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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

In This Issue

We begin this issue of the *Bulletin*, as in most previous years, with a series of memorials. Two of those memorialized this year were personal friends of your Editor, and here I would like to say something briefly about each of them.

Dr. Rick Fidler was a friend for over thirty years. For your Editor, he was also a valued editorial assistant, whose help I repeatedly acknowledged with gratitude in the pages of these Notes during the first years of my editorship. As Professor Sutlive remarks in his memorial, Rick was a devoted friend of the BRC who could always be counted on whenever help was needed. He was also a first-rate copy editor. He always found time to read and review essays and seemed to relish the time-consuming, and sometime tedious, but, nonetheless, essential task of checking facts and of following up reference citations. Rick was a stickler for accuracy. He also preferred prose that was clear and to the point. Although his academic training was as an anthropologist, Rick had a wide-ranging interest in virtually everything pertaining to Borneo, including, as I recall from past papers he presented at BRC meetings, postage stamps, state holidays, and, above all—lest the rest of us forget—the significant role of Chinese communities in the social and economic life of Borneo. He rarely, if ever, missed a BRC meeting, from the early 1970s, through the most recent Ninth Biennial BRC Conference held in Kota Kinabalu in 2008. Rick had, in particular, a deep and enduring affection for Malaysia, especially for Sabah and Sarawak. Characteristically, he dated the “Preface” to his Ph.D. dissertation—“*Hari Kebangsaan*—National Day, August 31, 1972.”

Rick first went to Malaysian Borneo—to Sabah in his case—as a Peace Corps volunteer. Later, he returned, this time to Sarawak, as a graduate student for 15 months of fieldwork (from March 1970 through June 1971). He based his work in the small market town of Kanowit. Here he studied the general features of the Kanowit Chinese community, including religion, commercial relations, education, and associational life. The town itself he described, appropriately, as “Kanowit Bazaar.” The resulting dissertation, “Kanowit: An Overseas Chinese Community in Borneo” (1973), is a work that still merits close reading. One of its major, and still relevant, themes is that of multiculturalism and the question of how different cultural groups have managed, through modifications in the behavior and attitudes of their members, to live together, if not in perfect harmony, in a state, at least, of mutual tolerance and respect. Kanowit, as he described it in the early 1970s,

is a bazaar, a market, and the Rejang River is the highway that connects it with its suppliers and ultimate customers in the interior, and with its markets and source of manufactured goods in the city of Sibul and the ports of the world. Kanowit Bazaar lives on its middleman trade. The necessities of this trade for the survival of the community have led to the development of business practices, specifically the towkay-Iban symbiosis, that have, in turn, led to new forms of behavior and attitudes of racial tolerance needed to sustain [this] economic system.

This tolerance arose, he argued, not so much from a feeling of “love” for the other, or from ideals of social justice, as from a quest, as he saw it, for survival and

success. However, as Rick observed, already by the early 1970s, the former prosperity of small riparian bazaars like Kanowit, once a ubiquitous feature of Sarawak's social landscape, was rapidly declining, and that this decline threatened the very social and economic fabric that had once bound different groups together in mutual relations of inter-cultural tolerance. As the young moved to cities, it was far from clear whether these kinds of relations could be successfully reconstituted. Indeed, as Malaysia—now a full generation later—enters what appears to be a new era of rising religious and inter-ethnic tensions, the historical experience of communities like Kanowit becomes an increasingly important object lesson. As Rick, in his dissertation Preface, concluded,

Not all the races of Kanowit “love” each other. Racial bias still exists, racial fears still threaten, ... But ... even if bred of necessity, even if only a manifestation of outward behavior., the tolerance of the people of Kanowit Bazaar is a lesson for the whole world to learn.

Rick will be greatly missed, especially so, of course, by his family. But, for all of us who knew him, future BRC meetings will never, I fear, be quite the same again.

Also remembered in the two opening memorials in this issue is Alastair Morrison. Like many persons who arrived in Malaysian Borneo in the 1960s, my first introduction to the Morrisons came about by way of Hedda Morrison's magnificent books of photographs—*Sarawak* (1957) and, most especially, for me, *Life in a Longhouse* (1962).

Among the many favors for which I am indebted to Professor Jim Fox was his suggestion, shortly after I arrived in Canberra in 1988, that, at some early date, I must meet Alastair Morrison and his wife Hedda. I had then just arrived in Australia to take up a three-year appointment as a Senior Research Fellow in the Research School of Pacific Studies (now Asian and Pacific Studies) at the Australian National University. At the time, the Morrisons lived not far away in the suburb of Ainslie. Several weeks later, I telephoned, and after a pleasant conversation was invited to dinner at the Morrisons' home. Alastair picked me up at the university, arriving in the afternoon so that we would have ample time to talk before dinner. He arrived, I recall, at the wheel of a somewhat exotic Soviet Lada. It was a delightful dinner. As Bob Reece observes in his memorial, Alastair, among many other things, was a bibliophile and an expert collector. The Morrison home, in consequence, was a veritable treasure-trove. The first afternoon, as I recall, was spent exploring Alastair's superb collection of *netsuke*, small, but exquisitely carved objects I had read about, but had never had a chance to hold in my hands and examine closely. Subsequently, I received a guided tour of Alastair's extensive Borneo library and Hedda's photography studio and photo archives.

At the time, the Morrisons talked of moving into a more manageable apartment. Alastair had already arranged to sell his *netsuke* collection to a Japanese dealer and, similarly, his library. The latter, he told me, was to be kept intact as a coherent collection. Years later, on a return visit to Canberra, he told me that this condition had not been kept, and, to his disappointment, his Borneo books had been scattered between a number of Japanese libraries. Eventually, he said, his own papers and diaries were going to the Cornell University library, together with all of Hedda's Borneo photographs. On the other hand, Hedda's China photographs were destined for Hong Kong. Fortunately,

before I left Australia, I had the good fortune to see a small exhibition of the latter at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. Both Alastair and Hedda were in a reflective mood during those three years and spoke at length of their time in Sarawak. Now, twenty years later, I imagine that Alastair was already at work on his Sarawak memoirs (*Fair Land Sarawak*), published by Cornell in 1994. I enjoyed those dinners immensely. As Bob Reece notes in his memorial, Alastair was erudite and witty, while Hedda seemed by nature empathic and curious, always engaging and drawing one out with questions. Perhaps, what made those evenings so special was that, for all the dramatic events that the two of them had lived through, they were, clearly, the center of each other's universe. As Bob writes, and as I recall them, they were a thoroughly devoted couple.

Despite the talk of scaling back their possessions and moving into a smaller, more convenient apartment, the Morrisons seemed to be in fine health at the time. Although Hedda moved about with the help of a walking stick, that, I understood, had long been the case. It therefore came as a dreadful shock when, later the same year that I returned to the United States (1991), Jim wrote to say that Hedda had passed away. At the time, Jim and the rest of us who had participated in the Comparative Austronesian Project were revising manuscripts and preparing volumes for publication. Jim dedicated the second volume in the Project series, *Inside Austronesian Houses* (James J. Fox, ed., ANU, 1993), to Hedda's memory (together with that of the late Anthony Forge). One of Hedda's photographs appears on the front cover of the volume and another (the latter, a photo of an Iban longhouse being constructed) on the frontis page. Thanks to Alastair, I was also able to open my own chapter in the book, "Posts, Hearths and Thresholds," with another of Hedda's wonderful photos. This one, taken on the unpartitioned gallery (*ruai*), depicts that quintessential Iban institution—the *berandau*—a longhouse gathering composed, in this case, of men, women, and children, drawn up in a semi-circle, deep in conversation with a visitor.

To me, Hedda's longhouse photos are incomparable. As she once told me, she never, even for interior subjects, used artificial lighting or a flash. That is why I think she was so successful in depicting people in a longhouse setting, without any sense of the photographer's intrusion, at home, doing what they customarily do—tending children, preparing meals, talking with one another, and so on—all within an architectural space of filtered light and shadows. Today, these photos are an invaluable reminder of what life was like before the appearance of generators, television, and electric lighting.

After I left Canberra, I greatly regretted that I hadn't visited the Morrisons more often while I was there. Once, Hedda told me that she had photographed a Bajau wedding and other scenes of Bajau village life on a visit to the west coast of Sabah shortly before Malaysian independence. These photos had never been published. She had the negatives, but had, unfortunately, no prints that I could look at. At the time, I put this down as something I would follow up on a later visit. Sadly, it never happened. Similarly, Alastair urged me to follow up, with a restudy, detailed household censuses he had carried out some fifty years ago of every Iban longhouse in the Kanowit District. Someday, perhaps, out of gratitude, I will be able to pursue these projects.

Dato' John Pike, the last colonial Financial Secretary of Sarawak, opens Alastair's memorial section with a version of the obituary he prepared for the *London*

Times, here slightly edited. The original obituary appeared in *Times Online*, September 9, 2009. Here, we thank Dato' Pike and the *Times Online* editor for permission to publish the present version in the *BRB*. To this, Dato' Pike has kindly added some personal observations based on his experiences of working with Alastair in Sarawak. We thank Dato' Pike for these as well. This is followed by an extended account by Bob Reece of Alastair, his personality and the eventful life he and Hedda led, not only in Sarawak, but also in China, and the important part Alastair Morrison played in the late colonial history of Sarawak and in the state's transition to independence.

In the memorial that follows, Vernon Porritt writes of Dato Pike's immediate successor, Dato Sri T'en Kuen Foh, Sarawak's first Sarawak-born Financial Secretary and very possibly, as Dr. Porritt suggests, the state's most able senior civil servant of the immediate post-independence era.

In the next memorial, Peter Kedit, the former Director of the Sarawak Museum, pays tribute to a kinsmen, Patrick Ringkai, who acted, sixty years ago, as the research assistant of Derek Freeman during his landmark fieldwork among the Baleh Iban.

In coming to Sarawak, Freeman had sought what he called an "unspoiled" community as a fieldwork site. Even in 1949, it is doubtful that such communities, to the extent that they existed at all, could be described as, in any way, "typical" of the Iban as a whole. At the time, the Baleh, however, was certainly remote. Little influenced by mission activity, formal education, or commercial agriculture, it was, importantly for the terms of Freeman's research, at the frontier of what was, even then, a rapidly diminishing zone of pioneer swidden cultivation. For colonial agronomists of the time, such cultivation was deemed a major "social problem," a point of view which Freeman himself never entirely escaped, despite the path-breaking nature of his fieldwork on the topic. Today, after a generation of modern, large-scale forest destruction, swidden cultivation, even of the pioneer variety, now seems remarkably benign.

As Peter Kedit notes, Patrick Ringkai himself was not from the Baleh. Instead, his home was at Gensurai in the Saribas region. Here, as Kedit tells us, after his stay with the Freemans and a brief stint as a local authority teacher, he lived out the latter half of his life, becoming, in time, a respected longhouse elder and community headman. By the time Ringkai was of school age, in some parts of the Saribas—Gensurai notably among them—young Iban men had, for a full generation, access to what, by the standards of the time, was a remarkably good mission education. Consequently, Ringkai had writing competency in both English and romanized Iban. It was Ringkai, in particular, who transcribed virtually all of the Iban textual materials recorded by Freeman. In his later published writings, Freeman's spelling of Iban terms, perhaps as a consequence, often reflected Saribas pronunciation, as did also the orthography used in the first Iban-English dictionaries and Anglican Bible translations. A familiar example is *bilek*, a decidedly Saribas pronunciation of the term used to refer to a longhouse apartment and the family unit that occupies it, which, in present-day Iban orthography is generally spelled *bilik* (see, for example, Richards 1981 and *Atur Sepil Jaku Iban*). Such has been Freeman's influence that his spelling persists in the anthropological literature. I found it interesting, in reading Monica Freeman's field diaries, which have just been published by the BRC (see "Library of Borneo" in this issue), that the everyday language the Freemans used in

the field, and which occasionally appears in Monica's diary entries, was, as one would have expected, colloquial Baleh Iban.

I had the pleasure to meet Patrick Ringkai briefly in the late 1980s. He was closely related by marriage to Benedict Sandin's younger brother and had come to the Kerangan Pinggai Longhouse on a visit. As I was staying there at the time, we introduced ourselves. I was curious, of course, to hear something of his experiences in the Baleh and what, years later, he made of them. First, I must say, he clearly held the Freemans in high regard. Stephen Morris, an anthropologist who had worked in Sarawak at the same time as Derek and who had visited the Freemans while they were in the field, once told me that Derek's field methods, even by the standards of colonial ethnography of the time, appeared to be somewhat draconian. Derek, he told me, had had an apartment built on the longhouse *tanju'* and so, from there, had been able to monitor everyone's comings and goings. For a community that, by Derek's own description, "had little taste for obeisance," Stephen wondered how "the natives" had put up with it. Ringkai answered that, from his own perspective, as Derek's research assistant, Freeman had, indeed, been a demanding taskmaster, often asking him to put in long hours of work, but that he had always been fair and demanded as much, if not more, of himself. To me, I found particularly interesting Ringkai's impressions of the Baleh Iban of the time. Rustic, uneducated, and rough-speaking, of course, they seemed to him, nonetheless, fun-loving, wonderful people to live with as a young bachelor, and, in short, every bit as "unspoiled" as they had seemed to the Freemans.

Next, Peter Sercombe pays a fitting tribute to Peter Martin, a remarkably prolific scholar and another long-time friend of the BRC. Peter Martin was also a personal friend to many of us who worked in Borneo. His untimely death came as an unexpected shock, and like so many highly productive scholars, he left behind not only a substantial legacy of published work—which Dr. Sercombe lists at the end of his memorial—but also a good deal of work in progress. Among the latter is a proceedings volume, co-edited with Peter Sercombe and now completed, which, we are pleased to report, will be published later this year by the Borneo Research Council. In addition, a memorial panel is being planned for the Biennial BRC Conference in Miri in July to highlight Peter's many contributions to Borneo linguistics (see "Announcements").

Finally, A.V.M. Horton concludes this year's memorial section, as he has in previous years, with an extended memorial for a number of persons connected with Negara Brunei Darussalam who died in the course of the last year, including both native Bruneians and others.

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In the first Research Note in this issue, Professor Andrew Smith, a frequent contributor to the *BRB*, follows up on a series of recent papers published in the *Bulletin* in which he has traced the activities of British private traders and sea captains in West Kalimantan during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Together, these papers add an important chapter to the maritime history of Borneo. In his present essay, Smith returns to a familiar topic within this history—that of Malay "piracy." In the early nineteenth century, Sambas was a byword for piracy in the Indo-Malayan Archipelago.

In an earlier essay (“Arch-villain to be rehabilitated? Mixed perceptions of Pangeran Anom of Sambas in the early nineteenth century,” 2007, Vol. 38), Smith reexamined the archival evidence and concluded that Sambas had been less a center of piracy than many historians had previously assumed. The sultan’s followers certainly engaged in coastal raiding, sometimes seizing ships and cargoes at sea, but most of this hostility was directed against the rising power of the sultanate’s chief political and economic rival—Pontianak—which, for a time during this period, enjoyed Dutch support. Moreover, British merchants, throughout this period, maintained active trading relations with Sambas, sometimes acting, indeed, as personal trading agents of the sultan himself.

As Smith shows, distinctions between piracy and conventional commercial practice were, at the time, far from obvious. In an ironic twist of history, Smith, in his present essay, examines a complaint of “piracy” lodged in Penang, not *against*, but, in this case, *by*, the Sultan of Sambas. The plaintiff in the complaint is a Calcutta-based trader named Captain Anthony Burnside. Using East India Company records, Smith reconstructs the events of the case, including Burnside’s actions, which, indeed, in the words of the Company’s Advocate-General, appeared to amount to a case of “unauthorised reprisal, if not downright piracy.”

As a postscript, Smith concludes his essay with a brief outline of the subsequent history of Captain Burnside. As an apparent fallout from the complaint lodged against him, Captain Burnside set sail for Australia. Here, in a final irony, he came to a fatal end, an apparent victim of native reprisal against European mistreatment, gaining in the process posthumous fame as the principal character in a tale of “lost treasure.”

Our second Research Note is by Bob Reece, another frequent contributor to the *BRB*, and draws on several previously neglected sources, in particular the unpublished personal journals of Malcolm MacDonald, to present a vivid picture of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, “The Little Sultan,” as MacDonald referred to him. Even though he ruled Brunei through the Japanese Occupation, dying only in 1950, Tajuddin is, as Reece notes, all but forgotten today, overshadowed and almost totally eclipsed in modern Brunei history by his younger brother and successor, Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin (the Seri Begawan).

MacDonald, as Reece notes, had “a sharp eye and even sharper pen.” Quite separate from his public statements, as a diplomat and British Governor-General for Southeast Asia, the personal impressions he recorded in his private journals were candid to the point of acerbity. In the case of Sultan Tajuddin, Reece describes them, indeed, as “scurrilous”—yet, considering the circumstances of the sultan’s life, they come in the end to be tinged with a measure of sympathy, even sadness. However, with MacDonald as our guide, it is easy to see why the story of Sultan Tajuddin has been all but erased from official Brunei hagiology.

Reece’s essay also reintroduces the mysterious and, quite literally, intriguing figure of Gerard MacBryan. Making an earlier appearance in Reece’s *The Name of Brooke: The end of White Rajah rule in Sarawak* as the unquestionably brilliant, but thoroughly manipulative Private Secretary of the last White Rajah of Sarawak, Vyner Brooke, MacBryan here assumes a strikingly similar role in Brunei, as Sultan Tajuddin’s political advisor on external matters of policy pertaining to the sultanate’s constitutional and financial rights. Mentally unbalanced, and given to megalomaniacal schemes,

MacBryan seems, in some ways, to have been born into the wrong century, when Europeans no longer aspired to create, but, rather, were busy divesting themselves of empires. Yet, as Reece notes, his advocacy of a new political confederation of northern Borneo states, in this case under Brunei sovereignty, anticipated elements of a debate that would, in one form or another, ultimately reshape the post-colonial political boundaries of the region.

Later on, following our Research Notes in this year's *BRB*, in the Brief Communications section, Dr. Liana Chua reports on a workshop held in Marudi, Sarawak, to mark the transfer of 316 digital and print copies of photographs taken over a century ago during the Haddon-Cambridge expedition to the Baram. Here, as our third Research Note, Dr. Chua provides a background account of the Haddon-Cambridge expedition and discusses the more general significance for students of Sarawak history and society of the extensive photographic materials—primarily prints and glass-plate negatives—that make up the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's "A.C. Haddon Photographic Collection," the original archival source of the reproduced photographs transferred to Sarawak.

As Dr. Chua observes, the Baram expedition came about, essentially, as a side trip, undertaken at the urging of the Baram Resident, Charles Hose, following the conclusion of the famous Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits. The latter, for anthropologists, is widely revered as a "foundation event" in the historical origins of anthropology as a professional, research-based academic discipline. Altogether, five members of the Torres Straits expedition visited Sarawak. Three of them, including the expedition leader, the anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon, remained in Sarawak from mid-December 1898 through April 1899. Here, most of their time was spent in the Baram, where they were the personal guests and frequent traveling companions of Charles Hose himself. Despite its brief duration, the expedition had a number of significant consequences. Best known, perhaps, was the eventual collaboration of William McDougall, one of the expedition's three psychologists, with Charles Hose to compile, with Hose as its principal source of ethnographic data, the encyclopedic, 2-volume masterwork, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (1912). A second was Sidney Ray's pioneering linguistic research and his preliminary classification of the languages of Sarawak, the first of its kind to be based on serious comparative analysis. A third important product was Haddon's own ground-breaking study of Iban *ikat* textiles, their cultural meanings and design motifs, most especially his monograph, written with the textile specialist Laura Start, *Iban or Sea Dayak Fabrics and their Patterns* (1936). This work continues to be a source of inspiration, discussion, and debate in what has now become an extensive body of scholarly literature. The continuing relevance of Haddon's work is nicely highlighted later in this volume in Vernon Kedit's excellent account and reexamination of Saribas Iban ritual textiles.

Finally, Liana Chua, in her essay, draws our attention, and helps make accessible, a further contribution of the Haddon-Cambridge expedition—the extensive visual record it produced of life and society in one fascinating corner of turn-of-the-century Sarawak. We are also grateful to Dr. Chua for undertaking the commendable project of cataloguing and annotating the A.C. Haddon Photographic Collection at Cambridge and for returning

copies of materials from this collection to Sarawak, where, as she explains in her Brief Communication, they have taken on new life and meaning.

Especially welcome is the next Research Note by Jayl Langub, another frequent contributor to the *BRB*. In his Note, Langub presents the first extended account of the Seping, a numerically small, and until now, perhaps, the least known of all the indigenous communities in Sarawak. Now settled, the Seping, by their own account, were once hunter-gatherers. According to Seping oral tradition, they were also, until several centuries ago, the original inhabitants of the Belaga River area, where they were present long before the influx of the now much more populous groups, notably Kenyah and Kayan, who today greatly outnumber them in the area. Given their small numbers, and the presence of larger groups living all around them, one of the questions that Langub poses in his essay is how have the members of this tiny community managed to preserve their language and a continuing sense of ethnic discreteness, without being assimilated into one or another of these larger groups.

For one thing, as Langub shows, the Seping solution was not by restricting intermarriage. Indeed, as the author tells us, kinship relations are so close within the community that most persons must, in fact, marry out. Almost two-thirds of all marriages thus occur with partners from other groups. As Langub's data show, a remarkable number of different ethnic groups are represented by those who marry into the Seping community and that these persons, in becoming community members, typically learn to speak Seping and to adopt a Seping identity. Instead, an answer to the question of how the Seping have managed to preserve their identity points up the complex nature of ethnic relationships, and notions of identity itself, in a Central Borneo context. Thus, at a more specific level, some Seping further differentiate themselves as Bemali, while at a more general, inclusive level, the Seping as a whole identify themselves, at the same time, as "Kajang." "Kajang," in fact, is an interethnic term and its use is seemingly based on a historical sense of solidarity among a number of small ethnic groups that claim to constitute the original inhabitants of the upper Rejang, in opposition to the later-arriving Kayan and Kenyah. By language, however, the Seping are allied with other Kenyahic-speaking groups, such as the Sebop and Penan, rather than with the other groups that make up the Kajang category. In the distant past, however, they shared a number of distinctive cultural elements with the latter, including subsistence on sago rather than rice and secondary burial of chiefs on top of elaborately carved burial posts. To further complicate the picture, while the Penan regard themselves, and are regarded by others, as a separate group, the Sebop, close cultural and linguistic relatives of the Seping, in contrast to the latter, identify themselves as "Kenyah," rather than "Kajang."

In addition to ethnicity, Langub, in his paper, also describes the general social, economic, and demographic characteristics of the present-day Seping community, which consists today of three longhouse settlements. He also traces the past location and movements of the group through the evidence of both oral history and by the more tangible signs of former settlements and past burial sites. Part of the initial impetus behind Langub's study was to document land right claims, as large parts of the area that the Seping have historically occupied are now contested by large-scale logging and plantation interests. In addition, it is worth noting that the communities that were

relocated as a result of the Bakun Hydroelectric Project were resettled by the Sarawak Government on land also traditionally claimed by the Seping, hence the additional significance of Langub's study.

While Jayl addresses the question of how a small ethnic community has been able to preserve its identity under challenging circumstances, Poline Bala, in the Research Note that follows, examines the processes by which the Kelabit, another small ethnic group, have adopted Christianity, making it a central element of their present-day identity, as a way, as she puts it, of "engaging with modernity."

"Common to nearly all Kelabit," Dr. Bala tells us, "young and old alike, is the idea that 'progress' is good." The Kelabit see themselves and are seen by others in Sarawak as a people who have actively pursued "progress" and "success," with, it should be added, remarkably effective results, having become, as a group, very likely, the best educated and occupationally advanced indigenous community anywhere in Malaysia. For the Kelabit, Bala argues, Christianity is envisioned as an integral part of modernity and, as such, was actively embraced as a catalyst for redirecting cultural dispositions toward the future, that is to say, towards a future life of "progress" and "success." Christianity, in other words, was not forced on the Kelabit, but, rather, actively incorporated by the Kelabit themselves as a new way of realizing the qualities required of a "good person"—in Kelabit terms, the ideals of *doo*-ness,—"endurance, perseverance, self-discipline, hospitality and strength." As a consequence, the form that Christianity came to assume among the Kelabit reflected a local cultural logic and so, Bala tells us, for present-day Kelabit, is not only something "modern," but is equally about maintaining traditional values and attitudes. Finally, she argues, Christianity, at the level of the nation-state, has helped the Kelabit project their sense of self identity into current Malaysian projects of identity formation and national development.

The next Research Note by Vernon Porritt is the second part of a two-part series. Originally, Dr. Porritt intended these essays as chapters in a more comprehensive book he planned as a sequel to his *British Colonial Rule in Sarawak, 1946-1965* (OUP, 1997), and which would cover the first decades of the post-colonial period. The first essay in this series, "Constitutional change in Sarawak, 1963-1988," appeared two years ago in the *BRB* (volume 38, 2007). In it, Porritt examined two questions: first, how Sarawak, prior to joining the Federation of Malaysia, developed its own constitution, and, second, how amendments made to the federal constitution through 1988 have affected Sarawak, particularly in matters of education, immigration, and religion.

In the present essay, the author's concern is with the history of institutions of local government in Sarawak. Modeled originally on British institutions of municipal government, by the time of independence elected local councils had been established, he tells us, throughout Sarawak and had, as Porritt notes, assumed a wide range of responsibilities, including primary education, community development, maternity and child welfare services, firefighting, and the setting of local tax rates. In his essay, he shows how, from 1963 to 1988, most of these responsibilities were gradually removed from local authorities, with some transferred to the state, and others, like primary education and firefighting, to the federal government. After 1963, no further elections were held for local authority offices, although, Porritt tells us, such elections were among

the conditions set out under which Sarawak agreed to join Malaysia. Although some of those elected in 1963 continued to hold office until 1981, in that year all local authority members became government nominees. And so, the author writes, “the era of elected local authorities in Sarawak ended.” Today, precisely paralleling political developments in peninsular Malaysia, local councilors come under the direct control of the state government that nominates them, a development which, the author tells us, political reformers in peninsular Malaysia are now beginning to question.

As I have observed in previous Notes, indigenous claims to rights to land and other natural resources have figured prominently over the years in the pages of the *BRB* (see especially Volumes 29, 30, 34, 36, and 39). In the next essay, Laurens Bakker looks at the strategies adopted by Dayak organizations and interest groups in East Kalimantan to substantiate these claims in a context of what he describes as “multiple legalities.” In this context, other normative systems exist in addition to, or even, at times, in conflict with, “official law,” as promulgated by the Indonesian state. As Bakker shows, a number of concerns have helped give rise to what he describes as “Pan-Dayak” groups whose existence is legitimized by appeals to customary rights and by their ability to exert political influence on government decision-making in favor of Dayak interests. In this essay, he traces the origins and workings of two of these groups, the Dayak Adat Council of Kalimantan (DADK) and the East Kalimantan Dayak Association (PDKT), both of which have sought to forge close ties with similar groups in West and Central Kalimantan. However, forging unity, as he shows, has not come easily.

As Bakker explains, Dayak attempts to ensure recognition of *adat*-based claims have pursued a number of different courses. Arguments formulated in terms of universal indigenous rights have gained comparatively little traction, in part because indigenous status is not a concept that brings special status in Indonesian law (in contrast, one might add, to Malaysia). While some have sought to link up in a nation-wide *adat* movement, as Bakker points out, in many parts of Indonesia, the power of the central government is weak, allowing regions, particularly following Suharto’s fall from power, considerable space for local action, including in matters of negotiating *adat* rights. Hence, Pan-Dayak groups have been most successful in forging links and gaining leverage with Provincial and regional governments. Ironically, the author tells us, it was through violence, by ousting the much-disliked Madurese, that the Dayaks in Kalimantan demonstrated their ability to unify in order to defend their interests and, in consequence, to gain substantial recognition of their *adat* claims. “Yet,” Bakker writes, “havoc is not what the Dayaks are after.” Instead, Dayak representatives have been able to depict themselves as Indonesian citizens who have been wronged and are seeking redress with considerable apparent success when working through regional and provincial governments. But, as Bakker notes, there are dangers, and, ultimately, he concludes: “It took machetes and guns to claim traditional rights, but it takes a modern education and a strong political consciousness to get actual recognition.”

Vernon Kedit in “Restoring Panggau Libau,” the next Research Note in this issue, examines the significance of anthropomorphic designs, known as *engkeramba*, in Saribas Iban ritual textiles. Drawing in particular on the oral memory of members of his family he explores the meaning of these designs, as revealed, most especially, in a series

of ritual cloths produced during her lifetime by his great-grandmother, Sendi anak Ketit, one of the most famous, innovative, and accomplished of all Saribas Iban weavers. In the now voluminous literature on Iban *ikat* weaving, others have touched on the work of Sendi before, most notably, Datin Empiang Jabu, but in the present paper, the author goes well beyond what has previously been written to provide a more detailed picture of the connections that exist between the textiles that Sendi wove at different times in her life, the performance of major rituals, family status, and the closely related traditional Saribas Iban cosmology of gods and culture heroes.

In his essay, the author argues against an interpretation of Iban textile designs that would see them primarily as highly conventionalized forms, rather than as symbolic representations. In the case of *engkeramba'* designs, he links these images, most importantly, to representations of the Orang Panggau, the spirit heroes and heroines of the mythical Panggau Libau world, and to the use of textiles in ritual contexts in which the Orang Panggau are invoked, together with individual deities such as Singalang Burong, and in which the status and achievements of the human sponsors and other participants are publicly validated, including, significantly, those of women weavers. These motifs themselves are additionally imbued with power, making them a source of both prestige and danger to those who weave them. What obscures the representational dimensions of textile designs, Kedit argues, is the Iban custom of verbal disguise. Hence, expert weavers use words to describe textile designs that allow them to avoid pronouncing the names of the spirit beings whose images or personal characteristics they represent through their weaving.

Finally, in the last Research Note of this issue, "Music for Cleansing the Universe," Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan and Judeth John Baptist write on the music, played on gongs and drums, that accompanies the performance of the Mamahui Pogun, a complex ceremony performed by the Lotud community of Sabah. The Lotud, who speak one of some 13 distinct languages comprising the Dusunic language family, have a distinctive ritual system in which priestesses, called *tantagas*, play a dominant role, acting as the principal intermediaries between the human and spiritual worlds. In the past, the Mamahui Pogun ceremony mobilized all of the villages of the Tuaran District that make up the Lotud community. Each village contributed, not only materially, with food and offerings, but also with an ensemble of musicians and gongs. The ceremony itself was held at the initiative of the priestesses, whenever indications such as droughts or sickness pointed to an imbalance in the universe, and its performance was meant to avert disaster by feeding and appeasing angry spirits and by cleansing—or "cooling"—the universe so as to restore it to a state of balance.

While the main procedures and intent of the ritual are laid out in the *rinait*, the poetic prayers and chants sung by the *tantagas* and addressed to the deities at different stages in the ceremony, instrumental music, the authors tell us, is the driving medium that propels its overall direction and enables, the Lotud believe, the deities to enter the human world and to participate in the ceremony. Thus, for example, a distinctive form of ensemble music, the *ginandang papatarok*, announces the opening of the ceremony by summoning the deities and spirits to the human world. Later, this same musical form signifies the descent of the supreme gods and goddesses from the upperworld. More

solemn *ginandang popotumbui* music accompanies the circular dancing of the *tantagas* as they individually come to represent these now-present deities, while the much faster *mojumbak* music, interestingly, an apparent ritual adaptation of a secular musical form, signifies rejoicing in anticipation of the ceremony's success. Today, the Lotud community and the area of Sabah in which they live are changing rapidly. The ceremony the authors describe in their essay was performed in June and July, 2003, and, as they tell us, as the last of the elderly *tantagas* now pass away, it may very well have been the last time the ceremony is held. As a consequence, in their conclusions, they propose some ways in which elements of the ritual and the distinctive musical culture it helped to sustain might be preserved.

Continuing a format initiated six years ago with Volume 34, the present issue includes a Review Article. Written by Dr. Francis Q. Brearley, the article reviews research in forest ecology published, or undertaken, over the recent 5-year period from 2003 through 2008. Dr. Brearley opens his essay by establishing the general context for the discussion that follows. As he notes, the island of Borneo has one of the most diverse floras in the world. For example, he tells us, some 30 percent of all plant species are found nowhere else, while one small area of forest, Lambir Hills in northwestern Sarawak, has the highest known density of tree species in the world, with 1,173 species in 286 genera, in an area of only 0.52 square kilometers.

The topics reviewed by the author include descriptions of plant communities in terms of species differentiation and habitat; new plant species discovered and described; community ecology; rates, patterns, and causes of deforestation; effects of forest disturbance—including not only logging, but open-cast coal mining and the 1997-98 El Niño drought and fires—and patterns of recovery; biodiversity, and carbon storage in Borneo forest systems. Dr. Brearley concludes by suggesting some possible directions that future research might profitably pursue. In future volumes, he promises updated reviews of work in this increasing significant area of Borneo research.

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As in past years, we open this year's Brief Communications with another "Letter from Lundu." To our great good fortune, this one celebrates Otto Steinmayer's return to Malaysia, after a brief sojourn in the land of his birth. Here Otto picks up the threads of ongoing life, in-laws, and family connections in his Lundu kampong and reflects more generally on turns of fortune, both his own, and those now occurring in Sarawak and on the Malaysian political stage.

In the next Brief Communication, Dr. Martin Baier reviews two recent books on the Kayan Mentarang National Park and surrounding areas of interior Kalimantan, including the Krayan, and adds some valuable historical perspective, drawing on earlier ethnographic sources and his own longtime connection with the region. Notably, he includes a collection of now irreplaceable photographs of local longhouses and dolmen grave sites taken in the 1970s and 80s.

The next three Brief Communications all have to do with mountains in Borneo. In the first, "Which is the highest mountain in Indonesian Borneo?" Martin Baier points out several notable discrepancies that have appeared in the recent literature concerning this question and stresses the urgent need for a professional geographer to review what

is currently known and publish the definitive facts on mountain locations and elevations in Kalimantan. In the second Communication, Herwig Zahorka follows up on Martin Baier's note. In it he quotes a communication from a forest ecologist in the field, Stephen Wulfrant, who reports valuable new information on mountain elevations in Kayan Mentarang and the surrounding region. The third Brief Communication of the series, "Bukit Rabong in this world and the next," is by your Editor and concerns a question that has plagued him for some years—the possible identity and location of what is described as the physical counterpart of an otherworldly mountain abode of the souls and spirits of Iban shamans. Through correspondence with anthropologist colleagues, the question has taken on new dimensions, as the evidence seems to point to a mountain that is sacred not only to Iban shamans, but to a large number of other indigenous peoples, and which, in addition, seems to lie at a point of conjunction where a number of the major ethno-linguistic groupings of Borneo meet.

The next Brief Communication, again by Dr. Martin Baier, describes the transfer of his personal library of books and periodicals relating to Borneo to the library of the Universitas Pelangka Raya.

In our final Brief Communication, "Revisualizing the Baram," Dr. Liana Chua, as already mentioned, reports on a workshop held in Marudi on August 8, 2009, to mark the transfer of a collection of digital and photographic prints from the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology to the Sarawak Museum and its recently-opened branch, the Baram Regional Museum, the latter now housed in historic Fort Hose in Marudi. As she observes in her Brief Communication, the photographs comprising the collection not only document aspects of "Orang Ulu" culture, as they existed over a century ago, but also record scenes of daily life in late nineteenth-century Sarawak and the landmark Marudi Peace Conference of April 1899.

As Dr. Chua tells us, a major purpose of the workshop was to tap local knowledge and gather information from those participating regarding the people, places, and events shown in the photographs in order to fill in gaps, augment the record, and correct inaccuracies in the existing documentation of the University of Cambridge's Haddon Photographic Collection. The images exhibited at the workshop provoked, she tells us, lively discussions and stimulated thinking about how cultural and historical materials might best be conserved and presented to the local public. It is hoped, as she tells us, that the dialogue initiated by the workshop, both within Sarawak, and between the Sarawak Museum and the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, will continue on a regular basis in the future. At the moment, the actual physical copies of the material transferred are being kept in the Sarawak Museum in Kuching, but planning is underway for their eventual display in the Baram Regional Museum in Marudi.

The Tenth Biennial International Conference of the Borneo Research Council, Curtin University of Technology Sarawak, Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia, 5-7 July, 2010

The Tenth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council will be held on the Curtin University of Technology Sarawak campus in Miri, Sarawak, over a three-day period, from July 5 through 7, 2010. For more information and a preliminary

program see the Announcements section or go directly to the BRC 2010 Conference website: <http://www.curtin.edu.my/brc2010>

Here we thank the Conference Coordinator, **Bibi Aminah binti Abdul Ghani**, Senior Lecturer, School of Foundation and Continuing Studies, Curtin University of Technology Sarawak (bibi.aminah@curtin.edu.my), her capable colleagues and hard-working staff for all the effort they have made to insure the Conference's success.

Rainforest World Music Festival

The Sarawak organizers of the BRC 2010 Conference fixed the conference dates so that participants would be able to attend the Rainforest World Music Festival after the Conference ends. The Festival will be held 9-11 July, 2010. The venue, as in previous years, is the Sarawak Cultural Village, at Damai resort near Kuching. For more information on the Festival, see the BRC 2010 website: <http://www.curtin.edu.my/brc2010>.

A Special Issue of the *Borneo Research Bulletin* in Honor of the late Reed Wadley

We are planning a special issue of the *BRB*, Volume 41, to honor the memory of the late Reed L. Wadley, who died on June 28, 2008 (see *BRB*, 39, pp. 16-25). The volume will appear later this year (2010). The essays contained in the volume are concerned specifically with the Danau Sentarum National Park and its immediate surroundings in West Kalimantan, an area in which Reed began his fieldwork as an anthropologist, and to which he remained committed throughout the remainder of his life.

The volume is also intended as a follow-up to a previous special issue of the *Borneo Research Bulletin*, Volume 31, 2000, which was similarly focused on the Danau Sentarum National Park. Like the previous volume, the issue will be multidisciplinary in its coverage and will deal with socio-economic issues, park conservation and planning, as well as provide updated reports on a variety of biological and socio-economic studies that have been carried out in the park since the previous volume appeared. The volume will be edited by E. Linda Yuliani and Carol J. Pierce Colfer and will include eleven chapters, as indicated below, including, as Chapter One, a general introduction by the editors.

Volume 41, *BRB* special Danau Sentarum issue:

Chapter 1: Introduction, Carol J. Pierce Colfer and Elizabeth Linda Yuliani.

Chapter 2: Danau Sentarum National Park: A historical overview, Julia Aglionby.

Chapter 3: Fluid landscapes and contested boundaries in Danau Sentarum, Emily E. Harwell.

Chapter 4: Carbon content of the freshwater peatland forests of Danau Sentarum, Gusti Z. Anshari.

Chapter 5: Interacting threats and challenges in protecting Danau Sentarum, Valentinus Heri, E.L. Yuliani, and Yayan Indriat Moko.

Chapter 6: Rapid human population growth and its impact on Danau Sentarum, Yayan Indriat Moko.

Chapter 7: Biofuel policies and their impacts on local peoples and

biodiversity, E.L. Yuliani.

Chapter 8: Forestry and fishery conflict in Danau Sentarum, Yurdi Yasmi and Carol J.P. Colfer.

Chapter 9: Orchids as a catalyst for conservation by the local communities of Danau Sentarum, Leon B. Prasetyo and Zulkifli.

Chapter 10: Possibilities and perceptions of a community micro-hydro project in West Kalimantan, Matthew Minarchek and Yayan Indriati Moko.

Chapter 11: "Paper Parks" and the social life of conservation; Lessons from Danau Sentarum, Reed L. Wadley, Carol J.P. Colfer, Rona Dennis, and Julia Aglionby.

Reed Wadley was well known to the editors and most of the contributing authors.

Current Borneo Publications and a Call for Help

Over the years, the *BRB* has tried to serve the various purposes set out forty-two years ago by the founding members of the Council. One of the most important of these is to assist our readers in keeping abreast of current publications relating to Borneo.

Each year, the sheer quantity of publications has made this task increasingly difficult. Shortly before going to press, our book review editor, Dr. A.V.M. Horton, sent me the following results of a "Google Scholar" search of articles pertaining to Borneo and Borneo-related subjects. The results clearly indicate the challenges we face. The numbers recorded in the second column are of articles that have appeared since the beginning of 2009, through February 24, 2010, when the search was made.

Google Scholar search:

Wednesday 24 February 2010: 1330h GMT

Although, by necessity, we have had to be selective, it is also plain, as Dr. Horton reminds me, that many titles are, as he aptly puts it, "falling through our net." We therefore urge readers to submit references to us, and also abstracts, including those of unpublished dissertations and academic theses. Dr. Horton also invites those who are interesting in writing book reviews, or who would like to suggest recent books that merit review (including their own) to please contact him directly at <avmhorton@hotmail.com>. Again, the BRC is a volunteer organization and our success in capturing the current literature depends importantly on our readers.

Subject	References from 2009	All References
Borneo	3,310	79,600
Kalimantan	1,300	30,600
Sarawak	1,930	38,100
Sabah	2,460	48,800
British North Borneo	1,050	24,300
Brunei	2,720	64,100
Negara Brunei Darussalam	852	14,300
Labuan	214	4,920
Kuching	365	8,180

New Member of the BRC International Board of Editors

It is a pleasure to announce the appointment of a new member to our International Board of Editors: Dr. Francis Q. Brearley, Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK.

Borneo Online and Websites

Dr. Otto Steinmayer continues to manage an active email discussion list. The list is up and running again after a brief down-time due to technical difficulties. Anyone with an interest in Borneo is welcomed to become a member either by going to "Borneo List" borneo-l@ikanlundu.com or by writing to Otto directly at [<otto@tm.net.my>](mailto:otto@tm.net.my).

Readers are also reminded that the Borneo Research Council maintains a website where continually updated information can be found regarding BRC activities and publications. The address is: www.borneoresearchcouncil.org.

Dr. Henry Chan's University of Helsinki Ph.D. dissertation, "Survival in the Rainforest: Change and Resilience among the Punan Vuhang of eastern Sarawak, Malaysia" is available on line as a pdf file through the following link: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-10-3919-5>

Finally, Ibanists might be interested in a Borneo Post Online article describing the development of a computer font program by a UITM Sarawak Senior Language Lecturer, Dr. Bromeley Philip, based on an alphabet originally created by Iban inventor, Dunging anak Gunggu (1904-1984), which the inventor called *urup Dunging*, see: <http://theborneopost.com//p=12017>.

Thanks and acknowledgments

Once again I take this opportunity to thank all of those who assisted me during the year with article reviews, editorial or technical assistance, or who contributed news items, announcements, comments, suggestions, or bibliographic items. The list, as always, is a long one, but here I would like to acknowledge George Appell, Dee Baer, Martin Baier, Bibi Aminah, Francis Brearley, Carol Colfer, Amity Doolittle, Frank Fenshaw, Mike Heppell, A.V.M. Horton, Peter Kedit, Jayl Langub, Paolo Maiullari, Ooi Keat Gin, Dato' John Pike, Vic Porritt, Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, Bob Reece, Jérôme Rousseau, Bernard Sellato, Peter Sercombe, Andrew Smith, Otto Steinmayer, Vinson Sutlive, Albertus Tjiu, Phillip Thomas, Linda Yuliani, and Herwig Zahorka. I am grateful, too, to Alan Morse for the work he did in preparing the present volume for publication and to the other members of the BRC staff in Phillips, Maine, for, once again, overseeing its printing, distribution, and mailing. Alan Morse also provided invaluable help with the reproduction of photographs and through his computer skills has assisted us greatly in improving the formatting and appearance of the *BRB* over recent years. In his role as Book Review Editor and compiler of our annual abstracts and bibliography sections, I am especially indebted to A.V.M. Horton. As always, Dr. Horton has also been a regular correspondent and a frequent source of news items, memorials, and information. He has also given invaluable advice as an essay reviewer. Finally, a special thanks goes to my wife, Louise Klemperer Sather, who, as our Assistant Editor, carefully read through all of the papers, reviews, announcements, and brief communications that appear in this volume. Her editorial skills, as always, have been an invaluable help to us all, not the least, your Editor.

Member Support

Here we wish to express our thanks to the following individuals for their contribution over the last year to the BRC endowment and general funds.

ENDOWMENT FUND:

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We thank each of these individuals for their generous support.

About the Authors in this Issue

Laurens Bakker is an assistant professor at the Institute for Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies and at the Institute of Sociology of Law of the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands. He has worked in Sumatra, Mentawai, Nias, and East and West Kalimantan, and defended his Ph.D. thesis entitled “Who Owns the Land? Looking for Law and Power in Reformasi East Kalimantan” on the impact of decentralization on land tenure in that province in 2009. His current research focuses on the political, economic and social role of vigilantes and NGOs in Indonesia, and on the meaning and social function of Shariah in the Netherlands. He has published on the relations between land access, politics, law and the usage of compelling discourses in Indonesia in journal articles and book chapters. His previous contribution to the *BRB* was “Resource Claims between Tradition and Modernity: *Masyarakat Adat* Strategies in Mului” (2005, Vol. 36).

Dr. Poline Bala is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Deputy Director, Centre of Excellence of Rural Informatics, University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). She obtained her Ph.D. in 2008 from Cambridge University. Her area of interest and research includes the impacts of political boundaries on the formation of cultural, political, and economic units in the border regions of Borneo. Most recently her research explores the role of technologies in the social transformation of Sarawak, particularly the introduction of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in rural areas. Looking specifically at the e-Bario project which she and a team of researchers initiated in the Kelabit Highlands of Sarawak in 1998, she examines the social impact of ICT use in Central Borneo. Dr. Bala’s previous publication in the *BRB* was “Interethnic Ties along the Kalimantan-Sarawak Border: The Kelabit and Lun Berian in the Kelabit-Kerayan Highland,” Vol. 32, 2001.

Dr. Francis Brearley is a Senior Lecturer in Ecology at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. He has been conducting ecological research in the forests of Borneo for over ten years, mostly in Sabah and Central Kalimantan. He is particularly interested in plant-soil interactions, post-agricultural secondary succession, plant reproductive phenology and mycorrhizal fungi, and his work has been published in *Journal of Ecology*, *Journal of Tropical Ecology*, *New Phytologist* and *Science* among others.

Liana Chua holds a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, where she is currently a Research Fellow. She studies religious conversion, ethnic citizenship, development and resettlement among the Bidayuh in Sarawak, as well as artifact-oriented theory, museology and photography. Recent publications include “To know or not to know? Practices of knowledge and ignorance among Bidayuhs in an impurely Christian world,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 2009, and “What’s in a (big) name? The art and agency of a Bornean photographic collection,” *Anthropological Forum*, 2009.

Judeth John Baptist is Senior Assistant Curator in the Research Unit of the Department of Sabah Museum. For over 30 years, she has conducted extensive ethnographic research among traditional communities in Sabah, including the Lotud, Kadazandusun, Kuijau, Rungus, Tagal Murut, east and west coast Bajau, Iranun, Tidong, and many others. Her areas of specialization include traditional religions, cosmology and customary law, as well as material culture. She has written many academic articles and papers, and is co-editor and contributing author of the book *Legal Culture in South-East Asia and East Africa* (Sabah Museum Monograph Volume 11, 2008).

Vernon Kedit is the direct descendant of an unbroken line of five *indu takar* of the Saribas. He has had a lifelong interest in weaving and family history and is currently engaged in collecting oral traditions and compiling a photographic record of ritual textiles still in the possession of Saribas Iban families. This is his first contribution to the *BRB*.

Jayl Langub is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). A retired civil servant, Jayl Langub earned a BA in anthropology at McGill University and a MA in Community Development at the University of Alberta. He has published numerous papers on the Penan and Orang Ulu, including entries in *The Encyclopedia of Malaysia*, “Penan communities and traditions,” “Adat and longhouse community,” “Kajang and other Orang Ulu groups” (*Peoples and Traditions*, vol. 12). Recently he co-edited with James Chin *Reminiscences: Recollections of Sarawak Administrative Service Officers* (Pelanduk Publications, 2007). He is also a frequent contributor to the *BRB*, his most recent publication being “Penan and the Pulong Tau National Park: Historical links and contemporary life” which appeared last year in Volume 39 (2008): 128-165.

Vernon L. Porritt is a frequent contributor to the *Borneo Research Bulletin*. He received his Ph.D. in history from Murdoch University, Western Australia, where he was recently reappointed Honorary Research Associate. Dr. Porritt is the author of five books on Sarawak, including *British Colonial Rule in Sarawak, 1946-1963* (OUP, 1997) and *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Sarawak, 1940-1990* (Monash University Press, 2004). His most recent *BRB* publication was “Constitutional Change in Sarawak, 1963-1988:

25 years as a state within the Federation of Malaysia” which appeared in Volume 38 (2007).

Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan (B.A.Honours, Monash University; Ph.D, University of Queensland) is an ethnomusicologist who holds the Kadazandusun Chair at Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and is an Associate Professor in the university’s School of Social Sciences. She is Adjunct Research Fellow in Anthropology in the School of Political and Social Inquiry, Monash University, and is the Regional Vice President for Sabah of the Borneo Research Council. Her original field of research was the music of the Huli people of Papua New Guinea, and she has spent over 30 years studying the music and cultures of many indigenous communities in Sabah, Malaysia, including the Kadazandusun, Lotud, Timugon Murut, east and west coast Bajau, Iranun, Tidong and others. Her research interests include traditional music, worldviews, ritual and dance, and ethnographic mapping. She has published many academic articles and papers and the record album *The Huli of Papua Niugini* (Barenreiter-Musicaphon, BM SL 2703, 1986), and is author of the monograph *Alat-Alat Muzik dan Muzik Instrumental Kadazandusun Tambunan* (Pejabat Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negeri Sabah, 2003) and the book *Selected Papers on Music in Sabah* (Kadazandusun Chair, UMS, 2004).

Bob Reece, Ph.D., is Professor in History at Murdoch University in Western Australia. His major publications in Borneo history are *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak* (Kuala Lumpur: OUP, 1982), *Datu Bandar Abang Hj. Mustapha of Sarawak: Some reflections on his life and times* (Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society, 1991), *Masa Jepun: Sarawak under the Japanese 1941-1945* (Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society, 1998) and, most recently, *The White Rajahs of Sarawak: A Borneo Dynasty* (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2004). He has also written introductions for the Oxford University Press reprints of Hugh Low (1848), Henry Keppel (1846), Charles Brooke (1866), Harriette McDougall (1882), and Spenser St. John (1879) and was a major contributor to *The Encyclopaedia of Iban Studies* (2001) and the *Encyclopedia of Malaysia* (2001; 2006). Professor Reece’s most recent contributions to the *BRB* were “The Kitingan Case, the Borneo states, and the Malaysian Constitution,” Volume 38 (2007), and “An interview with Dr. Haji Zaini Ahmad, Kuala Lumpur, 1985,” Volume 39 (2008): 91-103. He is currently working on a biography of Rajah Charles Brooke and a biographical essay on Gerard MacBryan.

F. Andrew Smith, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus, the University of Adelaide, South Australia. Originally trained as a plant biologist, his research interests since the mid-1990s have centered significantly on the history and ecology of Borneo, especially West Kalimantan. He is a Fellow of the Borneo Research Council and a frequent contributor to the *Borneo Research Bulletin*. His most recent *BRB* publications are “An ‘Arch-villain’ to be rehabilitated? Mixed perceptions of Pangeran Anom of Sambas in the early nineteenth century,” Volume 38 (2007), and “Daniel Smith’s last seven years: Hardships in country trade in the East Indies in the early nineteenth century” which appeared last year in Volume 39 (2008): 71-90.

MEMORIALS

ALASTAIR MORRISON 1915-2009



Alastair Morrison and Hedda Hammer, Peking, 1941 (photo: Powerhouse Museum, Sydney)

Colonial Administrator, Ornithologist And Writer

...Rumbustiously gentle, perceptive, kindly, generous in his judgment of others, the warmth of [Alastair's] personality made him friends wherever he went and combined happily with the rather more astringent perceptions of the love of his life, the internationally renowned photographer Hedda Morrison, *nee* Hammer, whom he first met in Peking in 1940 and married there in 1946.

...From an early age he was fascinated by birds. His first seven years in England, living at Witley in Surrey, provided a base for the study and nurture of birds and when he went on to Cambridge in 1934 this interest continued; vacations provided the opportunity to study them in remote islands and polar regions. When he left Cambridge he became a freelance bird collector, going first to Peru. There he compiled a descriptive catalogue of birds, including some geographical races previously unknown, and financing his journey by selling both live birds and skins to London Zoo and to private collectors on his return to England. He then had enough money to finance a second bird-collecting trip, this time to Chile, in 1938 and 1939, before returning to Peru again.

In early 1940, the time of the phony war, uncertain what to do as he was sick from an excess of rough travel and almost unable to walk, he took up an invitation from his brother Ian to go to China. Morrison was entranced by Peking and decided to stay to recuperate. The presence of Hedda Hammer as a guide to Peking, where she had lived since 1933, was an added inducement and to finance himself he made his first acquaintance with intelligence by working as a cipher officer in a small intelligence unit in the British Embassy. After Pearl Harbor he remained in Peking in semi-captivity until

the exchange of diplomatic staff in August 1942 through Portuguese East Africa, whence he proceeded to Calcutta to continue intelligence work, still as a civilian. In early 1943 he joined the Army and was commissioned into the 2nd Gurkhas but was posted to the cryptographic center at Abbottabad, where the only attraction proved to be the birds of the Indian hills.

Summoned to Delhi to be recruited into Force 136 and posted to Chungking, he was delighted to return to China. His tale of these days in his book, *The Road to Peking*, is both fascinating and hilarious. From China he was posted to the Malayan section of Force 136 and, after training as a partisan, parachuted into Malaya in August 1945, shortly before the Japanese surrender.

After further army service in Peking and Hong Kong he was demobilized in 1947 and joined the Colonial Service in Sarawak. Although he knew nothing about the country, it turned out to be a place just after his (and Hedda's) heart, as he has so ably and affectionately conveyed in his book, *Fair Land Sarawak*. He spent his first six years as a district officer in different parts of Sarawak and then held various posts in Kuching, with four years as Development Secretary followed by half a dozen as head of the government information office.

The Crown Colony regime followed the Brooke tradition of close and informal contact between local administrators and rural population, whereby the official on tour stayed in a longhouse, to be entertained with traditional if rather alcoholic hospitality. The warmth and informality of these relationships were particularly attractive to Morrison and also enabled Hedda to produce superb photographs of the many different peoples, subsequently published in a number of books they co-authored. This close relationship with the peoples of the interior gave him a particular insight into their needs, which influenced his work as Development Secretary, where his imaginative ideas sometimes came into conflict with hard-headed Treasury perceptions. Perhaps for his reason he did not go on to be Financial Secretary, but, as Information Officer, was provided with an ideal outlet for his energy, imagination, sympathetic understanding, wide knowledge and authorial skills during a period of rapid and complex political change, culminating for him in three years of Confrontation with Indonesia, one of the most successful operations for Commonwealth forces in Southeast Asia.

Morrison retired from Sarawak, honored by the title of 'Dato', at the end of Confrontation and settled in Australia. Here, in Canberra, he reverted to intelligence work and became for eight years Head of the S.E. Asian section in the Joint Intelligence Bureau (later JIO) until his retirement in 1976. Hedda continued her photographic work until her death in 1991. They had no children. Alastair Morrison was born on August 24, 1915. He died on August 5, aged 93.

[Reprinted, with permission, from *Times Online*, September 9, 2009]¹

* * *

Dato' John Pike added the following:

Bob Reece suggested I send you a few words about Alastair Morrison for the

¹ Your editor wishes to thank Susan Cohen, Secretary to *The Times* Letter, Obituaries and Register Editor, for permission to publish this online obituary with minor editorial deletions and changes.

next issue of the *Bulletin*. I wrote the formal obituary for the *The Times* which they published on-line...(above). What I would like to do now is add a few more personalized remarks which may be more appropriate for the *BRB* readership.

* * *

I had the good fortune to meet Alastair for the first time when I arrived back in Sarawak as a civil servant instead of my former role as a soldier. I was posted to Sarikei, where Alastair had just been serving as the Cadet and he was now ADO [Assistant District Officer] Binatang. It turned out that I was in the event to follow him not only to Sarikei but also to Binatang and then Lawas. No introduction to a series of districts and their problems could have been more perceptive or helpful as on each occasion Alastair wrote copious handover notes with an insight and wit which could not have been more stimulating, perceptive and wise. His style was always a joy and I still treasure the memory of first reading his notes on Lawas which, inter alia, included a description of one of the leading towkays (who was to prove to be a burden for the whole of my time there) which included this phrase: "his business principles are indelibly imprinted upon his reptilian features."

His notes on Lawas also included a description and some wise advice about another difficult character, a Sikh who had served with Ric Edmeades as a guerilla [in the SRD, or "Z Force"] and once told me that when, almost starving, they had burnt down the Tagai sawmill which was occupied by enemy troops, "the taste of roast Japanese had been delicious." Whether this was true or just a bit of idle boasting I never discovered. What I did discover over the course of my acquaintance with this character was the un wisdom of ignoring Alastair's advice. This had told me that when the Sikh got on the brandy all hell could break loose and that it would be unwise to let him have his confiscated shotgun back. He caused one major riot when drinking with a fellow Sikh shopkeeper, the Police were terrified and the DO was called in to sort things out and this was not difficult because he had no gun. He used to pester me frequently for the release of his gun and eventually and unwisely I let him have it back on the promise that he would stay off the brandy and stick to beer. That worked well enough until, on the occasion of another inter-Sikh row which I had to sort out, I evidently did it tactlessly and caused him to lose face and that got him back on the brandy and eventually he arrived very late at the DO's bungalow, armed and threatening to shoot me and my family. That was a very scary experience and brought home to me how wise Alastair had been.

Alastair's patience and tolerance in dealing with problems was an object lesson in how to run a district and I was very lucky to have been his successor on three occasions. We subsequently worked fairly closely together when he was Development Secretary and I was learning the ropes in the Financial Secretary's office. His drive and enthusiasm and fertile imagination were an inspiration to watch and were tempered by his gentle kindness. I have always thought that it was these latter qualities that made the powers that be hesitate to promote him to FS with the happy outcome for me that I was given the job instead.

He was a remarkable man who it was a great privilege to have known.

John Pike (*Oxon, United Kingdom*)

* * *

Born in Peking in 1915, Alastair R.G. Morrison was the second son of Australian-born George Ernest Morrison and his New Zealand wife, Jennie *née* Robin. 'Chinese' Morrison, as he is better known, was then *The Times* correspondent in China where he had been intimately involved since 1894, first as an adventurous traveler and subsequently as a highly-respected adviser to the Republican government of Yuan Shih-Kai. In 1919, when Alastair was just five, the family followed him to England where, despite the best medical care, he died of pancreatitis in January 1920. When Jennie died three years later, the brothers then came under the care of their housekeeper while they attended school. It was a lonely time for Alastair at Malvern (his brothers went to Winchester) and he had to rely on his own resources. Reading Economics at Cambridge from 1935, he spent his vacations wandering in northern Scandinavia, almost dying on one occasion beyond the Arctic Circle. After graduating, he spent the next few years traveling widely in South America, supporting himself (as Alfred Russell Wallace had done four decades earlier) by selling birds and other specimens to zoos and museums. He had inherited his father's wanderlust.

In 1940, he was back in Peking where he volunteered as a cipher officer with a British military intelligence group. Evacuated with British diplomats to India in 1942, he worked for the Inter-Services Liaison Dept. in Calcutta before joining the Indian Army and being posted as an intelligence officer to the 2nd Gurkha Regiment. Recruited by the Ministry of Economic Warfare in 1943, he served in Chungking in 1944-45 and after training in India and Ceylon was parachuted into Malaya on 8 August 1945 as part of Force 136 in "Operation Zipper." Parachuting into Selangor, he walked into Kuala Lumpur just in time for the Japanese surrender. His most dangerous experience of the war period came later, back in China, where he had to supervise the retrieval of British-owned property given by the Japanese occupiers to various Chinese war-lords.

In 1941 in Peking he had met a young photographer, Hedda Hammer, who had fled Nazi Germany. Separated by the war, they met up once again in 1946 in Peking where they quickly married before he was posted to Hong Kong. Returning to England after happily resigning his position as Adjutant of the Hong Kong Volunteers in 1947, Alastair joined the British Colonial Service. Late that year he was sent out to Sarawak, which had recently been acquired by Britain from the last Rajah, Sir Charles Vyner Brooke. As District Officer, he served in a number of up-country posts before being transferred to the Secretariat in Kuching in 1954, and finally to the Government Information Office in late 1959. Of his time up-country he wrote later in a typically self-deprecating way:

I myself was not the ideal officer for an Iban area. I was acquiring a useful knowledge of the language, but the ideal officer is one who loves talking and enjoys nothing more than a good argument, a man of immense stamina who can talk and sometimes drink all night and yet be ready to start on his round again early the next morning. As I was none of these things, some of my hosts must have thought me a rather poor specimen.

He nevertheless displayed a strong sense of empathy for the ordinary Chinese, Dayaks, and Malays he encountered in his daily work, many of whom were captured for posterity by Hedda's ubiquitous Rolleiflex.

Fortunately for us, Alastair left a brilliant account of his 1953 visit with Hedda to the Kelabit highlands, which was published in Vol. 36 of the *Borneo Research Bulletin* (“The Diary of a District Officer: Alastair Morrison’s 1953 Trip to the Kelabit Highlands,” Amster, 2005). His official diaries were left to Cornell University and his personal ones to Claire Roberts of Sydney’s Powerhouse Museum who is currently researching Hedda’s life on a Fulbright Scholarship at Harvard University. Keeping a diary from an early age, Alastair was no doubt aware of the example set by his father.

As an economist, Alastair’s real interest was in rural development and he was disappointed not to have been able to persevere in that area after working as Development Secretary. However, he was to be a crucial figure in the relatively smooth transition from British colonial rule in the early 1960s. Part of this was due to his “Malaysianization” of the Information Office which he achieved by fostering the talents of people like Ivor Kraal, Mohd. Taibi Ali, and Maimunah binte Hj. Daud. Pamphlets issued by the Information Office in a range of languages played an important part in educating Sarawakians in the principles of parliamentary democracy. Earlier, he had been responsible for producing material as part of the government’s propaganda campaign against the Clandestine Communist Organisation, which posed a serious threat to Sarawak’s security from the late 1950s. His last challenge was to help deal with Indonesian *Konfrontasi* which brought thousands of British troops to Sarawak’s borders with Kalimantan.

Thanks to the Colombo Plan scholarship scheme, many young Sarawakians (all men, incidentally) were able to obtain professional qualifications in Australia, New Zealand, and Britain in order to help form the educated elite that the country desperately needed in order to replace the colonial civil service establishment that had ruled the roost since 1946. Alastair, together with the first head of Radio Sarawak, Peter Ratcliffe, played a key part in selecting suitable candidates, some of whom were to take on important political roles when political parties emerged in the years leading up to Malaysia; others were to occupy important positions in government. Whether Alastair was the MI5 agent in Sarawak is an interesting question in the light of his strong intelligence background during the war and his ready acceptance by the defence establishment in Canberra, but it is impossible to determine one way or another.

During and after his time as District Officer, Alastair wrote extensively for the *Sarawak Gazette*, most notably in a series of articles countering the outspoken views of the irascible and idiosyncratic Curator of the Sarawak Museum, Tom Harrison, on government policy towards Sarawak’s indigenous groups. Well worthy of re-publication, this exchange of views on “Ulu Problems” highlighted (among other things) the different personalities and philosophies of the two protagonists: one, a self-educated and self-absorbed man of immense energies and appetites (and equally immense social resentments); the other, a sophisticated intellectual of refined sensibilities and lofty demeanor. Ranging over a wide range of issues, this unique debate cast Morrison as the defender of the colonial regime, while Harrison both rejected the idea of treating Sarawak as a “Human Whipsnade” and condemned the increasing penetration of *ulu* areas by government and missionary organizations. His view of Brooke rule was a highly romantic one and his firsthand knowledge of Sarawak’s natives was limited to the peoples living in the Trusan, Baram, Belaga and Baloi districts, excluding the Iban.

Nevertheless, it was a tribute to Harrison's powerful influence that Morrison should have admitted that he raised "a lone dissenting voice ... with some diffidence": it seems almost irreverent, like casting doubt on Papal Infallibility or interrupting a lengthy sermon by some venerable Prince of the established Church.

Fate (or perhaps some mischievous government housing officer) decreed that at one time the Harrissons and the Morrisons should be next-door neighbors in what was then called "Pig Lane" (now the distinctly more up-market Park Lane) near its junction with Central Road in Kuching. There is a story told that the Harrissons kept two pet turkeys whom they mischievously named "Hedda" and "Alastair" and amused themselves by remarking loudly on their appearance and various antics in the garden. The fact that both Barbara Harrison and Hedda Morrison were German did not bring them any closer together.

Alastair's up-country postings gave Hedda the opportunity to take a superb series of photographs of the peoples of Sarawak before the effects of modernization began to change traditional ways of life. Her 1962 book, *Life in a Longhouse*, remains a classic and the unique value of her negatives was appropriately recognized in their acquisition some years ago by Cornell University. Altogether, they constitute a treasure house of Sarawak ethnography.

In early 1967, four years after Sarawak had become part of the new Federation of Malaysia, Alastair and Hedda moved to Canberra where he took up a senior position as head of the Southeast Asia branch of the Office of Current Intelligence under the Joint Intelligence Organisation. Apart from his wide knowledge of Southeast Asian affairs, Alastair was highly regarded for his sound advice on a broad range of issues. He mentored a whole generation of young intelligence analysts before retiring in the mid-1970s. According to one colleague, he fulfilled the Confucian definition of a sage: a gentleman who had acquired wisdom through worldly experience. Alastair's intellectual sharpness was revealed more publicly in 1977 in *The New York Review of Books* when he took Sir Hugh Trevor-Roper and John Fairbank to task over their assessment of the notorious literary hoaxer, Sir Edmund Backhouse, whom his father had known in China.

In retirement, Alastair and Hedda's home in Ainslie was a welcome port of call for Borneo scholars attached to the Australian National University. Michael and Marguerite Heppell, Cliff Sather, and myself at different times enjoyed a relaxed evening over a curry that Hedda seemed to be able to concoct at a moment's notice. Here was a pleasant oasis in what sometimes seemed to be the arid desert of academia and its relentlessly critical atmosphere. The Morrisons projected the vitality and stimulus of Sarawak as they had known it during the colonial period. In other words, they had all the symptoms of what I have called "Sarawak fever."

When Hedda died in 1991 (they had no children), Alastair lost a beloved companion but proceeded to occupy himself by writing his memoirs, first of his time in Sarawak (*Fair Land Sarawak*, 1993), and then of his earlier life (*The Road to Peking*, 1993 and *The Bird Fancier: A Journey to Peking*, 2001). A fine writer, his mordant sense of humor is never far from the surface. He remained an ardent bird-watcher, facilitating the publication of books on birds and frogs. He also saw to the publication of Hedda's unique photographs of old Peking and Hong Kong. He was a devoted connoisseur and

collector of Chinese porcelain, Tibetan bronzes, Japanese *netsuke*, books on Peru and English crowns. He was, like his father, a keen bibliophile, eventually selling his valuable collection to the same Japanese university that had bought his father's books. In later years, failing eyesight and hearing began to restrict his activities and it was then that his wide circle of friends came to his aid. Wonderfully erudite on a wide range of subjects, carefully-spoken and generous, Alastair radiated an old-world courtesy and charm that will never be forgotten by those fortunate enough to have known him. Afflicted in latter years by a range of health problems, he bore them with the patience of a true Stoic.

The last time I saw Alastair in September 2008 was in a geriatric ward at Canberra Hospital where he was recovering from an unpleasant operation on his ear. It was a cruel and demeaning experience for a man of his intelligence and sensibilities and he conveyed a strong sense that he wanted to be "out of it all." His wish was at last granted a year later.

(Bob Reece, *Murdoch University, Western Australia*)

RICHARD C. FIDLER
1941-2009



“You really enjoy each other, and hearing about each other’s research.”
Fred Eggan, President, American Anthropological Association

The late Fred Eggan never worked in Borneo, but he regularly attended meetings of the Borneo Research Council, with his student, Alexander Spoehr. Professor Eggan’s observation is an apt comment about members of the BRC generally, and about Rick Fidler in particular. Rick was an unusual man and good friend. We consider ourselves fortunate to have known him for as long as we did.

We first met in 1970, shortly after Rick had arrived in Kanowit for his fieldwork. I had finished my studies at Pitt and had returned to Sibul for a final three-year term and field research. I can’t remember how we found out about each other – could have been from conversations between Pete Murdock and Ward Goodenough – but anyhow, we met, and every month or so, Rick would come downriver to Sibul for R&R, and we would have tea and an afternoon of conversation.

I do recall Rick sharing with us the story of his purchase of a book on Chinese rituals which he picked up in Singapore. The Chinese in Kanowit were fascinated by the book, which they borrowed to make certain they were observing ceremonies correctly. What a hoot, we thought, Rick providing information to Chinese whose rites he then was studying.

In 1973, George Appell organized a session of the BRC in New Orleans. There were about a dozen or so of us who presented papers, but through an oversight, there was no slot for someone on the Chinese – Rick. Rick made us aware that we had overlooked about one-third of the population of Sarawak, and was quite right.

* * *

Richard Calvin Fidler was born in 1941 and spent his early life in eastern Pennsylvania. He had both his undergraduate and graduate education at the University of Pennsylvania. After earning his B.A. in 1962, he worked for two years as a Peace Corps

volunteer in Sabah, from which he traveled to other parts of Asia, including Cambodia, and overland from India to London. Returning to Penn, he was fortunate to have, in his own words, “fantastic professors” and while there, met Ruth Carol Barnes, whom he married in 1975. Rick and Carol had two children, Kathryn (Kathy) and Benjamin (Ben), both of whom traveled with him to Southeast Asia when Rick returned to visit.

Upon completing his course work at the University of Pennsylvania, Rick applied for a visa to return to the town in Sabah where he had worked for the Peace Corps. Denied a visa to Sabah, he chose Kanowit as his research site, arriving there in April, 1970. Over the succeeding years, he visited Kanowit many more times. He returned to the United States in 1971 and spent a year writing his dissertation, receiving his Ph.D. in 1973.

His first university teaching was at Northern Arizona University during the academic year 1968-69, and where he taught once again in 1972 to 1974. He supported himself while writing his dissertation by teaching at local Philadelphia colleges. In 1974-75, he taught at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, and following his marriage to Carol, moved to Providence where he was to teach at Rhode Island College until his death.

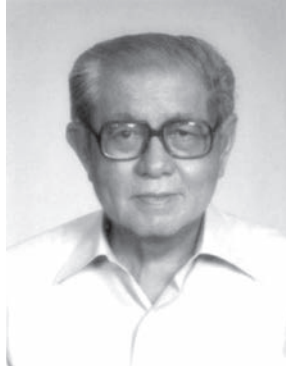
In one of the BRC sessions, may have been in Kota Kinabalu or Brunei, Rick presented a talk on teaching anthropology. I confess that I wondered how he was going to pull it off, but he was brilliant. His use of slides from Kanowit interspersed with images from books and his notes made it one of the liveliest and most interesting sessions of the conference.

We shall always be grateful to Rick for his encouragement for keeping the BRC going. The problem with voluntary groups is that they depend upon volunteers, some of whom are forthcoming and supportive – like Rick – and others whose volunteerism is less forthcoming and supportive. Rick never slacked off, and was always there, at meetings and for post-meeting revelry. In 1996, during the meeting in Brunei, participants were informed that some members had commitments to the Congress of the IUAES and would be unable to attend the biennial conference of the BRC scheduled in 1998 for Palangka Raya. Rick was among the most insistent that the conference go on. He was right – and the conference was organized and took place in Central Kalimantan, with Rick in attendance.

He was, as his daughter Kathryn describes him, “the avidest man in the world.” We have been fortunate to know him, and share his family’s sense of loss.

(Vinson H. Sutlive, *College of William and Mary*)

DATO SRI T'EN KUEN FOH ¹ 1919–2008



[1996]

His life and times

“It is our good fortune that we still have a good civil service to run the Government, even with little, if any, ministerial direction,” said Sarawak’s Council Negri member Ong Kee Hui during a debate on the state’s 1967 budget on 15 December 1966.² This tribute to the civil service was particularly pertinent to the two top officers in the civil service, both locally born, who had been thrust into the full responsibilities of their posts at very short notice. They were Acting Chief Secretary Gerunsin Lemat and Acting Financial Secretary T’en Kuen Foh.³ On 17 June 1966 Sarawak’s governor had dismissed Sarawak’s first elected government, the Ningkan government, which had been in power since 22 July 1963, and appointed the Tawi Sli government. Six weeks later the Tawi Sli government removed from office the Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary, both expatriates, a year before their contracts were due to expire.⁴ The incumbent Financial Secretary was on leave at the time and told not to return, leaving Kuen Foh with the task of preparing his first state budget. His predecessor, John Pike, later wrote that he had been “completely confident that...the shop would be in experienced, reliable and honest hands.”⁵

Kuen Foh, born 26 September 1919, was the youngest son of T’en Vui Yang, a Hakka (Kèjiā) migrant from Jiaying (now Meizhou) in the northeast of China’s Guangdong

1 For this memorial the writer is indebted to Kuen Foh’s fourth daughter, Nyuk Pin, whose research uncovered much of the material presented here.

2 Ong Kee Hui was at the time chairman of the Sarawak United People’s Party, then in opposition.

3 Gerunsin Lemat (1924-1995), a locally-born Iban appointed Acting State Secretary in August 1966, faced a parallel challenge (Tan Sri Datuk Gerunsin Lemat: 1924-1995, *Borneo Research Bulletin*, Vol. 27, pp. 6-17).

4 The Chief Secretary was Tony Shaw and the Financial Secretary was John Pike. Both were compensated for time not served on their contracts, which were not due to expire until 31 August 1967.

5 Letter from Dato John Pike dated 6 March 2009.



Kuen Foh's father's house in Meizhou, Guangdong Province (Family photo taken in 1985).

an infant.⁶ Vui Yang, who migrated to Sarawak in the early 20th century, was one of the first Hakkas from Jiaying to settle in Kuching.⁷ He quickly showed his entrepreneurial skills by renting No.15 Rock Road, a two-storey shophouse in the heart of Kuching, and opening a grocery store. A few years later, with the help of a court-translator friend, Vui Yang successfully tendered for a contract to make uniforms for government personnel. Vui Yang then bought No. 9 Rock Road, another two-storey shop house close by, where he set up a tailoring workshop on the ground floor. Kuen Foh and his four older siblings were brought up in the living quarters over the workshop.

As a five-year old, in 1924 Kuen Foh narrowly escaped possible death when a Sarawak Ranger armed with a *parang* ran amok on Carpenter Street during the Chinese harvest (eighth moon) festival.⁸ Earlier in the day the Ranger had been refused leave to visit his family and during his rampage in the evening left some twenty people either dead or seriously wounded. At one stage he had run into a clothing shop, where a group



Government Post Office Kuching in 1931. The Rock Road shop houses can be seen at the far left.

⁶ Vui Yang was betrothed to Liaw Khuik when she was 40 days old, having been chosen from another village and brought into the family by his grandmother as her youngest grandson's future wife.

⁷ Jiaying, a predominantly Hakka center for centuries, was renamed Meizhou in 1911 and given city status in 1987.

⁸ In the early 1920s, Sarawak had a mainly Malay and Sikh police force, and a mainly "Dayak" para-military force, the Sarawak Rangers. At that time there were living quarters for about thirty policemen and Sarawak Rangers on Carpenter Street, the former responsible for law and order in the immediate area.

Kuen Foh when at St. Josephs School in the 1930s.

of people, including Kuen Foh and his second elder sister Fung Kiaw, were admiring the festival lanterns. One man tried to hide, but was slashed to death. Fung Kiaw recalls that the shop attendants grappled with the Ranger, and that in the confusion she and Kuen Foh ran out of the shop, escaping unharmed.⁹

Also in 1924, Kuen Foh was enrolled in a Jiaying Chinese school and over the next four years acquired basic writing and reading skills in classical Chinese.¹⁰ In 1928 he was enrolled in St. Joseph's School, one of only two schools for boys in Kuching that offered a formal education with tuition in English, then Sarawak's official language.¹¹ In 1930 the Oversea Junior Cambridge Examination was introduced in Sarawak and two years later the first three St. Joseph's entrants passed the examination.¹² Kuen Foh was one of four St. Joseph pupils who graduated with an Oversea Junior Cambridge Certificate in 1936, the highest formal level of academic achievement available in Sarawak at that time.¹³

On 19 April 1937 Kuen Foh began his career in Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke's government as a trainee clerk. After fifteen months serving two to three months in the various departments in Kuching, he was posted to Lawas District Office for two years as a junior clerk, where his duties included "collecting head or door tax from the native communities other than the Malay community, issuing hawkers licenses/land rents and royalties on forest products (mainly timber) and preparing documents in standard forms relating to mortgage or transfer of landed property."¹⁴ Occasionally Kuen Foh served as an interpreter in civil and criminal court cases that involved ethnic Chinese.

The Japanese occupied Kuching on 24 December 1941 and set up a *gunsei-bu* (military administration board), which called on government employees to return



9 The Ranger was subdued after being shot in the leg by the Superintendent of Police and subsequently sentenced to death and executed.

10 This opened up centuries of Chinese literature for Kuen Foh, and an easy transition to printed media using simplified characters.

11 St. Joseph's School, nominally Roman Catholic, was founded in 1882. The other mission school, the nominally Anglican St. Thomas' School, began in 1848.

12 St. Thomas' School had entered four of its students for the first time in 1930. For further education, Sarawak students had to go overseas, usually to Singapore or Penang.

13 To the Chinese who formed the majority of the student population, nothing mattered but the acquisition of a Cambridge School Certificate which served as a passport to clerical positions in the Brooke civil service or in any European commercial house or bank (see Ooi Keat Gin, Mission Education in Sarawak during the period of Brooke Rule, 1840-1946, *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol. XLII, No. 63, December 1991, pp. 285-373).

14 Extract from Kuen Foh's letter to Dr. Naimah Talib dated 23 September 1992.



Liberation, September 1945; Australian soldiers with Kuen Foh (rear row center) and friends (family photo).

to their posts.¹⁵ During the occupation, Kuen Foh served in another three District Offices, Simunjan, Serian and Bau.

Generally those in government service were

better placed to endure the hardships of the occupation than most of their compatriots, especially those of Chinese origin. But by early 1944 the Allied blockade of Sarawak was creating widespread food shortages and Kuen Foh was, in his own words, “permitted to resign...and engaged myself in padi planting.” Reflecting the realities of life for many during the occupation, Kuen Foh cycled some thirty miles to Serian every day, where he worked for Chinese farmers cultivating padi in exchange for food for the family, and occasionally exchanged used clothing and other family items for padi.¹⁶ In Sarawak the occupation officially ended on 11 September 1945, Australian forces having liberated the Kuching area a month earlier.

The British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (BBCAU) took over military administration, handing it over to the British Military Administration (BMA) on 3 January 1946.¹⁷ The BMA recalled Kuen Foh to government service in February, posting him to the Kuching District Office. Two months later the BMA handed over the government to Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke and on 1 May Kuen Foh received his first promotion within the clerical service. By then the Rajah had signaled his wish to cede Sarawak to Britain and, following a controversial Council Negri decision on 15 May 1946, ceded Sarawak to Britain on 1 July 1946. This signaled the opportunity for Kuen Foh’s rapid rise through the ranks of Sarawak’s civil service, uninhibited by any of the past ethnic

15 All British and Europeans, including civil servants, were interned, with the exception of the odd German. Also, virtually all the Japanese personnel assigned for administration in Sarawak lost their lives when the Dutch sank their vessels just before the occupation. For a detailed account of the Japanese occupation and its administration, see Bob Reece, *Masa Jepun: Sarawak under the Japanese 1941-1945*, Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society, 1998.

16 Guek Lan, Kuen Foh’s future wife whom he did not meet until after the Japanese occupation, recalls that her family survived on edible wild fruit and plants grown in the rain forest. Sarawak’s economy was largely subsistence agriculture in 1941, Dayaks mainly practicing swidden agriculture in the rain forest and Chinese farmers planting cash crops on fixed lots in the environs of population centers.

17 BBCAU officers, some of them from the pre-war Sarawak service, acted as *de facto* Residents and District Officers (Reece, 1998, p. 218).

Kuen Foh on his wedding day, 18 March 1948
(family photo).



preferences or privileges of the Brooke era.

The British administration discontinued the Brooke era practice that clerical staff could only be promoted to a higher post within the same department. This enabled Kuen Foh to apply for the post of Senior Correspondence Clerk in the Treasury, to which he was promoted on 1 October 1949. Subsequently he successfully applied for, and was promoted to, Assistant Secretary Development in the Secretariat on 1 March 1952. At this time the government was embarking on new development, following a period of rehabilitation of Sarawak's infrastructure which had become run down during the occupation.¹⁸ By then the political uncertainty in the early post war years created by the Malay anti-cession movement had been played out, although signs of a future militant Chinese communist movement in the Chinese schools were becoming apparent.¹⁹ Kuen Foh no doubt welcomed the increase in salary that accompanied his promotion, as by then he had a family of five to support, having married Lee Guek Lin on 18 March 1948.²⁰ The younger children were deprived of ever knowing their paternal grandfather, Vui Yang, who died after a heart attack in October 1952.

The pace of development was rapidly accelerating, reflected in an increase in expenditure from nearly \$10 million in 1953 to over \$23 million in 1957 and a \$500 million 1955-1959 Development Plan, notwithstanding the distractions for the government of a State of Emergency from 5 August 1952 to 17 January 1953 and government preoccupation with early steps towards self-government for Sarawak.²¹ The Development Secretary's Office in the Secretariat expanded rapidly and on 1 January 1958

18 The Sarawak Annual Report for 1952 recorded that "With the advice and consent of the Council Negri, the Government is, in 1953, committed to large expenditure in order to expand its services to the public in almost every field of Government activity."

19 The assassination of Governor Duncan Stewart on 3 December 1949 signaled the demise of the anti-secessionists. The Students' Self-Governing Society in the Kuching Chung Hua Middle School was declared unlawful on 9 July 1951 after being deemed a study center for prospective communist cadres.

20 Their first son, Kuet Fah, was born on 22 October 1948, followed by their first daughter, Nyuk Jung (22 February 1950), and a second daughter Nyuk Moi (4 August 1951). Later additions to the family were their third daughter, Nyuk P'in (11 November 1952), second son, Kuet Fui (1 Dec 1955), and fourth daughter Nyuk Chin (26 Feb 1958).

21 A State of Emergency was declared when a small band of self-proclaimed communists from Indonesia took over the Batu Kitang bazaar for a few hours. Steps towards self-government included amending the Constitution so that government nominees and officials would no longer control the Council Negri and holding the first local government elections in Sarawak on 4 November 1956. The government also promoted a Borneo Federation of Brunei, British North Borneo, and Sarawak.

Kuen Foh was promoted to the status of Administrative Officer, Division II, with the post of Principal Assistant Secretary (Development).²² Then in 1959 Kuen Foh became the first local officer to be selected to attend a twelve-month Devonshire Course in England, probably Course B for chosen Colonial Officers who had served overseas for some years.²³ The Course was held at Oxford University, where Kuen Foh studied economics and economic development, and attended lectures and seminars on administration and local government.²⁴ This led to a rapid increase in Kuen Foh's responsibilities when he returned to Kuching, as on 10 April 1961 he was appointed Acting Principal Secretary (Finance) and on 20 December 1962 he became Acting Under-Secretary Finance.

By then British Government thinking that Sarawak would not be viable as an independent state, the threat of communism, fears of Indonesian aggression, and United Nation's pressure to end colonialism, all pre-ordained that Sarawak would become a state in a proposed Federation of Malaysia. Sarawak's first elected state government under Stephen Kalong Ningkan was formed on 22 July 1963, declared Sarawak's independence on 31 August 1963, and voted to join the Federation of Malaysia upon its formation on 16 September 1963 as a member state. The Ningkan government had to deal with a rapidly changing civil service, an armed internal communist movement that became allied with Indonesian forces making armed incursions into Sarawak from Kalimantan, and an influx of Commonwealth troops to counter the Indonesian threat.²⁵ Some senior government expatriate officers accepted four-year contracts with the Sarawak government while others opted to retire, opening up promotion opportunities for local officers.²⁶ In January 1964, Kuen Foh was given the opportunity to act as Financial Secretary for three months, promoted to a more senior status in the Administration Officer ranks, and appointed Under Secretary (Finance) in August.²⁷

Chairmanship of Sarawak's public electricity utility (SESCO) was added to Kuen Foh's responsibilities on 1 January 1965, a post he held for the next three years. This was no sinecure, as electricity demand was rising rapidly, new sources of capital were required for expansion programs, and growing pressure to replace expatriate staff and militant unionism had to be dealt with. Kuen Foh's skills were pivotal in setting in motion a \$9.3 million loan from the Asian Development Bank, which was finally

22 The Colonial Office called for a university degree for administrative officers, but this was relaxed for a few local personnel with the necessary experience and attributes to replace expatriate officers.

23 In addition to a university degree, recruits to the Colonial Office Overseas Administration Service were required to attend Devonshire Course A in preparation for service in British colonies. Devonshire Course B enabled chosen serving officers to study subjects relevant to their careers.

24 Kuen Foh studied under Mr. Healey, then the Economic Reader at Oxford University.

25 At the behest of the Sarawak's communist movement, in 1963 some 1,000 young Chinese, mostly Sarawak United People's Party members, crossed the border to Indonesian Kalimantan to take up arms against the formation of Malaysia.

26 There was pressure from the Federal Government, Sarawak politicians, and the unions, to remove all expatriate officers remaining in government posts.

27 B. A. St. J. Hepburn, Sarawak's expatriate Financial Secretary when Malaysia was formed, was transferred to a new post in Kuala Lumpur on 12 December 1964. His replacement, expatriate John Pike, Under-Secretary (Finance), had been very involved in negotiating the terms and conditions under which Sarawak joined Malaysia.

approved in late 1969.

On 16 May 1965 Kuen Foh was appointed Deputy State Financial Secretary. Some four months later the Federal Government rebuffed political pressure in Sarawak to withdraw from the Federation of Malaysia following the expulsion of Singapore, citing lack of provision for cession in the Federation's Constitution.²⁸ During this time of discontent, Kuen Foh served as Acting Financial Secretary on three occasions before being finally confirmed as Financial Secretary on 1 November 1966.²⁹ Although the fundamentals of that role remained, automatic membership in the government's executive, the Supreme Council, had been removed on 13 May 1965.³⁰ This ended the Financial Secretary's direct influence on government decisions, turning the position into a strictly civil service role, albeit very important, with a much reduced public profile. As Kuen Foh explained, his main responsibilities were preparation of Sarawak's Annual Budget and Annual Development Estimates, advising the Chief Minister and Supreme Council members on finance and development, and overseeing the State's financial management. By the time his first budget was submitted, the armed confrontation of Indonesia had ended (12 August 1966), most of the British and Commonwealth forces had withdrawn from Sarawak, Malaysian forces were taking over responsibility for security in Sarawak, and the Sarawak communist movement was trying to regroup in Sarawak, having lost its safe bases in Kalimantan.

Kuen Foh consolidated his long-standing reputation as a workaholic, usually returning to his office on Sundays after accompanying his wife to the wet market—a long-standing custom of some communities in Kuching. He quickly earned the appellation of the "Iron-willed Financial Secretary."³¹ His successor, Hj Bujang Mohd Nor, later wrote that Kuen Foh "was a very isolated man when it came to performing his role as State Financial Secretary, which meant that he wanted to carry out his jobs with absolute integrity."³² Hj Bujang also records that Kuen Foh was "a very humble man," who "respected everybody including those serving below him," but "did not like much publicity with regard to his role as one of the most important civil servants in the State." Kuen Foh's budgets were conservative, generally following a pattern of forecasting small deficits to inhibit political pressure to reduce government charges (taxes, royalties, duties, etc.), yet providing modest surpluses.

For his last budgets (1970 and 1971), Kuen Foh worked with a nominated State Operations Committee, as racial riots in peninsula Malaysia in May 1969 had led to emergency rule by a nominated National Operations Council.³³ During this period the political landscape was undergoing a major change. The "era" of Iban-led governance in

28 Similarly there was no provision in the Federation's Constitution for the expulsion of Singapore from the Federation.

29 The expulsion of Singapore on 9 August 1965 led to political pressure in Sarawak to withdraw from the Federation, which the Federal government refused to consider.

30 This was done to "save" the Ningkan government by enabling new ministries to be created and, through appointments to these ministries, to thereby obtain a safe working majority.

31 *International Times* (a local Chinese tabloid), 29 November 2004.

32 Email from Tan Sri Datuk Amar Hj Bujang Mohd Nor, 30 April 2009.

33 The Sarawak State Operations Committee ruled from July 1969 to 19 February 1971, when power reverted to the elected state government under Chief Minister Adbul Rahman Ya'kub.



A meeting of senior government officials in the early 1960s, with Chief Secretary F. D. Jakeway front row center and T'en Kuen Foh front row second from right.

Sarawak ended on 6 July 1970, after elections returned a Melanau-led, SUPP supported, UMNO-backed, state government. This heralded the beginning of a governing family dynasty that would hold power for the remainder of the century and beyond. And this, increasingly over time, consolidated UMNO-Mahathir concepts in the governance of Sarawak. Also, the days of government officers being appointed to senior positions solely on the basis of experience and ability were drawing to a close. Their positions tended to become uncomfortable as post-occupation graduates accrued a modicum of experience and the latest government “UMNO-style” precepts of top civil service administrative officers began to be applied. How far these influences affected Kuen Foh is not known, but on 2 Jan 1971 he ended his active government service at the age of 51.³⁴

Kuen Foh's underlying interest throughout his career in government had been in development, and within a few months after his retirement from government service he had accepted an array of development-oriented positions. The late Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui recognized his talents and appointed him Director and Financial Adviser of Goebilt Seafoods Processing Bhd. seafood-processing company, a planning and development role.³⁵ Also the Bank Negara Malaysia nominated Kuen Foh as a Director of the Bian

34 His successor was Bujang Mohamad Nor (Now Tan Sri Datuk Amar Haji Bujang Mohd Nor), a graduate from the University of Malaya, Singapore. He joined the Sarawak Administrative Service in the late 1950s and attended the Devonshire Course in Cambridge in 1960/61. Later he was promoted to the post of State Secretary, finally retiring from government service in 1990.

35 Goebilt—the name of the original American owners—was the site of an abandoned 1920 rubber-processing factory at Kampung Muara Tebas where Ong Kui Hui had tried to establish a tapioca starch manufacturing plant after World War II.

Chiang Bank in Kuching, which he has been credited with changing from a family concern into a modern bank.³⁶ As well as his private sector interests, Kuen Foh was appointed as a Director of San Holdings Bhd. and Director and Area Manager of its subsidiary, the Borneo Finance Corporation Bhd.

On 1 March 1972 Kuen Foh began possibly his most challenging “post-retirement” work as the General Manager of the Borneo Development Corporation Sdn. Bhd., replacing its last expatriate officer.³⁷ As Bank Negara wrote at the time, the BDC “has pioneered the work of industrial estate development as well as financing of industrial and commercial ventures in both Sarawak and Sabah.”³⁸ The state governments of Sarawak and Sabah took over full control of the BDC on 3 January 1975 by buying the Commonwealth Development Corporation’s 30 percent shareholding, and two months later Kuen Foh’s contract as General Manager was renewed for a further two years.³⁹ Before finally retiring after six years in the post, Kuen Foh is credited with having “accomplished various projects; the Bintawa fishing village housing estate, the Sarikei Industrial Estate, the Sibujang Park Housing estate, the Miri Industrial Estate, and acquisition of land in the Sutong area for future development of a BDC housing estate.”⁴⁰ His ten-page handover notes to his successor Frank Apau on 9 December 1977 include a formidable list of housing and industrial projects from Biawak in western Sarawak to Lahad Datu in eastern Sabah.

Kuen Foh’s services to Sarawak were recognized officially on the twentieth anniversary of the formation of Malaysia, 31 August 1983, with the award of Panglima Negara Bintang Sarawak that confers the appellation Datuk. The Kuching Jiaying Association recognized Kuen Foh’s importance in his clan by appointing him as its Honorary Adviser in 1992, and the government further recognized his contribution to the economic development of Sarawak by awarding him the title of Dato Sri in 2003. Kuen Foh finally succumbed to age and ill health on 8 March 2008 at the age of 95.

(Vernon L. Porritt, *Murdoch University, Western Australia*)

36 Wee Kheng Chiang set up the Bian Chiang Bank before World War II and Ong Kee Hui, as his son-in-law, had a long association with the bank.

37 As this was a full-time role, Kuen Foh was obliged to terminate all other appointments other than approved non-executive directorships. By agreement, Kuen Foh ended his association with the Bian Chiang Bank on 30 June 1972.

38 Bank Negara, letter, 20 January 1972.

39 For the BDC, the take-over eliminated capital-raising problems associated with its previous status as a non-resident company. The CDC’s continuing commitment in Malaysia amounted to some M\$ 150 million.

40 *International Times* (a local Chinese tabloid), 29 November 2004.

PATRICK RINGKAI 1912–2009



Ask any student of Iban studies who was Derek Freeman and he will tell you that it was Professor Freeman who made Iban society famous by his seminal writings on kinship (the Iban kindred), social organization (the *bilek*-family and longhouse), hill-rice cultivation, and a number of other ethnographic topics. His publications, particularly his *Report on the Iban of Sarawak* (1970), are essential reading for every serious student of Bornean anthropology.

Few people, however, know the identity of the “man behind the scenes,” the research assistant who helped Freeman by painstakingly collecting information for him and transcribing verbatim Iban conversations and texts.

This man was Patrick Ringkai, who passed away after a long illness on Sunday, May 3, 2009, at his home in Gensurai, in the Betong Division.

After Sarawak was ceded to the British government, following World War II, the colonial service engaged a team of social anthropologists to carry out research among the principal ethnic groups of Sarawak in order to provide a basis for administering the new colony. In addition to Freeman, who carried out his initial research between 1949-51 among the Baleh Iban in what is now the Kapit Division, the other members of this team were William Geddes (who studied the Bidayuh), H.S. Morris (who studied the Melanau), and T'ien Ju-Kang (who studied the Sarawak Chinese). The reports produced by this team gave impetus to further research and helped make Sarawak an important center of social science research in Southeast Asia. Geddes' research assistant, the late Raphael Nyandoh, and Morris' research assistant, the late Tuton Kaboy, both continued pioneering research under the auspices of the Sarawak Museum. By contrast, Patrick Ringkai pursued a different career and was employed by the Sarawak Museum only briefly, in 1968, under the museum's first local Curator, Benedict Sandin, for a short study of the Batang Ai and Skrang Iban.

Last year, while lying sick in bed, Ringkai gave an interview to researchers from

the Tun Jugah Foundation. He told his story of how he came to work with Freeman. He was first employed only as an interpreter, but later took up work as a research assistant after the late Datuk Peter Tinggom gave up the job to take an administrative post in the Sarawak civil service. Ringkai said he was paid \$75 per month, with a \$25 allowance for food. To him, Derek Freeman was a good man but a strict disciplinarian. At one point, he recalled, Freeman made him walk a distance of 6 miles overland along a jungle track from Matup to Gensurai in order to dispatch an urgent message. In addition to taking notes and collecting data on rice farming, Freeman had him record a long chant (*timang*) recited by Lemambang Ighoh anak Impin, writing it down by pencil, word-by-word, working day and night, until his fingers hurt. He was instructed to write as clearly as possible and to record exactly what the *lemambang* recited. Although Freeman himself never published an account of this text, the task was taken up by one of Freeman's students, James Masing, and in his foreword to Masing's monograph, *The Coming of the Gods*, Freeman gives some sense of the enormous amount of work that Patrick Ringkai put into recording this chant:

Not having a tape recorder, our method, day by day, was for Ighoh to dictate from memory to Patrick Ringkai, and then for me to work with Ighoh on the resulting text, making detailed annotations that placed it in the context of the heroic ritual performance of which it was a part. After some months this produced an annotated manuscript of 927 pages.

Patrick Ringkai was born on August 21, 1912, at Stambak Ulu, Betong Division. Descended from a long line of illustrious Saribas leaders, including Orang Kaya Pemancha Dana "Bayang," Ringkai was born to Sendi, a famous weaver mentioned in several publications on Iban *pua' kumbu*. Sendi was a great-granddaughter of Aji, one of OKP Dana's five sons, who was killed fighting against Brooke forces in the Saribas. Being one of four children, Ringkai was adopted into the Gensurai longhouse.

Ringkai attended St. Augustine's school in Betong and later joined his sister, Inja Kedit, in Singapore, where he finished his education with a Junior Cambridge certificate. With this education, he was employed by the Saribas Local Authority School Board as one of its first teachers in 1950 when the Board opened a school at Nanga Ajau, near Gensurai. Among the many students he taught from the Gensurai longhouse was the current Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, Tan Sri Alfred Jabu. In his younger days, Ringkai was a keen sportsman, especially in football. He was also a skilled craftsman, particularly in carving the decorated longboat bows, called *udu*, used when his longhouse participated in regional regattas and for which they won many trophies. In later years, he became the much loved and respected Tuai Rumah of Gensurai longhouse. Like his ancestors at Stambak Ulu and Gensurai, who pioneered coffee and rubber cultivation in the early twentieth century, he excelled in rice cultivation and in rubber and pepper planting. In 2002 he was awarded the *Bentara Bintang Sarawak* (BBS) by the state government for his service to his community and his many personal achievements.

On the evening of May 6, 2009, numerous relatives and friends from Gensurai and 18 surrounding longhouse communities gathered at Gensurai longhouse to attend Patrick Ringkai's *rabat*, or funeral service, held on the eve of his burial. Following

Saribas Iban custom, a eulogy was read and Ringkai was accorded a customary honor of *sigi alas ngerang* in acknowledgement of his longhouse leadership, community service, skill in farming, teaching, and research. Other of his contributions that were cited on this occasion included:

- a) organizing a Gawai Antu festival to honor the dead;
- b) negotiating for his community in land disputes with neighboring longhouses;
- c) looking after the welfare of widows by including them in farming activities;
- d) purchasing ancient jars, and
- e) participating in the early political movements associated with Sarawak's independence.

(Dr. Peter M. Kedit, former Director of the Sarawak Museum, currently attached to the Research Section of the Tun Jugah Foundation, drkedit@pc.jaring.my)

PETER WESLEY MARTIN
1949-2009



in Peter's office, *Universiti
Brunei Darussalam*

Peter often seemed to be in a bit of a hurry, just as when we first met in Brunei in late 1988. He was dropping off Ubong, his wife, who was about to give a cookery demonstration to an interested group on Jalan Subok, in Bandar Seri Begawan. Peter, meanwhile, had another commitment to which he was enthusiastically rushing. The “hurry” that Peter was in reflected his genuine and unrelenting zest for just about everything he was involved in, really. If life is a privilege, then Peter's life was a continuous celebration of this privilege, most obviously and consistently through his unwaveringly deep devotion to his family; his unflinching attentiveness towards and concern for his students; and his loyalty and professional commitment to his colleagues and, in particular, his legendary readiness to take on more, much more, than his share of the workload.

