

# "Chok Madah" Nature-Culture Trail



**Moken Village, Large Bon Bay, South Surin Island**



## Map showing "Chok Madah" Nature-Culture Trail



 "Chok Madah" Nature-Culture Trail  Moken Village, Large Bon Bay, South Surin Island

## Introduction

Hundreds of years before the establishment of the Surin Islands National Park, we the Moken travelled these islands. Some of us made the islands our temporary home during our semi nomadic travels. We depend on marine resources for our livelihood and we are adept at spearing fish and diving for sea produce. The forest is also an important resource for us because it yields food and raw materials for our boats, tools, and medicine.



We know the forest as well as the sea. We know how to select the straight and tall *Ja-ngarn* timber (*Hopea odorata*) for crafting dug-out boats, we know how to select long and firm Pandanus leaves to weave our mats, thatches, baskets and boxes and we know which palm leaves to use for weaving into thin bamboo stakes to make walls and roofs.

We have a great respect for the forest. Before cutting down a big tree a ceremony will be held and the offerings made to the supernatural beings that are the protectors of the forest.

We follow our forest trails to gather wild fruit, vegetables and tubers. We collect wild fruit and leaves to consume fresh or for cooking such as *Pawan* leaves (*Meliantha suavis*) and *Ka-ning* (*Diospyros* sp) fruit. Medicinal plants can also be gathered from the same

forest such as the bark of *Ba-ai* (*Derris indica*) which is collected and ground into a paste and mixed with water to rub on and cool infant's heads.

The leaves of another species, *Bubong* (*Scaevola taccada*), are dried, chopped into pieces, pounded with rice and wrapped within cloth to form ball shapes. These can then be warmed on a slow fire and used as a massager to sooth aching parts of the body.

What if we are stung by poisonous jellyfish? Then we pick *O-lan* (*Ipomoea pescaprae*) sweet leaves, pound them and smear the juice on the wound.



"O-lan" or Sea morning glory

Beehive

As well as functional products, the forest offers us special treats. During the blooming season beehives are brimming with succulent honey which we collect to share with everyone in the village.

We have a close relationship with the forest and we also have a great respect for the forest as it is a life giver.



Children's drawings of trees and forest

## Chok Madah Nature-Culture Trail

Starting at the back of our village pavilion, this 800 meter long trail leads into the lush rain forest and brings you to Chok Madah, a small beautiful bay on the western side of south Surin Island.



We, the Moken, have been using this as our foraging trail for generations and now it is open to visitors who are interested in learning about our knowledge of plants and culture. Our spirit has inhabited the forest and the sea in this area for centuries. There are twenty stations along the trail and each will provide you with information that connects your world with that of ours.

This trail has been developed with the cooperation from our community, the Andaman Pilot Project of the Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University, and the National Park Office, with the support from UNESCO and UNDP.



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- 1 Bamboo
- 2 "Pa-oh"
- 3 Nurse Log
- 4 "Blood" Trees, Moken "Ropes", and Sour Leaves.
- 5 The "Kamchad" Tree
- 6 Rattan Diversity!
- 7 The Entrance to Chok Madah
- 8 Dipterocarpus
- 9 "Be-tan"
- 10 The St. Thomas Bean
- 11 Calathea, Fish Tail Palm, and Pink Eye Vine
- 12 Joys of Plant World!

- 13 Tree Mound, Wild Orchid, and Diospyros
- 14 "Exerting Figs" and The Hairy Leg Mountain Crab
- 15 Palm Trees
- 16 Epiphyte and Symbiotic Relationships
- 17 Beach Forest
- 18 Fresh Water
- 19 Rubblish and Litter
- 20 Chok Madah

Large Bon Bay

Chok Madah



## Station 1 : Bamboo (*Ka-oon-ba-toong*)

Bamboo belongs to the grass family (Graminaeae/Poaceae) and it is the biggest grass in the world! Bamboo can grow very fast, up to one meter a day, with the type and size serving as an indicator of soil condition. Although there are many different kinds of bamboo, they all multiply by growing shoots and we use these to make delicious food for both animals and people. We forage for the bamboo shoots during the rainy season.

