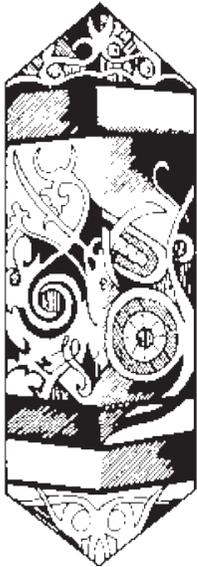


BORNEO RESEARCH BULLETIN

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The coming year—2008—marks the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Borneo Research Council. Among the Council's purposes are the promotion of scientific research in Borneo and the free flow of information regarding research activities and findings. During a meeting held in New Hampshire in September 1968, the founding members of the Council proposed that an occasional newsletter should be created to further these purposes. To be called the *Borneo Research Bulletin*, it would, in the words of its first "Coordinating Editor," Dr. Alfred B. Hudson, take as its principal aim "to facilitate the dissemination among interested scholars of information regarding proposed, ongoing, and completed research in all regions of Borneo" (*BRB*, 1969, 1(1): 1).

The first issue of the *BRB* (Vol. 1, No. 1) appeared the following year, in March 1969. It took the form of a five-page mimeographed newsletter. Ambitiously, Al Hudson wrote in his editorial forward that, henceforth, "it was envisioned that the *Bulletin* would be put out three or four times a year, and that it would serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences related to research in Brunei, Sabah, Sarawak, and the provinces of Indonesian Borneo" (p.1). In addition to a Coordinating Editor, the *Bulletin* had at the time several Contributing Editors, for example, Benedict Sandin representing Sarawak, Stephen Morris, the United Kingdom, and George Appell, the United States. While the idea of a forum remains very much alive today, the suggested time frame proved impractical. From 1969 through 1990, the *BRB* appeared twice yearly, as a semi-annual publication. It soon outgrew its original newsletter format, however, and in 1991 it was decided, chiefly for reasons of economy and scale, to publish the *BRB* once a year. Since 1991, the *Bulletin* has thus appeared as the annual journal of the Borneo Research Council.

Soon after the appearance of the first issue, Al Hudson returned to Borneo under a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies to carry out his landmark survey of the indigenous languages of the island, and Dr. George N. Appell took over the editorship, sustaining and developing the *Bulletin* through the next five years. Beginning with Vol. 5, No. 2, the editorship was assumed for a year by Dr. Otto C. Doering, who was succeeded in turn by Professor Donald Brown in 1974. In his first issue as Editor, Don introduced the present *BRB* cover design with its logo of reversed views, front above and back below, of a Kayan shield. This replaced a prior logo, used in several previous issues, based on a carved design from a Bajau Laut boat. In 1975, with Vol. 7, No. 2, Professor Vinson Sutlive became editor of the *BRB*, a job he held for the next twenty years. Your current Editor assumed the editorship with Volume 27 in 1996. In 2003, with Volume 34, Dr. A.V.M. Horton assumed the newly created position of Book Review Editor and compiler of our annual bibliography section. In the same year, the Borneo Research Council established an international board of editors for its various publications, including the *Bulletin* (see *BRB*, 2003, 34: 9-10).

All of us who edit or contribute in other ways to the *Borneo Research Bulletin* do so as unpaid volunteers, since the *Bulletin* operates, as it has since 1969, without outside institutional support. The scope and quality of each issue therefore depends upon our contributors and readers, and, in this regard, I welcome your suggestions, comments, research reports, news and other communications.

Over the years, we have tried, with varying degrees of success, to serve the purposes set out by the founding members of the Council. Today, in addition to its printed form, the *BRB* is also available online through many major university libraries. Last year, our Book Review Editor informed me that a Google search for the *BRB* yielded 263,000 entries. “Not bad,” as he put it, although, as he added, by way of perspective, a similar search for “Shakespeare” produced 46.4 million!

In This Volume

As in most past years, we open this issue with a number of memorials. As noted last year, a major figure in the anthropology of Borneo died just before the *Bulletin* went to press in 2006—Professor Rodney Needham. We therefore begin with a remembrance by Kirk Endicott, a former student of Rodney, describing what Professor Needham was like as a teacher, mentor, and friend. This is followed by an interview, originally recorded in 2000, in which Needham recalls his early fieldwork in Borneo in the 1950s. Next, Bob Reece pays tribute to a friend and colleague, The Rev. Max Saint; Graham Saunders writes of Hugh Hickling, and Vernon Porritt writes of Dato’ Haji Mohamad Taha bin Ariffin. A.V.M. Horton concludes this section with an extended memorial for a number of persons associated with Negara Brunei Darussalam whose deaths occurred during the past year. Next year, in Volume 39, we will include a memorial for Robert Barrett, whose untimely death was also noted, with sadness, last year.

Once again, the Research Notes that follow cover a wide range of topics. In their opening Note, “Messengers or Tipsters? Some Cautious though Concluding Thoughts on Brunei-Dusun Augury,” Eva Maria and Roger Kershaw revisit a classic topic in Bornean ethnography—bird omens and augury. They begin their essay with a welcome comparative overview of the literature. As they note, bird omens are perceived in some Bornean societies as “messages,” conveying advice, warnings or encouragement from some higher-level spirits or gods. Traditional Iban augury represents, perhaps, our best documented instance. Here omens are commonly perceived as “messages” and the birds or animals that bear them are regarded as “messengers.” The senders are typically upperworld gods and, indeed, the messengers themselves, in some instances, are thought to be manifestations of gods or their surrogates. The Iban, however, are highly pragmatic in the manner in which they read and make use of omens. In this regard, as the Kershaws note, to the degree that omens may be manipulated, or even deliberately avoided, there is a hint that they are perceived not merely as predictive, but also as causative, directly influencing the events that they are presumed to predict. For the Brunei Dusun, the Kershaws argue, omen-bearing birds and animals are thought of not as “messengers,” but, rather, as “tipsters.” Divine or spirit agency plays no part in dispatching them and so the omen-bearing creatures themselves cannot be described as “messengers.” Nor, they tell us, did the Brunei Dusun have specialized augurs in the past. Here, perhaps, some precaution is in order. In communities like the Iban, where a name might be given to a particularly skilled augur (i.e., *tuai burong*), this person is by no means a specialist in the strict sense of the term. Augury is a notoriously contentious subject and those acknowledged as *tuai burong* are credited with widely varying degrees of authority.

Having established some comparative reference points, the Kershaws, in the second three-quarters of their paper, analyze the traditional system of augury of

the Brunei Dusun and in two substantial appendices, they systematically document individual Brunei-Dusun omens, including those relating to dreams, thereby making a substantial and important contribution to the ethnographic literature. In the process, they also critically reassess previous writings on the topic of Brunei Dusun augury, including their own.

The next two Research Notes are topically related. Each deals with an enigmatic figure in the colonial history of what is today West Kalimantan. Both of these figures, in the colonial narratives of the time, Haji Abu Bakar and Pangeran Anom, were cast as “rebels” or “villains,” but as Reed Wadley and Andrew Smith reveal, their stories are, in fact, considerably more complex. In the case of Abu Bakar, Wadley suggests that the Dutch may well have found it convenient to label his actions as a “rebellion,” as they implicated a tangled web of trade, robbery, raiding, and cross-border connections involving the colonial government’s own upriver agents. The case of Pangeran Anom is better known and, indeed, looms large in the history of early nineteenth-century Sambas. Smith, in his paper, “An ‘Arch-villain’ to be rehabilitated?,” attempts to gain a clearer understanding of Pangeran Anom and the influence he exerted in the Sambas over a remarkably heterogeneous population by examining his early history. He then reassesses the acts of “piracy” that he was accused of committing, in order, as he puts it, to determine “whether Pangeran Anom has been ill-judged by history.” This reassessment raises interesting questions regarding the nature of early nineteenth-century trade in western Borneo.

In the Research Note that follows, “The Development of a New Religion in Central Kalimantan,” Dr. Martin Baier traces the development of the Hindu Kaharingan religion of Central Kalimantan from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. His Note itself is a summary abstract of a book which Dr. Baier has recently published in Indonesian on the Hindu Kaharingan religion. Kaharingan developed initially among the Ngaju Dayaks and in his essay Baier discusses the elements of traditional Ngaju cosmology and ritual practice on which this new religion drew as its source as well as documenting the powerful influence of Protestant Christianity. Particularly interesting is his discussion of the way in which traditional Ngaju deities, spirits, and cosmology were restructured and rationalized in line with state ideology, and the important role played by the Japanese Occupation in the establishment of a self-conscious and formally-organized Kaharingan community.

Herwig Zahorka, in the next Research Note, describes a type of ritual curing known as *belian sentiu* performed, typically over four consecutive nights, by shamans in a small Benuaq Dayak community, present on the Ohong (or Ohookng) River, in the Kutai Barat district of East Kalimantan, which he refers to as the Benuaq Ohookng. These people, he tells us, belong to a larger grouping known as the Luangan. Indeed, the rituals that Zahorka describes in his paper show many points of similarity with those discussed by Isabell Herrmans in her essay “Making Tactile: *Ganti diri* figures and the magic of concreteness among the Luangan Dayaks,” that appeared two years ago in the *BRB* (see Vol. 36, 2005). The notion of “making tactile” seems highly relevant here as well, as one of the striking features of *belian sentiu* rituals is the elaborate use they make of physical objects and ritual constructions. In this regard, as a professional forester, Zahorka makes a useful contribution by identifying the specific plant species used in

building these constructions, fashioning ritual paraphernalia, or making offerings. In describing Benuaq Ohookng ideas about the etiology of illness, the author stresses the role of spirit agents, particularly what he describes as “territorial spirits,” that is to say, spirits identified with specific locales in the surrounding environment. Some of the plant species used in curing are associated, he argues, with particular disease-causing spirits, and one interesting notion he advances is that these associations are based, at least in some instances, on both plants and spirits being identified with the same locales.

In the curing process, Zahorka emphasizes what he sees as the two primary tasks that the shamans must perform, first, extracting disease from the afflicted part of the patient’s body and returning it to the disease-causing spirit responsible and, second, recovering the patient’s lost body-part soul and re-inserting it back into the afflicted part of the body. Each task, he argues, requires its own set of ritual objects. In the first case, these include “spittle images,” wooden figures representing the disease-causing spirit onto which the patient spits out the disease, and, in the second, objects serving as “exchange souls,” for trading with the spirits in exchange for the patient’s body-part soul.

Masahiro Ichikawa, in the next Research Note, takes up a topic that has occupied a number of contributors in the past (most recently, see *BRB*, Vols. 30 and 34), land tenure, and in particular, in this case, rules of land transfer and inheritance. The author’s work is based on a short-term study of one Iban longhouse in the Miri Division of Sarawak, supplemented by briefer visits to 14 others in both the Miri and Sri Aman Divisions. Like a number of other Ibanists, including your Editor, Ichikawa stresses in his essay that Iban notions of land tenure are predicated on managing the land as a continuing family patrimony over multiple generations. This view, it might be added, reverses that of an earlier generation of colonial agronomists who saw the Iban very largely as rootless and profligate in their use of land, a view still echoed in the developmentalist ideology of some sectors of the current Sarawak government. The author’s specific interest is with the inheritance of land from parents to children and transfers of land upon divorce, death, and remarriage. Despite a voluminous literature on the subject, Ichikawa adds some useful new data and insights, particularly stressing, for example, the significant distinction between ‘old land’ (*tanah lama*) and ‘new land’ (*tanah baru*), that is, in part, land obtained through inheritance in contrast to that acquired in the course of marriage, and the calculating of “shares” in partitioning family land holdings. His general conclusion is that Iban rules of inheritance and transfer are “more systematic” and “fixed” than previous observers have reported. Here, however, the data he presents seem to suggest that, in matters of land, as in many other areas of Iban life, rules are subject to negotiation, with various possible outcomes.

The next two papers both concern constitutional change in the Malaysian states of Borneo, Sarawak and Sabah. The first by Vernon Porritt looks at Sarawak and examines two questions: first, how Sarawak, prior to its joining the Federation of Malaysia, developed its own constitution, and, second, how amendments made to the federal constitution since then through 1988, have affected Sarawak in several areas, including education, immigration, and religion.

The final Research Note in this volume by Bob Reece has an unusual history. It was originally written, not as an academic study, but as a legal affidavit that was

submitted as supporting evidence to the Hong Kong Supreme Court. As Reece explains in his introduction, the document came to be written in 1992 as the “expert opinion” of a trained historian in a legal case involving the Malaysian government versus Datuk Jeffrey Kitingan, the brother of Datuk Pairin Kitingan, at the time, Chief Minister of Sabah. In his affidavit, which Reece presents here in its entirety, he describes the special constitutional status accorded to Sabah and Sarawak by Kuala Lumpur at the time of Malaysia’s formation and traces how subsequent constitutional changes have worked to erode much of this status. Having, many years ago, read a copy of the original affidavit, your Editor has long urged Bob to publish some version of this extremely valuable work. As a close observer of the political events of the time, Reece presents the most cogent and insightful account ever written of the political circumstances and motives that have shaped the constitutional status of the Malaysian Borneo states. We are delighted therefore to be able to publish this affidavit together with the author’s explanatory introduction.

Finally, the second part of Dr. Mika Okushima’s two-part essay describing the historical migrations of the Kayanic-speaking peoples of north-central and northeastern Borneo will appear next year in Volume 39 of the *BRB*. The Editor greatly regrets that the length of the present volume made it impossible to include it in this year’s issue.

The Ninth Biennial BRC Conference, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, 29-31 July, 2008

The Ninth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council will be held on the Universiti Malaysia Sabah campus, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, over a three-day period, July 29-31, 2008. Jointly organized by the Kadazandusun Chair and the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, the conference theme is “Borneo on the Move: Continuity and Change.” A photographic competition and exhibition on this theme will be held in conjunction with the conference from 28 July until 1 August.

Further information can be found on the conference website: <http://sepanggar.wordpress.com>. See also the Announcements section in this issue of the *BRB*.

Conference Chairperson:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jaqueline Pugh-Kitingan
Kadazandusun Chair, Universiti Malaysia Sabah
Regional Vice President (for Sabah), Borneo Research Council
Tel: +6-088-320000 ext 1790, Fax: +6-088-320242
Email: jacque@ums.edu.my

Registration:

RM 350 for participants and presenters; RM 175 for students.
Owing to rising costs, the organizers regret that they have had to revise conference registration fees. There will be no early registration discount.
The conference email address is: brc2008ums@gmail.com.

World Rainforest Music Festival

The World Rainforest Music Festival will be held in Sarawak 10-13 July, 2008. As in past years, the venue is the Sarawak Cultural Village, Damai. Those attending the BRC conference may wish to come early to attend the festival as well.

Thanks and acknowledgments

Once again I take this opportunity to thank all of those who assisted me during the year with article reviews, editorial or technical assistance, or who contributed news items, announcements, comments, suggestions, or bibliographic items. The list, as always, is a long one, but here I would like to acknowledge in particular George Appell, Ann Appleton, Martin Baier, Dee Baer, Rob Cramb, Kirk Endicott, Mike Heppell, A.V.M. Horton, Roger Kershaw, Han Knapen, Jayl Langub, Paolo Maiullari, Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, Vic Porritt, Bob Reece, Graham Saunders, Bernard Sellato, Kenneth Sillander, Andrew Smith, Otto Steinmayer, Vinson Sutlive, Reed Wadley, and Herwig Zahorka. I am grateful, too, to Mr. Alan Morse for the work he did in preparing the present volume for publication and to the other members of the BRC staff in Phillips, Maine, for, once again, overseeing its printing, distribution, and mailing. Alan Morse also provided invaluable help with the reproduction of photographs and through his computer skills has helped us improve the formatting and appearance of the *BRB*. In his role as Book Review Editor and compiler of our annual abstracts and bibliography sections, I am especially indebted to A.V.M. Horton. As always, Dr. Horton has also been a regular correspondent throughout the year and a frequent source of news items, memorials, and information on recent publications. Finally, a special thanks goes to my wife, Louise Klemperer Sather, who, as our Assistant Editor, carefully read through all of the papers, reviews, announcements, and brief communications that appear in this volume. Her editorial skills, patience, and close attention to detail have been an invaluable help to us all.

Member Support

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

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We thank each of these individuals for their generous support.

About the Authors in this Issue

Martin Baier, now at the age of 73 years, has a family connection with Kalimantan that goes back three generations. Rev. Dr. Baier is a regular lecturer on cultural subjects at several theological academies in Central, South and East Kalimantan and has recently prepared for publication a book written in Indonesian about the development of the Kaharingan religion from 1847 to the present, entitled: *Dari Agama Politeisme ke Agama Ketuhanan Yang Esa*.

Masahiro Ichiakwa received his M.S. and Ph.D. in Human and Environmental Studies from Kyoto University. He began a study of natural resource use by the indigenous people in Sarawak, Malaysia, in 1995 and is currently attached to the Reseach Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN) in Kyoto, Japan.

Eva Maria Kershaw, a native of south Germany, is a graduate of London University in German and Khmer. Her principal specialty, the Dusun (Bisaya) language and religion of Brunei, developed during 1985-93, while she was resident in the Sultanate in the company of Roger Kershaw. Her main publications comprise a bilingual collection, *Dusun Folktales* (University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1994); and *A Study of Brunei Dusun Religion* (Borneo Research Council, 2000). Most recently, Eva Maria and her husband Roger published a Review Article, "Protagonist of Paradise: The life, death, and legacy of Bruno Manser," in Volume 35 (2004) of the *BRB*.

Roger Kershaw is a graduate of Oxford University in Modern History, with a Ph.D. in Political Science from London University (SOAS). He has lectured on Southeast Asian Studies at the Universities of Hull and Kent. Owing to the decline in interest in the subject in UK, he joined the Brunei Education Service between 1984-94. Among a variety of published work, the broadest in scope is *Monarchy in South-East Asia* (London, Routledge, 2001). Dr. Kershaw is a frequent contributor to the *Borneo Research Bulletin* and came to the subject of the present essay with a background in European bird-watching.

Vernon L. Porritt is a frequent contributor to the *Borneo Research Bulletin*. He received his Ph.D. in history from Murdoch University, Western Australia, where he was recently reappointed Honorary Research Associate. Dr. Porritt is the author of five books on Sarawak, including *British Colonial Rule in Sarawak, 1946-1963* (OUP, 1997) and *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Sarawak, 1940-1990* (Monash University Press, 2004). His most recent *BRB* publication was "Tim Hardy: Special Branch, Sarawak, December 1961-March 1968," which appeared in Volume 37 (2006).

Bob Reece is Professor of History at Murdoch University in Western Australia. His major publications in Borneo history are *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak* (Kuala Lumpur: OUP, 1982), *Datu Bandar. Abang Hj. Mustapha of Sarawak: Some reflections of his life and times* (Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society,

1991), *Masa Jepun: Sarawak under the Japanese 1941-1945* (Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society, 1998) and, most recently, *The White Rajahs of Sarawak: A Borneo Dynasty* (Singapore: Archipelago Press, 2004). He also wrote introductions for the Oxford University Press reprints of Low (1848), Keppel (1846), Brooke (1866), McDougall (1882), and St. John (1879) and was a major contributor to *The Encyclopaedia of Iban Studies* (2001) and the *Encyclopedia of Malaysia* (2001; 2006). He has recently completed a major article on the origins of the *Abang* of Sarawak which is to be published in a collection of essays edited by Dr. James Chin. Professor Reece's most recent publications in the *BRB* were "Some Sarawak Curiosities in the British Library" and, with F. Andrew Smith, "Joseph Burn and Raffles's Plan for a British Borneo," both of which appeared in Volume 37 (2006).

F. Andrew Smith, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus, the University of Adelaide, South Australia. Originally trained as a plant biologist, his research interests since the mid-1990s have centered significantly on the history and ecology of Borneo, especially West Kalimantan. He is a Fellow of the Borneo Research Council and a frequent contributor to the *Borneo Research Bulletin*. His most recent *BRB* publication, co-authored with Bob Reece, was "Joseph Burn and Raffles's Plan for a British Borneo" which appeared last year in Volume 37 (2006).

Reed L. Wadley is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Missouri-Columbia, USA; he is editor of *Histories of the Borneo Environment: Economic, Political and Social Dimensions of Change and Continuity* (KITLV Press, 2005) and co-editor with Alexander Horstmann of *Centering the Margin: Agency and Narrative in Southeast Asian Borderlands* (Berghahn Press, 2006). Dr. Wadley is a Fellow of the Borneo Research Council and a frequent contributor to the *Borneo Research Bulletin*. His most recent publications were "Wildlife Diversity on the periphery of Danau Sentarum National Park" and "*Abang* in the Middle and Upper Kapuas: Additional Evidence," both of which appeared in Volume 37 (2006).

Herwig Zahorka, MSc., is a German forestry scientist who has worked for his government in Thailand, Malaysia, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and most extensively in Indonesia (Kalimantan and Sumatra). He has written four books on Indonesia and more than one hundred and seventy articles, mostly on ethnography, history, archaeology, ethnobotany, and ecology (focused primarily on Kalimantan and Siberut). He is a frequent contributor to the *BRB*, most recently of a Brief Communication, "Blowpipe dart poison in Borneo and the secret of its production," which appeared last year (Vol. 37, 2006). Since his retirement he has lived in Indonesia.

MEMORIALS

RODNEY NEEDHAM 1923-2006



Professor Needham, following his retirement, enjoying a pint at the Turf Pub, Oxford, 2004.

RODNEY NEEDHAM: A PERSONAL REMEMBRANCE

Kirk Endicott
Department of Anthropology
Dartmouth College
Hanover, NH, USA

I was incredibly lucky to have Professor Rodney Needham as my teacher, research supervisor, mentor, patron, and friend. As hard as he could be on professional rivals and scholars with whom he disagreed, he was equally caring, patient, and indulgent to his students (or “pupils” as he always called us). It was amazing to me that a scholar of his stature would place his students at the top of his priorities. I owe most of the breaks I have received in my professional career to his advice and support. During his lifetime he adamantly opposed his students honoring him in any public way, such as producing a Festschrift for him. However, now that he can no longer stop me, I am taking this opportunity to express my appreciation for everything he did for me.

Although I knew Rodney for over forty years, took three degrees under his supervision, and visited with him repeatedly at various locations around the world, my

knowledge of him and his life was somewhat limited in scope. I only learned many details of his background and early life from obituaries. I didn't even know that he had changed his surname to Needham from Green! But our relationship, which began as one of teacher to student, gradually developed into a genuine friendship, and in later years he shared some of his personal thoughts and feelings with me as well as his scholarly ideas. My perspective on him is not unique, of course, but is shared in part by a number of his former students who went on to careers in anthropology.

Needham as Teacher

I first met Rodney in October 1965 when I arrived in Oxford to begin my postgraduate studies. In those days Oxford offered social anthropology only at the postgraduate level. Most incoming students—some of whom had never studied anthropology before—were expected to begin by doing the Diploma in Social Anthropology, a year-long introduction to social anthropology based on lectures and tutorials and culminating in several days of examinations in the spring. The 25 or so Diploma students had been divided up among the active faculty, who served as their tutors in weekly one-on-one tutorials. I had asked to be assigned to Rodney—who was a personal friend of my undergraduate advisor at Reed College, David French—and I was granted my wish. Rodney's group of perhaps half a dozen tutees included a mixture of British and foreign students, at least two from North America and one from Japan.

Rodney was very welcoming, and he made a special effort to help his new students adapt to Oxford culture and its educational system. He tried to get to know us personally and to find out about our educational backgrounds. I remember walking up Parks Road with him when he asked me what my favorite music was. I quickly mentioned a couple of classical composers more or less at random, too ashamed to admit that my taste actually ran to Ray Charles and the Beatles. He told us all to open an account at Blackwell's Bookshop and to buy the official university pocket-sized appointment book, so we would know what we had to do and when. He suggested that we read Jan Morris's recently published book *Oxford* (1965), to get a sense of the place and its history. One beautiful autumn day he piled us all into his Mini station wagon (yes, he still had a car then!) and took us for lunch at The Trout, a picturesque stone pub on the bank of the Thames (or Isis) River just outside the city. I appreciated that Rodney didn't hold my being an American against me, as anti-American feeling was then strong in some quarters of the university and community. In fact he seemed to like American students, in part perhaps because most of us already had some knowledge of anthropology and in part due to his love of the United States, a rarity among Oxford anthropologists at the time.

The Diploma year was an intensive indoctrination into the Oxford approach to social anthropology, the approach that has been called "British structuralism" (as distinct from the "French structuralism" of Lévi-Strauss) or even "Oxford structuralism." The approach was derived from the thinking of E.E. Evans-Pritchard and, as Evans-Pritchard saw it, from the *Année Sociologique* school of French sociology centering on Émile Durkheim. The faculty, despite their differing regional and topical interests, all (with the partial exception of Edwin Ardener, who had studied at L.S.E.) subscribed to this basic paradigm, and Evans-Pritchard's personal and intellectual influence was still strong. We

students were expected to learn to think and view the world in this way, which most of us willingly did. Other approaches were presented mainly to show why they were wrong. But we were also taught to read and think critically, even about the work of the masters. The basic idea was that we were to learn from the work of previous scholars, especially about the theories and concepts behind their studies, in order to do original work of our own.

In addition to tutoring a small group of students, every active faculty member taught a lecture course on one of his or her specialties. The same course might run through all three terms, or the topic might change from term to term. The lectures, which were optional to students, were on the topics that would appear on the exams at the end of the year. I was thrilled to be able to learn firsthand from some of the most eminent figures in social anthropology at the time, including Evans-Pritchard, John Beattie, David Pocock, Jean Buxton, Edwin Ardener, and, of course, Rodney. (Godfrey Lienhardt, Francis Huxley, and Peter Rivière were also in residence, but not teaching that year.)

Rodney's lecture course, which extended across all three terms, was on "Relationship Terminologies." He emphasized from the beginning that it was not about *kinship*, with its biological and psychological connotations, but about classifications of people. He regarded what people did with their classifications—the behaviors, rights, and duties associated with the categories—as of secondary importance. He surveyed the different types of relationship terminologies, but focused especially on the terminologies associated with "prescriptive alliance" systems, walking us through many of the terminologies that he had analyzed in his well-known book *Structure and Sentiment* (1962). His emphasis throughout the course was on the logical *structure* of relationships lying behind people's thoughts and behaviors, the central concept in his analytical approach at the time.

Tutorials were designed to make us read and think about some of the important topics and questions of the day, many of which would appear in some form on our year-end examinations. Each week our tutor would give us a list of books and articles to read and a question to answer in a four- to eight-page essay that we were to write for the following week. At the beginning of each tutorial we would read our essay aloud and then discuss it for the rest of the hour, in response to the tutor's questions and criticisms. We had to be ready to defend our answers with logic and facts. Rodney often assigned four or five books and a couple of articles, which was a heavy load for me. But it forced me to learn how to scan sources and search for the crucial information. The tutorial system was an intense and exhilarating, if sometimes stressful, method of learning.

Rodney's questions seemed designed to make us learn about important questions and to think about them in the Oxford way. By comparing notes with some of his other tutees, I discovered that he used roughly the same set of questions for all of us, but sometimes tailored them to fit the needs of the particular student. In my case he appreciated the fact that I had studied anthropology before and already knew something about British and French structuralism. But he seemed to think that he had to exorcise some of the "wrong thinking" that I had also picked up along the way. During my undergraduate education I had been interested in cultural ecology (my B.A. thesis was on Plains Indian warfare, which I explained in terms of economic and historical variables), and I had studied and done some research in social psychology. One of the questions he

gave me was “Examine the contention that the social anthropologist can safely leave the study of material objects to the museum man.” I think this was meant to purge me of any illusion that material culture could be understood without reference to people’s concepts and intentions. Another assignment was to discuss Durkheim’s statement that “Social psychology is nothing more or less than sociology. You could save a great deal of trouble simply to employ the latter term.” I think this was meant to convince me that individual psychology was not important for understanding social phenomena. Unfortunately, however, I gave the “wrong answer” in my essay, making an elaborate argument about how social psychological phenomena are distinct from what Durkheim termed “social facts.” Rodney wasn’t buying it. He remarked archly that I was “resisting therapy” and had me rewrite the essay the following week!

I managed to pass my Diploma exams despite indulging in the numerous pleasures of Oxford student life. I fell in love with a Danish girl, and we got married the following summer. I applied for several fellowships to finance my studies but failed to get any of them. I ended up working as a construction laborer near Oxford to support myself that summer. Through it all, however, Rodney was unfailingly supportive and encouraging.

Needham as Research Supervisor

The next step in the training of an anthropology student at Oxford in the 1960s was the B.Litt. (Bachelor of Letters) degree. The B.Litt. was similar to an American



Rodney Needham (on the right) in Peninsular Malaysia in 1955, with JOA officer Rufus Cole.

master's degree, but it required only the writing of a thesis, not additional coursework. Most B.Litt. theses were based on library research, though occasionally students did fieldwork. B.Litt. students selected their thesis topics in consultation with their research supervisors. The supervisor would suggest things for the students to read and study and would read and critique what the student wrote. A B.Litt. thesis usually took one to two years to complete, and if it were good enough, the student would be admitted to candidacy for the doctorate (D.Phil.).

I was delighted that Rodney agreed to be my supervisor for the B.Litt. During the Diploma year I had specialized in India as my "Prescribed Area" (the other option being "The Nilotic Peoples"), but I had become interested in Southeast Asia during my studies with him. When we came to discuss possible thesis topics, he first asked me if I would be interested in studying the political system of Cambodia, which still included elements of an Indianized kingdom. I demurred, however, because most of the literature was in French, which I could read, but only laboriously. He then asked if I would like to do a study of Malay folk religion. He said he had recently read Bill Wilder's interesting L.S.E. master's thesis on the sociology of Malay magicians, and he thought there was still room for a symbolic analysis of the beliefs and rituals catalogued in W.W. Skeat's book *Malay Magic* (1900). I said sure, I would give it a try. He then dictated to me a long list of books and articles I should read, including Wilder's thesis, Mary Douglas's book *Purity and Danger* (1966), and a Malay-English dictionary!

Due to events in my personal life, my work on the B.Litt. thesis began in Oxford in the fall of 1966 and ended over two years later in southern California. During the first year of reading and writing I alternated between living near Oxford and living in Denmark with my wife's parents. In March 1967 my wife, Mette, gave birth to our daughter, Britt. Since I didn't have funding to continue my studies or to start my fieldwork, we moved to the United States so I could take up a temporary job teaching anthropology at San Fernando State College (now called California State University at Northridge). During breaks in my teaching I finished writing the thesis, submitted it by mail, and was awarded the B.Litt. degree *in absentia*.

Throughout this upheaval, Rodney was a pillar of support. When I was working in Oxford, we met regularly to discuss what I was learning and whatever I had written. In my desperation to finish before leaving, I occasionally gave him draft sections written in longhand, and he read them and returned them without complaint. He also worked hard to help me get a job when I needed it, and I have no doubt that his recommendation was what enabled me to get a teaching job even before completing the B.Litt. While working on the thesis in California, I would mail him drafts of sections, and he would return them promptly with his comments and suggestions. He made sure that all my paperwork was in order and arranged for my viva (oral exam) when the thesis was finished. To my great relief, the examiners, Francis Huxley and Stephen Morris, liked the thesis and recommended that it be published by the Clarendon Press. Rodney applied his considerable influence on the Press as well. Getting my thesis published as a book, *An Analysis of Malay Magic* (1970), was the break I needed to get my graduate education moving again.

With little hope of getting funds to continue at Oxford, I applied to some American graduate schools and was fortunate enough, on Rodney's recommendation yet

again, to get accepted to Harvard with an NSF fellowship. At Harvard I was reunited with Jim Fox, another of Rodney's former students, and Jim acted as my principal supervisor for my research on the economy and social organization of the Batek Orang Asli of Kelantan, Peninsular Malaysia. With Jim's help and guidance I finished my Ph.D. at Harvard in 1974.

Although I was unable to return to Oxford, I never gave up my dream of finishing my D.Phil. Rodney and I discussed the possibility of my writing a second doctoral dissertation, this one on the religion of the Batek, and submitting it for the Oxford degree. Through the years Rodney had helped me keep my candidacy for the D.Phil. alive, which required a series of extensions. Fortunately, the job I got after receiving my Harvard degree, a Research Fellowship at The Australian National University, enabled me to return to the Batek in 1975-1976, with my second wife, Karen, to collect more information on the Batek religion. I began writing the D.Phil. thesis in Canberra and finished it while staying in Singapore with my friend and informal advisor, Geoffrey Benjamin. Once again Rodney accepted the chore of advising me and correcting my drafts by correspondence, despite the extra work that entailed. Once again he arranged for my viva, this time by Godfrey Lienhardt and Stephen Morris, and shepherded it through to publication at the Clarendon Press. Needless to say, calling Rodney my research supervisor for my B.Litt. and D.Phil. falls miles short of describing his full contribution to my education and scholarship.

One thing I appreciated about Rodney's role in my postgraduate education was that he did not try to impose his own interests and priorities on me. After he had molded me into a proper British structuralist in my Diploma year, he was happy to let me follow my own interests, which diverged somewhat from his own. We were both keenly interested in the Orang Asli, non-Western religions, and hunter-gatherers, but I wasn't attracted to the study of prescriptive alliance systems, the peoples of eastern Indonesia, or the philosophy of Wittgenstein, and he wasn't enthralled by the economies of hunter-gatherers or gender ideologies and relations. Nonetheless, he read everything Karen and I wrote on those topics and gave us valuable feedback. Suffice it to say, he gave me the space to be myself.

Needham as Mentor, Patron, and Friend

Readers will undoubtedly know that the academic profession is a complicated and mysterious world, full of pitfalls for naive graduate students. One needs some talent, lots of luck, and good advisors to forge a successful career in academic anthropology. Rodney's advice and support were crucial at every major turning point in my career. In addition to writing formal letters of support, he sometimes went behind the scene to assist his students. Once after I had had a run of unsuccessful job interviews, he contacted his sources to find out what I was doing wrong. His advice was simple: stop acting like a "country hick!"

Beyond being my academic mentor, he became a true friend. Over the years we communicated regularly by mail and phone (he never did adopt email), even when there was little news to report. His greatest joy in life was his boys, Guy and Tristan, and their wives and children. But he also treated his former students—at least those I know—like extensions of his family. He genuinely cared about us, our spouses, and

our children and was concerned about the ups and downs our lives went through. It's ironic that a man who made his reputation distinguishing structure from sentiment in kinship should have had such a strong sentimental attachment to his kin and quasi-kin. In his later years he entertained a constant stream of visitors to Holywell Street, many of them former students and their family members. He also carried on a voluminous correspondence with students, colleagues, and acquaintances around the world. I think he placed answering letters—which he pounded out on a vintage 1950s Smith-Corona electric typewriter—just behind teaching in his list of daily priorities.



At his desk, 1976.

The Role of Borneo in Needham's Teaching

Strangely enough, Borneo and the Penan did not play a big part in Rodney's teaching. In his course on "Relationship Terminologies" he mentioned the Penan as an example of a people with a cognatic system, but he had little interest in cognatic terminologies, and he quickly moved on to societies with prescriptive alliance systems. By contrast, John Beatty could hardly go three sentences in a lecture without bringing in an example of something from Bunyoro. Even after I began to study the Batek—who, like the Penan, were hunter-gatherers—Rodney seldom brought out points of similarity or difference between the two peoples for discussion. He did, however, have me read his article "Blood, Thunder, and Mockery of Animals" (1964), which compared some beliefs and practices of Semang in Peninsular Malaysia with Penan in Borneo. He also had me read Hans Schäfer's book, *Ngaju Religion* (1963), in conjunction with my study of Batek religion. He never offered to let me read his doctoral thesis, "The Social Organization of the Penan" (1953), and I heard from others that it would have been futile to ask to see it. (Restrictions on access to his B.Litt. and D.Phil. theses were lifted after his death, however, and scholars can now consult them at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.) Almost all I've learned about the peoples of Borneo over the years has been from the writings of other scholars.

Rodney did offer me a few words of advice once on how to do fieldwork, which were based on his study of the Penan. He said that researchers should never take more equipment than they can carry in one hand! Not long before, Evans-Pritchard had told his class that fieldworkers should always have two tables, so they don't have to remove their notes in order to eat a meal. Those two conflicting pieces of advice were the sum total of the training I got in fieldwork methods at Oxford.

Rodney often said that he regretted he had never published a general ethnography of the Penan. He obviously didn't consider his doctoral thesis a suitable basis for one, or he would have merely revised it into a book. His letters gave me the impression that he saw the ethnography as a big project, one that always got pushed to the back burner by more pressing matters. In late 1985, after finishing his monograph *Mamboru* (1987), he returned to work on the Penan project, digging into his notebooks, maps, and photographs and, as he wrote me, "gradually regaining some command of what I once knew." In June 1986 he reported that he had almost finished reviewing his Penan materials and would soon start composing the book. He foresaw it as being "very long, very difficult," but he thought he would finish it by the end of the calendar year. Yet, in February 1987 he was still struggling with it. He wrote me that "The difficulty with the Borneo work is to have so much more material [than on Mamboru], and no system." In November that year he wrote that the book was already long and still only half done. By then his wife, Claudia, had been diagnosed with cancer, and he turned his attention to caring for her, though he was still working on the book in June of 1988. In January 1989 he reported that he was still working slowly, sometimes spending an entire day in the study of one particle in the Penan language. Claudia died in late August 1989, and in February 1990 he wrote that he felt "undone" and tired and was looking forward to retirement. He added that his duties had kept him from doing his own work since the beginning of the year, and he was "not sure what I should make of that anyway if I were free to resume it." In August that year he officially retired and moved from All Souls College to a flat on Holywell Street. In

January 1993 he wrote that he still had not been able to resume work on the book. Then in May 1995 he wrote: "I wish I were actively completing a Borneo book (nearly done when I retired), but despite continual dips into the material, for the sake of other people more than anything else, I seem rather stuck still." By June 2001 he had started to suffer from the lung infection that brought his scholarly writing to a halt.

I have discussed with various friends the question of why Rodney never completed his ethnography of the Penan. It may simply be that he found that his data were inadequate to answer all the questions he had, and it was no longer possible to get the information he needed. My wife, Karen, has a more intriguing theory. She thinks that the Penan probably have a fluid, amorphous worldview and social organization, like many other nomadic hunting and gathering peoples in Southeast Asia, and thus are not amenable to the kind of ordered structural analysis that Rodney was so good at doing. He alluded to both these kinds of problems in a letter to me in April 1969. I had mentioned in a previous letter that I had read Malcolm MacDonald's amusing description of him when he was doing his fieldwork with the Penan (*Borneo People* [1956]). Apparently Rodney had really "gone native," to the extent of growing his hair long and wearing only a loincloth. He wrote, "Actually I was quite well known as a "nature" man in Borneo, and certainly the only professional anthropologist ever to live with "his" people as they did and entirely on their terms, i.e. near-naked and starving half the time. . . . I only wish that I had been well enough educated at the time to make the most of the hardships. It's galling to have endured so much for so long—and to have failed to ask what now seem obvious questions. Be well warned! Such topics are much in my mind at present, for I recently sent off a 42-page paper on Penan friendship-names (yup, more names—it's all they've got, no Structure) for the Beidelman Festschrift to E-P, and working on that really made me gloomy. Still, I did get the main features of that institution, and there's enough factual information to make it worth while."

**DOING FIELDWORK AMONG THE PENAN:
AN INTERVIEW WITH RODNEY NEEDHAM
RECORDED IN 2000 BY JOELLA WERLIN**

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What follows is very possibly the only recorded interview that Professor Rodney Needham ever consented to give concerning his fieldwork in Borneo.¹ The topic, fittingly, is Professor Needham's recollections of his pioneer fieldwork among the Sarawak Penan in 1951-52,² related in this case to a former student after the elapse of nearly a half century. It is presented here as part of a memorial to the late Professor Needham with the consent of his son and literary executor, Dr. Tristan Needham.

The interview that follows took place on the afternoon of 9 February, 2000, over tea, in the living room of Professor Needham's Oxford flat at 56 Holywell Street. It

1 I am aware of only one other interview. This is a video interview made in 1979 by Professor James J. Fox at the Australian National University, Canberra, shortly after Rodney Needham's appointment as the University Professor of Social Anthropology at Oxford. The interview concerns primarily the history of anthropology at Oxford. Fox did, however, question Needham about his decision to study the Penan, a matter I say more about in a further footnote below. A copy of the Fox video has since been posted by Dr. Alan Macfarlane on the Cambridge University "dspace" website devoted to interviews with famous anthropologists. For those interested, the interview may be accessed at: <http://www.dspace.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/1810/194673/1/needham.mp4> or at: www.alanmacfarlane.com/ancestors/index.htm.

2 Resulting in his Oxford D. Phil. Thesis, "The Social Organization of the Penan" (1953). In addition to this first extended period of graduate research, Needham visited Sarawak briefly in 1955 and was later awarded a SEATO Research Fellowship and returned for a further period of Penan fieldwork, mainly in the Baram District, between June-September 1958. Needham in his interview with James Fox describes this latter period as painful because of the extensive changes that had occurred since his first fieldwork. In addition, many of those he had known had greatly aged during the intervening years, owing to the hard life they led. This is something he mentions, too, in the present interview. Jayl Langub (personal communication) reports that the results of this latter research were presented shortly afterwards in an unpublished report that Needham submitted to the colonial government in January 1959. Reproduced copies of this report are known among Penan specialists. Professor Needham's D. Phil. thesis, on the other hand, has remained under circulation restriction for many years. We are grateful to Kirk Endicott for the news that this restriction has now been lifted. Failure to fully publish the results of his Penan fieldwork was long a sore point. In his interview with James Fox, he attributes the failure to a chance opportunity that arose at the time to do fieldwork in Sumba, in eastern Indonesia. This he describes in retrospect as an "obvious mistake," noting with approval the "precept" of the archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler, imposed while he was director of the archaeological survey of India that new fieldwork must never be embarked upon until the results of previous work have been fully written up. It is a precept which many others, of course, have also failed to follow.

was totally unplanned and unrehearsed. The interviewer, Joella Werlin, had studied for the Diploma in Social Anthropology at Oxford in 1959-60 and Dr. Needham had been her tutor. Although she did not continue in anthropology, Ms. Werlin continued to remain in contact with Professor Needham through the years that followed.

Initially, Ms. Werlin notes in a brief spoken epilogue recorded shortly after his death, Professor Needham had adamantly refused to permit an interview. Appeals to the interests of his family and posterity had no effect. Eventually, she speculates, it was a tutor-student relation that prevailed. Not wishing to show disdain for his former student's current profession as an oral historian,³ "my good tutor," Mrs. Werlin says in her epilogue, "made a transition from resistance to empathy." In the end, "He warned to the experience and even helped me out."

It was, in fact, in connection with her new profession that Ms. Werlin happened to be carrying field recording equipment with her during her visit to Oxford, and it was this, she recalls, that gave her the idea of interviewing Rodney.

Professor Needham's resistance is clearly evident early on in the interview. In addition, near the outset, there is a break of several minutes due to technical difficulties with the recording equipment. This is noted in the interview transcript that follows by the insertion of an "[interruption]" in the text. In her spoken epilogue, Ms. Werlin recalls that some interesting material was consequently lost, including Professor Needham's response to questions about the genesis of his interest in anthropology, his post-war study of Chinese at SOAS [before taking up anthropology], why he chose to conduct fieldwork among the Penan,⁴ and his first impressions of these people.

The transcription that follows is taken directly from the 2000 interview.⁵ Only a small amount of material extraneous to the topic of Professor Needham's Sarawak

3 Ms. Werlin's earlier professional career was as a producer and public affairs director for the Portland Oregon ABC-TV affiliate.

4 In this area, James Fox's interview complements the present one. During World War II, Needham had served in Burma and afterwards he visited Malaya, Singapore, and Cambodia. From the beginning, as an anthropologist, he tells Fox, he was "completely committed to Southeast Asia." He wanted to see more of it, and, despite a "romantic inclination" to work in Bali, Borneo seemed the natural choice. As to why he chose to study the Penan, he refers to two, again, in Needham's words, "romantic inclinations." First, he tells Fox, he was attracted by photographs of the Penan published in Hose and McDougall's *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, showing what he describes as a "tremendously handsome people." The other reason was that a man had gone out to central Borneo from the Field Museum in Chicago looking for so-called "Punan" and in 1947 published a paper in the *American Anthropologist* insisting that there weren't any such people. It was, he claimed, a "category mistake." Members of other tribes, real tribes, as it were, wandered off into the forest for a time and while in the forest they were called "Punan," but as soon as they came out, they were called something else again. As he tells Fox, he found this argument highly implausible as he had read a hundred or more Dutch sources that described what seemed to be "perfectly real people." So his second "romantic compulsion" was to discover whether such people really existed and, if so, to document their existence and way of life. Here Needham goes on to make a case for romanticism in anthropology, saying that all who have made a lasting contribution to the field have been "romantics at heart."

5 In this connection, I am grateful to Ms. Werlin for her excellent word-for-word transcription to which I have made only minor corrections, mainly of place and ethnic group names.

fieldwork has been deleted, comprising much less than a quarter of the total interview. Where these deletions occur, I have indicated this with [...].

The interview opens with a question about a photograph. Reproduced below from a copy sent by Professor Needham to Ms. Werlin, this photograph, reportedly taken in 1951, shows a young Rodney Needham shortly after his arrival in Sarawak with a Penan carrying-basket on his back.



Rodney Needham in Sarawak, 1951

This is Joella Werlin. I am speaking with Dr. Rodney Needham.

W- Do you remember the picture of yourself with the basket on your back, in Borneo?

N- [...] Yes, I remember it.

W- You said you had just arrived, and that at a later point you would have been wearing a sarong or something else, and your hair would have been down to your back.

N- My hair went down my back when I had been there for some weeks, after all.

W- What year was that?

N- 1951 was the first year I went to the Penan.

[interruption]

W - Please repeat [what you said].

N - I say, their response to violence is to run away.

W- Did you explore it?

N- How do you explore it? That's what they do. They hate the idea of violence. So far as it is certain, there has never been a case of homicide among them. That's that.

W- When you did your thesis, what was the subject?

N - It was called "The Social Organization of the Penan."

W - There was nothing you were proving in that thesis? You were describing? ...

N- Purely descriptive ethnography, except for the last chapter of the thesis in which I compared them with other hunters and gatherers about whom various generalizations had been formulated, and I showed that most of them didn't apply to the Penan. But that was not a very taxing task. It just meant that one lot of hunters and collectors like the Siriono do this and other peoples don't. That's it.

W- Did they receive you well?

N – Yes.

W- What would that mean? That is to say, were you invited to participate in their ceremonies?

N- The Penan effectively have no ceremonies; not at birth, not at marriage. And I was never with a Penan group when somebody died. I know what they are supposed to do, which is very minimal. But I have never seen it.

W- How many people [were there] in any Penan group you were associated with?

N- The mean size was about 19.

W - So that's not very many. Do they move through the forest?

N- Depends. The Penan are divided into two tribes. The Eastern Penan are on the move pretty constantly; they stay just for a few days in one place and then they move on. The Western Penan have pretty substantial shelters in the forest, on the edge of a river normally, and they can live there for months, a year, two years.

W- So which group did you live with?

N - Both.

W - Was there any other westerner there with you?

N- No.

W- Did you get lonely?

N - Not really, because there was so much to do, and one had so much to cope with. There wasn't enough to eat, so I was hungry . . . and very often one was ill. So, loneliness was not the main thing. After all, you're surrounded by people, and you're trying to learn their language as you go, and with Penan you live with the people, after all, and you might be in a tiny shelter with ten other people for example.

W - What kind of shelters?

N - Made of saplings, with a leaf roof.

W- When you describe these people, do you use the term "primitive"?

N- It wouldn't say very much. So the answer is "no."

W- Because that would have been the term applied at the time?

N - Even then I'm not sure about that.

W- Did you learn anything from them? Not *about* them, but *from* them?

N- Nothing that I hadn't learned from other people. You mean morally speaking, how to face life? No, nothing.

W - Will they survive?

N – No. They are not surviving now, because the forests have been logged.⁶ They have

⁶ When Needham says that the Penan are not surviving now, he is presumably referring to their way of life as nomadic hunter-gatherers. The great majority of Penan in Sarawak have settled down since the 1950s. In the process, Needham is unquestionably right that deforestation played a major part. Today, with settling down, land rights, as well as continuing deforestation, have emerged as the major survival issues, bringing the Penan into conflict not only with timber companies and the Sarawak government, but also with neighboring non-Penan groups. In physical terms, however, the Penan appear to be by no means dying out. By 1986, the number of Penan in the Baram region alone had more than doubled from Needham's original count, to 5,625 (see below). In 2006, this number had grown to 9,223, and for Sarawak as a whole, the present Penan population exceeds 15,000 (Jayl Langub, personal communication). Much of this increase is probably attributable,

been driven out of the forest and into government camps where there is usually no work for them, and they live in squalor and misery. They themselves say they are dying out.

W - How many of them would you say are left?

N - When I was there, I made a count which came to about 2, 600.⁷ And it is said now that there are perhaps 5000, but this includes Penan whom I didn't know. It includes Penan whom I couldn't count. It includes those who weren't born when I was there.

N- What sort of thing do you think you might learn from the Penan?

W- I'm not sure one would learn anything from a group of people who are that ... I'm not sure what term is correct now... that marginal, that ... whatever the right term is... [You say they] were non-violent, but they knew how to control emotions... Was there some way in which they settled disputes, since they didn't head hunt?

N- I never heard an Eastern Penan raise his voice against any other. I know what would happen if there were a dispute, but I never observed one. The Western Penan were a very volatile people, and much given to quarreling and shouting at one another. But there was no resolution of disputes. If people couldn't live together, they went off to another part of the forest. But normally things died down overnight.⁸

W - How old were you at the time?

N - I was 28 when I first went there.

W- So, if you were a young man again doing this kind of work, would you do it differently? Would you have wished to have done it differently? Or do you feel that that was the way you learn about a group of people?

N-Well, the only way to learn about them is to go and live with them, try to learn their language. There is no other way. Yes, among the Penan there would have been a better way of approaching things. I just didn't know, because I had no idea who the Penan were... if they were one tribe or two tribes... if they spoke one language or a number of isolects... didn't know where they were. I had to do all of that, to find out where they were. It was only afterwards that I saw how, ideally, I could have started, but I didn't.

as Langub notes, to improved access to medical care, particularly in the urban centers of Miri and Marudi and in larger longhouses, both Penan and Kenyah and Kayan. As Needham himself makes vividly clear in this interview, a hunting and gathering way of life was arduous and ill-health was, at the time he carried out his fieldwork, a constant fact of life.

⁷ It is not clear here whether Needham's count of 2,600 applies to Sarawak as a whole or only to the Baram, where he carried out most of his fieldwork, but most likely the latter. In 1986, as noted above, there were 5,625 Penan in the Baram District alone (Jayl Langub, personal communication).

⁸ As Needham notes in this interview, the Western Penan, although also non-violent, are a notably volatile people in contrast to the Eastern Penan. For an excellent account of this verbal volatility and a comparison of Western and Eastern Penan leadership and methods of dealing with quarrels, see Jayl Langub's fine essay, "Leadership among the Penan of Belaga District in Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo," *Contributions to Southeast Asian Ethnography* (2004) 12: 187-219. Needham in his ethnographic writings was the first to draw attention to the linguistic and cultural differences that distinguish these two principal Penan populations.

W- Which was...?

N - Well, along a river called the Apoh, there is a longhouse called Long Buang, which is lived in partly by people, Penan, who had settled within the last... I don't know for certain how long ago they settled, but not many years. And then the other part of the longhouse is used by nomads who used to come in from the forest, stay a few days, enjoy the high life and then go back to the forest. If I had known that they were there, before I found them, I would have started there. Lived in this longhouse by the river. Learned Penan better than I found it possible otherwise, and then gone back into the forest with some of the nomads. That would have been much the best way to do it.⁹

W- Were you the first Westerner that they had encountered?

N- I was the first Westerner that many of them had ever seen. Sure.

W - Did they idealize you in any way?

N - No, I can't say that they did. They thought it was remarkable that I had things like a flashlight and scissors, and medicines that worked. They liked the color of my skin, and that it was smooth, and my hair was long and straight. All those things they liked. I don't think they could admire me in any other way, if only because most ethnographers cannot be admired by people whom they are studying, because they are so ignorant and defective...and dependent.

W- Are you talking about the people?

N - No, the ethnographer. It would take a great deal to earn the admiration of an exotic people, a great deal.¹⁰

W- Because you don't have the survival skills that they would admire?

N- Exactly. Exactly, yes.

W- Did they understand why you were studying them? How could you explain that?

N- I just said that I wanted their stories. I said that I wanted to learn their language. They are familiar with learning languages, so this wasn't too strange a business. And that I wanted their stories. That was it, really. Also, don't forget that a European was so strange, that nothing he could do would seem any stranger.

9 In undertaking an ethnographic study of a community as nomadic as the Eastern Penan were in the early 1950s, Needham's argument here makes considerable sense. The Apoh is a tributary of the main Baram River. The Long Buang village still exists and although relatively close to the present-day town of Marudi, it remains, nonetheless, somewhat inaccessible (Jayl Langub, personal communication). As in Needham's day, the community would make an interesting research site, although, perhaps today, for different reasons, in this case for its historical role in the subsequent settling down of the Baram Penan.

10 Later, Professor Needham made a similar point in a letter he wrote to Ms. Werlin dated May 15, 2002. In this letter, he writes: "And: did you really ask me if the Penan thought me superhuman? Quite the reverse: for all the curious skills I had (medicine and writing, mainly), I was in their eyes as ill-equipped to survive in the forest as would have been a tiny infant. That is one thing that moralistic critics, especially in the U.S., tend to overlook when they take it that ethnographers are colonialists and regard their subjects with condescension and arrogance and general superiority: if they tried to do so they would either be put in their place or be abandoned."

W- You have mentioned that the women were very affectionate and curious about you.

N- Oh yes. The Eastern Penan. Yes indeed ... charming. Pretty.

W- Did they age very young?

N- Oh, yes, they did. Yes. One of the prettiest girls I knew, an Eastern Penan girl called Uding... I saw her after an interval of six years, and she had aged by twice that much.

They wear out, the women. It is a very, very hard life.

W- Do they do most of what we would call "housekeeping"?

N- All of it.

W-The men are the hunters?

N-The men hunt, and the men cut down sago palms and then the men pound the interior of the sago palm into a mass of detritus, which the women then leach through mats with lots and lots of water to get the flour.

W- Flour made of sago palm! Do they bake it?

N- Usually they boil it, and it turns dark brown with little bits of gritty fiber in it. It doesn't taste of very much. Or it can be baked, can be made into a sort of bread with water which you put into the embers.

W- How did you survive on that diet?

N- Well, they did.

W- Did you lose a lot of weight?

N- Yes, I lost a lot of weight. Yes.

W- Did you get sick?

N-[laughs] Yes, all the time. But then, so did they. There is this idea that hunters and collectors are simply traipsing around with their manly forms, you know ... muscles and slim waists, and so on, being fit as monkeys is nonsense. In every camp I was in, the majority of people were sick, and only a few were fit.

[Pause]

It isn't particularly romantic. I mean, the forest was very grand and all that sort of thing, but it rained every day.

W- Every day!/? Is that typical?

N- Yes. Yes, there is what you call a dry season of a few weeks around June, but it's not very dry usually. It is now because of the logging, but in those days it rained virtually every day. Immensely heavy rain, and so you were wet all the time. I used to wear tennis shoes on my feet, and they were always wet and moldy in the morning. And cold. And the ground, where it wasn't rough, it was mud.

W- You mentioned that you wore a sarong. What was it made of?

N- Of cotton. I simply took it with me, of course. It wasn't one of theirs.

W- What did they wear?

N- They wore loincloths made of cotton, which they got by trade. Because they used to have trading meetings about three times a year, on the river.

W- The trading meetings were with other people?

N- Yes, Kenyah used to come to [them], Kenyah, Kayan. They were overseen by a British colonial officer, who would come upriver, as I say, three times a year and stop at various places along the river. And the Penan would know when to come back, because they would have what is called a *tebukeyu*, which is a knotted strip of cane. And in the

forest they would either untie or cut off one knot for each day that had passed, and then they would know when to come back to the trading meeting.

W- Interesting. Was the British colonial officer aware of your presence there?

N- Of course he was, yes. I couldn't have been there without his permission.

W-So did you have to check in with him at periodic times?

N- No, I checked in when I arrived and hardly saw him until I left. Travel in those days was very slow, don't forget. It would take days and weeks to get upriver, until the missionaries built a couple of airstrips. So the second time I went back, I was able to fly in. Instead of spending days going upriver in a canoe, I was flown in, in an hour.

W-Who paddled the canoe? Did the Penan themselves?

N- No, no, no. They were scared of water. Most of them had no boats. The Western Penan were a bit familiar with water, but the Eastern Penan were very scared. No, no, the rivers have people going up and down all the time. And you pay your way, and you help. But that's all long gone. Nowadays they have express boats, which are air-conditioned, which have television. They play "Dallas" on the television. ... Yeah.

W- The Penan ...are they receptive now to any form of western cultural introduction?

N- Oh, anything, I think. Yes. But, of course, they mostly can't afford these things.

W-But if they could find a superior way to hunt?

N- But what is there to hunt? The forests are nearly all gone.

W- What did they primarily hunt then?

N- Pig, deer, scaly anteaters, monkeys... Gibbon....

W- Did you eat those things?

N- I was already enough of a vegetarian not to. No, I didn't, really. ... Snake, of course, they ate. I am reminded because instead of eating a snake with them, I had to ask a man who was my sort-of uncle, what was it like. "Was it good?" And he said, "Well... it's a little bit good."

[both laugh]

N- Later on, they acquired shotguns. And they are much more effective than the blowpipe. But, of course with a blowpipe they can make their own darts, and get their own poison. They can't now because the poison trees have been cut down. And with a shotgun, you depend upon the people who supply the cartridges. The government limits the number that you can have... And the traders, of course, charge you the earth to sell them. But, given their shotguns, they would blast anything off the surface of the earth.

W- This did not cause them to turn violent toward one another?

N- No, no. Oh no... The only signs of violence they've offered have been in recent years, and that's really been token violence against the government, which permitted the logging companies to cut down all of the forest.

W- The government now in control of Borneo is which government?

N-This is Sarawak [of which we are speaking], which is part of Malaysia.

[...]

W- Who defends them?

N- Nobody, really.

W- But somebody needs to. ...

N- There is no effective way of defending them. There just isn't ... Not by force. Not by law.

W- And that is why you think they are doomed?

N- The government can expropriate enormous tracts of forest just by publishing a notice in the *Sarawak Gazette*, in Kuching, which of course the Penan don't see, and which if they could see, most of them couldn't read... and if they could read, it would be out of date by the time they saw it. So their rights are gone. No... It's a distressing story. And the last thing I did with the Penan language was a television company went and made a film there. They hadn't taken the precaution of finding someone who could understand Penan, so when they came back, they had a film with Penan speaking on it, but no one who could understand it. So they came to me, and I translated that, and... These were Eastern Penan, and the main part of it was how they were dying of heat because they were used to the cool of the forest, not being out in the open. And they are dying of hunger. They had no money, they had no work. They had no prospects. And they said, "We're dying. We're all dying."

W- How many years ago was that film made?

N- I can't recall for the moment. Two, three years, maybe? Maybe longer.

W- So you did the translation that recently? Did you narrate it?

N- No, I didn't narrate it. I simply made a translation from the tape, and typed it up and gave it to them.

W- Have you seen the finished product?

N- Yes.

W- Do you have a copy of it?

N- No. Most of what they asked me to translate wasn't broadcast.

W- Was this broadcast over BBC?

N- Yes, I think so. I did see it.

W- Were you impressed?

N- No, not really. Not much. The Penan were in an administrative town called Marudi, and they were put into a coffee shop and the recording was made there, with the clatter of cups and other people shouting and motorbikes outside, and so on. Not very efficient.

W- Not efficient, not very sensitive.

N- No, no... I don't know how they survive now at all in these sort of camps. I suppose they must have handouts from the government. I couldn't face going back to see. And don't forget, that not only are the animals gone with the deforestation, the sago palms are also cut down. The poison trees from which they made dart poison are also cut down. They grazed and bulldozed. The rivers are full of silt..., but the deforestation has made a tiny number of people in Malaysia very, very, very rich.

W- And those who have been made very rich are.... Chinese, Malays..?

N- Malays, Chinese. Japanese at second hand.

W- There is no association of indigenous people, nobody, no world organization that is speaking for these people?

N- No, there have been protests mounted from time to time, but they're all ineffectual. And because there was international pressure to stop cutting the forests down, those who were responsible for issuing the logging licenses redoubled their efforts to cut it down, so recently they have been logging right the way up to the Indonesian border...to get everything out, while there is still time. Yeah.

W- Do you think administratively it could be different?

N- Yes, yes. But anyway, that is the answer. Could it have been done better administratively? The answer is “yes,” of course. Of course. But this is happening all over the world. A friend of mine whom I saw the other day is trying to defend the legal position of the people in northern Argentina who live in forests and are surrounded by forests. But the forest has been bought up by city slickers, who now want to cut it down, leaving the people with nothing — their shelter, their building materials, their wildlife. It’s happening everywhere. [...]

W- It’s very sad.

N- Oh, yeah. It’s distressing and as you hint, it is the more distressing in that there is virtually nothing that anyone can do. And the Malaysian government was within its rights. It said, after all, these people are subjects of Malaysia. That’s the first thing. Subject to Malaysian law. Secondly, they are subject to the law about the forest, and under the prevalent laws, they have no rights in the forest because they’ve never cultivated it. Of course they haven’t — they are hunters and collectors. But as the law stipulates, unless you have cultivated it for a certain number of years, you have no rights in it. So an outside body could not have legally done anything.

[...]

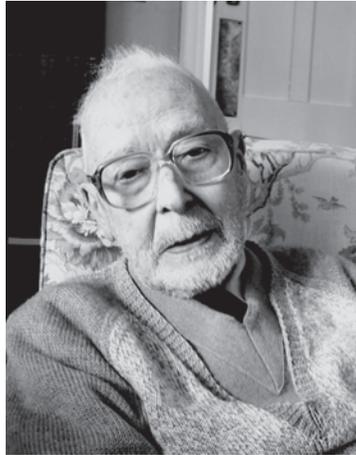
W-Thank you, Rodney!

N- Not at all.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Joella Werlin for, first of all, informing me of the existence of this interview and, secondly, allowing the *Borneo Research Bulletin* to publish it in its present form, together with her comments and the accompanying photograph. In addition, I thank Dr. Tristan Needham for granting us permission to publish his father’s recorded words. Jayl Langub, a major anthropological authority on the Penan, listened to the full interview recording and carefully read through the present transcript and notes and I am deeply grateful to Jayl for his many insightful comments and suggestions.

**THE REVD. A. J. M. (MAX) SAINT
1910-2007**



I first met Max Saint on one of my academic leaves in Oxford in the early 1980s when he was a retired Anglican clergyman with an honorary attachment to St Antony's College (where I was located at the time). He had been rector of the nearby Church of St Philip and St James (better known as "Phil and Jim") and over the years had come to be the college's greatly respected and loved informal chaplain. I cannot recall who introduced us, but it somehow emerged that he had been out in Sarawak as headmaster of St Thomas' School from 1937 until 1941, leaving in October just after the Brooke Centenary celebrations and just before the Japanese arrived. After a long voyage of three months via Batavia, Auckland, Panama, Bermuda, and Halifax, the old tramp steamer he had caught in Singapore deposited him penniless at the Glasgow docks and he then made his way by train overnight to London's Euston Station. There, hiding behind a huge basketwork luggage container on the platform, was his fiancée, Elisabeth Butterfield, who had not seen him since he had left England. She was taking the sensible precaution of looking him over again in case she wanted to change her mind!

Max, who had earlier worked as a teacher in Agra, India, after graduating from St John's College, Oxford, enjoyed his time at St Thomas' School, which then had three hundred boys, one-third of them boarders, and was "a going concern." "I had a good staff," he recalled later, "loyal and conscientious, and three excellent Chinese clerks in my office." Nevertheless, he had to accept greater responsibility than ever before and often felt isolated as the only European on the staff. Nor was he particularly enamored of terminal Brooke Sarawak, which "was tedious indeed after the remembered glories of India." He was fortunate to have as his friends Peter Howes, a missionary priest who had arrived just a few weeks before him, and Kueh Choo Seng, the Diocesan Registrar.

Howes, whose earthy sense of humor belied his saintly character, was to spend much of his time upcountry working with the Dayak Bidayuh. For his part, Choo Seng was something of a miracle-worker:

From an office in the Bishop's House he supervised everything – the finance and the organisation of the remotest parishes, as well as of the Cathedral and its affairs. He spoke all languages and his manners were impeccable, his judgements accurate and decisive. He had at call countless employees – carpenters, plumbers, electricians. In any emergency you called Choo Seng and the appropriate workman came, instant. He looked after each of us personally – took you himself to the bazaar when you needed to buy shoes or a pair of trousers to ensure that the crafty Chinese shopkeeper didn't get the better of his simple English customer. The answer to all questions was "Ask Choo Seng". He was about fifty, personally quietly devout. He acted as Server or Acolyte or Thurifer every Sunday with an eagle eye to keep the ceremonial up to scratch. He was the Christian undertaker. For a funeral he had organised the digging of the grave and the making of the coffin. If the coffin stuck KCS jumped on it – so it was said. He handed out the books to the mourners, taking care everybody had a paper handkerchief to weep into. He wore his oldest clothes for the Chinese service, as in Chinese custom.

This extract from Max's brief memoirs reveal his nice powers of observation, his dry sense of humor, and of course his great flair as a writer.

Max kept in touch with Peter Howes in Sarawak. Commiserating with Howes' parents during his internment at Batu Lintang P.O.W. camp, Saint rejoiced with them at the news of Howes' survival in surprisingly good health in August 1945. In the meantime, Max had married Elisabeth and had been posted as curate to Shrewsbury and Shawbury, later serving in Cheltenham before being appointed chaplain at Guy's Hospital in London in 1960 where he remained until 1976. When I first met him, he and Elisabeth were living out of Oxford at Headington with not a great deal to do other than garden and (in Max's case) read Dante. In time, Max was to become a highly respected authority on the Italian poet, running his own reading group in Oxford and being regularly consulted by academic experts.

Through a piece of sheer serendipity, I discovered when I was working on the Brooke/Sarawak archives at Rhodes House Library that it had just acquired a substantial collection of letters written by Sarawak's first Anglican bishop, F.T. McDougall, and his wife Harriette. They had been kept by a female McDougall descendant who had recently died at an Anglican retirement home in Oxfordshire and had been located by Patience Empson, the formidable but charming archivist who presided over the top floor of Rhodes House. I quickly saw that they were of great interest and told Max about them in the hope that they would rekindle his interest in Sarawak after forty years.

In the event, Elisabeth typed transcripts of all the letters and Max got to work on two essays: one about McDougall himself and the other about Charles Grant, a young

Scotsman of aristocratic birth who joined James Brooke's little team of European officers, traveling out with him on Captain Henry Keppel's H.M.S. *Maeander* in 1848, together with the Rajah's new private secretary, Spenser St. John, and his nephew, Charles Johnson Brooke. McDougall was a larger than life character whose medical skills probably won him more converts than his evangelism. He and Grant both supported the Rajah's elder nephew, Captain John Brooke Johnson (better known as Brooke Brooke) in the battle with his uncle that finally resulted in his disinheritance and exile in 1862. *A Flourish for the Bishop and Brooke's Friend Grant: Two Studies in Sarawak History, 1848-1868* was duly published in 1985 and was still in print when I last checked.

Subsequently, Max and I collaborated in writing an introduction to the Oxford University Press reprint of Harriette McDougall's *Sketches of Our Life in Sarawak* (1882). Max had identified strongly with McDougall, but I found Harriette a far more interesting and engaging character than the Bishop and was charmed by her descriptions of their eventful life in what was then called the Far East. I had seen some of her watercolors hanging in the Bishop's House in Kuching and what were probably the first photographs taken in Borneo by the Bishop himself. These are now held by Magdalen College Library, Cambridge, where the McDougalls' grandson was a music don. Harriette herself was a fine pianist, playing the organ in the original *belian* St. Thomas's Church in Kuching which had been built by McDougall and an Austrian carpenter in 1848.

Over the years I kept in contact with Max, visiting him and Elisabeth first at an Anglican retirement home near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire and later, after Elisabeth died, at The College of St. Barnabas near Lingfield in Surrey. He retained his good humor despite the adversities of advancing age and continued to pore over his beloved Dante. Another great source of satisfaction was the achievements of their son, Andrew, an architectural expert on the history of London and the author of many works on the subject.

Sarawak was a short episode in Max's long life, but his memory of those busy years was astonishing and I cannot help thinking that this amiable and erudite man had his own unique influence on that remarkable Sarawak institution, St Thomas' School.

(Bob Reece, Professor of History, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Murdoch University, Western Australia)

REGINALD HUGH HICKLING
2 August 1920 - 11 February 2007



Generally known as Hugh, Reginald Hugh Hickling was born in Derby, England, the elder son of Frederick Hickling, a police officer, and his wife Elsie. He was educated at Buxton College and then Nottingham University, where he became the youngest student to graduate with a degree in law.

From 1941 to 1946, Hickling served in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. His ship was part of the escort of the ill-fated Convoy PQ17 carrying supplies to Murmansk which lost 25 of 36 vessels to enemy action. As a sub-lieutenant he took part in the D-Day landing at Sword Beach. In 1945 he married Beryl Dennett with whom he had three sons and a daughter. He returned to his interrupted legal career in 1946 as Deputy Solicitor for the *London Evening Standard*, but in 1950, after the death of their first-born son and his wife's desire to move as far away as possible from England, he joined the Colonial Legal Service and was posted to Sarawak as Assistant Attorney-General, a position he held until 1954. In 1954 he spent two months in Brunei, where his task was to study the sultanate's history and traditions in order to define its constitutional status and to brief colonial officials prior to the drawing up of its first written constitution. He submitted his memorandum in 1955 and was transferred to Malaya where constitutional changes were already being prepared.

As Malaya's first constitutional draftsman, Hickling played an important role in preparing its first constitution. This document came into force in 1957 when Malaya received its independence from Britain, and also became the basis for the constitution of Malaysia created in 1963. In 1960, as Commissioner for Law Revision, he drafted the Internal Security Act, based upon the Emergency Ordinance of 1948 created to deal with the Communist insurgency ("The Emergency"). The Internal Security Act was retained by the Malaysian Government in the creation of Malaysia and by Singapore

upon its withdrawal from Malaysia in 1965. It remains Hickling's most controversial legacy, for linked with Article 149 of the Malaysian Constitution, it declares the right of the government to detain persons without trial for acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia or to the maintenance of its essential services or economic life. His own views were ambivalent. In 1998 he declared that he had not imagined back then "that the time would come when the power of detention, carefully and deliberately interlocked with Article 149 of the Constitution would be used against political opponents, welfare workers and others dedicated to non-violent peaceful activities." Following the terrorism attacks of 9/11, however, he changed his views; but clearly the possibility of the powers given to government under the Internal Security Act and Article 149 being abused troubled him.

Hickling later served with the Commonwealth Office in 1964 and then as legal adviser to the High Commissioner in Aden and the Federation of South Arabia between 1964 and 1967. He was Maritime Law Adviser in Thailand in 1968-69, in Malaysia in 1969, Sri Lanka in 1970 and the Yemen Arab Republic in 1984 and 1986. He ended his colonial career as Attorney-General of Gibraltar between 1971 and 1972.

Hickling began a new career as an academic, teaching Southeast Asian law at the School of Oriental and African Studies (which awarded him a Ph.D. in law) from 1976 to 1978 and from 1981 to 1982. From 1974 to 1976, and again from 1978 to 1980, he was a visiting lecturer at the National University of Singapore's Faculty of Law. He was also Adjunct Professor of Southeast Asian Law at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia) at Bangi, Selangor, for six years.

He built on his reputation in Southeast Asian law studies with numerous publications. His journal articles on Malaysian and Singapore law were collected and published in two works, *Essays in Malaysian Law* (1991) and *Essays in Singapore Law* (1992). In 1995, he was appointed Adjunct Professor of Law at Charles Darwin University in Darwin, Australia. He continued traveling to Southeast Asia and Australia until 2006, delivering lectures and visiting friends and colleagues. In addition to his academic work, Hickling was a writer of short stories and novels, mainly drawing on his own life and experiences. In 2000, he produced his autobiographical *Memoir of a Wayward Lawyer*. He had, also, a passionate love for the music of Mozart. He was appointed a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG) in 1968 and a Queen's Counsel (Gibraltar) in 1970.

Hickling retired to Malvern, Worcestershire, where there were family connections, and died there after a short illness on 11 February 2007. He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter and twelve grandchildren.

Those whom he knew as colleagues and students remark on his conscientiousness, lack of pretension, and his humor and sociability. In Malaysia, in particular, his passing has been marked with many testimonials reflecting the respect in which he was held, the fondness with which he was remembered, and sorrow at his passing.

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Hickling's death evoked a number of obituaries and reminiscences, including obituaries in *The Telegraph*, 17 April 2007; *The New Straits Times*, 28 February 2007; *The Singapore Law Review*, 15 April 2007. Searching the internet for Hugh Hickling will yield more, and a substantial Wikipedia entry.

(Graham Saunders, Dam End Farm, Kelfield Road, Riccall, York YO19 6PQ, England)

YBHG. DATO' HJ. MOHAMAD TAHA BIN ARIFFIN 1943-2007



On 25 November 2007, Sarawak lost a quiet-spoken, unassuming, yet powerful, citizen of integrity, Dato' Hj. Mohamad Taha Ariffin. His political and social standing in his home state of Sarawak is perhaps exemplified by Sarawak's Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and his wife Puan Sri Laila being among the first non-family members to pay their last respects.¹

Born on 23 July 1943, his late father, Allahyarham Hj. Ariffin bin Mok, was a Kuching-born Javanese who became the Assistant Director of *Kastam* (Customs). His late mother, Hjh. Naziah @ Yot binti Sahari, was a Melanau from Dalat who specialized in traditional Sarawak *songket* weaving.² Taha's grandmother, Nek Mok, was the biggest influence in the formative years of his life.³ This may have been because he was the eldest of twelve children.⁴

Fortunately for Taha, by the time he reached school age the education system was being revitalized after four years of Japanese occupation. Taha began his education with six years at the Sekolah Rendah Merpati Jepang followed by six years at St

1 Thousands from all walks of life visited the late Taha's house to pay their last respects, including the Head of State, Tuan Yang Terutama Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Muhammad Salahuddin, and his wife, Toh Puan Datuk Patinggi Hajah Norkiah.

2 *Songket* (*sungkit*) – cloth embroidery with gold and silver thread.

3 A note from Taha's daughter, Rafidah.

4 The siblings are Rokiah – housewife; Effendi – retired civil servant, now businessman; Fatimah – retired, now has own business and works at her husband's law firm; Zaidi – lecturer recently retired; Masbah – civil servant; Zainal – former sports journalist of local newspaper, personal assistant to Taha; Abdul Aziz – civil servant and has own business; Zainon – civil servant; Norzaleha – own business, Zakir – civil servant, and Razman – civil servant.

Thomas', a leading secondary school in Kuching.⁵ He was a diligent student and passed his Higher School Certificate examinations – an achievement matched by only a few Malays at that time. His HSC led, in turn, to the ultimate prize for a Sarawak student, a Centenary scholarship to study overseas.⁶ He was accepted by Leeds University and spent his undergraduate years living in lodgings in the rather austere city of Leeds in northern England. Although this must have been a cultural shock after the warm climate of Sarawak and the comforts of home, in later years Taha often spoke in affectionate terms of his landlady and about teaching her how to prepare Sarawak-style food.⁷ His studies culminated in the award of a Bachelor of Law degree (LLB), after which Taha moved to London to complete his legal training as an articled clerk. A fellow law student also from Sarawak recalls: "We were in London together in the early 1970s ... Even in those days, he showed himself to be a very dandy, well-attired gentleman who spoke with a conspicuous (and he took no offence when I described it as) Western accent." After Taha was called to the Bar (Inner Temple, London) in 1973, he immediately returned to Sarawak.

Sarawak in 1973 was a land of opportunity, both in the government and the private sector, for returning scholarship holders with tertiary qualifications, especially for the "natives" (all Sarawak's indigenous people), few of whom held tertiary qualifications at that time.⁸ The special provisions in the Constitution safeguarding the special position of the "natives" in Sarawak applied to Taha who was a Malay, but his qualifications alone assured him of a future in government service if he so wished.⁹ He chose to join the Sarawak civil service and, working his way through the ranks, had risen to the second

5 St Thomas', a missionary school established by the Anglican church, accepted students on merit from all denominations and religions, the majority of its student body being Chinese. Muslim families in seeking to enhance their children's future prospects usually chose St Thomas', with its Cambridge School-based syllabus, tuition in English and its non-proselytizing reputation. Possibly the majority of those in the public service and in positions of importance in Sarawak had been educated in St Thomas' at that time and still are.

6 Taha was extremely grateful to the government officers involved in the award, one of whom being Dato John Pike, to whom in later life Taha often asked to be remembered.

7 This was rather different from the experience of many overseas students in lodgings in England, which possibly demonstrated Taha's ability to relate to people.

8 "Native" is the term used in the Malaysian Constitution for the indigenous races of Sarawak which included Malays (Article 161). The Constitution defined a Malay person as one "who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom ..." (Article 160).

