.

Apart from Hinduism and Buddhism, the only other major religion to affect the archipelago in pre-European times was Islam, which has become the national religion of Indonesia and Malaysia. Its spread has been much more recent than that of the Indian religions, and as a result its history is much better known. The major sultanates only preceded the Portuguese by less than a century. By the eighth century, communities of Arab and Persian Muslims were already settled as traders in Guangzhou (Canton) and other southern Chinese cities. The spread of Islam into Indonesia occurred several centuries later, and linguistic evidence suggests that the Arabic and Persian loan words in Austronesian languages came for the most part directly from India (Gonda 1973; Hall 1977). How the religion came to spread so quickly through the archipelago is not clear, but a combination of trading enterprise, missionary conversion, and the acuity of native rulers who sought power through alliances with well-connected outsiders probably suffices as an explanation (Kumar 1979). By the fourteenth century a trade network, mainly in Javanese and Malay hands, had been set up to bring spices such as cloves, nutmeg, and camphor from the Moluccas. This, added to the well-established trade network from China through the Philippines and around Borneo, undoubtedly provided an excellent channel for the propagation and spread of Islam. By the late thirteenth-century Islamic influ-
ence was well established in northern Sumatra; a Muslim tombstone found on
the northwestern coast of this island is believed to date from 1206 (Ambary
1981). During the fourteenth century a number of Islamic sultanates developed
in this region (Miksic 1979), and from 1400 through to the growth of Portu-
guese power in the early sixteenth century the spread of Islam took place with
great rapidity. Sultanates and trading ports developed in Malacca (Melaka),
along the northern coast of Java, around the Borneo coast (with important
states in Brunei and Banjarmasin), on the island of Jolo in Sulu, and on the
islands of Ternate and Tidore off Halmahera. In the seventeenth century two
more important trading states were developed by the Makassarese and Buginese

The early centuries of the second millennium witnessed some major trans-
formations in terms of outside interest in the islands of Southeast Asia. For
example, the sheer volume of ceramics imported from China during the Song
and later dynasties contrasts starkly with the absence (at least in any quantity)
of such material during the first millennium. The trade in spices and "forest
products," which earlier was perhaps a rather sporadic affair, also spread to en-
compass virtually the whole archipelago. The islands were thus rapidly brought
into contact with many groups of outsiders—not just Muslims, but with other
groups such as Chinese and Thais. There are even some slight hints that ethnic
Chinese may have settled in some places as craftsmen prior to the spread of
Islam (e.g., Manning et al. 1980 for Kota Cina in Sumatra; Cheng 1969 for
Sarawak, but contested by Christie 1985). Virtually the whole archipelago
became connected to the greater Asian world between the tenth and fifteenth
centuries to an extent far greater than in the earlier Indianizing period.

The spread of Islam was one major reflection of this and of course helped to
speed up the process toward the end of this time span. By 1521, trans-archipe-
lagic trading was established on a frequent and formal basis, as can be seen
from the presence of special port officials (shahbandar) in Malacca to handle
trade from regions as far apart as the Moluccas, Java, Luzon, Banjarmasin, and
Palembang (Pelras 1981; Andaya and Andaya 1982; Cortesão 1944). One of the
major effects of all this intensified trade and contact was that certain groups
were able to take advantage of newly emerging options in order to expand
widely through the archipelago. The Bugis and Makassarese of southern Sul-
wesi have been the most important of such groups in recent history, but the
Malays have had the greatest impact of all, as they had the advantage of a west-
erly location around the trade highway of the Strait of Malacca, which enabled
them to make their moves very early. Indeed, the whole phenomenon of the
spread of the Islamic sultanates is closely tied in with the spread of Malay lan-
guage and culture. This does not mean that all the Malay communities of the
archipelago result entirely from migrations out of the Malay Peninsula; the pro-
cess has been far more complex and assimilatory than this.
The Patterns of History and Ethnography

Today, coastal Islamic groups who speak dialects of Malay and who identify themselves as Malays with localized epithets (e.g., Brunei Malays, Banjar Malays) form a homogeneous belt of peoples around most of the coastal regions of Borneo, eastern Sumatra, and the Malay Peninsula (see Fig. 4.6). Had the Javanese not had such highly developed earlier civilizations, this island might also have supported many such coastal groups, but the great literary and demographic strength of Javanese civilization clearly made it resistant to cultural domination (Supomo 1995). The modern Malay language perhaps descends from a lingua franca that developed along the shores of the Strait of Malacca, especially in the old Srivijayan heartland of southeastern Sumatra, in southern Peninsular Malaysia, and in the Riau and Lingga Islands. This development cannot be dated with precision, but it must have been underway by at least the time of the foundation of the important sultanate of Malacca in 1414. From this period onward, the use of the Malay language spread rapidly through the coastal regions of the western archipelago, and even as far as Ternate and Tidore in the northern Moluccas. Both the language and the culture have taken on some decidedly assimilatory characteristics; at the present time people can “enter” Malay culture (masuk Melayu) by converting to Islam and speaking the Malay language. Hence most of the coastal Malays of Borneo are almost certainly of local origin in a genetic sense, although ruling classes do often have traditions of foundation marriages with Johor or Malaccan noble families.

