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**Author:** Tulius, Juniator  
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The wild boar story

7.1 Introduction

The last group of stories relating an occurrence with similar consequences to the pig story and the mango story concerns wild boars, or *siberi*. The word refers to a lot of wild boars living in a group. Therefore, in other Mentawai dialects, wild boars are called *simaigi*, meaning ‘many’. The wild boar incident is about a father’s failure to catch wild boars. The father assumed that his female relatives were deliberately humiliating him when they repeatedly sang about his hunting failure. The father tried everything he could think of to compensate for his failure. However, his efforts did not erase his relatives’ memories of it. He and his family eventually decided to leave their homeland. They sought other places to live on Siberut island. Subsequently, other members of the kin group dispersed further geographically and split up into new kin groups.

I use the wild boar story as an essential example in analysing current conflicts over land rights. Several kin groups tell a version of the wild boar story, and some of those groups are involved in the current conflict over land rights in Chapter 10. Nevertheless, the wild boar story is not the only story bearing on the roots of the current land conflict. In fact, the two other stories presented in the preceding chapters also hold clues to the causes of the current conflict.

I first describe the cultural characteristics of Mentawai traditional hunting. Because the wild boar story tells about hunting activities, it adds to our understanding of traditional hunting. Hunting is an important social and cultural practice for Mentawaians.

After describing traditional hunting, I present three versions of the wild boar story which were collected from three related kin groups. I know other kin groups who tell a similar story but they are not related to the kin groups presented in this chapter; however, I chose just three of them, enough to illuminate the land rights case. In Chapter 10 I examine how the family stories
about the wild boar can be used in resolving a particular conflict over land. An interpretation of the wild boar story closes this chapter.

7.2 Social and cultural aspects of traditional hunting

Traditional Mentawaians hunt such wild animals as monkeys, wild boars, deer, and birds in order to have meat needed for daily meals as well as for completing particular rituals. Hunting wild animals in the forest is a major activity performed by male Mentawaians. Boys learn to hunt near home. Using a bow and arrow, they shoot coconuts placed at a certain distance. After mastering the mechanics of shooting, they start hunting small birds. They do that for pleasure. When the boys become adults, the hunting turns serious. An adult hunter needs to know many things. Familiarity with the natural surroundings, expertise in recognizing animal tracks in the mud, differentiating sounds made by animals, recognizing forest paths made by animals, awareness and wisdom in dealing with wild animals when they come across them in the forest, and skill in shooting animals to kill are a few of those aspects. Having such knowledge, a great hunter will be respected by his relatives. Having such knowledge and skill can be a great benefit for a young man in promoting himself to easily get a wife, besides being respected by other hunters.

Mentawai hunters observe certain habits before hunting so that they may more easily catch wild animals. Everything needs to be planned carefully before they go hunting. To hunt monkeys, for instance, a Mentawaian should wake up early, in order to hear the monkeys start calling, at about four or five o’clock in the morning. He then needs to follow the sound and arrive at the location before the monkeys move away from their overnight place. Mentawaians generally go hunting in the forested land belonging to their own kin group, located near their dwelling place. They frequently hunt in a group. Nonetheless, particularly skilled hunters are fond of hunting alone. When people go hunting together, they bring a few dogs to help catch and find the shot animals. In fact, none of the animals die immediately after being shot. They may still run or fly a few metres. In this case, it can be rather difficult to find the shot animals, as the wild forest is covered with trees and bushes. Therefore dogs are needed to go find the shot animals.

In the course of hunting, people sometimes simply get lucky and stumble upon wild boars in a large group while those boars are eating or just playing around in the mud. Having great skill in using a bow and arrows, Mentawaians would not miss when shooting a wild boar in such a situation. When the hunters return home, wooden drums (tuddukat) are beaten in order to call the family members together. All the related members of a family residing in that place would without exception be invited to share in the shot animal regardless of who caught it. The meat is shared equally among all family members.
Soon after the festivity is over, the families return to their houses, taking with them what is left of the pork.

By means of a bow and poisoned arrows, carried between the arm and the side of the body, and a machete held in the hand, Mentawaians go hunting. In order to hunt wild boars and deer while bringing a spear as an additional hunting tool, Mentawaians trace a series of footprints during daylight. If they do not see any animal footprints, they just wander in the forest until they stumble by chance upon some animals. Or, they try to follow sounds that are recognized as the voices of particular animals. If they recognize wild animal footprints but those animals are not caught during hunting, the hunters just set a trap (luluplup) or a special rope (sesere) that is purposely made to ensnare animals. They wait for a day or two, then visit the trap to see whether any animals have been caught.

In order to catch birds and bats, Mentawaians put an adhesive substance (ekket) on a long wooden stick. The substance is collected from particular trees. People chop the trunk of the tree in order to accumulate adhesive resins, for instance from the jackfruit tree.

People do not always return from hunting with a great result. They may return home with empty hands. In such a situation, generous hunters sometimes kill some of their own domesticated pigs or chickens in order to replace the unsuccessful hunting. By doing so, their families, who have been waiting for the return of the hunters, may still feel delighted and the exhausted hunters can be replenished with a hearty meal.

However, not all family members are generous. Some Mentawaians are frugal, even parsimonious. They do not want to sacrifice their domesticated animals unless there is a good reason. They may want to keep their domesticated animals for more important purposes. Rituals, social prestige, and means of payment are some of these purposes. If a family has as many pigs and chickens as possible, the family will be respected and seen by neighbours as a rich family. Such a family will find it easy to pay a fine or a bride price. Given this situation, slaughtering one’s own pigs to compensate for a hunting failure may not be desirable.

### 7.3 The wild boar incident

In the wild boar story, the father comes across wild boars while hunting in the forest. The wild boars are lying unconscious on the ground near a tree called laggure. The fruits of this tree contain a poisonous substance. Animals that eat the fruits may lose consciousness temporarily, and this is what happens to this group of wild boars. The father misjudges the unconscious state of the wild boars. Animals temporarily affected by the poisonous laggure fruit will not immediately awaken unless they are showered with water. When the father
returns home, he asks his relatives to go fetch the wild boars before it starts raining. This moment is the beginning of tragedy for the father and his family. When the relatives return to the place in order to fetch the wild boars, the wild boars have awakened and run away. This is seen as the father’s mistake or failure. In order to compensate for his humiliating failure, the father tries a lot of things. However, his female relatives keep reminding him by singing humorously about his failure again and again. The migratory movements caused by this wild boar incident are called by the Siriratei kin group pusabuat kalulut silango siberi, meaning ‘dispersal because of unconscious wild boars’, in short siberi.

