

**A HISTORY OF  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
RAJANG BASIN IN SARAWAK**

**BY FONG HON KAH**

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
BY  
JULITTA LIM SHAU HUA**

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## FOREWORD

*I would like to congratulate The Cultural Heritage Committee, Dewan Suarah Sibu for taking the remarkable step of sponsoring the writing of this book entitled "A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak" by Fong Hon Kah.*

*The book, written originally in Chinese, has been translated into Bahasa Malaysia by Encik Mohamad Haji Arsat and into English by Madam Julitta Lim Shau-Hua both of whom are Lecturers from the Batu Lintang Teachers' College, Kuching. These translations will make the book more widely accessible to all interested in the affairs of Sarawak.*

*Besides containing narration on the early history of Sarawak from the days of Brooke rule, which have been well documented in a number of publications, the book traces the socio-economic contribution by the various communities who had resided in the Rajang Basin over the past one hundred or so years. Although there had been short tumultuous periods in the early days of the Rajang Basin development, the various races had by and large lived in exemplary harmony and had assisted and co-operated with one another in their search for a better life. With political stability, great strides have been made in the economic development of the Rajang Basin, and the fortunes of the peoples in the area continue to flourish right to the present day.*

*There is still a dearth of books on Sarawak, written or authored by Malaysians of Sarawak origin. This publication will serve as a valuable reference text for further scholarship. I sincerely hope it will provoke a positive reaction from other local writers to come forward to conduct further research and produce publications on Sarawak which can contribute towards the pool of knowledge on the State.*



(DATUK PATINGGI TAN SRI [DR] HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD)  
Chief Minister of Sarawak

## MESSAGE

The Rajang Basin in Sarawak with its eminent characteristics and history of its development is of great importance not only to our country but the international society as well.

Like the other regions of Malaysia, the Rajang Basin is the dwelling place of various races. The natives here are numerous in number and they are of diverse ethnic groups leading their own ways of life, while the Chinese community here has a structure quite different from that of the Chinese community in other areas of Malaysia. This has been caused by accident of history; their original historical backgrounds and the different patterns of their migration, resulting in a subculture different from the Chinese community elsewhere.

The Chinese of the Rajang Basin are not only hardworking, united, co-operative and persevering in whatever they do, they are also endowed with an adventurous spirit coupled with foresight and unrelenting fortitude. While complementing the natives in their various economic activities, the Chinese have formed a powerful economic entity which has expedited the development of the Rajang Basin with remarkable results.

A century ago the Rajang Basin was covered with virgin jungles in which were scattered some simple native longhouses and a few small riverine towns. Today, through the endeavour of the various races, it has become a luxuriant agricultural, industrial and commercial region, and the economic power of its many big financial groups and multinational corporations have not only contributed tremendously to the development of the Rajang Basin but also played an important role in economic development both within and outside the country. Because of the great importance attached to the education of their children, the people of the Rajang Basin have caused education to flourish in this region and in turn provided the much needed work force that expedited development apart from supplying a large number of professionals for the whole country. The history of the development of Rajang Basin including its racial harmony, and outstanding accomplishment in politics, economy, culture and education is an exemplary model of a multiracial society.

History is the culmination of the precious experience of the people

in the past; it enables the future generation to understand the social change that had taken place and to know what path to take and its educational value has long been regarded with great esteem. This book "**A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak**" not only gives an account of the historical facts but, through a socio-economic approach, it also analyses and gives comments on the factors of success of the Rajang people. In a way, this book not only discusses the history of Rajang Basin but also inquires into the significance of its development from a broad angle. This reveals the forward-looking viewpoint of the author towards the study of history - an attitude a historian should have.

"**A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak**" is the first comprehensive regional history ever written about the Rajang Basin. While the author **Mr Fong Hon Kah** has been an experienced lecturer at institutes of higher learning, the English translator **Madam Julitta Lim Shau Hua**, and the Malay translator **Cikgu Mohamad bin Haji Arsat** are also lecturers of higher learning institutes in Sarawak, and all three of them have outstanding accomplishment in academics. These three versions of "**A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak**" are works of scholarship and their timely publication, launching and circulation will certainly be a grand cultural event for the Rajang Basin. I sincerely congratulate the author and both the translators on their achievement.

My congratulations go also to the Cultural Heritage Committee of Dewan Suarah Sibu for the completion of this academic project. I would like to specially thank the Chairman of the Cultural Heritage Committee Datuk Lau Hui Kang whose outstanding leadership and whole-hearted support has made this significant academic project a reality.



**TAN SRI DATUK AMAR DR WONG SOON KAI**  
**Chairman of Dewan Suarah Sibu, Sarawak**

## INTRODUCTION

The Rajang which is the longest river in Malaysia drains a vast central region of Sarawak sustaining important towns like Kapit, Kanowit, Bintangor, Sarikei and Sibü. Hence, the opening up and developing of the Rajang Basin exert a great and far-reaching influence on the economy, politics, culture and education in Sarawak.

With this knowledge in mind and having successfully launched various cultural activities like the Traditional Costumes Exhibition and Traditional Cuisine of the various ethnic groups in Sarawak as well as the Ceramics and Antiques Exhibition, as Chairman of the Cultural Heritage Committee, Dewan Suarah Sibü, I further put forward the proposal of highlighting the history of development of the Rajang Basin. Initially, we considered presenting it in the form of a big relief model, but constraints of space, material and manpower caused the plan to be shelved. Instead, we decided to publish a scholastic work, "**A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak**", to achieve the same objective.

We were indeed happy when our plan received the blessing of the Board of Management of Dewan Suarah Sibü under the Chairmanship of **Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Wong Soon Kai**, and contemporaneously approved the engagement of **Mr Fong Hon Kah**, a renowned scholar in the cultural and educational circle in Sarawak, to undertake the task of writing the book.

In his research, Mr Fong Hon Kah has collected and referred to a large quantity of printed literature as well as making field studies at the remote areas and towns of the lower and upper reaches of the Rajang River in order to get first hand knowledge. This book, completed according to schedule, is undoubtedly direct and gives detailed appraisal of historical facts with ample, reliable and authentic reference materials. This is the cumulative work of Mr Fong Hon Kah consolidated by his extensive knowledge, diligence and serious attitude towards academic research.

Thus I hope this substantial and valuable work of regional history would be treasured and widely used by people of all walks of life. It is a useful reference especially to those who study the history of Sarawak, a valuable acquisition for the various learning institutes and urban and rural libraries, and a book to circulate to benefit the scholastic world. And hopefully in turn it will promote the research, writing and teaching of the



history of our State, and to inculcate in the young people a better knowledge of local history so that they can positively contribute towards the development of society and country.

Finally, on behalf of the Cultural Heritage Committee, Dewan Suarah Sibü, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to **Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Wong Soon Kai** for his unfailing support and guidance. Our thanks also go to Batu Lintang Teachers' College lecturers, **Madam Julitta Lim Shau Hua** and **Mr Mohamad bin Haji Arsat** for their efforts in translating the book into English and Bahasa Malaysia respectively. Their works will definitely help to disseminate and popularise the circulation of the book to a greater readership.

Last but not least, I would like to extend our gratitude to all the generous donors whose support and co-operation have expedited the publication of this book.



**Datuk Lau Hui Kang**  
**Chairman of Cultural Heritage Committee,**  
**Dewan Suarah Sibü, Sarawak.,**

## PREFACE

'A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak' is a book of regional history. The author attempts to emphatically give an objective description and evaluation about how the Rajankians, namely, Melanaus, Malays, Chinese, Ibans, Kayans, Kenyahs, Penans and other ethnic groups lived together during the past hundred years, and how they developed the Rajang Basin into a prosperous and energetic multiracial society through the interchange and confluence of politics, economy, culture and education. And I hope that this historical fact could serve as a good example for the younger generation to emulate and as a good model for other developing multiracial societies of the world. The various ethnic groups in the Rajang Basin have very different historical origin, cultural background, and stages of progress, but now they all live together harmoniously, and work hard together to build a beautiful country.

It is not an easy job to write a comprehensive history of the seven major ethnic groups of the Rajang Basin. It requires not only the reading of a large quantity of materials in Chinese, Bahasa Malaysia and English, but also the checking and verifying of facts. As the life of each and every group is so much different from the others, I have to look for pictures as illustrations to help readers get a clearer concept of what has been described in words. Because of this, the book which was originally scheduled to contain 100 thousand words, 200 pictures, and to be completed in one year, has eventually been expanded to 150 thousand words, more than 400 illustrations and the time extended to more than one and a half years to get it completed. Even though the content of the book has been greatly quantified, it still seems scanty in some parts of the book, and I sincerely hope further addition can be inserted in the future.

I would like to thank Datuk Chen Xiuhua (Datuk Lucas Chin Siew Fah), former Curator of the Sarawak Museum, and Datuk Liu Huigan (Datuk Lau Hui Kang), Chairman of the Cultural Heritage Committee, Dewan Suarah, Sibiu, who placed their confidence in me and recommended me to write this book. In the

process of my research I have been given unfailing help by various government departments and social organisations, including the Sarawak Museum, Malaysian Information Services, RASCOM, Zhangquan Association, Fuzhou Association, Xinghua Puxian Association, Ke Shu Association, the Methodist Mission and the Catholic Mission of Sibu, the Sibu Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, Sarawak Chinese Culture Association, and many other organisations and schools. Individuals, especially Mr Fang Niensheng and Mr Liu Zizheng have given me many reference books and accompanied me on my field research to various places in the Rajang region. Other individuals as listed have provided me with valuable information about the Rajang Basin : Messrs Deng Yiqiang, Zeng Chuanyou, Huang Shaolong, Cai Cundui, Zhu Minhua, Cai Zengchong, Sun Chunfu, Chen Xijian, Huang Mengli, Liu Bangxun, Penghulu Lin Wenshao, Kapitan Huang Nanhai of Mukah, Kapitan Cai Shunfu of Kanowit and Temenggong Cai Xingmin of Kapit.

I am grateful to Mr Huang Jiefu (Mr K.F. Wong, F.B.I.P.P., F.R.P.S., Hon. EFIAP, Hon. O.G.P.H., Hon. F.R.P.S., Hon. Curator of Sarawak Museum) for the permission to use many of his master pieces as illustrations in the book. I have also selected many photographs of Rajang people taken by Mrs Hedda Morrison in the 1940's and 1950's, but unfortunately, I have no chance to thank her. I am indebted to Mr Lin Yusheng, Head of the Photography Section, Sarawak Museum, for giving me a large quantity of his works and for making reprints of old photographs used in the book, for example, the photo showing the Third Rajah signing the Instrument of Cession. My thanks go to Miss Wen Shuxiang for typing the manuscript in Chinese and for being very patient and kind.

This book, '**A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak**' has already been translated into English by Mdm Julitta Lim Shau-Hua, English lecturer, and into Bahasa Malaysia by Mr Mohamad Haji Arsat, Education lecturer, both of Batu Lintang Teachers' College, Kuching. The three versions will be published at the same time. Their translations have greatly helped me counter-check my original text and I would like to thank both

of them. I would like to especially mention that the serious attitude of Mdm Julitta Lim Shau-Hua towards academic work has helped to improve many parts of the original text.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the manuscripts readers of various races for their kind encouragement and suggestions. However, in any piece of academic work, there is always the reflection of the author's objectivity, his style of writing, and ideas; so I alone am responsible for any imperfection in the final version of this book.

Fong Hon Kah,  
Rong Lu,  
Kuching, Sarawak.  
1st June, 1996.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

The translation of Mr Fong Hon Kah's book from Chinese into English has been a colossal task. However, the translator has been fortunate to work with Mr Fong from the initial stage of his research in writing this book; sharing his findings, discussing and verifying facts. Apart from keeping very close to the Author's intent, the translation has been based on the following criteria in order to help the international and non-Mandarin speaking readers who may not have sufficient background of local and Chinese history to understand and appreciate our historical and cultural heritage:

1. Though in the Chinese edition only the names of dynasties in the Chinese history are given in terms of the reign and periods of the emperors concerned, the English translation has their equivalent periods in the Gregorian calendar. For example, the 4th year of Wu De in the reign of Emperor Gao Zu of the Tang Dynasty is equivalent to the year 621 AD in the Gregorian Calendar.

2. Throughout the book names of places and prominent historical personalities in China are first given in the current system of pronunciation, Hanyu Pinyin, and their alias pronunciation in parentheses, e.g. Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat Sen); Xiamen (Amoy).

3. Similarly, local Chinese names are given first in Hanyu Pinyin and the dialectal pronunciation in parentheses, e.g. Liu Huigan (Lau Hui Kang).

4. To avoid the kind of confusion and errors made by foreign writers, the two-character given-names in Chinese are joined in the spelling in Hanyu Pinyin and the Surname or family name, usually of single character, will stand by itself and appear first. Though there are double-character surnames in Chinese, e.g. Situ and Sima, they are joined in spelling and appear in the initial position.

5. As the philosophical thoughts behind some expressions in Chinese are oriental, readers will find this oriental uniqueness in the translated version.

6. In order to disseminate information to our young readers and general public, the language used is simple and the structures are less complex. Whenever necessary, extra information is given to illustrate technical terms or expressions once used in the past. For example, 'pasu' was used as measurement of volume for dry commodity such as rice or beans in Sarawak in the past, together with 'gantang', 'chupak' and 'leng'. In order to give young readers an idea of how much a 'pasu' of rice is in the metric system, I interviewed old folks who gave variations such as a Chinese jar, a rattan basket and a tall square-top biscuit tin. The last receptacle seemed more consistent in size, and it can hold 4 gantangs of rice. While 1 gantang of rice weighs about 6 katis, 1 kati is equivalent to approximately 600 grammes. So, with a little calculation we arrived at about 14.4 kilogrammes per 'pasu'. However, I stand for correction from more knowledgeable readers.

7. In order to gauge the sensitivity of various races, our script readers included Malay, Iban, Bidayuh and English-educated Chinese.

8. For want of a term to refer to the people of all races living in the Rajang Basin, the term 'Rajankians' has been coined from the combination of two names - Rajang Sarawakians - for which I would like to thank my colleague Mr Anthony Goh.

I am grateful to all who have helped me in the process of my work, especially Miss Anna Dreba, Miss Teo Whye-Siew, Miss Fraulein Angking, and Mr Mohammad Bin Haji Arsat for their much valued criticisms and suggestions, and my younger son Emmanuel Joseph Fong (Fang Chong) for helping me in the early stage of my learning the system of Hanyu Pinyin.

Julitta Lim Shau-Hua  
Batu Lintang Teachers' College,  
Kuching, Sarawak.  
8th May 1996.

## CHAPTER 1

### GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF SARAWAK

Sarawak, a state in Malaysia, is situated in the north-west of Borneo Island facing the South China Sea. The watershed of the central mountain ranges of the island marks Sarawak's eastern and southern border with Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo. The whole state covers an area of about 48,000 square miles, almost equivalent to the total area of all the West Malaysian states put together and with a coastline of about 500 miles long.

Sarawak lies just above the Equator from latitude  $0^{\circ} 50' N$  to  $5^{\circ} N$  and extends from  $109^{\circ} 36' E$  to  $115^{\circ} 40' E$  meridians of longitude. It has a hot-wet equatorial climate. The lowland coastal region has an annual average temperature of between  $25^{\circ} C$  and  $30^{\circ} C$  while the mountainous hinterland has an annual average temperature of between  $22^{\circ} C$  and  $28^{\circ} C$ . The annual average rainfall is about 160 inches with the wettest season from December to February while July is the driest month. Sibu area has an annual average rainfall of 116 inches.

These climatic conditions have decided the relief and natural vegetation of Sarawak as well as influencing the way of life of its people. Besides, such a hot-wet climate has, to a great extent, influenced the directions of growth and development of the Rajang Basin of to-day.

The land relief of Sarawak consists of mountainous land in the south-east and lowland in the north-west. Its border with Kalimantan, Indonesia, rises from 2,500 feet to 4,000 feet above sea-level. At the mountainous regions some ranges have not been traversed by man and even an orang utan would have to rack its brain to think of a way of getting across. Towards the north-west lies the lowland region. Between the mountainous region and the coastal region lies the hilly region of 800 - 1,500 feet above sea-level. With this landscape the rivers of Sarawak flow from the south-east to the north-west draining their waters into the South China Sea.

Sarawak is a land of many rivers as a result of its high rainfall and its physical relief. In the past when road communication was not developed the chief means of transport was by river. As transportation and livelihood are inter-related, people then chose to live by the rivers. Hence, the river basins had a greater concentration of population and the rivers became the basis for drawing up administrative divisions. Thus, the First Division covered the main Sarawak River basin including Batang (River) Kayan in the west and Batang Samarahan and Batang Sadong in the east. The Second Division covered the area of Batang Lupar and Batang Saribas and their tributaries. The Third Division covered Batang Rajang, its two main tributaries Batang Baleh and Batang Balui and their tributaries. Batang Rajang is the largest and the longest river in Sarawak with its numerous tributaries covering a great area of land, thus making the Third Division the biggest administrative division. The Fourth Division covered the Batang Baram basin while the Fifth Division had Batang Limbang and its basin. Now, Sarawak has been divided into 9 administrative divisions but the river basins still form the basis of naming these divisions. As these alluvial river basins are comparatively the most densely populated, they have also developed the fastest.

Sarawak has 90% of its land still under hot-rain forests. Even if one walks out of one's house one will see evergreen bushes and jungles. Because Sarawak has a hot-wet climate which is favourable for vegetation growth, it is the heaven for plants. In the virgin forests of Sarawak, trees are huge and tall with a canopy of foliage. As sunlight cannot penetrate the thick canopy of leaves, the forested areas are dark and damp. On the tree trunks are parasitic plants and creepers like orchids and rattans. Roaming freely in this thick undergrowth are different kinds of animals like the wild boars, orang utans, monkeys, deer, bears, leopards, porcupines, ant-eaters, flying foxes and squirrels. Among the species of birds, the famous ones are the hornbills and woodpeckers. A large variety of insects also inhabit these forests. Butterflies, too, come in many different varieties and colours. In fact, the largest butterfly and the largest flower in the world are found in Sarawak. The flora and fauna of the hot-rain forests of Sarawak have been the objects



of studies and about which many books have been written.

This rich and fast-developing land of Sarawak has many colourful cultures and it has gone through the rough winding road of history. Today, when we look at this beautiful land, we will want to know about the history of its development.

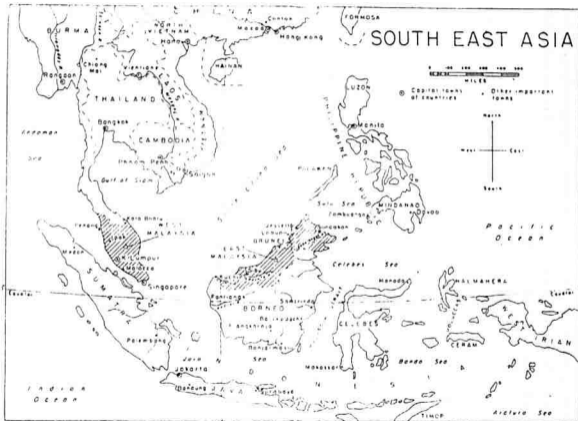


Fig. 1 Map of South East Asia

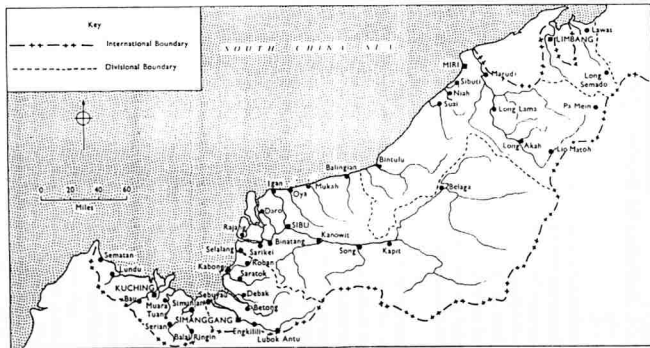


Fig. 2 The main towns and settlements in Sarawak



## CHAPTER 2

### ANCIENT HISTORY OF SARAWAK

The greatest problem in our research of South East Asian history is that there is a lack of written literature and records. It is only in the history of China that we are able to find some traces of it which had to be further supplemented by occasional short articles. Only then can we compile an outline of it. So, field work studies, archaeological findings and historical artifacts have become the important materials in our research into the history of South East Asia. The study of the history of Brunei including that of Sarawak is such a case.

The ancient history of Sarawak and Brunei should start from the Niah Caves in the Fourth Division of Sarawak. The ancient history of both states cannot be separated because before the Battle of Brunei in 1846 Sarawak was a part of the Sultanate of Brunei. After the defeat in the Battle of Brunei, the Sultan unconditionally ceded Sarawak to James Brooke. In the early 1950's, the discovery of the Niah Caves and the excavations carried out there have great values for the studies of the early history of Sarawak as well as that of the world.

The years following 1954, Tom Harrison, the Curator of Sarawak Museum led a group of archaeologists and started on the excavations of the Niah Caves. The Niah Caves had been the home of the Stone Age men of 50,000 years ago. As the site had not suffered great damage, the artifacts and the remains had revealed quite a long comprehensive history of the Stone Age. The archaeological findings of the Niah Caves have actually revealed to us the history of the development of man from the Old or Paleolithic Period to the New or Neolithic Period of the Stone Age.

Tom Harrison held very highly the historical values of the Niah Caves and invited the famous photographer, K. F. Wong, to film a documentary of the excavation works. Later, he took with him this documentary film to many parts of the world and presented lectures on the Niah Caves. His lectures had caused quite a

stir in the academic world, thus enabling him to raise funds for the development of the Sarawak Museum.

From 1949, the archaeologists of Sarawak Museum had already begun excavating at Santubong at the mouth of the Sarawak River. They discovered the remains of a Chinese trading village of more than a thousand years old. A large amount of ceramics and old coins of the Tang and Song Dynasties were unearthed. This discovery clearly showed that more than a thousand years ago or even earlier the Chinese merchants had come to trade in Santubong.

In the post-6th Century period, the history book of China (Sui Dynasty, 581 AD -618 AD) had recorded a country named 'Poli' and again in her history of the post-10th Century (Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644 AD) there was some writing about 'Puni'. Both 'Poli' and 'Puni' referred to the Sultanate of Brunei.

According to the historical records of China, in the 12th Century, Borneo Island was ruled by the Srivijaya Empire which arose in Palembang, Sumatra, in the 7th Century. At the height of its power, it extended its rule from Sumatra to Malaya, Java, Borneo, Celebes and the Philippines. The Srivijaya Empire had Buddhism as its religion and spread the Buddhist culture to South East Asia. Because its relation with China was very close, the Chinese historical books had very detailed records of this Buddhist empire.

After the 14th Century the power of the Srivijaya Empire gradually declined. The Majapahit Empire originated from Java soon replaced it and began to extend its boundary. And at the height of its power it was even larger than the area of the Srivijaya Empire. The rulers of the Majapahit Empire were Hindus from India, thus bringing with them the Hindi culture to South East Asia.

When the Majapahit Empire was at its strongest, there was an exodus of Muslim businessmen of Arab and Indian origins to South East Asia. Under their influence, many inhabitants of the South East Asian islands embraced Islam. And under the Islamic culture, there appeared many small states each ruled by a sultan. At first the sultans of these smaller states paid tributes to the Majapahit Emperor. But, when the Majapahit Empire declined in

1478 AD the sultans of the smaller states annexed part of the land and founded many independent sultanates. The Sultanate of Brunei was one of them. All these sultanates propagated Islamic culture. Today, only the island of Bali in Indonesia has preserved the heritage of Hindi culture and religious beliefs. This unique cultural feature of Bali has attracted tourists from all over the world.

Among the sultanates on Borneo Island, the most powerful was Brunei. Its commerce was well developed. Its relation with China was the closest and longest as a result of its geographical location.

The relations between Brunei and China have not only been recorded in historical books but the proofs of which can also be found in the artifacts. In March 1972, Professor Wolfgang Franke and Professor Ch'en T'ieh-Fan, during their first field trip to Borneo to study the ancient Chinese tomb inscriptions, discovered in a Muslim Cemetery in Brunei a Chinese tombstone built in 1264 AD, that is, in the fifth year of the Jing Ding Period of Emperor Li Zong during the Song Dynasty. The text reads in English translation :

Tomb of the Pan-Yuan Master Pu of Quan-Zhou  
of the Song Dynasty.  
Erected in the year of Jia-Zi of the Jing-Ding Period  
( i.e.1264 AD)  
By sons Ying and Jia.

This is so far the oldest tomb of a Chinese high-ranking official found in South East Asia. It thus suggests the close relation between Brunei and China long ago.

The relation between Brunei and China had also been tinted with legends. It was believed that in 1292 AD, that is, the 29th year of Zhi Yuan of the Yuan Dynasty, Emperor Kublai Khan sent an army to occupy the north-eastern part of North Borneo and had a governor stationed there. This place is the Kinabatangan area in Sabah today. Kinabatangan means 'China River'. The wife of Sultan Ahmed, the Second Sultan of Brunei, was the daughter

of Governor Ong Sum-Ping or Ong Ti-Ping who was the Chinese Governor of Kinabatangan. However, others believed that it was his sister. But, there was a second story that a Fujian man had followed Admiral Zheng Ho on one of his Nanyang voyages and had stayed behind in Brunei. Later, he married the only daughter of Sultan Mohammed, the First Sultan of Brunei, and succeeded him to the throne to become the Second Sultan of Brunei. With reference to the history of China, the latter story seems to be more reliable.

In 1993, when I (the author) visited the Kinabatangan area, I heard many stories about the early Chinese in Kinabatangan. My relatives took me on a special trip to a mountain near the highway along the Kinabatangan. It was popularly believed that in the Tulug Cave on top of that mountain was buried a Chinese army general and his sword. Now, the sword had been removed. Looking up from the foot of the mountain, we wondered at the imposing peak and how it came into being. Kinabatangan is indeed a place worth studying by the historians.

By the Ming Dynasty, the relation of Brunei and China was even closer. In 1405 AD, that is, in the 3rd year of Yong Le, Emperor Cheng Zu sent Admiral Zheng Ho on his Nanyang mission with an army of more than 27,800 men in a fleet of 62 ships; each ship was 18 *zhang* in width (a *zhang* is a measurement of length and is equivalent to 10 Chinese feet or 141 inches) and 44 *zhang* in length. This Nanyang mission was carried out partly to show how powerful China was and partly to locate the whereabouts of Hui Di or Emperor Hui. Hui Di, the nephew of Emperor Cheng Zu, succeeded his grandfather, Emperor Tai Zu, the First Emperor of the Ming Dynasty. However, King Yan opposed it, revolted and usurped the throne to become Emperor Cheng Zu. When his army conquered Nanjing, the Capital of China, Emperor Hui was missing and was never found. Admiral Zheng Ho's mission to Nanyang was the greatest feat unprecedented in the history of navy in the world at that time. He made 7 voyages and visited 36 countries. His reputation and the name of China had won over many countries which in submission also sent envoys to go with Admiral Zheng Ho to pay tributes to the Emperor of China.



In 1408 AD, that is, in the 6th year of Yong Le in the Ming Dynasty during the reign of Emepror Cheng Zu, Maharaja Karna, the Sultan of Brunei, together with his wife, son, younger brother and an entourage of more than 150 followers went to pay tributes to the Emperor of China. They were warmly received and handsomely rewarded. On their return journey, Maharaja Karna unfortunately fell ill and died at Nanjing where he was buried according to his will. In 1994, when Sultan Hassanal Bolkiaah, the Sultan of Brunei, visited China he made a special trip to Nanjing to pay his respect at the grave of the late Maharaja Karna.

Brunei did not have any contact with the European countries until after the 16th Century. But, South East Asia had begun trading with Europe as early as the 14th Century. Actually, it was trade relation that had brought the Europeans to the East. At that time the transportation of spices from South East Asia to Europe had to pass through many lands and over deserts to reach the Mediterranean Sea where it was transferred by sea transport to the European countries. This route not only took long months and years but it was also arduous and dangerous. Hence, by the time the goods arrived at Europe, the quantity was very much reduced while the great demand drove the prices very high. This had prompted the Europeans to look for a more direct route to the East. It was in this climate that new routes were discovered which had changed the relation between the countries in the East and those in the West, and influenced the life of man in the world.