The structures of the Moslem sultanates present intricate details that I can hardly hope to summarize here, but I will close this section with a pocket view of Brunei, one of the most important of these trading states (Brown 1970, 1978). During the Song dynasty Brunei was apparently known to the Chinese as P’o-ni (although Christie 1985 equates P’o-ni with Santubong in western Sarawak), and long before the arrival of Islam it seems to have been developing in size and renown, partly on the rich pickings from the trade routes linking southern China and the Strait of Malacca (Bellwood and Omar 1980; Omar 1981). By 1515 the ruler had converted to Islam (Nicholl 1975) and the rather elaborate ruling bureaucracy, which dominated northern Borneo (in spite of Spanish hostility) until the eventual reduction of its territory by the Brookes of Sarawak in the nineteenth century, appears to have acquired great wealth from the taxation of riverine districts all the way from Pontianak in western Borneo to the southern Philippines. In 1521 the sultan’s court was described by Antonio Pigafetta, a survivor of Magellan’s expedition, in terms that give an impression of considerable wealth and splendor. The Brunei nobles and commoners of today belong to an ethnic category that has been called Brunei Malay since at least sometime in the nineteenth century; the native (non-Brunei Malay) populations are of a lower social status, some being Muslim and Malay speaking (the Kedayans), while others are of more varied religious and linguistic affiliation (Bajau, Melanau, Dusun, and Murut). The Brunei Malay commoners themselves,
who live in and around the riverine town of Bandar Seri Begawan, probably originated through the assimilation of local populations into the high status Malay lifestyle from the early years of the sultanate.

It will be apparent by now that the bulk of the present-day population of the archipelago, excluding the small-scale traditional agricultural groups who are still to be considered, has a way of life that no longer has much connection with the prehistoric Austronesian past. Furthermore, there is one important aspect of the past century that must not be overlooked. The population of Indonesia is now almost 200 million, of whom about 100 million live in crowded and agriculturally intensified Java. But the fifteenth-century population of Java was only about 4 million (Sudjoko 1981:3), and in 1815 the Raffles census reported it as 4.6 million; it then increased to 29 million by 1900 (McDonald 1980). The total population of the archipelago between the sixteenth century and 1820 probably fluctuated around 8 million (C. Geertz 1963; Reid 1980), indicating a level of demographic stability that is certainly not present today.

III. THE INDO-MALAYSIAN TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES

I will now consider the small-scale traditional agricultural societies in the third category defined by H. Geertz in 1963 (see beginning of this chapter). In terms of descent ideology, the societies of Sumatra and the Lesser Sundas tend toward unilineal norms (as do the Chams of Vietnam), while those of Peninsular Malaysia, Borneo, Sulawesi, and the Philippines are basically cognatic (mainly bilateral, but occasionally with ambilineal descent reckoning). These distinctions are by no means as clear or necessarily as historically significant as some of the pre-1950s writers suggested, and the unilineal-bilateral "dichotomy" may be simply a reflection of other more fundamental differences in social structure. For instance, unilineal (and also ambilineal) kinship reckoning can only be expressed within a framework of corporate descent groups that have a membership greater than that of the individual nuclear or stem family. Societies lacking such corporate descent groups, such as the hunter-gatherers and some of the horticultural societies of Borneo and the Philippines, are necessarily bilateral.

These observations reflect little more than the logic of descent ideology and could lead into a discussion of correlations between different aspects of social structure, which I am rather unwilling to undertake. Perhaps I can suggest that, amongst the small-scale traditional societies, there are correlations between the existence of corporate landowning descent groups, stability of land use and tenure, and relatively high population densities (e.g., Miles 1972; Rousseau 1987, 1990:303 for Borneo). Conversely, there are apparent correlations between bilateral kinship reckoning and the absence of corporate descent groups, mobility
in land use, and relatively low population densities. As far as kinship reckoning is concerned, the significant differences—more significant perhaps than issues of matri- or patrilineality—may thus be between those societies (both unilineal and cognatic) that have corporate landholding descent groups and those purely bilateral societies that do not. I will return to this matter later in this chapter, but I should add that social anthropologists have not to date been concerned with the study of such correlations on a pan-Austronesian or even a pan-Indo-Malaysian scale, and there may be a great deal of historically significant information in this field still awaiting exposure.