I collected three versions of the wild boar story. They are from three kin groups residing in three different settlements. One version was collected from Saleleusi, a kin group residing in Paipajet. Afterwards, a version was recorded from Sakatsila, a kin group dwelling in Saibi Muara. And the third version, collected from a place called Saliguma, belongs to the so-called Satoko, a kin group whose members also live in Saibi Muara.

According to these family stories, the initial kin group affected by the incident was known as Sakerenganleleggu, meaning ‘a group of people whose voice was as loud as thunder’. Family members of that group departed from their homeland in Simatalu after the wild boar incident. They commenced to split up, and after some time they had acquired different kin-names. They also inhabited different places on Siberut island instead of staying in Simatalu. Some of the kin groups are Sakerenganleleggu, Siriratei, Sakatsila, Sake-laasag, Sakairiggi, Saririgka, and Satoko. Although the groups use different kin-names and rarely visit each other if at all, they still recognize their kinship to one another because their family story about the wild boar incident shows their family connection.

I discuss three of these related kin groups – Saleleusi, Sakatsila and Satoko – from whom I collected three versions of the wild boar story. They live in three separate places: Paipajet, Saibi Muara in the valley of Saibi Samukop, and Sarabua, a hamlet of Saliguma village. Each version emphasizes a particular theme of the story: the Saleleusi version highlights the migratory movements, the Sakatsila version emphasizes the occupation of places, and the Satoko version gives details about the growth of the kin group.

7.3.1 The wild boar story as told by the Saleleusi kin group in Paipajet

I explored the Simatalu valley in order to find kin groups that had some relation to the wild boar incident. My efforts, however, were unsuccessful. It appears that no kin groups or descendants affected by the wild boar incident are living there today. Several other kin groups were indeed living in settlements in Simatalu; however, they had family stories of other early conflicts. Next to the Simatalu valley, there is another village called Paipajet. I decided to visit
this village in 2004, where the mouth of the Paipajet river flows into the mainstream of the Simatalu river. Because of the strategic geographical location, I thought that some families of the kin groups affected by the wild boar incident might have migrated to Paipajet, even though geographical closeness was not what I initially expected based on what I had learned about migratory movements.

In Paipajet, I met with a kin group called Saleleusi. I visited Saleleusi members in the evening, because during the daytime they worked in their gardens. A few Saleleusi families gathered in the Saleleusi elder’s house. The kin group did not have a communal house (uma) anymore since they came to live in a government village in the 1960s. In order to be as close to each other as possible, to re-create a feeling of being in a communal house, they built their houses next to each other in the village. Most of the women sat together on the floor inside the house, and about seven men sat next to me to listen to the storyteller’s story. The following story tells how Saleleusi got to Paipajet.

**Story 13**

The familiar name of our ancestor was Silango [which means ‘unconscious’]. But his real name was Sikoibatei [eater of animals’ liver]. He occupied a place on the riverbanks of Simatalu. Our ancestor was called Silango because of *si-be*ri [the wild boar incident]. The whole story is as follows. One day, Silango or Koibatei [a shortened form of Sikoibatei] went to hunt animals in the forest. In the course of hunting, he came across wild boars lying unconscious on the ground under a *laggure* tree. The tree had fruits, and *laggure* fruit has a toxic substance that may cause those who eat it to become unconscious or even die. He brought one of those boars home when he returned. Instead of bringing the boar to the communal house (uma), however, he placed it near a bamboo grove situated close to the house. He did so in order to surprise his relatives. He asked his wife to collect bamboo, ‘Please, go together with our sisters-in-law (*eira*) to collect bamboo for cooking. The male members are going to collect wild boars in the forest.’ But they did not immediately go to accomplish their tasks because it started raining. After the rain stopped, they carried out their tasks. While the women collected bamboo, the men went to the place where the wild boars were lying unconscious. However, when the men arrived at that place, the wild boars had already run away. It seemed that the wild boars had been awakened by the rain. The men returned home empty-handed. They informed Silango about what had happened. In response to the situation, Silango asked his male relatives to catch some of his own pigs to replace the escaped wild boars. They thus all had pork to eat, but it was not the meat of wild boars. The pork was from Silango’s own pigs. After finishing their meal, Silango’s sisters-in-law and daughters-in-law (*taliku*) sang a song with lyrics that irked Silango: ‘Because of *silango* [unconscious wild boars], we have just eaten our father’s pork,’ while soothing their children to sleep.
After the festivity was over, Silango made a trap (luluplup). When the trap was ready, Silango set it on the ground in the forest near his residence. After some time, a wild boar was caught in the trap. The family then held another festivity. Afterwards, the women sang a song, ‘We have just had a festivity because of Silango [the person who set the trap].’ Afterwards, Silango made another trap. This time it was made out of rope (sesere). The rope snared another wild boar. He brought it home. Silango’s families again held a happy festivity. As they prepared for the festivity, the women sang their favourite cradle song: ‘Because of Silango, we are going to eat wild boar meat snared by sesere.’ Silango began to be aware of the fact that his daughters-in-law were singing about him. The song irked him badly.

After the festivity concluded, Silango conducted the headhunting ritual (mulabbbara) in order to show his daughters-in-law his anger at being humiliated. He was a brave man and deserved respect. Later he killed people in Simalegi. When he returned home, the families celebrated his return. However, his headhunting raid did not stop Silango’s daughters-in-law from singing their favourite song. And again the women sang the song, ‘We are carrying out a festivity to happily celebrate the return of Silango’—still referring to the initial mistake of the unconscious boars.