Additionally, we cut and split the bamboo to make lath floors for our huts and boats while the larger stems can be used as fresh water containers. To make these we cut large bamboo trunks and pierce the section wall using an iron tool. These bamboo water containers were a necessity in our boats during our nomadic journeys.

Bamboo with straight trunks is more common than climbing bamboo but along this trail you will surely see climbing bamboo (or *Ka-oon-yee-hang* in the Moken language). Some people are allergic to the fine hairs on the young stems so it is best not to touch them! In the past, we cut small *Ka-oon-yee-hang* stems and scraped the hair out to make cigarette pipes. Bamboo is a really useful plant for us.



## Station 2 : "*Pa-oh*"

There are several large *Pa-oh* trees in this area. *Pa-oh* or Khan Thong (it means 'golden bowl' in Thai) is a large tree which can grow up to 40 meters high. It is a deciduous tree that produces good quality hard wood. We use it to make our *kabang* (large boats) and *chapan* (small rowing boats).



*Pa-oh fruit.*

Can you see the Pa-oh fruit? The parts that look like flower petals function just like wings and propel the fruit away from the mother tree for dispersal.

Even today, we use simple tools to build boats and have developed our own technologies such as the use of a low wooden frame and rattan to haul large logs. You will learn more about our usage of rattan at Station 6.

*Pa-oh* trees usually have buttresses which can be as tall as 3 meters. We call this buttress *Ba-nin* and you will see *Ba-nin* again at Station 9.



*Our log hauling technology*



### Station 3 : Nurse Log

This dead wood is actually not useless at all. Many people call it a nurse log or mother stump. It serves as a home for mushrooms, fungi, mosses, ferns and other small plants. Small reptiles and insects also find shelter here and make it their spawning ground and a place to nurse their babies.



Nurse log is very humid inside which accelerates the process of decomposition and nutrient release back to the ground. Logs in the pond also provide a home and spawning ground for fish and other aquatic animals.

This cycle of birth and death (birth, aging, ailment, death), whereby the dead continue to be useful for the living, is a very apparent natural occurrence in the rain forest.



## Station 4 : "Blood" Trees, Moken "Ropes", and Sour Leaves

There are three items of particular interest in this area; the blood trees which bleed when cut, the vines which are used as rope and the leaves that taste sour.



**4.1** Although one may not be surprised to see white sap coming from a cut made into the trunk of a para-rubber tree, which we use in the South to make useful things like medical gloves and elastic bands, this tree is different.

**Blood tree** or *Ka-e Dalak* in our language is so named because it bleeds thin red sap when we cut it! We do not use this red sap but the wood is used to make planks and boat oars. It is not a good quality wood though as it wears down easily after some years.

*"Blood" tree*

## Station 4 : “Blood” Trees, Moken “Ropes”, and Sour Leaves (continued)

**4.2 Moken ropes.** In the old days we Moken did not have ropes. So what did we use for anchor lines, boat hauling, and for bundling stuff? In fact, there are ropes all over this forest if you know how to select and process plants.

We used one vine called *Lalad Lam-ngai* for our anchor lines. Similarly, during the time when we collected edible bird’s nests we used *Lalad Lam-ngai* or *Lalad Cha-oad* to make a long rope for hauling large human baskets so as to pick bird’s nests along cave roofs and walls.



*Eating rice, chiton salad, with small periwinkles*



*Preparing Chiton salad*

**4.3 Sour leaves.** You are probably familiar with sour fruit but there are also trees with palatable sour leaves such as *Roselle* (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) that we use in our soup. Another tree that has sour tasting leaves is called *Chuay* (*Elaeocarpus floribundus*) or *Tuay* or *Lon* as the Thai call it. We chop the leaves up and put them in our spicy Chiton salad as it is a good substitute for fresh limes which are hard to find on the Surin Islands.

## Station 5 The "*Kamchad*" Tree

This *Kamchad* tree (spoken the same in both Thai and Moken) is better known as *Makhaen* or *Ma-kwaen* (*Zanthoxylum limonella*) and it belongs to the same family as oranges (Rutaceae). We use the wood to make oars and small rowboats as the wood is relatively light.



