

# ***BORNEO RESEARCH BULLETIN***

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Clifford Sather, Ph.D., Editor  
Department of Anthropology  
P.O. Box 59 (Unioninkatu 38D), 00014  
University of Helsinki  
Finland

Phillip Lee Thomas, Ph.D., Production Editor

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Please send all inquiries, Fellowship and Membership fees,  
subscriptions, changes of address, contributions, etc. to:

Borneo Research Council, Inc.  
P. O. Box A  
Phillips, ME 04966  
U.S.A.

[www.borneoresearchcouncil.org](http://www.borneoresearchcouncil.org)

**e:mail: [brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org](mailto:brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org)**

### NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The present issue opens with two memorial sections. These mark the passing of two major figures in Borneo studies: Derek Freeman and Anthony Richards.

Derek Freeman died at the age of 84 on 6 July 2001 in Canberra, Australia. His death occurred on a Saturday. On the Monday morning that followed, when I opened my university email and learned the news, it happened that at the Institute of East Asian Studies we were then hosting a visit from Professor T'ien Ju-K'ang [or Tian Ru Kang], who, with Derek's passing, now becomes the last surviving member of the Colonial Social Science Research Council group, of which Freeman was, of course, a notable part, that pioneered modern social anthropology in what was then British colonial Borneo. It proved to be a memorable, if poignant, visit. Professor T'ien had always seemed to be the least likely of that distinguished group of scholars to outlive the others. At the height of the Cultural Revolution, he had disappeared, been tried (partly on a charge of "collaborating" with the British colonial government of Sarawak), been imprisoned and tortured, and assumed by many in the West to have been killed. But he survived, and in July 2001, as a venerable, but still active Professor of Sociology at Fudan University in Shanghai, he had returned to Sarawak at the invitation of the local Chinese community to speak of his earlier experiences and comment upon the changes that have taken place since his classic field study of a half century ago. Much like Derek Freeman, Professor T'ien has, throughout his life, shown little patience for dogma and has never shied away from controversial subjects. As evidence of the latter, he is now at work, he told us, on a study of Muslim minorities in southwestern China, a "sensitive" topic if ever there was one.

In a more personal vein, Professor James J. Fox, Director of the Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, the institution to which Derek Freeman was attached for virtually the whole of his professional career, in his eulogy of Derek delivered during a remembrance ceremony held in Canberra, told his audience that it was Derek who had personally persuaded him to come to the Australian National University. Derek had picked out the university-owned house on Red Hill, where the Foxes still live, had made sure that the university held it until they arrived, and had enrolled the Foxes' two sons in Canberra Grammar School. That was Derek's way. My own experience in going to ANU for three years as a visiting Senior Fellow was precisely the same. Prior to my arrival, Derek had flooded my mail with postcards, brochures, and books on Australian history, art, flora and fauna. He met me at the airport and at once took me on a tour of the mountaintops that surround Canberra, orienting me to the layout of that remarkable city whose landmarks recreate something surprisingly reminiscent of the sacred landscapes of Aboriginal Australia. After that, on frequent occasions over the next three years, morning walks with Derek on Black Mountain or excursions into the countryside surrounding the city of Canberra that he so dearly loved became among the most memorable experiences of my stay in Australia. In his eulogy, Jim Fox also told his audience of how Derek became a friend to his two sons, teaching them, among other things, how to shoot darts from an Iban blowpipe. Again, my own experience was much the same. In the late 1970s, Derek stayed with my family and me in Penang over a number of days. My children became at once devoted to him, calling him ever afterwards "Uncle Derek." Don Tuzin, in the "Remembering Derek Freeman"

section that follows Jim's obituary, quite rightly points up Freeman's extraordinary generosity of spirit. However, it must be added that this side of his character was not always apparent. Derek could certainly be abrasive, even at times bullying, with those whose views he considered disingenuous or founded on error. He was never one to suffer fools in silence. But with children it was different. They seemed to have little trouble perceiving this generosity and tended to respond to it in kind.

When Derek visited Penang in 1978 he had already completed a draft of his *Margaret Mead and Samoa* book and, while there, he presented the main argument to a responsive audience during a specially-scheduled social science faculty seminar at the Universiti Sains Malaysia. He also gave a brilliant extemporaneous talk to my anthropology students on what Iban society can teach us about our human capacity to make choices. Later, in 1983, Freeman, of course, published *Margaret Mead and Samoa*, a work that immediately embroiled him in a continuing controversy which, for better or worse, absorbed the rest of his life. That year, at the 1983 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, a number of papers were presented on the controversy, nearly all of them hostile, many downright vitriolic, and, in perhaps the most shameful episode in the checkered history of the Association, a motion was passed which resolved that Freeman's work was "unscientific." It also required that the president of the AAA write a letter to the editors of *Science* 83, who had recommended Freeman's book as a holiday purchase to their readers, to protest their recommendation. As Freeman would point out in response, taking a vote was hardly the way in which questions of science are resolved. With what can only be described as compounded arrogance, the editor and officers of the American Anthropological Association devoted almost the entire December 1983 issue of the *American Anthropologist* to a one-sided attack on Freeman, denying him a commensurate, unedited space in which to reply. Sensibly, Freeman chose, instead, to respond in full in a special issue of *Canberra Anthropology* and continued to reply in various forums thereafter. In the final years of her life, Margaret Mead had become, in the American sense, a "celebrity" rather than a practicing anthropologist and, not insignificantly for the Association and its office holders, a milch cow of public funding, establishment influence, prestige and reputation. The virulent nature of much of the criticism directed at Freeman seemed only to bear out his view that Mead had come to assume a more-than-human status for many in the American anthropological profession.

Sadly, Freeman would spend the rest of his life answering his critics. In 1999, after careful scrutiny of the Margaret Mead Papers in the Library of Congress and from other sources, including interviews with Mead's Samoan informants, Derek wrote a detailed reconstruction of Margaret Mead's Samoan fieldwork, *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead* (1999), which, he felt, essentially closed the controversy once and for all. Intellectually, he was no doubt right. The book offers what is probably the most detailed examination of how prior assumptions, training, and field experiences come to be translated into ethnographic analysis and description that has ever been written. However, it was a measure of Freeman's often remarkable naivety of real world intellectual politics that he could believe his book, for all that, would end the argument and satisfy his critics. Characteristically, in the last years of his life, after the appearance of far harsher critiques of her Balinese and New Guinea writings, Derek would become among the most steadfast defenders of Margaret Mead's integrity as a social scientist. For Derek, it was always the truth, not personalities, that mattered.

Regrettably, however, for the last twenty years of his life, Derek would never again return to his long-promised study of Iban religion, nor to fully formulate the social theory of choice, sketched in his earlier writings, that his Iban research had inspired.

Following Professor Fox's obituary, in "Remembering Derek Freeman," three of Derek's former students, Don Tuzin, Greg Acciaioli, and Michael Heppell, recall the kind of person he was and reflect on his influence in their lives and in the lives of others who knew him.

Here, I wish to thank Dr. Douglas Lewis of the University of Melbourne for allowing us to use the photograph of Derek Freeman that accompanies this memorial. Derek Freeman's original Iban field notes have been deposited in the Tun Jugah Foundation archives in Kuching, Sarawak. In the next issue of the *BRB*, I will report on this significant archival collection. Freeman's personal papers and correspondence, together with all of his Samoan research materials, have more recently been acquired by the University of California at San Diego and are now housed in the University's Mandeville Special Collections Library (for more on this collection, see my Brief Communication, "The Derek Freeman Papers," later in this issue of the *BRB*).

The second memorial section is devoted to Anthony Richards. Richards was appointed District Officer at Kapit in 1951, just as Derek Freeman and his wife Monica were completing their research in the Kapit District. Unlike some administrative officers of the time, Anthony appreciated the value of anthropological research, and he and Derek remained on amicable terms for the rest of their lives.

Anthony Richards, in a letter dated 23 May 2000 written to David Tham, a student of Sarawak colonial history, wrote, acknowledging some minor uncertainties of memory, "I'm afraid I grow old --86 by the end of this year --and, one of these days, my ancestors will come to fetch me home!" Anthony's ancestors did just that a few months later, and he died in Cambridge, England, where he and his family had settled after leaving Sarawak, on 15 November 2000, two weeks short of his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Characteristically, these words of Anthony's were written in response to a request for information. Throughout his later years, Anthony was famously generous with his knowledge and, in one way or another, virtually everyone writing on Sarawak benefited. I know that I certainly did. Thus, Richards, in the same letter, goes on in response to a request for biographical information, to write: "I've never written memoirs—having seen so many very dreadful and dull ones when working at [the] South Asian Studies Centre here." He then proceeded, however, to tick off a few essentials which, for the record, are worth recording here: "Schools: Primary—a small 'Prep.' School near Chepstow. Then to King's (Cathedral) School at Worcester (c. 1929-34), then with a minor scholarship to Hertford College, Oxford. I did Classics at school, History at Oxford. In 1937, was accepted (with Bill—W.G.—Morison) by the Tuan Muda (Bertram Brooke) for service in Sarawak. We were sent back to Oxford for the 'Colonial' Course—lasting a year, but mostly geared to people going to Africa. So to Sarawak in 1938, arriving in Kuching on 9 September." According to the Sarawak Government Staff List, Richards was officially appointed a "Cadet" on 6 September 1938; in those faraway days of sea travel a European officer began his service upon arrival in Singapore.

Bob Reece's obituary supplies the significant details and a balanced measure of Anthony Richards' life, while some personal impressions by those who knew him in

Sarawak, Temonggong Linang, Dato Tra Zehnder, and his life-long friend “Bill” Morison, can be found in the “Remembering Anthony Richards” section that follows.

After Anthony’s death, the Richards family kindly donated his books, correspondence, personal papers and photographs to the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and the Tun Jugah Foundation libraries. Later in this issue, I indicate something of the content and significance of these gifts in two Brief Communications. In a third Brief Communication, Bob Reece describes a Saribas Malay *syair* manuscript included among Richards’ unpublished papers, a copy of which is now deposited in the “AJN Richards Collection” at UNIMAS, and outlines the work now underway to translate and annotate this important document.

Also included among the unpublished papers in the gift made to UNIMAS were some brief autobiographical notes written by Anthony Richards in 1981. These describe his experiences as a Sarawak administrative officer and explain how he came to compile his encyclopedic *An Iban-English Dictionary*. Here, in tribute to Anthony, we open the Research Notes with an extended excerpt from these notes entitled “A.J.N. Richards: A Brief Autobiographical Note, 1981.”

The second paper in this issue, by Andrew Smith of the University of Adelaide, “Missionaries, mariners, and merchants: overlooked British travelers to West Borneo in the early nineteenth century,” reports on some lesser known travelers to West Borneo in the early decades of the nineteenth century and speculates on the possible influence of early British travel reports on later events in Sarawak.

As promised in the last issue of the *BRB*, the two papers that follow return to a debate begun in the *Bulletin* in 1999 concerning the existence of a Dayak kingdom in what is now Kalimantan Barat. In the opening paper, Andrew Smith and Reed Wadley review the arguments in this debate and suggest that this confederation, or “Kingdom of the Upriver,” was probably more symbolic than political in nature. The second, companion paper, “Re-emergence of the Raja Hulu Aiq,” by John Bamba, Director of the Institute of Dayakologi, provides contemporary evidence in support of this suggestion, while at the same time it depicts the present “Kingdom of the Upriver,” centered in the Ketapang area of West Kalimantan, and its present spiritual head, the Raja Hulu Aiq, against a background of contending economic and political interests. Bamba’s material is particularly interesting in light of the reassertion of various forms of local ritual and political authority now occurring throughout post-Suharto Indonesia.

Moving on to South and Central Kalimantan, Martin Baier, in the next paper, “Contributions to Ngaju history,” surveys some sources of Ngaju ethnography and history, particularly missionary authors of the last century, some of whom, he argues, are now undeservedly neglected.

Kenneth Sillander, in the significant, substantive paper that follows, “Houses and Social Organization among the Bentian of East Kalimantan,” returns us to some basic concerns in the social anthropology of Borneo, namely, to the social organization of “houses,” or house groups, including, not the least, the classic longhouse, and to the structure and makeup of local communities. As he rightfully notes, residential patterns in Borneo are often dual or even multiple, and a variety of house-like groups may be interposed between the family and the village. In a fruitful way, Sillander also re-explores the usefulness in a Bornean context of Lévi-Strauss’s notion of “house societies” (*société à maison*) and challenges the view that longhouse-like social groupings are absent from

southern Kalimantan. Also interesting is his account of the association of the multifamily *lou* with local leadership and with the presence of the *longan*, a ritual structure specifically associated with ancestral skulls and other enduring ancestor-related objects. For the Bentian, the skulls of ancestors are ritually distinguished from the skulls of enemies taken in warfare.

John Postill's paper, "The mediated production of ethnicity and nationalism among the Iban of Sarawak, Part II," is the second installment of a two-part paper. The first installment appeared in the last issue of the *BRB* and traced the role of radio broadcasting and the Borneo Literature Bureau in a project which Postill aptly describes as meant by its Iban actors "to preserve and modernize the Iban heritage." This project was brought to an end when the Malaysian government replaced the Borneo Literature Bureau with Sarawak and Sabah branches of the Dewan Pustaka dan Bahasa, each controlled from KL and organized to promote the use of Bahasa Malaysia. This new paper looks at what Postill calls the "second phase of Iban media production." This phase, covering the time period of 1977 to 1997, has witnessed, on the one hand, the growing Malaysianization of the media, with national television replacing locally-based radio, and, on the other, the creation of a new Iban cultural industry, centered chiefly in Sibu, particularly in the form of popular music, notably cassette recordings, CDs, and videos, including hugely popular Iban karaoke videos. During the recent Gawai Dayak, my wife and I, while guests in a Saribas longhouse, had occasion to discover just how popular Iban music videos have become as a source of entertainment. In an interesting way they make it possible for Iban viewers to restore Iban language and images to TV screens from which they are otherwise excluded by the national Malaysian media. The present paper includes the complete bibliography of references cited in both installments of the author's paper.

The appearance of John Postill's paper is particularly timely. In the present installment, Postill notes that, "With the demise of the BLB [Borneo Literature Bureau]...[and the destruction of an indigenous print media]...Iban-language Christian texts have acquired greater significance as cultural repositories among the more literate Iban." Today, indeed, by far the most widely read book in the Iban language is the Iban translation of the bible, called *Bup Kudus*. Introduced in 1988, *Bup Kudus* has been used now for over a decade in Iban churches of every Christian denomination in Sarawak. However, in April 2003, just as the *BRB* was being readied for the printers, the Malaysian Home Ministry, without explanation, banned *Bup Kudus*. The ban was reported in the *New Straits Times* and *Malaysian Today*, but otherwise went, initially at least, unreported in the Sarawak press. Church leaders, not only Iban, but of other ethnic groups, quickly mobilized and drew up a united petition which they submitted to the Home Ministry, and, after a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, they succeeded in having the ban rescinded. However, the episode raised fears in Sarawak, not only about the freedom of religion, but also about the future status of minority languages in the state.

In the final Research Note in this issue, "A short history of birds' nest management in the Niah caves," Quentin Gausset traces the breakdown of a traditional and seemingly sustainable system of nesting-area tenure and management, resulting in what today has become a tragic situation of over-harvesting of nests and a rapid decline in swiftlet populations, now to the edge of extinction. A special virtue of Gausset's paper is the way in which he carefully notes and distinguishes between the different factors that appear to

contribute to this tragedy, including not only the destruction of a traditional system of nesting-area tenure, but also, among other things, changes in the market demand for nests, the conversion of the surrounding forests to oil palm plantations and the resulting importation of migrant laborers and the heavy use of pesticides.

Once again, I take this occasion to thank all of those who assisted me during the year with review and editorial help, or who contributed news or bibliographic items. The list, as always, is a long one and this year includes: Sander Adelaar, George Appell, Dee Baer, Martin Baier, Carol Colfer, Hew Cheng Sim, Allison Hoare, Terry King, Michael Leigh, Ole Mertz, Heidi Munan, Keat Gin Ooi, Vernon Porritt, Bob Reece, Bernard Sellato, Andrew Smith, Vinson Sutlive, Tan Chee-Beng, David Tham, Donald Tuzin, Reed Wadley, and Robert Winzeler. Again, David Tham provided invaluable help with photo scanning. My special thanks go, once again, to Dr. Phillip Thomas (the National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland, USA), who single-handedly performed the daunting task of computer processing all of the text, tables, and photographs included in this volume. My wife, Louise Sather, again helped me to proofread and edit the entire issue. To all, my thanks.

#### **The BRC's Seventh Biennial Conference**

Finally, also appearing in this issue of the *BRB* is a report on the Borneo Research Council's Seventh Biennial Conference, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Borneo," which was sponsored by the Universiti Malaysia Sabah and held on the University's impressive new Kota Kinabalu campus over three days, 15-18 July, 2002. More than 180 papers were given, as well as five panel sessions. All were presented in the meeting rooms and auditorium facilities of the new UMS Library. In addition to providing the conference venue, the Library also announced the establishment of a special Borneo collection and on behalf of the Borneo Research Council, BRC President Dr. George N. Appell presented a complete set of BRC publications to the Library, including the *BRB*. Here we wish to thank the sponsors, organizing committee, and all of those who took part for making the conference, once again, a resounding success.

At the moment, planning is underway for the Eighth Biennial Conference, which is scheduled to be held in July 2004 in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan.

#### **A New Borneo Research Council Email Address and Website**

The BRC is pleased to announce that there is, first, a new Borneo Research Council email address: <[brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org](mailto:brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org)>.

Second, the Council has initiated a new website complete with BRC information: <[www.borneoresearchcouncil.org](http://www.borneoresearchcouncil.org)>.

On the website are listed all the publications and their prices that are offered through the Council. There is also a section where those wanting to find out what other fellows and members are doing can post messages. If, for example, you would like to obtain some pointers on developing your research or are looking for other scholars with similar interests, by posting a message on the website, someone may be able to help you out. Also posted on the website are past yearly reports of the president, printable book order forms, and printable membership invoices. If there are other things that you would like to see on the website, send an email with your suggestions to <[brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org](mailto:brc@borneoresearchcouncil.org)>. We would like to hear from you. Maintaining and operating the new site will incur an added expense to the Council of about US\$250 per year.

### **A New Online Bibliography of Borneo Dissertations**

The BRC has now begun an online bibliography of doctoral dissertations on Borneo. The bibliography has been developed in part from existing bibliographies and databases of dissertations, but it can also be augmented by authors of new or overlooked dissertations or by others who may know of dissertations that are not currently included. Once it is posted as a permanent part of the list, bibliographic information on dissertations may be retrieved in several ways. The general goal is to include dissertations in all fields from all universities provided that the dissertation concerns Borneo to some substantial extent or that it contains substantial information on Borneo.

The address of the website is <<http://www2.library.unr.edu/dataworks/Borneo/default.htm>>.

The bibliography is maintained by Bob Winzeler and is hosted by the University of Nevada, Reno, Library's DataWorks. A pilot version of the website is now up. Please send comments or suggestions to Bob Winzeler <[winzeler@unr.edu](mailto:winzeler@unr.edu)> and submit information on dissertations directly to the website.

As of February 2003, the Editor is pleased to report that about 230 dissertations were already listed on the website, most of them so far, although by no means all, from American and Canadian universities. We are grateful to Bob for undertaking this useful project and would especially welcome information on Asian and European dissertations. Also, anyone wishing to assist with this project should contact Bob directly.

### **A Change in BRB Reprint Policy**

Finally, the Executive Committee of the Borneo Research Council has, with reluctance, decided upon a change of policy with regard to reprints of papers from the *Borneo Research Bulletin*. In the past, we have provided reprints free upon request. However, in view of rising postage and other costs, a flat fee of USD 5 will now be charged for each reprint requested. This fee includes postage.

### **Member Support**

Here we wish to record our thanks to the following individuals for their contribution during the year 2002 to the BRC endowment and general funds:

Dr. Gale Dixon, Mr. James McLellan, Dr. Clare Boulanger, Dr. Amity Doolittle, Mr. Patrick Cassels, Mrs. Laura Appell-Warren, Dr. Michael R. Dove, Professor H. Arlo Nimmo, Dr. Reed Wadley, Dr. W. D. Wilder, Ms. E. Kim Adams, Mr. Ralph Arbus, Dr. Carol Warren, Dr. Allen Maxwell, and Dr. Jay B. Crain.

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We thank all of these individuals for their support.

### **Change of Editor's Address**

Please note that your editor has left the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and returned to the University of Helsinki. His new address is:



Prof. Clifford Sather, Cultural Anthropology, P.O. Box 59 (Unioninkatu 38D), 00014  
University of Helsinki, Finland. Email: <clifford.sather@helsinki.fi>.

## MEMORIALS

DEREK FREEMAN

1916—2001

Derek Freeman was born in Wellington, New Zealand, on 16 August 1916. After studying philosophy and psychology at Victoria University College, he was introduced to anthropology in a graduate seminar taught by Ernest Beaglehole and was inspired to do research in the Pacific.



**Derek Freeman, September, 1996 at Heide, Melbourne (Photo: Douglas Lewis).**

With a New Zealand teacher's certificate, he obtained a position as a schoolteacher in Western Samoa where he taught and did his first fieldwork from April 1940 to November 1943. Having learned Samoan, he was adopted as the son of the talking chief, Lauvi Vainu'u of Sa'anapu, and, in January 1943, had conferred upon him the high chiefly title of Logona-i-Taga (literally "Heard at the Tree Felling"), a title he bore proudly throughout his life.

As a student of Beaglehole, Derek was, by his own admission, steeped in the Boasian tradition of anthropology. Among the books that he brought with him to Samoa were *General Anthropology* (1938) edited by Boas and Margaret Mead's *From the South Seas: Studies of Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Societies* (1939) which included *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Prior to his departure for Samoa, he, too, had done research on the

socialization of children aged 6 to 9 years in various schools in Wellington. His primary interest, however, during his stay in Sa'anapu, was the study of social organization. The model he took for his work was Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole's study, *Pangai: Village in Tonga*.

In November 1943, Derek left Samoa to join the Royal New Zealand Volunteer Naval Reserve and served in Europe and the Far East. While serving along the west coast of Borneo, in September and October 1945, he had his first encounter with the Iban, with whom he was, some years later, to carry out his most important ethnographic research. At the time, he was determined to continue his studies of Samoa.

After the war, in 1946, he enrolled in Anthropology at the London School of Economics where he did course work for two years. He participated in seminars conducted by Raymond Firth, Audrey Richards, and Siegfried Nadel. Under the supervision of Professor Raymond Firth, he then wrote a thesis based mainly on his earlier research in Sa'anapu and on materials gathered during a brief return visit and on archival sources. This thesis of some 333 pages was entitled *The Social Structure of a Samoan Village Community*. The thesis was examined by Max Gluckman and in July 1948, he was awarded an Academic Postgraduate Diploma.

On completion of this thesis, Derek was given the opportunity of fieldwork among the Iban of Sarawak. Edmund Leach, then still at the LSE, had written a report for the Crown Colony of Sarawak recommending eight different research projects, one of which was the study of the Iban. Prior to his departure for Sarawak, in November 1949, Derek married Monica Maitland who became his life's companion. She soon joined him in an upstream longhouse in the Baleh region where they lived until February 1951. Among the reading that Derek took with him to Sarawak were the page proofs of *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*. Derek had presented a seminar at Oxford on Samoan social structure and Meyer Fortes had responded to his presentation with high praise and the offer of the page proofs of his book.

On his return to England, Derek transferred to Cambridge University where Fortes had recently been appointed as Professor of Social Anthropology. There Freeman became a member of King's College and, in addition to his doctorate, wrote what is regarded as one of the classic monographs in social anthropology, *Report on the Iban*. His research on the social organization of the Iban was innovative in its exploration of individual choices involved in attachments to groups rather than on rules of obligatory behavior. Already in that critical research, the issue of choice, rather than the application of structural principles, was evident in his thinking.

Derek's research among the Iban was carried out principally at Rumah Nyala, a longhouse community on Sungai Sut, a major tributary of the Baleh. He also spent time at Rumah Tungku on Sungai Tiau, at Rumah Pengulu Sibat on Melinau, and at Rumah Temenggong Koh in the Ulu Baleh.

After the completion of his thesis, in 1954, Derek returned to New Zealand to take up a Visiting Lectureship at the University of Otago. Shortly thereafter, Siegfried Nadel, who had been appointed as the Foundation Professor of Anthropology in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the ANU, invited him to take up the position of Senior Fellow in the Research School. He joined the Department of Anthropology and Sociology in February 1955. His entire career from that time onward, until his death, was spent in that department.

Through the 1950s, Freeman continued to write on the Iban. His major monographs, *Iban Agriculture* and *Report on the Iban* were published in 1955 and there followed a stream of important essays including a prize-winning paper on the concept of the kindred.

By the early 1960s, he had begun to question the narrow basis of the anthropological methods and theory he had been taught, and turned to an exploration of psychoanalysis, ethology, and evolutionary biology. He then became acquainted with the ideas of Karl Popper with whom he established a long correspondence. Following this change in research direction, Freeman took leave from the ANU to study at the London Institute of Psychoanalysis. He attended seminars at the Tavistock Clinic given by John Bowlby and traveled to Germany to consult with Konrad Lorenz and I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt about his plans for research in human ethology. Freeman was a pioneer in envisioning an ethology of human behavior.

It was on his return voyage to Australia in 1964 that Freeman re-read, after many years, Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* and was perturbed by what he regarded as the book's culturalist and relativist premises and its lack of any biological understanding of adolescent behavior. He resolved to return to Samoa and resume his own researches from his newfound behavioral and philosophical perspectives.

Two years later, Freeman was successful in obtaining further leave from the university. With his wife and two daughters, he went to live in the village of Sa'anapu from the beginning of 1966 to the end of 1967. During this period, he visited Manu'a, the main location of Mead's research and began his own inquiries which eventually led to his refutation of Mead's earlier work in Samoa.

Freeman saw Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* as a pivotal volume in the development of an anthropology grounded in relativism and cultural determinism. In a series of papers and lectures from the late 1960s onward, he advanced his own alternative, biologically attuned view of cultural behavior. He proposed an "interactionist paradigm" based on an evolutionary understanding of human nature that emphasizes individuals' capacities for choice and the consequences of these choices for the adaptive diversity of human cultures.

Through the 1970s, as he continued to develop his ideas, Freeman took on new responsibilities as Chair of the Anthropology Department and served as supervisor of a succession of Ph.D. students doing ethnographic research on Borneo and Samoa. One of these doctoral students was the Iban, James Masing, whose thesis, published as *The Coming of the Gods*, is a translation and analysis of a long invocatory chant which Freeman had recorded over a period of five days and nights in 1949. The preservation and translation of this magnificent example of Iban oral literature is a monumental contribution to the heritage of Southeast Asia.

During the 1970s, Freeman also became involved with aboriginal communities in the Kimberley Mountains in Australia and was a public advocate of aboriginal rights.

Freeman's book, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*, was completed prior to his retirement in 1982 and appeared in 1983. Even before its publication by Harvard University Press, a lead article in the *New York Times* prompted an outcry and a rush to defend Mead's reputation as America's most illustrious anthropologist.

Freeman's response to the controversy surrounding his first book was to write a sequel, *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead*. This book is a meticulous and

engagingly sympathetic account of Mead's time in Samoa based mainly on her own diaries and letters now held in the Library of Congress. The controversy over these books has yet to subside. David Williamson made it the subject of his play, *Heretic*, posing Freeman and Mead as two headstrong protagonists in the central debate over nature/nurture. The play vividly portrayed Freeman's intellectual journey in rethinking the foundations of social science. Certainly he revelled in the label, "heretic," and indeed titled one of his important theoretical papers "In praise of heresy."

Throughout his life, Freeman was a man concerned with ideas whose implications he pursued with tireless vigor. The *New York Times* journalist who wrote the initial article that set off the Mead controversy sent Freeman a note expressing his hope that he would "survive the fall-out." He did indeed survive and, moreover, thrived. For twenty years after his retirement, he kept up a steady stream of answers to critics.

From an early age, Freeman was an avid mountain climber who scaled mountains around the world. Until his heart failed him, he continued climbing new intellectual peaks and developing passionate personal interests. He is survived by his wife, Monica, his daughters Jennifer and Hilary, and grandchildren, Ryan, Cara and Elana. (James J. Fox, Director, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia. A version of this obituary appeared in the *Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia Annual Report*, 2001: pp. 67-69. We thank Professor Fox for his permission to republish it here.)

### DEREK FREEMAN REMEMBRANCE

Editor's Note: The first two statements that appear below were read by Professor James J. Fox during a memorial gathering held in honor of Professor Derek Freeman at The Australian National University on 20 July 2001. We thank Don Tuzin and Greg Acciaioli for their permission to publish these remembrances. In addition, we thank Dr. Michael Heppell for contributing his own personal remembrance as a former graduate student who worked under Derek's supervision.

#### Donald Tuzin

In the New Guinea society where I work, when an important man dies the people say that "a great tree has fallen in the forest," leaving emptiness where before there was strength and vitality. Derek Freeman's passing was of this kind. His monumental theoretical advances, ethnographic artistry, brave insistence that human behavior be understood as a product of the interaction of cultural and biological factors—these have a towering quality. So does his eloquent conviction that humanity's singular character rests on the paradoxical capacity of members of our species to make choices. This is anthropology exalted to the level of philosophy, possessing a grandeur, nobility, and sense of mission that has all but vanished from the anthropological landscape.

Derek's accomplishments are a matter of public record. Let me speak, instead, of the man I remember.

Derek had a powerful effect on people. Not once, in all of the thirty-two years I knew him, did I leave his company without feeling challenged and yet enlarged. Derek was the most observant and curious, most awakened, most motivated person I have known. Music

and art were an important part of his life, and he surrounded himself with things of grace and beauty and significance. A romantic, a lover of mountains and the bush, reefs and the sea, and all that lived there, he was a naturalist by temperament; and he never ceased wondering why and how come things are as they are. The beholding of such energy and commitment, inspired others (myself, anyway) to regret every wasted moment, every trivial thought and petty impulse, and to try to embrace loftier purposes.

This soaring intellectualism was infused with considerable amounts of humor. In his obituary of Siegfried Nadel, the founding Professor of Anthropology in the Australian National University, Derek fondly recalled the eminent scholar as possessing a “lambent” intellect—meaning a lightness of touch and a readiness for amusement in the exchange of ideas. Derek’s description could apply equally to himself, and it pleases me to imagine that the two are trading lambencies at this very moment. Likewise, Derek’s letters abound with mirth and cleverness: puns, poems, proverbs, aphorisms, doctored and re-captioned illustrations. Derek’s funny-streak was a mile wide, reflecting a spontaneous, child-like eagerness about the world that was also the key to his creative genius. Escorting Derek through Disneyland on his first trip to America rates as one of the most charming experiences of my life.

These fine features came together in Derek’s excellence as my doctoral supervisor. Letters I wrote from the field would receive answers three or four times their length, filled with good counsel and warm encouragement. Every month or so, a book would arrive. Always, it would be an account of heroic achievement—Mawson’s explorations in the Antarctic, Hillary’s ascent of Mt. Everest, that sort of thing—because, like a father remembering how it feels to be young and unsure, he wanted me to believe in the value of what I was doing. “Pick important problems, and follow them wherever they lead.” That was his advice, and it was good advice. So was his admonition to retain my sense of wonder over cultural practices that others might explain away as “customary” and therefore unproblematic.

Derek was a natural teacher, because in addition to wisdom and compassion, he radiated a special emotion that students often recognize and revere. It goes by the name “love of subject,” and it is a quality Derek possessed in extraordinary measure. The subject was anthropology; but, recall, Derek’s was an anthropology far grander in scope and significance than the field as we normally define it. Going beyond even its philosophic import, Derek, in my opinion, esteemed anthropology as a sacred trust, a status shared by no other field of academic endeavor. As such, Derek’s anthropology urgently aspires to the highest ideals of truth and goodness. And only as such, is anthropology sufficient to the compass of Derek’s great and passionate mind. We will not see his kind again. (Professor Donald Tuzin, Department of Anthropology, University of California, San Diego, USA)

### Gregory Acciaioli

Emeritus Professor Derek Freeman delighted in the label of heretic, one that was popularized by David Williamson’s play of that title. His own affection for the term was etymologically motivated, for heretic derives from the Greek *hairetikos*, “able to choose.” And choice was a significant cornerstone in Professor Freeman’s philosophy of social life, an element that kept him from becoming prisoner to any single perspective. In his early studies in social anthropology he emphasized analytical problems of the

delimitation of such social units as the kindred, but he also exhibited sensitivity to ecological factors often missing in that perspective. Yet, he rejected the ecological determinism of the American neo-evolutionists and convincingly demonstrated how their model building oversimplified the complexity of social life. When he moved on to consider the Freudian symbolism of headhunting and other aspects of Iban culture, he still chose to avoid the more reductionist aspects of that paradigm. He eventually moved from a Freudian bent to a more ethological perspective, but even then never succumbed to a rampant biologism. His interactionist paradigm, one of the most impressive syntheses of the biological and cultural in twentieth-century anthropology, eschewed biological determinism by emphasizing the emergent capacity for choice, acknowledging the role both of biological constraints and cultural patterning in the evolution of complex choice systems. Each of these phases through which he moved retained a keen awareness of the interaction of constraints from a number of sometimes contradictory sources through which choice still emerged as the defining character of humanity. It would be a pity were Professor Freeman only to be remembered for the Samoa controversy rather than the finely crafted theoretical statements and richly textured ethnographic and ethological analyses he presented throughout the various phases of the evolution of his thought.

It is with a sense of the contradictions he encompassed that we can best approach Professor Derek Freeman as a person. As a research scholar in the Research School of Pacific Studies (as it was then still called), I had several occasions to interact with him, most frequently when I undertook the task of editing a special volume of the departmental journal *Canberra Anthropology* on the Samoa controversy. Like all of us, the man with whom I interacted was a bundle of conflicting tendencies, sometimes kept in creative tension, sometimes erupting in a single direction. On the one hand, he was extremely generous with his time and scholarship, for example showing me in detailed fashion before I embarked on my own field work the truly impressive way he organized his own field notes; indeed, in accordance with the highest standards of scientific accessibility and accountability, he maintained those field notes as an open archive for other scholars to consult. Yet, he could truly be “remorseless” against those he felt were in error (and error was but the unfortunate entailment of the possibility of choice in his view), especially if they persisted in that error. At first he blamed me for not allowing first drafts of contributions to the special volume to be published unedited, but then, after I had given his article the same editorial treatment, he thanked me and gave me a clothbound copy of van Gennep’s *The Rites of Passage*, and later a Samoan *tapa* cloth I still treasure. We remained sympathetically respectful opponents on many other issues in anthropology after that, realizing our differences but remaining in dialogue and genuinely concerned about each other’s welfare.

In what was labeled a tribute to Professor Freeman, during the opening segment of the Science Show aired on 14 July, Robyn Williams, supported by the playwright David Williamson, presented Professor Freeman as “a most remarkable man” whose “fame was built on the remorseless pursuit of truth, as he saw it.” The praise is real, but the hedging of his accolade is also apparent. Professor Freeman elicited very polarized reactions throughout the academy and beyond; any balanced assessment of his influence must take account of both types of response. Yet, perhaps that was Professor Freeman’s gift not just to anthropology, but to the world of academia and the wider universe of those interested, passionately or casually, in conceptualizing our human nature. He may well have been a

heretic in relation to some sects of cultural anthropology, although he found widespread support from orthodox scientists in other disciplines. But certainly he was a gadfly, a meticulous academic and public intellectual who provoked others into either rethinking their taken-for-granted positions or at least specifying them far more precisely. Professor Freeman exercised a penetrating influence upon me in my student years and thereafter, forcing me to widen my horizons of what constituted anthropology and to question my basic motivations for being interested in the field. The answers I came up with were not the same as his own, but without his publications and conversations I would never have chosen to delve so deeply. I suspect I am not alone in that reaction. Such provocation deserves to be applauded widely and remembered fondly. (Dr. Gregory Acciaioli, Anthropology and Sociology, School of Social and Cultural Studies, University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, WA 6009, Australia)

Michael Heppel

#### PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF A STUDENT

For me, a stimulating association with Derek Freeman was confined to the short period between 1971 and 1980. My first contact with Derek was when I received a telegram that I had been awarded an ANU scholarship. After completing a B. Litt. at Oxford, I had been working as a financial/strategy consultant in the UK. As an alternative, Derek offered me the heady prospect of working with the Iban of Sarawak. I phoned up my former supervisor at Oxford, Edwin Ardener, to see what he thought of the idea. He warned me that Australian anthropology was a sea of mediocrity and worse; Derek was the only star in its dull waters. For Edwin, Derek's intellect was sadly lost to the United Kingdom when he left for the Antipodes, first to his homeland of New Zealand and thence to take up a research fellowship at the Australian National University, where he joined his countryman Raymond Firth.

In my brief association, Derek displayed many impressive qualities. One he quickly demonstrated was a confidence in his own work and the need to subject it to scientific scrutiny and constantly improve it, where necessary. On arrival in Canberra, Derek made it clear that he and his research were at my disposal. He had twin rooms at the ANU – one which he used as his office, and the second as a library for his books and research notes. I was invited to let myself in to the latter and take whatever research files I thought would be useful. Mid 1971 was still a time when Derek had ambitions to return to his Iban material and address his major focus of fieldwork study, Iban religion. He also mentioned a desire, with the benefit of his wife Monica's drawings and other information she had collected, to write an exegesis of Iban weaving. His intellectual passion at that time, however, was the formulation of a new anthropological paradigm which would make sense, in an anthropological and evolutionary context, of the emerging research on the human brain and human genetics. He quickly set about changing my focus from structure to behavior. He argued the importance of "how come" questions like "how come a legal system" and pointed me to the work of ethologists and behavioral psychologists. All through my background research before departing on fieldwork, Derek encouraged me to challenge accepted theories as he constantly did, positing novel ways of approaching anthropological problems. Regularly, he also explained his own views of



the Iban, their egalitarian culture and their boundless self-confidence, and the cultural and political advantages that these attributes afforded them in terms of choice, especially regarding leadership. Derek was clearly fascinated by the Iban. The fascination was immediate. Derek told me that Bill Geddes was the person whose name Leach had provisionally put forward as the scholar to study the Iban. Derek, at the end of the war, was serving on a New Zealand frigate which visited Miri. There, he saw his first Iban and was attracted by their bearing and swagger. Subsequently, Derek, in an interview with the Colonial Social Science Research Council, managed to convince the Council (among many things) that he was the student for the Iban as he already had some understanding of spoken Iban.

Derek's confidence in his own work was exhibited by his encouragement of my locating my fieldwork with the Batang Ai Iban who are closely related to the Baleh Iban Derek studied, rather than with the Saribas Iban (whom Derek believed had become gentrified), which was the preference of the Sarawak Museum. Derek insisted that one of my roles was to apply Popper's rule of falsification to his own work as well as to any hypotheses I might have. This pursuit of truth was in marked contrast to the approach of many other anthropologists at that time who seemed jealously to patrol the areas in which they had done their fieldwork research and deny access to other anthropologists.

To understand the broader issues of social control, I had to understand the social organization of the Iban. Consequently, I collected data on the social and political organization of the Batang Ai Iban, and this data corroborated Derek's earlier analysis. If I were to rewrite *Report on the Iban* from a Batang Ai perspective, the only thing I would change would be to add a small piece on the Iban concept of *kuasa* in the *bilek* household, which speaks volumes for the efficaciousness of Derek's methodology, the rigor of his data collection and the quality of his analysis. Additionally, Derek's data and observations were so detailed and acute that they could be subjected to analyses based on scientific advances which occurred long after Derek's fieldwork. For example, his data on dispute resolution were such that they were amenable to ethological analyses showing one way the Iban managed the reduction of tension between the disputants.

The quality of Derek's methodology and analysis was further reinforced to me when, subsequently, I did some fieldwork with a Bidayuh (Jakug) group in West Kalimantan. I approached the data collection in much the same way as I had with the Iban. The outcome was that the social and political organization of the Bidayuh, though not the social process, was very similar to the Iban. I feared I had approached the Bidayuh through an Iban prism. Immediately after this fieldwork, while visiting Sarawak, I found Bill Geddes there. Over dinner one evening, I explained my findings to Bill. Much to my surprise Bill did not disagree with my analysis, saying that subsequent visits to the Bidayuh had convinced him that his original work had been flawed.

Derek showed considerable concern for the well-being of his students, especially in the field. He was very careful to be sure that my wife, Marguerite, and I were well prepared for the field. In his own case, he nearly lost Monica when she contracted typhoid and had to be rushed down to Sibu in the only vehicle available, a leaking longboat with an uncertain outboard motor. His most important advice was that we should plan an escape route, which, for us, meant that we jealously guarded our last jerry can of petrol. Secondly, we should arm ourselves with an extensive medicine chest to be used on ourselves and, more importantly, for the Iban. The latter proved a very important

factor in our being accepted by the longhouse, as malaria and serious pulmonary infections responded quickly to our ministrations. Advice about food also did not escape Derek's attention. He advised the purchase of fishing nets and shotguns and giving them to poorer households. The former resulted in a steady flow of fish and other surpluses from farms, thus ensuring a healthy and fresh diet throughout our stay. One result of all this advice was peace of mind in the field and a greater ability to concentrate on the major task of collecting data.

Derek had a strong ethical sense which, when confronted by mindless and flawed authority, produced a highly combustible result. In Sarawak, there was an episode with the then curator of the Sarawak Museum, Tom Harrisson, culminating in a confrontation which, for a short time, cost Derek his official welcome in Sarawak. Derek's view of Harrisson's tenure has never been told. For Derek, Harrisson's desire to preserve the field for himself, throughout the 1950s, had been a major obstacle to anthropological research in Sarawak. Derek was rightly convinced that Harrisson was a very poor scholar and was very likely not to do justice to the research opportunities in Sarawak. Derek also believed that Harrisson's management of the museum collection was unprofessional. Derek's assessment seems to be borne out by the dearth of professional anthropological research in Sarawak during this period. His assessment of Harrisson's management of the Museum collection was probably generous. It later transpired, despite assertions to the contrary in Heimann's biography, *The Most Offending Soul Alive*, that his management was so lax that it enabled him to leave Sarawak with a large collection of objects which he had never had catalogued and, consequently, claimed as his own. These, he subsequently sold.

The confrontation with Harrisson was another example of the depth of support Derek gave his students. It was elicited when one of his students, de Martinoir, began writing of the difficulties he was experiencing with Harrisson. The difficulties increased, threatening his very fieldwork. (How true de Martinoir's assertions were will never be known. Clearly, he was not reliable, having misrepresented his qualifications to gain entry into this research program). Derek took up the cudgel on behalf of de Martinoir in Sarawak. Getting nowhere with the colonial bureaucracy, he embarked on the kind of frustrated direct action which would, in later years, provide so much ammunition for his enemies who were determined to prevent the recognition which his intellectual prowess so richly deserved.

In those days, the ANU anthropological doctorate enabled a student to spend two years in the field. During my fieldwork, Derek was an expeditious correspondent offering advice and encouragement to the reports I sent in from the field as well as suggestions about further avenues to explore. He constantly reassured me that the data collected and the preliminary analysis undertaken were heading in the right direction. Such reassurances certainly lowered my stress levels as an uncertain fieldworker. On my return to Canberra, Derek continued to review my draft chapters quickly with useful suggestions to expand my reading and tighten my argument. Many years later, even when his strength must have been failing and his interest fixed on completing as much of his work as possible, Derek still was prepared to go to the trouble to read and comment on a manuscript I sent him on Iban art.

On my return from fieldwork, I was able to witness at reasonably close hand the put-downs and humiliations which were to dog Derek during the decade of 1970-80. Rather

than appoint Derek to the vacant chair of anthropology, a timid appointments committee decided to humiliate him publicly by creating a second chair which most people interpreted as signaling that a department could not be trusted to Derek alone. At least the committee gave Derek the opportunity to choose his co-professor. Derek chose Roger Keesing who quickly donned Iago's garb and played skillfully to Derek's detractors.

Derek's frustrations were not limited to the University. In the mid-1970s, Derek became interested in Aboriginal culture and, in particular, that of a group living in a settlement at Mowanjum, near Derby in the Kimberley Mountains. Derek made a number of visits to the far northwest as well as hosting Mowanjum elders in his Deakin home. Derek's interest in Aboriginal anthropology was serious enough for him to apply for membership in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. The Institute, in its wisdom, rejected his application.

Given the way the anthropological establishment had treated him, it is probably not surprising that Derek should have turned his intellectual endeavors to the kind of hierarchical society which had treated him with so little understanding and encouragement in life, and devote much of his intellectual activity to an icon of the anthropological establishment. Margaret Mead was the target and proved easy meat for Derek's forensic skills. This foray, though, left unrequited the challenge of the Iban and their religion within the framework of a new paradigm. Paradoxically, the non-hierarchical Iban would always have found a ready place for the leadership talents which Derek possessed in abundance but which were largely spurned by the anthropological establishment.

Finally, one must remark that Derek's generosity and hospitality were mirrored by Monica. She participated in most of his fieldwork with the Iban and supported his work with her own observations, both written and sketched. She must have been a pillar of strength during those years in the field as well as in Canberra. Derek always had a calm, intelligent and understanding home environment to return to after the stresses of another day at the office. (Dr. Michael Heppell, 15 Bayview Avenue, Hawthorn, Victoria, Australia)

### ANTHONY JOHN NOEL RICHARDS

1914-2000

Anthony Richards was born at Sheepscombe, Gloucestershire, on 3 December 1914 and later moved to France Lynch, where his father, Kenneth Keble Evan Richards, was Vicar. After "Prep" school near Chepstow he attended King's (Cathedral) School, Worcester, between 1929 and 1934 where he studied Classics and earned the sobriquet "Tex" after an American boxer he was thought to resemble. He then went up to Oxford University on a minor scholarship to read History at Hertford College, graduating in 1937. He was a keen amateur photographer and sportsman.

Anticipating a career in the colonial service, he went on to complete the First Devonshire Course at Oxford in 1937-38 under the tutelage of the redoubtable Margery Perham. Together with W.G. (Bill) Morison, another Hertford student, he was encouraged to apply for the Sarawak service while awaiting the outcome of his examination for the Malayan Civil Service. Perhaps his interest was longstanding, as suggested by a childhood game in which "Sarawak" was the exotic name he gave to a

favorite wild part of the garden. He and Morison were both accepted after their interviews with the Rajah's brother, Bertram Brooke (better known as the Tuan Muda), and went out together to Singapore on a Blue Funnel Line ship, arriving in Kuching on the *Vyner Brooke* on 9 September, 1938.

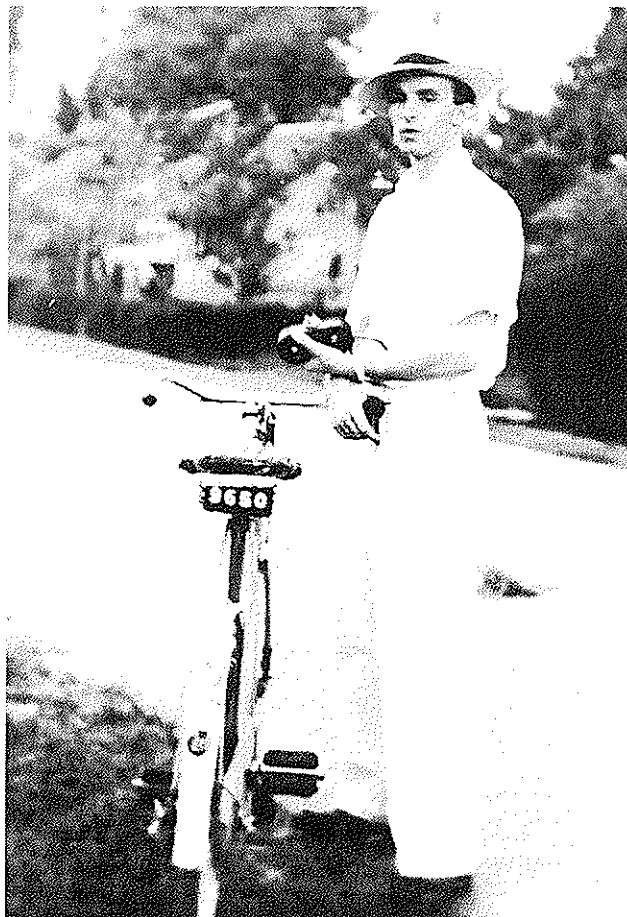
Anthony Richards' first lesson in Sarawak politics came from Captain Benfield of the *Vyner Brooke*, a veteran observer who had been plying between Singapore and Kuching for almost twenty years. To his Oxford friend, Brian Walsh Atkins, he wrote:

He [Benfield] is of the opinion that the present government is selfish – and each man for himself—and has not the confidence and wholehearted backing of the people. They refer to 'The Rajah' and mean the former one, who was a martinet, but knew his business: he was a ruler whom these folk could appreciate.

Anthony was fortunate enough to spend his first year in the Government Secretariat in Kuching under the tutelage of the new Secretary for Native Affairs, Andrew MacPherson, who had an original and inquiring mind as well as a good knowledge of the Iban and other interior peoples. A vigorous but humorless Scot, he spoke fluent Malay and Iban. At that time, the Sarawak administration was going through something of a crisis. The third Rajah, Charles Vyner Brooke, had lost all interest in government (if, indeed, he had ever possessed any) but was unwilling to give a larger role to his younger and much more able brother, Bertram, despite the provisions made by their father, the second Rajah, in his political will for what amounted to a shared responsibility for governing.

In this power and policy vacuum the senior bureaucrats of the Secretariat, constituted as a Committee of Administration, became the effective executive and began to tighten the strings of centralized control in what had traditionally been a loose and decentralized system. Rebelling against this, the outstation officers, the District Officers and Residents who had always been the core of Brooke government (Vyner unkindly called them "little tin gods"), made their views known in no uncertain terms. Amidst this bitter rivalry, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Cyril Le Gros Clark, was one of the few men capable of independent and lucid thought. Commissioned by the Committee of Administration, he produced a report which made recommendations on every aspect of government, notably education and the need to strengthen the Native Officer and Junior Administrative Services with a view to their taking over more responsibility. Not surprisingly, the report was left to gather dust.

One of Anthony Richards' first tasks (no doubt on MacPherson's orders) was to write a memorandum on policy in which he revived many of Le Gros Clark's ideas. This was a thoughtful and sophisticated (if somewhat sharply expressed) document in which his study of history shines through. It would be claiming too much to suggest that he could have done anything to rescue the terminally afflicted Brooke regime, but he certainly provided a brilliant diagnosis of its problems. This is how I summarized his views in *The Name of Brooke*:



**Anthony Richards captured in a snapshot by his friend Philip Allas at Kuap, 1939  
(AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS)**

He saw two major faults in the old Residential system: firstly, that it encouraged the growth of different policies, 'in so far as there were any at all' in different areas; secondly, that there were no means, short of change of regime, of 'ensuring any progress within those territories, distinct as they were, and jealous of each other and "interference." Altogether, it was static and inward-looking, 'outpaced in the course of progress', and therefore 'best left for dead'. Reversion to this system as it had operated was 'ridiculous.' The new [centralized bureaucratic] system, on the other hand, lacked adequate staff, the delegation of power from Kuching and a definite plan of implementation, so that while the old system was being destroyed, there was a hiatus of uncertainty and disbelief.' Contrasting the two, he described the old system as being forced into centralized execution but lacking centralized

policy and control, while the new system wrongly attempted 'centralized execution of a scrappy and non-existent policy.'



**October 1945, Labuan, photo taken of Anthony Richards shortly after his release from the Japanese prisoner of war camp at Batu Lintang (photo: Tun Jugah Foundation)**

Privately, he was highly critical of his fellow officers. Writing to his parents in March 1939 he described how

a crowd of outstation officers (down for the races) came trooping out of the CS's [Chief Secretary's] office. A bigger crowd of the most ultimate saps you never saw: one with a ludicrous moustache (who looked, as Bill [Morison] said, like something that crept out of a tree after a rainstorm)—and another looking very straight and prim but with an odd droopy air about him, others redfaced and fairheaded and brainless, and all grinning and talking nonsense. Spose they're alright though....

In the meantime, festering tension between the senior bureaucrats of the Committee of Administration and the outstation officers was coming to a head. Championing the

cause of a junior officer whom he considered to have been the victim of high-handed action, the Rajah's nephew, Anthony Brooke, was encouraged by his uncle to hold an inquiry which resulted in the resignation of most of the Committee and a six month interregnum when he held the reins of power as Rajah Muda, or Heir Apparent. During these months MacPherson's influence was considerable, but it all came to an end when the Rajah returned in September and repudiated his nephew's actions, describing him as being "as yet unfit to rule." It was a symptom of the dynastic row that only ended with the Rajah's decision to cede his sovereignty to the British government in October 1945.

Anthony Richards was scathing about these proceedings in his letters home to his parents and to Brian Walsh Atkins. In post-war years he was not to be one of those *orang dahulu* (pre-war officers) who mourned the passing of Brooke rule and railed against the new British colonial system, and yet most of his time in Sarawak was to be spent as an outstation officer. For all his criticism of what was going on, he had a strong romantic streak. "But there's hope," he told his parents in late March 1939, "and Brian Atkins' little dream of 2 years ago—how good it would be to be entirely cut off among savages and be able to build up a little state of one's own. Perhaps!..."

In mid-October 1939, Cadet Richards was posted out of Kuching to distant Bintulu on the coast of the Third Division where he passed two levels of Malay examinations within a few months as well as picking up the routine of a District Office. This involved extensive traveling in the Batang Anap region in a boat with a new-fangled 9 hp engine and in the sole company of Abang Metali, a very senior Malay Native Officer who spoke no English. Transferred to Sarikei and then to Binatang on the lower Rejang in May 1940 and appointed Magistrate 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, he was now a full-blown outstation officer with an altogether different perspective on things. In June 1941 he wrote to his mother from Binatang:

Now that I come from the outstations I cannot help begrudging all the money that's spent in Kuching when we need it so badly out here where that same money is actually made. And the First Division just doesn't understand the Third. The Chinese there are mostly old settlers and accustomed to the way things are done by Government, much more pliable and reasonable. Up here the Foochows are turning it into a different country, with much less regard for Government or anything but their own families and profits....

Transferred again in October 1941 to Betong on the Batang Saribas, he began to learn something of Iban language and culture. It was there, too, that he followed the old Brooke custom of taking a local wife [Doris Chew Ah Kiaw, who bore him a son, David Richards, now retired and living in Kuching with his mother and family, Editor]. At first retreating to Lubok Antu near the Dutch border when news came of the Japanese invasion, he changed his mind and together with Bill Morison returned to his post.

Arrested by the embarrassed local police at Betong on Japanese orders, he was imprisoned at Simanggang before being taken to Kuching and incarcerated there at the Batu Lintang camp for the next three and a half years. His prison camp experiences (recorded by the BBC's Charles Allen in 1982) reflected his positive and innovative attitude to things, as well as a strong and resilient philosophy of life. His facility with his hands in fixing things up for people led to him being called "Rigger Richards." His hand-made chess set is the most poignant memento of that difficult time [see also the

remembrance of W.G. Morison]. Frustrating the expectations of his Australian liberators in September 1945, he did not feel any bitterness towards his captors and disapproved of the little humiliations that were arranged for the ex-prisoners' supposed benefit.

Returning to Sarawak in mid-July 1946 after a long recuperative leave in England during which he was married to Daphne Oswell, a childhood friend, he served briefly in the Secretariat once again before being posted as District Officer to Kanowit and Meluan (Mujong) on the Rejang. After a year there during which he was promoted to Magistrate 2nd Class, and a year back at Oxford taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> Devonshire Course, he served from July 1948 for three years as District Officer, Bau. The principal diversion there was catching the illegal gold-miners and smugglers from Sambas in Indonesian West Kalimantan:

The former were always jovial [he wrote to me in November 1997], with improbable explanations for their carrying pick-axe and sledge-hammer in areas of plain rock—they were looking for a place to plant padi! The smugglers were usually brazen and cross-tempered, affecting not to recognise our authority as valid....

Now a permanent member of the Colonial Administrative Service, he spent the next few years on the Rejang at Kapit, Kanowit, and Sarikei where he was able to resume his study of the Iban. At Kapit from late 1951 he had become closely acquainted with Temenggong Koh and Temenggong Jugah and their families. Anthony and Daphne's eldest child, Anne, went to the Methodist mission school in Kapit with Jugah's son, Linggi, now Datuk Amar Leonard Linggi Jugah. From March 1955 he spent some months at Simanggang as Acting Resident, 2nd Division, before serving two years in Kuching as Resident of the 1st Division. In mid-1957 he was once again posted to Simanggang where he remained until June 1961.

It was during those years that he developed his extraordinary expertise in every facet of Iban life, recording oral traditions and word use which were to be the building blocks of his dictionary. He also developed a keen interest in the genealogies of the Malay Native Officers on his staff, all of whom were related to one another in some way. One of his Iban transcriptions was published by the Borneo Literature Bureau in 1962 and an important article on the Malays of the Saribas appeared in the *Sarawak Museum Journal* in 1963. He also contributed articles on a wide range of subjects to *The Sarawak Gazette*.

Anxious to utilize his knowledge, the colonial government allocated him to Special Duties in the Secretariat in January 1963 and gave him the task of compiling all that could be found out about Iban *adat* (traditional) law so that land reform legislation could be brought in to quell the land hunger of the Chinese and allow the Iban to capitalize their assets in land for other enterprises. He was also a member of the three-man committee whose job it was to design draft legislation. The outcome of this major enterprise (and of earlier work) was three important publications which remain the authoritative works on the subject: *Land Law and Adat* (1961), *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division* (1963), and *Dayak Adat Law in the First Division. Adat Bidayuh* (1964). However, the politics of putting through land reform proved to be too difficult after Malaysia. One of his principal regrets was that the whole business was not sorted out before he left Sarawak.

Sarawak's joining the Federation of Malaysia in August 1963 inevitably spelled the end for British administrative officers, although the departure of some of the senior men



was delayed by the first Chief Minister, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, partly to tap their expertise and partly to hold off the appointment of Malay bureaucrats from Kuala Lumpur to take their place. The Richards family (there were now a girl and three boys) packed up their belongings and left for England in March 1964, leaving behind a host of local friends. After seven years in Cambridge going through the difficult business of adjusting to English suburban life, they settled at Little Eversden, a village just south of Cambridge. Anthony's adjustment was probably made easier by his employment as secretary-librarian for the South Asian Studies Institute at Cambridge University in 1965, where he remained until his retirement in 1980. At the same time, he sang in the Cambridge Philharmonic Choir and busied himself in the affairs of St. Helen's, the local Anglican Church, using his skills in genealogy in compiling church, cemetery and local history records. He also acted as church warden for almost twenty years. It was his way of putting down roots, of learning the *adat lama* of his own people. Active involvement in the Sarawak Association's affairs also meant that he and Daphne kept up contact with a good many fellow retired officers and their wives and children. However, his only return visit to Sarawak was for a month in the late 1960s to check information for his dictionary.

