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6

The pig story

6.1 Introduction

The next story of family conflict is a story about a pig (sakkoko). The story tells how two neighbouring kin groups residing in the same valley of Simatalu became involved in a harsh assault on account of a pig. One of the kin groups received the pig from the other as a bride-price. After receiving the pig, the new owner failed to keep the pig in its pen, and the pig presumably wandered back to the group from which it had come. The new owner did not know that, and kept searching for the missing pig. Finally the former owner recognized the pig walking around the communal house. Instead of returning the pig to the new owner, however, the former owner shot the pig and ate the pork. The slaughter of this pig became the focus of a serious conflict between the two groups. In this chapter I present several versions of the pig story.

Both the mango story in Chapter 5 and the wild boar story in Chapter 7 relate the migratory movements of several Mentawai kin groups, but they do not describe the migrations in as detailed a way as they are described in the pig story. The pig story gives the details needed for the discussion of migratory actions in Chapter 9. Therefore, I made use of the pig story to get information about the early migrations of Mentawai ancestors. The pig story also portrays the separation process in which families of a particular kin group split into several new kin groups. It appears that the process of migration resulted in families of a kin group expanding both genealogically and geographically. For these reasons, I decided to use the pig story to illustrate the migration and expansion of Mentawai kin groups.

Besides, the pig story illustrates a particular aspect of Mentawai culture, which is animal husbandry. Domesticated animals like pigs have an important place in Mentawai culture. A person’s animals show how prosperous and respected that person is. Therefore, before looking thoroughly at the pig story, I want to describe the traditional way Mentawaians raise pigs, for what purposes they tame the animals, and the role of pigs in Mentawaians’ daily lives.
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Afterwards I give translations of three versions of the pig story. I then analyse the pig story briefly, before concluding the chapter.

6.2 The domestication of pigs

Mentawaians traditionally raise pigs. Having pigs benefits the whole family. Every family member is involved in taking care of the pigs, as the pigs need to be fed every day. Adult men cut down trunks of sago palm growing near their homestead and divide them into several small logs. They soak these logs in the river in order to maintain the quality of the soft part of the sago and to prevent the log becoming rotten. The logs float near a riverbank close by. Women and young people go to the riverbank to take a log of sago whenever they need to feed their pigs. They divide up the log into smaller portions so that the pigs can eat the soft part of the sago easily.

Mentawai houses are built on strong wooden stilts. Under the house floor there is enough space to keep several pigs. Mentawaians sometimes fence in a pen under their house where they can closely watch their pigs. Alternatively, people may build a pig pen with a roof next to their house, or near their garden by a riverbank. Pigs are not tamed completely. They are free to roam around in the vicinity of people's houses during daylight in order to find something to eat. The pigs return to the pen in the evening, and family members feed them sago palm there.

Before a family starts raising pigs, the father of the family usually carries out a small ritual in order to prevent the pigs from being eaten by snakes, being stolen by other people, and from illnesses that can wipe out all pigs at once. Prior to carrying out the ritual, the father has to observe a number of taboos, such as not eating uncooked foods and not having sexual relations for a period of time, usually three or four weeks. During the ritual, the father marks the new pigs (usually bought from neighbours) by cutting away a small part of the pigs' ears in order that the family may easily recognize which pigs belong to them.

Mentawaians sometimes eat pork on ordinary days, for instance if there is no meat from hunting wild animals. However, they slaughter their pigs for various rituals, the ritual for a newly born baby, the wedding ritual, the new house ritual, the healing ritual, and a few minor rituals. A crew from England making a documentary film and I were in Simatalu in 1998 when a father of a family performed the ritual for his son's new house. We were allowed to experience the entire process and we made a documentary of it (Wawman, 1999). We witnessed the father sacrificing four pigs for his son's new house. The father 'read' a prediction of good luck, good health, and prosperity for his son and the rest of the family when he examined the hearts of the ritually blessed
and ritually slaughtered pigs. Mentawaians may also read their fortune by examining the intestines of ritually blessed and ritually slaughtered chickens.

Skulls and bones of the ritually slaughtered pigs are collected in a special part of the family’s house. The Mentawai communal house (*uma*) is generally divided into four sections: *laibokat* (veranda) at the front of the house; behind that, the *abut kerei* (where people make a fire for rituals); behind that, the *puturukat* (where people usually perform dancing during rituals and adult men sleep in this room); and at the back of the house, the *baligat* or *katubaga* (where women and children sleep and cook daily meals). The *laibokat* and the *abut kerei* are the parts of the communal house relevant for the ritual slaughter of pigs.

Skulls and bones of domesticated animals are kept separate from those of wild animals. Skulls and bones of wild animals like monkeys, deer, and wild pigs are placed in the *abut kerei*, tied to a wooden board above the fire. Whenever people ritually cook meats, these skulls and bones get warm and smoky, to propitiate the forest spirits. In the Mentawai way of thinking, people do not take care of animals in the wilderness. It is the forest spirits who take care of wild animals. After the meat of wild animals has been eaten, the skulls and bones are placed near the fire as a sign of respect. Mentawaians assume that the forest spirits will be glad and will bring prosperity to the family when they see that the family have been taking good care of the skulls and bones of wild animals. The skulls are positioned towards the outside of the house, communicating to the spirits of other wild animals living in the wilderness. If people show the proper respect to the forest spirits by performing the appropriate rituals, then they will have better luck hunting, and will more easily catch wild animals. And the forest spirits will not be angry at the hunters.

In contrast, Mentawaians tie the skulls and bones of domesticated animals, mostly pigs, to a wooden board on the *laibokat*, far away from the *abut kerei*. Hanging these skulls of domesticated animals outside the house and far away from the fire is meant to allow the bones to be ‘possessed’ by the cold. These skulls and bones do not need to be warmed, because the slaughtered pigs have been cared for by people. The skulls and bones are positioned towards the inside of the house. By doing so, the spirits of the slaughtered pigs may remain in the surroundings near the house where they were raised.

Besides their place in rituals and daily meals, pigs are highly valuable as payments in a variety of social transactions. Bride-prices and fines are commonly paid by surrendering a few pigs. *Ibat pangurei* (wedding meal) is prepared by slaughtering pigs. It is the bride’s family giving the slaughtered pigs to the family of the bridegroom. The size of the pigs slaughtered for the wedding meal indicates how high a bride-price the bride’s family requested. Pigs are also used as gifts given to family members residing elsewhere, or to friends as a symbol of friendship. Above all, having a lot of pigs is important for Mentawaians, because it says something about people’s status in their community, such as *simasakkoko* or ‘people who have pigs’.
So, pigs are very important for Mentawaians. Raising pigs is meant to satisfy Mentawaians’ daily need for meat, to form exchange relationships, as payment for social misdeeds, and to use in rituals.

6.3 A cruel conflict over a pig

During my fieldwork I met individuals from several kin groups in the Mentawai Islands who declared themselves to be descendants of Samongilailai, even though they currently belong to kin groups not named Samongilailai. After listening to their family stories, however, these kin groups all turned out to have ancestral connections to the Samongilailai kin group. They are apparently descendants of the Samongilailai kin group because their family stories define their connections to the early Samongilailai kin group. They tell of the same place of origin from where the Samongilailai commenced to exist as a kin group. They also tell about the same past occurrence that forced the early families of the Samongilailai kin group to leave their homeland in Simatalu for new places elsewhere in the Mentawai Islands. Samongilailai was the initial kin group involved in the conflict over the pig. All the family stories of these different groups mention the same ancestor’s name as being involved in the conflict.

It appears that ancestral connections existing among those kin groups continue to link one family to the others even though these groups had been differentiated by other kin-names and had settled in different places. Below, I begin by looking at the pig story collected from the Salamao kin group residing in the village of Taileleu. Subsequently, I focus on a story from Sioban on Sipora island. The last example is taken from the Samongilailai kin group living in the village of Maileppet. The order of the three stories below simply follows the order in which I collected them.