9 Special provisions to safeguard the special position of the Malays and Aborigines on the Malay Peninsula enshrined in the Constitution of Malaya were extended to Sarawak (Article 153) on 16 September 1963 when Sarawak became a state in the Federation of Malaysia. The special provisions included reserving a proportion of positions in the public service, federal scholarships and training privileges, and permits or licenses where required for any particular trade or business. The high esteem in which Taha was held throughout his life suggests that his success owed little to the special provisions but stemmed from his personal attributes and management skills, although he would have had access to opportunities not accessible to the non-natives of Sarawak, mainly Chinese and Indians.

highest appointment in Sarawak's civil service, Deputy Chief Secretary by 1992.¹⁰ Taha served in that post for five years and then in his own words "decided not to stay around waiting for the post of Chief Secretary to become vacant but to venture out into the business world." Although 54 years old, he was well-equipped to do this, having attended the Harvard Business School Program for Management Development (PMD) in 1968. Further, well before leaving the civil service, Taha had begun to establish himself as a well-known personality through his leadership in sports at both state and national levels, for which he is perhaps best known to the general public.¹¹

Long a football fan, Taha's direct involvement in state football began in 1974 when, with government assistance, he established the Football Association of Sarawak (FAS) to replace the by-then bankrupt Sarawak Amateur Football Association. To revitalize the organization, he organized a revision of the Association's Constitution and an overhaul of its management—initial steps in a long journey to being recognized as the architect of Sarawak's "golden football era" from the late 1980s to the late 1990s.¹² Taha is credited with turning an indifferent Sarawak football team into a team that won the *Piala Sarawak* (Sarawak Cup) and the *Piala Borneo* (Borneo Cup) before entering the first Malaysia Cup competition ever held in 1979. By 1988 the Sarawak team had risen to the Malaysia Cup semi-finals.¹³ Foreign players added to the team in the early 1990s and Taha's personal selection of Alan Vest from England as head coach led to Sarawak winning the FA Cup in 1992 for the first time, the Premier League in 1997 and the Charity Shield in 1998. Sarawak reached the Malaysia Cup final in 1999, its peak during Taha's 1987-2003 Presidency.¹⁴ His role was recognized in 1995 by the award of the *Tokoh Sukan Sarawak* (Sports Personality of Sarawak). During his Presidency of the FAS, Taha became involved at the national level, beginning with his election as Vice-President of the Football Association of Malaysia, followed by being honored with the 1997-8 Sports Personality Award and the 1999 National Sports Leadership Award by the *Majlis Sukan Negara Malaysia* (Malaysia Sports Council).

But football was not the only sport that interested Taha. His early successes in football had led to his appointment as the Chef-de-Mission of the Sarawak contingent at

10 The Sarawak civil service was held in high regard. Datuk Adenan Haji Satem, Sarawak's Minister for Social Development, wrote in 1996: "The British, however, did leave behind ... a solid, systematic, and efficient system of administration."

11 In late 1993 Taha "received his medals as a Voluntary Colonel, Regiment 501" in the Territorial Army from Brigadier-General Region II Hidayat Shariff bin Abdul Ghafur (*Sarawak Gazette*, Sept. 1994, p. 7).

12 This is a newspaper journalist's colorful definition, the general consensus being that he was "The man who steered Sarawak football through its most successful years." For those interested in an in-depth look at the history of football in Sarawak, Wikipedia is a good starting point.

13 A controversial referee's decision that eliminated Sarawak from the semi-finals aroused public anger in Sarawak and the national flag and peninsular newspapers were burnt. To diffuse a very volatile situation Taha withdrew the FAS from the Football Association of Malaysia for a few months.

14 One newspaper obituarist wrote "a huge void was never filled when he [Taha] left the FAS."

the SUKMA (*Sukan Malaysia*, ‘Malaysia Games’) in the early 1990s.¹⁵ Taha assumed responsibility for all participating Sarawakian sports teams and is credited with organizing and galvanizing the Sarawak contingent to victory at SUKMA III held in Kuching in July 1990, at SUKMA IV held in Johore in July 1992, and at SUKMA V held



Dato' Taha receiving Johor Bahru's Sukma V overall champion's trophy from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad in 1994.

in Perak in June 1994. Sarawak's Chief Minister is quoted as saying “He ...brought glory to the state for winning the SUKMA three times.” These successes led to his

appointment as the Chef-de-Mission for Malaysia at the Asian Games held in Hiroshima in 1994 and the Vice Presidency of the Olympics Council of Malaysia. For his service to sports, the Malaysia Association for Physical Education awarded Taha the Millennium Recognitions Award (1990-1999). He reached the acme of his work in sports when he was appointed an arbitrator on the international Court of Arbitration for Sport in the later years of his life.¹⁶

Entering the business world as soon as he left the civil service, Taha and Lau Wee Hung, with respective shareholdings of 95 and 5 percent, established Tamar Holdings which covered a wide range of business interests through 16 subsidiaries.¹⁷ Appointments to company boards began on 24 April 1997 when he was appointed a Director of UBG (Utama Banking Group) that provides various banking and related financial services throughout Malaysia.¹⁸ Chairmanship of Hock Seng Lee, a construction and marine and civil engineering company, followed on 24 January 1998.¹⁹ Subsequent chairmanships included CMS Asset Management (formerly CMS Dresdner Asset Management) and the Sarawak Enterprise Corporation (formerly Dunlop Estates), which has interests in the Sarawak power industry and extensive land holdings. Taha became a member of

15 For euphoric accounts of these games, see the *Sarawak Gazette*, 1529 (September 1994).

16 See <<http://www.tas-cas.org/fr/membres/membresB.htm>>.

17 Subsidiaries included Tamarict (supply of computers), Tamar Travel Centre (Travel agency), Tamar Services, Tamar Plantation, Tamar Quarry, Tamar Media, JasaPlus (Construction), and Tamar Properties.

18 UBG disposed of its Merchant Bank in 2003, which then apparently became RHB (Rashid Hussain Berhad) Sakura and RHB Capital, with Taha a director of both.

19 Hock Seng Lee's Annual Report for 2000 shows a turnover of RM 140.7 million.

the Governing Council of the Malaysian Institute of Directors yet, even with his heavy workload in the business sector, still managed to pursue his interests in culture, politics, religion, and the arts.

Accepting the post of Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development in 1988 was a natural progression of Taha's lifelong interest in the arts. From acting in his local *kampung* as a child, he developed an interest in the performing arts and after his return to Kuching in 1973 took part in local stage plays and performances.²⁰ He was introduced to the "beauty and universality of music" (Taha's words) by his father at an early age, subsequently learning to play the guitar and the piano as well as developing a taste for singing.²¹ As Permanent Secretary, Taha invited well-known overseas singers and actors such as Dionne Warwick to perform in Kuching to enrich the local performing arts, even managing on one occasion to attract the Asian Film Festival to Kuching. Taha's interest in the arts was perhaps underlined by the "substantial financial support" he provided through his newly formed company, Tamar Holdings, in 1997 towards producing a CD *Sarawaku: Music of Sarawak*. This CD, released by Holland's PAN Records in March 1998, records for posterity the traditional music of Sarawak's five major ethnic groups.²² Also an influential figure in literature, at the time of his death Taha was the chairman of the Sarawak Literary Society, which was set up to promote and publish the work of local authors, as well as scholarly works on Sarawak by overseas specialists.²³ He was also a Vice President of the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, a prestigious bi-annual journal founded in 1887 and dedicated to Malaysian history and cultures.

Taha's influence extended to Malay culture as President of the *Yayasan Budaya Melayu Sarawak* (Sarawak Malay Cultural Foundation). The Foundation encompassed a wide variety of functions, ranging from endowing a RM2 million *Nusantara* (Socio-anthropology) chair at UNIMAS, (University of Malaysia, Sarawak); publishing seminar papers and other material; and organizing events such as the *Ramah Tamah Aidilfitri* (an informal, friendly end-of-the-fasting-month meeting) at the indoor stadium in Kuching

20 One of his favorite jokes was to assume a heavy accent when telephoning to confuse the listener about the caller's identity.

21 When his father returned from London in the late 1950s, he told Taha that *West Side Story* was a beautiful movie and thereafter the film was one of Taha's favorites. This sowed the seeds of a long-standing ambition to record his own rendition of his favorite Broadway tunes, in which he was also the vocalist. This finally came to fruition in January 2001, when, after months of studio work with a professional studio team, his CD entitled "With a song in my heart," set in an imaginary nightclub, was completed.

22 Randy Raine-Reusch, a specialist in traditional music and instruments, made the recordings, after finding in 1997 that Sarawak's traditional music was in danger of being lost. The venture was sponsored by the Canadian Society of Asian Arts and Malaysia Airlines and, in addition to significant financial support from Tamar Holdings, the Sarawak Tourist Board and the Majlis Adat Istiadat provided funding.

23 Earlier, Taha was the editor of the now defunct *Sarawak Gazette*, which was established in 1870 as the official government publication and evolved into a journal-type publication for scholarly articles.

Dato' Hj. Mhd Taha Ariffin presenting gifts to younger members of the Ariffin family for excelling in their studies.



in 2004 to celebrate the end of Ramadan.²⁴ Taha's presidency role also helped him to propagate his views, such as the time his opinion was sought by the Malaysian news Agency *Bernama* concerning some 60,000 unemployed university and college graduates in Malaysia on 4 November 2005.²⁵ The same article described Taha as "a social activist from Sarawak," revealing another facet of his personality.

Culture and religion are usually closely intertwined, especially so for Taha who was the Secretary-General of the Regional Islamic *Da'wah* (proselytizing) Council of South-East Asia (RISEAP) in his later years.²⁶ RISEAP defines itself as "a non-political, non-governmental organization that is trying to foster understanding about Islam and focuses on trying to meet the needs of Muslim minority countries in South East Asia and the Pacific by promoting Muslim unity in the spirit of brotherhood."²⁷ Taha held high hopes of eliminating current tensions between the Muslims and other communities in Southeast Asia through RISEAP, and the communiqué issued after the biennial General

24 Controversially, to help in its funding, the Foundation was recently given part ownership of IJM Plantations which aimed to boost oil palm estates in Indonesia by buying more land. *The New Straits Times Malaysia* commented that "if any ... internationally binding agreement is ever reached ... it will be too late for thousands of orangutans and countless other species, not forgetting millions of irreplaceable trees."

25 Taha's comments were attributed to "the President of Sarawak Malay Cultural Foundation, Datuk Mohd Taha Ariffin." His view as stated in the article was that the jobless graduates "must be prepared to go the extra mile and better equip themselves for the job market," not rely on the government to provide jobs.

26 RISEAP defines itself as "a non-political, non-governmental organization that is trying to foster understanding about Islam and focuses on trying to meet the needs of Muslim minority countries in South East Asia and the Pacific by promoting Muslim unity in the spirit of brotherhood."

27 In 1996 on the 15th anniversary of RISEAP Malaysia's Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir announced a new approach to *dakwah*, *Da'wah Bil Hal* that stressed action – "good deeds ... to help his immediate neighbors and fellow-men in times of distress or trouble. The objective is not proselytisation as much as it is to display the true teachings of Islam and its practice."

Assembly of the Joint Members of the Council held in Kuching in 2004 generally reflected Taha's views.²⁸ Extracts read "we renounce the use of violence against innocent civilians even in a warlike setting such as Iraq ... urge that more has to be done by all Muslim organizations to communicate the true and peaceful message of the Islamic religion to others and we pledge to do so with our action and words ... expressed grave concerns about the invasion of Iraq by the Anglo-American forces last year ... urges the great powers to do their utmost to bring peace and justice to the people of Palestine."

Politically Taha supported the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), the major party in Sarawak's ruling coalition. He had a close relationship with PBB leaders but never played a publicly active role in Sarawak's politics nor contested in any election.²⁹ But he made history in October 2002 as the first person in Sarawak who was not a politician to be elected by the State Legislative Council (*Dewan Undangan*) to the Federal Senate (*Dewan Ra'ayat*). A fellow Senator also representing Sarawak at that time, Datuk William Lau, recalls that they were compatriots in the Dewan who "spent hours together researching, and discoursing," always supporting each other when either had to speak on issues concerning Sarawak, and that Taha, a good speaker, always researched the subject of his speeches in depth.³⁰ Taha served as a senator until 16 June 2004.

By then his two children, his daughter Rafidah and his son Azlan, had returned to Sarawak after completing their education in Australia.³¹ Taha was an indulgent parent, proud not only of his own children but also of the entire family. With his wife, Datin Siti Zaharah Abang Hussain, he regularly organized family gatherings at the family home. To stress the importance of education, Taha would make a formal presentation of gifts to the grandchildren of his siblings "who excelled in their studies," a custom established in bringing up his own children. Whenever traveling he would keep in constant telephone contact with his family. By this time Taha was the "most respected figure for the whole Ariffin family."

Even towards the end when he telephoned me from the hospital to tell me that his blood count was half the normal level, he was still making plans, saying there were so many things he still had to do. Only two months before his death Taha received the challenging appointment of chairman of the anti-corruption group and had begun heated debates with his colleagues on "how to fight against corruption and to ensure equality within our society." This fitted in neatly with his interest in ethics in government, which he was researching in post-graduate studies at the Adelaide University of Australia until interrupted by deteriorating health. Unknown to his wife, as a surprise he had intended

28 The Assembly was made up of 57 representatives of 28 organizations from 17 countries.

29 Taha also had strong ties with the federal government, his ties including having served on MAPEN II (*Majlis Perundingan Ekonomi Negara Kedua*—The 2nd National Consultative Council on the Economy).

30 The most memorable occasion for Datuk Lau was the debate on an amendment to the Legal Profession Act when they vehemently opposed suggestions in the course of the debate (although not an issue of the amendment) that Sarawak should forthwith open its door to lawyers from mainland Malaysia to practice at its Bar, and thus to this day, that door is still shut.

31 We are indebted to Rafidah for this insight into Taha's family life.

to present her with a new car, color and model already decided, for use when they visited Australia. He had planned that the writer would accompany him on a drive from west to northeast giving talks on Sarawak's rich history. As a moderate Muslim, he had hopes of helping to bridge the growing gulf between the major religions, of reducing extremism, and of improving tolerance through mutual understanding. All this was left unfinished business when he finally succumbed to spreading colon cancer and two years of debilitating medical treatment on 25 November 2007.

(Vernon L. Porritt, Honorary Research Associate, Murdoch University, Western Australia 6150)

Secretary at the Ministry of Finance between 1 September 1989 and 19 October 2001 before being upgraded to Deputy Minister of Finance for the next three years. He held various secondary offices, for example as acting Chairman of the Brunei Investment Agency between 28 November 2001 and 8 February 2003. He also served for awhile as Chairman of Brunei Shell Tankers Sdn. Bhd. (e.g. *BBO* F.12.3.2004). On occasion he also acted as Minister of Finance (references to 5 January 2002, 12 June 2002, 18 June 2002, and 19 October 2003), the substantive minister being HM the Sultan from 1984 to 1986 and again from 1997 onwards. Dato Yaakub died in Singapore at the early age of fifty-nine. The sultanate is not so blessed with talent that it can afford the untimely loss of a gentleman of this stature.

Slightly less exalted than the foregoing was **Yang Berhormat Mejar (B) Awang Haji Abu Bakar bin Haji Ibrahim (1943-2007)**, who had been *Penghulu* of Kota Batu *mukim* for several years until he died on 16 September 2007 at RIPAS Hospital in the capital. From 2 September 2005 he had also been a nominated member of the Legislative Council, hence the honorific *Yang Berhormat*. He was survived by his widow, six children (four sons, two daughters) and various grandchildren. He was buried at the Masjid Jame Asr' Hassanal Bolkiaah cemetery (*BBO* M.17.9.2007). Born in 1943 in Kampong Sultan Lama, he worked as a teacher of academic subjects and sports at a number of schools, both primary and secondary. He then served with the Royal Brunei Armed Forces for more than five years, rising to the rank of Major, and on 1 May 1995 he became headman of Serdang, a settlement of more than one thousand inhabitants (*PB* 7.6.1995:3). From 2 September 2005 until his death he was a nominated member of the Legislative Council, hence the honorific *Yang Berhormat*.

Another former soldier, **Othman Muhammad**, aged sixty, was reported to have been gored to death by a bull in February 2007 while he was on his way home from a fishing trip with four friends at Kampong Gajah in Perak. He had served in the Royal Brunei Armed Forces for seven years and left nine children (*BBO* Sa.10.2.2007).

In the cultural sphere, **Yahya Mat Zain (d 2006)** was killed in a car accident in Limbang on Saturday 4 November 2006 and buried on the following morning. After making his acting debut in 1981 he went on to appear in more than fifty plays on stage and television, with several more roles yet to be broadcast. He was an active member of the *Rumpun Seni Lakon* (RUSILA) theatre group and a vice-president of GAPHAR, the Affiliation of Drama, Entertainment, and Creative Artists. He had retired as a welfare official at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport earlier in 2006. After the accident, Awang Yahya was eventually brought to RIPAS Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries, aged fifty-five. He is survived by his widow and three sons (*BBO* M.6.11.2006). Awang Yahya was the third major NBD actor to die within a year or so. Hajjah Kasumawati binti Haji Buntar, a comedy actress known as "Dang Kasum," recalled that Awang Yahya was "a nice and easy person to mix with." His untimely death came as a "real shock" (*BBO* W.15.11.2006).

Chia See Mee, a Chinese pharmacist in Seria, died on 5 January 2007 at the age of fifty-nine; he was "a well-known figure in the Chinese community" (*BBO* Sa.6.1.2007).

On Friday 30 March 2007 lightning struck at Bukit Agok in Tutong District, killing **two unnamed army recruits** and injuring thirteen of their colleagues (*BBSO*

1.4.2007). The survivors were visited at RIPAS Hospital on 31 March by HM the Sultan himself, who is Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

Hajjah Siti Aishah binti Haji Ali, 43, a nurse from Seria, was killed in a road accident involving three vehicles in Kampong Sungai Lalit Lumut on Tuesday 20 February 2007; her eight-year-old daughter survived the accident (*BBO* 22.2.2007).

FOREIGNERS

Among Britons connected with the sultanate, **Professor Reginald Hugh Hickling CMG QC PhD (1920-2007)**, died on 11 February 2007 (*DT* Tu.20.2.2007:24e #8); a memorial to him by Dr G.E. Saunders appears in this issue.

Nigel Turton (1949-2007) was a lecturer in the English Language Department at the University of Brunei Darussalam from July 1986 until July 2004. He was educated at the University of Leeds, where he obtained a Master of Arts degree. Before coming to Bandar Seri Begawan he worked at the National University of Singapore and then “on the Cobuild dictionary project headed by Professor John Sinclair at Birmingham University.” Turton died on 16 January 2007 at his home in Pickering (Yorkshire). He is survived by his widow and by three children (*BBO* Sa.10.2.2007).

Joseph Mathews (d. 2006), a teacher of English and history at St Angela’s Convent School in Seria between 1968 and 1984 and at St James’s School in Kuala Belait from then until 1992, died on Monday 23 October 2006. One of the longest-serving expatriate teachers in the sultanate, he held a master’s degree in English literature and was a Licentiate of Philosophy and an Associate of the College of Preceptors. He leaves a widow and a daughter (*BBO* Sa.11.11.2006).

John Cecil Maidment MBE, of Sarawak, Brunei, Sabah, Irian Jaya, Fiji, and Bournemouth, died on 3 February 2007 (*DT* Th.8.2.2007:25b #2).

The Revered Arthur James Maxwell Saint died on 29 November 2007 at the age of ninety-six. He served the Anglican Church in Sarawak between 1937 and 1941 and later wrote historical works relating to the Brooke era (*DT* Th.6.12.2007:29; Saunders 1992:278). A memorial by Bob Reece appears in this issue.

VISITORS

Several distinguished visitors to the sultanate also departed the stage during 2007. Here pride of place should probably go to **Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007)**, assassinated at Rawalpindi on 27 December 2007, who paid a three-day State Visit to Negara Brunei Darussalam in March 1996 as Prime Minister of Pakistan (*PB* 13.3.1996:1). On 28 December Sultan Hassanal Bolkhiah sent a message of condolence to President Musharraf upon the sad demise of the stateswoman. His Majesty, speaking on behalf of the entire people of Negara Brunei Darussalam, condemned the suicide bombing and offered his deepest sympathies to the family of the deceased (*PB* 2.1.2008:1).

Sir John George Melvin Compton Kt KCMG PC LLB (1926-2007), the first Prime Minister of Saint Lucia (February-July 1979 and 1982-96) was one of the special guests on the occasion of celebrations at the Istana Nurul Iman marking the fiftieth anniversary (15 July 1996) of the birth of HM the Sultan (*PB* 17.7.1996:11).

Compton, a barrister by profession, was Chief Minister of the island from 1964 until 1967 and Premier from then until 1979, when he led his country into independence. He was knighted in 1997 (*DT M.10.9.2007:25**; *DT W.19.9.2007:22*; *Chambers Dictionary of World History 2000:198*).

Admiral William James Crowe Jr (1925-2007), Commander-in-Chief of the US Pacific Fleet 1983-5, was granted an Audience of HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah on 10 October 1984, shortly after the sultanate achieved full independence. Born in early 1925, Admiral Crowe subsequently became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1985-9) and a “jovial and admired” Ambassador of his country to the United Kingdom (1994-7) (obituary in *DT Th.29.11.2007:29**).

MILITARY PERSONNEL

Field Marshal Sir John Wilfred Stanier GCB (1925-2007), professional head of the British Army between 1982 and 1985, visited Brunei on 20-21 November 1982, then ranking as a General (*Brunei '82:26*). He was Chairman of RUSI from 1986 until 1989 and Constable of the Tower of London from 1990 until 1996. He died on Saturday 10 November 2007 (*DT Tu.13.11.2007:27**).

Major-General Derek Thomond Horsford CBE DSO* (1917-2007) (not “Horsfield” as given in Harfield 1977:112), visited Brunei in May 1971 as Major-General Brigade of Gurkhas, 1969-71. He retired from the Army in the latter year, and died on 5 October 2007 (*DT Th.11.10.2007:27**; *DT M.14.1.2008:24*; *Who's Who 2005:1081*).

The highly-decorated **General Sir Anthony Heritage Farrar-Hockley GBE KCB DSO* MC MLitt (Oxon) (1924-2006)** was Chief of Staff (1965) to the Director of Operations in Borneo, “where he helped to organise secret operations inside Indonesian territory which brought about the end of President Sukarno’s ‘Confrontation’ with Malaysia” (*DT M.14.3.2006:21*). A soldier in the regular Army from 1941 to 1982, he ended his substantive career as Commander-in-Chief of NATO Forces in Northern Europe from 1979 until 1982. A prolific author, he was ADC General to HM the Queen (1981-3) and Colonel Commandant of the Parachute Regiment (1977-83). His eldest son is also a general (*DT M.14.3.2006:20g #1*; *DT M.14.3.2006:21*).

Major-General Sir John Jeremy Moore KCB MC* OBE (1928-2007) was Adjutant and Company Commander in 42 Commando, Royal Marines; in this capacity he was awarded a bar to his Military Cross (won during the Malayan Emergency in 1952) in recognition of his services during the Brunei Revolt of 1962. To be precise, he led operations in the town of Limbang, freeing all the rebel-held hostages, including the Resident (Richard Holywell Morris OBE, 1915-2000, an Australian) and his wife, at a cost of five marines killed and eight wounded. Out of the rebel force at Limbang, fifteen were killed and fifty captured; the remainder escaped into the jungle (*DT Tu.18.9.2007:25*; James and Sheil-Small 1971:32-7). Born on 5 July 1928, Moore later achieved greater fame as Commander of British Land Forces during the Falklands Campaign of May-July 1982, for which he was knighted. He was Colonel Commandant of the Royal Marines from 1990 to 1993. He died on Saturday 15 September 2007.

General Sir Joseph David Mostyn CBE (1928-2007) reached the last post on 20 January 2007. At the same time as Captain Moore was commanding operations in

Limbang, Major Mostyn, OC “B” Company, first Battalion, Royal Green Jackets, was recapturing Bekenu, which he achieved without suffering a single casualty. Six insurgents were killed, five captured, and about a dozen escaped. Mostyn, who continued to serve in Borneo during the “Confrontation” with Indonesia, subsequently rose to become Major-General in 1978 and Adjutant-General from 1986 until 1988, when he retired (*DT M.29.1.2007:25**).

In 1961-2 **Vice-Admiral Sir Roy William “Gus” Halliday KBE DSC (1923-2007)**, as he became, was senior officer of the 104th Minesweeping Squadron in the “Far East,” where he swept left-over Japanese mines and chased pirates in the Celebes Sea. In 1964 he learned to fly helicopters in order to give him status as Commander (Air) among the youthful Wessex pilots of the commando carrier HMS *Albion* (1947-73). The crews took part in operations in the Radfan [the capture of which in 1964 was “perhaps the greatest feat of arms” in the career of General Farrar-Hockley, just mentioned]; later they flew sorties to British and Commonwealth troops fighting the Indonesian *Konfrontasi*. He was Commander of UK Amphibious Forces 1971-3 and ended his career as Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Intelligence) from 1978 until 1981. He died on 23 November 2007 (*DT W.26.12.2007:27**; WW 2006:946).

Major-General Francis William Edward Fursdon CB MBE BSc (1925-2007) was Defence Correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* (London) from 1980 until 1986. Earlier, he “set up a staff college course on supplying by air, after joining an operational crew in the Borneo campaign and single-handedly making a film about it, which won an amateur film award” (*DT W.17.1.2007:21**). He died on 3 January 2007.

Colonel Wallace Pryke (1915-2007), an “officer whose Army career included two campaigns against the wily Fakir of Ipi,” also served during the Confrontation era at the Singapore headquarters (*DT F.11.1.2008:29**).

Air Commodore Henry Probert (1926-2007), who died on Christmas Day 2007, was head of the RAF’s Historical Branch. His works included a *History of Changi* (1965; updated 2006), referring to the airbase.

WIDOWS

Diana Adair Hargreave, Baroness of Kirknewton, who died in the Republic of Ireland on 17 September 2007, was the widow of Arthur Robin Adair CVO MBE (1913-81), High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Brunei from 6 May 1968 until he retired in August 1982. Among other things, he represented HM the Queen at the coronation of His Highness (as he then was) Hassanal Bolkiaah in August 1968 and was one of the signatories to the Brunei-UK Treaty of 1971. His widow, who remarried after his death, was survived by her son, Robin Adair, and three step-children (*DT Th. 20.9.2007: 26f #8*).

Liliana Burgess (1929-2007), translator and literary agent, was the second wife of Dr. Anthony Burgess, and, if her mother’s genealogy is to be believed, a descendant of Attila the Hun. Known as “Liana,” “her prize-winning Italian translations of Burgess’s *Malayan Trilogy* and *The End of the World News* did much to secure his reputation as one of the major European writers of the twentieth century. By the time he died in 1993, her shrewd negotiations with publishers and film companies had netted a fortune of more than [US] \$3,000,000 and eleven houses all over Europe.”

Born Liliansa Macellari, at Porto Civitanova, on 25 September 1929, she died on Monday 3 December 2007. Daughter of the Contessa Maria Lucrezia Pasi della Pergola, an amateur poet and painter, and Gilberto Macellari, a photographer and actor who died during the Second World War, she was educated at the University of Bologna and went on to win a Fulbright Fellowship to the USA in 1953. A marriage (dissolved 1967) followed to Benjamin Johnson, translator into English of Italo Svevo's short stories. She founded an English-language theatre company in Rome in the late 1950s and wrote as "Liana Johnson." She briefly taught at King's College, Cambridge, in 1967.

Liliansa met Burgess in 1963 and gave birth the following year to his son, Paolo Andrea (later known as Andrew Burgess Wilson, d 2002). The couple married in 1968, following the death of Anthony's first wife. Liliansa Burgess left no surviving relatives, "but her commitment to scholarship has led to the creation of the Anthony Burgess Centre at the University of Angers and the International Anthony Burgess Foundation in Manchester" (*DT W.5.12.2007:25**).

Mrs. Ruth Mather, who died at home in Edinburgh on 6 December 2007 at the age of eighty-one, was the widow of Richard Mather, former Director of the Meteorological Services of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, and Brunei [and Sarawak as well, presumably] (*DT F.14.12.2007:30*).

MISCELLANEOUS

On the afternoon of Saturday 3 February 2007 three young foreign workers (two Filipinas, **Maria Estella Pancho Lopez**, 21, and **Maralla Raya**, also in her early twenties, plus an unnamed Malaysian man) drowned after going for a dip in the sea whilst enjoying a birthday picnic near Tungku Beach, Berakas Forest Reserve. A fourth member of their group (Violeta Apote), initially reported to be in a critical condition at RIPAS Hospital, was said later to be stable. The victims had been pulled under by rough waters (*BBSO 4.2.2007; BBO M.5.2.2007*).

A fisherman, **Abdul Kahar bin Tamin**, 34, was reported missing, feared drowned in the Belait River near the Kampong Pandan waste treatment plant on the evening of Wednesday 1 August 2007 (*BBO F.3.8.2007*).¹

Shahul Hameed was murdered on 14 January 2006. On 16 January 2007 the High Court jailed five Indian nationals after they pleaded guilty to causing the death of their fellow countryman in a fight at Jalan Kebangsaan (*BBO W.17.1.2007*).

'**Edgar Puzone E**' (thus), who converted to Islam as **Ibrahim bin Abdullah Puzone**, a Filipino migrant worker found guilty on 3 February 2005 of murdering his girlfriend (Vilma Taalal Misal, 25, waitress) on 27 May 2003, lost his appeal against the death sentence at the end of August 2007 (*BBO Sa.1.9.2007*).

On Tuesday 11 July 2006 **Mohammad bin Usin**, a Malaysian cook aged twenty-eight working at Kuala Belait since 2003, was sentenced to death for smuggling *syabu* (narcotics) from Sarawak into Negara Brunei Darussalam on the evening of 21 February 2005 (*BBO W.12.7.2006*).

¹ There have been happier outcomes. **Awang Jofri bin Ibrahim** saved a child from drowning at the Anggerak Desa swimming pool on 13 August 2006 whilst **Awang Bakrin bin Mat Yassin** saved another person from drowning at the *Pusat Belia* (Youth Centre) swimming pool two years earlier. In October 2006 both of these heroes received awards for their bravery (*BBO W.18.10.2006*).

ABBREVIATIONS

*	denotes an illustrated article (but see also DSO*)
25b #2	page 25, column 2, paragraph 2
ADC	aide-de-camp
B	<i>bersara</i> /retired
BBO	<i>Borneo Bulletin</i> , online
BBSO	<i>Borneo Bulletin</i> , Sunday edition, online
BPAH	n/a
CB	Commander of the Order of the Bath
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CMG	Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George
CVO	Commander of the Royal Victorian Order
d.	died
DPMB	<i>Darjah Seri Paduka Mahkota Brunei Yang Amat Mulia, Darjah Kedua</i> / Crown of Brunei Order, second class (carrying the style <i>Dato Paduka</i>)
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross
DSO	Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (UK)
DSO*	DSO (and bar)
DT	<i>Daily Telegraph</i> (London)
GAPHAR	<i>Gabungan Penerbit Drama, Hiburan TV, dan Karyawan Seni</i>
GBE	Knight Grand Cross, Order of the British Empire
GCB	Knight Grand Cross, Order of the Bath
HM	Her Majesty/His Majesty
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
KBE	Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire
KCB	Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MC	Military Cross
NBD	Negara Brunei Darussalam (1984-)
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
PA	<i>Pengiran Anak</i>
PB	<i>Pelita Brunei</i> (Bandar Seri Begawan)
PBI	<i>Pelita Brunei</i> , Iklan section
PIKB	<i>Pingat Indah Kerja Baik</i> / Meritorious Service Medal
PJK	<i>Pingat Jasa Kebaktian</i> / Loyal Service Medal.
PSB	<i>Darjah Setia Negara Brunei Yang Amat Bahagia Darjah Keempat</i> / Order of <i>Setia Negara Brunei</i> , fourth class
QC	Queen's Counsel
RIPAS	(HM) Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (wife of HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah)
RUSII	Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (formerly Royal United Service Institution)

Sdn Bhd *Sendirian Berhad* (limited liability company)
WW *Who's Who*

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RESEARCH NOTES

MESSENGERS OR TIPSTERS? SOME CAUTIOUS THOUGH CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON BRUNEI-DUSUN AUGURY

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For several reasons, but not excluding the writers' accumulating years, it seems unlikely that we ourselves will be able to carry out further research on Brunei-Dusun augury. The present paper is likely therefore to constitute our own "last word" on the subject.¹

Self-evidently, what is felt to be personally "concluding" for these two ethnographers should not be taken as "conclusive" by others. Yet as the use of omens was already very much "a discipline in decline" by the last quarter of the twentieth century (for reasons which will be duly explained), and some of the great repositories of the ancient knowledge have by now passed from the scene,² it may be rather optimistic to hope that any future scholars will contrive to gather new empirical material on it either.

At least the corpus of published work on Bornean augury generally will continue to provide grist for theoretical mills. We, too, propose to start by scanning some of the literature for comparative reference points, with an outwards glance at first — from Borneo to the hill tribe country of central Vietnam (Section 1). It is hoped in this variegated light to be able to build modestly on the position or positions taken in R. Kershaw (1998b) about the basic supernatural dynamics of Brunei-Dusun augury: initially at the end of Section 1; then further in 2, as part of the Brunei-Dusun profile; but especially in 3, where attitudes towards and basic application of the traditional augural science are discussed.³

Now at some point in the course of a comparative overview it would not be impossible to be influenced in the direction of looking closely for a divine role in Brunei-

1 As is recorded particularly in the three previous publications listed in the References under our joint names, we were resident in Brunei Darussalam almost continuously between 1984–1994, through the employment of R. K. in the Ministry of Education. For both of us this was already a very late beginning in Borneo, although to have started there with an academic background in other states, societies and languages of the area no doubt had certain advantages. For a minimal definition of the ethnic group of present concern, see R. Kershaw (1998:29, n. 1).

2 We have in mind particularly Narak Buntak (Ukong) and Pangan Runtop (Bukit Udal).

3 In the course of presenting the Brunei-Dusun omen-bird list afresh, two important anomalies in its original presentation (i.e., in R. Kershaw 1998b:39, 40) will be corrected. These are also precisely noted in Appendix 3. Appendix 1 is used for a detailed presentation of the significance of augural sights and sounds, bird by bird.

Dusun augury. While the influence of ingrained but unsubstantiated assumption in other literature about the role of gods in predicting events and outcomes, through messengers sent to man, certainly needs to be identified and handled with care, such caution is superfluous where a case has been demonstrated for any particular group at the highest level of empirical and analytical excellence. Nevertheless it may be possible to invoke equally unassailable work which shows that divine intervention of this kind is not an invariable Bornean norm — albeit the absence of it need not, indeed, deprive omens of an innate causal power of their own.

Whatever the logic, and empirical dynamics, of the system as it was, we shall also examine in Section 2 the changing socio-economic milieu of the Brunei-Dusuns, with special reference to factors which appear to impinge negatively on the continued practice of Brunei-Dusun omen-reading. Section 3 comprises an extended but general account of attitudes, past as well as present, toward the omen creatures and other signs, and how in principle the system worked in the guidance of human decision-making in the past, but for all intents and purposes does not work today. A precise set of “technical” indications as to how the location or direction of movement of birds at the time of seeing or hearing them was to be interpreted, is then provided in Appendix 1. But neither in this Appendix nor in Appendix 2, which lists all the known omen-birds of seven ethnic groups, should readers expect to meet startling insights into the significance of either direction or choice of species respectively, whether among the Brunei Dusuns, or comparatively, between the Brunei Dusuns and other Bornean groups. As an interim conclusion, we hope it will not appear merely tautological, but at least a little philosophical, to suggest that it is because the Dusuns have withdrawn from contact with nature that nature ceases to communicate with them — a situation which has further reactive ramifications which not every observer may regard as entirely “functional.”⁴

1. Paradigms of the Divine

At the point of beginning to assemble our thoughts for this presentation, we were felicitously made aware of a forthcoming, 23-strong collection on the subject of birds as divine messengers in Southeast Asian societies (Le Roux and Sellato 2006). The title of the work suggested a very high degree of relevance to our subject — even if a model of divine intervention seemed alien to the Brunei-Dusun case, while the titles of the individual papers, with only two exceptions, turned out to hold less promise of relevance to augury on any terms than did the title of the collection.⁵

4 E.g., in terms of authority in the community, though the decline of ritual is a much more important element (as both cause and effect) in declining social cohesion (see E. M. Kershaw and R. Kershaw 1998; E. M. Kershaw 2000). Further on the subject of error, we would draw attention to corrigenda both in the article and book just mentioned, and also in E. M. Kershaw, ed. (1994), using Appendix 3.

5 The “little bird” who alerted us (augurally?) to this publishing event was none other than the editor of *BRB*. Owing to publication delays in Paris, we depended on the kind agreement of Professor Sellato, not to mention some sacrifice of time and effort on his part, in enabling us to have an advance sight of the papers selected from the collection, viz. Maurice (2006) and Sather (2006). The latter was requested for the obvious reason of its Borneo focus, in combination with Professor Sather’s known expertise on the “active intercession of the gods [of the Iban] in this

In the event, the paper by Albert Marie Maurice at first extends some unintended comfort to the skeptic in its chosen area of “messengers of the gods,” by seeming stronger on preconception than empirical confirmation. To start with, the author suggests that primitive peoples will very naturally have thought that birds were intermediaries with the celestial powers because winged creatures so easily escape earthly bondage through the gift of flight. However, it is stressed that no bird, to the author’s knowledge, has been identified with a god (as incarnation of a divinity) by any tribe of the High Plateau of Central Vietnam. Moreover, while there is some evidence of messenger status in decorative motifs and talismans, as well as some general indications in creation myths, and while a species of laughing thrush is definitely an agricultural omen-bird for the Bahnar and Reungao, Maurice admits that it is uncertain whether the latter bird is actually believed to translate the will of the gods. As for the Jörai, the fact that they make offerings when cutting down trees allows the “possibility” to be admitted that, for them, certain birds are intermediaries between spirits and men (but Maurice seems reluctant to take a chance on anything stronger than “possible”; and indeed why there should be a connection between such propitiation and the suggested role of birds is not at once obvious). At this point it is posited (more optimistically, perhaps), from the reputed “multiplicity of exchanges” between men and spirits, that souls (at least) will likely be found to assume bird form. Several credible instances are given of reincarnation of the human soul in the form of an eagle, and it appears that the goddess of padi, too, manifests herself to certain tribes in the shape of a bird. Yet the reader must again wonder whether such instances, even when backed by general assertion about the interlinking of the whole of nature under superior powers, lend solid support to the thesis of “birds as divine messengers” (rather than, here, as incarnate spirits). Furthest of all from such demonstration is the example of people using hornbill feathers in their ritual headdresses to emulate the role of gods. Not much more helpful is the origin myth in which a bird (merely presumed to be an envoy of the gods or the spirits) appears to guide a hero-founder on his providential way. One senses that Maurice uses a language of elegant restraint to insinuate some quite strong personal conviction about the gods intervening through birds, while tacitly conceding that the ethnographic material is not sufficient to make a convincing case for this. In his Conclusion he claims that in Vietnam interpretation of bird flight is the clearest sign of imagined ancient links with birds and nature generally (an epoch of harmony), but he reiterates his doubt whether any bird in the High Plateau has been attributed with a divine identity — certainly nothing like the ancient Egyptian falcon — and even queries whether the hill tribes really attach much credence to birds as would-be messengers. (Indeed some might ask how, without a god with a message to convey, birds could become message-bearers: bearers for whom?) This ambivalent discourse fades off into some romantic observations about birds having a superior sense of earthly magnetism, as seen in their migrations; therefore men are not puerile if they assent to being guided by avian movements. But in thus switching from the metaphysical realm via romanticism to modern science, the author leaves us with no clear conclusion on the situation of hill tribe belief from the late 19th to late 20th centuries.

In this light, it is tempting to wonder what could prompt a search for such an
world” (cf. Sather 1985:30); the former because its title foreshadowed an equal degree of insight into the divine power/powers behind ornithological omens, albeit not in island Southeast Asia.

elusive god or gods in the first place. Have some Western scholars conceivably labored under an ethnocentric disposition to assume that all mankind, at some point in individual tribal histories, has embraced or will embrace a hierarchical conception of the “other world,” with a supreme god acting and communicating through prophets and lesser messengers, including non-human representatives of the animal kingdom as well as other supernatural agents? When a Christian missionary — Schärer (1946) — can write a detailed theology of “the idea of the divine” among the Ngaju Dayaks of South Borneo with a loving care and perception which seem in striking contradiction with his religious mission, it is not unnatural to surmise whether an element of ethnocentric preconception was in play; or at least a keen interest in discovering affinities with Western theology which could serve as a basis for reassuring would-be converts that a change of faith is but a redefinition of what is already known, not a leap into the unknown. Somewhat (and yet, not totally) by contrast, another kind of predisposition to discover belief in a hierarchy of the supernatural may be present where an ethnic group exposed to state-promoted Islamization programs needs to refute, defensively, the type of demoralizing propaganda which depicts them as animistic if not Satanic heathen — though the plea of affinity may just as dangerously reassure Muslim proselytizers that the ethnic group is ripe for conversion (and why should it not do so, if Dusun writers have already been influenced, unconsciously, towards monotheism?)!⁶

A less “conspiratorial,” and almost certainly more valid, approach to Schärer’s work would be to see him as an anthropologist with no salient predisposition, who recorded what he met in South Borneo with appropriate scholarly dispassion. The inclination towards this assessment can only be strengthened in light of Schärer (1966). One should more especially note that Schärer (1946) did not “ethnocentrically” postulate a single or unitary supreme divinity of the Ngajus but stressed its bi-sexual duality.⁷

Meanwhile, a similar honesty surely pervades the inconclusive lines of Maurice (2006). What is perhaps most imperative in a critic is to eschew any preconception whatsoever about ancient Southeast Asian religion, whether in terms of formal theological structures as a defining characteristic of all supernatural belief in the area, or the preconception that fluidity and imprecision are the norm. But also to be avoided is an expectation that a relatively low level of elaboration will be a block to augury as such. Maurice’s work belies this, however sparsely — though we should not ignore the possibility that central Vietnam might have been found to be higher on the scale of elaboration in any case, had that august scholar not had to depend so heavily on library research in the early French sources for most of his data. A perfectly logical alternative for any culture is that there is relative theological elaboration, yet it does not constitute the foundation for the augury, i.e., the omens are not messages from the supreme spirit

⁶ The idea that scholarship can be used to pre-empt (and confirm) state propaganda — though with emphasis on the benefits for the state interest rather than the target minority — was mooted by R. Kershaw (1998b:31) with reference to Bantong (1985:108).

⁷ The female manifestation of the highest divinity is Djata, who resides in the underworld, or the realm of water. She had not, at Schärer’s time of writing, been given a name by either the Muslims or the Christians. The silence of the latter is connected, Schärer suggests (and surely humorously), with the fact that it is his own Protestant mission that is active in South Borneo: Protestants reject the Roman Catholic cult of the Virgin Mary! Schärer (1946:18).

or god. But even then there is still the possibility that the omen creatures are sent but have gained an independent power of causal action which disqualifies them from being accurately called “messengers.” At all events, one would hope that the “stronger” cases may stimulate reflection on the dynamics of augury in any system which is manifestly or seemingly “weaker,” either in its theological elaboration as such, or in the extent of any integration between belief about the divine and the practice of augury. As has been pointedly argued with reference to a group in the Sabah highlands — in Harrison (1979) — the apparent absence, or very low level, of “conventional” (i.e., theatrical-style) ritual in a Bornean society can be seriously misleading to foreign researchers whose preconceptions were formed by the academic literature on places such as Bali!

After these in some ways digressive lines we would wish to turn again more precisely to augury, and with specific reference to the Iban, whose theology sits indisputably on the “stronger” side of the spectrum. Thanks, possibly, to the very degree of theological elaboration, as much as the numerically dominant position of the ethnic group in Sarawak, we (and they) are by now blessed with a not inconsiderable anthropological literature in English. It is gratifying, also, to meet substantial mutual confirmation as between the accounts of different writers. The “theology” is in fact key to the augural system more than to anything else in Iban life — though we are urged to mark the fact that omens guide the Iban in steering a personal and communal course through all the complexities of *adat* on which a community depends for its harmony (Sather 1980, 2006). There is a beneficent supreme god, Singalang Burong, who sends his sons-in-law down to earth as omen-bearers, appearing to the Iban in the form of specific bird species. Singalang Burong himself is met in the shape of a bird, the Brahminy kite, but he does not usually play the part of an omen himself.⁸ It comes as no surprise to read that expert augurs (*tuai burong*) played a crucial role in major, man-initiated divination during its heyday. A newcomer to the subject might, however, be surprised to learn of the extent of attempted human manipulation of omens, especially of the negative ones in order to neutralize them and achieve a better outcome — with the undeniable implication that the omens themselves are in some degree or in certain circumstances causal. Yet although man can intervene, the gods’ advice (though not dictatorial) must be taken seriously; the presence of omens shows that the gods have taken notice of men, itself a token of favor (Sather 1985:3).⁹

8 The gods themselves were believed to practice augury; this is why they could impart their knowledge of the art to the Ibans, via a “culture hero,” Sera Gunting (whose part spirit-parentage means that Singalang Burong is an Iban ancestor) (cf. Sandin 1980:93–108; Jensen 1974:83–86). A virtually identical “genealogical theology” is claimed for the neighboring Maloh by King (1975).

9 The absence of dictation is consistent with the non-hierarchical quality of the gods’ society, a counterpart of the Ibans’ own (personal communication, C. Sather). At any rate, careful interpretation by the augurs remains at a premium. There is an interesting but, upon analysis, otiose objection to Freeman (1960:79, n.15) by Jensen (1974:137–38), where he takes issue with a reputed understanding by the former that omens are in principle causal because the Iban note that an omen was right, after the event, if it predicted the event correctly. Freeman’s words at that point do not contain anything to contradict his position that omens are essentially advisory. Another curious example of “much ado about nothing” is the attribution to Hose and McDougall

At the time of writing, the present two authors only had knowledge of one specifically dedicated source on augury among the Kenyah: the Right Reverend Bishop Antony Galvin, Vicar-Apostolic of Miri Vicariate in the 1960s — a man who may possibly be judged less indulgent towards the culture of his ethnic protégés than Hans Schärer was, though correspondingly truer to the mission of his church. He was unstinting in his recognition of the keen observation of bird behavior, species by species, on the part of the Kenyah, yet saw this aptitude (with apparent condescension or regret) as a natural corollary of their practice of “animism.” Consistently, we are not enlightened, even speculatively, as to the perceived source of augural messages. Are we to imagine that the “animistic” Kenyahs saw the birds themselves as incarnations of spirits? So far from exploring this idea, or the alternative possibility of a belief in a non-Christian godhead, Galvin quickly attempts (apparently by way of compliment) to put a more scientific slant on the reading of omens, by saying that “even the taking of auguries is less superstitious than one would imagine...,” for it reveals a real understanding of the natural hazards of the environment (Galvin 1972:53). A little more potential for anthropological analysis and stimulation of interest is revealed towards the end of the paper, where the Bishop records that in times gone by Kenyahs invoked omen creatures and spirits with chants of conjuration, and knew how to call to eagles to induce them to fly in a way that created a positive omen (Galvin 1972:58–59); but as far as this goes, there is again no hint of any possible power above and beyond the spirits or the omen-givers themselves. As stated earlier, it is one of our predispositions that the existence of such a power is not a precondition for augury, but it would be helpful to know whether the absence of any reference to one in the bishop’s study reflects its absence for the Kenyah or an element of episcopal predisposition in this connection. At least we have, for comparison with augury in other groups, the benefit of Galvin’s clear indication that omens were manipulated, which implies that they possessed a power to cause, in some way, the events predicted, wherever the omens may have come from.

It is not the case that Bishop Galvin lacked time or motivation for detailed research, for his paper includes two full pages devoted to a list of 77 bird species known to the Kenyah (not all omen-bearers, of course), with their Kenyah and English names. This is why one feels a pang of disappointment at having to seek the vital theological indications from a much earlier source — however authentic these indications may appear to be, once located. That gratifying feel of authenticity is due, not least, to the fact that the material was collected at a time before the inroads of modernization and

(1912 II:87) by Jensen (1974:128) of the claim that because of the impossibility of distinguishing the 33 birds of each augural species which are the genuine, and hence reliable, ones (because the majority were supposed not to be), therefore omen status was extended to the whole genus! In fact the two earlier writers were clearly saying not that the whole genus, but only the whole of each species, was afforded that courtesy status — this in connection with Iban thinking about the embarrassment of killing an omen-bird by mistake. A more serious disagreement has occurred between Sather (1980:xliv) and Jensen (1974:127) over the latter’s assertion that omens are significant only as a departure from the divinely appointed natural order of *adat*. Rather, in Sather’s observation, it is because omens are normal events, which in past experience have correlated with future eventualities, that they should be consulted in order to provide some protection from the inherent vagaries of nature-in-general.

erosion of traditional belief, but also to a telling capacity of the two early 20th century ethnographers, Charles Hose and William McDougall, to ask what we would regard as “the right questions.” The Kenyah indeed had a conception of a supreme god, we learn, and his name was Bali Penyalong. They also looked to Bali Flaki, a hawk, to guide and help them in many ways, and they expressed gratitude to him, but

we do not think that they conceive him as a single great spirit, as some of the other tribes tend to do; they rather look on the hawks as messengers and intermediators between themselves and Bali Penyalong, to which a certain undefined amount of power is delegated. No doubt it is a vulgar error with them, as in the case of professors of other forms of belief, to forget in some degree the Supreme Being, and to direct their prayers and thanks almost exclusively to the subordinate power, which, having concrete forms, they can more easily keep before their minds. They regard favourable omens as given for their encouragement, and bad omens as friendly warnings. We were told by one very intelligent Kenyah that he supposed that the hawks, having been so frequently sent by Bali Penyalong to give them warnings, had learnt how to do this of their own will, and that sometimes they do probably give them warning or encouragement independently without being sent by him.¹⁰

For our purposes it is germane, firstly, that the omen birds of the Kenyah were seen as having an incipient independence of action, detached from the power of their master. (No indication is given, unfortunately, regarding the possibility of manipulation of these “messengers,” but it may be logical to guess that, being thus endowed with a little independent power, these birds would not only have been thought capable of causing events, but also supposed amenable to the influence of humans, so that untoward events might be diverted or favorable outcomes achieved, as Galvin briefly reported.) But at the same time, there is a distinct Supreme Being always in the background, and he is the normative source of augural guidance. Taking this account at face value, one would conclude that the Kenyah system had much in common with the Iban counterpart, but was nevertheless characterized by some ambivalence and thus a greater flexibility.¹¹

10 Hose and McDougall (1912 II:57–58). We will forgive their sly dig at the Roman Catholic persuasion, and wonder mischievously if Bishop Galvin read it! On the subject of species identification, the “hawk” referred to in this source becomes an “eagle” under the almost identical name of *plake* for the Berawan: see below, in our discussion of Metcalf (1976). We are confident that most groups in Borneo are eclectic in naming more than one raptor by a single generic name. The Brunei-Dusuns with their “*kaniu*” certainly include more than one species, ranging from the goshawk, through kites and buzzards, to eagles. See further in notes 46 and 67, below.

11 For their elaborated (and admiring) thoughts on the origin of the conception of a beneficent Supreme Being, which these two early authors firmly refuse to attribute to contact with the Malays, see Hose & McDougall (1912 II:16–18). Unlike Singalang Burong, Laki Penyalang apparently does not take the form of a bird to descend to earth, nor is he mentioned to be an ancestor of the tribe through any union of a divine with a human being, as through Seragunting in the case of the Iban. However, as quoted in the previous paragraph, the hawk, Bali Flaki, has in some ways

Before moving on to the Brunei-Dusun case, we are able to cite two more examples of divine pre-eminence and bestowal of augury, accompanied by causality of omens plus (as typically revealed by) their potential manipulation by the recipients. The first, and surely most fascinating, case is that of the Kayan, as described by yet another eminence of Borneo's anthropological scene. The starting point has to be, not Laki Tenangan, the supreme and protecting god of the Kayan, identified in a classic early 20th century source,¹² but an effectively (or in retrospect, after the great religious reform) "unfriendly" female goddess known as Dipuy, who was responsible for the existence of omens and had taught them to the Kayan as well as sending the punishments that were incurred (including, in some cases, death) when any taboo, omen-linked or otherwise, was infringed. "Some characteristics of Kayan religion set it apart from other central Borneo religions. The old religion had an unusually large number of taboos and prohibitions, and its ceremonies were elaborate and noticeably expensive. This may be correlated with the fact that Kayan society had more marked social cleavages and greater economic exploitation than its central Borneo neighbours" with an observed "greater anxiety about religious prohibitions" than among the Kenyah, in the 1930s.¹³ According to the great religious reformer, Jok Apuy, at least, Dipuy's religion was a corrupt deviation from the original religion bestowed by the (likewise female) guardian spirit, Bungan Malan. She appeared to Jok Apuy in a dream and informed him of this.¹⁴

It would not be at all true to say that the old religion was completely swept away, we understand. In fact it was a condition of the success of the new — especially in blocking the inroads of Christianity (at least for a period) which was part of its rationale — that it did incorporate much of the old, and that the aristocratic class lent its authority to the new version by co-opting it. The claim to be a return to "pristine belief" was clearly legitimating, as with many religious reform movements elsewhere. One is also struck by the fact that, with respect to the headhunting ritual, "Most men ... are not convinced that the old taboos have entirely disappeared, because the spirits in charge of these taboos may not have accepted with good grace Bungan's return to power" (see Rousseau 1998:203). On the other hand, Bungan had undoubted potency, as the investigator had occasion to note when people proved reluctant to physically demonstrate how the now redundant bird omens had been read under the old system, lest this should give the impression that the demonstrator had switched loyalty back to Dipuy, which would anger Bungan (Rousseau 1998:70). This is not to say, however, that Bungan was difficult to please. It sufficed to lift up an egg in offering to her before starting an undertaking, in order to be

subsumed the godly attributes and status of the higher power who sent him.

12 See Hose and McDougall (1912 II:6, 12). They surmise that Laki' Tenangan could be *primus inter pares*, the minor deities just possibly being deified ancestors, as with the Kenyah. However, one has to be aware of some mild reservations regarding Hose's notes on the Kayan, in Rousseau (1998:14). Indeed, he identifies the foremost spirit as Doh Tenangan, a venerable woman; her husband, Lake' Tenangan, is otiose.

13 Rousseau (1998:8) citing earlier authorities (omitted in this quotation and paraphrase).

14 Rousseau (1998:23) quoting a Kayan history and handbook of the reform, which he later translated and published, with an Introduction, as Lake' Baling (2002). However, it was also claimed that the Kayans' own neglect or forgetfulness of the correct rules had contributed to the regime becoming unduly onerous (Rousseau 1998:32; Lake' Baling 2002:84).

fully protected from anything untoward.¹⁵

This brings us to the issue of greatest import for our present study. Under the new system there was in fact little to fear by way of accident or disaster, for besides the lifting of the onerous practices, the omens which had previously brought mishap (i.e., at least if they were ignored and no evasive action was taken) were “abolished” too. There are surely two critical points involved here: (a) whereas omens only worked if they were perceived (the hearer/viewer being a crucial part of the equation), they were nevertheless not mere messages but causal to the event predicted, for the recipient of the signal was not only able to take evasive action but could act to turn the omen round and give it a positive meaning; (b) but as man could thus intervene against *ad hoc* causality, it seems to us like a fairly logical extension from such potential that man could also vitiate the impact of omens by arranging with a “higher authority” (in this case, the restored divine patroness, Bungan) to suspend their causal impact in a blanket way, i.e., not by removing the birds, etc., from the environment, but by removing the adherents of the new religion from the category of those who had to heed the messages and thereby validate them.¹⁶

But we are even more taken by the importance of the said divine power behind the old augural system of the Kayan. Would it not be precisely because the Kayan divinity was precisely known and powerful — but severe rather than benign in relation to the augural dynamics — that the Kayan embraced a revolutionary liberation from that bondage?

At this point we may turn to the second example of divine pre-eminence and sponsorship of augury, etc., whose subjects/adherents (the Berawan) were likewise swept by the Bungan religious reform. The rhetorical question in the previous paragraph does not stand up too well when one meets an essentially similar structure, which in spite of lacking the notorious rigor to which the Kayan were subject, experienced the same historical outcome. Is it conceivably the divine power alone which paradoxically makes the system vulnerable, because it presents a clear target? With reference to the Berawan, Metcalf (1976:115) not only records of these neighbors of the Kayan in the upper Baram, putatively a subgroup of the Kenyah, that they were swept by the *Adat Bungan* movement like other Kenyah subgroups and the Kayan themselves, but he distinctly infers that among the reasons why the Berawan were affected was the fact of

15 On the relationship of the reform to Christianity among both Kayan and Kenyah, through three stages culminating in the victory of Christianity, see more especially Metcalf (1977). In Indonesian Kalimantan, thanks partly to the complex relationship of the Indonesian state to Islam, possibly also because Islam has failed to appeal to the Ngaju as well as Christianity has contrived to do to upcountry groups in Sarawak, modernizing and self-defensive religious reform has achieved institutionalization as Hindu-Keharingan. On this rather separate subject, see Weinstock (1981), Avé (1982), Schiller (1986), Tsing (1993:273).

16 Rousseau (1998:74) is particularly emphatic that, unlike the Iban model as presented by Jensen (1974:138), Kayan omens did not merely convey advice or warnings, but were distinctly causal (though on p. 73, n. 31, he notes that one subgroup, the Baluy Kayan, do not assume intentionality, nor see the omen animals as messengers of spirits). He also stresses that Dipuy was not involved in individual occurrences, only responsible for the existence of omens generally. We imagine that this may explain why Bungan could then declare the omens generally inapplicable for her adherents, as they switched allegiance to her.

having a spirit world of very different structure from the Ibans'. Where the Iban supreme god is not really more than a *primus inter pares*, among a neatly delineated pantheon of named spirits, the Berawan's equivalent figure is a supreme god, indeed creator, Bili Ngaputong, incomparably greater than any other spirit. However, he is surrounded by a vaguer, less comprehensively known spirit world than the Iban know. Metcalf attributes the vulnerability of the Berawan religion to this "fluidity," not to the salience of the supreme god.

The "fluidity" is most contrasted in the realm of augury: this is to say, although Iban augurs summon no birds, compared with the Berawan augurs who summon the eagle (*plake*), the former do have complex rules for interpreting the calls that come their way — though the "rigid formalism" invoked by Metcalf (1976:110) is surely a misplaced epithet. The Berawan, by contrast, "with less than two thousand souls, cannot agree about details of augury with their next-door neighbors." Moreover, it is far from clear that Bili Ngaputong, sometimes conflated with Bili Plake, is synonymous with the bird *plake* in the same way as Singalang Burong appears to men as *lang*. Meanwhile, under ideas shared between the Berawan and the Iban, omen creatures only forecast, do not directly interfere (Metcalf 1976:116). Thus they are in theory not equivalent to spirits/deities, but should act as their messengers only.

Nevertheless and at the same time, it does appear that the Berawan used to call upon *plake* to intervene, as if he were indeed synonymous with Bili Plake. This established effective structural identification with Bili Ngaputong — the theologically enabling condition, as it were (unfulfilled in the Iban system), for Bili Plake to intervene in human affairs, following supplication.¹⁷ In sum, the principal omen-bird of the Berawan possessed causative power virtually in principle, not merely by exceptional manipulation as with Iban omen birds. (Also, in relation to the important sub-theme of manipulation, one notes that the Berawan augur not only summons *plake*, but when he appears, urges him to wheel left for the most auspicious effect (Metcalf 1976:104). We have speculated that the salience of a supreme god, not "fluidity," may have contributed to the "vulnerability" of the Kayan religion in a time of cultural unease and ferment. Yet the power of men to mold the god into a helper, when he appeared as a bird, might have been expected to spare him as a target of ire, allowing him a longer lease of life. But in the event, after the Kayans' Dipuy was displaced, her benign successor, Bungan, did not last long either, at least in the face of Christian inroads.

Unfortunately, this attempt to pinpoint "vulnerability" and our hypothesis proposing this as the crucial factor in the collapse of an ancient religion and augural system, are substantially speculative: in the general mold of Metcalf's article, to be sure, but not concordant with it, nor with an iota of new data to back it up. We must hope that our discussion has prepared the ground for the subject of Brunei-Dusun augury in a not irrationally stimulating way. The basic framework that has emerged reserves a place for a supreme divinity, but such an entity may (in all the Borneo cases above), or may not (as, possibly, among the Vietnam hill tribes) be found. If one is extant, and at the same time

¹⁷ And this surmise is strengthened, Metcalf points out, by the early account of Bali Flaki in Hose and McDougall (1912 II:15), writing about the Kenyah. Or Hose and McDougall (1912 II:18) as cited by us in note 11, above. Metcalf (1976:117) refers to such intervention-cum-causality as a "flaunting" of the correct rules, but from the discussion as a whole appears to mean "flouting."

augury is present, the omens may (Iban), or may not (Kayan, Kenyah/Berawan) be sent by the supreme divinity himself (or herself), or can even be himself (Berawan); and they may be voices which warn (thus, messengers, being sent by the divinity: Iban) or causal agents (thus, not “messengers,” strictly speaking, even if holding a certain “delegated power” under divine agency: Kenyah/Berawan; and by no means “messengers” if not in any way envoys of such agency: Kayan). Minor manipulation aside, the Brunei-Dusun case does not exactly replicate any of the Borneo data reviewed so far, since although the Dusuns have a strong sense of divinity and do not lack a system of augury, divine agency has nothing to do with either the founding of augury or the dispatch of the omens, which by definition cannot be “messages,” nor their bearers “messengers.”¹⁸ It is immediately diagnostic that augurs are unknown to the Brunei-Dusuns, in contrast to the deliberate seeking of omens by specialists among the Iban (as also the Maloh), Kayan, Kenyah, and Berawan.¹⁹

2. A Brunei-Dusun Social and Religious Profile

The Dusuns of Brunei are a branch of the Bisaya, perhaps 15,000 strong in the 1980s, being most strongly represented in the Tutong District, with small numbers in the Belait and Brunei Districts. Accurate enumeration is rendered difficult partly by the suppression of the Dusun category from national censuses (although they still feature in the State Constitution as one of the seven indigenous ethnic groups of the country); partly also by the inexorable inroads of Islamic conversion (which does not, ironically, bestow the legal status and privileges of a “Malay,” even while it subverts the traditional, and constitutionally legitimated, non-Muslim identity of the Dusun ethnic group).²⁰ But then, in any case, linguistic assimilation (to Malay) through education and urban employment are making the Dusuns ever more difficult to distinguish from the “mainstream,” whether for the observer or in the minds of younger Dusuns themselves.²¹

18 The reference to Dusun omen-birds as “messengers of the spirits sent to warn or encourage men” in Bantong (1985:105) has to be acknowledged but this assertion from the Brunei Museum is not elaborated or vindicated by any research notes from the Dusun hinterland. It is tempting to wonder if in some way the literature on the Iban stimulated a hypothesis of similarity which the pressures of a bureaucratic career prevented from being followed up in the author’s ancestral village.

19 Among multiple reputed Maloh parallels with the Iban, King (1975:147) concludes with a reference to omen-seeking in the jungle by a *tau pabéo*. Specialists in omen-seeking are curiously missing from Rousseau (1998:68), or elsewhere in the book (he only lists some birds as “sought omens” as opposed to “spontaneous omens”); however, see Hose and McDougall (1912 I:168–70) for a detailed account of the role of augural specialists in preparations for war in those days. The equivalent section for the Kenyah is Hose and journey rather than war expeditions). Metcalf (1976) gives considerable detail on the activity of the Berawan augurs in his time (revealing much affinity with the Kenyah of old).

20 See, further, on the constitutional position, R. Kershaw (1998a). On the inroads of Islam, see E. M. Kershaw (2000, esp. Chapters. 11–12, pp. 191–206). This work also appears to be the only published source in book length on Brunei-Dusun religion at the present time.

21 On linguistic trends, see E. M. Kershaw (1992); Martin (1995). The latter is also valuable in calculating population numbers.

Bernstein (1997) gives a coherent overview of causes and effects in, respectively, the areas of modernization in the Brunei rural milieu and Brunei-Dusun “deculturation.” Yet it seems just a little sweeping to say, merely, that “contemporary Dusun village life gives the distinct impression of containing remnants of an earlier, integrated cultural system” (p. 167). Which changing cultural system does not, by definition, reveal “remnants”? Or, in so far as ritual (and an absolutely central ritual, at that) was alive and well in several locations, is it reasonable to generalize the residuality or collapse of cultural integration that was observed in a single location, to the ethnic group as a whole? Augury (which Bernstein does not cite), was certainly in steep decline by 1992, but the *temarok* ritual (which he does) was still sufficiently in evidence for the present two authors to be able to write subsequently about “Dusun religion” with the confidence of hardy, not to say posteriorly hardened, denizens of the night. This is a curiously sensitive issue for us, for without such repeated nocturnal exposure and physical tests we could scarcely claim, now, to be writing with authority on a “conception of the divine” in Dusun culture, for the vital purpose of demarcating that from the practice of augury.²²

This being said, however, we would not wish to deny that the recruitment of new *belian* has been languishing, for reasons which it is not facile to relate to the spread of secondary education. That is, education results in many intelligent young women obtaining work in town, including positions as government clerks and teachers, and becoming often resident in town, whether before or after marriage. Not only are they physically distant from their native village, but education and modern-sector employment tend to erode their faith in the ancestral religion, even were they not constantly exposed to the taunt of Islamic indoctrinators that, while it is perfectly modern to have a religion, the Dusuns, at best, have “no religion,” which is a very serious blemish indeed. To such an extent are modern young Dusuns capable of seeing and evaluating themselves through Brunei-Malay eyes, that some of them may even be found participating in government-sponsored theatrical parodies of Dusun ritual and mores, staged as “the Dusun cultural contribution” to major national festivals.²³

Meanwhile, in the villages the decline of riziculture erodes the relevance of the old religion for the remaining inhabitants. Be it noted that *temarok* — as a semi-cosmic drama staged by female priestesses (*belian*) summoning any of a number of divine spirits

²² *Temarok*, Bernstein reports, was known to be practiced in only 10 villages in 1992, seemingly only 1/9 of his total tally of 91. We would not take issue with “10” as a round figure (and provided that each “village” is defined to include several hamlets and a considerable number of participating households), but Bernstein fails to mention the bringing of rice from far-flung villages for initiation by competent *belian* at their rituals. When one reads also that “many foods are required to be initiated” (we know only of rice, fruit and eggs — being “freed for consumption,” as we would put it), one gains the impression of a program of strictly diurnal, and probably short-term, anthropological sorties to the outback. Local intelligence points to the role of indigenous bureaucratic “minders” in thus limiting access for the University of Kent. For more on this subject, see R. Kershaw (1998b:33–34, notes 11–14).

²³ See the fourth picture, and the commentary, in E. M. Kershaw and R. Kershaw (1998:14, 23) respectively, with our characterization, “choreographed culture.” Not only the role of government sponsorship must be stressed in setting up these entertainments, but also that of the same indigenous bureaucratic personnel who play minder to foreign researchers (see previous note). In both ways, arguably, their intervention may be obliquely inhibiting to cultural maintenance.

(singly and compositely called *derato*) — is first and foremost a harvest ritual, with a powerful secondary function as a rite of healing. Even the private monthly prayers in which a *belian* “passes” or “frees” food for her own ritual dependants’ consumption, gives pride of place to rice. Yet it does not follow from the erosion of relevance that belief as such is undermined. Paradoxically, the corrosive social modernization generated outside the village may also supply a new cultural impetus to balance economic evisceration, in the form of a perception that *temarok* is a vital asset in ethnic perpetuation. Not only the present two authors used to jump in their car and hit the Tutong trail on the eve of many a Brunei weekend, but also do numbers of the better-to-do urban kin of families sponsoring a ritual in the ancestral village. Not a little of the expense of a major ritual is funded from the urban, not the rural, economy.²⁴

At any rate, there were several locations around the year 1990 where the institution of *temarok* was in a relatively “healthy” condition, or at least superficially so. Faith in the presence and power of *derato* was still tangible, even though among the *belian* themselves one might hear expressions of a decline of confidence — confidence, that is, in the power of the divinity known to them, not its actual presence in themselves — as the evidence became compelling that *derato* was not punishing defectors to Islam, even an occasional defector from the ranks of the *belian*. If one wishes to pinpoint an example of decline in a cultural practice due to economic modernization, it is not at *temarok* that one should look most searchingly, but (as has been indicated) at augury. At this point, two illustrations will suffice. When people set out for Tutong Town or Bandar Brunei by car, the sound of the engine blocks out the warning cry of a red-headed tailorbird concerned about hazards lurking along the way; not that the hazards are exactly what they used to be, either, when people had to trek several miles on foot along lonely trails. And in rice farming, where the Department of Agriculture now supplies insecticide to protect the crop, the forecasting of an insect pest has become otiose. However, one may record that in the late 1980s the older generation who were still planting the family fields would still consult omens (*angai*) to a small extent, as also the stellar signs (*pyamo*), while they also at times blamed the smaller yields of recent years on the neglect of omens and stellar signs by most Dusuns. At all events, the negative impact of modernization, as with *temarok*, is not directly on belief in augury “in principle” but much more on the activities for which omen-taking was deemed requisite.

But it is also germane that as omens are not believed to emanate from a divine source, any decline of belief in the latter cannot logically have any causal relationship to decline in omen-taking. Although some highly experienced *belian* can call a small number of very special *derato* who are reputed to be extremely powerful (and potentially fatal to any host of less than highest spiritual resilience), it bears noting that these special *derato* are in no way equivalent to a “higher god” in a hierarchy of the divine, to which an imaginative analyst might look if searching for a source of messages. More to the point, all these beings in their various realms only communicate with initiated *belian* in

24 The timing of major rituals, invariably at weekends on the international calendar, not in line with lunar reckoning, was no coincidence. One would also meet men from Seria — Shell workers with musical ability — called in to play in the percussion (*gandang*) ensemble. But one area of cultural decline beyond rescue is the narration of folktales, as was noted with brief social analysis in E. M. Kershaw, ed. (1994:ix) and in E. M. Kershaw and R. Kershaw (1999:140).

the context of *temarok*, wherein these priestesses act as their uniquely privileged vessels and mediators with the laity. As a matter of fact, although this divinity is “ethnically exclusive” — that is, a god who cares for, or imposes rules on, Dusuns only (just as, analogously in Dusun minds, Allah guards the Malays on condition of some irrationally stringent taboos) — it would be possible in theory for a Dusun never to have received even an indirect prescription (e.g., a food restriction) from *derato* if he or she had somehow never been taken on as the ritual dependant of a *belian*. Although this would be a very unusual case, we can at any rate, and once more, state emphatically that *derato* is/are not involved with, or concerned about, the mundane concerns of any Dusuns seeking their livelihood. For this, augury is relevant.²⁵ Yet nor does the art of omen-reading entail a role for augural specialists, from whose existence, apart from inferring the phenomenon of divinity as such (by reference to personnel other than *belian*), one might well deduce that such divinity is the source of omens.²⁶

3. Attitudes and Application

To put it rather crudely, augury for the Brunei-Dusuns is a component in their supernatural affairs but not part of their religion, unless by the very broadest possible definition of “religion.” At this point, one further segment may be incorporated into the interpretative edifice. It has been argued in the most detailed discussion of Brunei-Dusun augury to date (see R. Kershaw 1998b:43) that the omen-birds of this group are not always identified as species in the way an ornithologist aspires to do, or as the Ibans do, but rather that the omen comprises only a call, and one which may emanate from more than one species. At least this is conspicuously so in the case of the woodpecker calls (*uit-uit*). At the same time, the little spiderhunter, for one, is significant almost entirely in terms of direction of flight and thus has to be identified as a distinct species by sighting (consequently, being thus known by sight, *sasat* is also recognized as being the particular species making the little spiderhunter calls — though ironically the call of augural relevance does not seem to be the one from which the Dusun name of the bird is derived onomatopoeically). Be this as it may, with a generally low premium on species identification as opposed to picking up bird calls, Dusun augury has another good reason for not being supposed to be about receiving messages from the gods or the spirits, for is it not reasonable that a “messenger” should be identified as a particular species if thus appointed? At least it should be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition of being a messenger!

To one’s chagrin, although it may seem plausible to deny the role of messenger by this argument, as an addition to the stronger points about exclusion from the religious framework and the absence of augurs, a new question at once fills the gap. If, as we

25 Or as the stylish phraseology of one Dusun intellectual put it, the “lawful occasions” which the omen system (at least as structured visually by his own grid) should enable “any Dusun, who follows the *Kepercayaan lama*,” to engage in “in good heart” (Bantong 1985:107).

26 In an area which transcends mere “mundane concerns,” there is a role for specialist mediators but they are not augurs: rather, they are the *belian* when approached before (e.g., to request), or during, a *temarok* by supplicants seeking a cure for either a physical malady or mental affliction. The *belian* mediates the healing intervention of *derato*. The only role with some affinity to an augur is that of the *dokun*, who deals with the more “animist” kind of spirits.

have begun to believe, the omen-bearers to the Dusuns are merely benevolent tipsters, not acting on behalf of a Dusun deity or other guardian spirits, how is it that they are so well-disposed towards the Dusuns as to make such important advice available to them? Is it a case possibly, of the human party having a much more dynamic role than has usually been found (or acknowledged) in studies of other Bornean groups, i.e., the sounds are present in the environment all the time but take on the function of advice only as — precisely as — a human being in that locality hears it, interprets it and (as the case may be) acts on it? Rather than suppose a special relationship between the local birds and the Dusuns which the birds have conceived, let us instead postulate that the human party subjectively initiated it — and never expected it to yield the kind of perfect intelligence of events to come which might be looked for from a godly custodian of their own tribe. It is true that every tribe has its “own” omen-birds but this would be perfectly explicable by reference to the particular avian fauna found in the area of residence. To state a truism, only birds of the area can be consulted since there are no others available. Where Dusuns live in proximity to Ibans, there is some overlap with their omen-birds; but we should not think of this as necessarily “borrowing from the Ibans,” only as a sensible sensitivity to the sounds of a shared natural environment — notwithstanding the highly ethnic-specific role of the Iban omen-birds.²⁷ The warnings picked up by Dusuns would in principle be accessible to all human residents of their area. The birds are gifted with a magical omniscience, we may posit, but do not hold a watching brief as guardians of the Dusun people as such. The function, when activated by Dusun interpretation and response, is protective for them, but the signs are not targeted at the group. It is certainly not an offense against the omen-bearer itself to ignore what appears to be negative advice: one is simply taking a chance with fate, hoping to be endowed with a level of innate luck robust enough to see one safely through the predicted difficulties.²⁸

This view of Dusun perception, based on many individual commentaries, gains some reinforcement from the “pragmatism” of Dusun behavior where a negative omen was heard but an undertaking could not be indefinitely postponed without serious economic or social disadvantage. It is now appropriate to move on to a more detailed dissection of the Dusun “theory of omens,” including the conceptions of a “good” and a “bad” sign (and even if a moral dimension is excluded, is it sensible to speak of “good” and “bad” if, for instance, the omens are only “advisory” in a permissive, non-mandatory way?); whether harmful events which do appear to be credibly foretold can be averted, e.g., by manipulating the omen to achieve a more favorable forecast, or whether non-attendance is the only safe option; and how to act if no augural sign is forthcoming when one is needed. At a more sociological level we shall have to address the reasons for decline of augury compared with earlier, but still remembered, decades.

Regarding “good” and “bad,” it will not surprise students of Southeast Asia to hear that what we are dealing with here is not guidance as to morally right or wrong

27 Cf. “The gods, in their omniscience, ensure that an augury is seen or heard only by those for whom it is intended” (Freeman 1960:80).

28 On the matter of the apparently benign disposition of omen-bearers: some Dusuns have indeed begun to wonder if there isn’t an element of protective concern, which in turn would imply a messenger role on behalf of some higher, benign authority. There does not seem to be any other reasonable explanation of supernatural solicitude, some muse.

action. All the actions which are implicitly urged or prescribed (including the action of avoidance, after receiving a “bad” omen) are actions entirely in the self-interest of the person or persons advised, but all morally right by that very criterion. This “right conduct” is personal-goal oriented. (Some scholars might detect a pursuit of “power” in a modest degree.) Normally the pursuit of a personal goal will not be damaging to others, but in a case of going on a raid against the Muslim Tutongs of Tanjong Maya some 110 years ago, the goal was precisely to do damage. (And generally, when Dusuns give an example of guidance by auguries, it will be framed in terms of competition or rivalry.) Yet the “morality” or otherwise of an undertaking was not a matter for comment or calculation by the augury — only whether it could safely be ventured or not. Nor is an omen itself innately good, in the sense of virtuous, or innately bad, in the sense of nefarious. Besides, the guidance given is essentially “for information,” not mandatory. It is certainly not morally culpable to ignore an omen; be the negative consequences (if any) as they may, they are “upon your own head” — and as a memorial to stupidity, not moral shortcoming!

Very importantly, the omen does not control the event predicted, let alone cause it, so a human being cannot divert harm by trying to adjure or adapt the sign through, say, the offices of a *dokun*, *belian*, or enlisted spirit.²⁹ One’s only truly protective recourse (if the time and location of a nefarious event have been correctly intuited) is total evasion, by staying away or abstention. There are, it is true, events which cannot be avoided at any price, notably sickness or death, but the leading experts, Narak Buntak and Pangan Runtop, were of one mind that this kind of information does not properly fall within the category of *angai* at all. Then on the other hand there are relatively “bad” omens which foretell lack of success in an enterprise, such as fishing or hunting, whereby the individual who decided to go ahead would simply be wasting his time, not placing life or limb at risk.³⁰ Needless to say, when the forecast is encouraging, no adaptive response is requisite — though undoubtedly the added confidence gained may in practice cause people to commit more energy to the activity and thereby enhance its success. No offerings are ever called for, by way of expressing gratitude or reverence either to the omen-birds or any divine agency, in Iban style, precisely because of the fact (just stated) that these omens have not the remotest pretension to control the events predicted, and the fact (previously rehearsed) that they are not messengers acting on behalf of any other supernatural party. Not many Dusuns have addressed the quandary posed by “good” omens which are followed by “bad” events. However, those who have, explain that the divergent outcome could be due to factors such as the action of a more powerful spirit who was wronged, or disobedience to previous prohibitions (*pantang*) which rendered that person spiritually vulnerable (*katula*, *kesabon*). Omens basically never err.³¹

29 Some very minor deviations from the rule of non-manipulation will be mentioned below. *Dokun* means ‘magician.’

30 We take it that references to fishing have referred typically to river fishing, usually with fish-traps or nets which might already be in the water, only needing to be visited. However, in the 1930s crocodiles were still present in the rivers in some numbers: a distinct danger. But the upriver Dusuns (and there were always a few) who went “out to sea” certainly did not venture beyond the estuaries.