**A. The Unilineal Societies**

In Sumatra, societies with strong patrilineal tendencies are found in the northern highlands (Aceh, Gayo, Batak), in the south of the island (Rejang), and in the isolated island of Nias off the western coast (Loeb 1935; Beatty 1990). In eastern Indonesia they are found, intermixed with small matrilineal enclaves, from Flores eastward and in the Moluccas (Loeb and Broek 1947). Examples of this kind of organization have been described for many groups; for instance, the Batakos of northern Sumatra inhabit villages—formerly defended by embankments—of large patrilineage houses with mat partitions for individual families (Loeb 1935). The island of Nias has a similar system. Originally, each new settlement would perhaps have been founded by members of one patrilineage, but as settlements grow they become more complex; Cunningham (1967) describes a village in Timor that has seventy-eight lineages represented in its population (although six of them form a definite majority). Lineages always become dispersed through processes of growth and fission over time, and many groups—such as the Batak—still call the localized lineages and the larger clans by the same name (*marga*).

Societies with strong matrilineal tendencies include the upland Chams of Vietnam, the Minangkabau of Sumatra, and the Minangkabau-derived population of Negri Sembilan in Peninsular Malaysia, plus a number of groups amongst the mainly patrilineal societies of the Lesser Sundas and Seram, such as the Tana ʿAi of Flores described in detail by Lewis (1988). The best-known group is undoubtedly the Minangkabau of Sumatra, whose village sections are focused on land- and house-owning matrilineages with uxorilocal residence. Traditionally these matrilineages were grouped into four Minangkabau-wide clans and further into two moieties (Loeb 1935). However, status positions are inherited by males, and noble lineages have a very strong tendency toward patrilineal descent.

One interesting feature of matrilineality amongst the Minangkabau of Sumatra and Negri Sembilan has been its survival in the face of Indian and
Islamic cultural traditions within which patrilineality has always been stressed. The Minangkabau are not a remote and isolated population; in Sumatra they had Indianized rulers by the fourteenth century and they have been under the influence of Islam for the last 300 years (H. Geertz 1963; Kumar 1979). In Negri Sembilan the matrilineal system has survived as an enclave within Islamic Malay society since at least the sixteenth century, and here some aspects of matrilineal ideology appear to have spread into neighboring small-scale traditional societies such as the Temuan and the Semelai (Carey 1976). Hence the Minangkabau represent a situation where matrilineal descent within corporate landholding lineages has obviously been very stable in the recent past. But, as with the unilineal-bilateral distinction, it is difficult to show that patrilineal and matrilineal ideologies are always permanent, opposed, and nonoverlapping.

Most patrilineal societies, especially the stratified ones, have a system whereby the groom’s family pays a bride-price to the family of the bride and the bride is then “released” by her family to live virilocally. But poorer families often cannot afford to pay the bride-price, in which case the husband lives uxorilocally, often in a position of low status (e.g., Cunningham 1967 for Timor). Even if a bride-price is paid, initial postmarital residence will normally be uxorilocally for a year or so; this custom also occurs amongst the cognatic societies of Borneo and Sulawesi. In matrilineal societies such as the Minangkabau there is no bride-price, and here the bride’s family sometimes pays a dowry to that of the groom, who will live uxorilocally.

Amongst the patrilineal societies it is clear that the ideal of virilocal residence is not always practiced, either because the bride-price is not paid or because females and their lineages hold important rights to land (as in Mentawai, where women own and inherit rice and taro plots). It can be seen, therefore, that in decisions about postmarital residence and child affiliation to one or the other parental lineage, there will often be a strong tendency towards ambilineality in real life (e.g., see Ellen 1978 for the Nuaulu of Seram). So it may come as no surprise to find that the Rejang of Sumatra turned from a patrilineal and virilocal ideology toward matrilineality around 1930, after bride-price payments were eliminated owing to economic circumstances and pressure from Islam (Lebar 1972:32, quoting Jaspan). In western Timor and eastern Flores there are also situations where closely related ethnic groups can have either patrilineal or matrilineal tendencies (Schulte Nordholt 1971; Metzner 1982).