6.3.1 The pig story as told by the Salamao kin group

In search of Samongilailai kin-group members on Siberut, I arrived at a village called Taileleu located in the southwestern part of Siberut in 2004. I met an old man called Aman Maom (see Photo 6.1). When he was young he was known by the name Terig Kerei. However, after his first son was born and given the name Maom, Terig Kerei changed his name to Aman Maom (‘father of Maom’). In the 1990s his son died in a car accident in Padang, and thereafter he was called Teu Maom. Teu is a shortened form of teteu (grandfather or grandmother). Teu also means ‘poor’ in the sense of losing someone. He is an old man and at the same time a poor man.
Photo 6.1 Aman Maom Salamao
Part Two

He is a shaman of the Salamao kin group. He has been practising shamanism since his oldest son was a little boy, which was in the 1960s. He has three houses. One is located in the government village of Taileleu and the other two are in the upriver place of Taileleu. Aman Maom Salamao’s ancestors were from Samongilailai. However, Aman Maom and his families did not keep the Samongilailai kin-name. After separating from the rest of the Samongilailai kin group, Aman Maom's ancestral families used the kin-name Salamao. The group once lived at a place called Bat Lamao in Silaoinan, from which their kin-name was derived and in which valley the Salamao separated from the Samongilailai. Aman Maom Salamao told me the story of the assault on the pig and his family’s migration to Taileleu. The story is as follows:

**Story 10**

We moved away from Simatalu because we became involved in a dispute with a kin group called Sapokka. The dispute was about a pig. My ancestors told me a story which we must always remember. The story is as follows. Our ancestors lived in Simatalu, and Sapokka [kin group] became one of our ancestors’ neighbours. One of the Sapokka sons got married to one of our ancestors’ daughters. Emeiboblo was our prominent ancestor when the assault occurred. Sapokka offered him a pig as bride-price. Therefore, our ancestor respected Sapokka very well.

One day, Sapokka shot the pig that had been given as our ancestor’s bride-price. After shooting the pig, the Sapokka families ignored the fact that their daughter-in-law was from Samongilailai. She seemed to recognize the pig and she asked about it, but they did not tell her the truth. A few days later, her father Emeiboblo came to visit Sapokka, ‘Perhaps, you have seen my pig, my dear relatives-in-law (kaddei). I have been missing it these recent days. I suppose the pig has returned to you, as it came from you. Therefore, I came to ask if you had seen it here lately.’ Sapokka denied it, ‘No, we did not see any pig that we had given to you.’ Of course, Sapokka deliberately lied to Emeiboblo. Emeiboblo’s daughter heard their conversation.

Afterwards, she went to visit her father’s house and revealed everything she knew about the pig that the Sapokka family had eaten in recent days. After listening to his daughter, Emeiboblo decided to extract a fine from Sapokka. Emeiboblo sought some people as mediators (sipasaili or sipasuili) in order to negotiate the quarrel that had arisen between him and Sapokka. The negotiators arrived at Sapokka’s house, ‘We come to represent Emeiboblo, whose pig has been shot and eaten by you. Emeiboblo already found out that his pig has been shot because his daughter has told him about it. Therefore, we now come to ask you to pay a fine for the pig shot (tulou saina). You have to pay a pig to Emeiboblo to make good with him again.’ After hearing the accusation, Sapokka said, ‘So, that is the reason why you come here. Emeiboblo found out about his pig from his daughter. Because the daughter reported us to her
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father, we are not going to pay the fine. We admit that we shot the pig for special purposes, but we are not going to pay the fine.’ The mediators returned to Emeboblo reporting what Sapokka had said. However, Emeboblo calmed the case down. He postponed discussing the case, he postponed, postponed, postponed in order to find another way to urge Sapokka to replace the shot pig. Emeboblo needed some time to think about it but it was not long enough.

After waiting for few days, Emeboblo sharpened his machete and spear. He did not bring his bow (rourou) and poisoned arrows (silogui) when he visited the house of the Sapokka family. He tried to be inconspicuous to Sapokka. At the house, Sapokka family members were cooking banana. Emeboblo addressed a question to them while he was sitting next to them, ‘Why do you not fulfil the request of negotiators that I sent to talk to you, that you have to pay me a pig as replacement for what you shot?’ Sapokka intentionally rejected Emeboblo’s request and answered him, ‘We do not want to pay it because we just do not want to do so. If you want to get it you have to do that with the shiny, sharpened machete and spear.’ While he stood up, Emeboblo said, ‘I shall do as you wish.’ And the next moment he threw his spear to hit the person who had answered him, who was cooking banana, and then swung his machete to another person sitting next to him. The rest of them ran away out of the house. Then Emeboblo returned home.

However, that occurrence did not frighten the Sapokka at all. They prepared their hunting tools and pursued Emeboblo in order to take their revenge for their two brothers’ death, the brothers who had been assassinated by Emeboblo. Before the Sapokka arrived, however, Emeboblo and his families had left for a place located on a hill called Sigarena. They built a shelter. They opened a garden (mone) as well.

While in exile, Emeboblo’s younger brother wanted to return to Simatalu. He asked Emeboblo for permission for himself and his family to return to Simatalu, ‘As a matter of fact, it was not me who was involved in the violence against the Sapokka. I have decided that they are not going to be violent to us. If all of us [permanently] leave our place, house and pigs, we are losing a lot of things. They are going to take the things away from us. If you do not mind, my families and I will return to our place.’ Emeboblo allowed his younger brother and his family to go back to their home. ‘You may return and take care of our chickens, pigs, house, land and gardens. We still have a few pigs there. They are very important to me. One day we will return to visit you, I promise!’ So, some members of Samongilailai did return to Simatalu. Emeboblo and his family remained at the place Sigarena. He fed his chickens with wild palm trees (bat ariribug). Emeboblo’s younger brother’s family who returned to Simatalu were Lajomanai’s ancestor (punuteteu Lajomanai), Moggui’s ancestor (punuteteu Moggui), and Sisilogpa’s ancestor (punuteteu Sisilogpa). [These are names of three people currently living in the village.]
Part Two

When the Sapokka heard about the return of Samongilailai, they prepared themselves for violence. 'So, have Samongilailai returned? Let us make a deal with them!' Sapokka decided to make an agreement with Samongilailai. Samongilailai was the name of the kin group of Emeiboblo and his brothers. Sapokka arrived, 'We have come to make a deal with you about the death of our two brothers.' Samongilailai said, 'We have nothing to do with the hostility. Our brother Emeiboblo did that. He is now in Teitei Sigarena. If you want revenge, you can visit him there. But we suggest you not go there because they perhaps have already left for a new place, or it may be possible that all of you will get shot by him.' At the place called Teitei Sigarena, Emeiboblo lived with his relatives. One of the relatives was a person called Pajorot. He was the ancestor of descendants that migrated to Sipora. Another relative was the ancestor of those families who moved to the place traditionally called Tateiku [currently the location of the government villages Berisigep and Sigappona], and also the ancestor of those families who later moved to the place called Cempungan.

As promised, Emeiboblo visited his brothers and the rest of the families in Simatalu. The families still had pigs and Emeiboblo wanted to take his share. When he visited them, the brothers were processing sago from palm in order to obtain flour to cook for their daily food. Upon his return, Emeiboblo wanted to know whether the Sapokka were still looking for violence after the return of his brothers and their families. Emeiboblo was not ready for violence; he was always afraid of Sapokka. He therefore hid himself in the house. However, he still felt insecure. He went to climb a tree called toilat. He brought with him a jackfruit (peigu) in order to fill his stomach while he was on top of the tree. Some of the seeds of the jackfruit fell down near the root of the toilat. At evening, when his brothers returned to process sago, he returned home, too. 'I just returned from the toilat tree. I ate jackfruit there. If one day the jackfruit grows there, you should remember that the fruits belong to me. That means they belong to you, too.'

Thereafter, they sacrificed pigs and Emeiboblo took his share and in the early morning returned to his families at Sigarena. Emeiboblo departed with the help of his brothers, 'You shall accompany me and soon after I arrive, you may return home.' They went upriver, upriver and upriver. While they were paddling their canoe, Emeiboblo introduced his brothers to their land and its borders, including rivers. When they approached the big river mouth, they turned to enter the small river called Polime. They kept paddling. 'This is the river called Polime and the land in this area belongs to us.' When they arrived at an area where they found many rattans, Emeiboblo stated, 'This is the border of our land. I have shown you the beginning of its border. It starts from there until it reaches this place where we are now. All of this is our land.'