In 1497, Vasco da Gama started from Portugal and successfully sailed round the Cape of Good Hope to reach India. When he returned with a shipment of spices including pepper, clove and ginger the Portuguese were overjoyed. Then, in 1511, another Portuguese, Viceroy Alfonso d'Albuquerque led an army and conquered Malacca. He built a fort there and made Malacca the trading centre in the East, thus controlling the international spice market and gaining great commercial advantages. The successes of the Portuguese had caused much interest among the Western European countries to go to the East to look for riches and colonies. Under such sudden impact, the oriental societies of South East Asia underwent rapid changes.

Actually as early as 1492, Christopher Columbus had led a fleet of 3 ships and set off from Spain intending to go to the East. He believed that the world was round and if he kept sailing westward he would eventually reach the East. Consequently, by accident he discovered the New Continent, America. He thought he had reached India, so he called the natives there 'Indians'.

In 1519, another Spanish, Ferdinand Magellan led a fleet of 5 ships starting out from Spain to sail round the world. After sailing round the southern tip of South America he went westward to the Pacific Ocean where he discovered an archipelago which he called the Philippine Islands after King Philip of Spain. Although he was later killed by the natives on one of the islands and his fleet of 5 ships with a crew of 287 men had been reduced to 1 ship and 18 men, the surviving men finally completed the daring feat of sailing round the world.

After their return to Spain, Antonio Pigaffeta, one of Magellan's crew, published an article about his experiences and review of his trip round the world. He said when his ship passed by the Borneo Island in 1521 he stopped over at Brunei and had an opportunity to see the rich and powerful kingdom state. In his article he had a very vivid description of this sultanate. According to him, Brunei was a beautiful city with more than 25,000 households that made up a population of more than 100,000 people. The people of Brunei lived in houses built on stilts over the water. During high tide, the women paddled their canoes to do their marketing. In their transaction they used Chinese coins with Chinese characters engraved on them and with a square hole in the middle. Like the Chinese they also strung the coins together with a string. The Brunei people, he said, loved to chew betel-nuts and drink rice wine. The Sultan's Palace was luxurious as well as magnificently decorated. Its splendour made the onlookers gape in wonder.

In the wake of the Portuguese and Spanish to the East came the Dutch, too. As a result of commercial interest, the Dutch and Portuguese began fighting for colonies. In 1641, the Dutch defeated the Portuguese and took over Malacca. Soon the Dutch occupied the islands in the East Indies, establishing themselves the

most powerful colonialists in South East Asia until the 19th Century. By the 19th Century, the British had extended their influence to South East Asia and as their sphere of influence steadily grew, that of the Dutch was relatively reduced.

The British began to come to South East Asia only in the late 18th Century. Initially, they leased Penang Island from the Sultan of Kedah. In 1819, Stamford Raffles founded Singapore. In 1824, the British obtained Malacca from the Dutch. These 3 ports joined together to make an important sea-route and their strategic location formed the important Straits Settlements. In 1846, the British obtained Labuan Island from the Sultan of Brunei. This further strengthened the position of Britain in the Far East. Meanwhile, because of its location, good harbour and facilities Singapore had quickly replaced the other ports with a much longer history as the centre of trade in South East Asia.

During the reign of Queen Victoria in the 19th Century, the British Empire was the strongest. She ruled the British Empire from 1837 until 1901. This period came to be proudly called the 'Victorian Age' by the British. Following the expansion of the British power, adventurers and riches seekers were the trend of the day then. The adventurer, James Brooke, came to the East with this same trend of thoughts. And in this opportune time and situation, he became the First Rajah (King) of Sarawak. With this turn of events, the fate of the many races on Borneo Island had changed.

Fig. 3 : Chinese Antique coins with a glorious past  
found in Kuching, Sarawak.  
(Private collection)

(1)



Kai Yuan Tong Bao

Kai Yuan Tong Bao minted in the 4th year of Wu De of Emperor Gao Zu of the Tang Dynasty (621 AD). The four Chinese characters were the handwriting of the then famous calligrapher Ouyang Xun.

(2)



Qian Yuan Zhong Bao

Qian Yuan Zhong Bao minted during the years of Qian Yuan of Emperor Su Zong in the Tang Dynasty (758 AD-760 AD). 1 Qian Yuan Zhong Bao was equivalent to 10 Kai Yuan Tong Bao.

(3)



(a)

Chun Hua Yuan Bao minted during the years of Chun Hua of Emperor Tai Zong in the Song Dynasty (990 AD - 994 AD). The Chinese characters were written by Emperor Tai Zong in 3 different styles; namely, Zhen Shu, Xing Shu, and Cao Shu.



(b)

Since they were written by the Emperor, they were called the Yu Shu or Royal Calligraphy. These 3 coins could be combined into 3 pairs, i.e. (a + b); (b + c) and (a + c) which were called Dui Zi Qian or the Pairing Coins.



(c)

Although the characters were written in 3 different styles, their thickness, width, the square hole and the size of the writing were exactly the same.

(4)



Yuan Feng Tong Bao

Yuan Feng Tong Bao minted in iron in the 1st year of Yuan Feng of Emperor Shen Zong in the Song Dynasty (1078 AD). This iron coin of Yuan Feng Tong Bao was equivalent to 2 Siao Ping Qian or the smallest coin. The Chinese characters on this iron coin were written in Zhuan Shu.

The coins in the Song Dynasty were minted in gold; silver; copper; iron and lead. The Chinese characters were written in 5 different styles, namely, Zhuan; Li; Zhen; Xing and Cao. The value of the highest denomination coin was equivalent to 10 Siao Ping Qian. Never before in the history of the Chinese coinage had there been such a great variety of coins with a glorious past as those minted in the Song Dynasty.

(5)



Shao Sheng Yuan Bao

Shao Sheng Yuan Bao minted during the years of Shao Sheng of Emperor Zhe Zong of the Song Dynasty (1094 AD-1098 AD). This copper coin was equivalent to 2 Siao Ping Qian.

(6)



Chong Ning Tong Bao

Chong Ning Tong Bao minted in the year of Chong Ning of Emperor Hui Zong of the Song Dynasty (1102 AD-1106 AD). This big denomination coin was equivalent to 10 Siao Ping Qian. The characters on this coin were written by Emperor Hui Zong himself. This slim style of Calligraphy was considered the best of all.

(7)



Da Guan Tong Bao

Da Guan Tong Bao minted in the 1st year of Da Guan of Emperor Hui Zong in the Song Dynasty (1107 AD). This is an example of a Siao Ping Qian. The characters on this coin also written by Emperor Hui Zong were as pretty as those on Chong Ning Tong Bao and comparable to the graceful Xuan Zhen style or Needle-hanging style of Calligraphy, which was found on the Huo Qian minted by Wang Mang of the

Xin Dynasty (9 AD - 23 AD).

( 8 )



Da Yuan Tong Bao

Da Yuan Tong Bao minted in the 3rd year of Zhi Dai of Emperor Wu Zong in the Yuan Dynasty. The characters are in Mongolian. This is a very rare iron coin and was equivalent to 10 Siao Pin Qian. The author came upon it by chance at a roadside stall near the Electra House in Kuching.

( 9 )



Yong Le Tong Bao

Yong Le Tong Bao minted in the 9th year of Yong Le of Emperor Cheng Zu in the Ming Dynasty (1411 AD). It was Emperor Cheng Zu who sent Admiral Zheng Ho on his Nan Yang Mission.

( 10 )



Wan Li Tong Bao

Wan Li Tong Bao minted in the 4th year of Wan Li of Emperor Shen Zong of the Ming Dynasty (1576 AD). During the reign of Emperor Shen Zong there was a large scale cultural interaction between China and the Western countries.

This Chinese numismatics culture had had far-reaching influence. Countries like Japan, Korea and An'nan (Vietnam) minted coins similar to the Chinese Fang Kong Qian or coins with a square hole in the centre and used them. This type of Chinese Fang Kong Qian was used and widely circulated in Brunei. The Song Dynasty was a great commercial empire having large scale trading with many foreign countries, thus explaining the presence of large quantities of Fang Kong Qian of the Song Dynasty in these countries. Even in Sarawak today, a lot of coins minted in the Song Dynasty can still be found.



Fig. 4 Pre-historic site more than 50,000 years old found at the Niah Caves in the 4th or Miri Division of Sarawak.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 5 Tombstone of a high-ranking official, Panyuan Master Pu of Quanzhou of the Song Dynasty, found by Professors Wolfgang Franke and Chen Tiefang at a Muslim Cemetery in Brunei.  
(Photo: Professor Wolfgang Franke)

Fig. 6 Ancient relief stone carving, Batu Gambar, discovered at Santubong at the mouth of the Sarawak River, as verified by the former Curator of the Sarawak Museum, Tom Harrison, to have been done in around 970 AD.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 7 In the Tulug Cave of the Gua Batu Putih, on the steep mountain near the highway, Jalan Kinabatangan, in Sabah. A Chinese army general was believed to have been buried there.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1994)





Fig. 8 Ancient Chinese green ceramics of Song and Ming Dynasties in the Sarawak Museum.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 9 Patung Genesa - the elephant-headed god - found on Bukit Berhala at the bank of the Samarahan River.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 10 Batu Nisan or Tombstone found in the Residency of the Resident, Limbang, in 1921. The inscription reads: Allah is the only God. Only Allah could save human beings from hell. Allah the Greatest and the Magnificent. This is an artifact evident of the spread of Islam into South East Asia.

(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 11 The author posing with Prof. Wolfgang Franke in the latter's study in Kuala Lumpur on 13th May 1995.

## CHAPTER 3

### FOUNDING OF MODERN SARAWAK BY THE FIRST WHITE RAJAH

James Brooke created the history of Sarawak and changed the fate of its people. Even today, we can still discern his influence upon the various races of Sarawak. To be able to objectively and fairly assess a historical figure like him, we must not view him from the angle of today's politics only, but we must take into consideration the historical facts of Sarawak, the cultural background of its people and the philosophy of progressivism. Only then can we accord him the position due to him in the history of Sarawak.

In the early 19th Century, Stamford Raffles, an Englishman who founded Singapore, proposed to manage Borneo on behalf of the British Empire but the British Government did not take his proposal seriously. As his plan was not realised, the British influence did not extend to Borneo until James Brooke ventured into the East in 1839.

James Brooke was born on 29th April, 1803, at Secrore, in the suburb of Benares, which is now called Varanasi, in India. His father, Thomas Brooke, was English and his mother, Anna Maria Stuart, was Scottish. Both his parents were the employees of the British East India Company in Benares where Thomas Brooke rose to become the High Court Judge in later years. They had two sons and four daughters, but one of their sons and two daughters died very young.

In 1815, when James Brooke was 12 years old, he was sent to England for his education. His performance in school was not good, but he loved sailing. He left school at 16 and returned to India to join the armed forces maintained by the East India Company. In 1825, when he was injured in a battle in Burma, he was sent back to England to recuperate. During this convalescing period, he read about the East in books written by Stamford Raffles, and became interested in the East and its exotic islands. Thus, his thought of exploring the East was aroused.

In 1835, his father, Thomas Brooke, died and left him a legacy of 30,000 British pounds. With that money he bought a schooner, which he named the *Royalist*, and came to explore the East. The *Royalist* was a vessel with a tonnage of 142 tonnes, fitted with sails and equipped with 6 cannons and other weaponry.

On 16th December, 1838, James Brooke and his crew set sail in the *Royalist* from England. About 5 months later, in May 1839, James Brooke and his crew arrived at Singapore.

Previous to James Brooke's arrival in Singapore, Rajah Muda Hashim of Sarawak heard of a British vessel shipwrecked near the mouth of the Sarawak River. He had the English crew brought to him. He housed them, fed them and sent them back to Singapore at his own expense. In order to show their gratitude to Rajah Muda Hashim, the British Governor in Singapore, Governor Bonham, and the members of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce requested James Brooke to personally bring letters of thanks to Rajah Muda Hashim of Sarawak.

On 27th July, 1839, James Brooke sailed from Singapore on the *Royalist*. And on 15th August, the *Royalist* entered the mouth of the Sarawak River and anchored near Kuching.

At that time, Sarawak was a province ruled by the Sultan of Brunei. Its boundary extended from Tanjung Datu in the west to the Sadong River in the east, with the South China Sea in the north and the Dutch Borneo in the south. Its area then was about the same as the present Kuching-Samarahan Division. Its administrative centre was at Kuching which was then known as Sarawak but was renamed Kuching in 1872.

Kuching was a village situated on the bank of the Sarawak River, about 38 miles from the river mouth. It had then a population of about 800 - 1,000 people, all Malays except for a handful of Chinese traders. There are several versions about the origin of the name 'Kuching'. Some people believed that the name came from Sungai Kuching, a stream that used to flow from the hill nearby and pass in front of the Tua Pek Kong Temple towards the Sarawak River. That stream was filled up when Kuching expanded. Others said that Kuching was named after Bukit Mata Kuching, the hill just behind the Tua Pek Kong Temple. And still others said

that it was called Kuching because of the Mata Kuching trees (Longan trees) that grew on the hill called Bukit Mata Kuching. Nevertheless, the word 'Kuching' was common in all the versions. Hence, Kuching became Kuching City, meaning the Cat City. Nowadays, there are not only giant-sized models of cats built at prominent spots in Kuching but there is also an already well-known Cats Museum in the Northern City Hall. It seems Kuching City has become the Heaven for cats.

When James Brooke first set foot on Sarawak soil, the country was under the rule of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin of Brunei. The chart in Appendix I at the end of this chapter shows the genealogy of the rulers of the Sultanate of Brunei.

Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin was a man of weak character and had no control over his relatives who were intriguing against each other. Because his government was not stable and his power gradually declined, there was social unrest, as it was the case in Sarawak. The governor, appointed by the Sultan to administer Sarawak, was Pangiran Makota who was intelligent but selfish, greedy and cruel. Sarawak was governed by corruption and extortion which caused great sufferings to the people. The Sarawak Malays and Land Dayaks (Bidayuhs), under the leadership of Datuk Patinggi Ali, revolted against Makota. They built their stockade along Siniawan and fought against the government troop under Makota. Sultan Omar Ali sent his maternal uncle, Rajah Muda Hashim, to help Makota quell the rebellion. But Rajah Muda Hashim could not do a thing as Makota refused to listen to him and carried on with his exploitation and exaction of the local people. Thus, the situation in Sarawak remained riotous.

When James Brooke arrived in Kuching, Rajah Muda Hashim received him warmly and treated him hospitably. Soon, they established a good relationship and eventually became good friends. Hashim was a kind, friendly, middle-aged gentleman. But he lacked firmness and was timid to make decisions.

James Brooke stayed in Sarawak for several weeks. He left Kuching on 20th September, 1839, and returned to Singapore to report to Governor Bonham.

On 18th August, 1840, James Brooke revisited Sarawak and

was warmly welcomed by Hashim. Meanwhile, revolts and rebellions were going on in the country. Hashim could neither suppress them nor control Makota. He asked James Brooke to stay on and help him suppress the rebellion at Siniawan. He promised James Brooke the title of Rajah with control over the parcel of land along Siniawan at the upper Sarawak River when the rebels were defeated. This is a scheme known in Chinese as 'killing with a borrowed knife'. After much consideration, James Brooke finally accepted the offer. So, taking two of the cannons from the *Royalist*, he led 12 men from his crew to fight the rebels. After some fierce fighting, the Malay and Land Dayak rebels agreed to lay down their arms if James Brooke would become the Rajah of Sarawak. Hashim agreed to their condition and the war finally ended.

However, Hashim was slow in fulfilling his promise and Makota was still the governor, exploiting, extorting and killing the people. Consequently, James Brooke decided to aim all the cannons on the *Royalist* at the governor's palace or Astana ready to fight Makota. Hashim had no choice but to fulfill the promise he had made, that is, to invest on James Brooke the title of 'Rajah of Sarawak', and he had Makota recalled to Brunei.

So, on 24th September, 1841, James Brooke became the Rajah of Sarawak. But it was not until 1st August, 1842, that he was officially bestowed the title by the Sultan of Brunei. According to the contract, James Brooke had to pay a sum of \$2,500 annually to the Sultan of Brunei. This obligation to make such payments ended in 1846 when Sarawak became an independent country after the Battle of Brunei.

After having lost the governorship of Sarawak and all the benefits that went with the title, Makota meanwhile in Brunei, intrigued against the British and James Brooke. He actively plotted to get rid of James Brooke. In the Brunei court, because of Makota's intrigues, Hashim and his younger brother, Beddrudin, were murdered together with those who were friendly to the British. James Brooke, sensing the situation was against him, acted immediately with the help of a few British warships and conquered Brunei Town. This brought the Sultan to his knees and ended the anti-British and anti-James Brooke movement. Although this was not

a fierce battle, politically it had a great and far-reaching influence.

After the 16th Century, because of mal-administration the political situation and the social order in Brunei gradually deteriorated. This is evident in the decrease of population from the 16th Century to the 19th Century. According to Antonio Pigaffetta's account, the population of Brunei Town in 1521 was about 100,000 people. By early 18th Century, according to Sir Hugh Low, who was considered the 19th Century authority on Brunei history, the population of Brunei Town was about 40,000 with about 30,000 Chinese farmers who were involved in the growing of pepper in the suburbs. However, by 1809, Brunei Town had only 3,000 families which accounted for a population of about 15,000 people. And by 1847, Brunei Town had only 12,000 people left. By then, the Chinese community had virtually disappeared except for a few who were slaves. The population of Brunei decreased steadily and by early 20th Century there were only 8,000 people left. This decrease in population revealed that Brunei had undergone a long period of political upheavals and social unrest, resulting in its people emigrating to and settling down in the neighbouring regions.

After James Brooke had ascended the throne, he set out to establish peace and order and to develop the economy of the country. While peace and order are the pre-requisites to consolidate political power, economy is the basis for developing the country. With this in mind, James Brooke established the armed forces to quell piracy in order to protect the lives and the properties of his people. Furthermore, in social reform he eradicated the practice of head-hunting and stopped slavery and forced labour in the mines. He also protected the minority ethnic groups from being killed by or the oppression of the other bigger and more aggressive groups. He established the civil court, instituted a code of laws and gave the accused a fair trial. At the same time, he exercised fair taxation, unified units of measurements and monetary system and endeavored to foster trades with other countries and encouraged people to come and settle down in Sarawak in order to develop agriculture in the country. From the above, we can see that James Brooke was politically progressive and the measures he took were beneficial to the people of the country in general. James Brooke

seemed to have the simple social economic outlook, similar to what is presented in the Book of Great Learning, one of the Four Books or Si Shu, which says, "*A man of high morality will have a great following of people who will till the land. From the land he will get the wealth to develop his state.*"

Under the rule of James Brooke, Sarawak was comparatively peaceful and progressive. These favourable conditions attracted immigrants from Brunei, the Dutch Borneo, Singapore and China. This increase in population means an increase of manpower which was much needed to develop the country more rapidly. When the British Admiral, Sir Henry Keppel, who had helped James Brooke in suppressing piracy in the earlier years of his reign, visited Sarawak in 1867, found then that the population of Kuching had already reached 20,000. This figure was 25 times more than that of 25 years ago. The progress and development of Kuching from a village to a township were evident if one compares the two photographs taken from the same angle but at two different times.

In order to ensure that the lives and properties of his people were safe and that trade and commerce could develop, James Brooke, with the help of the British Navy, carried out many expeditions to terminate piracy on the rivers within the country and on international waters. The most notable one was the Battle of Marudu Bay of 1845 when he conquered the Fort held by Sherif Osman, at Marudu Bay in North Borneo. Ever since this battle, the number of incidents of piracy on the sea and along the coast of Sarawak, the killing of innocent people and kidnapping of women was greatly reduced. However, the battle that shook the international world was the Battle of Beting Maru which happened after James Brooke's return from England.

On 2nd October, 1847, James Brooke returned to England where he was given a hero's welcome. The London City Council and several famous organisations awarded him Freedom Medals, Oxford University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, and Queen Victoria received him at Windsor Castle and bestowed on him Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath. Later, James Brooke adopted the insignia on the shield presented by Queen Victoria for the design on the Sarawak Flag and its Na-



tional Crest. Since Queen Victoria favoured James Brooke, the British Foreign Office supported him. The British Government appointed him the First British Governor of Labuan and Consul-General of Borneo. This appointment and an annual salary of 2,000 British pounds greatly raised his status in the British society and increased his popularity in Sarawak. He was invited to give talks everywhere in England. Even the school that had once refused to take him back was proud of his achievement overseas and held a big reception to welcome him. James Brooke, who left England 9 years ago as an adventurer on his expedition to the East, now returned in glory as the King of Sarawak. He not only made a name for himself and got the riches that went with that name, but he also brought glory to his family. His success naturally incurred the displeasure and jealousy of many people who sought an opportunity to damage his reputation. He was desirous of a high position, loved publicity and often published his articles in the magazines.

Now that he had achieved his ambition, he was highly gratified. But, his path was not smooth. He was quite a moody person. Later, the Battle of Beting Maru and the Bau Chinese Miners' Uprising shook him so badly that his moods became melancholy.

In 1848, after his return from England, James Brooke found that piracy was again rife, and incidents of looting and killing increased. So, he rallied the help of the British Navy to help fight piracy, determined to terminate it once and for all. This resulted in the famous Battle of Beting Maru.

Nowadays, some people still refuse to believe the existence of pirates on Sarawak waters. In fact, in the British Parliament then, there were some who held this same view and accused James Brooke of killing the innocent people. Apart from stopping the British Navy from helping James Brooke, they set up a Commission of Enquiry in Singapore in 1853 to enquire into the truth : Whether there were pirates or whether James Brooke was killing the civilians. As C.F. Boudriot, a Dutch officer in Dutch Borneo, who was James Brooke's rival, and Datu Patinggi, the Malay Community leader in Sarawak, both declared positively in their statements that pirates existed and that they killed and looted. Datu Patinggi even told the Court of Enquiry that his son was killed by

pirates. In addition, a memorandum signed by 59 Chinese businessmen was sent to the Commission of Enquiry thanking James Brooke for putting an end to piracy so that the sea-routes were safe for the trading ships. Although James Brooke's name was cleared, this enquiry had serious setbacks. It had indirectly encouraged his enemies to wage wars against him, and thus causing great loss of lives and properties to the people of Sarawak.

Actually, we cannot deny the existence of pirates on Sarawak waters at that point in time because there are material evidences that point to their existence then. We should not feel ashamed about the existence of piracy for that was only part of the process of human history. And against this historical fact, we should be proud of the fact that we have created a civilised and progressive society. Similarly, the people of the different races residing in the Rajang Basin should not feel embarrassed by the poverty and the primitiveness of the society then. Instead, they should be proud of the achievements of today. History is like a long river and we cannot just take part of it to study and leave the rest of it.

The fact that piracy existed was concluded at the Singapore Court of Enquiry. Even today, by studying, in the Cultural Village at Kuching, the structure of the traditional houses of the people living along the coastal region of Sarawak, we can see that the particular structure was not adopted only to keep the people safe from the flood tides but more importantly to combat the pirates who were causing a great loss of lives and properties. The notorious Illanun pirates used to come with the North-East Monsoon winds to raid the coastal villages and the passing boats along the coastal region of Sarawak. Therefore, the North-East Monsoon winds came to be known as the pirates' winds. In a country without a complete legal system and where the political situation was unstable, weaponry strength became the necessary factor for survival and development. Thus, the survival of the fittest rules; in a country where there is no law and order the weaker one would be swallowed by the stronger one. We can cite numerous instances in Africa today, and, even in South East Asia today, piracy has not yet been totally wiped out. The difference is that, unlike the man-powered wooden boats of old, the modern pirates' ships are driven

by high-powered engines, and no longer do they use weapons like guns or swords, but gunfire propelled by rockets. According to a recent report of the International Marine Bureau based in London, even today no less than 100 cases of piracy were recorded annually and most of which happened on the waters of South East Asia (See Hua Daily News, 4th July, 1995).

Nonetheless, the battles between James Brooke and the pirates involved a surprisingly great number of men on both sides. Apart from the addicted Illanun pirates, there were the Bajaus, Sulus, Sea Dayaks and Malays. According to estimates, there were about 25,000 altogether on Sarawak waters. Some of the boats they used were supplied by the Brunei pangirans or rulers of their respective regions. Generally, a pirate ship had a tonnage of 60 tonnes and was about 90 feet long. It had paddles on two floors of the ship which were manoeuvred by about 100 slaves and an armed crew of between 30 and 40 men. This type of ship was solid and could withstand gunfire. Each ship was usually equipped with several bronze cannons. Their weaponry had to be mightier than those of their rivals, but, if they lost, the two floors of paddlers would ensure a speedy escape. Each time they set out, there would be at least a fleet of 30 boats, and the biggest number could sometimes reach over 200 boats, manned by as many as 5,000 to 6,000 people. It was, therefore, undeniable that the pirates were numerous and their forces were strong.

The Battle of Beting Maru took place at the sand-bar of Batang Maru in the evening of 31st July, 1849. On 24th July, James Brooke, in the vessel, *Rajah Singh*, led a fleet of 18 boats with about 640 armed Malays to go to Batang Lupar. Following closely behind were the British warship *Nemesis*, the *Royalist*, the *Ranee* and 7 other smaller warships. On the way, they were joined by the Dayaks, making a fleet of about 70 to 80 boats and a strong force of about 2,000. When they entered Batang Lupar, the pirates led by Linggir, their leader, had set out in full strength two days previously and gone north to raid the villages along the coastal areas. James Brooke planned to intercept them on their return. He himself led a troop to Kabong to guard the mouth of the Kalaka River so as to prevent the looters from returning to their base. The

*Nemesis* led the main force to ambush the enemy at Batang Maru, a tributary of the Saribas River. The *Royalist* guarded the southern-most part of the mouth of Batang Lupar. When Linggir and his men heard news about James Brooke's expedition, they hurriedly returned to protect their homes, because they knew that James Brooke's men would always burn and destroy their enemies' houses. So, Linggir, leading his fleet of more than 200 armed boats and a force of more than 2,000 men, arrived in the afternoon of 31st July, 1849. Finding that the entrance to the Kalaka River was blocked by James Brooke and his men, they swept round the low headland into the Saribas River. While going upriver, they suddenly discovered that the *Nemesis* with the main force was waiting there. James Brooke and his men closed in from behind, cutting off their retreat route. James Brooke's forces consisted of not only the British warships but also the Dayaks from the Lundu River and Balau River, and the Malays from the Samarahan River and the Sadong River. Both sides formed a battle line of about 10 miles long, fighting from sunset till the moon was seen in the sky. It lasted for more than 5 hours. Although Linggir and his men fought tenaciously, they could not withstand the fierce gunfire. In the end, Linggir lost about 100 boats and about 400-500 of his men in action. Though his main force managed to break through the enemy line, another 400-500 men died from wounds or from exposure before they reached their homes.

This terrible battle shocked the English society and those who were against James Brooke accused him of killing the innocent. Among those who strongly opposed James Brooke was Joseph Hume, a member of the British parliament.

But, in his 22 years' rule of Sarawak, what affected James Brooke most severely was the Chinese Miners' Uprising in Bau.

In the 1770's, there were more than 100,000 Chinese miners working for more than 10 gold-mining companies in western Borneo. The administrative units of these companies, under the leadership of Chen Lan and Lou Fang, amalgamated to form Lan Fang Da Zong Zhi or the General Administrative Organisation for the Chinese mining companies. The members of Lan Fang Da Zong Zhi elected Lou Fang as its First Administrative Director-General

or Da Tang Zong Zhang. He managed Lan Fang Da Zong Zhi like an Autonomous Region along a very well organised system. There was a Da Ting or Administrative Centre. They built their own schools for the children of different races. They had their own armed forces to guard the properties of the mining companies. When they were at their height of power, even the local Sultan sought their help in suppressing revolts and maintaining order. However, their glorious time did not last very long. By the 1830's, because of internal rivalries the different member companies started fighting against each other. Besides, the Dutch colonialists were making advances in their quest for acquiring more territories while the native labourers were becoming rebellious. In this situation of continual internal conflicts and external harassment and suppression, the power of Lan Fang Da Zong Zhi declined drastically and many miners crossed the border to the neighbouring lands. It was in 1830 that Liu Shang-Pang brought his followers in the Shi Er Feng Gong Xi or the Twelve Shareholders' Company, of which he was the leader, to Bau just across the border from the Dutch Borneo. When James Brooke first came to Sarawak in the late 1830's, he visited Bau. There, he was quite impressed by the efficiency of the Hakka Chinese gold-miners and their mining methods. After 1850, as the Chinese miners in Western Borneo were oppressed by the Dutch colonialists, there was an influx of them into Bau. Their coming added to the number of miners in Bau, bringing it to about 5,000 people.