It is difficult to say exactly when the *Iban-English Dictionary* project first suggested itself to him, but he was closely involved by the time of his Cambridge appointment and his spare time over the next fifteen years was to be almost entirely devoted to it. As his own autobiographical note of 1981 indicates, the *Dictionary* was far more than a lexicon, it was a compilation of everything that he had learned about Iban culture, seasoned with a wide reading of the historical influences which it could be seen to reflect. Reading it is like reading an encyclopaedia of Iban life. Just to take one example, I had been told that the Iban had sent a coded or riddle-message down from the upper Rejang about the landing by parachute of Allied guerilla forces in the Kelabit highlands in early 1945. And sure enough, there it was in the *Iban-English Dictionary*:

*Babi belang siko', manok belang siko', nadai celum sarambar, enggau gawa' ka orang ke udah parai, enti' ngaga' kereja nya' apai-indai aki'-ini' idup magang, pulai ka menoa tu' lalu badu' parai.*

[One white pig and one white fowl, with no dark colours on them at all, are the things to redeem those who have died, when the rite is performed fathers and mothers, grandparents and all will live again and come back to earth, risen from the dead.].

When I sorted through the papers in the study of the house to which Anthony and Daphne had later moved in Cambridge, his *modus operandi* became clear. All his many notebooks on things Iban had been carefully scrutinized and carded for use, great care being given to contextual use as the best way of conveying meaning. At the same time, I saw from his extensive files of correspondence how unendingly patient and generous he had been to other researchers seeking his opinions and drawing on his long experience. As well as his old friend Robert Nicholl's mass of letters on all kinds of things, there were those of Rodney Needham, Derek Freeman, Stephen Morris, Vinson Sutlive, Terry King, Cliff Sather, Robert Pringle, Michael and Marguerite Heppell, Beatrice Clayre, Traude Gavin, Vic Porritt and many more. I even found my own file, going back to 1973 when I first interviewed him in connection with my doctoral research on the 1946

cession. Of all the pre-war officers (or at least, those of them still living and accessible in the mid-1970s) he was the most illuminating on what Brooke rule had been like. However, he could not bear the thought of writing his reminiscences. "I've never written memoirs," he told a correspondent, David Tham, in May 2000, "having seen so many dreadful and dull ones when working at the South Asian Studies Institute...."

He was a most generous and agreeable man and I feel very happy that I was able to visit him on three or four occasions during those latter years of his retirement when the inevitable conversation about Sarawak could go on for most of the day. Daphne, whose time in Sarawak had been mostly taken up with pressing domestic responsibilities (colonial service wives in Sarawak were far from being pampered "mems"), excused herself from these talkfests after feeding us with her inimitable pies and apple tarts but her respect and love for her husband was always tangible.

Anthony Richards was one of the great authorities on the Iban; he was a *pesaka*, or cultural treasure, in his own right. He would never have thought of himself as a scholar, however, but as a perpetual student who was always finding interesting new things to be explained and suggesting new links to be made. His *Iban-English Dictionary*, the distillation of his many years in Sarawak, is as fine a memorial as anyone could wish to have. For the Iban, he was Tuan Richards, the *orang buti*' who could *ngajat* (perform a war dance) and drink *tuak* (rice wine) all night with the best of them and then go on to the next longhouse for a repeat performance. *Nya' punga' lelaki amat!* (Bob Reece, Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia)

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"The first full moon," No. 1092 (7 March 1949), p. 65. (This refers to a festival celebrated by the Chinese of Bau and Siniawan.)

"Two stories from Jagoi Dayaks," No. 1092 (7 June 1949), p.142.

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(A Malay vocabulary), No. 1233 (30 November 1960), p. 250. (See also No. 1245 (30 November 1961), p. 223, for expressions borrowed from English.)

"Priest and poet," No. 1242 (31 August 1961), pp. 130-143. (This refers to the conference on Dayak customs held at Simanggang, 3-7 July 1961.)

"One cent a mile," No. 1243 (30 September 1961), p. 166. (This refers to *Syn Kapit No. 2*, a passenger launch operating between Sibu and Kapit.)

"The Coast," No 1245 (30 November 1961) p. 213. (This refers to the area in and around Bintulu.)

Obituary: Hermanus Assan, No. 1255 (30 September 1962), pp. 198-199

## ANTHONY RICHARDS — REMEMBRANCES

[Editor's Note: The remembrances that follow, the first by Temenggong William Linang and the second by Dato Tra Zehnder, are excerpted from interviews conducted by Jayl Langub, Nicholas Bawing, and myself (Clifford Sather) on 19 February 2002 at the Majlis Adat Istiadat offices in Kuching.]

## Temenggong William Linang

I first met Tuan Richards at Sri Aman. I was then in Song and later in Kanowit. After the Second World War, we met again in Simanggang [now renamed Sri Aman], where I got to know him better.... I was transferred to Lingga sub-district for 2 months<sup>1</sup>. Later, Richards was doing research on Iban *adat* and land matters and I attended the *aum* in Sri Aman [that is, the Conference on Dayak *adat* held in 1961]. Richards did a lot of traveling and was constantly writing (*iya rajin ngambi' surat*). He always had a notebook with him, a small [pocket-sized] notebook (or *bup utang*). He spent much time talking with people in the longhouse, listening to them until 12 o'clock, or even 1 in the morning.

J. Langub: How would you compare Tuan Richards to other District Officers in those days?

The other District Officers, they talked only, but Richards, he wrote down what people said. He asked more questions beyond official business, mostly on customs. If he was in a boat traveling, and there were Penghulus or knowledgeable people in the boat, he asked questions and wrote down what they said. He was a diligent writer (*iya ga' rajin nulis*). He was an especially good friend of SAO Jarit Meluda; they were best friends and often traveled together [Jarit Meluda and Richards wrote an excellent little book together on various kinds of Iban fish traps, hunting gear, and fishing and hunting lore, including methods for "calling" mouse deer and fish, published by the Borneo Literature Bureau in Iban as *Penemu Begiga* (1962). An English translation, called *Hunting Lore*, was published by BLB in 1965].

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<sup>1</sup>Temenggong Linang was born in the Betong district and started his career in the Sarawak administrative service as a Native Officer. He briefly served under Anthony Richards for two months, as he indicates here, when he was SAO at Lingga. Richards was then the District Officer at Simanggang. The more general purpose of this interview with Temenggong Linang was to collect narrative materials relating to the activities of Native Officers in the early colonial period immediately before and after World War II

Yes. The gathering was opened by *lemambang* (priest bards) who made offerings. That was on the first day. On the second day, we divided into sections, like workshops. It was held in the District Office. Tables and chairs were removed and mats were spread on the floor. That's where everyone sat, on mats, on the floor.

J. Langub: When they held the gathering (*aum*) on Iban *adat* at Simanggang, were you there? Where was it held?



Anthony Richards receiving a salute at the Saratok regatta, ca. 1941 (AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS)

J. Langub: Then it was just like a *berandau* (discussion session) held in a longhouse?

Yes, that's right. Tun Jugah arrived, leading a group representing the Rejang. Richards and Hermanus Assan acted as co-chairmen<sup>2</sup>. The people of the longhouse were

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<sup>2</sup>As Richards indicates in his account of serving as a Sarawak administrative officer, he was asked in 1961, near the end of the British colonial period, to undertake a study of Iban *adat* and practices related to land subject to Native Customary Rights (called NCR land). The results of the historic Simanggang gathering, the culmination of this study, appeared as *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division* (Kuching: Government Printers, 1963). Richards also produced a companion compilation, concerned with Bidayuh *adat* and covering the First Division called *Dayak Adat in the First Division* (Kuching: Government Printers, 1964). Richards describes his work as that "of recording local ideas on land tenure to help a land reform committee..." But, as he notes, politics intervened, so that the committee's recommendations were never acted upon. More recently, however, the High Court of Sabah and Sarawak has handed down a landmark decision upholding the legality of Native Customary Rights with regard to NCR land in which Richards'

very fond of Richards because he was respectful of people (*Sida' rumah panjai endang rinduka Tuan Richards laban iya manah enggau orang*). He shook everyone's hand. He was not like some "big shot" (*nadai baka orang big shot iya*). And he joked with (*betundi*) the ladies. He was good.

C. Sather: Why do you think Richards took such a special interest in the Iban?

Well, I'm not sure, but he wanted to record their oral traditions, their way of life in the longhouse, their *adat*. He wanted to talk to them and write down what they told him. He found it all interesting. Also he was posted to Iban areas. The Orang Ulu lived far upriver in those days and he never served in an Orang Ulu area.

C. Sather: What kind of personality did Richards have, do you remember? How did he deal with people? Can you say more about that?

When he dealt with a land dispute, he more or less spoke like us (*baka ku' kitai*), he knew the procedures (*iya nemu ngatur*). In fact, he tried to put himself in the shoes of the people, seeing things from their point of view, what it was like for them. He always talked nicely to people, never roughly. He was gentle, but firm. He knew how to talk with people, and they liked that.... He was diplomatic. He knew the Iban language well and people respected him for that. He also knew the polite language (*jaku' karung*) and it helped him a lot in working with people. (William Linang, a retired Senior Administrative Officer, was appointed Native Chief with responsibility for the Kuching Division following his retirement)

### Dato Tra Zehnder

When I think of Richards, I always remember my first impression of him. He was conducting the police band early in the morning. I didn't know who he was then. I saw this European with curly hair; there he was in the morning. Every morning when I went to school I walked past the parade ground. I passed Fort Margherita parade ground on my way to school and so I saw the Police Band practicing with Richards conducting. I didn't know who it was, so I asked my father, "*Sapa tuan ngajar orang main band nya*" (Who is that European conducting the band)? My father said, "Oh, *Tuan baru datai ari England*" (He's a new European from England).<sup>1</sup> I was a girl, you see, about 13 years old at the time. Now I am 75 this year. I was in Standard 3 at that time, in 1939. It was only years later, after the war, that I came to know Richards well [in conversations with Anthony Richards' sons, Huw and Michael Richards, they said that their father was a good musician, but that he never had time to cultivate this talent as an administrative officer. However, later in life, he joined a church choir when he was back in England].

Then, you know, one day I went to see Mrs. Kitto's family. You know, Mrs. Kitto, we were very close friends as girls.<sup>2</sup> She stayed where my house is now, which was built later by my father. At that time, as girls, we spent much time together. We both liked to see Datuk Brandah play his violin.<sup>3</sup> He used to sit down and play, while we would listen. So [while we were listening], I spoke to Mrs. Kitto—we spoke Iban—"Have you seen those *Tuans* in that house?" I pointed to the house which is the Field Force mess now, which was where Richards then lived. "Oh," she said, "he's got another friend there. Another young European, a bachelor (*orang bujang*)!!" I didn't know it then, but that was Bill Morison.

Then, after that, I never saw him. I only saw him again after the war. I went to see Major Sochon, a [European] police officer, for rations. I told him that John Nichol had sent me to ask for food.<sup>4</sup> There wasn't much food at the time. The Major said, "You had better go see Captain Morris." So he gave me a note to see Captain Dick Morris. That is how I got to know Dick Morris. Morris provided rations to me for a few months, even after it was illegal.<sup>5</sup> Then, John Nichol said, "Why don't you also ask for cigarettes?" I said, "How can I ask for cigarettes? I don't even smoke!" But I did, and he gave me some [which Nichol smoked].

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<sup>1</sup>Dato Tra's grandfather was a Sarawak Ranger and her father, Sergeant Jemat, an Iban police constable.

<sup>2</sup>A life-long friend of Dato Tra, Mrs. Kitto's original name was Susanah Daud. She later married a New Zealander who worked as a supervisor in the Land and Surveys Department.

<sup>3</sup>Edward Brandah was, in his time, a colorful personality. He was the most senior Iban police officer in Sarawak during his career and later became Superintendent of Prisons.

<sup>4</sup>John Nichol anak Kassim, another well-known Iban police officer, ended his career as Assistant Superintendent of Police and aide-de-camp of the first Governor of Sarawak after Malaysian independence.

<sup>5</sup>That is, after rationing had officially ended in Sarawak.



**A.J.N. Richards leading the police bugle band in practice, Fort Margherita parade grounds, 1939 (Tun Jugah Foundation archives).**

Then, later on, Morris introduced me to Richards. So I came to know Richards. I was with them all at the [conference on] *tusun tunggu*, on Iban *adat*, at Sri Aman years later, and I talked a lot about the women's side in *adat*. I was the only woman there, so I had to talk about women in *adat*. Of course, a lot of the men didn't like that. But Richards defended me and said that they should listen to what I had to say, for I was the only woman member of the Council Negeri. Richards and Hermanus Assan were co-chairmen of the Simanggang *aum*. Assan<sup>6</sup> told me, when we were having our *makan* (meal) in the rest house, in the presence of Temenggong Ngelambong, Pengarah Montegrai, and the others, "*Kitai misti nyukong Tuan Richards enggau naka ulih laban Tuan Richards ke ngadu adat kitai engkah ke dalam bup*" ("We must assist Mr. Richards all we can because Mr. Richards is codifying our customary laws inside a book").

And so, to go back, Morris introduced me to Richards. You know why? At that time, Richards was like a welfare officer. Not an official one, no; he was then in the Secretariat. You know, at that time, a European must not be married to a native woman. So they just kept them as mistresses. But, they were having children, and after they had children, then the officer would go back to England. When they came back again, they would be married (to English wives). So they had to *tinggal* (desert, abandon) the women, the Dayak or native women. I had one case, a woman from Lubok Antu by the name of Lumit. She had one son with Mr. F..., the District Officer of Lubok Antu. Then, I went to see Richards. According to this lady, Richards was a friend of F...

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<sup>6</sup>Hermanus Assan, then the Sibiu District Officer, died a short time later. An able administrator, he was widely expected to become State Secretary following independence. Richards says more about Assan, whom he greatly admired, in the autobiographical Research Note that follows.



When I went to see Richards, Richards said, “Wah! So you are Mrs. Zehnder, who fought so much in the *tusun tunggu* in Simanggang. And now you are going to fight more for women?” “Why not?” I said, “No one else is fighting for them. So here I am.”

So I mentioned the woman and the child. “Yes, I know that child,” he said. “He was given my name, this son. They call him ‘Richard’.”

You know why I mention this? It is because Richards was a very kind person. He then helped me with this case. Then I brought another case. This case involved a Malay lady working for a European, an agricultural officer. I can’t remember his name, but he was a bachelor.

Dick Morris was [involved] with Richards in organizing the Conference on *tusun tunggu* in Simanggang. Dick Morris was then a Resident and Richards was in the Secretariat. So, being a close friend of these two, I made use of it to help me. I had to do it, for, you know, in the colonial days, we women were nothing. I happened to be in the Red Cross then, in social work and women’s affairs, and was the first secretary of the Sariku Indu Dayak. So women came to see me. I was more or less like an office boy, with all these ladies sitting in front, while I was the one pushed to do things. So I went to see Richards about the problems of local women and children by European fathers. Richards looked after this problem, so I went to see him. Richards was ever willing to help me. We got maintenance for the children. This was all through Richards’ help. Then, we have to realize that he compiled the *adat*, so he had to do something. Not just writing about *adat*, but [seeing that people] observed it. He was not only helpful, he was kind. When he solved one case, I brought him another, and another. I had to do it.

C. Sather: So, was Richards something like a welfare officer?

No, as I said, not in an official sense. But, he was willing to look after such problems. He was also kind and had a lot of influence among the European officers. When he said something to them, they tended to follow what he said. He was also approachable. How did he solve these problems? Well, some of the men didn’t want to give maintenance to the child, so Richards had to make all the arrangements. In a third case, the European officer did not want to acknowledge the child, a girl. Otherwise, he was afraid, later on, she would come looking for him to claim an inheritance. But Richards solved that case, too. In the case of the Malay lady, Richards asked the officer to give the woman the lump sum of 8,000 dollars. Well, 8,000 dollars at that time was a lot of money. So, the woman bought land in Sioi Kandis, across the river. Richards got the government to pay compensation to her. And the daughter, who was a very pretty girl, is now married to a Datuk’s son! A bank manager.

Later, Richards used to ask me, “How are the children doing, the children you looked after?” He asked about them even after he went back to England. And I told him, “Oh, they are doing fine,” or, “This one has gotten married.” He was always pleased.

There was only one time he was against me. This was when I was a member of the Council Negeri and I asked for a special day for the Dayaks—Gawai Dayak. Richards was one of those against my proposal. But it was not that he was against me, because, personally, he was a friend, but he was acting as State Secretary, taking Snelus’ place, and he had to answer me and was against my proposal. So, we argued. This was because of his position, he had to answer the way the government wanted it. Not only he opposed

it, but Tun Jugah and lots of others also opposed it. I think it was said at the time that there were too many holidays already on the calendar.

I didn't see him again after he returned to England. I heard that he came back once, when he was working on the dictionary, to interview people, but he didn't come to see me. When I went to England, he invited me to come to Cambridge, but I couldn't make the trip. We talked on the telephone. I told him I was going to see Tuan Tuai (J.K. Wilson), but Richards said that, while it would be easy to come to Cambridge, it would be hard to find Tuan Tuai. He was not staying in a house; he was staying in a caravan in Scotland and moved from place to place. Richards was correct. We were never able to find Tuan Tuai. (Dato Tra Zehnder, former Director of the Majlis Adat Istiadat)

W. G. Morison

### REMEMBERING ANTHONY RICHARDS

Anthony Richards was known to me and my family as "Tex" as he was to fellow undergraduates at Hertford College, Oxford. How he came by that nickname I do not know but he was probably given it at school and it followed him to university.

While at university we knew each other but our paths did not cross all that often. Anthony came to Hertford as a scholar while I was an ordinary undergraduate. It was only when we had both had separate interviews with the Tuan Muda (Rajah's brother) and knew that we had both been selected for the Sarawak Civil Service that we began to see rather more of each other.

We traveled out together to Sarawak on a Blue Funnel ship that left from Birkenhead on the Mersey. If I remember rightly the ship took about a month to get to Singapore. From there we both took passage on the S.S. *Vyner Brooke* to Kuching. We shared a cabin on both ships. Based at Kuching for several months, we shared a bungalow on the same side of the river as the Astana. Anthony's first posting was to the Secretariat under Mr. MacPherson<sup>1</sup> who was then Secretary for Native Affairs and a fluent speaker in both Malay and Iban. I was drafted to the Treasury, an office job I found excessively dull! It was I believe in the Secretariat that Anthony first began to take a particular interest in Iban affairs.

Both of us were then appointed to a variety of districts in Sarawak and not long before the Japanese invasion of Sarawak, Anthony was appointed District Officer Betong District in the Second Division. Meanwhile I was an assistant to the then District Officer Mr. W.S.B. Buck at Sareiki.

At the time of the invasion by the Japanese we made our way overland to Lubok Antu, not far from the Indonesian border. It was there that Anthony and myself decided to return to our respective districts. I accompanied Anthony to Betong and from there, with a couple of guides, I made my way overland back to Sareiki.

Throughout his career in Sarawak, Anthony made a particular study of things Iban and there is no doubt about it, his knowledge of the Iban language and customs was

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. MacPherson was later killed by the Japanese at Long Nawan.

unsurpassed by any other European officer and he probably knew more than many Iban as well. On his retirement he produced his scholarly work, his Iban-English dictionary.

Anthony's handwriting was always clear and legible even when he wrote in a hurry! He wrote a number of articles about Sarawak and in particular about Iban culture and customs. His writing although scholarly was always accessible to the lay reader and certainly never dull.

In character, Anthony was a quiet person on the whole and modest about his achievements. I never knew him to boast about his knowledge of matters Sarawakian although he could certainly enjoy a party! In his younger days he could *ngajat* fluently (an Iban war dance) and rather better than most Europeans. He was also good with his hands and he became known as "Rigger Richards" in our prisoner of war camp (civilian internees) because he enjoyed "rigging things up" for people. I remember he made a shelf for me and he also carved a chess set out of local wood to while away some of the more dreary hours of internment.

After the war, Anthony's wife Daphne traveled to Sarawak with my wife Lucy and they became good friends on that voyage and thus helped to cement the friendships between our respective families which exist to the present day. I had a very good friend in Anthony Richards and like others who knew him, I very much regret his passing. (W.G. Morison, The Orchards, Dresteignton, Exeter, Devon, UK)

## RESEARCH NOTES

**Editor's Note:** The Note that follows was excerpted by your editor from a longer, untitled manuscript included among the late Anthony Richards' personal papers presented to the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak library (CAIS) by the Richards family. The material from this gift now forms a special collection, the "AJN Richards Collection," in the CAIS library [see "The AJN Richards Collection at the Centre for Academic Information Services (CAIS), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak"].

On the original manuscript, a typed note at the top of the first page indicates that it was written as the text for a talk which Richards apparently gave to the Anthropology Society, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, on 1 December 1981. This was shortly after the publication of the *Iban-English Dictionary*, and, in addition to describing his experiences as an administrative officer in Sarawak, Richards also explains how he came to write his dictionary and the process he followed in compiling it. The original manuscript contains a general introduction to Sarawak, its history and geography, much of it now outdated, which I have deleted. I have also corrected a few typographic errors. The original manuscript is now deposited at CAIS.

### A.J.N. RICHARDS: A BRIEF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE, 1981

#### A.J.N. Richards

I was an administrative officer and magistrate in Sarawak for 26 years, from 1938 to 1964. There was no formal training and we learned on the job from seniors and local officers and leaders. Our job as we saw it was to help the people in our districts over problems and disputes, keep the peace, collect the revenue, and coordinate public services like agriculture and forestry, education, public works, health, [and] communications. We were required to learn Malay, and were encouraged to learn a second language and enough about the law and customs of the people—Malay, Chinese, Iban or whatever—to help us in the work. If this was anthropology and linguistics, well and good—but we are not academics and did not label the practical knowledge we had. We were required to be accessible to the public at all times, in or out of the office, and this meant that we were an accepted part of the local scene and did not need to suffer loneliness. All this was part of the undefined "Brooke tradition," the way of administration we used.

Because of this local orientation—parochial it might be called—I am going to tell you how I came to know what I do about the Iban, and how I incorporated that knowledge in a dictionary of their language.... Before I tell my own story, I had better give you some account of Sarawak and the Iban.

Sarawak was a possession of Brunei 150 years ago. Sir James Brooke became Rajah of Sarawak proper in 1841.... By cession, sometimes entailing payment to Brunei, he came to rule the Second Division in 1853, [and] the Rejang and the coast as far as Bintulu in 1861. Charles Brooke succeeded as Rajah in 1868. He acquired the Baram (Fourth Division) in 1882. The Fifth Division became part of Sarawak in 1885 (Lawas) and 1890 (Limbang).

[T]he First Rajah followed the Malay style of government by consultation and negotiation, having no power with which to impose his wishes.... Laws were few—the earliest set standards for weights and measures so as to assist trade—all in the form of Rajah's Orders, though by the time I got there they were written formally as ordinances or statutes. Council Negeri, a sort of royal *darbar* for consultation with leading people, used to meet every 3 years from about 1863, but a constitution was given in 1941; and, since 1946, it has come to be a fully elected body. Sarawak became a British Colony in 1946, and achieved independence within Malaysia in 1963....

The population is about.... a third Iban, a third Chinese, and the remainder Malay, Melanau, Kayan, Kenyah, and other races. Trade and industry are mostly in the hands of the Chinese. Malays are now the ruling race once again.... There have been migrations within Borneo from south to north—in the east the Murut, the Kayan/Kenyah group next to them, and the Land Dayak (Bidayuh) in the far west. The Iban and related peoples spread from the district of Matan in the S.W. corner of Borneo, moving north and then east into the Kapuas, probably in the fifteenth century. They began to enter Sarawak by the Batang Lupar probably 300 years ago and have spread northeastward in Sarawak more rapidly during the last 150 years. Their main areas in Sarawak are the 2nd Division, the Rejang and Baleh, and along all the lower hills near the coast to the Baram and Limbang [Rivers]. Related peoples, now called “Ibanic,” remain distributed all over Kalimantan Barat.

There are indications that the Iban began to grow rice and replaced bronze with iron relatively recently (“fines” are in terms of bronze ware..). They clear forest, burn it, and plant by dibbling. Traditionally there is no cultivation as we know it, though there have been very rapid changes in recent years—with high-yielding rubber, and now pepper, and a few Iban planting rain-fed swamp rice, all of which need cultivation. The Iban build longhouses, mostly of 10-20 interrelated families, which are the ritual centers of their lands (the *menoa*). But they may sometimes spend more than half the year in scattered farm houses.

They are a shortish brown people, racially mixed by absorption of previous peoples, and in other ways. Traditional dress is the loincloth for men and a short skirt of home-woven cotton for women (usually black except at festivals)—but they have now mostly adopted western and Malay styles.

They used to depend much on omens and dreams, but many are now Christian. In war they used to take captives who became serfs—not slaves in our sense of the term. They also took the heads of those they killed.... Men gained good repute by successful raiding and women by skill in weaving. Generally they admire physical vigor and skill in all the crafts necessary for living in a forested country.

There is no hierarchy of status by birth, and women have equal rights with men. There is no formal division of labor or occupation—except between men and women: men cut wood and build, clear forest and hunt; women cook, mind the house and young children, plant, weed, and begin the harvest.

Having no rulers or power of sanction among themselves, disputes are arbitrated by senior members of the community if not settled privately. Offences are wiped out not by penalty but by compensatory, and often token, ritual payment, usually in kind. In the case of offences purely against persons or their property, the payment is to the one offended. In the case of ritual offences—those that offend the gods and may bring disaster to

everybody (the most serious being perhaps incest), the payment is much greater and is made to the arbitrator for the community as provision for a public ritual offering and sacrifice of appeasement. The system works as well as any. Michael Heppell's thesis, *Iban social control: the infant and adult*, deals with this (1975).

I was appointed to the Rajah's service—the Third Rajah, Vyner Brooke, who succeeded in 1917—and I went out by sea in 1938. The pay was just over £300 a year, and a bit better than my father's as a country parson. Bungalows, or accommodations in a fort, where it is the office and court as well, were provided, with basic furniture. We were expected to engage at least one servant as "cook boy" (a gardener was only needed in Kuching, and a *sais* only if you kept ponies). The "boy" was usually a Malay who would manage the house and kitchen, and with luck teach the language, go along on journeys, and generally be batman, companion, and source of local information and gossip. This changed after the war, when more were married—we ended up with two Chinese girls.

My first tour of duty was supposed to last four years—then 7 months' home leave (counted from Singapore and back by sea). Marriage was not allowed until after a second spell of four years. As events happened, my first tour lasted 7 years, because after 3 years the Japanese invaded and kept us all behind barbed wire for nearly another four.

I spent my first year in the Secretariat, which then consisted of the Chief Secretary, the Assistant Secretary, four local clerks and two messengers. The Chief Secretary was, in effect, Chief Minister. The Assistant Secretary had recently been brought down from Kapit to be "civilized" as they said—he first introduced me to the Iban world.

My second introduction to the Iban was on the arrival—under the usual very gentlemanly arrest—of the last of the Iban "rebels" or "outlaws," as they were called, who had been defying the Government over taxation and other matters for several years—some had taken a few heads, too. One of them, Banyang, has long been a Penghulu (chief) and a Senator—he called on me in 1980 when bringing his son, Paulus, to study law in England.

In 1939 I was posted as Cadet to Bintulu and sent off with an experienced Malay officer to do my first traveling among Iban. We walked the 30 miles of forest to Tatau, toured the Anap by boat, and walked back over to the Sebauh. In the Sebauh I first met Penghulu Jalin, a migrant from the Skrang—he was just building a new longhouse. One of his sons, Hermanus, was later one of my District Officers. I spent a night in the Sebauh again in 1962 but, because a group of us stayed up the whole night talking of important matters like bird omens, cockfighting, and house building, they said the visit didn't count as spending the night and I must come again.

One of my jobs was to see to the prison, and I learned that there was (then) no stigma attached to conviction or imprisonment, because they were regarded as irrelevant taxes, jail was "taking Government wages," and did nothing to settle a dispute or offence by ritual compensation. Later in the Rejang, the first man I ever put in jail greeted me when he came out as if I were an old friend.

In 1940 I went to the lower Rejang where I had to visit rural Chinese schools and charcoal factories, and Melanau fishing villages, so that there was less time for the Iban. There were Iban in the hilly parts, and a few in the delta padi lands, and I met more of them when I moved to Binatang—it was there I used to attend the regular cockfighting meets outside the town. I also had an Iban girlfriend at the time.

In 1941 I was promoted from Cadet and was posted to the Saribas as D.O. The fort there was one of the smaller ones, built as usual of ironwood, and even then nearly 100 years old—built by the first of my predecessors, when warfare was rife, and he only 18 years old.

The population of the Saribas District is half Iban, half Malay, with a few Chinese trading in the towns. The Iban there were among the first to take advantage of mission schooling (Anglican) and to become affluent from rubber plantations, with the result that they readily found employment outside the district and so appear to visitors from outside Sarawak as the only true Iban. Dr. Rousseau of McGill University recently published a paper in *Bijdragen* (1980) in which he criticized Freeman for not seeing the stratified nature of Iban society, and ignoring the Saribas where this is evident. This provoked Freeman into writing a long paper (1981)—in which he explained that the Saribas Iban were indeed considered for his research but were found to be too beset by Malay customs and concepts to be useful for the report he was then commissioned to make. Rousseau's field is among the class-conscious Kayan; but he may have been deliberately provoking [Freeman], because Freeman had not yet published much from his very large collection of texts and notes. Perhaps, he will now that he has retired....

In January 1942 I was taken from Betong as a civilian P. O. W. and was a prisoner of the Japanese in Kuching until September 1945.

I married in 1946 and, on return to Sarawak, was sent to Kanowit. A lot of rebuilding and reorganization was needed and traveling to areas left unvisited for nearly five years. Living was pretty basic—water from rain or the river, paraffin lamps, no fridge, army rations—and it was then we came to depend largely on fresh local supplies, and so continued for the rest of our time in the country.<sup>1</sup>

I did a three-week tour of the Entabai early on—leaving my wife to learn Malay the hard way—there was nobody who spoke English much, except the nuns at the Mission. I learned much during that tour, and made my first acquaintance with a shaman, *manang* Awar—and the really tough hill dwellers, among whom even the girls thought nothing of carrying a hundredweight of padi home over steep hills. I met Asun, the leader of the rebels of the 1930s, now back from banishment, a friendly old boy with a hooked nose; and heard about early migrations, and family connections in the area. From the ridge you can see Sadok Mountain close at hand, where Rentap held out against the Rajah from 1858-61, and away to the west, the sea beyond the Saribas.

During every such tour, Iban was the only language, of course. Old Temenggong Koh was sent with me by the Resident. He was a bit nervous—having fought for the Second Rajah up there against warring Iban (in fact, distant relatives of his) forty years before.

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<sup>1</sup>Editor's note: To a remarkable extent, European officers, particularly while traveling, appear to have lived off tinned food. This was observed by the late Benedict Sandin, who noted with some surprise that my family and I, who were then living in his mother's *bilik* in the Kerangan Punggai longhouse, ate more or less the same food as everyone else, indeed we often exchanged dishes at dinner time with neighboring families. During the rubber boom period of affluence mentioned by Richards, many Saribas Iban families, including some in Kerangan Punggai, adopted for a time what they saw as the European habit of eating tinned food. By the 1970s, this had long ceased, together with the affluence that it had once symbolized.

His companion, I found later, was a neighbor of his who had married a lady divorced by Koh.

At Kanowit I found what a great help R.C. Fathers could be. They are not allowed to give evidence in court but reckon they also have a responsibility in the district, and were always happy to relate useful gossip and local knowledge over a drink or two at home. They tended to converse in a delightful mixture of English and Iban with a Dutch accent. They were tolerant and immensely patient: though they deplored some local customs they took pains to understand them, never publicly decried them, and never tried to change anything except very slowly.

In 1951 I was posted to Kapit where Freeman had done his research. The District, now a Division, is 15,000 sq. miles in extent, with an Iban majority in a population at the time of about 30,000. Much of it is forest, of course. Travel was chiefly by longboat—40 feet long and 3 feet wide, with palm-thatch roof, and driven by an outboard engine, with a crew of two (driver and bowman). It took 7 hours to reach Sibü (Div. H.Q.) and 1 ½ to 2 days to reach Belaga—negotiating 3 miles of rapids at Pelagus. The rare occasions when you could walk, or paddle or pole a small boat were much more enjoyable—you could hear the wild life, and talk to your companions without shouting.

Needless to say I learned still more at Kapit—something or other from everyone I met, and particularly from people like Jugah, afterward a minister, and other chiefs. Jugah died last July, but his son Linggi is a lawyer and has now become a minister too. Linggi was at the Methodist school with my daughter—the junior classes there were taught in Iban.

It was the time of recruiting for Malaya, during the Emergency. Iban would come over from Kalimantan to relatives and join up. Many were disappointed—on medical grounds, because there were far too many volunteers, or because they were prevented from going at the last moment by dreams or omens. Many such went instead to the oilfields to seek work, with varying fortunes, and there was a succession of wives coming to the fort trying to get their men back, or simply trying for form's sake to enable them to claim desertion and marry someone else. When those in Malaya began to serve for more than six months at a time as enlisted soldiers (not unarmed trackers), the old restrictions on the wives' activities lapsed—it was simply not possible to keep lights burning and avoid weaving cloth or plaiting baskets and mats for so long.

The men came back with shotguns, or the means of buying an outboard engine or a padi mill. They were also much fitter, and copied British soldiers in manner. One young man of 25 or so had a neat military moustache—Iban are usually beardless—and I saw he had grey eyes. How come? Sir! You must have heard of the peacemaking at Kapit? Yes—in 1924. And that a Dutch officer came over and down the river to attend? Yes. Well! He spent a night on the way at our longhouse!

His name was Chemaru—rhinoceros—probably because somebody killed one about the time he was born. A lot of names are like that, marking an event or a visitor. There are Iban called Champion for instance—after the spark plug. The oddest was the name of the highly respected bar steward at the Sibü Club, named "Gladys" because he was born when the new ship "Gladys" made her first voyage to Sibü. There is also an Anthony Richards, son of an Iban officer at Belaga, who was born when I first arrived there.

Another practice in naming is to skip two generations before using names again. A man called Merom came to pay his gun license fee in a longhouse near Lubuk Antu:



afterwards I asked if he [had] anything to do with the Merom who rebelled against the Rajah at Bukit Batu (Stone Hill) in 1881. The young man looked blank, but his father said Yes—he was my grand uncle—and proceeded to relate his version of that war.

While on the subject of names: the names of in-laws may never be uttered and other names are generally avoided. Your wife or husband is mother or father of so-and-so. And nephews and nieces will be called *anak*, child, and vice versa. This is apart from ordinary forms of address where I would call old Koh “father” or “uncle” and someone my own age “brother.” All very confusing till you know the relationships in a longhouse, or, if it is important to know, can ask the right question—but of somebody else.

On journeys by boat or in the forest there was often one of the party who could entertain the company with a long epic in prose and verse—usually about the serpent gods and their rivalry with the bird gods, or the adventures of a hero in those realms, or comical and often bawdy tales of the unsuccessful trickster, “man in the street,” or “just so” stories and fables of animals or trees. At ritual festivals there might be contests of witty verses, or riddles. All these are related to the invocatory prayers and long chanted poems sung to invite the appropriate gods to a major ritual, where the language is not archaic, as generally supposed, but all riddles and double meanings—not that they are any easier to understand on that account.<sup>2</sup> This oral literature is very rich, but is varied to suit the audience or circumstances or style of the teller. There are formulae of rhythm or assonance, used like a composer’s store of musical phrases and harmonies, and major stories and poems have a set framework, but the wording is individual and often topical. Recording is difficult—it must be of a real performance—in a studio the tale will alter, and few can dictate slowly without getting lost. Even with a tape recorder, which I did not have till very late, you have to transcribe, check back, and annotate at once. Another session may be quite different.

One festival I remember was Koh’s Hornbill Festival in 1952: attended by Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, the Governor, and all ranks down, including myself in charge of transport. It is a war festival, preparatory to entering the next world with honor and therefore a serious matter, although you might not think so from the drinking and visiting and general fun and games taking place at the same time. The distinguished visitors hardly understood this, so some youngsters were told to keep them amused with party games while the ritual got under way in the rest of the longhouse. I was awake most of 3 nights, taking part in some of the ritual in Iban garb.

All this was really incidental to the work for which I was paid: dealing with finance and government departments, civil and criminal cases, inquests, and so forth. Some of the most difficult and protracted cases were over land, whether surveyed or not. Land “belongs” to he who first cleared it and performed the rituals: if it lies fallow for ten years or so, one of the descendants may plant rubber on it without asking the others, or even get a survey done and title in his sole name—then there is a complex argument when someone else wants to use his rights and plant padi.

Much business was done while traveling. I was in Kapit itself for probably only half the time. I kept notes on tour, in a mixture of Iban and English, often written during

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<sup>2</sup>Editor: My own experience entirely bears Richards out on this point, which is valid not only for the invocatory chants, but also for those sung by the Iban *manang* or shamans.

rambling conversations in a poor light, late at night after official business was over. These notes were most useful, when unraveled, for the dictionary.

In 1953 I went back to the lower Rejang as D.O. Many of the Iban there [were] not accessible by boat and the present roads were not built, so more and more I took to traveling light, with only one or two companions and no more luggage than I could carry myself. The custom was for the people to carry luggage and guide an officer on duty from longhouse to longhouse without pay. We always stayed in the longhouse and heard cases there on tour—to do otherwise was regarded as rude, and so unheard of. By going light the people were saved the trouble of becoming porters and the expense of feeding a large party overnight—and it was more fun for all. A group often came along as company—to visit neighbors—or the girls in the next house.

After a brief spell in Simanggang in 1955, I was for two years Resident of the First Division, based at Kuching—a time of urban affairs and a lot of committee work, when it was often difficult to give the rest of the Division the attention it deserved. From 1957 to 1961 I was Resident of the Second Division, Simanggang—with four D.O.s of whom only one was English. Hermanus Assan was one—son of Jalin of the Sebauh whom I have already mentioned.<sup>3</sup> He had been a teacher, then a shaman during the Japanese Occupation, before joining the administration. I learned a lot from him, and from a conference we organized and jointly chaired in 1961. The conference was attended by chiefs, shamans, bards, and others, probably 100 all told, and lasted 4 days. The idea was to record local customary law and to exchange information on custom, ritual and practice between people from different rivers who otherwise hardly ever met.

The customary law was printed with related material but is not now available. It included notes made by A.B. Ward in 1914, and they have been separately printed—in the *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol. 10 [17-18 (N.S.)], pp. 81-102 (1961). Ward also wrote an account of the administration called *Rajah's Servant* which was published by Cornell University (1966). At Simanggang there were also old court records and letterbooks from about 1900 reporting on the Division, and an invaluable record of settled land disputes from about 1916-20. When the grandchildren renewed a dispute, reference to the old book was often enough to refresh their memories: they were satisfied and much trouble was saved for all concerned.

There was more recruiting for Malaya, changes in local government, rural development schemes, road building and land compensation, building new schools, agricultural extension schemes, and the embarrassing business of trying to explain the new political parties springing up in Kuching and deal with Iban requests for advice on them, from our own almost total ignorance of party politics and our grave doubts about any benefit there would be in them to the people at large.

From 1961 until I left Sarawak in 1964 (independence in Malaysia was in 1963) I was given the duty of recording local ideas on land tenure to help a land reform committee of which I was the third member. We produced bills, draft legislation, but politics

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<sup>3</sup>See also "Remembering Anthony Richards" by Temonggong Linang and Dato Tra Zehnder.

intervened. We were too late, and the bills have never become law.<sup>4</sup> I was also on the government examinations board, involved in customary law courts, and called in to help translate documents on constitutional changes in preparation for independence.

I traveled to every station in the country to explain the land proposals, and that gave some opportunities to further my own research. I remember quizzing Kayans on their system of bird omens, and visiting Banyang's sister (Gramong's mother) at Julau to record her version of the dirge—the poem sung to relate the journey of the dead to the next world—among a lot of other things.

At the end of 1961 the Brunei revolt broke out. It was followed by Confrontation with Indonesia when a lot of discontented young Chinese became terrorists (freedom fighters, communists) and found support and help from Indonesia. That trouble is only now being brought under control. The Iban equated this with the Malayan Emergency and helped the Government as much as they could. In some places old chiefs who remembered the troubles fifty years before organized their own unpaid patrols in support of the troops. At one time the Iban (Ulu Ai') wanted to search and destroy on their own across the border. They might have done a good job, but there were fears of a major international incident and possible disasters if untrained men with shotguns took on trained men with machine guns. Therefore I traveled along the border by helicopter, boat, and on foot to warn them to stay at home. Again, I picked up information: this time about game traps, stories about the orang utan, and more details of mythology.

In 1964 we came home—"Now you really are an expatriate," my brother said, and got the job of Secretary Librarian to the Centre for South Asian Studies at Cambridge. From that I retired in 1980.

Before I left Sarawak some of my colleagues had suggested my compiling a dictionary. They thought a year enough time! The two old dictionaries were inadequate: Howell and Bailey—the one an Anglican missionary and the other a 20-years Resident of Simanggang—is good in its way but it was published in 1900 and is much out of date as well as unobtainable; Scott (1956) was efficiently done and easier to use than the other, but limited because Scott relied on one informant in London and never went to Sarawak. He was a professor of phonetics and therefore, I suppose, less interested in the society and its use of language than in the words themselves.

I began by making a rough card index of words and general references to my notes (13 or 14 books) and some of the more likely books about Sarawak. I cut up two copies of Scott's dictionary and put one column on each of 400 odd large sheets: this gave space to add in from Howell & Bailey, other books, news sheets, my memory and so on; all arrows and "balloons." These were written out clearly and then typed on 5" x 3" cards (as it turned out, I might just as well have used A4 paper). The cards were xeroxed—6 or 8 to a sheet, and there were over 1200 sheets, perhaps 15,000 entries. This was to let me keep cards in one place and sheets in another as a safeguard. I found the sheets a handy working copy for further improvements.

In 1967 I went to India and Pakistan to collect material for the Centre and the Sarawak Government paid my fares from Calcutta to Kuching and back so that I could

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<sup>4</sup>Editor: This work, however, has played a major role in the recent High Court recognition of native land rights in Sarawak, a fact that would certainly have pleased Richards.

spend a month in Sarawak checking word lists and filling in gaps. Among others I visited was a bard who lives near the border—last seen performing at the re-opening of an Indonesian station near the Kapuas Lakes. I found that three years of comfort in England made longhouse life pretty rough, and I didn't have long enough to get used to it again.

Ever since then I have been working away in the evenings and on weekends—for the job at the Centre was full time—although I was able to find time to look things up in other libraries in Cambridge. They were a great help, because I soon found that I had to delve into zoology, botany, astronomy and other subjects of which I knew nothing.

I realized then that my speaking the language easily for so long was not all that much help in recording it accurately. I had “picked it up” and had never studied it before. I also had to learn accuracy and brevity in the use of English.

It became easier after a while. I stayed away from details of phonetics and formal linguistics because my purpose was social and practical rather than academic, and I had enough to cope with as it was. I had determined to set down what I knew and might be useful to others. Many of my colleagues had the knowledge I started with, but they have never tried to write it out.

Later, the work became really absorbing. I found more and more instances of relations with India in cosmology, myth, and ritual, so I had to read up on Hindu mythology and question Indians who came to the Centre. I haven't tried to assign dates or periods—that would be another major study.

I found there were more words having Minangkabau senses or origins than Javanese. Many words are also Malay, of course, but often with slightly different or special connotations. I have given Sanskrit, Arabic or other origins whenever I found one, relying mainly on Wilkinson's Malay Dictionary—but it is unlikely that the route by which they reached the Iban lay through the Peninsula. There is a fair scattering of Dutch, Chinese and English loan words—but I have found only one Japanese [word].

The next difficulty was to find a publisher. Not being attached to a University for the purpose of the work, I could not be considered—they were short of funds to publish work by their own people. The Sarawak Government by then declined even to give encouragement (dead set on the National Language).<sup>5</sup>

I ended up with the Oxford University Press who required a subsidy. Consequently I spent five or six years seeking grants, while continuing work on the dictionary, and succeeded well enough for the delegates to the Press to accept the work for publication. Only then did I receive advice and instruction from their dictionary experts on detailed preparation for the printer, Oxford spellings and punctuation, and so on.

It was found impossible to do this detailed work by correspondence so, after helping me revise letters A and B, the Press left me to carry on. The work was very slow, but I had got through about a third by the time I retired from the Centre in October 1980. Then I could go ahead. The whole thing was revised and many of the longer entries re-written. I began the fresh typing, but my wife did most of it. Nearly 1200 pages of A 4. Xerox copies were made for keeping and each completed letter (or section of around 100 pages) made into a handy volume and sent off to the typesetters.

Gallery proofs began to come in long before the last letter was done. They were corrected. I had a proofreader by then to help. Then page proofs came in; and there was a

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<sup>5</sup>See John Postill's Research Note in this issue of the *BRB*.

bit of bother with the map and the few diagrams—which I drew myself. The last page proofs went off early last August. The “blurb” on the jacket goes something like this:

“Iban is the language of a third of the people of Sarawak, and used by about a half, and closely related languages are used in Kalimantan. It has a rich oral tradition, which is likely to be lost, as society alters in the face of rapid economic and political change.”

I have written much more than a lexical dictionary in the hope that others besides students of language will find a use for it. I had in mind anthropologists and people concerned with comparative studies of similar people; and, of course, the needs of my successors in the District Offices and other departments of government, for I was very conscious of things I wish I had known earlier than I did—and the needs of others, like missionaries, whose work takes them among the Iban. Even a little knowledge of an event, a story, custom, allusion, or proverb displays a real interest, admits a stranger to social contact, and provides an instant key to further information if it be sought.

Besides covering daily life and occupations, I give a lot of information, much of it published for the first time, on such matters as ritual and belief, myth and poetry, augury and *adat* law, and customs at birth, marriage and death. There are stories (told in précis, of course), some history and famous names, colloquialisms and rudery not often recorded, snatches of poetry. There is a general introduction to the language and grammar, a short English-Iban index to important entries, to guide those who wish to use the dictionary otherwise than to look up words heard or seen written. And there is a large bibliography of works consulted.

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MISSIONARIES, MARINERS, AND MERCHANTS: OVERLOOKED  
BRITISH TRAVELERS TO WEST BORNEO IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH  
CENTURY

F. Andrew Smith  
*Department of Soil and Water*  
*The University of Adelaide*  
*SA 5005, Australia*  
E-mail: andrew.smith@adelaide.edu.au

### Introduction

At the beginning of the nineteenth century West Borneo (now West Kalimantan) was politically unstable. The rise of the sultanate of Pontianak, with Dutch support, had resulted in the takeover of Mempawah from the Bugis and the destruction of Sukadana. Pontianak and piratical Sambas competed for control of the up-river Dayaks and also the extensive Chinese colonies (*kongsis*). Both of the latter populations mined gold and diamonds, but while the Dayaks were mostly subordinate to Muslim rulers ("Malay" or—in the case of Pontianak—of Arab descent), the Chinese increasingly asserted their independence. The withdrawal of the Dutch from Pontianak and Mempawah in 1791 created a vacuum in European influence in West Borneo that the British sought to exploit, even after Dutch officials returned in 1818. Treaties of friendship signed between the Dutch and the rulers of Pontianak and Sambas did not, in theory at least, affect British trading rights, and the foundation of Singapore early in 1819 increased British attempts to maintain trade with West Borneo north of the equator, i.e. north of Pontianak, the main Dutch base. In 1824, after prolonged negotiation, the British and Dutch signed a treaty designed to demarcate their territorial rights in the East Indies. Article 12 stated that the British had no territorial claims on islands "South of the Straits of Singapore." It was not at all clear whether this clause applied only to the islands in the immediate area of the Straits, or whether it included Borneo, most of which is south of this limit (Irwin 1955: 52-67). The British in the region held to the former view, and the Dutch to the latter. The treaty echoed an earlier suggestion by Stamford Raffles (1818) that the equator, which crosses the coast of West Borneo just north of Pontianak, might be the northern limit of Dutch settlements in Borneo (Irwin 1955: 54). Neither the English East India Company (EIC) nor the independent British traders maintained their earlier interests in establishing settlements in Borneo but pursued their mercantile activities from Penang, Malacca, and, increasingly, Singapore. They were not greatly hindered, at least initially, by the very limited Dutch presence in West Borneo. By 1827, after the abandonment of Dutch Assistant-Residencies at Mempawah and Landak, the only European officials were the Resident at Pontianak, the Assistant-Resident at Sambas and two customs inspectors at Tajan on the river Kapuas (Irwin 1955: 68).

In 1834 George Windsor Earl traveled from Singapore to West Borneo in command of a small schooner, the *Stamford*. This vessel had been chartered by a group of merchants, mainly Chinese, who hoped to establish trade through Singkawang with the

Chinese who mined for gold in the area around Monterado,<sup>1</sup> about 25 km to the southeast of Singkawang (Jackson 1970). Earl went in the ship's boat from the coast to Singkawang and then returned to the coast and took the *Stamford* northwards and upriver to Sambas to get the approval of the local Dutch authorities to trade through Singkawang. Surprisingly—given the restrictive practices that had been established—permission was granted so, after returning to Singkawang, Earl proceeded overland to Monterado. Although the voyage was financially successful, further direct trade via Singkawang was prevented by the Dutch, who took stronger steps to restrict foreign traders to Pontianak and Sambas as much as possible. After returning to Britain, Earl described his travels in Borneo in his book: *The Eastern Seas, or voyages and adventures in the Indian archipelago in 1832-33-34* (Earl 1837, reprinted 1971). Earl said that on arrival at Monterado he learned that “an Englishman had visited that town several years previously,” but despite many enquiries afterwards, he was unable to discover “the name or calling of the individual, or any circumstances connected with the visit” (Earl 1837: 279). While researching American missionary activities in West Borneo in the mid-nineteenth century, I came across references to a visitor to West Borneo at the end of 1828 who I thought might be the one mentioned to Earl and who has, in any case, been overlooked. I then came across other British travelers earlier in the nineteenth century, some of whom are also candidates for the “unknown traveler,” and who have received little attention. These individuals have in common that their presence in West Borneo resulted, directly or indirectly, from the enormous interest in Borneo shown by Raffles.<sup>2</sup> Fortuitously, they represent three different British interests at the time: those of missionaries, the authorities in the East Indies, and merchants. This contribution is a revised version of a paper presented at the Seventh Biennial Conference of the BRC, in Kota Kinabalu, 2002. It has gone through phases that focused on “traveler's tales,” biography and straight (if narrow) history. The present contribution retains elements of all three and provides a basis for more detailed research.

### Missionaries

The London Missionary Society (LMS) first sent representatives to Batavia during the short-lived British rule over the East Indies (1811-15). As Lieutenant-Governor of Java, Raffles supported missionary activities in the region, especially outside Java. His cousin, Rev. Thomas Raffles, was a Congregational minister in Liverpool and recruited missionaries to the East Indies. In 1814 Raffles wrote to his cousin: “If you will consent to leave the Javanese to their *own way* [his emphasis] for the present, I will commute with you a vigorous conversion on Borneo, almost the largest island in the world, and thickly peopled by a race scarcely emerged from barbarism” (Wurtzburg 1954: 351-2). An LMS missionary, Rev. John Slater, who had been recruited by Thomas Raffles, paid a two-day visit to Pontianak in 1819 on his way to Batavia (Jakarta). He intended to go to

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<sup>1</sup>“Montradok” in the original—the final “k” in many place-names in West Borneo was optional at the time. In this paper I mainly use present-day spelling, except where quoting original text, but retain some Anglicized place-names, such as Malacca, Penang, and Batavia.

<sup>2</sup>Raffles lost 1000 pages of a detailed account of the “former history, present state, population and resources” of Borneo when the *Fame*, on which he was a passenger, burned shortly after his final departure from Benkulen in 1824 (Wurtzburg 1954: 685).

Sambas and Monterado but had insufficient time. His Chinese host introduced him to the Sultan of Pontianak, who apparently agreed to the establishment of a mission in his territories where, at the time, the Dutch exerted little control. Slater enquired particularly about Monterado and the large Chinese population, estimated variously between 30,000 – 50,000 (Slater 1820a, 1820b). Most of the Chinese were not in fact under the control of Pontianak. Slater did not return to Borneo; he left the LMS in disgrace in 1823 and died soon afterwards in Batavia.

Rev. Walter Henry Medhurst, another LMS missionary and originally a printer, arrived in Batavia from Penang in 1821. He was based mainly in Batavia until 1843 and eventually became an official resident (*burgher*). It was a very impressive length of service, given the notoriously unhealthy conditions there at the time. Medhurst worked among the Chinese, and was visited by many missionaries from Europe and the United States who needed to learn Chinese. In the beginning of August 1828, Medhurst traveled from Batavia to Singapore, intending to sail along the eastern side of the Malay peninsula to Siam with two other missionaries, Jacob Tomlin and Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff. He missed their departure by two days, so he sailed in a Chinese vessel as far as Pattani and Songkhla, looking for them (Medhurst, 1830a). He did not find them and returned to Singapore on 1 October 1828 with a “complaint of the bowels [that was] very obstinate” (Medhurst 1830a: 192). He recovered quickly enough to fulfil his ambition to visit West Borneo, with the aim of distributing Christian literature and investigating opportunities for the establishment of an LMS mission.

Medhurst recorded his visit to West Borneo in a journal (Medhurst 1828-29) and subsequent letter (Medhurst 1829a). This material was published in the contemporary periodicals of the LMS, and references below are to the latter (Medhurst 1829b; 1830b). Dates of his itinerary and most of the details are taken from the published journal (Medhurst 1830b).<sup>3</sup> Medhurst left Singapore in a British schooner, bound for Pontianak, arriving there on 25 October. He met the Dutch Resident, D.J. van den Dungen Gronovius, who told Medhurst of his own travels far up the River Kapuas in 1823. According to Gronovius, the Dayaks were in a “miserable state...would gladly change their abominable superstition for a better [sic: presumably he did not mean a better superstition!], and frequently asked him to send them instructors.” However, the Dayaks were strongly opposed to conversion to Islam. Medhurst saw a good opportunity for the LMS or—if they were not interested—for Dutch missionaries, but he saw problems arising from the local Muslim rulers: there were “200 sovereign princes” in the Residency of Pontianak. From the information provided by Gronovius, Medhurst concluded that Sanggau, Sintang, and Tajan, all on the Kapuas, would be the safest places for missionaries to live (Medhurst 1829b: 554). On 3 November he left Pontianak, traveling north along the Landak River to the Chinese gold-mining center at Mandor, where he arrived on 6 November. On the way, he passed three Chinese “customs houses” or “guard-houses”—the first only about 25 km from Pontianak at the junction of the Landak and Mandor Rivers. Mandor appeared to be lower than the bed of the river and Medhurst described the lakes where once there had been gold mines. He: “beheld hills

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<sup>3</sup>Much of the information is given both in the journal and the subsequent letter from Batavia, and I only cite specific pages where this is not the case, or I give direct quotations.



levelled, vallies [sic] filled up, rivers turned out of their course, and new channels formed, yea, the very levels of the earth ransacked and turned upside down.” He visited the mines but was obliged to lower his umbrella because he was told that it offended the Chinese deities (Medhurst 1830b: 198-9). Medhurst described the gold-mining methods in some detail. He also mentioned the diamond mines further inland at Landak, said to be a very unhealthy place (Medhurst 1829b: 555) but, although encouraged to visit them, did not do so. Nor did he visit Monterado, about 60 km to the north, because the Chinese there were at war with the Dutch. However, he described the route to Monterado from Mandor. The Chinese were displeased by the taxation imposed by the Dutch on their supplies and had started growing their own rice. Those at Monterado were the “most turbulent” and had previously attacked the Dutch fort at Mempawah and the establishment at Singkawang (Medhurst 1829b: 555). Medhurst “was hindered by a man who would only speak of state affairs” and wanted him to intercede with the Dutch; however, he refused to do so (Medhurst 1830b: 200). He foresaw that there would be difficulties for missionaries who worked in the area, because sooner or later they would have to take sides between the Chinese and Dutch (Medhurst 1829b: 555).

Medhurst returned to Pontianak on 11 November and, after traveling about 10 km upriver to visit Chinese who grew sugarcane, soon left for Sambas, where he arrived on 23 November. He went among the Chinese and Malays and on 2 December he witnessed the installation of the new Sultan “Osman Amaludin.”<sup>4</sup> He distributed literature to be sent to Chinese settlements in the region but, because of the heavy rain and his ill-health, could not travel further to the interior. Medhurst emphasized that he had wanted to go from Sambas along the track to Monterado, about 70 km to the south, and then proceed by river to Pontianak. He also described a river route from Sambas to Lara, another Chinese mining center further inland (Medhurst 1829b: 555-6). He talked of his contacts with the old piratical inhabitants of Sambas and described the Chinese there as “idle, voluptuous, and sensual, and for the most part addicted to gambling” (Medhurst 1829b: 557). The Dayaks seen at Sambas were mentioned only very briefly. For example, they practiced only primitive agriculture, using hoes. Also, they suffered greatly from elephantiasis (Medhurst 1829b: 557).

Medhurst left Sambas on 4 December. After visiting Pamangkat at the mouth of the Sambas river, he returned to Pontianak after a stormy passage in a leaky Dutch government *prahu*. On 17 December he embarked on a “Malay” *prahu* for Semarang in Java, where he arrived on 21 December. He returned to Batavia on 18 January 1829. Medhurst’s verdict on the prospects for missionaries in West Borneo was written on his way to Semarang. He did not favor a mission to the Chinese because they were very scattered and their population appeared to be only about 25,000, lower than previously thought. Also, the adult population were not “tractable and teachable” but “boisterous and insolent to foreigners,” having lately been at war with the Dutch. Instead, he favored sending a mission to the Dayaks, whose population in West Borneo he estimated at 240,000. This was despite their headhunting, and alliances with Malay pirates: they were becoming ashamed of these “savage habits” as a result of their contacts with Chinese and

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<sup>4</sup>Othman Kamaloe’ddin, according to de Hollander (1871). This was the brother and successor to Sultan Mohammed Ali Tsafioe’ddin, previously known as Pangeran Anom—of whom much more later.