He arrived at Sigarena and he did not continue migrating in the direction of Cempungan (in the northern part of Siberut), but he chose to migrate southwards to Silaoinan. He moved there and claimed a plot of land afterwards. He
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did not find marks of other people indicating other people’s claim to the land, so he claimed the land himself. But when he arrived at the river mouth of the place called Mongan Masat, where to the right is the river called Bat Sapsap, and carrying on to the upriver place called Tirit Sapsap, he stopped there. He then returned to where he had come from initially. All rivers and plots of land captured within the borders, carrying such names as Mongan Sirau, Mongan Koddobat, Bat Mapiligi, and further downriver Bat Silaoinan, were claimed by him as properties of Emeiboblo and his relatives.

In order to secure the borders of the land, Emeiboblo and his brothers retraced the river called Bat Masat and reached the upper part of the river. They stumbled up hills. They passed through forests on the top of hills, top of hills, top of hills, top of hills. When they arrived at the upriver place called Tirit Magoga, where there were river mouths called Mongan Lamao and Mongan Mongilailai, they came across a forest path where many people from Simatalu walked, leading them to the upriver place called Tirit Samukop, and then they arrived at Sigarena, where Emeiboblo’s lands were situated.

Soon after he returned, he told members of his families, ‘We have extensive land and I shall tell you its borders. Those lands located outside of the borders do not belong to us, because other people had claimed them before us. So, you shall not claim any of that in order not to provoke any conflicts. But land inside of the borders is ours; that land belongs to us, the Samongilailai.’

After they stayed at Sigarena for some time, they began to expand. The ancestor called Sipajorot was a relative of Emeiboblo. He moved away from Siberut. Sipajorot and his family began to depart from Sigarena and arrived at the river mouth called Mongan Sarabua; they passed by a place called Sirau on the right side. And some of them moved to Cempungan, but they did not stay there long. When a harsh hostility among Mentawaians took place in Cempungan, they left Cempungan and went to Saibi Samukop. Then they came to occupy a place called Malamit. Then they moved to Maileppet. Sibeutenga and Siliggai are Sipajorot’s current descendants, who are now dwelling in Mailepet, while other families had immigrated to Sipora.

The rest of Emeiboblo’s relatives moved from Sigarena to the riverbanks of the place called Magoga. Later they moved again to the riverbanks of the place called Lamao. They were thereafter called Salamao.

We are Salamao, who descended from Emeiboblo. Because we lived in the place called Lamao, we got a new kin-name, Salamao. We stayed there, we stayed and stayed and stayed, and later moved on to inhabit the river mouth of the place called Bebetracl. Then we moved to the river mouth of the place called Mongan Palakkokoai, precisely at the place called Sirigdig. From Sirigdig we continued to migrate to here in Taileleu. Our ancestors moved from Sirigdig to Taileleu, because people were hunting them. Those people were called Sabirut. [The storyteller does not clarify who the Sabirut were. He just
Part Two

mentions Sabirut. He might mean people living in the southeastern part of Siberut.

A niece of Emeiboblo was terrified and ran away to hide herself from the sight of the Sabirut, so that her body wrap dropped off and she was consequently naked. The Sabirut found out that the woman was a family member of Samongilailai. The Samongilailai requested to the Sabirut to pay a fine for the embarrassing incident. Sabirut paid that fine by sacrificing their pigs. However, the payment did not make the Sabirut happy, as they knew that the woman was a member of Emeiboblo’s family and thus belonged to the cruel Samongilailai. They therefore assumed that the Samongilailai would kill Sabirut eventually.

In order to convince Sabirut, Samongilailai slaughtered a sigelag pig [sigelag is a particular size of pig, one weighing 50 to 60 kilograms], as a manifestation of Samongilailai’s goodwill. Sabirut put the pork into bamboo tubes; this way of preparing pork is called siliglig [this term is used later to name a plot of land].

In their turn [as a favour to Samongilailai], the Sabirut were willing to accompany the Samongilailai to go to their land at the river mouth of the place called Mongan Masat. Sabirut said, ‘As you said that you have plots of land located at the place called Bat Masat which borders on our land, too, we would like to accompany you there so that we can show you the borders of our land.’

So, from the river mouth of the place called Sabirut, they went upriver to a place called Silaoinan. On the way, they passed a place called Kairogdag.

When they arrived at the place called Mongan Masat, the Sabirut said to the Samongilailai, ‘You can take the land called Masapsap on the left side of the river Bat Masat. The land belongs to us, but Masapsap is now yours as payment for the humiliation of your sister; this land will be called porak tulou pakaila (land for erasing humiliation) but it is also called porak siliglig because of the pig you slaughtered for us, showing your goodwill.’ The Samongilailai stayed there and their numbers grew.

Some of the Samongilailai moved again to some other place located at the river mouth of Rogdag, where they planted mango trees (abbangan), sago palms, and bamboo groves. They built an uma as well. In that place, some of them decided to split up into several groups. Ancestors of the kin group called Saepunu decided to be live separately from the Samongilailai. They emerged as a new kin group. The Saepunu moved to the river mouth of Siberut. One of their current descendants is known by the name of Satalojo and resides in Puro. He is the leading figure of the kin group today. Some of our other relatives moved away to a place called Sirau, they became the Salakkokoaikin group. Their current descendants are Aman Sila’luppa and his families, Taigojongenda and his children, and Sibulauseddet and his families.

Some of the other Samongilailai split up to become the kin group called Sakoddobat, who moved to a place located in the river mouth called Koddobat. They built an uma at the river mouth and later moved again to the place called Mongan Simapilig, where they planted sago palms. The course
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of our own expansion in the kin group called Salamao was begun from the place called Mongan Koddobat. One of the offspring of Emeiboblo was Sikora. Sikora had seven sons and a daughter. The daughter got married to a son of the Saleilei kin group. We thus have a family relation to that group through marriage. Sikora’s sons were Simateingorut, Simateimut, Siturugougou and others whose names I do not remember anymore very well.

Then, we as Salamao moved to the river mouth of the place called Mongan Kerengan. Four sons of Sikora’s children migrated to the place called Bat Sirileleu (now called Taileleu). Sioremanai was the ancestor of Samongilailai, Sisilakkerei was the ancestor of Salakkokoai, Sigorottai was the ancestor of Salamao, and Siturugougou. The four ancestors and their families migrated to the riverbanks of the place called Sirileleu (now called Taileleu). At that time we moved away, because other people in northern Siberut began to get involved in violence. Satubeken and Saseppungan began it. Consequently, our ancestors moved away and arrived at the upriver place of Sirileleu. When arriving at Sirileleu, our ancestors met the kin group called Sakaloat; the Sakaloat were the landowners (sibakkat laggai). The Sakaloat accepted our ancestors staying in their lands. Our ancestors did not have any right to possess land there because the early inhabitants, the Sakaloat, had been the first to occupy the land in Sirileleu. Our ancestors were given the opportunity to build their houses and have a plot of land to use to make their own gardens, but they did not have rights to the land where their gardens were located.

After staying there for some time, they had plenty of chickens and pigs. So they gave some pigs to the landowners as payment for the plots of land they were using for building their houses, raising chickens and pigs, and opening gardens. Chickens and pigs were valuable payments at that time. Later, our ancestors became involved in disputes with the landowners, and our ancestors decided not to stay with the landowners any longer. Our ancestors of the Salamao group, who are also the ancestors of the Samongilailai and the Salakkokoai, moved away in order to avoid conflict with the landowners. Thus we went to inhabit a place located downriver of Sirileleu. The Salakkokoai inhabited a place located at the river mouth called Sisugsug, and we Salamao stayed in the place on the opposite side of the river of Sirileleu, where the river mouth of the place called Sisugsug is located.