"*Kamchad*" Tree

If you pick a leaf and crush it, you will notice that the sap has a fragrance like that of lime peel. Some people in other parts of Thailand eat the young leaves either fresh, with chilli dip, or as an ingredient in more elaborate dishes.

The *Kamchad* flowers bloom in March or April and are small with a greenish white colour. The seeds are small like pepper seeds and have a hot flavour. Several communities in southern Thailand use the seeds as an ingredient in curries to spice up and add fragrance to the dish. In the north, the seeds are used as condiments in traditional dishes like meat salads, semi-cooked meat salads and some curries. Certain schools of traditional medicine also use the seeds as a heart tonic to invigorate the blood and body system.



## Station 6 *Rattan Diversity!*

Rattan, or *Kwai* in our language, is in the Arecaceae family. It is actually a climbing palm found only in tropical areas. There are over 600 species and 13 genus including *Calamus*, *Daemonorops*, *Plectocomia* and *Korthalsia*.



The rattan leaves are long and thin like those of coconut palms. The stem is like sugar cane with a green smooth surface. Rattan trees are straight at the base but as they grow longer they lean against other trees or climb on the forest floor. The stem may be a hundred meters tall and the tallest ever recorded is 175 meters long. People use these long stems to make furniture or split them up to make wickerwork such as baskets and boxes.

Rattan tips serve as climbing limbs as they are like thin ropes with sets of thorns, similar to barbed wire. We call them *Ujung*, meaning tips, and we call the rattan base *Batang*.

Rattan can be used for several purposes. Split into small strips it can be used as all purpose rope or string and was used widely before metal nails became readily available. In the old days, different parts of our hut were assembled and tied with rattan strings like traditional Thai huts or houses.



## Station 6 Rattan Diversity! (continued)

Additionally, Rattan strings are used for sewing Pandanus leaves into large sheets for making boat and hut roofs. Rattan shoots, which we call *U-mood*, can be eaten after a quick boil and the round Rattan fruit with its distinctive fish scale pattern has an astringent taste.

We use several types of rattan that can be found in this area.

1. **"Kwai Badao"** ; the hand rail that you use when you climb up along the steep trail.

2. **"Kwai Jalae"** ; thorny rattan, or fragrant rattan (in Thai) is used for stringing pandanus leaves together into a large flat sheet for roof coverings.

3. **"Kwai Jae-chan"** ; is used for making boat ropes.

4. **"Kwai Boo-bon"** ; water rattan or club rattan is used to string pandanus together and to make frames for boat roofs.

5. **"Lalad Chaeb"** ; this is not a rattan but a vine which we use as all-purpose ropes.

6. **"Kwai Chee-yuk"** ; *Kwai See Muak* or Red Rattan (in Thai) is used for ropes to draw human baskets vertically during bird nest collections. It is also a suitable material for making roof frames.



*Kwai Jalae – sewing  
pandanus leaves*



*Kwai Badao – making hand rail*



*Lalad Chaeb*



*Kwai Chee-yuk -- making roof*

## Station 7 The Entrance to *Chok Madah*

The trail winding through these two trees makes us feel like we are passing through a gate or an entrance to *Chok Madah*. You have walked through the steep part of the trail and now the way forward is not that difficult. Plus, there are 13 more stations for you to enjoy along the way!!



The left side structure at the “entrance” to Chok Madah is a Fig tree (*Ficus* sp.) or *Strangler Fig* which climbs on the Blood tree. There are over 900 Fig species in the world and 88 of them can be found in Thailand. Their abundance lends them to take a variety of forms; standing trees, shrubs and climbing plants.

The “host” Blood tree is strangled by the Fig tree whose trunk and roots grow fast to compete with the host for sunlight. Eventually the host tree will die. Fig trees are not parasitic; rather they are epiphytes and derive only structural support from the host while growing independently. The right side of the “entrance” is the tree which we call *Be-tan*. The wood is light and suitable for building rowboats. We will meet *Be-tan* again at Station 9.