The relation between the Bau Chinese miners and James Brooke was cordial initially. Whenever James Brooke returned to Sarawak after an overseas trip, the management of Shi Er Feng Gong Xi would send representatives to welcome him at the wharf in Kuching. However, as a result of the contradiction between politics and economy, their cordiality changed into enmity which eventually caused the total destruction of the few thousand miners in the bloodiest battle in the history of Sarawak.

From the remains of the flag-post holder, the administrative building, the weaponry store and other facilities, we can see that the Shi Er Feng Gong Xi, unlike other companies, still retained the system of organisation of the Lan Fang Da Zong Zhi and its

autonomous spirit. In fact, the total number of Chinese miners in Bau then was about half of the population of Kuching, and the mining company was a big economic entity. Their production of gold and their expenditure on consumers goods had to a great extent affected the economy of Sarawak. The miners wanted to retain the Lan Fang Da Zong Zhi's style of autonomy but James Brooke did not allow an autonomous region in Sarawak. Therefore, he banned the Chinese miners from buying opium and selling their gold. In addition, each miner had to pay a poll-tax. When James Brooke charged them about their illegal activities of smuggling opium and of secretly selling their gold while only half of the total number of miners paid taxes, their relation deteriorated. When James Brooke further accused them of clandestine secret society activities and sent troops to confront them, the Chinese miners were so indignant that they plotted to overthrow James Brooke. Presently, many people knew about the fact that some members of the British Parliament were opposed to James Brooke; that there was the Singapore Court of Enquiry about him; and that the British Navy had stopped backing him. So, those who were against his rule thought the time was ripe to overthrow him. Opposition to James Brooke's rule did not come only from the Chinese miners but also from some Malay leaders and Iban chiefs.

During midnight of 18th February, 1857, about 600 miners led by Wang Jia and Liu Shang-Pang, proceeded to Kuching by river and attacked the Rajah's Palace. James Brooke escaped in the dark, crossed a stream to hide in a Malay village. The miners killed Harry Nicholetts, mistaken him for James Brooke. Then they attacked the Police Station and the Treasury Building, taking away weapons and money. As they were only against James Brooke, they did not cause any harm to any of the European businessmen or the European missionaries.

The following morning, Wang Jia, the Chinese miners' leader, summoned an assembly of the prominent people at the Court House in Kuching. They included Bishop Rev. Francis McDougall, Ludvig Verner Helms, the manager of Borneo Company; and the Datuk Bandar. He ordered L. V. Helms to take charge of the Europeans in Kuching, the Datuk Bandar to administer the

Malays, and decided to allow the Tuan Muda Charles Brooke, who was then in Skrang to continue managing the Dayaks. Thus, he clearly divided, it seemed, the management of the people. At the same time he had a cock slaughtered and with its blood made them take oaths, as the custom was, that no one party should harm the other and neither should they interfere with the affair of the other. But, they had to submit to the order of the Bau Company. This way of managing a state's affair was, indeed, naive. Yet, it was a style inherited from the Lan Fang Da Zong Zhi. After he had allocated the administrative duties, Wang Jia and his men went upriver to Bau. But on the way, they were attacked and lost a boat. Mad-dened by this incident, Wang Jia stopped to gather more men to strengthen his troop and returned to Kuching ready to take revenge.

Meanwhile, James Brooke had just returned to Kuching by boat, and seeing the Chinese miners approaching in full force, he was greatly shocked and lost his nerves. Fortunately, his nephew, Tuan Muda Charles Brooke, came with his Dayak armed force from the Skrang just in time to prevent the disaster. The Dayak armed forces, further strengthened by the armed Malays, proved to be too strong for the miners who were defeated and escaped by land as well as by the river. Wang Jia was killed at Tanah Lidah while Liu Shang-Pang died in action at Niu Lan Du at Siniawan. With the death of their leaders, the miners at once became disor-ganised and were in a state of chaos and despair. The remnant of the defeated force of miners escaped on foot with their families and many were killed on the way. While they were on the road at Krokong near Bau more than 1,600 were slaughtered. Though the rest of the miners managed to cross over the border to Dutch Borneo, they were wiped out by the Dutch colonial forces and their former rivals. This was the end of the once well-known and prosperous Bau gold-mining company.

Though the Chinese miners were finally defeated, James Brooke's government did not go unscathed. Many of the govern-ment administrative buildings were badly damaged. And fearing possible government reciprocal actions, many Chinese thought it wise to leave Sarawak, thus adversely affecting the economy of Sarawak. After having been twice so close to death, James Brooke

was emotionally very badly shaken, and his friend, John Templer, observed that James Brooke was quite deranged in his old age.

Two years after the incident of the Bau Gold-Miners' Uprising, the Brunei governor of Sarikei, Sherip Masahor, and Datuk Patinggi Abdul Gapur, who had once revolted against Makota, planned an uprising at different places on a specific day. They plotted to get rid of the Europeans and occupy Sarawak. But, the group of schemers in Kanowit started a little too early by killing Henry Steele and Charles Fox. This alerted Tuan Muda Charles Brooke who had Abdul Gapur arrested and banished to Batavia (now Java) where he was caught and imprisoned by the Dutch.

The following year, Sherip Masahor led an army to invade Kuching. While he and his men were at the mouth of the Sadong River, they met the forces of the Tuan Muda and had to retreat to Sarikei. Meanwhile, the Tuan Muda brought the Dayak and Malay forces and went after Sherip Masahor's forces which abandoned Sarikei and retreated to the Fort at Igan near the lower Rajang River. Soon, his Fort was conquered and occupied by the Tuan Muda's forces, and Sherip Masahor fled to Mukah. He was finally banished to Singapore by the Sultan of Brunei. After this incident, the Sultan of Brunei ceded Mukah to James Brooke's administration. Now, the boundary of Sarawak expanded to encompass the land from the Rajang Basin to Tanjung Kidurong.

Another strong force that James Brooke had to reckon with was Rentap and his armed followers. Rentap, who was an overbearing Iban leader, had made several attempts to revolt against James Brooke. He was known by the natives as the Inland Rajah or King. James Brooke ordered the Tuan Muda to lead the Malay and Dayak armed forces on three expeditions to punish Rentap. The first two occasions were unsuccessful. The third expedition took place in 1861. Tuan Muda Charles Brooke, leading a force of about 600 armed men with a Kuching-made cannon that could fire 12 pound cannon-balls, crossed the forest and set it atop Gunong Sadok. Finally, he destroyed Rentap's stronghold. After his defeat, Rentap fled to the Rajang Basin where he spent the rest of his life.

In his old age, James Brooke faced the problem of selecting



a suitable heir to succeed him. He was never married, so had no children. Therefore, he tried to groom his three nephews who were the sons of his elder sister, Emma, and Francis Charles Johnson. James Brooke brought them to Sarawak to assist him in the administration of the country.

His eldest nephew, James Brooke Johnson, was a captain in the British army before coming to Sarawak. He was well-mannered and held in high esteem by the people of Sarawak. He helped James Brooke in the administration of the country and achieved successes in quelling revolts. Later, he was appointed heir-designate and his title was changed from Tuan Besar to Rajah Muda. As he took up the surname Brooke, he was also known as Brooke Brooke.

James Brooke's second nephew was called Charles Anthoni Johnson. He served in the British Navy and was promoted to the rank of midshipman when he came to help James Brooke in Sarawak. He was well-known in the history of Sarawak as the Tuan Muda and later became the Second Rajah, Rajah Charles Brooke.

His youngest nephew was Henry Stuart Johnson, the youngest son of his sister Emma. He was known as Tuan Adek in Sarawak and later as Tuan Bongsu.

In 1861, James Brooke officially appointed his nephew, Brooke Brooke, as the Rajah Muda, to manage the affairs of the country. Then he went to England to recuperate from ill-health. But something unexpected turned up which was to ruin the relationship between uncle and nephew. When James Brooke was in England, there appeared a young man called Reuben George Brooke who claimed to be his illegitimate son. James Brooke not only received Reuben George Brooke into his household but he also prepared to send him to Sarawak. This made Brooke Brooke feel that his position was threatened. And at the same time, James Brooke was even contemplating discussion with the British Government about the cession of Sarawak. In his indignation, Brooke Brooke wrote a strongly worded letter to James Brooke which caused an irrevocable rift between uncle and nephew. James Brooke, therefore, removed Brooke Brooke from being his heir

and appointed Brooke Brooke's younger brother, Charles Anthoni Johnson, instead.

On 23rd September, 1863, James Brooke bade good-bye to the people of Sarawak and retired to England, after having ruled the country for 22 years. On 11th June, 1868, he died in his home at Burrator, England.

Now, though we view the history of Sarawak from a new angle and we even re-assess some of the historical figures, yet, we must accept the historical fact that James Brooke had brought modern civilization to Sarawak. He had established at that point in time, peace, law and order. It was upon this sound foundation that Sarawak was able to develop into a society that is peaceful, harmonious, prosperous and progressive. This was the great contribution of James Brooke to Sarawak.

Fig. 12 Sir James Brooke,  
the First Rajah of Sarawak.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

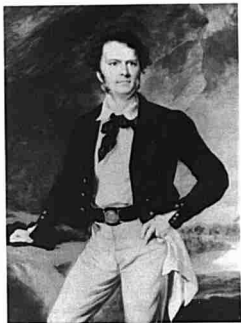


Fig. 13 Rajah Muda Hashim  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 14 Kuching in the year 1840  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 15 Palace of the Sultan of Brunei built above water on stilts.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 16 Kuching in the year 1864  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 17 Sarawak Government House, Kuching,  
built in 1864.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 18 Shoushang Ting, the Dabogong Temple, in Kuching, the oldest Chinese temple, existed even in the 1770's.

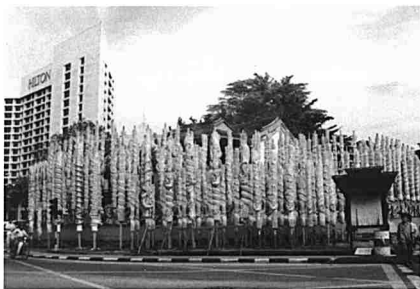


Fig. 19 An array of giant joss-sticks in front of the Dabogong Temple in Kuching on the Chinese New Year Eve, 1996.  
(Photo; Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 20 St. Thomas' Church,  
Kuching, built in 1851  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 21 The Mosque, Kuching, built in 1852.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 22 Fort Emma, Kanowit, built in 1859.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 23 Fort Brooke, Sibuan, built in 1863  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)





Fig. 24 The Heroes' Monument in the Museum Garden, showing copper tooling picture of Liu Shanbang who led the Bau Miners against the White Rajah.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah)

Fig. 25 Sherip Masahor who attempted to drive Rajah James Brooke out of Sarawak.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)





Fig. 26 Well-known Chaozhou (Teochew) community leader, Liu Jianfa (Lau Kiang Huat) shaking hands with Abdullah, Malay community leader, in 1865, fore-runners of all present-day hand-shaking VIPs.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 27 Brooke Brooke, the eldest nephew of Rajah James Brooke; son of his sister Emma, who was made the 1st Rajah Muda, but his title was stripped when he came into fierce conflicts with his uncle, Rajah James Brooke.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

## Appendix I: List of The Muhammedan Sultans of Brunei

### LIST OF THE MUHAMMEDAN SULTANS OF BRUNI

Taken from the Selesilah (Book of the Descent), preserved in Bruni, by the late Sir Hugh Low, G.C.M.G. Published in the Journal No. 5 of the Straits Branch R.A.S.

1. Sultan Mahomed, who introduced the religion of Islam.
2. Sultan Akhmed, brother of above, married to the daughter of Ong Sum Ping, Chinese Raja of Kinabatangan. No sons, but one daughter married to—
3. Sultan Berkat, from Taif in Arabia. A descendent of the prophet through his grandson Husin. Berkat, the blessed . His real name was Sherif Ali.
4. Sultan Suleiman, son of above, who was succeeded by his son—
5. Sultan Bulkeiah;<sup>1</sup> towards the end of his reign Pigafetta's first visit to Bruni in 1521 probably took place.
6. Sultan Abdul Kahar, son of above. Had forty-two sons, of whom—
7. Saif-ul-Rejal succeeded him. During his reign the Spaniards attacked Bruni in 1576 and 1580, taking it on the second occasion.
8. Sultan Shah Bruni, son of above. Having no children he abdicated in favour of his brother—
9. Sultan Hasan, succeeded by his son.
10. Sultan Abdul-Jalil-ul-Akbar, succeeded by his son.
11. Sultan Abdul-Jalil-ul-Jehar, who was succeeded by his uncle—
12. Sultan Mahomet Ali, son of Sultan Hasan.

<sup>1</sup> Famous in Malay legends throughout the East as Nakoda Ragam, a renowned sea rover and conqueror.

13. Sultan Abdul Mubin. Son of Sultan Mahomet Ali's sister. He murdered his uncle and usurped the throne. He was worsted in a revolution that lasted twelve years, and was executed.
14. Sultan Muaddim, fourth son of Sultan Jalil-ul-Akbar, nephew and son-in-law of Sultan Mahomet Ali. Succeeded by his nephew (half-brother's son)—
15. Sultan Nasr Addin, grandson of Sultan Jalil-ul-Akbar.
16. Sultan Kemal-Addin, son of Sultan Mahomet Ali, who abdicated in favour of his son-in-law—
17. Sultan Mahomet Ali-Udin—on his father's side grandson of Sultan Muaddin, on his mother's side great-great-grandson of Sultan Jalil-ul-Akbar. He died before his father-in-law and great uncle, Sultan Kemal-Addin, who again ascended the throne and was succeeded by his son—
18. Sultan Omar Ali Saif-udin. Died 1795. Succeeded by his son—
19. Sultan Tej-Walden. Died 1807. He abdicated in favour of his son—
20. Sultan Jemal-ul-Alam, who reigned for a few months only, and died in 1796, when his father reascended the throne and was succeeded in 1809 by his half-brother—
21. Sultan Khan Zul-Alam, succeeded by his great-nephew and grandson—
22. Sultan Omar Ali Saif-Udin, second son of Sultan Mahomed Jemal-ul-Alam. Died 1852. He left the throne, by will and general consent of the people, to
23. Sultan Abdul Mumin, who was descended from Sultan Kemal-Addin. Died 1885, succeeded by
24. Sultan Hasim-Jalilal Alam Akamaddin, son of Sultan Omar Ali Saif-udin. Died 1906.
25. Sultan Mahomet Jemal-ul-Alam, son of above.

The above are abridged extracts. The last two sultans were

not included in Low's list, which was made in 1893. Low's spelling of the names is followed.

Forrest, *op. cit.*, who obtained his information from Mindanau records, states that about 1475 a Sherip Ali and his two brothers came from Mecca. Ali became the first Muhammadan prince in Mindanau; one brother became King of Borner (Bruni) and the other King of the Moluccas. As regards the date this agrees with the Bruni records, and the brothers might have borne the same name. (See Mahomet Ali, Omar Ali above.)

According to Chinese records, a Chinese is said to have been King of Bruni in the beginning of the 15th century.<sup>1</sup> This would have been in Ong Sum Ping's time, and it probably refers to him.

**(Taken from Baring-Gould & C.A. Bampfylde, A History of Sarawak Under its Two White Rajahs, 1909, pp. 59-60)**

<sup>1</sup> W.P. Groeneveldt, *Essays relating to Indo-China*, 1887.

**Appendix II: Sarawak Treaties.** The document signed by Pangiran Muda Hashim granted to Sir James Brooke by the Sultan of Brunei in 1841, whereby Sarawak was made over to him and his successors for ever. The Arabic text and English translation are given below.



Document granted to Sir James Brooke by H.H. the Sultan of Brunei in 1841, whereby the country of Sarawak was made over to him and his successors for ever.

**SARAWAK TREATIES  
SARAWAK, 1841.**

TRANSFER by Pangenan Muda Hasim of the Government of Sarawak.

(Translation)

This Agreement made in the year of the Prophet one thousand two hundred and fifty-seven at twelve o'clock on Wednesday the thirtieth day of the month of Rejab showeth that with a pure heart and high integrity PANGERAN MUDA HASIM son of the late Sultan Muhammad hereby transfers to JAMES BROOKE

Esquire the Government of Sarawak together with the dependencies thereof its revenues and all its future responsibilities. Moreover he James Brooke Esquire shall be the sole owner of its revenues and will be alone responsible for the public expenditure necessary for the good of Sarawak.

Moreover James Brooke Esquire acting with the same integrity and pureness of heart accepts this Agreement as set forth and further undertakes from the date hereof to pay to the Sultan of Brunei one thousand dollars to Pangeran Muda one thousand dollars to the Pettinggi three hundred dollars to the Bandar one hundred and fifty dollars and to the Temenggong one hundred dollars.

Moreover James Brooke Esquire undertakes that the laws and customs of the Malays of Sarawak shall for ever be respected since the country of Sarawak has hitherto been subject to the government of Sultan of Brunei the Pangeran Muda and Malayan rajas.

Moreover should intrigues arise either within or without the State of Sarawak detrimental to its interests whether caused by peoples or princes or rulers who may be inimical to Sarawak the Sultan and his brother the Pangeran Muda shall uphold James Brooke Esquire as the lawfully appointed Ruler of Sarawak subject to no interference by any other person.

Moreover the Pangeran Muda and James Brooke Esquire do themselves make this Contract and the Pangeran agrees to relinquish all further activities in the Government of Sarawak except such as may be carried out by the consent of James Brooke Esquire and anything which they may severally or individually do in regard to the Government of Sarawak must be in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

Written in Sarawak on the night of Friday the second day of Shaaban 1257 at ten o'clock.

**(Taken from Charles Hose: Natural Man, OUP, 1988, pp. 27-30).**

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".



## CHAPTER 4

### DEVELOPMENT OF SARAWAK UNDER THE SECOND WHITE RAJAH

Charles Brooke, the Second Rajah of Sarawak, wrote about his maternal uncle, James Brooke, the First Rajah, and he himself, in the Preface to *'A History of Sarawak Under Its Two White Rajahs'* (S. Baring-Gould & C.A. Bampfylde, 1909). He said thus, "...he as the founder and myself as builder of the state." This simple figurative statement lucidly and justly summarizes the different roles both of them played in the history of Sarawak.

During the reign of Queen Victoria, when the power of the British Empire was expanding, many young British men were attracted to the exciting military career. Like other youths of that time, Charles Brooke, also known as Charles Johnson or the Tuan Muda before 1863, joined the British navy and his elder brother, Brooke Brooke, and his younger brother, Henry Stuart Johnson, also had a military career.

Charles Brooke was born on 3rd June, 1829, at Berrow Vicarage, Somerset, England. He entered the Grammar School and left it when he was 12 years old. On 18th January, 1842, he joined the British Navy. When he rose to the rank of midshipman, he was transferred to serve on the *H.M.S. Dido* which was under the command of Henry Keppel, with whom he had been on several expeditions against the pirates on the Borneo waters.

In 1852, when he was 23 and at the invitation of his uncle, Rajah James Brooke, he left the British Navy to come to Sarawak. He arrived in Kuching on 21st July, 1852. After having spent several months in Kuching, he was sent to serve in Lundu in January of the following year. When Alan Lee, the Resident of the Second Division of Sarawak, attempted to rescue William Brereton from Rentap, he was ambushed and killed by Rentap at Batang Lupar. Soon after this incident, Charles Brooke was sent in June, 1853, to take charge of the Fort at Lingga which was built in 1852.

The Fort at Lingga served as a check point to prevent the

armed inland tribes to come downriver to raid the coastal villages or the passing boats at sea. Charles Brooke became the District Officer of the Batang Lupar District in October, 1854. For several years he led the Malay and Dayak armed forces who were loyal to him, in a continual battle against Rentap. It was only in 1861 that Rentap and his armed forces were finally defeated. In 1857, he led his armed Malay and Dayak forces to Kuching to put an end to the Bau gold-miners' rebellion, and in 1859, he foiled Sherif Masahor's plan to invade Kuching. In 1860, with the help of his elder brother, Brooke Brooke, and several Malay leaders, he invaded and conquered Sherif Masahor's stronghold in Mukah. All these military successes were achieved during the reign of Rajah James Brooke.

In 1863, when Rajah James Brooke appointed him heir to the throne, in favour over his elder brother, Brooke Brooke, Charles Brooke's official title was changed from Tuan Muda to Rajah Muda. On 3rd August, 1868, he was proclaimed the Second Rajah of Sarawak, in succession to his uncle, Rajah James Brooke. He was ceremonially installed and took the oath on 11th October, 1870, when he summoned the first General Council in his reign. By then, he had already served for 18 years in Sarawak.

After 1868, even as the Rajah, he personally led several expeditions to crush the armed tribes who were raiding their neighbours in the upper Batang Lupar. In May, 1886, Rajah Charles Brooke led an armed force of 12,000 men of various races, to quash the trouble at Kadang Hills. In 1902, he led another strong force of more than 12,000 armed men, including a company of Rangers, a well-equipped Malay force and the armed Dayak forces to quell the revolt raised by Banting in the Ulu Ai. Unfortunately, there was an epidemic of cholera and more than a thousand of his men died. This expedition was not successful and Banting's men continued with their raiding and head-hunting of their rival tribes. In March, 1903, at the ripe age of 74, Rajah Charles Brooke led another expedition against Banting and finally defeated him, restoring peace and security to the inland districts. This was the last battle led by Charles Brooke, and by now, Charles Brooke had already spent about half a century of his life in quelling rebellions,

raiding and head-hunting activities, thus restoring peace to Sarawak.

The fact that the Brooke Raj, with only about 30 European officers, was able to rule about 400,000 proud and war-loving Orientals, deserves some serious thoughts on our part. Besides his adept administration, the Rajah could easily summon tens of thousands of armed forces of various races to help vanquish the rebels and law-offenders; some armed tribes would even come voluntarily to render their service. The Brooke's government was popularly supported by the different ethnic groups and the White Rajah was held in high esteem by all the people. When the Third Rajah ceded Sarawak to the British Crown, there arose a stormy anti-accession movement that lasted quite a while and had long-lasting effect politically. Therefore, the history of the hundred years' Brooke Rule of Sarawak really deserves earnest study. To objectively study this period of time in the history of Sarawak is, in itself, educational, and which, in turn, would give us insight into the political philosophy of our time.

In a state where personal rule is practised, the quality of the leader is often the decisive factor. Rajah Charles Brooke's rule of Sarawak was coloured with this personal rule. Those who had close contact with him and knew his character would be able to more thoroughly understand his rule of Sarawak.

It was not over-stating the fact when some western historians considered Charles Brooke as a liberal monarch. In actual fact, he cared about his country and loved his people; he was a simple and thrifty king. He was a military man, so he valued discipline and obedience as well as law and order. Because he had been a naval officer, he possessed navigation knowledge and experiences. He was not only far-sighted but also had knowledge of foreign countries. The spartan naval training had moulded him and made him better able to withstand hardships and lead a simple and frugal life. Thus, he strongly objected to the spendthrift ways of his wife, Ranee Margaret and his son, Rajah Muda Charles Vyner Brooke.

In the beginning of 1869, after having been away from England for more than five years, Charles Brooke considered it safe to

leave Sarawak in the hands of his officers and to pay his first visit, as the Rajah, to England with the intention of looking for a wife. On 28th October, 1869, he and Margaret Lili Alice de Windt, daughter of a wealthy aristocrat family, were quietly married. In April the following year, they returned to Kuching. Three months later they moved into the newly constructed Astana or palace. They had six children. Their eldest child and only daughter, Ghita, was born on 21st September, 1870. Dayang Ghita, as she was called, was very much loved by the Malay community in Kuching and a Malay kampung or village was named after her. Their twin sons, James and Charles, were born on 20th February, 1872. Unfortunately, when the Rajah's family were on their way back to England in 1873, the three children were stricken with heat apoplexy and died one after another; James on 11th October, Ghita on 14th October, and Charles on 17th October, and all were given a sea burial.

Ranee Margaret remained in England for over a year. There, on 30th September, 1874, Charles Vyner Brooke was born, and he was to become the future Third Rajah of Sarawak. In June 1875, Rajah Charles Brooke and Ranee Margaret returned to Sarawak. Their fourth son, Bertram Willes Dayrii Brooke, who was born in Kuching on 8th August, 1876, was to become the Tuan Muda and the favourite son of Rajah Charles Brooke. Their youngest son, Harry Keppel Brooke, who was called the Tuan Bongsu, was born in England on 10th November, 1879.

Charles Vyner Brooke became the Rajah Muda or heir-apparent on 31st July, 1891. And from August 1897 onwards, he was actively involved in the Sarawak government administration and served first in Mukah and later in Sibiu.

Rajah Charles Brooke's reign lasted 49 years, the longest in the history of the Brooke Raj. During his reign, he made great contributions to the country and the influence of his achievements pervaded the system. As has been mentioned, when the country under James Brooke was troubled so much by piracy, head-hunting and revolts, it was Charles Brooke who had done much to bring about the general peaceful state. When the economy of the country was at its lowest and the government coffer was empty, it

was through his foresight and fortitude that the economy was revived and revenues increased. Charles Brooke was cool in an emergency, and with a self-control that matched his austerity. He was methodical and practical in administration. His management of the country's economy was more superior than that of Rajah James Brooke. With his vast experience in the conduct of state affairs and his knowledge of the customs and outlook of the various ethnic groups, he was able to utilise the strengths of each group to help him manage and restructure the society. By making use of the existing sensitivity between the ethnic groups, he was able to rule over them. This contributed to his success. In fact, at that point in time, only he could command the respect of the people and govern the country so well, and thus bringing about great reforms and setting the foundation for a modern Sarawak.

In 1891 while speaking at the Council Negeri session, Charles Brooke divided the 39 years' of his service in Sarawak into three periods of 13 years each. He said the first period was almost entirely spent on the numerous expeditions in suppressing head-hunting, piracy and raiding activities; the second was divided between military expeditions to bring about peace and introducing law and order in the country while the third period, which was comparatively peaceful, was devoted to political reform and social development (1909, S. Baring-Gould & C.A. Bampfylde : 373-4). From this brief summary, we can understand the progress of the society at that time.

Under the reign of Rajah Charles Brooke, great progress was made in politics. His uncle, Rajah James Brooke had, in a decree of 17th October, 1855, instituted the Supreme Council to keep him informed of the opinions of his subjects and help him manage the country. The members of this Supreme Council, which consisted of the Rajah, the Resident of Kuching or the First Division and 3 Malay leaders, met in Kuching once a month to discuss the affairs of the state. In April 1865, in addition to this advisory Supreme Council, Charles Brooke, as the Rajah Muda, instituted the General Council or Council Negeri, a consultative body, which included the various local community leaders and senior government officers. The first General Council (Council Negeri) Meet-

ing was held in Bintulu on 8th September, 1867. Charles Brooke presided over this first meeting in the capacity of Rajah Muda, and as the Rajah in the Second General Council Meeting which was held in Sibu on 15th June, 1868. Though the General Council had no power to institute laws, it being consultative could advise the Rajah on matters pertaining to the different communities and the development of the country, thus fulfilling the dual function of communication between the Rajah and his people. This system of autocratic rule, which lasted for about 76 years, saw a change at the time of the Sarawak Centenary Celebration of Independence during the reign of the Third Rajah.

In 1863, Britain officially recognised Sarawak as an independent country. This was what James Brooke had put in so much effort to get. On 14th June, 1888, Sarawak became a Protectorate of Britain, and Britain also recognised the Rajah as the sovereign ruler of Sarawak. Simultaneously, the Sultanate of Brunei and the state of North Borneo also became British Protectorates. Britain appointed the British Governor of Singapore the High Commissioner for the Borneo Protectorates. In the same year, Rajah Charles Brooke was created a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George by Queen Victoria of the British Empire. In 1912, King George V of United Kingdom wanted to bestow on Rajah Charles Brooke the Baronetcy, which is a hereditary title higher than a knight, but he declined. Although Charles Brooke was an autocratic ruler, he objected to the form of imperialism practised by the British Empire, as their ideology conflicted with his ideals of protecting the weaker minority races.

During the reign of Rajah Charles Brooke, Sarawak experienced a rapid economic growth in agriculture, commerce, industry and forest produce.

The Borneo Company which was established in 1856 under an agreement with Rajah James Brooke was the only foreign company permitted to trade in Sarawak. Their trading activities included export and import, sea transportation, banking, logging, sago-flour manufacturing, gambier planting and other economic crops planting. The Borneo Company was solely owned and managed by the Europeans while the other businesses and trading ac-

tivities were in the hands of the Chinese.