31 Related intimately to the question of the reverence which we find to be lacking, one should

A “good” omen will be characterized colloquially by phrases such as the following: *diri moncoi* (‘one is doing well’); *diri kalap* (‘yourself will [be able to] get’); *diri nggirak* (‘you yourself will laugh’); *diri manang* (‘you yourself will win’); *jati nggirak di-soro* (‘we’ll laugh at them’); *angai jati*, *angai diri* (‘our own omen’); *ipon rumo ncisi*, *ijun nggirak kito* (‘your opponent’s teeth will be bared and you’ll be laughing at the sight’). Good omens from particular omen-birds may be noted by a special verb derived from the bird’s name: *diri mancag* (‘you’ve been favorably tipped by *sancag* [thick-billed spiderhunter]’); *diri nguit di-rumo* (‘you’ll do an *uit* [woodpecker] on your opponent’); *rumo suat uit gama mu* (‘your opponent will suffer an *uit* from you’). If a second omen call overlaps with the first one heard, in a permutation which gives a highly positive indication, then *ikou ngaranggong di-rumo* (‘you have outmaneuvered your rival’).³²

A “bad” omen (*angai raat*), correspondingly, may be spoken of as follows: *musu diri* (‘you are your own enemy’); *suat ala diri* (‘you will become a loser’); *suat rumo manang* (‘[you’ll] allow [suffer] your rival to win’); *rumo kanon* (‘your adversary gets [devours] you’); *rumo rakon* (‘your opponent laughs’); *rumo nggirak di-diri* (‘your opponent laughs at you’); *angai rumo* (‘your opponent’s omen’); *diri suat sosol* (‘you’ll be forced to rue’); *diri nyosol* (‘you’ll rue’); *diri andi moncoi* (‘it’s not good for you’); *ipon diri ncisi* or *incisi ipon mu* (‘your teeth will be bared’). Where a woodpecker is the omen-bearer: *tagon rumo nguit* (‘you’ll allow [order] your opponent to do an *uit* on you’); *diri suat uit* (‘you’ll fall prey to [suffer] an *uit*’). Where a second omen overlaps the first one heard, but giving a strongly counteractive indication, it may be said that *rumo ngaranggong di-diri* (‘your opponent has trumped you’). The worst example of an *angai raat* (‘abominable augury’) from Dusun oral history was the incident cited where the sign was an event in itself.³³ Any “bad” omen may be referred to as a sign “necessitating avoidance,” i.e., *tolak angai* (‘averting the prediction’).³⁴

expect to discover that omen-birds can be trapped and eaten. One very interesting and rational opinion (given by Pangan Runtop of Bukit Udal) was that when you eat the bird, you are not eating the omen, so of course you may eat it! He allowed that if, hypothetically, all omen-birds were slaughtered, then there would be no more omens, but we note how much in his thinking the birds themselves lacked any tangible power and personality. However, Timor Bandang (also of Bukit Udal), being he who described omen-birds as “the eyes of the Prophet,” had come to view the eating of one of these creatures as improper, being perhaps in some sense sacrilegious.

32 A linguistic point to be noted here is that while the normal meaning of *rumo* is ‘friend,’ in the context of augury it denotes one’s rival or vis-à-vis. For further detail of the rules for overlapping omens, see under *jiriot* (tailorbird) in Appendix 1.

33 Namely, the death of a headhunting leader during a raid, which the rest of the war party took seriously enough to abandon the fight and flee. We mention this because it was included in Pangan Runtop’s wide-ranging review of the subject. In fact, the war-leader was a Kayan attacking Dusuns, not vice-versa. It was not Dusun pugnacity or martial skills that won the day, but the magic of a great Dusun leader, Orang Kaya Pemancha Saging (by causing the Kayan blowdarts to swing round in the air and return to strike the marksmen). As we shall point out below, generally augury is not relevant for headhunting, because the Dusuns were not a credible headhunting society.

34 But as noted, strictly speaking, this is a matter of avoiding the event, not of changing the

It may be appropriate to postpone discussion of the effects of modernization until the end of the section, but at this stage the range of situations for which augury was traditionally deemed relevant should certainly be laid out, together with reference to “who, when, and where” (“where” will usually be self-evident from the activity, such as rice-planting, but there was also the question for wayfarers of the distance from one’s house at which one could allow a “bad” omen to cause the trip to be aborted). A broad outline of prescribed responses has already been given, but we must shortly introduce the species of omen-birds and other sources of information, even if postponing the more “mechanical” matter of direction of movement and location of call, and their interpretations, together with the interpretation of dreams, till Appendix 1 (however, the limited lore of non-avian omens apart from dreams will be included with each type as it is introduced towards the end of this section).

“In the old days” (but still very much within the living memory of the elderly in the late 1980s), omens were consulted without fail at the beginning of the rice-planting cycle; when choosing a site for a new house; before setting out to visit someone (often an ailing person) at some distance, which would entail an absence of several nights; before going to buy a buffalo, but also in advance of raiding in order to steal one; before fishing (usually innocuous, as we have noted), or a jungle expedition for hunting, trapping, camphor collection or taking wild bees’ nests (it was as much on the way to the jungle as during the specific activity that a chance accident might befall); before seeking to settle a dispute, for instance over recovery of a debt, or going to arrange a marriage; and (relatively recent) before a competitive cockfight. However, as the Dusuns never were, according to oral tradition, literally “headhunters,” the question of consulting augury in advance of this kind of activity rarely arose.³⁵ The few skulls in Dusun possession, which were paraded most famously in *kukui* processions at the 100th-day (or later) wakes of the most eminent departed, seem to have been acquired by treacherous murder or execution of slaves.³⁶

prediction, which is ineluctable except inasmuch as one’s absence from the predicted event would vitiate a tragedy which was to involve oneself alone. A dangerous flood could not be averted but one’s own death in that flood could be, by one’s absence from the scene.

35 We are aware that this assertion flies in the face of some Dusun intellectual proclivity in the construction of their tribal past (see Bantong 1985:109), comprising a grid which in the “Pursuit” section of six columns allocates column 5 to “war, etc.” Admittedly, Bantong does not in his article refer explicitly to “headhunting,” but the martial quality of his ancestors, even contemporaries, is more than implicit where, for instance, the tailorbird is said to be informing Dusuns that “one may go to war with confidence” if it calls from front left, on a low pitch (Bantong 1985:106). Yet there is an even more “exotic” feel to the assertion (likewise p. 106) that a Dusun should listen for bird calls and only then ask himself what activity he is currently engaged in or considering. We acknowledge that in a limited way, the tailorbird’s calls may be read differently by activity, e.g., a cockfight as opposed to a journey, but one would first be conscious of, or would have started, the chosen activity and only then listen for relevant omens.

36 A *kukui* is remembered as late as about 1947 — one staged to restore “balance” after the upheavals, fear, and deprivation of the Japanese occupation. Owing to its dangerously irrational impact on Dusun listeners, “the British” reputedly banned even the playing of the rhythm. We imagine that this order was made at the time of the 1962 Rebellion, when possession of firearms was also banned. If such a ban still existed, it was breached by a *gandang* ensemble of old-timers

The Dusuns were sufficiently subject to the “thrall of augury” to be very reluctant to pursue any more hazardous undertaking — such as hunting or jungle work — if no omen whatsoever was forthcoming. Absence of any omen was known as *angai liong* (‘a silent augury’). In the event of setting out from home for the purpose of any activity which was either far enough away, or in some way hazardous enough, to require some encouragement from augury — but then not receiving any guidance within the first mile — one had three options: (a) to turn back and try again the following day and the third day (or the third day could be timed to fall after an interval of one day, the intermitted day being called *baolot*); (b) if there was a relevant dream, take guidance from that; (c) weigh the relative riskiness of the enterprise, and at a low level of risk go ahead, hoping that one’s unrevealed *nasip* (innate luck) was good enough to see one through any hazards. Work in the jungle might certainly be considered to be at the lower end of the risk scale, and therefore worth chancing if the object of the work was important. If cutting down trees, one should simply take extra care. At worst, one might experience misfortune in some other sphere, whereby one could lose in a cockfight, be disappointed in hunting or fishing, suffer a bad harvest, or succumb to a chronic malady. Narak Buntak of Ukong, being a *dokun*, was more aware of risk (especially the planting of hostile charms) and less likely to take a chance than some of his contemporaries. Yet even he would not fail to visit a dying friend or attend a birth in his capacity as a midwife. His rule for himself was that his response to a “bad” omen could be flexible in proportion as the purpose was urgent (*ajat kuat*).

In fact, in instances where the mission was urgent, but potentially unfavorable omens were not absent, Narak would simply not listen for them. They “passed him by,” so to speak — or was it he who passed them by?! No dilemma was faced by anyone who perceived a relatively “bad” sign on an excursion after the first mile. By that point — defined as where one could no longer hear the cock’s crow from home — one did not need to heed signs at all. In case of such an alert, one would not turn back, but merely take note of the warning and observe extra care during the rest of the journey. A good sign heard late would similarly boost the confidence with which, armed with the original good omen, one had set out. Basically, signs received late are no longer omens.

In the event of receiving a “bad” omen within the first mile from home, however, one should wait a while, then try again, but after three abortive attempts give up. If attendance at a cockfight was the intention, one might go but only as a spectator. One could cry off from a meeting scheduled to arrange a wedding, by sending word of the bad omen but proposing an alternative date. However, the rule for weddings themselves was really Draconian: no alternative date could be set for the journey of the bridegroom to the bride’s house; it could be attempted on the two succeeding days, but in face of triple failure the promise of marriage would have to be retracted (*mundur*), for the intention had not met the omen test (*andi kelapas angai*).³⁷ By contrast, in rice cultivation, it is

in 1994, playing at Timor’s house for the benefit of the more musical of the present two writers — his most privileged moment of ten years in Brunei. In principle three bars of the rhythm should be inserted at the climax of *temarok buayo* and *temarok lanut* (the crocodile and snake rituals, in which the head is severed and carried round the room).

37 It was feared that such an inauspicious wedding would lead quickly to divorce, or that one of the partners might fall ill or die, or that their livelihood would not be guaranteed.

essential to understand that — at the extreme end of the spectrum from the Kayan of historical repute³⁸ — the Brunei-Dusuns never faced the predicament arising from an imperative to abandon cultivation. They were saved from embarrassment by another “three day rule,” viz. if the omens were persistently negative for such a period, the farmers would simply move to another site.³⁹ Omens were also taken into account at the start of harvesting, but postponement would not be for more than three days. Another example of the application of “common sense” is seen in the attitude that if an omen noticed on a journey spoke of “trouble back home,” one might be well-advised to retrace one’s steps, not because the event was one that could be averted (in this case by one’s presence rather than through absence) but because if one returned, at least one would be there to deal with the problem!⁴⁰

Perhaps the salience of “common sense” complements the total absence of specialized augurs (which is consistent, in turn, with the lack of any ritual procedures around the taking of omens, and the absence of a religious nexus): every man (or woman) is entitled, and qualified, to observe and interpret the omens which impinge on his (or her) activity of the moment. We emphasize once again that the Dusun magician (*dokun*), albeit a specialist, is not a specialist for augury. A *belian* can seek omens, but not by virtue of her religious calling, so she is no different from any other woman; besides, *belian*, until at least a few decades ago, were like other women in never traveling much, so their interest in augury normally only came into play at the initial stage of rice planting.⁴¹

Turning now to the identity of the omen-bearers and how the Dusuns distinguish among the sounds (often a plurality of the *katab kabang* — ‘sounds from the mouth’), and how well they identify the various species when manifested visually, let us first remind ourselves that in the few cases where sighting is relevant, position or direction of flight in relation to the observer is what counts, but where the call constitutes the omen, again position in relation to the observer is usually decisive. If we take the woodpecker family first, the relevant names of (a) and (c) refer primarily to sounds, not species (of which there are several possibilities): (a) *uit-uit* (high, lilting piping; expressed as a verb, the bird is said to *nguit* or *ngaruit*); (b) *teguru* (‘the drumming bird’, the sound being *nggandang kayu* — not the heavy tapping known as *matok*, recognized as the

38 See Rousseau (1998:72), quoting a British writer in the late 1880s and a Dutch scholar of the 1890s, both of whom knew of a year or years in which the Kayan had cancelled rice cultivation altogether because of adverse omens.

39 Someone persisting with cultivation at his original, but inauspicious, site might certainly suffer personal misfortune, including injury or death, or loss of the rice crop to a pest.

40 An example of behavior-switching with a different motive, not so much tinged with “common sense,” is seen where a journey to visit someone who is sick is cancelled in view of a “bad” omen. Indeed it may be more prudent for the would-be visitor not to go, but not for fear of consequences for oneself: it is the sick person who may find his or her condition worsening if the visit takes place. On the other hand, the warning would be ignored if one were going as a curer (see the last sentence of the previous paragraph but one).

41 In referring in this study to “elderly experts” on augury, we mean intelligent men whose long experience made them leading repositories of augural knowledge — as of much else. We found their reminiscences indispensable, but this does not mean that anyone in the community was formerly “appointed” to interpret omens for other individuals or the community.

sound of a bird “at work,” i.e., searching for food, with no augural significance);⁴² (c) *kancirek* (staccato chatter or laugh — an alarm call). Not that the Dusuns lack a generic name for “woodpecker” or are unaware of the bird family from which the omens issue: *platok* (indeed a synonym for the *teguru* is *platok angai*); but the point is that for augural purposes, only the sounds are relevant, hence neither the woodpecker family nor a more precise species is specified when referring to these omens. As a matter of fact, the *uit-uit* sound tends in practice not to have the importance of that of the *teguru*, as it is more likely to be heard in the jungle, at a point beyond the usual maximum distance for taking advice on whether to proceed with an undertaking.⁴³

A midget woodpecker, no bigger than the European wren, is the rufous piculet, consulted as an omen-bird by every one of the six other ethnic groups of Borneo of whose augury we have been able to read. Sad to report, it has become rare in the lower-to-middle Tutong River area, and we have never seen it. Those who remember the *tik badan* can describe well its manner of creeping, mouse-like, up and around the trunk and boughs of trees near the house. For omen purposes two calls are noted: (a) a fairly drawn-out alarm call, “tek-tek-trrrrrr;” and (b) a slow “tiiiik.” For completeness one should mention also (c), a rapid “tik-tik-tik-tik...” from which the bird manifestly derives its name; but being its “normal call” (*katab gala*: ‘a mere sound’), this is not an omen.⁴⁴

An omen-bird consulted particularly for journeying is *sasat* (little spiderhunter). For the most part it is the pattern of its flight as you proceed that is indicative; and the specifications are quite complex. The observed movement of a little spiderhunter, not its call, is more usually the omen as the species is neither secretive nor likely to be confused with any other: the disproportionate length of its beak and correspondingly top-heavy appearance guarantee that. However, there is one special call that it makes, which is feared as a warning of severe danger: an angry (or alarmed), churring “saaaat,” which is contrasted with the better known, sibilant “si-siit” which gives the species its various names all over Borneo.⁴⁵

The other spiderhunter on the Dusun list is the thick-billed species, known from its call as *sancag*. As noted above, there is a verb, *mancag*, based on its name, which expresses the state, or action, of winning out after receiving encouragement from that

42 So this eliminates the great black woodpecker as an omen-bearer for any properly knowledgeable Dusun (cf. Kershaw 1998b:40–41, n. 32). The expression *katab kayu* (‘noise on a tree’) refers to any tapping or drumming.

43 For the most likely species, see R. Kershaw (1998b:40–41, 55). But see an important new commentary in Appendix 3, below. Two other kinds of small birds were mentioned, *tegiris* and *terukod*, which tap in rapid succession though very softly, and hence are also grouped as *teguru*. *Tegiris* is mentioned more often than *terukod*; we suspect the referent to be the brown-capped woodpecker. Carved wooden woodpeckers in bright colors are met in *temarok punggor* (‘hollow tree-trunk *temarok*’) in which a tree trunk is represented — the woodpeckers being used as decoration thereon; they have no function.

44 The idea that sounds heard when a bird is “going about its daily work” are not of augural interest was seen in the previous paragraph. In basic principle, all omens are conveyed by somewhat unusual or random manifestations of the bird’s calls or behavior.

45 Regrettably, R. Kershaw (1998b) is silent on the calls of the little spiderhunter, in spite of emphasizing sounds over species.

omen (or if your opponent is favored, he thwarts you under that auspice). One may even *memancag* when working the fields, being favored as in a “state of grace” but not exactly “winning” over anything — unless one is imagined to be “getting the better” of the agricultural task or the usual difficulties. As the thick-billed spiderhunter approaches close to houses, like the little spiderhunter does, it is recognized by appearance as well as sound. Generally, only the sound, “cag-cag-cag,” counts. However, there is one combination of sound with a direction of flight that is also significant (see Appendix 1 for detail).

Whereas the little spiderhunter is almost invariably a bird to be sighted, the tailorbird is exclusively for hearing. The bird is called in Dusun *jiriot*, a name which unmistakably evokes the commonest call of the red-headed species: a strident three-note chirrup, repeated several times, which lends itself to European representation as “pi-chi-poo.” However, painstaking interviewing has elicited the fact that this — or a two-note variant — is only one of four recognized omen sounds. The relatively languid three-note form is called in Dusun *layod*; a slightly faster, two-note “kucit, kucit, kucit,” is known as *karujou*, but they are not interpreted differently. Somewhat more attention is paid to no less than three separately named variants of the tailorbird’s alarm call: (a) a single, frightened, very rough and drawn-out “siaaaaak,” called in Dusun the *kancang* call (*kancang* means ‘high-pitched,’ but is only used for this call of this bird); (b) several utterances of this in close succession, each note being very slightly shorter than when uttered singly, and which are dubbed, as a set, *sarak* (meaning ‘in rapid succession’); (c) a burst of the same, each note even shorter, which Dusuns hear as “confident and determined” and name as the *siou* call (meaning ‘brave, daring’). Given such minute distinctions in Dusun observation, readers will not be surprised to learn that the interpretation of these calls tends towards complexity (see Appendix 1).

As eagles are not usually seen close at hand, and in the absence of an ornithological theology à la Iban, certainly no specific species is meant by the term *kaniu*. However, the two relevant calls which Dusuns take note of when an eagle is espied in the sky — the common call dubbed *ngalatio* and an angry cry named *ngalangas* — make us think of the crested serpent-eagle, which is reasonably common in the Dusuns’ area, and whose common call, at least, we know well and hear as a plaintive, whistling mew (“tiiu, tiiu”) almost identical with the call of European buzzards at fledging time. We are able to be so certain of our identification of this eagle of Borneo because the species is in fact bold enough to perch on bare trees near Dusun settlements, looking out for the chance to snatch a hen. While it is mainly the calls that are taken into account, a circling motion (wheeling in the sky) also used to count in the specific context of a wedding procession. Some elderly Dusuns have pointed out, however, that in the times when settlements were still surrounded by jungle, and journeys to another settlement bound to take the traveler through jungle, the flight of eagles would normally have been obscured from view by the tree canopy.⁴⁶

46 Now that a wedding party is most likely to proceed by car, a “bad” eagle omen is highly unlikely to be noticed, even though the view of the sky is more open these days. By the by, a divergent opinion on the augurally relevant raptor has been recorded by the Brunei Museum, but this is contested by R. Kershaw (1998b:40, n. 30). For one thing, the Brahminy kite is not much given to wheeling high in the sky. (In fact Bernard Sellato in a personal communication

We have already pointed out that experts did not count information about inexorable events as *angai* at all, since such information leaves no room for any adaptive response, properly speaking. (It is *tanda gala* — ‘only a sign’; or *ngara gala* — ‘talking [for information] only’.) A particular kind of event that could not be averted was the death foreshadowed by the sight of a male paradise flycatcher (*ncluyon*) “floating,” shroud-like, between the high jungle trees. It is not the death of the observer that is foretold — hence, in part, the fact that evasive action is not apposite — but the death of a relative, including a new relation by marriage, or someone in the communal house. Curiously, though, one should not approach the bird when it is seen sitting in a tree, lest it may fly off — as if its flight could in some way trigger the morbid event. There is also a rule about sightings on the way to the rice field, which does cast the bird much more as an omen-bearer. Very clearly in the non-omen category is the fruiting-call of the Indian cuckoo (*kuang kaput*) or the forecast of rain by the black and yellow broadbill (*pelopou*). A different kind of exception to the basic category of Dusun omen-birds is the (Javan) frogmouth (*bugang*), which is actually a cause of evil being attracted into its (and the human observer’s) proximity; by this token one can engage in a quasi-manipulation of the event — not by staying away, but by chasing away the bird itself by loud banging or gunfire! Nevertheless, be it noted that this bird is not conceptually a conveyor of *angai* either.

One other omen-bird of lesser significance is the scarlet-rumped trogon (*tempagak* or *mpagak*), the laughing bird, which is little met in the area; but if it is heard, naturally you hope to be assured from the location of the call that “the laugh is on your opponent,” in other words, that “you are laughing.” In the past it was said to be able to take possession of a *belian* and make her burst into fits of frightful laughter — but this is not an augural matter. A non-omen species which merits mentioning is the crimson sunbird (*kasuit apui*) because its appearance in a rice field is taken to forecast a good yield.⁴⁷ As for the Indian cuckoo (*kuang kaput*), just mentioned as heralding fruiting, there is a strongly causal element in its call, for if it failed to call in season, one had grounds for fearing that the trees would not yield fruit for two or three more seasons to come.⁴⁸ Yet another “announcing,” not “forewarning,” bird is the nightjar (*ndutur* or *sandutur*, also called *bugang tana* or ‘ground-*bugang*’ — being in Tutong District the large-tailed

has expressed a dissenting view on this, having been told by Kenyah that this bird — their *pelaki* — does circle above their heads. We would certainly wish to stress that the Brunei-Dusuns do not exclude the Brahminy kite from their concept of *kaniu*, which embraces at least six nameable species of raptor; among these the crested serpent-eagle — the local chicken thief — is clearly the one known as *kaniu kasimbit*, while *kanui alap-alap*, which takes chicks from underneath houses, could well be the crested goshawk. N.B. Brunei Dusuns only regard the larger raptors as omen-bearers.)

47 It seems to symbolize goodness, at least if heard in the morning. This bird was unfortunately omitted from R. Kershaw (1998b).

48 For the folktale about its mournful pleas (its *lakang*) for fruit, see E. M. Kershaw, ed. (1994:156–61) — with the deplorable misnaming of the species at the time of going to press with that collection, which has been registered, with an excuse, in R. Kershaw (1998b:55–56). (See also Appendix 3, below.) The Dusun name — and render — its “imploing” call as *numbui bua*, ‘to implore for fruit’; R. Kershaw (1998b:56) renders it “pee-pee-pee-poo.”

nightjar), whose call is taken as a sign that a heat wave or heat wave-related epidemic is about to abate.⁴⁹ Children were also told that its incessant “tuu-tuu-tuu...” through the night was the sound of death, so they had better be still! Meanwhile, the common coucal (*bubut*), which booms out its “buut, buut, buut” call at the approach of dusk — and for this reason could never have become an omen-bearer, since people do not leave their houses on any normal enterprise at that time of day — is reputed to project news from the location of call, both good and bad. Generally, the residents of a communal house would then “keep their ears open,” even “be on their guard,” knowing that the coucal could be absolutely relied upon for accuracy, whatever the news in question might turn out to be. However, the event would not be one that could be avoided as in response to an omen proper.⁵⁰ Then there was the crestless fireback (*telibou*), unmistakably identifiable from Pangan Runtop’s description of its chicken-like size and behavior, e.g., of the cock-bird in charge of a bevy of hens; his plumage; and the low vibrant call (“ntuuk” — like a person calling) which people found quite “angry” when uttered in the dark close to the steps of the house. They would chase it away if it came so close. Yet generally it was a jungle bird and of little concern, certainly not in connection with augury.⁵¹

We revert to the intriguing case of the *bugang* (frogmouth — also called *bugang sawat*, or ‘*bugang-up-above*’): not an augural bird, yet deeply feared and a byword for evil, even among the young folk of today who are otherwise unfamiliar with bird lore. Being believed to attract noxious forces into its vicinity, or to be itself possessed by malignant spirits, it should be chased away, using gunshot or magic. If one were to acknowledge its presence by name, the worst possible harm would be guaranteed — in the form, for instance, of being enmeshed in the bird’s magic and led from one’s path when out in the jungle. Its urine was also poisonous: any person on whom a drop fell would be petrified at once, and any sapling thus touched would wither instantly. Someone who is *kesabon* — spiritually vulnerable after being irreverent to animals — should be worried when hearing it. In point of fact, the advice not to acknowledge the bird was quoted for self-protection against a phenomenon which informants did not call *bugang* but *kuang kulit*. Its disembodied voice goes further in its versatility, being able to foretell that you or your close relatives, or even not-so-close relatives, are about to face hard times. This is announced by a loud “kuang-kuang” call (cognate, Dusuns suggest, with *aro kurang*, ‘to be short of’), several nights in succession close to the steps of your house. Just to add to the mystery, these sounds can emanate with slight differences from the mousedeer (*planok*), wild boar (*ramo*), cat (*anjang*), magpie-robin (*pelita*), and eagle (*kaniu*). Thus some Dusuns believe it most likely that *kuang kulit* is a malevolent spirit which is using an animal, or a bird, as a “mouthpiece,” or is appearing in such a form. It

49 Actually, like the previous species, it is said to be ‘pleading’ (*lakang*) — in its case, not for the fruit to come but for the heat to abate.

50 In former years, the good news could include an increase in the price of rubber.

51 Another name which seems to lead to the crestless fireback is *bulun*. Conceivably, such “confusions” arise because Dusuns give a different name to the female of a species, perhaps not realizing that birds of distinctly different appearance are of the same species. In this instance we have some reason to think that *telibou* is the female, *bulun* the male. Not only the crimson sunbird but also the nightjar and coucal, as well as the crestless fireback failed to find a place in R. Kershaw (1998b).

was noted that these sounds also issue from close to the ground; they portend imminent calamity or death within the community. Now clearly, real eagles, as one example, do not call from close to the ground, least of all at night, and the obvious possibility springs to our minds that what has been heard on occasion was a bird making an aquiline mewing sound. Pangan Runtop's assertion that the *kuang kulit* was capable of itself taking, or taking on, the form of an eagle, as a *kuang kulit kaniu*, and his claim that he had once killed one of these "hybrids" (it had eagle-like features — a hooked beak — but not an eagle's claws, he remembered) strengthens this suspicion. We are moreover strongly inclined to suspect that *kuang kulit* is none other than the frogmouth, but with several mythical traits additional to the attributes of the *bugang*.⁵²

The non-avian omen-bearers will now be listed, with indications as to their interpretation, such as there are. While no hepatoscopy was ever practiced, some animals have been reported to be omen-bearers, e.g., the long-tailed macaque (*kara*) in certain directions away from oneself,⁵³ and the crocodile (*buayo*) in a certain direction,⁵⁴ not to mention a certain threatening posture of that reptile.⁵⁵ Some informants, but not all, mentioned a particular movement of the mousedeer (*planok*) as significant.⁵⁶ The python (*lanut ndolon*) conveys augural signs,⁵⁷ as does the tarsier (*mplii*).⁵⁸ Red ants (*kilau podos*) have their own special way of communicating a message in the rice field, to the effect that the rice of the person stung would not grow well in that place. A cicada (*nderaii*) could make some people feel nervous in close proximity to it, as they thought it to be the toy of a demon called *Isi Nunok*, whose own arrival might be heralded by the

52 It is not surprising that deep unease is engendered by the *bugang*. All nocturnal calls close to the house (or even more, under the house) can excite it. We ourselves have found the frogmouth eerie enough even in daylight, not only because of the spooky quality of its wheezes and whistles, but because they are ventriloquial (or there may be two birds involved). This ghostly effect is magnified at night, when the calls might well seem to be coming from beneath the house. See also, at greater length, R. Kershaw (1998b:42, n. 35; 56). There are references to an even more magical manifestation of the *bugang* in some Sabah folktales: see E. M. Kershaw and R. Kershaw (2006:177).

53 Namely, snapping at you (*bagogol*) on your right is inauspicious, on your left auspicious.

54 If met, or seen following your boat, on your right. (This is auspicious.)

55 Viz., pointing its open jaws at you: if you are on your way to a fight, this should be taken as a warning that your opponent will "devour" you. As a peddler, or just paddling along, one should take a threatening posture by a crocodile as a warning of dangers approaching.

56 If a mousedeer were seen running across the area slashed for rice-sowing, it was inauspicious enough to make one move to another site — for some informants but not all. If one was looking for wood and tree bark for a house, and a mousedeer cut across ahead of one, the search should be abandoned for the day.

57 A python seen lying in the rice field with its head high above the ground indicates the height to which the rice stems will grow. Correspondingly, if its head is resting on the ground, this means that the ears of the rice will be empty of grain and the stems pushed over by the wind.

58 If seen running out of an area to be sown, this was regarded as a sign of either a bad harvest to come, or of problems at home, either now or at a later date (being thus trouble-ridden, one is said to be in a state of *lilii*, i.e., 'tarsiered,' as it were — from the Dusun name of the animal).

insect.⁵⁹ The gecko (*sosok*) is augural in a small way.⁶⁰

Apart from the animal kingdom, warning signs were read for instance into incidents of a tree trunk falling (*punggor maba*), or a branch, with no obvious “motivation”: on the left it meant a serious threat for those you were about to visit, on the right for yourself or those left behind at home. Thunder claps (*guntor*) were significant in certain situations: they would deter you from collecting rice for seed the next year; or if heard close to harvest time, they reminded the Dusuns of *katab barud ramo* (‘the sound of grubbing pigs’) and hence were a warning that wild boar might well arrive to eat your rice. Incomplete rainbows too (*bungkang*), at certain times, had significance, especially as foretellers of death from wounding by an iron implement.⁶¹ Also up in the sky, the rice-sowing zodiac (*bintian pyamo*) traditionally played a major part in determining the correct organization of the first part of the cycle of riziculture; but in this function, these are not omens.⁶² *Ndaki*, the frothy natural soap of olden times, was used for prediction of the outcome of cockfights, by bathing the fighting birds in the foam and observing how long it took to dissipate. At the frivolous end of the spectrum, a newly married couple are “tested” as to their prospects of good fortune and happiness when they return, three days after the wedding, to the groom’s house for a short visit to his parents. This is in the context of the foot-washing ceremony (*ngagu atis*), but the “omens” are sought in a sireh leaf which the bridegroom has to tear behind his back, whereby if a jagged half were to emerge in his left hand, the bride will be unreliable, but if in his right hand, he is the unreliable partner; and also by sharing a betel quid, to see whose spittle, when expectorated into a plate, is red and portends robust health. In practice, the risk of an unfavorable outcome is eliminated by using a young sireh leaf, which will always tear neatly down the rib, and a young betel nut, which will absolutely reliably cause red saliva. Not totally different in its basic conception is the practice, in the course of funeral ceremonies, of seeking a prediction of the length of one’s life from the mass of burnt residue of the death torch, which one has trimmed off by the end of each day (so that the torch may continue to burn) and re-examines the following morning. One’s longevity would be raised in direct proportion to any lessening of the mass of the burnt matter during the night: i.e., the less left, the longer the life — or so the attendant ghosts were

59 People would push it away, if possible before it made a noise. Its sound was taken as an intimation of something unpleasant, but nothing more precise than that. Another insect given mild significance is the *klabang* (butterfly), which if it flies past the verandah or into the house announces an imminent visit.

60 If it spoke just as you were getting up to leave the house for a journey, you sat down again—but only until the call had finished. However, if you were of very nervous disposition, you might well abandon a journey if three calls were heard in succession. Note also the special case of the very rare white gecko; if and when a specimen is seen climbing up into a house, it must be chased off or killed if possible, because it is believed to be the food of thunder, which will follow its prey and create an inauspicious bang over one’s house (see following paragraph).

61 The time in question was in the early hours, when the rainbow would often be seen as double. The implement could be an axe, and invariably these wounds were self-inflicted, by accident.

62 See R. Kershaw (1998b:44–50) for the four Dusun constellations in question. An omen function is present, at best, where action is postponed for a day because a star is flickering. This complex subject E.M.K. hopes to discuss in a future article.

said to be trying to convey through this mysterious happening.⁶³

A very special kind of “bad” omen, which acts like a permanent stain of bad luck or irredeemable curse — in effect, as the cause of more misfortune to come, not the mere predictor thereof — comes into being where an awful catastrophe occurs, such as the death of the owner of a field in the field itself, which makes it unsafe to use forever by that family.

Needless to say, dreams are taken very seriously too. However, except as used to confirm previous predictions, dreams normally only come into prominence where no other augury is available. They never render a previous omen inapplicable. The different types of experience encountered in dreams are related to a postulated journey of the soul while its master or mistress is asleep. The extensive lore of dreams is recorded in Appendix 1, but let us note in this section the absolute imperative of heeding any dream which features oneself dying, being killed, or suffering an accident. It was self-evident to the community of Bukit Udal that if the university graduate and teacher, Madam Musing, had heeded the dream in which he saw himself being killed in his own car when hit by another at high speed, he would have arranged an exorcism, thereby escaping the collision in January 1986, more or less as foretold, which resulted in his being roasted alive inside his vehicle because not only did it catch fire but its self-locking mechanism was activated by the impact. The need for some preventive measure was emphasized in retrospect by Narak Buntak, who pointed out that the victim’s parents were already tempting fate by calling him “Madam” (evoking the very similar *madan*, ‘to spin, be giddy’). Madam had added to the risk by using a number plate which had been involved in a previous accident. This number plate had been duly exorcized, but in combination with a name like his, and such a dream, not even a high degree of innate luck would be equal to the odds.

Once again, in this incident and its interpretation (like the case of catastrophes which become, in themselves, omens of further misfortune), we seem to be meeting something akin to a “stain” of predestined tragedy. At least the inherent causality of the predictive signs can only be neutralized by strong counter-measures informed by acute awareness of danger. The standard form of exorcism is the *bagabas* ritual, in which a household gathers to witness, in the framework of a special, short *temarok* held at the end of a month, a black cockerel or hen being borne around the room and passed in a circular motion over the head of the person (or heads of all those persons) to be protected. Thereafter, to have the exorcism confirmed, the bird is thrown onto the floor, pointing towards the east, which is the auspicious direction for the bird to take. (It is appropriate to note, here, that the provision of protection against predicted bad fortune can also be provided by a *belian* within the *temarok* itself.) Next morning a nominal blood-letting is performed from the bird’s toe or under its wing.⁶⁴

63 Today oil lamps have superseded the *salong*. Another “unexplained event” which bodes well is the reliably increased volume of rice poured back into the sacks on the morning after every “crocodile *temarok*”! See E. M. Kershaw (2000:163).

64 If the chicken in question is a cockerel, he can later be used in cockfights, as he is regarded as likely to win, be fierce, not get injured, etc. The *belian* who “owns” the said cockerel as *manok belian* (‘chicken of the *belian*’) must be informed of the intention to use him as a fighting-bird. Neither a cockerel nor a hen used in this ritual can be slaughtered and eaten. For a more detailed

The *bagabas* ritual brings us to the tricky question of manipulation of omens. While it is true to state, as a basic rule, that Dusun omens are not held to be causal, and that therefore the question of trying to manipulate them for a favorable result is superfluous, on the occasion of a *bagabas* the members of the household will form a passage blocked at the western end, so that the chicken has no choice but to scurry towards the east. Or if it does run — or fly up — towards the west, the procedure is repeated. There are a few other examples of manipulation that we could cite. The presumed effectiveness of exorcizing the force of (or behind) a death-to-come, as predicted by a dream and made more likely by other inauspicious indications, has just been illustrated by reference to the death of Madam Musing. By way of a much milder example: on rare occasions, usually when an omen was sought as to the likely recovery of a person from illness, a little manipulation might be practiced. And where a cockfight had been promised in return for a patient's recovery, the family of the patient would only commit their very best bird, and that against an inferior specimen, in the interests of ensuring victory, since victory was a portent of recovery being permanent. Another example relates to the practice, after a burial, of seeking an indication as to whether any further deaths were to be expected in the same household. The omen was to be sought by filling a bamboo cylinder with water, hanging it from the ceiling, then attempting to cleave it in two with a *parang* (slashing knife, machete). If it could not be cleft with one stroke, the omen was "bad." To avoid this very outcome, the family would choose a type of bamboo which was unlikely to resist the blow.

We have remarked above that all omens were accurate — they 'never lied' (*andi nggobou*) — and thus were always taken seriously in the past. Yet at the same time, paradoxically, the essentially pragmatic Dusuns did not see an auspicious omen as an absolute guarantor of success. Technically, an excellent omen merely indicated that there were no extrinsic forces working against you, and to that extent your efforts had an excellent chance of being rewarded. The same rule could be applied, inversely, to the "bad" ones: one might always be able to avoid the worst by innate luck or extra vigilance (a "bad" omen was not equivalent to a curse). Certainly, a clear "don't," sometimes seen as the same as a prohibition or taboo (*pantang*), was not the norm. If and when a "good" omen was imperative in order to give reassurance after some evident bad luck — bad luck which one had attempted to override by some other means, such as medicine for an illness, but where the ultimate outcome was still uncertain — one could even give a little helping hand to augury, e.g., in the case of engineering a favorable outcome of a cockfight staged in gratitude for this — as yet provisional — cure.

Nevertheless, in general, Dusuns did not see omens as having power to influence the outcome of any event or course of action. Consistently, therefore, as we have argued, they did not usually attempt to manipulate the indications given by omens, in the way recorded in varying manifestations from the Iban, Kayan, Kenyah, and Berawan. Nor did they grant the omens any special status, or display the affection or awe due to divinity, as seen in the attitudes associated with Iban augury (side by side with the existence of some "manipulation" in the latter case). At all events — and we may cite a broadly apposite (if subtly ambivalent) formulation referring to the Berawan and Iban cases simultaneously

— “Omens are never accidental and it is for men to plumb their meaning correctly. Omen creatures always seek to help men; when they give bad omens they only warn of danger, they do not cause it” (Metcalf 1976:110). Of course, as with Kayan phenomena, if they are not observed, omens are without effect: that is, in a sense they only become omens by virtue of connecting with a human being; the omen-bearers, as free agents, are not commanded to make any such connection (Rousseau 1998:74). Dusun augury constituted a framework of constraints, almost a “discipline”; it had characteristics of a system of social control inasmuch as elders taught the rules to their successors and thereby inculcated a certain fear of unknown forces. But at the same time, the system provided a framework of guidelines for navigating the perils of life, precisely so that life should not be totally beset by anxiety. The friendly “tipsters” of this study are not sent by benevolent divinities, and least of all are they themselves divinities. Yet by this very token Dusuns have not been burdened by the extra, even greater fear of a sadistically domineering god or goddess intent on punishing any infringement of taboos. In short, the Dusuns have had nothing equivalent to the Kayans’ fundamental, pre-Bungan taboo on ignoring an unfavorable omen, imposed by a divine authority under its principle of “being cruel to be kind.”

Our discussion of the Brunei-Dusuns has by now lapsed more generally into the past tense. Most of the augury described in this section was described by elderly experts to one of the authors. This article is essentially an exercise in reconstruction of an art which had almost ceased to be practiced by the later years of the twentieth century. Among the more destructive aspects of modernization as regards the practice of augury, we would identify, much more than any decline in belief in the possibility or efficacy of these signs from the animal kingdom, the impact of transportation by car and the introduction of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. In the case of cars, either journeys have become much less hazardous (the danger of road accidents notwithstanding!), or the calls of omen-birds are no longer heard above the noise of the engine. Today, as swidden agriculture has ceased, great jungle trees are no longer felled — at most only trees in secondary jungle, and that by chainsaw, not axe; this has removed one potent source of mortality. As regards fertilizers and pesticides, all the precautions are taken in advance of any malign event — by way of insurance, as it were, not because any particular misfortune is anticipated, or indeed needs to be, in view of the precautions themselves.

The elderly experts did not say that omens had disappeared from the environment, nor even (unlike *derato*) that they had become “less powerful”: only that the need to listen for them had become progressively redundant, in a world where human circumstances and needs have been transformed, often beyond recognition. One could apply the dictum of Metcalf (1976:110), “The process of interpretation ... is situational in nature,” just as much to a Dusun world which has lost its need for augury as to the specific events and situations to which it was still, just about, relevant thirty-odd years ago. Conceivably, Brunei-Dusun augury could have been a little more resilient if it had had a “theological” dimension, with divine messengers, instead of independent “tipsters” not conceived of as serving any group in particular. Yet is it not a fact that all indigenous groups of rural Borneo are facing a crisis, in which culture as a whole has been losing much of its relevance as a protective resource, even at the diffuse but vital level of identity-marking

and the survival of distinct ethnic groups? The traditional cultures of rural society in general, let alone particular practices such as augury, are especially prone to erode as former “tribes” become involved in the urban economy or government employment: or, as one might put it with augury very much in mind, withdraw from contact with nature and suffer the corollary condition of no longer receiving privileged communication from the natural world.⁶⁵

APPENDIX 1

How to Read Brunei-Dusun Bird Omens and Dream Omens

The various bird species of relevance have been listed, and their calls described, in Section 3, above. It was noted that direction of flight is significant in some cases; even a mere appearance in the air may count. But more usually, calling (*katab kabang*, ‘sound from the mouth’) is the point of reference, with the addition of drumming for the woodpeckers (referred to as *katab kayu*, ‘sound on a tree’ — a term which also includes the non-augural *matok*, ‘tapping’). As we shall see, the position of a heard bird in relation to the listener is normally significant. But one very dynamic dimension which must be clarified at once is that certain combinations of bird calls, from two birds of the same species or of different species, have significance. This “doubling” or “overlapping” is called *ranggong*. If a second omen sound is heard on the opposite side from the first (and before the first has finished), the second call is the decisive one if the bird is of the same importance as the first, or more important, in the augural hierarchy. If the second call is on the right, it is almost always a good sign; if on the left, usually bad. But the “status” of the respective birds counts a great deal: the preferred sequence is *jiriot* (a minor omen, *angai diok*) overlapped by *teguru* (a major omen, *angai gayo*). In olden times the process of overlapping, where the second omen was regarded as eclipsing the first, was called *manga* (probably cognate with the modern word *mangala*, ‘to defeat’). In the case of drumming, no other bird is qualified to eclipse it; but a second *teguru* on the right after one on the left promises success and gains in cockfights, and spoils in a raid or hunt, while conversely if the second is heard from the left, it is “bad news” all round.

The rule for *teguru* heard singly is that from the right it is good for all endeavors (“we laugh at our opponents”). On the left, it is bad for everything: journeys would be better canceled; one might be about to fall ill; one may fall prey to an enemy, or lose in a cockfight. In the possibly somewhat hypothetical activity of headhunting, the Dusuns

65 Some of the difficulties of conceptualization and comprehension of traditional behavior and belief, which native researchers experience after being long removed from rural society, or the low valuation which they place on accurate research, are also in their way symptomatic of the inroads of urbanization and one of its concomitants, “career pressures.” By way of sequel to note 35, it is notable that none of the challenging assertions mentioned there is elaborated upon in a more substantial piece of work (Bantong 1993). The latter study not only neglects ethnic history but, almost entirely, the subject of augury too — apart from a list of omen-birds which makes good the earlier omission of the all-important medium-sized woodpeckers, as noted in R. Kershaw (1998b:42). (The importance of woodpeckers was indicated above, but will be expounded in detail in Appendix 1.) As for the theme of “privileged communication,” now redundant, another manifestation of it may be explored in animal folktales (E. M. Kershaw and R. Kershaw 2006).

of yore would fear that an expedition was fated to ‘pierce our eyes’ (*melalang mato*), a synonym for bad luck. No doubt omens were listened to with more than the usual attention at the start of such expeditions, with the result that augury itself contributed to their rarity in practice!

The little spiderhunter (*sasat*) comes into its own chiefly for journeying, being used if it flies past or around you close to your head, but not high above your head. Ahead of you passing from left to right, it is seen as “meeting you on your right” — a good sign, as it seems to take you on your journey, with a promise of an abundant harvest, a good catch of fish, spoils in hunting, or success in a cockfight (at least an outcome which leaves your own bird uninjured). On the contrary, if *sasat* flies in front of you from right to left, it is “meeting you on your left,” which signifies that it wants to take you home, because no success awaits you in any enterprise. You might even become the focus of someone with *ilmu* (magical power — in this case, malignant magic). The failure of a journey might include inability to help someone recover who is ill. As for a bird flying past you from behind, its intention clearly is to spur you on to your destination: it will not be long before your snare or traps are filled; you rice will do well. In the opposite direction, i.e., from the front towards you and onwards to the rear — or from behind, overtaking you but then turning back — it wishes you to know that there is no point in pursuing your intentions: you’ll tire yourself with no gain (your snare may snap or fish-trap break open — at least you must hurry to retrieve them); or there may even be danger for the folk back home (sickness; marauders?), who will lack your necessary succor if your absence is extended. Another bad sign is if the bird circles you (*ngaliling*), i.e., ‘puts you in an enclosure’ (*ngalubong*): this means that if you go a long way you are unlikely to return, perhaps being killed in an ambush or dying from sickness, certainly being unable to escape if meeting an enemy. However, an even more complex maneuver, comprising flight from right to left followed by the same bird then flying back from left to right, is a good omen because it indicates that the bird is “meeting you on your right, on its second pass”. On the other hand, left to right, followed by right to left, is “meeting you on your left on its second pass,” which is bad. Switching direction, in this and other contexts, is called in Dusun *sirong*.

Having discussed the various possible flight paths, we have to conclude the lore for *sasat* by recording one sound which is significant: this is the sharp, single note, “sat,” uttered without apparent provocation, e.g., with no other sound elsewhere which might have alarmed the bird and which you should have heard (but as you did not, very possibly indicates the presence of a bad spirit close by, which only the bird is aware of). Such a call, an *angai madan* (‘omen which puts you in a spin, makes you faint’), spells a high degree of danger for the hearer.

The rules for the ubiquitous *jiriot* (tailorbird) omens are complex and detailed in a very high degree. As was stated in Section 3, above, *kancang*, *sarak* and *siou* are variants of the same strident call, whereas *layod* is a much gentler and more relaxed utterance. The basic “personality” of each call is described respectively as follows: *kancang*, the single alarm note, “saaaaak,” long and high-pitched, is perceived as an *angai madan*, really alarming (*mbo gala aro musu*: ‘wherever you go there is an enemy’); *sarak* is a burst of “siaaak, siaaak, siaaak...” sounds, in quick succession (the word means exactly that), and is pretty bad, because it reminded people in times gone by of the sharp

blow severing the suspended bamboo tube (*pigison bulu*) after a burial; the shorter notes of *siou*, by contrast, being between *sarak* and *layod* in forcefulness (*kediok katab do, andi ni sarak, andi ni lambut*) are heard as confident, determined, indeed daring ('daring' being the basic meaning of the word), but whether you yourself are the daring one, or your enemy, depends on position, as we shall see; and lastly, *layod*, the familiar "kucit, kucit," is heard as relaxed and cheerful, a soothing, soft call (*katab lambut*) with on the whole pleasant connotations, though this could benefit your opponent. We will discuss the precise indications for *sarak*, *siou* and *layod*, and from there move on to the rules of interpretation for overlapping (*ranggong*) calls and a somewhat different phenomenon called *bila bulu* ('splitting the bamboo').

The basic rule on *sarak* is that it is negative from either side, i.e., both left and right. Whenever you hear it, you will regret your undertaking if you persist with it, for you might well trip on a tree stump, or slip up, and be injured; or you could even be killed, or at any rate fall ill and not return from a journey. A rice crop, if affected by a pest, could get it in a severe form. Generally, if one hears the call while working in the field or in the jungle, it is no longer a proper omen, but reminds us to be on our guard and not careless, even if there was a favorable omen at the outset. More specifically, if on your way to somewhere (within the first mile) you hear the sound from the front, it indicates "danger ahead" (awaiting you); if it is heard from close behind you, the folk left behind are either in danger owing to your absence, or one of them is about to fall ill and die (so the others need you). On the other hand, however, and this may seem totally paradoxical to a non-Dusun, the very sharpness of the call can mean that on that day you are going to prove more hot-tempered than you usually are, and therefore can accept a fight with confidence, in fact any challenging activity such as hunting, fishing, camphor-seeking, or just earning money!

There is even more ambivalence in *siou* omens. Although in principle the left is not good — as when the portended aggressiveness or daring is found in your opponent, or in his fighting-cock when pitted against yours, or in the wild boar which attacks your rice; or where the sickness of a friend you are visiting with a cure stands to resist your ministrations — if the sound refers to your rice crop, it could well mean that the rice itself has the capacity to surge ahead, yet on the other hand this could be counteracted when the quality of daring is "raging furiously" (rampant) in an attacking pest. The guarantee for an excellent rice crop is to hear *siou* on the right, at least if there is good rainfall; the crop will prevail even against a pest, though magical formulas may need to be mobilized. *Siou* on the right is also a portent of success in hunting, cards, and cockfights. As for a call heard at some distance to the rear (*likud*), this is an all-clear.

The soothing *layod* is certainly not seen as a bad omen, although on the left it favors your opponent: for instance, if you lose in a cockfight, your opponent will easily take your money because you have lost the heart to challenge him or stand up to him. As for your rice crop, it too will succumb, because of lacking the fighting spirit. Buffaloes will be dear to buy (*sanokot* — 'sticking' [to its present owner]). But from the right, needless to say, *layod* is especially positive: in fact, it is the very best omen for "everything connected with ourselves" — it is "our omen." One should add that there is a faster version of the *layod* that Dusuns recognize; they call it *karujou*. But it is equivalent and equal to *layod* in every respect.

Greater complexity awaits us, naturally, in the matter of “overlapping.” The basic rule of *ranggong*, as has been explained, is that the second omen heard overrides the first, with the relative augural status of the two birds having significance in the bargain as well. In the case of the ubiquitous tailorbirds, it can often happen that two birds of this species call in quick succession, sometimes using different calls from their repertoire. Here there is a supplementary rule: that the call from the right speaks of you, the one from the left speaks of your opponent. So if *sarak* from the right declares that you are hot-tempered on that day, a *siou* from the left counters it by saying that your opponent is daring — and the more likely to succeed. Alternatively, if you are attributed with daring by a right-side *siou*, and then hear another *siou* from the left, you and your opponent are predicted to be of equal size; it is then purely the relative weakness of either that will determine the outcome. But supposing that *layod* sounds on the right, followed by *siou* on the left: in such a case, you are predicted to be slow, and (although *siou* is not seen basically as a harbinger of misfortune) you may be unable to resist a foe in the shape of a chronic sickness or aggressive fighter or resilient prey. You will tire yourself out in pursuit of a spoil, because the hunted wild boar is too ferocious; or your rival will be more than a match for you in a cockfight or settlement of a dispute. This *ranggong* is potentially fine when your reassuring *layod* refers to rice growing, for the *siou* could well mean that the rice will have the requisite staying power to overcome any problems; only if the pugnacious quality attaches to a powerful pest which successfully attacks the rice, is the combination unwholesome. If you get the *siou* from the right, in connection with, say, rice cultivation, and *layod* is then heard on the left, this is a splendid combination, for not only are you yourself dynamic in the task, but a fine rice crop is assured independently. The combination of *sarak* on the right with *layod* on the left, in the context of a straightforward rivalry, means you will be appropriately hot-tempered, while your adversary will be slow, enabling you to win; it is also good for traveling some distance, because you are strong and fearless. Again with rice cultivation, the odds could be stacked doubly in your favor, for you will be hot-tempered in tackling any rice pest, should a pest, under the simultaneously inauspicious *sarak* from the right, not be sufficiently counteracted by the pro-rice *layod* on the left. We note that in the context of rice, the “adversary” in the combination is not the rice itself but the sickness afflicting the rice, though it is the rice that can be cured (*malap ruon*). Lastly, *sarak* from the right followed by the same from the left means *jati andi taan*, ‘we won’t last’ (not that your rival is in a much better position: *inan o andi moncoi*, ‘the other guy is not O.K.’).

Types of double tailorbird *ranggong* where left comes before right follow more or less a diametrically opposite pattern of rules, to the extent that your opponent — still under the auspices of the left-side sign — has to be countered from the right by a sign which foreshadows your own potential, whatever it may be, in the encounter to come. *Sarak* from the left suggests that your opponent is hot-tempered; nevertheless, *layod* from the right overrides this easily, so you can be assured of getting your way. A similarly favorable combination is *siou* from the left, indicating a dynamic opposite number, but followed by *layod* from the right, which gives you assurance of coming out best in the dispute or deal. This combination is especially liked by rice growers, since the rice is forecast to be “dynamic,” while the farmer himself is assured of well-being: the right side entirely complements the left, it is not a contest of opposites. As for *sarak* on

both sides, here we meet another version of complementarity: both your opponent and yourself will be hot-tempered in a fight; although the fight alone may decide the winner of the two, given the even odds, by no means should one be deterred from engaging with the foe. However, for other pursuits, from rice growing to travel, where *sarak* is taken in its ominous sense, the call from the right complements the call from the left by reinforcing it and making the outlook far worse, i.e., bad is added to bad (*tamba lagi raat*). Obviously, if the left side predicts a sluggish performance by the foe, in the form of a *layod*, but from the right there is an indication from a *siou* that you yourself will be dynamic, the prospects are very positive. It is roughly the same with a left-side *layod* and a right-side *sarak*: you yourself will be hot-tempered and able to overcome a sleepy antagonist; nor will you be prone to illness. This is a good combination for hunting, cockfighting and any other contest. On the other hand, should a rice pest suddenly afflict your rice — possibly without warning, as a left-side *layod* should be a good indication for the rice, though as was pointed out above, *layod* can well infer that the crop is somewhat less than resilient — your own temperament under the sign of *sarak* could be altogether too fiery to deal with the menace (*kasiou kou nguru* — ‘you are [too] impatient to heal [it]’). Thus it is clear that the sign which foretells your own performance has to be read in the context to which it applies: although signs from the right are said to “favor” oneself, the quality to which they refer may not be “functional” to one’s own interest in every context. Lastly, in connection with *ranggong* involving tailorbirds, two combinations with the little spiderhunter have been pointed out to us: (a) *layod* on either side, followed by a *sasat* seen meeting you on your right (flying from left to right) is a very good omen; (b) *sarak* on either side, followed by a *sasat* meeting you on your left (flying from right to left) is bad in the same measure.

A special kind of omen-from-two-sides is one comprising any sound from one side, “echoed” after a pause by an identical call from the other side. The exact repetition of one call, with a pause between, is the distinguishing mark. Because it has the quality of an echo, it is called *bila bulu* (literally, ‘splitting the bamboo’). The two sounds must be of precisely equal length, to count for this category. Moreover, if a third call is heard, on the same side as the first, it must again be balanced by an “echo” on the other side. When a *layod* is involved (as often it is), a call from the left echoed from the right is held to forecast a long and happy life. Right side echoed from the left, however, is not deemed to be so positive: e.g., in a contest you may lack the energy to stand up to your opponent; he might take your money from you easily in a cockfight. Still, this is otherwise a good omen.

A feature of woodpecker omens that is immediately striking is that when the piping call, *uit-uit*, is heard in a relevant place (i.e., not in the jungle, outside the range for normal relevance — though that is where its voice, unlike drumming, is more likely to be heard) a call from the left is regarded as “good,” a call from the right as “bad.” This reverses the more normal preference for omens from the right. Thus, when a woodpecker *nguit* from the left, you are assured that, in some contest, *ipon rumo ncisi, ijun nggirak kito* (‘the teeth of your opponent will be bared, you will laugh at the sight’); if from the right, *ipon diri ncisi* (‘your teeth will bared [in anger]’), or, as it can be expressed, *rumo nguit ikou* (‘your opponent does an *uit* on you’), in getting the better of you in a cockfight. These omens are used for all activities and undertakings. In the case of rice growing, a

call from the right can mean that your crop might succumb — the verb is *nguit* (derived from *uit*) — to a pest. However, if this does occur, there is consolation in a later call from the left, which promises that your rice should pull through: *andi pa raat penyakit o* ('that sickness will not be a disaster'). A very bad omen is the chattering alarm call, "cek-cek-cek-ceeek" (the *kancirek*, also dubbed *katab mulud*, literally 'sound in flight'), always uttered in flight as the bird flies away. In the past, when it was sometimes heard at the foot of the stairs, no one would dare to venture out for anything on that day. That sound heard from either left or right is bad. Interestingly, the verb used here identifies an *uit-uit* as the source of the trouble, even though the call heard is *kancirek*, as: *ikou suat uit* ('you suffer an *uit*') or *rumo nguit dijun* ('your adversary does an *uit* on you'). As for the drumming of woodpeckers — the omen of the *teguru* — there is an extremely "bad" manifestation, where it is heard on the left and then followed by *uit-uit* on the right. But in general, any type of call would be ignored in favor of drumming, which is attributed with heavier augural weight.

The miniscule woodpecker called by the Dusuns *tik badan* (a name which identifies the species, the rufous piculet, as specifically as the sound it makes, since the bird is usually easy enough to see when calling) is "consulted" mainly in advance of a cockfight or dispute, but not for farming. This preference sets the omen somewhat apart from the majority whose application is not narrowly defined. There are three types of sound: (a) an alarm call of one long burst, "tek-tek-trrrrrr," labeled the *terkajut* ('frightened') call; this is the call most commonly used for augural purposes; when heard on the left, your opponent, or his fighting-cock, will be weak (*madan*); if from the right, you yourself will be *madan* in any situation (your fighting-cock will be in that state too: how could he not be if you yourself are?), and any news you receive will be disturbing. As with the *uit-uit* woodpeckers, we see that again left is "good," right "bad." (b) The slow "tek-tek-traaaa" call, which spells no danger from whatever side it is heard. (c) A rapid succession of staccato sounds, "tek-tek-tek-tek....," which is recognized as the bird's normal call — 'merely a noise' (*katab gala*) — and as such is normally ignored.

The "cag-cag-cag" call of *sancag* (thick-billed spiderhunter) is also interpreted in the conventional way as far as preference for the right-hand side is concerned. From the left, *rumo mancag diri* ('your opponent will better you [with a *sancag*]') — though this only basically means that you yourself are unable to *mamancag* ('prevail'), i.e., your efforts are in vain, there is no real danger awaiting you, only a lack of reward for labor; if you fall ill, you will have little resistance. Conversely, from the right, the omen means that you are favored or will prevail (*memancag*) in any enterprise of the moment. However, it must be noted that a call from the left followed by the experience of the same bird flying at you, portends not just lack of success but a positive danger; even worse is a call from a distance, followed by the bird making a direct approach on the wing, which Dusun augural lore sees as an 'attack' (*nyarang*).

The eagle (*kaniu*) has two types of call: the *ngalateo* (the common, mewing call); and the *ngalangas* (an angry sound, "aaaak"). Eagle omens are to be used mainly for journeys over a distance, or to a cockfight. *Ngalateo* from the left is inauspicious: you are unlikely to return from the journey; or your opponent will win in the contest. For normal, low-risk activities, the call is perceived as a warning to take care but is not of great value, being the eagle's habitual call. Likely defeat in a contest is expressed as

diri suat alap ('you are likely to get "eagled"' – *alap-alap* being the name for one of the family). Heard from the right, this call is auspicious for any type of journey and the activity at the end of it. By contrast, the *ngalangas* sound is "bad" on either side; but specifically, if the call is heard from the left, your hosts at the end of a journey are likely to suffer (more likely than you: note, here, the parallel with the *jiriot* rule that left can refer to 'the other' more than, necessarily, your own misfortune); but if from the right, you yourself will suffer from ill health on, or as a result of, the journey. In the past, people would definitely cancel a journey upon hearing *ngalangas*. The other type of indication from eagles is a circling flight, said to *ngilung diri* ('enclose you [protectively]') in some circumstances, not least when a wedding party is accompanying the bridegroom to the bride's house, since the circle described in the sky is *masam luang kilong* ('like the cavern of the [bridal] bedstead [within the curtains and mosquito-net]'). However, a circling flight may just as easily be read as inauspicious, in terms of excessive rainfall or some other misfortune on the way: the coming event is one which will *ngalubong jati* (literally: 'bury us'), or it comprises something that will imminently *ngalibong diri* ('make you dizzy').

The scarlet-rumped trogon (the 'laugher,' known to Dusuns as *tempagak*) is little seen or heard in the Bukit Udal/Ukong area, but the folk there had a rule for it if ever it was heard close to a settlement. As its call (*katab ragak*) so much reminded people of human laughter (*katab irak*), from the left it was deemed to mean that *rakon rumo* or *rumo nggirak di-diri* ('the opponent is laughing'; '[your] opponent laughs at you'). Note, as in other examples that the call from that side does not directly mean misfortune for yourself, but by referring to your opponent, in a sense favorable to him, it logically signifies that you will not do well. From the right, however, the laughter is ours: *jati nggirak di-rumo* ('we laugh at the opponent' — not at all a case of "the laugh is on us!"); so we may confidently undertake a journey, work in the fields, hunt and fish, or take our fighting-bird to a cockfight. There is also a *ranggong* rule for this bird call: if heard from the left followed by right, it is favorable to your purpose.

Regarding the paradise flycatcher, which is not technically an omen-bird, we cannot add much to what was briefly stated in Section 3 of the main text. The rule about sightings on the way to the rice field, which does cast the bird much more as an omen-bearer, is that if it flies past you, at low level, you must return home for the day. Pangan Runtop of Bukit Udal described this omen as "truly evil."

If a bird of any species is killed by crashing accidentally into a tree-trunk or part of a house (whether its posts or superstructure), it automatically becomes a sign of looming misfortune: it is bad for you (if you see it), or could mean that someone in the house may meet the same fate (if his house is the scene of the accident). The event is called *lagawou katapi tiap kayu* ('a bird flying into any kind of wood'). It is not an *angai* (an omen which foretells an event which can be avoided), but a sign of something ineluctable. The malign event to which one is due to fall victim will very likely be the work of a noxious spirit in the vicinity. It is precisely the presence of this spirit, or whatever, that has brought down the bird, either directly or by distracting it so that it could not avoid the looming hazard. This pattern of cause and effect is analogous to the workings of a frogmouth presence in the vicinity of humans: it is not itself an evil force but attracts evil forces which will do you harm, though not without warning you of the

danger in advance — also by its presence!

Other birds which are subject to interpretation by Dusuns but not technically omen-bearers, are the crimson sunbird, Javan frogmouth, Indian cuckoo, large-tailed nightjar, common coucal, black and yellow broadbill, and crestless fireback. Our account of the significance attached to their sounds or a sighting, in Section 3 of the main text, will suffice.

As a very simple summary of basic interpretation of bird omens, we may say that a manifestation on one's left predicts success to one's opponent, or to human, animal, or other forces in nature other than oneself. Then, either one should abandon the intended action or take additional precautions. Upon hearing certain *teguru* sounds, or seeing certain patterns of flight by *sasat* or *kaniu*, one must not proceed under any circumstances. The *ncluyon* and *bugang/kuang kulit* are bearers of bad news, or warn of the presence of evil, but the events or the evil in question are not in general principle avertable. Hence, these signs are not properly called *angai*.

Dreams

It was noted above in Section 3 of the main text that dreams are taken very seriously, but they only come into prominence where no other augury is available, though they may also be used to confirm previous predictions. They never render a previous omen inapplicable. "A dream," in Dusun, is *nupi*.

To address this topic now in further detail, it must be stressed again that omens from the natural environment are valued above dreams, thus dreams are not usually considered at all, unless there is no other omen to hand; a dream which reinforces an omen is welcomed; a dream which contradicts a natural omen does not render it ineffective. There is also an apparent tendency of informants who have had extensive contact with Muslims to bestow special importance on dreams, as witness one characterization of dreams as *telingo Nabi* ('ears of the Prophet') — by a person who called the omen-birds *mato Nabi* ('the Prophet's eyes'). Although, in general, dreams are accorded low priority — which is surely an attitude well in accord with common sense, given that no one can be sure of having a relevant dream, or any dream, at the time when guidance is consciously needed — it is noteworthy that omens in dreams were commonly sought by a selected person (the headman) before the onset of communal field-preparation. Apart from the element of manipulation, this even represents an arguable exception to the rule that the Dusuns have no formal augurs. In the event that the appointed dreamer had three inauspicious dreams in succession, the chosen site for the clearance and cultivation had to be abandoned. The owner of a new house stays in it for a night before the rest of the family, and postpones entry for two or three days in the event of a bad dream. In any context, not only rice cultivation, luck is really on your side if you dream of the same favorable event twice over. Examples of dream reinforcing dream also represent a detachment of dream augury from the more normal requirement of some sort of valuation by reference to a conventional omen, or activation by the absence of one.

A further example of manipulation of dreams — with a necessary element of auto-suggestion — is seen in the reputed practice of some Sino-Dusuns, even today, of burning incense near the cock who is to be entered in a fight on the morrow. This is not for fortifying the bird, but is hoped to induce a dream of cockfighting in the bird's owner.

If the dream is favorable, he will go ahead with his intention. Afficionados confess that these “good” dreams do not come true with absolute reliability, but in a case of disappointment the blame would be placed on innate bad *nasip* in the protagonist, which has outweighed the omen.

One of the quainter aspects of the more general rules for Dusun dream interpretation, when first met by the foreign learner, is the idea that occurrences in dreams often (but to add to confusion, not invariably!) have a reverse meaning from the values of waking experience. Thus, if a dream features laughter by anyone, including yourself, the corresponding emotion in real life would be tearfulness, hence caution or trepidation is advised in facing the activity to which the dream is taken to relate. Conversely, when in the dream someone is seen weeping, the relevant event or activity in real life is one which will bring joy.

More straightforward is the interpretation of a scene in which you are pursuing someone. This portends good luck in your forthcoming undertaking. On the negative side, the following scenes are all given an “obvious” meaning in terms of real life: an experience of someone trying to apprehend you, to which you respond by trying to run away; someone falling off, or down from, something; traveling in a vehicle at night and colliding with a buffalo; any personal feeling of fear. However, the interpretation is “obvious” only in the general sense that the dream is understood to be inauspicious, not that the exact scene will be replicated. Thus, for instance, any of the four examples just cited would be taken to indicate that it would be foolish to undertake a trip to settle a dispute or engage in cockfighting, either as an owner (with bird) or punter (with money). Similarly, dreams relating metaphorically to death should be taken as a warning not to go on an extended trip to anywhere. These include dreams in which the sun or moon appear, as they are emblematic of the *salong* (the death-torch which burns at the house of someone who died, during their 14-day wake period); in which someone is seen dragging a buffalo (interpreted as signaling the imminent death of someone close); or where a bees’ nest hangs suspended between the branches of a tree (symbolizing the action of *nyaan bangka*: ‘the carrying of a corpse’ by two people on their shoulders).

As for dreams of death or near-death which are painfully direct — that is, in which you yourself have an accident, or are dying, or are killed — these have to be taken very seriously, as a portent that you will suffer precisely such a tragedy unless very serious action is taken, namely: not avoidance through absence or avoidance (as in response to a conventional omen) but a positive act to wipe out the “stain” or curse, preferably by means of a *temarok bagabas* or ritual bathing by a *belian*. (The process or effect is called *nggabas nupi raat*, ‘exorcising an evil dream.’) As we saw in Section 3 of the main text, the ghastly tragedy of the teacher Madam Musing, roasted alive in his own car, was believed to have been avoidable if only he had heeded the predictive dream and arranged for appropriate, countervailing measures of exorcism.

On the positive side, again, there is a reasonably straightforward, though metaphorical, extrapolation from dreams about healthy infants, born or to be born, to the predicted health of a rice-crop. Thus a dream about caring for a child is “good” for rice planting. If the child is a boy, it is particularly auspicious for hill rice; if a girl, for wet rice. If you see a child walking well, this means that your rice will “follow in its footsteps” and grow well too. Dreaming about a pregnant woman should generally be

followed by a good harvest.

APPENDIX 2

List of Academically Reported Omen-Birds in Sarawak, Brunei, and Sabah

The ethnic groups recognizing the various listed species as omen-birds are entered below each species in an approximate geographical order, moving from west to east: viz., (1) Maloh; (2) Iban; (3) Kayan; (4) Kenyah; (5) Berawan; (6) Brunei-Dusun of Bukit Udal/Ukong (abbreviated to “Br-Dusun”); (7) Kadazan-Dusun (entered simply as “Kadazan”). The sources tapped are respectively, (1) King; (2) Freeman (plus work by Banks, Jensen, Richards, Sandin, Sather — see bibliography); (3) Rousseau (plus Richards); (4) Galvin (plus Freeman, Richards); (5) Metcalf; (6) R. Kershaw, (1998b); and (7) Shim. Surprisingly, perhaps, only one species is recognized by all seven of the ethnic groups: the rufous piculet. It sometimes seems to require historical proximity between two groups for “sharing” to occur — a phenomenon that is surely “cultural,” not merely a reflection of the fact that the same species will impinge on two groups inhabiting a single geographical zone. The virtually identical omen list of the Maloh and Iban is cited by King (1975) precisely in order to suggest historical proximity and cultural fusion. But we make no attempt to hypothesize “cultural significance” in species choice in any significant sense. With the Iban, religious myth provides something of a lead-in, but how, in general, would one begin to account for the non-use of birds whose calls are conspicuously beautiful, such as the racket-tailed drongo or the straw-headed bulbul, which are neither too ubiquitous nor too unusual to have been discounted for either of those two reasons? General neglect of the otherwise sometimes “totemic” hornbill also seems surprising.

Incidentally, it seemed best not to include, even for the sake of distant, mainland comparison, the omen-birds recognized by a number of hill tribes of the high plateau of Central Vietnam. Maurice (2006), while very readably allusive and wide-ranging in every sense, depends considerably on earlier ethnographic literature, and is consequently not himself strong on precise species identification. Let it suffice to note loose references to a woodpecker or two, hornbills and munias, while only the racket-tailed drongo and white-crested laughing thrush are named unambiguously in connection with omen-bearing for several tribes (the latter bird is not known in Borneo anyway).

The bird families appear below in the same order as in Smythies (1960).⁶⁶

Eagles, kites, hawks (esp. crested serpent-eagle in Brunei): Kenyah;⁶⁷

⁶⁶ The reason for the large number of Berawan entries is that Metcalf (1976) is assiduous in listing the “lesser omen birds” of that group, but generally no distinction is made, below, between “principal” and “lesser” birds where any author has made such a distinction. The English names of a few Borneo birds have undergone revision since the publication of Smythies (1960): where relevant, the name used below reflects the usage in Francis (1984).

⁶⁷ Galvin (1972) lists both an “eagle” (in Kenyah, *pelaki*) and a “hawk” (in Kenyah, *kong*). Nothing more specific is given in English.

Berawan; Br-Dusun.⁶⁸

Brahminy kite (specific bird): Maloh;⁶⁹ Iban;⁷⁰ Kayan;⁷¹ Kenyah.⁷²

Black eagle (specific bird): Kadazan.

Honey buzzard: Kayan.

[Crestless fireback: Br-Dusun.]⁷³

[Indian cuckoo: Br-Dusun.]⁷⁴

[Common coucal: Br-Dusun.]⁷⁵

Barred eagle owl: Berawan.

[Frogmouths (probably Javan in Brunei): Br-Dusun.]⁷⁶

[Large-tailed nightjar: Br-Dusun.]⁷⁷

Trogons (5 species of upper Baram — i.e., Baram/Tutoh/Tinjar): Berawan.⁷⁸

Scarlet-rumped trogon (specific bird): Maloh; Iban;⁷⁹ Br-Dusun.⁸⁰

68 But see R. Kershaw (1998b:40, n 30) on Dusun ambivalence as to whether the eagle was traditionally relevant, at least at the start of a journey. See further, note 46, above.

69 A lesser augural bird, according to King (1975).

70 As discussed earlier, although this bird (*lang* to the Iban) is regarded as the physical manifestation of the chief spirit and father of augury, Singalang Burong, he does not in fact often play the part of an omen-bearer. However, he has the responsibility for making known the will of the gods, sending his messengers (the other omen birds) for this purpose. Banks (1983:104) notes him as an “additional” bird of augury.

71 While this bird was observed by all the Baluy Kayan communities according to Rousseau, not every single bird on his list of eight for the Kayan was common to all. Richards (1972:76) describes this bird as a “principal” bird of augury for the Kayan.

72 Added as a Kenyah bird on the authority of Freeman (1960:79, n. 13). Galvin (1972) does not mention it but Banks (1983:104) does — as an “additional” bird of augury for them, and so does Richards (1972:76).

73 Not strictly an omen-bird at all, but a tiresome nocturnal caller which has tended to worry Dusuns.

74 This bird was listed in R. Kershaw (1998b:41) but under reservation, as it is not technically an omen-bearer, being unconcerned with the outcome or vagaries of a human enterprise. However, in announcing the fruiting season it does play a predictive role: if it failed to call, there would very definitely be no fruit.

75 Not strictly an omen-bird at all, but believed to give forewarning of some impending “news.”

76 See R. Kershaw (1998b:41). This bird was listed in that article under reservation because it does not foretell an event: rather, as noted in Section 3, above, it attracts harm into its vicinity. But this being so, one may certainly avoid the harm by scaring the bird away, as well as leaving the vicinity (i.e., by avoidance).

77 Not strictly an omen-bird, but an announcer of a weather event, the end of a heat wave.

78 But at only one of three Berawan locations named by Metcalf (1976:100) is each of these five trogons (Diard’s, Whitehead’s, scarlet-rumped, orange-breasted, cinnamon-rumped) given the same indigenous name.

79 Called *beragai* by the Iban.

80 It was only slightly known to Dusuns of Ukong, being essentially a jungle bird, infrequently met (R. Kershaw 1998b:39–40, n. 29).

- Diard's trogon (specific bird): Maloh; Iban;⁸¹ Kenyah.
 Orange-breasted trogon (specific bird): Kenyah.⁸²
 Banded kingfisher: Maloh; Iban;⁸³ Kayan;⁸⁴ Berawan.⁸⁵
 Rufous-backed kingfisher: Berawan; Kadazan.⁸⁶
 Stork-billed kingfisher: Berawan.
 Ruddy kingfisher: Kadazan.⁸⁷
 Hornbills (sundry species): Maloh;⁸⁸ Iban.⁸⁹
 Rufous piculet: Maloh; Iban;⁹⁰ Kayan; Kenyah; Berawan; Br-Dusun;⁹¹
 Kadazan.
 Woodpeckers (medium size/piping cry) (esp. banded in Brunei): Br-Dusun.
 Woodpeckers (medium size/drumming) (incl. rufous in Brunei): Kenyah
 (?);⁹²Br-Dusun.

81 Named both *papau* and *senabong* according to its different cries. Richards (1972:65) and Sandin (1977:3) give *kalabu* as an alternative name for *papau*.

82 But Galvin (1972:54) attributes some improbable plumage to this bird, raising a certain doubt about its identification.

83 The Iban name is *embuas*.

84 Rousseau lists one bird which he could not identify, named *kasé*. As the Berawan call the banded kingfisher (but also the forest or ruddy kingfisher) *asé*, *aché* or *maté*, it is tempting to surmise that the bird in question is this kingfisher. And in fact, the text by Lake' Baling (2002:65) (in Rousseau's translation) itself mentions the banded kingfisher.

85 Named at three Berawan longhouses as if a single species with the next on our list: See the intricate table provided by Metcalf (1976:100).

86 The claim in R. Kershaw (1998b:39, n. 28) that this species is only seen as an omen-bearer in eastern Sabah was unfortunately made before the author was aware of Metcalf (1976) and his observations on the upper Baram.

87 The fifth bird on the list in Shim (1993). Confusingly, he gives it the scientific name of a different species.

88 The rhinoceros hornbill, a lesser augural bird, according to King.

89 Richards (1972:75–79) records that some informants mentioned both the helmeted and the rhinoceros as possible omen-bearers. Hose and McDougall (1912, II:59) mention one hornbill as a minor omen-bearer, using a now superseded scientific name (conceivably it refers to the white-crested).

90 Named both *ketupong* and *kikih* according to different cries; the latter is given by Freeman (1960:83), Richards (1972:64), Sandin (1977:3), and Sather (2006:774), but not by Jensen (1974). In addition, Sandin (1977:3) and Sather (2006:774) give *jaloh* as an alternative to *kikih*.

91 In R. Kershaw (1998b:40), although indeed the piculets belong to the larger woodpecker family, the word "woodpeckers" alongside species 11 at the top of that page should have headed the next two boxes, for birds 12 and 13.

92 Galvin (1972:57) includes in a list of nine omen-birds supplied by the headman of Long Ikang, a bird which is named *selatok* in Kenyah but which Galvin nowhere identifies with an English name or other indication. In the absence of a woodpecker among the other eight, and with a Kenyah name not distant from the Malay word for woodpecker, *pelatok*, one might very speculatively wonder whether the Kenyah, like the Brunei Dusun, have affixed a meaning to

Woodpeckers (medium size/alarm cry) (incl. buff-rumped in Brunei): Br-Dusun.

Maroon woodpecker (specific bird): Maloh; Iban;⁹³ Kayan; Kadazan.⁹⁴

Banded woodpecker (specific bird): Kayan.⁹⁵

Grey-and-buff woodpecker: Berawan.⁹⁶

Buff-rumped woodpecker: Berawan.

Buff-necked woodpecker: Berawan.⁹⁷

Grey-capped woodpecker: Berawan.

[Black and yellow broadbill: Br-Dusun.]⁹⁸

White-rumped shama: Maloh; Iban.⁹⁹

Striped tit-babbler: Kadazan.¹⁰⁰

Tailorbirds (all 4 in upper Baram; 3 in Brunei, esp. red-headed): Berawan; Br-Dusun.

[Paradise flycatcher: Br-Dusun.]¹⁰¹

Spiderhunters (all species of upper Baram): Berawan.

Little spiderhunter (specific bird): Maloh; Kayan; Kenyah; Br-Dusun.

Thick-billed spiderhunter (specific bird): Br-Dusun.

Greater yellow-eared spiderhunter (specific bird): Kayan.

White-eye: Kayan.

woodpecker drumming.

93 The Ibans note two calls of this species, which cause it to be called either *pangkas* or *kutok*.

94 The sixth bird on the Shim (1993) list is not named, but with a call said to be interpreted much as the maroon woodpecker, R.K. wonders if it is not the maroon woodpecker in another guise.

95 Rousseau (1998:70) understands that this bird was not a major omen.

96 This species is more or less conflated with the next on our list at the two Berawan locations where it is observed: see the intricate table in Metcalf (1976:100).

97 This species is apparently conflated with the next on our list at the Berawan location where both are observed (see again Metcalf (1976:100).

98 Like the Indian cuckoo and paradise flycatcher in this list, the broadbill was originally entered for the Brunei-Dusuns (see R. Kershaw 1998b:42) under reservation, because what it foretells or attracts is not an event that can be permitted or inhibited by participation/avoidance respectively. The coming event in this case is rainfall.