## Station 8 Dipterocarpus

We call this Dipterocarp tree *Je-chien* or the rubber tree. Just imagine in the old days when there was no glue, artificial resin or silicone, we the Moken used the resin or *Od* from this rubber tree as all purpose glue to coat wood for increased durability, to seal or fill in cracks in boats and to make torches.



The method used to extract the resin is to make a small cut or hole in the tree trunk. Sometimes we build a small fire in the hole which helps the resin seep out. Then we collect the resin and use it to coat our Salacca *kabang* or plank *kabang*. Despite the small cut in the trunk the tree will continue to grow and yield more resin in the future.

There is one kind of resin called *Od jakoh*. This resin is found in dead *Je-chien* trees or it is the resin which is extracted from the nests of sting-less bees. These bees make their nests either on the tree or on the ground where they excrete a sticky liquid from their body into the nest. We use *Od jakoh* to rub on the bow of our string instruments (*kating*) as it increases sliding friction and enhances the sound. Just like violinists rub resin on their bow.



*We use the resin to seal the cracks on our boat*

## Station 9 "*Be-tan*"



*The buttresses of Be-tan tree*

The *Be-tan* tree has buttresses; demonstrable of the trees evolution to compensate for shallow roots. No matter how tall these trees are, the roots remain shallow. So the tree expands its trunk as a buttress or support to uphold the tree against strong wind and storms. Buttresses also represent the expansion of plant tissue which helps to absorb more nutrients from the soil.



*"Koyang" or rear plank of our kabang*

In the old days, when ready made planks were not available, we cut the buttresses to make the rear plank of our *kabang*. This is both convenient and conservational as we did not have to cut down the whole tree. We have various conservational practices that enable us to live harmoniously with the environment. If only more people understood the Moken values and promoted the practices of indigenous conservation!

## Station 10 The St. Thomas Bean (*Sa-ba*)

The Thai people are familiar with the term *Sa-ba* which means the kneecap or the flat bone on the knee. The Thai enjoy a traditional game called Sa-ba which involves throwing round flat pieces obtained from the pod of St. Thomas Bean (*Entada rheedii*). The pod is long and large and comes from the curvy vine that you see on the ground. The vine is also useful for us as we can pound the stem to extract thin foamy juices to use as soap, detergent and shampoo.



*The St. Thomas Bean Vine*

In the old days, we were pretty much self-sufficient. Our food and goods were derived from the sea or the forest around us!



## Station 11 Calathea, Fish Tail Palm, and Pink Eye Vine



*Katieng plant*

**11.1 Calathea or “Katieng”** (*Schumanmianthus dichotomus*) is in the Marantaceae family and presents another plant which we use to make lattice or walls for our *kabang*. You have probably seen traditional houses in rural areas which use these lattice walls made from bamboo strips. The walls are relatively easy to make and the materials can be found locally. Moreover, they are appropriate for tropical climates and humid weather like ours. Houses with lattice walls allow the breeze to blow through so there is no need to import electric air-conditioning technology or the oil needed to run these units.

Our *kabang* lattice walls or *bidai* are made with bamboo but there are several other kinds of plants which we can split into strips and weave into lattice; like this *Katieng* plant. Another plant is *Salacca*, the stem of which is used as *kabang* gunwale. Before equipping the stems into gunwale we need to peel *Salacca*. We then use the peelings and the strips to make the lattice. This is our principle of reusing!

While Moken men are *kabang* builders, the women are *bidai* weavers. There are several patterns of *bidai* weaving but nowadays, as the art of *kabang* building is dying away, the knowledge of selecting suitable wood, widening the dug-out boats and weaving *bidai*, is also fading.



*Bidai or kabang wall*

## Station 11 Calathea, Fish Tail Palm, and Pink Eye Vine (continued)



*Fish Tail Palm*

**11.2 Fish Tail Palm** What you see here is Fish Tail Palm, Wart Fish Tail Palm or *Caryota mitis* (Arecaceae family). Peeling the sheath reveals the inner white shoots which after a quick boil taste great, especially with chilli and shrimp paste dip.

**11.3 Pink Eye Vine** We call this vine *Lalad Kudung* which means Pink Eye Vine. This is because when we have an eye infection (conjunctivitis)

we crush the vine and soak it in the water, then we wash our eyes with the water to sooth the infection.