After completing the headhunting raid (mulepa’), Silango visited his garden. The garden had a name, mone simaitso [visible garden], and was located on a hill called Taddaken. He already knew that it was the right moment to harvest the durian fruits; therefore he asked his families and sinurug [neighbours asked to lighten the work of a heavy or time-consuming task] to gather the durian fruits. When the durian fruits were nearly harvested, Silango remained on top of the durian tree. He sat on the highest branch. Silango shouted to his brothers, ‘You all may return now. I am still inspecting our gardens.’ All the helpers (sinurug) returned home and Silango harvested the remaining durian fruits. He and his own family collected all the durian fruits and, instead of returning home to Simatalu, they went away to Simalegi. In the meantime, other families were waiting for the return of Silango and his family. But they never showed up. Silango and his family had gone to Simalegi. They stayed in Simalegi. They stayed, stayed, stayed, and stayed there. The rest of the families in Simatalu began to worry, as Silango and his [nuclear] family did not return home. They asked other people if they had seen Silango and his family. After seeking for some time, they eventually found Silango and his family in Simalegi. When they arrived at his place, Silango pretended to be ill. The families asked Silango and his family to return. ‘We have come for you and we want you to return with us.’ But Silango did not really want to return. Therefore he said to his relatives, ‘You go home and I will come after you soon, after I recover from my fever.’ He promised them, but he never returned. To the contrary, he went to another place, called Terekan.
In Simatalu, his relatives were waiting for his return, but he never showed up. They went to Simalegi to visit Silango and his family for a second time. However, they arrived at Simalegi in vain, because Silango and his family had already left for Terekan. The seekers from Simatalu then went to Terekan to find Silango. And it happened in a similar way, ‘So... you are here now!’ ‘Yes, I am here,’ Silango said. The families from Simatalu said, ‘We insist that you return with us.’ Silango once more promised them, ‘I will come when my fever has gone.’ But he never kept his promise. Instead, he moved further and further away.

At that time, he left for a place called Sirilanggai. After that, he continued his journey to a place called Cempungan. He stayed there for a while. Then, in his further journey he arrived at a place called Saibi Samukop, before moving away again to the southern part of Siberut.

He claimed a plot of land in a place called Boriai, near Muara Siberut. He stayed there and his family expanded. From Siberut, some of his family gradually moved away to Rereiket, Sirileleu, and Sakalagat [the southern islands]. Our ancestor Silango or Sikoibatei returned to Siberut, and moved to Sirileleu, where he passed away. One family of Silango’s descendants in Sirileleu moved to Sagulubbe. This family became the ancestors of our current families in Paipajet. Our ancestors lived in Sagulubbe at a place called Kalea. Afterwards, they came here to Paipajet. The landowners of the kin group called Sageileppa welcomed our ancestors [in Paipajet]. From Sagulubbe, our ancestor named Tarourou led our migration. He was one of Silango’s descendants. Saleleusi was our kin-name when we were in Sagulubbe. Currently, in Paipajet, we use the same name, Saleleusi. We are descended from Tarourou about ten generations ago. Tarourou descended from our ancestors, whose names are as follows: Taktik, Tatitiet, Teu Tatuddukat, Aman Bilumanai, Teu Tengai, Teu Puleppu, Teu Saigatmanai, myself and my sons. (Narrated by Lemanus Saleleusi, age 47; Paipajet – Siberut, 2004)

Examining this story, I see that the storyteller still remembers his ancestor involved in the wild boar incident. The storyteller additionally mentions the initial place from where the family started to migrate. Prior to the migratory movements, some other events took place after the wild boar incident occurred. The ancestor is said to have carried out hunting activities in order to stop his female members singing of his failure in catching wild boars. The storyteller also mentions that his ancestor conducted a headhunting raid as the ultimate way to stop his female family members from ridiculing him. However, his action did not have the desired result. Because of his humiliation, he eventually decided to leave his place of origin.
Part Two

Chart 7.1 Expansion of the Saleleusi kin group to Paipajet on Siberut
*marks the place-name where the storyteller’s important ancestor had migrated. The ancestor’s name is as seen in the accompanying genealogy chart (Chart 7.2).
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Chart 7.2 Genealogy of the Saleleusi kin group in Paipajet
*indicates the important ancestor who had led the storyteller’s kin group migrating to the place marked with an asterisk in Chart 7.1 above.

After that, the story relates information about the migratory movements of the ancestral family. And the storyteller tells that the other families (relatives) kept looking for the migrating family in order to bring them back home. However, the first migrating family kept deciding to move away. The migrating family passed through several places. Chart 7.1 summarizes the migration of the group according to this storyteller’s story.

Several place-names where the migrating family moved are mentioned. However, the storyteller does not mention any other groups that might be related to Silango’s initial family and to the wild boar incident. In the final passage, the storyteller lists a number of ancestors’ names in order to show how
many generations the family has passed through since the incident took place. He obviously forgets a few generations, as he focuses in fact on his own ancestors’ names when they were in Sagulubbe. He does not list the earlier generations between Silango and the one who led the group to settle in Paipajet. The storyteller only mentions Silango as the prominent ancestor before telling about other ancestors, for instance Tarourou. The family generations of the Saleleusi kin group, as derived from this story, are given in Chart 7.2.

7.3.2 The wild boar story as told by the Sakatsila kin group in Saibi Muara

One of the twelve kin groups residing in the village of Saibi Muara today is Sakatsila. The name means ‘group with half a roof’. Sakatsila are actually part of the Siriratei kin group. After being separated from the Siriratei, the Sakatsila got into a dispute among themselves. The Sakatsila rejected a few family members, who later formed a new kin group with the name Saririkka (discarded families). Before being separated from the Sakatsila, the Saririkka took half of the roof of their communal house (uma) and left the other half for the Sakatsila. This event is the origin of the Sakatsila kin-name.

The storyteller of the next story is Kobou Sakatsila (see Photo 7.1) from the Sakatsila kin group. He was invited to meet me at my paternal grandmother’s house in 2004. I was staying at her house at the time. My father and two uncles

Photo 7.1 Kobou Sakatsila (in the middle, wearing the white shirt)
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of mine were present at the meeting. A few of my nephews were there as well. I asked the storyteller to tell me the story of the wild boar incident.

I decided to get information from him after my nephew recommended him to me. The storyteller seemed to know the wild boar story better than other members of the Sakatsila kin group who were residing in Saibi Muara. Kobou Sakatsila told the story as follows.

**Story 14**

Long ago our ancestor dwelled in Paipajet. He moved away and settled in a place in Simatalu; his name was Sikoibatei, but the well-known name he came to be known as is Silango. He stayed in Simatalu. He stayed, stayed, stayed and stayed. He had children and grandchildren; I do not know how many there were in total. In Simatalu the family lived at a place called Bat Pojai. Our ancestor Silango was hunting one time, when he stumbled across wild boars (*siberi*) lying unconscious on the ground. These boars had just eaten fruits of the tree called *laggure*. These fruits contain a sort of poison, which may paralyse those who eat it and make them temporarily unconscious. After finding them, Silango wrapped up the wild boars with palm leaves (*bulug poula*) but he did not tie up the legs of the boars as he thought they were already dead.