Malay settlers. Medhurst noted that their opposition to Islam was due to their liking for pork. He said that some Dayaks had “actually embraced the Chinese system of idolatry” which he believed should stir Christians to be more active in their attempts at conversion (Medhurst 1830b: 208-210). This section of his journal was published in another publication of the LMS, the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* (Medhurst 1830c). Likewise, in the letter to the LMS written soon after returning to Batavia, Medhurst recommended the settlement of “one or two” missionaries on the west coast of Borneo, to keep up communication with the Chinese, but principally to study Dayak languages and help people “so downtrodden and demoralized, but still so willing to be reformed” (Medhurst 1829b: 558). In fact, Medhurst’s tour had little impact on the activities of the LMS, although its missionaries, especially in Batavia and Singapore, continued to print and distribute large numbers of Malay-language and Chinese-language books and tracts to trading vessels from Borneo. In 1833, Rev. C.H. Thomsen, an LMS missionary in Singapore, wrote that he had listed in his visiting-book 179 rivers in West Borneo, with several settlements on each, to many of which he sent missionary literature (O’Sullivan 1984: 97).

Medhurst’s accounts of his travels in West Borneo greatly influenced the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), which coordinated missions for several Protestant church bodies in the USA. The periodical of the ABCFM, the *Missionary Herald*, included in June 1830 the extract from Medhurst’s journal that included his views on the suitability of Borneo as a missionary field, especially among the Dayaks (Anon. 1830: 201-2). Medhurst is also named in a lengthy article about Borneo in the *Chinese Repository* (1836), published by the ABCFM in Canton, that included descriptions of the Dayaks: “We are not aware that any efforts have been made to introduce Christianity, except a visit or two by Rev. Mr. Medhurst of Batavia, and the circulation of books and tracts among those inhabitants of the island who have visited Batavia, Singapore, and other European settlements” (Anon. 1836: 515). Medhurst’s tour was also mentioned by representatives of the ABCFM who visited Batavia and met him while exploring opportunities for establishment of an ABCFM mission in Borneo (e.g. Abeel 1835: 310; Arms 1837: 115).<sup>5</sup> After the establishment of the mission in 1839, the ABCFM missionaries experienced all the problems that Medhurst had predicted, and more, but before the departure of the last missionary in 1849, they had gone on some epic journeys in West Borneo that are beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>6</sup>

When compared with Earl’s very informative book and earlier reports in English such as Leyden (1811) and Hunt (1812), discussed later, Medhurst provided little new information about the history of West Borneo, or the customs of its Dayak peoples. Reviewing Medhurst’s journal of his tour along the eastern side of Malaya, the editor of the *Chinese Repository* (Anon. 1832: 228-229) commented that the value “to a general reader would have been considerably enhanced, had the author added more concerning the productions of the country, and the state of learning among the people. He has done

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<sup>5</sup>It was these references to Medhurst that first made me aware of his tour in West Borneo.

<sup>6</sup>Medhurst moved to China in 1843. He left Shanghai in poor health in September 1856 and died, aged 60, in London on 24 January 1857, only three days after his arrival in England (Wylie 1867: 25-27).

well, we think, in publishing it.”<sup>7</sup> The same rather ambivalent comment applies equally well to Medhurst’s journal of his tour in Borneo, but it is a significant addition to the sparse early nineteenth century English-language travel writing about the region, and especially about the Chinese colonies. C.M. Turnbull’s comment in his Introduction (p. x) to the 1971 reprint of Earl’s book that Earl was “probably the first Englishman to visit, and certainly the first to describe, the Chinese settlements” is clearly incorrect on both counts—but whether the first British visitor was Rev. W.H. Medhurst remains to be seen. Because Medhurst did not, in fact, visit Monterado, it is not at all certain that he was the person about whom the Chinese told Earl. Perhaps Earl, who depended on a translator, was told that the visit was to other areas occupied by the Chinese that were visited by Medhurst, e.g. Mandor and Sambas, but these are not close to Monterado. However, there are other possibilities, as follows.

### Mariners

In 1838, two American missionaries, Elihu Doty and William J. Pohlman, visited West Borneo on behalf of the ABCFM. At Monterado, they were shown an English magazine presented in September 1815 by “Commodore Sayes” to “his esteemed friend (name illegible), the chief commander of Montrado” (Doty and Pohlman 1839a: 305). (This sentence was one of many edited out of the account published in the *Missionary Herald*: Doty and Pohlman 1839b.) Captain George Sayer (not Sayes) RN was a prominent naval officer during the short period of British rule. In 1813 he commanded from his ship, the frigate HMS *Leda*, the naval squadron despatched by Raffles that took part in a successful campaign against Sambas, and, in particular, a notorious pirate chief, Pangeran Anom, the “young Prince,” who was a half-brother of the Sultan. The attack—like its unsuccessful predecessor in late 1812—was prompted by a series of piratical raids, including the plundering and burning in 1812 of a British trading vessel, the *Coromandel*, that had become stranded on a reef in the Karimata Islands. “The enormities of Pangeran Annam have out-heroded Herod; these are too recent to require recapitulation. Independent of his depredations on the *Coromandel*, a Portuguese ship, &c, nine Europeans of the Hecate have been seized and made slaves” (Hunt 1812: 24; see also S. Raffles, 1830: 198, and Veth, 1854-6, Vol. 1: 380-382).

The British naval squadron and troops destroyed Sambas and burned the pirate vessels at the beginning of June 1813, and the Sultan and Pangeran Anom fled into the interior. (The official report of the attack is given by Thorn 1815.) The *Leda* remained in the area until the middle of August and returned briefly to Pontianak in September after proceeding to Batavia (*Leda* 1813: Captain’s log). Other warships of the Royal Navy and EIC also patrolled the area with the aim of further reducing piracy and to show the flag. In August 1813 Raffles despatched one of his aides-de-camp, Captain R.C. Garnham, from Java to Borneo to negotiate with the rulers of the various coastal sultanates to help stamp out piracy and further strengthen British control. Raffles was well aware of the extensive Chinese population between Pontianak and Sambas, but thought that they should remain divided and under the influence of the two sultanates. He told Garnham that the Chinese should be given no “expectation of independence” but would be protected from

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<sup>7</sup>The version reviewed was the pamphlet published by the Mission Press, Singapore, at the end of 1828.

oppression by the Sultans by the local British officials whom he hoped to establish (Java: 18 August 1813).

Doubtless the Chinese had aired their hopes for increased independence during their many contacts with the British naval vessels that had patrolled the region intensively in the period leading up to the invasion of Java and subsequently. The ships obtained supplies, especially pigs and vegetables, from the Chinese and took on water from Pulau Kabung, close to Singkawang.<sup>8</sup> Thus, shortly before his departure, Sayer “saluted the Chief of the Chinese with 5 guns” (*Leda*: Captain’s log, 23 July 1813). The vessels of the Royal Navy apparently left the waters off West Borneo at the beginning of the wet season at the end of 1813, though patrols by warships of the EIC maintained a blockade of Sambas and neighboring ports. Raffles had intended to mount a further naval and military expedition to Borneo in 1814, as mentioned in a letter to Vice-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, the British naval commander at Madras (Java: 23 September 1813). However, he was prevented by instructions from the EIC that he was not to develop his plans further for Borneo (Bastin 1954). In mid-1814, on his way to Java, Hood paid a surprise courtesy call on Sultan Kassim of Pontianak; it was colorfully described by Basil Hall, then one of Hood’s lieutenants on his flagship, the *Minden* (Hall 1833).

Having briefly returned to Java, Sayer paid a farewell visit to Borneo in the *Leda* for three weeks from the end of August 1815.<sup>9</sup> On 16 September, while the *Leda* was moored off the Selakau river, north of Singkawang, the “Chinese chief of the Montradow Mines came on board.” He spent the night on board and next day Sayer “fired a salute of 5 guns on the Chief of the Chinese settled at the Montradow Mines leaving the ship” (*Leda*: Captain’s log). It was presumably on this occasion that he was given the English magazine that led to this quest to find out more about Sayer. On 19 September the Sultan of Sambas came on board the *Leda* but did not spend the night there: he got a 9-gun salute on leaving. This visitor was the former Pangeran Anom, who had become Sultan late in 1814 (Irwin 1955: 31). Unfortunately, the Captain’s log of the *Leda* includes no information about the activities of the Captain, or of his officers and crew-members, when ashore. There is no evidence from the Captain’s log that Sayer visited Monterado, but clearly he had ample opportunity to do so. In a pamphlet published in 1818, after his return to Britain, Sayer said that he was “unavoidably detained for more some weeks [after the destruction of Sambas] in the interior of the State of Sambas.” The Captain’s log says very little about Sayer’s absences from his ship, and the reference may refer to visits to the town of Sambas, which is about 70 km from the coast; nevertheless, it is intriguing.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>As pointed out by Veth (1854-1856; Vol 1: 108-109) this island was “re-discovered” by Earl (1837: 302-304). He called it “Palo Batublat,” claimed that the Malays were not aware of the water to be found there, and commented on the feral pig population.

<sup>9</sup>He was based in India in 1814 and the first part of 1815, having taken command of all Royal Naval ships in the interim period between the sudden death of Sir Samuel Hood in December 1814 and the arrival of his successor in India.

<sup>10</sup>Sayer and the *Leda* returned to Britain at the end of 1816, after an absence of very nearly seven years. He wrote the pamphlet (Sayer 1818) as a defense against accusations in another pamphlet by Captain R. O’Brien, who was court-martialed by Sayer in India.

There were many opportunities for British naval personnel to explore the hinterland of Sambas during the period 1811-1815, but I have not come across any reports to this effect. However, the memoirs of Capt. David Macdonald, first published privately in 1835 and with a third undated edition, probably in 1840 (Macdonald 1840 hereafter), provide much information which throws new light on British activities in the region at the time, and especially about Pangeran Anom. Macdonald was an officer of the EIC's Indian navy, the Bombay Marine, and in 1812 commanded an EIC "cruizer," the *Aurora*, which was off Palembang. Early in September, a British store-ship, attacked in the Karimata straits by a ship and several *prahu* under the command of Pangeran Anom, brought the news that the *Coromandel* had gone aground on a reef in the Karimata Islands early in August, and was falling apart. Sailing to investigate, the *Aurora* came across a small schooner from Pontianak on its way to Java. One of its passengers was a prominent Calcutta merchant, John Palmer, who had been a passenger on the *Coromandel*, and who transferred to the *Aurora*. The vessels commanded by Pangeran Anom had plundered the stricken *Coromandel* and attacked the rescue vessels sent by the Sultan of Pontianak.<sup>11</sup> Macdonald pursued the pirate vessels towards Sambas, but the *Aurora* was unable to cross the shallow bar at the mouth of the Sambas river. In due course, Macdonald delivered Palmer to Penang and then sailed to Java, returning to West Borneo early in 1813, when the second attack on Sambas was launched. He again narrowly missed capturing Pangeran Anom when the latter was aboard a large Chinese junk stranded at the mouth of the Sambas river. Soon afterwards, Macdonald captured one of the Pangeran's ships "of great bulk"—presumably a junk—on its way from Amoy with supplies for the Chinese at Monterado and Landak, and with 200 Chinese migrants. Its loss greatly alarmed the local population, especially the Chinese, who offered to transfer allegiance to the British (Macdonald 1840: 222-223). Macdonald took part in the successful attack on Sambas in June 1813, and had kind words to say about Capt. Sayer RN. Falling ill with malaria, he sailed to Java with the *Aurora* and, after his recovery and several voyages in the Archipelago, he returned to Sambas in 1814 under very different circumstances. Pangeran Anom had decided to change his habits and Macdonald went the 70 km upriver in a small gunboat with a few marines. He received homage from the aged Sultan and "feigned humility and contrition" from the Pangeran, for whom he developed great respect despite his previous piracy. Macdonald commented that the Pangeran must have had "one redeeming point of character by which he retained so firm a hold over the affections of the Malay, Dayak, and the enormous Chinese population of the mining districts, as well as those loose and idle spirits who came to join him, into whom he instilled a portion of his own energy and courage" (Macdonald 1840: 205-206; 304-308).<sup>12</sup>

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His active naval career ended and he died aged 57 in July 1831, less than one year after his seniority resulted in promotion to Rear-Admiral (Obituary: Anon. 1831).

<sup>11</sup>The *Java Government Gazette*, vol 1/35 (24 October, 1812) gives another detailed account of these events.

<sup>12</sup>Macdonald also spent time with the Sultan of Pontianak. He returned to Britain in 1820, and soon left the service of the EIC because of a wound to his arm that he received when the captured pirate fleet was burned.

The Pangeran's earlier successful capture of European vessels may have been part of a determined attempt to build up a naval force to counter the rising strength of Pontianak but, despite his fearsome reputation, European traders had persisted in trading voyages to West Borneo.

### **Merchants (and more mariners)**

The British in the East Indies soon recognized the opportunities for developing trade that arose from the defeat of the Dutch. Even before his arrival in Java, Raffles received a lengthy report that described Borneo in very optimistic terms from J. Burn, who resided in Pontianak for several years before 1811 (Burn 1811). Although by no means overlooked, Burn is a rather obscure individual who had previously commanded a trading vessel. During the preparations for the British expedition to Java, Raffles informed Lord Minto, then at Malacca, that he had despatched Capt. Greigh (or Greig) of the EIC, in the *Minto*, to survey the straits of Karimata as a suitable route for the fleet. Raffles recommended Lord Minto employ "the services of Captain Burn, now residing at Pontiana... and if necessary to leave him at Matan or Succadana..." to complete any unfinished business (S. Raffles 1830: 40). Capt. Macdonald also met him during one of his early visits to Pontianak (Macdonald 1840: 309). Burn passed on letters from Raffles to the Sultan of Sambas, concerning the piratical attacks on British shipping. The "Sketch of Borneo" by John Leyden (1811) relies heavily on information provided by Burn. He does not seem to have traveled far afield in West Borneo, but obtained much geographical information, especially about the extensive Kapuas river system, from Arab traders. His original report is very long and deserves more attention (see Heidhues 1998). John Hunt also provided a lengthy report to Raffles in which he described Borneo in glowing terms (Hunt 1812). Aspects of Hunt's activities are likewise obscure. He had been supercargo on a trading vessel in the area (Gibson-Hill 1959: 141) and, after traveling from Bengal to Java in 1812, was Raffles's representative in Pontianak in 1813. He had twice sailed up the west coast towards Sarawak and the report suggests that he may have visited Sambas, but although Hunt gave information about gold and diamond mining, he stated that he did not see the mines (Hunt 1812: 19). His report was written after the first attack on Sambas, which he mentioned. Exactly why the report was written seems to be unknown; however, it had a great impact on Raffles.

John Palmer's short visit to West Borneo in 1812 has been largely overlooked. Known as "the Prince of Merchants," Palmer ran an important agency (trading) house based in Calcutta and had mercantile interests and influence that were widespread in Southeast Asia and beyond (Bastin 1981; Webster 1998: 55-58). Palmer wrote an enormous number of letters that are preserved in his private letter-books, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. His literary speciality lay in making acerbic comments to the recipients of his letters about others. Thus, on 8 July 1813 he wrote to Raffles thanking him for his support for Pontianak, and criticizing the attitude of their "Penang friends [who were] irreconcilably angry with your efforts even to extirpate piracy." This was presumably a reference to adverse effects on trade produced by the blockade of the west coast of Borneo north of Pontianak. He then said that he would "continue to revere the motive and the object of your [Raffles's] undertaking" (Palmer to Raffles, Letter-books c83: 15). In fact, Palmer had developed a strong dislike of Raffles and many of his policies, as shown by some of the cutting comments that he made in his letters. For example, on 10 February 1814 he wrote to his friend William Petrie, Governor of

Penang: "I am sick of Raffles—his Impudence, Baseness and Profligacy. Spurn the wretch from your Dominion and disperse his mushroom usurpation or encroachment" (Palmer Letter-books c83. See also Wurtzburg 1949; 1954, *passim*). Nevertheless, he and Raffles shared interests in the development of trade and political links with West Borneo (Tarling 1964; Webster 1998: 58). Palmer stayed in Pontianak with Sultan Kassim for about 3 weeks in 1812 after the *Coromandel* was stranded. The cargo included opium belonging to Palmer (Palmer to Sultan, 6 January 1813; Letter-books c81: 47). After leaving Capt. Macdonald and the *Aurora* at Penang, Palmer returned to Calcutta on 20 December 1812. He had traveled on the *Tay*, a trading vessel that was owned by James Carnegy of Penang and commanded by Capt. Daniel Smith.<sup>13</sup> Soon afterwards, Palmer and the Sultan exchanged letters and gifts. Captain Smith carried those from Palmer, which were delivered via Palmer's agent in Pontianak, Mahumud or Mohomud. "When the Malays leave off wearing Creeses I will pay another visit to Pontiano and when roads are opened 20 feet wide from one town to another, and through every town, I will send the Sultan a carriage to ride in" (Palmer to Mahumud, 9 January 1813; Letter-books c81: 64-65). Palmer was not pleased when some of the Sultan's gifts turned out not to be made of gold but of base metal "that made the hand stink." Tactfully, he warned the Sultan of the duplicity of the goldsmith and typically also took the opportunity to warn him that Raffles was prejudiced against him—"he accuses you of ambition" (Palmer to Sultan, 19 December 1813; Letter-books c83: 249-251). The shrewd Sultan Kassim obviously valued his connection with Palmer who, according to Macdonald (1840: 361-3) became the Sultan's commercial agent in Bengal. When Hood unexpectedly arrived in 1814, the Sultan produced a letter from Lord Minto thanking him for his friendship with the British and in particular with Palmer, who had sent him "beautiful mirrors and chandeliers" (Hall 1833: 251).

Daniel Smith was one of the British mercantile sea-captains who had particularly close connections with West Borneo. He had been suspected by Macdonald of trading arms with the Chinese *kongsis* and hence indirectly with Sambas, but he was warned off by Palmer, who disapproved of Carnegy, Smith's "principal" in Penang, during the voyage back to Calcutta (Macdonald 1840: 341-2). Afterwards, Smith tried unsuccessfully to get Palmer to go into business with him (Palmer to Capt. Smith, 29 August 1813; Letter-books c83: 60). Many of Smith's voyages in the East Indies in this period, like those of other trading vessels, can be traced from the records of ships' arrivals and departures in the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* and *Java Government Gazette* (1812-1815). At the end of 1812 Smith transferred from the *Tay* to the *Gloucester* and sailed to Pontianak, no doubt carrying Palmer's letters and gifts. In March 1813, during the preparations for the second attack on Sambas, he carried despatches from Capt. Macdonald from Pontianak to the Government of Java (Macdonald, c. 1840: 365) and then made two return visits in the *Gloucester* to Pontianak. In 1814, he commanded

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<sup>13</sup>Palmer arrived in Penang on the *Aurora* on 22 October 1812 and departed for Calcutta in the week ending 14 November on the *Tay*, which had arrived "from the eastward and Malacca" about a week earlier (*Prince of Wales Island Gazette* 7/347; 24 October 1812, 7/349, 7 November 1812 & 7/350, 14 November 1812). "The eastward" was often used to refer to Borneo.

*L'Adèle*, and again visited Pontianak. It would be interesting to know who employed him.<sup>14</sup>

It is not clear what links Palmer maintained with West Borneo after 1813. In 1818, after a long gap in their private correspondence, Palmer provided a letter of introduction to the Sultan for Mr. Morgan, another British merchant who intended to visit Pontianak. Palmer asked Kassim to remember him to Kassim's "wife and children and brother the Pangeran," probably Osman, who succeeded Kassim as Sultan in 1819 (Palmer to Sultan, 18 June 1818; Letter-books c86: 306). By 1818 Palmer had recognized that, following the return of the Dutch, there was virtue in Raffles's advocacy of the development of a strategically located British trading base in the archipelago (Tarling 1964). Palmer wrote from Calcutta in December 1818 to William Farquhar, the Governor of Malacca, saying that it "would be nice to procure our friends in Borneo some mitigation of their Dependence" (on the Dutch), and that if his suggestions "thrown out about Pontiana, years ago, had been listened to Mynheer would never have thrust his nose among that People. I should like to know how my Samba friend will fare, though I think he would not suffer a Dutch man even to save his life" (Letter-books c87: 254; see also Tarling 1964; Wurtzburg 1954: 466-8). Unfortunately, the "Samba friend" was not named and this comment is presumably a sarcastic reference to ex-Pangeran Anom, and to Palmer's misfortunes when he was stranded.<sup>15</sup>

After Singapore was established, Palmer tried to influence events there and Raffles shows in his own letters that he was well aware of what Palmer was up to in Calcutta (e.g. Bastin 1981: 21). Palmer continued to lobby his influential friends during the 1820s to support British trade in the East Indies, though his influence declined when Lord Amherst replaced the Marquess of Hastings as Governor-General in India in 1823. Echoing the earlier suggestion by Raffles, Palmer thought that the British and Dutch spheres of influence in Borneo could be defined by the equator. Otherwise, "the contempt of the Feelings of the Natives and our Engagements with them will deservedly load us with obloquy everywhere" (Palmer to Prime, 10 May 1825; in Tarling 1964: 40). This comment referred to Sumatra but equally applies to West Borneo.<sup>16</sup> Not surprisingly, similar views were held by the British traders in the area, despite the displeasure of the Dutch, and sporadic attempts were made to re-establish the trade that had been inhibited

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<sup>14</sup>I have not attempted to trace Smith's later activities. In 1814 the *Tay* was under the command of James Carnegy of Penang, who must have retained links with the Chinese in West Borneo: on 3 September 1815 the *Leda* encountered the "British brig *Tay*," traveling from Selakau to Pontianak (*Leda*: Captain's log). Like the personnel from the Royal Navy and EIC Bombay Marine, the traders are obvious candidates for the "unknown Englishman" who visited Monterado, though the period under consideration here may be stretching the "several years" before Earl's visit a long way.

<sup>15</sup>The possibility that this comment referred to a visit to Sambas by Palmer led to my reading through the letter-books for 1811-1818, and subsequently led me to Captains Macdonald and Smith.

<sup>16</sup>Palmer's agency house collapsed in 1830 and he later became bankrupt, at least in part because of his generosity in making loans to his friends. He died in 1836, greatly respected in Calcutta (Wurtzburg 1949). Anthony Webster is writing Palmer's biography (Anon. 2001, and helpful personal communications).



by the return of the Dutch to West Borneo. Singapore's first newspaper, the *Singapore Chronicle*, published between September and November 1827 an anonymous and quite lengthy description of West Borneo by someone who "during a trading voyage, made a short stay at Sambas, Mampawa, and Pontianak" (*Singapore Chronicle* nos. 92-94, 1827; see Anon. 1827, reprinted by Moore 1837: 5-12). According to Gibson-Hill (1959), the author was F.J. Bernard, the first proprietor of the *Singapore Chronicle* (see Bastin 1981: 55) and a rather unsettled character. He soon gave up his interest in the newspaper and in 1827 traveled as supercargo, with T. Thomas of Calcutta, on the *Meridian*, which had been chartered by Singapore merchants including Hugh Syme. The departure on 17 March 1827 "for the eastward" was reported in the *Singapore Chronicle*, no. 79, 29 March 1827. Bernard's return was not reported in later issues that I have examined (issue no. 90 for 30 August 1827 was missing from the collection) and the *Meridian* returned from Macassar much later in the year. Bernard may have returned on the *Dree Mareas* (or *Dree Marias*). This was a Dutch brig, but its captain was P. Williams, a name which sounds more British than Dutch. The *Dree Mareas* made at least two voyages to Pontianak in 1827, and was there (or in the waters of West Borneo) for most of July (*Singapore Chronicle* June-August 1827, nos. 85, 86 and 89). Bernard gave no indication that he visited the Chinese districts. His information was obtained "from the most intelligent natives with whom he had intercourse, and afterwards submitted to the inspection of European gentlemen intimately acquainted with the coasts" (Anon. 1827, in Moore 1837: 5). There was a shorter note: "Trade with the West Coast of Borneo" in the *Singapore Chronicle* no. 147, 5 November 1829 (see Anon. 1829, reprinted by Moore 1837: 13-14). This gave few details and fulminated against restrictions by the Dutch, especially with regard to the opium trade. Lastly, in the context of trading activities, the British vessel in which Medhurst traveled to Pontianak at the end of 1828 should also be borne in mind. This was the schooner *Commerce*, commanded by N. Cormac, according to the *Singapore Chronicle* no. 120, 23 October 1828.

### Earl's book revisited

Earl (1837: 201) commented that "an English ship had visited this part of the coast in 1827, but I could meet with no one who possessed information concerning her proceedings." This was presumably the voyage in which Bernard was involved. Given the extensive British activities not long before his visit, it really is surprising that Earl had (or claimed to have had) no information about previous trading voyages or travels to the area. The fact that Medhurst did not return to Singapore on his way back to Batavia helps explain the fact that Earl did not know of his travels in West Borneo. However, Earl seemed to know little even about those missionaries who were based in Singapore (where there were fewer than 100 Europeans at the time). He commented that there were "two or three dissenting [i.e. Nonconformist] missionaries at Singapore, but they do not appear to have had much success in the conversion of the natives" (which was true, but their main activity was printing), "the effects of their labours being rarely heard of in the settlement, except through the medium of missionary publications brought out from England" (Earl 1837: 393).<sup>17</sup> Medhurst aside, there remains a possibility that the "unknown Englishman"

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<sup>17</sup>There was an LMS mission in Singapore from the time of its foundation (1819) and the small LMS press was soon used to print official papers for the Singapore authorities. Raffles was instrumental in the purchase of a larger press by writing to his contacts in

(Earl 1837: 279) was a British trader from Singapore, Malacca, or Penang who visited Monterado in the 1820s, when the Dutch had only a very limited presence in the area.

### Conclusion

Dutch control over West Borneo increased progressively after the 1830s, influenced in part by the activities of James Brooke to the north. The Chinese *kongsis* soon lost their independence (Jackson 1970), the Muslim ruling families became clients of the Dutch, and the Dayaks remained (in the words of Medhurst) “downtrodden and demoralized”—as they do to this day. The British maintained trade with West Borneo, particularly from Singapore. A vessel called the *Stamford* was still involved in trade with Pontianak and Sambas in 1838. She was mentioned in the *Singapore Free Press*, vol. 3 no. 8, 22 February 1838, described as a 65 ton brig. However, the main British mercantile interests widened far beyond to China. The Royal Navy maintained a significant presence in the East Indies, paying particular attention to suppression of piracy as well as giving support to the British imperialistic ventures, again including China. The missionaries also turned most of their attention to China as foreign influence increased there.

Of the various travelers mentioned in this paper, it was Earl himself who may have had a tangible impact on the future of Borneo. Earl was a strong admirer of Raffles, who had died in 1826, and many of Earl’s views follow those of Raffles. “Raffles and Earl represented neither official policy, narrow commercial ambitions nor conventional Christian proselytizing. They advocated rather a civilizing mission, which aimed to combine altruistic humanitarianism with practical economic benefits” (Turnbull, Introduction to reprint of Earl 1837, p. viii). This comment seems rather “over the top,” but Earl’s book was very successful. It greatly impressed James Brooke, who was also an admirer of Raffles and his writings (Brooke 1838; Runciman 1970: 48-54). Brooke’s arrival in 1839 did have a lasting impact on the future of Borneo, and particularly on what became Sarawak, thanks in part to input from new generations of British missionaries, mariners and merchants. In this way, the hopes of Raffles that Britain would retain influence over Borneo “north of the equator” became—though not in the places or manner advocated by him—reality for many years.

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Calcutta, including John Palmer (O’Sullivan 1984). The LMS press was also used to print the *Singapore Chronicle* until it went out of business in 1837.

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## THE “DAYAK KINGDOM” IN WEST KALIMANTAN: EARTHLY OR SPIRITUAL?

F. Andrew Smith

*Department of Soil and Water,  
Waite Campus, University of Adelaide,  
Glen Osmond 5064 Australia*

Reed L. Wadley

*Department of Anthropology,  
University of Missouri-Columbia,  
Columbia MO 65211 USA*

We have previously commented (Wadley and Smith 2001) on Research Notes by Djuweng (1999) and Sellato (1999) which referred to the existence of a Dayak “Kingdom of the Headwaters” or “Upriver” (Hulu Aiq: HA hereafter<sup>1</sup>) in the interior of Ketapang District (Kabupaten), West Kalimantan. According to Djuweng (1999), the “kingdom” was a regional federation of Dayak groups, the seniority and historical prominence of which was acknowledged by the Malay sultanates in the area. Sellato (1999) proposed that the “kingdom” once controlled large areas that extended northwards over the Kapuas, and that its strategic importance lasted until the Dutch took over control of the region in the 1850s. We, too, focused on the possible background of the “kingdom” in a historical context, i.e. as an area independent (or semi-independent) of the authority of the Malay rulers, and indeed possibly of later Dutch colonial authority.

A very different slant on the history and nature of the “kingdom” was given by John Bamba, Director of the Institut Dayakologi in Pontianak, in a wide-ranging discussion paper that related Dayak cultural values to ecosystem resilience in the face of profound changes in Kalimantan (Bamba 2000). According to Bamba, the “kingdom” still exists as a solely spiritual entity. Its “king” (Raja Hulu Aiq: RHA) “has no political power; he is not a king with a feudal government....” He is “the highest spiritual leader of the Dayak” in a region of Ketapang District, West Kalimantan, called *Desa Sembilan Demung Sepuluh* (“Nine Villages, Ten Customary Chiefs”). This area “is a territory of cultural binding that recognizes him as the highest leader of *adat*. RHA is believed by all the Dayak in *Desa Sembilan Demung Sepuluh* to be the one who was chosen to become the guarantor of the Dayak’s good fate, especially in relation to farming activities. Therefore, the Dayak pay special tribute to the RHA by mentioning his name in prayers in farming rituals” (Bamba 2000: 37). Bamba also described the *Meruba* ritual (*Maruba* according to Djuweng) that is performed yearly to honor the sacred *pusaka* objects, inherited by the RHA’s family, and only touched by the RHA. The objects include what Djuweng (1999) called the *Besi Koling Tungkat Rakyat* (“the Koling Iron Staff, the People’s Champion”). In discussing the possible nature of this object, we commented that Spanish colonial authorities in the Philippines and Americas gave native agents canes or batons of office

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<sup>1</sup>*Hulu Aiq*: this is the name according to the Krio Dayak. There are variations such as *Ulu Are* in other Dayak languages of the area: see the Research Note by Bamba (2002) that follows this one.

(Wadley and Smith 2001). Likewise, in the mid-1840s, Dutch officials in Borneo were authorized to distribute staffs (*stokken*) that were embossed with the arms of the Netherlands, as symbols of Dutch authority (Irwin 1955: 153). The first and second Brooke Rajahs gave staffs (*tungkat*) to native chiefs in Sarawak (C. Sather, personal communication: see also Editor's note). Wooden staffs of a very different kind were used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the Batak priests of Sumatra as symbols of their power (Schnitger 1939: 85-100). They were about 1.7 m long, and their carvings sometimes depict an incestuous relationship between boy and girl twin siblings that echoes the story told by Djuweng (1999). Part of such a staff is illustrated in Barley (1999: Fig. 37). They had specially forged iron tips that were driven into the ground during ceremonies (Schnitger 1939: 85). More prosaically, iron produced in Matan, West Borneo, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was transported in pieces about 20 cm long, 4 cm broad and 1 cm thick (Anon. 1827: 8). These dimensions are similar to those of the "Koling Staff" as given by Djuweng (1999: 105). Bamba's description of the "Koling Staff," however, is very different from any of the above objects. He describes it as a "yellow gold keris," or the remains thereof. The *pusaka* also includes a box and a plate, but the keris is the most powerful object. "Even RHA himself is not allowed to look at the keris when he cleans it during *meruba* ritual, or else he would go blind.... The *pusaka* is believed to possess the power of determining the course of nature" (Bamba 2000: 37-38). As a symbol of power, a keris seems very plausible, especially given Javanese traditions in the area (see Wadley and Smith 2001). The yellow-gold color—not mentioned by Djuweng—certainly suggests a strong connection to wider symbols of authority, both earthly and spiritual. According to Avé and King (1986: 19), examples of the "Majapahit keris," originally symbols of the authority of Majapahit in Java, have become ritual objects in various places in Central Borneo. Also, Harrisson (1966) described a golden keris handle of east Javanese origin, and possibly thirteenth or fourteenth century, from Balingian, Sarawak. However, such an origin was not claimed by Djuweng (1999), and his identification of the object as the remains of an iron staff fits uneasily with a keris handle. Djuweng had obtained his information from the nephew of the guardian of the object at the time, i.e. the nephew of the then RHA. Because the "Koling staff" and other *pusaka* objects are kept hidden, more detailed investigation may be impossible.

Bamba (2000) emphasized that respect paid by the Malay sultans—recorded in the Dayak oral traditions in the Ketapang district (see also Djuweng 1999)—arose from the spiritual power of the RHA, despite the oppressive rule imposed on the Dayak by the Malay rulers that extended into the Dutch colonial era. His account of the genealogy of the RHA (Bamba 2002) mentions disputes between village heads and successive RHAs that run counter to accepted beliefs that earthly and spiritual authorities in the Indo-Malay world are inextricably entwined. In fact, Bamba has given no indication that the RHA has ever held significant political power: hence the title of this Research Note. The present RHA, Singa Bansa, was sworn in as RHA in June 1997 (it is an interesting personal name, meaning in Malay "lion of the nation or people"). According to Bamba (2000), Singa Bansa believes that the (spiritual) territory of *Desa Sembilan Demung Sepuluh* covers wide areas in Borneo, naming the nine "villages" (or groups of villages) as Kayung-Tayap, Jalai-Pesuagan, Jekaq-Laur and Bihag-Krio (all in Ketapang District), Mahap-Sekadau (Sanggau District), Desa Darat Pantai Kapuas (in the Kapuas river



system), Buliq-Belantiq and Puring-Katingan (Central Kalimantan) and, as one *desa*, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei Darussalam (Bamba 2000:38). The last of these nine areas, at least, seems an unlikely ambit claim, and one that other Dayaks distant from Ketapang would have some difficulty accepting. Several of the other eight *desa* are well beyond the territory described by Djuweng (1999), which included the northern half of Ketapang District, and possibly parts of Sanggau District south of the Kapuas and the southwest of Sintang District. The use of *desa* here is also interesting as the term is a largely Javanese concept of village (i.e. single villages) rather than “village clusters” as used by Singa Bansa (according to Bamba 2000), and the modern Indonesian administration. The influence of Java on western Borneo is, of course, quite ancient, and the “nine *desa*” may well have referred originally to a more localized village cluster in the north of the Ketapang District. This was the area on which we focused (Wadley and Smith 2001). An examination of the Dutch archives might help address this issue.

An important feature of Bamba’s account (2000) is the information about the “coming out” of the RHA since the fall of Suharto. When the latter was in power, the RHA had disappeared from the lives of most Dayak: “he only existed in history.” Nevertheless, the RHA “still regularly visited the Dayak in Meliau-Sanggau District where he received fair treatment and homage” (Bamba 2000: 41-42). It should be emphasized here that Djuweng’s paper was first drafted before the fall of Suharto, in 1995 (see Sellato 1999) or even earlier: Bamba (2000) cites it as an unpublished paper of 1993. By 1998, however, the situation had changed dramatically. The new RHA appeared at a *Tolak Bala* ritual held in Ketapang that was organized by a local priest, Father Juli, and attended by many Dayak *adat* chiefs and shamans. This ceremony is traditionally held to restore the balance of nature and bring about peace, good harvests, etc. The version in 1998 was obviously politicized. On behalf of the Dayak people from the *Desa Sembilan Demung Sepuluh*, the RHA rejected the authority of the *Adat* Council set up by the Suharto regime (Bamba 2000: 41). As a result, Father Juli was fined by the *Adat* Council for not informing them or involving them in the ritual. This event resulted in the erection of a monument on supposedly sacred ground in Ketapang (also mentioned in an article in the Indonesian newspaper “Kompas” [*Semua Etnis di Katapang Berikrar Hidup Damai*: 22 March 2001]). This article also reported another *Tolak Bala* ritual held on 21 March 2001 which was designed not to make peace but to keep the peace, to avoid the inter-ethnic conflict then erupting in Central Kalimantan<sup>2</sup> These quite recent events suggested that the Dayak “kingdom” may now be evolving from its largely hidden spiritual basis to an open, more political role. However, according to Bamba (2002), the RHA has not become a more prominent personality. This seems to be due to different perceptions among the Dayak people of his importance, in both ritual and political terms. Bamba (2002) comments on the lack of respect given to the present RHA, Singa Bansa, even by the local people among whom he lives.

In conclusion, despite the differences in detail between the accounts by Djuweng (1999) and Bamba (2000, 2002), they both give a valuable demonstration of continuity in Dayak beliefs and tradition in a region that has received little attention in the past by specialist researchers, especially from outside Kalimantan. It remains to be resolved whether or not the RHA ever had a strong political role in West Borneo that encompassed

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<sup>2</sup>Bamba (2002) gives more details of the *Tolak Bala* rituals in 1998 and 2001.

the traditional nexus between earthly and spiritual authority, as suggested by Djuweng (1999) and emphasized by Sellato (1999). More detailed investigation of these traditions may reveal some very interesting regional or even ethnic variation, especially coupled with any insight to be had from the Dutch colonial archives. As for the future, it is still possible that, depending on local politics and the personalities involved, the role of the RHA will evolve in the coming years as Dayaks in Ketapang confront their political possibilities in the new era of regional autonomy. It will be a most fascinating and potentially far-reaching endeavor.

#### Editor's Note:

The question of “staffs” or *tungkat* is an interesting one. For the Iban, at least, the term *tungkat*, in addition to its usual meaning of staff, prop, or walking stick, may also refer to a summons in the form of a stick. The use of a staff, or stick, as a summoning device appears to be an early one, predating colonial rule. The entry on *tungkat* in the newly published *Encyclopaedia of Iban Studies* gives an excellent summary of this use and its colonial appropriation:

As a summons, *tungkat* were sent around to alert recipients that they were being directed to assemble at the sender's house or at some place he might designate. *Tungkat* might have attached to them a feather or a piece of charred wood to convey the urgency of a response, a piece of wood cut in such a way the curlings were peeled back (*bungai jarau*) to indicated some impending conflict, and a string with as many knots as the number of days before the recipient was required to appear (*temuku' tali*). After the imposition of colonial rule and the creation of the office of Penghulu, *tungkat* became official notices, and were kept in the District Office or in the house of a Penghulu (Sutlive et al. 2001: 1916).

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RE-EMERGENCE OF THE RAJA HULU AIQ:  
SOME MOTIVES AND IMPACTS<sup>1</sup>

John Bamba  
*Institut Dayakologi,  
Kompleks Bumi Indah Katulistiwa Blok A3/3-4  
Jl. Budi Utomo  
Pontianak 78241, Indonesia*

I last met the Raja Hulu Aiq<sup>2</sup> (RHA), or the “King of the Upriver,” on 16 July 2001. I stopped and paid a personal visit to him when I returned from a spiritual homage to the Sacred Fountain (*Pancur Keramat*), located just next to his house in Sengkuang. I met him, his wife and their 3-month old baby. (Their first child, a boy, is not the RHA’s real son. The RHA married a widow from Sepanggang with one son.) As this is the first time I had visited the RHA’s village and house, I stared around inside the house and tried to find the things I thought I was looking for: in particular, the famous room where the sacred pusaka is stored. To my disappointment, I saw only the large living room and some nice photographs hanging on the wall. (The *pusaka* room must be located in another part of the house.) I was surprised to find that I was one of those in the photographs, standing with some colleagues behind the RHA. The photographs reminded me of the Tolak Bala ritual held in Ketapang four years ago (13 August 1998). We took the photographs in a photo studio in Ketapang on the evening before the ritual.

After a short courtesy chat, the RHA told us that he had a promise from the Bupati (Head of Regency) in Ketapang that he will be granted a financial contribution from the local government to renovate his house. The Bupati stated that the RHA’s house and the Malay Sultan’s palace in Ketapang are regarded as the district’s cultural preserve. Rather proudly, he said that he knew the Bupati personally since the Bupati was the former head of Nanga Tayap subdistrict (*kecamatan*). Nanga Tayap is the adjacent subdistrict to Sandai where the RHA lives. It is indeed a sad reality that the RHA has to depend on the Bupati just to renovate his own house.<sup>3</sup> But for me, the reason behind this is far more complicated.

**The Tolak Bala**

Shortly before and after the formal resignation of President Suharto on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1998, Indonesia experienced political and social turmoil which included the killing and

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Andrew Smith of the University of Adelaide for his encouragement to write this article. Prof. Smith also helped me with the English.

<sup>2</sup> “Raja Hulu Aiq” is the term used by Krio Dayak where the RHA comes from. Of course there are other terms used according to the Dayak’s respective language such as “Raja Hulu Arai” for Jalai Dayak, “Raja Ulu Are” for Simpakng Dayak. The Malay term is “Raja Ulu Acq.” [Editor: note, in this and the preceding paper, “q” signifies a glottal stop]

<sup>3</sup> It is the second contribution from the local government. The house where the RHA lives now was built by the local government in 1995 at a cost of Rp15 million (1US\$ = Rp 9,000,-).

kidnapping of students and NGO activists as well as the gang-raping and looting of properties of people of Chinese descent in many parts of Indonesia. In West Kalimantan, it was marked by one of the worst ethnic wars between some Dayak subethnic groups against the migrant Madurese, which started from the end of 1997 up to early 1998. The Dayaks and other ethnic groups in Ketapang pledged not to be involved in any of this chaos (Situmorang, 1999). It was Father Juli, Pr. who took an initiative to gather Dayak representatives from all over *Desa Sembilan Demung Sepuluh*<sup>4</sup> in the Ketapang area in a cultural event he called “Tolak Bala.” There were two main activities carried out: a three-day seminar that resulted in a Statement of the Participants about their commitment to peace building, natural resources management, the revitalization of the roles of the RHA and the disbanding of the Adat Council, and the erection of a Tolak Bala Monument in the center of Ketapang town followed by prayers and blessings from 300 shamans led by the RHA, and the reading of the Seminar Statement.

The most important man behind the 1998 Tolak Bala ritual that served as the basis for the claimed re-emergence of the RHA was Father Matheus Juli, Pr., a Simpakng Dayak Catholic priest who then worked at the Nanga Tayap Parish. As a priest, Father Juli was among the few who have a special interest in Dayak magic and supernatural power. His success in gathering around 300 respected shamans and *adat* chiefs from all over Ketapang for the Tolak Bala ritual showed not only his influence as a well-known priest among the Dayaks, but also his special connection with those considered to have special positions in the Dayak communities. He traveled all over the area and met them personally, one by one, to make sure that they supported his plan. His success in making his dream “to show the real existence of the Dayaks” come true through the Tolak Bala ritual also shows his influence among both friends and foes. At the Tolak Bala, all the highest ranking local government officials such as the Bupati, the chief of the local military and police, and the speaker of the local parliament as well as his own superior, the Bishop of Ketapang Diocese, came and mixed with the representatives of the major ethnic groups in Ketapang. Those prominent figures were not treated as VIPs but as common spectators at the ritual. Father Juli argued that the RHA was the “VVIP” and the shamans, *adat* chiefs and *dukun* were the VIPs in the ritual. This was a very rational argument, though letting the head of a regency with all his entourage stand on their feet, mixed with the crowd under the sun, is not a common practice for most Indonesian people,<sup>5</sup> and is not in accord with Dayak culture and ethics. But Father Juli did that; again adding another record to his unusual reputation.

Besides its noble mission of encouraging peaceful ethnic relations in West Kalimantan after the terrible war between some Dayaks and Madurese communities in 1997, politically, the Tolak Bala was a battle arena of interests and influences between the Adat Council and its supporters, on one hand, and the Anti-Adat Council on the other.

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<sup>4</sup>The term *Desa Sembilan Demung Sepuluh* is by no means the standardized term, as there is no such thing in this case. The term *Desa* is definitely the government’s term but it is also Malayic, therefore more commonly used. Among the Dayaks, there are different expressions according to each separate language. For example: there is *Laman* instead of *Desa* and *Damung* or *Domong* instead of *Demung*.

<sup>5</sup>Since the ritual was carried out at a crossroad in the center of Ketapang market where most of the Chinese communities are located, I saw that some Chinese took the initiative to provide chairs from their houses for these government officials.

The Adat Council, which was fully supported by the New Order government and was established without Dayak community participation and involvement, was struggling very hard to maintain its position amid the growing rejection and criticism by the Dayaks that gained momentum with the break down of the New Order. In Ketapang, as in many other regencies in West Kalimantan where similar Adat Councils were found, the officials of the Adat Council were Dayak bureaucrats and politicians who had nothing to do with the Dayak communities they claimed to represent. The Adat Council's fine imposed on Father Juli for not involving them in the planning and implementation of the Tolak Bala clearly showed the battle of interests that was taking place. With the argument of not wanting to jeopardize the ongoing implementation of the ritual, Father Juli accepted and paid the fine, but then reacted by "using" the RHA to disband the Adat Council on behalf of all the Dayaks in Ketapang.<sup>6</sup>

During the Tolak Bala, the RHA was treated as if he were a real king in the political sense. The three-day seminar held before the ritual was closed by the official welcoming ritual of the RHA followed by the act of respectful greeting (*menyembah*) by all the seminar participants. The RHA was dressed in royal attire designed by Father Juli himself, a Javanese-style shirt, trousers and headband, all in yellow. Then all the participants headed to the place where the Tolak Bala ritual would be held in a convoy of vans, trucks, and pick-ups, most of which had been provided by the Chinese businessmen in Ketapang to show their support and contributions. During the ritual, all shops were closed. The peak of the ritual was the erection of the Tolak Bala monument, also designed by Father Juli himself and made by his own craftsman. After it was erected right at the crossroad at the center of the town market, all the shamans and *adat* chiefs gave their blessings and prayed at the monument. Before they approached the monument, they paid a respectful greeting again, one by one, to the RHA. Of course, it happened right before the eyes of the Bupati and other VIPs, as if to say, "Look, this is the real king to whom we pay our respects!" The RHA closed the blessing and prayed by throwing his own yellow rice (rice smeared with turmeric), followed by his royal words. During the process of the ritual, the names of the Bupati and other VIPs were never mentioned, not even in the introductory speech of the Master of Ceremonies.

### **The Role and Genealogy of the Raja Hulu Aiq**

As we witness today, the effort to revitalize and restore the RHA's legacy and influence through a dramatic Tolak Bala ritual ended up a total failure due to two reasons. First, the present RHA is not able to play the role of a leader, neither in a cultural nor a political sense. As a figure who has only authority to keep the *pusaka* and perform the Meruba ritual, the RHA was far from ready to act as a public figure. He lacks experience as a leader even at a village level, as he has never had any other roles or positions besides keeping the *pusaka*. It was reported that even during the Meruba ritual, he depended very much on the village elders to perform the ritual correctly. His lack of formal education (he graduated from a junior high school in Menyumbang) also contributes to his inadequacy and diminishes the respect he should get from the public. Second, the RHA's legacy to be an "earthly" leader is denied by the Dayaks themselves, especially by the

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<sup>6</sup>The disbanding of the Adat Council was listed as one of the decisions resulting from the three-day seminar held before the Tolak Bala. The RHA read the statement in his speech during the ritual.

Krio and Bihak Dayaks where his roots lie. In Sengkuang village where he resides, the RHA is a commoner who is hardly ever called “Raja” in everyday life by his fellow-villagers. Outside the Meruba ritual, he has no roles at all and is never treated even as an *adat* leader. And of course, he lives a normal life as everyone else does; doing jobs such as working in a *ladang* (rice field) every year and tapping rubber as his main source of income. As I have already noted (Bamba, 2000), he is treated much better both as a spiritual as well as an earthly leader in the Sanggau area where he usually receives homage and tribute.

Historically, the decreasing legitimacy and roles of the present RHA arise from the transfer of power from the RHA IV (Temenggung Jambu) to Singa Bansa’s father (the RHA V, named Bebek). RHA IV had no child, therefore he adopted Bebek. However, the communities thought that the title “RHA” should have been transferred to Umbiq, Jambu’s nephew as he had more royal blood than Bebek (see the table below).

### RHA GENEALOGY<sup>7</sup>

Umbiq himself had only one son, Sahrin, who had passed away. Bebek had three sons, Poncing, Badoi and Singa Bansa. It was confirmed by the informant I interviewed that the title of RHA is not the prerogative of the youngest son, as I believed previously (Bamba 2000). The reason why Poncing passed the crown to Singa Bansa was because Badoi had also passed away.

The places chosen by the RHA I up to the RHA III to reside changed due to the battle for influence between the RHAs and the village heads. The RHA I, for example, married the sister-in-law (wife’s sister) of Siak Bulun (Siak Bahulun). However, the harmonious relationship of RHA I and Siak Bulun as relatives did not extend to the political field. Siak Bulun as a king in the political sense, and Pang Ukir Empu Gremeng as a king in the spiritual sense, could not remove themselves from the battle for influence over the Dayak communities in that era. Empu Gremeng thus decided to move to Tanjung Porikng. Similarly, Bihukng Tiung moved to Laman Pupuk, Bansa Pati to Laman Paluh, Ira Bansa to Laman Tempasi and Temenggung Jambu to Laman Sengkuang. These changes in the RHAs’ residence are all believed to be due to this kind of competition with the village heads. It would be interesting to know more about whether or not this tension is the only reason, or whether there were other reasons, too, for the changing locations of the RHAs’ residences.

Based on the genealogy by Singa Bansa, it is also interesting to know that Siak Bulun was, in fact, not the first RHA in the spiritual sense, i.e. he was not the first person to hold the *Besi Koling Tungkat Rakyat* (“Koling Staff”). He might have been known as the “King of the Upriver” (Raja Hulu Aiq) at that time, but not as the holder of the *pusaka*. “Upriver” refers to the kingdom’s location upriver of Krio. RHA I in the spiritual sense was Pang Ukir Empu Gremeng. If Singa Bansa’s version is considered more reliable, it changes our perception a lot about the Malay version of the legend as told by Djuweng (1999). According to Djuweng (1999) for example, Ira Bansa was the first son of Siak Bulun, while in Singa Bansa’s version he was the third RHA, who held the position from 1914-1928. However, as both versions are based on myth, it is almost impossible to

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<sup>7</sup>*Kalimantan Review* No. 36/Th.VII/August 1998, p. 26. This genealogy was based on an interview with Singa Bansa (RHA VI) himself during the Tolak Bala ritual in Ketapang (August 13, 1998).

check their historical reliability. Myth, as far as I am concerned, is not meant to be checked for its truths but, as Sellato (1999) suggests, myth can help us understand the background to a historical fact.

I found another relevant myth among the Jalai Dayak in the southern part of Ketapang, where again, the name “Siak Bulun” appears. It is what Mircea Eliade calls “the myth of the eternal return” (Eliade 1954). The myth tells about the world which was once destroyed by a big flood as the Creator’s penalty because the people killed his son whom he sent in the form of a porcupine. The most interesting part of it is the appearance of Patih Gadjahmada, who brought new *adat* laws for the people in order to avoid any similar destruction in the future.

YEAR	GENERATION	REAL NAME	LOCATION
Unknown	RHA I	Pang Ukir Empu Gremeng	Pancur Sembore (Tanjung Porikng)
Unknown <sup>8</sup>	Temporary	Bihukng Tiung	Laman Pupuk (Pabio Tanah Tarah)
Unknown	RHA II	Bansa Pati	Laman Paluh (Demit)
1914	RHA III	Ira Bansa	Laman Tempasi (Menyumbang)
1928	RHA IV	Temenggung Jambu	Laman Sengkuang
1948	Temporary	Bebek	Congkong Baru
1973–26 June 1997	RHA V	Poncing	Laman Sengkuang
26 June 1997- present	RHA VI	Petrus Singa Bansa	Laman Sengkuang

It seems that Kalimantan’s relationship with Java reached its peak during the Kingdom of Madjapahit. In Ketapang, this relationship is reflected in the Malay version of the legend mentioned by Lontaan (1975) of Putri Junjung Buih (Malay name: “the Foam Princess”) or Dayang Putong (Dayak name) who married Prabu Jaya, who founded the Kingdom of Tanjungpura around the 14th century. Prabu Jaya was the son of King Brawijaya of Madjapahit. Putri Junjung Buih was the daughter of Bujang Bengkung and Dara Dondang, who were involved in an incestuous marriage, as they were the son and daughter of Teruna Munang (Bintan Putin) and Teruna Moning (Ratu Bintan Cuka) from Kenduruhan (Lontaan 1975: 75-81). It was also stated that the king in this area at that time was King Siak Bulun (Bahulun). However, the relationship between Putri Junjung Buih and King Siak Bulun was unclear. It was only stated that Putri Junjung Buih is the ancestor of the RHA.

In the Jalai Dayak myth, it is stated that there was once a Patih Gerudat Siag Balum who had a son named Petinggiq Payung Labur-Patih Tugang Nyanyam (PPL-PTN).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>In Singa Bansa’s version, the transfer from Empu Gremeng to Bihukng Tiung occurred around 650. This is a highly questionable date as the fourth RHA (Ira Bansa) held the position only in 1914. Even if the year had been misquoted by *Kalimantan Review* in its report, as for example “1650” instead of “650,” there is still a big gap in time until the next RHAs. Therefore, I decided not to put the year in the table.



PPL-PTN lived in Tarak Menjalin village where people had violated all the *adat* laws and traditions. One day, Duwataq's (the Creator) pregnant wife was sitting in front of his house. Listening to the hurly-burly of the people in Tarak Menjalin, she fell asleep. Her son suddenly jumped out of her in the form of a porcupine and landed in the middle of Tarak Menjalin village. He was soon chased and hunted by the villagers, who smashed and chopped the poor animal and shared the meat among all members of the village. All the people cooked and ate the meat except for Temanggung Murung and his family, who lived on the other side of the river. When Duwataq found out that his son had been killed and eaten by all the villagers except Temanggung Murung, he planted his walking stick in the middle of the village and advised Temanggung Murung to prepare a raft with all the animals, seeds and equipment he would need. Duwataq's stick was to be pulled out after seven days passed. When the stick was pulled out, a fountain of water came out from the hole and became unstoppable. All the people in the village were drowned by the flood from the fountain, except for Temanggung Murung and his family.

While floating on the raft, after several days and nights, Temanggung Murung saw another raft approaching with Sengkumang Pantai Laut and Patih Gadjahmada on it. The two important deities then advised him of the necessary things, *adat* laws, traditions and rituals he must follow that are now passed from generation to generation by the Dayaks. As Sengkumang Pantai Laut and Patih Gadjahmada left, the flood gradually disappeared. This is the reason why the Jalai Dayak often mention these two names in their opening prayers preceding any ritual they perform, up to the present.

If we look at the names involved in this myth, it is obvious that the stories surrounding the history of the RHA have links to stories from other areas, including the story of the roles of the Madjapahit Kingdom of Java. Patih Gerudat must be Patih Bardat, mentioned in Lontaan (1975) as the founder of Sekadau Kingdom. Siak Balum is Siak Bulun, the King of the Upriver who according to Sellato, "took turns with the kings (or sultans?) of Sukadana to govern the kingdom of Sekadau on the Kapuas" (Sellato, 1999: 111). This strengthens the argument that Siak Bulun was not RHA I (Empu Gremeng) who was believed never to have become an "earthly" king (borrowing the term used by Smith and Wadley 2002). Thus, Singa Bansa's version would appear to be more accurate than Djuweng's.

Sengkumang (Pantai Laut) is not a strange figure in the Dayaks' myths. In relation to the story of the RHA, Sengkumang (Si Tungkat Rakyat) is the one who gave the *Besi Koling Tungkat Rakyat* to the first RHA (Empu Gremeng). One of the sacred things found in the Sacred Fountain next to the RHA's house was a small obelisk (*lingga*) called Sengkumang's Penis (*Butuh Sengkumang*). Examples of *Butuh Sengkumang* come in various sizes and it is a common belief among the Dayaks that this object has a powerful supernatural power and is usually kept as a charm. The one found in the Sacred Fountain is considered the most powerful one and the father of all *Butuh Sengkumangs*.

### **The Impact of Tolak Bala**

It is undeniable that the Tolak Bala monument has become one of the landmarks of Ketapang town, besides the already-erected Ale-Ale monument. Sometimes, Dayaks may be seen around the monument, performing small rituals or just paying homage. In 2001,

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<sup>9</sup>This myth was told by the late Patih Tadung, a highly-respected *adat* figure of Penggerawan village, Jelai Hulu Subdistrict-Ketapang. See: Bamba (2002).

another Tolak Bala ritual was held at the monument; this time organized by Lorentius Madjun, the Deputy Bupati of Ketapang and a Gerunggang Dayak of Nanga Tayap Subdistrict. This Tolak Bala was a more political version: it was held after the Sampit tragedy in Central Kalimantan, where the Dayaks and Madurese were again involved in a bloody ethnic war. However, this time it was held without the presence of the RHA and Father Juli. Of course, Madjun involved the Dewan Adat, despite its dissolution by the RHA in the previous Tolak Bala. In other words, the RHA's royal words were not effective at all. The position of the Dewan Adat, with the local government's contingent of opportunist Dayaks, turned out to have grown stronger after the change of government in Ketapang, while the RHA has returned to his "submerged" position. Some Dewan Adat activists even speak publicly that the present RHA is a mere puppet RHA (*Raja Boneka*). There was no serious resistance from the participants of the previous Tolak Bala to this initiative by the local government and the Dewan Adat. Most of the same shamans and *adat* chiefs were seen in the ceremony. There are three possibilities why this has happened: (1) that these shamans and *adat* chiefs were not serious when they vowed to accept the RHA as their highest spiritual and even earthly leader; (2) that the local government and Dewan Adat were successful in launching their counter-attack against Father Juli and his moves; and (3) that the Dayaks in Ketapang were not astute enough to realize that they had been manipulated by those struggling for power.