## Station 12 Joys of the Plant World!



*Ghost lime*

<http://wanwisayossawang.tripod.com/HTML/monophylla.html>

**12.1 *Atalantia monophylla*** is from the Rutaceae family which, incidentally, is the same family that lime, orange and Bengal Quince fruit belong to. The Thais call this tree ghost lime tree. Does that sound scary? We call it *Talab*. What is interesting about this tree is the fruit, which is like lime but much smaller. The tree bears fruit in July and August when the Surin Islands are closed to visitors due to the rough weather from the southwestern monsoon. Do not be disappointed though!

The tree is not that difficult to find in the forests elsewhere.

## Station 12 Joys of Plant World! (continued)



*Screw pine or "Jakae Kadong"*

### 12.2 Screw Pine or *Pandanus tectorius*

is from the Pandanaceae family. The Thais call it "*Toey Nam*" or thorny Pandanus, but we call it "*Jakae Kadong*" and it is a very useful plant for us.. We cut long thick leaves and sew them with thin rattan strings to make large sheets for *kabang* sails or roofs. The women cut the leaves

into strips (ouch! beware of the thorns), sun-dry and boil them, then soften the strips by scraping them. Our beautiful mats and boxes are made of these Pandanus strips.

**12.3 Softy vine** Try squeezing this vine, the crust is soft like cork. We call this vine *Moo-nyin*. Sometimes we use it as a rope but the vine is not that strong and it is easy to break so it is not as popular as other kinds of *Lalad* or other vines.



*Softy vine or "Moo-nyin"*

## Station 12 Joys of Plant World! (continued)



**12.4 Mushrooms** When you walk along this trail, perhaps you look straight ahead or up at the canopy? You are not likely to look down on the ground, are you? Actually there are interesting things on the ground. Several mushroom species can be found in this forest. Are mushrooms plants or animals? No, they are neither! They have their own kingdom called the fungi kingdom. Some research indicates that

mushrooms share more characteristics with animals than they do with plants.

Have you seen any mushrooms along the way? Perhaps you can see some on the nurse



log? Remember that mushrooms take many different shapes and colours. We do not eat any of the mushrooms in this forest because some of them are poisonous and may even be deadly!

[www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/\\_welcome/](http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/_welcome/)

**12.5 *Ixora* sp. in Rubiaceae family.** This forest has trees with lovely flowers, like this "Needle Tree" (translated from the Thai language); look at the beautiful orange colour! We call the tree "*Jamang*" and it has several uses. One use is to prepare a warm bath for the sick by boiling the leaves in water. For infants or small children, we crush the leaves into a paste and apply it on their head to cool down fevers.



## Station 13 Tree Mound, Wild Orchid, and *Diospyros*



**13.1 Tree mound.** The dead *Diospyros* tree is home to termites. These termites are soil nesting but after the underground colony has flourished they move upwards. Their mound is built with semi-digested wood mixed with earthen shells. Termites are insects with the ability to digest cellulose from wood, thus they accelerate the nutrient cycle in the forest.

**13.2 *Diospyros* sp.** (Ebenaceae family). We call this *kaning* and we put the fruit peel in fish soup or sand worm soup. The ripe fruit has a yellowish orange colour and a sweet, astringent taste while the wood can be used to make knives and axe handles. Furthermore, the crust from the tree can be extracted to produce colour dye (usually a brownish

shade). In other places, the tree bark is pounded and boiled as medicine to cure dysentery and diarrhoea. The juice can also help with healing wounds.

## Station 13 Tree Mound, Wild Orchid, and *Diospyros* (continued)



**13.3** This wild orchid is *Cymbidium finlaysonianum* from the Orchidaceae family. Orchids can grow as epiphytes or grow on the ground. This wild orchid is generally found in the rain forests of southern Thailand and can be recognized by the 6 yellow petals on each flower (*Bu-nga Tadung*). If you happen to walk this trail when the flowers are in bloom you will always remember having seen one.



