

**KOMPANG:
AN ORGANOLOGICAL AND ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL STUDY
OF A MALAY FRAME DRUM**

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Kompang: An Organological and Ethnomusicological Study of a Malay Frame

Drum

Abstract

This study explores how the kompang (single-headed frame drum), which was adapted from the Arab/Islamic culture, plays a significant role in augmenting the Malay culture. Using a combination of musicological and ethnographic approaches, the author reveals the historical facts as well as analyzing the organological aspects of the instrument. The uniqueness of kompang music is disclosed through the musicological analysis of its repertoire, according to the three types of kompang ensemble performed throughout Peninsular Malaysia. Combining observations and interviews with his own experiences of learning how to play the kompang, the author presents a detailed account of traditional, aural learning processes as well as the performance practices of the instrument as presented in the ethnomusicological literature. In addition, the study of kompang music traces the stylistic changes in its traditional form and functions and links these changes to the socio-cultural transformations prevalent in Malaysian society. This work - complete with four compact discs (audio and video) of musical examples - contributes not only to ethnomusicological theory and method, but also to a deeper understanding of Malay musical culture.

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Selections on Compact Discs and Technical Notes

Most of the musical examples discussed in this thesis can be reviewed on the audio and video compact discs attached to this thesis. The following equipments were used in the field recordings and editing.

Audio recording

- i. Roland VS1680 Digital mixer with built-in hard disc recorder
- ii. AKG Monitor grade close-back headphones
- iii. Roland 2 ways amplified portable speakers
- iv. Philips CD digital audio recorder.
- v. Blank CDR for audio.
- vi. 6 Shure SM 58 Cardioid dynamic microphones
- vii. 2 AKG 414 condenser microphones with shock mount.
- viii. Microphone cables with XLR connector
- ix. 8 Microphone stands
- x. Panasonic Micro cassette recorder.
- xi. Sony 60 Minutes micro cassettes
- xii. 4 gang power extension cable.

Video recording

- i. Sony TRV16E Mini Digital Video camcorder
- ii. Sony Mini DV cassettes 60 minutes
- iii. Rechargeable battery for digital video camera recorder

- iv. Panasonic VHS video camera recorder.
- v. Rechargeable battery for Panasonic VHS Video camera recorder
- vi. VHS Video cassettes 120 minutes
- vii. Camera tripod.

Software

- i. Sound Forge 6.0 Professional Digital Audio Edition
- ii. Pinnacle Studio Version 7 for video editing
- iii. Nero burning Rom for CD burner

Computer and Hardware

- i. Twinhead Pentium III Notebook with Window Me, 866 MHz, 256 SDRAM, 10Gigabytes hard disc, USB port
- ii. Intel Pentium 4, 1.7 GHz, with Window XP, 256 DDRRAM, 20 Gigabytes hard disc
- iii. Imation external CD-RW Burner
- iv. IEEE 1394 CardBus (fire wire)
- v. Belkin USB VideoBus II

1. Audio CD I: Field Recordings

It was encoded into digital audio compact disc format (*.cda) that is supported by most Audio CD players as well being able to be run on Windows Media Player.

Audio Attributes: Uncompressed, 44,100 Hz, 16 bit, Stereo.

<u>Track</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Length</u>
1	<i>Pukulan Bertih</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	1 min. 16 sec.
2	<i>Pukulan Hadrah</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	0 min. 48 sec.
3	Excerpt of the <i>Pukulan Hadrah Pendek</i> . Recorded in Kampong Bachang, Kubu, Melaka on 24 February 2003	2 min. 51 sec.
4	<i>Pukulan Hadrah Kepang</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	0 min. 46 sec.
5	<i>Pukulan Baru</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	0 min. 56 sec.
6	<i>Pukulan Rancak</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	0 min. 33 sec.
7	<i>Pukulan Silat</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	0 min. 39 sec.
8	<i>Pukulan Zapin</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	2 min. 41 sec.
9	<i>Pukulan Inang</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	1 min. 32 sec.
10	<i>Pukulan Joget</i> . Recorded in Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	1 min. 30 sec.
11	<i>Pukulan Berarak</i> . Recorded in Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor, 3 March 2003	2 min. 04 sec.

12	<i>Pukulan Zikir</i> . Recorded in Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor on 3 March 2003	1 min. 38 sec.
13	Excerpt from <i>Pukulan Lagu – Enjit-enjit Semut</i> . Recorded in Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor on 3 March 2003	2 min. 48 sec.
14	Excerpt from <i>Pukulan Lagu – Selamat Pengantin Baru</i> . Recorded in Kampong Jorak Illahi, Batu Pahat, Johor on 3 May 2002	0 min. 21 sec.
15	Excerpt from the <i>Hadi</i> section of the <i>Pukulan Sariful Anam</i> accompany the <i>Zikir Sallallah</i> . Recorded in Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak on 28 April 2002	1 min. 39 sec.
16	Excerpt from the <i>Jawab</i> section of the <i>Pukulan Sariful Anam</i> accompany the <i>Zikir Bishahri</i> . Recorded in Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak 28 April 2002	0 min. 33 sec.
17	<i>Pukulan Kencat – Zikir Alhamd</i> . Recorded in Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak on 28 April 2002	9 min. 55 sec.

2. Audio CD II: Commercial Recordings

<u>Track</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Length</u>
1	Malaysia Truly Asia. From Tourism Malaysia, <i>Colours of Malaysia</i> , (Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism Malaysia, 1999), track 1	5 min. 46 sec.
2	<i>Bismillah</i> . From Raihan, <i>Album Koleksi Nasyid Terbaik Raihan</i> (Warner Music, Malaysia, 2000), track 5	4 min. 01 sec.
3	<i>Puji-pujian</i> . From Raihan, <i>Album Puji-Pujian</i> (Warner Music, Malaysia, 1997) track 1	4 min. 49 sec.
4	<i>Salallah</i> . From Raihan, <i>Album Syukur</i> (Warner Music, Malaysia, 1998) track 3	3 min. 39 sec.

- 5 *Cindai*. From Siti Nurhaliza, *Album Cindai* (Suria Record, Malaysia, 1997), track 1 4 min. 59 sec.
- 6 *Dondang Dendang*. From Noraniza Idris, *Album Masyhur* (Suwah Record, Malaysia, 1998) track 5 6 min. 13 sec.

3. Video CD I: Field Recording

It was encoded into Video CD version 2.0 (DAT) format that is supported by most compact disc video players as well as being playable on Windows Media Player.

Video format: 352 x 288, 1150Kbits/sec. PAL system.

Audio format: Wav. Stereo, 44,100Hz.

<u>Track</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Length</u>
1	Welcoming the King. Recorded in Tanjong Malim, Perak on 13 May 2003	4 min. 55 sec
2	Kompang Perak. Recorded at Police Station in Tanjong Malim, Perak on 12 April 2002	5 min. 30 sec.
3	Excerpt from the Kompang Ezhar competition. Recorded at Kampong Simpang, Merlimau Melaka on 28 April 2002	9 min. 07 sec.
4	Kompang Ezhar – <i>Zikir Alhamd</i> . Recorded in Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002	2 min. 35 sec.
5	Kompang Ezhar – <i>Pukulan Hadrah Pendek</i> . Recorded in Kubu, Melaka on 7 March 2003	2 min. 56 sec.
6	Kompang Ezhar – <i>Kuch Kuch Hota Hey</i> . Recorded in Kubu, Melaka on 7 March 2003	2 min. 51 sec.
7	Kompang Johor – <i>Pukulan Berarak</i> . Recorded in Batu Pahat, Johor on 3 May 2002	2 min. 09 sec.

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 8 | Kompang Johor – <i>Pukulan Zikir Ya Rasulullah</i> .
Recorded in Batu Pahat, Johor on 3 May 2002 | 2 min. 26 sec. |
| 9 | Kompang Johor – Medley Malay songs. Recorded in
Batu Pahat, Johor on 3 May 2002 | 3 min. 46 sec. |
| 10 | Kompang Perak – Traditional wedding procession.
Recorded in Kampong Gajah, Perak on 9 March 2003. | 10 min. 33 sec. |
| 11 | Kompang Perak – <i>Pukulan Kencat/Zikir Solatullah</i> .
Recorded in Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak
on 24 April 2002 | 12 min. 20sec. |

4. Video CD II: Commercial Recordings

<u>Track</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Length</u>
1	Asian Drum Festival, Bangkok 2002. Recorded with personal Mini Digital Camcorder by Suhaimi Mohd Zain	12 min. 53 sec.
2	<i>Sinfoni Irama Gendang Malaysia</i> Tourism Malaysia, <i>Gendang Malaysia</i> , (Lensa Film Sdn.Bhd., 2000)	8 min. 07 sec.
3	Tourism Malaysia, <i>Malaysia Truly Asia</i> , (Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism Malaysia, 1999)	12 min. 03 sec.
4	Tinting from Siti Nurhaliza, Noraniza Idris & Nurhaida, <i>Irama 3 Suara (MTV Karaoke)</i> , (Suria Record, Malaysia, 2001), track 9	5 min. 37 sec.

Acknowledgements

*Pulau Pandan jauh ke tengah
Gunung Daik bercabang tiga
Hancur badan dikandung tanah
Budi yang baik dikenang juga.*

*Pisang Emas dibawa berlayar
Masak sebiji di atas peti
Hutang emas boleh dibayar
Hutang budi dibawa mati.¹*

As metaphorically described by two of the traditional Malay verses (*pantun*) above, it is absolutely true that one's debts to intellectual kindness are too deep, too unfathomable and too broad to acknowledge. However, I should like to express my gratitude to all the people who kindly contributed their intellectual kindness to my study. First of all, the bibliography of this thesis is its primary acknowledgement. Beyond that, my thanks are due to the Malay people from the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia who gave of their time, knowledge and skills to explain and demonstrate the ins and outs of their cultural practices. This is their sincere story, of their music and their culture, inherited from their ancestors. I only gathered it and put it into coherent words so that it can serve other people. Without their collective generosity and patience, I would not have been able to write it. It is not easy to pick out a few names for special thanks out of many figures out there, but I should like to

¹ Two traditional Malay poems called *pantun*. The first *pantun* can be translated as "Far out at sea the Isle of Pandan lies / Nearby the peaks of Daik are three / In earth's womb the mouldering body lies / Yet kindness will remembered be". The second *pantun* can be translated as "With bananas of gold we sail away / A ripe one on a chest we save / Our debts of gold we can repay / A debt of heart we take to the grave".

mention a few kingpins in this study. First, Haji Zakaria and his workers who kindly instructed me in the construction of the kompong. Sadly, Haji Zakaria passed away after the second year of my fieldwork. Second, the *Mahaguru* of the Kompong Ezhar organization – Ramli Haji Dawam - who from his sickbed still gave his valuable attention to my inquisitive questions. Thanks are also due to Yusoff Abu (or Pak Usop Kompong), Abdul Ghani Abdullah, Sergeant Dalib Ahmad, and all the players in the Kompong Ezhar organization in Melaka. I must not fail to mention a few *guru kompong* from Perak and Selangor such as Zapuan from Kelawar, Muhammad Shahid, Haji Zakaria Abdul Rahman, Muhammad bin Mohd Noor and Ibrahim Haji Salim. My special thanks are also reserved for a few kompong players from Johor such as Isa Muhammad Abas, Zamri Muhammad, Radzi, Jamal, Mansor, and Farok Dahalan. Their hospitality whenever I returned to the area made every task become easier.

I also owe an enormous amount to two of the giant contemporary composers in Malaysia – Suhaimi Md Zain (Pak Ngah) and Manan Ngah. Even with his busy job in the studio as well as being involved in many performances, Pak Ngah restlessly entertained me a few times during the interview. Thanks also to Pak Ngah Suhaimi who presented me with some of his original recorded pieces as a compliment from his company – Pak Ngah Productions - purposely for the use of my study. An equally enormous amount of gratitude is also given to Manan Ngah who kindly lent me his collected documents about the *Muzik Nusantara* for my study. His kindness in meeting me as well as answering my phone calls and always being ready to explain whatever I needed to know is what I cannot pay in return. I

also would like to express my gratitude to the Raihan group, especially their manager, who helped me to clarify a few confusions about music in Islam and also provided some information about the use of the *kompang* in the *nasyid* singing.

In other areas, without the helping hands of my good friends, my tasks in the field would not have been as easy as they were. For that, I am deeply indebted to my friends, particularly Mohd Azam Sulong (Azam Dungun), Aswawi Isa (Awie Suna), Jamil Hikal, Zamri Air Baloi, Shaifuddin (Din Tok Bomoh), and Noriman, Tarmizi, and Mat Ghanie who sacrificed their time and energy alternately accompanying me on my travels around the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia to record the *kompang* performances. Their generosity was not only in helping me to set up the equipment for the recording sessions but they also sometimes had to be my “personal drivers” especially after midnight when exhaustion overtook me. My special thanks are also given to Rozaiman Muhammad who generously lent me his lovely Proton Wira for my transportation every time I returned to do more fieldwork. Due to his generosity in lending me his lovely car, it was so much easier to travel around with loads of recording equipment in the boot.

My deepest appreciation is reserved for my family – my wife Yong Rafidah who sacrificed the job she loves to accompany me here to Newcastle on unpaid leave, and my lovely children who left behind their childhood life under the tropical sun to be with their parents and adapt themselves to a foreign neighbourhood. Their tolerance is the best remedy for my study and I promise they will get back my time that they have lost during this period.

Most of all, I would like to pay my greatest gratitude to my dedicated supervisor, Dr. Goffredo Plastino who tirelessly gave his professional guidance in conducting my research as well as in the process of writing up this thesis. His guidance, suggestions, comments, and encouragement made me become aware of the real life of a scholar. Indeed, without his brilliant supervision and excellent support, this thesis would never have come to its end.

Orthography

Throughout this thesis I have used the italic style of fonts for linguistic glosses of Malay words, thus identifying those words with rough English equivalents. The spelling of Malay words cited in this thesis follows the orthographic conversions officially adopted by the Malaysian Government in 1972. Unless indicated otherwise, all translations are my own. The following is a list of vowels and consonants in Malay that require particular notice.

Vowels

/a/	(<i>lek<u>a</u>s</i>)	as in English “f <u>a</u> ther”
/a/	(<i>muk<u>a</u></i>)	as in English “l <u>a</u> w”
/e/	(<i>el<u>a</u>k</i>)	as in English “s <u>e</u> t”
/e/	(<i>k<u>e</u>mbang</i>)	as in English “th <u>e</u> ”
/o/	(<i>o<u>r</u>ang</i>)	as in English “bo <u>o</u> t”
/u/	(<i>kunc<u>u</u>p</i>)	as in English “ho <u>o</u> t”

Consonants

/b/	(<i>b<u>a</u>k<u>a</u>l</i>)	as in English “ <u>b</u> ar”
/c/	(<i>c<u>a</u>ngkut</i>)	as in English “ <u>c</u> harter”
/d/	(<i>d<u>a</u>tuk</i>)	as in English “ <u>d</u> esk”
/j/	(<i>J<u>o</u>hor</i>)	as in English “ <u>J</u> oe”
/k/	(<i>k<u>a</u>bung</i>)	as in English “ <u>c</u> ar”
/l/	(<i>l<u>a</u>pik</i>)	as in English “ <u>l</u> ark”
/m/	(<i>m<u>a</u>haguru</i>)	as in English “ <u>m</u> oon”
/n/	(<i>n<u>a</u>bi</i>)	as in English “ <u>n</u> on”
/p/	(<i>p<u>a</u>sak</i>)	as in English “ <u>p</u> ar”

/r/	(<u>r</u> aya)	as in English “ <u>r</u> un”
/s/	(<u>s</u> eni)	as in English “ <u>s</u> ent”
/t/	(<u>t</u> apak)	as in English “ <u>t</u> ar”
/w/	(<u>w</u> arisan)	as in English “ <u>w</u> ar”
/y/	(<u>y</u> ayasan)	as in English “ <u>y</u> outh”
/z/	(<u>z</u> aman)	as in English “ <u>z</u> ebra”

Joined consonants

/gh/	(<u>gh</u> airah)	no English equivalent (Arabic influenced)
/kh/	(<u>kh</u> alifah)	no English equivalent (Arabic influenced)
/ng/	(<u>ng</u> inga)	as English “ <u>s</u> inger”
/ny/	(<u>ny</u> anyi)	as in English “ <u>c</u> anyon”
/sy/	(<u>sy</u> id)	as in English “ <u>s</u> heet”

Diphthongs

/ai/	(<u>ai</u>)	as in English “ <u>c</u> ry”
/au/	(<u>au</u>)	as in English “ <u>a</u> bout”
/oi/	(<u>oi</u>)	as in English “ <u>o</u> il”

INTRODUCTION

HOW I CAME TO STUDY THE KOMPANG

*“.....bum....bum-bum....bum-bum....bum....pak-pak...pak-pak.....
Salal lahhu - alai Mu - ham - mad Salal-*

*bum....bum-bum....bum-bum....bum....pak-pak...pak-pak.....bum
Lahhu – alai – hi wasal - lam... Salal - lah...”*

The sound of frame drums beaten by a group of players to accompany their singing (the Arabic phrases as well as Malay verses) ahead of me destroyed my concentration when I was taking part in a close friend's wedding procession. My friend, who had grown up with me in the Eastern coastal region of the Malay Peninsular was experiencing a historical moment in his life celebrating his wedding ceremony with his loving wife from the state of Perak - the Western state of Peninsular Malaysia. This happened December 1985 when normally every year the Malay Peninsular experiences heavy rain from the tropical monsoon and is the most popular time for Malay couples to have their wedding ceremony because of the long school holiday in Malaysia. While walking steadily in the procession, a few questions popped into my mind. As this phenomenon was strange to me, I started to ask myself – What kind of musical ensemble is this? How do they organize their sound? Why do they sing Arabic phrases instead of a Malay text? What are the purposes of performing this music in this function? Where do they get the instruments? Why is this kind of music not performed within my region even though we are from the same ethnic group? But, I could not find any satisfactory answers for those questions.

As is normal practice in many Malay traditional weddings, after the procession, the bride and the groom were ritually seated on a decorated dais in the living room for the next stage of the ceremony. We, the guests of the groom, who had travelled a long way from the East coast, were served with delicious food under the canvas built in the compound of the bride's house. The players of the ensemble disappeared into the crowd and I started to enjoy the feast. From a short conversation with the local people at the ceremony, I learnt that the music which had just been performed in the wedding procession was called *main kompong* (kompong playing). The kompong is a single-headed frame drum beaten with bare hands in a group ensemble to accompany choral singing. That was the first encounter I had had with a live kompong performance. I had heard about the instrument before through some articles published in the national newspapers and seen it a few times on the main TV channel but never given real attention to it. Being formally exposed to the Western music at the very beginning, my interest in the instrument was soon lost after I went back to my hometown – Kuala Terengganu, where I continued to focus more on Western music.

A decade later, in 1997, I moved to the West region of the Malay Peninsular as I was offered a lecturer's post in the Music Department at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malim, Perak. The University is not far from the place where I had first seen the live kompong performance. However, the instrument was still alien to me as I still lived in the Western musical environment and I still clung to my alto saxophone in the Pop Orchestra. I first became really interested in the Malay traditional music, particularly in the traditional percussive musical

performances, when the music department of the University to which I was attached planned to offer a course on Malaysian traditional music at the undergraduate level. As part of the course, the students would be introduced to basic kompang playing. Here, came the first problems of finding a qualified instructor and published materials on the instrument. Encountering these problems my mind returned to the questions that I had asked myself twelve years before. I wondered whether anyone had enough information to satisfactorily answer my questions. Or whether there were any documents that could provide adequate information to answer those questions? In the search for answers, I found that few documents were available for the students to review unless someone was willing to study and create the documentation on the instrument and make it available to be used by people who had an interest in it.

The second incident that drove me to study the kompang in depth was when I was invited by the Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education to be part of the committee preparing the Resource and Activity Book for the National Music Curriculum for Secondary Schools in 1997. The curriculum is an integral part of the national curriculum known as the *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah – KBSM* (Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools) which was first set up in 1988. In 1995, the Malaysia Ministry of Education, decided to include music as an elective subject in the KBSM. The curriculum is actually a continuation of the music curriculum currently offered at the primary school. Malaysian traditional music is part of the content of the curriculum that was planned to be offered at the secondary level as suggested by the committee of the music curriculum makers. The

committee which was appointed by the Ministry of Education was team up by the music teachers and lecturers. Beside other instruments included in the new curriculum, the kompang was one of the instruments that were going to be introduced to the students as early as Form One in the secondary school. According to this committee, the reason why the kompang was chosen to be included in this curriculum was because the instrument is very significant to the Malay culture. To achieve this, the Curriculum Development Centre had to determine the content and prepare the teaching materials as well as training the teachers who were going to teach the subject at that level. The same problem arose when the committee started to plan for the content of the lessons. The lack of published documents such as books, essays and recorded materials on the instrument led the panel committee to delay the production of the proper teaching materials for that instrument.

At the time, the kompang and the information related to it was available in the form of short essays, articles and also as part of chapters in books published by either Malaysian or foreign scholars (see e.g. Matusky and Tan, 1997:174–186; Nik Mustapha, 1998:91-93; Asmad, 1990:92-94; Ang, 1998:49; Shamsiah et al., 1993:1-12; Sharani, 1977; Department of Sabah Museums and State Archives, 1992). Most of the mentioned literature is about Malaysian cultures as well as traditional music and, accordingly, the kompang was included as one of the elements being discussed in the literature. Apart from that literature, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and other government bodies had published some information about the instrument in the form of leaflets, tourist guide books and also through web pages (see page 64-76). All these publications about the instrument did provide some sort of basic

information for the panel committee to review. However, it still did not provide comprehensive knowledge. With the limited sources available publicly, there was a need for scholars to conduct extensive research in this area. In order to fill the gap, kompang playing had to be comprehensively and properly documented and the documentation needed to be made available for students and the public to review.

Recognising the problem that had arisen and driven by a deep interest in understanding more precisely the musical practice of kompang playing in the Malay society, in 1999, I started to collect information about the instrument in my preliminary study. From the limited sources available publicly, I focused more on kompang playing in the state of Melaka and Johor which I, at first, believed to be the central region of the instrument in Malaysia as I was unaware of the existence of the instrument in other areas. However, with the limited time that I had because of work commitments as well as performing with the orchestra, my efforts in getting information about the instrument made limited progress. However, my preliminary study did provide me with some background and basic information about the instrument for further research. From my preliminary study, I discovered the richness and variety of kompang music in Malay society and it enabled me to determine that this ensemble deserved comprehensive study and documentation of its repertoire. I finally got the chance to conduct extensive research on the instrument when, in 2001, I came to the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in the United Kingdom to study for a doctorate. It was just like killing two birds with one stone. I chose kompang playing in the Malay society as the main focus for my doctoral research.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of my study is to present the historical background of the instrument. As Larry Francis Hilarian (2003:2-4) did in his work on the *gambus* (lutes) of the Malay World, this study also examines the evidence on how the *kompang* arrived on the Malay Peninsular and was adopted by the Malay people in renewing their culture. The geographical migration patterns of the *kompang* will also be drawn in order to understand more precisely how the instrument arrived into specific areas of the Malay Peninsular. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the theory of the origin of the instrument, the relationships between the *kompang* of Malay society with the other *kompang*-like frame drums in nearby areas are also going to be explored.

Further, this study also aims to thoroughly describe the instrument from the organological perspective. Alan Merriam (1964:45) suggested that, in the study of musical instruments, each of them must be measured, and either drawn to scale or photographed. In addition, the description of the instrument must include the principles of construction, materials used, and decoration patterns; methods and techniques of performance, musical ranges, tones and theoretical scale are also to be noted. In so doing, firstly, consistent with the foregoing, the construction techniques used in making the *kompang* used by the Malay people must be examined methodically. Additionally, as suggested, the playing techniques as well as the performance practice of the instrument within the Malay culture must be observed in detail in addition to fully describing the unique aspects of the *kompang*.

It is also equally important to evaluate the timbre, volume and range of the instrument when used in traditional functions as well as in contemporary uses.

This study also intends to analyze the musical style of kompong ensembles in the Malay society. Stephen Blum (1993:165) argued that most studies of musical styles have been relative and endeavour to differentiate between two or more styles within the practice of one particular region. Researchers also regularly attempt to compare the styles of two or more people or to show that different styles of music are associated with specific types of economic activity or social organization. Parallel to this, in this study I will collect and record as far as possible relevant music from the repertoire of kompong ensembles in Malay society. The recorded material will then be transcribed using the western style of music notation in order to represent the music for the purpose of analysis. Each element of transcribed music will be compared and cross-referenced in order to fully understand its style. In so doing, I am aware that the transcription does not fully represent the complexity of kompong music, but the main purpose of the transcription is to provide an analysis for the description of kompong music. In other words, the music transcription is not the main purpose of this study, but as a descriptive tool in describing the music of the kompong. However, the best way to enter into the kompong performance is to listen to field recordings.

In addition, the aim of this research is also to determine the roles of the kompong in Malay society. This aim is to describe the roles of the kompong in Malay society by defining its ceremonial uses and discussing the relationship of the

drum to the Malay culture. Alan Merriam (1964:224-225), outlined three important functions of music in society, which are: enforcing conformity to the social norm, validating social institutions and religious ritual, and contributing to the continuity and stability of culture. He also argued that “every society has occasions signalled by music which draw its members together and remind them of their unity” (Ibid:227). Based on Merriam’s argument, it is necessary to examine the roles of the kompong both in traditional functions as well as in contemporary society. The changes to kompong music made by contemporary users will also be analyzed in this study following a suggestion made by John Blacking (1995:153). In his theoretical discussion, Blacking suggests that musical changes must be given a special status in the study of social and culture changes. This is because the role of music as mediator between nature and culture in man combines cognitive and affective elements in a unique way. In addition, general opinions of the changes in the kompong ensembles will be sought among traditional players and contemporary users in order to understand their perceptions on this matter.

THEORITICAL APPROACHES

Accompanied by the thunderous-interlocking sound of the kompong, the Malay people sing the Arabic phrases as well as Malay texts to celebrate joyful occasions. To approach this type of musical performance, I have utilized theories from the field of ethnomusicology. Based on my preliminary study of this musical ensemble, I started to shape this study by considering some suggestions made by various scholars. First of all, the focus of this study was heavily influenced by

Helen Myers's suggestion. Myers (1992:3) suggests that the study in this field should include the conceptual issues of the music such as the origin and the changes in the music, the roles of the music in the society, the symbol, universal in music, the musical system and the biological basis of music. In further shaping the focus of this study, I have also taken into consideration Bruno Nettl's doctrines for the ethnomusicologist. Nettl (1983:9) suggests that an ethnomusicologist should make an effort to study the total musical system as accepted by the entire society as its own in order to understand them. The concern should also focus on what is typical of a culture. Furthermore, music must be understood as part of culture and a product of human society. Therefore, the study should let a culture musically define itself and the study must also include musical changes. These comments are common in ethnomusicology writing.

As kompang playing is an important element of Malay culture, my study on this issue draws upon Alan Merriam's (1964:6) concept – "the study of music as culture". This concept implies a relationship between music and culture and it invites a thorough investigation to understand this relationship. In so doing, I accepted Bruno Nettl's (1983:136-140) suggestion of four approaches in viewing the music and culture relationship. Firstly, an enumerative approach is used to show the relationship. This approach is based on the suggestion that culture consists of a large number of separate components, interrelated to each other and one should study each culture and the components individually. Secondly, another way of looking at the music and culture relationship is to see what music does, and what it contributes to the complex whole of culture. Just like human organs, the

components of the culture are interrelated and contribute something to the whole. The interrelationship and interdependencies of the components are paralleled by the same kinds of relationships among the domains of culture. Thirdly, an approach which involves the hypothesis that there is core or centre for each culture, a basic idea or set of ideas, whose nature shapes the character of the other domains, including music. Fourthly, it envisions a line of relationships leading from a major value of a culture to music. Nettl provides a detailed example for this approach as he explained that Islamic culture places a relatively low value on music, in theory forbidding it. Thus, one conception of music in the major Islamic cultures is that it is something low in the scale of values (Ibid: 140).

In the study of music as culture, with the influx of foreign elements, I realized that the Malay culture is dynamic. Consequently, I could not avoid a focus in my study falling on cultural change which also implies musical change. Regardless of how one views the culture, changes are occurring in human experience. In approaching this issue, I applied Alan Merriam's two points of view on cultural change. Merriam (1964:303) suggests that it can be observed either as it has occurred in the past or as it is occurring in the present. As cultural change also leads to musical change in the society, I have also taken into account the changes in kompong music in this study. In so doing, I have examined the changes of the kompong music corresponding to John Blacking's suggestion. In his discussion of musical change, Blacking suggests that, ...

“The study of musical change must be concerned eventually with significant innovations in music sound, but innovations in music

sound are not necessarily evidence of musical change. If the concept of musical change is to have any heuristic value, it must denote significant changes that are peculiar to musical systems, and not simply the musical consequences of social, political, economic, or other changes” (Blacking, 1995:150).

In approaching the study of the changes in kompang music, I also examined Alan Lomax’s culture-based theory of musical change. Lomax’s theory is based on the assumption that musical variations are related to variations in culture, and that there are correlations between musical and cultural change (Lomax, 1972:228-239). To broaden my approach in the study of the changes in the kompang music especially in contemporary society, I also considered Bruno Nettl’s view on this issue. Nettl (1964:232) notes that music structures cannot be explained with reference to other cultural phenomena unless it is understood that the relations between them are not causal. Musical change is not caused by contact among people and cultures or the movement of the populations, but it is brought about by decisions made by individuals about music making and music on the basis of their experiences of music and attitudes to it in different social contacts.

Inevitably, my study of musical change is focused on observable phenomena that are regarded as musical by various groups of people. The aim of such study is to understand the musical processes that generate the kompang music produced such as live kompang performance and recorded materials. Thus, in the context of kompang music, my area of focus is not a particular musical style but the musical and social experience of communities who make and consume kompang music. In analyzing the change of kompang music in Malay society, I also considered one of

the situations listed by John Blacking (1995:168-170) in which musical change maybe found. The situation is a combination of social factors such as a tradition of professional musicians, the expansion of radio programmes, and a growth of national feeling that can precipitate a burst of individual creativity. To give a good example of this situation, see John Baily's account (1977) of the rapid development of the fourteen-stringed *dutar* and the increase of musical activity in the city of Herat, Afghanistan. Taking advantage of a similar situation, recently, John Baily also conducted fieldwork in Kabul to see the changes in musical activities in Afghanistan in the post-Taliban era. This situation is clearly demonstrated in a film¹ made by John Baily about the professional musician, and the recording industry as well as national feeling that prompted individual creativity.

As my intention is to discover and present extensive information about kompong playing in the Malay society, my study has drawn upon ethnomusicological approaches that have also been adopted by many other ethnomusicologists. To that end, in this study, I adopted both "armchair" research and the fieldwork approach. The "armchair" research as described by Helen Myers (1992:22) is like that of historical musicologists who glean data from archives and libraries. Even though the historical data of my study were mostly gathered through "armchair" research, I also adopted the historical fieldwork approach which was much influenced by Philip Bohlman's work. Bohlman used fieldwork methodologies to rebuild the musical landscape of Jewish religious life in the

¹ This film was presented by John Baily at the symposium celebrating the work and legacy of John Blacking, Perth, Australia, 12-14 July 2003 and in his paper "Music in Afghanistan in the post-Taliban era" presented at International Centre for Music Studies, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom on 19 February 2004.

province of Burgenland, Austria. Based on his experience, Bohlman suggests that the past not only reflects itself to the fieldwork process but that certain historical conditions require a fieldwork approach. Based on the memory of present-day society and on the surviving physical spaces of practices, he theorizes fluid in scopes between the ethnomusicological past and present (Bohlman, 1997:139-141).

Because my study was conducted in a culture lacking written documents, I had to rely on methods designed to investigate oral traditions. To that extent, I followed Helen Myers' (1992:22) suggestion that ethnomusicologists must collect and document material from living informants. In other words, the researcher should be involved in some kind of fieldwork. In discussing "the field", James Clifford (1997:21) says that "villages, inhabited by natives, are bounded sites particularly suitable for intensive visiting by anthropologists. They have long served as habitable, mappable centres for the community and, by extension, the culture". My own case is an interesting one to mention here because I am Malaysian but I have to do the work on a Malaysian musical instrument outside Malaysia. I did my homework in the United Kingdom while my fieldwork was in Malaysia – my native country. In this case, it is the opposite to James Clifford's (1997:22) term, a "home body abroad". In discussing "the field" from her own experience in musical culture of BaAka pygmies in Central African Republic, Michelle Kisliuk (1997:23-24) asked "who does or does not do the fieldwork, and why might we say so?" Furthermore, she stated that ethnographers use different tactics from, for example, those of travel writers or journalists to define who they are in "the field".

In discussing different tactics used in fieldwork, in my case, I entered “my field” with “multiple roles” (also adopted by many other ethnomusicologists, but seldom comprehensively reported). By multiple roles in the field I mean acting as a passive observer, active observer or participant observer at different stages of fieldwork. Firstly, as a passive observer, I was sometimes “just watching” the flow of the observed phenomenon without interrupting. Secondly, as an active observer, I sometimes made a lot of inquiries about the phenomenon being observed. Lastly, as a participant observer, I also played an active role taking part in the phenomenon that was being observed, for example playing an instrument in the group that was being observed at a function. The choice of what kind of role that I should take in the field depended on the situation and the information that I needed to collect. For instance, if the performance or ritual that I observed was my first encounter with it, I preferred to act as a passive observer. In some passive observation, the performers or people who were involved in the music did not notice my existence as a researcher. I benefited from this role as the people who I observed will have acted naturally as in the real situation. People tend to act differently from their normal behaviour if they know that they are being observed. My task in this research is to report what is actually happening in the field. As Goffredo Plastino (2003:97-112) did in reporting about the behaviour of the drummers who perform during the Holy Week in Bajo Aragon, Spain, “telling the truth” is the key phrase in research that every researcher should aim for although some people might oppose this idea.

I chose to act as an active observer when I had to identify my appearance in the function as an academic researcher who was seeking the information about the

phenomenon that was being observed and later going to write something about it. For example, in a practice session, my existence especially with the recording equipment attracted the attention not only of the players but also of the crowd. I had no choice but to identify myself as I had to get permission from the group before the recording took place or have a pre-recording discussion. Moreover, based on her own experience in doing fieldwork, Michelle Kisliuk (1997:27) suggests that in reflexive ethnography, “we get to know other people by making ourselves known to them, and through them to know ourselves again”. Apart from the recording materials, the benefit that I also gain from this role is that while it was still fresh in my mind I could immediately clarify anything that might have confused me during the function.

I take the role of participant observer normally in the third stage of my fieldwork. By the third stage I mean after I have been through the process of passive observation (first stage) and recording session (second stage) and have become familiar to my target group. I started to learn and perform on the instrument when I began to feel as if I had been “accepted” by the group that I observed. In my case, it did not take very long from the first stage before I felt “accepted” by the target group because of my ethnicity as Malay who was very familiar with their customs. Though formally educated in western music, I also made myself become “bi-musical” by using participatory observation in the field. In discussing the concept of “bi-musicality”, Mantle Hood (1960:55) explained that the training of ears, eyes, hands and voice and the fluency gained in these skills promise a real intellectual capacity for theoretical studies. He was also concerned that training and

performance in Western music hindered ethnomusicologists in studying other traditions. Hood not only argued the significance of becoming “bi-musical” but also suggested gaining cross-cultural musical understanding through performance.

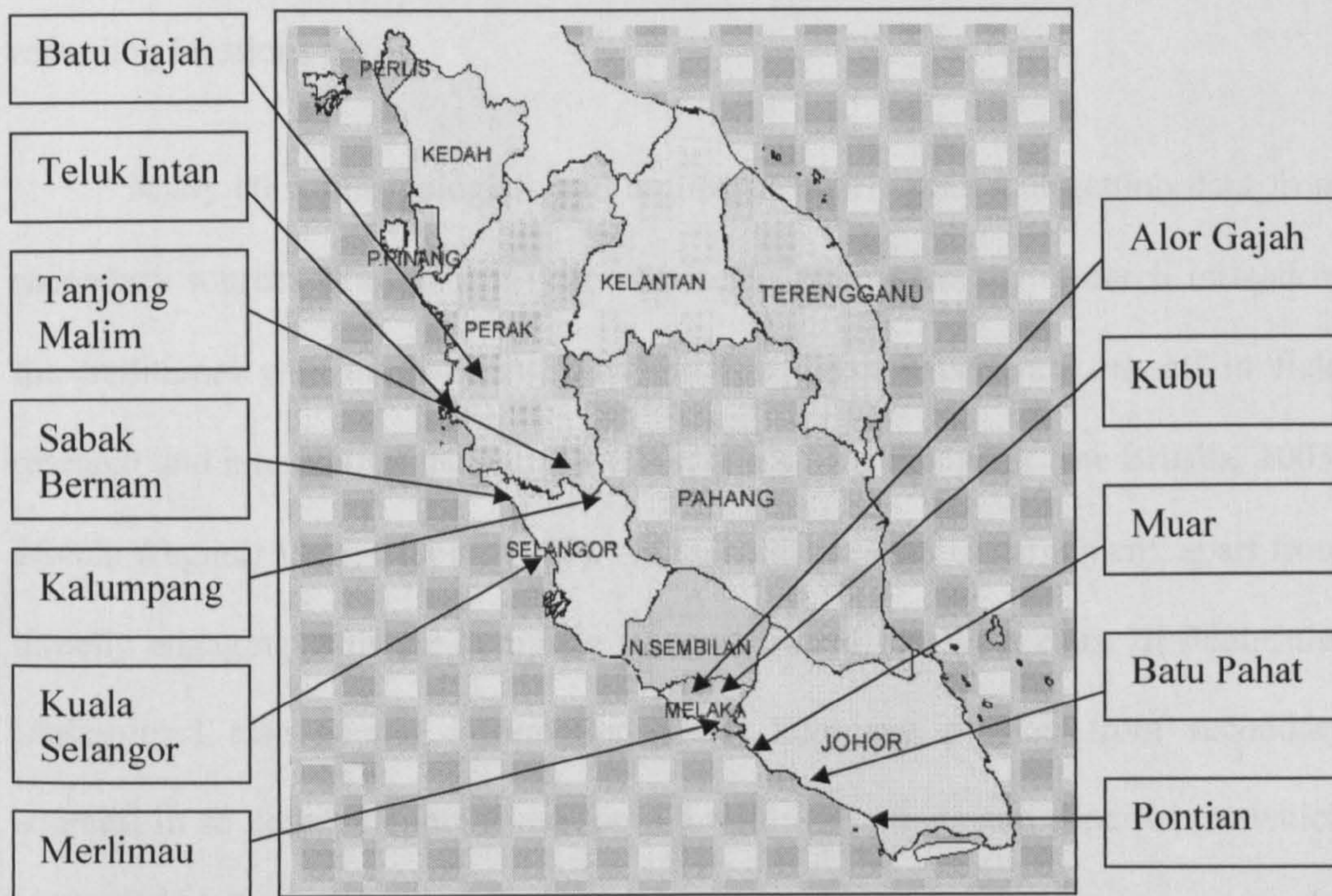
Apart from that, there were many more advantages that I gained from my participant-observation approach in my study. As Kisliuk (1997:33) writes, “because of our participation in performance, ethnomusicologists are especially aware that there is much one can only know by doing”. Adding to this statement, Shelemay (1997:191) describes ethnomusicologists’ tendency to participate in music-culture as “truly participatory participant-observation”. In discussing the benefit gained from the participant-observation approach, one also might look into Paul Berliner’s work in Zimbabwe. Berliner (1993) used his skills in *mbira* playing to enter into the musical culture of Zimbabwe. Adding to this, Margaret Sarkissian (2000) also benefited from the participant-observation approach in getting to know “from the inside” the performing tradition of the Portuguese settlement in Malaka. To that extent, Michelle Kisliuk (1997:43) stated that “Field experience becomes worth writing about and reading as a result of full participation in the life of research. The challenge and opportunity of performance ethnography is to focus thoroughly on that aliveness”.

THE RESEARCH SETTING

As previously mentioned, my preliminary study was focussed mainly on kompong playing in the states of Melaka and Johor as I believed they were the centre of kompong playing in Peninsular Malaysia. However, later I found that

there are also other places where kompang playing is not less important to the Malay people and I strongly believed that it should be equally studied in those other places. Therefore, I treated this research as an extensive study rather than intensive study. Alan Merriam (1964:42) described an extensive study as requiring the researcher to travel widely through an area, staying in many places for a period of time, documenting the music and doing the recording as widely as he can. This will give relatively superficial data accumulated from a dispersed geographic area. While on the other hand, an intensive study according to Merriam is to study a particular limited area to which the researcher gives his entire attention. Following the suggestion made by Merriam and parallel with my aim to reveal the musical practice of kompang playing in Malay society, instead of focusing on a particular area – Melaka and Johor - I broadened my field setting to a larger area, wherever the instrument is performed on the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

Starting in April 2002, with the knowledge that I had gathered in my groundwork from 1999 to 2001, and driven by the need to understand more precisely the musical practice of the kompang ensemble in the Malay society, I travelled around the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia, investigating, recording and documenting the performance practice of the instrument in Malay society. This time, the main areas of focus were the states of Johor, Melaka, Selangor and Perak. All these states are located in the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia. While Kedah, Pulau Pinang and Perlis were also in my field of attention, they are not my main focus because the instrument is not traditionally performed in these states.



Map 1: Locations of the field documentation in Peninsular Malaysia.

In Johor, I worked with in a few kompong troupes from the Pontian, Batu Pahat and Muar districts where the type performed is of the Kompong Johor type. Mainly, information about the Kompong Ezhar was accumulated from my work in the state of Melaka. Alor Gajah, Kubu, and Merlimau districts are among the areas of focus where I was directly involved in participating in as well as in the observation of the ensembles. Further to the North of these areas, I also investigated kompong playing in a few places in this state including Kuala Selangor area, Sabak Bernam and Kalumpang in the state of Selangor. Finally, I collected qualitative data about kompong playing in the Tanjong Malim area further up to Teluk Intan, Batu Gajah and Kampar districts in the state of Perak. All the places mentioned are accessible by modern roads and have basic infrastructure including electric supply.

These factors made it possible to transport all the research equipment to the recording locations easily.

Many ethnomusicologists had argued in their works that getting data from secondary sources is another way to conduct ethnomusicology research instead of the traditional way of gathering data through direct experience oneself in field research and interpreting the data based on one's own fieldwork (see Brusila, 2003: 26-30; Wagner, 1975; Slobin, 1993). As I also agree with the argument, apart from directly engaging with the *kompang* troupes around the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia, I also sought information about *kompang* playing from secondary sources. In so doing, I approached some formal institutions and departments which had published material on the *kompang* or had dealt with the instrument such as the Department of Handicraft, the Department of Culture and Tourism, *Yayasan Warisan Johor* (Johor Heritage Foundation), the Department of National Archive, and the Department of Youth and Sport. Apart from that, to broaden my approach, I also met people whom I believed could provide me with information related to the *kompang* either in traditional practice or in contemporary music. Among them are contemporary composers who have used the instrument in their works including Suhaimi Mohd Zain (better known as Pak Ngah) and Manan Ngah. Their works include recorded material such as audio CDs and video clips, and also written documents and are among the sources that I utilized in analyzing and interpreting the information related to the *kompang*.

THE FIELDWORK

Most (perhaps all) ethnographic researchers suggest that fieldwork is an essential part of the data gathering method in an ethnomusicology study. The fact that music is an objectively observable fact to be collected in the field and manipulated in the laboratory, has led many scholars to use this method in their studies. In conducting this study, I did the same – used the fieldwork method as well as doing work in the laboratory. In so doing, I also came to agree with Margaret Sarkissian's (2000:4) opinion that, as anyone who does fieldworks knows but seldom publicly admits, much of one's success is dependent on a serendipitous conjunction of persons, time, and place. In my case, it actually happened that everything seemed to work together to bring me into a "lucky situation" when I was doing my fieldwork. Not only the excellent co-operation that I received from the villages in the field but also most of the time I was "in the right place, at the right time" in pursuing information. For instance, on one occasion, on the way back to my hotel after taking part in a kompong practice session at Merlimau, Melaka, while driving through a Malay traditional village – Kampong Sempang - I noticed some people who were hanging a banner on the wall of a building promoting a kompong ensemble competition which was to be held in a few days. I stopped to get information about the competition and later I managed to record all the kompong troupes that performed on the day of the competition. Another incident where I was "in the right place at the right time" was when one fortunate morning I was going to interview one of the senior kompong players at Kampong Gajah, in Perak. At that time, he was preparing the instruments for a performance at a wedding ceremony in

the afternoon. As I always carried recording equipments in my car wherever I went during the fieldwork, unexpectedly, I was able to record the performance and with the permission of the bride's family, the entire ceremony.

In doing my fieldwork, I usually started by paying a short visit to all the target places before the scheduled recording took place. The village environment was friendly to the recording crew and me. Just like Lillis O Laoire (2003:113-136), who studied Irish folklore in Tory Island, I was considered a "native" as a Malay who had been born and brought up on the East coast of the Malay Peninsula, and I had no communication problem with the villagers because, even with different dialects, they spoke the same language as me – *Bahasa Melayu* (the Malay language). As expected, the fact that I grown up in the same ethnic group and practiced the same customs, meant that I benefited from direct insight into the socio-cultural context in which the members of the community lived. My entry into the target region was aided by the spirit of brotherhood for a Malay who practiced the same customs and possessed the same faith. Perhaps, this situation ignores Beaudry's (1997:68) statement that all communities are made up of individuals who are connected by different networks of kinship and by "friendships, enmities or rivalries". From the point of view of interpersonal communication and familiarity with the customs, the challenges and difficulties that I faced during my fieldwork were comparatively less than some researchers who did their work in foreign cultures (see e.g. Roseman, 1991:6; Sarkissian, 2000:4-5; Beaudry, 1997:71-76; Berliner, 1993). However, as many scholars warn the greatest danger for a researcher who works within his own community or people is the tendency to pre-

interpret the phenomenon (see e.g. Nettl, 1983: 174; Blum, 1993:2-3; Zamora and Erring, 1991), in doing this study, I always had to remind myself not to simply make an assumption, pre-judgment or come to an early conclusion about any phenomenon that I observed in the field in order to avoid bias in relation to that particular phenomenon.

I was also aware that establishing a good relationship between myself and people in the field was vital, as Nicole Beaudry (1997:68-69) reminds every ethnographer of the importance of the human interactions and the development of relationships which are the real sources of learning in the field. During the first visit to each place, I mixed with the villagers so that we could get to know each other and tried to establish a good relationship with as many kompang players as possible. By being as approachable a person as possible, I trusted my informants to decide the manner in which they would tell me what they knew and to choose the directions in which they channelled me within the scope of my research. Apart from getting verbal information from the informants, I also made appointments for scheduled recordings as well as finding out about coming live performances. With the knowledge from my preliminary study, it took about three months in the first year of my field research to gather the information about kompang playing as well as to record all the repertoires of the kompang ensembles performing on the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The good relationships between me and my informants that I had established during the fieldwork are maintained through letters as well as follow up calls by telephone. This was not simply maintaining a good relationship

but also sometimes helped me to clarify any confusion in interpreting the data from the field.

Just as Goffredo Plastino (2003:1) did in his study on the drum rhythms performed during the Holy Week in Bajo Aragon, I re-visited the sites in February 2003 to record, interview and participate in kompang practice on the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia. This time, with the knowledge and skill in kompang playing which I had acquired during my previous fieldwork, I entered into the world of kompang playing with more confidence. In addition to the previous places I had studied, I also engaged with some new kompang troupes from different villages and met some new *gurus* (instructors) to assess my knowledge and skill in kompang playing. Following the path of Paul Berliner (1993: 1-7), who sought out Badambira – the master of *mbira dzawazimu* to clarify his confusion about the keys of the *mbira*, with the help of a senior *guru* of the kompang troupe in Melaka – Yusoff Abu, on this visit I had the good fortune to be able to meet the *Mahaguru* of the Kompang Ezhar, the person who first established the Kompang Ezhar organization in Peninsular Malaysia. Sadly, Ramli Haji Dawam – the *Mahaguru*, who was in hospital in Melaka - was unable to demonstrate his skill in kompang playing to me. However, in this meeting, in spite of his illness, he was able to give me useful first hand information about the Kompang Ezhar. Moreover, his wife, who accompanied him on the ward, was most helpful in enabling him to clarify my confusion during the interview.

The generosity and hospitality that I received from all the informants during my fieldwork made my work very exciting and satisfying. Their hospitality was not limited to offering me meals at their home but extended to a willingness to arrange unscheduled practice sessions as well as inviting me to be involved in their actual performances. Some of them were kind enough to accompany me in travelling around the area to show me where kompong troupes were performing as well as introducing me to the *gurus* of other kompong troupes without hoping to receive any reward from me.

This fieldwork was very demanding on my time and energy as a casual conversation or a performance could last for hours. Sometimes, my helpers and I were already exhausted by the recording of a music performance during the day but we had to do it again the same night at another place for another performance. Moreover, as I was not always able to find a friend to help me in handling the mass of recording equipment in the field, I had to carry and set up the equipment as well as operate it alone. Handling a digital video camcorder statically placed on tripod whilst, at the same time, controlling the sliding faders on the mixer of the sound recorder is easier said than done, but sometimes, that was what actually happened in my field recording. On one occasion, for example, I had to drive about 350 kilometres to the South alone at night as I had committed myself to participate in a morning performance the following day which I could not afford to miss.

My fieldwork set in the Western coast of Peninsular Malaysia, created for me a struggle between the commitments to my acquaintances, my friends and also

to my family who I had left in the United Kingdom during my fieldwork. Despite the geographical separation and the difference in time² when I was in the field or “at home” in UK, I had to share my attention between all those parties to maintain our relationships. Apart from the interpersonal relationship, this fieldwork also made me concerned for my time, finances, energy and emotions. Nonetheless, this fieldwork has not just provided me with comprehensive information about kompang playing in Malay society but had also brought me many new friends who still keep up our relationship, which is a very meaningful matter in my life and goes beyond simply my career interest.

ABOUT THIS WORK

This study reflects upon the significant role of the kompang in augmenting the culture of the Malay people in Peninsular Malaysia. Historically, kompang playing did not originate from Malay culture, but it was brought from outside the region and adopted by the Malay people to enrich their culture. The Malay Peninsula had long been receiving people from outside the region who came to trade, settle, colonize, and propagate religions. Those who came from China, India, and Arab countries as well as those from the Western world brought their culture and traditions with them and they blended with the local culture. Consequently, the musical culture of the Malay people is significantly influenced by foreign elements, especially from Hindu culture, Islamic culture, and later on from the Western world. All these elements had been adapted and “syncreticized” with the local traditions to

² The time difference between the UK and Peninsular Malaysia is GMT +8 hours.

form a composite culture that has been refined by the so-called “melting pot” and “toasted salad” of Malaysian society.

Being a multiracial country, it is inevitable that there are influences of the multicultural and idiosyncratic elements in the musical culture of the Malay people. Thus, many types of the musical genres which originated outside of the Malay culture have been accepted by the Malay people. Recognising the cultural diversity in the country, in early 1970s, the Malaysian government attempted to invent the so-called “Kebudayaan Kebangsaan” (national culture) as a mean of achieving solidarity among the multiracial groups in Malaysia. The building process of the *Kebudayaan Kebangsaan* is based on three main propositions. First is that the elements of the *Kebudayaan Kebangsaan* must be based on the culture of the native people. Second, elements from other cultures which are suitable and appropriate can be accepted as part of the national culture. Third, Islam is an important element in creating the national culture (Norsiah Sabri, 1998:3). As a result, today, many types of music and musical instruments which historically came from foreign cultures such as *zapin* (see Mohd Anis, 1993), *bangsawan* (Rahmah Bujang, 1975), *gambus* (Hilarian, 2003) and *joget* (Sarkissian, 2000) are accepted and considered as “Malaysian Music”. Adding to this is the *kompang* which is one of the instruments that has been through the “Malayizing” process, and today is being described and accepted as a traditional Malay musical instrument by the Malay people.

To that extent, *kompang* playing is regarded as one of the important elements in augmenting the culture of the Malay people. Allegorically, if the

diversity of culture of the Malay people is regarded as a well-decorated Christmas tree, then kompang playing can be regarded as an ornament which is needed for the embellishment of the tree to be complete. To give an example, on certain occasions such as at a wedding ceremony, the presence of the kompang troupe considerably enhances the ceremonial of the wedding. Even though kompang playing is not a part of religious rites of a wedding, and the wedding can still be religiously complete without the presence of the kompang troupe, in some places, the ritual of the wedding procession is considered improper and incomplete without the accompaniment of kompang music. The instrument also plays important roles in many other traditional functions as well as having gained new roles in contemporary society which will be described in detail later in this thesis. The remaining parts of this thesis present an ethnographic study of the kompang in Malay society specifically in the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

All the information gathered in relation to the four main concerns of this study are presented in detail in the seven chapters of this thesis. The main focus of the first chapter is to provide general background about the people who have settled in Malaysia. In this chapter, I present fundamental information about the musical culture which has been adopted by the multiracial population of Malaysia. Brief discussions focus on various types of musical forms performed by all the ethnic groups following the various classifications of earlier scholars. I also review the literature published on the kompang by local and foreign scholars in a variety of publications. Instead of including it in the discussion on the instrument itself which is in Chapter 3, I present the roles of the kompang in the Malay society at the end of

Chapter 1, to give the reader some basic understanding of the roles of the instrument before proceeding to the next issue of concern, though later, in Chapter 2, I touch on this issue again.

Chapter 2 begins by considering the historical background of the instrument and the theoretical migration route of the kompong from culture to culture before it finally became part of the Malay culture. The evaluation and discussion of the relevant evidence of the historical events is presented in detail with the support of iconographic and textual data. Based on the historical sources and relevant evidence available, the geographical distribution patterns of the frame drum are presented in this chapter. Adding to this argument a general discussion of similar instruments in Malay society and surrounding areas is also included in the final section of this chapter.

The organological aspects of the kompong are examined in detail in Chapter 3. This chapter starts with a discussion of the terminology of the kompong used by the local people and outsiders and a detailed description of the physical appearance of the instrument. Later in the chapter, the techniques used in the construction of the instrument by the Malay people are described with the aid of a series of illustrations of the process of kompong making. The tuning of the instrument as well as the cultural evaluation of the timbre and volume are also presented in this chapter. Further, the marketing and economic aspects of the instrument are considered. The performing techniques and the performance practice of the

instrument are presented in detail and at the end of this chapter I explain the technical terms used in kompang playing.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 focus on discussion of the types of kompang ensemble performing in Peninsular Malaysia. Specifically, Chapter 4 is a discussion of Kompang Ezhar, while Chapter 5 discusses Kompang Johor and Chapter 6 is about Kompang Perak. Each of these chapters begin with a discussion of the reasons why these terms are used to name the ensembles and each chapter also gives a history of the ensemble in the particular area where it is performed. The distribution of each type of the kompang ensemble is also examined in each chapter as each type of the ensemble is performed in different areas. Furthermore, all these chapters will present the results of my investigation of the players and the training on the instrument from each type of ensemble.

Because of the differences between the music of the kompang ensembles found in Peninsular Malaysia, the performing techniques and the analyses of the repertoires are discussed separately in different chapters according to the type of the kompang ensemble. However, cross-references provide links between these chapters comparing the styles of music of the different types of kompang ensemble. Each of these chapters concludes with an analysis of all the types of the music in the repertoire performed by each type of kompang ensemble. Transcriptions of music from each type of the ensemble illustrate each chapter to visualize the elements of music for the analysis purposes.

Chapter 7 examines how the acculturation process that has been taking place in the Malay society has affected the traditional roles of the kompong in contemporary society. The manipulation of the instrument by the contemporary users is also investigated in this chapter. It includes discussion of the uses of the instrument in the recording industry as well as the new techniques of construction of the instrument for that purpose. The players' opinions on the changes are also discussed in order to determine their perception of the occurrence changes. As the instrument has become more popular, I also incorporate in this chapter a discussion of the present status of the instrument in the public schools in Malaysia. Finally, the changing status of the kompong players is described as it has happened as part of the acculturation process in Malay society. This leads to further discussion of the clashing of traditions related to kompong playing - especially between the traditionalist and modernist groups in Malaysia. I summarise the information related to the kompong in the final chapter of the thesis – the Summary and Conclusion.

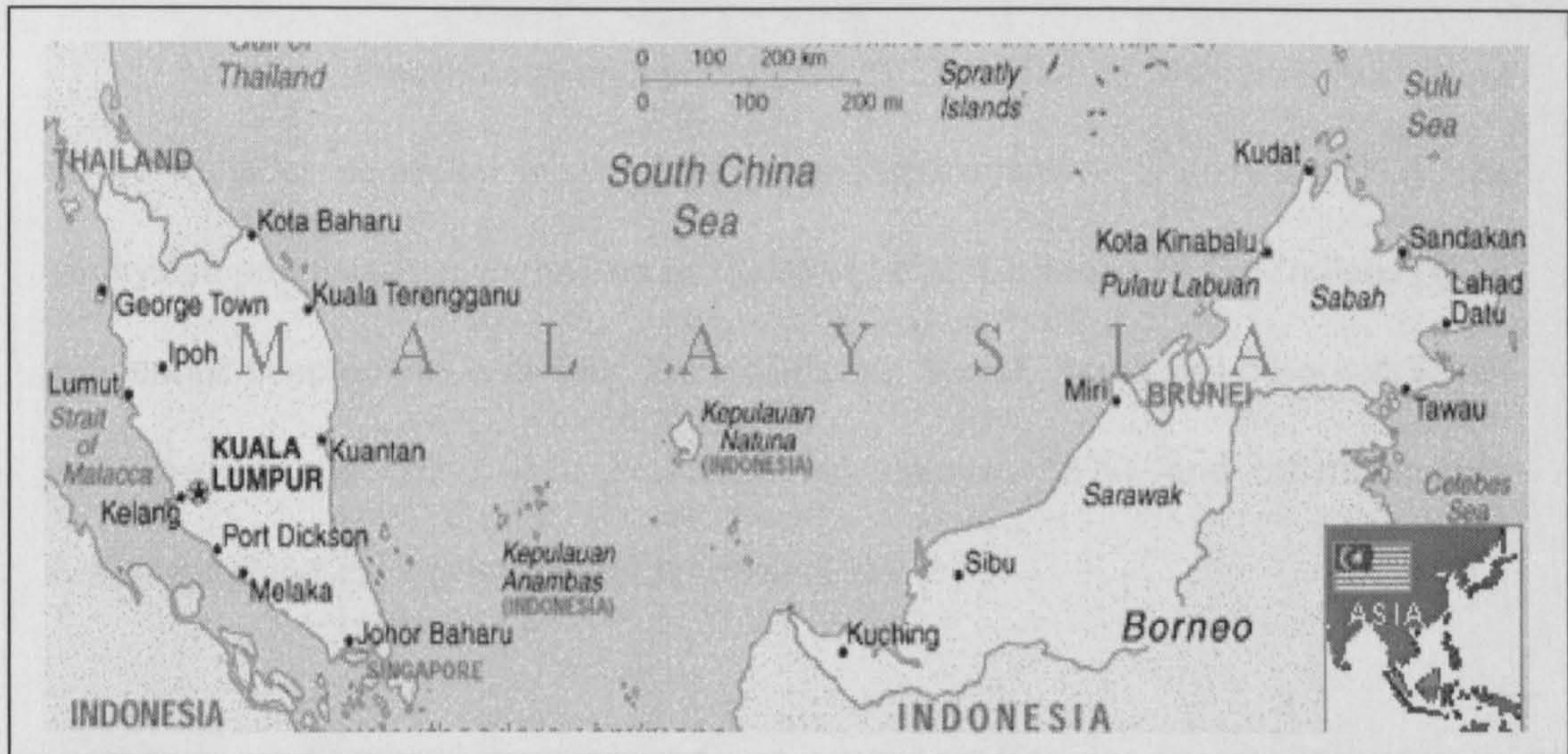
CHAPTER 1

THE BACKGROUND

GEOGRAPHY OF MALAYSIA

Malaysia is a country located in Southeast Asia between Thailand to the north and Indonesia to the south. It is divided into two parts, with Peninsular Malaysia extending southward from the Asian continent and the states of Sabah and Sarawak on the North Shore of Borneo Island. The country lies on a major east-west maritime route with the Strait of Malacca on the West and the South China Sea to the East. Because of the strategic location, it received many different peoples from the West and the East including Indian, Arabian, European, and Chinese, who stopped to conquer, settle, and trade (Andaya & Andaya, 1982:11-20).

There are thirteen states in Malaysia; eleven states located in Peninsular Malaysia and two states in Borneo Island. The eleven states in Peninsular Malaysia are Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor, Perak, Pulau Pinang, Kedah and Perlis. Singapore was once a part of the Malaysia Federation but separated in 1965. Other than that, there are three federal territories, which are Kuala Lumpur and Putra Jaya in Peninsular Malaysia, and Labuan in Sabah. Kuala Lumpur is the capital city of Malaysia. Every state has a major city which is linked via road, rail and air to other cities in the country.



Map 1a: Malaysia Federation

Malaysia's population consists of four main ethnic groups and many groups of immigrant people. The main ethnic groups are including the Malay, the *Orang Asli* (literally, original people or aboriginals) in Peninsular Malaysia, the Dayak, and the Kadazan in Sarawak and Sabah. There are also many immigrant groups in Malaysia including Chinese, Indian, Eurasians, Siamese, Javanese, Sumatran, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Arabs. The Malay people are the dominant group in Malaysia. As well as the Malays, there are other numerically ethnic groups in the category of *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil) including indigenous people known as *Orang Asli* in Peninsular Malaysia and native people in the state of Sabah and Sarawak. In Sarawak, the dominant native groups are the *Dayak*, who typically live in longhouses and are either *Iban* (Sea Dayak) or *Bidayuh* (Land Dayak). In Sabah, most native people fall under the term *Kadazan*. All of Malaysia's native people generally share a strong spiritual tie to the rain forest.

All these groups make up a population of 22 million in Malaysia. According to the statistics compiled by the Malaysian Department of Statistics (1993), the Malaysian population is comprised of Malays (54%), Chinese (29%), Indians (8%), indigenous people, which include Iban, Kadazan, Murut, Bajau and others in Sabah and Sarawak and Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia (8%), and others, mainly Arabs, Singhalese, Eurasians and European (1%).

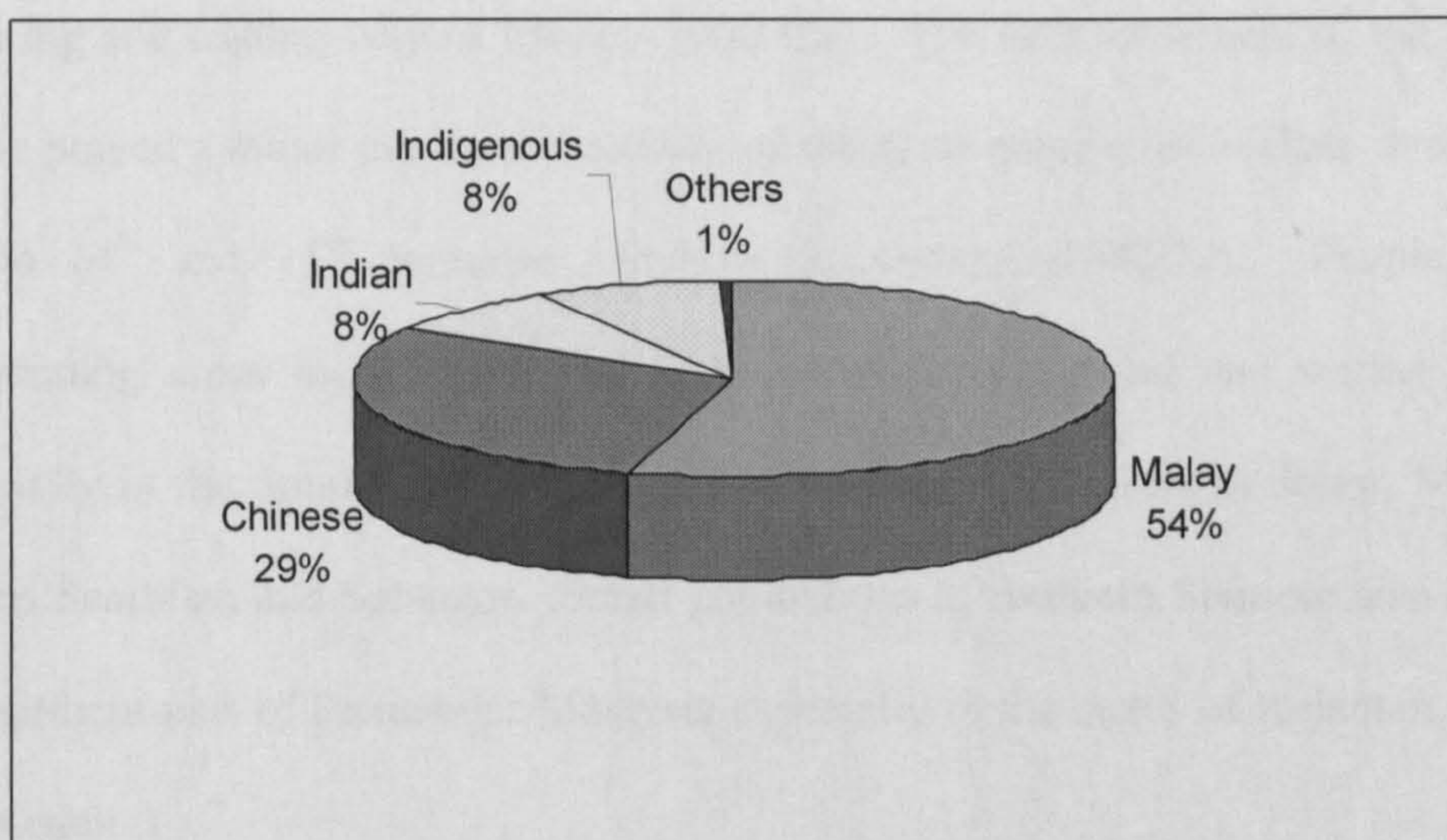


Figure 1a: Pie chart of racial composition of Malaysian population

The indigenous people of Malaysia, known as *Orang Asli* (original people), inhabit most parts of the foothills of the tropical forest in Peninsular Malaysia. They are subdivided into three categories based on ethnic and cultural criteria commonly used to describe the Orang Asli: *Semang* or *Negrito*, *Senoi*, and *Proto-Malay* or Aboriginal Malay. Most of them are hunters and farmers. The Orang Asli practice their own beliefs and customs. Now, some of them go to school and have

adapted to the Malay culture, especially those who dwell nearby Malay settlement (Roseman, 1991:17-19).

The Malays are the race of people who have settled in Peninsular Malaysia, and adjacent islands of Southeast Asia such as coastal Borneo, South-east Sumatra, Java and small islands in the nearby area. Anthropological study discovered that the Malay were originally seafaring people from Proto-Malaya who migrated from Northwestern parts of Yunnan, in China to Southeast Asia, as a result of their seafaring and trading way of life, by 1000 B.C. The new settlement of the Proto-Malay played a major part in the making of the great empires of Malaka and Johor in the 14th and 15th centuries (Andaya & Andaya, 1982:39). People from surrounding areas including Java and Sumatra also migrated and settled down, especially in the Southwest of Peninsular Malaysia in the states of Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan and Selangor. Small populations of southern Siamese also live in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia especially in the states of Kelantan, Perlis and Kedah.

Indian traders began travelling to Southeast Asia before the coming of Islam to the Malay Archipelago in the 14th Century. The Indian Traders spread Hinduism and Indian culture to the local settlements. The spread of Hinduism was not a result of any organised missionary movement but through marriage and unconscious assimilation. Gradually, the local population practised Hinduism, and Indian culture mixed with local culture in their lives. In the 14th Century, Arab traders travelled to

Southeast Asia and brought Islam and their culture to the area (Bellwood, 1997:136-141).

The Malay people in Peninsular Malaysia established first contact with Europeans when a Portuguese squadron of five ships under Diago Lopez De Sequeira docked in Melaka port in 1509. At the first arrival, the Portuguese were welcomed by the local people as traders. The Western colonization era in Malaysia began when the Portuguese invaded Melaka in 1511 in order to control the spice trade in the Asian maritime region. Apart from trading activities, the Portuguese also spread Christianity to the local people. Although the Portuguese were well entrenched in Melaka, they did not expand their territory in the Malay Peninsula (Gullick, 1969:40-41). Over time, some of the Portuguese merchants settled down in Melaka and remain today. The Portuguese presence in Melaka contributed to a notable dance culture known to the local people as the *joget*¹ (Sarkissian, 1995-96: 39-41).

After a hundred years under the Portuguese, Melaka fell to Dutch rule in 1641. The Dutch tried to establish a monopoly of the tin trade on the coast of the Malay Peninsula. The Dutch relations with the Malay rulers were more fortunate than the Portuguese. However, like the Portuguese, the Dutch had no intention of

¹ The *Joget* dance is performed by couples who combine fast hand and leg movements. It is a lively rendition with fast upbeat tempo and is greatly enjoyed by the young and old. It is usually performed during cultural celebrations and Malay weddings especially in Melaka. For further information, see Sarkassian (1995-96).

expanding their territory in the Malay Peninsula and only sought Melaka as a means to control the straits (Gullick, 1969:42). With the outbreak of the Napoleonic war in Europe, the Dutch possessions in Southeast Asia including Melaka passed into British hands. The British foundation of Penang in 1786 and of Singapore in 1819 strengthened British power in the Malay Peninsula. British colonization in Malaysia was formally recognized in 1924 with the signing of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty. By then, only the British were left to strengthen colonial power in the Malay Peninsula.

During the British colonization period (1824-1957), many immigrants had been brought by the British into Malaysia from Southern China and India. The Chinese immigrants mostly worked at tin mines throughout the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia and those immigrants from India mostly worked at rubber estates and plantations (Matusky & Chopyak, 1998: 401). In 1948, the British had committed themselves to preparing for the independence of Malaysia. Under the strong pressure of the Malay nationalist movement, the British introduced the first general elections in 1955. The UMNO-MCA-MIC² alliance won the first elections. The Alliance was successful in pressuring the British to relinquish their sovereignty in August 1957, thus making Malaysia an independent nation (Andaya & Andaya, 1982:274).

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The blend of all ethnic groups in Malaysian has influenced Malay culture and music. The influence of Hindu and Indian culture was historically very great,

² Among the major political parties in Malaysia. UMNO- United Malay National Organization. MCA- Malaysian Chinese Association. MIC-Malaysian Indian Congress.

and the Malay were largely Hinduized before they were converted to Islam in the 15th century. Some of the Hindu rituals, such as the wedding ceremony, survive in the Malay culture, even though the Malays practice the Islamic way of life. The Malays have also preserved some of their more ancient, animistic beliefs in spirits of the soil and jungle, often having recourse to medicine men or shamans (*bomoh*) for the treatment of ailments (Laderman, 1991:115).

The explanation of the Malay culture and music cannot be well described unless one realizes that Melaka, a small fishing village, turned into a splendid trading port by 14th century (Andaya & Andaya, 1982:7). Though not all the Malay culture and music blends here, examining the evolution of the port of Melaka provides an essential understanding of the blend of Malay culture and music. Melaka³ is a small city located on the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia. In the 14th and 15th centuries, Melaka was a major centre of trade in Southeast Asia. This was the time when foreign traders, especially from India, began traveling maritime routes and brought with them Hinduism, cultural practice and the arts. Over many centuries the people of the region, especially the royal courts, synthesized Indian culture and indigenous ideas including Hinduism (Matusky & Chopyak, 1998:401).

In the 1400s, the sea trade was almost completely controlled by Muslim traders from India and the Arab world. The Muslim traders and missionaries spread their influence along the major routes including Peninsular Malaysia and the Indonesian provinces (Gullick, 1969:38). The spread of Islam was greatly enhanced

³ In some publications, it is spelled as Malacca.

by social contact as a consequence of trade, and also through interracial marriages. It was a gradual and peaceful process, best described as “Islamization” rather than conversion (Taylor, 1989:8). The marriages between the rulers of different kingdoms made an important contribution in spreading Islamic belief even further. The king of Melaka converted to Islam when he married the princess of Pasai who converted to Islam earlier. This event led to commercial expansion and increased Muslim influence in the region (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:2)

Some of the Muslim traders had settled down along the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. They practiced their own traditions and mixed with local people. At the same time, the local people adapted the new culture and blended it with their own. This changed the local literature, style of government, music, dance, dress, games, titles and poetry. As a result, certain musical instruments associated with Islam and the Middle East including drums, plucked lutes and oboes became established in Peninsular Malaysia. Of the instruments and musical elements absorbed by local traditions, frame drums remain the most important instrument associated with the Islamic sound used in many ensembles (Miller & Williams, 1998:74). There are many frame drums used in many Islamic processions including *kompang*, *tar*, *rebana*, *marwas*, and *hadrah* (Matusky & Chopyak, 1998:409-410). These instruments were also played by the people from surrounding areas including Sumatra and Java. Among the musical ensembles associated with Islamic tradition in Malaysia are *kompang*, *hadrah*, *dabus*, and *rodat*. Some of the ensembles such as *dabus* have lost most of their religious significance and have

become secular genres, performed at various occasions (Miller and Williams, 1998:74).

MUSICAL BACKGROUND

Musical culture of Malaysia is very much influenced by foreign elements especially the Hindu culture from India, Islamic culture from Arabia, and later on from the Western world. It is believed that there already existed various types of native musical culture, especially for ritualistic purposes, by the time the natives came into contact with the Indian and Muslim traders. Furthermore, such musical performances can be identified based on the existing performances apart from Hindu, Islam and Western elements such as the rhythm for mantras and incantations in animistic belief (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:1).

Undoubtedly, the Indian influence on the musical culture of Malaysia was very great. The Indian musical culture greatly dominated the musical forms of the Malay Archipelago with the setting up of the Indianised empires including Funan (1-627 A.D) on the Mekong delta, Thailand, the Langkasuka Empire in Kedah, Malaysia, the Sri Vijaya Empire (650-1377 A.D) in South Sumatra and the Majapahit Empire (1293 – 1470 A.D) in Java, Indonesia. Over a thousand years under these four successive empires, the native people adapted to the Indianised musical culture and it became part of their life. As an example, two Hindu epics, the *Ramayana*⁴ and the *Mahabharata*⁵ were the greatest sources for the shadow

⁴ For the past two thousand years the Ramayana has been among the most important literary and oral texts of South Asia. This epic poem provides insights into many aspects of Indian culture and continues to influence the politics, religion and art of modern India.

theatre in Malaysia (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:2). There are four main types of shadow theatre in Malaysia, namely, *Wayang Jawa*, *Wayang Kulit Melayu*, *Wayang Gedek* and *Wayang Kulit Kelantan*, also known as *Wayang Siam*. The *Wayang Jawa* and the *Wayang Kulit Melayu* were adapted from the Javanese *Wayang Purwa* and draw on the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*. These two theatres came to Malaysia through Indonesia and mainly performed in the Southern states of Peninsular Malaysia. Unlike these two shadow theatres, the *Wayang Gedek* and the *Wayang Kulit Kelantan* are based on the *Ramayana* epic and popular in the Northern states of Peninsular Malaysia (Matusky & Tan, 1997:6-8).

The coming of Islam into the Malay Archipelago in the 13th Century had changed and added to the variety of the musical forms in Malaysia. The *Zapin*⁶ dance and various types of choruses singing praise to Prophet Muhammad and Allah, the Islamic God are among the elements of Arabian musical culture absorbed into the musical culture of Malaysia. The groups singing praise to God and Prophet Muhammad are in the form of various choruses accompanied by frame drum ensembles such as *hadrah*, *rodat*, *kompang*, *dabus* and *dikir rebana* (see page 102-108).

⁵ The *Mahabharata* is a classical Sanskrit epic of India. The *Mahabharata*, comprising more than 90,000 couplets, usually of 32 syllables, is the longest single poem in world literature. The 18-book work is traditionally ascribed to the ancient sage Vyasa, but it was undoubtedly composed by a number of bardic poets and later revised by priests, who interpolated many long passages on theology, morals, and statecraft. It is the foremost source concerning classical Indian civilization and Hindu ideals.

⁶ It is believed that Muslim missionaries of the Middle East namely Persia and Arabia introduced the dance to Malaysia during the fifteenth century. The dance was performed by males only but nowadays, it is also performed by female dancers. The dance movements are devoid of complexities but are highly dignified in disposition.

Apart from its own elements, Islamic musical culture, which came through India, also accommodated some of the Indian musical elements and produced its own characteristics. The blend of the Indianised and Islamic elements of music were adapted by the local people. The evidence for this is very clear, especially in the *ghazal* ensemble, performed in the state of Johor. The term *ghazal* was derived from an Arabic word meaning "love poem". The *ghazal* ensemble consists of a combination of musical instruments from Arabia and India such as the *gambus* (ud), harmonium and *tabla*. The *ghazal* was originally performed at Mecca and Medina as well as in Iraq in the Eight Century. In the Thirteen Century, the *ghazal* was performed in the courts of Delhi, Lucknow and Rampur in India, later on being brought into Peninsular Malaysia by Indian Muslim traders (Matusky and Tan, 1997:399-400).

Apart from Hindu and Islamic elements, musical forms in Malaysia are also influenced by its neighbouring countries, especially Thailand and Indonesia. In the Northern part of the Malay Peninsula, the Malay and the Siamese had long diplomatic contact, as for over five hundreds years the Siamese empire (1403-1909) dominated the Northern states of Peninsular Malaysia. As a result, the Malay people who settled in the Northern states of Peninsular Malaysia also adapted Thai culture and music. Certain musical forms such as *wayang siam* (shadow puppet theatre mainly performed in the Northern part of Peninsular Malaysia), *makyong* (traditional theatre accompanied by percussive instruments and a rebec acted mostly by women) and *menora* (like *makyong* but accompanied by more percussive instruments and a *serunai*) were adapted from the Siamese musical forms and

widely performed in the Northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. Some of the musical instruments used in the *wayang siam* such as *geduk* (barrel drum), *gedombak* (goblet drum) and *serunai* (double-reed oboe) are identical to the Siamese instruments used in the *nang talung* shadow theatre. Some of the dialogues and incantations in the theatre also are recited in the Thai language (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:4).

The *makyung* and the *menora* theatre are other acculturated musical forms derived from the Thai culture. Like the *wayang siam*, the *makyung* and the *menora* theatre ensemble also used similar instruments to the Siamese theatre. Furthermore, the dance and the movement in both theatres are pretty much similar. However, the dialogue used in the *makyong* and the *menora* theatre performed in Malaysia is the Malay language with the northern dialect (Id).

The influence of the Indonesian musical culture enhanced the richness of the Malay musical forms. The migration of the Javanese, Minangkabaus, Achenese, Bugis and Sumatrans into the Southern part of Peninsular Malaysia brought with them several types of musical forms. The Javanese introduced a few types of musical forms including the *kuda kepang*⁷, *gamelan*⁸, and *wayang purwa*⁹ (Ibid:3). The migration of the Minangkabaus into the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, especially in the state of Negeri Sembilan, brought with them the ensemble of gong-chimes called *caklempong* (Ang, 1998:50)

⁷ This dance drama is performed with an accompaniment of a rich and exotic rendition of traditional music played with indigenous instruments such as gongs, tambourines and *angklungs*.

⁸ An ensemble consists of many percussive instruments including gong chimes and double headed drums to accompany a graceful classical dance.

⁹ Javanese shadow play accompanied by gamelan ensemble based on the *Mahabharata* epic.

Western colonization had a big impact on the Malaysian musical culture. Every colonial power introduced their own culture and music to the native people. The notable Portuguese contribution to the musical culture of Malaysia is the introduction of the violin and guitar into the region. The uses of these two instruments as well as other instruments in the *keroncong*¹⁰ ensemble are evidence of the Portuguese influence. Originally, the *keroncong* song was performed by the black Portuguese known as *Mardijkers* accompanied by guitars and violins. Later on, these instruments were added into other musical ensembles such as in the *bangsawan*¹¹ theatre (Matusky and Tan, 1997:343).

By the late Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century, the British popularized other western musical instruments such as piano, trumpet, saxophone, clarinet and others in Malaysia. Mainly, the instruments were used in the newly introduced musical forms in Malaysia such as orchestras, brass bands, combos and some mixed with the Malay traditional instruments in the *bangsawan* theatre. The uses of western musical instruments in Malaysia became more popular with the setting up of radio stations, recording companies and film studios (Tan, 1993:8-16). During the British colonization period, especially in the early twentieth century, Chinese and Indian workers were brought by the British into Malaysia to serve in the agriculture sector. The Chinese and the Indian workers brought with them their musical culture and performances into Malaysia. Most of the musical styles are performed in their original forms. Malay traditional music is not much influenced

¹⁰ Traditional songs accompanied by a band consisting of a few instruments including guitar, ukelele, cello, double bass, violin and percussion.

¹¹ The Malay theatre like Western opera cast by men and women, with its music accompanied by mixed Malay and Western musical instruments.

by the music brought by the Chinese and Indian immigrants. Only lately, there are a few composers attempting to blend the Chinese and the Indian musical elements with the Malay elements in their compositions (Ang, 1998:28).

The evolution of the musical instruments and musical forms, which have contributed to the musical culture in Malaysia can be best described in two different perspectives, *adaptational* and *idiosyncratic* (Nik Mustapha, 1998:23). In the adaptational perspective, the original music or musical instruments from outside of the country were adapted, changed and developed according to the local culture especially in the aspects of vocal, mode, playing techniques, name, construction, ornamentation and decoration. The music or musical instruments maintain some of their originality but gradually change some of the elements to suit the local culture. One of the examples is a double reed oboe called *serunai* used in the Malay shadow puppet theatre or *wayang kulit* in the state of Kelantan. The instrument, originally from the Arab world, is known as a *shawn* or *surmay*. The physical construction of the original *serunai* has changed, especially its reed, size and decoration. It is constructed using local material such as jackfruit wood for the body of the *serunai* and using the local palm leaf called *daun tar* for the reed. The *serunai* is also decorated with local motif carving to suit the local taste (Ibid: 24). The Kompang ensemble still preserves some of its original elements but gradually changed especially with the use of new instruments in contemporary society¹².

In the idiosyncratic perspective, the music or musical instruments still maintain their originality including mode, construction, tuning, playing techniques

¹² See Chapter 7 for detail.

and even their name. If there are any changes, they are only very small changes in the elements of music or the name of the instrument (Id.). The *gambus* from the lute family used in the *ghazal* ensemble in the state of Johor is of Arab origin known as *Ud*. The instrument was probably brought by the Muslim traders into the Malay Archipelago since the 14th Century during the arrival of Islam to the region. Now, the *gambus* in Malaysia still maintains its originality, including the construction, the tuning and the playing techniques. Until this date, the Malaysian *gambus* still looks like the *Ud* in the Arab world. The tuning system of the *gambus* is still the same as the Arab *Ud*, in which the strings are tuned in double courses. The only change found in the instrument is its name, which is *Ud* (wood) in Arabic and *gambus* in Malaysia (Id.). Another example is a frame drum known as *tar* used to accompany the *zikir*¹³ in the *rodat* ensemble, which still looks the same as the Arab *tar*. The skin-head of the Malaysian *tar* is made of goatskin and tacked onto the wooden frame just like the *tar* found in the Arab world (Ibid: 94).

Summarizing the evolution of the musical culture in Malaysia, it can be concluded that the musical cultures of Malaysia are mostly derivative. The main influence on Malaysian music is from the Indian and Islamic cultures, with later addition of Western elements. In addition to the Melaka strait as a window of incoming elements, two more directions from the North (the Siamese), and the South (the Indonesian) have also been great sources of the musical elements influencing Malaysian musical culture. However, one should allow that the possibility of forms such as *Tarian Saba*, *Sewang*, *Kertuk Kelapa*, the Malay

¹³ A choral singing of Arabic language texts used in praise of the Prophet Muhammad.

lullaby, and others could have developed within the region itself. Moreover, one also should be aware of the possibility of simultaneous development of similar musical forms in different places.

TYPES OF MUSIC IN MALAYSIA

It is important to review about the types of music performed in Malaysia in order to understand where the *kompang* is categorized in Malaysian music. Malaysia is a multi racial country and has a diverse musical background. Every ethnic group performs their own traditional music as well as sharing some of the contemporary types of music. The types of music in Malaysia have been categorized by many scholars in many different ways. Some scholars categorize Malaysian music based on ethnical perspectives such as Malay music, Chinese music and Indian music (e.g. Hansa, 1989; Narayanam, 1985). Some of them classified Malaysian music from the musical perspective regardless of the ethnical concern such as vocal music, dance music, theatrical music (e.g. Matusky and Tan, 1997; Mohd Ghouse, 1992). A few of them had discussed Malaysian music based on the function of the music in the community such as religious music, ritual music, and entertainment music (e.g. Roseman, 1991; Laderman, 1991; Malm, 1979). Based on various scholars' categorizations, the author charts the types of music in Malaysia as illustrated in Figure 1b.:

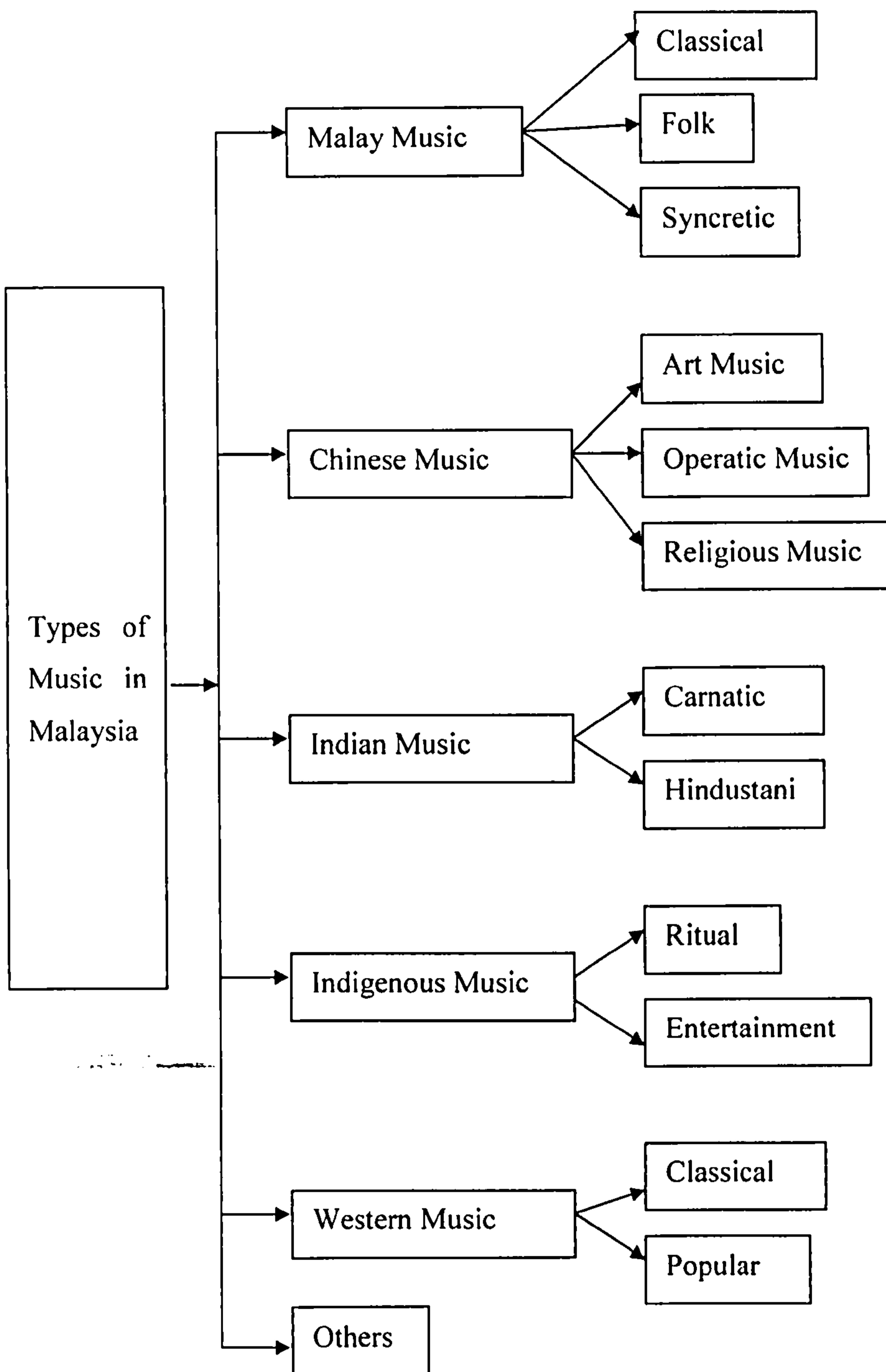


Figure 1b: Diagrammatic representation of types of music in Malaysia

Malay Music

Malay traditional music is mainly performed by the Malay people either for entertainment, ritual or religious functions. It can be categorized into three main types: classical music, folk music, and syncretic or acculturated music. Some types of Malay music though, may fall into more than one category such as *Makyong*, *wayang kulit*, *tarinai* and *zapin*. This is because some of the elements in the musical ensemble exist in both categories (Matusky and Tan, 1997:4).

Malay Classical Music

Malay classical music is a type of traditional music associated with royal entertainment and ritual occasions performed in the royal court. It is only performed for special occasions such as the birthday of a king, enthronement of a king, and at any royal ceremony. The musicians are well trained and patronized by the royal figures or a patrician family. Sometimes the music is notated in its own way as in the *nobat* and gamelan ensemble. Types of music falling into this category are the *nobat*, *tarian asyek* and *joget gamelan* (Matusky and Tan, 1997:3).

The *nobat* ensemble is a royal band, which consists of five to six musicians playing traditional drums, gong and two types of wind instrument. It is exclusively performed in the royal court of Kedah, Perak, Selangor and Terengganu. This ensemble originates from the days of the Melaka Sultanate (1400-1511) and was brought by the Indian Muslim traders from the Arab culture. It is performed to accompany religious and royal ceremonies (Ku Zam Zam, 1994:1-10).