Peter Martin was born in Singapore, and grew up in Bradford. After graduating from university, Peter became a teacher, working at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in the UK, as well as in Brunei, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Saudi Arabia. He went on to complete an MA in Applied Linguistics; and later read for a Ph.D. at Lancaster University, UK, during his time as an academic at The University of Brunei Darussalam (1985-1998). Peter's 1997 Ph.D. thesis says a lot about the man. Not only is it a widely cited work of acknowledged academic scholarship that was judged, at viva, as being a complete and final dissertation, with no—even minor—changes required. His Ph.D. was also rooted in the real world of classroom interaction. Peter was intimately familiar with local language education in Brunei, and he painstakingly recorded and transcribed hours of classroom data from his observations in primary schools—urban, suburban, and rural. In conclusion, Peter advocated using both Brunei Malay and English in the Bruneian Primary School classroom, wherever this might help to get “meaning” across, his concern being particularly for those who do not have easy access and opportunities to use the English language [outside the classroom] and who he saw as benefitting from a less stringent English-only approach.

Peter subsequently moved to The University of Leicester (1998-2005) in the UK, where he established and led the Centre for English Language Teaching Excellence. In 2005, he became Professor of Education and Linguistics at the University of East London [UEL] where he set up and led the Professional Doctorate in Education.

Peter's academic research and his publication output were prolific. His major foci included: multilingualism and relations that obtain between language, culture, and identity. His early published work, from his time in Southeast Asia, considered mainly sociolinguistic issues in multilingual settings, in particular: bilingual classroom interaction and language policy, planning and practice. A further strand of research was the sociolinguistics of Austronesian language communities in Borneo and the compilation of a dictionary of Kelabit, a project that continues, thanks to Peter's efforts.

Peter's later research focused on complementary schools in England and issues of multilingual classroom ecologies. He completed two Education and Science Research Council-sponsored studies of multilingualism in complementary schools, both rated "Outstanding" by the funding council. The first of these studies investigated Gujarati complementary schools in Leicester, while the second extended to Bengali, Chinese, Turkish and Gujarati schools in Birmingham, Manchester, London, and Leicester, respectively [and involved staff at the University of Birmingham, Birkbeck College London, Kings College London and the University of East London]. Peter's research has certainly increased our understanding of multilingualism, language education, and language in society.

Peter was a Fellow of the Borneo Research Council, Advisory Panel Member of Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity, and a member of organizations including the Foundation of Endangered Languages, the Association of Southeast Asian Studies in the United Kingdom (ASEASUK), the National Association of Language Development in the Curriculum, UK (NALDIC), the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL).

Outside of academia, Peter was passionate about classical music, particularly Mahler and Richard Strauss, and would often attend the Royal Opera House and the English National Opera in London, once he had moved there. He was also a competent pianist, although self-deprecating about his musical skills; and his car radio was constantly tuned to the classical music station, BBC Radio 3. He loved rugby, too, having been a keen and accomplished player in his younger years, and he actively supported the English club team, the Leicester Tigers. He was also a devoted football fan supporting, since his childhood, West Ham United. He enjoyed the occasional glass of beer, nearly always with friends, a pastime he combined with his love of sport and the outdoors. Outside of family and work, he adored his allotment, where he could engage with his joy in growing his own food. He made excellent chutneys and was frequently giving away jars of his excellent produce. He loved hill-walking, as well, particularly in the Lake District of northern England, and he was walking there with his brother Michael, near Buttermere and Blacksail a few days before he died of a stroke.

In Borneo, Peter's house frequently had visitors, whether relatives from upriver, local friends and colleagues or, more likely, a combination. And, of course, there were many parties at his family home, at which the food was always exquisite, with a host of wild and local foods on offer, Peter and Ubong both being impressive cooks.

A number of times, I was able to visit Peter and his family at Ubong's village, Long Peluan, in the Upper Baram. Peter was—still is—revered by his relatives, whether

Sab'an or Kelabit, and rightly so. The number of people he had “seen” through school or helped to get downriver to obtain essential medical treatment, among other forms of assistance, would be hard to enumerate; but he was modest and one only knew of his benevolence through others. He loved being in Long Peluan, where he found peace and might, extraordinarily, be seen occasionally to be relaxing, and where he was able to immerse himself among people he deeply respected and, he felt, led balanced and rounded lives and where, he hoped, he might finally be laid to rest.



Buttermere Village, Lake District, Northwest England [April 2009]

The suddenness of Peter’s demise was simply numbing. Peter had always been irrepressible – his dynamism and enthusiasm in all that he did, and the time and energy he devoted to those he knew, gave one the feeling that he would continue to “zoom” tirelessly into retirement, just as he seemed to have zoomed into middle-age.

There are so many, many people, including: family, friends, colleagues [most of whom were also, almost inevitably, friends—such was Peter’s warmth and personal appeal]; ex-students [many of whom became friends during the course of their work with Peter], all of whom will ensure that the memory of Peter remains intact. In the meantime, Peter’s research has increased our understanding of multilingualism, language education, and language in society. Furthermore, his teaching has stimulated and enriched the learning and lives of generations of students.

Below is a sample of his publications output:

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NEGARA BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: OBITUARY 2009

A.V.M. Horton

Introduction

The NBD royal family suffered several grievous blows during the year.

YAM Pengiran Anak Datin Seri Setia Hajjah Siti Halimah, a daughter of Sultan Sir Ahmad Tajuddin, was summoned to the mercy of Allah on 4 January 2009.

YAM Pengiran Lela Negara PH Mohammad, who died at the age of eighty-one in mid-September, was the son of a former vizier and an uncle to both HM Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah and HM Raja Isteri PA Hajjah Saleha. Further mourning was to follow on 25 November with the demise of **YAM Pengiran Sura Negara [cr 1981] Pengiran Anak Haji Muhammad Bey Muntassir (1956-2009)**, spouse of His Majesty's sister, HRH Princess Hajjah Amal Jefriah.

Another particularly noteworthy figure to exit the stage during 2009 was **YAM Pengiran Setia Raja [cr 1969] Pengiran Haji Jaya bin Pengiran Haji Rajid**, a nobleman of *cheteria* rank, was best-known perhaps as Commissioner of the Royal Brunei Police Force between 1975 and 1983.

Several foreign heads of state with NBD connections departed during the year, including President **Abdurrahman Wahid** of Indonesia, President **Corazon Aquino** of the Philippines, along with two former presidents of South Korea and one of India.

Two eminent expatriate judges—**Sir Alan Huggins (1921-2009)** and **Sir Noel Power (1929-2009)**—laid down their gavel for the last time. **Lieutenant-Commander Michael Langman (1921-2009)** was a long-serving Director of Civil Aviation during the sultanate's run-up to full independence at the end of 1983 whilst **Dr. Jean Lawrie (1914-2009)** was General Physician to the Brunei Royal Ladies and Children, 1978-82. **Michael Goaman (1921-2009)** illustrated Brunei postage stamps in the mid-1960s; **John Lawson (1932-2009)** designed the glass dome for Kiarong Mosque.

The number of British heroes responsible for “crushing the Brunei Revolt of 1962” and of “winning the Confrontation against Indonesia” shows no sign of abating. In the former category, with rather a better claim than most, is **Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon Shakespear (1920-2009)**. Mention might also be made here of the Anglican naval chaplain **Noël Debroy Jones (1932-2009)**, later raised to the dignity of the Right Reverend Bishop of Sodor and Man between 1989 and 2003.

More detailed biographies now follow in alphabetical order.

Biographies

ABDUL RAHIM bin Abdullah Tan (d. 2009)

Born **Tan Tong Hock**; converted to Islam “not too long ago”; arrested, 21 January 2009; reported originally to have died on 25 January in police custody; an investigation was being conducted into the cause of his death; buried on 28 January 2009 at the Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah cemetery (*BBO* Th.29.1.2009).

Aged forty-five, he had been detained for alleged theft. On 2 February 2009

four police officers were charged in Bandar Seri Begawan with “culpable homicide not amounting to murder” of Awang Abdul Rahim and with causing him “grievous hurt” whilst attempting to extort a confession on 22 January 2009 (*BBO* Tu.3.2.2009). The defendants were released on bail on 9 February (*BBO* Tu.10.2.2009).

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID, Presiden Kiyai Haji (1940-2009)

The fourth President of Indonesia (1999-2001) died on 30 December 2009, aged sixty-nine (*The Economist* online, 7.1.2010; accessed Sa.23.1.2010:1237h GMT). Held bilateral talks with HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, 27 November 1999, Manila (*PB* 1.12.1999:1). Six-hour working visit to NBD, 27 February 2000 (*PB* 8.3.2000:3, 8-9); held a meeting with His Majesty at the *Istana Nurul Iman* (*PB* 1.3.2000:1). Hosted a working visit to Indonesia by Sir Hassanal, 5-6 May 2000 (*PB* 10.5.2000:1, 8-9). Visited at the Istana Negara in Jakarta by HRH Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah (accompanied by HRH Prince Abdul Qawi), 18 May 2000 (*PB* 24.5.2000:16). Received a message of congratulation from HM the Sultan, 17 August 2000, marking the fifty-fifth anniversary of the declaration of Indonesian independence. Visitor to NBD for the APEC summit during which time he had further bilateral discussions with His Majesty (*GBOW ON* 16.11.2000). Accepted the credentials of TYT DSS Dr. Ustaz Awang Haji Mohd Amin bin Abdul Rahim as Ambassador of NBD to Indonesia, 9 February 2001, Merdeka Palace, Jakarta (*PBA* 21.3.2001:16*).

Born in 1940; Chairman, *Nahdlatul Ulama* from 1984 (*HEMPB* 1999:439). “Technically blind Muslim scholar” (*BB* Th.17.2.2000:3); “scion of East Java’s most revered family” (*DT* M.7.2.2000:11).

Grandfather: **Kiyai Haji Hasjim Asjari (1871-1947)**, principal spiritual leader of *Nahdlatul Ulama*. Father: **Kiyai Haji Wahid Hasjim (1913-1951)**, effective head of Masjumi (*HESEA* 2004:929-30).

ALLAN, Colonel Giles Alexander (1930-2009)

“In 1965 Allan commanded a company of Irish Guards with 1st Battalion Scots Guards in Malaysia before doing a tour in Borneo and then moving to Sandhurst as adjutant” (*DT* Th.26.3.2009:31*).

Born on 12 February 1930; died on 15 January 2009; survived by widow and their daughter. Educated at Eton; commissioned, Irish Guards, 1950; OBE (no date).

Footnote: “Allan” is definitely the correct spelling.

AQUINO, Maria Corazón Sumulong Cojuangco (1933-2009)

President of the Philippines, 1986-92; State Visit to NBD, late August 1988 (*BDS* 1988:149; Abu Bakar Hamzah 1989:104); further visit in August 1989 to attend the *berkhatan* ceremony for HRH Prince (later Crown Prince) Al-Muhtadee Billah (*BB* 5.8.1989:1). Hosted a return visit to the Philippines by HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and other members of the NBD royal family in 1991 (*PB* 5.2.2003:8).

Born on 25 January 1933 (*ST* 25.1.2004: 1:20); died on Saturday 1 August 2009 (*DT* M.3.8.2009:29*).

BARCLAY, Lieutenant-Colonel William John Joseph, "Bill" (1922-2009)

Lieutenant-Colonel Barclay was a British Army officer who helped to raise the Brunei Malay Regiment, arriving back in the United Kingdom during 1963. Earlier, he was decorated at Arnhem (Military Medal, 1944) and recorded "first-hand the chaos of Operation Market Garden" (obituary, *DT* W.3.2.2010:29*). He also served in Malaya during the Emergency. Born in London on 9 March 1922, he died at the age of eighty-seven on 11 December 2009. Twice married, he was survived by a son of his first marriage. He was educated at Xavier College, Bruges. Retiring from the Army in 1971, he resettled in South Africa, before returning to England in 2004.

BECKE, Lieutenant-Colonel William Hugh Adamson (1916-2009)

Demonstrated "archetypal British pluck" when (16 September 1963) "he defied a mob trying to sack the British embassy in Jakarta while his deputy as military attaché, Major "Rory" Walker, marched up and down playing the bagpipes." Two days later the embassy was set on fire. Becke's house was also burnt down. CMG 1964 (*DT* Th.11.6.2009:29*).

Born on 24 September 1916, Worcestershire; died on 3 April 2009; survived by widow, Mary (*née* Richmond), an Australian nurse whom he married in 1945.

Son of Brigadier-General John Becke CMG DSO AFC. Educated at Charterhouse and Sandhurst. Commissioned, Sherwood Foresters, 1937. DSO 1944. Assistant military adviser, British High Commission, Karachi, 1957-9; Private Secretary and Comptroller to Major-General Sir Rohan Delacombe, the last British Governor of Victoria (Australia), 1974 (*DT* Th.11.6.2009:29*).

WALKER, Major Roderick Muir Bamford "Rory," OBE MC (1932-2008), mentioned above, was born on 27 February 1932 and died on 15 October 2008 (*LTO* 31.10.2008, accessed on Tu.19.1.2010:1250h GMT). Educated at Cheltenham College and Sandhurst, he was commissioned into the Sherwood Foresters in 1952, transferring subsequently to the Intelligence Corps and then to the SAS. His MC was awarded for his part in the assault on Jebel Akhdar (Oman) in December 1958. He went on to command 23 SAS (TAVR), for which he was awarded an OBE. Survived by his widow (m. 1979) and two sons.

According to *Wikipedia*, **Brigadier-General John Harold Whitworth Becke CMG DSO AFC (1879-1949)** was an infantry officer during the second Boer War; Commander, Royal Flying Corps during World War I; transferred to the RAF on its creation, 1 April 1918; retired from the RAF, 1920.

Major-General Sir Rohan Delacombe (1906-1991) was Governor of Victoria from 1963 until 1974 and, on occasion, acted as Governor-General of Australia.

BLAKER, Lord (1922-2009)

Right Honourable Sir Peter Allan Renshaw Blaker, created a life peer in 1994. MP (Conservative) for Blackpool South, 1964-92. Minister of State, FCO, 1979-81; visitor to Brunei around New Year 1980 (*BB* 5.1.1980). KCMG 1983, PC 1983. Vice-President, Conservative Foreign and Commonwealth Council, 1983- (*WW* 1997:181).

Author of *Small is Dangerous: Micro States in a Macro World* (1984). Born on 4 October 1922; died on 5 July 2009. Called to the Bar, Lincoln's Inn, 1952; practiced for eighteen months. British diplomatic service, 1953-64.

A service of thanksgiving was held at St Margaret's Church (Westminster Abbey) on 10 November 2009 (*DT* W.11.11.2009:30).

BONGO, El Hadji Omar (1935-2009)

President of Gabon, 1967-2009; held a private meeting with HRH the *Perdana Wazir*, OIC Summit, Doha, 13 November 2000 (*PBA* 22.11.2000:3).

CARTER, Brigadier Gerald (d. 2009)

Royal Engineers; saw active service in Borneo, no date; retired in January 1978 (after thirty-two years in the British Army) and set up the tri-service Officers' Action Group in 1979; lives in Faringdon, Oxfordshire (*DT* Th.4.1.2001:4*; aged seventy-three at the time, suggesting a date of birth in 1927 or during the first four days of 1928).

Footnote. One **Brigadier Gerald George Carter MBE** died on 18 April 2009 after many weeks of failing health; husband of Brenda; father of Marcia and Finola; grandfather; funeral due to take place at St Andrew's Church, Shrivenham [five or six miles from Faringdon], noon, Tuesday 5 May 2009; donations to Royal Engineers' Benevolent Fund and St Andrew's Church. AE Baker & Sons, F/D, 01327 240572 (*DT* M.27.4.2009:28f #6; online reference 55050).

The Society of Old Framlinghamians online (accessed Th.21.1.2010:1624h GMT) appears to confirm the identification. **Gerald George Carter OSS MBE** died on 18 April 2009 aged eighty-one; he was educated at the school between 1941 and 1944.

CHUA PHENG SIONG, Dato Paduka [cr 1999] (1945-2009)

NBD civil servant and businessman. Born on 14 July 1945; died on 30 July 2009; survived by widow, one son, two daughters, two grandchildren; funeral due to be held at St George's Church, 1 August 2009, followed by interment at Berakas Christian Cemetery (*BBO* F.31.7.2009).

Educated at Anthony Abell College and at SOAS College; graduated from the Australian National University, 1970. Deputy Director, Economic Planning Unit, NBD, dates not available (*BBO* F.31.7.2009). Director of Special Duties, Ministry of Finance, 15 November 1995 to 9 November 1998 (*PB* 15.11.1995:14; *PB* 4.9.1996:8; *TD* 97:150a; *PB* 11.11.1998:3); previously Director of Information Technology at the Ministry of Finance.

Director of Financial Institutions at the Ministry of Finance, from 9 November 1998 (*PB* 11.11.1998:3; *PB* 5.4.2000:6); doubled as a member of the Jerudong Park Playground Committee (appointment announced in *PB* 24.3.1999:16); DPMB 24 July 1999 (*PB* 28.7.1999:1*, 3).

Worked for QAF from 2000 until his death; appointed Head of QAF Motor Group and QAF Leasing, 2000; subsequently General Manager (Business Development) of QAF Brunei Sdn Bhd, General Manager of QAF Eurokars Sdn Bhd, and General Manager of QAF Transport Sdn Bhd, no dates (*BBO* F.31.7.2009).

Alternative usage: Chua Peng Siong.

FAY, Edgar Stewart (1908-2009)

Obituary, "Barrister, judge and railway enthusiast who conducted two enquiries [1959, 1968] into the [1958] Munich air crash," *DT* Tu.24.11.2009:33.*

Also conducted a two-year investigation into the [1974] collapse of the Crown Agents; 203-page report published in 1977. Born on 8 October 1908; died on 14 November 2009, aged 101.

FERGUSON, Brigadier John Gordon Goddard de Poulton (1943-2009)

Obituary, "Commander who raised British morale as foreign troops faced brutal attack in Lebanon in the 1980s," *DT* W.30.12.2009:35.*

Also served in Borneo.

FRY: Penelope, Lady (d 2009)

Penelope, Lady Fry, who died on 16 March 2009 at Tunbridge Wells (*DT* Tu.17.3.2009:30f #6, age not given), was the widow of **Sir Leslie Fry (1908-1976)**, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Indonesia, 1959-63.

GARROD, Lieutenant-General Sir John Martin Carruthers (1935-2009)

Royal Marine; "adjutant in Borneo during the confrontation with Indonesia"; served on the staff of HQ 17 Gurkha Division in the "Far East," 1968-9, and at HQ Far East Land Forces, 1970-1.

Born at Darjeeling, 29 May 1935 (great-grandson of Colonel W.G. Suther, who commanded the Royal Marines at the capture of Shimonoseki, 1864); died on 17 April 2009; survived by widow and two daughters; knighted (KCB), 1988; CMG 1999, OBE 1980; Sword of Honour, Royal Navy, 1953. Commandant-General, RM, 1987-90. Served in Bosnia in the 1990s, working successively for the EC, the EU, and the UN (*DT* Th.30.4.2009:35**).

Further obituaries: *LTO* 5.5.2009 and *TGO* M.15.6.2009; see also the Old Sherwoodians website.

GOAMAN, Geoffrey Michael (1921-2009)

Designer of Brunei postage stamps (Stanley Gibbons 1987:137): "Freedom from Hunger" (4 June 1963); "ITU Centenary" (17 May 1965); and "Inauguration of WHO Headquarters, Geneva" (20 September 1966).

Born on 14 February 1921, East Grinstead; died on 13 May 2009; designed stamps for more than forty countries during the 1950s and 1960s with his wife, Sylvia (m. 1950); survived by their three daughters (*DT* M.1.6.2009:29**); the couple met at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London.

Sylvia Nancy Goaman (1924-2006) was the daughter of J.B. Priestley OM (1894-1984), novelist, playwright and critic, and his first wife, Pat Tempest, who died when she (Sylvia) was still in her infancy.

Further obituaries of Michael Goaman appear in *The Times* (online), 13 June 2009* and *The Guardian* (online), Tuesday 16 June 2009* (accessed Sa.23.1.2010:1234h GMT).

GRAY, John (1934-2009)

Born on 28 July 1934, Hong Kong; died on 19 November 2009. Obituary, "Hong Kong banker who consolidated HSBC's edge in new Chinese markets," *DT F.1.1.2010:29*.**

Extract: "His career was to take him to branch postings in India, Malaysia,

Brunei..."

Chief Executive and Chairman of HSBC in Hong Kong, 1993-6; retired 1996.

HALIMAH binti Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Datin Seri Setia Hajjah Siti (d 2009)

A daughter of Sultan Sir Ahmad Tajuddin (r 1924-50) by a non-royal consort; died on 4 January 2009 equivalent to 8 *Muharram* 1430 (*PB Sa.31.1.2009:5*).

HASLAM, Rear-Admiral Sir David William (1923-2009)

Obituary, "Hydrographer of the Navy who gave his name to an underwater mountain off the Seychelles," *DT W.9.9.2009:31*.* RN 1941-85. Sounded the unexplored estuaries of Burma and Malaya, 1944, from the survey ship *White Bear* (formerly Sir Thomas Lipton's steam yacht, *Iolanda*) in preparation for the aborted Zipper landings; surveyed other routes in the South China Sea, 1946, to ensure that they were obstruction-free. Knighted (KBE), 1984.

See also *LTO* 18.8.2009 (accessed Th 4.2.2010:1628h GMT).

HUGGINS, Sir [cr 1980] Alan Armstrong (1921-2009)

Judicial Commissioner, Brunei, 1966-83, and Negara Brunei Darussalam, 1984-7 and since 1991 (*POT 1996:945-6*). President, NBD Appeal Court, 2001-2. Died on 10 December 2009, aged eighty-eight; survived by three children, Adrian, Roger, and Rosemary, and by their mother (his first wife), Catherine, Lady Huggins. Service in St Michael and All Angels, Stokenham, Kingsbridge, Devon, Tuesday 29 December 2009:1300h GMT, forthcoming; donations to the church in Stokenham (*DT Tu.15.12.2009:30f #10*; online reference 66944).

Judge of Supreme Court, Hong Kong, 1965-76; Justice of Appeal, HK, 1976-80; Vice-President, Court of Appeal, HK, 1980-7 (*WW 1997:969*). Obituary, "Judge who prepared Hong Kong for the new complexities of Chinese law," *DT Tu.9.2.2010:29*.*

Born on 15 May 1921; educated at Radley and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge; called to the bar, Lincoln's Inn, 1947; magistrate briefly in Uganda before transferring to Hong Kong in 1953 (*DT Tu.9.2.2010:29**); retired to Devon..

A "man of traditional religious beliefs which could cause him to appear somewhat stern"; honorary life governor, British and Foreign Bible Society; President of YMCA; diocesan reader, Hong Kong and Macao (*DT Tu.9.2.2010:29**).

Recreation: amateur dramatics.

Died on 10 December 2009; twice married; second wife died in 2007 (*DT Tu.9.2.2010:29**).

Footnote: not "Higgins" (as used mistakenly elsewhere by the present writer).

JACKSON, Michael (1958-2009)

Michael Jackson, the US pop singer and dancer, who died on 25 June 2009, performed a few concerts in NBD in 1996, and was reportedly paid a vast sum for his trouble (*LT* Tu.16.7.1996:5; *BB* W.1.7.1996:1*; *BB* 8.1.1997:3; *STM* 28.6.2009:20-5**). After his death “RTB’s English radio station has been airing famous songs of Michael all day long and is flooded with callers describing their shock upon hearing the news” (*BBO* Sa.27.6.2009).

JAYA bin Pengiran Haji Rajid, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Setia Raja [cr 1969] Pengiran Haji (d 2009)

An NBD nobleman of *cheteria* rank, Pengiran Setia Raja Jaya died aged eighty-three at RIPAS Hospital on 18 October 2009 equivalent to 29 *Syawal* 1430 (0545h local time). HM the Sultan and HRH the Crown Prince paid their respects later the same day at Kampung Sungai Tilog (*PB* 21.10.2009:24).

PSR Jaya was best-known as Commissioner of the Royal Brunei Police Force between 1975 and 1983, subsequently enjoying a second career as a diplomat.

Besides his *cheteria* title, bestowed on 18 March 1969, he was also awarded the DK (*Dato Laila Utama*), PHBS, QPM, CPM, PJK, *Pingat Perjuangan* [Campaign Medal], PKLP [Police Long Service Medal], *Pingat Puspa* [Coronation Medal], and *Pingat Polis Diraja* [Royal Police Medal]. He was a member of *Majlis Mesyuarat Diraja* [Privy Council] and the *Majlis Mesyuarat Mengangkat Raja* [Regency and Succession Council].

PSR Jaya was survived by his widow, eight children, more than thirty grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren (*cicit*). The corpse was interred at the Royal Burial Ground, Jalan Tutong (*PB* 21.10.2009:24).

JONES, Right Reverend Noël Debroy (1932-2009)

Anglican clergyman, born on Christmas Day 1932 (*DT* W.24.12.2003:20), died on 28 August 2009, Scarborough, cancer; survived by widow, 1s 1d. CB 1986 (*WW* 1999: 1880). Naval chaplain, 1962-89; General Service Medal (Brunei, 1962; Borneo, 1963); rose to become Chaplain of the Fleet (1984) and Archdeacon of the Royal Navy (no date); Honorary Chaplain to HM Queen Elizabeth II, 1983. Bishop of Sodor and Man, 1989-2003.

Educated at Haberdashers’ West Monmouth School and St David’s College, Lampeter; Wells Theological College; ordained, 1955; “traditional Anglo-Catholic” (*DT* F.11.9.2009:31**).

KIM DAE-JUNG, Dato Laila Utama [cr 2000] (d. 2009)

President of South Korea, 1998-2003; received an annual message of goodwill from HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, 15 August, marking Republic of Korea Liberation Day (*PB* 16.8.2000:1; *PB* 22.8.2002:12); greeted by His Majesty at the ASEM, London, April 1998 (*PB* 15.4.1998:9); held bilateral meetings with Sir Hassanal, Auckland, 12 September 1999 (*PB* 15.9.1999:16; *PB* 22.9.1999:12), Seoul, 21 October 2000 (*PB* 25.10.2000:16), and Shanghai, 22 October 2001 (*PB* 31.10.2001:4*; *PBA*

31.10.2001:1); State Visit to NBD, 13-14 November 2000 (*PB* 15.11.2000:5; *PBA* 22.11.2000:8-9; *PBA* 29.11.2000:7); appointed DK, carrying the style *Dato Laila Utama*, INI, 13 November 2000 (*PB* 15.11.2000:5).

Born on 6 January 1924 (according to *DT W.19.8.2009:27*); died on 18 August 2009 (*ibid.*). Convert to Roman Catholicism, 1950s. Nobel laureate for Peace, 2000 (BBC R4 News, F.13.10.2000:1300h BST). Hon GCMG 2001 (*DT W.5.12.2001:28*).

LANGMAN, Lieutenant-Commander Victor Michael (1921-2009)

Appointed Director of Civil Aviation, Brunei, 8 October 1975 (*WKNB* 8.11.1975:547; *BAR* 1975:365). "In 1975 he was seconded to manage the Sultan of Brunei's new airport, where the airport staff named a new fire engine after him. In 1983 he retired again" (*DT W.20.1.2010:31*).

Born on 16 August 1921, Boreham, Essex; died on 16 November 2009; survived by his widow, Betty Joy "Jane" Matthews (m. 1947), 1s 1d. Obituary, "Naval airman in the Western Desert who took part in a heroic withdrawal as Rommel's tanks rolled in," *DT W.20.1.2010:31*.*

Educated at Brighton College; volunteered for the Fleet Air Arm, joining *HMS St Vincent* as a naval airman, 2nd class, June 1940 (trained partly in Canada); later served with 815 naval air squadron (DSC 1943); emigrated to Canada after the war; RCN, 1948-66, serving on the carriers *HMCS Magnificent* and *HMCS Bonaventure* (awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration); returned to the UK and joined the Civil Aviation Authority (*DT W.20.1.2010:31*).

Footnote. According to Colledge and Warlow (2006:307) there was no *ship* with the name of *HMS St Vincent* in 1940; so it might have been, instead, a defense establishment.

HMS Magnificent (1944-65) was an aircraft carrier of 15,700 tons; 695 x 80 feet; 19-40mm; forty aircraft; launched by Harland & Wolff, 16 November 1944; lent to the RCN, 1948-57; arrived at Faslane on 12 July 1965 for break-up (Colledge and Warlow 2006:212).

HMCS Bonaventure (1956-71) began life as the prospective 14,000-ton *HMS Powerful* (1945), construction (by Harland & Wolff) being suspended after the war; the aircraft carrier appears to have been completed eventually as *HMCS Bonaventure*, acquired by the RCN on 17 January 1956; 16,000 tons (thirty-four aircraft, 8-3in, 7-40mm); broken up in Taiwan in 1971 (Colledge and Warlow 2006:275).

LAWRIE, Dr. Jean Eileen (1914-2009)

"Dr. Jean Eileen Lawrie CBE MB BS" (*née* Grant) died peacefully at home in 2009 (precise date not given), aged almost ninety-five; wife (to Rex), mother, grandmother, great-grandmother; private cremation, followed by a memorial service to be arranged (*DT Sa.16.5.2009:32f #5*; online reference 56113).

Note that "Dr. Jean Lawrie CBE MB BS" was General Physician to the Brunei Royal Ladies and Children, 1978-82; her husband, a retired physician of Guy's Hospital, was General Physician to Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah II.

We are definitely dealing with the same person here. **Jean Eileen Lawrie**,

(*née Grant*), was born on 7 June 1914 in Southern Rhodesia; died on 14 May 2009; survived by widower, Rex, 2s 2d (obituary, “Campaigner for the rights of female doctors,” in *The Times* (London) online, 14 July 2009; accessed Sa.23.1.2010:1252h GMT).

LAWSON, John Nicholas (1932-2009)

Born on 25 October 1932, St Albans; died on 30 October 2009; staunch Anglican; survived by widow, 1s 2d. Obituary, “Master craftsman who delivered glorious stained glasswork to British churches and Middle Eastern mosques,” *DT M.14.12.2009:29.*** Extract: “In the early 1990s Lawson was invited by the Sultan of Brunei to design the glass dome for the Kiarong mosque in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, which was being built to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sultan’s reign.”

“As always, Lawson made the original ‘cartoon,’ or drawing [for the Kiarong Mosque commission], at the Goddard and Gibbs studio on Kingsland Road, in Shoreditch, East London. He worked from his own experience and research into Islamic culture and art, but consulted local experts and calligraphers to ensure that the design, including Arabic characters and lettering, met the criteria of Islamic experts” (obituary by Phil Davison, *TGO Tu.8.12.2009*, accessed Th.4.2.2010:1629h GMT).

LEUCHARS, Major-General Peter Raymond (1921-2009)

Chief of Staff to the Director of Operations in Borneo during the “Confrontation” with Indonesia (*DT Th.10.9.2009:31***, full dates not given). CBE 1966. Born on 29 October 1921, London; died on 17 July 2009; survived by widow, 1s. Educated at Bradfield College and Sandhurst. British Army 1941-76. Commissioned into Welsh Guards, 1941. MID (Italy 1945, Palestine 1946). Ended his career as GOC Wales. Chief Commander, St John’s Ambulance, 1980-9. Colonel, Royal Welch [yes] Fusiliers, 1974-84. Captain, Sunningdale Golf Club, 1975 (*DT Th.10.9.2009:31***; see also *LTO 8.8.2009*, accessed Th.4.2.2010:1636h GMT).

LOCHHEAD, Lieutenant-Colonel David Alexander Wallace (1920-2009)

Second-in-command, Queen’s Own Highlanders, 1961; participated with the QOH in suppressing the Brunei rebellion, December 1962; previously participated as a company commander in Malaya during the Emergency and at GHQ Far East Land Forces; retired from the Army, 1963; British Red Cross Society, 1964-85, rising to become General Secretary (Scotland) by the time of his retirement.

Born on 1 October 1920, Ayr; died on 3 March 2009; survived by widow and three sons. MC 1944, OBE 1985, Red Cross Medal 1983 (*DT Sa.11.4.2009:35**).

MAISNER, Air Vice-Marshal Aleksander (1921-2008)

Born on 26 July 1921, Hamburg; died on 21 December 2008; RAF (UK), 1946-77 (CBE 1969, CB 1977); as group captain, given the task of closing down RAF Seletar in Singapore, effected on 30 March 1971 (*DT Th.29.1.2009:31**); Thanksgiving Service due to be held at Church of St Peter and St Paul, Shiplake, Friday 20 February 2009, to be followed by Committal of Ashes (*DT F.6.2.2009:36*).

He himself returned to the UK in 1969 (according to *LTO* 9.1.2009, accessed Sa.6.2.2010:1113h GMT).

MARTIN, Dr. Peter Wesley (1949-2009)

“Peter Martin, University of East London, unexpectedly died this past April [2009], as he turned sixty” (BRC, *Annual Newsletter*, September 2009:1). Prolific linguist, based at UBD 1985-98. A memorial to him by Peter Sercombe appears elsewhere in this issue.

MOLONY, Charles Patrick (1946-2009)

Teacher in UK (Bedford, Harrow), **Brunei**, PNG, Kazakhstan; traveled widely; lived in retirement at Kotor (Montenegro); born on 17 March 1946; died on 17 May 2009. Funeral due to take place at Kotor Town cemetery, 22 May 2009:1500h local time; donations to British Heart Foundation (*DT* Th.21.5.2009:32f #4ff).

MORRISON, A.R.G. (1915-2009)

Alastair Morrison (MA Cantab) was a member of the Sarawak Civil Service, 1947-67 (Naimah S. Talib 1999:183; Sarawak Association, *List of Members*, August 2006:11; settled in retirement in Australia: “At the end of 1953 I refused a temporary transfer to Brunei as Information Officer and was forthwith sent on leave” (*BRB* 1992:5).

Husband of Hedda Marie Morrison, photographer (d. 1991), whose works included “Brunei and the Seria Oilfields” (*New Commonwealth*, April 1951). A memorial appears in this issue.

MOHAMMAD ibni Al-Marhum Pengiran Bendahara Pengiran Anak Abdul Rahman, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Lela Negara [cr 1979] Pengiran Haji (d. 2009)

NBD nobleman and member of the extended royal family (uncle to both HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and HM Raja Isteri Saleha); died in mid-September 2009, aged eighty-one; survived by widow (Pengiran Datin **Aisah** binti Pengiran Perdana Cheteria PH Damit), fourteen children, fifty-two grandchildren, and eight *cicit* (great-grandchildren); funeral (19 September) attended by HM the Sultan (*PB* 23.9.2009:24).

Created *YAM Pengiran Lela Negara* on 19 April 1979; also awarded the DSLJ SMB PHBS and PKL. Member of the *Adat Istiadat* (State Custom) Council. Supervisor, Special Grade (*Pengawas Tingkat Khas*), PWD, Ministry of Development (*PB* 23.9.2009:24).

Exact date of birth not given (if “eighty-one” is correct, it must have been either in 1928 or some time between mid-September and the end of 1927).

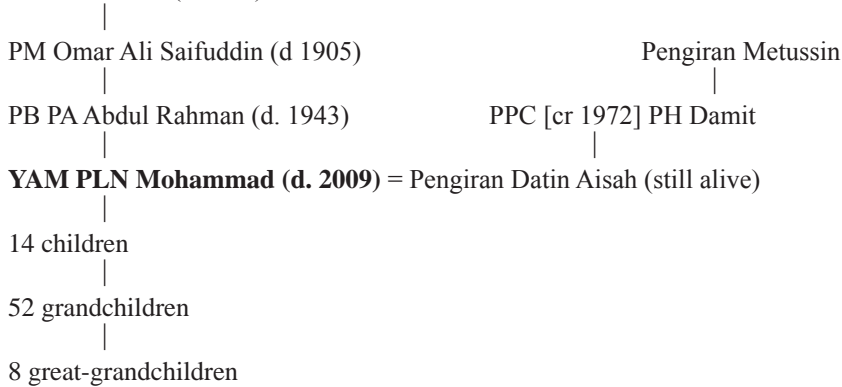
PHBS (First Class) 1970 (*WKNB* 26.12.1970:320); member of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III’s entourage during the *haj* of 1951.

Mentioned (Abdul Aziz Juned 1990:6; *PB* 1.11.2006:7*).

Majlis Membuka Naubat (*PB* R.14.10.2009:2).

Genealogy (1)

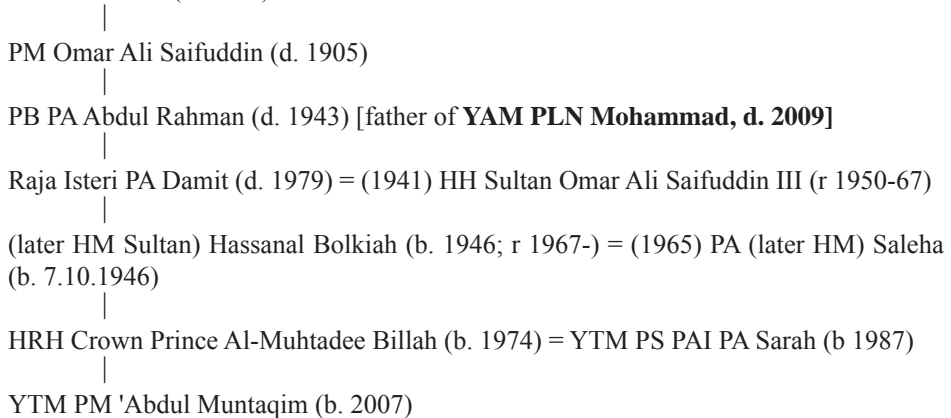
Sultan Hashim (d 1906)



It should be noted that, within the convoluted Brunei/NBD royal genealogy, Pengiran Bendahara PA Abdul Rahman (mentioned above, d. 1943) was the father of the second and third wives of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III (r 1950-67); he was therefore the maternal grandfather of **HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah**; and so YAM PLN Mohammad would have been an uncle of His Majesty. By a further twist the Pengiran Bendahara mentioned was also the paternal grandfather of **Her Majesty Raja Isteri PA Hajjah Saleha**; therefore YAM PLN Mohammad would have been Her Majesty's uncle as well.

Genealogy (2)

Sultan Hashim (d. 1906)



Genealogy (3)

Pengiran Bendahara PA Abdul Rahman (d 1943)

|
 Pengiran Pemancha Muhammad Alam (1918-1982)

|
 HM Saleha = (1965) (later HM Sultan) Hassanal Bolkiah

|
 as in genealogy (2)

MUHAMMAD BEY MUNTASSIR bin Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Anak (Dr) Kemaluddin Al-Haj, Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Sura Negara [cr 1981] Pengiran Anak Haji (1956-2009)

NBD nobleman of *cheteria* rank; brother-in-law (*adik ipar*) to HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah; returned to the mercy of Allah on 25 November 2009 equivalent to 8 *Zulhijah* 1430, aged fifty-three (*PB* 19.12.2009:4).

Born in 1956, Jalan Stoney, Kampung Sumbiling Lama; educated at SMJA Malay School and SOAS College (*PB* 19.12.2009:4). Married YTM PSPAP Hajjah Amal Jefriah, 4 October 1980 or 24 *Zulkaidah* 1400; two sons and two daughters (*dua orang putera dari empat orang cahayamata*).

Granted the *cheteria* title, *YAM Pengiran Sura Negara*, 21 March 1981. DK (carrying the style *Dato Laila Utama*), 1985; Silver Jubilee Medal (*Pingat Peringatan Jubli Perak*), Selangor, 1987 (*PB* 19.12.2009:4). Member of the Privy Council (e.g. *TD* 97:190b).

Connected with a computer company (*PB* 28.12.1988:xi, referring to 27.10.1988). Director, ITS Sendirian Berhad (*PB* 19.4.2000:3).

His father (b. 1932) is among other things Speaker of the Legislative Council since its revival and father-in-law to HRH Princess Rashidah; which would mean that PSN Muhammad Bey Muntassir was brother-in-law, not just to HM the Sultan, but also to His Majesty's daughter (Princess Rashidah).

Funeral attended by HM the Sultan and other members of the royal family, including HRH Prince Jefri Bolkiah, 26 November 2009 (see the report by Dayangku Hajjah Fatimah binti Pengiran Haji Md Noor, "Brunei Darussalam kehilangan seorang pembesar negara," in *Pelita Brunei*, 28 November 2009:12-13**). Interred at the Royal Burial Ground.

Alternative usage: Kamaluddin.

Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II (d. 1852)

Pengiran Pemancha PA Muhd Salleh I (d. 1876)

Pengiran Tua Omar Ali

Pengiran Bendahara PAH Md Yassin (d. 1951) = Pengiran Isteri Hajjah Nor Alam (d. 1958)

YAM PIM PAH Kamaluddin (b. 1932) = YAM PA DPHS Rafeah (granddaughter of SMJA II)

YAM PAH Abdul Rahim
= YTM PSPAP Hajjah Rashidah Sa'adatul
Bolkiah (b. 1969)

YAM PSN PAH Md Bey Muntassir
= HRH Princess Amal Jefriah

YAM PA Raheemah Sanaul Bolkiah (b. 28.12.1997) and others

MD YASSIN bin Sulaiman (d. 2009)

Iban convert to Islam "recently"; resident at Kampong Terawan Labi; died aged thirty-eight by (it was believed) drowning in the Beluhur River in Belait District; corpse discovered on 10 February 2009 (*BBO* W.11.2.2009).

NOORDIN bin Dato Ratna Haji Md Jaafar, Haji Awang

Deceased in NBD nlt November 2009; *cf.* application for probate by his son, Awang Kharin bin A. Noordin (ref. LA/230/2009 in *PBI* 25.11.2009:23cd); himself the son of a *Dato Ratna*, the title held by one of the *menteri darat* (land chiefs) in Brunei-Muara District (Brown 1970:205).

Alternative usage: Dato'; Ja'afar.

Genealogy:

Orang Kaya Shamsu

Jamaluddin

Dato Ratna Haji Mohamed Ja'afar

Haji Awang Noordin

Awang Kharin

Haji Awang Noordin applied for probate in respect of his grandfather, Jamaluddin bin OK Shamsu, in late 1997 (*PBA* 7.1.1998:12c #1).

PASKIN: Alice Marjorie “Eve,” Lady (d. 2009)

MBE (no date); died peacefully at her home on Friday 24 April 2009 (age not given); funeral due to be held at St Giles Church, Great Wishford (about five miles northwest of Salisbury and three NNE of Wilton), Friday 15 May 2009: noon; enquiries to Chris White, 12 South Street, Wilton SP2 0JS; 01722 744691 (*DT F.1.5.2009: 36g #4*).

Widow of **Sir John Paskin KCMG MC (1892-1972)**, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, CO, 1948-54.

PAYNE, Martin John Nicholas (1943-2009)

“One of his earliest guises was as a young doctor. He had been recruited to recommend the benefits of spurious pills to the natives of Borneo. (Payne had no medical training).”

Obituary, “Adventurer who travelled the world dressed as a Thai paratrooper, sampling both glamour and the gutter” (*DT Sa.7.2.2009:33***).

POWER, Yang Arif Sir [cr 1999] Noel Plunkett (1929-2009)

President of the Court of Appeal, NBD, from 28 April 2007 until his death at Jerudong Park Medical Centre on 19 November 2009, aged seventy-nine; sworn-in at the Istana Nurul Iman (INI) in the presence of HRH Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah (on this occasion Deputy Sultan), 28 April 2007 (*PB 2.5.2007:16***).

Reportedly a Visiting Judge to Brunei/NBD, for twenty-nine years (*BruneiDirect.com*, 21.11.2009, accessed Th.4.2.2010:1652h GMT).

Commissioner of the Supreme Court, NBD; took the oath of office, INI, 18 March 1985 (*BDS 1985-6*); sworn in again as a Commissioner of the High Court, NBD, in the presence of HM the Sultan, INI, 15 May 1989 (*BDS 1989:156*).

Born in Brisbane, 4 December 1929; m, 2s 1d; educated at the University of Queensland; Called to the Bar, Supreme Court of Queensland and High Court of Australia, 1955. Magistrate, Hong Kong, 1965-76; President, Lands Tribunal, HK, 1976-9; a Judge of the Supreme Court, HK, 1979-87; a Judge of Appeal, HK, since 1993 (*WW 1995:1546*). Knighted in 1999 (*DT Sa.12.6.1999:13d*).

Served for thirty-four years with the Hong Kong judiciary, “ending as the last colonial assistant chief justice, responsible for handover to the mainland Chinese government in 1997.” Chinese Gold Bauhinia Star, 1997 (*DT W.30.12.2009:35*).

Took two years out of legal studies in Brisbane to act with Laurence Olivier in London, and also in Ireland (*DT W.30.12.2009:35*).

Oenophile.:Chairman of the Asia Pacific zone for the Wine and Food Society, he was once asked if he enjoyed a vintage by his Croatian in-laws. They had crushed the grapes with their own feet (*DT W.30.12.2009:35*).

RIVETT-CARNAC, Sir Miles James (1933-2009)

RN 1950-70 (according to *DT W.7.10.2009:37**), among other things as commander of HMS *Woolaston*. “In 1965 *Woolaston* was on patrol off Borneo during the Confrontation with Indonesia when she encountered a *sampan* that had been booby-trapped with a mine; it exploded, killing one man and wounding eight, and putting the

minesweeper out of action for six weeks. Rivett-Carnac was mentioned in despatches” (*DT W.7.10.2009: 37**; incomprehensible in original source). The obituary in *The Times* elucidates matters: “In 1963 he joined his first command, the minesweeper *Woolaston* based at Singapore, and took part in the confrontation with Indonesia in support of the fledgling state of Malaysia. When boarding a *sampan* after an exchange of fire which had killed the insurgents, a booby trap killed a midshipman and badly damaged the *Woolaston*, also blowing a number of sailors overboard who were swiftly recovered. Rivett-Carnac was mentioned in despatches for *Woolaston*’s contribution to the campaign” (*LTO 13.10.2009*, accessed Sa.6.2.2010:1122h GMT).

Promoted Commander (the youngest in the Royal Navy at the time), date not given; retired from the RN in 1968 (according to *LTO 13.10.2009*).

Born on 7 February 1933; died on 15 September 2009. Ninth Baronet (cr 1836); second son of Vice-Admiral Sir James Rivett-Carnac, seventh Bt; succeeded brother (eighth Bt), 2004; succeeded by his son, Jonathan (b 1962), now the tenth Bt (*DT W.7.10.2009:37**).

Autobiography: *From Ship to Shore* (1998) (cited in *DT W.7.10.2009:37*).

HMS *Woolaston* (1958-69), coastal minesweeper, “Ton” class. Built by Herd & McKenzie and launched on 6 March 1958. Re-named HMS *Thames*, 1969-75. Sold on 14 November 1980 and broken up at Sittingbourne (Colledge and Warlow 2006:390; see also pp 348-9). “Ton” class minesweepers (116 produced between 1953 and 1958 for the RN and other navies), displaced 360 tons, measured 153 x 28.8 ft, and were equipped with one 40 mm gun (*ibid.*, p xv).

ROH MOO-HYUN (1946-2009)

President of South Korea, 2003-8; addressed an annual message of goodwill to HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, 23 February, marking NBD’s National Day (eg *BBO Th.23.2.2006:h4.htm*); died at Kimhae, 23 May 2009; book of condolence opened at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, BSB, 26-28 May 2009 (*BBO W.27.5.2009*).

SAYER, Guy Mowbray (1924-2009)

“Chief Manager” (equivalent nowadays to “Chairman”), HSBC, 1972-7; spent part of his career in Jesselton; CBE 1978 (*DT Th.14.5.2009:31**).

SHAKESPEAR, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Gordon Wyndham (1920-2009)

Lieutenant-Colonel HGW Shakespear MC, of the 1st Btn, 2nd King Edward VII’s Own Goorkha Rifles (Sirmoor Rifles) was awarded the Seri Mahkota Brunei Order, third class, in 1963 (*BGG 21.12.1963:292*); commanded the 1/2nd Goorkha Rifles during the suppression of the Brunei Revolt, December 1962 (described in detail in James and Sheil-Small 1971:7-14), for which he was mentioned in dispatches.

MC 1944, whilst serving with his regiment in Italy; then ranking as “Major” (*DT W.13.5.2009:33*).

Educated at Malvern and Sandhurst; followed his grandfather and father into the 2nd Goorkhas, 1940-72; served during WW2 at Debra Dun, North Africa, Italy, Greece, and again in India. Subsequently posted to Singapore, Malaya, Hong Kong,

Catterick, Chatham, Malaya again, Brunei (1962), Portugal, and Nepal. Excellent golfer; once (no date) RU in the Army's golf championship (*DT* W.13.5.2009:33*).

Died suddenly on Easter Monday (13 April) 2009; Service due to be held at Mattingley Church, Hampshire, at noon on Tuesday 21 April 2009 (*DT* F.17.4.2009:28g #1; online reference 54489). Mattingley is about seven miles NE of Basingstoke, nine NW of Aldershot, and nine South of Reading.

Survived by widow (m. 1948), Jean (*née* Bernard); 1s 2d (*DT* W.13.5.2009:33) and grandchildren.

SHUKERY Hashim (d. 2009)

Malaysian actor (films, television drama) who visited NBD on location in pursuit of his profession; represented as a person of humility and self-effacement. Began his acting career in 1984; his last stay in the sultanate came in 2000, when he was appearing in an RTB/RTM television drama *Mentari di Ufuk Timur*; photographed at that time around the Jame' 'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah. Died, reportedly of pancreatic cancer, 10 June 2009 at the UKM Hospital, Cheras; age not given (*BBO* W.24.6.2009*).

VENKATARAMAN, President Ramaswamy (1910-2009)

Born on 4 December 1910 (*GloriousIndia.com*); died on 27 January 2009, leaving a widow and three daughters; eighth President of India, 1987-92; accepted the letters of appointment of **YAM PDNLD Abdul Momin bin PH Ismail (d 2008)** as non-resident High Commissioner of NBD to India, 24 November 1990 (*PB* 12.12.1990:4; see also *BRB* 2008:35-6).

A lawyer who was detained for two years during the Quit India Movement era, he defended Indian nationals charged with collaboration during the *masa Jepun* in Malaya and Singapore (*DT* W.29.1.2009: 31).

WILSON, Captain Roi Edgerton (1921-2009)

From 1966 until 1968 "Tug" Wilson was commander (air) in the carrier HMS *Albion*, "which was involved in the withdrawal from Aden and the Confrontation to prevent the Indonesian takeover of Borneo." CBE 1974. Obituary, "Aviator who led a charmed life as he pioneered the role of helicopters in search-and-rescue and in combat," *DT* W.22.4.2009:25.**

See also: Rear-Admiral J.H. Adams (1918-2008) in *BRB* 2008:37.

WOOD, Colonel David James (1923-2009)

MBE (c.1966), *Légion d'honneur* 2004. "In 1961 he was appointed second-in-command of the 1st Green Jackets in Penang and subsequently on operations during the insurgency in Brunei. He was mentioned in despatches" (*DT* Tu.28.4.2009:27**).

In 1944 he had commanded one of the glider-borne platoons which crash-landed in Normandy in the opening minutes of D-Day; granted a regular commission after the war; retired in 1977; settled in Devon; survived by widow; no children (*DT* Tu.28.4.2009:27).

WYATT-SMITH, Peggy (d. 2009)

Died on Monday 7 September 2009, aged ninety-five; widow of John. Tapper Funeral Service, 01202 69449 (*DT* W.9.9.2009:30h #last; online reference 61697).

John Wyatt-Smith CBE (1917-2002). Malayan Forest Service, 1939-63 (except for a spell in Nigeria during the Second World War). As Forest Botanist, Kepong, he visited Brunei for a month in 1954 (Ashton 1964: v). Died on 30 October 2002; husband of Peggy; father of two daughters] and grandfather (*DT* W.6.11.2002:28h #last). Born in China, 29 January 1917; educated at Brighton College and Wadham College, Oxford, after early schooling in Switzerland; evaded the Japanese in 1942 by escaping to West Africa by way of Sumatra and South Africa; manager, FAO Forestry Project, Nigeria, 1963-8; forestry adviser, Overseas Development Administration, UK, 1968-77; post-retirement work as UN consultant to the Forest Research Institute of the Philippines, followed by a two-year forestry assignment for the British ODA in Nepal; CBE 1981; Bernard Edward Fernow Award, 1981 (for outstanding achievements in international forestry) (printout of *LT* 12.11.2002, seen by courtesy of Alan Lamb Esq, son-in-law of Mr. Wyatt-Smith; acknowledgements also to Howard Chadwick Funeral Service for forwarding to Mr. Lamb my original letter of enquiry).

YOUNG, Captain Brian Gilmore (1930-2009)

DSO. Born on 25 September 1930, Kent; died on Christmas Eve 2009; survived by widow, Sheila Young (m 1958). Obituary, "Naval 'top gun' who recaptured South Georgia from the Argentines without his troops having to fire a shot," *DT* W.13.1.2010:37.**

Also served in 892 squadron in HMS *Centaur* during the Confrontation in Borneo. Entered RN 1944.

HMS Centaur (1947-1972), aircraft carrier, 22,000 tons; fifty aircraft; 20-40mm; Harland & Wolff, 22 April 1947; sold 19 July 1972, arr. Cairnryan 6 September 1972 (Colledge and Warlow 2006:63; key to "arr" not given).

ZAINUDIN bin Haji Jaffar, Dr. Haji (d. 2009)

Dr. Haji Zainudin Haji Jaffar of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Policy Studies at UBD was reported to have died on 25 October 2009, aged forty-eight (*Borneo Bulletin* online).

Abbreviations

*	article with a monochrome illustration.
**	article with polychrome photography.
12c #1	page 12, column 3, paragraph 1.
1s 1d	one son, one daughter.
AFC	Air Force Cross.
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting.
BAR	<i>Brunei Annual Report</i> .
BB	<i>Borneo Bulletin</i> .
BBO	<i>Borneo Bulletin</i> , online.
BBSO	<i>Borneo Bulletin</i> , Sunday edition, online.

BDS	<i>Brunei Darussalam</i> (yearbook).
BGG	<i>Brunei Government Gazette</i> .
BRB	<i>Borneo Research Bulletin</i> .
BRC	Borneo Research Council.
BSB	Bandar Seri Begawan.
BST	British Summer Time.
BTO	<i>Brunei Times</i> , online.
CB	Commander of the Order of the Bath.
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire.
CMG	Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George.
CO	Colonial Office.
CPM	Colonial Police Medal.
DK	<i>Darjah Yang Utama Kerabat Diraja</i> / Royal Family Order.
DPMB	<i>Darjah Seri Paduka Mahkota Brunei Yang Amat Mulia, Darjah Kedua</i> / Crown of Brunei Order, second class (carrying the style <i>Dato Paduka</i>)
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross.
DSLJ	<i>Dato Seri Laila Jasa</i> / Dato (second class) of the <i>Seri Laila Jasa</i> Order (instituted 1965).
DSO	Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (UK).
DSS	<i>Dato Seri Setia</i> .
DT	<i>Daily Telegraph</i> (London)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
F/D	Funeral Directors.
GBOW ON	Government of Brunei Darussalam Official Website: Online News.
GCMG	Knight Grand Cross, Order of St Michael and St George.
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time.
HEMPB	<i>The Hutchinson Encyclopaedia of Modern Political Biography</i> (Oxford: Helicon, 1999; Editorial Director Hilary McGlynn).
HESEA	<i>Southeast Asia: A Historical Encyclopedia</i> , edited by Ooi Keat Gin; three volumes (Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford: ABC-Clio, 2004).
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship.
HMCS	Her Majesty's Canadian Ship.
INI	(at the) <i>Istana Nurul Iman</i> .
KBE	Knight Commander, Order of the British Empire.
KCB	Knight Commander, Order of the Bath.
KCMG	Knight Commander, Order of St Michael and St George.
LTO	<i>The Times</i> (London), online.
MB BS	Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery.
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire.
MC	Military Cross.
MID	Mentioned In Despatches.
MP	Member of Parliament.
NBD	Negara Brunei Darussalam (1984-).
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire.
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (UK).
OM	Order of Merit (UK).
OSS	Order of the Star of Sarawak.
PB	<i>Pelita Brunei</i> (Bandar Seri Begawan).
PBA	<i>Pelita Brunei, Aneka</i> section.
PBI	<i>Pelita Brunei, Iklan</i> section.
PBKK	<i>Pelita Brunei, Keluaran Khas</i> (special supplement).
PC	Privy Councillor (UK).
PHBS	<i>Pingat Hassanal Bolkiah Sultan</i> / Coronation Medal (1968)
PJK	<i>Pingat Jasa Kebaktian</i> / Loyal Service Medal.
PKL	<i>Pingat Kerja Lama</i> / Long Service Medal; rewards loyalty lasting twenty years or more (according to <i>PB</i> 8.3.2006:13).
PKLP	<i>Pingat Kerja Lama Polis</i> / Police Long Service Medal.
PSPAP	<i>Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Puteri</i> .
PWD	Public Works Department.
QPM	Queen's Police Medal.
RIPAS	(HM) Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (wife of HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah).
RTB	<i>Radio-Televisyen Brunei</i> .
RTM	<i>Radio-Televisyen Malaysia</i> .
RU	runner-up.

SAS	Special Air Service (UK).
Sdn Bhd	<i>Sendirian Berhad</i> (limited liability company).
SEAA	<i>Southeast Asian Affairs</i> (annual; ISEAS, Singapore).
SMB	<i>Darjah Seri Paduka Mahkota Brunei Yang Amat Mulia, darjah ketiga</i> / Crown of Brunei Order, third class.
SMJA	Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam (r 1906-24).
SOAS	Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III (r 1950-67).
ST	<i>Sunday Times</i> (London).
STM	<i>Sunday Times Magazine</i> .
SUV	sport-utility vehicle.
TAVR	Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve.
TD	<i>Panduan Telefon NBD</i> / The Telephone Directory of Brunei Darussalam (Jabatan Telekom Brunei, 1997).
TGO	<i>The Guardian</i> (London), online.
TYT	<i>Tuan Yang Terutama</i> / His Excellency.
UBD	<i>Universiti Brunei Darussalam</i> .
UKM	<i>Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia</i> / National University of Malaysia.
WKNB	<i>Warta Kerajaan Negeri Brunei</i> / State of Brunei Government Gazette.
WW	<i>Who's Who</i> (UK, published annually).
YTM	<i>Yang Teramat Mulia</i> .

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RESEARCH NOTES

PIRACY AGAINST THE SAMBAS “PIRATES”? THE CASE OF CAPTAIN BURNSIDE – AND WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM AFTERWARDS IN THE ANTIPODES

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Introduction

This article describes and analyzes an accusation of piracy made in 1806 by the Sultan of Sambas, in northwestern Borneo, against Captain Anthony Burnside, an Irishman, who was then a trader based in Calcutta.¹ It provides an unexpected counterpoint to my recent examination of accusations of piracy committed by Sambas from the end of the eighteenth century until the return of the Dutch to Borneo in 1818 (Smith 2007). The accusation against Burnside was uncovered in a search for information about Borneo in the on-line catalogue of records of the English East India Company (EIC) held in the British Library.² In a wider context, the material gives new insight into the relations at the time between the EIC Supreme Government in Calcutta, and the authorities in Penang. In addition, Burnside’s subsequent brief time in Sydney provides a footnote to the early colonial history of Australia, particularly with respect to his financial dealings with some prominent personalities and to the economic circumstances at the time. Last, there is some irony in Burnside’s eventual fate in New Zealand and popular beliefs that have arisen from it without (as far as I am aware) knowledge of his previous activities in Borneo.

Sambas as a “pirate state” at the beginning of the nineteenth century

I concluded previously (Smith 2007) that Sambas was by no means as “piratical” (at least against European vessels) as was popularly believed at the time. The Sultanate was certainly aggressive towards its neighbors Pontianak, Mempawah, and Banjarmasin by the beginning of the nineteenth century, and was soon to form alliances in northern Borneo and with the Illanun of Sulu.³ The result was the establishment of

1 Contemporary material described here refers to him both as “Burnside” and “Burnsides”. However, he signed himself as “Anthony Burnside.” I give major European settlements their European names. This article is revised from a presentation given at the Ninth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council, Kota Kinabalu, 2008.

2 The documents, in *Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India Records IOR/F/4/298/6892*, are extracts from *Bengal Public Consultations*; the file covers the period September 1807 to June 1809. The name “Burnsides” appears throughout.

3 Previously, in 1803, the Illanun launched attacks against Sambas and disputed with Sambas over possession of captured *prahu* (Richardson 1805:42; 50-53). Richardson’s book was based on

a formidable maritime raiding force that ranged widely along the coasts of Borneo. A significant contributing factor to Sambas's changed dependence on trading to raiding was the disruption to regional stability that was caused by the establishment of Pontianak in the early 1770s and its increasing control over trade from inland sources, including Chinese, Malay, and Dayak. The regional disruptions included Pontianak's conquest of its southerly neighbor, Sukadana, with Dutch support in 1786 and – more threatening to Sambas – its conquest in 1787 of Mempawah, which formed a buffer between Sambas and Pontianak. The result was ongoing warfare on land and at sea between Sambas and Pontianak. The Dutch had a trading outpost at Pontianak until they withdrew in the 1790s.

During these events there was continued trade with Sambas by British country vessels – i.e. vessels involved in regional trade based in India, the East Indies, and China – which anchored off the mouth of the river and sent boats up to the town. Elmore's sailing directory for British mariners in the East Indies, published in 1802 but based on the author's voyages in the period 1783-96, named Mempawah as "one of the best markets to the eastward" for the sale of opium; Sambas was the next best. Sukadana also received special mention, but no emphasis was placed on Pontianak (Elmore 1802:311).⁴ Although Elmore advised that ships traveling to Borneo should be well-armed and always ready to repel attacks, the only port named as particularly dangerous was "Borneo Proper," i.e. Brunei (Elmore 1802:312).

The reputation of Sambas suffered considerably with the surprise attack on the country ship *Calcutta* off Selakau in July 1803 and the massacre of Captain Drysdale, most of the officers, many of the crew and all the armed sepoys who were on board. Pangeran Anom, half-brother of the Sultan of Sambas, was the prime mover in this aggression. The arrival of the Sultan prevented further bloodshed and he explained to John Burgh, the only surviving officer, that the attack was triggered by dishonesty by Drysdale, who had bought opium from an accompanying country vessel that had previously been contracted to Pangeran Anom, with the intention of selling it to Pangeran Anom at a higher price.⁵ The Sultan pointed out that he had known Drysdale for many years and the latter had been at Sambas several times; he had "lost his life and his ship through his own misconduct" (Richardson 1805:34). According to the Sultan, relations with country traders, especially those based in Penang, had previously been good.

After the capture of the *Calcutta*, both the Sultan and Pangeran Anom repeatedly offered Burgh command of the ship in the service of Sambas, the stated aim being to capture the Chinese junks that traded with Pontianak (Richardson 1805:54). Burgh refused, saying that he would then be liable to be put to death by the British as a renegade and pirate (Richardson 1805:39). These events were reported by Burgh when he was released at the end of 1803. The authorities at Penang at first ignored them because of

firsthand information provided by John Burgh, who was held captive in Sambas in 1803.

⁴ Elmore's advice about trade at Sukadana suggests that he was unaware of its destruction in 1786, or assumed incorrectly that it was again a thriving port.

⁵ The vessel was the *Clyde*, commanded by Captain James Tait. He made many voyages in the East Indies until the end of 1811, when he left for Europe, and died near Kelso, Scotland in 1847 (Smith 2008; see Appendix: Captain Tait).

the difficulty of mounting a successful attack against Sambas, which lies many miles up a river that becomes progressively narrower and more winding. However, they became alarmed by reports that Pangeran Anom was preparing to put the well-armed *Calcutta* to sea, presumably crewed by its lascars who had been detained at Sambas. Accordingly, a small naval expedition was despatched to the Sambas River in June 1805 and the *Calcutta*, which was moored not far from the mouth, was recaptured. Reports that Pangeran Anom was killed were incorrect, though he was wounded. He came to be regarded by the Europeans in the region as the arch-villain in Sambas and was later said to have “out-heroded Herod” (Hunt 1820).⁶

The EIC authorities in Penang (and later in Java) were well aware that a major cause of attacks by the local inhabitants was the dishonest practices of some of the European country traders and they accordingly explored various ways of regulating this trade. The traders themselves, both the ships’ captains and their backers, naturally opposed any regulation and were prepared to risk attacks, which were, in fact, very rare. Richardson’s account makes it clear that the capture of the *Calcutta* was due to extreme carelessness by Drysdale in allowing on board a large number of armed men, and ignoring a warning that Pangeran Anom had been overheard giving instructions to start the surprise attack (Richardson 1805:28). Despite the capture of the *Calcutta* and murders, and the reprisals against Sambas, the events described below show that trade with Sambas was still an attractive proposition for country traders based in Penang and Calcutta.

Anthony Burnside as a country trader

Some details of Captain Burnside’s voyages between 1799 and 1807 can be traced from the EIC’s semi-official *Calcutta Gazette* and *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* (cited here as *CG* and *PG*).⁷ During this period he commanded the *Phoenix* and then the *Clyde* for voyages from Calcutta along the coasts of India to the British settlement at Bencoolen [Bengkulu] in West Sumatra. Early in 1805 Burnside took command of a new *Clyde*, a ship that was launched in Howdrah in December 1804 (*CG* 42/1087), and in February 1805 voyaged to Bombay (*CG* 43/1101). At the end of the year he was back in Calcutta, where the owners, Campbell, Hook and Co., advertized for freight to be taken to Penang and the west coast of Sumatra, i.e. to Bengkulu and possibly other ports (*CG* 43/1138: 19 Dec 1805). By 15 March 1806 the *Clyde* was at Muntok on Bangka (*PG* 1/8) and by 18 April had left Sambas for Brunei (*PG* 1/14). Burnside returned to Sambas in August 1806, as shown by documents summarized below. In January 1807 he returned to Calcutta via Riau and Penang (*CG* 45/1194, 45/1195; *PG* 1/51). Early in February 1807 an advertisement was placed for freight for Madras in the *Clyde*, again commanded by Burnside (*CG* 45/1197). He returned in mid-April and soon departed on a voyage that I have not traced (*CG* 46/1207). There is nothing out of the ordinary in Burnside’s activities as described so far. In fact the long voyage in 1806 until the beginning of 1807

⁶ See Smith (2007) for a detailed examination of Hunt’s highly inaccurate list of piratical events around Borneo.

⁷ I have not looked at issues of *CG* before mid-1798; *PG* was first published early in 1806. I only give full dates of the weekly issues where these are particularly useful in tracing the details of the voyages.

appears to have followed many of the recommendations set down by Elmore (1802:162-171) for country traders from Calcutta to the east.

The accusation of piracy committed by Burnside

The following account is based on the file in the EIC Records that was sent from Calcutta to London in June 1809. It is headed "Improper Conduct of the Eastern Traders" and deals with the activities of captains Burnside and Lippiatt (sometimes called "Lippiat"). Lippiatt's numerous offences were committed around Sumatra and are not relevant to the present account. I describe below the chronological order of events concerning Burnside that occurred in the voyage just summarized, and do not follow the order of documents in the file itself. The earliest reference to Burnside is in an extract of a translated letter (not dated) from the Sultan of Sambas, addressed to James Carnegie, a leading trader in Penang. The Sultan said that in February-March 1806 he had given Captain Taylor a letter, together with a present of two slave girls, to be taken to the "great man," i.e. the Governor at Penang or Governor-General in Calcutta.⁸ The aim was obviously to reestablish good relations with Penang following the recapture of the *Calcutta*; however, no reply had been received by the Sultan. Soon afterwards, the *Clyde* and Burnside arrived off the mouth of the Sambas River. According to the Sultan, Burnside captured a *prahu* from Sambas that was proceeding to Java. He removed money and arms and afterwards released the *prahu*. When Burnside went to Sambas to trade, the Sultan's brother (almost certainly Pangeran Anom) asked if he could buy cargo on three months' credit, and (according to the Sultan) Burnside was paid after four months. Burnside then complained that the gold received in payment was "mixed and adulterated." The Sultan's brother told him to bring the gold ashore to be replaced, but he would not do so; instead he rejected a portion of it, which the Sultan replaced. During this business two *prahu* belonging to the Sultan arrived from Java and were captured by Burnside, who immediately sailed. The Sultan complained to Carnegie that the value of the money and arms removed by Burnside amounted to 17,000 Spanish Dollars. In addition, Burnside had "vouchers for goods traded with the Sultan's brother." Translation of the letter to Carnegie was certified by "Thos Raffles, Secy. to Govt."

The Sultan followed up his complaint in a letter to the Governor at Penang, at the end of which is appended: "Written on the 7th September Sunday 11 o'clock." ⁹ The Sultan said that he had received a letter of friendship which "my friend" (now presumably the Governor at Penang) had sent and he wished to reciprocate this friendship. He said that Carnegie had sent a letter requesting that the "former arrangement" (presumably to trade) could continue, and he wished that this be so, to strengthen his friendship with Penang. The Sultan repeated that Burnside had taken two of his *prahu* with their cargo, coming from Java, and a *prahu* going to Java, with money and arms, an account of which

8 Early issues of *PG* mention Captain Taylor as commander of the country ship *Forth*, and list voyages to Riau, Trengganu, Malacca and Sumatra (*PG* 1/14: 31 May 1806; 1/15: 7 June 1806; 1/16: 14 June 1806; 1/18: 28 June 1806).

9 The translation was by J.C. Lawrence, the acting Malay Translator, who held this position between the end of November 1807 and the end of January 1808, when Raffles was apparently in Malacca recovering from illness (Wurtzburg 1954:56). Lawrence may have been standing in for Raffles earlier.

he had sent to Carnegie, so that “my friend” (presumably again the Governor) could inquire into the affair. He sent a gift of wax along with the letter.

At the end of March 1808 the EIC authorities in Penang sent a letter to Lord Minto, the Governor-General in Calcutta, in which they expressed their belief that many British vessels had been plundered and their crews massacred because of the improper conduct of some commanders, who had “enforced by arms, what cannot be achieved by amicable negotiation” [sic]. The Penang authorities referred to the translated letter from the Sultan of Sambas and his correspondence with James Carnegie about Burnside’s conduct. The documents summarized above were enclosed. The correspondence was forwarded to the Advocate-General in Calcutta, Robert Smith, who reported at the end of July 1808 that the case against Burnside appeared strong and that he should be brought to trial, provided that the principal circumstances could be proved. As far as could be gathered from the Sultan’s statements, it seemed to him to be a case of “very unauthorised reprisal, if not of downright piracy.” This advice was in accord with maritime law as it applied in times of war, here against the Dutch, as there is nothing in the file (or *Calcutta Gazette*) to suggest that the *Clyde* was licensed as a privateer. This would have allowed attacks against Dutch vessels, but not against vessels owned by Sambas. Such attacks were certainly not appropriate as reprisals in cases of private debt (Ivan Shearer, personal communication). Smith regretted that insufficient details about the events had been given, but pointed out that Burnside was in Calcutta, or had been very recently. Accordingly, he recommended that Burnside should be given a copy of the complaints and asked to defend the charge. Further, a letter should go to Penang to seek additional information from Sambas or elsewhere, and especially whether anyone from the vessels that had been assaulted could be sent to Calcutta or depositions could be made at Penang. The Advocate-General thought that “the enquiry will have a good effect and operate as a warning.” Accordingly, a few days later the EIC Council in Calcutta wrote to the authorities in Penang asking if they could obtain additional information. Burnside was given a copy of the complaint.

Burnside’s response

Burnside sent a lengthy reply on 3 October 1808. He acknowledged that on 11 April 1806 he had detained a vessel and said that he had ascertained that it contained “property belonging to Dutchman who lived on Madura.” He had taken “a few things out of her” and they were listed in his ship’s log book. He had been with the Sultan of Sambas several times after the “transaction” and the latter had never mentioned it beyond saying that there was much more on the *prahu* than he (Burnside) was aware of. On 21 August, during the second visit, when Burnside was ashore (presumably upriver at Sambas) his Chief Officer wrote to him saying that he had detained a sloop under Dutch colors and that he wished him to go aboard to examine the vessel. Burnside said that the Sultan told him that the vessel was indeed Dutch property and that he had his own *prahu* out trying to capture it before it entered the river. The Sultan hoped that Burnside would give him the cargo of salt and the sloop itself. Burnside’s reply was that if he could prove the vessel to be Dutch he would hand it over if the Sultan would pay his debts immediately, which was agreed. Burnside then went on board and the crew acknowledged that it was

Dutch, from Java. The next day, when Burnside was back on the *Clyde*, a man arrived and warned him not to go ashore again because he believed that Burnside would be captured and his ship taken. As there were (according to Burnside) many “Pirate Prows” in the river he was greatly alarmed, particularly because of the fate of the *Calcutta* and murder of Captain Drysdale. Accordingly, Burnside wrote to the Sultan saying that he would not go ashore again and that if he was not paid his debts he would blockade the port and seize as many *prahu* as possible. A few days later he detained one of the Sultan’s *prahu* and informed the Sultan, who again said that he would not settle his debts unless Burnside went ashore. Burnside again refused and wrote again, saying that he would wait only another day for a final answer, as he had been told that Sambas was collecting all the “Pirate Prows” they could in order to capture his ship, and had offered a reward of 5000 Spanish Dollars for his head. He then had to leave, as southerly gales were setting in and he lost two of his anchors and had to cut the others away for the safety of the ship and cargo in case of an attack by the many *prahu* who were seen around his ship every day.

Burnside also said that on his arrival at Sambas he had agreed to let the Sultan have goods valued at 10,000 Spanish dollars on credit, but that the Sultan exceeded his time by nearly two months. The Sultan promised to recompense Burnside for the adulterated gold as soon as a junk sailed from Selakau, where the Sultan was collecting his customs duty. Burnside told the EIC authorities in Calcutta that he had suffered a very large loss on his voyage: he had traded at every other port on the coast (of Borneo) and had no reason to complain except against “those Pirates at Sambass” [sic]. He had in his possession all the papers belonging to the vessels, the Sultan’s “Bond or Chop,” and the ship’s log book. His Chief Officer, Mr. Stone, was now in Calcutta and Burnside thought that the latter could attest to the whole of what he had related.

The EIC’s reaction

Despite the spirited defense, the EIC Council in Calcutta thought that Burnside’s letter was not a complete justification for his conduct (which, according to maritime law – summarized above – it was not), and, as further inquiry might be necessary, they forwarded his letter to the Advocate-General for advice. The Council had not received a reply from Smith when they next considered the matter (15 October 1808), nor had any additional information arrived from Penang. Accordingly, no legal steps had been taken against Burnside. All this information was forwarded to London along with the separate and lengthy documentation concerning the piratical activities of Captain Lippiatt. However, the latter was deemed to be a “foreigner” and had probably proceeded to Batavia or some other enemy port.¹⁰ The Supreme Government in Calcutta assured the EIC in London that they would enforce the penalties of the law in the manner pointed out by the Advocate-General in any future cases where traders subject to EIC authority were

¹⁰ Captain Lippiatt, whose nationality is actually not clear from the file, was certainly a rogue. He was of concern to the Royal Navy and EIC authorities in Penang and at Bencoolen in that he attacked vessels belonging to Achin [Aceh], and attempted to sail away with a Danish-registered vessel, of which he was Master, when the owner was ashore. He was detained by his crew but mistakenly released. Lippiatt went over to the French when the British country ship in which he was a passenger was captured off Sumatra.

found guilty of aggressive conduct towards “the Natives of the Eastern Islands.”

Any lingering wish by the EIC in Calcutta to pursue the affair would have been pre-empted when Burnside left Calcutta for the last time on 8 December 1808 on the *Hibernia*, bound for Australia (*Sydney Gazette* [SG] 7/272: 19 Mar 1809). The timing of the departure may have been fortuitous, but he may have sought to avoid a trial, or been advised that his departure would be a suitable way of quietly bringing the matter to a close.¹¹

Burnside in Australia

The *Hibernia*, with Burnside in command, and with a valuable cargo, arrived in Sydney via Hobart in mid-March 1809 (SG 7/272).¹² Very soon afterwards, Burnside dined with the famous John Macarthur (who was about to depart for England), Macarthur’s partner, Garnham Blaxcell, a prominent merchant, their associate Captain David Dundas, and others. After the party ended, a sentry on the wharf intervened to stop a woman being taken by boat to the *Hibernia* along with Burnside, which resulted in a scandalous court case (Kercher 1996-2008: *Decisions of the Superior Courts of New South Wales, 1788-1899: R. v. Dundas*).¹³ A later letter from Blaxcell to Macarthur in England states that the *Hibernia* belonged to Burnside, and that he (Blaxcell) and his partner William Campbell had bought it (*Macarthur Papers* IV, MLA2900; letter dated 6 November 1809). The purchase was at least partly on credit. Blaxcell told Macarthur that he had arranged for the proceeds of a cargo of sandalwood to be remitted to Burnside, who agreed to arrange for insurance to be taken out in London for the cargo, which was to be sent to Canton for sale in the *Lady Barlow*, owned by Campbell & Co. of Calcutta (*Macarthur Papers* IV; letters of 6 November 1809 and 10 May 1810). The sandalwood had been obtained on a voyage of the brig *Favourite* (or *Favorite*), which was owned in Sydney jointly by William Campbell, Thomas Jamison, Blaxcell and Macarthur.¹⁴

Now with William Campbell as captain, the *Hibernia* left for Fiji at the end of May, but Burnside remained behind.¹⁵ During his stay he sold part of the cargo (grain

11 According to Steven (1965:139), the *Clyde*, presumably commanded by Burnside, had previously been dispatched to Australia but had been forced to return to port. Uncharacteristically, Steven gives no further details or reference from which the date (presumably 1808 or early 1809) could be discovered. Shipping news in *CG* became very sparse by 1808 and there is unfortunately a gap from August 1808 until early January 1809 in the series I have examined.

12 According to a summary of shipping movements to and from Tasmania at this time, based on original sources (Nicholson 1983:25), Captain Samuel Ashmore was Master of the vessel when it arrived at Tasmania, and Burnside took over afterwards.

13 The case was one of attempted sodomy by the drunken Captain Dundas against sentries on the wharf. The woman who was prevented from going to the *Hibernia* allegedly rebuffed an approach by Dundas, after which he allegedly made improper suggestions to the sentries. The case was dismissed after an alibi was provided for Dundas – though the sentries’ testimony appears strong.

14 William Campbell and Dundas both commanded the *Favourite* in voyages to the Pacific islands for sandalwood and other local products. As far as I am aware, William Campbell was not a relative or associate of the Campbells of Calcutta, who were represented in Sydney by Robert Campbell, a nephew of Robert Campbell (Senior) of Calcutta (Hainsworth, 1981:86-7, 149, 173-5; see also, the biography of Robert Campbell of Sydney by Steven 1965).

15 Both William Campbell and Samuel Ashmore commanded the *Hibernia* in subsequent voyages

and animal food) to the Government in March, May, June and September, and was paid in Treasury bonds (i.e. currency convertible outside Australia) in May and mid-October (*N.S.W. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence Index* [CSI] 1809, SZ757: 80a-82a; SZ760:151b). Burnside was a member of the jury in several coroner's inquests, the last on 4 November (*CSI, Coroner's Inquests* 1809, 4/1819: 9, 167-9, 189-91, 203, 355-6, 381-2).¹⁶ As well as Blaxcell and William Campbell, he also had financial dealings with Simeon Lord, an influential emancipist merchant. The latter entered into a commercial agreement with Captain John Thompson, master of the *Boyd*, a convict transport from Britain that had arrived in Sydney via the Cape of Good Hope in August 1809. Lord chartered the *Boyd* on its return voyage and loaded a cargo of coal and timber provided by the government on credit. Some was to be taken to the Cape of Good Hope, to be exchanged for wine that would be sent to New South Wales, and the remainder was to be sold in London. The profits would be shared by Lord and the New South Wales Government (*Historical Records of Australia* [HRA] Series 1, 1914-1925, Vol. 7:292; see also Hainsworth 1972:74). A large number of sealskins belonging to Lord and other merchants were also loaded, destined for London. This arrangement was of very dubious legality with respect to EIC regulations that forbade such trade by non-EIC vessels, but was supported by William Paterson, the Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales in the hiatus following the overthrow of Governor Bligh in January 1808. In October 1809, Lord gave Burnside a bill of exchange for £1300, to be paid in London by Hullett, Brothers & Co, merchants in London who had strong connections with merchants in Sydney (Kercher 2004: *Unreported Judicial Decisions of the Privy Council: Lord v. Campbell*, 1814). Security was provided by some of the seal-skins on the *Boyd*.¹⁷

In October 1809 Burnside gave notice that he intended to leave New South Wales shortly and asked creditors to furnish their accounts (*SG* 7/300). At about the same time there were other announcements that the *Boyd* would soon depart, and although Burnside was not named as a passenger, he certainly departed on the *Boyd* early in November. This was stated by Blaxcell in his second letter to Macarthur – there was also a copy of the earlier one, the original of which had been sent on the *Boyd* (Macarthur Papers IV; letters dated 6 November 1809 and 10 May 1810). More details about Burnside and his departure from Sydney were given in the memoirs of Peter Dillon, an Irishman who later became famous as a voyager in the Pacific. Dillon met Burnside in Sydney in 1809, and they became “intimately acquainted.” Burnside was also Irish (so the name *Hibernia* is relevant with respect to Burnside's ownership of that vessel); he had “by industry accumulated a fortune of £30,000” and was returning to “end his days on the banks of the Liffey” (Dillon 1829, Vol. 1:217). In his account of Dillon's life and travels, Davidson (1975:14) suggested that Dillon first met Burnside soon after arriving in Calcutta (apparently in 1806) and that Dillon possibly sailed with Burnside on the

to the Pacific islands and Calcutta, and both had distinguished maritime careers in the region. Blaxcell apparently transferred his share of ownership to Campbell, and ownership was then transferred to Scott, Wilson & Co. of Calcutta, for whom Ashmore sailed (Cumpston, 1977: *passim*).

16 This is where signatures “Anthony Burnside” appear.

17 The sealskins came from a voyage of the *Antipode*, a small schooner owned by Hulletts in partnership with Lord (Kercher 2004: *Lord v. Campbell*, 1814; Hainsworth 1972:237).

Clyde, but Dillon did not say this.¹⁸

Burnside in New Zealand

In fact, Burnside never returned to Ireland. The *Boyd* sailed from Sydney early in November to Whangaroa, at the north of New Zealand, to collect more timber for delivery at the Cape of Good Hope. Captain Thompson went ashore with a small party to cut timber and they were killed by Maoris, who then boarded the *Boyd* and (as generally believed) killed all on board except for two women passengers, a baby and the cabin-boy. The dead were cannibalized according to Maori custom, the *Boyd* pillaged and, after an accidental gunpowder explosion, burned to the water-line. News of the disaster quickly reached the captain of the *City of Edinburgh*, who was loading cargo at the Bay of Islands. This vessel went to investigate, and the four known survivors were rescued. Reprisals by other European mariners followed – inevitably with attacks on innocent Maoris. There was a report that four other European survivors had been taken away as slaves; the local informant (a young Maori woman) only knew their names as “Brown, Cook, Anthony and Harry” (SG 8/330: 28 April 1810). These look like a mixture of first names and surnames, and give the possibility that “Anthony” was Burnside. However, no trace was found by an expedition that went inland to follow up this report.

The “*Boyd* massacre” was sensational news in Sydney (SG 8/323: 10 March 1810) and accounts soon followed in Calcutta and Britain. Much emphasis inevitably was put on the war-like Maoris and their cannibalism. The events greatly affected early relations between the Maoris and Sydney-based Europeans, both traders and missionaries, who became understandably nervous about visiting New Zealand, especially as the attack on the *Boyd* was not the only such incident, though it was certainly the most brutal. One of the most detailed accounts is given by Rev. Samuel Marsden, who visited New Zealand soon afterwards. Marsden laid much of the blame on Captain Thompson of the *Boyd*, who was said to have severely mistreated a high-ranking Maori who had been on board. On arrival at Whangaroa, the latter went ashore to his tribe to recount his experiences, and they then carried out the massacre (Marsden 1932). This—rather than any inherent Maori brutality—is the explanation favored in the extensive New Zealand literature on this episode (e.g. Doak 1984).¹⁹

Wider contexts and conclusions

This account, though primarily biographical, can usefully be considered in wider contexts – both as regards the East Indies and the Antipodes. First, the main motive behind the report from Penang to Calcutta in March 1808 was not to bring Burnside to justice, but to make the case for an arrangement whereby country traders from all EIC Residencies that passed through the Straits of Malacca would have to call in at

¹⁸ According to Davidson (1975:15) Dillon arrived in the Pacific in October 1808, possibly on the *General Wellesley*, the voyages of which are recounted elsewhere in another context involving Borneo (Smith 2004). For Simeon Lord’s unsuccessful association with this vessel after it arrived in Sydney, see Hainsworth (1981:70-71, 126, 172-5).

¹⁹ Doak (*passim*) refers to some earlier episodes that had soured relations between the Maoris and European traders.

Penang and take out financial surety for good behavior. Such a requirement would have helped put the precarious finances at Penang on a sounder footing. However, the Penang authorities greatly overstated their case in alleging that many British vessels in the region had been plundered and their crews massacred. In fact, there had been few such attacks in the region (Smith 2007). The comments by Elmore (1802:312) about the dangers at Brunei may be an oblique reference to the capture of the *May* and murder of the captain, officers and Europeans in the crew (Hunt 1820:24). Hunt also mentioned the murder of a country trader and his boat's crew at Sulu in 1800.²⁰

The advice from the Advocate-General in Calcutta was that the measures proposed by Penang were "liable to considerable objection." He thought that the laws in place should be fully adequate in that those who carried out piratical acts could be tried in the Supreme Court of Judicature in Bengal and "punished capitally or otherwise." Likewise, injuries against native rulers or their people could be redressed in the courts in India, at Calcutta, Madras or Bombay, or possibly at Penang. The EIC could give financial aid if necessary to those who brought complaints. Robert Smith pointed out that the EIC Government in India could withdraw permission for offenders to stay in the Indies and send them to Europe, which would be very appropriate for offences "tending to degrade the national character and endanger the public peace or the general interests of Trade." Further, there was a danger that by authorizing the issue of financial bonds the EIC might itself become legally responsible for the acts of the traders. In addition, the latter would suffer delay and financial hardship if they were obliged to call at Penang to enter into the bond and procure security, for which they would probably have to pay a high commission. In any case, the EIC Government in Calcutta had no direct authority to make regulations such as those proposed. Thus Smith comprehensively demolished Penang's attempt to secure profit from the country traders, irrespective of the trade that they actually conducted in Penang itself. Irresponsible conduct by traders came to be regarded very differently in Sydney, where at the end of 1813 Governor Macquarie made masters or owners of every British vessel sailing from Sydney to the Pacific enter into a financial bond to refrain from acts of trespass, war, and interference in local disputes or against indigenous religion. Furthermore, they had to obtain consent from local chiefs or parents before accepting Pacific islanders as sailors or passengers: the penalty for a breach was £1000 (Davidson 1975:45-46).

Burnside's voyage to Sydney occurred at a time when the colony still lacked staple goods necessary for survival and was becoming a popular port of call for Calcutta-based country traders. However, the economy was by no means secure and Burnside's financial standing must have been regarded as very solid. That was certainly not the case with everyone with whom he had dealings in Sydney, including Simeon Lord, whose property on board the *Boyd* (said to be worth £12,000) was not insured due to the bankruptcy of his London agents (*HRA* 1/8:583). Other evidence suggests that there was no insurance on the ship at all, and that all of Lord's bills of exchange that were sent to London were returned unpaid (*Historical Records of New South Wales* 1901, 7:527). For example, Burnside had endorsed Lord's bill of exchange as payable to Bruce, de Ponthieu, Bazett & Co. in London, and merchants and East India agents who were associated

²⁰ However, it should again be borne in mind that his list is very inaccurate (Smith 2007).

with Colvins & Co. in Calcutta. Payment was refused when the bill of exchange was presented to Hullett, Brothers & Co.²¹ Subsequently John Thomas Campbell, the agent in Sydney for Bruce and partners (and Governor Macquarie's Secretary: Holder 1966), sued Simeon Lord in a prolonged case that resulted in an appeal by Lord to Britain's Privy Council in 1814 (Kercher 2004: Lord v. Campbell, 1814) which apparently lapsed (Bruce Kercher; personal communication).²²

Garnham Blaxcell also had major financial problems associated with the loss of the *Boyd* and his agreements with Burnside, the consequences of which continued after Blaxcell's death in Batavia in 1817 following his bankruptcy and unauthorized departure from New South Wales. An attempt was made by John Thomas Campbell to recover funds from Charles Throsby, a retired surgeon and magistrate, for security entered by the latter for Blaxcell for "Captain Burnside's bills" (*CSI*, 4/1739:192-3).

As late as 1842 an appeal was made to Lord Stanley, then Governor-General in New South Wales, by George Johnson, an 81-year-old pensioner in Dublin, who claimed that he was owed £1100 plus five years' interest received by "the Representatives of Anthony Burnside" in New South Wales from Throsby (*HRA* 1/22:164).²³ However, Campbell's death in 1830, and further bankruptcy and financial misdeeds in New South Wales, prevented any settlements until 1849 – by which time Johnson was probably dead (Newton 1967).²⁴ There may be more information in the early records of New South Wales that would throw more light on Burnside's financial transactions in Australia in 1809 and the consequences that affected prominent colonial personalities of the time.

There are also strong traces in New Zealand – though in a very different context that relates to Burnside's supposed "fortune" that vanished after the destruction of the *Boyd*. This is mentioned in many written accounts in recent years, all apparently depending on Dillon's memoir. There is a persistent belief that this "fortune" is still undiscovered somewhere at or near Whangaroa. Thus, according to Grayland (1963:44), "old Maoris talk of a chest about six feet long" that was lost when it was being transported from the *Boyd* through Whangaroa harbor. Doak (1984) also refers to Burnside in his account of the maritime exploration of the wreck of the *Boyd*, and (personal communication) of more recent treasure-hunting episodes. Given Burnside's extensive commercial activities in Sydney, it is of course possible that the "fortune" may have been largely in paper form (i.e. bills of exchange), though it is much more romantic to believe that it was in coin or bullion.

In conclusion, it is very ironic that Burnside, who escaped possible death at

21 Colvins & Co had been Colvins, Bazett & Co. before Bazett left Calcutta for England. Presumably these companies handled Burnside's financial affairs.

22 Campbell had Irish connections and arrived in Sydney in January 1810 at the same time as Governor Macquarie, whose secretary he became. Later he held other government posts, became a landholder and was involved in the establishment of the Bank of New South Wales (Holder 1966).

23 Johnson was probably Burnside's brother-in-law. He married Mary Burnside in Dublin in 1795 (Anon., 1997:112).

24 After Campbell's death his estate had been placed in the hands of John Manning, Registrar of the Supreme Court in Sydney. Manning had become bankrupt in 1841 and he had kept private and public funds in the same account.

Sambas as a result of his perceived misdeeds there, was killed in New Zealand only about three years later as a result of misdeeds of another ship's captain against native people. This Borneo-New Zealand connection has not been made previously as far as I am aware, and it is certainly "romantic" – if perhaps far-fetched – to think of at least part of the purported lost fortune as a pirate's treasure.

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I have to thank Wade Doak for helpful information about treasure hunts in New Zealand, Professor Ivan Shearer for advice about maritime law, Professor Bruce Kercher for advice about *Lord v. Campbell* (1814) and Lynette Zeitz for comments about the possible reasons why Burnside left Calcutta for Australia.

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“THE LITTLE SULTAN”: AHMAD TAJUDDIN II OF BRUNEI, GERARD MACBRYAN, AND MALCOLM MACDONALD¹

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His early life had not been very happy. He had succeeded to the throne when he was very young and two regents had been appointed. According to some well-informed Malays, power was kept out of his hands for years and he was given little chance of preparing for the assumption of royal duties. He was effectively prevented from asserting himself and becoming a personage in his own right. Older members of the Sultanic family dominated him through his youth and into his early manhood.

T.S. Monks
(1992)

Although he lived relatively recently (1913-1950), Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin II, Brunei's 27th ruler, has been an almost forgotten figure in its history, despite the fact that he pressed for greater political and financial independence for the Sultanate in a way that was in advance of his time. This, together with his advocacy of a new political confederation of northern Borneo under the authority of the Sultanate, anticipated much of the political process beginning in the late 1950s and ending in January 1984 when Brunei's independence from Britain was finally established. Nevertheless, most historians of modern Brunei have until recently ignored his reign in their published work, preferring to focus on that of his younger brother, Sultan Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin III, better known as the "Seri Begawan."² B.A. Hussainmiya in his substantial biography of Sir Omar Ali has thrown some positive light on Ahmad Tajuddin's reign, suggesting tactfully that he "began the movement of regaining royal dignity and sovereignty" with "mixed" success, but at the same time using him to highlight "the magnitude of [Sir Omar Ali's] achievement."³ The semi-official mythology of Brunei still tends to represent Sir

¹ This article is dedicated to the memory of my good friend, the late Robert Nicholl, who always encouraged me to write about MacBryan. I would like to acknowledge the extremely generous assistance provided by Simon Francis.

² See A.V.M. Horton, *The British Residency in Brunei, 1906-1959*, Hull: Centre for South-East Asian Studies, 1984; Pehin Dr. Jamil Al-Sufri, *Brunei Darussalam: The Road to Independence*, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei History Centre, 1998, and A..J. Stockwell, "Britain and Brunei, 1945-1963: Imperial Retreat and Royal Ascendancy," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (2004), pp. 785-819. To be fair, Horton treats Ahmad Tajuddin in more detail in his 1985 doctoral thesis (see note 7), but this unfortunately remains unpublished.

³ B.A. Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and Britain: The Making of Brunei Darussalam*,



Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin II after his coronation on 17 March 1940, wearing the K.C.M.G. presented to him by the British government on the occasion.

From B.A. Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III ...*, Kuala Lumpur: OUP, 1995.

Omar Ali as both rescuing the state from a dissolute ruler and heroically upholding its sovereignty against the British.

Manipulated by his Political Adviser, the mercurial Gerard MacBryan, privately ridiculed by Britain's wily High Commissioner for Southeast Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, and largely forgotten by posterity, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin deserves to be looked at afresh. What follows is not a comprehensive and detailed account of his reign, however, but a sketch of its main features which may serve to stimulate further research. While Hussainmiya has given an account of his relations with his

Residents and the Colonial Office, a finer analysis is needed. For his own extraordinary role in modern Sarawak and Brunei history, MacBryan himself deserves a dedicated study. Malcolm MacDonald's official role in relation to the Borneo states is well-known but his private perceptions and opinions of Ahmad Tajuddin are only briefly revealed by his biographer, Clyde Sanger.⁴

In addition to the relevant sections of Malcolm MacDonald's private journals reproduced as part of the text, a number of historical documents have been appended, namely a Malayan Civil Service official's account of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin's coronation in March 1940 (**Appendix I**), a British North Borneo official's account of his funeral (**Appendix II**) and the Brunei court biography (**Appendix III**).

The reasons for Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin's neglect are not difficult to find: he was only eleven (just three years older than the boy-king Tutankhamen) when he succeeded to the throne as *Yang di-Pertuan* on the premature death of his father, Sultan Sir Muhammad Jamalul Alam II, K.C.M.G., at the age of thirty-five on 20 September 1924.⁵ While the Sultan was said to have died of malaria, there was no official inquest and it was strongly rumored that he had been poisoned by someone close to him.

Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 45-6, 59-60.

4 Clyde Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald: Bringing An End to Empire*, Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, pp. 332-334.

5 Tutankhamen was eight years old when he became king of Egypt.

Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin , c.
1948, with (left) Pengiran
Bendahara Omar Ali
and (right) Pengiran Anak Hj.
Mohammed Yasin.
From the private collection of
Professor Bob Reece.



Ahmad Tajuddin did not attain full sovereignty until 19 September 1931 when he was eighteen, and was not crowned until 17 March 1940. During his seven year minority, the two senior *wazir*, Pengiran Bendahara Pengiran Anak Abdul Rahman and Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Muhammad Yassin (sometimes referred to as “the two wicked uncles”) acted as joint Regents and, together with his mother, Paduka Seri

Isteri Pengiran Anak Fatimah, reportedly exercised a malign influence over him.⁶ Indeed, it was said that they deliberately corrupted him so that they could retain their authority. At the age of thirteen he was given his first *gundek*, or concubine.⁷ His mother reportedly sabotaged British Resident E.E.F. Pretty’s plans to send him to Malaya or England for his education,⁸ although he received English lessons from the age of fourteen from a specially appointed British teacher. His younger brother, Omar Ali Saifuddin, was later sent to Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, the “Eton” of the Malay aristocracy, but not without some resistance from his mother. There is little evidence of how Ahmad Tajuddin reacted to his difficult situation, but it was commonly said in Brunei that he was so afraid of being poisoned that he sometimes cooked his own food in soda water.⁹

Ahmad Tajuddin’s somewhat timid personality also meant that the authority of

6 E.E. Pengilly, “Brunei, after its re-occupation by Australian Military Forces,” National Archives [NA] CO 537/1629.

7 Dato’ W.H. (“Borneo Bill”) Doughty, interviewed by Don Brown, Brunei, 1969. Doughty’s full Brunei title was Pehin Dato’ Laila Setiawan.

8 A.V.M. Horton, *The Development of Brunei during the British Residential Era, 1906-1959: A Sultanate Regenerated*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1985, p. 301.

9 *Ibid.*

the British Resident was strengthened and that during his regency and for the first decade of his reign there were no serious crises of the kind that his father, the forceful young Sultan Jamalul Alam, had brought about during the regency set up on his succession in 1906.¹⁰ Jamalul Alam's strong opposition to the new Land Code proposed by the Resident in 1909, which had far-reaching implications for the Kedayan ethnic minority, was only overcome by the application of extreme pressure by the Resident, most notably the threat to depose him.¹¹ Significantly, as with Ahmad Tajuddin's reliance first on his Malayan private secretary and later on the former Sarawak government officer, Gerard MacBryan, Jamalul Alam's father, Sultan Hashim, had preferred to make use of an outsider – in this case an independent Englishman managing a foreign-owned *cutch* (mangrove bark) company – rather than rely on his Resident.¹²

Ahmad Tajuddin signaled his lack of confidence in Brunei's political system by boycotting most of the meetings of the State Council between 1931 and 1950, apparently in protest against the power of the Resident,¹³ and by employing as his private secretary Inche Mohamad Hassan bin Kulop Mohamad from Selangor or Perak. Inche Hassan, subsequently described by an Englishwoman living in Brunei as "very sharp in an oriental way and definitely above average bright,"¹⁴ had a good grasp of English and could be relied upon by the Sultan to do his bidding. In October 1931 the Sultan visited Malaya for three weeks and then spent from July 1932 until August 1933 in Britain where he went nominally to improve his English. On 30 April 1934 he married Tengku Rohani (Roihani), daughter of the Sultan of Selangor, Aliuddin Sulaiman Shah, at Klang's Istana Negara, having already fathered three daughters by his principal *gundek*, known as "Kedayang Emas."

In early August 1935, the newly-appointed Commissioner for the Malay States, Sir Shenton Thomas, arrived in Brunei from Singapore on his first official visit and subsequently recorded these impressions:

We anchored opposite the Customs wharf and the Sultan came off to call. His car is a big Lincoln with yellow trappings on roof and radiator. He is 23 years old and quite tiny, wears spectacles, and his hair is much too long behind.¹⁵

He went on to describe his return visit to the *Istana*:

I rode with the Resident from the wharf to the palace in an enormous litter of scarlet and gold carried on the shoulders of about 30 men who staggered drunkenly over the road. The journey was only 200 yards but

10 For reasons that are not entirely clear, the regency lasted until 1918 when Jamalul Alam was twenty-eight.

11 Graham Saunders, *A History of Brunei*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 114. According to Saunders, *ibid.*, "the Sultan's allowance was cut and he was threatened with deposition before he agreed." See also, Ranjit Singh, *Brunei 1839-1983: The Problems of Political Survival*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 116, and Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, pp. 17-18.