Outside the Dayak communities, the emergence of the RHA and the special ceremonies during the Tolak Bala ritual in 1998 have encouraged the Malays to follow suit. Soon, the Malays in other areas such as Pontianak, Sambas and Landak performed rituals of restoration of their sultans. The *adat* of keratons and other traditions were re-performed, and Malay-based organizations established. The Malays now also have *Dewan Adat Melayu* (Malay Adat Council) as well as *Majelis Adat dan Budaya Melayu* (Malay Adat and Cultural Assembly) following what their "big brothers," the Dayaks, have already done. In Pontianak, some Malay groups have even elected their *Panglima* (*Perang*) or "Chief (of War)" like the *panglima* who have been known among the Dayaks since the late 1960s. On one hand, this strengthening of ethnic identity shows the coming of a new era of freedom for the people of Indonesia, but on the other hand, it could further crystallize ethnic segregation which has become the biggest problem Kalimantan is facing right now.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS TO NGAJU HISTORY, 1690-1942\*

Martin Baier

*Guest Lecturer, STT-GKE Institute  
Banjarmasin, Indonesia*

South Borneo (the Indonesian provinces of Kalimantan Tengah and Kalimantan Selatan) contains the settlement areas of the Ngaju Dayak. Long-term and intensive studies in ethnography and history have been carried out in these areas for a long period of time. August Hardeland, who today is almost totally forgotten, and whose importance as an outstanding philologist of the Ngaju has never been fully recognized, stayed between 1841-45 and 1850-56 in the Kahayan and Murong areas. He linguistically assigned the Ngaju to four distinct groups (Hardeland 1858: 8): Pulopetak, Mengkatip, Mentangai, and Kahayan.

The first usable European reports of the people populating the Pulopetak and lower Kapuas areas date back to the 1690s (see Baier 1995: 77-79). In his history of the Theatine mission, Fr. Bartolomeo Ferro refers to "Porto de Beagius," evidently a Biaju-Ngaju location (Ferro 1705: 529-633). The Portuguese Captain Cotingo pushed forward to the area of Pulopetak, where he enjoyed Ngaju hospitality (Gemelli Careri 1728: 215-236). Direct trade with the non-Moslem Ngaju was possible at that time. Indeed, the Ngaju (not the Bakumpai) wished to ally themselves with the king of Portugal and obtain Portuguese help, especially for erecting an armed *fortezza* (of course, also a protection against Banjarmasin). Unfortunately, Cotingo's reports were not taken seriously in Macao, and so this unique chance of forging a direct commercial connection with Dayaks from the Kapuas area failed. At the same time, as many as 1,800 Ngaju converted to Catholicism over an initial six-month period; and a further 3,-4,000 during a three-year period a little later (Gemelli Careri 1728: 216; Valentijn III: 252). In 1691 the Ngaju controlled the delta area of the Kahayan and Kapuas Rivers. As findings from the extensive excavation area of Kuta Batagoh near the mouth of the Murong River, as well as Schwaner's observation of the densely populated Terusan area (sandwiched between the lower Kahayan and the Murong River) demonstrate (Knapen 2001: 168; Riwt 1958: 379, 383), the area westward of the lower Barito River was inhabited by the Ngaju. Politically and culturally the Ngaju competed with the Banjarese. A fundamental change in the balance of commercial and political power to the benefit of the Banjarese occurred only after the establishment of Dutch colonial intervention in about the middle of the nineteenth century.

It is important to realize that before then the Ngaju were quite dominant west of Banjarmasin. They sometimes attacked trading ships on the coast. They conducted direct commerce with Singapore, which they named "Salat" (Hardeland 1859: 152; Perelaer 1870: 182, 183). Unfortunately, in 1826, this kind of trade came to an end and the power of the Ngaju at sea declined.

The first Protestant missionaries (from Germany) reached Borneo in 1835. Their interest centered on the Ngaju people. The first Christian schools were founded in 1836. The first Ngaju bible, a Ngaju grammar, and an extensive Ngaju dictionary became

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\*I thank Dr. Barbara Harrisson for her help in translating this essay into English.

available during the 1850s. Simultaneously, through M.H. Halewijn, J.F. Becker, C. Hupe, and the extensive work of C.A.L.M. Schwaner, information about the Ngaju came to public notice in continental Europe. This was also the time of the first geographic expeditions across Borneo (H. von Gaffron in 1846, C.A.L.M. Schwaner in 1848) which reached what is now the province of Central Kalimantan and Ngaju territory. August Hardeland's dictionary constitutes a real Ngaju encyclopedia. Hardeland's works as well as the extensive archives with source material about Ngaju culture in Wuppertal and Leiden span more than 160 years of anthropological and linguistic research.

Not only Protestant missionary work was at issue, but also Ngaju beliefs and their development from animist polytheism (with headhunting and human sacrifice as central features) to a high religion which recognized the existence of only one (creator) God. My own 1998 article on the "Hindu Kaharingan Religion as a special case of post-Christian nativism" describes this development in detail (Baier 1998: 49-54). Historic breaks, both in the pre-Indonesian period (1892/94, 1942-45) and the early Suharto era, illuminate the gradual process of Dayak reform, emergence of rationalism, and acculturation; the latter including assimilation or elimination of extraneous elements (Baier 1998: 51). The effect of education, humanization and a modern outlook led to new norms. Kaharingan theology became codified and its community organized in a modern fashion. Though a look at past records can illuminate the change, commentators often neglect this. For instance, the current standard text on the Kaharingan religion entitled *Small Sacrifices* cites as an authority former Christian Lewis KDR (member of the provincial parliament) who refers to Dayak "humanism" as an ever-present feature (Schiller 1997: 5).

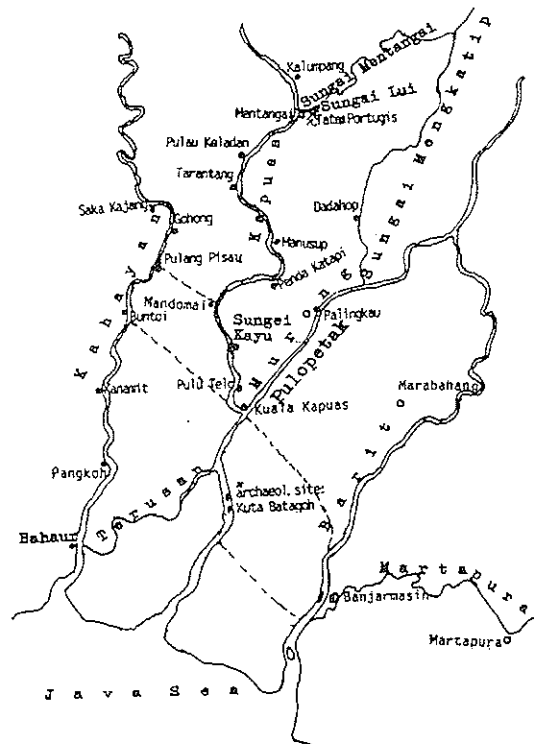
"From early times to the present," he states, "Dayaks never drank rice wine out of human skulls," when, as a matter of fact, during the 1920s, the contrary was asserted by the scientist Lumholtz. During extensive travels in south Borneo, a native administrator of high rank in the Katingan area had assured him that "on the Upper Samba the custom still prevails of drinking *tuak* from human skulls" (Lumholtz 1920: 335). Perelaer reports a similar custom: the drinking of blood from heads taken in headhunting (Perelaer II 1881: 66; similarly Schärer 1938: 571).

Even first-class Borneo specialists may be ensnared in errors. Hans Schärer, for instance, whose extensive work is generally reliable, became so taken with the theory of Dutch structuralism that he applied it totally in his *Ngaju Religion*. Influenced by his Leiden mentor and teacher, J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong, he interpreted Ngaju culture as reflecting a clearly stratified upper- and underworld, and, similarly, a society composed of two tribal moieties operating separately. He also explained the ritual texts from a structural point of view. For instance, Section A of one verse refers only to moiety A of the whole Ngaju tribal group, while Section B—though synonymous with Section A, only expressed differently—is valid only for moiety B. The Sangiang genealogies of the creation myth, and the marriage customs described in this connection, convinced Schärer that the Ngaju tribal group had been split into two branches in the past. One moiety was accordingly formed by the Ot Danum and the people of the Kahayan, who were associated with the upper world and were represented by the village of Pangkoh; the other was formed by the Ngaju "moiety" inhabiting the Murong and Barito area, who were associated with the underworld and were represented by Kuala Kapuas. Slaves and priests, both of whom functionally mediated between the two moieties, were represented by the village of Mandomai, on the lower Kapuas (Schärer s.a.: 139-164). Objective proof

for these moieties and geographic assertions is not provided, and there is no evidence of the existence of two moieties at all. Schärer's impressive study of *Ngaju Religion* thus seems over-interpreted. Most of his other work (some of which has remained unpublished) is unique in quality. It includes recordings of legends, myths and rituals and details of the sacerdotal language and of adat law. Important also are his journal articles, for instance on human sacrifice among the Katingan people, and on death rites among the Ngaju. These still rank among the best ethnology published during the twentieth century.

Scale 1 : 750 000  
 0 15 30 km  
 --- modern canals  
 .. villages of 1939

South-east  
 Borneo  
 (cf. Baier 1995: 81)



Map 1. Southeast Borneo.

The role of slaves is best extracted from colonial and missionary reports concerned with southern Borneo. The Dutch administration began to exert some control over various forms of slavery (debt-slaves, slaves openly bought and sold, prisoners of war) by

the 1890s. Until that time, the wealth and status of native chiefs continued to depend on the numbers of slaves they possessed, and on slave labor. For instance, the imposing longhouse fortresses erected on high stilts of ironwood and surrounded by high ironwood stockades, formerly known as *kuta*, could only be built by slave labor. During the mid nineteenth century, according to Tichelman (1949: 231), some 800 slaves were imported to east Borneo annually from the Sulu area. Strong slaves were employed for heavy work; those who were weak were reserved for sacrifice. During the burial rituals in 1863 for chief Tundan on the upper Kahayan, as many as 60 slaves were reportedly killed (Mallinckrodt 1924/25: 258). Clearly, slaves served to maintain the high status and constant feasting carried on by dominant chiefs.

According to J.F. Becker (1849a: 427), one-third, and to Rheinisch missionaries (Ms 2, in my possession) as much as two-thirds, of the Puloetak population were slaves. M.T.H. Perelaer reported that Dutch administrators also used slaves, notably for coal mining (1881: 33). Even the missionaries Hardeland and Denninger employed them. They did so to compensate the mission for the expense incurred when buying the freedom of slaves, a procedure which accorded with regulations then valid (van Lummel 1882: 78, 98-99).

The use of slave labor often involved cruelty. What actually happened depended on local conditions, such as population density, or methods of cultivation. Dutch and other foreigners, including missionaries (Knapen 2001: 11, 107, 177, 373; Sundermann 1914; Ms. 1, manuscripts of Rheinisch missionaries in the possession of the Historische Documentatie KITLV, Leiden EP Coll.2 exercise-book No.137: 2), maintain that headhunting and political coercion promoted native migration, so that, in some areas, populations decreased. Sparsely populated Dayak land may thus be interpreted in retrospect as the consequence of emigration. One such area lay north of Mengkatip, along the western fringe of the Barito River, where traditional hostilities between Ngaju and Dusun-Lawangan peoples were maintained (Stöhr 1959: 50); another was the upper Kapuas of West Kalimantan (Sellato 1994: 25), which, in time, became entirely depopulated. Still other examples are reported by Pijnappel (1859/60: 338-339). He described hundreds of warriors who attacked fortified longhouses, plundered and incinerated them, and killed the people. Longhouse villages were commonly beleaguered for a week or two, then attacked. If possible and opportune, prisoners were taken and enslaved, or else sold into slavery. Headhunting raids were also responsible for the depopulation of the once densely inhabited Sangkulirang area in east Borneo according to Spaan (1918: 784). When an attack by the mighty Dusun chief Surapati and his Ot Pari warriors was expected, even missionaries engaged in preparing the Ngaju militarily and managed their defense (Kriele 1915: 33-34).

Old travel reports indicate that fortified longhouses along rivers were a common feature during the mid nineteenth century (especially Maks 1860 and Braches in Rheinisch Missionaries, Ms. 1). Only decades later, when Dutch control of headhunting became effective, widely spread, isolated settlements appeared, and their presence made possible a more effective form of dry rice cultivation.

During the late twentieth century, European colonialism and proselytizing by foreign missionaries were the subject of much criticism. Even the reports and source material of European missionaries gradually became neglected. However, this did not necessarily lead to increased objectivity of reporting. As far as developments in southern Borneo

went, the participation and cooperation by cultural anthropologists and missionary theologians remained positive and fruitful up into the 1960s (cf. the posthumous editions of Schärer 1966 by the KITLV in Leiden and of Zimmermann 1968 by W. Stöhr). In the course of a lecture presented (in German) in Leiden in the presence of eminent Indologists, the missionary Sundermann put it this way (1914: 159):

The governor in Banjarmasin does not hear everything. But we missionaries live among the people. We see with our own eyes what people want, and hear what they desire.

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## HOUSES AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AMONG THE BENTIAN OF EAST KALIMANTAN<sup>1</sup>

Kenneth Sillander  
*Swedish School of Social Science*  
*University of Helsinki*  
*00014 Finland*  
kenneth.sillander@helsinki.fi

### Introduction

The Bentian are a small group of Dayaks who live in a relatively remote upriver area in the district (*kabupaten*) of West Kutai in the province of East Kalimantan, close to the border with Central Kalimantan, in Indonesian Borneo. They number some 3500 persons and inhabit a total of twelve villages, most of them located within the subdistrict (*kecamatan*) of Bentian Besar. The Bentian subsist by shifting agriculture, supplemented by rattan cultivation, which they have practiced for at least one and a half centuries. They have recently become nationally and internationally famous for practicing “sustainable agroforestry” (centered on rattan) and for having, with some success, resisted timber company claims to their lands, for which their most prominent leader received the international Goldman Environmental Award in 1997.

This article considers a different aspect of Bentian existence, namely, their settlement pattern, with particular emphasis on their houses. The Bentian differ from some better-known Dayaks in not having traditionally occupied large, rectangular longhouses, accommodating, in the paradigmatic cases, up to several hundred inhabitants. However, unlike many of their Dayak neighbors to the south (the Ma'anyan, Bukit, and other Luangans<sup>2</sup>), who traditionally only rarely built longhouses, the Bentian regularly built fairly sizeable (up to some forty meters long) multi-family houses called *lou*, some of which could perhaps be classified as longhouses, in addition to smaller, single-family farmhouses (*blai ume*). Families alternated residence between these two types of residential structures, as they continue to do today, even though, for some time now, most *lou* have become concentrated in villages (*desa*), while formerly they were dispersed in the forest (Bentian villages are relatively recent, having been first established around the turn of the twentieth century as a result of pressure from the Sultan of Kutai and the Dutch).

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<sup>1</sup>A slightly different version of this paper was presented at the Third Conference of the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies, in London, September 6-8, 2001. The paper is based primarily on data collected during fieldwork in 1993 and 1996-97 in the districts of Kutai Barat in East Kalimantan and Barito Utara in Central Kalimantan. During the course of fieldwork, a large number of villages in these two districts were visited for comparative purposes.

<sup>2</sup>The Bentian recognize themselves as *Luangan*, a term denoting a large number of loosely connected but culturally and linguistically related subgroups occupying the interior area between the middle reaches of the Barito and Mahakam Rivers, in the Indonesian provinces of East and Central Kalimantan (see Sillander 1995).

It thus appears that the Bentian settlement pattern is in some respects intermediate between their northern and southern Dayak neighbors. My primary objective here is not to conduct a comparative analysis, however, but to describe the Bentian's settlement pattern from the point of view of how it affects or reflects Bentian social organization. In particular, I am interested in how the affiliation of individuals and families with *lou* relates to the overall organization of groups and social interaction in Bentian society. In this connection I raise the question of whether or not the Bentian may be regarded as a "house society" (*société à maison*) in Lévi-Strauss's terms, thus resuming a line of inquiry pursued in Macdonald (1987) and, more recently, in Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995). The interplay of residence and kinship as organizing principles, previously examined in a Bornean context by Sather (1976), forms another thread followed in this paper. Living in a small-scale and rather dispersed bilateral society in many ways typical for the region, and occupying houses which in comparative perspective are rather unsubstantial in physical as well as demographic terms, the Bentian may at first sight appear to be an improbable house-society candidate, but there are some compelling grounds, I will argue, to classify them as one.

In addition to house organization, I will also consider Bentian community organization in this article, for without an understanding of the latter, our picture of house organization is incomplete. I will try to provide information on both historical and present patterns, although I will give priority to historical patterns, as the importance of *lou* residence was greater in the past than it is now. Some significant changes in residence and settlement patterns have occurred during the last two centuries, but notions associated with earlier forms of residence continue to influence the now-prevailing types.

### **Bentian Swidden Houses and Clusters**

Like other Dayaks, the Bentian practice what might be called a dual type of residence, that is, most of them stay part of the time in villages and part of the time in their farmhouses (often the greater part in the latter).<sup>3</sup> Residence was also principally dual in the past, before their settlement in nucleated villages.<sup>4</sup> Then, families usually alternated

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<sup>3</sup>There are also, we may note, some families who reside exclusively in farmhouses, on their swiddens, and others who stay exclusively in the villages. The great majority of families, however, alternate residence between the village and the swidden.

<sup>4</sup>In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, residence for some Bentians became, in fact, tripartite rather than dual: divided between farmhouses, extended family houses located somewhere in the forest, and village *lou*. Tripartite residence also characterizes some families today, who own a farmhouse and a small single-family village house, and in addition sometimes stay in a village *lou*. However, the principal pattern for most Bentians in both the past and the present was and is dual. Although associated with a very different ecological setting, a similar residential pattern evolved among the Semporna Bajau Laut after they abandoned sea nomadism and began to construct permanent pile-house villages in the second half of the twentieth century (Sather 1976, 1997:134-187). In place of an earlier pattern of dual residence, characterized by family fishing groups at sea, and their periodic aggregation at boat moorage sites, a more complex structure of intermediate residential groups emerged, consisting chiefly of village house groups (*luma'*) and house group clusters (*ba'anan*), both now primary units of a newly emergent village social organization.

residence between their farmhouses and solitary *lou* which typically were located in areas with no navigable rivers, not infrequently on hilltops. As an integrated understanding of Bentian social life requires taking both residence categories into account, I will begin by giving a brief presentation of the Bentian pattern of swidden residence, before turning to a more extensive discussion of the mode and significance of *lou* residence.



**Plate 1: Bentian *lou solai* ("grand *lou*").**

Bentians make swiddens in clusters of adjacent fields (*teming*), usually consisting of about two to five separate swiddens, although there also exists the option of making a solitary swidden. The conjugal couple (or sometimes a widow/widower together with a grown, but unmarried child) is the standard swidden-making unit. Each such unit ideally cultivates a separate swidden and frequently also builds a farmhouse of its own. However, swidden-making units also quite often share farmhouses, particularly in the case of young married couples who tend to stay together with one of the spouses' parents (or occasionally other relatives), and who at first usually have no separate field of their own, but assist their older co-residents with theirs, which tends to be relatively large in such cases.

There is normally only one hearth in a swidden house and its inhabitants usually constitute one household, eating together, sharing rice and other resources. Bentian swidden houses are generally quite small, between five to eight meters long and three to five meters wide, sometimes with a small semi-detached kitchen at the back or side. The number of inhabitants is usually between three and ten, although there may in rare cases be up to twenty people residing in a swidden house. The overall impression, even in houses with few residents, is that of a rather crowded space, not the least because of the inhabitants' rice stocks which are kept in large bark bins in the house. Swidden houses are built on house posts about one to three meters above the ground; in the past, when headhunting attacks were anticipated, they could be several meters higher. The house posts are made of either ironwood or other, "ordinary" wood (trees that grow on the spot are sometimes simply chopped off at an appropriate height and left standing to serve as house posts). Walls are usually made of bark (near the Teweh area over the border in Central Kalimantan sometimes of bamboo or palm thatch) but today also sometimes of boards. Split bamboo slats or rattan canes (and today also boards) provide the floor material while the roof normally consists of wood shingles, sometimes made of

ironwood, but more usually of lighter wood. Ironwood is said not to have been used as a house construction material (either for houseposts or roofing) before the end of the nineteenth century. This is true both for ordinary swidden houses, referred to as *blai ume*, and the larger houses known as *lou*, which today are found mainly in villages. Village houses, on the other hand, whether *lou* or single-family houses, have usually had ironwood posts and also, increasingly often, ironwood shingles.



**Plate 2: *Lou solai* surrounded by single-family houses.**

The houses in a cluster of adjacent swidden fields are usually placed at some distance from each other, in order, among other things, to enable more efficient guarding against marauding monkeys and wild boars. However, the family units making up a swidden cluster frequently visit each other and they also share meat from game caught by their members. Swidden cluster families are expected to help each other, for instance, by providing participants for rice field work groups or rituals held by their neighbors. The interdependence expected ensures that one, if possible, makes swidden fields next to somebody whom one knows well and likes, preferably a relative. The constituent family units of a swidden cluster are with few exceptions related by bilateral kinship ties. A common pattern is to share cluster residence with one or several of one's siblings or cousins and their families or one or several of one's spouse's siblings or cousins with families. When one moves to a new location, the other families of the same cluster often follow, although they may also choose not to do so. One does not usually have the same swidden neighbors throughout one's lifetime, although some people with close relationships stick to each other's company for much of it.

#### **The Bentian *Lou* as a Building and as a Social Category**

As already mentioned, most people do not stay solely in their farmhouses, nor did they do so in the past. In fact, because of the risk of headhunting attacks, exclusive farmhouse residence was sometimes rarer in the past than it is now. Before the time of settlement in nucleated villages, people periodically stayed in *lou* which, like the farmhouses, were "dispersed in the forest" (*senteban saang laang*), typically next to, or at least not very far from, one or several swiddens. However, they would stay in these *lou* mainly under certain circumstances: at times of ritual (e.g. curing rituals, weddings,

mortuary ceremonies), during meetings dealing with community affairs, or if they had a newborn baby or some severely sick family member to care for. For most of the time, the families who recognized themselves as belonging to a particular *lou* would live dispersed, and the *lou* would often be occupied only by some elderly couple and perhaps a single family or an unmarried individual looking after them and cultivating a rice field or garden close by.



**Plate 3: Forest *lou*.**

Like the swidden houses, such “swidden *lou*” (*lou ume*) were moved quite frequently (perhaps once in 20-30 years on average), and they were rebuilt about once in a decade (a necessity because of the impermanent building materials used). They were typically rather flimsy structures—resembling large, rectangular swidden houses, and built of the same materials—as were early village *lou*, whose dilapidated condition was often a source of complaint by Dutch and sultanate visitors (e.g. see Knappert 1905:627). Like swidden houses, they consisted in most cases of a single large undivided room, thus lacking the walled *bilik* or “compartments” typical of the longhouses in Dayak areas further north (however, particular families often occupied particular spaces in the house, and they would unfold large cotton mosquito nets at night, providing some degree of privacy).<sup>5</sup> Most swidden *lou* were also quite small in comparison with such longhouses, normally less than thirty meters long. However, some *lou* did have compartments, albeit often with partitions only a few decimeters high, and not necessarily aligned in an inner

<sup>5</sup>This is not to say that all longhouses in northern Borneo were internally compartmentalized into family *bilik*; an exception being, for example, the Kelabit of the Sarawak/East Kalimantan borderlands (see Bala 2002:44-45).

row along the back, as typical of longhouses, and such partitioned *lou* were often somewhat larger and more solidly built than the others. Some fortified *lou* constructed for protection against attacks from the infamous Pari Dayaks (Bahau, Modang), for instance, conformed to this design, as did some early village *lou* which were built under leaders with extensive leadership ambitions aiming to concentrate large numbers of followers under one roof. Generally, Bentian *lou* also appear to have been larger and more frequently partitioned in downstream Bentian areas closer to Benuaq territory (and the central Borneo culture area), an indication of influence from their neighbors, who more commonly built such longhouse-like *lou*.



**Plate 4: Single-family farmhouse.**

The number of inhabitants belonging to an average-sized swidden *lou* was quite small, usually less than thirty people, consisting typically of a few elderly siblings and their spouses (if still alive), and perhaps some three or four of their children with their families, the latter possibly including a few already married children with children of their own. What we might term the core of a *lou* did in fact usually consist of a set of siblings, sometimes including classificatory siblings, typically the oldest such set alive. It was from these siblings that the other members of the *lou* traced their membership in it (whether through filiation, adoption, marriage, or combinations of such connections), and it was the mutual solidarity (or discord) of these siblings which provided the source for much of the cohesion (or instability) of the *lou* as a whole.

Every *lou* had a leader and spokesperson called a *manti* (or, in some cases, several) who was usually one of the members of such a “core sibling set” and thus born into the *lou*. The larger the size of the *lou*, the more status did the *lou*, and particularly its *manti*, usually enjoy. And the larger the number of its inhabitants, the more human and material resources did the house have to arrange grand rituals (to which people from other *lou* were invited), further adding to its status. However, the logic of the system was such that some of the members of a *lou* were likely to marry out and hence become associated with other *lou*. All the members of a sibling set, as a result, seldom remained in their natal *lou*. Whether they would remain or not was in large part determined by the persuasive powers of its *manti*, as well as by the size of the *lou*, as a populous *lou* enabled marriage with first and second cousins within the *lou*, a generally preferred practice. Bentian marriage, according to customary law and continuing practice, is ambilocal—initially matrilocal



and secondarily patrilocal — which means that there has usually existed some degree of tension between the two sets of parents of a couple, especially if they belong to different *lou*: where the couple are to end up staying most of their lives has always been more or less uncertain. For the same reason, and also because of low fertility and high infant mortality rates, the population balance of a *lou* (or a village) has always been precarious, and the “struggle for people,” e.g. for manpower, followers, and allies, has always been a central concern at all levels of Bentian group politics, as it indeed seems to have been in Southeast Asia generally (Reid 1988).

The constituent families of a *lou* often made swiddens in clusters, as they continue to do today. However, people also sometimes made and continue to make swiddens together with relatives and friends resident in other *lou*. Bilateral kin networks, i.e., kindreds, which include both cognatic and affinal kin, intersect in important ways with *lou* boundaries and we should not over-emphasize the distinctness of these essentially fluid and porous social categories. In fact, for many people at any particular time, and certainly over a longer period of time, it would be appropriate to speak about multiple *lou* membership, or of contextual *lou* identity. How many people actually belong to a particular *lou*, then, has always been to some degree a matter of definition and viewpoint. Still, we should recognize the important fact that the members of a *lou* often were, and are, referred to as *erai aben* or *erai buhan* (“one family”), indicating that they form an internally related group, which indeed has always been the case (although an amalgamation of groups previously unrelated has at times occurred). Furthermore, even though *lou* are markedly fluid in practice, they are typically talked about *as if* they were quite solid and stable social entities, and there is normally a core of members for whom *lou* identity is an unambiguous matter (often these core members, typically members of the above-mentioned core sibling sets, are descended directly from the founders of the *lou*). We should also note that there is, like in farmhouses, usually only one hearth in a *lou*, and that the constituent families form one household while in the *lou* (e.g. in the sense of eating together and sharing food), even though they often form independent households while on their swiddens. The *manti* of a *lou* also exerts considerable authority over its families—over decisions about where and with whom to farm, for instance, or whom to marry—and thus significantly restricts their autonomy.

One thing which has particular significance in bringing the families of a *lou* together as a collectivity is the fact that the *lou* is seen as the proper place for rituals. Even if single-family households held, and continue to hold, curing rituals in farmhouses, or single-family village houses, it is still preferable to hold them in the *lou*, and the performance of other rituals demands the use of a *lou*. This is so not only because farmhouses are not big enough to accommodate the many participants attending the larger rituals, often 50-100 people or more, but notions of *lou* as ritual houses also reflect notions of propriety which ultimately express the important fact that *lou* are associated with the ancestors. A concrete manifestation of this association is the *longan*,<sup>6</sup> an approximately two meters tall, somewhat ungainly wooden structure consisting of four to

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<sup>6</sup>The word *longan* actually refers to a wide variety of ritual structures. The one discussed here, which is the only permanent *longan* (i.e. which is not discarded after its use in ritual), is sometimes more specifically referred to as *longan teluyen*, “the ironwood *longan*.”

eight ironwood poles holding up a shelf on which “ancestral objects”<sup>7</sup> are stored. A *longan* used to be part of most *lou*, and it can be said to have formed the ritual center of the *lou*, or, in James Fox's (1993:1) words, its “ritual attractor.”<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, this structure, around which most ritual action concerned with the ancestors and certain associated spirits takes place, used to be seen as the mark and defining characteristic of a *lou*, and *buntang* thanksgiving/supplication rituals culminating in a water buffalo sacrifice prescribed its use, and thus the use of the *lou*.

A *lou* is, in a sense, like the holy house of the Malagassy Zafimaniry, “a place where one goes to obtain the blessing of [...] the ancestors” (Bloch 1995:80), although we should add that one goes to the *lou* for such purposes almost exclusively in the context of ritual. The capacity of a *lou* to provide such blessing originates in the continuity between the living and the dead which is seen to be embodied most specifically in the *longan* (which should be at least several generations old, and is typically claimed to be extremely old) and in the ancestor skulls<sup>9</sup> and other ancestral objects stored on or above it, in the rafters. Continuity is, in fact, itself a defining characteristic of the *lou*. As a man explained to me, it is not enough for a house to be large for it to be a *lou* (in fact, many *lou*-sized swidden houses were not given recognition as *lou* by informants), rather many people must have been born and died in it before it becomes one. A similar factor sometimes mentioned as a measure of sufficient continuity to define a *lou* was that it must have been in the same location long enough for the coconut palm to begin to bloom, minimally six years. An expression of the importance of continuity as a criterion for *lou* status is also the fact that even ordinary-sized farmhouses could sometimes be loosely labeled as *lou* by informants, providing they had been long-lasting enough. However, the people likely to regard such houses as *lou* were, significantly, those for whom they had served the social function of *lou*, that is, functioned as a house where several family units gather as one — others were likely to dismiss such buildings as “just farmhouses” (*blai*

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<sup>7</sup>The “ancestral objects” referred to here (some of which are known more specifically as *penyentuhu* or *semere*) make up a subtype of heirlooms (*pusaka*). They consist of a variety of predominantly small objects (e.g. the canine teeth of clouded leopards or tigers, beads, strangely formed stones or pieces of wood) which are anointed with blood (*ngulas*) from sacrificed domestic animals during *buntang* rituals in order to invoke the blessing of certain protecting spirits, especially of the *naiyu* variety, with which they are associated.

<sup>8</sup>Today there are only a limited number of *longan* in Bentian villages, and it is said that new renditions of these potent objects can no longer be made. In most villages there is only one *longan* in active use. This is typically located in the one *lou* which is recognized as the *lou solai* or *lamin adat* of the village. This situation may reflect the government-promoted development toward increasing village concentration and unity.

<sup>9</sup>Bentians and other Luangans sometimes store in their houses the skulls of famous or not-so-famous ancestors that have been exhumed in connection with especially costly secondary mortuary rituals (*gombok mpe selimat*, *kwangkai*). Among the Bentian, at least, these ancestor skulls are ideally stored by the *longan*, hence the designation *utek tuha longan*, “elders’ skulls of the *longan*.” Like the ancestral objects referred to above, the ancestor skulls have a protecting role and are anointed with blood during *buntang* rituals. They are ambiguously associated with the “head souls” (*kelelungan*) of their former “owners” and with *naiyu* spirits. The ancestor skulls should be distinguished from the non-ancestral “trophy heads” (*utek layau*), which are also anointed with blood during rituals, but which are typically not stored by the *longan*.

*ume maha*). This points to the fact that the term *lou* has some connotations of “home,” that is, a place of long-term residence and/or of origin, in which one is, ideally, at least, more “at home” than elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

The constituent families of a “traditional” Bentian *lou* can be said to have formed a minimal community. The integration of this community, we should note, is heavily dependent on factors which can be classified as religious. Not only did its members come together mainly during rituals, but they also entered a soul house (*blai juus*) at the conclusion of *buntang* rituals. A material copy of this soul house was hoisted up in the rafters of the *lou*, and an invisible counterpart of it provided protection for their souls at a special location in heaven. Continuity with the ancestors was, as already mentioned, provided by the *longan* and the ancestral objects which were associated with particular spirits acting as protectors of the *lou*. When a *lou* was moved, these objects were re-installed in the new *lou*, and building materials were also commonly reused on such occasions, especially after ironwood became employed for *lou* construction. Largely as a result of these factors, the members of the *lou* community acquired a sense of unity and distinctness transcending the solidarities provided by the kin relations of which it was composed. It became a “house,” in the sense of a family, for which residential association as much as descent or kinship provided the source (even though not the principal idiom) of notions of relatedness.

#### **Bentian Society as a House Society**

It may be illuminating to liken Bentian society to a “house society” (*société à maison*) in Claude Lévi-Strauss's terms, if this concept is applied somewhat loosely, as advocated by Waterson (1995). In this understanding, the term basically refers to a society in which the house is a central social institution and cultural concept. Such an understanding takes as its starting point Lévi-Strauss's definition in *The Way of the Masks* (1983:174) of the house as “a corporate body made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods and its titles down a real or imagined line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity and, most often, of both.” It is less concerned, however, with Lévi-Strauss's later development of the term (1987, 1991), according to which hierarchy and inequality are inherent features of such house societies, as a logical, if not empirical entailment of the house's transmission of goods and immaterial property, nor with otherwise attempting to restrict the concept's meaning.<sup>11</sup> The point to such a vague

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<sup>10</sup>In this connection it may be relevant to report on a somewhat special meaning that the term *lou* has taken among the Bentian's Luangan neighbors in the village of Benangin on the Teweh river, where the word is said to be no longer regularly used for houses, but instead is used mainly to refer to the village, as when people talk about “going down to the *lou*” (*dolui la lou*) when they return to the village from their swiddens in the surrounding hills. This usage points, except for the term's connotations of home, to the traditionally strong association that exists between a *lou* and a particular place, expressed further by the fact that *lou* were usually named after some particular location or feature of the landscape, such as a hill, a valley, a stream, a waterfall, or a fruit tree or some other sort of tree found where the house was built.

<sup>11</sup>As may be noted here, I am of a somewhat different opinion than Macdonald (1987a) and Sellato (1987) according to whom Lévi-Strauss's concept is of minimal relevance to unstratified Indonesian societies. Unlike them, and like Waterson, I am not so much concerned with whether the society to which the term is applied precisely fits Lévi-Strauss's concept, as with its heuristic

application of the concept is to draw attention to what Waterson (1995:49-50) refers to as the “key features” of Lévi-Strauss’s above definition: “the ideal of continuity,” “the passing down of some form of valued property,” and “the strategic exploitation of the language of kinship and affinity.”

In the present case, the term “house society” refers to a society where the house (*lou*) is a more restricted or minimal unit as compared to some of those societies with which the concept is more commonly associated (e.g. the Kwakiutl, feudal Europe, Japan), although it should be remembered that Lévi-Strauss also applied his concept to many Indonesian societies, and that he was expressly concerned with using it to make sense of the apparent lack of order in cognatic societies (in terms of received kinship theory). Admittedly, the continuity of the Bentian *lou* was quite limited, as were perhaps, in a comparative perspective, the material and immaterial properties passed down and managed principally by its *manti*, namely, the *longan* and other ancestral objects, heirlooms such as Chinese jars and gongs, and rights to land in locations cultivated by its members. However, some amount of “valued property” clearly was passed down, and Bentian society is definitely a house society in the sense that the house is a central organizing principle and dominant institution in the society, as well as in the sense that relatedness based on residential association is typically expressed in the idiom of kinship, even if it is in fact residential association, itself, which is primary in establishing *lou* unity, or separating different *lou* communities from each other. The house, in this case, as in those explored by Lévi-Strauss, is a kin-based category, although it is also clearly more than a kin category (e.g. it is not simply a descent category). The concept of house may thus, in line with Lévi-Strauss’s intentions, be taken to serve as a complement to descent for an understanding of social structure, in a manner incidentally analogous to how the category of the household (or the *bilik*) has been applied to complement kin categories in analyses of Bornean longhouse communities since Derek Freeman’s pioneering writings (1960, 1970). In fact, the house concept may also, as I will demonstrate, fruitfully complement the household term, as its referent does not seem to be as structurally all-important among the Bentian as one might assume from studies of other Bornean societies.

### **Change and Continuity in Bentian Residence and Settlement Patterns**

In the nineteenth century, when Bentians began to settle in nucleated villages, *lou* also began to be built in villages. In fact, at first, until the mid-twentieth century, it was usually only *lou*, rather than single-family houses, that were built in the villages, in some cases just one, in others several, up to twelve or more. Some of these *lou* were, as already mentioned, particularly large, and some of them were referred to as *lou solai*, “grand *lou*.” Such *lou* were not only large, but they were intended—at least by the leading *manti* of the community, who were usually responsible for their construction and often resided in them—to be buildings where the entire village would gather, and in which rituals for the entire village (i.e. *nalin taun*, an extended *buntang* ritual) would be arranged. These *lou*, which in many localities were the first buildings for which ironwood was used as a

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value as “a jumping-off point, from which to examine indigenous concepts” (1995:48). To me, the principal value of the concept lies in the general attention it brings to houses—both in the sense of physical structures and conceptual models—as vehicles of social organization, and to the articulation of the house institution with a plurality of principles of social organization.

construction material, in time and under the influence of colonial and national governments became known as *lamin adat*, “adat longhouses,”<sup>12</sup> a term indicating that they were houses where major events pertaining to the common affairs in the community (i.e. customary law negotiations, larger rituals) were and are expected to be arranged. However, many extended families continued to live in swidden *lou* until quite recently, while others built *lou* of their own in the village. Progressively throughout the twentieth century, smaller, single-family houses—known in the New Order era as *rumah pembangunan* (“development houses”)—have also been built in the villages. During the past ten years, these houses, which are now mainly made of modern materials, planks or plywood, and often painted and equipped with windows, have also begun to be built along the newly constructed roads in the area, a pattern motivated by opportunities for easier transport of rattan and other “exports” (e.g. bananas).

Today there exist few swidden *lou* in the Bentian and surrounding Luangan areas. There are also few traditionally designed *lou* left in the villages; in many Bentian villages just one, in others three or four, and in a couple of villages none (among other Luangan subgroups they are even less common; on the Teweh river, for instance, there are possibly no traditional village *lou* left). Most Bentians do, however, still reckon some form of *lou* membership, although the *lou* to which they now belong is often represented by a large, modern-styled village dwelling, built of the same materials as the single-family development houses. These modern *lou* nevertheless tend to serve the traditional function as houses where a number of swidden-making families gather, and they are referred to by the same term which is used for their traditional counterparts. However, there are also some families who have no, or only a rather loose, connection to some particular localized *lou*, although this does not necessarily mean that their kin relations and obligations are any less extensive than those of other community members. In fact, small numbers of weakly or ambiguously *lou*-associated swidden-making families have probably always existed.

Bentian residence today is in some respects significantly different from what it was in the nineteenth or early twentieth century, not the least because of the fact that present-day *lou*, both modern and traditional, are spatially concentrated in villages (and interspersed with single-family houses), and thus are closer to each other. This implies, among other things, less distance from outmarrying relatives than what was the case in times when swidden *lou* were common, and a weakening of the former association of *lou* with the particular (farming) areas where they used to be located, but from which they are now at a distance. This development may have meant that the Bentian have simultaneously become slightly more “individualized,” living “on their own” in their farmhouses, or in their single-family village houses, and “collectivized,” living together in villages as “one big family,” while the “in between” house group (the *lou* category) may have lost some of its former importance. However, the *lou* concept has persisted in this new setting—where people continue to be associated with modern or traditional village *lou*, and continue to be subjected to the authority of their *manti*. This is indisputable evidence for a

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<sup>12</sup>*Lamin* is a central Borneo term for longhouses or longhouse compartments now used throughout the province of East Kalimantan as a generic designation for longhouses. *Adat*, as elsewhere in Indonesia, may refer to either customary law or ‘tradition,’ and in the expression *lamin adat*, it refers to both.

continuing structural significance of the *lou* category and thus of “the house” in Bentian society.

### **Past and Present Conceptions of Community**

The village concept is, as already mentioned, not an indigenous or traditional Bentian concept, or at least, that is how the Bentian themselves see it. The scope of integration in nineteenth century Bentian communities was lower than it is today, and probably also lower than in most other Dayak societies at that time. As Weinstock (1983:98) has correctly pointed out, “the inhabitants of a *low solai* [a large *lou*] represented a single family rather than an entire village as in the case of the longhouse dwelling peoples of northern Borneo.” However, although the inhabitants of a *lou*, before the time of village settlement, formed a kind of minimal community, they did, in fact, belong to a larger community as well. The members of *lou* in a particular area recognized themselves as belonging to a territorial domain, a *benua'*,<sup>13</sup> to which the members of other *lou* in the same area also belonged, and within which people from other areas were not allowed to open up land for cultivation.<sup>14</sup> The inhabitants of this area, which was about the same size as present-day village territories and, like the latter, carefully delineated with respect to particular rivers, streams and hills etc., formed a named, predominantly endogamous social unit which represented the highest level of indigenous political organization, and the most inclusive social category recognized at the time (“ethnic identities,” such as Luangan subgroup identities: Bentian, Benuaq etc., gradually became more widely recognized only as integration with the sultanates and the Dutch colonial government became more instrumental towards the late nineteenth century). Before village integration, the whole region comprising the Teweh river in Central Kalimantan and the area today inhabited by the Bentian was divided in such socio-territorial units.

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<sup>13</sup>The term *benua'* has, in fact, a fairly wide field of application among the Bentian. Except for a territorial domain of a local group, it can also be used to designate 'home' or 'village.' It would perhaps be most appropriate to translate the term into English as 'village,' although I have avoided this in order to maintain the Bentian distinction between nucleated villages, which are referred to by the Indonesian term *desa*, and traditional territorial domains, for which the Indonesian term is not applied. “*Benua'*” is, of course, a proto-Austronesian term indicating, in present-day Austronesian languages, a territorial entity of highly variable character, and in some languages, a house (see Fox 1993:12). Traditionally, the term was used by Bentians (except for the territorial domain of the “community” as a whole) also for the more restricted locality with which a particular *lou* was associated.

<sup>14</sup>Although pre-dating Bentian integration in nucleated villages, village or community territoriality among the Bentian need not have been an originally indigenous concept. On the contrary, it is possible that the concept, like that of nucleated villages, was introduced as the result of coastal influence, but that it became adopted earlier than the latter, perhaps in the early nineteenth century, after the Kutai sultanate had moved to Tenggarong and begun to maintain more extensive relations with the inland. These conjectures would be congruent with Tsing's observations (1984:127-152) on the lack of the principle of village territoriality among the relatively isolated central mountain Meratus, and the application, in some east side Meratus communities, of the same principle based on a notion of “the local community as a small model of the coastal kingdom” (Tsing 1984:136). Similarly, George Appell's (1992:3) remark, concerning the Rungus of Sabah, that “the jural personality of the village had developed over time as land had become scarcer,” points in the same direction.

Although normally not residentially concentrated, these “local groups” or “communities” (there is, as far as I know, no specific indigenous term referring exclusively to the categories in question) at times gathered, and in certain circumstances acted as corporate entities, more precisely when dealing with other entities of the same order between which conflicts, settled through payment and exchange of traditional valuables, are said to have been frequent.<sup>15</sup> The typically uneasy intergroup relations of these groups, together with their corporate character and dispersed residence, point to their similarity with another Southeast Asian “hill tribe” social category of the same order, the Ilongot *bertran* (Rosaldo 1980). As in the case of the *bertran*, the name of a Bentian local group could be used both as a designation for a group and for the territory with which it was associated. The group typically took its name from a particular locality, which in the Bentian case was often borrowed from the name (and locality) of a particular *lou* which was seen as the ‘center’ (*pusat*) of the area, or as the ‘trunk’ or ‘base’ (*puun*), while the other *lou* in the same area were regarded as its ‘branches’ (*pakaak*).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>When these “traditional” Bentian communities gathered it was typically not the whole community that would gather, but only the *manti* and perhaps some other elders in the capacity of its representatives, or the kin of an extended family who arranged a *buntang* or *gombok* (secondary mortuary) ritual. However, all or most members of these communities apparently sometimes gathered temporarily in some large *lou* in periods when attacks from the Pari were particularly frequent (for example, the Terieq community, who for some period of time in the early nineteenth century had seven *manti*, normally associated with separate *lou*, sometimes came together in a large partitioned *lou* for such reasons). It also appears that community-wide *nalin taun* rituals started to be arranged in some communities already some time before settlement in “proper” villages (*desa*, *kampung*) took place. Some of these rituals were occasions when the members of some particular other community were invited (*nuak*) and offered valuables, and, in accepting the invitation, became committed to return it in equal or greater measure at some later stage (i.e. through a new ritual and counter-gifts).

<sup>16</sup>The use of the botanical idiom of trunk and branches follows a pattern widespread in Austronesian speaking societies (Fox 1993:17-20; Waterson 1990:124-29). A division into trunk and branch houses or other residential units categorized through the same imagery seems also to be found among other Dayaks than the Bentian (and other Luangans). For example, Sather (1993:75-78) describes in some detail how the parallel concepts of ‘base’ (*pun*, *pemun*) and ‘tip,’ (*ujung*, *puchok*) define relations of ritual precedence between the *bilik* families that make up a Saribas Iban longhouse. Here, the family of the *pun rumah* (“house source”), whose members are generally descended from the house founder and occupy the center apartment, establish their ritual priority by erecting the first ritual house post (*tiang pemun*) during longhouse construction. The resulting relationship between longhouse families and their “source posts” appears in some ways closely analogous to that of Bentian *lou* groups and their *longan*. Moreover, as Saribas families and longhouses hive off, or undergo fission, a distinction is preserved between the original, or “old house” (*rumah lama*) or family, (*bilik lama*), and the “new” one(s) created in the process (*rumah baru*, or *bilik baru*). Even if he does not report on the use of botanical metaphors in this connection, Winzeler (1996:3) notes the creation of new villages among the Bidayuh through a division in daughter villages “which in time have their own daughter villages,” indicating a pattern structurally analogous to the Bentian distinction between trunk and branch houses. The traditional settlement pattern of the Bidayuh was, incidentally, remarkably similar to that of the Bentian in some other respects as well. First, migrations were not as extensive as among many other Dayaks, such as the Iban and Kayan. Second, all types of houses were built of light materials and were frequently far

The *lou* in question was often the first *lou* established in the area over which the community as a whole made claims. It was frequently used for gatherings during which community affairs were negotiated, and its *manti* were likely to have a special status. It thus appears that some *lou* might have had the status and function of *lou solai* (grand *lou*) before the time of village integration, that is, in that they functioned as houses which in some sense represented the community as a whole—rather than only an “extended family” or house group. As these *lou* also, like those recognized as *lou solai* or *lamin adat* in the nucleated villages established later, frequently were physically larger than other *lou*, it would perhaps appear justified to refer to them and their village counterparts in the standard Borneo terminology as longhouses.<sup>17</sup> The existence of these *lou* also makes Bentian society more “house society like” in Lévi-Strauss’s terms, as it points to the existence in their society of a degree of inter-house hierarchy and of a notion of a house encompassing the whole society (i.e. community).<sup>18</sup> As the houses which in this

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from navigable rivers, often on hilltops. Third, the line of movement among both groups for the last 100 to 150 years has been in a downstream direction, that is, “from higher and more remote locations toward lower and more accessible ones” (Winzeler 1996:3).

<sup>17</sup>The question whether *lou* should or can be classified as longhouses is a complex one, although perhaps more of scholarly than native concern. As we already know, the term has a variable referent. Perhaps most basically, it refers to a relatively large house where a group of people, preferably kin, gathers. The Bentian use it for all their larger houses, whether divided into internal apartments or unpartitioned, modern or traditional, insofar as they serve this function. In terms of this function, *lou* do of course resemble longhouses and it may be noted in this connection that the term *lou* is contrasted with that of *blai* which is the term used for farmhouses and small village houses. However, the scope of integration effected by a Bentian *lou* is undeniably quite restricted when compared to the longhouses of central and northern Borneo, and as already mentioned, in distinction to most of these longhouses, Bentian *lou* were most often unpartitioned. Nevertheless, I am still somewhat uneasy with the view of some authors (Avé and King 1986:52; Waterson 1986:155-56), who contend that there never existed any real longhouses among the Dayaks of southernmost Borneo (i.e. among the Ma’anyan, Luangan, and Ngaju), and who want to make a distinction between the “great houses” used by these Dayaks to house extended families, and the much larger “longhouses,” typically housing entire villages, traditionally found in other parts of the island. In the first place, very large and massive longhouses as opposed to great houses did, at least until the nineteenth century, exist in some parts of southern Borneo (see Knapen 2001:85, 88; Miles 1964). The principal reason for my reluctance to accept this view is, however, that I conceive of a continuum between great houses and longhouses. Even if typical traditional Bentian *lou* were unpartitioned, quite small, and housed only “extended families” (i.e. not entire villages), the Bentian did sometimes build much larger, and occasionally partitioned, *lou* which were intended to house whole communities. Perhaps more importantly, for the Bentian (and other people familiar with Bentian *lou*) there exists no such distinction. They translate the word *lou* into pan-regional vocabulary as *lamin*, a central Bornean term used throughout East Kalimantan for longhouses. In addition, we may note that the term *lou* appears to be cognate with, on the one hand, the terms *levu* and *lebu* used for longhouses by the Lahanan and the Melanau, respectively (see Alexander 1993:33; Morris 1978:41), and on the other hand, *lewu*, used by the Ma’anyan for their extended family village houses, which generally are and were much smaller than Bentian *lou* (Hudson 1978:215, 223).

<sup>18</sup>However, it should not be assumed that the integration of traditional Bentian communities (*benua*) was always seamless, or that the subordination of all its *lou* to that of the “leading *lou*”



way were thought to stand for the community as a whole were also dwellings for a particular house group, they can be said to have served a double function.

In the current situation, community for the Bentian is largely synonymous with the village. This does not mean, however, that the communal divisions of the past have lost all of their former importance. Like Ilongot *bertan* (Rosaldo 1980:226), the social categories making up traditional Bentian communities could be either concentrated or dispersed. If they became dispersed by their members marrying out or moving away to other communities, they would eventually disappear. However, even if they dispersed in this sense, they would retain some of their significance for at least some time, because people would recognize descent from these socio-territorial categories, which thus may be seen to have also formed descent categories, in addition to localized social groups. Membership in these categories was in fact often traced back from some particular founding individuals, typically accredited with supernatural origins and faculties.<sup>19</sup> Today, the importance of these categories as descent categories has possibly become even more important than before, despite the fact that as a result of intermarriage most of them are now dispersed over several villages (or make up only part of a village together with another such category), and there remain only a few predominantly "pure" villages, which consist mainly of descendants from only one category. What has happened today is that the distribution of local groups in the nineteenth century preceding village integration has become frozen. The divisions of that time now stand as a model of the traditional order and people typically phrase claims of original rights to land (which have now become urgent to clearly define because of logging and transmigration) in terms of this order.

### Conclusion

In this article I have presented the pattern of Bentian settlement and residence, past and present, with a particular emphasis on house organization. I have described a pattern characterized by dual residence in single-family farmhouses and multifamily houses (*lou*), the latter formerly dispersed, today concentrated in villages. I have also described the "traditional" territorial organization of the Bentian according to which the inhabitants of several *lou* shared a group identity and a common carefully delineated territory founded by ancestors from whom these inhabitants reckoned descent, and to which the inhabitants of one particular *lou*, described as the 'trunk' (*puun*) of the others, usually was considered more directly descended than the others. The significance of this type of organization still endures to an important extent alongside the present, government-enforced organization into nuclear villages. Despite tendencies toward, on the one hand, residence in single-family "development houses" in villages, and for some families, full-time residence in single-family farmhouses, both the dual pattern of residence and the organization in house (*lou*) groups have generally persisted.

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necessarily was unequivocal. There were families who were only loosely associated with a particular *lou*; there were also *lou* which were marginal to the encompassing community to which they were seen to belong, or which were ambiguously associated with several communities.

<sup>19</sup>Some of these individuals are even believed to have been spirits originally, more precisely, representatives of the heavenly *seniang* who descended to earth and thus gave rise to these local groups and descent categories.

Small, impermanent swidden multi-family houses like the traditional Bentian *lou* are poorly described in the ethnographic literature on Borneo, as is the social organization of such houses. However, swidden longhouses or multi-family houses are actually not unusual in Borneo but occur among many longhouse-building Dayak groups such as the Maloh (King 1978b:203), Iban (Freeman 1970:161-70), Kayan (Rousseau 1978:80), and Kenyah (Whittier 1978:106-8), pointing to the possibility that the organization in multi-family houses, intermediate to that in farmhouses or longhouse apartments on the one hand, and villages or communal longhouses on the other, may have been more widespread than suggested by previous studies, which have tended to focus on the two polar modes of organization. The general importance of this “intermediate level” of social organization among the Bentian, but also among some other Borneo peoples such as the Bajau Laut (Sather 1997:134-187) and, perhaps, the Ma’anyan (Hudson 1978), demonstrates that “extended families” can indeed form social units of central structural significance in Borneo (as such notably not being reducible simply to a phase in the household’s developmental cycle) (cf. King 1978a:12-15).

I have identified *lou* as corporate entities of central structural and cultural significance in Bentian society which, under the leadership of particular housegroup heads (*manti*), control much of the material and reproductive resources of this society, in a similar way to how descent groups often do among unilineal peoples. I have also described the emic identification of these houses as kinship entities (*aben*, *buhan*) and their simultaneous transcendence of the kinship loyalties on which they are based. Thus, the classification of the Bentian as a “house society” (*société à maison*) in the terms of Claude Lévi-Strauss has emerged as illuminating for an understanding of the social organization of this society which on the house group level as well as on the encompassing community level, fuses kinship and residence as organizing principles.

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THE MEDIATED PRODUCTION OF ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM  
AMONG THE IBAN OF SARAWAK (II), 1977-1997

John R. Postill  
*Research Fellow*  
*Bremen Institut für Kulturforschung (BIK)*  
*University of Bremen, Germany*  
jpostill@usa.net

In the first installment of this two-part research note (Postill 2001), I retraced the early history of modern Iban media production in Sarawak from 1954 to 1976. I stressed the centrality of the Iban language to Radio Sarawak broadcasters and Borneo Literature Bureau (BLB) authors in their struggle to preserve and modernize the Iban heritage. This ethnonationalist project was to be crippled in 1977 when the Malaysian government closed down the BLB and brought in Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, a federal agency in charge of promoting the national language. In what follows I cover a second phase of Iban media production, from 1977 to 1997—the year of a region-wide financial crisis whose consequences for Sarawak media are still to be evaluated. This second phase would witness a growing Malaysianization of the media in Sarawak, with television replacing radio as the staple of evening entertainment in both urban and rural areas. At the same time, the town of Sibü replaced the Saribas basin as the twin heartland, with Kuching, of an expanding Iban culture industry. I discuss the consequences of this shift below (see also Postill 2002b). Meanwhile, Kuching remained the capitol of official, elite-driven Iban culture.

### Radio

With the demise of the BLB and the rapid spread of Malay-language rural schools and television, the Iban Section of Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) was the sole Iban-language medium of any import remaining in the 1980s. In 1980, after the communist threat had been finally quelled, the Psychological Warfare Unit at RTM was dissolved. The main focus at the Iban Section was then the phasing out of slash-and-burn hill rice farming to give way to “modern” agricultural practices. Interviews with successful cash crop farmers were a preferred method of persuasion. Other important areas were health, education, poverty and job vacancies. The purported aim was to change the rural population’s conservative “mind-set.” Meanwhile, the Iban component of school broadcasting was undergoing fundamental changes. In the place of Michael Buma’s spelling, dictation and traditional tales (*ensera*), more elaborate grammar-based Iban language lessons were now being broadcast to primary and lower secondary pupils.<sup>1</sup> This improvement must be set, however, against a far more transcendent 1980s shift: the establishment of Malay as the sole medium of instruction across the state school system in the place of English. Both these changes were the consequence of the extension of the Education Act of 1976 to Sarawak, which required the creation of new school syllabi set

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<sup>1</sup>This innovation was known as *Pelajar Jaku Iban ke Sekula Primari & Sekondari* (Untie 1998:2) and reflected directives set by the Ministry of Education.

according to Ministry of Education guidelines. A further expansion in airtime at RTM occurred in the early 1980s with the launching of Sunday programs in Iban and two more hours in the evening from Monday to Saturday. The next increase was to arrive a decade later, with two more hours in the morning. Henceforth the total airtime would be set at 66 hours a week, with 9 hours a day from Monday to Saturday and 12 hours on Sundays. In 1993 new studios were built and modern equipment acquired. Two years later, some important changes in programming took place. First, the soap operas (*cherita kelulu*) were discontinued. According to the producer Laja Sanggin, this was due both to the low quality of the scripts submitted and to the Iban Section's lack of manpower. At least some Iban writers disagree, saying it was due to the frequent transfer of producers and other staff, so that they ceased to call for scripts. Second, "loose slots" were introduced from 6 to 8:30 pm whose aim was to both inform and entertain the audience with varied capsules lasting 2 to 3 minutes instead of the accustomed 15 to 30 minutes. Some of these capsules were aimed at a young audience. Messages on the evils of truancy, loafing, drugs, etc., were "injected" (see below) to this group in between the pop songs. Another novelty was to open the lines to telephone callers with messages for their migrant kin on grave matters such as illness, death or financial hardship (*jaku pesan berat*). Callers could now also take part in a new program called *Nama Runding?* ('What do you think?') in which they could express their views on a given topical issue within the strict limits imposed by the Malaysian state, that is, avoiding any direct reference to ethnic inequalities, land issues, or Islam. These programming changes were both a response to perceived changes in the wider society (especially a stiffer competition from television and private radio stations, the rural-urban drift, a rise in educational standards, etc.) and a consequence of a lack of financial and human resources to produce new programs. As a result, the more "traditional" programs such as *Main Asal* ('Traditional Music') were relegated to what in rural Sarawak is considered to be a very late slot: from 10:15 pm to 11 pm.<sup>2</sup>

In 1997 Sarawak's first privately-owned commercial radio station, CATS<sup>3</sup> Radio, was launched. Its mission was to capture a wide audience across the state through "light entertainment," especially music. It had an Iban Section run by an RTM veteran and former intelligence officer, Roland Duncan Klabu, transmitting two hours a day: from 1 to 2 pm Monday to Friday, from 3 to 4 on Sunday and from midnight to 1 am seven days a week. To maximize his one-hour afternoon slot, Klabu opted for the "hot-clock system," consisting of a five-minute news bulletin and a motley of capsules, Iban pop songs, local reports, farming tips and suchlike. He made no bones about the true purpose of these broadcasts. The program, he explained, was "literally bought by a number of record companies seeking to promote Iban pop songs throughout Sarawak" (Klabu 1998:2). The most prominent figure to emerge was undoubtedly Peter John anak Apai,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>In my Saribas and Skrang experience, most rural viewers retire for the night between 8:30 and 9:30 pm.