One day the Salamao and the Salakkokoai were in a dispute over insulting each other’s wives. The dispute had created bad relations between the two groups. In order to calm down the dispute, the Salamao paid the Salakkokoai sago palms located in five different areas and received from the Salakkokoai a big pig with brown skin (babui siboje). Afterwards, we stayed and kept planting sago palms and raising pigs and chickens. After we finished planting our gardens and raising pigs and chickens, one of us called Simateipara went to set his trap (mutapi) to catch animals in the forest. He caught a lot of animals and at that moment we came together for the second time with the Sakaloat, the
landowners in Sirileleu. Unfortunately, our good relations with the landowners were short-lived. We had to split up again and separate from them. We did not want to stay together with them anymore. In order to leave the landowners, we had to pay them four plots of our gardens (epat ngamata mone), a huge pig (babui), four baskets of chickens (epat log manu’) and an iron wok for cooking (okali). We had to pay for all the costs of things we had used and got from the Sakaloat. We paid for our own independence.

Before we were definitely separated from the Sakaloat, they reminded us, ‘Because all of you who are descended from the kin group called the Samongilailai, including the Salamao and the Salakkokoai, do not want to join us any more, we would like to remind you that if you go upriver to the place called Bat Mabilabilag, that is the border of your places where you can plant and harvest things. For your information, if you [go further upriver and] arrive at the river mouth of Kaloat, you have to always remember that you are entering the borders of the lands belonging to us. You should not hesitate to enter them. You can hunt animals in the forest of our lands but you must not take any rattan or other valuable natural resources. You can make your own garden if you like, too.’ But we did not want to get in trouble, so we stayed away from them. We, the Salamao, stayed downriver. Some members of the Salamao group stayed at a place called Bat Limu and they acquired a new name, Salimu. The Salimu are now independent, as a new kin group. They have their own uma. However, we are still related to them ancestrally.

We are currently occupying the place we bought from the landowners. But our former lands have been left in the hands of our relatives at a place located along the riverbanks of Koddobat in Silaoinan and at a place around the hill of Sigarena. Those places are our ancestral heritage. We do not allow anyone else to take them away from us. Other people cannot freely exploit the natural resources that are available in those places. This story I am telling you was told to me by Siruate’te’, my ancestor. He was descended from Emeiboblo. He told the story to my father. Now I am already old and I am going to tell the story to my sons and grandsons. (Narrated by Terig Kerei (Aman Maom) Salamao, age 78; Taileleu – Siberut, 2004)

This story relates three main events. The first is a past occurrence in Simatalu. The second is the exploration of places in the valley of Silaoinan. The third is an occurrence when the group went to live in Taileleu. The storyteller begins by narrating the hostile killing of a pig that had been given as a bride-price. Because of the pig, his ancestors became involved in a conflict with the kin group called Sapokka and commenced to emigrate from Simatalu.

The storyteller demonstrates his familiarity with the ancestral narrative of the Samongilailai kin group through detailed recollection of the pig–killing incident, place-names and locations of plots of land, numbers of families founded in the course of migratory movements, and names of his other ances-
tors that had led the group to move out from Simatalu. He also recollects some ancestors of Samongilailai that had led their families to create new kin groups. The relationships among the related kin groups are shown in Chart 6.1.

The storyteller does not talk explicitly about his particular ancestors who created new kin groups while explaining the splitting up of the family. As the storyteller does not recollect the ancestors’ names, he replaces those names with the names of current descendants of those ancestors. So, instead of learning the ancestors’ names, we are given the current names of the ancestors’ offspring. It seems that the storyteller once heard about them or met them once. They might be leaders of current Samongilailai families residing in various places in the Mentawai Islands. I sketch the genealogical ties between those families in Chart 6.2.

**Chart 6.1** Expansion of the Salamao kin group
*marks the place-name where the storyteller’s ancestor created a new kin group. The ancestor’s name is as seen in the accompanying genealogy chart (Chart 6.2).
6.3.2 The pig story as told by the Samongilailai kin group in Sioban on Sipora

In 2004 I visited the village of Sioban on Sipora island, where I met another group of Samongilailai. This kin group is the owner of the place and land in Sioban. According to Sioban villagers, Samongilailai was the first kin group to settle permanently in Sioban. Among them, I met several elders; however, only a small number of them knew their family stories. One of those people was Gustap Samongilailai (see Photo 6.2), father of several sons.

He was active in the Protestant church as one of the church elders. I visited his house several times to become acquainted with him and his family. We exchanged information about our family backgrounds. It took a few days for us to get to know each other before I had an opportunity to interview him. Eventually, he trusted me and told me his pig story.
He told me the pig story while his sons were seated around us listening. We sat in the house of one of his sons. They were actually building the house on land that belongs to the Samongilailai. The house is located near the graveyard of Sioban village and where the family garden is situated. They wanted to build the house there to protect the land from being used by other people. The pig story, as it was told to me, is also about how the ancestors of the Samongilailai arrived at Sipora and settled in Sioban. The story is as follows.

**Story 11**

At the beginning, our kin group was called Saurei, while we were still living in Paipajet. The name of our ancestor was Siranjau. He had two sons. I do not remember the name of the older son, but the younger son was Simatatlaggai. He was our ancestor. Simatatlaggai moved away to dwell on the riverbank of Matalu in Lubaga. His older brother remained in Paipajet.

When our ancestor arrived at Lubaga he found a plot of land, whose borders adjoined the borders of land belonging to the kin group called Sakerebau. The land was located on the riverbank of the place called Baibai. It included the upriver portion of the place called Lubaga, where the land adjoined land belonging to the kin group called Sirirui. The border here was called Kalaimurau. The border extended until it reached a place called Sirilogau. These were the borders of our land claimed by Simatatlaggai in Lubaga. In Lubaga, a small river called Bat Simaottot was used as border of our land as well. That border ad-
joined land belonging to the descent group called Saelet. When our ancestor Simatatlaggai was in Lubaga to occupy the place called Mongan Lubaga, more precisely called Siatsemi, Simatatlaggai had sons and daughters. They were named: Emeiboblo, Pabelemanai, Maliggai, and a daughter, I do not remember her name. Maliggai married a son of the descent group called Sakoikoi, and the Sakoikoi were the closest neighbours of our ancestors. They became the so-called teitei una [neighbour, literally 'behind the house'] of our ancestors. The Sakoikoi occupied a place in an area called Lebbekeu. Some of the Sakoikoi split off in order to become the kin group called Siritoitet. Another daughter of our ancestor married a son of the kin group called Sapokka.

When they lived in Simatalu, our ancestors raised pigs. One of their pigs went to dig in the ground in order to feed itself in the valley near the place Sapokka occupied. Sapokka shot the pig. Afterwards, they [members of the Sapokka group] brought it home and they ate the pork. Emeiboblo's sister saw the pig. She recognized that the pig belonged to her father and brothers. While the Sapokka, including Simatatlaggai's daughter, ate the pork the daughter saved a small piece of the pig's cooked skin. She dried the skin in the sunshine. One day, Sapokka's daughter-in-law asked permission from her husband to go visit her father, Simatatlaggai. Her husband allowed her to go. In the meantime, Emeiboblo and his brother and father were searching for their pig.

She went to visit her family and she brought with her the skin of the pig. She rolled it together with her hair. When she arrived at her father's place, she asked her sister who had married a member of the Sakoikoi group to comb her hair. In that way, her sister found the skin of the pig. 'What is this? It looks like the skin of our missing pig.' They showed the skin to their brother, Emeiboblo. Emeiboblo asked when Sapokka had killed the pig. From the information told by his sister, he realized when he had begun to miss the pig. Emeiboblo disliked that event. He decided to extract a fine from Sapokka.

Emeiboblo informed Sapokka, 'I have come today to your house in order to get paid for the pig you shot, which belonged to me.' Sapokka did not want to pay and said, 'If you want to get paid, you can take your payment on our sharpened metal arrows (tunung).’ Emeiboblo did not want to get involved in a serious dispute with the Sapokka because they had become relatives in a marriage relationship. But he wanted to be paid the same size of pig Sapokka had shot. Sapokka refused to pay. So Emeiboblo returned to his house and reported to his families what the Sapokka had said. Emeiboblo and Pabelemanai prepared to attack Sapokka. They sharpened their machetes and spears.