Another Malay classical form of music is the *Tari Asyek* (engross dance) performed in the royal court of Kelantan. Apart from folk entertainment in the royal court, it is also performed as a ritual dance during royal ceremonies. The musician and dancers are well trained and only work in the court. The ensemble consists of three gongs, drums and a large hanging gong (Malm, 1974: 4).

The Malay *gamelan* is distinctly different from the Javanese and Balinese gamelan. Although the instruments are not much different, unlike Javanese gamelan, Malay gamelan music is less complex. Nearly all the instruments in the Malay *gamelan* play the melody or the counter melody. It was brought to the royal court of Pahang in 1811 from Riau-Lingga and in 1913 to the state of Terengganu after the royal marriage between the Prince of Terengganu and Princess of Pahang. Originally, the Malay gamelan was played to accompany the court dance called the *Joget gamelan* (Matusky and Tan, 1997:91). Now, the gamelan ensemble has been introduced into the national music curriculum as part of the music study in secondary schools. The gamelan ensemble has become more popular and is performed on many occasions including university convocations and grand dinners.

Malay Folk Music

Malay folk music includes many types of Malay traditional music played usually by villagers. It is mainly performed for entertainment purposes among villagers. There is no formal institution for folk music learning. The musicians acquire music skills by the rote method. Malay folk music falls into six categories; dance music, theatrical music, vocal music, instrumental solo, musical ensemble and

percussion ensemble (Ibid:4). Dance music is the musical ensemble used to accompany many types of Malay dance including *tari inang*, *zapin*, *joget*, and *gendang tarinai*. Dance music also exists in classical tradition, which the *tari asyik* performed in the royal court of Kelantan and the *joget gamelan* performed in the royal court of Terengganu.

There are two types of Malay theatrical music in Malaysia; puppet theatre and human theatre. The puppet types of theatre in Malay culture are mainly performed with two dimensional shadow puppets made of goat or cow hide including *wayang kulit Jawa*, *wayang kulit Melayu*, *wayang gedek* and *wayang kulit Kelantan*. Human types of theatre include *makyong*, *menora*, *mekmulung*, *bangsawan* and *randai*. Almost all the music for the theatres is performed with a chamber ensemble in which percussion instruments dominate (Ibid: 5).

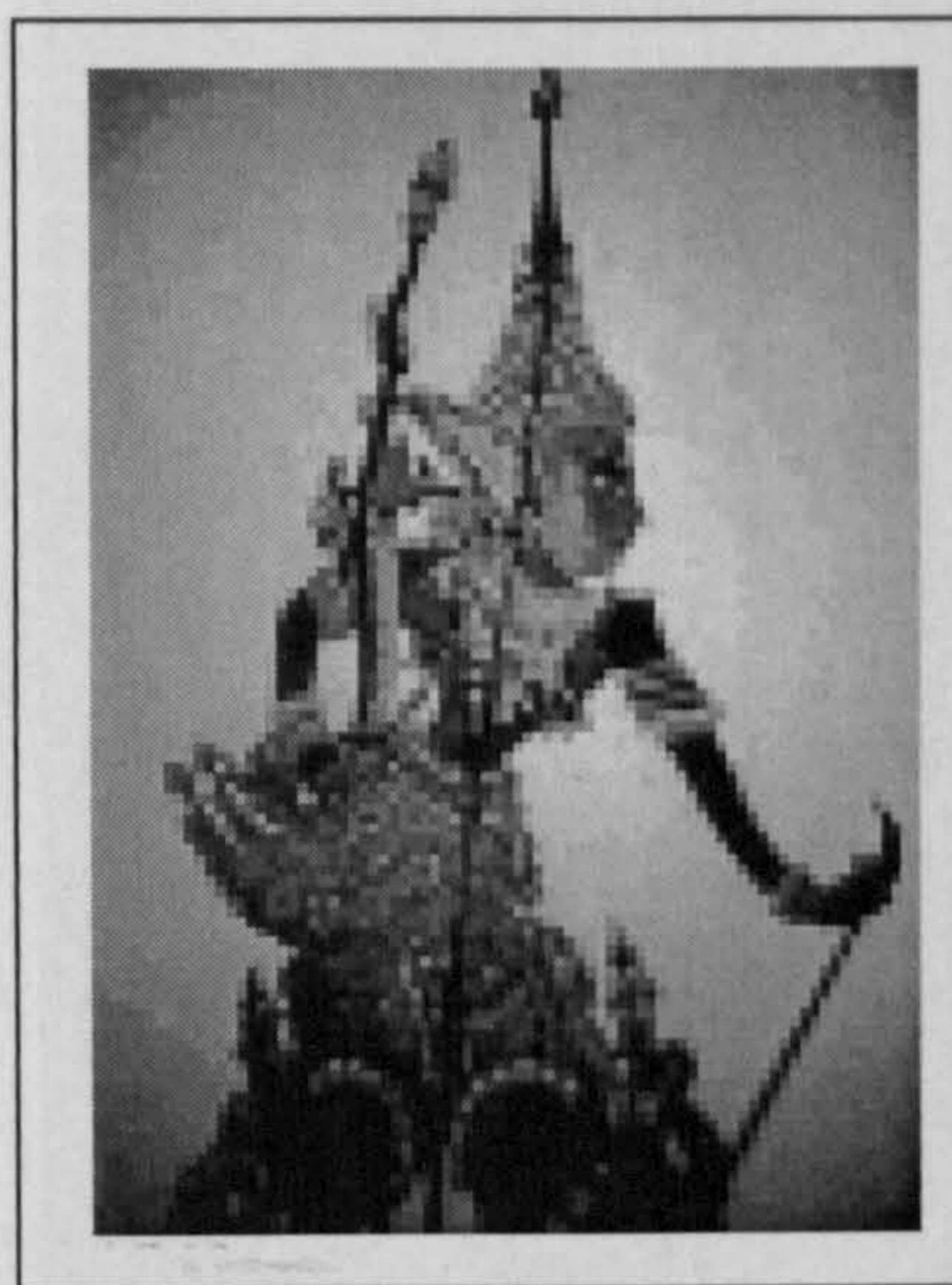


Plate 1a: *Wayang Kulit*

Vocal music is involved in almost all aspects of life in the Malay community from childbirth to the process of socializing. It exists in the form of *zikir*, *marhaban*, *pantun*, *gurindam* and *syair*¹⁴. Some vocal music such as *pantun*, *syair*, and *marhaban* are sung without any accompaniment, but some is accompanied by one or two musical instruments. There are many kinds of musical instrument played in instrumental solos. The instruments from the aerophone, chordophone and membranophone families are used to play the melody, entertaining the player himself, or a group of people. Instruments made of bamboo, wood or metal are played as solo instruments. These include mouth zither, *seruling*, *kecapi buluh*, *puling tanah*, *rebab* and *tetuang*. Some of the instruments mentioned above are also played in other ensembles such as the *rebab* used to play the melody in *makyong* theatre.



Plate 1b: A *rebab* player

¹⁴ *Pantun*, *gurindam* and *syair* are among the forms of the Malay literature.

Although most Malay musical ensembles are percussion-dominated and used to accompany the theatre or dance, there are also percussion ensembles performing freely as independent ensembles. These percussion ensembles perform for entertainment purposes or on some occasions including ritual and martial art (Ibid:166). The ensembles falling into this group are *caklempong*, *tumbuk kalang*, *rebana ubi*, *kompang*, *gendang silat*, and *kertuk*.

Malay Syncretic Music

The third category in Malay traditional music is syncretic music, also known as acculturated music. This type of music is found both in urban and rural areas. Syncretic music which involves vocal music, dance music, theatre music and instrumental music has been accepted by the Malay. In syncretic music, both folk and classical music blend together with foreign elements from Arabia, Parsi, India, China and the West. This type of music is also very flexible with the absorption and adaptation of foreign musical elements including melody, textures, scales, themes and musical instruments. The types of music included in this category are *keroncong*, *ghazal*, *bangsawan*, *dondang sayang*, *zapin*, and *joget* (Ibid: 3).

Chinese Music in Malaysia

The Chinese in Malaysia perform their own traditional music, brought from the mainland of China especially during the British colonization period. Though not all the types of music of China are performed in Malaysia, the types of music

performed in Malaysia are very much similar to the ones performed in China. The types of Chinese music in Malaysia generally fall into three categories: art music, theatrical or operatic music, and ritual or religious music.

Chinese Art Music

In the art music category, Chinese orchestral music also known as *Huayue tuan* is the main type of art music performed by the Chinese in Malaysia. The Chinese orchestra in Malaysia is similar to the Chinese orchestra found in the mainland of China with a blend of western and traditional Chinese musical instruments. The music itself combines western polyphony with Chinese melodies and scales, with repertoires mostly imported from Hong Kong, Taiwan and China (Ang, 1998:36). There are a few Chinese virtuoso performers in the Chinese classical tradition in Malaysia. Most of them were trained outside Malaysia. Two notable figures in the Chinese orchestra in Malaysia are Khor Seng Chew of the *Dama Chinese Orchestra* and Chew Hee Chiat of *Zhuan Yi Chinese Orchestra*.

Chinese Operatic Music

There are two types of Chinese theatrical music in Malaysia; Chinese opera and *Po-te-hi*. These types of opera were initiated by the Malaysian Chinese after the entourages of Chinese theatres from China came to Malaysia in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century to entertain Chinese immigrants. They date back to the forms of opera popular with both the elite and common people in the Yuan dynasty (13th Century). The Chinese opera is a classical opera, which is primarily

associated with Chinese religious festivals. The opera is performed in Teochiu, Kantonis or Hokien dialect. The cast use the specially decorated costumes and make-up to portray stories of ancient China or religious legends. The music is like that to be found in the Chinese orchestra but the number of the instruments maybe less. The melody is dominated by the bowed string instrument called *erhu*. The action in the play is driven by the percussion instruments including drum, clappers, gong and cymbals (Matusky and Tan, 1997:73-74).

Po-te-hi is a glove puppet theatre played by two puppeteers. The puppeteers use their fingers to move the wooden puppet while reciting the dialogues. Unlike the human opera, *Po-te-hi* is performed only in Hokien dialect. The functions of music used in the theatre are as an accompaniment to speech and vocal melodies, as sound effects, to announce the start of the show and changes of the scenes. Mainly, the music is heterophony with the use of the percussion instruments including a drum, woodblocks, clappers, cymbals, gongs and traditional stringed instruments. The Chinese opera is performed as a religious symbol and social function. It is also performed to celebrate the birthday of the Chinese angels. The performances of this theatre give an opportunity for informal interaction between the Chinese communities (Ang, 1998:44).

Chinese Religious Music

Some types of Chinese music in Malaysia have a religious or ritual function. Apart from *Po-te-hi* opera, other types of Chinese music that have religious or ritual connotations are the Chinese lion dance, the Chinese drum ensemble and music for

funerals. The lion dance is an important tradition in China. Usually the dance is part of festivities like Chinese New Year and the openings of restaurants and weddings. If well-performed, the lion dance is believed to bring luck and happiness. The lion dance dates back to the Han Dynasty (205 B.C. to 220 A.D in China) and during the Tang Dynasty (716-907 A.D.) it was at its peak. It was particularly performed during religious festivals. The Chinese lion dance is very popular among the Chinese in Malaysia and is performed during the Chinese New Year and at wedding ceremonies, to greet honourable guests or at other ceremonies. The lion is enacted by two dancers. One handles the head, made out of strong but light materials like papier-mâché and bamboo, the other plays the body and the tail under a cloth that is attached to the head. A Little Buddha teases it with a fan or a giant ball. The head dancer can move the lion's eyes, mouth and ears for expression of moods. The 'lion' is accompanied by three musicians, playing a large drum, cymbals and a gong (Matusky and Tan, 1997: 156).



Plate 1c: The Chinese Lion Dance in performance.

The Chinese drum ensembles consist of 24 drummers playing various interlocking rhythms. It is also known as 24 *Jie ling gu* and popular among the Chinese especially in the Chinese medium school in Malaysia. The huge barrel drums known as *shigu* (lion drum) used in the *Jie ling gu* ensemble are similar to the one used in the Chinese lion dance. The music and the choreography in the ensemble refer to the cycle of the Chinese agricultural calendar. The ensemble is performed in many Chinese festivals including *Yuan Zhi Yi* (The night of water eyes), Chinese New Year, and cultural shows (Chan, 2002: 28-29).



Plate 1d: Musical ensemble accompanies a funeral procession.

A small ensemble consisting of a barrel drum, a gong and cymbal is used to accompany the procession of a funeral. As part of the ritual, the ensemble performs instrumental music on a small open truck. The group continuously performs the music all the way from the dead person's family house to the graveyard. Mourners, family and friends of the dead person walking behind the coffin follow the

procession. The music is played continuously without a melody part in moderate fast tempo. The drummer plays various patterns of rhythmic ostinato with the cymbals and gong guiding the tempo.

Indian Music in Malaysia

Indian music in Malaysia exists in the form of art music, which includes pure music as well as dance music, and folk music. Most Indian music generally has religious overtones regardless of its categorization (Narayanan, 1985). The Indian music in Malaysia evolved from Carnatic music from South India and Hindustani music from North India.

Carnatic Music

Carnatic music is of Tamil origin from South India and Sri Lanka, which is the largest group among the Indian population in Malaysia. The music is considered one of the oldest systems of music in the world. Imbued with emotion and the spirit of improvisation, it also contains a scientific approach. This is mainly due to the contributions of such inspired artists as Purandara Dasa, known as the Father of Carnatic Music. The basis of Carnatic music is the system of *ragas* (melodic scales) and *talas* (rhythmic cycles). There are seven rhythmic cycles and 72 fundamental ragas. All other ragas are considered to have stemmed from these. An elaborate scheme exists for identifying these scales, known as the 72 Melakarta Ragas (Massey and Massey, 1976: 110-115).

Mainly, Carnatic music in Malaysia involves instrumental and vocal music being the preferred medium for songs with Tamils. The elements of Carnatic music in Malaysia still remain largely true to its origins. Both vocal and instrument study in Carnatic music are popular with Tamil speaking Indians in Malaysia. The most popular area of instrumental study includes the *vina*, *tabla*, and *mrdanga* (Ang, 1998:33).

Hindustani Music

Hindustani music in Malaysia originated from North Indian classical music, which is much less commonly found in Malaysia than Carnatic music. This music however is still performed and studied especially in the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Historically, the North Indian people brought Hindustani music to Malaysia during the British colonization in the mid twentieth Century. Hindustani music is based on Carnatic music with the influence of Muslim and Persian music. In North India, the Mughal Empire (1526-1727) from the East dominated the region and the Indianisation of Mughal culture occurred through intermarriages. As a result, Persian and Sanskrit, Islamic and Hindu culture blended together and contributed to the evocation of Hindustani music (Matsky and Tan, 1997:417-418).

In Malaysia, small ensembles consisting of two to three players are common compared to the large orchestras of Carnatic music. The main areas of musical study are the *sitar*, *tambura*, *tabla* and voice. A few Hindustani composers and artists actively perform true Hindustani music. However, composer Samuel Dass is currently making efforts to produce “Malaysianized” Indian classical music. He has

composed and released albums of new pieces in classical Indian music, which incorporate elements from other cultures in Malaysia (Ang, 1998:36).

The Music of Indigenous People

The music of indigenous people in Malaysia is mainly used in religious rituals, but sometimes performed for personal entertainment. It is not categorized as art music but they do have a rich tradition of folk music. The music of the Orang Asli (aborigine) is evoked from dreams and performed for ritual in singing and trance-dance ceremonies (Roseman, 1991: 80). Generally, the music of indigenous people in Malaysia can be categorized into two groups; music for ritual and music for entertainment.

The Ritual Music

Most of the indigenous people in Malaysia still hold their ancient animistic belief, which is centered on the spirit and soul. The *sewang* is a ritual dance which is performed either for ritualistic occasions such as the harvesting season or New Year and to renew the agreement between the community and the spirits or in the healing process. Mainly, the musical instruments used in the ritual ceremonies are made of bamboo tube and played as an ensemble accompanying the songs.

The Entertainment Music

Apart from ritual music, the indigenous people also perform instrumental as well as vocal music for entertainment. As most of the settlements are far from

modern entertainment such as radio and television, solo instruments are useful in freeing the tensions of the late afternoon. The solo instruments are played in the evening and night-time after work, releasing the stress. There are also songs and solo music played by children, a group walking into the forest or a sleepless person in the night as a self-entertainment. The solo instruments used for entertainment are bamboo flute, mouth-harp, and bamboo-tube zither. The flute is also an instrument of courtship and seduction. Often a Temiar man plays his flute from the top of a fruit tree while women cutting fruit on the ground admire his manly playing (Roseman, 1991:159).

Western Music in Malaysia

Western music or the music derived from the western culture is also widely performed in Malaysia. This includes classical music and popular music. The influence of Western music on Malay music began obviously during the British colonization early in the Twentieth Century. The spread of Western music in Malaysia is parallel with the new invention of electronic media such as radio, gramophone, film, cassette player and television.

Classical Music

Western classical forms such as symphony and chamber groups regularly perform pieces from various western composers in concert halls around the cities in Malaysia. Among a few fine halls, which regularly organize western classical

music performances are the Petronas Philharmonic Hall, Istana Budaya, and Kuala Lumpur City Hall. This type of performance is normally attended only by high-class communities in the big cities. Apart from well-established groups from outside Malaysia, there are a few well-known local groups regularly performing western classical music. Among the groups are The National Symphony Orchestra, The Kuala Lumpur Symphony Orchestra, and The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (Ang, 1998:26).

Small groups performing western chamber music are found only in the big cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Bharu. Among the most popular chamber groups are the *Camerata*, which are made up of a sub-section of players from the National Symphony Orchestra, the *Kuala Lumpur Chamber Players*, which is a mix between local and foreign invited musicians, and the *Baroque Choristers* which exclusively perform western baroque vocal music. Beside these, large-scale choral groups also were formed as western music in Malaysia becomes more popular. Among them are the amateur *Selangor Philharmonic Society* which organizes choral groups consisting of classically trained and untrained local singers, and *Kumpulan Koir Kebangsaan* (The National Choir) which regularly performs western songs as well as Malay songs (Ibid.:27).

Other types of western musical ensemble include wind orchestras, brass bands, pop-orchestras and others. All these groups perform using western musical instruments and the western forms of music. Study of western musical instruments is common in urban areas. The piano is the most popular instrument followed by

violin, guitar and wind instruments. Two popular examination boards, which grade the students of western study, are the *Associated Board of the Royal School of Music* and the *Trinity College of Music and Drama of London*. Both of them are based in England and have established branches in Malaysia (Ibid: 25).

Popular Music

There are many types of popular music derived from western culture in Malaysia. This includes pop bands, jazz groups, combos, soloists and singing groups. It was pioneered by the *bangsawan* theatre musicians in the 1920's and 1930's. The music uses a mix of Indian, Western, Latin American and Malay traditional instruments. The Malay elements such as the singing style, vocal ornamentation, cyclic drum patterns and the use of Malay texts are mixed together with the western elements of harmony and orchestration (Ang, 1998:45). The development of popular music in Malaysia in the 1950's was influenced by western rock music since the 50's. Songs from rock 'n' roll such as "Rock around the Clock" were sung by Malay artists. Some of the songs were translated into Malay lyrics, but maintained the original melodies and rhythm and used the same instruments as the original songs (Matusky and Tan, 1997:447).

In the 1960's, the so-called *pop yeh-yeh* music had developed in Malaysia based on the Beatles music from England. Many *pop yeh-yeh* bands consisting of three guitars and a drum set known as *kugiran*¹⁵ were set up and performed in the nightclubs, stage shows and other occasions. Among the popular groups were The

¹⁵ Acronym for *Kumpulan Gitar Rancak* – Fast rhythm guitar group.

Siglap 5, The Hooks, Nirwana and Mutiara Timur. From the 1970's to 1980's, popular music in Malaysia was influenced by transnational music of artists such as Michael Jackson, Madonna, ABBA and Boney M (Id). Later on came the rock and heavy metal music from the west which invaded popular music in Malaysia. This type of music was imitated by local artists and music groups such as The Search, Wings, Lefthanded, and Bumiputera Rockers.

In the mid 1990's, some Malaysian artists and composers tried to find their own identity in popular music. This had led them to mix Malay traditional elements with western music. Manan Ngah, M. Nasir and Pak Ngah were among the composers who had experimented with this new popular music called *Muzik Nusantara*. In this music, the composers tried to mix the Malay traditional instruments such as *kompang*, *rebana*, *serunai*, *rebab*, *gamelan* and others with western instruments. With the new technology, many Malay traditional instruments have been sampled and used in recording music. This helped composers to mix the Malay musical instruments with the western instruments in their recording. Since the late 1990's, many *nasyid*¹⁶ groups have been set up. This type of music is mostly accompanied with percussion instruments including *rebana* and *kompang* and has become popular in Malaysia. Among the popular *nasyid* groups are Raihan, Rabbani, Hijjaz, The Brothers and Nowseeheart. This has added to the variety of popular music in Malaysia.

¹⁶ Newly composed songs with religious texts either in Malay or Arabic.

Other Music in Malaysia

Beside Malay, Chinese and Indian, there are also a few other immigrant groups settled in Malaysia who perform their own music. Among them are Portuguese, Punjabi, and Singhalese. The Portuguese mostly settled down in the state of Melaka and their *branyo* dance is well known. Since 1952, songs and dances introduced by Fr. Manuel Joachim Pintando in his church are regularly performed by the Portuguese in Melaka. The music of the Portuguese in Melaka consists of a viola, accordion, guitar, *rebana* (frame drum), tambourine and a triangle. Two popular songs sung in the *branyo* dance are *Jinkli Nona* and *Ti' Anika*. Some of the Portuguese musical elements were also adapted by the Malay such as in the *joget* (fast dance) rhythm (Matusky and Tan, 1997:429).

The Punjabi who mostly settled in the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia also perform their music. The *bhangra* is a folkdance of Punjabi performed in celebrating the harvest-season in Punjab. In Malaysia, it is performed for joyful occasions including wedding ceremonies. It was originally an exclusively male preserve but now female dancers are winning places as *bhangra* dancers. The music is dominated by the drums and oboe type of instrument (Ibid: 417-419).

PUBLICATIONS ON THE KOMPANG

Research and publications on Malaysian Music converge more toward traditional theatre such as *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets), *makyong*, *bangsawan*, *manora*, and dance music such as *joget gamelan*, *tarinai* and *zapin*. A little research has been done on the music of indigenous people of Malaysia especially the Temiar people, and also music of indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak. This research was done by both Malaysian and non-Malaysian scholars (Matusky & Chopyak, 1998). Many non-Malaysian researchers have made good contributions in documenting and publishing books, articles, essays and journals on Malaysian traditional music.

The non-Malaysian scholars who have worked extensively on Malaysian Traditional music include Patricia Matusky (1980) on *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets), William Malm (1969) on music of *Makyong*, Margaret Sarkissian (1993) on Portuguese music of Melaka, and Marina Roseman (1991) on Temiar Music. Two notable scholars who published several books and articles about Malaysian music are Mubin Sheppard on *Rodat* (1938) and *Nobat* (1962), and Amin Sweeney (1972) on the Malay shadow play. Other foreign scholars who also have contributed to the publications on Malaysian traditional music are James Chopyak (1986) on music in modern Malaysia, John Blacking (1955-56) on the musical instruments of the Malayan Aborigines, Jacques Brunet (1971) on the Malay shadow puppet, Jeanne Cruisnier (1936) on the dance music of Kelantan, Jack Percival Baker Dobbs (1972) on music in the multiracial society of West Malaysia,

and Couillard, M., Elizabeth Cardoso, and Margaret R. Martinez (1982) on Jah Hut musical culture.

Many Malaysian scholars have also published something on Malaysian traditional music. Among them are Abdullah Mohamed (1971) on *ghazal*, Ahmad Omar (1984) on *joget gamelan*, Ghulam Sarwar Yousof (1976) on *makyong*, Mohammad Anis (1986) on *rundai*, Mohammad Ghouse Nasaruddin (1979) on village performing arts, and Rahmah Bujang (1977) on *boria* theatre. Three local music lecturers who have conducted research and published several books, articles and essays on Malaysia traditional music are Tan Sooi Beng (1984, 1988), Chan Cheong Jan (2001) and Minni Ang (1998). Other local scholars who published some information on Malaysian traditional music are Ku Zam Zam Ku Idris (1983) on musical instruments in the shadow play, and on *mek mulung* and *gendang keling* ensembles in Kedah, Mohd Taib Osman (1974) on traditional drama and music, and Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan (1988) on Music of Sabah.

The instruments relating to the *kompang* and the ensembles have been discussed in a few publications including encyclopedias, books, journals, magazines and websites. Until now, there is no extensive research and no complete publication has been done on the *kompang* itself. However, there are a few books, articles, essays, journals, and web sites providing some information on the *kompang*. Some of them were published in English, and most of them were published in the Malay language. The publications on the *kompang* can be grouped into three main media; scholarly publications including encyclopedias, books and

journals, popular publications including magazines, newspapers and tabloids, and electronic media such as web sites and interactive CD ROM (compact disc read only memory).

Scholarly Publication

A few scholars published some important information about the kompang in scholarly publications including encyclopedias, dictionaries, books, journals and conference proceedings. These media provide important and valuable information about the kompang and issues related to the instrument for the reader. Mostly the writers are the experts in the field and write articles based on their research.

Encyclopedias and Dictionaries

There are a few encyclopedias and dictionaries which provide some important information on the kompang. One is *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* edited by Sadie (1984), and another *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Vol. 4: Southeast Asia* edited by Miller and Williams (1998). In *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, the kompang was described as

“Kumpang. Frame drum with goatskin head of the Southern states of West Malaysia. Its diameter is about 33 cm and the body of the drum, which is about 7 cm deep, is made of jackfruit wood. The head is nailed to the body with brass tacks. The player holds the drum in the curve of the left arm, with the left hand gripping the rim. It is beaten with the fingers of the right hand. An ensemble of seven frame drums of West Malaysia, each with a different timbre, played in wedding processions by friends of the bridegroom to accompany

Arabic choruses. It is also played in religious processions” (Kartomi, 1984: 484)

Matusky and Chopyak (1998) wrote a brief description about the *kompang* in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Vol. 4: Southeast Asia* as part of the discussion about traditional music in Peninsular Malaysia. Most of the discussion focused on the uses of the *kompang* in the Malay culture:

“In the Southern state, the ensembles playing *kompang* music with the chanting of *zikir* accompany processions as part of the ceremony. The drumming is performed on the *kompang*, a hand-beaten frame drum. It has a shallow, hardwood body and a single tacked head, sometimes with metal jingles inserted into the frame. The drummers may chant religious texts on the drumming, which are in interlocking style, affected by two or more texts, and in some social contexts they chant secular texts, but the emphasis is on groups of players. A lead drummer beats the cues for abrupt changes in tempo, levels of volume, and rhythms, the drummers produce sharp contrasts in timbre. The extreme range of high and low timbres in the drumming, the loud volume, and fast tempi offer a dynamic accompaniment to the ceremony or procession” (Ibid: 424).

Another two encyclopedias, *Ensiklopedia Malaysiana Jilid 7* (1995) (*The Malaysiana Encyclopedia, Volume 7*) and *Ensiklopedia Dunia Melayu, Jilid 3* (1997) (*The Encyclopedia of the Malay World, Volume 3*) also provide some important information about the *kompang*. Both of them were published in the Malay language. According to the statement in the *Ensiklopedia Malaysiana Jilid 7* (1995:249), there is no research about the origin of the *kompang*. However, it is believed that the *kompang* is of Arabic origin based on the evidence that the

instrument looks like one played in the Arab world. Furthermore, the music performed on the kompang was adapted from Arab music including the songs and the rhythms. It has been performed since the 13th Century in Java, Indonesia by the Arab traders.

The Ensiklopedia Dunia Melayu, Jilid 3 (1997:194) explains that originally only the male players played the kompang, but now the kompang is played by both male and female players. The same explanation about the origin of the kompang as the previous one was also discussed in this encyclopedia. Furthermore, the encyclopedia describes how the function of the instruments has become broader than before. The instrument was performed on religious occasions including wedding ceremonies, circumcisions, and praising God and Prophet Muhammad. Now, to suit the taste of the new generation, the kompang is performed with various folk songs sung in the Malay language.

Books

The kompang has been discussed in a few books written by scholars either as part of the discussion about Malaysian music or as a sub-topic. The information about the kompang discussed in some books provides good sources for the readers. One of the books about the kompang is edited by Matusky and Tan (1997) entitled *Muzik Malaysia: Tradisi Klasik, Rakyat dan Sinkretik* (Malaysian Music: Classical, Folk and Syncretic Tradition). A section of the book discusses generally about the kompang including the description and uses of the kompang, the playing techniques and also some rhythms performed on the kompang.

According to Matusky and Tan (1997:174), the *kompang* is a Malay traditional instrument, which is similar to the *dufuf* from the Arab world. The Arab traders brought it to the Malay Archipelago probably in the 13th century. The *kompang* ensemble is used to accompany songs, *zikir*, and *marhaban*¹⁷ in religious and social occasions including wedding ceremonies, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, opening ceremonies and other occasions. The *Kompang* music is composed into three or four parts, which produce an interlocking rhythm pattern. Each part plays its own rhythm based on two timbres, which is *dum* and *tak*. In some places, these timbres are called *bum* and *pak* or *ding* and *prang*. All the rhythms in the *kompang* ensemble are used to accompany the songs, which were originally taken from *kitab berzanji*¹⁸ or other Islamic texts.

Another book which explains something about the *kompang* is *Alat Muzik Traditional Dalam masyarakat Melayu di Malaysia* (Traditional Musical Instruments of the Malay community in Malaysia) written by Nik Mustapha (1998). The book describes brief information about the *kompang* including the construction techniques, the playing techniques and the function of the ensemble. Nik Mustapha (1998:91-93) wrote that the instrument is made of a hard wooden frame with a goatskin hide tacked on it. It is tuned to the desired sound using a *sedak*. The *sedak* is made of a piece of a small rattan inserted underneath between the frame and the skin-head. The *kompang* ensemble normally performs in a group either sitting with legs crossed, standing or walking in procession. It plays in wedding ceremonies, to welcome very important guests, and on many religious occasions. A *kompang*

¹⁷ Song in Arabic text praising Prophet Muhammad.

¹⁸ A book which contains religious texts praising Prophet Muhammad.

ensemble normally consists of three groups of players; these are *pembolong* who play the basic rhythm, *penyilang* who play the counter rhythm and *peningkah* played by the leader of the group.

Popular Publications

The second source of information about the kompang is from popular publications such as newspapers, tabloids and magazines. Most of the information about the kompang published in this media was written by columnists, reporters, public writers, activists and others based on their knowledge or experience in the ensemble. Though the writers who wrote something on the kompang are not specialists in the field, the information written is very helpful in order to understand kompang playing in Malaysia.

Newspapers and Magazines

There are a few articles published in the national and local newspapers in Malaysia about the kompang. The kompang and its related information were also discussed in a few magazines providing useful information to the readers. The description quoted from the Lifestyle Magazine (November, 2000) was about a Malay wedding where it mentioned the kompang playing in the ceremony:

“You must know that the jolly drumming heralds the appearance of the bride and groom. The beating of handheld drums called *kompang* is a form of merry-making called *Hadrah* in Malay. On a joyous occasion like a wedding, it's a way for the newlyweds to announce their marriage surrounded by family and close friends. *Kompang* players, usually from the groom's side of the family, come in a procession led by the lucky guy to receive his wife at her family home. Like in the Chinese tradition, there's room for a bit of fun as mischievous friends or relatives block the procession's way until they extract a levy” (Goh Hwee Koon, 2000:17).

Electronic Publication

In the modern world, new technology has made searching for information even easier. In the electronic media, not only the text, but the videos, sounds and photos are also published. This has made the information provided more useful to the user. The information about the *kompang* can be found in many electronic publications such as World Wide Web and on interactive compact disc.

World Wide Web

Brief descriptions about the *kompang* are found in a couple of web sites published either by the Malaysian government, clubs or individuals. In a Musical Malaysia web site, Ang (1998) published an electronic sequenced sound of the *kompang* rhythm. Ang (1998) also explained about the *kompang* in the same web site:

“The kompang is a shallow frame drum with a goat or cow hide nailed to the wooden frame by metal nails. It is usually found in large kompang ensembles throughout Malaysia, playing interlocking rhythmic patterns for processions, to accompany the choral singing of zikir and to perform music for various social occasions.

Kompang is usually played in groups with legs crossed when sitting, standing, or walking in procession, depending on the need. The player uses one hand to hold the kompang while the other is used to hit it” (Musical Malaysia Homepage, accessed on 21 March 2002).

The Department of Handicraft, Ministry of Entrepreneur Development, Malaysia has published a web site containing a description about the kompang in the Malay language. There are four paragraphs describing the kompang, the playing techniques and the uses of the kompang in the Malay culture. There is no picture or illustration in the web site to support the explanation about the kompang. Some information about the kompang gathered from this web site says that the kompang is a frame drum made of jackfruit wood and goatskin. It is played in Malay wedding ceremonies, greeting important persons, to accompany the *marhaban* and other religious occasions. Furthermore, the kompang ensemble is performed in sitting position, standing or in procession with three parts playing interlocking rhythm patterns (Kraftangan Malaysia, accessed on 21 March 2002).

The Kompang Troupe of Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka led by Sergeant Dalib Ahmad has published a web site both in the Malay and English languages. In the web site, there are brief descriptions about the construction

techniques of the kompong, history of the kompong Ezhar, the organization, the performances, the costumes and the training certificates. This site is supported by a series of colourful photographs about the Kompong Ezhar. The web site explains that The Kompong Ezhar was originally from Bantin, West Java, Indonesia. It was popular in West Java during the Dutch rule. Munaji was one of the founders of the Kompong Ezhar and brought the Kompong Ezhar to Singapore during World War II and later on it was spread out to the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia (Pasukan Kompong Al Ezhar Kampong Pengkalan, accessed on 21 March 2002).

The Encyclopedia of Percussion homepage has published a brief description of the kompong in their electronic Encyclopedia of Percussion. The description about the kompong in the web site is as follows:

“kompong

Origin: Malay. Shallow frame drum, made from goat or cowhide tacked onto ring shaped frame. Played using a combination of right hands and fingers while held in left hand. About the same size as a tambourine. Traditionally used to accompany all sorts of processions.

Usually played in groups of 6-10 or more persons, with either similar or interlocking parts” (The Encyclopedia and Percussion Page, accessed on 21 March 2002).

In a web site, Felix Tan (2002) from Radio Singapore explained his experiences of the kompong in Bintan, in Riau Archipelago, Indonesia. He had explored the indigenous Malay-Indonesian music called Kompong. According to

Felix Tan (2002), a *kompang* is a type of Malay traditional drum. A group of *kompang* players usually consists of 20 people. A traditional group comprises of about eight drummers, who play the *kompang*, and four *bunga manggar* (decorative flower) girls. These drummers drum out their beats in tone, style and rhythm to songs that are sung. The *kompang* ensemble played at wedding ceremonies and to receive guests during official ceremonies, the sound of the *kompang* adds a festive and joyful atmosphere to the celebration. The *kompang* instrument is of Arab origin and was brought into the country either with Indian-Muslim traders during the days of the Malay Sultanate, or through Java in the 13th century by Arab traders. It is played by both women and men to accompany the songs. The ensembles play interlocking rhythmic patterns for processions, to accompany *zikir*, which is choral singing of Arabic language texts in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (Singapore National Trades Union Congress Homepage, accessed on 21 March 2002).

Compact Disc

Up to the present, there is no interactive CD ROM, video compact disc or audio compact disc about the *kompang* itself which has been published. However, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Malaysia published a few video compact discs about the nation of Malaysia and its culture. One of them is a video compact disc entitled “Malaysia Truly Asia” where a short video shows female *kompang* players greeting the arrival of a group of tourists at the airport. The players beat the *kompang* while singing in two rows in front of the arrival hall. Apart from that, the

sound of the kompang ensemble accompanies the newly composed song also used as part of the soundtrack in the video (Tourism Malaysia, 2000).

Another video compact disc published by Tourism Malaysia (2001) is entitled *Gendang Malaysia* (The Malaysian drums)¹⁹. The video compact disc was recorded live during the *Simfoni Irama Gendang* (the Symphony of the Drums Rhythm) performed in a football stadium at Kota Bharu, Kelantan in 2001 where the author also watched the performance. In the performance, many types of traditional drum from all over the country were combined and performed a new composition based on the traditional rhythms. A group of kompang players also was added in the performance but they performed in a different way from the original ensemble.

THE ROLES OF THE KOMPANG IN MALAY SOCIETY

The Kompang ensemble has performed in many religious and social occasions since its arrival in Peninsular Malaysia. At the beginning, it was not as popular as now. Before the 1960s, the kompang ensemble was only performed in small villages and limited to some special occasions including wedding ceremonies and religious occasions. At that time, the kompang performance was not considered as an entertainment for most of the people, especially those who settled in the town areas. This was because they were more exposed to the other kinds of musical entertainments such as *bangsawan*, live bands, theatre, and broadcasts compared to the villagers. Traditionally, the kompang ensemble is popular among the Malay

¹⁹ See Video CD II, track 2.

people who settled on the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The map below shows the original location of kompiang playing in Peninsular Malaysia.



Map 1b: The location of the kompiang playing in Peninsular Malaysia.

The kompiang performance is an important part of the traditional Malay wedding ceremony especially in the Southwest of Peninsular Malaysia. The activities and ritual practiced during the traditional Malay wedding ceremony came from diverse cultures, of indigenous, Hindu and Islamic traditions blended together. The Malay people practiced Hinduism before Islam spread into the Malay Archipelago. When Islam became a dominant religion in the region, the Malay practiced the Islamic way of life, but still maintain some of the Hindu culture in their life including the wedding ceremony. There are a few stages and activities

which take place during a Malay wedding. The stages start from the investigation about the bride, called *merisik*; the engagement, called *bertunang*; and the actual wedding day. The wedding process maybe takes two to three months or longer. The actual wedding ceremony normally takes place in a full day including a night before the wedding day called *malam berinai*. The *kompang* performance normally occurs during the *malam berinai* and in the procession during the actual ceremony.

The main activities in *malam berinai* begin with the actual religious solemnization of the marriage conducted by the religious official called the *Imam* or *Tok Kadi*. This activity is called *akad nikah*, which is the official agreement of a wedding in Islam. After the *akad nikah*, the bride and groom officially becomes a married couple. This activity is followed by *berinai* ceremonial, in which the newly married couple sits on a decorated dais. Family members of the couple alternately apply henna to the hands of the bride and groom. At the same time the *kompang* troupe performs many joyful songs to entertain the bride, groom, guests and cooks who are preparing the food for the ceremony tomorrow. The *kompang* players sit on the floor with legs crossed and play the *kompang* to accompany their songs. This activity sometimes last until late night or early morning. Normally the songs sung in this period are taken from *kitab berzanji* (book of verses) and the old Malay songs.

The wedding ceremonial activities during the actual day are called *hari bersanding* and begin with the bridegroom walking slowly in procession towards the bride's house, for about a hundred to two hundreds metres. The party is led by

womenfolk and accompanied by bearers of the decorative flowers called *bunga mangga*, family members and friends of the bridegroom. The komping troupe walks in procession and performs various songs until the bridegroom enters the bride's house. In some places, another komping troupe will continue to perform their music whilst the wedding couple, seated on a decorated platform, is blessed by their families and friends. Normally, the songs performed by the komping troupe at the wedding are about the happiness of the wedding couple.

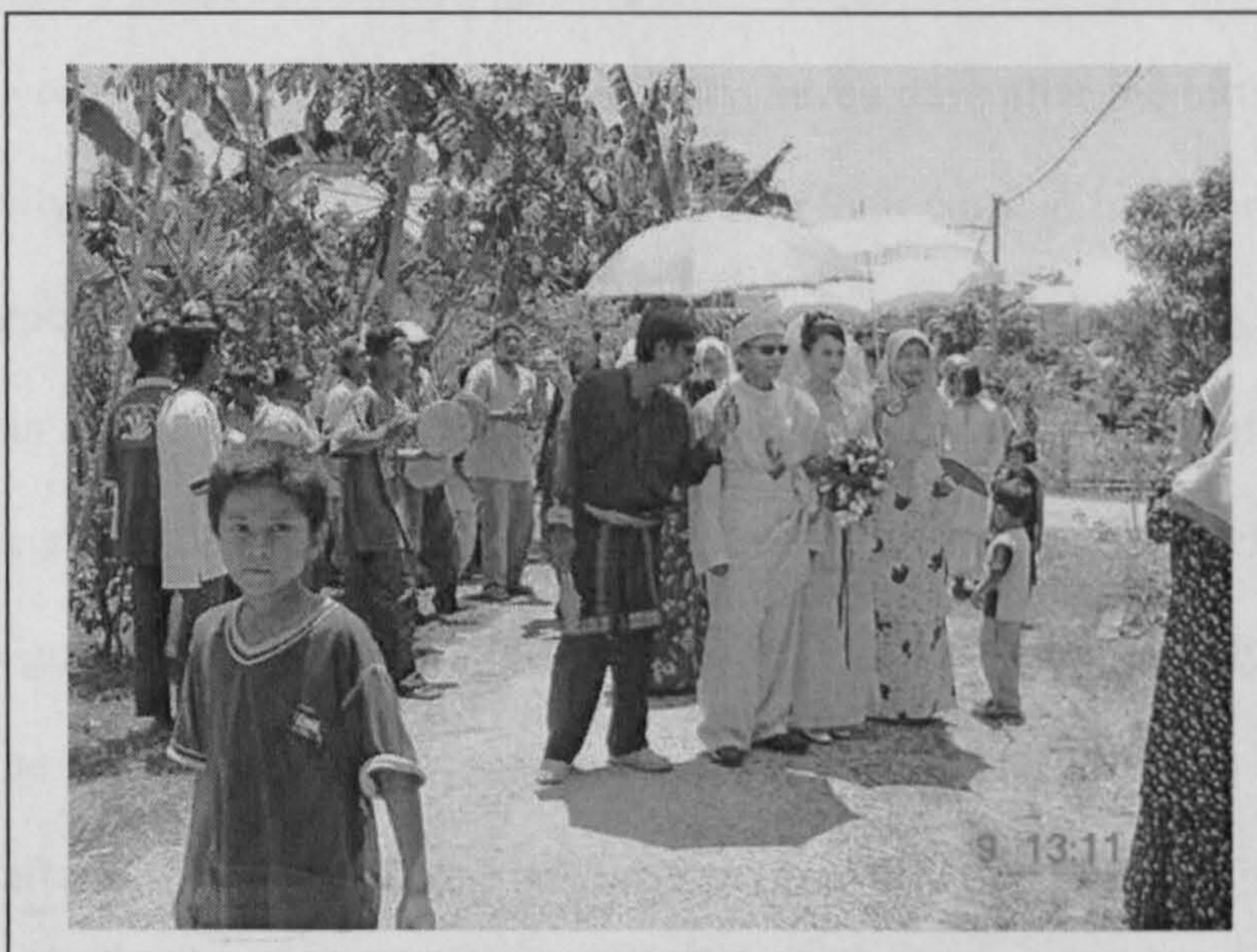


Plate 1e: A traditional wedding procession accompanied by a komping troupe

Another important function of komping playing in Malay communities is to accompany the procession during a traditional circumcision ceremony, especially before the 1970s. All the Malay boys as in all Muslims will have to have a circumcision. The ceremony called *bersunat* or *berkhatan* normally takes place when the boys reach between five to ten years old. During the circumcision

ceremony, a boy or a group of boys who are to be circumcised are taken in procession through the village before the circumcision is done. A group of the *kompang* players are invited to perform their music accompanying the procession. The *kompang* troupe performs various songs to add joy to the ceremony. Now, the traditional circumcision ceremony is not widely practiced because most parents send their sons to be circumcised at a modern surgery.

Having a new baby will give happiness to a couple. On the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia, a *kompang* troupe is usually invited to perform the music during the celebration of childbirth. Normally, seven days after the birth of a child into a family, a ceremony called *bercukur rambut* (hair cutting) is performed by the parent purposely to thank God for the childbirth. In this ceremony, the baby's hair is cut by an *imam* (religious leader in a village) and followed by some of the guests. The father carries the baby in his arms and slowly walks around a circle of guests while the guests sing the *selawat*²⁰. This is the time the father proudly shows his baby to the guests. The *kompang* players will perform their music to accompany the *zikir* after the *selawat*-is done. All the songs performed during this ceremony normally contain words praising Prophet Muhammad.

The *Kompang* music is also performed at many religious functions including *Maulud Nabi* (birthday of Prophet Muhammad), *Khatam Quran*²¹, *zikir* and *berzanji*. In the *Maulud Nabi* celebration, a procession consists of many groups of Muslim people walking along the road in the village or town while they sing the

²⁰ Religious texts in Arabic praising the Prophet Muhammad.

²¹ The completion of the whole of the Holy Quran learning.

selawat. The kompang troupe beat the kompang to accompany the *selawat* along the procession. This procession will take about one to two hours depending on the distance of the road. Sometimes the kompang troupe continuously performs the music after the procession until the crowd has gone.

Khatam Quran is conducted by parents when teenagers have completed their study of the whole Quran. The ceremony begins with the pupil sitting on a specially decorated platform and reading a few verses of the Quran in front of their teacher and parents. After he is satisfied with the pupil's reading of the Quran, the teacher prays to Allah for the blessing. After the prayer, the kompang troupe beat the kompang to accompany *zikir* in a sitting position. This is followed by a feast for the guests before the ceremony ends. The kompang ensemble also performed to accompany the *zikir* and other religious songs on many occasion including the celebration of *Awal Muharram*.²²

After the 1960s and early 1970s, kompang playing among the Malay people became more and more popular. It spread out not only to the villages but also to the town areas. The kompang was also performed not only for weddings and religious occasions but also on many new occasions. This does not mean that the kompang has lost its religious functions or has changed its function, but the instrument has actually gained more functions than before. Among the new functions of the kompang are to welcome a very important person, during sports days and during football matches to raise the supporting spirit among the supporters and players.

²² First day of the beginning of the Islamic calendar year.

On certain occasions such as the opening ceremony of a new building, speech day, university convocations and others, the kompong is used in welcoming very important persons to the occasion. These very important persons may be a Sultan (king), ministers, political figures or high officials from a division who are special guests who will open the occasion. The kompong troupe plays music to greet the very important person as soon as he or she exits the car and processes to their seat in the building or to a special place to be seated. Just like in the wedding procession, the kompong players continue their playing until the very important person reaches the seat. This is to show respect to the very important person and add geniality to the occasion.²³

On 31st August every year, Malaysia celebrates its National Day. On this day, many departments, clubs, cultural groups, and non-government organizations send their representatives to take part in the National Day procession. The kompong troupes are also involved in this procession as well as marching bands and other music ensembles. This occasion starts in the early morning in the capital city and many other cities in the states. The kompong troupes play their instruments continuously until the procession come to the end.

The implementation of the new music curriculum for the secondary school by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia gave a good boost to the popularity of kompong playing. The new music curriculum for secondary schools was established in 1996, but only twenty chosen secondary schools all over Malaysia offer the subject of music. Malaysian traditional music is one of the important

²³ For example, see Video CD 1, track 1.

elements included in this new curriculum. As well as a few other Malaysian traditional musical instruments, the kompang is introduced as early as form one. Students who choose music as one of their elective subjects will be exposed to the playing techniques, basic rhythm and the songs that are sung with kompang accompaniment. In 2001, the Ministry of Education expanded the implementation of the new music curriculum. More secondary schools throughout Malaysia offer music as one of the elective subjects.

By the late 1990s, the new trend in Malay popular music, the so-called ethnic music and *nasyid*²⁴ became one of the popular genres in Malaysia. As the trend to preserve traditional heritage is emerging in Malay society, many music makers started to include traditional elements in their works. As a result, the kompang as well as other traditional drums are becoming widely used in the music recording industry in Malaysia. This issue will be thoroughly described in Chapter 7 as I will examine the uses of the kompang by contemporary society.

²⁴ Song in which the lyric specifically contains religious thought.

CHAPTER 2

THE KOMPANG IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The answer to the question about the origin of kompang playing in Malaysia is yet to be defined. Many scholars believe that the origin of the kompang is from the Arab world (Shamsiah et al., 1993: 3-4; Matusky and Tan, 1997:174; Ang, 1998:49). There is also a statement that says the kompang was brought to the Malay Archipelago by Indian Muslim traders during the Melaka Sultanate (Asmad, 1990:2). Searching for evidences of the origin of kompang playing in Malaysia can be done through the analyzing of historical sources, examining the structure of the instrument, comparing the function of the instrument in the community and the types of music played with the instrument. The kompang is a single-headed frame drum beaten with bare hand in a group ensemble to accompany choral singing. In categorizing musical instruments, Hornbostel and Sachs classify any instrument whose sound is produced by a vibrating membrane as a membranophone. Specifically, Hornbostel and Sachs place any frame drum whose membrane is stretched over a circular frame with skin glued, nailed, or laced under subcategory 211.311 (Dourmon, 1992:273). The kompang that perfectly meets the specification outlined by Hornbostel and Sachs can be classified as a membranophone instrument under subcategory 211.311. This chapter will analyze the historical sources of the kompang and the description of similar instruments around the Malay Archipelago in order to describe the origin of the kompang.

SOURCES ON FRAME DRUMS

As discussed in Chapter 1, searching for the ethnomusicological literature of the kompong is quite limited because there are not many relevant scholarly publications available on the instrument itself. However, beside verbal sources from informants, there are indirectly quoted sources from travelers' accounts, colonial reports, and notes written by missionaries and friars and locally written treatises among the sources that help in analyzing the history of kompong playing in Malaysia. A few sources came from students' essays, master's theses and doctoral dissertations, but most of these remain unpublished. Analyzing the historical sources of the frame drum in general will lead to the better understanding of the history of kompong playing in Malaysia.

The Frame Drum in Ancient Mesopotamia

Archeological study has traced the first appearance of the frame drum to the third millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia (Iraq). A huge drum on the Gudea Relief in Paris was dated from this period. The drum is rested upright on its rim standing as high as a man. A smaller frame drum with a nail-fastened skinhead, reaching from knee to shoulder played by two players is also dated from the same period and is now exhibited in The University Museum, Philadelphia. This ancient drum is believed to have been known as *balag-di* in Sumerian and *timmbuttu* in Akkadian (Marcuse, 1975:131).

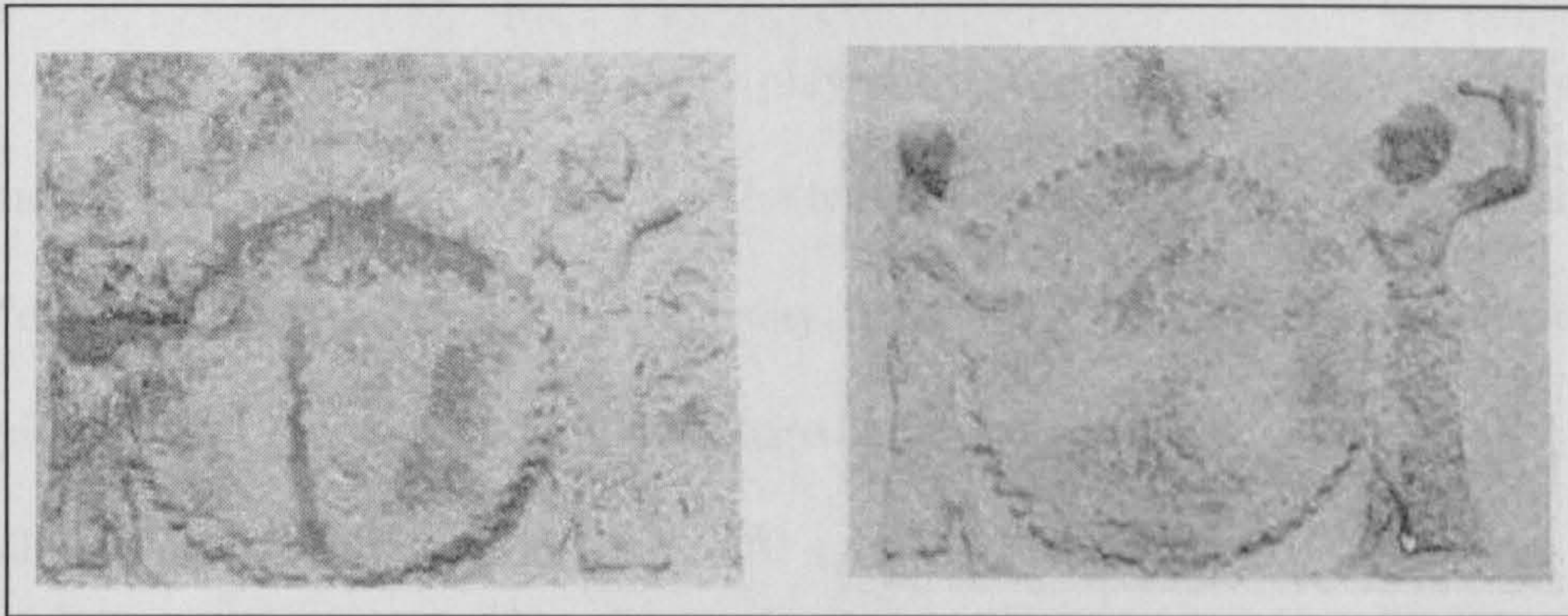


Plate 2a: Gigantic frame drum exhibited at University Museum, Philadelphia

Many other Mesopotamian artworks show evidence of the early appearance of the frame drum in the area. One valuable piece of evidence is a queen's seal and a plaque depicting a small rectangular frame drum appearing as early as 2700 B.C now also exhibited in The University Museum, Philadelphia. Another significant evidence of the early appearance of the frame drum is a clearly depicted shallow frame drum on a Sumerian vase (see Plate 2b) dated from 2500 B.C. exhibited in the Louvre Museum, Paris (Blades, 1970:144).



Plate 2b: Sumerian Drum 2500 B.C in Louvre Museum, Paris

The same type of frame drum played by women was also traced from a Sumerian text dated from 2400 B.C. The texts referred to two categories translated as “drums” and “tambourine” (Doubleday, 1999:105). A clay statuette of women playing a small frame drum with their bare hands roughly dated about 2000 B.C. is exhibited in the British Museum. A smaller, ancient frame drum was also discovered by archeologists on a Babylonian plaque dating about 1100 B.C. (Sachs, 1940:74).

The ancient frame drum was frequently associated with women, based on evidence from many female figurines found in Ur in the neo-Sumerian period (2150 –1850 B.C). In many ritual performances in that period, the female dancers used the frame drums rather than clappers (Blades and Anderson, 1984:974). The frame drum was also used in many religious ceremonies and processions. As described in a Sumerian hymn to the goddess *Inanna*, the drums resounded after blood sacrifices. The drums were played in laments for the dead while the lamenters circled the “House of God” (Wolkstein and Kramer, 1983:53&99).

The Frame Drum in Ancient Egypt

There were questions about the earlier appearance of the frame drum in Egypt, but there is no clear archeological evidence which shows the case. Archeological excavation discovered many objects from the Sumerian cemeteries and temples which are very similar to those found in Egypt. The discovery has led to the hypothesis that there was a prehistoric contact between these two great civilizations. From this point, many archeologists believed that musical instruments

including the frame drum traveled from Asia to Egypt especially during the slave girl trade era between 1570 and 947 B.C (Marcuse, 1975:131). Many remarkable relics of the frame drum are preserved in many museums including a circular frame drum in Cairo Museum. The small circular frame drums were more usual, but some had four concave sides. The instrument was strongly associated with feminine activities such as singing and dancing and it was played only by women (Sachs, 1940:97).

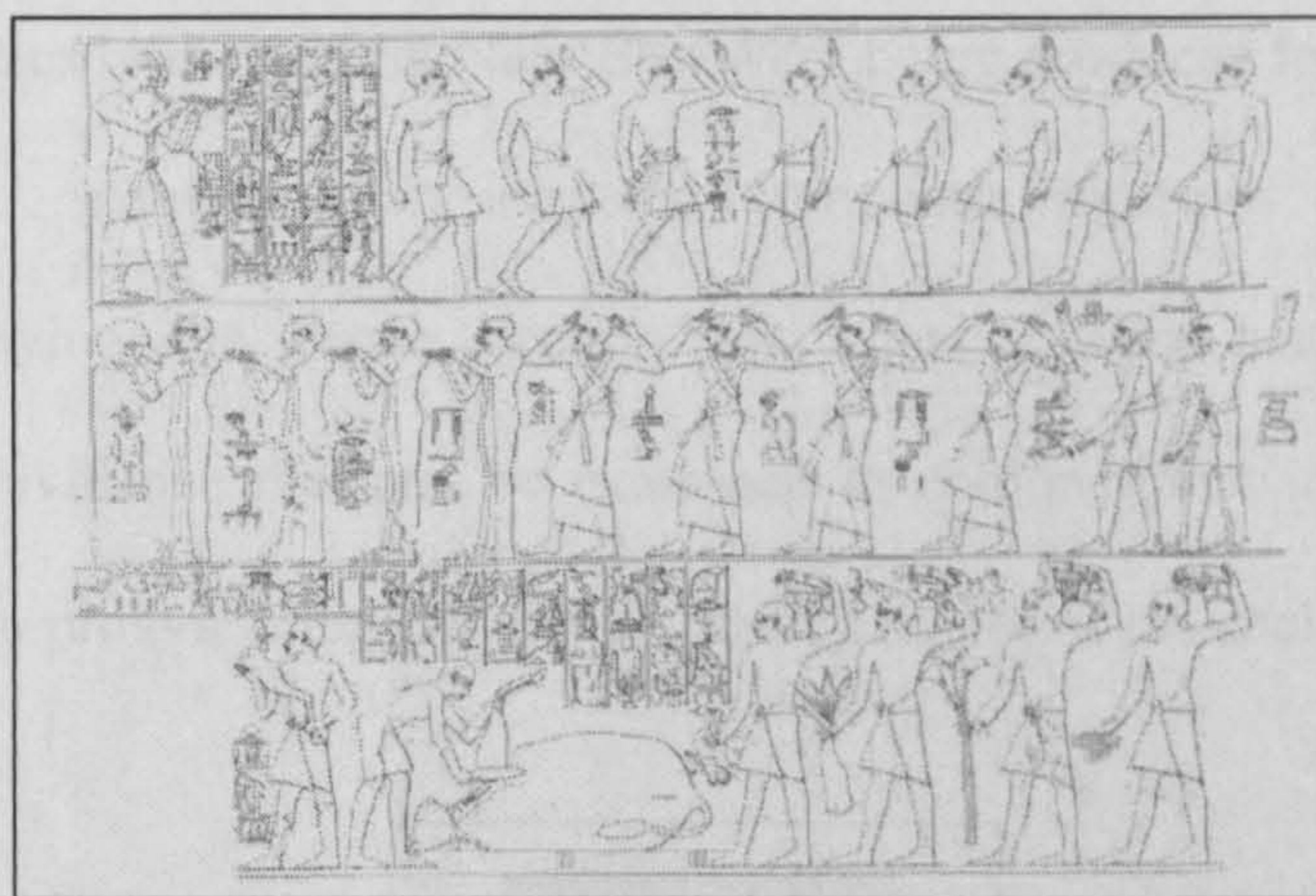


Plate 2c: Tomb of steward of Tiy, depicting dancing women accompanied by frame drum players

Many wall carvings from 14th Century B.C. tombs depict various scenes of the playing of frame drums. One of them is the tomb of the steward of Tiy, queen of Amenhotep III (see Plate 2c) showing a celebration of the king's *Sed* festival to renew the pharaoh's kingship in the fourteenth century B.C. The middle register of the carving shows a procession headed by two women playing frame drums, three women clapping and followed by female dancers. The lower register shows an ox sacrifice (Robin, 1993:105).

Israeli and Hebrew Biblical Sources

There is plenty of evidence to attest that the frame drum was played in ancient Israel and surrounding areas, especially by women players. Archeologists and biblical scholars have long known about the artifactual and textual sources for frame drum playing in ancient Israel. The evidence is found in the form of archeological materials such as terracotta figurines and references in a number of the Hebrew biblical passages. The figurines of clay representing many aspects of life and activities in the ancient Near East were being produced long before pottery was invented. Among them are small terracotta figurines depicting female musicians playing the frame drum. This type of clay statuette constitutes archeological evidence that can be examined in conjunction with the analysis of biblical texts to provide information about the existence of the ancient frame drum.



Plate 2d: A terracotta figurine depicting a woman playing the frame drum

One notable terracotta figurine depicting a female musician playing a frame drum was found in Palestine in 1907 (see Plate 2d). The small statuette features a standing woman holding a frame drum-like object with her left hand while the other hand is pressed against the head of the drum. Presumably, this 8.5 inches tall figurine is of Palestinian origin and now is exhibited in the Harvard Semitic Museum (Meyers, 1993:50-51). Another example of a small figurine depicting a female musician holding a frame drum was found in the excavation at Amathus in Cyprus (see Plate 2e). The 9.5 inches high terracotta figure features a woman with thickly braided hair holding a frame drum with her left hand and striking it with the flat palm of her right hand. This valuable artefact is now exhibited in the Cyprus Museum (Ibid:52).



Plate 2e: A terracotta figurine found in Cyprus

Many of the known examples of artefacts illustrating the frame drum have entered museum collections through the antiquities trade. The provenance of some

of them is not clear, but it can be suggested that they mainly came from Phoenician or coastal sites such as Tyre, Achzib, Shiqmona and Kharayeb. Mainly, the collections of terracotta in this area were from the Iron II period (1000 – 540 B.C) and the Hellenistic period (332 – 167 B.C). This has led to the suggestion that the frame drum had been played in this area since these two periods (Meyers, 1993:57).

The claim that the frame drum has long been played in the Syro-Palestinian area based on ancient artefacts has been confirmed and supported by the Hebrew biblical passages. There are many musical instruments mentioned in the Hebrew Bible such as *lyre, harp, lute, pipe* and *frame drum*. There is only one term for membranophones found in the Hebrew Bible, which is *toph (tuppim)*, the word for hand drum. This term is related to the other Semitic words for drum, such as Assyrian *tuppu*, Aramaic *tuppa*, Arabic *duff*, Sumerian *dup* or *tup*, Greek *typanum* or later *tympanon* and Latin *tympanum* (Blades, 1970:160; Marcuse, 1975:131; Sachs, 1940:108; Meyers, 1993:58). The drums were made of a wooden frame and the skin made of the hides of horned animals, either rams or the wild goat (Sachs, 1940: 108).

The Hebrew bible mentions woman playing the frame drum and dancing in many passages. In Exodus 15:20, describing the celebration of the victory of the Israelite warriors over their enemies:

“Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron’s sister, took a hand drum in her hand; and all the women, out after her with hand-drums and dancing. And Miriam sang unto them: sing to Yahweh, for he has

triumphed gloriously; Horse and rider he has cast into the sea”
(Myers, 1993:61).

Another passage which describes the celebration of the warriors’ victory and welcomes heroes with song, dancing and drumming is in Judges 11:12. The passage describes the daughter of Jephthah coming to greet her father on return from war with frame drum and dances (Doubleday, 1999:107). In conjunction with the Hebrew bible passages about the use of the frame drum in celebrating the victorious warriors, the artwork depicted on the stele of Rameses II (1301 – 1234 B.C) from Abydos also shows the same function (see Plate 2f). The artwork features a procession of priests and women playing frame drums to greet warriors returning from battle (Meyers, 1993:63).



Plate 2f: A musical tradition of ancient Israel

Most often, the frame drum in ancient Israel was played with the lyre. The lower register of Plate 2f shows five female frame drum players, one female rattle player, and one young lyre player. The association of these two instruments with celebration is found in the Book of Genesis 31:27 when Aramaean Laban reproaches his son-in-law Jacob and his wife for his flight without a proper celebration;

“Why did you flee secretly and deceive me and not tell me? I would have sent you away with gladness and songs, with frame drum (*top*) and *lyre*” (Meyers, 1993:59).

The frame drum is also mentioned in the Hebrew bible with various other instruments including horn, harp, lyre, lute, pipe and cymbals. A precise example is mentioned in the Book of Psalms, which is a psalm of praise for God;

“Praise Yahweh!

.....

Praise him with blast of the *horn*;

Praise him with *harp* and *lyre*;

Praise him with *frame drum* and dance;

Praise him with *lute* and *pipe*;

Praise him with clanging *cymbals*; (Meyers, 1993:59)

The frame drum is mentioned many times in the Hebrew bible in praising God, celebrating victory and other rituals. However, none of the passages mentions the use of the frame drum in the wedding ceremony. It is believed though, that it was also used at Jewish weddings, as it is today all over the Orient (Sachs, 1940:109).

Arabian and Islamic Sources

The influence of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Semitic culture in the Arab world brought the frame drum to the local people. Frame drums were among the first musical instruments, appearing as early as pre-Islamic times in Arabia. It appeared in two forms, a rectangular and a circular shape with the generic name *duff*. The *dufuf* is the plural term for the frame drum. The *duff* is believed to correspond to the Hebrew *tof* or *toph*, which is mentioned in the Hebrew bible (Marcuse, 1975:132). The term *duff* has a general meaning of frame drum today. The *da'ira* mainly refers to the circular or round shape frame drum in Arab world. The frame drum in pre-Islamic times was mainly played by women to accompany dances and songs and associated with occasions of mirth and mourning.

In the seventh century, the playing of the frame drum among Muslim people was no doubt approved by Prophet Muhammad. There are a few *hadiths*¹ collected show the evidence that the playing of the frame drum was approved by Prophet Muhammad (see Appendix 1). The *girbal*, *bendair* and *tambourine* are among the frame drums mentioned in Prophet Muhammad's time. It was used for many occasions including wedding ceremonies, celebration of *Ed Adha*², to herald a joy of childbirth, circumcision and also in war. Some of the frame drums had jingles attached (Blades, 1970:184). The frame drums were used in devotional chanting

¹ Reports on the sayings and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) or what he witnessed and approved are called *Hadith*. These are the real explanation, interpretation, and the living example of the Prophet (s.a.w.) for teachings of the Quran. His sayings are found in books called the *Hadith* books. Some famous collectors of *Hadith* are Imam Al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam An-Nasa'i, Imam Abu Dawood, Imam At-Tirmizi, and Imam Majah. There are many others.

² An Islamic festival is held to celebrate the pilgrimage, starting from the 10th of Zulhijjah (a month in the Islamic calendar year) every year.

called *tahlil* accompanying the circumambulation of the *Ka'abah*³ at Mecca. The term *tahlil* is close to Hebrew *tahala* (psalm or song of praise), and circumambulation of the “house of the god” occurred in many places including Sumer and among the Israelites. The *Ka'abah* is known as the *Beitullah* (the house of god) to the Muslim people (Gibb and Kramers, 1961:586).

The frame drums were also used by female musicians in the Prophet Muhammad's time to greet the arrival of eminent persons. This hospitality tradition was also practiced in ancient Israel. A few examples occur in Prophet Muhammad's time. One good instance was where some girls in the streets of Medina greeted the Prophet Muhammad, singing with the accompaniment of the *duff*;

“We are girls of the tribe of Najjar, what a blessing it is to be a neighbour of the Prophet!” – and he (the Prophet) congratulated them on their performance (Roy Choudhury, 1957:66).

Many other instances of the use of the frame drum to greet and welcome important persons on special occasions occur. One occasion was when a slave girl promised to welcome the Prophet Muhammad home with drumming (Poche, 1984:617)⁴.

Arabian women played the frame drum in battles, singing to raise the spirit of the warriors to victory. This occurred in the Prophet Muhammad's time and probably for some time previously. A woman of the Prophet's enemy, named Hind

³ The first house of worship built for mankind. It was originally built by Adam and later on reconstructed by Abraham and Ismail. It is a cubed shaped structure based in the city of Mecca to which all Muslims turn in their five daily prayers.

⁴ See Appendix 1 for more examples of the *hadith* showing the approved uses of the frame drum during the Prophet Muhammad's time.

bint Utba, led a troupe of women singing and beating the frame drums at the battle of Uhud (625 C.E). The Arabian women also sang the elegy and the lament to the heroes of the war with a frame drum accompaniment. In the Prophet's time, some "little girls" played the frame drum and lamented their heroes who died at the battle of Badr (Robson 1938:75). In the seventh century, weekly concerts were performed by ritual mourners with a frame drum accompaniment. However, in the fifteenth century, the female mourners who used frame drums to accompany their laments were prohibited by orthodox Islam and periodically banned by the authorities (Ahmed, 1992:119).

Frame Drums in Malaysia and Malay Archipelago

Frame drums with a similar structure to the *kompang* can be found in many parts of the world. Frame drums have been played in certain places in the world since 2000 BC (Horniman Museum and Library, 1970). This instrument is still in common use in most parts of the world. However, it is more important to focus the discussion on similar instruments around Malaysia and the Malay Archipelago. The Malay Archipelago is a great island group of Southeast Asia formerly called the East Indies. It lies between the Asian mainland and Australia, separating the Pacific Ocean from the Indian Ocean. The Malay Archipelago (see Map 2a) consists of areas of lands and islands including Peninsular Malaysia, Borneo Island, Singapore, Riau islands, Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi and many small islands in the surrounding region.



Map 2a: The Malay Archipelago

In Southeast Asia, frame drums are usually shallow drums with a single skin stretched over a wooden frame. Frequently, its frame depth is less than the diameter of the skin. The frame is mostly circular shaped with an animal skin such as goatskin or cow skin attached. Some of the frame drums with jingles attached are similar to the tambourine in the West (Taylor, 1989:47). Usually, it is held in a vertical position and struck with either bare hands or sticks. Some drums have decorations either on the head or on the frame. Some of the frame drums of Southeast Asia probably came from the shamanic frame drum used all over North and Central Asia and India (Sachs, 1940:240). There are a few types of frame drum played in many musical ensembles in Malaysia. Some of them are closely related to religious functions such as *tar rodāt* and *rebana hadrah*, but some of them have lost their religious function and became secular genres such as *rebana dikir barat* (Nik Mustapha, 1998:90).

In Peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra, the term *rebana* is used for several types and sizes of drums including frame drums. There are two categories of *rebana* in Malaysia: kettledrum and frame drum. The term *rebana*, which refers to

the kettledrum, is *rebana besar* and *rebana ubi* (see Plate 2g) played in some ceremonial occasions in the state of Kelantan. A kettledrum type of *rebana* is made of water-buffalo hide strung over a carefully chiseled-hollow log. The *rebana besar* (big drum) is hung from a beam with the face vertical and struck with the hands only. One *rebana besar* weighs about 60 to 80 kg and the face is 3 feet in diameter. The *rebana ubi* (medium size drum), which is smaller than *rebana besar* is at least 70 cm in diameter and almost 1 meter in height. It is hung vertically or placed horizontally on the floor. Both of them are usually found in ensembles, which play interlocking patterns (Matusky and Tan, 1997:222).

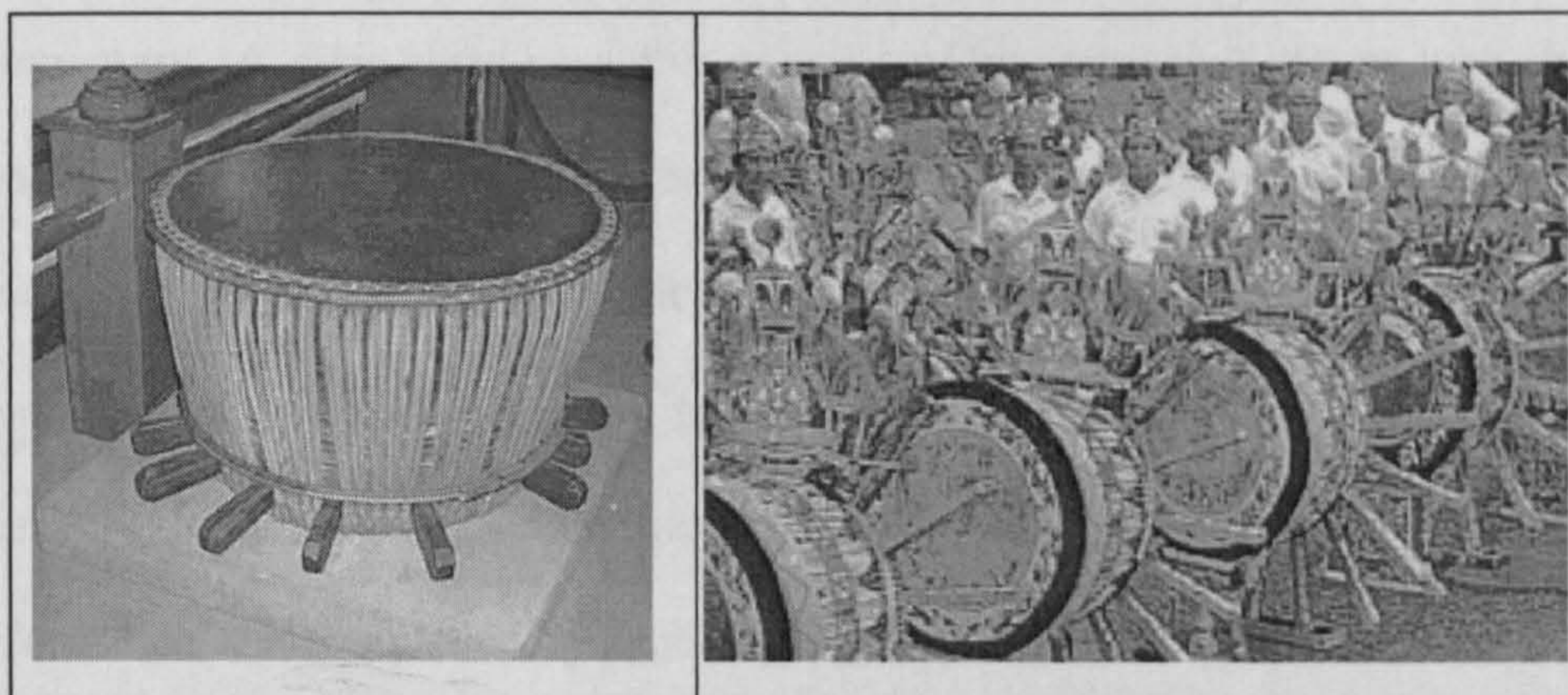


Plate 2g: *Rebana Besar* (left) and *Rebana Ubi* (right)

Meanwhile, the term *rebana*, which refers to the frame drum, is a circular frame drum with a goatskin head, laced with leather or pinned to a wooden frame. It is tautened by pressing a piece of rattan into its inner rim and heating near a flame. Some *rebana* are loosely inserted with small metal discs or jingles like tambourines (Sadie, 1984:201).

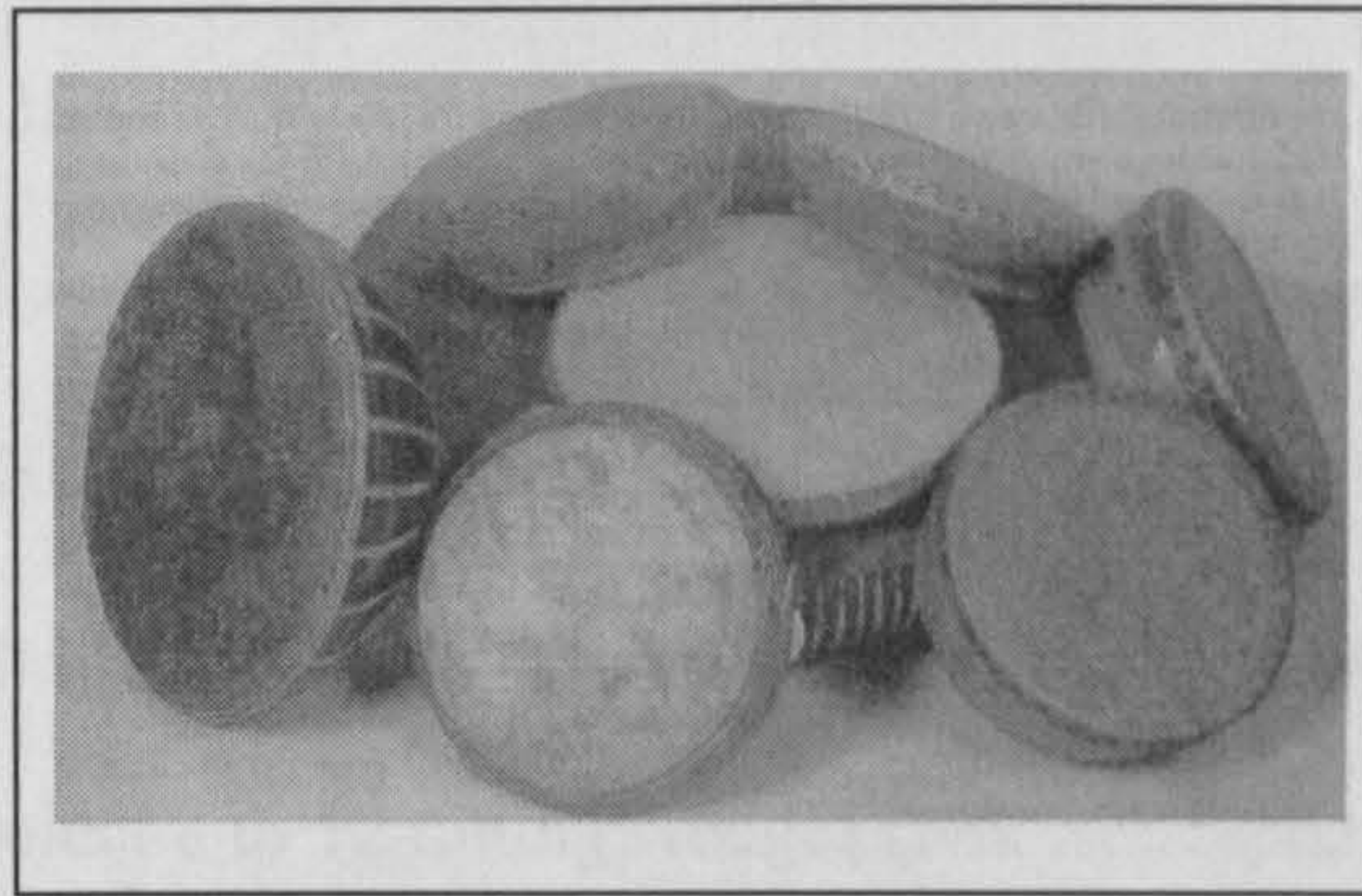


Plate 2h: Types of *rebana* found in Malaysia

The frame drum type of *rebana* is used in the *dikir barat* ensemble. The *dikir barat* ensemble flourished in the East coast of peninsular Malaysia. The *dikir barat* is a modified and secularized version of *zikir*. Like most of the Malay folk performances, the *dikir barat*, in its traditional practice, is an avenue for social commentary. A *dikir barat* ensemble consists of two opposing groups who sing in a call-and-respond pattern. Each team is led by a *tukang karut* or lyricist whose performance is judged by his ability to versify, his skill and his intensiveness of improvisation. While singing, the group members will make certain movements especially with the hands and body to enlighten the performance. The whole performance is accompanied by handclapping, a pair of *rebana*, maracas and a gong (Matusky and Tan, 1997:355-358).

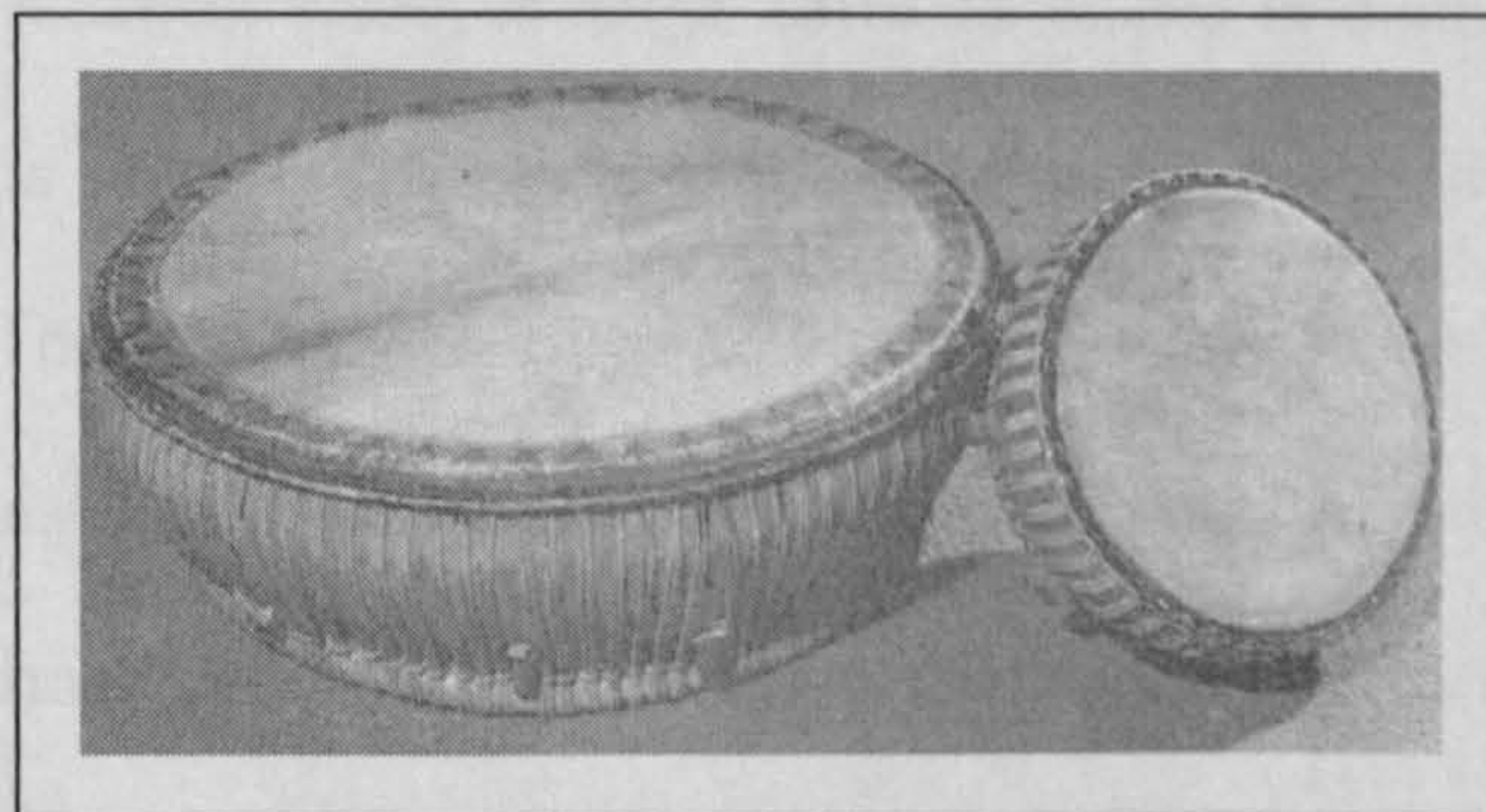


Plate 2i: *Rebana ibu* (left) and *rebana anak* (right) used in the *Dikir Barat* ensemble

A pair of *rebana* (see Figure 2i) is used in the *dikir barat* ensemble. The bigger size is called *rebana ibu* (mother) and is about 18 inches in diameter. The smaller size, about 10 inches diameter, is called *rebana anak* (child). Both of them are made of goatskin hide and fastened by rattan thongs and laced with rattan to the base, from which project 8 to 12 tuning wedges (Nik Mustapha, 1998:83-89).



Plate 2j: *Rebana Kercing*

Another type of the kompang-like frame drum in Malaysia is *rebana kercing* (see Plate 2j). The art of *rebana kercing* playing is only found in the state of Kelantan, located in the Northeast coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The *rebana kercing* is a single-headed frame drum, which resembles a heavy tambourine. The frame, made of jackfruit wood, is about 10 to 11 inches in diameter and 2.5 to 3 inches depth. Its skin-head is made of goatskin and is much shallower than the other *rebanas*. The term *kercing* refers to the small metal discs inserted around the wooden frame just like a tambourine. Originating from the Middle East of West Asia, it is the smallest variety of Kelantan's drums. While beating the *rebana kercing* in one hand, performers in a group of six or more, dance in rhythmic jerks,

chanting verses and sometimes singing lusty Arabic choruses in praise of the Prophet. The chanting praises heroism in battles, expresses tender romance, and the pining for one's love. The *rebana kercing* is mainly performed before a wedding ceremony, at the circumcision rite and during other festive occasions. It should be noted that the *rebana kercing* is performed mainly by male teenagers (Nik Musthapa, 1998:83-90).

Rebana hadrah is another type of the frame drum played in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia. The instrument is called *rebana hadrah* (see Plate 2l) because the *rebana* (frame drum) is used in the *hadrah* ensemble. The *hadrah* is a type of singing dance popular in the northern states of Perlis and Kedah. A similar type of *hadrah* dance is also performed in Java, Indonesia. It originated from Arabia and was brought to Malaysia via India (Mohd Ghouse, 1992: 145). Men mainly perform the dance. The unique and sometimes slightly disturbing feature of this dance is some of the performers play the role of women and it has become associated with transvestite performers.



Plate 2k: A pose of *hadrah* dance

Traditionally, an ensemble of eight to ten different sizes of *rebanas* provides the musical accompaniment. The drummers and dancers sit upstage with the dancers sitting either at stage left or right or in front of the drummers. Like most Malay dances, the *hadrah* dance movements can be divided into sitting, kneeling and standing movements. There are about fifty songs either in Urdu, Arabic or Malay which are sung in the *hadrah* ensemble. Mostly, the *hadrah* songs are praising Allah (the Islamic God) and the Prophet Muhammad (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:145).



Plate 21: *Gendang peningkah* (left) and *rebana* (right)

There are eight to ten various sizes of *rebana* and a gong used in the *hadrah* ensemble⁵. All the *rebanas* used in the *hadrah* ensemble are single-headed frame drums with a diameter between 12 to 18 inches and 4.5 inches depth. The skin-head is made of goatskin and tensioned by inserting a small rattan strand underneath between the skinhead and the frame. All the *rebanas* have four to five jingles inserted around the frame except the smallest *rebana* called the *gendang peningkah* which has no jingle. The *gendang peningkah* has a diameter of 12 inches and 6

⁵ See Videography – Hadrah published by Jabatan Muzium dan Antikuiti Malaysia.

inches depth and is used to play counter part to the other *rebanas*. The drums are played in an interlocking pattern with the gong marking the end of every measure (Mohd Ghouse, 1992: 147-148).

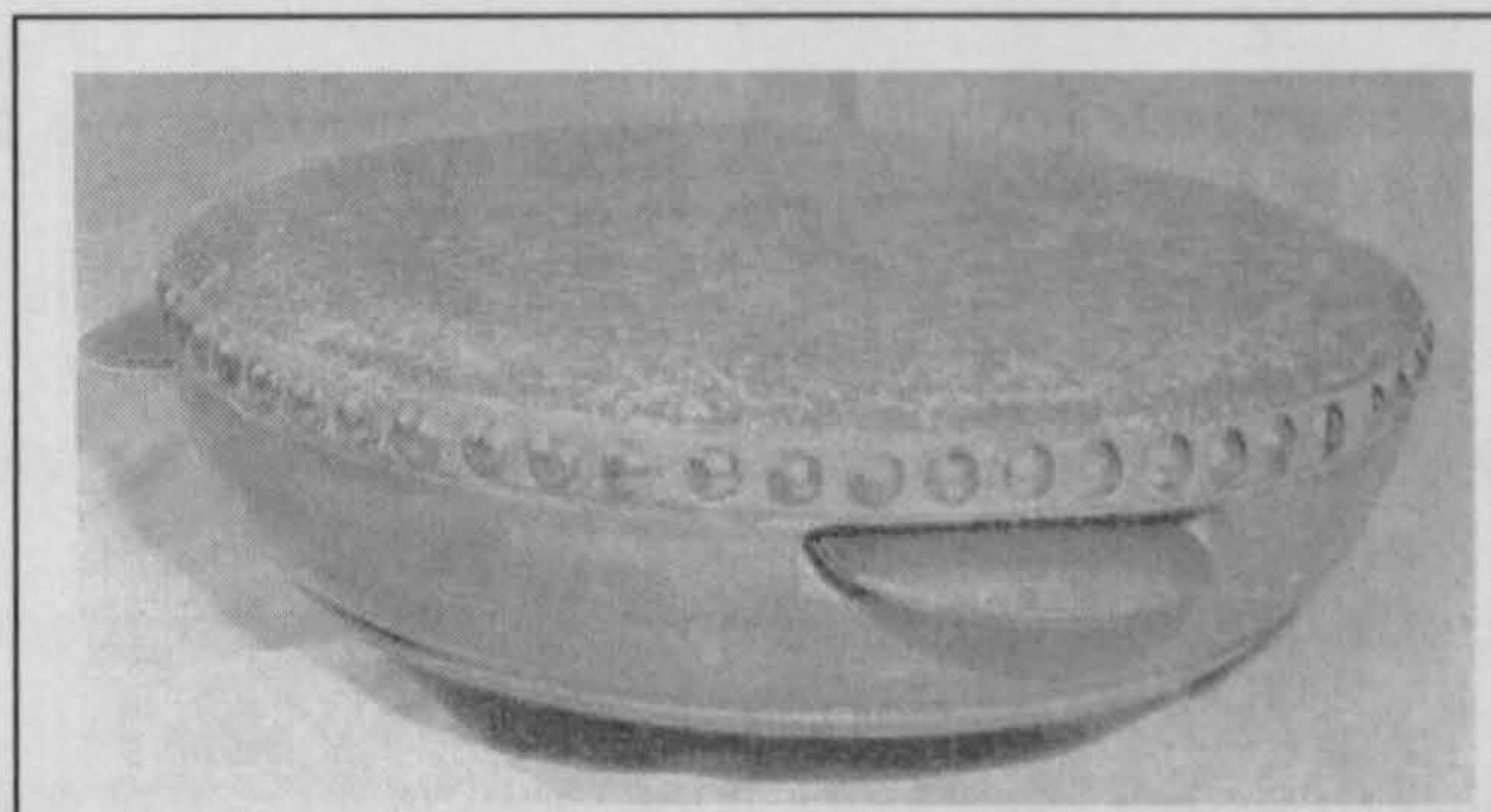


Plate 2m: *Tar Rodat*

On the East coast of Peninsular Malaysia, *tar* is another type of kompang-like frame drum used in the *Rodat* ensemble. The instrument is better known as *tar rodat* (see Plate 2m) as it is only used to accompany the *rodat* dance. *Rodat* is a folkdance performed in the state of Terengganu, located in the East coast of Peninsular Malaysia. However, the dance is believed to have originated from Arabia and to have been brought to Malaysia from Aceh, Indonesia via Sambas in Borneo by traders in the 19th Century. The term *rodad* is a short form of two words - *Hadrat*, which means *zikir* (songs in praise of Allah and Prophet Muhammad) and Baghdad. The *rodad* originally consisted only of *zikir* with the accompaniment of *tar* and without any dance movements. However, during the 1930s, the *rodad* was performed with dancing in which the female parts were performed by transvestite

dancers (like the *Hadrah*). But, after World War II, women dancers performed the female parts (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:148).