<sup>3</sup>CATS is an acronym. It stands for "Communicating Aspiration Throughout Sarawak." It is also a pun, as *kuching* is the Standard Malay word for 'cat'.

<sup>4</sup>His artistic name is a wordplay on the Iban teknonym 'Father-of' (*Apai*). It literally translates as 'Peter John Son-of-Father'. I once attended a longhouse sermon in which the priest jokingly told his flock that "We humans are all like Peter John; we're all children

an Iban DJ who became hugely popular overnight with his personal brand of daft humor and ability to communicate on air with callers from all walks of life. Peter John was an inveterate connector of two disparate yet overlapping worlds: rural and urban Iban life. CATS offered an amusing, hybrid alternative to a more sober RTM Iban service. Also, its crystal clear FM sound made listening a more pleasurable experience than RTM's crackling short wave transmission.

Peter John notwithstanding, Iban-language broadcasting was caught up in a wider social and political malaise. Educated Iban felt that the crisis of the Iban Section reflected both the erosion and eventual demise of the Iban language and culture. With this bleak prognosis in mind and a sense of urgency, in April 1998 the Council for Customary Law (*Majlis Adat Istiadat*) in Kuching ran a one-day workshop on the current situation and future prospects of Iban-language broadcasting. The workshop, which I was fortunate to co-organize, was held almost entirely in the Iban language, a rare event in Kuching<sup>5</sup>. The morning session was led by Empeni Lang, Chief Registrar of the Native Court. It was devoted to identifying the key problems besetting Iban-language broadcasting. Perhaps inevitably, most of the subsequent discussions centered on the Iban Section at RTM to the detriment of CATS and BTP (School Broadcasting). The following 15 key RTM problems were identified and summarized by the workshop facilitator:

1. No clear aims or objectives.<sup>6</sup>
2. Insufficient audience research.<sup>7</sup>
3. Not enough manpower.<sup>8</sup>
4. Not enough money.<sup>9</sup>
5. No code of ethics.<sup>10</sup>

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of the Father'' (*Semua kitai mensia baka Peter John meh, semua anak Apai magang*). This popular figure has since left CATS Radio and is no longer on the air.

<sup>5</sup>However, some of the participants, all of whom were native Iban speakers, had at times to revert to English. Like many middle-aged, educated Sarawakians of other ethnic groups, they found it difficult to sustain a work-related discussion exclusively in one language, especially in a language different from English. Moreover, most of the terminology associated with broadcasting has no Iban equivalents. Other participants chose to use English to stress particular points, a well-established practice among English-educated Sarawakians.

<sup>6</sup>Or, as the facilitator put it: "*Nadai tuju ke terang*."

<sup>7</sup>In the original "Ibenglish": "*Nadai research digaga pasal proper content*." In the 1980s, radio staff would often travel to the rural areas. Their travel reports included views from the listeners. Two preliminary audience research studies were carried out between 1993 and 1994. In addition, some 20 listeners telephoned with their views at the beginning of 1996.

<sup>8</sup>The Iban Section had 15 staff members in the 1980s, but only 6 in 1998. According to their new head, 27 more staff members were needed (Montegrai 1998).

<sup>9</sup>At the time of the workshop, advertisers were said to be "flocking to CATS," the private station, and deserting RTM. Radio commercials are mostly for household goods. The Iban Section budget has shrunk from RM 80,000 in 1994 to RM 60,000 in 1997.

<sup>10</sup>Participants felt that some broadcasters can at times be coarse or rude (*kasar*) and disrespectful towards the audience.

6. Poor infrastructure and facilities.<sup>11</sup>
7. No supporting print media.<sup>12</sup>
8. No full-time women employees.<sup>13</sup>
9. Poor quality of transmission.<sup>14</sup>
10. Low command of Iban among broadcasters.<sup>15</sup>
11. Unpleasant voices.<sup>16</sup>
12. Programs not properly edited.
13. Less traditional programs than before.
14. Low levels of professionalism.
15. Flawed recruitment process.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, the following concerns about the Iban Section were voiced during the workshop or in private conversations elsewhere:

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<sup>11</sup>For instance, storage facilities at RTM are in sore need of improvements. Unique folk stories, traditional music recordings, etc., are kept on magnetic tapes rather than compact disks (personal communication, Nichol Ragai Lang, March 1997).

<sup>12</sup>This point echoes a recurrent concern throughout the workshop and in conversation with educated urban Iban: the lack of written materials in Iban since the demise of the Borneo Literature Bureau.

<sup>13</sup>“[The Iban Section] must be the only organization in the world with absolutely no women on the staff!” complained one producer.

<sup>14</sup>The only area in Sarawak where RTM Iban can be listened to on FM is Miri. All other areas receive a crackling AM service. The other three major languages (Malay, English and Mandarin) all have FM broadcasts.

<sup>15</sup>This issue excited numerous comments from the participants. Two aspects of the complex problem were most salient. First, the intrusion of Malay terms and pronunciation in the Iban spoken by the younger broadcasters. Unlike their predecessors whose schooling was entirely in English, Iban under the age of 33-35 were educated in Malay. To compound this problem, as broadcasters climb up the organizational ladder at RTM they spend less time “on air” and more on administrative duties. The younger translators were singled out for their tenuous grasp of both Iban and English and their speaking *Iban rojak* ('mixed Iban'). One senior participant described their Iban as “more irritating than educating.” A second aspect noted was the lack of a standard Iban spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary. The result, said a participant, is that one can listen to the Iban word for 'person' being pronounced as *orang*, *urang*, *ohang* and even *uhang* depending on the broadcaster's river of origin (one could also add to the list the Skrang *ureang*). What nobody mentioned was the fact that the Iban Section has *already* played a fundamental role on the long road to standardization by privileging the Saribas dialect. Any future decisions on standardization will have to be made *with reference to the RTM-Saribas dialect* rather than, say, the Skrang or Baleh dialects.

<sup>16</sup>The early broadcasters, such as Gerunsin Lembat, are said to have had beautiful voices. According to Empeni Lang, the workshop facilitator, the younger broadcasters not only have less pleasant voices, but are also “very subjective.”

<sup>17</sup>In other words, it was felt that new staff are often recruited on the basis of their political allegiance rather than ability.



1. External interferences, both from Iban and Peninsular political quarters.<sup>18</sup>
2. Poor leadership within the Iban Section.
3. Too many phone-in programs replacing the forums, dramas, magazines and features of previous decades.
4. Growing competition from CATS, other commercial radio stations from West Malaysia, television, etc.
5. Some programs broadcast too late for rural audiences.
6. No programs for women (cf. no. 8 above).
7. No programs for children and teenagers.
8. As a result of all the above: a highly demoralized staff.

Although pushed to the margins of the workshop discussions, we should also mention the other two branches of Iban-language broadcasting: School Broadcasting and CATS Radio. School Broadcasting (renamed *Bahagian Teknologi Pendidikan* [BTP]) is also facing an uphill struggle. The excitement of the early years surrounding the educational possibilities of radio has turned into bitter disappointment. For one thing, few schools in the urban areas teach Iban. In Kuching there is but one school, St. Mary's Secondary School, still teaching this language. Elsewhere, out of the 600 to 650 primary schools in Sarawak with over 50% Iban pupils, only 40% currently listen to the Iban programs.<sup>19</sup> A BTP survey listed the following factors to account for this low figure:

1. Programs hard to fit into the exam-oriented, textbook-based school syllabus.
2. Poor reception in many "shadow areas."
3. No Iban language teacher in the school.
4. Radio set out of order (Untie 1998: 4).

Finally, CATS has also come under attack since its launching for some of its presenters' low level of competence in the Iban language. One rumor had it that one of them, who had never experienced longhouse life,<sup>20</sup> was relieved from her newsreading duties following complaints from listeners. To compound matters, this station's Iban programs were often seen as a mere channel for the Chinese-dominated Iban music industry of Sibu, as Klabu himself recognized.

In the afternoon, the workshop participants sought practical solutions to the problems identified. In the end, they adopted 12 resolutions that generally followed from the enunciation of the problems, e.g. the need for clear objectives, a more balanced programming, better training, etc. One interesting suggestion that went beyond the

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<sup>18</sup>Some Iban politicians are said to treat the Iban Section as if it were "just another government department." Pressures can also come from Malay politicians from Kuala Lumpur and their Sarawak allies. Religion is a particularly thorny issue. RTM Sarawak, unlike its Peninsular counterparts, has regular Christian broadcasts in Iban and other languages. These have been discontinued at least twice during the past few years owing to pressures "from high places."

<sup>19</sup>Kaji Selidik Tahunan Tentang Penggunaan Radio (*Bahagian Teknologi Pendidikan* 1993).

<sup>20</sup>As a rule of thumb, growing up in a longhouse is a chief criterion for being considered a 'true Iban' (*Iban bendar*) as opposed to an 'urban Iban' (*Iban nengeri*).

purview of the workshop was the need to create an official body to strengthen the Iban language through standardization, research and other means.

The history of Iban-language broadcasting is therefore long and eventful. For decades it has not only served the government of the day with unflinching loyalty but has also contributed, in some measure, to the standardization and preservation of the Iban language and culture across Sarawak. The Iban Section of Radio Sarawak (now RTM) has served the state well: it fought Indonesia in the 1960s, the communists in the 1970s and what the state defined as the (backward) "rural mind-set" from the 1980s onwards. At present, however, the state has other priorities. Among the most pressing of these is to build a strong, unified national culture based on the Malay language and traditions. The host of problems affecting all three Iban-language radio organizations (RTM, CATS and BTP) can all be linked to a chronic weakness: the lack of adequate political representation of the Iban and other non-Muslim indigenous groups (Jawan 1994:226-235).

There is, however, a more elusive problem facing producers: how to step out of their ideological certainties and recultivate the field of Iban media production. Melanesia provides us with a useful comparative vantage point. On the basis of her work in Papua New Guinea, Sullivan (1993: 551) has argued that the ideas and practices of media professionalism spread in parallel to the transfer of technology from the West to other regions. Quoting Keesing (1989:23), she adds that, across the Pacific islands, the ideologues who idealize the past are usually "hell-bent on technology, progress, materialism and 'development.'" This observation applies equally well to Sarawak. The producers' faith in the potential of radio to transform their audiences given the right political, financial and professional resources has remained undiminished despite years of institutional stagnation. A case in point is the aforesaid belief that positive messages can be directly "injected" into young listeners—what media scholars call the "hypodermic needle model of communication" (see Morley 1992: 45, Watson and Hill 1993: 87). This confidence can be explained by the fact that most of them were trained in the 1960s and 1970s—a period of rapid economic growth, multi-ethnic nationalism, anti-communism and deep faith in the infinite possibilities of modern technology. Their urban careers developed amidst the growing disparities in wealth and status between urban educated Iban and their rural illiterate brethren. Yet this chasm was blamed on the latter's traditional "mind-set." Unlike indigenous media producers in Australia (see Ginsburg 1993), Iban producers are too embedded in the state's material and ideological apparatus to provide alternative visions. As trained government servants, they reproduce the views of what Debray (1996:176) calls the "mediocracy," i.e. the "elite holding the means of production of mass opinion." In territories with tight media control and top-down communication, Appadurai's (1990) wishful notion of "multidirectional flows" of cultural influences holds little analytical promise. While it may apply to Chicago's intellectual diaspora, in the case of Iban radio the flow is unidirectional, from one or two urban corridors of media power to countless longhouse galleries and rooms.

### **Print media**

Since the closure of the Borneo Literature Bureau a number of Iban books have been printed, most of them by a Kuching publisher named Klasik Publishing House, including two traditional *ensera* (Donald 1989, Tawai 1989) and five *cherita kelulu* or morality novellas (Jantan 1987, Ensiring 1991, Ensiring 1992, Garai 1993, Bangit 1995).

We met Janang Ensiring (1968) in the previous research note (Postill 2001) as a 19-year old poet infatuated with Malaysia. His 1992 novella *Dr Ida* deserves our attention for its innovative use of urban settings and problems--a clean departure from the BLB's bucolic preferences.

The second non-governmental print outlet for the Iban language today is provided by the first institutions ever to create texts in Borneo vernaculars: the Christian churches. The most successful religious texts appear to be those which have adopted a manner of "BLB strategy," that is, prayer books that seek to adapt the best of the Iban *adat* (in this case religious *adat*) to the essentially developmentalist Christian project. This dual strategy echoes those adopted in other Asia-Pacific societies. In Papua New Guinea, a European lay missionary in 1990 directed a television drama to teach villagers in a remote area new farming techniques. To Sullivan (1993: 537), this was part of a long missionary tradition of "co-opting indigenous values (of community, mutual obligation, kinship and sharing) as the teachings of Christ and in so doing distinguishing church from private interests while easing a transition from barbarism to a market economy." In Sarawak, as in other territories, the Catholic Church is ahead of rival denominations in its nativist-cum-modernist print media but has yet to use audiovisual media extensively, for reasons considered below. As Giddens (1984) has reminded us, social actions often have unintended effects. With the demise of the BLB, the Iban-language Christian texts have acquired greater significance as cultural repositories among the more literate Iban. This was surely not the intention of the authorities who are said to have ordered the destruction of the indigenous print media.

Two state-sponsored outlets for Iban authorship survived into the 1990s. One was *Berita Rakyat*<sup>21</sup>, a monthly magazine founded in 1974 by the Rajang Security Command (RASCOM) in Sibu. This magazine was part of the government's efforts to defeat the Chinese-led communist insurgency in Sarawak's Third Division through military action and propaganda. The cover showed an Iban warrior in full ceremonial dress performing a sword dance (*ajat*). The contents were in the dual modernity-cum-tradition *Nendak* mould (Postill 2001), but with an added emphasis on "security." Like in *Nendak*, a wide spectrum of Iban genres was represented. There were morality tales (*cherita kelulu*), sagas (*ensera*), riddles (*entelah*), ethnohistorical accounts (*jerita tuai*), hagiographies of Iban leaders and even a cartoon strip featuring Roky, a young law-enforcing hero. Unfortunately for Roky's author, the negotiated end of the armed struggle would also mean the eventual phasing-out of *Berita Rakyat*. Production ceased in the early 1990s.

The one extant Iban print medium in 1997 was *Pembrita*, a state government mouthpiece published monthly by the Information Department.<sup>22</sup> *Pembrita* is yet another Iban medium with an original Paku-Saribas connection, for it was the result of the pioneering Adult Literacy Scheme launched in 1950 in that river area (Jawan 1994: 183). Aimed at rural Iban, it is a profusely illustrated newsletter containing two kinds of items: good developmental news (on exemplary longhouses, lucrative cash crops, animal husbandry, etc.) and exhortations to the rural populace to modernize their ways, with a typical headline reading (in Iban): "FARMERS MUST CHANGE THEIR WORK

<sup>21</sup>Literally, 'The People's News'.

<sup>22</sup>Its Malay version is called *Pedoman Rakyat*.

HABITS.”<sup>23</sup> Unlike *Nendak* and *Berita Rayat*, however, *Pembrita* contains no traditional genres, despite repeated appeals to the readers for such materials, in an apparent attempt to broaden the readership base of what the editors call “our Iban newspaper” (*Surat Kabar kitai Iban*).<sup>24</sup>

There is no such thing, however, as an Iban newspaper in the strict sense of the term. In 1996, eleven newspapers in other languages were published in Sarawak: seven in Chinese, three in English and one in Malay (see Table 2.6). A key constraint affecting all papers in Malaysia, and even more so in thinly populated states such as Sarawak, is the high cost of paper. In 1993 a ton of imported paper cost US \$1,000 in Malaysia but only US \$780 in the United States. A further problem for Malay-language papers both in East and West Malaysia is that advertisers tend to regard Malay readers as belonging to the low-income group, so advertising revenue is much lower than that for the English and Chinese dailies (Amir and Awang Jaya 1996: 13). Any fledgling Iban newspaper would have to overcome even more imposing barriers. One viable solution suggested to me by an urban Iban might be for one of the state's newspapers to carry a weekly Iban supplement, a practice already well-established in Sabah with the Kadazan language.

The state government controls virtually all papers in Sarawak. With the exception of one or two Chinese papers, writing favorably about any aspect of the much-diminished opposition is unheard of. On one noted occasion, a *Sarawak Tribune* editor was allegedly dismissed for publishing “the wrong picture” of a powerful politician. According to press insiders, it is always safe to write pro-development articles. Another safe area is “culture,” that is, the colorful side of Dayak cultures: music, dance, garments, etc. The Sarawak daily press represents Dayaks in two radically different ways: (a) as camera-friendly “ethnics” with picturesque cultures in need of protection (and more tourism) or (b) as ignorant, backward peasants in need of enlightenment (and more development).<sup>25</sup> In both portrayals, which never appear together, scant allowance is made for the various ways in which actual Dayak agents may be making and remaking their social worlds.

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<sup>23</sup>ORANG BUMAI DI MENUA PESISIR ENDA TAU ENDA NGUBAH CHARA PENGAWA SIDA (*Pembrita*, May 1996).

<sup>24</sup>In my experience, *Pembrita* is more popular a newspaper in the Skrang than in the Saribas area.

<sup>25</sup>For the second kind of portrayal, see Minos' “Dayak attitude and NCR Land Development,” *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 October 1997. Minos is a Bidayuh Dayak.

Newspaper	Circulation
<b>Chinese</b>	
1. <i>Chinese Daily News</i>	5000
2. <i>See Huan Daily News</i>	n.a.
3. <i>Sin Hua Evening News</i> and 4 others	n.a.
<b>English</b>	
1. <i>Sarawak Tribune</i>	30000
2. <i>People's Mirror</i> *	10000
3. <i>The Borneo Post</i> *	n.a.
<b>Malay</b>	
1. <i>Utusan Sarawak</i>	20000

**Table 2.6. Circulation of major Sarawak newspapers.** Source: Amir and Awang Jaya (1996: 54). Keys: n.a. = not available; (\*) = includes a Malay-language supplement. The tabloid *People's Mirror* is now defunct and has been replaced by *The Malaysian Today* (personal communication, Clifford Sather).

The key to development, as seen by the mediocracy, is to get the rural Dayaks to change their collective “mind-set” (a favorite term) so that development can proceed swiftly. There are similarities here with the ideology of Andria Ejau and other Iban media producers from the earlier period (Postill 2001). The key difference is that Ejau's generation drew largely from first-hand experience in upriver areas and an intimate knowledge of the Iban language and culture. Today's journalists, by contrast, write from urban areas for an urban readership. Whilst Ejau and his contemporaries sought to blend culture and development in their texts (in pursuit of what today is known as “sustainable development”), journalists constantly drive a harsh wedge between the two domains. A recent example of the powerful interests behind this discursive wedge arose in 1987-1991, when a total of 30 Penan and other Dayak communities, including Iban longhouses, carried out anti-logging blockades in the Baram and Limbang districts. They were protesting against the destruction of the environment upon which their livelihood depended. The following extract sums up the role of the Sarawak press:

The stories by the *Borneo Post* were orchestrated based on government press releases...; self-censorship by reporters was exercised to adjust to the media's organizational and official requirements. The only on-the-scene report the *Borneo Post* filed was on 21 July 1987, when the media escorted the State Minister for Tourism and Environment (who owns one of the largest timber concessions in Sarawak) to one of his timber camps in Limbang (Ngidang 1993:94).

In its 11 July 1987 editorial, the *Borneo Post* lamented the fact that development had been hindered “by two groups of people, namely the Penans and their allies and those who instigate people in rural areas to reject government efforts” (Ngidang 1993: 94). Sarawak newspapers are, in sum, at the service of the state government and their wealthy allies. Their modus operandi reveals the extent to which Sarawak is a rich “resource frontier” (King 1988) in the hands of a small elite rather than a democracy. The chances of an Iban newspaper ever being produced, therefore, are severely limited by both the

economies of scale required for it to be profitable, and by the same political imperatives that have led to the mass logging of Dayak forests and to the burning of Dayak books.

### Popular music

Sibu is the third largest town in Sarawak, but the second most important in terms of commerce, after Kuching. From 1974 on, the timber industry grew rapidly in the state, with Sibu as its hub (Leigh 1983: 164). This attracted large numbers of Iban to an urban setting where they were already well represented.<sup>26</sup> Many of the poorly educated Iban entered into patron-client relations with Chinese merchants (*towkay*) (Sutlive 1972: 119). The same pattern was to prevail in the budding music industry of the late 1970s.

By far the most successful Sibu record company during the 1977-1997 period was Tiew Brothers Company, better known as TBC. Mathew Tiew Sii Hock, a former salesman, and two of his brothers founded TBC in 1977. Initially they sought to market Malay albums but found the competition from Peninsular record companies to be too stiff, so they chose instead to market Iban pop. Following the initial success of Iban tapes, they began to release songs in Melanau, Kayan, Kenyah, Malay, and recently, Chinese. Iban has nevertheless remained TBC's mainstay. According to company sources, the uniqueness of Iban pop lies in its *rojak* ('mixed salad') melodies: a melange of Indonesian *dangdut*, global pop rock, heavy metal, Latin *baladas* and other styles, all performed to a peculiar Sibu-Chinese beat<sup>27</sup>. On another level, however, Iban pop is far from unique. If in the 1950s it followed Indonesian and Indian patterns, and in the 1960s-1970s Western ones, since the 1980s it has increasingly aligned itself with musical trends arriving from West Malaysia and absorbed concepts and words from the national language. Middle-aged Iban critics say today's lyrics lack the subtlety and vigor of both 1960s Iban pop and the best contemporary Malay and Indonesian music. They see the lyrics as often being too "raunchy," and say that several have been banned from the radio. At any rate, these songs are politically safe: unlike some Indonesian popular culture,<sup>28</sup> Iban pop is about entertainment, not social critique. Most songs in my sample (94%) deal with the vagaries of the human heart, as Table 2.7. demonstrates.

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<sup>26</sup>In 1947 there were less than 300 Iban in Sibu. In 1972, there were at least ten times this figure (Sutlive 1972: 466).

<sup>27</sup>"Iban music industry fast catching up with the rest of the world" (*Sarawak Tribune*, 22/3/1998). This catchy headline from *Bernama*, the Malaysian national news agency, conceals the fact that it is a Chinese family who controls the lion's share of the "Iban music industry."

<sup>28</sup>See, for example, Peacock's (1968) classic study on "proletarian theatre" (*Iudruk*) in the East Javanese town of Surabaya, or Van Groenendael (1985) on the *wayang* in rural Java as, among other things, powerful sites of social critique.

40.00% broken heart	<i>ambis asa, tusah ati</i>
40.00% longing heart	<i>lelengau, sunyi</i>
14.00% happy heart	<i>ati senang</i>
2.00% ode to Sarawak	<i>Menua Sarawak</i>
2.00% the meaning of life <sup>29</sup>	<i>Dunya Sementara</i>

**Table 2.7. Subject matter of Iban pop songs produced in the 1990s, in percentages. Sample: 49 songs from 5 well-known cassette tapes.<sup>30</sup>**

William Awing sings:<sup>31</sup>

<i>Sepuloh taun dah lalu</i>	It's been ten years
<i>Tua nadai betemu</i>	Since we last met
<i>Tekenyit aku nerima surat nuan dara</i>	Couldn't believe your letter, girl
<i>Nuan mai aku nampong</i>	When you told me that you wanted
<i>Pengerindu tua</i>	To start once again
<i>Nama kebuah nuan</i>	How can you say
<i>Agi ka beguna aku</i>	That you still need me?
<i>Aku tu aku suba</i>	I'm still the one I used to be
<i>Ukai orang baru</i>	I'm not a new person

Very occasionally singers will follow the lead of their Radio Sarawak forebears and step out of their love grooves to reproduce the views of the Establishment. In the following verse, the immensely popular Andrewson Ngalai praises Sarawak while promoting a commercial alternative to slash-and-burn farming:

<i>Rakyat diau sama senang ati</i>	The people all live merrily together
<i>Musuh nadai agi dikenangi</i>	Enemies are no longer remembered <sup>32</sup>
<i>Tanah besai alai endur betupi</i>	Plenty of land to rear livestock
<i>Lantang senang dudi ari</i>	So that one day we'll be happy

On other occasions, while still on the painful subject of love, they touch on current social problems, notably the inequalities wrought by education and migration (*bejalai*).

<sup>29</sup>A most unusual philosophical investigation into life's transience conveyed in a moralistic tone by Andrewson Ngalai and entitled "*Dunya Sementara*," from his album *Ambai Numbur Satu*.

<sup>30</sup>The five tapes are: *Ambai Numbur Satu* and *Andrewson Ngalai* by Andrewson Ngalai, *Taju Remaong* by Johnny Aman, *Iban Karaoke* by several artists (Johnny Aman, Andrewson Ngalai, Josephine Wilson, and William Awing), and *Joget Iban* by several artists (Andrew Bonny James, Angela L. Jua, Johnny Awie, Jus Allen, Gibson Janggum, Jackson Dana and Alice Awis). Only the latter album is an *Irama* production; the other four are all TBC.

<sup>31</sup>"*Nuan enda ngasoh nganti*," In *Iban Karaoke Vol. 7* (TBC audiocassette).

<sup>32</sup>Probably a reference to Sibu's recent past. More generally, the notion that there are no longer any 'enemies' (in Iban, *munsuh* or *munsuh*, but notice here the Malay spelling *musuh*) thanks to the pacifying efforts of the government is widespread among the Iban (see next section).

Johnny Aman sings about the barriers of class and wealth now dividing the once egalitarian Iban society:

<i>Malu amai asai ku dara</i>	I feel really ashamed, girl
<i>Ka jadi enggau nuan</i>	I who wanted to marry you
<i>Enda diterima</i>	But was rejected
<i>Laban aku orang merinsa</i>	For being poor
<i>Nadai pemandai bekuli ngapa</i>	For being an ignorant coolie

And on the temptations of *bejalai*:

<i>Baka aku ti bejalai</i>	I have to go away
<i>Ngiga belanja sulu</i>	To look for money, my darling
<i>nuan ti diau rumah panjai</i>	you're staying in the longhouse
<i>Bejaga diri selalu</i>	So look after yourself

<i>Baka jako orang bukai</i>	Don't listen to those
<i>musi berita enda tentu</i>	who tell stories about me
<i>Anang nuan arap ambai</i>	Don't listen to them, my love
<i>Nya mina berita pelesu</i>	They're just lies
<i>Nadai aku kala asai</i>	Not once have I felt
<i>Ngayah ka nuan sulu</i>	Like betraying you, my darling

TBC has sponsored numerous song contests and “discovered” rising starlets, many of them young Iban from the Rejang basin. They publish an Iban-language magazine named *Merindang* (‘Entertainment’), purchase ample airtime on CATS Radio and have launched a website to promote both their starlets and established singers. In the late 1990s the company boasted two recording studios—one fitted with analog equipment, the other with more advanced digital technology.<sup>33</sup> Their 1997 production was two albums a month. Besides cassette tapes, they produced karaoke videotapes and compact discs. Karaoke videos were significant as they provided the only regular audiovisual outlet for Iban artistes who seldom, if ever, appeared on television. Patterned on West Malaysian video clips, they were extremely popular at social gatherings in the longhouse and at public functions involving Iban leaders. The cassette and video cover illustrations project a dynamic urban persona devoid of any ethnic markers: the singers wear Western-style clothing and accessories (headband, sunglasses, mobile phone) reminiscent of those worn by Sarawak’s visiting Filipino artistes and other Southeast Asian entertainers.

Irama, another Sibu company, often uses exactly the opposite imagery. Irama produces both Iban pop songs (*lagu Iban*) and folk music (*main asai*), including *taboh* (gong and drum ritual music) and *ramban* (love songs). The performers are clad in traditional Iban costume and surrounded by Iban motifs. Modernity is nowhere to be seen. These tapes appear, however, to be less popular than TBC’s.<sup>34</sup> In this connection, some Iban leaders and cultural organizations have decried the loss of the vast Iban

<sup>33</sup>TBC website (<http://www.tbc.inet.com.my>).

<sup>34</sup>Even though the folklore tapes were considerably cheaper. In 1997 they were selling at RM 7.25 compared to the pop tapes’ RM 12.50 to RM 13.50. I do not have at present, however, any sales figures from either company.



musical heritage.<sup>35</sup> Suggestions have been made to introduce Bornean folk music in the Malaysian school curriculum<sup>36</sup> and the Dayak Cultural Foundation has announced the creation of a Dayak classical music orchestra.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, some leaders have called for tighter regulations in the pop music industry in order to protect the Iban singers from exploitation by (ethnic Chinese) middlemen, as well as official support to market their own tapes.<sup>38</sup> The Housing Minister, Datuk Celestine Ujang, believes some Iban artists would be millionaires if they were given a fair share of the industry's profits.<sup>39</sup>

The thriving Sino-Iban music industry in Sibu is the outcome of a number of favorable circumstances: the expansion of the music industry in other parts of the Archipelago, the economic growth and diversification of the Sibu area in particular and Sarawak in general, an urbanizing Iban population with a growing demand for "modern" forms of entertainment that RTM was failing to provide, the old symbiotic relations of patronage/exploitation binding Sibu Chinese and Iban, and the entrepreneurial acumen of one particular Sibu family.

### Television

The invention of television (1931) preceded by several decades the invention of Malaysia, a political entity described by Anderson (1998) as a "hasty amalgam of Malaya, Singapore and the Bornean regions of Sarawak and Sabah" arranged by Whitehall.<sup>40</sup> Both Malaysia and Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) were born in 1963. Unlike the BBC, RTM was never intended to be a public service. Rather, it was to be a *government* service with a crucial mission, as it was regarded as "an important tool for facilitating or encouraging socio-economic development and for fostering national integration amongst the country's multi-ethnic peoples" (Anuar and Kim 1996: 262). Six years later, a second channel was launched. Its directives followed those for the first channel and remained unchanged into the 1990s:

1. to explain in-depth and with the widest possible coverage the policies and programs of the government in order to ensure maximum understanding by the public;

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<sup>35</sup>A case in point is the Iban politician and former headmaster, Jimmy Donald, who has worked on the musical heritage of the Iban. In a recent paper (Donald 1997), he singles out a number of traditional genres, including *didi* (lullabies) and other songs for children, *ramban* (used to correct someone's behavior), *pelandai* (to entertain and egg on a warrior), *dungai* (an entertaining form of "conversation"), *kana* (a sung epic), *pengap* or *timang* (invocation of the deities at major festivals), *renong* (to recall a love story, to heal a shaman's patients, to open a *pengap*), and others.

<sup>36</sup>*Sarawak Tribune*, 8 April 1997.

<sup>37</sup>*Sarawak Tribune*, 2 April 1998. The orchestra has now been founded and performed a concert, as reported in the last *BRB*, during the 2000 BRC conference in Kuching (Brakel 2001).

<sup>38</sup>These views were put forward by an Iban councillor (name not recorded) at a workshop on Iban arts held in Kuching in April 1997.

<sup>39</sup>*Sarawak Tribune*, 2 April 1998. As it happens, Ujang himself is a millionaire.

<sup>40</sup>But see Jones (2002) for a more complex interpretation.

2. to stimulate public interest and opinion in order to achieve changes in line with the requirements of the government;
3. to assist in promoting civic consciousness and fostering the development of Malaysian arts and culture; and
4. to provide suitable elements of popular education, general information and entertainment (Nain 1996:162).

Over the years, the realities of Malaysia's political life have tarnished these lofty ideals. Khoo (1995) gives three representative examples. In 1983, the populism of Dr. Mahathir, Malaysia's Prime Minister, was at its peak. As leader of the ruling coalition's dominant party, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), and undisputed national leader, he was able to mobilize the UMNO-owned newspapers, especially the *New Straits Times* and *Berita Harian*, to carry "reports, features, analyses and letters [...] slanted against the Malay royalty." In addition, the state-owned TV stations ran a series of Malay films on the rampant tyranny suffered by the people "under the Malay equivalents of the *ancien regime*" (1995: 206-7). Second, in 1986 RTM screened an edited police videotape to discredit the opposition party, PAS (1995: 228). Finally, in 1988-89 the *Lagu Setia* (a song of loyalty to king and country, leaders and people, religion and race) was repeatedly broadcast over radio and television and sung at political, government and civic functions (1995: 321).

The late 1980s were marked by the increased authoritarianism of a vulnerable Mahathir. His ruling coalition, the Barisan Nasional, used docile media organizations, notably television and the press, owned by politicians and businessmen "to promote and legitimise itself" and to "discredit political opposition and dissent more generally" (Gomez and Jomo 1997:3). Critics say that television's potential role as a tool of "popular education" and national integration has lost out to the dictates of advertisers who favor entertaining foreign productions. In the 1980s, Mahathir's government began issuing licenses for the creation of private TV companies. His intention was to raise funds while retaining control over party political content by selling to carefully chosen bidders. All along, television has remained a key electoral tool for Barisan Nasional, the Malay-controlled ruling coalition (Anuar and Kim 1996).

In 1984, the private channel TV3 was created. The official justification was that private television would foster competition, help reduce the size of the government debt, and counter the VCR threat to national unity after an increasing number of ethnic Indians and Chinese had turned to imported videos in their own tongues, shunning the Malay-language domination of RTM's programming (Hashim 1995). TV3 was a huge commercial success. Despite a strong economic recession, it recorded a pre-tax profit of RM 2.16 million in 1985. Five years later, this figure had multiplied fifteenfold to reach RM 31.59 million. This led to rapid changes in the shareholding structure. By 1994 the majority shareholder was the group MRCB, controlled by close associates of Anwar Ibrahim (Gomez 1997: 91-92). TV3's positive coverage of Anwar is said to have played a key role in his wresting the UMNO deputy presidency from Ghafar Baba as part of his bid to ultimately become Prime Minister (Gomez 1997: 126-127). In 1997, Shamsuddin Abdul Kadir, close to Mahathir, became one of TV3's directors (Gomez 1997: 73).

Some vocal sectors within urban West Malaysian society have expressed dismay at what they see as a constant meddling of politicians in the programming, a widespread

lack of professionalism and the unrelenting search for lucrative revenues from transnational advertising agencies. Both RTM and TV3 have been attacked for allowing un-Asian levels of sex and violence into their programming. RTM's hard-earned 1980s ratio of 60 domestic productions to every 40 imported ones had by 1993 been reversed. TV3 was even more westernized: 80% of its programs came from the West, mostly from the USA (Hashim Rahman 1995). These figures, say the critics, indicate that the policies to foster a national culture are under severe threat (Nain 1996). Pressure from non-Malay quarters led to a compromise: RTM would devote its first channel to the promotion of the Malay(sian) language and culture, while TV2 would target the needs of the non-Malay groups by broadcasting in Chinese, Tamil and English (Hashim 1995). Despite this adjustment, a number of pressure groups still feel that their constituents are under-represented, including women's groups, small ethnic minorities and non-Muslim religious groups (Anuar and Kim 1996).

A persistent bone of contention is religion. Islam is a main ingredient in the synthetic Malaysian culture dreamed up by the UMNO leaders after the serious 1969 racial riots in West Malaysia. It is the only religion with TV coverage, a perennial source of resentment from other religious quarters. So far, moderate Muslim values have dominated local productions. Most RTM dramas revolve around the concerns of the Malay community, notably, how to reconcile the demands of modernization with the Islamic faith.<sup>41</sup> Two Malaysian researchers describe how "Islamic values are injected [in many dramas], partly as an indirect response to the government's desire to instil Islamic values into the administration and wider society" (Anuar and Kim 1996: 270).

In their television history, the Bornean states are again a special case. Transmission commenced in Sabah in 1974, eleven years after it had done so in West Malaysia. From 1975 Sarawak was allowed to use the Sabahan facilities. Various cultural, musical and religious programs were produced and broadcast by the two states over a joint channel known as Channel 3. However, in 1985 Channel 3 was closed down following directives from Kuala Lumpur — predictably, it was seen as a threat to national unity. Programming was taken over by the center, with which airtime was now "shared." Non-Muslim religious programs were never again broadcast.<sup>42</sup> Today, in spite of Sarawak's impressive economic growth of the past two decades, local production is lower than it was in the 1970s. Three kinds of programs are produced in Sarawak:

1. *Rampai Kenyalang*.<sup>43</sup> The state's oldest program, launched in 1976, this 30-minute newsreel is broadcast every Wednesday from 12:15 to 12:45. It covers political events, sports and cultural celebrations such as Gawai Dayak.
2. Documentaries on development and culture. Irregularly broadcast, on average twice a month.
3. Music, the arts, entertainment. Also irregular broadcasts.

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<sup>41</sup>An interesting parallel with the Radio Sarawak dramas and BLB novellas discussed earlier.

<sup>42</sup>When the Christian Kadazan-dominated *Parti Bersatu Sabah* (PBS) swept into power in Sabah in 1990, the rebirth of a state television station was at the top of their electoral manifesto (Jawan 1994: 220-221). The Federal government, however, successfully thwarted such attempts.

<sup>43</sup>Previously known as *Majalah Sarawak* and *Mingguan Sarawak*.

Television in Sarawak is a West Malaysian import that arrived more than a decade later. Together with the Malay-medium school system, television is an integral part of the wide-ranging process of “double westernization” affecting Sarawak and Sabah since the Federation was created in 1963, and accelerated since the mid-1970s. By “double westernization” I mean the two-step flow of ideas, images, and practices from the Western world (especially the USA) selected and recycled in West Malaysia and then re-exported to East Malaysia. Television is also a reliable propaganda tool for the ruling government coalition, and in particular for the country's authoritarian Prime Minister. It is a fundamental conveyor of nation-building and modernity visions, notably Mahathir's Vision 2020—his dream of a developed Malaysia by the year 2020 (Postill 2002a). Finally, it is the site of many a struggle for political and economic clout. Attempts by the Bornean states to develop an autonomous channel in the 1970s were soon thwarted by Kuala Lumpur in the interest of “national unity,” the same interest that led to the burning of Iban books. The result is that Iban and other Dayak groups are systematically excluded from television. The sole recurrent Iban contribution is that of a young woman clad in traditional costume who sings the Vision 2020 along with four other attractive peers, each representing a major Malaysian ‘race’ (*bangsa*). This is but one example of the nation-state's indefatigable efforts to tame cultural diversity by overcommunicating the aesthetic appeal of the various cultures to a nationwide audience while *undercommunicating* (Eriksen 1993:84 following Goffman) their chief perceived threat to national unity: their unique languages and cultures. The Dayaks can be seen on television, but they cannot be heard.

### **Marrying pop and pomp**

With the decline of the great pagan rituals of the past, and with the tedious simplicity of Christian rites and the development of an urban Iban elite in Sarawak, a secular celebration has acquired growing prominence over the past three decades: Gawai Dayak, the 1st of June pan-Dayak Festival launched in 1965 by the Iban Chief Minister of Sarawak, Kalong Ningkan, to match the Malay Hari Raya and Chinese New Year celebrations. Gawai Dayak is a mass event celebrated in towns and longhouses across Sarawak. There are special state television and radio programs to mark it, as well as newspaper features and advertisements, souvenir programs, postcards and other tourist memorabilia, posters and hoardings of brands of international beer and tobacco, photographs by tourists and Dayaks alike, greeting cards, telephone calls, fax and email messages, speeches mediated by public-address systems, Iban karaoke audio- and videotapes, and the Gawai Dayak midnight toast, which is synchronized across the land by means of a mobile medium: the wristwatch. In a word, it is a media-fueled, controlled explosion of ethnic jubilation. By contrast, other kinds of outbursts, as we saw in the case of the anti-logging blockades, are quietly kept away from the mass media limelight.

To illustrate the media production side of Gawai Dayak, I will cast but a glance at the 1994 souvenir program published by the Kuching-based Organising Committee. The cover shows the portrait of the previous year's *Kumang Gawai*, or Gawai Beauty Queen (Iban Section). Overleaf, the reader is welcomed with the greeting “Happy Gawai 1994” in Malay and eleven Dayak languages. Page 3 contains a list of “Gawai Themes” from the first Festival in 1987 to 1994. They all stress the need for unity, in line with the Chief Minister's oft-repeated slogan “politics of development,” i.e. the idea that development

should be above ethnic-orientated “politicking.” The last three themes focus more specifically on the familiar conundrum of how to reconcile tradition and development:

- 1992 CULTURE: THE PILLAR OF UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT
- 1993 ADAT AND TECHNOLOGY FOR NATIONAL PROGRESS
- 1994 CULTURAL CONFLUENCE AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT  
TOWARDS VISION 2020

The next item is a preface written, also in English, by the Iban anthropologist and former Director of the Sarawak Museum, Dr. Peter Kedit. He relates the 1994 theme to the metaphor “confluence of rivers,” applicable in his view to Sarawak’s cultural and economic history, as well as to Malaysia’s national motto “Unity in Diversity.”

The Pacific nations provide us again with a useful comparative framework. LiPuma and Meltzoff (1990: 79-90) have analyzed the social construction of a “public culture” in the Solomon Islands during ceremonies of independence. Like Malaysia, this nation-state is a British colonial creation. These ceremonies provide an annual setting for complex struggles over the representation of a national identity amidst great ethnic diversity and growing class differences. Ethnicity is simultaneously exalted and nested within the national identity. As in the Iban ethnohistorical accounts mentioned in the previous research note, headhunting is presented as part of the internal strife that fragmented the Solomon Islands before unification. Similarly, the new media are mobilized by the elites to present the scattered islands as “a new, fledgling nation built on a primordial unity” (1990: 90). Time and space are reconceptualized, and the nation is portrayed and performed as a natural unit antedating its official birth. The leitmotif is to preserve the indigenous traditions “by creating a special time and space (i.e., ritual ceremonies) where they may be displayed” (1990: 90). Across much of the post-colonial world, elites have invented pseudo-rituals and media narratives to symbolically conjoin centralized states with their sub-national ethnic groups (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Throughout the Pacific, says Sullivan (1993:551), notions of *kastom* (‘custom’) have become powerful political tools, “so vague as to be both unifying and dividing, invoking various levels of community.” These “ideologies of primordial culture” are pervasive across the vast region’s mass media because “like [the] mass media themselves, [they] easily transcend geographic and linguistic barriers.” In Island Southeast Asia, from Southern Thailand to West Papua, the term *adat* (‘custom’) performs an identical service through a growing number of elite-controlled media, both modern (radio, television, public-address systems, etc.) and pre-modern (dance, music, etc.). Lacking a common language and cultural heritage, the Dayaks (including those who follow rather than set the official agenda) are re-presenting themselves through a small set of vague terms and images.

The next section in the souvenir program is a series of double-page messages from two state and another two Dayak leaders. The Dayaks (the Deputy Chief Minister, Tan Sri Alfred Jabu, and the State Minister for Land Development, Datuk Celestine Ujang) are members of the so-called “big three” Iban millionaire politicians within the Melanau-controlled PBB, the dominant party within the ruling coalition at state level (Jawan 1994: 122). There follows the official prayer, *Sampi Gawai Dayak 1994*, written by Janang Ensiring, whom we have already encountered twice, first as a young patriotic poet, then as a middle-aged novelist. Among wishes of good health and longevity for all, Ensiring waves a proverbial cockerel (*miau manuk*) to ask the benevolent spirits “that our *adat* and

our unity will follow firmly and closely the *Rukun Negara* [Malaysia's national ideology]" (*Awak ka adat kitai enggau sempekat kitai tegap munda sapat Rukun Negara*). Then there is a long *biau* ('blessing') by the Iban politician Jimmy Donald in which he rewards, to quote from the English abstract provided, "the efforts of our wise leaders to perpetuate the noble values and the rich cultural heritage of the Dayak community." This is followed by a long photographic section in which the leaders are seen to partake in the colorful festivities.

Tourism being a growth industry in the state, on page 22 we learn about "Gawai Tourism Nite" which includes a "Traditional Gawai Welcome," dinner, Gawai "rituals," traditional music, a beauty parade and the latest pop hits from Sibuh. The next section is made up of background information on some of the Dayak cultures represented in 1994, including materials from a foreign anthropologist (Jensen), an Iban ethnohistorian (Sandin), and Dayak staff from the Council for Customary Law (Langub, Belawing). Finally, there is a long list of committee members and a number of mostly tourism-related advertisements.

As this product shows, this remarkably mediated ceremony expresses and reinforces Sarawak's ethnic-weighted imbalance of power. The ceremonial, colorful side of "the Dayaks" has accompanied powerful figures in Sarawak since the Brooke days. Gawai lends legitimacy to the political elite's claim that "the politics of development" is a successful formula of government that reconciles the demands of modernization with the preservation of a rich cultural heritage. In turn, they argue, this rich heritage can generate more revenue for the state and its people in the form of tourism.

The other side of the official festive coin is provided by the Sibuh-based popular music industry. Iban cassette tapes and karaoke videos are increasingly popular with longhouse revelers. The complementarity of Sibuh and Kuching—of Iban pop and Iban pomp—is never more apparent than during Gawai. This festival is, in sum, a "rite of modernization" (Peacock 1968), a celebration of and through clock and calendar time that provides all Dayaks with an official "slot" in the annual round of national events (Postill 2002a).

### **Interpersonal media**

Gawai Dayak mobilizes two kinds of media: the mass media we have discussed throughout this piece (radio, print media, television, etc) and also what are known as "interpersonal media," that is, technologies that allow two-way communication, including letters, telephone, fax, email, and public-address systems (cf. Thompson 1995). In a nation-state such as Malaysia where the mass media are under strict government control, the interpersonal media have a special significance. Thus, Internet reports of all kinds reach Iban longhouses through indirect (and imperfect) channels. In 1997, a deluge of "flying letters" accusing the Chief Minister, Taib Mahmud, of fleeing Sarawak at the height of the forest fires in neighboring Kalimantan, reached all areas of the state (see *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 October 1997, for one of many pro-Taib retorts). Rumors that Taib had deposited 8 billion ringgit from his logging ventures in a Swiss bank reached the rural areas and were quietly relayed in coffee shops and longhouse galleries. In this case, a number of interpersonal media (especially email, telephone and letters) and face-to-face exchanges were mobilized to discuss allegations which had been "black-out" from the mass media.

## Conclusion

In each research note I have discussed one remarkable 20-odd-year period, one generation, of media production tied to profound social and cultural changes within Iban and Sarawak society. The first period (1954-1976) saw the rapid development of language-based Iban media—radio, books and a magazine—driven by a generation of Saribas teachers drawing on oral Iban culture. Their aim was to reconcile economic development and cultural preservation. At the same time they were furthering the state's aim of “saving the Iban from themselves,” from their presumed conservatism. The second period (1977-1997) was born with the mass destruction of books in Dayak languages by the new postcolonial, Malay-dominated state, part of the aborted ethnogenesis of a modern Iban culture. This was a period of accelerated Malaysianization and increased circulation of visual media contents. At the subnational level, the Sarawak state and its Dayak allies consolidated a vague, colourful Dayak identity supported by a wealth of visual media displayed most prominently during the Dayak Festival. A parallel discourse in the state government-controlled newspapers flourished and was pressed into intensive service at critical junctures of resistance from the Penan and other indigenous groups: the representation of the Dayaks as a backward people in need of a modern “mind-set.” Partly as a reaction to the state's monopoly over legitimate media, this period also witnessed the growth of interpersonal media (telephone, fax, email, etc.) that challenged the ruling elite's accounts of rural development.

Following King (1989), King and Wilder (2003) and other anthropologists, I see the need to understand ethnicity not as an isolated category of analysis but as part of a broader context of social, economic, and political relations—as part of what Comaroff (1996) calls the “politics of difference.” Contra Barth (in Hann 1994), I argue that the study of ethnicity in the post-colonial world cannot be detached from the study of culture and nation-building. Indeed, in Borneo as in other Asia-Pacific islands, ethnicity and nationalism are two aspects of common developmentalist projects that seek to spread vague primordial notions (of “custom,” “heritage” and the like) through various media. It is precisely those “various media” that I have sought to explore in historical detail, for this is a sorely neglected area in the literature (see also Postill 2003). This approach has uncovered behind-the-scenes struggles not so much over vague symbols, but over the development and consolidation of a modern national language and culture in Malaysia—a question that is far from resolved given the continued strength of English and several Chinese “dialects.” The attempts by Saribas Iban media producers to create a literate Iban high culture were thwarted by the new Malaysian state's will to monopolize legitimate language and culture. A literate culture “cannot normally survive without its own political shell, the state” (Gellner 1983: 140). In this regard, Iban radio posed less of a threat to the new Malaysian nation-state than Iban books, so it was allowed to live on.

Under the spell of Appadurai's (1990) “mediascape” trope and the ubiquitous notion of “globalization,” Ginsburg (1993), Sullivan (1993) and others working on non-Western media production have highlighted the multidirectional nature of media influences. While agreeing with the need to design models that can capture some of the complexity of contemporary media practices, I have insisted on the *unidirectional* flow of media innovations and contents from the West, especially the English-speaking world, into East Malaysia via West Malaysia: a massive process of “double westernization” over which end-consumers in rural Sarawak have little control.

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A SHORT HISTORY OF BIRDS' NESTS MANAGEMENT  
IN THE NIAH CAVES (SARAWAK)

Quentin Gausset

*Institute of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen*

*Frederiksholms Kanal, 4*

*DK-1220 Copenhagen K., Denmark*

quentin.gausset@anthro.ku.dk or quentingausset@yahoo.fr

### Introduction

The exploitation of birds' nests in Malaysia has a long history. Trade in birds' nests with China already existed at the start of the 17th century, when Dutch merchants began operating in the Malaysian and Indonesian region (Cranbrook, 1984: 150, Koon and Cranbrook 2002: 64-5). The trade in birds' nests was an important source of profit, which was therefore controlled first by the Sultanate of Brunei, and then by the Brooke administration which issued titles and permits to the different owners and enacted various ordinances to control the collecting of nests. In the early years of the Sarawak State, birds' nests constituted a significant source of revenue for the state, which collected export duties of 10% of the value of the nests (Cranbrook 1984: 152).

In Malaysia, mainly two species of swiftlets produce edible nests: *Collocalia fuciphaga* (producing white nests) and *Collocalia maxima* (producing black nests). Both species inhabit mainly limestone caves, such as the Niah caves, which are the object of this study. The nests are made out of the saliva and feathers of the swiftlets. Once processed to remove the feathers, the nests are consumed in soups, which are believed by many people (mainly Chinese) to have rejuvenating and cosmetic virtues.

In the main Niah cave, the exploitation of birds' nests began fairly recently, less than 200 years ago (Harrison and Jamuh 1956; Medway 1958; Koon and Cranbrook 2002: 68). Niah soon became a major center of black nest production, which peaked at 18.500 kg per year in 1931, or 70% of the total production of black nests in the state of Sarawak for that year (Cranbrook 1984: 155). The exploitation of birds' nests in the Niah caves sustains the livelihoods of hundreds of people, and has been one of the backbones of economic development for Niah town. One even talks of "birds' nests tycoons," people who became very rich within a short time, just through birds' nests trade. The fame of the Niah caves owes a lot to this huge production of nests, but also to the archaeological discovery of the oldest human remains in Southeast Asia (Harrison 1958). In order to protect this unique archaeological site, the caves were made into a national heritage site under the authority of the Sarawak Museum, and later on into a national park under the authority of the National Parks department. Recently, the swiftlets have become protected species.

Before 1980, only two harvests were allowed, in December and June, each of which lasted for 2 months (Medway 1958: 467). Each harvest was followed by 4 months without harvest.<sup>1</sup> Most owners and collectors were Penan, while traders were first Malay, then, later on, local Chinese. The owners either worked in the cave themselves or hired

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<sup>1</sup>However, several of my informants told me that each harvest lasted 3 months and was followed by a period of 3 months without harvest.



Penan workers who were paid a fixed price per harvest, as well as a share of the harvest (Cranbrook 1984). During harvest time, workers stayed overnight in the cave. Traders established a whole village in an adjacent cave (the so-called "trader cave"), to barter goods for raw nests, or buy nests with money. As many workers contracted debts with traders, they often repaid the debt in kind. In the early 1930s, the state established auctions to secure a better price for the workers and owners (through traders' competition) and to prevent tax evasion (Banks 1937). The state also tried to outlaw the repayment of debt in kind with nests.

At the end of the 1950s, birds' nests collection was a dying business (Medway 1957; 1958). In 1958, only five Penan were still working as professional birds' nests collectors. The price was so low that it was not economical to exploit nests, given the concomitant risk. The bird population was very impressive and was estimated to be about 1.5 million in the 1950s (Medway 1957) and 1.3 million in 1978 (Leh and Hall 1996).

In short, before 1980, the local system of birds' nests management, which involved mainly Penan and some local traders, was still sustainable and well controlled. It was taking place on a rather low and declining scale. The number of birds and birds' nests was very high, but the price was low.

Today, any visitor would be struck by the contrast that exists between what they would see and the description that travelers made of the Niah cave 25 or more years ago. The clouds of birds and bats which used to swarm in and out of the cave in search of food, and which were praised by tourist guides, have disappeared. The cave looks quiet and empty of wildlife, but is full of people who stay inside to look after their holes<sup>2</sup> and prevent others from harvesting their nests. The days are gone when visitors covered themselves with plastic bags to prevent bird droppings from staining their clothes. The number of swiftlets building black edible nests has dramatically declined. It was estimated to be less than 500,000 in 1993 (Leh and Hall 1996), and 180,000 in 1997 (Kheng 1997).

Although these estimations are not easy to make, and are subject to numerous methodological problems, nobody challenges the fact that there has been a recent and drastic decline in the population of birds. What is more problematic, however, is to identify the causes of this decline. One can broadly distinguish two different types of causes: those which are physical, and those which are socio-economic in nature.

Various physical causes have been suggested, which all argue that the local ecosystem has been disturbed to the point that it has affected the population of birds. It has been suggested that the collection of guano has a negative impact on the cave ecosystem and on the population of insects which the birds eat (Leh & Hall 1996: 25-26). Many local people also claim to have witnessed a major drop in bird populations after the forest fires and haze which hit the region in 1997. Some also blame fire and smoke to explain why the number of birds dropped in the big mouth of the cave after a house which was standing there burned, and the smoke from the fire killed thousands of birds. A recent invasion of green algae is also blamed for spoiling the reproduction grounds of the swiftlets (Kheng 1997: 91; Leh, personal communication). Many local people believe that the use of pesticides has had a negative impact on bird populations (see also Vardon,

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<sup>2</sup>The main cave, where most of the birds' nest collecting takes place, is subdivided into several hundred "holes," all of which are owned by individual owners.

in Kheng 1997: 91), as it may have both reduced the amount of insects on which birds feed, and poisoned the birds who ate those insects. One can note, to support this hypothesis, that insecticide residues have been found in swiftlets from Niah cave (Cranbrook 1984: 160). This argument might be related to another one, which is probably the most convincing, which argues that the most serious disturbance of the ecosystem, happening on the largest scale, is the establishment of huge oil palm plantations all over the Niah area. This has not only changed the ecosystem of the whole area in which swiftlets feed, but it has also involved the use of large quantities of pesticides (see, for example, Agger et al. 2000). This change has not only impacted the population of swiftlets building edible nests, but also the population of mossy swiftlets and bats. As I already mentioned, big clouds of bats used to be seen coming out of the cave at dawn. This is no longer the case, as the bats are not numerous enough. The production of guano, which comes not only from edible-nest swiftlets, but also from mossy swiftlets and bats, has declined sharply (Leh & Hall 1996), to such an extent that it cannot be accounted for just by the decline in edible-nest swiftlets, but also implies a decline in bats and mossy swiftlet populations. As the bats and mossy swiftlets are not so much disturbed by human exploitation inside the cave (exploitation usually concentrates on the edible nests), the decline of these species strongly supports explanations in terms of physical causes.

Apart from these physical causes of decline, most people agree that humans have also had a negative impact on the population of birds, both because of their constant occupation of the cave (noise, light and smoke can disturb the birds) and through over-exploitation of the nests. Birds' nests could be exploited sustainably and generate a high yield, as they are a renewable resource. Two or three harvests per year could take place without having much detrimental impact on the bird population (Koon and Cranbrook 2002). But if all nests are harvested before eggs are laid and chicks can fly, then the birds cannot reproduce and their population will decline. An important question is, of course, to assess the relative importance of the physical causes compared to the socio-economic ones, and to establish the maximum population of birds that could be sustained under a sound system of management. Today, nobody can answer this question. Further research is needed to know how many birds can be sustained in the present state of the ecosystem. In any case, we must be careful not to consider over-exploitation as the only cause of edible nests' decline, as physical aspects also have had an impact on the bird population.

This being said, I intend in this paper to focus on the possible socio-economic causes of the birds' decline. I will explore the problems linked to the present management of this resource, which is generally believed to be unsustainable.

### Methods

The research was conducted from April to June 2000, October 2000 and July-August 2001, and based mainly on semi-structured interviews.<sup>3</sup> All kinds of actors in birds' nests management were interviewed in Niah, including 7 traders (mainly Chinese), 11 owners of parts of the cave (mainly Penan who have become Malayized), more than 20 workers and collectors of nests (mainly Iban), and 6 government officials dealing with the management of birds' nests. A questionnaire was administered in Rumah Ranggong, an Iban community living close to the cave whose members are heavily involved in

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<sup>3</sup>I would like to express my gratitude to SLUSE (The Danish University Consortium on Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resource Management) for funding this research.

collecting nests (they constitute probably between a fourth and a third of all the people working in the cave). The questionnaire aimed at collecting data on how many people were involved in the collection, in what kind of specialized work, and how many people depended on the money generated by this business.

Methodological problems included the difficulty to conduct research about income and money matters, as well as the difficulty in studying illegal activities (a big part of nest collection and trade is officially forbidden by different regulations and there is much theft—I will come back to these points later). Most people are reluctant to explain their practices in detail, and express a deep distrust of researchers. Many people are also unwilling to cooperate, as they doubt that the research will be of any benefit to them—and actually fear that the research will harm their short-term interests. In this context, I took all details about income, trade and harvesting practices with caution, trying as much as possible to cross-check the information with different actors (which was difficult, as the level of secrecy is also high among members of the same community and among the different actors of birds' nests management). This is the reason why this article does not give many quantitative details about harvest or income. When it does, the numbers have been crosschecked by different kinds of actors, such as the collector, the trader, and the owner of a cave nesting site, or have been directly observed by me, such as when accompanying collectors when they sold their harvest to a trader. Of course, I had to promise to protect the confidentiality relating to these data, and, therefore, the anonymity of my informants. Despite the lack of detail, the general lines, illustrated by a few trustworthy examples, are sufficient to understand the socio-economic causes and constraints linked to birds' nests management. These have been broadly confirmed and supported during a debriefing session organized by the State Planning Unit of Sarawak, which was attended by most government actors concerned with the management of birds' nests, including the national parks, Sarawak Museum, agriculture department, and Majilis Adat-Istiadat—the administration responsible for recording and codifying customary law.