99 Iban name: *nendak*.

100 Shim thinks the tit-babbler known as an omen-bird by his group (the seventh on his list), may be the fluffy-backed tit-babbler, but from his description of its call (which R.K. knows because the bird is very common at Sukang in Belait district), there is reason to suspect the striped.

101 R. Kershaw (1998b:39) listed this bird among the other omens but with strong reservation and mainly because it appears in Bantong (1985). The reservation was due to the fact that a sighting of the male of the species foretells a death, not a nefarious event that can be avoided by a change of plan as in normal responses to an omen. However, as was noted in Section 3, above, one might well retrace one's steps on a journey, fearing that the death in question is scheduled to occur in one's own home during one's absence. Unfortunately the biological symbol for "male" was omitted from box 3 on the 1998 list, though "male" is specified in n. 27, below it.

Spangled drongo: Berawan.¹⁰²

Violet-backed starling: Kenyah.

Crested jay: Maloh; Iban;¹⁰³ Kenyah;¹⁰⁴ Berawan.

Slender-billed crow: Kadazan.

APPENDIX 3

Corrigenda in Four Other Publications on the Brunei-Dusuns

The misidentification, in E. M. Kershaw, ed. (1994:156–61) of the Indian cuckoo as a roller, has already been corrected (by the culprit!) in R. Kershaw (1998b:55–56), but perhaps merits an additional flagging here.

R. Kershaw (1998b) itself succumbed to some anomalies at the printing stage. The more important are the omission of the male symbol for the paradise flycatcher (bird no. 3 on p. 39) and the placing of the “Wood-peckers” sub-heading within the box for the rufus piculet (bird no. 11 on p. 40) whereas it should introduce the next three species (nos. 12–14). These and a few lesser corrigenda have already been noted in *BRB* 30(1999):4. One more could be added: p. 36, n. 19, line 7, read “columns” (plural). Furthermore, reflecting E.M.K.’s extensive interviews in Dusun, a shift has taken place in the relevant section of the present article, in that the word *teguru* is acknowledged to refer to a bird only (albeit an unspecific “drumming bird”), not a sound first and foremost as is the case with *uit-uit* and was previously implied also for *teguru*. It is diagnostic that there is no verb with the sense of “to be *teguru*’ed” (cf. our translation, ‘suffer an *uit*,’ first introduced in Section 3). The omen is the drumming sound, to be sure, but this is called *nggandang kayu*.

E. M. Kershaw and R. Kershaw (1998) suffered somewhat from intervention by its editor, who also declined to accept a corrigenda slip for a later issue of *SEAJSS*. All the following items comprise needed restorations of the original text: p. 1, para. 2, line 10 delete “the” after “acknowledge”; p. 4, para. 3, line 12: delete “over” after “glossed”; p. 7, para. 3, line 7: the phrase “a normal ritual in progress” should be changed back to “a normally progressing ritual”; p. 8, para. 2, line 13: for “affecting” read “effecting”; p. 9, para. 3, line 1: add “still holds” after “argument”; p. 21, para. 3, lines 9–12: the phrase “with a strong transcendental dimension” originally described the State’s nation-building plans, not Dusun religion, and should be relocated accordingly.

In E. M. Kershaw (2000), the following corrigenda were almost entirely due to errors or proofreading oversights in Scotland: p. 4, n. 1, line 1: after “folkloric” add “features”; p. 9, n. 1, line 1: for “four” substitute “five”; p. 13, line 24: for “Garea” read “area”; p. 17, para. 2: the six kinship terms introduced here ought to be in the glossary too; p. 23, line 7: for “*panda Cecilia*” (attributed to a maverick spelling-checker at Phillips,

102 Previously called — and so named by Metcalf — the hair-crested drongo. But identification is somewhat clouded by the fact that Metcalf uses the scientific name for the bronzed drongo.

103 Called *bejampong* by the Iban.

104 As with the reputed orange-breasted trogon, Galvin (1972:54) attributes some improbable plumage to this bird.

ME!), read “*pandai sekola*”; p. 63, line 1: before “previous” add the words “with no”; p. 63, line 30: for “contributed” read “attributed”; p. 97, in the heading of Section (b): read “*Ngayat*”; p. 110, line 5: “*umou kingkin*” should be added to the main glossary; p. 139, line 15: change “*bahagian*” to “*bagian*”; p. 155, line 16: after “shaft” delete “of areca palm”; p. 174, line 24: for “lank” read “flank”; p. 252: “*labangan*” belongs in the R.H. column; p. 257: “*ngtangan*” should read “*ntangan*,” and be relocated alphabetically; p. 263: the definition of “*tad sawat*” should read “from on high”; p. 286: six index items (*papa*, snake, summoning, swing, *tebuu*, wooden palatial house) are wrongly indented — being substantive, not subdivided categories.

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ABU BAKAR'S REBELLION, 1879¹

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Rebellion seems to be one of the logical consequences of conquest, for throughout human history where force is used to expand territory, rebellion is never very far behind. Being the inevitable outcome of conquest is no guarantee of success, however, and there are probably many more failed rebellions than ones that succeed. The history of European colonialism around the world provides a near limitless suite of both outcomes, and the Dutch experience in West Borneo is no exception, although – apart from the fairly well-known Kongsi Wars of the 1850s and 1880s (Heidhues 2003) and the decades-long campaign to pacify the Iban (Wadley 2007) – we know little about the various and overwhelmingly unsuccessful rebellions and insurgencies that arose in response to Dutch rule. For example, within the first decade of their re-established sovereignty over West Borneo, the Dutch were faced with a short-lived revolt in the late 1850s by the *pangerans* Anom, Kuning, and Ratu of Sintang (who chafed over their loss of power under new treaties) (Kielstra 1890) and a revolt during the early 1860s in the upper Melawi led by Mas Nata Wijaya (who claimed to be the true *pangeran* of Sintang) (Niclou 1887).²

Given this early track record of successful Dutch suppression of revolts throughout West Borneo, it is a bit surprising to see an attempted rebellion along the Embaloh River in 1879, by a certain Haji Abu Bakar in league with some Iban from the upper Rejang of Sarawak.³ Unfortunately, we have only the colonial version to guide us, and the Dutch may have seen it as useful to present the incident as a rebellion, rather than something else. Thus, what actually motivated Abu Bakar and his accomplices may have been quite different, but is difficult to know from the evidence at hand (though Embaloh oral history may still preserve some memory of the incident and other documentary

1 The research upon which this note is based was funded by the International Institute for Asian Studies, Netherlands (1998-2001).

2 There is a large bundle of documents concerning this rebellion in the Dutch colonial archives: Kabinetsverbaal (Geheim) 25 March 1868 H4, Ministerie van Koloniën, Nationaal Archief (hereafter NA), Den Haag, Netherlands. Time constraints did not allow me to explore these records at all.

3 The following account is drawn from Report of Controleur Tromp, 22 January 1879; Letter to Governor-General from Resident Kater, 29 January 1879; Letter to the Committee of the Government of Sarawak from Resident Kater, 29 January 1879; Letter from William Crocker (Sarawak Government Committee) to Resident Kater, 20 March 1879; Letter to the Committee of the Government of Sarawak from Resident Kater, 6 April 1879 – all in Mailrapport 1879 No. 224 (NA); and Letter to the Government Committee of Sarawak from Resident Kater, 2 July 1879, Mailrapport 1879 No. 551 (NA).

sources [below] may yield more clues).

In early January 1879, Iban raiders from the Katibas attacked a large boat near Nanga Mandai; the five-man crew, along with the traders Sukin (Chinese) and Abang Salim (Malay), fled into the forest and were not pursued. Much of their cargo, including rice, was lost overboard, but about 700 dollars worth of *getah* (forest latex) was stolen. Dutch officials determined that the raiders were led by Sanang (a.k.a. Keling), son of the headman Unggat, who was in league with Abu Bakar. At about the same time, Abu Bakar had swindled an Arab trader named Sheik Imal at Nanga Embaloh – selling him 10,000 gantangs of rice for 400 dollars but only delivering 2,000 gantangs. A few days after the Iban raid, Abu Bakar left for Sarawak (with five small cannons he took from the government outpost at Nanga Embaloh), claiming his mother was ill upriver.

Abu Bakar actually worked as the native representative for the Dutch colonial government along the Embaloh, having come well-recommended as the adopted son of Pangeran Suma, who himself served in that role in the early 1870s although the Dutch had not always trusted him.⁴ (NB: This is a different Pangeran Suma from the ones of Selimbau and Suhaid mentioned in Wadley 2006.) In Enthoven's (1903:96-97) genealogy of Bunut's nobility, Abu Bakar appears as the son of a Malay noble, Raden Riya, with the title of Raden Surya Ugama, and as married to the sister of Selimbau's ruler. With an Embaloh mother (there is no mention of his father's origins, though a mix of Embaloh and Malay is likely), Abu Bakar was in a good position of local influence and had been responsible for arranging a peace-making ceremony between the Katibas Iban and people of the Embaloh and Bunut rivers. Prior to his hasty departure for Sarawak, some 200 Katibas Iban had come to the Embaloh, ostensibly in expectation of the peace-making, living off their Embaloh hosts and rice that Abu Bakar provided them. Although Abu Bakar had guaranteed that the Iban would behave themselves, people in Bunut and along the Palin River worried that they were making the area insecure. Abu Bakar's connection to the Katibas was not coincidental, either: He and Sanang knew each other well as their fathers, Pangeran Suma and Unggat, had been friends for years. (The Dutch claimed that as principal headman of the Katibas, Unggat received an income of 50 or 75 dollars from the Sarawak government derived from tax revenue, an office to which Sanang may have hoped to succeed.)

During his investigation in mid-January, Controleur J.C.E. Tromp became certain that Abu Bakar had planned an attack with the Katibas Iban during the time of the peacemaking, most likely against Bunut and five Embaloh settlements, using the stolen money and goods to finance the assault. It is not clear from the reports, however, whether he planned a treacherous attack at the ceremony itself (which seems unlikely given the guaranteed presence of Dutch forces) or an ambush as participants journeyed upriver. Bunut certainly was his main target, and he gave people in four of the most-upriver Embaloh communities – Keram, Bukung, Belimbis, and Pinjawan – the choice of following him or having their houses burned. Abu Bakar apparently held influence in those communities, especially Belimbis and Pinjawan where his mother and other close

4 Kort verslag der residentie Westerafdeeling van Borneo over de maand December 1872, Mailrapport 1873 No. 50 (NA).

kin lived.⁵

Not only was the attack and robbery near Nanga Mandai led by Sanang, but several Embaloh were involved as well; namely, Makati (headman of Bukung), Kesui and Langi of Belimbis, Jenal of Pinjawan, and men from one of the three or four houses of Teliai where Suka was headman. The raiders carried the stolen goods to Bukung and Belimbis before moving on to Sarawak. Following Abu Bakar, people from those four communities also transported their household wares to Sarawak while hiding other valuables in the forest. It is unlikely that this migration was willing: A Palin headman, Benuang, left for Sarawak at the same time with some 60 households, after giving Sanang a number of ceramic jars and other valuables, and Abu Bakar supposedly threatened others who did not want to move with beheading by the Iban and having their headless corpses thrown into the river to give notice to the Malays of Bunut and the controleur. In addition, Sanang and his men had extorted chickens, taro, and other food from the inhabitants of Ulak Pauh, Paat, and Nanga Sungai when they had passed that way.

Although they were convinced that the Embaloh themselves would not join Abu Bakar's attack, as a precaution the Dutch stationed an armed boat at Nanga Embaloh, and the Mangku Bumi of Bunut led a large force to strengthen the fortification there. Interestingly, the Mangku Bumi had considerable influence in the five most-downriver Embaloh settlements – Ulak Pauh, Paat, Nanga Sungai, Teliai, and Benua Ujung – where many of his mother's kin lived.⁶ People in the remaining Embaloh settlements also prepared for the threatened attack from Sarawak. The attack, of course, never came. Notified by the Dutch of Abu Bakar's and Sanang's activities, the Sarawak government arrested them in March or April, and the two men quietly faded from the documents. How long they stayed in jail and how much of the stolen goods were recovered may be hidden in the Sarawak archives. Presumably, the Embaloh who were conscripted by Abu Bakar returned home and resumed their old lives. The Dutch certainly do not say any more on the subject in the documents I have reviewed.⁷ However, in a postscript to his report, Resident Kater mentions that the Assistant Resident received a letter from Abu Bakar (presumably before he fled to Sarawak?) saying that the Malay rulers along the Kapuas were in league against him. This provides the only hint of motivation, suggesting that, instead of a rebellion against the Dutch per se, it was local-level political disputes that motivated Abu Bakar's efforts. What exactly he hoped to accomplish is unclear and is likely to remain so until someone stumbles across additional references in the archives, perhaps in documents specifically dealing with Bunut, or records or oral histories of the incident.

5 See the maps in King (1985) for the location of these communities along the Embaloh.

6 There is no information from the Mailrapport documents or from Enthoven's genealogies as to the relationship between Abu Bakar and the Mangku Bumi. More broadly, however, this underscores the close interrelationship between the Embaloh and upper Kapuas Malays (the founder of the Bunut kingdom, for example, being of Embaloh descent himself; Enthoven 1903:94), and the considerable though largely unexplored influence each had on the other culturally and linguistically (King 1985:58-61).

7 Given the volume of material in the Dutch national archives, I focused on that which concerned the Iban (*Batang Loepars*) and much less on the goings-on in adjacent areas unless they directly involved Iban.

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**AN “ARCH-VILLAIN” TO BE REHABILITATED? MIXED
PERCEPTIONS OF PANGERAN ANOM OF SAMBAS IN THE
EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY;
WITH AN APPENDIX ON JOHN HUNT¹**

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Introduction

Maritime raiding that included attacks on both native and (more rarely) foreign shipping was endemic around Borneo until well into the nineteenth century. The Muslim rulers of the coastal polities inextricably combined trading and raiding, and the relative profitability of the latter probably increased when local trading patterns were disrupted by European powers that attempted to control regional trade – including that with China – for their own commercial ends.² Local political events were also an important factor. Pontianak, established in the early 1770s, soon destroyed Sukadana, took over Mempawah and extended its influence progressively up the Kapuas River. This led to rivalry between Pontianak and Sambas for control over the Chinese mining communities (*kongsis*) and ongoing warfare on land and sea. Supported at first by the Dutch and increasingly by country trade³ from Calcutta and Penang, Pontianak became a major center of trade in West Borneo, putting additional pressure on Sambas. British country vessels maintained trade with both sultanates and coastal ports under their respective control. However, in the first twelve years of the nineteenth century attacks by vessels based at Sambas and adjacent ports created much alarm in the English East India Company (EIC) governments at Penang and, later, Batavia.⁴ The commander, Pangeran Anom,⁵ became a particular *bête noir* and was blamed for many of the attacks on trading vessels at the time. The following extract from John Hunt’s *Sketch of Borneo or Pulo*

1 This account is a revised and extended version of a paper that was presented at the Eighth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council: “Borneo in the New Century,” Kuching, Sarawak, 31 July-1 August 2006.

2 See Warren (2001) for an analysis of the interlinked factors that influenced “piracy” in the Sulu zone at this time. Like Warren, I have some hesitation in using this generic Eurocentric word; hence the quotation marks.

3 “Country trade” is the term used for regional trade between India, the East Indies, China, etc., as opposed to trade directly originating from Britain. The traders and their “country vessels” or “country ships” were not employees of the English East India Company (EIC).

4 European names are used here for the main trading settlements.

5 “Pangeran Anom” is a royal title of Javanese origin. In the contemporary British literature there were variations in spelling, such as “Annam” or “Annom.”

Kalamantan, communicated to T.S. Raffles, then Lieutenant Governor of Java, gives the flavor of opinion about Sambas and its allies.⁶ Names of vessels have been italicized.

In 1803, the ship *Susanna* of Calcutta, Captain Drysdale, was cut off near Pontiana by the Sambas and Borneo pirates; the Europeans were all massacred and the vessel taken. – In 1769 Captain Sadler, with his boat's crew, was murdered by the Sambas pirates off Mompava, having a prodigious quantity of gold dust; they did not succeed in cutting off the ship. – In 1806 Mr. Hopkins and crew, of the *Commerce*, were murdered by the pirates of Borneo proper; the ship was plundered by them and the Sambas pirates. – In 1810 Capt. Ross was cut off. – In 1811 Capt. Graves was cut off by the Pasir pirates. – In 1812, the enormities of Pangeran Annam have out-heroded Herod; these are too recent to require recapitulation. Independent of his depredations on the *Coromandel*, the Portuguese ship, &c. nine Europeans of the *Hecate* have been seized and made slaves: two have been since murdered, two have escaped, and five are ham-strung and otherwise maimed. Mrs. Ross and her son are still in slavery there (Hunt 1820a:45-46).

A different impression of Pangeran Anom is given in the memoirs of Captain David Macdonald (1840).⁷ Macdonald commanded a "cruizer" (corvette) of the EIC's navy that was based in Bombay and took part in campaigns against the Pangeran, who in 1813 put a price on his head. Hostilities over, Macdonald met the Pangeran in 1814 at Sambas. According to Macdonald, the Pangeran believed himself protected from Europeans because he had survived a shot in an earlier action with the EIC. The ball, in his face, was never extracted. "But of whatever atrocities and crimes he may have been accused – and doubtless there were many – there must still have existed some secret agency, some 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 1840:206). In

6 Hunt's report – the original now apparently lost – was first published in *Malayan Miscellanies* (Hunt 1820a); the date of the report was given as 1812. As discussed below in the Appendix it was possibly actually written in 1813 when Hunt was Raffles's representative in Pontianak. This version, along with other material cited later, is now accessible via Google Book Search: "Malayan Miscellanies J. Hunt". It was reprinted by Moor (Hunt 1837), with minor editorial changes. This second version was also included in Keppel (1846, Vol 2; Appendix 2: xvi-lxiii); this is now available online on the Cornell University "Southeast Asia Visions" website: <http://dlxs.library.cornell.edu/s/sea/>). Details of the Sultan of Pontianak's unpleasant punishments of adulterers are omitted in this last version.

7 The book itself is undated but is given as c.1840 in library catalogues. Macdonald commented in his Introduction that he first set down his memoirs in 1830. Pagination here refers to the third edition in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. There is another version of the third edition (e.g. in the British Library, London, and now also available online on the Cornell University "Southeast Asia Visions" website). This version has a different publisher (Benson and Barling, Weymouth) and is shorter, but also includes the material cited here except where noted otherwise.

other words, Pangeran Anom was a charismatic leader with the ability to hold together some very disparate racial groups. He “was apparently about thirty years of age, perhaps a little more” [indeed he was], “and although slightly deformed, might still be called a smart-looking little man; his mother was a Chinese, and from her he inherited the fair complexion and features, with the smallest hands and feet it is possible to conceive, and much of the cunning and shrewdness of that race. His face was disfigured by a blemish on the cheek” [caused by the shot in the action in 1805]... “which, when excited, gave his mouth a peculiarly disagreeable expression.” He “spoke with great rapidity and fluency” [Macdonald: unlike most Malays] “while his restless little eyes gave evident indication of an irascible and vindictive temper...”, though there was no illustration of this during Macdonald’s stay of three days at Sambas (Macdonald 1840:305-6).

This paper summarizes Pangeran Anom’s early life, re-examines some of the piratical deeds of which he was accused, and includes information from sources that have received little attention. It places the events in the context of the political climate in the region at the time and considers whether Pangeran Anom has been ill-judged by history. Because of the emphasis given over the years to John Hunt’s report to Raffles, I attach an appendix summarizing Hunt’s activities at the time, building on the account in Dutch by de Haan (1935:584-86).

Pangeran Anom’s rise to power

According to current genealogy of the Sambas sultanate (Buyers 2002-2005), Pangeran Anom was born in 1767. He was the son of a royal concubine, and half-brother of the Sultan of Sambas who succeeded to the throne in 1790. The sultan was a weak man and the Pangeran strove to exert his own authority (Veth 1854:367). He allied himself with the Chinese from Monterado, who by then paid little heed to the demands of Sambas for taxes. Pangeran Anom settled for five years among the Chinese not far from the coast on the lower Sungai Dori. He dressed in Chinese style, sacrificed in their temples and gambled with them (Veth 1854:367). This distinctly “un-Malay” behavior is explicable by his Chinese blood (assuming Macdonald’s account is accurate), though his mother was most likely an offspring of a Chinese father and Dayak (or Chinese/Dayak) mother. The Pangeran also became an active dealer in opium and the Chinese paid him taxes previously paid to the sultan. After five years, mediation by the royal family caused him to be reconciled with the sultan, who appointed him Pangeran Bendahara, i.e., Regent of Sambas (Veth 1854:367).

Pangeran Anom’s close relations with “pirates” began during his time on the Sungai Dori, and continued, with the sultan’s support, after his return to the capital (Veth 1854:368). He became associated with the Illanun (Iranun) raiders and others who included those from Bangka, Sarawak, Brunei, and Pasir (Hunt 1820a). According to Veth (1854:368), Pangeran Anom’s first great undertaking was directed in 1799 against Banjarmasin. At the head of 15 or 16 “*penjajaps*” (long, two-masted vessels) he burned a vessel belonging to the Sultan of Banjarmasin. He was driven away after a fierce battle with armed vessels sent by the Dutch Resident and after, according to his own account, capturing two *prahus* under Dutch colors (Richardson 1805:60). The departure of the Dutch from the region by the end of the eighteenth century doubtless weakened the strength and influence of both Banjarmasin and Pontianak, where the Dutch had held

fortified outposts.

Relations between Sambas and the Illanun pirates were not always harmonious. In 1803 a force of Illanun *prahus* plundered the lower reaches of the Sambas River, causing *prahus* from Sambas to counterattack. Hostile relations were also demonstrated when a Sambas *prahu* took a *prahu* from Java that was then captured by some Illanun pirates, and finally retaken by Pangeran Anom and his fleet (Richardson 1805:51-52). The main maritime efforts of Sambas were, however, directed against Pontianak. In 1803 Sambas planned to use 40 fighting *prahus*, plus the captured Java *prahu* and a captured British country ship, the *Calcutta*, to cut off Chinese junks at Pontianak, and capture the town. If this were successful, Banjarmasin would be attacked again (Richardson 1805:60). This campaign does not seem to have eventuated, at least on the scale that was planned, but attacks against Pontianak continued. As time went on, Sambas formed alliances with other raiders, including the Illanuns, to strengthen their forces (Veth 1854:386).

Banjarmasin and Pontianak were greatly alarmed by the threats from Sambas and lobbied the EIC for the support that they had previously enjoyed from the Dutch. In January 1811 Raffles, then in Malacca, warned Lord Minto, EIC Governor-General in India, that Banjarmasin was unstable after the departure of the Dutch and that in 1810 Pangeran Anom had carried away 50 local vessels (Raffles 1811). In February and March 1811, Sultan Kassim of Pontianak wrote to Raffles seeking help against Pangeran Anom and the Illanuns, who had plundered two Chinese junks in Pontianak roads. He also said that the Illanuns were gathering at Sambas (Ahmat 1971). The letters were accompanied by correspondence from Joseph Burn, a disgraced British country trader, who was living in Pontianak and to whom Raffles had also written (Burn 1811; Smith 2004; Reece and Smith 2006). This correspondence was prompted by requests from Raffles for information about attacks on British country vessels that were attributed to Pangeran Anom, some of which were listed a little later in Hunt's report. It is therefore useful now to return to Hunt's list of attacks. As will be seen, it is, in fact, very inaccurate and incomplete.

Death of Captain Sadler

Sambas was not involved in the murder of Captain Sadler and his boat's crew, which occurred at Mempawah in 1795.⁸ The deed was done by the then Panembahan Kassim who ruled there on behalf of his father, Sultan Abdulrahman of Pontianak. Although at the time Kassim attempted to blame Sambas (Nicholl 1984), it became well-known in Pontianak that he was the guilty party.⁹ According to Burn (1811:57-60), Kassim had been heavily in debt to Sadler. Kassim later told Macdonald that he had killed Sadler because the latter had sold him small arms that were useless because they had no touch-holes, and that Sadler had become drunk, threatened Kassim with a pistol, and invaded the harem. However, Kassim said that he later paid the debt (presumably to Sadler's

8 Hunt's date "1769" is presumably a misprint for "1796," itself incorrect.

9 Nicholl (1984) was responsible for publication of a letter written in 1795 by William Midwinter, who was on the ship – its name surprisingly not given – at the time of Sadler's death. Midwinter related the false account given by Kassim to the ship's officers and crew after Sadler's disappearance at Mempawah, and also other experiences of country trade in the region.

employers). Macdonald commented that traders often treated the natives dishonorably. As a result, the latter were often branded “bloodthirsty and treacherous” (Macdonald 1840:216-219). This was clearly something not unique to the Sambas sultanate.

Capture of the *Calcutta* and the aftermath

The country ship commanded by Captain Drysdale in 1803 was not the “*Susanna*” but the *Calcutta*.¹⁰ It was indeed captured by Pangeran Anom, and the loss illustrates very well the uncertain relationships between the European traders and the local native rulers.¹¹ After an extensive voyage from Calcutta through the East Indies, the ship arrived in Borneo in mid-June 1803. By 1 July it was in Sambas roads in company with the *Clyde*, commanded by Captain Tait. The ships soon departed, the *Clyde* bound for Penang and the *Calcutta* for Selekau to the south, the latter voyage in accord with an agreement with Pangeran Anom. Captain Drysdale had purchased six chests of opium from Captain Tait, who had previously pledged them to Pangeran Anom, but Drysdale tried to overcharge the Pangeran. Although Drysdale took the usual precautions against attack by issuing arms, he allowed on board too many of the local people along with Pangeran Anom. Drysdale was stabbed and thrown overboard, the first officer was wounded and jumped overboard to swim ashore but was drowned, and most of the senior crew members and nine sepoy were murdered. Seven crew members who had jumped overboard reached the shore and were subsequently taken by local Chinese to Pontianak. The sole British survivor was John Burgh, the second officer. He had gone into the hold to select some bales of textiles for the Pangeran and by the time he was back on deck the massacre had taken place. After a chase worthy of a Hollywood action movie, Burgh was wounded, and overpowered along with other survivors, who included the *serang* (boatswain), *lascars* (ordinary seamen), Drysdale’s “native girl” and a slave boy. The arrival of the Sultan of Sambas restored calm. He told Burgh that “the ship *Calcutta* was doomed to be seized and the commander and other Christians on board to be massacred by way of recompense for the breach of faith on the part of the master of the vessel [*Clyde*] that absconded.” Had Drysdale wanted to trade fairly, he should not have gone to Selekau (Wright 1961:273, citing EIC records; also Richardson 1805:26-30). The survivors were detained at Selekau or nearby. Pangeran Anom repeatedly asked Burgh to take charge of the ship and its crew plus 150 Malays in the service of Sambas, but he refused, as he had no wish to become a renegade and pirate.

Burgh was allowed to leave in December 1803 on the *Duchess of York*, another country ship that had arrived in Sambas roads in ignorance of the capture of the *Calcutta*.

10 A vessel called “Susannah” was captured by pirates between Batavia and Sulu “in about 1807.” It was “under Danish colours.” This information is in the only report that I have seen about this event, which was brought to the attention of the Government in Java as late as 1814 by relatives of French passengers whose fate was unknown (Java Factory Records; Separate Dependencies Consultations, 14 September 1814). No evidence is given that Sambas was involved. Hunt was in Sulu in 1810 and would presumably have known about this event.

11 The circumstances are known from the EIC reports and in much more detail from the book, already cited here, by James Douglas Richardson (1805); it was derived from the journal of John Burgh. The only copy known to the present author is in the Toyo Bunko Library, Tokyo, which kindly provided a photocopy. The book deserves to be better known: hence this summary.

(The fate of the other survivors was not recorded.) The sultan said that if the British would help him capture Pontianak he would willingly pay an annual tribute. The sultan gave Burgh a letter to the governor of Penang, intended to explain the circumstances in the best possible light. This all shows that the British were not afraid to trade with Sambas and that the “piracy” should be assessed in the context of local commercial and political circumstances. Sambas clearly traded as well as raided, and the plundering of the *Calcutta* arose directly from bad faith among the traders.

Richardson ended his account with comments on the best course of action if the British were to seek restitution for the loss of the *Calcutta*, or to give security to British commerce in the area, which was a considerable market for opium and piece goods. He pointed out that Sambas depended on imported rice and other foodstuffs from Java and elsewhere, paid for with gold dust. Richardson suggested that one or two armed vessels cruising along the track of the *prahus* from Sambas could easily intercept them and cut off Sambas’ supplies. He believed that an attack on Sambas would not be feasible because of the sandbar that would prevent entry of vessels drawing more than 13-14 feet of water. Further, the vessels would have to be warped up, with ropes made fast to trees, for 40 miles before the town was reached. The country all around was a swamp, thus, presumably in his opinion, precluding an attack by land (Richardson 1805:59-71).

Robert Farquhar in Penang initially did not believe that the matter was worth pursuing. In his opinion the ship would be in poor condition and although the town of Sambas could be destroyed by a small expeditionary force, that would be difficult because of its location. He pointed out to his superiors in Calcutta that the politics on the coast of Borneo could nearly all be called to account on the same score (“piracy”), that many of their rulers were related and hence an expedition to Sambas could be fatal to future traders (Wright 1961:273-74). However, Pangeran Anom in fact armed and manned the *Calcutta* (probably with some of its original crew), so in April 1805 Penang sent an expedition to recapture the ship. The EIC’s cruizer *Les Frères Unis*, accompanied by the armed ship *Belisarius* and small vessels provided by Pontianak and manned by Chinese, proceeded upriver towards Sambas and recaptured the *Calcutta*, with two Chinese junks and two large *prahus*. Pangeran Anom escaped in a small boat and was believed (incorrectly, of course) to have died from his wounds (Richardson 1805:74-75, citing the report by Capt. Robert Deane to Farquhar). He soon returned to Sambas.

Capture of the *Commerce*

The *Commerce* was lost not in 1806 but early in 1810, and Sambas pirates were not responsible. The *Commerce* was returning from Manila and became disabled and drifted ashore in the Tambelan islands off the coast of West Borneo. Captain Chapman went to Malacca to obtain material to make the ship serviceable. When he returned he found a fight in progress between *prahus* from Brunei and local islands for possession of the ship, which was set adrift. Chapman’s Malay crew begged him not to follow for fear of their lives, so he gave up the chase. It was reported that some of the cargo of sugar had gone to Pontianak (*Prince of Wales Island Government Gazette* 5/210: 3 Mar 1810; 5/220: 12 May 1810).¹² The Sultan of Pontianak and Burn informed Raffles in February

¹² This semi-official publication was established in February 1806; it was published weekly, with an occasional special issue (“Extraordinary”). Volumes were supposed to cover 52 issues, but

1811 that the *Commerce* had been finally seized by the pirates of Sarawak in conjunction with those of Sambas (Burn 1811:5; also Ahmat 1971). The captain and 45 of the crew were sent as slaves to Brunei (Wright 1961:272, citing EIC records).

Capture of the *Malacca* and the aftermath

The brig *Malacca*, commanded by Hercules Ross, was attacked near Muntok at Bangka at the end of May or beginning of June, 1810, shortly after the loss of the *Commerce*, and Ross was killed. According to the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* (PG 6/224:9 Jun 1810; 6/230:21 Jul 1810), the pirate chiefs lived at Muntok, and much of the cargo of tin ended up at Banjarmasin. Ross had traded in different vessels out of Penang and Malacca for several years, as reported in many issues of the *Gazette*. The *Malacca* was owned by Alexander Hare, who was then based at Malacca. Raffles showed a special interest, perhaps because of his friendship with Hare. Some of the pirate chiefs, including Assang (or Assery etc.) Abdul Rassib (or Rassil, Rashid, Rasib etc.), had taken refuge at Sambas, and Raffles asked the Sultan of Sambas, via Sultan Kassim and Joseph Burn, to hand them over, but he refused. The sultan admitted he had assembled “robbers and wicked men” but that was “because I am poor and wanting in many things.” He had not invited Rassib to stay, but could not arrest him because Sambas collaborated with Muntok (Ahmat 1971). No other sources that I have consulted mention Mrs. Ross and her son, suggesting strongly that she was not a European: there would have been much less interest in the fate of a native wife and a son of mixed race. Rassib became closely allied with Pangeran Anom, with whom he went out on sorties from Sambas to the coastal waters off Mempawah, Pontianak and Banjarmasin. There were now two small ships from Sambas, which were openly challenging Pontianak and threatening to attack Chinese and English vessels.¹³ Raffles passed this information on to Lord Minto when the latter arrived at Malacca. Raffles also reported that the longboat of the *Thainstone*, a country vessel from Penang, had been taken and the crew murdered (Lady S. Raffles 1830:46). This event – not recorded by Hunt – occurred at Bangka at the end of June 1810 (PG 6/227:30 Jun 1810); there is no reason to blame Pangeran Anom.

Another attack on a brig owned by Hare?

Macdonald (1840:202-3) discussed with Pangeran Anom the capture of a brig that was returning from Banjarmasin. The Pangeran had been accused of killing the crew but he denied this to Macdonald. He said he had freed the commander, named by Macdonald as Scott, a “drunken and troublesome fellow.” This was said in order to illustrate Macdonald’s view of the types of Europeans in the country trade. I have found no other reference to this attack – it may be a confused reference to the attack on the *Malacca*. The Scotts were Penang-based merchants and traders, and identifying this Scott (if he was a relative) is problematical.

numbering of early volumes had some inconsistencies. Issues in 1810 were printed as parts of Volumes 4, 5, 6 and 5 again; hence the details that are cited here.

13 Hunt (1820a:51) said that Pontianak had a fleet of two ships, two brigs, 50 *prahus* and about 1000 men.

Attack on the *Minto* (or *Lord Minto*)

Hunt did not mention the attack on this vessel in 1811. The *Minto* was a small armed schooner, chartered by the EIC to survey the coastal waters of West Borneo as the favored route for the British fleet which was mustering in Malacca for the invasion of Java. *Prahus* from Sambas were beaten off after a strong attack “with the loss of several killed and a greater number wounded” (*Minto* 1880:279). Its commander, William Greig, was well-known to Lord Minto, who was with the British expedition (as was Raffles), and this attack was a considerable black mark against Sambas.

Capture of “the Portuguese ship”

This ship can be identified as the *Diana*, which traded between Penang and Macao (references in *PG*: Apr-May 1811) and was captured near Pasir in East Borneo late in 1811 or early in 1812 (Medhurst 1829; Macdonald 1840:202, 365). The commander of the attacking vessels was possibly not Pangeran Anom but another Sambas resident, later identified by a visiting English missionary, Rev. W.H. Medhurst, as the “Arang Raja Bujang” – possibly Radin Bujang, a member of the extended Sambas royal family (Buyers 2002-2005). He told Medhurst that the ship was decoyed to an island under the pretext of collecting bird nests and, for reasons not given, all on board except the Portuguese boatswain (ship’s mate in some accounts) were killed (Medhurst 1829). The vessel was taken upriver to Sambas and the boatswain (and probably some of the crew) entered Pangeran Anom’s service.

Plundering of the *Coromandel* and the aftermath

The *Coromandel* ran aground on a reef in the Karimata Islands in August 1812. Details were published in November in the *Java Government Gazette* (1/35:24 Oct 1812; 1/36:31 Oct 1812; see also Macdonald 1840:199-201, and Smith 2002). The captain and passengers, including John Palmer, a prominent merchant from Calcutta, went by boat to Pontianak. The “Portuguese ship,” now commanded by Pangeran Anom and with “a motley crew of all nations,” arrived to remove the cargo, chiefly opium, from the wreck. Pangeran Anom persuaded most of the crew of the *Coromandel* to join him. The officers and remainder were camped on shore. At this stage the Pangeran remained “civil” to them but apparently determined to detain them. Some escaped on a *prahu* from Pontianak that was encountered by the *Helen*, a British store-ship sailing from Palembang, which arrived at the scene of the wreck to find the Pangeran’s ship and eight *prahus* from Sambas, some of which had been attacked by *prahus* from Pontianak. One of the latter had been sunk and the crew was ashore preparing to defend themselves with the residue of the crew of the *Coromandel*. The arrival of another ship from Sambas caused the *Helen* to return to Palembang to spread the news. Commanded by Captain David Macdonald, the EIC’s *Aurora* sailed to the Karimata area in mid-September and fell in with vessels from Pontianak with the Captain and passengers from the *Coromandel*. John Palmer transferred to the *Aurora* and told Macdonald that the Pangeran had committed no aggression until the *Coromandel* had been abandoned (i.e. technically there was no piracy) but had obstructed the vessels sent from Pontianak. Macdonald regarded this obstruction as grounds for detaining Pangeran Anom, so the *Aurora* sailed for the Sambas River. One of the ships from Sambas was found at anchor at the mouth of the river and

attacked, but it got over the shallow sandbar and escaped upriver because the *Aurora* was unable to follow.

British attacks on Sambas and the aftermath

When news of the fate of the *Coromandel* reached Java, Raffles suggested to Captain James Bowen, commander of the frigate HMS *Phoenix*, that it was time to destroy Sambas.¹⁴ Bowen sailed almost immediately via Pontianak, with the sloops HMS *Procris* and *Barracouta*, and gunboats, plus 100 British soldiers. They were joined by vessels from Pontianak, led by Sultan Kassim. The comments made by Richardson in 1805 turned out to be well-founded. The two sloops and supporting vessels struggled across the sandbar and up the river, which was much narrower than that which led to Palembang. Sambas turned out to be heavily defended by a triple log boom across the river and well-constructed forts, which were unsuccessfully attacked on 15 November. The flotilla withdrew under heavy gunfire and with considerable damage to the *Barracouta*.¹⁵ HMS *Phoenix* returned in December to Batavia, where Bowen suddenly died “under great depression of spirit, a sacrifice to the climate” (*JG* 1/45:2 Jan 1813). Shortly after the attack, Bowen had reported to Vice-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, the naval commander-in-chief in India, that he had acted “in consequence of a communication from Raffles” [about Sambas]. In his report to the Admiralty in London, Hood regretted that he had been prevented by Bowen’s death from learning more about Raffles’s “communications” (Hood 1813). Macdonald (1840:209) said that Bowen had “too overweening a contempt” for the native people, and poor information – he was probably misled by Pontianak – but the force was too small. Pangeran Anom later told Macdonald that he was warned of the forthcoming attack by a fast Chinese vessel from Batavia.

Although Raffles and Gillespie were by then personally on bad terms, they immediately organized a much stronger expedition which built up at the mouth of the Sambas river in the early months of 1813. It was initially an EIC campaign, but was joined by a squadron of vessels of the Royal Navy, no doubt eager to avenge the earlier defeat, and also by the Sultan of Pontianak with his forces. This campaign can be followed in detail in ships’ logs in the English National Archives, Kew, Macdonald (1840) and in the official report by the military commander, Lieut. Col. James Watson.¹⁶ A naval blockade was soon imposed, during which the *Aurora* captured a Chinese junk that had gone aground on the Sambas river bar. Unknown to Macdonald, Pangeran Anom had been aboard and narrowly escaped. The junk was given to the Sultan of Pontianak. After the capture of the junk, a Chinese delegation from Monterado and Landak came to the British military camp. They announced their readiness to withhold supplies from Sambas

14 Raffles had no authority over the Royal Navy. Bowen had naval command in the successful expedition in March-May 1812 against Palembang, about 60 miles upriver from the east coast of Sumatra. The expedition was under the overall command of Col. Gillespie, the military commander in Java. Thorn (1815: 127-73) gives a detailed eye-witness account of this hazardous expedition, along with the official reports.

15 The assault is recorded in detail in the logs of HMS *Barracouta* and *Procris* in the English National Archives, Kew (formerly the Public Record Office). Otherwise, information is sparse – the episode was covered up as much as possible.

16 The report was published several times, e.g. in Thorn (1815:327-32).

and exchange their connections for protection by the British if the captured vessel was restored – but there was no indication that this occurred. Later, Macdonald captured another of Pangeran Anom's vessels, laden with supplies, including gunpowder and shot from the Sultan of Brunei. This vessel (another junk?) was of great bulk, navigated by the renegade Portuguese boatswain from the *Diana*, and had come from Amoy, with supplies for Monterado and Landak, with 200 Chinese migrants on board (Macdonald 1840:220-23).

As the British forces gathered, the Sultan of Sambas prudently retired to the interior but Pangeran Anom remained, rejecting a request to surrender. Accordingly, the sloops HMS *Hecate* and *Procris*, the EIC's cruisers *Teignmouth* and *Aurora*, the Sultan of Pontianak's ship, and many smaller vessels, with about 1500 troops and armed sailors struggled over the bar and up the river towards the forts.¹⁷ The troops were landed in several divisions on 28 June. Some got lost, but others came across a terrified elderly Malay woman who was persuaded to show them the way to attack the main fort from the rear. The assault was successful and Pangeran Anom fled upriver in a small boat, escaping a botched pincer movement to attack Sambas from the rear and so capture him. His vessels – the “Portuguese ship,” a brig and several *prahus* – were burned and the British forces struggled back downriver and over the bar. The campaign was described as a glorious victory, though it took a large toll in subsequent sickness. Further, the political consequences were negligible. Raffles had been keen to destroy Sambas and dethrone the sultan in favor of a ruler from Pontianak, but soon became uncertain about what to do. Pontianak certainly wanted to take over control, and the Chinese miners (especially those from Monterado) were also hoping for autonomy under the British. However, Raffles decided to adhere to the original status quo and the sultan was soon allowed to return on condition of swearing allegiance to the British (several references in *Java Factory Records* for 1813; see Irwin 1955:27). The local people also sought the return of Pangeran Anom, who had retired to Pasir, where he had teamed up with “Rassib,” probably in the second ship from Sambas which was not reported captured in the attack on Sambas. Pangeran Anom was allowed to return, but “Rassib” was not (Macdonald 1840:361-63).

Macdonald's potentially hazardous trip in August 1814 to Sambas was in a small EIC gunboat “completely at their mercy” to receive Pangeran Anom's submission, and his impressions of the Pangeran have already been described here. Macdonald reminded the Pangeran that in 1813 he had put a price on Macdonald's head, at which he showed “feigned humility and contrition.” When Macdonald left Sambas, the gunboat was full of gifts, including a pregnant lady of the court whom the gunboat's Dutch commander agreed to marry (Macdonald 1840:304-8).¹⁸

17 Hunt's comment about the capture of the boat's crew of the “Hecate” in 1812 remains a mystery. The log of HMS *Hecate* is also in the English National Archives and gives no mention of piratical attack. Hunt's report was obviously written before the second campaign against Sambas, during which this event might otherwise have occurred (see Appendix). Perhaps Hunt got the name wrong again.

18 Bowen's unsuccessful assault on Sambas returned to haunt Raffles early in 1814, after Gillespie, by then in Calcutta, made a series of serious charges against Raffles's governance in Java. Although Raffles's role was apparently not referred to by Gillespie in writing, Raffles

Pangeran Anom becomes Sultan of Sambas

Less than a week after Pangeran Anom had made his submission, the sultan died. Pangeran Anom as regent wrote to Raffles, requesting the appointment of a British resident at Sambas, as Raffles had earlier intended. However, by then Raffles had been told by the EIC Government in Bengal not to develop his plans for Borneo (Irwin 1955:31-32). Pangeran Anom was chosen by the ruling families of Sambas as sultan. He reformed himself as far as the British were concerned and in 1815 received an official welcome on the Royal Navy's frigate HMS *Leda*, that had been involved in the assault in 1813 and was paying a farewell visit to the area (see Smith 2002). After the transfer of control in Java back to the Dutch, he wrote to Batavia early in 1817 to request the return of the Dutch to Sambas. His attempts to obtain support from "lord general Raffles" had not succeeded and he needed Dutch aid so that his lands would be better ruled. Optimistically, he asked the Dutch to provide him with a ship armed with 18 guns. Sultan Kassim of Pontianak also requested the return of the Dutch. Eventually a Dutch delegation, with 600 soldiers, arrived at Pontianak on 18 July 1818 and the sultan formally accepted Dutch suzerainty on 9 August (Irwin 1955:49-50). Typically, he promptly enlisted Dutch military support to pacify Tayen on the Kapuas and hence maintain strong control over the lower reaches of the river. The Dutch delegation then proceeded to Sambas, arriving at the river mouth on 2 September. There they encountered the Sultan of Sambas with a large fleet of *prahus* on the point of raiding Pontianak. He quickly changed his mind and also accepted Dutch suzerainty, the Dutch flag being raised at Sambas on 6 September 1818 (Irwin 1955:50-51).

Events after this time lie beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that the increasing independence of the Chinese *kongsis*, and the ongoing tensions and warfare between them, decreased the Sultan of Sambas's authority, as did the presence of the Dutch officials (Yuan 2000). He died in July 1828. The missionary Rev. W.H. Medhurst arrived very soon afterwards – certainly a sign of changing times. His correspondence and reports make it clear that the sometime Pangeran Anom was still greatly respected and that the inhabitants of Sambas looked back with nostalgia on their days of "piratical" glory (Medhurst 1829; for other references see Smith 2002).

Conclusion

Much of the evidence given here shows that while Pangeran Anom was undoubtedly an aggressive man of his times who followed the time-honored career of maritime raiding, his activities were greatly influenced by external events, especially the increasing influence of Pontianak. He went to considerable effort to try to establish a naval force, perhaps to balance that of Pontianak, and at the same time maintained trade both with Europeans and Chinese. The Pangeran's mixed ethnic background that

believed that he had raised it with both the military and naval commanders in India. In his detailed defense against the charges, Raffles (1814) felt obliged to emphasize that Gillespie had agreed to provide the small military force and that Bowen was solely responsible for planning and mounting the attack. Further, he (Raffles) had already been exonerated from blame by Lord Minto. Gillespie was killed in action later in 1814 but the charges were not cleared up in Raffles's favor until 1817, when he was in England. Wurtzburg (1954, *passim*) gives a detailed account.

presumably facilitated relations with local Chinese and Dayak people is especially intriguing. Accordingly, there is really no need for me to “rehabilitate” him, even by challenging Eurocentric views about “Malay piracy” – already challenged by Warren (2001) with respect to the Illanuns who became allies of Sambas. Apart from Macdonald’s views – albeit recorded after some 20 years – the fact that the Pangeran was accepted as sultan by the British and reigned without much negative comment by the Dutch, as far as I know, shows that he graduated successfully from “pirate” (dare I say “terrorist”?) to established ruler. Of course, such graduation (and changed views by external powers) is not at all unique in recent history. Stereotyping rulers as absolute villains is best left to politicians and the media: history is rarely so straightforward.

Appendix: John Hunt

Hunt’s original report to Raffles was possibly destroyed in the fire on the *Fame*, in which Raffles was traveling when he finally left Bencoolen in 1824. Despite the inaccuracies, we are fortunate that it was thought useful enough to be included in the short-lived *Malayan Miscellanies*, a publication established by Raffles. Hunt’s report tells us that he had traveled along the coast of West Borneo, and he was also involved in a voyage or voyages to Sulu. A report in the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* says that he was supercargo in the *Harrier* when in 1810 this vessel was wrecked on the north coast of Borneo. The officers and crew narrowly escaped being killed by the local people. There was quite a strong British naval presence there at the time, including the *Lord Minto*, commanded by Captain Greig. The Sultan of Sulu, who helped in the rescue, was thanked by the British and promised to support them (*PG* 5/241:6 Oct 1810). According to Gibson-Hill (1959), Hunt was shipwrecked in the *Seaflower* in the Sulu Sea in 1812. There was an HMS *Seaflower* and a merchant vessel called *Seaflower* at this time, but Gibson-Hill’s comment (with no citations) must reflect confusion with the wreck of the *Harrier*, as this was the only vessel referred to by Hunt in his own account of Sulu (Hunt 1820b). Hunt arrived in Batavia in the middle of 1812 and gave an effusive address to Raffles at a function on 23 September 1812 (*JG* “*Extraordinary*”: 29 Sept. 1812; also reported in *PG* 7/351:21 Nov 1812). The time of his arrival helps explain his errors in listing “from memory” (Hunt 1820a:44) the attacks on British vessels that occurred when he was not in the region. Hunt was in Batavia at the end of December 1812 when he took delivery of a small musical ensemble at the expense of the Batavia Government (de Haan 1935:585). This was possibly a privilege of his forthcoming appointment in Pontianak. Hunt went to Pontianak as resident and commercial agent early in 1813 and stayed there for some months. *The Prince of Wales Island Gazette*, reporting the appointment in Pontianak, stated that Hunt had been the master attendant at Negapatam in southern India (*PG* 7/364:20 Feb 1813). Lists of Europeans (not employed by the EIC) in issues of the EIC’s *East-India Register & Directory* between 1803 and 1809 name the master attendant as “James Hunt.” Presumably that name was a continuing mistake (though a surprising one), or perhaps there was confusion in Penang. Given the time taken to update entries in the *Register & Directory*, the timing of the disappearance of “James Hunt” fits with John Hunt’s voyage to Sulu.¹⁹

¹⁹ Of course, John Hunt may have been related to James Hunt. There must be more material about Hunt in EIC records that would help clear up his identity and early life.

In his report to Raffles, Hunt mentioned events in late 1812, such as an attack from Sambas on Mempawah “in October last” and (rather obscurely) the unsuccessful British attack on Sambas on 15 November 1812. Thus, he mentioned that HMS *Barracouta* just scraped over a reef of rocks in the river, and that below the forts below Sambas had “to haul athwart the river, to get her broadside to bear.” He also mentioned the view from the masthead (Hunt 1820a:54). These details suggest that he may have been present as a volunteer, though I know of no other evidence. In addition, in sentences in *Malayan Miscellanies* that were edited out of Moor’s reprint (Hunt 1837), Hunt referred to his attempts to obtain early manuscripts for Raffles at Pontianak. He could not obtain any ancient records from the Sultan of Pontianak “but was informed by him, he had sent you [Raffles] three historical manuscripts per favor of Capt. Graves” (Hunt 1820a:6).²⁰ These comments, and detailed information about Pontianak that was not given by Joseph Burn, suggest that Hunt may have been established at Pontianak when he wrote the report and that the correct date may not be 1812 but 1813. If not, it must have been written very late in 1812. Volume 1 of *Malay Miscellanies* contained many printer’s errors, for which the editor (William Jack) apologized. This is not an important matter in the present context, though it is clear that in assessing Raffles’s policy in the region, Bastin (1954) was wrong in assuming that Hunt’s report was a factor in Raffles’s support for the unsuccessful assault led by Captain Bowen.

Hunt’s long report gives much more information about many areas of Borneo, and particularly the north, than does Burn’s but contains the errors about piratical attacks that are analyzed above. The impression is that the crafty Sultan Kassim was successful in presenting to Hunt a misleading case against Sambas. In his report to Raffles, Hunt mentioned mining and the famous Matan “diamond” and briefly described the fruits and other plant products, and the wildlife of Borneo, including mammals, insects “and vermin,” fish and birds: “the ornithology of Borneo is somewhat limited” (Hunt 1820a:23). He showed strong interest in the commercial prospects of fishery and gathering oysters for pearls in northern Borneo and Sulu, commenting that Arab divers from Bahrein and Chulias from Nagore and Negapatam in India could teach local Malays the superiority of diving (Hunt 1820a:33-34). This interest could have resulted from time spent at Negapatam. Hunt was probably also the author of an imaginative account of the origin of the Dayaks and Malays by “H,” written “about two years ago... a few alterations excepted, whilst residing on Borneo.” This was dated 12 May 1815 and was also published in *Malayan Miscellanies* (Anon “H” 1820). It contains little of value apart from possibly his account of the origin of the Dayaks of Sekadau, up the River Kapuas, obtained from a chief of the district, according to whom several of the local tribes originated from the country of Lawai and then “settled on the banks of the great Lawai river” [i.e. the Kapuas] (Anon “H” 1820:29-30). This dispersal was said to be due to defeat in warfare with the “Biajus”, i.e. the Ngadju Dayaks of southern Borneo

20 I have not tracked down Captain Graves, who as already noted “was [in 1811] cut off by the Pasir pirates with a rich cargo” (Hunt 1820a:45). It is possible that Graves commanded the Portuguese-registered *Diana* (its captain not named in PG), though the implication from Hunt’s wording is that this vessel was attacked in 1812, the year in which Pangeran “out-heroded Herod.” There is no mention of the *Diana* or Graves in a later account that detailed attacks on both Dutch and British vessels over the period covered here, with no emphasis on Sambas (Anon. 1849).

– though Hunt misinterpreted or could not identify the place-names. These details add more snippets of information about Lawai (see Smith 2005).

John Hunt was later involved as Raffles's emissary in an unsuccessful commercial venture that Raffles initiated in 1814 in Sulu and the Philippines, with the aim of extending trade to Canton and so solving the chronic financial problems in Java. The failure was to cause Raffles some embarrassment and, in the words of Bastin (1954:104), was "gently hushed up." According to Captain Macdonald, who was there in the *Aurora*, the reception at Sulu was unfriendly because many of the followers of Pangeran Anom had settled there "and circulated amongst this wild and warlike people the most exaggerated stories of our conduct in the late affairs at Sambas and Palembang." Also, Hunt was "a half-caste gentleman, [and] had spent some years in the Malay trade"; this comment is intriguing with respect to the EIC's definition of "Europeans" included in the *East-India Register & Directory*, assuming that he was the EIC's "James Hunt." On one occasion he was stoned at Sulu (Macdonald 1840:280-5).²¹ Hunt afterwards wrote a lengthy geographical and historical account of the Sulu Archipelago and its relations with the Philippines and northern Borneo; this too was published in *Malayan Miscellanies* (Hunt 1820b). He settled in Java as a landowner and died there in 1835 (de Haan 1935:585-86). Despite the inaccuracies in Hunt's account of Borneo, his lyrical description of its attractions and products would have contributed greatly to Raffles's enthusiasm for the island as a future British possession even after the return of the Dutch to Java. As suggested by Bastin (1954), the report apparently also greatly impressed James Brooke: hence its inclusion in Keppel (1846, Vol 2; Appendix 2: xvi-lxiii).

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²¹ The short version of Macdonald's "third edition" mentions the stoning of the "Resident" (not named there) but not the other details about Hunt, suggesting that the copy in the Bodleian Library is really a fourth edition. It contains many handwritten notes by Macdonald, showing that he planned yet another edition. I have not tried to track down his later life and date of death.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW RELIGION IN CENTRAL KALIMANTAN¹

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For the last forty-five years, since Alfred Hudson began his excellent research in East Barito in the 1960s, and followed since then by many others, religious manifestations in Indonesian Borneo have been intensely studied, described, and explained by foreign observers and indigenous participants alike.² To understand these manifestations, reliable sources must be consulted. For instance, the present-day situation should be assessed by *adat* specialists, religious functionaries, or educated members of a community, and not be based solely on the observations of ordinary villagers.³ If an event is removed in time by more than one generation and living witnesses are no longer available, it is necessary to consult archives and scholarly sources and books.⁴

The religion at issue here developed among the Ngaju Dayaks in what is today the Indonesian Province of Central Kalimantan. The Ngaju occupy areas along the

1 This paper is a slightly revised version of an address I presented in Indonesian to representatives of sundry religious communities on 10 March 2006 in Tarakan (East Kalimantan). It was given as part of a series of discussions which President Abdulrahman Wahid recommended in 2001 to be held in all governmental district capitals of Indonesia as a means of preventing religious hatred (*Forum Komunikasi Umat Antar Umat Beragama*). Tarakan has a liberal policy as regards religion. The paper is also an English-language abstract of a more detailed description of the Hindu Kaharingan religion, entitled *Dari Agama Politeisme ke Agama Ketuhanan Yang Esa*. It is based on literature sources in three European languages, as well as modern Indonesian, Ngaju, and Ngaju ritual language. The editor is Prof. Kumpiady Widen, M.A., Ph. D. (Balai Penerbit Amu Lanu Pontianak).

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

2 In the case of Central Kalimantan, scholars have been drawn to nearly all areas except for the Kotawaringin Barat region.

3 Apparently Professor Schiller drew on such unqualified sources to explain the etymology and history of the word *basarah*, 'to conduct a religious worship' (2005: 117, 118). According to her informants, she claims, the word *basarah* is derived from *basara*, 'to litigate.' First, Schiller fails to note that *basarah* is both written and spoken with a /h/, whereas *basara* is without a /h/. Secondly, *basara* is derived from *bicara/bichara*, 'to talk' (Hardeland 1859; Bingan and Ibrahim 29; Schaerer 1846: 11; Wilkinson I: 135). *Basarah*, on the other hand, is a loanword from the Indonesian root *serah*; thus *menyerahkan diri* (like the Arabic root and meaning of 'Islam').

4 For instance: Why was the Japanese occupation of 1942 especially cruel in Tarakan? According to van Heekeren, it was because the Dutch had succeeded in sinking a Japanese minesweeper there (Heekeren 1969: 41, 42).

southern Barito, the Minor Kapuas, the Kahayan, and the Katingan rivers, as well as parts of the Mentaya. Dutch explorers made first contact with this part of Borneo by way of Banjarmasin, that is, through the Barito Delta to the southeast, in 1606. It was not until 1817, however, that the Dutch were able to occupy parts of the southern Barito, an area inhabited mainly by the Bakumpai Dayaks, and Tanah Laut in the Province of South Kalimantan. Why did it take them so long to establish a colony?

Although the Dutch possessed iron cannons, they also needed motorized boats, initially steam vessels and side-wheelers, if they wanted to control the interior. Southeast Asian sultanates possessed cannons, but they were cast of bronze or brass and so overheated after only a few rounds. The Dutch could fire their iron cannons up to a hundred times without overheating them (pers. comm., Heeresmuseum in Leiden, 1983). They began to use steam-powered boats in Southeast Asia early in the nineteenth century. Up until then control was only possible in coastal regions. With steamships, they could navigate up the Barito as far as Muara Teweh during the rainy season.

By 1830 security was established to the extent that Europeans could settle in Banjarmasin. Protestant missionaries took advantage of this possibility. But since they had practically no chance to make progress in Islamized areas, they proceeded two to three days upriver into the vicinity of what is today Kuala Kapuas and established a mission among the Ngaju Dayak. By 1849, the missionaries began producing reports and books describing the culture and religion of the Ngaju. Scientists, often German (Becker 1849; Schwaner 1853/54), followed close behind the missionaries. Two mountain ranges in Central Kalimantan, the Schwaner and Müller, carry the names of German pioneers to this day.

According to early reports, Ngaju religion assigned cosmological or geographical features to different deities. For instance, the uppermost heavenly sphere was believed to be controlled by the creator, Hatalla, who in interior areas was also called Hatara. The name's etymology suggests a Hindu derivation. Mahatara, also known as Bhattara Guru, refers to the Hindu God Shiva (Schärer 1946: 16; Zimmermann 1969: 318, 365). Later, when Dutch control expanded and Moslem influence grew, the name of the Creator God, and so also the name of the one high God today, was Islamized to "Hatalla." The earth's surface and what is underground belonged to the deity Kaloë, a female monster in the form of a one-breasted toad (Baier 2007: 6; see also the name of the town Kluwa in South Kalimantan). In the course of time Kaloë was replaced by Jata, another riverine deity, who was also female and also in charge of water and the underground (Perelaer 1870: 5-6). However, Jata also seems to have an Islamic flavor, for sacrifice in her name may not include pork, but only goat meat (Zimmermann 1969: 317-324). From 1935 until 1960, the Ngaju venerated two high and central deities in parallel: Hatalla, the deity of the sky, and Jata, the deity of water and the underworld (Baier 2007: 7, 21 and Schärer 1946: 22).

During the colonial era still other deities were also venerated, for instance Pataho, founder and protector of villages (Baier 2007: 17).⁵ Especially during headhunting one placed oneself under his protection since Pataho was also in charge of war and defense. Even today one finds evidence of him in most Ngaju villages in Central Kalimantan, in

⁵ Pataho is a generic term, not the proper name of a specific god.

the form of model houses placed on stilts in his name. Often inside such houses exotic objects can be found: for instance, a monkey-skull, a curiously shaped stone, or an object from a shipwreck (Kuehnle-Degeler 1924: 111-114). About twenty years ago I discovered the rusty replica of a cannon in such a hut. Perhaps it was possible, so I thought, to see if it came from a Portuguese or a Dutch ship. But suddenly an old woman stood behind me and suggested that I offer a bottle of beer to the cannon. Puzzled, I asked, "why beer?" This was an alcoholic beverage, therefore *haram* in Islam. To this she replied that the cannon was "Western" and that it was her family's Pataho who wanted beer for it, just as any "Westerner" would. In this way, this village guardian deity is associated with objects from the past that are especially exotic, rare or curious.

There are other deities, such as Sahor, Bapa Sangumang, Indu Sangumang, and others, who watch over different aspects of human life, like health, or wealth and well-being. Most important, however, is the mighty Tempon Telon, who watches over the souls of the dead in the afterworld (Lumholtz 1920/I: 23; Schärer n.d.: 131, Ugang 1983: 10). This deity was held in higher regard than the Creator God, Mahatalla. So important is Tempon Telon that the tribal religious community was called *babuhan* ('community') of Tempon Telon. Moreover, today Tempon Telon is considered the equal of Shiva, as god of destruction and dissolution (Baier 2007: 20-22). Likewise, the creator Mahatalla was not as almighty and unchanging a century earlier as he is now. He had power only as long as he possessed 'the water of life,' *Danum Kaharingan*, which ensured rejuvenation (Zimmermann 1969: 317-324).

Throughout the Dutch era there was religious freedom for everyone; only headhunting, slave-sacrifice and cruelty to animals, as they occurred during death feasts, were forbidden. Later, during the Japanese occupation, it was policy to erase all remnants of western colonialism. For the first time native religion was taken seriously, on a par with high religion. From 1943, a general movement towards Japanization took place (Bigler 1947; Baier 1998: 51). Native priests were encouraged to reintroduce or maintain their old rituals. Educated *adat* specialists and Christian Ngaju reverted back to animism, foremost among them Tjilik Riwt, who later, in 1957, became the first Indonesian governor of the new Province of Central Kalimantan. J. Salilah, a medical nurse during colonial times and Christian employee of the mission hospital in Kuala Kapuas, became a professing animist and practicing priest during Japanese times. Already, in 1945, the Japanese had urged him to give his religion a new name.

Spontaneously he chose the name *Kaharingan*. Its etymology derives from Ngaju ritual language and the concept of *haring*, which means 'to exist by oneself, without foreign influence' (Ugang 1983: 10, 11, 12; cf. *Danum Kaharingan*). As the Hindu Kaharingan religious institute explains it today, Kaharingan means 'living,' 'a source of life stemming from God' (*sumber kehidupan dengan kuasa Ranying Hatalla Langit*, Lembaga Pengembangan Tandak...2003: 1 (A.b. al 1)). The new name spread throughout Kalimantan after 1945. At present it is presumed to be the official name for all extant Dayak religions of Indonesia, more exactly for what survives of them, especially in Central Kalimantan and along the borders to West and East Kalimantan (Tunjung, Benuaq Dayaks), as well as in the Meratus mountains of South Kalimantan.

Encouraged by developments during the Japanese occupation, adherents of Kaharingan organized a conference. In 1950 they met in Central Kalimantan near

Palangka Raya where they resolved to maintain “Kaharingan” as the official name of their faith. Simultaneously, they established a political party, the Sarikat Kaharingan Dayak Indonesia (Schiller 1997: 117). But they still had a long way to go before the new religion became official. Before Indonesia was ready to grant formal approval, a number of conditions had to be met. The state permitted only one ideology, namely *Pancasila* which embraced one Almighty God. How can a worldview, according to which there are many gods and spirits, satisfy this stipulation? Tjilik Riwt was aware of this problem. In a publication locally distributed in 1953, he proposed that Kaharingan knew only one God by the name of Ranying (Riwut 1953: 5). However Ranying is only an honorific for the creator God, Ranying Hatalla Langit. This Ranying occupies the seventh, or highest, heavenly sphere, jointly with his angels, the *Dewas* and *Sangiang*. By way of explanation, Riwt in this instance refers to the sister or wife of Hatalla. For the first time he manipulates in writing the ranking of Ranying Hatalla Langit so that he can appear similar in status to the God in Islam or Christianity; a God without family, wife or children. The original family members were reduced to the status of angels.

Marked changes took place too in the cost of sacrifices, especially in the Tiwah Feasts of the Dead. Before the Dutch occupation it was necessary, at least for the chief families, to offer slaves (these were mostly bought at the slave market). In 1859 the Dutch forbade this practice and only buffaloes were allowed to be offered. In the 1950s and 1960s the death rituals experienced competition from the much cheaper rituals of Islam and Christianity. According to Dr. Sri Kuhnt Saptodewo, after the eighties only hens were required to be offered at the Tiwah Feast of the Dead (Maks 1861: 494; Kuhnt Saptodewo 1993: 75, 78). After questioning and receiving inadequate information, I find this doubtful however, nor is it confirmed by other sources (cf. also Schiller 1997: 124). In 2003 Bajik Simpei informed me that only buffaloes or oxen are acceptable sacrifices during Tiwah feasts.

Ever since Indonesia started its *Orde Baru*, every citizen was formally required to belong to a recognized religious community. Five were permitted: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Those adhering to Kaharingan had to adapt further, for in 1979, when their faith last failed recognition, they were still unable to conform to the following requirements laid down: 1. that their belief knew only one God; 2. that a holy book or script was present; 3. that a special building for religious services was present; and 4. that a set number of yearly feast-days were ordered.

The changes which Tjilik Riwt had begun to make the religion acceptable were carried further by later Kaharingan leaders and the editors of *Panaturan* and included these adaptations:

1. The Creator God Ranying Hatalla Langit was declared an almighty, most holy and elevated deity. Naturally, he was also all-knowing, mysterious and everlasting (Baier 2007: 18-19). He became more like the Hindu Trimurti, who is creator, and simultaneously supporter and destroyer of all life. Like Trimurti, Ranying Hatalla Langit penetrates, fills, and completes the world and the cosmos and is one with them. *Jata*, the *Ngaju*-deity of water and the underworld, was degraded to become a manifestation of Ranying Hatalla Langit. All other *Dewas*, spirits, spirit-like beings or “lords in heaven” were similarly degraded, either as manifestations of the creator or else as angels, prophets or *Jins* (Baier 2007: 20). As far as comparison with Islam went, Ranying Hatalla Langit

was equal to Allah: owing to his everlasting, esoteric perfection; no human being can adequately describe him. The quality “all-loving,” with which he was also endowed, may have been modeled on Christianity.

2. A holy book. The Dutch scientist Mallinckrodt and the Swiss theologian Schaerer before the second World War proposed that genealogies of deities, spirits, spirit-like beings, as well as of ancestral spirits and human ancestors were an integral part of the Ngaju creation myth. The two scholars had compiled and interpreted this in accordance with the recitals of Ngaju ritual specialists (Mallinckrodt and Mallinckrodt-Djata 1928; Schärer 1946). Their creation myth, available in print before the colonial phase ended, was that of the Kapuas and lower Kahayan area. However, the individuals who later promoted Kaharingan as a high religion came from the middle reaches of the Kahayan. Therefore, in 1973, they readapted the existing Middle-Kahayan myth to their own purposes. In 1996, at Palangka Raya, where the final version of the myth was formally agreed upon by a committee of leaders representing all Kaharingan communities, it was printed and made available as a holy text entitled *Panaturan. Tamparan Taluh Handiai*, viz. “The Origins. The Source of All Being.” If one compares this with earlier versions, a number of discrepancies and manipulations become apparent. For instance, the new text, among other things, refers to a confusion of languages and the building of a tower, just as the Koran and the Bible have it (Genesis 11), a detail which is entirely missing in earlier Ngaju references (Majelis Besar Alim Ul. Kaharingan Indonesia 1996: 172).

3. Up into the 1970s, a building for religious services, which are now held every week, did not exist in Central Kalimantan, at least among the Ngaju, and this is still so in the far interior, where a ‘hall’ (*balai*) is built only for burial feasts. The first building for regular services (Balai Basarah) was erected in Palangka Raya some thirty years ago. Every Thursday evening the community congregates for a short ritual with recitals and sermon, songs and collection (cf. Schiller 2005: 114-121). The particular day of the week, however, for the Kaharingan service may vary. In Pendreh, close to Muara Teweh on the Barito, the community meets on Friday mornings. Women take part in meetings and also share ritual duties. Other services are performed incidentally and on feast days. The Indonesian government subsidizes the erection of a Balai Basarah.

4. Regular feast days. The curriculum for secondary schools recommends three feast-days per year.⁶ First, “agricultural day” after the May harvest is a thanksgiving with rest, cleaning and blessing of agricultural tools. Deified ancestors are asked during a service to render their blessing for the coming season. The second is a “cultural day,” when the gift of knowledge and culture is credited to Bawi Ayah, a deity similar to Saraswati, the Hindu equivalent of Bawi Ayah in Bali. The third is a day of “general thanksgiving” for the blessings the community received during the previous year. Rituals in honor of Pataho, the founder or guardian of communities, are performed at his shrines. Complete rest from work is an important requirement. This practice was apparently influenced by the Balinese Nyepi Day (Lembaga Pengembangan Tandak...2003, in Baier 2007: 20; Zimmermann 1969: 358).

In March 1980, when the Kaharingan community obtained official recognition

⁶ This had not yet been adopted at the time this paper was written (March 2006).

by the state government, not as Indonesia's sixth religion, but as a branch of Hinduism, the name "Hindu Kaharingan" was formalized. Direction and authority for decision-making was delegated to the "Great Council of the Hindu Kaharingan religion" in Palangka Raya. A local Hindu Kaharingan academy became an official educational state institution. Hundreds of religious teachers are trained there. The state also formally subsidizes this teaching via the leaders of the Hindu communities in Bali. So it was not until the visit in 2001 of President Abdulrahman Wahid in Palangka Raya that money was given to the Great Council of the Kaharingans. Only during the past few years was it possible to formally employ teachers and to erect subsidized buildings for Hindu Kaharingan services in Kalimantan.

It is remarkable to see how positive and self-conscious Kaharingans currently are in their interior villages. "We are Hindus," they proclaim. Likewise, people in Palangka Raya are proud of being part of a Hindu world community. "In October (2004), when a Krishna world congress takes place in the USA, our people will be there!" The Kaharingan curriculum for high schools claims that "The Hindu Kaharingan Religion has no beginning. It has always been present, ever since there have been humans. In fact, 'Kaharingan' equals life. Together with the first human beings it came down to earth...it gives direction and faith to all mankind" (Lembaga Pengembangan Tandak...2003: 2, in Baier 2007: 10).

Two passages of Ngaju death rituals may serve to indicate the development which has taken place. The first (Citation 1) was formulated some 80-100 years ago, written down as cited by religious functionaries, some three months after the death of an individual ready for burial (Schärer 1966: 495, 507). The second (Citation 2) was formalized 30-40 years ago, as recited by a Kaharingan representative of a local community, while the body to be buried still remained at home (Majelis Besar... 1974: 14-16 (shortened)). Both quotations speak for themselves. Can the Ngaju prayers of a century ago be compared with the Kaharingan prayers of the present, or does the new ritual appear closer to modern, monotheistic rituals as we know them?

Citation 1: "You – the souls of the dead, as you rest by the stepping stone, close the entrance door to the house of the hornbill; you – who lounge there like fallen leaves by the stone, close to the anchorage, the place for boats and water snakes; you – pray, turn back, and lead us to the mountain home of the coffins, to the hill where the dead reside... May our handfuls of rice quickly rise up to the dew-clouds and return from there as a shower..." (Schärer 1966: 495, 507).

These words and many more like them are addressed not to one almighty God, but to spirit-like beings whom one commands, rather than pleads with, to respond. Such texts can only be understood by individuals familiar with the ritual language and the mythology of the native community concerned.

Citation 2: "Ranying Hatalla Langit, with this prayer we commend unto you this soul hoping it will be accepted. We pray asking you, the Almighty, to lend us your golden boat for the Liau at the grave site of our village. Ranying Hatalla Langit, grant us your forgiveness and love, forever, to us, your community, during lifetime the home of the soul of this deceased. Let the water of life rain down on all of us, so that we may continue to share a long life on earth, be wealthy and happy. Ranying Hatalla Langit, protect us from sickness and grant us means (magic) to survive, for you are almighty,

you have more power than all kings together. Our prayer has only few words; it is short so that its soul may return to us directly!” To conclude, a “kurr” is uttered three times (as if calling chickens) for the souls of the prayers to return. The final word “sahij” for “amen” marks the end. The majority of Ngaju are today Christians and this second passage seems to bear similarities to the Lord’s Prayer by which Protestant Christians, including Protestant Ngaju, praise the Lord and ask for His assistance.

Although single elements, ways of expression, words, and names may derive from ancient, native belief, Hindu Kaharingan deserves to be called a new religion, one that was shaped by modern, educated individuals. They adapted to the demands of their culture, to those of the state and to others elsewhere in the modern world. This new religion takes its place in Indonesia. It developed from tribal religion into a high religion. At the beginning of the twenty-first century it became Indonesia’s largest, now monotheistic tribal religion. Hindu Kaharingan is well respected, influential, and progressive now. It had to go a long way to achieve this.

Addendum : According to the Badan Pusat Statistik, Kalimantan Tengah, at the end of 2004 there were 1,913,788 inhabitants in the province: 1,361,318 were Muslims (71%), 384,698 Christians (Protestants and Catholics) (18%), and 198,339 Hindus (including thousands of Balinese transmigrants) (10%).

During the last 170 years (from about 1830 to 2006) the percentage of Dayaks practicing tribal religion diminished from nearly 100% to 10%. Nevertheless, the nearly 200,000 adherents of the Kaharingan religion demonstrate that this new religion is the largest religious group in Indonesia that originates from a tribal religion. All other animistic religions vanished or constitute very small minorities.

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THE SHAMANIC *BELIAN SENTIU* RITUALS OF THE BENUAQ OHOOKNG, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE RITUAL USE OF PLANTS

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Introduction

The Dayak Benuaq Ohookng people of East Kalimantan believe in a diverse multitude of territorial spirits known as *wook*. Some *wook* have the power to remove the soul (*juus*) thought to reside in a human body part or organ. At the same time, they implant disease with the result that the affected body part or organ becomes sick. The objective of Benuaq shamans (*pembeliatn*), as intermediaries with the spiritual world, is to identify the spirit responsible and negotiate with it during a nightly *belian sentiu* ritual. The particular *belian sentiu* rituals I describe in this paper are performed over four consecutive nights. They are exclusively night rituals and involve an exchange in which a carved ironwood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*) 'exchange soul' (*kelakar*) is traded with the spirit for the patient's captured soul. To get rid of the disease, the patient additionally smears some of his/her saliva on a carved image (*sepatukng silih*) representing the illness-causing spirit. Prior to this, the shaman first activates the image. Afterwards, the image is taken to the forest and left there. The shaman may also extract the disease from the sick body part by means of a thinly shredded banana leaf (*telolo*). The disease can also be attached to the carved image of the spirit or mixed in the blood of a sacrificial animal. In order to find the lost soul of the patient's sick body part, the shaman, on the final, fourth night of the ritual, performs a dance, then falls into a trance. While in trance, he receives a message informing him where to catch the missing soul. To discover the soul and capture it, he uses a bamboo tube filled with boiled rice (*tolakng tintikng*). The captured soul is then massaged back into the sick body part of the patient.

To perform a four-night *belian sentiu* ritual, a great many plants are essential. These are arranged around an altar (*balai sianca jadi*) and are used as ritual objects. In addition, both white rice and rice colored with black, red, yellow, and green dyes play an important role in both attracting and feeding the spirits.

The observations and interviews upon which this paper is based took place during seven journeys I made to the Benuaq Ohookng between 1976 and 2006. The most intensive period of my study of Benuaq Ohookng shamanism was from 1976 through 1984.

Fundamental beliefs concerning disease and the conditions of curing

The Dayak Benuaq Ohookng referred to in this research note inhabit the longhouse villages of Pentat, Lempunah, Muara Nayan, Mancong and the former Keranau, all situated along the Ohong (*Ohookng* in their language) River, in the Tanjung Isui area, Kecamatan Jempang, Kutai Barat, East Kalimantan. Each village comprises a longhouse plus additional single-family houses built around it.

Culturally and linguistically, the Benuaq Ohookng belong to the Luangan Dayak group (cf. Sillander 1995, Weinstock 1983). In the traditional beliefs of the Benuaq Ohookng, a living human being has a spirit soul (*semangat*) and, in addition, seven body-part souls (*juus*). Thus, the head has the *juus puaq*, the abdomen the *juus sentunkng*, the heart the *juus lemposu*, the bones the *juus tulakng*, the flesh the *juus issi*, and each eye an *ilang anak majang*. Terrestrial spirits (*wook*) have the power to “eat” a *juus* and at the same time implant a disease in the corresponding body part. Consequently, this part or organ becomes sick. Efforts to cure a disease can succeed only if the disease is removed and the missing *juus* replaced. This is the mission of the shamans, *pembeliatn* or *beliatn*, who act as mediums in relation to the *wook*. During nightly sessions, while performing rites known generally as *belian sentiu* (or *sentiyu*), these mediums identify the *wook* responsible for the illness and present them diverse offerings, including small carved images, or ‘exchange souls’ (*kelakar*), made of ironwood.

If the *wook* agrees, he takes back the disease. To restore the missing *juus* to the patient, the *beliatn* performs a vigorous dance, after which he falls into a trance. In this state, he learns from the *wook* where to find and catch the *juus* for re-inserting it into the patient’s body.

A *belian sentiu* ritual may last up to four nights, or more, with varied activities and increasing amounts of ritual equipment. A one- or two-night ritual is accompanied by the sacrifice of a single chicken. For a four-night ritual, two chickens are sacrificed or, possibly, one or two pigs. For rituals lasting eight nights or more, old skulls with souls dating from the long-ago time of headhunting may be used as a medium for the *wook* and for the shaman’s protection. The *beliatn* call these skulls *kelelungan merwaaq* or *kelelungan panyan tuhuq*. It is obligatory to wrap them in traditional red cloths called *abang*. In the case of an eight-day rite, a buffalo may be sacrificed.

To perform a four-night *belian sentiu* ritual, a great number of plants and other ritual objects (*ramuan*) are essential, every one of which has a special function. Many are medicinal plants. According to Gönner (2002: 184), up to 59 species of 32 botanic families are used in Benuaq Ohookng shamanistic rituals.