The *rodat* ensemble consists of 20 to 26 performers including 12 male dancers called *anak pelengkuk*, 4 to 6 female dancers called *mak inang* and eight drummers called *pengadis* (Nik Mustapha, 1998:94). The basic movements of *rodat* are divided into sitting-kneeling, a combination of squatting and standing, which is performed mainly by male dancers and standing movements. Originally, all the *rodat* songs had religious connotations, praising Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. However, over the years, local love songs have been added to attract the youngsters to keep the *rodat* ensemble alive. The *rodat* ensemble is performed at wedding ceremonies, circumcision ceremonies, after harvest, as well as secular and religious ceremonies (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:148).



Plate 2n: *Rodat* dancers accompanied by *tar* players

The *tar rodāt*, is similar to the *rebana hadrah* but is of smaller size. The instrument has a diameter between 10 to 12 inches. The skinhead made of goatskin or cowhide is tacked onto the circular wooden frame. Three pairs of small metal discs are inserted around the frame. The drum is played with the bare hand. It produces high sounds by striking at the edge and produces low sounds by striking at the centre of the drum (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:148).



Plate 2p: *Dabus* dance (left) and *anak dabus* (right)

A set of *rebana* is also used to accompany the *dabus* dance performed in Peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra, Indonesia. *Dabus* dance is a dance that has the elements of trance. The element of trance in this dance probably link to the *zikir* practice in Islamic mysticism (Sufism). According to Habib Hassan Touma (1996:162-165), in the *zikir* ceremony, in particular, it might focus on movement and dance, another on meditation and trance, and on the act of self-flagellation. The *dabus* ensemble is believed to have been created as a form of a pastime during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and his friends, Saidina Abu Bakar, Saidina Omar, Saidina Osman and Saidina Ali. It is possible that this dance was used to train soldiers during the wars with the enemies of Islam. The warriors were said to

perform this dance to show their bravery, frighten their enemies and to spread the word of God (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:155). The *dabus* dance combines three traditional arts; singing, dancing and the ability and the bravery of the dancers in using sharp equipment. They actually stabbed themselves with the sharp iron rod with a small bell at the top called *anak dabus* (son of *dabus*) without any injuries. The *dabus* dance was brought to Malaysia via Sumatera by traders and evangelists in the 18th Century. The *dabus* dance is popular in certain states in Peninsular Malaysia especially in Perak where it is believed to have been first performed in Pasir Panjang, Sitiawan. It is believed that this dance has the power to heal, medicate and to prevent the spread of disease. However this belief has diminished slightly and the dance has undergone the inevitable changes (Id.)

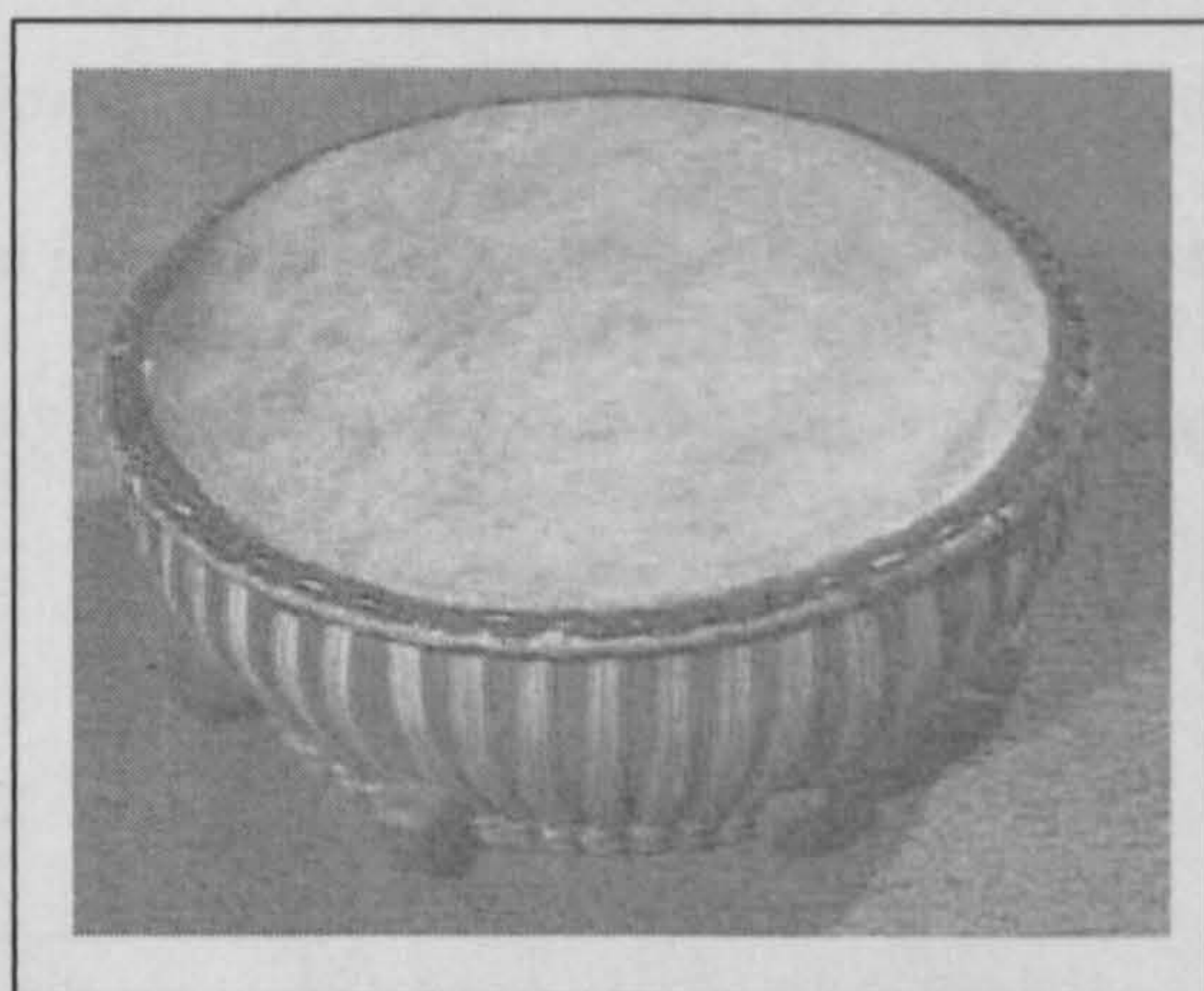


Plate 2q: The *rebana* used in the *dabus* ensemble

There are 8 to 13 *rebana* used in the *dabus* ensemble. They are divided into three sizes, big, medium and small *rebana*. Two big *rebana* with a diameter of 23 inches and 5.5 inches depth, two medium sizes of *rebana* with a diameter of 18 inches and a depth of 4 inches and the rest are 16 inches in diameter and 7 inches

deep. All the *rebanas* are made of hardwood and attached with goatskin. The number of *rebana* used in the *dabus* ensemble varies from troupe to troupe. Some troupes add a *serunai* (double reed oboe) to accompany the singing (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:156).

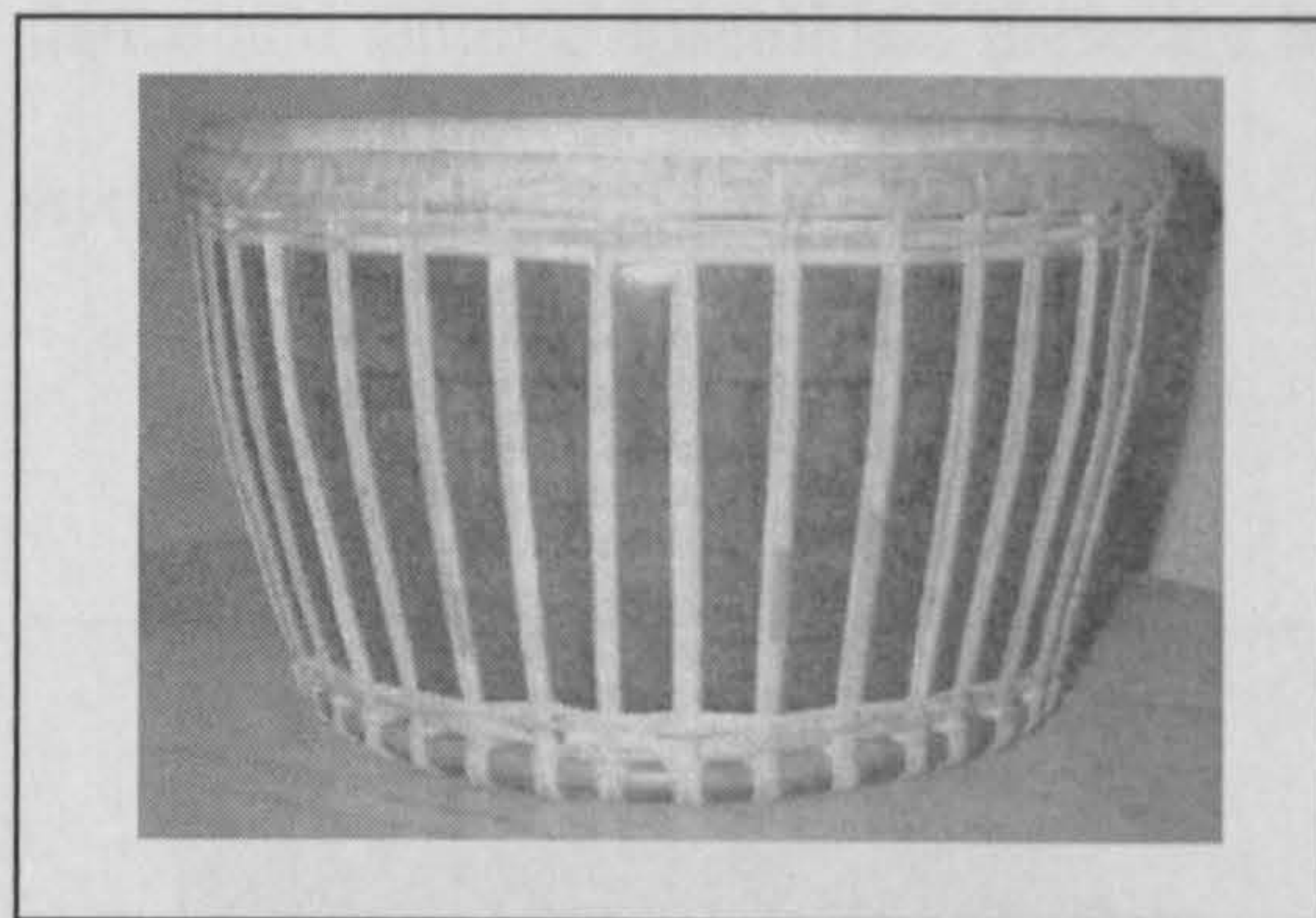


Plate 2r: Potted type of *rebana* used to accompany various types of Malay traditional songs and dances

The frame drum type of *rebana* (see Plate 2s) is also used in conjunction with other traditional instruments in many syncretic music ensembles in Malaysia. It is used to accompany secular dances and singing such as *joget*⁶, *canggung*⁷, *asli*⁸,

⁶ The *joget* is the most popular traditional dance throughout Malaysia. The *joget* is performed by couples who combine fast hand and leg movements. It is a lively rendition with fast upbeat tempo and is greatly enjoyed by the young and old. It is usually performed during cultural celebrations and Malay weddings.

⁷ The dance is performed in pairs with the ladies holding a handkerchief in their hands. The dancers sing while dancing. They sing the famous Malay poems according to the beat and tunes of the music. The musical instruments used to accompany the dance are gong, violin and two *rebana* and a *gendang ubi*.

⁸ This dance is based on the Malay *asli* songs like *Makan Sireh*, and *Gunung Banang*. The dance features slow flowing and elegant movements and resembles the *asyik* dance (court dance), but its movements are simpler and danced to a modern music ensemble.

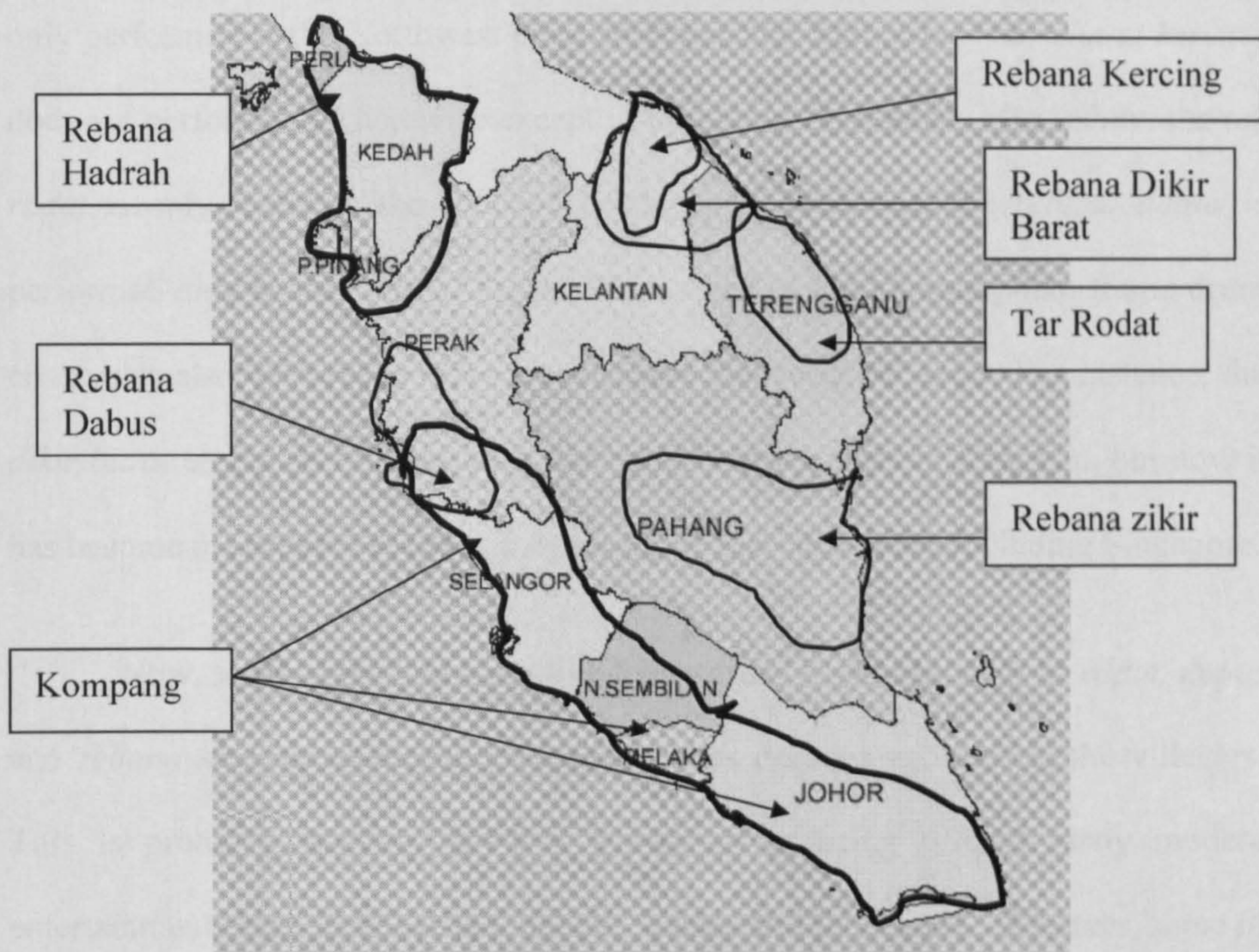
*masri*⁹ and *inang*¹⁰. The *rebana* is placed upright on the player's lap and beaten with both hands (see Plate 2s). Mainly, there are two timbres played on the *rebana*. Timbre *dung* is sounded by beating at the middle of the drumhead and timbre *tak* is produced by beating at the edge of the drumhead. The *rebana* plays three main functions in secular dance and singing ensembles: these are basic rhythm, additive rhythm and counter rhythm (Nik Mustapha, 1998:83).



Plate 2s: The *rebana* player

⁹ *Masri* is a modern Malay dance that has the influence of the Middle East dances in its movements, costumes and the accompaniment of music. Sometimes the dancers hold traditional tambourines and make sounds with them while dancing. *Masri* dance is usually performed by female dancers only.

¹⁰ *Inang* dance is a modernized version of the traditional *mak inang* folk dance. It is performed at social functions. This dance moves at fast tempo set by the *rebana*, viola and *gendang* (double headed canonical drum). While they dance, the dancers wave colourful scarves.



Map 2b: The original area of the kompang-like frame drums performed in Peninsular Malaysia

Analyzing all the kompang-like frame drum ensembles performing in Peninsular Malaysia, it can be concluded that most of them share common elements. All of them originated from Arabia and arrived in the Malay Archipelago during the arrival of Islam in this region, either directly from Arab countries or through India. Originally, all the kompang-like frame drum ensembles in Peninsular Malaysia had religious connotations, and were used in singing praises to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. However, examining the places where every kompang-like frame drum is played, it seems each ensemble has boundaries separating one ensemble from another (see Map 2b). For example, the kompang ensemble originally performed in the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia and the *rebana hadrah*

only performed in the Northwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The *rebana kercing* does not perform anywhere else except in the state of Kelantan. Meanwhile, the *tar rodan* is only found in the state of Terengganu. Moreover, the *rebana dabus* is performed only in the state of Perak. Now some of the *kompang*-like frame drum ensembles also perform in other areas beside their original area. For instance, the *dikir barat* ensemble originally performed only in the state of Kelantan, but now it has become more popular and widely performed in other states including Singapore.

Now, some of the *kompang*-like frame drum ensembles such as *rodan*, *dabus* and *rebana kercing* are not quite as popular as decades ago among the villagers. This is probably because the new generation is being offered many modern entertainments such as television, movies, games and live bands. However, some of the *kompang*-like frame drums such as *kompang* ensembles and *hadrah* still perform on many occasions. With the excellent efforts of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Malaysia, however, all the ensembles related to *kompang*-like frame drums as well as other Malay traditional music have been encouraged to perform in many cultural shows in Kuala Lumpur and other cities in Malaysia.

There are many types of frame drums that are similar to the *kompang* found in Indonesia. Among them are *derendeng*, *genjring*, *guwel*, *kencane*, *kobat*, *mundam*, *pano*, *redap*, *rapa'i*, *tambring*, *terbang*, and *rapano*. The *rebana*, which is similar to the Malaysian *rebana*, is also widely performed in many ensembles in Indonesia, especially in the Sumatra and Riau Islands. Most of the musical ensembles which use the *rebana* as music accompaniment have religious

connotations. The same type of Malaysian *rebana* is used to accompany *qasidah*¹¹ and *zikir* recitations in Lombok and Mataram, Indonesia. The instrument is called *Rebana Qasidah* as it used to accompany the *qasidah* recitation. The *Rebana Qasidah* ensemble can be found in every village in the Lombok area. There are 8 to 12 women in this ensemble. The songs sung by them have generally the spirit of Islamic education. The *qasidah* ensemble is usually held at night to make any festivity livelier (Matusky and Chopyak, 1998:605-606).



Plate 2t: *Ratib Rebana Rea* in performance

In Sumbawa Island, one of the large islands in the West Nusa Tenggara province, the *rebana* is also used in the *Ratib Rebana Rea* ensemble. It is also called *Ratib Rebana Kebo*, because of the large *rebana* that is used to accompany the songs in Arabic. Mainly, the songs are taken from the *Kitab Berzanji* or *Kitab Hadrah*. The *rebana* is held vertically on the floor while the players sit with legs crossed and beat the drum with bare hands. The *Ratib*¹² art is usually performed

¹¹ Islamic religious singing with Arabic text by women singers consisting of the lyrics of songs and prayer to Allah and praise to Prophet Muhammad. It also consists of poems about struggle and advice and stories about human life in the world.

¹² A type of Islamic chanting (*zikir*) in Arabic text.

during wedding ceremonies of gratitude, circumcision rituals, or to welcome important visitors, hence the function is to brighten up the celebration (Yonaniko & Victor, 2000, Sumbawa Province Homepage, accessed on 13 June 2002).

There are many similar frame drums played in the island of Java, Indonesia. One of them is *derendeng*. Its goatskin head is about 24 cm in diameter and is pinned to a wooden frame about 10 cm deep. It is tautened with a rattan hoop, which is pressed into the rim. The drum is beaten with a stick held in the right hand. *derendang* is used in the *Prajuritan* theatre ensemble in the mountain of Semarang, Indonesia (Kartomi, 1984:794).

The *genjring* is another frame drum with jingles used in parts of West and Central Java. Its goatskin head is about 30 to 35 cm in diameter and pinned or glued to a wooden frame. Usually three sets of metal discs are attached around the frame. *genjring* are mostly played with *terbang* to accompany religious singing. In Cirebon, four *genjring* and singers are used to accompany the *burok* pageant, in which dancers wear animal masks. In the Banyumas area, they are used to accompany displays of the art of self-defence, together with gongs and other drums (Ibid: 36).

The *terbang* is another type of frame drum of Java, Indonesia. It has a goatskin head pinned or glued to a wooden frame. In Cirebon, West Java, there are five sizes of named *terbang*: the *bibid* is about 45 cm in diameter, the *kempyang* is about 40 cm in diameter, the *darah* is about 36 cm in diameter, the *induk* is about 30 cm in diameter and the *kempli* is about 26 cm in diameter. The *terbang* ensemble is

used to accompany religious singing with four *genjring* (frame drum with jingles). The nine drums symbolize the nine *Wali Songo* (nine Muslim missionaries) of early Islam in Java. Normally, a *genjring* player will lead the ensemble with a relatively high-pitched *genjring* playing more complex and varied rhythms in interlocking patterns. The performers, usually all male, introduce *senggakan* (vocal interpolations) and sing unison songs, sometimes with additional singers (Ibid: 568).

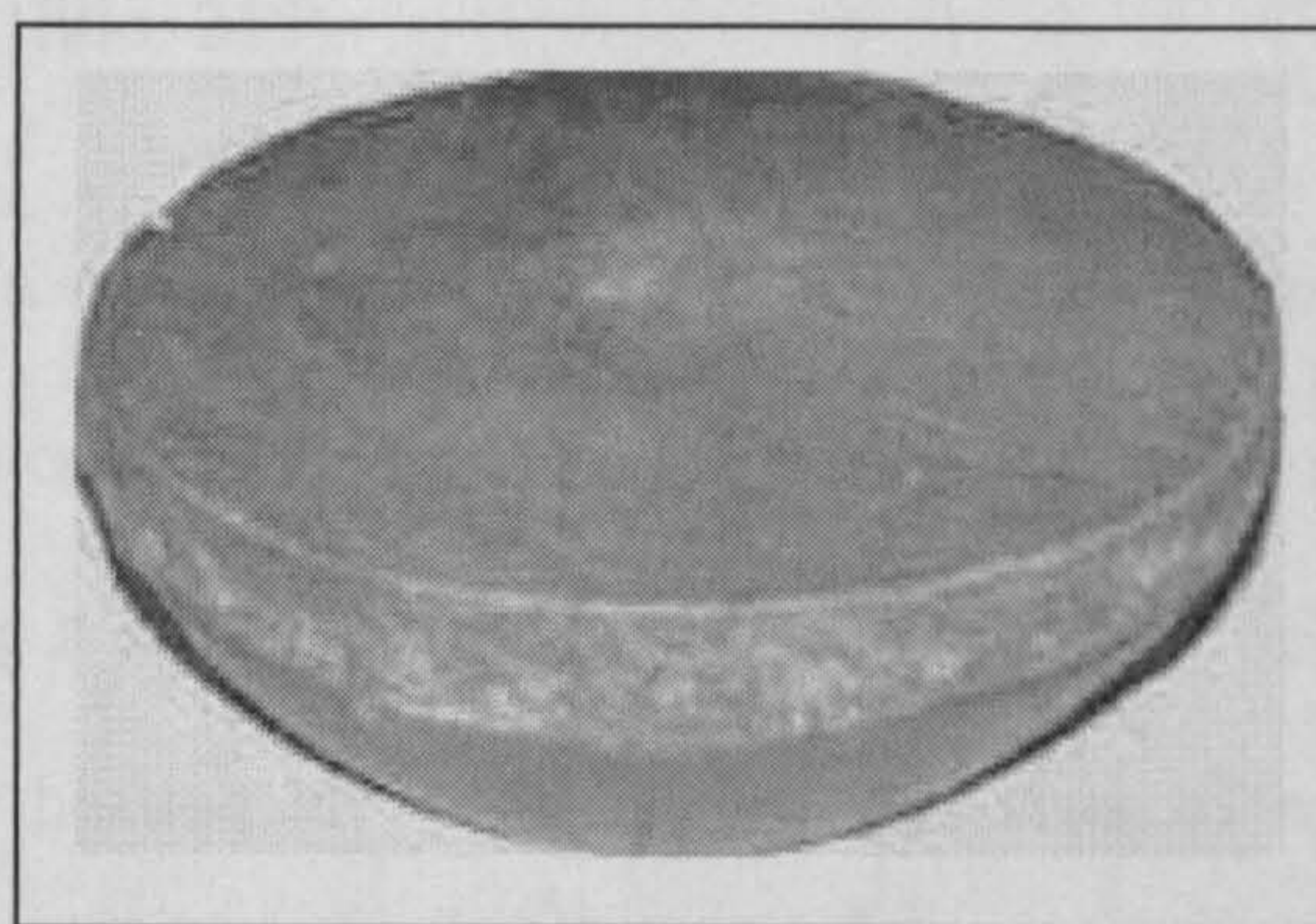


Plate 2u: *Terbang*

The similar frame drums are also found in Sumatra, Indonesia. The *Guwel* is a frame drum of the Gayo people in the Takangon area, Central Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia. Its goatskin head is about 41 cm in diameter, is attached by rattan lacing to a thick circular wooden frame about 13 cm in depth. Its skin measures about 45 cm in diameter (Sadie, 1984: 113). The *Kobat* is another frame drum of the Langkat area of North Sumatra, Indonesia. The wooden frame is about 15 cm deep and about 60 cm in diameter and the goatskin head is fastened to it with rattan lacing. It is played in pairs and as part of the *gendang-gong* ensemble. The *mundam* is a small frame drum of the Payakumbuh area of Minangkabau, West Sumatra, Indonesia. Its diameter is about 17 cm. It is used in the *talipuak layu* dance (Id.).

The *pano* is a frame drum of the Bonjol (Agam) area of Minangkabau, West Sumatra, Indonesia. Its diameter is about 45 cm. It may be a *talempong* (gong-chime) to accompany dances and *randai* theatre at wedding and other ceremonies. It is played with larger frame drums (*radok*) at Muslim ceremonies and may also be played solo by a singer of *talibun* poetry. It is also used in the *tabuhan* ensembles of South Sumatra, and also in the *kelintang* ensemble in Bengkulu and Jambi provinces, Sumatra (Ibid: 215).

A *rapa'i* is a type of frame drum with jingles of Sumatra, Indonesia. The goatskin head is nailed or pinned on to a wooden frame. The head is tautened before playing by inserting a long piece of rattan inside the rim. Sometimes, it may be further tautened by heating it. There are various sizes of *rapa'i* found in North Aceh and Sabang on the island of We, measuring from about 68 cm to 1 meter in diameter. The circular frame is about 37 cm deep, is made of heavy, thick wood. About five to ten *rapa'is* are suspended from a high wooden frame and beaten by hand and fists, producing extremely loud sounds. Formerly they were used for signalling between villages, but now they are played to welcome important guests and at *rapa'i pase* competitions. *Rapa'i dabus* are smaller, ranging from 50 to 60 cm in diameter and played by a group of 30 men to accompany physical displays by participants who possess *ilmu kebal* (invulnerability), born of religious concentration. *Dabus* groups exist especially in East, North and West Aceh (Kartomi, 1984: 193).

Another popular frame drum of Sumatra is the *rapano*. This frame drum is found in Minangkabau, Angkola and Mandailing areas of Sumatra. It is also known

elsewhere in Indonesia and Malaysia as *rebana*. Its head, made of goatskin or sheepskin, is nailed and sewn with rattan into its frame, which is made of jackfruit or other wood. The skin is tautened by pressing a rattan ring into the rim (Id.). *Redap* is another name for the *rebana* played in Sumatra. It is found in two main sizes, usually about 40 cm to 50 cm in diameter. The same instrument used in South Sumatra is about 30 cm in diameter. Its skinhead is made of goatskin or cow skin and laced to a deep wooden frame with rattan. The head is tautened with eight pieces of small triangular wood placed around the lower rim. A small rattan is inserted underside between the frame and the head to further tauten the skinhead. It is played with the larger frame drum at many Muslim ceremonies. It is also used to accompany the *talibun* poetry. The instrument is also used in the *kelintang* ensemble in Bengkulu and Jambi provinces, Sumatra (Ibid: 215)

Similar frame drums are also found in the North area of Southeast Asia. Among them are *kong dung* and *rammana*. A *kong dung* is a large single headed frame drum of the Lao people of Laos. The drum also known as *rammana lam tat*. The *rammana* is a shallow frame drum of Thailand, Laos and Kampuchea. It probably derived from the Chinese *bangu* or the Malaysian *rebana*. In Thailand, it exists in two sizes. The body of the smaller *rammana* is about 5 to 7 cm deep and slopes inwards from the head to the open bottom. The head is about 25 cm in diameter, is stretched tightly over the wider opening in the circular frame and anchored around the edge on the sides of the frame with tacks. The instrument is played with the fingers and the palm of the hands. It is used in the *khruang sai* and *mahori* ensembles and is often played by the same performer as the *thon*. In

Thailand and Laos, the instrument is used to accompany various types of vocal performance. In Kampuchea, the *rammana* is similar to the Thai *rammana*. The skinhead is pegged and is struck with the hands (Morton, 1984:191).



Plate 2v: *Rammana*, a frame drum of Thailand

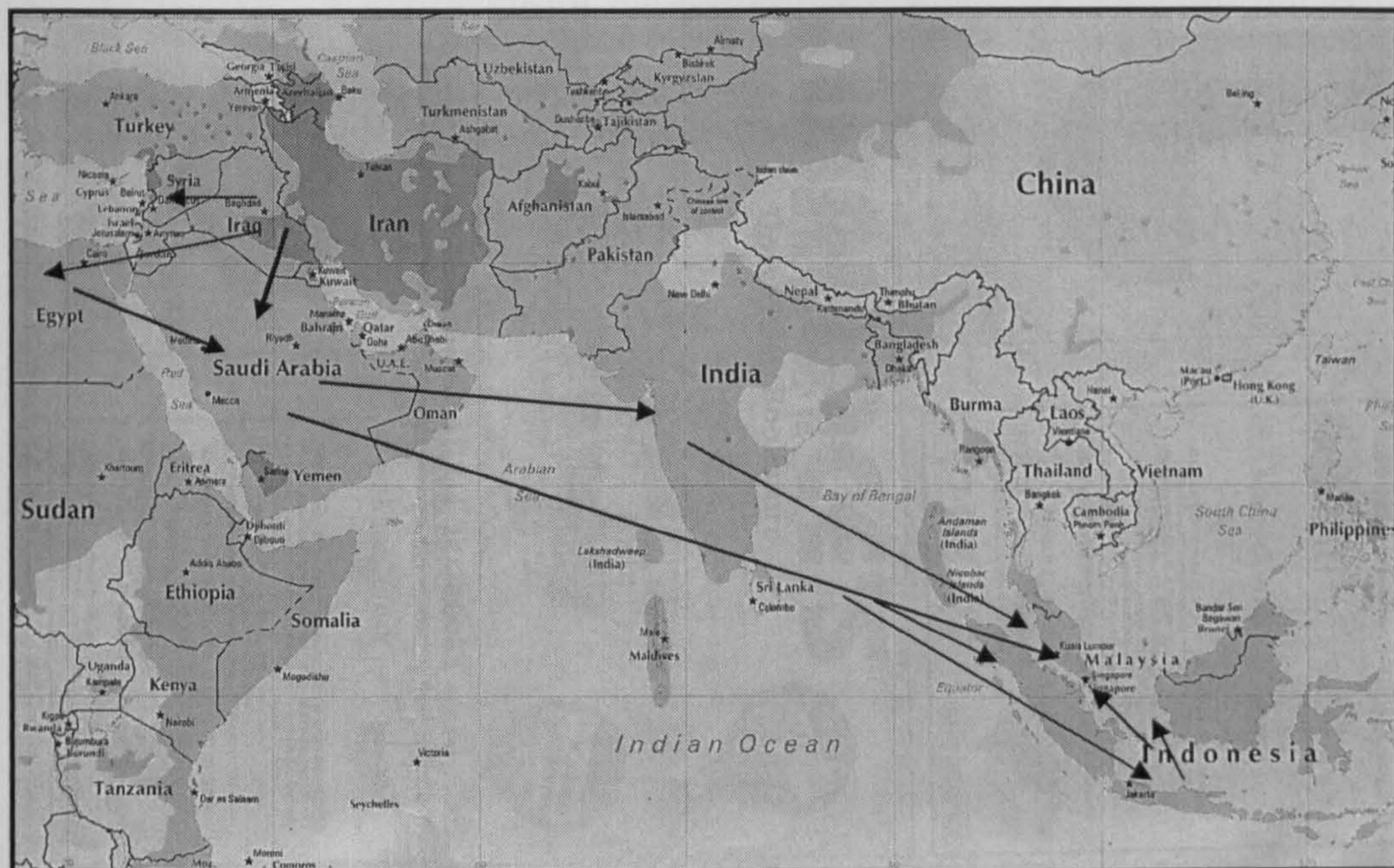
The use of the kompong-like frame drum in many musical ensembles appeared in many cultures around the world. In Europe, the *tambourine* is a very common frame drum used in many ensembles. In Ireland, a version of it is known as the *bodhran* and in Italy it is called the *cimbalo*. In Portugal and Spain it is called the *pandeiro*, and it is called the *daire* in many countries of Eastern Europe. Similar types of frame drum are also found in India as the *pirai*, in the Arab world as the *tar* and in Russia, Korea, Asia, and North America as a shaman's drum (Marcuse, 1975: 133-135).

HOW THE ARABIAN FRAME DRUM ARRIVED IN MALAY ARCHIPELAGO

Successive migrations of the Arabs have brought the frame drum to a broader area include Africa, India and Southeast Asia (Sach, 1940:157-159). The

instrument had been brought into South India probably in the 12th century. It had been played by Muslim people in Gujarat and the surrounding area (Poche, 1984). The Islamic influence has left many traces of instruments in Southeast Asia including frame drums. The primitive tribes have absorbed most of the Islamic instruments and they have become part of their culture. Some of the drums gradually lost their regional character when beginning in the seventh century Islam unified the Near East and extended their empire between the Malay Archipelago and Spain. The frame drum as well as many other instruments of Arab origin was taken to Southeast Asia probably during the Melaka Sultanate and Majapahit Empire (1293 – 1470) by Muslim traders. When the local people converted to Islam and practiced the new faith, the drum became part of their music (Sach, 1940).

The appearance of the *kompang* in the Malay Archipelago has been traced from the 13th Century A.D. in Java. It is believed that the Arab traders brought the instrument to the region (Shamsiah et al., 1993:2). Arab traders played the frame drum to attract customers. During the Majapahit Empire (1293 – 1470) in Java, the *kompang* was played to celebrate their victory after the war. It also was played as an entertainment to avoid the army getting drunk after the war. The *kompang* used to accompany the song about the Almighty of Allah and the Prophet. Concurrently, the *kompang* is also played in the Riau islands including Bintan. The migration of the Javanese people to the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia especially in the state of Johor, Melaka and Selangor brought *kompang* playing to the Malay people in Malaysia (Khalid Amin, 1993).



Map 2c: Traces of the kompong origin

Kompong ensembles have been played in the Malay Archipelago including peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Sumatra and Java in Indonesia since the arrival of Islam in the region. The instrument may use different names in different places but it is performed for the same purpose which is associated with Islamic occasions including *zikir*, *berzanji*¹³ and the wedding ceremony. It is also called kompong in Singapore and Bintan, Indonesia. A similar instrument is called *terbang* and *darah* by the Javanese, and *rapano* by the Sumatran. The people in the Malay Archipelago migrated within the region and practiced their own culture in the new settlements. As a result, many types of music and musical instruments played in one place are also played in other places in the region. For example, *Gamelan* is played in Java and it is also played in Peninsular Malaysia, while *caklempong* is played by the Minangkabau people in Sumatra and it is also played by the people in the state of

¹³ A choral singing praising Prophet Muhammad from a book called *kitab berzanji*.

Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia. In the north, *Manohra* is performed by the Siamese in Southern Thailand, and it is also performed by the Malay Kelantanese in the Northern part of Peninsular Malaysia (Matusky and Tan, 1997:406).

DISCUSSION ON THE EVIDENCES OF THE ORIGIN OF THE KOMPANG

Much evidence shows that the types and the uses of the kompang in Malaysia are very similar to the frame drum found in many other Muslim countries especially Arab countries. This will strengthen the theory saying that the kompang performed in Malaysia was originated or adapted from the frame drum of the Arab World. This will also reject the opinion saying that the instrument was adapted from the local frame drum especially the one performed by the native people of the Malay Archipelago. To demonstrate the case, one can observe from a relief from the 12th Century exhibited in the Museo Nazionale in Florence. The relief shows that the design of the Arabian frame is the same as the kompang (Sachs, 1940:209). Careful study of the relief, (see Plate 2w) shows that the holding and the playing techniques of the instrument are very similar to the playing techniques of the kompang performed in Malaysia. The frame drum in the relief is held vertically at the bottom of the frame with the left hand and is beaten with the other hand. Obviously, the playing technique of the frame drum demonstrates in the relief is different from the local frame drum performed by the native people of Malaysia. Mostly, the frame drum of the native people is place vertically on the lap of the player and is beaten

with both hands. For example the *branok*¹⁴ of Temiar people is performed with both hands and is placed on the player's lap (Roseman, 1991:122-123). Moreover, the size of the frame drum in the relief is also about the same as the *kompang*.

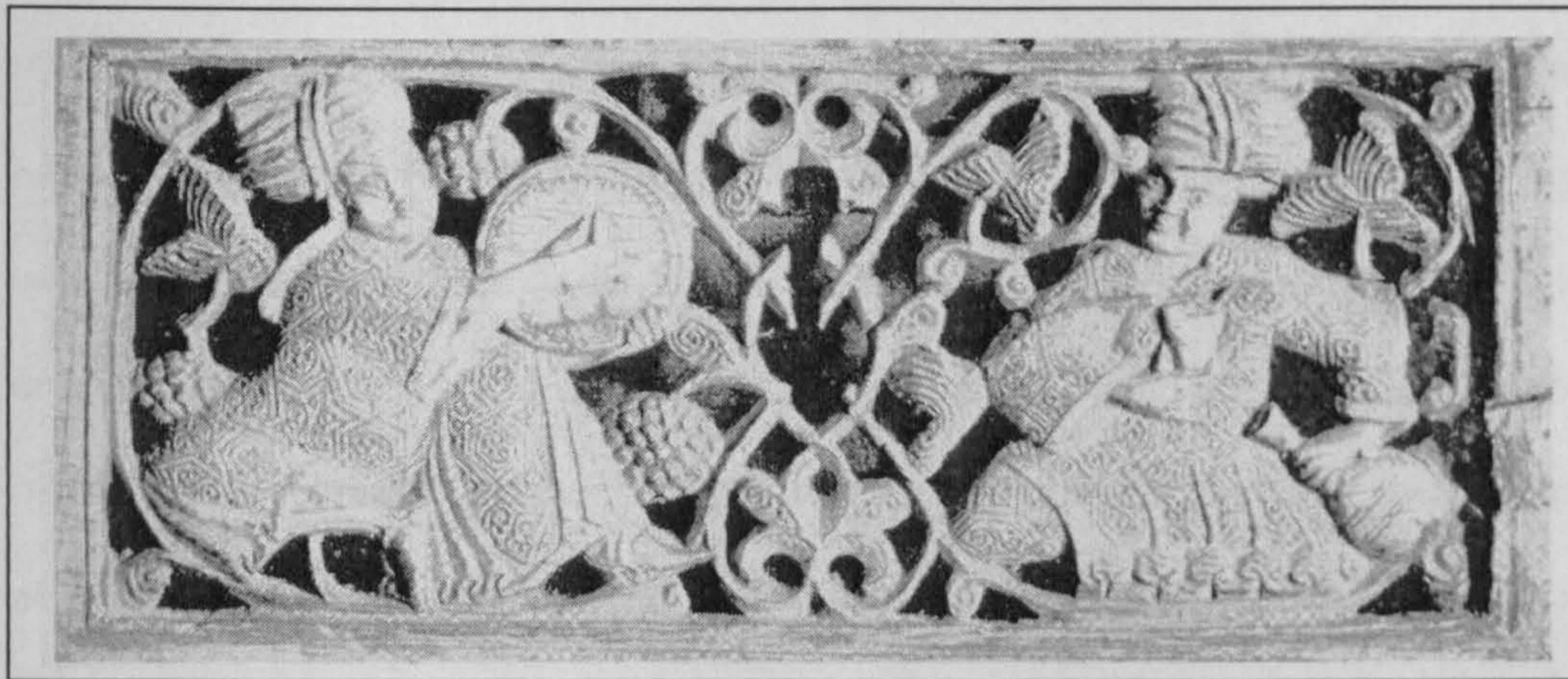


Plate 2w: Relief of an Arabian Frame drum (12th Century) in the Museo Nazionale in Florence

Another aspect that one can see to witness the evidence that the *kompang* of Malay people was adapted from the frame drum of the Arab world is the construction techniques. Mostly, the method of attaching the skinhead of the frame drums of the Arab World such as *duff*, *da'ira*, *girbal*, *bandair* and *tar* are tacked, nailed or glued onto the wooden frame (Blades, 1970:183-184). Meanwhile, most of the frame drum of the local people such as *rebana*, *branok* (in Malaysia), *redap*, *guwel* and *kobat* (in Indonesia), its skinhead are laced to a deep wooden frame with rattan and tautened with small blocks of wood placed round the lower rim. However, this method of attaching the skinhead is not applied to the *kompang*. Instead, it is tacked onto the wooden frame just like the frame drum from the Arab

¹⁴ Single-headed frame drum of Temiar people (native people of Peninsular Malaysia). For more detail see Roseman, 1991:122-123.

World. This will lead to the theory that the *kompang* was adapted from the frame drum of the Arab world.

Furthermore, examining the construction's feature some of the *kompang* such as the one performed in the state of Perak (see Chapter 6) and a few types of the frame drums that are claimed to be originated from the Arab World such as *rebana kercing*, *tar* (in Malaysia), *genjring* and *rapa'i* (in Indonesia) are inserted with a pair of metal discs on its frame. This feature resembles some of the frame drums from the Arab World such as *tar* and *girbal*. Investigating the frame drums of the native people, all of them are constructed without any jingles or metal discs attached on its frame. This observation also will strengthen the theory that the *kompang* was adapted from the frame drums of the Arab World.

In theorizing the origin of the *kompang*, one can also analyze and compare the role and function of the instrument in the society. Analyzing this aspect, in Malaysia, the *kompang* has been used for certain Islamic processions such as those accompanying *zikir*, wedding ceremonies, the birth month of Prophet Muhammad, and circumcision. According to Wellesz (1957), when a child is born into Islam in the Arab world, the *adhan*¹⁵ was chanted in its ear, whilst the neighbouring matrons assembled with their *dufuf* (frame drums) to celebrate joy. The same ritual also has been practiced in some places among the Muslim people especially in the Southwest

¹⁵ The call for the daily prayers is called *Adhan*. The person who calls the *Adhan* is called a *Mu'adhin*. A *Mu'adhin* calls the *Adhan* five times a day before Muslims are to perform their daily *Salah* (Prayer). The *Adhan* is composed of specific words and phrases to be recited loudly in the Arabic language so that the neighbors can recognize the time schedule for the prayers.

coast of Peninsular Malaysia. This ritual practiced in certain places in the Southwest coast on Peninsular Malaysia was probably an inheritance from Arab Muslims. The *dufuf* is also performed during the celebration of circumcision and the wedding ceremony amongst the old Arab Muslims. Even though it is not part of the religious ritual, the *kompang* ensemble is played to celebrate the joy of the bride in the wedding ceremony. In some places, especially in the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, the *kompang* ensemble is very important in the procession of the wedding ceremony among the Malay Muslims.

The use of the frame drums on some occasions including wedding ceremonies and celebrating special days was approved by Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. A few *hadiths* collected by Bukhari, Muslim, and Abu Dawud described the uses of the frame drum on many occasions including wedding ceremonies, the celebration of *Ed Adha*, and many others. One of the *hadith* collected by Bukhari says,

“Narrated 'Urwa on the authority of 'Aisha:

On the days of Mina, (11th, 12th, and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) Abu Bakr came to her while two young girls were beating the duff and the Prophet was lying covered with his clothes. Abu Bakr scolded them and the Prophet uncovered his face and said to Abu Bakr, "Leave them, for these days are the days of 'Id and the days of Mina." 'Aisha further said, "Once the Prophet was screening me and I was watching the display of black slaves in the Mosque and (Umar) scolded them. The Prophet said, 'Leave them. O Bani Arfida! (carry on), you are safe (protected)'."

(MSA-USC Hadith Database, Shahih Bukhari: Volume 2, Book 15, Number 103)

The use of the Arabic text and Islamic chanting in the *kompang* performances provide strong evidence of the origin of the *kompang*. Many *zikir*¹⁶ and songs performed with the *kompang* such as *Falakam*, *Alhamdulillah* and *Salakia Rahman* are taken from *Kitab berzanji*¹⁷ (See Chapter 6). Moreover, the structure of the *kompang* is similar to the Arabian frame drum known as *daf* or *duff*. Some of the musical instruments from outside the region have changed some of its elements including construction technique, playing techniques and the function of the instrument in the community. Some of the elements of the *kompang* have changed to suit the local need. The changes include the construction techniques, the music performed with the *kompang*, and the uses of the *kompang*. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

¹⁶ Choral singings of Arabic texts praising the Prophet Muhammad.

¹⁷ A book contains religious texts in Arabic praising Prophet Muhammad.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORGANOLOGY OF THE KOMPANG

At first, my research was focused on one type of the kompang (big-shallow frame), as I was unaware of the existence of the small-deep frame drum found in the states of Perak and Selangor. When I first came across the small-deep frame drum, my impression was that this instrument looked different and had nothing in common with the kompang that is widely played in the states of Melaka and Johor. However, I later found that both types of hand-beaten frame drum were interchangeable in the performance of the kompang ensemble. This led to my belief that they were inseparable and it became necessary to investigate both types of frame drum as they were both used to play the role of accompanying instrument in the *zikir* repertoire, although they are never played together in the same ensemble. In this chapter, I will describe both types of instrument from the organological perspective. I will also present my experience in making the instrument as well as its tuning techniques, as learned under the instruction of a very well-known kompang maker in the state of Melaka. Furthermore, a cultural evaluation of the timbre and volume of the instrument are also given, based on my observations and interviews with kompang players from different places. Finally, the playing technique of the instrument is demonstrated with a series of photographs as well as descriptions of the playing techniques adopted by players throughout the Malay Peninsula.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

In the Malay world, the instrument is called the *kompang* by the Malay people who are settled in the Malay Peninsula, Borneo Island, Singapore, the Riau Archipelago, the eastern coast of Sumatra and in West Java. However, the instrument is also called by different names, such as the *rebana*, *kumpang*, *terbang*, *bibid*, *babonan* and *kempling*, by different people from different places, and is categorized in the *rebana* family in the Malay Archipelago. However, the term *kompang* is the most well-known and widely used by the Malay people to describe the instrument, particularly in the Malay Peninsula. Other terms are also used, more rarely, by different ethnic groups in different places; for example, the term *terbang* is used by some players of Javanese ethnic origin. Some of the other terms used to describe the *kompang*-like instrument may not be recognized by most of the Malay people because these terms are very rare in daily usage. A similar type of instrument is also known as the *Rebana Perak* by players in the state of Perak.

Often, another Malay word is attached after the word *kompang* to describe a particular condition or character that is associated with the instrument, such as the place where the ensemble performs or the type of the ensemble. For example, the instrument is called the *Kompang Ezhar* (see Chapter 4) by players in the *Ezhar* organization found in many states on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The *Kompang Johor* (Chapter 5), the *Kompang Selangor*, and the *Kompang Perak* (both in Chapter 6) are the terms used to describe the instrument played in the states of Johor, Selangor, and Perak.

It is also important to note here that some Malay people use the terms *Kompang Ribu*, *Kompang Tiga*, *Kompang Tujuh*, and *Kompang Jawa* in their daily conversation. These are among the terms which refer to the number of the players in the ensemble or who perform on the instrument. The term *Kompang Ribu* (Thousand Kompangs) refers to a kompang ensemble performed by a large group of players. Meanwhile, the terms *Kompang Tiga* (Three Kompangs) and the *Kompang Tujuh* (Seven Kompangs) refer to the small ensembles which consist of three parts or only seven players in an ensemble. The term *Kompang Jawa* is used to describe the kompang ensembles performed by players of Javanese ethnic origin. It is found mainly in the state of Johor and certain places in Selangor. There is also the term *Main Kompang* (kompang playing) which is often used by Malay people to describe kompang playing in the form of an ensemble performed for certain occasions. Most Malaysians spell the word as *kompang* but other spellings are found. For instance, The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments (1984:794) spells it as *kumpang*.

The kompang is a single-headed frame drum consisting of two main parts; the *baluh* (frame) and the *muka* (head). The *baluh* is a frame made of tropical hardwood carved into a circular shape. Some players called the frame as *balong* (Matusky and Tan, 1997: 175). This is where the player holds the instrument. The *muka* is the drum head made of animal hide skin (called *belulang* or *kulit*), goatskin hide or cowhide depending on the type of kompang. It is stretched over the frame and attached with small nails. A piece of red lace made of cotton cloth, or a piece of copper about 1 centimetre wide is attached with metal tacks around the frame to cover the edge of the head. The edge of the open end of the *baluh* is called the *bibir*

(lip). It is a curious name, given that this part does not look like a pair of lips, but none of the players or *kompang* makers that I interviewed could explain for sure why it is called the *bibir*.

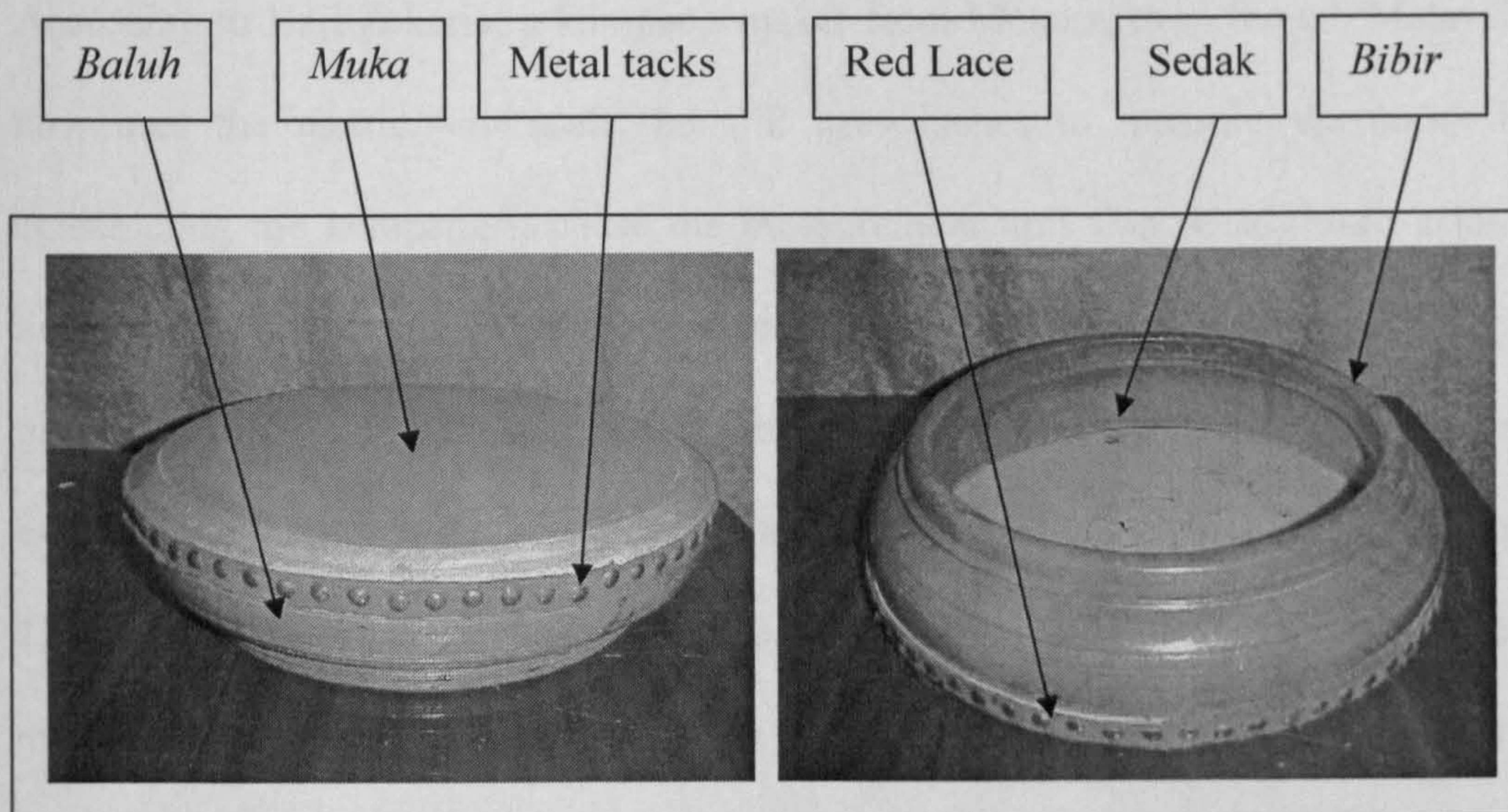


Figure 3a: The structure of a komping

Searching for the types of komping-like instrument¹ used in the so-called *main komping* (komping ensemble) in Peninsular Malaysia, I found two types of instrument, which I describe as having a “bigger but shallower frame” (Figure 3a) and a “smaller but deeper frame” (Figure 3g). The “bigger but shallower frame” is found in many parts of the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, while the “smaller but deeper frame” is only found in the states of Perak and Selangor. The first type

¹ There are also a few komping-like instruments found in Malaysia such as *Rebana Kercing* in Kelantan (see page 106), *Tar Rodat* in Terengganu (see page 109) and *Rebana Hadrah* in Perlis (see page 108). However, these instruments are used in their own ensembles to accompany singing and dancing, differently from the komping ensembles.

(bigger-shallower frame) is the more popular and is widely used in kompang ensembles throughout the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. It exists in many different sizes. The size of a kompang is identified from the diameter of its *muka*.

Always, the kompang is measured in inches and not in the metric scale². According to Haji Zakaria, a kompang maker from Melaka, even though Malaysia now uses the metric unit scale, he still uses inches to measure the *baluh* in constructing the kompang because the measurement unit was widely used a long time ago. Until now, this measurement unit has also been used by all the kompang players to differentiate the sizes of the instrument. The kompang is constructed in every whole-inch diameter size from 6 inches to 15 inches inclusive. However, the 12 inch and 13 inch kompangs are very popular and are the ones most preferred by mature players for performances. I have never found any kompang bigger than 15 inches in diameter used in the ensemble. However, larger sizes may sometimes be made for other purposes such as for decoration or as a gift. The smaller sizes are normally used by young players in practice sessions because they are lighter in weight than the bigger sizes. The 6 inch to 9 inch kompangs are also sold as souvenirs for tourists. In a few houses that I observed during my fieldwork in Melaka and Johor, the family hung a smaller sized kompang neatly on the wall of their living room as a home decoration. Presumably the smaller sized (6-9 inches) kompangs are not suitable for performances as I never observed these instruments used in real performances. It has been confirmed by Haji Kassim that the smaller

² 1 inch is equal to 2.54 centimetres in the metric scale.

sizes of kompang produce too high a sound, so they are not preferred by experienced players.

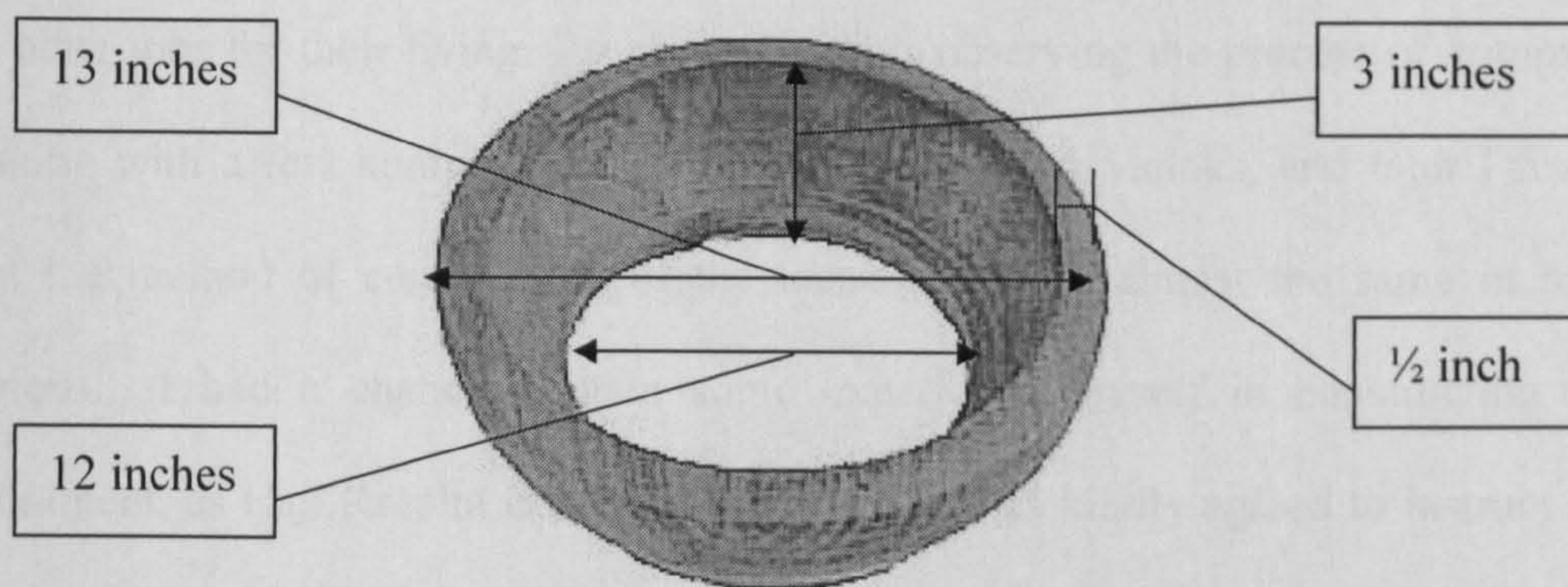


Figure 3b: Cross view of the *baluh* of a 13 inch kompang

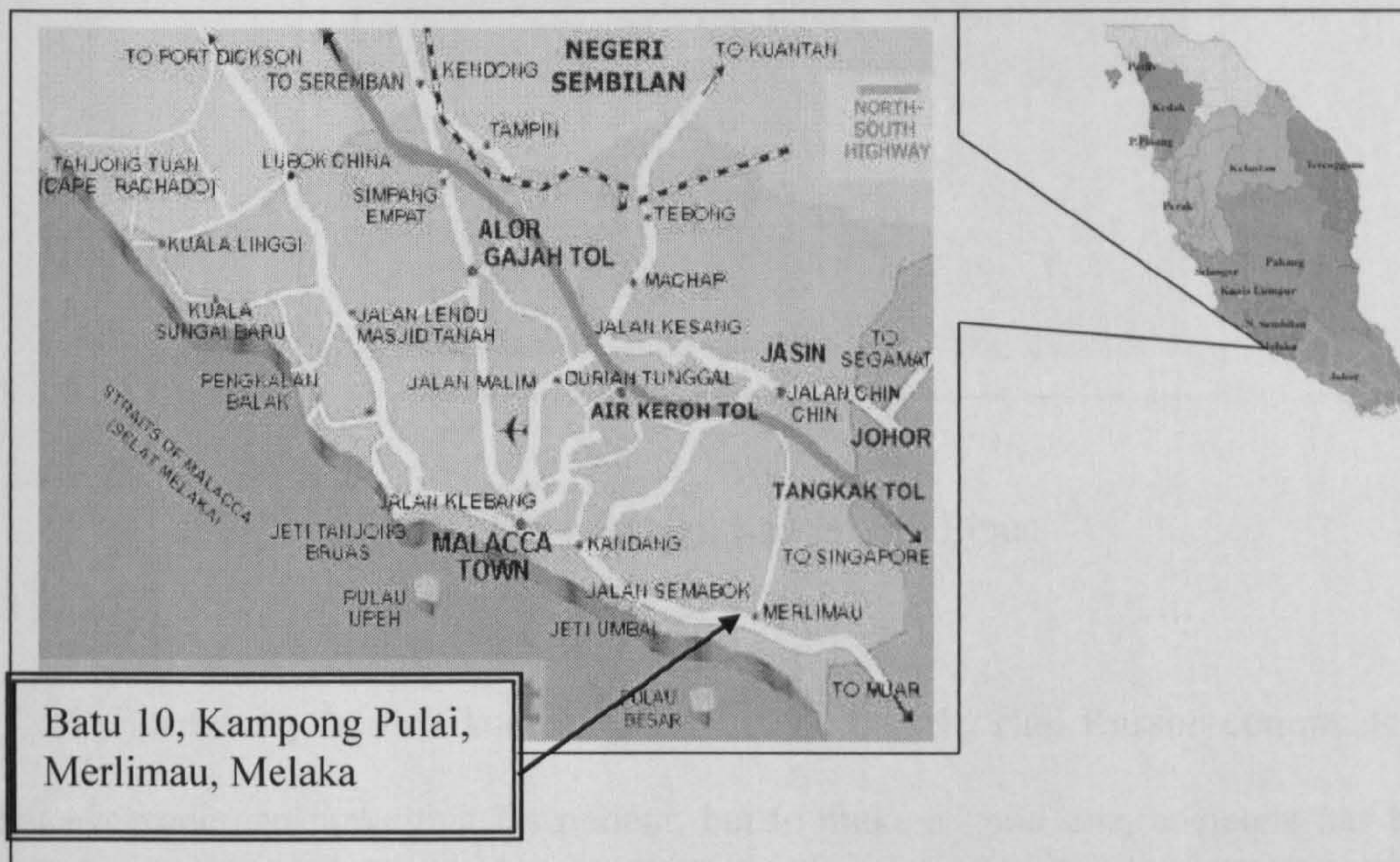
The shallow-curved frame, which is called the *baluh* of a kompang, is about 3 inches deep with a thickness of about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Some kompangs are carved on the outside of the frame with various patterns to make them look beautiful and artistic. The open end of the *baluh* is always constructed to be one inch less in diameter than the size of the kompang. For example, the open end of the 13 inch kompang is 12 inches in diameter and the open end of the 12 inch kompang is 11 inches in diameter. The thickness and deepness of the frame for any kompang is the same regardless of its diameter. Some kompangs are entwined with a nylon string at the *bibir* to prevent the *baluh* from cracking or breaking. Most kompangs are drilled with a small hole in the middle of the *baluh*. The purpose of this hole is to tie a string to the kompang so that it can be hung up when not in use.

CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

I travelled to a few villages in Johor and Melaka searching for a good kompang maker and found only a few of them seriously involved in kompang making. Others may only make the instrument as their part-time job as they depend on other jobs for their living. I spent a few days observing the process of kompang making with a few kompang makers around Johor and Melaka, and later I found that the method of construction of the instrument was almost the same in both regions. I had a chance to gain some experience myself in constructing the instrument, as Haji Kassim Bin Limat and his workers kindly agreed to instruct me on how to make a good kompang. However, I had to pay for the cost of the wood and the *belulang* that I used in the process of making a kompang. The construction techniques of the kompang described here are based on the techniques adopted by Haji Kassim Bin Limat, a kompang maker from Batu 10, Kampong Pulai, Merlimau, Melaka. He had a small workshop beside his house and was assisted by three experienced workers. All his kompangs were directly distributed from his workshop and sold throughout Malaysia.

Explaining his first experience in making the kompang about fifty years ago, Haji Kassim said that he learned how to make the instrument from a kompang maker known as Wak Jawa at Kampong Parit Jawa, Batu Pahat, Johor. He spent about five years acquiring a good skill in kompang making using all the traditional equipment such as a self-made manual turning lathe which was the main machine

used to carve the frame. Using this traditional equipment, only a few kompangs can be produced in a week.



Map 3a: Location of kompong maker: Haji Kassim Bin Limat

Today, Haji Kassim's workshop uses many modern and more efficient machines that have replaced the traditional equipment in the process of making the kompong. With the modern equipment, they can produce more kompangs in a shorter time than before and the quality of the instrument is better than before. Sadly, I didn't have a chance to meet Haji Kassim during my last visit to his workshop in February 2003 because he had passed away in November 2002 after devoting himself to kompong making for more than fifty years.

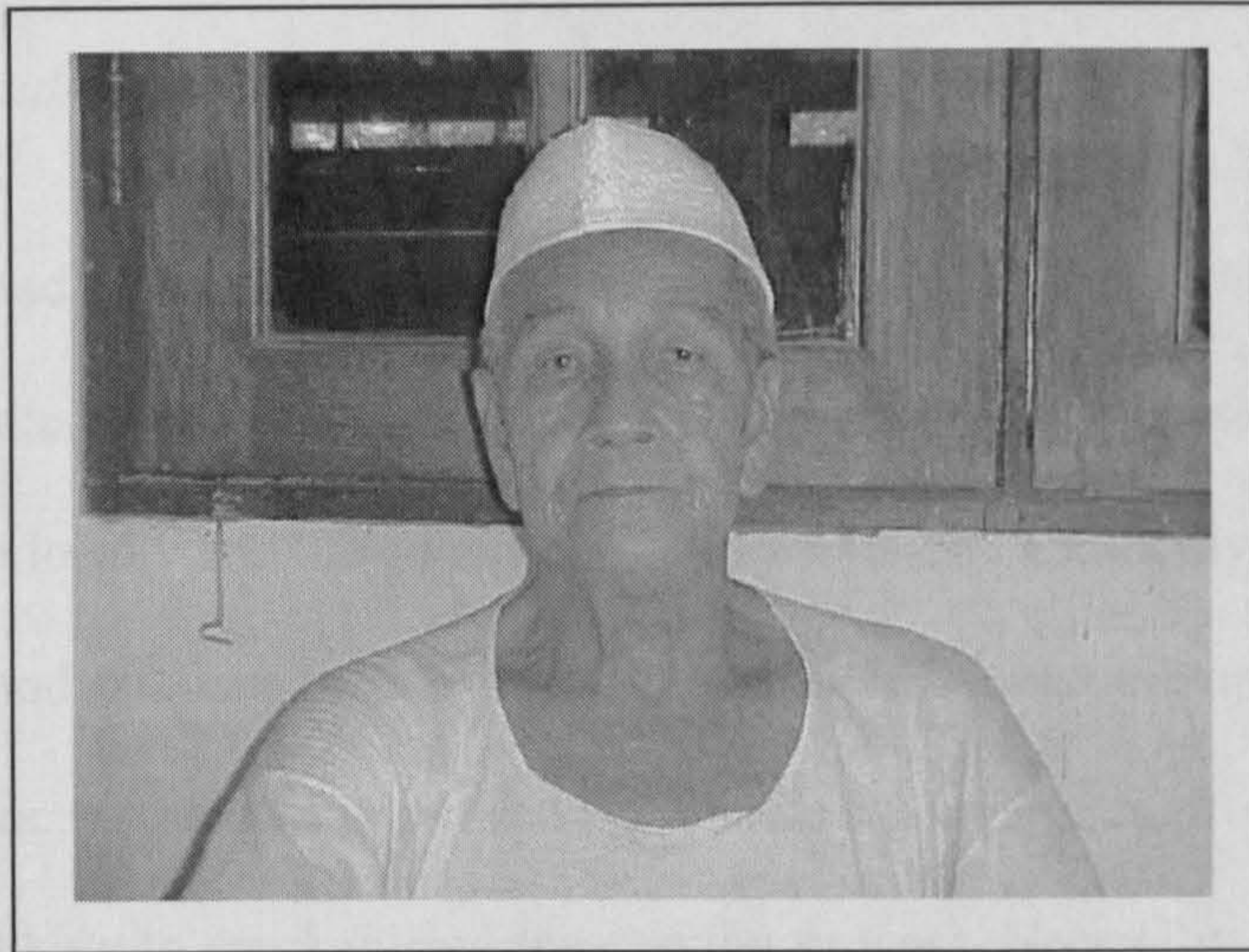


Plate 3a: Haji Kassim Bin Limat

Examining the first kompang that I made myself, Haji Kassim commented that everyone can make that instrument, but to make a good one, someone has to have very good skill and experience, and it would take some time for anybody to reach that level. Realizing that my first kompang did not sound as good as it should have done, he added that somebody with the gift and skills of a craftsman could probably build a better kompang than most ordinary people. This skill is like a gift from God. However, he advised me not to give up because sooner or later I would get the skill. Among the skills that are needed by a kompang maker are wood carving skills, the ability to prepare the goatskin, and the capability of identifying the good sound of a kompang. The process of kompang making is divided into four main steps. The steps are: preparing the frame (*baluh*), preparing the skin (*belulang*), attaching the skin (*mengulit*) and the finishing process.

Preparing the *Baluh*

A good wood will make a good kompang. However, not all kinds of wood can be used to make the frame of a kompang. It has to be carefully selected from the wood available locally and the condition of the wood. There are only a few types of tropical hardwood that can be used to make a *baluh*. Though the *baluh* itself is not beaten to produce a sound, a good wood can make a kompang last longer as well as making it less likely to crack during the carving process. Normally, the types of tropical wood used to make a *baluh* are *leban* (*Vitex pinnata*), *cempedak* (*Artocarpus integer*), *sena* (*Pterocarpus indicus*), and *pulai* (*Alstonia angustiloba*). Some kompang makers believe that the *kayu nangka* (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) is the best wood to use to make a *baluh* because it is hard but light. Apart from that, all the mentioned types of wood favoured because of availability and easy to obtain.

According to Haji Kassim, a long time ago, before someone cut a tree using an axe to make a *baluh*, there were certain rituals that had to be done to ensure the safety of the kompang maker. The rituals included the recitation of an incantation to ask permission from the spirit of the tree, and also the avoidance of some forbidden behaviours like urinating on to the tree trunk and saying bad things about the wood. These were all part of the old animistic beliefs adopted by the ancient Malay people even if after Islam arrived in the 13th century. Even though he had done this himself in the past, Haji Kassim commented that these rituals were not true, but were just an animistic belief. He refused to recite the mantra for my record because the text of the mantra contains words praising the *Jembalang*, the unseen demon

who takes care of the jungle, as is believed by some people. According to Haji Kassim, this is against Islamic belief. Under Islamic law, humans can only give praise to Allah the Almighty and not to other gods or spirits. Now, especially after the growth of the Islamic movement in Malaysia in the early 1970s, people have gradually abandoned the practice of these rituals and they use a modern chain saw to cut a tree. Now, this ritual is not a common practice in the Malay community.

The wood is cut into a square shape according to the size of the komrang. It is cut slightly bigger than the size required. For example, if the wood is used to make a 12 inch komrang, then it needs to be cut about 12.5 inches square and 3.5 inches thick. This square-shaped cut out block of wood is called the *kabung*. The *kabungs* need to be soaked in water for a certain period. This is done purposely to kill all the insects inside the wood and to make sure that the wood is good enough to make a komrang. All the *kabungs* used in Haji Kassim's workshop today have been soaked in the pool behind his house for about eleven years. The *kabungs* taken from the pool are carefully sorted and dried in the shade for a few days. A cracked or decayed *kabung* cannot be used to make a *baluh* because it will break easily.

Before the *kabung* is carved, it is marked with a circle according to the komrang's diameter. The workshop-made *penanda* is like a geometry gauge and is used to mark a circle on the *kabung* as a guide for the carving process (see Figure 3c). The *penanda* is a bar shaped piece of wood with a nail at each end of the bar. One nail is put on the middle of a *kabung* as an axis and the other end is turned around the *kabung* to mark a circle. The *kabung* is cut into a nearly round shape

called a *bakal* before it is placed on the turning lathe machine for the carving process.

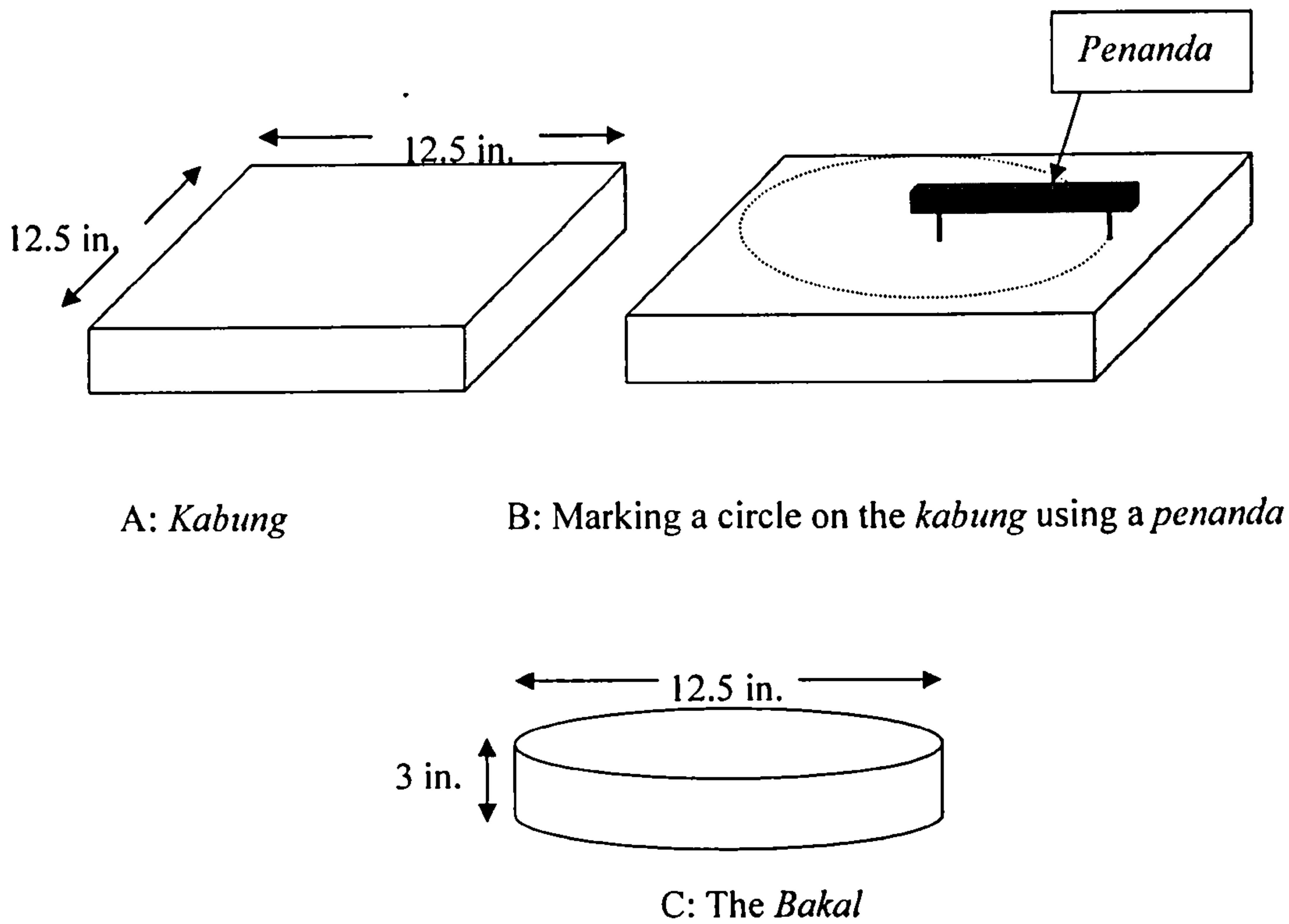


Figure 3c: Cutting the *kabung* and the *bakal*

The process of carving the wood to make a *baluh* is done using an electric spinning machine called a turning lathe. The process is known as *melarik* (carving) and it is done in a workshop called a *rumah larik*. Safety is the main thing to take care of during the carving process. Anyone who runs the machine must wear goggles, gloves and a nose filter to prevent small particles and dust from entering the eyes and nose. Haji Kassim used many types of workshop-made chisels in the carving process. The chisels, made of steel, are about 0.8 metres long (see Plate 3b).

They have to be sharpened every time before being used to carve the *bakal*. The use of a blunt chisel will crack the *bakal*. The *bakal* is carefully carved into the *baluh* shape about half an inch thick. After being carefully inspected for cracks and to ensure that the shape of the *baluh* is satisfactory, it is rubbed with a piece of sandpaper to make the surface of the *baluh* smooth. A nylon string is tied around the *bibir* of the *baluh* to prevent cracking during the process of attaching the head. The string is left on the *baluh* to make it strong and not liable to crack during a performance. Now the *baluh* is ready to have the head attached.

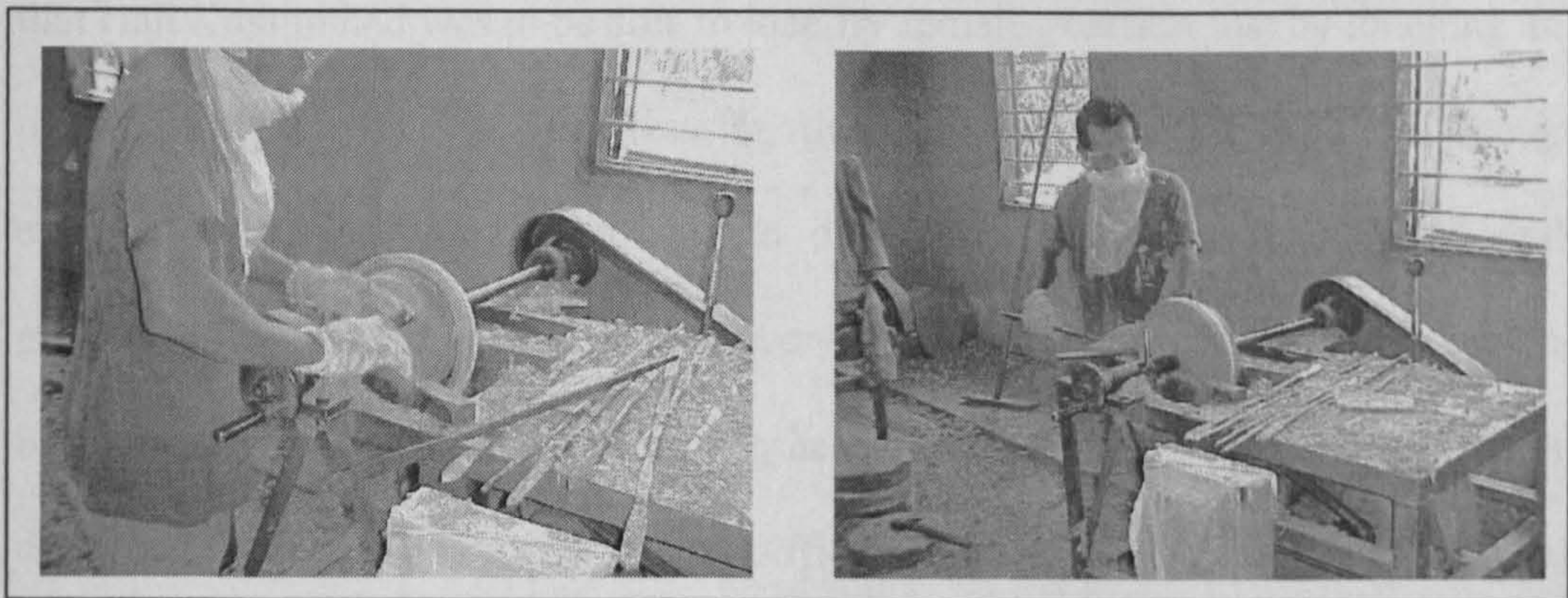


Plate 3b: Carving process using wood turning lathe and chisels

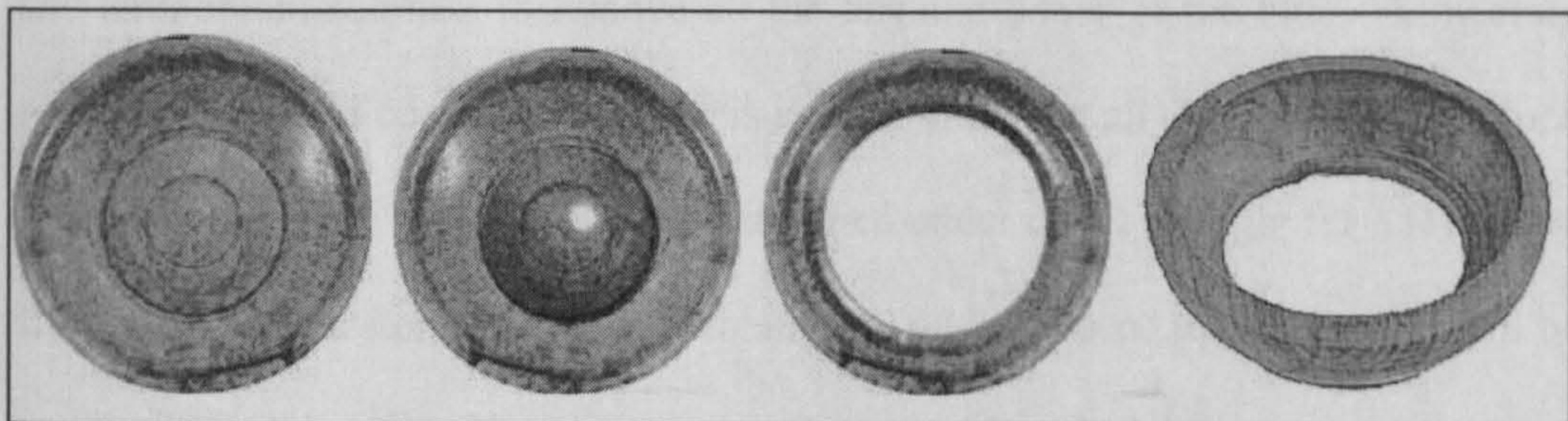


Plate 3c: The process of making the *baluh*

Preparing the Head

The animal skin used to make the head of the kompang is called the *belulang*. All the “bigger but shallower frame” type of kompangs found in the southwest states of Peninsular Malaysia use goatskin hide as the head. This contrasts with the kompangs (smaller but deeper frame type) found in Perak and Selangor, which use cowhide for the head. Haji Kassim only used female goatskins to make the head. This is because female goatskin is thinner and softer than male goatskin and it will produce a nicer sound for the kompang players. One expertise that Haji Kassim had was to be able to identify female goatskin just by touching and rubbing it. According to Haji Kassim, this skill can only be acquired through experience. Anyone would be able to differentiate between female and male goatskin if he worked with goatskins every day. Other animal skins like cow and buffalo are not suitable for making the head for this type of the kompang, as he described them as being too thick and difficult to attach to the shallow frame. Haji Kassim bought the goatskins from the slaughterhouses around his home town.

All the goatskins brought from the slaughterhouse are cleaned with sodium and ammonium sulphate to remove all the dirt and odour of the hide. A medium soft brush made of coconut husk fibre is used to brush out all the fat and blood stuck inside the skin. The cleaned goatskins are dried under direct sunlight for a few days. If the skin hide is stored before it is totally dry or is exposed to moisture, it will be smelly and easily split. Therefore, it must be stored in a dry place.



Plate 3d: The dried *belulangs* stored in a dry place

Attaching the Head

The process of attaching the head on to the *baluh* is called *mengulit*. This is a very important step and it has to be done by an expert because, during this process, the *kompang* will be tuned to the desired sound. The *belulang* taken from the store is carefully selected to make sure that it is fit to be used for the head. A scratched or cut *belulang* cannot be used because it can easily break when it is stretched on to the *baluh*. Before the attaching process is done, all the hair on the *belulang* has to be removed. This process is done by shaving the hair using a specially made knife. The shaving process has to be carried out carefully to avoid scratching or damaging the *belulang*. It is not an easy job. I accidentally cut a few *belulangs* during the shaving process because of the mistake that I made in the process.

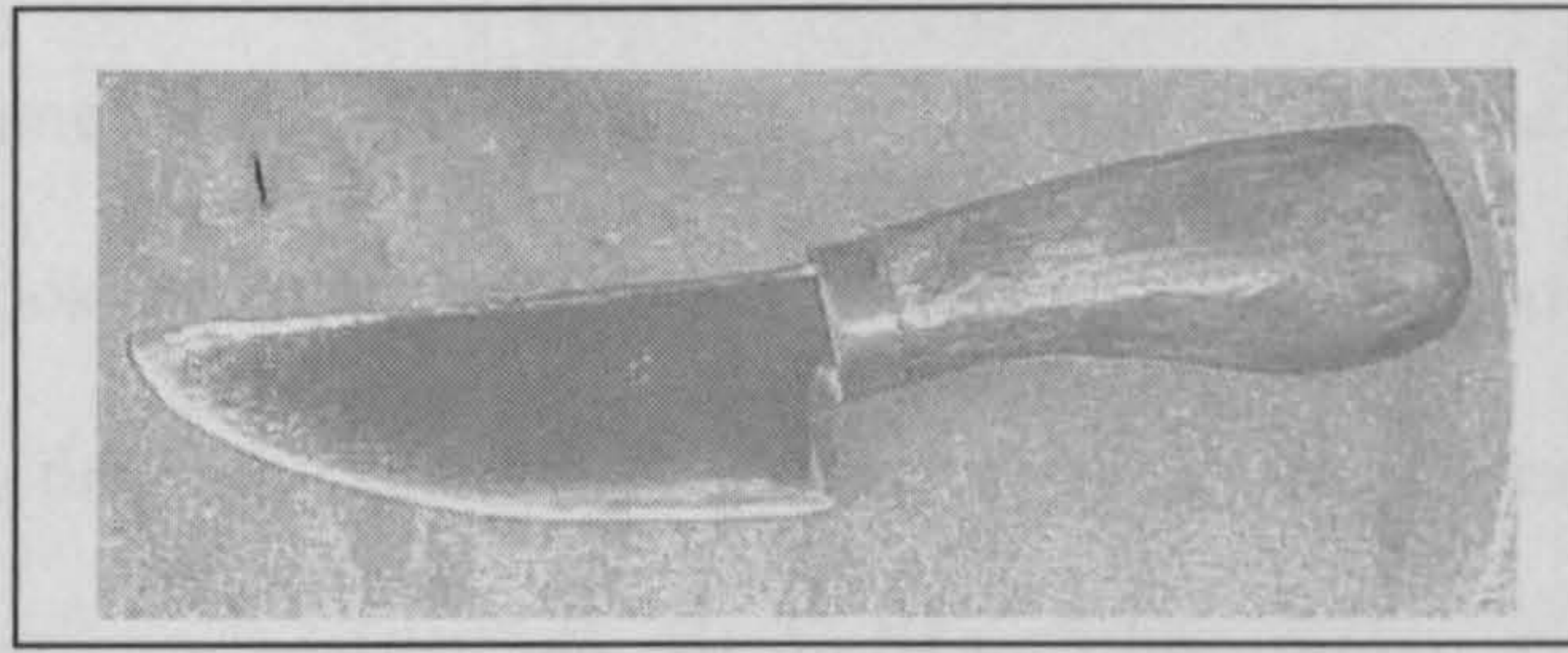


Plate 3e: Specially made knife that is used to shave the skin hair

The shaved *belulang* will be soaked in a pail of water mixed with bleach for about an hour to make it softer and stretchy. A *belulang* can be cut to make one or two heads depending on the size of the *belulang* and the size of the *kompang*. Figure 3d shows the part of the *belulang* which is used to make a head. The soft and wet *belulang* is attached to the *baluh* using three iron hoops called the *simpai*. The *simpai* are slightly bigger than the size of the *baluh*. They are used to clip and hold the *belulang* during the stretching process.