When he returned home, he brought one boar and placed it near a cluster of bamboo. Soon after he arrived home, he announced to his families that he had just found wild boars while hunting in the forest. Upon arriving at his house, rain was falling heavily. It was raining, raining and raining. After the rain stopped, he asked his male relatives to go with him to fetch those wild boars. ‘Let us go to collect the boars lying dead on the ground. But we should not hope too much because rain has just fallen.’ So they went. First they arrived at the bamboo cluster [near the house], and Silango did not see the boar he had just laid there. It seems it had run away because the rain had awakened it. ‘Tilei… [this word expresses surprise, rather than its literal meaning, which is ‘vagina’], one pig I just put here already ran away. I am afraid the others will have run away as well.’ However, they kept going to the place where the boars had been lying. When they arrived, they clearly saw the empty palm-leaf wrapping, and footprints of the boars were seen everywhere on the ground under the *laggure* tree. ‘Tilei… they have gone, what are we going to do now?’ Silango could not believe his eyes. The others said, ‘There is nothing to do about it, let us go home.’ Silango or Sikoibatei thought about what he could do to make his relatives happy.

He decided to replace the wild boars that had run away, with his own tame pigs. In order to count the wild boars that had run away, he counted the empty wrappings made out of palm leaves. He asked his male relatives to catch that number of his own pigs and slaughter them for a festivity. Everybody was happy. Brothers, sons, daughters, children-in-law and grandchildren of Silango were invited to attend the festivity. *Tuddukat* [wooden drums] were
beaten and kajeuma [three different sizes of drum made out of palm trees covered with snakeskin] were warmed and beaten as well. They cooked pork, taro and sago, and beautifully decorated their house with flowers and special leaves (pamanai-manai). After eating the pork, his daughters-in-law took care of their children, singing a song in order to lull them to sleep. The lyrics of their lullaby annoyed Silango, ‘We have just had a party because of the wild boars.’ They sang the song almost every day. The song was not initially intended to irk Silango. It was just a lullaby. However, after hearing it regularly, it began to irritate Silango.

One day, Silango went out to set a rope trap (tapi) to snare deer. When he returned home, he carried a deer with him. He had successfully caught one. A celebration was held again, and his daughters-in-law sang a similar song. ‘If it were not for the wild boars, we would not eat any deer meat.’ Silango almost lost his patience due to the attitude of his daughters-in-law.

In order to stop hearing the song, he asked his families to catch his pigs and hold another festivity. But this did not stop the daughters-in-law from singing that song. Being upset now, as well as angry, Silango prepared (mulabbara) to conduct a headhunting raid. He looked for someone’s head (mulakeu). We do not know whose head he wanted to hunt [the storyteller hid this information from me]. Silango wanted to conduct the headhunting raid in order to show his daughters-in-law what sort of man he really was. After conducting the headhunting raid, he returned home. The relatives celebrated his return (mulepa’). However, this headhunting raid still did not stop the women singing the song.

When the durian season came, all members of the family went to harvest the durian fruits. Silango was in the top branch of the durian tree and said to his families, ‘All of you may gather up all the harvested fruits and return home immediately. I will see whether there are more fruits remaining, so that I can save some fruits here for my chickens. [In Mentawai, people do not usually use durians to feed chickens, but sometimes people throw parts of the durian fruits to the chickens. I suppose the storyteller is using chickens as an easy example.] I will harvest them later but first I have to see how many fruits are left. It will take me a while to look for the fruits remaining. It is better not to wait for me and my wife.’

Afterwards, all members of the family returned home. Silango harvested the rest of the durian fruits. Together with his wife, he gathered up all the remaining fruits and went away from the place. They did not return home. They went to Simalegi instead. They lived and lived and lived in Simalegi. Two sons of Silango named Boalai and Tainambu, who lived in Simatalu, went looking for their parents: Silango and his wife. They looked for their parents; they looked and looked for them. Then, the parents and the sons met again in Simalegi. Silango disliked the family meeting. He wanted to get away from the rest of his relatives and that is why he moved to Sikabaluan.
He found a plot of land at a place called Teitei Saaleibaga. He and his wife lived there for a while. They opened a garden but not for very long. The two sons came to meet them again. ‘So... you are here,’ said the sons. ‘Yes, we are here,’ answered the parents. Silango decided to leave immediately in order to avoid his sons.

Thus, he went away and arrived here in our village in Bat Mukop [this village is now known by the name Saibi Samukop] and settled in an area called Bat Bilag. He settled in Bat Bilag together with his wife. He did not want to return to Bat Pojai in Simatalu, where he initially came from. Silango and his wife settled in Bat Bilag. Again the two sons came after them. They all eventually decided to live there together in Bat Bilag. As their numbers increased, because other families from Simatalu came to join them as well, their kin group came to be called Sakerenganleleggu, because when they spoke each other, their voices sounded like thunder (leleggu). A new family [kin group] was thus formed at Bat Bilag.

One of those families was our ancestor. However, the [irritating] circumstance did not change and the daughters-in-law continued singing the song, which again and again made Silango annoyed. He and his wife therefore left the rest of the family in Bat Bilag and went to a place called Bat Rereiket while going upriver in the valley of Saibi Samukop. They did not stay there. When they [later] went downriver, they did not stay at Bat Silaoinan either. The family just passed through those places.

Eventually, they settled in the place Mongan Sabirut, currently called Muara Siberut. Silango found a plot of land located near the current settlement called Muntei. He planted sago palms at a place called Duluidui, which adjoined the borders of sago palms of a garden belonging to a kin group named Saseppungan, whose descendants currently live in Maileppet. Silango did not settle there for a long time. He went to Muara Siberut, where he had land in a place called Malupetpet, and Bat Sakkelo. He lived in Malupetpet. There he had five children: two girls and three boys. He did not want to settle there permanently.

He then continued to migrate, going to the island of Sakalagat [Sipora]. He brought along a son named Tareglailai. Perhaps there are relatives of ours descended from Tareglailai living in Sipora, but we do not know them. When Silango lived on the island of Sakalagat, our ancestors told us that whenever thunder made a loud rumbling noise in the night, Silango began to miss his homeland and his relatives. Because he missed his home, he returned to Siberut island. However, he did not return to Saibi Samukop or Simatalu. He settled on a large river in Taileleu. There he had another son, called Reureukerei. Thereafter, Silango ended his journey in Taileleu. He passed away there.
The storyteller stopped for a while. He drank a cup of tea and smoked a kretek (clove cigarette). He looked around him and asked me whether we were going to spend more time to complete the story. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon, and he assured me that his story would end after sunset, indicating that he had a very long story to tell. My nephews and I were enthusiastically looking forward to hearing the rest of the wild boar story. So, he carried on with his story. Meanwhile, he took a piece of paper and tore it into pieces and formed them into round shapes like small balls. He then arranged the balls vertically, to represent his ancestors who had been born since the wild boar incident.