When Charles Brooke became the Rajah of Sarawak in 1868, Kuching had grown from a fishing village of about 800 to 1,000 people at the time of James Brooke's arrival (Chapter 3) to a township with a population of about 20,000. By 1917, it had taken the appearance of Kuching of today. In fact, many renowned buildings in Kuching, such as the Museum, the General Post Office and the Astana, just to mention a few, were built during the reign of Rajah Charles Brooke. This period also saw the springing up of little townships in the country which accelerated economic growth, and which in turn consolidated the country's economy and engineered the construction industry of society.

In the field of agriculture, the planting of rice, tobacco, sugarcane and tea was not very successful, but the planting of cash crops such as gambier and pepper proved great success, thus bringing in more cash for the people and an increase of revenues for the government. Gambier is a bush plant grown mainly in the East. Its leaves are harvested, crashed and boiled to a thick brown paste. Then it is strained and the fine paste is made into small pieces and dried while the residue is used as fertilizer. The dried gambier is used for tanning hides and fabrics as well as a spice for food. Because of its usefulness and economic value, it was widely grown in Kuching, especially along the Batu Kawa Road which had a section used to be called the Gambier Hill. Its importance can be seen from the fact that one of the main streets in Kuching is called Gambier Street and even the big kuali or round pot used for boiling gambier leaves was called gambier pot. Pepper had long been grown in Sarawak but it was only after the immigration of the Chinese that pepper growing was carried out on a large scale.

Another crop that brought great economic benefits to Sarawak was sago. When the Rajang Basin became part of Sarawak in 1861, the production of sago along the low-lying coastal region of the Rajang River for export was stepped up.

In 1905, rubber was introduced into Sarawak. As the prices of natural rubber in the world market were promising, many racial groups in Sarawak were involved in the planting of rubber trees. This laid the foundation of natural rubber as one of the main ex-

ports of Sarawak, and further improved the economy of Sarawak.

In addition, the jungle products of Sarawak steadily increased as a result of high demand. Apart from timber, there were rattan, damar, jelutong, illipenuts and birds' nests which added to the list of Sarawak's exports and were a source of revenue for the government.

Though mineral production was secondary to agricultural products, gold and antimony were an economic asset. Oil was discovered in Miri in the Fourth Division of Sarawak in 1895. And in 1909, Rajah Charles Brooke negotiated with the Shell Petroleum Company and the Sarawak Oil Company was thus formed.

Though the industrial arts and craft which were brought into Sarawak by the Chinese immigrants were in the initial stage, they nevertheless became increasingly important for the progress, development and prosperity of the society in Sarawak.

Rajah Charles Brooke had as his prime objective the development of agricultural economy of Sarawak, as Sarawak has vast area of agricultural land. So, between 1898 and 1912, by reintroducing the immigration of Chinese immigrants into the country to develop agriculture at four agricultural settlements in Kuching and Sibu, he improved the profile of agriculture. The achievements made by the immigrants in these agricultural settlements will be discussed in the later chapters of this book.

The improved economy of Sarawak can be deduced from the reports of the government revenues during that period of time.

From the time of the Battle of Beting Maru in 1849 until the time just before the Bau Chinese gold-miners' uprising against Rajah James Brooke in 1857, the economy of Sarawak steadily improved. But, unfortunately, all records of government revenues prior to 1857 were destroyed by fire during the miners' attack on the government buildings in Kuching, so there was no way for us to verify. The incident of the Bau Chinese gold-miners' uprising had claimed a death toll of several thousand Chinese and caused many more to leave the country. This adversely affected the government income. The 1860 government record showed a deficit. However, when the political climate in Sarawak gradually improved, many Chinese returned and more immigrants followed,



bringing a revival to the economy of Sarawak. The following table shows the total government income from revenues against the total government expenditures, all in the then Sarawak currency, for the year 1870 to 1907 :-

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>REVENUE (Sarawak dollars)</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE (Sarawak dollars)</b>
1870	\$ 122,842	\$ 126,161
1880	\$ 229,718	\$ 203,583
1890	\$ 413,113	\$ 362,779
1900	\$ 915,966	\$ 901,172
1907	\$1,441,195	\$1,359,274

(S. Baring-Gould & C. A. Bampfylde, 1909 : 426)

It is worth noting that the total government revenue collected for the year 1890 was about \$ 413,000 (Sarawak dollars). But, 17 years later, the amount collected rose to more than \$1,441,000 (Sarawak dollars). This growth was remarkable in that the main source of government revenue came from the agricultural products, and for the fiscal year 1907, the export of agricultural products amounted to \$3,133,565 (Sarawak dollars).

This sound economic foundation enabled the country to embark on a programme of nation building and social development. Many of the modern facilities in Sarawak were constructed after 1870. This was directly related to the economic growth.

A good government would usually want to upgrade the quality of its people. It would certainly try to achieve this objective through education. Rajah Charles Brooke built the first government school at Paku, Bau, in 1870. It was also the first Chinese school and existed 42 years earlier than the Fujian (Hockien) Free School set up by the Chinese community in Kuching. Of course, the Rajah's aim of setting up this Chinese school was not solely to educate the Chinese children, but with a political intention of ap-

peasing and attracting the Chinese to come to revive gold-mining in Bau. In 1883, the first government-run Malay school was set up, and in 1903, a government-run English secular school (as opposed to the Christian missionary schools) was built. By this time, the various Christian missions and the different Chinese communities had already set up their own schools. The S.P.G. Mission (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) built the St. Thomas's School in 1876 and the Roman Catholic Mission in Kuching established St. Joseph's School in 1881. After 1901, the Fuzhou (Foochow) Agricultural Settlement, the Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement and the Xinghua (Henghua) Agricultural Settlement in Sibu were established, one after another. The Methodist Mission and the Catholic Mission set up their schools in both the Fuzhou and Xinghua Agricultural Settlements while the Cantonese community set up their own schools in the Guangdong Agricultural Settlement. Consequently, education in Sarawak took off with a flourishing start. As stated in the Report on Education in Sarawak, the majority of these schools were Chinese schools (R.W. Hammond, 1937 *Report on Education in Sarawak*).

In addition to the establishment of schools, Rajah Charles Brooke paid his attention to the development of basic amenities and cultural business.

As from the year 1895, Kuching had piped-water supply. From 1900, there was telephone service. As early as 1882, medical services were provided by the government hospital, at the site of the present prison at the junction of Tabuan Road and Reservoir Road. Then, in 1909, a Medical Building, known as the Pavilion, was constructed to provide better medical services to the people. Street-lights were installed along the major roads in Kuching. In 1912, buses and trains were used as public transport. By 1916, telegraph services were established in Sarawak.

On 26th August, 1870, the Sarawak Gazette began its publication. It recorded reports of important happenings in Sarawak, and today it has become valuable historical material for researchers. In 1874, in order to strengthen law and order, the Court House was constructed. And in 1911 Rajah Charles Brooke instituted the Chinese Court which was officially declared open by him on 1st

July, 1912. Later on, this Chinese Court House became the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and in 1994 it was turned into the Chinese Historical Museum. In 1891, the world-renowned Sarawak Museum was constructed.

Rajah Charles Brooke loved and promoted various cultural and sports activities. The musical band, organised by him and made up of Filipino musicians, enjoyed a good reputation not only in Sarawak but also overseas. He built an esplanade with a bandstand where the Filipino musical band would hold weekly public performance. Besides, he formed a recreational club and introduced animated movies to Kuching in 1905. He also organised seasonal horse-races and annual competitions for golf, regatta and tuba-fishing.

The boundary lines of the present day Sarawak were finalised during the reign of Rajah Charles Brooke. In 1841, the land of Sarawak consisted of only the area of the present Kuching-Samarahan Division. In 1853, it expanded to the Krian River region and stretched to Tanjung Kidurong encompassing the Rajang Basin in 1861. In 1883, the Baram River basin became part of Sarawak, followed by the Trusan region in 1885 and Limbang in 1890. When Lawas was annexed in 1905, the area of Sarawak became as it is now.

From the above description, we can see that Sarawak was built during the reign of Rajah Charles Brooke. The influence of his major contributions to Sarawak can still be felt nowadays; a fine example is that of the agricultural settlements in Sibul.

On 5th December, 1916, at the ripe age of 87, Rajah Charles Brooke bade farewell to his people in Sarawak and returned to England where he died on 17th May, 1917. He had made deep and affectionate impression on the hearts of his subjects. The people of Sarawak missed him so much that when 3 seaplanes that touched down on the Sarawak River, the people, not knowing what they were, said that it was the spirit of the old Rajah coming back to see his country.

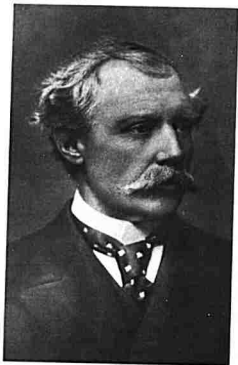


Fig. 28 Sir Charles Brooke,  
the 2nd Rajah of Sarawak.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 29 Rancee Margaret Brooke,  
wife of the 2nd Rajah.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

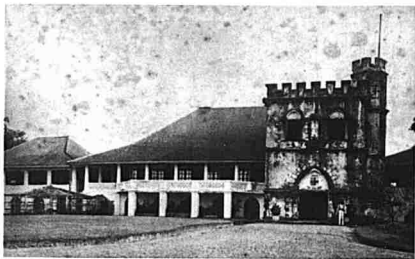


Fig. 30 The Palace (Astana) of the White Rajah, built in 1870.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 31 The Court House, built in 1874.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 32 Fort Margherita, Kuching, built in 1879.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

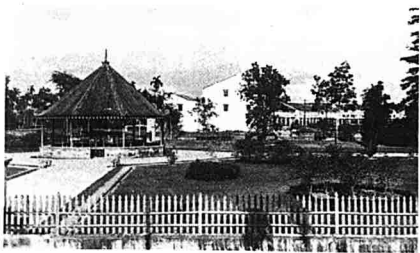


Fig. 33 The Esplanade, the recreational ground of the 1870's in Kuching, at the present site of the Heroes' Square, formerly also known as the Central Padang, Kuching.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

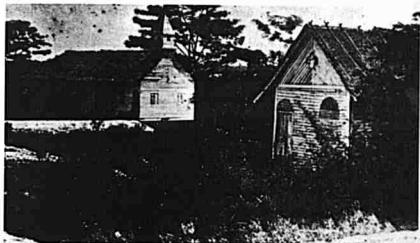


Fig. 34 St. Joseph's School (right) and St. Joseph's Church, Kuching, 1881.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 35 The Market Street, Kuching, in the early 20th Century,  
with the Mosque at the far end.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 36 Horse Racing in Kuching, 1890.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

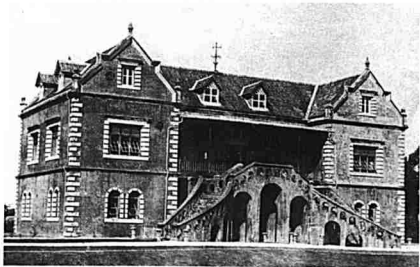


Fig. 37 The Sarawak Museum, built in 1891.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)





Fig. 38 The Pavilion or Medical Building, Kuching, 1909.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 39 The Sarawak Chinese Court, Kuching, built in 1912, later became the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, now the Chinese Historical Museum.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 40 The first train in Kuching, known as Bintang, began service in 1912.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

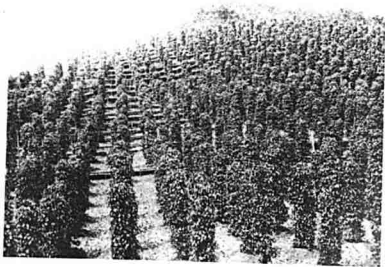


Fig. 41 A Pepper Garden in the early 20th Century.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 42 Chinese gold-miners  
at Bau in the last quarters of  
the 19th Century.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

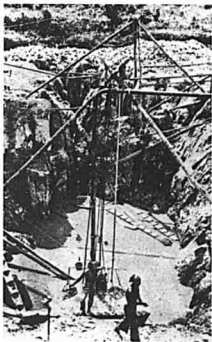


Fig. 43 An open-cast gold  
mine in Bau at the end of  
the 19th Century.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 44 The Sarawak Rangers during the reign of the 2nd Rajah, who were in mufti decorated with silver coins.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

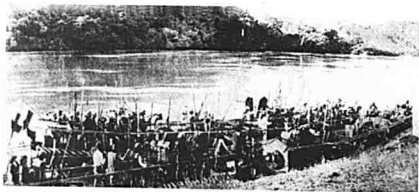


Fig. 45 Rajah's armed forces setting out on an expedition led by the Tuan Muda against Rentap in battle-boats flying the Sarawak flags.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

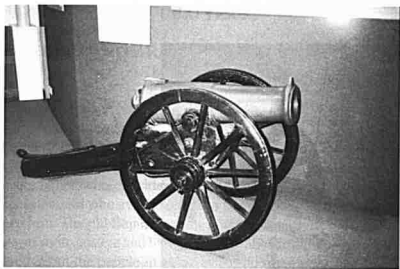


Fig. 46 This Kuching-made bronze cannon, which could fire a 12lb cannon ball, was used by Tuan Muda to destroy Rentap's fort and so defeating Rentap who escaped to the Rajang basin where he spent the rest of his life. This bronze cannon is now kept in the Dewan Tun Razak, Sarawak Museum, Kuching.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 47 Picture of Rentap on the Heroes' Monument in the Museum Garden in the Museum Garden, Kuching.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 48 Fort Sylvia, Kapit, built in 1880. The author posing with Temenggong Cai Xinmin. (Photo: Fong Nyan Shin, 1995)



Fig. 49 Kuching in 1909. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)

## CHAPTER 5

### THIRD WHITE RAJAH AND THE END OF THE BROOKE RAJ

On 24th May, 1917, Charles Vyner Brooke was proclaimed the Third Rajah of Sarawak to succeed his father, Rajah Charles Johnson Brooke. However, he never completely enjoyed the trust of his father who considered him a spendthrift and unsteady in character, and who even had had an inkling of not letting him succeed him. The old Rajah liked his younger son, Bertram, better for he was more austere and hardworking. Like the old Rajah, Bertram cared about the people in the interior and often visited them. Because Bertram had the qualities that Vyner did not seem to possess, Rajah Charles Brooke, in his will directed that "...no material developments or changes in the State or in the Government thereof and no new works such as public works ... shall be initiated by my son Vyner without first consulting my son Bertram" (Runciman, 1960 : 231). According to his father's injunction, Vyner should spend at least eight months of the year in Sarawak, and during Vyner's absences Bertram was to carry out the duties of Rajah, and when Vyner was in Sarawak, Bertram should remain in England to preside over the Sarawak Advisory Council in Westminster, London. This injunction was galling to Vyner, and his wife Ranee Sylvia, in her writing, never disguised the fact that she was resentful to her father-in-law's official order. In fact, Vyner never seriously followed his father's injunction. He would often go back to England when it was Spring there and return when it was Autumn to spend the Winter months in Sarawak. This invariably meant that Bertram had to leave England in Spring to come back to Sarawak to carry out the duties of Rajah and return to England in Winter. This situation made Bertram's wife, Dayang Muda Gladys, very unhappy. Eventually, when Vyner finally decided to end the Brooke Raj in Sarawak, he had never even discussed the matter with his brother, Bertram, completely disregarding his father's will.

Charles Vyner Brooke ascended comfortably the throne of the Raj of Sarawak which his grand-uncle had founded and his father had built. Neither did he have to worry about the problems of political unrest nor did he have to face the economic problems or the embarrassment of treasury deficits. When he became the Third Rajah of Sarawak in 1917, the government revenue recorded a total amount of \$1,705,292.00 (Sarawak dollars), while the total government expenditure was \$1,359,746.00 (Sarawak dollars), leaving a surplus of more than 300 thousand Sarawak dollars (Pollard, 1972 : 72). This amount at that point in time was a large sum. From then onwards, the economy of Sarawak continued to make considerable progress as could be seen from the figures given below :-

YEAR	REVENUE (Sarawak dollars)
1921	\$2,900,000
1929	\$6,700,000
1933	\$3,500,000 (world economic slump caused fall in revenue)
1940	\$7,500,000

(Runciman, 1960 : 233)

During this period of time, rubber and pepper were the main source of revenue. Later on, the increase in revenue was largely due to the production of oil from the oil-fields near Miri.

Although there were isolated cases of head-hunting during the reign of Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke, there was no longer any major war. The different native tribes and ethnic groups had already realised the importance of peace and stability for the country and the feuding tribes began to make peace. In 1920, Charles Vyner Brooke witnessed a large peace-making ceremony in Simanggang. At this peace-making ceremony the Ibans of Ulu Ai and Engkari, and the Ibans of Skrang, Layar and Lemanak, in front



of the Third Rajah, expressed their decision to end their feuds and make peace with each other.

On 16th November, 1924, the greatest and most significant peace-making ceremony in the history of Sarawak was witnessed by Charles Vyner Brooke in Kapit on the bank of Upper Rajang River. There had been enmity between the Ibans of the Rajang River and its tributaries in Sarawak and the Kayans, Kenyahs and Kajangs of Apoh Kayan and the Baloi River in Dutch Borneo. The Iban Chief, Penghulu Koh, of the Rajang Ibans in Sarawak led a party of 4,200 Ibans and the leader from the Dutch Borneo tribes, Taman Kila, led a group of 960 warriors in 97 boats to come to meet in Kapit. As this involved the people of Sarawak and the people of Dutch East Indies, the Third Rajah of Sarawak and Captain A. F. Molenaar of the Royal Dutch Colonial Light Infantry and Civil Controller of the Apoh Kayan were present as witnesses to this historic peace-making ceremony in Kapit. This unprecedented peace-making not only removed the enmity and war between the tribes but also brought about lasting peace to the Rajang Basin. In appreciation of his services in connection with this peace-making, Penghulu Koh was promoted to the rank of Temenggong. Temenggong Koh was highly respected by the Ibans and he had been very active in the Sarawak political arena for several decades until his death in 1956. About this peace-making, *the Sarawak Gazette Vol. LIV, No.855 of 1st December, 1924*, had made a very detailed report. And 70 years later, on 25th November, 1994, the Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, Datuk Alfred Jabu, officiated at a grand assembly in Kapit to commemorate the peace-making ceremony of 1924.

In 1931, Penghulu Asun led the Ibans of Kanowit, Entabai and Julau along the Rajang River in a revolt against the Rajah and some young Ibans banded together to go head-hunting. The cause of the revolt was economic rather than tribal. Because of the World Slump, the prices of rubber and jungle produce dropped and the Ibans could not pay their taxes. Besides, the clerks insisted on carrying out all regulations causing much discontent among the people who blamed the government for their hardships, resulting in the revolt. Charles Vyner Brooke sent the Sarawak Rangers on

an expedition to put down the revolt. Finally, in December, 1932, Asun surrendered to the government and was exiled to Lundu. In 1933, he moved to live in Kuching until he died in 1958. Asun's revolt caused quite a great influence on the Ibans as he had a big following of Ibans. In order to prevent this rebellious influence from spreading, Charles Vyner Brooke, on 30th December 1931, had the native leaders assembled in front of the Sibiu Resident's Office to pledge their royalty to the Rajah and to promise to maintain peace and harmony among themselves.

Apart from Asun's revolt and the isolated cases of head-hunting, the society in Sarawak generally enjoyed peace and security. Under these favourable circumstances, Sarawak continued to prosper and made considerable achievements in infrastructure development.

Economically and socially the country continued its steady progress. Between 1918 and 1941, the export of rubber, pepper, timber, oil and other products steadily increased, and the people of Sarawak were better off and could afford manufactured goods like bicycles, radios, better clothing and machinery. Like the increase in exports, imports had also increased, and as businesses prospered government revenue also grew. This enabled the Sarawak government to develop public services and other basic infrastructure.

In 1924, the Chartered Bank of England opened a branch in Kuching, providing services in currency exchange in order to meet the increasing commercial and banking needs of Sarawak. This had provided a lot of convenience for the commercial sector as well as the individuals.

In the 1930's, Sarawak was affected by the world economic recession, and in 1933 the Sarawak government even had the half cent coinage made for circulation. However, several years later, the economy of Sarawak picked up, with an increase in exports.

Among the improvements in infrastructure made by the Sarawak Government were chronologically as follows :-

On 15th June 1923 the Power Station which was erected at the site of the present Electra House provided electricity to the town.

In 1924 the Satok Suspension Bridge which was completed carried the pipes with water supply from Matang for the people in Kuching town.

In 1925 Sarawak had eight wireless stations in service, and by 1926 this number was increased to fifteen.

Hospital and medical services were improved. In 1925 Sarawak had its own government dentist. In 1926 the Rajah Charles Brooke Memorial Hospital for the lepers at the 13th Mile, Penrissen Road, provided medical care to the lepers who had been moved from the Leper Settlement on Satang Island, off the coast of Sarawak. In 1928, the government General Hospital at Rock Road was completed.

In 1931 the road joining Kuching and Serian was completed (*Supplement to Sarawak Government Gazette, 2nd January, 1931*). On 26th September, 1938 the airstrip at the 7th Mile was opened. In December 1932 the British Empire Broadcasting Station began its regular transmission to Sarawak, and radios became very popular in Kuching.

In legal reforms, a Judicial Commissioner was appointed in 1928 to take over the judicial duties from the Rajah who, prior to this, had presided over most of the court sessions. After 1930, the position of a Chief Justice was instituted to hear important cases. In 1929 the Sarawak Government appointed a Secretary for Chinese Affairs who dealt with the Chinese community through the Kapitans or Headmen.

Sarawak under the Third Rajah had improved culturally and in education. Unlike his father, Charles Vyner Brooke was friendly, fun-loving and easy-going by nature. He took great care about his appearance. His wife, Ranee Sylvia, was both intelligent and lively, and often organised various social activities. So, under these young and fun-loving rulers, the lives of the European officers and their wives were happier and more relaxed. In 1920 they established a Recreational Club. Later, Charles Vyner Brooke built a cinema, at the present site of the Sarawak Foundation Building or Bangunan Yayasan Sarawak, and named it Sylvia Cinema after his wife. This cinema became the centre of relaxation for the Kuching people.

Regarding the development of education during this period of time, we can gauge it from the figures provided by the Education Department of Sarawak as follows:-

TYPE OF SCHOOL	NO. of SCHOOLS	
	1930	1938
Anglican Mission School	13	11
Roman Catholic Mission School	15	27
Seventh Day Adventist Mission School	1	3
Government Aided Malay School	24	33
Chinese Community School	91	144
Total No. of Schools :	145	219

( Journal of Malaysian Historical Society, June 1980 : 11)

Just as Sarawak was making steady progress in development in a state of internal peace and security, the war clouds loomed over the sky of Sarawak.

On 7th July 1937, when the all-out resistance war against Japan broke out in China, the Chinese in Sarawak like the other overseas or Nanyang Chinese, immediately responded by setting up committees to raise money for the China Relief Funds. A group of young Chinese men from Sarawak joined the other overseas Chinese, more than 3,000 in number, and went to China to fight the Japanese in the Resistance War. The German army over-ran Poland on 1st September 1939, and two days later Britain declared war against Germany, thus the Second World War broke out. As Sarawak was a British Protectorate by the Treaty of 1888, the Sarawak Government began raising funds for the British war effort. In the meantime, plans were being made for the celebrations of the Centenary of the Brooke rule in Sarawak. From August 1941 onwards, all sorts of celebration activities were going on in every

part of the country, with the grand celebrations in the Capital, Kuching, on 24th, 25th and 26th September of the same year. The climax of the Centenary Celebrations was the ceremony held on 26th September, when Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdillah presented the "Sword of State" to the Rajah, followed by the leaders of the various communities with their gifts. Then, the leaders of the Malay, Dayak and Chinese communities read their addresses and pledged their loyalty to the Rajah. The whole ceremony was carried out with great solemnity and enthusiasm, showing beyond doubt the affection and loyalty of the various races of Sarawak had for the Rajah and the Brooke Raj. The Rajah on his part had issued a proclamation to mark the end of an absolute monarchy and the establishment of a Constitution for Sarawak.

It deserves mention that the Rajah had already revived the highest Malay title, Datuk Patinggi, since April 1937, and bestowed it on the Datuk Bandar, Haji Abdillah. Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdillah was a Malay leader much respected by all the races in Sarawak. On 15th April 1946, when Charles Vyner Brooke took over the government from the British Military Administration, it was Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdillah who presented the "Sword of State" to the Rajah symbolically handing over to him the power of State. Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdillah opposed most strongly to the cession of Sarawak to Britain. The Sarawak Government had given him a sum of \$12,000 (Sarawak dollars) but he returned it considering it a bribe (Heaton, 1974 : 39). His house at Haji Taha Road became the assembly place for the anti-cessionists. Later, his descendants sold it to the Chinese Community in Kuching who turned it into the Chinese Consulate for the Chinese Consul in Sarawak. It is now used as Zhong Hua (Chung Hwa) Middle School No.4, along the present Haji Taha Road, Kuching..

Shortly after the Centenary Celebrations, Charles Vyner Brooke went with his family to Sydney, Australia, via Malaya. On 8th December, 1941, when the Japanese attacked the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, both U.S.A. and Britain declared war on Japan, thus the outbreak of the Pacific War which spread to Sarawak. On 16th December the Japanese occupied Miri and on 19th December the Japanese bombers attacked Kuching, dropping

bombs from Ban Hock Road to Fort Margherita. The latter was not bombed but 33 civilians died and 78 were injured as a result of the air raid (Pollard, 1972 : 87). On 24th December, Kuching was occupied by the Japanese. At about four in the afternoon, the Sarawak Government surrendered to the Japanese forces. Meanwhile, Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke was in Australia, the Tuan Muda, Bertram Brooke was in Britain, so, the Chief Secretary of Sarawak, Captain Le Gros Clark had to stay to shoulder the responsibility and to await events. Many of the European government officers who had wives and children in the country decided to stay. They were all taken prisoners and like the other prisoners of war suffered atrocious treatment under the Japanese. The Prisoners of War Camp at the present site of the Batu Lintang Teachers' College, Kuching, housed several thousands of them and more than a thousand died there. About the appalling conditions of the Batu Lintang P.O.W. Camp, Agnes Newton Keith in her book entitled "*Three Came Home*" had documented the conditions and life in the Camp during the Japanese Occupation. The people of Sarawak under the Japanese reign of terror led a life of darkness and starvation for 3 years and 8 months. Even just before the end of the war, the Japanese forces carried out major arrests and killed many more people. The Chief Secretary of Sarawak, Captain Le Gros Clark, and Consul Dr Zhuo Wanlai (Cho Wan Lai), the Chinese Consul of North Borneo (Sabah), together with three other European prisoners were taken to North Borneo and brutally killed at Keningau on 6th July 1945. It was only 1 month and 9 days before the Japanese surrendered, and besides, the Australian Army of the Allied Forces had already, on 10th June 1945, liberated Labuan Island and Brunei Bay.

On 6th and 9th August 1945, the Americans dropped two atomic bombs respectively at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, forcing Japan to surrender unconditionally on 15th August 1945. At about 2.30 p.m. on 11th September 1945, Major General Hiryo Yamamura, Commanding General of all the Japanese forces in Kuching, signed the document of surrender in the presence of the Australian 9th Division Commanding Officer, Brigadier-General Thomas Charles Eastick, to whom he also surrendered his sword.

on board the *H.M.A.S. Kapunda* at Pending. Immediately afterwards, Brigadier-General Eastick, Captain Jennings, Senior U.S. Navy Officer, Colonei Suga and an interpreter went to the Batu Lintang Camp where he read out General Wootten's liberation message. Thus, 11th September 1945 was commemorated as Liberation Day in Sarawak. On the following day, Major General Sir George Wootten landed in Kuching to formally accept the surrender from the Japanese forces. From Liberation Day onwards Sarawak was administered by the British Military Administration until 14th April 1946, when Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke returned to Kuching. He was warmly welcomed by the different races of Sarawak. In a ceremony held on 15th April 1946, he took over the government from the British Military Administration.

However, Charles Vyner Brooke had decided to cede Sarawak to Britain, and had his wishes conveyed to the people of Sarawak. His reasons were that most of the buildings in Sarawak had been destroyed in the war and were badly in need of reconstruction and his government was financially unable to restore Sarawak to its pre-war conditions and that only the British Government was able to meet the needs of the people. In fact, another problem he faced was the question of an heir, and the power struggle among the Brookes. Charles Vyner Brooke had three daughters and no son, and according to the Sarawak Laws, only a male child could inherit the throne, so the next in line would be his younger brother, Bertram Brooke, the Tuan Muda, who had been a threat to his position in the past. But, Bertram was only two years younger than Charles Vyner Brooke, quite frail in health and obviously would not be able to succeed him. So, the next in line would be Bertram's son, Anthony Brooke, whom Charles Vyner Brooke never liked. He had twice in 1939 and 1944 respectively bestowed on this nephew the title of Rajah Muda, and twice he had stripped him of it.