Altars (*balai sianca jadi*) and the shaman’s protective measures

To perform a *belian sentiu* ritual a rectangular shaped altar or shrine (*balai sianca jadi*) (see Photo 1) is constructed from *potukng* wood (*Melicope incana*, syn. *Euodia alba*, Rutaceae).¹ This is a type of wood associated with many *wook*. The altar furniture includes small wooden houses for the *wook*, two *antaakng* (*tempayan*, antique Chinese jars, homes for the spirits), a *genikng* (large antique gong, also a home for a spirit), a short ladder, and a specific superstructure. The altar is surrounded by high stalks or branches of the following eight obligatory plant species (eight is an important number in *belian* rituals):

1. *Jelmoq* (*pisang*, banana), *Musa paradisiaca* L., Musaceae
2. *Sepootn* (*pinang*), *Areca catechu* L., Palmae

¹ In the spelling of Benuaq Ohookng words used here, /c/ corresponds to the English /ch/ and /q/ represents a glottal stop.

3. *Touq*, *Costus sp.*, Zingiberaceae
4. *Ukor*, *Cariota mitis* Loureiro, Palmae
5. *Biowo*, *Cordyline fruticosa* (L.) A. Chevalier, Liliaceae
6. *Teluyatn* (ironwood), *Eusideroxylon zwageri* Teysm. & Binnend., Lauraceae
7. *Potukng*, *Melicope incana* T.G.Hartley, Rutaceae, Syn. *Euodia alba* Hook.f.
8. *Nacakng*, *Macaranga triloba* (Blume) Muell. Arg., Euphorbiaceae

For the two most important of these items, *teluyatn* (*Eusideroxylon*) and *potukng* (*Melicope*), two specimens of each are present.



Photo 1: *Balai sianca jadi* altar with an *awiir* fabric, the village of Pentat, 2006 (photo: H. Zahorka)

These plant species are related to distinct *wook* families. Their wood is always used in ritual performances and is fashioned into ritual objects. *Potukng*, rich in alkaloids, is a “spirits’ wood.” *Teluyatn*, also called *belian*, incorporates mystic power and calls helpful spirits.

The *beliatn* has to be able to lure all the various *wook* from the forests, fields, trees, and waterside into the room where the ritual is being performed so that they may receive the offerings and so become supportive. When the altar is beautifully decorated, then the *wook* will settle on the branches of the plants or in the small houses. The bowls and plates containing offerings are crowned with a cone made from young coconut leaves. The fringed panels on the side are made of the same material. Special fringes and objects intended to attract the spirits are made of the young leaves of *tuak* (*Aren* palm,

Arenga pinnata (Wurmb.) Merrill.). Ornamental fringes in red and yellow are often made from the young leaves of *paleh* (or *palas*), a small palm (*Licuala sp.*), that keeps evil *wook* away.

To get the attention of the spirits, the acting *beliatn* starts the séance with a sharp whistle produced from the hollowed fang of a sunbear (*Helarctos malayanus*). To protect himself from malevolent *wook* he smears his neck, chest, and arms with white rice-paste and sprinkles himself and all of the people in the room with fragrant *danum bungaq mayang* (*danum* = water and *bungaq mayang* = the flower of *sepoont* or the *Areca catechu*). For sprinkling, he uses a small twig of *ngeraseh* (basil, *Ocimum basilicum* L., Caesalpinaceae). This “holy water” ritual seems, to my mind, to be part of an ancient Hindu heritage deriving from the Mulawarman Kingdom, which existed in this area before the arrival of Islam and produced the first stone inscriptions in Sanskrit with Pallava letters in about 400 AD. This assumption may also apply to the use of incense at the beginning of the ritual. Small pieces of tuber root from the *luaq* or *luwee* plant, (*Dianella ensifolia* (L.) DC., Liliaceae), which contains an insecticide, are heated in a small pan over glowing charcoal. Also, resin incense can be used. Finally, the *beliatn* throws *wajiq* (yellow sacred rice) over his shoulder in the direction of the entrance three times. This ritual calls the rice spirit *lolakng luikng* (*lolakng* means ‘beautiful woman’). This female



Photo 2: *Beliatn* Moya performing a *belian sentiu* ritual in 1978 at Tanjung Isui village (photo: H. Zahorka)

spirit, which seems also to be of Hindu origin, transmits the messages between the *beliatn* and his helpers, the *mulukng* spirits. The yellow dye for the rice is *kunyit*, extracted from the rhizome of *Curcuma longa* (L., Zingiberaceae). Yellow dye may also be extracted from *siraakng* (*Codiaeum variegatum* (L.) Bl., Euphorbiaceae).

The most effective defense weapon employed by the *beliatn* against dangerous *wook*, however, is his ‘leaf sword,’ or *biowo*. This is made from a leaf of the *Cordyline fruticosa* (L.) (A. Chevalier, Liliaceae), artfully decorated with cuts and tied with young coconut leaves (Photo 2). The headdress and the cuffs of the *beliatn* are made of the same material. The people cultivate *biowo* plants in their gardens and fields to keep away evil spirits.

Then, in a long song couched in poetic language called the *mempakn beliatn*, the *beliatn*

calls all the spirits by name and describes all of the offerings prepared for them.

***Awiiir*, the shaman's spiritual link to the spirit world**

With the *biowo* in his hand, the *beliatn* dances in a counterclockwise direction around a long white or patterned cloth hung from the ceiling or from a beam. At the top of the cloth are hung young inflorescences of the *sepootn* or *pinang* palm (*Areca catechu* L.), as well as other ornamental palm leaves. This is called the *awiiir* and is the most sacred object used in *belian* rituals (Photos 1, 2 und 12). It is the vehicle of the *beliatn*, linking him to the world of the spirits. By this, his *semangat* can journey upwards into the realm of the spirits. Hidden at the top is a wooden cross within a ring. This symbolizes the crossroad leading the *beliatn* to the eight levels of the sky where the spirits live in their various villages.

One after another, all of the offerings are placed beneath or at the foot of the *awiiir*, as the *beliatn* presents them while singing to the spirits. This is also the place where the *beliatn* strives to learn the identity of the *wook* responsible for the disease (Photo 3). To help him achieve this, *Beliatn Daman*, shown in Photo 3, uses small pots containing bees' wax torches, a small mirror, rice, and twigs of *siraakng* (*Codiaeum variegatum*), whose green leaves are spotted with yellow marks that look like yellow sacred rice. This medicinal plant, which is also known to the Benuaq Ohookng as *pohon jatus pengerunu*, has a magical significance. Because of its capacity for vegetative propagation, it is considered immortal. Often it is planted on graves. Even after all other signs of the grave have vanished, *Codiaeum* will still be seen growing there to mark the spot.

All performances of the *beliatn* are accompanied by the music of *gimar* drums, large *genikng* gongs, and six small *kentangan* or *saron* gongs, which play the melody. Rhythm and melody vary according to the actions of the *beliatn*.

Photo 3.
Beliatn
Daman
prays for
knowledge
of the spirit's
identity,
1976,
Tanjung
Isui village
(photo: H.
Zahorka)



Food offerings and exchange souls for the spirit

The most alluring food presented to the *wook* is boiled white rice and boiled rice colored black, red, yellow, and green with dyes. This “five-colored rice” fills dozens of hanging and standing platforms. Black dye is extracted from the leaves of *sopaakng piao* (*Leguminosa Archidendron sp.*). Red dye comes from the fruits of *gelinapm* (also *gilinggam*) (*Bixa orellana L.*, Bixaceae). Yellow dye comes from *siraakng* (*Codiaeum variegatum L.*, Euphorbiaceae) and *kunyit* (the root of *Curcuma longa L.*, Zingiberaceae). Finally, green dye derives from the leaves of *puput* (*Jasminum sambac Aiton*, Oleaceae) or from those of *biowo* (*Cordyline fruticosa*).



Photo 4: Five-colored rice and red petals in the center, Pentat village, 2006 (photo: H. Zahorka)

Photo 5: Rack for rice offerings (*kelenkakng eboq*), Pentat village, 1988 (photo: H. Zahorka)



Small platforms intended to lure the *wook* into the house are erected in front of the house. These are constructed of *potukng* wood and are loaded with five-colored rice (Photo 4). At the center of the plate containing the colored rice are red petals for decoration. The posts of the left platform are pointed like spirit hats. To accommodate the great number of *wook*, particularly the *nyahuq* or omen spirits, swing-shaped constructions (*kelenkakng eboq*, *kelenkakng* = swing) with many “sitting boards,” one on top of the other, are hung from a ceiling beam. On each storey of swings, a banana leaf is set out covered with five-colored rice (Photo 5).

Some *beliatn* additionally offer colors in liquid form, particularly to the *juata* water spirits (Photo 6). The four glasses of colored liquid are accompanied by four *sepatukng kokoq*, dog-like figures carved of *potukng* wood (*sepatukng* = figure, *kokoq* = dog). White appears in the form of white rice at the center. The purpose of this set of offerings is probably to attract the *wook* from all four points of the compass. This idea seems also to reflect Hindu influence, as these four directions play an important role in Hinduism.

The big dog-shaped figure on the left-hand side depicts a *timang* (tiger), a spirit that protects the *beliatn*, which is also carved of *potukng* wood. The figure is carefully dressed with a typically Benuaq *ikat* fabric *ulap doyo* woven from the leaf fibers of *doyo* (*Curculigo latifolia* Dryander, Amaryllidaceae). A second plate contains the five-colored rice formed into five



Photo 6: Four *sepatukng kokoq* images and a *timang* spirit, *Beliatn* Moya, 1978 (photo: H. Zahorka)



heart-shaped figures. Figures that depict or attract the *wook*, or which are occupied by them, must be made of *potukng* wood. Most of these figures have human-like shapes. Other, similar carved figures, which are made of ironwood (*teluyatn*, *Eusideroxylon zwageri*), have an entirely different function. These are ‘exchange souls,’ or *kelakar*. Several of them are generally displayed within the altar area (Photo 7 and 8) and each is designated

Photo 7: A *kelakar* or ironwood exchange soul, Muara Nayan village, 1980 (photo: H. Zahorka)



Photo 8: Three *kelakar* and a *mulaakng* image (photo: H. Zahorka)

as a ‘compensation’ (*ganti*), to exchange in return for the patient’s soul. They are offered on the altar without a special ritual. Their length varies; however, their gender is always indicated: males with a loincloth, females with a skirt. The *kelakar* can be considered as a symbolic substitute for a human sacrifice, or simulacrum. Photo 8 shows, from left to right, a male, a female, and another male *kelakar*. The far right-hand figure depicts a *mulaakng* spirit carved of *deraya sepatuku* wood (*Horsfieldia grandis*, Myristicaceae). *Mulaakng*

spirits may cause illness (Collection H. Zahorka).

Ruyak are constructions that hold objects for offerings. Their shape differs for different *wook* families. If a local or village *wook* is identified as responsible for the patient’s illness, then objects will be offered that are valuable to local people; however, in miniature form (Photo 9). Adorned with split coconut leaves, this *ruyak* contains an *antaakn* (*tempayan*, antique Chinese jar), *kentangan* (six small gongs), a *genikng* (large gong) and two cylinder-shaped bellows like those used by Benuaq blacksmiths. The objects are probably made of *lutukng* wood (*Alstonia*

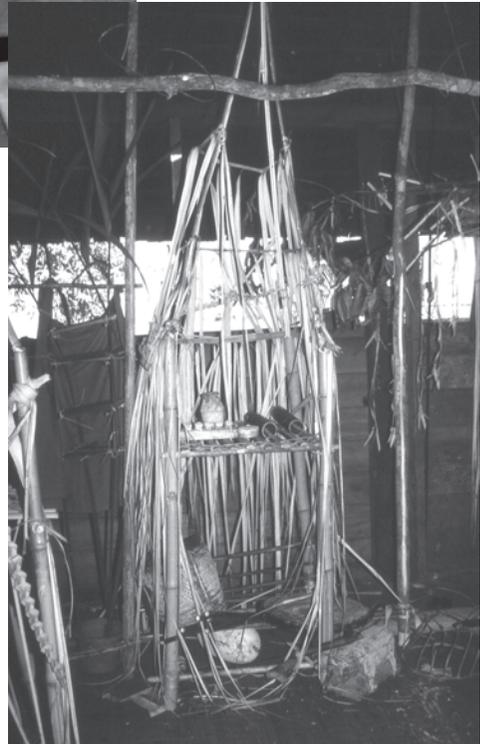


Photo 9. A *ruyak* with offerings, Lempunah village, 1985 (photo: H. Zahorka)

scholaris (L.) R. Br., Apocynaceae) and bamboo.

A *banci* is a very wicked and powerful *wook*. To satisfy this spirit (typically imagined as female and depicted in the form of a large wooden statue with movable arms and legs), a large boat-shaped construction of *potukng* wood, the *balai banci*, is built in front of the longhouse and filled with all types of human food and delicacies (Photo 10). The *banci* also demands blood. The small construction at the front offers rice to the *mulaakng*, a family of forest spirits.

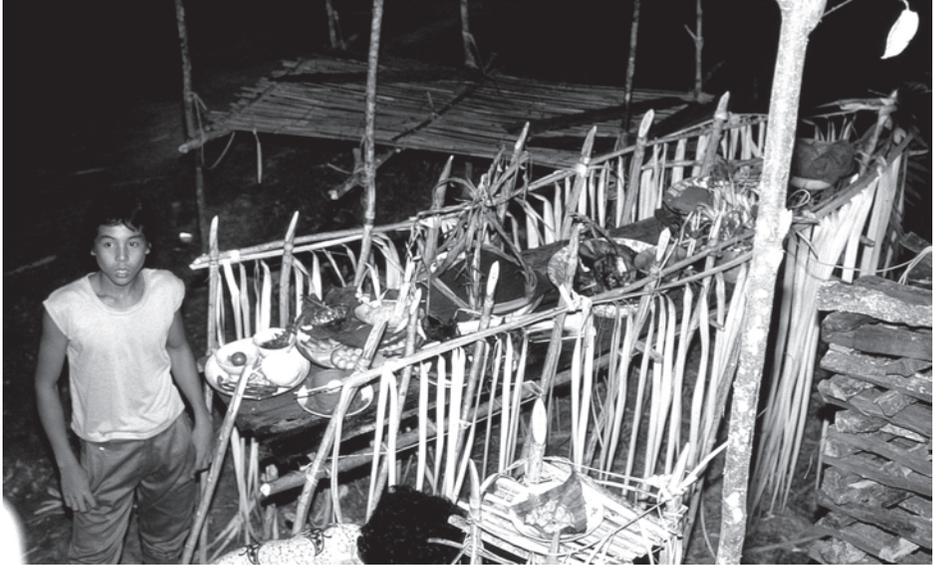


Figure 10. *Balai banci* with offerings, Pentat village, 1988 (photo: H. Zahorka)

Some of the spirits dealt with by the *beliatn*

While the spirits worshipped by animists are characteristically located in, or belong to, individual animals, plants, natural phenomena, and ritual objects (Zahorka 2004: 77-82), the spirits of the Benuaq roam the natural environment. They are not spirits of individual plants or animals, but are associated with trees, forests, mountains, swamps, water, fields, and villages. They are thus territorial spirits. Most of them are benevolent if rewarded by the *beliatn* with sufficient offerings.

Helpful sky spirits associated in part with (former) headhunting raids (and so with the color red) are the *nayuq*. They control the keeping of *adat* and are an aid to the *beliatn*, as are the *timang* spirits called upon during *belian sentiu* rituals. However, both use sickness to punish people who disregard *adat*. The mediating friendly rice spirit, *lolakng luikng*, has already been mentioned. For major and difficult tasks, the *beliatn* can also call the spirits of the *kelelungan merwaaq* for help.

A group of generally good spirits, who aid the *beliatn*, are the *tangkai*. The helpful *mulukng* (already mentioned) belong to this group, as do the *juata* water spirits, the *madakng*, *nyahuq*, and *tonoi*. The *juata* spirits are associated with the rainbow, with

pregnancy and delivery, but they are also responsible for diarrhea and dysentery. The *madakng* are mountain spirits that can cause body pain. The *nyahuq* are associated with the omen birds and with *puti*, the *mangris* tree (*Koompassia excelsa*, Becc., Taub., Caesalpinaceae). The *nyahuq* also lead the souls of the deceased to the otherworld. The *tonoi* earth spirits guard the village and ritual objects like gongs, *tempayan*, and *mandaus*. They are not as powerful as the others, but they are the protective spirits in the village, and are associated with the color white.

Among the large *belontakng* images erected in the field on the occasion of *kwangkai* funeral rituals, all of which depict a human figure facing westward, the protecting *tonoi* spirit is depicted as a snake embracing the human figure; the *juata* as a crocodile or a fish (mostly on the back of the figure), and the *timang* as a dog-like tiger (often at the head or at the feet of the figure). The *belontakng* statues erected on the occasion of the great ritual, the *guguq tautn*, depict a human figure, generally as a *beliatn*, always facing eastward.

The *kuyakng* are tree spirits associated with the color green and with the *waringin* tree (*nunuq ringin*, a strangling fig, *Ficus benyamina* L., Moraceae). These spirits can cure, and they can even influence life expectancy, though they also can cause madness.

The great varieties of mountain and forest spirits that are called *wook* are associated with the color black. They include the *mulaakng* family who can abduct a *juus* if not provided with offerings. This family is associated with the *deraya sepatukng* tree (*Horsfieldia grandis*). Specified as evil are spirits known as the *banci*, *bongai*, and *tentowijaq*. The *banci*, a powerful female *wook*, is responsible for many severe diseases like malaria and encephalitis. There are some notable parallels between the *banci* and the Bali-Hindu witch *Rangda*. To pacify her, a great variety of offerings and blood are needed. *Bongai* and *tentowijaq* are powerful forest *wook* that can cause various diseases by abducting human *juus*. To compel them to return a *juus*, the blood of a sacrificial animal is required. Unspecified groups of evil spirits are also known as *papaq* or *papaiq*. Local variations exist.

Luring the spirits and diagnosis

To determine the cause of a disease (“case history,” anamnesis) and identify the responsible spirit (“diagnosis”), the *beliatn* listens to the lengthy reports of the patient’s family concerning the history of the sickness and about the dreams they have recently experienced. The *beliatn* conveys these accounts to the spirits via the *awiir*, generally by holding it in his hand while listening.

After this, all of the spirits have to be lured into the room where the ritual is being performed. They are supposed to settle within the altar and on the swing-shaped constructions with the five-colored rice, the *kelenkakng eboq*. These actions occur during the second and third night of a four-night *belian sentiu* session. On the second night, to accommodate all of the spirits entering the room, the last platform in front of the house is connected with a long string of *rotan wentonik* to the top of the altar. On the third night a ladder-shaped connection is added, the *tukar wook* (*tukar* = ladder), made of *bete tuak* (*bete* = leaf), the leaves of the *aren* palm (*Arenga pinnata*) (partially visible in Photos 1, 11, and 12).

When the *belian sentiu* ritual starts on the third night, a heap of long branches is piled in front of the house. These serve as homes to the spirits. The branches are from the eight plant species surrounding the altar, together with some more, like *tae* (*Canarium sp.*, Burseraceae), *kelebahuq*, (*Glochidion obscurum* var. *macrocalyx* J. J. Smith, Euphorbiaceae), *kayutn arakng* (*Diospyros sp.*, Ebenaceae) and *nunuq ringin* (*Ficus benjamina* L., Moraceae).



Inviting bees' wax torches light and brighten the entrance. The *beliatn* appears in the door taking up a polite, respectful attitude, and sings, demanding that the spirits enter the room (Photo 11). After a while, the branches are laid down in front of the altar and afterwards on the altar itself. During this time, the *beliatn* sings and makes inviting gestures (Photo 12). When the spirits have settled on the altar, the branches are carried out. Now, the room is teeming with spirits.

Photo 11: Inviting the spirits to enter (photo: H. Zahorka)

Photo 12: The spirits are asked to heed the pleas of the *beliatn* (photo: H. Zahorka)



Some *beliatn* use a swing fixed in the open door to lure the spirits into entering the room. It is called a *kelenkakng wook* (*kelenkakng* = swing) (Photo 13). The fringes of the swing have to be of *bete tuak*, the leaves of the *aren* palm (*Arenga pinnata*). During the third night, the diagnosis is established and the spirit causing the disease is identified.

Ritual prophylaxis

To avoid spreading the sickness to healthy relatives of the patient, the *beliatn* provides prophylactic rituals. Everyone present gets some white rice paste (and later also blood from the sacrificed animals) rubbed on their chests, and fragrant “holy water” (*danum bungaq mayang*) is sprayed over them. The *beliatn* also keeps his “leaf sword” (*biowo*) and torches, as well as red and yellow fabrics on hand while singing over their heads in order to protect them from evil spirits. The *beliatn* will also ask the house spirits for help. A *tonoi* spirit traditionally occupies an inherited Dayak sword (*mandau*). The *beliatn* holds the *mandau*, along with some wax torches, and touches the body part that should be protected from the disease by the helpful *tonoi* (Photo 14). In the particular ritual shown in this photograph, a child of the family sponsoring the ritual was probably sick with encephalitis and,



Photo 13: The swing (*kelenkakng wook*) invites the spirits to enter, *Beliatn Moya*, 1978 (photo: H. Zahorka)

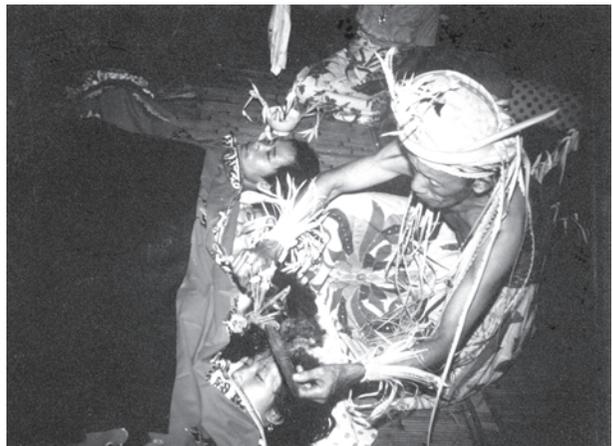


Photo 14: *Beliatn Moya* provides prophylaxis with steel and torches, 1978 (photo: H. Zahorka)



Photo 15: *Beliatn* Ran performing prophylaxis, 2006 (photo: H. Zahorka)

unfortunately, later died.

F o r prophylaxis, family members also have to sit on a throne-like *pantiq* in front of the house. The *beliatn* holds a big branch of

nunuq ringin (*Ficus benjamina*) over their heads and pours a large quantity of “holy water” over the branches and onto those below. *Nunuq ringin* is the home of the *kuyakng* tree spirits, who can heal and extend a person’s life span, though they also can make people mad. The singing *beliatn* requests that the *kuyakng* provide a positive influence on the patient (Photo 15).

Blood sacrifice

All *belian* rituals require a blood sacrifice of chickens (*piaq*) or pigs (*uneq*) or, on major occasions, even a buffalo. The offerings are the immaterial *semangat* and *juus* of the sacrificed animal, not its body. This offering is directly dedicated to the spirit identified as responsible for the patient’s illness. The spirit responds with a blessing. Before blood-taking, the *beliatn* explains to the animals why they are to be slaughtered, and he praises them, and dedicates them via the *awir* to the spirit (see Photo 16). The blood has to be drawn while the animal is still alive. It fills several small bowls. The *beliatn* then smears the fresh blood on all the plants within the altar area and on all the other objects there. The blood protects from evil spirits and purifies.

After these offerings have been made, the *beliatn* starts to examine and divine from parts of the sacrificed pig’s liver (*ate*) and its spleen (*lapikng*), as if they were segments of a map. When he discerns special patterns, he reads from them messages from the spirit concerning the success of the ritual, the health of the people participating in it, and future events (Photo 17). In the foreground of the photo, on the left-hand side of the figure is a *telolo*. The *telolo* is half a leaf of a banana plant thinly split and bundled together on one side.

The ritual therapy

a) Extracting disease with a *telolo* and returning it to the spirit depicted as

a “spittle image” (*sepatukng silih*)

The *telolo* is an important instrument used by the *beliatn* in his therapy. He puts it on the sick body part of the patient and extracts the disease with it (Photo 18). He then carefully shakes or plucks the disease from the *telolo* so that it falls into the blood in the bowl or onto the five-colored rice in the *kelenkakng eboq*.



Photo 16: Two pigs to be sacrificed (photo: H. Zahorka)



Photo 17:
Divining
patterns
of
the
liver
and
spleen
(photo:
H. Zahorka)



Photo 18: *Beliatn* Moya extracts the disease with the *telolo*, 1978 (photo: H. Zahorka)

However, if the illness-causing spirit has already identified itself and indications from the liver show that it is willing to take the disease back, then the *beliatn* attaches the disease directly to the image that depicts the spirit. This image is called the *sepatukng silih*, or ‘spittle image’ (*silih* = saliva), and is carved from *potukng* wood (*Melicope incana*).

The following describes a ritual at which I was present, in which two *beliatn* identified the powerful *tentowajak* spirit as the culprit. The spirit’s *sepatukng silih* is shown with a pointed hat (an attribute of dangerous spirits), a face surrounded with red paint, and painted arms without hands. It is adorned with fragrant basil flowers. The most appalling thing about this image, however, is the painted bag that hangs around its neck. With this bag, the spirit is supposed to carry the disease back to its abode. This peculiar object, *kolit sepootn*, consists of the bag-shaped first bract (botanical term: *prophyll*) borne on the inflorescence of the *pinang* palm (*Areca catechu*). To activate the spirit of the spittle image, the *beliatn* holds it against the



Photo 19: The *sepatukng silih* being activated with the *awiir*, Pentat village, 2006 (photo: H. Zahorka)

awiir and sings to it for a long time (Photo 19).

After this, the patient smears (or spits) his own saliva on/at the figure to get rid of the disease. Alternatively, a mother may perform this action using the saliva of her sick child (Photo 20). In addition, the *beliatn* rubs the *telolo* with the extracted disease on the spirit's bag to transfer the disease into it (Photo 21). After this, someone carries the image with the disease in the bag into the forest. The Basap Dayak of the Mangkalihat Peninsula do a similar thing using disease-bearing figures (Zahorka 2002).



Photo 20: Saliva applied to the *sepatukng silih* (photo: H. Zahorka)

Photo 21: From the *telolo*, the disease is transferred into the *sepatukng silih*'s bag, *Beliatn* Ran and Acui, 2006 (photo: H. Zahorka)



b) Catching a lost *juus* with a *tolakng tintikng* and re-implanting it in the patient's body

Tolakng bulaan refers to the bamboo *Bambusa vulgaris* (Schradet, Graminae) and *tintikng* describes the boiled rice that is cooked inside it. The use of bamboo is a pre-ceramic technique for boiling food. The *tolakng tintikng* is thus a length of bamboo filled with boiled rice and often decorated with coconut leaves, or blackened. It is a highly important instrument of the *beliatn* because it acts like a magnet to draw back lost souls. During the third night of a four-night *belian sentiu* session, these objects are fixed below each rung of the ladder, and bundles of them, together with a fried chicken placed on top of them, are held above the head of the patient by the *beliat*.



Photo 22:
Both *Beliatn*
reclining in
trance, covered
with cloth
(photo: H.
Zahorka)

On the fourth night, at the conclusion of a *belian sentiu* session, the *beliatn* dances with furious drumming and falls into a trance. A helper covers him with a fabric (Photo 22). His trance lasts at least half a minute. While in trance, the spirit reveals to the shaman where the soul is hiding. The shaman then jumps up, grasps a *tolakng tintikng*, and pokes it eagerly at the spot revealed to him (Photo 23). This can be the branch of a plant or the bottom of a *tempayan* or one of the small houses for the spirits as shown in the photos. Then, from the end of the bamboo stick, he pulls out a tiny thread-shaped soul and on closer examination recognizes the patient to which it belongs (Photo 24).

Then, he massages the soul thoroughly into the patient's sick body part (Photo 25). After the disease has been extracted with the *telolo* and the missing *juus* has been re-implanted, the patient should recover his health. Sometimes, before re-implanting the *juus*, the shaman places it for a moment inside a small vessel.

The following day, after the end of the curing ritual, the headdress of the *beliatn*



Photo 23: Soul-catching with the *tolakng tintikng* (photo: H. Zahorka)

Photo 24: Examining a soul (photo: H. Zahorka)



Photo 25. Re-implanting the soul (photo: H. Zahorka)



is hung in front of the patient's door to indicate that the house is now *pali* (taboo) to nonresidents for four days (persons, however, may enter through the rear door).

Another form of healing ritual, but with much more vigorous dancing and drumming, is the *belian bawo*, which was last performed in the Lempunah longhouse in 1976, on the occasion of a *gugu tautn* ritual (Photo 26, *Beliatn Nuncutn*). The historically more recent *belian sentiu* ritual has now replaced it. The *belian* curing rituals of the Benuaq are shamanistic rites combining elements of mediumship, wandering, and possession.

Photo 26.
Belian bawo
 performed by
Beliatn Nuncutn,
 1976 (photo: H.
 Zahorka)



Some additional notes

The payment received by the *beliatn* is small; however, he and his helpers are given the right halves of any pigs sacrificed. The total expense of a four-day *belian sentiu* executed for two families, performed by two *beliatn* and with two sacrificed pigs in Pentat village in 2006 was said to be at least Rp. six million, at the time about USD 660. Except for the cakes, most food offerings, like the fried chickens, cannot be eaten after four days under tropical conditions.

After one ritual, *Beliatn* Ran did something rather profane, which I would like to share here. At the end in the last night, at 3 a.m., the hosts served boiled pig meat and rice as a late dinner for everyone present. When I got greasy fingers, *Beliatn* Ran, grinning, offered me his *telolo* as a tissue. I used it appropriately and then shook it jokingly over the bowl with the blood sacrifice; all of which drew a great laugh from the gathering.

Benuaq rituals are part of Benuaq Ohookng religion, which they call *adat nahaa*. The official Indonesian term for this traditional religion is Hindu Kaharingan, but this name is unknown among the Benuaq Ohookng. Yet, several elements of their faith are obviously related to ancient Hinduism. For example, their creator and most powerful spirit is *Letala*, etymologically most probably derived from the highest ancient Hindu authority, *Bathara*, and by no means from Islam's Allah. Under this deity's spiritual authority, according to the myths of the Benuaq, are a great number of *Seniang* or *Sangiang* spirits who are responsible for the sun, moon, stars, rain, and winds. They are also the ancestors of animals and of many *wook*. On behalf of *Letala* they watch over human *adat*, morals, and taboos. Within this pantheon, they exist above the *wook*. Another evidence of Hindu influence on the *belian* rituals of the Benuaq is they do not use palm wine or other alcoholic beverages in contrast to other tribes in Kalimantan, for example, the Ot Danum (Helbig 1982: 374f) and Tumon Dayaks (Zahorka 2001:

84-102), among whom plenty of *tuak* is compulsory. Although many Benuaq are now members of Christian denominations, they still faithfully perform their rituals as a part of their cultural heritage and *adat*. This is not so, however, with Benuaq who have adopted Islam.

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RULES OF INHERITANCE AND TRANSFER OF LAND BY THE IBAN OF SARAWAK: LAND AS AN INTERGENERATIONAL RESOURCE

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Introduction

This paper aims to describe rules of inheritance and transfer of land by the Iban, a native group in Sarawak, and to examine Iban concepts of natural resource management. Fieldwork was conducted mainly in one longhouse, although 14 others were visited for comparison.

Rules are examined by reference to a number of cases, including land inheritance from parents to children, land transfers upon divorce, and transfers upon remarriage. The findings of this paper are: the Iban recognize two types of land: 'new land' (*tanah baru*) and 'old land' (*tanah lama*) and in many longhouses land inheritance follows rules that are more systematic than reported in previous studies. For example, the proportion of land transferred from parents to children is relatively fixed; blood relationship is an important factor; and children have stronger land claims than parents.

The Iban believe that land belongs not only to an individual person in one generation, but to persons of the next and future generations. Therefore, a person should manage land well in his generation and pass it on to the next. The Iban way of thinking incorporates mechanisms that ensure that land use and land management decisions are made based on long-term benefits, over successive generations.

1) Background

Recent research concerning the degradation and loss of tropical forests has focused on institutions for natural resource management by local communities and peoples who subsist by using forest resources (Gibson et al. 2000, Berkes and Folke 1998). An objective of this research is to seek clues to solving the problem by understanding institutions adapted to natural and social environments in forest areas. This paper aims to examine the natural resource management of the Iban, focusing on their rules for inheritance and transfer of land.

The land described here refers not only to the ground itself, but also includes the trees and vegetation that grow on it. Iban land consists mainly of secondary forest in the form of forest left fallow after rice cultivation, and partly of rice fields, para-rubber gardens and fruit-tree groves (Ichikawa 2004). These different land uses dot Iban territory and form a mosaic landscape.

Freeman (1955, 1970), Sutlive (1992), and others have reported on Iban's rules of inheritance and transfer of land. This paper points out, in contrast to these previous studies, that inheritance and transfer are based on more systematic rules than have been previously reported. The general conclusion of this paper is that the Iban have rules

for, and ways of thinking about, inheritance and the transfer of land that support land-use decisions in terms of benefit over successive generations. These rules and ways of thinking support the sustainability of their secondary forest-fallow-based land use system, which may thus be positively evaluated for biodiversity conservation (Ichikawa 2007; Wright and Muller-Landau 2006).

It is known that the details of Iban customary rules vary from region to region and from longhouse to longhouse, and that these rules have changed in accordance with changing social and natural conditions (Cramb 1986; Cramb and Wills 1998; Ichikawa nd). The rules described in this paper, according to local informants, have not changed since the early 1900s. Therefore, the rules described here are not recent, but have existed for a relatively long period in the communities described.

The first section below briefly describes Sarawak, the Iban, and the findings of previous research. The next section outlines the methods used in the current study. The results of this research and the rules of land inheritance and transfer are then explained, and in the final section, some findings of this study are summarized in terms of Iban concepts regarding land as an intergenerational resource.

The Setting

The total area of Sarawak is around 120,000 square km, of which 95% is covered by forest, including fallow forests (Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2002). Total population is around 2.1 million, consisting of various ethnic groups such as the Iban, Chinese, Malay, Bidayuh, etc. Most Chinese and part of the Malay population live in towns and urban areas, while most of the other ethnic groups are found mainly in rural areas dominated by forests.

Living originally in the middle Kapuas basin in West Kalimantan, the Iban have spread over wider areas of Sarawak during the past 400 years (Pringle 1970). Today, they inhabit the lower and middle streams of the major rivers of Sarawak. They are the largest ethnic group in the state, accounting for a third of the population (Department of Statistics, Malaysia 2002). They are known for living in longhouses and growing hill rice, using swidden methods (Freeman 1955). However, they have recently diversified their economic activities, including growing rubber, pepper, and oil palm as cash crops, and also undertaking wage work in urban areas (Ichikawa 2003).

Rural Iban tend to reside in longhouses with 5 to 50 households. The longhouse community is an independent political unit, occupying a discrete territory of up to 10 or 15 square km (Cramb and Wills 1998). A longhouse consists of a number of *bilek*, each a compartment containing a living room, bedroom, and kitchen. The people living in the same *bilek*, usually a nuclear or stem family averaging 5 or 6 persons, comprise a single household. The *bilek* consists not only of a compartment, but also the *bilek* members and all their property, including land, rice, valuable jars (*tajau*), and plates (*pingai*).

When an Iban opens a tract of virgin forest (*kampong*) to make, for example, a rice field, he and his *bilek* members hold usufruct rights to the land. After harvest, when the land becomes fallow forest, they continue to hold rights to the land. Other land uses are mainly as rubber gardens, pepper gardens, or fruit groves. The area of each field is less than 1 or 2 hectares.

The other ways to obtain land rights are: to open up land left by those who have

moved from the longhouse (Freeman 1970:148-149). Today, land is sometimes bought and sold, although this was not the case before.¹ In Sarawak today, there is little virgin forest remaining to be opened.

Inheritance and the importance of *bilek* continuity

According to Iban custom, one child remains in his/her natal *bilek* and takes care of his/her parents (Freeman 1970: 13). The other children marry into their spouse's *bilek*, or marry and become independent, founding new *bilek* of their own. The *bilek* is thus inherited by the child who remains in the natal *bilek*, and he/she normally receives much more property than the other children (Freeman 1970: 31). For the Iban, continuity of the *bilek* is important. If there is no child to be the *bilek* successor, a *bilek* may be extinguished (*punas*). The Iban try to avoid this. If a couple has no children, they usually adopt a son or daughter, especially from close kin (Freeman 1970: 17).

A newly married couple usually stays for several years in the natal *bilek* of either the husband or wife. After that, if the couple wishes to be independent, they build a new *bilek* for themselves. According to Freeman (1970: 35), if a son/daughter marries into his/her spouse's *bilek*, his/her parents give him/her a minor inheritance called *pemai*, made up of objects such as Chinese jars (*tajau*), brass boxes (*baku*), or woven fabrics (*pu'a kumbu'*). When a couple builds a new *bilek* for themselves, becoming independent from the natal *bilek*, the natal *bilek* parents give them valuable things and utensils necessary for their daily life, comprising a larger inheritance than the *pemai* (Freeman 1970: 53).

2) Methods and Study Area

Fieldwork was conducted by interviews with persons knowledgeable about customary rules, and by observation of real cases. My primary informant was Mr. K (72 years old) whom I interviewed in his longhouse in the Bakong River basin in the Miri Division (Figure 1). Mr. K had earlier been appointed by the longhouse members as the head of the land committee that settles land disputes and is recognized as a person knowledgeable about local village land issues. I also visited 14 other longhouses in the Miri and Sri Aman Divisions. In each longhouse, I conducted interviews with a person knowledgeable about land customs, in most cases with the longhouse headman. The fieldwork was done in April and May 2005.

3) The Results

Here, I describe the results of the study, mainly referring to explanations by Mr. K, but also adding explanations heard in the other longhouses. According to Mr. K, the principles of inheritance and transfer have not changed from his grandfather's generation. The interviews revealed differences, however, between longhouses, but did not find clearly recognizable differences between the Miri and Sri Aman Divisions.

¹ Freeman (1955), who conducted his fieldwork in Baleh in the late 1940s and early 1950s, did not observe any buying and selling of land.

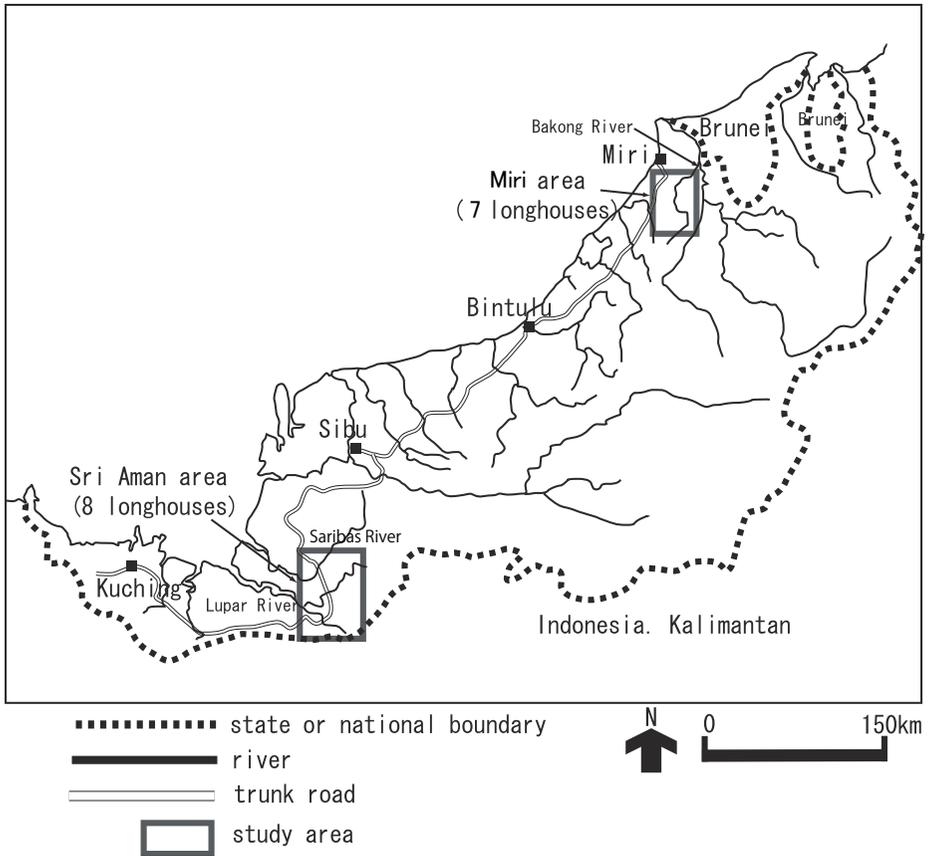


Figure 1. Study area

Establishment of a new *bilek*

In the longhouse to which Mr. K belongs, after marriage, a couple usually resides for several years in the natal *bilek* of either the husband or wife.² Land acquired during their stay in the natal *bilek* is considered to belong to the natal *bilek*. Therefore, rights to it are mainly held by the head of the *bilek*. If the newly married couple living in the husband's natal *bilek* divorces after a few years of marriage, the wife has no claim to any of this land. If the wife has lived with the husband for many years, she has a right to receive some land. A couple can usually build an independent *bilek* after they have children and their married life is established.

According to Mr. K, a minor inheritance, called *pemai*, is given to a person who marries into his/her spouse's *bilek*, as reported by Freeman. The *pemai* consists of

² In recent years, however, after marriage many couples stay in urban areas where the husband works. In such cases, it is not clear whose natal *bilek* they belong to, or if they are considered to have founded their own independent *bilek*.

valuable things, such as Chinese jars, plates (*pingai*), and brass boxes (*baku*), and may include pieces of land if the person is marrying into a *bilek* in the same longhouse. The timing of the transfer of *pemai* is whenever married life becomes established after having children. The reason given for a transfer of *pemai* land is that it enables the new couple to gain subsistence by making a rice field on the land. If a person is marrying into a remote longhouse, land is not given, but only valuable goods. All *bilek* property left after *pemai* has been given to those children marrying out, is inherited by the child who remains in the *bilek* and takes care of the parents. This child generally gains much more property than the others.

Old land and new land

According to Mr. K, land held by a *bilek* is divided into ‘old land’ (*tanah lama*) and ‘new land’ (*tanah baru*), a distinction Freeman (1970) does not mention.

New land is land which a couple acquires by themselves after they have founded their own *bilek*. Old land is land inherited from parents. This land was first acquired by the parents or by earlier generations. Secondary forest and planted rubber trees typically grow on old land. Some old land is called ‘heritage land’ (*tanah pesaka*), where fruit groves (*pulau buah*) and registered rubber gardens (*tanah ikar*) are established. Fruit groves, or land on which various kinds of fruit trees grow, were created by the ancestors at sites of former longhouses or field huts (*langkau*). Some fruit trees were planted, while some germinated from the dropped seeds. Registered rubber gardens were surveyed by the government in the 1930s and an Identity Card of Ownership of Rubber was issued. Although these cards are no longer legally valid in the studied longhouse, longhouse people still recognize their value in verifying land claims.

Looking at old land reminds the longhouse people of their ancestors who created it. For longhouse people, old land is evidence of *bilek* continuity, which they are proud of. They also remember their ancestors through valuable heritage objects (*barang lama*), such as Chinese jars, plates, and brass boxes.

Shares (*ungkup*) of land

Iban use the concept of ‘shares’ (*ungkup*) when explaining their inheritance rules. For example, after a couple (husband and wife) constructs a new *bilek* and becomes independent of their parents,³ land acquired by them belongs to the couple. They recognize two shares of land, one share for the husband, the other for the wife. If they divorce without clear fault on either side, the land is divided according to their shares: half for each. When they have a child, they recognize four shares of land. Two shares are for the husband and wife, one share is for the child, and the other share is for their *bilek*. The *bilek* share is to cover whatever expenses occur as a result of activities of the *bilek*. As an example of *bilek* expenses, people sometimes cite funeral expenses. The share for the *bilek* appears after a child is born and the continuity of the *bilek* becomes secure.

³ Although a couple normally constructs a new *bilek* for their independence after their children are born, as already pointed out, there are *bilek* consisting of only a husband and wife.

The partition of new land

Here, we shall consider, as shown in Figure 2, an example of a *bilek* consisting of a husband, wife and three children, to explain the process of land partition. In this example *bilek*, the husband inherited his natal *bilek* from his parents and his wife married in from the same longhouse. Therefore, she received Land 3 as *pemai* from her parents. Although Figure 2 shows land 1, 2 and 3 as single blocks, the land actually consists of several plots of dispersed land of less than 1 or 2 hectares scattered around the longhouse territory. The timing of handing over land to children varies, but is usually after the children marry and a son or daughter is born who will inherit the *bilek*.

In the case of the *bilek* shown in Figure 2, the land is principally shared as follows. Regarding the new land, six shares are recognized: 1 for the husband, 1 for the wife, 1 for each of the three children, and 1 for the *bilek*. For example, if there are 12 pieces of new land and each of them is almost equal in size and value, one share is equivalent to 2 pieces of land. Supposing that Child 1 will succeed to the *bilek*, Child 2 and Child 3 will each receive 1 share of land when they become independent from their natal *bilek*. However, if they marry into their spouse's natal *bilek* in the same longhouse, they receive only smaller portions of land as *pemai*.

Here, after Child 2 and Child 3 have established independent *bilek*, in principle they no longer have any rights to inherit land acquired after they left the *bilek*. This is because rights apply only to land acquired while they are *bilek* members.⁴

Child 1 remains in the natal *bilek*, takes care of the parents, and manages the funeral ceremony after they die. Child 1 receives four shares of land: 1 share of his/her own, 2 shares of the parents, and 1 of the *bilek*. He/she will be responsible for handing over the *bilek* and its property to his/her child.

The above case shows that land is partitioned for inheritance based on more systematic rules than reported previously.

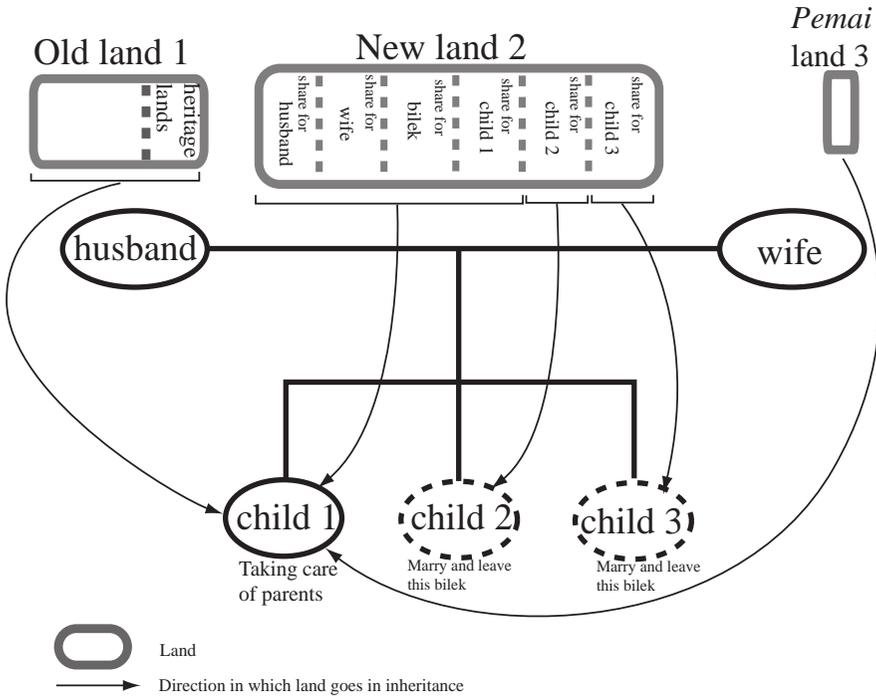
It is difficult to open new land in Sarawak today, because few virgin forests remain. In the case of Mr. K, he has 6 pieces of old land and 12 pieces of new land, and has already given some land to his children. The area of each piece is uncertain, but it is presumed to be around 1 hectare. Mr. K was born in the study longhouse, becoming independent and making a new *bilek* after he married. In this longhouse territory, cutting of virgin forests continued until the mid 1980s. Today the people of the longhouse cannot open any new land because no virgin forest remains. **New land is acquired just by buying land.**

I asked 14 persons from different longhouses how to divide the shares of land, assuming the composition of a *bilek* as shown in Figure 2. Five persons gave clear explanations based on the principle of dividing the shares between *bilek* members and the *bilek* itself. Three of the five divided the shares the same way as Mr. K. One person divided the new land into five shares: 1 share for husband and wife, 1 share for each child (total 3 shares), and 1 share for the *bilek* itself. In this case, Child 1 gained 3 shares (1 share of his own, 1 share from his parents, and 1 share for the *bilek*). The other person divided the new land into 6 shares, as did Mr. K, but he divided these shares differently:

⁴ However, this principle is not applicable to children born to the parents later. For example, a child born in the 5th year after his/her parents built an independent *bilek* has rights to land acquired by the parents in the 4 years before he/she was born.

3 for Child 1, and 1.5 each for Child 2 and Child 3.

The other nine persons could not give a clear explanation about the allocation of shares. Seven persons, however, said that they would roughly divide the land in the following proportions (Child 1: Child 2: Child 3): 4: 1: 1 (3 persons), 3: 1.5: 1.5 (1 person), 2: 1: 1 (2 persons), and 1: 1: 1 (1 person). The other two persons said that there were no clear rules for partition and that it was discussed and decided by each *bilek*.



Source: Interviews by the author

Figure 2 Inheritance and sharing of land according to the Iban custom

The partition of old land

In Figure 2, the *pemai* land brought by the wife is normally inherited by Child 1. If the wife passes away before her husband, the latter has no right to her *pemai*. Those who would have the right are Child 1, Child 2 or Child 3, who are connected by blood with the wife.

For the Iban, old land is considered to be inherited by Child 1 without partition. Since old land is proof of the continuity of the *bilek*, preferably, it should be managed by the *bilek* as a unit. In particular, heritage land should be inherited by Child 1 without partition. However, if old land other than the heritage land is abundant, or there is little new land, some of this land may be inherited by Child 2 and/or Child 3.

Conceptually, it is thought that heritage land does not belong to Child 1, but

is managed by him. For example, after Child 2 and 3 marry out, they still hold the same level of rights as Child 1 for tapping rubber and taking fruit from heritage land. In case Child 1 wants to sell heritage land, he must get the agreement of Child 2 and 3 in advance.

Ten of the 14 persons responded similarly to Mr. K that it is in principle better to hand over old land without partition to Child 1, although actually some parts of it may be divided between Child 2 and 3. Some explained that Child 1 just manages the old land, while others said that the rights of Child 1 are strong and that he can use or dispose of the land however he wants. Four of the 14 persons said that old land can be divided and handed over to any of the children. Two persons explained that partition of land is arrived at after discussion within the *bilek*. Two persons said that old land can be divided with Child 2 and 3, but that Child 1 gets more land than the others.

It is thought in almost all longhouses that Child 1 can basically receive all, or a major part, of the old lands. It is understood that one of the reasons why the amount of land Child 1 receives is larger, as already pointed out by previous studies, is that a major portion of the new land as well as the old land goes to Child 1.

Strong rights of children in the event of divorce and remarriage

The existence of children is important when the Iban consider inheritance. As mentioned above, parents begin to consider partitioning their land to their children after the latter have married and have children of their own. They are then considered to have formed a full-fledged *bilek* with a high probability of succession. Furthermore, as Mr. K explained, the transfer of land in divorce cases shows the strong rights that children have in land. For example, if a wife divorces her husband because of his fault, her children in many cases remain with her. All of the new land will go to her and her children. In this case, land rights belong principally to the children, not to the mother. This is because the children have blood ties to both the father and the mother and one will succeed to control of the *bilek*, including its land. In some divorce cases, the husband should hand over his old land or *pemai* land also to the wife and children. That land belongs totally to the children, although it is managed by the wife when they are still small. The wife, who has no blood relation with the husband's family, has no right to the *pemai* or old land that originated with the husband's parents and earlier generations.

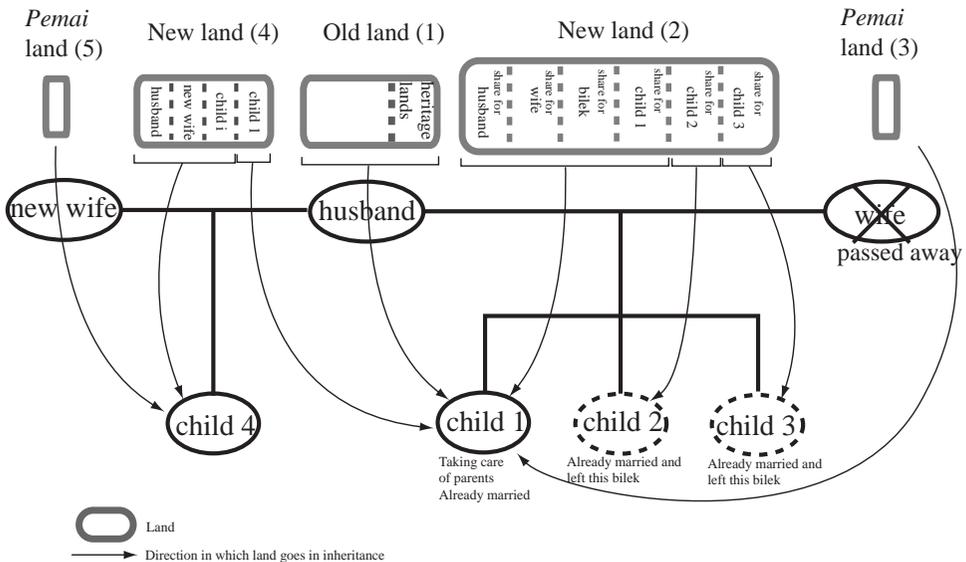
In the previous studies, a *bilek* has been recognized as a rights-holding unit. But Mr. K described how the rights of a **mother and children in a single *bilek*** have different strengths. The results of interviews conducted in the other longhouses are shown next.

Of the eleven persons I asked about divorce cases in which the husband was at fault, six persons answered that old land should be handed over to the wife and children. Five of these six persons insisted that the child held the rights. Another said that the wife also has rights, but that, if she remarries, her rights are transferred to the child.

Regarding new land, three of the 11 persons explained that the child held all the rights or had much stronger rights than the wife. The other eight persons said that the wife has the same rights as the child. But three of the eight pointed out that if she remarries, her rights are transferred to the child.

Strong rights of the first wife’s child

Mr. K also described a case about a *bilek* shown in Figure 3, which actually occurred in the longhouse. In this *bilek*, after the husband and wife had three children, the wife passed away. If the husband had not remarried after his wife’s death, he as head of the *bilek* would have managed both the old (1) and new land (2), although he would have no rights to his wife’s *pemai* (3), which would go, instead, to the children. The husband, however, remarried. In this situation, the husband’s rights in the new (2) and old land (1) should, in principle, be transferred to Child 1. If the husband remarried into the *bilek* of his new wife, only land equivalent to his one share would have been given to him as *pemai* by Child 1. Actually, the new wife, in this case, joined the husband’s *bilek*, where Child 4 was born. Child 4 has no right to the new land (2) or even to old land (1), although he may have a right to the new land (2) equivalent to his father’s 1 share. Child 4 will be able to inherit new land (4) that the husband and new wife acquire after their marriage and *pemai* land (5), if any, brought by the new wife.



Source: Interviews by the author

Figure 3 Strong land rights of children of first wife

Here, it is not necessary that *bilek* members strictly practice these rules in actual inheritance situations and daily use. I heard from the members of this *bilek* that in the use and management of new (2) and old land (1), the influence of the husband after remarriage is still strong, and they believed that the husband would decide how to partition the land. According to the husband and Child 1, Child 4 can use the new (2) and old land (1), and can also inherit part of this land when he becomes independent, if there is sufficient land. Mr. K. explained, however, that if a land dispute occurred between the children, it would be settled based on the principles explained above.

I conducted interviews with five persons, each from a different longhouse. Two persons gave an explanation almost identical to Mr. K's, namely, that the husband's land rights after remarriage moved principally to Child 1. The other three persons explained that Child 4 also has potential rights to both old (1) and new land (2).

4) Summary and concluding remarks

The author examined Iban customary rules of land inheritance and transfer based on the results of interviews and observations mainly in a single longhouse, but adding information from several other longhouses in the Miri and Sri Aman Divisions. As already pointed out, customary rules have changed with changing social and natural conditions, and vary over time and between regions and longhouses. These rules are likely to continue to change as a result of the commercialization of land (Cramb 2007: 196-210, Ichikawa n.d.) and the absence of virgin forest. Therefore, the rules revealed by the study vary in details. However, some rules appear to be common throughout both divisions.

There are two types of land recognized in terms of inheritance and transfer: "new land" and "old land." In many longhouses, shares of new land are parceled out to *bilek* members and the *bilek* itself, and the proportions of land partitioned between children are largely fixed. Also, in many longhouses, the Iban think that, preferably, old land should not be divided, but inherited by the child who succeeds to the *bilek*. Therefore, the child succeeding to a *bilek* obtains much more land than children who marry out.

The child succeeding to the *bilek* is expected to manage the land properly and to hand it over to the next generation. He may not use the land selfishly or dispose of it by his own decision. One of the findings of this paper is the importance of blood relationships. A person without a blood relationship has no right to succeed to land as shown in this paper. It has also been found that the land rights of children are often stronger than their parents' rights. This appears to be related to the value the Iban place on *bilek* continuity.

Fallow secondary forests are significant for biodiversity conservation (Ichikawa 2007; Wright and Muller-Landau 2006). They are also indispensable to the Iban for short-term rice fields, which are important both physically and spiritually (Freeman 1970). Mr. K explained that Iban pioneers cleared virgin forests to make rice fields not only for themselves and their *bilek* families, but for future generations. Therefore, it is important that the Iban manage their land well and hand it over to the next generation. Land does not belong solely to the individual, but also to his/her descendants. The *bilek*, for the Iban, should continue eternally. The Iban way of thinking and society incorporate mechanisms that ensure that land use decisions are made not only based on considerations of short-term benefit, but also on long-term benefits, through successive generations, past and future.

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CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IN SARAWAK 1963–1988: 25 YEARS AS A STATE WITHIN THE FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA

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Introduction

When Sarawak joined the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963, it was a secular state with its own constitution, which was integrated into the Federation's constitution, with provisions and exceptions to reflect the special rights of Sarawak within the Federation. This article seeks first to provide the background on how Sarawak's constitution came to be and how it was developed to enable self-government as an independent state just prior to Sarawak joining the Federation. Second, it seeks to investigate the amendments made to the Federation's constitution during Sarawak's first twenty-five years within the Federation that altered or detracted from Sarawak's rights. All this is based on the premise that a constitution embodies "the fundamental political principles of a state."¹

Historical background

From 1476 to 1841 the northwest coast of Borneo comprising the present state of Sarawak was part of the independent Malay Sultanate of Brunei, with indigenous native groups practicing forms of animism and maintaining their own cultures and languages. On 24 September 1841, Raja Muda Hashim granted James Brooke tutelage over Sarawak Proper and James was proclaimed Rajah of Sarawak in Brunei on 1 August 1842.² A century of independence for a territorially-expanding secular Sarawak under Brooke rule followed,³ during which, in addition to pre-existing Islam and animism, virtually all other major religions became firmly established through Chinese, European, and Indian immigration and missionaries.⁴ English and Malay were widely used by the administrative officers, and by usage English became the accepted official language.⁵ Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, the third Rajah, proclaimed Sarawak's first written constitution

1 Roger Scruton, *A Dictionary of Political Thought*, London: Pan Books Ltd, 1983, p. 92.

2 Sarawak Proper covered an area of some 3,000 square miles, the western end of the current state of Sarawak.

3 By 1905 the Brookes had extended Sarawak to some 48,250 square miles by annexing territory from the Sultanate of Brunei.

4 This is a simplification of a long, protracted process.

5 The *Sarawak Gazette*, the government's official publication, was printed in English with the occasional translation into Malay.

on 24 September 1941, ending a century of Brooke sole sovereignty.⁶ The first clause of the proclamation bound the Rajah and his heirs or successors “to ensure that our beloved subjects shall ultimately enjoy their inherent right to control their own lives and destinies.” Under the constitution, almost complete authority was transferred to the executive—the Supreme Council of no less than five members, and the legislature - the Council Negri with twenty-five members.⁷ Other than Cardinal Principle 7 stipulating that “Subjects of whatever race or creed shall be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our Service,” religions or religious beliefs are not mentioned in the 1941 Constitution, consistent with Brooke rule of Sarawak as a secular state. The constitution envisaged Sarawak continuing as an independent sovereign state, but with Britain responsible for defense and foreign affairs in accordance with the 1888 and 1941 bilateral treaties.⁸ With the arrival of the Japanese on 25 December 1941, Sarawak came under military administration which worked to some extent through those community leaders willing to cooperate, with Japanese becoming the de-facto official language. After liberation on 11 September 1945, the state came under Allied military administration until 15 April 1946, when the re-commencement of civil government under the 1941 constitution was proclaimed.⁹

On 1 July 1946, Sarawak was ceded to Britain.¹⁰ “To avoid offending local feelings and susceptibilities,” amendments to the constitution were limited to those absolutely necessary to reflect the transfer of power.¹¹ The Nine Cardinal Principles in the 1941 Proclamation laying down broad parameters of good governance were retained throughout the era of British colonial rule.¹² Coupled with the introduction of elections, further amendments in 1956, 1962, and 1963 gradually introduced a measure of representative government.¹³ The final amendments reduced the number of ex officio

6 Sarawak Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941. For an exhaustive background to how the Constitution came about, see Alex C. Castle, *The Constitutional and Legal History of Sarawak: Documents and Commentaries: Volume 1: Peoples' Law Making and Brooke Rule*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Historical Society Sarawak Branch, 2003, pp. 251-279.

7 Council Negri and Supreme Council members were nominees of the Rajah and top-rank administrative officers. Section 4(iii) of the constitution retained the right of the Rajah to appoint any new non-ex officio members to the Supreme Council.

8 “Agreement between Her Majesty’s Government and Charles Brooke, Second Rajah of Sarawak,” 5 September 1888, and “An Agreement between His Majesty’s Government and the Rajah in Council of the State of Sarawak,” 22 November 1941.

9 English was reintroduced as the administrative language immediately after the occupation ended.

10 For a full account of cession at the wish of the Rajah which was ratified by a controversial vote in the Council Negri, see R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 198-245.

11 File note, 5 June 1952, File SEA 31/7/02, CO1022/90, Public Records Office, Kew.

12 See Appendix 1.

13 The Sarawak (Constitution) Order, 1956: the Sarawak (Constitution) Order in Council, 1962, and Amendments to the Sarawak (Constitution) Order in Council, 1956 passed in the Council Negri on 9 March 1963.

members in the Council Negri to three, with all other members indirectly elected; replaced the Chief Secretary as President of the Supreme Council with a politically-appointed Speaker; introduced members of the Supreme Council being appointed to ministerial roles; and established a politically-appointed Chief Minister as head of government.¹⁴ These constitutional changes facilitated the formation of Sarawak's first elected state government, which was formed on 22 July 1963. The new government under Chief Minister Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the chairman of a group of political parties called the Sarawak Alliance, passed a resolution on 4 September in the Council Negri welcoming the British-Malayan 9 July agreement to form Malaysia.¹⁵ In the absence of a plebiscite to validate the forthcoming changes in Sarawak's sovereignty, a United Nations mission found that in its opinion a sizeable majority of the people of Sarawak wished to join the Federation of Malaysia.¹⁶

On 21 June 1962 the Cobbold Commission had issued its report supporting Sarawak and British North Borneo becoming member states in a proposed Federation of Malaysia. Three major differences between the Malayan and Sarawak constitutions were that the former decreed Malay as the national language, Islam as the official religion, and afforded Malays special rights. However, the ethnic mix in Sarawak was different from that in the Federation of Malaya, where Muslim Malays made up about half the population.¹⁷ Subsequently, an Inter-governmental Committee (IGC) agreed on the terms and constitutional safeguards that would apply to Sarawak, issuing its findings on 27 February 1963.¹⁸

1963-1988

With the formation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963, an amended Malayan Constitution, incorporating the constitutional safeguards agreed to by the IGC, applied to Sarawak. In the absence of a cession clause and the "good-government" Cardinal Principles of the Brooke Constitution, Sarawak relied on those safeguards to protect its interests.¹⁹ Although complex in detail, in simplified form these were:

Citizenship: automatic Malaysian citizenship for those born and normally resident in Sarawak. For those of good character who were normally resident in Sarawak and who

14 "Indirectly elected" refers to the three-tier electoral system of local councils electing members to Divisional Advisory Councils, which in turn elected Council Negri members. This led to distortion in the number of Council Negri seats won by political parties compared with their overall percentage of votes received at the local council elections.

15 Thirty-one Council Negri members voted in favor. The five dissenting votes were from the predominantly Chinese party, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP).

16 U Thant, "Mission to Sarawak and Sabah (North Borneo), Secretary-General's Conclusion," *United Nations Review*, 10, 9 (October 1963): 15.

17 In Sarawak, the Malay-Melanau Muslim community made up about 20 percent of the population, non-Muslim indigenous peoples making up about 45 percent, and the Chinese about 31 percent.

18 *Malayan Government, Malaysia: Report of the Inter-governmental Committee, 1962*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer 1963.

19 Although there was some pressure for a cession clause, it was held to be unnecessary.

had resided in any part of Malaysia for seven of the preceding ten years, but had not been born in Sarawak or any part of Malaysia, citizenship upon application.

Education: although on the Federal List, to remain under the control of the Sarawak State Government. Knowledge of the Malay language not required as a qualification for any educational opportunity and no application of any Federal requirements for religious education. Use of English as the education media could be continued for a maximum of 10 years.

Emergency powers: during a national emergency, the Federal Parliament given unqualified power when a Proclamation of Emergency is declared, notwithstanding anything in the Constitution.

Immigration: this remained on the Federal List, but admission to Sarawak not to be granted to persons from or outside Malaysia without the approval of the Sarawak State Government, giving Sarawak effective rights over immigration into the State.

Federal Constitution: any amendments to the Constitution to require a two-thirds majority in the Federal House of Representatives.

Federal House of Representatives: Sarawak to elect 24 members of the total membership of 159.

Federal Senate: Sarawak to be represented by at least two members.

Legal Department: Sarawak to have a legal department with the Attorney-General a State Officer appointed in consultation with the Federal Government.

Religion: religious freedom is guaranteed in the Malayan Federal Constitution. A two-thirds majority of the total State Legislature is required to pass any law that may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the Muslim religion. Federal Law should not provide for special financial aid for establishing Muslim institutions or Muslim religious education in Sarawak without the concurrence of the State Government.

Sarawak Constitution: Sarawak is allowed to continue calling its Executive Council the Supreme Council and its Legislative Assembly the Council Negri. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) appoints Sarawak's head of State after consulting with the Chief Minister.

Sarawak's Legislative List: Muslim Law, Native Law and Customs, land, agriculture and forestry, local government and services, electricity, state works and water, state machinery, state holidays, turtles and riverine fishing.

Concurrent Federal and Sarawak Legislative List: social welfare, scholarships, national parks, animal husbandry, town and country planning, public health and sanitation, and drainage and irrigation.

The Council Negri passed the first amendments to the Sarawak Constitution by the required two-thirds majority on 25 June 1964. One of these enabled another person to perform the functions of the Speaker should the latter be unable to do so. The other removed the impractical stipulation that indirect elections be held within 60 days in all situations. Opposition Council Negri member Chan Siaw Hee claimed the amendment showed that the State Government had no intention of holding a direct election before 16 September 1968, the latest date given in the IGC Report. Initially, direct elections were to be held in 1967, but setting up new electoral boundaries each with approximately the

same number of voters delayed the projected date of elections until May 1969.²⁰ To prolong the life of the Council Negri due to be dissolved in September 1968, the Federal constitution had to be amended.

For this, the [Federal] Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1968 was enacted. During the debate on this act in the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives), on 21 August Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, Secretary-General, Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), suggested that the Federal Government had deliberately delayed delimiting constituencies and registering voters because it feared defeat at the polls. Criticizing the wording of the amendment, Yong took the opportunity to say that "if the arbitrary arrest and detention of [his SUPP colleague] SUPP member Chan Siaw Hee ... was in accordance with the law, then let us see [whether] the proposed amendment ... is also in accordance with the law."²¹ Polling finally began on 10 May 1969. Five days later polling was suspended, following a proclamation of emergency over racial riots that broke out in Kuala Lumpur on 13 May 1969.²²

The aim of the next amendment to the Federal Constitution was to prevent any recurrence of the 1969 racial riots in mainland Malaysia. By the end of June 1969, hundreds of people had been killed and over 350 injured in the riots.²³ The riots were generally accepted as a major setback in the polls for the ruling Alliance coalition headed by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), with feared loss of, and resentment over, the special privileges for the *bumiputera* (Malays) in the Constitution.²⁴ After the riots broke out, the government quickly assumed emergency powers, suspended parliament, and established direct government through the National Operations Council (NOC). The NOC was disbanded on 19 February 1971 and parliamentary rule re-established on the following day. In preparation for return to parliamentary rule, the [Federal] Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1971, was published on 15 February 1971.²⁵ Simply, this act empowered the Dewan Rakyat to pass laws restricting any freedom of speech questioning the special position of the Malays, the sovereignty of the rulers, the national language (Malay), and constitutional provisions on citizenship. This restriction extended to speeches in the Dewan Rakyat and all state legislative assemblies, which included the Council Negri in Sarawak.²⁶ On 24 February during the debate on the act

20 The early elections were to provide proof to Indonesia of Sarawak's commitment to Malaysia under the agreement ending Confrontation with Indonesia.

21 Chan Siaw Hee was detained on 14 August 1968 under the Provisions of Preservation of Public Security Regulations (PPSR) and the Internal Security Act.

22 Polling was not resumed until 6 June 1970. The interruption to the elections in Sarawak created some resentment, as there were no civil disturbances in Sarawak.

23 Estimates of casualties varied with some estimates of death as high as 700.

24 *Bumiputera* was generally accepted as meaning only Malays but the intent covered all native races.

25 Shortly after publication of the act, Stephen K. T. Yong (SUPP) undertook to seek reassurance that the act would not affect the prerogative of the Council Negri to decide on the politically sensitive issue of whether Bahasa Malaysia would replace English as the official language in Sarawak after 1973.

26 The SUPP Chairman Dato Ong Kee Hui, by then the Federal Minister of Technology,

in the Dewan Rakyat, Haji Amad Arshad (Alliance coalition) said that the choice was between a restricted democracy, meaning the restrictions imposed by the amendment bill, and military or emergency rule. The act was passed on 3 March, with only 17 dissenting votes.

Earlier, in 1966, the Federal Government's power to amend the Constitution of Sarawak following a declaration of a state of emergency was used to resolve a complicated political impasse. On 17 June Governor Tun Abang Haji Openg dismissed Chief Minister Ningkan, who was said to no longer hold the confidence of the majority in the Council Negri. A new Chief Minister, Tawi Sli, with his new Supreme Council members, was then sworn in. The High Court in Kuching subsequently found that the governor had no power to dismiss Ningkan. To provide the governor with those powers, the Federal Government declared a controversial state of emergency in Sarawak on 14 September.²⁷ The Federal Parliament then passed the Emergency (Federal Constitution and Constitution of Sarawak) Act, 1966, which enabled the Dewan Rakyat to change Sarawak's constitution so that Sarawak's governor could convene the Council Negri and dismiss Ningkan.²⁸ On 24 September the governor once again dismissed Ningkan and once again Tawi Sli and his Supreme Council were sworn in. Ningkan's petition against his unconstitutional dismissal progressed slowly through the courts for another two years, finally ending on 1 August 1968 when he was advised that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had dismissed his appeal. Commenting on the controversial declaration of a state of emergency, Lord MacDermott observed: "their Lordships could not find any reason for saying that the emergency was not grave and did not threaten the security of Sarawak."

An appeal by a man sentenced to death for possessing firearms in 1969 led to an interesting ruling by the Federal Court on the Federal Constitution. On 21 August the Court ruled that the Dewan Rakyat had the power to make constitutional amendments, even if those amendments were inconsistent with existing provisions in the constitution. Lord President Tun Mohamed Suffian said many provisions in the constitution showed that it was intended to be a living document, which, if the need arose, could be amended in any way thought fit. His comments were put to the test in 1983 when the Dewan Rakyat was forced to reverse some constitutional amendments already approved before Royal assent would be given.

The Federal Constitution (Amendment) Act 1983 passed by the Dewan Rakyat in August 1983 contained some controversial amendments that curtailed the powers of the head of state, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. These amendments were: Article 150 (1) that

Research and Local Government, said the public would expect the same restrictions and penalties to apply to MPs.

²⁷ The Secretary-General of the Sarawak United People's Party, Stephen K.T. Yong, pointed out there was "not a tense atmosphere in the State" and "the only conclusion ... is that it [the declaration of a state of emergency] is an attempt to cover up the wrong and unconstitutional move of dismissing the Chief Minister of Sarawak in June this year" (*Sarawak Tribune*, 16 September 1967).

²⁸ A public opinion poll among the literate people of Sarawak by the *Sarawak Tribune* on 19 September found that 96% were against the Dewan Rakyat in Kuala Lumpur amending the Sarawak Constitution.

transferred the power to proclaim an emergency from the Agong to the Prime Minister; Article 66 (5) that made a Federal bill law if the Agong's assent had not been given after 15 days; and 8th Schedule 11(3) that made a state bill law if [in Sarawak's case] the governor's assent had not been given within 15 days.²⁹ Royal assent was withheld until 15 December after Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir gave a written undertaking that a new bill would reverse those amendments. A special joint session of the Dewan Negara (Senate) and the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) approved the Constitution (Amendment) Act 1984 that reversed the contentious amendments and the Act received Royal assent on 19 January. All the other amendments in the 1983 Act remained, including another of direct relevance to Sarawak, the abolition of appeals in civil cases to the Privy Council in Britain. That connection was finally severed at the beginning of 1985 when the Federal Court was renamed the Supreme Court and all remaining appeals to the Privy Council were abolished.

Eight years earlier, two special provisions in the Malaysian Constitution reflecting the non-prominence of Islam in Sarawak in 1963 were repealed. These were Articles 161C and 161D that were introduced on 16 September 1963 and repealed by the Malaysia Act Constitution (Amendment) Act 1976, effective from 27 August 1976. Shown in full in Appendix II, both Articles had been incorporated in the Constitution when Malaysia was formed as "illustrative of the fact that Islam does not occupy the place in the Borneo States that it does elsewhere in the Federation" and that "In Sarawak the majority of the Chinese and indigenous people are not Muslims."³⁰ The repeal of Article 161C enabled the legislative provision of special financial aid for establishing and maintaining Muslim institutions or instruction in Muslim religion to Muslims in Sarawak to be passed without the consent of the governor of Sarawak. Further, the stipulation that any such special financial aid by the Federal Government already being given to all States in Malaysia be applied to social welfare in the case of Sarawak was removed. The repeal of Article 161D removed the provision for a two-thirds majority in the Council Negri needed to approve any bill controlling or restricting propagation of any doctrine or belief to Muslims. Removal of these two articles reflected the fact that Islam is the religion of the Federation under Article 3 of the Malaysian Constitution and meant the removal of barriers that could be viewed as restrictive to increased penetration of Islam in Sarawak. Only three days before the Articles were repealed, the Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi (Dr.) Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub had presided at the conversion of 44 people to Islam and told his audience that it was the duty of all Muslims, particularly the intellectuals, to play a leading role in the propagation of Islam.³¹

The Constitution (Amendment) Act 1985 passed on 23 October 1985 increased the number of seats for Sarawak in the 180-seat Dewan Rakyat by three to a total of 27.³²

29 L. A. Sheridan & Harry E. Groves, *The Constitution of Malaysia*, Singapore: Malayan Law Journal Pte. Ltd., 1987, pp. 178-9, 372—5, 493 and 501.

30 L. A. Sheridan & Harry E. Groves, *The Constitution of Malaysia*, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1967, p. 228.

31 *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 August 1976.

32 Sheridan in note 5 on page 152 states "the number was raised from 24 by ... section 2 (c), with effect by virtue of ... from 24th February 1986."

This was the first increase in seats for Sarawak since Malaysia was formed, reflecting the increase to 597,237 voters in Sarawak by January 1985. In 1988, Articles 83-6 of the Constitution, all relating to land, were amended. According to Dr. Mahathir, this was to help carry out the Federal Government's privatization, economic, and development plans. The 1988 amendments enabled state governments to hand over land to the Federal Government, enabled Federal Government to ask state governments to turn over rights to reserve land to the Federal Government, and enabled the Federal Government or relevant public authority to retain alienated land that was no longer needed. State interests were served by mutual agreement on compensation and land usage. Only a review after another decade or more would show the outcome of these amendments on Federal land holdings in Sarawak.

Comments

Both Sarawak and Sabah had a well-developed sense of identity and individuality before both agreed to become part of the Federation of Malaysia. Their different ethnic, economic, and religious mix, and their past histories compared with the states of Malaya, coupled with their distance from the federal capital, Kuala Lumpur, were all sources of friction when those states became part of the Federation. The special safeguards and conditions given to Sarawak and Sabah, such as control over education, immigration, and land, enabled both states to retain much of their own identity, without being completely overwhelmed by the mores of mainland Malaysia. However, those safeguards came under pressure from time to time and were indeed completely overridden during the 1966 Ningkan crisis. Easier relationships were established post-1966 after state governments in the image of the ethnic Malay Muslim-dominated Federal Government had been installed. This muted resistance to the special status of Malays and Indigenes embodied in the Constitution helped to overcome serious opposition to changing the official language from English to Malay. It also enabled the Federal parliament to provide special financial aid for Muslim institutions and instruction in Islam to Muslims in Sarawak without the consent of the governor of Sarawak, removing the need for a two-thirds majority in the Council Negri to approve any bill controlling or restricting propagation of any doctrine or belief to Muslims. By 1988 the basic tenets of the Federation of Malaysia, Malay as the national language and the pre-eminence of Islam, had been firmly entrenched in Sarawak by amendments to the 1963 constitution. Federal power to alter the constitution unilaterally had been established and Sarawak had been completely integrated as a state within the Federation of Malaysia.