Silango’s sons, named Boalai and Tainambu, who lived in Bat Bilag, migrated to a place called Sirilabat. This place is located in the upriver valley of Saibi Samukop. Living in that area, the two brothers always felt anxious. Every day they felt in danger, because they were occupying other people’s land. They therefore decided to move to another place close to a graveyard. After they settled in this place near the graveyard, their kin-group name changed from Sakerenganleleggu to Siriratei, because they built their house near a graveyard (ratei). However, moving to the graveyard did not decrease their fear of reprisals from their neighbours in the valley. Near the place was a small river, which belonged to a kin group called Sabuilukkungan. In the past, our female relatives were diligent. They frequently went fishing in the river. Consequently, the Sabuilukkungan complained, ‘Tilei... our fish have gone because of Sitoi ka laggai (new arrivals in the village).’ By using this expression, the Sabuilukkungan intentionally made disparaging remarks about us, Siriratei. They disliked us because we caught fish and shrimps in the river. As the first inhabitants of the valley, they claimed the river.

In order to get rid of us, the Sabuilukkungan went to a village called Cempungan to ask Cempungan villagers to [perform] killing. However, the Cempungan people refused to fulfil that request because of the distance between Sirilabat and Cempungan, which was not far away enough. After unsuccessfully asking for help, Sabuilukkungan went a little bit further and reached two other settlements. They arrived at a settlement called Tubeket in the northern part of Siberut. The Sabuilukkungan proposed to the Satubeket, ‘Please, come and eliminate the Sitoi ka laggai [new arrivals] living on our land; because of them the fish in our river have been decreasing.’ For the Satubeket, it was fine to do this because by doing so they could create an alliance (pusiripokat) with the Sabuilukkungan. Besides, they could show that they were a brave group of people in a headhunting raid. [The Satubeket people were well known as headhunters on Siberut island. The group is quite famous in family stories of kin groups living in different valleys on Siberut, telling of people going to eliminate the Satubeket to take revenge on them for the deaths of their relatives killed by the Satubeket during headhunting raids.]
Thereafter, the Satubeket came to murder our ancestors; they cut our ancestors’ heads off. Our ancestors were Pajaggoina and Turukabei. When the Satubeket returned to their village, they took alive with them a young girl of our relatives, named Garaggag. Garaggag was a female about ten years old, if we would like to estimate her age. My late father said, ‘The Satubeket returned home and they carried our young female ancestor on their shoulders with a happy face of victory.’ After some time passed, eventually our surviving ancestors found an opportunity to take revenge on the Satubeket. After departing to take revenge, our ancestors called on the Sataggau, our neighbouring kin group residing in the place called Mut Koha. Our ancestors informed them about the revenge, saying, ‘We are going to avenge the death of our brothers murdered by Satubeket and to bring our female relative back home.’ The Sataggau supported our ancestors with food, canoes, paddles, and other things they needed for the journey. In order to have good luck for their mission, our ancestors performed multabbra, a ritual for headhunting. Afterwards, they went to carry out the headhunting revenge.

In the north, in Sikabaluan, they met up with our relatives, the kin group called Sakelaasag. The Sakelaasag were our relatives. They were descendants of Silango, when he still occupied and owned the land called Teitei Saaleibaga. The Sakelaasag had moved to Sikabaluan because Silango had left them for a new place. When Silango moved to the valley of Saibi Samukop, we began to dwell in this area [Sikabaluan].

Going back to those ancestors who wanted revenge, they stayed in Sikabaluan with Sakelaasag. ‘We have come for our little sister and to take revenge for our murdered brothers.’ The Sakelaasag said, ‘If you want to find our little sister, you look for a person called Pinabaibaina [one who does not settle permanently]. We gave her this name because she did not only live with her husband’s relatives but she also came to visit us.’ After spending some time with the Sakelaasag, our Siriratei ancestors waited for the right moment to attack. Our ancestors eventually decided to get revenge.

Upon arriving at the river where Satubeket’s communal house was located, they saw a woman washing clothes. They cut off a stalk of a sort of ginger plant (tairatti gojo), often used as a spear. They threw it to the woman. She looked around and later saw them, ‘Tikai… my uncles; my brothers… what has brought you here?’ It seems that she still recognized them well. They approached her, saying, ‘We have come for you and you may now return home with us.’ She replied, ‘But I cannot do that anymore, because I have a son and a daughter.’ Our ancestors wanted to know if there was anybody else in the house in order to complete their revenge, and asked, ‘Who is there at home?’ She said, ‘There is an old widow in the house.’ They discussed what to do in order to kill the poor, unfortunate old widow (silumang sitaurei).

She returned to her house. When she hung up clothes to dry, she dropped a cloth that belonged to the old widow. She did that as planned. She asked the
old widow to get the cloth. When the old widow went to collect her cloth, our ancestors went to get the old widow and took her life by cutting off her head, legs and hands. Afterwards, our ancestors returned without Garaggag, their female relative. They returned to the Sakelaasag, and informed them what they had done to the Satubeket.

Soon after the event, they returned to their home in Sirilabat. Upon returning they came across the Sataggau again in the place known by the name Mut Koha, ‘So... what is the upshot?’ ‘Well... we have taken “something” at the ebbei sopag [shallow side of the river], but we still need to take something else that is located at the bakkat sopag [upriver].’ They spoke to each other allegorically in order to deceive the Sabuilukkungan. The Sabuilukkungan nonetheless heard the conversation of our ancestors with Sataggau by chance. Sabuilukkungan asked the Sataggau a question, ‘What did the Sitoi ka laggai say to you about the results of their journey?’ Then the Sataggau explained, ‘Well, the Sitoi ka laggai have returned and told us that they have taken something from the ebbei sopag, but not from the bakkat sopag yet.’ The Sabuilukkungan laughed about the story because they [the Sataggau] did not know the meaning of the deceiving sentence. The Sataggau disliked the way the Sabuilukkungan laughed at their explanation. The Sataggau said, ‘You are now laughing at the Sitoi ka laggai but you do not know what their pasailukat [malicious way of referring to somebody else] was meant for, all of you are the next target. It is because they have found out that you asked the Satubeket to eliminate the Sitoi ka laggai.’ After hearing what the Sataggau had just explained, the Sabuilukkungan were afraid.

