Adult Male Replacement in a Group of Silvered Leaf-monkeys
(Presbytis cristata) at Kuala Selangor, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT. During observations of silvered leaf-monkeys at Kuala Selangor, Malaysia, the resident adult male in one group was replaced by an immigrant male. Three months after the replacement, all of the dependent infants in the group disappeared. The similarity of these observations to observations of male-takeovers and subsequent infanticide among Indian and Ceylonese langurs suggests a similar pattern of social change among all langurs which live in one-male groups.

INTRODUCTION

The patterns of group composition found among many species of non-human primates have been well documented in recent years (CROOK, 1970; EISENBERG, MUCKERHIRM, & RUDRAN, 1972; JOLLY, 1972). In contrast, remarkably little information is available on the behavioral and demographic factors (e.g., immigration, emigration, differential mortality, infanticide) which maintain frequencies of particular age-sex classes within a group. This paper reports observations of social change in a group of silvered leaf-monkeys (Presbytis cristata) which relate to the mechanisms maintaining group composition in these and other langurs.

Silvered leaf-monkeys, usually occurring in groups containing a single adult male and several adult females and immature individuals, inhabit a 50 hectare, wooded hill at the western edge of Kuala Selangor town in Peninsular Malaysia. BERNSTEIN (1968) and FURUYA (1961–2) have described the site and many aspects of the behavior of these langurs. Five groups lived on the hill between June, 1974 and March, 1975. Figure 1 shows the observed ranges of these groups and the landmarks used in the observations presented below. The observations reported here primarily concern one of these groups (KS-4). This group was observed sporadically between 1972 and 1975 during the course of other primate field studies conducted in Peninsular Malaysia.

OBSERVATIONS

August, 1972: A short-tailed male, ST (Fig. 2), was the only adult male resident in a group which ranged in an area approximating that occupied by KS-4 after June, 1974.

June–August, 1973: ST was the only adult male in KS-4.

September 6, 1974
10:55: KS-4 was contacted during an intergroup encounter with KS-3. A large adult male
Fig. 1. Map of Kuala Selangor hill (after Bernstein, 1968) showing the home ranges of resident groups in 1975 and the landmarks mentioned in the text.

Fig. 2. Short-tail, the adult male who was replaced.

with a full tail, FT(Fig. 3), was the only adult male in KS-4. FT and the male from KS-3 chased and rested in sight of each other for over an hour until FT withdrew towards the relay station (RS) and joined a subgroup of KS-4. He sat in the midst of this subgroup giving "kwah" calls.¹  
12:14: FT followed by several members of KS-4 contacted KS-5 near a private house (PH).

¹ This vocalization is given only by adult males and is associated with group movement oriented towards the calling male.