### **Socio-economic causes of birds' nests decline**

In the following, the different factors that have changed in the past 25 years and that have caused problems for the management of birds' nests, are reviewed.

#### **Increase in price**

The price of birds' nests began to rise in the early 1980s (*Borneo Bulletin* 1982, Leh 1998: 25, Koon & Cranbrook 2002: 86-7). From 10-50 RM/kg in the late 1970s, the price of raw black nests increased to 350-500 RM/kg in the late 1980s, and peaked at 1600 RM/kg in 1996. Then it went down to 1200-1400 RM/kg, following the Southeast Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s (Koon & Cranbrook 2002: 86.<sup>4</sup>)

This huge raise in price was accompanied by a revival of the exploitation of birds' nests. From being a dying business in the 1950s, a great number of people suddenly began to be interested in birds' nests. The legitimate owners got a renewed interest in exploiting their resource, but were still doing this following the old management system of two harvests per year, under the supervision of the state. But people other than the Penan also tried to seize the new opportunities, especially the neighboring Iban. The Iban

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<sup>4</sup>Prices are in Malaysian Ringgit (RM). Throughout 2002, the Malaysian Ringgit was valued at roughly 3.8 to 1 US Dollar.

live closer to the cave than the Penan themselves (who live on the other side of the Niah river), and have therefore an easy access to the cave. The neighboring Iban communities then started “stealing” the nests outside of the harvesting period. The pressure on the nests then increased, both because of the Penan’s renewed interest in their resource, but also because of the interest found among outsiders, who began to steal the resource.<sup>5</sup>

### Challenge of ownership

The Penan felt totally powerless in regard to the new situation. They were not used to guarding their cave holes all the time, and it was in any case difficult for them to organize such a guard since they live far from the cave, on the other side of the Niah river. The encroachers got more and more daring, and did not mind being caught by an angry Penan owner. They just continued to operate, more and more in the open. The Penan ownership was seriously challenged, as few non-Penan people took it into account.

The Penan then reported the situation to the administration. However, instead of trying to support the Penan’s ownership and prevent theft to secure the Penan’s rights to their resource, the administration suggested that it would be a good idea to prevent *everybody* from harvesting nests, including the Penan themselves, to replenish the resource base. The administration then declared two total bans on the harvest of nests, from 1989 to 1991, and again from 1993 to 1996 (Kheng 1997). The Penan’s ownership was thus challenged a second time by the state who took over the management from them. The Penan were left without access to their own resource, and without any alternative source of income.

But this did not stop neighboring communities from continuing to exploit the nests. Theft was sometimes encouraged by unscrupulous traders who argued that it was a shame to let the resource get spoiled.<sup>6</sup> As the cave has many entrances which cannot easily be guarded, people swarmed in and continued to steal nests, on an even larger scale since the Penan were not allowed to go inside their cave to guard their resource. Instead of reinforcing the Penan’s ownership, the total ban weakened it further, giving a free hand for thieves to operate. And instead of paying the Penan to guard their own cave and nests, the state spent a substantial amount of money paying a police field force, which did not have a personal stake in securing the resource, and which was relatively powerless in preventing access to the cave. Despite increasing the use of force and putting a few encroachers in jail, they were unable to stop the exploitation of nests. Some of them then began to accept bribes and let people go inside the cave to exploit the nests.

The Penan could not exploit their own nests because of the official ban, although they were stolen by their neighbors and bought by illegal traders. Their ownership was therefore seriously challenged; they were close to losing everything. Given the situation, the owners had the choice between two strategies: either harvest their own nests before they were stolen (which was difficult as there was a total ban on harvesting and as other people were already engaged in this activity), or lease their cave sites, thereby getting rid of the management problem. In order to retain some control over their resource, most of them preferred to rent their cave sites to the Chinese traders or Iban “thieves” who were

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<sup>5</sup>This happened at the same time that huge oil palm plantations began to be established, disturbing the ecosystem on which the birds relied.

<sup>6</sup>If one harvest is missed, the nests degenerate naturally and may even become unmarketable (Medway 1958: 469).

stealing the nests under their eyes while they themselves were prevented from doing anything to stop it. In this way, they could secure revenue from their resource and get their ownership recognized by those who were formerly challenging it.

### **New actors**

Before the 1980s, the number of actors involved in birds' nests exploitation was relatively limited. There were the *owners*, who were generally Penan descended from those who had discovered the main cave and had started exploiting it in the 19th century. As stated previously, the cave is subdivided into several hundred "holes," which are all individually owned by more than 100 owners. The ownership is private, and is sanctioned by a title which was given under the Brooke administration, and which can be sold or inherited. Although the Penan were the original owners, a certain number of Chinese or Malay traders now own some holes, either through historical matrimonial alliances with Penan, or through purchase. Second, there were the *workers* or *collectors* (either climbers who make the nests fall from the walls of the cave or gatherers who take the nests which have fallen to the ground). Third, there were the *traders* who were first Malay and then, later, local Chinese. Finally, as already mentioned, the *state* played an important role in controlling and regulating the harvesting of nests, collecting taxes, controlling immigration (many workers are illegal immigrants from Indonesia who were attracted to Niah because of the development of oil palm plantations and the labor opportunities thereby created) and crime (illegal gambling and selling of drugs is taking place inside the caves).

During the 1980s, with the rapid increase in the price of nests, many new actors became interested in the nests. New traders (mainly Chinese) appeared, who began to buy nests without having a proper permit entitling them to do so. The chain of traders, which already used to be very long (nests were sent from Niah to Miri or directly to Kuching, where nests are usually processed<sup>7</sup> before being exported to Singapore, Hong Kong or mainland China, where they end up in the soup of rich consumers), became even longer. Today, even some collectors sometimes buy nests from other collectors and try to sell them for a profit to traders in town, and some traders in Niah also give money to local people staying in the communities involved in harvesting nests, in order to buy nests for them.

The most important change in the 1980s was the creation of a chain of renting and leasing. As the Penan were unable to assert their ownership rights and to exploit their own resource, they began leasing their cave nesting sites. In what follows, I will refer to those who rent a site as *leasers*. Most leasers are traders (although not all traders are leasers) who seldom go into the cave themselves and prefer to sublet the site to other people who will take care of the exploitation. But some leasers exploit the cave site themselves (mainly the Iban or Penan, sometimes Kenyah), especially if the hole is small and is difficult to access. Leasers usually pay a fixed rent per year, and those who do not exploit the site themselves sublet to others for a monthly rent and the monopoly of trade on the birds' nests harvested. Again, those who *sublet* from leasers can work in the cave themselves, especially if the site is small and difficult to access. But when the hole is big, those who sublet hire labor to take care of and harvest nests. Those who hire laborers will

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<sup>7</sup>Nests are also processed at Niah on a very small scale, for local consumption or for sale to tourists visiting the caves.

be called *team leaders* (*mandur* in Iban), as they are in charge of finding labor, controlling the collection of nests, selling them to traders (usually the leaser), and distributing the salaries to the workers. Among the workers, a new kind of actor has appeared: the *caretakers* (*tukang jaga* in Iban), who stay in the cave and look after the nests to prevent theft.

It is important to distinguish these different actors as they control different and specific aspect of birds' nests management. The owners (together with the state) control ownership (the right to harvest nests). The leasers control the capital which is wanted by owners and lacking among team leaders or workers. The team leaders control labor, something which is very difficult to do for owners and leasers alike. Caretakers control the assets—the nests—and prevent their theft. The collectors control the harvest. The traders control trade (the buying and selling of nests). The government agents control legislation and its enforcement. And finally, consumers control demand. However, the situation is complex and some actors play several different roles at the same time (e.g., most leasers are traders, some are team leaders, and a few are workers; some owners and team leaders can be workers at the same time, etc.).

This period also saw a progressive disengagement of the Sarawak Museum, first in the enforcement of collection rules, which at some point involved police field forces, then in the actual management of the caves. Although the Sarawak Museum still remains in charge of the archeological site, the management of the caves and of their wildlife (bats, birds, insects, etc.) has been officially transferred to the Forestry Department. This transition created confusion and tensions, not just between civil servants belonging to different administrations, but also between people involved in the birds' nests exploitation and the government servants. For some years, people were unsure who was in charge and with whom they had to negotiate. Moreover, people working for the Forestry Department did not have the long experience and knowledge of the local people and their context that the Sarawak Museum had accumulated over many years. Finally, people working for the Forestry and Wildlife Department had a more pronounced ecocentric perspective, while all the other actors had a clear anthropocentric view of birds as a valuable resource. Unfortunately, the transition happened at a time when the old system had broken down, and when intervention from the state, despite the best of intentions, was unable to control abuses, and actually made things worse. The Forestry Department has therefore so far failed to gain the trust of the local actors.

### **Increase of insecurity**

We have already seen how the Penan's ownership became very insecure, being threatened both by thieves and by the state which enacted a total ban on harvesting and prevented the Penan from harvesting their nests. They then started renting their cave sites to traders and workers, thereby "legalizing," from their point of view (in the sense that they authorized the "illegal" activities) the theft and trade in stolen nests that was going on. Although the position of traders and workers became relatively more secure after the leasing arrangements were created, these arrangements still remained characterized by a great deal of insecurity.

The contracts made between the owners and the traders are renegotiated every year, and this is a source of insecurity for the traders, who bear a high financial risk and invest a lot of money before they can make a profit. The fact that they lend money to owners and workers helps them to lower this uncertainty in binding them to longer-term

agreements. The traders also try to establish monopolies through subletting their cave sites to workers on the condition that they sell the entire harvest through them (at a price which is less competitive). But there is much insecurity in this as the workers who rent the cave site from them often try to sell the nests to other traders who will give them a higher price.

The workers' contracts with the traders are also made on a yearly basis, which brings the same type of uncertainty. Moreover, they are the ones risking their lives and health to exploit the nests, although they get the lowest share per person (see below). Another risk and uncertainty is that they often harvest nests outside of the legal period, which is illegal and can bring sanctions. Their strategy to cope with these uncertainties is, first, to try to increase their income through selling their nests to unauthorized traders, and second, to engage in the exploitation of unregistered caves, which have no traditional owner, which do not depend on a trader, and which gives them all the profit. A final source of insecurity is that the nests can easily be stolen by others, and that workers are held responsible when this happens.

Finally, even the state feels insecure, as its legitimacy and credibility are at stake. The state must protect the swiftlets (they are defined as a threatened species), secure local people's livelihoods, and secure law and order. So far, it has had a lot of difficulties in fulfilling these duties. Part of the problem is that the management of the cave involves different administrations (forestry and wildlife, archaeology, agriculture, local development, customary law of indigenous people, police, etc.) which defend different things, based on different premises and strategies that are at times contradictory.

### **Dilution of responsibility**

The higher insecurity of all the actors described above goes hand in hand with their lower sense of responsibility. As all the actors depend on others for the management of the nests, and as the number of different actors has increased in the past 25 years, people feel helpless in changing the present system. A sound management of the nests requires the collaboration of different actors, but nobody knows how to organize this collaboration. Everybody blames others as responsible for the degradation of the resource. The long chain of actors increases insecurity and dilutes responsibility.

The owner of the cave site does not feel responsible anymore, since he delegates responsibility to the person who rents the site from him. He gives the contract to the highest bidder, not to the soundest manager (the contract does not mention anything about the number of harvests which can be taken, despite the fact that the rent is fixed, regardless of the number of harvests). The owner gets a yearly rent, and does not know what is happening inside his cave site. It is not so much that he does not care as long as he receives the rent, but rather that he feels totally powerless in imposing any sort of management – owners started renting their cave sites precisely because they could not control the situation.

The leaser (often a trader) is usually not exploiting the cave site by himself, and rents it to a team leader (who does not exploit it either but hires people to do it) or directly to a worker; he therefore delegates all the management problems to them. He does not know what is happening in the cave; he only wants to make sure that his workers sell the nests harvested to him instead of his competitors. He makes a profit on every nest that he buys, and he does not mind, therefore, if the number of nests harvested is too high and unsustainable.

The worker exploits nests that he does not own, and does not feel responsible in developing a sound management of the resource. He is not motivated to be a sound manager since he does not own the right to harvest nests, he has an insecure contract, and since a sound management—two harvests per year—is relatively risky because the nests might be stolen and he would bear the consequences. Moreover, it is believed that even if the worker is a sound manager, the birds to which he gives time to reproduce might go elsewhere and reproduce in places which are not well managed. If the cost of the management is individual while the benefit is communal, it does not encourage anybody to behave responsibly, unless everybody else does the same. And as people are unable to reach a consensus on common management rules, everybody reluctantly engages in over-exploitation of the nests.

The recent creation of a birds' nests committee by the Forestry Department is unlikely to find any sustainable solutions. First, this committee does not represent all stakeholders as it is mainly constituted of cave site owners. Second, it is not really in charge of the management of the collection (which remains vested in the hands of the Forestry Department), and is powerless when dealing with the huge interests which are at stake and with the great complexity of the problem.

#### **Dilution of benefit**

Before 1980, as there were less actors than today, the benefits were more concentrated in the hands of the owners (often themselves working in the cave) and the traders. Today, in most cases, owners lease their cave site to a Chinese trader who sublets it to an Iban team leader who hires workers to take care of the cave and harvest nests. The deal between the trader and the team leader is usually either that the trader gets a monthly rent from the team leader (which encourages over-harvesting), or that he gets 1/3 of the harvest as rent. In almost all cases, the trader has the monopoly on trade of the nests harvested in the cave site (usually bought at a price which is lower than what could be found if the nests were sold on a free market). The team leader gets 2/3 of the harvest, which he redistributes among the workers according to the specific agreement between them. The monthly rent, or the 1/3 of the harvest, given to the trader roughly covers the yearly rent that the trader pays to the owner, although in some cases, especially in the new deals between new aggressive traders and newcomers in collecting, the trader makes a very high profit from the monthly rental.

To take an example, a Chinese trader rents a cave site from a Penan owner. The rent is 3000 RM per year. The trader leases the site to an Iban team leader who hires 6 other persons to take care of the cave site and harvest the nests. The trader takes 1/3 of each harvest, which today yields between 800gr and 1.5 kg of raw nests, according to the season and the size of nests at harvest. He also buys the nests at a price ranging between 800 and 1200 RM, depending on the quality of the nests. The amount of harvests per year is extremely difficult to determine exactly. According to the team leader, it is three times per year, but it is widely believed to be up to 5 or 6 times per year, if not more. If one considers 6 harvests per year, with an average 1 kg of nests, the total is 6 kg of nests. The owner gets a rent of 3000 RM per year, the workers get 2/3 of the harvest (4 kg, which they sell for 1000 RM/kg to the trader, i.e. 4000 RM or 570 RM per person). The trader gets 1/3 of the harvest (2 kg), but makes a profit on the trade of nests by selling the 6 kg to Kuching traders with a high profit (at least 50%, or 3000 RM for 6 kg). So he makes at least 6000 RM, but he has to deduct the cost of transport to Kuching, and the rent to the



owner (3000 RM). In this example, the share of the profit is roughly 30% for the owner and the trader, and 40% for the workers (or 5.7% per worker). If the number of harvests is less than 6 per year, the share of the owner will increase. If it is more, it will decrease.

In another example, a Chinese trader rents a cave from a Penan owner for 1000 RM per year. He leases it to an Iban team leader who hires 2 other persons to work in the cave. The yield is around 800 gr. If we hypothesize 6 harvests per year, the total is roughly 5 kg per year. The workers get 2/3 of the harvest (paid at an average price of 1000 RM/kg), the trader takes 1/3 of the harvest. He sells the 5 kg in Kuching for 1500 RM/kg. In this example, the workers get 39% share of the profit (3330 RM, or 1110 per person), the owner gets 12% (1000 RM), and the trader gets 49% (or 4170 RM).

Although these examples do not give the exact figures (one does not know exactly how many harvests there are per year, the exact price paid for each harvest, how much is sold directly to the trader and how much is sold on the black market, etc.), they nevertheless show that the share of the profit can vary. Owners can get between 10 and 30% of the profit, traders between 30 and 50%, and workers get around 40%, but much less if one figures the amount per person (and if one takes into consideration that team leaders can easily retain more money for themselves than what they redistribute to the workers). Considering the benefit has little meaning without considering the costs. The owner usually does not work; he just takes the money once per year. The trader bears the financial risk of the trade, and the worker risks his life and his health to establish a 24-hour guard of the nests and climbs poles to harvest nests often situated 30 to 50 meters above ground level. He is also the one who risks being pursued by the authorities in case they try to enforce their bans on collection.

### **Greater control, violence, and frequency of harvest**

The establishment of a new chain of contracts did not make the security of harvest greater. Old thieves, transformed into rightful leasers or workers, suddenly had to face theft by others. They therefore had to create solutions that the previous managers had failed to find. They resorted to three strategies. First, they began to establish a 24-hour guard in the cave, at least during the period when birds are making nests. This raised the operating cost of exploiting birds' nests tremendously. However, this strategy is not completely successful, as the nests can be quickly harvested in one or two hours when a caretaker falls asleep or is not present.

A second strategy has been to raise the level of violence and to develop mob justice inside the caves. Thieves who are caught can be beaten on the spot. Part of the problem here is that, as most of the harvesting going on is "illegal" (outside of the legal periods, or during official bans), the workers, leasers, owners, and traders involved in harvesting the birds' nests during that time are working and making profit illegally. Therefore, they cannot rely on the state or on the police to help them prevent "theft" inside the caves, since the state perceives their own activities as illegal. The only solution is for them to develop their own system of mob justice in order to discourage unwanted "thieves."

As all the former strategies partly failed, a third strategy was developed, which consists in harvesting nests as soon as they can be sold, without waiting for the chicks to have the time to fly away and reproduce, and without giving a chance to thieves to operate. Collectors don't want to take any chance in investing for the future when there is such a high risk of losing everything in the present. The lack of any efficient control of theft is one of the primary causes of over-harvesting.

### **Less respect for the cave**

Bird-David (1993) argues that hunting-gathering societies usually develop subject-to-subject types of relationships with their environment. This is true of the way the Penan used to have a very close and personified relationship with the Niah caves. Various myths exist that describe the cave as the remnant of a former village which was flooded because of some transgression of rules (Husain 1958; Sandin 1958), or that tell how the nests were originally mistaken for some form of fungi (Medway 1960). The cave is believed to be inhabited by various spirits (including some of the most important Penan local heroes), and respectful behavior must be adopted inside in order not to disturb them. Various taboos exist, some of them defended by the National Parks administration in Niah (it is, among other things, forbidden to shout inside the cave). Some of the most important Penan fertility rituals used to be performed annually at the mouth of the cave to secure abundance and good fortune.

This mythical, ritual and respectful relationship with the cave is today challenged by the new situation. Workers stay overnight in the cave and live there. They cook, eat, sleep, defecate, and listen to music or even to television. The old taboos are not respected anymore. The rituals, which require a total closure of the cave for a few days per year, are more and more difficult to practice (the workers don't want to leave their nests unguarded, and the state does not want to close the cave to tourists). As a result of this trend, the cave and the nests have been commodified and have lost most of their ritual and symbolic potency.

### **Conclusion**

Different factors have contributed to the breaking down of the old Penan management system, including the increase in the demand for nests which drove prices up. This triggered the interest of various new actors to get involved in the business, sometimes through unlawful practices, such as theft, illegal trade. This involvement of new actors has weakened the traditional mechanisms of social control and conflict resolution, and it has challenged the traditional system of ownership. State intervention, although based on the best of intentions, made things worse by closing the cave to the exploitation of the nests. This proved not only inefficient; it also weakened even further the previous system of management. As a reaction, and in an attempt to retain some form of control over their resources, the Penan owners started leasing their cave sites to traders or workers, which diluted further the responsibility for a sound management of the nests through a cascade of leasing and subleasing arrangements.

The former "thieves" were transformed into rightful workers renting their cave sites directly from the Penan owners, or sub-renting them from a Chinese leaser/trader. All workers began to stay overnight in the cave to deter thieves. The nests began to be harvested more and more often, with the number of nests decreasing steadily every year. With the workers staying overnight in the cave (cooking, eating, sleeping, etc.), the old taboos lost ground, as well as the old rituals, which require a total closure of the cave for a few days once per year.

The old sustainable system of management has given way to a new one, which is characterized by the involvement of a great number of different actors, leasing and sub-leasing arrangements, people staying 24 hours a day in the caves to look after the nests and prevent theft, and an intensive exploitation of the resource.

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SEVENTH BIENNIAL MEETINGS  
SEVENTH BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
BORNEO RESEARCH COUNCIL  
HOSTED BY UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

The Borneo Research Council Seventh Biennial International Conference was held at Universiti Malaysia Sabah in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, from 15 to 18 July 2002. The conference was hosted by the university's School of Social Sciences, and held at the new university Library.

This is the second time that the Borneo Research Council has held its biennial international conference in Kota Kinabalu. In 1992, Kota Kinabalu was host to the BRC Second Biennial International Conference, which was jointly organized by the Centre for Borneo Studies (Sabah Foundation), the Department of the Sabah Museum and other bodies. According to Dr. George Appell, the School of social sciences at UMS was selected to host the 2002 Conference because the university is renowned as a research institution in the region and the Council recognizes the importance of Social Science research in understanding mankind and the environment in Borneo.

The Conference attracted 266 registered participants from throughout Malaysia and across the world, not including undergraduate UMS students who attended. Over 180 papers were presented in addition to special panel reports.

The Opening Ceremony on 15 July was officiated by Deputy Chief Minister Y.B. Datuk Tham Nyip Shen, on behalf of the Chief Minister Y.A.B. Datuk Chong Kah Kiat. This was followed by the Keynote Address by the Council's President Dr. George Appell entitled *Current Status of Social Medical and Biological Research: Future Needs and Policy Implications*. The welcoming dinner for conference delegates was hosted by Tourism Malaysia at the Kimanis Ballroom of Hyatt Kinabalu, with Encik Edzuar Zar Ayob Azar, Regional Director of Tourism Malaysia, as Guest of Honor. The Closing Speech on 18 July was given by Dr. George N. Appell.

Due to the large number of papers to be presented, the Conference was organized into five concurrent sessions, consisting of presentations of individual research papers, as well as one special session and four panel sessions devoted to special research. The special session entitled *Maps of the Human World, Geographies of the Unseen: Ritual Responses to the Reconfiguration of Local Landscapes*, was headed by Professor Dr. Clifford Sather who currently holds the Chair of Dayak Studies at UNIMAS and Jayl Langub, Secretary of the Majlis Adat Istiadat Sarawak. The panel sessions were *Best Practices in Conservation: Communities, Donors and Forests in Borneo* chaired by Dr. Cristina Eghenter of WWF, *Making and Unmaking Borneo's Borders* chaired by Dr. Riwanto Tirtusodarmo of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, *Between Music, Dance and Ritual: Some Aspects of Kulintang in Sabah* chaired by Professor Dr. Mohd. Anis Md. Nor of the Culture Centre at Universiti Malaya, and *Preservation—Modernisation—Reinvention in the Performing Arts of Borneo* chaired by Dr. Patricia Matusky of the Tun Jugah Foundation.

This is the first BRC International Conference at which both paper sessions and panel sessions devoted to music and the performing arts have been organized. The panel

on *Kulintang* included Sunetra Fernando and Hanafi Hussin of Universiti Malaya and Dr. Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan of UMS, and discussed findings from the project *Kulintang Music and Malay Dance Traditions of North Borneo and the Philippines* which was carried out from 1998 to 2000 under a SEASREP grant. The *Performing Arts* panel also included Prof. Anis and Dr. Jacqueline, together with Dr. Clara Brakel-Papenhuyzen of the Dayak Cultural Foundation and Puan Chong Pek Lin of Batu Lintang Teachers College, Sarawak. This panel discussed major changes in traditional performing arts in Borneo.

The response to the conference from participants, particularly international researchers, was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Many expressed the view that it provided an open forum for researchers in all fields on Borneo to meet and exchange ideas. The opportunity for cross-discipline interaction was greatly appreciated, as was the chance for local and foreign participants to meet.

One of the outcomes of the conference is that the School of Social Sciences and the UMS Library will be establishing a special Borneo Research Council Corner in the library. This will become an important resource of Borneo Research Council publications and other Borneo research materials in the region.

The next BRC Biennial International Conference is scheduled to be held in Balikpapan in 2004. (Dr. Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, School of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sabah)

## PRESIDENT'S KEYNOTE ADDRESS THE FUTURE OF RESEARCH IN BORNEO

G. N. Appell, Ph.D.  
*President*  
*Borneo Research Council*

- Yang Berhormat Datuk Tham Nyip Shen, Deputy Chief Minister, Sabah,
- Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Professor Datuk Seri Panglima Dr. Abu Hassan Othman, Vice Chancellor, Universiti Malaysia Sabah,
- Yang Berusaha Professor Dr. Sabihah Osman, Dean, School of Social Sciences, Chair of the Organizing Committee,
- Distinguished Members of Government,
- Members of the Universiti Faculty,
- Honored Guests,
- Fellows and Members of the Borneo Research Council, and Participants in This Conference,
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed a great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Board of Directors and Officers to the Seventh Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council. We are most fortunate to have been invited to hold our Seventh Biennial Conference here on this stunningly beautiful new campus. It truly is impressive, and from such a

magnificent campus, great thoughts, great ideas and great men and women will surely arise.

We owe a debt of thanks to Professor Dr. Sabihah Osman, Chair of the organizing committee, who took on the work of bringing this conference to the Universiti Malaysia Sabah. It has taken much work and has produced an environment for a very important and fruitful conference. And we also want to thank Dr. Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, secretary of the organizing committee, for all her efforts to make this a great conference.

The Borneo Research Council was founded in 1968 to forward research in the social, biological and medical sciences in Borneo. Borneo is unique in that the environment and man's place in the environment can only be fully understood by the close association of all these disciplines.

For example in our own ethnographic research begun in 1959 we have used the research of botanists, entomologists, ornithologists, soil scientists, historians and so on. I wish we could find an ichthyologist who would contribute to this work.

What do these sciences have in common? What philosophy of science unites these apparently disparate disciplines?

First, it seems to me is the philosophy of holism. From the sciences of ecology and social anthropology the concept of holism has been taken and expanded. Holism looks upon the natural world and its human population as closely interlinked. What happens in the natural world affects the human population, and what happens in the human population has consequences in the natural world. This is why it is so important that these sciences work together to develop understandings of a society and its environment.

Let me give one brief example. Sacred groves exist in many of the societies of Borneo. These are found around springs and seeps of water. But these groves of trees are now being cut down in development projects. And the consequences are far reaching. Without the groves of trees, the springs and water seeps dry up. The hydrological cycle is then impaired, which impacts the weather systems. And the result appears in more lengthy droughts. Furthermore, these changes have impacts in the agricultural sector. The fauna and flora of streams change so that they are less productive. This has consequences in the diet of the local population, which affects their health. There is also a loss of birds and animals. And the human population loses a forest source of medicines and materials for construction and crafts.

At this point I want to digress for a moment and talk about the quality of research. Research must be scholarly. I know of a number of instances where researchers have acted like Christopher Columbus and published on their research as if they were the original discoverers of the issue, ignoring or ignorant of past research findings that might have amplified their research results or perhaps nullified them.

To return to the nature of shared scientific concepts by all these disciplines, there is another concept that is common to all. It is the use of a time line to determine causal relationships and other invariant relationships.

Here, being hosted by the School of Social Sciences, it might be appropriate to phrase this time line in terms of the past, present and future. And I would like to say a few words on the importance of the past to an understanding of the present and how they both contribute to the design of a fruitful future.

Coming on the flight over here I had the opportunity to read in English a translation of some of the critical works of Taoism. The translator was Chinese from Hong Kong.

She wrote:

When I was growing up in Hong Kong I received a western education at school and a Chinese education at home.

She went on to write:

I was told by my elders that it was important to know the history and the traditions of my people, and that persons who are not in touch with their traditions are like weeds blown by the wind.

The problems caused by rapid social and technological change are shared by all the countries of the world today including my country and the countries of Borneo. Since this is a Borneo meeting, however, I will focus my comments on the problems of change as they relate to Borneo, and how it is important to know the past to understand the present and plan for the future.

Let me give just two brief examples where the imperfect knowledge of the past has consequences in the present, and may have something useful to say about the future.

Where we work, there were tall, beautiful trees where great hives of bees with honey hung from their limbs. They provided honey for the people, honey which is metabolized differently from sugar and is therefore a more healthful food. Most of these trees have been cut down in making way for *kebun*. The result is a greater reliance on refined sugars, and these have an impact in terms of contributing to the increase in diabetes. But for the future, I wonder how will the fruit trees, *kebun* and other plantings reach their maximum fruiting without these bees.

The second example is a bit sad. Legend has it that a man was out hunting with his dogs, chasing a *tempadau*. He was just about to spear it, when they were all overtaken by the flood. They were turned to stone. And one could see the outline of this hunt in these stones and what had happened in the past. In putting in a new road, they were bulldozed down and destroyed. Yet what a wonderful park for everyone, including tourists, could have been built around them.

The future lies in our hands. Not just here in Sabah, but everywhere in the world. And my thoughts are not just on Borneo, but also on my own country. The future cannot be built on consuming irreplaceable resources. And this includes not only the physical resources but also the social resources. The future must be built on the strengths of a country and the strengths of the past.

While it is a critical goal to work toward sustainable forestry and agriculture, it is just as critical to appreciate the cultural differences and religions, before modernity expunges the record and leaves lives unfulfilled.

Each culture represents an act of creation, an aesthetic act. Each has its own beauty, its own inescapable aesthetic patterns that provide food for the soul.

As a man is judged and respected on the quality of his character and background, so a nation, so a country is judged and respected to the degree it appreciates the cultural backgrounds of its peoples and preserves them. And we hope this conference will contribute to that effort.

And if we do not respect others, if we do not recognize the contributions of others, and honor them, we plow the ground for seeds of discontent.

Jason Epstein wrote: "without a vivid link to the past, the present is chaos, and the future unreadable" (Epstein 2000).



Too often we do not admit as to how our visions of the future are shaped by the past.

G. K. Chesterton wrote (orig. 1910):

all the men in history who have really done anything with the future have had their eyes fixed upon the past.

He continues:

I need not mention the renaissance, the very word proves my case. The originality of Michelangelo and Shakespeare began with the digging up of old vases and manuscripts. For some strange reasons man must always thus plant his fruit trees in a graveyard. ... He can make the future luxuriant and gigantic as long as he is thinking about the past.

Someone once wrote:

You must listen to the music of the past so that you can sing in the present and dance in the future.

I hope this conference will bring out much music and singing so that in the future there will be dancing.

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#### THE DEREK FREEMAN PAPERS IN THE MANDEVILLE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Clifford Sather

*Cultural Anthropology*

*P.O. Box 59 (Unioninkatu 38 D)*

*FIN-00014 University of Helsinki*

*Finland*

The personal papers of the late Derek Freeman, including correspondence from 1938 to the time of his death, field notes, and documents concerned chiefly with Samoa and the so-called Mead-Freeman controversy, but also covering other aspects of his career, have been deposited in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the University of California, San Diego. The acquisition of this collection began in 2000, a year before Derek Freeman's death, and was largely completed in 2002.

When I visited the Library with my wife on 3-5 September 2002, the greater part of the Papers were already catalogued, except for the most recent acquisitions and a

collection of personal diaries and journals that are still in the possession of Monica Freeman, Derek's widow. Among the latter, of special interest, is Monica Freeman's own journal which she kept during the years 1949-51, when she and Derek lived with the Baleh Iban in what is now the Kapit Division of Sarawak. By singular good fortune, Monica and her daughter Jennifer were in San Diego at the time of our visit, staying with Professor Donald Tuzin and his wife, and we were able to enjoy a delightful picnic lunch together, all of us, on the University of California-San Diego campus, under the shade of eucalyptus trees in an especially Canberra-like setting. Professor Tuzin is a former student of Derek's and will, many of us hope, become, in the future, his intellectual biographer. With the encouragement of Professor James J. Fox, Monica Freeman is currently editing her Sarawak journal for eventual publication by the Australian National University's Pandanus Press.

While the Tun Jugah Foundation library in Kuching, Sarawak holds the original copies of Derek Freeman's Iban field notes, together with photographs, pencil sketches, tape recordings, and other documents relating to Freeman's Iban field research, there are a number of things in the Mandeville Collections of special interest to those concerned with the Iban and, more generally, with Sarawak. Included in the Freeman Papers, for example, are drafts of a number of published papers, including Freeman's Curl Prize essay, "On the Kindred," which centrally concern the Iban, but which also have exerted notable influence on the analysis of other Bornean societies.

The Derek Freeman Papers are divided into two parts: a "first accession (2001)" and a "second accession (2002)." The first accession documents much of Freeman's research and publication career, covering his training in the tradition of British social anthropology at the University of London and Cambridge University and also reflects, in particular, his later shift of interest towards a synthesis of human biology and anthropology. The first accession also includes most of Freeman's Samoan research materials. After completing his B.A. degree at Victoria University, New Zealand in 1939, Freeman became a language teacher in Western Samoa, where he remained until 1943. During that time he made frequent visits to a Samoan village called Sa'anapu, and in 1948 he wrote a M.Phil. thesis based on his study of Sa'anapu entitled "The social structure of a Samoan village community." Between 1966 and 1968 he returned to Samoa for further research. The second accession contains his thesis and all of the remaining research materials and field notes not included in the first accession. Like his Iban field notes, Freeman's Samoan notes were originally kept in ring-binders, arranged alphabetically by subject and cross-referenced. Again, as with his Iban research notes, there were also special binders for primary sources, indigenous texts, historical material, charts, drawings, and statistical data, all carefully cross-referenced by Freeman himself. While the extent of Freeman's Samoan material is impressive, his Iban material is even more impressive, reflecting the fact, as he himself acknowledged, that of the two peoples, he always felt a stronger affinity to the Iban. Compared to the stratified, more restrictive society of Western Samoa, he particularly relished the social equality and democratic tenor of the upriver Iban life that he and Monica experienced a half century ago, in the early 1950s. The second accession supplements the first with additional research materials from Samoa, notes used in drafting professional papers, a collection of photographs of Samoa and of Freeman taken at various times in his life, and a substantial file of correspondence with anthropologists and colleagues in other disciplines. A good deal of this correspondence, particularly from 1948 through the

1980s, relates to Freeman's Iban writings. However, in other respects, the bulk of the second accession is weighted heavily towards Freeman's activities of the 1990s and year 2000, most notably to the Mead-Freeman controversy. At the time of our visit, some parts of the second accession were still being cataloged.

Within each of the two accessions, the Papers are arranged in eight parallel series, consisting, essentially, of: 1) correspondence, 2) subject files, 3) Samoan research notes, 4) general notes, 5) writings by Freeman, 6) writings by others, 7) the Mead-Freeman controversy, and 8) miscellany. "Miscellany" was a category created by Freeman himself and includes a wide variety of things, including graphics and images photocopied from other sources to which Freeman often added captions and then sent on to friends and others. The correspondence series are particularly rich, especially those of the second accession, and contain Freeman's files of personal and professional correspondence, arranged alphabetically by correspondent and chronologically by date. Until the 1980s, Freeman corresponded with nearly every anthropologist who had worked in Borneo. Particularly full, of course, are the files of his former students. In addition, there is much in the correspondence that illuminates Freeman's Iban writings, the issues that concerned him at the time particular works were written, comments and advice of colleagues, and the circumstances of publication. As the cataloger observes in the website notes to the Papers, the correspondence files are an especially rewarding place "to investigate Freeman's ideas, since in his letters, Freeman was able to engage friends and colleagues on all of the issues that interested him." This was his intellectual work style, and in the early days, these issues were very much related to his Iban research. In this regard, the Edmund Leach correspondence is an especially rich background source to Freeman's writings on the *bilek* family, kindred, cognatic kinship, augury, and swidden cultivation. Leach's comments and advice, written to Freeman while Freeman and Monica were in the field, are detailed and run to many pages. Not only do they suggest possible theoretical directions, but they are surprisingly encyclopedic in terms of ethnographic issues. Although Leach's own stay in Sarawak was relatively brief, his grasp of the comparative ethnography was remarkable. Also, Leach clearly saw the significance of what Freeman was reporting from the field. Later on, when Freeman was again in Samoa, Leach helped see the *Report on the Iban* through publication. He also encouraged Freeman in his interest in religion, an interest, regrettably, that was never to be fully realized in Freeman's Iban writings. Also notable is the Meyer Fortes correspondence. Fortes and Freeman began writing to one another when Freeman was still a graduate student at the University of London, before his Iban fieldwork, and continued regularly thereafter until Fortes' death in 1982. Fortes was clearly a lifelong mentor, friend, and intellectual sounding board, and their letters record every major change in Freeman's intellectual and professional life. For me, having suffered as an undergraduate through the desiccated prose of *The Web of Kinship*, Fortes' letters to Freeman were a revelation of lucidity and feeling, and though always supportive, they often challenged or gently disputed whatever newly-embraced truth that was then exercising Freeman's thoughts. Fortes' letters also provide a chronicle of what he saw as the decline of British social anthropology in the 1970s and 80s, and in his letters he often lamented the dearth of brilliant students who had once, like Freeman himself, flocked to British universities from all over the world.

Also of interest are some of the materials contained in the Subject Files and General Notes. These include notes, quotations, and bibliographic references on a range of

general and theoretical subjects of interest to Freeman, arranged alphabetically by subject matter. A number of these subjects directly relate to Freeman's Iban work, for example, "Dreams," "Augury," and "Heads."

For scholars who would like to consult the Derek Freeman Papers, it may be worth noting that modest financial assistance of up to USD 400 may be applied for from the "Friends of the UCSD Libraries" by writing to the Head of the Mandeville Special Collections, Ms. Lynda Claassen.

More generally, information on the Derek Freeman Papers, including accession abstracts and a summary of the collection's contents, may be found on the University of California, San Diego, Library website, or may be obtained by writing to the Head of the Mandeville Special Collections Library, Ms. Lynda Claassen ([Lynda@library.uscd.edu](mailto:Lynda@library.uscd.edu)), University of California, San Diego 0175S, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0175 USA.

#### THE AJN RICHARDS COLLECTION AT THE CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC INFORMATION SERVICES (CAIS), UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

Clifford Sather  
*Cultural Anthropology*  
*P.O. Box 59 (Unioninkatu 38D)*  
*University of Helsinki*  
*Finland*

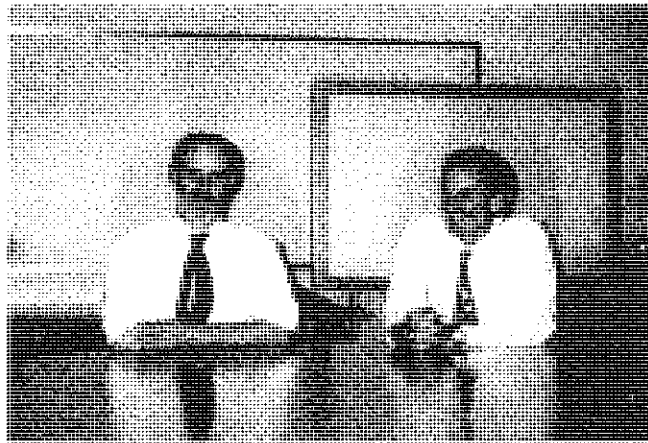
The personal papers and much of the library of the late A.J.N. Richards were presented as a generous gift by the Richards family to the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). They now comprise a special reserve collection called the "AJN Richards Collection" in the university's library, thereby fulfilling the family's wish that these materials be given a permanent home in Sarawak.

Transfer of the Richards papers was formally marked by a ceremony held on 22 October 2001 on the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak campus at Kota Samarahan (see photos). Ill health prevented Daphne, Anthony Richards' widow, from making the trip from England. However, through the generosity of the Tun Jugah Foundation, two of their sons, Huw and Michael Richards, were able to be present in Sarawak and together represented the family during the handover ceremony.

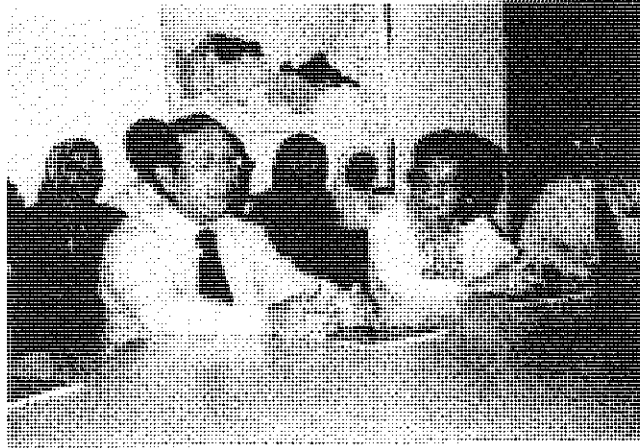
The Deputy Vice Chancellor of UNIMAS, Professor Khairuddin Abd. Hamid, received the papers on behalf of the university. Also present at the ceremony were Datuk Amar Leonard Linggi Jugah, Director of the Tun Jugah Foundation, whose father, Tun Jugah, was a friend of Anthony Richards during the latter's years as an administrative officer in what is now the Kapit Division; Dato Tra Zehnder, Director of the Majlis Adat Istiadat and also a friend of Anthony Richards during his Sarawak years; Jayl Langub, Secretary of the Majlis Adat Istiadat; Prof. Michael Leigh, Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies; myself, as Chair of Dayak Studies; and Temenggong William Linang, retired Senior Sarawak Administrative Officer, who had served with Richards as a colonial officer in the early 1960s. Ms. Siti Sumaizan Ramli represented the library and following the handover ceremony, gave Huw and Michael Richards a tour of CAIS and introduced them to Ms. Zainun Mat Nor, the Special Collections Librarian, who is

directly responsible for conserving and cataloguing the AJN Richards Collection. Ms. Zainun showed them the cataloguing room and area set aside for the Richards materials in the CAIS library. The ceremony was followed by lunch.

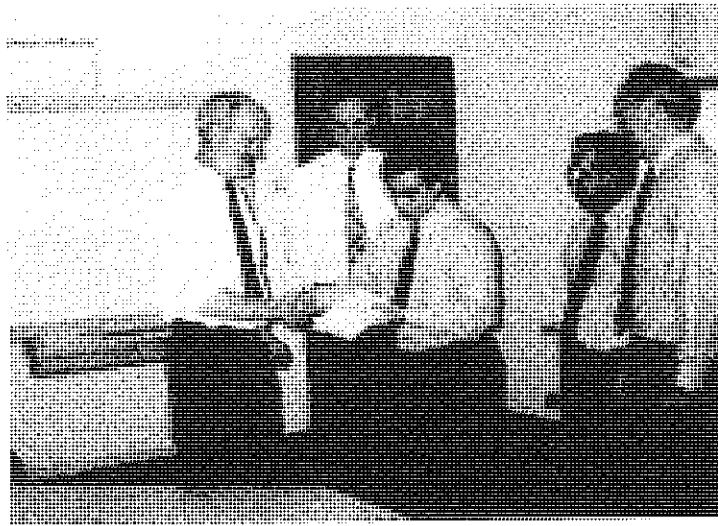
The initial sorting and evaluation of Anthony Richards' papers and books was undertaken at the family's request by Professor Bob Reece of Murdoch University, who provided a broad listing of manuscript material, while Huw Richards drew up a checklist of most of the books and journals. Professor Reece brought the collection to the attention of the Tun Jugah Foundation and myself at UNIMAS and suggested that it should be given a home in Sarawak. The latter was also the wish of the Richards family. The shipping of the papers and books from England was funded by the UNIMAS Library Committee and was organized by myself with the help of Huw and Michael Richards. I received the shipment, consisting of a crate containing fourteen large boxes, on behalf of the UNIMAS library on 2 January 2002. In addition, the Richards brothers had brought with them for the handover ceremony in October a collection of over 2,000 photographic prints and negatives. This material has since been divided between the Tun Jugah Foundation archives and CAIS (see in this issue, "A.J.N. Richards' Photographs in the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and Tun Jugah Foundation Libraries").



**Photo 1: Huw and Michael Richards are welcomed to the handover ceremony.**



**Photo 2: Datuk Amar Leonard Linggi speaking during the ceremony; Dato Tra Zehnder? on the right.**



**Photo 3: Huw Richards presents his father's copy of An Iban-English Dictionary to Prof. Khairuddin; Michael Richards behind and Datuk Amar Linggi and Prof. Sather to the right.**

#### **CAIS and the Southeast Asia Collection**

The Southeast Asia Collection at CAIS was established in October 2001 through an initial gift of 2800 volumes from Professor Emeritus Marvin Rogers of the University of Missouri. Since then, the Collection has been augmented by further gifts from Professor Rogers, as well as a number of additional donations, including a collection of books and journals on general and Southeast Asian anthropology from the estate of the late Professor William R. Geddes. However, the A.J.N. Richards papers and books comprise,

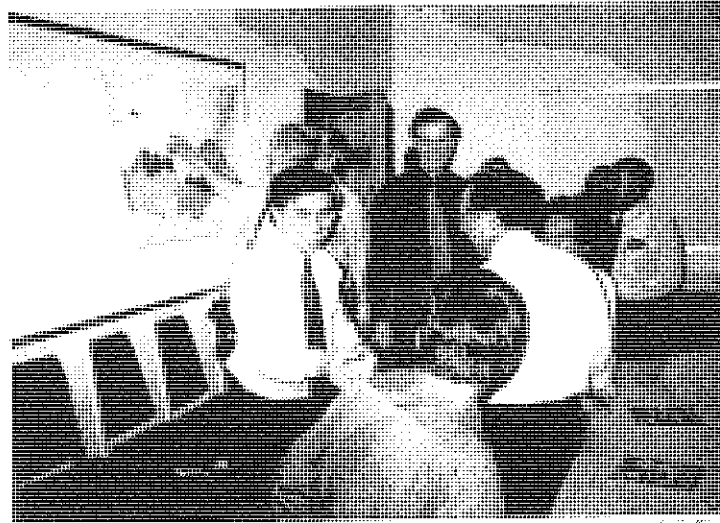
together with the Rogers gift, the major cornerstone of the university's Southeast Asia Collection. While the Rogers collection is strong on Peninsular Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, the Richards collection focuses almost exclusively on Borneo and in particular on Sarawak, and besides books and journals, also includes, as noted, an extensive collection of photographs, correspondence, notebooks, manuscripts, and other unpublished materials.



**Photo 4: Dato Tra presents Huw and Michael Richards with a photo of the historic 1961 Simanggang adat conference.**

#### **Richards' Life, Writings and the AJN Richards Collection**

Anthony John Noel Richards was born on 3 December 1914 at Sheepscombe in Gloucestershire, England. His father was a country vicar. After graduating from Hertford College, Oxford, he entered the Sarawak civil service as a Brooke cadet officer in September 1938. His first posting was to the Secretariat where he worked under Mr. Andrew MacPherson, then Secretary for Native Affairs. Here, he rapidly gained fluency in both Iban and Malay. His posting, first to Sarikei in the lower Rejang in 1940, and then, in 1941, as District Officer in Betong, Saribas, shortly before the Japanese Occupation, confirmed what later became a lifelong interest in Iban affairs. During the war, he was interned at the Batu Lintang prisoner of war camp.



**Photo 5: After the ceremony, Prof. Khairuddin greets guests; Prof. Michael Leigh in the background. Photos: Otto Steinmayer.**

Following his release, Richards was sent on furlough to recuperate in England and while there, married Daphne Oswell who had been a childhood friend. In 1946, he, now together with Daphne, returned to Sarawak where he entered the colonial civil service. During the British colonial period he served at various postings, first as a District Officer and later as a Resident, throughout much of Sarawak. After Malaysian independence, he remained briefly in the postcolonial government before returning to England in February 1964. In leaving Sarawak, Anthony and Daphne, according to their son Huw, changed their first class tickets for second class and used the difference to travel a meandering route back, visiting a number of places where they had never been before, including Athens where they spent the Greek Orthodox Easter of that year. Following their return, Anthony worked until his retirement in 1980 as Secretary-Librarian for the Centre for South Asian Studies at Cambridge University .

Virtually the whole of Anthony Richards' working life was devoted to Sarawak and the peoples of the State. From his early experiences as a young administrative officer, he developed a special affection for the Iban and Malay of the Second Division, and the Iban he spoke retained, for the rest of his life, an unmistakable Saribas flavor. This was so, even though he was later posted to the Rejang, where he came to know well the redoubtable Iban leaders of the time, Temenggong Koh and Tun Jugah. The latter, together with his son Linggi, then a law student at the University of Hull, later visited the Richards family in Cambridge.

Richards is remembered by those who knew him during his Sarawak years as an avid writer who continually took notes, recording his observations and taking down stories and conversations from those around him in small pocket notebooks which he kept constantly at hand. These valuable notebooks comprise an important part of the AJN Richards Collection and were extensively used by Richards in the compilation of his dictionary. Richards was also uniquely gifted with an ear for the poetic language of spoken Iban. This gift is abundantly displayed in his *Iban-English Dictionary* which



gives notable attention to the use of rhyme, alliteration and other stylistic devices, particularly in Iban liturgical chants, storytelling, songs, wordplay and humor. But it is also present in his ethnographic writings as well, for example, in "The migrations of the Ibans and their poetry" (*Sarawak Museum Journal*, 1949, vol. 5, pp. 77-87), *Rita Tujoh Malam* (a collection of Iban stories, 1960, Borneo Literature Bureau), and especially, perhaps, *Leka Main Iban* (an anthology of Iban poetry, 1966, Borneo Literature Bureau). *Leka Main Iban* was initially conceived to be part of an innovative project intended to introduce Sarawak school children to Iban poetic forms as a complement to the study of English literature. Sadly, this project died with independence. The AJN Richards Collection contains all of Anthony Richards' published works concerned with the Iban, as well as a small number of unpublished Iban texts, including prayers (*sampi*) and a transcribed version of the *sabak bebuah* (lamentation for the dead, told as a poetic narrative), the latter with notes and annotations.

Richards also wrote on the Saribas Malays. Especially notable is his "The descent of some Saribas Malays" (*Sarawak Museum Journal*, 1963, vol. 11, pp. 99-107) and *Dayang Isah Tandang Sari* (a Saribas Malay legend in Malay and English translation, 1962, Borneo Literature Bureau). He also left an unpublished photostat transcript in Jawi of a long Saribas Malay *syair*, a copy of which, together with a Romanized transcription and notes, are to be found in the AJN Richards Collection. (See in this issue, Bob Reece's "The Syair Saribas Project.")

After returning to England, Richards began work on *An Iban-English Dictionary*. In an autobiographical note written in 1981, he tells us that the idea of writing a dictionary came from friends and colleagues in Sarawak shortly before he left for England. Once back, the project consumed much of his spare time for more than a decade. Not only did he compose the entries and write the entire dictionary, he also had to raise a substantial sum of money to subsidize its publication by Oxford University Press. Happily, this sum was later recovered from the book's sales.

*An Iban-English Dictionary* was first published by Clarendon Press, Oxford, in December 1981. A major work of scholarship, the *Dictionary* is widely regarded by linguists, anthropologists, and others as one of the finest works of its kind ever compiled for any Southeast Asian language. Far more than a simple dictionary, its more than 10,000 entries, many of them of an encyclopedic nature, and all richly cross-referenced, remain an invaluable source of information on Iban history, culture, social life, mythology, customary law, ritual, politics and poetics: the summation, in short, of a lifetime of keen observation. An inexpensive Malaysian reprint of *An Iban-English Dictionary* was published in 1988 by Penerbit Fajar Bakti, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, with financial assistance from UNESCO, and continues to be widely used in Sarawak.

A substantial and valuable part of the AJN Richards Collection consists of notes, word entry cards, manuscript drafts, and page proofs of *An Iban-English Dictionary*. There is a great deal of unpublished material contained on these cards and earlier page drafts that had to be deleted from the more abbreviated entries that appeared in the published dictionary. Of the fourteen boxes of material comprising the Collection, four boxes relate directly to the dictionary, including one box of Iban word entry cards and two boxes of notes organized for use in compiling dictionary entries. In addition, one box of books largely contains other dictionaries and language-related materials.

For Sarawak administrative officers serving like Anthony Richards in Dayak areas, settling land disputes formed a significant part of their duties. Richards, from early on in

his career, showed himself to be a singularly insightful observer of Dayak customary law and judicial procedures, including, importantly, the use of offerings and ritual restitution in resolving breaches of custom. Twenty years ago, he was still remembered by Iban elders in the Saribas for his grasp of Iban principles of legal procedure. Beginning with his first "outstation" postings as a district officer, he took up the work started by earlier Brooke officers of codifying what were initially described as "fine lists," or *tusun tunggu* in Iban. In 1953 the Government Printer published the first of his compilations as *Code of Fines* or *Tusun Tunggu Iban, Third Division*. By the end of his career, Richards was universally recognized as the foremost authority on native, and in particular, Iban customary law and land tenure. In 1961, he published a major work on the subject, *Land Law and Adat* (Kuching: Government Printer). In the same year, he was appointed to a committee created by the colonial government charged with drafting land law reform legislation. Two major works resulted from this assignment: *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division* (in Iban and English, 1963, Kuching: Government Printer), and *Dayak Adat Law in the First Division-Bidayuh* (in English, 1964, Kuching: Government Printer). Both remain definitive works and were the primary sources drawn on for the more recent compilations of Iban and Bidayuh *adat* produced by the Majlis Adat Istiadat.

Included among the unpublished papers contained in the AJN Richards Collection are a number of files and notebooks relating to the proceedings of the land reform committee, 1962-63, and to the historic conference or *aum* on Iban customary law held in Simanggang in 1961. There are also files on specific land dispute cases.

Anthony Richards died in Cambridge, England, on 15 November 2000.

### **Content and Scope of the Collection**

So far, only Anthony Richards' books and journals have been catalogued. The work of cataloguing the remainder of the Collection is still underway.

### **Books and Journals**

The Collection contains over 200 books relating primarily to Sarawak. These are included in the checklist below, compiled by Huw Richards with the help of Professor Bob Reece, and include such notable Sarawak classics as James Brooke's *Borneo and Celebes*, 2 vols.; Charles Brooke's *Ten Years in Sarawak*, 2 vols.; John Templer, *Private Letters of Rajah James Brooke*, 3 Vols.; Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak under its two white Rajahs*; and Henry Keppel's *Voyage of the Maeander: a visit to the Indian Archipelago* and *The Expedition to Borneo of HMS Dido for the suppression of piracy*, 2 vols. Also contained in the Collection are 55 Borneo Literature Bureau volumes, including most of those published in the Iban language, as well as the Bureau's Iban language school texts, *Pelajar Iban* (books 1-6), in the 1970 and 1982 editions.

The collection also includes, as mentioned earlier, a number of dictionaries, phrase books, and published vocabularies. Besides Iban dictionaries such as Howell and Bailey's *Sea Dyak Dictionary*, the Collection also contains dictionaries of other Sarawak languages, as well as a valuable collection of Malay dictionaries and language materials, including Wilkinson's 2-volume *Malay-English Dictionary* and Swettenham's *Vocabulary of the English and Malay Languages*.

Given the virtually non-existent periodical holdings in the UNIMAS library, the gift of journals contained in the AJN Richards Collection is particularly welcome. Of special

note is a complete set of the *Sarawak Museum Journal*, from 1911, vol. 1 (numbers 1-4) through 1997, vol. 51 (number 72), including all of the Special Monographs published by the *Sarawak Museum Journal* through 1997. Except for vol. 1, the Collection also contains a complete set of the *Borneo Research Bulletin*, from 1970, volume 2, through 1999, volume 30. Also included in the Collection is a small set of the *Borneo Chronicle* (48-50), from 1985 through 2000, published by the Borneo Mission Association, and the colonial government's *Sarawak Annual Reports* of 1958, 1960 and 1962.

Of the 14 boxes comprising the original Collection, six boxes contained books and journals, including one box of the *Sarawak Museum Journal* and Special Monographs and a second box holding mainly Borneo Literature Bureau publications.