The juice or liquid squeezed from grilled leaves can cure otorrhea, aural pus and ear ache from deep water diving; a few drops in the aching ear will relieve the pain.



*Isn't this beautiful ?*

**13.2 A Large Fig tree with a hole in the trunk.** This Fig tree has a large hole in the trunk. Do not worry! The tree will not die. The hole serves as a home for small reptiles, insects and birds. It is a safe place for them away from predators on the ground and the hole can become a nesting place for these animals.

*Fig tree*

## Station 14 : Exerting Figs and Hairy Leg Mountain Crab !



*Exerting Fig*

**14.1 Exerting Figs.** We learnt about strangler Figs at Station 7, now we can see an exerting Fig which spreads its roots into this hard rock and practically breaks it in two. See how powerful this little plant is?

**14.2 Hairy Leg Mountain Crabs.** Have you seen any crabs around here? The Thai call them Chicken Crabs as they give out a cry of *chieb-chieb* just like chicks! We call them *katam plian* (*Cardiosoma carnifex*) and they are our favourite food. The crabs hide

in the holes and granite rock cracks during the day and come out to feed at night. Try looking under the rock; you might see some waving claws! We walk this forest at night time to forage for the crabs. They do not run very fast and when they hide in the cracks we use the *kodo* or hooked metal arm to fetch them out.



*Hairy Leg Mountain Crab*

## Station 15 Palm Trees



*Palm tree which we climbed up to cut mature leaves, leaving young leaves to grow*

This palm tree (*Livistona speciosa*) is of the Arecaceae family and is another plant that is important to us. We call it "Ja-lo" and it is found all over Thailand.

The leaves are large in size and thus they are very useful. We cut them and weave them into split bamboo sticks to make thatched roofs and walls for our huts. Please note that we do not cut down the whole tree, but we will climb up to cut only the mature leaves, leaving the tree and the young leaves to continue to grow. Palm thatched roofs are very good in protecting us from the rain, heat and sunlight. It is also very easy to repair as we only need to insert extra leaves on the leaking parts. Thus it is economical, yet very effective.



*Moken hut with palm leave roof and wall*



## Station 16 : Epiphytes and Symbiotic Relationships



*Epiphyte "La-lad-lee-bud"*

**16.1 Epiphytes** We call this kind of epiphyte *La-lad-lee-bud* (*Scindapsus* sp.) and it is from the Araceae family. It grows on other trees causing no harm but providing no help either. Epiphytes live on nutrients in the bark of the tree it grows on. Some of them (like Holttum's Stag horn fern) develop large leaves (or nest leaves) to catch falling leaves and other organisms which provide extra nutrients for them. Others develop photosynthesizing roots (like orchids) and they grow well in shady areas.

**16.2 Symbiotic relationships** are represented here by algae and fungus. Look closely on the tree bark or rock surfaces and you will see coloured patches. They are not blemishes or taints but are actually living organisms called lichen, consisting of algae and fungus. Fungus provides humidity and shelter for algae, while algae provide nutrients for the fungus. Without one, the health of the other would suffer. This is the essence of a symbiotic relationship.



*Symbiotic Relationship*



## Station 17 Beach Forest

Now you can see the sea at *Chok Madah*. Is it worth the (tiring) walk? The plants grown in this area can withstand sea spray. The four main ones are Tropical Almond, Barringtonia, Half-moon Flowers and Pandanus.



*Tropical Almond or "Lae-ka"*

(ever wonder why they are called almond?) and they taste even better with a sugar coat. We sometimes dry mature leaves and brew them like tea.

**17.1** These **Tropical Almond** trees (*Terminalia catappa*), are sometimes called **Sea Almonds** or **Indian Almonds** and are found in the beach forest all over the Surin Islands. We call them *Lae-ka* and the children like to chew on the raw fruit as they are sour and sharp tasting. The ripe fruits are yellow and have a sweet flavour. The seeds or nuts taste great

## Station 17 Beach Forest (continued)



**17.2** We call this *Bu-toon* (***Barringtonia Asiatica***). We can see from the picture that the fruit is salt-water proof. They have a thick husk and float like coconuts so they can travel in the sea for long distances. With suitable temperature and sandy soil conditions, the seeds sprout into small plants. Look around you, there are young *Bu-toon* everywhere here; which is good because like many plants we slice up the young fruit and eat them with a chili and shrimp paste dip.