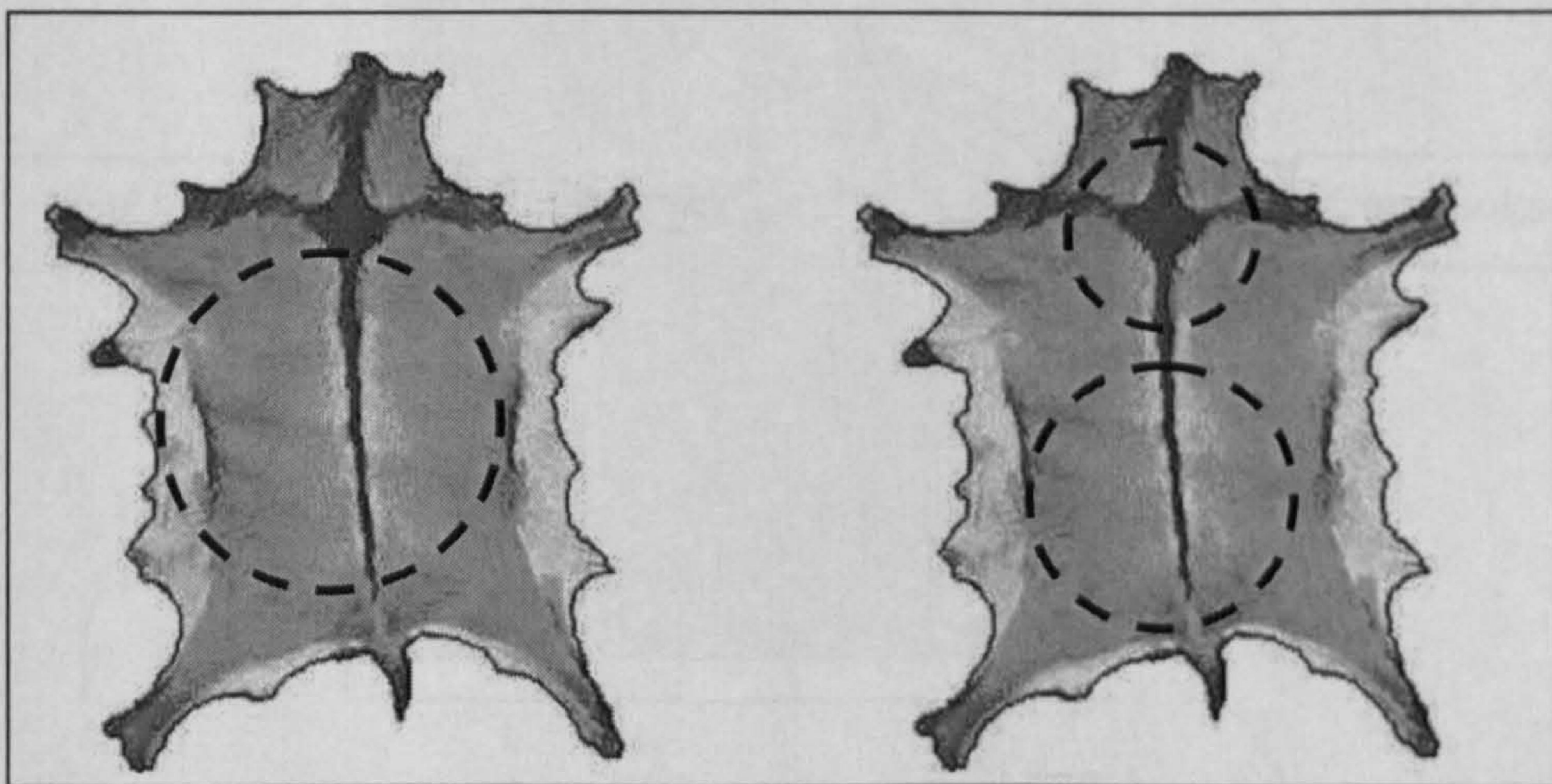


Figure 3d: Part of the *belulang* used to make a kompany

A *sentong* (Figure 3e) with six or seven iron hooks is used to hold the *simpai* to ensure the tautness of the *belulang*. The *baluh* is placed on a *sentong* and hooked with the iron hooks around the *simpai*. A round piece of wood called a *lapik* is inserted between the *baluh* and the *sentong*. Six pegs made of triangle-shaped wood called *pasaks* are inserted between the *lapik* and the *sentong* to stretch the head. The *belulang* is tightened by knocking the *pasak* inside between the *lapik* and the *sentong*. To ensure that the head is tight enough, the *kompang* maker steps on the *belulang* a few times while hammering the *pasak* inside forcing the *belulang* to tighten to its maximum stretch. The *belulang*, which is still fully stretched on the *sentong*, is dried under direct sunlight for about two hours, depending on the weather, or until the *belulang* is totally dry. After that, the *belulang* is tightened once again using the same process.

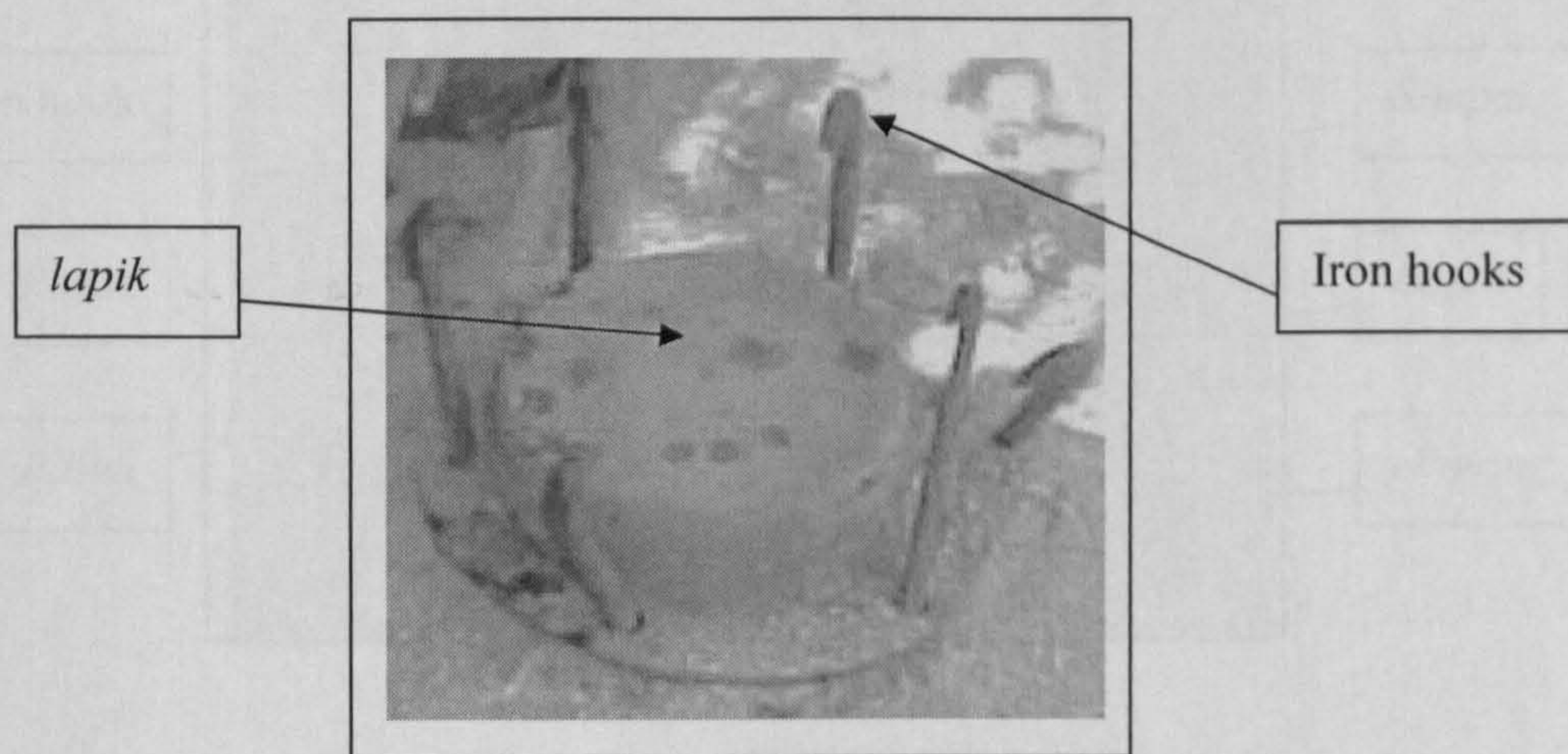


Figure 3e: *Sentong*

The kompong maker beats round the kompong's head with his bare hand to get the desired sound before it is nailed around the *baluh*. If a certain part of the *muka* sounds loose, the *pasak* at that point will be hammered again. This is just like tuning a snare drum where the player tightens the tuning key where it is needed. After achieving the desired sound, the *belulang* is nailed around before the hooks are taken off. This is where the first tuning process taking place. However, over time, the kompong might need to be re-tuned before it is played because moisture and humidity can cause the *belulang* to loosen. The edge of the excess *belulang* around the *baluh* is carefully cut with a very sharp knife. Now, the kompong is ready for the finishing processes including varnishing and decorating.



Figure 3f: The process of attaching the head



Plate 3f: Cutting the excess *belulang*

Finishing Process

The kompong can be played even if it has not gone through the finishing process, but it will look rough and not beautiful. The appearance of a kompong is one of the important elements of the kompong ensemble. For that, the instrument has to be finished in some way to make it look nice. The outside of the head will be rubbed with a fine sandpaper to make the surface smooth and beautiful. A hole about a size of a pencil is punched using an electric drill at the middle of the *baluh*. This hole is used to tie a string for hanging purposes when the instrument is not in use. A piece of red lace is attached with metal tacks around the *baluh* to cover the edge of the *belulang* and the nails. Some kompong makers use a piece of copper strip instead of red lace to cover the nails and the edge of the *belulang* around the *baluh*. Finally, the *baluh* of the kompong is shellacked with clear varnish to make it look shiny and beautiful. The varnished kompong will be dried in the shade before it is stored on a shelf. Some kompongs are painted or decorated with various patterns on the *muka*. Normally, for a particular organization, the *muka* of the

kompang will be painted with the crest of the organization as identification for the troupe.

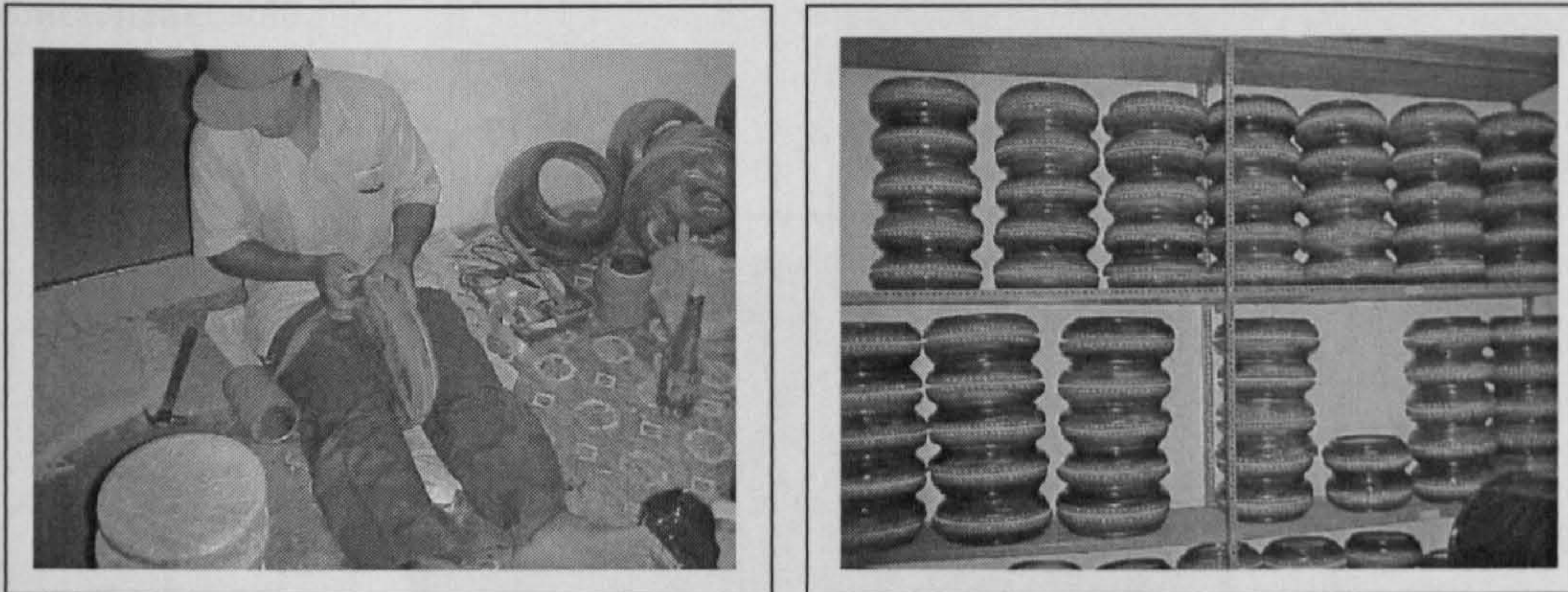


Plate 3g: Tacking the red lace around the *baluh*, and kompangs shelved in the store

THE KOMPANG IN PERAK AND SELANGOR

The type of instrument used in the Kompang Perak ensemble looks similar to the kompang that has been extensively described above. However, the size and construction techniques of the instrument played in the states of Perak and Selangor are slightly different from those of the kompang played in other areas. In Perak, the instrument is known as the *rebana* instead of the kompang, although the term kompang is also used concurrently with the term *rebana*. At first, these two terms caused me some confusion because I thought the term *rebana* referred to a different type of frame drum which has nothing in common with the kompang ensemble. However, the confusion was clarified by Safuan, the captain of the kompang troupe

from Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak³. He explained that both terms are commonly used by the players in Perak. This has also been confirmed by Haji Zakaria from Kampong Gajah Perak⁴. According to him, the two terms are interchangeable.

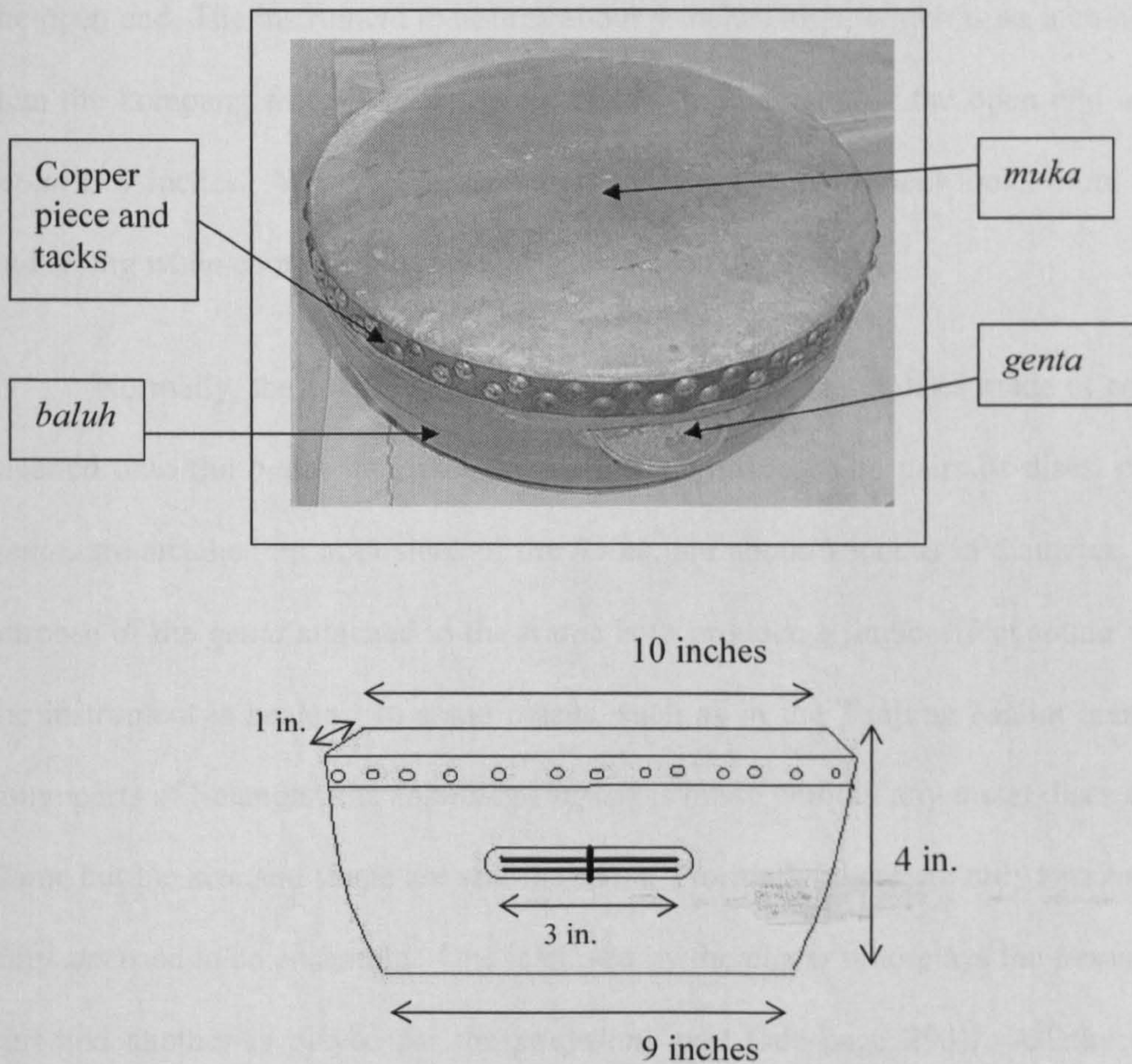


Figure 3g: The measurement of the *Kompong Tingkah*

³ Interview with Safuan, from Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak, on 25 April 2002.

⁴ Interview with Haji Zakaria Abdul Rahman, a kompong teacher at Kampung Tersusun Teluk Memali, Kampung Gajah, Perak on 23rd February 2003.

There are two types of *kompang* in this category used in the states of Perak and Selangor, which are called the *kompang tingkah* and the *kompang pembolong*. The *kompang tingkah* (see Figure 3g) is slightly bigger than the *kompang pembolong* (Figure 3h). Its *muka* (head) is 10 inches in diameter. The head is attached to a round wooden frame which narrows only slightly as it curves towards the open end. The instrument measures about 4 inches high, which is an inch higher than the *kompang* from the Southern states. The diameter of the open end of the *baluh* is 9 inches. With the measurements it has, the instrument looks more solid and strong when compared to the equivalents from the South.

Normally, the *kompang tingkah* has two pairs of metal discs made of copper inserted onto the *baluh* just like a modern tambourine. The pairs of discs, called *genta*, are attached on both sides of the *baluh*, are about 3 inches in diameter. The purpose of the *genta* attached to the frame is to produce a jingle-effect sound when the instrument is beaten. In some places, such as in the Tanjong Malim area and some parts of Selangor, the *kompang tingkah* is made without any metal discs on its frame but the size and shape are still the same. Normally, there are only two *rebana tingkahs* used in an ensemble. One is played by the player who plays the *peningkah* part and another is played for the *penyelang* part (see page 293). All the other players will beat the *kompang pembolong* in the ensemble.

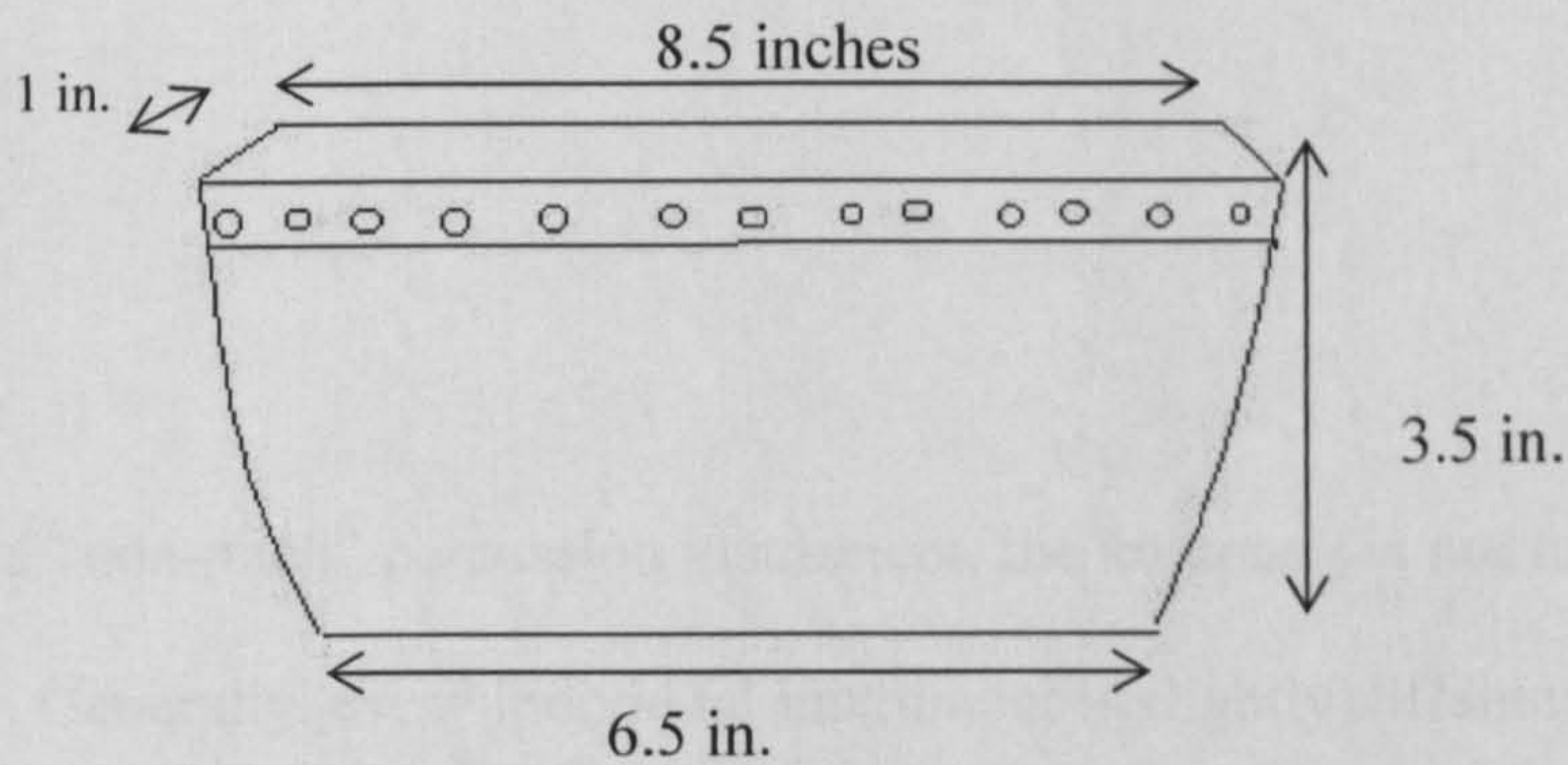


Figure 3h: The measurement of the *Kompong Pembolong*

Another type of kompong used in Perak and Selangor is of a smaller size and without any discs inserted into its frame. It is known as the *kompong pembolong*, as the name derives from the part (the *Pembolong* part) in the ensemble that the instrument is used to play. The players who play this instrument provide the basic rhythms for the *kompong peningkah* to interlock in the ensemble. The size of the head is 8.5 inches in diameter and the *baluh* is about 3.5 inches high. The open end of the *baluh* is about 6.5 inches in diameter. Unlike the Kompong Ezhar (Chapter 4) and the Kompong Johor (Chapter 5), the head of both types of the Kompong Perak

is made of cowhide instead of goatskin. This makes the timbre of the instrument sound different from the ones found in the Southern states. The smaller size of the *baluh* and the use of cowhide make the pitch of the Kompang Perak higher than those of the kompangs in other areas. Its *baluh* is normally made of *halban* wood (*Vitex Pinnata*). The method of attaching the head to the frame is the same as with kompangs in other areas, namely it is fastened with metal tacks around the frame. A piece of copper is wound around the *baluh* to cover the edge of the skin before the tacks are applied to hold the head in place.

TUNING

Being a “non-pitch” percussion instrument, the kompang is not tuned to any standard pitch. Generally, every individual instrument is slightly different in timbres and pitches. It depends on the tautness and thickness of the head as well as the size of the kompang. However, the kompang also needs to be tuned to the *bunyi yang betul* (acceptable sound) before it is played. All the kompangs used in an ensemble are tuned to a rough pitch as close as possible to each other. For most traditional kompang players, the word tuning means nothing to them. All they do before every performance begins is insert a small piece of rattan inside the *baluh* to tighten the membrane. This is an essential thing to do before they sit in a group. Even though there is no standard tuning set for the kompang, an experienced kompang player is able to tell the *bunyi yang betul* of a kompang. The exact pitch is not very important to the players but the *bunyi yang betul* of a kompang is described as loud,

penetrating, sharp and taut. This was demonstrated clearly to me during a training session in Johor when I randomly picked one of the instruments from the store and started to follow their beat. After a while, one of the players cued me to stop beating the drum. At first, I was not so sure what was wrong because I thought that I was beating the right rhythm. However, it was not the rhythm that he was concerned about, but the “sound” of my kompong, which he described as *bunyi tak masuk* (the sound is out of the group). This meant that the “sound” of the kompong that I used was outside the range of the *bunyi yang betul*.

After this incident, I noticed that every kompong is “sound checked” before it is used either in any practice session or in performance. The experienced kompong player will know which kompong is ready to be used and which one needs to be tuned. This is done by softly beating the *muka* of the instrument near the edge of the *baluh* with closed fingers. If the sound of the instrument is perceived as too low, gruffly and wishy-washy, this means that the head of the instrument needs to be tightened before it can be played in an ensemble.

As a new player, how do I recognize the *bunyi yang betul* of a kompong quickly if I do not have any standard reference? The only standard reference that came to my mind was the Western standard pitch, in which middle C is set at 440 Hertz of the sound frequency. In so doing, I started to note down most of the kompongs that had been “sound checked” by experienced players from different places every time before a practice began. In general, it can be concluded that the *bunyi yang betul* of a kompong with the “bigger but shallower frame” (the Kompong

Ezhar and Johor) ranges from “c0” to “g0” in terms of standard Western pitches (see Figure 3i). However, the range of *bunyi yang betul* of the Kompang Perak is greater than that of the Kompang Johor. This is because the size of the instrument is smaller than the kompang found in the southern states. Overall, the range of the *bunyi yang betul* of the Kompang Perak is from “f0” to “c1” in terms of standard western pitches (see Figure 3j). In this case, any kompang with the rough pitch within the *bunyi yang betul* can be played together. Moreover, the timbre of each kompang is also different from the others depending on the thickness and tautness of the head. This is why they (the players) claim that the beauty of the kompang ensemble derives from the mixture of the various timbres of the kompangs performing together.

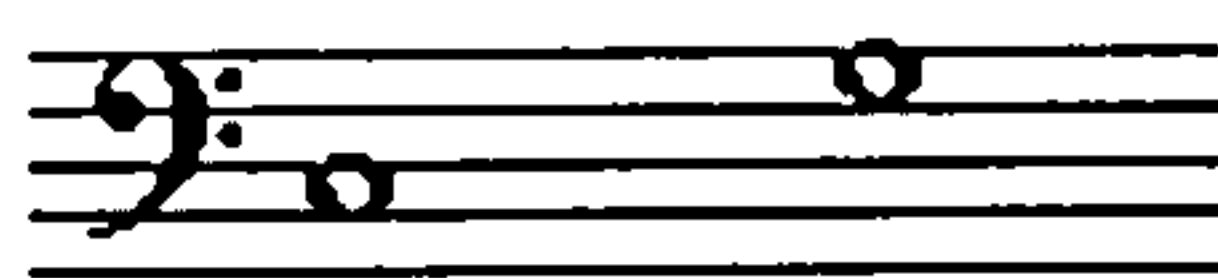


Figure 3i: Range of *bunyi yang betul* of the Kompang Johor



Figure 3j: Range of *bunyi yang betul* of the Kompang Perak

The process of the “sound check” for both types of kompang is done in two ways; during the construction process and just before the kompang is to be played. As previously described, in the process of *mengulit* in the construction of a kompang, the *belulang* needs to be fully stretched before it is permanently nailed on

to the *baluh*. If this process is not done properly, the head will be loose and produce an unacceptable sound. If this happens, the instrument has to be rejected. A newly made kompong does not usually need to be tuned and it is ready to be played. This is because the head is already tightened to the *bunyi yang betul* during the process of *mengulit*.

As previously discussed, a kompong is always “sound checked” just before it is played in an ensemble. If the sound of the kompong is out of the *bunyi yang betul* range, the player has to make some correction to his instrument. This is because, as time goes on, the head of the kompong will expand and gradually loosen. This condition will make the kompong produce a low pitch and a husky sound. Therefore, it will not be fit to be used in the ensemble. If this happens, only a *sedak* is needed to correct the sound of the kompong. A *sedak* is a small piece of rattan inserted all around the underside of the instrument, between the *baluh* and the head, to tighten the head. The length of *sedak* needed for this purpose is about the same as the diameter of the kompong. A spatula-shaped piece of wood called a *penyedak* is used to press and force the *sedak* underneath the *baluh*. Many different sizes of rattan are used as the *sedak*. The size of the piece of rattan used depends on the tautness of the head. If the head of the kompong is very loose, a bigger piece of rattan is needed. Nowadays, many kompong players use different sizes of electrical insulated wire as the *sedak* instead of rattan. This is because these days it is easier to get electrical wire than narrow lengths of rattan. The use of electrical wire will not produce any different effect to the sound of the kompong as compared to the use

of rattan. The *sedak* is always taken off when the *kompang* is stored to help the head last longer.

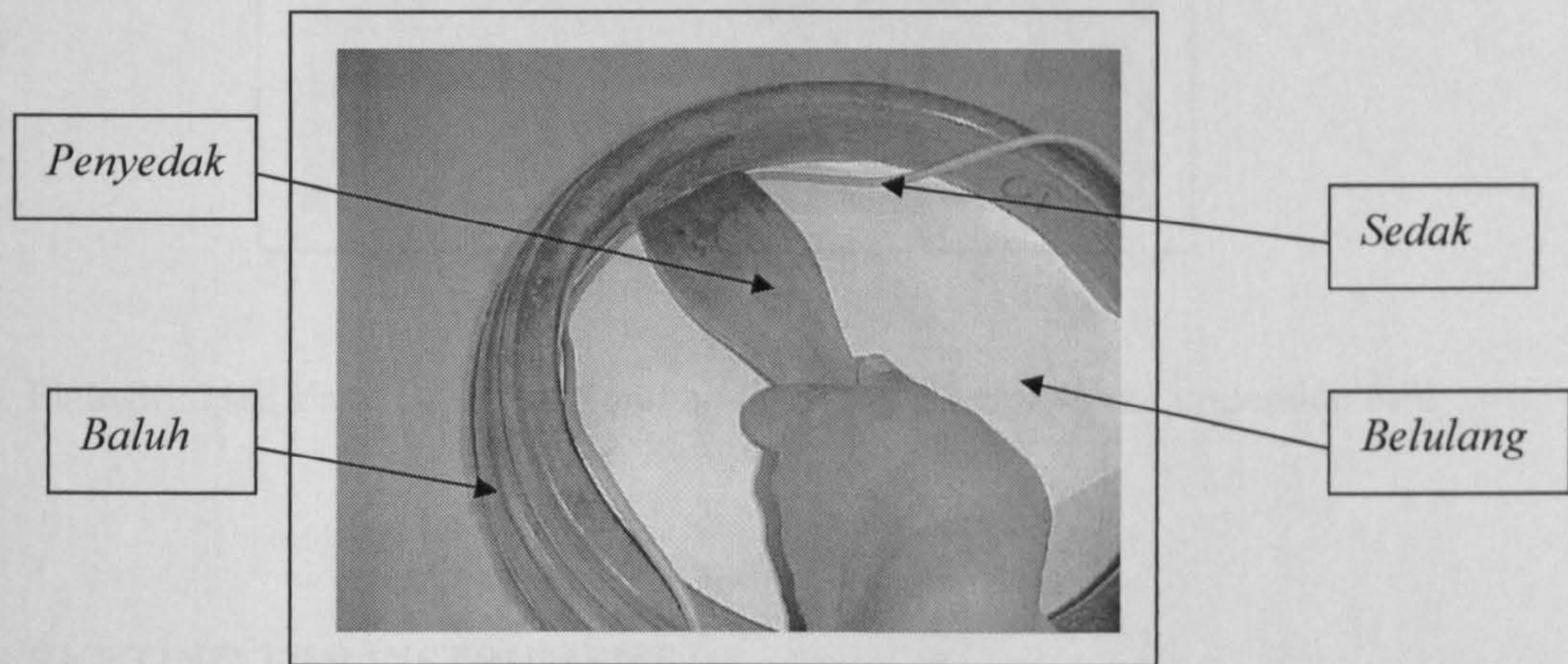


Figure 3k: Inserting a *sedak*

Malaysia receives heavy rain throughout the year that can cause the *kompang* to get moist or wet. This condition is worse during the rainy season, which is from October to March every year. Wet conditions will loosen the *belulang* of the *kompang*, producing a mellow and husky sound, which is unacceptable to *kompang* players. A wet *kompang* must be dried out. Often, the practice is to place the instrument in direct sunlight for a certain period until it totally dry. Sometimes, the instrument is dried near an open fire. This process can also tighten up the head.

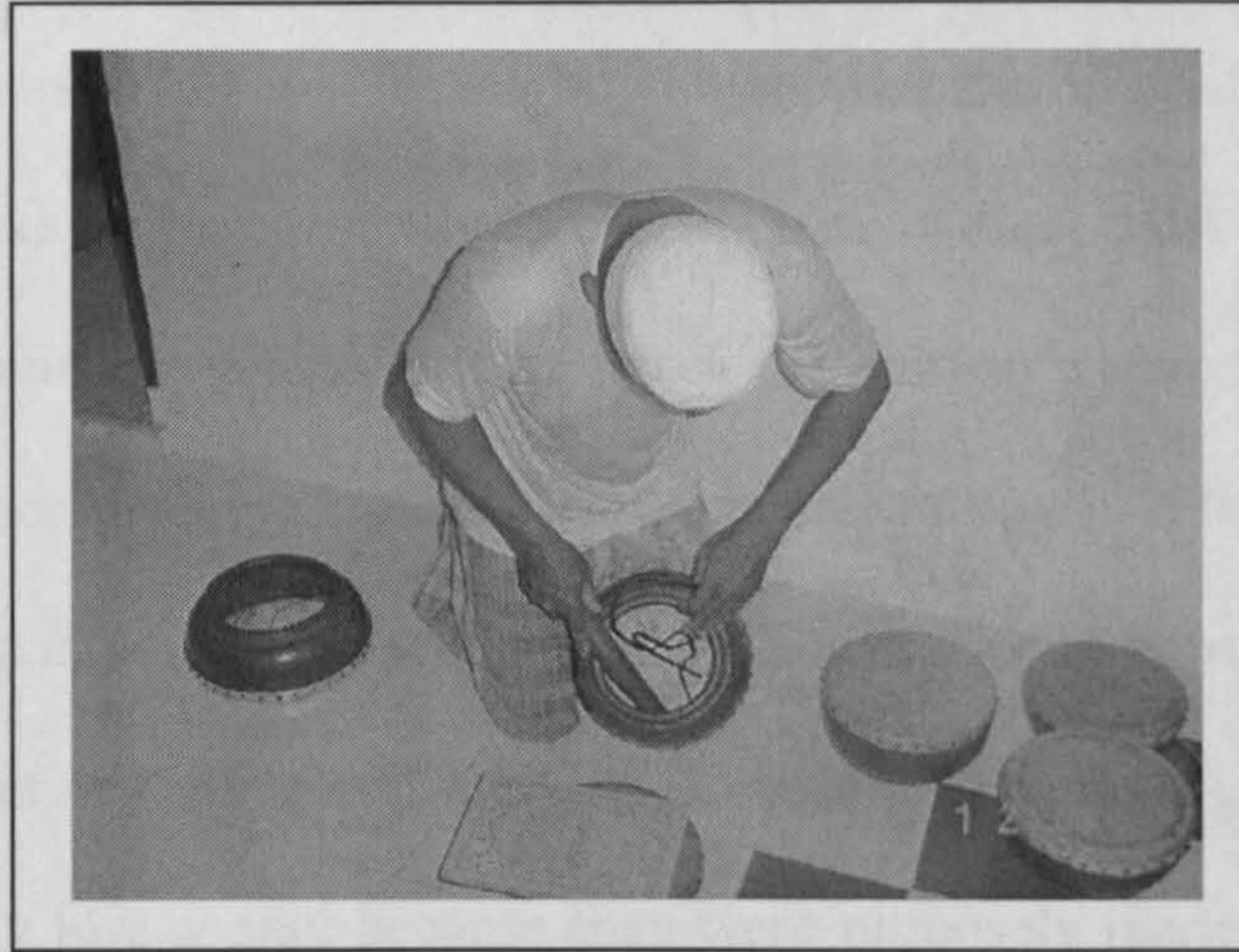


Plate 3h: Haji Zakaria Abdul Rahman applying a *sedak* to the underside of a kompong

MARKETING THE INSTRUMENT

Kompongs are normally bought by the players directly from the kompong makers around the villages. Currently, there is no factory or trading company that manufactures the instrument in large quantities and sells it all over the country, because the potential market for the instrument is not particularly large. Unlike many western musical instruments, the kompong is not widely available in music shops. However, a few music shops in the bigger towns near Kuala Lumpur as well as many other cities on the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia may sell the instrument in small quantities. These shops get their supply from the traditional kompong makers from outside the towns in their area. Even though they do not keep a stock, some music shops are willing to accept an order from a customer for a large quantity of the instrument. The delivery will take some time as they have to get the instruments from the traditional kompong makers. The price of instruments

obtained via a music shop may be slightly higher than the original price as the shop will need to make a profit from the deal. Because of that, most players or buyers prefer to buy their instruments directly from the kompang makers. They can also negotiate the price of the instrument if they intend to buy in a large quantity. It is also true that the instrument is sold at some of the souvenir shops, especially in the southwestern part of Peninsular Malaysia. However, the kompangs sold at souvenir shops are mostly low quality because they were purposely made as souvenirs and not for performance. An experienced player will not buy a kompang from a souvenir shop but directly from the kompang maker. This is because they can carefully select a quality instrument as well as haggle over the price.

There are only a few kompang makers who depend on it for their living. Apart from Haji Kassim from Merlimau, Melaka, there is Sulaiman from Segamat, Johor, and Ramli from Kampong Gajah in Perak who are also full-time commercial instrument makers. Other kompang makers make the instrument as their part-time job or whenever they get an order from a buyer. These people do other jobs for a living and kompang making is just for their side income. Some of them also make other types of Malay drum including the *gendang*, *rebana*, and *jidur* as well as other Malay handicrafts such as *keris* (Malay dagger) and knives. These village manufactures have been categorized as small village industries by the local authority. Some of the kompang makers in this category get some financial support from the government, not just for their living but also to promote the production of local cultural products. This financial support is granted under the Small Industry Fund provided by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs.

Size in Inches	Price in Malaysian Ringgit	British Pounds
15 inches	RM 95.00	GBP 13.58
14 inches	RM 85.00	GBP 12.14
13 inches	RM 75.00	GBP 10.71
12 inches	RM 70.00	GBP 10.00
11 inches	RM 65.00	GBP 9.28
10 inches	RM 55.00	GBP 7.86
9 inches	RM 50.00	GBP 7.14
8 inches	RM 45.00	GBP 6.43
7 inches	RM 40.00	GBP 5.71
6 inches	RM 35.00	GBP 5.00

Table 3a: The price list of kompangs sold by Haji Kassim Limat

The kompang is a relatively cheap instrument as compared to many Western drums and other traditional drums found in Malaysia. In Malaysia, an average of monthly income for the moderate workers is about RM 1200.00. This means that players with moderate income can still afford to buy a kompang at the current price. The price of a kompang varies according to the size of the instrument. It ranges from RM 35.00 to RM 95.00 (GBP 7.00 to GBP 13.57)⁵. Table 3a shows the prices of kompangs according to size offered by Haji Kassim Limat at Merlimau, Melaka. The prices shown do not include the handling and delivery costs. In any case, the

⁵ Based on the currency exchange rate of GBP1.00 equal to RM7.00.

price of the kompang is negotiable and may be lower if someone buys a large quantity. Haji Kassim's workshop not only makes new kompangs but they also fix and replace the head of the kompang. Players can send their kompang to be refurbished with a new head for the price of RM 45.00 (GBP 6.42) per kompang of diameter 10 inches and above.

CULTURAL EVALUATION OF THE TIMBRE AND VOLUME

All the kompangs used in an ensemble must have the same or nearly the same timbre. Before they are played, they must be carefully chosen based on their sound characteristics. According to many kompang players and kompang instructors from different areas, the sound of a kompang should be loud, strong and piercing when one plays timbre *pak* or *prang*. The listener perceives the sound as though it is thrusting out from the kompang. The kompang should sound softer and have a deep humming reverberation when one plays timbre *bum* or *ding*. It is heard as though the sound is travelling in a circle or coming in waves. The lively sound of the kompang should raise the listener's spirit as the ensemble plays a lively and cheerful rhythm. The kompang will produce the desired sound when its head is tight enough. A kompang with a less taut head produces a low, husky and humble sound. This type of timbre is considered out of tune.

There are two main factors that will affect the timbre of the kompang, namely the type of the *belulang* and the shape of the *baluh*. The thinner and softer the *belulang* used to make the head, the nicer, stronger and more piercing will be the

timbre that is produced. In this case, female goatskin is preferred for use as the head because of its thinness and softness as compared to male goatskin.

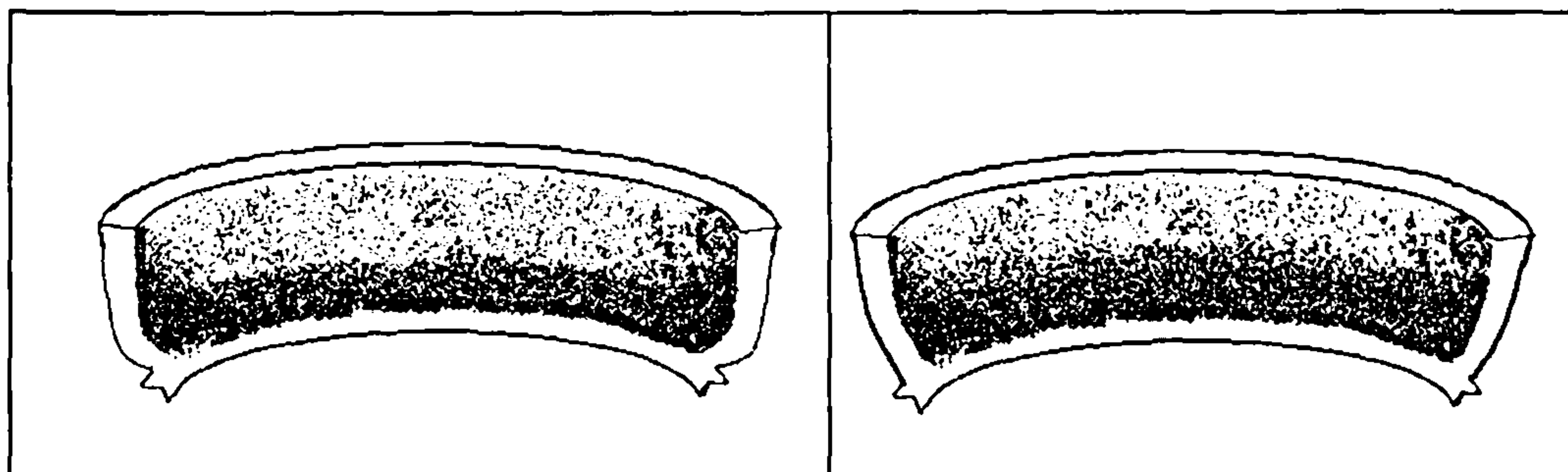


Figure 3l: Deep-curved *baluh*

Figure 3m: Shallow-curved *baluh*

Basically, there are two shapes for the *baluh* used to make the kompang, which are the deep-curved and the shallow-curved (see Figure 3l and 3m). The curved body of the deep-curved *baluh* is deeper than the shallow-curved *baluh*. It is more difficult to carve the first type of *baluh* because it is easy to crack and break it. It can only be carved by a highly skilled kompang maker. The timbre produced by the kompang with the deep-curved *baluh* is heard as a deep humming sound, which is a nicer sound than is heard from the shallow-curved *baluh*. This is because the shape of the *baluh* helps to amplify the sound and produce a reverberation-like quality. This gives the “wet-effect” to the sound of the kompang. Despite the loudness of the sound, the player can feel the niceness of the kompang sound especially when one plays timbre *bum*. The shallow-curved *baluh* produces more of a dry sound than one gets from the deep-curved *baluh*. The kompang with the deep-curved *baluh* is the type preferred by most kompang players.

The kompang is used to perform in an ensemble on many lively and cheerful occasions. For some occasions, such as a wedding ceremony or the opening ceremony of a function, the presence of the kompang ensemble will enliven the gathering. For that purpose, the kompang ensemble always plays to give a strong and thundering sound. Every instrument in the ensemble should be designed to produce a loud and penetrating sound. There are two factors that will affect the loudness of a kompang. These are the construction of the kompang and the playing technique. As previously discussed, the kompang with a deep-curved *baluh* sounds louder than the kompang with a shallow-curved *baluh*. Apart from that, the uses of a soft and thin head are will also enhance the loudness of a kompang. That is why most kompang makers prefer to use female goatskin for the head because it is softer and thinner than male goatskin or lambskin. The soft and thin skin hide is more elastic and has more vibration characteristics, which will produce a louder sound.

Another important factor is the use of a proper technique in beating the kompang, which will enhance the quality of the timbre as well as the loudness of the sound. Obviously, an experienced player can beat the instrument louder than a beginner. Even though some beginners can play the kompang loudly and strongly, the sound produced is not as nice as that produced by an experienced player. I observed some beginners who were beating the instrument strongly, and trying to match the experienced players in an ensemble, finally stop beating before the end of the piece because their thumbs and fingers got hurt. This is because they used incorrect playing techniques. This problem will gradually be solved as the player gets more experience and acquires the proper playing techniques. A good kompang

player, on his own, can beat the instrument louder than a small group of beginners. For this reason, a good player will normally play the harder part of the ensemble as he/she can beat a louder sound to interlock with the basic part which is normally performed by less experienced players.

In some *kompang* ensembles, such as in the *Kompang Perak* (Chapter 6), only one or two players will play the counter rhythm of the ensemble, while the rest of the players will play the basic rhythm. Even though only one player may be playing the counter rhythm, it can still be heard not only because the player is playing a different rhythm from the others but also because the sound of the instrument is produced loud enough to be heard. In the *Kompang Perak* ensemble, the *kompang tingkah* sounds louder than the *kompang pembolong* because the size of the instrument is bigger. Moreover, the player who plays the *kompang tingkah* is normally more experienced and skillful, and can beat the instrument with a better tone and louder sound than the other players. Regularly, on any big occasion with the *kompang* ensemble present, the crowd often looks to see who is playing the *kompang tingkah*. Playing this instrument is regarded as an honour. Because of the exclusiveness of the instrument, the owner always keeps it with extra care. It is claimed that, in Sabak Bernam district in Selangor, there is a *kompang tingkah* that can be heard as far as a mile from the seashore when it is played in an ensemble near the beach. This *kompang tingkah* has been given a nickname as the *Bintang Timur* (East Star) and it is only kept and played by its owner. However, in construction the *Bintang Timur* looks no different from other *kompang tingkahs* in the area.

PERFORMING TECHNIQUES

Unlike many other frame drums around the world, which instruments are mainly played by tapping the head of the instrument with the fingers of both hands or using sticks, the *kompang* is instead beaten with only one bare hand. This is because the other hand is used to hold the instrument. As the natural dynamic of *kompang* playing is always loud, that is why the instrument is beaten with the palm and not tapped with the fingertips. The playing technique of the *kompang* is also different from the playing techniques of the *rebana* in the Malay world, which is tapped with both hands while the instrument is placed on the player's lap. The *kompang* is always held with one hand while the other is used to beat it. The playing technique of the *kompang* is the same in different areas. Generally, there are three different techniques of holding the instrument adopted by *kompang* players. There is no specific term or name given to any of the techniques of holding the instrument.

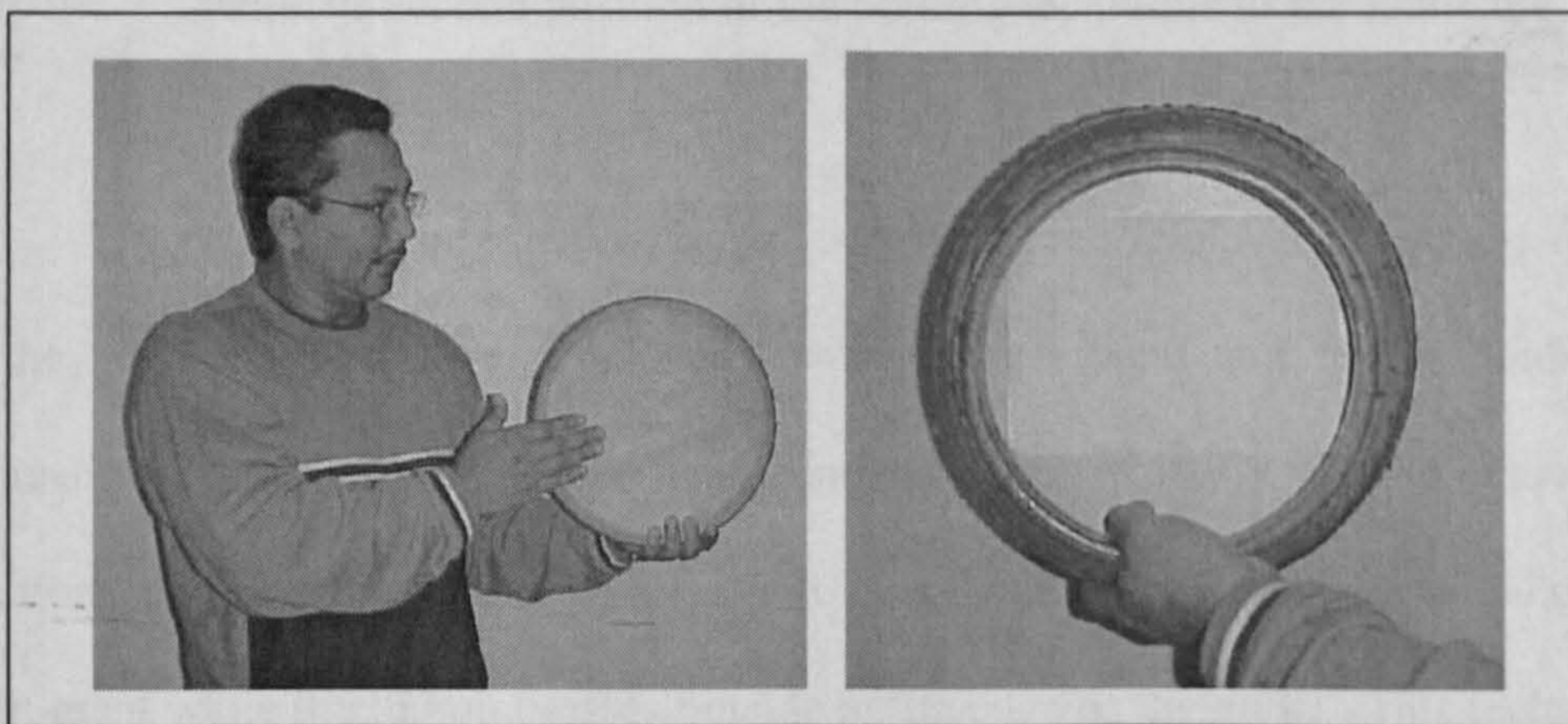


Plate 3i: First position of the holding technique of the *kompang*

The kompang can be played left-handed as well as right-handed. The first technique adopted by most players is to hold the instrument with the left or right hand freely in the air while the other hand is used to beat the instrument (Plate 3i). In this position, the *baluh* of the kompang is placed between the thumb and the fingers vertically. The *baluh* is firmly grasped with the thumb pointed towards the inside of the instrument and the fingers press the edge of the *muka*. Almost all the players in the Kompang Perak ensemble use this technique to support the weight of the instrument. This is because the type of instrument used in this area is heavier than the instrument found in the southern part of Peninsular Malaysia.

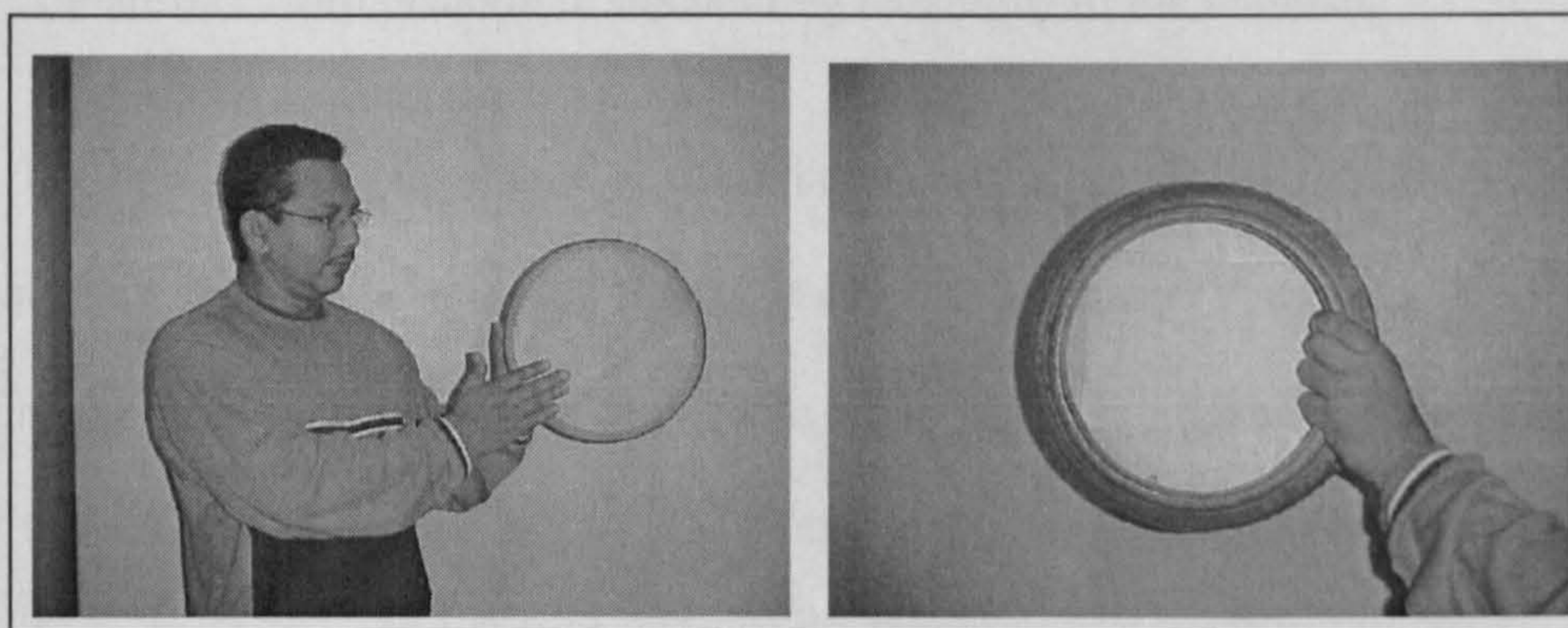


Plate 3j: Second position of the holding technique of the kompang

The second holding technique position is where the player grasps the *baluh* of the kompang from the middle-side with the left hand and firmly holds the kompang vertically while the right hand beats the head (Plate 3j). Unlike in the first position, the fingers in this position are bent inside the kompang to hold the instrument while the thumb presses outside at the edge of the *muka*. This technique

is only used for the type of kompang with a bigger but shallower frame. This technique is not widely used as compared with the first position.

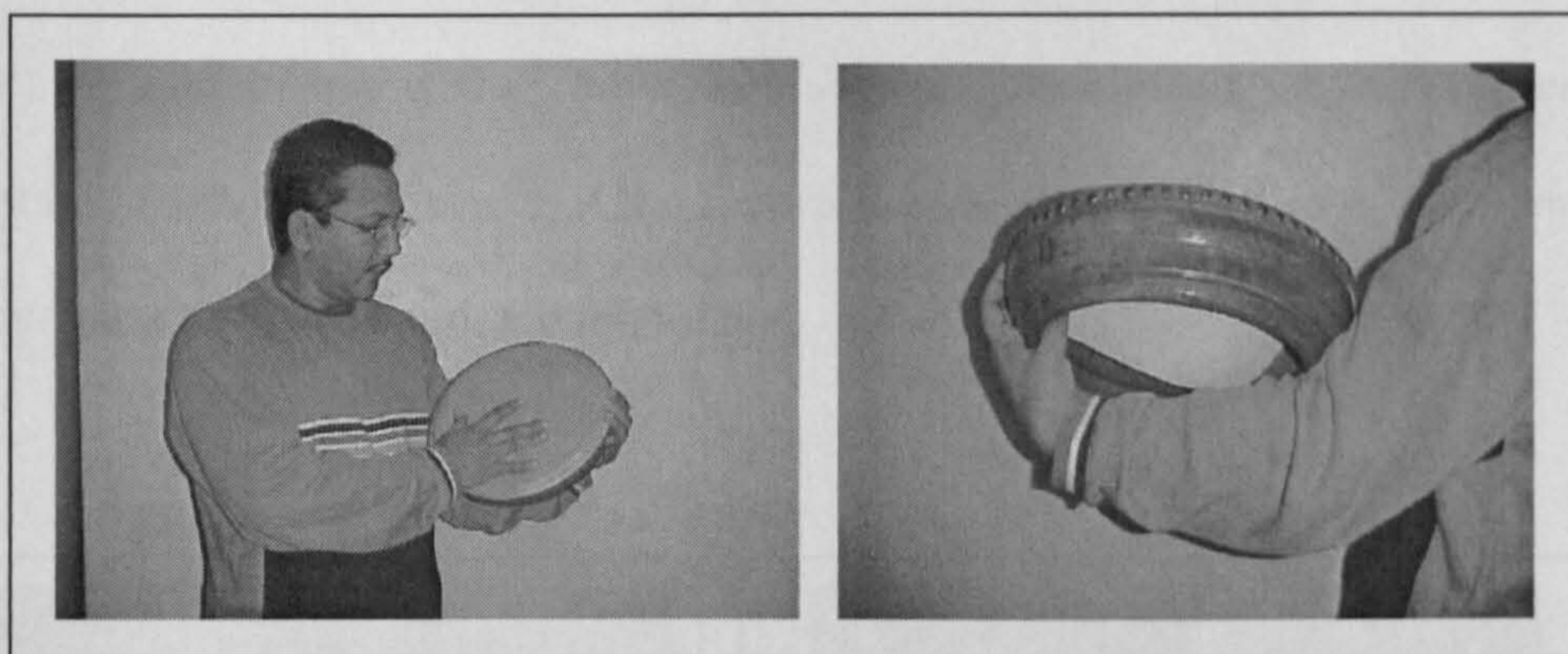


Plate 3k: Third position of the holding technique of the kompang

The third holding technique position is where the player grasps the far side of the *baluh* with the left hand, the thumb inside the kompang (Plate 3k). The left hand fingers firmly grip the outside of the *baluh*. The kompang is positioned against the left arm to support the weight of the instrument while the right hand is used to beat the drum. This position is popular among young players because it helps them to keep hold of the heavy kompang while in performance. It is very rare to observe adult players using this technique because it is said to block the sound coming out from the bottom of the drum⁶.

The rhythm of kompang music is composed of only two different timbres. According to the mnemonic system, the two timbres played on the kompang are called *bum* and *pak*. Some kompang troupes in different places replace *bum* and

⁶ Interview with Isa haji Muhammad Abas, the captain of the kompang troupe of Kampung Jorak Illahi, Batu Pahat Johor on 28 April 2002.

pak with mnemonic words *ding* and *prang*. The timbre *bum* is performed by beating the instrument near the edge of the *muka* with closed fingers. The fingers bounce naturally, releasing the *belulang* to vibrate freely and produce a sustained sound (see Plate 3l). This technique is also called *pukul kuncup* (close beating) by the players in the state of Johor. The sound of the timbre *bum* is perceived as low, softer and more settled as compared with the timbre *pak*.

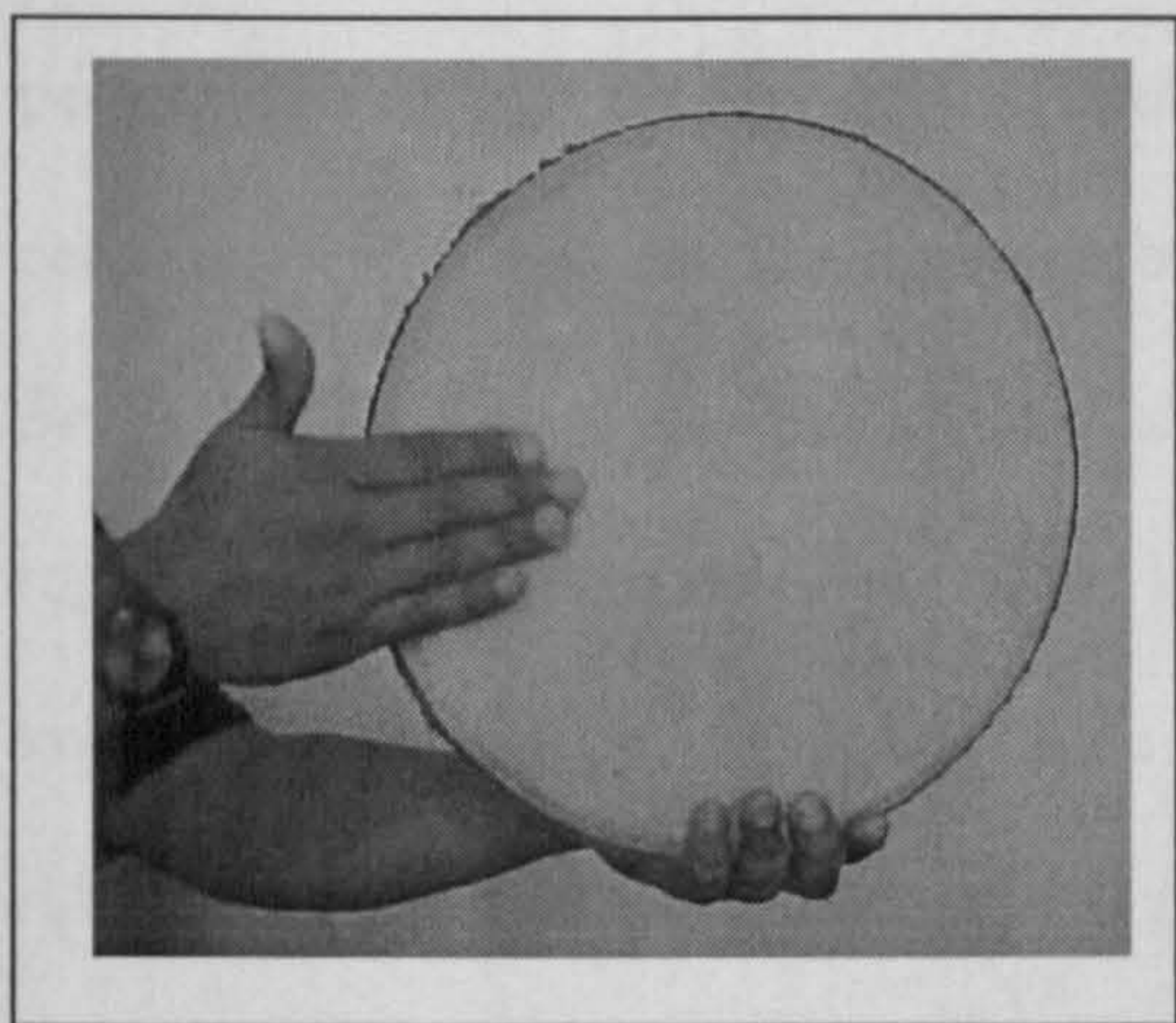


Plate 3l: Mnemonic *Bum*

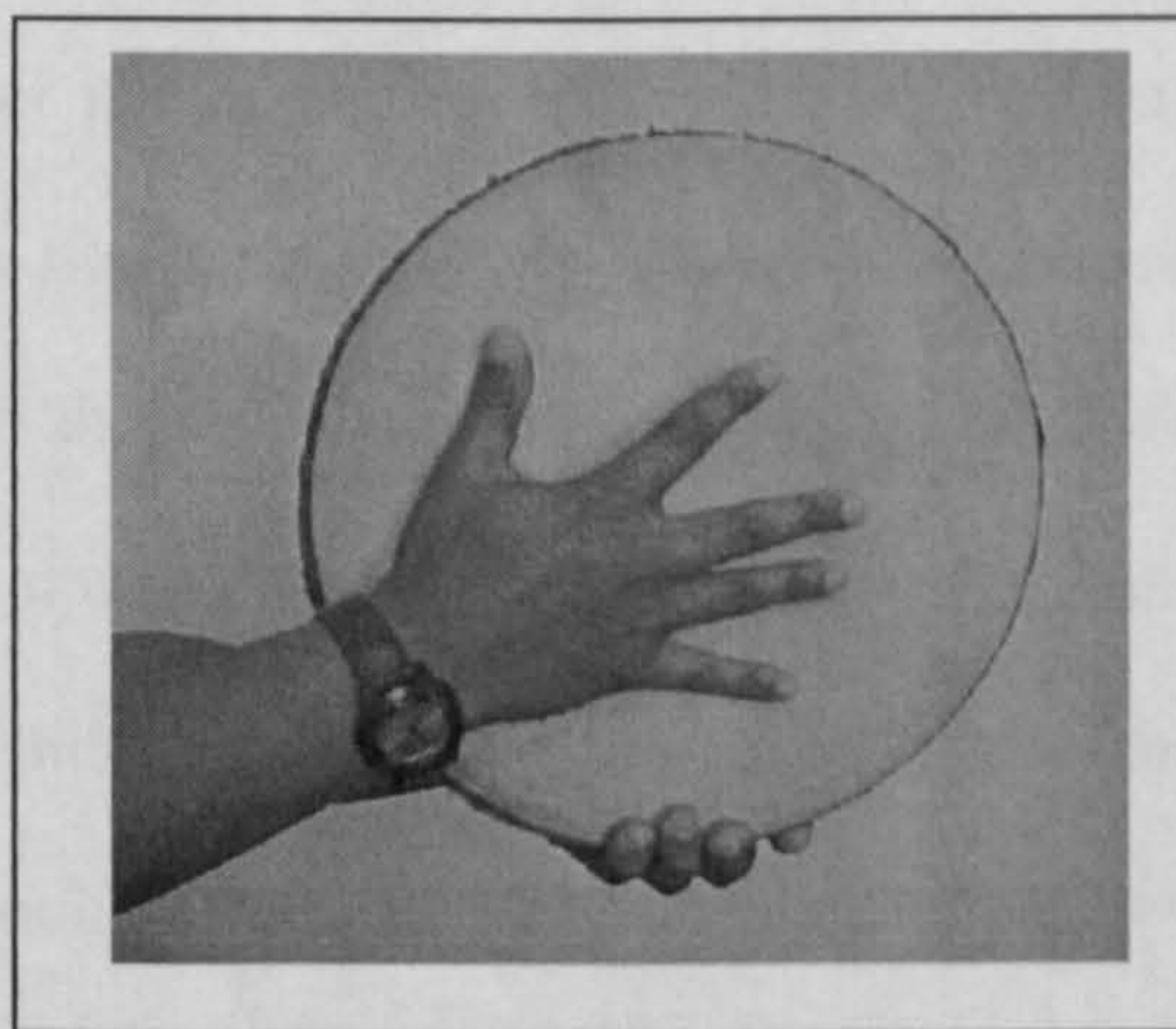


Figure 3m: Mnemonic *Pak*

The timbre *pak* is produced by beating the *kompang* with the palm at the middle of the *muka*. The fingers are opened and allowed to bounce loosely to produce a flam-like sound (see Plate 3m). As the technique is used, this beat is known as *pukul kembang* (open beating) by the players in Johor. Unlike the timbre *bum*, this timbre *pak* is produced by beating the instrument with a strong and powerful beat. The sound is perceived as loud, high and penetrating. If the *kompang* is used to accompany a song, all the players sing together while beating the instrument. The beating techniques of the *kompang* contrast with the playing

techniques of the hand drum from the Arab world such as *riqq* and *darabukkah*. The stroke *dum* (*bum*) of these drums is produced at the centre of the drumskin and *tak* (*pak*) is produced at the edge⁷.

Traditionally, the *kompang* is not a solo instrument. It is always played in the form of an ensemble. It is performed in groups either with legs crossed when sitting, standing, or walking in procession. The position of the performance depends on the occasion for which the ensemble is performing. The sitting performance is given either on the floor or sitting on chairs during a pre-wedding ceremony, which is on the night before the wedding day and is called *Malam Berinai*. On this night, the bride wears the traditional bridal costume and sits together with the guests to listen to the *kompang* playing. In the sitting position, the *kompang* players can be comfortable while performing many songs from the religious text called the *kitab berzanji* (book of verses). The *kompang* troupe will perform until late in the night, while the cooks are preparing food for the following day's ceremony.

The *kompang* ensemble also performs in a standing position in rows. This is usually done to entertain the guests or the bride and the groom whilst they sitting on the dais during the wedding ceremony. The same position for *kompang* performance is also used when welcoming a very important person during their visit to a certain occasion. Sometimes, the troupe will move around to perform a beautiful formation while playing the *kompang*. The ensemble also performs in the wedding procession.

⁷ For more details about the playing techniques of Arab hand drums, see Touma, Habib Hassan, (2003:47-49).

A group of *kompang* players play the instruments and sing songs while walking in two or three rows to accompany the bride and groom to the wedding chairs. It is also used in procession on the birthday of Prophet Muhammad or the *Mauled Nabi*.

THE PUKULAN

The music of the *kompang* ensemble is composed of three or more different parts in a rhythmic pattern. Traditionally, the complete set of the interlocking rhythmic patterns in all types of *kompang* ensemble found in Peninsular Malaysia is called the *Pukulan* (the beat). It is also known as the *Rentak* by some *kompang* players. The term “*pukulan*” carries many meanings in *kompang* playing throughout Peninsular Malaysia. In general, the term *pukulan* (from the word *pukul*) means beating or hitting something such as “*pukul kompang*” which means beating the *kompang*. But, in the context of *kompang* playing in Malay society, the term *pukulan* carries two different meanings. Firstly, the term *pukulan* is used to refer to a complete set of rhythmic patterns performed in a piece of *kompang* music. If this term is used to refer to western beats such as *Cha Cha*, *Rhumba*, and *Waltz*, they will be called the *Pukulan Cha Cha* (Cha Cha beat), the *Pukulan Rhumba* (Rhumba beat) and the *Pukulan Waltz* (Waltz beat). As a modern Malay musical term, it is called the *rentak* instead of *pukulan* such as in *Rentak Cha Cha*, *Rentak Rhumba* and *Rentak Waltz*. In this case, both terms carry the same meaning, but the term *pukulan* is more acceptable than the term *rentak* in *kompang* playing in Malaysia. This is because this term is widely used by the *kompang* players. So, the

term *pukulan* will be frequently used in this thesis to describe the beat of the repertoire in each type of *kompang* ensemble found in Peninsular Malaysia. Some examples of the *pukulan* in the *kompang* repertoire are the *Pukulan Bertih* (the *Kompang Ezhar*), the *Pukulan Berarak* (the *Kompang Johor*) and the *Pukulan Sariful Anam* (the *Kompang Perak*).

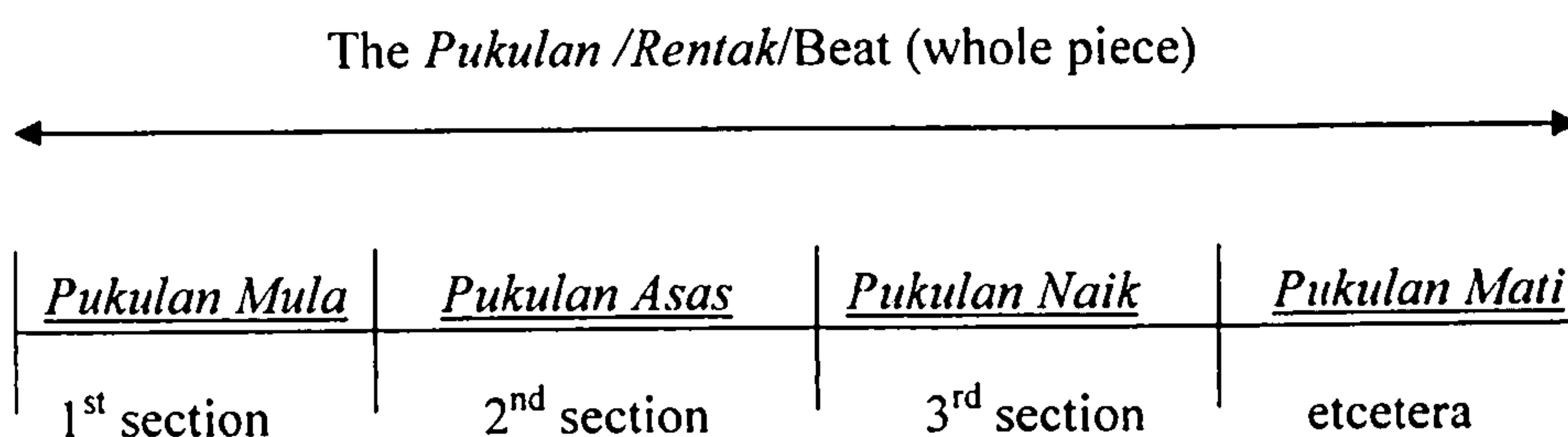


Figure 3p: Example of the form of the *Pukulan* in the *kompang* ensemble

Secondly, the term “*pukulan*” is also used to describe the small form of interlocking rhythmic patterns that make up a section of a piece of *kompang* music. Specifically, the second meaning of the term “*pukulan*” is widely used in the *Kompang Johor* ensemble (Chapter 5) and the *Kompang Perak* ensemble (Chapter 6). For this purpose, I will use the term *pukulan* (underlined) for the second meaning of the term to differentiate between these two meanings. For example, a complete set of the interlocking rhythmic patterns (the first meaning of the term *pukulan*) is made up of a combination of a few sections having the small form of the *pukulan* (see Figure 3p). Every *pukulan* has its own name such as the *Pukulan Mula*

(introduction beat), *Pukulan Asas* (basic beat), *Pukulan Turun* (descending beat), *Pukulan Naik* (ascending beat), *Pukulan Mati* (ending beat), and *Pukulan Hadi*. Some of the *pukulans* may be repeated many times in a piece. The number of times each *pukulan* is repeated depends on the type of the *pukulan* and the function of the performance. All types of *pukulan* (first meaning) and *pukulan* (second meaning) will be discussed extensively in the next three chapters, as I will analyze the repertoire of all the types of kompong ensemble found in Peninsular Malaysia.

CHAPTER 4

THE KOMPANG EZHAR

The “Kompang Ezhar” is the name of a well-established kompang troupe organization active throughout the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia. All the kompang troupes in the Kompang Ezhar organization have a similar style of performance and perform the same rhythms and songs. The type of instrument used by these troupes in performance is the same as the one described in Chapter 3. The Kompang Ezhar has become more popular and widespread because of its proper organization. Through its well-organized troupe, the players are trained properly by the qualified kompang trainer. Moreover, with the publicity made by the committee as well as the players, this troupe becomes widely known to the public and provides some prospect for them to be invited to performed in many functions. The organization is very popular in the state of Melaka. It has also played in a few places in the states of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and parts of Johor.

HISTORY

The Kompang Ezhar playing on the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia can be traced back to the kompang performing practices in West Java, Indonesia. The term “Ezhar” is derived from a style of martial arts or *pencak silat* organization found in West Java and Banten Island, Indonesia. The term “ezhar” refers to *setia hati* (faithful heart), which means that all the members of the organization must possess a faithful heart. The *pencak silat* (or *Silat*) is the generic term for the indigenous martial arts of the Malay Archipelago, which includes Indonesia,

Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. *Silat* is closely linked to the Malay peoples. It influenced their ritual ceremonies in the old days, and their commercial activities, when maritime trade was dominated by the powerful warrior states in the region.



Plate 4a: Silat practice at Merlimau, Melaka

Silat developed directly from the ancient fighting arts of the Malay Archipelago. Throughout its long history, it has been used in war many times, either within a particular kingdom or between kingdoms and empires, both foreign and local. The geography and the different characteristics of the people have given rise to the many different styles of *silat* all over the Malay Archipelago. For example, in some places where the terrain is slippery and rocky the style of *silat* is characterized by a number of low stances. The *silat* Ezhar was popular in West Java during the period of Dutch rule before World War II. Many styles of *silat* are accompanied by music, which is mostly dominated by drum instruments. Some of the *silat* practices

are accompanied by the *gendang* (barrel drum) and *gong, rebana* (frame drum) and the *kompang* (Matusky and Tan, 1997:230).

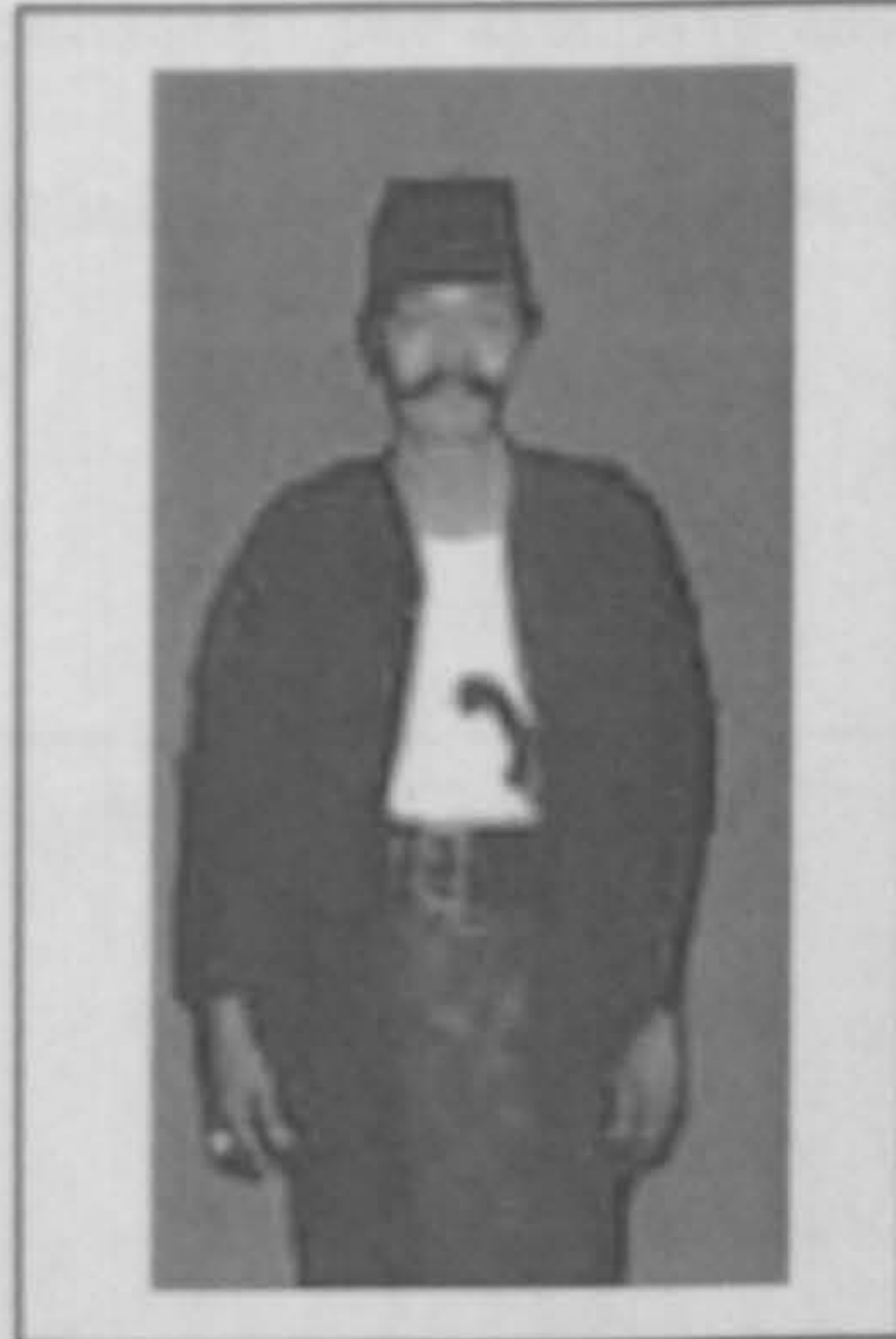


Plate 4b: *Mahaguru Kang Munaji*

Traditionally, *silat* was an informal part of education and was an integral part of any youth's path to manhood. Today, *silat* is learnt and practiced by men and women, boys and girls, of any age, and is accessible to complete beginners in martial arts. It is taught and trained by a *Mahaguru silat* (master of the martial arts) and his assistant. During the period of Dutch rule in Indonesia, the Dutch prohibited *silat* practices among Indonesian youth because of suspicions about the motives of the participants. At that time, there were many rebellions against the Dutch by Indonesian youth, some led by the *mahaguru silat*. In order to keep practicing the *pencak silat* regularly, they formed *kompang* troupes among the youth in West Java. By this means, they were able to play the *kompang* while secretly practicing the *pencak silat*. One of the best known *Mahaguru silat* Ezhar in West Java in the

1930s was Munaji bin Muhammad (also known as Kang Munaji)¹. He established a *silat* court and trained many youths at a village called Bantin, West Java (see Map 4a). Munaji also trained his trainees to play the *kompang* to accompany the *silat* practices as well as for other functions. The *kompang* ensemble also performed on many occasions in the area including wedding ceremonies, circumcisions and to accompany the *zikir*.



Map 4a: Bantin, West Java, Indonesia

In 1942, the Japanese army invaded most parts of Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. That was a very hard time for all the villagers in the region. During the Japanese rule (1942-1945), three things done by the

¹ The term Kang is from the word Kakang, which in the Javanese language means brother. It is also used to refer to a respected person.

Japanese army caused severe suffering for all the villagers in the region, namely forced labour, forced requisitioning, and forced slavery of women. Many Indonesian men were taken from their homes and sent as far as Burma to work on construction projects and perform other hard labour activities in terrible conditions. Many thousands died or disappeared. Japanese soldiers took food, clothing, and other supplies from Indonesian families by force and without compensation. Many factories, farms and elements of infrastructure were destroyed during the war. This had led to much hunger and suffering for the villagers. Moreover, many Indonesian women were kept as "comfort women" for the pleasure of Japanese soldiers (Andaya and Andaya, 1982:258).

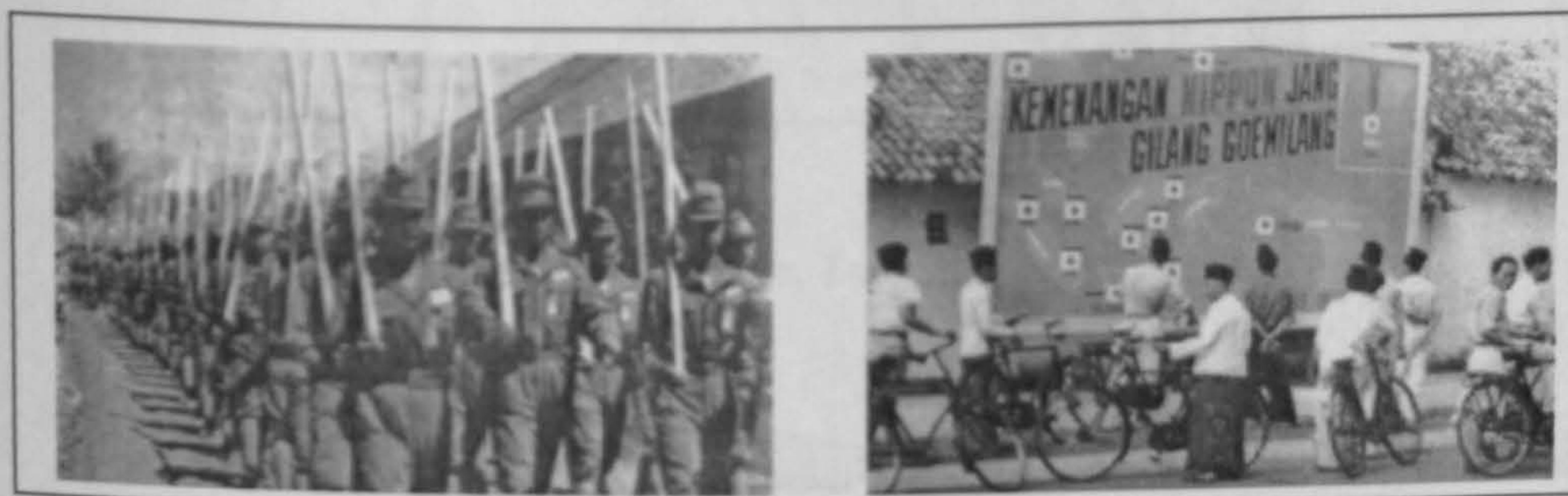


Plate 4c: Japanese Army and Javanese people during the war

Many villagers tried to escape from the appalling situation by migrating to other places. Kang Munaji was one of those who migrated to Singapore in order to seek a better life. After the Japanese Army surrendered in 1945 and the living conditions started to improve, Kang Munaji opened a new *silat* court in a village known as Bukit Radin Mas, in Tanjung Pagar District, Singapore. He trained the

local people in *silat* and *kompang* playing. At that time, other types of *kompang* playing already existed in a few places including the Riau islands and the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia, but it was not as popular as today² (see Chapters 5 and 6).



Map 4b: Radin Mas Village, Tanjung Pagar District, Singapore

Kompang playing and the *silat* practices became more popular and spread throughout the Malay community in Singapore. In running the *silat* court and the *kompang* training, Kang Munaji was assisted by Jasman, who was one of his best trainees. Jasman, who was also known as Kang Jasman, was very active in teaching the *silat* and *kompang* playing to many new trainees in Singapore after Kang Munaji died. Two of Jasman's notable trainees were Ramli Haji Dawam and Muhamad Khalil. Ramli Haji Dawam is from Melaka and Muhammad Khalil is from Kuala

² Interview with Pak Guru Ramli Haji Dawam, on 24 February 2003

Lumpur. The relationship between the Malay people in Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia was very close. They travelled and moved to each place freely. This was because, after the Japanese army surrendered and the British came back to Malaysia, the British had established the Malayan Union in 1946, under which all the states including Singapore were ruled under one administration, that of the British Governor. This was opposed by the Malay people because they lost their executive power to administer the nation. Under pressure from the Malay people, the British disbanded the Malayan Union and replaced it with the Persekutuan Tanah Melayu (Federation of Malaya) in 1948, which retained the power of the sultans and the Malay ruler (Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 264-269), Malaysia became completely independent from Britain on 31st August 1957 and Singapore separated from the Malaysian Federation in 1967.

In 1968, Ramli Haji Dawam and Muhamad Khalil migrated to Malaysia. Ramli settled down in Melaka and Muhamad Khalil lived in Kuala Lumpur. Muhamad Khalil, who was also known by his nickname of Mat Singh, set up the first branch of *silat* and *Kompang Ezhar* at Kampung Cendana, Kangkung Bharu, Kuala Lumpur. This branch was unable to continue with the *kompang* practices because Muhamad Khalil died soon after he set up the branch on 21 January 1971. The task of establishing the *silat* practice and *kompang* playing was then taken over by Ramli Haji Dawam. Later, he expended his skills in training *kompang* players amongst the Malay in his home town in Melaka. Ramli set up the first *Kompang Ezhar* troupe at Kampong Sungai Duyung, which later became known as Kampong Duyung or Jambatan Duyung, in Melaka.

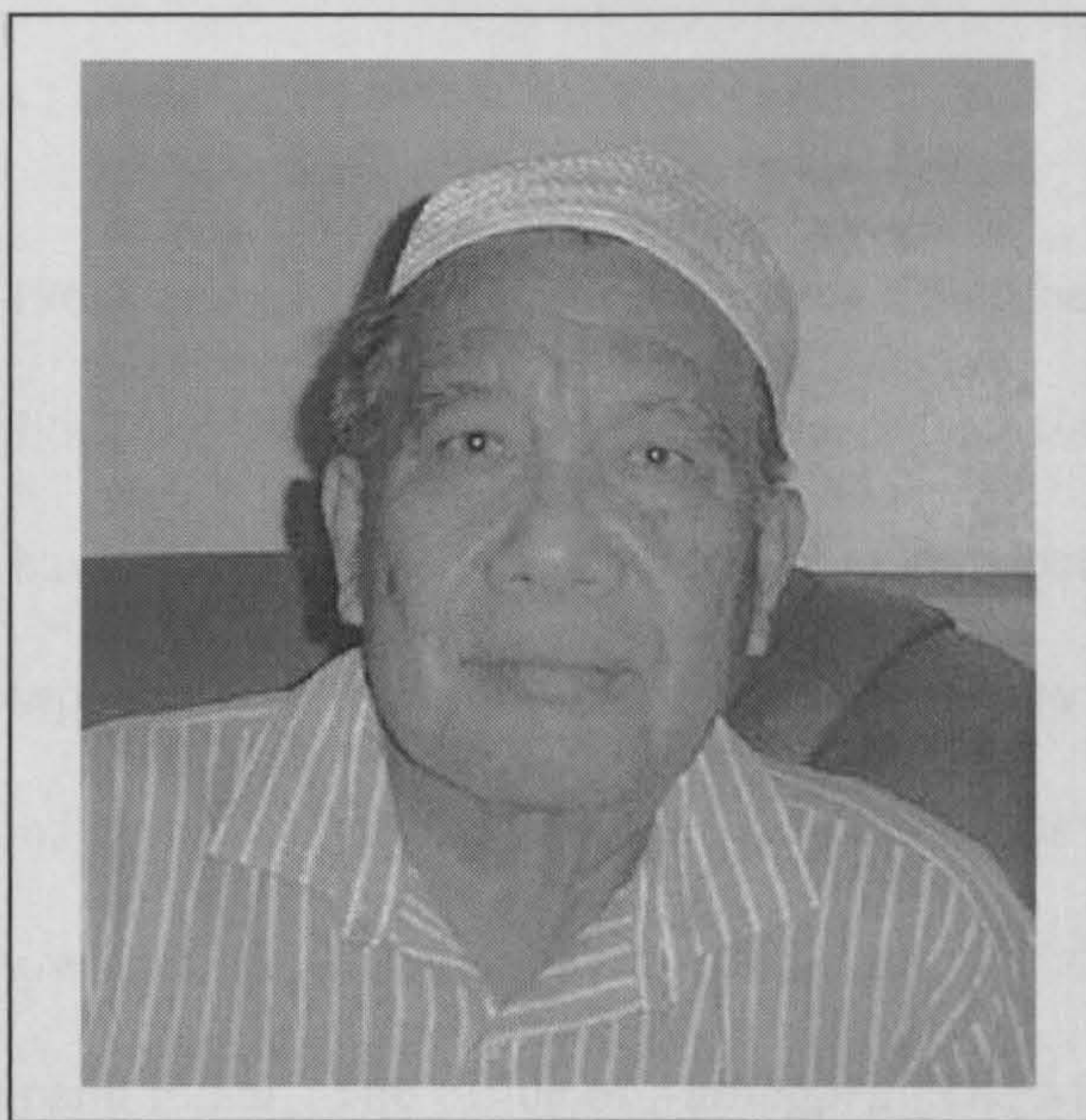


Plate 4d: *Mahaguru* Ramli Haji Dawam

Although *kompang* playing had previously existed in a few places on the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia, including Melaka, and the style of *kompang* playing was not much different, it was not as popular as it became after Ramli came back to Melaka. He had initiated a proper *kompang* troupe organization called the *Kompang and Silat Ezhar Organization* in the state of Melaka. From this point, the *Kompang Ezhar* organization spread out to the neighbouring areas including parts of Johor, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor and Kedah. Nowadays, the *silat* practices within the *Ezhar* organization have been superseded and are not popular, because there are now many other popular types of *silat* practice in Malaysia, such as *Silat Gayong* and *Silat Cekak Hanafi*. However, *kompang* playing in the *Ezhar* organization is becoming more popular especially when performed for wedding ceremonies.

