

4. Governmental Agencies and Planned Change

Since the formulation of the nationalistic ideal of Indonesia as one state, with one people and one language, great emphasis has been put on the cultural integration. Irrespective of the nation's motto – "unity in diversity" – tribal groups have to be incorporated in the cultural mainstream of the country. A special development programme has been designed by the Department of Social Affairs to reach this aim. It is an uniform programme for all tribal peoples in Indonesia (about 2 million people divided in about 85 different ethnic groups). Beside general development aims such as improvement of health care and education, the programme also contains elements of a civilization programme aimed at changes in religion, housing, clothing, and body decoration. In general, the programme aims at a transformation of the community and its way of life, a process which leaves very few aspects of traditional life untouched. The focal points of the programme are the resettlement villages in which numerous "development" and "civilization" activities are carried out. As incentives the inhabitants receive all kinds of products to get adjusted to a new way of life with cash crops instead of hunting and gathering, with nuclear family houses instead of small temporary huts, and with new possibilities for social contacts (Departemen Sosial 1982).

In a number of studies made on behalf of this Department, attention is paid to the positive and negative elements of the life and culture of the Kubu in relation to development possibilities. Positive aspects are the mutual solidarity, the willingness to accept innovations, and to come into contact with outsiders. On the hand their attitude towards cultivation of land and the raising of animals is negative. These activities are taboo. The *melangun* tradition turns every effort to settle them down into a failure.

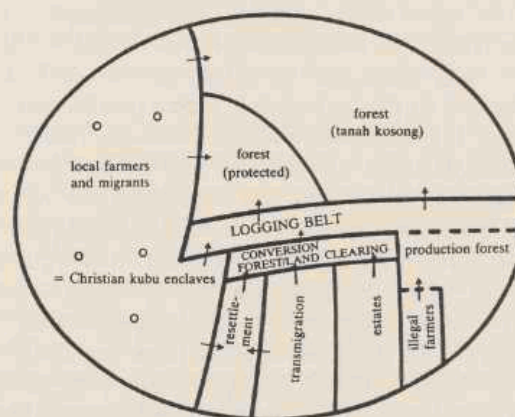
The *jenang* is considered as a parasite and as an intermediate person. He personally benefits from the isolation of the Kubu.

The traditionalism and the fatalistic mental attitude (not future oriented, and no desire to dominate over nature) are other aspects of Kubu life unfavorable for their "progress" (Departemen Sosial 1973, 1974, 1984, 1985).

About one third of the Kubu, classified as "one of the most primitive tribal peoples in Indonesia," have been involved in these resettlement projects. These projects differ greatly in the amount of success they meet. In some villages one succeeds in creating a new kind of community.

Most of the villages, however, are deserted after some time though the houses may be occupied by other people. As soon as the flow of goods decreases the number of Kubu leaving the village gradually increases often after conflicts with the civil servants. They return to the forest or to deserted fields of the local peasants. The *melangun* tradition is supposed to cause this exodus.

In spite of the failure of many resettlement projects among the Kubu there is no sign so far to change the policy with one exception worthwhile mentioning here. In the central part of Jambi there is a small chain of mountains, called Bukit Duabelas. There are about 800 Kubu living around these mountains. Encroaching farmers, transmigrants, and logging companies pushed the people more and more towards the mountains. As the pressure became more intense, survival problems for the Kubu increased. Sometime during 1984 a small delegation of Kubu accompanied by their Malay middleman, a *jenang*, visited the head of Bangko, the district capital. They complained about the continuous loss of their forest to other land uses. They asked to be left alone in order to continue their traditional life-style. Because of a number of reasons the request was received rather well: the relatively limited amount of success of development projects among the Kubu without viable alternatives at hand and the enormous pressure on their habitat which has already turned so many Kubu into beggars because they have lost their territory and means of existence, which are the most important ones (see figure and table). That area is in the process of being declared an official nature reserve. The local Kubu are allowed to continue to live there. Though the area is too small for the Kubu to live on, it is an important change with regard to development planning for the Kubu.



Schematic representation of land-use zones in (former) Kubu areas