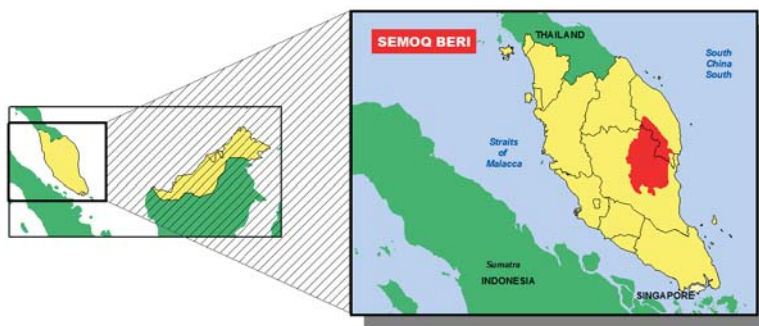


SEMOQ BERI



Population	Major Religion	Language
2,500	Animism	Semaq Beri

Who are the Semoq Beri?

The Semoq Beri (“people of the jungle”) are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups of Peninsular Malaysia. They belong to the Senoi subgroup.

They refer to themselves as Semoq (“people”) and are called Semoq Beri by their neighbors. They are also referred to in relevant literature as the Jakun of Tekai River and erroneously as the Semelai. The Semoq Beri live in settlements located in the jungles of the Jerantut, Kuantan, and Maran districts in Pahang and the Hulu Terengganu and Kemaman districts in Terengganu.

In the Malaysian Department of Aborigines nomenclature, Semoq Beri refers to a culturally diverse grouping of Orang Asli living in a large area along the eastern and northern tributaries of the Tembeling and Pahang Rivers.

What are their lives like?

The Semoq Beri have a common understanding within their society that each group has its own territory. The boundaries are clearly defined and maintained through mutual respect and any access to resources is available on demand—for instance, rights to make a garden are acquired by felling trees.

All types of subsistence activities are represented in Semoq Beri society—from hunting to slash and burn agriculture. Those living in government settlements are semi-nomads. Although less dependent on forest produce, they still hunt and fish regularly and collect some forest produce for trade (rattan, aromatic woods).

The traditional Semoq Beri are hunter-gatherers and

are completely dependent on the forest. They use the government village settlement only as a base camp. Except during the rainy season, they move around the forest all year round, hunting and collecting forest produce. They put up temporary camps within the jungle and move from one location to another. Each move can last from two to thirty-six days and cover a distance of up to 375 miles (or 600 km).

What do they believe?

The Semoq Beri believe in the existence of a Creator God called *Tohan* as well as numerous genies, spirits, ghosts, and supernatural beings. Certain natural phenomenon such as thunder, lightning, and eclipses are still feared by some of the Semoq Beri. They believe the forest is full of spirits that are an integral part of the human environment and these spirits communicate with and guide humans during dreams and trances. These non-human beings are everywhere in the forest; not only are they in plants and animals, but also in stones and mountains. Religious rituals are closely linked to their use of the forest. Their lives are also filled with taboos and superstitions due to the fear of spirits that dominate their lives. A small minority of the Semoq Beri are Christian.

What are their needs?

The Semoq Beri are hunter-gatherers and are dependent on the forest. They are a remote and highly mobile people. They are also isolated and impoverished. Pray for positive efforts for outside the culture to help improve their way of life. Pray for believers who will seek to relate the True Creator God to others within the Semoq Beri mobile community.