THE ORGANIZATION

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Kompang Ezhar became more popular and spread throughout the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia. More and more kompang troupes have been set up and perform on many occasions. In order to standardize the kompang playing and the management in every kompang troupe, a proper organization, complete with committee members, has been formed. The organization is known as the *Kesenian Ezhar* (The art of Ezhar), or it is better known as the Kompang Ezhar. The office of *Mahaguru* (The Master) is the highest position in the organization. The organization is divided into two committee trees under the *Mahaguru* as the top leader. The two committees are the management committee, the purpose of which is to run the organization, and the training committee, which takes care of the training and performances (see Figure 4a).

The management committee is headed by the *Yang Dipertua* (the President), who looks after the management of the organization. There are three committee members on the publicity committee, which has the task of promoting the organization to the public. The hierarchy consists of the secretary, the treasurer, the state committees and the branch committees. The training committee is headed by the *Ketua Khalifah*³ (Chief Trainer), who is responsible for the training and the quality of kompang playing in the Kompang Ezhar organization. He is assisted by the *Timbalan Ketua Khalifah* (Deputy Chief Trainer) and the *Khalifah* (Trainer) in every zone.

³ *Khalifah* (Caliph) is borrowed from an Arabic word which means the head of the committee.

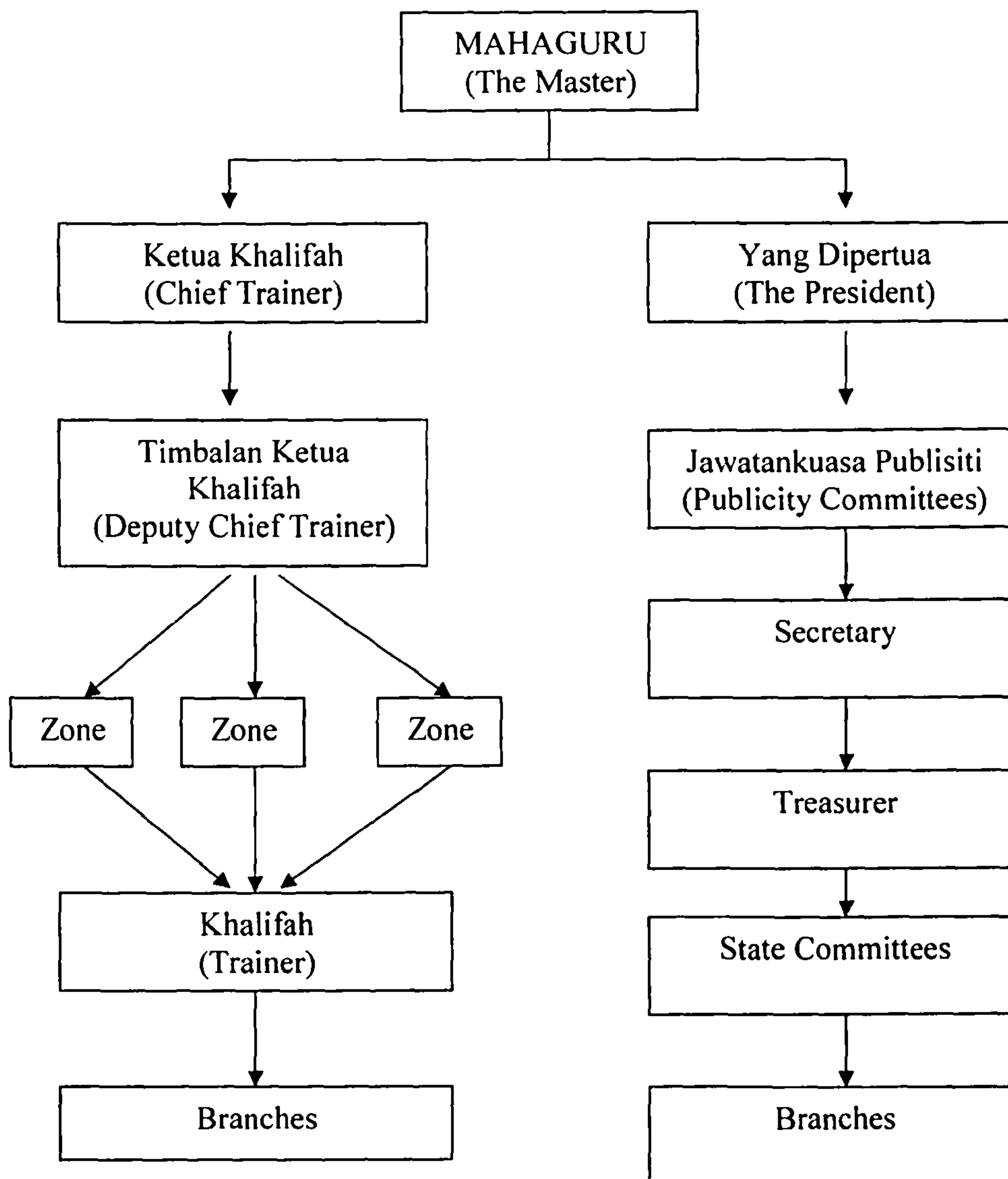


Figure 4a: The organization chart of the Kompong Ezhar

Membership of the Kompong Ezhar organization is open to all with some restrictions. Anyone who would like to join the organization must be in good health, literate and not convicted of any crime. A branch of the Kompong Ezhar organization can be set up anywhere in Malaysia. Furthermore, the newly set-up branch must have at least fifteen members. The membership in a branch is not

restricted only to the local people, but is open to all. However, only one branch is allowed to be set up in a village.

The Logo

Unlike other types of komping troupe, the Kompang Ezhar organization possesses a unique logo (see Plate 4e). The logo is normally printed on the heads of the kompangs. From this logo, audiences will easily recognize which type of komping troupe is performing in a function. Every object designed on the logo has its own meaning and represents the inspiration of the Kompang Ezhar organization.

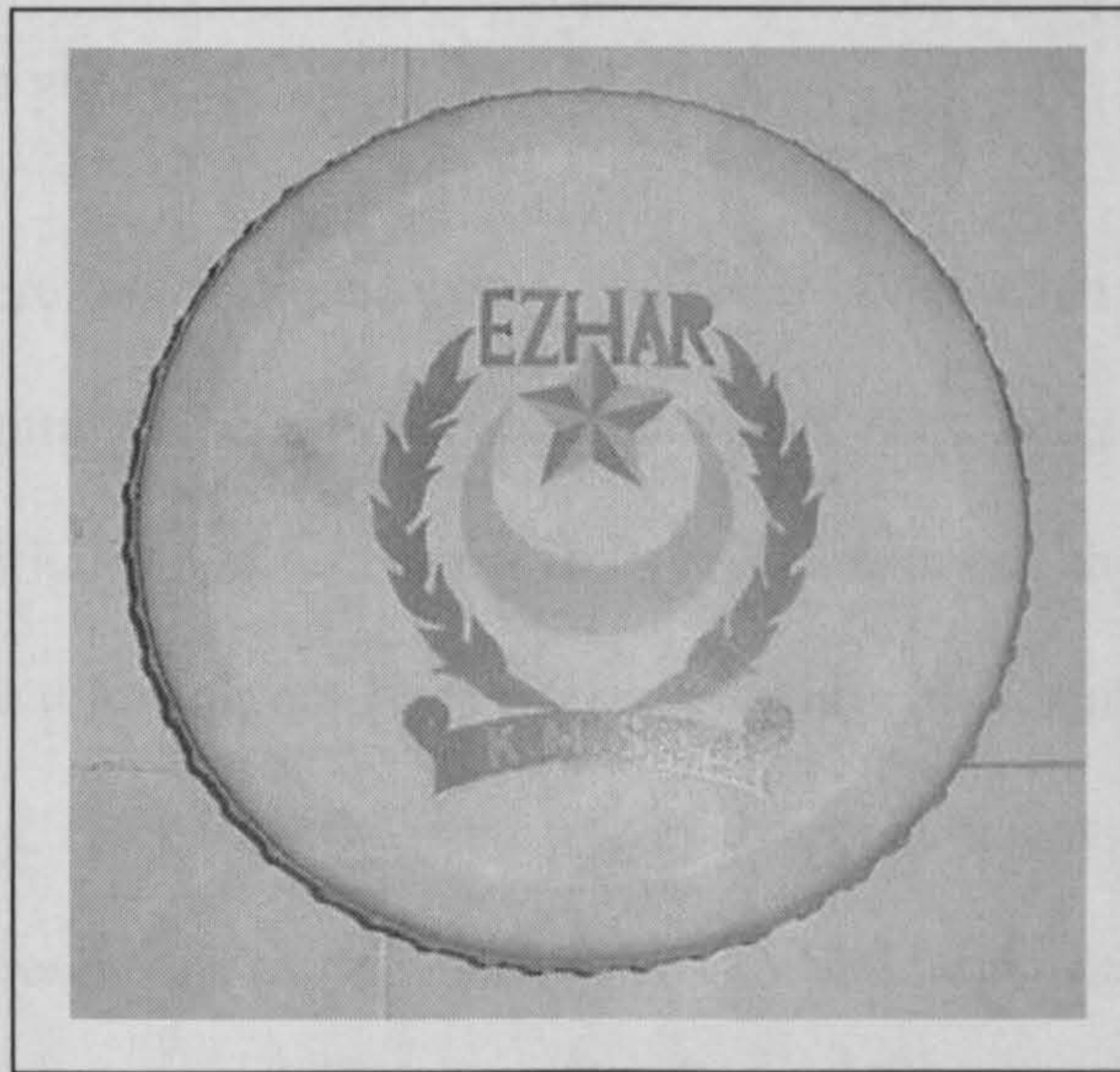


Plate 4e: The official logo of the Kompang Ezhar organization

Mahaguru Ramli Haji Dawam interpreted the meaning represented by the objects on the logo with five different explanations based on the design of the logo.

The explanations of the meaning represented by the logo are interpreted as below:

i. The colours

There are three different colours used to paint the logo – red, green and yellow. Red is the bright colour used to represent the courage of the members of the Kompang Ezhar organization. Green is always associated with Islam and it represents the religiousness and perfection of the members of the Kompang Ezhar. Lastly, yellow is traditionally assumed as the royal colour by the Malay people. In this case, the colour represents the royal highness of the king and the constitution of Malaysia.

ii. The yam leaf

There are thirteen green yam leaves at each side of the logo. Naturally, the yam leaf produces sticky and itchy rubber. The sticky and itchy leaf represents the assiduousness of the kompang players. The thirteen yam leaves represent three different meanings. Firstly, they represent thirteen prayer commandments. Secondly, they represent the thirteen stripes on the Malaysian flag, and thirdly, they also represent the thirteen states united in The Malaysian Federation.

iii. The crescent moon and five-angled star

The yellow moon and the star represent the Islamic religion and the kingdom. The five-angled star represents the five principles of Malaysian law and the five pillars of Islam.

- iv. The letters K.M.S.H.

The four letters KMSH at the bottom of the logo represent the first letters of the words of the Kompang Ezhar's motto. The motto is *Kompang Melayu Setia (Suci) Hati* (Faithful (chaste) Heart Malay Kompang). The motto represents the players of the Kompang Ezhar organization performing their art faithfully and courageously.

- v. The logo is composed of three colours (yellow, red, and green) and three objects (leaf, moon and star). The three colours plus the three objects in the logo represent the six commandments of faith in Islam.

The Costumes

Unlike many other kompang organizations, the Kompang Ezhar organization has its own official costume (see Figure 4b). The attire is designed based on Malay traditional dress for men and women. Every kompang player has to have their own costume and wear it during the performance. The use of the same design of outfit in the kompang performance makes it look like a proper uniform for the kompang troupe.

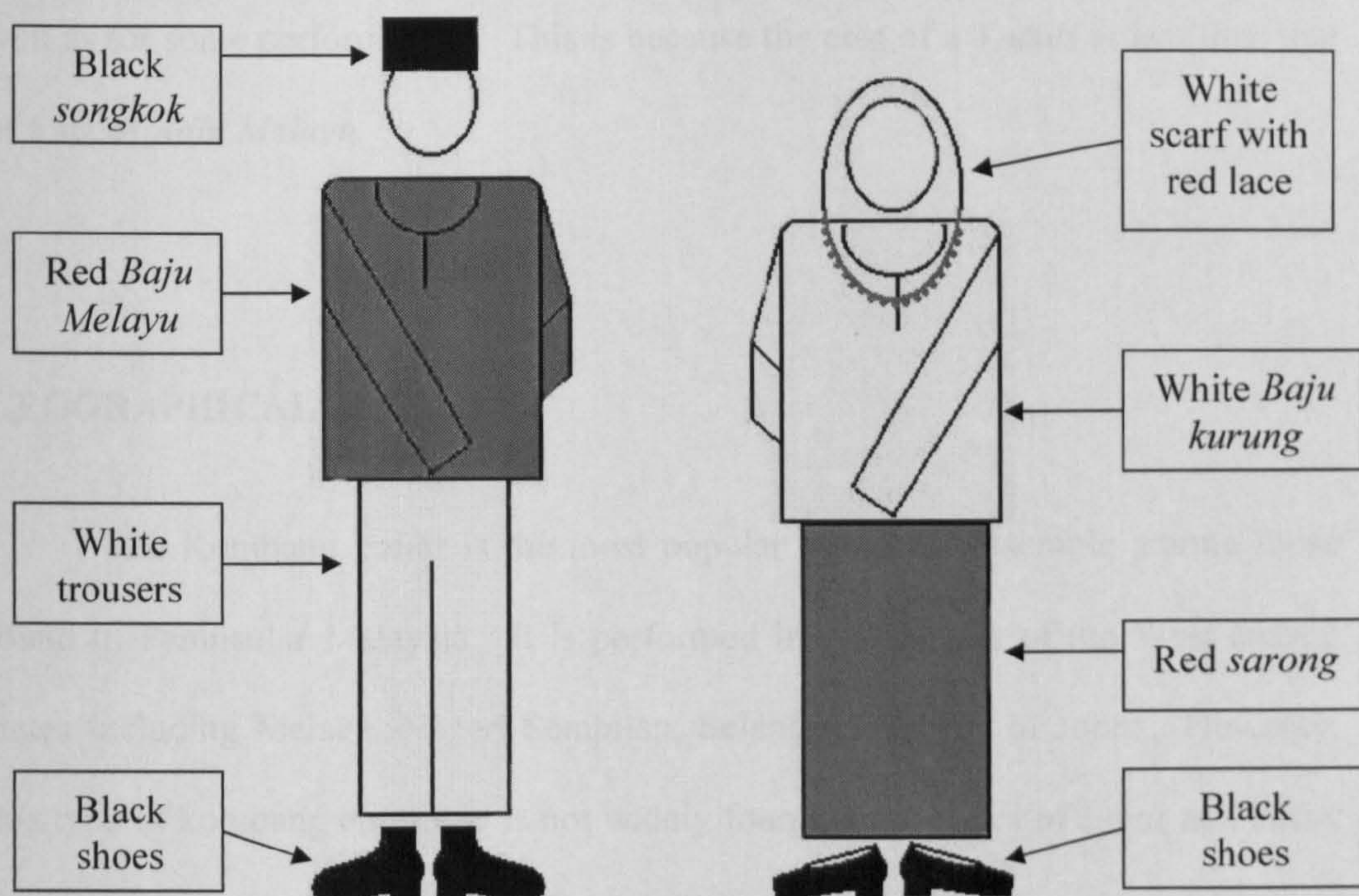


Figure 4b: Male and female costumes

The man's costume is called the *baju melayu* (the Malay shirt). This is a red, loose, long-sleeved shirt (*baju*) worn over a pair of white trousers (*seluar*). A velvet cap called the *songkok* is used as headgear and the uniform is completed with a pair of black shoes. The costume for women is called the *baju kurung*. This comprises a loose white tunic (*baju*) worn over a long red skirt (*sarong*). The *baju kurung* set may be made of any fabric material. Together with the *baju kurung* and the *sarong*, there is also a scarf called a *tudung* to cover the head. This is a scarf covering the head, ears, neck and bosom with red lace at the bottom edge. This scarf is to comply with the obligation in Islam that all women must cover their hair. The woman player also wears a pair of black shoes. Some Kompang Ezhar troupes in Melaka have designed their own T-shirt to be used by the players during practice sessions as

well as for some performances. This is because the cost of a T-shirt is less than that of a set of *Baju Melayu*.

GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

The Kompang Ezhar is the most popular kompang ensemble among those found in Peninsular Malaysia. It is performed in many parts of the West coastal states including Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor and part of Johor. However, this type of kompang ensemble is not widely found in the states of Johor and Perak because people in these states perform their own types of kompang ensemble (see Chapters 5 and 6). In Johor, this type of kompang ensemble is found at Kampong Haji Manan, Keluang, and it is headed by Jasni bin Rabu. Presumably, Melaka is the centre for the Kompang Ezhar organization not only because the *Mahaguru* (Ramli Haji Dawam) is from this state, but also because the organization was initiated by people in this state. Currently, Minhat bin Makdar from Jambatan Duyung, Abdul Ghani Minhat from Pekan Kuala Sungai Baru and Yusoff Abu from Kubu are among the well-known personnel in the Kompang Ezhar organization in Melaka. Overall, there are more than fifty kompang troupes actively performing for many occasions in Melaka.

To the North of Melaka, a few kompang troupes are also found in the state of Negeri Sembilan. However, this Sumatran-origin dominated state prefers the musical culture influenced by ethnic groups from Sumatra such as *tumbuk kalang*

(stamping mortar pestles into wooden troughs), *caklempong* (gong-chimes ensemble) and *Endang* dancing (fast-sitting position dance). Kompang playing is not one of the main musical cultures practiced in this state and the kompang playing here is influenced by its neighbour – Melaka. It is interesting to note here that one of the Kompang Ezhar troupes set up in this state is headed by a woman. Ms Zuri Faizah Mansor plays the important role of running the kompang troupe at Taman Marinda, Senawang. Her troupe is mostly composed of young women from around her neighbourhood. Other kompang troupes in this state are mostly headed by men.

Even though the people in some places in Selangor perform their own type of kompang (see Chapter 6), the Kompang Ezhar organization is also widely established in this state, including the Federal territory of Kuala Lumpur. Currently, Abdul Rahman bin Yim is the *Ketua Khalifah* (Chief Trainer) for the Kompang Ezhar organization in Selangor. He is assisted by many *Khalifah* (trainers) from different places in the state such as Radzuan Bedul, Alias Md Arif, Zainul Abidin Kassim and Razali Baharom. Similar ensembles are also found in the areas around Kuala Lumpur such as Selayang, Ampang, Shah Alam and Kajang. The organization also expands its influence to the northernmost state where traditionally the kompang ensemble is not common. However, a branch of this organization has been set up in the capital city of Kedah – Alor Setar. This troupe is organized and trained by Habibi bin Abdullah.

Recently, the Kompang Ezhar organization has expanded its establishment to the Eastern coast of Peninsular Malaysia with the recent set up of the first

kompang troupe in the state of Kelantan. Before this, the kompang ensemble did not perform at any function in the Eastern states of Peninsular Malaysia because the instrument is not part of the local culture. In the state of Kelantan, a new Kompang Ezhar troupe was officially launched on 10 May 2003 at Kampong Kubang Bemban, Pasir Mas. This troupe is headed and trained by Haji Albakri Alias, who is also a teacher at the secondary school in the village. This troupe is mostly composed of teenagers from his school. As with many other kompang troupes in the Ezhar organization, this troupe adopts the same rules and performs the same repertoire as the similar troupes found in the Western parts of Peninsular Malaysia.

THE TRAINING

Kompang playing training sessions at the branch are handled by the *Khalifah* and his assistant. They are normally held in the evening after working time and at night depending on the suitability of the trainees and availability of the *Khalifah*. Every trainee must attend all the training sessions to ensure that they progress according to the stages of the playing skills. The training sessions are sometimes held at the *Khalifah's* house or at the house of one of the trainees. Sometimes, they are also held at a public hall known as the *balai raya*⁴ if the village has one. The training session is conducted two or three times a week on weekdays or at the weekend. Each training session will normally take about two hours. After all the trainees have learned and acquired all the skills and playing techniques of the kompang ensemble, the number of training sessions will be reduced to one a week. Normally, there is no training session held for the mature and skillful players;

⁴ A hall-like building built by the government or villagers for public use.

however they will have a rehearsal session if they are going to perform for some event. This is because most of the mature players have many other commitments. Some of them say that they do not need regular practice sessions because they are already good at kompang playing.

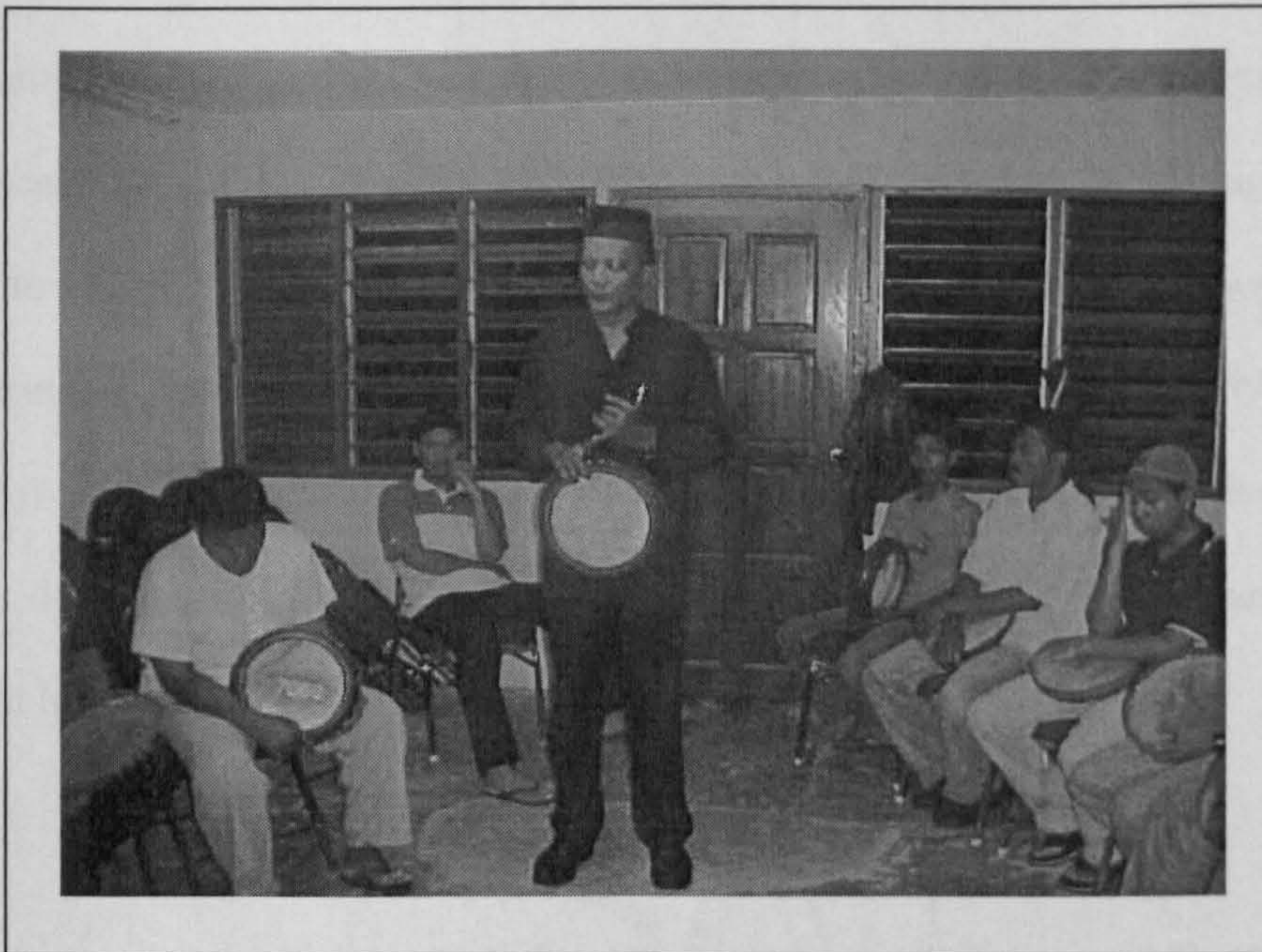


Plate 4f: A kompang training session at Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka

Traditionally, the training and learning process of kompang playing is conducted by the *khalifah* and his assistant using a rote method. There is no standard notation used in kompang playing. The trainees have to memorize all the rhythms and the songs. The *khalifah* uses the mnemonic system to demonstrate the rhythms based on the timbres played on the kompang. There are only two timbres

played on the *kompang*, which are *bum* and *pak*. The players sing the rhythmic ostinato of the timbres *bum* and *pak* based on the rhythm they are playing.

After the trainees have acquired all the skills and playing techniques of the *kompang*, a closing ceremony called *Istiadat Perkhataman*⁵ will be held as recognition of the achievement of the trainees. This rite will be held after three to six months or maybe longer, depending on the progression of all the trainees. At the closing ceremony, the *Mahaguru* and some of the *khalifahs* from other branches are invited to attend. The *Kompang Ezhar* organization has established its own rite for the closing ceremony. This rite must be followed and practiced in any closing ceremony at the branch. There are three things that have to be provided by the trainees during the closing ceremony: hard-boiled eggs, forty-four *ketupat*⁶, and a charcoal burning pot with incense.

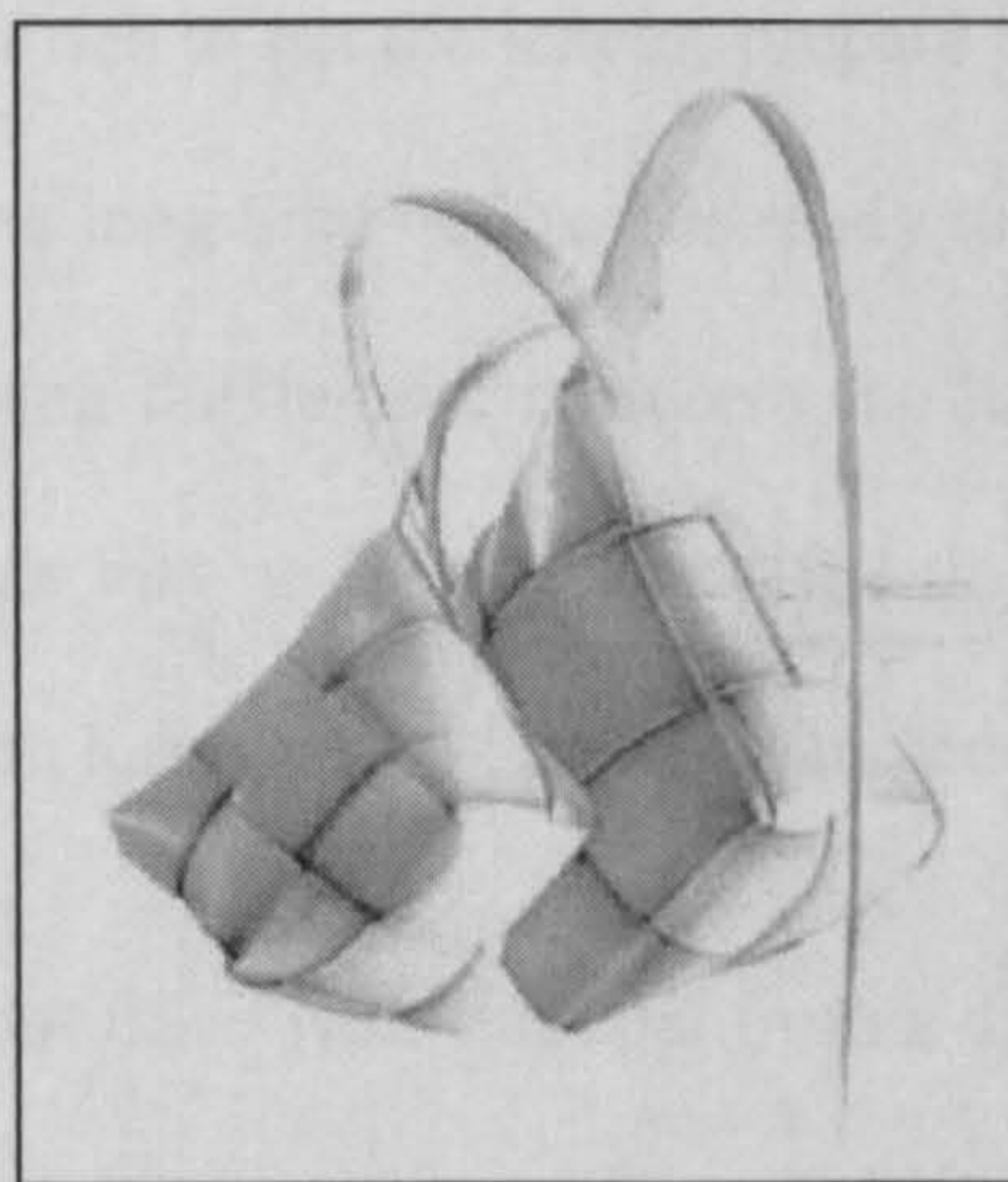


Plate 4g: *Ketupat* (rice cake in a woven coconut leaf)

⁵ The closing ceremony after the completion of *kompang* learning.

⁶ The *Ketupat* is a boiled savoury rice cake wrapped in woven coconut leaves.

Every trainee must provide a hard-boiled egg for the closing ceremony. The egg must be eaten by the trainee in front of the *Mahaguru* and the *Khalifah*. The ritual of eating a boiled egg during the closing ceremony is because the white part of the egg represents the cleanness and the truthfulness of the players while the yellow egg yolk represents the royal colour. By doing this, it means that the trainee accepts that in the Kompong Ezhar organization, all the players must always be clean and honest, and respect the king.

Forty-four *ketupat* are shared together with all the trainees and should be eaten after the ceremony. The *ketupat* and the boiled eggs served at the ceremony can only be eaten by the trainees and not by the guests. The reason why the *ketupat* is chosen for the ceremony is because it is a Malay traditional food. It has a symbolic meaning as it is not an easy job to make a *ketupat*. It takes a lot of effort to climb the high coconut tree to get the leaves, prepare the woven coconut leaf, fill it with rice and boil it for a long time before it is ready to be served. The challenges and difficulties of preparing the *ketupat* represent the hardness of learning to play the kompong. This means that no matter how difficult it is to achieve something, given every effort and with hard work a person can achieve what he desires.

A small burning pot filled with charcoal from a dying fire is prepared for the ceremony. It is used to burn the incense for a spiritual purpose. Scent from the burning incense will fill the area during the ceremony. This ritual is conducted purposely to raise the trainees' spirit in the kompong playing. The burning incense

in the ceremony is also used by the *Mahaguru* during his recital of the *tawasul*⁷. Some of the incense will be kept by the *Mahaguru* for his own use.

At the end of the ceremony, the *Mahaguru* will issue three different kinds of certificate to recognize different achievements (see Appendix 2). The first certificate is issued to the newly set up branch of the Kompong Ezhar organization which has just completed the *Istiadat Perkhahaman*. The certificate acknowledges that the branch has successfully run the training sessions and the players have acquired the playing techniques as well as knowing all the repertoire of the Kompong Ezhar. Normally, the certificate is kept by the trainer or the captain at the branch. Another certificate is granted to every successful trainee in the Kompong Ezhar organization, in the branch to certify that the awarded trainee has completed the training sessions and acquired all the skills of Kompong Ezhar playing. This will allow the certificate holder to perform on the instrument in the Kompong Ezhar organization. This certificate also counts as a membership document of the Kompong Ezhar organization. The third type of certificate is issued to the captain of the newly set up kompong troupe. With this certificate, the Chief Trainer acknowledges that the awarded trainee has completely followed all the *zikirs* and rules in the Kompong Ezhar organization. This will authorize the awarded trainee to train the kompong players at his branch as an Assistant Trainer.

⁷ Mumbled recitation of an incantation during the closing ceremony.

GRATUITY FOR THE PERFORMANCES

When a kompong troupe is invited to perform for a certain occasion or celebration, normally the organizer of the occasion or celebration will give a type of gratuity to the kompong troupe. The gratuity presented to the kompong troupe is the organizer's appreciation of the troupe's participation and involvement in the occasion or celebration. Normally, the type of gratuity presented to the kompong troupe is in the form of an amount of money. Besides the money, the organizer of the celebration also gives a feast to all the kompong players. The feast is given either before the performance, in-between the performances or after the performance, depending on the type of occasion or celebration. For example, in a wedding ceremony, the kompong players will be invited to have their feast after the procession. But for the performance during the *malam berinai*, the players play the kompong in a sitting position for a long period. They will take one or two breaks between the performances. The organizer will serve the food for the kompong players before the performance or during the break times. The organizer will also provide transportation for the kompong players to the location of the performance if this is far from the players' base.

For some performances, such as at a wedding ceremony, the kompong troupe is paid some amount of money. Normally, the family of the bride pays the money to the captain of the kompong troupe who will later divide it equally among all the players in the troupe. The payment for the kompong performance in a wedding ceremony is about RM100 to RM200 (GBP14.29 to GBP28.57) depending

on the agreement between the family of the bride and the kompong troupe. There are a few factors that influence the size of the payment to the kompong troupe. One of the factors is if the organizer or the inviter has more funds for the occasion, so more money will be paid to the kompong troupe. The amount of the payment is also based on the number of players in the troupe. The more players, the bigger the payment, because presumably the more players there are in a kompong troupe, the better they perform. Normally, a well-known kompong troupe will get a higher payment than a newly set up troupe. In this case, the kompong troupe must always practice to give a very good performance, so that they will be invited again on other occasions or by other organizers. Kompong troupes do not always get paid for their performances. In some performances, such as the procession on *mauled nabi*, National Day, cultural shows and even at some wedding ceremonies, the kompong troupes do not get any pay. They perform the ensemble on these occasions to fulfil their obligation to the community.

PERFORMING TECHNIQUES

The performing techniques adopted by the Kompong Ezhar organization are very similar to those of other kompong ensembles throughout the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Traditionally, the kompong is played in a group and performed as an ensemble and not as a solo instrument. The holding and playing techniques of the instrument are similar to those of the other kompong ensembles performing in other areas (see page 159). However, the Kompong Ezhar has

established its own rhythms and songs in its own repertoire, which is different from that of the other komping ensembles found in Malaysia.

In the Komping Ezhar ensemble, at least three parts are composed to play the interlocking rhythmic patterns. Every part plays a different rhythmic pattern and the combination of all the parts will produce a resultant rhythmic pattern. The three parts of the Komping Ezhar's music are called the *melalu* or *pembolong*, the *menyelang* or *peningkah* and the *menganak* or *melanak*.

i. Melalu or pembolong

This part is also known as *pukulan dasar* (basic beat). Six to ten players who beat the basic rhythm play this part. Each note is mostly played on a continuous down beat. They play timbre *pak* or *bum* according to the type of beat they are playing. In some types of beat such as the *Pukulan Hadrah* (see page 204), this part will be divided into two or three parts, which are called the *melalu satu* (first *melalu*), the *melalu dua* (second *melalu*) and the *melalu tiga* (third *melalu*).

ii. Menyelang or peningkah

This part is usually played by one player or a few players who play the variation rhythm to the main rhythmic pattern. It is usually played by the leader of the group who starts and ends the performance. If the komping troupe is performing in a sitting position, the *peningkah*

player will be placed in the middle of the players. The *peningkah* player will also lead the *kompang* players in front of the procession. In some types of beat such as the *Pukulan Hadrah Pendek* (see page 206), this part is divided into two parts called the *Menyelang Rapat* (Close *Menyelang*) and the *Menyelang Jarang* (Rare *Menyelang*)

iii. *Menganak* or *melanak*

This part plays the counter rhythm to the *melalu* part, and it is mainly upbeat. In order to balance the sound of the ensemble, the instrument used to play this part is normally chosen for the loudest and best sound it can produce and it is played by the best player in the troupe. It is also normally placed at the middle of the troupe beside the *menyelang* part. It is also sometimes divided into two parts called the *Menganak Rapat* (Close *Menganak*) and the *Menganak Jarang* (Rare *Menganak*) in some *pukulans*.

In some types of beat such as in the *Pukulan Bertih* (see page 199), another part is added in conjunction to the three parts that are mentioned above. The added part is a free rhythm called the *mengocok*. Only one player, ad-libbing the rhythm, plays this part. This part is only added when the number of players is less than ten in the troupe. Some *kompang* troupes such as the *Kompang Ezhar* troupe from Kubu,

Melaka, add a modern tambourine to play the pulses of the beat in every piece. This instrument is purposely added to give a jingle-like sound to the ensemble⁸.

THE REPERTOIRE

The Kompang Ezhar organization performs its own repertoire of music, which is mostly different from that of the other types of kompang ensemble in Peninsular Malaysia. The melody or the vocal part of the kompang ensemble is sung by all the players whilst beating the instrument. Both vocal part and rhythmic part are equally important in the ensemble. However, in some of the performances, especially that are performed by the newly set up troupe, the melody part is less emphasized than the rhythm part. This is because some of the players cannot sing very well and they just follow the words sung by the other players. As a result, sometimes, the audience cannot hear the melody part clearly because of the loudness of the kompang sound. The drumming and the singing are two different skills, both of which have to be carried out by all the players in the ensemble. Observably, in the kompang performance, some players cannot combine these skills at the same time. If this happens, the players who have this problem will put more emphasis on the drumming than on the singing, causing an imbalance between the loudness of the kompang sound and the vocal part. All the songs in the kompang ensemble are sung in unison.

There are two types of vocal part performed by the Kompang Ezhar troupe, which are the Malay songs sung in the Malay language and the *zikir* in the Arabic

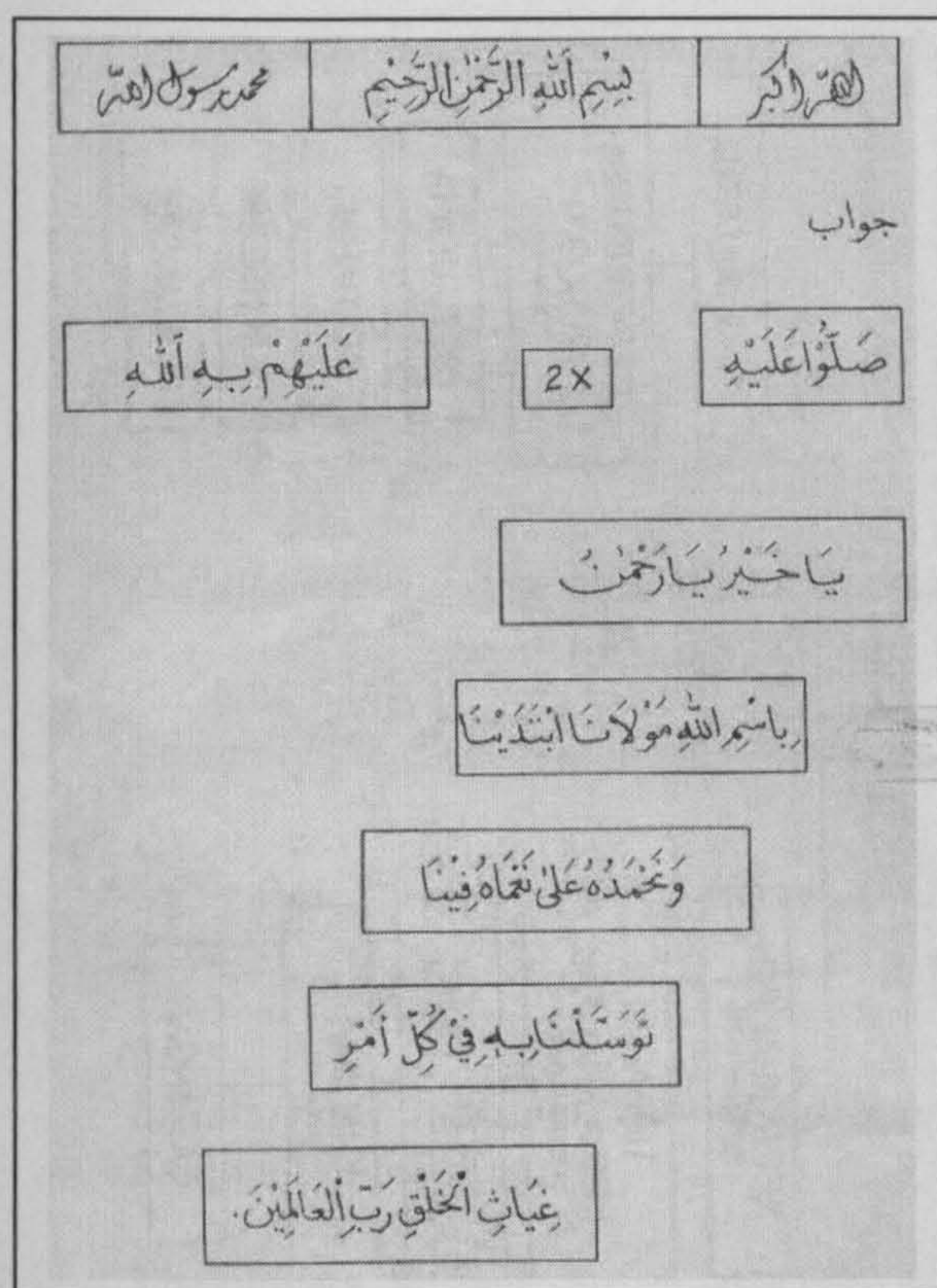
⁸ Interview with Haji Yusof Abu, a kompang instructor from Kubu, Melaka on 24 February 2003

language. All the kompong players have to memorize all the songs and *zikirs* in the repertoire. Many of the Malay songs performed by the Kompong Ezhar are adapted from Malay traditional songs and old folk songs. Some of the songs are taken from old Malay films from the 1950s. All the adapted melodies were given new lyrics to suit the functions of the kompong performances. There are a number of songs which have had lyrics written purposely for performance by the Kompong Ezhar. Among the songs which have been composed specially for the Kompong Ezhar are *Aneka Rentak* (Multi Rhythms), *Sila-sila* (Welcome), *Lambang Sejarah* (Historical symbol), *Renjis-renjis* (Spray), *Islam Agama rasmi* (Islam is the Official Religion), *Untuk Pengantin* (For the Brides), and *Demikian* (That's all).



Plate 4h: The Kompong Ezhar competition for teenagers at Kampong Sempang, Merlimau, Melaka, April 2002

There are ten *zikirs* performed by the Kompang Ezhar troupes. Each *zikir* has its own name. All the *zikirs* in the Kompang Ezhar's repertoire are taken from a book called the *Kitab Dewanul Hadrah*⁹. This book contains phrases praising God and the Prophet Muhammad. The ten *zikirs* in the Kompang Ezhar are *Zikir Bismillah*, *Zikir Musa*, *Zikir Sallallah*, *Zikir Yarobbana*, *Zikir Khairuman*, *Zikir Muhammadiyah*, *Zikir Wa'alihim*, *Zikir Aini*, *Zikir Khatinan* and *Zikir Alhamdulillah*. Most of the *zikirs* are performed in a static position either sitting or standing in a performance except for the *Zikir Sallallah* which is sometimes performed in a procession.



In The Name Of Allah, The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful

Praise to the highness and to his companions.

Oh God who is the source of all joy, oh God who is always generous,

With the name of Allah we started,
We give praise for enjoyment given to us.

We depend on him in all aspects

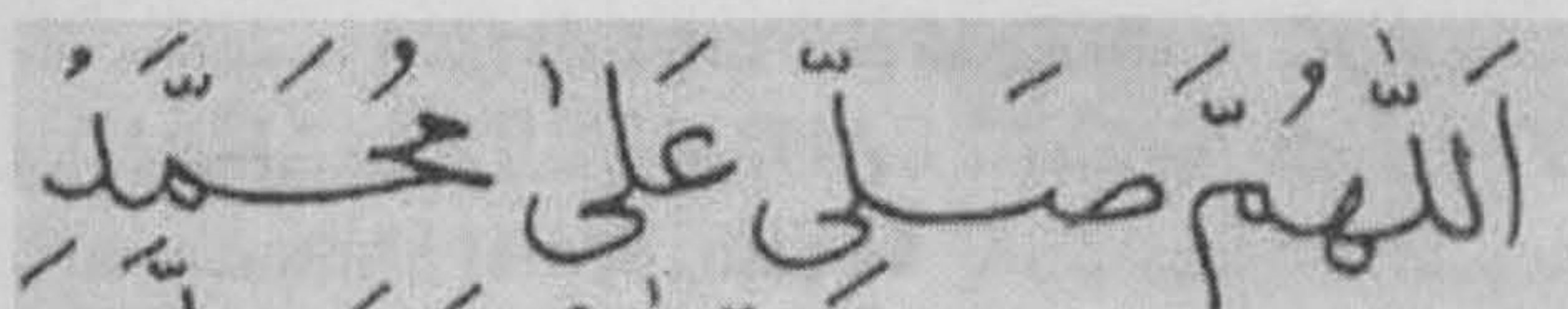
The saviour of the creatures who rules the world with all its features.

Figure 4c: Example of *Zikir Bismillah*

⁹ Interview with Ramli Haji Dawam, the *Mahaguru* of the Kompang Ezhar Organization, on 24 February 2003.

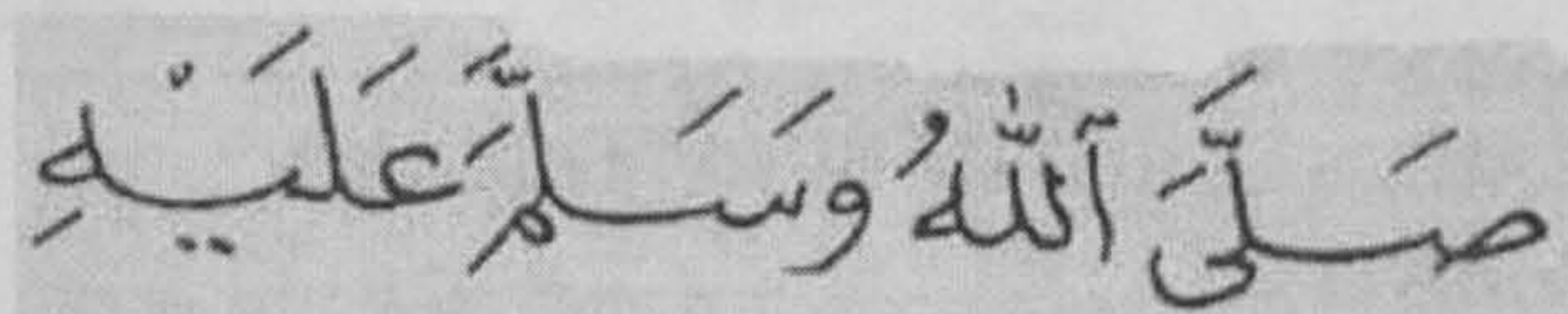
Noticeably, every performance of the Kompang Ezhar will start with the recitation of the *Selawat*¹⁰. This is a call and response recitation of *selawat* between the captain of the troupe and the players. The captain of the kompang troupe will loudly recite the *selawat* and it will be answered by all the players who are full of exuberance. The *selawat* is like an introduction to the kompang performance. It is recited as:

First the captain recites:



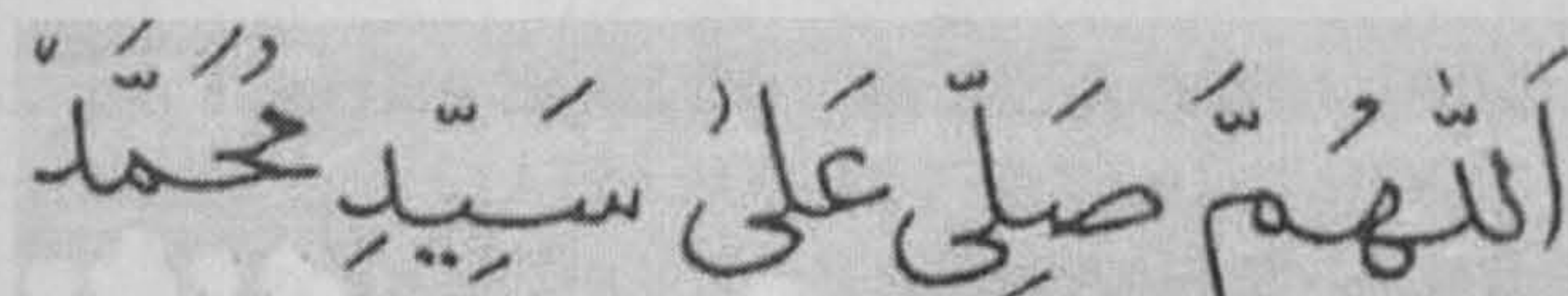
(*Allahumasolialai Muhammad*) (Peace be upon you Prophet Muhammad)

The players' answer:



(*Salallah wasallamualaih*) (Peace and safety be with you)

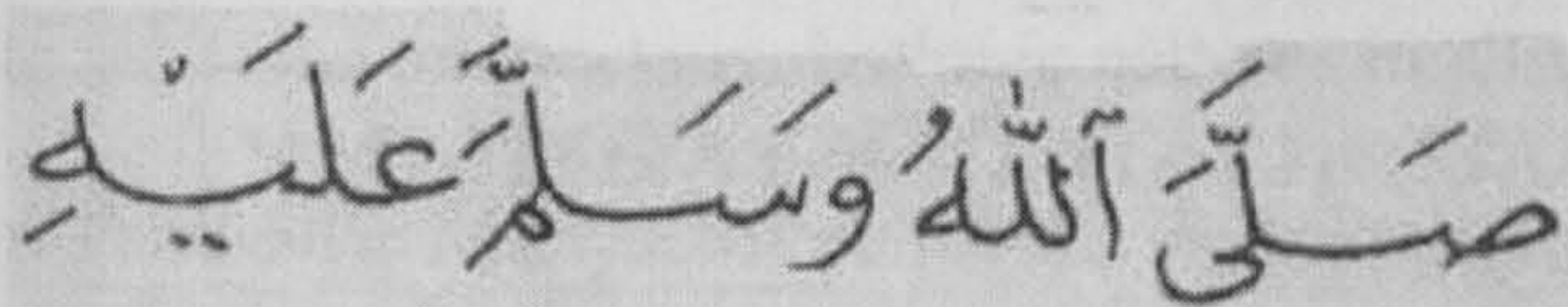
Secondly the captain recites:



(*Allahumasolialaisaiyidina Muhammad*) (Peace be upon you Prophet Saidina Muhammad)

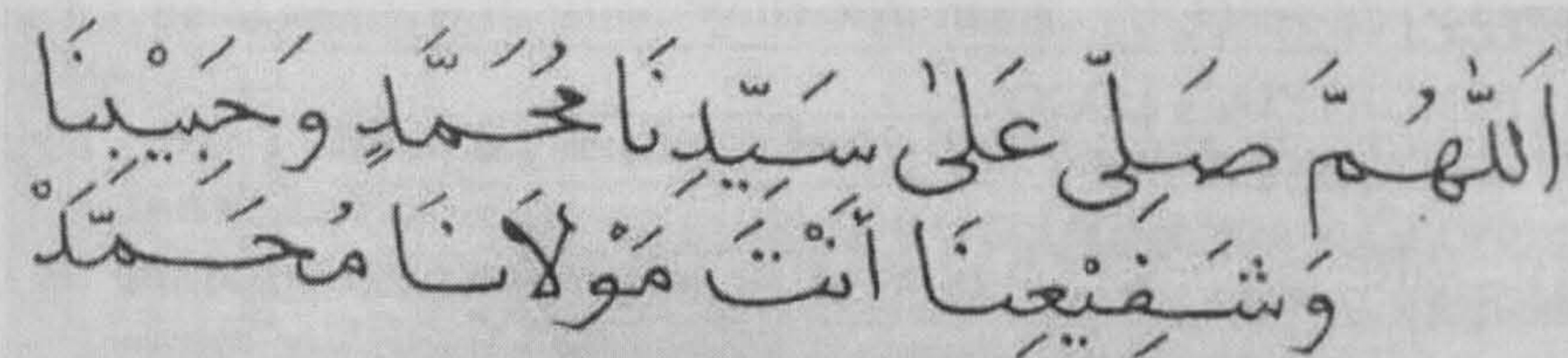
The players' answer:

¹⁰ Short phrases in Arabic language praising the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.



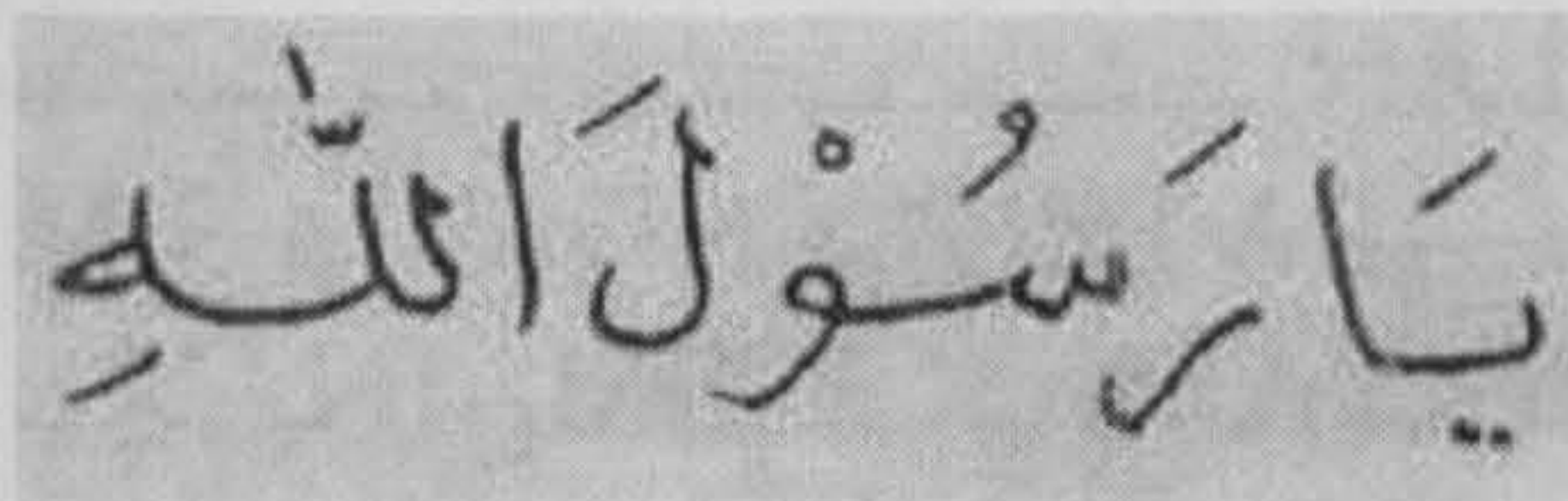
(*Salallah wasallamualaih*) (Peace and safety be with you)

Finally the captain recites:



(*Allahumasolialaisaiyidina wahabibina wasyafiiena, antamaulana Muhammad*) (Love to you who gave the guidance to the prophets and religious people).

The players' answer:



(*Ya rasulullah*) (Oh, the messenger of Allah)

The players start beating the *kompang* as soon as the recitation of the *selawat* ends. The songs and the *zikir* performed in every performance are based on the captain's selection depending on the occasion that the *kompang* is being played for.

THE RHYTHMIC STRUCTURES

The music of the *kompang* ensemble is composed of three or more different parts of a rhythmic pattern. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, traditionally, the

complete set of the interlocking rhythmic patterns in all types of *kompang* ensemble found in Peninsular Malaysia is called the *Pukulan* (the beat). The players of the *Kompang Ezhar* also use the term *pukulan* to describe the beats in their repertoire. Originally, there were seven types of *pukulan* in the *Kompang Ezhar* ensemble, in which each type of *pukulan* is called by its own name. All these seven *pukulans* are categorized as the *Pukulan Wajib* (compulsory beats). Every player must be able to perform all the *pukulans* of the *Pukulan Wajib* in the *Kompang Ezhar*. The seven types of the *Pukulan Wajib* in the *Kompang Ezhar* are *Pukulan Bertih*, *Pukulan Baru*, *Pukulan Hadrah*, *Pukulan Hadrah Pendek*, *Pukulan Hadrah Kepang*, *Pukulan Rancak* and *Pukulan Silat*. All the *pukulans* mentioned are used to accompany the *zikirs* and songs in the *Kompang Ezhar* repertoire, but some *pukulans*, for example the *Pukulan Bertih*, are sometimes performed as instrumental music.

There are also a few new added *pukulans* in the *Kompang Ezhar* ensemble. All the new added *pukulans* are categorized as *Pukulan Tambahan* (additional beats). Some of the *pukulans* in the category of the *Pukulan Tambahan* in the *Kompang Ezhar* are *Pukulan Zapin*, *Pukulan Inang*, and *Pukulan Joget*. The new *pukulans* were added to the existing *pukulans* because they are used to accompany newly composed songs. They were gradually added to the repertoire in the early 1960s when the *kompang* troupes started to perform many Malay songs which are not suitable for accompaniment by the existing *pukulans*¹¹.

¹¹ Interview with Ramli Haji Dawam on 24 February 2003

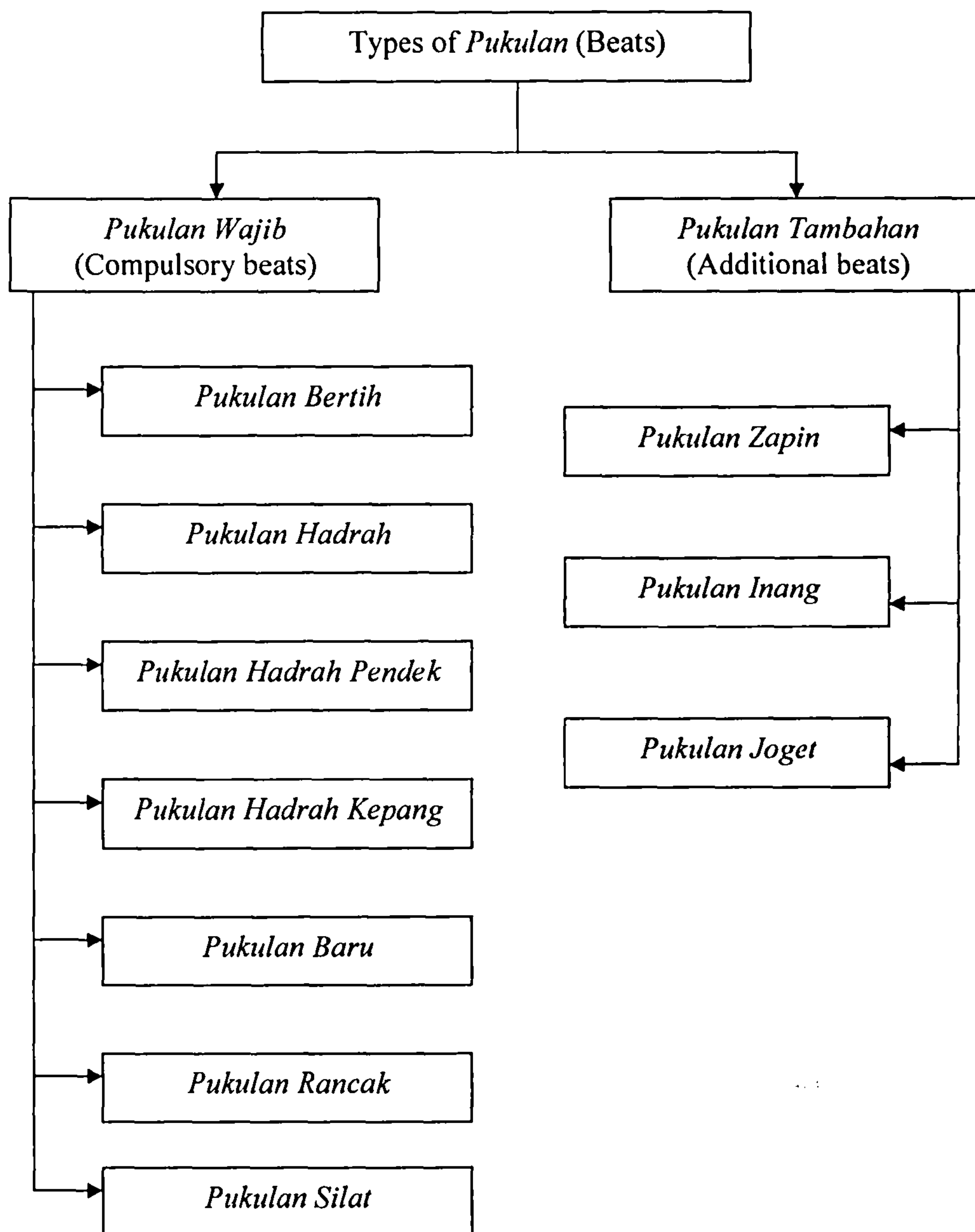


Figure 4e: Types of *pukulan* in the Kompang Ezhar's repertoire

For the purpose of the transcription method, all the notes located above the line in the attached scores represent the timbre *Pak* while all the notes placed below the line will represent the timbre *Bum* of the kompang sound.

Pukulan Bertih

The *Pukulan Bertih*¹² is normally the first type of *pukulan* taught to new kompiang players. It is composed of three different parts, which are called *Melalu*, *Menyelang* and *Menganak*. Sometimes, another part called *Mengocok* is added when the players in the troupe are fewer than ten people. This part ad-libs the rhythm to make the sound of the ensemble livelier. The *Pukulan Bertih* is normally performed at the beginning of the performance, without a vocal part, as an introduction before the ensemble proceeds to other items in their repertoire. It is also used to accompany the *zikir* called *Alhamd* in some religious functions such as *Maulid Nabi* (birthday of Prophet Muhammad), circumcision and wedding ceremonies. It can be performed in either a sitting or standing position. It may also be performed in a procession in conjunction with other *zikirs*.

Analyzing the form of the *Pukulan Bertih*, it can be divided into four sections (see Figure 4f). The first section is called *Kepala Pukulan* (head of the beat). This section introduces the beat and sets the tempo for the piece. It starts with six quaver beats in a measure before proceeding to the next section. The second section is the main body of the *pukulan*. This section is used to accompany the vocal part if this *pukulan* is used to accompany a *zikir*. It is performed in sixteen quaver beats in a measure, in which the *Melalu* part beats nine timbre *bum* and seven timbre *pak*. This section will be repeated many times to the end of the *zikir* or until the captain of the troupe give the cue to proceed to the next section.

¹² Sometimes it is spelled as *Berteh* by some players

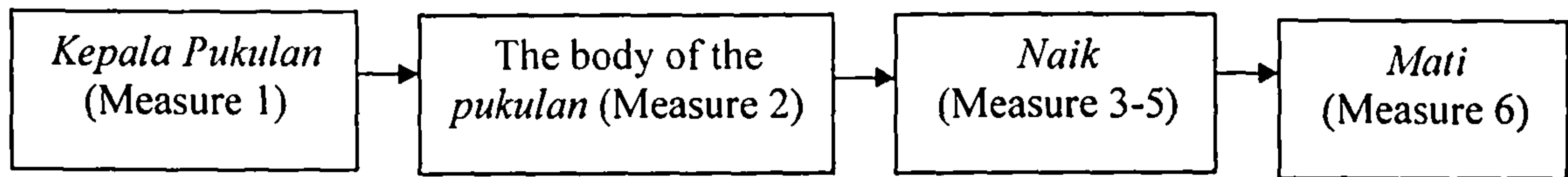


Figure 4f: Structural form of the *Pukulan Bertih*

The third section is called *naik* (ascending). This section is a bridge between the body of the *pukulan* and the ending of the piece. Sometimes, if the same *zikir* is repeated many times, this section will be performed as a bridge between the two bodies of the *pukulan*. This section is performed with eight beats of the quaver where the *Melalu* part beats seven timbre *Pak* and one timbre *Bum* in a measure and it is played in four measures. It is followed by another measure of the same beat but with three timbre *Pak* and one timbre *Bum* performed twice. This section can be summarized as seven *Pak* and one *Bum* repeated four times (7P – 1B - 4X) and three *Pak* and one *Bum* repeated twice (3P – 1B – 2X).

The last section is called the *Mati* (Ending) section. This section is performed in nine beats of the eight-note in a measure. All the parts play timbre *Bum* to the end of the piece except the *Menganak* part. In this section, the *Menganak* part plays a very important role as it will cue the troupe by beating the timbre *Pak* with accents on the fifth beat and the ninth beat of the measure. It will indicate the ending of the piece.

Pukulan Bertih

♩ = 120

The score is divided into four systems, each corresponding to an instrument:

- Me labi:** Rhythmic notation with 'Pak' and 'Bum' labels. Measure numbers 16 and 8 are indicated.
- Mernye lang:** Rhythmic notation with 'Pak' and 'Bum' labels. Measure numbers 16 and 8 are indicated.
- Mengarak:** Rhythmic notation with 'Pak' and 'Bum' labels. Measure numbers 16 and 8 are indicated.
- Mengo cok:** Rhythmic notation with 'Pak' and 'Bum' labels. Measure numbers 16 and 8 are indicated.

The second system (measures 2-17) features a 2-measure rest at the start, followed by rhythmic notation for all four instruments.

The third system (measures 18-33) features a 3-measure rest at the start, followed by rhythmic notation for all four instruments.

The fourth system (measures 34-39) features a 5-measure rest at the start, followed by rhythmic notation for all four instruments.

Figure 4g: Transcription of the *Pukulan Bertih* performed by the kompong troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka¹³

¹³ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 1

Pukulan Hadrah

The *Pukulan Hadrah* is another type of beat in the Kompang Ezhar's repertoire. Sometimes it is also called the *Pukulan Hadrah Panjang* (long Hadrah) by some players. However, the term *Pukulan Hadrah* is more frequently used by the players. It is used to accompany many *zikirs* such as *Zikir Bismillahi*, *Zikir Allah Musa*, *Zikir Muhammad Ya*, *Zikir Aini* and *Zikir Khatinan*. This beat is normally performed in religious functions such as *Mauled Nabi*. It is also performed during the *Malam Berinai*. The *Pukulan Hadrah* is also the name of a beat in the Kompang Perak's repertoire (see page 306). However, the two *pukulans* are composed differently. The *Pukulan Hadrah* in the Kompang Perak's repertoire is composed of only three rhythmic parts whereas the *Pukulan Hadrah* in the Kompang Ezhar's repertoire (see Figure 4i) is made up of six different parts. Furthermore, the structural form of the two *pukulans* is different. The only similarity found in both *pukulans* is the similar rhythmic pattern performed in the first part (*Melalu/Pelalu*) of both ensembles. From this point, one can assume that the *Pukulan Hadrah* in the Kompang Ezhar's repertoire is probably adapted from the same *pukulan* as the Kompang Perak. This argument is based on the historical evidence that the Kompang Ezhar organization was established later than the Kompang Perak organization.

The music of the *Pukulan Hadrah* in the Kompang Ezhar ensemble is composed of six different parts, named *Melalu 1*, *Melalu 2*, *Melalu 3*, *Menyelang*, *Menganak Rapat* and *Menganak Jarang*. However, if the players in the troupe are

fewer than twelve, the *Melalu 3* and *Menganak Jarang* parts can be omitted¹⁴. There are only three sections that form the *Pukulan Hadrah*. The first section is called *Kepala Pukulan*, which introduces the beat and sets the tempo for the piece. It is performed in the metre of six beats of the quaver (eight-note) in a measure. It then changes the metre in the second section where the body of the *pukulan* is performed. In this section, all the parts perform in sixteen beats of the quaver in a measure. This section is used to accompany a selection of *zikirs* and will be repeated to the end of the *zikir*. The captain will cue the players to the next section by raising his/her *kompang* just before the last section of the piece. The piece is ended with the last section, which is called the *Mati* (end). The metre is changed again in this section into nine beats of the quaver in a measure.

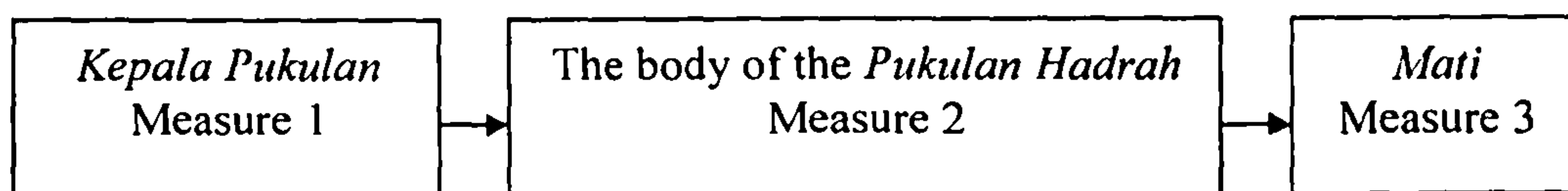


Figure 4h: Structural Form of the *Pukulan Hadrah*

¹⁴ Interview with Dalib Ahmad, a *kompang* instructor from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka on 22 April 2002

Pukulan Hadrah

♩ = 120

The musical score is organized into three systems, each containing six staves. The first system includes a tempo marking of 120 and a 6/8 time signature. The parts are labeled as follows:

- Melalu 1
- Melalu 2
- Melalu 3
- Menyelang
- Menganak Rapat
- Menganak Jarak

The second system is marked with a '2' and the third with a '3'. The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, with some parts featuring more complex melodic lines than others.

Figure 4i: Transcription of the *Pukulan Hadrah* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka¹⁵

¹⁵ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 2.

Pukulan Hadrah Pendek

This is another *pukulan* in the same category as the *Pukulan Hadrah*. However, the two *pukulans* are very different from each other. Unlike the *Pukulan Hadrah* (see Figure 4i) and the *Pukulan Hadrah Kepang* (see Figure 4k), which are both performed in sixteen beats in a repeating cycle, the *Pukulan Hadrah Pendek* (short *Hadrah*) is performed in four beats of a quadruple metre. This *pukulan* is mainly used to accompany Malay songs, which are normally composed in quadruple metre. According to Haji Yusof Abu, a *kompang* instructor from Kubu, Melaka, this *pukulan* is a shorter form of the *Pukulan Hadrah*. It is true that its structural form is shorter than the *Pukulan Hadrah*, which it is performed without the *Kepala Pukulan* (head of the beat) and the *Mati* (Ending) section. However, it sounds very different from the *Pukulan Hadrah*, and an analysis of all the rhythmic patterns from all the parts in this *pukulan* can perhaps demonstrate why this is the case.

The *Pukulan Hadrah Pendek* (see figure 4j) is composed of seven different parts. Every major part in this *pukulan* is divided into two or three groups. The *Melalu* part is divided into three groups called *Melalu 1* (first *Melalu*), *Melalu 2* (second *Melalu*), and *Melalu 3* (third *Melalu*). Both the *Menyelang* and the *Menganak* parts are divided into two groups called *Rapat* (close) and *Jarang* (rare). Analyzing the rhythmic patterns in this *pukulan*, it can be noticed that all the parts in each group beat almost the same rhythmic pattern but add an extra note for every extended part. Each part, except in the *Melalu* group, is played by only one player. Normally, the players who play these parts are among the best in the troupe. Some

kompang troupes may add a tambourine player beating the basic pulse of the music. Another interesting fact to point out in this *pukulan* is that the player who plays the *Menganak Rapat* part will ad-lib the rhythm in every fourth measure (see measures 8 and 12).

Ucap Selamat Pengantin Baru

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system includes a vocal line and seven instrumental parts. The lyrics for the first system are: "U - cap se - la - mat u - cap se - la - mat pengantin di - be - ri Aaaaa". The second system includes a vocal line and seven instrumental parts. The lyrics for the second system are: "Ker - na men - ja - di ker - na men - ja - di ra - ja se - ha - ri".

Vocal
U - cap se - la - mat u - cap se - la - mat pengantin di - be - ri Aaaaa

Melah 1
Melah 2
Melah 3
Merse hng Jarang
Merse hng Rapat
Mengarak Jarang
Mengarak Rapat

Vocal
Ker - na men - ja - di ker - na men - ja - di ra - ja se - ha - ri

Ama-lan yang ba - ik Amal yang ba - ik ha - rus di - ba - ja Aaaaa

Se - mo - ga ke - kal se - mo - ga ke - kal Se - pan - jung lah za - man

Figure 4j: Excerpt transcription of the *Pukulan Hadrah Pendek* performed by the Kompang troupe from Kubu, Melaka¹⁶

¹⁶ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 3 and Video CD 1, track 5.

Pukulan Hadrah Kepang

This *pukulan* is also known as *Pukulan Hadrah Kuda Kepang* by some players in Melaka. However, in order to shorten the name, many of the players give this *pukulan* the name *Pukulan Hadrah Kepang*. According to Dalib Ahmad, a kompong instructor of Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka, this *pukulan* is derived from the music of the *Kuda Kepang* dance performed mainly in Johor, the southernmost state of Peninsular Malaysia. The *Kuda Kepang* dance is a hobby horse trance dance performed at a wedding ceremony as well as at other festivals. It was brought into the southernmost state of Peninsular Malaysia by the Javanese. There are two myths about the origin of the dance. One states that it derives from the frenzy-like behaviour of Saidina Ali's (Prophet Muhammad's friend) horse when he went into battle. Another holds that it was created by Wali Songo, a group of nine Muslim priests, to propagate Islam in the 15th century in Java, Indonesia. The *Kuda Kepang* dance is accompanied by a percussion ensemble consisting of two drums, a hanging gong, a pair of knobbed gongs placed on a rectangular wooden frame, and five *angklung* (bamboo tubular chimes) (Mohd Ghouse, 1992:127-132).

Although the *Pukulan Hadrah Kepang* is said to derive from the *Kuda Kepang* dance, the two rhythms of the ensemble are very different. In fact, the *Pukulan Hadrah Kepang* is used to accompany *zikir* such as *Zikir Allah Walihim* and is never used to accompany a dance. However, both kinds of music share a similar mood, which is lively. The structural form of the *Pukulan Hadrah Kepang*

is exactly the same as the structural form of the *Pukulan Hadrah* (see figure 4h). It is composed of three rhythmic parts, which are called *Melalu*, *Menyelang* and *Menganak*. The *Melalu* part, which beats the basic rhythm, plays an important role in this *pukulan* with nine timbres *Bum* and *Pak* beaten alternately providing a lively-effect sound to the piece.

Rentak Hadrah Kepang

The musical score is titled "Rentak Hadrah Kepang" and features a tempo marking of 120. It is organized into three distinct rhythmic sections, each with its own set of staves. The first section, labeled "Melalu", consists of two staves for "Pak" and "Bum". The second section, labeled "Menyelang", also has two staves for "Pak" and "Bum". The third section, labeled "Menganak", has two staves for "Pak" and "Bum". The time signature is 16/8. The score begins at measure 2 and ends at measure 3. The notation includes various rhythmic values and rests, with some notes marked with accents (>).

Figure 4k: Transcription of the *Pukulan Hadrah Kepang* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka¹⁷

¹⁷ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 4.

Pukulan Baru

This *pukulan* is composed of four rhythmic parts, which are called *Melalu*, *Menyelang*, *Menganak* and *Mengocok*. The *Mengocok* part is sometimes omitted by some *kompang* troupes if they lack a good enough *kompang* player in the troupe to play this part. This part is not as important as the other three parts¹⁸. This is another *pukulan* in the *Kompang Ezhar* ensemble that is based on sixteen beats of the quaver note in a measure. Just like the *Pukulan Bertih* (see Figure 4g) and the *Pukulan Rancak* (Figure 4m), the basic rhythm performed by the *Melalu* part is nine timbres *Bum* and seven timbres *Pak* in a cycle. The cycle of the sixteen beats in this section will be repeated to accompany a vocal part such as *Zikir Salallah* up to the end of the *zikir*. This *pukulan* is regularly performed in religious functions as well as in wedding ceremonies.

The structural form of the *Pukulan Baru* is similar to the *Pukulan Bertih* (see Figure 4f) and the *Pukulan Rancak*, in that it is always started with the *Kepala Pukulan* in six beats of the quaver note. The body of the *pukulan* is performed to accompany the vocal part while the *Naik* section functions as a bridge to another vocal section or to the ending section. Analyzing the *Naik* section (see Figure 4n from measure 4 to measure 7) of this *pukulan*, it can be noticed that it is different from the equivalent section of the other *pukulans*. This section can be analyzed based on the *Melalu* part where it performs eight beats timbre *Bum* and one beat timbre *Pak* followed by seven beats of timbre *Bum* and one beat of timbre *Pak* and it is repeated three times. It then continues with three beats of timbre *Bum* and one

¹⁸ Interview with Haji Yusof Abu, a *kompang* instructor from Kubu, Melaka, on 24 February 2003

beat of timbre *Pak* repeated twice. It ends with seven beats of timbre *Pak* before proceeding back to the body of the *pukulan* or to the ending section. The section can be formulated as 8 *Bum* – 1 *Pak* (1x), 7 *Bum* – 1 *Pak* (3x), 3 *Bum* – 1 *Pak* (2x), 7 *Pak* (1x).

Pukulan Baru

The musical score is titled "Pukulan Baru" and is written for four parts: Melaku, Menyelang, Menganak, and Mengocok. It is in 6/8 time. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the initial rhythmic patterns for each part. The second system continues the patterns with some variations. The third system shows further rhythmic developments and includes a section with a 7/8 time signature.

Figure 41: Transcription of the *Pukulan Baru* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka¹⁹

¹⁹ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 5.

Pukulan Rancak

The *Pukulan Rancak* is another *pukulan* in which the *Melalu* part performs a similar rhythm to the *Pukulan Bertih* and the *Pukulan Baru*. This *pukulan* is also used to accompany a vocal part such as the *Zikir Qadesar*, which is mainly performed in religious functions. Unlike the *Pukulan Bertih* and the *Pukulan Baru*, this *pukulan* can only be performed in three sections, the *Kepala Pukulan*, the body of the *pukulan* and the *Mati* section. The *Naik* section is only added as the bridge when it is used to accompany a *zikir* that needs to be repeated in a performance. The troupe has a choice either to add or to omit this section in their performance, based on the captain's decision²⁰.

The *Pukulan Rancak* (see Figure 4m) consists of three different parts that make the piece sound lively. Like the *Pukulan Bertih*, it is performed in sixteen beats of the quaver note. The *Melalu* part provides the basic rhythm with nine beats of timbre *Bum* and seven beats of timbre *Pak* in a cycle. The *Menyelang* and *Menganak* parts basically beat continuous triplet notes throughout the body of the *pukulan*. However, the *Menyelang* part omits the first note of every set of triplet notes performed in this section. Some *kompang* troupes may add a *Mengocok* part to this piece. This part normally performs a free rhythm to ad-lib the piece and adds variety to the rhythm. This task is only carried out by a very good and experienced *kompang* player.

²⁰ Interview with Dalib Ahmad, a *kompang* instructor from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka, on 22 April 2002

Rentak Rancak

The musical score for 'Rentak Rancak' is presented in three systems, each with three staves. The first system is labeled 'Melalu', 'Menyelang', and 'Menganak' respectively. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a 6/8 time signature, and a dynamic marking of *fz*. The notation includes rhythmic patterns with stems and beams, and rests. Numerical indicators '2' and '3' are placed above the first and second systems respectively. The score concludes with a double bar line and a final 6/8 time signature.

Figure 4m: Transcription of the *Pukulan Rancak* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka²¹

Pukulan Silat

As its name suggests, the *Pukulan Silat* is the only *pukulan* used to accompany a *Pencak Silat* (martial arts) performance. This piece is regularly performed in the wedding ceremony on the wedding day. The *Pencak Silat* is

²¹ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 6.

performed to entertain the bride and groom as well as the guests at the wedding on the compound of the bride's house. This performance is performed just after the wedding procession and before both the bride and the groom enters the bride's house for other rituals. The *kompang* ensemble provides the musical accompaniment to the *Pencak Silat* performance, which normally takes about ten to fifteen minutes.

Compared to other *pukulans*, the *Pukulan Silat* is very simple in terms of its structural form and rhythm. Unlike the others, it has no *Kepala Pukulan* and *Mati* sections. It starts straightaway in the body of the *pukulan* when the captain of the troupe gives the cue by lifting up his instrument. It is ended after the captain cues a measure before the end and gives the accent to the last note of the piece. In actual fact, this *pukulan* consists of only two parts, as the *Melalu* and the *Menyelang* parts play the same rhythm and the *Menganak* part counters the rhythm performed by both the other parts. The first part plays two beats of timbre *Pak* and one beat of timbre *Bum* repeatedly until the end of the piece. The *Pukulan Silat* is never used to accompany a vocal part as it was composed only to accompany the *Pencak Silat*.

Rentak Silat

The image shows a musical score for 'Rentak Silat' with three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Melalu', the middle 'Menyelang', and the bottom 'Menganak'. Each staff has two lines of notation: 'Pak' (upper) and 'Bum' (lower). The 'Pak' lines contain eighth and sixteenth notes, while the 'Bum' lines contain rests and eighth notes. A tempo marking '♩ = 100' is at the top left. A double bar line is present in the middle of each staff. An asterisk '*' is placed below the 'Bum' line of the 'Menyelang' staff in the third measure. Dynamic markings '>' are placed above the final notes of each staff.

Figure 4n: Transcription of the *Pukulan Silat* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka²²

Pukulan Zapin

The *Pukulan Zapin* is a type of *pukulan* in the category of the *Pukulan Tambahan* (additional beat) in the *Kompang Ezhar*'s repertoire. The word *zapin* is of Arab origin and is frequently used in the state of Johor, as well as throughout the Malay Archipelago. The term *Zapin* in Malay contexts can refer to a particular dance form (*Tarian Zapin*), a musical ensemble, song, beat or rhythmic characteristic. The *zapin* dance is a group dance performed in a pair either by two dancers or two rows of dancers accompanied by a *zapin* ensemble consisting of *gambus* (lute), violin, harmonium, accordion and *marwas* (double-headed frame drum). The *zapin* songs and in particular *zapin* rhythms are important musical elements that shape the *zapin* dance forms. The *zapin* music, with or without the dance, is performed at a variety of occasions, for entertainment, in connection with

²² Listen to Audio CD 1, track 7.

rituals, and in religious contexts. It is performed during wedding ceremonies, *mauled nabi*, circumcisions, and also in public concerts such as *Pesta Zapin* (*zapin* festival), and royal ceremonies (Hilarian, 2003:12-15).

In the *Kompang Ezhar* ensemble, the *Pukulan Zapin* is used to accompany many Malay songs either newly composed or existing, such as folk songs and popular songs taken from old Malay films. It is composed of three parts, *Melalu*, *Menyelang* and *Menganak*, which perform an interlocking rhythmic pattern. All the parts of the *Pukulan Zapin* repeat the same rhythmic pattern all the way to the end of the song except for a rest of three beats between two verses of the song. There is no specific form for this *pukulan*. Its structural form is shaped according to the form of the song that this *pukulan* accompanies. For example, in the case of the *Lambang Sejarah* song (see Figure 4q) performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka, the form of the song is analyzed as A A' B A' B A' (see Figure 4p).

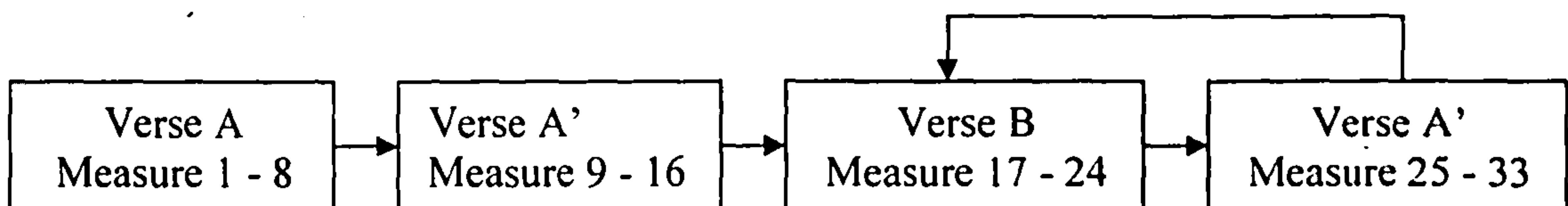


Figure 4p: Structural form of the *Lambang Sejarah* song

Lambang Sejarah

$\text{♩} = 100$

Vocal

Kompang Me-la - yu Se-tia ha - ti Ez-harringkas nya

Melalu

Menyelang

Meningkah

5 Ber-sa-tu dan te - guh Se-ni bu-da - ya bang-ga an se-mu - a - - -

9 Lam-bang-nya in - dah bulan dan bin - tang ber-bu - cu li - ma

13 Me-rah se - a - ngat ga - gah ku-ning-nya pu - la war-na - di - ra - ja

17 Da-un ke-la - di tigabelas ja - lur hi - jau war - na - nya

21 Ru-kun sem-bah - yang sem-pur-na di - a - tur amal-kan sen-tia - sa

25 Ketu-pat dan te - lur a - dat Ez - har ta-mat-se-mu - a

29 Lengkap in-dah di-a - tur se-la-mat su - dah se-mo-ga-ber-ja - ya

Figure 4q: Transcription of the *Pukulan Zapin* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka²³

²³ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 8.

Pukulan Inang

The *Pukulan Inang* is another type of *pukulan* in the category of the *Pukulan Tambahan* in the Kompang Ezhar's repertoire. It is also known as the *Pukulan Tari Selendang* by some kompang players in Melaka. Like *zapin*, the term *inang* also can refer to a particular dance form (*Tarian Inang*), a musical ensemble, song, beat or rhythmic characteristic. The *Tarian Inang* is a type of Malay folk dance performed at social functions such as cultural festivals, dinner shows and others. This dance moves at a fast tempo accompanied by the *rebana* (frame drum), viola and *gendang* (double-headed drum). The *inang* song and dance originated during the period of the Malaka Sultanate in the 13th century. The dance is very graceful and has all the qualities of a royal performance. Sometimes the dancers hold long scarves during the performance (Ang, 1998:40).

The rhythm pattern of the *Pukulan Inang* interlocks three parts called *Melalu*, *Menyelang* and *Menganak*. It is normally started with the vocal part and the kompangs' parts begin at the first beat of the second measure. This is because most Malay songs have an anacrusis rhythmic characteristic, in which the melody does not begin at the first beat of the measure. In the case of the song called *Untuk Pengantin* (For the Bridegroom) (see Figure 4s), the captain of the troupe sings the first note of the song to set the key of the melody and is followed by all the kompang players. The melody of this song is actually adapted from a Malay folksong called *Kenek-Kenek Udang*. This song was mainly sung as a recreational song by teenagers in the old days. Because the melody is so lively, it was taken and

given a new lyric by the Kompang Ezhar players and performed in wedding ceremonies²⁴.

There are two main interlocking rhythmic patterns performed in the *Pukulan Inang*. The first pattern is found in the first verse of the song (see Figure 4s) from measure 3 to measure 11 where the *Melalu* and *Menyelang* parts beat timbre *Bum* and timbre *Pak* alternately to the end of the first verse of the song. In this section, the *Menganak* part counters the basic rhythm performed by the *Melalu* and *Menyelang* parts to make the interlocking rhythm sound lively. The *Menyelang* and *Menganak* parts perform a short section as a bridge (measures 12 and 13) before the next verse of the song. The second interlocking rhythmic pattern is found from measure 14 to measure 30 where all three parts play a different rhythmic pattern. This form is repeated again to the end of the song. It can be summarized as Figure 4r below.

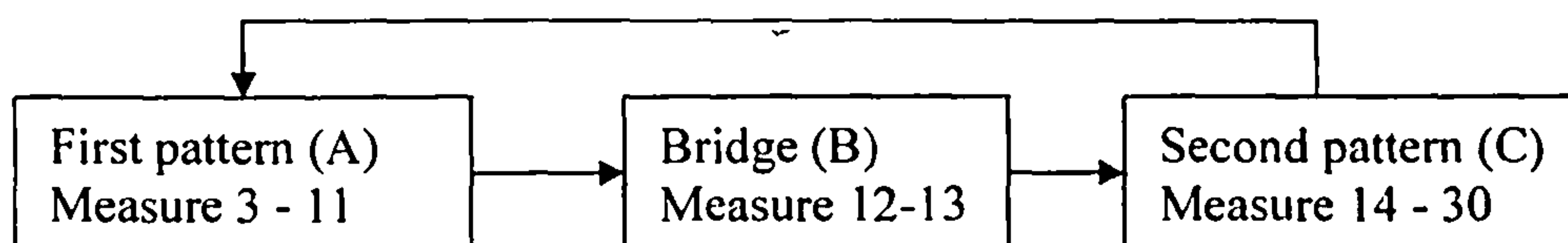


Figure 4r: Structural form of the *Pukulan Inang*

²⁴ Interview with Dalib Ahmad, a kompang instructor from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka, on 22 April 2002

Untuk Pengantin

♩ = 130

Vocal

Pa-lu-an kom-pang ber-bu-nyai Ma-je-lis tam-bah ber-se-ri Me-ri-ah-nya ha-ni i-ri

Melahi

Menyelang

Meningkah

7 Te-ra-sa ri - arg di - ha - ti E - za - har E - za - har E - za - har E - za - har E - za - har E - za - har E

13 Ge-gak gem - pi - - ta kom - pang di - pa - lu Ber-su - ka ri - a ber -

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 130. It consists of three systems. The first system (measures 1-6) features a vocal line and three instrumental parts: Melahi (Melody), Menyelang (Crossing), and Meningkah (Marching). The second system (measures 7-12) continues the vocal line and instrumental accompaniment. The third system (measures 13-18) concludes the vocal line and instrumental accompaniment. The lyrics are in Indonesian and describe wedding-related activities.