It is apparent from this that fluctuation from one norm toward the other can occur quite rapidly in some circumstances, although I hesitate to theorize about general causes or to postulate whether the role of bride-price is generally one of cause and effect. But it is necessary to warn against a view that the patrilineal and matrilineal ideologies necessarily represent ancient and long-lasting differences between different Austronesian societies.
B. The Cognatic Societies

Cognatic societies that practice shifting cultivation with low population densities are found throughout large parts of Borneo (King 1993), Sulawesi, the Philippines, and Peninsular Malaysia. Many of the Borneo societies still inhabit distinctive raised longhouses with adjoined family living quarters linked by a common veranda, although this tradition is rapidly disappearing today. In the egalitarian and truly bilateral societies without descent groups, such as the Dusun of Sabah (Appell 1978) and the Iban of Sarawak (Freeman 1960, 1981), the individual two- or three-generation families form independent corporate groups who can make alliances with other families for decisions concerning residence and land use. Amongst the Iban, the land- and property-owning family is called a bilek; it survives from generation to generation as new members are born or join through marriage. Iban longhouses can hold up to fifty bilek families living in side-by-side dwelling apartments facing on to a shared veranda—the whole structure being up to 200 meters long. Families can move from one longhouse to another if they wish; some villages consist of just one such structure, others of two or more.

The Iban do, however, represent one pole of Borneo variation, as cognatic landholding descent groups of greater generational depth are sometimes found in other societies, especially amongst the stratified societies of central Borneo (Rousseau 1990), among the Maanyan of Kalimantan (Hudson and Hudson 1978), and the longhouse-dwelling Selako (Schneider 1978). From the available ethnographies it seems that a similar range of variation in social structure—from independent family units to societies with larger descent groups—also occurs in Sulawesi (e.g., see Nooy-Palm 1979 for Sa'dan Toraja cognatic lineages), although here there is a tendency for related families to share multifamily houses (quite magnificent ones in the case of the Toraja: Plate 13) rather than to build independent units in longhouses. Basically, the rather transient bilateral social formations without descent groups characteristic of societies such as the Dusun and the Iban seem to be well adapted to situations where land and labor are not in short supply (Frake 1956). It is interesting to note that corporate descent groups can develop in societies of this type in modern situations of cash cropping, especially of rubber, where land rights become more permanent and where a larger pool of labor is required (Miles 1972).

C. Political Integration and Ranking

The Indo-Malaysian traditional societies exhibit relatively small-scale systems of political integration and ranking. Many are basically alliances between egalitarian and independent villages, while others are focused on ranked lineage sys-
tems that encompass one or more villages or a territorial unit such as a river valley. There is no indication that true states with specialized bureaucracies and the powers to maintain allegiance by force developed anywhere in the region before the Indian and Islamic periods. However, prior to such contacts it is possible that Indo-Malaysian societies evolved in some places (perhaps on Java?) into small-scale ranked chiefdoms or "domains" similar to those of parts of ethnographic Micronesia and Polynesia (although perhaps lacking some of the more extreme expressions of chiefly divinity and power recorded in eighteenth-century Polynesia).

Ranking in Indo-Malaysian small-scale traditional societies is based on a number of principles, the main one being that the descendants of the group that founded a settlement and first cleared the land will tend to preserve high status. Ancestors bulk large wherever we look in traditional Austronesian society, whether in art (Feldman 1985) or in mythology and tradition (e.g., see Lewis 1988 for Flores). Leaders often rise to power because of their ability to trace clear descent from a founding ancestor of a lineage or tribe. I have recently discussed the great importance of "foundership" as a factor giving rise to both migration (one needs to migrate, even if only a little, to become a founder!) and the rise of inequality in Austronesian societies as whole (Bellwood 1996c; Slamet-Velsink 1995). So we have a kind of "founder principle" that can be applied to the ranking of lineages, whether unilineal or ambilineal, but this ranking is also normally open to constant rearrangement through individual cleverness and the manipulation of wealth (as well attested for the links between feasting and chiefship in Nias; Marschall 1980; Beatt 1990). Rank can therefore be both inherited and achieved at the same time in a great many societies.