When the cock crowed in the morning, they went to the house of Sapokka. It was early in the morning. When they arrived at the place, Emeiboblo killed one of the Sapokka. Other Sapokka went after him and his brother. Emeiboblo hid himself by climbing a tree called toilat. He brought his spears and bow and arrows up the tree with him. He hid there when Sapokka looked for him and then returned home. Some Sapokka were near the tree but they did not see
Emeiboblo. The Sapokka wanted to go to Emeiboblo’s house but they hesi-
tated to do so, because they anticipated being shot by the rest of Emeiboblo’s
relatives. The Sapokka decided to return to their house. Next day, they again
went to hunt Emeiboblo. They did that several times. Emeiboblo decided to
leave his brother and the rest of the families, because the Sapokka hunted him
almost every day. He and his family left for a new place.

Before Emeiboblo left, he handed over rights to their land, gardens, vege-
tation, animals, and other possessions to his brother, named Pabelemanai.
Emeiboblo said to Pabelemanai, ‘My family and I are going to leave you to stay
elsewhere; you are going to stay here for the rest of your life. You have to take
care of our gardens and other possessions of ours. You must know the borders
of our land. Leleu Simagerettobat belongs to us. This hill is a large one. This
hill is bordered by land belonging to Sakerebau, Sakoikoi and opposite the vil-

gages of Simalegi and Sakatiri, and then adjoining land belonging to the groups
called Siritoitet and Saoppu, and finally adjoining the land belonging to Saker-
ebau.’ Emeiboblo reminded his brother about the other lands and rivers which
belonged to them. The lands and rivers were situated at the place called Bat
Saibi Simatalu. The borders of their land, including rivers, started from the river
mouth of Bat Saibi Simatalu extending upriver to a place called Kulumen.

Another piece of land, Emeiboblo told his brother, was named Teitei Sirig-
dig. The entire hill belonged to the Samongilailai. Afterwards, our ancestor
commenced to migrate. He stayed at a place called Teitei Sigarena. At Teitei
Sigarena, Emeiboblo built a shed and planted a mango tree (abbangan). Teitei
Sigarena was divided into two parts. One side of the hill belonged to the group
called Siriratei and another side belonged to us. After staying there for some
time, Emeiboblo moved to a place called Sirilabat because the son of his sister
lived there. Sirilabat was located in the upriver valley of Saibi Samukop. While
Emeiboblo was staying in Sirilabat, he asked his nephew if there was land that
other people had not discovered (siau) yet. It took Emeiboblo and his family
eight days to accomplish a trip in order to ensure himself that other people
had not claimed the land. They arrived at a place called Bat Simapeleku’. After
staying with his nephew, Emeiboblo decided to leave again. He made a canoe
beforehand. The canoe was made out of a durian tree. This durian was called
togtug sinikki baga. The durian belonged to his nephew. After the canoe was
completely finished, Emeiboblo and his family moved downriver and arrived at
a place called Bat Koddobat. They claimed Bat Koddobat as theirs.

At this point, the storyteller paused in telling me the story. He called my atten-
tion to a finch’s song. The bird was singing clearly in the daytime. This bird is
called kuilak in Mentawai. Mentawaians believe this particular bird is a partic-
ular sign if it sings on particular occasions. The bird sounded like it was close
to the house, but we could not see it. The storyteller told me that what he was
telling me was the truth, and the song of the kuilak was evidence that it was
the truth. After he let me know about it, another animal made a sound. It was a small house lizard, called in Mentawai *supsup*. The sound made by the animal was interpreted in the same way as the song of the *kuilak*. He then continued telling me his story.

They then moved again downriver until they arrived at a place called Bat Siriano. But Sibubu and Sitoggro had occupied this place first. Emeiboblo and his family met with Sibubu and Sitoggro. Sibubu and Sitoggro invited them to stay with them there. When Emeiboblo and his family stayed in the house of Sibubu and Sitoggro, the two hosts beat their wooden drums (*tuddukat*) to inform their neighbours and relatives to come. They transmitted messages telling about the arrival of Emeiboblo and his family at their place. The messages transmitted by Sibubu were: ‘Neighbours and relatives, you have to come and bring along with you sharpened tools, spears, arrows and bow and machetes in order to eliminate people from Simatalu.’

Soon after that, some people arrived at the house of Sibubu and Sitoggro. Those people immediately wanted to kill the people from Simatalu, who were Emeiboblo and his family. But Sibubu and Sitoggro stopped them. They said, ‘We are not going to kill anybody today. I invited you here in order to introduce you to my new relatives (*ra’ra’*). So, if you see them opening gardens or gathering food, you know that they are my family (*saraina*). Consequently, you shall not kill them.’

Thereafter, Sibubu introduced Emeiboblo and his family to those people. They lived there together in peace. Everybody came to bring something for Emeiboblo and his family. They brought coconut seeds, young sago palms, and other trees for Emeiboblo to plant. A feast was set up. Emeiboblo dwelled in the place and had some children. They were Sisausau, Sikora, and the ancestor of Sabeleake whose name I do not remember, and a female called Situkai. Sibubu and Sitoggro accompanied Emeiboblo and his family to go upriver, where Emeiboblo and his family could plant all the seeds he had received from people who initially came with the intention of killing him.

On the way upriver, Sibubu requested Emeiboblo to bend his bow and set an arrow on. Emeiboblo was to stay on one side of the riverbank, while Sibubu with a spear in his hand stood on the other side. They opposed each other. Emeiboblo did not understand why Sibubu asked him to stand opposing him. Emeiboblo said, ‘I have seen *ulaunia manua* [literally, the light of the sky; meaning I have survived] because of you, now you want me to bend my bow and put the arrow on. Are we going to kill each other?’ Sibubu answered him, ‘Emeiboblo, my best friend (*siripo*), you must listen to me very carefully and remember what I say to you. What I want to say to you must be remembered also by our offspring (*sapunuteteuta*). I have given you seeds of sago palms, and now I am going to give you a plot of land where you can plant them. Starting from here, at the river mouth of a place called Bat Simasapsap, and extending
upriver until you reach a place called Bat Koddobat, you enter that place and continue to the upper part of that river until you encounter a river where it is divided into two waterways. You have to follow one of the rivers called Bat Limu, until the end of this river where you cannot find water anymore. These are all borders of our land. What I have just told you are borders of the land where you can make your own gardens. The land enclosed in those borders now belongs to you and your descendants.’ After Sibubu explained the borders, he stated clearly to Emeiboblo, ‘But my best friend (siripo) Emeiboblo, you have to be aware of the fact that if you come downriver intending to expand the borders of the land I have given you, claiming it as your new land, this, my spear, is going to strike your body dead.’ Soon after he finished his words, Sibubu forcefully struck his spear into the ground, thereby breaking its wooden handle. This moment symbolized their agreement. ‘Now I see your point, my friend. You have given me your own land, you have even sketched the borders of which land is going to be mine and which land was yours initially. But my friend, you have declared to me that I cannot take over your own land except the land you have given me. If I come to take over or expand the borders of the land given to me, I am going to die by means of your spear just as you struck the spear to the ground. Now I declare to you, if you take over the land that you just gave to me, or if you narrow the borders of the land given to me, I am going to shoot you by means of my bow and its poisoned arrow.’ Soon after he said that, Emeiboblo released his arrow to hit a sago palm. Sibubu wanted to stop Emeiboblo shooting his arrow by replying to him metaphorically, ‘Hey, my friend, it is not necessary to release the arrow, it might hurt somebody.’ Afterwards, Sibubu closed his speech by saying, ‘For your remembrance, this land I just gave you is the land called porak pukisi (land for payment for the threat), because I asked other people to come with sharpened tools to kill you, although they did not do so.’ Sibubu continued, ‘The porak pukisi is mostly located in Bat Koddobat, including the upper part of the river Bat Koddobat. But the land at the source of the river belongs to the kin group called Sakaelagat. My own land adjoins their land, too. Sakaelagat are the group of people who dwell in a place called Saibi.’