10 sa - tu pa - di Ri - ang - nya ha - ti si - ba hai - ti - dak ter - ki -

25 ra Un - pa - ma . kh bu - kn hai ja - tuh ke - ri - ba . Riang - nya - ba . . .

31 Pa - li - an kom - pang ber - bu - ryi Ma - je - lis tam - bah ber - se - ri Me - ri - ah - nya ha - ri i - ri

37 Te - ra - sa ri - ang di - la - ti E - za - har E - za - har E - za - har E - za - har E - za - har E - za - har E

Figure 4s: Transcription of the *Pukulan Inang* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka²⁵

²⁵ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 9

Pukulan Joget

Another type of *pukulan* in the category of the *Pukulan Tambahan* is the *Pukulan Joget*. This *pukulan* is used to accompany many Malay songs which have a fast tempo and a lively mood. Similarly to other *pukulans* in the same category, the term *joget* also can refer to a particular dance form (*Tarian Joget*), a musical ensemble, song, beat or rhythmic characteristic. The *joget* dance is a syncretic form of music with strong Portuguese roots. In Melaka, this dance is also known as *Chakuncak*. Its origin has been traced back and associated with a Portuguese dance which was introduced to Melaka during the era of the spice trade. The *Joget* is performed by couples combining fast hand and leg movements. It is a lively dance where the dancers skip heel-toe from one leg to the other. Its music uses the Western violin, the *rebana*, and knobbed gong, as well as other western musical instruments. It is usually performed during cultural celebrations and Malay weddings (Munan, 2000:177).

The *Pukulan Joget* is composed for the *kompang* ensemble based on the original *joget* rhythm (*Rentak Joget*) performed with a *rebana* and a gong (see Figure 4t). It was modified to suit the playing techniques of the *kompang*. It is used to accompany many popular *joget* songs performed especially in the southwest coastal region of Peninsular Malaysia. Most of the *joget* songs are sung in duple metre parallel with its rhythm. The rhythm has a strong root based on triplets and is frequently performed in 2/4 and 6/8 metres. This feature has similarities with the

music of the Portuguese. This is because this music was influenced by the Portuguese (Matusky and Tan, 1997:333-334).

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Rebana (right hand), Rebana (left hand), and Gong. The time signature is 2/4. The right hand part has a melody with notes and rests, including a triplet of eighth notes. The left hand part has a rhythmic pattern with notes and rests, also including a triplet of eighth notes. The Gong part has a simple rhythmic pattern with notes and rests. The notation includes clefs, time signatures, and various musical symbols like notes, rests, and triplets.

Figure 4t: *Rentak Joget* performed on the *rebana* (Matusky and Tan, 1997:333)

In the case of the song called *Oh Bulan* (Oh Moon) (see Figure 4u) accompanied by the *Pukulan Joget*, the *Melalu* parts plays timbre *Bum* and *Pak* alternately. At the same time, both *Menyelang* and *Menganak* parts play triplet rhythms all the way to the end of the song. However, the *Menyelang* part omits the first note of every triplet which gives variety to the rhythms. It is started when the captain of the troupe beats the *kompang* to set the tempo and is followed by all the players beating the complete rhythm. After eight measures, the players start to sing the melody while beating the same rhythmic pattern. The structural form of this *pukulan* is shaped by the form of the song that it accompanies.

Vocal

Melaki

Menyelang

Mengarak

Oh - bu - lan du - end - sa kau be-ra - da
 Oh puag - gik a - ku a - da du - a - si

Me - ay - da - n a - las ba - la g - a
 Me - de - agar - su - a - ra - su ber - bu - ay

15
 13
 Ra - du ra - sa ba - a - ku Ka - lau nak me - man - dang wa - jah su

21
 27
 A - ku ju - ga ka - lau nak me - man - dang - ya Ti - dur ba - nag se - su - a nak ke - da
 Ba - la - kah a - da in - na ber - juah - pa Tug - gu - lah ba - n yang ba - la - ga - a

Figure 4u: Transcription of the *Pukulan Joget* performed by a *kompang* troupe from Kampong Pengkalan, Alor Gajah, Melaka²⁶

²⁶ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 10

Some of the types of *pukulan* performed in the Kompang Ezhar ensemble such as *Pukulan Inang* and *Pukulan Zapin* are also performed in the Kompang Johor ensemble. However, these two types of *pukulan* are composed with different rhythmic patterns. In general, the basic rhythm still follows the rhythms performed in the other traditional musical ensembles such as the *zapin* dance and *inang* dance. In the next chapter, this issue will be discussed in detail as I will specifically focus my discussion on the Kompang Johor ensemble, so that one can see the similarities and the differences between these two types of kompang ensemble.

CHAPTER 5

THE KOMPANG JOHOR

The term “Kompang Johor” refers to the particular type of kompang ensemble performed in the state of Johor, the southernmost state of Peninsular Malaysia. This term is mostly used by people from outside the state of Johor to describe the type of kompang ensemble with the inclusion of a *Jidur* (double-headed cylindrical drum) in performances in this state. Even though, recently, the Kompang Ezhar ensemble has also performed in certain places in Johor, the Kompang Johor still dominates the kompang troupes in this state. It is very rare to hear players of this type of ensemble use the term “Kompang Johor” in conversations between themselves. Instead, they just term it as *main kompang* (kompang playing) without referring to the name “Johor”. As Johor is their home state, they have no need to add the name in order to distinguish their ensemble from others. When they say “*main kompang*” among themselves, they mean the playing of the Kompang Johor ensemble¹.

It is important to mention here that this type of kompang ensemble is also referred to as the “Kompang Jawa” (Javanese Kompang) by some people. This term is concurrently used with the term Kompang Johor because it is mainly people with Javanese family origins who perform this type of ensemble in Johor. I chose the term “Kompang Johor” as the title for this chapter because it describes the particular type of kompang ensemble that only performs in the state of Johor and is not found

¹ Interview with Isa Haji Muhammad Abas, Chairman of a Youth organization of Kampong Jorak Illahi, Batu Pahat, Johor, on 28 April 2002.

in other parts of Malaysia. Moreover, it is also used to differentiate between this type of ensemble and the other types of kompong ensemble that perform in other areas in Malaysia. In this chapter, I will present the historical sources of the Kompong Johor ensemble, as well as descriptions of the instruments used in this ensemble. It is also significant to discuss the players as well as the performing techniques of this ensemble as there are noticeable differences between this type of ensemble and the others. More importantly, a musicological analysis of the repertoire is presented in order to fully understand the uniqueness of the music of this ensemble.

HISTORY

There is no exact date recorded for the beginning of kompong playing in Johor. However, the kompong playing in the Malay Archipelago especially in Java can be traced back to the coming of Muslim traders from India and the Arab world in the 13th Century. Though, there is no clear evidence found about the kompong playing in Johor before the 19th Century, but it is traced that the instrument was introduced by the Javanese people who migrated into the Malay Peninsula in the 19th Century. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, the Muslim traders brought with them the Islamic culture and music, of which the frame drum was one of the valuable heritages left to the local people. The instrument was played by the traders in many religious functions as well as to promote their merchandise, especially soon after they had arrived in Java, Indonesia (Matusky and Tan, 1997:174). The kompong was also played during the time of the Majapahit Empire in Java about

400 years ago. According to Khalid Amin (1993:16), the instrument was used to celebrate their victory after the battle. It was also used to entertain the Majapahit's army in order to avoid them from getting drunk as well as to remind them to the almighty of Allah. In Java, the similar type of instrument is also called by various names such as *terbang*, *derendeng*, *bibid*, *darah* and *kempli* (see page 119). Sumarsam (1995:26) reported that *dhikir* (*zikir*) and *terbangan* (the *terbang* ensemble) music were two exogenous Islamic musical forms that were performed every Thursday evening in Java.

The Javanese people, who migrated into the southern region of Peninsular Malaysia in the 19th Century, brought with them their culture and introduced to the local people. Kompang playing was one of the musical cultures that were introduced to the local people. There were many factors that forced the Javanese to flee to the southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Among them were the occupation of Java by the Dutch (1825-1920), wars in Java, the forcing through of their cultivation system by the Dutch rulers, and the poverty and high density of the population that made living harder. The Dutch colonization of Java began when the United East India Company was founded in the city of Batavia in 1619. Dutch power in Java at that time was very fragile, faced with the powerful neighbouring Sultanate of Bantam and the rise of Mataram in the east and centre of the island. Taking advantage of the rivalry between the two Javanese powers, the United East India Company gradually strengthened its position. In 1684, Bantam fell to the Dutch, while Mataram was divided into two major parts in 1755. In the early nineteenth century, it was replaced by the Dutch government, whose policy was to implement a

more systematic exploitation of the land. In 1808, Daendels, the governor of Java, initiated several reforms, deciding to reduce enforced labour and to construct an east-west road across north Java. At that time, the Dutch started to develop many plantations, growing crops such as coffee, tea, sugar, rubber, and copra (Tarling, 1999:251-252).

In 1829 the Dutch launched the Cultivation System, which transformed a large proportion of the Javanese countryside, including its paddy fields, into a single government plantation. The Cultivation System required that a village set aside a fifth of its cultivatable land for the production of export crops. These crops were to be delivered to the government in lieu of tax. Land rent was to continue at the same time as a complementary part of the system and as a measure of the amount to be produced by each village (Ibid:253). Combined with more systematic colonial exploitation, military expeditions helped to consolidate Dutch influence on the whole archipelago. Tensions increased, local revolts were repressed, such as in the Java War of 1825 to 1830 and the Acehnese War of 1873 to 1903, and these only ceased in 1914 (Ibid:255-258). All these events, combined with the dramatic rise in Java's population by the end of the 18th Century, forced the movement of population to areas where conditions were relatively easier. At the same time, many Javanese people migrated to the Malay Peninsula, especially the southern region including Johor. They brought with them their culture and way of life. As a result, kompiang playing was among the Javanese cultural features introduced into Johor. This tradition was accepted by the local people and became part of their culture.

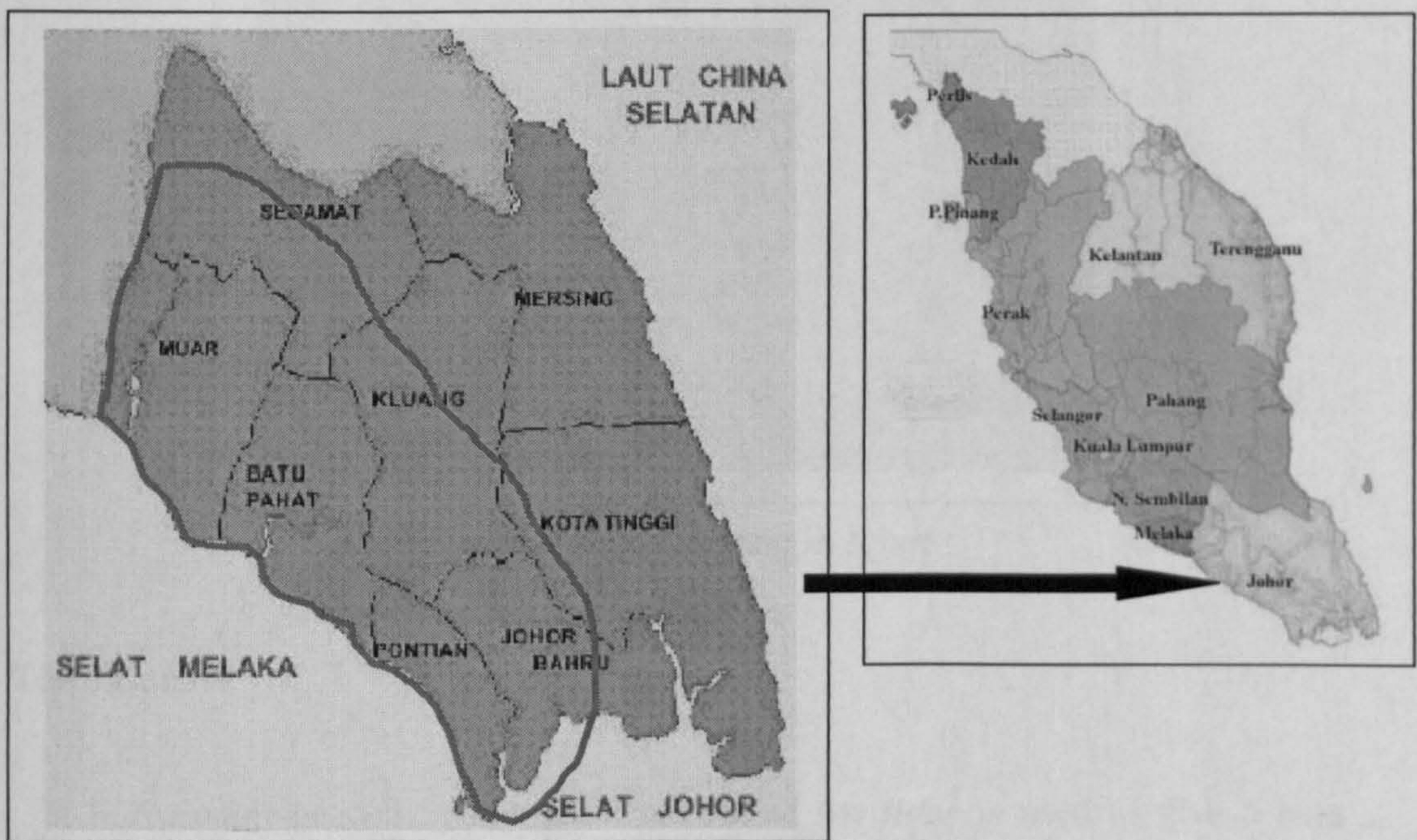
In the early 20th Century, kompang playing became more popular and was performed on many occasions around the villages especially those with a Javanese community. The kompang was also played by the local Malay as a consequence of mixing with the Javanese. By the 1940s, more kompang troupes had been established, especially in Batu Pahat and the Pontian district of Johor. A few kompang makers in Segamat, Muar, Batu Pahat and Pontian had set up small workshops to make the kompang². Nowadays, kompang playing is a common traditional music performed almost everywhere in the state of Johor.

GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

The Kompang Johor or the Kompang Jawa as found in the state of Johor is widely performed in the area populated by people of Javanese origin. Consequently, the Johorean Malay also perform the same type of ensemble. The area with the highest proportion of people of Javanese origin in Johor is in the southwest coastal region of the state, notably in the districts of Muar, Batu Pahat and Pontian. The Javanese people also occupied the districts of Johor Bahru, Kluang and Segamat, whereas the northern part of Kota Tinggi district and Mersing district have fewer people of Javanese origin when compared with other districts in Johor. Despite the fact that there are fewer Javanese in these districts, the kompang ensemble is also performed in Mersing and Kota Tinggi districts by the Malay people (see Map 5a).

² Interview with Isa Haji Muhammad Abas, Chairman of the Youth programme of Kampung Jorak Illahi, Batu Pahat, Johor, on 28 April 2002

Currently, there are nearly a hundred kompong troupes actively performing in Muar, Batu Pahat and Pontian districts³. Having said that, there is kompong playing in almost all the villages in these districts. The kompong troupe from Kampung Jorak Illahi, in Batu Pahat district, is one of the active troupes that perform on many occasions. The troupe is headed by Isa Haji Muhammad Abas who also occasionally organizes the kompong competitions in Batu Pahat district. The troupes in Muar and Pontian districts also actively perform on many occasions organized either by the formal organization or by village communities. In Pontian district, a kompong troupe from Kampong Air Baloi, headed by Muhammad Zamri, is one of the well-known kompong troupes that are often invited to perform on many occasions in the area.



Map 5a: Region in which kompong playing is popular in Johor

³ Ibid.

THE INSTRUMENTS

Unlike the other types of kompang ensemble, the Kompang Johor ensemble consists of two different types of drum – the kompang and a double-headed drum called the *jidur*. The kompang used in the Kompang Johor ensemble is exactly the same as the one used in the Kompang Ezhar organization. The instrument is made of goatskin hide tacked to a wooden frame. The red lace made of cloth entwined around the frame gives the identity to the kompang type played in the Southern part of Peninsular Malaysia.

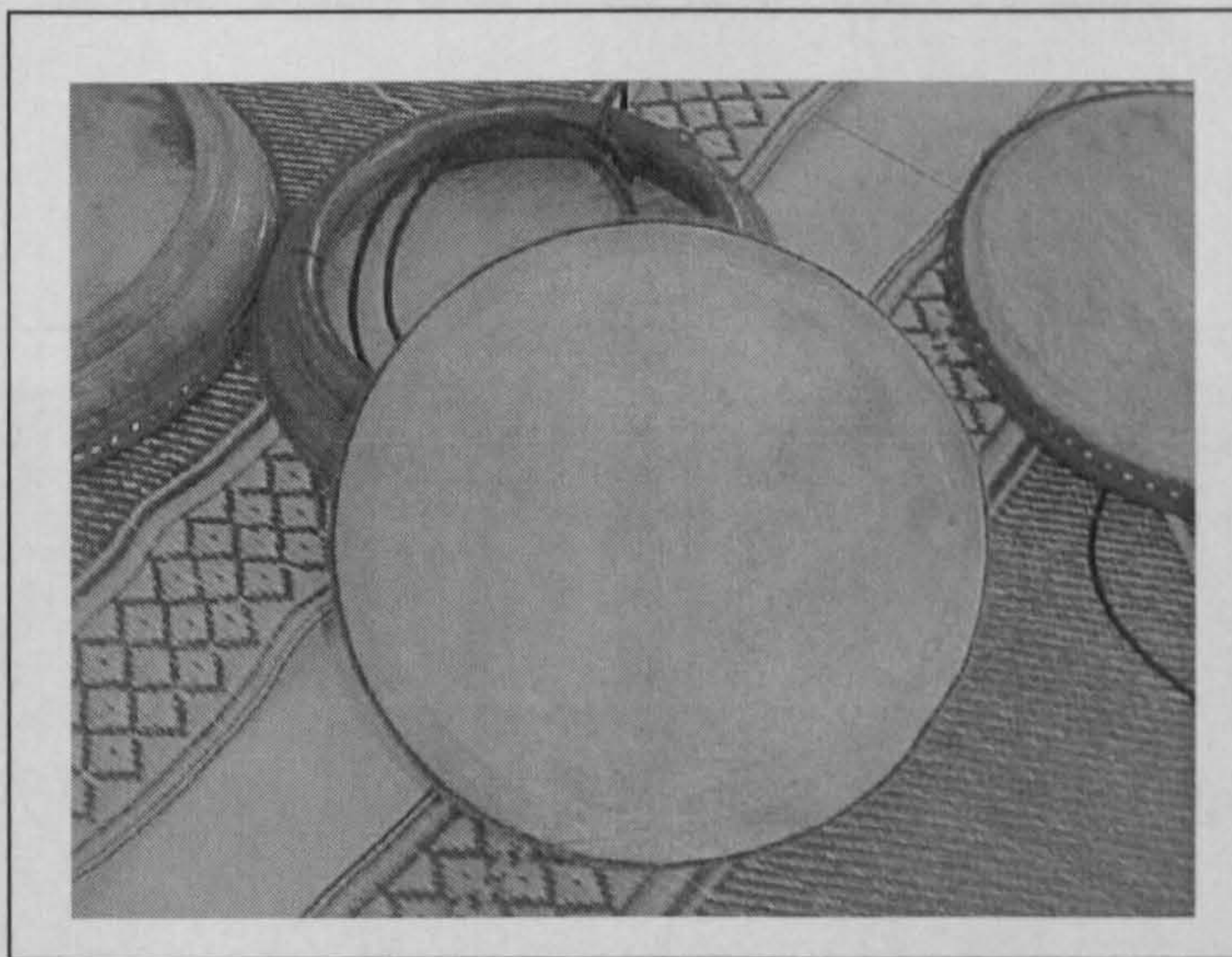


Plate 5a: The Kompang in Johor

The Jidur

A double-headed cylindrical drum called the *jidur* is used to give a bass effect and play the basic rhythm in the Kompang Johor ensemble. The head of the *jidur* is made of cowhide and it is about 18 inches in diameter. The head is

reinforced onto the frame with two iron rings tightened with seven nuts on each side. Presumably all nuts need to be attended to when tuning. It must therefore be a matter of skill to keep both sides of the drum in perfect tension at the same time. The frame is made of a hard wood, usually jackfruit wood. The instrument is struck with a wooden rubber-headed beater. In the ensemble, only one player plays the *jidur*. Normally, the *jidur* player is chosen from amongst the biggest and strongest players because he needs to carry the heavy instrument in the procession. The *jidur* is hung by a strap from the player's shoulders during the performances. Sometimes, the instrument is attached to the back of a bicycle which is pushed all the way in the procession. The *jidur* is also used in the *kemplingan* ensemble⁴ in the state of Johor.

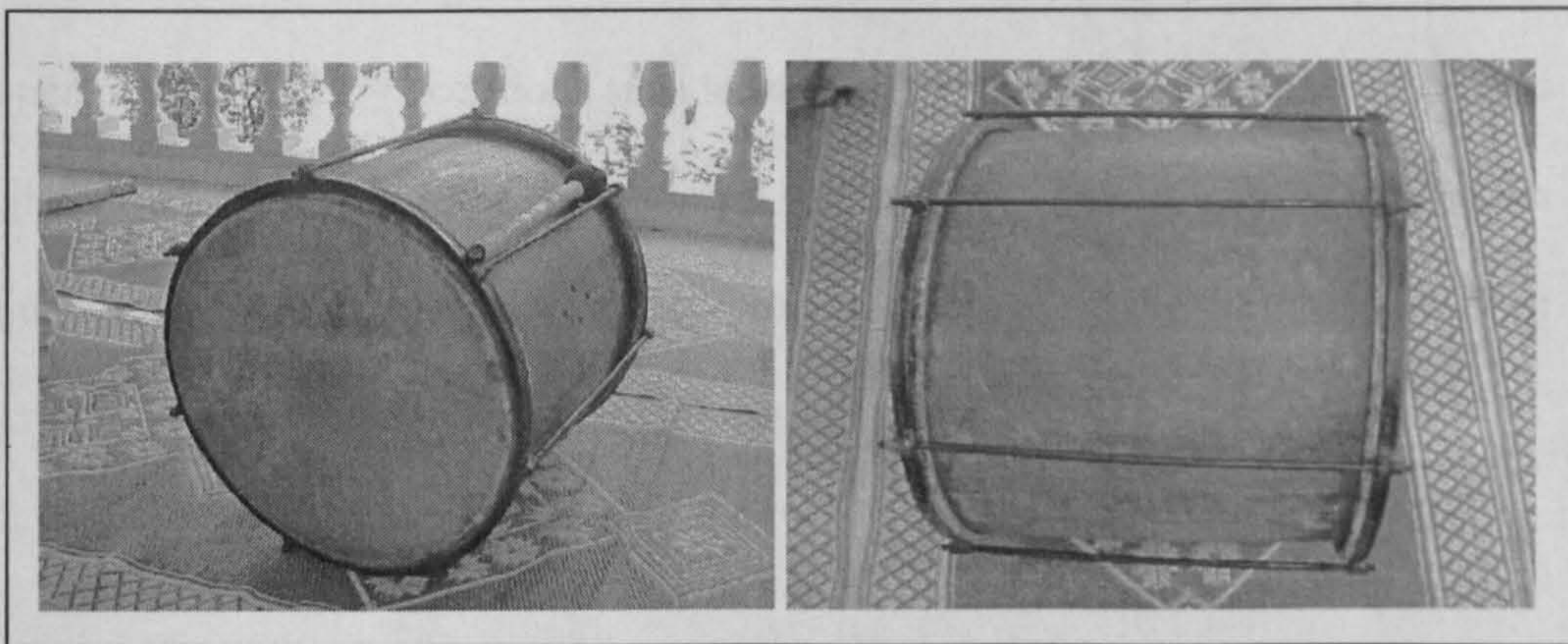


Plate 5b: The *Jidur*

The *jidur* is an instrument that originates from the Arab world. It was brought into Java, Indonesia, by Arab-Yemeni people probably in the 13th Century.

⁴ The ensemble consists of four players playing single headed drums, a double headed drum and a *jidur* accompanying the recitation of traditional religious Arabic texts by the Malay community of Javanese origin in Johor.

In Java, it was used in many ensembles such as the *Jiduran*, *rudat* and *kompang*. Over the years, the instrument was assimilated with local elements causing it to lose some of its individuality. The *jidur* and the ensemble related to the instrument became popular in Central Java. It was used to call all the villagers together, in circumcision ceremonies, gathering ceremonies, and to entertain the guards at night (Rahmat Hj. Md. Noh, no date:2).

The migration of Javanese people into the Southern part of Peninsular Malaysia contributed to the inclusion of *jidur* playing in Malaysian music. It is believed that Wak Mat Merjo and his brothers first brought the *jidur* to Melaka in 1916. The Javanese brothers introduced the *jiduran* ensemble to the local people in Melaka and spread it to other areas including Johor. The development of the *jiduran* ensemble continued from generation to generation. Many new groups were set up and performed on many occasions such as wedding ceremonies and other social and religious functions (Ibid:3). Commonly, the *jiduran* ensemble was played in conjunction with *kompang* playing. Eventually, because of the similarity of both ensembles, the *jidur* was added to the *kompang* ensemble in Johor.

THE PERFORMERS

Generally, a *kompang* troupe in Johor must consist of at least ten players to play four parts of rhythm in the ensemble. However, the more players there are in the troupe the better, because a bigger ensemble will produce a louder sound, which is suitable for open-air performances and is needed for high-spirited functions. In

Johor, a komping troupe can be set up with any number of players as long as there are enough players to play all the parts in the ensemble. Some komping troupes only consist of ten to twelve players, but other troupes can contain twenty to thirty players.

Originally, in the early days of komping playing in Johor, especially before the 1970s, the instrument was only played by men⁵. This situation was mainly because of the social norms held by the Malay people at that time. According to the old Malay custom, women were urged to stay at home and were associated only with domestic work, whereas men worked outside the house and made social contacts. In this culture, it was considered inappropriate for women, especially those who were not married, to expose themselves to the outside world and engage in activities, especially those that involved both men and women together. This restriction did not make it possible for women to be involved in activities outside their home, including the komping ensemble.

However, this custom has gradually changed, especially starting from the early 1970s as an acculturation process has taken place in Malay society. Adaptation by the Malay people to foreign cultures, especially from the West, has changed the social values of society. Women are more independent and are allowed to engage in outside cultural activities (Noorsiah, 1998:2). From about this time, they started to join komping troupes as well as take part in other activities. Nowadays, it is not unusual in Johor to see a komping ensemble performed either by a mixture of men and women players or only by women players, especially for

⁵ More details about the changing status of the komping player is given in Chapter 7.

social functions such as greeting a very important person. Moreover, many of the kompong troupes in Johor are composed of teenagers or children. In fact, in some places such as in Batu Pahat and Pontian districts, most of the kompong troupes are dominated by teenagers⁶.



Plate 5c: Both men and women of different ages play the kompong

THE TRAINING

In contrast to the Kompong Ezhar organization, there is no organization or committee formally in place to manage the kompong troupes in Johor. They are organized informally either by the villagers or as part of a social club or other institution. However, there are a few committees formed either by the government or local authorities specifically to manage community organizations in the villages,

⁶ Interview with Isa Haji Muhammad Abas, Chairman of the Youth Programme of Kampung Jorak Illahi, Batu Pahat, Johor, on 28 April 2002

such as youth groups, sports clubs and cultural organizations. The kompong troupe is sometimes run as one of the activities of these organizations.

As with many other types of traditional music in Malaysia, the kompong playing in Johor is informally taught and passed on from generation to generation through oral tradition. Traditionally, there is no formal class or institution set up purposely to teach kompong playing in Malaysia. The *guru kompong* (the kompong teacher) is the person who manages the troupe and trains new kompong players. The *guru kompong* is the expert and the most honorable person among the players. He runs the training sessions once or twice a week at weekends or on weekday evenings. Normally, the training session is held at the *guru kompong*'s house or at one of the player's houses. If there is a public building such as a *balai raya*⁷ or *surau*⁸ available in the village, then the practice sessions may be held there. The players have to bring their own instruments for practices and performances. Some kompong troupes have a collection of instruments donated by individuals, clubs, firms or political figures. The instruments are kept at the *guru kompong*'s house. Just as in the Kompong Ezhar organization, the training session will normally take about one to two hours depending on the availability of the teacher and the trainees. However, the training sessions will be held twice a week or more and the length of the sessions will be extended if the troupe is going to perform in a competition or for a very important function such as welcoming the king to the village.

⁷ A hall-like building which is built by the government or villagers for public use

⁸ A prayer place which is smaller than a mosque

The kompong ensemble is a combination of singing and drumming, but the emphasis is on the drumming (Matusky and Chopyak, 1998:424). In the training sessions, the players concentrate more on the accuracy of the rhythms and the playing techniques rather than on the vocal part. The *guru kompong* demonstrates the playing techniques as well as the rhythms performed on the kompong. The melody of the vocal part is not thoroughly demonstrated in the training session except for the Arabic choruses. This is probably because many of the Malay songs performed with the kompong are adapted from old folk song melodies and old Malay films. The melodies of the songs are normally taken from the folk songs sung during social and recreational gatherings. Some of the Malay songs are adapted from popular songs sung in the old Malay films, especially those produced in the 1960s. The players learn the Malay songs informally in their everyday life. Some of the kompong troupes, especially those with younger players, try to compose new rhythms. The newly composed rhythms are used to accompany the Malay popular songs which are most preferred by the younger players.

THE PERFORMANCE

Kompong playing in the state of Johor has a similar function to that of other types of kompong playing in other areas. It is performed mainly for religious and social functions. Traditionally, the Kompong Johor is performed to celebrate *mauled nabi*, circumcision and childbirth⁹. The kompong troupe also performs in many cultural shows and at tourist attractions, as well as for sports days, opening

⁹ See Chapter 1, page 79-80.

ceremonies, and greeting a very important person. But nowadays the biggest function of *kompang* playing in Johor is to perform at wedding ceremonies.



Plate 5d: A *Kompang* Performance at Kampung Jorak Illahi, Batu Pahat, Johor

As in the other parts of Peninsular Malaysia, in Johor the *kompang* ensemble performs in a sitting position, standing or walking in procession, depending on the function of the performance. The *kompang* is played sitting with the legs crossed when the performance is for a static function such as *malam berinai*¹⁰, celebration of childbirth, and in supporting a team at a sports event such as a football match. The players sit in a circle facing each other with the *jidur* player and the captain of the *kompang* troupe sitting in the middle of the circle. This position is suitable for that function because the *jidur* acts as a guide for the rhythm and all the players can easily see the captain. A performance in a sitting position will normally take a

¹⁰ A ceremony held at the bride's house on the night before the wedding day.

longer time than one performed in a different position. Normally, the kompong ensemble performance for *malam berinai* will last until late at night.

The Kompong Johor is also performed in a standing position for a short performance such as greeting or welcoming an important guest on certain occasions. The players stand in one or more rows facing the greeted guest. They play the kompong as soon as the guest has arrived at the venue of the function and walks to the seating place normally located on the stage of a hall or under a decorated canopy. The performance will last until the guest has been seated on the assigned chair¹¹. The kompong troupe also occasionally performs in a standing position in the arrival hall of an airport to welcome home an important figure or, for example, a sports team that is bringing home a trophy they have won. This is to show honour and respect to the greeted person or team.

The main function of the kompong playing in Johor is to perform in procession at a wedding ceremony. The captain of the troupe leads the players in front of the bride, walking from a gathering place to the bride's house. The *jidur* is hung from the player's shoulders with a strap and he is positioned in the middle of the troupe. In some places, it is also possible to observe the *jidur* being carried on the carrier of a bicycle which is pushed along in the procession. In this way, the *jidur* player can perform better without a heavy instrument to carry, especially during a long procession. The kompong is also performed in the procession celebrating the *mauled nabi*. The kompong will accompany the *selawat*¹² sung by

¹¹ See Video CD 1, track 1.

¹² Chorus praising Prophet Muhammad in Arabic text

the players and the crowd in the procession until the end of the ceremony. Occasionally, the kompiang in Johor is also performed in the procession to mark a traditional circumcision. As in the celebration of *mauled nabi*, the kompiang playing also accompanies the *selawat* in a circumcision procession.

THE COSTUMES

Unlike the Kompiang Ezhar troupes, most of the kompiang troupes in Johor have no official uniform. However, in some performances, the use of the proper costume is very important to ensure that every player looks nice and smart. At performances for formal functions such as to greet important guests, *mauled nabi*, or to celebrate National Day, all the players will have to wear proper attire. Normally, for this purpose, the captain of the troupe will set the pattern for the proper uniform to be worn for the particular performance. At a traditional performance, the players will be dressed in their traditional attire such as *baju melayu* or *baju batik* for men and *baju kurung* or *baju kebaya* for women.

The *baju melayu* is the most popular attire worn by kompiang players in the performances. The *baju melayu* is a loose shirt worn over a *sarung* or a pair of trousers. The more elaborate ones will also have a *kain sampin* - a piece of brocade tied around the waist - and trousers to match the shirt. To complete their ensemble, a traditional headdress called a *songkok* is worn. This is normally made of velvet. Headdresses are encouraged during prayers, and the *songkok* has become an indispensable part of the traditional Malay man's costume. As an alternative, the

kompang players also often wear the *baju batik* for formal performances. It is a long sleeved shirt with a design painted on to a silk or cotton fabric.

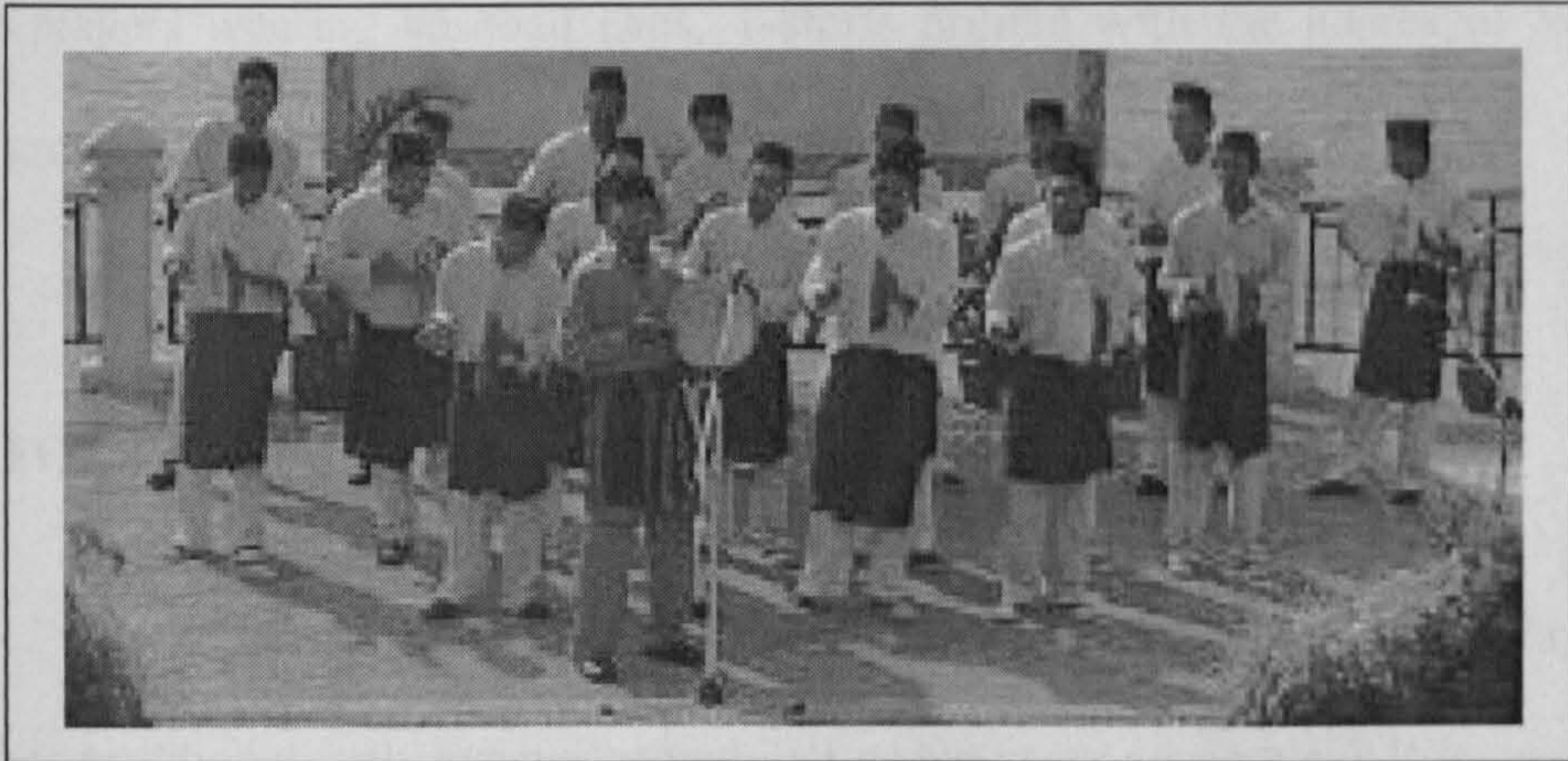


Plate 5e: A komping troupe performs in the *baju melayu*

The traditional costumes for women players are either the *baju kurung* or the *baju kebaya*. The *baju kurung* comprises a loose tunic, the *baju* (shirt), worn over a long skirt or the *sarung*. It is still worn in its original loose form. The *baju kebaya* is a two-piece costume, consisting of a tight blouse often made of lace or transparent material and a figure-hugging sheath of fine batik. In the old days, the woman would wrap a long piece of batik around her hips and pleat the end. But for convenience, the sheath and pleats are now sewn. The tightness of the sheath made walking difficult and over the years a slit was introduced. With greater Islamic consciousness, the *baju kebaya* has lost its figure-hugging quality and is now worn as a loose garment.

However, for the traditional functions held in villages such as wedding processions and other religious functions, the costume is not a main consideration.

The players may wear any kind of attire they like. Normally, older players wear proper Malay attire but teenagers may wear casual or up-to-date gear. This was clearly demonstrated to me in a wedding procession at Batu Pahat, where I observed some players wearing baseball caps, T-shirts printed with the names of Western rock groups, and worn-out jeans in the performance.

PERFORMING TECHNIQUES

As with the types of *kompang* playing in other areas, the *kompang* playing in Johor is traditionally always performed in a group as an ensemble. It is performed either instrumentally or to accompany a vocal part. Uniquely, the music of the *Kompang Johor* ensemble is composed of four different parts besides the vocal part. The four parts are called *pelalu*, *penyelang*, *peningkah* and *jidur*. The combination of all these parts produces interlocking rhythmic patterns which they (the players) call the *pukulan* (see page 164). Each part of the *Kompang Johor* ensemble plays a different role and all parts are equally important in the ensemble.

i. Pelalu

In this part, the players play the basic rhythm for any *pukulan*. Mostly, each note is played on the downbeat to provide the basic rhythm for the *penyelang* part to counter its rhythm. The players who play this part sit around the *peningkah* and the *jidur* if they perform in a sitting position.

ii. *Penyelang*

This part plays the counter rhythm to the *pelalu* part. Mainly, it is played on the up beat between the notes performed by the *pelalu* players. It gives a variation to the rhythm performed by the ensemble. The *penyelang* players sit together around the *peningkah* and the *pelalu*.

iii. *Peningkah*

This part of the ensemble is played by the captain of the *kompang* troupe. Sometimes, this part ad-libs the rhythm depending on the type of *pukulan* performed in the ensemble. This part will also lead the starting and ending of any *pukulan*. The captain who plays this part sits in front of the troupe and will cue the players either to start or end the *pukulan* in any performance.

iv. *Jidur*

Not used by the other *kompang* ensembles in Malaysia, the *jidur* is a single instrument added to the *kompang* ensemble to play the bass effect of the rhythm. Normally, it is played on the strong beat to guide the other parts in the ensemble. In a modern arrangement, the *jidur* performs the same function as the bass drum in a drum set, giving the basic rhythm to the rhythmic patterns performed in the

ensemble. In a *kompang* ensemble, the *jidur* player is normally placed in the middle of the troupe.

The number of players who play each part depends on the total number of players in the troupe. Normally, the number of players playing the *pelalu* and *penyelang* parts are divided equally. For example, if fifteen players play the *pelalu* part the same number will play the *penyelang* part. This will produce a balanced sound for the ensemble. However, there is only one player playing the *peningkah* part and one playing the *jidur*. One might wonder why these parts are only played by one player for each part as it might sound unbalanced. This assumption is untrue because, in reality, both of these parts can be heard clearly by the audience. In the case of the *peningkah*, this is because the *kompang* used to play this part is carefully chosen from a collection of *kompangs* for the best tuning and ability to produce the loudest sound. Normally, the player who performs this part is also the best among them, who can beat the instrument with a louder sound and better tone. Moreover, the rhythms performed in this part are different from the other parts, which make this part recognizable. Obviously, the sound of the *jidur* can be heard by the audience because it has a different timbre and a louder sound.

THE REPERTOIRE

All the music in the repertoires of the *Kompang Johor* ensemble can be divided into two categories. The criterion for categorization of the repertoires is based on the function of the music, which is either a rhythmic ensemble without a

vocal part or a rhythmic ensemble to accompany a vocal part (see Figure 5a). The rhythmic ensemble without a vocal part is performed mainly as an introduction at the beginning of each performance, regardless of the function of the performance. Every *kompang* performance in Johor will be started with the *pembukaan* (opening) before the troupe continues to perform other items from their repertoire. The *pembukaan* is an introduction to a performance and it is always started with the *Pukulan Berarak* (see page 251). This piece is a form of rhythmic ensemble without a vocal part.

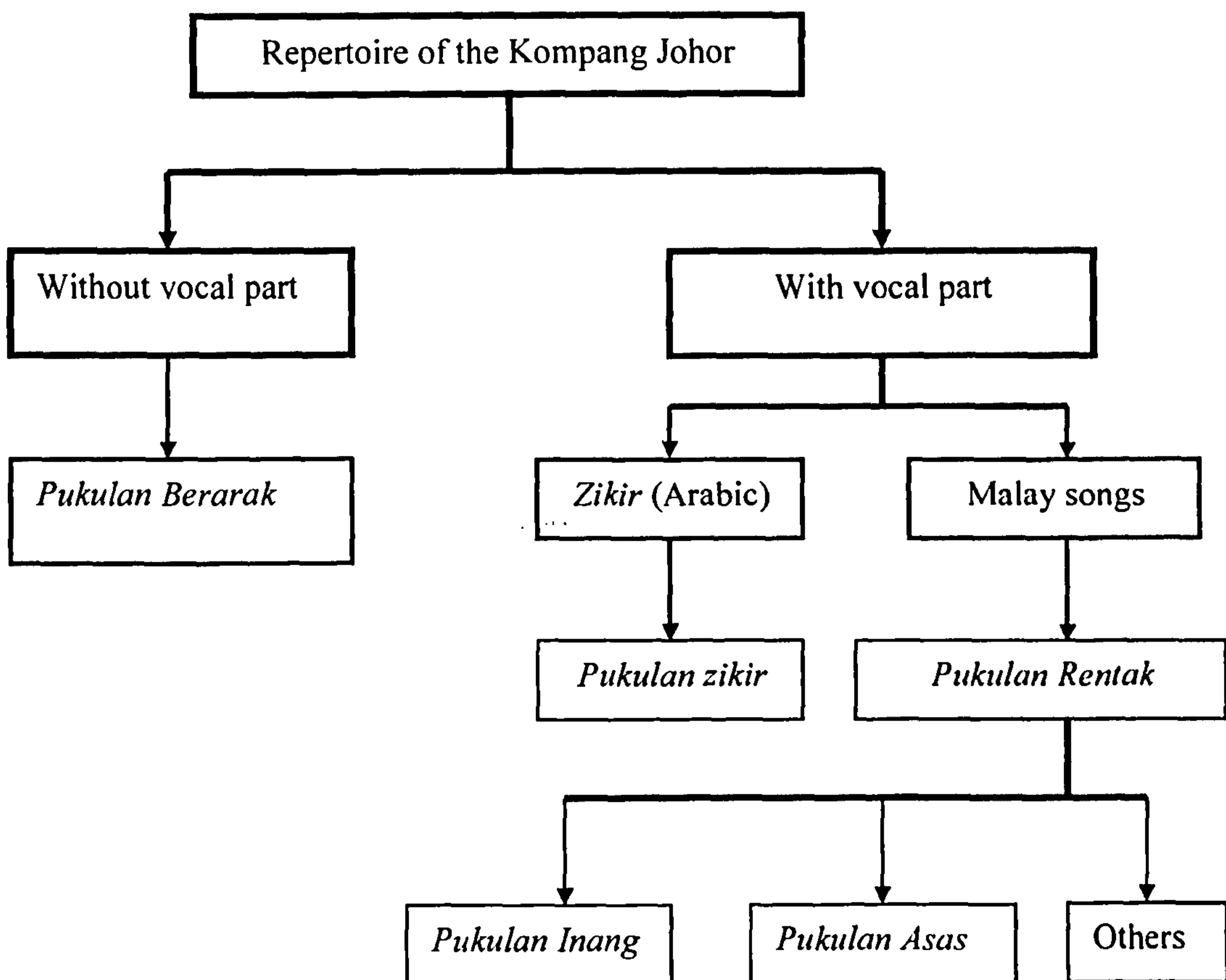


Figure 5a: Diagrammatic representation of the repertoire of the Kompang Johor

The second category is the rhythmic ensemble to accompany a vocal part. There are two types of song in this category sung by the players in the Kompang Johor ensemble, which are the Malay songs and the *zikir* (Arabic texts). All the songs and the *zikir* performed in the kompang ensemble are sung by all the players in unison. The *zikir* consists of Arabic choruses sung in unison, the texts of which praise Prophet Muhammad. It is taken from the *Kitab Berzanji*, a religious book containing complete verses praising Prophet Muhammad. The *zikir* is performed either in a sitting or a standing position mainly for religious functions. It is also performed in procession especially for wedding ceremonies and for celebrating the *mauled nabi* (birthday of Prophet Muhammad).

Mostly, the Malay songs performed by the Kompang Johor ensemble are taken from Malay folk songs sung by children during their play time such as *Enjit-enjit Semut*, *Tepuk Amai-amai*, *Geylang Sipaku Geylang* and *Rasa Sayang Hey*. Some of the Malay songs are taken from old popular songs sung by Malay artists and from old Malay films. Among the most popular songs performed in the wedding ceremony, which are adapted from old popular Malay songs, is *Selamat Pengantin Baru* (happy wedding day) popularized by the legendary female artist Saloma in the 1960s¹³.

¹³ For example, see Video CD 1, track 9.

THE RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE

As previously mentioned, the rhythms performed in the Kompang Johor ensemble are composed of four different parts which together make a complete piece in the ensemble. Analyzing the structural form of all the pieces in the repertoire, it can be concluded that everything played by the Kompang Johor ensemble is composed of at least three sections and sometimes more. Every section of the piece is composed of different rhythmic parts which are called *pukulans*¹⁴. Each *pukulan* has its own name according to its function. In the repertoire of the Kompang Johor, there are at least five variant forms of *pukulan*, which are used to make up the complete form of any piece. The five basic rhythmic patterns are called the *Pukulan Mula* (introduction beat), the *Pukulan Asas* (basic beat), the *Pukulan Turun* (descending beat), the *Pukulan Naik* (ascending beat), and the *Pukulan Mati* (ending beat). The following transcriptions are the types of *pukulan* performed by the kompang troupe from Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor. Similar types of *pukulan* were also observed at different places in Johor.

¹⁴ The small interlocking rhythmic patterns. Details of the term *pukulan* are discussed in Chapter 3 (see page 164-166).

Figure 5b: The *Pukulan Mula*

Figure 5b: The *Pukulan Mula*

Figure 5c: The *Pukulan Asas*

Figure 5c: The *Pukulan Asas*

Figure 5d: The *Pukulan Turun*

This musical score is for the *Pukulan Turun* and consists of four staves: Pelalu, Penyelang, Peningkah, and Jidur. Each staff is divided into two parts, 'Pak' and 'Bum'. The time signature is 4/4. The Pelalu staff has a steady rhythm of quarter notes. The Penyelang and Peningkah staves have a more complex rhythm with eighth and quarter notes. The Jidur staff has a sparse rhythm with rests and occasional notes.

Figure 5d: The *Pukulan Turun*

Figure 5e: The *Pukulan Naik*

This musical score is for the *Pukulan Naik* and consists of four staves: Pelalu, Penyelang, Peningkah, and Jidur. Each staff is divided into two parts, 'Pak' and 'Bum'. The time signature is 4/4. The Pelalu staff has a steady rhythm of quarter notes. The Penyelang and Peningkah staves have a more complex rhythm with eighth and quarter notes. The Jidur staff has a sparse rhythm with rests and occasional notes.

Figure 5e: The *Pukulan Naik*

Figure 5f: The *Pukulan Mati*

This musical score is for the *Pukulan Mati* and consists of four staves: Pelalu, Penyelang, Peningkah, and Jidur. Each staff is divided into two parts, 'Pak' and 'Bum'. The time signature is 4/4. The Pelalu staff has a steady rhythm of quarter notes. The Penyelang and Peningkah staves have a more complex rhythm with eighth and quarter notes. The Jidur staff has a sparse rhythm with rests and occasional notes.

Figure 5f: The *Pukulan Mati*

Each piece in the Kompang Johor ensemble is accompanied by a particular type of beat which is also called the *pukulan*. All the *pukulans* in the Kompang Johor repertoire are categorized into three types of beat, which are called *Pukulan Berarak*, *Pukulan Zikir* and *Pukulan Lagu*.

Pukulan Berarak

The *Pukulan berarak* is a complete form of an interlocking rhythmic pattern performed without a vocal part. It is regularly performed as the *pembukaan* (opening) of a kompang performance as well as for other functions such as welcoming very important guests, wedding processions, and circumcisions. The *Pukulan Berarak* is composed of a combination of five different small forms of the *pukulan*, which are the *Pukulan Mula*, the *Pukulan Asas*, the *Pukulan Turun*, the *Pukulan Naik* and the *Pukulan Mati*. The sequence of the *Pukulan Berarak* is always the same (see Figure 5g). It is always started with the *Pukulan Mula* to introduce the piece as well as to set the tempo for the whole piece. It is subsequently followed by the *Pukulan Asas* which is repeated a few times depending on the function of the performance. The number of times it is repeated is also decided by the captain of the troupe. It is succeeded by a few repetitions of the *Pukulan Turun*. This sequence is bridged by the *Pukulan Naik* before it reverts back to the *Pukulan Mula*. The second round of the *Pukulan Asas* is also repeated several times before proceeding to another section. The complete cycle of the *Pukulan Berarak* ends with the *Pukulan Mati*.

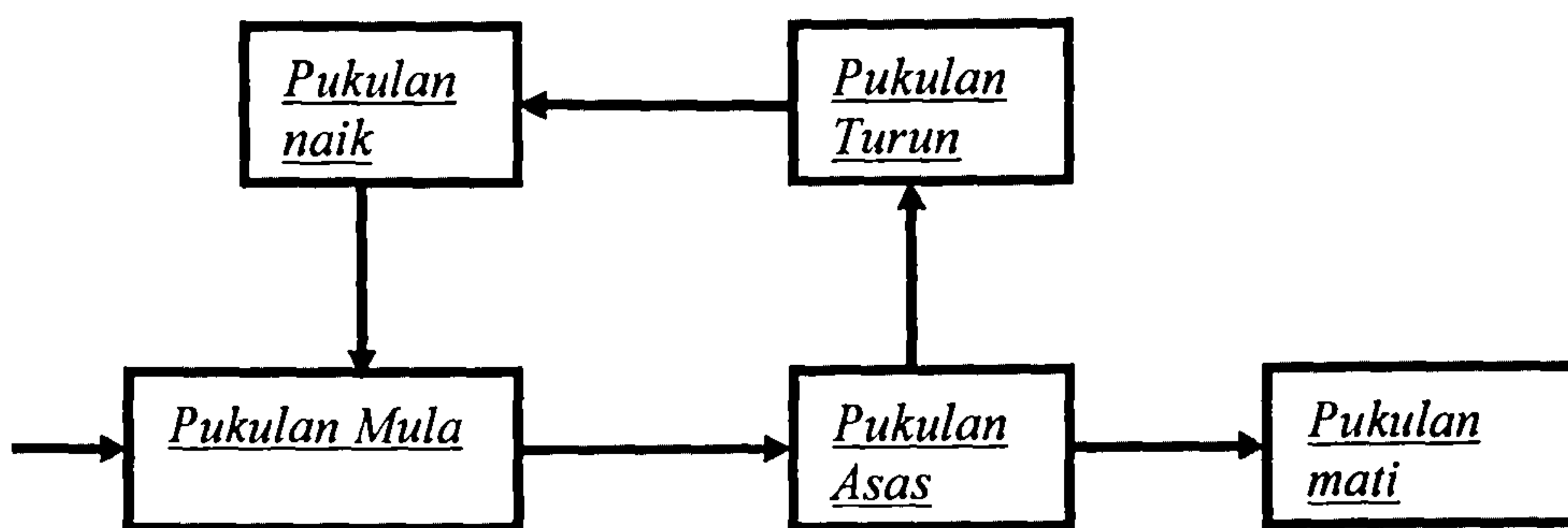


Figure 5g: The Structural form of the *Pukulan Berarak*

Each type of *pukulan* that forms the *Pukulan Berarak* mentioned above, except the *Pukulan Mati*, is repeated many times. The number of repetitions of each *pukulan* depends on for how long the ensemble needs to play and the function that the kompong ensemble is performing for. In some cases, when the troupe has to perform for a longer period such as for a longer procession or for welcoming a very important person, the total number of repetitions of each *pukulan* is different. In these cases, normally before the performance starts, the captain of the troupe will decide on the total number of repetitions for each *pukulan* that is needed and will tell this to all the players. Alternatively, the captain may give the cue to the players to change to another *pukulan* without mentioning the number of repetitions of each *pukulan*. In so doing, the captain raises his/her kompong when it is time to stop repeating each *pukulan*. This is just like a conductor cueing the members of an orchestra. Even without the music score, the players understand the cue and are ready to change to the next *pukulan*.

The example of the *Pukulan Berarak* transcribed (Figure 5h) is based on the ensemble performed by the kompong troupe from Kampung Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor, under the instruction of their captain, Muhammad Zamri. In this performance, the troupe performed and repeated every *pukulan* in the *Pukulan Berarak* as analyzed in Table 5a. The number of repetitions of each *pukulan* in the *Pukulan Berarak* may be different in other performances.

<u><i>Pukulan</i></u>	Number of times repeated	Measure
<u><i>Pukulan Mula</i></u>	1	1 - 6
<u><i>Pukulan Asas</i></u>	5	7 - 10
<u><i>Pukulan Turun</i></u>	7	11 - 12
<u><i>Pukulan Naik</i></u>	1	13 - 14
<u><i>Pukulan Mula</i></u>	1	15 - 20
<u><i>Pukulan Asas</i></u>	3	21 - 24
<u><i>Pukulan Mati</i></u>	1	25 - 31

Table 5a: Analysis of the *Pukulan Berarak* performed by the kompong troupe from Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor

Pukulan Berarak

Pukulan Mula (1-6)

Musical score for Pukulan Mula (1-6) in 4/4 time. The score is divided into five measures, numbered 1 through 5. The instruments are Feldu, Peaydang, Peayangkub, and Jidur. Feldu plays a steady quarter-note rhythm. Peaydang and Peayangkub play eighth-note patterns. Jidur plays a bass line with quarter and eighth notes.

Pukulan Asas (7-10) Repeat 5X

Musical score for Pukulan Asas (7-10) Repeat 5X in 4/4 time. The score is divided into four measures, numbered 7 through 10. The instruments are Feldu, Peaydang, Peayangkub, and Jidur. Feldu plays a steady quarter-note rhythm. Peaydang and Peayangkub play eighth-note patterns. Jidur plays a bass line with quarter and eighth notes.

Pukulan Turun (11-12) Repeat 7X

Pukulan Naik (13-14) Not repeated

Pukulan Mula (15-20)

Musical score for Pukulan Turun (11-12) Repeat 7X, Pukulan Naik (13-14) Not repeated, and Pukulan Mula (15-20) in 4/4 time. The score is divided into three measures, numbered 11 through 15. The instruments are Feldu, Peaydang, Peayangkub, and Jidur. Feldu plays a steady quarter-note rhythm. Peaydang and Peayangkub play eighth-note patterns. Jidur plays a bass line with quarter and eighth notes.

Pukulan Asas (21-24) Repeat 3 X

Pukulan Mati (25-31)

Figure 5h: Full transcription of the *Pukulan Berarak* performed by the kompong troupe of Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor¹⁵

¹⁵ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 11,

Pukulan Zikir

The *Pukulan Zikir* is the only type of *pukulan* used to accompany all the *zikirs* in the repertoire of the Kompong Johor. The *zikir* with kompong accompaniment is performed during wedding processions and for celebrating the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, as well as in other religious functions. It is composed of a combination of at least three small types of *pukulan*. The *Pukulan Mula* functions as an introduction to the *Pukulan Zikir*, and the *Pukulan Mati* is used to end the piece. The *Pukulan Asas* is the body of the whole *Pukulan Zikir* and is used to accompany the melody of the *zikir*.

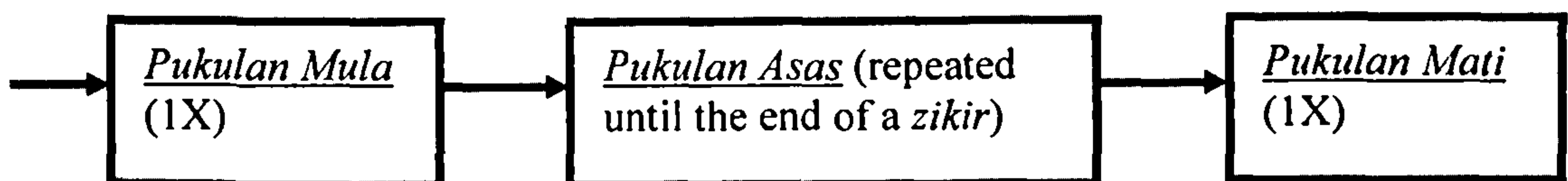


Figure 5i: A basic form of the *Pukulan Zikir*

If many different *zikirs* are performed continuously in the ensemble, the structural form of the *Pukulan Zikir* will be different (see Figure 5j). The *Pukulan Asas* will be repeated to accompany every *zikir* as many times as the total number of the *zikir* set to be sung in the ensemble. The *Pukulan Naik* and the *Pukulan Mula* are performed as a bridge between two of the *Pukulan Asas* which accompany the *zikir*. The sequence of the *Pukulan Mula*, *Pukulan Asas* and *Pukulan Naik* is played in a cycle until all the *zikirs* have been performed. In the last cycle, the *Pukulan*

Turun and the *Pukulan Naik* are played as a bridge after the *Pukulan Asas*. Finally, the *Pukulan Mati* is performed to end the performance.

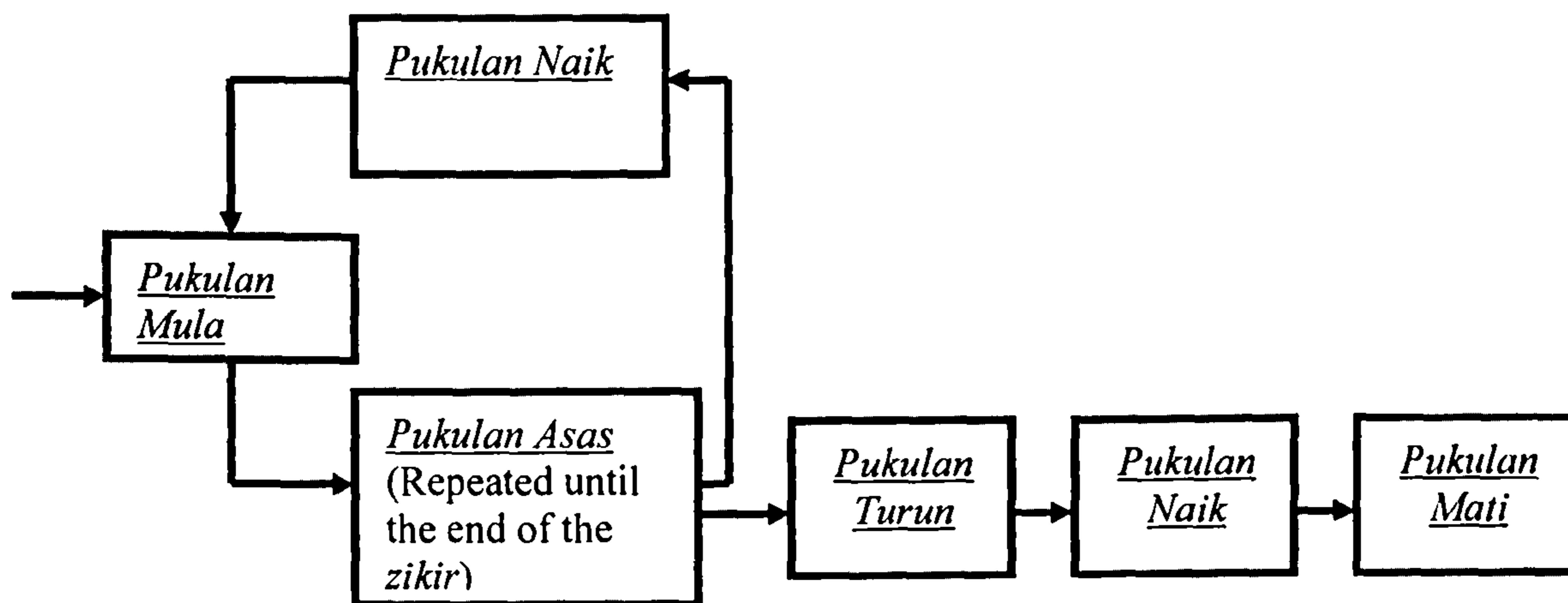


Figure 5j: A Structural form of the *Pukulan Zikir* to accompany many *zikirs* in one performance

The following transcription (see Figure 5k) is the *Pukulan Zikir* performed by the kompong troupe from Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor, to accompany the *zikir* called *Ya Rasulullah* (Oh, the messenger of Allah). Examining this piece, it is learned that the troupe adopted the extended structural form of the *Pukulan Zikir* (Figure 5j) which clearly demonstrates that the *Pukulan Asas*, the *Pukulan Naik* and the *Pukulan Mula* are cycled before the piece proceeds to the ending section. Each section of every *pukulan* in the transcription of the *Pukulan Zikir* is analyzed in Table 5b.

<i>Pukulan</i>	Measure
<u><i>Pukulan Mula</i></u>	1 - 4
<u><i>Pukulan Asas</i></u>	5 - 18
<u><i>Pukulan Naik</i></u>	19 - 20
<u><i>Pukulan Mula</i></u>	21 - 26
<u><i>Pukulan Asas</i></u>	27 - 30
<u><i>Pukulan Turun</i></u>	31 - 34
<u><i>Pukulan Naik</i></u>	35 - 36
<u><i>Pukulan Mati</i></u>	37 - 41

Table 5b: Analysis of the *Pukulan Zikir* that accompanies the *Zikir Ya Rasulullah* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor

Zikir Ya Rasulullah

Zikir

Pelalu

Penyelang

Peningkah

Jidur

Ya Ra-

6 su - lul - lah Ya ha - bi bul lah

6 su - lul - lah Ya ha - bi bul lah

12 Sa do man sa ro La la

12 Sa do man sa ro La la

18 Igtul ai ni

18 Igtul ai ni

Figure 5k: Transcription of the *Pukulan Zikir* that accompanies *Zikir Ya Rasulullah* performed by the *kompang* troupe of Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor¹⁶

¹⁶ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 12.

Pukulan Lagu

The *Pukulan Lagu* (song beat), also known as the *Pukulan Rentak* (rhythm beat), is another category of *pukulan* in the Kompang Johor ensemble. All the beats in this category are used to accompany Malay songs. Basically, there are three rhythmical sections in the *Pukulan Lagu* (see Figure 51). The first section is the introduction to the piece, which is always led by the *Pukulan Mula*. The second section is the specific beat, which is chosen to accompany a particular Malay song. In this section, a variety of beats is possible, such as the *Pukulan Inang*, the *Pukulan Asas* or another type of *pukulan* depending on the song they are performing for. For example, the *Pukulan Inang* is played in this section to accompany the song called *Enjit-enjit Semut* (the ants), but for other songs such as *Selamat Pengantin Baru* (happy wedding day), the modified version of the *Pukulan Asas* is used instead of the *Pukulan Inang* in this section. The third section of the *Pukulan Lagu* is the ending beat of the song. This task is always performed by the *Pukulan Mati*.

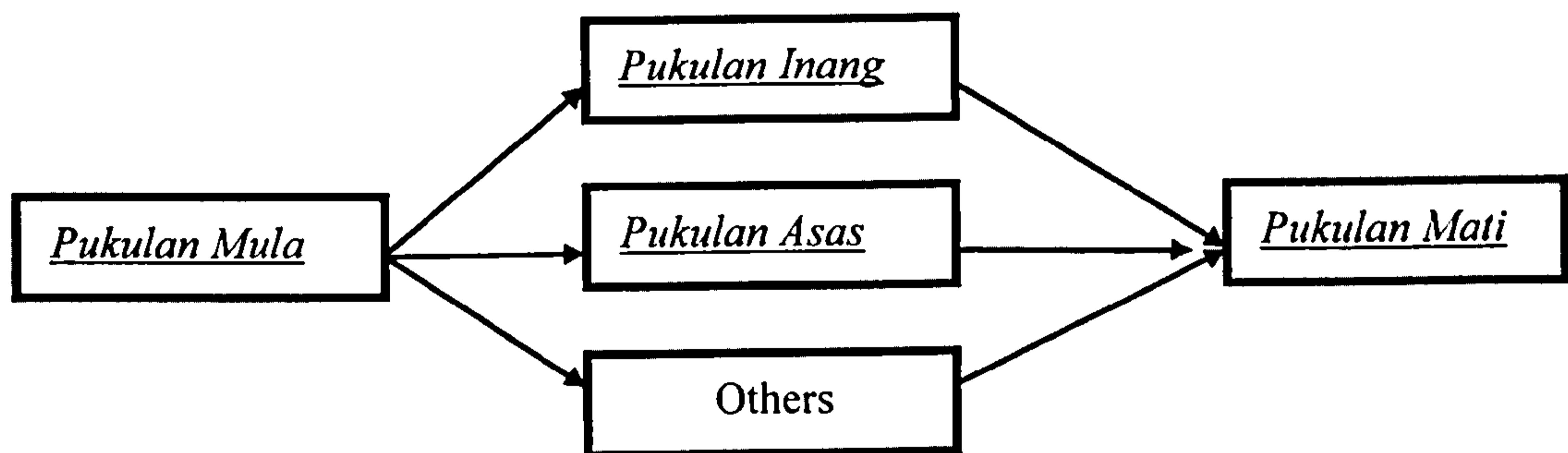


Figure 51: Structural form of the *Pukulan Lagu*

The following transcription is the example of the *Pukulan Lagu* used to accompany the Malay folk song called *Enjit-enjit Semut* (see Figure 5m). This piece is introduced with the *Pukulan Mula* from measure 1 to measure 7. It is followed by the introduction to the melody of the song, which is from measure 8 to measure 11. The melody of the song is found from measure 12 to measure 43 and it is fully accompanied by the *Pukulan Inang*. This piece ends with the *Pukulan Mati* from measure 44 to measure 50. The *Pukulan Inang* is also used to accompany many other folk songs such as *Rasa Sayang Hey*, *Tepuk Amai-amai*, and *Lenggang Mak Limah*.

Types of Pukulan	Measure Number	Description
<i>Pukulan Asas</i>	1 – 7	Rhythm without vocal part to introduce the piece
Introduction	8 – 11	The introduction to the melody of the song (<i>Enjit-enjit Semut</i>)
<i>Pukulan Inang</i>	12 – 43	The body of the song
<i>Pukulan Mati</i>	44 – 50	The ending section of the piece

Table 5c: Analysis of the *Pukulan Lagu*, which accompanies the *Enjit-Enjit Semut* song performed by the *kompang* troupe of Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor

Enjit Enjit Semut

Malay Folksong

$\text{♩} = 140$

The first system of musical notation includes a vocal line and four instrumental parts: Pelalu, Penyalang, Peningkah, and Jidur. The vocal line is in treble clef with a common time signature. The instrumental parts are in bass clef. The Pelalu part has a 'Pak' (pitch) and 'Bum' (bass) line. The Penyalang and Peningkah parts also have 'Pak' and 'Bum' lines. The Jidur part has a common time signature. The notation shows a series of rhythmic patterns and notes.

The second system of musical notation includes a vocal line and four instrumental parts. The vocal line is in treble clef with a common time signature. The instrumental parts are in bass clef. The Pelalu part has a 'Pak' (pitch) and 'Bum' (bass) line. The Penyalang and Peningkah parts also have 'Pak' and 'Bum' lines. The Jidur part has a common time signature. The notation shows a series of rhythmic patterns and notes. The lyrics 'Enjit enjit se - mut siapa sa - kit na - ik a - tas' are written below the vocal line.

The third system of musical notation includes a vocal line and four instrumental parts. The vocal line is in treble clef with a common time signature. The instrumental parts are in bass clef. The Pelalu part has a 'Pak' (pitch) and 'Bum' (bass) line. The Penyalang and Peningkah parts also have 'Pak' and 'Bum' lines. The Jidur part has a common time signature. The notation shows a series of rhythmic patterns and notes. The lyrics 'Enjit enjit se - mut siapa sa - kit na - ik a - tas Enjit - enjit se - mut siapasa -' are written below the vocal line.

18

kit na-ik a-tas Enjit enjit se-mut sia-pa sa kit na-ik a-tas . .

18

Enjit enjit se-mut sia-pa sa-kit na-ik a-tas Du-a-lah ti-ga
Ka-lau-lah a-da

24

ku-cing ber-la-ri ma-na nak sa-ma si-ku-cing be-lang
su-mur di-la-dang bo-leh-lah ki-ta menumpangman-di

30

36

du - a - lah ti - ga bo - leh ku ca - ri ma - na nak sa -
 36 Ka - lau - lah a - da U - mur yang pan - jang bo - leh - lah ki -

41

ma cik a - dik seo - rang
 41 ta ber - jum - pa la - gi

46

46

Figure 5m: Full transcription of Malay Folk Song, *Enjit-enjit Semut* performed by the komping troupe of Kampong Air Baloi, Pontian, Johor¹⁷

¹⁷ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 13.

Another example of a Malay song accompanied with a beat under the category of the *Pukulan Lagu* is *Selamat Pengantin Baru* (see figure 5q). This song was originally sung by the most famous and legendary female artist, Saloma, in the 1960s. It is said to be synonymous with the wedding celebration, as it is always performed at weddings in Johor. As with the other structures of the *Pukulan Lagu* (see figure 5l), the piece also starts with the *Pukulan Mula* and ends with the *Mukulan Mati*. The *pukulan* used to accompany the melody of this song is a modified version of the *Pukulan Asas*.

Analyzing the *Pukulan Asas* used to accompany this song, it is seen that the modification occurs at both the first and the second motif of the *Pukulan Asas* (see Figure 5n). The second motif of the *Pukulan Asas* is modified by extending the same interlocking rhythmic pattern from the previous motif. This becomes the first motif of the modified *Pukulan Asas*. Meanwhile, the first motif of the original *Pukulan Asas* is shortened to one measure and becomes the second motif of the modified *Pukulan Asas* (see Figure 5p). Furthermore, another modification of the *Pukulan Asas* in this song also occurs in the *jidur* part. The syncopated notes of the *jidur* part in the modified *Pukulan Asas* are simplified to suit the rhythm of the melody.

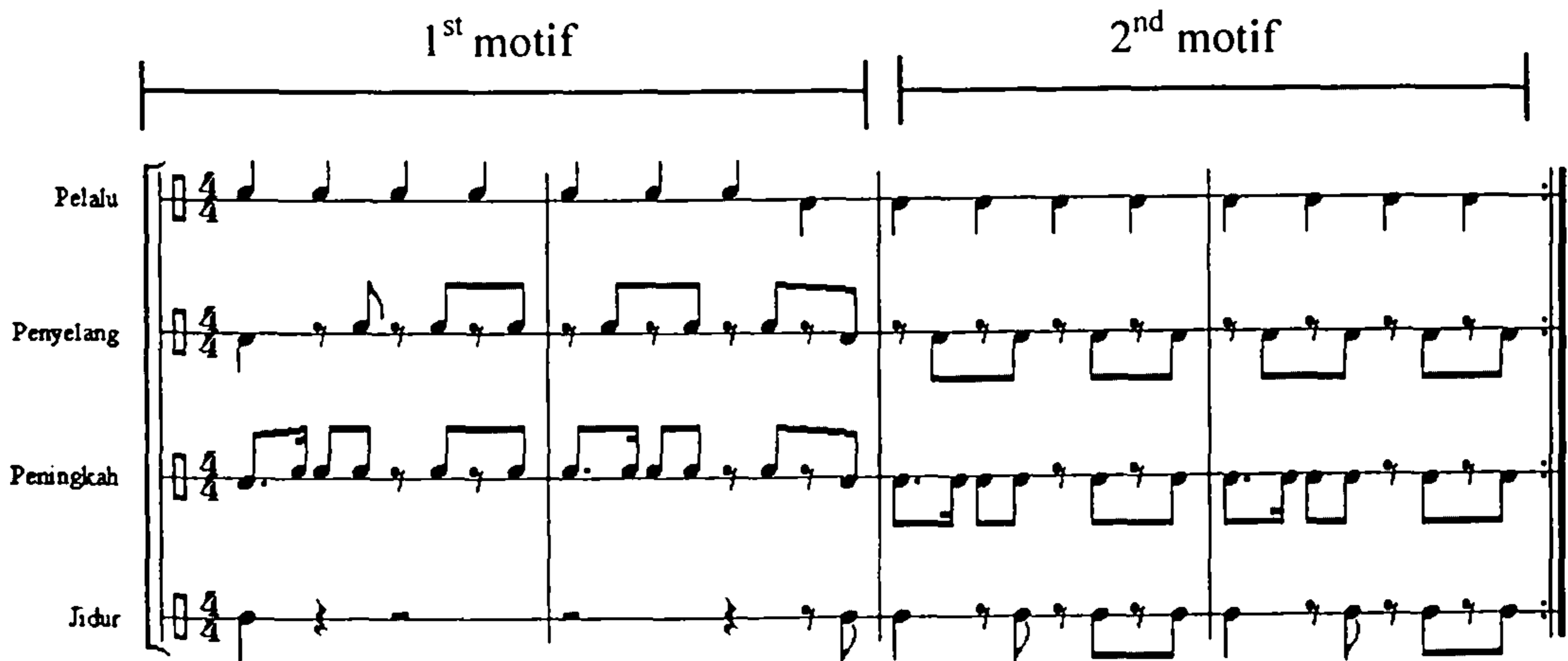


Figure 5n: Structural motifs of the original *Pukulan Asas*

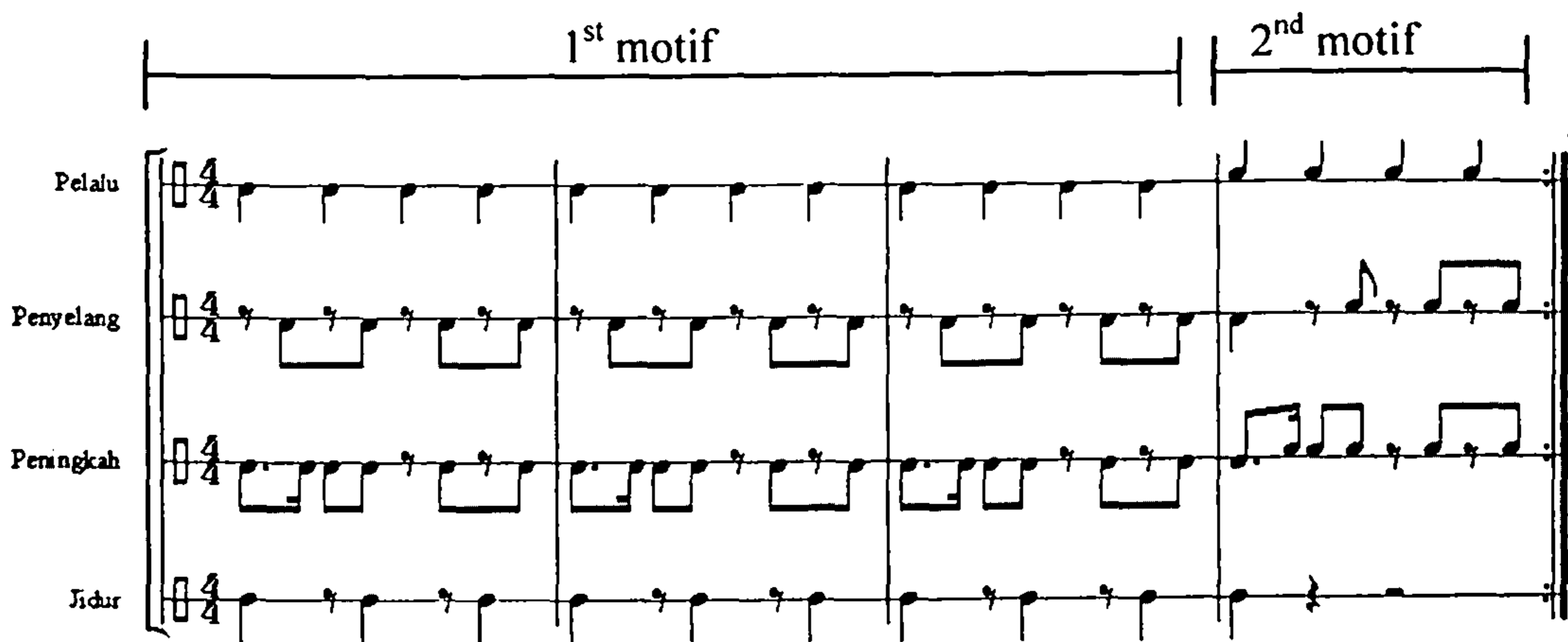


Figure 5p: Structural motifs of the modified *Pukulan Asas*

The melody of the song, except for the last note, rests with the first motif of the modified *Pukulan Asas*. The second motif, which is dominated by the timbre *pak*, functions just like a transition between the verses of the lyric. Similarly to the *Pukulan Zikir*, the melody of the song rests with the section of the motif where the timbre *bum* is played on the *kompang*. Noticeably, the tone of the timbre *bum* is lower when compared with the timbre *pak*. It sounds more calm and muffled than the timbre *pak*, which is clearly contrasted to highlight the sound of the melody part.

♩ = 120

vocal

Sla - mat pe ngan ta ba - ra Sla - mat

Pejab

Pengalang

Pengalah

Jabu

ber - lah - gi - a Sla - mat la - e - nak cu - cu

12

Sla - mat Sla - mat

Figure 5q: Excerpt transcription from *Selamat Pengantin Baru* performed by the kompiang troupe from Kampong Jorak Illahi, Batu Pahat, Johor¹⁸

¹⁸ listen to audio CD 1, track 14.

In general, all the types of *pukulan* in the repertoire of the Kompang Johor are different from the types of *pukulan* performed by the Kompang Ezhar. Noticeably, they are not only composed of different numbers of parts but they are also composed with different structural forms. Moreover, the inclusion of the *jidur* in the composition of the Kompang Johor ensemble makes the two types of *pukulan* sound different. The basic rhythmic pattern of the *pukulans* in the Kompang Johor is clearer because of the bass-effect sound which is produced by the *jidur*. As well as the differences between these two types of *pukulan* in the kompang ensemble, there are also some similarities found among the types of *pukulan*. Still, the main principle of the *pukulan* in both of the ensembles is that they are composed from a few parts that interlock with each other to produce the resultant rhythmic patterns. Both types of ensemble utilize timbre *bum* and *pak* in orchestrating the rhythm of the *pukulan*. The issues discussed in this chapter will also be elaborated in the next chapter. The next chapter will examine how the same issues are related to the kompang ensemble performed in the states of Perak and Selangor. As presented in this chapter, the next chapter will also analyze the types of *pukulan* in the repertoire of the Kompang Perak.

CHAPTER 6

THE KOMPANG PERAK

As might be understood from the title of this chapter, it is concerned with the type of kompong ensemble performed in the state of Perak. The term “Kompong Perak” is derived from the instrument played mostly in the state of Perak, a state on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. This type of kompong ensemble has a different repertoire from the other kompong ensembles found on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. One must be aware that this type of instrument is also called the “Rebana Perak” by people in the state of Perak. In fact, in this state, the term “Rebana Perak” is widely used by northerners, especially those who live near the area of the Perak River from Kuala Kangsar down to Kampong Gajah and Teluk Intan districts. However, I also noticed that most of the southerners, especially in the Tanjong Malim and Slim River areas, frequently use the term “Kompong Perak” instead of “Rebana Perak”. On the other hand, they are also as familiar with the term “Rebana Perak” as their fellow countrymen in the northern part of the state. The term *rebana* is a generic term, which refers to the single-headed frame drum played in the Malay Archipelago¹.

Searching for similar types of ensemble in other areas, I found that the so-called “Kompong Selangor” has a great deal in common with the Kompong Perak

¹ There are many types of *rebana*, which refers to the single-headed frame drum played in Malaysia, the Riau islands, Sumatra and Java. The construction technique of the *rebana* can be slightly different from one instrument to another. The *rebana hadrah*, *rebana kercing*, *rebana dikir* and *rebana ubi* are found in Malaysia, while the *rebana berdah*, *rebana kebo* and *repana* are found in Indonesia. For more details, please refer to Chapter 2 – Frame Drums in Malaysia and Malay Archipelago, page 102-107.

ensemble. Mainly, the ensemble is performed in the northern part of the state of Selangor which is the border state of Perak to the south. Coincidentally, the instruments used in the Kompang Selangor and the Kompang Perak ensembles are identical to each other. More interesting to note here is that the two ensembles share the same types of *pukulan* in their repertoires. This leads to my conclusion that the two ensembles are inseparable, and therefore it is necessary to discuss both ensembles together in this chapter. In investigating why these similar ensembles are called by different names in different areas, I later learned that the terms used for these ensembles are simply in line with the name of the state in which the instrument is performed.

Generally speaking, from my observations, even though the ensemble is also widely performed in Selangor, this type of ensemble is more popular and more regularly performed in the state of Perak. Moreover, the Kompang Ezhar (see Chapter 4) is also widely performed in Selangor. For that reason, to avoid confusion, I decided to use the term “Kompang Perak” as the title for this chapter. However, in this thesis, the term Kompang Perak also refers to the similar type of kompang ensemble performed in the state of Selangor, but it is not applicable to the Kompang Ezhar that is also performed in the same area. In this chapter, I shall trace the historical events that led to the arrival of the kompang ensemble into the states of Perak and Selangor as well as discussing the historical connection between these two ensembles in these states. Furthermore, as with the previous two chapters, this chapter will also discuss the instrument and the players as well as the performing techniques of the instrument to demonstrate the differences between this type of the

ensemble and the other types of kompang ensemble in other areas. Finally, the repertoire of the Kompang Perak ensemble will be analyzed in order to appreciate its uniqueness.

HISTORY

The arrival of the kompang in the Malay Archipelago was extensively discussed in Chapter 2, but how exactly it arrived in the Selangor and Perak regions is still uncertain. There are a few hypotheses that can be made as to how the kompang arrived in Selangor and Perak. Analyzing the organological aspects of the instrument, as well as the performance techniques and the repertoires of the kompang ensembles in the states of Perak and Selangor, it is found that the ensembles in these two states share some very close similarities. Based on this observation, one can conclude that kompang playing in the state of Perak has a close relation and historic connections with the similar ensemble in the state of Selangor. Examining the historical sources of both states will lead to a better understanding of the history of kompang playing in this region.

Historically, kompang playing in Selangor can be traced back to the early years of the Selangor Sultanate. Selangor was under the influence of the Melaka Empire during the late 1500s. The history of Selangor dates back to the 16th century, when rich tin deposits were found in the region. The area's natural wealth, along with its relative freedom from the presence of the Dutch, attracted miners, immigrants and colonizers. Due to the civil war and the Dutch invasion of Macassar

(now Ujung Padang) on Celebes Island (also known as Sulawesi), Indonesia, Selangor experienced mass immigration by the Bugis in 1680s. The Bugis were one of the dominant ethnic groups that settled on Celebes Island. The steady encroachment of the Dutch over their territory, which was previously dominated by Portuguese traders, led the Bugis to emigrate from this great port city and travel northwest to territories including the Riau Islands and the Malay Peninsula. Renowned for their capabilities as sea traders and warriors, the Bugis soon rose to prominence in Selangor. By 1740 they dominated the state both politically and economically and had established the roots of the present Sultanate of Selangor (Andaya and Andaya, 1982:83-90).



Map 6a: Theories of the migrational route of kompiang playing into the states of Selangor and Perak

Based on the above historical event, one might theorizes that the kompang playing in Selangor was introduced by the Bugis between 1680 and 1740. Though, there is no written document found to support this argument. However, the earliest kompang playing in Selangor dates back to the governance of Sultan Muhamad Shah Ibn Almarahum Sultan Ibrahim (1826-1857). During his governance, Sultan Muhamad Shah entrusted Raja Yusof as his representative to govern the districts of Sabak Bernam, Kota and Hutan Melintang (now in the state of Perak). Raja Yusof brought with him a group of performers and established the ensembles of *rebana dikir (berdah)*, *dabus*² and kompang in the districts (Sharani Maalam, 1977:128). From Sabak Bernam, the kompang playing spread to the neighbouring area including Kuala Selangor to the south and the southern part of Perak. According to Sharani Bin Maalam (1977:129), Anderson wrote in 1820 that the kingdom of Selangor possessed the territory to the north of Dinding, which extended as far as the River Krian at latitude 5°N. Dinding district and the River Krian are now part of Perak territory. Based on this fact, the assumption that the kompangs played in the states of Perak and Selangor are closely related and have a historic connection to each other is most likely to be true.

From this fact, one might conclude that kompang playing in Selangor and its neighbouring areas was introduced by the Bugis from Macassar who established the Selangor Sultanate in the 18th Century. However, this argument is inconclusive because the similar ensemble is not performed in Macassar now. Furthermore, the likelihood that the Bugis brought the instrument to Selangor is also arguable

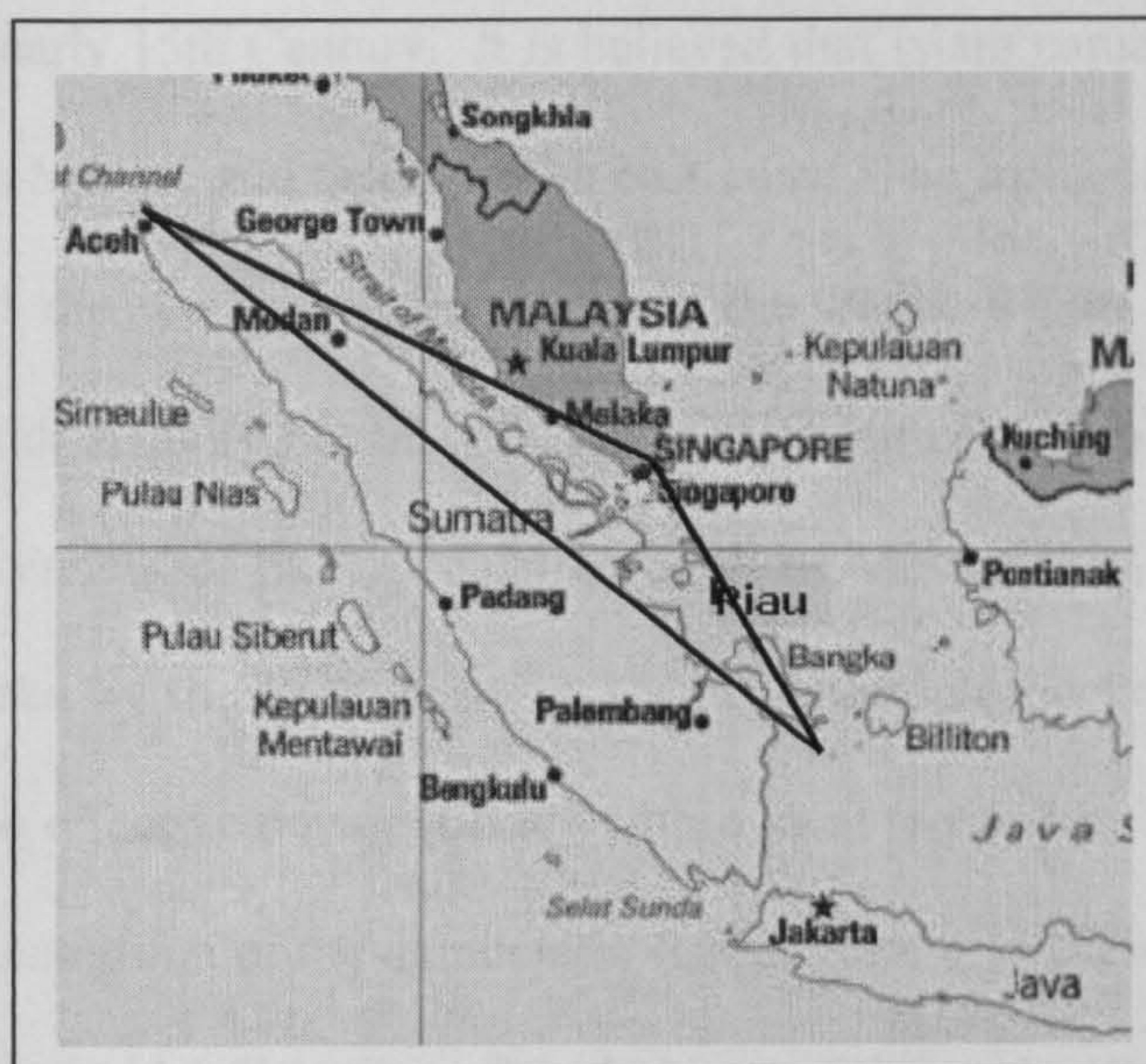
² For more detail, see page 111-113

because there are no sources that confirm this. However, the possibility of the transmission of kompang playing through the migration of the Bugis into Selangor cannot be totally discarded because Islam and Arab people, as discussed in Chapter 2, had reached Maccasar before the 17th century (Tarling, 1999:175-177).