High-ranking founder lineages provide for the incumbents positions of secular and religious power in many societies—such persons have an important say in village affairs, are entitled to occasional presentations of food and labor from their "subjects," and normally control decisions about land use within the group territory. These lineages generally display their status through the ownership of wealth items: Chinese jars, ancient beads, megalithic monuments, fine weapons, drums, and so forth. Another kind of wealth is expressed through success in agriculture and the raising of livestock, especially pigs, the products of which can be used in prestige feasting. A powerful lineage can also reinforce its position through intermarriage with members of high-ranking lineages in other regions; this procedure has the double function of setting nobles apart from commoners and of expanding valuable alliances. Bride-price also often increases in value with rank; this can reinforce tendencies toward high-rank endogamy, and it can enable powerful lineages to increase their manpower by requiring males unable to meet the necessary payments to reside uxorilocally (e.g., see Forth 1981 for eastern Sumba).
Such processes of rank enhancement might give the impression that a successful lineage, if it wished, could expand its power almost indefinitely. This is most certainly not the case. Lineage affiliations in real life are notoriously complex, oral genealogies can be manipulated, families wax and wane in terms of wealth and size and—more importantly—as soon as one lineage leader shows signs of increasing power in an unpopular way, there will either be fission or a revolt (as discussed in detail by Leach 1954 for societies of a similar level of organization in Burma). A state cannot develop from a small-scale traditional society unless the emerging leaders can monopolize power and convert the network of military and economic alliances between sections into a centrifugal flow toward themselves. This never happened anywhere in the Austronesian world until the period of the Indianized states of the middle and late first millennium AD.

Turning now to look at the expressions of rank and class and their supporting ideologies throughout the traditional regions of the archipelago, one finds that societies tend to be fairly egalitarian in Peninsular Malaysia and parts of Borneo (not central), Sulawesi, and the Philippines, where population densities are low and where there is a dependence on shifting cultivation with bilateral organization and considerable family mobility. Villages are normally independent of each other and leadership is frequently by election, rather than by inheritance within a separate class of nobles. As groups come to depend more on permanent landholdings for wet rice or tree crops (as in the Sunda islands), the separation of noble and commoner classes becomes more marked. This is especially true for those societies that have had close associations with the Islamic sultanates and the networks of international trade. The latter, of course, have provided many of the prestigious wealth items that so frequently provide material support for rank. In general (see beginning of this section), it is apparent that the existence of rank and class divisions in the small-scale traditional societies tends to correlate with the existence of corporate descent groups of unilineal or ambilineal type, as it is between such groups that differential statuses are displayed. It is not true, however, to assume that all cognatic societies necessarily have no class structure; aristocracies are present in the cognatic societies of central Borneo, apart from the Punan (Rousseau 1990; King 1993). In this region of relatively low population density, the ruling lineages appear to be able to coerce their followers into settlement-endogamous marriage arrangements, thus ensuring the maintenance of larger supporting populations (e.g., see Alexander 1993 for the Lahanan).

Amongst the relatively egalitarian societies there is considerable local variation. The Austroasiatic-speaking Senoi of Peninsular Malaysia dwell in villages led mainly by councils of influential elders or by elected headmen (Lebar et al. 1964; Dentan 1968). So too do the Malay-speaking Jakun and Temuan (Carey
1976), although in the latter groups there are now district headmen as a result of Islamic Malay influence. Many groups in Sulawesi and Borneo have elected headmen and other nonheritable leadership positions at the village level; one group in this category is the Iban of Sarawak.

The Iban have attracted much interest owing to their phenomenal rate of expansion from the Kapuas Basin of western Kalimantan through vast areas of Sarawak within the past 400 years. By 1850 they had expanded to settle most of the Rejang Basin (St. John 1974), and during the late nineteenth century they continued onward to encroach upon the borders of Brunei. Their expansion involved the clearance for shifting rice cultivation of enormous areas of virgin equatorial rain forest, and Freeman (1955:25) reports the case of one bilek family that moved over 300 kilometers in one lifetime. King (1976) and McKinley (1978) have suggested that this expansion was not simply due to population pressure or shortage of land. King believes that the values and beliefs connected with the need to acquire human heads to increase health, prosperity, and status may also have been significant (as also suggested by Hose 1926 for Kayan expansion).

Yet despite the Iban successes in colonization and in assimilating other groups, they never had permanent leaders until they came firmly under the control of the Brooke government after 1841 (Brown 1978; Freeman 1981). Their society was basically classless and egalitarian according to Freeman (1981); each longhouse had nonhereditary guardians or leaders for a number of specific spheres of activity, including law (adat), warfare, and the opening up of new lands. Men achieved these statuses through individual prowess and charisma and through success in agriculture and collecting heads. However, recent studies (Jawan 1992; Sather 1990) suggest that status can form around successful Iban founders or wealthy men when settlements have become stable; as one might expect, the migratory phase is the least conducive to the formation of rank.

I turn now to examine some of the more stratified societies of the region. I have already noted the widespread principle that descendants of founder lineages tend to be of high rank and to control many of the important decision-making positions. Some groups in Sumatra use titles of Indian origin for high-ranking persons (for example, the Singa Maharaja of some Batak groups), but such occurrences do not alter the basic observation that systems of rank and class are quite widespread in Austronesian societies (particularly in Oceania), and they must in some form be of great antiquity.