Anthony Brooke was born in 1912. In 1936, he came to serve in Sarawak, and had been the District Officer in the Third Division, now Sibiu Division. He was a man of strong character and had strong views about the administration of Sarawak, some irregularities of which were pointed out to the Rajah. He knew he

would be the next in line to succession, so he was seriously interested in the question of inheritance. When Charles Vyner Brooke made known his intention of ceding Sarawak to Britain, Anthony Brooke and his father, Bertram Brooke, strongly objected.

The Brooke Raj had ruled Sarawak for more than a hundred years and had the support and respect of all the races. Actually, the government of Sarawak at that point in time was the most liberal and effective one in the whole of South East Asia. Now, Charles Vyner Brooke suddenly wanted to end it, much to the surprise of his subjects. Naturally, the people of Sarawak were unhappy and puzzled about it. There was a common feeling of resentment against this change. As the Malay community had enjoyed very close relationship with the Brooke Raj and the Malay noblemen like the Datuks who had been helping the Rajah to run the country had held very high positions and power in the Sarawak Government, the Malay community were fiercely against cession. During that period of time the political situation was such that the political thinking of the people was likewise. Therefore, if we use the present political views to criticize the political attitude of the people then, we tend to be too subjective and unfair to the people in the past.

The vital meetings of the Council Negeri took place on the 16th and 17th May 1946 to discuss the post-war problems faced by Sarawak and the country's future. When the question of cession was raised, it met with strong opposition from many quarters. The Dayak and Chinese representatives expressed their decision to respect the Rajah's wishes whereas the Malay representatives and the European officers were divided into two camps. After the Third Reading of the Cession Bill, the figures were nineteen in favour of and sixteen against cession, thus with a difference of three votes the Cession Bill was passed. Then on 20th May 1946 the Supreme Council in Sarawak authorised the Rajah to execute the instrument of cession. The British Government passed a Bill accepting the cession of Sarawak and Sarawak became a British Colony on 1st July 1946. The rule of the Brooke Raj founded by Rajah James Brooke in 1841 finally ended after a period of 105 years including the 3 years and 8 months of the Japanese Occupation.



Once cession became a reality, the anti-cessionists started their public demonstrations, wanting to repeal it so as to reinstate the status of Sarawak as an independent nation and Anthony Brooke to be sent back to Sarawak. The colonial government not only ignored their requests, it also forbade Anthony Brooke to enter Sarawak and issued official circular to warn the government officers who were involved in the anti-cession movement. As a result, about 338 teachers and government officers resigned en bloc in protest. Among the 152 Malay teachers, 87 quitted teaching, resulting in the closure of 22 schools (Heaton, *The Anti-Cession Movement In Sarawak*, 1974 : 45). When in despair, the anti-cessionists took direct action. This happened on 3rd December, 1949. When the second British Governor of Sarawak, Mr Duncan Stewart, made his first visit to Sibü, he was stabbed by Rosli Bin Dhoby, a young Malay teacher, aged 19. He died a week later in a Singapore hospital. This incident made the anti-cessionists quieten down, and Anthony Brooke telegraphed them urging them not to demonstrate again. So, the anti-cession agitation gradually calmed down. However, under the impact of international political surge the anti-colonialist movement emerged. Later, this movement developed into a fierce armed struggle that lasted until 10 years after the Formation of Malaysia.

Now, the Brooke Raj has become history but their reign of Sarawak had left some far-reaching influence. An important example was the opening up of the Rajang Basin by the Second Rajah, Charles Brooke.



Fig. 50 Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke, the 3rd White Rajah (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 51 Ranee Sylvia Brooke, wife of the 3rd Rajah of Sarawak. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 52 July 22, 1918, Rajah Vyner Brooke and Ranee Sylvia Brooke on their way to the Installation Ceremony, following behind is his younger brother Bertram Brooke. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 53 Rajah Vyner Brooke with Government Officers and Native Community Leaders in front of the Astana after his official Installation Ceremony. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 54 The Historic Peace-making Ceremony between the Kayan, Kenyah and Iban tribes held in Kapit on November 16, 1924. The native tribal leaders slaughtered pigs, an Iban custom, as a sign of their determination to maintain peace. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 55 The Commemorative Plaque in front of Fort Sylvia marking the 70th Anniversary of the historic Peace-making Ceremony held in Kapit on November 25, 1994. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 56 Sylvia Cinema built by the 3rd Rajah and opened on November 24, 1934, now renovated and known as the Sarawak Foundation Building.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 57 Kuching Airport at Mile 7 officially opened on September 26, 1938.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 58 Kuching Mosque renovated in 1932 but demolished in 1968.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 59 On 30th December 1931, in front of the Sibü Government Building, Rajah Vyner Brooke met an assembly of Native Chiefs who pledged their loyalty and decision to maintain peace in order to check Penghulu Asun's rebellious force from spreading.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

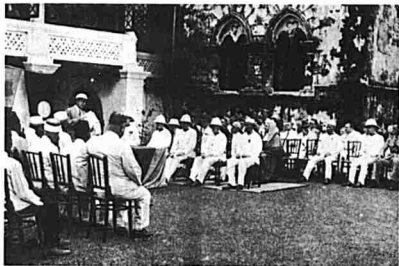


Fig. 60 Rajah Vyner Brooke in the presence of the high-ranking officers and dignitaries announced the establishment of the New Constitution for Sarawak on 31st March 1941 in front of the Astana.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

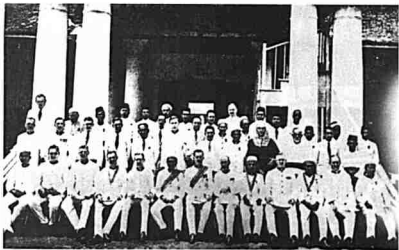


Fig. 61 The first and last State Legislative Council held under the New Constitution of Sarawak in November, 1941, chaired by the State Secretary C.D. Le Gros Clark, on his left was Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdillah. Just before the Japanese Occupation the Rajah left for Australia but C.D. Le Gros Clark stayed behind to take care of the State affairs and was taken prisoner. On 6th July 1945, about 1 month 9 days before the Japanese Surrender, he was brutally killed together with the Chinese Consul to North Borneo Dr Zhuo Huanlai at Keningau, Sabah.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 62 In October 1940, a delegation of Muslim Chinese from China led by Ibrahim Ma visited Sarawak to rally support for the Anti-Japanese Movement. Picture shows they were warmly welcomed by the people of different races in Sibü. Nearest to the camera were members of the Malay Union Club of Kampung Nyabor, Sibü.

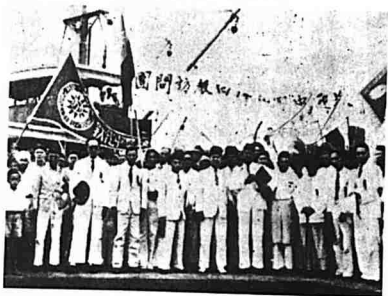


Fig. 63 The Muslim Chinese Delegates from China being welcomed by people of all races at the Sibü Wharf.





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Fig. 64 On 4th May 1945, Dr Zhuo Huanlai, the Chinese Consul to North Borneo, posing with the members of the Sibu Fuzhou Merchants Recreation Club during his visit to Sibu.



Fig. 65 The Memorial Monument set up by the Government of China in the Xishang Gardens of Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China, in memory of more than 1,000 of the Patriotic Overseas Chinese Youths who sacrificed their lives in defence of their Motherland against the Japanese. In response to their leaders' call to save China, many overseas Chinese youths numbering more than 3,000 including 3 batches of about 100 altogether from Sarawak, joined the Anti-Japanese War in China. The lists of the names of these patriotic youths are now kept in the Guangdong Provincial Archive, China.

(Photo: Pemanca Hong Ruolong, Lundu, 1995)



Fig. 66 The Inscriptions on the Memorial Monument in memory of the overseas Chinese youths who sacrificed their lives in the Anti-Japanese War.  
(Supplied by: Dr Zhuang Yunguang of Kunming City, Yunnan Province, China, 1995)

## CHAPTER 6

### NATIVES OF THE RAJANG BASIN

The Rajang River, the longest in Sarawak, has many tributaries which pour their waters into it making it the largest and the longest river in Malaysia. Water transport is one of the chief means of communication in Sarawak, so people tend to live by the rivers or close to them as the rivers provide the routes for them to travel and to transport their goods from one town to the other. As a result, towns have sprung up along the rivers giving the Rajang Basin the potential for further development. Because of its vast area with plentiful produce and its hardworking people, the Rajang Basin, in the last hundred years, has made tremendous achievements and is destined for further development in the future like the mighty Rajang River advancing towards the distance.

The Rajang is about 350 miles long, measuring from the source of its great tributary, the Balui River. The rapid current makes its way downriver and breaks up into several rivers which drain into the South China Sea. They form a great delta between Rajang Town in the south and Igan Town in the north. The river banks are swampy where mangrove trees thrive well.

About 16 miles from the mouth of the Rajang is the headland, Tanjung Manis, with a deep commercial port that can accommodate more than 10 liners, each with a tonnage of 10,000 tonnes or more. Now, it is being developed into a modern port and an industrial area which will become a prosperous town in the Rajang Basin. The river town, Rajang, is about 4 miles from the river mouth. About 24 miles upriver from Rajang Town is Sarikei and 11 miles from it is Bintangor (formerly Binatang). By boat from the mouth of the river to Sibu, the administrative headquarters of the Third Division (now Sibu Division), takes a distance of 65 miles. Sibu is not only the political but also the economic and cultural centre of the Rajang Basin. Though its development is somewhat limited by geographical factors, it is the biggest and the most prosperous in the Rajang Basin.

Kanowit, a town with a long history, is about 32 miles from Sibü. About 30 miles upriver is another town called Song. Going upriver for a further 88 miles from Sibü is the town, Kapit, which is the biggest town in the upper Rajang Basin. Like Sarikei, the headquarters of the Sixth or Sarikei Division, Kapit has now become the headquarters of a new division, the Seventh or Kapit Division.

From the mouth of the Rajang, river steamers can ply along it for about 170 miles upriver because it is deep and wide. The land on both banks of this stretch of the river is rich in natural resources; its agriculture is well developed and business is flourishing - it is the golden basin of the Rajang. Upriver from Kanowit, is the hill region; the land rises steadily and the river becomes narrower with its numerous tributaries flowing between steep hills covered with dense forests. Kapit which faces the river has the forested hills and mountains as its backdrop, making it a holiday scenic spot of the area. From Kapit onwards the river branches out into two rivers, Batang (River) Baleh with its tributaries in the south and Batang Balui with its numerous tributaries north of the Hose Mountains. After passing the Pelagus Rapids at the 170th Mile-stone, a boat can travel for another 60 miles, followed by 5 miles long of rapids, after which a boat can proceed for another 50 miles. This is where the mountain region begins and valleys are so steep and water so swift that it is unfavourable for water transport of any kind.

The Rajang River and its tributaries drain about half the size of the total land area of Sarawak. As the scenery changes from the lowland coastal region to the hilly region of the upper reaches, the ethnic groups and their cultures are also different. Therefore, the Rajang Basin can claim to be a place that is picturesque, culturally rich and abounding in natural resources.

The main ethnic groups living in the Rajang Basin are the Melanaus, Malays, Ibans, Kayans and Kenyahs, Punans and Penans.

### **(1) Melanaus**

The Melanaus originally called themselves A-Likou or Liko but the name 'Melanau', meaning people of the sea coast, was

what the Brunei people called them. It appeared in the books written by the European as early as the 16th century. Nowadays, the name 'Melanaus' is more popularly used (Morris, 1989 : 181).

The Melanaus originated from Kalimantan, Indonesia, and had very close relationship with the other natives races such as the Kayans and Bidayus (Land Dayaks). Long ago, they settled down on the coastal region that stretched for about 20 miles from the mouth of the Rajang River to the mouth of the Baram River. They concentrated mostly in the coastal region around Mukah, Oya, Dalat and Igan at lower Rajang.

Like the Dayaks, the Melanaus used to live in longhouses, but gradually they abandoned them and built detached houses to live in. In some places, for example at Medong, the Melaunau tall houses are built on posts very high from the ground, mainly for safety from floods and pirates.

The Melanaus live by the coast where the flat, swampy land supports the growth of sago palms. These geographic factors have determined their economic situation and lifestyle. Fishing and sago growing are their main occupations. They are skilled sailors, fishermen and boat-builders. Their production of sago flour has accounted for three quarters of the world production, making it one of the main cash crops of Sarawak. Besides, they are also involved in logging. Their woven handicraft, like the baskets and sun-hats, is famous and uniquely beautiful.

The land along the coastal region of the Third and Fourth Divisions where the Melanaus are mostly found had been ruled by the Brunei Sultan for about four centuries. Many Brunei officers and businessmen married the local Melanau women and produced a new breed of Muslims. In addition, because of the influence of the Malays, many Melanaus became Muslims. But, they still retain their unique culture as shown by the design of their new mosque in Mukah. Some Melanaus have become Christians while others still adhere to their native Liko religion.

## **(2) The Malays**

The Sarawak Malays believed that they originated from Minangkabau in Sumatra, Indonesia, but others said they came from Java, while still others believed they came from Johore, West

Malaysia. Recently, some people believed the Malays might have come from the Yunnan Province of China.

In Sarawak, the Malays are the most advanced natives. As they are believers of the Islamic religion, they put great importance on their religious education, so their children generally receive a basic language and religious education. Because they belong to the same religion, use the same language and stay together, they are very united and co-operative. Upon this basis, the Malays have great influence politically and are a great force in the government. Even during the reign of the Brookes, the administrative power was in the hands of the Malays; in the government the administrative officers and armed forces, the Malays made up the main part. In fact, during the reign of the Brookes, the influence of the Malays was greater and more far-reaching than the riotous period under the Brunei Sultan.

In Sarawak, the Malays concentrate mainly in the First and Fifth Divisions. In the Third Division, apart from the descendants of the Brunei migrants living there, the Malays had moved from the western part of Sarawak to settle at the delta region and along the mouth of the Rajang River. But, they do not concentrate in one area like the Melanaus; they are found in Kapit, 150 miles upriver from the mouth of the Rajang.

Most of the Malays live by the riverbanks where the land is low and wet, so their houses are built on stilts to be safe from dampness and high tides. These geographic conditions also determine their way of life. Their main occupations are fishing and padi-growing. They are also rubber planters and businessmen. While the Malay men are good sailors and fishermen, the Malay women are expert at weaving sarongs and making baskets and ataps. They are good in performing art like traditional singing and dancing. Nowadays, many Malays are government officers as well as serving in the police and armed forces.

Generally, the Malays are optimistic, sincere and generous, well-mannered, willing to help others and quite humorous and easy to get along with.

In the Third Division, the Malays and the Muslim Melanaus tend to live in the same area, and thus to a great extent they are

very much integrated as a group.

### (3) The Ibans

The Ibans of the Rajang Basin came from the land drained by the Kapuas River and its tributaries in West Borneo. Today, there are still a lot of Ibans living there. On the walls of the Pontianak Museum in Kalimantan, Indonesia, are relief carvings depicting the lifestyle of the Ibans and their particular cultural features showing the influence they have had on the local area. During their exodus to the north, the Ibans crossed the central mountainous ranges of Borneo, followed the Lupar River downstream, and some settled along the Skrang River while others went west towards the sea and settled at Sebuyau, Samarahan and Lundu. One group of Ibans went northeast to settle along the Rajang where many more joined them. The Rajah of Sarawak at that time had attempted to stop them from going to the Rajang by confining them to the Lupar River basin. However, the Rajah's plan failed, resulting in an influx of Ibans who chased away the original settlers there.

To the Ibans, rice is a staple food and growing padi is an important event which forms the centre of their living. Therefore, they have to find a lot of land for shifting cultivation of padi so as to get enough staple food.

The Ibans are a communal race and their longhouse is their centre of activities. Their social structure has a rather democratic system whereby the leaders are elected by the people. Every longhouse has a Tuai Rumah or Headman. In this hierarchy, there are the Penghulu, the Pemanca and the Temenggong who are their tribal leaders respected by their people. Their social structure is different from the class-system of the Kayans and Kenyahs.

The Ibans are mainly engaged in padi-growing, hunting, fishing and collecting wild fruits and vegetables for food. They also collect jungle produce such as illipenuts or engkabang, damar, rattan, and jelutong for sale in town. In addition, they are involved in logging and making handicraft for sale.

In recent years, many Ibans have come to live in town where they are working as government officers, in the police and the armed forces and in many different occupations in the towns. In

Sibu, the number of Ibans is increasing very rapidly.

About the history of Iban migration, we can get a detailed record in "*The Westward Migration of the Sea Dayaks*" by Benedict Sandin, published in the Sarawak Museum Journal, June 1956 issue.

However, where the Ibans originally came from is yet to be verified. Once a native Taiwanese came to Sibu to do missionary work, he was able to use his native tongue to communicate with the local Ibans. This is something interesting. When the author was working in Tebakang, his Bidayuh colleagues told him that they could understand what the Li Zu (tribe), the natives of Hainan Island, were saying on television. Whether the natives of South East Asia have any relation with the minority ethnic groups of southwest China is an ethnological question worth studying.

#### **(4) The Kayans and Kenyahs**

The Kayans and the Kenyahs are two different ethnic groups, but, as their settlements are near to each other and their cultures are quite similar, some ethnologists often put them as a common group known collectively as the 'Orang Ulu' or 'People of the Interior', mainly because of geographical demarcation.

The Kayans and Kenyahs originally came from Sungai or River Kayan valley in the eastern part of Borneo. They followed the Kayan River, crossed the Border Range or the Central Mountain Range from the Indonesian side to Sarawak and settled along the Batang (River) Balui, the northern tributary of the Rajang River. The history of the migration of the Kayans to the Rajang Basin was related by Penghulu Hang Nyipa in an article entitled '*Migrations of the Kayan People*' published in the June 1956 issue of the Sarawak Museum Journal.

The Kayan, Kenyah and Kejaman together formed a mighty group of tribal peoples. When the Ibans entered the Rajang Basin, the two groups fought many fierce battles over the ownership of land. Their feud lasted a long time. Later on, partly because the Kayans together with the Kenyahs and Kejamans objected to paying government taxes and partly because they harboured the three men - Sekalai, Sawin and Matalip - who were wanted for the murder of two Englishmen, Charles Fox and Henry Steel, at Kanowit,



Charles Brooke in 1863 led a large scale expedition against the Kayan-Kenyah-Kejaman group. On this expedition, Charles Brooke enlisted the help of the Ibans, who were the arch-enemies of the Kayans, as well as an armed force of 15,000 made up of mainly Ibans and Malays to suppress the Kayan-Kenyah-Kejaman rebels along the Upper Rajang. The latter were badly defeated, their number very much reduced and they had to retreat to the upper reaches of the Rajang River while some of them migrated to the Baram River basin.

Both the Kayans and Kenyahs are very conscious about social class. Although all the people live in the same longhouse, they occupy different portions of the longhouse according to their social class. The Chief lives in a big room in the middle, on both sides of the big room live those whose ranks are lower than the Chief, and those in the lowest ranks live in the extreme ends of the longhouse.

The structure and design of the Kayan and Kenyah longhouses are quite different from those of the Bidayuhs and Ibans. They do not have an open platform like the 'tanju' in an Iban or Bidayuh longhouse. The main posts are huge and tall and are often carved with beautiful designs while the whole structure itself conforms almost strictly to modern architectural requirements.

Both the Kayans and Kenyahs are skilled at wood carving and making good knives and spears, and fine blow-pipes with darts. They build fine, strong long boats and they are clever at guiding their boats safely through dangerous rapids.

The Kayan and Kenyah women's costumes are beautiful and their head-dresses are made of fine beads with intricate designs. They wear heavy round or cone-shaped ear-rings made of copper or bronze. Their movements are generally graceful and elegant, shown especially in their famous Feather Dance. They are musical people; their Bamboo Band music and Sapeh music is well-known.

#### **(5) The Punans or Penans**

In the forests of the region drained by the Balui River and the Belaga River, tributaries of the Rajang, live the forest people called the Punans and Penans. The Kayans call these nomadic peo-

ple 'Punans' while the Kenyahs call them 'Penans'. In fact, they are two different groups of people; the Punans are more settled than the Penans. Generally, they are referred to as Penans. They most probably came from the south of the Borneo Island, and are close to the Kenyahs.

Some of these Penans have already settled down, but others are still leading a nomadic life in the forests. They hunt animals, collect wild vegetables and wild sago for their staple food. They do not stay long at one place; when there is no more animal to hunt or wild vegetables to collect, they move on to another part of the forests. Because they do not stay long at a place, their huts are very simple, often made of branches with its roof made of leaves and the walls made of barks or leaves of trees. Normally, they travel in groups of about 20 to 40.

The Penans are fair complexioned because they live in the forests all the time and they are not used to strong sunlight. They are not accustomed to socialising with others and strangers make them uneasy. But, in the forests they are very agile and move about without a sound; these are the qualities of a hunter. They are also adept at making blow-pipes and darts which they use for hunting birds and animals.

The Penans also have their market day. They use the system of knot-tying in order to keep the appointed date. On the appointed day, they will bring their goods such as dried gall-bladders of monkeys or bears, rhinoceros's horns, birds' nests, damar, rattan and other jungle produce as well as their finely made rattan mats. They will sell their goods to the Kayans, Kenyahs or Chinese businessmen, and with the cash from their sale they will buy their necessities such as salt, matches, tobacco, clothes and metal utensils.

The Penans' livelihood depends on the forests, so they are opposed to logging and destruction of the forests. Since they depend on the existence of forests, they will not clear the trees or burn them in order to plant padi or other crops. Unless they can completely change their traditional thinking and way of life, it will be quite difficult for them to adjust to the life of an advanced modern society.

From the above description, we can see that from the mouth of the Rajang till its source, there live different ethnic groups each with their own unique culture. It was only from the mid-nineteenth century onwards that the Chinese immigrants started coming to the Rajang Basin. Among them were different dialects of people from southern China; they were the Minnan (Hockien), Fuzhou (Foochow), Guangdong (Cantonese) and Xinghua (Henghua). With their coming, the number of ethnic groups has increased, making the cultures of the Rajang Basin more colourful. More importantly, following the arrival of the Chinese immigrants agriculture developed very fast, business flourished and towns sprang up everywhere. At the same time, more formal, modern education and culture started to take root. Hence, before we can understand the development of the Rajang of today, we should first have an overview of the situation of the Rajang in the mid-19th Century.



Fig. 67 Picture shows the chimney of the Sago Processing Factory built by Borneo Company in 1865. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 68 Traditional method of processing sago by Melanau women. (Photo: Lim Yu Seng)

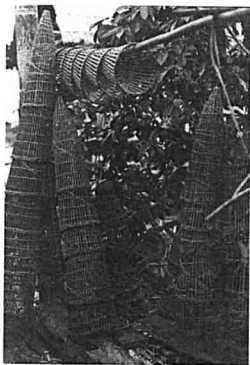


Fig. 69 Fish-trap or  
Bubu made of bamboo  
and rattan.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 70 A Melanau woman  
emptying the fish from a  
bamboo cage where the fish  
had been kept alive until  
needed.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 71 Melanau women drying the fish they caught.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 72 A Malay harvesting flowers from the nipah palm for making sugar. The nipah palm which grows wild in the swamps of the coastal region has high economic value. Its leaves are used for making thatches for walls and roof, its stalks for stringing meat in making satay, and salt is extracted from its roots and trunk.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 73 A woman making atap or nipah thatches which were once commonly used for roof but now only very remote rural folks use them.



Fig. 74 A Melanau making nipah-salt from nipah palm in Paloh.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig 75 The author visiting an Iban longhouse on the bank of the Kapuas River in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, believed to be the original home of the Ibans who migrated north to Sarawak. The present Pontianak Museum in Kalimantan, Indonesia, has very colourful Iban culture.

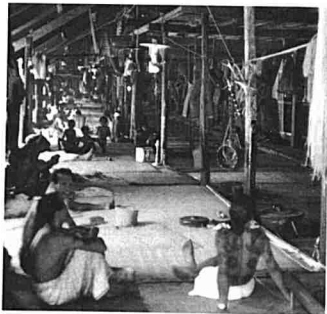


Fig. 76  
An Iban  
Longhouse  
in Sarawak.  
(Photo: K.F.  
Wong)





Fig. 77 Rice is the staple food of all the races, and the Ibans, except the nomadic Penans, plant rice. Picture shows the traditional shifting cultivation of hill padi where Iban men burning the clearing for planting rice. (Photo: Hedda Morrison)

Fig. 78 The Muruts planting rice: the man walking in front uses a stick to make holes in the ground and into each hole the woman puts a few grains while covering it with a thin layer of soil; a few days later the young seedlings will appear. (Photo: Hedda Morrison)





Fig 79 Iban men  
making rice  
barns with barks  
of trees.  
(Photo: Hedda  
Morrison)

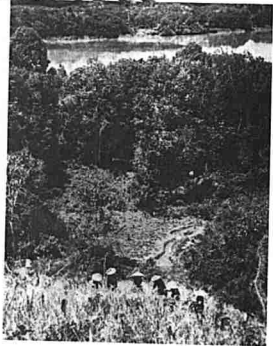


Fig 80 Iban women  
harvesting rice.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 81 An Iban woman  
cooking rice in bamboo.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 82 An Iban family having a meal.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)

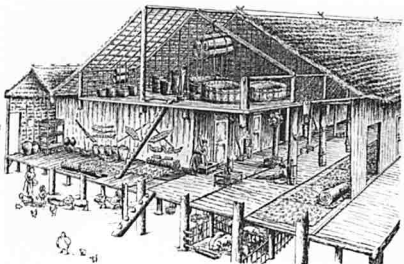


Fig. 83 Plan of a typical Iban Longhouse



Fig. 84 A Kejaman girl with tattooed patterns on her body. Tattooing is part of the traditional culture of the Dayaks, and their tattooed patterns very often have specific meanings.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 85 Boatmen pushing their boat across rapids which are numerous in the upper reaches of the Rajang River.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 86 A Kayan longhouse in Upper Rajang.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 87 The inside of a Kenyah longhouse at Belaga.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 88 A Kenyah grandmother with her grandchild.  
(Photo: K.F.Wong)



Fig. 89 A monkey is not only a pet to the Penans but also a good helper ridding its master's hair of lice.  
(Photo: K.F. Wong)



Fig. 90 A simple Penan hut, its owner is seen preparing poisoned darts for hunting.  
(Photo: K.F. Wong)

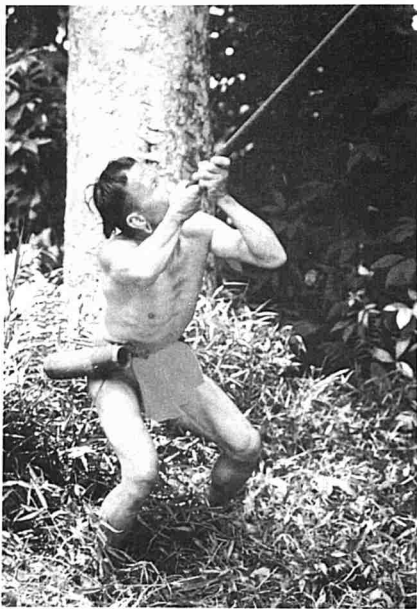
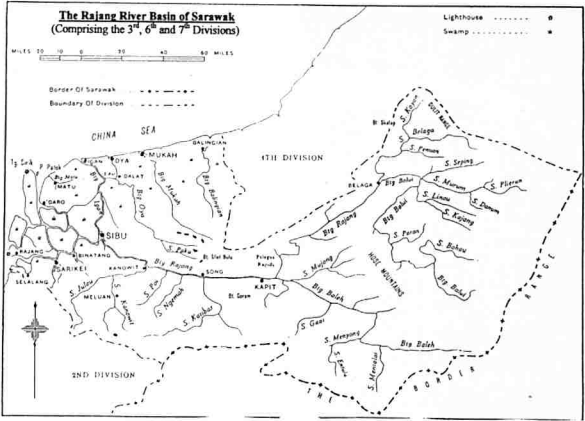


Fig. 91 A Penan using a blow-pipe with poisoned darts for hunting birds and animals.  
(Photo: K.F. Wong)





Fig. 92 Penans bringing jungle produce for barter-trade on market-day.  
(Photo: K.F. Wong)



Appendix III: Map of the Rajang River Basin, Sarawak.  
 (3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> Divisions of Sarawak)

## CHAPTER 7

### EARLY CHINESE SETTLERS AT THE LOWER RAJANG

After the mid-nineteenth century, a great number of Chinese came to settle in Sarawak. This was brought about by two important factors. Firstly, Sarawak under the White Rajahs became politically stable and peaceful which attracted various races from the neighbouring regions. Secondly, the White Rajahs encouraged and arranged for the Chinese settlers to come to cultivate the land for agricultural purposes and to start various businesses in order to develop the economy of Sarawak.