12 Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p. 74, note 47.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

14 Kathleen Clark to Anthony Brooke, 27 March 1950, Rhodes House MSS Pac. s. 73, Box 19/7.

15 Shenton Thomas, "Tour to Sarawak, Brunei and British Borneo, 1935," NA CO 717/111/7.

quite enough. The reception hall was a poor building of wood and iron, again done in scarlet and gold with cheap German rugs of the brightest colours. This jazz effect was heightened by pillars which were done in the colours of the various chiefs, pinks, and blues, and greens, while drawn up on one side was a line of spearmen in bright cherry. We sat and drank orange pop as usual and were given Brunei cigarettes.¹⁶

The Sultan was at that time under considerable pressure from his brother-in-law and former *Raja Muda* and Sultan of Selangor, Tengku Kelana Jaya Petra, who had recently arrived with two companions and fifteen attendants to take the Tengku Ampuan back to Klang for the birth of her first child:

He seems a good deal in awe of the Sultan of Selangor [Sir Shenton observed], which is only natural, seeing that he is but a boy head of a small State whereas the Sultan is at least 70 years old, and he is being pestered by the ex-Raja Muda.¹⁷

Not only was this proposal contrary to Brunei *adat*, or custom, that the heir should be born in the state, but might well have been dangerous for the mother traveling at that time of year. It was certainly costly to transport the royal party to Malaya and Sir Shenton consequently advised the Sultan to resist the pressure, promising British Resident of Selangor, Roland Turnbull's, support and writing both to Tengku Kelana and the Sultan of Selangor to explain the situation. Nevertheless, the Selangor family prevailed and in late August the Sultan, Tengku Ampuan and party traveled to the royal capital of Klang where Tengku Norehsani (Tuanku Ehsan) was born on 15 October 1935.

Although the details are sketchy, it is clear that by 1936 the Sultan's relations with his Resident were deteriorating. A.V.M. Horton cites Acting High Commissioner A.S. Small writing in June that "[His Highness] is proving rather troublesome that he is now growing up and had acquired taste or power." The Sultan had been involved in "several clashes" with the Resident and Small found it necessary to send to Brunei former Resident E.E.F. Pretty "in order to smoothe matters down."¹⁸ A significant outcome of all this was the decision by the Colonial Office to appoint more senior officials as Residents from that time.¹⁹

In his 13 January 1940 dispatch to the Secretary of State for Colonies, Malcolm MacDonald, informing him of the Sultan's forthcoming *berpuspa* or coronation on 17 March (which the Resident, J.G. Black, had attempted to postpone and the Sultan had insisted take place),²⁰ Sir Shenton remarked that while the latter's conduct during the early years of his reign "was not always correct" and that he had had to be "warned severely more than once," the past five years had passed without any major problems. He might be "irresponsible," Sir Shenton conceded, but he had "no vices." He added: "In considering the past his upbringing must not be forgotten. It is not easy for a young

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Horton, "The Development of Brunei during the British Residential Era," p. 299, cited by Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p. 47.

19 Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p.49.

20 Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p. 47.

boy, brought up in a remote State and in the atmosphere of a small and sycophantic Court, to withstand the temptation to which as a member of the Royal House he must be subjected.”²¹ Besides, the Sultan’s loyalty had been demonstrated in a tangible way by his offer of Straits \$100,000 to the British government for Imperial defense purposes in June 1939.²² Accordingly, Sir Shenton recommended that he be awarded a K.C.M.G. on the occasion of his coronation. The Sultan was, after all, the only Malay ruler not to have been honored in some way by the British Crown. This was duly agreed, but on the recommendation of the Resident the coronation was attended not by the Commissioner himself, as might have been expected, but by his Private Secretary, Robert Irvine, M.C.S., who provided a report of the proceedings (**Appendix I**).

Very little information is available about Ahmad Tajuddin’s role during the Japanese occupation, which commenced on 22 December 1941 with the arrival in Brunei Town of an army unit from Kuala Belait under a Capt. Koyama.²³ It was the policy of the Japanese to keep the Malay rulers of Malaya and Borneo in place as a means of securing the support of their subjects but, like the British under the Resident system, to deny them any real power. As part of the new political configuration of *Borneo Kita* (northern Borneo) consisting of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo, the Sultanate, together with what had been the Fourth and Fifth Divisions of Sarawak, made up what was called *Miri-shu*, or Miri province. It had its own military governor who answered to the first military commandant of Borneo Kita, Marquis Toshinari Maeda. Basing himself at the Brooke Astana in Kuching rather than at Miri, whose oilfields (together with Brunei’s recently developed Seria field) accounted for the Japanese interest in the area, Maeda made a visit to Brunei in early 1942 where he and his senior officers were photographed with the Sultan, his brother, and Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Hj. Mohd. Yasin.

During the next three and a half years, Brunei was nominally governed by its Council of State under the direction of the pre-war Government Secretary, Inche Ibrahim bin Mohamad Jahfar. However, he was under constant scrutiny from the resident Japanese provincial governor, based initially in Miri but after April 1942 in Brunei Town, who appears to have acted much as the British Resident had previously done. While the minutes of the Council’s proceedings have survived,²⁴ no historian has so far made use of them to improve our understanding of governance during the occupation period, but it seems that the Sultan’s role was increasingly that of a figurehead.²⁵ The only significant concession made to him was the restoration of the island of Labuan and the Limbang, Lawas and Trusan districts to Brunei’s nominal rule as part of *Miri-shu*.²⁶ While there is no record of the discussions that the Sultan must have had with the Japanese on this subject, it seems highly likely that it was his initiative. The loss of Labuan and Limbang (the latter being a significant source of tax revenue) had always been a source

21 Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 13 January 1940, NA, CO 717/143/20.

22 Shenton Thomas to Secretary of State, 14 June 1939, NA CO 717/130/13.

23 Mohd. Raus bin Haji Mohamed Amin, “Stories of Brunei: Daru’l Salam,” c. 1951, Rhodes House MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 101.

24 Dr. B.A. Hussainmaya, personal information.

25 T.S. Monks, *Brunei Days*, Lewes [Sussex]: The Book Guild Ltd., 1992, pp. 105-6.

26 Pengilly, “Brunei.”

of bitter resentment in Brunei and it was no accident that after Ahmad Tajuddin's brother, Pangeran Omar Ali, became Sultan, he told the newspapers in Singapore on 4 September 1951 before going on the *haj* that they should be restored to the Sultanate.²⁷

With the intensified Allied bombing of oil installations at Miri and Lutong and the machine-gunning of the Istana Mahkota itself in early 1945, the Sultan and his immediate family, together with Pehin Dato Amar Hj. Kasim, retired to Kampong Tentaya, Limbang, and in his absence much of the contents of the Istana, including items of the royal regalia, were plundered. The one description of the Sultan during the Japanese occupation is a vignette penned later by M.C. Clarke, an Australian doctor working in North Borneo before the war who had been allowed by the Japanese to practice without restriction. He was called in with his Canadian colleague, Dr. George Graham, to the Istana Mahkota in early 1943 on the pretext of the Sultan being ill when all he really wanted was some convivial company:

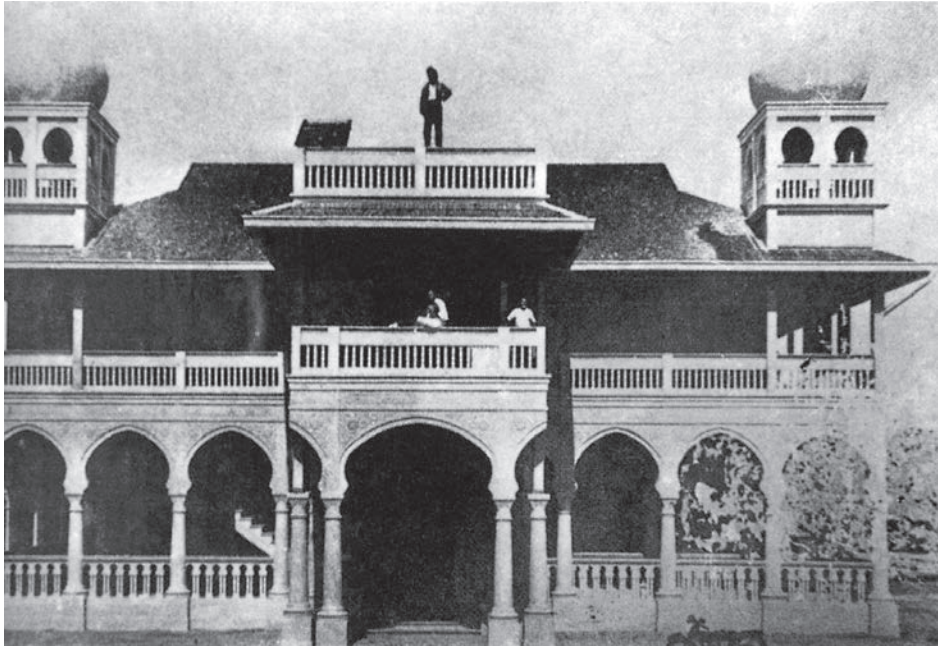
Presently the Sultan joined us. His attire acknowledged the Malay love of brilliant colours. In his early thirties, he was slightly built, with an aquiline nose, large humorous eyes and a scanty, rather whimsical moustache. He was not happy about the Japanese invasion. Rather than doing nothing, he became deliberately busy - he gambled, drank and made love, fulltime! ... Before we departed, the Sultan had us examine an old retainer who, worried by events, had been consuming too much Chinese wine. Graham advised him to give up drinking. The Sultan asked, "But why?" Graham faced the matter bravely. He explained how, due to malnutrition, excessive drinking could lead to cirrhosis of the liver. He became graphic in describing this disease, it progressed slowly, with the liver contracting and getting harder and harder, until finally, the blood could not percolate through it and fluid collected in the abdomen. His Highness looked alarmed and patted his faithful retainer on the shoulder. I remarked that the process sometimes took twenty or even thirty years: at this everyone in the room began to breathe more freely.²⁸

The Sultan welcomed the Australian 9th Division liberators with open arms on his return to Brunei Town on 17 June 1945. Received with a Guard of Honour organized by the Australian military commander and taken to the Residency for tea, he quickly availed himself of medical assistance for his asthma before being reinstated in the Istana Mahkota "in protective custody." Like the Malayan rulers, he was under suspicion of collaborating with the Japanese, but investigations did not lead to any repercussions.²⁹ Pre-war Resident E.E. Pengilly, who returned briefly in late September after internment, believed that "up to December 1941 he was perfectly and genuinely loyal to the British connection" and that he had played no significant part in the administration of the state

27 NA CO 943/2/13. Under strong pressure from the Singapore authorities, Sultan Omar Ali subsequently denied that he had made any such statement, his private secretary accepting full responsibility in order to save any embarrassment.. Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p. 64.

28 Derwent Kell [M.C. Clarke], *A Doctor in Borneo: In Peace And War*, Brisbane: Boolarong Publications, 1984, pp. 113-4.

29 According to Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p. 75, note 60, the official British documents relating to these investigations were destroyed under statute.



The Astana Mahkota, c. 1940s. Completed in 1932, it was badly damaged by Allied bombing in 1944-45. From Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*.

under the Japanese.³⁰ Nevertheless, his political role was once again eclipsed, first by the Australian-controlled British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (BBCAU) and then by the British Military Administration (BMA) until 1 July 1946 when civilian administration was restored under a new Resident, W.J. Peel.³¹ His earlier request to visit India and Britain was politely deferred by BMA Commandant, Col. C.F.C. Macaskie.

Fortunately for his state of mind, perhaps, the Sultan was unaware of war-time planning in June 1944 by the Colonial Office's Borneo Planning Unit for new treaties imposing the Foreign Jurisdiction Act on Sarawak and Brunei, thus allowing the British government to legislate for Brunei and treat it as part of one administrative unit together with Sarawak and (what would become) the Crown Colony of British North Borneo.³² Such an arrangement would have practically destroyed what remained of the Sultan's sovereignty and reduced Brunei's constitutional status under British law to that of a protectorate, rather than a protected state, but it was held back by the fact that the Borneo territories and their post-war civil affairs administration came initially within American, and subsequently, by delegated authority, Australian military control. A draft treaty had actually been drawn up by a Colonial Office official in 1944 containing the provision that "His Britannic Majesty shall have full power and jurisdiction within the state of Brunei."

30 Pengilly, "Brunei."

31 Monks, *Brunei Days*, p. 103.

32 Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 172-175. .

The plan was to send out a “special emissary” after the war to “negotiate” this treaty with the Sultan when similar treaties had already been negotiated with the Malayan rulers by Sir Harold MacMichael.³³ Pengilley had indicated to the Colonial Office in December 1945 that he did not anticipate any difficulty with the Sultan about this as he was “a physically insignificant and mentally colourless and inadequate individual” who had been “much addicted to strong drink” and whose morals “left much to be desired.”³⁴

As the 1 July 1946 deadline for the restoration of civilian government in Brunei approached, the Secretary of State for Colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, accepted Malcolm MacDonald’s advice that the Sultanate should not be linked with the North Borneo or Sarawak administrations. A return to pre-war arrangements would suffice until such time as the Sultan was apprised that new constitutional changes were being contemplated and that a new treaty would be “presented for consideration with [sic] him [in] due course.”³⁵

In the meantime, the Sultan was showing signs of asserting himself more actively than he had done before the war. In February 1947, just a year after Rajah Vyner Brooke had publicly announced his intention to cede Sarawak to the British Crown, the Sultan protested to the newspapers in Singapore that his traditional rights over Sarawak had been overlooked. If Sarawak had to be ceded to anyone, he emphasized, it should have been to him.³⁶ Needless to say, Resident W.J. Peel was not with him at the time, or else the embarrassing statement was highly unlikely to have been made. Hussainmiya’s suggestion that subsequent Resident E.E.F. Pretty may have “discreetly encouraged” the Sultan in his correspondence with the Secretary of State for Colonies also seems unlikely.³⁷ Further, there is no evidence of a “softening” in the Colonial Office’s attitude to the Sultan or of any invitation to him to attend talks in London.³⁸

There were other issues than the cession. After liberation, Tajuddin had moved with his consort, Tengku Ampuan Rohani, and their daughters and attendants to a modest bungalow in Brunei Town. During the devastating Allied bombing of Brunei Town in early 1945, the Istana Mahkota at Tumasek Point, which had only been completed in 1932, was seriously damaged and was not habitable. When his continued demands that the British government should build him a new Istana and pay him Straits \$64,630 compensation for War Damage fell on unsympathetic ears, the Sultan protested physically by relocating himself in Kuching in mid-1949, together with the Tengku Ampuan and Inche Mohamad Hassan.³⁹ For the time being, the Sultan’s *Istana Kechil* in Kuching’s Rock Road flew the Brunei flag and his car sported the royal pennants. British resistance to his wishes was officially justified in terms of there being more important priorities in the program

33 “Agreement between His Britannic Majesty’s Government and The State of Brunei,” NA CO 825/42.

34 Pengilley, “Brunei.”

35 Creech Jones to MacDonald, 18 June 1946, NA CO 537/1629.

36 *The Straits Times*, 28 February 1947.

37 Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p. 51.

38 *Ibid.*

39 A house subsequently purchased by the Sultan was at the junction of what was then known as “Pig Lane” (now Park Lane) and Central Rd. It was subsequently owned by Datu Bandar Abang Hj. Mustapha who probably purchased it from him.

of post-war reconstruction, notably the hospital and the Residency. The British decision to make the Governor of Sarawak *ex officio* High Commissioner for Brunei in mid-1947 meant that in Kuching the Sultan was closer to the real seat of power, but he would almost certainly have been seriously affronted by this subordination of the Sultanate to the authority of its former province and by the first steps to unify the administrations of Sarawak and Brunei (the filling of twenty-one Brunei government positions from the Sarawak government establishment).⁴⁰

It was only with the greatest difficulty that the Sultan was persuaded by his Kuching friend, Datu Bandar Abang Hj. Mustapha,⁴¹ and by Sarawak's Chief Secretary R.G. Aikman, to attend his own Silver Jubilee celebrations in Brunei on 22 September 1949. Two weeks earlier he had been extremely ill, reputedly from advanced alcoholic poisoning, and had admitted himself to Kuching hospital. He was also unhappy about having to pay for part of the celebrations from his own allowance. Once having returned to Brunei, however, he decided (or was persuaded) to remain in the state, the commencement of work on his new Istana no doubt being the major determining factor.

Gerard MacBryan

It was in May 1950 that Gerard Truman Magill MacBryan, who had been Rajah Vyner Brooke's Private Secretary in the late 1920s and again in 1941, made his reappearance in Kuching and persuaded the Sultan to appoint him as his Political Adviser. MacBryan's career in Sarawak had been controversial, even notorious. He had been held responsible for conspiring with Raneé Sylvia Brooke to vary the traditionally male succession in favor of her eldest daughter, Leonora, and of "stacking" the Supreme Council with three newly-created life *datu* of non-elite origins in order to obtain its agreement. MacBryan's scheme seems to have been premised on his marrying one of the Rajah's three daughters, two of whom (Leonora and Valerie) he is known to have courted, or one of Bertram Brooke's daughters (Anne Brooke) whom he also courted. Although he failed in this, he would have subsequently noted Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin's apparent achievement in 1937 of persuading his *wazir* to vary the Brunei succession in favor of his own daughter, Tuanku Ehsan.⁴²

Succession through the female line was not unknown in Borneo, where Puteri Ratna Kesuma, the daughter of the second Sultan, had married an Arab from Tai'f in Saudi Arabia (Syed Sharif Ali Bilfakih), thus enabling him to become the third Sultan ("Sultan Berkat") in 1426.⁴³ There had been female rulers in their own right in the Malay Muslim kingdoms of Pattani in southern Thailand and in Aceh, Sumatra, where there

40 The Sultan's reactions to this development were evidently not recorded, but there is evidence of its having raised antagonistic feelings in Brunei. See Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p.52 and p. 74, footnotes 43 and 44. Oddly, V.L. Porritt, *British Colonial Rule in Sarawak, 1946-1963*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997, makes no mention of the issue.

41 See Bob Reece, *Datu Bandar Abang Hj. Mustapha of Sarawak: Some reflections of his life and times*, Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society, 1991, p. 120.

42 See Appendix II (A.M. Grier, "Funeral of the Sultan of Brunei," Rhodes House MSS Pac. s. 77). If there was ever in fact a document embodying this agreement, it has long since disappeared.

43 Amin Sweeney, "Silsilah Raja-raja Berunai," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 41, Pt. 2 (December 1968), p. 45.



Gerard MacBryan, c; 1941.
From the private collection of
Professor Bob Reece.

were no less than four in the seventeenth century. And as we have seen, Ahmad Tajuddin's own mother, the Rajah Isteri, together with the two Regents, had been a *de facto* ruler in Brunei after the death of her husband, Sultan Jamalul Alam.

MacBryan made a number of attempts to return to Sarawak, including one in 1935 when he married a beautiful Kuching Malay woman, Sa'erah binte Abdul Kadir, in Singapore by Islamic rites and then claimed to have made the *haj*, or pilgrimage, with her to Mecca, returning dressed in white Arabian robes (*mishlah*) and headgear (allegedly presented to him by King Ibn Saud in his new *persona* of Hj. Abdul Rahman) and looking for all the world like Lawrence of Arabia.⁴⁴ However, the hereditary *datu* protested vigorously to the Rajah against his remaining in the state and he was obliged to return with Hajjah Sa'erah to London where he reportedly worked as a stockbroker in association with

his brother and gradually took over the management of their father's private mental hospital at Box, near Bath.

Eventually MacBryan persuaded the Rajah to allow him to return in August 1940 to Kuching, where he worked briefly at the Sarawak Museum before being readmitted to the Sarawak Service in January 1941 and appointed Private Secretary.⁴⁵ This was part of his reward for brokering a secret financial settlement between the Rajah and his senior bureaucrats, the Committee of Administration, which paved the way for the announcement of a written constitution on 31 March 1941.⁴⁶ In December 1940 he had accompanied the Rajah to Brunei on an official visit and subsequently persuaded him that the forthcoming Centenary of Brooke Rule in 1941 was the ideal time to finalize the outstanding claims made by the Sultan and by some of his *pengiran* for compensation

44 MacBryan's account of his pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia under the assumed name of "David Chale" was the basis of Owen Rutter, *Triumphant Pilgrimage: An English Muslim's Journey from Sarawak to Mecca*, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1937. There was some doubt in Sarawak as to whether MacBryan actually completed the claimed pilgrimage, most strongly expressed in the caustic review that appeared in *The Sarawak Gazette*, 1 September 1937. However, reviewers in *The Scotsman* of 15 July 1937 and *The Daily Telegraph* of 1 September 1937 accepted the story at face value.

45 Banks was still a staunch defender of MacBryan when he was interviewed by the author in 1974.

46 For the text of the secret settlement, see Anthony Brooke, *The Facts About Sarawak*, Bombay, 1947, pp. 35-8.

for the loss of their traditional rights in the Limbang district, annexed by Rajah Charles Brooke in 1890. In February 1941 he once again traveled to Brunei in the government yacht, *Maimunah*, anchoring upstream from the Istana Mahkota. Significantly, he wore the robes and headdress that he had been given in Saudi Arabia. MacBryan was well aware of the high prestige Arabs enjoyed in Borneo, especially if they claimed descent from the Prophet (as they almost invariably did), and of the impression that his attire was likely to make.

MacBryan had become familiar with Brunei during his first posting as a government cadet at Limbang in July 1920. In June of the next year he paid a visit, together with the Resident of the Fifth Division, F.F. Boulton, to witness the official investiture of Sultan Jamalal Alam with the K.C.M.G. by the then Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Lawrence Guillemard. MacBryan's rapid acquisition of the Malay language, including the archaic courtly version used by the Brunei aristocrats, enabled him to establish good contacts there and to gain some useful insights into the operations of the broken-down Sultanate.

Meeting Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin at the Istana and a representative of the Limbang *pengiran* in February 1941, MacBryan successfully negotiated settlements with them. The Sultan agreed to receive Straits \$20,000, subject to Sir Shenton Thomas's approval, in compensation for Sarawak's enjoyment of *keraja'an* rights (sovereignty) over Limbang for the previous fifty years and to accept Straits \$1,000 per annum in perpetuity in consideration of future sovereign rights. A total cash payment of Straits \$60,000 was made to Pengiran Sabtu Kamaludin on behalf of the Limbang *pengiran* for their surrender of *tulin*, or taxation rights, and they were to receive Straits \$6,000 per annum in perpetuity in consideration of future *tulin* rights. Pensions of Straits \$310 per annum were also awarded to certain descendants of Raja Muda Hashim (who had ceded sovereignty of the Sarawak River area to James Brooke in September 1841) and the Sultan's younger brother, Pangeran Muda Omar Ali, was given Straits \$2,000 as a wedding present.⁴⁷ The arrangements had been made after consultation with the British Resident, Major E.E. Pengilly, in December 1940, but he was now described as at one point running along the river bank chasing the *Maimunah*, which suggests that he had second thoughts. When the Colonial Office subsequently learned of the payments, it immediately canceled them as transgressing Britain's 1888 treaty with Sarawak. The Sultan was subsequently allowed to receive Straits \$6,000 as a Centenary gesture from the Rajah and an annual payment of Straits \$1,000. The deed produced by Pengiran Sabtu Kamaludin as the basis of MacBryan's payment of compensation for *tulin* rights was found to be a forgery. However, he does not appear to have returned the money handed over to him by MacBryan, and consequently the latter's standing in Brunei remained strong.

Accompanying the Rajah during his wartime exile in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, for two years, MacBryan provided Australian Naval Intelligence's Captain Roy Kendall with a plan to smuggle Malay and Indonesian students stranded by the war

47 "Extract from Minutes of Committee of Administration concerning various payments to Brunei in connection with the annexation of Limbang," NA CO 532/27, file 53034. See also, Anthony Abell to Secretary of State, 19 November 1948, NA CO 938/5/3.



Gerard MacBryan (Hj. Abdul Rahman) on his return from Saudi Arabia in 1936. From Owen Rutter, *Triumphant Pilgrimage ...*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1937.

in Arabia and Egypt back to their countries of origin by submarine as a way of obtaining information about the Japanese. Thwarted in his efforts to direct this scheme when his British security record was revealed, he then tried unsuccessfully to interest the then Brisbane-based General Douglas MacArthur in employing him. Returning with the Rajah to Britain in 1943, he subsequently played a key role in the final negotiations with the Colonial Office which led to the Rajah's agreement on 24 October 1945 to cede his sovereignty to the British Crown. One of the conditions stipulated by the Rajah was that MacBryan should be entrusted with the responsibility of obtaining the agreement of Sarawak's Malay and Chinese leaders. Although British Military

Intelligence had a thick file on MacBryan, which recorded his evasion of military service in 1940 and his suspicious actions in Dutch Borneo in early 1942 (where he was almost shot as a Japanese spy), the Colonial Office had no choice but to work through him to achieve its ends.

In early January 1946, MacBryan arrived unannounced in Kuching. With him he brought a small suitcase of official documents legitimizing the cession through rapidly-arranged meetings of the Supreme Council and Council Negri. He also distributed a large quantity of newly-printed banknotes, purportedly to reimburse the *datu* for their loss of pay during the Japanese occupation but in fact to secure their compliance with the Rajah's wishes. When this shady deal was exposed in the British press by the Rajah's younger brother and Heir Apparent, Bertram Brooke, the Colonial Office was obliged to go through the proper constitutional processes instead. This culminated in a narrow vote in favor of cession in the Council Negri in Kuching on 15 May 1946, thanks to the support of its official European members, and formal annexation under an Order-in-Council by the British Crown on 1 July.⁴⁸

MacBryan spent 1946 and the first half of 1947 in London, when he was subject to mental breakdowns. Believing that by using a mysterious black box he could make himself invisible, he tested his theory on one occasion by taking peaches from a fruit barrow in central London, only to be arrested and fined by a magistrate. Aware of his

⁴⁸ The story of how the Rajah came to an agreement with the Colonial Office and the way this was implemented is related in detail in R.H.W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 187-240. Some of the official documents relating to the final negotiations in October 1945 are still retained under statute, however, and more details remain to be revealed.

precarious mental state and the imminent onset of a nervous collapse, he had himself admitted to a mental hospital outside London on at least two occasions. Nevertheless, he continued to offer the Colonial Office his opinions on the future of the Borneo states, suggesting in September 1946 that Brunei be united with Sarawak and claiming that he “could easily persuade [the] present Sultan to cede Brunei to the Crown for this purpose.”⁴⁹ There was some expectation that he might want to visit Brunei to achieve this end and the Resident was duly warned, but in the event he was to remain in London for the next twelve months.

Returning at last to Sarawak on 30 April 1950 from Johannesburg in South Africa, where he had made his home since late 1947 with his third wife, Frances, MacBryan’s principal mission was to revive the Sarawak State Trust Fund for the education of young Sarawakians that he had earlier attempted to establish with £1,000,000 of Sarawak’s remaining state funds.⁵⁰ While the Colonial Office in March 1946 had confirmed the intention of creating the Fund, by September 1949 it was saying that it could not be established as there was no legal footing.⁵¹

MacBryan put his case forcefully at meetings with a committee consisting of Sarawak’s Attorney-General, Arthur Grattan-Bellew, and other senior government officers, only to find that they stuck to the Colonial Office line. They refused to accede to the request contained in the Rajah’s proclamation of 14 January 1946 that £1,000,000 be paid from Sarawak’s reserve funds to MacBryan to endow the Trust Fund.⁵² Thwarted in his ambitious scheme, which he represented as the *quid pro quo* for the 1946 cession because of the benefits that it would offer young Sarawakians, it was a major setback. Concern about the fate of the Fund had already been responsible for the temporary fits of insanity he had suffered in Johannesburg over the previous two years which had necessitated hospitalization there.⁵³

MacBryan and the Sultan

During his stay in Kuching, MacBryan was contacted by Enche Hassan, Ahmad Tajuddin’s private secretary, and spent some hours talking with the Sultan. “We get on very well together,” he wrote to Frances shortly afterwards. “Do you remember I told

49 Creech Jones to Malcolm MacDonald, 12 September 1946, NA CO 537/1629.

50 At the Colonial Office Conference in London in 1930 which he attended as an observer, MacBryan had persuaded Vyner Brooke to set up the Rajah of Sarawak Fund to assist with the education of the children of Sarawak’s European officers. However, the Colonial Office had frustrated MacBryan’s intention by preparing a deed which restricted the benefits to children of pure European descent from the higher ranks of the Colonial Service, not just the Sarawak Service. (MacBryan to Frances MacBryan, 4 May 1950, copy in the possession of the author).

51 A resolution of Sarawak’s Council Negri in May 1946 had revoked an agreement by the Supreme Council engineered by MacBryan on 5 January 1946 and replaced it with the *Rajah’s Dependants Order* which allocated annual life payments to members of the Rajah’s family and others, including MacBryan himself. *The Times*, 28 April 1950.

52 *The Daily Telegraph* [London], 13 May 1950; Kenelm Digby to Mark Morrison, 24 May 1950, Mark Morrison Papers, State Library of New South Wales, ML MS 863; copy of Rajah’s proclamation of 14 January 1946, *ibid.*

53 Mrs. Frances Benn, interviewed by the author at Henley-on-Thames, 24 March 1981.

you how vital I conceived Brunei to be?”⁵⁴ The two men had indeed struck up a close rapport and within days MacBryan persuaded the Sultan to appoint him as his Political Adviser on all questions *outside Brunei* and to help him pursue his constitutional and financial rights in London, on the pretext of seeking medical advice there. Consulted by the Sultan at MacBryan’s instigation, Britain’s Special High Commissioner for Southeast Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, could raise no objections to MacBryan’s appointment: after all, the terms of Brunei’s 1905-06 supplementary treaty with Britain only stipulated that “the advice of the British Resident must be taken and acted upon on all questions *in Brunei* [my emphasis].” In a letter written at the time to the Rajah’s personal secretary, Mrs. Evelyn (“Sally”) Hussey, whom he had made his *confidante*, MacBryan outlined what he thought was Ahmad Tajuddin’s position:

The Sultan in his heart is deeply dissatisfied, and exemplifies Asiatic opinion generally. He is not by any means such a fool as he may seem to some. His weakness arises out of his sense of utter frustration. I have repeatedly warned the Colonial Office ... about the dangers of the Brunei Treaty to the whole British Commonwealth system in the East. The British Government would do well to realise that my warning was serious.⁵⁵

By 1 June 1950, they were installed in Raffles Hotel in Singapore and MacBryan was making arrangements to travel to London by air on 10 June while the Sultan was to sail on the *Willem Ruys*, together with the Tengku Ampuan, Tuanku Ehsan and Enche Hassan. They were to rendezvous in London and pursue with the Secretary of State for Colonies the issue of Brunei’s constitutional relationship with Britain. In the first of four letters, typed and no doubt composed by MacBryan but evidently signed by the Sultan, the latter formally appointed him as his Political Secretary as from 10 June.⁵⁶ In a second letter, the Sultan stated that he had pronounced a *titah*, or royal decree, “irrevocably appointing and anointing” Tuanku Ehsan as his successor and heir, and requesting MacBryan in his capacity as her official guardian to inform the Colonial Office that she was to be known henceforth as *Puteri Besar*, or Heir Apparent.⁵⁷ Tajuddin’s younger brother, the Kuala Kangsar-educated Omar Ali Saifuddin, had already been appointed *Pengiran Bendahara*, or first *wazir*, in July 1947, an office which fell short of making him Heir Apparent but established him as the most senior member of Brunei’s political hierarchy under the Sultan.

In a third letter, the Sultan emphasized that Rajah Vyner Brooke had had no right to cede Sarawak, complaining that he himself had not been consulted and claiming that he should be paid the sum of Straits \$5,000 (originally 4,000 Spanish dollars) due to him as tribute due on the transfer of Sarawak’s sovereignty.⁵⁸ He authorized MacBryan

54 MacBryan to Frances MacBryan, 4 May 1950, copy in the author’s possession.

55 MacBryan to Evelyn Hussey, 10 May 1950, Brooke Papers, Rhodes House Library Oxford, MSS Pac. s. 83.

56 Ahmad Tajuddin to MacBryan, 1 June 1950. Although the originals of these letters have disappeared, copies of individual letters are located in the various places indicated and can be put together to form a set.

57 Ahmad Tajuddin to MacBryan, 1 June 1950, NA CO 938/12/4, file no. 64148.

58 This was in accordance with the original agreement made by James Brooke with Rajah Muda

to pursue the issue with the Secretary of State for Colonies and promised to let him see a letter to General Carlos Romulo of the Philippines which he had apparently written on the subject.⁵⁹

In a fourth letter, the Sultan complained that Brunei's oilfields had been developed to the detriment of himself and his people and he consequently authorized MacBryan to take up the matter with the Secretary of State.

The Sultan was still resentful over his treatment by the British authorities in relation to the re-building of his Istana and had not been altogether mollified by an increase in the modest oil royalties paid by the British Malayan Petroleum Co. and an increase in his own salary. Playing on this, and on the Sultan's suggestible nature, MacBryan had evidently persuaded him to take immediate political action. If we are to accept MacBryan's word, Ahmad Tajuddin's planned visit to London was designed to renegotiate Brunei's constitutional status (reducing the power of the Resident) and to place further pressure on British Malayan Petroleum to increase royalty payments by threatening to enter into talks with the Standard Oil Company of America.

In a final letter dated 1 June and addressed to MacBryan but once again typed and no doubt composed by him, the Sultan referred to the four previous letters, telling him:

I have been very ill for a long time and the cause of it has been mental anguish at the way the oilfields of Brunei have been conceded without consideration of myself or my feelings or of the interests of my people. But I have been helpless because of the Treaties ... which have forced me to do whatever I was told in all matters ... My sole desire is that from a financial point of view a reasonable resource should be available to me to relieve the distress and suffering of my own people in the particular way I think right and not in the way that the British Residents and High Commissioners and Agents think right.⁶⁰

In case the British government continued to show "a continued unreasonable attitude in these affairs," he authorized MacBryan to proceed to the United States "as my chosen and personal and political representative" and negotiate an agreement with the President of Standard Oil for the full development of Brunei's oilfields.⁶¹ The American connection was one that MacBryan had been investigating since 1941 when he first approached the United States Consul in Singapore, although it seems unlikely that he had actually made contact with Standard Oil by mid-1950.⁶² The Sultan also instructed MacBryan to inform the United Nations of the injustices that Brunei had suffered from the "enforced treaties" with Britain. Finally, he told him:

Kindly also mention that my daughter has equal rights with the

Hassim of Brunei in September 1841.

59 United States National Archives, College Park, Washington, 746H.00/4-255 1.

60 Ahmad Tajuddin to MacBryan, 1 June 1950, Rhodes House, Oxford, MSS Pac. s. 83, Vol. 29, Box 4/4.

61 Ibid.

62 United States National Archives, 746H.00/4-255 1. Hussainmiya's claim (*Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III*, p. 52) that the Sultan "began in the late 1940s to court A. Hoffman, the President of the Standard Oil Company," appears to have no substance.

daughter of the King of England to succeed to a throne.⁶³

An advertisement to this effect was duly inserted by MacBryan a few days later in Singapore's *The Straits Times*.

To what extent MacBryan was manipulating the Sultan during this brief but eventful time is a difficult question to resolve. The four letters apparently signed by the Sultan on 1 June 1950 were typed by MacBryan on his distinctive portable typewriter and expressed in a way that went far beyond the former's modest command of English. The originals, which should have borne the Sultan's personal yellow seal, have not survived, but their validity was attested to by Singapore's Notary Public on 10 June 1950 and by the Commissioner of Oaths in Johannesburg the following April. However, MacBryan would most likely have had access to the Sultan's personal seal after his death and would easily have been able to concoct and backdate the letters. It would be naïve to suggest that he was incapable of forgery, although a forger would probably have moved the date of his formal commencement as Political Adviser from 10 June to 1 June. MacDonald certainly regarded the letters, with the possible exception of the *titah*, as spurious, but then he had never been inclined to give "the little Sultan" much credit.

From what we now know of the Sultan's strained relationship with the Brunei Residents before the war and the issues which preoccupied him after the war, the content of the letters sent by him to the Colonial Office between 1947 and 1949 does not seem to be out of character. "Translated" and typed (and most likely composed) by Enche Hassan, they nevertheless conveyed his genuine concerns in polite but firm terms.⁶⁴ The four letters composed and typed by MacBryan should be seen in the same light.

It seems likely that MacBryan, too, had quickly come to understand the Sultan's concerns and was able to express them in a way that he approved. MacBryan's own immediate interest was to make himself indispensable to the Sultan, replicating the situation he had created in his earlier role as Private Secretary to Rajah Vyner Brooke. He clearly enjoyed being the *eminence gris* behind the throne and his fluency in courtly Malay, together with his knowledge of how the Resident system in Brunei worked, meant that he was in a unique position to exercise power. He also appears to have taken over the management of the Sultan's financial affairs, as he had done for Vyner Brooke, no doubt to help secure his influence over him.⁶⁵

Beyond this position of power, and the substantial salary that he might expect from the Sultan, however, was MacBryan's evolving grand plan to unite the Muslims of northern Borneo and the southern Philippines in a single political entity under the restored authority of Brunei. The logical first step in this process was to scrap the treaties of 1888 and 1905-06, which bound Brunei to Britain and rendered the sultans virtually impotent, and to improve the Sultanate's share of Brunei's burgeoning oil production. This contingency no doubt alarmed officials at the Colonial Office, concerned as they already were about the Sultan's refusal to communicate through his Resident. As we

63 Ahmad Tajuddin to MacBryan, 1 June 1950, Brooke Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford, MSS Pac. s. 83, Box 4/4.

64 The letters can be found at NA CO 943/2/8 and CO943/2/8.

65 The Rajah's and the Sultan's bank account details were found by the author among MacBryan's papers.

have seen, he had earlier taken the unprecedented step of writing several letters directly to the Secretary of State for Colonies, Arthur Creech Jones, in connection with the rebuilding of the Istana, payment of compensation for War Damage, the funding of his Silver Jubilee celebrations and the increase of his monthly allowance.⁶⁶

In any event, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin suffered a hemorrhage at the Raffles Hotel on the night of 3 June and was taken to the hospital where he died the next morning of kidney failure. He was just thirty-seven years old. While his body was lying in state at the Sultan of Johore's *Istana Besar* in nearby Johore Bahru, the Tengku Ampuan (whose brother was by then the Sultan of Selangor) vainly attempted to persuade the Singapore authorities that he should be interred at Klang in the burial ground of Selangor royalty. She had to be reminded very firmly that Brunei custom required that his subjects should see his face before he was buried and that not until then could his successor be named.⁶⁷ In the meantime, High Commissioner Malcolm MacDonald was composing an ambiguous message of condolence to her:

I was very fond of His Highness the Sultan. He was one of the most colourful personages whom I have ever met and we had many interesting times together.

I shall always remember his lively personality on future visits to Borneo.⁶⁸

The Sultan's funeral ceremony and burial at Brunei took place on 6 June after his body had been flown back on an R.A.F. aircraft to Labuan and brought with full ceremony by royal barge to the *Lapau* (Court House) in Brunei Town. A detailed description of the proceedings was made by the North Borneo government's official representative, A.M. Grier (**Appendix I**).

The Brunei Succession

Immediately after the ceremony at the Lapau at 2.30 p.m., British Resident E.E.H. Pretty officially proclaimed Pangeran Omar as Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and the 28th ruler of Brunei. Whether this was in response to a direction from Sarawak's Governor Anthony Abell, in his capacity as High Commissioner for Brunei, or the unanimous resolution of a prior meeting of Brunei's Council of State, is not clear, although both parties were clearly in agreement. Abell's only official responsibility was to *confirm* the succession under the terms of Article 2 of Britain's 1888 treaty with Brunei. Pretty told Grier after the ceremony that there was some suggestion that in 1937 Tajuddin had forced his *wazir* to sign a document recognizing his daughter's succession and that surviving pre-war documents proved "that it had always been made clear to the Sultan that only male issue could succeed."⁶⁹ For his part, the thirty-five years old Omar Ali Saifuddin happily accepted his new role and quickly asserted his authority by insisting that his late brother be interred at the traditional royal burial ground upriver rather than at Ahmad Tajuddin's own estate four miles out of Brunei, as the Tengku Ampuan had wanted. He

⁶⁶ For these letters, see NA CO 943/1/20.

⁶⁷ *The Straits Times*, 5 June 1950.

⁶⁸ *The Straits Times*, 6 June 1950.

⁶⁹ A.M. Grier, "Funeral of the Sultan of Brunei," Rhodes House, Oxford, MSS Pac. s. 77.

also insisted that Tajuddin's face was packed with mud in full view of his subjects before he was interred, in accordance with Brunei custom.

Writing to Rajah Vyner Brooke's nephew, Anthony Brooke, from Brunei in March 1950 a few months before these events took place, the part-time journalist and banker's wife Kathleen Clark told him of the unpopularity of Ahmad Tajuddin, who had been given only a few years to live "because of the frightful condition of his liver from various dissipations."⁷⁰ Omar Ali Saifuddin, on the other hand, was

a most charming and excellent man who will make a first class Sultan with his very pro-British feelings[;] in fact he is a very fair man! He takes a real interest in this country, has a great sense of history and I think is as bright as glass, though he is so quietly spoken.⁷¹

Significantly, she pointed to Pengiran Mohamad, the Wireless Engineer, as the leader of the pro-Omar Ali Saifuddin faction:

A most charming, intelligent Malay who I believe has been educated outside Brunei, he is quiet and courteous and has great standing amongst his fellows. You always find he is the one who has been elected to organise everything ...⁷²

Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin had left no legitimate male heir, but the supposed 1937 agreement with his *wazir* and the 1 June 1950 *titah* meant that it was still open to MacBryan to challenge the legality of Omar Ali Saifuddin's succession and push instead for the installation of the then sixteen years old Tuanku Ehsan as ruler. This he did in a letter to Malcolm MacDonald written on the night of 6 June. At this point, however, he was probably unaware that there was a significant faction in Brunei that was loyal to Tajuddin's wishes and was strongly supported by some members of the Selangor royal family. Indeed, Pretty confessed many years later that he had put Omar Ali Saifuddin on the throne "against significant local opposition."⁷³ Present at the funeral was Tengku Kelana Jaya Petra, the brother of Tengku Ampuan Rohani, who had been denied the Selangor succession in the mid-1930s by the British and restored to it by the invading Japanese,⁷⁴ only to be deprived of it again by the returning British in late 1945. Not surprisingly, he was bitterly anti-British and strongly committed to the cause of his niece, Tuanku Ehsan. Dressed in splendid robes and with his eyelids painted with antimony in the traditional aristocratic style,⁷⁵ the flamboyant Tengku Kelana was a temporary rallying point for local opposition to the new sultan. This manifested itself late the following year in critical articles appearing in the Singapore journal *Melayu Raya* and evidently written by members of a dissident group which included a number of schoolteachers.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Kathleen Clark to Anthony Brooke, 27 March 1950, Rhodes House, Oxford, MSS Pac. s. 73 Box 19/7.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid. Pengiran Mohamad's full Brunei title was Pengiran Kerma Indra Pengiran Mohamad bin Pengiran Abdul Rahman Piut.

⁷³ Robert Nicholl, interviewed by the author, Oxford, 13 March 1981.

⁷⁴ See Yeo Kim Wah, "The Selangor Succession Dispute, 1933-38," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 2, Pt. 2 (September 1971), pp. 169-184.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ "Extract from Sarawak and Brunei Political and Intelligence Report for October 1952," NA,

The morning after Tajuddin's funeral and Omar Ali Saifuddin's proclamation as his successor, MacBryan cabled King George VI from Singapore:

May I be allowed to protest at the action your Majesty's Governor Anthony Abel[!] in Sarawak at having without your Majesty's command approved on behalf of His Majesty's Government that a person other than the Sultan's annointed [sic] heir should be proclaimed by the Council of Brunei upon the direction of the local British Resident[.] The rightful heir is Princess Ehsan.⁷⁷

MacBryan's plan may well have been to become Tuanku Ehsan's consort and thereby fulfill his grand T.E. Lawrence-style scheme of uniting all the Muslims in Borneo and the southern Philippines under a revived and strengthened Brunei Sultanate. Significantly, he had once again brought with him his Arabian robes and headdress.

The *Tongkat Ular*

The same morning, 7 June, MacBryan held a press conference in Singapore at which he claimed that the planned coronation of Omar Ali Saifuddin would be invalid without the presence of the golden orb and the *tongkat ular*, which he alleged were parts of the Brunei royal regalia that had come into his possession.⁷⁸ According to the Singapore-based Australian journalist, Dennis Warner, who was present, the *tongkat ular* (snake-headed walking stick or cane) "was simply a length of rattan, perhaps a couple of feet long, with a golden serpent's head and tail."⁷⁹ Accusing the British government of depriving Tuanku Ehsan of her throne, MacBryan cited a document signed and sealed by the Sultan appointing him as her guardian until she was enthroned. All this received extensive publicity in the Singapore and British press, with photographs of MacBryan brandishing the *tongkat ular*.⁸⁰ He was further reported as claiming that the late Sultan had shown him how to use the items of regalia "in traditional rites not known to anyone in Brunei."⁸¹

MacBryan managed the same day to see Malcolm MacDonald, who was clearly apprehensive of his ability to stir up controversy in the press and was anxious to restrain him. Predictably, MacBryan stressed the unconstitutional nature of the recent succession proceedings in Brunei, citing the *titah* signed by Ahmad Tajuddin on 1 June which claimed Tuanku Ehsan as his rightful heir. In order to support his case, MacBryan had brought with him the *tongkat ular* but he resisted MacDonald's repeated attempts to take possession of it and return it to Brunei. Subsequently, he was canny enough to deposit the two alleged items of regalia with a local bank, so that a search of his room at Raffles Hotel and his lawyer Sir Roland Braddell's offices by Singapore Special Branch or British Intelligence was in vain.⁸² MacDonald had refused to countenance MacBryan's

SEA 114/33/01.

77 This was reported in *The Daily Graphic* and *The News Chronicle* of 8 June 1950.

78 Dennis Warner, personal communication, 17 May 1996.

79 Ibid.

80 *The Daily Graphic*, 8 June 1950.

81 Dennis Warner, personal communication, 17 May 1996.

82 Dennis Warner, personal communication, 17 May 1996; *The Daily Express*, 19 August 1950.

claims as to the invalidity of the coronation without the missing regalia, while MacBryan continued to insist that Tuanku Ehsan was “the rightful ruler.” In his report to the Secretary of State, Arthur Creech Jones, the High Commissioner told him that this was “a characteristic piece of irresponsibility and foolish interference by MacBryan, whose conversation is pretty wild and shows signs of mental imbalance.”⁸³ He was not overly concerned about MacBryan’s intention of visiting Brunei and then going on to London to consult with Creech Jones: “In any case [he added], we presumably need not take this business too seriously, for MacBryan seems so blatantly in the wrong and is moreover such an irresponsible advocate of the case.”⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the question of the *tongkat ular* raised a doubt about the legitimacy of the planned coronation of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin.

MacBryan in Brunei

Arriving in Brunei on 11 June, ostensibly to deal with the late Sultan’s affairs, MacBryan nevertheless made no attempt to contact the Resident or to meet any Brunei Malay officials. Sarawak’s Attorney-General, Arthur Grattan-Bellew, who was visiting Brunei at the time, made a point of seeing him and managed to obtain a “glimpse” of the letters from Ahmad Tajuddin which were the basis of MacBryan’s claimed authority. However, he was unsure of their exact contents and whether or not they bore the Sultan’s official seal “as MacBryan kept talking to him in a completely incoherent and nonsensical way.”⁸⁵

MacBryan meanwhile had begun to drink heavily and behave extremely strangely while staying at the Government Rest House, “wandering naked around the verandah”⁸⁶ and “conducting thunderstorms.”⁸⁷ He was heard to pose the question: “Who are the Holy Trinity?”, to which he answered: “The Virgin Mary, Princess Elizabeth and Mrs. Hussey.”⁸⁸ There were other reports of erratic behavior towards his fellow guests at the Rest House and in the bazaar where he pinched the cheek of a Chinese woman drinking coffee before wandering around the town holding a half-filled glass of whiskey, followed by a crowd of curious children.⁸⁹ He was consequently certified as “being of unsound mind” by the Brunei State Medical Officer on 17 June and put aboard the next boat to Singapore, the fishing vessel *M.V. Tenggiri*, for medical treatment there.⁹⁰ Locked in his cabin for most of the voyage, MacBryan nevertheless managed to smash down the door, seize the ship’s navigational instruments and charts and throw them overboard.⁹¹

83 MacDonald to Creech Jones, 10 June 1950, NA CO 943/2/12.

84 Ibid.

85 Anthony Abell to Secretary of State for Colonies, 19 June 1950, NA, CO 943/2, file no. 59726.

86 Hugh Hickling, personal communication, 9 August 1991.

87 Mrs. Binda Large, personal communication, 13 March 1981. Binda Large was the wife of William Large, a pre-war Brooke officer who was at that time Chief of Police in Brunei.

88 I.A.N. Urquhart to Mrs. B. Large, 3 March 1981, letter in possession of the author.

89 Ibid.

90 *The Sarawak Tribune*, 23 June 1950.

91 Kathleen Clark, “Chronological Account of Events Concerning the Brunei Regalia (Tongkat and Chop) and MacBryan’s Activities: 23rd May 1950 to 18 Aug 1950,” copy of typescript in the

On his arrival in Singapore on 22 June, he was detained at the Mental Hospital there until mid-August under an order issued by the colony's Colonial Secretary. Released on the expiry of the order, he announced to the press that he intended going to London within a few days to pursue Tuanku Ehsan's case with the Colonial Office, taking the *tongkat ular* with him. The Colonial Office was sufficiently concerned at his claims about the missing regalia for Omar Ali Saifuddin's coronation to be delayed by almost a year until 31 May 1951.

Back in London on 21 August, MacBryan tried unsuccessfully to see Colonial Office officials about the succession and consequently seems to have suffered a mental breakdown. There was a story of him trying to direct traffic at Piccadilly Circus and his sister committing him to the mental hospital at Epsom in Surrey,⁹² where he had already been a voluntary patient on at least two occasions in 1946 and 1947. On his release, he returned to Johannesburg and on 26 October *The Times* published a letter from him emphasizing that the late Sultan had been concerned with his "unhappy political plight" and that of his people under the 1905-06 treaty with Britain, which subjected him to the authority of the British Resident in all matters except the Muslim religion. MacBryan claimed that the Sultan had wished to renegotiate Brunei's constitutional arrangements and to form a strategically important "British Bornean Union" with Sarawak and North Borneo, to be underpinned by the revenue from Brunei's oilfields, "the richest in the Commonwealth."⁹³

From Johannesburg, MacBryan continued to bombard the Colonial Office with letters relating to the Brunei succession and the revision of Brunei's treaties with Britain. However, his dispatch to Brunei's State Council in March 1951 of copies of letters written to him by Rajah Vyner Brooke on 28 June 1946 and by Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin on 2 April 1950 was rejected by its President, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, who saw "no useful purpose" in passing them on to the State Council.⁹⁴ When MacBryan protested to the Colonial Office that the documents had been withheld from the State Council on the advice of the Resident, a resolution was made by the State Council on 18 April that he be banned from entry to Brunei.⁹⁵ Following this, however, MacBryan was able to ascertain from the Colonial Office that it had no objection to his visiting the state. He promptly cabled Malcolm MacDonald in Singapore to confirm that there was no problem in making a visit in order to take legal proceedings against the Resident and make known the "commands, wishes and instructions of the late Yang di-Pertuan."⁹⁶

MacBryan was back in London in August 1951, writing to *The Times* about oil royalties in Sarawak and Brunei but failing once again to meet anyone at the Colonial Office. He appears to have returned to Johannesburg and then set off for Singapore once

author's possession.

92 Bertram Brooke to Margaret Noble, 31 September 1950, Brooke Papers, Rhodes House MSS Pac. s. 83, Box 28/5.

93 *The Times*, 26 October 1950.

94 Omar Ali Saifuddin to MacBryan, 2 April 1951, Brooke Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford, MSS Pac. s. 83, Vol. 29, Box 4/4.

95 MacBryan to James Griffiths, 13 April 1951, Brooke Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford MSS Pac. s. 83, Box 4/4; MacBryan to James Griffiths, 4 June 1951, CO 938/12/4, file no. 64148.

96 Telegram from MacBryan to Malcolm MacDonald, 23 May 1951, NA CO 938, 12/4.

again before the end of that year with the intention of visiting Sarawak and meeting Governor Anthony Abell in his capacity as High Commissioner for Brunei.⁹⁷ In any event, however, he seems not to have visited either Sarawak or Brunei, going on instead to Hong Kong where he died in unexplained and certainly suspicious circumstances in a hotel shortly before Christmas 1953.⁹⁸ It seems likely that the failure of his plans to establish the Sarawak Trust Fund and to put Tuanku Ehsan on the Brunei throne had proved too much for his increasingly delicate mental balance. While there is no proof that British Intelligence played any part in his death, there was every reason for the British government to have been relieved at the demise of this brilliant and charismatic man who had the potential to cause serious embarrassment in Brunei and London. Although he had taken the *tongkat ular* with him on his return to London, it subsequently disappeared and has never been heard of again. Whether it in fact constituted a vital part of the Brunei royal regalia is also a question that has never been settled.⁹⁹

X X X

There were only the briefest references to Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin in historical writing about Brunei in 1977 when I was completing my doctoral thesis on the cession of Sarawak in 1946 and it was because of this that I wrote to the Palace in Brunei asking if I could be supplied with any information. I had encountered the story of the diminutive Sultan during my research on the cession, an event which moved him to protest publicly in February 1947 that his traditional rights over Sarawak had been overlooked: that if Sarawak were to be ceded to anyone, it should be to him.¹⁰⁰ This was a remarkable outburst, particularly in light of the British government's commitment to the official annexation of Sarawak in July, but Tajuddin made his statement to the newspapers in Singapore where he was free from the "advice" of his Resident. What he was seeking, however, was not the resumption of his own sovereign rights over Sarawak but the payment to him by the British government of Straits \$5,000 for the transfer of sovereignty, an arrangement that Rajah James Brooke had undertaken with Brunei's governor of Sarawak, Rajah Muda Hashim, in September 1841.

I had seen photographs of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin with the first Japanese governor, Marquis Maeda, and his entourage of officers on their first visit to Brunei in early 1942. I had also learnt something of his relationship with Gerard MacBryan through my acquisition of the latter's private correspondence with his (since deceased)

⁹⁷ MacBryan to Secretary of State for Colonies, 4 June 1951, NA CO 938/12/4.

⁹⁸ Significantly, perhaps, there is no extant record of a Hong Kong police inquiry or coroner's inquest into MacBryan's death. Nor is there any information as to where he was buried. Personal inquiries made by the British anthropologist, Stephen Morris, in the 1980s could establish nothing. The documents found with MacBryan after his death were retained by the Hong Kong government authorities and eventually forwarded to the Colonial Office in October 1955 and thence to his third wife, Frances (NA CO 537/1635). The most recent document among those recovered was dated 3 November 1953. The Rajah, the Rane, Sir Dennis White and Averil Mackenzie-Grieve all gave different accounts of MacBryan's death (Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 279).

⁹⁹ There is no mention of the *tongkat ular* in the official listing of the 38 items of regalia used during the coronation of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah in 1972.

¹⁰⁰ *The Straits Times*, 28 February 1947.



Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin with (to his left) the Japanese Commandant of northern Borneo, Lieut. General Marquis Toshinari Maeda, early 1942. Seated behind the Sultan is his brother, Pengiran Bendahara Omar Ali Saifuddin and to his left, Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Hj. Mohammed Yasin. From Huissainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Ali Saifuddin III*.

first wife, the Australian, Eva Collins (then living at Nambour in southern Queensland), and his third wife, Frances Benn (then living near Warminster in Wiltshire).

My request for information about Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin of 11 October 1976 finally resulted in a letter from Datin M.E. Lloyd-Dolbey, then Personal Secretary to Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, of 6 September 1977, enclosing a nine-page typescript which is reproduced below (**Appendix III**). To all intents and purposes, it is an official biography and appears to have been written by one of the Sultan's Bruneian officials. While the information it contains appears to be factually accurate as far as it goes, it reveals very little of Ahmad Tajuddin's personality and character and of the problems he faced.

The foremost authority on these subjects was Britain's High Commissioner for South-East Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, who was based in Singapore from 1946 until 1955 and was a frequent visitor to Borneo. His official dispatches to the Secretary of State for Colonies on Brunei during those years were shrewd and informative but gave very little indication of his personal reactions. While he was an urbane and canny diplomat, MacDonald also had a sharp eye and an even sharper pen when it came to recording his personal impressions of the leading personalities with whom he came in contact. Although his journal entries were essentially private writings, they were self-conscious productions that were probably intended for publication at some later time. MacDonald was no doubt familiar with W. Somerset Maugham's Malayan and Borneo short stories and his writing closely imitated Maugham's acerbic style.

Some of MacDonald's descriptions of personalities, notably of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, were scurrilous in the extreme and this explains why his journals were



Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin and Major-General Yoshinori Maeda, c. February 1942.

From the private collection of Professor Bob Reece.

apparently “vetted” by an employee of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office after his death and some time after their removal from the library of the Royal Commonwealth Society in Burlington Avenue, London, to Durham University where MacDonald had been Chancellor and where his other papers were deposited. I noticed the “vetting” when I found that the journals in Durham were not in sequence and had some obvious gaps, including some pages which I had earlier photocopied when they were held at Burlington Avenue. As there had been a limit to the amount of photocopying allowed there (10% of the original), I had not managed to copy all the Brunei references, but the copies I managed to make, together with some further copying at Durham, meant that I had a fairly good coverage of MacDonald’s impressions of Brunei. A quick perusal of his typescript autobiography, “Constant Surprise,” also held at Durham University Library, revealed it to be a bland “official” account of his public career which in no way reflected the mordant Maugham-like *persona* of his private journals. His memoir, *Borneo People* (1956),¹⁰¹ was an affectionate and highly readable account of many of the people whom he had met there. Most prominent in these stories was Sarawak, where he frequently visited Paramount Chief Temenggong Koh’s Baleh longhouse on the upper reaches of the Rejang river by flying boat and where persistent rumors linked him romantically with one of Koh’s daughters. When it came to the point, however, he was unwilling to commit his less benign thoughts to print.

What do the incomplete private journals reveal?¹⁰² MacDonald made his first

101 Malcolm MacDonald, *Borneo People*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1956.

102 “Diary of various events in South East Asia, June 1946, to April 1952,” MacDonald Papers, Durham University Library, MS.

visit to Brunei in mid-July 1946 (the basis of the first two accounts reproduced below) and was there once again for the Sultan's Silver Jubilee celebrations in September 1949. His last meeting with the Sultan was in Singapore in late May 1950 when the latter was *en route* to London, but MacDonald visited Brunei again in May 1951 for the coronation of his younger brother, Omar Ali Saifuddin.

July 16 [1946]

Voyaged overnight on *Alacrity* to Suka Point on Muara Island, where we arrived at 7.45 this morning. Thence by Higgins' launch into the Brunei River, where we were met by two Government launches bearing the Sultan, some of his daughters and the Resident ([John] Peel). The Sultan came on board to greet me. He stands less than five feet high and has a face as weak as his character. From youth he has abandoned himself to wine, women and perhaps (in occasional hiccoughy snatches) song. It is not necessarily his fault. He is a badly brought up, and spoilt and (under the encouragement, I am told, of his mother) debauched princeling. He succeeded to his Sultan's throne when a minor, and is now 33 years old and in the 22nd year of his reign. When he succeeded it was the custom that the new Sultan inherit the harem of his predecessor. As there had been a succession of short-lived Sultans (some of them succumbing to the effects of deliberately administered poison) before this boy came to the throne, the accumulated harem had reached considerable proportions. I believe it contained seventy women. This would not have deterred the young Sultan, but it seemed objectionable to the British resident of the day ([Eric] Pretty, now in Johore). He decided that the time and opportunity had come to ration His Highness as regards wives. He took action accordingly. I must ask Pretty for the exact details of this interesting piece of Brunei history.

Whatever the ration that Pretty fixed, the Sultan indulged his appetite for women, and drink, to excess. I believe his excesses are of quality as well as quantity. He is a degenerate. Again, it was not wholly his fault, for apart from physical, mental and moral defects due to heredity, his mother provided him with an undesirable environment. She encouraged him to enjoy the company of women and to spend most of the time enjoying it. Her influence was against his taking his responsibilities as a Ruler seriously. His education was gravely neglected in all matters except those concerning the bed-chamber. Then he was suddenly sent to England for a little schooling; too sudden and erratic a change for an inexperienced and weak-witted minor Asiatic Sultan. His principal impression of Britain is the splendour of the Gleneagles Golf Course Hotel.

He was officially married to the daughter of the late Sultan of Selangor. He has treated her brutally and tyrannically. She never appears outside his house and few people seem to have seen her in it. I have heard some story about her being kept in a cage part of the time. His other wives are not officially married to him, but to his spear, his kriss [sic] and other parts of his possessions, according to some ancient Brunei custom. This fine distinction in theory makes no difference in practice.

This was the half-grown little ruler of Brunei who greeted me on the Brunei River a few miles below his capital this morning. His black hair has a circular shaved patch on the

back of his crown; his pop-eyes are concealed behind large, dark glasses; his moustache consists of a few long, curly wisps of black hair doing their best to look like a bushy cavalry moustache; his beard is even more ludicrously inadequate and absurd (consisting of about eight individual, unrelated, long, straggley black hairs); and his other features in keeping with these weak points. This morning he wore a musical-comedy uniform - a black peaked hat like a glorified London bus-driver's head-gear; a tunic of dark blue and silver fitted to his waist by a silver metal belt; blue breeches cut like riding breeches; and black top-boots. A couple of medals (those of the Jubilee and the Coronation) and the insignia of his C.M.G. strung round his neck completed the dress of this comic and sinister little personage.

Accompanying him were three of his daughters, two by 'unofficial' wives and the third by his official spouse. She is the youngest, looking about eight years old. They are young, dark-eyed girls with Malay features and beauty. But the youngest has wild, bad-tempered eyes.

He and his young relatives betook themselves from my launch into another and preceded me up river to Brunei town...

[pages missing]

... and other Englishmen who in days of yore had adventured to these same parts, bent upon business with the notorious Sultan of Brunei. It was pleasant to feel that the place wore almost the same aspect now as it did in their time, that perhaps no corner of the world had changed less in century, and that my eyes were to gaze upon much the same scenes and spectacles as strange as those which greeted them...

This was swiftly contained when we sailed into the river. Two small, trim launches approached us, and then stopped and hailed us. In one was Mr. John Peel, the British Resident of Brunei, immaculate in a white suit and topee, as befitted an able young representative of the old British Raj which is gradually disappearing from the East. In the other was the reigning Sultan of Brunei, accompanied by members of his family.

Our craft halted in mid-stream and the Resident and Royalties came aboard with smiles and words of friendly welcome. This gave me my initial opportunity to study the appearance of His Highness. I had been led to expect an extraordinary sight, but nothing so astonishing, so incredible as this. I could scarcely believe my eyes. I pinched myself to make sure that I was not dreaming. I had to discipline myself, to make sure that I did not stare in too rude wonderment. And that I did not burst into peals of merry laughter.

The Sultan was not a midget, but he was not very far from that. He measured 4 feet 8 inches high. Nevertheless, his various parts were well made, all in good proportion with the others. And his figure was like that of a neat little boy of pre-school age.

His face, however, bore a somewhat different character. He was adult, and eloquent of awful weakness and (should I say?) degeneracy. His skin was pale for a Malay potentate, but his hair was as black as pitch. Like smooth, polished ebony, it was brushed straight back from his boney forehead, and parted on the crown to reveal a shaved circular patch of bare pate. His dark, glistening eyes bulged too much from their sockets, an unhealthy

effect accentuated by the lenses of his horn-rimmed spectacle. His nose had a delicate, yet sensuous, curve, and large, ugly mouth was grossly full-lipped. His cheeks and most of his jaw were hairless, but above his upper lip some skimpy, curling wisps of black hair did their best to simulate a bushy cavalry moustache. Whilst less than dozen long, apparently unrelated, straggley hairs sprouted from his chin appeared like a ludicrously plucked and despoiled head of a worn-out Chinese sage.

In his eyes was a vague, dissolute look.

His costume was colourful, if incongruous. One of His Highnesses [sic] idiosyncracies was a passion for designing odd uniforms for himself. On this occasion his dress seemed best suited for the head chauffeur of some Austrian princeling in far-fetched musical comedy set in the Tyrolean Alps. His hat was shaped like a bus-driver's, with broad shiney black peak. His tunic was of dark blue, with silver lapels, cuffs and buttons. Its wasp-waist was clasped within a silver-metal belt. His trousers sported a different shade of blue, and were cut like particularly vulgar riding-breeches. His legs and feet were enclosed in black patent leather top-boots. A couple of beribboned medals on his bosom and the bauble of the C.M.G. strung around his neck completed the make-up of this comic personage.

With him were a quartette [sic] of daughters. Sons had he none; but those four young females he begot by various mothers. A Moslem monarch. There was no particular limit to number of ladies whom he might sire. One was his official wife, enjoying the title of Tungku Ampuan, a Sultan's daughter from the Unfederated Malay States. The others were, by some strange, ancient, hallowed Malay fiction, married to his principal weapons of war and the chase – his spear, his kris and the rest. The marital rights, however, were exercised wholly by His Highness.

Some of these women were the mothers of his three eldest daughters, who all gloried in the title Belabub. There was the Belabub Besar, or Big Belabub; the Belabub [blank] or middle one, and the Belabub Damit, or small Belabub – like the three bears in the fairy story of Goldilocks. The Sultan's youngest daughter was the legitimate offspring of himself and his wife, and she therefore was a fully-fledged royal princess who took precedence over her older half-sisters.

At the time when I first met them the Belabub Besar was a girl of seventeen summers. and the Princess Esah [Ehsan] was a child of nine. The other pair of girls were distributed in age somewhere between the two. They were a pretty quartette, black haired, dark eyed, brown skinned, sweetly featured, and dressed in brightly coloured, flower patterned batus and sarongs.

Yet they betrayed already their breeding. The eldest girl in particular had the gay, roving eye, the unabashed, inviting smile and the abandoned swing of the hips of a young lady who is no better than she ought to be. The two younger Belabubs had no such blatant style, and seemed innocently virgin yet they had an air of being natural, untamed and free, like jungle animals. The princess, as I have said, was still a mere child; but a selfish, imperious look in her eyes revealed that she was a true descendant of a long line of Brunei Sultans.

Brunei 3

The Sultan's Silver Jubilee fell on September 20th 1949.

On the previous day I took wing from Singapore, to attend the celebrations. My 'plane landed in Kuching, not only to take on more fuel to complete the flight to Brunei, but also to take on the Sultan and transport him to his Jubilee. He had been staying some time in his house in Kuching. Without him on this auspicious occasion the ceremonies in his state would indeed be a performance of 'Hamlet' without the Prince of Denmark.

However, when we landed on Kuching airfield he was nowhere to be seen. Nor were the officers of Government who should have been there to greet me and to speed me on my way. Instead an apologetic telephone message from [Chief Secretary] Gordon Aikman awaited me, explaining that the Sultan and the Tungku [sic] Ampuan (who was with him) were in ill-humour and were at the moment resisting the suggestion that they should go to Brunei, and that I might have to delay my onward passage whilst the process of persuasion were [sic] completed.

Whilst I waited I heard from an acquaintance of the events of the last few weeks. The Sultan had taken up residence in Kuching some time ago. He was in casual, happy-go-lucky mood. He complained of his health, and eventually took to his bed. For ten days no-one was allowed near him in his bedroom, where he apparently led the life of an invalid recluse, receiving no visitors, doing no work and declining contact with the outside world. Enquiries of his staff elicited the reply that he was feeling a bit under the weather, and was resting.

Suddenly one morning the doctor in the hospital received an urgent telephone call, saying that His Highness felt seriously ill, that he wished to stay for a while in the hospital, and that he had already entered his car and was on the way.

The royal patient arrived a few minutes later. The doctor had only to glance at him to diagnose his complaint. He looked in terrible condition, and was in a highly excitable state. He complained that he could not remain at his own residence, because the children there made so much noise, yelling and laughing all day long. The doctor knew that there were no children whatever in the house. Later, when His Highness was undressed and in bed in a private ward, he complained to the nurse of the bells that kept ringing in the corridor outside his door. Could someone stop their continuous tintinabulations?

There was in fact no bell anywhere within ear-shot. The ward was perfectly silent. His Highness's peace of mind was assailed not by noises, but by the preliminary signs and portents of a vicious attack of 'delirium tremens'.

The doctor visited the Sultan's residence, to discover what was the particular source of this indisposition. There he learnt that in the room which His Highness had occupied alone for the last ten days there were 423 empty beer bottles. It seemed therefore on average that the little man had been consuming 42 bottles per day. This seemed sufficient explanation of his physical condition.

It was now within two or three weeks of the Jubilee, in which the Sultan was to be the principal actor. The doctor and nurses did a thorough job with him, and restored him to

a presentable condition in time for the great event. But the recovery was superficial; His Highness' fundamental condition was serious; the royal kidneys were gradually breaking down under the strain which they had borne for many years.

The doctor made no secret of this to His Highness, and gave him a sharp warning of the danger. He calculated that at his present rate of deterioration the little Sultan had only between six months and eighteen months to live.

His Highness was therefore inclined to lose interest in life. He began to regard with indifference the vain pomp and glory of this world. At any rate he thought that to give a few days to the ceremonial of his Jubilee was to devote too large a share of the time remaining to him to futile vanity. If life was now to be short, let it at least be merry. Let its cup be filled to the brim with joy. Let him drink it to the very dregs and if perchance time permitted, let it be refilled again and yet again. He would savour its taste fervently, Praise to be Allah! And salaams to Bacchus too! Cheerio, chin-chin! Here's mud in your eye. No heeltaps! He did not wish the cup to be dashed even briefly from his lips by the nonsensical, mundane official tomfoolery of a reign which was in any case drawing rapidly to a close.

He declared that he would not go to Brunei for the Jubilee. His wife, who abhorred all public appearances, encouraged him in his opposition. They both dug their toes in.

Hence my delay on the airfield at Kuching. My travelling companions and I waited more than an hour whilst a tremendous argument took place in the royal residence. Aikman urged that the Sultan must grace his Silver Jubilee with his presence. His Highness averred that he was too ill to travel.

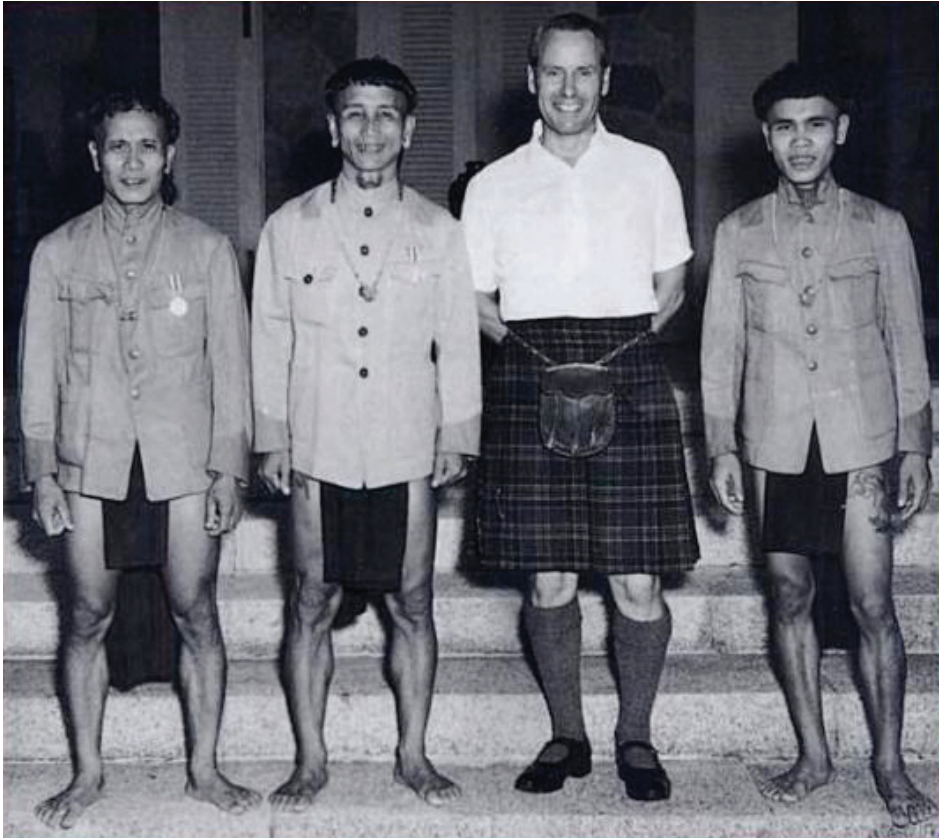
Eventually we, on the airfield, saw a little cavalcade of motor cars approaching us. On the bonnet of the leading car we spied the royal flag of Brunei, fluttering bravely in the breeze. Then within the car we recognised the dark goggles of the Sultan's sunglasses perched on his thin, pale face. So Aikman had won. Hamlet was after all to make a personal appearance in the leading role in the week's drama.

When the Sultan stepped out of the car, I saw the ravages of illness on his person. His body seemed to have grown smaller than ever. He was shrivelling up. His face appeared haggard and its colour was bad. The wings of the angel of death did indeed seem to be brushing his hollow cheek.

He walked towards us like a man in a trance. Then, as we shook hands, his lack-lustre eyes brightened with sudden recognition. He gave me a wan smile, and for a brief moment a mischievous sparkle lit his eyes, as if he and I were fellow-conspirators in some dark plot. It dissolved as quickly as it had formed and he turned away mechanically to ascend the steps into the jaws of the waiting aeroplane.

The Tungku Ampuan looked sour. She evidently regarded with extreme distaste our expedition.

But there was no turning back now. The aeroplane's doors closed sternly behind us. A few minutes later we were poised in position to start at the end of the runway. Then the propellers buzzed into violent activity, the machine raced madly along the ground, and



Malcolm MacDonald with Sarawak Iban friends, c. 1950. From the dust jacket of Clyde Sanger's biography of MacDonald, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.

with its inmates were hurled like pebbles from a catapult into the air.

The next morning broke fair, after a night of rain. There was a freshness in the air, and a slight breeze blew, bringing welcome hints of coolness to us ...

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... the Sultan mounting the steps. There, on the threshold of the hall, he was met by the Penghiran [sic] Bendahara and the Pengiran Pemancha, who bowed solemnly to him, With his consort he walked with stately pace along the carpet towards the dais. The whole audience rose in salutation.

The interior of the pavilion was tastefully decorated with flags and bunting, sprays of foliage and bouquets of flowers. But its most beautiful [sight] was the many coloured costumes worn by some of the distinguished people in it. [C.W.] Dawson [Acting Chief Secretary of Sarawak] and I contributed little to the array, striking a sober note in the white drill and gold braid of the sartorial adornment of tropical Governors. But

the leading Malays in particular indulged in an orgy of colour which lent the scene a sparkling brilliance.

I have already mentioned that the Sultan himself was clad in a rich regal Malay dress of emerald green silk and gold thread. Its stuff was of the finest shimmering and glittering quality. Possibly the complete dignity of his appearance was a little marred by the fact that he wore his crown at a slightly rakish tilt; yet this seemed to be charmingly in character. Moreover, it was more the crown's fault than this. The crown was too tight, not the Sultan. The head measurements which had been sent to the Goldsmiths Company to ensure an exactly fitting crown omitted to mention the fact that space should be allowed for a cloth skull-cap to be inserted between the circle of metal and the Sultan's skin. The net result was that the crown was too small; and His Highness had to wedge it over his forehead at a slight angle in order to prevent it from rolling off.

As I have also mentioned before, the Sultana was dressed that day in dark blue and gold, with yellow and gold scarf around her shoulders. The Penghiran Bendahara wore a magnificent suit of oyster and gold from the tip of his turban to the toes of his slippers. It had been especially woven for the occasion by his young wife. The Belabub Besar did not attend the ceremony, having fallen into disgrace as the result of some joyous escapade scarcely in keeping with the status of a married woman; but her two pretty sisters, the Belabub Lua and the Belabub Daunit, were sitting side by side in the front row. The former dressed in Cambridge blue and the latter in Oxford blue, each with a flowered pattern of gold on the silk. The Penghulu Pemancha was in a white uniform and wore a pork-pie hat with almost as many colours in its make-up as graced Jacob's coat. The Penghiran Mohamed had on a black velvet cap, dark brown baju and trousers and a purple and gold sarong. Inche Hassan, on the other hand, wore a pink baju and trousers offset by a white and gold turban and sarong. The Orang Kaya de-Gadong [sic] sported a red and gold turban and sarong over his white uniform. Several Hajis wore many-hued turbans and long, close-fitting, grey or brown 'frock-coats' which often distinguish those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Other Muslim personalities were clad in costumes of varied shades; the Chinese towkays came in black and white; and the Iban chieftains from up-country enlivened the show with caps of fur or feather, loin cloths of bizarre designs and, for the rest, gleaming brown flesh decoratively spattered with blue tattoo.

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... utterly exhausted at the winning post; the rest of my crew seemed completely fresh, and gave loud war- whoops of triumph.

A tea-party in the Residency garden followed. Amongst the large company were the Sultan and his four daughters. An even more interesting arrival was his mother. I already knew her astonishing and sinister reputation and looked at her with curiosity as we all sat down at a table to eat cakes and sip tea.

She appeared to be an affable old lady, gentle and dignified. Her small, slight frail figure seemed the incarnation of feminine weakness, and her serene, wrinkled face and trim grey hair had perfect air of ladylike gentility. Could this be (I thought) the notorious

regent, the cold-blooded tyrant, the unnatural mother of the scandalous tales which had circulated in the region? It seemed strange – although her smile, if gracious and sweet, was at the same time a trifle enigmatic. Perhaps the secret lay in her eyes. Occasionally they betrayed a quality in contradiction to the rest of her appearance. They had an imperious glance, cold, calculating and selfish. Then the embers of some fire within her glowed through them, and I felt instinctively that they could kindle easily into passionate fury and hate.

Noticing the fine, long deft fingers on her delicate hands, I realised that they had probably not lost their cunning. If the whispered insinuations of her enemies were true, these beautiful claws had dabbled in poison. Perhaps even now – if she felt so disposed – she could slip by some incredible, invisible sleight-of-hand grains of fatal powder into my tea. I looked at my cup and saucer, but they appeared untampered with. The fact that I am still alive to tell this tale is no doubt proof that she was innocent of guile that sunny afternoon. Perhaps in any case the darkest rumours spread about her past conduct were the idle, scandalous inventions of disgruntled courtiers. But I felt as if I were privileged to sit at table with an aged, two clawed Imperial dragon on its best behaviour.

I shall have more to write about her in due course.

As we sipped our tea and toyed with cakes we chatted about this and that. The Sultan understood a certain amount of English, but lacked confidence to speak it. John Peel acted as interpreter between us. His Highness was extremely talkative. He spoke of the miseries which he and his people suffered under Japanese rule. And of their joy at the return to Brunei of their British protectors and friends. He made sly, ingratiating, flattering remarks about my visit, with some kind and courtly phrases which warmed my heart towards him. They indicated a certain sense of diplomatic nicety in him, which no doubt sprang from impulses little more than skin-deep, but which was none-the-less engaging in a rascally, Oriental sort of way for that. I liked his artful quality. Frequently his smooth words were accompanied by a wistful, boyish smile of what appeared to be sincere friendship. Moreover his utterance occasionally showed a pretty turn of humour. His smile would then break into a healthy laugh, the sounds of which contained mischievous, hilarious notes.

The ladies took no oral part in the conversation. Moslem women are usually silent in the presence of strangers. But they spoke plenty with their eyes. The Sultan's mother gazed upon us with kindly yet lofty tolerance, as an all-wise, well-mannered elder does when compelled to listen to the chatter of half-witted children. The Belabub Besar rolled her huge, sultry eyes at me with the frank, familiar come-hither stare of a street walker at dusk in Piccadilly Circus. The two little Belabubs ogled and simpered like a couple of shy but rather sophisticated children; whilst the princess kept shooting towards me glances charged with bored and bad-tempered resentment.

The Sultan did not seem to be wildly enthusiastic about the tea. In fact he left a full, steaming cup of it untasted. Every now and then his hand moved instinctively towards the cup, but at the first contact with this unfamiliar object it drifted vacantly away again, whilst His Highness's eyes roved a trifle wildly in vain search of other refreshment.

As soon as he finally abandoned hope of any such sustenance coming to his rescue he rose, stretched out his hand to mine, bowed so low that you saw the tonsured circle, like a small full moon on the top of his head, and took leave. His mother and daughters followed him like a drove of hinds and fawns silently attending a royal stag.

I dined early at the Residency, for the reveling [sic] that day was a nonstop performance and would continue throughout the evening on the padang in the town. Immediately after the meal the Sultan called to take me to it. He was dressed now in faultless tail-coat, white waistcoat and the suitable accompanying garments. Round the neck of his boiled shirt dangled the ribbon and accolade of a Companion of the Noble Order of the British Empire, and on the lapel of his coat hung the two little medals which he had gained on the battlegrounds which were so hotly contested when authority had to decide who should get Jubilee and Coronation medals. He looked much too small and - in spite of his incredible pretence at a moustache and beard - young for this adult garb and finery, like some prodigious child conjurer dressed up for a Command Performance.

His eyes shone with gaiety. If there was just hint of glassiness in their glitter, it was of no account. No doubt he had been making up for the lack, at the afternoon tea party, of beverage to his taste, but he had done this wisely, not too well. He was in natural, spontaneous high spirits. Almost every sentence which he spoke twinkled with jest, and every now and again he gave a hilarious laugh. He was like a boisterous youngster, a child who had never properly grown up. I felt a strange sympathy for him, a sadness at this rather charming yet pathetic royal figure who seemed somehow so untrained to the responsibilities and dignities of rule.

We motored to the town. The night was dark, but heaven's high vault was brilliantly lit with the candles of ...

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The presence of the Sultan and two of the Belabubs was a remarkable innovation. Before the war the attendance of females at such a function would have been unthinkable. But in some respects, even in conservative Brunei, ancient custom was breaking down. Amongst others, the strict taboo against women in such public social gatherings was loosening its hold. Its power had not completely disappeared. Much argument had preceded the attendance of the Sultan's ladies, and although in their case this act of emancipation was urged and permitted, in other cases the old restraint had prevailed. For example, the Penghiran [sic] Bendahara had pleaded with his wife to come to the Jubilee celebrations; but she obstinately refused, on the grounds of impropriety. Other wives and daughters also had to stay away.

The Sultan's old nurse, however, had cast her vote for the new custom, and came to witness the ceremony. This withered hag occupied a place of honour, squatting on the floor close beside the throne. With her were two other aged and ugly harpies. Clad in dirty clothes with unkempt grey hairs and wrinkled, toothless faces, they looked like the three witches from 'Macbeth'. It was as if that infamous trio had met round their cauldron on the blasted heath near Forbes, mixed a vile concoction of obscene spells and drams, and after chanting, 'Where shall we three meet again?' decided on Brunei as the site of their next tryst.

Certain well known local characters were however, positively refused admittance to the audience. They were the Evil Spirits who, unless forbidden, were apt to haunt and spoil pleasant sociable gatherings in Borneo. Ancient custom decreed how they could be prevented from attendance. In the middle of the red-carpeted aisle through the centre of the audience was propped a strange-looking object like a large model of Neptune's trident. On the end of its long wooden shaft was set threateningly a three-pronged fork, worthy to be in the armoury of some horrific torture chamber. This weapon was a warning to all ill-disposed Spirits to keep away. If they intruded, they would be impaled upon these sharp and twisted spikes.

That was why the ceremony passed off without any untoward incident.

The Sultan and Sultanah advanced with regal tread to their thrones on the dais. These pieces of furniture were as much like bits of stage property for an amateur theatrical performance as were their swords, shields and lances of the Royal Bodyguard. They had been knocked together, planed and chiseled a few days earlier out of some common planks, and the black and gold paint on them still smelt fresh. They stood under a domed canopy also newly fashioned of painted wood, with an embroidered ceiling, silk side-hangings and a carpeted floor. On either side of the thrones, stood a large, shining, brass Brunei cannon.

When the Sultan and Sultanah reached this bower and seated themselves, the audience also sat down. Then an expectant hush was shattered by the Royal Orchestra, which broke into an astonishing musical shindy. The half-dozen solemn performers crowded on the floor near the thrones, lugging their instruments. These consisted of three ancient drums of stretched snake-skin, two colossal gongs and a wood-wind instrument with the wide mouth of trumpet. They thumped, crashed and wailed at the tops of their voices all together and at what seemed to be interminable length.

They would have continued indefinitely, if ancient custom had been observed. The uproar of this orchestra on special occasions is supposed to have had semi-sacred imports, and the longer it lasts the more virtue it imparts to a ceremony. However, the Sultan did not, apparently, share that view. It was only with the greatest difficulty that he was persuaded to allow his trusty bandsmen to take any part in the proceedings at all. He could not abide them. To borrow a descriptive expression, he hated their guts, and their drums, gongs and flute as well.

I could not blame him. In accordance with time-honoured tradition, they had been playing continuously, with scarcely pause to draw breath, all the previous day, half the night, and all that morning. They started in a room next to his living room. He cursed the infernal noise, and commanded silence; only to be told that ill luck would dog his Jubilee if it were not accompanied by this customary music. He almost went insane. After a while – unable to strangle them – he dismissed them to the verandah, then to the lawn outside and finally to an out-house beyond the lawn. So great was their prowess with wind and fist that even from there faint, maddening strains of their hullabaloo irritated the royal ear. The Sultan declared that he never wanted to hear another peep or squeak from them, and ordered that their performance should be struck from the programme prepared for the Jubilee Pavilion.

Once more the pundits pointed out to him that this would presage some awful disaster ...

May 30 1952

Sultan of Brunei lunched with me at Bukit Serene [the High Commissioner's official residence] today. He is on his way to England, to pay his respects to the King and thank him for his 'K' [knighthood]. I wonder whether he will ever get there. He looks like a doomed man to me, much thinner, weaker, frailer than at his jubilee. His head seems narrower, his flesh thinner (almost nothing beneath the skin), his eyes with death in them.

He was sober and rather silent, not lacking in dignity except to those awful, bulgy, tell-tale eyes and a general sense of a living corpse, a human body where decomposition has started before death has claimed it. But he talks in spasms. He drank whiskey-and-soda. Before lunch he drank three-quarters of a tumbler full, and then hesitated over the rest. Tunku Mahkota, who was a fellow guest, told him to swallow it so that we could go and eat.

The little Sultan professed inability.

'I drink whiskey very little', he said with a sheepishly naughty laugh.

'Hardly a drop', I said encouragingly.

H.H. smiled in friendship at me and then said 'I used to drink to excess'.

He gave his gay, infectious laugh which is like that of a boy who is being extremely naughty but who knows that he will get away with it because no one dare say him 'nay'.

Afterwards he drank two more full whiskeys and-sodas.

June 9th

The little Sultan died this morning at 9 o'clock. He had a haemorrhage last night, was taken from Raffles Hotel to the Hospital, and never had a chance of recovery. So passed away the last of the mediaeval Sultans.

May 29 - June 1st

In Brunei for the Coronation.

Arrived with Abell on the *Mermaid* after two days at sea from Kuching

The house party at the Residency, where Pretty - the greatest British Resident ever in Brunei, and the 'last of the Nineteenth Century Residents in Malaysia' - is entering on his last month: - [Revd P.H.H.] Howes, Abell, Prettys, Andrey and me.

The lit-up kampong at night like a long procession of glow worms. An occasional firefly above in the form of a lamp on a pole.

The Bendahara's eyes were popping [more] than ever as he raises his arm with its drawn sword and shouts 'Sambah', looking around at his audience with a glance that would be penetrating if they were not half-blind ...

APPENDIX I: Robert Irvine, "Report of Visit to Brunei for the Coronation of H.H. the Sultan on the 17th March, 1940"

[NA CO 717/143/20]

I embarked on m.v. *Marudu* on Saturday the 9th March, 1940, and reached Labuan at about 5 p.m. on Wednesday the 13th March. I spent Wednesday night with Mr. Jakeman, the Resident, Labuan, at the Labuan Residency and about 12 noon on the following day I left for Brunei on the launch *Kittiwake*, arriving there at about 4.45 p.m.

My formal landing in Brunei took place the following morning, the 15th March, at 9.30 a.m. It had been arranged for me to present the British Resident, Major E.E. Pengilley with his Efficiency Decoration at this formal landing. Accompanied by R.W. Jakeman, Resident, Labuan, and by Lieutenant Harun bin Mohamed Amin, Federated Malay States Volunteer Force (Superintendent of Education, Brunei) I traveled by the launch *Muara* from the Residency jetty to the Customs jetty, a distance of about 1 ½ miles, and was met on arrival by the British Resident. Mr. Jakeman and I were in Civil Service uniform and Major Pengilley and Lieut. Harun in Volunteer uniform. We ascended the Customs wharf and were accorded a salute by a Guard of Honour of 21 men of the Brunei Police under the command of the Chief Police Officer, Mr. W. Martin. The Guard was drawn up at the head of a hollow square facing my point of arrival, on one side were stationed the principal residents of Brunei town and on the other a number of privileged spectators. After inspecting the Guard of Honour I took up position behind a small table draped with a Union Jack near the middle of the hollow square, with Mr. Jakeman on my right and Lieut. Harun on my left and Major Pengilley stationed himself in front facing me at a few paces distance. Mr. Jakeman read out Major Pengilley's record of service in English and Lieut. Harun a Malay translation. Major Pengilley stepped forward and I pinned on his Decoration. I was then introduced to each of the principal residents. This concluded the formal landing and Major Pengilley, Mr. R.F. Evans (the representative from British North Borneo), Mr. Jakeman and I left the Customs wharf and proceeded to the Astana [sic] Mahkota, 3 miles away, for a formal call on His Highness the Sultan.

We arrived at the Astana at 10 a. m. and were shown upstairs by the A.D.C. and the Private Secretary to His Highness. In the room upstairs were the two wazirs (Duli Pengiran Bendahara and Duli Pengiran Pemancha), the Pengiran Shahbandar, several other Brunei Chiefs and Tengku Klana Jaya Petra, who had come to represent the Sultan of Selangor at the Coronation. The Sultan appeared almost immediately, in white uniform. He greeted us all very affably and invited us to sit. We conversed together for about a quarter of an hour and then took our leave.

At about 11.20 a.m. the Sultan paid a return call on me at the Residency, bringing with him the chiefs who had been present at my formal call at the Astana. We chatted together for about half an hour or so, very pleasantly and easily, and the Sultan then returned to the Astana. During this interview the British Resident and I had a few minutes private conversation with his Highness when His highness informed us that he wished to make

a gift of \$100,000 from the State's revenues to His Majesty's Government for the prosecution of the war.

The Coronation Ceremony was timed for 3 p.m. on the 17th March in the large room of the Government Office, which had been cleared of all furniture and decorated for the occasion.

At the far end of the room, on a platform raised about 2 feet from the floor, was the throne from the Lapau (the old Council Chamber) a wooden structure painted yellow and surmounted by a dome and various banners, having with it a cushioned chair covered with yellow silk. Facing the throne on the left were placed chairs for the European spectators and on the right chairs for the important Asiatic spectators. These chairs occupied about half of the hall and behind there was standing room for the general public. Adjacent to the throne on the left was a raised dais for the representatives of the various Governments. Down the centre a broad passage was left and railed off to prevent the spectators from breaking into the centre.

I arrived punctually at 2.45 p.m. and took up position on the verandah of the office where the other representatives, Selangor, Sarawak and British North Borneo, had already assembled. A few minutes later the two Wazirs arrived with the Sultan's Crown and it became apparent that the programme would run late as the Wazirs had to return to the Astana to accompany the Sultan to the Lapau and by this time the Sultan should have been at the Lapau entering his litter for the procession to the Coronation Hall. After about 10 minutes wait we were informed by telephone that the Sultan had left the Astana and 10 minutes later that he had arrived at the Lapau and that the litter procession was about to start. It came into sight in a few minutes, with drums and gongs beating, trumpets blowing and people shouting. The litter, a wooden construction painted yellow, was carried on *the* shoulders of 24 men, 6 to each pole. It had a seat for the Sultan with a canopy over it and standing on the litter in front were the two Wazirs and the A.D.C. and behind two attendants carrying regalia. Walking in front of the litter, at the sides and behind, were chiefs, regalia bearers and attendants with swords and spears. There must have been well over a hundred of them. Particularly noticeable amongst the regalia bearers were five men carrying giant candles in giant candlesticks painted in bright colours. The Sultan was bareheaded and in a white velvet uniform with yellow facings and yellow stripes on the trousers.

The litter was set down before the Guard of Honour of 24 Brunei Police under the command of the Chief Police Officer, and, after inspecting the Guard, the Sultan came up on to the office verandah where I and the other representatives greeted him. We then went into the Resident's office where a procession was formed for the entry into the Coronation Hall. When the procession was ready it moved off down the centre of the Hall to the throne at the far end, The Sultan ascended the throne, I and the other representatives and the British Resident took our places on the raised dais, and the chiefs, regalia bearers and attendants took up their allotted positions around the throne.

Facing the Sultan on the platform beside the throne, on the Sultan's right, was the Wazir

Duli Pengiran Bendahara, and in the same position on his left the Wazir Duli Pengiran Pemancha. Beside the Pemancha stood the A.D.C. At each of the four corners of the platform stood regalia bearers, the bearer in front on the right holding a brazen arm and hand, the palm of the hand facing upwards at right angles to the arm, the bearer in front on the left holding a brazen lion, and the two behind weapons. Kneeling on the platform immediately in front of the Sultan was an attendant holding a drawn sword with the hilt, presented to the Sultan and the point on his own breast. A giant candlestick was stationed at each corner of the platform and one behind the throne. The Pengiran Shahbandar and some major chiefs stood facing the platforms and on both sides and behind the platform were the rest of the attendants and regalia bearers.

The proceedings commenced with the Coronation of the Sultan by the Duli Pengiran Bendahara. The Pengiran carrying the Crown handed it to the Duli Pengiran Pemancha who in turn handed it to the Duli Pengiran Bendahara who placed it on the Sultan's head. The crown is a yellow songkok (cap) with a broad band of gold studded with small diamonds and brilliants and having a white plume in front. It is a new crown made to the Sultan's design, the old one having disappeared since the last Coronation.

The Duli Pengiran Bendahara then read out the long proclamation. (At this point the Bendahara, an old man and not very strong showed signs of distress and had to be supported). At the end of the proclamation the first gun of a 21 gun salute boomed out, the 'nobat' (the royal band) consisting of drums and trumpet played and the Bendahara called out in a loud voice 'sembah' (do homage). All the Malays around the throne waved their swords and spears and shouted back 'sembah'. So also did the several hundred Malays standing at the back of the Coronation Hall and I could hear loud shouts of 'sembah' from the crowd outside the Hall. The Duli Pengiran Pemancha then read out a short proclamation, at the end of which the 'nobat' played again and there were more shouts of 'sembah'. There were several more of these short proclamations each ending with the 'nobat' and shouts of 'sembah'.

As the sound of the last gun of the 21 gun salute died away, I came down from the dais and stood facing the Sultan 3 feet or so from the platform. I read out in English the message from His Majesty the King, the message intimating to the Sultan his appointment to be an honorary Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, the message from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the message from His Excellency the High Commissioner. I paused at the end of each message for Mr. E.C.G. Barrett, the Assistant Resident, Brunei, to read out a Malay translation. I handed the yellow packet containing the messages in Jawi to the A.D.C. who handed it to the Sultan, bowed, and returned to my seat on the dais.

The representatives of Selangor (Tungku Klana Jaya Petra and Dato Kayu Abdul Hamid), Sarawak (the Resident of Miri and a Native Officer) and British North Borneo (the Resident of Jesselton and a Native Officer) then went forward in turn and delivered their messages. At the conclusion of the messages the Sultan stood up and read out a

reply to each representative. Prayer was then offered by the Dato Imam of Brunei and the ceremony ended. The Sultan descended from the throne and proceeded down the centre of the hall in a procession similar to the procession of entry to the porch of the offices where his litter was in readiness. The chiefs and attendants took up their positions and the litter procession returned to the Lapau where the Sultan entered his car and returned to the Astana.

Apart from the delay of half an hour or so, which I have mentioned previously, the ceremony went smoothly and without any hitch and the Resident and the other Government officers responsible for the arrangements are much to be congratulated. The crowds thronging the road from the Lapau to the Government offices must have numbered several thousands but they were orderly and gave no difficulty to the Police and Boy Scouts controlling the route. Inside, at the back of the hall, there must have been several hundred Malay spectators and they too caused no trouble. There was a certain amount of jostling and pushing in the confined space of the porch and steps of the office as the attendants scrambled to take their places for the return procession of the litter to the Lapau, and some people had their clothes disfigured with splashes of grease from the giant candles as the bearers pushed their way into position, but apart from that everything was most orderly. I noticed after the litter procession had passed on its return journey that many spectators rushed forward to secure a piece of the white cloth which had been laid down along the route – as a memento, I presume.

After giving the Sultan some minutes to get clear, the invited guests followed him to the Astana for the bersanding ceremony. There was a wait of about half an hour and then the Sultan and the Tengku Ampuan came down to the audience hall below and took their seats on cushioned chairs of yellow silk on the throne. Seated on the floor in front of the throne in two lines forming a passage way up to the throne were 30 small Malay girls and the other women of the Astana stood around. After a few moments the Sultan's eldest sister stood up and turning around called out in a shrill voice 'sembah semua'. This was repeated three or four times and then the women withdrew. During the whole performance the Tengku Ampuan remained quite motionless, staring straight in front and, with her face completely devoid of expression. She was beautifully dressed in a cream coloured robe with many jewels mostly diamonds and brilliants and had a small diamond crown on her head.

On the conclusion of this bersanding ceremony the Sultan and the Tengku Ampuan proceeded to their decorated motor car for the motor car procession through the town. Outside the town many of the kampong people had made little shelters in which to sit and watch the procession and in the town itself the route was thronged with spectators. The Sultan and the Tengku Ampuan drove in an open car with an attendant standing behind shading them with a large yellow umbrella.

On returning to the Astana the guests were provided with tea.

The Sultan was unable to be present at the State Banquet held at 8 p.m. the same evening in the Recreation Club. He sent a message to say that the 'adat' (custom) prescribed

that he must remain within his Astana for several days after his Coronation. The Duli Pengiran Bendahara was also an absentee, his heavy day having been too much for him. There were 150 guests at the Banquet. The toast of His Majesty the King was proposed by the British Resident and I made a short speech in Malay expressing pleasure at having had the opportunity of being present at his Highness's Coronation and wishing him and his country success and prosperity.

The following evening, the 18th March, the Sultan gave a dinner party at the Astana for the representatives of the Governments attending the Coronation and for important residents in Brunei. After dinner all the guests were invited upstairs. The Sultan and the Tengku Ampuan (who was not present at the dinner) seated themselves on cushioned chairs of yellow silk on a raised platform at the end of the room and after a short pause, the Sultan stood up and read out an address thanking the representatives for their attendance at the Coronation and the British Resident and the other Government officers concerned for the efficient arrangements which had been made for the Coronation ceremony and for the celebrations, a well-deserved tribute. I made a short speech in Malay in reply expressing my pleasure at having been given the opportunity of being present at His Highness's Coronation and thanking His Highness on behalf of myself, the other representatives and the other guests, for his hospitality that evening. We then bowed and withdrew. Some amusements, a ronggeng, main silat, and Dusun dancing had been provided in the grounds of the Astana and we spent a very pleasant hour, the Dusun dancing being particularly interesting as it was new to most of us...