In the unilineal societies of Sumatra and the Lesser Sundas, the district and village leaders are drawn from high-ranking lineages, often descended from founder figures, and they are usually entitled to labor services from commoners as well as food shares (e.g., see Loeb 1935 for the Batak). High-rank endogamy
has given rise in many ethnographic societies to noble, commoner, and slave (war captive and debtor) classes (e.g., see Cunningham 1967 for the Atori of Timor; Forth 1981 for eastern Sumba). Fox (1977a) has described the numerous small states (or "petty feud ing domains") of the past few centuries on Roti and Savu; the hierarchies here were based on ranked patrilineages. On Roti twelve of these small states were in existence in 1690; during the nineteenth century the number increased to eighteen. The Savu states were linked by the sharing of islandwide lunar rituals, and their leaders had heavily ritualized functions; on Roti there appears to have been less integration between the units. However, both Fox (1977a) and Forman (1977) have stressed that these localized hierarchies and their supporting tribute-collecting arrangements were probably intensified by Portuguese and Dutch trade and colonial interference.

One society that does reveal an interesting and presumably indigenous system of ranking is that of southern Nias, off the western coast of Sumatra. Village chiefs here held hereditary titles controlled by noble patrilineages, and there was also an important hereditary male priesthood. The massive chiefs' houses and the unique megalithic monuments of Nias have long been famous as material creations of this intensely ranked society (Schnitzer 1964), and it appears that Nias chiefs were considered semidivine, like some of their Polynesian counterparts. They became powerful spirits after their deaths and only they were allowed to wear gold ornaments and to hold intervillage feasts. Chiefly status for the living and the dead was the motivation behind the creation of the spectacular stone structures, and chiefs were also able to keep slaves.

The competitive feasting that bolstered chiefly status on Nias involved great presentations of wealth, especially of pigs, of which up to 1,500 were killed in reported cases. Similar periodic and massive pig slaughters are also characteristic of many societies in Melanesia, and they may once have been more common in Indonesia; the Islamic prohibitions against eating pork, which never reached Nias, have of course had a great impact elsewhere in this region. Nias chiefs could also accumulate and loan wealth with similar profit motives (see Suzuki 1959:40-41) as the Big Men of Melanesia, and I suspect that this type of competitive achievement imposed on a basic system of hereditary ranking was once characteristic of many ancient Austronesian societies.

As already noted, some of the cognatic societies of central Borneo also have class systems and aristocracies based on inheritance, family alliances, and the ownership of highly valued objects. Such groups include the Kenyah, the Kayan, and the Maloh (Hose and McDougall 1912; King 1978, 1993). The Kayan in particular—despite their low population density—maintained three or four social strata from nobles to slaves (Rousseau 1978). The chiefs retained much of their status through intermarriage with chiefly families in other villages, while commoners tended to be village-endogamous. Slave sacrifice on the
death of a chief (as in Nias) is also reported to have occurred amongst the Kayan and the Melanau of Sarawak (St. John 1974).

IV. OTHER ETHNOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF AUSTRONESIAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES

It is not my purpose here to list all the material correlations of the small-scale traditional societies in the archipelago, but some features drawn from the comparative ethnographic record are of obvious interest for prehistory. Settlements, for instance, are normally focused on village-type nucleations for social reasons and (in the past) for defense. Houses (Waterson 1990; Fox 1993; Plates 13–16) are almost universally rectangular, with the great longhouses of Borneo at the upper end of the size range: up to 200 meters long and sometimes raised 10 meters off the ground. The Minangkabau, Batak, and Toraja have particularly fine multifamily houses with some superb artwork, but in most coastal areas where outside influences have been strong, much smaller nuclear or extended-family houses are the norm. Circular houses are not common, but they are constructed in Enggano, western Flores, and by the Atoni of Timor.

Most traditional villages in the archipelago also had in the past one or more special houses in which sacred paraphernalia such as hunted heads, ancestor relics, and lineage symbols and valuables were kept. Sacred storage houses of this kind often served also as temples and as foci for meetings; the small god-houses described for the Simalungun Batak of Sumatra by Bartlett (1934) were inside fenced enclosures that were also used for the growing of sacred plants and for assemblies—functions rather like those of the marae temple structures of Polynesia. Bartlett, incidentally, regarded these Batak sacred houses as pre-Islamic survivals, and the widespread distribution of such structures in the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago and in Oceania argues for their great antiquity.