**Table: AJN Richards Collection, Books**

Title	Author	Year	Publisher
Sarawak annual report 1958		1958	Sarawak Government
Sarawak annual report 1960		1960	Sarawak Government
Sarawak annual report 1962		1962	Sarawak Government
Sarawak Government Staff List 1962 part 1- Officers in Division 3		1962	Sarawak Government
Mandok lauk		1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 6		1970	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 4		1970	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 3		1970	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 1		1982	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 2		1982	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 3		1982	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 4		1982	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 5		1982	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pelajar Iban Bup 6		1982	Borneo Literature Bureau
Surat sambiang: a prayerbook in the Iban language authorized for use in the diocese of Kuching		1982	
Kamus Pelajar	Abasa and Sariyan	1988	Delta
Sembayang hari besai		n.d.	
Sirat sabelit	Achoi	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
A vocabulary of Matu Melanau	Aikman	1947	Sarawak Government
A short introduction to the history and politics of Southeast Asia	Allen	1970	Oxford University Press
Hunting the gugu: in search of the lost ape-men of Sumatra	Allen	1990	Paladin
Tales from the South China Seas	Allen (ed.)	1983	
Tupai Miai	Ambon	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau

Programme of entertainment at the Sarawak Union Thursday 26th February 1959	anon	1959	Sarawak Government
Rules of the Sarawak Club	anon	1959	Sarawak Government
HRH Prince Philip's Tour of Kuching	anon	1959 Friday 27th Feb.	Sarawak Government
Ensera Dayang Ridu enggau Bujang Kerimpak Labu	anon	1961	Borneo Literature Bureau
The countryman's guide to politics	anon	1962	Sarawak Government
Tenggau politik ka orang menoa pesisir	anon	1962	Sarawak Government
Questions and answers on Malaysia	anon	1964	A New Age Publication
English-Iban dictionary	anon	1964	Ministry of Defence
English-Iban phrasebook	anon	1965	Borneo Literature Bureau
Worterbuch der priestersprache der Ngaju-Dayak	Baier, Hardeland, and Schärer	1987	
Bornean mammals	Banks	1949	
A naturalist in Sarawak	Banks	1949	
A stroll through Borneo	Barclay	1988	Hodder and Stoughton
A history of Sarawak under its two white Rajahs: 1839-1908	Baring and Bampfylde	1909	Henry Southeran & Co.
English-Iban phrasebook	Barry		RC Mission Sarawak
Wanderings in the great forest of Borneo	Beccari	1904	Constable
The Tidong dialects of Borneo	Beech	1908	Oxford University Press
Some aspects of the marriage customs among the Sarawak Malays with special references to Kuching	Abang Yusuf Puteh	1966	
A checklist of Brunei trees	Hasan and Ashton	Photo- copied 1980	Photocopied from Botany School Cambridge HJ 158
Rajah Brooke's Journals (Vol 1)	Brooke, J.	1848	
Rajah Brooke's Journals (Vol 2)	Brooke, J.	1848	
Ten years in Sarawak vol 1.	Brooke, C.	1866	Tinsley Brothers
Ten years in Sarawak vol 2.	Brooke, C.	1866	Tinsley Brothers
Queen of the Headhunters: the autobiography of H. H. the Hon. Sylvia Brooke, Ranee of Sarawak	Brooke, Sylvia	1972	Sphere
North Borneo folk stories	Brooks	1961	Borneo Literature Bureau
Under five flags	Brooks	1995	

Forest trees of Sarawak and Brunei	Browne	1955	Sarawak Government
Ali besah	Bunggan	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Java and the Dutch East Indies	Cabaton	1911	Fisher Irwin
Hunting and wildlife management in Sarawak	Caldecott	1988	
The story of street and road names in Sarawak	Chater	1964	Borneo Literature Bureau
Archaeology in Sarawak	Cheng	1969	Heffer / Toronto
The Nyonya	Chin, J.	1962	Borneo Literature Bureau
The Santubong affair	Chin, J.	1964	Borneo Literature Bureau
The Sarawak Chinese	Chin, J.	1981	Oxford University Press
Cultural heritage of Sarawak	Chin, L.	1980	Sarawak Museum
Rajah Charles Brooke: monarch of all he surveyed	Chriswell	1978	Oxford University Press
Malayan Monochromes	Clifford	1925	John Murray
Ambonese adat: a general description	Cooley	1962	Yale University
A pocket dictionary of colloquial Malay	Coope	1954	Malaya Publishing House
Sarawak and its people	Dickson	1962	Borneo Literature Bureau
A Sarawak Anthology	Dickson	1965	University of London Press
Lawyer in the wilderness	Digby	1980	Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University
The truth about Sarawak: talk by John Doraisamy in the Radio Malaysia series "Window on the World" 27/9/1966	Dorisaimy	1966	Federal department of information, Malaysia
Dilah Tanah	Ejau	1964	Borneo Literature Bureau
Sebeginda bujang	Ejau	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Madu midang	Ejau	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Aji bulan	Ejau	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pa Alo'i nginti	Ejau	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Batu basundang	Ejau	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Ngelar menoa sarawak	Janang	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Wat Lamba	Entingi	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Bujang penerang	Entingi	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
The Negritos of Malaya	Evans	1937	Cambridge University Press
The religion of the Tempasuk Dusuns of North Borneo	Evans	1953	Cambridge University Press
Guide for Sabah Native Courts	Evans	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Studies in religion, folk-lore and custom in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula	Evans	1970	Frank Cass
An introduction to Southeast Asia	Farmer	1993	

Indonesian batik and ikat	Forman	1988	Hamlin
Report on the Iban	Freeman	1970	Athlone Press
Bujang Abang Bunsu	Gani	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Women's Warpath: Iban ritual fabrics from Borneo	Gavin	1996	UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History
Nine Dayak Nights	Geddes	1957	Oxford University Press
Raja Langit	Gerijih	1964	Borneo Literature Bureau
Raja Berani	Gerijih	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Malay poisons and charm cures	Gimlette	1915	Churchill
Seventeen years among the Sea Dayaks of Borneo	Gomes	1911	Seeley & Co
The Sea-Dayaks of Borneo	Gomes	1917 3rd edition	Society for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts
Kelantan: a state of the Malay Peninsula	Graham	1908	James Maclehorse
Iban Shamanism	Graham	1987	Australian National University
Relations and Complications	Dayang Muda	1929	Bodley Head
Sylvia of Sarawak: an autobiography	Ranee Sylvia	1936	Hutchinson
Head hunters, black, white and brown	Haddon	1901	
Head hunters, black, white and brown	Haddon	1932	Thinkers Library
Iban or sea Dayak fabrics and their patterns	Haddon and Start	1936	Cambridge University Press
James Brooke of Sarawak	Hahn	1953	
Kinabalu Guerrillas: an account of the Double Tenth 1943	Hall	1968 (3rd ed)	Borneo Literature Bureau
A new account of the East Indies vol. 1	Hamilton	1744	
A new account of the East Indies vol. 2	Hamilton	1744	
Mulu: the rain forest	Hanbury-Tenison	1980	
Orang Utan	Harrisson, B.	1962	
The Malays of South-west Sarawak before Malaysia: a socio-ecological survey	Harrisson, T.	1970	Macmillan
Excavations of the prehistoric iron industry in West Borneo: Volume 1. Raw materials and industrial waste	Harrisson and O'Connor	1969	Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University

Excavations of the prehistoric iron industry in West Borneo: Volume 2. Associated artifacts and ideas	Harrison, Stanley	1969	Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University
Borneo Jungle: an account of the Oxford expedition to Sarawak	Harrison, (ed.)		Lindsay Drummond Ltd.
The peoples of Sarawak	Harrison, T.	1959	Sarawak Museum
Handbook of Sarawak: comprising historical, statistical and general information concerning the colony obtained from official and other reliable records	Hepburn, (comp.)	1949	Sarawak Government
Iban social control: the infant and the adult	Heppell	1975	PhD thesis, Australian National University
Borneo and beyond: tribal arts of Indonesia, East Malaysia and Madagascar	Heppell and Maxwell	1990	Bareo Gallery, Singapore
Sarawak and its government	Hickling	1954	Sarawak Government
Gardening in the lowlands of Malaya	Holtrum	1953	
The personal laws of Malaysia	Hooker	1976	Oxford University Press
A source book of adat, Chinese law and the history of common law in the Malayan Peninsula	Hooker	1967	Faculty of Law, University of Singapore
Field book of a jungle wallah	Hose	1929	
The pagan tribes of Borneo (vol. 1)	Hose and McDougall	1912	
The pagan tribes of Borneo (vol. 2)	Hose and McDougall	1912	
Sea Dyak Dictionary: in alphabetical parts, with examples and quotations shewing the use and meaning of words	Howell and Bailey	1900	American Mission Press, Singapore
In a fair ground or Cibus Cassowary	Howes	1995	
Pantun baru	Ijau	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Bujang Lintang	Inin	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
Nineteenth Century Borneo: a study in diplomatic rivalry	Irwin	1955	Donald Moore
Kamus Dewan	T. Iskandar	1970	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementrian Pelajaran
Papers on early South-east Asian history	Hinton, ed.	1964	Journal of Southeast Asian history
Sarawak: a geographical survey of a developing state	Jackson	1968	University of London

Chinese in the West Borneo goldfields: a study in cultural geography	Jackson	1970	University of Hull
The Raja of Sarawak; an account of Sir James Brooke KCB, LLD, given chiefly through letters and journals (vol. 1)	Jacob	1876	Macmillan
The Raja of Sarawak; an account of Sir James Brooke KCB, LLD, given chiefly through letters and journals (vol. 2)	Jacob	1876	Macmillan
Entelah Iban: tusun kasatu	Jaraw	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Keling nyumpit	Jenang	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
The Iban and their religion	Jensen	1974	Oxford Univ. Press
The population of Borneo: a study of the peoples of Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei	Jones	1966	Athlone Press
Sekeda cherita pandak	Kechendai	1970	Borneo Literature Bureau
Taming Philippine Headhunters: a study of government and cultural change in Northern Luzon	Keesing and Keesing	1934	George Allen and Unwin
Voyage of Maeander: a visit to the Indian archipelago	Keppel	1853	Richard Bentley
The Expedition to Borneo of HMS Dido for the suppression of piracy (Vol. 1)	Keppel	1968 (1st ed 1846)	Frank Cass & Co
The Expedition to Borneo of HMS Dido for the suppression of piracy (Vol. 2)	Keppel	1968 (1st ed. 1846)	Frank Cass & Co
Essays on Borneo societies	King	1978	Oxford University Press
Pacific Mythology: an encyclopedia of myth and legend	Knappert	1995	Diamond books
Why turtles live in the sea and other stories	Lansdown	1963	Borneo Literature Bureau
Political systems of highland Burma: a study of Kachin social structure	Leach	1954	LSE / Bell
Sembayang hari besai	Lee, (Bishop)	1981	
Population and settlement in Sarawak	Lee	1970	Asia Pacific Press
The Philippine claim to Sabah	Leifer	1968	Centre for South-east Asian Studies, Hull
The Rising Moon: political change in Sarawak	Leigh	1974	Sydney University Press



A handbook of Malay script: with passages for reading and a list of commonly used Arabic words	Lewis	1954	Macmillan
Malay Annals: translated from the Malay language by John Leyden	Leyden	1821	
Glimpses from Sarawak's past	Lo	1986	Agas
Chinese festivals in Malaya	Lo and Comber	1958	Eastern Universities Press
Old Sarawak: a pictorial study	Lockard and Saunders	1972	
Sarawak Museum Journal—Index to all the issues from 1911-1979	Loh	1980	Sarawak Museum
The wild mammals of Malaya (Peninsular Malaysia) and Singapore	Lord Medway	1978	Oxford University Press
Sarawak, its inhabitants and productions. notes during a residence in that country with H. H. the Rajah Brooke	Low	1848	Richard Bentley, London
Sarawak, its inhabitants and productions. notes during a residence in that country with H. H. the Rajah Brooke	Low	1988	Oxford University Press reprint
Expedition to Borneo	MacDonald	1982	
Borneo People	MacDonald	1985	
Borneo	MacKinnon	1975	Time-Life International
Melah pinang	Majang	1962	Borneo Literature Bureau
Sempama jako Iban	Majang	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Engkeratong ayam raja	Mawar	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau
In Malay Forests	Maxwell	1960	Eastern Universities Press
Letters from Sarawak; addressed to a child	McDougal	1854	
Hantu hantu: ghost belief in modern Malaya	McHugh	1955	Donald Moore, Singapore
Sarawak	Morrison	1957	McGibbon and Kee
Life in a longhouse	Morrison	1962	Borneo Literature Bureau
Fair land Sarawak: some recollections of an expatriate official	Morrison	1993	Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University
Sarawak craft, methods, materials and motifs	Munan	1989	Oxford University Press
The May 13 tragedy		1969	National Operations Council
Apai Sali	Nyangoh	1967	Borneo Literature Bureau

Modernisation in East Malaysia 1960-1970	Ongkili	1972	Oxford University Press
World beyond the rivers: Education in Sarawak from Brooke rule to colonial office administration 1841-1963	Ooi	1996	Oxford Univ. Press
The White Rajahs of Sarawak	Payne	1960	Robert Hale
Bup Iban (catalogue of BLB books)	Pearce	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Anak Bunsu Apai Keling	Pelima	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Kuching past and present	Pollard	1972	Borneo Literature Bureau
British colonial rule in Sarawak 1946-1963	Porritt	1997	Oxford University Press
Bapak guru orang hisaya: a pioneer in social experimentation in Sarawak: Ro Bewsher, 1910-1998	Porritt	1999	Centre for South-east Asia Studies, University of Hull
Glimpses of Sarawak between 1912 and 1946: autobiographical extracts and articles of an officer of the Rajahs: John Beville Archer (1893-1948)	Porritt, (comp.)	1997	Centre for South-east Asia Studies, University of Hull
Rajahs and Rebels: the Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke rule 1841-1941	Pringle	1970	Macmillan
The Chinese in Malaya	Purcell	1948	Oxford University Press
White Rajah: a dynastic intrigue	Pybus	1996	
May 13: before and after	Rahman	1969	Utusan Melayu Press
The Name of Brooke	Reece	1982	Oxford Univ. Press
Masa Jepun	Reece	1998	Sarawak Literary Society
Vocabulary of English and Sarawak Land Dyak (Singhi tribe)	Reijffert	1956	Sarawak Government
An Iban-English Dictionary	Richards	1966	Pre-publication manuscript
The Sea Dayaks and other races of Sarawak: contributions to the Sarawak gazette between 1888 and 1930	Richards	1963	Borneo Literature Bureau
The life story of Temonggong Koh 1870- 1956	Ritchie	2000	Kaca Holdings
Sir Charles Arden-Clarke	Rooney	1982	Rex Collins
The White Rajahs: a history of Sarawak from 1841- 1946	Runciman	1960	Cambridge University Press
British North Borneo: an account of its history, resources and native tribes	Rutter	1922	Constable

Triumphant Pilgrimage	Rutter	1937	
The pagans of North Borneo	Rutter	1985	Oxford University Press
A flourish for the bishop and Brooke's friend Grant: Two studies in Sarawak history 1848-1868	Saint	1985	Merlin
Cheremin pengingat	Sajai	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Sengalang Burong	Sandin	1962	Borneo Literature Bureau
Pengap Gawai Batu	Sandin	1962	Borneo Literature Bureau
Tigabelas Bengkah Mimpi	Sandin	1962	Borneo Literature Bureau
The Sea Dayaks of Borneo before white Rajah rule	Sandin	1967	
Rajah Simpulang Gana	Sandin	1968	Borneo Literature Bureau
Iban adat and augury	Sandin	1980	Universiti Sains Malaysia
A naturalist in Borneo	Shelford	1916	T Fisher Unwin
Malay-English vocabulary	Shellabear	1912	Methodist Publishing House, Singapore
Historic Malaya: an outline history	Sheppard	1959	Eastern Universities Press
Malay Magic: being an introduction to the folklore and popular religion of the Malay Peninsula	Skeat	1900	
Pagan races of the Malay Peninsula (vol. 1)	Skeat	1906	
Pagan races of the Malay Peninsula (vol. 2)	Skeat	1906	
Danau Alai	Skipper	1960	Penguin Books
The birds of Borneo	Smythies	1960	
Common Sarawak Trees	Smythies	1965	Borneo Literature Bureau
Sword and daggers of Indonesia	Solc	1970	Spring books
One hundred years of the Chinese in Singapore	Song	1923	
The sea nomads: a study of the maritime boat people of Southeast Asia	Sopher	1977	National Museum Singapore
Kayan-English dictionary with appendices	Southwell	1980	Privately printed
The lingering eye: recollections of North Borneo	Suart	1993	
Kerapa nawai	Sullang	1963	Borneo Literature Bureau
Handy reference dictionary of Iban and English	Sutlive	1994	Tun Jugah Foundation
The Iban of Sarawak	Sutlive	1978	AHM Publishing
Tun Jugah of Sarawak: colonialism and Iban response	Sutlive	1992	Sarawak Literary Society

Vocabulary of the English and Malay languages (vol 2)	Swettenham	1908 (7th ed)	Kelly and Walsh
Vocabulary of the English and Malay languages (vol 1)	Swettenham	1909 (8th ed)	Kelly and Walsh
Administrators and their service: the Sarawak administrative service under the Brooke Rajahs and British colonial rule	Talib	1999	Oxford University Press
Private letters of the Rajah Brooke KCB Vol. 1	James Templer, (ed.)	1853	Richard Bentley
Private letters of the Rajah Brooke KCB Vol. 2	James Templer, (ed.)	1853	Richard Bentley
Private letters of the Rajah Brooke KCB Vol. 3	James Templer, (ed.)	1853	Richard Bentley
Adat Law in Indonesia	Ter Haar	1948	Institute of Pacific Relations, New York
Good morning and good night	Ranee Margaret	1934	
Malaysia	Tregonning	1964	Cheshire
Malayan animal life	Tweedie, and Harrison	1954	Longmans, Green
The social organisation and customary law of the Toba-Batak of Northern Sumatra	Vergouwen,	1964	Martinus Nijhoff
Colonialism and Iban warfare	Wagner	1972	
Malay Archipelago	Wallace	1902	Macmillan
Rajah's servant	Ward	1966	Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University
Outlines of Sarawak history under the Brooke Rajahs 1839-1946	Ward and White	1950	Sarawak Government
Hikayat palandok jenaka	Warisan	1962	Oxford University Press
The Naga King's Daughter	Wavell	1964	Allen and Unwin
Myths and legends of China	Werner	1984	
Palms of Malaya	Whitmore	1973	Oxford University Press
The geology of Sarawak and Sabah caves	Wilford	1964	Brunei Press
The Dusun: a North Borneo Society	Williams	1965	Holt, Rinehart and Winston
Budu, or twenty years in Sarawak	Wilson	1969	
Shaman Saiva and Sufi: a study of the evolution of Malay magic	Winstedt	1925	Constable
Malaya and its history	Winstedt	1948?	Hutchinson

The Malays: a cultural history	Winstedt	1950 (1947)	Routledge and Kegan Paul
A practical modern English-Malay dictionary	Winstedt	1952	Kelly and Walsh
Dictionary of colloquial Malay	Winstedt	1957	Marican and sons
The fall of Srivijaya in Malay history	Wolters	1970	Lund Humphries
Early Indonesian Commerce: study of the origins of Srivijaya	Wolters	1974	
The price of loyalty	Wong	1983	Summertimes
The origins of British Borneo	Wright	1970	Hong Kong University Press
China	Youde	1982	
The Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand	Young	1962	

### Correspondence

One box in the Collection consists entirely of personal correspondence. Anthony Richards maintained, throughout his life, an extensive circle of correspondents, exchanging letters with friends and colleagues all over the world, including many in Sarawak. Richards was extremely generous with his knowledge and the experience he had gained during his years in Sarawak and the correspondence collection includes long and detailed letters written to nearly every anthropologist, historian, and others concerned with Sarawak, or with the Iban in particular, including Derek Freeman, Traude Gavin, Michael Heppell, Rodney Needham, Robert Nicholl, Vic Porritt, Bob Pringle, Bob Reece, Benedict Sandin, myself, Vinson Sutlive, Naimah Talib, and many others. The correspondence is arranged in individual files by correspondent and includes in most cases both the correspondent's letters and copies of Richards' replies.

### Dictionary Notes

Dictionary notes, as mentioned earlier, make up a major part of the unpublished papers contained in the AJN Richards Collection. This material consists of two boxes of dictionary notes and one box of word entry file cards, plus numerous dictionary-related folio files, some of them containing dictionary page proofs. There is also a file of correspondence that Richards maintained with Oxford University Press.

### Iban Notes, Notebooks, Manuscripts and Papers

Of the 14 boxes in the Collection, two boxes contain notebooks. These were organized in alphabetical order by Richards for use in compiling his dictionary, one box holding materials from A through O, the other P through Z. Included in the Collection is also an unpublished transcript with notes of the *sabak bebuah* (lament for the dead), apparently recorded by Richards in the Julau area, and a small miscellaneous collection of other texts, including prayers (*sampi*) and fragments of chants. There are also folio folders containing material on Iban poetry, augury (*beburung*), *tusut* or genealogies, and *adat* and land dispute case material, as well as notes and manuscript drafts for many of Richards' published writings on the Iban. Among the *tusut* are a number of genealogies of Rejang Iban, including Penghulu Empam, Temenggong Jugah, and others.

### Malay Notes, Manuscripts and Papers

In addition to the Saribas Malay *syair* manuscript mentioned earlier, entitled, as a manuscript, “Shae’r Silah-Silah Melayu Saribas. Ini-lah shae’r tersilah... Abang Gudam dengan Temenggong Kadir Negri Saribas,” there are also notes on spoken Sarawak Malay, local Malay place names, and a folio file of Saribas Malay genealogies, particularly those of Malay officers in the colonial administration of the time. In addition, there are also notes on Malay stories, including the ever-popular Abu Nawas tales.

### Richards’ Published Writings

The Collection includes copies of many of A.J.N. Richards’ published writings. So far, the following have been catalogued:

1. Lawai / A. Richards.—[Brunei: Printed by the Government Printing Department], Reprinted from *Brunei Museum Journal*; vol. 4, no. 2, 1978, pp. 1-10.
2. *Dayak adat law in the First Division: adat Bidayuh* / compiled by A.J.N. Richards. Kuching, Sarawak: Govt. Printing Off., 1964 .
3. Iban augury / by Anthony Richards. Reprinted from *Sarawak Museum Journal*; vol. XX, no. 40-41(new series).
4. *Leka main Iban* / dipilih Anthony Richards. [Kuching, Sarawak]: Borneo Literature Bureau, 1966.
5. *Penemu begiga* / oleh Jarit Meluda ; di-adu ka Anthony Richards. [Kuching, Sarawak]: Borneo Literature Bureau, [1962].
6. Tibang, terbang, tilong and Mandai / A.J.N Richards. Reprinted from *Sarawak Museum Journal*; vol. X, nos. 19-20 (new series), 1962.

As cataloguing continues, more titles will be added.

### General Notes

A number of folio folders contain material on customary law, land tenure, the Simanggang Conference on Iban *adat*, and the deliberations and draft recommendations of the land reform committee. There are also some administrative memos and government correspondence, as well as notes taken during the course of “outstation” travels, including sketch maps showing the location of longhouses along the rivers being traveled. Notable also is a manuscript “Vocabulary of Sadong Land Dayak,” compiled by the Serian Roman Catholic Mission. Included also are reading notes made by Anthony Richards mainly of materials relating to the Iban such as Derek Freeman’s writings on Iban shamanism and augury, and notes on bird sightings collected by Richards for Bertram Smythies.

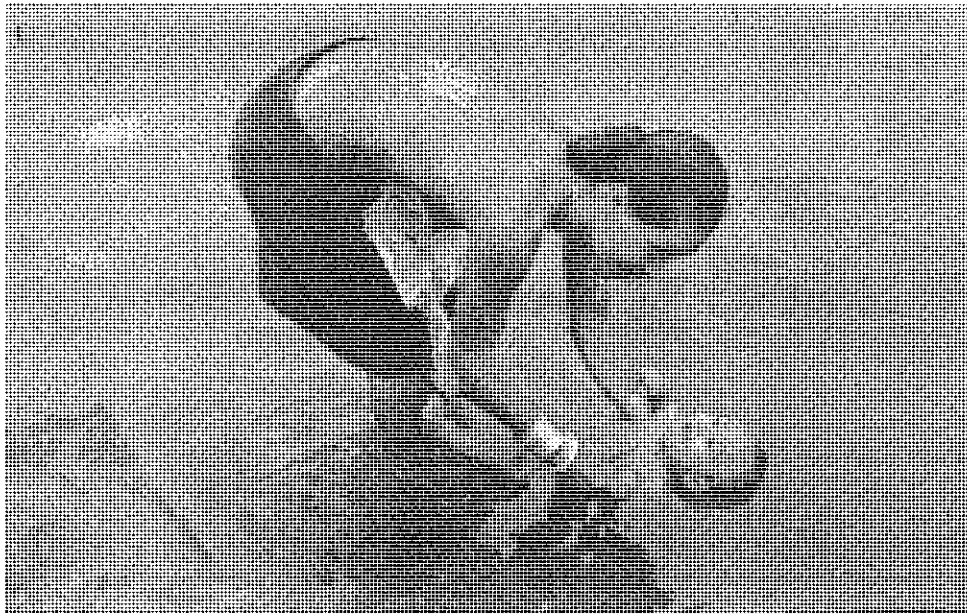
### Photographs

Included in the material presented by the Richards family to CAIS is a collection of 260 black-and-white photographs and 411 negatives, nearly all of them taken by Anthony Richards himself between 1939 and 1964. So far, about eighty percent of this material has been scanned, digitized, and stored in jpg form on CD files. Eventually, it is planned that all of it will be digitized and that a large selection of photos will be made accessible to those wishing to view them through the CAIS website. (See, for more information, Clifford Sather, “A.J.N. Richards Photographs in CAIS and Tun Jugah Foundation Libraries” in this volume).

Richards' photographs cover a wide range of subjects, and many capture aspects of everyday life that are now part of Sarawak's past (see photo, "Iban mother bathing her baby")

#### **Use of the AJN Richards Collection at CAIS**

Further information on the AJN Richards Collection, including a catalogue of the books and journals contained in the collection, may be obtained by consulting the CAIS website: <http://www.unimas.my/en/cais>. The collection is housed in a special room in the CAIS building as part of the library's Southeast Asia Collection, and is a reserve collection subject to restricted access. Students, scholars, university staff and others may use individual items on a 2-hour basis in the Centre, although special provisions may be made for longer use as well as photocopying. The collection catalogue may be accessed from the CAIS homepage using a VTLS Gateway search. Further information on the AJN Richards Collection may also be obtained by contacting Ms. Zainun Mat Nor, Special Collections Librarian, Centre for Academic Information Services, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia (email address: [mnzainun@cais.unimas.my](mailto:mnzainun@cais.unimas.my)), or Ms. Margaret Simeng, Senior Librarian, CAIS ([mag@cais.unimas.my](mailto:mag@cais.unimas.my)).



**Photo 6: An Iban mother bathing her baby (AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS)**

A.J.N. RICHARDS PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA  
SARAWAK AND TUN JUGAH FOUNDATION LIBRARIES

Clifford Sather  
*Cultural Anthropology*  
*P.O. Box 59*  
*00014 University of Helsinki*  
*Finland*

Among the materials presented by the Richards family to Sarawak is an extensive collection of photographs and negatives, the great majority taken by the late A.J.N. Richards himself during his years as an administrative officer in Sarawak, from September 1938 through February 1964. These have been divided between the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) library, or CAIS (Centre for Academic Information Services), Kota Samarahan, and the Tun Jugah Foundation library-archives in Kuching.

Anthony Richards was an avid amateur photographer who took many pictures throughout his years in Sarawak, including classic over-the-railing photos of his first sighting of the Sarawak coastline and his journey up the Sarawak River to Kuching. By good fortune, a brother owned a photographic studio in England and many of his earlier photographs were sent to England for processing. As a result, the negatives and many prints survived the Japanese Occupation, and so provide a rare photographic glimpse of pre-war life in Sarawak, from late 1938 through 1941.

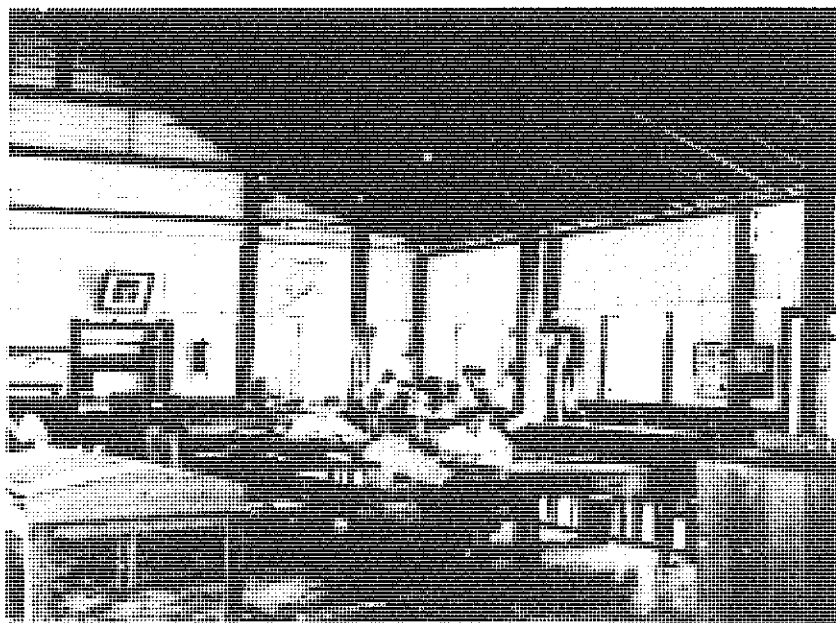
The photographic record takes up again with an official photo taken in October 1945 in Labuan showing an extremely gaunt and bearded Anthony Richards shortly after his release from the civilian prisoner of war camp at Batu Lintang (see the Richards memorial). This photo is now kept in the Tun Jugah Foundation archives. Richards' own photographic record begins again in 1946, following his return to Sarawak after a period of recuperation in England, and continues, uninterrupted, until his departure with his family in 1964 (see Photo 1). While the pre-war photographs were taken largely in the First and Second Divisions and in the lower Rejang, following his posting to Sarikei in 1940, these later photographs were taken at sites all over the state, including Miri, but more importantly, in the mid- and upper Rejang, at Kanowit, Kapit and Belaga; again in the Second Division, at Betong and Simanggang (now Sri Aman), and in the First Division, mainly at Bau. In addition to photos taken during official travels, the photographs in the collection now include family scenes, including pictures taken during family holidays at Bako.

In the division of photographs between the Tun Jugah Foundation and CAIS, generally speaking, the Tun Jugah Foundation received those concerned primarily with Iban social life and culture, historical events and personalities related to the Iban community of Sarawak, and, geographically, the Rejang and former Second Division; while CAIS received those of more general Sarawak interest and particularly photos of Kuching and the former First Division, including a valuable series taken in the Bau district, where Richards served as District Officer between 1948 and 1951 (Photo 2). There are, however, notable duplications and overlaps in the two collections.





**Photo 1: Richards, taken on December 2, 1949.**



**Photo 2: Bau District Office, ca. 1950 (AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS).**



**Photo 3: A family portrait, Kuap, 1939 (AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS).**

**Photographs held in the CAIS Library at the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak**

In October 2001, the UNIMAS library received, in addition to the personal books and papers of the late Anthony Richards, 260 black-and-white photographic prints and 411 negatives. These now form part of the library's AJN Richards Collection. At the time of writing, eighty percent of this material, including most of the negatives, has been scanned and digitized in jpg format and, together with the original prints and negatives, has been stored for conservation on CD files as part of the AJN Richards Collection. Eventually, all of this material is scheduled to be digitized and, according to CAIS plans, an extended collection of photographs with captions will be made available online through the CAIS website .

There is considerable overlap between the prints and negatives and a good deal of material is unidentified, or is identified only very generally, as, for example, "river scenes," "Bau," Kapit," etc., and most of the photos are undated. However, by matching the location of photos and Richards' service record, it is possible to assign approximate dates to most of them. Although most of the photographs in the collection were taken by Anthony Richards himself, including a number of interesting photos of Kuching and Kuap (Quop) taken between 1938 and 1940 (Photo 3), there are also a small number of official photos and studio prints. Among the latter is a complete set of seven panoramic

photos of Kuching produced by Nam Hua Studio, Kuching, and dated 1939 (see Photo 4). Included in the Collection are also an aerial photograph of Kuching most likely dating from the early 1960s (Photo 5) and several photos of the well-known, then newly-built but now no longer extant Aurora Hotel, as well as other landmark buildings. Also notable is a set of nine Information Service photographs of the ceremony in 1961 at which Richards officially represented the Sarawak colonial government, marking the readjustment of the Indonesia-Sarawak border and the re-establishment of an Indonesian government station at Badau, Kalimantan Barat (see Photo 6). Similarly, of special interest is a series of 22 official photographs taken during a visit by Anthony Richards to the Sarawak Ranger training camp, Camp Baird in Ulu Johore, showing, among other things, Richards reviewing the Rangers then serving in Malaya and awarding medals (Photos 7 and 8).

Further information on the A.J.N. Richards photographs in CAIS can be obtained by writing to Ms. Zainun Mat Nor, Special Collections Librarian, Centre for Academic Information Services, UNIMAS, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia (email: [mnzainun@cais.unimas.my](mailto:mnzainun@cais.unimas.my)), or by consulting the CAIS website: <http://www.unimas.my/en/cais>.



**Photo 4: Part of a panoramic series of photos of Kuching, 1939 (AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS).**



Photo 5: Aerial view of Kuching, early 1960s (AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS).

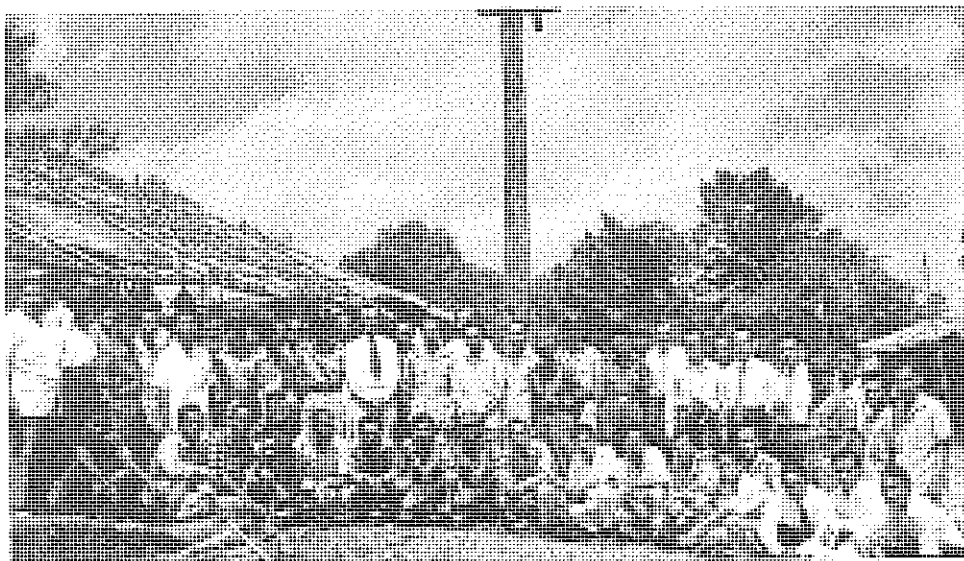
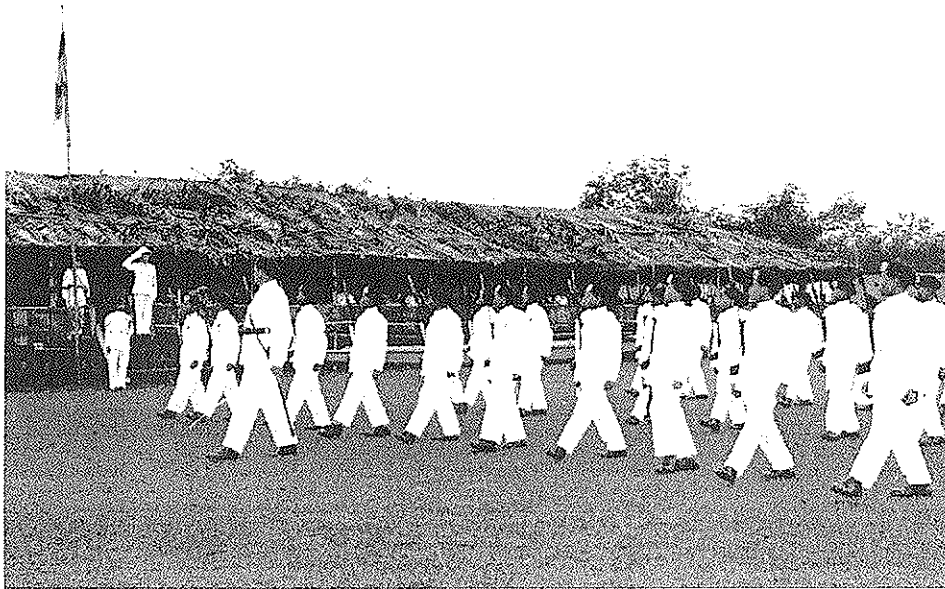
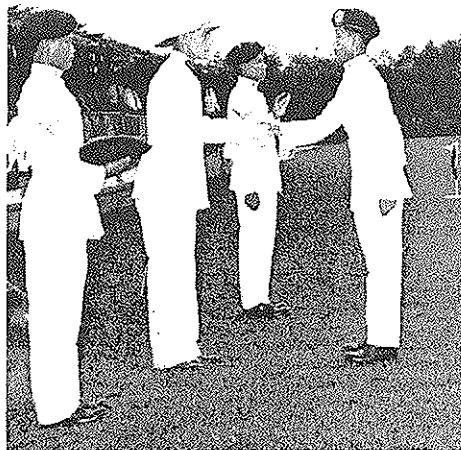


Photo 6: Re-establishing the Indonesian border station at Badau, 1961 (AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS).



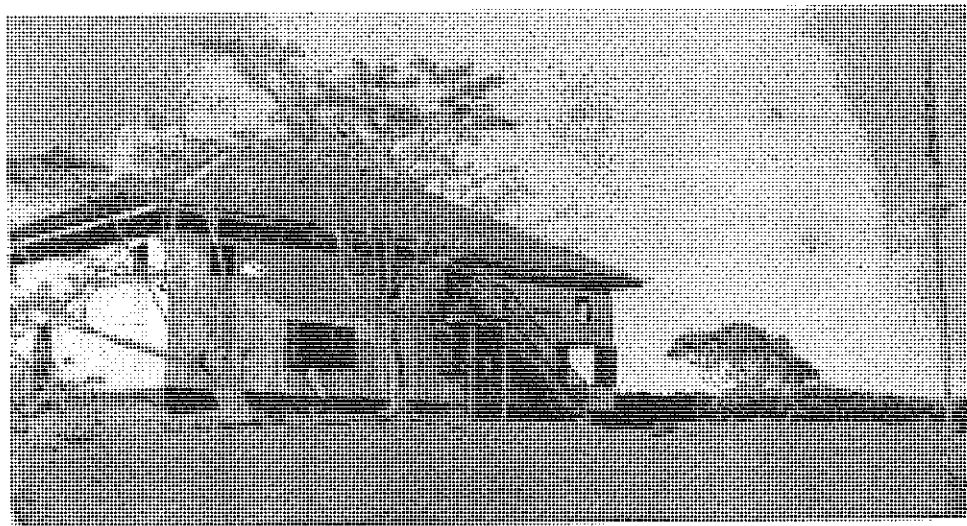
**Photo 7: Richards reviewing the Sarawak Rangers serving in Malaya, Camp Baird, August 1962 (AJN Richards collection, UNIMAS).**



**Photo 8: Anthony Richards presenting medals, Sarawak Rangers, Camp Baird, Johor, 1962 (AJN Richards Collection, UNIMAS).**

### Photographs in the Tun Jugah Foundation Archives

In October 2001, the Tun Jugah Foundation was presented, as a gift from the Richards family, with a collection of 490 photographs and 986 negatives belonging to the late A.J.N. Richards. Included in the gift were two albums of negatives, one labeled mainly "rapids" and "river scenery" and containing 89 negatives, and the second, "Kapit," consisting of 168 negatives, apparently dating from the 1950s, mostly showing scenes of Iban life, e.g., women pounding rice and weaving, farming, boat-making, fishing, and fighting cocks. There are also two albums of photographic prints. The first, containing 22 photos, is divided between "Kuching and Quop-1939-40" and "Kanowit-1946-47." Also contained in this album is the photo of Anthony Richards taken in 1945 immediately after his release from the Batu Lintang prisoner of war camp. The second album, containing 49 photographs, is labeled "1939-40- Kuching, Quop, Bintulu, Anap." Included are several photos of the cross-river house, then called "Sanroque," in which Richards and W.E. Morison lived immediately after their arrival in Kuching, and an ethnographically interesting set of photos of the Bukitan (or Beketan) communities on the Anap and Tatau Rivers.



**Photo 9: Kanowit fort, 1946 (Tun Jugah Foundation).**

The photos in the Tun Jugah Foundation collection cover the whole of Anthony Richards' career in Sarawak. They begin with 30 negatives labeled "voyage August 1938" that record his outbound journey and first arrival in Sarawak. Another set of negatives, labeled "Kuching 1938," shows scenes of Brooke Kuching, including horse racing and band concerts. There is a small collection of negatives and prints depicting pre- and post war Sarikei, including 11 negatives labeled the "Sarikei Coronation celebrations." There is also a set of 33 negatives labeled "Miri etc." Much richer, however, is the photographic record of the former Second Division. Particularly valuable are scenes of Iban life, including burials, house building, weaving, boats, cast-net fishing and hunting. There are also official photos of the Saratok regatta and an official posed photo of the "Simanggang takeover" in which A.J.N. Richards replaced M. Forster as District Officer. Additionally, there is a group of seven postcard-sized photos of H.E. the

Governor, Sir Alexander Waddell's 1961 visit to Debak, including his visit to St. Christophers' School. A larger set of 40 photos depict the "Governor's tour of Strap (Lingga, Barang)," but also included are scenes of the Ulu Undup.



**Photo 10: Hauling the government longboat through the Pelagus Rapids (Tun Jugah Foundation).**

Also well represented in the collection are photos of the Kanowit district, including scenes of river travel and longhouse life in the Poi. Of special historical interest are photos of the Kanowit fort and bazaar taken in 1946 and 1947 (see Photo 9).

However, the bulk of the Tun Jugah Foundation collection comprises photographs and negatives of what is now the Kapit Division. Again, especially rich are scenes of Iban life, including weaving, river bathing, boat building and rituals. Among the latter are over 30 negatives labeled "Gawai Kenyalang." Notable are a number of photos of the historic Kapit fort, taken in the early 1950s, including two especially interesting negatives, "inside Kapit fort, case in progress," showing a native court case in progress. There are also a large number of photos of the Kapit regatta and an interesting set of 11 postcard-sized studio photos showing what is now the old Kapit bazaar as it appeared when it was under construction in 1952. Also of historical interest is a series of 23 photos labeled "Pelagus sappers begin work," showing engineering crews blasting the Pelagus Rapids. Additionally, there are photos of government longboats being hauled by

ropes through the rapids (Photo 10), as well as a number of other upper Rejang river scenes. A group of 20 negatives portray the "H.E.'s visit to Belaga," and there are six negatives taken in the Ulu Katibas in the early 1950s.

In addition to Richards' own photographs, the collection contains a small number of official photographs. Especially notable is a large picture of the 1924 peacemaking ceremony at Kapit with a letter dated 1954 attached to the back that lists the names of all the persons who appear in the photo. Also included in the collection is a folio of four large black-and-white photos of the Sarawak Council Negri, with the names listed below. The four are dated: 6 December 1955, 4 December 1956, 8 December 1959, and 23 March 1960.

The Richards photos now form part of the Tun Jugah Foundation archives and library collection, housed in the Tun Jugah Foundation offices on the fourth floor of the Tun Jugah Towers, Kuching. More information can be obtained by writing to Janet Rata Noel, The Tun Jugah Foundation, Level 4 Tun Jugah Towers, 18 Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman, 93100 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia (email: jrn@po.jaring.my), or by consulting the Tun Jugah Foundation website: [www.tunjukahfoundation.org.my](http://www.tunjukahfoundation.org.my).

## THE BIDAYUH FILMS OF PROFESSOR WILLIAM R. GEDDES

G. N. Appell, Ph.D.  
*Borneo Research Council*  
*Phillips, Maine 04966*

Among William R. Geddes's lasting legacies to the ethnography of Borneo are the three excellent films he produced on various aspects of the Bidayuh culture. As I have received inquiries from time to time on the sources of these films, I thought this information would be welcome.

*The Land Dayaks of Borneo* (1961-66). 38 min. Distribution: New York University. Shot in 1961 in the village of Mentu Tapuh, Southwestern Sarawak. General life of village, oriented to the river, with some gardening and gathering. Climaxed by a medium performing in a Harvest Festival.

This film was reviewed by Peter R. Goethals in the *American Anthropologist* 69:127, 1967.

Goethals (1967:127) writes the film "depicts Dayak life in Mentu Tapuh, a village of Sarawak's First Division, as of 1961. ... As a partial but graphic record, primarily of Mentu Tapuh's subsistence and ritual activities, this film nicely supplements the full accounts of the producer's 1954 and 1957 monographs dealing with the same longhouse community."

The second and third films are:

*The Souls of the Rice* (1978-1983). 1983. 55 minutes, color. Shows the community ceremonial life of the Land Dayak (or Bidayuh) living in the First Division of Sarawak. 16 mm. or video available from Other World Films, 176 Hudson Parade, Clareville, N.S.W. 2107, Australia.

*Brides of the Gods* (1983-1985). 1985. 55 minutes, color. Shows a more intimate view of a ceremony practiced at the family level. 16 mm. or video available from Other World Films, 176 Hudson Parade, Clareville, N.S.W. 2107, Australia.



These two films were reviewed by Robert Gardner in the *American Anthropologist* 89:265-267, 1987. Gardner writes that the former film shows "the community ceremonial life and the latter film a more intimate view of a ceremony practiced at the family level. ... Anthropology has gained the addition of two important documents to its total 'literature' and the world of film [had] a pioneer of vision and sensitivity at large in the wilderness of a troublesome genre."

In between filming *The Land Dayaks of Borneo* and *The Souls of the Rice*, Geddes produced a film on his research among the Blue Miao of Thailand, which Gardner refers to as presenting "the delicacy, even musicality, of Miao life."

The source of this film is:

*Miao Year*. Photographed (164-1967) and produced (1968). Edited by Rodric Adamson. 16 mm., color, sound, 62 minutes. Discusses the swidden agriculture of the Miao and also their opium poppy plantings. Available from: University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning, 2000 Centre Street, 4th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704. Telephone: 510-643-9271; fax: 510-643-9271. [Reviewed by Asen Balikci, *American Anthropologist* 71:800, 1969.]

#### THE SYAIR SARIBAS PROJECT

Bob Reece  
*Murdoch University*  
*Freemantle, W.A. 6150*  
*Australia*

An old Malay text has recently come to light which may prove to be one of the most important sources for the history, genealogy and folkways of the Sarawak Malays. It may also reveal a good deal of information about the Malays' relations with the indigenous Seru, and with the invading Iban, who were migrating to the Saribas from the Kapuas valley from the late sixteenth century. It was in the Saribas area that the Malays and the Iban forged close trading and raiding relations and where significant intermarriage and sharing of traditions took place. Their close political relations also produced some of the toughest resistance to Brooke rule, which was crushed in July 1849 by the combined forces of James Brooke and the Royal Navy at the "battle" of Betong Marau.

The *Syair Saribas*, to give it a more convenient title than the manuscript's original introduction, is a substantial *jawi* text, probably dating in its original physical form from 1946 or 1947 when it was written down in pencil, possibly from a recitation from the oral tradition by an old Malay woman storyteller, in the Spaoh area of the Batang Saribas. The *Syair Saribas* is an orally communicated text (or texts, since it incorporates many discrete stories) whose origins probably go back at least to the early seventeenth century. It relates, amongst other things, the arrival at Kuala Saribas of the aristocratic Temenggong Kadir in self-exile from Brunei, to be joined there by the celebrated Dato' Godam (also known as Abang Gudam) from Pagar Royong, Minangkabau, in Sumatra who ultimately rescues Kadir's daughter, the beautiful Dayang Chi', from the Sultan of Brunei's harem, marries her and establishes a dynasty. For the most part, however, it is a

closely detailed genealogical and geographical mapping of Malay settlement of the Saribas. At times it has the character of the Old Testament's Book of Genesis, but without the literary quality.

The manuscript consists of just over 400 pages of *jawi* script and almost 2,000 quatrains of verse, which makes it about ten times longer than Brunei's *Syair Rakis*. Like other Bornean *syair* and *hikayat* such as the *Syair Awang Semaon*, *Syair Rakis* and *Hikayat Datu Merpati*, the *Syair Saribas* is a mixture of folk stories, history and genealogy. It is the most authentic and substantial source for the early history of the Malay settlement of the Batang Saribas area and contains some of Sarawak's oldest Malay and Iban oral traditions. Like Brunei's *Syair Awang Semaon*, it relates directly to a particular area and does not go beyond it. Interestingly, it seems to bear no relation at all to the Datu Merpati stories of the Sarawak River delta and is oriented much more towards Brunei.

The manuscript was discovered by the late A.J.N. Richards in the Spaoh area of the Saribas in 1961 when he was Resident of the Third Division at Simanggang under the British colonial government, and was photostated by the old process then used by Sarawak's Lands and Surveys Department for their documents (white text on black background). A romanized transcription was subsequently made of most or all of the manuscript by someone at Richards' instigation, some parts of it now being almost illegible in the photostat copy and possibly in the original as well. Genealogical information contained in the manuscript was used by Richards in his compilation of genealogies of the Saribas Malays (which he deposited with the Simanggang District Office and with the Sarawak Museum) and for his article, "The Descent of Some Saribas Malays," *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 1963. A copy of the romanized transcription of the manuscript was given by him to the Borneo Literature Bureau, but was never published.

In his 1963 article, Richards explained how it was that he became involved in his genealogical research:

At Simanggang where I was stationed from 1957-1961, I found that most of the Malays in Government service were related to each other. I found it useful to make notes of the family 'trees', both to assist in remembering who was who and to leave some local knowledge to my successors.

In the course of my correspondence with Richards in the early 1980s on other matters, he told me about the manuscript, emphasizing that he was unwilling to make it public at that stage due to certain sensitivities that it might arouse in Brunei and Sarawak, with the first of the *syair* describing some strange and unsavory happenings at the Brunei court and others reflecting not altogether favorably on the ancestors of some Sarawak families. He also remarked that the manuscript contained some "local colloquial forms" of expression which might now be regarded as antiquated or not permissible.

In a letter to me dated 29 January 1982, he wrote:

The '*hikayat*' I have is from the Saribas.... It is a *silah-silah* in *syair* form that used to be recited and was written down on poor paper in 1946 or 1947. I only possess a photostat copy— now 20 years old—and a typed manuscript, part of which I have yet to check against

the *jawi*. The transcription is over an inch thick of foolscap—expensive to copy. It now needs conversion to modern spelling, translation and general working up. The descents based on it are in the Sarawak Museum and appeared in the *Sarawak Museum Journal*.... The *syair* starts with a doxology and some legend, but then traces the history of a leading family of Saribas *Abang* from origins in Minangkabau and Brunei down to almost the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tailing off into a list of who begat who when recent and remembered times come upon the scene; doubtless when the old lady reciting got tired or the writer had a heavy date....

In a letter of 2 February 1982 he provided a more detailed description of the *Syair*:

I have looked briefly at the *syair*. It is entitled *Ini lah syair tersilah cetera Abang Gudam dengan Temenggong Kadir Negeri Saribas*. It has a short preface about 'former Datus' and the justice of their administration; then a title page for the first 'book' (*kuras*) called *Syair Rajah Shahkandar* ... (i.e., legend about Alexander the Great) which begins with the doxology. There are ten *kuras* of varying length which are divided (except the first and the tenth) into two, three or four *bahagian* each. There are about 7600 lines (and some later scrappy bits) written in pairs across the page (so the *jawi* has 3800 written lines) and these make 1900 quatrains.

I find I've done quite a lot: there are notes and correspondence, and I've chased up words I didn't know in Wilkinson, so it looks like a tedious clerical exercise yet to be done. Annotation will be possible and an introduction. It will take long enough, I expect, without my reading widely to indulge in comparative work—there are plenty of others better qualified than I to do that once it has seen the light of day.

I discovered two old white-on-black photostat copies of the manuscript, two copies of a partial *rumi* transcription and some notes amongst Richards' papers when I went through them in Cambridge in 2001 at his family's request. (The papers, which included all of Richards' notes for his *Iban-English Dictionary* and his recordings of and commentaries on Iban oral literature, were subsequently sent to the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak where they are now being catalogued.) With the Richards family's permission, I took one of the two photostat copies of the manuscript and a duplicate copy of the *rumi* transcription, together with some notes, to Dr. Phillip Thomas in Washington DC in the hope of interesting him in completing the project Richards had begun. I had earlier worked with Dr. Thomas on the publication of two Sarawak Malay works: *Hikayat Panglima Nikosa* (Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society, 1983) and *Fajar Sarawak* (Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society, 1984). Dr. Thomas expressed keen interest and has been working on the manuscript part-time over the last two years, checking the *rumi* transcription against the *jawi* and making a summary of the contents.

### Aims of the project

1. To locate, if possible, the original manuscript in the Batang Saribas area or, failing that, to collect all possible information from the *Batang Saribas* area about the stories and information recounted in the *Syair Saribas*.
2. To produce an accurate *rumi* transcription of the text, checking the existing *rumi* draft against the *jawi* original when necessary.
3. To produce an English translation of the most significant sections of the text (some sections being in the form of doxologies or praise language and others which are not really translatable) and summarizing the remainder.
4. To produce a substantial Malay-language Introduction (with an English translation), outlining the historical context and general significance of the manuscript and its mythological, historical, genealogical and literary content, comparing it with other Bornean, Malayan, and Indonesian *syair* and *hikayat*.
5. To put into final form ready for printing:
  - Introduction
  - Full *rumi* transcription, with annotations
  - English translation of some sections
  - Some examples of the *jawi* text
  - Relevant photographs, with captions

### Progress to date

As indicated above, Dr. Phillip Thomas has been working in his spare time for the last two years on the existing *rumi* transcription and has made one visit to Sarawak to consult on the text. He has checked about one-fifth of the *rumi* transcription. I spent two days in Kuching in late May 2002 to discuss the project with Datuk Seri Adenan bin Hj. Satem and Sarawak Museum Director Sanib Said. I also made a week-long visit to Sarawak in late August during which I conducted research for two days in the Museum Library and UNIMAS Library. I located some useful secondary sources at the Museum Library, including the thesis on the Malays of Pusa by Professor Emeritus Zainal Kling of the University of Malaya, but was unable to find any references to the *Syair Saribas* in the Richards Papers at UNIMAS other than the two letters from Richards to myself from which I have quoted above. Together with Hajjah Rosenah Ahmad, I also spent two days in the Batang Saribas area in August 2002, briefly visiting Pusa, Debak, Spaoh and Betong to establish whether the original manuscript still exists and, if so, where it might be located. In this respect, we could find no one who had ever heard of the manuscript, let alone its whereabouts, and very few who still knew the oral traditions about Temenggong Kadir, Dato' Godam etc. According to Richards' genealogy, in 1963 there was a certain Abang Hassan bin Abang Wi at Spaoh who was the great-great-grandson of Patinggi Kedit. Thinking that Abang Hassan may have been the owner of the manuscript, we attempted to locate his descendants, but could only establish that his adopted daughter had moved away. This is something to be pursued further.

By way of compensation, we did visit and photograph the *batu nisan* of Temenggong Kadir, Dato' Godam and Dayang Esab at Pusa and record their inscriptions. The *batu nisan* are located in an old and almost overgrown burial ground outside the town and close to the river bank at a place called Sapinang, which is sacred to the local Malays. Our access was facilitated by a board walkway erected earlier to accommodate a visit by

Pehin Dr. Jamil of Brunei's Pusat Sejarah who has been working for some time on Brunei's genealogical and other historical links with Sarawak. The graves of Temenggong Kadir and Dato' Godam are close together, protected by a shelter, while that of the legendary Dayang Esah ('Tandang Sari') is another fifty yards away and protected by another shelter. There is no sign of the grave of Dayang Chi', but the presence of fragments of other *batu nisan* at both sites suggests that the burial ground was well used and that hers may have been lost or inadvertently destroyed. Another possibility, of course, is that the historical identities of Dayang Chi' and Dayang Esah are one and the same.

By a bit of remarkable serendipity, we located an old Malay man in Betong who is probably one of the last people in Sarawak to know the traditional Temenggong Kadir/Dato' Godam and other Batang Saribas Malay stories in detail. Abang Hj. Rosly (76) of Kampung Mesjid is a retired businessman who left school when he was young, which may explain why he retains more of the oral tradition (passed down by his father) than other people of his generation. He had not heard of the manuscript and could not recall the Syair being recited (or rather, chanted) but was very familiar with its subject matter. Clearly, it is only two or three generations since these stories were common knowledge thanks to itinerant storytellers who could recite from memory.

### Support for the project

Through the instrumentality of Datuk Seri Adenan bin Hj. Satem, funds have been made available by the Sarawak Branch of the Malaysian Historical Society to meet the costs of transcription and editing for publication. Under this arrangement, editorship of the final book to be published by the Society will be under the names of Sanib Said, Hajjah Maimunah Daud, Hajjah Rosenah bin Hj. Ahmad, Dr. Phillip Thomas, and myself. I have also suggested that the name of the late A.J.N. Richards be added to the list to give him posthumous credit for all the work he did on the manuscript. The Vice-Chancellor of UNIMAS, Professor Yusuf Hadi, has facilitated the project by making available working copies of the Syair and a draft transcription. Murdoch University has also assisted by relieving me of some of my teaching duties.

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A WOODEN FIGURE USED TO TAKE ON HUMAN DISEASES  
SHAMANISTIC HEALING RITUALS OF THE BASAP IN EAST  
KALIMANTAN

Herwig Zahorka  
*zahorka@indo.net.id*

In January 2002 I accompanied a German student in ethnology, Christian Oesterheld, to the Basap area, on Mangkalihat Peninsula, in East Kalimantan. He stayed there nearly three months doing research. It was my fourth journey to the Basap since 1976.

While staying with the Basap we had the opportunity to meet with a shaman who called himself a *dukun*. He performs healing rituals to cure sick people. For the performance of each ritual he produces a specific carved wooden figure that depicts the patient he is treating. During the two nights of a healing ritual, which he calls *bulungan*, he performs a shamanistic dance, or *tarian tangiagan*, with the figure, and he repeatedly "takes" disease spirits from the sick body-parts of his patient and presses them into the figure. The patient is then supposed to become healthy. The figure now bearing the disease spirits is finally taken into the forest. Christian Oesterheld plans to report on the details of the ritual in his doctoral thesis.

I was lucky to get a two-legged figure, 40 cm (15.7 inches) in height, with clear female attributes, which was made for an old woman obviously suffering from arthritis in both knees. The figure was made of the soft wood of *semurut*, which was botanically identified as *Alstonia scholaris*, Apocynaceae. The eyes, tongue, and vulva of the figure are painted red, and the eyebrows and nose are black. The figure has her two arms raised. Her right hand has four fingers, while her left hand consists of a fist and a thumb pointing up.

On the right hand a twig of a plant was fastened which the shaman called *ba lep bo*. The left hand held another twig of a plant called *sarim bangun*. A twig of the same plant was also fastened by a red string to the back of the figure .



Wooden figure depicting the shaman's patient, with two plants, *sarim bangun* and *ba lep bo*, attached to it. Disease spirits are pressed into the figure which is then left in the forest to decay. The patient in this case was an old woman suffering from arthritis in both knees.

A photograph of this image, or *patung*, which is now in my collection, is included here (photo 1). As far as I know, this is the first published photo or reference to such images used by the Basap for ritual healing.

I took some fresh twigs of these two plants to the *Herbarium Bogoriense*, Bogor, where I had them hotanically identified. I found out that both are medicinal plants widely used throughout Southeast Asia.

*Sarim bangun* is the shrub *Gendarussa vulgaris* Nees (use: *Justitia gendarussa* Burm.f.), Fam. Acanthaceae. Interestingly, in China a drug is made from the root to treat arthritis, rheumatism and other diseases. In Vietnam, the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia, and the Philippines, it is used both for magic and medicine. Mostly the leaves are used externally to treat rheumatism, swellings, lumbago, and other ailments like gonorrhoea and malaria. The whole plant contains alkaloids. (Perry, L.M. et al.: 3-4; *Plant Resources of South-East Asia* No.12: 330). In the Mentawai Island of Siberut, shamans (*kerey*) call this plant *pangasele*. *Sele* means "to chase away," and may be extended, in *pangasele*, to mean, "may sickness and evil spirits get lost and misfortunes be averted."