APPENDIX II: A.M. Grier, "Funeral of the Sultan of Brunei"

[Brooke Papers, Rhodes House, Oxford, MSS Pac. s .77]

1. On my return from Jesselton on 5th June I found telegrams waiting for me to the effect that launches from Brunei with senior officers of the State and mourners would arrive about noon and desired to return immediately with H.H. body and those members of his entourage who had accompanied it. While I was in Jesselton I was instructed to use my discretion about attending the funeral ceremonies as the representative of the North Borneo Government and to advise when the funeral was to be. Unfortunately the wireless link with Brunei does not work until 1300 [hours], after its early morning session, and, as the aircraft bearing the body was due at 12.30 hours, it would not be possible to signal the time of the funeral before the launches returned to Brunei. I therefore decided to accompany the launches and to send a signal from Brunei.
2. The mourning launches on arrival were a most impressive sight, with everyone wearing, if a Muslim, a white band around his songkok, and if a European, a black band on his sleeve. There was a generally cheerful air about the whole party. Lorries and other transport were available and the mourners followed by many of the inhabitants of Labuan went up to the airfield to await the aircraft.

3. Arrangements at the airfield were excellent. The plane arrived dead on time and was backed into position beside the Guard of Honour. The coffin was brought out and placed upon an R.A.F. 1,500 cwt. truck where it was covered with a State flag with representatives seated each side of it. The wreaths were of great beauty and from a large variety of individuals, States, and high Government officers. The family party had grown since I saw them off from Labuan, and now included the Tungku Ampuan's elder brother, the Tungku Klana, and a talkative and somewhat unpleasant younger brother. The coffin went straight to Small Ships Wharf where, before an enormous crowd, it was embarked on the M.L. *Muara*, while the family retired as usual to the Rest House. However their sojourn there was shorter than it had ever been before, and both launches set out about 1.0 p.m.
4. I was on the *Muara* and consequently heard a considerable amount about the Sultan's last illness from his secretary, Inche Hassan, with as can be imagined, very full details of the cost of clothes which had been bought for the trip to the U.K., cost of the coffin, anxiety about his future, and highly slanderous sidelights on the visiting members of the Selangor Royal House, who were stated to have pawned the Sultan's watches and fountain pens as soon as he died. I gathered that Inche Hassan felt that his future in Brunei was not secure.
5. Owing to the speed with which everything had been handled in Labuan, we were suddenly advised once we had entered the Brunei river that we were running ahead of schedule. We therefore had to slow down to arrive at 5.0 p.m. The wharf and town were a wonderful spectacle. By the wharf lay a large barge on which a two-storey superstructure had been erected. The top and first storey were decorated with the Royal yellow and State flags leaving the bottom storey free for the coffin and the Guard of Honour. Beside the wharf lay dozens of prahus whose occupants wore large domed hats giving an effect of a field of mushrooms on the water. There was a Guard of Honour from the Brunei Police waiting on the wharf but apart from this control all other available space was occupied by a vast, respectful, but entirely uncontrolled crowd, of the Sultan's subjects. The coffin was carried ashore and placed in a carrying bier covered by a domed erection of yellow silk shaded by the royal umbrella. It then set out for the Astana, in theory followed by members of H.H.'s family and other mourners. In practice only the British Resident and Mrs. Pretty reached the Astana [sic] with the family. I was taken to the Residency by the Assistant Resident and therefore to my regret missed the only signs of mourning which were paid to the Sultan. I also missed the interesting spectacle of the Selangor royal family making a quick assessment of the value of the presents given to the Sultan on his 25th anniversary which are now the personal property of his heirs.
6. There were two matters on which trouble might have been expected. While in Singapore the Sultan had taken on as private secretary a certain Mr. McBryan [sic] and it was thought in Brunei that it was he who had arranged for the insertion in the *Straits Times* of a notice to the effect that the Sultan wished his only legitimate daughter to succeed him. It was known that the Sultan had long held this desire and

there was some doubt whether he had not compelled the wazirs to sign a document in about 1937 recognising his daughter's succession. Fortunately Brunei did not lose its documents during the war and the British Resident was in a position to prove that it had always been made clear to the Sultan that only male issue could succeed. However apparently the Sultan had been reinforced in his wishes by a speech made by Mr. Malcolm Macdonald extolling the virtues of Queen Elizabeth of England. The other difficulty was that the Tungku Ampuan was determined that the Sultan should be buried on his own land near the 4th mile from Brunei Town along the motor road, and had obtained some sort of agreement from the Deputy Commissioner General, probably in order to expedite the despatch of the body from Singapore. In the event the wazirs decided that the Penghiran Bendahara should succeed his brother, while the Penghiran Bendahara put his foot down firmly about the place where his brother was to be buried.

7. The funeral ceremonies were scheduled to begin at 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday 6th June, by which time everyone had assembled in the Court House. The coffin and family mourners arrived about three-quarters of an hour late and owing to a misunderstanding the Tungku Ampuan with her daughter and brother failed to attend the ceremony. The Tungku Ampuan and her brother went straight to the wharf. The ceremony in the Court House was most impressive, the coffin being carried from the public road to the dais along a pathway covered with white cloth. After suitable prayers the Penghiran Bendahara was announced as the new Sultan. He made a short speech and appeared to be very popular with the people. He was then congratulated by the representatives of the Governments of neighbouring territories. The coffin had meanwhile been taken up and carried to the wharf through vast crowds of people and escorted by the bodyguard carrying spears or staves with red pennons [sic] which I imagine had last done duty at the Sultan's Jubilee celebrations. As the Court House became empty there was a wild scramble for pieces of the white cloth which had covered the route, and as far as I could make out an effort was made to see that everyone who struggled hard enough got a fair share.
8. The water procession was of a beauty which will not easily be forgotten by those who saw it. The barge carrying the coffin and the bodyguard was towed by the M.L. *Sri Brunei* while the M.V. *Muara* carried the late Sultan's family, important officers of State and the representatives from neighbouring territories. A large crowd of prahus and other launches followed behind while the procession went slowly past the river kampong to the burial place across the water. A small jetty had been built but it was not easy to scramble ashore. The site for the grave was high on the hillside resembling a Chinese graveyard, and the grave diggers were still busy when the procession arrived. Incidentally the ground was very rough so that the procession was little more than a scramble up the hillside until everyone had found a convenient tomb or tree on which to sit. It was also very hot.
9. On its arrival, the coffin was opened so that the Sultan's body could be placed in contact with the earth which was put around his face. Fortunately he had been

embalmed in Singapore. After that the hole was not large enough to take the coffin. However no-one seemed to mind and the coffin was finally lowered and the grave filled in, after which the whole party streamed back to the launches in a manner reminiscent of a football crowd finding a gap in the fence around the field when they had already been informed that there were no spare seats.

10. I returned to Labuan the same evening arriving about 9.30 p.m. and am most grateful for the opportunity of seeing this ceremony which was such an interesting mixture of old world ceremony and uncontrolled crowds. I was most impressed by the way the British Resident and Mrs. Pretty coped with the situation, and by the respect and esteem in which they are both so clearly held.

10th June, 1950.

APPENDIX III: SULTAN SIR AHMAD TAJUDDIN AKAZUL KHAIRI WADDIN

His Highness the SULTAN SIR AHMAD TAJUDDIN AKAZUL KHAIRI WADDIN *ibnu* Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam, the 27th Sultan of Brunei who was born in Istana, Brunei Town on 2nd September, 1913 corresponding to 30th Ramadhan, 1311, was a very young Sultan at the time His Highness succeeded His Highness' father Sultan Sir Muhammad Jamalul Alam, K.C.M.G., who passed away on 11th September, 1924 at Istana Sungai Tekuyong, Brunei Town. Because at the time when His Highness received Keris Sinaga to succeed His Highness' father His Highness was then 11 years of age, all governing responsibility for the State of Brunei was handled by two Wazirs namely Pengiran Bendahara Pengiran Anak Abdul Rahman and Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Muhammad Yassin. Three years after His Highness became Sultan in August, 1927, His Highness made an official visit to Labuan and incidently [sic] it was His Highness' first visit abroad.

In his early age His Highness received Islamic Religious education from appropriate religious officers. Later, at the age of 14 years that was in 1927 of the Christian Year His Highness then began his English education under the tuition of a European teacher. While studying English His Highness was said to be a bright pupil and was able to master all the lessons that were taught to him. His Highness' talent could be observed from his achievements within so short a time to master the English Language although at that time English was considered to be a difficult language as it was sparsely [sic] being heard then. In view of his achievements which were beyond expectation, at the end of that year careful preparation was made by His Highness' teacher to fit the rapid advancement of His Highness' education into a more effective system. By the will of Allah, His Highness was able to follow the system with success and this had enabled His Highness to further his education by himself based on the advices [sic] given by His Highness' teacher. From the way His Highness studied it could be seen that His Highness was a man of great determination and consequently His Highness was able to receive an education comparable to those who studied in schools.

To commemorate his attaining the age of 17 years old which is known as the age of discretion, on 30th Ramadhan of the Hijrah [sic] 1348 corresponding to 28th February of the Christian Era 1930, His Highness' 17th birthday was celebrated with pomp and ceremony, because such age was considered as a transition period to adulthood. Since then, His Highness' birthday was calculated annually according to Muslim Calendar. None-the-less, preparation for the continuation of His Highness' education went on with the engagement of the service of an English teacher.

One year after attaining the age of adolescence, on 19th September, 1931, in a ceremony attended by state dignitaries, the power to rule the State of Brunei which was then handled by the two Wazirs was handed back to His Highness. As of that date His Highness himself governed Brunei. As a result, His Highness was always fully preoccupied with government affairs. To smoothe out the affairs of the government, a State Council was established, comprising of 9 members including the British Resident. The Council was responsible for the governing arrangement which was to be implemented and all enactments had to be submitted to the Council before being put into force.

As a historical landmark, it was during His Highness' reign that oil exploration was started in Brunei. By the will of Allah, in April, 1929 an oil well was discovered in Seria being a source of revenue for Brunei and the oil mining work was from time to time being expanded until it became an important industry which brought prosperity and made Brunei Darussalam famous. The gift of Allah which was discovered during His Highness' reign has always been remembered by His Highness' subjects because from its revenue gradual development has been undertaken to meet the needs of the people and the State. The development of roads and schools was extended in line with the revenue. A bridge was built to link Brunei Town area with areas in the west which provided a link to Seria oil field.

As stated in the history of Brunei, it is true that most of the previous Sultans of Brunei were keen to make visits abroad to see the condition of those foreign countries so as to make comparison with their own country. The footsteps of the previous Sultans of Brunei who were very keen to make visits abroad had, more or less, been followed also by His Highness. On 1st October, until 21st October, 1931 His Highness went to Peninsular Malaya and later in July, 1932, His Highness went to England to see the development there. It was a long visit and [it was] only in August, 1933 that His Highness returned to Brunei. During His Highness' visit, His Highness' Government was administered by Pengiran Bendahara and Pengiran Pemancha too. During both visits His Highness was accompanied by Pengiran Muhammad bin Pengiran Abdul Rahman Piut as ADC (honorary) who was later known as Seri Paduka Pengiran Temenggong Sahibul Bandar Pengiran Haji Muhammad. Later the post of ADC was bestowed on Pengiran Besar Bagol ibnu Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam (His Highness' brother).

A great celebration was held in Brunei to welcome His Highness' return from England. The event was celebrated not only by the people and the inhabitants of Brunei but also by the people of the neighbouring areas in Sabah and Sarawak who still considered the Sultan of Brunei as their Sultan. With the arrival in Brunei of a large number of boats from the places mentioned, the Customs Department had not the time to carefully check

them and almost every house was said to have visitors from the neighbouring areas who were related to them. The display of colourful fireworks which was specially ordered from Japan brightened the night scenery during the festivity. Boat race which was known to be the pride of Brunei people since the days of Awang Semaun was also held. During the boat race, both sides of the Brunei river were full of perahus and sailing boats (tongkang) backed with spectators including foreign visitors. After dark every house was illuminated with colourful lights and lanterns and on top of Bukit Penggal, Bukit Subok, Bukit Saililah and Bukit Sungai Kebun big fires were lighted which illuminated the whole of Brunei Town on that night.

Later, in 1934 His Highness went to Selangor and married Tengku Raihani, the daughter of Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Alaudin Sulaiman Shah. The ceremony took place on 30th April, 1934 at Istana Negara, Kelang, in accordance with the practice of the Brunei and Selangor Royal Customs. The 'Akad Nikah' ceremony for the marriage was held in Masjid Jami' Rahmah, Kelang, Selangor. His Highness was accompanied during his visit by His Highness' mother Her Highness Paduka Seri Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Fatimah and His Highness' brother Pengiran Muda Omar Ali Saifuddin, State dignitaries, His Highness' relatives and retinue including regalia bearers and 'Naubat' group who took part in the ceremony. When the wedding ceremony was over, His Highness returned to Brunei in July, 1934, but in October, 1934, His Highness went to Kelang again. Later in November, 1934, His Highness and Tengku Ampuan Raihani together with the retinue returned to Brunei. His Highness' arrival was ceremoniously received by the people and inhabitants of Brunei.

His Highness was said to be a Sultan who highly respected his visitors. Before his visit to Selangor, in March 1934 at that time when the Rajah [of] Sarawak, Mr. C.V. Brooke visited His Highness as a Royal guest of Brunei, arrangement was made for him to stay in Istana Mahkota that was His Highness' place of residence. This was a special honour accorded to a guest. Similarly too towards His Highness' friends who were of the same age range whom His Highness always treated as if they were of no differences to His Highness himself, either in presenting clothings [sic], to them, during a social gathering, dinner etc., except when attending certain functions or in public which required formality. His Highness' friendly character was remembered eternally by those who were very close to His Highness, but if those people were to use the opportunity for an ulterior design, and if his motive come to His Highness' knowledge, His Highness would in a diplomatic manner change his attitude towards them.

At the end of August, 1935 His Highness went to Kelang again together with Tengku Ampuan Raihani and His Highness stayed there until Tengku Ampuan Raihani gave birth to His Highness's princess, Tengku Norehsani on 15 October, 1935. Earlier His Highness married Kedayang Emas, who gave birth to Pengiran Anak Siti Saerah, Pengiran Anak Siti Zubaidah and Pengiran Anak Siti Halimah. Until the end of his life, His Highness did not beget any prince.

Since the tie of relationship between the Royal families of Brunei and Selangor was established, relationship between the two Royal families became more close. In August, 1937, once again His Highness together with His Highness' family went to Selangor

to attend the Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Sultan of Selangor which was held in August, 1937. On his return from Selangor, in December, 1937, His Highness went for an official visit to Kuala Belait and to formally declare open a newly built Recreation Club. The visit was received with great joy by the people and the inhabitants there even people from the interior came to Kuala Belait Town to join in the celebration and to have a look at His Highness.

Approximately nine years after ascending the throne that was since the handing over of the power on 19 September, 1931, His Highness was crowned. The ceremony for the opening of 'gandang jaga2' for the Coronation Ceremony was formally opened at the Lapau on Monday 26th February, 1940, that was forty days before the Coronation Ceremony, was to be held and a Red Flag was hoisted at Bukit Sungai Kebun and a Yellow Flag at Bukit Penggal to herald the beginning of the Coronation Ceremony. During the period of 'jaga2' all Royal embellishments were erected in places which would be passed by the procession and the 'gandang jaga2' which had been officially opened would continuously be played and the beat subjected to time which were fixed for it especially at night when the state dignitaries attended the 'Berjaga2' Ceremony which was held ever[y] night in the Lapau during the period of berjaga2. Besides that during the period of berjaga2 various types of entertainments were organised such as martial art, dances, bubu dance, 'berdiang dangan', 'bernaindong', 'Berdundang', 'berkajat' and other forms of entertainment.

On 17 March 1940 at 5.15 p.m., the Coronation Ceremony was successfully conducted according to the Royal Tradition of Brunei which had been inherited by the people of Brunei and had become the symbol of greatness of the people since ancient time. Coinciding with the placing of the Crown on to His Highness, all those who were present did their obeisance for seven times accompanied by the firing of cannon according to the decided number. After that Pengiran Bendahara Pengiran Anak Abdul Rahman read the Praise of Coronation with a soft voice according to the normal practice of ancient time with the consequence that the ceremony at that time was very quiet because every one was concentrating to hear the contents of the reading. When the ceremony was over His Highness was taken in procession around Brunei Town.

His Highness can be said to be a man who was interested in developing the learning of Islam among his subjects. In 1940, with His Highness' consent a private Arabic School was established in Brunei Town under the guidance of Syed Abdul Aziz Asimi who became a teacher of that school. His Highness himself consented for the school to be housed in one of His Highness' Istana as an encouragement for the development of that beneficial subject. By the will of Allah the development of that school had progressed rapidly and within a short period pupils from that school had proven their achievements, but during Japanese occupation of Brunei in 1942 the school was closed down.

During the Japanese occupation of Brunei since the beginning of the Pacific War in 8th December, 1941, His Highness still resided in Brunei Town, but in the middle of 1945 when the Allied Forces attacked Brunei, His Highness went and settled in Tantaya together with Pehin Dato Amar Haji Kasim until 17th June, 1945 when His Highness and the Royal family who were with His Highness returned to Brunei Town together with

Australian army and on his arrival His Highness's personal standard was hoisted. At that time Brunei was still administered by the Allied Forces and only on 6th July, 1946 was the administrative power handed over to the civil authority. It was during the Japanese occupation that His Highness's brother Pengiran Besar Bagol passed away and the post of Sanggamara was filled by Pengiran Ahmad bin Pengiran Pemancha Pengiran Anak Haji Mohd Yassin who is now known as Pengiran Maharaja Anakda.

Twenty-five years after ascending the throne of Brunei, another big celebration was held in the State of Brunei to celebrate the 25th years of His Highness' reign that was His Highness' Jubilee, which was held on 22nd September, 1949. During the ceremony His Highness was awarded the 'Excellent Order of the British Empire' by His Majesty King George VI which was presented by the British High Commissioner in a colourful ceremony. The presentation of the Order took place in the presence of the Commissioner General for South East Asia and representatives from the neighbouring countries. Commemorative stamps for that historical day were issued to mark that joyful ceremony. The celebration in connection with the ceremony was held for three consecutive days in Brunei Town, followed a week later by a similar celebration in Kuala Belait. To commemorate the event, His Highness awarded Jubilee Medals to 50 dignitaries of the State of Brunei. Before the Silver Jubilee celebration was to be held all the people of Brunei felt apprehensive because three weeks before that His Highness was taken seriously ill during his stay in Kuching. A Thanksgiving Ceremony led by Pengiran Haji Mohd Salleh (later known as Paduka Seri Pengiran Digadong Sahibol Mal Pengiran Haji Mohd Salleh) was held in the Brunei Town Mosque to pray to Allah to whom praise and whose name be exalted for His Highness' good health.

The prayer was answered.

At the age of 36 years, His Highness the Sultan Sir Ahmad Tajuddin, K.B.E., C.M.G., 7 months after his Silver Jubilee, on 4th June, 1950, His Highness passed away in Singapore as a result of haemorrhage while on his way to an official visit to the United Kingdom. At the request of His Highness the Sultan of Johore, the body of the late Sultan was laid in State at Istana Besar Johor Bahru, and on the following day it was flown to Labuan by an R.A.F. Dakota and then brought to Brunei Town by boat. His Highness' burial ceremony was held at the Royal Mausoleum, Brunei Town with full tradition and was attended by foreign representatives among whom were the British High Commissioner, a representative from the Sarawak Government, and also the British Malayan Petroleum Company. Before the body was interred [sic], in an area considered as Lapau, in front of the hearse a succession ceremony was conducted. When it was over His Highness the Seri Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddin then became the Sultan and ascended the throne.

During his life time, His Highness was interested in sports. His Highness was a good football player and was also fond of horse riding. Besides that His Highness was considered to be a Royal artist who was keen in the field of writing. A written work left by His Highness which was treasured by the people of Brunei is a book entitled 'Guidance for Security' which was printed by Mohd. Darwi of Mohamediah Press, Muar, Johor, which contains valuable and important advices [sic].

May Allah bless His Highness' soul.

A CAMBRIDGE ANTHROPOLOGIST IN BORNEO: THE A.C. HADDON PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION, 1898-1899

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A venerated “ancestor” (as they are fondly called) of Cambridge University’s Department of Social Anthropology is Alfred Cort Haddon (1855-1940), widely regarded as one of the founding fathers of modern British social anthropology. In 1898, he led an expedition of seven young scholars and practitioners from different disciplines to the Torres Strait, a group of islands sandwiched between Australia and New Guinea, on “a multidisciplinary project encompassing anthropology in its broadest sense, including ethnology, physical anthropology, psychology, linguistics, sociology, ethnomusicology and anthropogeography” (Herle and Rouse 1998: 2-3). The Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits,¹ as it was known, was a milestone in the development of British anthropology, laying the grounds for its transformation into a professional, fieldwork-based discipline (Rouse 1998:76).

While the Torres Strait Expedition has been immortalized in the annals of anthropological history, a lesser known fact is that five of its members, including Haddon himself, passed through Borneo on their way back to England. They spent much of their visit in the Baram area as guests of the District Resident, Charles Hose, staying at his bungalow in Marudi and making several upriver trips to surrounding longhouse communities and bazaars. When they returned to England in April 1899, they brought with them a large range of native crafts, cloths, weapons and skulls, and several hundred photographs. Many of these artifacts ended up in what is now the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), which was established in 1884 and holds some of the world’s most important and extensive ethnographic collections.

The photographs on which this paper focuses were taken by different members of the Expedition, each of whom carried his own camera in addition to the official photographic equipment (Edwards 1998:110). Over time, these negatives, prints, and lantern slides were subsumed within the Museum’s substantial but disorganized “A.C. Haddon – Borneo” collection—which is how I discovered them while cataloguing photographs in 2007. At the time, my remit was to create database entries for Charles Hose’s massive photographic collection, copies of which had been deposited—and in some cases, personally labeled by Hose—in the Museum. A database search, however, unveiled several hundred further entries relating to photographs of Borneo which Haddon

¹ The title of the expedition reflected the fact that the bulk of its funding came from the University of Cambridge’s Worts Fund; extra financial support was provided by the Queensland government, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Royal Society, the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Dublin Society, among others (Rouse 1998: 58).

had taken or collected. Many of these were duplicates made at various points over the last century. In 1935, for example, the Museum marked Haddon's eightieth birthday by presenting him with new prints of all the photographs he had donated to it over the years. Haddon bequeathed this gift to the Museum, leaving it with several thousand mounted prints stored in beautiful, custom-made wooden cabinets, to which researchers still have access today. A closer survey of the photographs² suggested that there were at least five hundred distinctive images of the Expedition's time in Borneo. Of these, 186 were documentary photographs of Iban fabrics in the Sarawak Museum's collection. The other images cover a vast assortment of subjects, including longhouses and landscapes, indigenous rituals, river scenes, prominent local leaders, clothing and artifacts, bodily decoration, and Charles Hose's idiosyncratic style of governance.

While Haddon's Torres Strait photographs have been widely reproduced in scholarly books and articles, and more recently, disseminated among Torres Strait Islanders, his Bornean photographs have seen little light of day. Some were reproduced in Charles Hose's magisterial *Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (1912)—co-authored with William McDougall, one of the Expedition members—and William Henry Furness' *The Home-Life of Bornean Headhunters* (1902). Others were used in Haddon and Start's *Iban or Sea Dayak Fabrics and their Patterns* (1936), as well as Haddon's popular narrative of his journeys in the Torres Strait and Borneo, *Head-hunters: Black, White and Brown* (1901). However, none of these brief appearances do justice to the sheer range of themes, settings and situations captured by the Expedition members during their visit. To understand why they chose to photograph what they did, we need to turn briefly to the historical and institutional context in which the Expedition took place.

Anthropology at a turning point: the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits

Like many other early anthropologists, Haddon veered into the discipline by mistake. This was hardly surprising, given that anthropology at the end of the nineteenth century had yet to be established as a proper university discipline. Indeed, it had yet to acquire the fieldwork-based form with which we are familiar today, for its tendency was to hold apart empirical evidence-gathering and theoretical analysis rather than draw them together. Academic anthropology—or more specifically, ethnology, the comparative study of the origin, spread and evolution of human societies—remained the preserve of “armchair anthropologists” like James Frazer and Edward B. Tylor, who wrote compellingly about the customs, rituals, beliefs and languages of faraway peoples they had never encountered. Their primary data, however, came from networks of missionaries, scientists, administrators, traders, and others who, through their travels and experiences, had amassed important collections of artifacts, data and firsthand knowledge of “primitive” peoples.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, academic anthropologists became

² It is currently impossible to pinpoint the exact number of photographs in this collection. Because they were never comprehensively catalogued or provenanced, not all of them have appeared on database searches. In February 2010, for example, nearly two hundred more prints and glass-plate negatives from the trip were discovered; I am hoping to catalogue them in the near future.

ever more convinced of the need to guide and systematize these far-off collecting efforts. Consequently, various scholarly establishments began issuing sets of instructions, such as *Notes and Queries in Anthropology* (1870-1920), on what to ask, record, and observe in “primitive” settings. These publications—effectively nascent fieldwork manuals—revealed a growing desire for “accurate anthropological observation” which would contribute to the “scientific study of anthropology at home” (*Notes and Queries* 1874: iv). In many ways, however, the professionalizing impulses that spawned their creation would also lead to their demise. By the end of the nineteenth century, when Haddon and his team left for the Torres Strait, anthropology was increasingly coming to be seen as a natural science rather than, as was previously the case, “a pleasant hobby” (Urry 1972: 48). In this new guise, it could no longer rely on the well-meaning but unprofessional endeavors of amateur collectors. What was needed was a new generation of “academically trained natural scientists” (Stocking 1992:20) who would collect facts and data on human societies in an appropriately rigorous, systematic manner.

Alfred Haddon certainly fit this criterion. As an undergraduate, he studied zoology at Christ’s College, Cambridge (finishing in 1879), and later taught the subject at the Royal College of Science in Dublin. In 1888, possibly to “escape what seemed after seven years the dead end of a provincial professorship” (Stocking 1992: 21), he visited the Torres Strait to study its coral reefs and marine life. His initial interest in marine biology, however, soon gave way to a deep fascination with the ethnography of the area (Stocking 1992: 21; Griffiths 2002: 130), and in particular, the need to record aspects of social life and customs “before ‘it was too late’” (Herle and Rouse 1998: 3). This evolutionist concern with “salvage ethnography”—what he saw as “our bounden duty to record the physical characteristics, the handicrafts, the psychology, ceremonial observances and religious beliefs of vanishing peoples” (Haddon 1897: 306)—remained a guiding force throughout his fieldwork and professional life. Following his 1888 fieldtrip, Haddon turned increasingly to studying and teaching anthropology. While retaining his duties in Dublin, he began giving freelance lectures in physical anthropology to students in medicine and natural sciences at the University of Cambridge, where he saw the potential for creating “an institutional niche” for the subject (Rouse 1998:52).

One way to do this, he hoped, was to organize a major anthropological expedition (Rouse 1998:56). With the support of leading university figures, he set about arranging a trip to the area which had first captured his interest: the Torres Strait. The expedition, which took place between April and November 1898, was a milestone in anthropology, for it collapsed what had previously remained its two distinct facets: empirical data-gathering and scholarly analysis. In this way, it “bypassed” the traditional middlemen-collectors and “place[d] specialised experts directly in touch with the natives” (Urry 1972: 50). The expedition’s methods were influenced by scientific models of data-gathering (Herle and Rouse 1998:15), which Haddon encapsulated with a term then prevalent in the natural sciences: “fieldwork” (Stocking 1992: 27). In later years, he would become a strong advocate of this undertaking as the methodological and analytical foundation of anthropology. He thus laid the foundation for the discipline’s growing self-identification as the “intensive study of limited areas” (Stocking 1992: 27): a slogan which would later find its fullest expression in the groundbreaking work of Bronislaw Malinowski (1922).

Who were the men who accompanied Haddon to this remote corner of the world? None was an ethnologist in the mold of Frazer or Tylor; most had strong scientific or medical backgrounds. W.H.R. Rivers was a physician and psychologist who conducted vision experiments in the field. During this stint he developed his “genealogical method” of recording kin and social relations (1910), which would later cement his position in the pantheon of great anthropologists. William McDougall, who later became a leading experimental psychologist in America, was also a physician and a former student of both Haddon and Rivers at Cambridge; his work during the expedition focused on the study of tactile sensation. His name will be familiar to Bornean scholars for having appeared with Charles Hose’s on *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (1912)—a publication to which he appears to have chiefly contributed his academic standing rather than in-depth ethnographic knowledge.

Charles Myers, another ex-pupil of Haddon and Rivers, was a physician and later the first lecturer in Experimental Psychology at Cambridge; during the expedition, he mainly conducted hearing experiments and made various audio recordings. Charles Seligman, who also became a renowned anthropologist, had a medical background; he studied native medicines, poisons, and pathology during fieldwork. Sidney Ray, a schoolteacher, was the expedition’s linguist, drawing on his self-taught expertise of Oceanic languages. Finally, there was Anthony Wilkin, then an undergraduate student of Haddon, who had done some archaeological work in Egypt. He was put in charge of the photographic equipment and processes, although much of the photography itself was orchestrated by Haddon (Edwards 1998:110). Haddon, meanwhile, concentrated on taking physical measurements of Islanders, recording local customs and studying decorative art.

The Cambridge Expedition entailed the study of human society in its most encompassing sense, through a medium—fieldwork—which has since become integral to anthropology. Audio-visual material was central to this endeavor; and photography may be seen as an extension, or at least an analogue, of sketches, diagrams and other visual modes of apprehending their surroundings. Indeed, Elizabeth Edwards suggests that for Haddon,

drawing, inscribing and photographing were part of the tradition of scientific recording which, through its realism, could explain the real world. In intellectual terms drawing and photography represented alternative routes to the revelation of truth (1998: 110).

This view would have reflected the prevailing tendency within Euro-American scientific circles to treat vision as “the paradigm of privileged knowledge” (Pinney 1992: 80). New visual technologies such as the camera and the cinematograph—one of which also went on the Torres Strait Expedition (Griffiths 2002: 128)—were seen to guarantee a sort of “unmediated objectivity” (Edwards 1998:127) by virtue of the fact that they simply recorded what there was. Consequently, the Expedition’s photographs were treated not as “mere illustration but...an integral part of the presentation, proof and transmission of evidence” (Edwards 1998: 120). It is thus unsurprising, Edwards suggests, that their photographic equipment came from the prestigious London firm, Newman and Guardia, and represented the latest in cutting-edge technology (1998: 107).

At the same time, Haddon and his team used audio-visual technologies as modes of social interaction (Edwards 1998: 122). The group frequently entertained the Islanders with lantern slide-shows, and often held viewing sessions of photographs which Haddon had taken back in 1888, as well as images captured hours or days earlier. They took pictures at weddings (Edwards 1998: 123), and on one occasion, were asked by a grieving father, Waria, to photograph his newly-deceased son “in order that he might not forget what he was like. Of course we did this for him” (Haddon 1901: 123). The phonograph also proved popular with their informants and contacts (Haddon 1901:338) for its ability to play both tunes brought from England and audio recordings captured in the field. Haddon recalled that “the natives were never tired of listening to the machine, and fully appreciated singing into it, and were very delighted at hearing their songs repeated by it” (1901:234). By the time the Expedition members left the Torres Strait, they had accumulated seven months’ worth of photographs, several short films, and hundreds of sound recordings. Some of the equipment, including cameras and the phonograph, went with them to Borneo, where a similar, if less rigorously systematic, process of documentation would take place.

Haddon goes to Borneo, 1898-1899

The Torres Strait Expedition’s visit to Borneo may have had its roots in the early 1890s, when Charles Hose, then on home leave, met Haddon at London’s Royal Anthropological Institute (Rouse 1998: 60). At the time, Hose—who had entered the Sarawak Civil Service in 1884—had recently become Resident of Sarawak’s Baram District (1891), and was in the process of establishing himself as a respectable scientist, a “naturalist, anthropologist, and geographer, in Sarawak and elsewhere” (Hose 1994: 15). When news of the planned Torres Strait Expedition—which was well-publicized in national broadsheets and other channels (Rouse 1998:61)—reached him in 1897, he seized the chance to cultivate further connections with an internationally-regarded scientist and academic. He wrote to Haddon in England, inviting him to visit Sarawak, “promising a guided trip up the Baram River to visit some peoples who, at the time, had little exposure to Europeans” (Rouse 1998: 60-61).³ Haddon later wrote that “I received such a pressing and enthusiastic invitation from Mr. Charles Hose... that I felt constrained to extend the scope of our work by accepting his tempting offer” (1899: 413). He agreed to pass through Sarawak on the way home.

In all, five members of the team ended up spending time in Borneo.⁴ Myers and McDougall left the Torres Strait on 24 August 1898, arriving in Borneo in September.

³ This does not mean that they had had no prior contact with Euro-Americans. In 1896 and 1897, Hose was visited by the American doctor William Henry Furness III and his party (Furness 1896, 1902; Hiller 1896; Wilder 1968), who spent long stretches of time visiting and staying with various longhouse communities, including Tama Bulan’s. Emphasizing the undiscovered, remote nature of the upriver groups was probably a useful persuasive strategy for Hose, who “was able to hold sway with little competition” in the area where he was stationed (Durrans 1994: x).

⁴ In this paper, I largely retain Haddon’s spelling of names and place-names in his travel narrative, *Head-hunters, Black, White and Brown* (1901). Where possible, I have included their contemporary incarnations in brackets.

Over the next few months, they stayed with Hose in Marudi, making trips to upriver communities, collecting artifacts, attending rituals, and witnessing first-hand Hose's personal brand of paternalistic rule (Durrans 1994: xx-xxii). Myers returned to Europe on 4 January 1899, just missing Haddon, Ray and Seligman, who had arrived in Kuching (via Hong Kong and Singapore) on 12 December. The later arrivals remained in the capital for three weeks, with Ray busy studying Malay, Seligman visiting Land Dayak communities in the First Division, and Haddon—who stayed with the curator of the Sarawak Museum, Robert Shelford—photographing and studying a large number of Iban fabrics in the Museum (Haddon 1901: 279-280). One of the highlights of their time here was the annual Kuching Regatta on the Sarawak River on 2 January, of which many photographs exist.

On 4 January, Haddon, Ray, and Seligman sailed towards the Baram via Sibuh and Limbang, visiting villages, a Malay sago factory and even Brunei for the day. From Limbang (where they were hosted by the Resident, O.F. Ricketts) they took a steamer, then a party of smaller boats, along the Madalam, Malinau, and Tutau [Tutoh] Rivers, visiting more villages, camping on riverbanks and even getting tattooed at Umu [Uma] Belubu by the mother-in-law of the chief, Balu Long, who was “perhaps the best tattooer in the Baram District” (Haddon 1901: 305). At Long Linai, they met the government river steamer, *Lucille*, which brought them to Marudi (Claudetown) on 28 January, where they were reunited with McDougall. Thus began their three-month stay in the area as guests of Hose, who brought them on a number of upriver trips as he carried out his administrative responsibilities. On these excursions, they met various local luminaries—Hose's firmest political allies, such as the Kenyah chief Tama Bulan and the Berawan leader Aban Abit⁵—collected an assortment of objects, including skulls (Haddon 1901: 337-338), stone hooks, and boar's tusks (Haddon 1901: 370), witnessed several rituals, made measurements and physical observations of a cross-section of the population, and climbed Mount Dulit, the highest point of which Hose named “Cambridge Peak” (Haddon 1901: 346-348). Their stay culminated in a brilliantly orchestrated display of Hose's political prowess: the Marudi Peace Conference, which from 8 to 13 April brought together (what Hose estimated were) six thousand inhabitants from throughout the region, including Kenyahs, Kayans, Lirongs, Ibans, and Madangs, in a general peace-meeting (Hose 1900: 52). The group left for England shortly afterwards, clearly impressed with Hose's skill at governance as well as the Brooke Raj as a whole, which Haddon described as “honestly endeavour[ing] to help the people to govern themselves and [assist] them towards a gradual bettering of their condition” (1901: 294).

Haddon and his colleagues took photographs at every stage of their Bornean sojourn. Despite coming at the end of their main stint in the Torres Strait, this remained a scientific, research-oriented trip: one which garnered enough objects, photographs, and documentation for Haddon to assert soon after returning that “[w]e have now in Cambridge specimens to fairly well illustrate the arts and crafts of the natives of Sarawak” (1899: 415). His report on the Expedition in *Nature* noted that Ray had amassed material on Land and Sea Dayak languages and the vocabularies of over 200 words in 46 dialects, that Myers had made various physiological observations, that Seligman had studied native

5 Named as Aban Avit by Furness (1902).



Fig. 1. Iban family bathes, Marudi. © University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. P.5051.ACH1.

medicines, poisons and other substances, that McDougall had looked at “the question of the relations of men to animals and plants,” and that he had made measurements and physical observations of 276 natives from a variety of groups (Haddon 1899: 415).

In this regard, Haddon’s Bornean photographs—particularly the plainly anthropometric ones—may be construed as visual offshoots of their overarching anthropological interests. Yet there are also numerous images which lie closer to the “travelogue” end of the spectrum, many of which exude a remarkable sense of ease and candidness. Looking through them, one gets the impression that their authors—and we know from inscriptions on the MAA prints that at least Myers, Haddon, and Seligman were taking photographs—were also simply taking pleasure in their surroundings as (privileged) tourists. Here, they were primarily guests in an unfamiliar land, reliant on the knowledge, goodwill, and connections of their redoubtable, no doubt solicitous, host. Sandra Rouse suggests that Haddon “enjoyed tremendously” the months he spent in Sarawak, for “[b]y then he considered the official phase of the Expedition successfully completed and he was relieved of much of the leadership responsibility” (1998: 61). Perhaps the photographs reflect some of that prevailing mood.

Take, for example, an image (P.5051.ACH1; Fig. 1) whose MAA catalogue card reads “Iban family bathe, Marudi,” and which was later reproduced in Haddon’s *Head-Hunters* (1901). Standing waist-deep in a river is a semi-naked man, slightly



Fig. 2. Expedition members on their travels. © University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. P.50172.ACH2.

blurred in movement, who smiles widely at the camera as he holds an infant child in the water. Close to him, looking somewhat more chary, is a woman, possibly his wife; while two naked boys, one of whom flashes the photographer a toothy grin, squat on the bank nearby. Behind them, an older man prepares to enter the water. The subjects of the photograph are by no means unaware of the camera; indeed, they engage with it with a candor that could not have been stage-managed. Equally intriguing is what appears to be a scene from the obstacle race held on the second day of the Marudi Peace Conference (P.41540): an event which, Haddon recalls, “caused great amusement” (1901: 402). In it, a man wearing a full white suit and helmet—possibly Hose or R.S. Douglas, his second-in-command—runs down a small grassy slope with his arms raised, probably in response to a large splash caused by some people who have just jumped from a “crazy staging” (Haddon 1901: 402) into the pond at its base. One man can be seen swimming across the water toward the other bank as other white-suited figures (probably the Expedition members) and a clutch of attendees look on. Photographs such as these punctuate the Haddon Borneo collection, reflecting as strong an interest among the Expedition members in capturing specific, memorable moments and relations on their travels as in producing scientific objects.



Fig. 3. The photographer's shadow falls on two Punan men. © University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. P.5075.ACH1.

The Borneo photographs: a themed selection

Unlike some of Hose's meticulously staged photographs from the same period (e.g. Wilder 1968: 432) or the photographic re-enactments of myth and past practices which Haddon orchestrated in the Torres Strait (Edwards 1998), many of the Expedition's Bornean images are straightforward records of their trip. Travel itself was a source of considerable interest. There are, for example, several pictures of the small canopied boats which brought

Haddon and his colleagues up the narrower stretches of river; these often had to be pulled or paddled vigorously across rapids (P.50172.ACH2; Fig. 2). Their entourage on these journeys, consisting of a mixture of Ibans, Malays and others, also featured in these records, poling boats or taking breaks along the way. As they traveled, the group photographed numerous landscapes and landmarks, including a view of the Limbang River from Ricketts' residence (P.4946.ACH1), various longhouses, such as the one at Long Linai (P.5008.ACH1), bazaars (P.50254.ACH2), Brooketon (Muara; P.50224.ACH2), and the fort at Marudi (P.4976.ACH1).

Haddon and his team did of course retain an interest in the people they met as scientific or ethnological specimens. Within the collection are numerous side and frontal portraits of people, mainly men, often sitting on a stool or standing stiffly, sometimes in poses that highlight aspects of their physiognomy or bodily decorations. No picture captures this better than P.5075.ACH1 (Fig. 3), which clearly shows the shadow of the photographer falling over the path next to two Punan men. Meanwhile, another photograph (P.50207.ACH2) shows the side profile of a middle-aged man in a loincloth seated on a high wooden stool holding his tattooed right hand up to his cheek. The reverse of the MAA print reads: "Hand and leg tatued of Tingang a Sibop Chief", "½ a Kenyah" and "Sarawak." Haddon recounts meeting Tingang in February en route to



Fig. 4. A fowl being sacrificed during a ritual for Bali Penyalong at Tama Bulan's longhouse. © University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. P.5148.ACH1.

what was probably Long Julian,⁶ when he asked Hose to mediate in a dispute between him and his wife (1901:363-364). There is no mention, however, of Haddon taking any measurements or photographs of Tingang, although at least three exist in the collection. These and other similar images stand as insistent reminders of the power imbalances at play throughout the Expedition's trip. However well-meaning Hose and Haddon were, these encounters were not meetings of equals, but framed within a situation of colonial (or rather, Brooke) rule. Whatever their relations with the government, these subjects probably had very little choice over whether to pose for the Baram Resident's guests.

The description of Tingang as "½ a Kenyah" also reflects a certain "typological zeal" (Durrans 1994: viii) fanned in part, I suspect, by Hose. Many inscriptions on the reverse of the original prints refer to—or at least take a good stab at—the ethnic or tribal designation of their subjects. As Hose's impressive taxonomical efforts in *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (1912) reveal, amassing a list of Sarawak's different and often complex ethnicities and tribes was one of his long-standing projects. Yet, as anthropologists and historians have since shown (e.g. Babcock 1974; Boulanger 2009; King 1993; Rousseau

⁶ This name has caused some confusion, having been listed in Haddon's records and publications as "Long Sulan." Participants at the Marudi conference in August 2009, however, suggested that this was probably Long Julian, an important stop along the Dapoi River.



Fig. 5. A Muslim man is ‘offered’ alcohol during a party at the house of the Sebop chief, Jangan.
© University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. P.5083.ACH1.

1990), this ambition was challenging at best, and ill-fated at worst. On this “checkerboard pattern of ethnic units distributed randomly through the vagaries of migration,” as Rousseau once described central Borneo (1990:1), place names and linguistic groupings overlapped problematically with ethnic and political ones, while people themselves constantly straddled or cut across these apparent boundaries. Nevertheless, Hose’s efforts at identifying and demarcating corporate identities—including the “rag-bag category” (Metcalf 2002: 93) of “Klemantan,” under which he drew a diverse group of non-Muslim natives who wouldn’t fit into his other categories (Hose and McDougall 1993, vol. 1: 42)—appear to have influenced Haddon and his colleagues, who adopted his terminology when labeling their prints. They have thus left us with penciled descriptions such as “Klemantan group, Murik, Sarawak” (P.50248.ACH2), “Barawan, Sarawak” (P.41564),⁷ and “Bakang (Dusun) Dyaks” (P.86681.ACH2). In some places, we can also detect a creeping interest in correlating racial and physical traits: the man shown in P.5086.ACH1, for example, has been labeled a “Kayan: only man seen with curly hair.”

Not all their subjects, however, behaved as stiff, wooden specimens. As happened in the Torres Strait, photography both reflected and facilitated social relations, and the Expedition members appear to have established a genuine, often friendly, rapport

⁷ The woman in this picture has been identified on the reverse of another print (P.50184.ACH2), taken by Myers, as Tina, a Berawan woman.

with their subjects. In keeping with earlier practice, Haddon and his colleagues made an effort to record names, relations and places: a testament not only to their documentation methods, but also, I suspect, a real fondness for the people they met. P.50246.ACH2, for example, is Seligman's photograph of Datu, a Balau Iban man, who smiles quite unguardedly in a grassy clearing. Many photographic subjects also feature in Haddon's travel narratives: P.50193.ACH2, for example, gives us a glimpse of Aban Abit, head of the Long Tisam longhouse (Haddon 1901: 335-338) whom William Henry Furness, one of Hose's earlier guests, also met (Furness 1902: 55). When Hose, Haddon, McDougall, and Ray visited him, they were able to witness a pig liver divination ceremony and even purchase skulls (Haddon 1901: 336-338; P.45416.ACH2). Later, they visited Tama Bulan's longhouse on the Pata River, where they, like Furness and his colleagues (Furness 1896:320), were much taken with his daughter Bulan (P.5064.ACH1) and her friends Mujang and Sara, all of whom Haddon described as "the friendliest and jolliest damsels I have met in all my travels" (1901:375-376).

The Expedition members also documented a variety of rituals and activities, many of which no longer exist in contemporary Borneo. While visiting Tama Bulan with Hose in November 1898 (Hose 1900: 40), for example, Myers and McDougall photographed several scenes from a ritual dedicated to the "Supreme God" Bali Penyalong (P.5148.ACH1; see Hose and McDougall 1993, vol. 2:52-54). Meanwhile, Haddon has left us with extensive written and photographic evidence of a visit to the house of Jangan, a Sebop chief at Long Puah, a few months later. During this trip, Hose and the Expedition members witnessed—and in some ways precipitated (Haddon 1901:352)—a ceremony involving the transferral of skulls from a hut where they were being held temporarily to the semi-complete new longhouse in which the visitors were to stay. The ceremony began with a group of young men dressed in war gear singing and chanting to the skulls as they were removed from their makeshift abode



Fig. 6. An elevated coffin used for secondary burial in central Borneo. © University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. P.5176.ACH1.

(P.50223.ACH2), and ended with them being hoisted up to the rafters of the new house in a basket (P.50167.ACH2). To mark their visit, Jangan held a naming ceremony for his first child (P.41557), for whom Haddon was asked to become godfather (Haddon 1901: 353). After pigs and chickens were sacrificed and several speeches made, recalls Haddon, the boy was named “Utang [Untung?] Haddon” (Good luck Haddon), and *borak* (rice spirits) was passed all round. Among the visitors’ photographs of this ceremony is a pictorial reminder of the tensions that could surface in such ethnically diverse settings. P.5083.ACH1 (Fig. 5) records a moment in the post-ritual party which Haddon recounts thus: “Great hilarity was caused in succeeding, or failing, as the case might be, in making a few Mohammedans [possibly members of Haddon’s party] who were present partake of a liquid that was prohibited to them by the Prophet” (Haddon 1901: 355).

Even though Haddon and his colleagues appear not to have approached Borneo with the same salvage-oriented zeal that guided their activities in the Torres Strait, the collection they assembled stands as a rich record of long-vanished lives and landscapes. Apart from the rituals and activities mentioned earlier, there are images of the towering, elaborately-carved coffins of Kayan and Kenyah aristocrats (e.g. P.5176.ACH1; Fig. 6), white European or Chinese crockery dotting their sides (see Hose and McDougall 1993, vol. 2: Plate 152), anthropomorphic canoe prows (P.50170.ACH2), ceremonial poles on which had hung enemies’ heads and bits of flesh (P.5152.ACH1; Haddon 1901: 361-362), an effigy of the Kenyah war and omen-bird, Bali Flaki [Pelaki] (P.50216.ACH2), a wooden figurine used in a Kedayan *berantu* healing ceremony (P.5144.ACH1) and intricate house paintings, such as those on Aban Abit’s bedroom partition (P.41561). In contrast to the Torres Strait, most of these entities were not then in imminent danger of being lost or discarded; yet a century later, they have all but disappeared.

Another mainstay of late-nineteenth century Sarawak which has since vanished is, of course, the Brooke Raj. Whether or not they meant to, the Expedition members ended up creating and preserving some intriguing records of Brooke—and more specifically, Hose—rule in Sarawak. This was arguably engineered by Hose himself, who undoubtedly hoped to impress upon Haddon his skill at governance. The latter certainly seems to have been convinced, later attributing the Expedition members’ successful Bornean sojourn to Hose’s “personal qualities...which awaken a feeling of affection and loyalty in the natives” (1899: 416). Apart from capturing features of life in the Raj’s small administrative centers, such as Ricketts’ Limbang residence (P.41544) and Hose’s Marudi bungalow, its veranda bulging with stuffed animals and packing materials (P.41562), they also showed Hose, the Resident, in action as he conducted his duties. During their stay, these culminated in the great Marudi Peace Conference—an action-packed affair which unfolded over five days. The obstacle race mentioned earlier took place on the second day, shortly after an exhilarating two and a quarter-mile boat race⁸ (P.50264.ACH2) which Tama Bulan’s people won, narrowly outpacing a Malay boat (Haddon 1901: 402). During the subsequent speeches and toasts—and brief skirmishes between old rivals (Haddon 1901: 403-404)—Hose remained very much in the thick

⁸ This race was devised as “a sort of local Henley” which would enable young men to expend their natural energy with “some other equally violent, but less disastrous, activity” (Hose 1926:148); the race has since become a biennial affair, the Baram Regatta.



Fig. 7. Pig sacrifice during the Marudi Peace Conference. © University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. P.5130.ACH1.

of the things, mediating and generally directing the proceedings. A group shot of him looming in full uniform over several men, including Tama Bulan (P.41539), reminds us of his sheer physical stature: something which he could use to great effect when he wanted.

11 April saw a *tuba* fishing event in Logan Ansok (P.50197.ACH2), whereby men, some clad in animal-skinned warcoats and hornbill-feathered rattan caps, roamed the lake in canoes, catching the fish forced to the surface by the intoxicating substance (Haddon 1901: 406-409). Following another boat race the next day, the participants gathered for their final meeting on 13 April: a rousing and convivial affair by all accounts. One of its highlights was a “gigantic gaily painted model of a hornbill, on which a very large number of cigarettes were suspended” (Haddon 1901: 410) (P.50203.ACH2; see Hose and McDougall 1993, vol. 2: 88). For the occasion, three huge sacrificial pigs—one each for the Baram tribes, the Lirongs of the Tinjar, and the Madangs—were provided by the Resident “for the purpose of swearing peace and friendship” (Haddon 1901: 410). This accomplished, each pig was then “killed in the usual manner by sticking it in the neck with a spear” (Haddon 1901: 411), and its liver examined for divination: a sequence duly captured in photographs by the Expedition members (P.5130.ACH1; Fig. 7). Further speeches then ensued, with the various leaders affirming their peace with each other and the Government. At the end of this “great palaver” (Haddon 1901: 412), Hose collected



Fig. 8. Charles Hose collecting taxes at the end of the Marudi Peace Conference. © University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. P.41558.ACH2.

taxes of two dollars per family from the leaders (P.41558.ACH2; McDougall 1900 in Hose and McDougall 1993, vol. 2: 289-300; Fig. 8). Thus ended a concerted display of what Haddon would later describe as the “paternal administration of native affairs that is the keynote of the Sarawak system of government” (1899:415).

Aftermath and future

This article has provided the merest glimpse of Haddon’s much larger and varied Bornean photographic collection. For most of its members, the Torres Strait Expedition was a launch-pad to prominence in their respective fields. Haddon himself went on to become the first Lecturer (later, Reader) in Ethnology at Cambridge (1900), a position which enabled him to take a leading role in establishing anthropology as a full-fledged, fieldwork-based university discipline. Indeed, “it is not coincidental,” Rouse notes, “that the rise of anthropological fieldwork occurred at the same time as anthropology began to take root as an academic discipline. That the two were linked owes much to the efforts of Haddon and the Expedition members” (1998: 76).

After their return to England, the Expedition members deposited most of their photographs and artifacts in Cambridge University’s Museum of General and Local Archaeology and Ethnology (as MAA was then called). Their personal notes, journals, sketches, correspondence, and other documents were placed in the University Library.

Over the next three decades, Haddon and his colleagues gradually transformed their data into six volumes of *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, published between 1901 and 1935. In the meantime, they disseminated their findings via both popular and scientific talks, newspaper and journal articles, lantern slide-shows, and exhibitions (Herle and Rouse 1998: 3). One of these was Haddon's popular travel narrative, *Head-Hunters: Black, White and Brown* (1901), which he was contractually obliged to produce before publishing any scientific reports (Rouse 1998: 66). Because of the relative paucity of published material on the Expedition's Bornean work,⁹ this book has proven an invaluable resource in piecing together the (all too human) circumstances in which the photographs and objects which now lie in the Cambridge Museum were obtained.

Thanks to its status as a "founding moment" in the history of the discipline, the Torres Strait Expedition has been widely described and commemorated: in 1998, for example, MAA held a major exhibition to mark its centenary, while in 2001-2002 it sent about sixty objects from Haddon's collection to Australia as part of a traveling exhibition on the Expedition. These activities have generated close links between the Museum and contemporary Torres Strait communities: the 1998 exhibition, for example, was preceded by two years of consultation with political leaders and cultural experts from the Islands, while several groups of Islanders have since visited the Museum to study Haddon's collections and share their expertise and memories. This relationship between Museum and community is not unique, but it is certainly one of MAA's strongest and most successful examples.¹⁰

By comparison to his Torres Strait material, Haddon's Borneo collection has received far less use and attention; as the more casual appendage to the main expedition, the Borneo trip was not a groundbreaking affair of the same ilk. For Sarawak, however, its significance is indisputable. The images which have now been deposited in the Baram Regional Museum are not merely copies of 110 year-old photographs, but slices of Sarawak's history. In returning them to the areas and communities in which they were first taken, I hope that they will serve not only as important historical and communal resources, but also as new—or renewed—bridges between Sarawak and Cambridge. Given Sarawak's long-obscured place in the now-fabled Torres Strait Expedition, this would certainly be a fitting tribute to all those—native and foreign—who were a part of Haddon's Bornean visit.

9 A notable exception being Haddon and Start's book on Iban fabrics, based on photographs and collections made in Sarawak (1936). Haddon, Myers, Seligman, and Rivers also published a few journal articles based on their time in Borneo.

10 For further information, see Herle 2004.

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NOTES ON THE SEPING OF BELAGA DISTRICT, SARAWAK

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Introduction

Almost nothing has been written about the Seping except for an occasional passing mention by administrators (de Crespigny 1882; Low 1884a and 1884b; Urquhart 1955) and ethnographers (Brosius 1992; Haddon 1932; de Martinoir 1974; Nicolaisen 1977-1978; Rousseau 1973, 1974, 1990). This paper is a general description of the community. It looks at Seping history, social organization, socio-economic activities, and how the community has managed to maintain its ethnic identity in the face of increased mobility, intermarriage, rapid change, and development.

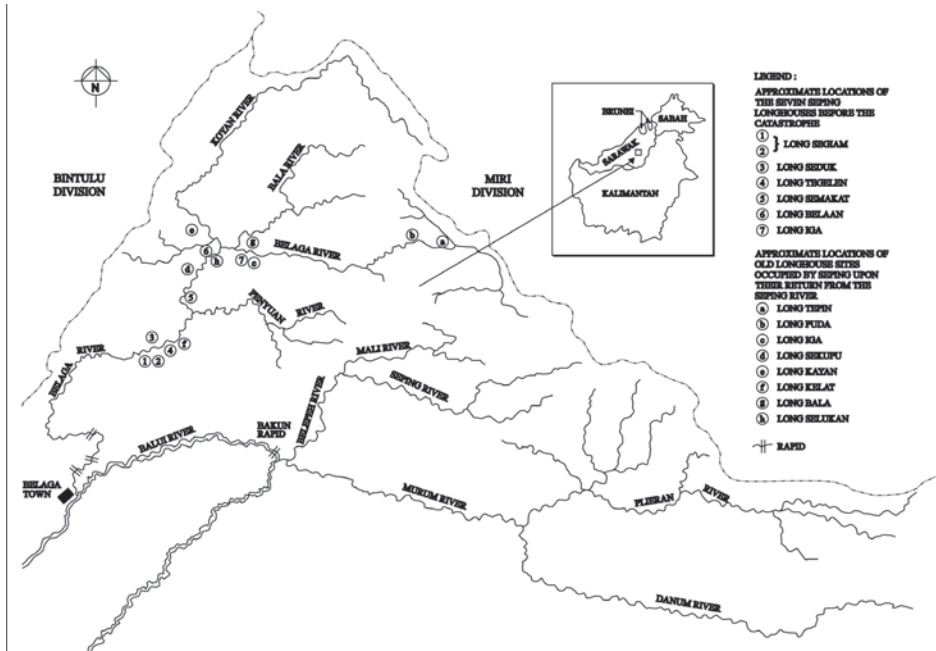
The Seping are among the few tiny ethnic minorities that have survived assimilation by bigger groups and exist today as a distinct community, keeping their cultural identity and language intact. They claim to be the first group to occupy the Belaga River region and have left their mark on the landscape as proof of that. In 1956 they lived in one longhouse comprising 16 households at Long Koyan along the middle reaches of the Belaga River. In the early 1960s a major portion of the population migrated to the Tinjar River in the Baram District; four households, however, remained at Long Koyan. After almost twenty years on the Tinjar, the group that migrated there returned to their ancestral homeland on the Belaga River. Today, the Seping comprise three longhouse settlements: Long Bala with 28 households and a population of 205, Long Koyan with 8 households and a population of 56 people, and Mile 6, Belaga-Long Urun Logging Road, 4 households and a population of 23 people. The four households at Mile 6 comprise the group that did not migrate to the Tinjar.

The 4 households at Mile 6 insist that they are Bemali, a group culturally and linguistically related to the Seping, but in reality they are offspring of mixed marriages between Bemali and Seping, or Bemali-Seping-Kejaman. The Bemali used to live as a separate community, but due to a rapid decrease in population they merged with the Seping in 1956, at the single longhouse settlement at Long Koyan. Given their small number, and that they are offspring of mixed marriages involving Seping partners, they will be considered in this paper as Seping.

Oral History

According to an oral narrative (see attached Appendix) by a Seping elder, Beng Lian, the Seping people are the original settlers of the Belaga River. Originally they comprised seven longhouses: two at Long Segiam, and one each at Long Seduk, Long Tegelem, Long Semakat, Long Belaan (in the Koyan, tributary of Belaga) and Long Iga (see Map 1). A long time ago, a supernatural event took place: they killed a dragon and

cooked it. Because of this, the seven longhouses either turned to stone or were swept downriver by a gigantic flood. All the people, except two, died. The two people were a brother and a sister.¹ They fled up the Penyuan, a true left-bank tributary of the Belaga River. After years of roaming the jungle, they became adults, lived as husband and wife, begat many offspring, and revived a new community of Seping. They lived for many years along the Seping River, a tributary of the Belepeh which in turn is a tributary of the Murum that flows into the Balui. After living on the Seping River, the community

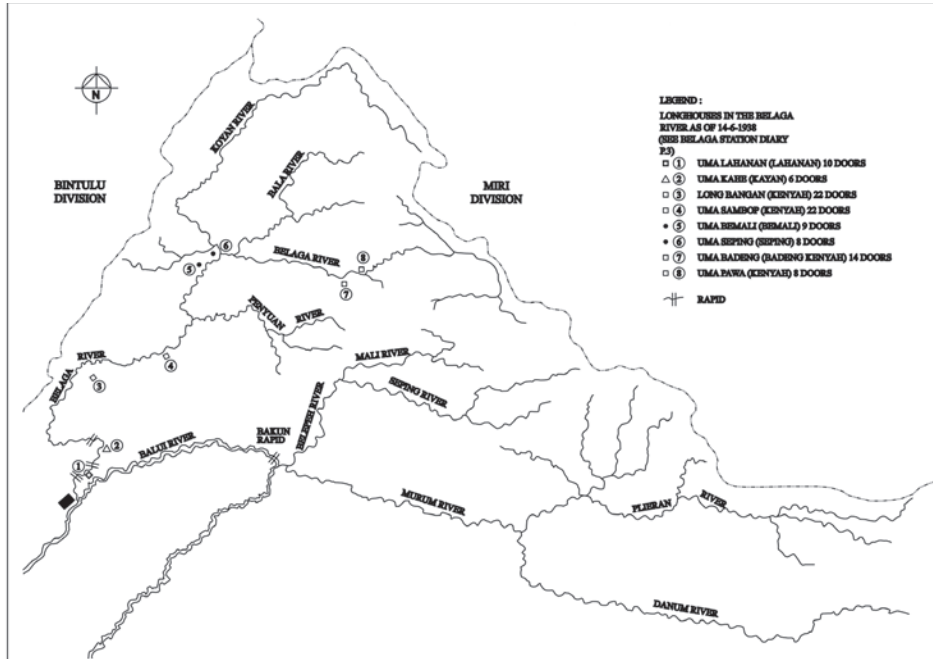


Map 1: Approximate locations of the seven Seping longhouses before the Catastrophe and old longhouse sites occupied by the Seping upon their return from the Seping River.

moved back to their original homeland on the Belaga River, led by their leader Lakui. They reoccupied the Belaga River as one longhouse community. Since the time of Lakui, leadership has changed twelve times: Lakui to his son Biat; Biat to his son Lakui; Lakui to his son Kiat; Kiat to his son Selalau, Selalau to his son Balan; Balan to Jengai; Jengai to his son Utung; Utung to his brother-in-law Likah Usa; Likah Usa to his cousin Lian Lakui; Lian Lakui to his step-son Kebing Gau; and Kebing Gau to the present headman, Lenjau Lian. They also moved settlements from one location to another along the Belaga River, leaving traces of their occupations in terms of old longhouse sites, *temuda*² and burial poles. According to Beng Lian’s narrative the Seping have established no less than eight settlements in different locations along the Belaga River (see Map 2).

1 Another version of the story says that the two individuals were from different households, one from the upriver and the other from the downriver end of the longhouse.

2 Secondary forest that grew from the land cultivated with hill rice.



Map 2: Location of longhouses in the Belaga River in 1938.

Written Records

The first mention of the Seping in the literature is in the official traveling report of the Third Division Resident published in the October 1882 issue of the *Sarawak Gazette*. The report mentions a fine imposed on the Seping for not being able to produce for sale the agreed amount of camphor to Brunei traders. On page 45 of the October 1882 issue of the *Sarawak Gazette*, the Resident, de Crespigny, wrote:

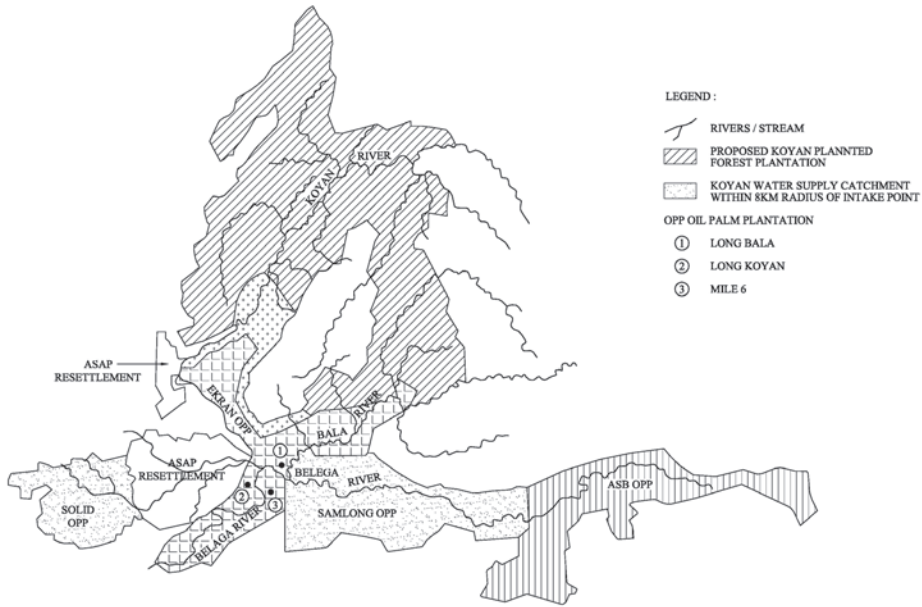
Tama Laang came and made arrangement with the Brunis by which they are to pay in a further amount of three piculs [of camphor]. I demanded one more payment of three piculs and said I would not press for the remaining six and took the liberty of forgiving the Sepings that amount, seeing that the interests of traders would be in better condition were this done (de Crespigny 1882:45).

Hugh Brooke Low made a number of entries on the Seping in the diary of his official travels up the Upper Rejang. On Thursday, 6 December, 1883, he made the following entry:

Dian reports that Aman Urieng brought 7 rifles into Baloi from Tinjar and left 2 here (one he gave to Jiu a Punan, now in Dian's possession); and the other he sold to Inau a Kajaman now in Akam Bato Merieng's possession. Ama Sulan a Sepieng has two... (Low 1884: 42).

He made another entry the following month, on Tuesday, January 1st 1884:

Aban Jalong told the Rajah that 3 Sepiengs (Tama Selalang, Tama Lahang and Lajah) had come to him with a message from Tuloi that unless he paid a fine of 30 tetawaks, 4 slaves and 50 ilangs within one moon he would be attacked by Government bala (Low 1884:51).



Map 3: Locations of the three Seping settlements at Long Bala, Long Koyan and Mile 6, surrounded by an oil palm plantation. Map adapted from Ecosol Consultancy SDN BHD, 2002 EIA report on the proposed oil palm plantation at Sungai Asap in Belaga District.

On his journey up the Tinjar in 1899, Haddon mentions the Seping thus:

At every house we stopped at subsequently Hose made inquiries for Baling Go's [*Bale' Gau's*] tooth-nails ... a very typical adze-head... These Seping Kenyahs brought it with them when they came from the Pliran River, a branch of the Rejang (Haddon 1932:201).

The Belaga Station Diary provides a bit more information, but nothing else besides the locations of the two longhouses, and who the headmen were. The Diary indicates that in 1938 there were eight longhouses on the Belaga River (see Map 3), two of which were the Seping and Bemali longhouses. The two longhouses were located near Long Koyan. At this point in time, the Bemali people were slowly being absorbed by neighboring groups through intermarriage. The remarks written about the Seping and Bemali by administrative officers, on official visits to the Belaga River, were, to say the least, far from complimentary. For instance, in 1940, when the Kapit District Officer visited all the longhouses on the Belaga River, he had these comments on the two longhouses, which appear on page 16 of the Belaga Station Diary:

On the 2nd day we managed to struggle against the falling river up to the Seping house, passing Bemalis, but calling them up to Seping for evening business. Night with Seping. New T. R. [Tuai Rumah or headman], Lian Lakui. For orders to these two miserably small and dirty houses...*dampa*..see p. 14. (Sgd.) A. R. Snelus 6.6.1940

The orders, contained on page 14 of the Diary, read as below:

Rh Lian Lakui, Seping and Rh Talip [Nyagung], Bemali have agreed to join up together and build one new and good longhouse, since both existing houses are miserable shacks of only 8 doors and not far apart, and their races are now intermarried and always intermingling. House to be built on true left bank of S. Belaga near [Long] Bala after 1941 harvest. At the same time Juing Jimun who has two doors at present living in a 'dampa' 2 hours upriver from Rh Lian Lakui...must rejoin the longhouse taking his rooms on to theirs after harvest 1941 he may no longer live alone, separated from the longhouse...he is now so ordered. (Sgd). A. R. Snelus 4.6.1940

The District Officer's order was not carried out until 1956 when Keping Gau became the headman of the Seping, and Sem Talip the headman of the Bemali. The Seping and the Bemali built one longhouse at Long Koyan with an unusual arrangement of two headmen, Keping Gau for the Seping and Sem Talip for the Bemali.

However, in the early 1960s³ a large number of them moved to the Tinjar on their own accord, with official endorsement from the colonial government. Four families decided to stay put in the Koyan and Bala area, and not migrate to the Tinjar for several reasons. First, they found it unthinkable because of the possibility of losing customary rights to their land in the Koyan and Bala areas. Second, they didn't like the idea of being dependent on the generosity of host communities in the Tinjar to provide them land for farming. Third, as migrants, and a minority group at that, they feared their voice might not be taken seriously, especially in times of need.

With regard to the majority who chose to migrate, there were two basic reasons they chose to do so. The first was the difficulty of communication. There were two main routes to Belaga Town from Long Koyan: 1) by boat to the head of Giham Hulo (Hulo Rapids), and then on foot, climbing steep hills, the highest of which is Bukit Jayong; or 2) on foot along the steep river bank and then paddling between four sets of rapids: Giam Hulo, Giham Urek, Giham Padeng, and Giham Pasang. Whether one took the route through Bukit Jayong or passed the four sets of rapids, the journey from Long Koyan to Belaga Town took three days to complete and the round-trip journey to Belaga and back took a week. On the Tinjar one could make the journey, using a boat with an outboard motor, from any of the longhouses right to Marudi Town in one day.

In addition to easy access to Marudi Town, another advantage of living along the Tinjar was that it made it possible to live near the Sebop people whose language and culture are similar to those of the Seping. In fact, when the Seping were living in the Seping River, they used to have close contact with the Sebop who occupied the Plieran River and its tributaries, the Luar and Menavan. The Sebop Penghulu in Tinjar at that time was Balan Lejau whose maternal great-grandparents were Seping. He was personally involved in making arrangements for the Seping migration to the Tinjar.

Upon their arrival in the Tinjar, they split into two groups: the larger group established a new longhouse settlement at Long Pejawai, not far below the Sebop

³ Two other longhouses above Long Koyan, the Kenyah of Uma Pawa, and the Kenyah Badeng, also migrated to the Tinjar in the early 1960s. Official involvement in this migration is described by Stewart Ngau Ding in his "Administrator at Large" in Chin and Langub eds, *Reminiscences: Recollections of Sarawak Administrative Service Officers*, 2007, pp. 224-6. Individual households started to move to the Tinjar as early as 1962, while others moved in 1964.

longhouse of Long Sobeng, and the smaller group joined Penghulu Balan Lejau's Sebop longhouse of Long Sobeng. The larger group that settled at Long Pejawai said that they did not join Penghulu Balan Lejau's longhouse so as to maintain their Seping identity.

After almost 20 years in the Tinjar, the Seping faced a shortage of land to farm. As migrants they depended on the generosity of the host communities to provide them land to farm. At the same time, in the early 1980s, the upper Belaga River area was connected to Belaga Town as well as Bintulu by a network of logging roads. The migrant Seping then decided to move back to their ancestral homeland in the Belaga River in the early 1980s. Those that settled at Long Pejawai established a longhouse at Long Bala, and those that settled at Long Sobeng joined the four families who had remained in the Koyan area, the site of the longhouse they had left 20 years earlier.

The more important reason for the Seping to come back to Belaga River from the Tinjar was to reclaim their customary rights land. Fortunately for them, their land was not occupied by other groups during their absence in the Tinjar. However, the area was opened up for logging. This was to be followed by oil palm plantation development, and the resettlement of 15 longhouse communities from the upper Balui affected by the Bakun Hydroelectric Dam. Most of the land the Seping claim by native customary rights has now been taken over for oil palm plantations and resettlement.

While the Seping who had moved to the Tinjar faced a land shortage there, the four families who remained on the Belaga River faced a different kind of problem. With a 10-door longhouse rule, the four families did not qualify for official recognition by the government as a longhouse community. To maintain their legal existence as a longhouse, the then headman, the late Sing Tahe, invited nine families of Kenyah Bakong who were then staying at the failed coffee plantation of Datuk Tajang Laing in Spakau to join them in 1982. They first built a longhouse at Long Koyan, and then moved to Mile 6 on the Belaga-Long Urun Logging Road, near the Ekran Oil Palm Plantation. The Kenyah Bakong have now expanded to 22 families as an uncontrolled number of additional families moved in. There is now considerable tension between the host community and these invited newcomers over land.

The eight families of Seping that came back to Long Koyan from the Tinjar refused to move to Mile 6 because that community is now made up largely of Kenyah Bakong. Officially, however, they are considered part of the group at Mile 6, with Nyelang Tahe as their headman.

Ethnic Identity

The Seping consider themselves a distinct people. They call themselves Seping and are recognized by their neighbors as such. As a people, they share a sense of common ancestry, as exemplified by their oral history (see Appendix). They identify themselves with a specific territory, the Belaga River, and share elements of a common culture and the Seping language. They are aware of their ethnicity, and recognize their differences from others. Looking at themselves in this way reflects both Barth's (1969:15) ideas concerning ethnic boundaries and Smith's (1991) notion of ethnic identity as being associated with six possible criteria, namely group name, common ancestry, shared attachment to a specific territory, shared culture and language, and awareness of ethnicity.

This sense of ethnic identity applies in particular to Seping relationships with their Kenyah neighbors. Today, the Seping are surrounded by four large Kenyah groups, the latter, in contrast to themselves, relative latecomers to the Belaga River area. Between themselves and the Kenyah, the Seping perceive the existence of clear ethnic boundaries marked by all six of the criteria defined by Smith.

At the same time the Seping also consider themselves to be Kajang. Here, ethnicity is a much more complex phenomenon. The term “Kajang” was first introduced into the Borneo ethnographic literature by Edmund Leach (1950:50). He included in the category the following “tribes”: Sekapan, Kajaman, Lahanan, Punan Bah, Seping, and Bemali (Bahmali). The category “Kajang” is interesting. Tom Harrisson (quoted in Rousseau 1990:63) denied the significance, indeed, even the existence of the category. However, there are groups who not only acknowledge the term’s existence, but regard it as an important ethnic category. For instance, the Punan Bah include the following groups within the Kajang category: Sekapan, Kejaman, Lahanan, Punan Bah, Seping, Bemali, Tanjong, Kanowit, Sihan, and Bekatan, the coastal Melanau of the Rejang delta, the Segan and Tatau of Bintulu division, and the Berawan (whom they call Melawan)⁴ and Sebop of Baram district (Nicolaisen 1977-8). As a social category, the term “Kajang” denotes a sense of interethnic solidarity (Nicolaisen 1977-8:191) among the early inhabitants of the upper Rejang, in opposition to the Kayan and Kenyah who expanded later into the area (see Rousseau 1990:63).

Two distinctive cultural traits that groups belonging to the Kajang category used to share in common were the role of sago in their economy---it was formerly their staple food---and the practice of secondary burial (Metcalf 1975:54-9) in which the remains of dead chiefs were stored in jars atop elaborately carved poles made of ironwood (*belian*). Nowadays, rice has replaced sago as their staple and the practice of secondary burial has long been abandoned. These shared past traits were the basis of a sense of similarity and hence of interethnic identity.

The question as to whether the Seping have compromised their Seping identity by simultaneously claiming to be Kajang does not arise, as the term “Kajang” is used in a much broader, interethnic sense.

Interactions between the Seping and the core groups of Kajang—Sekapan, Kejaman, Lahanan, and Punan Bah—which Ida Nicolaisen calls the Kajang *lan* or ‘true Kajang’ (Nicolaisen 1977-8:194), especially the Kejaman, have always been close and frequent. Virtually all Seping over the age of 50 speak Kejaman, Sekapan, Lahanan, and Punan Bah fluently. Likewise, a large number the Kajang *lan*, especially Kejaman and Lahanan, speak Seping with reasonable fluency. Over the years, intermarriages have occurred between the Seping and the Kajang *lan*. Intermarriage has encouraged frequent visits by relatives from each side of the married couple, and offspring of marriages between different ethnic groups can trace their ethnicity through both the mother and father.⁵ The most important marriage between the Seping and Kajang *lan* was that of

4 The four large Berawan settlements in the Baram—Long Jegan, Long Teru, Batu Belah and Long Terawan—classify themselves under the category of Lepo’ Pu’un (see Metcalf 1974), and recognize cultural similarities with the Kajang.

5 However, it is interesting to note that our data show that, today, the Seping intermarry more

the famous Kejaman chief, Taman Tipung Tuli, and a Seping woman named Lesung. Lesung was, of course, a *keta'ak*, an aristocrat. It was a marriage that the Seping, to this day, take particular pride in. As a powerful chief in the upper Rejang, he protected minority groups from being taken advantage of by larger groups.⁶ Taman Tipung did not have any descendants from his marriage with the Kayan aristocrat, Bulan.⁷ However, he had several descendants through his union with the Seping woman, Lesung. Figure 1 shows three individuals who can trace their lines to Taman Tipung Tului: Mura, a great-grandson; Lejau, the current headman of the Seping longhouse at Long Bala, a great-great-grandson; and Usin, a successful businessman, a great-great-great-grandson.

Intermarriages, especially the one between the powerful Kejaman chief Taman Tipung Tului and the Seping woman, Lesung, have been used by the Seping to assert their membership in the Kajang category. On the other hand the Kajang core groups have readily



Mura Keding, a great-grandson of the Kejaman chief Taman Tipung Tului (see Fig. 1).

Lejau Lian, the Seping headman of Long Bala, and a great-great-grandson of the Kejaman chief Taman Tipung Tului (see Fig. 1).



frequently with Kenyah than they do with Kajang. They also appear to be more closely related to the Kenyah linguistically. Thus, A.B. Hudson (1978: 20) places the Kejaman, Sekapan, and Lahanan languages within the “Rejang-Bintulu group,” while classifying the Seping language as “Kenyahic” (although Hudson (1978:22) does not refer to “Seping” but to “Bah Malih” whom the Seping consider a Seping subgroup).

6 Seping elders say that the Kejaman, especially the powerful Kejaman chief, Taman Tipung Tului, helped prevent the Seping from being overwhelmed by the four Kenyah groups. Thus, this Seping-Kajang association appears to be historical rather than linguistic.

7 Taman Tipung had a son, Tabun, and adopted a Kayan girl, Tipung. Neither of them had any offspring.

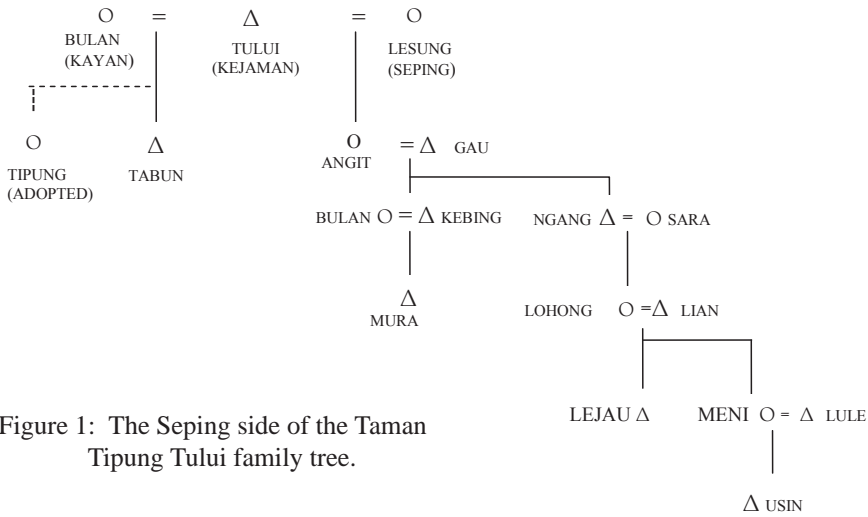


Figure 1: The Seping side of the Taman Tipung Tului family tree.

accepted minority groups into their category to give them added strength to counter the influence of the newly arrived Kayan and Kenyah, and especially the political dominance of the former.

Language and ethnic affiliation

In his oral historical narrative, Beng Lian claims that the Seping language shares a lot of words in common with Kejaman, Melanau, Penan, and Kenyah. A number of Seping elders agree with Beng Lian’s claim with respect to Penan and Kenyah, but have some doubts with regard to Kejaman and Melanau. Linguists suggest that the Seping language belongs to the Kenyahic subgroup (Hudson 1978:23), while Kejaman belongs to the Rejang-Bintulu group and Melanau to the Lower Rejang group (Hudson 1978:20).

Tables 1 and 2 show how closely related the Seping, Sebop, and Penan languages are to one another. Table 1 compares a number of kin terms used by the Seping, Penan, Sebop, and Kenyah Lepo’ Tau, showing some commonalities, while Table 2 is a comparative vocabulary list. The vocabulary that appears in these tables was collected by the author.

Relations between the Seping and the Sebop are not confined to the similarities of language. Their relationship dates back to the time when both were living in the Usun Apau. At that time the Seping occupied the Seping River area and the Sebop, north of them, lived on the Luar, a true right-bank tributary of the Plieran. They interacted frequently, and married into each other’s group. Even after they moved out in different directions, the Seping to the Belaga River, and the Sebop to the Tinjar in Baram District, they maintained close relationships with each other. Thus, when the Seping migrated to the Tinjar in the early 1960s, it was the Sebop *Penghulu*, Balan Lejau, who they

English	Seping	Penan	Sebop	Kenyah Lepo' Tau
grandparents	ake'	tepun	ukun	uko/ukun
father	ama'	tamen	tamen	amai
mother	ina'	tinin	tinin	we'
uncle/aunt	ve'	ve' (EP)*, vi' (WP)**	vi'	embe'
sibling	pade'	pade' (EP), padi' (WP)	padi'	pade'/panak
elder sibling	tuken	tuken	tuken	seken
younger sibling	tadin	tadin	tadin	sadin
cousin	pade' pecak	pade' pata (EP), padi' pesak (WP)	pade' pecak	senganak
child	anak	anak	anak	anak
nephew/niece	aong	ahong (EP), aong (WP)	aong	aung
parent-in-law/child-in-law	kivan	kivan	kivan	ivan
husband	laket	banen	laki'	lake'
wife	ledu	do (EP), redu (WP)	ledo	leto
brother-in-law	sabai laket	sabai	cabai	sabai
sister-in-law	sabai ledu	langu	cabai	sabai

EP=Eastern Penan; WP=Western Penan

Table 1: Comparative kin terminologies: Seping, Penan, Sebop and Kenyah Lepo' Tau

approached for a site to build a longhouse and land to farm. Penghulu Balan Lejau was in fact, an offspring of a Sebop father and Seping mother. During their 20-year stay in the Tinjar, the Seping say they were well accepted as if they were Sebop. As mentioned, a number of Seping families joined the Sebop longhouse of Penghulu Balan Lejau, participating with them in farm work and other community activities.

Despite the closeness of the Seping language to Sebop, frequent interactions, intermarriages, and the fact that a number of Seping families lived under one roof with the Sebop at Long Sobeng for twenty years, the Seping say that the Sebop are a distinct group. The Sebop consider themselves to be a subgroup of the Kenyah, while the Seping have been historically associated with the Kajang.

The Seping and Penan were also close neighbors when both lived in the Usun Apau. When the Seping still occupied the Seping River area, a group of Penan calling themselves the Penan Apat⁸, roamed the Apat River, a tributary of the Jek, which in turn is a tributary of the Seping. Seping elders confess that they know nothing about their relationship with the Penan when they were in the Usun Apau, other than they were close neighbors. However, Penan Apat oral history suggests that their apical ancestor, Poven Teguli' accompanied the Seping on raids against the Kelabit, indicating a cordial relationship between the Seping and Penan (Brosius 1992:84). However, when the Seping were living at a place called Tuju Batu Buwin, also in the Seping River, a feud broke out between them and the Penan (Brosius 1992: 84-85). The Penan surrounded the Seping

8 The Penan Apat are today's Penan Geng, residing in the upper Belaga, Danum, Plieran, and Seping rivers.

English	Seping	Penan	Sebop	Kenyah
I	a'ak	akeu' (EP)*, aku' (WP)**	aa'u	ake'
you	ka'ak	kaeu' (EP), kau (WP)	kau'	iko'
we (exclusive)	ulik/amek	amee' (WP), ami' (WP)	kami	ilu
bachelor	laket danak	lake' lemanai (EP), lake' usa (WP)	laki' danak	lemanai
damsel	ledu danak	redu lemanai (EP), redu usa (WP)	ledo danak	lemanai
us (inclusive)	ulik	uleu' (EP), ulo' (WP)	ulu'	ilu mung
water	ba'	ba'	ba	sungai
fire	peruk	porok	peru'	luten
hot	pana	pana	pana	pana
cold/cool	genin	genin	genin	sengim
sleep	pegen	pegen	pegen	lundok
day	langi'	dau (EP), langit (WP)	langit	tau
night	darem	marem	marem	alem
far	jo'	ju'	ju'	cok
near	dane'	dane' (EP), dani' (WP)	dani	nyeng
run	pelayu	nekedeu' (EP), mengasa (WP)	ngaca	ngasa
jump	uduk	nekuja (EP), ujek (WP)	uduk	nekejuk
flee	kaleo'	kelap	kelap	kelap
house	uma	lamin (EP), uma (WP)	uma	amin
hut	lapau	lepo'	pangup	lepau
post	liit/suka'	lihie/suka' (EP), je' (WP)	suka	suka'
chicken	diek	yap (EP), dik (WP)	diek	yap
barking deer	tela'o	tela'o (EP), telao (WP)	tela'o	tela'o
wild boar	mavui	mavui	mavui	bavui
pig	buik	iduk (EP), uting (WP)	buin	buin
snake	acen	asen	acen	jung ulai

EP*=Eastern Penan; WP**=Western Penan

Table 2: Comparison of Seping, Penan, Sebop, and Kenyah Lepo' Tau Vocabularies

longhouse and this prevented the latter from leaving the longhouse to tend their farms and look for food. The Seping sued for peace and in return the Penan demanded the two daughters of the Seping chief in marriage. Jamai was married to Daang, the son of the Penan Apat chief, Poven, and Kedisi to another Penan by the name of Nyai. It is from the offspring of these two marriages with the daughters of the Seping chief that the Penan Apat lay claim to have aristocratic blood in their society (Langub 2004:193). None of the Seping elders I interviewed had heard of the feud between the Seping and Penan, but

a Seping grandmother residing at Long Koyan says she heard of the story of Jamai who was pregnant out of wedlock and given to live with the Penan. She later married Daang, the son of the Penan chief, Poven. She confirms that Jamai was a daughter of a Seping aristocrat. With regard to Kedisi, the Seping grandmother says she never heard any story about her.

The Seping do not have the same close relationship with the Penan that they do with the Sebop. Apart from linguistic affinities, the Seping do not see other similarities with the Penan, as they do with the Sebop and Kajang. The Seping say that the Penan are different. They were nomadic and lived by hunting and gathering. They settled down recently, about thirty years ago. As nomads they did not live in longhouses, but in lean-tos. They also engaged in barter-trade with their settled neighbors. Since the Seping left the Usun Apau, they have had almost no interaction with the Penan, no intermarriage, or other links. Today, the Penan are the only people left in the Usun Apau area.

The Seping language is in everyday use in all the three settlements, although older people complain that younger people tend to bring foreign words, especially Malay, into their conversations. A small number of outsiders who have married into the Seping community and live with them speak the language with reasonable fluency. Kejaman, Sekapan, and Lahanan in their 60s and 70s speak fluent Seping, and although those in their 50s and below are not as fluent as their elders, the fact is that there are still non-Seping today who speak the language.

The Seping have various types of folk stories (*suket*) and epics (*beguan*). Today, folk stories are rarely told, and the only person who could sing the *beguan* passed away



Yan Ketek of Long Koyan and his mother Lahad Butan. Yan is the leader of the Seping of Long Koyan. (Photo: Kelvin Egay)



Kliering (burial post) of Taman Tipung Tipung Tului stands proudly in front of the Sarawak Museum, Tun Razak Building in Kuching as a recognition of his social standing, see Fig. 1. (Photo: Courtesy of Sarawak Museum).

a few years ago. With the passing of Beng Lian, also a few years ago, the Seping also lost their only oral historian. The Seping used to welcome visitors to their longhouse with “praise” or “drinking songs,” but these are no longer performed. *Suket* and *beguan* are rich in poetic vocabulary and idioms and the elders say that their loss has greatly impoverished the language.

Belief System

The Seping are Catholics. They adopted Catholicism in 1966 when they were at Long Pejawai, in the Tinjar. Their ancestors believed in omens which they called *amen*. Omen creatures include a number of birds, deer, and snakes that were also recognized by their neighbors, when augury was prevalent among the indigenous peoples of interior Sarawak. When Adet Bungan, a reformed indigenous belief system founded by Jok Apui, a Kenyah from the Apo Kayan, East Kalimantan, was introduced to Belaga in the late 1940s, the Seping, like most of the indigenous people in Belaga District, adopted the new belief system (see Lake’ Baling 2002; Langub 2002; White 1956: 472-475; Aichner 1956:476-477; Prattis 1963:64-87). When they moved to the Tinjar, the Sebop and most of the other indigenous peoples in the area were Catholics. After a few years in the Tinjar, they decided to convert to Catholicism through Father De Varies.

Household and Community

There are a total of 40 households in the three Seping longhouse settlements. Of the 40 households, 31 are nuclear families, and nine extended families. The biggest household has 21 members, an extended family, made up of the husband, wife, children, married children and their spouses, and grandchildren. The smallest household has

An old Seping *salong* (burial pole), among many others, located near the Seping longhouse of Long Bala. It is covered by creepers.



two members, comprising a husband and wife; their children have married and formed their own households. The head of the household is normally the most senior male member. However, four households have female heads. In three cases, the female member became head of the household following the death of her husband, and in one case she accepted the role when her Chinese husband declined it.

As mentioned earlier, there are three Seping longhouses—Long Bala, Long Koyan, and Mile

6—located outside the perimeter of the Sungai Asap Resettlement. Long Bala is located upriver from the Sungai Asap Resettlement, at the confluence of the Bala and Belaga Rivers; Long Koyan is situated downriver from the Sungai Asap Resettlement, slightly below the confluence of the Koyan and Bala Rivers; and Mile 6, also downriver, and on the opposite bank of Belaga River from the Sungai Asap Resettlement (see Map 3). The Sungai Asap Resettlement area is, according to Seping oral history, within the Seping traditional territorial domain.

Although the Seping live in three longhouses, at three different locations, they have only two headmen or *ketua kampung*, one at Long Bala, the other at Mile 6. Long Bala is a solid settlement with its own headman. The groups at Long Koyan and Mile 6 used to be one longhouse located at Long Koyan. When the group of four households, including the headman, decided to move to Mile 6, together with 22 families of Kenyah Bakong, the other eight households refused to move. The four households are the families who did not migrate to the Tinjar, while the eight households staying put at Long Koyan are returnees from the Tinjar. The latter refused to move primarily because they were concerned about the eventuality of losing the post of headman to the Kenyah Bakong majority. Administratively, Long Koyan is under the jurisdiction of the headman at Mile 6.

Because of their small population, no Seping has ever been appointed to the post

of *penghulu*, or area chief. Beng Lian, in his oral history narrative (see the Appendix), claims that the Seping headman, Selalau, was appointed to the post of *penghulu*, but there is no written record of this appointment in the Belaga District Office.

The Seping claim that their society is stratified into two strata: *keta'ak* (aristocrats), and *panyin* (commoners). In the past they had a third stratum at the bottom, *dipen* (slaves). Today this stratum no longer exists. By tradition the village headman is chosen by consensus from among the *keta'ak* class. The duties and responsibilities of the headman are: 1) to maintain harmonious social relationships among the members of the longhouse; 2) to resolve conflicts; 3) to act as an intermediary between the local community and the outside world; and 4) to oversee development activities in the village. In matters pertaining to development activities, he is assisted by a village development committee, *Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung*.

In the past, the Seping practiced secondary burial. For a person from the *keta'ak* class, secondary burial was an elaborate affair. The bones of the deceased were cleaned and stored in a jar which was then placed on top of a carved *belian* burial pillar, known as a *salong*. This practice was abandoned when the Brooke government outlawed it (Nicolaisen 1984:5). Today, *salong* poles (see Plates 1 and 2) are no longer made, and the ones raised by their ancestors are kept as a form of cultural heritage and as markers of their territorial domain. Seping ancestral *salong* can be found along the Belaga River and its tributaries, at Long Kelat, Long Sekupu, Long Belaan, Long Koyan, Long Bala, and Long Iga (Map 1).

Marriage

The Seping are a monogamous people, and an individual is allowed only one spouse at a time. An individual is prohibited from marrying somebody closely related, up to a cousin three times removed. Ideally, an aristocrat (*keta'ak*) is expected to marry within his or her own class. Given their small population, this is not possible. The headman of Long Bala and another aristocrat from the same village married women of the same standing from other ethnic groups. The headman married a Kenyah woman, and the aristocrat a Sehop. Today, the difficulty of finding a spouse within the community is not only confined to the *keta'ak* class, but also the *panyin*. Increasingly, commoners find it difficult to find a spouse within the community who is not a close relative. Of the 51 existing marriages in the Seping community, 33 are with persons from outside the community. This means that 65% of the existing marriages are with individuals from other ethnic groups. Table 3 shows the different ethnic groups that have married into the Seping community. The figures include only in-marriages, in which the non-Seping partner has become a member of the Seping community, and not out-marriages, where the Seping spouse has left the community.

When an individual from the *keta'ak* class marries, the bridewealth comprises one large gong called a *ketawak*, one *kelem bau* (high quality bead), and cloth. If the bridegroom wants the bride to move to his family apartment, the bridewealth is doubled, that is, two large gongs, two beads, and double the amount of cloth. The bridewealth for a commoner comprises one small gong, and one *talem temaga* (brass tray). If the bride moves to the bridegroom's apartment, the bridewealth is doubled.

Livelihood and Economic Activities

Virtually all households say their core economic activity is farming, that is, the cultivation of hill rice, which some of them combine with cash crops such as cocoa, pepper, and, perhaps, a few fruit trees. The Seping are not skillful rice cultivators like their more industrious neighbors, the Kenyah. This is so because, according to Beng Lian's oral narrative (Appendix), the Seping were in some distant past hunter-gatherers, relying on wild sago as their staple food. They became rice cultivators just before their migration from the Seping to the Belaga River, with Lakui as their leader. Since the time of Lakui, Seping leadership has changed twelve times. Although the Seping still cultivate rice today, the size of individual farms is much smaller than it used to be, with an average of 3 to 4 *gantang* of planting seeds per household farm. An often mentioned reason for the smaller size rice farm nowadays is that family members are involved in several activities, such as cash crop farming, and wage employment. Another reason is that the size of their customary rights land has shrunk, taken over by logging companies, oil palm plantations, and the Sungai Asap Resettlement, a resettlement for 15 longhouse communities comprising Kayan, Kenyah, Lahanan, Buket, and Penan who were moved from the Balui River to make way for the Bakun Dam.

Map 3 shows that the three Seping settlements are just inside the land area given to Ekran Oil Palm Plantation. Ekran was given a provisional license (PL) to develop the area into an oil palm plantation, but the Seping insist that the whole area is their native customary land. According to the Seping, Ekran went ahead with the development of about 30% of the total area given to it, largely on the left bank of the Belaga River, across the river from the Seping longhouse at Long Bala. This includes native customary land on the Iga and Pelule, an area the Seping have a strong emotional attachment to, as it contains the sites of their former longhouses.

The area between the Bala and Koyan is supposed to be developed as the third phase of Ekran's project, but the villagers protested and requested that the company not enter the land as it is badly needed by the people for farming. While the Seping were

Table 3: Number of marriages with other ethnic groups.

Seping	M	F	Total number of marriages	M	F	Other ethnic groups
Seping	0	2	2	2	0	Berawan
Seping	1	1	2	1	1	Kejaman
Seping	4	9	13	9	4	Kenyah
Seping	1	2	3	2	1	Iban
Seping	0	2	2	2	0	Lun Bawang
Seping	1	1	2	1	1	Sebop
Seping	0	1	1	1	0	Kayan
Seping	1	0	1	0	1	Bajau
Seping	0	1	1	1	0	Sekapan
Seping	0	4	4	4	0	Chinese
Seping	1	1	2	1	1	Indonesian
Total	9	24	33	24	9	Total

preventing Ekran from entering the area, a group of Kenyah from the Asap Resettlement, hungry for land to farm, sneaked into the area two years ago, to plant rice. The Kenyah were advised not to enter the area again.

In the 1930s there were six settlements along the Belaga River above Giham Hulo (see Map 2): Long Bangan (Kenyah), Uma Sambop, Long Semutut (Kenyah), Uma Bemali, Long Koyan (Bemali), Uma Seping, Long Bala (Seping), Uma Pawa (Kenyah), Uma Badeng (Kenyah Badeng). As the earliest group to settle along the Belaga River, and then having occupied different locations, the Seping have left burial poles (*salong*) of some of their long dead ancestors, and *talun* or native customary rights land along its length. Of great concern to the Seping are their rights to native customary rights land in the general area of Long Koyan and Long Bala, where they are now permanently settled. They brought their concern to the Belaga District Office, discussed their plight with lawyers, but nothing much has happened other than the fact that they have managed to stop Ekran from developing the area between the Bala and Koyan, albeit temporarily.

The Seping consider land as the most important asset they possess. It is the source of their livelihood. The land can be cultivated with both food and cash crops; while *talun* (fallow land) provides for a host of activities, i.e., here the villagers can cut firewood, bamboo or cane and gather shoots, wild fruits, edible leaves, fungi, tubers, and other uncultivated foodstuffs. The older people consider farming, i.e. the cultivation of hill rice, an important occupation. Prior to the arrival of timber companies in the interior, rice cultivation was the main occupation of rural people, and the Seping were no exception. Rice is grown mainly for domestic consumption.

As they live just outside the Asap Resettlement area, they now have access to the resettlement trading center, as well as to Bintulu Town, which is about two and a half hours away by car. As a consequence, cash has become important for the Seping. Since their return to Long Bala and Long Koyan in the early 1980s, younger Seping have sought cash employment with timber companies, oil palm plantations, and elsewhere. Most have found jobs as mechanics, drivers, tree cutters, scalers, security guards, etc., or as administrative assistants and clerks in the public and private sectors, and for young women, as shop assistants.

A few individuals have moved to urban centers to look for jobs. The only Seping who has a tertiary education moved to Kuching to work as a manager in a well-established firm. He is married to a Kenyah woman who works as a lawyer in Kuching. Two young men traveled to Johor Baru, one of them a foreman, the other a driver in the same factory. Four individuals are employed as factory workers in Miri.

Five individuals are self-employed: two run transport services using 4W-Drive land cruisers, one owns a canteen, and two others own coffee shops, which sometimes act as restaurants. A young Kayan man who married a Seping woman operates a small scale commercial vegetable garden. Table 4 shows the cash-generating employment of the Seping.

Although it was difficult to find out how much individuals are paid for the jobs they are doing, especially those who are self-employed, I managed to get approximate figures as to how much employers pay their employees. A lorry driver transporting timber from one location to another is paid an average of RM 5,000 a month, and an ordinary

driver between RM 800 and RM 1,000 a month. An ordinary mechanic is paid between RM 800 and RM 1,000 a month, depending on his experience and length of service, whereas a chief mechanic is paid between RM 1,500 to RM 2,000, also depending on the length of his service. The two security guards are paid RM 800 each a month. A laborer working on an oil palm plantation is paid between RM 15 and RM20 per day. One of the administrative assistants in a government department says her salary is RM 900 per month, and a clerk in a private company, RM 600 a month. As mentioned earlier, these are just approximate, not precise figures.

Although the younger people are attracted to cash employment, they still consider farming, i.e. cultivation of rice and cash crops, important. Farming and cash crop cultivation mean attachment to the land. Land is important. When a person loses a job, he has land to fall back on; he can plant rice or cultivate cash crops. This concern was expressed by a number of people employed by timber companies and oil palm plantations. They say that their jobs are not stable; they can lose them at any time if the company changes management or a particular type of work is no longer required. A mechanic who works with a timber company said:

As long as the company I am working with is here, I have a job; but if it moves to another area, I will lose it. I will not follow the company because I am attached to this place, and my family has land here. There are too many outsiders moving into this area and I don't want my land to be taken by people who have no historical attachment to this place.

As we checked the list of jobs that the people of Long Bala have, a young man made the following remark:

On paper and as of now this list looks impressive; people have cash employment and earn good money. [But] In a few months' time some

Table 4: Cash-generating employment of the Seping

	Employment	No. of people employed
1	transport services (self-managed)	2
2	small businesses (self-managed)	5
3	drivers (timber co. and oil palm plantations)	9
4	professionals	2
5	administrative assistants and clerks	5
6	factory workers	4
7	foremen	2
8	mechanics (timber co. and oil palm plantations)	13
9	welder	1
10	tree cutters	4
11	security guards	2
12	laborers	20
13	shop assistants	2
14	vegetable farmer	1

people may lose jobs, and it may take them months or years to find other jobs. With land one is never without a job.