Amongst items of portable material culture, it should be noted that most ethnographic communities either made or had trade access to pottery and iron (Marschall 1968). The clothing of early Austronesian societies was of bark cloth, beaten from the inner bark of a number of local trees such as Manila hemp (abaca, Musa textilis), paper mulberry, and breadfruit, but use of the backstrap loom for weaving has spread through most parts of the archipelago and into parts of western Oceania since at least Proto-Western-Malayo-Polynesian times. Bows and arrows and spears are of at least proto-Austronesian antiquity, but the blowpipe is probably more recent. This device, used with poisoned darts or clay pellets, was developed in or around Borneo according to Jett (1970). It was used throughout the archipelago and taken—presumably by the initial Austronesian settlers—to Madagascar (Fig. 5.1). The blowpipe has also been adopted by the Austroasiatic-speaking Negritos and Senoi of Peninsular Malaysia, although the
Philippine Negritos have retained the bow. To my knowledge the pellet bow of India and Mainland Southeast Asia has never been used in the Southeast Asian islands.

Tattooing is a fairly universal trait in the Austronesian world (see Plate 6). For instance, Murut men in northern Borneo traditionally tattooed stars on their shoulders to denote captured heads (Rutter 1929). Deformation of the skulls of infants has not been widely reported, but the Melanau of Sarawak depressed the foreheads of young girls, the people of Minahasa (north Sulawesi) practiced cradleboarding (Hickson 1889:213), and Maceda (1974) reports cases of fairly recent head deformation and trepanation from the Philippines. The practice of headhunting was widespread in the larger islands (it would clearly have been impractical on the smallest ones); I have already mentioned its association with status and expansion amongst the Iban and Kayan of Borneo. Downs (1955) reports that the Barè’e Toraja of Sulawesi used to form raiding parties of ten to twenty men to take heads for the rituals associated with mourning ceremonies, to consecrate sacred houses, and to prove bravery. Mourning rituals were also a major stimulus for headhunting in Borneo (Metcalf 1982).

Most groups in the archipelago who have not been influenced heavily by Indian, Islamic, or Christian traditions practice secondary forms of burial, in which the defleshed bones are eventually stored in a receptacle of some kind. A
full account of secondary burial rituals for high-ranked Berawan in Sarawak is given by Metcalf (1982); the details are too complex to summarize here, but they make one realize just how much is sure to have been lost in the archaeological record. Interesting ethnographic examples of archaeologically recoverable receptacles for both primary and secondary burials include the stone sarcophagi and stone urns of the Batak of Sumatra and the Minahsans of northern Sulawesi (Bellwood 1978: Figure 8.24; Dalrymple 1984); the common use in Borneo of large stoneware jars, often cut open to take crouched primary burials (e.g., see Harrison 1962 for the Kelabits; Massing 1981 for the Benuaq of Kalimantan; Metcalf 1982 for the Berawan); and the common use of megalithic structures, particularly in Borneo and the Lesser Sundas (Schneeberger 1979; Sukendar 1985b; Hoskins 1986; Newton and Barbier 1988). Borneo and Sulawesi in particular have an immense range of wooden burial structures, in the case of Borneo often consisting of wooden mausolea or log coffins that clearly have limited scope for archaeological survival unless placed in caves (as log coffins often were: see Bellwood 1988 for Sabah). Also, in Java there are indications that "charnel houses" raised on posts were used for secondary burial prior to the period of Indianization (Stutterheim 1956).

V. THE COMPARATIVE RECONSTRUCTION OF EARLY AUSTRONESIAN SOCIETY

In the final section of this chapter I will present observations from comparative ethnology to supplement the list of features reconstructed linguistically for early Austronesian society in Chapter 4. The problem can be approached in two ways: either by broad pan-Austronesian comparisons, or by trying to find isolated societies that might have preserved earlier cultural patterns. I will examine the second approach first, if only to reject it totally. I have already shown that isolated hunter-gatherer groups such as the Tasaday and Punan are not valid candidates for ancient reconstructions, and neither are the presumably long-isolated societies of Mentawai and Enggano off the western coast of Sumatra. Traditionally, the Mentawaians lacked betel chewing, pottery, metal, rice, and the blowpipe, and the people of Enggano had a similar list of absences that also included weaving and cattle. Both groups used stone tools and depended on taro cultivation until recent times (Loeb 1935; Lebar 1972). Yet one has only to examine the linguistic list of early Austronesian reconstructions (see Chapter 4, Table 4.2) to see that while metals, the blowpipe, cattle, and possibly weaving are relatively recent in the archipelago, three of the items (pottery, betel chewing, and rice) are of at least Proto-Malayo-Polynesian antiquity. So these are cultures that have presumably lost the three items during their ancestry, rather than being fossilized pre-pottery or pre-rice survivals. They clearly reflect local
adaptation and some loss of cultural items rather than a totally pristine and conservative ancient stratum.

