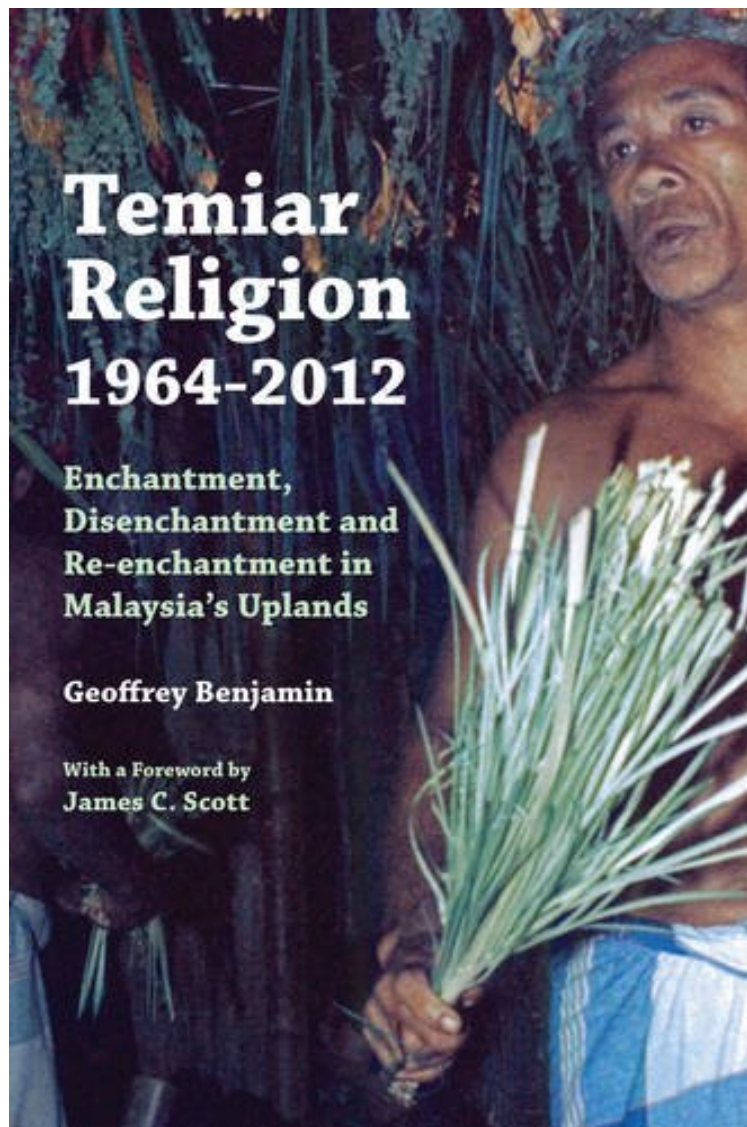


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Temiar Religion, 1964-2012: Enchantment, Disenchantment and Re-enchantment in Malaysia's Uplands

Geoffrey Benjamin

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The Temiars, a Mon-Khmer-speaking Orang Asli society living in the uplands of northern Peninsular Malaysia, have long attracted popular attention in the West for reports that ascribed to them the special psychotherapeutic known as 'Senoi Dreamwork'. However, the reality of Temiar religion and society, as studied and recorded by Geoffrey Benjamin over 50 years, is even more fascinating than that popular portrayal - which is shown to be based on a serious misrepresentation of Temiar practice. When Benjamin first lived in the isolated villages of the Temiars between 1964 and 1965, he encountered a people who lived by swidden farming supplemented by hunting and fishing. They practised their own unexportable, localised animistic religion in an area where the main religion of civilisation was formerly Mahayana Buddhism and is now Islam. Fifty years later, the Temiars have become much more embedded in broader Malaysian society, while retaining their distinctive way of life, including continuing involvement with their complex shamanic religion. Benjamin's ongoing fieldwork in the 1970s, 1990s and 2000s followed the Temiars through processes of religious dis-enchantment and re-enchantment, as they reacted in various ways to the advent of Baha'i, Islam and Christianity. Some Temiars even developed a new religion of their own. In addition to its rich ethnographic reportage, the book proposes a novel theory of religion and develops a deeply insightful account of the changing intellectual framework of anthropology over the past half-century.

From the Inside Flap Contents List of Tables and Figures Foreword (by James C. Scott) Preface Orthography and Pronunciation Chapter 1. The Historical and Intellectual Background Chapter 2. The Temiars and their Religion Chapter 3. Temiar Religion (1967)--Preface and Introduction Chapter 4. Temiar Religion (1967)--The Cosmos Chapter 5. Temiar Religion (1967)--Species Chapter 6. Temiar Religion (1967)--Souls Chapter 7. Temiar Religion (1967)--Spirit-mediumship Chapter 8. Temiar Religion (1967)--Theology Chapter 9. Field-report Correspondence with Edmund Leach Chapter 10. Temiar Mediumship in Context Chapter 11. Indigenous Religious Systems of the Malay Peninsula Chapter 12. Danger and Dialectic in Temiar Childhood Chapter 13. Rationalisation and Re-enchantment: Temiar Religion, 1964-94 Chapter 14. Temiar Religions, 1994-2012: Islam, Christianity, alj Slamad Afterword Appendices 1-4 Bibliography Index From the Back Cover "If you would like to make sense of the Temiar world and, at the same time, wonder at an example of ethnographic analysis at its very best, you can do no better than to start here." From the Foreword by James C. Scott, author of *The Art of Not Being Governed*. About the Author Geoffrey BENJAMIN has taught at the former University of Singapore, the Australian National University, the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University. He is currently Senior Associate at the Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) at Nanyang Technological University.