Job security is of great concern to the Seping. It is precisely because of this that younger people look to the land as a source of livelihood security. Their strategy, it seems, is to get cash employment, and keep the land on which to fall back on when there is no cash employment available.

Individuals who have job security are the two professionals working in Kuching and Peninsular Malaysia, the lawyer wife of one of them, four women and one man employed as administrative assistants and clerks. Their number is small.

Amenities

Road. One reason why the Seping moved from their homeland on the Belaga River to the Tinjar in the early 1960s was difficult access to Belaga Town and other urban centers. Today settlements along the Belaga River have road access to Belaga Town, Bintulu, and Miri. Although returning to their land they left behind was the main reason why the Seping decided to move back to the Belaga River in the early 1980s, one cannot ignore the fact that the road, opened up by timber companies and oil palm plantations, was also a major factor in making that decision.

Water and Electricity. In the 1940s a District Officer called the Seping houses "miserable shacks." Their houses did not improve in the 1950s and 1960s, and people fetched their water from nearby streams. The presence of timber companies in the area in the early 1980s made it possible for the Seping to obtain timber to build longhouses of reasonably good quality. All three longhouses have a piped-water supply, provided by the government as minor rural development projects. A good number of young people are earning reasonable monthly income from timber companies and oil palm plantations, and this has enabled the community to buy generators to supply them with electricity.

Health. In the late 1950s a rural clinic manned by an *ulu* dresser was established at Uma Sambop, Long Semutut, about two hours' journey downriver by boat from Long Koyan. When they moved to the Tinjar, they were not far from the rural clinic at Long Sobeng. Today, there are two rural clinics in the Sungai Asap Resettlement, one at Local Center 1 and the other at Local Center 2. These clinics can be reached by motorable road within less than half an hour from Long Bala, and an hour or so from Long Koyan and Mile 6. For serious cases, patients are taken to Bintulu Hospital, about a three-hour journey by road.

Education. Education was first introduced to the Seping in 1957 when a primary school was established at the Kenyah longhouse of Uma Sambop, Long Semutut. Half a dozen Seping children enrolled as students. When the majority of the Seping moved to the Tinjar in the early 1960s, their children enrolled in the school at Long Sobeng. In the early 1980s, they moved back to Belaga River. The children enrolled in the school at the Penan settlement of Long Urun, about a two-hour drive by logging road up the Belaga River. With the establishment of the Asap Resettlement in the late 1990s, Seping children had the choice of attending school at either Local Center 1 or Local Center 2. For their secondary education, they go to Belaga Town, Kapit, or Bintulu.

In providing a picture of educational attainment of the Seping, a practical

approach is to take into account the population of the community aged 6 years and above. Table 5 below shows the educational attainment of the three Seping longhouses.

There is a small difference in overall educational attainment between Long Bala and Long Koyan and Mile 6. This can be attributed to the fact that Long Bala seems to be the better organized settlement.

The majority of Seping have primary education. The number continuing onto secondary schooling drops significantly: for lower secondary, 25 for Long Bala and 6 for Long Koyan and Mile 6, and for upper secondary, 17 for Long Bala and 6 for Long Koyan and Mile 6. Only three individuals have tertiary education: two from Long Bala and one from Mile 6. However, the third individual is a Kenyah woman married to the graduate from Long Bala. The three individuals are gainfully employed in urban areas, two in Kuching and one in Peninsular Malaysia. The three individuals maintain their own apartments and visit their respective longhouses regularly as their roots are firmly planted there.

Of those with secondary education, four young women found stable jobs as administrative assistants and clerks in government and the private sector. Most of the young men with secondary education work as drivers or mechanics in nearby timber camps or oil palm plantations. Only one young man found an office job, as a clerk on an oil palm plantation.

Observations and concluding remarks

Increased mobility and intermarriage have altered the ethnic landscape in even the most rural areas of Sarawak, making them increasingly multi-ethnic. The Seping landscape is an extreme example of this. As noted earlier, the Seping were once the sole occupants of the Belaga River area. By 1938 there were four large Kenyah settlements above the series of rapids: two below the Seping longhouse at Long Koyan, these being the Kenyah Long Bangan at Long Bangan, and the Kenyah Uma Sambop at Long Semutut; and another two above the same Seping Long house at Long Koyan, the Kenyah Badeng at Long Dulit, and the Kenyah Uma Pawa at Long Penyadan. The Seping were thus sandwiched between these four large settlements of industrious Kenyah. Today, not only are the Seping surrounded by these four Kenyah groups, but also by an additional 15 longhouse communities comprising five ethnic groups--Kayan, Kenyah, Lahanan, Buket and Penan--and by several oil palm plantations with hundreds of workers, both Malaysian and foreign.

With a small population of less than 300 individuals, and being surrounded

Table 5: Educational attainment of the Seping

Longhouse	N	P	LS	US	T	Total
Lg Bala	86	75	25	17	2	205
Lg Koyan & Mile 6	38	28	6	6	1	79
Combined	124	103	31	23	3	284

N=no schooling; P=primary; LS lower secondary (Form 1-3);

US=upper secondary Form 5-Upper 6; T=tertiary education

by larger and more powerful groups, the Seping have been confronted with two major challenges: potential assimilation by larger groups and loss of rights to their traditional lands. Today, the Seping have survived as a group. The fact that they have survived as a distinct community despite being surrounded by larger and more powerful groups is amazing. In their relationship with other groups, the Seping positioned themselves in such a way as to avoid being overwhelmed by the latter. For instance, when the Kajang needed to strengthen interethnic solidarity of the early inhabitants of the Belaga District to counter the expansion of the newly arrived Kayan and Kenyah, the Seping associated themselves with the early inhabitants under a “Kajang” umbrella without losing their Seping identity.

Another event that nearly caused the Seping to lose their separate identity was their migration to the Tinjar in the early 1960s. When news of their intention to migrate became public, the Sebop *Penghulu*, Balan Lejau, himself an offspring of a Sebop father and a Seping mother, was eager to accept them into his longhouse at Long Sobeng. Fearful of being absorbed into the Sebop community, the Seping elders negotiated for a token number of their households to join the Sebop, with the main group establishing their own longhouse nearby. The *Penghulu* agreed to the request of the main group to build a longhouse at Long Pejawe, not far below the Sebop longhouse, sparing the Seping from a possible loss of identity.

Their desire to maintain a separate Seping identity was recently tested when the group at Long Koyan discussed whether to move to Mile 6, Belaga-Long Urun Logging Road, to take advantage of the skills of the Kenyah Bakong in farming and house building. Four households, including the headman, decided to move to Mile 6; while eight refused because they did not want to be outnumbered by the 22 Kenyah Bakong households. Today, eight households remain at Long Koyan, technically under the leadership of the Seping headman at Mile 6.

Although Table 3 indicates that 65% of existing Seping marriages are with individuals from outside the Seping community, virtually all these outsiders have taken residence in Seping villages. A good number of them have learned the Seping language and speak it with reasonable fluency. Their children, having been brought up in a Seping environment, naturally speak Seping.

The Seping were first to occupy the Belaga River and have left their mark on the landscape as proof of occupation. These marks include old longhouse sites (*ugan levau*), cemeteries (*tanem*) including burial poles (*salong*), and farm land (*talun*) which they currently use or have left fallow for use in successive farming seasons. Being the sole occupant of the river basin, the Seping had free access to the land and its resources.

Things changed toward the end of the nineteenth and early the twentieth century when four groups of Kenyah moved into the Belaga River. Of the four groups, the Kenyah Sambop located downriver from Long Koyan at Long Semutut were the Seping's nearest neighbors. When the Kenyah Sambop settled at Long Semutut, a boundary was drawn between them and the Seping, at Long Penyuan. Over the years the area allocated to the Kenyah Sambop was not sufficient to accommodate the growing population. As a gesture of goodwill, and to avoid a situation where the Kenyah Sambop would have no alternative but to force their way into areas occupied by others, the Seping elders agreed

to move the boundary upriver, from Long Penyuan to Long Unen, in Seping territory. This boundary is still observed by the two communities.

When the majority of Seping migrated to the Tinjar in the early 1960s, four households did not. The four households that refused to migrate were regarded by the majority as stubborn. At that time, none of those who migrated to the Tinjar thought of coming back to the Belaga River. In hindsight, the four “stubborn” households are now regarded as a blessing in disguise as they prevented the area from being occupied by other groups.

In the mid 1980s, the area around the Koyan and Bala was earmarked for the resettlement of the 15 longhouses from the Bakun catchment area. Then, in the early 1990s, various plots of land in the area were allocated to large companies for oil palm plantations. It should be noted that since the visit of A. R. Snelus, then District Officer of Kapit, in 1940, the Seping have settled more permanently around Long Koyan and Long Bala. The Seping accepted the decision to allocate land in the area to the 15 longhouse communities as fair, but consider it insensitive on the part of the authorities to allocate land in the Koyan and Bala area to an oil palm company, without consulting the people who claim rights over the land, having lived and farmed on it generation after generation. The company has developed about 30% of the land, but is unable to continue work on the rest of the area, especially between the Bala and Koyan, as the Seping have asserted their customary rights to this land.

Despite their small number, and living in an increasingly complex social milieu, the Seping have tried persistently to keep their identity intact. The physical landscape has dramatically changed from an area largely covered by a biologically diverse primary forest, except for patches of land used for shifting agriculture, to that of vast oil palm plantations. While the Seping take pride in maintaining their ethnic identity, they are not so sure of their ability to defend their rights to the land they claim as theirs by custom and tradition.

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Appendix

History, Descent, Rights and Territorial Domain of the Seping Community in the Upper Belaga River (*Sejarah asal usul, keturunan, hak dan kawasan penempatan masyarakat Seping di bahagian Hulu Sungai Belaga*)¹

Summary of an Interview with Beng Lian

The Seping community is one of several indigenous groups found in the state of Sarawak. The Seping are not so different from other indigenous groups in terms of dress, manners, customs and traditions, skin color [*kulit*], way of life, and so on, and the Seping language has obvious similarities to Kejaman, Melanau, Penan, and Kenyah. It is not surprising then that the Seping people are categorized as part of the Kajang peoples. The settlement history of the Seping in the upper Belaga River area is here narrated in the form of a legend which has been passed down through the generations by word of mouth, and is here told by a Seping elder, Beng Lian (79 years old [at the time of this interview in the early 1990s]), of Long Bala.

In the distant past, the Seping community consisted of seven separate longhouse settlements, all of them found along the length of the Belaga River. According to Beng Lian's narrative, there were two Seping longhouses at Long Segiam, one longhouse at Long Seduk or Lubuk Tegan, one longhouse at Long Tegelem, one longhouse at Long Semakat (Kuala Koyan), one longhouse on the upper Koyan River, that is, at Long

¹ This summary of Beng Lian's interview was recorded in the early 1990s by an unknown interviewer. It was prepared for a lawyer who was then planning to represent the community in a legal case involving their customary land rights claim to areas surrounding these present-day Seping settlements. A copy of this summary came into the possession of the author, Jayl Langub, in 2006. The original was written in Bahasa Malaysia and is here translated by the author. Beng Lian died sometime in the early 2000s, several years before the author began this study.

Belaan, and lastly, one at Long Iga.

It is most unfortunate that these numerous Seping communities no longer exist today as living, vibrant communities. [Oral] history suggests that all seven longhouses were cursed and turned to stone or swept downriver by a gigantic flood as a consequence of inappropriate behavior committed by everybody in these longhouses. This legendary event is still of cultural significance today, as the Seping continue to retell the story of this catastrophe.

According to Beng Lian's narrative, the Seping of today are the descendants of a pair of Seping ancestors who once lived at Long Seduk or Lubuk Tegan. This longhouse met with a terrible disaster as a consequence of inappropriate behavior, that is, in this case, of catching a dragon and subsequently killing it and cooking its meat. Realizing that this was a bad sign, because of what they had done, a grandparent advised two grandchildren, one a boy, the other a girl, to flee. The two grandchildren took flight up the Penyuan River [a left bank tributary of the Belaga]. Only these two survived the disaster that otherwise wiped out the entire Seping population of all seven longhouses.

As the story goes, these two wandered through the primary forest for years until they became adult. Finally, they came to know each other and lived together as husband and wife. They had many offspring who married one another. Over the years, the number of families increased, giving rise to a new community of Seping. They lived a nomadic life, moving in search of food from one place to another.

Toward the end of their wandering, they came to a river called the Seping, a name which remains to this day. The river was so named to commemorate the name of the original Seping people. The lower portion of the river was, however, called Balui Peh, one of several tributaries of the Murum, which has the Kayan village of Uma Bawang at its mouth. They established a new settlement [along the Seping River] and lived there for many years. It was here that the original couple, who had become the apical ancestral parents of all the Seping people, became weak and frail, and finally died. Evidence of the Seping occupation of the area can still be seen to this day.

Lakui, a grandson of this apical couple, took over leadership of the Seping community. Lakui recalled the story of the Seping people as told by his ancestors which stated that the Belaga River area had been their original homeland. Thus, it was Lakui who led the Seping people back to the Belaga River. Having migrated, they established a settlement at Long Tepin along the upper Belaga; Lakui was still their leader.

When Lakui passed away, he was replaced as leader by his son Biat. During Biat's leadership, he led the Seping downriver to Lubuk Puda. Biat had a son whom he named Lakui, after his grandfather. Lakui later took over the leadership of the group from his father. Under Lakui's leadership, the Seping moved further downriver to Long Iga. After Lakui's death, he was replaced as leader by his son, Kiat. The Seping stayed at Long Iga for quite a long time. Here their leadership changed three times, from Lakui to his son Kiat, from Kiat to his son Selalau (who later, according to Beng Lian, was appointed to the position of *penghulu*), and finally from Selalau to his son Balan, who led the Seping downriver to Long Sekupu.

Upon Balan's death, Jengai became the leader. Jengai led the Seping upriver to Long Koyan. Jengai was replaced by his son, Utung. Under Utung's leadership, the

Seping moved downriver to Long Kelat. Utung led the Seping in moving a second time, this time upriver to Long Bala, where he died. His brother-in-law, Likah Usa succeeded him as leader. Likah Usa did not make any decisions in terms of moving the Seping community to a new area of settlement.

A cousin of Likah Usa, Lian Lakui (the father of the narrator of this oral history), was then appointed to lead the Seping people. Under Lian Lakui's leadership, the Seping moved upriver to Long Selukan. When Lian Lakui died, leadership passed to his stepson, Keping Gau. Keping Gau, in his turn, led the Seping downriver to Long Koyan. When Keping Gau died, he was replaced by Lenjau Lian who is the current headman of the Seping, now residing at Long Bala.

The truth is that, according to history, the Seping people were the first to occupy the Belaga River area. Although there are many different ethnic groups living along the Belaga River today, this change in ethnic composition took place comparatively recently.

In the old days, the Usun Apau area, which was occupied by various ethnic groups, was raided. The people were not able to defend themselves from the attack, but certain groups managed to escape to freedom. Among the groups that fled to safety were the Lepo Anan, Lepo Tau, Lepo Meleng, Memali, Kelabit, Kenyah Sambop and others. It was at this time that the Sambop people became inhabitants of the Belaga River area.

Like other indigenous groups in Sarawak, the Seping people recognized territorial boundaries, declared by the chiefs and leaders of the Orang Ulu people. During his lifetime, the Orang Ulu chief Taman Tipun Tupui demarcated the territorial boundaries of the Belaga River area thus: from the mouth of the Belaga River going upward to the Penyuan River, thence to the Mejawah River, moving downriver to the Balui/Rejang River, as far as the Belaga Bazaar, was the territory under the jurisdiction of Taman Tipung Tului. From the Penyuan River, going up the Belaga River, was the territory under the jurisdiction of the Seping people.

Taman Tipung Tului and Lake' Sebuang were brothers; and together with Keping Laleng, they were the leaders of the Kejaman people at that time. The area then allocated to the Sambop was restrictive or "tight." Under the wise decision-making of Seping leaders, such as Likah Usa, Lian Lakui, and Keping Gau, the boundary line at the Penyuan River was moved upriver to Long Unen, a tributary of the Belaga River. This change was agreed upon by all parties concerned so as to provide enough land area for the Sambop people.

AN ENGAGEMENT WITH “MODERNITY”? BECOMING CHRISTIAN IN THE KELABIT HIGHLANDS OF CENTRAL BORNEO¹

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Introduction

Although historically originating in Europe during the Enlightenment, it is widely acknowledged that the phenomenon of modernity had an impact on religions and cultures beyond Europe. This impact is usually characterized along the lines of a split between private and public worlds, a subjectivizing and marginalization of religion, a loss of tradition and breakdown of community, disenchantment, and the meaninglessness of religious language. All these are exemplified through social and political theories which suggest that the more a society becomes modern, the more its religious traditions decline (cf. Camaroff and Camaroff 1991; Ferguson 1999).

This European-derived notion of modernity (e.g. modernization theory) has been critiqued in a number of ways. One criticism has been of its long-held assumption that tradition invariably gives way to modernity in an evolutionary progression. But, foremost, is a criticism of the macro-level explanation of modernity in which the roles played by institutions or systems are stressed. The advent of modernity from this theoretical framework is seen as a given wave-like process that floods local forms of “world-making” (Bubandt 2004: 250). Furthermore, the focus on institutional factors rather than on the practices and ideas of local people “flattens the diverse articulation of modernity around the world” and thus has tended to provide accounts of only one side of the process.

It has partly been this attempt to redress this imbalance that has placed the topic of modernity at the center of the anthropological discipline’s theoretical and analytical agenda. It is a situation that has prevailed since the early 1980s through the 1990s. The persistence of this trend can be gauged from the proliferation of debates concerning theories of local modernity in which indigenization or vernacularization of modernity has become the main focus (for instance, Appadurai 1999; Goancker 2001, Knauff 2002, Rofel 1999). This increase in interest has been partly the result of far-reaching changes

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in the local communities that anthropologists study; many of their “objects of study” are now engaged in processes related to modernity and modernization. Today issues of modernity still capture the attention of the discipline (Jonsson 2004:673). This is despite the impossibility of agreement among theorists on its defining characteristics and time scale.

Questions of modernity remain important because they are questions about the implications of social change for societies and so inevitably affect every person. This is especially so because modernity concepts include problems of envisioning the future of human societies. In addition to this, as suggested by Talal Asad (2003), a new and urgent intensity of the modernity process in recent years demands a rethinking of the relationship between religion and the modern, especially the role of religion in the modern world. It is partly in response to this new wind of change that this paper explores the link between being modern and being Christian through the alternative modernity of the Kelabit. In order to explore what I mean by “alternative modernity among the Kelabit,” the next section will first describe what is understood as “local or alternative modernity” within the discipline of social anthropology.

Local and alternative modernity

Unlike earlier modernization theory, the main focus of local or alternative modernity is not only the power of modernity processes to encompass the indigenous (e.g. LiPuma 2001), but also the capacity of the local to encompass the modern and practices associated with it (Knauff 2005). In other words, the notion of “alternative modernity” is a heuristic device for talking about the dual and interactive processes of vernacularization and objectification. It helps to comprehend the impacts of modernity particularly on local communities, and how, in turn, the local can have effects on modernity itself. (cf. Bubandt 2004:249).

To explore this interactive process, Knauff (2002:25), for example, describes “alternatively modern” as a kind of “social and discursive space in which the relationship between modernity and tradition is reconfigured. . . [W]ithin this space. . . what it means to be modern is vernacularized or is reconstituted locally on many levels at the same time, yet vernacular itself is objectified according to new types of imaginaries and sensibilities made available by the new political economy and ideoscapes of modernity.”

In short, modernity is not a universal form (Bubandt 2004:250), but instead can be a cultural space or “site-specific imaginary, an attitude of questioning the present” (Gaonkar 2001b:13 quoted in Bubandt). Thinking of modernity along these lines, rather than as the triumph of institutions (e.g. the market, democratic governance and science), allows for the exploration of aspects of modernity as refracted through the experiences of people new to it. It provides space to explore inconsistencies and variations that take place under different conditions and historical circumstances, while concurrently acknowledging the influence of systems and institutions on social behaviors.

Holding this in mind, this article seeks to explore local modernity in the Kelabit Highlands, that is, to chart the encounter between the Kelabit and forces of modernity. Based on data collected during 12 months of fieldwork between September 2005 to September 2006, it explores how this engagement came about and how the Kelabit

particularized and redefined modernity within their own history and socio-political context; and how, at the same time, the Kelabit have been transformed through this process of engagement. Of specific interest here is how Christianity has been an entry point to modernity that transformed the Kelabit world, and at the same time how Christianity is being indigenized: that is, how it is being creatively integrated into practices and beliefs rooted in a local cultural logic by the Kelabit. Christianity and especially the church have become stabilizing factors and antidotes to the growing individualism proliferating under the aegis of modernity. The church especially has become a mooring point to maintain a strong community orientation and expressive solidarity.

The Kelabit Case

An analysis of how the Kelabit have encountered Christianity, education, and institutions of the nation-state suggest that they have been active agents and subjects of their own history, creatively engaging with global forces despite their geographical isolation in the mountains of Central Borneo. Similar to Knauff's observations of the Gebusi's encounter with modern institutions in Papua New Guinea (Knauff 2002:19), the Kelabit interpret and respond to new winds of change in various ways: appropriating and reconfiguring their responses differently depending on their cultural context and history. Over the years, this adaptive engagement by the Kelabit has occurred through multiple and interactive networks of exchange such as trade, marriage alliances, headhunting and migrations. Through these trade affiliations, journeys and cultural contacts, a diverse assortment of cultural borrowings and interactions have taken place between the Kelabit and the world outside, often obscuring the origin of these borrowings in the process (Bala 2002).

One theme that constantly emerges from writings about the Kelabit's adaptive engagement is their overt rejection of their past (tradition) and their modern understanding of progress and fundamental future change (see, for instance, Amster 1998; Bulan and Bulan, 2004). They have become a social and cultural group that is committed to the active pursuit of success and mobility, both in cultural and economic life.

This trend has been aptly described by Amster (1998) in a recent academic analysis of Kelabit ethnicity. He suggests that "success" defines what it means to be a Kelabit. He writes

Prominent among their [the Kelabit] views was the widely held perception that Kelabit people have been very successful in spheres of education and employment, particularly when compared with other indigenous groups in Sarawak... Being Kelabit, in the opinion of many Kelabit, largely can be translated into "being successful"...Common to nearly all Kelabits, young and old alike, is the idea that "progress" is good... The Kelabit characterize themselves, and are characterized by others, as a people who have actively pursued "progress" and "success" in various forms: educationally, economically and spiritually (1998:217-219).

In keeping with Amster's observations, I consider how the Kelabit embraced Christianity to shape their cultural disposition towards the future, namely future progress and success. To be specific, I consider the ways Christianity impedes and fosters the envisioning of the future among the Kelabit. My argument is that the Kelabit envision

Christianity as an entry point as well as an integral part of modernity—that they are seen by the Kelabit as one and the same thing. In short, for the Kelabit to be Christian means to be modern. Their views and experiences in many ways contradict the predominant view that posits a conflict or tension between the two. Christianity is a catalyst for change which propels the Kelabit onwards to search for a better future – economically, spiritually and socially. Yet at the same time, for the Kelabit, Christianity is about maintaining highly valued traditional values and attitudes.

To examine this in detail, this paper begins by exploring the question how in the first place the Kelabit became Christian. What mechanisms drove them? Was there a local cultural logic or cultural structures involved (Sahlins 1981)? Or has this been because the Kelabit were passive reactors to, and simple enactors of, some external system, in short, “victims of history” (Wolf 1982)?

When asked why they became Christians, two social situations are often invoked by the Kelabit in Bario. The first is a desire for freedom from the fear of spirits. Thus, an elderly informant who lived in the Highlands before Christianity came to Bario told me, “During the period of *ulun ma’un* (old life, or the past), we had to appease the spirits all the time, because we feared them so much that we sometimes couldn’t do any work on our farms or venture on our far travels. It was especially troublesome when one’s rice was ready for harvest in the fields, or when one had started building a house, or just gotten married. This was because a person had to stop all his or her plans if there was a bad omen.” He went on to explain that the observation of good and bad omens revolved around deference to birds such as the eagle (*keniu*) and spider-hunter (*ngaie*), the snake, the barking deer, the sound of a falling tree, and various other omens and taboos. “We were bound by fear of these spirits.”

The influence of this factor can be gauged from the Kelabit’s first encounter with mission work in the area. Judson Southwell, one of the first missionaries to reach the Kelabit Highlands in 1939, describes his first attempt to convert the Kelabit, “Here [the village of Pa’ Terap] the headman gave us a good hearing as we preached the gospel, but the people were not yet ready and willing for a complete change from old pagan ways... Somewhat disheartened, we set out to return along the same perilous route we had come” (Southwell 1999:98; Saging 1976/1977: 247).

But two years after Southwell’s first visit, the headman of Pa’ Terap sent three young men, Galih Balang, Balang Riwayat and Tamah Ingan, to Belawit in East Kalimantan to learn more about Christianity.² When asked about the headman’s change of attitude, Doo Ilah³ replied, “He was curious about this new belief, how it would bring freedom and liberation from our fear of the spirits (*ngaie*). We were literally living in fear of the spirits.” The three men stayed in Belawit for half a year. On their return they initiated the first “classroom” learning in the longhouse. Besides returning with this new faith, they also brought home new reading and writing skills. In addition, they brought new songs—Christian hymns and songs for the village. Recalling the encounter, Doo Ilah

2 This was not limited to the Pa’ Terap longhouse. Other headmen at Long Lellang and Pa’ Umur had also sent their own young men to explore Christianity.

3 Sina Doo Ilah, now in her late seventies, was living at the village of Pa’ Lungan when Christianity first “arrived” in the Kelabit Highlands. She now lives in the longhouse at Pa’ Umur.

continues, "It was full of fun for all of us. This is because they showed us how to write and sing new songs. We were curious to learn because the skills were rather novel. Each morning everyone in the longhouse was woken up by the sound of a bamboo bell. We were also shown how to do physical exercise on the veranda of the longhouse (*tawa*). The children had a great time going on processions (*makasur*) around the longhouse, singing these new songs they had brought home to us."⁴

In other words, the Kelabit have never been pressured by missionaries in particular to become Christians; in similar ways they were not forced to adopt formal education. At the same time, the Kelabit were not hostile towards outsiders. Southwell's experiences suggest that the Kelabit exercised their agency in the face of the Christian mission encounter, in which they were not merely objects of conversion (Keane 2007) but subjects, who intentionally explored and embraced Christianity as a strategy to free themselves from the fear of "old spirits."

This sense of freedom has been described as a great social transformation (*kaa rayeh*) which led to an *ulun beruh* (new life) period in which, as noted by Doo Ilah, "many things have changed for we have now submitted ourselves to God's ways. This is because we have been freed from this gripping fear of bad omens. With this new life and belief we are able to explore and do our work (*lemaúd*) without being fearful of these spirits. It is indeed a great transformation (*kaa*) for us ever since we became Christians."

The Kelabit experience reflects Steeman's claims that "religion is what carries a man through life, what makes it possible for him to live and work, what does in fact make life meaningful, what makes him face death and illness and life's precariousness and what directs basically his life's enterprise. ... Religion is thus not conceived primarily as a specific kind of beliefs and actions, but rather the tone of life, the very core of the way one lives out his life, the inner aspect of his dealing with himself, with others, with his environment... Religion is man's intimacy with himself in the intimacy with whatever he perceives as giving the ultimate meaning to his life" (Steeman 1973: 45-46).

To the individual, as noted by Durkheim (1965: 464), religion gives strength and direction to life. He writes "...the real function of religion is not to make us think, to enrich our knowledge, nor add to the conceptions which we owe to science of others of another origin and another character, but rather, it is to make us act, to aid us to live. The believer who has communicated with his god is not merely a man who sees new truths of which the unbeliever is ignorant; he is a man who is stronger. He feels within him more force, either to endure the trials of existence or to conquer them." Whereas to the society, claimed Berger, religion has the capacity to bestow legitimacy on a social order by giving it "an ultimately valid ontological status, that is, by locating it within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference" (Berger 1969: 33).

Berger's claims resonate with the other social reasons often invoked to describe conversion to Christianity in the Kelabit Highlands which are the pursuit of Kelabit *iyuk*

4 When Southwell returned eight years after his first visit to Pa Terap, he was surprised that the headman, Tama Bulan, had embraced Christianity. He writes of him as, "a powerful Headman and spoken of with great deference and respect. Tama Bulan gave up drinking and spirit worship and gradually influenced others ..." (Southwell 1999:190).

and the maintenance of *doo*-ness. What are they? *Doo*-ness and *iyuk* are two fundamental concepts that relate to images and ideals of goodness among the Kelabit. They play important roles in shaping motivation and actions both at the individual and collective level. Therefore, a scrutiny of these two notions, I suggest, following practice theory (for instance, Ortner 1984), can provide insight into the structure/system itself and, most importantly, as Ortner has noted, “reveal the sorts of binds it creates for the agents, the sorts of burdens it places upon them and so on” (1984:152). This kind of analysis “provides much of the context for understanding actors’ motives, and the kinds of projects they construct for dealing with their situations” (Ortner 1984:152).

While *iyuk* refers to the traditional notion of movement and specifically to status mobility, *doo*-ness embodies the notion of goodness, success and well-being, or rather, the qualities required to constitute a good person such as knowledge, endurance, perseverance, self-discipline, hospitality and strength. My argument is that it is the images and ideals of *doo*-ness, and the interweaving processes between *doo*-ness and *iyuk* that have generated and sustained Kelabit engagement with ideas, institutions and objects from the outside world—including their response to Christianity. An insight into what *iyuk* and *doo*-ness constitute among the Kelabit is therefore necessary for understanding the Kelabit response to modernity and the creation of their own sense of what it is to be modern. In a sense, Kelabit ideologies of becoming modern have been largely framed by their ideals of *doo*-ness. *Doo*-ness has shaped how the Kelabit actively internalize new tropes of progress and success.

What does this mean? The Kelabit have incorporated Christianity as a new means to generate the qualities required to be a good person (ideals of *doo*-ness)—endurance, perseverance, self discipline, hospitality and strength. If in the past these were inculcated and measured through the cultural activities of tattoo-making, elongating earlobes, traveling far and headhunting (cf. author’s Ph.D. dissertation, 2008), today these still highly valued qualities are attained through the personal and spiritual discipline of *me tebpupun*, or ‘going to church.’ Christianity from this perspective is a catalyst of change, yet, at the same time, affirms the traditional Kelabit notion of *doo*-ness in new ways. It has become a new means to attain and express *doo*-ness while promoting traditional values of personal effort and discipline. In other words, these traditional values are not simply replaced by new values.

Becoming Christian for the Kelabit is also about forging connections with the external world in order to enhance (*ngiyuk*) their well-being through status mobility, but in new forms and involving different contexts. The old ways and means of displaying status differentiation have decreased as observed by writers about the Kelabit (e.g. Janowski 1991; Bulan, et al. 2004:40). Nonetheless, I argue (cf. Bala 2008), concerns for *doo*-ness as an indicator of social status and the quest for *iyuk* have not in the least diminished despite being Christian. Instead, they have come to overlap other and new social formations and structures as they are now pursued within larger political and economic situations. Christianity, then, has been adopted and co-opted by the Kelabit as a means of providing a range of new options and systems for attaining and expressing social status, prestige and power in the Highlands and the world beyond.

For instance, Harrison suggests

The Kelabit [were] anxious to improve their status in relation to peoples more 'fortunately' placed. They have, indeed, led Sarawak in abandoning restrictive *adats* without throwing over their whole past and becoming Christians. And they now enthusiastically support the school they opened and built themselves at Pa Mein. They are not parochial. They are tirelessly interested in aeroplanes, Europe, the solar system, other people's customs, wars, clothes and belongings. Night after night I have sat till the early hours swapping Kelabit information for English (Harrison 1946:56).

In the same vein, but in a more forthright manner, Morrison (1957) suggests that among the many factors which contributed to the Kelabit's conversion to Christianity was the desire for economic gain. Both authors point to the fact that becoming Christian has been largely self-generated,⁵ and was motivated by the Kelabit's own desire to maintain connections with the rest of the world. This is made evident through the ways in which the Kelabit traveled far to get Christianity as a new belief and bring it home to the Highlands. It represents Kelabit purposive engagement with the outside world.

This self-generated engagement with Christianity was further reenergized by a Spiritual Revival in 1973 in the Kelabit Highlands. It started on October 4th with a group of students at Bario Secondary School. A significant mark of the event was the phenomenal manifestations of the gift of the Holy Spirit during what were known as Revival Meetings. Within three years the entire Kelabit population was converted to a specific form of Christianity with an emphasis on the capacity (*kail*) and power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Bulan and Bulan, 2004).

The impact of the Revival was so profound that many Kelabit consider Christianity, more than anything else, to be the greatest thing to have happened in their history. Many writers, Kelabit and non-Kelabit alike, highlight the role and significance of Christianity to the Kelabit transformation. Robert Saging, a Kelabit himself, writes, "Christianity has played, is still playing and will continue to play a leading role in the lives and development of the Kelabit tribes" (Saging, 1976/1977:244).

Today each village in the Kelabit Highlands has a church. The church is of great importance to village life. Through the years, the church and its organization have combined to become the most important focal point for organizing economic and social life in the Kelabit Highlands. In fact, in certain respects the church has replaced the social and economic roles of the longhouse as a space to share and express a communal lifestyle. For example, almost all joint social and economic activities in the village today are organized through and by the village church. These include the *kerja sama* (consisting of men and women) *muda-mudi* (youth group), *kaum Ibu* (church-based women's group), and the *baya* groups (usually consisting of women from the village working voluntarily and in rotation on each other's farms). These joint work groups are offshoots of the Kelabit tradition of self-help in which villagers provide local mutual assistance, for instance on each other's farms, on a rotation system.

Christian worship among the Kelabit is therefore about more than the pursuit of personal virtue. The church has also become a place to display publicly one's commitments to social roles and moral obligations in the larger society. Not attending church and

5 My suggestion here is that the Kelabit experience with Christianity resonates with Joel Robbins' observations of the Urappim becoming Christian in Melanesia (Robbins 2004).

not getting involved in its joint activities are considered to be anti-social behavior and frowned upon. An extreme example of this involved a man in one of the villages who, although a leader in the village church, very rarely attended church services and very seldom took part in the joint work groups. He became the target of much gossip and criticism and was eventually removed from his leadership position. In short, Christian worship and church attendance form an important aspect of both communal and personal identity among many Kelabit living in the Highlands today.

This process of integration is made easy partly because the virtues of *doo*-ness as advocated by the church are similar to the values and personal attributes held in high regard within the traditional Kelabit notion of *doo*-ness. In the end, both sets of values confirm and transform each other. There are no contradictions here. Going to church today has therefore become a sign of commitment to those values and a core activity by which to assess others' and one's own behavior in the community. Hence, there are local expressions such as "*doo kediah neh me teh iah tebpupun me maya kerja lun mula*" ([He/she] is a good person for she/he goes to church and takes part in the joint activities in the village).

Within larger fields of economic and cultural power, the particularization of Christianity, or what it means to the Kelabit, is made evident through how it has become integral to Kelabit contemporary identity. Amster (1998:3), comparing Mutalib's (1990) analysis of Islam among the Malays, says

just as Islam today is the basis for Malay identity in Malaysia, the Kelabit identity is now largely about being Christian, and that Christian practice and belief cannot be empirically separated from notions of contemporary Kelabit ethnicity.

But what does this mean? Or rather, why is this so? "Nation-ness" says Anderson (1983:12) "is the most universal legitimate value in the political life of our time." Modernity, suggests Donham (1999), often has been remodeled by the discourses and institutions of the nation-state.⁶ In Malaysia the rhetoric of national modernity generated questions of how to find a workable ideology which is able to unite all the people to achieve the common goal of modernization. How to deal with the heritage of the past and contemporary cultural pluralism? How to deal with the threat of disintegration? How to deal with the aspiration for a better future, i.e., a just, prosperous and modern society?

For the Kelabit, their incorporation into Malaysia as a nation-state means engaging with Malaysia's identity projects of modernity and its prisms of religious

6 For instance, in Indonesia Geertz narrows the problems of this discourse to two. He writes, "(The) people of the new states are simultaneously animated by two powerful, thoroughly interdependent, yet distinct and often actually opposed motives – the desire to be recognized as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hope and opinions "matter" and the desire to build an efficient, dynamic, modern state. The one aim is to be noticed: it is a search for an identity, and a demand that the identity be publicly acknowledged as having import, a social assertion of the self as "being somebody in the world." The other aim is practical: it is a demand for progress, for a rising standard of living, more effective political order, greater social justice, and beyond that of "playing a part in the larger arena of world politics," of "exercising influence among the nations" (Geertz 1963:108).

discourse (religion in the public political and discourse domain in Malaysia). Race and religion are two important bulwarks of development and modernization in Malaysia; reflected through the New Economic Policy (NEP) – Malaysia’s Modernization Policy.

A dominant characteristic of NEP is its Ethnic Framework of Development. It is a development pattern tilted towards distributional objectives, albeit along racial lines.⁷ Embedded in the framework is the requirement to identify persons based on their ethnic and religious affiliation for the purpose of resource and wealth distribution.⁸ As noted by Chandra (1986:33), ethnic and religious categories therefore “carry deep meanings for people” in defining a person’s existence and purpose especially in accessing political and economic resources in Malaysia (Shamsul 1986, Jomo 1985). Malaysia’s ethnic-based development framework is amplified through its system of racial quotas for job opportunities (within government agencies), preferential attention for scholarships, places at public universities and commercial ownership.

What are the implications of this ethnic framework of development for the Kelabit, one of the smallest ethnic groups in Sarawak? For the Kelabit, their “peripheral situation” in relation to particular political cultures is aggravated by the Highlands’ physical distance from centers of power. Without large numbers, constituencies, pressure groups or lobbies, and with their out-of-the-way location (Tsing 1993), there is a concern that the Kelabit are not given a hearing in the context of a national integration discourse, which places the Malay-Muslim *bumiputera* at the top of the hierarchy. Moreover, the existing inter-ethnic disparities with regard to access to key economic and political resources concurrently force ethnic groups into a competitive relationship with each other, in which one group’s advancement can mean the retardation of another group. In a sense, economic competition for resources based on ethnic identification is the main organizing factor of inter-ethnic relations within Malaysia’s multi-ethnic society (Despres 1975:2-3; cf. Nagata 1979).

Putting this differently, the new and shifting contexts in the broader political, economic and social milieu have not only brought new means to *miyuk* within internal struggles for status and power, but have also introduced a particular concern or desire among minority groups such as the Kelabit for collective political agency and raised social status within Malaysia’s economic and political terrain. This suggests the emergence of a new form of *iyuk* competition, in which the Kelabit must engage competitively with other citizens who are not Kelabit for economic and political resources.

Within these new forms of competition and status emanating from outside the community, Kelabit *iyuk* and *dooness* are now often linked with the Malaysian government’s notion of ‘development’ (Malay, *pembangunan*), which is seen as a means for individuals to attain and enjoy affluent and prestigious lifestyles while at the same time enabling the whole collective (in this case, the Kelabit society) to attain high standards of living and respect from others. In fact, there is a sense of communal pride in being considered a progressive and successful community.

⁷ See Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975 (Government of Malaysia).

⁸ Underlying its agenda is the desire to “accelerate the process of restructuring Malaysian society to correct economic imbalance so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race and ethnicity with economic function.”

Conversely, the dynamics of economic competition provide a means to articulate and strengthen the Kelabit notions of ethnic identity and its boundaries (Barth 1969). In 1998 Amster observed the significance of Christianity among the Kelabit as a means of projecting their identity in relation to others in Malaysia and globally. This reinforced in-group self-identification entails competing with other ethnic groups for access to government financial support, government grants, development projects and schemes. Consequently, a desire for what other ethnic groups have obtained because of their ethnic and religious background becomes a strong communal aspiration among the Kelabit in the Highlands.

It is within the context of Malaysia's pursuit of modernity and politics of identity formation that Christianity has provided a "grounding" or "mooring" for the Kelabit specifically within Malaysia's multiethnic and religious society. Over the past 50 years, their Christian faith and identity has become a new anchor as the Kelabit have transformed themselves from a rice-farming community to one that produces professionals, religious leaders and intellectuals who play important roles in the wider Malaysian society. Today, out of 5,240 Kelabit, only 1,200 are still living in the Highlands. Many have migrated to different cities in Malaysia like Miri, Kuching, and Kuala Lumpur, or even overseas to the U.K., U.S.A., Canada, Holland, Australia and New Zealand. Despite this extensive geographical dispersion around the globe and within Malaysia's complex ethnic mix, their common faith and the survival of original longhouse or kinship ties within the Kelabit diaspora makes it possible for the Kelabit to imagine and "objectify" a shared identity.

Conclusion

The Kelabit's avowedly modern orientation towards progress offers a not entirely typical picture of modernity. Their experience throws light upon the qualities of modernity itself. There is rupture and rapid change, but also a sense of continuity and appropriateness. This is made evident by ways in which forces of modernity and, in this case, Christianity, became a catalyst of transformation among the Kelabit yet, at the same time, encapsulated Sahlins' cultural structures. Seen in this light, Christianity has a contradictory, double role among the Kelabit. While it affirms Kelabit practices of *iyuk* and *doo-ness*, it simultaneously transforms their nature; and so, while Christianity disconnects the Kelabit from their *ulun ma'un* (past), it simultaneously creates an important link to their past – maintaining traditional values and the pursuit of *iyuk* and *doo-ness*.

Conversely, *iyuk* and *doo-ness* provide a lens by which the Kelabit are able to see themselves as always having had a substantial affinity with modernity and progress. They provide a means for the Kelabit to appropriate and reconfigure their responses to Christianity within their own cultural and historical context. Seen in this light, the Kelabit pursue Christianity partly as a strategy for gaining *doo-ness* and *iyuk*. It has become part of a local configuration of progress which today appears integral to Kelabit identity. As described in this paper, Christianity provides a grounding for Kelabit identity without inhibiting progress, and a new anchor within a larger Malaysian political and economic context.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SARAWAK, 1963-1988: DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT WON AND THEN LOST?

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This study is the second of a series examining all aspects of the governance, economy, and social services of Sarawak during its first twenty-five years as a state in Malaysia (1963-1988).¹ “Modern” local government in Sarawak may be said to be derived from the United Kingdom Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 that defined a Municipal Corporation as a “legal personification of the local community, represented by an elected council, and acting for, and responsible to, the inhabitants of the district.”² By mid-1963, elected local councils had been established throughout Sarawak and had taken over a wide range of responsibilities, including primary education. Part 1 of this study outlines changes to local authority rating systems between 1963 and 1988. Part 2 shows the responsibilities that were removed from Sarawak’s local authorities during the 1963 to 1981 period, throughout which local authority members elected in 1963 held office, with only a few exceptions.³ Part 3 covers events that led to no further elections of local authority members being held after 1963 (although this was laid down in the conditions under which Sarawak agreed to join Malaysia), and the change to members becoming government nominees.⁴ Part 4 covers important changes between 1981-1988 when local authority members were government nominees.

Historical Background

Prior to 1841 when Sarawak was a tributary to the Brunei Sultanate, “we may look to local traditional community leadership, acting in various degrees in consultation with the community, as providing the focus for the provision of the communal needs of simple rural agricultural life.”⁵ During the Brooke era (1841-1946) local traditional

1 This series of papers supersedes the original concept of an all-inclusive work on the lines of, and as a sequel to the writer’s *British Colonial Rule in Sarawak 1946-1963* (OUP, 1997). The first paper, “Constitutional Change in Sarawak 1963-1988,” appeared in the *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 38, 2007.

2 Roger Scruton, *A Dictionary of Political Thought*, London: Pan Books, 1983, p. 274. Scruton further defines local government as “a public organization authorized to decide and administer a limited range of public policies pertaining to a circumscribed territory within a larger and sovereign jurisdiction.”

3 The few exceptions were by-election replacements to vacancies created by death or resignation.

4 Government of Malaya, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-governmental Committee, 1962*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1963, Clause 25 (3),

5 John Woods, *Local Government in Sarawak: An introduction to the Nature and Working of District Councils in the State*. Kuching: Sarawak Government Printing Office, April 1968, p. 7.

leadership continued, with district officers gradually assuming an increasing role over essential community services. During this period, urbanization led to the creation of an advisory Kuching Sanitary Board in 1921, made up mainly of government officials. In 1934 this was reconstituted as the Kuching Municipal Board with nominated unofficial representation, and similar boards were set up in Bau, Sibul, Sarikei, Binatang, and Miri. These were reconstituted in 1947 following the end of the Japanese occupation.

Sarawak was annexed by Britain on 1 July 1947 and in the latter part of that year Sir Charles Arden Clarke, the first governor, issued his "Notes on the Development of Local Government in Sarawak."⁶ This led to the development of local authorities in rural areas, financed by population-based capitation grants, customary taxes, and license fees. By 1957, local government bodies covered the whole of Sarawak.⁷ Then in 1959 all local authorities adopted a common rating system supported by government grants.⁸ Following state-wide elections, on 1 January 1960 elected members, guided by a handbook on the duties of local authorities and councillors, took control of all twenty-four councils.⁹

Further council elections were held throughout Sarawak in mid-1963. Thus by 16 September 1963, the day Sarawak became a member state of the Federation of Malaysia, newly elected municipal, urban, and rural district councils provided local government throughout Sarawak.¹⁰ State government grants augmented a common rating system and all rural councils used a standard model constitution. Council responsibilities included primary education for the indigenous population, of which very few attended the mission or Chinese-medium schools.¹¹ In the less experienced councils, Sarawak Administrative Service officers provided guidance. Prior to Sarawak becoming a Malaysian state, the newly elected councils had nominated members to Divisional Advisory Councils, which in turn had selected and nominated members to Sarawak's legislature, the Council Negri. This three-tier electoral system highly politicized the mid 1963 local council elections and led to aggregate political party votes not being reflected in party representation in the Council Negri.¹²

Part 1: Changes to the rating system

From 1959, local authority revenues had consisted largely of rates based on property values and state government grants-in-aid of either \$2 or \$1 for every dollar

6 Mss Ind. Ocn. S.223M, Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

7 The only exception was a small area in the Miri District that was part of the Sarawak Shell Oilfields concession.

8 Government of Sarawak, "The Financing of Primary Education and Financial Assistance to Local Authorities," Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1959, passed in August 1959.

9 The handbook was H. Bedal, *Local Government in Sarawak*, published by the Sarawak Government Printing Office, Kuching, in 1959.

10 For a more detailed account of local government between 1946 and 1973, see Vernon L. Porritt, *British Colonial Rule in Sarawak 1946-1963*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997, Chapter 2.

11 See Appendix 1 for the list of duties and powers of a local authority.

12 Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, table 20, p.78.

collected in rates.¹³ While this was successful in overcoming inequities between the Chinese-occupied-house tax, the Dayak door tax, and the Malay head tax all previously in use, the rates and grants system tended to disadvantage local authorities with minimal rateable property, where rates were more difficult to collect.¹⁴ To correct this situation, in 1966 the state government introduced a revised grants-in-aid system.¹⁵ All rateable property was revalued throughout Sarawak on a uniform basis and a Rate Deficiency Grant was introduced. This was based on a local authority's total rateable value in relation to its population compared with the state average.¹⁶ In 1967 the Ministry of Local Government established that most rate-payers would save varying amounts due to abolition of primary school fees.¹⁷ Local Authority Rating Regulations already allowed local councils to remit rates in cases of hardship.

In the second phase of the revaluation, over- and under-valuations and inevitable anomalies were corrected. Where revaluation created unduly high rate increases, in 1967 the Minister for Local Government, Abang Haji Abdulrahim bin Abang Haji Mosili, authorized *ad hoc* remission of rates pending introduction of a system to spread the increases over several years. In a series of talks explaining the new equalization grants that were broadcast by Radio Malaysia, Sarawak, the Minister reported that most of the District Councils would benefit financially, some by as much as \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year.¹⁸

The next changes were contained in the Local Authority (Amendment) Bill 1977 (Ordinance 3/77) and the Kuching Municipal Council (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 1977, which became operative on 1 November 1981.¹⁹ When introducing the bills on 13 December 1977, the Minister for Local Government, Leo Moggie, explained that the new rating system to be introduced "would take into account the great disparity between the urban and rural areas and in the services and amenities that the councils should provide."²⁰ To rectify this disparity, other than the general-purpose rate collected by all local authority councils, rates were only levied for specific services actually provided, so that rural areas, where many or most of the services were not provided, were not

13 Local authorities also collected their own license fees and were allowed to retain a few minor state revenue items such as gun license fees. Councils also received capital grants and loans from the federal and state governments.

14 Dayaks – Sarawak's principal non-Muslim indigenous people.

15 In a radio broadcast on 14 June 1966, the Minister for Local Government, Dunstan Endawi, explained Command Paper 3 of 1966, "Local Government Finance in Sarawak", which was subsequently passed into legislation by the Council Negri.

16 To ensure payments by ratepayers remained more or less the same in local authority areas where rateable values were previously seriously undervalued, rate percentages were reduced accordingly.

17 The Federal Minister for Education, Mohamed Khir Johari, issued a statement on 3 August 1965 when visiting Kuching that the Federal Government had approved the abolition of primary school fees in all Sarawak government and government-aided schools from 1 January 1966.

18 *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 December 1966, p. 6.

19 The major purpose of the bills was to replace elected local authority councilors with government nominees: see Part 3.

20 *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 December 1977, p. 12.

penalized.²¹

More contentiously for Dewan Undangan Negeri (Council Negri) members, the bills included a provision that gave local authorities the power to attach the movable property of defaulting ratepayers.²² Member Joseph Samuel was concerned that other statutory bodies would ask for the same powers to recover arrears, but was assured that the provision was intended only as a last resort. Reflecting the general difficulty in collecting rates that the provision was intended to overcome, on 29 January 1982 the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) warned that a “warrant of attachment” to seize moveable property would be issued to defaulting ratepayers and their property sold in seven days by auction.²³ This completed the major changes to the rating system over the 1963-1988 period.

Part 2: Changes to the responsibilities of Sarawak’s local authorities

The responsibilities and duties of Sarawak’s local authorities when Sarawak joined Malaysia on 16 September 1963 are shown in Appendix 1. Between 1963 and 1988, there were some profound changes in those responsibilities and duties.

Sub-division of land in development-designated areas

The first major change in the powers of local authorities occurred when the Council Negri passed the Land (Control of Sub-Division) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1972 (No. 10 of 1962). This bill removed the power to subdivide land in development-designated areas from various local authorities: the Kuching Municipal and the Kuching Rural Councils, as well as the Sibu Urban, the Miri, and the Sarikei District Councils.²⁴ When presenting the bill on 20 December 1972, Acting Chief Minister Stephen Yong explained that one local council had “rejected outright” the advice of the Director of Lands and Surveys by approving two commercial projects in a residential area, adding that this was not the only case.²⁵ Council Negri member Nelson Liap Kudu (SNAP, Simanggang) said that the bill meant “a further erosion of the powers of local authorities.”²⁶ On the other hand, Council Negri member Wan Alwi bin Tuanku Ibrahim (Pesaka Kelaka)

21 Replying to a question in the Council Negri on 14 March 1984 on whether there were plans to improve local authority council services to rural longhouses, Dr. Wong Soon Kai, the Minister for Local Government, said that although rural people did not have to pay specific rates, their councils did their best to provide several services, such as building minor roads, jetties, reading rooms, and community halls, etc.

22 Under Article 160 (2) of the Malaysian Constitution, in Sarawak the “Legislative Assembly” retained its historic name of the “Council Negri.” However, by 1971 in the gradual Malaysianization of Sarawak the Council Negri became known as the Dewan Undangan Negeri, in line with the Legislative Assemblies in peninsular Malaysia, without any local objections being raised.

23 KMC Chairman Stephen Yong said that rate-payers owed about \$300,000 at the end of 1981 and the KMC expected to collect about \$8 million from property rates in 1982.

24 The Director of Lands and Surveys then became responsible for land subdivisions in development-designated areas.

25 Previously in opposition, the SUPP had become part of the Sarawak Alliance government in July 1970 on its own terms.

26 *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 December 1972, p. 10. No doubt Kudu was referring to the pending transfer of responsibility for primary education from the local authorities to the education department.

welcomed the bill, describing it as progressive.

Primary education

All Sarawak's local authorities also lost one of their most important responsibilities at this time – primary education. With delegated responsibility under the Local Authority Ordinance of 1948, local authorities had played a major role in establishing primary schools in Sarawak's rural areas. When Sarawak joined Malaysia in 1963

Local Authorities, consisting of twenty-three district councils and one municipal council ... [had] established a large number of primary schools directly under their own management. Most of these serve the indigenous peoples, but a few serve the Chinese and some are "combined schools" with a mixed enrolment.²⁷

Under the Malaysian Constitution, education throughout Malaysia was a federal responsibility, but in Sarawak it effectively remained under state control under the *Malaysia Report of the Inter-governmental Committee, 1962* (IGC Report) until the state government decided otherwise.²⁸ Subject only to local authorities continuing to collect existing education rates, the Federal Government approved the Sarawak Government's abolition of primary school fees in all Sarawak's government and government-aided schools from 1 January 1966.²⁹ By the end of 1966 there were some 1,170 primary schools in Sarawak with a total enrolment of 135,500—about two-thirds of the state's 6 to 11 year old children.³⁰

On 16 January 1972, Chief Minister Abdul Rahman Ya'akub announced that all local authority primary schools would be taken over by the Sarawak Government in early 1973.³¹ Government aims included consolidation of the education system "to promote national integration and unity," by working towards its integration with the Peninsula Malaysia system and Malay as the main medium of instruction.³² After the takeover on 1 January 1973, local authorities continued to provide all the accounting services for those schools and collect education rates for a further six months to enable the Federal Government to set up an accounting unit for that purpose.³³ As temporary agents,

²⁷ Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary for 1963*, p. 1.

²⁸ "The present policy and system of administration of education in North Borneo and Sarawak (including their present Ordinances) should be undisturbed and remain under the control of the Government of the State until that Government otherwise agrees." (Malaysian Government, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee 1962* (IGC Report 1962), Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1964, clause 17(a)).

²⁹ Due to flaws, collection of education rates in the Malaysia peninsula states had been suspended, but was to be reintroduced. The cost to the Federal Government would be about \$2.5 million a year, which Sarawak's Deputy Chief Minister James Wong described as a magnificent gesture (*Sarawak Tribune*, 4 August 1965, p. 1).

³⁰ Sarawak Education Department, *Annual Summary for 1966*, p. 9.

³¹ Federal Minister Hussein Onn had agreed to Sarawak's proposal (*Bernama*, 16 January 1972).

³² These aims were laid down in the Second Malaysia Development Plan and outlined by the Chief Minister at the opening of the Science Library of St. Joseph's school in Kuching on 26 February 1972.

³³ Accounting services included paying teachers and all costs associated with their schools.

local authorities received 100 percent grants until the accounting unit was established.³⁴ When this had been completed, local authorities had been completely relieved of any responsibilities for or involvement in primary education.³⁵

Maternity and child welfare services

From the 1950s, local authorities in the rural areas had been instrumental in raising the standards of midwifery and in setting up maternity and child welfare clinics under Medical Department supervision. The 1955 Midwives Ordinance had prohibited unqualified midwifery, but allowed those with limited training to practice in the rural areas until qualified midwives became available. By 1963 local government councils employed over 100 registered midwives and there were maternal and child health clinics “all over the country ...most of them staffed and run by local authorities.”³⁶ With the advent of Malaysia, by prior agreement public health was placed on the Concurrent [Legislative] List in the Constitution.³⁷ In 1971 the Ministry of Health, Malaysia, introduced the integrated health care system.³⁸ Responsibility for providing health care for mothers and children throughout Sarawak then reverted to the Medical Department under the Department’s Family Health program. Finally in 1979 maternal and child health services were taken over by the Federal Government.³⁹ As James Wong Kim Min, the Minister of Environment and Public Health, acknowledged some years later, local government work in maternal and child health services had been “of great importance” and “many lives were saved.”⁴⁰

Fire services

Providing fire services had been the responsibility of local authorities virtually since their inception. The few major urban centers had been able to develop reasonably sophisticated fire-fighting services, but due to financial constraints, fire-fighting services outside those centers were rudimentary, relying on volunteers with very simple equipment. Local authority by-laws laid down basic fire precautions in dwellings and simple fire-fighting equipment in other premises that included factories, sawmills, cinemas, public venues, and shophouses. In the 1962 IGC Report, “Fire brigades, etc.” was on the State Legislative List.⁴¹ This was recognized from 1 January 1976 in a clause that was added to

34 Prior to 1 January 1973, the grant was 90 percent.

35 After primary education had been taken over, gradually education in Sarawak was fully integrated into the national system with Malay as the primary language for tuition in all government and government-aided primary schools. Examinations for entry to secondary schools were abolished in 1974.

36 Sarawak Government, *Sarawak Annual Report, 1962*, p. 168. Section 99 of Sarawak’s Public Health Ordinance of 1962 covered health care of mothers and children.

37 *The Constitution of Malaysia*, Cap 17, Ninth Schedule– List III–Concurrent [Legislative] List, clause 7.

38 Malaysian Information Service, Sarawak, *Sarawak Report ’88*, p. 156.

39 William Tang Tieng Kee (compiler), *50 Years Golden Jubilee of (Mixed Multi-Racial) Local Authorities in Sarawak (1944-1988)*. Kuching: Ministry of Environment and Public Health, Sarawak, 1990 (?), p. 29.

40 Tang 1990 (?), p. 5.

41 IGC Report 1962, Annex A, List II, State List, 5 (a).

the Malaysian Constitution covering “Prevention and extinguishment of fire, including fire services and fire brigades” in Sabah and Sarawak.⁴²

In 1980 Chief Minister Rahman Ya’akub told a local government conference in Kuching that the state’s capacity to provide fire services was limited and an efficient fire service was needed, particularly in Bintulu where multi-billion ringgit projects, including LNG and urea plants, were being sited.⁴³ He told the meeting that the Federal Government had agreed to take over Sarawak’s fire services as quickly as possible.⁴⁴ The Malaysian Constitution was amended accordingly and from 15 May 1981 the Federal Government became responsible for fire fighting services throughout Sarawak.⁴⁵ While “fire safety measures and fire precautions in the construction and maintenance of buildings” remained under the concurrent list, local government responsibilities in Sarawak for fire fighting ended on 15 May 1981.⁴⁶

Part 3: From elected to nominated local authorities: 1963-1981

Local government is included in the State Legislative List of the Constitution of Malaysia and is thus a state responsibility.⁴⁷ The 1963 local authority elections in Sarawak were the first step in indirect elections to Sarawak’s Council Negri (State Assembly - Legislature).⁴⁸ Thus the 1962 IGC Report stipulated that “during an initial period after Malaysia Day [16 September 1963] elections to the State Assemblies [of Sabah and Sarawak] should be indirect.”⁴⁹ This condition was not fulfilled. After the 1962 elections, there were no further state-wide elections in Sarawak to local government authorities, either direct or as the first stage in electing a new Council Negri.⁵⁰ Although influenced by federal legislation, Sarawak’s own legislative body, the Council Negri, introduced and passed the necessary legislation that later ended elections to local government authorities.

The first step in the transition from elected to government-nominated local authority councils occurred on 25 June 1964, when Sarawak’s Council Negri passed an amendment to the Sarawak Constitution. This removed the provision to hold indirect

42 *The Constitution of Malaysia*, Cap. 17, Ninth Schedule, List IIA, clause 19.

43 *Sarawak Tribune*, 25 April 1920, p. 1.

44 The Federal Government had assumed responsibility for fire services throughout peninsular Malaysia from 1 January 1976 under clause 26, List I, Ninth Schedule, Cap. 17 of the Malaysian Constitution.

45 The exclusion of Sabah and Sarawak from Clause 26 of Federal List I, Ninth Schedule, cap. 17 of the Malaysian Constitution was removed by the Constitution (Amendment) Act 1981, section 17 (a).

46 Clause 9A, List III-Concurrent List, cap 17, Ninth Schedule of the Constitution of Malaysia covers “fire safety measures and fire precautions . . .” in Sarawak remaining under local government control.

47 The Constitution of Malaysia, Cap 17, Ninth Schedule—Legislative Lists, List II—State List, clause 4.

48 “Indirect elections” to Sarawak’s legislature were a three-tier electoral system of elected local councils selecting members for Divisional Advisory Councils, which in turn selected Council Negri members.

49 1962 IGC Report, Cap III, Elections, Clause 25 (3).

50 Very occasionally by-elections arose to replace local authority councilors who died or retired.

elections to the Council within 60 days in all situations.⁵¹ Although this implicated elections to local authority councils, there was no mention of this in the Council's debate. The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), then in opposition, claimed that the amendment showed the government had no intention of holding a direct election to the Council Negri before 16 September 1968, as stipulated in the 1962 IGC Report.⁵² As SUPP Secretary-General Stephen K.T. Yong pointed out, with this amendment the government could delay holding a by-election indefinitely when a casual vacancy occurred.⁵³ However, this did not occur. A by-election for Ward Four of the KMC resulted in SUPP member John Fong being returned as a councillor on 17 April 1966, underlining the SUPP's domination of Council.⁵⁴

The next step removed any obstacle to elected local authority members holding office beyond their three-year term. Due to expire on 30 June 1966, their tenure of office was "extended by the State Government until such time to be decided by the Governor in Council, being not less than 6 months after the dissolution of the Council Negri."⁵⁵ Thus future elections to local authorities were still intended. On 23 April 1966 the federal chairman of the Election Commission, Dato Dr Haji Mustapha Albakri, had flown into Kuching to discuss delineating constituencies and registering voters so that Sarawak could take part in pan-Malaysia general elections in mid 1969. At a press conference on arrival, Albakri said that it was up to the state government "to decide whether the [direct] elections should be held in 1969."

Projected election dates in Sarawak then became confused by political imperatives. In the 11 August 1966 peace treaty with Indonesia that ended *Konfrontasi* (Indonesia's three-year military attempt to overturn the formation of Malaysia), the Federal Government agreed to hold general elections in Sabah and Sarawak "as soon as practicable" to reaffirm their decision to join Malaysia.⁵⁶ Ten days later, Deputy Prime

51 Referring to the 1962 IGC Report and Malaysia Act that laid down indirect elections would continue for a period after Malaysia day, Sarawak's Chief Minister, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, argued that holding indirect elections within 60 days would not be possible in some cases and impractical in others.

52 The 1962 IGC Report laid down that direct elections to the Federal Legislative Assembly and the Federal House of Representatives would be held in Sarawak "after the fifth anniversary of Malaysia Day or on such earlier date as the Federal Government may ... prescribe" (Clause 25 (4)).

53 *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 June 1964, p. 2.

54 The Chairman of the KMC, Ong Kee Hui, had been re-elected President of the KMC for the fifth time in June 1964. Ong, a moderate, was also the Chairman of the SUPP, a left wing, communist-infiltrated in its early years, predominantly Chinese, anti-Malaysia, opposition party founded on 15 June 1959. Initial communist infiltration was gradually eliminated due to government actions (Teng Lung Chi, David, and Ngieng Kiong Ann, Daniel, *The Challenges—SUPP in Focus*, Sibiu: Think Management Consultants and Services Sdn. Bhd., 1990).

55 William Tang Tieng Kee (compiler), *50 Years Golden Jubilee of (Mixed Multi-Racial) Local Authorities in Sarawak (1944-1988)*. Kuching: Ministry of Environment and Public Health, Sarawak, 1990(?), p. 20.

56 Sarawak's indirectly elected Council Negri had voted in favor of joining Malaysia. Article 1of of the 1966 peace treaty with Indonesia read: "The Government of Malaysia ... agrees to afford the people of Sabah and Sarawak ... the opportunity to reaffirm, as soon as practicable, in a free and democratic manner, through general elections, their previous decision about their status in

Minister Tun Razak announced that general elections would be held in Sarawak in early 1967.⁵⁷ The SUPP Secretariat called for the promised elections to be supervised by neutral Afro-Asian countries, as well as for the release of all political detainees not brought to trial, repeal of “restrictive and irrational” Ordinances, and withdrawal of all “foreign troops including the Malaysian forces.”⁵⁸ However, there were no elections in 1967, as the Electoral Commission’s work had just begun.⁵⁹

The Election Commission finally recommended 24 federal and 48 state constituencies in Sarawak, each with an equal number of voters as far as possible. Speaking on a bill for the delineation of those constituencies in the Dewan Ra’ayat (Federal Parliament) on 14 June 1968, Razak said that direct elections in Sarawak were unlikely to be held before May 1969, due to the amount of preparatory work still to be done. To accommodate this delay, the Council Negri’s five-year term of office had to be extended by amendments to the Malaysian and the Sarawak Constitutions.⁶⁰ The Dewan Ra’ayat passed the necessary statute amending the Malaysian Constitution on 9 September 1968 and eighteen days later the Council Negri amended Sarawak’s Constitution accordingly.⁶¹ Based on May 1969 direct elections to the Council Negri, under the six-month rule local authority elections in Sarawak would be held before the end of 1969, by which time elected local authority councilors would have been in office for some six and a half years. But this time events intervened.

In July 1965, the federal government had set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry under Senator Dato Athi Nahappan into the workings of local authorities in peninsular Malaysia.⁶² The Commission’s report, which was to have a profound effect on local authorities throughout Malaysia, was submitted to the Federal Government in January 1969. Another thirty months were to elapse before the report was tabled in the Dewan Ra’ayat. By then Sarawak’s politics had changed dramatically as its main opposition party, the SUPP, had stated in writing and subsequently included in its manifesto that “The SUPP supports the concept of Malaysia.”⁶³ By tacit agreement with Malaysian

Malaysia” (*Sarawak Tribune*, 12 August 1966, p. 1).

57 Sarawak’s ex Chief Minister, Kalong Ningkan, who was first deposed on 17 June 1966, welcomed the promise of an early election. His dismissal had aroused some sympathy amongst the public (Porritt, “Turbulent Times in Sarawak ...”, *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 2004, pp. 70-82).

58 The federal government was locked in a long struggle with the Sarawak Communist Organisation (SCO). Commonwealth troops had begun their withdrawal and handover to the Malaysian military, although the SCO guerillas were still a potent force that had not begun to feel the debilitating effect of loss of Indonesian support (Porritt, *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Sarawak, 1940-1990*, Clayton: Monash University Press, 2004).

59 The clause “as soon as practicable” in the peace treaty accommodated any subsequent delays in holding the elections in early 1967.

60 In the debate in the Federal Parliament (Dewan Ra’ayat) on 21 August 1968, Stephen Yong (SUPP) held that the Alliance Government had delayed preparations for elections in Sarawak deliberately in “fear of defeat at the polls” (*Sarawak Tribune*, 27 August 1968, p. 3).

61 During the debate on the Sarawak Constitution (Consequential Amendment) Bill, SUPP Chairman Ong Kee Hui said the Sarawak government had turned the Council Negri into a “rubber stamp.”

62 The Royal Commission under Senator Dato Athi Nahappan started its inquiry in September 1965.

63 *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 April 1969, p. 6.

Alliance leaders, this enabled the SUPP to contest the forthcoming elections freely without fear of its candidates being interned.⁶⁴ Later, SUPP Chairman Ong Kee Hui would play a leading role in ending elections to local authority councils in peninsular Malaysia.

General elections throughout Malaysia finally began on 10 May 1969. The following day the overall results for peninsular Malaysia showed a “sharp” reduction in the votes for the governing United Malays National Organization-dominated Alliance, which had lost its two-thirds majority. On 13 May following the announcement of the results of the election, racial rioting broke out in Kuala Lumpur, with over 50 killed in the first night.⁶⁵ To control the situation, the Yang di-Pertuan Agung proclaimed a state of emergency, which automatically suspended the Constitution and the Parliament. To enforce emergency rule, the National Operations Council was formed under Deputy Prime Minister Razak. Newspapers were ordered to cease publication and on 16 May elections to the Dewan Ra’ayat and the State Assemblies were suspended “until further notice.”⁶⁶

In an adroit political move before resumption of elections in Sarawak on 6 June 1970, Razak invited the SUPP to join a coalition government.⁶⁷ Not only would this strengthen a coalition government and virtually eliminate effective opposition in the Council Negri, but also virtually ensure SUPP support of federal agendas. As soon as the results of the elections were known, the SUPP accepted Razak’s invitation. By 6 July after a carousel of various political alliances, the Sarawak Alliance Government emerged, with the SUPP’s Secretary-General Stephen Yong as Deputy Chief Minister.⁶⁸ SUPP chairman Ong Kee Hui lost his state constituency but won his federal constituency, thus retaining his seat in the Dewan Ra’ayat.⁶⁹ No longer on the opposition benches, Ong Kee Hui was sworn in as a federal minister without portfolio on 9 December 1970. By then it was clear that no statewide local authority elections would be held in Sarawak in 1970.

On 7 July 1971, Ong Kee Hui, then Federal Minister of Technology, Research and Local Government, said in a statement to the Dewan Ra’ayat on local authorities:

After seriously studying the report of the [Harrapan] Commission and taking into account what transpired in this country since the last general election

64 Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, pp. 130-1. Communist infiltration of the SUPP had culminated in some influential members being interned and some branches being closed.

65 Officially, nearly 200 people had been killed by the time the riots ended. There are copious reports and studies of this event, one of the latest being Kua Kia Soong, *May 13: Declassified Documents on the Malaysian Riots of 1969*, Petaling Jaya: Suaram Komunikasi, 2007.

66 Suspension of the elections in Sarawak created some resentment, as there were no civil disturbances in Sarawak. Kalong Ningkan’s political party, SNAP, described it as a “totally inexcusable and dastardly act.”

67 Tan Sri Datuk Amar Stephen K.T. Yong, *A Life Twice Lived: A Memoir*, Kuching: Borneo Adventure, 1998, p. 106.

68 Ibid. pp. 194-98. Yong won both a federal and a state constituency.

69 For Ong Kee Hui’s explanation of the loss of his state constituency, see Tan Sri Datuk Amar (Dr.) Ong Kee Hui, *Footsteps in Malaysia: Political Development of Sarawak since 1963*, Kuching: SUPP Headquarters, 2002, pp.106-112.

was held, the government has come to the conclusion that considering the size of the country; that we have representative governments at national and state levels; and that certain of the functions of the Local Authorities can be taken over by the State Government, it is considered unnecessary and indeed redundant to have another tier of representative government at the Local Authority level. It is therefore decided to consult the State Governments to abolish the system of Local Government with elected members.⁷⁰

This met with a quick rebuttal from Sarawak. Two days after Ong Kee Hui made his statement, Chief Minister Rahman Ya'akub announced that Sarawak's local councils would continue to function, although "we could not ... shut our minds to development in other parts of Malaysia."⁷¹ However, Ya'akub made the views of the Sarawak Alliance Government clear on Sarawak's local authorities. He said that the local councils in Sarawak, especially in the rural areas, were not "running all that well." Ya'akub also questioned whether government help to the local councils should continue and said that elections could not be held until necessary adjustments were made to ward boundaries.⁷²

The ultimate outcome for Sarawak's local authorities was foreshadowed by state government legislation in 1971 that amended the 1962 Local Government Elections Ordinance.⁷³ Before the legislation was amended, by-elections had been held to replace the few local authority vacancies that had occurred since the 1963 elections. Under the amendment, future local authority vacancies due to death were to be filled by nominees of the deceased's political party and vacancies from resignations were to be filled by the state government. By that time elected local authority councillors had served eight years. On 12 February 1972 Federal Minister Dato Ong Kee Hui, who had been appointed Chairman of the National Council on Local Government, underlined Ya'akub's criticism of Sarawak's local councils.⁷⁴ He said that several local councils in Sarawak were not functioning properly and that the Sarawak Government should consider how to improve its local government in line with the "Nahappan" Royal Commission of Inquiry's report into the functioning of local authorities in peninsular Malaysia.⁷⁵ For this, the Sarawak Government finally set up an *ad hoc* Committee in October 1973.

Based on the recommendations of the *ad hoc* Committee and peninsular Malaysia's Local Government Act, 1976, on 13 December 1977 the Council Negeri passed Local Authority (Amendment) Bill 1977 (Ordinance 3/77) and the Kuching Municipal Council (Amendment) (no. 2) Bill, 1977. These bills introduced government

70 The "Harappan" Royal Commission of Inquiry's report on the workings of local authorities in peninsular Malaysia had not been tabled in the Dewan Ra'ayat at this time. Only the predominantly Chinese peninsular opposition party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), opposed the decision (*Sarawak Tribune*, 8 July 1971, p. 1).

71 *Bernama*, Kuala Lumpur, 9 July 1971.

72 Ya'akub claimed that the present boundaries "were demarcated by the Colonial Government ... to ensure at least in one area their own man had been elected."

73 Malaysian Information Services, *Sarawak 25 Tahun Merdeka* Report '88, Kuching: State Government of Sarawak, 1988, p. 16.

74 Ong advised the peninsular "states were now working towards" implementing the [Nahappan] Royal Commission report on local government.

75 *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 February 1972, p. 1. This triggered a long slow process of change.

nomination of all their councillors for two-year terms. In a briefing some three weeks before the bills were tabled in the Dewan Undangan Negeri, Sarawak Local Government Minister Leo Moggie said that the original concept of local councils in Sarawak was no longer thought to be relevant because education and health services had been taken over by the government.⁷⁶

Explaining the bills, a subsequently published semi-official account states:

It was noted that due to suspension of local government elections, the elective bodies in the local Councils had remained static and become ineffective. In view of unsatisfactory management of most local authorities, changes in the structure of local authorities in Sarawak were deemed to be desirable. In addition there was great disparity between the larger urban Councils and the rural Councils. The aim of the amendment was to remedy all defects by restructuring and reorganising the local authorities with a view to providing a unified structure pattern of local government throughout the State. ... The abolition of elective Councils should not be viewed as a stern measure to discourage local participation in politics. The change was to enable local authorities to function correctly within the framework of the Government's objectives.⁷⁷

Of the ten Council Negeri members who spoke on the bills, only Jonathan Sabal, the member for Pelagus, called for local councils to continue to be elected in order to provide representation for local people in local matters.

Under the bills, all local authority councillors were to resign automatically and the Yang di-Pertua Negeri acting on the advice of the Cabinet (previously called the Supreme Council) would appoint the chairmen, the vice chairmen and other councillors to the municipal councils of Kuching, Sibul, and Miri, and all the district councils for two-year terms. Under the Ordinance, a local authority would have a chairman, a vice chairman, between eight and twenty-four councillors for a Municipal Council, and between eight and twelve councillors for a District Council. The Yang di-Pertua Negeri was empowered to rule whether a local authority was a Municipal or District Council.

The bills did not become operative immediately. On 2 January 1978 the Federal Minister of Local Government and Federal Territory advised that a special report would be made for reorganization of the local authorities in Sabah and Sarawak.⁷⁸ Officially this reorganization aimed to introduce "a modern and viable system similar to that in peninsular Malaysia."⁷⁹ Setting the reorganization process in motion was finally achieved on 1 November 1981 when the bills came into operation.⁸⁰

76 Moggie also said that it was no longer necessary for local councils to serve as training grounds for future legislators (*Sunday Tribune*, 20 November 1977, p. 1).

77 William Tang, 1990, p. 23.

78 *Bernama*, 2 January 1978. Federal Minister Haji Hassan Adli Arshad made this statement when announcing a \$17.9 million launching grant for reorganization of peninsular Malaysia's local authorities.

79 *Bernama*, 13 November 1980. Federal Minister for Housing and Local Government Datuk Dr. Neo Yee Pan also reported that by that time all states in peninsular Malaysia, apart from Pahang and Trengganu, had restructured their local authorities.

80 \$17.8 million was allocated as a launching grant for reorganization of Sarawak's local authorities.

To replace the Sibuan and Miri Urban District Councils, by order the Yang di-Pertua Negeri immediately created the Sibuan and Miri Municipal Councils. All councillors originally elected in 1963, and any subsequently replaced through by-elections, ceased to hold office. Their replacements, all government nominees, were appointed for two-year terms by the Yang di-Pertua Negeri.⁸¹ The Sarawak Minister for Local Government promised the nominees freedom of action, saying that “it was neither necessary nor practicable for the government to tell them what to do.” Local authorities were authorized to pay up to \$500 to each former councillor in recognition of their services. The new councillors were paid a sitting allowance for attending council meetings, mileage for cars or petrol for longboats, and subsistence or lodging allowances. Full-time executive chairmen of the Municipal Councils and the Kuching Rural District Council were paid between \$2,700 and \$3,300 a month, with part-time chairmen paid half that amount. Chairmen of Municipal Councils and the Kuching Rural District Council were entitled to chauffeur-driven cars, and deputy chairmen were awarded half the fixed allowance of their chairmen.⁸² As paid, government-nominated, bodies, councils effectively became government instrumentalities under the indirect influence of government.⁸³ For example, on 8 October 1983 Sarawak’s Acting Chief Minister directed all local councils to strictly enforce the Anti-Litter and the Refuse Collection and Disposal By-Laws.

Part 4: Government-nominated local authorities 1981-1988

Inevitably, appointments to local government councils came to be viewed as government favors, the *Sarawak Tribune*’s political correspondence reporting in 1988:

The undisclosed list of new councillors [to the Sibuan Municipal Council] has already become an open secret after some of them could not help sharing their joy with friends and relatives.⁸⁴

The list included an amateur singer and women’s section chief, leading one councillor who asked not to be named urging the SUPP not to appoint “those who do not have a proven working record.”

Following completion of a new road to Kota Samarahan some thirty kilometres from Kuching, the Samarahan District Council was created in 1985 covering an area of 1,160 square kilometers and serving a population of some 24,000, mainly farmers and fishermen.⁸⁵ Speaking at the installation of the government-appointed Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and twelve councillors on 20 May, the Minister for Local Government announced a grant of \$500,000 for council projects. The District Officer, Kota Samarahan, was appointed Chairman of the Council (*Wali Kota*) and most of the twelve councillors were experienced in local government, having previously served with the Kuching Rural

81 Establishing elected councils throughout Sarawak had taken twelve years (1947 to 1959).

82 *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 November 1982, p. 3.

83 Whether elected local authorities provide better outcomes than government-nominated local authorities is open to debate, as is whether there is any cost benefit.

84 *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 January 1988, p. 1.

85 *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 May 1985, p. 1. Kota Samarahan became the center of a new Division, Sarawak’s eighth, by dividing the First Division centered on Kuching, on 24 July 1986, and later the site of the campus of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

District Council. At the installation ceremony, the Chief Minister spoke of a possible restructuring of the Ministry of Local Government to play a more positive role in development. Giving the example of the road to Kota Samarahan, the Chief Minister said that development projects were often seen as benefiting only a few people or being of limited benefit to local people, whereas the road to Kota Samarahan was an important link to Asajaya and Pendam, the latter at the mouth of the Batang Sadong. To avoid such perceptions, he suggested that under the restructuring local councillors could cultivate positive thinking amongst the people towards development projects in their areas.

Some three months after establishing the Ministry of Tourism in May 1986, the government added promotion of tourism to local authority responsibilities, together with town beautification. This reflected the growing importance of tourism, which through the Sarawak Tourist Association had attracted government grants. The State Regional Coordinating Committee had been set up in 1977 and by 1986 tourist developments were becoming quite diverse, ranging from the élite Baram River Club on the remote Usun Apau plateau to the Damai Beach Resort within an hour's drive of the capital, Kuching. By 1988, although income generated from tourist spending and services only contributed about one per cent of Sarawak's gross domestic product, the rapid growth in the number of visitors to Sarawak, which doubled in the 1976-1986 decade to nearly 190,000, showed the potential of tourism to make a meaningful contribution to the economy.⁸⁶

Reflecting growing numbers of ratepayers and population growth, full time Chairmen were appointed to the Sri Aman, Sibul Rural, Kapit, and Limbang District Councils in July 1987. Efficient functioning of many councils proved to be a perennial problem, the State Environment and Tourism Minister reminding all state councils on 17 January 1988 that they were an arm of the state government, adding that councillors who were not fully committed to their roles should resign.

Kuching was elevated to city status, the fourth in Malaysia, on 1 August 1988, with Dr. Yusoff as Mayor (*Datuk Bandar*) of Kuching City North and Song Swee Guan as Mayor of Kuching City South.⁸⁷ To maintain continuity and minimize any disruption of services, initially Kuching City South continued to be serviced by the Kuching Municipal Council, and Kuching City North continued to be serviced by the Kuching Rural District Council. Appropriate changes to the boundaries of both councils were made at the same time.⁸⁸

X X X X

Local authorities had served a very useful purpose in bringing primary education to many of the smaller settlements throughout Sarawak and setting up maternity and child welfare clinics in those settlements. Inevitably, these functions were taken over by centralized departments once those departments were sufficiently developed and had the resources to do so.

⁸⁶ *Sarawak Report '88*, p. 74.

⁸⁷ City of Kuching Ordinance 1988 (Ordinance 2/88); Kuching City North Ordinance (Ordinance 3/88).

⁸⁸ Kuching Municipal Ordinance (First Schedule) (Amendment) 1988 (Swk. L.G. 15/88) and the Local Authority (Kuching Rural District Council) Alteration of Boundary Order, 1988.

The era of elected local authorities in Sarawak had begun in 1956 when the KMC elections brought to fruition Governor Arden Clarke's 1947 "Notes on the Development of Local Government in Sarawak." That era ended in 1981, when local authority councillors reverted to being nominated by the government, mirroring federal legislation and action in peninsular Malaysia. With the dismissal of Chief Minister Kalong Ningkan in 1966 and the SUPP becoming involved in the state and federal governments in 1970, a more compliant state government facilitated the passage of state legislation that ended elected local authorities in Sarawak. The end result was in effect a two-layer governing system, federal and state, with local authorities as quasi-independent government agencies. The introduction of government-nominated local authority councilors ushered in an era of direct government control through its nominees, reflecting a call for local authorities to play a more positive role in promoting development, the fundamental policy of the incumbent government. Whether the change from elected to nominated local authorities in Sarawak and all other local authorities throughout Malaysia should remain a *fait accompli* has nevertheless begun to be questioned.⁸⁹

Appendix 1

Responsibilities of Local Authorities on Malaysia Day, 16 September 1963⁹⁰

Powers included:

- holding property;
- borrowing money;
- entering into contracts;
- levy of rates and cesses;
- making by-laws and issuing licenses;
- control of building and development;
- housing;
- control of markets, parks, and open spaces;
- control of libraries and reading rooms;
- and subdivision of land in development-designated areas

Duties included:

- providing primary education;
- providing fire services;
- establishing maternity and health clinics;
- and safeguarding environmental health e.g.,
 - control of drains and ditches;
 - disinfection;

⁸⁹ An article entitled "The snuffing out of Local Democracy in Malaysia" and written by Professor Johan Saravanamuttu was published in *Aliran* in 2000. *Aliran*, which is published by the Aliran Kesedaran Negara (National Consciousness Movement), is on the roster of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. *Aliran* claims to be Malaysia's "first multi-ethnic reform movement dedicated to justice, freedom and solidarity." The article was accessed via the Internet on 6 August 2008.

⁹⁰ Based on William Tang, 1990, pp. 24-5.

refuse collection and disposal;
night soil collection;
sewerage and sewage disposal;
prevention of pollution;
general sanitation;
valuation and rating;
construction and maintenance of roads;
street lighting;
and slaughterhouses.

Notable changes in powers and duties from 1963 to 1988

Removed:

- subdivision of land in a development area (taken over by Lands and Surveys on 22 December 1972);
- primary education (taken over by the Federal Government on 1 January 1973);
- establishing maternity and health clinics (taken over by the Federal Government in 1979);
- providing fire services (taken over by the Federal Government on 15 May 1981).

Added:

- promotion of tourism and town beautification (from August 1986).

ADAT, LAND, AND POPULAR DEMOCRACY: DAYAK POLITICS IN EAST KALIMANTAN

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The regulating agency of official law, by which I mean law promulgated by a government which derives its authority from the state it represents, is not uncontested.¹ In most states the medium of law is applied to provide official norms of (il)legality to society yet, as is a central theme in anthropology of law, other normative systems may exist in addition, or even in competition, with this official normativity.² Law gains meaning from what it authorizes as much as from what it forbids, making law and its negation opposites that define and construct one another (Anders and Nuijten, 2007:12). As the rule of law principle maintains that none is above the law (cf. Carothers, 1998:96-97), governments included, control over which norms are law as well as over their actual meaning are highly valuable strategic assets in power struggles.

In this article I analyze the discourse used by Dayak in East Kalimantan to substantiate customary claims to natural resources. This discourse refers to multiple legalities—official law as well as indigenous norms- and is sustained by references to Indonesian nationalism and regional community. Although these varied factors seem incompatible, they carry a long way in practice. As legal arguments are entwined with local needs and ethnic interests, unraveling this Gordian knot is a daunting task for those government officials that have to deal with the claims. A purely legal analysis hence is not sufficient in settling the matter. My interest lies with the conscious and precise mobilization of Dayak indigeneity in arguing exclusive rights and maintaining the continued validity of norms alternative to those of official law. I maintain that these appeals to indigenous norms and the normative plurality that is invoked are politicized in a way that exceeds the direct needs of most of the people in whose name they are fielded, but that serves to effectively secure a zone of autonomy. Nonetheless this is a dangerous strategy to follow. Ethnic relations form the fibres that make up the Dayak cords in the knot, but what keeps them from untwining? Is ethnic unity a strong enough base

1 This article is a reworked version of an earlier chapter in a special issue on anthropology of law in the Dutch sociolegal journal *Recht der Werkelijkheid*, which was published in January 2010.

2 Research for this paper was carried out as part of the Indonesian-Dutch INDIRA project. I would like to thank Fakultas Kehutanan of Universitas Mulawarman, Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, Tropenbos International Indonesia and the Van Vollenhoven Institute of Leiden University for their kind support of the research. Financial support was provided by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Treub Foundation, the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO), and the Adatrechtstichting.

to successfully claim exclusive rights and the validity of private norms in twenty-first century Indonesia? How do Dayak get away with such claims in the national context? My main question thus is how the strategic mobilization and deployment of Dayak ethnicity in the obtainment of exclusive rights functions, and what its results are. The issue whether such deployment is in accordance with the law or can be seen as “just” forms the broader background against which the subject is considered.

Claiming Dayak ethnic rights is a strategy that balances Indonesian national unity, indigenous rights and local interests. Official law is, as may be expected in a nation in which the government claims to adhere to the rule of law, the main regulating agency as far as the state is concerned. The above questions thus need to be considered from a socio-political as well as from a legal perspective. My point in undertaking such an exercise is to explore the relatedness of these two and the dependence of local juridical circumstances on political power.

Research methodology

This article is based on field research carried out in a series of research visits to West and East Kalimantan between 2004 and 2009. This research was concerned with the legal aspects of land tenure as well as with the socio-political dimension in which such tenure was to be realized. The two differed markedly, and showed that especially at lower levels of the administration political influence and social power were major factors that could overshadow official law. Most of the data used for this article was collected through semi-structured interviews with a diverse range of respondents; farmers, regional and provincial administration and police officials, NGO activists, indigenous leaders and judges. People were quite willing to share their thoughts, hopes and annoyances regarding Indonesia’s legal system, its government, society and future. Yet what people say and what they do can be different. Hence the research included long periods of participant observation. For the cases discussed here this meant attending demonstrations, NGO and Dayak organization meetings, sitting in on discussions between Dayak spokespersons and government officials, and spending days in the offices of both, observing and discussing their courses of action. The fieldwork was complemented by keeping an eye on regional newspapers, a major source of information for all parties involved, and by reading government reports and local Dayak magazines.

The limits of Indonesian unity

Indonesia, as a state, consists of a plurality of ethnic groups with quite highly diverse languages, cultures and religions that are mainly united through a collective shared past as the Dutch East Indies. National unity and identity are largely based on this common past and on the fight for independence, and are largely considered as failing to attain the same binding power as ethnic and regional affiliations. When Anderson (1991) proposed to consider nations as imagined communities—imagined because one does not know all other members of one’s nation in person, and community is not part of daily experience—he frequently referred to Indonesian nation-building for illustrations. The diversity of languages was overcome by the introduction of a new, national language (*Bahasa Indonesia*). Differences between religions and ideologies were solved by

formulating the state philosophy of *Pancasila* as the nation's supreme ideological base, however, creating a uniform legal framework proved more problematic. Groups throughout Indonesia place emphasis on the validity of local custom (*adat*) as a source of rights. In the colonial past, *adat* was officially considered as valid law for the native population in most private law affairs. Non-natives were governed by other, non-*adat*, legal systems. Upon independence, this official legal pluralism was replaced by a single system of national law in which the status of *adat* became mainly symbolic and subject to general interest as defined by the government. In practice, *adat* norms remained valid throughout rural areas and a type of unofficial legal pluralism ensued (see Burns, 2004: 249-251; Hooker, 1978: 20-29). As we shall see below, rights derived from state law and *adat* interests frequently opposed one another in affairs pertaining to land and natural resources, giving rise to grievances in those population groups that maintained the validity of their *adat* rights. From 1999 onwards, reform of the national administration and far-reaching changes in government provided such groups with opportunities to mobilize their claims.

Reform

When the Southeast Asian economic crisis of the second half of the nineties hit Indonesia, it severely impacted the dispersal of economic favors, upon which New Order power was based. Support for the regime dwindled as aspiring members of the elite, politicians, and high-ranking army officials began to consider alternative power constellations. Moreover, large parts of the population—the poor who were directly affected by the crisis, intellectuals and social leaders critical of the unequal and authoritarian New Order rule—began to demand changes. Demands turned to large-scale protests and riots and when it became clear, in 1998, that Suharto no longer had the full support of the military and political elites, he stepped down as President of Indonesia.

Suharto's successor, vice-president Yusuf Habibie, was faced with the daunting task of keeping the Indonesian state together. The metaphor of the nation as a family was shelved in favor of no-nonsense political and administrative emancipation of the Indonesian population. In two 1998 laws known as the "regional autonomy laws,"³ far-reaching administrative powers were decentralized from the national level to that of regional government.⁴ In addition, government control over the establishment of political parties and over the press was considerably lessened.

The regional autonomy laws preserved the unity of the nation as they provided regional governments with far-reaching authorities. Article 7 of Law 22 decrees that regional government will not have authority over foreign politics, defense, security, the judiciary, religion and fiscal matters, but the law does not contain a positive definition of the new regional authorities.⁵ These vague descriptions of authorities led to a wide

3 Law 22 of 1999 on Regional Government and Law 25 of 1999 on the Fiscal Balance between the Regions and the Centre.

4 Indonesia's administrative levels consist of the national level, below it the provinces, and below these the regions. At the time of writing, some 450 regions existed (see <http://www.bps.go.id/> for the current state of affairs).

5 For a more extensive discussion, see, for instance, Suharyo (2000:8-14).

diversity in interpretation and application throughout Indonesia's regions. Whereas the substance of the regional autonomy laws has since been elaborated in various presidential decrees as well as a set of revision laws, weak central government control over regional administrations allowed ample space for local power holders to ensure that implementation suited their interests (cf. Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken 2007:11-15; McCarthy 2004: 1199-1201). Revised versions of the regional autonomy laws were promulgated in 2004.⁶ Whereas these laws contained more precise delineations of the authorities of regional government and clearly defined a more prominent role for the provincial level, they also stipulated that in addition to the members of the regional parliament, the head of the regional government henceforth was to be elected directly by the population.⁷ This is an important change as it established a direct connection between the district head and the population. In East Kalimantan this made for candidates waging extensive campaigns and establishing far-reaching cooperation with local interest groups. Popular influence was entering politics.

The rise of ethnic rights

Indonesian law recognizes the existence of *adat* claims, notably in relation to land and other natural resources. The Basic Agrarian Law, for instance, mentions *adat* claims as potentially valid rights to land, although various limiting conditions do exist (see Haverfield 1999: 51-4). Observance of *adat* rights, however, hardly goes beyond lip service. National legislation either contains references that do not have consequences, or leaves *adat* rights conspicuously absent in laws where definition of their legal validity would appear essential.⁸ That is not to say that *adat* does not hold sway. In large parts of the archipelago, access to land, forest, water and so on is arranged based on local *adat*. State administration has never provided a system that satisfactorily could replace local custom, and its representatives have never been able to instil state law throughout the nation. In many areas, therefore, *adat* rules exist as an alternative normative system to official law.

Under the New Order, *adat* –in the meaning of tradition–was incorporated in the regime's appreciation of Indonesia's cultural diversity. Cultural and ethnic traditions were highly appreciated, provided they remained folkloristic (see Acciaioli 1985:162). Song and dance were fine, but politicization or any other type of mobilization was sternly discouraged. The perception of *adat* as a source of rights was sternly discouraged, even insofar as national law contained instructions to take *adat* claims into account. Enforcement of national law was limited and colored by the interests of the regime and, as MacIntyre (1991:17) notes, "largely unfettered by societal interest." Results of appeals to official law were unpredictable.

The end of the New Order regime brought the social role of *adat* claims to the fore with a vengeance. Throughout the nation communities maintained *adat*-based claims to lands which had been taken into use for regime-sponsored projects.

⁶ Laws 32 and 33 of 2004.

⁷ The regional head used to be appointed by the regional parliament.

⁸ See Bedner and Van Huis (2008) for an overview of the position of *adat* claims in official legislation.

In opposite direction to government decentralization, the *adat* movement centralized around the Jakarta-based National Alliance of *Adat* Communities (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, AMAN), an organization which strongly refers to a discourse equating the position of Indonesian *adat* communities (*masyarakat adat*) to those of indigenous communities worldwide (cf. Li 2000: 155-157; Budiman, 2005: 3-9). Although this is a strategy that ensures international support, its effect is questionable; the government's position is that all Indonesians are indigenous and therefore no exclusive rights can exist.⁹

Yet not all groups making claims based on *adat* do so in reference to the nationwide *adat* movement. With considerable administrative authority largely beyond the control of the center at the regional level of government, arguing *adat* rights at this level is a strongly favored alternative (cf. Henley and Davidson 2007; Acciaoli 2009: 94-97). In the view of Indonesia that takes Java (more specifically, Jakarta) as the center of the nation, many regions within Indonesia are peripheral or semi-peripheral. During the New Order this meant that the regions acted upon the central regime's instructions (Connor and Vickers 2003:156-157). Now, however, the regions grant considerable space for local initiative, including matters of *adat*. The close proximity of administrative authorities to the region's population, their dependency on local support for their position and the ensuing possibility of having members of local ethnic minorities forming significant blocks in the regional administration means that "keeping things in the family" can be a far more efficient course of action to get *adat* claims and other local interests officially supported.¹⁰ Such localism takes in the indigenous argument as well. *Putra daerah* (sons of the soil) status is often fielded in support of *adat* claims. The claimants are not interested in some form of indigenous status on the national level; they emphasize their indigeneity at the local level and accost the regional or provincial governments. West Sumatra, for instance, is a well-researched case in which the rise to prominence of the ethnic Minangkabau majority in the local administration (F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann 2001) and attempts to implement official observance of the Minangkabau *adat* property system (F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann 2004) are evident examples. In Nunukan, East Kalimantan, the Dayak Lundayeh have obtained official recognition of their *adat*-based communal land claim, while authority in affairs pertaining to this land has been vested in local *adat* leaders (see Bakker 2007: 166-168). Likewise, Central Kalimantan's provincial government followed bloody ethnic fighting between local Dayak and Madurese migrants—which ended in a decisive Dayak victory—with legislation showing a strong bias towards Dayak *adat* rights.¹¹

9 See the explanation of Indonesia's representative at the United Nations on his country's vote on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/ga10612.doc.htm>.

10 See for instance Avonius (2003) on events in Lombok, and Schulte Nordholt's (2007) study on Bali after the fall of Suharto.

11 After plans to promulgate official legislation prohibiting Madurese to live in Central Kalimantan proved impossible to carry out under Indonesian law. See for instance the entries in the Dayak blog www.e-borneo.com of 14 September 2001. The resulting legislation (Provincial Regulation of Central Kalimantan 9/2001) makes it clear that all in the province must respect local *adat* and follow the instructions of *adat* leaders, and that the *adat* in question is Dayak *adat*.

Ethnic groups attempting to obtain governmental recognition of *adat* rights—a matter with a certain, if poorly determined, foundation in official law—thus approach the issue in various ways. A major strategy is by referring to the general, international discourse of indigenous peoples' rights that appeals to the morality of the state and that is aligned with civil action groups, NGOs, and other groups willing to openly criticize the government. Another approach sees ethnic groups attempting to harness government authority to further their goals, rather than following a strategy of open opposition. In various regions the validity of *adat* rules is boosted by recognition and support through official regulations, yet raises questions as well. Is the recognition of *adat* a valid line of action for a democracy reinventing itself after decades of authoritarianism? If the New Order regime maintained control through the appropriation of national law, than how does the rise to the fore of local *adat* systems differ from such exclusivist normativity?

Dayak Unity

The June 2007 in-flight magazine of Garuda Indonesia, Indonesia's national carrier, is a special issue on the culture of the main indigenous group of Kalimantan, the Dayak. In one of the articles, a report on the Dayak *Isen Mulang* festival in the province of Central Kalimantan, Sari Widiati (2007:22) writes:

Even though the festival presented only a small part of the tremendous range of Dayak culture, including how the Dayak have acculturated with newer arrivals in the region, it brought together people from around the province to gather and compete in a sportsmanlike way, displaying the 'never give up' spirit that is the meaning of the phrase *Isen Mulang*.

No doubt the festival was a joyful occasion. Yet the illustrating photographs of men shooting blowpipes and dancing with *mandau* will remind others of the 1997, 1999, and 2001 unrest in West and Central Kalimantan, when Dayak and Malayu warriors forcibly evicted Madurese migrants, leaving hundreds dead. Reasons stated for this outbreak of violence are diverse. Dayak authors such as Giring (2004) and Widen (2002) emphasize continued Madurese crime, general rudeness and violence; not just against Dayak but against all ethnic groups in Kalimantan. As the local indigenous group, the Dayak were the *tuan tanah* (literally 'lords of the land,' but also meaning 'hosts') to the other groups. A host politely forgives well-meaning guests an unintended mistake, the apologists argue, but after years of patiently enduring Madurese misbehavior the Dayak had no other choice but to clear their lands of these criminals. Yet others see a more profound background. Davidson (2003: 63, 65-67) points out that Dayak-Madurese conflict has a long history in Kalimantan. Davidson discerns economic interests as well as attempts by both groups to become influential political entities, and concludes that an internalized "us" versus "them" is a strong part of the conflict's origins. De Jonge and Nooteboom (2006: 471-472), two researchers approaching the issue with considerable attention to the Madurese perspective, point to similar issues by emphasizing competition over resources as well as elites' attempts to obtain powerful positions in the post-Suharto political climate. Achieving major political power in a competitive society required a defeated or subdued opposition; a role for which long-standing enmity ideally positioned the Madurese.

Yet in East Kalimantan, which also has Dayak and Madurese groups among its population, no such conflicts occurred. The violence that took place in Central and West Kalimantan was not denounced or opposed by East Kalimantan Dayak groups. A policy developed among East Kalimantan Dayak organizations to condemn ethnic violence in general, but present it as a realistic threat, after which they would state their willingness and ability to protect East Kalimantan society from this threat. This approach served to improve the local position of Dayak groups to match the level of Dayak power in West and Central Kalimantan. As a result, the political importance of such organizations and Dayak standing in general increased in East Kalimantan. Real and visible relations to the victorious Dayak fighters in other provinces was essential to substantiate this rise in prestige.