Broader comparative reconstructions are of more value, but there are pitfalls. For instance, simple observations that pile houses, headhunting, and megaliths are widespread are of little assistance in indicating antiquity without linguistic support, and when such entities are studied in isolation they can give peculiar results. I need hardly stress the impracticability of Perry's view (1918) that megalithic monuments in Indonesia were introduced by sun-worshipping, "stone-using immigrants."

However, when turning to concepts and customs in the religious and social spheres, where simple trait diffusion is perhaps less likely, we can make some headway. In the realm of religion it is clear that beliefs centered on spirit animism and ancestor cults are so widespread and deep seated that they must be of great antiquity (Newton and Barbier 1988). Shamans (i.e., inspirational priests or mediums who are able to converse with spirits through trances) are particularly widespread in Austronesian societies, particularly in Oceania. A dualism of male-sky (e.g., Lowalangi on Nias, Rangi in New Zealand) and female-earth deities, concepts of supernatural and mystical power (mana in Polynesia, semangat in Malay; Winstedt 1953:19), and taboo (tapu in Polynesia, rebu in Batak; Loeb 1935:94-95) are also virtually pan-Austronesian. Blust (1981c) has presented a linguistic reconstruction for a Proto-Austronesian term referring to supernatural punishment for offending ancestors or superior persons (i.e., breaking a taboo), and he has also traced other ritual activities to possible ancient borrowing from Negrito societies.

On the matter of status positions in early Austronesian society, Blust (1980) has reconstructed the Proto-Malayo-Polynesian term datu for a lineage official. Pawley (1981) has suggested that Proto-Oceanic society was stratified with terms for hereditary chief, firstborn son of a chief, and a person of low status. Historical evidence predating AD 800 from Java shows that the term ratu (raka in the Kalasan inscription of AD 778) was applied to a head of a district grouping of several villages (Naerssen 1977; see also Meer 1979; Christie 1986). The implication of this is that central Javanese society in the immediate pre-Sailendra period was probably ordered into a number of small embryonic states or chiefdoms, although this is perhaps no more than would be expected at this period, given subsequent developments in this region.

I will turn finally to the reconstruction of aspects of Proto-Austronesian social organization. Goodenough (1955) has compared societies in the Philippines and Oceania to reconstruct a cognatic type of society for this early phase (see also Loeb 1935), possibly with landholding ambilineal descent groups. More recently, Blust (1980) has presented a totally different reconstruction based on the Lesser Sunda evidence as interpreted by Wouden (1968). The
details of this are complex, but basically he thinks that early Austronesian socie-
ties were organized around a double unilineal descent system, with each per-
son belonging to a separate exogamous matrilineal and patrilineal lineage. Each
society would have had four maximal lineages—two matrilineal and two patri-
lineal—which would have been paired (one of each) into two exogamous
moieties.

Both these reconstructions are in obvious opposition and it is not easy to
select one or the other as being most plausible (see Blust 1994 and Fox 1994 for
further technical debate on the issue). As pointed out by Fox, it is quite possible
that the earliest Austronesian societies used both cognatic and unilineal ideolo-
gies in different contexts, as do many small-scale traditional Austronesian socie-
ties and even more cosmopolitan groups such as the Balinese today. Tenden-
cies toward unilinear and ambilinear descent reckoning may therefore have
developed in those societies that evolved ranked corporate groups under situa-
tions of high population density and permanency of land use. Since I have
already discussed such correlations in this chapter, I will not pursue them
further, but I think it should be stressed that Proto-Austronesian society, what-
ever its precise nature, must have held the seeds of all the traditional and non-
outsider-imposed variations that are evident today (see also Fox 1985).

Another final possibility that may be significant for eastern Indonesia (and
also Melanesia) is that the unilinear tendencies amongst Austronesian societies
here could reflect very strong influences from the pre-Austronesian populations
of the region. These were presumably related to the ancestors of the present
Papuan-speaking and predominantly unilinear populations of New Guinea and
western Melanesia. Close relationships between some aspects of the societies of
eastern Indonesia and New Guinea have also been pointed out by Lebar
(1972:124) and Kennedy (1937). However, the issue is complex and may never
be fully resolved; I can only present here my own rather intuitive views on the
matter.