Appendix 1

Sarawak Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941 enacted 24 September 1941 (part only)

Now therefore it is meet that we should pronounce and declare the principles of government which have actuated our predecessors and ourselves during the one hundred years of the rule of the English Rajahs. And we do urge that these same principles which

have brought peace and contentment to our people may serve to guide the members of the Councils of State who will hereafter be responsible for the good Government of Sarawak.

Let the Cardinal Principles of the rule of the English Rajahs as set out hereunder therefore be remembered:

1. That Sarawak is the heritage of our Subjects and is held in trust for them.
2. That social and educational services shall be developed and improved and the standard of living of the people of Sarawak shall steadily be raised.
3. That never shall any person or persons be granted rights inconsistent with those of the people of this country or be in any way permitted to exploit Our Subjects or those who have sought our protection and care.
4. That justice shall be easily obtainable and that the Rajah and every public servant shall be freely accessible to the public.
5. That freedom of expression both in speech and writing shall be permitted and encouraged and that everyone shall be entitled to worship as he pleases.
6. That public servants shall ever remember that they are but the servants of the people on whose goodwill and co-operation they are entirely dependent.
7. That so far as may be Our Subjects of whatever race or creed shall be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our Service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge.
8. That the goal of self-government shall always be kept in mind, that the people of Sarawak shall be entrusted in due course with the governance of themselves, and that continuous efforts shall be made to hasten the reaching of this goal by educating them in the obligations, the responsibilities, and the privileges of citizenship.
9. That the general policy of Our predecessors and Ourselves whereby the various races of the State have been enabled to live in happiness and harmony together shall be adhered to by Our successors and Our servants and all who may follow them hereafter.

Appendix 2

Selective Extracts from the Malaysian Constitution regarding Sarawak

95B. Modifications for Borneo States and Singapore of distribution of legislative powers.

- (3) The Legislature of a Borneo State may also make laws for imposing sales taxes, and any sales tax imposed by State law in a Borneo State shall be deemed to be among the matters enumerated in the State List and not in the Federal List ...

95D. Exclusion for Borneo States and Singapore of Parliament's power to pass uniform laws about land or local government.

- In relation to a Borneo State *and in relation to Singapore* Clause (4) of Article 76 shall not apply, nor shall paragraph (b) of Clause (1) of

that Article enable Parliament to make laws with respect to any of the matters mentioned in Clause (4) of that Article.

95E. Exclusion of Borneo States and Singapore from national plans for land utilisation, local government, development, etc.

(3) Under Article 92 no area in the State shall be proclaimed a development area for the purposes of any development Plan without the concurrence of the Governor.

110. Assignment of taxes and fees to the States.

(1) Subject to Clause (2), each of the States shall receive all proceeds from the taxes, fees and other sources of revenue specified in Part III of the Tenth Schedule so far as collected, levied or raised within the State.

111. Restriction on borrowing.

(2) A State shall not borrow except under the authority of State law, and State law shall not authorise a State to borrow except from the Federation or, for a period not exceeding five years, from a bank or other financial source approved for that purpose by the Federal Government.

112. Restriction on alterations in establishments of States.

(1) Subject to Clause (2), no State shall, without the approval of the Federation, make any addition to its establishment or the establishment of any of its departments, or alter the rates of established salaries and emoluments, if the effect of doing so would be to increase the liability of the Federation in respect of pensions, gratuities or other like allowances.

112B. Borrowing powers of Borneo States and Singapore.

Clause (2) of Article 111 shall not restrict the power of a Borneo State or Singapore to borrow under the authority of State law within the State, if the borrowing has the approval, of the Central Bank for the time being of the Federation, nor the power of Singapore to borrow under the authority of State law otherwise than within the State, if the borrowing has the approval of the Federal Government.

112C. Special grants and assignment of revenue to Borneo States.

(1) Subject to the provisions of Article 112D and to any limitation expressed in the relevant section of the Tenth Schedule-

- (a) the Federation shall make to the Borneo States in respect of each financial year the grants specified in Part IV of that Schedule; and
- (b) each of those States shall receive all proceeds from the taxes, fees and dues specified in Part V of that Schedule, so far as collected, levied or raised within the State, or such part of those proceeds as is so specified.

112D. Reviews of special grants to Borneo States.

(1) The grants specified in section I and subsection (1) of section 2 of Part IV of the Tenth Schedule, and any substituted or additional grant made by virtue of this Clause, shall at the intervals mentioned in Clause (4) be reviewed by the Governments of the Federation and the States or State concerned, and if they agree on the alteration or abolition of any of those grants, or the making of another grant instead of or as well as those grants or any of them, the said Part IV and Clause (2) of Article 112c shall be modified by order of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong as may be necessary to give effect to the agreement:

146A. Branches in Borneo States and in Singapore of Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

(2) The branch of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission for the Borneo States shall consist of -

- (a) the Chief Justice of the High Court in Borneo, who shall be Chairman;
- (b) the legal advisers of the Borneo States;
- (c) the chairman of the State Public Service Commission (if any) in each of the Borneo States; and
- (d) two persons designated by the Federal Government from among the members of the main body of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission or Public Services Commission.

153. Reservation of quotas in respect of services, permits, etc. for Malays.

(1) It shall be the responsibility of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to safeguard the special position of the Malays and the legitimate interests of other communities in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

161. Use of English and of native languages in Borneo States.

(1) No Act of Parliament terminating or restricting the use of the English language for any of the purposes mentioned in Clauses (2) to (5) of Article 152 shall come into operation as regards the use of the English language in any case mentioned in Clause (2) of this Article until ten years after Malaysia Day.

161A. Special position of natives of Borneo States.

(1) Subject to Clause (2), the provisions of Clauses (2) to (5) of Article 153, so far as they relate to the reservation of positions in the public service, shall apply in relation to natives of any of the Borneo States as they apply in relation to Malays.

(2) In a Borneo State Article 153 shall have effect with the substitution of references to natives of the State for the references to Malays, but as regards scholarships, exhibitions and other educational or training privileges and facilities Clause (2) of that Article shall not require the reservation of a fixed proportion for natives.

(3) Before advice is tendered to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong as to the exercise of his powers under Article 153(19) in relation to a Borneo State, the Chief Minister of the State in question shall be consulted.

(5) Article 89 shall not apply to a Borneo State, and Article 8 shall not invalidate or prohibit any provision of State law in a Borneo State for the reservation of land for natives of the State or for alienation to them, or for giving them preferential treatment as regards the alienation of land by the State.

(6) In this Article “native” means -

(a) in relation to Sarawak, a person who is a citizen and either belongs to one of the races specified in Clause 7 as indigenous to the State or is of mixed blood deriving exclusively from those races; and

(7) The races to be treated for the purposes of the definition of “native” in Clause (6) as indigenous to Sarawak are the Bukitans, Bisayahs, Dusuns, Sea Dayaks, Land Dayaks, Kadayans, Kalabits, Kayans, Kenyahs (including Sabups and Sipengs), Kajangs (including Sekapans, Kejamans, Lahanans, Punans, Tanjongs and Kanowits), Lugats, Lisums, Malays, Melanos, Muruts, Penans, Sians, Tagals, Tabuns and Ukits.

161C. Muslim education in Borneo States.

(1) No Act of Parliament which provides as respects a Borneo State for special financial aid for the establishment or maintenance of Muslim institutions or the instruction in the Muslim religion of persons professing that religion shall be passed without the consent of the Governor.

161D. Freedom of religion.

Notwithstanding Clause (4) of Article 11, there may be included in the Constitution of a Borneo State provision that an enactment of the State Legislature controlling or restricting the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the Muslim religion shall not be passed unless it is agreed to in the Legislative Assembly on second or third reading or on both by a specified majority, not being a majority greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the Assembly.

161E. Safeguards for constitutional position of Borneo States.

(2) No amendment shall be made to the Constitution without the concurrence of the Governor of the Borneo State or each of the Borneo States concerned, if the amendment is such as to affect the operation of the Constitution as regards any of the following matters:

(a) the right of persons born before Malaysia Day to citizenship by reason of a connection with the State, and (except to the extent that different provision is made by the Constitution as in force on Malaysia Day) the equal treatment, as regards their own citizenship and that of others, of persons born or resident in the State and of persons born or resident in the States of Malaya;

- (b) the constitution and jurisdiction of the High Court in Borneo and the appointment, removal and suspension of judges of that court;
- (c) the matters with respect to which the Legislature of the State may (or Parliament may not) make laws, and the executive authority of the State in those matters, and (so far as related thereto) the financial arrangements between the Federation and the State;
- (d) religion in the State, the use in the State or in Parliament of any language and the special treatment of natives of the State;
- (e) the allocation to the State, in any Parliament summoned to meet before the end of August, 1970, of a quota of members of the House of Representatives not less, in proportion to the total allocated to the other States which are members of the Federation on Malaysia Day, than the quota allocated to the State on that day.

THE KITINGAN CASE, THE BORNEO STATES, AND THE MALAYSIAN CONSTITUTION

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Introduction

In about October 1992, I was asked by Mr. Harjeet Singh of the Kuala Lumpur legal firm of Shearn, Delamore & Co. if I would provide expert advice in the form of an affidavit in the case of Datuk Jeffrey Kitingan, a Sabah Kadazan-Dusun politician and Director of the Sabah Foundation who had been charged with seven offences involving the alleged corrupt transfer of funds to bank accounts in Hong Kong. As the bank concerned would not allow its staff members to testify in a Malaysian court, Malaysia's legal authorities had called upon the Hong Kong courts in April 1990 to lend their assistance in the collection of evidence which could then be presented in the Malaysian courts in order to secure Kitingan's conviction. Kitingan's lawyers challenged this, claiming that the charges were politically motivated and that under the terms of Section 77b of Hong Kong's Evidence Ordinance, this was sufficient grounds for Hong Kong not to lend its assistance. My affidavit was intended to be presented as an expert opinion that the charges were indeed politically motivated, something I had strongly suspected when I first heard of the attempted prosecution. As it happened, I had never met Datuk Jeffrey Kitingan or his brother, Datuk Pairin Kitingan, who was then the Chief Minister of Sabah, but I had kept close track of political events in Sabah and Sarawak since my time there as a journalist in the late 1960s and early 1970s and was aware of the subsequent constitutional changes which had eroded much of the special status, originally granted to the two Borneo states in Kuala Lumpur's desperate efforts to include them in the enlarged Federation as a counter-balance to predominantly Chinese Singapore. I was by no means a constitutional expert but I was well aware of the political agenda which underlay constitutional change: Kuala Lumpur's (or rather UMNO's) plan to run the Federation along highly centralized lines for the benefit of what was thought would be a Malay majority. I think that my name was put forward when Jeffrey Kitingan's lawyers asked my old friend Professor George Appell if he could recommend someone. George and Laura Appell had worked as anthropologists in Sabah for some years and were well acquainted with the Kadazan-Dusun community in which the Kitingans had become leading figures after the tragic demise of Datuk Fuad (Donald) Stephens, someone whom I had known well when I was a journalist for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and subsequently in Canberra when he was Malaysia's High Commissioner. There were other authorities like the late Hugh Hickling, author of the 1963 Malaysian Constitution, who might have been considered more appropriate than myself from a constitutional point of view, but a political understanding of the historical relationship of the Borneo states with Kuala Lumpur was arguably just as important. Acting as an expert witness

involved a visit to Kuala Lumpur and then Hong Kong where I was briefed by the defense solicitor and barrister before embarking on my affidavit. Using an extensive collection of legal documents and newspaper cuttings supplied by Harjeet Singh, together with the resources of the Library of the University of Hong Kong where my old friend Professor Wang Gung Wu was then ensconced as Vice-Chancellor, I set to work and managed to produce within a week what I thought was a fairly respectable document. Imagine my dismay, then, when the Hong Kong solicitor and his barrister colleague told me in no uncertain terms that it would simply not do. I felt like an undergraduate who had been handed back his essay and told to try a little harder! However, it was not the substance of the document that was unsatisfactory but the way in which it was presented. I was instructed that every assertion made had to be authenticated or supported in some way. It had to be based on legislative authority or otherwise represented as reflecting the consensus of legal or historical academic opinion in this area, or at base level as an expression of my own individual expert opinion. Further, instead of footnotes I had to furnish the actual published documents cited and refer to them as appendices listed as "Reece, R.H.W., Exhibit 1" etc. This latter task was onerous in its seemingly endless photocopying, arranging, and labeling of what became a meter-thick dossier, but it was nothing compared with the absolute slog of going through the draft and identifying every time I made an assertion of some kind. In the process I learnt a good deal about the differences between historical and legal verification. Every historical text is a mosaic or confection of assertions based on supposition, personal opinion, informed conjecture and unadorned hearsay as well as actual documentary evidence. The lawyers clearly think that we historians get away with murder, and perhaps sometimes we do. Their qualitative assessment of evidence of all categories has to be much more precise and authoritative and I became much more conscious of these categories and their important differentiations. Ironically, I may well be a better historian because of it. Altogether, it was a most edifying experience and I thought back to my high school headmaster who once advised me to go into law. I would certainly have made a lot more money, but at what cost? For one thing, there is the damage to the English language that lawyers do every day. The spiky and heavily hedged and qualified legalese into which I had been obliged to translate my gracefully flowing prose was barbaric to the eye. It makes me shudder even now as I read it for the first time in fifteen years. There were compensations, of course. I was accommodated in the executive suite of the Hong Kong Hilton where there was always a bottle of champagne in the ice bucket and fresh strawberries and canapés nearby. Christopher Bonsall, the charming Eurasian Hong Kong solicitor of the firm of Johnson, Stokes and Master, wined and dined me at the Hong Kong Cricket Club. I reflected with some satisfaction on the contrast with my earlier time in Hong Kong in 1968 when I was writing freelance for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, living on noodles and sleeping on the settees of tolerant friends. I could not help thinking that the HK\$100 I was now paying for a wonderful curry lunch at the Hilton would have supported me for a week or two back then when I could not even have afforded a cup of tea. I was able to return some of the hospitality shown me in earlier years by the Wangs and others, including the Australian architect, Alan Gilbert, and to finance his moonlight flit back to Melbourne with all his belongings after his company failed and he was left owing a fortune in rent. At last the affidavit met the strict standards set out by my legal

friends and after a final session with them over champagne and canapés I returned to Western Australia and my envious family with a draft that needed only the final touches. My brother-in-law, who is a district court judge in Queensland and an extremely shrewd critic of the legal process, would probably have supported the Crown case. He wrote to me in these rather deflating but ultimately helpful terms:

After reading your affidavit, I have difficulty in understanding how your evidence can be relevant. By way of illustration, I am sure there are some in Queensland who think that the prosecution of Joh [Bjelke-Peterson, the former Queensland Premier], Austin, Lane et al was politically motivated. Even if that could have been proved, it would have got the defence nowhere, because the sole issue for the Court (which includes, in our system, the jury) to consider is whether the Crown has proved the guilt of the accused of the offence charged.

In any event, Mr Kitingan's legal advisers think that your evidence is important for his defence. I do wonder whether you should confirm with them – to ensure that they don't intend to, say, release your affidavit (knowing that they can't use it at the trial) in an effort to improperly influence or inflame local opinion.

As I have read your affidavit I have found myself wondering at times whether all of it can, in a legal sense, be said to be properly admissible on the grounds of expert evidence. Generally the rule in our system ... is that that witness can only speak of things he has seen or heard himself – *de visua et auditu* – rather than express opinions. A witness may give his opinion on matters provided that they are matters calling for special skill or knowledge and provided he is an expert in such matters.

To qualify as an expert the judge must be satisfied that “the field of knowledge in which the witness professes expertise is a recognised and organised body of knowledge outside his ordinary experience of men and [that] ...the witness has sufficient expertise in such field as would enable him to assist the tribunal.”

It seems to me that in the latter part of your affidavit you perhaps wander from being an historian to proffering views, which, in truth, are not matters of historical expertise, but conclusions of fact which a layman, perhaps having had the historical context explained to him, might draw. Look particularly at your paragraph 52, in which you conclude that the charges “appear to relate directly to his attempt to overturn ...”. As you concede you do not know the substance of the charges, would it not be better to say, say, “I have no knowledge of the strength of the evidence intended to be lead [sic] by the State in bringing the seven charges against Dr. Kitingan. They have been presented at a time when he was seeking to overturn etc.”

Needless to say, I accepted his excellent advice although his comparison with the Queensland cases was not entirely appropriate. The essence of the Hong Kong cases was whether the Malaysian request could be facilitated under Hong Kong law. Months later I learnt that the defense had been successful, Master Beeson of the Hong Kong Supreme Court finding that “the proceedings [against Datuk Kitingan] were of a political character and also an abuse of the process of the court...” Master Beeson did not reject my affidavit in its entirety, as the Crown had insisted be done:

I treated it as the report of a trained historian who has a special expertise in the history and politics of Malaysia with the reservation that as the reporter was not available for oral examination or cross-examination it must be treated with some caution where matters purely of opinion were aired.

The Crown immediately challenged the decision, partly on the earlier grounds that my expert opinion should not be accepted. On 20th January 1994, in his final judgment on the appeal, Hon. Jones J upheld Master Beeson’s earlier decision that the Hong Kong courts could not cooperate with their Malaysian counterparts, summarizing in six pages what he considered to be the most relevant parts of the background information I had provided in my affidavit.

There remains the question of whether Datuk Jeffrey Kitingan was in fact guilty of the offenses with which he had been charged, an issue which the highly technical Hong Kong cases had obscured and ultimately rendered irrelevant. I tried to meet Datuk Kitingan during a subsequent visit to Kota Kinabalu but found him strangely unwilling to see me in view of the part I had played in securing his non-prosecution. However, whether Datuk Kitingan was guilty or not, I remain satisfied that Dr. Mahathir’s hand was closely involved in this action. I believe that his motivation was purely and simply to deal with a man who had become a political nuisance and a hindrance to his efforts both to bend Sabah’s political system to the West Malaysian model and to ensure that the constitutional amendments which had brought Sabah and Sarawak under a much more centralized control from Kuala Lumpur would not be dismantled. It has to be conceded that the threat by Kadazan-Dusun political figures associated with the Kitingan brothers that Sabah might secede from the Federation was a cause for concern for the Kuala Lumpur government, although I believe that it was largely rhetorical in nature. I would prefer to draw a veil over the sad story of what has happened in Sabah politics subsequently, except to say that the introduction of UMNO has finally rendered the state politically “safe.”

The Affidavit

[The text that follows has dispensed with the original apparatus of Exhibits but a full list is provided of all references used other than newspaper articles. All explanatory interpolations have been enclosed by square brackets.]

It is crucial to any understanding of the experience of Sabah within Malaysia since 1963 that the circumstances leading to the formation of the Federation of Malaysia

should be briefly outlined and explained. On 27th May 1961, the Federation of Malaya's Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, publicly proposed that Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo (Sabah) and Brunei be joined in a new political federation, to be known as "Malaysia." At that time the Federation of Malaya was a sovereign state, having achieved independence from Britain in August 1957. Singapore had been granted internal self-government in 1959 and had its own Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, but was still a Crown colony in which the British government retained control of defense, foreign relations and internal security. North Borneo and Sarawak were Crown colonies, each under the authority of its Governor-in-Council. Political representation was more advanced in North Borneo than in Sarawak, an unofficial majority having been granted in North Borneo's Legislative Council in 1960. Brunei was a British Protectorate whose 1959 Constitution had provided for internal self-government, with the British government retaining responsibility for defense, foreign affairs and internal security. Provision was made for popular elections to a legislative council to be held in 1961 but supreme authority remained with the Sultan. The Parti Rakyat Brunei, established in 1956, was the first political party to appear in the three Borneo territories.

At the time of Tunku Abdul Rahman's announcement of the Malaysia proposal, there had been no prior consultations with the governments of Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei, although the suggestion of such an arrangement had been made earlier by British colonial officials, notably Lord Brassey, a Director of the North Borneo Company, in 1894 and Sir Cecil Clementi, Governor of Malaya and the Straits Settlements, in 1930. It was also taken up by Britain's Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia, Malcolm McDonald, during his term of office from 1949 until 1952. Finally, on 30th January 1960, the Governor of North Borneo, Sir Roland Turnbull, predicted the establishment of a "great Commonwealth member" consisting of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories as full partners.

There had also been an alternative official proposal for the closer linking of North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei in a federation or confederation of British Borneo, which would lead to the independence of the constituent states and possibly to their ultimate incorporation in a wider political federation with Malaya and Singapore. This proposal was made by the British Governor of Sarawak, Sir Anthony Abell, on 23rd July 1957 and was later broadcast by him in more detail on 7th February 1958. It received support from indigenous political leaders in North Borneo and Sarawak, notably from Donald Stephens, a North Borneo Kadazan (indigenous Christian) who envisaged the achievement of independence by this means within two or three years. The proposal was rejected by the Sultan of Brunei, who favored instead a merger with the Federation of Malaya. However, it accorded with the vision of certain Parti Rakyat Brunei activists of a "greater Brunei" with all its "ancient territories," including North Borneo and Sarawak, restored.

As early as 1956, another alternative, the union of Malaya and the Borneo states of North Borneo and Sarawak, had been proposed and by 1960 was being discussed by the United Malays National Organisation ("UMNO"), the dominant party within Malaya's ruling Alliance coalition government. Finally, there was a strong initiative from Singapore for merger with the Federation of Malaya, motivated primarily at this point by the perceived economic benefits of a common market. In late 1960 the Central Executive

Committee of the ruling People's Action Party announced a major policy decision that:

Merger between Singapore and the Federation is our immediate task to be accomplished. But this should not rule out a broader association between the Federation, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo—provided all the territories decide that is what they want... It is in everyone's interest in these territories that the Federation, Singapore and Borneo should seek strength politically and economically by closer association with each other.

The first step towards the fulfillment of Tunku Abdul Rahman's Malaysia proposal came on 23rd August 1961 when he and Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, reached broad agreement on a merger of the two countries which would give the new Federal government control of defense, foreign affairs and internal security, and the Singapore government continued control of education and labor matters. On 15th November 1961 there was published by the Singapore government a White Paper setting out Heads of Agreement for the proposed merger. It was also announced by the British government on 13th October 1961 that Tunku Abdul Rahman had agreed to go to London in November "for discussions with the object of reaching an understanding on the broad issues and to prepare the way for consultation with the Borneo territories without which no commitment could be entered into." The outcome of these talks was a Joint Statement of 23rd November 1961 in which the British and Malayan governments expressed agreement on the desirability of the Malaysia proposal and announced the establishment of a joint government commission "to ascertain the views of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak." It was also agreed that the views of the Sultan of Brunei would be sought.

The membership of the Commission, which was to become known as the "Cobbold Commission" after its Chairman, Lord Cobbold, was announced on 16th January 1962 and it proceeded to hold hearings in North Borneo and Sarawak from 19th February to 18th April. Before the Commission's arrival in Borneo, the colonial governments of North Borneo and Sarawak published official papers strongly supporting the Malaysia proposal and urging the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak to do likewise in their meetings with its members. In its Report, published on 1st August 1962, the Commission came to the following conclusions about the reactions of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak to the Malaysia proposal:

About one-third of the population of each territory strongly favours early realisation of Malaysia without too much concern about terms and conditions. Another third, many of them favourable to the Malaysia project, ask, with varying degrees of emphasis, for conditions and safeguards varying in nature and extent: the warmth of support among this category would be markedly influenced by a firm expression of opinion by Governments that the detailed arrangements eventually agreed upon are in the best interests of the territories. The remaining third is divided between those who insist on independence before Malaysia is considered and those who would strongly prefer to see British rule continue for some years to come. If the conditions and

reservations which they have put forward could be substantially met, the second category referred to above would generally support the proposals. Moreover once a firm decision was taken quite a number of the third category would be likely to abandon their opposition and decide to make the best of a doubtful job. There will remain a hard core, vocal and politically active, which will oppose Malaysia on any terms unless it is preceded by independence and self-government: this hard core might amount to near 20 per cent of the population of Sarawak and somewhat less in North Borneo.

The Report also made a number of unanimous general recommendations, too detailed to enumerate here, which can be seen to have accepted most of the principles embodied in the document known as the "Twenty Points," the important joint statement by North Borneo's political leaders of 29th August 1962 which is dealt with below. Following the publication of the Cobbold Commission's report, the British and Malayan governments made a joint statement on 1st August 1962 accepting its recommendations and announcing that "the proposed Federation of Malaysia should be brought into being by 31st August 1963." The statement also announced the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Committee "to work out the future constitutional arrangements and the form of the necessary safeguards" to be provided for North Borneo and Sarawak. According to the statement,

These safeguards will cover such matters as religious freedom, education, representation in the Federal Parliament, the position of the indigenous races, control of immigration, citizenship and the State Constitutions.

The Inter-Governmental Committee's task was to recommend amendments to be made by the Malayan Parliament to the constitution of the Federation of Malaya which would provide these "safeguards," the intention being that the amended document would then become the constitutional basis of the enlarged Federation.

Chaired by Britain's Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, Lord Lansdowne, the Inter-Governmental Committee consisted of representatives of the governments of Britain, Malaya, North Borneo and Sarawak. After a preparatory meeting in Jesselton, North Borneo, on 30th August 1962, five sub-committees were established which held meetings in North Borneo, Sarawak, and Kuala Lumpur. The Inter-Governmental Committee completed its Report on 27th February 1963. On 9th July 1963 representatives of the governments of Britain, Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo and Sarawak then signed the "Malaysia Agreement" which committed them to membership of the Federation of Malaysia and to acceptance of the constitutional and other arrangements recommended by the Inter-Governmental Committee. On 29th August 1963 the Malayan government announced that the Federation would be inaugurated on 16th September 1963.

Prior to the completion of the Inter-Governmental Committee's work, the legislatures of North Borneo and Sarawak welcomed in principle the decision of the British and Malayan governments to establish Malaysia by 31st August 1963. On 12th September 1962 the Legislative Council of North Borneo unanimously passed a

motion to this effect, “provided that the terms of participation and the constitutional arrangements will safeguard the special interests of North Borneo...” On 26th September the Council Negri (state legislature) of Sarawak unanimously passed a similar motion “on the understanding that the special interests of Sarawak will be safeguarded...” On 1st September 1962 a referendum in Singapore had resulted in overwhelming support for a form of merger with Malaya which would allow Singapore to retain a substantial degree of autonomy.

In response to pressure from the governments of the Philippines and Indonesia, the Malayan government agreed at a conference in Manila in early August 1963 that a United Nations mission should visit North Borneo and Sarawak to ascertain indigenous reactions to the Malaysia proposal and to investigate whether the recent elections held there had been free and properly conducted. The government of Indonesia, in particular, had been critical of the failure to hold a plebiscite in North Borneo and Sarawak on the Malaysia proposal. A United Nations mission, headed by Sir Laurence Michelmore, subsequently visited Borneo and Sarawak from 16th August to 5th September. In his report on the findings of the mission, published on 14th September 1963, United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant, concluded: “there is no doubt about the wishes of a sizeable majority of the peoples of these territories to join in the Federation of Malaysia.” Nevertheless, when the Federation of Malaysia was inaugurated two days later on 16th September 1963, the governments of the Philippines and Indonesia refused to recognize it.

I will now proceed to examine a further reason why the governments of Malaya and Singapore agreed to merge and why they, together with the British government, wished to include the two Borneo states of North Borneo and Sarawak and, if possible, Brunei, in the proposed federation.

As already mentioned, the initiative for a merger of Malaya and Singapore came originally from Singapore’s ruling People’s Action Party, but it was resisted for some time by Malaya’s dominant party, UMNO, and leading Malay politicians including Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. The consensus of academic opinion is that a major factor in the Malayan government’s eventual agreement to include Singapore in Malaysia was the fear of a left-wing socialist government there, a possibility which loomed large when Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew’s People’s Action Party was defeated at a vital by-election on 19th April 1961 and then in the following year suffered a damaging internal split. This endangered its absolute parliamentary majority and suggested the possibility of a left-wing victory at the 1964 Singapore elections. Singapore’s constitutional position was also due to be reviewed by the British government in June 1963, with the possibility that control over defense, foreign policy and internal security would be assumed by a left-wing government.

While it is the generally held academic opinion that Malay politicians wished to guard against what they perceived as Singapore’s potential left-wing radicalism by having control of its internal security, it is also the opinion that they were keenly aware of the need to maintain the “racial balance,” i.e., the political and cultural predominance of the Malays, within the proposed new political configuration. The ethno-religious arithmetic of the Malaysia proposal, according to the reported understanding of Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and the senior members of his UMNO party, was

that in electoral and more broadly political terms the combined Chinese population of Singapore and Malaya, which outnumbered the Malay population, would be offset by the “Malay” population of North Borneo and Sarawak. It was generally believed at the time that in his discussions with the British government, Tunku Abdul Rahman’s “price” for taking Singapore into Malaysia was that North Borneo and Sarawak should also be included. In my view, he and other senior Malayan leaders saw the two Borneo states as an essential counter-weight to Singapore within the wider federation. In this connection, I endorse the view of one of the principal academic authorities on the formation of Malaysia that a crucial influence on Tunku Abdul Rahman’s ethno-religious calculations was a report made to UMNO by Malaya’s Ambassador to Indonesia, Senu bin Abdul Rahman, after a tour of North Borneo and Sarawak in 1960. Describing *all* the indigenous peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak as “Malays,” Senu concluded that within a federation consisting of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo, “Malays” would remain in the numerical majority.

However, Tunku Abdul Rahman’s personal acquaintance with northern Borneo and its peoples was limited to a short visit to predominantly Malay Brunei in September 1958 and to Sarawak and Brunei in July 1961. In my view, the limits to his knowledge of Borneo’s non-Muslim indigenous peoples were reflected in his statement, reported in the newspapers on 24th July 1961, that “From the text-books as the schools and by meeting the Dyaks [sic], I found out that the only difference between the so-called Dyak [sic] language and Malay is in the dialect just as there is a difference in the dialects of Selangor Malays and Kedah or Kelantan Malays.” The Dayak (Iban) language is acknowledged by linguists as a distinctive language in its own right, not a “dialect” of Malay, although it possesses some similarities to Malay. In a major speech to the Malayan Parliament on 16th October 1961 formally advocating the Malaysia proposal, Tunku Abdul Rahman claimed that the integration of the two Borneo states within Malaya did not present the same problems as Singapore because of the “natural affinity” which existed between them and Malaya:

From the Federation’s point of view, we are linked to the Borneo territories not only by proximity and close association but also because the Borneo territories have the same type of culture and racial origin as the Malaysians [i.e., Malays]. We have similar customs—except, of course, in their case, they have some peculiar local customs but they are local affairs—and we have similar problems, economically or otherwise, and we even share the same currency...

In fact, the peoples of the two Borneo states possess a significantly different ethnic, cultural and historical background from that of the Malays. At the time of the negotiations on the Malaysia proposal, ethnic Malays comprised almost 50% of the population of Malaya, with Chinese making up almost 37%. However, the North Borneo official census taken on 10th August 1960 revealed that ethnic Malays there numbered only 1,645 and that it was Islamicized indigenous groups (notably Bajaus and Illanuns, who did not describe themselves as “Malays”) who made up most of the state’s 37.9% Muslim population. The largest single homogeneous ethnic category was the Kadazan-Dusun grouping of Christian and animist indigenes (30%) who were followed by the

Chinese (23%). Furthermore, the Kadazan-Dusun grouping is generally regarded by anthropologists as having a greater ethnic and cultural affinity with some of the peoples of the Philippines, from where they probably migrated in remote times, than with the Malays.

The first reported reaction of the political leaders of North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei to Tunku Abdul Rahman's Malaysia proposal came on 9th July 1961 from the United Front, which consisted of Ong Kee Hui (Chairman of the Sarawak United People's Party), A.M. Azahari (President of the Parti Rakyat Brunei), and Donald Stephens, who shortly afterwards established North Borneo's first political party, the United National Kadazan Organisation ("UNKO"). Referring to Tunku Abdul Rahman's recent visit to Brunei and Sarawak when he was reported to have said that he saw no need for the merger of North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei or their independence before federation with Malaya and Singapore, the United Front announced after a meeting in the North Borneo capital of Jesselton (now Kota Kinabalu) that the "British Government should be advised that so far as the wishes of the people in the three [Borneo] territories are ascertainable, 'any plan in accordance with the pronouncements made by Tengku Abdul Rahman in Brunei and Sarawak would be totally unacceptable to the people of the three territories.'"

Donald Stephens was also reported as saying ten days later: "If we join Malaysia, the people who will come and take most of the top jobs will be from Malaya." In a major speech in Singapore on 10th August 1961, Stephens reiterated his belief that North Borneo should first achieve independence before discussing the Malaysia proposal:

My people feel that if North Borneo joins Malaya now as a state, it would in fact mean that North Borneo would become not a state but a colony of the federation of Malaya. As I have said before, these fears are genuine. Not actually fear or suspicion of the sincerity of Malaya to take us on as an equal partner but more the fear that by virtue of our status as a British colony we would automatically become a second-class state or a colony of Malaya...We must have at least self-government before we can talk, before we, the people of the country, can decide for ourselves whether we want to become partners in Malaysia. Self-government for us is a pre-requisite to final settlement of the Malaysia question.

It is important to note that the Malaysia proposal is generally regarded by political scientists as having acted as a catalyst in the formation of political parties in North Borneo, the first being Donald Stephens' UNKO Party in August 1961, Datu (later Tun) Mustapha's Muslim-based United Sabah National Organisation ("USNO") in December 1961 and G.S. Sundang's United National Pasok-momogun Party ("UPKO") in January 1962. It is also important to note that Donald Stephens, a newspaper owner-editor and member of North Borneo's Legislative Council and Executive Council, was considered by a distinguished American academic visitor to North Borneo at that time as "being picked by more and more insiders as the coming Borneo politician." Due to Stephens' mixed Kadazan and Australian ancestry and his relations with the Chinese community by marriage, this observer described him as being "almost uniquely well qualified to represent the multiracial Borneo community."

A more positive response to the Malaysia proposal came on 3rd February 1962 in a Memorandum from the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee which had been formed after the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Regional Meeting in Singapore in July 1961. This meeting had provided the first opportunity for the political leaders of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo and Sarawak to discuss the Malaysia proposal together. The Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee then held a series of four meetings of its own under the chairmanship of Donald Stephens, three of which were attended by Brunei observers. In the 3rd February 1962 Memorandum, general conditions were laid down for the achievement of the Malaysia proposal. Nevertheless, Donald Stephens continued to voice his criticisms of the Malaysia proposal and in Sarawak, the Dayak secretary-general of the Sarawak National Party, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, was strongly critical of those Borneo leaders who favored it.

The United Front's criticism of the Malaysia proposal was sustained until as late as 9th September 1962 when the three constituent parties dispatched a Memorandum to the United Nations Committee on Colonialism designed to internationalize their anti-Malaysia campaign. The Memorandum called on the United Nations to "intervene in the proposed transfer of sovereignty in Sarawak and Sabah on the ground that such a transfer is a denial to the peoples in these territories of their right to complete independence." Nevertheless, after what I believe was a concerted campaign of persuasion by the governments of Britain and Malaya, together with the vigorous intervention of Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, there was a conditional acceptance of the Malaysia proposal by Donald Stephens's UNKO party, although G.S. Sundang's UPKO party continued to oppose the arrangement until June 1964 when it announced its acceptance of Malaysia as a *fait accompli* and merged with UNKO.

In my belief, the promise of M\$500 million in economic development funds from the Federal government during the first five years of membership was a major advantage held out to the two Borneo states as an inducement to join Malaysia. At the time of the negotiations on the Malaysia proposal, oil had not been discovered in North Borneo and the timber industry was in its infancy. Consequently, it was dependent on outside financial assistance. Membership of the new Federation meant that North Borneo would have access to Singapore's duty-free goods and its important commodity market, together with private Singapore Chinese investment funds.

Nevertheless, it has been generally agreed by academic commentators that the crucial factor in changing the attitudes of those Borneo leaders, notably Donald Stephens, who had previously been opposed to joining Malaysia, was the question of security, highlighted in early December 1962 by the Brunei Rebellion and by Indonesia's outspoken opposition to the Malaysia proposal. On 30th August 1962, the Parti Rakyat Brunei won 16 seats in Brunei's first general elections on a platform of opposition to the Malaysia proposal. Motions critical of the proposal were submitted in advance by Parti Rakyat Brunei for the first scheduled meeting of the Council, which was postponed several times from September to 5th December 1962. These motions were disallowed by the Speaker. When the latter date was scheduled, Parti Rakyat Brunei submitted another motion in advance calling on the British government to keep Brunei out of Malaysia and to return North Borneo and Sarawak to Brunei's control, the new federation to be granted independence within a year. However, the Speaker of the Council refused to place

the motion on the Council's agenda. On 8th December 1962, forces belonging to the underground military arm of Parti Rakyat Brunei seized control of the oilfield at Seria and its police station but failed to take the capital, Brunei Town, and to kidnap the Sultan. Within two weeks they were dislodged and dispersed by British troop reinforcements flown in from Singapore. In the meantime, Parti Rakyat Brunei leader, A.M. Azahari, had announced himself from Manila as Prime Minister of the unified state of Kalimantan Utara (northern Borneo) and was subsequently granted political asylum by the government of Indonesia which had expressed support for the insurgents. It also became apparent that the rebels had received military training in Indonesian Borneo.

In my view, the Brunei Rebellion had the effect of discrediting the alternative Borneo federation proposal, with which Azahari had been closely associated, and enhancing the Malaysia proposal. North Borneo's and Sarawak's political leaders condemned the Rebellion and in late December North Borneo's first direct elections were won almost unopposed by a coalition of parties now supportive of the Malaysia proposal. The possibility of invasion by Indonesia and a long-standing territorial claim to North Borneo by the Philippines had loomed large at a time when the British government was making it clear that it could only defend the Borneo states if they were part of Malaysia. In the view of one distinguished academic commentator, the Malaysian Federation might not have come about without this external pressure.

I shall now discuss Brunei's reaction to the Malaysia proposal. The Sultan of Brunei did not respond favorably to the proposal at first. However, after the Brunei Rebellion of December 1962 he demonstrated a keen interest in pursuing the possibility of Brunei's membership. Contemporary newspaper reports indicate that initial talks between the Brunei and Malayan governments held in March 1963 offered strong hopes of agreement, but more detailed negotiations in London in June broke down and finally failed. The consensus of academic opinion is that the question of Federal government control over Brunei's oil and gas revenue had been the major problem in the negotiations. The Malayan government was believed to have conceded that Brunei should maintain full control of its oil and gas revenue for the first ten years and instead of paying Federal tax, should make an annual contribution of M\$50 million to the Federal treasury. However, the Malayan government reportedly insisted that thereafter the power of taxing this revenue should revert to the Federal government, and that it should have immediate control over revenue from any newly-discovered oil or mineral finds. There was also the question of the Sultan of Brunei's precedence in the Council of Rulers who would take it in turn to be Yang di-Pertuan Agong ("Head of State") of the new Federation for five-year terms. It has been suggested that a "sticking-point" was the Sultan's alleged insistence that he become the first Head of State. However, the predominant academic opinion is that it was Brunei's refusal to accept Federal government taxation of its oil and gas revenue which effectively kept it out of Malaysia.

It will be seen below that the control of revenue from oil and gas also became a major source of contention between the Federal government and the state government of Sabah, first during the Chief Ministership of Tun Mustapha in 1975 and subsequently during the Chief Ministership of Datuk Pairin Kitingan from 1987 to the present.

I shall now discuss the final phase of the negotiations which led to the signing of the Malaysia Agreement on 9th July 1963. One of the documents presented to the Inter-

Governmental Committee (which we have seen was established in August 1962 under the chairmanship of Lord Lansdowne to decide on the constitutional details of the Malaysia proposal), was a memorandum signed by Donald Stephens, Datu Mustapha, and other leaders of the five North Borneo political parties which became known as the “Twenty Points,” these parties being UNKO, USNO, UPKO, the Democratic Party, and the United Party. This document, dated 29th August 1962, was submitted to the Inter-Governmental Committee with the intention that the principles embodied in it should be incorporated in the Malaysian constitution in order to protect the special rights and interests of the peoples of North Borneo. A similar document consisting of eighteen points was also submitted by Sarawak’s political leaders, many of which were similar to the Twenty Points. The Inter-Governmental Committee Report, which we have seen was published on 27th February 1963, reflected most of the principles embodied in the Twenty Points, which then found expression in the Malaysian Constitution or other contemporary legislation. While the Twenty Points document did not possess any legal/constitutional standing, it was clearly looked upon by North Borneo’s political leaders as a charter of state rights and the basis of North Borneo’s future relationship with the Federal government. It is for this reason, I believe, that Sabah’s current political leaders continue to invoke it.

The most important subjects dealt with in the Twenty Points were, *inter alia*, as follows:

- (i) Religion
- (ii) Immigration
- (iii) Native Rights
- (iv) Borneonization
- (v) Finances
- (vi) Constitutional Safeguards

I shall now illustrate the main principles embodied in the Twenty Points and the way in which these were reflected, to a greater or lesser extent, in the Inter-Governmental Committee Report and were ultimately embodied in the new Federal Constitution and other contemporary legislation which complemented it.

Religion. According to Point 1 of the Twenty Points, “while there was no objection to Islam being the national religion of Malaysia there should be no State religion in North Borneo, and the provisions relating to Islam in the present Constitution of Malaya should not apply to North Borneo.” The Inter-Governmental Committee Report recommended retention of Article 3 (1) of the Malayan Constitution providing that “Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.” However, it also recommended that “the Heads of State of the Borneo States should not be Head of the Muslim religion in the State” Another concession was made to the representations of the North Borneo leaders in the Report’s recommendation that the constitutions of the Borneo states could provide that a two-thirds majority vote of the state legislature would be needed to pass any law controlling or restricting “the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the Muslim religion.” The Report further recommended (i) that “Federal law should not provide for special financial aid for the establishment of Muslim institutions or the instruction in the Muslim religion of persons professing that religion in respect of North Borneo

and Sarawak without the concurrence of the State Government concerned”; and (ii) that “where federal law provides for special financial aid to Muslim religious education in pursuance of Article (2) [of the Malayan Constitution] the Malaysian Government would grant to the North Borneo and Sarawak Governments proportionate amounts for social welfare purposes in those States.” The Malaysian Constitution duly embodied all these recommendations in Articles 161C and 161D.

Immigration. According to Point 6 of the Twenty Points, “control over immigration into any part of Malaysia from outside should rest with the Central Government but entry into North Borneo should also require the approval of the State Government.” This was reflected in the recommendations of the Cobbold Commission Report and the Inter-Governmental Committee Report and although not embodied in the Malaysian Constitution, it was embodied in the amended Immigration Act of Malaya (No.27 of 1963) proclaimed on 26th August 1963.

Native Rights. According to Point 12 of the Twenty Points, “the indigenous races of North Borneo should enjoy special rights analogous to those enjoyed by Malays in Malaya...” The Inter-Governmental Committee Report reflected this principle by recommending that in its application to North Borneo and Sarawak, the provisions of Article 153 of the Malayan Constitution relating to “Malays” and the special quotas, permits, licenses, and land reserved for them “should be construed as if “Natives” were substituted for “Malays.” This recommendation was embodied in Article 161A of the Malaysian Constitution which gave the indigenous peoples of the Borneo states a privileged position similar to that of the Malays in Peninsular Malaysia as defined in Article 153.

Borneonization. Point 8 of the Twenty Points stated that “Borneanisation of the public service should proceed as quickly as possible.” This was reflected in the recommendation of the Inter-Governmental Committee Report that

Borneonisation of the Public Services in the Borneo States is a major objective of policy. For a number of years to come special arrangements will be necessary to secure this objective and to protect the legitimate interests of the Native peoples...

This principle was not embodied in the Malaysian Constitution but was one of the many important matters left to be dealt with in government-to-government agreements between Federal and state authorities.

Finances. According to Point 11 of the Twenty Points, “North Borneo should have control of its own finance, development funds and tariffs.” Differences on the question of financial autonomy could not be reconciled by the Inter-Governmental Committee and it is my view that the North Borneo representatives had to make substantial concessions to the Malayan government in order to save the negotiations on the proposed Federation. Under the formula finally adopted by the Inter-Governmental Committee, there were to be intermediate arrangements until a final agreement could be made which gave the state government a share of revenue. Under Articles 109, 110, 112C, and 112D of the Malaysian Constitution, it was provided that Sabah would derive its revenue from:

- (i) Federal capitation and road grants assigned to it in Parts I and

- (ii) II of the 10th Schedule;
- (iii) Revenues from lands, mines and forests, sales of state land and property, fees for state services etc. as assigned in Part III of the 10th Schedule;
- (iv) a special annual grant made by the Federal government as assigned in Part IV of the 10th Schedule; and
- (v) special sources of revenue assigned to Sabah in Part V of the 10th Schedule, notably “import duty and excise duty on petroleum products,” “export duty on timber and other forest produce,” motor vehicle registration fees, port and harbor fees and state sales taxes.

Constitutional Safeguards. In two important respects, the recommendations of the Inter-Governmental Committee failed to reflect important principles set out in the Twenty Points. Firstly, Point 3 of the Twenty Points stated that:

Whilst accepting that the present Constitution of the Federation of Malaya should form the basis of the Constitution of Malaysia, the Constitution of Malaysia should be a completely new document drafted and agreed in the light of the free association of States and should not be a series of amendments to a Constitution drafted and agreed by different States in totally different circumstances...

In fact, the work of the Inter-Governmental Committee consisted of drafting amendments to the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya which were then enacted by the Malayan Parliament as the “Malaysia Act.” My view is that the North Borneo representatives on the Committee were obliged to accept that, given the constraints of time set by the 31st August deadline for the establishment of Malaysia, it was practically impossible to draft a completely new document.

Secondly, Point 16 of the Twenty Points stated:

No amendment, modification or withdrawal of any special safeguards granted to North Borneo should be made by the Central Government without the positive concurrence of the Government of the State of North Borneo.

The power of amending the constitution of the State of North Borneo should belong exclusively to the people in the State.

The relevant, if somewhat ambiguous, recommendation of the Inter-Governmental Committee Report was as follows:

It is considered desirable that modifications to the special constitutional arrangements made in respect of a Borneo State should, subject to the safeguard of the consent of the State Government in cases where this is required, be capable of being amended to the extent of bringing the State into line with the present States of the Federation without the requirement that the Federal Bill making such amendment should be supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the total number of members of the Houses of Parliament.

As a consequence of these recommendations, the Malaysian Constitution did not incorporate the safeguards originally required by the North Borneo representatives. In my view, this effectively facilitated subsequent amendment of the Federal Constitution in such a way as to remove most of the provisions which originally gave Sabah and Sarawak a special constitutional status within the Federation. Nevertheless, during the negotiations on the Malaysia proposal, the two Borneo states can, in my view, be seen to have acted as partners, if less than equal partners, with the Malayan and Singapore governments in the discussion of their collective future within the proposed new Federation. The special provisions for North Borneo and Sarawak within the negotiated constitution reflected the reality that their original standing in the Federation was significantly different from that of the constituent states of the Malayan Federation of 1957, i.e., Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johore, Pahang, Perak, Trengganu, Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis, Penang, and Malacca, whose respective governments had not been officially consulted on the Malaysia proposal and had not been parties to the subsequent negotiations for its realization. A consequence of this was the unsuccessful attempt on the part of the state government of Kelantan to obtain a declaration from the Supreme Court of Malaya either that the Malaysia Agreement and the Malaysia Act of the Malayan Parliament were void or that they were not binding on the state of Kelantan.

Within two years of the signing of the Malaysia Agreement, a series of events commenced which clearly demonstrated, in my view, that the new Malaysian government in Kuala Lumpur had not accepted the constitutional and political principles implicit in the Agreement relating to the special standing of the two Borneo states, preferring instead to treat the enlarged political entity as a unitary state necessitating strong centralized government control. This can be seen from:

- (i) the dramatic separation of Singapore from the new Federation of Malaysia in 1965;
- (ii) the unseating of Sarawak's first Chief Minister, Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan, in 1966;
- (iii) the overturning and replacement of Tun Mustapha's USNO-led government in Sabah in 1976;
- (iv) the creation of new parliamentary seats so as to favor Peninsular Malaysia;
- (v) the enactment of a number of amendments to the Federal Constitution
- (vi) relating to the special position of the two Borneo states.

These will now be discussed in detail.

The Separation of Singapore. The separation of Singapore from the Malaysian Federation, embodied in an agreement made between the governments of Malaysia and Singapore of 7th August 1965 and announced on 9th August by Tunku Abdul Rahman, is generally regarded as having taken place against the will of the Singapore government, amounting to a *de facto* "eviction." It also took place without any prior consultation with the governments of Sabah and Sarawak. Nor was there any subsequent attempt on the part of the Federal government to have them ratify it. The general academic opinion is that while there were other contributory factors, the separation of Singapore was precipitated by domestic political considerations. This was the attempt by Lee Kuan

Yew's Singapore-based People's Action Party to establish itself in Peninsular Malaysia, becoming the political party of the Malaysian Chinese and ultimately replacing the Malaysian Chinese Association as UMNO's major partner in the ruling Alliance coalition government (the other party being the Malaysian Indian Congress). It is also believed that the People's Action Party's decision to contest the Peninsular Malaysian elections in April 1964 and its announced intention in November of that year to form a united opposition front contravened what Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and his senior ministers regarded as a "gentlemen's agreement" that Singapore politics and Peninsular Malaysian politics should operate quite autonomously of each other. In this connection, Tunku Abdul Rahman was reported as saying on 21st August 1964: "The first sign of Singapore's attempt to have a hand in the affairs of Malaysia was in the latest elections [April 1964] when the PAP [People's Action Party] contested some of our constituencies. This was quite contrary to what we agreed."

It is the general academic opinion that the separation of Singapore was construed by many of Sabah's and Sarawak's political leaders as undoing the basis of the 1963 Malaysia Agreement in which Singapore's membership of the Federation offset what they perceived would otherwise have been the predominant influence of Malaya. Although the Malaysian Constitution did not provide for secession or expulsion from the Federation, it is my view that Singapore's separation was construed by Donald Stephens to mean that other component states could also secede or be expelled. Responding to the event, Donald Stephens, then Federal Minister for Sabah Affairs, expressed "grave concern" and on 16th August 1965 called for renegotiation of the terms of Sabah's membership of the Federation. When he also mentioned the possibility of holding a state referendum on the issue, Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman reportedly obliged him to resign as Federal Minister at the end of that month. In a radio broadcast on 22nd August 1968, the Prime Minister said that any one who intended to secede "by force or by any other action will be regarded as rebels and traitors and we will deal with them as such."

It is my view that Donald Stephens and other political leaders in Sabah viewed the separation of Singapore as dangerously shifting the political balance of the Federation in favor of Peninsular Malaysia's predominant power. Donald Stephens was reported on 20th June 1967 as saying that Malaysia was "moving towards a Unitary State system thinly disguised as a federation" and that he wanted an independent body to "reexamine" Sabah's status and rights within the Federation. He was further reported as saying: "a number of our safeguards are no longer safe; promises have been broken and although we are supposed to have a Federal system of Government, action taken on the part of the Central Government indicates that the policy is to do away with state rights as soon as possible and all power will be given to Kuala Lumpur."

The removal of Singapore's representation in the Federal Parliament meant that the Kuala Lumpur government could more easily obtain the two-thirds majority needed to amend the Federal Constitution, making possible amendments designed to reduce the special position of the two Borneo states. Under the formula agreed to by the Inter-Governmental Committee, the original allocation of seats in the Federal Parliament was as follows:

Peninsular Malaysia	104
Singapore	15

Sabah	16
Sarawak	24
Total	159

Reflecting the balance sought by the Borneo representatives on the Inter-governmental Committee, this distribution made it virtually impossible for the ruling Alliance coalition of Peninsular Malaysia to find the two-thirds parliamentary majority required to amend the Federal Constitution. However, as we shall see below, the separation of Singapore from the Federation and the subsequent creation of new Federal parliamentary electorates meant that the Federal government was able to obtain the necessary two-thirds majority and make significant amendments to the Constitution.

It has also been pointed out by some academic commentators that some of the Sabah leaders were concerned about the Malay-Islamic national cultural ideology which the Federal government in Kuala Lumpur had adopted and was promoting in its campaign of “national integration,” which also involved the de-emphasizing of the ethnic distinctiveness of other groups, notably the Chinese. Lee Kuan Yew and his Singapore-based People’s Action Party had challenged this policy from its own pluralist, egalitarian standpoint which envisaged a “Malaysian Malaysia,” i.e., a culturally heterogeneous Malaysia in which no single ethnic group would possess special economic privileges of any kind or be acknowledged as possessing religious or cultural preeminence at a national level.

The Ningkan Affair. I shall now consider the “Ningkan affair,” which I believe demonstrated for the first time that the Federal government in Kuala Lumpur would move swiftly to oust any chief minister of Sabah or Sarawak who was not to its liking, even when the government of the state was affiliated with the ruling Federal Alliance coalition. More importantly, it also demonstrated that the Federal government was able to enact legislation effectively overriding the state constitutions of the two Borneo states. On 22nd July 1963, Datu Stephen Kalong Ningkan, a Christian Dayak and secretary-general of the Sarawak National Party, was appointed Chief Minister of Sarawak and leader of the Alliance-affiliated coalition government in the state legislature. (It will be remembered that Datu Ningkan was one of the Sarawak leaders who had spoken out most strongly against the Malaysia proposal in July 1961 and was one of the last to accept it.) On 16th June 1966 the Governor of Sarawak, following representations said to have been made to him by a majority of members [of the state legislature], called on Datu Ningkan to resign. When he refused, the Governor then dismissed him from office the next day. Following a declaration by the High Court of Borneo on 7th September 1966 that the dismissal was void, the Malaysian Head of State on 14th September declared a state of emergency in Sarawak under Article 150 of the Federal Constitution. On 19th September the Federal government passed legislation amending the Sarawak Constitution and empowering the Governor of Sarawak during a fixed period to summon the legislature, suspend standing orders and issue directions binding on the Speaker. And on 23rd September the Governor called a meeting of the legislature which passed a vote of non-confidence in Datu Ningkan, who was dismissed the following day. Another Dayak leader, Penghulu Tawi Sli, was then appointed Chief Minister in Datu Ningkan’s place. Datu Ningkan’s subsequent action in the High Court of Borneo to reverse the second

dismissal was unsuccessful, as was his appeal to the Privy Council. The case established beyond challenge the Federal government's right under Article 150(5) of the Malaysian Constitution "to make laws with respect to any matter....," including matters normally regarded as the prerogative of state governments under their constitutions. The inference drawn from this by one respected academic authority on Sabah and Sarawak was that "'states' rights' were seen to be held at the pleasure of the Federal government."

It is generally agreed by academic commentators that the principal policy issue which caused conflict between Datu Ningkan and the Federal government in Kuala Lumpur was his insistence on the continued employment of certain senior British expatriate officials until Sarawakians were trained to replace them—the policy of "Borneonization" whose basic principle, as we have seen, had been accepted in the Inter-Governmental Committee's Report. This was at variance, however, with the Federal government's own policy of "Malaysianization"—of replacing expatriates as quickly as possible with Kuala Lumpur-appointed officials, mostly of Peninsular Malaysian and Malay origin. Although only a small number of Peninsular Malaysian officials were appointed to Sarawak during these early years, they were in predominantly executive departmental positions such as the Federal Secretary, the Director of Education and the Director of Radio Malaysia in Sarawak. Opposition to "Malaysianization" was also expressed by senior Malay politicians in Sarawak who had welcomed the Federation: for example, Datu Abang Othman bin Hj. Moasili expressed the hope in the state legislature on 14th December 1968 that Federal officials "will not keep on continuing to regard themselves as somewhat superior, and by keeping themselves aloof they look somewhat like the former colonialists."

The Berjaya Coup. Subsequent events demonstrated that the Federal government in Kuala Lumpur was also prepared to act against Muslim-dominated state governments in Borneo. It has been generally accepted that the ruling Barisan Nasional multi-party coalition (which had been formed in 1974 as an enlargement of the former Alliance coalition) was closely involved in the establishment of a new party known as Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah ("Berjaya") in Sabah in July 1975. This resulted in the defeat of Tun Mustapha's USNO-led government at the state elections in April 1976 and his replacement as Chief Minister by Berjaya President and former state governor, Donald Stephens, who had in the meantime converted to Islam and was known as Tun Fuad Stephens.

The circumstances leading to what was generally perceived as a Kuala Lumpur-supported coup will be rehearsed briefly as they invite comparison with recent developments in Sabah, particularly with regard to the question of secession from the Federation. Tun Mustapha's well-documented extravagance at both governmental and personal levels had been given widespread publicity in numerous newspaper and magazine articles in a number of countries and in at least one published book. The Sabah state government was consequently reported to be in serious debt by the beginning of 1975 and the Federal government refused to approve an overseas loan of US\$200 million which it had arranged. Tun Mustapha had also for some time been reportedly resisting the Federal government's request to sign an agreement with Malaysia's national petroleum agency, Petronas, which would have effectively surrendered in perpetuity all of Sabah's offshore oil and gas revenues in return for a 5% share of annual profits. Large new hydrocarbon reserves had been discovered by Shell in Sabah's coastal waters in 1973.

On 23rd April 1975, Tun Mustapha presented to a meeting of USNO a paper, entitled “The Future Position of Sabah in Malaysia,” which canvassed the possibility of Sabah seceding from the Malaysian Federation. It was also alleged that he had secret talks with Indonesian and Philippines leaders about Sabah’s independence and his plan to create a new Sultanate, to be known as “Bornesia,” incorporating Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, Indonesian Borneo and possibly the Moro (Muslim) population of the nearby Sulu Archipelago of the southern Philippines. He was also alleged to have supplied arms to Muslim rebels in the southern Philippines. Resigning as governor on 23rd July 1975, Tun Fuad Stephens was reported on 27th July as accusing Tun Mustapha of conspiring to take Sabah out of the Federation and warning him of the consequences:

Any attempt at UDI [unilateral declaration of independence as was done in Rhodesia] would not be possible because the security forces in Sabah, including the police force are under the control of the Federal Authorities who will undoubtedly be used by the Federal Government to put down any attempt at rebellion or attempt at declaring Sabah independence.

Apart from removing his control of internal security and police in May 1975, the Federal government took no punitive official action against Tun Mustapha for his widely-reported secessionist ideas. Nor was the Federal government’s Anti-Corruption Agency directed to investigate the many damaging public accusations of corruption which had been made against him. However, the Federal government reportedly assisted in the formation of the new Berjaya party, led by Tun Fuad Stephens who resigned as governor to contest the forthcoming elections. In my view the Federal government’s support for Berjaya and for Tun Fuad Stephens was conditional on the latter undertaking to sign the agreement with Petronas which Tun Mustapha had reportedly declined to sign. Berjaya was subsequently elected to government in April 1976, with Tun Fuad Stephens as Chief Minister. Immediately after Tun Fuad Stephens’s death, together with other senior Berjaya ministers, in an as yet unexplained plane crash on 6th June 1976, Datuk Harris Salleh became Chief Minister. A week after his assumption of office, he signed the agreement with Petronas.

Electoral Distribution. We have already seen that the separation of Singapore in 1965 significantly altered the balance of parliamentary representation within the Federation in favor of Peninsular Malaysia. While the representation of Peninsular Malaysia has been subsequently increased [from] 104 to 133 seats, that of Sabah and Sarawak has been increased by only four additional parliamentary seats each. In my view, this substantially disproportionate increase in Peninsular Malaysia’s parliamentary representation cannot be justified on the grounds of relative population increase. The following table sets out the significant shift in the weighting of parliamentary representation described above:

	<u>1963</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1993</u>
Peninsular Malaysia	104	104	133
Singapore	15	n/a	n/a
Sabah	16	16	20
Sarawak	24	24	28

Constitutional Amendments. Subsequent to the Kuala Lumpur government's ability to achieve a two-thirds parliamentary majority of 120 seats from Peninsular Malaysia itself, a number of important amendments were made to the Malaysian Constitution which, in my view, have almost entirely eroded the special standing of the two Borneo states within the Federation as it was originally negotiated. The principal amendments are as follows:

(i) Under the Constitution (Amendment) Act of 1976, Articles 161C and 161D limiting financial aid to Muslim institutions and religious instruction in Sabah were repealed.

(a) (ii) Under the Constitution (Amendment) Act of 1971 Article 161A, giving the "natives" of Sabah and Sarawak the same privileges within their own states as those enjoyed by the "Malays" in Peninsular Malaysia under Article 153, was repealed. Henceforth, the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak could properly be referred to as "Malays." The inevitable consequence of this was to deprive them of what had been their exclusive enjoyment of quotas relating to the public service, permits and licenses and other privileges conferred under Article 161A.

(ii) Under the Constitution (Amendment) Act of 1976, Article 1 (2) was altered with the effect that the separate listing of the two Borneo states as members of the Federation was eliminated.

It is my belief that this reflects the Federal government's long-term policy that Sabah and Sarawak were to have the same status within the Federation as the constituent states of the original Malayan Federation of 1957. In my view, this is the most politically symbolic of all the amendments to the Constitution relating to Sabah and Sarawak.

I shall now deal with events subsequent to the election of a new state government in Sabah in 1985. In 1984 a new political party was formed in Sabah, known as Parti Bersatu Sabah ("PBS") and led by a Christian Kadazan, Datuk Pairin Kitingan, who had resigned from Berjaya. In the state elections of April 1985, PBS won 25 of the 48 seats, which, together with one defection from another party, gave it a simple majority and thus the right to form the government and to have its leader sworn in as Chief Minister. Instead, however, Tun Mustapha, leader of the minority USNO party, made an extraordinary pre-dawn bid to have himself sworn in as Chief Minister by the state governor. This became the subject of a legal action which eventually resulted in the confirmation of Datuk Pairin as Chief Minister.

In my view, the main reason for the loss of support by USNO and Berjaya and the success of PBS was the perception by many Sabahans that during their terms as Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha (1967-1976) and Datuk Harris Salleh (1976-1985) had actively cooperated with the Federal government in the reduction of Sabah's special status within the Malaysian Constitution. During Tun Mustapha's term as Chief Minister, for example, the USNO-dominated state legislature enacted legislation which replaced English with Bahasa Malaysia (Malay) as the official language and the principal medium of instruction and to make Islam the state religion. On 1st April 1984 during Datuk Harris's term as

Chief Minister, the administration of the island of Labuan, formerly administered by the Sabah government, was transferred to Federal territorial jurisdiction. This enabled Peninsular Malaysians to enter Sabah through Labuan without being subject to the state's immigration controls. In my view, these concessions were made by Tun Mustapha and Datuk Harris to gain favor with and support from the Federal government.

From the time of PBS's surprise election victory on 21st April 1985, the Federal government, in my view, demonstrated a marked unwillingness to acknowledge and cooperate with the new government headed by Datuk Pairin Kitingan. It failed to criticize the efforts by Tun Mustapha to have himself sworn in as Chief Minister or to take police action against what I believe to have been an organized campaign of bombings and arson planned by local interests to prevent PBS from forming the government. Nor did the Barisan Nasional in Kuala Lumpur agree to accept PBS into the national coalition until as late as June 1986, despite the latter's early application for membership.

The principal reason for this lack of cooperation, later developing into open hostility and active harassment, was, in my view, PBS's commitment to a platform of restoration of state rights commencing with the Sabah state elections of April 1985 and its subsequent invocation of the Twenty Points as the proper basis for Sabah's relationship with the Federal government. On 2nd January 1987, Dr. Jeffrey Kitingan, younger brother of Chief Minister Datuk Pairin Kitingan, issued a public statement in which he said that one of the main sources of unhappiness with the Federal government in Sabah was its apparent non-compliance with the original Twenty Points, which he regarded as the basis for Sabah's joining the Federation. He also stated that it was a common perception "that the federal leadership has been influencing the development of political events in Sabah to the detriment of the ruling party [PBS]." On 13th January 1987 Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar bin Baba was reported to have challenged PBS to substantiate the allegations and Dr. Kitingan accordingly produced a long memorandum addressed to the Federal government and entitled "The Twenty Points: Basis For Federal-State Relations For Sabah." After surveying the embodiment of the Twenty Points in the Malaysian Constitution and subsequent developments, Dr. Kitingan wrote:

In conclusion, it is shown that there are a number of critical areas in which the Federal government has deviated from the original spirit and meaning of the constitutional safeguards granted to Sabah at the time of the formation of Malaysia...The principal areas in which there have been clear deviations with respect to implementation are those which relate to matters pertaining to Immigration, Religious freedom, Borneonisation, Citizenship, Education, Finance, and Tariff Arrangements and Constitutional safeguards.

I now wish to consider the Yayasan Sabah ("Sabah Foundation") with which Dr. Kitingan has been closely linked since May 1985. A charitable body established by the government of Tun Mustapha in 1966, the official purpose of the Sabah Foundation was to distribute more widely the income earned from the state's timber exports. From 1970 this took the form of annual cash payments to all adults and subsequently of educational scholarships tenable in peninsular Malaysia and overseas. It is my belief that, in practice, under the USNO-dominated government of Tun Mustapha and the Berjaya government

of Datuk Harris Salleh, the cash payments were used to promote the popularity of the ruling coalition. An unofficial “milk-cow” of government, it was financed by substantial timber concessions operated by subsidiaries. With the appointment of Dr. Kitingan as chief executive of the Sabah Foundation by the new PBS state government in May 1985, it was reorganized and a commercial arm was established in the form of Innoprise Corporation Sdn. Bhd., resulting in a rapid improvement of its earnings. Under Dr. Kitingan’s direction, the Sabah Foundation’s activities were broadened to include a range of rural community development and youth projects throughout the state.

In November 1988 Sabah’s Chief Minister, Datuk Pairin Kitingan, requested the services of the Sabah Foundation in terminating a private monopoly exercised over the shipping of logs from Sabah by a Japanese cartel and its local agent, Archipelago Sdn. Bhd., reported as being controlled by former Chief Minister Datuk Harris Salleh and a prominent Sabah Chinese businessman, Datuk Wong Chik Lim. The Foundation’s commercial arm, Innoprise Corporation Sdn. Bhd., subsequently attempted to establish a properly regulated agency which would restore government control over the shipping of logs. Although this attempt was unsuccessful, it was reported at the time as having antagonized certain vested commercial interests enjoying close links both with the opposition Berjaya party in Sabah and UMNO in Peninsular Malaysia.

One of Dr. Kitingan’s innovations within the Sabah Foundation was the establishment of the Institute for Development Studies, a policy research center or “think tank” designed to guide the state government in its future planning. Part of the work of the Institute for Development Studies was the publication of material intended to canvass issues relating to Federal-state relations, a notable example being “Sabah 25 Years Later 1963-1988” (1989) edited by Dr. Kitingan and his deputy director, Dr. Maximus Ongkili. The essays by various authors collected in this publication dealt in detail with the circumstances of Sabah’s joining Malaysia, including the principles embodied in the Twenty Points document, and critically reviewed Sabah’s subsequent experience within the Federation. The book contains, in my view, an elaboration of the case made out by Dr. Kitingan in his 1987 memorandum referred to above.

In early January 1990, Dr. Kitingan published a New Year’s message in which he again raised some of the specific grievances held by the PBS government in relation to the Federal government:

- (i) its latitude in allowing a former PBS Federal Deputy Minister to campaign against PBS;
- (ii) its discrimination against Chief Minister Datuk Pairin Kitingan through Radio Television Malaysia’s refusal to show him in a tourist film intended to promote Sabah;
- (iii) its failure to act against the duplication of names on electoral rolls and the naturalization and electoral registration of large numbers of illegal immigrants;
- (iv) its speedy registration of new opposition parties in Sabah; and
- (v) its erosion of Sabah state powers in the areas of fisheries, mining and forestry “which might leave the State wholly dependent financially.”

In his published message, Dr. Kitingan called specifically for the equal distribution of oil and gas revenue between the Federal and Sabah governments and for greater Sabah representation on Federal government boards and authorities, emphasizing that “our

State should rightly be treated as a full partner in the Federation.” At the same time, he anticipated that “Sabah and its State Government will face more harrassments [sic] in the years ahead.”

I now wish to deal with what Dr. Kitingan reported as a major grievance—the naturalization and electoral registration of illegal immigrant workers from the southern Philippines. The population of Sabah itself, estimated recently at 1.4 million, has been swelled in recent years by illegal immigrant workers from the southern Philippines and Indonesia who are now estimated to number at least 250,000. It has been reported that many of these workers have been given “blue cards” (certificates of naturalization) by the Federal authorities in Sabah and that they accounted for most of the 50,000 new voters reported as having been registered on the electoral rolls in the six months between October 1989 and March 1990. This rapid increase can be compared with an increase of 72,000 over the four years from 1985 to 1989 reported by the Election Commission. (See “RHWR-4”, p.21). It has also been reported that practically all of the newly-registered voters are Muslims from the southern Philippines and Indonesia. It is my belief that as they are indebted to the Federal authorities for their citizenship status and their opportunity to find employment, their political loyalties will be to UMNO Sabah (“UMNO Sabah”) the Sabah branch of the party which dominates the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition at Federal level. In my view, their enrollment is likely to have the significant effect of producing Muslim majorities in a number of Federal and state electorates where they did not exist previously, thus facilitating the eventual election of an UMNO Sabah government.

In my view, the Federal government began to pursue a policy of direct harassment of the PBS government in April 1988 when Federal government tax investigators conducted a raid on four PBS leaders, including three state government ministers, searching their homes without prior notice and taking away papers. In June 1989 the Federal government’s Anti-Corruption Agency began to investigate Dr. Kitingan, reportedly “leaking” some of the information it gathered to Sabah’s opposition parties during the next few months without actually naming him, and then revealing his name in December. This, together with the Federal government’s negative response to a number of his requests, led Sabah Chief Minister, Datuk Pairin Kitingan, to complain publicly in November 1989 that “certain Federal leaders” were attempting to topple his government. He noted that a Deputy Federal Minister originally appointed as a PBS member had been allowed by the Barisan Nasional Federal coalition government to retain his post even though he had since resigned from PBS and was leading an opposition party in Sabah opposed to the PBS. Datuk Pairin was also reported as claiming that the Anti-Corruption Agency’s investigations of himself and his brother were politically motivated. He noted that the investigations had come on the eve of the by-election for the state seat of Ranau. The Anti-Corruption Agency is under the control of the Prime Minister’s Department, the responsible Minister then and now being Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir.

On 18th January 1990 in his speech at the USNO annual assembly in Kota Kinabalu, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir was reported as saying:

Some Sabahans had been given the opportunity to further their education to an [sic] extent of becoming doctors, though not necessarily being in the medical line, but apparently they have forgotten the benefits of

gaining independence through the federation, but had instead chosen to create anti-Malaysia feelings.

This was, in my belief, a veiled but unmistakable reference to Dr. Kitingan and his colleague, Dr. Maximus Ongkili, of the Institute for Development Studies. Five days later, Dr. Kitingan was arrested on the seven charges of corruption to which I have referred ... The timing of Dr. Kitingan's arrest, coming as it did after his controversial New Year message and the Prime Minister's sharp response to it, suggests to me that the charges were politically motivated.

During the two months before the Sabah state elections of 16th-7th July 1990, there was a series of arrests of four PBS supporters carried out by Federal Police Special Branch officers in connection with an alleged secession "plot" in Sabah. On 25th May 1990, during the annual Kadazan harvest festival, two Kadazans were detained under the Internal Security Act. One of them was Benedict Topin, executive secretary of the Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association, chairman of Sabah Air Sdn. Bhd. and a key PBS member. On 10th July 1990, a week before the elections, Tan Sri Abdul Rahim bin Nor, Deputy Inspector General of the Malaysian Police, was reported as having revealed details of the alleged plot. In my view, the timing of this dramatic allegation suggests that its motive was political. This is supported by the subsequent failure of the Malaysian Police or other Federal authorities to make public any evidence of a secession conspiracy. It is also significant, in my view, that Dr. Kitingan was charged on twelve counts of failure to disclose assets a week after PBS's electoral victory.

At its annual congress held on 15th October 1990, five days before Federal parliamentary elections, the PBS decided to leave the Barisan Nasional Coalition, which it had joined in June 1986, and to join the opposition coalition led by Parti Semangat '46. My view is that this decision expressed the belief of most PBS congress delegates that the Sabah government had not benefited from its time within the ruling national coalition—indeed, that Sabah's general position within the Federation had continued to deteriorate. Chief Minister Datuk Pairin Kitingan was reported as saying after the congress decision that his efforts to obtain certain concessions for the state from the Federal government in return for PBS's continued support for the Barisan Nasional had been unsuccessful.

The PBS announcement brought an angry response from the Barisan Nasional leadership. Deputy Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional secretary-general Abdul Ghafar bin Baba was reported to have described the PBS action as "a dirty political tactics [sic]." Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir himself was reported at the same time to have referred to the PBS presence within the Barisan Nasional coalition as having been like "a thorn in one's flesh" which had "caused the flesh to swell and suppurate." In my belief, responsibility for PBS's last-minute switch of political allegiance was attributed by the Prime Minister and his Deputy wholly to the Kitingan brothers. In fact, however, the newspaper reports of the PBS congress where the decision had been made did not indicate that they had advocated the move.

In my view, the campaign of harassment of the Sabah Foundation and Sabah government leadership was stepped up dramatically after the Barisan Nasional had been returned at the Federal elections of October 1990 with a strengthened majority. On 3rd January 1991, Dr. Maximus Ongkili, deputy director of the Institute for Development

Studies, was taken in for questioning under the Internal Security Act but was released after a month. On 5th January 1991 Chief Minister Datuk Pairin Kitingan himself was stopped at a roadblock near the Chief Minister's office at the Sabah Foundation in Likas, Kota Kinabalu, and arrested on three charges of corruption. And on 16th January 1991, the manager of Innoprise Corporation Sdn. Bhd., Vincent Chung, was arrested under the Internal Security Act "on suspicion of being involved in a plot to bring about Sabah's secession from Malaysia." He was subsequently served with a two-year detention order signed by the Minister for Home Affairs, Dr. Mahathir.

On 21st February 1991 in a speech at a Kota Kinabalu rally marking the establishment of a branch of UMNO in Sabah, ("UMNO Sabah"), Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir was reported to have said that Dr. Kitingan and the Institute for Development Studies were planning, with the assistance of another country, to take Sabah out of Malaysia and make him its President. The Prime Minister alleged that by raising the "Twenty Point Issue" and accusing the Federal government of neglecting Sabah, Dr. Kitingan and the Institute for Development Studies were spreading hatred for the Federal government and working towards secession. He was reported to have said further on 21st February 1991: "Before, Sabah people never hated the federal government or the National Front," but that since the PBS came to power, statements were made, "especially by Jeffrey Kitingan, to give rise to hatred against the federal [government], and poison the minds of Sabahans."

Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir was reported as saying after the 21st February 1991 rally, when questioned by journalists why Dr. Kitingan remained free when he was fanning anti-Malaysia sentiments: "He [Dr. Kitingan] is free until the government decides he is a threat to the security of the country. At that stage, there are provisions in the law that we can use. If he is not a security risk we don't act." He was also quoted as saying that as there was no evidence of any planned use of violence against the Federal government, "we can still allow the agitators to remain free." No disclaimer was issued by the Prime Minister subsequent to the wide publication of these attributed remarks.

On 13th May 1991, four days after the newly-established UMNO Sabah's first by-election victory in the Muslim-majority seat of Kota Belud where former Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha, successfully represented the new party, Dr. Kitingan was arrested under the Internal Security Act on suspicion of "involvement in a plot to pull Sabah out of Malaysia." On 16th July 1991, the Deputy Home Affairs Minister, Datuk Megat Junid, announced that Dr. Kitingan's detention had been extended for a further two years by a letter signed by the Minister for Home Affairs, Dr. Mahathir. Nothing had been published to suggest that any of Dr. Kitingan's statements or actions subsequent to the Prime Minister's speech of 21 February had in fact made him a "security risk," but on 18th July 1991, Datuk Megat Junid told the Federal Parliament that there might be a White Paper providing details of the secession "plot." "Once investigations are completed," he was reported to have said, "something would be done to convince the public." However, no White Paper has since appeared, which suggests to me that the evidence of the alleged "plot" may not be very convincing to the public.

It is significant, in my view, that Dr. Kitingan's detention under the Internal Security Act took place within six weeks of public statements by Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir (also the minister responsible for the administration of the Internal Security

Act) referring to him as a secessionist, an “agitator,” and a potential threat to the security of Malaysia. It is also significant, in my view, that Dr. Kitingan’s arrest took place four days after UMNO Sabah’s victory in the Kota Belud by-election. I believe that this result was a political boost for the Prime Minister, suggesting to him that UMNO Sabah was capable of being elected to government in the state in place of PBS.

It is important to understand the crucial role of the Internal Security Act in Malaysian politics in recent years. Inherited from the British colonial government, which introduced it to deal with the aftermath of the Communist terrorist uprising of 1948-1960, the Internal Security Act has, in my view, and in the view of international organizations such as Amnesty International and Asia Watch, been employed by the Federal government in recent years to deal not only with key opposition politicians but with dissidents within the Federal ruling coalition. For example, one hundred people, many of them notable opposition politicians, were taken in for questioning in July 1987 in “Operasi Lallang” (Operation Long Grass) and sixty of these were subsequently detained under the Internal Security Act. In this case, a White Paper was published by the Ministry of Home Affairs to justify the application of the Internal Security Act. However, when one of the detainees, opposition politician Karpal Singh, subsequently secured his release by applying to the High Court of Malaysia by a writ of *habeas corpus*, the Act was then amended in June 1989 to exclude this form of application, except in cases of possible procedural irregularity.

Under Section 73(1)(b) of the Internal Security Act, a person can be held for questioning for a maximum of sixty days before the imposition of a maximum two-year detention order, renewable indefinitely, under Section 8(1). There is no provision that the detailed basis of the detention order be made public or that the detained person be brought to trial. It should be noted that the state of emergency for the whole of Malaysia declared by the Malaysian Head of State in May 1969 is still in force, enabling the blanket application of the Internal Security Act.

Under Section 11 of the Internal Security Act, there is also provision for detainees to appeal to a government-appointed Advisory Board against the allegations made against them. The Advisory Board may recommend to Malaysia’s Head of State the release of a detainee if it believes that the case against him or her is insufficient to justify continued detention. However, the Minister for Home Affairs, who is responsible for the administration of the Internal Security Act, is not bound by these recommendations and is not obliged to state his reasons for rejecting them. I have been informed by Mr. Harjeet Singh of Shearn Delamore, Dr. Kitingan’s Malaysian solicitors, and verily believe that in February 1992 the Advisory Board recommended that Dr. Kitingan be released from detention but that this was rejected by the Minister for Home Affairs, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir.