The rise of pan-Dayakism

Ambitious elements within the Dayak movements aim to mobilize a pan-Dayak identity that unites Dayak groups into a coherent social force vis-à-vis non-Dayak (Thung et al. 2004) and, when deemed necessary, against the state. Education, telephones, the internet, and other modern means of communication enable such developments. The need for Dayak cohesion, its supporters feel, is bigger than ever. Government development plans hold little space for *adat* rights, while the numbers of non-Dayak living on Borneo put pressure on Dayak lands and traditions. The grounds for pan-Dayakism thus are in place: threats to Dayak cultures, livelihoods, and territories. A number of potentially unifying arguments can hence be distinguished.

First is the ethnic argument, which presupposes the existence of a coherent Dayak identity that is indigenous to Borneo. Aside from various other indigenous groups—such as Malay in West Kalimantan and the Banajarese in the south—many of Borneo's inhabitants are immigrants who have settled in Kalimantan, often without indigenous consent. In many areas, migrants are so numerous that Dayak and other indigenous groups have become minorities, and fear that what is left of their culture and lands will be swallowed up by new arrivals and government development. Yet, Dayak activists argue, they are the *Putra Daerah*, the 'sons of the soil.' They belong to the place, as opposed to others, and, as sons from this same mother, are related by a kinship that goes beyond regular bloodlines.

Second is the legal argument, which concerns illegal or unjust use of Dayak lands. As many Dayak live in rural areas with limited access to education, general ideas about law and legality are largely formed by local normativity, generally based on *adat*. Legitimate actions undertaken under national law which negatively influence local arrangements—for instance migrant resettlement or the construction of plantations—are frequently considered as illegal or at least unjust practices. Such actions are seen as abuses of state power controlled by an abstract elite of (non-Dayak) state officials. As a direct result, the legal argument sees Dayak lands as illegally limited by the state, personified by non-Dayak migrants and mining, logging or plantation companies.

Closely related to the legal argument is a third, economic, issue. Over the past decades, the central government granted (inter)national companies permission to log Kalimantan's extensive forests. Although these forests were subject to *adat* rights, profits

failed to trickle down to the Dayak groups living in the areas. In addition, the workers carrying out the actual logging are usually immigrants brought in for the job, offering few local Dayaks the chance of a job with the companies. For many Dayak groups the forests provide additional produce through hunting and gathering, and are the main land available for laying out new gardens and rice fields. The type of rice farming conducted in much of Borneo's interior is dry rice farming, or shifting cultivation. After using a plot for one or two years it must remain fallow for at least five years to recuperate. Fields are cleared on a yearly basis in the forest, thus making it necessary for a small group to have access to a relatively large plot of forest in order to sustain itself. After logging, many forest areas have been transformed into large monoculture enterprises of rubber or oil palm, thus limiting the land and forest available for shifting cultivators. Many local protests were staged, although few were successful. A higher level of mobilization, it is felt, might put more weight on the scale and address these significant violations of *adat*.

Nonetheless, ambitions to mobilize a pan-Dayak identity are hampered by the inherent high level of abstraction this requires. Most rural Dayak first consider themselves to be part of a specific subgroup rather than of a united Dayak whole. The numerous Dayak groups are divided by different languages, customs, religions and a plethora of diverse local *adat* rules, with many groups having histories of communal warfare. In addition, the political makeup of Borneo means that Dayak groups are citizens of three different nations – Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, while they do not constitute a majority in any of them. Developments in West and Central Kalimantan have shown Dayak groups to unite in dealing with other ethnic groups, but this appears to be brought about by opportunism and personal ambitions rather than by conscious planning.

The uniting abilities of Dayak ethnicity thus face problems similar to those of Indonesian national identity. However, whereas the metaphor of the family was problematic within the context of the nation, it holds more validity in uniting Dayak. Actual inter-group relations and marriages are quite common and the increasing presence of non-Dayak interests on Borneo provides an actual factor to unite against. Dayak identity, contrary to national identity, thus gains strong meaning by contrasting it with a concrete and nearby other group. As a consequence, the discourse of Dayak identity thus contains strong drives going against the discourse of national unity. The main issue, then, is whether Dayak unity has stronger uniting powers than the “national family” does.

East Kalimantan Dayak Politics

East Kalimantan Dayak organizations actively ally with West and Central Kalimantan Dayak groups in projecting the potential of united Dayak to East Kalimantan's government and society. The organizations' existence is legitimized through appeals to customary or indigenous rights as well as by references to political muscle, for these broad alliances claim thousands of members.

Possibly due to this need for association, East Kalimantan has some highly developed “Pan-Dayak” groups; notably the DADK and the PDKT. The Dayak *Adat* Council of Kalimantan (*Dewan Adat Dayak se-Kalimantan*, hereafter DADK) is based in Balikpapan and regularly fields Dayak *adat* as an argument to counter or influence the

provincial government. The DADK has considerable success in obtaining indemnifications for usage of Dayak *adat* lands from the government or from companies, and ensures a Dayak voice in the province's economic policies. This includes decisions as to the locations of new plantations and mines, as well as to the percentage of local workers that companies will be made to hire. Locating new projects on *adat* land and reserving jobs for local Dayak workers are strong courses of action, as they favor the area's economy. However, claiming the validity of *adat* and legitimizing the DADK's position as an organization empowered by *adat* authority only works if sufficient individuals support this thesis. In order to convincingly argue the legitimacy of their arguments, the DADK hence needs actual Dayak support. The organization mobilizes along such bonds as unite the Dayak groups to obtain the numbers, community, ethnicity and religion, as well as through the notion of justice of Dayak legal consciousness. Legitimacy must be established vis-a-vis the government and the non-Dayak population, yet requires confirmation from the large and diverse mass of Dayak communities. However, the accessible level of regional government offers ample opportunities to claim representative powers without the need to deliver actual proof. Connections in government, military, or police circles can be of greater importance than actual grassroots support (e.g. Bakker 2009).

The second organization is the East Kalimantan Dayak Association (*Persekutuhan Dayak Kalimantan Timur*, or PDKT). Established in the late 1990s, this is the oldest Dayak organization in the province. The PDKT lobbies for proportional Dayak representation in the administration and in government and has established close links with officials at the provincial level. The PDKT's situation is a strong example of the type of internal problems that Dayak organizations must deal with. Schiller (2007: 70-75) describes how during a major PDKT seminar in 1999, participants' diversity in religion, *adat* and even in cultural symbols were problematized to the extent that they prevented the formulation of a baseline of common Dayak interest and the design of an organizational coat of arms. No Dayak group would go so far as to leave the PDKT as the organization was the main Dayak vehicle in the province at the time, but inter-group rivalry and distrust discouraged commitment and prevented the foundation of an authoritative organization. Nonetheless, the meeting managed to empower its board to engage with relevant political issues in the province.

In 2003, the PDKT board asked the Dayak to vote for a specific pair of candidates—Suwarna and Ngayoh—in the provincial governor and vice-governor elections. The pair won, putting the PDKT in a good position with the provincial authorities but, paradoxically, in a poor light with its young supporters. Many young urban Dayak, fresh out of the protests and turmoil that ended the New Order regime, considered a close link to government officials too similar to the patrimonialism they had just protested against. Moreover, they argued, such links made it impossible for the PDKT to speak out on issues that were crucial to its grassroots support, but sensitive to the government (Thung et.al. 2004: 59-63). Urged on by these urban activists, smaller regional Dayak organizations began to oppose the influence of the PDKT. They maintained that the organization had become estranged from its rural roots by engaging with the government rather than supporting the Dayak subsistence farmers affected by government land usage. The PDKT board attempted to counter this development by inviting regional Dayak leaders

and *adat* specialists onto its board or into its advisory panel, yet to its young critics this strategy again brought associations of New Order policies, which also frequently used incorporation as a means to silence opponents, to mind.

Internal division

In 2001 the DADK was established. Among its founding members were the rector of Balikpapan University, the founder of Balikpapan's chapter of the Evangelical *Gereja Injil* Church, and an influential *adat* leader of the Dayak Lundayeh who also was a retired, but still connected, police officer. Working through the church, the student community, and the network of *adat* leaders, the DADK swiftly became well-known throughout the province. Initially the DADK and PDKT existed side by side. The DADK focused on solving issues among the Dayak population according to Dayak *adat* and did not involve itself with district politics. However, as many of the issues they had to deal with involved government authorities, contact between government officials and the DADK became frequent.¹² The DADK explicitly referred to the prominent violence in West and Central Kalimantan and their abilities to control tempers in East Kalimantan. This made East Kalimantan authorities decide to involve the *adat*-touting DADK, rather than the less outspoken PDKT, in mediating conflicts. The DADK carefully managed its image and contacts. In 2004, the chair of the DADK board had a meeting with then President Megawati Soekarnoputri, during which the nature of Dayak identity and the commitment of the DADK to the unity of the Indonesian state were discussed. In 2005 a similar visit was paid to her successor, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Both occasions were covered in East Kalimantan media, ensuring the DADK of a reputation as an organization that had contacts in the highest regions. East Kalimantan police and military already had begun making incidental requests for DADK mediation in potential conflicts, Dayak parties now followed suit as well.

In 2004, the DADK board decided to honor its name and formally establish its Kalimantan-wide scale. Under the chairmanship of the board, delegations from Dayak *adat* organizations from all four Indonesian Bornean provinces joined to discuss issues related to the Dayak community in a formal conference in Balikpapan in November 2004. The meeting encountered problems similar to those which Schiller observed at the 1999 PDKT meeting. Again the participants' cultural and religious diversity, as well as the problem of suitable symbols and the number of each group's representatives, dominated the discussions. However, East and Central Kalimantan's representatives had already reached agreements in a series of meetings preceding the conference. Conference participants received a list of decisions which the board proposed on the composition of the DADK (including deciding the members of the board), and combined Central and East Kalimantan support ensured a swift passing.

A main obstacle was the absence of West Kalimantan's representatives whose flight had been extremely delayed, and who only arrived halfway through the meeting. West Kalimantan's contingent sought—and received—a review of passed decisions, thus distinctly showing the world the lack of Dayak unity.

12 Cases included disputes over land, natural resources, and whether non-Dayaks should be allowed (or forced) to settle disputes with Dayak according to Dayak *adat*.

Such a lack was also apparent in the absence of a fair number of local or regional Dayak organizations. Board members of the PDKT had cautioned against joining the DADK since the organization could destabilize Dayak-government relations. Critics claimed that the PDKT board simply feared to be eclipsed by the DADK, but other large Dayak organizations shared the PDKT's reservations. The general secretary of the powerful National Dayak Adat Community (*Masyarakat Adat Dayak Nasional*) from Central Kalimantan had joined the DADK's founding board, yet the influential leader of the National Dayak Adat Council (*Majelis Adat Dayak Nasional*), Agustin Teras Narang—a member of the national parliament and a heavyweight in Central Kalimantan's Dayak society—refused to join a potential competitor to his own organization. The founding board took great care to emphasize the organization's all-Dayak character. A new chair originating from West Kalimantan was elected and the organization of a follow-up conference in that province was planned.

External unity

Whereas the PDKT largely refrained from references to Dayak as “family” or “relatives” and limited itself to speaking of “the Dayak” without explaining whom they meant by this, the DADK restyled kinship-symbolism to fit the Dayak imagery. Rather than as siblings, the Dayak were depicted as a “tribe” (*suku*) that consists of various sub-tribes. Dayak relations were not those of a “family” but rather resembled those of a Dayak longhouse, of which part of the population would move away when too many inhabitants had to share the same accommodation, and found a new longhouse. The houses were independent, but would maintain relational ties. The constellation thus was far looser than that of a family, but nonetheless implies relatedness vis-à-vis the rest of Indonesian society. Inter-Dayak relations connected all Dayak communities, but not within the straight, authoritarian framework of the “family” metaphor. The “tribe” and “longhouse” symbolism also contained a message to the nation: the Dayak were part of the Indonesian state as fellow-citizens and neighbors, but not as children subservient to non-Dayak parents.

The DADK 2004 conference showcased a new addition to Dayak movements that emphasized this independence; five men dressed in military camouflage outfits wearing red berets guarding the entrance and exit doors of the meeting room. Although unarmed, their authority was clear. These five were the first members of the Kalimantan Dayak Adat Defence Command (*Komando Pertahanan Adat Dayak Kalimantan*). A group established to safeguard and regulate *adat* related meetings, to police the Dayak *adat* community and discipline violaters of *adat* rules. A large founding ceremony for this group, which would come under the command of the DADK, was announced for the next year. In the light of the violent developments in West and Central Kalimantan, one would expect the *Adat* Command to be met with suspicion from the authorities. This hardly was the case. A day before the conference, the head vicar of the Samarinda episcopacy publicly urged the DADK chair to fight ignorance, neglect, and poverty. The chair replied that the *Adat* Command would have an important role in controlling Dayak in case of social unrest and thus contribute to the safeguarding of the peace in East Kalimantan. Basing their opinion on this statement, the provincial government and

provincial police forces stated their support for the Dayak Command.¹³ Whereas the *Adat* Command became a social force in conflicts throughout East Kalimantan, and Dayak prominence was clearly on the rise, the link with government was steadily maintained.

In 2006 things took a sour turn when West Kalimantan Dayak leaders decided to start yet another all-Dayak organization and declined to continue working within the framework of the DADK. The West Kalimantan Dayak argued that the DADK had grown too close to the government, and could no longer be seen as an independent organization with Dayak interests at heart. Division threatened, and came to the fore in 2008. In a new round of elections for East Kalimantan's governor and vice-governor, the DADK and the PDKT—which was supported by the new West Kalimantan organization—urged their supporters to vote for different pairs of candidates. The Dayak vote was splintered and both organizations' aspiration of getting a Dayak governor in office failed to materialize.

Negotiating Normativity

Dayak attempts to ensure recognition of *adat* normativity and *adat*-based claims by greater Indonesian society are furthered using three quite different discourses which are interwoven or separated as circumstances require. First, claims are formulated in the universal terms of indigenous rights. The *Putra Daerah* concept strongly appeals to native status; who can be more indigenous than those who have the land itself as their (symbolic) parents? The problem with this discourse is that it appeals to an international moral argument, but that indigenous status is not a concept that brings special status in Indonesian law. Claims stand a better chance if they are phrased in terms of official law as well, not the least because framing claims in this way implies adherence to the official legal system and acceptance of the state as the highest authority (Minow 1997: 355). Dayak organizations do not threaten to leave the unity of Indonesian society; in fact they submit their grievances to its judgement. But do they? In another, more sceptical reading of affairs it can be argued that organizations' strategies concern the harnessing of state authority to serve the interests of the Dayak community rather than those of society as a whole. The discourse of adherence to the state thus symbolizes unity and belonging, but in practice it may also signify awareness of modern power-relations and the usefulness of control over the state's authority. The third discourse, which engages with national reform, makes use of both these other lines of reasoning. It refers to the ousting of corrupt New Order politicians from government and their replacement by new officials who will do better in representing the interests of society. Dayak organizations publicly support reform politicians and presidents, and encourage their membership to vote for reformists. Obviously this is also where Dayak opportunities are located. The closed elite under the New Order would not allow ethnically inspired and non-aligned movements to gain influence at any level of government, whereas reformed administrative procedures and makeup of local government allow considerable possibilities for Dayak interests to

13 The official founding ceremony of the KPADK in Balikpapan in February 2006 was attended by representatives of the city council and the mayor, the provincial army command and provincial police forces, all congratulating the DADK on the establishment of this security wing. In Balikpapan alone the KPADK had 400 enlisted members.

enter the previously reserved circles of government officials.

Yet these various discourses, essentially three different roads to the same destination of greater space for Dayak *adat* and interests, must take two especially problematic aspects in their stride. First is the official legal stance towards *adat*. As stated before, *adat* rules and claims are mentioned in various national laws. Ostensibly as a source of rights, but as Bedner and Van Huis conclude (2008: 186-190), this is no forgone result. In order to remain valid and relevant, customary norms are as much subject to change as national law is. The *adat* of a century ago was not concerned with group rights vis-a-vis the state or fellow Indonesians. Nor was there much need or, during the New order, space, to rephrase *adat* rules in the context of the modern state. Whereas reform provided the opportunity to demonstrate the continued existence and viability of *adat* rules in communities throughout Indonesia, this was often not the *adat* described in the tomes of the *adat* scholars of the colonial era. Custom and customary authority are vulnerable to abuse.¹⁴ A strong argument which government authorities frequently field against the recognition of *adat* is that they are dealing with opportunistic “invented traditions” (cf. Hobsbawm, 1983:1-2), or with a reification of outdated and sidelined customs for the potential benefit of a select group at the expense of a majority of the population. There are strong arguments against the recognition of *adat* claims, notably when considered from a governmental perspective.

The second problem is the nature of the two organizations discussed above. Both presented themselves as representing Dayak *adat* interests, yet neither engaged *adat* experts. Whenever either of the two was called upon by the government to assist, negotiations would be conducted by board members and officials while limiting parties’ involvement to a minimum. If the organizations contacted a private party on behalf of a Dayak community or wronged party, this would usually be done by a senior member accompanied by a fair number of the organization’s members. A request made to a plantation company for financial compensation because of unallowed usage of *adat* land becomes a sort of “offer one cannot refuse” if delivered by thirty uniformed members of the *adat* command. The interpretation of *adat* displayed is certainly different from the open meetings aimed at consensus that are practiced in rural villages. What goes on here is not unlike the coercion exercised by bands of thugs, or blackmail in the name of *adat*.

Against these stand arguments that the practice of national law can be as unfair and elitist as opponents fear *adat* to be. The New Order, with its select and pragmatic appliance of official law stands as a strong example, while Indonesia is probably as famous for tourist-paradise Bali as for the corruption of its bureaucracy.¹⁵ Both *adat* and official law have their drawbacks, but *adat* implies autonomy from the national government that goes beyond what the decentralization legislation allows. Yet as *adat*

14 Consider for instance Ubink’s (2008) analysis of the role of chiefs in customary land tenure in Ghana, Fraenkel’s (2004) work on the pragmatic and opportunistic discourse of custom in the Solomon Islands crisis, or Harnischfeger (2003) on the Nigerian Bakassi Boys militia.

15 For 2008, Indonesia shared position 126 out of 180 (together with Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guyana, and Honduras) on Transparency International’s corruption perceptions index, scoring a 2.6 out of a maximum of 10. See http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2008/

requires support from within the local administration if it is to operate on a relatively large scale and next to official law, strong political and social links between the two are essential.

Arguing traditional values within modern Indonesia

Looked at from the perspective of the indigenous peoples' movement, the nature of the Dayak claim is relatively twofold and relatively conventional. First, *adat*-derived rights are claimed, which are mainly rights to land, forest, and other natural resources. Second, honoring of these claims implies the recognition of the validity of *adat* rules by the government, and therefore of a certain degree of Dayak autonomy. Whether *adat* is to be seen as a law in itself, or creates a measure of autonomy within official law, is open for negotiation. Imagined results could be the establishment of reserves, or the remittance of indemnifications for *adat* resources in use by the state. However, chances of this are slim as Indonesian law does not recognize a special "indigenous peoples" status. To the law, all Indonesians are indigenous, so this argument is likely to fail.

Reform, with its emphasis on greater democracy, more freedom for the population and greater autonomy for the regional level of government, does, however, allow for a greater demonstration of diverse identities within the Indonesian nation. Provided that what is asked for is not cast in formulations that contravene national law or directly threaten national unity, emphasis on regional identity is considered an acceptable and lawful aspect of regional autonomy. Successfully fielding *adat* as a legal source of rights thus is not impossible, but it requires a careful and mediated approach that at times is reminiscent of New Order policies.

The reputation of Dayak throughout Kalimantan has been substantiated by the ousting of the Madurese. To non-Dayak Indonesians, Dayak have shown themselves to be capable of uniting in order to defend their interests. A worrisome thought for the diverse migrant population of Kalimantan. Yet havoc is not what the Dayak are after. Both the DADK and the PDKT aspire to the role of intermediaries capable of bringing Dayak grievances to the attention of powerful officials before actual unrest takes place. Both organizations emphasize the place of Dayaks within the nation, and present the Dayaks as Indonesian citizens who have been wronged by the previous New Order regime that gave away their lands to the criminal and violent Madurese.¹⁶ To Dayak spokespersons, seeking legal satisfaction from the wrongs suffered from the regime and at the hands of the Madurese, the removal of the corrupt regime was an opportunity to remedy the situation.

However, both organizations are very much part of 21st century regional politics. They carefully operate on the thin line between legal and illegal and claim their authority from a source—*adat*—that is beyond the control of the government. Both have strong links to government authorities, and both carefully undermine the other's popular credibility. The young Dayak protesting against the PDKT, for instance, largely joined the DADK which, in turn, established links with government officials. Neither organization will go

¹⁶ Perceptions of Madurese as rude and violent people exist throughout Indonesia. A frequently poorly educated group that mainly engages in poorly-paid manual labor, the Madurese are overrepresented in crime, violent or otherwise, and shunned by large parts of society.

as far as to block agreement when negotiating over government plans for *adat* land, but each ensure to keep the notion of Dayak violence glowing. As a result, many Kalimantan regional governments are susceptible to Dayak desires and have accepted the presentation of the expelling of the Madurese as just and legal.¹⁷ The validity of Dayak *adat* norms thus gained an important foothold in official law. As yet, no government authority has publicly disputed the organizations' claims to represent the Dayak communities. Dayak division is no secret and easily determined. An informed hypothesis is that government ties into these organizations go deeper than either is prepared to admit. As long as the government deals with these organizations as representing "the Dayak," other candidates for that position will have a tough time getting their foot in.

Concluding remarks

The arguments brought forward to sustain the recognition of Dayak *adat* rights are complex and rich. Claiming indigenous Dayak rights by referring to a potential for violence rather than the international indigenous peoples' discourse, the legal status of which is poor, at best, in Indonesia, is a strategic success. Dayak representatives use a discourse of Dayaks as Indonesian citizens who have been wronged during the New Order and demand redress in this era of reform. Redress is, however, not requested from the faceless and remote central government, but from the regional officials; the "politician next door." These officials are susceptible to public pressure and with the Dayak's fearsome reputation in mind, likely to pay attention. Mobilizing Dayak ethnicity may bring Dayak influence to bear in official regional legislation. In this way, Dayak *adat* rights can gain official support, either in practice or as official legislation.

The strategy has three major drawbacks. First, it depends at least in part on the Dayak's fierce reputation, hardly an association suitable to wronged national citizens and one reminiscent of New Order coercion techniques. The strategy thus could make the organizations vulnerable to accusations of extortion and illegal use of force. Second, the strategy requires the various Dayak groups to present a united front to the rest of society, which internal strife threatens to make impossible. Dayak are not one ethnic group, and never have been. Individuals as well as whole communities may well feel that the violent image or the various organizations' leaders are at odds with their interests. Whether the successful application of this strategy will continue thus remains to be seen. Third, close ties with local government ensure influence but make the organizations vulnerable to accusations of collusion and patrimonialism which are heavily associated with the New Order regime. Even if they have provided inroads into government, they can work havoc on the grassroots support base. In case of serious conflict, government could challenge the Dayak organizations' legitimacy on these grounds.

This does not, however, imply that the drive for the recognition of Dayak *adat* rights was unsuccessful. Looking at the wider effects beyond the threat of violence, the broadly themed politicization of Dayak identity—including *adat*, nationalism, official law and indigeneity—has created inroads into government and Kalimantanese society that will

17 To this day, no Dayak has been prosecuted for the fights or the killing of Madurese, even though a fair amount of photographic and filmed material is available that could be used in identifying individuals.

be difficult—but not impossible—to undo. Besides, as potentially violent and dangerous warriors, Dayak have presented themselves to the outside world as the discussion partner of national presidents, as the unifiers of Kalimantan's indigenous groups and—notably for the latter—as the actors who opened government eyes to local *adat*.

The Dayak discourse of indigeneity managed to penetrate into regional and provincial governments. These levels are well-removed from the central government, accessible to grassroots influence and maintain a strong level of administrative autonomy. The result is a local political sustenance of a coexistence of *adat* and official law that is nowhere in the books, but that is locally considered as the embodiment of Indonesia's reform since the state and its rulers now take local interests into account.

What sets this result apart from other attempts is that this coalescence of state law and local norms works because of a careful blend of similarities and differences. Dayak are Indonesian citizens and formulate their claims and statements largely within the discourse of Indonesian legitimacy. They are modern, educated and politically conscious. It took machetes and guns to claim traditional rights, but it takes a modern education and a strong political consciousness to get actual recognition.

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**RESTORING PANGGAU LIBAU:
A REASSESSMENT OF *ENGKERAMBA*' IN
SARIBAS IBAN
RITUAL TEXTILES (*PUA' KUMBU*')**

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Thirty-one years ago at Seputin, just across and slightly upriver from where we met, Derek Freeman told me that Iban folklore “probably exceeds in sheer volume the literature of the Greeks.” At that time, I thought Freeman excessive. Today, I suspect he may have been conservative in his estimate (Sutlive 1988: 73).

Panggau Libau is the mythical home of the brave and handsome archetypal cultural hero Keling and his clever and beautiful wife, Kumang, the patroness of weavers. Iban mythology resounds with their exploits, Iban chants hymn their praises, and Iban woven textiles capture their reflections. That is, until recently. New research has concluded that the anthropomorphic forms in Iban textiles, commonly referred to in the literature as *engkeramba*’, which portray, among others, these cultural heroes, are no more than space fillers, mere cartoons, or insignificant dolls (Gavin 2004). This conclusion represents a paradigm shift that flies in the face of centuries of Iban weaving tradition, and has curators rewriting their data and collectors reevaluating their masterpieces. As an Iban who is an eighth-generation descendant of at least five generations of master Saribas Iban weavers, I would like to offer a reassessment of what these *engkeramba*’ actually mean and address this recent argument which runs counter to some of the most fundamental *adat* of our weaving tradition. To truly understand Iban ritual textiles is to understand Iban cosmology.¹ The two are inseparable. Iban ritual textiles are, in essence, canvasses on which Iban myths, philosophies, stories, and histories are woven (see Kedit 1994:154). Disfigure the main characters of these narratives and you maim the stories they tell, in the process completely missing the point and ultimately failing to see the forest for the trees. Here, I make my argument based on the *pua' kumbu*’ depicted in this essay, all of them woven by my great-grandmother, Sendi anak Ketit (1892-1974)²,

1 My principal source of information on Iban cosmology is Gregory Nyanggau Mawar from Kerangan Pinggai, Paku, Saribas.

2 Iban genealogies are bilateral (or cognatic) and ancestry may be traced through either parent. Here, master weavers are indicated in bold. The genealogy is as follows:

Orang Kaya Pemancha Daya *Bayang* x **Mengan Tuai** (f) =
 [1st generation] Orang Kaya Aji *Peti Malaya Duat Pengiran Bunsu* x **Dimah** (f) =
 [2nd generation] **Mindu** (f) x Panglima Budin *Gerasi* =
 [3rd generation] **Mengan** (f) x Tuai Rumah Ketit =
 [4th generation] **Sendi** (f) x Gelau =
 [5th generation] Inja (f) x Kedit (grandson of Penghulu Sa'ang *Rumpang*) =
 [6th generation] Albert Rumpang x Mary (f) =
 [7th generation] the author.

who was acknowledged by her peers as a master weaver and principal master dyer in the Saribas during the later years of the Brooke era.

What does the Iban term *engkeramba* mean? Iban-English dictionaries generally translate it as a 'doll.'³ To the Iban, *engkeramba*, in a general and everyday sense, simply means 'scarecrow,' the ubiquitous anthropomorphic figures found in fields and farms all over Borneo. Iban weavers also use the term *engkeramba* as part of their technical vocabulary to describe any woven motif that has an anthropomorphic form. However, this does not mean that these forms are mere human-like images or 'dolls.' *Engkeramba* is a euphemism or verbal disguise for something altogether terrifying that cannot be named directly. Other euphemisms like *engkatak* (frog), *katun* (cartoon) and *gambar aja* (just pictures) are also used as these terms closely resemble the forms they weave. The term *gambar*, when used by weavers in describing an anthropomorphic form on a textile, translates as 'picture of a person,' suggesting a powerful being. The use of euphemisms, therefore, becomes the device by which weavers refer to the spiritual beings and personalities who populate the vast Iban pantheon without having to utter their names. As Heppell succinctly suggests, "Iban do not want to reveal what they are doing or what a design represents out of concern that they might be revealing something which should not be revealed, particularly when it is a stranger asking."⁴ The Iban call this use of euphemism *jako' karong*.⁵

In the Saribas, not every weaver may weave the *engkeramba*. It is one of the fundamental conventions of weaving that only a weaver who, among other attributes, possesses *pengaroh*⁶ may weave these images that depict spiritual beings. Anthropomorphic forms are believed to be spiritually imbued and therefore potentially harmful. A weaver protects herself from these dangerous spirits by using *pengaroh*. These *pengaroh* are bestowed by the goddesses and mythic heroines and only to women who have spiritual relationships with them. These women are then acknowledged by the community as being spiritually mature. In all instances in the Saribas, these women came from leading families whose men were leaders of the community. These male leaders⁷ were also believed to be successful because of the protection of the gods and goddesses who also gave them *pengaroh*. In turn, these men and women made no secret of the patronage of their deities and usually ascribed their successes and accomplishments to their divine patrons. Women who did not own *pengaroh* would not weave the *engkeramba* for fear of being *alah bulu enda' kering semengat*⁸ and therefore struck *layu* or *busong*⁹ by the spiritual beings whom they might have attempted to portray, or by the gods and goddesses for failing to observe convention. These weavers would instead

3 Richards translates it as a 'model, doll, esp. carved wood figures in human form...' (1981:84), while Sutlive defines it as 'a doll, a carved image, or a model' (1994:69).

4 Michael Heppell, personal communication.

5 Riddle, to use words to cover or conceal meaning.

6 Amulets or charms.

7 Other Iban males had no qualms following these male leaders in war expeditions as they believed that these leaders were virtually guaranteed success through divine intervention.

8 Spiritually weak.

9 *Layu* means 'to wilt' and *busong* means 'to suffer a supernatural curse resulting either in a household misfortune or a swelling of the abdomen resulting in death.'

depict spiritual beings in abstract forms and never utter their names.

Pengaroh become part of a *bilik*'s¹⁰ property and are inherited by the next generation of *bilik* occupants as heirlooms. Through the use of these *pengaroh*, weavers within these *bilik* therefore have access to an otherwise restricted repertoire of patterns and designs. Once they have access, they are schooled by their mothers and grandmothers in the esoteric knowledge requisite to weave an *engkeramba*', among a number of other "forbidden" designs. The first lesson a weaver learns about these figures is that she must be careful when she weaves an anthropomorphic form. She learns that her gods are jealous and prefer not to see any other anthropomorphic forms on textiles other than themselves.¹¹ She also learns that the gods may be offended if the anthropomorphic forms that are supposed to represent them on cloth displease them. The weaver is therefore constantly mindful of this very basic principle of pleasing the gods.¹²

By contrast, Traude Gavin states that "the Iban themselves do not attach similar importance to designs of figures. These are largely a recent phenomenon. The only old figurative pattern of high rank is the Nising pattern" (2004: 246). Gavin goes on to say that "other small figures serve mainly as space-fillers (*pengalit*; *bubul*) and are often included on end borders in Saribas *pua* where they have a decorative function." These "space-fillers" or "cartoons," she adds, "apparently look faintly comical to the Iban as well" (Gavin 2004: 247). By this argument, the entire repertoire of sacred, powerful and forbidden *engkeramba*' woven by Iban weavers the length and breadth of Sarawak is dismissed as nothing more than mere space-fillers with a decorative function, or faintly comical cartoons, except the Nising design, which is elevated beyond the gods.¹³

The premise of this recent argument rests upon refuting an earlier argument made by Alfred Haddon that these anthropomorphic forms "may be made only by the wives and daughters of chiefs" (1982: 124). Haddon's statement is fully consistent with my own argument that "in the Batang Saribas river system, the depiction of actual deities and personalities is restricted to only the most experienced and spiritually mature weavers of the aristocracy" (Kedit 1994: 153). The rejoinder that "Iban women gain the right to weave high-ranking patterns from their own status as weavers, rather than from their husbands' or fathers' social position" (Gavin 2004: 281) is simplistic and does not address the distinctive social system in the Saribas where meticulously kept genealogies called *tusut* are recited at all life-changing events, healing rites, and festivals sponsored by leading families.¹⁴

10 A family unit that occupies a room (or *bilik*) in a longhouse.

11 For this reason alone, the demon Nising, arch-enemy of the gods, is always depicted minimally, if at all.

12 It is on this fundamental principle that restrictions on the portrayal of anthropomorphic forms are founded in the Saribas and, to some degree, in other Iban regions as well.

13 This is in direct contradiction to Iban cosmology where the gods and mythic heroes preside over demons and ordinarily outrank them, whether on cloth or in the cosmos.

14 Clifford Sather, "'All Threads Are White': Iban Egalitarianism Reconsidered" (1996), argues that Iban society is most usefully seen — not as unequivocally "egalitarian" — but as structured around an articulation of principles of both "equality" and "hierarchy," with relations of equality predominating internally — especially within the local longhouse community — in *adat* and relations within the family and between kindred and affines — while hierarchy is externally

In the remainder of this essay, I shall attempt to illustrate and augment Haddon's argument by reviewing a selection of ritual textiles woven by a weaver of "the single most important family of the Saribas" (Pringle 1970: 199). This family traces its ancestry to the Orang Kaya Pemancha¹⁵ Dana *Bayang*,¹⁶ the "most dreaded Saribas 'pirate,' the man who commanded the marauding fleets" (Pringle 1970: 56), who had threatened to put Rajah James Brooke's head in a basket (Pringle 1970: 72-74). Brooke later wrote, "The Orang Kaya Pemancha, of Sarebas, is now with me—the dreaded and the brave, as he is termed by the natives. He is small, plain-looking and old, with his left arm disabled, and his body scarred with spear wounds. I do not dislike the look of him, and of all the chiefs of that river I believe he is the most honest, and steers his course straight enough."¹⁷

The Orang Kaya Pemancha Dana *Bayang* was succeeded by his son the Orang Kaya¹⁸ Aji *Peti Malaya Duat Pengiran Bunsu*¹⁹ who was described as one of the most cruel and treacherous headhunters of those days.²⁰ The Orang Kaya Aji *Peti Malaya Duat Pengiran Bunsu*'s daughter, Mindu, married Panglima Budin *Gerasi*, great-grandson of Unggang *Lebor Menoa*, a rival chief from the Upper Layar.²¹ This arranged marriage pacified the "smouldering dispute between two Iban families, like the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets, an important factor in local politics for years" (Pringle 1970:108).

Panglima Budin *Gerasi*²² pioneered the cultivation of coffee and rubber in the Saribas, and was to become the head of an extended kindred. As an ostentatious sign of his family's unrivalled leadership of the Saribas, Budin *Gerasi* instituted the *adat Burik Menaul Beragum Bejugu*²³ as his family's *bulu manok*. "Among the first planters [of

derived and, as a rule, valorized within a larger regional society through major ritual gatherings or *gawai*.

15 A non-hereditary title bestowed by Sherip Masahor, an agent of the Brunei Sultanate.

16 Dana *Bayang* or Dana "the Soaring Eagle," the latter an *ensumbar* (praise-name) given to Dana.

17 Journal entry, 12th December 1845, in *Mundy, Borneo and Celebes*, II, 78.

18 A non-hereditary title bestowed by the Rajah before the Orang Kaya Aji rebelled against the Brooke Raj.

19 Aji *Peti Malaya Duat Pengiran Bunsu* or 'Aji Strong as Steel, Duat the Young Prince,' the *ensumbar* (praise-name) given to Aji by his wife Dimah.

20 "Saji [Anglicised version of Aji's name] gallantly attacked, and met the fate he so richly deserved...Saji's name and acts have been in my ears for years past," wrote the Tuan Muda [Charles Brooke, the nephew of James Brooke, who was to succeed his uncle as the Second Rajah]. "Many a bloody deed had been perpetrated, and he always had boasted that the White Men's powder and shot would take no effect on his body. So fell one of the most cruel and treacherous head-hunters of those days" (Baring-Gould & Bampfylde 1909:180).

21 Upper part of the Saribas river system.

22 His full praise-name or *ensumbar* was *Baya Nanga Lingga Benyawa Nukang Peredah Budin Antu Gerasi Begigi Ginyah-Ginyah*. Translation: 'Crocodile of the Lingga with Strong Jaws, Budin the Giant with Gnashing Teeth.'

23 The very rare coloration of a striped eagle with beard and crest on its head which is used to welcome any member of the Budin *Gerasi* bloodline to a festival. Failure on the part of the host to receive a Budin *Gerasi* descendant with this coloration would result in *pansa arong* (fainting of a fellow guest or a member of the host's household), indicating that the guardian spirit of

coffee] were leading Iban families in the middle Saribas who established their gardens early in 1889 and obtained their first output in 1892. In 1895, the Resident reported: ‘The Stambok [i.e. Stambak] gardens are being enlarged. Gergasi [the Malay version of Budin’s praise-name], the head of the house there owns quite eight hundred trees and employs labour (Dyak). His paddy farm this year was made for him by Malays on wages’” (Cramb 2007:178). “In the riverine zone at Stambak, below Betong, the headman Budin (the coffee planter of the 1890s mentioned above) planted over 4,000 seedlings [of rubber] in 1909, with seed brought back from Singapore by his son Lumpoh. Another early planter, Penghulu Saang, obtained seeds from Stambak to plant at Pelandok in the Paku branch of the Saribas in 1912” (Cramb 2007: 183). This venture further strengthened the family’s economic and social position. “The Saribas Iban ‘experienced unparalleled material prosperity’, enabling further investment in agriculture, business and trading, as well as the construction of ‘palatial’ ironwood longhouses and the celebration of elaborate *gawai* festivals on an unprecedented scale” (Cramb 2007: 184, quoting Sather 1981: 27-9). Pringle succinctly commented that “it is no exaggeration to say that any knowledge of Saribas history in the Brooke era begins with knowledge of this family” (Pringle 1970: 57).

The women of this family, in turn, were the custodians of powerful *pengaroh*. Mengan Tuai, the wife of the Orang Kaya Pemancha Dana *Bayang*, and her granddaughter Mindu,²⁴ who married Budin *Gerasi*, were both known to have been patronized by Indu’ Dara Insin Temaga, the daughter of the war god Singalang Burong. Although Indu’ Dara Insin Temaga is not the principal spiritual patroness of weaving,²⁵ mythology states that her weavings are the most beautiful and her threads are as fine as silk.²⁶ Mindu’s eldest daughter, Mengan (later known as Indai Isah), was named after her grandmother and brought up as an *anak umbong*.²⁷ Mengan was to become the most well-known *indu’ takar* in the Saribas, superseding even the fame of her mother and grandmother before her as *tuai takar*.²⁸

Mengan married her first cousin, Tuai Rumah Ketit, the son of Budin *Gerasi*’s brother. Her daughter, Sendi anak Ketit (known as Indai Gumbek²⁹ to her peers), was born in 1892 in Stambak Ulu, Layar, Saribas. She lived until the age of eighty-two and left

Budin *Gerasi*’s bloodline is not pleased with the protocol accorded.

24 Family oral history recounts how Mindu anak Orang Kaya Aji, on her deathbed, commanded her eldest daughter Mengan anak Budin *Gerasi* to *muntas* (operate) her middle finger to remove the charms in the form of stones embedded in her flesh which Indu’ Dara Insin Temaga had given her, and to keep them within the *bilik* as ‘inheritance’.

25 As noted earlier, this role is played by Kumang, wife of Keling.

26 Gregory Nyanggau Mawar, personal communication.

27 Secluded child who lives in a *meligai* (beautiful apartment in the *sadau*, loft or upper room), often the eldest daughter of a chief, and attended by slaves taken in wars and their descendants. An *anak umbong*’s feet are not allowed to touch the ground and she does not leave her *meligai* until the day of her marriage.

28 An *indu takar* is a woman who knows the secret measurements of mordant and dyes and conducts the ritual of soaking yarns in a preparatory bath. It is also the highest social status for a woman. A *tuai takar* is the lead or principal among the *indu takar*.

29 *Indai Gumbek* translates as ‘Mother of Gumbek.’ Gumbek was Sendi’s daughter Inja’s nickname. Iban parents are called by the names of their children.



Plate 1. Seated, from left to right: Jelía anak Ipa (eldest granddaughter of Penghulu Sa'ang Rumpang), Sendi anak Ketit (eldest granddaughter of Panglima Budin *Gerasi*), Rimbu anak Sa'ang Rumpang (daughter of Penghulu Sa'ang Rumpang), Inja anak Gelau (eldest great-granddaughter of Panglima Budin *Gerasi*) holding the author's father. Standing, from left to right: Mawat anak ? (husband of Jelía anak Ipa), Ringkai anak Ketit (grandson of Panglima Budin *Gerasi*), Ivory Kedit anak Ipa (eldest grandson of Penghulu Sa'ang Rumpang), Nelian anak Ketit (grandson of Panglima Budin *Gerasi*). Photograph taken in Singapore in 1943.

behind a textile legacy³⁰ replete with graphic representations of the various personalities, mythical beings and deities who populate the Iban pantheon. Sendi was posthumously named *indu' pandai pengelandik jari nadai pemali tau' jait tau' nyungkit tau' anyam tau' sulam tau' nakar tau' gaar* (clever woman with skillful fingers and no ritual restrictions who is a master of embroidery, *sungkit, pilih*, warp wrapping, and preparing cotton for

30 These *pua' kumbu'* are heirlooms of the family and are currently held in trust by the author's father (as the *tuai bilik*, or elder of the family room). Information about these textiles was related from Sendi herself to her daughter, Inja, who then transmitted the information to her children. Sendi had also spoken of her textiles individually to her grandchildren, explaining in detail to each one of them their significance and ritual meaning as 'inherited' *pua' kumbu'*. The author further interviewed other female relatives who were also master weavers and contemporaries and students of Sendi – Jelía anak Ipa (Indai Nancy, Sendi's in-law and sister to Kedit who married Sendi's daughter, Inja) and Lenguti anak Langie (Indai Gulang, Sendi's niece—daughter of Sendi's sister Isah) who was later adopted by Langie, brother to Sendi's father) to verify the oral information which is now being documented for future generations of the family of Budin *Gerasi*.

dyeing)³¹ and was accorded *sigi' alas ngerang*³² by the elders of her community at her funeral wake. Sendi, in the course of her long career as a weaver, wove the entire known gamut of the *engkeramba'* on her *pua' kumbu'*, as I shall attempt to explain in the following pages.

Tangga' Remang or Pua' Penuai

As early as her first *pua' kumbu'* (also known as the *pua' penuai*, or 'the oldest *pua'*', (Plate 2) which depicts a series of clouds (pendants enclosing abstract medallions which allude to certain members of the Iban pantheon) called *Tangga' Remang*, Sendi was already creating anthropomorphic forms.³³ The term *Tangga' Remang* is a form of *jako' karong*, very much like the euphemistic *engkeramba'*, alluding to the actual title, *Tangga' Beji*, 'Ladder to Heaven,' referring to a legend telling the story of how an Iban ancestor, Beji, attempted to build a ladder to reach the heavens, but ultimately failed. His ladder broke into pieces, fell back to earth and became rivers. Intrinsic is the lesson that human beings may not become gods, though they may aspire to godly values and virtues; Sendi's first lesson in spirituality. The *Tangga'*

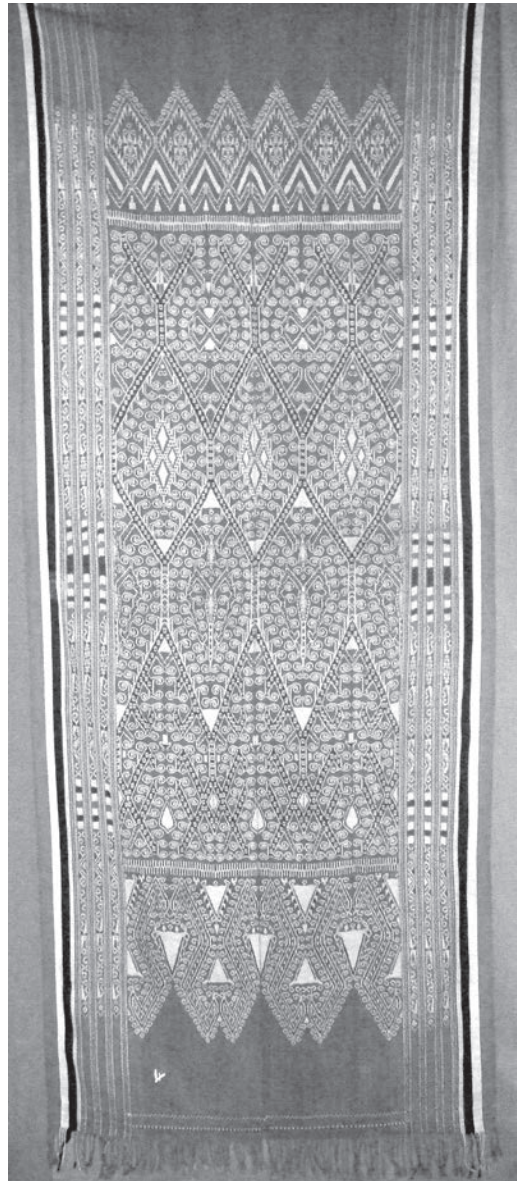


Plate 2. The *Tangga' Remang* in the custody of Albert Rumpang Kedit, grandson of Sendi Ketit.

31 The highest rank for a woman within the Saribas prestige system where men and women are accorded ranks at their deaths, based on the twofold requisites of accomplishment and ancestry.

32 *Sigi' alas ngerang* is the unit equivalent that indicates that the person was a master weaver who knew the secrets of the *takar* and *gaar* rituals. Families descended from Budin *Gerasi* adhere to *adat Unggang Lebor Menoa* which is a unique prestige system that differentiates them from other families of the Saribas.

33 This is not typical of Iban weavers, as only women who have charms inherited from their foremothers to protect themselves from harm caused by a premature engagement with the spirits would attempt to weave an *engkeramba'* on their first *pua' kumbu'*.



Plate 3. Headless torso with hind limbs and two digits on each limb.

Remang also refers to ‘The Coming of the Gods,’ when used by bards during festivals.

This *engkeramba*’ (Plate 3, headless torso with hind limbs) is the motif used by the women of Sendi’s family to symbolize a food offering that is being fed to the “spirit”³⁴ of the design being created. The torso missing its head is a reference to headhunting, a graphic representation of the offering being “vanquished” and consumed.

This appeasement is a requisite that restrains the spirit of the design from “escaping”

the cloth in search for food to devour. To the Iban mind, all beings require nourishment, even those on textiles. These headless torsos are positioned in the center of the passages that act as portals for the greater spirits encased in their pendants, like offerings on a threshold (Plate 4).

This motif has become a recurring symbol found on almost all of Sendi’s family’s *pua’ kumbu*’. Towards the middle of the last century, other Saribas women began to copy this symbol and incorporate it into their

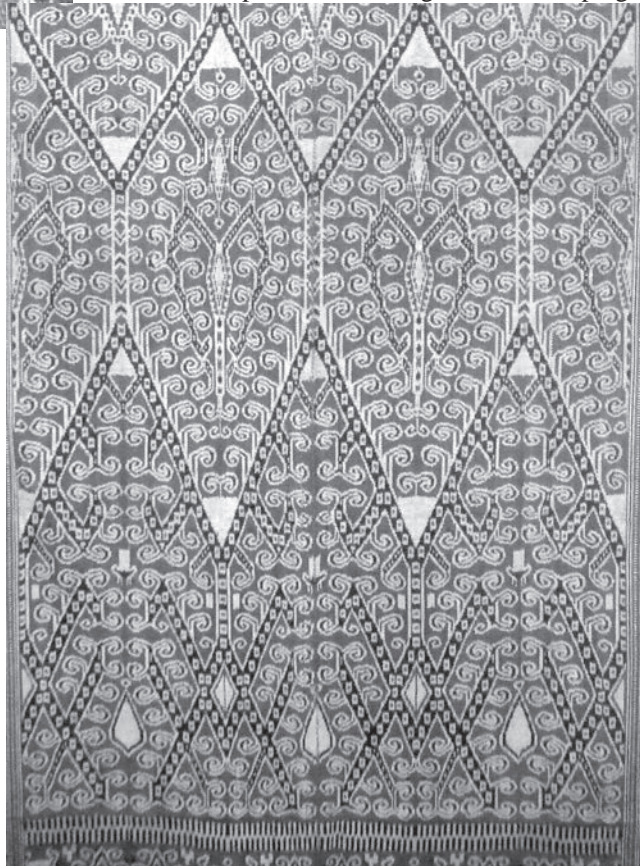


Plate 4. Offerings of headless *engkeramba*’ to “feed” the spirit of the design.

³⁴ The Iban believe that all patterns are inherently imbued with spiritual power by the innate presence of the spirit of the design. The spirit is “captured” by the weaver who creates the pattern.



Plate 5. The *duri*'.

Plate 6. The *duri*' prevents the spirit of the design from escaping the pendant within which it is enclosed.

designs. This *engkeramba*' has become a symbol signifying a sacrifice and is universally identified as such throughout the Saribas.

Another method by which weavers "trap" a spirit is by the use of a sharp-edged *duri*', or thorn (Plate 5), at the entrance or exit of a passage.

This symbol effectively blocks a spirit from escaping (Plate 6). Any sharp object becomes an effective spiritual barrier or weapon.

In weaving these symbols, Sendi was learning a fundamental lesson from her mother: designs have spirits which are potentially malevolent and may harm the household if not appropriately "fed" with food offerings or "fenced in" with sharp objects or stronger designs. The headless *engkeramba*' that Sendi wove therefore represents a lesser spirit being offered to the greater spirit of the design. The *engkeramba*' in the context of this *pua' kumbu*' therefore does not just fill space for no apparent reason, but is *integral* to the space it fills with the main reason being to protect the weaver and her household from harm from the greater spirit in the design.

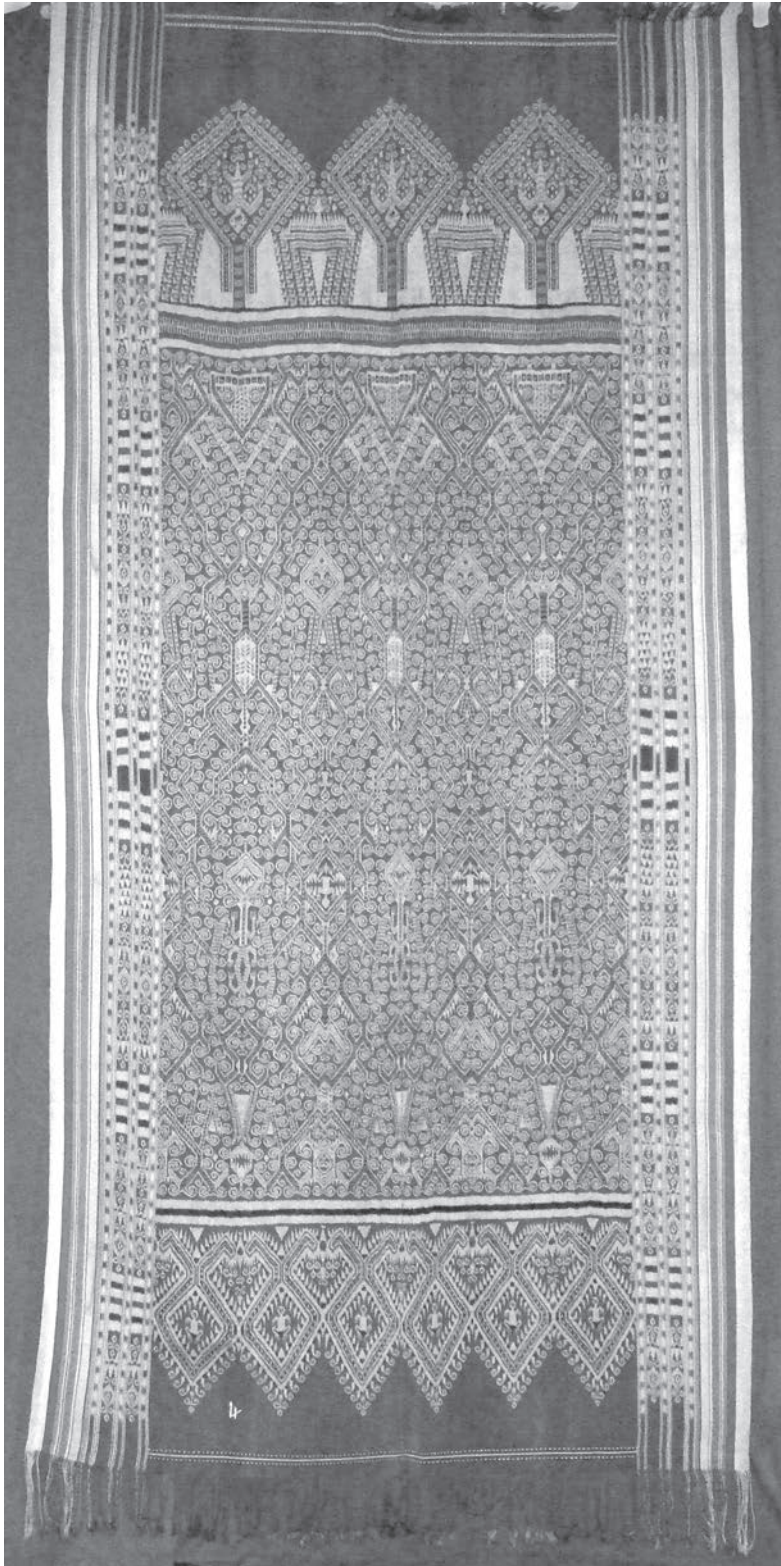


Plate 7. The *Bali Bugau Kantu*, in the custody of Albert Rumpang Kedit, grandson of Sendi Ketit.

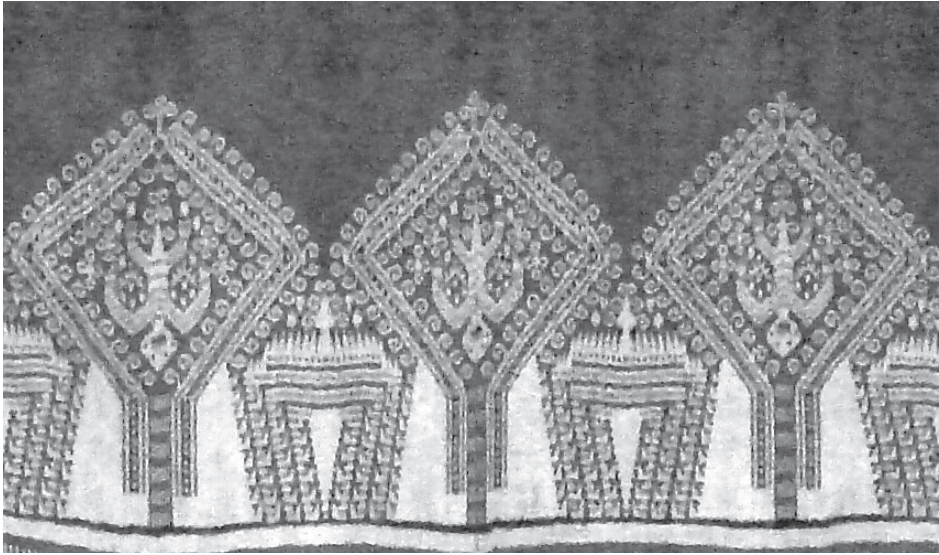


Plate 8. The *punggang kemudi* of Gerasi Nabor Menoa

Bali Bugau Kantu', or Gajah Meram

Sendi wove the popular³⁵ design known as *Bali Bugau Kantu'*, the Enemy's Cloth³⁶ after "graduating"³⁷ with her tenth *pua' kumbu*. Although the original meaning of this design is unknown, the *Bali Bugau Kantu'* has come to be known in the Saribas as retelling the legend of *Remi* whose brothers were murdered by the *Kantu'*; a story that instructs the Iban on the origin of mortuary rites (see Sandin 1994: 94-98).

In the legend, the corpses of the three brothers each metamorphosed into a different animal,³⁸ all depicted by Sendi in the design of this *pua' kumbu'* (Plate 7).

35 This design was woven by almost all of Sendi's female relatives and Saribas contemporaries for two reasons: (1) as an indicator of technical skill, since the design is complex, and (2) as a covert form of competition between weavers and sibling rivals, to see who could successfully interpret and embellish the most beautiful copy or version of the design.

36 The Bugau and Kantu' were traditional enemies of the Saribas Iban, and the terms Bugau and Kantu' have come to be used to mean "enemy." This pattern is said to have been copied from a *pua' kumbu'* that was looted by Sendi's great-great-grandfather, Orang Kaya Pemancha Dana Bayang, on one of his raids to West Kalimantan (for an account of some of these raids into West Kalimantan led by Orang Kaya Pemancha Dana, based on Saribas Iban oral tradition, see Sandin 1994: 165-76).

37 A weaver is deemed *tembu' kayu'* (has completed her cycle of widths) on completion of her tenth *pua' kumbu'* and is then allowed to use the white colored band on her outermost lateral selvedge. This white outermost band is a status marker that indicates that the weaver is a master weaver. The esoteric term for a white outermost lateral selvedge is *semalau labang*, after the feathers of the *semalau* bird which are colored white against black.

38 A python, a gibbon, and a crocodile.



Plate 9. The *punggang pun* of *Sepit Api*, or 'Fire Tongs.'

The powerful spirits of these creatures inhabit this *pua' kumbu'* and, as such, must be properly "fenced in" with strong fringe patterns. At the *punggang kemudi* (end fringe) Sendi positioned the *Gerasi Nabor Menoa* or 'Giant that Sows the Earth' [with seeds] (Plate 8) while at the *punggang pun* (point of origin fringe), she placed the *Sepit Api* or Fire Tong (Plate 9) which coincidentally encases *engkatak* or small frog-like figures on the end border (Gavin 2006: 247).

The *Gerasi Nabor Menoa* is enclosed within a pendant with its head facing the *indu' buah* or main pattern of the *pua' kumbu'*, and under its arms are seeds which it guards jealously; a covert reference to a victorious warrior who proudly clutches his trophy heads under his arms after a battle. This giant, whose unspeakable name³⁹ is *Gajah*⁴⁰ *Meram*, or 'Brooding Giant,' guards the upper fringe.

The fire tong is a symbol that is associated with Selampandai (also Selampetoh, Selampeta), the great blacksmith who forges mankind and in Iban cosmology is a brother of the war god Singalang Burong.⁴¹ He is not depicted in this *buah punggang* but his presence is tacitly acknowledged by the image of the fire tong.

As creator spirit, Selampandai guards the point of origin fringe (*punggang pun*) of the design of this powerful *pua' kumbu'*, and for his services he is offered not headless *engkeramba'*, but ample offerings complete with head and all limbs intact (Plate 11). Weavers call it the *engkatak* (frog) which it closely resembles, but does not actually

39 Names of patterns, motifs and symbols are a source of much confusion to non-Iban weavers simply because Iban weavers will not utter or reveal a name that is powerful for fear of inviting the wrath of the spirit. This restriction is known as *mali* or 'forbidden.'

40 *Gajah* translates as 'elephant' but in esoteric language, it means a creature of great proportions. Another form of the term is *gajai* which has the same meaning.

41 Gregory Nyanggau Mawar, personal communication.



Plate 10. Motifs of birds encased within motifs of fire tongs with sharp teeth.

represent. Frogs would not befit the great blacksmith who created mankind. The term *engkatak* is used here as a euphemism, or concealed name, to refer to a food offering of a lesser spirit being which has no name.

The fire tong, however, does have a name. Its *ensumbar* (praise-name) is *Sepit Api ke Bejari Ragang Ragang, Pengetis ka Simbong Terabang, Ke Bejalai Melit Tisau Langit Besabong Gelang*. Another meaning for *Sepit Api Bejari Ragang Ragang*⁴² is to describe a scorpion moving astraddle with its claws. This praise-name is also very similar to the *ensumbar* of Si Gundi,⁴³ the father of Keling. Could the fire tong therefore have an alternate or multiple meanings? Iban weavers speak and weave with puns and riddles in order to hide the true meaning of the objects they weave. This is another fundamental aspect of Iban weaving, often misunderstood, which I shall discuss at the conclusion of this article.

In the *Tangga' Remang* textile (Plate 2), Sendi has also woven the *Sepit Api* at the *punggang pun* of the *indu' buah*. But instead of “feeding” the fire tongs with

42 Translation: ‘He who is a pair of long outstretched arms ready for attack, the Sharp Sickle and Defender who tranverses the edges of the sky whose ends collide like the clasp of a bangle.’

43 *Bujang Kelemayang Panas, Tandok Kijang Berindas, Gemuring Gading Taing-Taing Bepelimping Pala Patong, Chang Chelawang, Gila Gundi Sepit Api ke Bejari Ragang-Ragang, Bujang Sampak Gading Tandok Kijang Kuning*. Translation: ‘The Prince of the Sun, the Crocodile King, the Clashing Horns of the Barking Deer, whose dented kneecaps make the defending sound of clashing cymbals, the wild Gundi with a pair of long outstretched arms ready for attack, the Gold Encrusted Prince, the Horn of the Royal Barking Deer.’

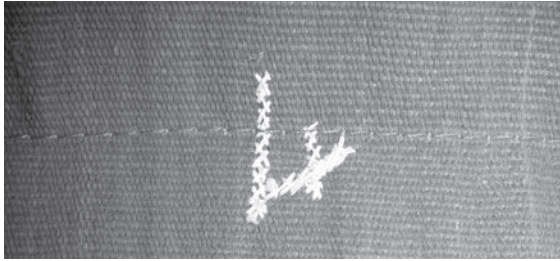


Plate 11. In all her *pua' kumbu'* except the *Tiang Sandong Betong* (which was bequeathed by Sendi to her granddaughter Magdalene) Sendi embroidered the Arabic numeral "4" onto the point of origin fringe as an identifier of her *bilik's* property. Sendi lived in Room Four, or *Bilik Empat*, of the Stambak Ulu longhouse.

an *engkatak*, she offered them birds instead (Plate 10). Within the fire tongs are sharp jagged "teeth" that devour the offering. Consistently in all her *pua' kumbu'* showing the fire tong, Sendi wove this motif at the point of origin fringe of the *indu' buah*. This is also true of almost all of the *pua' kumbu'* found in the Saribas. Could the fire tong then be an explicit homage to the creator spirit by the weaver in seeking assistance in "creating" the spirit of the *indu' buah*?

The *engkatak* and *burong* are therefore not filling an otherwise empty space as decorative items, but are integral to the pattern in appeasing the unseen Selampandai. Being sacrificial subjects, the *engkatak* and *burong* make the *buah punggang* not only visually arresting, but, more importantly, ritually complete and therefore spiritually safe for the weaver and her household.

At the risk of further confusing the reader, it should be mentioned that a *pua' kumbu'* can go by several names, or have more than one *ensumbar* (which I shall explain in the next example). This *pua' kumbu'* has as its main central pattern the *Bali Bugau Kantu'*, but due to the presence of the *Gerasi Nabor Menoa* at the end fringe, it is also known as the *Gajah Meram*. However, in the Saribas, the prerogative to name one's *pua' kumbu'* with various titles is a privilege enjoyed by weavers who have attained the level of *indu' muntang indu' nengkebang*.⁴⁴

Tiang Sandong Betong, or Nibong Berayong

After "graduating," Sendi devoted most of her weaving career to creating designs of the *ranyai*, or ritual shrine, which has at its center a ritual pole. The ritual shrine is erected during the prestigious *Gawai Burong* or 'Festival to the Gods,' often called the 'Bird Festival,'⁴⁵ a festival that is hosted and celebrated by *raja berani tau' serang*⁴⁶ and made ritually complete by the presence of *bujang berani*⁴⁷ who partake of the *ai' garong*⁴⁸ to validate and sustain their social status. In the Saribas, sponsoring the *Gawai Burong* was the ultimate status symbol of a leader from a leading family who was successful in war and therefore had the spiritual authority⁴⁹ to celebrate this elaborate

44 'She who knows how to fold the warp and who creates original designs,' the penultimate status for a weaver.

45 The grandest festival celebrated in the Saribas.

46 Successful war leaders.

47 Brave warriors who had taken trophy heads.

48 Sacred wine.

49 To the Iban mind, divine sanction and patronage are the defining factors in status

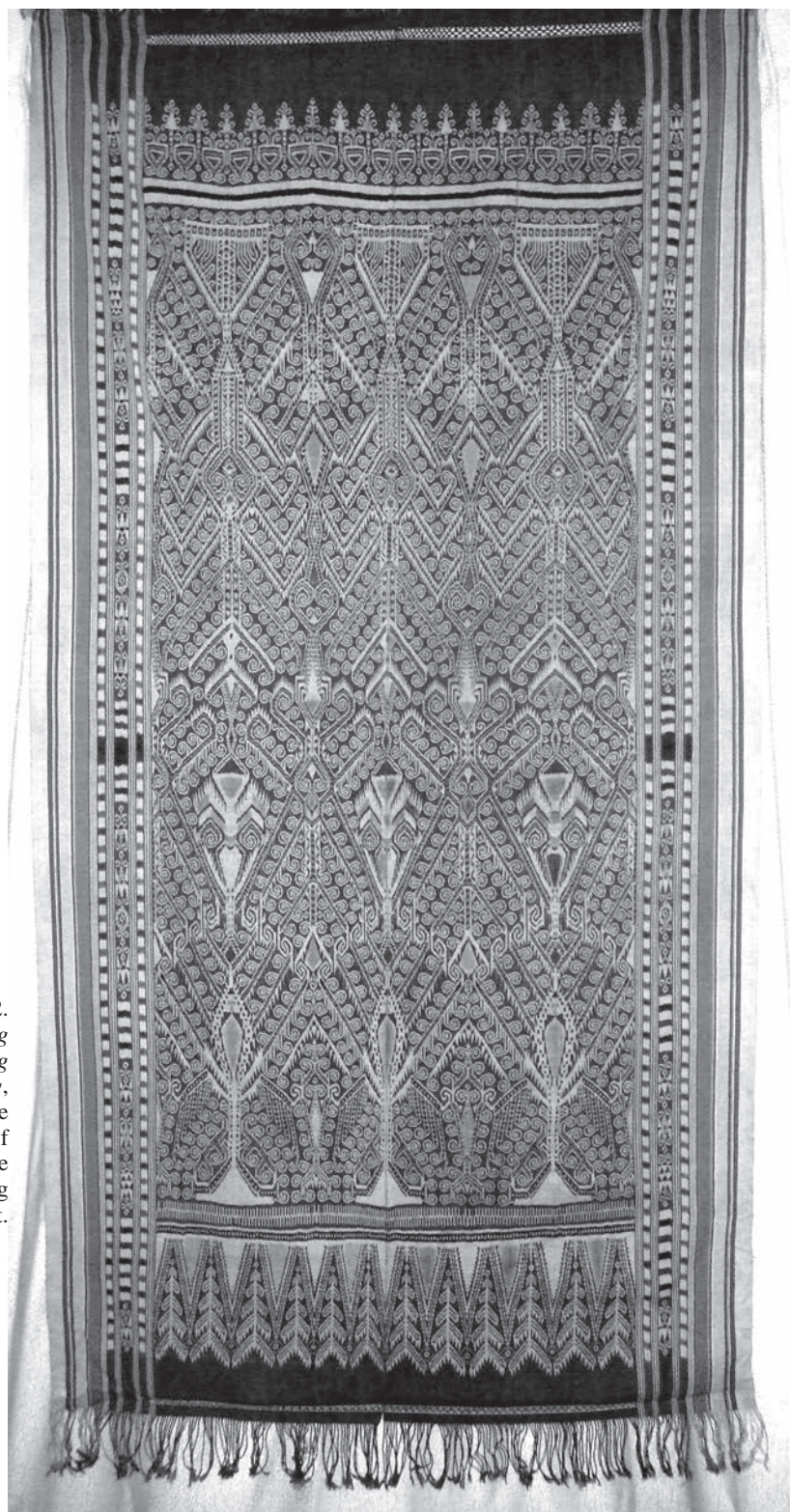


Plate 12.
The *Tiang
Sandong
Betong*,
in the
custody of
Magdalene
Bucking
née Kedit.

and expensive festival. Wives and daughters of such leaders would weave *pua' kumbu'* that were used specifically for this festival, which had to be celebrated consecutively in ascending degrees.⁵⁰ Each degree is named after its corresponding ritual shrine.⁵¹

While the men of leading families pursued the activity of headhunting, which was a prerequisite to celebrating the *Gawai Burong*, their women, in turn, wove the designs of the various degrees of the festival as the ultimate status-marker of their own achievements as weavers of leading families. A wife or daughter of a leader was expected to weave at least one ritual shrine design; preferably the degree most befitting her husband's or father's status so that it could be used at the celebration of the same degree of the festival.

In the hierarchy of designs in the Saribas, the nine ritual shrines designs outrank all others and enjoy the highest prestige.⁵² It is for this reason that although the practice of headhunting more or less ceased by the early twentieth century, thus making these *pua' kumbu'* and their ritual use in the *Gawai Burong* obsolete, weavers of leading families still continued to weave these high ranking designs as an overt statement of their "inherited" spiritual authority (Kedit 1994: 153). The ritual shrine designs assumed an unparalleled prestige, being now the sole prerogative and property of these women who were descended from the chiefs of the headhunting era.⁵³

The main pattern of the *Tiang Sandong Betong* is made up of actually two *indu' buah*; the *Sandong Betong* proper and its spiritual reflection, the *Nibong Berayong*. The lower half displays the *Nibong Berayong* which grows in Sebayang,⁵⁴ the spiritual reflection of the temporal *Sandong Betong* shrine which occupies the upper half. Both designs have their own personal *ensumbar* which therefore means that this *pua' kumbu'* can be called by either of the two names. Central to both designs is the trophy head which is at the core of the ritual shrine of the fifth degree, depicted graphically in the design of the *Sandong Betong*, but only alluded to in the design of the *Nibong Berayong*.

The trophy head is a recurrent theme in almost all Iban textiles because it is

enhancement.

50 The *Gawai Burong* has nine ascending degrees. Each degree mirrors a stage in padi cultivation which, in turn, is a covert reference to the cults of headhunting and fertility, as discussed extensively by Julian Davison and Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr. in "The Children of Nising: Images of Headhunting and Male Sexuality in Iban Ritual and Oral Literature" (Davison and Sutlive 1986). My principal informant on the *Gawai Burong* is Temenggong Matthew Dana from Pelandok, Paku, Saribas.

51 These are: 1) *Gawai Kalingkang*, 2) *Gawai Sandong*, 3) *Gawai Sawi*, 4) *Gawai Selangking*, 5) *Gawai Mulong Merangau* or *Lemba Bumbun* or *Sandong Betong*, 6) *Gawai Gajah Meram*, 7) *Gawai Meligai*, 8) *Gawai Ranyai* or *Mudor Ruroh*, and 9) *Gawai Gerasi Papa*.

52 The *Bali Belumpong* (Divided Cloth), the *Bali Kelikut* (Blanket of Kumang), the *Pua' Jugam* (Black Cloth), and the *Bali Menyetii* (Beautiful Cloth) are a rank below the designs reserved for the *Gawai Burong*. The *Lebor Api* (Blazing Fire) has equal status to any degree of the ritual shrine design as it is used for the *Gawai Enchaboh Arong*, a preliminary degree of the *Gawai Burong*.

53 Sendi wove four degrees of the ritual shrine textiles, beginning with the fifth degree *Tiang Sandong Betong* (Fig. 12), followed by the sixth degree *Gajah Meram* (Fig. 7), then the seventh degree *Meligai* (Fig. 15) and finally the penultimate eighth degree *Ranyai Beduju* (Fig. 22).

54 The Iban afterworld of the dead.



Plate 13. The trophy head at the bottom of the jar, displayed upside down with open mouth and teeth and eyes.

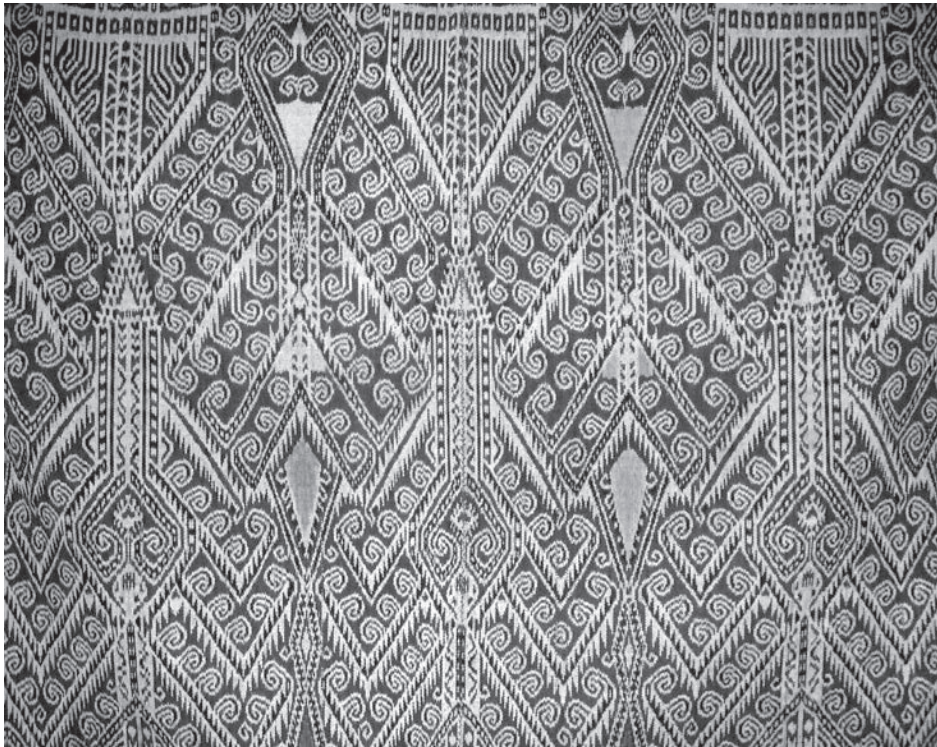


Plate 14. Three ritual poles with “bulges” in the middle. These “bulges” are the *tajau berawai* of the ritual pole containing trophy heads.

central to both the cults of headhunting and fertility. It is known by a plethora of names, the more common and utterable ones being *buah* (fruit), *igi* (seed) and *leka* (round object). As far as the weaver is concerned, the trophy head is also called an *engkeramba*, as the motif comprises a visage with eyes, mouth, and teeth. A weaver must take every precaution to ensure that her spirit is not overwhelmed by the spirit of the trophy head that she attempts to capture onto cloth.

In this *pua' kumbu*, the trophy head (Plate 13) is positioned upside down inside a *tajau berawai* (decorated jar) where it has been “captured and trapped” by the weaver to watch over the ritual shrine (Plate 14) that welcomes the gods to the Gawai Burong. The *ensumbar* for this trophy head is *Leka Begumba Balang Bera'ang Enggi' Tutong Orang di Gelong Batu Besundang*.⁵⁵ Tutong, a mythic hero of the Iban pantheon (also a blacksmith like Selempandai and brother-in-law of Keling, being the brother of Keling's wife, Kumang, the patroness of weaving), is thus indirectly invoked by the weaver through this *ensumbar* to act as mediator between her and the gods of Tansang

⁵⁵ Translation: ‘The trophy with short hair and protruding jaw that belongs to Tutong who lives at Gelong.’

Plate 15.
The *Pua'*
Tengkebang,
in the custody
of Peter
Mulok Kedit,
grandson of
Sendi Ketit.



Kenyalang as she seeks their blessing.⁵⁶

A weaver creates the motif of the trophy head as a testament to her spiritual maturity. It is a defining point in her spiritual journey. Like an Iban warrior who would have gone on a raid to bring back trophy heads and so earn fame for himself, an Iban weaver would do the same, but in cloth.

There is nothing comical in the grimace of the figure, and all weavers take the challenge to weave the trophy head motif very seriously.

Pua' Tengkebang, or Meligai

Tengkebang means 'to create something new' or 'to reinvent an old design.' Sendi wove this *pua' kumbu'* to represent the seventh degree of the Gawai Burong, called the *Meligai* which means 'a shrine of beautiful offerings suspended from the branches of the *Ranyai Sebayan*.'⁵⁷

In this, her penultimate *pua' kumbu'*, Sendi created a new interpretation of the terrifying demon, *Gerasi Papa*, or Ravenous Demon, otherwise known as Nising or *Antu Beduru* in the Saribas. In this *pua' kumbu'*, Nising, almost ghost-like in a fashion familiar to the western eye (Plate 16), is depicted as "chained and captured." Nising is not offered any food offering in the form of *engkatak* or *engkeramba'* simply because *it* is the offering. The motif is also kept very small, in deference to the gods who find images of other creatures besides themselves repugnant.

Weavers "graduate" to motifs of demons after weaving motifs of trophy heads. This is a challenge only very few would attempt, as the spirit of a demon greatly eclipses that of a trophy head. When a weaver, without getting ill or beset by misfortune, successfully completes a *pua' kumbu'* that displays an *engkeramba'* representing a demon, it is a sign of her triumph over the spirit of the demon. This is a great status-marker for any woman. In Iban cosmology, Nising is only defeated by Singalang Burong, the patron deity of war.⁵⁸ For a weaver to depict Nising, not only is she retelling the epic battle, but also covertly indicating her spiritual maturity.

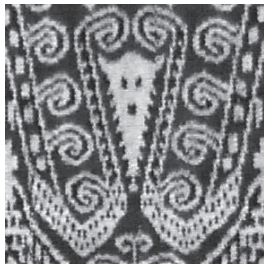


Plate 16. The demon *Gerasi Papa*, also known as Nising or *Beduru*.

Tiang Ranyai, or Ranyai Beduju

Sendi's final *pua' kumbu'*, the *Ranyai Beduju*, is a visual celebration of Iban cosmology. It shows the earthly ritual shrine of the eighth degree, the *Tiang Ranyai* (upper half, or *indu'*

facing page:
Plate 17.
The *Ranyai Beduju*, in the custody of Albert Rumpang Kedit, grandson of Sendi Ketit.

⁵⁶ The war-god Singalang Burong's abode is known as *Tansang Kenyalang* (Hornbill's Nest), a great and magnificent longhouse in the Iban cosmos.

⁵⁷ Not to be confused with the eighth degree of the Gawai Burong, which is also called *Tiang Ranyai*. The *Ranyai Sebayan* is the tree that grows in the afterworld where warriors lop off trophy heads suspended from its branches. In the seventh degree, the focus is on the offerings rather than on the ritual pole.

⁵⁸ Gregory Nyanggau Mawar, personal communication.





Plate 18. A snake guards the *Ranyai* while omen birds flutter in its branches.



Plate 19. Archetypal cultural hero, Keling, dressed with feathers, earrings and covered in tattoos.

buah kemudi) as well as the spiritual *Ranyai Beduju* that flourishes in Sebayon (lower half or *indu' buah pun*). In the upper half, Sendi portrayed creatures that take an earthly form, while in the lower half she depicts the scene in Sebayon as she imagined it.

In the upper half of the main pattern, sons-in-law of the war-god Singalang Burong, disguised in their earthly form as omen birds, herald the coming of their unseen father-in-law, while Keling, in his earthly form of a serpent with shiny scales, rests by the ritual shrine made of spears with sharp tips that have been used in fighting the enemy (Plate 18). On the lower half of the *pua' kumbu'*, however, Sendi depicted a realistic scene from the afterlife and wove the most significant *engkeramba'* in her entire career as a weaver: *Keling Aji, Pemayoh Bini Banyak Rambang; Kiai Anyai, Penyambut Sakai Pemanggai Lintang; Keling Aji Berani Ati, Tau' Serang; Gerasi Nading, Bujang Berani Kempang*,⁵⁹ himself, crowned with a *labong*⁶⁰ of feathered plumes and enthroned on a pedestal called the *papan penyadiah* (Plate 19). Sendi portrayed the cultural hero god resplendent in all his glory. He occupies a space that is lushly decorated with extra coils (*pengalit*) and tendrils (*bubul*) to honor and celebrate his presence. In his arms are trophy heads. Towering over him is the great *Ranyai Beduju* with swaying branches and palm fronds fruiting abundant bunches of trophy heads.

During Gawai Burong, the heroes of *Panggau Libau* were always invoked first by the host. The host then sought their assistance to beg the gods of *Tansang Kenyalang* to grace his festival. The mythic heroes of *Panggau Libau* therefore assume an important role in the Iban pantheon as mediators between the Iban and their gods.⁶¹ This is the reason why they are depicted on *pua' kumbu'* woven for the Gawai Burong.

Weaving the *engkeramba'* of a god is the only exception to the convention of “capturing” the spirit of the *engkeramba'*. Instead of using *pengaroh* to protect herself, the weaver seeks the permission of the god being portrayed by preparing a *tabak piring* (tray) that contains a *piring* (plate of offerings), blood-stained feathers of a sacrificed fowl, and the *baku' pinang* (box of betel nut and *sirih* leaves), and offers these with invocations to the god. The weaver does not attempt to capture the spirit of the god, but, instead, she attempts to best portray the god in an anthropomorphic form; the ultimate honor for a weaver. Once completed, this *engkeramba'* becomes the exclusive “property” of the *bilik*, a copyright that can only be *teladan* (copied) or *ngangkat* (copied with improvements made) by her descendants. Weavers from other leading families may “buy” these designs by paying a ritual fee stipulated by the owners.

The ability to weave an *engkeramba'* representing a god is also an indication that the weaver is *nadai pemali* (without restrictions) and may weave any design. The state of being without restrictions is coveted by all weavers. However, it is a state that cannot be achieved through any personal means or accomplishments. It can only be bequeathed by a god or goddess. This gift is communicated in a dream encounter,

59 Translation: ‘Keling the royal, the much-married, many he has loved and left; Anyai the wise who receives his people and is their protector; Keling the royal, bold in war, a raging demon in the fight.’

60 Male headdress made of bamboo and wrapped with a woven textile called the *selampai*.

61 Gregory Nyanggau Mawar, personal communication.

Plate 20. Sendi Ketit, age 82. Taken in 1974.

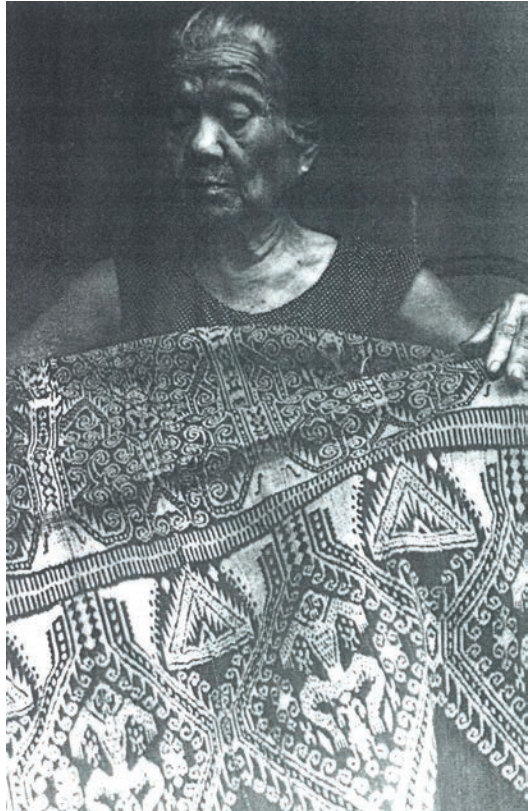
which must be confirmed by an elder who has had a similar dream.⁶² Often, this gift is manifested as a new growth or mole on the base of a thumb or finger.

When asked to name this motif of the god Keling, a weaver would lower her eyes modestly and ask a fellow weaver, often someone more spiritually mature than her (a grandmother, mother, or older sister), to utter it instead. The name spoken by this fellow weaver would almost always be the ubiquitous: *buah engkeramba'* (the *engkeramba'* design) or *gambar aja'* (just a picture).

Overview of Sendi Ketit's usage of motifs of *engkeramba'*

These five *pua' kumbu'* woven by the same weaver demonstrate six important characteristics of the *engkeramba'*:

- (i) any anthropomorphic form is called an *engkeramba'* (or similarly, *engkatak*, *katun*, *gambar*) as a device by which a weaver does not have to reveal its true name or significance;
- (ii) there are different types of *engkeramba'* which represent different spiritual beings and personalities and therefore serve different functions (e.g., sacrificial offerings, protectors, mediators to the gods);
- (iii) the *engkeramba'* is significant and integral to the design it inhabits and often is the focal point in the design;
- (iv) a weaver's spiritual development and maturity are reflected in the types of *engkeramba'* she weaves, as a testament of her relationship with the spiritual world; and
- (v) the *engkeramba'* is a copyright motif and a monopoly reserved by weavers of leading families.



⁶² Dreaming is a salient activity within Iban cosmology, a direct means by which an Iban communicates with the spirit world, and such communication is perceived by a weaver's peers as validation and endorsement of her undertaking.

Why, then, has the *engkeramba*' on Iban textiles been so misunderstood? Sometimes we forget that the Iban weaving tradition is essentially an activity shrouded in secrecy, albeit, the basic and more pedestrian aspects of weaving are common knowledge. As a weaver develops in skill and spiritual strength, she attracts attention and sometimes jealousy. The adage that "knowledge is power" holds true in the context of Iban weaving. Having access to esoteric knowledge means having control over the more esoteric aspects of weaving. Such insider knowledge and trade secrets, as it were, would only be shared between mother and daughter. When pressed by a stranger, an Iban weaver would most likely change the subject or deliberately render the subject matter insignificant with dismissive nonchalance. Against this backdrop of the weaver's reticence to divulge precious information, one begins to understand why a weaver would deliberately mislead the uninitiated and gullible.

We should also be prepared to acknowledge that perhaps many of the informants who have supported research into Iban textiles are simply ignorant of the very esoteric subject of the *engkeramba*' and how weavers from leading families correlate it with the spiritual beings and personalities that make up the complex Iban pantheon. The *engkeramba*' has been monopolized, at least in the Saribas, by a small pool of master weavers from leading families of the area, and any knowledge about it has been closely guarded (up until now). Only a handful of very old weavers in the Saribas know the secret names of the *engkeramba*', much less their descendants, who are young weavers who attend classes and workshops to learn the practical methods of weaving. Show an *engkeramba*' to one of these young women and she will most likely have no real idea of what it means, and feign laughter to camouflage her ignorance. It is almost like showing hieroglyphs to an Egyptian on the streets of Cairo and then asking him or her to decipher the text.

To fully comprehend the multi-layered narrative of any anthropomorphic form on Iban textiles and to conclude authoritatively on it, one must first understand the mindset of the weaver who wove it and her worldview. One must also be fluent in the Iban language and conversant with its deceptive subtleties in order to decipher the metaphors a weaver often uses. Finally, incumbent is the possession of a comprehensive and near encyclopedic knowledge of Iban oral history, adat, and cosmology, as it is from this vast ocean of knowledge that a weaver draws her subjects and is consequently inspired to weave her statements. She becomes storyteller, historian, magician, and archivist and the *engkeramba*' she weaves are her protagonists and antagonists.

I shall defer respectfully to my elders and let them have the last word on the matter of the *engkeramba*'. Datuk Sri Empiang Jabu, from the Saribas, in describing the design of a high-ranking *pua*' pattern woven by her grandmother, writes, "this *pua kumbu* comes from the Saribas area where there are restrictions on the weaving of human forms, and for this reason the face of Nising is of *minimal size*" (Jabu 1992: 82). She explicitly states that "these designs depict human-like figures or *engkeramba* and *they symbolise the spirits and gods*" (Jabu 1991: 6). The late *niang* Datin Amar Margaret Linggi, from the Julau who married into a leading family of the Baleh, was more emphatic, stating that "figures in any *pua* pattern are not human but 'other beings' which may *harm the weaver if their names are spoken*. The reader should take notice that any figure also is

surrounded by a circle or some other form, such as a buah bangkit shape, the surrounding shape being intended to *protect the weaver from harm by the image*" (Linggi 2001: 30). (italics and bold, mine). When two Iban authorities on the *pua' kumbu'*, each from a distinct weaving tradition, agree on a common point that anything which resembles an anthropomorphic form is potentially forbidden and should therefore be approached with care, one should pay close attention.

It would seem, therefore, that the Iban are in agreement with Haddon who, despite flaws in some parts of his *magnus opus*, was spot-on when he wrote that the *engkeramba'* "may be made only by the wives and daughters of chiefs, and even they must begin by making other patterns" (Haddon and Start 1936: 124). The heroes and heroines of Panggau Libau, in mediating for the Iban by allowing their images to be depicted on cloth, would otherwise be much offended.

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**MUSIC FOR CLEANSING THE UNIVERSE—DRUMMING
AND GONG ENSEMBLE MUSIC IN THE *MAMAHUI POGUN*
CEREMONIES OF THE LOTUD DUSUN OF TUARAN, SABAH,
MALAYSIA¹**

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Introduction

Mamahui Pogun is a major cycle of rituals performed over several weeks during times of calamity, among all the villages of the Lotud Dusun of Sabah, the east Malaysian state of northern Borneo.

The Lotud speak one of the more than 50 Austronesian languages spoken by the main part of the population of Sabah (King and King 1984). They number around 10,000, and live mainly in the Tuaran District and Tamparuli Sub-District on the west coast of Sabah. The Lotud language is a member of the indigenous Dusunic Family of Languages, which consists of around 13 languages including Kadazandusun, the largest overall language in the state in terms of numbers of speakers (Banker and Banker 1984, Blood 1990:63, Johansson 2004). Most Lotud are also fluent in the languages of neighboring peoples, such as the Kadazandusun, and west coast Bajau, and also the national language, Bahasa Malaysia. Over the centuries, they have also had extensive contacts with the Iranun and the Brunei. The Lotud identify themselves as *Lotud* and recognize their differences from other cultural groups. In addition to their language, other distinguishing cultural features include a distinctive costume worn by older women, music traditions, belief system and ritual practices.

Like most indigenous communities in Sabah, the Lotud are an egalitarian society with gender balance, and a bilateral kinship system. They traditionally lived in villages

¹ This is a revised and updated version of the paper “Music for Cleansing the Universe—Gong Ensemble Music in the *Mamahui Pogun* Ceremonies of the Lotud Dusun of Tuaran, Sabah, Malaysia” by Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan and Judeth John Baptist, presented at the *Symposium of the International Musicological Society 2004 (sIMS 2004)*, 10-16 July 2004, Melbourne, Australia. An edited version was presented by Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan as the Special Public Lecture of the Kadazandusun Chair at Universiti Malaysia Sabah on 23 July 2008.

composed of *lamin tanaru*, longhouses with a maximum of four apartments. These are no longer extant, and nowadays the Lotud live in single dwellings called simply *lamin*.² The nuclear family is the fundamental social unit and the basis of the household. Marriage is legalized by a payment of bridewealth and is exogamous as far as second cousins (Blood 1990:71-72).

The Lotud are traditionally wet rice cultivators, especially on the coastal plains around Tuaran and inland to Tamparuli, while those living in the hills further inland cultivate dry rice. Rice is centrally important as the Lotud staple and hence is ritually significant. Each rice field is believed to have a spirit called *toguruwon* or *sinduan parai*, and harvested rice (*parai*) is an essential element in the offerings to deities during the multitude of rituals and ceremonies that are part of Lotud social and religious life. The Lotud also raise water buffaloes and chickens. The water buffalo is used as a plough animal for rice cultivation. The Lotud do not eat pork and do not rear pigs. Piglets, however, are purchased for ritual sacrifices.

Traditional priestesses and ritual specialists, or *tantagas*, are nearly always women, and are skilled in memorizing the *rinait*, the long ritual chants and prayers that are addressed to the Lotud deities. As among other Dusunic peoples, *rinait* constitute a unique genre of poetic oral literature. They consist of series of biambic lines—the first in the everyday language, the second (having the same meaning) in the ritual language. They tell of the Creation of the World, the exploits of the deities, the origins of rice, prescriptions for moral living, ritual practices and other aspects of cultural life. Recitation of *rinait* may involve loud chanting or soft whispering, and can last for hours or days, according to the context and occasion.

The *tantagas* constitute a female hierarchy, with the most elderly who are grandmothers having the greatest spiritual knowledge and power. Younger women learn the *rinait* and the rituals from older *tantagas* (the novice is called *tantagas wagu*, while the most senior one is known as *tantagas lawid*). In addition to her personal name, each *tantagas* has a ritual name which is the name of her first grandchild prefaced with the title *Odun* (Grandmother).

The *tantagas* are skilled ritual specialists who can engage with the spirit world to battle demons (*rogon*) and rescue the captured subsidiary spirits of sick individuals in healing ceremonies, to recover missing rice spirits in fertility rituals, and perform other spiritual activities connected with ritual. The main role of the *tantagas*, however, is to balance the physical and spiritual worlds. Some *tantagas* can also be *libabou*, or 'spirit mediums,' because they have a familiar spirit (Lotud *libabou*, Brunei *gimbaran*) who accompanies them into the spirit world. The *libabou* are also traditional healers in Lotud society. The most senior *tantagas* or priestesses are usually also gifted as *libabou* or spirit mediums and healers, but not all *tantagas* are *libabou* and not all *libabou* can become *tantagas*. Occasionally, a man may also be a *libabou*, but this is rare.

² However, depending on the style of construction, several types of *lamin* are distinguished, e.g., *lamin kinubu*, *pinopintod* and *lamin kopio*

The Lotud Worldview

As in many indigenous worldviews in Sabah, the Lotud world is regarded as involving a balanced interaction between spiritual and physical dimensions. The Lotud worldview is highly complex (see Regis and John Baptist 1982, 1992, 1994, 2002). They conceive of seven layers of the spiritual world above the earth, each inhabited by various types of spirits. Above the seventh layer is the highest realm or *Diwato*, which is inhabited by the supreme deities and their seventeen offspring. The spiritual world parallels that of the human world, with deities living in families and having spiritual offspring. Each of the offspring of the supreme deities has a role in both the spiritual and physical worlds. The account that follows was compiled over the years, primarily by Judeth John Baptist from conversations with the late Odun Rinduman and other Lotud priestesses.

The highest realm, or *Diwato*, is said to be inhabited by the supreme deities Kinohoringan (God), who has the ritual name in the Lotud *rinait* of Hajin Mansasal Awan (Creator of the Clouds), and his wife, Umunsumundu, who has the ritual name of Sumandak Panamba'an (Powerful and Beautiful Spirit Maiden). According to one version of the Lotud Creation *rinait*, rice is said to have been created from the blood of their daughter Muntaba who was sacrificed by her mother. Umunsumundu also initiated the formation of the *tantagas* group.

The term *Diwato* is both used to describe the abode of the supreme deities and to refer to good spirits. As a place, *Diwato* itself consists of seven levels and ten parts (each of these seventeen sections is for the habitation of one of the seventeen offspring of the supreme deities), with Kinohoringan and Umunsumundu dwelling in the highest level. Their children and various other good spirits (*diwato*) live throughout the other levels of this realm.

Pongoluan (a different place from *Diwato*) refers to the resting place of the departed spirits of good people. It is said to be located in the first or lowest spiritual layer above the earth, to the east on Mt. Kinabalu. Sometimes these spirits may wander into the human world, and require appropriate offerings to send them back to their resting place.

Random is the abode of *rogon* or demons, and also of the spirits of especially evil people. It is said to be located far beyond the sea to the west. *Rogon* are not confined to *Random*, however, and frequently wander into the human world on the earth to inflict suffering, and require sacrifices as appeasement. In addition to these, there are other transient spirits wandering the earth and clouds which can cause human suffering. Some of these are the ghosts of human beings who did not receive an appropriate send-off to enter *Pongoluan*. They can attack humans and also require appeasement.

Kolungkud is the underworld located in the center of the earth (to the south), where most of the ghosts of bad people reside. It is also the abode of Ombuakar, the dragon.

Kinohoringan and Umunsumundu control and are assisted by four *songkubang* or spirits in charge of rain and earthly fertility, who can withhold their favors if angered. They are named:

- (i) Sari Pahlawan (a servant of Kinohoringan, who lives at *Kolungkud* in the center of the earth and takes care of the dragon Ombuakar),

- (ii) Tuan Naga or Ombuakar (the keeper of Kolungkud, who distributes offerings to other spirits during rituals),
- (iii) Malaikat or Sambak Brunei (the angel who cares for the children of the supreme deities and the Lotud people), and
- (iv) Raja Langkap (the keeper of the rain who lives in the clouds).

The use of Malay terms for the names of these spirits (and also the ritual name for Kinohoringan) points to the long association of the Lotud with the Brunei. The *Mamapang*, or Creation myth of the Lotud, which is recited by the *tatagas* during the *molukas* or housewarming ritual, tells of the creation of all these realms and spirits in the universe (Regis and John Baptist 1982, 1994).

The ideal world is one in which everything in the spiritual and physical realms is in balance. The universe is affected by and, in turn, affects human behavior. Human beings are expected to live morally upright lives, as prescribed in the *rinait*. If people go against this by, for example, committing sexual sins, such as adultery, fornication, and incest (which also includes marriage between close cognates), they will incur supernatural punishment. The universe will become spiritually 'hot' (*alasu*), crops and livestock will die, and humans (both the individuals concerned and their communities) will also suffer disease and death. It is therefore necessary to make the universe 'cool' (*osogit*) by cleansing it with the appropriate rituals and sacrifices (*sogit*). Other calamities, such as unmitigated rains and floods, epidemics, widespread war and murders, are also deemed to be caused by imbalance and impurity in the universe.

The Origin of the Mamahui Pogun

According to Lotud oral history, many generations ago the place (*pogun*) of the Lotud suffered a massive drought that lasted for many years. The water dried up. Plants and animals perished; many humans died. Fires burned everywhere. It was so hot that even the soil ignited spontaneously.

The people cried and cried. One night, Umunsumundu appeared in a dream to Luntar, the first *tatagas*, who was also called Odun Jalin. She instructed her in the ritual proceedings of *Mamahui Pogun* or 'Cleansing the Universe' and taught her the appropriate *rinait*. The *Mamahui Pogun* was to begin with a cycle lasting seven nights and seven days, to stop the drought. In the dream, Umunsumundu told her to instruct the village to build a sacred bamboo ritual house or *turugan* with coconut fronds for roofing. The villagers were to bring offerings such as husked and unhusked rice to appease the angry spirits.

At first, Odun Jalin recited the *rinait* for one night and one day inside the *turugan* (*Manawah do Turugan*). On the second day when she went outside of the *turugan*, two sets of sacred stones called *buliga ngadau* (pearls of the sun) fell from the sky for Odun Jalin. One set was "male" and the other "female." These stones were to be safely tied in cloth, and only exposed and bathed in coconut oil during the *manawa do turugan* rituals in the *Mamahui Pogun*.

Since then, *Mamahui Pogun* has been held every five to ten years or so, whenever there has been an imbalance in the universe, causing widespread natural and human calamities.

The Cycle of *Mamahui Pogun*

The *Mamahui Pogun* cycle consists of three main phases (see Table 2):

- (i) *Manawah do Turugan*
- (ii) *Monumbui Sidangon*
- (iii) *Monumbui Mahantan* or *Monumbui Sisiron*.

The word *manawah* refers to ‘neutralizing’ in the sense of balancing, while *turugan* is the ritual house. *Monumbui* is ‘to sacrifice’ and *sidangon* means ‘open air.’ The *Monumbui Sidangon* refers to special prayers and sacrifices in the open place at the market ground near the Tamparuli River. *Mahantan* is the river mouth to the open sea, while *sisiron* is the coast. *Monumbui Mahantan* or *Monumbui Sisiron* has always been held either at Dalit Beach or at Kuala Tuaran, according to the decision of the *tantagas* and the Lotud elders. The beach stretch between Dalit and Kuala Tuaran is believed to mark a major boundary between the physical realm of humans on the land and the spiritual realm of the sea and air. *Monumbui Mahantan* always involves traveling by boats down the Tuaran River to the sea. Both *Monumbui Sidangon* and *Monumbui Mahantan* require assembling all the *tantagas* and members of all the villages in the district, each village bringing its own traditional flag and a set of gongs with a drum.