Another hypothesis is that kompang playing in Selangor and Perak was introduced by the Malay people from the Riau Archipelago during the Johor-Riau-Aceh supremacy (the 17th and 18th Centuries). The fall of the Melaka Empire to the Portuguese in 1511 led to the establishment of a new empire by the exiled Melakan rulers in Johor. In the 17th Century, the new empire became powerful and exercised control over the Riau-Lingga islands as well as the eastern coast of Sumatra. The geographical setting of the Johor-Riau-Aceh axis made it possible for the Malay people to travel, migrate and engage in trade, inter-marriage and sharing of musical traditions. Trading, and social and diplomatic contacts between Johor-Riau-Aceh and maritime ports around the triangle, was also almost inevitable. Kuala Selangor was one of the important maritime ports around the triangle that benefited from the supremacy of Johor-Riau-Aceh. It was also the centre for administration during the early years of the Selangor Sultanate (Andaya and Andaya, 2001:85-89). As a consequence, the triangle of the Johor-Riau-Aceh axis may have played a significant role in the spread of kompang playing in Selangor through the sharing and adopting of each people's cultures.

This theory is supported by the verbal story that claims that some of the melodies sung with the Kompang Selangor were composed by Encik Chenong and

Encik Dollah Mansur from Riau (Sharani Maalam, 1977:128). If the claim is true, the theory of the possibility of kompang playing being brought from the Riau Archipelago is very strong. Moreover, to strengthen the theory, the similar ensemble is also found in the Riau Islands³.



Map 6b: Johor-Riau-Aceh triangle in the 17th and 18th Centuries

Another theory claims that the kompang playing in Perak was introduced from Palembang, Sumatra. According to Haji Zakaria Abdul Rahman, a kompang instructor from Kampong Gajah, Perak, the instrument came originally from Arabia and was brought to Perak from Palembang on the east coast of Sumatra hundreds of years ago⁴. The instrument arrived along with the migration of the Malay people from Palembang who settled along the Perak River. The Perak River was one of the

³ For further information, see page 74.

⁴ Interview with Haji Zakaria Abdul Rahman, a kompang teacher at Kampung Tersusun Teluk Memali, Kampung Gajah, Perak, on 23rd February 2003.

most important routes connecting people from the rural areas of Perak and the outside world before modern roads were built.

The Manjung district is believed to have had the first organised government in Perak. After this government ceased to exist, the Malay government of Bruas emerged in the early 15th Century. It is believed that Islam came to Perak via such coastal states as Melaka and those on the east coast. The influence of Islam spread until it reached the interior of Perak along the Perak River. Historically, the sultanate of Perak actually began with the installation of Sultan Muzaffar Shah I, who was a descendent of Sultan Mahmud Shah of Melaka, in 1528 following the capture of Melaka by the Portuguese in 1511. Although the Perak Sultanate had been formed, the effective power still lay within local territories. The administrative method was an extension of the democratic feudal system of Melaka. Perak became more prominent with the discovery of tin in Larut, Taiping, in 1848 by Long Jaafar. With this discovery, Perak's economy boomed and more mining areas were brought into existence. The tin mining attracted many outsiders including Sumatrans, Bugis, Javanese, Chinese and also the British (Andaya and Andaya, 2001:62-65).

The claim that kompong playing in Perak was introduced via Palembang cannot be ignored because it was in line with the historical events of the 17th and 18th Centuries during the Johor-Riau-Aceh supremacy. During this period, diplomatic connections as well as trading and social contacts around the triangle were very close. This made it possible for the cultural and musical styles from each place to be absorbed and adopted by people from another place. Based on this

historical event, the possibility that kompang playing in Perak had been brought in by migrating Malay people from Palembang is acceptable. However, this theory has yet to be proved since there is no concrete evidence that has been found so far to support this claim.

GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

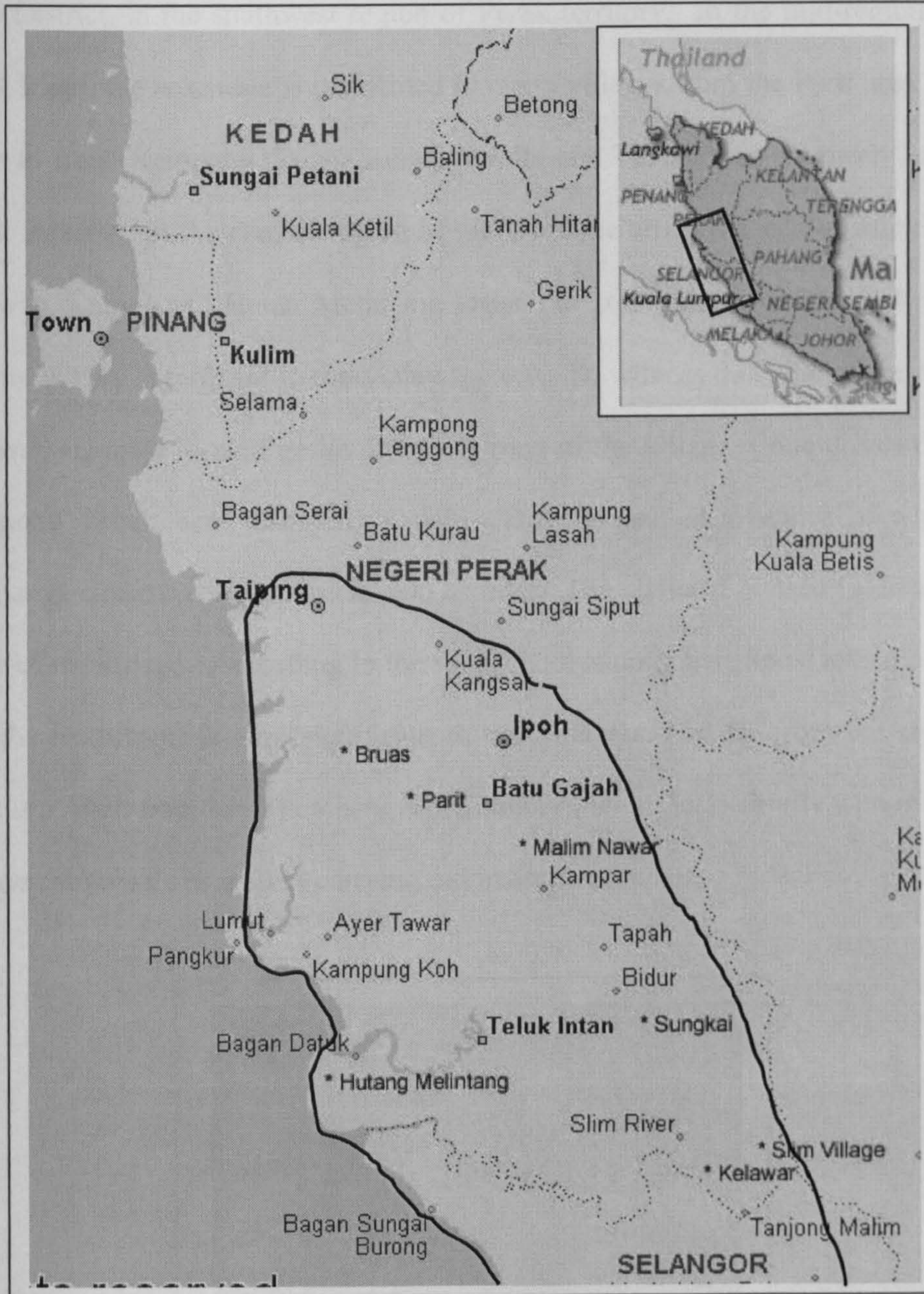
Tracing the areas where the Kompang Perak is widely practiced, based on the historical events that have been previously discussed, one can draw a generalization that it is mostly found in the areas of early settlement in the states of Perak and Selangor. Here, before the modern roads were built, rivers played the significant role in transporting people around the area. Consequently, the early major settlements were built along the main rivers which provided the water for living and agriculture as well for transporting goods to other places. Thus, in Perak, the early settlements of the Malay people were near the main rivers and their tributaries such as the Perak River, the Krian River, the Kinta River and also the Bernam River which divides Selangor from Perak. Generally, kompang playing in Perak is more popular among the Malay people in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas. This is because the instrument historically had strong roots in the rural areas and the people in these areas still hold strongly to their traditional culture and customs. Elsewhere, the Malay people in the urban areas have been more exposed to foreign cultures – mainly Western - which have led them to adopt some of the new elements and leave some of their traditional practices behind. Nevertheless, the

Kompang Perak is also performed in urban areas especially for social events such as cultural shows, greeting important guests and on other occasions.

In the southern part of Perak, the instrument can be found in the Tanjong Malim area, which includes Kampong Kelawar on the bend of the Bernam River and Slim Village on the Slim River which is a tributary of the Bernam River. Not far to the north, even though not so active, a few kompang troupes are also found in the Sungkai area. The Kompang troupe of Kampong Kelawar is a well-known troupe in the area and actively performs on many occasions around the Tanjong Malim area. This troupe receives many invitations to perform for various functions in its surrounding area. The troupe is headed by Encik Safuan, the *Tok Empat* (leader) of the village. It is mostly composed of mature players with a few younger players to provide continuation.

The same performance is also found in the Kampar area, specifically at Malim Nawar and Kampong Tualang Sekah, two traditional villages located about 30 miles to the south of Ipoh, the capital city of Perak. To the north of the state, the similar ensemble is performed as far as Kuala Kangsar district, and the Sayong and Bruas areas. Kuala Kangsar is a small old town located on the bend of the Perak River where the early Perak Sultanate was founded in the 16th century. Close to this area, to the north, a few kompang troupes are also found in Taiping district where the early tin deposits had attracted immigrants to settle here. However, in the northernmost area of Perak, close to the border with Kedah, no similar kompang

ensemble is practiced. This is probably because the northern part of Perak was influenced by the traditional performing arts from Kedah such as *tarian hadrah*⁵.



Map 6c: The region in which the Kompang Perak is performed

⁵ *Hadrah* is a type of drum ensemble to accompany a dance and song in which the text praises Prophet Muhammad. For more details, see page 107-108

The Kompang Perak is also very popular and widely performed by the Malay settlers along the Perak River and its valley from Kuala Kangsar to Teluk Intan District, in the southwest region of Perak territory. In the mid-region of the Perak River, the ensemble is performed in many villages from the Parit area further down to Bota, Kampong Gajah, Sungai Manik, and Teluk Intan (formerly know as Teluk Anson). In the coastal region of the state, the ensemble is also found in the Sitiawan, Lumut and Hutan Melintang areas. In some places in Perak, kompang playing is very significant to the Malay society. To witness this, one might observe a unique signpost located beside the main road of the village if one drives through Kampong Teluk, near Kampong Gajah. The signpost is a replica of a pair of kompangs constructed with bricks and cement. The signpost is used to display the name of the village. According to the villagers, this unique signpost tells the visitor that the instrument is very significant to the villagers. Not far from the signpost, there is a small traditional kompang workshop run by a Malay family who make the instrument for sale as well as carrying out instrument repairs.

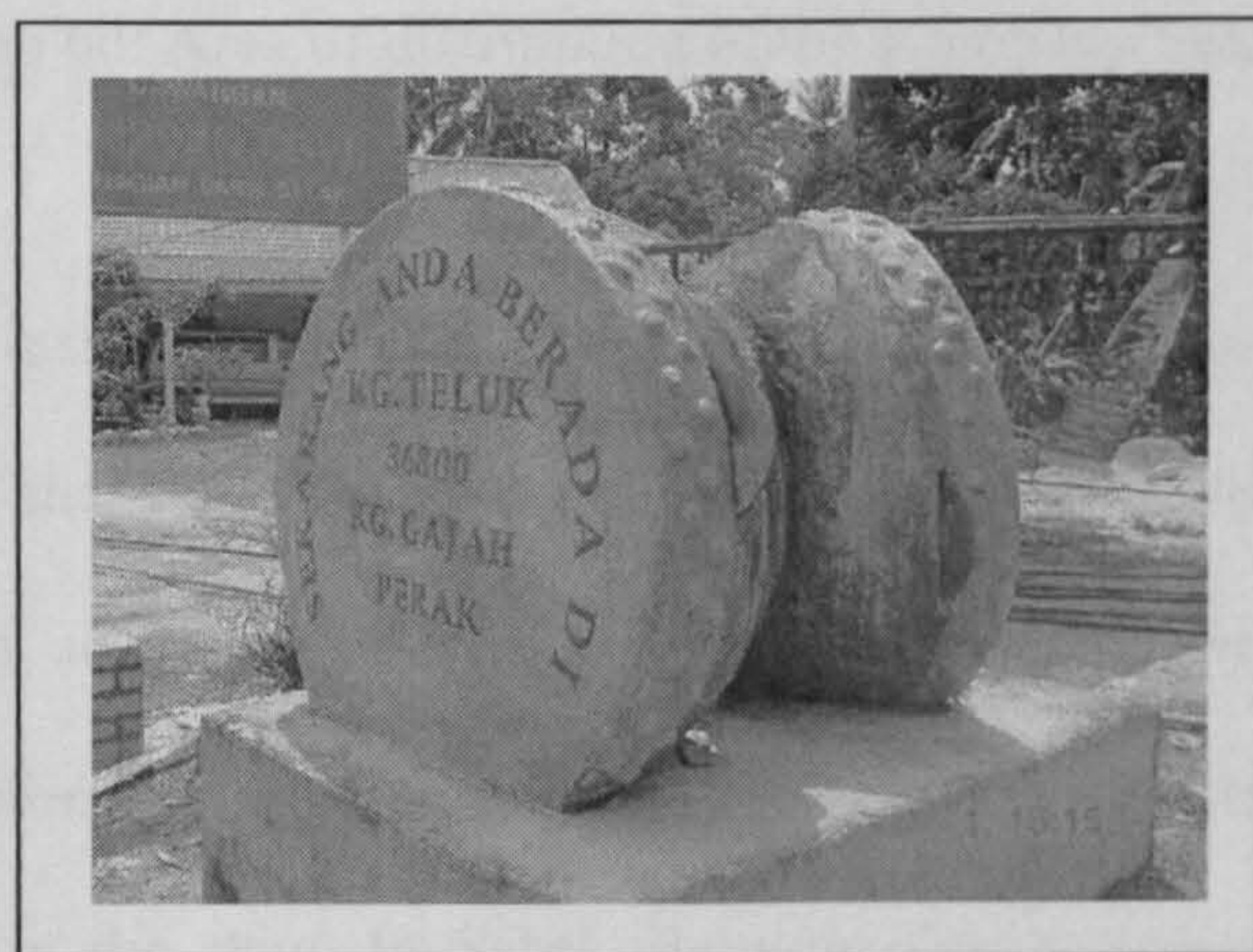
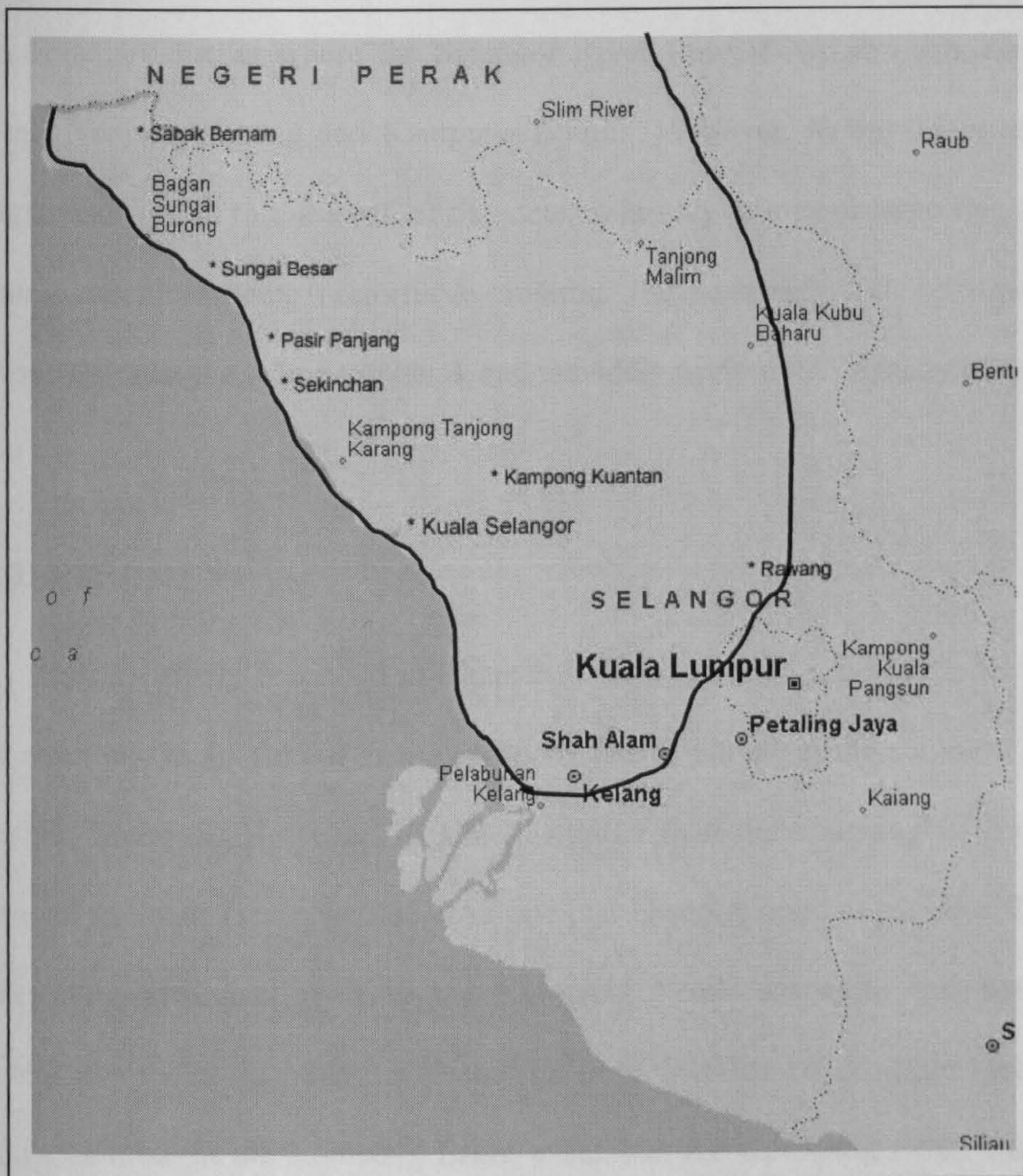


Plate 6a: A pair of kompang replicas used as a signpost at Kampong Teluk in Perak



Map 6d: Area of distribution of the Kompang Selangor

A similar instrument is used and ensemble performed in a few places in the northern part of the state of Selangor. As in Perak, the rivers played a very important role in accommodating the early settlement of Selangor. Thus, the ensemble was performed in the areas where the early settlements were founded near the major rivers in the state. In Sabak Bernam district, which is just across the southern border of Perak along the Bernam River, a few kompang troupes are found

at Sungai Besar, Kampong Bagan and Sekinchan. The ensemble is also found in Kuala Selangor district where the Selangor River flows down through Kampong Kuantan, Tanjong Karang and Kampong Buluh. However, in the urban areas of Selangor and further to the south of the state, it is very rare to observe this type of kompong ensemble being performed. Instead, the Kompong Ezhar ensemble is more popular than the Kompong Perak and is widely performed on many occasions.

THE INSTRUMENT

As extensively described in Chapter 3, the instrument used in the Kompong Perak ensemble looks similar to the kompong that is played in the southern part of Peninsular Malaysia. However, its size is smaller than the kompong with the red lace found in Johor (see page 233). As one can observe, another major difference between the instrument used in the Kompong Perak ensemble and the other kompong ensembles in Malaysia is that its head is made of cowhide instead of goatskin. Unlike in the Kompong Ezhar ensemble, the Kompong Perak ensemble consists of two types of kompong, which are called the *Kompong Tingkah* (see page 145) and the *Kompong Pembolong* (see page 147). These two types of kompong play different roles in the Kompong Perak ensemble.

THE PERFORMERS

Generally, the number of the players in a Kompong Perak ensemble is around ten to twenty people. However, some kompong troupes in Perak and Selangor consist of more than twenty players. The numbers of players in the

kompang troupes vary from one to another. This depends on the number of instruments available to the troupe and the availability of players in the village who can perform on the instrument. For instance, the kompang troupe of Kampong Kelawar, in the Tanjong Malim area, consists of nearly thirty players at a time, but the similar ensemble at Kampong Gajah, Perak, only has thirteen players. According to Zafuan, the leader of the Kompang troupe from Kampong Kelawar, the number of players in a troupe is not really important, ten to fifteen players is good enough, but more important is the quality of the players in the troupe. He explained that a small troupe which is made up of good players will perform better than a large group with many new players. This is mainly because the new players need to acquire good playing skills on the instrument. However, the more good players there are in a troupe, the better they can perform.

On the question of gender in the Kompang Perak ensemble, unlike the Kompang Ezhar and the Kompang Johor, it is very rare to observe female players in the Kompang Perak ensemble. From my observations at various places in Selangor and Perak, so far I have never come across female kompang players performing at traditional functions such as in wedding processions or *Khatam Quran*⁶. For this reason, it seems to me that the Kompang Perak ensemble is monopolized by the males, either young or mature players. However, I have recently discovered that there are a few newly formed kompang troupes, organized by institutions such as schools, colleges and government bodies in urban areas, which include some female players. Some of these troupes are mixed gender when they perform together in one

⁶ The completion of the learning of the Holy Koran. For more details, see 81.

group. Mostly, the players of the newly formed troupes are young as they are still at school or college of further education. However, these kompong troupes mainly perform for various social events such as greeting important guests, as well as for cultural shows, and are rarely involved in the more traditional functions⁷.

In contrast with the urban areas, in rural areas it is mostly adult and mature players who dominate the kompong troupes. According to Haji Zakaria, one of the reasons why it is mostly mature players who lead the kompong troupes is that they are more willing to take care of their culture than the younger generation. Moreover, kompong playing is used as one of the platforms for them to socialize in their community. Meanwhile, the younger generation have many social activities to be involved with in their peer group such as sports, clubs and youth activities⁸. However, young players are encouraged to join the troupes and play the easier parts of the ensemble from the beginning. This is how the skill of kompong playing is inherited by the next generation. In some places, some players may be as young as ten years old, but others may be in their seventies or older. The leader of the troupe is normally an experienced and skilful player who trains, leads and informally organizes the troupe. His leadership is highly respected by his team-mates as they always follow his instructions. One of the tasks that is performed by the leader of the troupe is to arrange the venue for the practice sessions as well as telling the players about the schedule of the sessions. He normally either provides the place to practice at his house or arranges another place for the practice sessions. Apart from

⁷ This issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

⁸ Interview with Haji Zakaria Abdul Rahman, a kompong teacher at Kampung Tersusun Teluk Memali, Kampung Gajah, Perak, on 23rd February 2003.

that, he also keeps all the instruments which are either his own or belong to the troupe, having been donated by individuals or organizations. However, a player who has an instrument of his own will bring it for practice and performance. Often, the leaders of the kompong troupe are also capable of repairing the instruments as well as making them.



Plate 6b: The mixed ages of the kompong players from kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak

The learning process of the Kompong Perak is similar to that of the Kompong Johor. Traditionally, the skill of kompong playing is transferred to the younger players by a rote method. As traditionally practiced in the Kompong Perak ensemble, there is no notation as such that is used to teach or to perform the kompong ensemble. Basically, new players just imitate what the experienced players play. They have to memorize all the rhythms and the *zikirs* in the repertoires. Some players, especially the younger ones who find it difficult to

memorize the wording of the Arabic texts sung with the kompang ensemble, can refer to the *Kitab Berzanji*. This leads to another problem, which is that not all of them, especially the younger players, are able to read the *Kitab Berzanji* in which the text is written in Arabic. For them, they have no choice except to try to memorize the texts or just to follow the singing of the others. If this happens, they will concentrate more on the kompang playing than on the singing part, which sometimes causes an imbalance between the sound of the kompang and the vocal part. However, in general, if the ensemble is performed by the mature players, they will also lay stress on the vocal part to make it sound balanced, as most of them can read the Arabic text even if they do not understand it.

THE PERFORMANCE

Generally, the roles of kompang playing in Perak and Selangor are similar to those of kompang playing in other areas of Peninsular Malaysia (see page 76). It is closely associated with many religious occasions such as wedding ceremonies, circumcision, celebrating the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, to herald childbirth and to accompany the recitation of the *zikir*. It is also now performed for many social functions including welcoming very important guests, cultural festivals, National Day, the opening ceremonies of functions and events, as well as to support a team in a sporting event.

In some places, especially in the central areas of Perak, namely the Kampong Gajah and Parit areas, the kompang playing are very significant in a

wedding ceremony. Some villagers in Kampong Gajah explained that even though it is not a must, a wedding ceremony is described as not being proper or complete without the presence of a kompong troupe. The kompong troupe is invited to perform during the *hari menggantung* (decorating days), which start three days before the actual wedding day at the bride's house. During the *hari menggantung*, close friends and neighbours as well as family members come to the bride's house to give a hand to anything from decorating the dais or cleaning the house to preparing the food for the ceremony. During this period, a kompong troupe performs their music to provide uplifting moments for the ceremony. The players normally perform in a sitting position with legs crossed in the living room or on the veranda outside the house. The performance normally takes place in the evening or at night. Mostly, the music performed in this function is to accompany the *zikirs* which are taken from the *kitab berzanji*. The same repertoire is also performed by the troupe in the *malam berinai* (the night before the wedding day). On this night, the bride has henna applied to her fingers by the *Mak Andam*⁹ and is blessed by family members and friends. The kompong troupe performs their music to accompany this tradition until late at night.

During the *hari mempelai* (the actual wedding day), the kompong troupe will perform in the *perarakan pengantin* (the wedding procession). The kompong players walk in a group beating the instruments in front of the bride and groom in the procession and are followed by the family members and friends who walk behind the bride. In some places, especially in the south of the state, this procession

⁹ A traditional beautician who also leads all the ritual events in the wedding ceremony.

is headed by the bride and the groom while the kompang troupe follows at the back. This performance will take about fifteen to thirty minutes depending on the distance of the procession has to walk. The procession will be started about a hundred to two hundred metres from the bride's house. The processors walk slowly toward the bride's house accompanied by the rhythms of the kompang, while other guests watch the ceremony. The kompang players end their performance as soon as the bride and groom are seated on the decorated dais and are ready for the next ritual¹⁰.



Plate 6c: A kompang performance in a wedding procession at Kampong Teluk Memali, Kampung Gajah, Perak, on 9 March 2003

On certain occasions, some of the kompang troupes in Perak and Selangor receive an amount of money as a payment after their performance. The amount paid to the kompang troupe depends on the type of the function and the organizer. For instance, for the wedding ceremony, a kompang troupe is paid about RM100 to RM150 (Malaysian Ringgit). But most of the kompang troupes performing in rural

¹⁰ For more details about the traditional wedding procession, please review the Video CD 1 track 10.

areas do not get any payment. They perform as a social obligation to their community. However, they do get some token of appreciation from the organizer of a function in the form of either a hamper or *bunga telur* (egg flowers)¹¹. In the Malay culture, performing the *kompang* or lending a hand at any function in the local society is not a way of getting money, as this task is considered to be a social service to the community. However, it is always the case that the *kompang* players will be served with food and drink by the host after the performance.

PERFORMING TECHNIQUES

Basically, the playing technique of the *Kompang Perak* is very similar to that of the other *kompang* ensembles in other areas. However, the *Kompang Perak* only adopts one of the holding techniques illustrated in Chapter 3 (see page 160). Unlike the other types of *kompang* playing in other areas, the instrument in the *Kompang Perak* ensemble is always placed on the palm of one hand, either left or right whichever is preferred, while the other hand is used to beat the drum (see Plate 6d). Just as with the other types of *kompang* ensemble, in the *Kompang Perak* the two timbres produced on the *kompang* are also known as *bum* and *pak*. It is interesting to note here that the similar technique used to beat the instrument is known by different terms in different places. For example, as described in Chapter 3, the timbre *bum* is produced by beating near the edge of the instrument's head with closed fingers. This is called *pukul kuncup* in Johor, but in the *Kompang Perak*

¹¹ A boiled egg is hung on a stem of a fake flower. The *bunga telur* is given to the guests as a present.

ensemble this technique is known as *pukul lentung*. Whereas the timbre *pak*, which is produced when beating the instrument with the open fingers at the middle of the head, is called *pukul kembang* in Johor, but it is known as *pukul cerang* in Perak. This is probably because, in the past, the Malay people from different places used many different dialects. As with the other types of *kompang* ensemble, the rhythm of the *Kompang Perak* is also composed from the combination of the *pukul lentung* (*bum*) and *pukul cerang* (*pak*).



Plate 6d: The holding technique of The *Kompang Perak*

In the *Kompang Perak* ensemble, all the rhythms played on the *kumpang* are used to accompany the melody part. Unlike the *Kompang Ezhar* and the *Kompang Johor*, there is no piece in the *Kompang Perak* ensemble that is performed without a vocal part. All the players sing the melody part of the ensemble in unison. Apart from the melody part, the rhythm of the *kumpang Perak* is composed from only three different parts, which also produce the interlocking rhythmic patterns. The three parts are known as the *pembolong*, *penyelang* and *peningkah*.

i. Pembolong

This part is also known as *pengikut* (follower). It is considered the easiest one among the three parts in the Kompong Perak ensemble. Normally, around ten to twenty players beat the basic rhythm, which is the combination of the timbres *bum* and *pak*. Younger people and inexperienced players normally play this part. They perform the basic rhythmic pattern into which the other parts interlock their rhythms.

ii. Penyelang

There is only one player who plays this part. The player uses the *kompong tingkah*, which is slightly bigger than the instrument used for the *pembolong* part. The role of this part is to alternate with the basic rhythm played by the *pembolong*. Its beat is like an imitation beat of the *pembolong* part but its notes comes just before the *pembolong* notes.

iii. Peningkah

Normally, only the leader of the kompong troupe plays this part. It is considered to be the most difficult part in the kompong ensemble. Because of its difficulty and the fact that only one player plays this part, it is considered to be an honour to play this part. The player who plays this part will lead the ensemble to begin, end or change the song in a performance. The main role of this part is to counter the

rhythm played by the *pembolong* and *penyelang*. Similar to the *penyelang*, the player who plays this part uses the *kompang tingkah* to produce a slightly different tone and a louder sound than the *pembolong*. This will make the sound produced by the *peningkah* contrast with the sound played by the other players and it can be heard clearly by the audience. In a *kompang* performance, the player who plays this part is always the centre of attention among the *kompang* players.

Sonically, it is curious that in this ensemble, two of the three parts are played by single performers, while all others playing the third, which must result to imbalance in sound. However, in the real performance, all the parts in this ensemble can be clearly heard by the audience. This is because all the parts perform different rhythms and interlock to each other. Moreover, the uses of the *kompang tingkah* to counter the rhythm make the ensemble sounds balance (see page 158).

THE REPERTOIRE

The *kompang* ensemble performed in Perak and Selangor has its own repertoire. Even though the performing techniques are similar from one troupe to another, the rhythms and songs performed by the *kompang* ensemble in Perak and Selangor are different from those of the other *kompang* ensembles in other areas. Furthermore, its musical form also differs with that performed in other areas. For that reason, it is essential to analyze all the types of *pukulan* in the repertoires of the *Kompang Perak* ensemble in order to fully understand its music. In so doing, I will

discuss this matter in three different aspects – the vocal part, the musical form and the rhythms performed in the Kompang Perak ensemble.

Vocal Part

The vocal part in the Kompang Perak's repertoire can be divided into three categories based on the language used for the wording of the songs. The categories are the *zikir* with Arabic text, the song with Malay text and the song which is a mixture of Arabic and Malay texts. As in other areas, all the *zikirs* with Arabic texts are taken from the *Kitab Berzanji*, the main source of the kompang repertoire. It is interesting to mention here that even though the same *zikir* is taken from the same source (the *Kitab Berzanji*) as the other types of kompang ensemble performed in other areas, it is sung with different melodies. For example, the melody of the *zikir* called "*Salallah*", sung by the Kompang Johor ensemble (Figure 6a), is sung in major mode and different from the melody of the same *zikir* sung by the Kompang Perak ensemble (Figure 6b), which is sung in minor mode. These two examples clearly demonstrate that the same *zikirs* taken from the same source are sung with different melodies in different parts of Peninsular Malaysia. In general, the songs with Arabic texts are sung at religious functions such as celebrating the birthday of Prophet Muhammad and the *Khatam Quran*. Apart from that, the songs with Arabic texts are also performed at other functions including wedding ceremonies and circumcisions. But it is very rare to observe these *zikirs* being performed at social functions such as cultural shows or opening ceremonies. This is because the songs

with Malay texts are more suitable and preferable for performance at these functions¹².



Figure 6a: Excerpt melody of the *Zikir Salallah* sung in the Kompang Johor ensemble



Figure 6b: Excerpt melody of the *Zikir Salallah* sung in the Kompang Perak ensemble

Altogether, there are about sixteen *zikirs* taken from the *Kitab Berzanji* performed with the kompang ensemble in Perak and Selangor (see Appendix 3). Every *zikir* is known by its own title. The title for every *zikir* is normally taken from the first word of the verse of the *zikir*. For example, the *zikir* entitled “*Alhamd*” is taken from the verse “*Alhamdulillah hillazi a’ttoni*”. All the *zikirs* in the repertoire have their own themes. Generally, the themes of the *zikirs* are

¹² Interview with Tarmizi Tukiman, a kompang player from Teluk Intan, Perak on 8 March 2003.

focused on praising the Prophet Muhammad, giving praise to Allah the Almighty, praising the greatness of the Holy Koran, giving moral advice, describing the endless period of the life after death, and other themes. The themes of the *zikirs* performed with the *kompang* ensemble in Malaysia are similar to the ones performed in Java, Indonesia, as described by Jaap Kunst below:

“Itinerant songsters reciting tales full of wise counsel, moral advice and depicting the punishments of hell; and further, in the hands of religious individuals who play on the frame drum as accompaniment to their hymns of praise, resembling our psalms” (Kunst, 1973:379).

Based on my observation, I found that most of the players do not understand the meaning of the *zikirs* because they do not speak Arabic. Moreover, according to an Arabic speaker, after listening to the recorded audio from my fieldwork of the *zikirs* sung by the *kompang* players, the pronunciation of the Arabic words were less accurate than they should have been and not so clear¹³. This had made the *zikirs* sung in the ensemble meaningless and not understandable. Some are able to read the Arabic text written in the *kitab berzanji* although without understanding the meaning of the text, but many of them cannot read the Arabic text at all. Those who cannot read the *kitab berzanji* have to memorize all the *zikirs* performed with the *kompang* ensemble. Generally, to perform a *zikir* with the *kompang* accompaniment will take about ten to fifteen minutes. This means that to perform all the *zikirs* in the repertoire will take about four to five hours of performance

¹³ The recorded audio of the *zikir* from my fieldwork was reviewed by Ustaz Rashid Hassan (who qualified as a *hadith* translator from the University of Al Azhar, Cairo) on 10 July 2002.

including the transitions between the *zikirs* and the break time. This can only be done in a sitting position, as the players will be more relaxed than when in the standing position or in procession.

Apart from the *zikirs*, there are also Malay texts that are sung with the *kompang* ensemble in Perak and Selangor. Even though the traditional *kompang* players in Perak and Selangor are considered to be more “protective” in keeping their traditional heritage in its original form than the *kompang* players from other areas, it was inevitable that they would have to accept the changes in its repertoire. As the *kompang* playing extended its functions and gained new roles in Malay society, many new songs were composed in the Malay text to be used in the new functions. They are performed especially for social functions such as greeting VIPs, processions on the National Day, in university convocations and other occasions. This is an innovation and has led to modifications to the repertoire of the *kompang* ensemble. Mostly, this new repertoire has been added since the 1950s¹⁴. Before this date, all the songs (*zikirs*) in their repertoire were in the Arabic text. Some of the songs were translated into the Malay language from the Arabic *zikirs* while others were newly composed in the Malay text. The reason for this is that the songs with the Malay wording are easy for all the players to understand and to memorize. Furthermore, the songs with the Malay wording are more effective for educating Malay listeners, especially in the aspects of religious issues and moral concerns. The lyrics for the Malay songs sung with the *kompang* ensemble are written according to

¹⁴ Interview with Safuan, aged 64, from Kampong Kelawar, Perak, on 25 April 2002. This information was also supplied by Haji Zakaria Abdul Rahman, aged 75, a *kompang* teacher at Kampung Tersusun Teluk Memali, Kampung Gajah, Perak, in an interview on 23 February 2003.

the function for which the *kompang* is being played. For example, the lyrics of the Malay songs performed in the wedding ceremony are mainly about the benefits of a wedded life, praying for the couple's everlasting happiness, and greeting the bride and groom as well as the guests. If the *kompang* is performed for a festival, such as National Day or *Eid Mubarak*¹⁵, the songs chosen are those with lyrics that suit that particular festival or function. This is to add joy to the occasion.

The third category of vocal part in the *Kompang Perak* ensemble is the song which is a combination between a *zikir* and a Malay song. There are several songs in this category, in which the first verse is a *zikir* in Arabic text and the second verse is a Malay text (see Figure 6c). In some places, such as at Kampong Kelawar, in the Tanjong Malim area, some of the songs in this category are composed with the Malay text in the first verse and the *zikir* in the second verse. These two verses are alternately repeated to the end of the song. A short rhythmic section is performed as the bridge between these two verses. This kind of song is performed just like a question and answer song.

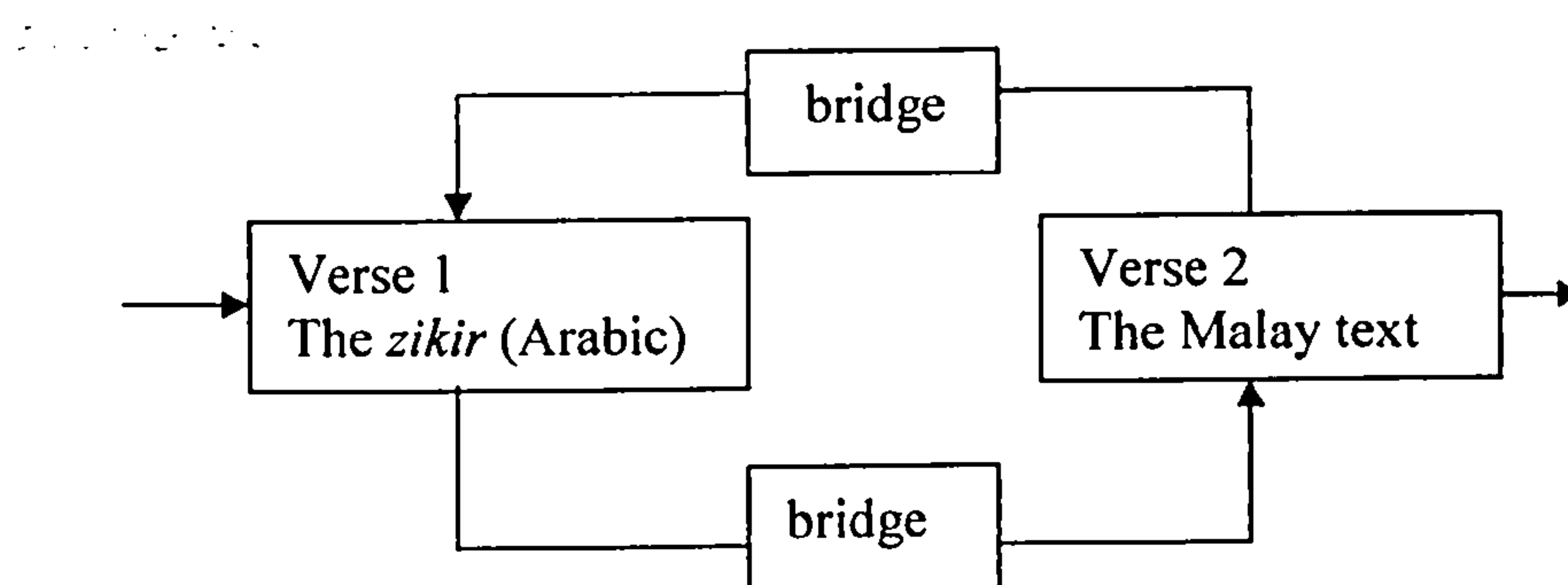


Figure 6c: Structural form of the vocal part with the Malay text and the *zikir* in the *Kompang Perak* ensemble

¹⁵ Islamic festival to celebrate the pilgrimage, starting from the 10th of Zulhijjah (a month in the Islamic calendar) every year.

Analyzing all the songs of the Kompang Perak repertoire in this category, it is found that the themes of the Malay texts were composed according to the function for which the kompang is being played. The *zikirs* of these combined songs are still taken from the traditional source – the *Kitab Berzanji*. For instance, the song called *Tabik Encik*, performed by the kompang troupe from Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, consists of a few verses of Malay text and the *zikir*. The theme of the Malay text is to greet the guests as well as to give advice and guidance to the audience. But the *zikir* section, which is called *Alhamd*, is taken from the *Kitab Berzanji*. Unlike the *zikir* section, the Malay text is not written or published in any book but it is memorized by all the players. However, some of the new younger players now write the wording of the song in their notebook so that they can refer to it later. The wording of the Malay text is sometimes different from one kompang troupe to another. This is because most of the troupes have composed their own wording for various functions or have inherited it from past players. Obviously, this type of vocal part is a modification of the original repertoire from the *Kitab Berzanji*. No one knows for sure when this type of vocal part was developed since there are no documents available on the subject. However, according to Haji Zakaria, the kompang teacher of Kampong Gajah, Perak, this type of vocal part was composed more than fifty years ago. Haji Zakaria remembered being told this by his grandfather. This was probably part of the effort to “Malayize” the Arabic culture by the local people.

The Musical Form

The komping ensemble performed in Perak and Selangor still retains its own musical form. This form is also used for newly composed songs. There is only one musical form used in the Komping Perak ensemble (see Figure 6d) and its music is always performed in the same structure. In the Komping Perak ensemble, technically every piece is composed of six different sections. Generally, every piece of the repertoire always starts with the vocal part. In the first section, the leader of the komping troupe will sing the first word of the first verse to indicate the key of the song. This is followed by all the komping players singing this verse as soon as their leader has finished the first word of the lyric. All the songs are sung in unison. One might notice that maybe a few players sing the songs with slightly different pitches. This does not mean that the song is sung in different parts, but is simply because some of the players cannot sing very well in the same key¹⁶.

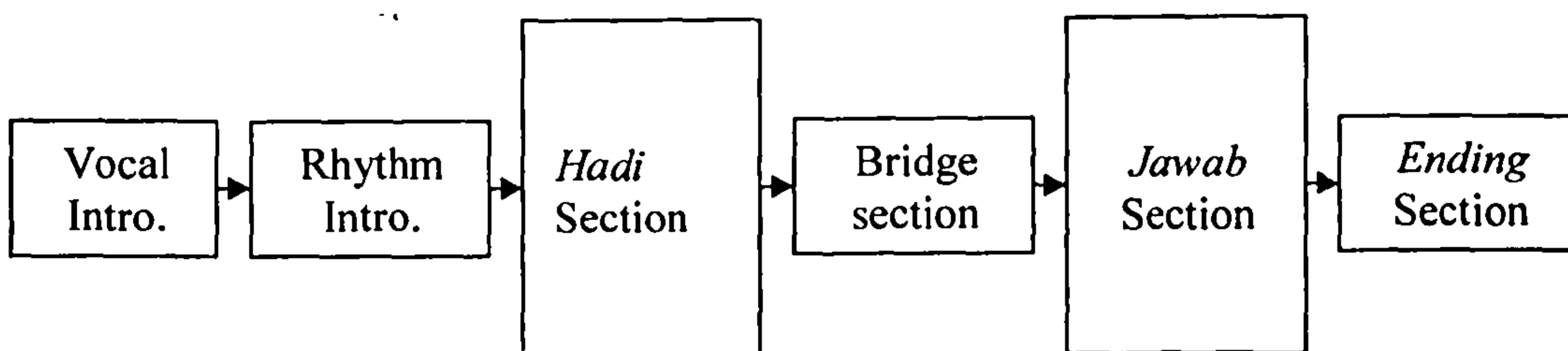


Figure 6d: Musical form of the Komping Perak ensemble

¹⁶ Interview with Haji Zakaria Abdul Rahman, a komping teacher at Kampung Tersusun Teluk Memali, Kampung Gajah, Perak, on 23 February 2003.

The instruments are beaten at the end of the first verse of the song in the second section of the piece. This is a short introduction to the rhythmic section. The rhythmic pattern played in this section is called the *Pukulan Mula* (introduction beat). This beat is performed to introduce the whole beat (*pukulan*) used to accompany the song. Every beat in the Kompang Perak's repertoire has the same rhythmic pattern as the *Pukulan Mula* (see figure 6e).

Figure 6e: Excerpt transcription of the *Pukulan Mula* from *Zikir Sallallah*

The main section of the form is called the *Hadi* section. It is the section where the *zikir* or the lyric of the song taken from the *Kitab Berzanji* is performed. The first verse of the *zikir*, or a song that was sung unaccompanied earlier, is repeated again in this section with the kompang accompaniment. This section is like a question section where the theme of the *zikir* or song is performed. The verse of the *zikir* in this section is called the *Hadi*. For that reason, the beat used to accompany the *zikir* in this section is called the *Pukulan Hadi*. Basically, every *Pukulan Hadi* performed in this section has a similar rhythmic pattern or there is a

slight modification to the rhythmic pattern from one to another (see Figure 6j, and Figure 6l).

There is another short rhythmic section functioning as a bridge between two main sections of the verse of the song. In the Selangor area and the southern part of Perak, the beat performed in this section is called the Pukulan Tukar Lagu (changing song beat). However, I found that the similar beat performed in this section is known as the Pukulan Menurun (descending beat) in the Kampong Gajah and Perak River valley areas in the state of Perak. The Pukulan Tukar Lagu gives a transition time and cue to the players to proceed to the next section of the piece. As with the Pukulan Mula, the same rhythmic pattern of the Pukulan Tukar Lagu is used in different beats to accompany different *zikirs* (see Figure 6f).

The image shows a musical score for the 'Pukulan Tukar Lagu' section. It consists of four staves: Vocal, Pelalu, Penyilang, and Peningkah. The Vocal staff is a treble clef with a single note on a whole rest. The Pelalu staff has a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with 'pak' and 'Bum' labels. The Penyilang staff has a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with 'pak' and 'Bum' labels. The Peningkah staff has a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with 'pak' and 'Bum' labels. The score is written in a 2/4 time signature and spans two measures.

Figure 6f: The Pukulan Tukar Lagu

The second main section of the *zikir* or song is called the *Jawab* (answer) section. This section is like an answer to the *Hadi* section, in that the melody and the lyric are different from the *Hadi* section. Some songs in this section are sung in

the Malay language, while the *Hadi* section is sung in Arabic. The beat used to accompany this section is called the *Pukulan Jawab* (answer beat). The rhythmic pattern in this section is different from the *Pukulan Hadi*. Finally, the piece ends with the *Pukulan Mati* (ending beat). This is a short rhythmic pattern, which is played as a coda to the piece (see figure 6g). The leader of the troupe normally gives a cue by lifting up his instrument a measure before the *Pukulan Mati*.

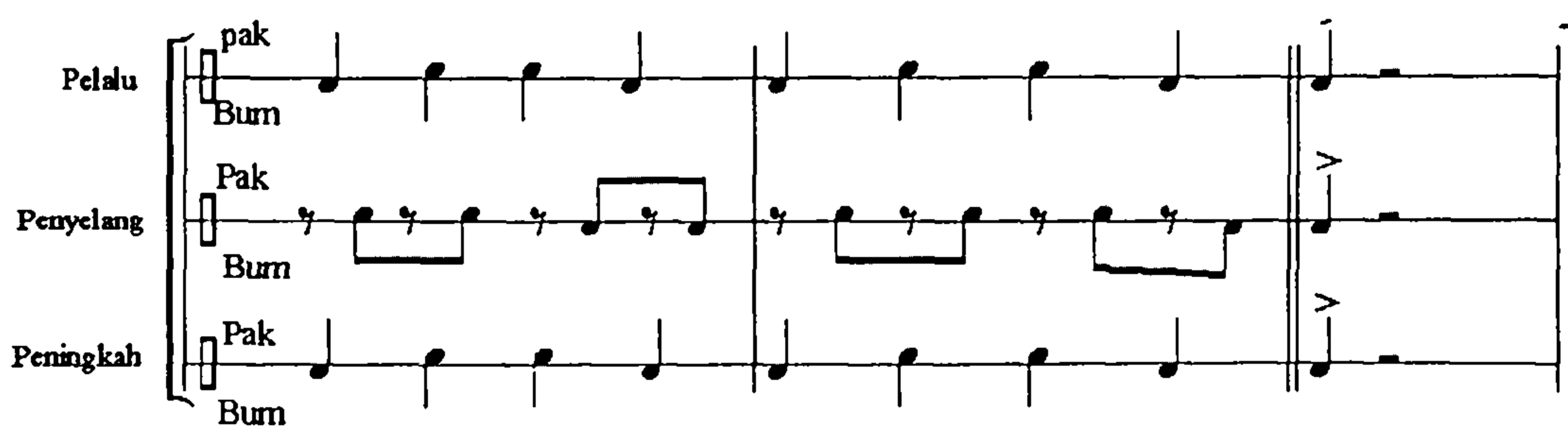


Figure 6g: The *Pukulan Mati*

Most of the *zikirs* in the Kompang Perak repertoire have many sections of the *Hadi* and the *Jawab*. For example, in a *zikir* called *Falakam*, there are eight *Hadi* and eight *Jawab* sections, which are sung alternately to the end of the *zikir*. The *Hadi* section is repeated many times with the same melody but sometimes with a different verse of lyrics. This is also similar to the *Jawab* section, which is the repetition of the same melody but with a different verse of lyrics. In this case, the *Pukulan Hadi* and the *Pukulan Jawab* are repeated alternately to the end of the piece. The *Pukulan Tukar Lagu* is played repeatedly as the bridge between these two sections. In Perak, the *Pukulan Tukar Lagu*, used to play the bridge before the section is cycled back to the *Hadi* section, is known as the *Pukulan Menaik*

(ascending beat). However, the rhythmic pattern of the beat is still the same as the *Pukulan Menurun*.

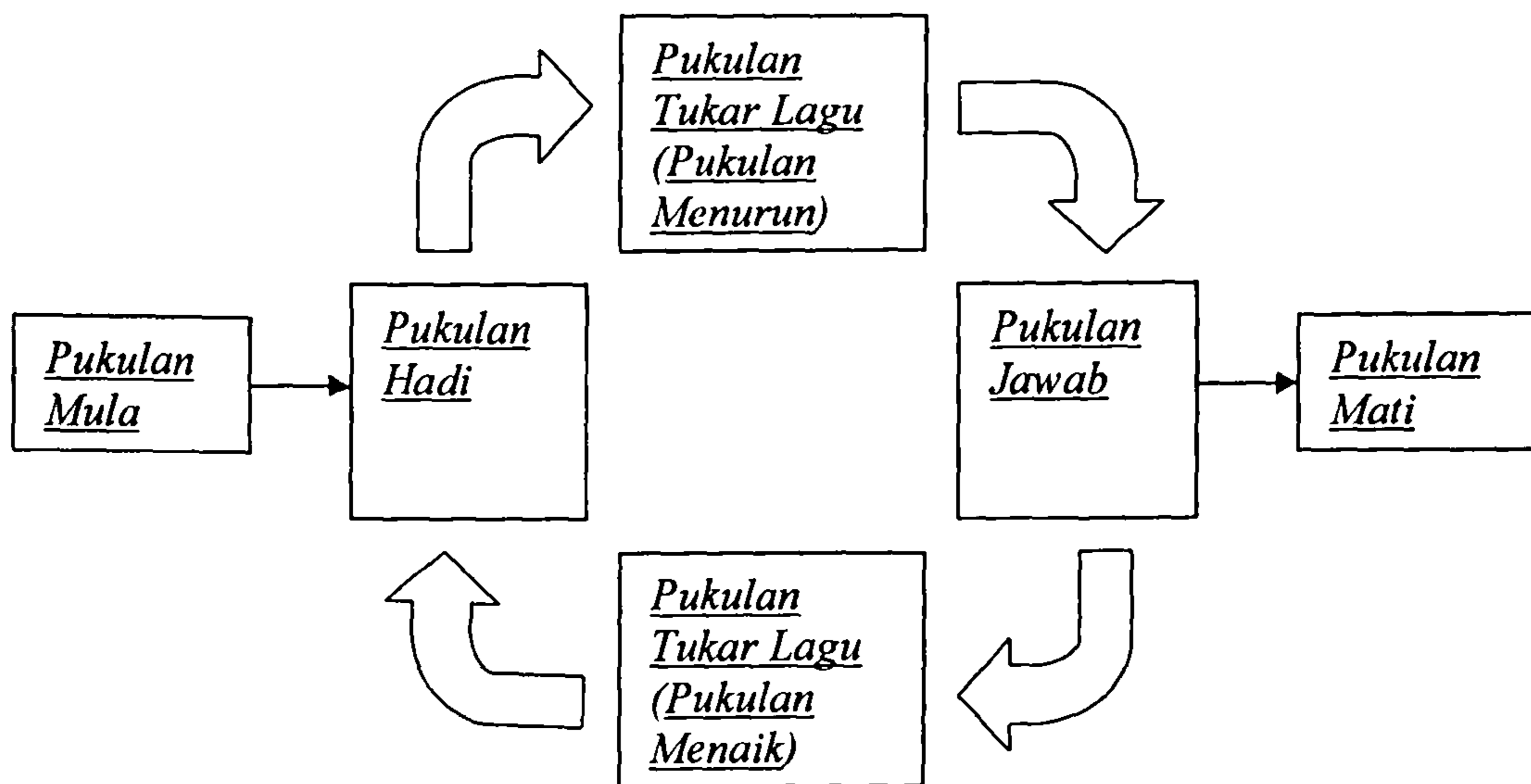


Figure 6h: The cyclic musical form of the Kompang Perak ensemble

The Rhythmic Structure

There are only three common beats (the *pukulans*) used to accompany all the repertoires in the Kompang Perak ensemble. Namely, the beats are known as the *Pukulan Hadrah*, the *Pukulan Sariful Anam*, and the *Pukulan Kencat*. All the *pukulans* are normally performed in common time (quadruple metre) to suit the rhythm of the songs sung in the performance. All of the *pukulans* mentioned above share a similar *Hadi* section and they are performed in a similar structure.

Pukulan Hadrah

Referring to the name of the beat – the *Pukulan Hadrah*, one might notice that it is also a type of beat in the Kompong Ezhar's repertoire (see page 202). Accordingly, this will suggest the beats from two different types of kompong ensemble must have some sort of connection between them. However, analyzing the structural form and the rhythmic patterns of both *pukulans*, it is found that there are many differences between them. The two *pukulans* are orchestrated from a different number of parts and different sections of the beat. However, the first part (the *Pelalu* part), which plays the main rhythm of the both *pukulans*, performs the same rhythmic pattern. This give a great effect to the whole beat which makes the two *pukulans* sound comparable. As previously argued in Chapter 4, the *Pukulan Hadrah* of the Kompong Ezhar (see page 202) was probably adapted, with some modifications, from the *Pukulan Hadrah* of the Kompong Perak.

The *Pukulan Hadrah* of the Kompong Perak is mainly used to accompany *zikirs* with a fast tempo, such as *Zikir Khairuman*, in a wedding procession. Normally, it is started in a slow and steady tempo but it gradually gets faster and livelier towards the end of the piece¹⁷. This *pukulan* is composed of three different parts (*Pelalu*, *Penyilang* and *Peningkah*), and it is performed in five different sections apart from the vocal introduction (see Figure 6i). As previously mentioned, just like the other types of *pukulan* in the Kompong Perak's repertoire, this *pukulan* also starts with the *Pukulan Mula* (see Figure 6e).

¹⁷ See Video CD 1, track 10. This is a short video clip showing the *Pukulan Hadrah* performed in a traditional wedding procession at Kampong Tersusun, Teluk Memali, Kampong Gajah, Perak, on 9 March 2003.

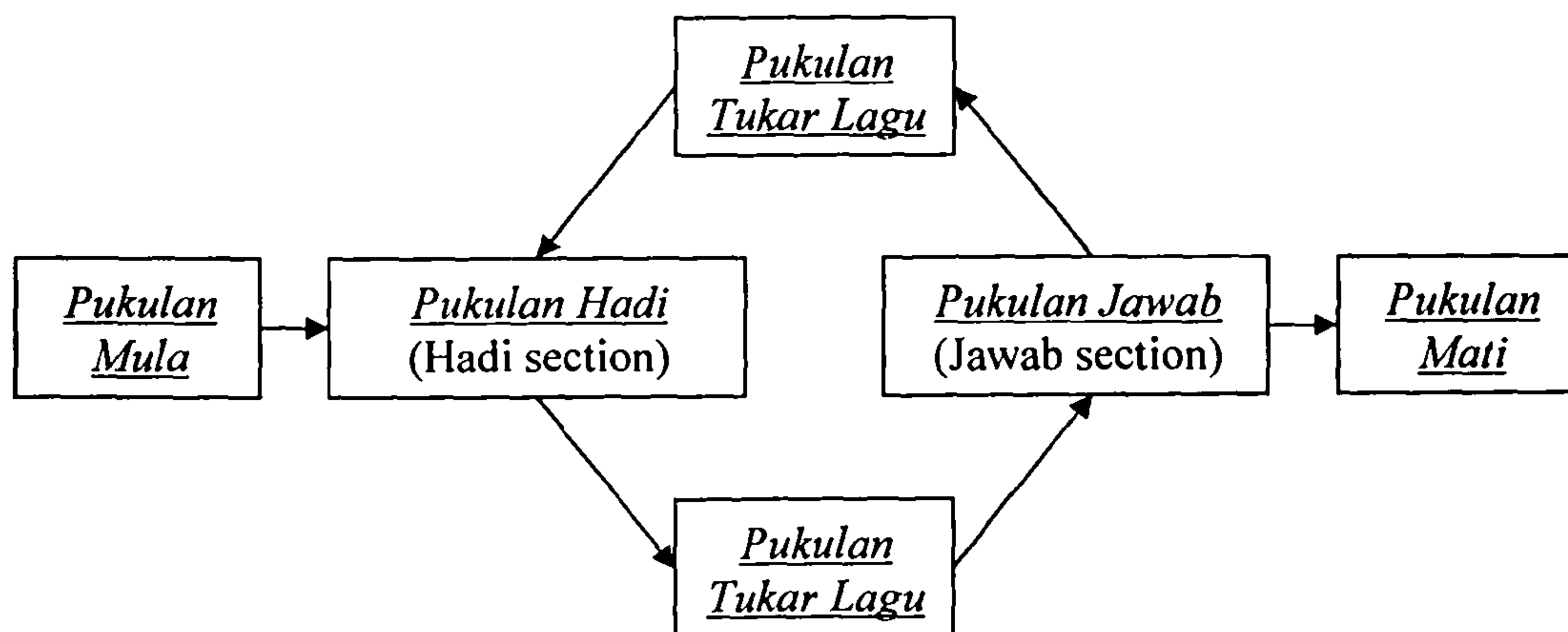


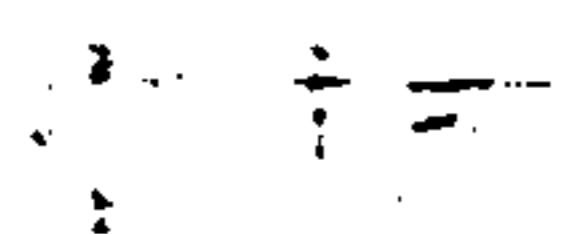
Figure 6i: Structural Form of the *Pukulan Hadrah*

The next section of the *Pukulan Hadrah* continues with the *Pukulan Hadi* in the *Hadi* section where the vocal part is accompanied. Comparing the *Hadi* section of the *Pukulan Hadrah* with other *Hadi* sections in other types of *pukulan*, the rhythmic pattern of this section is roughly similar, although in the *Pukulan Hadrah*, the rhythm is slightly modified. The modification occurs in the *peningkah* part, where the pulse of the rhythm is performed all the time. The *pelalu* part and the *penyelang* parts are still the same as in the other *Hadi* sections (see Figure 6j). In many parts of Selangor, this type of *pukulan* is also identified as six *lentung* and four *cerang* (6 *bum*, 4 *pak*)¹⁸. These terms are used based on the *Pelalu* part, which plays the basic rhythm. In this part, the players perform the timbre *bum* six times and the timbre *pak* four times in rotation to accompany the vocal part in the *Hadi* section (see Figure 6j).

¹⁸ In some places, especially in the state of Selangor, the term *lentung* is used to replace the timbre *bum* and *cerang* is used for timbre *pak*.

Pukulan Sariful Anam

Another type of the beat used to accompany many pieces in the Kompong Perak's repertoire is called the *Pukulan Sariful Anam*. This beat is used to accompany the *zikirs* with a slow and steady tempo such as *Zikir Sallallah* in the procession on the birthday of Prophet Muhammad or in other religious functions. It is also performed sitting with the legs crossed in the *Malam Berinai*. The structural form of the *Pukulan Sariful Anam* is absolutely the same as the *Pukulan Hadrah* (see Figure 6i). However, the rhythmic pattern in its two main sections – the *Hadi* and the *Jawab* sections - are different. In the *Hadi* section, two of the parts – *Pelalu* and *Peningkah* - play the same rhythmic pattern while the *Penyilang* part interlocks the rhythm that is performed by the other parts. Similarly to the *Hadi* part in the *Pukulan Hadrah*, the *Pelalu* part of the *Pukulan Sariful Anam* performs six *lentung* and four *cerang* (6 *bum*, 4 *pak*) in rotation to accompany the vocal part (see Figure 6j).



♩ = 118

Zikir
Sallal - lah hu - a - lai Muham - mad Sallal - lah hu - a -

Pelalu
Pak
Bum

Periyelang
Pak
Bum

Peringkah
Pak
Bum

7
lai wa - sal - lam Sal - lal - lah hu - a - lai - Mu - ham - mad

13
Sal - lal - lah hu - a - lai - wa - sal - lam ya - na

Figure 61: Excerpt transcription of the *Hadi* section of the *Pukulan Sariful Anam* from the *Zikir Sallallah*¹⁹

The rhythmic patterns of the *Jawab* section of the *Pukulan Sariful Anam* are different from the *Hadi* section. The *Pelalu* part plays the main rhythmic pattern, which is mainly one note with the timbre *bum* and four notes with the timbre *pak* (1 *bum*, 4 *pak*). This beat is also known as one *lentung* and four *cerang*. The

¹⁹ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 15.

Penyilang part in this *pukulan* still functions as the counter part playing mostly on the up beat of the rhythm. Meanwhile, the *Peningkah* part plays the same rhythm as the *Pelalu* part, but sometimes plays ornamentation notes to give variation to the rhythm. The ornamentation notes, such as triplets, added by the *Peningkah* in this section are not specifically arranged, but it is up to the creativity of the *Peningkah* players. This means that different players who play the *Peningkah* part might play with different rhythmic ornamentations in different performances.

It is also important to note here that in the case of the *Pukulan Sariful Anam* performed by the *kompang* troupe from Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak, the *Hadi* section of the *pukulan* is also used to accompany a *zikir* called *Bishahri*.²⁰ In other words, the *Pukulan Sariful Anam* is used to accompany two different *zikirs* in a performance where the *Hadi* section of the *pukulan* is used to accompany *Zikir Salallah* and the *Jawab* section is used to accompany *Zikir Bishahri*. When I asked the players about this situation, they explained to me that it is common for them to combine two *zikirs* in one performance. As described earlier, they also combine a *zikir* and phrases of Malay texts in one piece accompanied by one type of the *pukulan*; although, in some performances, they also perform only one *zikir* without any combination with other *zikirs* or songs, depending on the function they are performing for. Normally, the captain of the troupe will decide what kind of *zikirs* and songs from their repertoire will be performed and the players will go along with their captain's choice.

²⁰ The *zikir* was taken from page 12 of the *Kitab Berzanji*. See Appendix 3.

♩ = 124

Zikir
Bi-shah - ri ro - bi - i - kod Ba - da

Pelalu
Pak
Bum

Penyilang
Pak
Bum

Peningkah
Pak
Pak

6
6 nu ru - hul - ar - la Fa - ya - ha - ba - za - bad -

12
12 ro Bi za - ka lih - ma - yuj - la

Figure 6m: Excerpt transcription of the *Jawab* section of the *Pukulan Sariful Anam* from the *Zikir Bishahri*²¹

Pukulan Kencat

The *Pukulan Kencat* is another type of beat used to accompany *zikirs* and songs in the *Kompang Perak*'s repertoire. In some places in Perak, this *pukulan* is

²¹ Listen to Audio CD 1, track 16.

also known as *kencat selapis* or *ketimbun*. Occasionally, some players pronounce this beat as *gencat*, probably because of their different dialect. In general the Malay term *gencat* means cease or stop. This term is used for this beat probably because in the second section of the beat it makes a sudden stop and loops back to the first rhythmic pattern. Unlike other beats, the structural form of this beat consists of three main sections apart from the introduction, bridges and ending sections. The main section starts with the *Hadi* section, similarly to the other beats, but it adds another section in-between the *Hadi* and the *Jawab* sections. This section is called the *Kencat* and it has a different rhythmic pattern.

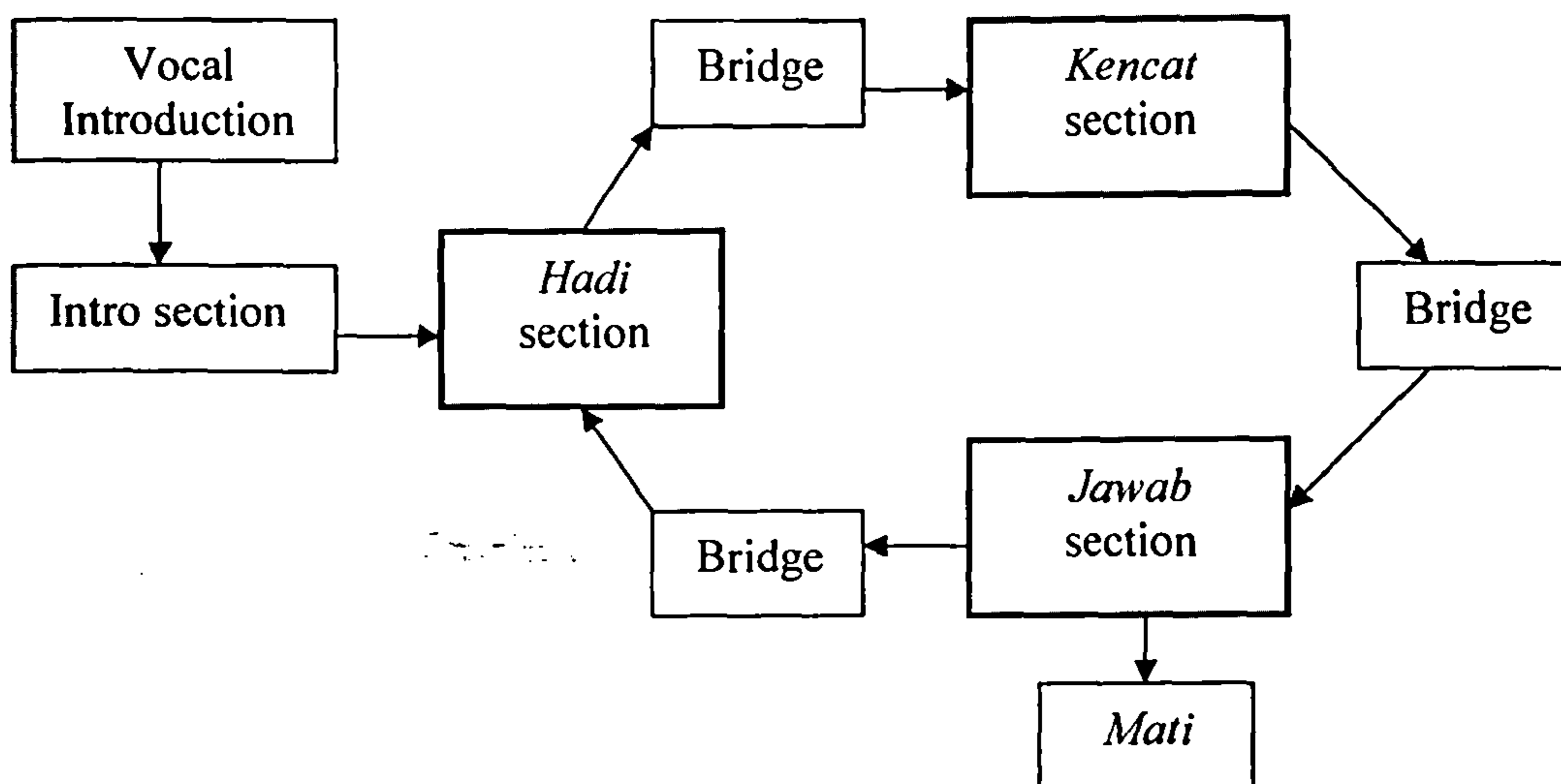


Figure 6n: Structural form of the *Pukulan Kencat*

The rhythm of the *Hadi* section in this beat is similar to that of the other *Hadi* sections in other *pukulans* (see Figure 6m). The *Jawab* section is also similar to the *Jawab* section in other beats. The only difference in the *Pukulan Kencat* is in

the second section, which is the *Kencat* section. In this section, the same melody and lyric of the first verse of the song/*zikir* is repeated again but it is accompanied with a different rhythmic pattern. This structural form is repeated many times until the end of the *zikir*, which ends with the *Pukulan Mati* after the *Jawab* section.

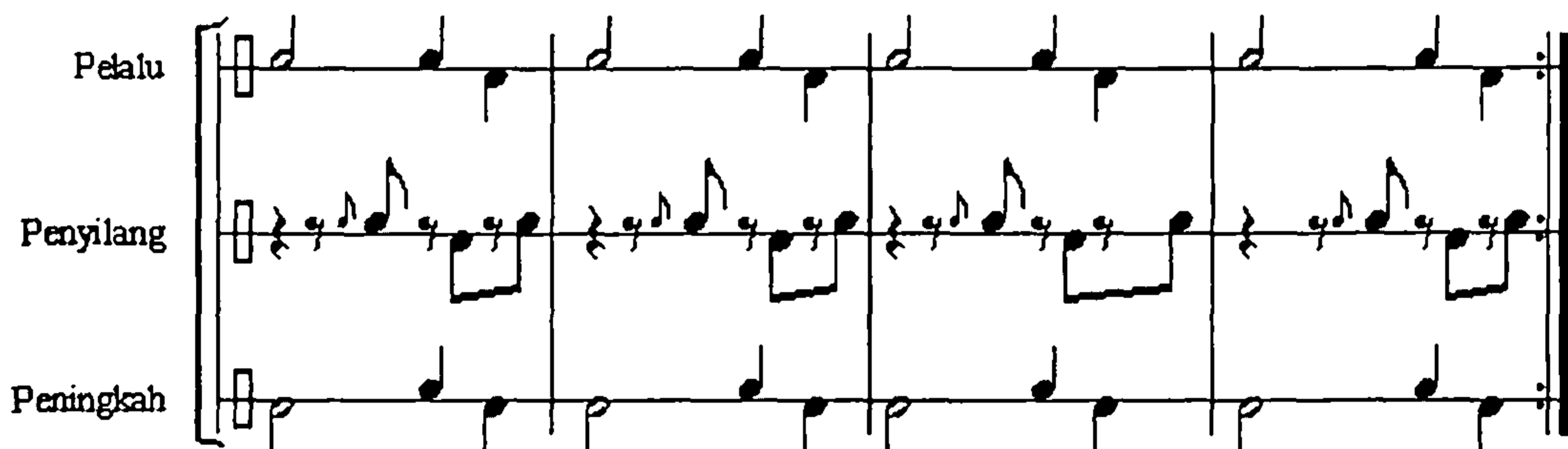


Figure 6p: The *Pukulan Kencat*

The following transcription is the example of the *Zikir Alhamd* accompanied by the full *Pukulan Kencat*. This piece is introduced by the vocal part from measure 1 to measure 3. As one can see in the vocal part of the piece, it starts with an anacrusis rhythmic pattern. This is because almost all Malay words are normally accented at the second or third syllable of the word. As with the other pieces, the rhythmic accompaniment starts with the *Pukulan Mula*, which is performed from measure 3 to measure 4. The *Hadi* section of the piece is played from measure 5 to measure 18. Unlike the other pieces, the *Hadi* section of this piece uses the Malay language. The melody and the lyric in this section were composed by members of the troupe. Meanwhile, the *Jawab* section is sung in Arabic, which is the *Zikir Alhamd* taken from the *Kitab Berzanji*. A short bridge is added from measure 19 to measure 20 just before the next section.

Measure number	Section/ <u>Pukulan</u>	Description
1 - 3	Vocal introduction	The Malay lyric composed by the troupe.
3 - 4	The <u>Pukulan Mula</u>	Introduction to the rhythm.
5 - 18	<i>Hadi</i> section / The <u>Pukulan Hadi</u>	A verse of the newly-composed Malay song.
19 - 20	<u>The Pukulan Tukar Lagu</u>	Transition between two main sections.
21 - 34	<i>Kencat</i> section/The <u>Pukulan Kencat</u>	Same verse of the <i>Hadi</i> section is repeated.
35 - 36	<u>The Pukulan Tukar Lagu</u>	Transition between two main sections
37 - 50	<i>Jawab</i> section/The <u>Pukulan Jawab</u>	<i>Zikir Alhamd</i> taken from the <i>Kitab Berzanji</i> sung in Arabic.
51 - 53	<i>Ending</i> section/ The <u>Pukulan Mati</u>	Ending rhythm.

Table 6a: Analysis of structural form of the *Zikir Alhamd*, performed by the kompong troupe of Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak

The same verse of melody is repeated in the *Kencat* section, which can be observed from measure 21 to measure 34. This repetition is accompanied with the Pukulan Kencat. The *Jawab* section is the third main section of this piece, which is the *Zikir Alhamd*. Similarly to *Jawab* sections in other pieces, this section is accompanied with the Pukulan Jawab as can be seen from measure 37 to measure 50. This structural form is cycled back to the *Hadi* section with the Pukulan Tukar Lagu played as the bridge between all the sections to the end of the piece. Finally, this piece ends with the Pukulan Mati from measure 51 to measure 53.

♩ = 124

1 2 3 4 5

Zikir
Salah dan si - lap ha - rap ma - af kan Ta - bik en - cik ta - bik -

Pelalu

Penyilang

Peningkah

6 7 8 9 10 11

lah tu - an A - dik ser - ta i - bu ba - pa se - ka - lian

12 13 14 15 16 17

Ka - mi ber - ma - in ber - ka - wan ka - wan Sa - lah dan si lep - ha - rap

18 19 20 21 22 23

ma - af kan Ta - bik en - cik ta - bik - lah tu - an

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 124 beats per minute. It features a vocal line (Zikir) and three instrumental lines (Pelalu, Penyilang, and Peningkah). The lyrics are in Indonesian and consist of a series of phrases and a chorus. The score is divided into four systems, each containing six measures. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

24 25 26 27 28 29

A - dik ser - ta I - bu ba - pa se - ka - lian Ka - mi ber - ma - in ber ka -

30 31 32 33 34 35

wan ka wan Sa - lah dan si - lap ha - rap ma - af kan

36 37 38 39 40 41

Al - ham - du - lil - lah Hil - la - zi

42 43 44 45 46 47

a' - tho - ni Ha - zal rhu - la - ma

The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece with a three-part instrumental accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It consists of six measures, numbered 48 to 53. The lyrics are 'Tho-yi - bal' under measures 48-49 and 'ar - da - ni' under measures 50-51. The instrumental accompaniment consists of three staves: a top staff with a treble clef, a middle staff with a treble clef, and a bottom staff with a bass clef. The accompaniment features a steady rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final measure (53).

Figure 6q: Transcription of *Zikir Alhamd* accompanied with the *Pukulan Kencat* by the Kompang Troupe from Kampong Kelawar, Tanjong Malim, Perak²²

Presumably, these three types of *pukulan* in the Kompang Perak ensemble are quite enough to accompany all the *zikirs* in their repertoire. No noticeable changes or modifications have been made by the traditionally-minded players to these precious repertoires as they are very concerned about the originality and authenticity of the kompang music that they will pass down to the younger generation. But, no matter how these three types of *pukulan* are “protected” and preserved by the traditional kompang players in Perak, the cultural legacy of kompang playing is still not totally free from being modified by contemporary users. The next chapter will discuss at length how the kompang and its music are being exploited, and changes are being made to some of its traditional elements, to suit the tastes of contemporary users and audiences.

²² Listen to Audio CD I, track 17.

CHAPTER 7

THE KOMPANG IN CHANGING MALAY SOCIETY

The current trend in musical preference among Malaysians, especially the younger generation, is toward more contemporary music. Modern technology has encouraged a close connection between Malaysian culture and the western world. Adoption of western culture has enhanced the influx of western music into Malaysia. Bruno Nettl (1985:3) wrote that,

“In most places, the introduction of Western music goes back a few hundred years, but its imposition became vastly more intensive in the twentieth century. Virtually all of the world’s people have been exposed to masses, hymns, marches, rock and roll, waltzes, and jazz; to violins, pianos, guitars; to chords, notated music books, records, radio; to orchestras, bands, choruses; even to opera and oratorio, Monteverdi and Schoenberg. In different ways, at various rates of speed, and with varying enthusiasm, they have accepted this music, and one may hear it, performed with great or moderate expertise, and feel that everywhere, it has to some extent been accepted by the people as their own.”

As Nettl writes that “it has to some extent been accepted by the people as their own”, Western music, especially popular genres, is now preferred to Malaysian traditional music among the Malay people. Moreover, western music also dominates the entertainment mediums such as television, radio, and recorded as well as live performances. Malaysian traditional music including the kompang ensemble is only performed on a few occasions such as at religious functions, cultural shows, and

traditional events or outside the urbanized areas. Some people treat it as “second-class” music.

The association of the kompong ensemble with the Malay culture and religious functions has been very significant. Kompong ensembles still retain their traditional style of playing as well as their roles in Malay society in Peninsular Malaysia. However, the acculturation process that has been taking place in Malay society since the colonization by Western powers especially during the British period (1824-1957) has changed the musical preference among some of the Malay people. Some people, mainly from urban areas have a high regard for the Western-influenced musical genres. The kompong ensemble, being described as belonging to Malay traditional music¹, has been manipulated by some contemporary composers and performers in their recent works to suit the taste of their audience. In this case, the commercial value is of more concern than the preserving of traditional heritage². In this chapter, I will discuss how the instrument and its traditional playing style have been manipulated and have given it a new way of performing in contemporary music. In addition, I will present interviews with contemporary users as well as well-known composers who manipulate this element which will help to give a better understanding of how and why they have made these changes. Opinions from traditional kompong players and audiences about the changes in kompong playing were also sought in order to understand their perception of the changes. Finally, I will discuss the clash of social values which has resulted from western influence and

² Interview with Manan Ngah on 18/2/2003.

which have played a role in the changing perception of kompang playing among the modernist group in Malaysia.

THE KOMPANG IN CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE

Contemporarily, the kompang is used by many people including dancers, performers, players, and composers in many ways and for various purposes. The instrument either still retains its traditional style of playing or has been modified to suit the need of contemporary users. In Malay dance, it is very common to see the dancers appear in performances with hand-held props such as scarf, *tudung saji*³, candle, saucers, umbrella, paper-flip fan, coconut shell or hand-held musical instruments such as tambourine and kompang. In cultural shows, sometimes the dancers use a kompang as a prop in their choreographic movement instead of playing them in the traditional way. The dancers might beat the instrument a few times while gracefully dancing with the instruments. In this case, the instrument is no longer functioning in its traditional role but as a tool or prop in the dance.⁴ Often, this type of dance is performed in cultural events and five-star hotels for tourism purposes.

³ The *tudung saji* is literally a food cover made from screw pine leaves and woven into attractive patterns.

⁴ For example, see Video CD II, track 1, The Asian Drum Festival, Bangkok, 2002.



Plate 7a: Dancers using the kompang as a prop

In a performing art show held at a shopping complex in Kuala Lumpur in April 2002, a percussion player performed a solo performance using ten kompangs. The instruments were placed on strings stretched over wooden boxes like the *bonang* in the gamelan ensemble. The performer beat the kompangs with two sticks using both hands. Various rhythms were performed by striking the sticks on various parts of the kompangs' skinhead producing various timbres. At the same time, the player manipulated his body and hand movement imitating a Chinese's *Gu* player's⁵ performance to make the show more interesting. The performer tried to combine traditional elements of music from various cultures found in the multicultural society in Malaysia. It seemed that the audiences enjoyed the show. Again, in this performance, the instrument was manipulated by the performer from its traditional playing style and he experimented with new playing techniques. This was the only performance ever performed in this style and it has not established a new style of kompang playing in later performances.

⁵ Chinese's *Gu* (Barrel drum) players normally performed in a group striking the drums with two sticks and choreographically moving the body and hands according to the rhythm.

In 2001, The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism Malaysia organized a grand drum performance called the *Simfoni Irama Gendang Rebana Perdana* (The Prime Rhythms of the *Gendang* and *Rebana* Symphony) at the Sultan Muhammad Shah football stadium, Kota Bharu, Kelantan⁶. This event was organized purposely to gather as many as possible of all the drum players in the state of Kelantan. In the event, more than two thousands musicians with various types of drums performed together in a group. The type of drums used in the performance were sets of *gendang* (cylinder drum), *gedombak* (hourglass drum), *geduk* (barrel drum), sets of *rebana* (frame drum), *rebana ubi* (a big frame drum), *kertuk* (slit drum), and *kompang*. There were also a few melodic instruments in the event such as *serunai* (double reed oboe), and *rebab* (spike fiddle) which were used to play the melody. The playing technique of all the instruments was in their traditional styles but the rhythms were composed mainly on the basis of traditional ensembles performed in the state of Kelantan such as *wayang kulit* (shadow play) and *dikir barat* (call and response singing) ensembles. In the show, the *kompang* was not performed as it is in traditional ensembles but was mainly used to play the strong beat of the rhythms. All the *kompang* players in the event played the same rhythm in one part without interlocking with each other. This is because the instrument was used only as an additional instrument and not as a major instrument in the composition.

A similar performance was also organized by the same Ministry in 2002 for the National Day celebration in Kuala Lumpur. In that performance, there were a thousand *kompang* players who performed various rhythms together with other

⁶ See Video CD II track 2.

drums. The performance was watched by an audience of thousands who came to celebrate the National Day. It was also broadcast on the main channel of Malaysian television. The role of the kompang in this show was neither as an interlocking instrument nor as a main rhythmic instrument; rather the kompang part composed for this show was to support other drums performing newly composed rhythms. In other words, the kompang was not played in its traditional ensemble style. However, this performance contributed to promoting the extension of the use of the kompang in Malaysia.

The Malaysian government took advantage of the cultural richness of Malaysia in promoting the country for tourism. As Sarkissian (2000:7-10, 70-71) describes, the “Visit Malaysia Year” programme, which was launched in 1990 by the Malaysian government, certainly provided increased opportunities for traditional music to be performed as a package for tourism. Subsequently, many television commercials have been produced for this purpose as well as brochures and promotional audio/video CDs. These materials have been distributed worldwide through travel agencies as well as by the Department of Tourism of Malaysia. The kompang as well as many others ethnic musical instruments and musical genres of Malaysian were used in many different ways as a tool to publicize the culture of Malaysia. For example, in a complimentary video CD entitled *Malaysia Truly Asia*⁷ produced by the Malaysian Department of Tourism, the soundtrack used for the background of the documentary is the theme song of *Tourism Malaysia*. The song, which is also entitled *Malaysia Truly Asia*, is accompanied with a composition

⁷ See Video CD II, track 3.

using various types of ethnic musical instruments of Malaysia⁸. The kompang is one of the important percussive instruments used to provide a rhythmic accompaniment especially in the chorus part of the song. Technically, in this song, the kompang is not played in its traditional style, but the composition gave it a new style of performance to allow the instrument to blend effortlessly together with other musical instruments. However, the identity of the kompang sound in this song is still easily identifiable which makes the appearance of the kompang in this composition highly recognizable.

The rise of the religiously conservative Islamic group in Malaysia especially in mid-1990s has promoted the extension of use of the kompang as well as other Malaysian traditional drums to accompany the *Kumpulan Nasyyid*⁹. This conservative Islamic group believed that certain musical instruments such as the stringed and wind instruments are not allowable in Islam. This is because the string and the blowing instruments are believed to be associated with *haram* (unlawful) activities such as liquor-drinking and adultery amongst others (Harris, 2003:2). However, music itself is not referred to in the holy Koran. Where the *hadith* are concerned there are various places where music is mentioned – none of them favourably. For example, al Bukari, an accepted writer of *hadith* wrote:

“At some future time there will be people from my *umma* (community) who will seek to make lawful fornication, the wearing of silk by men, wine-drinking and the use of musical instruments... Singing sprouts

⁸ See Audio CD II track 1.

⁹ A group of singers, either male or female, who normally sing songs in which the texts are mostly associated with the Islamic faith.

hypocrisy in the heart as rain sprouts plants” (Muhammad Muhsin Khan , 1971: Internet Resource).

Because of this interpretation, as an alternative many *kumpulan nasyid* started to use a variety of percussion instruments either of foreign origin such as congas, triangle, bongo, timbales and cabasa or traditional drums such as *gendang*, *rebana* and *kompang* to avoid being banned by this group. Many non-commercial *Kumpulan Nasyid* set up by various organizations to perform on special occasions such as *Maulid Nabi* and *Maal Hijrah* (New Year in Islamic calendar) avoid the use of the “haram” instruments and replace them in their performances with percussion instruments including the *kompang*. The use of frame drum-like instruments is described as allowable because these types of instruments (the *duff*) were also used during Prophet Muhammad’s time to accompany song as well as in the wedding ceremony (Roy Choudhury, 1957:66). However, there are contemporary commercial *kumpulan nasyids* such as Rabbani, In-Team, and Hijaz that use various types of musical instrument including stringed and wind instruments as well as electronic recorded sound in their works.

The Raihan is a leading contemporary *Kumpulan Nasyid* in Malaysia which uses only percussion instruments to accompany their songs. This group, originally a team of five (now four as one died in September 2001) male singers has produced six albums starting in 1997. Their first album, *Puji-Pujian* sold over 600,000 copies, which was the highest selling album in the history of the music industry in Malaysia (Munan, 2000:181). This *Kumpulan Nasyid* also received many musical awards including the Best Vocal Group award in the Malaysian Industry Music

Awards (AIM – *Anugerah Industri Muzik*) from 1998 to 2002. AIM is the most prestigious music award in the country where winning is based on quality and creativity and not popularity. The management of the Raihan group stated that they were not saying that the uses of various musical instruments by the musicians and singers were now *haram* (unlawful). Instead, this group decided to use the percussion instruments because their concept of music is based on beaten instruments such as *rebana* and *kompang*. Furthermore, it is acceptable for anyone to use any kind of musical instruments in their performances. But, for this group, the message and advice given in their songs is more important than the music itself¹⁰.

Mostly, the use of the *kompang* and other drums by this group is to provide rhythmic accompaniment to their *nasyid*. Two or three *kompangs* are used to beat either basic rhythm or counter rhythm of western or traditional rhythm in the compositions. Generally, the holding and beating techniques of the instrument adopted by this group are the same as in the traditional playing style but the rhythm and the repertoire are different. The *kompang* is used sparingly with other percussive instruments including the *rebana*, tambourine, bongo, congas, timbales, and snare drum. For instance, in a song entitled *Bismillah*¹¹, two *kompangs* are used to beat the interlocking part of the basic rhythm known as *Inang* performed with the *rebana*. In addition, a tambourine-like jingle is used to play the pulse and provides a colourful texture to the beat. There are many other songs sung by the Raihan using the *kompang* as a part of the instrumental accompaniment such as *Puji-*

¹⁰ Interview with the Manager of Raihan group on 19 July 2003.

¹¹ See Audio CD II, track 2.

*pujian*¹², *Salallah*¹³, *Syukur* and *Rasulullah Junjugan*. None of them are similar to the traditional *kompang* beat found in any type of the *kompang*'s repertoire. All the *kompang* parts in the *Raihan* music were newly composed or modified from the traditional *kompang* rhythms. This is because other instruments dominate the composition and play more important role in the ensemble.



Plate 7b: *Raihan*, one of the most popular *Kumpulan Nasyid* in Malaysia.

It is interesting to note that the new generation of *kompang* players have started to compose new rhythms or have modified the traditional rhythms to accompany Malay popular song as well as foreign songs such as Hindustani and Western songs. Radzi, a teenage *kompang* player from Kubu Melaka said that he loves new songs either Malay or Hindustani especially from box office films. He found it boring to perform the *kompang* in accompanying old and folksongs in

¹² See Audio CD II, track 3.