After the oral agreement was made, Emeiboblo began to plant durian trees, coconuts, sago palms, and bananas and built his house where he could raise pigs and chickens and raise his children. After living some time in this place, Emeiboblo returned to Sirilabat, where he again met his nephew, and he told him about his new land. Emeiboblo said to his nephew, ‘Plots of land starting from Sirilabat until Simapeileiggut, including Bat Simasapsap, and the downriver part of Bat Koddobat belong to me. The upper part of the river including the hilly area of Bat Limu belongs to the Sikailagat.’ He told his nephew so that after he [Emeiboblo] died, someone would already know which land belonged to Emeiboblo. After he stayed, stayed and stayed at his nephew’s place, Emeiboblo and his family returned to their land in Silaoinan.
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One day they went fishing. Some members of his family, mostly women, remained at home. Sakaelagat visited the place where Emeiboblo’s family were staying. They wanted to visit the family in order to have a drink or eat something. Because of headhunting practices at that time, many people were afraid of other people’s attacks. Everyone always knew of everybody else before visiting each other. When Sakaelagat arrived at the place, therefore, all the women in the house ran away. When they were running away, those women’s clothes fell off because their clothes had got stuck on a thorny rattan (labi). They thus ran away without any clothes. They were naked. Sakaelagat shouted, ‘You should not be afraid of us, because we are not going to kill you. We come to ask for something to drink or eat.’

When our ancestors returned from fishing, they found their house empty and silent. Emeiboblo searched for his family but no one was there. He thought that other people may have perhaps killed his family. But he did not find any bodies or any evidence indicating bloodshed. He called their names and from the bush near their house women answered him that they were hiding from other people who had just come to the place and they were naked.

Two days after that event, Emeiboblo and his family went to visit Sakaelagat. Sakaelagat welcomed Emeiboblo and his family. Sakaelagat prepared food and drink for all of them. Sakaelagat already knew the purpose of the visit of Emeiboblo and his family. Sakaelagat said, ‘We know now why you have come to visit us. That is because of your women and daughters when we arrived at your place, they ran away and got naked because their clothes dropped while running away from us.’ Emeiboblo asked about the consequences of what Sakaelagat had done to his family. The next day, Sakaelagat together with Emeiboblo and his family returned to the place where Emeiboblo stayed. Sakaelagat gave Emeiboblo and his family a plot of land. The land was located in between the places called Bat Koddobat and Simapaddegat. This land was called porak katukaila (land paid for humiliation). Since then, that piece of land has belonged to Emeiboblo and his family entirely, and they remained in the area called Bat Koddobat, adjoining the rest of the lands belonging to the Sibubu and the Sakaelagat. Emeiboblo passed away in Bat Koddobat.

Emeiboblo’s three sons were Sikora, the ancestor of the Sabeleaken, who later migrated to inhabit a place in Bat Rereiket, and Sisausau. Sikora remained living in the valley of Silaoinan. Sisausau was our ancestor who migrated to Sipora. Sisausau was also called by the name Sipanajojo. His journey began from Silaoinan to Sirilabat. From Sirilabat, he went down to the coastal areas where he claimed plots of land located in places called Beat Torongai, Toinongonai and Tinti (a place near the current settlement called Maileppet). When Sisausau inhabited a place called Torongai, he found a plot of land (mone) located on the riverbanks of places called Bagat Peigu until Sakkelo. Sisausau found signs indicating other people’s occupation, starting from Sakkelo to the upper part of the river Sabirut. Therefore he did not claim the area. Sisausau then moved to Rereiket, where he
found a plot of land in Rogdok. There he built a house and planted a durian tree (*kinoso*) and a coconut tree. In Rogdok, Sisausau found land in two places called Simalabi and Simapelekag. While he stayed in Rogdok, Sisausau had a son called Sipajorot. Sisausau passed away in Rogdok. Our ancestor Sipajorot carried on the migration to Sipora. The son of Pajorot was Sijaja. Sons of Sijaja were two: Sisala and Sibukkutlabu.

Sisala was my ancestor. Sisala had two sons called Sisialulaggai and Simemeuma. Simemeuma was the ancestor of our relatives who live in a place called Sao of Sipora. Sisialulaggai was my ancestor. The sons of Sisialulaggai were Palimaio, Tasibuat and Takilibet. Palimaio’s sons were my grandfathers, called Sikatsaipeu, Sibelasot and Silulumonga. My father, named Josep was one of Sikatsaipeu’s sons. Josep had brothers named Mateus, Levi and Benjamin. My name is Gustap and I am the son of Josep. My sons are those who are sitting next to me, listening to my story while I am telling it to you. Two of my other sons have married and already have sons. We have passed through 14 generations since we migrated from our original home on Siberut island.

Our ancestor Sipajorot and his family arrived at the island of Sipora, initially inhabiting a place called Goiso’oina. When they dwelled at that place, the river there was too shallow. It was not good enough to paddle a canoe, so they left the place. Then they moved to a place called Bagat Ureinu [currently called Saureinu], where they stayed temporarily. They planted a bamboo (*ibre*). But the place was full of crocodiles. They were afraid of crocodiles, so they decided to leave the place and went to a place called Simatoraimonga. When they arrived at this place, many strange things happened. This place was haunted. Therefore they returned to Siberut and stayed in Rogdok. Their grandfather, called Siubat (‘old man’), stayed here alone. The grandfather conducted a ritual to get the place rid of the ghosts. Sometimes, the Samongilailai in Rogdok in Siberut went to visit their grandfather in a place called Simatoraimonga. But they did not want to stay there. Every time they went to visit him they said, ‘We are going to visit our grandfather, called Siubat.’

Since then this place has been called Siubat. The grandfather named Siubat returned to Siberut to ask his family to stay in Simatoraimonga. When he left Siberut, many people came along to stay in this place [Simatoraimonga], just as the words of our ancestor said, ‘*Tunung le’ kutata’ta*’ [while illustrating holding a spear], *abelaat, ka logui-at*’ [while illustrating curving a bow in order to shoot an arrow] (I threw a spear away, thereafter I took a bow and arrow). Our ancestors were like *tunung* who pioneered to inhabit this place, and other people were like *logui* who followed our ancestors’ trail.

After the arrival of our ancestors, the kin group called Sakoikoi and others came to inhabit this place [Simatoraimonga]. The kin group called Taikatubutoinan later occupied the place called Bagat Ureinu. They inhabited an upriver
place, claiming the place as their own, but the river mouth belonged to us, the place where the bamboo was once planted. The Taikatubotoinan attempted to claim our land. They burned down the bamboo planted by our ancestors. The bamboo was the evidence of our ancestors’ occupation of the place.

Nowadays, I do not know exactly where our land in Bagat Ureinu is located. I also do not know the borders of the land. What I do know is the names of the land. I know the names of the land because of my ancestral story. If I wanted to become acquainted with my ancestral lands I would have to refer to the names while asking other people if they know where the lands are located.

(Narrated by Gustap Samongilailai, age 63; Sioban – Sipora, 2004)

The storyteller is quite familiar with his ancestral family residing in Paipajet. Part of this family, according to the storyteller, migrated to Simatalu and began the Samongilailai kin group there. Then the pig incident occurred in Simatalu. According to this storyteller, the woman was not a daughter but a sister to Emeiboblo, the prominent ancestor of the group. It is not clear in this version whether the pig was received from Sapokka as a bride-price, or whether it was just a pig raised by the Samongilailai. However, the killed pig certainly belonged to the Samongilailai, as Samongilailai fought to get the pig back from Sapokka. The story then relates information about Emeiboblo, who brutally killed the Sapokka by himself. The younger brother who came along in the attack did not do any harmful act. So he was not held responsible for Emeiboblo’s brutal act.

Further on in the story, the storyteller reveals the places his migrating ancestors had lived in. The migrating ancestor and his family arrived at the valley called Silaoinan. There, his ancestors received some plots of land. In describing the borders of the plots of land, the storyteller mentions other kin groups that were residing in the Silaoinan valley. This tells us that other kin groups had occupied the area before the Samongilailai arrived there.

After the death of Emeiboblo, Emeiboblo’s descendants became the next leaders. They led the next course of migrations and became prominent individuals within newly established kin groups. One of the newly established groups migrated to Sipora, and turned out to be the first kin group to dwell in Sioban village on Sipora. The other newly established kin groups are not really mentioned in the story, as the storyteller was not familiar with how those relatives had fared while they migrated in different directions. The migratory movements described in the story are sketched in Chart 6.3 and the genealogical links among the Samongilailai kin group as told in Story 11 are given in Chart 6.4.
Chart 6.3 Expansion of the Samongilailai kin group
*marks the place-name where the storyteller’s important ancestor lived. The ancestor’s name is as seen in the accompanying genealogy chart (Chart 6.4).
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Chart 6.4 Genealogy of the Samongilailai kin group
*indicates the ancestor's name who was regarded by the storyteller as an important ancestor. During the migratory movement, the ancestor once lived in the place marked with an asterisk in Chart 6.3 above.
6.3.3 The pig story as told by the Samongilailai kin group in Maileppet

In January 2006, I carried out fieldwork to gather information about a land conflict on Siberut. I returned to Maileppet to meet with several kin groups that had once been in a conflict over land rights against the Samongilailai from Sipora (see Chapter 10).