In response to a question asked by opposition member, Lim Guan Eng, in the Federal Parliament on 23rd December 1992, Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs, Ong Ka Ting, stated that Dr. Kitingan was being held under the Internal Security Act for security reasons and not political reasons. In response to an earlier question by opposition member and former detainee, Karpal Singh, seeking the reasons for the rejection of the Advisory Board’s recommendation that Dr. Kitingan be freed, the Parliamentary Secretary stated that the Minister’s decision could not be questioned. He did not offer any further

evidence of Dr. Kitingan's alleged involvement in a secessionist plot in Sabah, or refer to the possibility of a White Paper on the subject which had been mentioned two years earlier.

The case of Dr. Kitingan and the six other Sabahans under detention has been taken up by Amnesty International and Asia Watch, who have published and distributed detailed reports. In its report of October 1991, Amnesty International made the following statement:

Amnesty International is concerned that the seven detainees from the State of Sabah held under the ISA [Internal Security Act] without charge or trial may be prisoners of conscience held solely for the non-violent exercise of their rights to free expression and freedom of association. It recommends to the Government of Malaysia that they be released immediately and unconditionally if they are not to be formally charged with a recognizable criminal offence and promptly tried in public in a court of law according to established international standards for fair trial.

In reference to the general use made by the Malaysian government of the Internal Security Act in recent years, the same Amnesty International report stated:

Administrative detention is the practice of some countries, including Malaysia, of detaining persons by the decision of an administrative authority rather than a result of a judicial process. Any system of administrative or preventive detention which invests an executive authority to detain individuals without charge or trial risks being used to circumvent the due process of law and the authority of the courts. In such situations, individuals may be arbitrarily detained for purposes of harassment or intimidation, as a means of facilitating oppressive and illegal interrogation, or to silence non-violent critics and political opponents of the government exercising their basic human rights such as the rights to freedom of expression and belief and to freedom of association. These dangers are particularly present where the system of administrative detention fails to provide detainees with any opportunity for effective remedy of violation of their fundamental right through a form of judicial appeal.

In my view, it is significant that Malaysia has not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights or the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment. I further believe that it is largely the continued application of the Internal Security Act which has led the United Nations Development Programme to classify Malaysia in the "Low Human Freedom" category.

It is my considered opinion that the Federal government in Kuala Lumpur has been disinclined to accept the PBS government of Sabah since the latter's first election to office in 1985 and that from October 1990 it has actively pursued a political strategy designed to replace it with an UMNO Sabah government. The first part of this strategy

has been to eliminate the leadership of PBS and of the Sabah Foundation in the belief that the Kitingan brothers are the vital “strong men” whose removal would demoralize and destabilize the PBS government. The second part of the strategy has been to establish UMNO Sabah, in place of USNO, providing a bridgehead for direct and permanent Federal political influence in the state through UMNO Sabah’s eventual replacement of the PBS government. This has meant the abandonment of what had been the previous official policy of the Federal Barisan Nasional coalition (and of its predecessor, the Federal Alliance coalition) not to establish branches of its constituent parties in Sabah or Sarawak.

The third part of the strategy is the current attempt by Tun Mustapha, encouraged I believe by the Federal government, to overturn Sabah’s so-called “anti-hop” legislation. Article 18(2)(d) of the Sabah Constitution, enacted by an amendment in May 1986, requires sitting members of the state legislature who wish to change their party allegiance to resign their seats. In my view, this legislation was a response by PBS to the long and continuing history in Sabah and Sarawak of money and other material inducements being systematically and successfully employed to change the party allegiances of sitting members. Similar legislation has recently been enacted by Sarawak’s state legislature and has long existed in the Peninsular Malaysian state of Kelantan where the opposition Parti Islam has been in power for most of the period since 1957. However, the Kelantan law was successfully challenged in Malaysia’s Supreme Court in 1992. In my view, this strategy is unlikely to be pursued much further because of the possible embarrassment to the Barisan Nasional coalition government of Sarawak which narrowly averted defeat in 1987 when a number of members of the ruling party crossed the floor of the legislature.

It is my belief that the Federal government’s political harassment of the Sabah’s PBS government has recently been accompanied by measures designed to place financial and economic pressure on the state. In a move officially explained as being designed to conserve forest resources and prevent illegal logging, Federal Primary Industries Minister, Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, announced in February 1991 that the export of round logs and sawn timber from Sabah would in future only be possible by means of Federal licenses issued by the Malaysian Timber Industry Board. Significantly, the same restriction was not imposed on Sarawak, whose exports of timber had reportedly been running at four times those of Sabah. And in December 1992, Dr. Lim Keng Yaik took the extreme step of announcing a “temporary” ban on the export of all sawn logs from Sabah as from 1 January 1993. The ban has in my view threatened the loss of more than 40% of the Sabah state government’s independent income, namely the revenue from the export tax on timber.

The allocation of Federal aid funds for development projects can also be seen to have been used for political purposes in Sabah in recent years. For example, the allocation of M\$6 million in Federal funds was announced by Barisan Nasional Secretary-General, Ghafar bin Baba, in April 1991, during a visit to Sabah. This allocation was for rural electrification in the Kota Belud area where a by-election was due to take place in the following month. When asked by a Sabah journalist if this allocation amounted to “money politics,” Federal politician Datuk Abdul Kadir was reported as saying that he preferred to describe it as “development politics.” In my view, the two terms were synonymous in this context.

At an administrative level, what I believe to have been a “freeze” by the Kuala Lumpur government on the Sabah state government since October 1990 was expressed in a petty but nonetheless symbolic way by the widely-reported exclusion of Sabah’s most senior civil servant, State Secretary Datuk Simon Sipaun, from the annual national Conference of State Secretaries held in April 1991. Datuk Sipaun had been invited to attend the previous national conference in July 1990.

I wish to refer briefly at this point to what I believe to be the level of knowledge possessed by the principal Federal government protagonists in the debate over Federal versus Sabah state rights. It is now more than thirty years since the negotiations on the formation of the Federation of Malaysia took place and there are very few still-active Federal politicians or political observers who experienced those events. One consequence of this is a notable lack of knowledge and understanding of the basic facts of those negotiations and their significance. Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir himself was reported as saying on 12th September 1991, in response to the call by PBS state assemblyman Datuk Monggoh Orow for a referendum on the issue of remaining in Malaysia, that there had been a referendum at the time of the Malaysia negotiations in which the people of Sabah and Sarawak had decided to “swim or sink” with Malaysia and that there would be no second chance. No referendum or plebiscite was in fact held in Sabah and Sarawak, although as we have seen, one was held in Singapore in September 1962.

Even the late Tunku Abdul Rahman, one of the principal participants in the negotiations leading to the formation of Malaysia, had by early 1987 either forgotten or confused the salient facts of Sabah’s entry into the Federation. He was reported as saying in January 1987 that he could not comment on the Twenty Points because they were first raised “too long ago—even before 1963.” He continued:

All I can remember is that the Cobbold Commission headed by Lord Cobbold had drawn up the constitution which was accepted by Sabah. If I am not mistaken, Sabah readily signed the Malaysia Agreement and had accepted the Yang di-Pertuan Agong as the head of Islam in the State.

We have already seen that the Constitution, as originally drawn up and enacted following the recommendations of the Inter-Governmental Committee, did not make Malaysia’s Head of State the head of Islam in Sabah.

A revealing testament to higher-echelon Federal government bureaucratic attitudes to the original negotiations on the Malaysia proposal can be found in the observations reported to have been made to the press in Kota Kinabalu on 14th March 1991 by Malaysia’s Inspector-General of Police, Tan Sri Haniff Omar:

There has been a lot of nonsense in some accusations, like the “Twenty Point” [sic] agreement ... I had dug out records of the Cobbold Commission reports, Malaysian Solidarity Commission [sic] reports, Inter-Governmental Commission [sic] reports, the Malaysia Agreement and even the Malaysian Constitution just to understand the whole issue surrounding the federation. I discovered that there were many misleading things in the [Twenty Points] memorandum but the

fact is that if the intention was good, it could be thoroughly researched and better explained...

At the UMNO general assembly in early November 1992, Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister and Barisan National Secretary-General, Ghafar bin Baba, was widely reported in the Malaysian press as having issued a further challenge to PBS to debate the Twenty Points issue. In view of the fact that Datuk Pairin Kitingan and Dr. Jeffrey Kitingan had been calling for such a debate themselves since as early as 1987, and that by December 1992 Dr. Kitingan (and six other Sabahans) had already been imprisoned without trial for almost two years on allegations of secessionist plotting consequent on his public canvassing of the Twenty Points agenda, this, in my opinion, was an instance of remarkable hypocrisy.

While I have no knowledge of the substance of the seven criminal charges made against Dr. Kitingan, I am convinced that they must be seen in the broader context of issues and the sequence of events which I have outlined above: the history of the negotiations leading up to the formation of Malaysia and the special status achieved within its Constitution by Sabah and Sarawak by virtue of those negotiations; the direct and decisive interventions by the Kuala Lumpur government in the political affairs of Sarawak in 1966 and Sabah in 1975; the systematic and almost complete removal of the special constitutional status of Sabah and Sarawak by means of a series of legislative amendments enacted since 1971; and the concerted efforts by the Federal government, particularly marked since October 1990, to unseat the PBS government in Sabah by politically eliminating the two Kitingan brothers and to erect in its place an UMNO Sabah state government unlikely to disturb the pattern of tightening Federal control or to resist the removal of the few remaining special constitutional provisions relating to the two Borneo states.

In overall summary, there is, in my considered view, a clearly discernible design in the actions of the Malaysian Federal government to remove the special constitutional status of Sabah and Sarawak in the Federation and to place them on the same footing as the component states of Peninsular Malaysia which originally made up the Federation of Malaya. Constitutional and other legislative changes enacted by the Federal government, together with political and administrative interventions, have enabled it to exert increasing pressure on the PBS-led state government of Sabah. Furthermore, any voiced objections or resistance to this process on the part of Sabah's Christian political leaders and any invocation by them of the original negotiations and agreements leading up to Sabah's incorporation in Malaysia, notably the Twenty Points, have been treated as evidence of a desire to secede from the Federation and nothing short of treason.

Finally, in reference to the way in which the special constitutional position and rights of Sabah and Sarawak have been, in my view, systematically extinguished, including the special position and rights of their indigenous inhabitants, and to the resistance this process has aroused in Sabah in particular, it is appropriate to cite the 1972 opinion of Tan Sri Mohd. Suffian bin Hashim, who was later to become Lord President of Malaysia's Supreme Court. In his "Introduction to the Malaysian Constitution" this internationally respected jurist wrote in relation to amendments made by the Federal Parliament to the Sedition Act in 1970 to "entrench" (i.e., to place beyond all debate and challenge) Articles 152, 153 and 159 of the Federal Constitution relating to the special

rights reserved for Malays in Peninsular Malaysia following the Kuala Lumpur riots of 13th May 1969:

The bargain arrived at as a result of the give and take and compromises of the representatives of the major communities during the talks leading to independence, was a solemn pact constituting the very foundation of the nation and any attempt to ridicule, or deride or whittle away the decisions that have been entrenched in the constitution will bring nothing but trouble, and certainly the events of 13 May 1969...have shown the nature and scale of the disaster that could strike the country should present and future generations forget the background to the labours of our multi-racial constitution makers, and attempt to disturb the delicate balance written into the various articles.

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BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

Letter from Lundu

15 January 2008

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After noon on the first day of 2008 we heard the harsh, creaking rusty-gate sound of a hornbill. I went out to look, and I was surprised and delighted to find that the bird was perched on the top of a dead *mengeris*. He—I'll call it "he" because it's the male birds who parade their vanity—was certainly a species of *Anthracoceros*, a *big* bird, and he screeched and yacked and hopped among the branches. It was quite a show. The bird knew it and carried on even when I got to the foot of the tree. Hornbills were never omen birds in animist Borneo, but whenever a hornbill appears in the back yard I take the event as auspicious. Our patch of the woods is healthy enough to give them a home.

Plenty has been written about wildlife (non-human and human) in Sarawak. I turn my attention to the neglected creatures in between, namely the dogs. Where there are Dayaks, there must be dogs, and an account of one includes the other. But when dogs appear in print, they are only to be reviled and cursed at as mangy, dirty, tick-ridden, flea-bitten, noisy, meddling, ugly, useless, destructive yellow curs. It's the literary equivalent of a kick. The rage of the white longhouse visitor who passes the night on the *ruai* tormented by barking and dog-funk and who in the morning finds his shoes torn to shreds has become a commonplace.

Is this justice to Borneo dogs? I've been around long enough, and I say, No! Dogs not only just happen (a house is built and peopled and a dog attaches itself to it), they are a necessity. As an early-warning system, their job is vital, and a barker (*penyalak*) is valued. *Penyamun* stalked us in the old days, and now we have burglars.

Consider the slur against Dayak dogs that they are mongrels. That's not strictly true, even if Dayaks leave dogs' love-lives alone.

Behavior marks a breed of dog as much as physique. A bulldog who has never seen a bull will try to bite one if it ever gets near, and corgis will try to herd unfamiliar human beings as they would sheep. Sheepdogs without sheep are miserable, I've heard, and a Pyrenees sheepdog will bite car tires in default of sheep legs.

Human beings and dogs have worked together for 100,000 years, and dogs play with patterns from their work. Whenever I come back to the house after a walk abroad, our two dogs, Melon and Milky, run to greet me. They prance around in front of me, doing their best to hinder me from moving forward, leaping, dodging, and yapping at the top of their voices. If I turn right or left, they jump in that direction. Or one blocks me before, the other bothers me at the back. These dogs are not very big, our biggest half the

bulk of a German shepherd, but their tactic works. I'm reduced to a standstill and have to stride through their blockade with menace. This play—in earnest—is exactly what is required of dogs employed in hunting wild pigs.

Across the large crescent of Eurasia, and to the islands, where pigs live wild, one way of hunting them has been standard. Homer describes it as it was done three thousand years ago in the *Odyssey* (book 19, lines 428 to 466), and this is the way pigs were hunted in Borneo. Men go into the forest with spears, and a pack of dogs in front sniffing out the track. The dogs find the boar, then keep him at a stand by barking and worrying him. At a favorable instant, one man steps in and spears the boar through the heart. Boars are armed with sharp tusks. Boars are nimble and can turn and severely wound or even disembowel the hunter. (One chased my wife's brother, when he was young, up a tree.) It is a brave man who takes the first chance of spearing the boar. In Homer this is the young Odysseus himself. The boar gashes his leg, not reaching the bone, just as Odysseus stabs him straight through the chest. The other hunters stop the bleeding with spells, and the wound heals to leave a scar by which Odysseus's old nurse recognizes him on his return from Troy. Dayaks hunted pigs in exactly the same way, and faced, with their dogs, the same risk.¹

Captain Cook, a true Polynesian without knowing it, introduced pigs from Tahiti into New Zealand. Pig hunting is popular in New Zealand, even necessary, and although Kiwi hunters use rifles in place of spears, the dogs still find the pig and hold it at bay.

Decades ago Sarawakians abandoned the technique of hunting pigs with spears. (Blowpipes are still sometimes used for small game, squirrels and monkeys, but they were never used to hunt pigs, said my late father-in-law.) Shotguns became available in the early 20th century, and one must admit it's much safer to kill a boar from a distance. A shotgun sprays death in a cone, without the precision of a spear point or bullet. Take dogs out to hunt pigs with a shotgun, therefore, and the hunter will have dead dogs as well as a dead pig. Since shotguns came into use, dogs have been left at the house. Hence Borneo dogs look so miserable. They are unemployed.

Dogs should return to the hunt with the men. Every year the Sarawak newspapers report three or four hunting accidents. A man alone in the woods with a shotgun hears a sound and shoots, and kills or wounds a fellow. "I thought it was a pig," or deer, he tells the police. Even in thick bush a dog knows the difference between a human being and an animal from a distance. This can also be observed in dog-play. Dogs bark at people who appear at 100m, with less or more enthusiasm depending on whether they recognize the people or not. But if they sense an animal, they remain silent and run fast towards it, barking only when they have got it cornered or treed.

Yellow dogs look "generic" and are not pretty. They must, though, be considered a breed. What breed? the Borneo Boar-Hound.

Borneo dogs live outdoors. They do NOT come in the house, and by now are banished from many *ruai*. My wife's relatives shudder upon hearing that my parents' dog in Connecticut sleeps on the bed with them. Though Borneo dogs will eat anything,

¹ As Xenophon, *Cynegeticus* 10, notes. Here Xenophon (a disciple of Socrates) gives detailed technical directions on how to hunt boar. By this time, hundreds of years after Homer, nets had become standard equipment. Perhaps in the interests of safety? I have a pig tusk (*taring*, Iban) on my desk, and I could pare my nails with it.

e.g. ripe dead chicken, and that to excess, they are unwilling children of Nature. They hate to get their feet wet on a chilly morning. Greedy they are, Borneo dogs are pets. We spend money on shampoo and chemicals to kill ticks. They get baths. Their offspring are cared for and dandled. *Sigat anak ukoi* goes the Iban simile: 'cute as a puppy.' My late mother-in-law Ibi taught all her dogs to *tabi*, that is, "shake hands." A dog may be kicked or switched with a rotan, but causing real harm to a dog will mark one as a cruel person, to be regarded with suspicion.

Good dogs bite rats and chase monkeys (who ravage the corn) and clean up the leftovers and other nameless stuff, as they did 100K years ago.

Dogs are company, and have an excellent passive understanding of speech. Dogs are generous with their sympathy. The Sebuyau have always given names to dogs, sufficiently distinct as dog-names to confirm the musings of Lévi-Strauss. Dogs are our companions in this strange adventure in the midst of Nature.

Borneo 2007: Three European Exhibitions¹

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The year 2007 appears to have been an exceptionally good one for Borneo in Europe. Two exhibitions were held in France, and one in Switzerland, which prominently featured the big island, its forests, its peoples, its cultures and its arts. Here follows a brief review of those three events.

Bornéo ... Dayak et Punan. Peuples de la forêt tropicale humide, Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie, Laon, France, 25 November 2006-11 March 2007.

The beautiful city of Laon, only a short distance by train or by car from Paris, offers a large variety of first-class monuments, including its famous early-Gothic cathedral, which served as a model for the builders of the cathedrals of Reims and Chartres. The old city is perched on a narrow plateau and surrounded with fortifications and medieval gates. The Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie is housed in a Templar Knights' *commanderie*, next to an early-twelfth-century chapel. It displays one of France's most important collections of Greek antiquities, a large collection of Gallo-Roman jewelry, weaponry, and bronze (including superb *fibulae*), as well as a collection of fifteenth-to-nineteenth-century paintings, sculpture, and furniture (including the world-famous retablo of *L'Annonciation*).

Members of the Institute for Research on Southeast Asia (IRSEA), Antonio Guerreiro and Bernard Sellato, with the assistance of Ph.D. student Nicolas Césard and zoologist Didier Boussarie, have guest-curated an exhibition on Borneo, focusing on both the natural history and ethnography of the island. About 160 artifacts were exhibited, including thirteen ethnographic objects on loan from the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, and a number of zoological and botanical specimens, as well as iconographic items – a large number of recent field photographs, old books, maps, engravings and drawings, stamps and postcards, and posters.

The exhibition's official opening was held on November 24, 2006, in the presence of representatives of the city's mayor and of the embassies of the Federation of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia. On March 3, a guided tour of the exhibition was organized by Antonio Guerreiro and Nicolas Césard and, in the same afternoon, three films on various themes (Dayak ethnography, nature and culture conservation) were screened at the MAL (Maison des Arts et des Loisirs) movie hall, near the Museum, until

¹ This Brief Communication was originally published in *Moussons. Social Science Research on Southeast Asia* (11: 243-248, 2007) and, in a slightly edited form, is reprinted here with permission.

19:30. The local press (*L'Union*) advertised the event and reported on it the next day.

Financial assistance from the Maison Asie Pacifique, Marseilles, is gratefully acknowledged, as well as invaluable help from the museum curator, Caroline Jorrand, and her friendly staff.

Note: www.ville-laon.fr

Patong. Le grandi figure scolpite dei popoli del Borneo, Museo delle Culture & Galleria Gottardo, Lugano, Switzerland, 23 March-25 August 2007.

The Brignoni collection of primitive art, consisting of about 660 pieces, was donated in 1985 to the City of Lugano. After organizing a preliminary exhibition (1986), the city decided to host the collection at the Heleneum, a superb neo-classic villa, where it set up the Museo delle Culture Extraeuropee, inaugurated in 1989 – and later renamed Museo delle Culture, now headed by Dr. Francesco Paolo Campione. Another exhibition, in 1996, was devoted to Brignoni as artist and collector, a man *con passione d'arte e con l'occhio dell'artista*. The 2007 exhibition, in which half of the pieces are presented for the first time to the public, was organized thanks to an agreement between the City of Lugano and the Banca del Gottardo, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the bank.

Serge Brignoni, born in 1903, studied the arts in Bern, Milano, and Berlin, then resided in Paris from 1923 until 1940. There he got acquainted with André Breton, Tristan Tzara, and many others in the Surrealist movement, and became part of the *Italiens de Paris*, with, among others, Giacometti and De Chirico. However, it was in Provence, in 1925, then in Basel, in 1931, with Paul Wirz, that Brignoni felt the call of the art of the South Seas, and in 1936 he participated with Breton in an *Exposition surréaliste d'objets* – particularly, Pacific art pieces – at Charles Ratton's gallery in Paris, after which he got acquainted with Picasso. Contrasting with Breton, who bought in London, Brignoni built his collection mainly from acquisitions from the German, Swiss, Belgian, or Dutch ethnic art markets. For him, collecting was a true form of art.

The *Patong* exhibition focuses, as its title indicates, on the wooden, mainly monumental, statuary carved by the peoples of Borneo. A thin exhibition booklet features a short text by Paolo Maiullari and his wife Junita Arnel, herself a Ngaju Dayak hailing from Central Kalimantan province of Borneo, and a number of good-quality color photographs. Antonio Guerreiro and the author of the present review, both IRSEA members, participated in the selection and identification of the pieces exhibited.

A large illustrated book, edited by F.P. Campione, was released at the time of the exhibition's opening, being the first of a two-volume opus devoted to the Brignoni collection, and subsidized by the Banca del Gottardo. It includes a long essay by Campione on the meaning and value of ethnic art; another, by Isabella Lenzo, on Primitivism as the foundation of the Brignoni collection; and various sections dealing, respectively, with the Naga of Assam, Sumatra and Nias, Borneo, the Lesser Sunda Islands, and with different parts of New Guinea (South Coast, Sepik, Maprik, Washkuk, Northeast and Massim), Melanesia and Polynesia. The volume ends with a substantial bibliography

(pp. 247-255).

The section devoted to Borneo, rather skimpy (pp. 84-95), focuses principally on the *pantak*, anthropomorphic wooden statues of the peoples of the northwestern corner of the island (J. Arnel), and on the only baby-carrier, *ba'*, of the collection (P. Maiullari). Extra illustrations in this section include a few *tuntun*, carved sticks of the Iban, one painted wooden shield of the Kayan, one ritual drum of the Ngaju, and a couple of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic wooden posts used in funerary rituals.

The second volume, released in August 2007, at the time the exhibition ended, is the collection catalogue proper. It includes three text sections on the museum's cataloguing system (M. Cometti); on Brignoni, the artist, as a collector (A. Borellini); and on the cultural areas and styles represented in the collection (G. Giovannoni); as well as an extensive catalogue, over 90 pages, of some 660 pieces shown in black-and-white photographs, overwhelmingly dominated by the New Guinea area (400 pieces), with Borneo relatively well represented (40 pieces) – Africa, interestingly, accounts for only thirty pieces.

The *Patong* exhibition is scheduled to travel to other cities and countries. However, the exhibition catalogue, in English, is still in the works, but expected soon. Among other texts and profuse full-color illustrations, it includes a brief Foreword on the art and labors of collecting, identifying, and interpreting by the present writer, and a substantial essay by A. Guerreiro on Borneo sculpture, its functions and aesthetic choices.

Note: Museo delle Culture www.mcl.lugano.ch

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Patong. Le grandi figure scolpite dei popoli del Borneo, 2007, Lugano: Museo delle Culture & Galleria Gottardo, illustrated exhibition booklet, 32 p.

Patong, forthcoming, illustrated exhibition catalogue (in English).

Georges Bourdelon. *L'Aventure de l'objectif*, Espace Van Gogh, Arles, France, 9 November – 30 December 2007.

Georges Bourdelon (1924-2000) was a true free spirit. Born in Brignoles, Provence, he discovered his vocation – filming – after meeting with Marcel Pagnol and training with him at his film studio in Marseilles. His collaboration as a cameraman on a number of feature films in Paris, notably with playwright and film director Sacha Guitry, confirmed it, but he longed for spaces more open than stage sets. He then worked with

Léon Poirier in southern Morocco, Henri Lhôte in the Hoggar, and François Blasan in the Kalahari. It was in the Hoggar and the Tibesti, among the Hadad, that he shot his first personal movie, *Les Forgerons du désert* (1952).

In 1950 he met Louise Weiss, who later viewed him as her spiritual son. They remained close friends till the latter's demise, and in the course of the years, they made 24 short movies together in Syria, Lebanon, India, Kashmir, the Himalayas, East Africa, and Mauritius, as well as two books, *La Syrie* (1951) and *Le Cachemire* (1955). In 1955 he traveled to Iran with another friend, anthropologist Noël Ballif, and with him shot two movies, *Persépolis* and *Isfahan*, and published a book, *La Perse millénaire* (1957).

The year 1957 saw him traveling to Indonesia and Malaysia, where he remained several years, shooting movies in Java, Flores, and Komodo, and participating in the famous Borneo expedition led by zoologist Pierre Pfeffer. This trip gave birth to two books authored by Pfeffer, *Aux Iles du dragon* (1954) and *Bivouacs à Bornéo* (1963; reprinted 1990), another by expedition member Guy Piazzini, *Chez les Rescapés du Déluge* (1959; English translation, *The Children of Lilith*, 1960), a recording of traditional music (*Musique de Bornéo-Kalimantan*, 1957), and a long film, *Les Dayaks, chasseurs de têtes*, which was shown all around Europe – an English version of the film has been circulating lately. A cornerstone in Bourdelon's career, Borneo made him famous.

In 1963, he met Caroline Normandin, a collaborator of General de Gaulle in 1945, later a reporter with television pioneer Pierre Lazareff, and an explorer and photographer, soon to become his wife and closest work partner. Together they founded their company, Productions du Dragon. In the next thirty years, Bourdelon shot scores of documentary films, covering all sorts of subjects, from the private lives of Farah Pahlavi of Iran and the Negus of Ethiopia to the last days of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo; from the problems of the youth in the Middle East to those of the offshore petroleum industry in Gabon; from the setting up of a gas pipeline between Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego to the daily life of the French *Garde républicaine*.

Retour à Kalimantan. Forty years later, in 1994, Bourdelon returned to Borneo. Documentary film maker Gérald Duduyer convinced an already weakened old man to retrace his steps to the upper Bahau River, accompanied by a film team. After visiting me in Jakarta – we had first met in Levallois-Perret, near Paris, in the 1970s – he and his team visited the villages upriver, locating individuals Bourdelon had worked with in the 1950s, and showing around his film and old photographs. Indeed, those were highly emotional moments, meeting again with very elderly Kenyah people, who still called him Shoshi – the Kenyah rendition of Georges.

In a last *baroud d'honneur*, as Normandin wrote, Bourdelon visited in 1995 French polar explorer Paul-Emile Victor, his friend and peer, who was in his last days in Bora-Bora, and brought back a moving document for the French television. He retired in Arles, where he was soon to be “re-united with his Provençal ancestors.”

After Bourdelon's demise, Normandin established an association, “Les Amis de Georges Bourdelon,”² with famous feature-film director Jean-Jacques Annaud (*The Name of the Rose*, etc.), who considered him a great friend and a master, as its godfather. Normandin recalls that Annaud shot his very first movie with Bourdelon, a 3-minute

2 Association “Les Amis de Georges Bourdelon”, 13 rue Emile-Barrère, 13200 Arles. Ph. 33-(0)490966375. See an homage to Bourdelon in *La Provence*, 1 November 2006.

commercial for Bastos cigarettes.

The beautiful Espace Van Gogh exhibits about 100 photographs, representative of the various stages of Bourdelon's career, and shows three films (in DVD format), including *Les Dayaks*. Those excellent documents, all a half century old, form a fantastic historical and ethnographic archive. Interested parties should contact the Association.

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The “Unwritten” Last Chapter of the late Ong Kee Hui’s *Footsteps in Malaysia: Political Development of Sarawak since 1963.*¹

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In the Foreword to *Footsteps in Malaysia*, Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr. George Chan Hong Nam wrote, “we had intended to include writings on his [Ong Kee Hui] principles in life in this book but unfortunately he passed away before he wrote them.”² In fact, an outline and part of the “unwritten” chapter, together with an early sequential plan for the entire book had been written prior to his demise. This “unwritten” chapter was extremely important to the late Tan Sri Datuk Amar Ong Kee Hui, who viewed his life as analogous to John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, a journey to final enlightenment. This is reflected from time to time in parts of *Footsteps in Malaysia* that were written prior to his death. Much of the original outline for the “unwritten” chapter is covered in Chapter 15, “Life After Retirement,” but there are two sections written over a decade earlier by Ong Kee Hui that do not appear in *Footsteps*. These sections, intended for the “unwritten” chapter, are recorded in this Brief Communication and are thus made available to the Ong family, his surviving colleagues, researchers, and future historians, instead of remaining locked away in my computer archives. But first, a brief background.

Ong Kee Hui and I had collaborated on *Footsteps* up to about page 62, when we parted company. My role had been that of transcriber, editor, and researcher, similar to that for Volume One of his memoirs, *Footprints in Sarawak: Memoirs of Tan Sri (Dr) Ong Kee Hui: 1914 to 1963*, as recorded in the Acknowledgements.³ Seeing his life as a journey to enlightenment, Ong Kee Hui eschewed in his final writings all sensitive subjects relating to politics to which he would have been privy, an issue, among others, over which we parted company.⁴ The only insight into the more lugubrious side of Sarawak political life in *Footsteps* is perhaps a paragraph on page 67 that reads:

In the mad scramble or bid for concessions of land, forest or other natural resources of the state [Sarawak], which occurred soon after

1 Published in Kuching by the Research and Resource Centre of the Sarawak United People’s Party (2002, ISBN 983-99257-3-3).

2 For an obituary, see “Tan Sri Datuk Amar (Dr.) Ong Kee Hui 1914-2000,” *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 32 (2001), p. 17.

3 The word “footprints” used in the title of Volume One had special significance for Ong Kee Hui, as will be seen in parts of the “unwritten” chapter recorded here. For this reason, the early intention was to use the same title format for Volume Two, altering only the dates.

4 For instance, cronyism in the awarding of forestry concessions by top politicians was covered even in the local press at the time of the power struggles between Abdul Rahman Ya’kub and Abdul Taib Mahmud for control of the government in the late 1970s.

independence [1963], members of opposition parties had very little chance of getting anything from the Government ...⁵ So I decided that I would have to look elsewhere outside the state for sources of wealth.

The two most important aspects of Ong Kee Hui's life (1914 to 2000), other than his family, were his Christian beliefs, culminating in his confirmation in 1987,⁶ and politics, through his chairmanship of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP). A fourth-generation Sarawak Chinese from a prominent family, Ong Kee Hui, after obtaining a diploma in agriculture, served as an agriculture officer with the Sarawak government from 1936 to 1948 (interrupted only by the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945).⁷ Subsequently, he was active in banking and business until 1970, when as an elected MP, he was appointed a minister in the Malaysian federal government.⁸ He retired from the federal government and the SUPP in 1982 and from business in 1986 when the Sarawak Emporium of which he was a director was wound up. Later, one of his sons-in-law secured a forestry concession for him to supplement his income.

His political career began with his nomination to the Sarawak Council Negri (Parliament) in 1955 and selection as an unofficial member of the Sarawak Supreme Council (Cabinet), and his election to Chairman of the Kuching Municipal Council in December 1959. Ong Kee Hui is perhaps better known and remembered as a founding member and the Chairman of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) from 1959 to 1982. This party, representing the majority of the Chinese people in Sarawak, gradually evolved from a left-wing, communist-infiltrated, anti-Malaysia opposition party to membership in the conservative, UMNO-underpinned Malaysian and Sarawak alliances of ruling parties.⁹ Held in high esteem by his peers and the Sarawak public, in his retirement Ong Kee Hui was the doyen of Sarawak's political elite. Dying at the age of 86, his epitaph may well have read, "He had a good innings, playing the great game with some finesse."

5 The main opposition party was the SUPP, of which Ong Kee Hui was the chairman.

6 Reflecting Ong Kee Hui's devotion, some years before his death he bestowed a property at the coastal village of Buntal to the Anglican Church as a retreat for church groups.

7 Ong Kee Hui was the great-grandson of Ong Ewe Hai (1830-1889), a leading Sarawak merchant and Rajah Charles Brooke's advisor on Chinese Affairs; grandson of Ong Tiang Swee (1864-1950), one of the first two Chinese nominated to the Sarawak Council Negri (Legislative Council) in 1937; and son of Ong Kwan Hin (1896-1982), a recognized authority on Chinese temples.

8 Ong Kee Hui married the daughter of a successful banker and businessman on 14 September 1937 and the couple had two sons and six daughters. Following the death of his first wife on 15 May 1985, he remarried on 6 December 1987.

9 At various times in his political career Ong Kee Hui was the Chairman of the Kuching Municipal Council, a member of the Council Negri, and a Minister in the Malaysian government.

“Personal Salvation: A Meaning to Life”

[parts as written in 1998]

Now covered in Chapter 15 of *Footsteps*, “Life After Retirement,” but originally planned in the draft layout for the “unwritten” chapter, is Ong Kee Hui’s upbringing in a traditional Chinese extended family with Confucian values of filial piety, ancestor worship, strict patriarchal order, and the predetermined status of every member of the family according to age and gender. Also covered is how Christianity came into his life, the conflict within the family that this created and how this was resolved. Quoting directly from the original provisional chapter layout “with some such (very flexible) arrangement in mind, a relevant paragraph is moved here from Chapter Three (in *Footprints*) to slot in as necessary.”

“As I recounted earlier, some of the theories and ideas I was exposed to during my student days at Serdang caused me some confusion as they conflicted with my ideas about God and humanity. These lingering doubts persisted until one day I walked into the hall in the hostel at Serdang and heard a voice that fascinated me coming from the gramophone. Mr. Ponniah, a Tamil scholarship holder from Johor, was playing a record of a speech in English by an Indian. He told me it was Mahatma Gandhi delivering a spiritual message. I was fascinated by his voice and asked Mr. Ponniah to play the record again from the beginning. What I heard that day inspired me and ever since that day, Gandhi’s message has always provided the anchor for my faith, convictions, and even my actions. In his message, Gandhi declared his firm conviction and belief in the existence of God, whom he described as

an Indefinable Mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it though I do not see it. It is this Unseen Power, which makes itself felt, and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent. Even in ordinary affairs we know that people do not know who rules or why and how He rules. And yet they know that there is a Power that certainly rules.

“Ghandi illustrated this point by recalling that during his tour of Mysore in the previous year he had found through questioning the poor villagers that many of them did not know who ruled Mysore. However, they knew that someone did, as the law and order that prevailed in the state testified. If the poor villagers were so ignorant about their ruler, it is not surprising that we, who are infinitely lesser in relation to God than the poor villagers to their ruler, know so little and do not realise the existence and the presence of God, the King of Kings. Ghandi went on to describe the Divine attributes and manifestations of Benevolence, Life, Truth, Light and Love in those who felt His presence in their lives and the transformation that took place in their conduct and character. The testimony to this, he said, was

to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this is to deny oneself.

Ghandi concluded with these words:

This realisation is preceded by an immovable faith. He, who in his own person tests the fact of God's presence, can do so by a living faith. And since faith itself cannot be proved by extraneous evidence, the safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world and, therefore, in the supremacy of the Moral Law - the Law of Truth and Love. Exercise of faith will be the safest when there is a clear determination summarily to reject all that is contrary to Truth and Love. I confess I have no argument through reason. Faith transcends reason. All I can advise is not to attempt the impossible.

This spiritual message had a strong impact on me, not only in stabilising me intellectually and spiritually when I was troubled by doubts or wavering in my faith, but also by Ghandi's dedication to serving his country and his people, which inspired me to take up public service later in my life."

Also directly quoting from the draft layout of the "unwritten" chapter – the following would be best placed in the last chapter on "personal salvation."¹⁰

"On 19 August 1995 a week before my 81st birthday, two of our close friends came to the house bearing a framed picture as a birthday present. Over the painting of waves and a seashore, the following story, *Foot Prints*, was printed:

One night a man had a dream.
 He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord.
 Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.
 For each scene he noticed two sets of Footprints in the sand:
 One belonging to him and the other to the Lord.
 When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
 He looked back at the Footprints in the sand.
 He noticed that many times along the path of his life
 There was only one set of Footprints.
 He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest
 and saddest times of his life.
 This really bothered him, and he questioned the Lord about it:
 "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,
 you'd walk with me all the way.
 But I have noticed that during the most troublesome periods of my life
 there is only one set of Footprints.
 "I don't understand why,
 When I needed you most
 you would leave me."
 The Lord replied:

¹⁰ The original intention was that the memoirs would appear in one volume, not two.

“My son, my precious child,
I love you and I would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering,
when you have seen only one set of Footprints,
It was then I carried you.”

“The title of these memoirs, *Footprints in Sarawak*, was chosen before I read this story. Originally I was inspired by a verse in H. W. Longfellow’s *Psalm of Life*.¹¹ By coincidence, the title of the story above by an unknown author is the same as that of the memoirs, but that is not all. I believe that the story reflects that of my own life ...”

¹¹ Part of H.W. Longfellow’s *Psalm of Life* reads:

God replied, “My precious child, I would never leave you during your times of trial and suffering.”

The Brunei Revolt

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The half-century anniversary of the Brunei Revolt of 8 December 1962 will soon be approaching. Various accounts have been written, but they have often lacked independence and freedom from “party line” influence. There is also a large amount of personal recollection, and private documentation—but both are being diminished annually by death.

I recently brought the matter up at a Sarawak Association meeting earlier in the year and one possibility which I would like to propose would be to hold a meeting of persons interested at the forthcoming Borneo Research Council’s biennial meetings in Kota Kinabalu. I have therefore written to offer this proposal to Dr. Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, Kadazandusun Chair, Universiti Sabah Malaysia, the principal BRC 2008 organizer.

I do not think that it would be appropriate for anyone to deliver a paper on the Revolt at the BRC 2008 meetings, but it could be the occasion for a promotion of a project to be undertaken in the next couple of years, leading to a publication in 2010—soundly academic and free from political influence. I would be happy to take part in this promotion. Then afterwards a group might meet of those interested in carrying the project forwards.

As well as a study of official papers, anecdotal sources need to be investigated, and checked. This would be in two directions, local people and overseas people, both those working in Borneo and those brought in for the emergency. For example, I was principal of a school in Miri at the time.

Appeals for evidence could go to mission societies, civil service associations, service authorities, Shell and other bodies. As I mention here, I have already raised this informally with the Sarawak Association, and can do so with the Borneo Mission Association and the Mill Hill Fathers.

I have spoken to the widow of General Farrar-Hockley, a family connection who died last year. His papers are now being sorted and I will be sent copies of anything relevant. Unexpectedly, my gravedigger here, ex-army, also has a not unimportant story.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BORNEO RESEARCH COUNCIL NINTH BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

29 - 31 JULY 2008 (Including Photographic Competition and Exhibition, 28 July-1 August 2008)

The Ninth Biennial Conference of the Borneo Research Council (BRC) will take place in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, for three days, 29-31 July, 2008. The Conference is organized by the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sabah. The Conference Theme is: **BORNEO ON THE MOVE: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE**

Further information and updates on conference schedule can be found on the conference website: <http://sepanggar.wordpress.com>.

The Borneo Research Council (BRC) was established in 1968 as an incorporated non-profit organization for the advancement of knowledge in the social, biological and medical sciences with regard to Borneo (Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, and Kalimantan).

Since 1990, the BRC has held biennial international conferences at various universities and institutions located on the island of Borneo. In 1992, Sabah hosted the Second BRC Biennial International Conference, which was jointly organized by the Centre for Borneo Studies (Sabah Foundation) and the Department of Sabah Museum, and in 2002 Universiti Malaysia Sabah organized the Seventh such Conference. The most recent BRC Conference was organized by Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) in Kuching Sarawak, during July 2006. The School of Social Sciences at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has been selected to organize the forthcoming 2008 Conference.

A special Photographic Competition and Exhibition on the theme Borneo on the Move: Continuity and Change will be held in conjunction with the Conference. This will be open to any interested participants who wish to submit their photographs that are relevant to the theme.

Session Themes

This will be a multidisciplinary Conference dealing specifically with Borneo, with plenary sessions and sessions devoted to special topics and panels. Some of the session themes will be:

- Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Borneo Languages
- History and Archeology
- Borneo Material Culture
- Tourism Development
- Ethnicity, Diversity and Development
- Migration, Diaspora and Borderland Issues
- Property and Land Issues
- Security Issues
- Health, Healing and Borneo Societies

Borneo Psychology Research
Biodiversity, Conservation and Environment
Marine Resources
ICT, Media and Communications
Education and Borneo Communities
Gender and Social Transformation
Human Resources and Industrial Relations

Contact

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Submission

Deadline for submission

- abstract: 21st March 2008
- full-paper: 28th May 2008

Languages of Presentation

The official languages of the Conference will be English, Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Indonesia.

Conference Program

The timetable and topics for Session Themes is tentative at this stage. For updates consult the conference website below. Up to four papers can be included in each session, if necessary. The afternoon of Thursday 31 July can also be used for paper sessions, if a larger number of papers are to be presented. The Post-Conference visit to Sabah Museum could then be moved to Friday 1 August 2008.

Registration:

RM 350 for participants and presenters.

RM 175 for students.

Owing to rising costs, the organizers regret that they have had to revise conference registration fees. There will be no early registration discount.

The conference website: <http://sepanggar.wordpress.com>.

New Book Series

A new scientific and academic book series has been created within the publishing house *Connaissances et Savoirs* (147-149 rue Saint-Honore, 75001, Paris, www.connaissances-savoirs.com), concerned with Southeast Asia, South Asia, Nusantara, the Pacific and Far East, entitled “Sources d’Asie.” The series will be jointly directed by Pierre Le Roux and Bernard Sellato and aims to serve the international scholarly community.

* * *

The Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group of the Association for Asian Studies Announces the Creation of an MSBForum listserv

Also a Call for Papers for the 2008 Association for Asian Studies Conference

Dear colleagues,

This message contains information about the MSBForum listserv and a Call for Papers for the 2008 Association for Asian Studies Conference.

MSB Forum:

We recently added all *Berita* subscribers to the MSB’s e-mail listserv, the MSBForum (msbforum@listserv.cmich.edu). We now have a consolidated e-mail forum for scholars, students, and friends who have some connection to the Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group. We hope to develop our “virtual community” by increasing communication online. Please feel free to post e-mail messages concerning research or academic affairs related to Malaysia, Singapore, or Brunei to msbforum@listserv.cmich.edu (note: this is a non- or self-moderated list). And please pass the word to colleagues who might be interested.

We will soon launch our website at <http://www.msbstudies.org>.

Messages sent to msbforum@listserv.cmich.edu will be re-sent to everyone on the MSBForum list.

Call for Panels / Paper Proposals:

The 2008 Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting will be held April 3-6, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. General conference information can be found here:

<http://www.aasianst.org/annual-meeting/index.htm> and the Call for Papers here: <http://www.aasianst.org/Proposal/pages/2008CFP.htm>

DEADLINES:

The AAS deadline for panel and individual paper proposals is August 17. The Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group may sponsor one panel proposal each year, and this can assist with getting onto the program. If you are submitting a panel proposal to the AAS, and would like to seek the MSB endorsement, please send me the proposal at gfelker@willamette.edu by August 13. In the event that I receive more than one panel proposal, I will circulate proposals anonymously to other MSB officers. We will select one for the official endorsement, while also encouraging the AAS to include on the 2008 Program as many proposals with Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei content as possible. If you have an individual paper idea, and want to recruit other individuals to form a panel, feel free to send a message to the MSBForum (msbforum@listserv.cmich.edu) or by posting a message to the Discussion blog (<http://msbstudies.blogspot.com>) linked to the MSB website (<http://www.msbstudies.org>)

As usual, the MSB Group will have a business meeting at the Atlanta AAS conference, before adjourning to a local Malaysian or Singaporean restaurant for an evening of *makan* and camaraderie.

We hope to see many of you there, and to hear from even more of you online.

Best wishes.

Greg Felker, MSB Studies Group Chair

Meredith Weiss, MSB Studies Group Chair-Elect

Ron Provencher, Editor, *Berita*

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ASEAN Research Scholars 2008

The Asia Research Institute of NUS invites applications from ASEAN citizens enrolled for a fulltime advanced degree at a university in an ASEAN country (except Singapore) for consideration as ASEAN Research Scholars. These fellowships are offered to current graduate students working in the Humanities and Social Sciences on Southeast Asian topics, and will allow the recipients to be based at NUS for an “in residence fellowship” for a period of three months. The aim of the fellowship is to enable scholars to make full use of the wide range of resources held in the libraries of NUS and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Scholars will be expected to commence on 1 May 2008, and to make a presentation on their work at the Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies at the end of July 2008.

Successful candidates can expect the following benefits:

- 1) A monthly allowance of SGD\$1,750 (inclusive of housing allowance).
- 2) A one time round trip travel subsidy by the most economical and direct route on a reimbursement basis upon being accepted for the fellowship.
- 3) Access to library and computer resources on campus.

Applicants are invited to e-mail/facsimile/mail their curriculum vitae, a 2-page outline of their research proposal in English (this may be accompanied by a longer statement in a Southeast Asian language) to the address below by 15 November 2007. Arrangements should also be made by which at least two letters of reference, one of which is from your principal supervisor, are sent confidentially to the same address by the same deadline.

The 2-page outline of the research proposal must include the following details:

- 1) Whether the data collection or fieldwork stage of the research has already been completed;
- 2) how the fellowship will contribute to the research;
- 3) the types of sources to be consulted in Singapore;
- 4) proposed work plan during the fellowship.

You can look forward to excellent library and internet computer facilities at NUS’s main library (<http://www.lib.nus.edu.sg/>), the library at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) (<http://www.iseas.edu.sg/library.html>) and the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library at the National Library (<http://www.nlb.gov.sg>) to facilitate your research for the dissertation. NUS’s main library has 2 million volumes covering all topics while ISEAS’s library has 200,000 on Southeast Asian topics, half of which are in Southeast Asian languages.

Selvi

Asia Research Institute, NUS Bukit Timah Campus

469A Tower Block #10-01, Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 259770

E-mail : arikk@nus.edu.sg, Fax: 65 67791428, Website: <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/>

The Call for Panel/Session Applications for IUAES 2008

The 16th Congress of the International Union of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences On the Theme of “Humanity, Development and Cultural Diversity” From July 15-23, 2008 in Kunming, China

The 16th Congress of IUAES (The International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences) will be held in Kunming, China, July 15-23, 2008. The Congress's Organizing Committee is trying to make it the most successful congregation of anthropologists and ethnologists around the world. Your participation is especially welcome!

We are now at the stage of calling for proposals to organize academic Panels/Sessions. If you or your organizations are intending to organize and chair a session, please fill the attached application form or contact us immediately. At the moment, we have had 215 session proposals at hand, but we need more for making the organizational work better.

It is our suggestion that each session could have 3 panels (i.e., smaller groups) and each panel could be consisted of 5 paper presenters. If a session has 3 panels and a total of 15 speakers from 3 countries/regions around the world, the session leader is to be granted 1 waiver of registration fee (check website:<http://www.icaes2008.org> for details). This measure is to encourage each panel/session be international.

If any of your friends is willing to serve as a session leader, please advise him or her to load the application form at website <http://www.icaes2008.org> and to send it to iuaes2008@hotmail.com.

The Organizing Committee is now raising funds to create a basis of financial support to cover travel and/or lodging for a selected group of individuals from the developing countries in special financial needs and for scholars whose roles are crucial to the success of the 16th Congress of IUAES. Details will be announced when we have a clear idea of how much funding will be at our disposal.

You may also recommend other scholars as session leaders. For more information and the welcome letter, please visit the website <http://www.icaes2008.org>. If you have suggestions and inquiries, please contact us by this email address iuaes2008@hotmail.com or phone call 86-10-68933590 for Dr. Zhang Haiyang, or Dr. Liu Mingxin.

Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia (Malaysian Social Science Association): The 6th International Malaysian Studies Conference (MSC6)

5-7 August 2008 (Tuesday-Thursday)

Theme: Engaging Malaysian Modernity: 50 Years and Beyond

Venue: Crowne Plaza Hotel Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

MSC6 CONVENORS

Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia (in English: Malaysian Social Science Association – PSSM) will be convening the 6th International Malaysian Studies Conference (MSC6) on 5-7 August 2008 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kuching, Sarawak. The Faculty of Social Science, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), Sarawak, is co-convenor and host.

OBJECTIVES

Since its inception, the primary objective of the biennial Malaysian Studies Conference (MSC) is to bring together scholars, both Malaysians and Malaysianists, for the purpose of scholarly exchange and interaction based on their research findings and reflections on Malaysia. The MSC also aims to analyze issues and problems relating to contemporary Malaysia, and to compare the Malaysian experience with that of various countries in the world, especially that of Malaysia's neighbors. Another objective of the MSC is to examine the state of Malaysian studies and to suggest ways for its advancement. For MSC6 in particular, taking advantage of it being held in Sarawak, it is hoped that special attention is given to Borneo studies as part of Malaysian studies.

THEME

The theme of MSC6 is "Engaging Malaysian Modernity: 50 Years and Beyond". As is generally acknowledged, development and modernization often go together. In the context of Malaysia, modernization as a new historical phase in the transformation of this country began well before 1957, beginning perhaps with the intrusion of Western influence, particularly the imposition of British colonial rule. Malaysia, or what was then known as 'Tanah Melayu' or Malaya, as well as Sabah and Sarawak, had since then adopted a modern form of government, public administration, education system, new modes of economic production, and certain new ways of social life. Such structural changes in Malaysian society have also been accompanied by cultural changes.

With the establishment of an independent national government and various development policies since Merdeka, the processes of modernization continued with greater vigor. During the last 50 years, Malaysia has been under five different administrations from the time of Tunku Abdul Rahman to the present Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Each administration brought its own style of governance and steered the course of Malaysian modernization further.

However, the evolution of Malaysian modernity in the last five decades is a complex process especially under the impact of accelerated globalization. It is characterized by both convergences and contestations, similarities and contrasts, as well as adaptation, accommodation, hybridization and dislocations. This story, indeed, cannot be told enough. We have witnessed the emergence of an impressive array of modern physical landscapes, especially in bustling cities and towns, while rural areas too have been equipped with modern infrastructure. Nevertheless, there are important questions to be addressed. These include the political, economic, educational, social, cultural, and religious, dimensions of modernization. Modernization and modernity too can be viewed at many levels -- national, regional and local. While modern urban living may be seen at the national level, at the regional and local levels, some regions and states still operate very much within the ambit of traditional settings. At the local level, many indigenous communities such as the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia, and the indigenous communities of Sarawak and Sabah still continue with their traditional ways of life, including practicing age-old methods of cultivation and beliefs.

Given these complex, at times bewildering and contradictory processes, it is important to critically discuss Malaysian modernization and modernity after 50 years of Independence and also to anticipate its future in the twenty-first century. Some important questions pertinent for discussion include: What has gone into the making of Malaysian modernization and modernity, and are the forces in its formation stable and enduring? What is the nature of the Malaysian modernization process especially between Peninsular Malaysia and the Eastern States of Sarawak and Sabah, as well as between urban and rural areas, among ethnic groups and across the gender divide? What are the implications of this process? What are the driving forces of change and possible trajectories into the future? What alternative futures are being imagined?

Some of the key issues that can be discussed include, but are not necessarily limited to the following sub-themes:

- Interrogating modernization and modernity
- Late capitalism, post-modernity and culture
- Globalization, indigenous communities and indigenous knowledge
- Economic development and social inequality
- Good governance, human security and environment
- Gender and modernity
- International relations and trade
- Social and cultural change
- Religion, ethnicity and identity
- Globalization and the nation-state
- Urbanization, education and health
- Youth and modernity
- Media, IT and communication
- Literature and history
- Imagining alternative futures

While the focus will be on the above sub-themes, in the tradition of the past five MSCs, we also welcome papers that will be presented on the broad subject of “Malaysian Studies” conceived in the fashion of area studies but related to the Conference’s theme. With these issues and questions in mind, it is hoped that the 6th International Malaysian Studies Conference will serve as an important platform for the exchange of research findings and ideas on this important theme of “Engaging Malaysian Modernity: 50 Years and Beyond.”

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The Conference program will consist of panels of papers, organized as much as possible under a common theme. Each panel will consist of 3-4 paper presenters and a chair who also serves as discussant. Participants are encouraged to form their own panels for this Conference based on the subthemes outlined above or on other dimensions of Malaysian Studies.

PANEL PROPOSALS

As has been the practice of past MSCs, there are three different channels of paper presentation, as follows:

Institutional panels – These are panels organized by institutions such as research institutes and faculties.

Thematic panels – These are panels organized by convenors on selected themes. The convenor is responsible for deciding on the theme and organizing the presenters.

Individual panels – These are panels consisting of individual paper presenters. Individual paper presenters are welcome to contribute. The Organizing Committee will try to group such papers accordingly, either into a thematic panel if they fall under a common theme, or otherwise into omnibus panels, that is, panels that need not necessarily address a common theme.

Note: As has been the practice of past MSCs, institutional panels will bear the institution’s name as a means to raise the profile of the institution. In return, the institution has to pay an institutional registration fee of RM500. This does not include the registration fee for each individual paper presenter (see below). The participating institution may organize more than one institutional panel at no extra cost.

SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS

Those intending to present papers at MSC6 must submit an abstract of about 150 words to the MSC6 Secretariat latest by 15 March 2008. Soft copies of the full written papers must be submitted latest by 1 July 2008. Those who plan to organize institutional or thematic panels should also submit their panel abstracts by the same date. Individual paper abstracts must be submitted together with panel abstracts.

The Organizing Committee will vet all panel and paper proposals and inform the

proposer in due time of the outcome. To ensure the smooth running of the Conference, the Organizing Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any panel or paper proposal. It is also the right of the Organizing Committee to proceed with or call off any panel due to unforeseen circumstances.

As has been the past practice of MSCs, only those with full papers will be allowed to make presentations at the Conference. PowerPoint notes are not considered as papers.

Roundtables or forums on selected topics that need not necessarily have written papers can only be organized by the MSC6 Organizing Committee.

REGISTRATION FEE

Participants who register early will enjoy the benefits of pre-registration. The closing date for early or pre-registration is 15 June 2008. All registration after that date will be charged as per normal.

The registration fees are as follows:

Participants from & in Malaysia

PSSM members Pre-registration RM300

After 15 June 2008 RM350

Non-members Pre-registration RM400

After 15 June 2008 RM500

PSSM student members Pre-registration RM130

After 15 June 2008 RM180

Students (non-members) Pre-registration RM180

After 15 June 2008 RM230

Participants from abroad PSSM members Pre-registration USD130

After 15 June 2008 USD150

Non-members Pre-registration USD150

After 15 June 2008 USD170

All Conference participants, including paper presenters, have to pay their registration fees.

MODES OF PAYMENT

Those in Malaysia who want to pay their registration fees can transmit their payment in Malaysian Ringgit by bank draft, money order or postal order, payable to Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia at the address below.

Alternatively they can deposit the sum directly into the Association's bank account (see below), fax the receipt to the Association with their name and MSC6 printed on it, and bring the original receipt to the Conference as proof of payment. Please note that the practice of payment by cheque is discontinued for MSC6 to avoid unnecessary technical problems. Participants who reside overseas can transmit their payment in US dollars directly into the Association's bank account and fax a copy of the receipt to the Association with their name and MSC6 printed on it. The payer, however, must bear

any bank charges incurred in the transaction and must bring the original receipt to the Conference as proof of payment.

Those who want to pay at the time of registration on the day of the Conference may do so only in Malaysian Ringgit by cash.

The Association's bank account is as follows:

Name of payee : Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia

Name of bank : Commerce International Malaysia Berhad (CIMB)

Universiti Malaya Branch

Jalan Pantai Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Account Number : 1440-0005156-05-6

Swift code : CIBBMMYKL14400005156056

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Secretariat is not responsible for hotel booking or any other accommodations arrangements. Participants are required to arrange their own accommodations. However, the Secretariat is making arrangements for a special rate for MSC6 participants at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, our conference venue, in Kuching. There are also a number of budget hotels within walking distance from the venue. The Secretariat will also make arrangements for a special rate with these hotels. Please visit the hotel websites for further information.

ENQUIRIES

All abstracts, full papers and enquiries regarding MSC6 should be sent to MSC6 Secretariat, Ms. Azlina Abdullah, Email : pssmalaysia@yahoo.com or alin052@yahoo.com and cc to Ms. Sharifah Zarina Syed Zakaria szarina@pkrisc.cc.ukm.my

Telephone : 6-03-8921 4175 / 4235 / 5161

Address : (Att: Ms. Azlina Abdullah)

c/o Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS)

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

43600 UKM Bangi

Selangor, Malaysia

Please visit organisation's homepage at <http://pssmalaysia.tripod.com> for further information regarding the Association as well as other information.

**Borneo Reunion to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of VSO
Kuching, 19-20 July**

2008 marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO). The Borneo states and Sarawak in particular have a special place in this history, as the first VSO volunteers worked with the Budu Community Development Scheme, while others worked later at Lemanak, Padawan, and Long Lama.

To mark the occasion, former VSO volunteers in Sabah and Sarawak are organizing a small reunion celebration in Kuching on the 19th of July, 2008, with the support of the state authorities. Plans include a morning conference on “Voluntary Services in Nation Building,” a reunion dinner, and a “touring exhibition” to some of the places where volunteers worked.

For further information, please contact:

- 1) Val Mashman, Fax 082 250950 or 082 250950 or efelc@jaring.my
- 2) David Phillips, 36 Burma Road, London N16 9BJ, Sarawak.contact@yahoo.com

BORNEO NEWS

For purposes of species distribution modeling based on herbarium records, **N. Reas** (Leiden) used all *Shorea* records of Borneo for his pilot study on validating models. Species distribution models related species' presence-only data to environmental predictors such as temperature, precipitation, and altitude. In order to evaluate and validate these models a technique called "Null-models in Species' Distribution Modelling" was developed. This procedure allows one to select models which accurately predict species' distributions. Currently this methodology is applied to all species on Borneo present in the National Herbarium of the Netherlands database, to develop high resolution (5 arc-min) botanical diversity patterns of Borneo (*Flora Malesiana Bulletin*, 2007).

The Third International Borneo-Kalimantan Inter-University Conference (*Konferensi Antaruniversiti se Borneo-Kalimantan ke-Tiga*) was held in Kota Banjarmasin, Kalimantan Selatan, June 15-17, 2007. The conference was opened by the Governor of South Kalimantan, Drs. H. Rudy Arifin, at the Mahligai Pancasila Banjarmasin. The conference was organized by the Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat (UNLAM), Banjarmasin, with the theme "Transformasi Sosial: Merenungkan dan Memformulasikan Dasar Pembangunan di Borneo-Kalimantan" ("Social Transformation: Conceptualizing and Formulating Development Policy in Borneo"). Panel sessions were held at the Hotel Jelita, Kota Banjarmasin, and extended over 2 days. According to the conference secretariat a total of 52 papers were presented, 29 by participants from Kalimantan, 15 from Sarawak, 4 from Sabah, and 2 each from Brunei Darussalam and Peninsular Malaysia.

Plans are currently being made for a Fourth Borneo-Kalimantan Inter-University Conference in 2008, which will be held either in Brunei or Sabah.

As reported in the *BRB* (2005, vol. 36: 238-39), the First Borneo-Kalimantan Inter-University Conference was held at the Institute of East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, August 29-30, 2005. The conference theme was "Transformasi Sosial di Pesisir Pulau Borneo" ("Social Transformation in Coastal Communities of Borneo") and was jointly sponsored by the Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS, and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat. The Second Inter-University Conference was held at the Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, and took place over one and a half days, August 13-14, 2006. It was sponsored by the Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik and the conference theme was "Transformasi Sosial Masyarakat Perkotaan/Bandar di Borneo-Kalimantan" ("Social Transformation of Urban Society in Borneo") and 61 papers were presented in 16 panels.

On 26 November, 2007, an international seminar on "Ibanic languages and communities in the Malay world" (Seminar Antarabangsa Bahasa dan Masyarakat Ibanik di Alam Melayu) was held at the Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu (Institute of the Malay World and Civilization), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor. Organized primarily by **Professor James T. Collins** and his students, the seminar also

drew participants and speakers from the Tun Jugah Foundation, Kuching (represented by **Robert Menua** and **Dr. Peter Kedit**), the Institut Dayakologi, Pontianak (**Sujarni Alloy** and **Albertus**), Universitas Tanjungpura (**Herpanus Antam** and **Petrus Sekujam**), SIL (**Dr. Johnny Tjia**), and the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (**Awang Tuah Dilang**). Also attending was **Dr. Timo Kaartinen** of the University of Helsinki, Finland.

The seminar papers focused primarily on questions of linguistic morphology, ethno-linguistic classification, folklore, origin myths, ethnobiology, and inter-ethnic sociolinguistic relations. Papers from the seminar, edited by Chong Shin and James T. Collins, have been brought together and published by the Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu (*Bahasa dan Masyarakat Ibanik di Alam Melayu*, 2007, ATMA, Bangi).

KALIMANTAN NEWS

Dr. Kenneth Sillander, lecturer at the Swedish School of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, has been awarded a postdoctoral research, travel and writing grant from the Academy of Finland for a period of three years, beginning 1 January 2008. The research project that Dr. Sillander will be undertaking during this period is entitled "Sources of Solidarity in an Indonesian Society" and focuses chiefly on the Bentian Dayak of East Kalimantan, expanding on work that he began for his Ph.D. dissertation (University of Helsinki, 2004). During the funding period, Sillander plans to carry out further fieldwork among the Bentian in order to identify and analyze social practices that help generate group solidarity and interpersonal bonds in Bentian society. Kinship and ritual will represent two principal fields of interest. As part of this project, Sillander is also co-editing with **Pascal Couderc** a collection of essays on conceptions of ancestors in the indigenous religions of Borneo. The planned volume developed from a panel, "Ancestors in Borneo Religions," organized by Sillander and Couderc at the BRC meetings in Kuching.

August 1-17, 2005, **M. Mansur** (Bogor) studied the ecology of *Nepenthes* in Hulu Barito river area, Central Kalimantan, together with **Dr. F. Brearley** from the Stirling University, Scotland. September 16-October 3, 2005, **I. Larashati**, **E. Mirmanto**, **Mr. A. Muhidin** and **Wardi** (Bogor) and **Mr. A. Marakarmah** (Zoology Division) went to the peat swamp forest in Sebangau, Central Kalimantan, to do studies on the ecology and distribution of Pandanaceae. December 2-11, 2005, **N. W. Utami** (Bogor) has collected data on woody plants endemic to Balikpapan and surroundings. November 13-December, 2005, funded by Treub-Foundation, Van Tienhoven Stichting and Tropenbos, **Ambriansyah**, **P.H. Hovenkamp**, **M. Iqbal**, **N. Reas** and **F. Slik** (Lieden) explored G. Lumat.

SARAWAK NEWS

Professor Abdul Halim Ali has been appointed Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies (Institut Pengajian Asia Timur), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kota Samarahan, Sarawak. Professor Halim replaces **Professor Madya Dr. James U.H. Chin** who resigned the Directorship, 28 February, 2007, in order to take up a position as Professor and Head of the School of Business, Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak Campus, Kuching. Professor Halim continues as the Institute's Nusantara Chair, a position which he has held since 1 January 2003. Last year, Professor Halim co-edited with another former Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies, Professor Abdul Rashid Abdullah, a research volume on the socio-economic conditions in 14 coastal kampungs in western Sarawak, *Masyarakat Pesisir Sarawak Barat Daya* (2006, Program Nusantara, Institut Pengajian Asia Timur, UNIMAS).

A half-day seminar was held at the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak on May 23, 2007, to discuss the results of a research project, "Status dan Keperluan Pembangunan Sosio-Ekonomi Kampung Pusa, Betong" ("Status and Socio-Economic Development Needs of Kampung Pusa, Betong"). Begun in 2005, the project is a joint study by the Institute of East Asian Studies and the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, and the Fakulti Pengurusan Perniagaan UiTM, Cawangan Sarawak.

As reported in the *BRB* (2005, vol. 36: 242-43), **Professor James Chin** and **Jayl Langub** of the Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS, organized a 2-day workshop in November 2005, which brought together a number of retired senior Sarawak administrative officers to share their experiences of administrative service during the transitional period from colonial rule to independence. Professor Chin and Jayl Langub, as co-editors, have now published, based on this workshop, a volume of these recollections, *Reminiscences: Recollections of Sarawak Administrative Service Officers* (2007, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications). (reviewed in this volume).

Among the visitors to the Institute of East Asian Studies during 2007 were **Robert Pringle**, author of *Rajahs and Rebels* (1970, Macmillan), who spoke on "Rajahs and Rebels in Retrospect: A look back at Iban history in the Brooke era," and **Professor Allen Maxwell**, who spoke on his past field research in Brunei and on "Brunei *salasilah*: an underexplored genre of Southeast Asian historical texts." Universiti Malaysia Sarawak has proposed to reprint Robert Pringle's *Rajahs and Rebels*. However, in a note to your Editor, Pringle reports that in returning to the US, he discovered that a Malaysian publisher had already pirated the book. Through the US Embassy, a complaint was made to the Malaysian Ministry of Trade, which sent a "cease and desist" letter to the pirates, who have now recalled the book and destroyed their stocks. With this, it is hoped, a legal reprint can appear.

Hanne Christensen writes from Denmark that, in addition to raising two young children, Ronja (10) and Rasmus (6), she is currently working on a consultancy to help establish a course focusing on ethnobotany at the University of Copenhagen. She hopes to be involved in the future with a similar course at the University of Århus. In addition, she returns to Sarawak (and Sabah) three times a year, as a guide with a large Danish travel agency, and so is able to regularly revisit Nanga Sumpa, the site of her major Iban ethnobotanical research.

BOOK REVIEWS

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, 2005, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 321 pp.

Friction is at once an exploration of big ideas (such as connectivity and the portability of universalisms) and a narrative of environmental disaster in Indonesia (particularly South Kalimantan) immediately before and after the fall of Suharto in 1998. Centered on “friction” – “the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (p. 4), Tsing examines the intersection of universals (broadly conceived as prosperity, knowledge, and freedom), globalization, and natural and human-made environments. Although self-styled as an ethnography, Tsing’s account actually derives from snippets of short-term fieldwork, other sorts of encounters (such as attending a meeting on global environmental change), and news reports, “formed in discrete patches” (p. x). Anyone thus expecting something along the lines of a classic ethnography focused on the details of local-level social life will be greatly disappointed, but that is not the aim of this study: Those local-level details are obviously important here, as Tsing makes clear, but must be “stretched” (p. 271) in order to pursue larger issues of connectivity and the “friction” produced – those “zones of awkward engagement” (p. xi). Besides, Tsing herself admits that her own academic schedule and life circumstances did not permit the kind of long-term fieldwork doctoral students are freer to conduct (p. x, 273 n.1). This would seem to better justify the methodological emphasis on “ethnographic fragments,” rather than as some profound theoretical breakthrough (p. 271).

In the first section of the book, on “prosperity,” Tsing considers the wide disparities produced by economic development, ironically billed in nationalist discourse as the route to prosperity. She focuses on the expansion of capitalist frontiers with a particular eye on the development of road networks in South Kalimantan into the Meratus Mountains and the subsequent influx of legal and illegal extractive timber operations and labor migrants. (One thing that struck me in this section was the singular lack of maps throughout the book, which would be a real problem for those unfamiliar with the contours of Kalimantan.) She touches on the rank corruption surrounding logging and plantation development, the haze during 1997’s El Niño, the Maduran-Dayak violence of the late 1990s, and coal extraction (a highly understudied subject despite its historical importance following the arrival of Dutch steamers in the mid-1800s). She also addresses the complex issue of scale in description and analysis, something geographers and geographically minded anthropologists have been dealing with for decades. Her primary attention here is on the bizarre story of Bre-X mining company and the interconnections among nation-making projects, corruption, and foreign investment (which she dubs “franchise cronyism”). Her aim “is to show the heterogeneity of capitalism at every moment in time” (p. 76) and across spatial scales.

“Knowledge” is the theme of the second section, this time under the premise that “[t]he play among multiple, contested universals” produce one type of friction, upon which both “knowledge of the globe” and “globally traveling knowledge” are

dependent (p. 87). Tsing again covers a wide range of topics, including the Asia-Africa Conference of 1955, hosted by Indonesia, that highlighted the “global dream space” of science, modernization, and political sovereignty; the order-producing classification of nature inherent in European scientific ideology; the culturally specific claims about universals seen in John Muir’s environmental philosophy; the global-scale models in early climate change research; the International Tropical Timber Organization’s futile attempts at sustainable forest management; indigenous ecological knowledge; and occasionally contradictory but collaborative relationships within environmental campaigns. A special focus of this section is on the melding of moral/ethical piety, social justice, and environmentalism in Indonesia, a combination that grew in strength in the 1990s even before the fall of Suharto. Here she examines the cosmopolitan claims of largely young, urban, educated Indonesian “nature lovers” and how circulating knowledge becomes localized. Though Tsing spends a good deal of time on this topic, her treatment exposes the fundamental flaw in such “ethnography of discrete patches:” It can be highly superficial and prone to miss some essential factors, particularly revolving around a deeper examination of social relationships. Such “ethnography” generates an anthropological impressionism aimed at evoking feeling over content, “meaning” over social contextualization.

That being said, Tsing’s description of the intricate and complex Meratus Dayak swidden system in Chapter 5 – appropriately titled “A History of Weediness” – is very nice, and she notes how the highly social nature of its landscape has been misread continually by developers and policy planners (p. 193). Those of us who have worked in and researched similar systems will see many parallels here but will also come away absolutely dumbfounded by her blanket and unsupportable assertion that “[r]egrowing secondary forests ... have never garnered sympathetic attention among either scholars or policy makers” (p. 189). Nowhere does she cite the many scientists, even anthropologists, who have for decades studied swidden systems and their fallow forests – sympathetically. Her sole reference to such (in another chapter) is to Conklin’s *Hanunoo Agriculture*.

The third section concerns “freedom” and builds on the contrast between the repression of Suharto’s regime and the rampant near-anarchy of the reform period immediately after Suharto’s fall from power. Tsing deals with Indonesian nationalism promoted through the environmental movement, its use of the Suharto-era courts, and the growth of “indigenous rights” campaigns and its problematic translation within Indonesia. Movement and mobility, of people and ideas, is especially emphasized throughout this section, and Tsing explores how stories travel and translate across the globe, such as the allegorical use of Chico Mendes (the Brazilian labor rights activist) and Chipko (the environmental movement of Indian villagers to protect trees from being logged) by Indonesian environmentalists. From this, she moves on to critiquing the capitalist/acquisitionist strategy of the Nature Conservancy and the largely successful collaborations surrounding efforts to protect forest in the Meratus Mountains during the late 1980s, despite fundamental differences in actual aims and perspectives.

Despite the interesting stories she weaves together on topics of considerable environmental and social significance, Tsing’s motivation to be “a hair in the flour” (p. 206) – that is, to “speak truth to power” or to be a fly in the ointment – is unfortunately

and severely undermined by her own writing style (which has nonetheless become clearer and considerably less dense than in her first book, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*). Coming from the humanities end of the American anthropological continuum, her “evocation” and clever literary turns-of-phrase will simply put off most of those who need to read of these things – foresters, ecologists, policy-makers, and the like. (I would argue that the usual culprit of postmodernism is not the main issue here.) The scholars chosen by the publisher to write back cover blurbs – Goenawan Mohamad (an Indonesian literary figure), Mary Steedly, and Ann Laura Stoler (both American anthropologists largely on the same end of the continuum as Tsing) – underscore the intended audience: one that does not need such hairs in its flour, is already converted to such lines of argument, and is quite comfortable with Tsing’s writing style.

My prediction for this book is that it will become, like *Diamond Queen*, widely cited (if not thoroughly read) within particular brands of cultural anthropology and environmental studies that emphasize political things (e.g., political ecology). There has already been a special session at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) devoted to it. Over the next few years, like James Scott’s “resistance” and “legibility,” it will launch a spate of writing using “friction” and her other neologisms; one will not be able to attend the annual meeting of the AAA without bumping into numerous presentations about it. But will it become the hair in the flour that it should be? I fear not (Reed L. Wadley, Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri-Columbia, USA).

James U.H. Chin and Jayl Langub, editors, *Reminiscences: Recollections of Sarawak Administrative Service Officers*. Subang Jaya: Pelanduk Publications. 2007, 335 pp. ISBN 967-967-978-943-8, US\$ 23.50.

Brooke officers left us a number of vivid memoirs describing administrative life in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Sarawak—most notably, perhaps, Charles Hose, K.H. Digby, and Alastair Morrison. About the lives of local Sarawakian officers, we know far less. This is so, even though, as the editors of this volume note, local officers have played an integral part in the administration of Sarawak from the earliest days of the Brooke Raj onward. The present volume is meant to cover a significant, though later part of this gap. Recorded here are the personal reminiscences of eight local officers covering much of the second half of the twentieth century, from the transition to Malaysian rule, through Confrontation, to the 1990s.

Reminiscences grew out of a workshop sponsored by the Institute of East Asian Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, and organized by the editors: James Chin, a political scientist, and Jayl Langub, himself a former administrative officer. Aside from asking the contributors to pay special attention to the handover period and early years of Malaysian independence, the editors otherwise imposed no strict guidelines. The decision was obviously a wise one as the resulting chapters are nicely varied, capturing something of the very different backgrounds and experiences of their authors.

The editors open *Reminiscences* with a well-written introduction sketching the origin of the Sarawak administrative service. From its first days, the Brooke Raj recruited its native officers from the local Malay *perabangan*, or ‘aristocratic class,’ a practice continued, the editors note, virtually unchanged, until the 1930s. It was only in 1932, during the reign of Vyner Brooke, that Lucas Chuat, an Iban from Engkilili, was appointed the first non-Malay native officer. By the end of Brooke rule, the number of non-Malay officers had increased to only seven. Although Vyner Brooke introduced important constitutional changes that increased local participation in government, native officers enjoyed only limited responsibility and almost no attention was paid to their training. It was only during the colonial period, after the Japanese Occupation, that local officers were promoted to senior positions and eligibility was extended not only to non-Malay natives, but to non-natives as well, and, for the first time, as a matter of policy, a civil service was created that was more or less representative of the population as a whole. Educational opportunities were hugely expanded and incoming officers were now expected to meet educational requirements and underwent, upon selection, a formal course of training.

In the chapters that follow, the contributors reflect on their personal experiences as administrative officers during the subsequent years, beginning with the transitional period to Malaysian rule. In order to convey a sense of the diversity of these experiences, I will say something here, briefly at least, about each chapter.

Like the other contributors, Gary Tay, the author of Chapter 2, was a student during the colonial period. While in Form Five, an expatriate officer visited St Thomas’ School where he was studying, and gave a talk encouraging students to consider a career in the administrative service. As a Chinese youngster from Kuching, Tay tells us that joining the service seemed at the time an ideal way “of seeing and getting to know all of Sarawak.” One consequence was, as a result of his first postings to Simanggang and Saratok, a seemingly unexpected fascination with the Native Court system. Learning Iban, mastering court procedures, and passing the government law exams, Tay acquired magistrate authority, and, years later, after his retirement, returned as a magistrate in the Resident’s Native Court, a remarkable achievement for a non-native officer. For many readers, however, the most interesting part of Tay’s chapter is likely to be his account of “Operation Hammer,” in which Tay served in the “Control Areas” as a resettlement and welfare officer. Near the end of his career, Tay, while serving as a divisional development officer in Miri, became involved with scientists in surveying and later helped to set up the Mulu National Park. This work brought him into contact with Penan communities, in which he clearly took a considerable interest, and, surprisingly, on page 44 we find a conference photo of the author, taken in Japan, with the environmentalist, and the Sarawak government’s number one *bête noir*, Bruno Mansur. Regrettably, Tay makes no comment on this meeting in his text.

Aloysius Dris, writing in Chapter 3, tells a very different story. Rather than entering the service directly, Dris first obtained a university degree under a Colombo Plan scholarship in Canada. Returning as a university graduate, his career took a very different course and was spent mainly in the Information Department, the Sarawak Industrial Development Corporation, and, finally, the Tourism Board, where Dris became CEO. By contrast, Haji Su’ut Suhaili, author of Chapter 4 and a Malay former officer,

entered the administrative service at the age of 18 and, at the height of his career, had served in no less than ten different districts.

Liman Numpang, author of Chapter 5, entered the administrative service by, perhaps, the most unusual route of all. As a bright youngster from a remote Iban longhouse in the Saratok district, Liman qualified for a scholarship to St. Augustine's School, Betong. But rather than taking up the scholarship, he decided to attend, instead, an experimental school at Budu, in the Ulu Krian, run by the idealistic Scots educator, J.K. Wilson. So, at the age of 12, in 1953, Liman began his Budu schooling. The Budu school was part of an integrated community development center and was designed to educate native youngsters so that they would serve, rather than drift away from, the rural communities of their birth. As the Education Department refused to register the Budu school, its graduates were ineligible for government secondary schooling, and Liman was therefore sent to northern Scotland to complete his education. When he returned, he was made officer-in-charge of the community development center at Nanga Budu, where he later helped oversee the first free rural education system in Sarawak initiated by the Kalaka District Council. But, as Liman observes, the community development concept soon faded following Malaysian independence, and in 1965 Liman joined the administrative service.