*Ba lep bo* is also a shrub and has the botanic name *Coleus atropurpureus* Benth. (use: *Plectranthus scutellaroides* (L.) R.Br.), Fam. Labiatae. From Indo-China, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines, Indonesia, through to New Guinea, mostly the crushed leaves are used to treat all kinds of inflammations, hemorrhoids, and to relieve muscular pain. It is used as an active medicine. Some women swallow the sap of the leaves as a contraceptive (Perry, L.M. et al.: 185; *Plant Resources of South-East Asia* No.12: 408f). In Siberut the plant is called *laggek ta belet logau*. *Bele* means "to fall" and *logau* means "blood." *Ta belet logau* therefore means "blood that doesn't flow." The red leaves are crushed and the red sap is massaged onto the belly to stimulate menstruation. The whole plant contains alkaloids (*Medicinal Plants of Siberut*: 76). The Basap patients are not supposed to use those plants internally.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NEW JOURNAL

#### *Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies*

Published under the aegis of the Asia-Pacific Research Unit (APRU) of the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, *JAPS*, will launch its inaugural issue in 2003.

*Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies (JAPS)* is an internationally referred, scholarly biennial publication (May and November) focusing primarily on Asia (South, Southeast and East), Australasia and the Pacific Rim regions of the Americas (North, Central and South). The disciplines of interest encompass politics, history, indigenous languages and literature, religions, man and the environment, ethnohistory, anthropology, cultural heritage, socio-economic development, war and conflict resolution, pre-history and archaeology, and the arts. *JAPS* shall undertake to publish articles based on original research or fieldwork of the highest scholarship.

As editor of *JAPS*, I cordially invite contributions.

Keat Gin Ooi  
The Editor  
Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies  
School of Humanities  
Universiti Sains Malaysia  
11800 Penang  
Malaysia  
Fax: 604-6563 707; email: kgooi@hotmail.com

## BORNEO NEWS

### REGIONAL NEWS

*Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak* Volume 4 is in its final stages of editing and will be ready for publication in 2002. The volume will contain 6 families: Aquifoliaceae (S. Andrews), Ebenaceae (F.S.P.Ng), Lecythidaceae (M. Pinard), Oleaceae (R. Kiew), Proteaceae (R.C.K. Chung), and Sapotaceae (P.P.K. Chai and P.C. Yii). The volume is edited by **E. Soepadmo**, **L.G. Saw**, and **R.C.K. Chung**.

**Dr.P.J.A. Kessler** and **Mr. J.B. Mols** (Leiden) finished the revision of *Monocarpia* in Borneo. There are 3 species of which 1 was undescribed. **Dr. L.G. Shaw** is revising *Licuala* of Borneo. Under the British Chevening Scholarships/Royal Society Malaysian Fellowship he was able to visit Kew between 15 January and 15 June, 2000.

## KALIMANTAN NEWS

**Mr. J.W.F. Slik** and **Ms. S. Sevilla** (Leiden) studied the indicator role of *Macaranga* and *Mallotus* species for forest disturbance in Kalimantan. Slik continued his PhD studies on the biodiversity of *Mallotus* sect. *Hancea*, *Polyadenia*, and *Stylanthus*.

**Ms. F.I. Windadri** (BO) conducted fieldwork in Tabalong, South Kalimantan, by helping to make an inventory of lichen and bryophytes supported by the European Union, between 17 March and 5 April 2000. Four hundred and fifty-two specimens were collected.

**Mr. M. Amir**, **R.K. Hadiatry**, **Purwaningsih**, and **T. Uji** (BO) went to Muara Kendawangan Nature Reserve, West Kalimantan, between 28 June and 16 July 2000. About 200 specimens were collected.

**Ms. H. Rustiami** (BO) went to Batulitjin, Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan, between 24 January and 9 February 2001; 181 specimens were collected. **Dr. Rugayah** and **A. Ruskandi** (BO) visited Bukit Bangkirai, East Kalimantan, between 31 January and 20 February 2001; 180 specimens were collected. They went again from 7-18 September 2001 and collected 90 specimens.

**Ms. F.I. Windadri** went to Bukit Bangkirai, East Kalimantan, from 4-13 February 2001 and collected 369 specimens of bryophytes. **Mr. Dodo**, **Isro**, **Muzaeni**, **E. Safei**, **Suherman**, and **Suparta** (Kebun Raya, Bogor) went to the Betung Karihun National Park, West Kalimantan, from 18 June-8 July 2001; 194 living plants were collected.

## SABAH NEWS

Borneo Collection seeks volunteers. The **Borneensis Collection** is a young and ambitious natural history museum maintained by the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation at Universiti Malaysia Sabah. The object of Borneensis is to develop a reference collection for the entire Borneo flora and fauna, with special reference to vertebrates, insects, land snails, herbaceous plants, and bryophytes.

Several large expeditions and the ongoing research work by researchers of the Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (ITBC) have produced rich materials for these groups, which, however, remain partly unprocessed due to lack of properly trained staff. For this reason, we are currently seeking local and international volunteers who are willing to help with sorting, mounting, labeling, and identifying specimens, or any of these activities for any length of time. In return, we can offer basic accommodation, a small allowance, and the opportunity to work on the world's richest biodiversity in a stimulating academic environment. For further information, please contact Dr. M. Mohamed or Dr. M. Schilthuizen at the addresses below or visit the website at <http://www.ums.edu.my/ubtp>.

Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Locked Bag 2073, 88999 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, MALAYSIA. Tel: +60+88-320104; fax: +60+88-435311.

**Dr. Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan** has been promoted to Associate Professor and appointed Kadazan Dusun Chair at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

### SARAWAK NEWS

The Borneo Project website (<http://www.earthisland.org/borneo>) was recently overhauled, and now has many new features and sections. One new feature is a gallery section, displaying over 50 pictures of Sarawak in the 1960s. The pictures come from the collections of returned Peace Corps volunteers Michael Mercil and Ted Pack. These photos show how dramatically Sarawak has changed in the last thirty years. The Project has also amassed a large archive of several hundred news stories on Borneo, with the latest news updates weekly.

Professor **Clifford Sather**, Chair of Dayak Studies, will be leaving Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) in July 2003 to take up an appointment as Professorial Fellow in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Helsinki (P.O. Box 59, 00014 University of Helsinki, FINLAND). As part of a continuing study of Saribas Iban healing traditions, he began work in May 2003 with his wife Louise and **Mr. Jantan Umbat** of the Tun Jugah Foundation on the *besugi sakit*.

#### **Sarawak Dayak Graduates Association**

An association of Dayak graduates called the Sarawak Dayak Graduates Association (SDGA) has been formed and was officially registered on 23 July 2001. The first major event organized by the Association was a workshop held in Kuala Lumpur on the Third Outline Perspective Plan and Eighth Malaysia Plan and was organized jointly by the Association and a parallel Sabah group called the Indigenous Economic Progress Sabah (INDEP). The Prime Minister, Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, presented the keynote address.

Among the stated goals of the Association is to cooperate "with other societies in Malaysia, having similar objectives," in order to enhance "greater inter-ethnic co-operation, instill religious tolerance and establish mutual respect to safeguard the dignity of all races in Malaysia." In addition, the Association seeks "to help its members and the Dayak community progress further and to be on par with other Malaysians in areas where they lag behind."

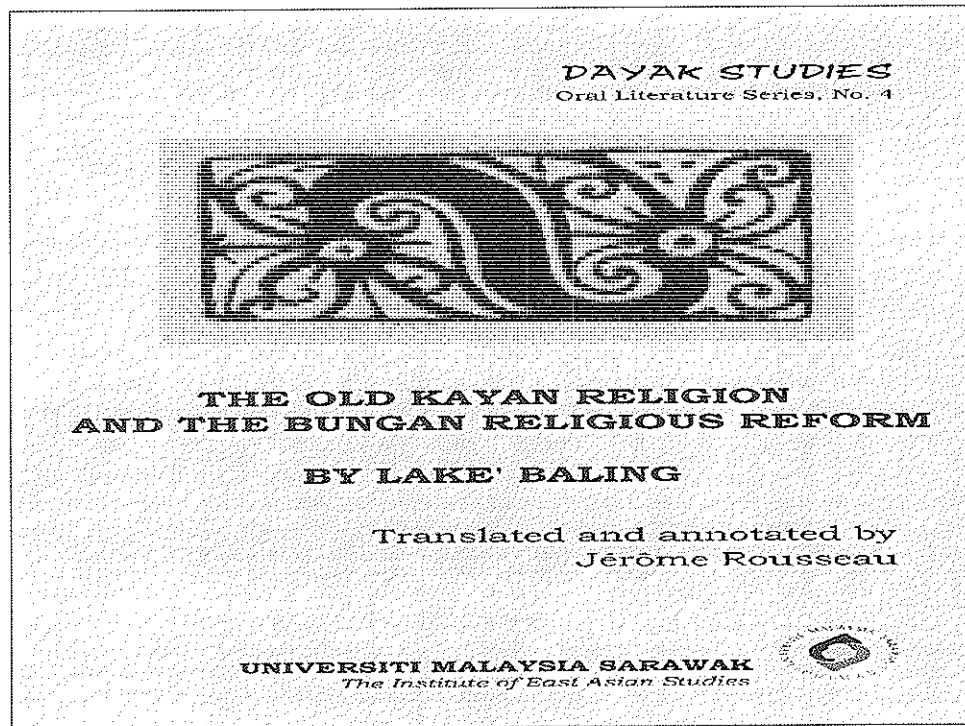
The first Annual General Meeting of the Sarawak Dayak Graduates Association was held on 14 February 2003 and was followed the next day, 15 February, by an official launching ceremony and a day-long seminar on "Social Transformation" held at the Santubong Kuching Resort and attended by an overflow audience of nearly 2000 members.

Further information on the Association can be found on the SDGA website [www.sdga.org.my](http://www.sdga.org.my) or by writing [sdga@po.jaring.my](mailto:sdga@po.jaring.my).

## TWO NEW DAYAK STUDIES VOLUMES

Two new books were published during the last year by the Dayak Studies program at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

1. *The Old Kayan Religion and the Bungan Religious Reform*, by Lake' Baling, translated and annotated by Jérôme Rousseau. Dayak Studies Oral Literature Series, No. 4.



ISBN 983-9257-23-4 124+xviii pp, 2 plates

The author of *The Old Kayan Religion and the Bungan Religious Reform*, Lake' Baling Avun, was born at Uma Aging, the first Kayan longhouse above Belaga. Here, in later life he was the community headman and a noted authority on customary law. Lake' Baling was the descendant of a long line of Kayan aristocrats. As was then the custom for the sons of leading Kayan families, he was sent as a youth to live in another village, and so, as a young man, spent a number of years at Uma Bawang. Here he became an early adherent of Adat Bungan and studied with a number of well-known religious experts, including Lake' Lirong, the most senior Bungan priest in Belaga at the time.

In the 1940s and 50s, Adat Bungan, an indigenous religious reform, appeared and replaced traditional religion in much of central Borneo. It removed many of the burdensome taboos that had formerly circumscribed daily life. As chief of Uma Aging, Lake' Baling became an influential supporter of the new religion. In the 1950s he began to set down in writing his knowledge of Adat Bungan and of the older religion that it had replaced. In 1961, he completed the manuscript of the present book. In 1974, two years before his death, Lake' Baling met the anthropologist Jérôme Rousseau, who was then carrying out a study of Kayan social life and religion at Uma Bawang, and asked him to translate the manuscript he had written into English and to publish it so that the Kayan people and the whole world might appreciate the value of Adat Bungan. The present book is, in part, a fulfillment of that request.

*The Old Kayan Religion and the Bungan Religious Reform* contains Lake' Baling's original work, printed here in Kayan, a preface by Jayl Langub, and an introduction, English translation, and extensive annotations by Jérôme Rousseau, Professor of Anthropology at McGill University.

**2. *Changing Borders and Identities in the Kelabit Highlands: Anthropological Reflections on Growing Up in a Kelabit Village near the International Border*, by Poline Bala. Dayak Studies Contemporary Society Series, No. 1.**

The central topic of this book, the first in the Dayak Studies Contemporary Society series, is the international border that runs between Indonesia and Malaysia and its evolving significance to the peoples of the Kelabit Highlands, Sarawak, and their Berian kinsmen in East Kalimantan. In *Changing Borders and Identities*, the story of the border also becomes, as she tells it, the author's own story. Playing upon the multiple meanings inherent in the notions of "boundaries" and "borders," and the role both play in creating and mediating identities, the author relates an account of the international border to her own odyssey from a Kelabit Highlands childhood to becoming an anthropologist and university lecturer. Along the way, she introduces us to, and so weaves into her account, an age-old song form, the *laku*, now re-adapted to tell individual stories of a changing present.

The author, Poline Bala, is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Social Sciences, in the International Studies Program, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

Each Dayak Studies volume is priced at: **RM25/USD8/AUD13**

For placing orders or for further information on *Changing Borders and Identities in the Kelabit Highlands* and *The Old Kayan Religion and the Bungan Religious Reform*, as well as previous Dayak Studies volumes, please write to:

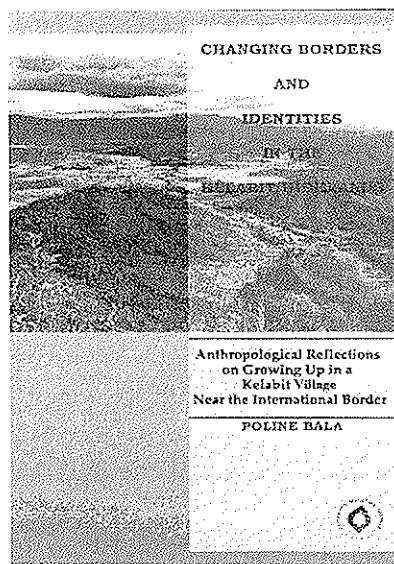
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**Universiti Malaysia Sarawak**

**94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia**

Telephone: 60-82-671000 ext 228 & 661 Fax: 60-82-672095 OR aroshima@

ieas.unimas.my



ISBN 983-9257-17-X 140+xivpp, 16 plates

In Malaysia, Dayak Studies books are available at the University of Malaya Cooperative Bookstore on the UM campus, and in the US, and for overseas orders, through the Borneo Research Council, P.O. Box A, Phillips, Maine, 04966, USA.

## BOOK REVIEWS, ABSTRACTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOK REVIEWS

*Changing Borders and Identities in the Kelabit Highlands: Anthropological Reflections on Growing up in a Kelabit Village near the International Border.* Poline Bala. Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia: Dayak Studies Contemporary Society Series, No. 1, The Institute of East Asian Studies, University of Malaysia Sarawak, 2002, 142 pp., RM25.00, USD8.00, AUD13.00, paper.

Part memoir, part academic treatise, Poline Bala combines personal narratives regarding local perceptions of the border with insightful scholarly analysis. As a “native anthropologist”—Bala is herself a Kelabit from the Kelabit Highlands—the author wonderfully situates her work into the broader framework of research on the Kelabit people as well as the ethnography of borders. Bala begins with a refreshingly honest discussion of what it means to do research on one’s own people. Included in this are comments on the Kelabit community’s broader engagement with foreign anthropologists, both as they conduct their field research and through engagements with their texts. Such reflexivity makes for interesting reading and provocative insights; it is

also an essential starting point for the larger argument she builds in the book, incorporating her own personal narrative into an anthropological analysis of the border.

One of Bala's main concerns is with how perceptions of the border, and perceptions about people from across the border, have shifted and changed over time. By beginning with an account of her own emergent awareness of the border, she succeeds in pulling the reader vividly into this mental framework, showing concretely the near and distant events that have shaped and continue to shape local perceptions of the international frontier. As with many locations along international frontiers, the border in the Kelabit Highlands is a product of colonial-era geopolitical maneuverings that, in certain key respects, had little to do with local on-the-ground realities. Throughout the book, Bala emphasizes how people on both sides of this artificially imposed national frontier have been and remain socially connected; indeed, they are so closely connected historically and culturally, she argues, that they could essentially be viewed as one people. In many instances, people on opposite sides of this border are close relatives (*lun ruyung*) and Bala demonstrates how, over time, local emphasis on this relatedness has gradually subsided and people from the Indonesian side of the border are increasingly perceived as outsiders. Concurrent with this, Kelabits have become deeply dependent on Indonesian seasonal migrant labor for maintaining their rice farms, and cross-border marriages are extremely common.

Understanding these processes—by which Lun Berian (Indonesian) “relatives” (*lun ruyung*) come to be viewed as outsiders and workers who are often looked down upon by Kelabits—compels Bala to outline the social history by which the border has been made real to people living in this border zone. In telling this history, Bala looks at events in her own life and those of her family and how certain pivotal events, such as the Malaysian/Indonesian Confrontation in the 1960s, shifted and solidified local perceptions of the border. She describes in detail how her father (and many other Kelabit relatives) served as active participants in the undeclared border war between Indonesia and Malaysia, known as “Confrontation.” Through these stories she illustrates how the international border, in her own mind and that of other Kelabits, became something meaningful where it had not been nearly so meaningful before. As people such as her father became mobilized in defense of the border, the border became something real in the local imagination.

While Bala is sensitive to the basis of local perceptions, she raises ethical concerns about the inequality that has resulted in response to the national boundary. Expressing some personal regrets, Bala comments on being “alarmed to find myself looking at my relatives from the Berian area more as Indonesians than as my *lun ruyung*” (95). The important point is that historical circumstances have made this transformation inevitable and that borders are powerful vehicles for indoctrinating notions of difference. In an effort to help make better sense of how this process has occurred, she also presents and analyzes texts of some contemporary *laku*, a genre of traditional Kelabit songs. Bala uses these to explore laments about rural outmigration and, more generally, as a window into the emotional effects of social change among the Kelabits. By including these local narratives, Bala adds a critical dimension to the book and although the *laku* don't comment explicitly on the border, they add a layer of texture that certainly illuminates local concerns. Bala also explains her decision to include these *laku* as “a way to preserve our ‘rich and beautiful customs’” (p. 53).

This book has many things to offer. As a native of this region, Bala brings a great deal of care and sensitivity to her subject matter. Weaving together memories and family history with local social history and narratives of the international frontier, this book explores issues that will be of interest to a wide range of readers, including those with a specific interest in the Kelabit, Borneo cultures and history, or the study of international borders. A valuable contribution to the ethnography of border zones, this book offers a decidedly local perspective on an international boundary line and directly confronts the power of borderlands to create and sustain difference. (Matthew H. Amster, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA 17325, USA).

**Judith Heimann: *The Most Offending Soul Alive: Tom Harrison and his Remarkable Life*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999. 465 pages. US\$26.95. ISBN 0-8248-2199-8.**

Tom Harrison, even twenty-five years after his death, continues to evoke strong emotions from Sarawakians and Old Sarawak Hands. The chief requirement, they tell me, of any reviewer of his biography is that he should never have known the man. People who *did* know him call Harrison an abusive, jealous bully, a mean drunk, greedy of power, callous. That's just for starters. Some would call him thief, fraud, and psychopath.

Yet Harrison was a genuine explorer in an age when exploration was hard and dangerous; he helped invent an important sociological technique; he held military command during WW2 and *konfrontasi*; and he raised the Sarawak Museum to excellence and prestige. He led a life crowded with toil and adventure, and no man entirely lacking virtues could have done much of what he did. Maybe there is no place in the middle for someone like Harrison; yet it's only just to weigh the good and the bad in him.

Judith Heimann was brave to take on the job. The facts of Harrison's career are complex and obscure, and he showed different faces to different people. He went out of his way to make enemies, and he tyrannized his subordinates; yet he could charm and flatter the powerful and those he considered "useful." He was careless of his reputation. He publicized himself aggressively while economizing on truth, creating an engaging print persona glaringly at odds with the man Heimann portrays from documents and over 200 interviews.

Harrison was born into the dreary upper-class milieu of 1911 (in Argentina, where his father had moved to make lots of money). He attended "public" school at Harrow, which he professed to loathe but later never failed to boast about. By his late teens he had made a splash as an ornithologist, and on those credentials he was invited to accompany an Oxford University expedition. At Cambridge, he spent more time drinking than studying, and soon left without a degree, but not before he had gone on another expedition and gathered connections.

Class privilege excused many failings, and Harrison at his most combative never forgot he belonged to the ruling class, or allowed others to forget it. Connections again led to his being asked to organize an Oxford expedition to Sarawak.

Science, however successful, was eclipsed by the scandal of eight sophomores frolicking among the natives. Harrison resented the control of the D.O., of E. Banks,



curator of the Sarawak Museum and officially in charge of the expedition, and resented Banks's Oxford degree and position in the *raj*, and did everything he could to cross him. In Kuching, Harrison and company swaggered through town in dirty clothes, boasted, got drunk and brawled. Banks, legitimately offended, published a scathing critique.

Harrison's career, however, was little damaged. He went on a further expedition, and stayed on in the South Pacific, where he lived "like a hippie," as Heimann says, did ethnography, and helped Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. make a film about "cannibals" (which was never released). Though he arrived in England penniless, he was still known, still upper class, and promoted himself as one who "lived among cannibals."

Harrison turned to anthropologizing the English working-class. With Charles Madge he founded Mass-Observation, a scheme in which hundreds of volunteers were recruited clandestinely to study their fellow citizens. This was, at the time, a new approach. Most people feel that Mass-Observation was Harrison's best work.

M-O flourished briefly in the war years. Then Harrison went too far in his criticism of the government, and all M-O men were called up. Harrison's Borneo experience was useful to the military. He was given training with the Special Operations Executive and, with rank of major and a team of commandos, parachuted into Bario in early 1945.

The war months were Harrison's finest moment. He was now virtual king over the highlands of Sarawak, and acted like it. He revelled in the power and the violence. Directing a jungle guerrilla war waged by headhunters suited Harrison's self-image. Harrison was an effective skirmisher. Whether he commanded well or not is hard to say; he behaved brutally enough towards his men to bring them perilously close to "fragging" him.

Harrison spent a mere eight months fighting, which provided material for 30 more years of adolescent heroics. If he himself had ever killed someone we would never have heard the end of it. Mercifully, he got no blood on his hands.

In peace Harrison took charge of the Sarawak Museum, which he ran as his private fief, together with the Turtle Islands and Niah Caves. Harrison improved the Museum considerably. He enlarged its collections and rearranged the exhibits. He made it a centerpiece of Kuching life and a focus of Sarawak pride. He not only revived the *Museum Journal* but established it among the best publications of its kind.

Harrison began the first large archaeological digs in Sarawak. At Santubong he unearthed remains of iron-works that pushed back the history of Sarawak civilization 400 years, and at Niah caves he discovered what was then the oldest known skull of a modern *Homo sapiens*. Conservation of both sea-turtles and the orangutan both started with him.

However, his territoriality and the grudge he bore against anyone with a degree brought him to quarrel with other scholars, and gratuitously to offend local intellectuals. When Sarawak entered Malaysia, Malaysians were not prepared any longer to tolerate white Tuans, and Harrison had made too many enemies. In 1966 he retired and went abroad. When he flew back to Sarawak later that year, he found he had been barred from the country.

In the six years after his expulsion Harrison roamed through a series of semi-serious academic jobs, and finally, after divorcing his second wife, Barbara, married Christine Fornari, a Belgian noblewoman, mainly for her money and a sparring-partner. In 1976,

while on a visit to Thailand, the bus they had hired rammed into a timber lorry on a dark road, and Harrisson and his wife were impaled. It was an ironic death.

Heimann may have started out believing that Harrisson had been painted too black, and then found out many things she wished she hadn't. She likes Harrisson, she is frank about Harrisson's failings, but she is uncomfortable extenuating them. The true enormity of Harrisson's brutality in his personal relations is hard to take. He was high-handed with his co-workers and encouraged dissension. He hated his mother, and blamed all his problems on her. He never ceased to quarrel with his father, who at last disinherited him. Women were sex to him, and money. Heimann calls him a "cuckoo," laying his eggs in others' nests. He stole his wives and lovers from other men—often right in front of them—and left them when he lost interest. His first wife killed herself. His son was diagnosed schizophrenic, and Harrisson abandoned him to mental institutions.

Heimann cannot salvage Harrisson's reputation as a man. Harrisson might not have cared. He *would* have cared about how people saw his work.

As ornithologist, Harrisson made genuine, though minor, contributions. His method in Mass-Observation enlivened sociology. He was an excellent museum-curator. Herein his autocratic and demanding temper can be excused: he pushed his staff and got results. His passion for display also took a positive direction as he expressed it through the Museum.

Harrisson's archaeology remains controversial: his field notes are in disarray, unreadable, and all but useless for whoever would follow up on his researches. Heimann makes the point that he excavated where no other had; however, Harrisson made sure that none but himself could work his sites. His contempt for education was fatal: no matter how brilliant, you can't do solid work on "genius" alone.

Harrisson certainly claimed to understand and sympathize with natives better than any other white person. However, when one looks at how Harrisson actually behaved, and how tribal peoples saw him, the picture changes. He wheedled or extorted power and prestige, and exploited it to the limit; but for all that, he existed at the margins of native society. He never grew rice or hunted. He never knew a Bornean language. He heaped racist abuse on the late Iban scholar Benedict Sandin, calling him a "stupid, lazy native."

It is surprising that Heimann, otherwise very thorough, gave so little space to Borneans' recollections of Harrisson. The Kelabit, I hear, have surprising things to tell.

Harrisson was a poor anthropologist. While he can be forgiven for not being interested in "theory," Harrisson's sympathies were patchy and did not extend beyond his "pet tribe." He had no interest in life in general, nor did he draw any lessons, however slenderly philosophical, from what he saw around him. His ethnography, especially in the book *World Within*, is marred by his fantasy of what Borneo *should* be, one drunken orgy of sex and headhunting, with TH at the center. That Borneans themselves might demur never crossed his mind.

In his entry in *Who's Who* Harrisson described himself as fond of "living among strange peoples." His judgment was backwards: the Kelabits were decent, ordinary folk, Harrisson was the strange one.

Whatever you come to think of Harrisson, Heimann has written a fascinating book in her portrayal of him. Harrisson worked hard at being a classic colonial "character," and his doings are material for a *Boy's Own* tale of the most lurid and emotional stripe. Heimann makes the most of it, and entertains us magnificently.

But *TMOSA* is much more than cheap thrills. Heimann vividly recalls a nearly forgotten time, when such characters as Harrison were still possible—we shall not see their like again—and shows remarkable insight, moral courage, fairness and generosity towards this difficult, contradictory, enigmatic, and perhaps tragic man. Harrison is destined not to be forgotten. (Otto Steinmayer, reprinted with permission from the New Straits Times)

**Vincent Nijman. *Forest (and) Primates, Conservation and ecology of the endemic primates of Java and Borneo*. Tropenbos-Kalimantan Series 5. Tropenbos International, Wageningen, The Netherlands, 2002, ISBN 90-5113-052-X, iv + 232, tables and figures, 4 sections, 13 chapters, summaries in Indonesian.**

This book will certainly be useful to anyone seriously interested in the conservation ecology of Java and Borneo endemic primates. It provides valuable comparative materials for scholars, conservationists and decision-makers. The book opens with a general introduction to the conservation of endemic primates in the Sundaic region (Chapter One) and is followed by three main sections.

The first section (chapters 2 and 3) gives an overview of the problems related to primate census techniques. Departing from the viewpoint that data collected by several observers using different census techniques and observing over a range of areas differing in their degree of disturbance leads to great variation in population density estimates; the author discusses the variations of Bornean gibbon density and biomass estimates at two different sites using three census techniques (Chapter Two). He concludes that caution is needed when using census techniques in primatological studies, especially in the case where they are meant to back up conservation programs. Following an outline of the significant impact of behavioral parameters on primate census techniques, the author deals with the issue of behavioral changes in target species as illustrated by gibbons (Chapter Three). He argues that the links between behavioral biology and conservation biology should be strengthened to improve the effectiveness of monitoring and census techniques. This section should be taken as an encouragement to refine our analyses of indicator species as a means of monitoring the health of ecosystems that are so vital to conservation programs.

In the second section (chapters 4 to 8), the author looks into the distribution and conservation status of some endemic primates of Java, namely the gibbon (*H. moloch*) and the leaf monkeys (*P. comata*, *T. auratus*) and gives recommendations for the conservation status of these species. In Chapter Four, the aim of the study was to gain some behavioral data on the Java gibbon *H. moloch*. The data show that this endangered species can be accurately censused by means of its vocalization, though taking special care in separating male and female songs. He concludes that the high degree of vocalization in this species opens the way to new and interesting non-intrusive studies. The data presented in Chapter Five offers evidence that geographical variation in grizzled leaf monkeys cannot support the idea of treating the nominate forms *P. comata* and *P. comata fredericae* as two different subspecies, let alone distinct species. On the basis of the data presented, he contends that it is timely that both eastern and western Java populations and their forest areas should be more actively protected in order to preserve intra-specific variation. Chapter 6 gives information on the altitudinal and

habitat preferences of grizzled leaf monkeys and discusses the species' conservation status. With a severely fragmented population distribution, and the ongoing process of natural forest conversion and encroachment, the author gives some recommendations for this species' preservation and suggests raising the classification of some forest areas to a higher conservation status. In Chapter Seven, the author's study of the geographical distribution of the endemic leaf monkey *T. auratus* shows that though the species occurs in a great variety of forest types, it should be considered "vulnerable" according to IUCN threat criteria. Despite the low level of accuracy of Chapter Eight's population estimates, the author documents the high biological value of the Dieng Mountains and recommends that the reserve system in Java be expanded to include this area as an important global biodiversity conservation area. In this section, Nijman has greatly contributed to showing that the accurate description of a species' range of occurrence is essential in the proper assessment of a species' conservation status and in monitoring its changes in abundance and range.

In the third section (chapters 9 to 11), the author looks into the distribution and conservation status of some endemic primates of Borneo, mainly the proboscis (*N. larvatus*), and gives recommendations for the conservation status of these species. In Chapters Nine and Ten, an attempt was made to assess the conservation status of a flagship species, the proboscis monkey *N. larvatus*. The local extinction of *N. larvatus* from Pulau Kaget serves to illustrate how local populations of legally protected species can disappear within a few years even within protected areas. In Chapter Eleven, spatial patterns of Borneo primate diversity in terms of species richness and endemism are assessed, while in Chapter Twelve the author proceeds to re-assess IUCN conservation status policy. He clearly justifies his proposed changes and calls for the protection of endangered primate species on the basis of their genus. In this section, Nijman deals with a lot of information from different viewpoints to show how complex conservation of primates in Borneo has always been. He concludes that none of the primate populations are too small to be beyond recovery, and that there still are opportunities to safeguard the biological wealth of the island, but that local governments alone cannot succeed without the international community.

Although all of the chapters in this book make valuable contributions--as they offer more ecological and behavioral data--they also leave unanswered the recurrent question of how the endemic primates of the Sundaic region -- and, to that extent, their forests -- can be conserved in the current economic and political situation. The main concern of primate conservation today is that endangered species are under severe threat of disappearing largely due to lack of funds and political support at the local, national and international levels, but also due to poorly integrated planning.

The value of this book is that it provides important information which corrects some misconceptions about ecological issues. This book should encourage us to continue our research on the ecological and behavioral parameters of endemic primates of Java and Borneo that are so critically needed to accurately address conservation issues of long-term monitoring programs. (Dr. Isabelle Lardeux-Gilloux, 30 Rue Grande 04210 Valensole, BOS-France, and Balikpapan Orang-utan Society).

**Vernon L. Porritt. Operation Hammer: Enforced Resettlement in Sarawak in 1965. Special Issue, 2000, Hull: University of Hull, Centre for South-East Asian Studies. 1**

**x plus 160 pages, 16 plates in black and white, two maps, 12 Appendices and index. Price: 10 £, plus postage, UK = 2 £; Overseas = 4.50 £.**

This study is yet another of the author's valuable contributions to documenting the history, and indeed, political geography, of Sarawak. It is an academic and unbiased description of a mass relocation, or resettlement, of about 7, 600 ethnic Chinese living in the vicinity of the Kuching-to-Serian Road in 1965. Sarawak in the mid-1960s was in a period of strained relations with the federal government (in Kuala Lumpur), military pressure from Indonesia, and internal subversion from the local communist organization.

The study is thorough and is supported with extensive footnotes, bibliography, a useful index, illustrations, maps, and most importantly, a collection of official primary documents contained in 12 Appendices. This well-researched and easy-to-read book describes a moment in time which many consider was a pivotal point in the anti-communist campaign in Sarawak. The campaign was code-named "Operation Hammer," hence the title of the book.

The official aims of the campaign were to paralyze the working effectiveness of the communist movement in Sarawak, restore public confidence, and secure cooperation in exposing that organization. Furthermore, it was to act as a deterrent to any terrorist activity in that country and perhaps in neighboring Brunei and Sabah. However, the official objective was the protection of the Chinese families – smallholders – living along a stretch of a major road. The resettlement program was initiated because of the perceived threat of communist insurgency in Sarawak.

The book contains nine chapters. The first sets the geographical scene and presents an overview and profile of the population of Sarawak in 1965, a period when that country was two years into a sister state relationship within the Federation of Malaysia. An examination of the privileges given to the Malays and native (indigenous) peoples of Sarawak by Article 153 of the Constitution of Sarawak and the Constitution of Malaysia is undertaken in the second chapter. Examples of these privileges include, among others, the reservation of a "reasonable" proportion of employment, scholarships, education and training, business licenses and other privileges for the natives of Sarawak. The aim of this legislation was to prevent the Malays and other "natives" from being overwhelmed by non-native racial groups, particularly the Chinese, who dominated the professions and controlled much of the economy.

Malayan Chinese had earlier expressed concerns of losing their ethnic identity, especially when the British administrators proposed a union of Malay States and the settlement of Malacca and Penang. The concept of communalism in Sarawak prior to federation, an overview of the problems perceived by Singapore in relation to a merger of that country with Malaysia, and the geopolitics in Sarawak are discussed in the third chapter.

Communist activity in Malaya was first recorded in 1934 and continued long after the cessation of World War II – the Malayan Communist Party was undoubtedly the best organized and a very powerful political force. The emergency period – 1948 to 1960 – witnessed the repatriation of some 10,000 Chinese to China, and nearly half-a-million rural Chinese were resettled in hundreds of "new villages." Communism and communist aims in Sarawak are analyzed in Chapter Four.

A brief outline of the formation of the Federation of Malaysia and the issues and problems associated with and opposition to, both from within and externally, this political merger are presented in Chapter Five. Porritt records the Brunei Rebellion in which two groups from Sarawak took part; the Brunei Referendum, which rejected the proposal of a merger within a larger Malaysia; and opposition in Singapore to joining in the formation of the Federation. External opposition came from the Philippines and Indonesia, the latter demonstrating more militancy in the form of *konfrontasi* (confrontation) beginning in 1963.

Chapter Six describes the defense of Sarawak during the period of *konfrontasi*, when the role of the Sarawak CCO (Clandestine Communist Organization) militants was of grave concern to the government of the State. The Malaysian administrators called on the British government to provide external defense in accordance with the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement of 1957. Increased government vigilance over internal security became apparent after the insurrections in parts of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions of Sarawak. The CCO was allegedly preparing to take up arms; Chinese smallholders had over 8,500 licensed shotguns. Military assistance--40 Commandos and 2/10th Gurkha Regiment were brought in from Singapore--to help the local police collect these shotguns as roadblocks were established along the Kuching-to-Serian Road.

The Goodsir Resettlement Plan for Sarawak was intended to deprive insurgents of supplies and intelligence by severing all contact between the insurgents and the local community. The initial plan was to resettle all Chinese in areas along the Kuching-to-Simangang Road, and at six other locations. Chapters Seven and Eight describe the events of the enforced resettlement plan and the politics of this plan are analyzed in the final chapter. These chapters, together with the text of the official documents (to be found in the Appendices), make very interesting reading.

The military threat from Indonesian forces along the Kalimantan/Sarawak boundary was reduced dramatically after the failed coup in Jakarta in September 1965. The author concludes that Operation Hammer saved many of the Chinese people in the area from becoming embroiled in the communist struggle. The reader will decide whether the Operation had a significant impact on the government's fight against communism. (Dr. Vivian L. Forbes, Adjunct Associate Professor, Curtin University, and Map Curator, the University of Western Australia).

**D.H. Robinson, *A Mild Man In Borneo, Kuching, Sarawak, The Author, 2002*, pp. 298. [Available from the author, Les Arnauds, St Foy le Petit, 47120 Duras, Lot-en-Garonne, France]**

Published reminiscences of British colonial officers from Sarawak are surprisingly few. I can only think of Ward (1966), Digby (1980), Morrison (1993) and Archer (1997). Consequently it is gratifying to see that "Robby" Robinson has taken the trouble to relate and self-publish his experiences as a road engineer in the mid- and late 1950s. As much as anything else, the book reveals the crushing, long-distance colonial bureaucracy which meant that all his detailed plans for the Serian-Simanggang Trunk Road Project had first to be vetted by various British government departments in London. The building of the road was nothing less than a saga of ingenious improvisation and Robinson regales us with some interesting details of his experiences. In order to run

things effectively, he had to become the White Rajah of his own bureaucratically autonomous kingdom. How successful his engineering was can still be seen today, particularly when it is compared with the disastrous stretch of road from Simanggang to Sarikei. As Robbie's classicist friend Otto Steinmayer notes in his Foreword, the Roman engineer Gaius Cervesius Otho (no relation) once observed: "*Tria quae sunt praecipue observanda in viis construendis sunt colliquitio, porro colliquitio, et denique colliquitio*" [The three most important things in road-building are drainage, drainage and drainage.] How important the Simanggang road was to the opening up of agriculture and small industry in the area neighboring the road would be difficult to overstate. It was the first major breakthrough from a river-based to a road-based transportation system.

Robbie also has some good anecdotes to relate about some of his fellow officers and the general life style of expatriates of the period. Inevitably, one of his drinking companions at the Happy World Cabaret (predecessor to the Aurora Hotel as Kuching's favorite watering hole) was the bibulous and splenetic Tom Harrisson. He explains that they were able to get on very well after their first meeting when the crusty curator "asked what the hell a newly arrived engineer ... knew about the bloody country." Robinson's retort didn't make its way into Judith Heimann's biography but it is a fair summary in its way: "I know you, a bloody journalist, and a failed one at that." (Bob Reece, Murdoch University, Western Australia)

## ABSTRACTS

Editor's note: Abstracts marked **EI** have, with the permission of its Editorial Board, been reproduced from the abstracts journal *Excerpta Indonesia*, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands. We thank the Editorial Board for kindly allowing us to reprint them here (with minor editorial changes) as a service to our readers.

**Alexander, Jennifer, 2000, From "accompanying spouse" to "dutiful daughter": fieldwork roles in Sri Lanka, Java and Sarawak. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*. 1(1): 14-23.**

This contribution discusses the fieldwork experiences of the author in Sri Lanka, Kebumen (Central Java), and Rejang (Sarawak, Malaysia). On the first trip, to Sri Lanka, she accompanied her husband, anthropologist Paul Alexander, as what was officially called an "accompanying spouse." Wives who accompanied their husbands to the field in those days had their fares paid and received a living allowance from the university (in this case, the Australian National University) which reflected their potential contribution to the fieldwork. Without proper training, this proved to be a disappointment. The author's own fieldwork in Java took place in more or less the reverse circumstances, in that her husband was what could now technically be considered an "accompanying spouse." However, this was not the way the villagers interpreted the situation. The visible activities of the husband were valued more than the author's "playing about in the marketplace." This account concentrates more on the circumstances of living and working in Java rather than on the contents of Alexander's research, which she conducted in marketplaces in three nearby towns. The next episode

concerns the experience of living and doing fieldwork in a longhouse community in Borneo, where, paralleling her Javanese experience, she was encouraged to live in the headman's household and become "adjunct cook and dishwasher." Although by then a mature woman over 40 years old, she temporarily became the "junior female of the household," which yielded useful insights into the hierarchical implications of household and longhouse life. The final section deals with a second visit to Central Java, this time to do research on the trading activities of the Javanese in the Jepara region in the context of the developing woodworking and furniture industries. (EI, Ewald Ebling)

**Atje, Raymond, Linda Christanty, Tubagus Feridhanusetyawan, and Kurnya Roesad, 2001, Hutan sebagai asset strategis. *Analisis CSIS*, 30(2): 124-136.**

Forests constitute an important natural resource for the Indonesian economy. However, it seems that this form of exploitation is not sustainable in the long term. According to recent estimates, Indonesia's forest area has decreased by 1.8 million hectares per annum between 1995 and 1997. At this rate, the forest in several areas will cease to be a viable economic resource within a few years. The economic crisis which struck Indonesia in 1997 has opened the door to structural reform in the forestry sector. Unfortunately, the reform process is hampered by several factors. In the first place, the multidimensional nature of the economic crisis provides insufficient leeway for formulation of policies in which forestry issues have high priority. Tackling forestry issues is only feasible in the wider context of economic and institutional reform. Second, a long-term perspective is needed for an effective biodiversity conservation policy. So far, policy-making has been dominated by short-term economic considerations. Reform measures are also significantly slowed down because of the different interests of the various stakeholders in the forestry sector, differences which are often exacerbated by decentralization measures. In this article, the authors also discuss a CSIS research project on forestry policies which focuses on the effects of the economic crisis on legal reform and institution-building in the forestry sector; a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact of the crisis on the sector; and the role of economic incentives and the decentralization process in sustainable forestry management. (EI, Ewald Ebling)

**Barr, Christopher, 2001, Politik ekonomi serat kayu, keuangan, dan utan dalam industri pulp dan kertas Indonesia. *Analisis CSIS*, 30(2): 202-219.**

This article examines the factors that have led Indonesian pulp producers to make large-scale investments in processing facilities without first securing a legal and sustainable raw material supply. It is argued that the country's pulp and paper conglomerates have been willing to invest billions of dollars in high-risk projects because their owners have been able to avoid much of the financial risk involved. Three factors that have allowed them to do so are: (1) heavy government subsidies, including access to wood from natural forest at costs well below its stumpage value; (2) weak regulation of Indonesia's financial sector; and (3) failure on the part of international financial institutions to assess the risks involved in pulp and paper investments adequately. The paper concludes with several policy options to promote sustainability, including the elimination of the wood supply subsidy to the pulp industry, the introduction of a credible independent monitoring program of plantation development



and a moratorium on new pulp and paper processing capacity extensions until public audits of companies' pulp wood supply plans are carried out. (EI, author's abstract)

**Chung, Arthur Y.C., Chey Vun Khen, Sining Unchi and Momin Binti, 2002, Edible insects and entomophagy in Sabah, Malaysia. *Malayan Nature Journal*, 56 (2): 131-144.**

More than 50 species of edible insects from 11 orders were documented from Sabah, Malaysia. The most common insect group taken as food was honeybee brood, followed by grasshoppers and sago grubs. The bee brood was mainly from the giant wild honeybee, *Apis dorsata*, and the cultivated *Apis cerana*. Grasshoppers of various species, especially those from padi fields, were consumed as well as sago grubs, the larval stage of a weevil *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*, commonly found in decaying felled sago trunks. Beetles (Coleoptera) contribute the most species consumed as food. The survey showed that many of the edible insects are often roasted or grilled because that is the simplest and most convenient cooking method in remote areas. Entomophagy, however, is not commonly practiced in Sabah except by some rural and elderly people. This survey covered various ethnic groups, mainly Kadazandusun, Murut and Bajau, and also other races, including the Chinese. Although more than half of the respondents have consumed insects in their lifetime, many reiterated that the insects were eaten only in their childhood. (author's abstract)

**Cranbrook, Earl of, 2000, Northern Borneo environment of the past 40,000 years: archaeological evidence. *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 55, no. 76: 61-149.**

The past 40,000 years cover the close of the last and most severe of the Pleistocene glaciations and the climatic reversal of the Holocene. Research on past climates in the tropics has been much more recent than that carried out for temperate zones. In this paper the author reviews the zoological evidence for climatic change for the northern part of Borneo, which forms the eastern block of the West Malesian biogeographical region, i.e. the Southeast Asian continental shelf, also known as the Sunda Shelf, concentrating most specifically on Sarawak and Sabah. He points out that animal specimens form a basis for inferred ecology, presenting clues about the environment. (EI, Rosemary Robson-McKillop)

**Cranbrook, Earl of, 2000, Quaternary mammal fossils from Borneo. *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 55, no. 76: 216-233.**

The basis for this article consists of two fossils bought in Kuching, but for which the provenance is not exactly known. Based on the evidence provided by adherent particles of matrix, they probably came from one of the many open-cast workings now operating in West Kalimantan and other provinces of Indonesian Borneo. One is a fragmentary lower last molar of a stegodontid and the second is the upper jaw and toothrow of a juvenile hippopotamus. In Borneo, stegodontid specimens are rare and none has yet been found *in situ*. There have been no previous fossil records of a hippopotamus in Borneo. (EI, Rosemary Robson-McKillop)

**Hawkins, Mary, 2000, *Becoming Banjar: identity and ethnicity in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 1 (1): 24-36.**

In the eyes of foreign observers, Borneo has mainly been seen as the land of the Dayaks. The Banjar, or “coastal Malays” who make up the vast majority of the inhabitants of southern Kalimantan, have received scant attention in the ethnographic and historical literature. This paper addresses the question of what makes this group identify itself as Banjar. Linguistic and historical evidence indicates that “the Banjar” are not singular but many. Some scholars propose a threefold division, between the Banjar Kuala, the Banjar Banyu, and the Banjar Pahuluan, but the author argues that other groups could be added to this classification, and finer distinctions made within them. In other words, it is possible to justify a multiplicity of Banjar groups. The one context in which people of southern Kalimantan will invariably identify themselves as Banjar is religion rather than in language or common occupation. Islam forms part of an oppositional discourse which sets the Banjar apart from the Javanese, as well as from their Bukit and Dayak neighbors. The term *urang Banjar* is of relatively recent origin, emerging in the 1930s as a term of ethnic identification. Before that, the Malay-speaking peoples of southern Kalimantan would refer to themselves as from a particular area rather than as Banjar, and in most contexts they still do. Like the concept of *wong Jawa*, *urang Banjar* seems to be a category whose emergence is closely associated with the emergence of Indonesia as a nation. It also proclaims an adherence to Islam. People from other ethnic groups in the area who convert to Islam “become Banjar.” If the current trends toward decentralization in Indonesia persist, it is likely that the primary beneficiaries in South Kalimantan will be the Banjar, who already exercise local political and economic dominance. The author concludes that coming decades may well see increasing numbers of South Kalimantan’s diverse peoples “become Banjar.” (EI, Ewald Ebling)

**Helliwell, Christine, 2000, *Restoring the balance: “marriage exchange” in a Borneo community. The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 1(1) :37-53.**

This paper examines the practice of the transfer of wealth (*buis*) upon marriage among the Gerai, a Dayak community of the northern part of the Ketapang regency in West Kalimantan. The most important social unit in this community is the “rice group,” ideally a co-residential group consisting of a stem family, whose members produce rice on behalf of the group, share rights in the product, and take responsibility for each other’s well-being. The *buis* is a substantial collection of wealth including gold, pigs, and other items which are handed over by the husband to the wife in the “major” wedding ceremony called *sabat*, which takes place only after their oldest child reaches puberty. The *buis* is not considered a “payment,” but rather marks the husband’s recognition of the work (including childbirth) which the wife performs during the marriage on behalf of the rice group. To classify it as “bridewealth” or “dowry” is clearly problematic: in terms of Goody’s (1973) set of distinctions between bridewealth and dowry (in terms of content, recipients, givers, returnability, time of payment, and use), the *buis* could be classified as bridewealth according to two variables, as dowry according to another two, and as neither or both according to the remaining three. The meaning of the *buis* is connected to the notion of “balance,” which is central to the Gerai

*adat*. Its function is to restore balance to the marital relationship and the rice group. Marriage is understood as an equal coming together of the skills and capacities of man and wife. The woman contributes the linked skills of rice selection, rice storage, and childbirth; the man traditionally brought the linked skills of felling trees to make a ricefield and headhunting. In the past, being able to hand over the head of an enemy to his wife marked him as a true man and guaranteed the fertility of their conjugal union. Gerai people see the handing over of the *buis* not as a “payment” to the wife, but rather as a fine intended to rectify the imbalance resulting from no longer providing heads to the rice group. The classification of the *buis* in terms of the conventional bridewealth-dowry typology is unsatisfactory since it has the character of a fine rather than of an element of exchange. Also, the transfer of wealth does not take place between two distinct social groups. (EI, Ewald Ebing)

**Hoare, Alison L., 2001. *Cooking the Wild: The role of the Lundayeh of the Ulu Padas (Sabah, Malaysia) in managing forest foods and shaping the landscape. PhD dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Kent at Canterbury.***

This thesis provides an account of the Lundayeh subsistence system as found in the villages of Long Pasia and Long Mio, situated in the Ulu Padas, Sabah. The research focuses on Lundayeh food and diet, describing the diversity of resources used and the importance of forest foods. Comparison with studies from elsewhere in Borneo suggests that there are many similarities between Lundayeh practices and those of other highland peoples.

These data are used to critically examine the concepts of “wild” and “wilderness,” considering whether these concepts are meaningful, either analytically or for the Lundayeh. Investigation of the way in which the Lundayeh manipulate and manage their resources suggests that they have had a profound influence on their environment. Consequently, the Ulu Padas cannot be described as a wilderness, nor its resources as wild. The extent to which the Lundayeh themselves construct the categories of “wild” and “cultivated” foods is investigated through examining how these resources are owned, and their different roles in the local diet. These data suggest that the Lundayeh recognize that there is no simple dichotomy of “wild” and “cultivated,” but rather, that there is a gradation between these two categories. There is also evidence to suggest that the Lundayeh do not consider any resources as wild, in the sense of being uninfluenced by people.

The environmental perceptions of the Lundayeh are also investigated, and how these have been shaped by their particular way of life, history, beliefs and knowledge systems. It is apparent that for the Lundayeh, the Ulu Padas is a cultural landscape. However, this is changing, as a result of recent social and environmental changes. This thesis concludes by examining the impact of changing perceptions on how the Lundayeh are managing their environment, and on their attitudes towards conservation. (author)

**Höfer, Anke Maria, 2000, *Observations on abundance and diet of the Sunbeam Snake “Xenopeltis unicolor” in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Sarawak Museum Journal, 55, no. 76: 255-258.***

This article is a brief report of a 1996 field survey in West Kalimantan to examine the herpetofaunal community, concentrating especially on the Sunbeam Snake (*Xenopeltis unicolor*), a non-venomous, nocturnal, ground-dwelling reptile widely distributed throughout Southeast Asia. (EI, Rosemary Robson-McKillop)

**Marzali, Amri, 2001, Kekerasan sosial di Kalimantan: sebuah analisis antropologi sosiokultural. *Analisis CSIS*, 30(3): 269-290.**

In 1999 there had already been troubles between the Dayaks and Madurese immigrants in West Kalimantan, and then in 2001 all hell broke loose in Central Kalimantan as people's pent-up frustrations were released in what can only be described as a bloodbath. In this article the author approaches this problem of ethnic violence from an anthropological point of view, trying to discover what went wrong. After all, the Dayaks and Malays have lived together for centuries in a state of (sometimes uneasy) symbiosis. Like the Madurese, the Malays are also Muslim, so obviously the major cause was not religious, or was it a question of a blatant parading of religion in an arrogant fashion? Whereas the Dayaks have never really felt that they have to profile themselves in relation to the Malays, there are plenty of signs that they fostered different feelings towards the Madurese and their religious practice. For instance, in recent years the Dayaks have fought long and hard for official recognition of their own religion, *Agama Helu Kaharingin*. The arrival of big business in the region in the form of logging companies intent on wresting the jungle with which the Dayaks identify themselves from them, exacerbated the situation. Frustration and feelings of being second-rate citizens boiled over into aggression and, as can happen anywhere, social values were abandoned and mob violence took over. Perhaps this might not have happened if the Dayaks, and to a lesser extent the Malays, had felt that there was a just and impartial state system to which they could appeal for redress of their grievances, but that was sadly lacking. (EI, Rosemary Robson-McKillop)

**Micski, Jozsef, 2001, Interaksi antara pemerintah dan donor di sektor kehutanan. *Analisis CSIS*, 30(2): 195-201.**

The article describes the process of institutionalizing government-donor cooperation in developing and implementing an integrated national forest program and to enhance inter-agency cooperation. Three bodies have been established to achieve these targets: the Inter-Departmental Committee on Forest (IDCF), the Working Group for Coordinating the Implementation of the National Forest Program (NFP) and the Donor Forum on Forestry. The author raises some critical points about the effectiveness of those bodies and discusses several negative and several positive current policy achievements and developments in the field. The negative developments include: the continued illegal logging and deforestation; the debt restructuring process of the largest wood companies which does not sufficiently address sustainable forest management principles; the practice of several districts under the decentralization program to allocate concessions in an unsustainable manner and the lack/ absence of the prosecution of offenders. On the positive side, the author mentions the Ministry of Forestry's progress in making public the results of forest inventory and mapping (but without addressing the land tenure issues); the establishment of a Directorate of Forest and Estate Crops Fire

Control; the recent moratorium on the cutting of *ramin* species and a public statement of the President against illegal logging. In addition, eco-labeling/certification schemes deserve special attention because they address the linkages between illegal logging and trade. Finally, the article proposes several priority measures which need to be undertaken: a high level joint political statement of the main decision-makers in the country (the President, Vice-President, DRP and MPR); rigorous implementation of the rule of law; promoting further the role of the IDCF as the main coordinating instrument for the NFP and continued policy dialogue. (EI, author's abstract)

**Postill, John, 2000, Borneo Again: Media, Social Life and Nation-Building among the Iban of Malaysian Borneo, PhD Thesis, Anthropology, University of London.**

This thesis studies the social uses of modern media (especially radio, television, print media, clocks, and public-address systems) among the Iban of Sarawak in relation to nation-building efforts in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Malaysia. It is intended as a contribution to both the ethnography of Southeast Asia and to the fledgling subfield of "media anthropology." Questioning the present anthropological paradigm of marginal peoples successfully "negotiating" external influences, this study demonstrates that rural Iban are neither predisposed nor equipped to challenge the contents of state-controlled media. Indeed, most rural Iban share the developmentalist goals of the Kuala Lumpur and Kuching elites. Chapter 1 is a review of the relevant ethnographic and media literature. Chapter 2 recounts the history of Iban media production from the early dominance of vernacular radio to an increased Malaysianisation of the media after independence. Chapter 3 adopts a "biographical" approach to study the acquisition and disposal of television sets in Saribas longhouses. Chapter 4 analyzes the uses of radio, television, clocks and other media in the social organization of time and space in the Saribas. Chapter 5 explores the Saribas localization of political ideals through a range of media genres, from school textbooks to longhouse speech-making over public-address systems. Chapter 6 examines the localization of Christian ideals by recent converts in the Skrang area, with special reference to the uses of Iban-language prayer books. Chapter 7 is a summary and conclusion. (author)

**Rousseau, Jérôme, 2001, Hereditary stratification in middle-range societies. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 7(1): 117-131.**

The tension between equality and inequality is a crucial factor in the variety and evolution of social systems. State-information is one aspect of this and in this context the notion of middle-range societies has been proposed. This is useful to draw attention to the enormous diversity of social systems in pre-state sedentary societies. So far, the most attention has been paid to "complex chiefdoms," but in this essay the author draws attention to the other end of the scale, the small-scale sedentary societies with populations running into the hundreds rather than the thousands, looking specifically at why some have hereditary stratification and others do not. He derives many of his examples from Southeast Asia, Melanesia, Polynesia, and the West Coast of Canada. To support his argument he gives a number of salient examples from Borneo societies, especially from the Kayan and the Iban. (EI, journal abstract)

**Syaukani H.R., 2001, Pelaksanaan desentralisasi di bidang kehutanan dalam rangka pengelolaan hutan lestari di kabupaten Kutai Kertanagara. *Analisis CSIS*, 30(2): 146-155.**

Since the passing of Acts no. 22/1999 and 25/1999, Indonesia has taken a positive step on the road towards decentralization, giving autonomous regions more chance to manage their own resources. In this essay the author looks at how this policy is affecting and will affect the forestry industry in the *kabupaten* Kutai in East Kalimantan. He argues that this has already had very positive effects in the field of ecology, as well as in the social and economic spheres. However, he feels that certain preconditions must also be met in order for this transfer to proceed smoothly and with the best possible results. It is, for instance, necessary to ensure that the capacity and capability of the human resources available have been honed to a high degree of efficiency. The forestry sector in East Kalimantan absorbs 34 per cent of the workforce. In order to establish sustainable forest management, it is necessary to improve the capability of regional human resources and to coordinate and restructure regional revenues derived from forest products. In order to provide a stable and sustainable income in the future, there has to be regional commitment towards the conservation of the forests; forest management systems which respect economic, social, and ecological aspects have to be supported; and there has to be a recovery of resources which have already been degraded by previous bad management and forest fires. Although forest decentralization policies are basically still in an early phase, the author feels there is every reason to have confidence in the future. Certainly local people will be far more careful of their own local resources than any centralized system would be, and it should be easier to solve the inevitable conflicts between the local people and large timber companies. (EI, Ewald Ebing)

**Wadley, Reed L., 2002, Trouble on the frontier: Dutch-Brooke relations and Iban rebellion in the West Borneo Borderlands (1841-1886). *Modern Asian Studies*, 35(1): 623-644.**

Borders are usually artificial constructions cutting through existing well-established networks of communications, trade, common traditions, and strong kinship ties. In this essay the author illustrates the sorts of problems which arose when colonial powers endeavored to stake their claims on territory in West Borneo and Sarawak, and especially the way in which this affected the Iban population. These people tended to defy the colonial power of both the English and the Dutch, manipulating the border to their own advantage, namely by using it as an escape route from punishment for headhunting or tax evasion. Despite their awareness of the need to control these unruly subjects, the Dutch and the British had great difficulty in seeing eye-to-eye with each other about the measures to be taken to deal with the problem. All the efforts made to discipline the Iban culminated in the Kedang Expedition of 1886, a large punitive measure against Iban on both sides of the border. The author's analysis reveals that most of the disagreement between the Dutch and Raja James Brooke of Sarawak stemmed from long-established competition for the borderland and its people, and different styles of rule. However, both failed to realize that traditional Malay rule (for instance of the Kapuas Malay kingdoms) was over people, not over land. (EI, Rosemary Robson-McKillop)

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