Charles Brooke had high regards for the Chinese settlers and the contributions they made. He wrote in 1866, "*John Chinaman as a race are an excellent set of fellows, and a poor show would these Eastern countries make without their energetic presence*" (Brooke, 1866 : 84).

In fact, the main revenue of the Brooke Raj came from the Chinese businesses, agriculture, mining and other economic activities. The White Rajahs wanted the Chinese to play the economic role which, they were aware, would directly affect the survival and the development of the Brooke Raj. "*The Chinese role was economical, for at all times the Brookes depended on Chinese traders and cash croppers for the great majority of the revenues*" (Pringle, 1971 : 62).

In order to attract the Chinese to come to develop the economy of Sarawak, especially along the Rajang Basin, Rajah Charles Brooke put an advertisement in The Sarawak Gazette printed on 29th November, 1880. Quoted below is the Sarawak Government Notification from Rajah Charles Brooke.

#### **Government Notification**

I Charles Brooke, Rajah make known the following terms which the Government of Sarawak hereby agrees to fulfill with any

Company of Chinese who will engage to bring into the Rejang River Chinese settlers with wives and families numbering not less than Three hundred souls, who will employ themselves in gardening and farming paddy or in other cultivations -

1<sup>st</sup> - The Government will provide land sufficient for their requirements free of charge.

2<sup>nd</sup> - The Government on first starting will build them temporary houses, and make a good path to their landing place.

3<sup>rd</sup> - The Government will give them one pasu of rice per man or woman a month and a little salt and half the amount to every child for the first 12 months.

4<sup>th</sup> - The Government engage to keep up steam communication with Kuching and carry any necessaries for these settlers on the most reasonable terms.

5<sup>th</sup> - The Government will build a Police Station near them to protect them and assist in making themselves understood in the native language and generally look after them.

6<sup>th</sup> - In carrying out the above engagements the Government expect the said Chinese will permanently settle in the territory of Sarawak.

Kuching, 11th November, 1880.

**(Note: 1 pasu = 14.4 kilogrammes approx.)**

It was under the terms and conditions laid down by the Rajah that arrangements were made for about 500 Chinese to come to cultivate the land along the Lower Rajang reaches. Later on many of these Chinese moved to Sibuan area (Runciman, 1960 :

208). According to Mr Deng Yuqiang, an information officer brought up in Sibul, in the period before the Second World War there was a considerable number of Chinese living in these coastal towns - Belawai, Matu, Daro, Balinggin and Dalat. Among them the majority were Zao An, a Fujian dialect of Southern China. These Chinese could be the descendants of these early Chinese immigrants.

However, the immigration of Chinese to the Rajang Basin could well be thirty or forty years prior to 1880, as recorded in the local community record. It is believed that in the 1840's, several families from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou in Southern Fujian left China by sailing boat and came to Kanowit. They built houses of atap or thatched roof and settled down there, forming the beginning of a village. Eventually more Chinese came to live there and developed it into a riverine commercial town. Boats from Singapore regularly brought the daily necessities to Kanowit and went back with loads of local products and jungle produce. This was stated in the special commemorative magazine of the 80th Anniversary of Yiting Primary School, Kanowit, by Lin Xiankuan in his article entitled '*The Zhang Quan People of Kanowit - Past and Present*' (Lin Xiankuan, 1994 : 27).

The main factor that contributed towards making Kanowit into a commercial town was its position at the confluence of the Rajang and Kanowit River. Kanowit had easy means of transport, so people concentrated there and developed it into a riverine trading port. In 1859, the Sarawak Government built a fort called Fort Emma there. The existence of the fort revealed the important position of Kanowit in the Rajang Basin then. The construction of the fort served the dual objectives of the Sarawak Government of the Brooke Raj. Firstly, it was built to strengthen peace and order; to maintain social stability and to protect the lives and properties of the people. Secondly, with peace and order ensured, the government could develop the place, manage the people and increase the government revenues. In the history of Sarawak, a fort was often built where there was a concentration of population, and more people would come to live in a place where there was a fort that offered protection. Therefore, it is possible to tell when a town

was established by the date on which a fort was built. Fort Brooke (1863) in Sibul and Fort Sylvia (1880) in Kapit are two good examples. These forts were built not only for the purpose of defence but they were also centres of government administration. Until recently, many of these forts were used as the district offices. At the time of writing, the Sarawak Museum staff are compiling a record of these forts and their related historical records - a very important and meaningful task.

Fort Brooke was built in 1863 on an island at the river bend opposite the site of the present Sibul town (Baring-Gould & Bampfylde, 1909 : 323). This river bend was called Tanjung Maling and the village on the island was also called Maling. Meanwhile the little settlement, Sibul, opposite Maling grew up rapidly because of its position as a riverine port. Because it was very near to Maling, it was sometimes called Maling Town (Liu Zizheng or Lau Tze Cheng, 1977 : A82).

According to the first population census carried out in 1871, the population of Sarawak by race was as follows:-

<b>RACE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
Malays	52,519
Dayaks	70,849
Chinese	4,947
Indians	367
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>128,679</b>

(Baring-Gould & Bampfylde, 1909 : 33).

According to this population census, there were about 415 Chinese living along the Rajang River. But this figure was considered inaccurate; the actual number of Chinese in 1871 could be more than that. If we were to refer to the number of shops owned by the Chinese at each of the towns along the Rajang we would be able to get a good idea of the Chinese population there. The Sarawak

Gazette published on 24th January 1871 stated that there were 60 wooden shops in existence in Sibü. The Chinese involved in trade and commerce could be well over a hundred. On 1st June 1873 the Rajang Basin became a residency with its Divisional Headquarters at Sibü. This new status brought rapid development to Sibü, and by 1880 Sibü had overtaken Kanowit as a riverine port of great importance. In 1887 the Sibü Chinese traders with Government aids built at the site of the present Channel Road a row of 60 belian-wood shophouses. A systematic plan of Sibü Bazaar developed at about this time (Chater, 1969 : 34). C.A. Bampfylde who was the Resident for the Third Division (now Sibü Division, Sarikei Division & Kapit Division) stated in 1909 in the book, *A history of Sarawak Under Its Two White Rajahs*, co-authored with S. Baring-Gould, that the total population of Sarawak was about 416,000 people and 45,000 were Chinese (Baring-Gould & Bampfylde, 1909 : 323). From this figure we can presume that the Chinese population along the Rajang Basin could be more than what was stated in the first census of 1871.

Furthermore, in 1875 the Government District Office was moved from the Baleh in Upper Rajang to Kapit, suggesting that the population in Kapit warranted the government administrative services especially in collecting taxes from the traders. When Fort Sylvia was built in Kapit in 1880, many Chinese traders from the Baleh and other regions gradually migrated to Kapit. According to the Sarawak Gazette of 1st March 1888, 7 new shophouses were being built in Kapit in addition to the existing 18 shophouses run by the Chinese.

This is the situation of Chinese immigration to the Rajang Basin at the turn of the 19th Century. Most of them were of the Minnan dialect or the Hockien from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou of Southern China. They were mainly traders who lived in the town areas. It was in the early part of the 20th Century that a great number of immigrants of the Fuzhou (Foochow), Guangdong (Cantonese) and Xinghua (Henghua) dialects came to settle in the Rajang Basin. Their coming changed the basic social composition and expedited the development of the Rajang Basin, so starting a new chapter in the history of the development of the Rajang Basin.



Fig. 93 Kaiyuan Temple in Quan Zhou built around 686 AD in the Tang Dynasty (618-1907 AD) The Minnan (Hockien) people of Sibiu originated from Zhang Zhou and Quan Zhou in Fujian Province of China. Both Zhang Zhou and Quan Zhou have well-known scenic and historical sites.



Fig. 94 Nanputuo Temple, built in the Tang Dynasty, a sacred place of Buddhism, at Xiamen (Amoy) Fujian Province, China.





Fig. 95 The East-West Twin Pagodas of Quan Zhou built in 865 AD. The one in the East is known as Zheng Guo Pagoda and the one in the West is Ren Shou Pagoda, 200 metres apart from each other.

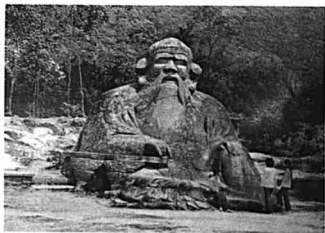


Fig. 96 A more than life-size stone statue of Lao Jun (Lao Zi), a giant Taoist stone sculpture of the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD)

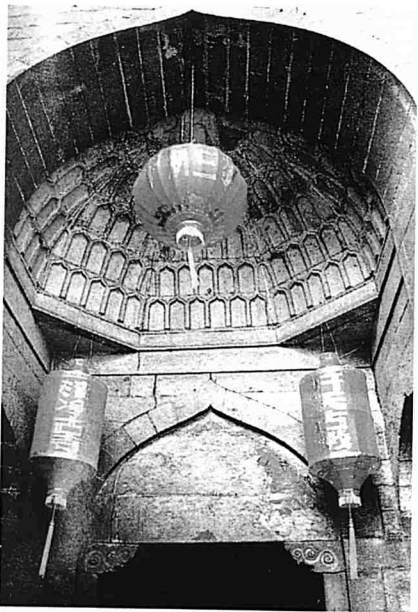


Fig. 97 Qing Jing Temple, popularly known as Qing Zhen Temple, an Islamic place of worship in Quan Zhou, Fujian Province, China; built in the Song Dynasty, around 1009 AD or in the 400th year of the Islamic calendar. At the entrance the Islamic arch is decorated with traditional Chinese lanterns with the characters 'Qing Jing Gu Si' written on them.



Fig. 98 Fort Emma built in 1859 at Kanowit which was the earliest settlement for the Zhang Quan people who were witnesses of the history of Kanowit.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 99 St. Francis Xavier's School, one of the earliest modern schools, built by the Catholic Mission in 1883.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)

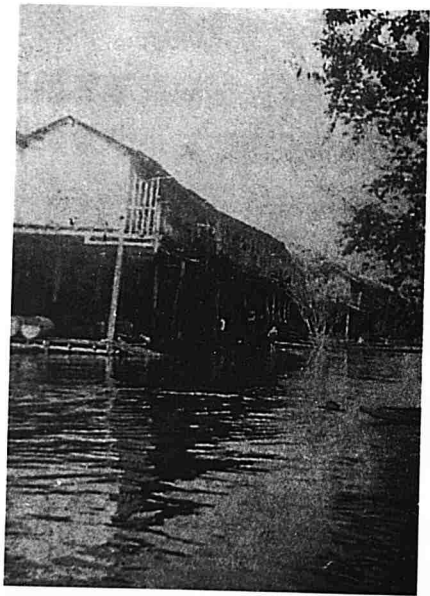


Fig. 100 Kanowit Bazaar of the 1930's with shops built on stilts.



Fig. 101 Kanowit Town of the 1940's



Fig. 102 The Zhang Quan Association building in Sibuluan.



Fig. 103 Members of the 3rd elected committee of the Sarawak Federated Zhang Quan Association at the sworn-in ceremony witnessed by the Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Huang Shunkai (Dr Wong Soon Kai) on 9th July, 1995.

## CHAPTER 8

### SIBU IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Sibu, situated at the bank of the Lower Rajang and at about 65 miles from its mouth, used to suffer flash floods several times a year because of the lowland coupled with poor drainage. There used to be a river called Lembagan River that flowed along the back of Liu Qinhou (Lau King Howe) Hospital towards Kampung Nyabor, past the Palace Cinema then through the Main Bazaar and finally emptying itself into the Rajang River. This river was wide and deep enough for a steamship to ply along it (Liu Zizheng or Lau Tze Cheng, 1977 : A82).

According to the reminiscences of Sibu-bred Deng Yuqiang, before the 1960's the water of the Lembagan River was clear and it was a popular place for swimming and water-sports. After school, the boys would hurry to the river bank, cover their private parts with one hand, let down their pants and jump into the water for a refreshing dip. Now this river had long been filled up and in its place are buildings of many storeys high. The simplicity of the town of yester-year and the childhood innocence had vanished with the passing of time - gone forever.

On the night of 10th February 1889, Sibu Town was gutted by fire; the town was burnt to the ground. The row of more permanent shophouses built in 1887 suffered the same fate as the structure was so strong that there was no way of pulling down the intermediate ones to prevent the fire from spreading. After this fire, all the traders wanted to build concrete shophouses. But, everything they owned was lost, so they had to make do with very simple, temporary timber shophouses to meet the immediate needs and pick up the business again (Chater, 1964 : 34-35). This fire had caused much destruction and delay, though temporarily, the development of Sibu Town.

By the early 20th Century, Sibu had become the commercial centre of the Rajang Basin. The vast hinterland with its rich natural resources and a dense population had caused businesses in

to flourish. Because of its accessibility, the number of ships plying between Sibü and Kuching, and between Sibü and Singapore had steadily increased. These merchant ships came with the daily necessities and returned with the jungle products they had purchased. Thus, Sibü became the trading centre, collecting the jungle products from the hinterland and distributing the daily necessities and manufactured goods to the other riverine towns.

The Chinese in Sibü at that time were mainly traders but a few were engaged in both trades and farming. At the outskirts of the town proper lived the Malays in villages like Kampung Nyabor, Kampung Hilir, Kampung Datuk and Kampung Nangka. Further into the interior and along the river were the Ibans. Business transaction between the natives and the Chinese was by barter trade. In the past as life was simple and things were cheap, barter trade was more popular, simpler and more practical to both buyers and sellers than the use of money. Besides, the currency coins introduced by the Sarawak Government were limited in number and these coins were items collected by the natives for ornamental purposes, the chances of these coins being used were very much reduced. These were important factors that had promoted barter trading.

How many shophouses were there in Sibü in 1900? To answer this question we can glean the facts from several records. The 24th January 1871 issue of *The Sarawak Gazette* stated that there were 60 wooden shophouses in Sibü scattered here and there. In the book, *Sarawak Long Ago*, W.J. Chater pointed out that in 1887 the Sarawak Government and the Sibü tradesmen built a row of 60 belian-wood shophouses at the site of the present Channel Road. In 1897 (the 23rd year of Kuang Xu, Emperor of Qin Dynasty), when the Da Bo Gong (Tua Pek Kong) Temple in Sibü was being renovated, the shop and individual donors' names were carved on two stone panels. On these panels, the largest number of donors was from Sibü; there were 43 shop and two individual donors. If the shop-donors accounted for 3/4 of the total number of shops, then the total number of shops in Sibü would not be fewer than 60. The next largest group of donors was from Kanowit which accounted for 35 shops. These records reflect the facts of history of the development of Sibü and Kanowit (Fang Niansheng, 1993).



Before the arrival of the Christian settlers to the Rajang Basin, the two main religions in Sibü were Buddhism and Islam. In 1923 a man called Lu Tienfu from Kutien, Fujian, came to Sibü and introduced another religious belief, Zhen Kong Jiao (Chen Kung Chiao), which soon gained many followers, and from Sibü it was spread to other parts of Sarawak (Liu Pak Khui, 1977 : 26). The Muslims or Islamic believers were traditionally concerned about their children's religious education. Through their religious education, their children learnt to read and write. So, this made the Malays the most advanced among the natives in Sibü.

On the other hand, the Da Bo Gong (Tua Pek Kong) Temple in Sibü served as the centre of religious activities for the Chinese. In 1871, at the bank of the river there was a temple built of belian wood which was believed to be the origin of the present Yong An Ting Da Bo Gong Temple.

The temple has played a very important role in education for the Chinese since the turn of the 20th Century. The Minnan or Hockien people started a private school at Yunhu An which was a little house adjacent to the temple where the nuns or monks lived. In 1916, a public school for the overseas Chinese (Hua Qiao Gong Li School) called 'Mingde Guomin School' was built at the site of Yunhu An (Fang Niansheng, 1993). In 1918, it was combined with Nan Qiang School established by Zhang Liangbi, a community leader, to form the 'Huaqiao Zhonghua Public School', thus setting the foundation for the present Zhonghua Primary School and Zhonghua Middle School in Sibü (Cai Cundui, 1987 : 207-208).

Kanowit, which was the first town established along the Rajang River, was the first town to get in contact with Christianity. In 1883, the Catholic Mission built at Kanowit the St. Francis Xavier's Church and St. Francis Xavier's Primary School. In 1901 the Catholic Mission built the Sacred Heart Church in Sibü, and in the following year the Sacred Heart School was established. Christianity came to the Rajang Basin much later than Islam and Buddhism. But, in the early years of the 20th Century when the Fuzhou (Foochow) and the Xinghua (Henghua) Agricultural Settlements were established, the number of Chinese settlers who were Christians increased. The coming of Christianity had influenced, con-

tributed towards and quickened the phase of development of the Rajang Basin.

In his book, *Sarawak Long Ago*, W.J. Chater stated that Sibul, a riverine town, was established in 1862, and by 1900 it had become the most flourishing commercial centre. In 1897 when the Yong An Ting Da Bo Gong Temple was being renovated, among the donors were the names of 14 merchant ships which had plied between Sibul and other ports. This historical fact suggests that Sibul was a very busy trading port with great quantities of exports and imports passing through it; again reflecting Sibul as a flourishing town in the Rajang Basin (Chater, 1969 : 33).



Fig. 104 The old Mosque at Kampung Nyabor Road, built in 1830.



Fig. 105 The Sacred Heart Church built by the Catholic Mission in 1901.



Fig. 106 The First Methodist Church at the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement at Sungai Merah, Sibü, 1903.



Fig. 107 The first Methodist School with dormitory for boarders and quarters for the Pastor, built at Seduan on the bank of Sungai Merah, Sibü, 1903.



Fig. 108 Students of the Anglo-Chinese School with its founder, Rev. James Hoover, at Sungai Merah, Sibul. This photo of 1903 shows that they were in the apparels and with the hair-style of the Qing Dynasty.

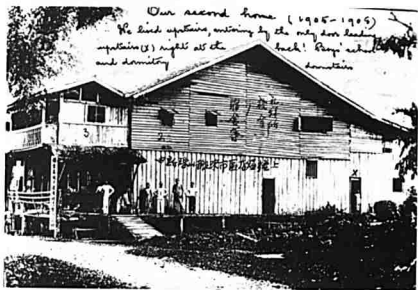


Fig. 109 The wooden shophouses of Sibul in the early 20th Century. Rev. and Mrs James Hoover lived on the first floor of this shophouse when they moved from Sungai Merah to Sibul in 1905.

## CHAPTER 9

### BACKGROUND OF THE CHINESE SETTLERS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

At the turn of the 20th Century, there were 3 organised groups of Chinese immigrants who came to settle in the Rajang River Basin of Sarawak. They came under an agreement with Rajah Charles Brooke, the Second Rajah of Sarawak to cultivate the land and to develop agriculture there.

The first organised group led by Huang Naishang (Wong Nai Siong) and consisted mainly of Fuzhou (Foochow) people from Fujian Province in southern China began to arrive in batches in early 1901.

The second of the organised groups, led by Deng Gongshu (Teng Kung Shook) and consisted of Cantonese from Guangdong Province in southern China, started to arrive in 1902.

The third group consisted of the Xinghua (Henghua) people from Fujian Province was organised by a Methodist Missionary, Rev. Dr. William Brewster. The first batch of them led by Pastor Cheng Bingzhong (Ting Ping Tiong), a Xinghua (Henghua) Methodist, began to arrive in 1912 from the Xinghua area in south China.

The influx of these Chinese immigrants was due to several factors - geographical, historical, political and economical.

Geographically, these three organised groups of immigrants were from Guangdong and Fujian, the coastal provinces in the south-east of China. Because these provinces have a long coastline, they provided the emigrants many accessible seaports and sea-routes.

Because of these geographical factors, Guangdong and Fujian had, in the history of modern China, the largest number of people emigrating overseas. The Fujian and Cantonese people from the Min (Fujian) and Yue (Guangdong) originally migrated from the Huanghe (Yellow River) Basin, and prior to their arrival in the Rajang River Basin, some of them had already emigrated and set-

tled in many overseas countries. These Chinese pioneers had exerted great influence on the coming of the later-year settlers. For example, Huang Naishang (Wong Nai Siong) who founded the Fuzhou Agriculture Settlement or Xin Fuzhou in Sibiu was assisted by Qiu Shuyuan (Khoo Siok Wan) and Lin Wenqing (Lim Boon Keng), two Chinese settlers in Singapore, and on arrival in Kuching he was introduced to the Rajah of Sarawak by Wang Zhangshui (Ong Tiang Swee), the Chinese Community leader in Kuching. Later on, Huang Naishang helped Deng Gongshu (Teng Kung Shook) who brought into Sibiu the first batch of Cantonese settlers from China, while the arrangement for the Xinghua settlers brought by Pastor Cheng Bingzhong was made by Rev. Dr. William Brewster who obtained help from Rev. James Matthews Hoover, who was then the leader and supervisor of the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement in Sibiu.

Apart from the historical factor, what caused many Chinese to emigrate overseas was the political situation in China at various times. Traditionally, in an agrarian country like China, the Chinese farmers normally settled at the place where they farmed, and emigrating to another place was a serious and unthinkable matter. But, very often because of political unrest, they had no choice but leave their home for a distant land. The political factors that caused an influx of Chinese immigrants to the Rajang River Basin were far more complicated than Chinese immigration of earlier years. Many of these settlers were the targets of political persecution; the anti-western and therefore the anti-Christian movement. Some of them were involved in political activities like the anti-Qing movement which failed, and one way to escape persecution was emigration from China.

Last but not least was the economic factor. It is a well-known fact that many Chinese went overseas because of economic reasons.

What were these Chinese like as a race? To answer this question, it is proper to present a brief description of the origin of the Chinese race.

The Chinese or Huazu originated from the Huanghe or Yellow River Basin. Gradually, they moved southwards to the



Changjiang (Yangtze Kiang) and the Yuejiang (Yue River ) basins. From the artifacts unearthed in the 1970's, it had been verified that as early as 6,000 years ago, there was already an advanced civilization in the Changjiang river basin. The settled people there not only knew how to breed silkworms, plant rice and construct buildings using sophisticated techniques but they also learned to rear animals like pigs, buffaloes, sheep and dogs. They already knew how to make cooking utensils and sharp weapons like knives and spears. From the items of earthenware excavated, there were inscriptions of Taowen - a primitive form of writing - on them which existed even earlier than the Jiagu Wen - inscriptions carved on tortoise shells or animal bones - of the Shang Dynasty (16th - 11th Century BC).

China is situated in East Asia with the oceans and seas to the east and the south, impassable high mountain ranges to the west and the deserts and frigid zone of the Polar Region in the North. In ancient China, these natural frontiers had provided China a safer and more peaceful situation than the other civilization regions. China with her temperate climate, vast areas of land and rich natural resources was an optimal environment for the development of the Chinese civilization, one of the great civilizations of the world, on par with the Indian civilization, Egyptian civilization and Babylonian civilization. The ancient Chinese believed that their country was the centre of the world, thus calling her Zhongguo or the Middle Kingdom. Because of her advanced culture that has been likened to a bright, beautiful flower, her people are called Zhonghua. Today, these bright beautiful flowers have bloomed and are found along the Rajang River.

According to *'The Records of The Historian'* by Sima Qian, an eminent historian of the Han Dynasty, the First Emperor of China was called Huangdi or Yellow Emperor who ruled the country about 4,600 years ago. There were several famous emperors after Huang Di but the three dynasties with a detailed recorded history were the Xia Dynasty (2197 BC - 1767 BC), the Shang (1766 BC - 1122 BC) and the Zhou (1122 BC - 256 BC). The historical data of these three dynasties not only show that the history of China has reliable historical records but they also reveal a

glorious culture. The philosophical thoughts of the Chun-Qiu (Spring-Autumn) Period (770 BC - 476 BC) and the Zhangguo (Warring States) Period (475 BC - 227 BC) had caused *'all flowers to bloom and all schools of thoughts to contend'*. Most remarkable were those of Confucianism, Taoism and the Military Science or the Art of War by Sun Zi, an eminent military strategist of China. Even today, their philosophical thoughts are exerting increasing influence on the world.

During the Qing Dynasty (221 BC - 207 BC), a remarkable empire was established. It was inherited by the Han Dynasty (Xi Han or Western Han, 206 BC - 8 AD; Dong Han or Eastern Han, 25 AD - 220 AD) under which China was developed into a great, strong and flourishing empire of immense size. Han Wu Di (Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty) sent envoys to the Xi Yu (Western Dominion), that is, Central Asia, thus opening up the Silk Route and promoting cultural interaction between China and the Central Asian countries. As a result, the reputation of Han Dynasty was spread far and wide.

However, this relatively peaceful development was disrupted towards the later part of Xi Jin Dynasty (Western Jin Dynasty, 265 AD - 316 AD) when the five barbarian tribes in the north of China caused much destruction and unrest. This period came to be called *'Wu Hu Luan Hua'*, literally the five barbarian tribes disrupted China. The capital city of Xi Jin Dynasty, Luoyang, was conquered, the Emperor was captured and the government of Xi Jin Dynasty was forced to move to Jianye, the site of present Nanjing (Nanking), and for the first time in the recorded history of China there was a mass exodus of Chinese from the north to the south.

In the history of China, the Tang Dynasty (618 AD - 907 AD) was another period of a strong and flourishing empire of vast areas and culturally very advanced. At its height of power, the boundary extended to cover Menggu (Mongolia) in the north, Xinjiang (Sinkiang) and Zhong Ya (Central Asia) in the west, Annan (Vietnam) in the south and Gaoli (Korea) in the east. Communication with the outside world was thus open, attracting from many nations of the world numerous merchants, religious monks and scholars to Zhang'an, the capital city of the Tang Dynasty. Whether

it was in the realm of literature, art, calligraphy, music, dances, science or technology, the level reached was much higher than before. As there was freedom of thoughts and beliefs, Jing Jiao (Nestorianism), Xian Jiao (Zoroastrainism), Moni Jiao (Manichacanism) and Hui Jiao (Mohamadanism) were introduced into China. Given such a political stability and flourishing economy, the Tang culture mingled with the other ethnic cultures from the surrounding lands to form an amalgam of progressive, rich and colourful culture.

Because the Tang Dynasty had exerted such a great influence that even today Malaysians of Chinese origin still call themselves 'Tang Ren' or the Tang people, and refer to China as 'Tang Shan' or Tang Mountain.

However, the Tang Empire was toppled after a series of civil wars. It was then followed by 'The Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms' (907 AD - 960 AD) which was a period of confusion and chaos in China. Finally, it was the Song Dynasty (960 AD - 1279 AD) that united China.

In the history of China the Song Dynasty was culturally progressive and advanced, and commercially prosperous but very weak militarily. This situation gave rise to continual invasions from the northern tribes. In 1127 AD the Nuzhen tribesmen conquered Kaifeng, the Capital of the Song Dynasty, and captured the two emperors, Huizhong and Qingzhong, resulting in the end of Northern Song. The government of the Song Dynasty was forced to move south to Lin'an, the site of present Hangzhou, and was known as Southern Song. The southward movement of the Song Dynasty government effected another mass exodus of the Chinese to the south and the south-east coastal areas of China.

After the fall of the Northern Song, the Silk Route by land in the north was also cut off, but it was replaced by the Silk Route by sea in the south which grew increasingly important. The main ports included Hangzhou, Mingzhou (Ningbo), Quanzhou and Guangzhou, of which Quanzhou was the most important starting point. It was at Quanzhou that merchants of different nationalities gathered and it was also at Quanzhou that different religions were preached. Even in the Quanzhou of today there are relics of for-

eign cultures.

Replacing the militarily weak Song Dynasty was the Yuan Dynasty (1280 - 1368 AD). It was a militarily mighty empire that extended from Asia to Europe. Marco Polo, a Venetian merchant, in the book about his travels described China of the Yuan Dynasty as a strong nation with a prosperous society, advanced culture and beautiful scenery. In fact, China had been the most advanced country in the world up to the time of the Yuan Dynasty.