The three phases are each separated by a time period of one to three weeks, according to the decision of the *tantagas* and the Lotud Council of Elders. The *Manawah do Turugan* starts inland at Kampung Bantayan. The *Monumbui Sidangon* begins upriver at Tamparuli, while the *Monumbui Mahantan* leads to the open sea. This symbolizes the “cleansing” or “drifting away” of all the spiritual impurities that offended the spiritual world.

This study is based largely on the most recent *Mamahui Pogun*, which was held from 15 June to 7 July 2003. With many of the *tantagas* becoming elderly and passing away, the conversion of many Lotud to Christianity and Islam, excessive rains, increasing news reports of crimes and wars in the world, it was deemed an appropriate time for a *Mamahui Pogun* to be held to cleanse the universe and restore balance for the earth. The *tantagas* believed that the world had become *alasu*, or ‘hot,’ because of evil human actions. They also thought that the spirits felt ignored by humans who no longer fed and respected them.

The most senior *tantagas* informed the Lotud Council of Elders, the Native Courts of Tuaran and Tamparuli, the Tuaran District Office and Tamparuli Sub-District Office that the ritual cycle would be held, and that people should refrain from swimming in rivers in the District due to the presence of river *rogon* in the water. A letter from the District Native Court Office announcing this was sent to every village in the District and posted at the Native Courts in the Tuaran and Tamparuli townships.

Mamahui Pogun involves the compulsory contribution and participation of all villagers in every village. Each family is required to contribute sacks of unhusked and husked rice as offerings to the spirits. Nowadays, cash is often substituted for rice.

Each village headman was thus given the task of collecting the money and instructing the people to send their contributions in the form of rice to the respective places where the ritual was to be held. This included everyone living in the village,

regardless of ethnic or religious origins. The village headman was also responsible for informing his people about the various taboos, such as the prohibition against swimming in the rivers and others. These taboos, however, were not adhered to by everyone. On 15 June 2003 while taking a swim, a youth and his uncle, who tried to rescue him, drowned at the confluence of the Bantayan and Tuaran rivers.

Manawah do Turugan

The villages along either side of the Tuaran River were divided into zones. Formerly, there were more participating villages in each zone, but with widespread conversions to Christianity and Islam over the years and the movement of younger peoples away from Tuaran to work in the capital city of Kota Kinabalu, the numbers of participating villages were reduced. One village beside the river in each zone was selected as the host village, where a bamboo ritual house or *turugan* was constructed. The zones of participating villages were:

Turugan were constructed in Kampung Bantayan and Kampung Marabahai. Since no suitable land was available in Kampung Olung, the *turugan* for this zone was built in Kampung Tutu Solupuh.

Table 1: Zones of Lotud Villages for *Mamahui Pogun*

1. <u>Kg. Bantayan</u> Kg. Damat Kg. Rambai Kg. Mangkaladoi Kg. Bontoi Tamparuli Kg. Tolibong Kg. Koluar	2. <u>Kg. Marabahai</u> Kg. Lakang Kg. Panjut Kg. Tombolugu Kg. Tagas Kg. Dungun Kg. Barus Kg. Botangan Kg. Dungang Kg. Pandamai Kg. Sawa Kg. Raganan	3. <u>Kg. Olung</u> Kg. Pitas Kg. Buliing Kg. Bundung Kg. Kiwatu Kg. Roun Kg. Labuaya Kg. Tutu Solupuh
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A *turugan* can only be built for *Mamahui Pogun*, not at other times. The structure of each *turugan* was determined by the prescriptions of the *rinait*. Those in Bantayan and Marabahai were built raised about one meter off the ground on bamboo posts, while that of Tutu Solupuh was constructed flat on the ground. Each *turugan* was an open rectangular structure, whose horizontal dimensions were estimated in terms of the number of upright posts (each separated by a distance of about two meters). The width was the space between 3 uprights (4 meters or two uprights from the corner post), while the length ran for 8 uprights (that is, 7, after the corner post). Of these, the first part of the house (between the corner post and two uprights) was reserved for the *tantagas* to sit. The next length was a small walkway across the width, while the remainder was



Plate 1: The turugan at Kg. Bantayan.

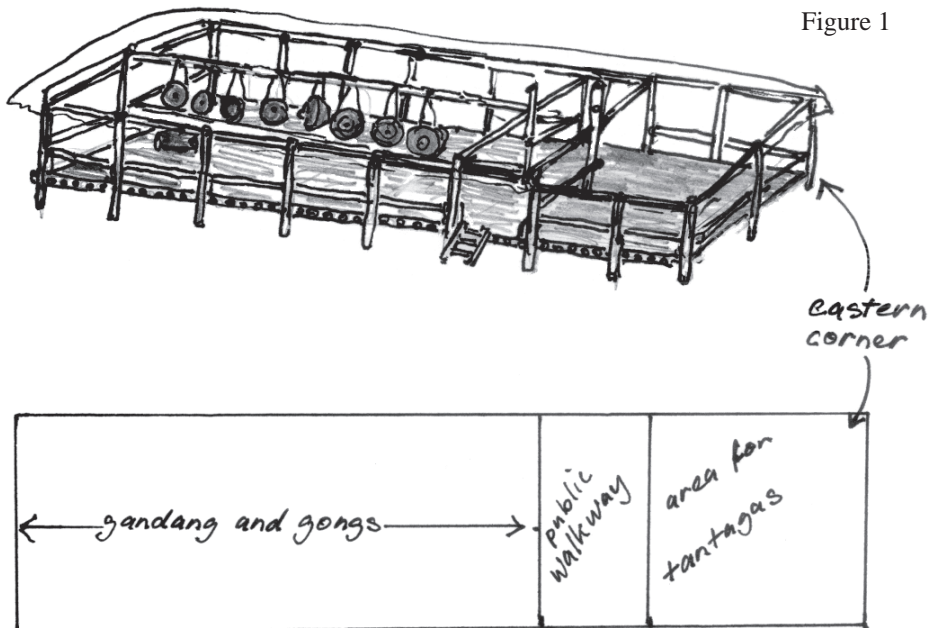


Figure 1

reserved mainly for the gong players. The gongs were hung on ropes from a length of bamboo parallel to the roof ridgepole. A bamboo ledge below the gongs functioned as a seat for the performers. The roof was made from coconut palm leaves, with the fronds stitched tightly together for the sections above the *tantagas* (Figure 1, Plate 1).

The *kojodiah*, or ‘beginning,’ of the cycle took place, as always, in Kampung Bantayan, the most inland village. The first day or *manawah* began in the night at 3:00 a.m. The cycle then began with the solemn sacred drumming or *tumahan* to summon the spirits (Plate 2). This was immediately followed by the ensemble music *ginandang papatarok* with phrases interspersed with a rapid drumming figure called *ginandang*. One of the *tantagas* wept loudly, as she recalled the terrible drought that had initiated the original *Mamahui Pogun*. The *tumahan* drumming and the crying were believed to awaken the spirits of the dead and announce to the whole spirit world (both human and non-human) that the *Mamahui Pogun* was beginning. The *ginandang papatarok* music highlighted the start of the descent of the spirits to the *turugan*.

Tiered rice offerings were then set up around the inside perimeter of the *tantagas* section. Each offering (*tatabur*) consisted of unhusked rice (*parai*) in a woven basket tray, with another on top full of husked rice (*wagas*), and on the very top another offering called *linodi* which was a plate containing seven cooked rice balls, seven sliced betel nuts, seven areca leaves, one egg and one small plastic lid or cup full of oil (Plate 3). Each tier of each offering was for a particular spirit, and would later be given to an individual *tantagas*. The offering in the eastern corner of the *tantagas* section facing outwards,



Plate 2: *Tumahan* by the village headman of Kg. Bantayan beating the *gandang*.



Plate 3: *Tatabur* (offerings) with *linodi* on top in front of the *tantagas* in the *turugan*.

which points to the rising sun, had a very large cylindrical basket, or *bohungan*, full of husked rice as its middle tier. This offering was for Ombuakar or Tuan Naga, the dragon spirit who lives under the river at Kolungkud and distributes the offerings to the other spirits. Another offering beside this one had its husked rice in a *korop*, or medium-sized cylindrical basket. Sacks of husked and unhusked rice given by all the villagers were stacked outside at the end of the *turugan*, near the *tantagas*.

Ten *tantagas* presided at the *Manawah do Turugan* ceremonies at Kampung Bantayan, while later 11 were present at Kampung Marabhai and Kampung Tutu Solupuh. Throughout this first day, all the activities of the *tantagas* took place inside the *turugan*. These included their chanting of the *rinait*, the donning of the *manarapoh*, or full ceremonial costume (complete with accessories such as the ceremonial swords, *lungkaris*, the strings of small *giring-giring* bells which are hit on the floor or thigh during chanting, or shaken when standing to symbolize the presence of the deities, and the magical *komburongoh* or bunches of sacred ginger pieces strung together), the *mangain* or counterclockwise circular dancing, the revealing of the *buliga ngadau*, and other activities (Plates 4 and 5) (Edmundson and John Baptist 2002).

A *libabou* stood away from the *turugan*, near the river. She conversed with various wandering spirits and threw rice grains to them. Her role was to appease them and prevent them from entering the *turugan* to possess the *tantagas* and hence disrupt the ceremonies (Plate 6). At the end of the day, she threw away the sevenfold *linodi*



Plate 4: The *tantagas*, led by the high priestess Madam Uwoi Bialah, alias Odun Rinduman (foreground), performing rituals inside the turugan during *manawah do turugan* in Kg. Bantayan.

Plate 5: The *buliga ngadau* (pearls of the sun).





Plate 6: A *libabou* (left foreground) faces the Bantayan River and addresses wandering *rogon* to prevent them from entering the *turugan* (background).

offerings on the plates to the spirits, while the *tantagas* were to keep the husked and unhusked rice.

On the second day, or *tumabur*, which refers to ‘displaying’ or ‘handing over’ the rice, the gongs and one main offering of husked rice in a basket tray were placed outside the *turugan* at the opposite end of the house from the *tantagas* section. The villagers again donated sacks of rice. The *tantagas* wearing ceremonial but not complete costumes (the *siwot* feathered headdress was omitted, although the gold headband or *sigar* was worn) performed all their rituals outside on mats near the rice offering. The *tumabur* ended with the *tantagas* group standing and chanting *rinait* to the four directions of the Lotud world—Pongoluan (Mt. Kinabalu or “east”), Rondon (“west”), Diwato (“north”), Kolungkud (“south”) (Plate 7).

Throughout the *manawah* and the *tumabur*, the village people brought their own food and drink and ate in and around the *turugan*. During the noontime on the first day, as the *tantagas* rested and also ate, the village headman and others (including members of the entourage of a visiting politician) made speeches. In former times during *manawah*, the men used to sing. The spirits were believed to also participate in the communal feasting, which ratified the pact between the human world and the spiritual.

After this, the two-day process of *manawah* and *tumabur* was repeated in Kampung Marabhai, a village located near the Tuaran township, and again, after that



Plate 7: *Tantagas* performing outside the *turugan* during *tumabur* at Kg. Bantayan.

in Kampung Tutu Solupuh, not far from the sea. The *buliga ngadau*, however, was not exposed at these places and the large offering in the *bohungan* was not present, although one using a *korop* was placed in the left-hand corner of the *tantagas* section of each *turugan*.

Thus, the *Manawah do Turugan* lasted for seven days from the construction of the *turugan* in Kampung Bantayan on 15 June 2003, to the end of the *tumabur* in Kampung Tutu Solupuh on 21 June 2003. The cleansing or neutralizing process had begun, drifting from inland down toward the coastal area. In all three villages, the *turugan* were not demolished, but left standing to decay over time.

Monumbui Sidangon

After a week had elapsed, the *Monumbui Sidangon* began with two *tantagas* chanting *rinait* from the balcony of the community hall in Kampung Bantayan, sometimes using their *tutubik* brass plate rattles with tortoise shell handles (to symbolize sending away evil spirits), while the ensemble of a native drum and four gongs played just the first phrase of the music called *ginandang papatarok*. This first phrase is called *mongigol*. The traditional flag (*tungul*) of the village hung from the balcony. After completing this, the group went inside where the two *tantagas* continued their chanting and sat on a rolled-up sleeping mat, waving (*kumiyap*) their sashes, or *sandai*. Downstairs, the village headman cut the ear of a sacrificial piglet which later would be sacrificed with another at

Tamparuli.

The group then assembled in front of the community hall, where the village flags were planted and the piglet, encased in sacking was placed. A small offering of cooked rice mixed with fat from the piglet's ear, fish tails, and coconut toddy (*bahar*) was wrapped in dried areca leaves and placed atop a bamboo stick, erected near the flags and the piglet. This offering was said to be for the spirits of that particular location and summoned them to a mass gathering at Kg. Bontoi (the Tamparuli *tamu* ground). The musicians played music called *mojumbak*, followed by *ginandang popotumbui*.

After this, the group proceeded to the place where the *turugan* stood. The *libabou* descended down the hill towards the house, addressing all the wandering demons, while the two *tantagas* stood behind her chanting and shaking their *tutubik* to summon these spirits from around the *turugan*, as the drum and gongs briefly played *mojumbak*, followed by *ginandang popotumbui*.

The *tantagas* continued their chanting as they were transported by van to the open space used as a market ground at Kampung Bontoi beside the Tamparuli River near the Tamparuli township. Here all the *tantagas* assembled, together with headmen and members of all the participating villages. The flags of the villages were planted near the offerings and piglets, around which the *tantagas* performed the slow solemn circular *mangain* dancing while shaking their brass plate *tutubik* rattles. At first the *tantagas* circled clockwise 13 times according to the number of the two supreme deities and their entourage of 11 others who would receive the offerings. Then they circled counterclockwise. This was accompanied by the ensemble music *ginandang popotumbui* interspersed with *mojumbak*. The event concluded with the sacrifice of three piglets (one for each zone) with a spear.

Back in the community hall of Kampung Bantayan, in the early hours of the following morning, the *modsud*, or 'sending back,' of the spirits was performed. Four *tantagas* wearing long tubular skirts hanging from their heads, sat and chanted to send the spirits back to the spirit world. The *libabou* sat nearby in trance addressing the wandering spirits to send them away.

Monumbui Mahanton/Monumbui Sisiron

The *Monumbui Mahanton* began on 7 July 2003, as three *tantagas* chanted at the home of the headman of Kampung Bantayan. As for the *Monumbui Sidangon*, a small ensemble of one native drum and four gongs played just the first phrase of *ginandang papatarok*, while the *tantagas* continued chanting and shook their *tutubik*. After a while, the *tantagas* sat on a rolled mat and performed *kumiyap* as they waved their *sandai* and continued chanting.

Outside in front of the house, after flags and suspended offerings were planted in the ground near a live sacrificial piglet, the *tantagas* continued chanting *rinait* while the instruments played *mojumbak* and *ginandang popotumbui*. They then proceeded towards Tuaran Township. Periodically, the group would stop at certain places along the way for the *tantagas* to chant, while the villagers played the instruments.

Finally, some of the *tantagas* and members of all participating villages assembled on the riverbank near the Tuaran market ground, where various pump boats



Plate 8: With its village flag waving, a boat carrying musicians, two *tantagas* and a *libabou* and other villagers travels down the Tuaran River.

were moored. Boarding the boats, some of the group proceeded down the Tuaran River to the river mouth of Kuala Tuaran near Kampung Hampalan. In former times, the entire group of *tantagas* and villagers would have traveled by longboats to the river mouth. Nowadays, a shortage of boats has meant that most of the people travel by cars and vans to Kampung Hampalan for the *Monumbui Mahanton* (Plate 8).

Here the flags from all the participating villages were planted, together with rice offerings on trays and the three piglets. The entire group of *tantagas* assembled and performed the slow circular *mangain* dance around the offerings and flags, while shaking their *tutubik* to send back the evil spirits on some counterclockwise rounds, and their *giring-giring* on clockwise rounds to address the good spirits. The drum and gong ensembles from all the villages played in unison, with *ginandang popotumbui* for the *mangain* and *mojumbak* for brief interludes (Plate 9).

Four *libabou* (one man and three old women), three wearing a man's ceremonial costume complete with headcloth and long *moga* skirt, joined the circulating throng (Plate 10). After some time, the *libabou* took some offerings to the sea edge. They stood on the shore facing the sea, and conversed with various wandering *rogon* to send them back to Rondon beyond the sea.

At the end of the ceremony, the *monumbui* sacrifice was performed. As the entire group of *tantagas* performed another round of *mangain* to the music called *ginandang popotumbui*, the most senior *tantagas* used a spear to pierce three piglets inside their casings. Each piglet represented one of the three zones of Lotud villages. The ensembles then broke into the music called *mojumbak* signifying rejoicing at the success of the



Plate 9: *Tantagas* performing the circular *mangain* in the *Monumbui Mahanton* of 1996.

Plate 10: An elderly woman *libabou* holding a rice offering (center left) dances near the line of *tantagas* in the *Monumbui Mahanton*; she wears a man's ceremonial costume with headcloth and long skirt because her *libabou* (familiar spirit) is male.



cycle. The piglets were left behind on the sand to feed the spirits.

During the early hours of the following morning, in the Kampung Bantayan headman's house, the *tantagas* again performed the *modsud* wearing the long skirts hanging from their heads. There was no ensemble music. Unlike the end of *Monumbui Sidangon*, however, they faced the wall as they chanted.³ The *libabou* again entered a trance, in which state she is said to be able to see and communicate directly with the spirits, and so ensure that they were all sent back to their various places in the spirit world. With this, the *Mamahui Pogun* was completed.

Instrumental Music in the *Mamahui Pogun*

The instruments and their performance

Every indigenous community in Sabah has its own characteristic gong ensemble, which usually also includes a drum or occasionally, in some cultures, two drums. Each village usually has its own ensemble, the instruments of which are individually owned. When discussing gong music in their culture, the Lotud often distinguish between *basalon*, or music for ritual purposes and *mojumbak*, or music for pleasure.

Basalon (metal sounds) is very slow and solemn and is often accompanied by the sedate *mongigol* or *sumayau* dancing of participants in other ritual cycles such as the week long *rumaha* (to honor the spirits inhabiting skull collections) followed by the *mangahau* (for spirits inhabiting heirloom jar collections). The instruments for *basalon* include the double-headed native drum, *gandang*, which has tuning pegs (*binsolot*) inserted into the cane binding around each head, two or three small brass hanging gongs, or *tanyang*, and two or three heavy brass or bronze hanging gongs called *tawag*, which have raised front surfaces around their bosses (Pugh-Kitingan 2004: 19-21, 22-25, 85, 88-89). The term *basalon* is used generally by some people to refer to any collection of brassware, including brass trays, containers and gongs. For most Lotud, however, it specifically means the gongs played in sacred ceremonies and also refers to the solemn ritual music performed with these instruments.

Mojumbak has been adopted from the neighboring coastal Bajau communities. The *jumbakon*, or secular instruments, for *mojumbak* include the *kulintangan* row of small kettle gongs on a rack, one or two *tanyang*, two *tawag*, and a pair of red barrel-shaped double-headed *gandang parang* drums which have cane binding crossing their bodies from one head to the other. *Mojumbak* is lively and rhythmic. It is played for entertainment at small non-ritual social gatherings, and often accompanies *silat*, or martial arts, demonstrations (Pugh-Kitingan 1996, 1997, 2004: 20). The *jumbakon* instruments, however, are prohibited from being performed in ritual contexts, and in the *Mamahui Pogun* the *mojumbak* music is played on *basalon* instruments.

The instruments used for the *basalon*, the ritual ensemble music, of the *Mamahui Pogun* include one traditional Lotud *gandang*, together with two to five *tanyang* and from two to five *tawag* (Figure 2, Plate 11). The *gandang* drum is of primary importance, both ritually and musically. When making a *gandang*, animal bones are placed inside the body to enhance its spiritual power. This spiritual power of a *gandang* is believed to increase

³ In facing the wall, the *tantagas* face in the direction of the setting sun, the direction in which the spirits depart.

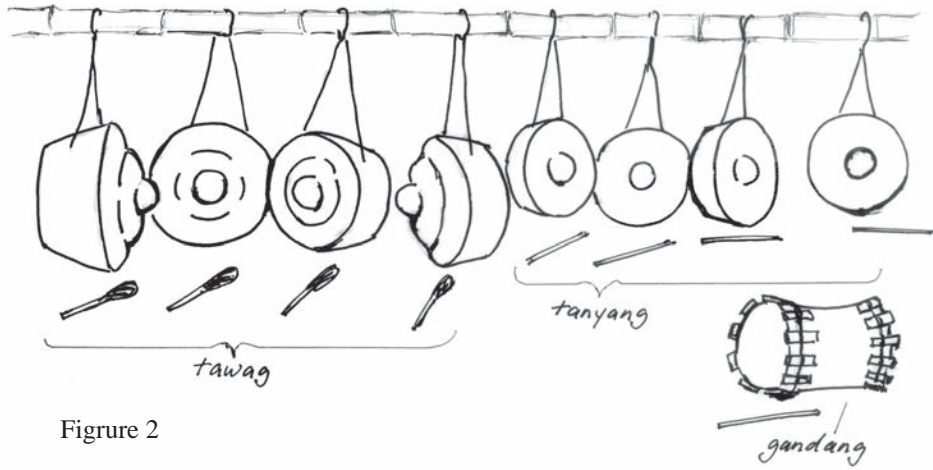


Figure 2

Plate 11: Villagers playing the *basalon* instruments in the *Manawah do Turugan* at Kg. Bantayan at noon, while others eat together with the spirit world.



the more it is played in ritual contexts. Ideally, the drum should be accompanied by as many gongs as possible, especially during the *Manawah do Turugan*.

Although each gong has its own fundamental pitch and characteristic upper partials, the individual tunings and their intervallic relationships with the other gongs are not really deemed significant. Rather, it is the composite overall metallic timbres



Plate 12: The basalon instruments at Kg. Tutu Solupuh during *tumabur*.

of the gongs (*basalon*) and their general pitch regions (*tanyang* always sound higher than *tawag*), in contrast to the clear-cut beat of the *gandang* drum that are considered important. As in most traditional Dusunic ritual gong ensemble music, adherence to the prescriptions of the *rinait* in terms of number and types of instruments, as well as the rhythmic patterns of the music, is essential. Relative tuning relationships are not as important.

The set of instruments at Kampung Bantayan consisted of the *gandang*, supported by four *tanyang* and four *tawag*. During the *manawah*, the *gandang* was placed horizontally on the floor in front of the line of gongs, with the *tawag* hanging nearest the *tantagas*, and the *tanyang* on the opposite end. The gongs were hung more or less from the highest pitched *tanyang* to the lowest pitched *tawag* (Figure 2).

The next day, during the *tumabur*, the instruments were hung outside from a gong stand. The *gandang* was placed at the end near the highest pitched *tanyang*.

At Kampung Marabhai, the ensemble included ten gongs—five *tanyang* and five *tawag*—together with the *gandang*. They were hung in the *turugan* during the *manawah* in the same order as in Kampung Bantayan. During the *tumabur*, they were hung outside as at Kampung Bantayan, with the drum placed at the end of the row on the ground near the highest pitched *tanyang*. A similar arrangement occurred at Kampung Tutu Solupuh, where the ensemble contained three *tanyang* and three *tawag* with the *gandang* (Plate 12).

In each village during the *Manawah do Turugan*, the drummer also played the *tanyang* nearest the *gandang*, hitting the drum with one stick in the right hand and the gong with a second stick in the left. Except for the early morning *tumahan* drumming which is done by the village headman, any competent musicians (men or women) may play the drum and other instruments provided they maintain the correct patterns for the different types of music. (Of these, the early morning *tumahan* and *ginandang papatarok* at Kampung Tutu Solupuh were not recorded because they were performed earlier than planned.)

During the *Monumbui Sidangan* and *Monunmbui Mahanton*, less gongs (only two of each type) and the drum were played by each village. This was mainly because the gongs, together with flags and other paraphernalia, had to be carried for several miles to Tamparuli in the first instance, and in the second case to Tuaran and by boat to the river mouth. During the climaxes to these two phases, however, the ensembles from all the villages were played together in unison to create a huge volume of sound that supported the mass *mangain* of the *tantagas* and, it was believed, of the supreme deities and their offspring who were present. The *tantagas* circled 13 rounds (alternately clockwise and counterclockwise) and 13 times in each round, as recited in their chanting, symbolizing the two supreme deities and their 11-member entourage.

The purpose of ensemble music in the *Mamahui Pogun* is to summon the spirits, and to indicate their presence at the rituals. The ensemble and its music are central to the ritual cycle. As one participant said, “you cannot have *Mamahui Pogun* without the *gandang*, and the *tanyang* and *tawag*.” Each of the instruments is believed to be possessed by a powerful spirit called a *dahau*. The various *dahau* assist in calling the deities and other spirits to descend from the upper realms to attend the ceremonies and receive the offerings.

There are four main types of instrumental music in the *Mamahui Pogun*:

- (i) *tumahan*
- (ii) *ginandang papatarok*
- (iii) *mojumbak*
- (iv) *ginandang popotumbui*

These musical pieces not only delineate the structures and processes of the ritual activities, but are the means through which the physical and spiritual worlds merge. The ensemble music creates an opening in the boundary between the seen and the unseen dimensions, which enables the deities and other spirits to enter and interact with the human world.

Tumahan

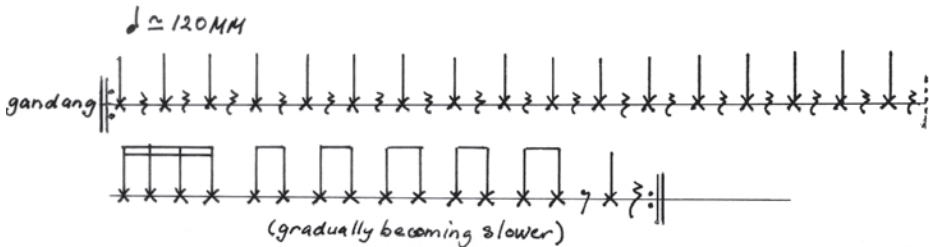
Tumahan means ‘announcing.’ This refers to the early morning (3:00 a.m.) drumming of the *gandang* by the village headman, at the start of the *manawah*, or first day rituals, in the *turugan*. This announces the start of the *Manawah do Turugan*, and hence the *Mamahui Pogun*, to all the spirits. The drum is laid horizontally on the floor, and is hit with a stick held in the right hand.

The drumming is based on two motifs, and is played 17 times. For most people the significance of the number 17 has been lost over time, and they say “we always do it this way” or “this is our *adat* (customary norm).” According to the *tantagas*, however,

Diwato is said to consist of seven horizontal layers above the earth, with ten vertical parts. The *tumahan* always consists of a basic two-motif phrase strictly played 17 times to summon all the deities and supporting spirits from each of the seventeen sections of Diwato. Participants will count the number of times the phrases are played, using short lengths of cane placed on the floor. Sometimes, they will call out a number to help the drummer remember where he is.

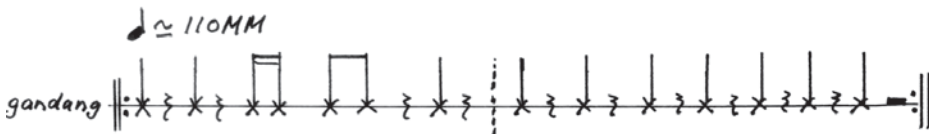
The *tumahan* at Kampung Bantayan was based on the phrase in Transcription 1. Here the first motif nearly always consisted of 17 straight beats, except where the drummer miscounted (the eighth phrase included 27 beats in its first motif, while the 16th contained 20 beats). The second motif always began with the rapid four-beat semiquaver running figure, which was followed by decelerating quaver-like beats.

As shown in Transcription 2, the *tumahan* at Kampung Marabhai differed somewhat from that of Bantayan. Here, the first motif was characterized by a rapid



Transcription 1: Basic phrase for *Tumahan* from Kampung Bantayan.

semiquaver, then quaver figure, while the second consisted of simple straight beats. There was variation, however, in terms of the number of drumbeats in the second motif (usually 7 or 5, but only 3 in the fourth and fifth phrases, and 6 in the 16th). The first motif also showed some variation, with the opening beat omitted from some phrases (such as the sixth), the motif shortened to the semiquaver figure and one long beat (as in the eighth phrase).



Transcription 2: Basic phrase for *Tumahan* from Kampung Marabhai.

Ginandang

The term *ginandang* refers specifically to the short semiquaver then quaver motif played by the *gandang* at the beginning and end of the *tumahan*, and also at the start and occasionally between phrases of the ensemble music *ginandang papatarok*, which follows the *tumahan* in the early morning in the *turugan*.

Ginandang Papatarok and the Mongigol motif

Ginandang papatarok is very slow ensemble music, which signifies a highlight in the proceedings and the presence of the supreme deities. It is played by the *gandang* and all the gongs immediately following the *tumahan*, early in the morning in the *turugan*, and periodically throughout both the *manawah* and *tumabur* in the *Manawah do Turugan*, while the *tantagas* sit and chant their *rinait*, and when they stand and circle in the *mangain*.

When *ginandang papatarok* was played as the *tantagas*, dressed in the *manarapoh* ceremonial costume, performed the *mangain* during the *Manawah do Turugan*, the higher deities were believed to be represented by these women who acted on their behalf. The deities were thus believed to participate in the proceedings and perform the ceremonies through their human agents, the *tantagas*, and this music signifies this.

Ginandang papatarok is not performed during the *Monumbui Sidangon* nor during the *Monumbui Mahanton*, because there are prohibitions against playing this music in full during these later stages of the ritual. The first phase, called *mongigol*, however, is played first thing in the morning on the balcony of the community hall and in the village headman's house while the *tantagas* chant. It is also played briefly towards the climaxes in the *Monumbui Sidangon* and the *Monumbui Mahanton*, according to the instructions of the senior *tantagas*. (In other contexts, this *mongigol* music, with its *mang top bung* pattern, accompanies the *mongigol* dancing in family rituals such as the *Mangahau* and *Rumaha*.)

Ginandang papatarok is said to be very difficult to perform, and the second motif requires adept coordination between *gandang* and *tanyang* beating by the drum player. According to the senior *tantagas*, the basic rhythmic pattern of *ginandang papatarok* can be described as: *mang top bung, mang top bung, top top bung-bungai top bung* where *mang* indicates the beat and timbre of the *tanyang*, while *top* represents the *gandang* and *bung* is the *tawag* (personal communication with Odun Rinduman).

The basic structure of *ginandang papatarok*, which was typical of all performances in the *Manawah do Turugan*, is shown in Transcription 3. This two-motif phrase is repeated over and over, throughout each performance. The *gandang* has the lead role in shaping the structure of the music, and its *top top* figure at the start of the

Handwritten musical transcription for *Ginandang Papatarok*. The transcription shows three staves: *tanyang*, *tawag*, and *gandang*. The *tanyang* staff starts with a bracket labeled "(start only)" and a tempo marking $\text{♩} \approx 90 \text{ MM}$. The *tawag* staff also has a bracket labeled "(start only)". The *gandang* staff begins with a bracket labeled "ginandang" figure, marked with 'x' symbols. The music consists of rhythmic patterns of notes and rests across the three staves, with a vertical dashed line indicating a section boundary.

Transcription 3: Basic phrase for *Ginandang Papatarok*.

second motif is characteristic of this piece. Usually each statement of the phrase begins with a single *gandang* beat, but occasionally the extended *ginandang* drumming motif may also initiate the phrase.

Mojumbak

Mojumbak signifies 'rejoicing.' It is played intermittently throughout both the *Monumbui Sidangon* and the *Monumbui Mahanton*, from the exit from the community hall and the village headman's house, along each route to the sacrificial grounds, and throughout short breaks in the proceedings there. It always precedes an extended performance of the music called *ginandang popotumbui*, except at the very end during the conclusion of the mass ceremonies, to indicate rejoicing as balance is restored to the universe.

The *mojumbak* played during the *Mamahui Pogun* is shown in Transcription 4. This has the same basic rhythmic pattern as the secular *mojumbak* music, which has been diffused from the neighboring Bajau. The main differences here are that the *kulintangan* and the *gandang parang* are not used, because they are ritually prohibited. Instead, the *tanyang* and *tawag* play their parts from the secular music, while the *gandang* beats out the composite rhythm of the two *gandang parang*.

Ginandang Popotumbui

Ginandang popotumbui refers to 'summoning the spirits.' It is the music that accompanied the mass circular dancing or *mangain* of the *tantagas*, at the Tamparuli market ground in the *Monumbui Sidangon* and at Kuala Tuaran in the *Monumbui Mahanton*. It does not occur during the *Manawah do Turugan*, when the *mangain* is accompanied by *ginandang papatarok* and the *tantagas* shake their *giring-giring* and

(Start) ♩ ≈ 135MM

tanyang

tanyang

tawag

tawag

gandang

Basic Pattern

Transcription 4: Basic pattern for *Mojumbak* in the *Mamahui Pogun*.

carry their *lungkaris* and *komburongoh*. The mass *mangain* dances of the *tantagas* at both Tamparuli and Kuala Tuaran were accompanied by *ginandang popotumbui* played by all the ensembles from all the villages. As in the *ginandang papatarok* of the *Manawah do Turugan*, the *ginandang popotumbui* signified the merging of human and spirit worlds and each *tantagas* represented one of the deities as described in their chanting.

The basic structure of *ginandang popotumbui* is shown in Transcription 5. The *tantagas* describe the basic pattern as: *mang mang top bung*, *bungai mang top bungai* where the first *tanyang* figure (*mang mang*) is actually the start of the performance.

As shown in Transcription 5, the basic phrase for *ginandang popotumbui* is based on two repeated motifs, of which the second with its repeated quaver-like *tawag* figure and third *gandang* beat, is a variation of the first. This basic phrase is played throughout both *Monumbui Sidangon* and *Monumbui Mahanton*, up until the ceremonies at the sacrificial grounds. During the mass *mangain* as all the ensembles from all the villages play together, however, only the second motif with its characteristic *tawag* figure was played. The *tantagas* shook their *tutubik* in counterclockwise rounds, or in other rounds their *giring-giring*, in time to the beat of the music. The repetition of this motif and the slow rhythmic steps of the *tantagas* in the *mangain* provided a dramatic buildup to the sacrificial climax of the ceremonies.

Conclusion

The *Mamahui Pogun* is a major ritual cycle of the Lotud Dusun of Tuaran, which involves the members of all villages in the community. It is held once every five to ten years or so during times of calamity to avert disaster, to appease and feed the angry spirits, and cleanse the universe by restoring balance between the physical and spiritual realms. The leading practitioners are the *tantagas*, or ‘priestesses,’ who intercede between the human and spirit worlds. The proceedings throughout the series, from the construction of *turugan* ritual houses in the leading villages to the final sacrifices, are

stano only ♩ ≈ 90 MM

tanyang

tawag

gangdang

most commonly heard at mangain in Monumbui Sidangon and Monumbui Mahanton as basic repeated phrase

Transcription 5:
Basic phrase for
Ginandang Poptumbui.

directed by the *tantagas* and prescribed in the *rinait*, the ancient chanted poetic prayers and hymns to the deities that are recited during the ritual.

It is the instrumental music, however, which provides the main vehicle for the cycle to proceed. Not only does it give a framework for the other activities during the rituals, but the Lotud believe that it also enables the deities to enter the human world and participate in the ceremonies.

The early morning *tumahan* drumming of the *gandang*, followed by the solemn *ginandang papatarok* ensemble music, announces the beginning of the cycle and summons the supreme deities and other spirits to the *turugan*. During the *Manawah do Turugan*, the sound of the *ginandang papatarok* music signifies the descent of the supreme deities from the upper worlds to participate in the ceremonies. The *tantagas* act as their human agents while performing the ceremonies, and each priestess represents a particular deity. In the open public *Monumbui Sidangon* and the spectacular *Monumbui Mahanton*, as the music named *ginandang popotumbui* accompanies the mass slow circling *mangain* dance of all the *tantagas* in the district, the deities are also believed to be present and are represented by the *tantagas* when they perform the rituals. Each of these types of ritual music is very slow and solemn.

Great importance is attached to the role of the drum, the numbers of gongs, and rhythmic patterns, rather than to tunings and pitch arrangements. The faster *mojumbak* music in the *Mamahui Pogun* signifies rejoicing at the success of the rituals. Although it draws upon secular *mojumbak*, it is still performed in the ceremonial context with the ritual instruments, each of which contains a *dahau* spirit to summon the deities.

For the onlooker, the *turugan* ritual house stands without walls, as if it were a house that only partially visible in the physical realm, standing between the seen and unseen dimensions. Similarly, the very slow repetitive Lotud ensemble music in the *Mamahui Pogun* lacks ornamentation and often has a fragmented quality, like a bridge between the human and the spirit worlds.

The *Mamahui Pogun* discussed here was the most recent and probably the last to be performed. It was held during June and July 2003. The previous one was held in 1996. As the numbers of *tantagas* decline, and the Tuaran landscape changes with highways intersecting the Lotud padi fields and the five-star Rasa Ria Resort now occupying Dalit Beach where *Monumbui Mahanton* ceremonies were once performed, the *Mamahui Pogun* itself is changing and may not occur again.

Nowadays, some families prefer to donate cash to the village headmen and the *tantagas*, rather than rice. Money, however, has no traditional ritual value. For many villagers, the meaning of many of the ceremonies is being forgotten. Traditionally, *Mamahui Pogun* involved all village residents, regardless of ethnic origins or religious affiliations. Today, many families who have converted to other religions and people who profess no particular religion no longer see the *Mamahui Pogun* as relevant in modern times.

With the demise of many *tantagas* and the decline of the *Mamahui Pogun*, the unique instrumental music will also disappear. Already, many young people do not know how to play the ensemble music of the cycle, and some are completely unaware of its significance.

The *tantagas* themselves view this situation with sadness and concern. “When we have gone, who will remember the traditions of our people?” they ask. “Who will know how to perform the rites to cleanse the universe in times of trouble?”

In other cases, such as the declining *Rumaha* and *Mangahau* ceremonies, the solemn *mongigol* or *sumayau* dancing has been taken from its actual context and adapted to concert stage performance. Although this is a change from the traditional context, it has ensured the continuity of a distinctly Lotud genre of music and dance. A similar process could ensure the continuation of certain artistic elements from the *Mamahui Pogun*. The *rinait*, for example, which has already been documented, could be developed and promoted as unique Lotud oral literature in secular contexts (Appell 1992, Regis and John Baptist 1992). The unique drum and gong ensemble music of the *Mamahui Pogun*, however, will eventually disappear with the ritual cycle. This is because the process and context of the cycle and its music are strictly prescribed in the *rinait*. The Lotud believe that any violation of this will incur supernatural punishment upon the community.

The *Mamahui Pogun*, however, belongs to the Lotud community, and its continuity or discontinuity is their prerogative. The choice of whether to participate in the cycle or not is the right of individual Lotud people, and their choices must be respected.

In interacting with a community undergoing change and social transformation like the Lotud, who still maintain a vibrant culture, the role of the researcher is to accurately document both their tangible and intangible cultural heritage⁴ and to preserve this as a valuable record for future generations (Malm 2004:5-6).

As anthropologist George Appell has stated, the truly “modern” person is one who tolerates differences in others, recognizing their rights of free expression, while having a critical and enquiring mind. This person has the capacity to deal with change:

The essential feature of the capacity to deal with change is an appreciation of the past and where one has come from. Thus, people can deal with change when they know that their past was a valuable experience in preparation for the future, when their past is viewed in such positive terms as a foundation for dealing with change. On the other hand, when it is devalued, when it is lost and not available for reference in history books, in ethnographies, in museums, people become lost. They can become apathetic with the loss of their roots. Or they can become normless, without any guideposts to help them deal with the future. And so they throw themselves into the mental opium of sexual excess, excess of alcohol, mindless entertainment, drugs, whatever (Appell 1986:33).

In documenting the music and ritual processes of the *Mamahui Pogun*, it is hoped that this will provide a record of part of the rich intangible cultural heritage of the Lotud that can be understood and appreciated by future generations.

⁴ The 2003 UNESCO *Convention for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage* has included oral traditions, music, musical instruments, dance, rituals, ritual spaces and artifacts and other items associated therewith as “intangible cultural heritage.”

Phase	Event	Location	Activities	Instrumental Music
<i>Manawah do Turugan</i>	Construction of the <i>turugan</i>	Kg. Bantayan		
	<i>Manawah</i>		<u>Inside <i>turugan</i></u> 3.00 a.m. drumming, setting up rice offerings, gong music, <i>rinait</i> chanting, donning the <i>manarapoh</i> and <i>mangain</i> by <i>tantagas</i> , exposure and bathing of <i>buliga ngadau</i> at noon, eating	<i>tumahan</i> (drum only) <i>ginandang papatarok</i> (drum and gong ensemble)
	<i>Tumabur</i>		<u>Outside <i>turugan</i></u> <i>rinait</i> chanting by <i>tantagas</i> ; eating at noon	<i>ginandang papatarok</i> (drum and gong ensemble)
	<i>Manawah</i>	Kg. Marabahi	<u>Inside <i>turugan</i></u> 3.00 a.m. drumming, setting up rice offerings, gong music, <i>rinait</i> chanting, donning the <i>manarapoh</i> and <i>mangain</i> by <i>tantagas</i> , eating	<i>tumahan</i> (drum only) <i>ginandang papatarok</i> (drum and gong ensemble)
	<i>Tumabur</i>		<u>Outside <i>turugan</i></u> <i>rinait</i> chanting by <i>tantagas</i> ; eating at noon	<i>ginandang papatarok</i> (drum and gong ensemble)
	<i>Manawah</i>	Kg. Tutu Solupuh	<u>Inside <i>turugan</i></u> 3.00 a.m. drumming, setting up rice offerings, gong music, <i>rinait</i> chanting, donning the <i>manarapoh</i> and <i>mangain</i> by <i>tantagas</i> , eating	<i>tumahan</i> (drum only) <i>ginandang papatarok</i> (drum and gong ensemble)
	<i>Tumabur</i>		<u>Outside <i>turugan</i></u> <i>rinait</i> chanting by <i>tantagas</i> ; eating at noon	<i>ginandang papatarok</i> (drum and gong ensemble)
<i>Monumbui Sidangan</i>	<i>Monumbui Sidangan</i>	Begins at Kg. Bantayan hall, then proceeds to main event at Kg. Bontoi (Tamparuli <i>tamu</i> ground)	Mass assembly of all villages; eating food, followed by mass <i>mangain</i> by <i>tantagas</i> , sacrifice of 3 piglets	<i>ginandang popotumbui</i> interspersed with <i>mojumak</i>
	<i>Modsud</i>	Village headman's house, at Kg. Bantayan	3.00 a.m. ritual trance of <i>tantagas</i> to "send back" the spirits to their world	
<i>Monumbui Mahanton (Monumbui Sisiron)</i>	<i>Monumbui Mahanton (Monumbui Sisiron)</i>	Begins at Kg. Bantayan headman's house, then proceeds to Tuaran market and downriver to Kuala Tuaran	Mass assembly of all villages; eating food, followed by mass <i>mangain</i> by <i>tantagas</i> , sacrifice of 3 piglets	<i>ginandang popotumbui</i> interspersed with <i>mojumak</i>
	<i>Modsud</i>	Village headman's house at Kg. Bantayan	3.00 a.m. ritual trance of <i>tantagas</i> to "send back" the spirits to their world	

Facing page... Table 2: Process of the
Lotud *Mamahui Pogun*

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Review Article

FOREST ECOLOGY RESEARCH IN BORNEO: 2003-2008

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Borneo is the second largest tropical island in the world (after New Guinea). It has one of the most diverse floras, with around 14,400 plant species (Roos *et al.* 2004), of which around 3,000 are trees (MacKinnon *et al.* 1996). Around 30 % of all plant species are found nowhere else (Roos *et al.* 2004). In addition, Borneo is the center of diversity of the important timber tree family, the Dipterocarpaceae, where at least 267 species are found (Ashton 1982). Lambir Hills in northwestern Sarawak has the highest density of tree species in the world, with 1,173 tree species (in 286 genera and 81 families) in only a 0.52 km² area of forest (Lee *et al.* 2002) and in the environs of Mount Kinabalu in Sabah there are over 5000 plant species (Beaman 2005). In terms of conservation priorities, Borneo falls within the Sundaland biodiversity hotspot, one of the five hottest hotspots (Myers *et al.* 2000), is split between two of the world's seventeen megadiverse countries (Mittermeier *et al.* 1997), and harbors four of the "Global 200" priority regions for conservation (Olson & Dinerstein 2002). By any measure, Borneo is exceptionally biodiverse.

My aim in this review is to present ecological work that has been carried out on Borneo in the period 2003 to 2008 with a particular focus on forest ecology. "Forest ecology" covers a number of topics and I will consider here mostly terrestrial plant ecology in a broad sense (I will not examine animal ecology in any detail). The topics which I feel are most worthy of my attention, and which I have knowledge to comment upon, are focused upon here under the following groupings: (i) floristics, *i.e.* descriptions of plant communities with a view to examining larger-scale patterns of species diversity on the island, (ii) new plant species that have been discovered and described, (iii) community ecology, with a focus on habitat specialization of tree species. I will then look at (iv) rates, patterns and drivers of deforestation with some thoughts on forest conservation and (v) the effects of disturbance on the forest and patterns of recovery. I will finish with a (vi) section on biogeochemistry and carbon (C) storage in Borneo's forested ecosystems and how C storage might be affected by some of the geographical variations and disturbances noted previously. My focus will be on studies conducted in the forests of Borneo but will include those which have a wider ecological significance. Figure 1 shows the location of the sites mentioned in the text. It is notable, and of some concern, that the majority of the studies reported here have the main authors primarily

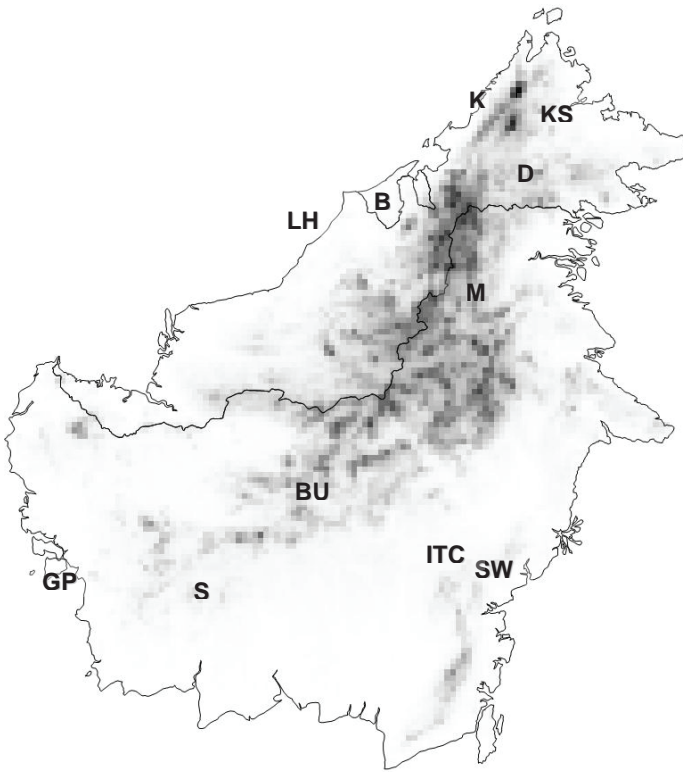


Figure 1: The island of Borneo with the location of study sites mentioned in the text. Barito Ulu (BU), Belalong (B), Danum Valley (D), Gunung Palung (GP), ITCI logging concession (ITC), Kabili-Sepilok (KS), Lambir Hills (LH), Malinau (M), Mount Kinabalu (K), Sungai Wain (SW) and Wanariset Sangai (S). Darker shading indicates increasing elevation.

based in Europe, America, or Japan; where local authors are included they are often as research counterparts rather than primary authors. In terms of capacity building, it would be great to see local authors publishing their work in the higher-impact international journals (although there is the other side of the coin, these journals are often too expensive to subscribe to in the region).

1) Floristics

New descriptions of tree communities (from permanent plots where trees over a certain diameter are marked and identified) have been published from Barito Ulu

and Wanariset Sangai in Central Kalimantan (Brearley *et al.* 2004; Wilkie *et al.* 2004), Belalong in Brunei (Small *et al.* 2004); Sungai Wain in South Kalimantan (Eichhorn & Slik 2006); and CIFOR's Malinau Research Forest in East Kalimantan (Kartawinata *et al.* 2006). When considered together in combination with other plot descriptions, these studies form a larger body of work and their value is increased considerably as species distributions and large-scale patterns of variation in tree communities can be ascertained. For example, Slik *et al.* (2003) collated data on tree species abundance from 28 locations across Borneo and showed that tree diversity was highest in southeast Kalimantan and central Sarawak. Furthermore, the forests of Borneo could be divided into five floristic groups using statistical clustering methods and those groups which were north of the central mountain range were clearly different from those to the south, suggesting that the mountains effectively prevent large-scale dispersal of many tree species (Slik *et al.* 2003). The Borneo-wide network of permanent plots is expanding but there are areas which need more coverage, notably parts of West and Central Kalimantan and some of the Sarawak/Kalimantan border regions. Expanding the number of plots will allow ecologists to examine patterns of diversity in more detail and make strong inferences on the environmental factors affecting island-wide tree diversity.

A database of over 28,000 plant collections from Mount Kinabalu has been described by Beaman (2005) and this allowed Grytnes & Beaman (2006) to document elevational patterns of species richness in this incredibly diverse mountain landscape. They found that the elevation with maximum species richness was generally 900 to 1200 m. with a moderate decline in species richness at lower elevations and a steeper decline towards the higher alpine zone. This pattern varied somewhat by floristic group, with a steady decline in species richness with elevation for trees, but the mid-elevation pattern of highest species richness, as mentioned above, being more notable for ferns and epiphytes.

2) New species and species descriptions

The density of collection of herbarium specimens needed to describe new species fully, was 35 specimens per 100 km² on Borneo, which is the lowest in the Sundaland region (Johns 1995). However, this is further split highly unevenly with Sabah having 126 collections per 100 km² and Kalimantan (comprising about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the land area) having an order of magnitude less, with 12 collections per 100 km². Nevertheless, there have been numerous new species described during the period of this review and I note here some which have caught my eye (this is by no means an exhaustive list): *Nepenthes chaniana* (Nepenthaceae; Clarke *et al.* 2004), *Nepenthes glandulifera* (Lee 2004), *Dissochaeta atrobrunnea* (Melastomaceae; Kadereit 2004), *Beilschmiedia oligantha* (Lauraceae; Nishida 2005), *Etilingera palangkensis* (Zingiberaceae; Takano & Nagamasu 2006), *Musa barioensis* (Musaceae; Häkkinen 2006) and *Ficus lumutana* (Moraceae; Berg 2008). Between 2003 and 2008, two more volumes of the *Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* (Soepadmo *et al.* 2004, 2007), with descriptions of the families Apocynaceae, Cunoniaceae, Dipterocarpaceae, Herndandiaceae, Meliaceae, Polygalaceae, Symplocaceae and Thymelaeaceae, were published, bringing the total number of volumes to six. The final volume of the *Flora of Mount Kinabalu* was also

produced (Beaman & Anderson 2004). Plant collections in parts of Kalimantan should be increased as this area is very under-collected and we will undoubtedly see many new species continue to be described in the near future.

3) Community ecology

3.1) Habitat specialization

A key research theme in this period has been the determination of habitat specialization by trees in the forests of Borneo, and there have been a number of papers showing the degree of habitat specialization from a number of sites across the island. Northern Borneo has been a particular focus for this work as it has forests on a range of soil types, from relatively more nutrient-rich clay soils to more nutrient-poor soils with more sand in them. As a general pattern across sites, the dominant families in lowland forests usually remain consistent (*e.g.* Dipterocarpaceae and Euphorbiaceae; Slik *et al.* 2003) but the dominant species differ by both habitat and by geographical location. This suggests some degree of limited large-scale seed dispersal and independent evolution in different sites (Cannon & Leighton 2004). For example, Cannon & Leighton (2004) examined 69 small plots at Gunung Palung in West Kalimantan and found that, among common species, 67 % were significantly associated with a single one of the five habitats studied (alluvium, peat, freshwater swamp, granite and sandstone) with only 16 % of species found as habitat generalists. Similar patterns were seen in a montane forest on Mount Kinabalu where 20 out of 42 common species in a 2.75 ha. plot showed specialization in relation to topography (Aiba *et al.* 2004). Among the Dipterocarpaceae, Paoli *et al.* (2006) showed that 18 out of 22 species were positively or negatively associated with a habitat type at Gunung Palung, and that diversity of this important tree family was highest on the nutrient-poor granite-derived soils. Comprehensive tests of associations with topography and habitat have been carried out at Lambir Hills, which has varied topography and a range of contrasting soil types where around 350,000 trees have been mapped in a 52 hectare (0.52 km²) plot. At this site, Davies *et al.* (2005) showed that 87 % of the tree species (with more than 50 individuals) had distributions significantly biased with respect to the habitat gradient in the plot and Yamada *et al.* (2006) also found eight out of ten members of the Sterculiaceae to show significant associations with habitat. Similarly, from Kabili-Sepilok in Sabah, DeWalt *et al.* (2006) determined soil-related specialization for lianas where 30 out of 42 species studied showed significant habitat associations and the rankings of liana biomass and diversity matched that of soil fertility.

The physiological basis of this habitat specialization is the natural extension of this work and is currently under study. For example, Palmiotto *et al.* (2004) found that, at the seedling stage, the growth of four out of five species was significantly greater on their preferred soil type at Lambir Hills (although for the species from the more nutrient-rich soils this was only realized under higher light conditions) and there was no difference in growth between the two soil types for the soil generalist species. At Kabili-Sepilok, Baltzer *et al.* (2005) showed how species specialized to nutrient-poor sandstone soils were more water-use efficient when compared to species from the nutrient-rich alluvial soil but that this was traded-off against higher metabolic rates and

reduced nutrient-use efficiency. Edaphic (soil-related) specialists were not capable of physiological acclimation when grown on their non-native soil type: species from the nutrient-rich alluvial habitat could not gain the high water-use efficiencies when grown on the sandstone soil and species from the sandstone soil had increased metabolic costs when grown on the alluvial soils. Interestingly, Russo *et al.* (2005) showed that soil specialists did not always have a home soil advantage in terms of growth rates but that, with increasing size, species were lost from their non-preferred soils more rapidly than from their preferred soils, leading to clear patterns of species distributions. Most studies have been conducted on a small fraction of the species present in the forests, often with a focus on the Dipterocarpaceae. It would be valuable to extend the taxonomic breadth of such studies and also to consider the importance of biotic interactions, such as pathogenic or mutualistic fungi, or insect or vertebrate herbivory, in structuring plant communities.

In an Amazonian forest, differing rates of herbivory of species on different soil types also appeared important in leading to habitat partitioning (Fine *et al.* 2004) and there is some evidence that this was the case where it has been studied at Kabil-Sepilok (Eichhorn *et al.* 2006). Dipterocarp seedlings native to more nutrient-rich soil suffered greater rates of herbivory on mature leaves when planted in the nutrient-poor site; in contrast, species native to the nutrient-poor soil suffered mature leaf herbivory equally on both soil types. In contrast, for new leaves, herbivory rates were greatest on each seedling species' native soil type (Eichhorn *et al.* 2006). In a similar vein, the number of Lepidoptera species feeding on the dipterocarp seedlings was lower when the seedlings were in their non-preferred soil type, although this was not seen for Coleoptera or Orthoptera (Eichhorn *et al.* 2008).

3.2) Density- and distance-dependent mortality

Studies have looked at the role of the Janzen-Connell effect in maintaining species richness (*i.e.* are seedlings prevented from recruiting in the immediate vicinity of parent trees because of high specialist pathogen and/or herbivore pressure?) and Blundell & Peart (2004) showed that density-dependent mortality of seedlings was occurring in *Shorea quadrinervis* (Dipterocarpaceae) at their study site in Gunung Palung. Furthermore, it was found that survival of seedlings in the same forest was related to the phylogenetic diversity of surrounding seedlings (*i.e.* how closely each seedling is related to each other), with seedling survival enhanced when it was in the vicinity of a group of species more unrelated to it (Webb *et al.* 2006). Stoll and Newbery (2005) extended this work to later life stages to show that adult dipterocarp trees at Danum Valley in Sabah grew faster (twice the diameter growth rate over ten years) in the absence of neighbors of the same species when compared with those with a higher density of neighboring same species.

3.3) Phenological patterns

Two long-term studies of phenological patterns and their relationships with climate have been published by Sakai *et al.* (2006) from Lambir Hills, and by myself and colleagues from Barito Ulu (Brearley *et al.* 2007). Both studies have presented evidence that droughts appear to promote reproductive activity on a large-scale – the phenomenon

known as mast fruiting (Sakai *et al.* 2006; Brearley *et al.* 2007). We have also identified low intensity masting events, during which fewer trees reproduce and seedling survival is poor. The low reproductive success during these low intensity events appears to be due both to a high level of flower loss, perhaps due to low numbers of pollinators, and high seed predation as predators are not swamped with resources as they would be during a mast year (Maycock *et al.* 2005). Shorter term droughts also appear to cause leaf shedding and flushing (Ichie *et al.* 2004). In addition, Cannon *et al.* (2007) showed that reproductive activity during mast-fruiting events at Gunung Palung was much lower in montane ecosystems and freshwater peat swamp ecosystems (probably due to the lesser importance of dipterocarps in these ecosystems). These phenological studies should be continued to include an increased number of El Niño events. It would also be useful if a standardized protocol could be used by phenology researchers to allow more meaningful comparison between sites, with the inclusion of large-scale meteorological data.

4) Deforestation: rates and causes

Around half of Borneo still remains forested (Langner *et al.* 2007), with rates of deforestation within the region some of the highest globally and appearing to be increasing, at least in Indonesia (Koh 2007). Fuller *et al.* (2004) showed the deforestation rate to be around 2 % per year in Kalimantan with a higher rate in East Kalimantan where forests were more likely to be burned. However, this is not evenly spread among habitat types, with lowland forest having the highest deforestation rate, most probably due to higher population pressure, ease of access, and greater timber stocks. A more recent study by Langner *et al.* (2007) showed the average deforestation rate between 2002 and 2005 was 1.7 % per year, but this was higher (2.2 %) in peat swamp forests.

Deforestation has also been occurring within protected areas in Indonesia. For example, Curran *et al.* (2004) reported on exceptionally worrying rates of deforestation of more than 2 % per year *within a national park!* Rates of deforestation in the 10 km. buffer around the park were double this. Overall, from 1985 to 2001, forest loss in protected areas in Kalimantan was over 56 % (Curran *et al.* 2004).

The major causes of deforestation are commercial logging (including illegal logging) which also includes clearance to create oil palm plantations (Koh & Wilcove 2008) as Indonesia and Malaysia are currently the largest global producers of palm oil (<http://faostat.fao.org>). Around 55-60 % of oil palm expansion between 1990 and 2005 has come at the expense of forested land (Koh & Wilcove 2008). Fires, especially during El Niño years, are also an important driver of forest degradation (van der Werf *et al.* 2008) and an increasing threat is that of open-cast coal mining (Brearley 2007) with Indonesia appearing to be one of the fastest growing producers in the world, with the center of production in Kalimantan (Anon. 2004). Expansion of oil palm is arguably the biggest of these threats and future research should focus on how this expansion is affecting ecological communities and how they might recover if plantations are abandoned.

In terms of conservation, it is often considered that planning without local people's needs in mind can lead to failure of the conservation scheme or even conflict. Work by Sheil *et al.* (2006) has examined local people's priorities for conservation in the Malinau region in East Kalimantan with many people considering unlogged forest to be

the most valuable land-use type – this gives hope for conservation schemes promoted by “outsiders” if they also involve local stakeholders as a “pragmatic and ethical means to foster a new constituency and to achieve conservation across a wider landscape” (Sheil *et al.* 2006). Follow-up work suggested that many local people support some form of forest conservation, but also consider local views to be important in planning this (Padmanaba & Sheil 2007). Ali & Jabobs (2007) have outlined how forest conservation can be linked to healthcare, especially in upriver parts of the island, and discuss strategies for linking these two essential activities through “conservation agreements.”

5) Disturbance and recovery

5.1) Droughts and fires

Numerous studies examining the effects of the 1997/1998 El Niño drought and fires have been published – this was the most severe drought event observed directly in the region. One of the most important is that of Potts (2003) who showed that tree mortality rates at Lambir Hills were about three times higher during the drought period than prior to it. Interestingly, the mortality rate of large common trees was greater than that of large rare trees, suggesting a compensatory mechanism whereby rare species could be maintained in the landscape. Slik (2004) showed that tree mortality rates during the drought period in the ITCI logging concession in East Kalimantan were, again, about three-and-a-half times higher in undisturbed forest compared to eight-and-a-half times higher in logged forest, much of this was due to the fact that pioneer trees, such as various *Macaranga* species, were more common in the logged forest and over half of these pioneer trees died during the drought. Delissio & Primack (2003) found that seedling mortality was also elevated during the drought and Bebbler *et al.* (2004) showed that mortality during the drought was greater for seedlings which had higher levels of insect herbivory (*e.g.* mortality of seedlings with more than 50 % defoliation was twice as great as those with less than 10 % defoliation), although heavily defoliated seedlings were fairly rare in the forest. Some forests were subjected to drought and then, due to the drier conditions, were more susceptible to fires. Van Nieuwstadt and Sheil (2005) found that, in the forests of Sungai Wain in East Kalimantan subjected to drought and fires, about three quarters of all trees died around two years after the event compared to about one quarter dying in the forests subjected to drought only. It is also worth noting that drought had a greater negative effect on larger trees whereas fires had a greater negative effect on smaller trees, leading the authors to argue that, due to more rapid replacement of smaller trees, the impact of the drought was more severe than that of the fires (van Nieuwstadt & Sheil 2005). Furthermore, trees on ridges and hilltop positions were more affected than those in lower topographical positions (Slik & Eichhorn 2003), meaning that repeated fires may well have greater effects on species that do not reach larger sizes and those with a habitat preference for ridges, potentially leading to changes in species composition over time. Slik & Eichhorn (2003) showed how forest which had been burned twice (1982-3 and 1997-8) had a higher number of pioneer trees and a lower number of climax trees when compared to an unburned forest. Numbers of pioneer trees in forests burned once (1997-8) were intermediate whereas numbers of climax trees were similar to the twice-burned forest. Seven years after the fire, forests were still strongly

affected, with recovery being very slow (Slik *et al.* 2008). We need to continue data collection from these sites to determine how forests will recover over the longer term and also to consider the effects of these disturbances on below-ground ecosystems.

5.2) *Shifting cultivation*

A series of studies has been carried out on the effects of shifting cultivation on tree species diversity in the vicinity of Gunung Palung National Park (Lawrence 2004, 2005, Lawrence *et al.* 2005). She showed how tree species diversity declined and there was increasing dominance by certain species after an increasing number of cycles of shifting cultivation, and how this decline in diversity was more noticeable for the smaller (< 10 cm diameter) trees (Lawrence 2004). Species diversity in these secondary forests also decreased with increasing distance from primary forest (Lawrence 2004). Follow-up work discussed how the change in species composition was only partly mediated by changes in soil nutrient status and discussed the importance of seed dispersal in determining species composition (Lawrence *et al.* 2005). Colleagues and I have shown how, even after 55 years of succession, despite the forest structure of recovering secondary forest being somewhat similar to that of primary forest (82 % recovery for basal area, 88 % recovery for tree height and 74 % recovery for biomass), the floristic composition is still very different, with a coefficient of similarity of only 24 % (Brearley *et al.* 2004). With secondary forests playing an increasingly important role we need to consider how these forests may provide ecosystem services in the future (*e.g.* carbon sequestration and storage) and how this compares with primary forests.

5.3) *Logging disturbances*

Other anthropogenic disturbances were studied by Berry *et al.* (2008) who examined plots in the Danum Valley area to determine differences in tree species composition between unlogged plots and those logged 18 years previously. They found no difference in species richness on a plot basis, but the variation among logged plots was greater and, at the landscape scale, logged forest supported more species of small trees. This should not, however, be taken as a lack of an effect of logging on the forest, as the species composition in the two forest types was still very different nearly 20 years post logging.

There are indications that reduced impact logging is a promising and sustainable way forward both from an ecological as well as an economic perspective (van Gardingen *et al.* 2003). As obvious as it may seem, this is essentially a logging operation which is planned in advance, maps are made of the area and the trees to be extracted, and the trees are felled in a way to avoid damage to other trees, skid trails are minimized to avoid soil damage and climbers are often cut to prevent falling trees pulling down other trees which may be entwined by these climbers. Sist *et al.* (2003) showed how reduced-impact logging might be of ecological benefit at a site in East Kalimantan where, at lower cutting intensities, this technique reduced the number of trees damaged during timber extraction by around 40 % and also reduced soil damage by skidding logs, although benefits were less clear under higher logging intensities. However, effects need to be considered on a site-by-site basis as Forshed *et al.* (2008) found that, during

supervised logging operations in Sabah, directional felling was of minimal benefit but that climber cutting had a much greater positive effect on subsequent tree growth. It is heartening that timber produced under conditions certified as “sustainable” can be sold for a higher price, at least under some circumstances (Kollert & Lagan 2007). Sadly, more sustainable methods of logging have not been adopted widely and it would be of great benefit to examine why this is and continue to promote the ecological and economic benefits of such methods.

6) Biogeochemistry and carbon storage

It is noteworthy that the forests of Borneo store more carbon (C) above ground on a per area basis than do their Amazonian counterparts (Paoli *et al.* 2008). Paoli *et al.* (2008) showed that the effects of soil fertility on above-ground biomass (and hence C storage) was not particularly marked, but the most fertile of the soil types examined at Gunung Palung did have a higher density of the largest trees (which make up a particularly large proportion of the forest biomass). This suggests, when compared with the work of Cannon & Leighton (2004), that forest structure may be less strongly dependent upon soil variation than is community composition. However, Paoli & Curran (2007) further showed that above-ground production was strongly related to soil nutrient status across three forest types, specifically to extractable soil phosphorus, indicating a soil fertility effect on C cycling.

Dent *et al.* (2006) detailed the differences in soil nutrients, litterfall, and litter decomposition rates among different forest types at Kabili-Sepilok and Takyu *et al.* (2003) showed how above-ground biomass, net primary production (NPP) and decomposition rates were lower in ridge-top than lower slope positions on three soil types on Mount Kinabalu. This followed from the earlier work of Kitayama & Aiba (2002) who showed how these parameters all decreased with altitude on Mount Kinabalu.

It would be very useful if forest biomass could be determined successfully by remote sensing as this would save a large amount of money over time- and labor-intensive field surveys. Phua & Saito (2003) attempted this for the forests in Kinabalu Park and found that remote sensing could only be used to show very broad differences in forest structure. In contrast, more recent work by Tangki & Chappell (2008) found that the technique was a useful tool to determine tree biomass in a series of logged and unlogged forest sites. How remote sensing will fare in mapping landscape variation in biomass in undisturbed forest remains to be determined for the forests of Borneo, although there are promising results from Amazonia (Saatchi *et al.* 2007).

Conclusions

Borneo is a highly diverse island and we are still describing the species found there, how they are distributed across the island, and what the important physiological factors and biogeographical determinants that affect species distributions are. Sadly, rates of deforestation remain high but we do know that, under favorable conditions, forests can recover from various forms of disturbance to provide a valuable repository of both carbon and biodiversity.

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BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

Letter from Lundu: 13 Januray 2010

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Consider this Letter to come to you from Lundu in spirit. True, I am writing it in Kuala Lumpur, but it was conceived and gestated in Lundu.

The past year has seen many dramatic turns of fortune, both for Sarawak, for our own kampong, and for me personally. The several strands of events crossed and knotted in surprising ways. Let me get myself out of the way quickly. In February '09 I visited the U.S. to seek a job, fully intending to take one up if successful. Four weeks into my task I had a call from the English Department of Universiti Malaya. Would I like to come back to teach, this time as associate professor? This was the proverbial offer I couldn't refuse: a sure promise of employment among old friends, and where I would be near my family. I flew back to Malaysia in June.

I enjoyed a month in Lundu, and then to work in KL. Thirteen years had passed since I last taught, things had changed, and I had plenty to learn. At last, the semester ended and I took leave to Sarawak for Christmas. Not in 20 years have I been away from Lundu so long. Still, with communication as easy and cheap as it has become, I remained intimately informed.

Few may remember that early 2008 was a time of easy money. Rubber was up, pepper was up. Timber was up. It was a good time to make an honest living—or a dishonest one. Nusi and I had chased would-be loggers out of our backyard at least three times. Then, in April, an elderly relative of my wife approached us. The land behind the house was *his*, he said, and he was going to log it.

After having been battered by strangers and faced with this challenge from a relative, we had not the heart to resist him. To his everlasting discredit, this relative was too old and too close not to know that his actions were no less than blackmail. He left us with nothing but the “nuclear option,” to call the police, whose help we could not count on anyway.

The chainsaws snarled, operated by Indonesian illegals. Then, on an ominously quiet day, we heard a tremendous boom and crash behind the house. A giant *mengeris* lay on the forest floor. Instead of felling the tree then and there, the *kulis* had cut the buttresses halfway through and, departed, let the *mengeris* fall at hazard. If it had gone in the other direction it would have landed entirely within our garden, potentially injuring anyone working there. My wife was furious, and let her anger be known.

Two days later we heard from an intermediary: the person in charge of the logging asked if would be okay to come in and continue. We were stunned. The relative

had not been logging on his own account; he'd been fronting for a "businessman." We had no idea he valued the *adat* of tribal ownership and his own people so little.

The "businessman" was spooked and ran. The Indonesians melted over the border. There was a terrific row, and feelings were poisoned like you've never seen except among relatives. We ceased to speak with our neighbors. And an example had been set. Corruption was seen as open freely to all.

For a while, the kampong was split fifty-fifty. Half wanted to go for the money, half insisted it was illegal, immoral, and imprudent. Where was the kampong to get wood from for houses if it did not protect its forest? One person argued in favor of "schemes." Everybody knows that a huge chunk of oil-palm plantation profit comes up-front from logging. Another man responded, if someone wanted to build a factory here that would be fine. A factory would create jobs and wealth. Once the trees are gone, he said—and heaven knows we have few enough of them—that's it. As for oil-palm, the terms on which land is leased for planting resemble a strange perversion of a mortgage turned inside-out.

The financial crisis made itself felt hard in Lundu, and proved a blessing in disguise. Everything—rubber, pepper, oil-palm, timber—plummeted and the easy money dried up overnight. Rice rose 40% and wise older people reopened their farms. The *rakyat* spoke a collective "oops" and decided that if times were tough, they'd better go back to helping each other as they had done for most of their history.

The General Election of 2008, though it swept over Semenanjung like a "tsunami," as it was said, left Sarawak untouched, although the DAP took Kuching. (Apparently, the erection of the "Thing" on the Sarawak River's north waterfront contributed to the disaffection of the residents.) Commentators were quick to note that the BN remained in power only because Sabah and Sarawak voters supported the BN's local component parties. East Malaysians hoped that their value to the BN would bring increased attention from the Feds.

Genuine struggle between the BN and PKR emerged a year later, in April 2009's by-election in Batang Ai'. This contest received great popular attention all over Malaysia, and unusually close care from the BN, and, as predicted, the BN won.

Miffed at the Opposition's loss, PAS president Abdul Hadi put his foot in his mouth by remarking that Iban voters were an ignorant bunch who "still wore loincloths." A silly thing to say, true; but it irritated enough Dayaks to reply with an unexpected torrent of articulate indignation and close and careful scrutiny. Long unstated prejudices were coming out in the open to be aired and could never again be bottled away in the realm of not-to-be-touched.

As I write, the consequences of a much more serious gaffe, this time committed by the BN, have Natives of Sarawak and Sabah questioning what their status is in Malaysia and just how much they are respected by the Feds. In 2003, some functionary in the Home Ministry found the word "Allah" used in Iban Bibles as the word for "God" and banned the book. East Malaysian churches sent emissaries to then PM Abdullah Badawi, who promptly reversed the ban.

The issue did not go away. Four years after the flap over the Iban Bible, the Home Ministry threatened not to renew the printing permit of the Catholic church's newsletter

The Herald until the editors dropped the use of “Allah” in their Bahasa Malaysia section. The controversy has become embittered to the point that an influential faction—despite all historical and linguistic evidence to the contrary, and grave theological objections—wants to restrict the term “Allah” to Muslims alone, an act unprecedented in the Islamic world. Feelings rose so high that eight churches were attacked with firebombs. Fortunately, only one attack caused serious damage and no one was hurt by any of them.

The response to the campaign for an exclusive Malay/Muslim proprietorship of “Allah” and to the news of outrages rouses admiration in me for its temperance and intelligence. Sarawakians and West Malaysians alike are refusing to be provoked. Whence comes this careful thought, eloquence, and moderation? The Internet has now reached sufficiently deep into Malaysia that many, many people are exceedingly well informed. If a *bilek* doesn’t have a computer, they have offspring elsewhere who do, and who keep the folks at home informed, perhaps by cell phone. Once—not so long ago—information was the monopoly of the Information Department and the controlled press. Today, information comes in volume—just like fruit at the market—and people pick and choose the unblemished.

My previous Letters have all struck a bucolic note. Rightly so. Sarawak... Lundu... and our backyard in particular are Paradise. No noises there but of insects and birds. Nothing to see but the green of majestic forest, and of the trees we’ve planted. We breathe clean air and see blue sky; we admire stars at night, and the songs of crickets and tree-frogs help us to sleep.

Sarawakians know what they are fortunate enough to inherit. By any means they inform themselves to anticipate and repel the depredations of intruders.

**THE KAYAN MENTARANG NATIONAL PARK:
INDONESIA'S NEW NATIONAL PARK IN NORTH
CENTRAL BORNEO BORDERING NORTHERN SARAWAK
AND SABAH**

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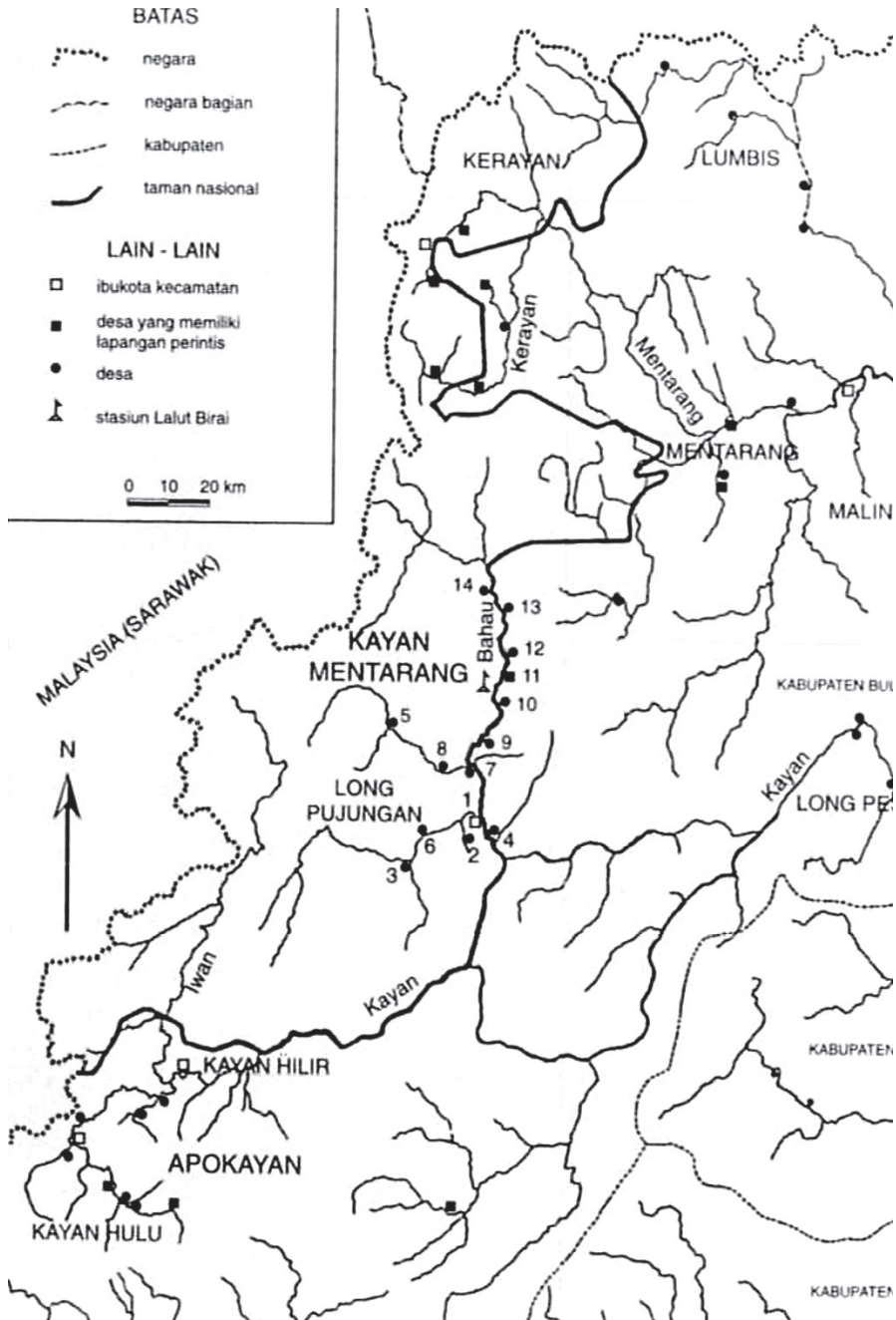
The Kayan Mentarang National Park (KMNP) was inaugurated on October 7, 1996, when the Indonesian Republic's Ministry of Forests conferred National Park status on the nature reserve that had existed on the Malaysian border since 1990, comprising the northern Apau Kayan, western Pujungan, northern Bahau, western Tubu, Krayan, Mentarang, and Lumbis regions.

Thanks to its inaccessibility and to the steepness with which the mountains fall away to the eastern seaboard of Indonesian Borneo –steepness meaning impassable rapids on the rivers –this 1.4 million hectare area now contains the largest rainforest conservation area in Borneo, larger than any of Borneo's other former jungle areas. It is a thinly populated mountainous region, inhabited by 20,000 Dayaks and a few hundred Punan hunter-gatherers. The only source for their meager sustenance is the remaining area of rainforest. This National Park is the first in Indonesia to be administered, policed, and serviced on a multilateral basis, with cooperative input from the Ministry at the national level, the regional government of the area concerned (Malinau), and representatives delegated by the local communities.

Two books outline the history, general character, and specific scientific and cultural interest of this national park:

- 1) *Kebudayaan dan Pelestarian Alam* (abbr. *KPA*): *Culture and Nature Conservation. Interdisciplinary Studies in the Kalimantan Interior*. Edited by Cristina Eghenter and Bernard Sellato. Jakarta 1999: WWF Indonesia, ISBN 979-95102-4-4, 575 pp.
- 2) *Kayan Mentarang National Park. In the Heart of Borneo* (abbr. *KP*). Edited by Lene Topp and Cristina Eghenter. Jakarta 2005: WYSIWYG. WWF Denmark in collaboration with WWF Indonesia, ISBN 87-991502-0-4, 175 pp.

Both books are reviewed here. The first, *KPA*, offers both breadth and depth. The wider context involved in the creation of the Kayan Mentarang National Park is described and the key problems arising are presented in detail, analyzed, and discussed. These problems, including the task of administering the park and its future, are addressed by way of three discrete areas of knowledge: studies of the natural environment, culture (indigenous ethnicities), and politics (the politics of states exercising sovereign power



Map (source: KPA, p. 40) showing the Kayan Mentarang National Park and surrounding area [translation of map legend starting top left:] national border – border between Sarawak and Sabah – (obsolete) administrative region borders – National Park boundary. Various: district capital – field research stations – villages – Lalut Birai field station.



The old village of Tang Faye, southern Krayan region, Krayan Selatan district, “Kelabit Type A” according to Schneeberger 1979: 31, Map II (implausible in my opinion: more likely “Kelabit Type B”). Photographs: Martin Baier 1974





The former village of Pa Kaber, southern Krayan region, Krayan Selatan district. Area on near side of fence is the enclosure for buffalo and pigs. The high-gabled roof is over the chief's quarters. "Kelabit Type A" according to Schneeberger 1979: 31,32 Map II (implausible in my opinion; with its high roof it vaguely resembles the "Kenyah-Kayan Type".)



Photographs:
Martin Baier 1974

from outside of eastern Borneo). The *KPA* anthology comprises 25 essays, in which a total of 36 experts and specialists contribute their knowledge, insights, and vision of the future. Notably, over three-quarters of the contributors are Indonesians, 17 being from Indonesian Borneo itself. As might be expected, the contributors have widely disparate levels of qualification: from university professors and the head of an institute (Bernard Sellato, who is French), to serving primary school teachers in jungle villages and non-academic professionals domiciled in Sarawak. The bibliography and text make no mention of Mallinckrodt's *Het Adatrecht van Borneo* –the standard work containing a full listing and distribution of all Dayak tribes –nor of Elshout's detailed account of the Apau Kayan-Kenyah culture, nor of Ph. N. Jalong's and my study of the culture, language, and history of the Ngorek, undertaken while these Dayaks were still living in the area now covered by the KMNP and available to give first-hand testimony (Baier is mentioned in the references, but the content is nowhere adduced).

Research for the anthology centered on a number of individual studies of a broadly cultural character carried out by Dr. Sellato (settlement and population primarily of the Pujungan/Bahau administrative district, megalithic monuments, migrations and settlement history, linguistic differences between the tribal groups of this area) and Dr. Eghenter (large-scale migrations and trading relations with the outside world).

The project attracted the interest of Western specialists and of Indonesian nature conservation bodies (e.g. the WWF). Overseas funding was provided by the Ford Foundation and the Danish Foreign Ministry. This enabled expeditions to be undertaken on a team basis, with mainly Indonesian experts, in a number of locations (Pujungan/Bahau area, Apau Kayan, Krayan). The highpoint came in 2003 in the form of an expedition involving over 100 members, many of them experts in their field. Although available expertise was spread as widely as possible, only a limited number of stations were selected, for experts in various disciplines to carry out fieldwork in their own particular specialty for a few weeks at least. Locations were: 1) Long Pujungan and the Lurah and Bahau headwaters; 2) the southern Krayan region, with focal points at Pa Upan and on the Tuba River; 3) the northern Krayan and Lumbis region, with focal points at Pa Raye and Tau Lumbis. This last large-scale expedition was aimed principally at research in the earth and life sciences (geology, botany, zoology) and archeology (artifacts from the megalith culture), and at training village people in aspects of nature conservation, with encouragement to avoid felling all trees outside a given radius from villages and to engage in rainforest species and plant conservation. The final *KPA* essay (p. 523ff.) goes so far as to call upon people living in extremely remote settlements to set up local museums in their own villages without external funding assistance. This appears to me to be an unwarranted and unreasonable suggestion.

Earlier, during the 1990s (1993-94), much smaller teams, often of two individuals, undertook similar forays for pre-specified fieldwork in their respective areas of competence. Their results appear in the 25 papers collected in the *KPA* volume. Pride of place goes to culture, history, migrations, civil order and traditional (*adat*) law, tribal affiliation, material culture, and local tradition. Places with resident *adat* practitioners (*demang kepala adat*) were visited. Naturally enough, these settlements are the administrative centers of their respective districts or are located close by: Long Nawang



Longhouse, former village of Pa Dalan, Krayan Hulu, Krayan Selatan district. House types similar to those of Pa Kaber. Photograph: Martin Baier 1974

(Apau Kayan), Long Aran, Long Pujungan, Long Alango, and Apau Ping (Pujungan region). Remote regions (including Tubu and Lumbis) were not covered by the research. Yet it is precisely in such remote places that ancient oral traditions (local legends linked perhaps to myths about monoliths in *sawah* fields or by river rapids) would still have been extant. They will now be lost forever.

For the anthropologist there is highly illuminating material in the descriptive accounts recorded by jurists and agronomists: the *ladang* (dry rice) cycle, rights of use to forest and fallow land in the vicinity of villages, and community cooperation in agriculture and in the construction of houses and roads. The Kenyah Dayaks Bilung Njau and Lukas Lahang have contributed a first-rate essay on these subjects (pp. 253 – 280). In villages along the middle reaches of the Pujungan and lower Bahau, an area of forest (*tanah ulen*) within a village territory is reserved for the exclusive use of community members in ways determined by the *adat* officeholder for the village or district, who also monitors the exercise of these rights of use. Use of *tanah ulen* by private individuals is prohibited. Permission for hunting and fishing is granted on special occasions—a privilege restricted exclusively to the respective village community. The *tanah ulen* belongs to the village and, in a sense, is its “savings account.” Valuable building timber from this source may only be used for the village hall or the church. Other points worthy of special mention are the descriptions of the forest economy, the collecting of jungle produce (most notably, *gaharu* wood) and hand-production of items of material culture (ceramic ware, rattan



Last remaining longhouse in Apau Ping, Bahau region, Pujungan administrative district, supposed by Schneeberger 1979 (1979: 32, Map II) to be Kenyah-Kayan Type II. Apau Ping does not accord with this: more affinity with Kelabit Type A. Photograph: Martin Baier 1986

wickerwork, musical instruments), and not the least the cataloguing of surviving artifacts from the region's megalith culture (in particular the urn dolmens of the upper Bahau).

A further feature of note is the listing and classification of languages and ethnic groups and subgroups, the former based on Alfred B. Hudson's linguistic study of indigenous Borneo languages (1978). Thus, there is a full, scrupulously compiled listing of the Kenyah subgroupings in the Pujungan administrative district. However, as previously noted, the book fails to treat ethnic groups that are now extinct, or which have emigrated from the area to other regions. Thus, for the Ngorek in particular, a fuller account of their migration as recorded in written sources would have been warranted. A significant error is committed by Dr. Rajindra Puri, who claims that the "Gunung Menjoh/Pua' peak," located south of the Lurah River, is one of the highest summits of central Kalimantan, at 2,500 m.¹ Google Earth indicates that no mountains south of the Lurah exceed 1,800 m. Information from Google Earth and the Mission Aviation Fellowship at Tarakan (pilot Craig Hollander) indicates that the highest point anywhere in Kalimantan is Bukit Raya (2,289 m), while the highest in East Kalimantan is Bukit Betoh (or Ayoh), on the fringe of the eastern headwaters of the Boh River (2,228 m, 01°49' 10.59"N, 115°16'21.64"E, cf. Diessen and Ormeling 2004: 360).

¹ In his many publications announced on the internet, Dr. Puri continues to stand by this erroneous statement (cf. also Puri 2005: 42).



Apau Ping longhouse, 1986.
Exterior side-façade and central corridor
with family apartments right and left.

Photographs: Martin Baier 1986



Unlike earlier studies in Dayak anthropology, this volume concerns itself only peripherally with religion – whether traditional tribal religion or the theology and spirituality of the country’s various and decidedly disparate Christian communities. Rituals of Bungan nativism are, indeed, described (*KPA*, pp. 377 – 396), but from 1948 to 2003 this simplified and modernized tribal religion led only a lingering, shadowy existence among the Apau Kayan Dayaks. When its last adherent, Pesatu, died at a village named Betao in 2003 (not in 1988 at Long Aran as stated on p. 380), this cult became history. It is now only encountered among Kayan émigrés living in the Berawan region of Sarawak. The anthology has nothing on the tribal religions of the pre-colonial and colonial periods; and nothing on the disparities between the very liberal GPIB and GKPI churches and the strict-observance GKII church, differences which impact particularly on family law and on alcohol and tobacco use. The architecture of the once ubiquitous longhouse villages attracted the interest of travelers and researchers during the colonial period and was described in their reports (see esp. Schneeberger, Map II: “Settlements, House Types and Languages in Central Northeast Borneo”); but here it is passed over in silence.

In terms of scholarship, *KP* does not approach the standard of *KPA*. Nonetheless, thanks to its clear layout, maps, and wealth of photographic material, it quickly acquaints the reader with the origins and development of the KMNP, its abundant flora and fauna, and, not least, the remaining evidence of the stone and earth constructions of vanished cultures. Although this book is pitched at the travel-guide level, and lacks a historical introduction, there is interest for anthropologists in its photographs of figures carved in high relief on rock, and of the *buaya tanah*, dragon-like “crocodiles,” three to five meters long and sculpted mostly of clay.² We are confronted here with a blank page not only in geography and anthropology but in the history of the visual and plastic arts. On the Lumbis region, virtually nothing at all has been published; there are a few superficial accounts of the Krayan highlands from an anthropological viewpoint, but nothing amounting to a monograph with description and analysis of their pre-Christian culture. *KPA* opens the reader’s eyes and provides stimulus to penetrate the thickets of an untrod cultural jungle. Lene Topp’s and Cristina Eghenter’s illustrated volume likewise deserves its place in any library concerned with the anthropology or natural history of Southeast Asia.

There remains the issue of whether the Kayan Mentarang region is really the ideal location for a national park. It has very little in the way of endogenous natural phenomena that can be called truly exceptional: there is rainforest, to be sure, but this is rainforest without orangutan, elephant, rhinoceros—according to a 1986 oral report the last rhino was killed on the upper reaches of the Aran River in 1965 – or large

² **Editor’s note:** These large earthen images of crocodiles are found not only in the Krayan Highlands, in East Kalimantan, but also across the border in neighboring Lun Daya areas of Sarawak and among the Saribas Iban of the Betong Division and also, at one time, very likely, among other Iban groups as well. For the Saribas Iban, the crocodile (*baya*) is considered an enemy of padi pests; hence in the past, the construction of these earthen images (*baya tanah*) was related to ritual efforts meant to defeat these pests and ward off crop destruction. The present Director of the Sarawak Museum, Ipoi Datan, an archaeologist by training, is currently engaged in a comparative study, mapping and documenting these images in Sarawak.

Collapsed dolmen
 "cemetery", Pa
 Tenam, near Long
 Umung (future district
 administrative center),
 Krayan Darat district.
 It is likely every village
 in the northern Krayan
 region possessed
 dolmen graves like
 this one as the final
 repository for bones.



This dolmen grave was
 freed from vegetation and
 tidied up for the benefit
 of our group in 1989.
 Certain similarities exist
 in the area south of here
 as far as the urn dolmens
 of the Ngorek Dayaks.

Photographs:
 Martin Baier 1989



predators. Notable ancient artifacts such as aesthetically pleasing sculptures or rock carvings are thin on the ground. The longhouses, rituals, and mask dances of a bygone culture have vanished utterly. An additional discouraging feature is that nothing is being done to conserve the few still extant reminders of the culture of past centuries. Of the urn-dolmen burial site at Long Pulung, Sellato reports: “Recently it was [...] protected by a wooden fence with a locked door” (1995: 74). In 2003, as part of a group, I visited this site and found no sign of a fence. Several of the urn dolmens had been upended by rising tree-roots. And it has been decided that the National Park’s museum, archives and central administration are to be located in Malinau – a city not only rapidly purpose-built as the modern capital of the Malinau administrative district, and lacking any tradition of its own, but also remote from all that is worth seeing in the KMNP itself.³

A more suitable choice of location would be the Kotawaringin Barat administrative district. As a one-time princely domain, it still has a “palace” and ancient mosques belonging to the royal house; longhouses on the Minangkabau pattern, and impressive Naga doors made by the Tumon Dayaks, with their feasts for the dead, and carnival-style masked dancing; it has the orangutan reserve at Tanjung Putting, fully developed infrastructure, and straightforward access for tourists. There is only one drawback: the 200-km stretch of rainforest between the coast and the mountains has vanished and been replaced by oil-palm plantations.

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³ Schneeberger (1979) Map I shows Malinau located about 20 km. downstream from the confluence of the Malinau River with the Sesayap. For Borneo this is unusual, and it seems reasonable to infer that Malinau City was founded towards the end of the colonial period, once river traffic had become motorized.

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WHICH IS THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN IN INDONESIAN BORNEO?

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This question is of current interest as a result of statements made in two publications which have appeared over the last ten years (Eghenter and Sellato 1999: 38 and Puri 2005: 42).

According to Eghenter and Sellato, the highest mountains in Indonesian Borneo are: 1) an elevation south of Kayan, east of Data Dian, 2985 meters high (i.e., almost 3000 m.; quite impossible!), 2) an elevation between the Iwan and Lurah, 2499 meters high; and, in third place, 3) Bukit Raya with an alleged height of 2276 meters. For his part, Puri writes: “the Pua` Peak, to the south of the Lurah, is one of the tallest peaks in Central Borneo around 2500 m.” In neither book are the sources for these statements given.

In my Brief Communication about the Kayan Mentarang National Park (see this issue, Baier 2009), I write: “Google Earth indicates that no mountaintops south of the Lurah exceed 1,800 meters. Instead, information from Google Earth and the Mission Aviation Fellowship at Tarakan (Pilot: Craig Hollander) indicates that the highest point anywhere in Kalimantan is Bukit Raya (2,289 m.), and that the highest elevation in East Kalimantan is Bukit Betoh (or Ayoh), on the fringe of the eastern headwaters of the Boh River (2,228 m., 01°49`10.59`N, 115°16`21.64`E, cf. Diessen and Ormeling 2004: 360).

How have such discrepancies come about? Perhaps information was taken from no longer available Soviet maps of 30-40 years ago where peaks of over 2500 meters in the area bordering Sarawak are mentioned (cf. Eghenter and Sellato, 2) above, “2499 m.”). More probably the TAD atlas (Voss 1983) was used. This German atlas should be used critically, if at all. Almost nothing can exceed the absurdity of statements contained in “Secondary Road” (Voss 1983: 10-13), and the heights given (over 2240 m.) for the highest mountains in Kalimantan (almost identical with Eghenter and Sellato’s highest elevation of 2499 m.¹) cannot be accepted on face value.

There is an urgent need for a professional geographer to verify and publish the definitive facts regarding mountain elevations in Kalimantan.

¹ Astonishing and remarkable: In 1994 Sellato published a map with the supposed exact heights (Bukit Raya, 2278 m, Kalimantan’s highest mountain, a.s.o.) in his book *Nomads of the Borneo Rain Forest*, page 224. The original French edition from 1989 doesn’t contain this map.

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MORE ON KALIMANTAN MOUNTAINS

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Dr. Martin Baier sent me a note requesting information concerning the highest mountains in Kalimantan, perhaps because, since 1976, I have traveled throughout large parts of East and Central Kalimantan. However, GPS became available for determining mountain elevations only after 1993. Therefore, I forwarded Dr. Baier's note to a highly knowledgeable forest ecologist, whom I am glad to call a friend, Stephan Wulffraat. Stephen has spent eight years with the WWF in the Kayan Mentarang National Park and he is one of the contributing authors to the excellent volume, *Kayan Mentarang National Park. In the Heart of Borneo* (Topp and Eghenter, eds., Jakarta 2005, see also Baier in this issue). Below is his reply dated 11 December 2009. It appears that the highest peak is probably a mountain in the Apau Kayan referred to as Gg. Makita or Gg. Lidung Payau, which is probably the same as Bukit Betoh/Ayoh. He estimates its altitude to be between 2000 and 2500 m. above sea level.

Dear Herwig,

...It is interesting that you bring up this elevation issue. I have also noticed that funny mistakes are made in [the] literature. I have been able to do direct checks on some of these elevations.

The highest elevation in Kayan Mentarang is Mount Menco (or Menjoh) between the Pujungan and Lurah rivers. We did a survey in 1999, first to Mt. Lunjut (1900 m. asl) (called the Pua Peak by Puri), which we thought was the highest peak, but from there I saw a higher one, and we went there (another 2 day's walk) and checked that with an altimeter. It read 2002 m. On maps this mountain is said to be 2500 m. high.

Gunung Harun in the very north of Kayan Mentarang is recorded on some maps to be 2200 m., but I checked it and found its elevation to be 1992 m. asl. There are more high peaks in this area, as well as west of the Iwan River, but none of them is higher than 1800 m., I think. Another peak west of the Bahau measured 1820 m. asl.

Now I have been fascinated by this very high mountain in the Apo Kayan that is [said to be] 2985 m. on the maps. The name of this mountain is Gn. Makita, also referred to as Gn. Lidung Payau. It is probably the same as the Bukit Betoh/Ayoh that you mentioned. I wanted to organize a survey to this mountain but never had the time or funds. According to local people, nobody has ever been there, with the exception perhaps of some *gaharu* collectors (but they would not go all the way to the top). When I came down the Iwan River there was a bend in the river from which I had a good view of this peak and I took photos. It is an impressive mountain with a remarkably shaped summit, but it is definitely not 3000 m. high. My rough estimation at the time was between 2000 and 2500 m. Who knows one day I might still get there....

Best regards,

Stephan

BUKIT RABONG IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT

Clifford Sather

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I am grateful to Martin Baier and Herwig Zahorka for pointing out some current discrepancies in the topographic mapping of Kalimantan—particularly with regard to mountains—their names, locations, and elevations.

Their Brief Communications remind me of a difficulty I encountered, myself, in the course of working with Iban shamans (*manang*) in the Saribas region of western Sarawak. The difficulty concerns a seemingly problematic mountain which local shamans and others call *Bukit Rabong* (alt. sp. *Rabung*). The term *rabong*, by itself, means, literally, ‘highpoint,’ ‘apex,’ or ‘summation.’ In its more abstract noun form, as *perabong*, it signifies ‘zenith’—hence, Saribas shamans often describe Bukit Rabong as being located directly beneath, or itself forming, at its top, the *perabong langit*, literally, the ‘zenith of the sky.’ It is said that the summit of Bukit Rabong, in fact, connects with the sky (*langit*) and so, for Saribas shamans, with the home of the upperworld gods, most importantly Menjaya and his sister Ini’ Inda, both of whom are closely associated with shamanism, and, the latter, with the initiation of novice shamans. This ritual initiation (*bebangun*), which is enacted by living shamans in this world, is said to take place, in actuality, unseen, on the ‘summit’ (*tuchong*) of Bukit Rabong (see Sather 2001: 29).

Bukit Rabong is associated not only with shamans, but also with death. Like most places identified with death, Bukit Rabong is thought to have both a physical presence in ‘this world’ (lit., *dunya tu*), that is to say, in the ordinary visible world of everyday life, as well as an invisible counterpart presence, unseen to us, as living human beings, in the afterworld. For the Saribas Iban, Bukit Rabong is, more specifically, the place to which the ‘souls’ (*semengat*) of dead shamans journey after death and, thereafter, the place where their ‘spirits’ (*antu*) are thought to make their home in the Iban afterworld. As one Saribas shaman, the late Manang Bangga of Muton longhouse, put it, Bukit Rabong is, in essence, ‘the land of the shamans’ souls’ (*menoa semengat manang*) (see Sather 2001: 116). In this sense, Bukit Rabong precisely parallels *Batang Mandai*, which, for the Saribas Iban, is the place to which the souls of ordinary human beings (*iban*, as opposed to *manang*)¹ journey after death. The *Batang Mandai* also has a physical presence in this world—in this case, as the Mandai River, a southern tributary of the Kapuas in West Kalimantan (also known to Saribas *manang* as the *Batang Mandai Idup*, ‘the Mandai River of the Living’), as well as an invisible afterworld counterpart (*Batang Mandai Mati*, ‘the Mandai River of the Dead’) along which the spirits and souls of the great majority of Iban are said to make their home after death.

Today, when a death occurs, most Saribas Iban perform a simple Christian

¹ This use of the term *iban*, meaning ‘layperson’ or, simply, ‘human being,’ is the most likely source of the modern ethnonym (cf. Sather 2004: 623).

burial and prayer service. This was not the case, however, in the 1970s and 80s, when I began fieldwork, and elsewhere I have described “traditional” Saribas Iban death rituals as I observed them during those years (Sather 2003). The significant point here is that both Bukit Rabong and Batang Mandai loomed large in these rituals and in the ways in which the living, in this world, continued to interact with the dead.