After figuring out that our ancestors had found out who killed their relatives, the Sabuilukkungan decided to leave the place immediately. Before the Sabuilukkungan ran away from Saibi Samukop, our ancestors already got them. Our ancestors caught the Sabuilukkungan on the coast of Saibi Samukop. On the coast they made an agreement. The Sabuilukkungan said, ‘You do not need to kill us; instead, you can take our land in Teitei Simataratat [hill of many frogs].’ [This kind of land was called porak segseg logau, land for stopping bloodshed.] After that was arranged, the Sabuilukkungan made peace (paabat) with our ancestors. But the Sabuilukkungan had to leave Sirilabat. Therefore, they went to live in a place called Sipugpug. We [Siriratei] separated and lived in several groups. We now exist as Sakatsila, Saririgka, Sakairiggi, and Siriratei kin groups.

Then, lightning struck the Sabuilukkungan’s communal house in a place called Sipugpug. Afterwards, they decided to leave the valley of Saibi Samukop forever. They moved to the valley of Rereiket. They did not return. Since then this place has remained in the hands of our neighbours, the Sataggau. Long, long after that happened, the Sataggau vanished. As our ancestors said, ‘The Sataggau families died all at once like crabs in a cooking pot’, but no one knew what had caused their death. Since then, no more people have occupied the
place in Sirilabat. The Siriratei had moved to Saibi Muara. The Siriratei took over rights to the land; at least we occupied most of this place and planted it with a lot of crops. The kin group called Siritoitet, too, was living here. Our Siriratei ancestors shared with them the care of the settlement and the land. Afterwards, people gradually moved to this village and increased the population, and some of us started selling plots of land to them. That also occurred about three generations before us, when some plots of ancestral land, for example in the place called Sigulugbaga, was sold by Siritoitet and my ancestors of the Siriratei group to your ancestors [meaning my ancestors], before your ancestral family eventually merged to establish your current kin group, called Satoko. Now, part of the settlement of Saibi Muara belongs to your family. (Narrated by Kobou Sakatsila, age 38; Saibi Muara – Siberut, 2004)

The storyteller of Story 14 begins his narrative by recalling the place of origin and the initial kin group's name. He then tells the story of the wild boar incident, including actions that his ancestors had carried out prior to spreading out from the initial place in Simatalu. The storyteller describes the course of his prominent ancestor's migratory movements from one place to another on the island of Siberut (see Chart 7.3). According to this story, the ancestor also moved over to Sipora. However, instead of staying in the southern islands, the storyteller’s ancestor returned to Siberut and eventually passed away in a settlement called Taileleu.

The storyteller's next theme is the further development of the migrating ancestor’s offspring, especially those who remained in the valley of Saibi Samukop. It happened about four generations ago. Assault and headhunting raids while residing in Saibi Samukop are recounted, too. Furthermore, the story relates how the storyteller’s ancestral kin group obtained a plot of land because of the assault and headhunting. Eventually, the story closes with a new topic, in which the storyteller describes how his kin group came to occupy the whole settlement of Saibi Samukop after the other kin groups moved away from there or even vanished. Later, a new kin group was established and more and more newcomers arrived to populate the settlement of Saibi Samukop.
Part Two

7.3.3 The wild boar story as told by the Satoko (Siriratei) kin group in Sarabua

The Sakatsila storyteller’s story briefly mentions the emergence of a kin group called Satoko. Two different families established the kin group about five generations ago. One Mentawai family was from Siriratei residing in Saibi Muara, while the other was a Chinese family immigrating to Siberut when the father of the Chinese family was working as a soldier of the Koninklijk Nederlandse-Indische Leger (KNIL). He was sent to Mentawai in a military peace-making expedition in the early 1900s. At that time, the Mentawai Islands had been under the authority of the Dutch colonial government since 10 July 1864. The Chinese soldier witnessed the process of the Dutch authorities stopping the
headhunting practices on the island of Siberut and making peace relationships among kin groups residing in Simatalu and Simalegi. After achieving a peaceful situation in those valleys, the military expedition moved to the valleys of Rereiket and Silaoinan. Gradually, kin groups residing in other places of Siberut island such as Sikabaluan and Tatubeket were also brought to peace. The Dutch authorities of the military expedition announced to each settlement that headhunting practices were now forbidden, and they asked which kin groups had conflicts. Then they asked leaders of the quarrelling kin groups to make peace with each other.

After retiring from the military, the Chinese soldier did not return to Sumatra. Instead, he and his family stayed in Mentawai in Saibi Muara. There he formed a close friendship (siripo) with a Siriratei family. Both families decided to resign from their former kin groups and form a new group, which was later called Satoko. At this point, they regarded each other as if they were really relatives, although they were not related by blood. Whatever problem one family had, the other tried to resolve it. They helped each other in all aspects of social
life. If one family was preparing a wedding ceremony, the other was invited, and helped by sharing the cost of the bride price.

The next version of the wild boar incident was recorded from the oldest member of the Satoko kin group and the respected elder of the Siriratei, Sakatsila, Saririkka, and Sakairiggi kin groups (all of them related to each other). His name is Teu Jaasa Satoko14 (see Photo 7.2). He was even esteemed by other kin groups in several villages of Siberut and Sipora because of his good leadership in leading his group and his villagers when he was the head of the village of Siberut in the 1960s. At the time, there were only a few villages. The storyteller’s fame was also partly due to the reputation of his father, named Teu Ngaroi (his real name) or Teu Marimau (his nickname, Tiger), in helping Dutch soldiers to stop headhunting practices on Siberut island.

The storyteller himself was once chosen as kepala kampung (village head) in Siberut because he was known as a courageous man. As he got older, his memory of his family history was incomplete. He told me what he still remembered, as follows.

Story 15

I will let you know what my grandfathers told me about the events they had experienced in the past long ago. According to our ancestors’ story, this island was empty. No one knew from where and when a woman and her son had come to inhabit the island of Siberut. The woman gave her son a ring and asked him to search for a wife on this island. He searched and searched by wandering this island for an unknown period of time. Nobody knew how many days, weeks, months or years the son had spent walking around on this island. One day he met his mother again and he married her. Since then, the first people on this island, located in Simatalu, expanded the numbers of the Siberut population.