However, Europe from the beginning of the 14th Century experienced a movement with a renewed interest in art and literature. This Renaissance Period which lasted for about three centuries had a tremendous and unprecedented effect on the European society and brought the European nations into a new era in the history of mankind.

The spirit of Renaissance that permeated through the lives of the European society included the following:

- ( 1 ) Renaissances of Political Ideas and Institutions,
- ( 2 ) Renaissances of Systems of Law,
- ( 3 ) Renaissances of Philosophies,
- ( 4 ) Renaissances of Languages and Literatures
- ( 5 ) Renaissances of Visual Arts, and
- ( 6 ) Renaissances of Religious Ideals and Institutions

(Toynbee, 1957 : 241-260).

The post-Renaissance period saw in Europe a people with a liberal mind, a progressive culture, and a rapid development of science and technology. So, towards the later part of Ming Dynasty (1368 AD - 1644 AD) and the early part of the Qing Dynasty (1644 AD - 1911 AD), from the west came the Jesuits, namely, Matteo Ricci, Johannes Adam Schall Van Bell, Franciscus Sambiaso, Diago de Pantoja, Sabatin de Ursis, Nicalous Longobardi and Ferdinand Verbiest, who belonged to the religious order of 'The Society of Jesus'. They brought with them the advanced knowledge of science and technology of the west to China in order to gain the trust of the Chinese scholars and the officials

in the ruling circle so as to start on their Christian Missionary work. Because they were extremely knowledgeable coupled with their lofty morality, they won the respect and trust of the Chinese people. This interaction promoted the exchange of eastern and western cultures (Li Dingyi, 1956 : 2).

In the early part of the Qing Dynasty (1644 AD - 1911 AD), the Pope in Rome forbade the Chinese Christians to pay homage to their ancestors. Emperor Kang Xi (1662 AD - 1722 AD) of the Qing Dynasty personally explained to the Papal Special Emissary, Tournon, about the meaning inherent in paying homage to their ancestors, but Tournon could not see eye to eye with the Emperor and refuted him. Consequently, the Qing government banned all Christian activities, which indirectly put an end to the cultural interaction between the west and the east, causing a decline in the studies of western science and technology by the Chinese people (Toynbee, 1957 : 10-11), and so, China lost a very good opportunity of modernisation.

Even just before the Opium War (1839 - 1842 AD) between China and Britain, China still considered herself the Heavenly Kingdom, far superior to the rest of the world. The Chinese government was quite ignorant of the impact the Industrial Revolution (18th - early 19th Century) had on the western nations which had become stronger militarily and hence more aggressive in territorial designs.

In 1842, China lost to Britain in the Opium War and was forced to sign the Jiangning or Nanjing (Nanking) Treaty, by which Xianggang (Hong Kong) was ceded to Britain and five trading ports - Guangzhou (Canton), Xiamen (Amoy), Fuzhou (Foochow), Ningbo and Shanghai - were opened to foreigners. In addition to a large indemnity paid to Britain, there were other unequal treaties imposed by the victor upon the vanquished at gunpoint.

Between 1849 and 1865, there was the Taiping Tianguo (Taiping Heavenly Kingdom) Uprising which had lasted for more than ten years and drained the Qing government of its energy.

In 1860, because China had conflicts with both Britain and France, the two western powers formed an allied army and conquered Beijing (Peking). Along the way they looted, burned and

killed. After occupying Yuanming Yuan - the Imperial Summer Palace - and a wanton looting, they set fire to the buildings. Emperor Xianfeng escaped to Rehe (Jehol) north of Beijing. This incident dealt a heavy blow to the Qing government which was again forced to sign unequal treaties with Britain and France apart from paying war indemnities.

In 1894, over the territorial problem of Chaoxian (Korea) China went to war, known as the Jiawu War, against Japan. But, China was defeated and signed the Maguan Treaty or the Treaty of Shimonoseki by which China was forced to recognise the independence of Chaoxian, to cede Taiwan to Japan, to open the trading ports - Chongqing, Shashi, Suzhou and Hanzhou - and to pay an indemnity of 200 million tael of pure silver to Japan.

So, from the Opium War (1839-1842) to the Jiawu War (1894), China had been the loser and after every defeat China had to sign humiliating unequal treaties in order to make peace with the victors, ceding land, paying war indemnities and giving them many privileges. Such humiliations aroused in the Chinese both fear and anger, evoking in them the anti-west feelings and culminating in the incident of the Yihetuan, meaning the Righteous and Harmonious Militia or known to the west as the Boxers Uprising of 1900. The Chinese from the provinces of Shandong, Shanxi and Zhili (Hebei) rose under the banner of 'Fuqing Mieshang' or 'Support for the Qing and Extermination of the Foreigners', and actively involved in an anti-west wave killing the foreigners as well as the Chinese Christians. The Boxer Uprising led to the formation of the Allied Forces of Eight Nations by Japan, Russia, Britain, USA, France, Austria, Italy and Germany who were ready to take revenge. They conquered Beijing, set fire to the city, killed, raped and looted. Empress Dowager Ci Xi fled to Shanxi with the young Emperor Guangxu. The Qing government had to make peace by signing the unprecedented unequal treaties allowing the foreign nations to station their military forces in China and paying war indemnities amounting to 450 million tael of silver, payable in 39 years, thus making the amount with interests to be about 982 million tael of silver. One Chinese tael or liang is about 37.783 grammes, and at that time one tael of silver was worth US\$1.63.

All these war indemnities certainly had drained the economic resources of China.

Although the Boxers Uprising occurred in the northern part of China, its influence was also felt by the Chinese in the southern region. A good example was the anti-Christian incident in Gutian, Fujian, with 11 deaths and 5 injured. The situation was then becoming serious (Chen Gonglu, 1965 : 493).

It was only after the Opium War that the Chinese recognised with fear the strength of the foreign ships and powerful guns. This stimulated them to pay attention to the Yangwu or Foreign Affairs, resulting in a movement called 'Shi Yi Zhi Suo Zhang Yi Zhi Yi', which means 'learn the superior barbarian technique with which to repel the barbarians'. However, it was not very effective, as there was no overall national planning or co-ordination. The fleet of ships that they built suffered total defeat in the Jia Wu Sino-Japanese War of 1894. In their quest for strengthening their country, the intellectuals in 1898 led by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao with the consent of Emperor Guang Xu attempted radical reforms but their efforts were frustrated by the conservatives led by Empress Dowager Ci Xi. This attempt for reform by the idealist intellectuals came to be called the 'Hundred-Day Reform Movement'. By now, more and more Chinese believed that only a revolution could save China. So, in 1911 the Qing Dynasty was overthrown by a revolution led by Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat Sen), a western-trained physician, resulting in the founding of the first republic in Asia.

Hence, to a certain extent the Chinese immigrants in the Rajang Basin were affected by the Boxers Uprising, the Reform Movements and the Revolution which effected their emigration from China. We should therefore bear in mind that their background was different from the immigrants who came to the Rajang Basin purely for economic development.



Fig. 110 This is modern Fuzhou City. The Sibü Fuzhou agricultural settlers emigrated from Fuzhou region of Fujian Province, China.



Fig. 111 The Wulongjiang Bridge in the suburb of Fuzhou city, Fuzhou, China.





Fig. 112 A modern residential area in the suburb of Fuzhou City, Fuzhou, China.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1994)



Fig. 113 A modern hotel in Fuqing City, Fujian Province, China, built by overseas Chinese.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1994)



Fig. 114 Modern shops mushrooming along the high-way of Fuqing City, Fujian, China.

(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1994)



Fig. 115 The Zantang Hall in Hengyang School in Gutian District, Fujian Province, China, built by Temenggong Datuk Chen Lixun in memory of his father.



Fig. 116 Humen Town in Guangdong Province of China, the place where the 2 million katis (approx. 1.2 million kilos) of opium confiscated by Lin Zexu from the British merchants was burnt. Guangdong Province where many historical events took place was the traditional home of the settlers of the Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement in Sibul, Sarawak.



Fig. 117 The Cannon Platform built at Humen Town by Lin Zexu during the Opium War.



Fig. 118 The bronze statue of Lin Zexu at Yili, Xinjiang Province, China. Lin Zexu (1785-1850 AD), from Houguan District, Fujian Province, was exiled to Yili, after the Opium War. There, he made tremendous contributions to the construction of Yili where he is still remembered today. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1994)



Fig. 119 The Zhongshan Memorial Hall at Guangzhou in memory of China's modern revolutionist Dr Sun Zhongshan.



Fig. 120 Bao An Secondary School, Baoan District, Guangdong Province, China.



Fig. 121 Dongguan District, Guangdong Province, China, famous for its production of lychee.



Fig. 122 The modern Quangning City in Quangning District of Guangdong Province, China, from where the Guangdong (Cantonese) settlers of the Sibü Guangdong Agricultural Settlement originated.



Fig. 123 The lychee trees planted during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) at Xianyou District in Fujian Province, China, are still thriving.



Fig 124 Xianyou District famous for its production of 'longyan' (Longan).

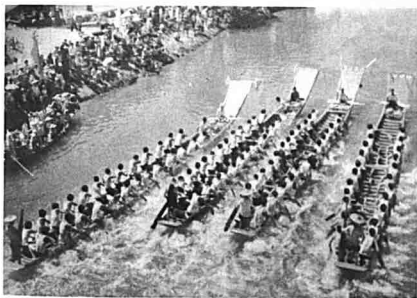
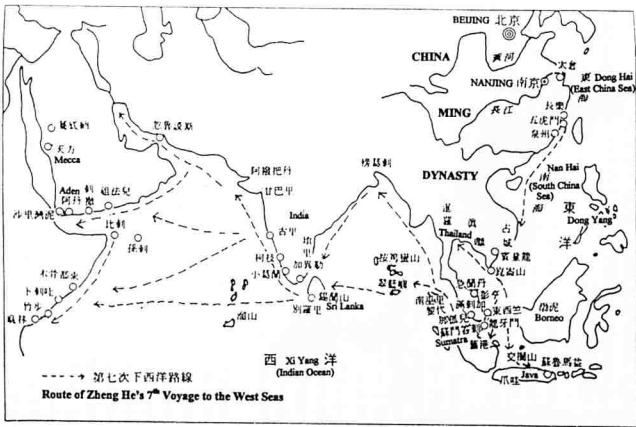


Fig. 125 A Dragon-boat Race on Mulan River. Xianyou District, Fujian, China.

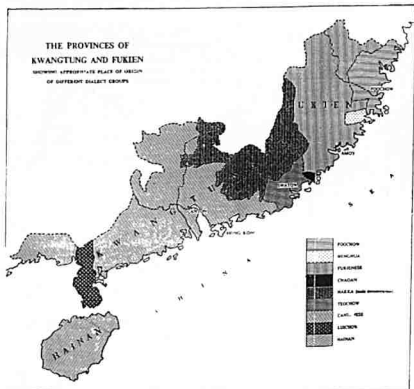


Fig. 126 The Jiu Li Lake and Waterfalls of Xianyou District, one of China's renowned scenic spots.





## Appendix V: Provinces of Guangdong and Fujian



(Taken from Tien Jukang, *The Sarawak Chinese*,  
D. Lund Humphries, 1953, p. 10).

## CHAPTER 10

### FUZHOU (FOOCHOW) AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT, SIBU

Among the three large Chinese agricultural settlements in Sibu, the earliest one with the largest number of settlers and the most influential was the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement. Its establishment was closely connected with its founder, Huang Naishang (Wong Nai Siong).

Huang Naishang (1849-1924) came from a poor farming family in the Minqing District of Fujian Province. After the Sino-British Opium War, Fuzhou was one of the 5 treaty ports opened to the foreigners, and so Christianity was brought into China. Among the different Christian denominations, the influence of the American Methodist Episcopal Church or the Methodist was the greatest. Huang Naishang became a Christian and received a western education under the care of the Methodist Mission through which he learned about the then world situation and began translating western books into Chinese. In 1894, he passed the government provincial examination and became a 'Ju Ren' meaning 'Promoted Man' or scholar.

It was in 1894 that China was defeated in the Sino-Japanese War, which shocked the whole country, especially the educated Chinese into recognising China's backwardness and gradual decline. So, one of the scholars Kang Youwei who advocated institutional reform and modernisation of China was unanimously supported by the educated Chinese, culminating in the Self-Strengthening Movement. In 1895, Kang Youwei who had passed the provincial examination went to Beijing to sit for the metropolitan examination. And there, gathering together more than 1,200 'Ju Ren' or scholars who had come to Beijing for the same metropolitan examination, he wrote and sent a petition called the 'Wan Yan Shu', a letter of ten thousand words, to Emperor Guang Xu petitioning for reform. Emperor Guang Xu accepted their proposals of reform and some of the more liberal court officials supported

their ideals. In 1898, the Qing Government under Emperor Guang Xu began to implement institutional reform which lasted only about 100 days and which was finally quashed in a coup d'etat staged by the Empress Dowager Ci Xi and the conservative court officials. In the history of modern China, this was the famous Wu Shu Coup D'etat of 1898. Many well-known reformers were arrested and executed, but Kang Youwei managed to escape to Hong Kong and from there to Japan.

At the time of Wu Shu Coup D'etat, Huang Naishang was in Beijing. He was patriotic and he hoped China could become strong like the western countries. So, during the 8 months of his stay in Beijing, he was often seen with the leaders of the reform movement discussing national affairs. He had on eight occasions sent petitions to the government making suggestions for reform. But, after the reform movement was suppressed, many reform leaders and their sympathisers fled Beijing while Huang Naishang escaped to Tienjin, then returned to Fujian via Shanghai.

The failure of the reform movement coupled with the incident of the Ye He Tuan or the Boxers Uprising of 1900 and its eventual defeat made the intellectuals realise that the only way for national salvation was to take the path of revolution and overthrow the Qing feudal rule. So, all the patriotic Chinese including Huang Naishang turned to support the revolution led by Dr Sun Zhongshan (Dr Sun Yat Sen).

After his return to Fujian from Beijing, Huang Naishang was very much depressed, and in order to escape political persecution and to develop his own ideals to benefit his own countrymen, he left China with his family for Singapore in 1899. In April, 1900, he came to Sarawak. Having personally visited Sibul and found that the Rajang River basin was vast with virgin jungles and sparsely peopled, he believed it was suitable for a large-scale agricultural development. So, he went to Kuching to see the Chinese Community leader, Wang Zhangshui (Ong Tiang Swee), and with an introduction from the latter, Huang Naishang signed a contract with Rajah Charles Brooke that he would bring Chinese farmers to cultivate the land in the Rajang Basin. In the contract, the guarantors were Qiu Shuyuan, an educated, well-known Singapore busi-

nessman, and Huang Naishang's son-in-law, Dr Lin Wenqing, while the contractors were Huang Naishang and Li Chang. Li Chang, also known as Li Aisheng, was from Yongfu District, Fujian, and had sat for and passed the government provincial examination at the same time as Huang Naishang. Signing the contract on behalf of the Sarawak Government were the Resident of Sibu, C.A. Bampfylde, and Rajah Charles Brooke himself, witnessed by George Muir of Paterson, Simons & Co. on 9th July 1900. Regarding the content of the said contract, please refer to the contract in the appendix at the end of the chapter.

After having signed the contract with the Sarawak Government, Huang Naishang obtained a loan of \$30,000 (Sarawak Dollars) from Rajah Charles Brooke and returned to Fujian. While in China both Huang Naishang and Li Chang enlisted farmers from several districts of Fuzhou Province - Minhou, Minqing, Gutian and Yongchun Districts. The following year, Li Chang brought the first batch of settlers from Fuzhou and this group arrived at Sibu on 20th February 1901. Twenty days after the departure of Li Chang and his group of settlers, Huang Naishang led a large group of 535 settlers and arrived at Sibu on 16th March of the same year. These two groups of farmers were assigned to settle at Ensurai and Sungai Merah areas in Sibu. Six months later in September, Huang Naishang procured another \$10,000 (Sarawak Dollars) from Rajah Charles Brooke for Li Chang to enlist some more farmers from China. Contrary to Huang Naishang's expectation, Li Chang went sight-seeing in Hongkong and Taiwan, and finally died in Xiamen (Amoy). In January 1902, Huang Naishang had to accompany Li Chang's family back to China where he enlisted the third group of 511 farmers from the districts of Fuzhou. Fortunately, with a donation amounting to about \$7,000 from his Chinese and foreign friends in China, he was able to hire an American ship that sailed directly for Sarawak. On 7th June 1902, they arrived at Sibu after a stop-over in Kuching. Out of the 511 farmers, 4 died of cholera on board the ship. The total number of settlers came to about 1,118. This figure has been arrived at by the author from the figures given in the '50th Anniversary Commemorative Magazine of the Sibu Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement' published

in 1951.

However, regarding the total number of settlers in the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement, there are two other versions. According to the figure given in the *'Autobiography of Huang Naishang'* (Huang Naishang, 1951 : 101), there were altogether 1,070 while an American professor, Craig Lockard, in his field research in Sibü concluded that there were about 1,153 in his 1971 monograph, *Charles Brooke and the Foundations of the Modern Chinese Community in Sarawak 1863 - 1917*, published in the Sarawak Museum Journal.

When the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement, also known as Xin Fuzhou or New Fuzhou, was established, Huang Naishang was appointed its Gangzhu or Proprietor who was in-charge of these settlers. However, during the first few years the situation in the settlement was unpromising. The new settlers were not accustomed to the hot and humid weather conditions, so many fell ill. Besides, the land allotted for cultivation consisted of virgin jungles, unlike the flat expanses of rice fields of Fujian in China. They had to use hand tools to open up the thick jungles, felling trees and clearing the thick undergrowth and turning it into rice fields. Furthermore, the surrounding forests were inhabited by wild beasts and poisonous snakes which destroyed crops and harmed farm animals and human beings. Sometimes when the settlers went to work in the jungle they were brutally murdered. As the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement was located at the lower reaches of the Rajang River, the land was low, swampy and infested with mosquitoes which badly affected the health of the settlers.

The poor living conditions of the settlement presented a great challenge to the settlers, but the greater challenge came from the ability to make the land yield its crops. In the beginning, rice, tapioca and vegetables were grown to solve the immediate needs. However, some of their first year's crops were destroyed by floods and wild animals, resulting in very poor harvest. In the second year, sugar canes and other cash crops were planted, but there was no market for them. The two successive years' failures landed the farmers in debts; they not only could not repay the Sarawak Government loan according to the contract but they had had to get

further loans from their Gangzhu, Huang Naishang. In 1903, the rice harvests were better, but the number of settlers by now had been reduced from the original 1,100 to about 600. According to the records in the '*Autobiography of Huang Naishang*', during those three difficult years 37 died of illness, 11 were drowned, more than 100 returned to China because of the difficulty of adapting to the harsh living conditions, 130 moved away to other regions, and a further 40 were employed in the Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement in Sibiu. Thus, the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement was left with less than 700 people (Huang Naishang, 1951 : 101).

As Huang Naishang bore a debt of \$40,000 (Sarawak Dollars) payable to Rajah Charles Brooke, he had to collect taxes from the settlers as a form of repayment for the \$40,000 loan procured for them. This incident caused much discontent among the settlers who reported it to the government and created conflicts between Rajah Charles Brooke and Huang Naishang.

Just at this trying time when the settlers were disappointed with life, lost confidence in the future and were facing possible disintegration of the settlement, the Methodist Mission sent Rev. James Hoover to the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement to do missionary work. At that time about two-thirds of the settlers were Methodist Christians. The timely arrival of Rev. James Hoover not only saved the Sibiu Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement from disintegration but he also engineered its rapid development.

In 1904, Huang Naishang and Rajah Charles Brooke came to an amiable settlement about the loan; the amount of \$40,000 which the settlers owed to Huang Naishang would be cancelled off by what Huang Naishang owed to the Rajah. After that, Huang Naishang returned to China with his family. In his autobiography, Huang Naishang said that as the agricultural settlement had been established and there were people to look after it, he had to return to China for the revolutionary party members were urging him to go back.

After returning to China, though he described the hardships and harsh living conditions of the agricultural settlement in Sibiu, he still encouraged his fellow Fuzhou people to go and work on

the land there. As the number of Chinese emigrants was more than a thousand, the Chinese authorities were suspicious and summoned Huang Naishang to answer their query about the details and activities of the New Fuzhou Settlement in Sibü. Huang Naishang's description of this enquiry, *In Answer to the Query of the Chinese Authorities*, was published in 1951 in *The Sibü Fuzhou Settlement 50th Anniversary Commemorative Magazine*.

From an objective angle based on historical facts, Huang Naishang did not achieve much success in the work at the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement. However, his lofty ideals, patriotic spirit and willingness to serve were enough to gain our esteem. Besides, he disregarded all hardships in seeking cultivable land, raising funds, enlisting farmers and leading more than 1,000 farmers from China to Sibü to open up land for agriculture, thus having his name perpetually and proudly remembered by posterity. Never before in the history of the Sarawak Chinese had there been a feat greater than this. The advanced and flourishing Rajang Basin of today had a lot to thank him for. To a certain extent, however, he had his limitations. For example, he lacked the ability to communicate with and relate himself to the Sarawak Government, and he lacked the planning and organisational skills that Rev. James Hoover had. In the actual implementation of work, Liu Jiazhu (Lau Kah Too) was more superior than him. Later on it was under the proper direction of Rev. James Hoover and Liu Jiazhu, and with the co-operation and hard work of the remaining pioneers that the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement achieved a great success.

Rev. James Hoover was born on 26th August 1872 in Pennsylvania, U.S.A. After graduating from the teachers' college, he taught for 9 years in his hometown, and in response to his religious calling, he became a missionary. In 1899, he was sent to teach at the Anglo-Chinese Secondary School in Penang, Malaya. On 16th February 1903, from Malaya he came to the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement in Sarawak to carry out his missionary work among the Chinese settlers there. Like Huang Naishang, he had lofty ideals and was determined to transform the primitive Rajang Basin into a modernised society. The Methodist Mission was a religious group that put great emphasis on the social devel-



opment of the people they evangelised; therefore it was natural to find that their religious activities and social construction were closely integrated. So, soon after his arrival at the Fuzhou Settlement, Rev. James Hoover built a Methodist Church at Sungai Merah, established the Anglo-Chinese School for the children of the settlers there, and conscientiously carried out his social development plan in order to realise his ideals.

In 1904, when Huang Naishang returned to China, Rajah Charles Brooke appointed Rev. James Hoover Head and Official Representative of the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement in Sibul. It was a wise choice because Rev. Hoover came from an advanced western country, was educated, and possessed ideals, foresight and a dynamic personality. All this coupled with his organizational skills and leadership qualities he was indeed the best in the Fuzhou Settlement then.

After his appointment as Head of the Sibul Fuzhou Settlement, he went about improving the life of the settlers there. In 1904, he introduced the rubber seeds, taught the settlers how to plant rubber trees and enlarged the rubber plantations at the Rajang Basin. The planting of rubber trees was so well carried out that rubber became the main cash crop of the Rajang Basin for a long period of time.

In 1907, Mrs Sarah B. Cochran, Rev. Hoover's friend from his hometown, donated a rice-milling machine, and with the help of some natives Rev. James Hoover set up the first Rice Mill in Sibul.

In 1910, Rev. Hoover introduced the steamships onto the Rajang River. He helped in setting up a company of share-holders to launch marine communication which proved to be very successful. This was the beginning of the marine transport business. Now, the marine transport business of Sibul has entered the international scene; recently many countries including Mynmar (Burma) had placed orders for Express boats and other types of marine transport. In 1912, a group of his American friends donated an electricity generator. There was no electric supply in Sibul at that time; every household used kerosene lamps and coconut-oil lamps. When the generator arrived in Sibul, Rev. Hoover fixed it himself includ-

ing the wiring, thus putting Sibü another step forward towards modernisation.

Not long after the setting up of the generator to supply electricity to Sibü, another of Rev. Hoover's dream came true. Mr C.W. Masland, a friend of Rev. Hoover from Philadelphia, presented him a machine for sawing wood, fulfilling his wish of sawing wood using a machine and not a hand-saw. The machine proved to be cost effective and labour-saving. Soon many logging companies were formed and the timber industry in the Rajang Basin developed rapidly.

In addition, Rev. James Hoover obtained an ice-making machine that started the ice-making business in Sibü.

Even the wireless service was introduced into Sibü by Rev. Hoover who served as its operator in the early stage.

The first bicycle was also brought into Sibü by Rev. Hoover. Interestingly, not long after that there appeared patrolling the streets of Sibü policemen on bicycles; these policemen wore the police khaki uniform on top with loin-cloth below the waist. They were an interesting sight in those days.

Rev. James Hoover had made tremendous contributions in the process of mechanisation and modernisation of the Rajang Basin. His achievements could not be denied, while the progressive impression he made on the mind of the people was immeasurable.

As soon as he took over from Huang Naishang as Head of the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement, Rev. Hoover obtained a loan from Rajah Charles Brooke to help the settlers redeem the land titles they had pawned at the Pawn Shops. In the 1930's, life at the settlement was hard because world depression had caused the prices of the agricultural products to plummet. It was Rev. James Hoover who made known the plight of the settlers and sought help from the Sarawak Government which allocated grants to help them. In fact, at that time, it was only Rev. James Hoover who could communicate with the Rajah and who could gain his complete trust. Because of this trust, he was invited to take part in Sarawak's political affairs.

Not only did Rev. James Hoover want the settlers to be fi-

nancially better off, he also wanted them to cultivate better quality and moral conduct, so he paid top priority to their education by building churches and schools.

Rev. James Hoover's contributions were not just seen in the areas of solving the problems of the settlers, developing the settlements, and expanding various economic enterprises; neither were his contributions limited to establishing schools and educating the younger generation, but the greatest of his contributions was the influence his personality and character had made on the lives of the settlers. His organisational skills and his leadership qualities had earned the utmost respect from all the settlers; his sincerity and practical working style had won the admiration and praises of all the racial groups in Sarawak; his daring and pioneering spirit and his informed far-sightedness had influenced and facilitated the development of the Rajang Basin. Even today the rest of Sarawak has felt the impact and the pulses of the development of the Rajang Basin. In this sense Rev. James Hoover was the 'Father of Development' of the Rajang Basin and the best remembered and most praised person in Sibiu. He should be recorded as such in the history of the Rajang Basin.

In 1933, Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke, the 3rd Rajah of Sarawak, bestowed on Rev. James Hoover a Meritorious Award in recognition of his unflinching loyalty and devoted services to the country.

On 11th February, 1935, Rev. Hoover died in the Kuching General Hospital at the age of 63 after having contracted malaria on his visit to the Baram area. He was buried at the St. Thomas's Church cemetery, Rock Road, now Tun Abang Haji Openg Road, Kuching.

As a mark of respect for his passing, the Sarawak Flag was flown at half mast at all government buildings. Great grief struck the settlers particularly those in the Sibiu Agricultural Settlements as they mourned his loss and their grief at the passing of 'Tuan Hoover', as he was popularly known to all the local people, was shared by the other racial groups in Sarawak.

About the activities and experiences of Rev. James Hoover, there are detailed descriptions in the book entitled '*Tuan Hoover*

*of Borneo*' by Rev. Frank T. Cartwright (1918-1964), an American Methodist missionary, who was proficient in the Fuzhou dialect and visited the Sibü Fuzhou Settlement in 1934. This book about Rev. James Hoover has been translated into Chinese by Xu Shitao and published by the Sarawak Chinese Cultural Association in 1993.

In the 32 years under the leadership of Rev. James Hoover, the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlements had not only attained great success but had also developed and expanded, and had attracted an influx of immigrants from the Fuzhou Province of China. The expansion of Fuzhou Settlements from 1910 to 1926 can be seen from the figures given below :-

YEAR	REGION OF EXPANSION
1910	Fuzhou Settlement extended to Sarikei
1921	Extended to Binatang (now Bintangor)
1923	Extended to Kapit
1925	Extended to Mukah
1926	Extended to Sebuah, Bintulu, and Baram

(The Historical Data of the Chinese in Sibü, 1992 : 26-28).

According to Professor Lin Zhiping the three most outstanding pioneers of Fuzhou Settlements in Sibü, Sarawak, were Huang Naishang, James Hoover and Liu Jiazhu. This is a fair assessment (Lin Zhiping, 1994 : 439-464).

In 1902 when the Catholic Mission in Sibü established the Sacred Heart School, it marked the start of education in the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement. In the next 30 odd years, the Fuzhou Settlements set up more than 40 churches, more than 80 primary schools and about 10 secondary schools. Such a large-scale cultural and educational enterprise definitely had a great and far-reaching impact not only on the settlers but also the local natives. The emergence of a new generation of leaders and the events of the later years are sufficient evidence of such an educational enterprise.