His entry into the service coincided with the beginning of Confrontation and his first assignment was to the Sarawak-Kalimantan border where he served as both an administrator and a liaison officer between the military and local civilian communities. Until Confrontation, many upland people living along the border were only vaguely aware of its existence. Once, Liman tells us, in Ulu Undup, he was called on to resolve a land dispute between two neighboring longhouses. In the course of inspecting the land and consulting maps, he discovered, to everyone's surprise, that one of the two longhouses was actually in Indonesia. Much of the rest of his career was spent serving as an administrative officer with the Rajang Area Security Command (RASCOM). After retirement, he was recalled and attached for seven years to the Bakun hydroelectric project. In the final pages of his chapter, he presents a sympathetic picture of those forced by resettlement to abandon their traditional homes and land.

Peter Siburat, a Bidayuh former officer, credits his entry into the service to his mother, who told him, as a youngster, that if he applied himself in school he might be able to work for the government and so not have to get up before dawn each morning and tap rubber like everyone else in their village. Taking her advice to heart, he studied diligently and won a place at Batu Lintang secondary school in Kuching. Conditions at the time were austere and classes were still being held in the old prisoner-of-war barracks. After graduation, he was selected for the service and posted to Simanggang. Siburat has an especially observant eye for rituals and routines, something, of course, in which civil services abound. In Sarawak, some of these rituals were particularly vigorous and challenging, and he gives a nice account of the welcoming ceremonies that awaited visiting DOs when traveling to upriver Iban and Orang Ulu longhouses in the 1960s and 70s. Nor does he neglect the humdrum. The everyday duties of a newly-appointed outstation officer consisted primarily, he tells us, of inspecting shotguns, issuing cartridge permits, and writing and filing memos and other correspondence. However, his talents did not go unnoticed, it seems, and he was soon made secretary of the Simanggang

Recreation Club and put in charge of weekend entertainments. Independence was still some years off and there were many expatriate officers and their families living in the district at the time. Consequently, weekend entertainments were taken seriously. They were also, he learned, an occasion for transacting a good deal of official business. Later, Siburat served as an Iban translator for the Cobbold Commission and as an SAO, he traveled throughout the lower Batang Lupar, Skrang, and Undup areas conducting information sessions to explain the plans for Malaysia. At the time, he notes, longhouse people were split, some favoring Malaysia, others opposing it. The primary worries of those who opposed it were about loss of land and livelihood and whether there would be jobs in the future for their children, all worries which, he shrewdly observes, have, since then, far from disappeared. For most Sarawakians, wavering ended with the Brunei Rebellion. In Simanggang, Siburat hastily organized a volunteer "home guard" to secure the power station and government offices. Soon afterwards, hostilities began on the border. During Confrontation, Siburat was assigned to gather intelligence from border longhouses, was attached for a time to the military as a guide-interpreter, and later was involved in evacuating border communities and resettling them on the Skrang scheme. The author ends his chapter on a note of nostalgia, recalling the earlier years, when an outstation officer's first job was to "take government to the people," visiting them where they lived and, uninfluenced by politics, hearing out their views.

Stewart Ngau Ding, the author of Chapter 7, began his education, he tells us, in a Borneo Evangelical Mission school in the upper Baram. Like Jayl Langub, the author of Chapter 9, his father was a Penghulu and his childhood experiences appear to have equipped him well, most notably with diplomatic skills. These found ample scope for application. In the 1960s, the Baram District to which he was posted was a favorite destination of Iban migrants from other parts of Sarawak, some of whom had by then settled illegally on land claimed by others. One particularly challenging task he was assigned was to evict these newcomers, or, if possible, to find alternative sites where they might, with the permission of others, be resettled. Many years later, when visiting the descendants of some of those he had had to evict earlier in his career, he was pleased to discover that he was remembered, not with bitterness, but as someone who had dealt fairly with their parents.

Joseph Sim writes in Chapter 6 that he entered the administrative service in 1962 and was sent as a probationary officer to Miri. On 8 December that year the Brunei Rebellion broke out, rebels seized the nearby towns of Kuala Belait and Seria, and in Miri itself hasty preparations were made for an attack on the town that, fortunately, never materialized. However, the subdistrict station at Bekenu was captured with the aid of local Kedayan villagers. In the aftermath, the Kedayan paid a heavy price. Their shotguns were confiscated and wild animals ravished their farms. Compounding the destruction, the district suffered its worst floods in living memory. From Niah and a brief assignment in Sibuti, Sim was transferred to the Baram and then to Kapit. Following the Siburan police station attack in 1965, Sim, like Tay earlier, was reassigned to the newly established "Controlled Areas." By the end of his career, Sim rose to the rank of Resident, Permanent Secretary, and, finally, Director of Public Affairs in the Chief Minister's Office, and at the end of his chapter he outlines briefly some of the administrative changes he witnessed in the course of this long career.

The final chapter, written by Jayl Langub, is, in many ways, the most informative in the picture it presents of the duties and everyday social life of outstation officers. Langub is somewhat younger than the other contributors and first entered the service only in 1967, four years after the formation of Malaysia. Following an induction course, he was sent to Kanowit, an Iban area, where his initial duties were much like those described by Siburat, except that now they included, reflecting the changing political priorities of the time, minor rural development projects. Longhouses, in this case, applied for particular projects, such as a community-constructed gravity-fed water system, a bridge or jetty, a sports field, footpath, or river clearance project, which a local officer then had to evaluate and approve using prescribed criteria. After this, the officer traveled from longhouse to longhouse to oversee the completion of these projects. Other activities included registering voters and, as in the past, conducting *randau ruai*, or informal longhouse dialogue sessions. Like Tay, Langub, too, developed an interest in the Native Court and in his chapter he describes his experiences with court procedures as a young court assessor. By the late 1960s, at Kanowit and throughout much of the Rejang region, the activities of the CCO or “Clandestine Communist Organisation,” as it was then known, became a matter of grave concern, and at times of danger, to local officers. Even in a small outstation like Kanowit, the identity of CCO members was a mystery and, when discovered, often came as a complete surprise. Langub recalls having had breakfast in a coffee shop with a young man of his acquaintance, who, two days later, he learned, was killed in a clash with local security forces.

From Kanowit, Langub was transferred to Belaga. Here he encountered altogether new problems. The most pressing took the form of cross-border visitors, chiefly Kenyah with families on both sides of the Sarawak-Kalimantan border. Most came to work and earn money with which to buy essentials to take back with them across the border. Although diligent, they sometimes failed. Faced with an unsympathetic immigration department, and reluctant to send them back without food, he resorted to various informal strategies to get them to the Kapit bazaar, where their labor was much in demand by shopkeepers, and then back again, across the border, to Kalimantan. In 1974, he was transferred to Spaoh, in the Saribas district, where he remained until 1977. It was here, shortly before his departure, that this reviewer first met the author during a far from sober Gawai Dayak celebration in the Ulu Paku, an event which, I am relieved to find, goes unrecorded here. From Spaoh, the author was posted to Limbang and from there was sent on study leave to Canada. At McGill, he earned a university degree, and, with this, his career as an outstation officer was over. Upon returning, he was posted to the Secretariat, first to the State Planning Unit and then to the Majlis Adat Istiadat. At the Majlis, his work included compiling codified guidebooks to the *adat* of different ethnic groups in Sarawak, a task that required frequent return trips to outstation areas, an experience, however, that, he sadly notes, never quite matched what it had been before when he actually lived there as an outstation officer.

Langub gives a vivid account of outstation life. To perform his job, an officer had to keep in touch with local happenings, get out and meet people, and learn to tap the advice of those with special local knowledge. In rural areas, officers were often looked upon as the government personified. In addition, civil servants were themselves important participants in local community life and were regularly invited to various events, such as

weddings and festivals. In smaller stations, officers frequently had to perform a varied array of duties. Thus, Langub describes assessing family school fees, invigilating exams, and keeping completed scripts under lock and key. For younger officers, the football field and coffee shops were centers of social life, and evenings and weekends were spent visiting friends, including, oftentimes, local school teachers. As a much rarer diversion, occasionally “There were the odd anthropologists conducting research.”

Reminiscences is a valuable work, filling a significant gap in the modern history of Sarawak. All of the authors, in their different ways, have valuable things to say, of interest to local readers as well as historians. The only complaint I have is with the publisher for the numerous printing errors that mar this otherwise excellent book, and one can only hope that these will be rectified in some future, well-deserved reprinting. (Clifford Sather, BRB Editor, Portland, OR USA)

Judith M. Heimann, 2007, *The Airmen and the Headhunters: A True Story of Lost Soldiers, Heroic Tribesmen and the Unlikeliest Rescue of World War II*. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 289 pp.

Judith Heimann is known to most of us from her earlier work on the life of Tom Harrison. In this work, she follows up on stories which she discovered in her research into Tom’s months of Borneo war against the Japanese. The book details the experiences of two American aircrews whose B24 Liberators crashed in Borneo following missions over Brunei Bay (in November 1944 and January 1945, respectively). The story follows the struggle to survive as these young men found themselves suddenly in the vast interior of north-central Borneo. A great deal of the book describes their experiences with the Lun Dayeh of the Kemaloh region of what was then the Mentarang District of Japanese-occupied Dutch Borneo. Many of these villagers had been converted to Christianity a decade earlier by Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries Ernest Presswood (Canadian) and John Willfinger (American). By the time the airmen arrived, Rev. Presswood was in a prison camp on Sulawesi and Rev. Willfinger, who surrendered to the Japanese to protect those he had come to serve, had been executed in Tarakan on Christmas Eve 1942.

This is a story that took a great deal of careful work over many years to put together. Heimann conducted interviews in Borneo and the United States with many of the survivors or their families. She gathered material from archives in the United States, Great Britain and Australia. With these and especially the diaries and stories written by some of the participants, Heimann gives us a very close-up view of the young airmen’s courage, comradeship and, most especially, the many acts of kindness of the Makanahap family and their Lun Dayeh hosts. The numerous characters and locations lend a Lord of the Rings quality to the story and the addition of two very useful maps, a glossary, index and extensive notes on sources greatly add to the utility of the book for both general readers and Borneo scholars.

A central character in this drama is William Makahanap, a Christian from the Sangi and Talaud islands in the Celebes. He was the District Officer in Long Berang, serving under the Japanese. He took the Americans under his care and arranged with

Lun Dayeh villagers to have them fed and hidden from the Japanese. We learn of his leadership in organizing a war against the Japanese with the assistance of local Chinese shopkeepers and, of course, the Lun Dayeh. Long before the arrival of the SEMUT teams from Harrison's operations in the Plain of Bah, Makahanap's Lun Dayeh allies were clearing the Mentarang of the Japanese.

The various tellers of these tales are not always clear from the text, but to have attributed or quoted each source would have unreasonably encumbered both the writer and reader. All in all, Heimann has done a superb job of weaving these recollections and observations together in a manner which renders both the situations and the perspectives of the various personae meaningful. That being said, other than Mentarang District Officer Makahanap's dictated recollections and the memories of the surviving Lun Dayeh participants (or at least the children of these), this is a tale, as the title correctly credits, about the airmen and their experiences told from their perspectives. The descriptions of events that come directly from the diaries, especially those of Phil Corrin, are the real gems of the tale. These convey the state of mind of young Americans who are confronted with a place and a people totally foreign to their experience. A minor correction about these experiences concerns the Navy airmen's story on pp. 169-170 about meeting with Tagal in Long Pa' Sia'. There were no Tagal in Long Pa' Sia' at that time; the people there were Lun Dayeh. The Tagal were in Meligan, Iburu and Ulu Mio. Also, it should be noted that the people shown on the back cover are Kenyah, not Lun Dayeh.

For scholars of Borneo history this is an important tale about a region that underwent profound transformations in the aftermath of the war and the end of Dutch rule. Following the closing of Chinese shops in Long Berang, the Lun Dayeh of the Kemaloh River and its tributaries migrated south into the Mentarang areas around Malinau or west into the Krayan plateau (Long Umong, for example) or via Long Pa' Sia' into the Mengalong River region of Sabah. In 1968, I heard some of these stories from villagers in Mendulong and Ranau. In 1971, I flew to southern California and interviewed Maj. Dan Illerich, who gave me a copy of Phil Corrin's diary, entitled "Borneo Log." I never got around to following up on all this and I am grateful to Judith Heimann for putting together these scattered stories in such a careful and useful way. I am confident that many others will agree with these sentiments. (Jay Crain, Department of Anthropology, California State University, Sacramento)

Airman Ernest G. Darch, 2004, *Survival in Japanese POW Camps with Changkol and Basket*, Markham [Ontario]: Stewart Publishing & Printing, 214 pp. ISBN 1-894183-56-8.

This second but unrevised Canadian edition of Ernest Darch's World War II narrative (first published in London by Minerva in 2000) makes available once again what may well be the last of the Batu Lintang prisoner-of-war memoirs to appear, as well as one of the first to have been written. It also provides an interesting account of Darch's capture by the Japanese in Java where he had been a R.A.F. radar operator, his time in Javanese prisons (notably, Tanjong Priok near Jakarta) and his transportation from Singapore to Kuching with hundreds of others in a grossly overcrowded freighter

in October 1942. Written more than sixty years ago, it possesses an extraordinary immediacy.

What makes the book so starkly different from the accounts given by civilian detainees such as K.H. Digby (*Lawyer in the Wilderness*, 1980), P.H.H. Howes (*In A Fair Ground*, 1994) and, of course, Agnes Keith in her classic, *Three Came Home* (1947) is that it is based on the experience of the British other ranks' camp. There the mortality rate was truly appalling, less than one-third surviving from an original 2,000 or so men. The death rate in the two civilians' camps and the officers' camp was relatively insignificant, reflecting their exemption from constant forced labor and their more responsible and communally-oriented camp committees. Darch and his unfortunate comrades were put to work principally on the Kuching airfield and the ship-building facility at Tanah Puteh (near Pending) where Sarawak's one significant wartime industry was established by the Japanese. While the pace of work was manageable enough during the first eighteen months, the changing fortunes of the war meant that the Japanese desperately needed wooden cargo ships to compensate for their merchant shipping losses and airfields to compensate for their lost aircraft carriers. Pile-driving and *changkol* and basket work at Tanah Puteh's "Lekas Corner" provided the greatest physical challenge of the entire occupation and marked the beginning of what Darch calls "slavery."

This period also corresponded with the 50% reduction in food rations supplied by the Japanese and a NCO-operated regime in what became the other ranks' camp that was notable both for its corruption and for the brutality of its own military police enforcers who conscripted the work parties. Darch relates that life for the first year under the "officers dynasty" was relatively benign and efficient, but that their NCO successors simply did not have the caliber to run things properly. Wholesale racketeering in food and medicines for the benefit of the privileged and powerful few was the order of the day, and morale was low. Apart from a monthly camp concert, there was nothing in the way of organized diversion: a marked contrast with the civilians' and officers' camps. Darch would have been amazed to have read Frank Bell's *Undercover University* (1990) and its account of the wide-ranging educational activities he arranged and directed at the latter. The one positive thing for the other ranks' camp was the news obtained from the secret radio which operated until early 1945 when the batteries finally failed.

Darch believes that if there had been a system of pooling resources, many lives would have been saved. He managed to bring three of his colleagues into a sharing scheme, but this could not be sustained in an environment where there was no encouragement from above: "The strong, the senior NCOs, perpetrated the rule of 'survival of the fittest,' with themselves being the fittest and determined to remain so. Can one then blame the individual if, in his fight to survive, he gradually gave up the effort to share, the primary instinct being self-preservation?" Although Darch appears to suffer a sense of guilt over this, he proved to be one of the fittest by saving his strength on work parties through various ruses and by displaying both entrepreneurship and physical courage in his illegal trading operations. This included tapping drums of lubricant hidden in the jungle when the Allied air attacks began and selling it as cooking oil. In an environment where food and how to secure it was a constant preoccupation, even an obsession, he survived while scores of his less enterprising comrades died of overwork, malnutrition, and disease: "Few Kuching prisoners ... lasted the three years unless they risked unauthorised

trading.” By the beginning of 1945, five were dying every day in the other ranks’ camp and the Japanese decreed that the coffins be given hinged bottoms for reuse in order to save wood. He writes of men who had “given up the ghost” long before their ulcerated and suppurating bodies finally succumbed. What impact all this had on him personally is not so clear, although his determination to survive was extremely strong (he had a fiancée in England) and may have hardened him to otherwise heartbreaking sights. Like many other ex-POWs, he has little to say about the Japanese that is positive, although he describes one young soldier whose treatment of his work party in early 1945 was tempered both by humanity and by the knowledge that Japan was losing the war.

More than any other Batu Lintang narrative, Darch gives a graphic account of the physical ill-treatment (by no means always punishment) routinely handed out by mostly Korean guards who slapped and punched prisoners at will. The only antidote was not to flinch in anticipation, something few were able to manage. Of life in the other camps, including the male civilian camp and the women’s camp, Darch knew very little, although he comments critically on Agnes Keith’s failure to mention the work done for the women’s camp’s benefit.

Based on secretly made notes, the book has been reprinted due to the efforts of the Canadian-based relatives of one of Darch’s less fortunate R.A.F. colleagues who survived internment but succumbed to its long-term physical effects in 1953. It would be interesting to know how Darch feels today about the account that he wrote so soon after his release. Disappointingly, his epilogue of 2000 tells us nothing about his subsequent thoughts. However, we do have from him an “unvarnished” account of what the British other ranks went through and a convincing explanation of why they suffered such appalling mortality. (Bob Reece, Murdoch University, Western Australia)

Julitta Lim Shau Hua, PhD, *Pussy’s in the Well: Japanese Occupation of Sarawak 1941-1945, Kuching: SUPP Headquarters, 2005, 489 pp, ISBN 983-41998-2-1.*

Here is a book that will warm the hearts of those who can never forgive the Japanese for what their armies of occupation perpetrated in Southeast Asia during World War II. What came to be known as *masa jepun* in Sarawak was a grim time for the European prisoners of war at Kuching’s Batu Lintang camp, most notably the British other ranks whose experience has been described by Ernest Darch. Nor is it easy to forget the horrific massacre of Sarawak officers and their wives and children by a Japanese naval party at Long Nawang in Dutch Borneo in August 1942. However, life for those “outside the wire” was by no means unbearable except for the handful of Chinese patriots who had earlier been gathering funds to support Chiang Kai Shek against the Japanese in China. Probably a score or more Kuching and Sibuan Chinese were tortured to death by the dreaded *kempeitai* and many more lived in daily fear of reprisals. Obligated to repay what was called the *sook ching*, or ‘blood debt,’ in hard cash to help finance the Japanese war effort, the Sarawak Chinese were always under suspicion

of treason. Nevertheless, through avoidance or tactful submission and adaptation to changed economic circumstances, they survived the war in reasonable condition. Spared the wholesale massacres of Malaya and Singapore and the closer-to-home horrors of Api Api (Jesselton) in North Borneo and Pontianak and Sinkawang in Dutch West Borneo where local rebellions brought savage retaliation from the Japanese, they wisely pursued the ancient strategy of bending to the wind. Japanese policy towards the Malays and the Dayaks was relatively benign, the former being co-opted wherever possible into government service and the latter being left pretty much to their own devices apart from the confiscation of their shotguns and the compulsory acquisition of their padi. Initially impressed by the military exploits of the Japanese, the upriver Dayaks were to turn on them ferociously once the fortunes of war began to change. Apart from the Europeans and the Eurasians, the wartime experience of Sarawak's peoples was relatively benign.

It is difficult to see what Julitta Lim wishes to achieve with her book at this point in time. The narrative of the Japanese invasion and occupation and of the Allied liberation and of the actual experience of the war both inside and outside "the wire" has been well covered elsewhere by Ooi Keat Gin and others. If young Sarawak Chinese are curious to know what things were like for their grandparents during the war, there are the first-hand accounts provided by Lau Tzy Cheng (1955) and Liu Yong Tzu (1969). Lim's main contribution is to reproduce lists of names of POWs and survivors (oddly enough, Ernest Darch has been missed), documents of the time and photographs. Indeed, the book has the feeling about it of a memorial or record rather than a work of history in the accepted sense of reflecting a critical approach. While the book contains useful information, the lack of a list of contents and index makes it difficult to find.

To be sure, there is a certain poignancy in invoking once again the story when the European survivors of Batu Lintang now amount to little more than thirty and the number of Sarawakians who lived through World War II is being reduced every day. Photographs provide the book's main strength, many of them published for the first time. Many others credited "Sarawak Museum" have in fact appeared before in other publications, including my own, and have subsequently been rephotographed by the Museum or perhaps at Lim's instigation from books held by the Museum library. While it is true that they now form part of the Museum's photographic collection, it is disingenuous to label them all "Sarawak Museum," thereby failing to acknowledge their proper provenance when they are derived from private or other institutional collections. Only the Australian War Memorial (occasionally) and a handful of private donors receive proper credit.

Much of the book's content has been taken from pre-war Chief Secretary and Camp Master J.B. Archer's *Lintang Camp*, a compilation of documents published in May 1946 before the formal cession of Sarawak to the British Crown, an event in which Archer was to play a key role. Less well-known was his unforgiving and relentless policy of repatriating practically all of Sarawak's pre-war Japanese population at the end of the war. Fortunately, not every prisoner who survived Batu Lintang was moved by the same spirit of vindictive vengefulness, but Julitta Lim seems at times to be intent on reviving it. Published by the Sarawak United People's Party, the book's detectable Chinese chauvinist flavor is a far cry from the forgiving and generous attitude adopted by one of the Party's principal founders, the late Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui.

Although this is not a scholarly book, Julitta Lim is anxious to lend it scholarly authority by highlighting the fact that she has a Ph.D. from Washington International University and proudly reproducing a photograph of herself in academic regalia. There is no indication, however, of a doctoral dissertation or thesis which might have earned her this high qualification. A search of the Internet reveals that the grand-sounding Washington International University (there is no connection with the nation's capital) is an obscure mail-order degree college which is not accredited with any U.S. Department of Education agency or even affiliated with the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA). It sits in the company of such august institutions as: Melville College, Guyana (Flight Training); Lifetime Careers School, Archbald, Pa.; and National University Virtual High School, La Jolla, Cal. Situated in the oddly-named town of King of Prussia, Philadelphia, Washington International University possesses an extremely modest faculty of some seven staff members. These evidently versatile and hard-working folk oversee a range of correspondence degree courses, most of them apparently over one year regardless of whether they are at undergraduate or postgraduate level. An "Accelerated Degree Program" resulting in a Ph.D. in Arts costs a very reasonable US\$4,200.00 and its requirements are no more than high school completion, six years' unspecified "work experience," and written work that can be seen to be equivalent to a M.A. The main pre-requisite for admission, however, appears to be a check for US\$150.00 as a first installment. Normally, in British, Australian and New Zealand universities, a Ph.D. is awarded on the basis of a major original research dissertation of at least 80,000 words. In the United States and Canada, substantial coursework is required as well as a major research thesis. The process is normally expected to take about four years of full-time study and very often takes longer. Under these circumstances, Julitta Lim's Ph.D. might be seen to have been an absolute bargain, but it is unlikely to be worth much more than the paper it is printed on. The "graduates" of Frank Bell's "Undercover University" at Batu Lintang prison camp were probably better qualified than those of Washington International University. (Bob Reece, Murdoch University, Western Australia)

Hew Cheng Sim, editor, 2007, *Village Mothers City Daughters: Women and Urbanization in Sarawak*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: Singapore. x + 150 pp. ISBN 978-981-230-415-5 (softcover). Also available in hardcover.

Addressing a discernable gap in the academic record, this significant collection of papers focuses the spotlight on Sarawak women as they encounter and engage with the process of rapid urbanization and rural-urban migration, arguably the most significant aspect of social transformation in Sarawak in the present day. In doing so, it highlights a number of important and contemporary issues surrounding urbanization and exposes the gendered face of development.

The contributors share a common specialization in gender issues and an authority informed by long-term experience of living and working in Sarawak. The approach is multidisciplinary. Each of the papers explores the complex interplay between gender and urbanization from a particular perspective and draws on different forms of evidence. Each

focuses on different groups of women in different contexts, taking the reader behind the dehumanizing veil of anonymous statistics and into the regions where they are prepared. This plurality of approaches discloses the presence of “multiple modernities” at work, shaping a diverse variety of gendered experiences.

In an integrating first chapter, Hew Cheng Sim provides a context for the process of urbanization in Sarawak and a background to the chapters that follow. She locates the origins of urbanization in the trading and administrative networks of Sarawak’s colonial past. The distinctive shape of rural-urban migration also had its beginnings in this period and has been consolidated by the development policies of successive governments since. Her analysis of this process concludes that rural-urban migration in Sarawak has been “a gendered process with serious consequences for women” (2007:10).

The nature of these consequences is teased out in the rest of the chapter to show how migration has gone hand in hand with profound changes in both the geographical and social landscape in Sarawak and how this has impacted different women in different ways to create a reality that is multiple and various, but, above all, complex. The following chapters bear testimony to the extent of that complexity.

Chapter two shifts the explanatory focus to work as Goy Siew Ching and Low Kuek Long examine the gendered shape of employment structures, patterns of labor mobility and wage levels. Their analysis, based on a study of migrant workers in the manufacturing industry in Kuching, shows that the Kuching labor market is marked by great disparity. Women experience less upward mobility and lower earnings than men, and the multifarious reasons for this are explained during the course of the analysis.

The final pages of this chapter make a number of recommendations aimed at addressing the factors that disadvantage urban working women. Directed to both state and private sectors – employers, service providers, educators, policymakers, and women themselves, the scope of these recommendations is an indicator of both the complexity and dimensions of the inequality that exists.

Adele Baer argues that a meaningful assessment of women’s health status must include an understanding of the social and cultural forces that impinge on women’s experience of health, often contributing to chronicity of illness or lack of access to health care. While she acknowledges that women in Sarawak today live longer and generally have far better health than their mothers’ generation, certain groups of women have greater health problems than others and more difficulty accessing medical services.

Urbanization and development have also resulted in new health vulnerabilities for Sarawak women. For example, Baer argues that a restricted diet – a result of both deforestation and a cash economy—has made rural women particularly vulnerable to malnutrition. Unrealistic attitudes and lack of education about safe sex practices, she suggests, increase women’s vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS. Health service providers and educators will find much of interest here, as throughout, criticism is tempered with solid, practical advice about how the situation might be improved, often at little or no cost.

An insightful chapter by Sara Ashencaen Crabtree considers how the legacy of colonial psychiatry has imposed a gendered shape on experiences of madness in Sarawak. Drawing on ethnographic research at a local psychiatric hospital, she argues that general hospital practices and commentaries from women psychiatric service users

support a picture of a male-dominated psychiatry preoccupied with issues of morality and sexuality that oppress women. The author situates these circumstances against an historical backdrop of psychiatric care in Malaysia.

Traditional healing practices provide an alternative or supplementary treatment for many psychiatric patients in Sarawak. In a discussion that includes viewpoints and commentaries from traditional healers, she provides convincing reasons why psychiatric patients frequently make use of their services, in spite of the power and dominance of conventional medicine.

Ling How Kee unravels the relationship between gender- and age-related issues in a sensitive portrayal of elderly women's experiences of urbanization in Sarawak. Quantitative data is rounded out with material from in-depth interviews to demonstrate how historical, social and cultural forces in Sarawak have combined to contribute to a less than adequate quality of life for many elderly women. Personal narratives of elderly women included in the paper show how factors like class, gender, ethnicity and age interact to produce different experiences for different women, enhancing the aging process for some, reducing choices for others. These narratives also reveal the factors that have mitigated pre-existing vulnerabilities for some elderly women.

There is a great deal of valuable information in this paper for welfare planners and providers, including a list of concerns and recommendations for urgent policy responses that take gender into account.

"Like a chicken standing on one leg" is the arresting title of Hew Cheng Sim's chapter on urbanization and single mothers in Sarawak. Bringing the experiences of single mothers into the light, she explores the problems they face and the support networks that exist to assist them, using both quantitative and qualitative material to capture the complexity of these experiences.

Family theory has a contested history and the author contextualizes these debates and the way a particular interpretation has impacted negatively on attitudes towards single mothers in Malaysia. Challenging ideological assumptions that associate single motherhood with a breakdown in family values, she produces substantial evidence to support an argument that links the fragmentation of families and marriages to labor mobility associated with rapid urbanization.

Utilizing the art forms of stories and songs, Poline Bala contributes a reflective and moving account of Kelabit women's experiences of migration and their responses to it, including her own experiences of rural-urban migration in pursuit of education. In songs of intense longing for those who have left, elderly Kelabit women articulate their loneliness and emptiness and the loss of their children and grandchildren for support in tasks of daily living. Women who have migrated to the urban lowlands tell of the difficulties of adapting to an urban lifestyle and the constant longing for family and community left behind.

Outward migration has brought the Kelabit into "mainstream Malaysian life" (p. 123) where they play a valuable and significant role in a wider society. Nevertheless, the yearning expressed in these songs and narratives makes it clear that the psychic and emotional cost to both rural and urban women has been considerable.

I enjoyed and learned much from this book that makes a unique contribution to studies of Sarawak in its focus on women. Together, the different chapters reveal how

gender reaches into every aspect of women's encounter with urbanization in Sarawak as they struggle to negotiate a changing world. Issues such as class, material well-being, education, marital status, age, and health, transform the experience of gender – they are not merely additive. In the context of rapid social change the difference this makes to women's experience is often exacerbated.

The scope of this collection as well as the wealth of detailed information in its pages will make this book a resource of inestimable value for academics and researchers across many disciplines. Besides providing a benchmark for future reference it is a fertile source of ideas and recommendations for future research.

All the papers have an applied or practical focus. Each of the authors draws out the policy implications of the ideas they put forth, making this book an invaluable resource also for state planners and decision makers, health service providers, and educators.

Change works through human agency – systems don't change themselves. The contributors' commitment to make Sarawak women visible in the process of social transformation and the issues they raise makes this book also a work of advocacy. (Ann Appleton, Institute of East Asian Studies, UNIMAS, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak)

Tim Bending, 2006, *Penan Histories: Contentious Narratives in Upriver Sarawak*. Leiden: KITLV Press.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Eastern Penan in Borneo (a few communities of which were and in rare cases continue to be nomadic) came under intense international media attention. This was partly due to their protests against government-licensed companies' logging of primary rainforest that they inhabit along with other indigenous groups. These protests were championed by several "well-known" figures, as mentioned by Bending (p. 1), including Al Gore and HRH Prince Charles.

This book (according to the back cover) sets out to describe an Eastern Penan village in Sarawak in relation to the issue of deforestation. Bending's book results from nine months of fieldwork undertaken during the 1990s, in one Eastern Penan community, Long Litut, in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. The book is divided into 6 main chapters and totals 172 pages. It is partially an exploration of Penan sentiments; and these are used as a means to try and gain a broader understanding of Eastern Penan perspectives about transitions they have undergone, and are still undergoing; as well as their attitudes towards commercial scale logging that has been taking place continually in and around areas they inhabit for approximately 30 years. More specifically, the author's purpose is to reflect on why, according to him, Penan moved through stages that include: a shift from nomadism to a settled lifestyle; then, to working in the logging industry; later, to protest against this industry (in which they had worked); before, finally, returning to work within the logging industry. However, it is accepted by Bending that Long Litut views may not represent those of all Penan, but that they "should give a certain measure of insight on these issues as they pertain to a particular community" (p. 4).

It is heart-warming to see published considerations of the circumstances of the

Penan and Bending is to be appreciated for his contribution to this debate, since too little appears in the public domain about Penan concerns about their situation (for reasons outlined below). There are, however, some general as well as specific concerns regarding this publication, including the four transitional stages that Bending suggests (above). Most Penan continue to forage extensively, where they can, regardless of occupying a “permanent” settlement or having some involvement with paid labor. Residents of the village of Ba Lai (south of Bareo), in the interior of Sarawak’s Baram Division, for example, were, until recently, at least only semi-settled. Outside of phases of rice planting and harvesting, many of them continue to forage away from their “permanent” settlement for extensive periods (such that one might reasonably question whether or not they actually comprise a settled community).

In cases where Penan, along with other indigenous groups, object to logging the reasons are relatively straightforward, contrary to Bending’s claims (p. 4, 56, and 78). These communities generally lack any kind of political authority or access to it, i.e. they lack a public voice through which they can articulate their concerns; they have limited land rights in the face of the harvesting of timber on land they inhabit (a point acknowledged by Bending, pp. 4-5); and logging has impacted directly and massively on their livelihoods (although the ways in which specific Penan’s interests have been affected are complex, and are by no means uniform across different communities as well as among individuals within them). Where Penan have been influenced by “others,” this has been as much, if not more, by neighbors, such as Kelabit (who are not, by any stretch, pro-government, contrary to Bending’s claim [pp. 72-73]), Kenyah and Iban (who have also been affected by logging) than by Bruno Manser. He happened to be a Swiss shepherd, and a rare individual who was willing to live with and like a Penan, who appreciated their lack of conspicuous consumption; and who also happened to believe the Penan had a right to some autonomy (Manser 1996; cf. Bending pp. 22-23; and 88).

Penan, along with members of other Dayak groups (referred to above), have met government officials regarding logging, land rights and economic development, over the years, and their lack of rights and share in the wealth accrued from timber extraction has been reported in detail (e.g. *Far Eastern Economic Review* 1985, among many others). These encounters have helped shape how Penan, among others, perceive local politicians who are normally supposed to represent their constituents’ interests.

Penan did not just decide to abandon anti-logging protests (p. 125). In fact, where Penan and other indigenous people have become involved in commercial logging, this has often been out of necessity, a way to avoid extreme poverty and keep their children at school (cf. p. 25 and pp. 128-9). Blockades and protests continue to this day and are reported on the internet (see, for example, <http://www.rengah.c2o.org/>), among other forums, but otherwise go largely unmentioned by the Malaysian mainstream media, which are either government owned or controlled.

Bending’s study could have provided readers with more contextual detail, since the back cover describes it as “an ethnographic examination.” Given the length of time he reports to have spent among Penan, little is revealed about the community in which the author was based (only 3 ½ pages, on pp. 33-36), as well as the language(s) in which interview research was conducted. There is also relatively limited use of secondary

resources (cf. Brosius 2007; and Sellato & Sercombe 2007). And, while a great deal of discussion is devoted to the degree of agency the Penan appear to have in the whole logging issue, little consideration is given to the author's role in this ethnography or that of neighboring settled groups.

There are also some minor concerns including: the glossary of Penan terms, on pp. ix-x, which contains thirty-six words, a quarter of which are not actually Penan, but borrowings either from Malay or from English via Malay, besides "Berawen" is actually "Berawan"; footnote 5 (on p. 3), states that Needham's main research interest was with systems of naming. In fact, Needham's main focus was social organization, as revealed in his thesis (1953); and Needham's first name is "Rodney" not "Roger." Finally, Eastern Penan are also located in Brunei, although the author omits to show this (in the map on p.2).

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(Peter Sercombe, University of Newcastle, UK)

Peter G. Sercombe & Bernard Sellato, 2007, *Beyond the Green Myth: Hunter-Gatherers of Borneo in the Twenty-First Century*. With a Foreword by Kirk Endicott. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies. Studies in Asian Topics Series, No 37; pbk; xiv + 384pp; no price listed. ISBN-10: 87-91114-84-5, ISBN-13: 978-87-91114-84-7. Maps, tables, figure, bibliography, index.

The hunter-gatherers in question are the egalitarian Penan/Punan peoples who occupy the heartlands of Central Borneo. Nowadays often settled rather than nomadic, they are found in Kalimantan and Sarawak, but are absent from Sabah. They number twenty thousand persons in total. The highest concentration of Punan is found in the Malinau-Tubu' area of East Kalimantan, where they constitute almost half of the indigenous Dayak population (pp. 1, 137). The Penan of Sarawak came to international attention, particularly from 1987 when their barricades against logging companies hit the headlines (p. 301). Their best-known advocate was Herr Bruno Manser (1954-2000), the Christian Swiss artist who, in effect, sacrificed his life for their cause. A small group of Penan resides at Sukang in the interior of Negara Brunei Darussalam.

What is the "green myth" beyond which readers are promised to be taken? It is the "neo-romantic environmentalist idea of wise traditional peoples" (p. 1). The editors wish to move the debate forward from idealized notions of the Pnan (i.e. "Penan," "Punan," and other nomads taken in combination, p. 30) as "born conservationists" or "symbols of a life in harmony with Nature, and guardians of the forest against evil outsiders" (p. 45). As Professor Kirk Endicott notes in a helpful introduction, hunter-gatherers "do not always harvest their resources in a sustainable way; under some circumstances their immediate-return approach leads them to exhaust a resource, as they did with some sources of incense wood and edible birds' nests when competing with outside collectors." Furthermore, "not all Bornean hunter-gatherers are meek and non-violent; some groups have aggressively defended themselves and their lands from intruding groups of Dayak head-hunters." And they are not averse to settling down and taking up farming when the conditions are propitious (pp. xi-xii).

A more extended treatment of the "green myth" is provided by Professor Sellato on pages 84-6. The notion of traditional people, he says, was "promoted and marketed by environmental organisations to institutional donors and the wider public, who readily condoned it, the former because the idea was new and trendy at the time and thus had market value, and the latter because the Western world seemed to need this myth" (p. 84). The Pnan themselves have become adept at exploiting their aura in the international arena. Indigenous movements, Sellato writes, "often gain social recognition through their appropriation of their NGO allies' ideological world" (p. 85). Since the turn of the third millennium, Punan communities have been benefiting from a conjunction of factors. First, they are receiving assistance from various quarters toward their social and economic development. Secondly, their exclusive right to the control of their lands is increasingly recognized. Thirdly, they still project a positive international image; hence they are likely to secure further assistance in the future. Punan are not innocent victims, left behind by development, Sellato argues, but should be viewed instead as fully-fledged

agents, using and manipulating other actors in their social and economic landscape toward strictly Punan goals. In this sense, he adds, they exploit their social environment in exactly the same “hunting-gathering” way that they do their natural environment. Nor are they particularly “poor.” It should be held, he argues “that their general economic predicaments are mostly, in fact, rather good, especially when compared to Indonesia’s urban and peri-urban poor” (p. 86). But Punan are poorly equipped to benefit from their situation. Sellato concludes that only by adjusting their psychological and ideological conditions to modern circumstances, i.e. by altering to some degree their “hunter-gathering” outlook and thus losing some of the basic tenets of their Punan-ness, will they be able to fare as well (or better) in this century as they did in the last (pp. 88-9).

Further case studies are supplied in the rest of the book. The fine cast of contributors is virtually a who’s who of the field; and several experts who do not contribute papers feature in the acknowledgements (page ix). Following an exhaustive overview by the editors in chapter one, including (pp. 7-9) a concise literature survey, the late Professor Rodney Needham provides all the basic “facts and figures” about the Pnan (pp. 50-60). That he is described as “retired” in the contributor-biography section, whereas he died as long ago as 5 December 2006, alerts readers to the fact that this book must have been some time in gestation; indeed, his paper turns out to be a reprint from F.M. LeBar’s 1972 edited volume, *Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia*, Volume 1. Judging from internal evidence, this book seems to date largely from 1999-2000. It is true that the consolidated bibliography does have some sources dated 2003 (pp. 341, 343-4, 349) and 2004 (pp. 342, 355), and from as recently as 2005 in the case of works by one of the editors (pp. 363-4); but Manser’s multi-volume *Tagebücher*, reviewed at length in *BRB 2004* (pp. 180-3), is not cited. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the *fieldwork* had been largely completed by the turn of the century.

Two chapters (Nos. 10 and 11, pp. 227-88) are devoted to the Penan of Negara Brunei Darussalam. The first, by joint-editor Peter G. Sercombe, examines “continuity and adaptation” among this group, based at Sukang in Belait District. Apart from these fifty-six persons, there are eleven Penan living elsewhere in the country, mostly in Kuala Belait (p. 232). Dr. Sercombe promises us “etic as well as emic” sketches of the Penan situation in the sultanate (p. 227). What he presents, in fact, is an excellent, wide-ranging ethnographic description covering Penan history, social organization, culture, economics, and patterns of language use (p. 228), based on first-hand knowledge acquired by the writer between 1992 and 2000.

These Penan had originally been full-time nomadic hunter-gatherers ranging in the *ulu* Belait and across into neighboring Sarawak, engaging in barter with the local sedentary Dusun population. “It was during these barter trade meetings,” Sercombe relates, “that the Penan were eventually persuaded to settle by the local Dusun, who in turn had been encouraged to lobby the Penan by the local Belait District officer at the time. According to both Dusun and Penan, this district officer, a (British) colonial administrator, was a prime mover in initiating the Penan transition to settlement” (p. 230). There seems to be some problem of terminology here. The District Officers in Brunei were invariably Malay, even during the Residential Era (1906-59). The reference might be, instead, to the “Assistant Resident” stationed at Kuala Belait, a post reserved for Europeans until it was abolished in 1959. Again, it seems odd that a Briton could

have been responsible for settlement taking place at least three years after he would have left the state. This matter warrants further investigation: it might help if Dr. Sercombe could give us the name of the supposed “District Officer.” Be that as it may, in 1962 Legai Madang (d 1973), the elder of the Penan band, agreed to move into a longhouse in Sukang Village. The group is now led by Luyah Kaling (p. 231). To this day they remain isolated even from other Penan across the border; and Sercombe himself never witnessed a non-Penan child entering the longhouse (p. 239). As with all non-Muslims in the “Abode of Peace,” the Sukang Penan are under strong pressure from the powers-that-be to Islamize (p. 240). On the other hand, physical isolation decreases the chances of dramatic change: the “relatively inaccessible context of Sukang is conducive to the conservation and maintenance of village life, with its limited scope for social and physical change, unless imposed or heavily influenced from outside.” Sercombe also concludes that it is no longer the case, as Needham had maintained, that “nomadism is the essence of being a Penan” (p. 257).

The second chapter on Negara Brunei Darussalam, by Professor Robert A. Voeks (California State University, Fullerton), tests whether Penan have a superior ethno-botanical understanding than their Dusun cultivating counterparts. His objectives were twofold: (1) to test the hypothesis regarding the magnitude of folk plant-names maintained by hunter-gatherers and small-scale cultivators in Borneo; and (2) to determine the degree to which ethno-botanical salience among these groups is a function of cultural utility (p. 265). His findings confirmed the conventional wisdom in the literature that cultivating societies maintain larger plant lexicons, and thus a greater breadth of ethno-botanical knowledge, than hunter-gathering groups (p. 283). It appears that for the Penan and Dusun, settlement and farming are associated with a florescence of material culture, and this is necessarily accompanied by a significantly enhanced understanding of the old growth flora. But Voeks had only two informants, one from each group; which seems a somewhat shaky basis upon which to construct a cast-iron theory.

The final chapter, by Associate Professor J. Peter Brosius (University of Georgia), one of the best in the book, is a masterpiece of incisive, nuanced analysis. He starts by noting that resistance to logging companies comes from the Eastern Penan (Limbang-Baram area), whereas the Western Penan (Belaga) have been “conspicuously acquiescent” (p. 289) or even “willing participants” (p. 291) in the destruction of the rain forest. The point of the paper is to account for this differential; and the author does so quite brilliantly. He examines three factors: the contemporary political situation; the historical context; and the nature of social relations characteristic of these two populations. An analysis of why some Penan did *not* erect barricades in the late 1980s might help to illuminate the reasons why others did do so (p. 290).

The section on “colonial encounters” is fascinating. Eastern Penan “portray colonial officers as predictable and trustworthy people who abided by their word” (p. 309). The colonial government respected the Penan and the integrity of the lands they occupied, while the current government does not. The Penan never had to institute blockades against the *orang putih*; and many see their only salvation in a return to colonialism, manifested in the person of HM Queen Elizabeth II (p. 309). Foreign environmentalists, from an Eastern Penan perspective, act in a way that is consistent with the past behavior of colonial authorities, and they project their past experience with

colonial officers onto these individuals (p. 311).

When Western Penan talk about the colonial past, Brosius continues, it does not have nearly the same resonance as it does among Eastern Penan. This contrast appears to be the product of the more frequent and sustained contact which occurred between Penan and colonial authorities in the Baram District relative to the low degree of contact in the Belaga District (p. 311). Brosius himself is somewhat puzzled by this circumstance, given that the same colonial officers would have been transferred from the one area to the other. Without the colonial precedent, at any rate, "it is doubtful that Eastern Penan would have responded as they did to Manser and other environmentalists" (p. 324).

Western Penan communities exist in a mildly antagonistic, competitive relationship, he writes. Their embrace of timber companies derives from a desire to foil the ambitions of their perceived Penan competitors, and is entirely consistent with the traditional Western Penan pattern of intercommunity relations (pp. 320, 323). The different Eastern Penan response was because of the different nature of their society. The competitiveness evident among Western Penan is lacking almost completely: even when they have accepted compensation, it seems to Eastern Penan it represents an unfortunate departure from a formerly united stand against the companies (p. 323).

Brosius then moves on to consider the implications of his findings for theories of domination. Here he takes up James Scott's ideas of "public transcripts and hidden transcripts": "the former are defined as 'a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate,' while the latter are defined as 'discourse that takes place offstage, beyond direct observation by power holders.'" Brosius adds the twist that "Not only are the Penan engaging in the production of both public and hidden transcripts, they are also possessors and deployers of prior transcripts. Such prior transcripts, both social and historical in nature, configure contemporary transcripts" (p. 328).

Not all hunter-gatherers wish to be pigeon-holed as either "Penan" or "Punan." In chapter four, "The Emergence of the Ethnic Category Bhuket," for example, Dr. Shanthi Thambiah (University of Malaya) discovers that the ascription "Punan" to these people "denies the inherent diversity and varied identities of hunter-gatherers in different parts of Borneo" (p. 91). The Bhuket comprise five communities living far apart from one another in West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, and the headwaters of the upper Balui in Sarawak. There is a need, the author says, "for caution in formulating or accepting generalisations about people's identity without taking into consideration the voices of the very people who are being discussed." Furthermore, "the unitary concept of Punan may not be a credible anthropological category, nor a useful category for theoretical purposes. Moreover, such categorisation does not help hunter-gatherers themselves to produce a real future, with the potential to be anything but a continuation of the past or present instance" (p. 107).

The next chapter forms a natural progression. Dr. Rajindra K. Puri (University of Kent) provides a biographical sketch of K.A. Klimut (b 1949), a Punan elder from the Menabur River, a tributary of the Tubu' in Malinau Regency, north-eastern Kalimantan. Here at least one Punan gets a chance to speak for himself, not once, but twice. He likens the situation of his people to that of the Australian Aborigines. He addresses the Punan's central dilemma: whether to stay in the resettlement villages or return to their traditional

lands, outlining the advantages and disadvantages of relocating (pp. 110, 112). He raises worries about education and health (pp. 117, 118-19) and, noting that Punan do not become civil servants or big businessmen, denounces the poor quality of employment opportunities open to them. He expresses his concerns about the future of his people (p. 118) and laments that their culture of sharing is under threat (pp. 120-1).

Coming now to the central section of the book, chapter six, by Lars Kaskija (Uppsala University), examines the “stuck at the bottom” mentality of the Punan Malinau. Here the words of Bare’ Tangga’, a Punan Tubu’ elder, might be cited: “You are here to collect data.... We are always happy to help you. One day you can go back to your country and become a professor, an important man, and earn a lot of money. I am already a kind of professor. Nobody else knows as much about Punan culture as I do. But where is my salary?” (p. 148). Chapter seven, by Mering Ngo, a Kayan Dayak anthropologist and consultant, deals with “the mounting conflict over the collection and control of edible swift nests, and this product’s economic importance for the Punan communities living near Betung Kerihun National Park”; chapter eight, by Professor Stefan Seitz (University of Freiburg), “explores underlying motives of nomads’ attitudes towards animals, as either game or pets, and their reluctance to eat the meat of animals they have reared”; whilst chapter nine, by Henry Chan (Sarawak Forestry Corporation), looks at the Punan Vuhang’s “response to economic and resource change.”

One minor word of warning to prospective readers: a good-quality magnifying glass might not come amiss when trying to read the maps (for example the one on page 10).

Beyond the Green Myth is a substantial, hardheaded, state-of-the-art ethnographic description of the Pnan by the foremost experts in the field. This authoritative book weighs in the balance ideas about the Pnan propagated in the outside world, particularly by non-governmental organizations; and finds them wanting. The skill of the Pnan (“stuck at the bottom”) in exploiting outside perceptions of them as “disadvantaged” is analyzed with unsentimental aplomb. The text is written in language which is accessible to the non-anthropologist; and, indeed, it is in places a pure joy to read. The editors acknowledge (p. 9) that, despite all the research that has been done thus far, *much remains to be discovered*. This excellent book might not warrant the elusive third Michelin star, therefore; but it would certainly qualify for two (AVM Horton, 180 Hither Green Lane, Bordesley, Worcestershire B98 9AZ, England).

Pengembara, 2008, *Wanderer in Malaysian Borneo*. Shah Alam: Marshall Cavendish Editions [actually launched in 2007]. Forewords by Tan Sri Datuk Amar Haji Abdul Aziz bin Dato Haji Husain, Ahmad Nizam Salleh, and Thomas Varughese; paperback; xx + 140pp; maps, illustrations; ISBN-13 978-983-3845-26-2; ISBN-10 983-3845-26-6; (no price listed).

In this slim volume, a copy of which was supplied to the reviewer by the author, “Pengemba” (the pen-name adopted by Christopher Hugh Gallop, PIKB) takes leave of Negara Brunei Darussalam and journeys instead in Malaysian Borneo. He visits the main tourist areas and urban centers, such as the two capital cities, the Niah and Mulu Caves, Mount Kinabalu (Mr. Gallop is one of the few people to have scaled both of its peaks), Miri, Bintulu, Sibul, and Kota Belud, as well as more inaccessible locations. He journeys up and down river (Padas, Baram, Igan/Rajang). The final two chapters are devoted to Labuan.

Written in the same style as his previous anthology (reviewed in the *BRB* 2006:274-5), our genial guide prefers to travel either on foot or by public transport in order to meet more of the people. For similar reasons, he likes to lodge in cheaper accommodations. When time is short, or the package is good value, he will allow himself the luxury of air travel and nights at the better hotels, which, in line with local usage, he learned to call “inns.” The hardships of the expeditions are glossed with a wry sense of humor; and the “bargains” are not always what they seem. Pengembara is an excellent listener. He avoids politics.

The update on the condition of the Sabah railway (“pleasant and efficient”) is useful.¹ The author, following Professor Tregonning, is a bit harsh on Leicester Paul Beaufort (North Borneo’s “most incompetent governor”). Born in 1853, Beaufort qualified as a barrister at the Inner Temple in 1879 and was appointed Government Secretary and Judicial Commissioner in North Borneo ten years later. Far from “not lasting long” (p 55), he was actually one of the longer-serving governors of the colony, his term running from 1895 until 1900. He was then Chief Justice of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) until his retirement at the end of the First World War. A knighthood followed in 1919, death in 1926. It is a better record than most of us will achieve.

Although not heavyweight academic reading, this is a delightful book. Once again the reprinted articles date from 1991-3. Given that Mr. Gallop no longer resides in Borneo, it is to be feared that this is the last we are going to get in this line. (A.V.M. Horton, Bordesley, Worcestershire, UK)

¹ For Karl Marx’s views on the impact of railways on economic development, in this case in India, see George Lichtheim (1912-73), *Imperialism* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1974; originally published in 1971), pages 129-30.

ABSTRACTS 2007

Ali R. and S.M. Jacobs, 2007, Saving the rainforest through health care: medicine as conservation in Borneo. *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health*. 13(3): 295-311.

This article gives an overview of rainforest conservation as it relates to human health and describes the context, design, and implementation of the Kelay Conservation Health Program (KCHP). The KCHP is a health program for indigenous people living in a critical area of orangutan rainforest habitat in Indonesian Borneo also developed to aid conservation efforts there. Program design included consideration of both health and conservation goals, participatory planning in collaboration with the government health system, a focus on community managed health, capacity building, and adaptive management. After two years the program had, at relatively low cost, already had positive impacts on both human health (e.g., child immunization rates) and conservation (e.g., local forest protection measures, attitudes of villagers and government officials towards the implementing conservation agency).

Barker, G., H. Barton, M. Bird, P. Daly, I. Datan, A. Dykes, L. Farr, D. Gilbertson, B. Harrison, C. Hunt, T. Higham, L. Kealhofer, J. Krigbaum, H. Lewis, S. McLaren, V. Paz, A. Pike, P. Piper, B. Pyatt, R. Rabett, T. Reynolds, J. Rose, G. Rushworth, M. Stephens, C. Stringer, J. Thompson, and C. Turney, 2007, The ‘human revolution’ in lowland tropical Southeast Asia: the antiquity and behavior of anatomically modern humans at Niah Cave (Sarawak, Borneo). *Journal of Human Evolution* 52(3): 243-61.

Recent research in Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia suggests that we can no longer assume a direct and exclusive link between anatomically modern humans and behavioral modernity (the ‘human revolution’), and assume that the presence of either one implies the presence of the other: discussions of the emergence of cultural complexity have to proceed with greater scrutiny of the evidence on a site-by-site basis to establish secure associations between the archaeology present there and the hominids who created it. This paper presents one such case study: Niah Cave in Sarawak on the island of Borneo, famous for the discovery in 1958 in the West Mouth of the Great Cave of a modern human skull, the “Deep Skull,” controversially associated with radiocarbon dates of ca. 40,000 years before the present. A new chronostratigraphy has been developed through a re-investigation of the lithostratigraphy left by the earlier excavations, AMS-dating using three different comparative pre-treatments including ABOX of charcoal, and U-series using the Diffusion-Absorption model applied to fragments of bones from the Deep Skull itself. Stratigraphic reasons for earlier uncertainties about the antiquity of the skull are examined, and it is shown not to be an “intrusive” artifact. It was probably excavated from fluvial-pond-desiccation deposits that accumulated episodically in a shallow basin immediately behind the cave entrance lip, in a climate that ranged from times of

comparative aridity with complete desiccation, to episodes of greater surface wetness, changes attributed to regional climatic fluctuations. Vegetation outside the cave varied significantly over time, including wet lowland forest, montane forest, savannah, and grassland. The new dates and the lithostratigraphy relate the Deep Skull to evidence of episodes of human activity that range in date from ca. 46,000 to ca. 34,000 years ago. Initial investigations of sediment scorching, pollen, palynomorphs, phytoliths, plant macrofossils, and starch grains recovered from existing exposures, and of vertebrates from the current and the earlier excavations, suggest that human foraging during these times was marked by habitat-tailored hunting technologies, the collection and processing of toxic plants for consumption, and, perhaps, the use of fire at some forest-edges. The Niah evidence demonstrates the sophisticated nature of the subsistence behavior developed by modern humans to exploit the tropical environments that they encountered in Southeast Asia, including rainforest.

Béguet, Véronique, 2006, Des entités invisibles qui font vivre les humains : Une approche cosmocentrique de la différenciation, de la préséance et leur articulation à l'égalitarisme chez les Iban de Sarawak (Malaysia). Ph.D. thèse, Département d'Anthropologie, Université Laval, Québec, Canada.

This thesis proposes a resolution of what we perceive to be a paradox : a group, the Sarawak Iban (Malaysia), that is egalitarian on the social, political, economical and judicial levels, yet encourages differentiation and marks precedence on a ritual level. It is based on an ontological anthropology, especially Tim Ingold's approach of dwelling in the world, which promotes a revisiting of animism through a cosmocentric approach. The thesis also insists on the need to take seriously animism, including the existence of invisible entities as a real phenomenon, questioning the agnostic foundations of anthropology.

The thesis explores Iban animism through three types of metamorphosis or transformation. The first allows a passage between co-natural living beings (human, animal, vegetal and mineral) and invisible beings (*antu*). It establishes their ontological distinction, but also, simultaneously, their consubstantiality. The second type, the metamorphosis of the dead into animals, renews notions of ancestrality. The benevolent entities (*petara*) appear as transformed ancestors who connect humans to the animal and aviary kingdoms. Finally, the invisible entities have not only the power to transform themselves at will, but also that to transform living beings; that power, along with their sociality, is at the core of their personhood which is at the same time similar (because of the sociality) and different (because of a highest mastering of metamorphosis) from that of humans. This thesis examines, thirdly, the relational modes and the transformations caused by the *antu*, especially petrification which is at the origin of charms and modifications of the human body. Differentiation and precedence are built in these relationships with invisible entities. The support of the latter allows one to climb progressively the steps of one or many prestige ladders, and to acquire the corresponding ritual capacities. In that process, the human "matures" and "gains strength," progressively in all dimensions, visible and invisible. Ritual precedence corresponds to an ordering of human beings

according to their “strength, maturity” and their capacity to sustain the proximity of more and more dangerous invisible beings. Hence, differentiation and precedence stem from relationships with invisible entities. Egalitarian morality and practices, on the other hand, rule relationships strictly between humans (author).

Buckley, C., K.A. Nekaris, and S.J. Husson, 2006, Survey of *Hylobates agilis albibarb* in a logged peat-swamp forest: Sabangau catchment, Central Kalimantan. *Primates* 47(4): 327-35.

Few data are available on gibbon populations in peat-swamp forest. In order to assess the importance of this habitat for gibbon conservation, a population of *Hylobates agilis albibarb* was surveyed in the Sabangau peat-swamp forest, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. This is an area of about 5,500 sq. km. of selectively logged peat-swamp forest, which was formally gazetted as a national park during 2005. The study was conducted during June and July 2004 using auditory sampling methods. Five sample areas were selected and each was surveyed for four consecutive days by three teams of researchers at designated listening posts. Researchers recorded compass bearings of, and estimated distances to, singing groups. Nineteen groups were located. Population density is estimated to be 2.16 (+/-0.46) groups/sq. km. Sightings occurring either at the listening posts or that were obtained by tracking in on calling groups yielded a mean group size of 3.4 individuals, hence individual gibbon density is estimated to be 7.4 (+/-1.59) individuals/sq. km. The density estimates fall at the mid-range of those calculated for other gibbon populations, thus suggesting that peat-swamp forest is an important habitat for gibbon conservation in Borneo. A tentative extrapolation of results suggests a potential gibbon population size of 19,000 individuals within the mixed-swamp forest habitat sub-type in the Sabangau. This represents one of the largest remaining continuous populations of Bornean agile gibbons. The designation of the Sabangau forest as a national park will hopefully address the problem of illegal logging and hunting in the region. Further studies should note any difference in gibbon density post protection.

Césard, Nicolas, 2007, A Sociohistorical transition: Trade in forest products and bride-price among the Punan Tubu of Eastern Kalimantan. *Anthropos* 102: 455-477.

Most of the former nomadic Punan of Kalimantan (Borneo) reside along the large rivers of the hinterland. For almost a century in northeastern Kalimantan the increased trade in forest products along the Tubu River, as well as the settling process, had a significant impact on the Punan Tubu's social system and the interaction of the different groups with the outside world. The article analyzes and summarizes the continuity between the commercial trade of the past and the current “bride-price” as exemplified by the Punan Tubu—at first glance two unrelated spheres. A sociohistorical review highlights the effects of the evolution of trade and the emergence of new goods, of the neighboring Dayak groups' influence, and of the adoption of complex marriage payments (author).

Chan, Henry, 2007, *Survival in the Rainforest: Change and resilience among the Punan Vuhang of Eastern Sarawak, Malaysia*. Ph.D. dissertation/Research Series in Anthropology, University of Helsinki. ISBN 978-952-10-3918-8 (paperback), vii+401 pp.

This dissertation concerns the Punan Vuhang, former hunter-gatherers who are now part-time farmers living in an area of remote rainforest in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. It covers two themes: first, examining their methods of securing a livelihood in the rainforest, and second, looking at their adaptation to a settled life and agriculture, and their response to rapid and large-scale commercial logging. This study engages the long-running debates among anthropologists and ecologists on whether recent hunting-gathering societies were able to survive in the tropical rainforest without dependence on farming societies for food resources. In the search for evidence, the study poses three questions. What food resources were available to rainforest hunter-gatherers? How did they hunt and gather these foods? How did they cope with periodic food shortages? In fashioning a life in the rainforest, the Punan Vuhang survived resource scarcity by developing adaptive strategies through intensive use of their knowledge of the forest and its resources. They also adopted social practices such as sharing and reciprocity, and resource tenure to sustain themselves without recourse to external sources of food.

In the 1960s, the Punan Vuhang settled down in response to external influences arising in part from the Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation. This, in turn, initiated a series of processes with political, economic, and religious implications. However, elements of the traditional economy have remained resilient as the people continue to hunt, fish, and gather, and are able to farm on an individual basis, unlike neighboring shifting cultivators who need to cooperate with each other. At the beginning of the 21st century the Punan Vuhang face a new challenge arising from the issue of land rights in the context of state and national law and large-scale commercial logging in their forest habitat. The future seems bleak as they face the social problems of alcoholism, declining leadership, and dependence on cash income and commodities from the market (author).

Chua, Linda, 2007, *Fixity and Flux: Bidayuh (Dis)engagements with the Malaysian ethnic system*. *Ethnos* 72(2): 262-288.

This article explores conceptions of the Malaysian ethnic system from the perspective of certain Bidayuh, an indigenous group of Sarawak, Borneo. Recent scholarship has highlighted the “fluid” and “shifting” nature of Malay identity; but less attention has been paid to how ethnic minorities in the region depict Malay-ness. I suggest that for many Bidayuh, Malay-ness is marked by an inescapable fixity which stifles a fluidity that they value as intrinsic to Bidayuhness and other aspects of life. Moreover, this sense of fixity has been mapped onto their conceptions of the (Malay-dominated) Malaysian ethnic system, in which they are inescapably entangled. The article investigates some of the consequent tensions arising from Bidayuh (dis)engagements with Malaysia’s ethnic “fixity,” while tracing certain trends and changes in this relationship (author).

Cleary D.F., T.J. Boyle, T. Setyawati, C.D. Anggraeni, E.E. Van Loon, and S.B. Menken, 2007, Bird species and traits associated with logged and unlogged forest in Borneo. *Ecological Applications* 17(4): 1184-97.

The ecological consequences of logging have been and remain a focus of considerable debate. In this study, we assessed bird species composition within a logging concession in Central Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo. Within the study area (approximately 196 sq. km) a total of 9747 individuals of 177 bird species were recorded. Our goal was to identify associations between species traits and environmental variables. This can help us to understand the causes of disturbance and predict whether species with given traits will persist under changing environmental conditions. Logging, slope position, and a number of habitat structure variables including canopy cover and liana abundance were significantly related to variation in bird composition. In addition to environmental variables, spatial variables also explained a significant amount of variation. However, environmental variables, particularly in relation to logging, were of greater importance in structuring variation in composition. Environmental change following logging appeared to have a pronounced effect on the feeding guild and size class structure but there was little evidence of an effect on restricted range or threatened species although certain threatened species were adversely affected. For example, species such as the terrestrial insectivore *Argusianus argus* and the hornbill *Buceros rhinoceros*, both of which are threatened, were rare or absent in recently logged forest. In contrast, undergrowth insectivores such as *Orthotomus atrogularis* and *Trichastoma rostratum* were abundant in recently logged forest and rare in unlogged forest. Logging appeared to have the strongest negative effect on hornbills, terrestrial insectivores, and canopy bark-gleaning insectivores while moderately affecting canopy foliage-gleaning insectivores and frugivores, raptors, and large species in general. In contrast, undergrowth insectivores responded positively to logging while most understory guilds showed little pronounced effect. Despite the high species richness of logged forest, logging may still have a negative impact on extant diversity by adversely affecting key ecological guilds. The sensitivity of hornbills in particular to logging disturbance may be expected to alter rainforest dynamics by seriously reducing the effective seed dispersal of associated tree species. However, logged forest represents an increasingly important habitat for most bird species and needs to be protected from further degradation. Biodiversity management within logging concessions should focus on maintaining large areas of unlogged forest and mitigating the adverse effects of logging on sensitive groups of species.

Dounias, E., A. Selzner, M. Koizumi, P. Levang, 2007, From sago to rice, from forest to town: the consequences of sedentarization for the nutritional ecology of Punan former hunter-gatherers of Borneo. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin* 28(2) Suppl: S294-302.

BACKGROUND: The last nomadic peoples of the world are facing strong governmental incentives to renounce their foraging lifestyle. Nevertheless, the shift to a sedentary way of life and the adoption of agriculture do not always result in the promised improvement in diet and health conditions. **OBJECTIVE:** We compared the dietary regime and nutritional status of three groups of former hunter-gatherers, the Punan of Borneo. All three groups adopted extensive upland rice cultivation almost 6 decades ago, but each has some degree of dependence on agriculture versus forest resources, which varies along a gradient of accessibility of urban facilities. **METHODS:** The diet of three distinct Punan groups living in the dipterocarp forest of East Kalimantan was assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively and analyzed in relation to the seasonality of resources and human activities. The physical fitness of the Punan was also estimated from repeated anthropometric measurements. **RESULTS:** The more remote the Punan community was from urban facilities, the more diversified was the diet and the better were its nutritional status and physical fitness. The contribution of forest resources to the dietary regime also decreased with urban proximity. However, the higher dependency on agriculture is not the proximate cause of the deterioration in diet and physical fitness, which is rather due to the transition from the nomadic to the settled way of life. **CONCLUSIONS:** The brutal shift in lifestyle among the Punan of Borneo has profoundly affected the integrity of these societies and impacted their social, cultural, symbolic, and political features. In the long run, this may compromise their health status and ecological success.

Scales, H., A. Balmford, and A. Manica, 2007, Impacts of the live reef fish trade on populations of coral reef fish off northern Borneo. *Proceedings, Biological Sciences/The Royal Society*, 274(1612): 989-94.

The live reef fish trade (LRFT) is one of the greatest but least-quantified sources of fishing pressure for several species of large coral reef fish across the Indo-Pacific. For the first time we quantified the localized impact of the LRFT. We collected data from three LRFT traders in northern Borneo, which yielded information on daily fishing effort and the species and mass of all fishes sold every day by individual fishers or vessels over 2, 3 and 8 years. Total monthly catch and relative abundance (catch-per-unit-effort) declined significantly in several species, including the most valuable species, the Napoleon wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*, estimated changes of -98 and -78% over 8 years in catch and relative abundance, respectively) and lower-value bluelined groupers (*Plectropomus oligocanthus*: -99 and -81%) and Epinephelus groupers (-89 and -32%). These severe declines were rapid, species-specific and occurred in the first 2-4 years of the dataset and are, we believe, directly attributable to the LRFT. This has crucial implications for future data collection and monitoring if population collapses in other parts of the LRFT and similar wildlife trades are to be successfully detected.

Sheil, D., R. Puri, M. Wan, I. Basuki, M. van Heist, N. Liswanti, I. Rukmiyati, I. Rachmatika, I. Samsuedin, 2006, Recognizing local people's priorities for tropical forest biodiversity. *Ambio* 35(1): 17-24.

Tropical forest people often suffer from the same processes that threaten biodiversity. An improved knowledge of what is important to local people could improve decision making. This article examines the usefulness of explicitly asking what is important to local people. Our examples draw on biodiversity surveys in East Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo). With local communities we characterized locally valued habitats, species, and sites, and their significance. This process clarified various priorities and threats, suggested refinements and limits to management options, and indicated issues requiring specific actions, further investigation, or both. It also shows how biological evaluations are more efficient with local guidance, and reveals potential for collaborations between local communities and those concerned with conservation. Such evaluations are a first step in facilitating the incorporation of local concerns into higher-level decision making. Conservationists who engage with local views can benefit from an expanded constituency, and from new opportunities for pursuing effective conservation.

Wilting A., F. Fischer, S. Abu Bakar, and K.E. Linsenmair, 2006, Clouded leopards, the secretive top carnivore of South-East Asian rainforests: their distribution, status and conservation needs in Sabah, Malaysia. *BMC Ecology* 6: 16.

BACKGROUND: The continued depletion of tropical rainforests and fragmentation of natural habitats has led to significant ecological changes which place most top carnivores under heavy pressure. Various methods have been used to determine the status of top carnivore populations in rainforest habitats, most of which are costly in terms of equipment and time. In this study we utilized, for the first time, a rigorous track classification method to estimate population size and density of clouded leopards (*Neofelis nebulosa*) in Tabin Wildlife Reserve in northeastern Borneo (Sabah). Additionally, we extrapolated our local-scale results to the regional landscape level to estimate clouded leopard population size and density in all of Sabah's reserves, taking into account the reserves' conservation status (totally protected or commercial forest reserves), their size and presence or absence of clouded leopards. **RESULTS:** The population size in the 56 sq. km. research area was estimated to be five individuals, based on a capture-recapture analysis of four confirmed animals differentiated by their tracks. Extrapolation of these results led to density estimates of nine per 100 sq. km. in Tabin Wildlife Reserve. The true density most likely lies between our approximately 95 % confidence interval of eight to 17 individuals per 100 sq. km. **CONCLUSION:** We demonstrate that previous density estimates of 25 animals/100 sq. km. most likely overestimated the true density. Applying the 95% confidence interval we calculated in total a very rough number of 1500-3200 clouded leopards to be present in Sabah. However, only 275-585 of these animals inhabit the four totally protected reserves that are large enough to hold a long-term viable population of > 50 individuals.

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ENDNOTES

On 8 February 2007 a guide book to Loagan Bunut National Park was launched at Miri. This publication is part of a project, commenced in 2002, on the conservation and sustainable use of tropical peat swamp forests and associated wetland ecosystems. Funding is provided by the UNDP Global Environment Facility in collaboration with the Sarawak Forestry Corporation (*BBO F.9.2.2007*).

On Wednesday 14 February 2007 Pehin Md Zain Serudin, Minister of Religious Affairs, was guest-of-honor at the launch of *Menyuruki Syair Rakis* by *Profesor Madya* Dr. Haji Hashim bin Haji Abdul Hamid. Judging from the report (*BBO F.16.2.2007*), the publisher appears to be UBD; but this is not definite. The book deals with the *Syair Rakis*, written by a nineteenth-century Pengiran *Shahbandar* of Brunei.

The annual Brunei Book Fair took place between 25 February and 6 March 2007 at the Indoor Stadium in Berakas. Organized by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, ninety-eight hundred booths were set up for the fair; both domestic and foreign publishers (especially from ASEAN countries) were participating (*BBO Th.1.2.2007*; *BBO Th.15.2.2007*; *BBO 26.2.2007*; *BBO Sa.10.3.2007*).

On Sunday 25 February twenty-six DBP publications were issued, including *Antalas Sukma*, the first novel by Sonsonjan (*sic*; ?Sosonjan) Khan (born at Kota Kinabalu in 1964), who had already completed the follow-up, and was on to her third novel. A prolific short-story writer, Khan won a hat-trick of *Bahana* awards between 1999 and 2001 and a fourth in 2003 (*BBO Th.1.3.2007*).

Another title launched at the fair was *Sir* by Haji Abdul Aziz bin Tuah (*BBO F.18.5.2007*).

One of the items attracting attention was *Thank Goodness I Have Cancer*, written by Lawrence Loh, who recovered from the affliction in 2006 (*BBO Sa*

10.3.2007, which comprises an interview with the author). The publisher is not given.

On Monday 26 February 2007 the Department of Information issued two “books,” designed to serve as reference materials for journalists, states, and non-state actors. The first, *Milestone: Seventh Conference of ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information*, covered the ASEAN Information Ministers’ Meeting, which NBD hosted in 2002; the second, *Milestone: The Reopening of the State Legislative Council*, concerned the events of 2004, when the parliament was revived after an absence of two decades (BBO Tu.27.2.2007).

Amphibians and Reptiles of Brunei Darussalam: A Pocket Guide (Natural History Publications - Borneo - Sdn Bhd, Sabah) by Indraneil Das Ph.D. (Oxon.) was launched on Thursday 1 March 2007 at UBD’s Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre (BBO F.2.3.2007). A research fellow at UBD between 1991 and 1993, Dr. Das is currently an Associate Professor at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

Also on 1 March the Takaful IBB Berhad in conjunction with the *Jabatan Mufti Kerajaan* and the *Jabatan Perdana Menteri* issued a prayer book entitled *Doa dan Amalan Sebelum dan Ketika Menaiki Kenderaan*. The publication was a contribution to the road safety campaign (BBO F.2.3.2007).

On 5 March it was reported at Universiti Malaysia Sabah would be publishing in July a twelve-chapter book entitled *Malaysia and Islam in the Global Context: Psychological, Social, and Cultural Perspectives*, edited by Profesor Madya Dr. Rosnah Ismail. The text is in English and will be translated into Malay in due course (BBO M.5.3.2007).

On 7 March *Teknologi Merangkap Ikan di Negara Brunei Darussalam 1906-2003* or Brunei Darussalam Fishing Technology 1906-2003, by Pengiran Khairul Rijal bin PH Abdul Rahim was launched at the UBD Multipurpose Hall (BBO Th.8.3.2007).

Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan 2005 (291pp, nine chapters) and *Cigarettes and Smoking* (an English translation of *Rokok dan Merokok*, issued previously) were launched by the State Mufti Department, NBD, on Thursday 29 March. Both books will be on sale from 31 March (BBO F.30.3.2007).

On 5 April it was reported that the DBP had participated “recently” in the thirty-fifth Bangkok International Book Fair, held at the Queen Sirikit Convention Centre in the Thai capital. The event was opened on 30 March by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (BBO Th.5.4.2007).

The Brunei History Centre, State Mufti Department, and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka were planning to exhibit at the forthcoming twenty-sixth Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair, due to run from 27 April to 6 May 2007 (BBO M.16.4.2007).

It was announced on Thursday 17 May 2007 that the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka

(NBD) would exhibit 168 titles at the World Book Fair due to convene at Singapore between 25 May and 3 June. Two new children's books were due to be launched, namely *Kawan* by Md Amirul Hadi bin Haji Md Tajuddin and *Sang Kerbau dan Burung Pipit* by Abdul Aziz Haji Mohammad Noor (BBO F.18.5.2007). The State Mufti Department would also be taking part (BBO W.23.5.2007).

On 24 May 2007 it was reported that the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka would be publishing works by twenty local writers in various genres, including academic works, poetry, short stories, plays, and children's books. Contracts were signed with the authors on the previous day. The titles included *Islam di Brunei Darussalam Zaman British 1774-1984* by Pengiran DSS PH Mohammad bin PH Abdul Rahman; *The Phonotactics of Brunei Malay: An Optimality-Theoretic Account* by Dr. Mataim Bakar, based on his doctoral thesis at the University of Essex, 2001; *Pemikiran Retorik Barat: Sebuah Pengantar Sejarah* by Lim Kim Hui; and two works by Datin Paduka Hajjah Suraya Noraidah, namely *Professional Nursing Development in Brunei Darussalam: Implications for Curriculum Development* and *Collection of Nursing Papers* respectively (BBO Th.24.5.2007; BBSO 23.9.2007).

My Rewards (215 pp) by Tan Sri Chong Kah Kiat, 59, a former Chief Minister of Sabah (2001-3), was published on Sunday 22 July 2007. Avoiding recent controversies, the book concentrates instead on his days as a schoolboy and then as a lawyer and politician (BBO Tu.24.7.2007; name of publisher and place of publication not given).

In August 2007 Royal Brunei Catering produced its first cookbook (122pp, sixty recipes) as part of the celebrations marking the sixty-first anniversary of the birth of HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah. It was due to be launched by HM the Raja Isteri on 26 August 2007 during a Domestic Science Exhibition (BBO F.24.8.2007).

On 16 September two ladies (Fung Lai Wah, writer, and Lu Ping Kat, photographer) arrived in the sultanate in order to research a Brunei travel guide scheduled to be published in Hong Kong in December 2007 (BBO Th.20.9.2007).

In September 2007 the Philippine Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan issued a *Compilation of Personal Notes and Useful Information for Women in the Diplomatic Corps in Brunei Darussalam* (BBO Sa.22.9.2007, referring to "recently"). Her Excellency Virginia H. Benavidez, the long-serving Philippine Ambassador, encouraged others to update the publication by sharing their thoughts on life in the sultanate.

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BORNEO RESEARCH COUNCIL LIBRARY OF BORNEO

BRC MONOGRAPH SERIES

- No. 1 *Female and Male in Borneo: Contributions and Challenges to Gender Studies*, Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr., Editor. 1991. Price \$30.00. ISBN #0-9629568-0-5
- No. 2 *The Seen and the Unseen: Shamanism, Mediumship and Possession in Borneo*, Robert L. Winzeler, Editor. 1993. Price \$20.00. ISBN #0-9629568-1-3
- No. 3 *Traditional Medicine Among the Ngaju Dayak of Central Kalimantan: The 1935 Writings of a Former Ngaju Dayak Priest*, A.H. Klokke, Editor and Translator. 1998. Price \$25.00. ISBN # 0-9629568-7-2
- No. 4 *A Study of Brunei Dusun Religion: Ethnic Priesthood on a Frontier of Islam*. Eva Maria Kershaw. 2000. Price \$38.50. ISBN #1-929900-01-5
- No. 5 *Never Stand Alone: A Study of Borneo Sociality*, Christine Helliwell. 2001. Price \$35.00. ISBN #1-929900-02-3
- No. 6 *I. H. N. Evans Bornean Diaries 1938-1942*, A. V. M. Horton, Editor. 2002. Price \$55.00. ISBN #1-929900-03-1
- No. 7 *Journeys of the Soul: Anthropological Studies of Death, Burial, and Reburial Practices in Borneo*. William D. Wilder, Editor. 2003. Price \$45.00. ISBN #1-929900-04-X
- No. 8 *Fishing, Hunting and Headhunting in the Former Culture of the Ngaju Dayak in Central Kalimantan*. A. H. Klokke, Editor and Translator. 2004. Price \$39.00. ISBN #1-929900-05-8
- No. 9 *Acts of Integration, Expressions of Faith...Madness, Death and Ritual in Melanau Ontology*. Ann L. Appleton. 2006. Price \$45.00. ISBN #1-929900-06-6

Complete set available for \$250.

BRC PROCEEDINGS SERIES

- No. 1 *Change and Development in Borneo: Selected Papers from the First Extraordinary Conference of the Borneo Research Council, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, August 4-9, 1990*, Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr., Editor. 1993. ISBN #0-9629568-2-1
- No. 2 *Language and Oral Traditions in Borneo: Selected Papers from the First Extraordinary Conference of the Borneo Research Council, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, August 4-9, 1990*, James T. Collins, Editor. 1993. ISBN #0-9629568-6-4
- No. 3 *Shifting Patterns of Language Use in Borneo: Papers from the Second Biennial International Conference, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, July, 1992*, Peter W. Martin, Editor. 1995. ISBN #0-9629568-5-6
- No. 4 *Tourism in Borneo: Issues and Perspectives*, Papers from the Second Biennial

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