One of those families was our ancestor, called Silango, whose son was called Sile'uk. Sile’uk’s son was Sisabau, whose son was called Sijobat. [Sijobat was also known as Teu Ngaroi or Simarimau.] I am Sijobat’s son. My name is Jaasa and my sons are Johannes, Efraim and Martinus. Johannes’s son is Sergius. Efraim’s son is Vincensius and he recently got married and has a son as well. We have passed through eight generations. At the present time, we have spread over the whole island. We also have relatives who live on Sipora and Pagai islands. We are now called Satoko, by which name other people on this island [Siberut] recognize us.

Our kin group’s name was formerly Sakerenganleleggu. This name was created from the fact that our ancestors’ voices were incredibly loud. When members of the group spoke to each other their voices were like the echo of

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14 Teu Jaasa Satoko passed away in November 2006. It was a few weeks before I had planned to meet him again in order to ask him a few questions that had come up during the course of writing this book.
The wild boar story

that time our group was led by ancestors called Sikoibatei and Sioiaken, and dwelled on the riverbank of the Simatalu river. One day, Koibatei [Sikoibatei] went to hunt in the forest, and he came across wild boars (siberi or simaigi), lying unconscious on the ground, under the tree called laggure. The wild boars were unconscious because they had eaten the fruits of the laggu tree. Those fruits have toxins that paralyse those who eat them. He wrapped up all the wild boars by using leaves. Afterwards, he returned home and asked his families for help in bringing the wild boars home. Rain was falling when his relatives went to the place where the wild boars were lying. Upon arriving at the place, the wild boars had already run away because the rain had showered them and awakened them from their unconscious state. If Sikoibatei’s relatives had not seen the wrapping, they perhaps would not have believed him. But they saw the wrapping and all the mud around the place where the boars had been lying. After that, the name of our ancestor changed from Sikoibatei to Silango. This new name was derived from the fact that Sikoibatei had failed to catch those boars. Thus, our ancestor acquired a new name, Silango Laggure, shortened to Silango [‘unconscious’].

We arrived at Saibi Samukop and Sarabua because our ancestor disliked his new name. Later, our ancestors had plots of land in Malupetpet and Rereiket. Our expansion (pusabuat) was described to me by our ancestors as follows: Formerly, we dwelled in Simatalu and later moved on to inhabit the riverbanks of a place called Bat Bilag located along the upper reaches of the Saibi Simatalu river; currently the place is a settlement called Limau. Subsequently, we went over hills and settled on the riverbanks of a place called Sakreake. When we dwelled in Sakreake, our kin-name changed from the initial Sakerenganleleggu to Siriratei.

Other people gave us the name, because they were surprised to see that our ancestors had built their uma near a graveyard (ratei). Mentawaians are usually afraid to have a house close to any graveyard. They are even afraid of passing a graveyard. But our ancestors built their house near a graveyard. Afterwards, we went downriver to Saibi Samukop. A small number of the Siriratei decided to split up. Because of a dispute, some members of Siriratei opened and took away half of the roof of our uma while the other half remained. For that reason we called them Saririgka [discarded relatives], because they did not want to be part of us anymore. The rest of the relatives were called Sakatsila because half the roof of the house had been taken by Saririgka whose house had only half of the roof remaining.

A few Siriratei families again moved away from Sakreake to inhabit the river mouth called Saibi Muara in the Saibi Samukop valley. Other Siriratei relatives built a house near a tree called kairiggi, in Sirisura. They therefore came to be called Sakairiggi. Because of Silango’s family’s dispersal, we [Silango’s descendants] have many plots of land. Boriai is one of them. Another part of our
land is located in Teitei Sigarena, at a place called *leleu simaitca* [literally ‘visible hill’].

When the Dutch [soldiers of the KNIL] arrived at Saibi Samukop (Saibi Muara), our ancestors already inhabited the place. The Dutch did not stay there very long. The Dutch left Saibi Samukop for a new place in Muara Siberut. While in Saibi Samukop they encountered some difficulties finding clean water. When they left for Muara Siberut, they did not take all the materials of their houses with them, so our ancestors collected those materials, such as wooden boards and corrugated iron sheets used for roofing. Our ancestors used the iron sheets to cover the roof of their communal house. This was unusual building material for Mentawaians. The Satoko communal house now looked just like the house of Sumatran traders in Mentawai, so people started calling it *toko* (which explains the name Satoko for our kin group). Our ancestors bought a plot of land located in Saibi Muara, where currently people of many different kin groups live. The land once belonged to Sabuilukkungan and later they surrendered it to the Sataggau kin group. But all of the Sataggau died, so that their land came into the hands of the Siriratei and the Siritoitet. [The plot of land bought by Satoko was about 20 hectares, but the location for the village of Saibi Muara is much larger than the size that belongs to the Satoko.] From these groups of people, your ancestors [referring to me] bought it for your families [meaning the part of the Satoko kin group that are descended from the Chinese family]. It is precisely located in Sigulugbaga [a neighbourhood of Saibi Muara] (Narrated by Teu Jaasa Satoko, age about 90; Sarabua – Siberut, 2004)

This storyteller’s wild boar story is slightly different from the two preceding versions. This storyteller begins his family story with the arrival of a woman and her son, of unknown origin, on the island of Siberut. This story is similar to the story of the pregnant woman drifting on a raft presented in Chapter 6, about the first people to come to Mentawai. The kin group of the storyteller might be one of those who are descended from the woman and her son who were stranded on Simatalu, but the storyteller does not name the generations between Silango and the woman who married her son while recounting his family generations. He simply says that his kin group’s ancestor is Silango and that Silango was a descendant of the woman and her son.

The storyteller also tells about the geographical expansion of his ancestral family as summarized in Chart 7.4. The storyteller recounts Silango’s next generations up to the storyteller’s current family. From Silango to the storyteller’s current family we can count eight generations. According to the storyteller, the genealogy of his ancestors is what is listed in Chart 7.5.

However, he does not tell about other events in the life of his ancestor prior to the migratory movements. He simply mentions that Silango disliked his new name, implying that he started wandering in order to get away from the
rest of his family residing in the homeland in Simatalu. While passing from one place to another, the ancestor occupied particular places where he claimed land. In the last passage of his story, the storyteller tells about the arrival of the Dutch (KNIL soldiers) in Saibi Muara in 1905 (Schefold, 1988: 98). This is said to be the moment when the kin group called Satoko was established.