When I was in Maileppet, I was surprised to hear that the Samaileppet kin group, which had consisted of seven different kin groups, had split up from each other. The seven previously united kin groups currently exist as seven independent kin groups. The Samongilailai kin group in Maileppet, which had earlier merged with six other kin groups to create Samaileppet, now exists again as Samongilailai.

Petrus Beutenga Samongilailai (see Photo 6.3) was a prominent member of Samongilailai in Maileppet. He was involved in a conflict over land rights in Maileppet. He joined Samongilailai from Sipora in order to oppose Samalinggai and Sarubei (see Chapter 10 for details of the land conflict). In order to understand the land conflict, Petrus Beutenga Samongilailai and I traced the roots of their claim to the land in Maileppet. Accordingly, he told me his kin group’s version of the pig story.
Beforehand, while sitting next to me, he had asked his wife to look for a notebook where he had once written down the Samongilailai genealogy. However, his wife could not find the notebook and he could not find it either. He assured me that he still recollected what he had once written in the notebook. What he once wrote was then told to me in the following story.

**Story 12**

Our ancestor was called Silatjaumanai. Simatatlaggai (male) and Sialuok (female) were Silatjaumanai’s children. Children of Simatatlaggai were four: three sons and one daughter. Those sons were Sigegeake, Emeiboblo and Pabelemanai. Sigegeake moved to Paipajet. There, his kin group was called Sabulautagga. Pabelemanai was the forebear of the Samongilailai dwelling in Simatalu. They are currently called Sababbam. Emeiboblo was the forebear of those families currently residing in southern Siberut (Silaoinan, Maileppet and Taileleu) and on Sipora and Pagai. Those families split up into the groups called Samongilailai, Salimu, Salamoo, and Sapatalkokoai. Children of Emeiboblo were Sibokkolo, Sikora, and some daughters. Sibokkolo was the ancestor of those who are now residing in Maileppet and Sioban on Sipora island. One of Sibokkolo’s children was Sipajorot alias Sipanajojo (the dog shooter). Sikora was the forebear of Salamoo, Salimu, Samongilailai and Sapatalkokoai. Those groups currently live in Taileleu.

When our ancestors moved out from Silaoinan, some of the family members remained there. They are now called Sakoddobat, because before departing we all dwelled in Bat Koddobat. Before dwelling in Bat Koddobat we lived in Teitei Sigarena, where we split up into several groups and each group chose a different destination. So, our separation began in Teitei Sigarena. Prior to departure, our ancestors divided up their communal possessions, namely two unou (plate made out of jackfruit wood), a set of uman kateubak (drums made out of palm trees), one lulag puiringan (special wooden plate for rituals), and one asaat (whetstone); each group took with them one. Besides those objects, they also shared the secrets of warfare tactics and practices, including mantras and ritual formulas. Samongilailai, who moved south, arrived at the valley of Silaoinan. At this place, we split up again. Samongilailai who moved away to Taileleu took with them one of the unou. Samongilailai who moved to Sipora took with them the other unou. They also took the asaat. But the lulag puiringan remained in Silaoinan. The Samongilailai who moved to Maileppet took with them the uman kateubak.

Our initial kin-name was Sakerengan. This used to be our name before we were called Samongilailai. We moved away from Simatalu to Teitei Sigarena because Emeiboblo killed members of Sapokka. He did so, because Sapokka stole Emeiboblo’s pig. Sapokka ate the pork of the pig. The pig for Emeiboblo was a bride-price. He had received that pig from the Sapokka themselves. It was because a daughter of Emeiboblo got married to a son of Sapokka. Since the
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killing of that pig in Simatalu, the Samongilailai commenced to disperse. In further migrations, we arrived at the valley of Silaoinan and claimed a large plot of land. That land in fact belongs to all the members of the Samongilailai including those who have moved away from there. Our land was situated in between the river mouth of the place called Bat Kalea and the river mouth of the place called Bat Masat. The border of the land is the upriver place called Sirau, from there it moves up to a hill and turns to another hill and then down to the river mouth of a place called Mapopoalat. The entire area belonged to us. The place was not the only land we had in Silaoinan. There was a large piece of land that belonged to the group called Sakaegat. The Sakaegat kin group had given us a plot of land because our ancestor Emeiboblo offered to the Sakaegat a pig and sago for their meals, when they came to him for a meal because they were fishing in Sibuddaoinan.

That happened in this way: Sakaegat dwelled in Silaoinan. They went to Sibuddaoinan for netting sea turtles. When they were there, they ran out of food. So, they went to seek Emeiboblo who was in Sirilabat, staying with his nephew after finding his own place in Silaoinan where the Sakaegat knew him. Soon, the Sakaegat met Emeiboblo. The Sakaegat got sago from him. Emeiboblo did not only offer sago to them. He also offered his pigs. Half of the pork was eaten in Sirilabat; another half was put into bamboos. When the Sakaegat decided to return to their fishing, they received another pig from Emeiboblo. Emeiboblo went to accompany the Sakaegat while returning to Sibuddaoinan. In Sibuddaoinan, the Sakaegat said to Emeiboblo, 'We have eaten your sago and pork but you did not eat ours, especially you did not eat any turtle that we caught. Due to this fact, you get a plot of land from us instead.' For his kindness, Sakaegat gave a plot of land to Emeiboblo. The land extended from the riverbank of a place called Maragure up to the river mouth of a place Koddobat. This land was called sakit sakko (payment of pigs).

Another plot of land we also got from Sakaegat was the plot of land extending from the river mouth of a place called Simasapsap further to the river of a place called Simapiligi until the riverbank of a place called Koddobat. This plot of land was obtained from Sakaegat due to a humiliating incident. One of the Sakaegat disturbed Emeiboblo's sisters while they were fishing in the river. The river belonged to Sakaegat. In order to protect the river and fish, one of the Sakaegat chased Emeiboblo's sisters away. The women ran away so that they lost the banana leaves that were wrapping their bodies. They got naked and hid themselves in the place called Salipak. Emeiboblo knew the case but did not ask any penalty. However, the Sakaegat offered intentionally to Emeiboblo a plot of land. This land was called monen pakaila (land for humiliation).

The last plot of land we received in Silaoinan was called porak tuilu (land because of threat). When Emeiboblo arrived at Silaoinan, he went to visit a person called Sibubu in order to seek shelter and food to eat. But Sibubu was a bit afraid of the fact that he had a stranger in his house. He was not
afraid of Emeiboblo but he was concerned about Emeiboblo’s safety. Sibubu did not want Emeiboblo to be killed by other people in his neighbourhood. Sibubu beat the wooden drums (tuddukat), calling his neighbours. Immediately, neighbours like the Sabirut arrived at Sibubu’s place. They came with bows and arrows. Sibubu explained to them why he had beaten the drums. He asked Emeiboblo to show himself after hiding in the ceiling of Sibubu’s house. Sibubu introduced Emeiboblo to the neighbours so that they would recognize him. Whenever he went around the Silaoinan valley, those people would not kill him. After that occasion, Emeiboblo decided to return to Simatalu. Sibubu went to accompany him. When they were canoeing, Sibubu struck the river mouth of a place called Masat by means of his bamboo stick used to paddle his canoe. Sibubu spoke, ‘My brother from Simatalu, Emeiboblo, I only accompany you until this river. From this point I offer you this land, you must not extend this border whenever you come downriver or shorten this border as you go upriver. Remember carefully, if you come downriver to extend this border, you will get shot by my bow and arrows.’ So Sibubu ended his speech. Emeiboblo said, ‘I accept what you said, and if you alter the borders of the land that you have bestowed on me, I will hit you by means of my spears.’ Sibubu continued, ‘If you have dogs and they die, you have to bury them here in order to remember that this land commemorates our friendship.’