*Bu-toon sprout*



## Station 17 Beach Forest (continued)

**17.3 Half Moon Flowers** or *Boo-bong* as we call them (*Scaevola taccada*) belong to the Goodeniaceae family. The flowers are white and look just like a waxing moon. When our eyes are sore from too much swimming and diving or from the wind and waves, we squeeze the liquid out of the small, white, mature fruit and drop them into our eyes.

It is very soothing. This method is shared by Polynesian surfers. Isn't this fascinating?



*Half Moon Flowers... ever wonder how they got such a name?*



**17.4 Another kind of pandanus** (*Pandanus Odoratissimus*) is, naturally, also from the Pandanaceae family. Like the earlier kind of Pandanus that you saw, this plant is very useful for us as well. After we sun-dry and boil the leaf strips, they become whitish, smooth, and shiny compared to the creamy and dull colour of the large Pandanus.

*Pandanus plant*

## Station 18 Fresh water



Fresh water is very important for us and a stream appears in this area during the rainy season which does not then dry up during the hot season. This fresh water tastes better than several brands of bottled water. You may notice that the location of our village is always close to the stream or other water sources. When we did our nomadic rounds we always stored water in bamboo containers (Remember? We used the bamboo like the one you saw at Station 1). Now we use plastic containers

or bottles because it is much more convenient.

Every island in the Surin region has water sources. When we go diving or foraging there is no need to bring fresh water along because we know where we can find sweet drinkable water!

Along the trail, you have seen plants and animals that help to sustain our life, including this valuable water stream. Although our forefathers frequented the island and we have eventually settled here, the nature on the island remains virtually pristine. We have conservation practices which have been embedded in our culture and traditions; therefore, cultural conservation is a means towards nature conservation.





## Station 19 : Rubblish and Litter (*Ja-Chak*)



Adoe! (An exclamation we use which is approximately equivalent to *Golly-Gosh!*). This station serves as a mirror for the modern consumer society. Look how you treat Mother Nature, filling her up with rubbish. Southwestern monsoon winds and waves blow these plastic containers, Styrofoam and everything else onto the beach.

Waste is a big problem in the modern (or post-modern?) world. You think that when you throw your litter away it will be a going-gone thing,

sunk into the ocean abyss. Some rubbish, however, comes back just like a boomerang!

Our community used to be almost litter free because we used natural materials which easily decompose. In addition, we generally practice recycling. Instead of learning from our practices, the larger society promotes over packaging and single use containers.

Has the larger society learned anything from us at all? Quite the opposite, the larger society introduced us to the new consumption behaviour; prodigality and extravagance translates to wastefulness. What will become of our world in the future?



## Station 20 *Chok Madah*



Let's turn away from the rubbish pile and look out into the emerald sea. Isn't it beautiful? The sea is relatively calm during this season but when the southwest monsoon arrives the sea here is rough, with large pounding waves.

*Chok* means small bay, and *Madah* is the name of the late Moken elder who loved to anchor his *kabang* here while searching for shellfish in the sea and wild fruit and leaves in the forest. This small bay is a great shelter from the east and northeast wind (during

December and January). We the Moken have over a hundred names for different places on the islands. They are not just names, but our social memory of the islands.

The Nature-Culture Trail ends here. Thank you for honouring us by walking this trail which was, and still is, our foraging trail. We hope this walk has helped you understand how our cultural practices have contributed to nature conservation.

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The Surin Islands are situated in the Andaman Sea, about 60 kilometres from Khuraburi Town in Phang-nga Province.

The forest on the islands is pristine, and the coral reef is considered to be one of the best in the country. The islands are also home to us, the Moken, an indigenous group who have roamed the Andaman Sea for centuries. We are familiar with the sea, and we are also knowledgeable about the plants in the forest.

On the “*Chok Madah*” Nature-Culture Trail you will learn about our plant knowledge and see how our cultural practices have contributed to natural conservation.