**Chart 7.4** Expansion of the Satoko kin group to Saibi Muara and Sarabua on Siberut

*marks the place-name where the storyteller’s ancestor initially lived. The ancestor’s name is as seen in the accompanying genealogy chart (Chart 7.5).
7.4 Interpretation of the wild boar story

Each of the three versions of the wild boar story presented in this chapter emphasizes a different main point. The Saleleusi version, for instance, seems to emphasize the long wanderings of the ancestor Silango. The ancestor passed through such places as Simalegi, Berisigep, and Saibi Samukop. The ancestor wandered round nearly the whole of Siberut island before moving over to Sipora, and eventually decided to return to Siberut, where he passed away in a place called Taileleu. Furthermore, the name of the family garden (*simaitso*) seems to be quite important to mention in the story. The initial communal property of the Siriratei kin group is known by the name *mone simaitso* (visible garden). This name became a kind of keyword that made it possible to reunite migrating family members. To recognize the family links among dispersed kin groups descended from Silango, the location of the garden must
The wild boar story is a family story about hunting wild boars in the forest. It speaks of the social and cultural relevance of hunting. Mentawaians’ knowledge of their natural surroundings, such as where to go to have successful hunting, is integrated into the story. However, hunting is not meant only for catching animals but also for becoming familiar with the surrounding natural landscape. While hunting in the forest, Mentawaians will notice a particular location where they can get building materials or where there is good land for planting particular crops.

All three stories mention various plots of land that were claimed as theirs while moving from one place to another. Information about how the family grew is also documented in the family stories. The genealogy of the kin group became an important element of family stories. Knowledge of the migratory movements and the names of ancestors may confirm kinship between relatives that are currently separated by different kin-names and different places of residence.

In ending the second part of the book, I summarize here the content and themes of the mango story, the pig story, and the wild boar story, presented in the preceding chapters. The storytellers recount the route of the migration of their ancestors. They use particular terms when speaking of migratory movements. *Pusabuat* (divergence) is the process of spreading out from an initial area. *Pujaujaubat* (wandering) is the process of wandering in order to explore a new area. The term *pusabuat* describes the behaviour of animals, for instance pigs, when a group of pigs separate and go in different directions in order to save themselves from predators. This factor of predators forces the pigs to leave their place. *Pusabuat* used to describe humans in these stories suggests they feel forced by circumstances to leave for a new place. *Pujaujaubat* suggests something different. This term is used when Mentawai families moved...
away from their place of origin because they wanted to find a new place where
they would be acknowledged as the owner of the land, for instance if they
could settle in a place that was not yet occupied. So they migrated voluntarily
instead of being forced to. Nevertheless, both kinds of migratory movements
(*pujaujaubat* and *pusabuat*) have the same result: people left their dwelling
places and sought other places to live.

The storytellers’ stories differ in length. The pig story (Chapter 6) is con-
siderably longer and filled with more details than the mango story (Chapter
5) and the wild boar story. The specific aspects of these stories are the charac-
teristics of the family story, the migratory movements and family expansions
described in them, and the current conflicts over land rights.

Some stories contain only information about essential events. Other sto-
ries include more details and conversation. The longer narrations depend on
factors like storytellers’ memory and knowledge of events, which is necessar-
ily limited. A storyteller does not remember details of an event. Instead he
recounts his impression of an event that he once heard from his ancestors.
But even though he may remember clearly, a storyteller may not want to tell
his ancestral story in detail because he wants to prevent the details spreading
outside of the family circle.

Some stories were told to me in great detail. This indicates that the story-
teller has a great knowledge of past events of his ancestors, and also that the
storyteller does not really mind if other people – in this case I, as a researcher
– know their family stories. If the detailed information told in the story is not
considered a family secret, then there is no reason to hide the story. Neverthe-
less, I suspect that each storyteller hid from me a few things even though he
told me a long story. The storyteller sometimes honestly said that he would not
tell me the names of individuals or groups that had harmed other kin groups
during headhunting raids. This is a sensitive topic to discuss in public, because
it may lead to a serious assault among kin groups in the present.

The family stories indicate that Mentawaians considered several factors before
settling in a place. A ritual was performed when opening a new dwelling place.
The leader of the family slaughtered a rooster and read the family’s destiny in
the rooster’s intestines. If it was a bad sign, they would seek another place. If
it was a good sign, they erected a shelter and gradually built a house. A good
place was near a river because that made it easy to transport a lot of things.
They could bring goods from downriver and upriver places to their settlement
by means of a dugout canoe instead of carrying them on foot. A river was also
perceived as a source of protein where Mentawaians regularly caught fish and
shrimps, or collected shellfish.

Besides a river or stream, people noticed the type of soil. A sandy plot of
land is ideal for planting coconut palms, while clay soil is ideal for planting
fruit trees like durian, jackfruit and mango. A swampy area is ideal for grow-
The wild boar story

ing sago palms, from which Mentawaians on Siberut obtain their staple food. The Mentawai Islands do not have extensive flat land where people can cultivate crops. The islands consist mainly of hilly areas. Nevertheless, Mentawaians generally do not build their house on a hillside unless it is for safety. As exemplified by the pig story, a family built a house on the top of a hill in order to hide themselves from the enemy. In the traditional situation, hilly areas are actually reserved for hunting and as an area where building materials can be gathered. If they cannot find an ideal place with flat, dry land, Mentawaians prefer to build a house near a swampy area that is good for growing sago.

In a few family stories, it is told that the ancestors of Mentawaians on Siberut lived in coastal areas (see the wild boar story). They claimed beaches and reefs where they could catch fish, sea turtles and diverse shellfish. Coconut palms grow in former settlements located near the coastline of the Mentawai Islands, signifying that the Mentawaians once occupied coastal areas. For reasons like headhunting, danger of flooding and tsunami, Mentawaians gradually moved inland, leaving their old coastal settlements unattended. In the era of headhunting, people in the south of Siberut for instance could reach a village in the north of the island by canoe. If a village was located near the coast, it could be easily seen and reached by headhunters from the sea. This would be more difficult if the village was located inland. In that case the headhunters would have to enter a river and locate the village before carrying out their raid. So building a house inland was considered safer than in a coastal area.

All family stories illustrate the process of gathering foodstuffs in daily life. In the stories, conflicts among family members frequently involve the collecting of foodstuffs. Not all the conflicts in the stories are within a single family (kin group); some are between two or more different families residing in the same valley. The stories usually relate more than a single incident. They usually mention other events that forced their migrating ancestors to embark on further migratory movements.