Afterwards, Sibubu returned to his home, and Emeiboblo continued his journey. In this way, Emeiboblo got a plot of land from Sibubu. Those lands currently belong to all of Emeiboblo’s descendants.

Now, I am about to tell you about the lands found by my ancestor called Sipajorot alias Sipanajojo. From Silaoinan, Sipajorot went to the place called Cempungan, and from there he moved to dwell in Saibi Samukop and lived among the group called Sagurug. While he was there, he killed a member of the group called Sanene. His relatives paid for the misdeed by surrendering two plots of land located in the places called Bat Rapperat and Bat Sibuddaoinan. Sibuddaoinan is the place where most Sanene currently live.

Afterwards, Sipajorot moved away from there. He found land during his journey. The land was situated between the place called Beat Torongai and the river mouth of Siberut. So Maileppet is part of that land. He occupied a place called Silogau, because he was afraid of being killed by his enemies. He thus went to the river mouth of a place called Rogdok in the valley of Rereiket. He built a house there. He lived in Rogdok for some time. While living there, the Satoutou came to Sipajorot’s house and took away the ladder of his house for unclear reasons. He shot them to death as a consequence. But he had to pay for his misdeed with plots of land namely located in the places called Bat Lakokok, Bat Simege and Bat Labbaet. Afterwards, he went downriver and dwelled in a place called Riringoinan in Katurei bay. He married a daughter of Sagoilok, a kin group residing there. She was the daughter of the father called Suratkerei. Her name was Siumata. From this marriage, Sipajorot had a son...
The pig story called Sipaja’ja’. Sipaja’ja’ moved over to Sipora and one of his current descendants is Simagasa who lives in Tuappeijat. The rest of the families carried on their migratory movements to populate Sioban, a settlement of Sipora, and further to the Pagai islands. (Narrrated by Petrus Beutenga Samongilailai, age 52, January 2006)

The storyteller focuses on telling the individual names of his ancestors, the objects that were brought along by the Samongilailai families during the migratory movements, and the plots of land that belonged to particular groups of Samongilailai families. The storyteller’s story is not structured very well. He starts telling about the migratory movements at a certain place, where his ancestor had arrived. Later he traces back to the home place of the ancestral family in Simatalu. Nonetheless, I can reconstruct the expansion of the Samongilailai kin group living in Maileppet in Chart 6.5.

![Chart 6.5 Expansion of the Samongilailai kin group in Maileppet](image)

*marks the first place-name where the storyteller’s important ancestor had dwelled in the course of migration. The ancestor’s name is as seen in the accompanying genealogy chart (Chart 6.6).
Moreover, he does not begin his story with the killing of a pig. When he comes up with the part about the killing of a pig, he tells it simply and briefly. In further telling, the storyteller concentrates more on illustrating how the migrating ancestors, namely Emeiboblo and Sipajorot, claimed plots of land. I assume that the current conflict over land in Maileppet strongly influences the way the storyteller tells his story, which focuses on land matters. In Chart 6.6, I reconstruct the genealogy of the Samongilailai in Maileppet.

![Genealogy Chart](chart.png)

Chart 6.6 Genealogy of the Samongilailai kin group in Maileppet

*indicates the ancestor’s name who was regarded by the storyteller as an important ancestor. During the migratory movement, the ancestor once lived in the place marked with an asterisk in Chart 6.5 above.

Oral agreements between Samongilailai and neighbouring kin groups regarding particular plots of land are mentioned in the family story as well. Even the borders of those plots of land are clearly mentioned. For outsiders, I find it difficult to figure out where the particular plots of land are located exactly and how extensive the plots of land are. When I asked the storyteller whether he knew the place, he ensured me that he even knew the names of the small rivers used as markers of the land’s borders.
6.4 Interpreting the pig story

Stories of the killing of a pig explain the attempt by two neighbouring kin groups called Samongilailai and Sapokka to define each other’s possession of a pig. The Samongilailai assaulted the Sapokka by killing members of the Sapokka when the Sapokka got back the pig given to the Samongilailai. To the Samongilailai, their ancestor’s action in killing members of Sapokka was seen as a punishment of the Sapokka for their misbehaviour in stealing the Samongilailai’s pig. This killing by the Samongilailai is remembered as the greatest event. As the Samongilailai had killed a few Sapokka, they did not feel regret to leave their homeland. On the contrary, they were proud of the assault because the loss was on the enemies’ side. Moreover, they grew to be one of the largest kin groups in Mentawai because of that event. The initial kin group expanded into several new kin groups and claimed many plots of land. Before they assassinated members of Sapokka, they had had only a small plot of land in Simatalu.

Judging by the family stories, the current kin groups of Samongilailai share some major features. For instance, the migrating ancestor’s name Emeiboblo is mentioned in every story of Samongilailai. After leaving his homeland in the course of migration, the migrating ancestor inhabited a place called Teitei Sigarena. This place is mentioned in the stories. Yet according to the stories, every kin group of Samongilailai tended to migrate south in the Mentawai Islands. If a family once moved to northern Siberut, the family nevertheless reversed their journey and eventually turned south like the other families of Samongilailai did.

Besides the features they share, every current kin group of Samongilailai has its own history of expansion. The change of their kin-names is a clear example. For instance, a few families settled in Bat Koddobat and they became Sakoddobat; some families dwelled in Bat Lamao and they became Salamao. Locations mentioned in the pig stories illustrate that the Samongilailai passed through many places, and the migrating family separated at certain points. From these points, each of the separate families continued their journey in different directions. As this happened, connections among the separated families were rare, they even might not meet each other at all. Nevertheless, their genealogical ties remain. In a later stage of migratory movements, the migrating families might meet again; however, they did not merge in order to form one kin group like the initial Samongilailai. Individual kin groups of the migrating Samongilailai kept splitting up.

The first migrating family of Samongilailai was not the first group to explore several places on the island of Siberut. Other kin groups, for example Sakerebau and Samaloisa, had first found and occupied plots of land. The migrating family of Samongilailai only claimed a few plots of land that were still free. Nonetheless, the family eventually acquired more land. According to the
pig stories, the Samongilailai family not only claimed free plots of land, but also received plots of land from other kin groups. The plots of land were the payment of fines due to humiliation and due to threat, or were gifts bestowed by other kin groups due to a close friendship that the family had with those kin groups.

Family stories also contain information about communal land. There are two kinds of communal land. The first is a plot of land located in the place of origin; the second is a plot of land that was claimed in the course of migratory movements. In principal, all these plots of land belong to all Samongilailai descendants (muntogat Samongilailai). The migrating ancestors transferred responsibility for the protection and maintenance of all communal possessions of the Samongilailai to relatives that did not move away from the plots of land claimed. In case no other families remained at the place, trustworthy neighbours would be given the opportunity to take care of the land and use it. They are called sipasijago porak (caretaker of land), and it adds to the status of this group. Rights to the use the plot of land were handed over before the actual owners left for new places in order to ensure rights to the land would remain in the hands of the initial landowners.

Sometimes, a newly established kin group of Samongilailai might acquire some plots of land in the course of migration. This means that relatives of the kin group that had emigrated elsewhere in the Mentawai Islands would not have the same rights to all the land claimed by the kin group – unless all descendants of the group had died. Relatives of the group that has disappeared then have the right to claim plots of land that were owned by that kin group. Nonetheless, as long as the kin group that claims a plot of land still exists, the relatives may only have the right to use the land. Because they are descended from the same ancestral family, they may have access to the land of any of the kin groups to whom they are related.

Examining the family stories, we see that there is inconsistency in remembering ancestors. Ancestors of a kin group are probably forgotten if they did not claim any land or did not establish a new kin group or did not contribute significant events in the group’s history. As a consequence, only some of the prominent ancestors, including ones who passed away three to five generations ago, are remembered in Mentawai. Judging from the pig stories, Mentawaians may in some cases recollect ancestors’ names as long ago as ten or fifteen generations. It is quite clear that the stories do not report in detail all the events that occurred throughout the generations, but rather they consist of crucial events, which are special features of the kin groups that own the stories.