¹³ See Audio CD II, track 4.

secular functions such as wedding celebrations, *Pesta Sukan* (sport days), and cultural shows. He feels proud when his troupe performs new rhythms to accompany new songs because it attracts the audience's attention to their performance. Jamal, a friend of Radzi, further commented that the traditional rhythms are very familiar and unattractive to the local audience especially in a wedding celebration because they have so many things to focus on other than the kompong performance. However, Radzi's troupe performs the traditional rhythms and *zikirs* at religious functions because they believe that the repertoires are suitable for that kind of function¹⁴.

During a break in a practice session at Kubu Melaka, while older players were enjoying their coffee and cigarettes, younger players started to beat various disorganized rhythm patterns and sang love songs. Finally, they were organized by a player and started to sing a Malay text followed the melody adapted from Hindustani popular song – *Kuch Kuch Hotai Hay*. This song is a theme song from a popular Hindustani film titled *Kuch Kuch Hotai Hay* screened in Malaysian cinemas in 1999. They were very exciting beating the kompong and singing the song. The rhythm they performed to accompany the song did not exist in their original repertoire. However, it sounded very organized and suitable to accompany that song¹⁵.

A similar situation also occurred in the Kompong Johor ensemble. The kompong troupe from Kampong Jorak Illahi, Batu Pahat, Johor is mostly made up

¹⁴ Interview with Radzi and Jamal, the kompong players from Kubu, Melaka on 9 March 2003.

¹⁵ See Video CD I, track 6.

of teenagers. As with many other teenagers, their musical preference is contemporary in nature. Popular songs in recent music charts are often whistled by them. To suit their musical interest, apart from traditional repertoires, this troupe also modifies or composes new rhythms to accompany new popular songs. Mainly, the rhythms composed by this troupe are based on the modern beat used to accompany popular songs. Some of them improvise traditional rhythms on the *kompang*. This always happens in their practice sessions when their *khalifah* is absent as he will not allow them to play any rhythm apart from their repertoire.

Mansor Ahmad, a *kompang* instructor from Batu Pahat, Johor argued that the composition of the rhythms in *kompang* ensembles would encourage the elimination of the traditional rhythms and that this would gradually erode their culture heritage. According to Mansor, *kompang* players can play whatever music they wish and can compose any new rhythms they wish, but not on the *kompang*. Furthermore he commented that if they want to perform “pop music”, it is better to use “modern” instruments such as drum set and guitar. But, if they want to play the *kompang*, they had better play it in the traditional style because this is our ancestral legacy. Mansor also disagreed with the use of the *kompang* in contemporary performances such as dance and pop songs for the purpose of promoting the instrument because he believes that the instrument is already well-known in Malaysia. On the other hand, he accepts the use of the *kompang* to accompany the contemporary *nasyid* such as the *Raihan* group. Rejecting my suggestion that the use of the *kompang* in contemporary *nasyid* would also lead to the elimination of

the traditional repertoire, Mansor argued that there the instrument is used in its traditional role to promote faith¹⁶.

THE USE OF THE KOMPANG IN *IRAMA MALAYSIA*

Over recent years, many contemporary composers and musicians have been eagerly seeking a new identity for their music to win fans. Consequently, this has led to the establishment of a new genre in the music industry in Malaysia, which has been called *Irama Malaysia* (Malaysian Rhythm). Originally, this term was derived from a musical genre known as the *Balada Nusantara* (the Malay Archipelago Ballad) introduced in 1988 by a very well-known contemporary composer – Manan Ngah. According to Manan Ngah, the *Balada Nusantara* is a contemporary music genre that is based on Malay musical elements with the addition of foreign elements namely, Portuguese, Spanish, Indian, Chinese and Arab-Persian that can be adapted to Malay music. This musical genre was officially recognized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Malaysia on 11 August 1989. Over the years, a number of terms such as *Muzik Etno* (Ethno-music), *Etnik Kreatif* (Ethnic Creative), and *Irama Malaysia* have been used by different people to describe similar genres. This genre has also contributed to the extension of the use of traditional elements including the use of traditional musical instruments in contemporary music. Many new albums have been published based on the concepts of *Irama Malaysia*. The term *Irama Malaysia* as determined by the

¹⁶ Interview with a *khalifah*, Mansor Ahmad from Batu Pahat, Johor on 9 March 2003

Juara Lagu TV3¹⁷ as the sound of traditional musical elements and instruments in Malaysia, is quite unclear because the word Malaysian should include the musical elements of Chinese, Indian and the other ethnic groups of Malaysia. However, in reality, the focus of the music is more on the *Irama Melayu* (Malay Rhythm), which is based on five different types of beat; *asli*, *zapin*, *inang*, *masri* and *joget*. Traditionally, the rhythms of *Irama Melayu* are played by percussion instruments such as *rebana*, *kompang*, *gendang* and *gong*.

Many popular artists were born into *Irama Malaysia*. Among them are Sheqal, Hasnol, Noraniza Idris, Nurhaida, Tok Ki and Siti Nurhaliza. Some are also popular in others genres such as pop-rock and ballad. There are a few composers who successfully work within so-called *Irama Malaysia* such as Manan Ngah, M.Nasir and Suhaimi Mohd Zain. Manan Ngah was the first composer, who formally established this genre with the Malaysian audience through an album entitled *Balada Nusantara* sung by Sheqal in 1988. This was the first album in Malaysian contemporary music recognized as the *Irama Malaysian*-like genre established in the country. In this album, Manan Ngah used many elements from indigenous and foreign influences blended together into a single concept of music which he called *Balada Nusantara*, the same term that he used to name the album. The blending of the Malay indigenous musical instruments and foreign elements had been done in the music of *Bangsawan* (Malay opera)¹⁸ a long time prior to this.

¹⁷ *Juara Lagu* is a prestige yearly award presented to the winners (composers and performers) in various categories such as Pop Rock, Ballad and *Irama Malaysia* organized by TV3, a leading commercial TV channel in Malaysia.

¹⁸ The *Bangsawan*'s popularity reached its peak in the 1920s and 1930s. Its orchestra is a blend of Indian, Western, Latin American, Arab-Persian and indigenous Malay musical instruments mixed in

Apart from its use in *Bangsawan*, P. Ramlee, who was regarded as the Harry Belafonte of Malaysia, had used this kind of blending of elements in his music since the 1950s. He used popular melodies or ones adapted from the Western pieces of the day and gave them new lyrics to suit the domestic taste. Musically, P. Ramlee used traditional instruments orchestrated in the Western style reflecting the influence of foreign musical elements in his work. He is said to have modernized the traditional Malay singing style and employed Western instrumentation in his music (Munan, 2000:179).

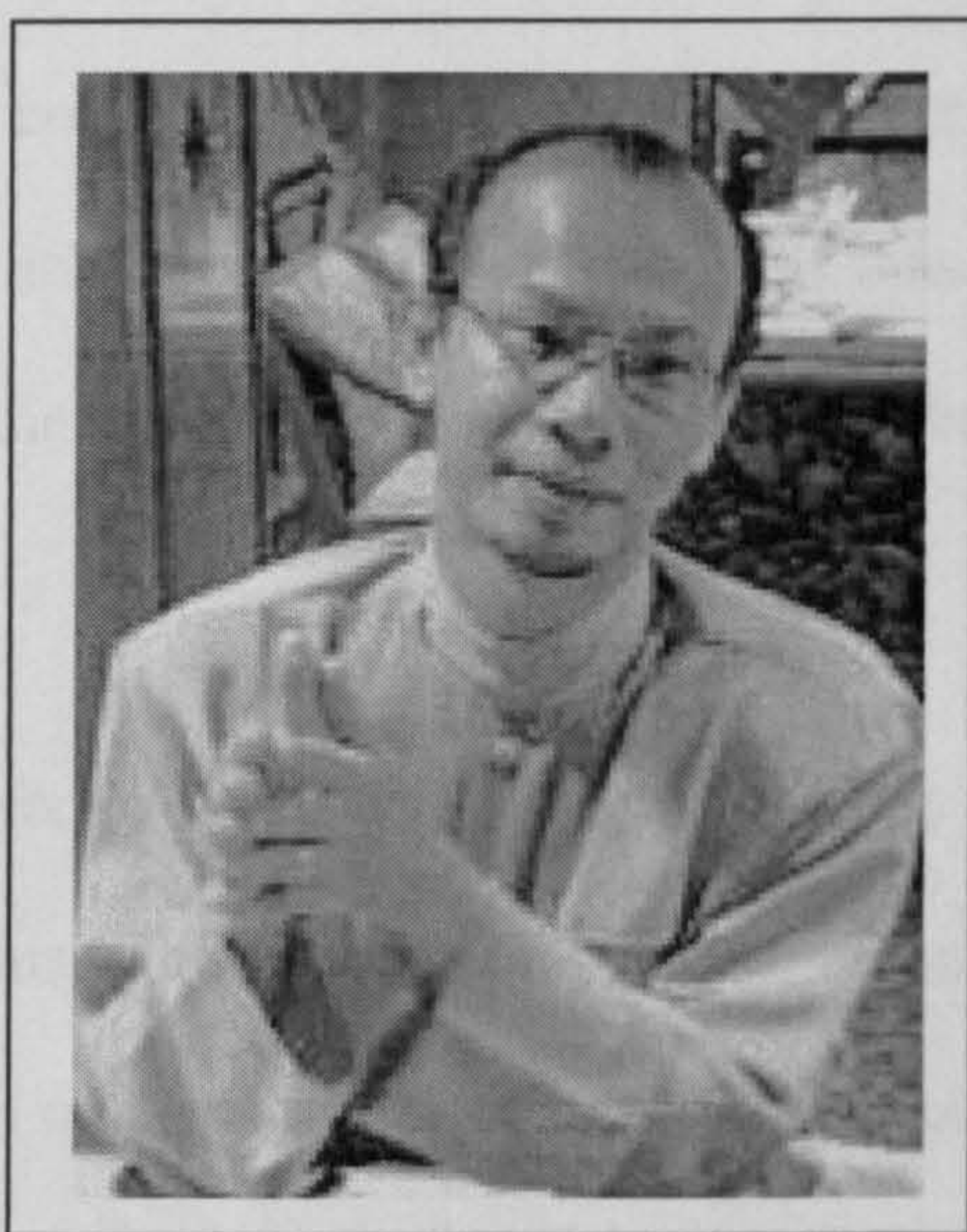


Plate 7c: Manan Ngah

Even though the album *Balada Nusantara* was the first album in which the music was a mixture of western and indigenous ingredients, Manan did not use the *kompang* in his work. Instead, he used many other indigenous instruments such as

many ways. Its music is a fusion of Malay and foreign elements. Malay elements include vocal ornamentation, linear texture, cyclic drum patterns and the use of Malay texts. Western adaptation includes harmony and orchestration and songs adapted from Arab, Chinese or Indian rhythms and modes. For more detail, see Tan (1993).

gendang, *marwas*, *angklung* (bamboo tubes), *gamelan*, *gambus* (lute), *dup* and *tabla*. However, he used the *kompang* in conjunction with other instruments in a live performance in 1988. The thirty minute performance was broadcast live globally for the World Sport Aid Carnival/Telethon. In the performance, Manan chose two Malay traditional songs – *Rentak 106* and *Selayang Pandang* to be sung in a group. The *kompang* was used with other instruments such as the *gamelan* and the *ghazal* ensemble in this performance. The global broadcast of the performance by Global TV London was claimed to be successfully “selling” Malaysian culture to the world (Fauzan, 1988: 9). Following Manan Ngah’s successful work *Balada Nusantara*, many other composers started to blend western and traditional elements in their work hoping to achieve recognition from their fans. This has meant that the *kompang* as well as other traditional instruments have been manipulated in their works.

According to Manan Ngah, the *kompang* is not an “elite” instrument in Malay contemporary music, but is a percussive instrument which widely accepted by many composers. In other words, until now, the *kompang* has not been a major or main instrument in contemporary music works but, rather, it is an alternative instrument or additional instrument used in the contemporary music. Moreover, the instrument is also seen as a non-controversial instrument especially when used in *lagu dakwah* (religious songs) because it is said to have religious connotations. He commented that the rhythms of the traditional *kompang* need to be altered in order to suit new compositions. This is because most of the traditional *kompang* beats

used to accompany the *zikirs* with Arab influences are different from the contemporary melodies that are much influenced by Western musical elements.

Although there are a few other composers work in this genre, but Suhaimi Mohd Zain (better known by his performing name Pak Ngah), a well-known and prolific songwriter in traditional music, has an almost complete monopoly of *Irama Malaysia*. He has won many prestige musical awards for his works in this genre in the country. His songs, which are mainly blended from many traditional musical elements, are sung by some of the main singers in Malaysia such as Siti Nurhaliza, Noraniza Idris and Jamal Abdillah.¹⁹ Pak Ngah who owns a recording company – The Pak Ngah Production, Sdn. Bhd., has manipulated many traditional musical elements including the *kompang* in his works. Here, further discussion of this issue will be based in the main on Pak Ngah's works either recorded materials or live performances. This is because he is the most productive composer using the *kompang* in contemporary music. Other composers' works will also be briefly discussed in conjunction with Pak Ngah's works.

According to Pak Ngah, the *pukulan* of the *kompang* is too predictable for some people. He commented that, "if you play the same thing, the audiences already know what will happen next and this is quite boring. You have to find a new way how to make the *kompang* music more exciting". He suggested that one way to avoid being boring is to escape from the traditional styles of playing and modify the character of music as well as the playing techniques of the *kompang*.

¹⁹ For example, listen to Audio CD II, track 5 – Cindai (Siti Nurhaliza), track 6 – Dondang Dendang (Noraniza and Siti Nurhaliza).

What he did was to reuse traditional elements with some modification in his contemporary works. Pak Ngah acknowledged that people had long used those traditional elements, however, only certain types of traditional music are performed by the villagers in their community. For instance, originally, *kompang* ensembles only performed on the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia but not in the East coast of the country. Furthermore, he believed that, with the platform that he has (recording company and popular artists), many kinds of traditional music could be re-introduced to audiences²⁰.



Plate 7d: Suhaimi Mohd Zain (Pak Ngah)

In the album entitled *Awallah Dondang*, sung by Noraniza Idris – a remarkable female singer of *Irama Malaysia*, Pak Ngah has blended many kinds of traditional ingredients including beats, mode and instruments to “Malaysianize” the song. For instance, the *zapin* beat was used to accompany the song called *Awallah*

²⁰ Interview with Suhaimi Mohd Zain (Pak Ngah) on 22/2/2003

Dondang. There is a section in the *zapin* beat called *kopak*²¹ where traditionally a few *marwas* (a double-headed frame drum) are used to play this section. But, in this song, Pak Ngah used the *kompang* instead of the *marwas* to perform this section. According to Pak Ngah, the sound of the *marwas* is too “small” and that is why he used the *kompang*, which he described as having a “bigger” sound to replace the *marwas* in this section for the recording.

Another good example of the uses of the *kompang* music in contemporary song is in an album entitled *Berkhabar* sung by Noraniza Idris and produced by Pak Ngah. There is a song called *Tinting* in this album where Pak Ngah used the *Kompang Perak* ensemble to accompany the song²². He explained that the idea to use the *Kompang Perak* in this song was sparked by a student who had asked him about the *hadrah* of Perak. This had prompted him to compose the song based on this rhythm. The use of traditional *Pukulan Hadrah* (see page 306) is different in this song. Originally, the tempo of the *pukulan* is slow and steady and Pak Ngah regarded this as quite boring. What he did was to take the same rhythm pattern and doubled the time to make it faster. However, the structural form of the *Pukulan Hadrah* remains the same as the traditional one, which is repeated until the end of the song. But, in terms of melody and form, the song follows the current trend in composition. Pak Ngah used the actual *Kompang Perak* in the recording of the song.

²¹ *Kopak* is a term used to describe a section in the *zapin* ensemble where a few *marwas* are used to perform interlocking rhythm pattern as a bridge between verses of melody. This section is very fast in tempo and very loud.

²² See Video CD II, track 4.

It is very interesting to mention here that the song entitled *Tinting* in its video clip form is regularly broadcast on Malaysian television. The singer (Noraniza Idris) in her traditional attire sweetly sings this song while playing the kompang with a group of players in a public shelter in a traditional Malay village. The video clip shows the performance inspiring many people who were doing their own jobs either in the field, in construction or business to join the singer in the ensemble. The villagers decide to leave their jobs and join the group playing the kompang. In another scene, the performance also attracts a shopkeeper who is checking the stock in his grocery shop. He looks at his worn out kompang hanging on the wall of his shop. Finally, he grabs the instrument and happily joins the group to accompany the song. This video clip symbolically suggests that the kompang had been abandoned by some people, but this idol inspired the villagers to play the instrument again.

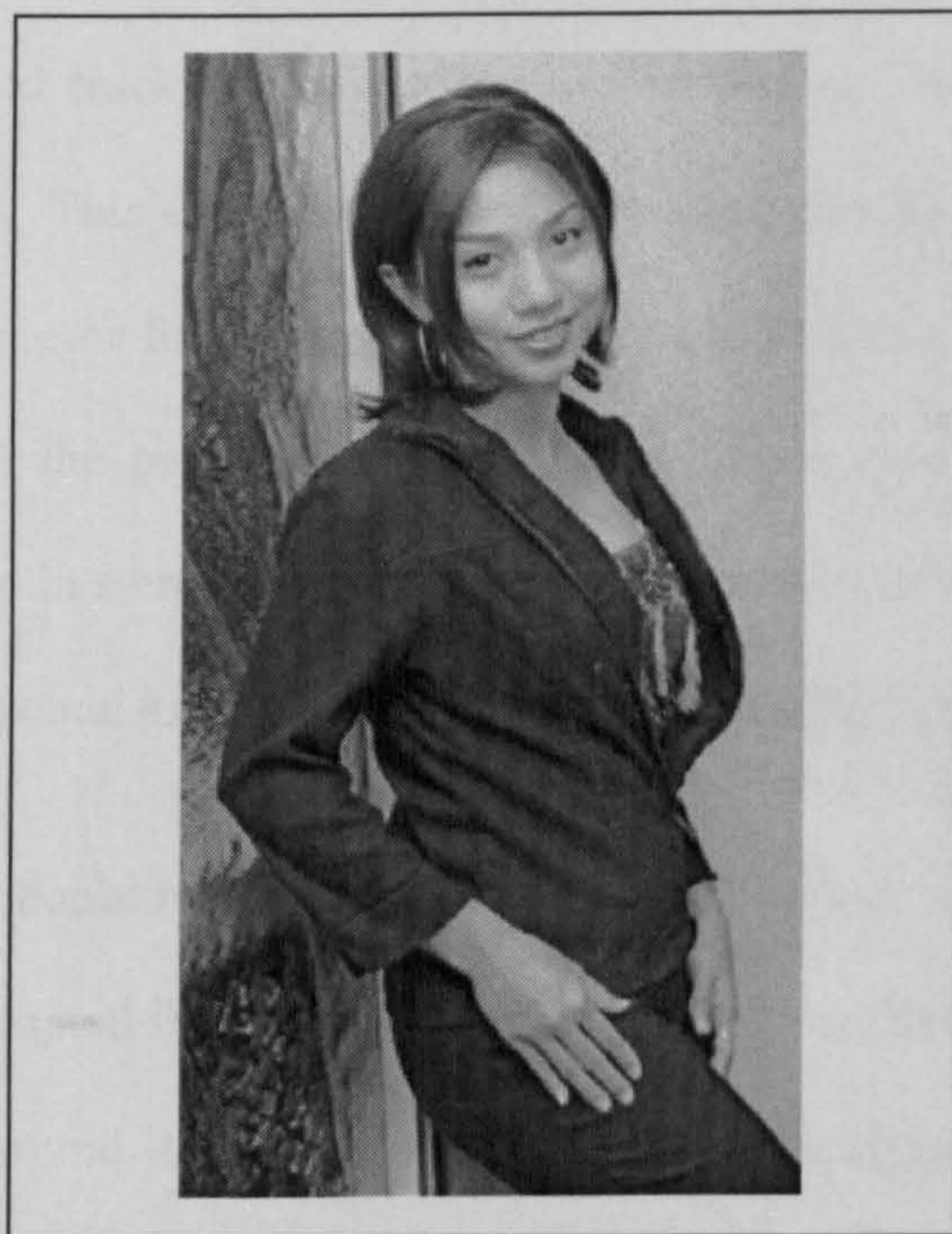


Plate 7e: Noraniza Idris

The kompong ensemble has been used in the recording process in many ways and for many purposes. The kompong has been played in the recording studio either in the traditional style of playing or adapted to new recording techniques such as sampling and doubling. In some recordings, the whole group of players play together as they performed traditionally in the villages. With this method, the resulting recorded material sounds more natural than it does when digitally recorded. However, it costs more money and time to produce. The greater the number of players used for recording the more money needs to be paid. The more players in a group, the more likely it is that mistakes will occur during the recording process. To reduce these problems, some producers use only a few players to play the instrument in the recording process. Basically, only the four or five best players depending on how many parts there are to the music, are chosen to play the piece. Normally the first track of the recording is recorded with the basic part of the rhythm. The second track is assigned to the second or interlocking part of the ensemble and so on. This entire ensemble is recorded part by part. Later, all these parts are dubbed three or four times to make the sound fuller. In some recordings five players play all the parts together according to the type of the *pukulan*. The ensemble is recorded in stereo. This recorded material will be dubbed three times to make the recording sound as if a whole group is playing the instruments.

Apart from doubling techniques described earlier, the use of sampling techniques is also adopted in the use of the kompong ensemble in recording studios. The best kompong sound is sampled using a sampler machine. Both timbre *Bum* and *Pak* are sampled and used to sequence the kompong music. The end product of

this technique is not as natural sounding as the traditional kompang ensemble. This is because the actual kompang is not tuned to the same pitch and every instrument possesses different characteristics of timbre. Basically, the sampling product is only used for 'demo' material before the actual kompang ensemble is recorded or performs. This is to save the cost of producing 'demo' music for certain occasions. Pak Ngah also uses the sampling technique to compose 'demo' music for his compositions as a guide for the players to practice. But in the recording process, he uses the real kompang. According to Pak Ngah, the sound character of the real kompang is preferred by the listeners because it has a sound, which makes each ensemble sound unique to the listeners.

NEW TECHNIQUES USED IN CONSTRUCTION OF THE KOMPANG

Nowadays, kompang ensembles perform on many occasions especially in villages and still use the traditional instruments typical of the place where they are performing. However, in some recording and contemporary performances, the instrument is modified to suit the users' need. For example, there are some kompangs using a plastic diaphragm, which is normally used in modern drums such as the *tom tom* to replace the goatskin as a skinhead. This modified kompang still uses the same *baluh* as its frame. The plastic diaphragm is attached to the *baluh* with a metal rim hooked by six or eight tuning keys. The tuning key used in the newly constructed kompang resembles the one that is used for snare drums. The *sedak* is still used as it is in traditional instruments but it is not used to tune the

instrument any longer. It is used as a bridge between the *baluh* and the skinhead. The size of the *kompang* using the new construction methods is the same as the traditional one. However, the timbre is quite different.

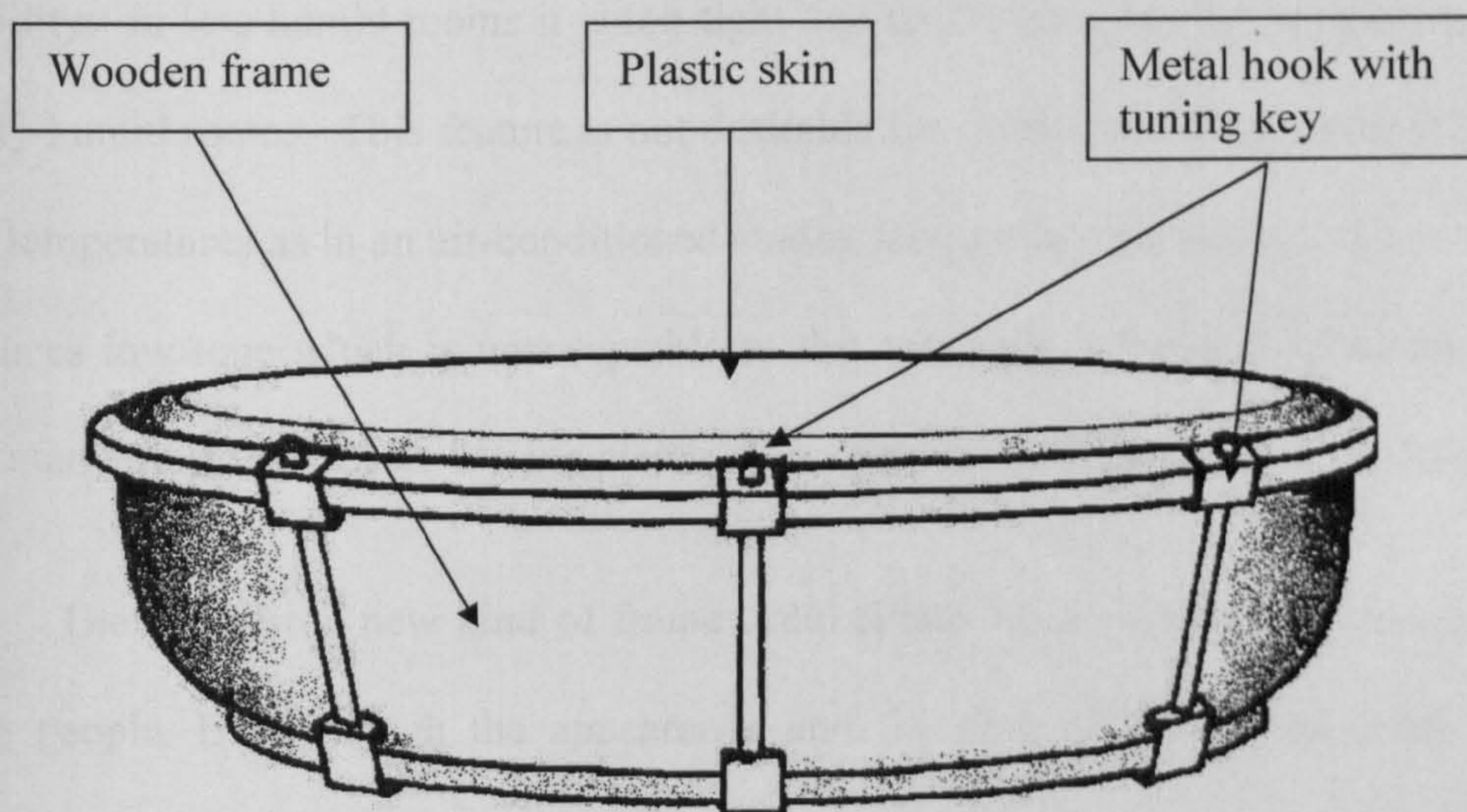


Figure 7a: The modified *kompang* with the tuning keys

The sound of the *kompang* with the plastic skin is described by most of the traditional *kompang* players as “thin” as compared to the sound of the traditional *kompang*. However, in the recording process, this “thin” sound can be manipulated using a sound processor.²³ Some of the advantages of using the plastic skin and the tuning key are that the instrument can produce better tone and not react to the weather changing. Pak Ngah explained that with the tuning key attached, the *kompang* can be tuned to any pitch to suit the music whenever the players wish.

²³ Interview with Pak Ngah on 22/2/2003.

This provides a wide possibility for the instrument to be used in modern composition. Moreover, the kompang with the plastic skin is more reliable when used in the studio because it does not react to weather change. All the recording studios are equipped with air-conditioning. The traditional kompang sounds good in the open air but sometimes it is not reliable due to changes of room temperature and humidity. In less humid rooms it is too tight due to the humidity but it slackens in highly humid rooms. This feature is not desirable for studio recording purposes. In cold temperatures as in an air-conditioned studio, the animal skin become loose and produces low tone which is unacceptable to the ensemble. These are the reasons why many music producers use the plastic skin kompang in the recording process.

There is also a new kind of frame drum (Plate 7f) seen as the kompang by some people. Even though the appearance and the tone of this frame drum are different from the traditional one, some people play it like the traditional kompang. This frame drum is made of plywood with the diameter being about the same as the traditional kompang. The plastic skin is attached to the frame with six metal hooks, which also function as tuning keys. A piece of curved wood is attached to the underside of the frame provides the handle for the player to hold the instrument firmly. The timbre of this instrument is described as thinner, lighter and its pitch is higher than the traditional kompang. This type of instrument is used by some organizations such as schools, colleges and youth organizations to perform like a kompang ensemble.

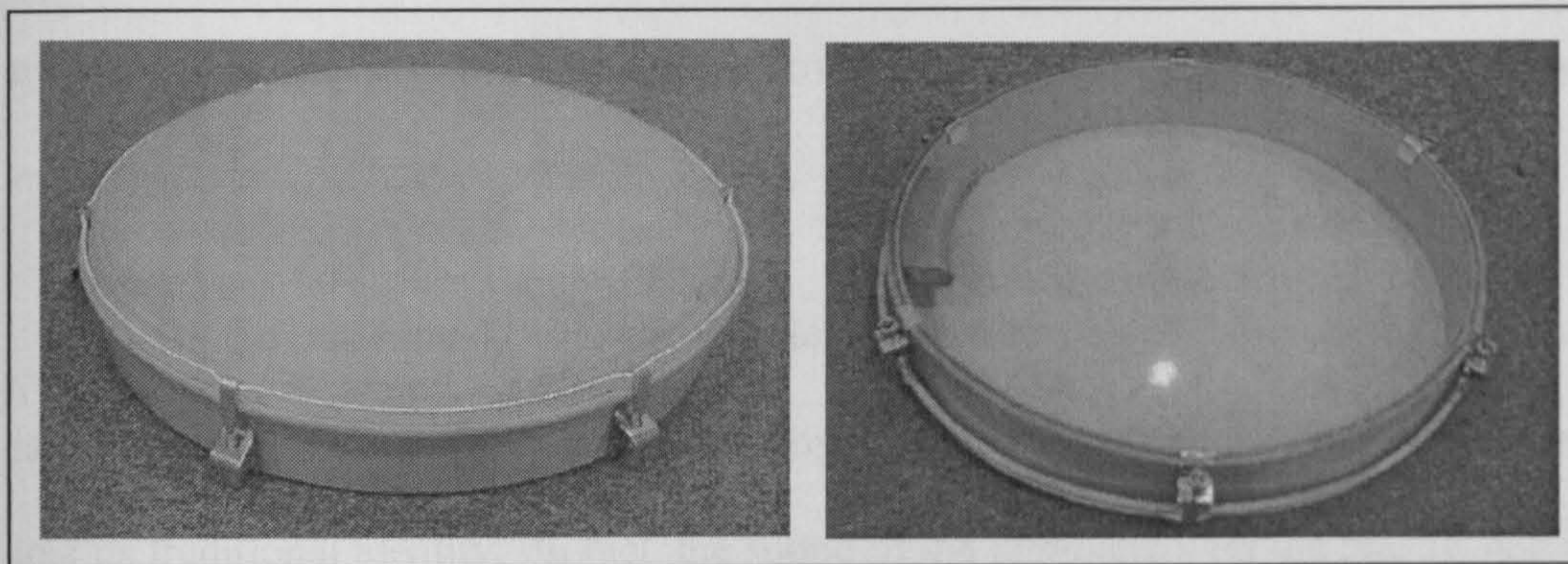


Plate 7f: The modern frame drum seen as a kompong

There are a few reasons why some people use this instrument to perform in kompong-like ensembles. The instrument is lighter as compared to the traditional kompong. The weight of the instrument is less than 500 gram, which is much lighter than the traditional kompong, which had weights ranging from 700 gram to 1.5 kilogram depending on the size of the kompong. The lighter instrument means it is easier to hold for a long performance. The cost of the instrument is also cheaper than the traditional kompong. A player can buy an instrument for about RM45.00 (GBP6.60) as compared to the traditional kompong which ranges in price from RM60.00 to RM100.00 (GBP8.82 – GBP14.71) depending on the size and the quality of the instrument. Apart from the price, it is also easy to buy in a large quantity because the instrument is widely available at music stores in large towns. However, with the traditional kompong, the kompong maker takes between one and three months to make a set of kompongs consisting of twenty instruments. Sometimes it takes a longer period for the kompong maker to find suitable goatskins and wood to make the kompong and this will delay the delivery of the instrument to the buyer. Some buyers prefer not to wait and buy the modern frame drum from a

music store. Moreover, some people who it seems do not really care about traditional values say that the modern kompang-like frame drum looks neat and nice.

On the other hand, for some people, the appearance of the modern kompang is not as artistic as the traditional kompang. They regard the instrument as having lost its traditional identity. In fact, the sound of the kompang with the plastic skin is not the same as a real kompang. It is maybe suitable to use in a recording process because the sound can be manipulated using a sound processor but not in a live performance. Many of the musicians who use the kompang in their live performance prefer the traditional instrument over the modified one. This is because the traditional kompang sounds more authentic than the modern one.²⁴ A few traditional kompang players refuse to call the plastic skinned frame drum such as those used in recording studios a kompang. For them, the kompang must be constructed with a wooden frame and with the animal skin attached and not an artificial skin. Furthermore, they argue that, if the drum is made of other than original materials or constructed in a new way, the instrument should be given a new name²⁵.

THE KOMPANG IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Nowadays, it is not a strange phenomenon to see the kompang being played by school pupils in Malaysia. Many public schools especially on the Southwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia have a set of kompangs. The instrument is used by the

²⁴ Interview with Pak Ngah on 22/2/2003.

²⁵ Interviews with kompang players in Melaka, Johor and Perak in 2003.

students either in extra-curricular activities or in a music lesson in the formal curriculum. In public schools, both primary and secondary, it is compulsory for students to participate in at least one of the extra-curricular activities. The student can choose to participate in one of the clubs organized in the school such as the music club, culture club, dance club and photography club among others. The kompong ensemble may be introduced to the student in conjunction with other activities in one of the relevant clubs such as the music club or the culture club. In fact, some schools form a kompong club exclusively to promote the instrument among the students. The kompong ensemble performs in many activities organized by the schools including Sports Day, Prize Giving Day, Teacher's Day, as well as greeting very important guests such as the King and minister who visit the school. The kompong is normally performed in its traditional way in the school. However, the instrument is also used with other musical instruments to accompany a choir, *nasyid* or any musical performance in school. If this happens, the music of the kompong is composed or modified to suit the ensemble that it is used to accompany.

The implementation of the new music curriculum for secondary schools by the Ministry of Education of Malaysia has had an impact on the widening of use of the kompong in the country. The curriculum was established in 1996, with only twenty secondary schools all over Malaysia chosen to offer the subject of music. In 2001, the Ministry of Education expanded the implementation of the new music curriculum. More secondary schools throughout Malaysia now offer music as one of the elective subjects. With the expansion of the new music curriculum, increasing numbers of students will have the opportunity to learn about Malaysian traditional

music. Malaysian traditional music is one of the elements included in this new curriculum together with western music theory, keyboard, and western influenced musical ensembles such as choirs, marching bands and orchestras,. Students who choose music as one of their elective subjects are exposed to the playing techniques of some of the “Malaysianized” traditional ensembles such as the *kompang*, *gemelan* and *caklempong* (gong-chimes). The curriculum also introduces the student to Malaysian music in general, including the Malay music, Malaysian Chinese music, Malaysian Indian music and music of the indigenous peoples of Malaysia including those living in the states of Sabah and Sarawak. The students also have an option to sit the formal music examination set up by the Ministry of Education at Malaysian Certificate of Education level.

Kompang playing is introduced to the pupils in the public school music curriculum as early as Form One.²⁶ At the beginning, the students are given a very brief introduction to the instrument as well as a very short history and a description of the roles of the instrument in the Malay society.²⁷ The students are also taught about the playing techniques as well as performing a few songs with kompang accompaniment. The information about the kompang ensemble in the resource book provided by the Ministry of Education is very limited; this is because of the lack of published material about the instrument. According to Nor Azman Mohd Ramli, one of the music teachers who were involved in the panel writing the

²⁶ Mainly, students entering a Malaysian secondary school start in form one at the age of 13.

²⁷ All this information is included in the Music Education Resource and Activity Book for Form One published by the Ministry of Education Malaysia in 1998. This book provides a teaching guide for the teacher and suggested activities for music lessons. It is also contains music scores and relevant exercises related to all the topics in the curriculum to be used by the students in the classroom.

Resource Book for Form One, they had a very limited reference about the kompong causing them not to provide more information about the instrument and the ensemble. The teachers who teach music in schools need to find information themselves about the ensemble to deliver to their students.

In Form One, the students are taught to beat the timbre *Bum*²⁸ and *Pak* of the kompong through exercises provided in the resource book. Three basic parts – *melalu*, *menyilang* and *meningkah* in the kompong ensemble are introduced to the students at this level. The first piece of the kompong ensemble introduced at school is a complete *Pukulan*. Its structural form consists of the *Pukulan Mula*, *Pukulan Lagu* and *Pukulan Tamat* (also known as the *Pukulan Mati*). The form of this piece is similar to the *Pukulan Zikir* (see page 257) of the Kompong Johor. However, this piece is performed without the *Jidur* part. Both the rhythms of the *Melalu* and *Menyilang* parts are similar to the same parts of the Kompong Johor but the rhythm of the *Meningkah* part is simplified from the corresponding part of the Kompong Johor ensemble. The modification is made to make it easier for school pupils to perform this *pukulan*. Moreover, this piece does not sound much different from the *Pukulan Zikir* of the Kompong Johor except that the piece is performed without a song or a *zikir*. There is no specific title assigned for this *pukulan*. This piece provides some basic ideas about the kompong ensemble to the students.

²⁸ Instead of *Bum*, the term *bong* is used in the Resource and Activity Book for Form One. However, both mnemonic terms refer to the same timbre of the kompong. I have never found the term *bong* used to describe this timbre anywhere in publications. It was also never used by the players in any of areas of my fieldwork. This term is only used in the Resource and Activity Book for Form One. According to Nor Azman, this term is used because the sustained sound of the kompong is perceived as *bong*. The higher notes written in the score published in the Resource and Activity book for Form One represent the timbre *pak* and the lower notes represent the timbre *bong*.

Pukulan Mula

Melalu
Menyilang
Meningkah

Pukulan Lagu To Coda

Coda

Figure 7b: The first *kompang* piece introduced to the Form One students. From *Music Education Resource and Activity Book for Form One*, (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1998:50)

There are three other *pukulans* introduced to the student at this level specifically to accompany the Malay songs. Those *pukulan* are called *Rentak Masri*, *Rentak Inang* and *Rentak Zapin*. In the Resource and Activity Book for Form One, the term *rentak* is used instead of the *pukulan* to describe the type of beat traditionally used by most *kompang* players throughout Malaysia. The use of this

term in this book is to avoid confusion among the students derived from the variety of terms used to describe the same thing²⁹. For instance, the term *Pukulan Inang* is used by most of the traditional kompang players in Johor as well as the Kompang Ezhar but the term *Rentak Inang* is used in school.



Plate 7g: A kompang ensemble performed by a group of school students

The first *pukulan* introduced to the students in Form One is the *Rentak Masri* (Figure 7c). Originally, the *Rentak Masri* was not one of the *pukulan* found in any of the traditional kompang ensembles' repertoire. Actually, this beat is used mainly to accompany traditional Malay songs by a small ensemble consisting of either traditional instruments or western instruments. The main rhythm of this beat is normally performed using the *rebana* (a larger frame drum) by one player using both hands (see page 114). It is obvious that this beat was influenced by Arab musical culture. The *Melalu* part of this *pukulan* carries the basic rhythm;

²⁹ Interview with Nor Azman Mohd Ramli on 5/3/2003. He is a music teacher who was also part of the panel of the committee which prepared the Resource and Activity book for Form One.

meanwhile the *Menyilang* and the *meningkah* parts play the interlock as well as providing ornamentation to the beat. In the resources and activity book for Form One, this *pukulan* is suggested to accompany a song entitled *Suara Takbir* (the call to prayer) composed by the legendary artist, P.Ramlee. Nor Azman explained that, by playing this piece, the students can be exposed to a range of knowledge and skills in one short exercise. The skills include the playing techniques of the *kompang*, the singing techniques and re-knowledge of the old songs sung by popular artists in the past.

The other two *pukulans* introduced at this level are the *Rentak Inang* and the *Rentak Zapin* (Figure 7c). These two *pukulans* do appear in traditional *kompang* ensembles' repertoire. The *Rentak Inang* introduced in secondary school is similar to one in the *Kompang Ezhar* ensemble (see page 220). The only confusion is the rhythm patterns of the *Melalu* and *Menyilang* part of the *pukulan* are interchanged with each other. Actually, the rhythm pattern of the *Melalu* part in the music score published in the Resource and Activity Book for Form One is supposed to be played by the *Menyilang* part and vice versa. The error in the score writing was acknowledged by Nor Azman and he agreed that the publisher should amend the next edition. The teachers have also had this error clarified in the short courses given by the Curriculum Development Department of the Ministry of Education.

Rentak Masri

Melalu
Menyilang
Meningkah

The musical notation for Rentak Masri consists of three staves. The top staff, labeled 'Melalu', contains a sequence of quarter notes. The middle staff, labeled 'Menyilang', contains a sequence of quarter notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'Meningkah', contains a sequence of quarter notes with some beamed eighth notes.

Rentak Inang

Melalu
Menyilang
Meningkah

The musical notation for Rentak Inang consists of three staves. The top staff, labeled 'Melalu', contains a sequence of quarter notes. The middle staff, labeled 'Menyilang', contains a sequence of quarter notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'Meningkah', contains a sequence of quarter notes with some beamed eighth notes.

Rentak Zapin

Melalu
Menyilang
Meningkah

The musical notation for Rentak Zapin consists of three staves. The top staff, labeled 'Melalu', contains a sequence of quarter notes. The middle staff, labeled 'Menyilang', contains a sequence of quarter notes. The bottom staff, labeled 'Meningkah', contains a sequence of quarter notes with some beamed eighth notes.

Figure 7c: *Rentak Masri*, *Rentak Inang* and *Rentak Zapin* introduced in public schools (Kementerian Pendidikan, 1998:51)

The rhythms for each part of the *Pukulan Zapin* introduced in the school are different from the *Pukulan Zapin* performed by the Kompong Ezhar ensemble (see page 216). Even though both versions of the *pukulan* are composed of three parts, the rhythm patterns in the *Pukulan Zapin* performed by the Kompong Ezhar are

more complex. However, both versions sound alike when performed in full ensemble because both are orchestrated based on the same basic rhythm pattern (Figure 7d). A similar rhythm pattern is also performed with the *rebana* in the *Zapin* dance ensemble in the state of Johor. From this basic rhythm pattern, the *rentak* is improvised with some ornamentation added using other percussion instruments including the *rebana anak*, woodblock, tambourine and others. In the *Zapin* dance ensemble, the first beat of this rhythm is normally played with a knobbed gong and timbre *Tak* is played alternately with both fingers near the edge of the *rebana*, which is always placed on the lap of the player. The *Rentak Zapin* performed by the *kompang* ensemble in schools was orchestrated based on the basic rhythm pattern performed on the *rebana* by the *Zapin* dance ensemble.

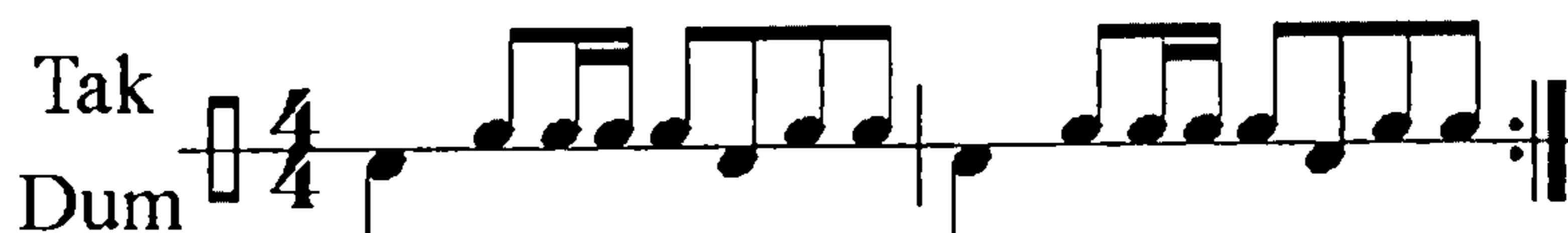


Figure 7d: *Rentak Zapin* performed on the *rebana*

In conclusion, the types of the *pukulan* introduced into schools are not exactly the same as those performed by the traditional *kompang* ensembles. The main change being that the *pukulan* was simplified to suit the school situation. It was composed based on Malay traditional rhythm patterns by the panel of writers deliberately for the publication of the Resources and Activity Book for Form One. The purpose was to introduce the students to the basic knowledge and skills of the *kompang* ensemble. The content of the introduction to the *kompang* ensemble in

schools seems very brief as compared to the traditional kompang ensemble. This is because only a very short time is allocated for music lessons in the school timetable. At the same time, students at this level are also taught others aspect of music such as theory, singing techniques, keyboard and recorder. Kompang playing is only included in the syllabus for Form One and is not included in the syllabus for higher classes. However, kompang playing may still be continued in extra-curricular activity.

In the discussion of new composition and the uses of the kompang in festivals, it is better to investigate further why the changes are occurring in kompang playing especially in contemporary society. There are many factors that led to new developments in composition of the kompang music as well as the construction techniques of the instrument. As mentioned earlier, the influx of western music and culture in Malaysia has acculturated Malaysian people into western music traditions. For the past few years, with the raise of nationalism and awareness to preserve their culture and tradition, the Malay people started to reintroduce their traditional music through various platforms. Because of the western music has strongly embedded in contemporary Malaysia, many composers have to find new ways of reintroducing traditional music in their work. One of the ways is to blend traditional elements with western popular music. This has led to the exploitation of many traditional musical elements including the kompang music. In this way the originality and the authenticity of the kompang music is not the main concern. As a result, in the contemporary composition, the kompang is not performed in its original form, but it is used in different way to suit the need of the composers and listeners. This effort is

regarded as a good job by some people because they believe that in this way they can reintroduce their traditional music to the new generation. However, this has been rejected by some of the traditional kompang players because they are really concern about the originality of the kompang music. Many of them thought that it will erode the originality and authenticity of the music which lead to the desecration of their tradition.

THE CHANGING STATUS OF THE KOMPANG PLAYER

As mentioned earlier in Chapters 5 and 6, in the early days of the kompang playing in Peninsular Malaysia, the ensemble was dominated by mature male players. The *Ensiklopedia Dunia Melayu*, Jilid 3 (1997:194) also states that originally only male players played the kompang, but now the kompang is played by both male and female players. In discussing the changing status of the kompang player, I believe that the gender roles in the kompang playing in Malay society deserve further investigation. Knowing that frame drums in some parts of the world are performed on mostly by female players, some explanation is need of why this situation is different from the origins of kompang playing in Peninsular Malaysia. In order to make this situation more understandable, it is appropriate to review some of the frame drums played in other parts of the world in particular those which have similar roles to the kompang in Malay society.

Looking back to the historical facts, in ancient Mesopotamia, the frame drum was performed mostly by female players based on the evidence observed on clay statuettes dated about 2000 BC (Blades, 1970:153). James Blade also wrote

that the frame drum of the Arabs was chiefly played by women. The frame drum served the normal purposes accompanying the dance and song, and was associated with occasions both of mirth and mourning (Ibid:83). Curt Sachs (1940:97) claimed that the frame drums were only played by female players in ancient Egypt. Furthermore, Sachs says that the *mizhar*, *duff*, *da'ira*, *girbal* and *bandair* were among the types of frame drum played by the professional singing-girls in pre-Islamic Arabia and in all Semitic countries. Additionally, the *girbal* is also mentioned in Prophet Muhammad's time (Ibid:246). More interestingly, the frame drum of Arab/Islamic culture, which has similar roles with the *kompang* in Malay society, was performed by female players to herald the joy of child birth, celebration of circumcision and of marriage. Women in mourning also played the frame drum and followed it by chanting from the Koran (Farmer, 1957:434).

In the present day, the frame drum is still regarded as a women's instrument in some parts of the world. For example, in Afghanistan, even though it is not thought to be a "real" instrument, the *daira* (frame drum) is played by women and children. However, when the gender of the performer changes, the status of the instrument or the performer may also change and the *daira* is considered to be a "real" instrument when it is played by a man (Sakata, 1987:86-87). However, in Malay society, unlike in Afghanistan, the status of the *kompang* has remained the same, even though the gender of the player has changed. In discussing gender roles in music, Carol Silverman (2003:120) says that the frame drum (*def*, *daire*) has been associated with Balkan Muslim Rom female performers for at least a hundred years, and probably longer. Veronica Doubleday (1999:121) also notes that like female

frame drum players in the Middle East, those in the Balkans were regarded by non-Rom patrons as marginal but powerful. Frame drumming was suspect not only because of the instrument itself but because of its association with Rom women; as Picken (1975:144) wrote, “Not only it is a women’s instrument, it is also an instrument of women of ill-repute”.

Despite the fact that the frame drum is regarded as a women’s instrument in some places, elsewhere it is also played by male players. There is considerable evidence showing that men also perform on the frame drum. For example: a relief from the 12th Century exhibited in the Museo Nazionale in Florence shows a type of Arabian frame drum (which looks similar to the *kompang*) being performed on by a male player (Sachs, 1940:209)³⁰. In Romania, the frame drum (*daira*, *dara*) is used by gypsy showmen to accompany song and dance (Sadie, 1984:536). The *defi*, as described by Sadie is found mostly in the north of the Greek mainland where it is used to accompany all the principal melodic instruments. This frame drum is played by both men and women (Ibid:553). In the High-Atlas mountain of Morocco, frame drums are used to accompany female dancers in the *ahwach* (dance performance). This frame drum is played only by men and it is strictly forbidden for women to play it (Jouad and Jacob, 1978:70). Meanwhile, many types of frame drum found close to the Malay Peninsula such as *terbang* (in Java) and *redap* (in Sumatra) are played by male players. Both of them are also performed for Islamic religious functions.

³⁰ See Plate 2w in Chapter 2, page 120.

Looking back to the statement that the *kompang* was only played by male players at the start of *kompang* playing in Peninsular Malaysia, it demands some explanation why this situation is not the same as in the other part of the world. In searching for an explanation for this situation, I found that the culture, customs and practices of the Malay people played an important role in creating the situation. In certain aspects, the Malay people have a similar way of life to Afghan people. Sakata (1989:86) describes how traditional Afghan women are supposed to be kept, or keep themselves, in seclusion, cutting off social relationships with males who are not closely related to them. As Malay women also practiced the same custom, the opportunity for them to engage in the social functions such as in the *kompang* ensemble was narrow as they had to keep themselves away from social relationships with men who were not their relatives.

Equally, the traditional roles of *kompang* playing in the past was focused more on the religious functions such as accompanying *zikir*, *berzanji* and *marhaban* during the *mauled nabi* celebration or a wedding ceremony. These rituals were mainly conducted by men. Although women also performed the *berzanji* and *marhaban*, the recitals were performed mostly without *kompang* accompaniment. This tradition also had limited the opportunity for the woman to play the instrument. Moreover, unlike in the Middle East and Balkans, where the frame drum is regarded as women's instrument, the *kompang* in Malay history was regarded as a male

instrument³¹. This also restricted the accessibility of the instrument to women and children since it was exclusively reserved for men.

The instrument was also associated with *silat* practice for self defence (see page 167-168). Historically, this martial art form was almost a monopoly of men, who they used their *silat* skills to defend themselves as well as their family from enemies. Culturally, in Malay society, women were not encouraged to become involved in “masculine activities” because they were considered weak and were always associated with domestic work. They were urged to do “feminine activities” such as knitting, decorating the house, cooking and taking care of their children. The *silat* was considered a “masculine activity” because of the tough physical activity and high energy needed to practice it. This custom also limited women’s access to the instrument. Meanwhile, in old Malay custom, children always disassociated themselves from the “adult activities” as a way to show their respect to the adults. They were considered rude if they joined adults to do activities together. As *kompang* playing was considered as a male activity, children were only allowed to observe the performance until they reach a “mature” age.³²

Everything has changed as the social values have changed in accordance with the acculturation process that is taking place in Malay society. The output of many mass media such as radio, television and films has transferred western culture into the Malay world. The flood of western culture especially through mass media

³¹ Interview with Haji Kassim Bin Limat on 25/4/2002.

³² In old Malay culture, a boy is considered to have reached the “mature” age when he can do a job for living even if he still lives with his parents. In this case, the ages of the “mature” can range from sixteen to much more.

has influenced the social values in Malay culture and has led to reformation in many aspects of Malay society. Adding to this, the work of the emancipation movement in Malaysia especially in early 1970s has changed the Malay's perspective on women's role in society. Equal opportunity in activities was part of the benefit women gained from the movement. They started to become employed as well as engaging in other activities including social functions and leisure activities (Noorsiah, 1998:2). This has made it possible for women to join kompang troupes in their communities as well as other activities.

Consequently, today, both men and women play the kompang. Some kompang troupes are made up of men and women, but there are also kompang troupes consisting of only women players. Age and maturity are no longer an important consideration in making up a kompang troupe. Nowadays, not only mature people play the kompang as the instrument is also played by the younger generation including teenagers and primary school children. Now the members of the kompang troupe in Johor are predominantly young players aged from fifteen to thirty. It is also interesting to note that in some places, not only the Malay people play the kompang, but other ethnic groups including Chinese and Indian also play it. However, the number of people from other ethnic groups involve in kompang ensembles is very small and kompang playing is not considered to be their music. Most of those who take part in the ensemble are simply appreciating the music and putting in themselves into the cultural melting pot. Beside, the role of kompang

playing is not applicable to their culture³³. The komping is no longer reserved exclusively for men but is considered as “everyone’s instrument”.

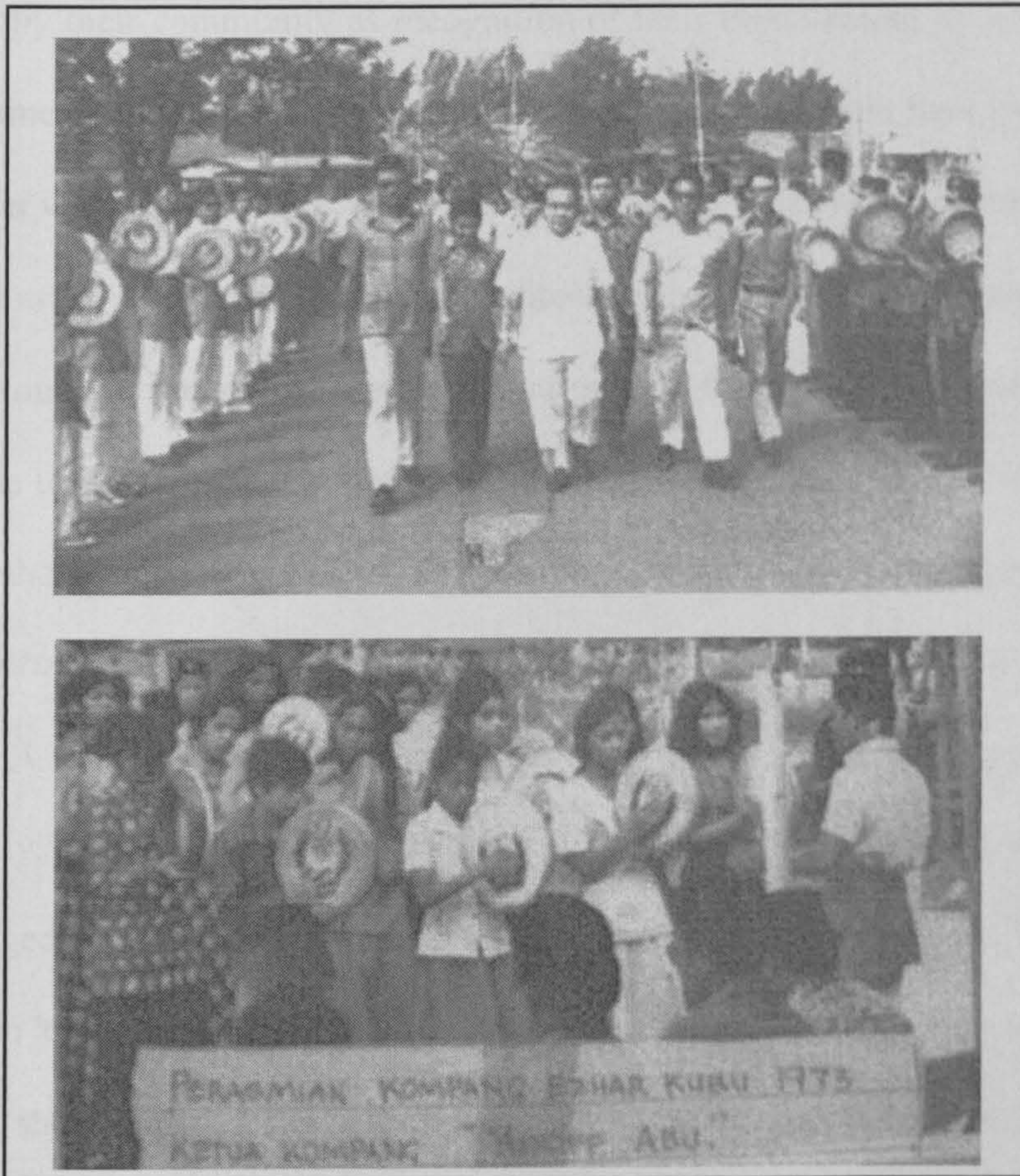


Plate 7h: The Komping Ezhar greeting a very important guest in 1973 (above), Women and children play the komping in 1973 (below). Both pictures are taken from Yusoff Abu’s collection.

Komping players especially the teacher of the troupe were highly respected not only by their players but also by their community. The komping teacher who was also normally a *guru silat* (master of the martial art), or a leader in the

³³ Interview with Muhammad Zamri, a komping player from kampong Air Baloi, Pontian Johor on 23 February 2003.

community was not only respected for their leadership but also respected for their skill in performance, especially in playing the *Meningkah* part in the kompong ensemble. Some outstanding kompong leaders were given various respectful nicknames by their community as recognition of their involvement in the kompong troupe. Some of them, even, are better known by their nickname than by their real name. This was demonstrated clearly to me during my fieldwork when I asked a few villagers in Kubu, Melaka for the direction to Yusof Abu's (*khalifah* of a kompong troupe in Melaka) house. Many of them did not recognize that name and were unable to give me directions to his house. However, a man asked me whether the person that I meant was Pak Usop Kompong or not. Thinking that I might meet a new important kompong player since he added the word "kompong" at the end of his name, I said yes. Then he showed me the way to the man's house. Coincidentally, the house he showed to me was Yusof Abu's house. Yusof Abu acknowledged that he is better known as Pak Usop Kompong by the villagers and few of them know his real name. The nickname "Pak" is added by the villagers in front of his short name – Usop is to show their respect for him. The word "Pak" is a diminutive from the word "Bapak" (father), which children use to speak to or about their father (Daddy) or a nickname given to a respected man in the village. While the word "Kompong" is added to his name to show that he is regarded for his skill in and contribution to kompong playing.

Formerly, only mature and respected players could teach kompong playing in the community. If there were no skilful player in the village, a well-known kompong teacher from a nearby village would be invited to train the troupe. The

trainer would proudly use his skill to train the troupe which he normally did without payment, if there were payment it would be in the form of a gift such as a set of clothes after the troupe had completed training. It was an honour for a kompong teacher to be trusted to train a kompong troupe. In the Kompong Ezhar organization, only a person who has been approved by the *Mahaguru* (the master) can teach kompong playing. In order to get this approval, a player must be able to demonstrate his skill in and knowledge about kompong playing to the *Mahaguru*. This means that all kompong teachers are highly respected not only by their trainees but also by the community.

As kompong playing is acquiring new roles in the Malay society such as being used to welcome an important guest and supporting a team in a sports match, more and more kompong troupes have been set up by organizations across the country purposely for those functions. These new kompong troupes are made up from the members of organizations. Many of them have no skill and experience in kompong playing. Those who have some knowledge and skill about the ensemble will be appointed by the head of the organization to train the troupe. If no one in the troupe has sufficient skill, a kompong player from outside the organization will be paid to train the troupe. In this case, money is more the concern of the trainer than the honour of teaching a kompong troupe. Generally, the relationship between the players and the trainer is impersonal. The trainer might be respected by the players because of his duty to the troupe but not as a person who holds an important role in the community. However, most of the traditional kompong troupes informally

formed in villages are still supervised by mature, skilful and respected kompang teachers even where the players of the troupe are dominated by younger generation.

CLASHING TRADITION

As I have indicated throughout this thesis, the kompang which holds significant roles in Malay society is not always admired by all classes of people in Malaysia. Clashing cultures and changing of social values among the Malay people derived from the acculturation process which is largely influenced by Western culture has changed the Malay's perspective toward kompang playing. This has split the Malay attitude toward kompang playing into two different perspectives. One is associated with a traditionalist group who place a high regard on the traditional music and the other with a modernist group who place western influenced musical genres at the top of their musical preference list. Though, it is not possible to divide precisely the Malay people into traditionalist or modernist groups because some of them lie on the continuum line between these two groups. Traditionalist group can be described as people who still strongly hold and practice their tradition and culture in everyday life. Generally, the Malay people who lie in this group live in the village or outside of the urban area. Meanwhile the modernist group is mainly the people who live in town areas. They openly accept and adopt western culture in their life. The reason for this is because the intrusion of western culture in Malaysia especially through mass media is largely happen in urban area. This phenomenon has encouraged the Malay people to accept and practice western way of life. Unconsciously, this has slackened the Malay soul to their culture and tradition.

Gradually, western culture blends with local tradition and becomes widely practiced by the Malay people. Contrarily, even though people who live in rural areas have also access to mass media, the impact of the western influence on the Malay people is considerably smaller than in urban area. Because of that, some people still hold and proudly practice their tradition in everyday life. In the case of kompong playing, the traditionalist not only preserves the authentic elements of the kompong playing but still performs the ensemble in its original form.

The clashing culture between these two groups is observable. To show the case, I observed a group of children from a village in Melaka cheerfully hanging around a *balai raya* waiting for their *khalifah* for a kompong practice session. On the other hand, at different place, another group of youngsters proudly strummed their guitars (even if not properly tuned) or another group in front of a shopping complex at Kuala Lumpur “hanging” with MP3 player earphones plugged into their ears enjoying western style music. These two different phenomena provide strong evidence for the clash of social values in contemporary Malay society. On the one hand, kompong playing is regarded as important music in society while on the other hand the kompong is treated as second class music.

The word kompong is synonymous with Malay society especially so in the Southwest of Peninsular Malaysia. Because of its significant role in the society, it is often used as a metaphor where the word kompong carries a number of extra meanings for groups of people. The metaphors are only understood within the circle of communication of particular groups. For example, it is common to hear people

ask that “*Bila awak nak dikompangkan?*” (When will you be “kompanged”?). The hidden meaning behind this question is “When will you have your wedding ceremony?” In this case, the term “dikompangkan” in the question no longer refers to the instrument or the music itself but means that the wedding is officially announced. Another example is when people talking among themselves after a visit by an important guest such as political figure or high officer to a function in a village. In the conversation, sometimes people also comment that “*Kedatangannya telah “dikompangkan” oleh penduduk kampung*” (His arrival was “kompanged” by the villagers). The underlying meaning of the comment is that the guest was greeted with a very warm welcome. This situation is similar to western culture where a guest is welcomed with the red carpet.

On the contrary, the word “kompang” is also given a few negative metaphors by some people. For example, I heard in a music practice room a young man shout at the drummer because he had missed the tempo a few times, “*Hoi, kalau tak tahu main, baik balik main kompanglah*” (Hi, if you do not know how to play that, it would be better for you to go home and play the kompang). In this case, the kompang ensemble music is assumed to be easy to play as compared to pop music and as only being played by people with low musicality. It also shows that the music of the kompang ensemble is regarded as second class music by this particular group. Furthermore, the sound of the kompang ensemble is also unpleasant to some people. The following example, a comment made by a teacher to his pupil in a private piano lesson, illustrates the case. The teacher’s comment was “*Muzik apa yang kau main, bunyi macam ‘kompang pecah’ saja*” (What kind of

music are you playing? It is sounds just like a “broken kompang”). Metaphorically, the music played by the pupil is referred to as having the sound of a broken kompang, which was an unpleasant sound for the teacher.

The changing social climate resulting from the influx of the western culture has changed the perception of the new urban generation toward the roles of kompang playing. Some people, especially the younger generation eagerly follow the fashionable ways of living to show that they are not old-fashioned and are in touch with the “modern” way of life. The Kompang is often associated with older people in rural areas leading a traditional way of life. Even though in reality, the instrument is also performed by the younger generation especially in non-urbanized areas (in fact, in some places in Johor, the younger generation dominates the kompang troupes), kompang playing is considered as outdated and not following the current trend. Because of that, many functions which were traditionally celebrated with the presence of a kompang troupe are no longer. Instead, the Western ways of celebrating a function have been adopted.

The association of kompang playing with celebrating a traditional wedding ceremony is a very significant one. The wedding ceremony is regarded as not proper and incomplete by some people if it happens without the presence of a kompang troupe. In some places, the invitation of a kompang troupe is part of the main agenda in planning a wedding ceremony. The bigger the kompang troupe invited to perform on the wedding day, the livelier the ceremony will be. This is how traditionalist groups value kompang playing. But, this value is in sharp contrast

with the modernist group. Having a wedding ceremony at a five star hotel with all the modern, western-style “gear” is always a dream. The kompong ensemble is no longer on the agenda to liven up the wedding ceremony as it was at their parent’s wedding in the past. Instead, a chamber music group softly plays waltzes and ballad music is preferred as a background to their wedding ceremony. Moreover, organizing a wedding dinner in a banquet hall with chamber music or inviting a pop star with the band to entertain the guests in a ballroom shows the wealth and stylishness of the bride’s family.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

KOMPANG CULTURES

At the beginning of this thesis, I firmly stated that my main aim in this study is to carefully present kompong playing in Malay society. To that end, information about kompong playing was gathered in the main through a study in a large geographical area of the West coast of Peninsular Malaysia. All the information about the kompong in the area of focus was carefully collected, recorded, transcribed, analyzed, compared and properly documented. From that information, I have drawn an ethnographic analysis of kompong playing in Malay society based on the data gathered from these two approaches. In this chapter, I will summarise all the information and findings on this topic. Finally, I will state my conclusions so that they may be useful for future research.

It is apparent that the longstanding interaction of the Malay people with foreign cultures has produced a complex cultural transformation and a unique Malay tradition. Historically, it has been possible to show that the Malay people have consecutively encountered three main foreign cultures over the past centuries – Hindu from the Indian continent, Islam from Arab World and later culture from the Western World. The arrival of the Indian people not only brought Hinduism but also introduced the Hindu culture to the local people. The influence of Hindu culture in Malay tradition was very great. Some of the elements from Hindu culture can be clearly seen to have survived in the life of the Malay people today. A good example for this is observed in the traditional Malay wedding ceremony. Some of the rituals

such as applying henna to the bride's fingers and *bersanding*³⁴ obviously follow the Hindu's tradition. Apart from some mantras and incantations of which some elements were adopted from Hindu culture, in music, one can easily observe the Indian musical instruments performed on by Malay people such as the *tabla*, *serunai* and *gendang*. Undoubtedly, the influence on the Malay musical culture especially of the shadow plays of the two great Hindu epics – *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* has been very great (see Matusky, 1980).

The coming of Islam into the Malay world, starting from the 13th Century, has undoubtedly changed some of the cultural practices in Malay society. Islam that was peacefully brought by the Arab and Indian merchants into the Malay world is now being practiced by most of the Malay people. Religious devotion continued to be important to the Islamization of the Malay. As Islam also came through the Indian continent, before arriving in the Malay world, the Islam of the Arab World had become mixed with Indian culture. This reduced religious conflict when Islam was introduced to the Malay people after the 13th century. Islam also approved some forms of music to be used in devotion to God. The close relationship between the Malay people and the "lawful" music of Islam led to the development of new musical ideas and exchanges of musical repertoire between these two bodies of musical culture. Consequently, many elements from Islam and Arab culture have been adopted by the Malay people. This phenomenon is not only seen in religious practices but can also be seen in musical activities. For example, many musical forms from Islamic culture such as singing in praise of the prophet and Allah as well

³⁴ The bride and the groom are seated side by side on a decorated dais.

as performing on the drums - including the *kompang* - have been adopted by the Malay people.

However, the spread of Western culture through colonization as well as modern technology into the Malay World has influenced some of the cultural practices in Malay society. The intrusion of the Western people and Western culture into the life of the Malay people has interfered with the elements of the already mixed culture previously possessed by the Malay people. Unlike the expansion of Hinduism and Islam, which was basically the expansion of religious systems, Western religions did not have a strong impact on the Malay culture, but the influence of Western civilization was important in the intellectual and technological development of Malaysia. The most noticeable impact of Western civilization on the Malay people is not only seen on the musical practice but also in how the Malay people perceive their traditional culture. In music, Western people introduced their musical forms as well as instruments into Malay culture. As a result, many Western musical instruments such as the violin, trumpet and piano have been performed on by Malay people. Some of the musical instruments are not only used in the original forms of performance as in western culture but have also been absorbed into the local musical forms such as in *keroncong*, *bangsawan* and *joget*.

Living in a multicultural country, it is inevitable that the Malay people have been exposed to various cultural elements from outside of their own culture. Thus, the adaptation and syncretism of the foreign culture with the indigenous culture

have occurred incautiously. This phenomenon has led to the establishment of many new forms of musical activities. Kompang playing is one of the results of the adaptation and syncretism of the foreign culture by the Malay people. Because of the different ways of receiving the musical elements by different groups of people in different places, some of the musical practices were performed differently by different groups of people. For example, the way the kompang ensembles perform is slightly different from one place to another. Even if the roles of kompang playing in Malay society remain the same – providing religious devotion as well as enjoyment, the type of rhythms performed on the instrument are distinct. Moreover, the types of song in the repertoires are also different.

The differences of the kompang playing from one place to another can be seen clearly from the analyses presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 in this thesis. In Chapter 4, I explain in detail the Kompang Ezhar ensemble which performs mainly in the state of Melaka as well some other states. As one could see the repertoire of the Kompang Ezhar is different from the repertoire of the Kompang Johor and the Kompang Perak. However, if analyzed in terms of the playing and the orchestration techniques of all types of kompang ensemble in all areas, it is found that they have all adopted the same techniques. Thus, with many other similarities between these ensembles, one can conclude that all these ensembles originated from the same source but may have been received, perceived and syncreticized differently by different group of people at different times. The Kompang Ezhar organization is considered quite new as compared to others types of the kompang ensemble. It was established in the 1960s following some modification of the kompang ensemble

carried out in Java, Singapore and the Malay Peninsular. The main source of the repertoire is still the *zikir* which was brought in from Islamic culture, though many new songs were adopted from older Malay folksongs. A few new beats (*pukulan*) were composed based on the traditional and idiosyncratic rhythms such as *zapin*, *inang*, *joget* and *silat* making it different from the other types of *kompang* ensemble.

The *Kompang Johor* is another type of *kompang* ensemble which performs only in the state of Johor. Unlike the *Kompang Ezhar* and *Kompang Perak*, this *kompang* ensemble performs with an additional instrument, the *jidur*. Looking at the orchestration techniques of the ensemble, it is obvious that this ensemble has been through a process of adjustment to suit the local environment. Given that in the state of Johor the *jidur* is played by mostly people with an ethnic origin in Java, and as the *kompang* is also popular among the same ethnic group, the instrument which was originally used in the *Jiduran* ensemble the *jidur* has been added into the *kompang* ensemble in Johor. This feature had made the *kompang* ensembles performing in Johor different from the *kompang* ensembles performing in other areas. Moreover, if one looks at the repertoire of the *Kompang Johor*, one finds that the ensemble retains its original *zikirs* as well as the beats to accompany the *zikir*. However, as the time has passed and the younger generation has started to become involved in this ensemble, the repertoire of the *Kompang Johor* has become richer with many new beats and songs added to suit the taste of the later players and audience. The ensemble performs not only to accompany the *zikir* (in Arabic) but also to accompany many Malay songs including folksong and old popular songs sung by famous artists from the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, recently, some of the

kompang troupes in Johor have started to compose new beats or have imitated contemporary beats to accompany many of the new songs sung by popular artists who head the charts of the music industry in Malaysia.

This situation is quite different with the Kompang Perak ensembles. Until the present, the songs and the beats in the repertoire have remained “protected” by the “hardcore” players in the state of Perak and Selangor. I have not encountered any of the troupes in the Kompang Perak ensembles who have tried to invent or add new beats to the repertoire. If there were any attempt to invent new beats from “inside” the Kompang Perak ensemble, it would be strongly resisted by the “hardcore” players. However, as it is not immune from change and the concept of culture belongs to everybody, the authentic-ness of the Kompang Perak is influenced from “outside” the ensemble. As I explained in Chapter 7, the *Pukulan Hadrah* of the Kompang Perak had been modified by contemporary composers to accompany contemporary songs. Even though the composer had powerful reasons for doing that, it still does not satisfy some traditional kompang players. However, there is nothing they can do to stop it from happening again.

To the extent that Malay culture has long been exposed to foreign culture, the cultural transformation and development has been a complicated process. The Malay cultural possibilities are and always have been subject to change. Thus, the ways the Malay perceives elements in the cultural transformation are differ from one to another. For example the modernist group perceives the roles of kompang playing differently from the traditionalist group. As discussed in some detail in

Chapter 7, the contradictions between the traditionalist and modernist groups in their views on kompong playing in the society are very clear. In general, the modernist group is more open and willing to accept changes in the kompong performance while the traditionalist group trying to protect the “authentic-ness” of kompong playing. As the tradition is never been legally protected, it is always up to the practitioners to maintain and modify, to accept change or to reject it. As a result, in kompong playing, many players have been trying to establish new ways of performing as well as adding new roles to kompong playing. As previously discussed some changes in the kompong playing may be accepted by some people but may be rejected by other people. This contradiction is unlikely to come to an end while the Malay people possess a dynamic culture.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It appears that, as discussed earlier, the increasing of intercultural connections, the migration of people, and the establishing of borderless media flows also offer new roles and meaning to kompong playing. Consequently, contemporary musicians tend to construct new identities as they progress in their careers, in gaining an audience, exploiting the traditional elements and giving new meaning to music. The kompong and the issues related to this topic are changing along with the changes in cultural practices. Kompong playing, which was first ‘borrowed’, then “adopted” and is now universally accepted and is described as a Malay traditional music, is still looking toward what will happen in the next generation. There is a question that arises from this phenomenon, just like *bangsawan* and *zapin* which

were transformed from popular cosmopolitan musical genres into “traditional Malay performing arts”. Will kompong playing retain its traditional values and be permanently placed in the category of “the Malay traditional music” or on the contrary, will it transform into a popular cosmopolitan musical genre in the future? It will difficult to answer this question precisely unless further study of this issue is carried out in the future.

The kompong, from day to day, is embedding deeper and deeper into the Malay soul as it is gaining popularity, either as a “traditional” instrument used in traditional functions or as a “symbolic” instrument used in contemporary functions for the sake of “traditionalizing” or “Malayizing” the western influence on functions. With the spirit of nationalism and the recent awareness of a need to preserve the local traditions carried by the Malay people, the kompong is one of the “national heritages” that has been conspicuously pointed out by various parties such as government bodies, cultural activists, learning institutions, contemporary musicians and tourism boards. Ironically, the effort to use the kompong to “naturalize” the westernized functions that have encroached into the Malay culture lately is seen as jeopardizing the traditional values of the instrument. Even though it might become more popular in term of usage that does not guarantee that it will keep its original roles in Malay society.

Based on the current situation, I can predict that the kompong playing will change in the future. There are sufficient evidences to show that the changes will occur not only in the construction techniques of the instrument but also in traditional

roles of kompang playing as well as the playing techniques. Based on the current interest among the contemporary users in using the instrument in contemporary music, it will not be surprised if the new materials such as the use of plastic or fibreglass technology will replace the tropical wood as the frame while the plastic diaphragm will be used to replace the animal skin as the skinhead. The new construction techniques of the instrument possibly will change parallel to the development of new technology in material making. Furthermore, as I observed in many places, many younger players are very keen to compose new rhythms on the kompang to accompany many new contemporary songs that most preferred by them. By the time, I believe, many new rhythms will be composed and accepted by the kompang players and will become part of their repertoire. More than that, with the eagerness to blend the traditional elements in the new composition in order to “traditionalize” the Western music, it is not surprise if the kompang will become an important instrument included in this type of composition. If this happen, one might see the instrument will become an independent instrument and no longer used to interlock with each other as in its traditional way of orchestration.

After all, all these changes, either it will be accepted or not, the Malay people have to face this reality of life. With the dynamic culture that the Malay people now possess, I wonder how my grandchildren will perceive kompang playing twenty years from now. I can say that the ending of this study is not an ending of the investigation into kompang playing in Malay society; instead, it is the beginning of further studies into the next issues related to the kompang.

APPENDIXES

GLOSSARY

Appendix 1 Some *Hadiths* about the Frame Drum

A few other *hadiths* can also be taken into account as evidence of the official approval of frame drum playing by Prophet Muhammad. One of the *hadiths* is reported as:

“Narrated by Ar-Rubai bint Muauwidh:

The Prophet came to me after consummating his marriage with me and sat down on my bed as you (the sub-narrator) are sitting now, and small girls were beating the duff and singing in lamentation of my father who had been killed on the day of the battle of Badr. Then one of the girls said, 'There is a Prophet amongst us who knows what will happen tomorrow'. The Prophet said (to her), 'Do not say this, but go on saying what you have spoken before.'”

(Volume 5, Book 59, Number 336) (MSA-USC Hadith Database, 2003)

The above *hadith* explains that Prophet Muhammad denied that he knew what would happen in the future but asked the girl to continue singing and playing her *duff* (frame drum). Another *hadith* below also clearly shows that Prophet Muhammad had approved the playing of the frame drum when he asked a woman to fulfill her vow to play the *duff* over him. The *hadith* is reported as:

“Narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As:

A woman came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: Apostle of Allah, I have taken a vow to play the duff over you.

He said: Fulfil your vow.

She said: And I have taken a vow to perform a sacrifice in such a place, a place in which people had performed sacrifices in pre-Islamic times.

He asked: For an idol?

She replied: No.

He asked: For an image?

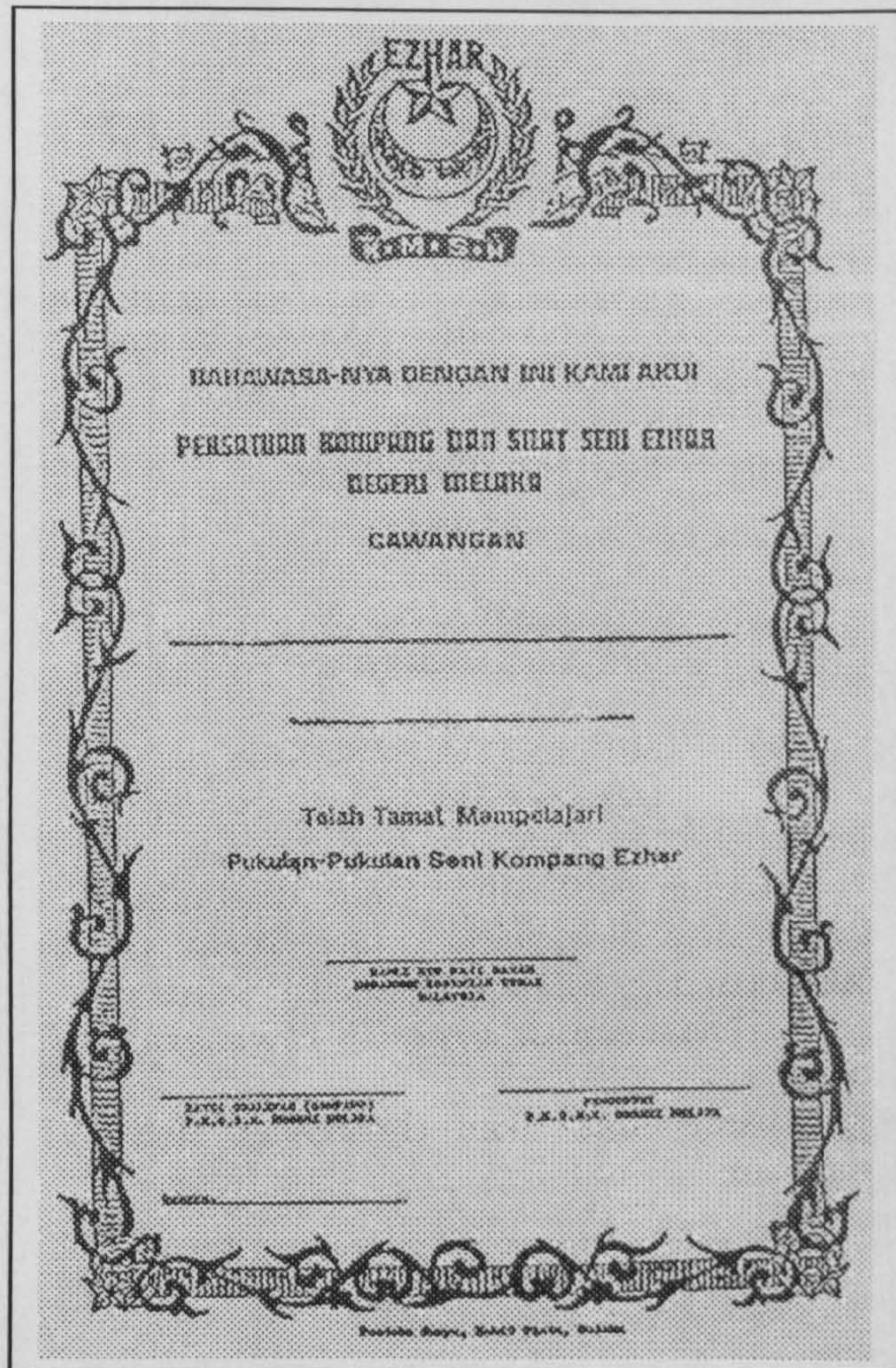
She replied: No.

He said: Fulfil your vow”

(Book 21, Number 3306: Sunan Abu Dawud), (MSA-USC Hadith Database, 2003)

Appendix 2 Types of Certificate in the Kompang Ezhar Organization

1. Certificate awarded for newly set-up branch



Translation

With this certificate we certify that The Kompang and Silat Ezhar Organization, State of Melaka, branch _____ has completely learned the arts of Kompang Ezhar playing.

Signed by

The *Mahaguru*

Chief Trainer

The President

2. Certificate of completion of training awarded to successful trainees



Translation

This is to certify that _____ (*name of the trainee*) _____ has completed the training in Kumpang Ezhar playing at the Kumpang and Silat Ezhar Organization branch _____ organized by the Kumpang and Silat Ezhar Organization, State of Melaka.

Signed by the Mahaguru and Date

3. Certificate awarded to the assistant trainer at a newly set-up branch



Translation

With this certificate we certify that _____ Identity Card No: _____ has undergone the Kompang Ezhar training at branch _____ and has followed all the *zikirs* and rhythms according to the Ezhar organization. He is allowed to continue the training at his branch under the order of the Chief Trainer as the Assistant Trainer.

Signed by

Chief Trainer

Appendix 3 Titles of the *Zikir* in the *Kompang Perak* Ensemble

Titles of the *zikirs* which are taken from the *Kitab Berzanji* performed with *kompang* accompaniment in the states of Perak and Selangor. The page numbers of the *zikir* are based on the *Kitab Berzanji* published by Maktab Wastabtul Ma'arif, 32, Jalan Bukum, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. This is the most well-known *Kitab Berzanji* published in Malaysia and is used by all the *kompang* players throughout the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

Title	First verse (in Arabic text)	Page
<i>Khairuman</i>	خَيْرٌ مِّنْ وَطِئِ الثَّرَى الْمُسْفَعِ فِي الْوَرَى	7
<i>Bissahri</i>	بِشْهَرٍ رَّبِيْعٍ قَدْ بَدَأَ نُورُهُ الْأَعْلَى	12
<i>Tanakkolta</i>	تَنَقَّلْتِ فِي أَصْلَابِ أَرْبَابِ سُودِي	16
<i>Walidalhabibu</i>	وُلِدَ الْحَبِيْبُ وَخَدُّهُ مُتَوَرِّدُ	23
<i>Hasolal</i>	حَصَلَ الْقَصْدُ وَالْمَرَادُ وَصَفَى الْوَقْتُ وَالْوَدَادُ	26
<i>Fiimisli</i>	فِي مِثْلِ حُسْنِكَ تُعَدُّ الْعُشَّاقُ	29
<i>Alhamd</i>	الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَعْطَانِي	31
<i>Badatlana</i>	بَدَتْ لَنَا فِي رَبِيْعِ طَلْعَةِ الْقَمَرِ	33

<i>Falakam</i>	فَلَا تَكْفُرُوا لَهَا مِنْ آيَةٍ مَسْهُورَةٍ	41
<i>Faturkohul</i>	فَطَّرَ الْوَصْدِ أَضْحَتْ مُسْتَقِيمَةً	42
<i>Faarot</i>	فَارَتْ حَلِيمَةً مِنْ رِضَاعِ مُحَمَّدٍ	45
<i>Ta'allam</i>	تَعَلَّمَ لَيْسَهُ الْغُصْنُ الْقَوِيمُ	48
<i>Manmislu</i>	مَنْ مِثْلُ أَحْمَدَ فِي الْكُونَيْنِ هَوَاهُ	51

Glossary

Adhan	The call for the daily prayers is called the Adhan. The person who calls the Adhan is called a Mu'adhin. A Mu'adhin calls the Adhan five times a day before Muslims perform their daily Salah (Prayer). The Adhan is composed of specific words and phrases to be recited loudly in the Arabic language so that the neighbours can recognize the time schedule for the prayers.
Baju Melayu	Traditional Malay attire for men.
Baju Kurung	Traditional Malay attire for women.
Balai raya	A hall-like building built in the village by the government or local authority for public use.
Tudung	Scarf or head cover for women.
Bakal	A piece of wood cut out in a round shape and used to make a kompong's frame.
Baluh	A round wooden frame of a kompong.
Belulang	The head of the kompong made of goatskin hide.
Bersanding	The bride and the groom are seated side by side on a decorated dais.
Bibir	The open end of the kompong's frame.
Bum	Mnemonic name used for the lowsound of a kompong.
Ding	Mnemonic name used for the low sound of a kompong.
Eid Adha	An Islamic festival is held to celebrate the pilgrimage, starting from the 10 th of Zulhijjah (a month in the Islamic calendar) every year.
Gurindam	Malay traditional phrases.
Guru	Teacher or instructor.
Hadith	Reports of the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) or what he witnessed and approved are called Hadiths. These are the true explanations, interpretations, and

	living examples given by the Prophet (s.a.w.) for the teachings of the Qur'an. His sayings are found in books called the Hadith books. Some famous collectors of Hadiths are Imam Al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam An-Nasa'i, Imam Abu Dawood, Imam At-Tirmizi, and Imam Majah. There are many others.
Hari menggantung	Decorating days for wedding in the state of Perak.
Hari mempelai	Wedding day in the state of Perak.
Istiadat perkhataman	Closing ceremony upon the completion of kompong training.
Kabung	A cut out piece of wood in a square shape used to make a kompong's frame.
Kampong	A Malay term for a village or settlement.
Ketua Khalifah	Head or chief trainer of the kompong troupe.
Ketupat	A boiled rice cake wrapped in woven coconut leaves.
Khalifah	The word Khalifah refers to the successor or representative of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) or to one of his successors. This person acts as the head of state for the Muslim Ummah. Another title for the Khalifah (English Caliph) is Amir Al-Mu'mineen which means 'the leader of the believers'. Another use for this word is for humanity in general. The human being is considered the Khalifah (representative) of Allah on earth according to Allah.
Kitab Berzanji	A Muslim religious book, in which the texts contain words praising Prophet Muhammad.
Lapik	A round shaped piece of wood used to line the kompong's frame during the process of attaching the head.
Lubang bunyi	A small hole in the kompong's frame.
Mahaguru	The master of the kompong players.
Mak Andam	A traditional beautician who also leads all the ritual events in the wedding ceremony.
Malam Berinai	The night before a Malay wedding ceremony.
Mauled Nabi	Birthday celebration of Prophet Muhammad.

Melarik	The carving process of the kompang's frame.
Melalu	Basic part in the kompang music.
Menganak	The variation part of the kompang music.
Mengocok	Ad-lib or free rhythm of the kompang music.
Mengulit	The process of attaching the head onto the frame of a kompang.
Pak (1)	Mnemonic name used to describe the high sound of a kompang.
Pak (2)	Shortened form of <i>bapak</i> meaning father, or a nickname given to an older and respected person.
Pasak	A peg made of a triangle-shaped piece of wood used to tighten the head of the kompang.
Pantun	Malay traditional verses.
Penanda	A bar-shaped piece of wood with a nail at each end of the bar used to mark a circle on the <i>kabung</i> as a guide for the carving process.
Peningkah	Counter part of the kompang music.
Penyedak	A spatula-shaped piece of wood used to press a small rattan between the frame and the head on the underside of a kompang, for tuning purposes.
Penyelang	Alternating part of the kompang music.
Perarakan pengantin	Wedding procession.
Prang	A second mnemonic name used for the high sound of a kompang
Pukulan	Beat or a resultant rhythmic pattern of kompang music.
Rentak	Rhythm or beat.
Rumah larik	A workshop where the carving process of the kompang's frame is done.

Sedak	A small piece of rattan inserted on the underside of a kompang between the frame and the head, for tuning purposes.
Sentong	A disc-shaped piece of iron with six or seven iron hooks used to tighten the head during the process of attaching the head of a kompang.
Simpai	The iron ring used to clip the skin hide during the process of attaching the head of a kompang.
Syair	Melodious traditional Malay phrases.
Tawasul	Mumbled recitation of incantation in the ceremony to mark the end of kompang training.
Tudung saji	A food cover made from screw pine leaves and woven into attractive patterns.
Zikir (zikr)	Arabic phrases recited in praise of Prophet Muhammad.

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