The Saribas region, comprising the present-day Betong Division, is located some distance from the West Kalimantan border. Consequently, very few Saribas Iban have traveled to Kalimantan and I never met anyone who claimed to have been to either Bukit Rabong or the Mandai River. Stories are told, however, of men who are said to have traveled to these places in the past in order to obtain *pengaroh* (charms) directly from the dead. In these stories, many fail to return, while others bring back charms which in time become family *pesaka* (inherited wealth). Considerable secrecy surrounds *pengaroh*, however, and I never met anyone who acknowledged owning such charms. People I spoke with, including *manang*, expressed considerable uncertainty about where Bukit Rabong and Batang Mandai are located, but nearly all were sure that these places exist in a physical form somewhere in West Kalimantan. The main trunk road that now connects the Saribas with Kuching runs in several places very close to the Kalimantan border and here, at higher elevations, Bukit Rabong is said to be visible on the distant horizon from the Sarawak side of the border. Moreover, it is readily recognizable. It has a distinctive shape, with steep sides and a high bulging summit that is described by Saribas shamans and others, including persons who say that they have seen it, as exactly resembling a *tawak* or *agong* gong when seen in profile (Sather 2001: 117). According to the late Benedict Sandin, the former Curator of the Sarawak Museum, and several other Saribas authorities, Bukit Rabong rises from the true left bank of the Mandai River. This fits closely with descriptions from Saribas chants which depict the journey of the shamans’ souls up rapids from the Mandai River. From the head of these rapids the souls jump to the summit of Mount Rabong (*Tuchong Rabong*).

On the other side of the border, the presence of the Mandai River has never been in question. Bukit Rabong, on the other hand, is a different matter. I was never able to locate a mountain of that name on maps of West Kalimantan. If it exists, as most people assured me that it did, including those who had actually seen it from afar, it must be either unrecorded on maps or known to Indonesian cartographers by another name. But what name? And where precisely is it located?

For people in the Saribas, including even *manang*, these questions, for all practical purposes, have no particular significance. The physical mountain cannot be seen from where they live, and, in any case, it is the invisible, not the this-worldly mountain, that matters.

In time, I came to think about Bukit Rabong in pretty much the same way. That is, until one day, four or five years ago, when I was working in the Research Section of the Tun Jugah Foundation’s offices in Kuching. The secretary came to my desk and said that I had a visitor. The visitor turned out to be an amateur ethnographer named Roland Werner who had published, several years earlier, a book on the art and material cultural of the Jah-hêt, an Orang Asli community in peninsular Malaysia. He was visiting Sarawak and had read my book on Saribas Iban shamanism (*Words of Play, Seeds of*

Power, 2001). He had a question for me. He then produced a map of Kalimantan and asked me to locate Bukit Rabong. He had searched the map himself and couldn't find it where I had indicated that it should presumably exist. I told him that I had experienced the same difficulty. If the mountain had, indeed, been mapped, which, to me, wasn't at all a certainty, then it must be known to Indonesian map-makers by a different name. This wouldn't be surprising, as the area in which it is said to be located is not inhabited by the Iban, but by other ethnic groups. Moreover, from where I did my fieldwork, Bukit Rabong couldn't be seen at all. None of the shamans I worked with had ever been there, nor, for that matter, did they express any particular interest in the physical, this-worldly mountain. Instead, their concern, as practicing shamans, was with its invisible other-worldly counterpart. Here, they said the spirit shamans (*petara manang*) live who assist them as spirit companions in their healing performances, including, among them, the spirits of formerly living shamans. And here, their own souls would eventually find a home.

Indeed, *manang* when they refer to Bukit Rabong in rituals are not always referring to an actual mountain, even an otherworldly one. Individual rituals are called *pelian* and each *pelian* contains a sung component called the *leka pelian*, meaning, literally, 'the gist' or 'seeds of the *pelian*.' In describing the *leka pelian*, one must necessarily enter a riddle-like speech domain described as *jako' dalam*, literally, 'deep speech,' in which words typically have multiple meanings. References to Bukit Rabong occur frequently in the *leka pelian*. For example, in the final lines of nearly all *leka pelian*, the *manang* sings of leaping into the air, together with his spirit companions, and of alighting on the summit of Bukit Rabong. In the course of performing a *pelian*, the shaman is believed to send out his 'soul' (*semengat*), which, together with his spirit helpers (*yang*) and other spirit companions, performs, unseen, the actual work of the *pelian*. In these concluding lines, Bukit Rabong refers not only to a mountain, but also to the top of the head, more specifically, to the *bubun aji*, the 'anterior fontanelle,' through which the human soul is believed to enter and leave the body. At one level, then, these lines describe the return of the *manang's* soul to his body, as well as, very often, the return of his patient's soul which the *manang* has succeeded in recovering. At the same time, the words also describe the return of the shaman's spirit companions to the top of Bukit Rabong.

I'm afraid my visitor found all of this less than satisfactory. His own interests, as far as I could make out, were exclusively with physical mountains, magnetic directions, and the material objects, including crystals, used for curing.

Shortly after this, I began to work on a long essay on Saribas Iban ancestors and concepts of ancestorship for a panel, "Ancestors in Borneo," which Kenneth Sillander and Pascal Couderc were then organizing for the BRC biennial meetings in Kuching. Writing the paper brought me back once again to the question of Bukit Rabong. The fact that the souls of deceased shamans travel to a separate afterworld and that, from there, their spirits enter into quite different relationships with the living than the spirits of the ordinary dead, meant that it was necessary to treat deceased shamans as a separate category of "ancestors." Differences are marked in many ways. For example, during burial, the orientation of the body in the grave is reversed for shamans; with the head

oriented so that it points upriver, rather than downriver. Summing up these differences, I wrote in my essay (“Recalling the Dead, Revering the Ancestors”):

While the souls and spirits of the ordinary dead are believed to travel downriver (*kili*) to Sebayan, those of dead shamans travel, by contrast, upriver (*kulu*), to a separate afterworld of their own located on the summit of Mount Rabong. In Sebayan, the ordinary dead are believed to live along an invisible river known as the Mandai... Like a number of other Borneo peoples, the Iban believe that this river has a visible counterpart in the living world, also known as the Mandai... Mount Rabong, too, has a visible counterpart, but its location is less certain. From their abode at the summit of Mount Rabong, the spirits of ancestral shamans play a notably different role [in the affairs of the living] than the spirits of ordinary ancestors. While the latter are concerned with renewing and strengthening the lives of the living, the former are more specifically involved in the ritual work and initiation of living shamans. Thus during curing rituals, they are regularly invoked... as spirit companions. Many shamans take [their] name... as their shamanic title (*julok*) and some of these spirits act as personal spirit helpers. The top of Mount Rabong is said to be directly accessible to the upperworld... [and here,] according to myth, Ini' Inda [one of the principal shamanic gods] initiated the first human shamans... Since then,... she carries out these same rites [whenever]... novice shamans undergo initiation in this world. In the process, the ancestral shamans assist as spirit companions and bestow upon the newly initiated novices charms and ritual paraphernalia.

The late Reed Wadley and I were regular email correspondents during this time. I shared with him several earlier drafts of the ancestors essay and benefitted greatly from his comments. In the course of our correspondence, the question of Bukit Rabong's possible location came up a number of times. In September 2007, Reed was in West Kalimantan. Here, he asked a number of local Iban about Bukit Rabong. On September 17, 2007, he wrote by email:

You're going to love this, Cliff: According to an aka' [editor: honorific term for an older friend] in Lanjak (who would know), Bukit Rabong is in Sarawak; where exactly he didn't know

As in the Ulu Paku, where I did my own fieldwork, so, too, in the Emperan, where Reed worked, people seemed equally uncertain about the location of Bukit Rabong. However, from the area around Lanjak, near the Sarawak border, Bukit Rabong is sometimes visible, although at a great distance. In the same letter, Reed went on to write:

It would seem that Bukit Rabong stays quite firmly on [the] edge of visibility. I wonder though if in the past, when Sarawak Iban would have been traveling more into West Borneo and more knowledgeable about its geography, these sacred sites were equally removed from visibility. I think it's only been with the creation of Malaysia and its extraordinary economic success that has kept Sarawak Iban on their

own side of the border and thus led to a diminution of geographical knowledge. During the Dutch period, there seems to be an almost ubiquitous presence of Iban from Sarawak in places up and down the Kapuas, either raiding (early on) or working. Bukit Rabong might have been a little farther removed back then, on the edge of geographic awareness.

Here, I think, Reed makes several valuable points. First, there was almost certainly more travel in the past by Sarawak Iban into what is now West Kalimantan. This is well attested to by Saribas oral traditions, not only by stories of men traveling to the Mandai River and neighboring mountains to obtain *pengaroh*, but also accounts of raiding, trading expeditions, and return migrations (cf. Sandin 1994). Second, as the Iban have moved and expanded over time, it is possible that the mountain identified by local Iban groups as Bukit Rabong may have changed as well—but always preserving its location on the periphery of visibility. This is suggested by the *leka pelian* in which the *manang* frequently describe Bukit Rabong, tellingly, as ‘famed Rabong Summit visible from afar’ (*Tuchong Rabong tampak benama*, see Sather 2001: 422).

Later Reed passed on some of this correspondence to Michael Eilenberg, a Danish anthropologist who was then traveling in West Kalimantan. Michael climbed Bukit Seberuang, just above the town of Lanjak, West Kalimantan, and from there took the photograph that appears below (Photo 1), which he sent to Reed as an email attachment. Reed, in an email message to me dated Monday, December 10, 2007, sent on a copy of Michael’s photo. Reed’s accompanying message read as follows:

Cliff, I wonder if I’ve just found Bukit Rabong, or at least the possibility of it. See the attached jpg photo, taken by Michael Eilenberg from Bukit Seberuang right abo[ve] the town of Lanjak.

Looking up to the upper left corner, you can see a mountain in the shape of a tawak, right on the edge of [the] horizon. I don’t know what the mountain’s name is, but Sellato would know—that’s his people’s *menoa*. But damned if that might [not] be the one!

Reed

The direction in which the photo is taken, with Bukit Rabong on the far left, toward the Mandai River, does, indeed, orient it generally toward the country (*menoa*) of the Aoheng and Ot Danum, people studied by the anthropologist Bernard Sellato. I wrote to Bernard at once, sending him a copy of Michael’s photograph. I received Bernard’s email reply soon after, on Thursday, December 13, 2007:

Dear Cliff,

Would that be Gunung Tilung, Tevilung, Tebilung? A sacred mountain to all uppermost Kapuas people, precisely because of its shape, and assumed by some to be the abode of the souls of the dead...

All the best, BS

In a second email, sent December 17, 2007, Bernard confirmed that Gunung Tilung is, indeed, visible from the Sarawak side of the border and so, given its distinctive shape, is very likely the same mountain that several Saribas Iban had told me that they had



Photo 1: Bukit Rabong seen from Bukit Seberuang, above Lanjak, West Kalimantan.

photo: Michael Eilenberg

seen while traveling along the border and which they identified as Bukit Rabong. He also attached a photograph of Gunung Tilung, which appears as Photo 4 in his book, *Hornbill and Dragon* (1989, see Photo 2 below). The photo itself was taken near Putussibau. As he added in a subsequent note (December 21):

Gunung Tilung or Tevilung, as far as I am aware, is where all the (ordinary) dead go... Since it is fairly visible from Putussibau, where many groups came to trade, as my photo shows, as well as from the Sarawak border area, as [Michael's] photo shows, no wonder its shape has left a lasting impression on all people residing in or passing by those areas.

Continuing, he goes on to suggest,

Possibly, the Sarawak Iban, who could only see it from afar, made the mountain the abode of dead shamans, while most local groups, like the Taman, Maloh, etc., view it as the abode of all dead spirits.

Concluding his note of December 17, 2007, Bernard additionally wrote, "I'm pretty sure it's the same mountain. Many groups, beyond [the] upper Kapuas region know of it."²

² One such group that Sellato mentioned in his note are the Berawan. Thus, Sellato writes that Gunung Tilung "is even mentioned in Berawan texts given by Metcalf in *Where are you/spirits?*, although Metcalf did not recognize it as an actual mountain—he was so engrossed in his speaking-in-pairs stuff that he believed that all names mentioned in Berawan texts were just *piat* terms or names fabricated for the sake of rhymes, the interesting thing being that the Berawan here demonstrate that they know a lot of toponyms from regions far away from theirs." Sellato touched



Photo 2: Gunung Tilung from near Putussibau, West Kalimantan. photo: Bernard Sellato

Referring to what he describes as a “pretty poor” APA map of Borneo, he adds, “On my map, it is called Gunung Liang Sunan (987m) and is indeed on the Mandai (left bank).”

In his message of December 21, Bernard makes another point, which, I think, has considerable bearing on the possible significance of Bukit Rabong, not only for the Iban, but for other groups as well. Neither the Mandai River nor Bukit Rabong exist within an area of present-day Iban settlement. Although the Saribas Iban trace their origins back through an extensive body of oral traditions to the middle and upper Kapuas, except for what is described by some accounts as a brief transit by way of the mouth of the Mandai, neither the Mandai River nor Bukit Rabong are regarded by the Iban as places of origin or even significant past settlement. While both clearly exist, as landmarks within the Iban cognitive world, they occupy or define its outer peripheries, existing, as Wadley aptly put it, at the edge of Iban geographical awareness. As Sellato suggests in his note, Mount Rabong, Tilung, Tevilung, or whatever it is called by local groups, may be seen as peripheral, or boundary defining, in an even more fundamental sense. Thus, he writes (December 21, 2007):

Actually, the interesting thing with this otherwise not especially interesting mountain is the fact that it stands right at the triple point between the territories of three major ethno-cultural clusters: Iban and Ibanic to the W and NW, Ot Danum and other Barito-speaking peoples to the S, and “central Borneo” (in the Rousseau sense) and nomads to the E—plus Tamanic to the N. So, no wonder, either, that it appears in the oral traditions...of people living quite far away, such

on these matters in his review of Metcalf published in *L’Homme* (1991, vol. 120, XXXI, 4: 124-26).

as the Berawan, although, of course, those could never have seen it themselves and have learned about it [only] from others.

While we are dealing here with a mountain that, in one way or another, is sacred to many people in Borneo, it is not entirely clear, at this stage, that all of these people are referring to the same mountain, although, as Sellato says, this seems highly probable. Equally uncertain is the question of whether this mountain is the same as the map-maker's Gunung Liang Sunan. Here I would repeat Martin Baier's call for a systematic review of the physical geography of Kalimantan as a way of reaching some definite answer.

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GIFT OF THE REV. DR. MARTIN BAIER'S LIBRARY TO THE UNIVERSITAS PALANGKARAYA (UNPAR)

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I imagine that my library of over 1000 books and periodicals about the whole of Borneo and bordering areas is one of the largest private collections of books on Borneo in any German-speaking country. Since 1924, three generations of the Baier family have lived and worked among Dayak peoples in Kalimantan. Out of gratitude for all that we have experienced and learned as a consequence of this long, close association, I have decided that I would like to donate my Borneo library to an academic institute in Kalimantan.

The books in my collection cover a period from 1706 (J.J.de Roy, *Hachelijke Reys-Togt...na Borneo en Achin...ondernomen in het Jahr 1691*. Leyden: Pieter van der Aa) to 2009 (M. Slama, *Konflikte-Mächte-Identitaeten*, with Kuhnt-Saptodewo and M. Mahin: "Dayak sein und Dayak werden," Wien: Verlag der Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften). It includes all standard works (Schwaner, Hardeland, Nieuwenhuis, Bock, Mollengraaf, Mallinckrodt, Schärer, etc.) and all reprints of English-writing authors about Sarawak (as Hose and McDougall 1966, a.s.o.), consecutive issues of the *Sarawak Museum Journal* from 1954 to 1991, almost all Dutch essays from the Banjaresen War to 1950, picture books (*Kalimantan Selatan*) and Atlases (van Diessen /Ormeling).

The well-known Dutch antiquarian Gert van Bestebreurtje judged: "My compliments. You have a splendid academic library: a valuable addition to an Indonesian university."

In 1983, I began looking for a university library to which I might donate my collection. It seemed to me the best university at the time for Dayak studies would be the Universitas Tanjungpura in Pontianak. I wrote to the Rector and sent several students to see him, but there was no reaction. At last, I asked the director of the theological academy, Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Pontianak, to mediate. The oral answer from the Rector was: *Kurang entusias* - "not especially interested!" Then the Indonesian General Consul [from Berlin] (who was Batak) visited me and inspected the library. He promised to make inquiries at the various universities in Kalimantan. He never received an answer. In 1998 I visited the Rector of the University of Borneo in Tarakan [Universitas Borneo Tarakan]. He was enthusiastic but as the university lacked a faculty of arts [Indonesian: Fakultas Sastra, i.e., language, literature, and social sciences], I made it a condition that a lecturer should take a course in Dutch, at least in Jakarta. Here, too, there was no reaction. In the end I offered the books to a good friend, Dr. Marthin Billa, the government regent of Malinau, East Kalimantan [Bupat Kabupaten Malinau], for the Kayan Mentarang National Park Centre. No reply.

The situation at the Universitas Pelangka Raya (UnPar), Central Kalimantan,

proved to be very different (with Dayak lecturers, some of them studying in Australia, many of them Christian), my offer was immediately accepted and Professor Kumpiady Widen, Pembantu I Rektor of UnPar, arranged for the transfer of 9 million rupiah (=US\$ 900), this sum donated to a center for the handicapped in Samarinda. I sent the first 22 books by post to Palangkaraya (cost \$120), where they arrived undamaged. The university has promised to transfer another 10 million rupiah for transportation costs and confirmed that in Palangkaraya there are suitable bookbinders able to repair old books. In March 2010, I plan to visit the Universitas Palangka Raya library to witness and assist in the cataloguing and housing of the collection. The bulk of the collection is scheduled to arrive later.

Report: Revisualising the Baram: Photographs from the A.C. Haddon collection (1898-1899) workshop, Marudi, 8 August 2009.

Liana Chua
Gonville & Caius College
University of Cambridge
Cambridge, CB2 1TA
UK

A hundred and two years ago, a small party of Cambridge scholars led by the anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon arrived in Sarawak as guests of Charles Hose, Resident of the Baram District. During their stay, they took hundreds of photographs of the people and places of the Baram and the surrounding regions, including Limbang, Brunei and Kuching. The collection formed a vivid and fascinating visual record of turn-of-the-century Sarawak, encompassing images of native communities, longhouses, ritual practices, riverscapes, Brooke rule, and the famous Marudi Peace Conference of 1899. Since then, these photographs have remained in storage at the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA), barely known and only sparingly used.

With funding and support from MAA's Crowther-Beynon Fund and the Firebird Foundation, USA, this slice of Sarawak's history has now been returned to the areas and communities in which it was made. On 8 August 2009, a workshop was convened in Marudi to mark the transfer of 316 digital and print copies of the Haddon photographic collection to the Baram Regional Museum (a branch of the Sarawak Museum). The one-day event brought together over thirty members of the Orang Ulu community as well as other interested observers from across Sarawak to scrutinize and discuss the images. It featured a small exhibition of about a hundred photographs, most of which were divided into themed categories: "People," "Life in the longhouse," "Daily activities," "Ritual life," "Places, spaces and landscapes," and "The Marudi Peace Conference." Workshop proceedings opened with a lecture on the historical context of Haddon's visit and an overview of the collection by Cambridge anthropologist Liana Chua, who had catalogued the images in 2007 and later arranged their transfer to Sarawak. This was complemented by two papers delivered by Ipoi Datan, Director of the Sarawak Museum—one (on behalf of Charles Leh) on the history of Fort Hose, which now houses the Baram Regional Museum, and the other on cultural sites in the Baram District. Jayl Langub of UNIMAS brought things to a conclusion with a presentation on the Mamat ritual paintings of noted Kenyah artist Jalong Liban [see Langub and Rousseau, "Ten Kenyah paintings given to the Sarawak Museum," *BRB*, 37(2006): 195-216]. All the sessions were accompanied by lively question-and-answers and open discussions.

A key achievement of the workshop was to garner valuable information—hitherto lacking in MAA's records—about the people, places and events shown in the photographs. Participants' local knowledge and memories were fully tapped as they helped to identify various locations, correct mistakes, and pad out accounts of specific



episodes and activities. Animated debates over the origins and meanings of specific corporate labels, such as “Sebop” and “Madang,” were sparked by some of the pictures as well as by references to Haddon’s own records of the trip. Other images provoked commentaries on social and political relations under the Brooke Raj (1841-1946): a photograph of longhouse denizens plying an unwilling Muslim visitor with alcohol, for example, prompted reflections on the constant ethnic interaction that has historically taken place in the area, while stiffly-posed anthropometric shots generated a dialogue about the power imbalances inherent in Haddon’s visit. Finally, it was interesting that the sessions also precipitated broader questions of how to preserve and promote those aspects of “Orang Ulu culture” which were so clearly manifested in the photographs, but so rapidly disappearing in contemporary Sarawak. Among the possibilities mooted were the restoration of old colonial buildings as cultural heritage centers and the establishment of “living museums” in Baram communities as a means of preserving traditional knowledge and skills. The potential for using old photographs as forms of documentary evidence in contemporary land disputes was also raised.

Feedback from the participants was roundly positive, with several of them being spurred into doing their own research on the topics discussed. The physical and digital copies of Haddon’s collection are currently being held in the Sarawak Museum’s offices in Kuching; it is anticipated that they will eventually be enlarged and assembled as an exhibition in the Baram Regional Museum. The possibility of making these images digitally accessible has also been raised, although no concrete steps have been taken yet towards this end. Finally, in what we hope will be the start—or re-establishment—of a long-term relationship between Sarawak and Cambridge, the Sarawak Museum will continue to compile and convey future feedback on the images back to MAA.

Acknowledgements

The workshop was jointly organized with Ipoi Datan and the staff of the Sarawak Museum, and Jayl Langub of the Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS. The entire photographic repatriation project would not have been possible without financial aid from the Crowther-Beynon Fund, University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the Firebird Foundation, USA; I particularly appreciated the support of Anite Herle and George Appell. Enquiries about the Haddon collection can be addressed to me at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, CB2 1TA, United Kingdom or lclc2@cam.ac.uk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE TENTH INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL BRC CONFERENCE CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SARAWAK MIRI, SARAWAK, 5-7 JULY, 2010

The Tenth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council will be held on the Curtin University of Technology Sarawak campus, in Miri, Sarawak, over a three-day period, July 5-7, 2010. Sponsored by the Curtin University of Technology, the conference theme for the 2010 meetings is "Borneo: Continuity, Change and Preservation."

Further information regarding the conference, travel and accommodations, preregistration forms, program schedules, information on panels and special events can be found on the conference website: <http://www.curtin.edu.my/brc2010>.

Or by contacting:

BRC 2010 Secretariat
Curtin University of Technology
Sarawak Campus
CDT 250
98009
Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia
<http://www.curtin.edu.my/brc2010>

Program

Sunday 4 July 2010				
18: 00-20: 30	Conference Welcoming Reception			
Monday 5 July 2010				
08: 30	Arrival of buses			
08: 30-09: 30	Registration			
09: 30-10: 30	Official Opening Ceremony			
10: 30-11: 00	Coffee & Tea			
11: 00-12: 00	Keynote Address			
12: 00-13: 15	Lunch			
13: 15-14: 30				
Session I-A	Session I-B	Session I-C	Session I-D	Session I-E
14: 30-16: 30				
Session II	Panel session on migration			
16: 30	Coffee & Tea			
16: 45	Departure of buses			

Tuesday 6 July 2010				
08: 30	Arrival of buses			
08: 30-09: 15	Registration/ coffee & Tea			
09: 15-10: 30				
Session III-A	Session III-B	Session III-C	Session III-D	Session III-E
10: 30-12: 00				
Session IV-A	Session IV-B	Session IV-C	Session IV-D	Session IV-E
12: 00-13: 30	Lunch			
13: 30-16: 00				
Session V	Panel session on burial			
16: 00	Departure of buses			
19: 00-22: 00	Conference Dinner			

Wednesday 7 July 2010				
08: 30	Arrival of buses			
08: 30-09: 15	Registration/ Coffee & Tea			
09: 15-10: 30				
Session VI-A	Session VI-B	Session VI-C	Session VI-D	Session VI-E
12: 00-13: 30				
13: 30-16: 00				
Session VII	Panel session on language			
14: 30-15: 00				
15: 00-15: 30				
15: 30-16: 00				
16: 15	Departure of buses			

- Biodiversity and Ecology
- Cultural Heritage and Hybridization
- Education and Indigenous Communities
- Ethnicity, Diversity and Identity
- Gender and Social Transformation
- Health and Healing
- History, Anthropology and Archaeology
- Human Resources and Industrial Relations
- ICT, Media and Communication
- Languages
- Marine Resources

- Migration, Diasporas and Border Issues
- Property and Land Issues
- Psychology
- Security Issues
- Sustainable Development
- Tourism

The Conference Coordinator is Bibi Aminah binti Abdul Ghani, Senior Lecturer, School of Foundation and Continuing Studies, Curtin University of Technology Sarawak (bibi.aminah@curtin.edu.my).

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ASIA PACIFIC STUDIES (IJAPS)

Contributions are invited to the *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* (IJAPS) (www.usm.my/ijaps). This young, interdisciplinary journal (inaugural issue November 2005) welcomes contributions from scholars and students of all disciplines (non-science) working on themes related to the Asia Pacific region.

The journal will also consider publishing special issues with a guest editor or editors on a specific thematic topic. Such issues would carry between three to five articles (six or seven papers are also possible) and an editorial introduction. The Editor will endeavor to reserve forthcoming issues for this purpose.

For further information, contribution guidelines, and proposals regarding possible future thematic topics, contact the IJAPS Chief Editor:

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Chief Editor, *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* (IJAPS)
(www.usm.my/ijaps/)

Series Editor, APRU-USM Asia Pacific Studies Publication Series (AAPSPS)

BORNEO BIOMEDICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY, 3RD EDITION

Dr. A. Baer has completed a 3rd edition of the *Borneo Biomedical Bibliography* under the auspices of the Institute of East Asian Studies at UNIMAS. The bibliography

has been archived and is now available through the following link: ScholarsArchive@OSU using the url: <http://hdl.handle.net/1957/12879>.

UNIVERSITI BRUNEI DARUSSALAM DOCTORAL SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM 2009/2010

Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) is once again offering its Doctoral Scholarships Programme (UBD DSP) to enhance UBD's ability to attract academically outstanding international Ph.D. scholars, as part of its efforts to make the university a regional and international centre of excellence in research and higher education.

The UBD Doctoral Scholarships Programme is designed to attract world-class doctoral students who are able to show a very high standard of scholarly achievement in graduate studies in the natural sciences, health sciences, social sciences, business and economics, Malay/Brunei studies, language skills and communication, and education, by offering students financial assistance during their doctoral studies.

The UBD Doctoral Scholarships Programme is part of UBD's ongoing international recruitment strategy and aims to position UBD as a regional and international leader in leading-edge higher education research.

Terms and conditions

1. The UBD Doctoral Scholarships Programme is open to all international candidates, regardless of nationality, applying for admission to a full time PhD program at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) at any time in 2009 or 2010.
2. The scholarships do not carry a bond.
3. Each scholarship covers tuition fees (and bench fees where applicable), one outward and return economy travel fare to Brunei Darussalam, research expenses up to a maximum of Brunei Dollars \$8,000, a yearly book allowance of Brunei Dollars \$300, on-campus accommodation in the university's Residential Halls, plus a monthly personal allowance of Brunei Dollars \$500.
4. Each scholarship is tenable for the minimum period of candidature for the respective PhD program at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD).
5. The scholarship does not include any other costs not specified in Condition 3 (above) and it does not guarantee employment or residence in Brunei Darussalam to the scholar upon graduation.
6. The scholar may not take up paid employment *outside the University* or serve on the staff of their country's Diplomatic Mission in Brunei Darussalam during the award. However, the scholar may apply for paid employment *within the University* such as that of Research Assistant or Part-Time Tutor/Lecturer only with agreement from the student's supervisor and if such posts are available in the University.
7. The scholar may be required to assist his/her respective Faculty in undergraduate teaching, or other work assigned by the Department Head, for up to 6 hours per week. This Teaching Assistantship is a condition of the scholarship and the scholar **will not receive any pay** for the teaching assistance provided.
8. For the academic year 2009/2010, the UBD PhD Scholarships are open for the following Ph.D. programs:

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences	Ph.D. in Geography, History, Malay Language & Linguistics, Malay Literature, Sociology/ Anthropology, English Applied Linguistics.
Faculty of Science	Ph.D. in all areas, particularly Petroleum Geoscience, Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Physics, Computer Science, Robotics, Mechatronic, Material Science, Alternative/ Renewable Energy, Agro-technology and Food Security.
Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education	Ph.D. in Education (all areas).
Faculty of Business, Economics & Policy Studies	Ph.D. in Economics, Public Policy/Social Policy, and Business Administration.
Academy of Brunei Studies	Ph.D. in Brunei Studies and ASEAN Studies
Institute of Medicine	Ph.D. in all areas, particularly Medicine, Bio-medical Science, Nursing, and Midwifery.
Language Centre	Ph.D. in Language and/or Communication, and Foreign Language Studies.
Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre	Ph.D. in all areas.

9. The scholarship covers the entire duration of the Ph.D. program (3 years) provided that every year the scholar demonstrates satisfactory progress as determined by the University.
10. If the scholarship is terminated prematurely by the scholar himself, then the scholar shall be responsible for his travel expenses back to his home country.
11. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of competition among eligible candidates. Candidates should be academically outstanding, interested and able to pursue higher education research of relevance to UBD, and able to demonstrate an appreciation of South East Asian culture, particularly of Brunei Darussalam's Malay Islamic culture.
12. The minimum admission requirement for the scholarship is an Upper Second Class undergraduate degree and a competent or distinction achievement at the Masters degree. Both stated awards should be obtained at an institution recognized by UBD.
13. All applicants must complete the prescribed application forms (available on the UBD website: www.ubd.edu.bn).
14. Confirmation of the scholarship shall be subject to the visa and health requirements of the Government of Brunei Darussalam (details attached herewith).
15. The scholarship may not be held concurrently with any other study award without the prior approval of UBD.
16. UBD reserves the right not to award any scholarships if there are no candidates of sufficient merit. The decision of Universiti Brunei Darussalam on selection of any candidate is final. Enquiries or disputes regarding its decisions will not be entertained.

For more information about the UBD Doctoral Scholarships Programme, please contact:

The International and Public Relations Office
Universiti Brunei Darussalam
Telephone / Fax: +673-2463062 / 2463015
or email: rosnah.ramly@ubd.edu.bn

CATALOGUE PUBLICATION

Patong: La grande scultura dei popoli del Borneo dalle Collezioni del Museo delle Culture di Lugano [Patong: The great sculpture of the people of Borneo from the collection of the Museo delle Culture of Lugano, Switzerland]. Altrarti 2, Milano: Edizioni Mazzotta, 2008. [www.mcl.lugano.ch]

In 2007 the Museo delle Culture of Lugano, Switzerland, presented a temporary exhibition of Bornean art entitled “Patong. Great figures carved by the people of Borneo.” This was held at the Galleria Gottardo, Lugano (see *BRB* vol. 37, 244-45, 2006), and, coinciding with the event, a booklet was published describing the 39 artworks included in the exhibition, each identified by ethnic group and function, together with an account of a Bahau or Modang coffin-end depicting in high-relief the thunder spirit Pèn Lih (Campione 2007).

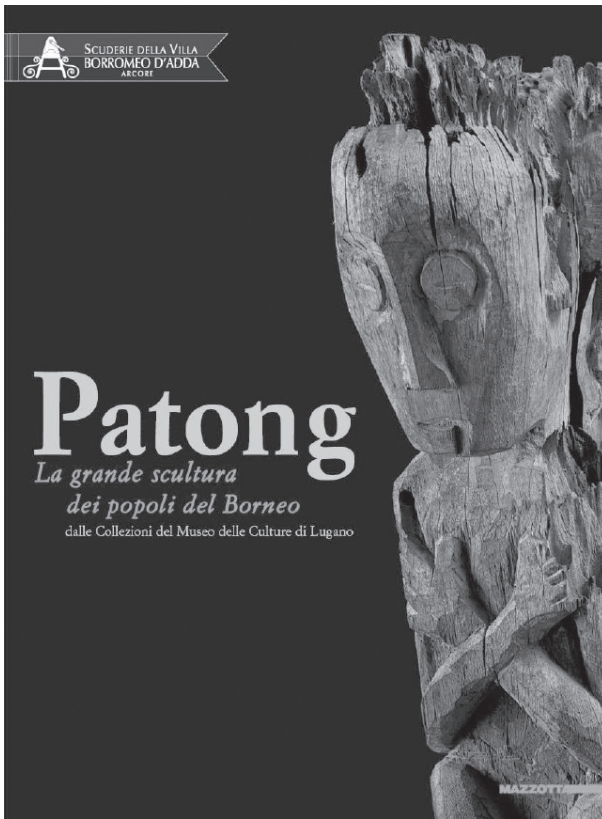
In 2008, the MCL took the Patong exhibition abroad. From 5 October 2008 through 15 February 2009, the exhibition, now called “*Patong. The great sculpture of Bornean people*” was presented in Italy at the Villa Borromeo d’Adda exhibition hall in the city of Arcore, located a few minutes from Milan, in the heart of the northern industrial area of Brianza.

The exhibition was made possible thanks to MCL, the Antonio Mazzotta Foundation (Milan), the Councillor of Cultural Identity and Autonomy for the Lombardy Region, the Councillor of Performing Arts for the City of Monza and Brianza, and the Ministry for Cultural Assets and Activities of Milan. The aim of this second exhibition was to introduce to the Italian public Bornean art and culture.

For the exhibition’s inauguration, a 180-page catalogue in Italian edited by Paolo Maiullari and Junita Arnel was published by Edizioni Mazzotta. The catalogue is the second volume in the MCL’s Altrarti series.

The *Patong* catalogue consists of eight essays and two sections of color illustrations. It opens with a series of forewords by the Governor of Kalimantan Tengah, Agustin Teras Narang; the Councillor for Cultural Identity and Autonomy for the Lombardy Region, Massimo Zanella; the Councillor for Cultural Assets and Activities of Milan, Daniela Benelli; the Councillor for the Performing Arts for the City of Monza and Brianza, Gigi Ponti; the Mayor of Arcore, Marco Rocchini; the Councillor for Culture, Vittorio Perrella; and the President of the Antonio Mazzotta Foundation, Gabriele Mazzotta.

The first essay entitled “Progetto Patong” [Patong Project] was written by the director of MCL, Francesco Paolo Campione. It describes how the Borneo collection was assembled by the Swiss artist Serge Brignoni, who bequeathed his entire collection to



the city of Lugano in 1985. It also describes the three-year project prior to the Arcore exhibition and the work that went into the publication of the exhibition catalogue. The article also coins a new appellation for Bornean great figures: the general term *patong* (or *patung*), as opposed to the earlier *hampatong*. The term *hampatong* first appeared in the scientific literature in an article in *Nederlandsch-Indië Oud & Nieuw* (Bertling, 1927) and in time assumed the generic meaning of “sculpture” in reference to Bornean art, without any geographic or cultural distinction, especially in European and North American tribal art circles. The term *patong* (or *patung*), which is taken from the root of the word *hampatong*, also

refers locally to “sculpture,” constituting the root of the word for “sculpture” use by a number of Bornean ethnic groups and in the Indonesian lingua franca. The article concludes by presenting the goals of the Patong project for the next years. These consist of completing an in-depth examination of aspects of Bornean art, organizing an international seminar and exhibitions that will project an image of indigenous people of Borneo that is respectful of the complexity, originality, and richness of their almost unknown artistic and cultural values.

The second essay, “Un inatteso giacimento” [An unexpected deposit] by Bernard Sellato, describes the work of collecting, identifying, and interpreting art objects. It analyzes the complexity of Borneo art and culture in relation to tribal art market values and needs, noting the “unhealthy” treatment given to Bornean artworks today. As Sellato notes, a major problem relating to Bornean private collections is an almost total dearth of information regarding origins and functions, because in the process of evaluating an object’s aesthetic qualities, there is near-total ignorance of its cultural context. Moreover, generalizations in identifying objects seem to respond, for practical and financial reasons, to a need to place heterogeneous Bornean artwork within familiar and significant ethnic labels, like Bahau, Modang, and Ngaju, which thus become “boxes” into which are put all sorts of artifacts of diverse, often unrelated origin. The interpretation of these objects

also discredits them, because dealers tend to label all Bornean anthropomorphic figures as “ancestor figures,” which is a gross oversimplification. Some of these figures, as among “Kayanic” groups, are not ancestor figures at all and have no connection whatsoever with the dead or funerals. Although many large anthropomorphic statues, especially among groups comprising the “Barito Complex,” are erected in the course of funeral rituals, they do not necessarily represent ancestors. While acknowledging that everyone has the right to his own interpretation, owners would do well to review the scientific literature.

The third essay is written by a Ngaju mother and daughter, Nila Riwut and Mutia Hintan, and is entitled “Dayak fra tradizione e modernita” [Dayak between tradition and modernity]. It describes some Ngaju traditional practices associated with birth, marriage, death, and healing. The authors stress the effects of a modern way of life, now increasingly penetrating Borneo, in changing traditional values and practices. External influences like the colonial state, Christianity, and modern medicine have at least partially disrupted ancestral practices and beliefs, thus creating a situation in which people are now precariously balanced between two ways of life. Interviews describing traditional healing show how the use of herbs and healing rituals performed by the *balian* may give better results than modern medicine, suggesting that these methods should be preserved. Loss of traditional knowledge is today a fact of life. Adversely affecting the Dayaks have been transmigration policies, Islamization, and environmental destruction. Responsibility in the latter case lies with government authorities who encourage the exploitation of the forests, thus provoking ecological and cultural disasters, and who treat the Dayaks as ignorant people and an obstacle to progress.

The fourth essay, by Antonio J. Guerreiro, is entitled “La scultura lignea dei Dayak: funzioni e valori estetici” [The wooden sculpture of the Dayaks: functions and aesthetic values]. After describing the main cultural areas of Borneo and their principal wooden products, iconographic motifs and functions, the author introduces the reader, through a stylistic analysis, to the artwork of the ethnic groups that live in the valley of the Mahakam and its tributaries in East Kalimantan, i.e. the Bahau-Modang and the Benuaq, comparing them with neighboring ethnic groups. Special attention is given to Benuaq sculpture. The author begins with a typology of Benuaq wooden sculptures, then describes the functions and contexts in which they are used. He next describes *blontang* funerary poles made for the *kwangkai* secondary burial ceremony. His analysis treats meaning, aesthetic values and context, depicting the symbolic iconography of these poles and the presence of different factors determining their execution, like the purchaser’s intent and the carver’s *pathos*. The carver expresses through iconographic details the feelings he experienced during the ceremony, giving each *blontang* a distinctive character. This example, together with an analysis of Mahakam valley sculptures, points up the diversity of Bornean artistic production. Stylistic and iconographic motifs are illustrated by means of photographs of Bahau, Modang, and Benuaq sculptures from the Brignoni Collection.

The fifth essay, “Eventi celesti e immagini terrestri. la scultura funeraria dei Dayak Ngaju” [Celestial events and earthly images. The funerary sculpture of the Ngaju Dayak], is written by Paolo Maiullari and describes the funerary architecture and ceremonial poles made by the Ngaju of southern Borneo. These objects are constructed

for the deceased's second burial and show strong connections with cosmology. Starting his analysis with the Katingan area, the author stresses the high degree of variation due to the local specificities, families' wishes and their economic means. Specific cultural traits from the upper and lower Katingan areas are compared to one another, and to those of the Kahayan area and, through personal communications with Kenneth Sillander, to the Bentian. While Ngaju mausoleums show considerable conformity due to architectural constraints, the ceremonial poles erected beside them display far greater decorative variation and are divided into three types: 1) *sapundu*, 2) *sapundu balanga*, and 3) *sengkaran/penyanggaran*. The iconography used to decorate these poles consists of representations of cultural objects, anthropomorphic figures, animals and plants, often with both cosmological and earthly significance. This iconography differs depending on what those who commission these poles choose to have carved on them. Four examples of funerary complexes, i.e. mausoleums and *sapundu* poles, are analyzed in detail. Two are priest's *sapundu*, one is a large funerary complex belonging to 14 families, and the fourth is a village chief's *sapundu*. Each has its own story to tell, and together with Bentian examples, illustrate the richness and diversity of indigenous culture.

Junita Arnel, in the sixth essay, "Il sentimento della morte nella nostra cultura" [Sentiments regarding death in our culture], writes of Ngaju mythology and the *tiwah* burial ceremony. In the first part of her essay, she describes Ngaju conceptions of the universe, the secondary burial ceremony (*tiwah*), and the voyage of the soul according to *Panaturan*, the official collection of Ngaju oral cosmogony and mythological stories written for the first time in 1973 in the *sangiang* sacred language. Here, myths of the middle course of the Kahayan River predominate. In the second part of her essay, she provides a detailed account of a single *tiwah* ceremony, held in 1974 in the Katingan area. This 25-day-long *tiwah* was held for the author's grandmother and through the use of family archives and interviews with the attending Katingan priests, the author describes the ceremony from beginning to end. The ritual was conducted according to Katingan tradition and myths and differs in many important respects from the Kahayan ceremony and from the official *Panaturan* version. One striking difference is the identity of the central figure of the psychopomp. In Kahayan tradition this is Raja Tempon Telon, while in Katingan it is Raja Sangumang. Day-by-day, the author describes each stage of the *tiwah*, stressing the connection between ritual practices and Katingan mythology. In this way, she reveals the nature of the *tiwah* as sacred theatre, a kind of "cosmological mimesis" of the soul's journey to the upper world.

The seventh essay by Michael Heppell, "Iban *tuntun* della Collezione Brignoni" [Iban *tuntun* from the Brignoni Collection], begins with a general account of *tuntun* and how they came to the attention of Western art markets and collectors in the mid to late 1970s when these objects started to appear in Kuching. Until then, only people working in Iban areas occasionally acquired them. A *tuntun* is a measuring rod used to determine the correct height of the trip-wire and strike of the blade of a spring trap (*peti*) used to kill pigs and deer. Use of the *tuntun* has mythological roots that are connected with daily life through their ritual consecration. According to Iban myth, *tuntun* originated from a time when the Iban were incapable of hunting success. Iban leaders encountered a god who told them how to carve and make use of the *tuntun* to improve their chances of hunting

success. A *tuntun* incorporates in its markings standard measures of height. These are more difficult to determine for figured *tuntun* than for non-figured ones, because the figures carved on them vary significantly in size. Figures, however, have other purposes, often originating from dream experiences, and so place *tuntun* in the category of Dayak hunting charms.

Finally, an eighth essay by Wahyu Ernawati, “Le opere del Kalimantan al Museo Nazionale d’Indonesia” [Kalimantan works of art at the National Museum of Indonesia], traces the history of how the first Bornean collections were put together in Indonesia. As the Dutch extended their colonial control over the Indonesian Archipelago through military expeditions, the state also supported scientific investigations as a way of gathering knowledge about the territory and its local cultures. Especially in the nineteenth century, the collection of material culture became a large-scale project, particularly the collection of ethnographic objects. The colonial policy of the time required that all items of material culture collected in the field be shipped to the Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Batavia, which founded the first ethnographic museum in Indonesia (Museum van de Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen). In the late nineteenth century, the Dutch for the first time extended colonial control over the southern part of Borneo. Around 1840, the colonial government forced the Sultans of South Kalimantan to sign a trade agreement and recognize the colonial government. This opened the possibility for intense explorations conducted by experts such Schwaner along the Barito River, van Lijnden, Veth and von Kessel along the Kapuas, and Weddik through the Mahakam River. Between the mid-nineteenth century and the declaration of Indonesian independence in 1945, the Bornean collections held by the Dutch colonial government were divided between Batavia and the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden. With Indonesian independence, the museum van de Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen passed to Indonesian management and was later renamed the National Museum (Museum Nasional). In terms of the number and quality of works of Bornean art and material culture preserved both in the Museum Nasional in Jakarta and in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden, the principal collectors were Anton Willem Nieuwenhuis and E. W. F. van Walchren.

A simplified exhibition booklet was also prepared for youngsters of elementary or primary school age in the form of a jungle adventure story entitled *Il prezioso talismano di Jamit. Viaggio immaginario tra i Dayak* [The precious talisman of Jamit. Imaginary travel into the Dayak world] written by Gina Abbati of Edizioni Mazzotta. Although simple in language, the story is meant to introduce young readers to the daily life and myths of the Dayak peoples of Borneo and to the decorative images represented in the exhibition.

The MCL publications are available at www.lugano.ch/museoculture/welcome.cfm?id=003006. Divided by series, most are in both English and Italian. Online orders at info.mcl@lugano.ch.

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- 2008 *Il prezioso talismano di Jamit. Un viaggio immaginario tra i Dayak.* Milano: Edizioni Mazzotta Ragazzi. [Illustrated exhibition booklet for young readers].

Bertling, C.T.

- 1927 «*Hampatongs*» of «*Tempatongs*» van Borneo, in: *Nederlandsch-Indië Oud & Nieuw*, vol 12, n.5, pp.131-141, 179-192, 223-236, 249-254, 's-Gravenhage (Den Haag).

Campione, Francesco Paolo

- 2007 *Le grandi figure scolpite dei popoli del Borneo*, Catalogue of the temporary exhibition held in Galleria Gottardo, Galleria Gottardo/MCL, Lugano.

Maiullari, Paolo & Junita Arnel, eds.

- 2008 *PATONG. La grande scultura dei popoli del Borneo.* Altrarti 2, Milano: Edizioni Mazzotta.

Junita Arnel & Paolo Maiullari

BORNEO NEWS

NEGARA BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NEWS

Professor V.T. King (Leeds University) has been reappointed as external examiner by UBD in sociology and anthropology for 2009-2011 (*ASEASUK News*, No 45, Spring 2009: 2) [AVM Horton].

SABAH NEWS

Fausto Barlocco (Loughborough University) successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation on “Between the local and the state: practices and discourses of identity among the Kadazan of Sabah, East Malaysia” (supervisor: Professor Sarah Pink) (*ASEASUK News*, No 45, Spring 2009:5) [see Abstracts, this issue].

Maureen de Silva (SOAS, University of London) successfully defended her doctoral thesis on “Javanese indentured labourers in British North Borneo, 1914-1932” (supervisor: Professor William G. Clarence-Smith) (*ASEASUK News*, No 45, Spring 2009:5).

The [I.H.N.] Evans Fund helped to fund a conference on “Continuity and Change: (re)conceptualising power in Southeast Asia,” held at the University of Cambridge, 26-28 March 2009 (*ASEASUK News*, No 45, Spring 2009:8).

Wong Sue, Sergeant Jack (d. 2009), DCM; US Submarine Combat Insignia; died on 16 November 2009, aged eighty-four (*DT W.25.11.2009:35*).

“Chinese-Australian member of Z Force, the Allied Special Forces Unit, during the Second World War, who served behind enemy lines in Borneo for six months as a nineteen-year-old. In the several books he wrote about his war experiences, he claimed Z Force commandos in Borneo killed 1,700 Japanese soldiers and trained six thousand guerrillas. Also witnessed the horrors of the Sandakan prisoner of war camp - only six out of two thousand Australians returned from the camp alive” (*DT W.25.11.2009:35*) [AVM Horton].

On March 15, 2010, **Dr. Paul Porodong**, a Rungus, successfully defended his Ph.D. thesis at the University of Kent at Canterbury, United Kingdom. The title of his thesis is “An Exploration of Contemporary Rungus Farmers’ Subsistence Strategies.”

SARAWAK NEWS

Dr. Otto Steinmayer, a long-time contributor to the *BRB*, has returned to Malaysia and, we are happy to note, is now teaching again in the English Department, Universiti Malaya (see “Letter from Lundu,” Brief Communications, this issue). His current university email address is: otto@um.edu.my.

We are also pleased to note that, as of January 2009, **Ipoi Datan** was appointed Director of the Sarawak Museum and Chief Editor of the *Sarawak Museum Journal*. The former Director of the Sarawak Museum, **Haji Sanib bin Haji Said**, was appointed to the Nusantara Chair, at the Institute of East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), where he also holds a teaching appointment in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Niah Cave Project

As part of this project, under way since 2000, around forty papers have been published already and two monographs are due to be published by the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research and Sarawak Museum:

Graeme Barker, David Gilbertson, and Tim Reynolds (eds.)

(1) *Rainforest Foraging and Farming in Island Southeast Asia: The Archaeology and Environmental History of the Niah Caves, Sarawak*

(2) *The Archaeology of the Niah Caves, Sarawak: Excavations 1954-2004 (ASEASUK News, No 45, Spring 2009:1).*

Professor Graeme Barker (University of Cambridge) is “Principal Investigator on the ‘Cultured Rainforest: Long-term Human Ecological Histories in the Highlands of Borneo’ project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council within their Landscape and Environment strategic research initiative with funding from April 2007 to March 2010” (*ASEASUK News, No 45, Spring 2009:1-2*).

Dr. Lindsay Lloyd-Smith (University of Cambridge) is currently a Research Associate for the Cultured Rainforest Project, having just been awarded a doctorate for a thesis entitled “Chronologies of the Dead: Later Prehistoric burial practice at the Niah Caves, Sarawak” (*ASEASUK News, No 45, Spring 2009: 2, 5*).

Chan Seng Chai (d. 2009), Sarawak journalist under the bylines “SC Chan” or “Johnny Chan”; *Malaysian Mirror* news portal’s correspondent for Sarawak and Sabah; also wrote for *Malaysiakini* and freelanced as a Bernama stringer; died aged sixty-one at the Normah Medical Specialist Centre, Kuching, at 2 am on Wednesday 22 July 2009 after undergoing a heart bypass operation; the body was brought back to his residence (Rainbow Drive, Jalan Green, Kuching) on the same day (*BBO Th.23.7.2009*; also *The Star*, online). Survived by two children (*BBO Th.23.7.2009*) [AVM Horton].

Crawford, Major-General Ian Patrick (1933-2009). Obituary, “Medical Officer who performed a life-saving operation in the wreckage of his crashed helicopter in Borneo” (*DT Tu.24.3.2009:29***). The operation was performed in 1964 on **Major (later Brigadier) Eric David Smith DSO (1923-98)**, who later wrote *Counter-Insurgency Operations: Malaya and Borneo* (1985) and a history of the Gurkhas (1997) [AVM Horton].

Dublin Unting Ingkot, Datuk (d. 2009), Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Sarawak; Vice-President, *Parti Rakyat Sarawak*; assemblyman for Batang Ai; had been appointed chef de mission for the 2008 Malaysian Games, but suffered a stroke and was admitted to the Normah Specialist Medical Centre, 22 May 2008; died there, aged fifty-five, on 25 February 2009, having been in a prolonged coma; survived by his widow, Datin Froline Moriah Demies Impoi, and three children aged up to eleven years (*BBO Th.26.2.2009*).

Unting entered politics when he contested Batang Ai constituency on a BN-PBDS [Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak] ticket in the 1991 state elections. He retained the seat in subsequent polls, winning in 2006 for BN-PRS after the deregistration of PBDS in 2004; became an assistant minister in 1996 (*BBO Th.26.2.2009*) [AVM Horton].

North, John Ray (d 2008), an expatriate British Education Officer in Malaya (11 August 1953 onwards) and Sarawak (1962-71), died in August 2008 (notification by Dr, Annabel Gallop, via email, 12.2.2010: 1514h GMT). On his return to the United Kingdom he settled at Chagford (Newton Abbot) in Devon and, from July 1999, at Nyetimber (Bognor Regis) in West Sussex [AVM Horton].

Rojes Enoos (d. 2008), Association footballer for Sarawak at U-12 and U-18 level; died aged eighteen in Penang, July 2008, as a result of a motorcycle accident (*BBO* Sa.21.2.2009) [AVM Horton].

KALIMANTAN NEWS

Willie Smits, born in Holland but now an Indonesian citizen, founded the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation in 1991 (see D. Normile, Restoring a “biological desert” in Borneo, *Science* 325: 557, 2009). Smits hit on a solution to the problem of failed conservation projects by giving an economic incentive to local residents in his Samboja Lestari project--an ambitious effort to transform a clear-cut site into a mix of agroforestry plots and orangutan habitat. In 2002 he had purchased 2000 hectares of land near Balikpapan, in a district with a 50% unemployment rate. Villagers who sold land to the project received a plot in a zone ringing the site where they planted acacia trees to provide timber and sugar palms for sap to be processed into ethanol, and also grew cash crops such as ginger, papayas, cocoa, and chilis among the trees. In the inner zone, village teams were paid to plant fast-growing trees to kick-start reforestation as well as slower-growing rainforest species--some 1600 tree species in all. Smits has raised about \$4.5 million for the project, from a foundation he directs. So far the reforested habitat has attracted 137 bird species and is now home to orangutans and sun bears. The greenery has lowered air temps by 3 degrees and increased rainfall by 25%. The project's NGO status means that it can ignore Indonesian bureaucracy and commercial compromises; 3000 jobs have been created. Governance of the projects is based on local traditions so that peer pressure keeps villagers from felling forest trees and ensures cooperation with project managers to keep poachers and loggers at bay (Dee Baer).

BOOK REVIEWS

Walker, Anthony R., ed., 2009, *Pika-Pika: The Flashing Firefly. Essays to Honour and Celebrate the Life of Pauline Hetland Walker (1938-2005)*. New Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation, xv+489 pp. ISBN 81-7075-087-3.

The title of this volume, *Pika-Pika*, is a Japanese onomatopoeic expression for the flashing of fireflies, an image, the editor tells us, that uniquely captures the special quality of the life that the book honors. This life was that of the editor's wife, Pauline, who died in Brunei Darussalam in March 2005, after a long battle with cancer.

In addition to the editor's Introduction, the book comprises twenty essays written by academic colleagues and friends of the Walkers, most of them anthropologists. Individual essays are topically diverse, ranging from an exploration of the biographical roots of an American jazz quartet to a quest for the origins of the El Dorado myth among the priest-healers of an Amerindian society of northeastern Colombia. Asia, however, looms large, especially Southeast Asia. This is understandable, as, for more than 20 years, the Walkers made Southeast Asia their home. Here, Anthony taught anthropology, first in Penang at the Universiti Sains Malaysia (1972-78), then at the National University of Singapore (1979-86), and, finally, from 1999 to the present, at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam. In addition, Anthony carried out fieldwork in northern Thailand and Yunnan and, among fellow anthropologists, is best known for his meticulous ethnography of the ritual life of the Lahu, a Tibeto-Burman-speaking people of the mountainous borderlands of mainland Southeast Asia and southwestern China.

Three essays in the collection concern this same general region, one deals with Singapore and two with Indonesia. Of more direct relevance, two essays concern Borneo. In the first, "Skilled craftsmanship from Interior Borneo: Badeng traditional crafts and their future" (pp. 219-237), Tan Chee-Beng, a former student of Anthony, now Professor of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, examines the material culture of a Kenyah Badeng community that formerly lived at Long Geng in the Belaga District of Sarawak. Disclaiming any special artistic gifts himself, Tan focuses, instead, on the comparatively humble artifacts of everyday life—for example, mats, sunhats, baskets, and baby-carriers—and the technical skills and knowledge that go into fashioning them. This he does in an illuminating way by describing how these handcrafted objects are made and put to use by longhouse people in the course of an average day. Among the more notable of these objects are so-called 'dog horns' (*cong asu*), simple but functionally-ingenuous wooden collars placed around the necks of longhouse dogs to prevent them from causing mischief by inserting their heads into small openings. He also describes musical instruments and toys. In the early 1990s, the Long Geng community, Tan tells us, was divided between Roman Catholic and evangelical Protestant (SIB) longhouses. With the Keluan River flowing between them, these two congregations occupied opposite river banks. Both congregations introduced guitar bands in their church services and by the 1990s, the ubiquitous guitar has largely replaced more traditional Kenyah musical instruments. As a favorite toy, Badeng children made at the time small blowpipes of bamboo which they used to shoot paper "bullets" at one another. Teams of boys from the two rival Christian groups, using these blowpipes, waged frequent warfare on one

another in what Tan describes as “a relatively benign display of sectarian conflict” (p. 233).

When he began fieldwork in 1992, the Long Geng community, despite its sectarian divide, was firmly united in protest against the growing encroachment of logging and the government-proposed construction of the now infamous Bakun Hydroelectric Dam. Protests, however, proved to be of no avail and in November 1998, the former Long Geng community was removed and its members resettled by the state government near the Koyan River in the present-day Bintulu District. Here, living on logged-over land directly accessible by road to the coastal city of Bintulu, the community was suddenly, Tan writes, “exposed to the full force of the market economy.” With few remaining forest resources and farmland scarce and difficult to reach, community members were no longer able to satisfy their own material needs. Local skills and knowledge were lost, as people, now relying on government monetary compensation and remitted wages, found it easier to purchase household necessities in town, rather than produce them for themselves at home in the ways they had been accustomed to in the past.

In the second essay, “The interpretation of sickness and the conduct of healing in traditional Brunei Dusun society” (pp. 335-65), Pudarno Binchin, himself a Brunei Dusun and currently Curator of Ethnography with the Brunei Museums Department, describes what he calls “traditional Dusun ideas about sickness and its alleviation” that, by and large, he tells us, are now known only to “Dusun old folk” (p. 338). He begins his account with a discussion of *linguh*, which he glosses as ‘soul’ or ‘metaphysical essence,’ describing the various forms this ‘essence’ takes and how it relates more generally to Dusun ideas of sickness and well-being. He then goes on to describe the role of ‘spirits’ (*limatai*) and ‘deities’ (*derato*) and the various categories of illness that are distinguished and explanations of their causes, ending with an account of traditional healers.

A subtext of both these essays is a story of rapid cultural loss. For the Brunei Dusun, Pudarno illustrates this, near the end of his essay, with the example of Kilat bin Kilah, the key informant of Voeks and Samban’s study of Brunei Dusun medicinal plants (“Healing flora of the Brunei Dusun,” *BRB* 32 (2001): 178-95), who, since the study’s publication, has passed away, thus taking with him, as one of the last Dusun herbalists, much of his knowledge of plants and their preparation for healing use (p. 363).

While Pauline frequently joined Anthony in the field and helped edit all of his published writings, it was in Singapore that she found her own voice as a writer, particularly as a dance and theater critic. Later, she returned to writing in the late 90s, but, unfortunately, by the time the couple moved to Brunei, failing health prevented her from pursuing once again an active freelance writing career. She did, however, continue to edit and, in addition to Anthony’s publications, served as literary editor for B.A. Hussainmiya’s *The Brunei Constitution of 1959: An Inside History*.

For some readers of the *BRB*, Anthony is likely to be best known as the editor of *Contributions to Southeast Asian Ethnography*, an occasional publication which, over the course of its 12 issues, published a considerable number of papers on Borneo. *Pika-Pika* follows the same format as *Contributions*. Hence, each individual essay is abundantly illustrated with maps, drawings and photographs.

This reviewer was a teaching colleague of Anthony in the 1970s and 80s, both

in Malaysia and Singapore, and is privileged to have been a friend of the Walkers ever since. Between them, Pauline and Anthony formed a remarkable partnership. Pauline, ever optimistic and generous of spirit, helped create and sustain, wherever the Walkers made their home, a lively, eclectic fellowship of friends, students, and fellow scholars to which this wide-ranging, highly readable volume bears fitting witness.

(Clifford Sather, University of Helsinki)

Erik Petersen, 2000, *Jukung-Boats from the Barito Basin, Borneo*. With a Preface by Tinna Damgård Sørensen (Director, Viking Ship Museum). Roskilde: VSM. Hardback, no price listed, no dust jacket. 156pp. ISBN 87-85180-40-8. Tables, figures, maps, photographs, illustrations, bibliography, glossary.

At the end of the second millennium AD the Barito Basin had a flourishing boat-building industry which provided a livelihood for around two thousand artisans engaged in the production of *jukung*, constructed on the foundation of dugouts which had been expanded over fire. The purpose of this book was twofold: first, to provide a “systematic and comprehensive description” of the various types of *jukung*; and, second, to consider whether vessels of this nature could have been used by the Ma’anyan people for their migration from Kalimantan to Madagascar around 1,300 years ago (p. 9).

Erik Petersen, an architect-planner born in 1930, worked in Denmark, East Africa, and Indonesia from 1956 until his retirement in 1992. He then settled in southern Borneo. His field work was carried out at three locations: first, along the Mangkutup and Muroi Rivers; second, at Manusop and Sungai Dusun villages; and, third, at Alalak (pp. 9-10). He also visited Borobudur and is able to use as evidence some of the depictions found there (pp. 124, 146-7). The Introduction is datelined “Banjarmasin,” December 1998. The Viking Ship Museum, which had already (1991) published a book on tribal canoes from northern Borneo (*Building a Longboat* by Ida Nicolaisen and Tinna Damgård Sørensen), encouraged the project and promised to publish the material were the author able to complete it as planned. It is known that the Vikings also used hollowed-out tree-trunks for their boats, made higher by the addition of planks at the sides; but the oldest construction processes are not documented. The VSM was supporting a series of ethnographical projects around the world, therefore, in the hope that boat-building traditions elsewhere might shed some light on this matter (p. 7).

Jukung is an umbrella term covering everything from the simple canoe to much larger catamarans, fishing boats, ferries, and cargo vessels. There are two fundamental categories: *jukung sudur*, which are constructed over half a tree trunk, and *Barito jukung*, which are based on a full one.

The core of the book (Chapter Three, pp. 25-74) identifies the various types of *jukung*, describes their general characteristics and functions, their market value (sale prices started in the mid-1990s at 250,000 rupiah and proceeded to anything up to eighteen million for a motor boat and thirty million for a *jukung raksasa*), their historical development, and their prospects. Not just this chapter, but the whole book is illustrated with photographs, but more particularly with exquisite drawings (both cross-sections

and overviews), the author's architectural training clearly coming into its own here.

Chapter Four examines the three phases of the production process. The broad pattern (there are variations) is as follows: The trees are cut down in upriver forested areas, notably along the Mangkutup and Muroi Rivers, tributaries of the Kapuas. The second stage, which takes place downstream at Manusop Village, involves the final hollowing out of the logs to make them thin enough for the *mamaru*, or 'expansion over fire.' The final stage of production occurs off Banjarmasin at Alalak Island, also known as Boat-Builders' Island, where the skilled workers buy the *jukung* coming from upstream, perform the final tasks, and afterwards sell the vessels to the buyers, most of whom are from the Barito Basin (p. 75). Chapter five deals with the building methodology, while Chapter Six looks at the tools and types of wood used.

The industry is flexible. Although production dates back more than a thousand years, several models date only from the post-war era in response to changing external circumstances and new demand. It is stated, however, that the hardwoods are now becoming more difficult to procure (p. 116); so production of the larger *jukung* "must die out within ten years" unless the government shall have made radical changes in its forest policy in the meantime (p 151).

In the last part of the book (Chapters Seven and Eight), Mr. Petersen places Barito boat-building in historical perspective and presents a plausible case for supposing that Ma'anyan migration to Madagascar peaked around 700 AD. The push-factor was population pressure in the early Iron Age coincident with the rise of Srivijaya (pp. 137-40). At the same time, new tools facilitated more advanced types of *jukung*-construction. A sea-going people with a knowledge of trade routes, some Ma'anyan began looking for new land outside the Barito. Their first landfall was Bangka Island; but, under further pressure from Srivijaya, they migrated from there to Madagascar. The reviewer lacks the expertise to comment in detail on this theory. Mr. Peterson notes, however, the close similarities - linguistic, funerary, agricultural - between the Ma'anyan people of south Borneo and those of Madagascar. The boat-building techniques also reveal parallels. He suggests that both small and large boats might have been used to cross the ocean towards Africa. The small ones would have been "canoe-like double outriggers, constructed over dugouts, and with a rig similar to the one seen on the *vezo* canoes of Madagascar"; while the larger ones "were probably ship-like, double outriggers, based on heavily built-up dugouts, like those seen on reliefs at the Borobudur Temple" (p. 151).

Overall, *Jukung-Boats from the Barito Basin, Borneo*, plainly a labor of love, is a definitive piece of original research. Similar in quality to the work of Professor Adrian Horridge on the *prahu*, the book has many strengths, notably the comprehensive coverage (little or nothing appears to escape the author's attention), the complete mastery of the subject matter, and, not least, the drawings. A good sign is that Mr. Petersen is not afraid to say when data are lacking or when he does not know the answer. He demonstrates courtesy in his disagreements with other scholars and advances his own dissenting views in moderate fashion. On the other hand, an index is lacking; and there are some typographical/orthographical errors which would need to be corrected in any future edition. Given that a decade and more has elapsed since the book was published, perhaps it will now be possible to fill in some of the gaps and to say whether the dire

predictions have been justified. The reviewer would also have liked more information as to how much the findings from Borneo have helped the VSM to understand early Viking construction processes; which was, after all, one of their justifications for publishing this book.¹

(AVM Horton, Bordesley, Worcestershire, UK).

¹ The Editor would note that some materials from *Jukung-Boats* first appeared in a Brief Communication by Erik Petersen, "The South Kalimantan *Jukung*: A Study," *BRB* 28(1997): 157-66.

Tom Schmidt, 2009, *Bumbling Through Borneo, Hong Kong: Kakibubu Media Limited, 112 pp.*

Bumbling through Borneo is not an academic book. Instead, this well-researched cartoon novel is a window to what is currently being written about Borneo for a general audience. This "work of fiction" is loosely based on the author's adventures as a backpacker in Sarawak in the early 1990s and was first published in 1992.

The main character, Bob, an unemployed American architect, receives a challenge—a ticket to Singapore and an invitation to mysteriously mystical Sarawak (not all of Borneo)—and is promised a "great reward." Bob collects travel companions, fellow backpackers and residents of Sarawak, including Jim who facilitates his encounter with *Ulu Belaga* and its environmental and social problems. These concerns and a sense of respect and awe for Sarawak and her people underpin this cartoon novel.

The text, which is complemented, enhanced, and extended by the accompanying drawings, skims the surface as we do when we travel quickly, stopping only briefly. Likewise, the characters are superficial, one-dimensional characterizations preventing, in my view, readers from identifying with any one of them.

Jon, Bob's travel companion whom he fortunately met in Singapore, sneezes at the slightest provocation, which is commented on extensively. Only Jim, a census officer who is not only Kayan but hails from a longhouse in *Ulu Belaga*, has a degree of complexity we would expect of a "real person." Jim is able to live in the "modern world" while remembering and being comfortable with his cultural identity and is the source of much of the information and transport for the trip from Belaga town into the interior.

Bob's respect for the community (and his architectural background) is clearly visible through the drawing and understanding of the technical brilliance of a traditional longhouse, but he is disappointed because the community has a fridge. After a night of culture and dance they are dropped off on a logging road. Distaste and horror at the destruction of the primeval rainforest is evident through the drawings of the dismal logged landscape which is contrasted with the awe of the forest and natural environment that still exists in the national parks.

This is not a guidebook, but it does give snippets of useful information on current issues including the controversial Bakun Hydro Electric Dam, changing land use patterns, cultural information on topics ranging from the construction of longhouses to beads and tattooing, and historical notes on towns and cities. A lighthearted approach increases

the accessibility of this information and encourages a quest for more knowledge about Sarawak and the rest of Borneo.

(MM Ann Armstrong, Lodge International School, Kuching, Sarawak)

Tan Siew Ee and Rosnah Opai, 2008, *The Economy of Brunei Darussalam: Perspectives and Insights*. With a Foreword by Dato Paduka Dr. Haji Ismail Haji Duraman (Vice-Chancellor, UBD). Petaling Jaya: HBJ Education Sdn Bhd; x + 386 pp; tables, figures, bibliographies; ISBN 978-983-3026-04-3; pbk; available at Spr \$49.90 via ISEAS.

From 1929 onwards successive discoveries of hydrocarbons transformed Brunei from an insignificant backwater into one of the most prosperous countries in the world in terms of income *per capita*. Negara Brunei Darussalam (as the sultanate has been known since the start of 1984) finds itself courted and flattered by the leading powers in the world today, such as the USA, the PRC, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. The perennial problem facing the economy since the 1930s concerns preparations for the day when the oil and gas supplies are exhausted.

The Economy of Brunei Darussalam: Perspectives and Insights, the third in a series, addresses this issue. The book is intended partly as a university textbook but, more importantly, as a guidebook for policy-makers. There are five sections relating respectively to development; consumption and savings issues; trade; monetary matters; and taxation. One or two articles seek to improve on papers published in a previous volume.

One editor (Tan Siew Ee) is joint author of six of the fourteen chapters, while Rosnah Opai supplies one as sole author and three others as joint author. Dr Tan has approaching four decades of research and teaching experience both in his home country (Malaysia) and overseas. His younger colleague, Puan Rosnah, graduated from UBD (where she now lectures) in 1991 and took an M.Sc. in Development Planning Studies from Hiroshima University ten years later. There are nine other contributors, mostly drawn from UBD, but with two from the civil service, and one based in Malaya.

The bibliographies are largely theoretical (rather than relating specifically to NBD) and many of the papers demonstrate an impressive grasp of economics in general and econometrics in particular, along with the attendant mathematical skills. For readers who delight in the Dickey-Fuller unit root test, the Engle-Granger cointegration test, the Granger causality test, and Ordinary Least Squares, this book will be a treat indeed. Many of the tables contain useful raw data, such as population and GDP figures year by year (and much else besides). On the other hand, the chapters are not numbered on their title pages; there are no headers; and there is no index. From time to time the various researchers highlight data deficiencies hindering their investigations.

In the lengthy opening chapter, an overview of development planning and socio-economic progress in the country since the 1950s, the editors provide a valuable update to the 1994 book by Mark Cleary and Wong Shuang-Yann entitled *Oil, Economic Development and Diversification in Brunei Darussalam*. The ultimate goal of the development plans has been to improve the quality of life of the citizens (p. 17).

Although much of the sultanate's success in this respect may be attributed to abundant state revenues, Tan and Rosnah conclude (p. 34) nevertheless that "the enhanced welfare and living standard of Bruneians today is to be attributed not to chance alone but has much to do with the deliberate planning efforts of the government." It is also noted (p. 25) that successive development plans had been "quite successful especially in terms of enhancing the employment opportunities for Bruneian females as well as their empowerment."

Although natural resources have made the sultanate wealthy, dependence upon oil and gas has not been entirely without problems. Productivity in other sectors, such as agriculture and industry, remains low; there is an enlarged public sector; "Dutch disease" raises its ugly head; and oil is a non-renewable resource. Hence the economic diversification issue with which the sultanate has been grappling for decades. In Chapter Two, Puan Rosnah considers recent policy initiatives in this regard. She notes that there has been a "slight and positive development" in agriculture, forestry, wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, construction, and transport and communications; "encouraging growth" is detected in tourism and in the financial and insurance sector (pp. 67-8). Key projects include the Brunei International Financial Centre, eco-tourism, a "world-class industrial park," and a container port. One predicament is that Negara Brunei Darussalam faces "stiff competition" from nearby countries which have been well established in the various fields into which NBD wishes to expand (p. 69); Sir Shenton Thomas was saying much the same thing in the mid-1930s (Thomas to Colonial Office, UMS Brunei, No 88, 10 September 1935, paragraph seven; see CO 717/110/51535, National Archives, Kew). Other negative aspects include an inflexible and uncompetitive workforce and the hurdles hampering the setting-up of a business in the sultanate.

A further drawback to dependence upon hydrocarbons is that fluctuations in the world price of crude oil induce a similar instability in government revenues. In Chapter Fourteen, reforms are suggested which might ameliorate the position. Shahriman bin Haji Besar and Tan Siew Ee take the view that, to release further funds for development purposes, the government should introduce a personal income tax (possibly accompanied by some reduction of the existing corporation tax in order to relieve pressure on the private sector). There is also "plenty of scope" for value added taxes (pp. 380-1). Earlier in the book, Chapter Three looks at consumption and expenditure patterns in the sultanate. The results of the analysis, by Haji Zulazrin bin Haji Mohidin and Puan Rosnah, provide useful information both for the government (in taxation and welfare policies) and for business decision-making (p. 95). It is discovered that Malay households spend a larger proportion of their income on transportation, while their local Chinese counterparts prefer to give priority to housing, which they regard as an investment. The chapter authors suggest that for economic diversification purposes the focus should be on industries such as transportation, housing, and durables, which have relatively high income elasticities. An industry with high income elasticity means that demand will increase in line with income (and decrease likewise, should income fall).

Although still in its infancy in Negara Brunei Darussalam itself (p. 259), tourism can be a major contributor to economic diversification, particularly for small states (p. 233). This supplies the subject matter for Chapters Seven and Eight. In the first

of these, the indefatigable volume editors join forces once again to furnish an empirical examination of the determinants of inbound tourism in Negara Brunei Darussalam and in certain ASEAN countries, notably Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The most important factors appeared to be the income of the holiday-maker, real exchange rates, and promotional campaigns. Resource endowment and the role of governments were also significant (p. 222). Focused marketing and “open skies” agreements are advocated (p. 223).

In Chapter Eight, Chin Yick Moi and (yet again) Tan Siew Ee study travel agencies and inbound tourism development. Between 1990 and 2000 the total number of “visitors” to the sultanate peaked at 1,310,493 (in 1998); while the number of “tourists” fluctuated from 8,010 in 1990 to peaks of 58,090 in 1994 and 55,497 in 1996, before dipping to under 33,000 in 1997 and 1998, and recovering somewhat to 41,241 in 2000 (p. 237). If NBD were to develop a flourishing tourism sector, with its attendant multiplier effects, there is plainly much work to be done. The big problem is that the sultanate lacks sufficient tourist attractions; and even the existing ones are “not well maintained” (pp. 250, 255, 256t). Several policy recommendations are made, such as enhanced promotional activity, improvement of transportation networks, superior vocational training, better data-collection by the government, a cleaner environment (particularly in Kampong Ayer, in restaurants, and on the beaches), and more locally-made souvenirs (pp. 260-2).

Chapters Nine and Ten deal with trade issues; Chapter Eleven concludes that there is no evidence for the export-led growth hypothesis in Negara Brunei Darussalam (pp. 311, 319, 321). In Chapters Twelve and Thirteen Tan Eu Chye first reexamines the question of money demand in the sultanate and then looks at the money supply.

Earlier in the collection, Jessica Lai Teck Choo worries about personal consumption and saving patterns in the sultanate (Chapter Four). It is noted that Bruneians spend too much on loans and not enough on insurance and investments. For this reason the author suggests that a monitoring system should be implemented to control the levels of borrowing incurred by the individual consumer, thereby moving “a step closer to a more sustainable economy” (p. 138). Chapter Five is concerned with private-sector demand for motor cars while Chapter Six analyzes cigarette consumption in the country.

In general, *The Economy of Brunei Darussalam: Perspectives and Insights* comprises a broad-ranging econometric survey covering everything from development planning to taxation. It remains to be seen whether the policy recommendations will actually be adopted by the government.

(AVM Horton, Bordesley, Worcestershire, UK)

ABSTRACTS

Bakker, Laurens, 2009, *Who Owns the Land? Looking for Law and Power in East Kalimantan*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Faculty of Law, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

People need land: to live on, to grow foodstuffs and to obtain the many natural resources required in the global economy. Control over land and its riches hence is a powerful asset. “Who Owns the Land?” is a multidisciplinary study of discourses of land rights and control over land that aims to shed new light on the creation, maintenance and functioning of authority in East Kalimantan.

In 1998 the Southeast Asian economic crisis hit Indonesia, and brought an end to more than three decades of authoritative rule by the New Order regime. What followed was *Reformasi*—reform—a process of reinventing Indonesia. More presidents took and lost office than in all preceding years, democracy arrived with a vengeance and the shape and future of Indonesian society was the subject of serious national debate. Decentralization of legislative power to regional government was seen as a desired solution in the post-authoritarian state. Yet decades of New Order rule left their mark, notably in a widespread social understanding of clientelism and nepotism, rather than democracy and liberalism as characteristic of governance. Decentralization thus created an arena in which reformers, New Order conservatives, local elites, and such forces as materialized along ethnic and religious lines, could have it out.

“Who Owns the Land?” deals with the effects of decentralization on control over land in the sparsely populated and resource-rich province of East Kalimantan. Laurens Bakker takes a socio-legal perspective in researching the effects of decentralization on access to land, and approaches the issue of land rights and their regulation through official legislation as well as from the perspective of the local population. This study deals with how land rights are argued, with the strategies of obtaining rights. It seeks to find out how rights are formulated, based on which criteria, and by whom. Based on extensive field research among rural and semi-urban population groups, among NGOs and inside the newly empowered regional bureaucracies in East Kalimantan, the focus of the book is on the argumentation and success of claims rather than on their legal validity; on the discourse rather than the code [author].

Barlocco, Fausto, 2009, *Between the local and the state: practices and discourses of identity among the Kadazan of Sabah (East Malaysia)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Loughborough University (UK).

This thesis investigates the effects of the nation-building agenda carried out by the Malaysian state on the sense of collective belonging of the Kadazan people of the Bornean State of Sabah. The thesis includes a reconstruction of the formation of the two most important forms of collective identification, the nation and the ethnic group, and the analysis of the way in which Kadazan villagers identify themselves in relation to discourses circulating in various media and the practices in which they get involved in their everyday life. Kadazan villagers consistently show a rejection of the

state propaganda and a general unwillingness to identify themselves as members of the Malaysian nation, which I attribute to their marginal position within the Malaysian state. They more often identify themselves as members of their ethnic group or village, collective forms of identification that seem to allow for a higher degree of participation in their definition than the national one. The empirical analysis of the everyday self-identification in relation to practices and discourses shows a complex picture, as Kadazan villagers differently situate themselves as Malaysian, Kadazan, Sabahan and members of their village on different occasions and contexts. One of the explanations of this fact lies in the ambiguous character of Malaysian nation-building, promoting unity while at the same time treating citizens differently depending on their ethnic and religious background. The official discourse and practice of ethnic and religious differentiation has been deeply internalized by the Kadazan and has become a primary reason for their opposition to the state, as they feel treated as second-class citizens. Another explanation for the development of a sense of belonging to various collective forms of identification among the Kadazan rests in the fact that their recent history has made these significant as expressions of different sets of shared lived experiences, providing the basis for the development of senses of commonality with members of the national, sub-national, ethnic and village communities at the same time [author].

Chang, Y.M., Y. Swaran, Y.K. Phoon, K. Sothirasan, H.T. Sim, K.B. Lim, D. Kuehn, 2009, Haplotype diversity of 17 Y-chromosomal STRs in three native Sarawak populations (Iban, Bidayuh and Melanau) in East Malaysia. *Forensic Science International, Genetics* 3(3): e77-80.

17 Y-STRs were analyzed in 320 male individuals from Sarawak, an eastern state of Malaysia. These individuals were from three indigenous ethnic groups in Sarawak comprising of 103 Ibans, 113 Bidayuhs, and 104 Melanau. The observed 17-loci haplotypes and the individual allele frequencies for each locus were estimated, while the locus diversity, haplotype diversity and discrimination capacity were calculated in the three groups. Analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) indicated that 87.6% of the haplotypic variation was found within population and 12.4% between populations. This study reveals that the indigenous populations in Sarawak are distinctly different from each other, and from the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia (Malays, Chinese, and Indians), with the Melanau having a strikingly high degree of shared haplotypes within. There are rare unusual variants and microvariants that were not present in Malaysian Malay, Chinese, or Indian groups. [Dee Baer comments: The male (Y) chromosome tells about men only, not women. Melanau men seem to be quite inbred, but the women may or may not be].

Choo, F. S., 2009, *Children of the Monkey God: The story of a Chinese Hakka family in Sarawak, Borneo*. Tempe, AZ : Third Millennium Pub., ISBN: 193480522X 9781934805220, v+271 pp.

Covering a period of 115 years, from 1850 to 1965, *Children of the Monkey God* deals with the experiences of four generations of a Chinese Hakka family in Sarawak.

Chua, Liana, 2009, What's in a (Big) Name? The Art and Agency of a Bornean Photographic Collection. *Anthropological Forum*, 19 (1):33-52.

This article concerns the photographic collection of Paka anak Otor, the Bidayuh owner of a “mini-museum” in Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo, and how it became entangled in his claims to status within and beyond his village. Superficially, the situation is easily apprehended via two analogous approaches within photographic theory and Southeast Asianist ethnography, which treat objects and images as representations or bearers of power and meaning. Here I suggest that such approaches end up eliding the action-centered nature of Paka’s “big name”-making ambitions. In response, I approach his photographic collection through an analytical framework deriving from Alfred Gell’s seminal theory, *Art and Agency* (1998), which has hitherto remained marginal to Southeast Asianist anthropology. I argue that, more than merely symbolizing or bearing his “big name,” Paka’s photographs were agentive image-objects that actively instantiated it. I conclude by asking how such an analytical shift might encourage a reconceptualization of “power” and “objecthood” in Southeast Asianist anthropology [author].

Clarke, C.M., U. Bauer, C.C. Lee, A.A. Tuen, K. Rembold, and J.A. Moran, 2009, Tree shrew lavatories: A novel nitrogen sequestration strategy in a tropical pitcher plant. *Biology Letters* 5(5): 632-635.

Nepenthes pitcher plants are typically carnivorous, producing pitchers with varying combinations of epicuticular wax crystals, viscoelastic fluids and slippery peristomes to trap arthropod prey, especially ants. However, ant densities are low in tropical montane habitats, thereby limiting the potential benefits of the carnivorous syndrome. *Nepenthes lowii*, a montane species from Borneo, produces two types of pitchers that differ greatly in form and function. Pitchers produced by immature plants conform to the “typical” *Nepenthes* pattern, catching arthropod prey. However, pitchers produced by mature *N. lowii* plants lack the features associated with carnivory and are instead visited by tree shrews, which defecate into them after feeding on exudates that accumulate on the pitcher lid. We tested the hypothesis that tree shrew feces represent a significant nitrogen (N) source for *N. lowii*, finding that it accounts for between 57 and 100 per cent of foliar N in mature *N. lowii* plants. Thus, *N. lowii* employs a diversified N sequestration strategy, gaining access to a N source that is not available to sympatric congeners. The interaction between *N. lowii* and tree shrews appears to be a mutualism based on the exchange of food sources that are scarce in their montane habitat.

Cunliffe R.N., T.J. Lynam, D. Sheil, M. Wan, A. Salim, I. Basuki, and H. Priyadi, 2007, Developing a predictive understanding of landscape importance to the Punan-Pelancau of East Kalimantan, Borneo. *Ambio*, 36(7): 593-9.

In order for local community views to be incorporated into new development initiatives, their perceptions need to be clearly understood and documented in a format that is readily accessible to planners and developers. The current study sought to develop a predictive understanding of how the Punan Pelancau community, living in a forested landscape in East Kalimantan, assigns importance to its surrounding landscapes and

to present these perceptions in the form of maps. The approach entailed the iterative use of a combination of participatory community evaluation methods and more formal modeling and geographic information system techniques. Results suggest that landscape importance is largely dictated by potential benefits, such as inputs to production, health, and houses. Neither land types nor distance were good predictors of landscape importance. The grid-cell method, developed as part of the study, appears to offer a simple technique to capture and present the knowledge of local communities, even where their relationship to the land is highly complex, as was the case for this particular community.

Devi, B.C., T.S. Tang, and M. Corbex, 2008, Setting up home-based palliative care in countries with limited resources: a model from Sarawak, Malaysia. *Annals of oncology*, 19(12): 2061-6.

The provision of palliative care (PC) and opioids is difficult to ensure in remote areas in low- and middle-income countries. We describe here the set up of a home-care program in Sarawak, where half the population lives in villages that are difficult to access. The establishment of this program, initiated in 1994 by the Department of Radiotherapy of Sarawak General Hospital, consisted of training, empowering nurses, simplifying referral, facilitating access to medication, and increasing awareness among public and health professionals about PC: The program has been sustainable and cost efficient, serving 936 patients in 2006. The total morphine usage in the program increased from <200 g in 1993 to >1400 g in 2006. The results show that pain medication can be provided even in remote areas with effective organization and empowerment of nurses, who were the most important determinants for the set up of this program. Education of family was also a key aspect. The authors believe that the experience gained in Sarawak may help other regions with low or middle resources in the set up of their PC program especially for their remote rural population [authors].

Dounias, E., A. Selzner, M. Koizumi, and P. Levang, 2007, From sago to rice, from forest to town: the consequences of sedentarization for the nutritional ecology of Punan former hunter-gatherers of Borneo. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 28(2) Suppl: S294-302.

The last nomadic peoples of the world are facing strong governmental incentives to renounce their foraging lifestyle. Nevertheless, the shift to a sedentary way of life and the adoption of agriculture do not always result in the promised improvement in diet and health conditions. We compared the dietary regime and nutritional status of three groups of former hunter-gatherers, the Punan of Borneo. All three groups adopted extensive upland rice cultivation almost 6 decades ago, but each has some degree of dependence on agriculture versus forest resources, which varies along a gradient of accessibility of urban facilities. The diet of three distinct Punan groups living in the dipterocarp forest of East Kalimantan was assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively and analyzed in relation to the seasonality of resources and human activities. The physical fitness of the Punan was also estimated from repeated anthropometric measurements. The more remote the Punan community was from urban facilities, the more diversified was

the diet and the better were its nutritional status and physical fitness. The contribution of forest resources to the dietary regime also decreased with urban proximity. However, the higher dependency on agriculture is not the proximate cause of the deterioration in diet and physical fitness, which is rather due to the transition from the nomadic to the settled way of life. The brutal shift in lifestyle among the Punan of Borneo has profoundly affected the integrity of these societies and impacted their social, cultural, symbolic, and political features. In the long run, this may compromise their health status and ecological success [authors].

Eveleigh, Mark, 2008, *Headhunter Heaven*. *Geographical*, 80(8): 38-44.

The article discusses the Dayak communities in Indonesian Borneo's Rantau Bumbum settlement, and their struggle to continue with their way of life. The settlement is the last on the Mandai River. The Mandai River is avoided by the Dayak communities because of their belief that only ghosts live there. The Dayak's traditional local animist religions are explored. How the village survives with the lack of a cash economy is considered. The slash-and-burn rice planting of the community's Da-an tribe and its belief in the spirit world are discussed.

Fowler, William. *Britain's Secret War: The Indonesian Confrontation 1962-66*. Osprey Publishing, Botley, Oxford, UK, 2006. ISBN 1 84603 048X.

This slim volume discusses Confrontation from the British military perspective. It starts with the "Brunei Rebellion" and then turns to the events along the 900-mile border between Kalimantan and East Malaysia. Early on, Special Air Services (SAS) patrols were deployed at 60-mile intervals along the border to gather intelligence and win "the hearts and minds" of indigenous groups by living with them and providing antibiotics and other amenities. Then in 1963 incursions from Kalimantan escalated and indigenous border recruits became armed Border Scouts, eventually reaching a force of 1500. The Commonwealth troop strength—on land, sea, and in the air—grew to 17,000 (not counting the tracker dogs used on patrols). Cross-border attacks at Tebedu, Long Jawi, Kalabakan, Long Miau, Lundu, Bau, Rassau, and elsewhere in 1963-64 are briefly discussed, as are abortive raids into West Malaysia in 1964-65. When the Commonwealth forces built hilltop border forts in East Malaysia, they were attacked by Indonesian artillery and ground units, but always repulsed. Secret border raids into Kalimantan also resulted in Indonesian losses. The author specifies the regiment, aircraft, and weapons used in this undeclared warfare, but discusses little of the civilian repercussions, except to mention happy military memories of the beer, the girls on Bugis Street in Singapore, and the pop-music songs of the day (p. 42). [A. Baer].

Hitchner, S. L., F. L. Apu, Lian Tarawe, N. A. Supang Galih@Sinah, and E. Yesaya, Community-based transboundary ecotourism in the Heart of Borneo: a case study of the Kelabit Highlands of Malaysia and the Kerayan Highlands of Indonesia, 2009, *Journal of Ecotourism*, 8(2): 193-213.

This article examines the current state of community-based transboundary

ecotourism in the Kelabit Highlands of Sarawak, Malaysia, and the Kerayan Highlands of Kalimantan, Indonesia, areas included within the international “Heart of Borneo” conservation initiative. Ecotourism development is an important element of the Heart of Borneo initiative, which aims to simultaneously promote conservation and sustainable development by linking protected areas with low-impact use zones in a variety of ecosystem types. There is strong local, governmental, and international support for ecotourism development here, as well as an awareness of the possible pitfalls of expanding ecotourism in this region. Research for this case study was conducted primarily in the Kelabit Highlands of Sarawak, and it included interviews with local actors in ecotourism (local guides and homestay owners, as well as urban-based tour operators and tourism promotion centers and agencies), participation in inter-community dialogues regarding transboundary ecotourism, as well as the analysis of promotional materials on ecotourism in these areas, comments in the visitors’ books of lodges, and tourists’ websites and travel blogs. This case study represents a stage of introspection by people actively engaged in current ecotourism activities and seeks to chart a course forward that takes into account the specific ecological, social, cultural, and political context of this region. The process of conducting this research project helped to pinpoint some of the specific challenges of transboundary ecotourism in this area, and will form the basis for a more comprehensive ecotourism management plan for local communities on both sides of the border. Gathering, collating, and analyzing the findings of this research with local community members revealed that the main issues that need to be addressed include: (1) protection of forests and cultural sites as foci for ecotourism; (2) improved communication between villages, guides, and lodges; (3) increased promotion of transboundary trekking options; (4) village-level preparation for more tourists and more equitable distribution of income generated from ecotourism; (5) careful improvements in tourism infrastructure; (6) the negotiation of legal complications arising from international border crossings by tourists and guides; and (7) the maintenance of local control over ecotourism management and of the trajectory of future tourism development in the Heart of Borneo. (<http://www.cabdirect.org/abstracts/20093201485.html>)

Levang, Patrice, Soadun Sitorus, and Edmond Dounias, 2007, City life in the midst of the forest: A Punan hunter-gatherers vision of conservation and development, *Ecology and Society* Vol. 12, No. 1, <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol12/iss1/art18/>.

The Punan Tubu, a group of hunter-gatherers in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, are used to illustrate the very real trade-offs that are made between conservation and development. This group has undergone various forms of resettlement in the 20th century, to the point that some are now settled close to the city of Malinau whereas others remain in remote locations in the upper Tubu catchment. This study is based on several years of ethnographic and household analysis. The Punan clearly favor both conservation and development. In the city, the Punan benefit from all positive effects of development. Child and infant mortality rates are very low, and illiteracy has been eradicated among the younger generation. However, the Punan complain that nothing in town is free. The older generation, in particular, resents the loss of Punan culture. Because of frustration

and unemployment, young people often succumb to alcoholism and drug addiction. The Punan do not want to choose between conservation and development, between forest life and city life. They want to benefit from the advantages of both locations, to enjoy both free forest products and the positive aspects of modern life, to go wild boar hunting in the morning and watch television in the evening. In short, they want to enjoy city life in the midst of the forest. The same kind of contradiction has led to identity problems. They want to uphold the traditional life of the hunter-gatherer, but at the same time they reject marginalization and seek integration into the larger society. In short, they want integration without loss of identity. The settlement of Sule-Pipa illustrates how some groups have dealt with the contradiction more successfully. Thanks to good organization and charitable donations, they have secured educational facilities and basic health care, and marketing costs are reduced by collectively organized road and river transportation. The economy of the village is thriving, mainly because of the collection of forest products from the primary forest. Remoteness has saved the community from intensive logging, from uncontrolled and excessive exploitation of local forest products by outsiders, and from forest conversion. But few remote communities enjoy the luxury of charitable injections of funds, and roads will be built to the remote locations sooner or later. However, playing for time can help the Punan develop the capacity and ability to cope with a competitive developed world and maintain their cultural identity.

Liew K.B. and M. Lepesteur, 2006, Performance of the rural health improvement scheme in reducing the incidence of waterborne diseases in rural Sarawak, Malaysia. *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 100(10): 949-55.

This study evaluates and discusses the impact of the rural health improvement scheme in reducing the incidence of dysentery, enteric fever, cholera and viral hepatitis in Sarawak, Malaysia, using data compiled from state and federal health department reports. This study suggests that from 1963 to 2002, water supply intervention contributed to a more than 200-fold decrease in dysentery and a 60-fold decrease in enteric fever. Variations in reporting of viral hepatitis during that period make it difficult to detect a trend. Cholera was still endemic in 2002. Cholera and dysentery outbreaks, occurring when rural populations relied on contaminated rivers for their water supply, suggested that sanitation intervention was not as effective in reducing waterborne diseases. Recommendations are made for successive one-component interventions focusing on catchment management to ensure protection of current and alternative water supplies.

Nicolaisen, I., 2009, Cultural perceptions, gestational diabetes, and development. *International Journal of Gynaecology and Obstetrics*, 104 Suppl. 1: S8-10.

Women constitute half of the world's population, but a far larger percentage of the world's poor, particularly in low-income countries. The UN Millennium Declaration recognizes the link between growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, and the crucial role women play in achieving sustainable development. A child's future is interwoven with the life situation of its mother, most intimately so in the case of gestational diabetes. This article discusses the

social and economic implications of the rapid growth of type 2 diabetes and diabetes mellitus. It calls for culturally sensitive health policies and programs to address prevention and treatment of these conditions. Notions of conception, pregnancy, and well-being vary greatly among the world's 5000-6000 cultures. The article illuminates this disparity, drawing on the author's research among indigenous people in Central Borneo. It concludes that culture-specific perceptions must be incorporated in policies and programs that address the detrimental effects of diabetes on health and socioeconomic development (author).

Norazuna Norahim, 2009, Language choice of Bidayuh graduates in Kuching-Samarahan Division, Sarawak, East Malaysia. Ph.D. thesis (Language shift and language maintenance, Language contact and Multilingualism). Kota Samarahan: Universitit Malaysia Sarawak.

Over the last four decades, Sarawak has undergone rapid socio-economic and socio-cultural transformations. The language choice patterns of communities in Sarawak may have been altered to a greater or lesser extent by the impact of these changes on the linguistic ecology of the region. It may lead to the total loss of cultural heritage, which is closely linked to the traditional occupation and way of life of the indigenous communities in previous environments. In the absence of other ethno-specific core values, language is all the more vulnerable for the lack of significant reinforcements that could anchor it more firmly to the social structure of the group (Smolicz, 1992). Researchers working on language shift and language maintenance (*LSTM*) in Borneo (e.g. Asmah and Kamilla, 2008; Sercombe 2002; Martin, 2002) have expressed their concern regarding the emerging threats of this transformation on the linguistic heterogeneity in the region. Hence, this thesis is motivated by the need to address the particular issue under the umbrella of language contact and multilingualism. My aim is to describe the *process* of language shift. I have examined the variability of *patterns of language choice* among educated Bidayuh in various domains of language use. By employing the *implicational scaling technique* and *speaker variation* in language choice patterns (Gal, 1979), I was able to determine the direction and motivation for shift among the Bidayuh. My findings have shown that it is *speaker variables* rather than social factors (e.g. age, gender etc.) as major variables to be examined in *LSTM*. Language shift is a gradual process, and it should be clear to the researcher before embarking on *LSTM* study. The transformation has led to changes in language attitudes and reassessment of the roles and functions of languages within the community's language repertoire. The recessive form of bilingual practice is an added factor. The multi-function of Malay and English in this community is a major factor for the Bidayuh predicament. The community language has been reduced to a peripheral position. These languages are also "linking languages" (Mulhausler 1977:10) in *inter-ethnic* and *inter-dialectal* interactions. The "imbalance" in the language ecology of the region is partly a consequence of the national policies adopted in the typically ex-colonial countries which require a national language for unification purposes and a language of international standing for rapid economic growth. The Bidayuh predicament is also a consequence of the widespread occurrence of mixed marriages. Unintelligibility between various isolects within the Bidayuh speech system also prevents community

members from communicating in the Bidayuh language. In view of these constraints in the use of the community language, it is proposed that perhaps the idea of having a single dialect for *intra-ethnic* interaction could be worked on. This move may reduce the community's dependency on Malay and English in *inter-dialectal* communication although linguistic diversity of the Bidayuh speech system can be adversely affected. In relation to the survival of the mother tongue in the near future, the factors of language attitudes and demography will determine the direction of shift [author].

O'Shaughnessy, P.T., 2008, Parachuting cats and crushed eggs; The controversy over the use of DDT to control malaria. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(11): 1940-8.

The use of DDT to control malaria has been a contentious practice for decades. This controversy centers on concerns over the ecological harm caused by DDT relative to the gains in public health from its use to prevent malaria. Given the World Health Organization's recent policy decisions concerning the use of DDT to control malaria, it is worth reviewing the historical context of DDT use. Ecological concerns focused on evidence that DDT ingestion by predatory birds resulted in eggs with shells so thin they were crushed by adult birds. In addition, DDT spraying to control malaria allegedly resulted in cats being poisoned in some areas, which led to increased rodent populations and, in turn, the parachuting of cats into the highlands of the island of Borneo to kill the rodents, a story that influenced the decision to ban DDT spraying. I focus on this story with the intention of grounding the current debate on lessons from the past.

Pereira, Lisa, 2009, Oral history interview with George W. England recorded 2006 Apr. 8. English Internet Resource 58:07 Central Connecticut State University. Center for Public Policy and Social Research.

George W. England joined the U.S. Navy in June of 1943 and attended basic training in Sampson, NY. After basic training he continued on to Memphis, TN to train at the aviation center and naval airport. After this training he volunteered for additional training as an aerial gunner. He was then transferred to Jacksonville, FL to complete an additional 8 weeks of training. It was there that he became part of a crew of 2 pilots, a navigator, an instructor, and 5 students. England then went to Hutchinson, KS where he became a member of the crew on a B-24, which was part of the VPB 111th Patrolled Bombing Squadron. The squadron was known as the liberator patrol-bombers. The crew was sent to San Diego, and then Hawaii before flying overseas. When they received their orders to go overseas, the crew of England's B-24 decided that they needed a mascot, so they adopted a German shepherd that flew alongside them in every mission. They flew missions to Hong Kong, the Philippines, Okinawa, Singapore, and Borneo, in which their main objective was to search for downed aircraft, ships, and submarines. The planes in England's unit faced regular combat, and attempts were often made to shoot them down. England was discharged in April of 1946. He returned home to Connecticut where he returned to school and then later worked at IBM until he retired. He remains active in the Avon post of the VFW. United States (video/x-ms-wmv, access: <http://content.library.ccsu.edu/u/?VHP,5588>).

Potter, Lesley, 2009, Resource periphery, corridor, heartland: Contesting land use in the Kalimantan/Malaysia borderlands. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 50(1): 88-106.

The long borderland in Kalimantan between Indonesia and East Malaysia is partly mountainous and environmentally unique, its three national parks forming the core of a tri-nation “Heart of Borneo” initiative proposed by environmental NGOs and ratified in 2006. More accessible lowlands in West Kalimantan and the north of East Kalimantan constitute a typical “resource periphery” in which strategic considerations, persisting through the Suharto years, now intersect with a range of new political, economic and cultural demands. A perception by the central government of increasing lawlessness in the borderlands arose in the turbulent years following Suharto’s fall, during *reformasi* and the beginnings of decentralization. In addition to smuggling and illegal logging, contests over land use erupted at various scales. Proposals to construct an oil palm corridor along the border, begun by the Megawati government and extended by some sectors of the Yudhoyono regime, were part of a quest for greater legibility and control on the part of the central authorities. The paper specifically examines the power struggles that arose over that project and its inevitable outcome, a central government back down. However, the current palm oil boom is bringing new corporate planting, which may eventually succeed in “taming” the borderlands [author].

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