P. 127 The Sibü Fuzhou Association, a milestone in the pioneering history of the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement of Sibü, Sarawak. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 128 The Sibü Fuyuan Methodist Church, a sharp contrast to the first Methodist Church at Sungai Merah, Sibü. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 129 Huang Naishang (Wong Nai Siong) Secondary School, Sibü, in memory of this Fuzhou Pioneer.



Fig. 130 The Hoover House, Sibü, in memory of Rev. James Hoover  
and Mrs Mary Hoover.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 131 Fuying Building, the Methodist Mission's headquarters for the propagation of the Good News in the Rajang Basin. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)

## **Appendix VI: Agreement between Charles Brooke and Huang Naishang for Fuzhou Immigration, 1900.**

### **AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHARLES BROOKE AND WONG NAI SIONG FOR FOCHOW IMMIGRATION, 1900\*.**

Memo of Agreement was made in duplicate between the Sarawak Government, hereinafter mentioned as the Government, on the first part, and Messrs. Nai Siong and Tek Chiong of Chop Sim Hock Chew Kang, hereinafter mentioned as the Contractors on the other part.

1. The Contractors agree to introduce into the Rejang River 1000 adult Chinese agriculturalists, men, women, and about 300 children and to establish them in that river for the purpose of cultivating rice, vegetables, fruits, etc., but of these immigrants not more than one half are to be introduced during the first year, that is to say before June 30, 1901, and the rest the contractors undertaken to introduce during the following year, that is to say between June 30, 1901 and June 30, 1902.
2. The Government undertakes to advance the Contractors the sum of \$30 for each adult and \$10 for each child so introduced, and of these advances two thirds shall be paid to the Contractors in Singapore, and the balance at Kuching on arrival of the immigrants there, and the Contractors undertake that the moiety of the immigrants to be introduced during the first year as mentioned in Paragraph I, shall be brought to their destination in the Rejang within 4 calendar months from the date they receive the advances in Singapore as above mentioned.
3. The Contractors undertake to repay all such advances to the Government within 6 years from the date of this Agreement as follows: Nothing to be paid by the Contractors during the first year; during each of the subsequent years one fifth of the advances to be paid each year, that is to say \$6, for each adult

\* Rajah's Agreement Book, April 1893-December 1902, pp. 142-144.



and \$2 for each child in respect to the advances paid on their account in accordance with Section 2.

4. The Government undertakes to provide for the passages of the aforementioned immigrants from Singapore to the Rejang, or, in the event of the Contractors bringing these immigrants direct from China to the Rejang, the Government will pay the Contractors \$5 for each immigrant as passage money.
5. The Government undertakes to provide the Contractors free of all rent or other charges for the term of 20 years from the date of this Agreement, sufficient land in the Rejang in the vicinity of Ensurai and Seduan streams, or elsewhere, for the proper settlement of the aforementioned immigrants and to insure that the immigrants shall get sufficient land for their purpose, the quantity of land being not less than 3 acres for each adult.
6. On the expiration of the above mentioned term of 20 years any immigrant shall on his application be given a grant for the land occupied by him subject to Quit rent at the rate of 10 cents per acre per annum, provided that such land be fully cultivated.
7. In the event of the Government wishing to occupy any land taken up by any of the immigrants a fair sum shall be paid to such immigrants by the government for disturbance in respect to crops, houses, etc.
8. The Government undertakes to make suitable landing places, roads, and paths.
9. On the recommendation of the Contractors the Government will recognize the appointment of any competent and suitable man as *kangchew* or headman of each village or settlement. The powers of such *kangchews* will be limited to the settlement of trivial disputes, boundary disputes, and other minor matters, but these powers will be more clearly defined by the Government when necessity subsequently arises for their appointments.
10. The Government guarantees full protection to immigrants from interference by Natives.
11. The Government will place no restrictions on the immigrants

with respect to their planting or the scale of their produce, and they will be at liberty to plant what they please and sell where they like, but it is understood by the Contractors that the primary object in introducing these immigrants is the cultivation of rice, and they, on their part, undertake to see that this is not lost sight of.

12. The Government undertakes to ship all provisions, stores, etc. for the immigrants and produce sent by them to Kuching, on Government vessels at moderate rates of freight as opportunities of shipping by Government vessels afford, but the Government does not undertake to run steamers especially for the purpose of carrying such goods and produce but will do its best to assist the immigrants in their respect.
13. The Government will not permit any persons to visit the immigrants for the purpose of inducing them to gamble or to gamble with them, nor to sell opium to them. Gambling amongst the immigrants may be allowed, or not as decided to be advisable by the Government and the Contractors, and, if at any time it is allowed, it will be confined solely to immigrants under the supervision of their headmen, and such headmen will alone have the right to sell opium to the immigrants under their charge. The Government will make special arrangements with the Farmers from time to time to insure those rules being carried out effectually.
14. The Government will permit that a limited but sufficient number of muskets may be kept by the immigrants to protect their crops from the ravages of wild pigs, etc.
15. After the expiration of 2 years from the date of this agreement should the immigrants be successful and their settlements be in a thriving condition the Government will permit others joining them from China, and will assist such fresh immigrants in as far as it may lay in its power to do so.
16. Should the Contractors be successful in carrying out the objects in respect to these immigrants and succeed in establishing a prosperous settlement or settlements they will be permitted to conduct such trading operations as they may wish, and successful planters will be permitted to trade.

17. On their sureties for the repayment of the advances as agreed upon and mentioned in Paragraph 3 of the Contractors offer. Signed—Khoo Siok Wan, Lim Boon Keng\*\* and the said Khoo Siok Wan and Lim Boon Keng do hereby affix their seals and sign their names as having duly given security for the Contractors in this respect. Signed, sealed and delivered on the 9th day of July, 1900. (Signature are Khoo, Lim, Wong Nai Siong and Tek Chiong, Contractors: Charles Brooke and C.A. Bampfylde, Government: George Muir of Paterson, Simons & Co. Witness: at Kuching, July 27, 1900.)

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\*\* Khoo and Lim were important Chinese businessmen in Singapore.



## CHAPTER 11

### GUANGDONG (CANTONESE) AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT, SIBU

When the first batch of Fuzhou settlers arrived at Sibü on 20th February 1901, the leader Li Chang did not come with them as he missed the boat while in Singapore. When he finally arrived at Kuching together with Cheng Guandou, a Fuzhou man, and two Guangdong (Cantonese) gentlemen, a Sarawak Government steamship took them to Sibü. The two Cantonese gentlemen were Jiang Zuxuan (Chiang Choshiong) and Deng Gongshu (Tang Kung Shook) who were the pioneers of the Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement in Sibü, Sarawak.

Soon upon arrival in Sibü, Deng and Jiang surveyed the land along the banks of the Rajang River and found it flat, fertile and suitable for farming. So, on 5th March 1901 while they were in Kuching, Deng Gongshu and Jiang Zhauxiang signed a contract with Rajah Charles Brooke to establish an agricultural settlement in Sibü. That marked the beginning of the Sibü Guangdong (Cantonese) Settlement. (Please refer to a copy of the contract at the end of this chapter.)

There is very little about Jiang Zhauxiang except that he was one of the signatories to the contract on behalf of the Cantonese. But there is more about his countryman Deng Gongshu.

Deng Gongshu (1870 - 1936) also known as Deng Jiarang and alias Deng Youxian, came from the Sanshui District in Guangdong Province. After having passed the Provincial Examination, and like Huang Naishang he was actively involved in the Reform Movement led by Kang Youwei. When the 1898 Reform Movement or the Wu Shu Coup D'etat failed, all those involved in the Reform Movement had to flee the country. According to Yi Yuwu who published an article on '*The Historical Data of Deng Jiarang and The Guangdong (Cantonese) Settlement*' in the 3rd March 1950 issue of Kuching Zhonghua Gongpau (The Kuching Chinese Public Newsletter), Deng Gongshu or Deng Jiarang and

his comrades fled overseas to escape persecution by the conservatives. Those who arrived at Sibü with Deng were ten scholars - three Xiao Lian and seven Ju Ren. (Both Xiao Lian and Ju Ren were terms used interchangeably in the Ming and Qing Dynasties for those who had passed their Provincial Examination, according to *'The General Knowledge of Ancient Culture'* published by the Shandong Educational Publication, 1988.) This exodus of intellectuals to the Nanyang was known as 'The Great Escape of the Scholars'.

After having concluded the agreement with Rajah Charles Brooke, Deng Gongshu returned to China and raised a capital of \$400,000 (Chinese Yen). At that time the value of 1 Chinese Yen was equivalent to that of 1 Sarawak dollar. There were two other versions about the amount he had raised; one said \$220,000 and the other \$500,000. Anyway, with the capital he had raised Deng Gongshu formed the New Guangdong Agricultural Company and recruited prospective settlers from Guangning, Sanshui, Qingyuan, Sihui, Fanyi, Dongguan and Chonghua to open the Sibü Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement in Sarawak. From 1902 to 1917, the number of Cantonese arriving in the Sibü Guangdong Settlement was 676 according to Liu Zizheng, but *'The Sibü Chinese Historical Data'* published by The Sarawak Chinese Cultural Association, 1992, recorded a total of about 1,000.

The Sibü Guangdong Settlement was also known as the New Guangdong Settlement, and Deng Gongshu was appointed the Gangzhu or Proprietor.

The organisation and the management of the Sibü Guangdong Settlement were different from those of the Sibü Fuzhou Settlement and the later Sibü Xinghua Settlement. Their organisation and management were similar to those of the 18th Century Lan Fan Da Dong Zhi of west Borneo. The settlers formed companies of various sizes and opened up land at different places. However, as manpower, finance, leadership and opportunity were varied, some companies were successful while others failed.

The life of the early settlers was difficult. They lived in thatched huts that were prone to destruction by wind and rain. Their food was meagre. They sat on the floor and ate from their

basin for there was no furniture or utensil of any sort. Not only were their living conditions bad but they also had to face many dangers to their lives. There was an incident of six settlers who were murdered while collecting poles for pepper vines.

The settlement was originally consisted of dense virgin jungles and the settlers did not know how to fell those huge trees. So, they had to employ the natives to do the job. After clearing the trees, they first planted food crops and later pepper and rubber.

From 15th March 1902 onwards, Deng Gongshu worked at the Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement at Lanang area about 3 miles from Sibu town. In 1904, Jiang Yiqing established a farm at Salim. The Guangdong Settlement expanded and spread to other areas in the Rajang Basin. The areas and the year when each of the settlements was established were as follows:-

YEAR	AREA
1911	Sungai Stabau
1912	Lower Naman
1914	Sungai Naman
1915	Upper Naman
1916	Sungai Nibong
	Durin
1917	Sungai Pok
	Sungai Petai
	Sungai Pak
	Tanjung Lukut

By 1917, the land on both banks of the Rajang River from Lanang to Kanowit was cultivated. But, the Gangzhu or Proprietor Deng Gongshu met with failure for he was only a scholar with ideals but lacked the actual agricultural production knowledge and

managerial experience. He lost more than \$100,000 and had to hand over the management of the Guangdong Settlement to others. Then feeling very much disappointed he left Sarawak and returned to China in 1910 to become the Principal of a secondary school there.

The more successful Cantonese company was Guangnansheng Agricultural Company at Salim run by Jiang Yiqing. What contributed to the success of the company was good organization and management. Jiang Yiqing who came from Guangning was educated and skilled in management, and his contribution was obvious. His capable assistant and supervisor of the settlement was Cheng Guanguo (Chan Koon Kok 1857-1927), also from Guangning, a man with high morality, knowledge and managerial skills. He had contributed much to the success of Guangnansheng Agricultural Company. His grandson, John Chan or Cheng Yaofei, was a former Divisional Education Officer of the Sixth or Sarikei Division of Sarawak.

Of all the three agricultural settlements in Sibul, the Guangdong (Cantonese) Settlement was less well-known partly because it was located in the more rural area quite a distance from Sibul town and partly because there was little written record about it. So far, the only available record was the one written by Jiang Yiqing about the Cantonese pioneers in *The Record of The Nanyang (Overseas) Guangdong Settlement at Salim*. Furthermore, because of the nature of its various companies set-up there was no overall organization nor a central management, making it impossible to keep up with any outside contacts and making it difficult for researchers to obtain information for studies and to introduce it to the outside world.

However, from the concrete evidence of their work the Sibul Cantonese settlers had contributed much to the development of the Rajang River Basin. The pepper and rubber they planted had been an important source of Sarawak government revenues. Besides, the quality of pepper and rubber produced by them was the standard of the day for the other settlements in Sarawak. They established 12 primary schools and 1 secondary school making education available to not only the Chinese children but also the



children of other ethnic groups. The descendants of these early Cantonese settlers have also played a very important role in the politics of the country. It is imperative for them to set up a body to collect, record, compile and study the history of the Sibugangdong Settlement as part of our cultural heritage before it is too late to do so.



Fig. 132 Sibukeshu (Hakka Clan) Association, with members from the early Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlers and the descendants of the Cantonese pioneers.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 133 Sarawak Hui Ning Association with members mainly from the Sibuk Cantonese Agricultural Settlement.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 134 Deng Gongshu Road in Sibuan, named after the Gangzhu of the Sibuan Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement. After having incurred a loss of more than \$100,000 (Sarawak dollars), he returned to China and refused to talk about the Cantonese Agricultural Settlement in Sibuan. At that time little did he know that today a road - Tang Kung Shook Road - at the Upper Nanang area of Sibuan would be named after him in recognition of his pioneering contribution. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 135 Daqun Primary School situated at Thai Kwung area, the site of the early Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement of the Upper Nanang Road, Sibuan, is a reminder of the struggle of the early Cantonese pioneers. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah)

## AppendixVII: Agreement between Charles Brooke and the Cantonese Company, 1901.

### AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHARLES BROOKE AND THE CANTONESE COMPANY, 1901\*

To Messrs. Chiang Cho Shiong and Tang Kung Shook.

With respect to your proposal to form a Company with the object of introducing Chinese immigrants into the Rejang River for the purpose of cultivating under the style of "Sok Jong Kong," I am prepared to grant you permission to do this under the following conditions:

1. The Government will reserve for the purpose of your project sufficient land at Sungei Lanang and its neighbourhood for the sole use of immigrants imported by your Company, for which no rental or other charges will be made, but no permanent grant will be given for this land, which will revert to Government when abandoned or no longer occupied, though so long as such land is cultivated in a bona fide manner it will remain the property of your Company, and will not be subject to sale or transfer to others.
2. Such land may not be alienated in any way by your Company, nor made liable to any charges or payments.
3. The Government reserves the right of making roads and railways though any part of the above mentioned reserve and of working minerals in the same but pay just compensation for any damages and disturbance where such roads and railways pass through or such minerals are worked on cultivated land.
4. A *kangchew* may be appointed by your Company to keep order amongst the immigrants and settle all small disputes, reporting to the Resident of the District all crimes and offence (sic); the appointment of the *kangchew* will be subject

\* Rajah's Agreement Book, April 1893-December 1902, p.p. 155-156.

to the approval of the Government. Police assistance will be provided when necessary and the immigrants will receive full protection in every way.

5. All landing places, road, paths and bridges will be made by the Government as required.
6. The Government will supply the Company with a site at Sibuh for the purpose of building stores or godowns for keeping and storing provisions and produce belonging to the immigrants.
7. The Government undertakes to pay the Company \$5 for every adult immigrant introduced by them into the Rejang the number of whom, however, is to be limited to 5000, and no more than 500 adults (exclusive of children) are to be imported in any one year.
8. The Company will have the same right as others to fish in the rivers or the sea.
9. Arrangements will be made by the Government with the Government Farmers so that all farms may be held by the *kangchew* under the same terms as granted to *kangchews* in Gambier and Pepper districts. The exclusive rights so granted to the *kangchew* will extend only over the Reserve of land occupied by the Immigrants and no other will be permitted to sell opium, spirits, arrack and wine or gamble with immigrants within that Reserve.
10. The immigrants may manufacture rice arrack to be used by their women when being confined, as is the case in China, but such arrack is to be made in small quantities only and on no account is to be sold.
11. The *kangchew* will have the sole right to sell all stores and provisions required by the Immigrants and to buy all produce obtained by them but strictly at local current market rates. No others will be allowed to sell, buy or barter with the immigrants.
12. The Government will permit the Company to import firearms and ammunition for the use of the immigrants to protect their

- crops against wild pigs and other animals, but permits must first be obtained to import such firearms and ammunition.
13. The Government will grant to the Company under permanent lease a piece of land to be used solely as a burial ground.
  14. The Government will assist the Company as far as possible in carrying on Government steamers at the usual rate of freights all stores, provisions and produce belonging to the Company or the Immigrants.
  15. In the event of the Company failing to establish a colony of not less than 500 adults on the Reserve of land mentioned above within one year from this date the conditions mentioned herein will be terminated.

Given under my hand and seal at Kuching, Sarawak, this 5th day of March, 1901.

Charles Brooke, Rajah

**(Taken from Rajah's Agreement Book, April 1893-December 1902. pp. 155-156, as printed in The Sibu Chinese Historical Records, pp.31-35)**

## CHAPTER 12

### XINGHUA (HENG HUA) AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT, SIBU

The Sibu Xinghua Agricultural Settlement which was established in 1912 was influenced by the Fuzhou and the Guangdong Settlements, and following the style of the former, was initially known as the New Xinghua.

In 1911, when Rev. Dr. William Brewster, a Methodist missionary working in the Xinghua region of Fujian Province of China heard about the Sibu Fuzhou and Guangdong Settlements in Sarawak, and accompanied by a Xinghua Methodist Pastor Li Zhangshui he came to Sibu to appraise the situation there. Seeing that the settlements were developing well, and through the introduction of Rev. James Hoover who was then supervisor of the Sibu Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement, he signed an agreement with Rajah Charles Brooke of Sarawak. The contract was for the employment of 300 Xinghua immigrants to cultivate the land along the Sungai Merah region and the terms and conditions were the same as those for the Fuzhou people. (Please refer to a copy of the agreement at the end of this chapter.)

After signing the contract, Rev. William Brewster returned to China and began recruiting the Xinghua Christians from the districts of Putian and Xianyou to work in the Xinghua Agricultural Settlement in Sibu, Sarawak. The Methodist Mission exerted significant influence in the Xinghua region of Fujian Province in China and had a great following of Chinese Christians there. This could be attributed to the social welfare work that they had done for the people with whom they had come into contact wherever they worked. To popularize education, they built schools, set up newspaper firm, and established printing house for printing books. To improve the social welfare of the poor, they established hospitals, orphanages and leper asylums. In order to curb social ills, they formed Public Morality Societies and set up Rehabilitation Centres for the ex-opium smokers. They also undertook the con-

struction of telegraphic services, weaving factories and other enterprising businesses. To upgrade the living standard of the people, they constructed roads to improve transportation and built irrigation system for the farms. Thus, the setting up of an agricultural settlement in Sibu was one of the Methodist Mission's ways of helping the Christians to lead a better quality life.

In 1912 from Putian and Xianyou in the Province of Fujian, Rev. William Brewster enlisted 101 Xinghua settlers who were led by Pastor Cheng Bingzhong to go to Sarawak. The fare for each adult was \$20 and \$14 for each child, while the Methodist Mission paid for those who were too poor to pay. This first group of Xinghua settlers set off from Xiamen (Amoy) on 12th February, 1912, and as they were delayed on the way they did not get to Sibu until 22nd May, 1912. Upon arrival in Sibu, they were settled at the Xinghua Agricultural Settlement at Sungai Merah, Sibu.

After settling the Xinghua immigrants at Sungai Merah, Pastor Cheng Bingzhong returned to China in early 1913. Then on the request of Rev. William Brewster, Pastor Cheng Bingzhong left China with a second group of 44 Xinghua settlers. During this trip Pastor Cheng Bingzhong went as far as Singapore but the 44 Xinghua settlers proceeded to Sarawak. They arrived in Sibu on 17th June 1913, and joined the first group of Xinghua immigrants at the Xinghua Agricultural Settlement at Sungai Merah, Sibu.

As the land along Sungai Merah was infertile, low-lying and prone to floods, cultivation was difficult. So, starting from 1914 the Xinghua settlers moved inland where the land was higher. In 1915, with assistance from Rev. James Hoover they obtained the land at Sungai Teku where they established the second Xinghua Settlement. In 1928, a group of the Xinghua settlers moved to cultivate the land at Penasu along the Igan River, thus opening up another Xinghua Settlement. In 1929, Huang Dexin, father of the world renowned photographic artist Huang Jiefu (K.F. Wong) led a group of Xinghua immigrants to plant pepper at Sungai Poi in Upper Rajang, so establishing the 4th Xinghua Settlement.

The Xinghua settlers came to Sibu later than the Fuzhou and Guangdong settlers, and though they were able to get the assistance of the pioneer groups, their life was by no means easy. Like



the earlier groups of settlers, they had to carry out the arduous task of opening up the virgin jungle for cultivation and lead a spartan life. But, they survived and developed the land. In the four settlements, the Xinghua settlers built 5 churches, 5 primary schools and 2 secondary schools, hence making their contribution towards the development of culture and education in the Rajang River Basin.

All these three groups of Chinese immigrants from the Guangdong and Fujian Province had gone through the most spartan conditions of life. Some had sacrificed their lives, some had failed while some had succeeded in carving out a life for themselves. How they overcame all odds to get onto the road of success was indeed a sad but great historical poem. In a nutshell, their experiences have become an educational book for posterity and a part of cultural heritage for all the ethnic groups in the country.



Fig. 136 Xinghua Puxian Association situated at Huang Naishang (Wong Nai Siong) Road, Sibü, is an achievement of the Xinghua (Heng Hua) settlers.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 137 The old shophouses along the bank of Sungai Merah, Sibü.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 138 New shophouses at Sungai Merah Bazaar, Sibul.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 139 Sungai Merah Bus Berhad, Sibul, most of the land transport business is managed by the Xinghua (Heng Hua) people.

## **Appendix VIII: Memorandum of Rajah Charles Brooke on Sibuhinghua Settlement, June 30, 1911.**

### **Memorandum for Rajah Charles Brooke on Sibuhinghua Settlement**

The following terms are accepted by me.

(sgd) C. Brooke

Singapore, June 30, 1911.

memorandum for H.H. the Rajah of Sarawak.

1. Permit the importation of Hinghuas - to the number of 300 at a cost of not over \$15 each - or total of \$4,500. (These will arrive probably in 10 months).
2. Grant these Hinghuas a reservation on the Igan similar in area, terms etc. to the Foo Chow grant on the Rejang. Taxes to be paid from 2nd year of coming of the first three hundred - on the individual holdings, when surveyed.
3. Grant the American Mission one-half cost of Industrial School building - and a yearly sum of \$500 for upkeep of Industrial and Agricultural experiments.

*(Sgd) W.F. Oldham*

**(Taken from The Sibuhinghua Chinese Historical Records, p. 42)**

## CHAPTER 13

### NATIVE SOCIETY OF RAJANG BASIN BEFORE WORLD WAR II

In the 23 years prior to the Japanese Occupation (1941) of the country covering the period from the end of the First World War (1918) to the outbreak of the Second World War (1939), Sarawak progressed steadily in a state of political peace and flourishing economy. During this period of time, Sarawak was also affected by the world depression, especially in between 1929 and 1930 when there was a disastrous drop in the prices of natural commodities which created hardships among the people who were unable to pay government taxes. This chain reaction culminated in a rebellion led by Penghulu Asun which was quickly put down. Then steadily the economy picked up till the time of the Centenary Celebrations of the Brooke rule in 1941.

The coming of several large groups of Chinese settlers to cultivate the land in the Rajang region caused the commercial economy to flourish and stimulated the growth of the agricultural economy. Even the amount of jungle produce greatly increased, thus bringing more wealth to the natives who inevitably changed their ways of life. It was in this situation of mutual benefits that all the ethnic groups of the Rajang region worked closely to develop the country's economy and reconstruct the society.

Ever since the coastal region stretching from the Rajang delta as far as Tanjung Kidurong in Bintulu was annexed into the map of Sarawak in 1861, the sago industry had been an important source of government revenue, and it had also been the most important economic activity of the Melanaus. The importance of the sago industry in the economy of Sarawak can be gleaned from the table given below.

YEAR	SAGO EXPORT (TONS)	VALUE (SARAWAK \$)	TOTAL
1890	160,878	\$ 348,035	20.40%
1900	215,910	\$ 784,320	15.30%
1910	346,544	\$1,171,999	2.10%
1920	271,320	\$2,310,430	12.90%
1930	261,722	\$ 960,998	3.80%
1940	388,790	\$2,184,997	4.60%

(Morris, 1991 : 239)

The sago flour produced in the coastal region was sent to Sibu town, 65 miles from the mouth of the Rajang River, where the exporters collected and shipped it overseas as the port facilities in Sibu were better. The development of sago industry, the increasing quantity of jungle produce and other agricultural products came about as the result of market demand, better transportation and world economic situation.

Apart from engaging in the sago industry, the Melanaus were involved in economic activities such as fishing, logging, gathering jungle produce, hunting, weaving and making handicrafts and commercial trading.

Under the rule of the White Rajah, the Melanaus no longer suffered from the raids of pirates, the suppression and exploitation of the Brunei court officials. To the older Melanaus who are still staying in Kampung Nangka, this period of the history can still be vividly recalled.

Though the number of Malays living in the Rajang region was small, there were many outstanding Malay figures and distinguished families. Out of the five Heads of the independent State of Sarawak, 3 were from the Rajang region, of whom 2 were

Malays.

Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang, the second Head of State of Sarawak, wrote in the article '*My Family and Other Anecdotes*' published in a magazine called '*The Sarawak Teacher*' (1966, Vol.2 No.2) that his family came from Pontianak, Indonesia, the descendants of Arabs. His ancestors could have been Arab merchants who came to trade in South East Asia during the time of Majapahit Empire.

Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi Aduce Mohd. Noor, the present Head of State of Sarawak, came from a farming Malay family. His parents, like other Malays, were engaged in fishing, planting padi, growing vegetables, collecting edible ferns or wild vegetable and hunting (Sanib Said, 1991 : 13).

In fact, in the Rajang region there were Malay businessmen who brought the jungle produce they had traded with the Dayaks to sell it in the town. Besides, many Malays were government civil servants, military and police personnel.

During this period of the early 20th Century, among the natives of the Rajang region, the ethnic group that underwent a great change was the Ibans. Traditionally, the life of the Iban community centres around the growing of rice, the hill padi. Every year between May and June, they fell the trees and clear the jungle. July is the hottest month, so the cut trees and bushes are dried and then they are burnt in August. In September, the seeds are sowed. Weeding is done in October and November. Between November and December fencing is erected around the field. When the padi is ripening between December and February, bird-scaring is the main job. By late February or March the padi is harvested. The harvest festival begins in April, and varies from place to place. But, it has been now fixed on 1st June of every year which is also a Public Holiday celebrated by all the ethnic groups in Sarawak.

In the past, between the chores on the farm, the Ibans fished in the river, hunted wild animals in the jungle or gathered wild fruits and ferns for food. Besides, they made baskets, mats, wall-matting and floor-covering from rattan, bamboo and reed.

The traditional economic activities of the Ibans included collecting jungle produce like rattan, damar, engkabang or illipenuts,

and tapping jelutong and wild rubber. They exchanged the jungle produce with the Chinese or Malay businessmen for salt and other items such as beads, metal and porcelain utensils, earthen jars and coins. These economic activities of the Ibans had definitely helped in the development of the township and transportation which brought about a flourishing commercial market for export and import activities. For instance, the rattan collected by the Ibans was sent to the town where it became the raw material for the Chinese handicraftsmen who made them into rattan tables, rattan chairs, rattan beds and baskets. Some of the rattan was exported by the Chinese businessmen as raw material to the overseas countries to earn foreign exchange.

In the early 20th Century when the Chinese immigrants came to the Rajang River Basin, they set up settlements, planted rubber trees and pepper vines. Seeing the success made by the Chinese immigrants, many Ibans also started to grow these cash crops. When the prices of such cash crops soared, these Ibans became richer. Consequently, some Ibans abandoned their traditional way of life which centered very much around padi-growing. Later on when the Chinese ventured into logging and timber industry, many Ibans left home to work at the timber companies, thus resulting in their eventual migration to the town where they adopted an urban life-style (Sutlive, Jr., 1992 : 128-135).

The Kayans and Kenyahs living along the upper reaches of the Rajang River were not as numerous as the Ibans, but as the population was sparse, there was plenty of land for cultivation. They lived on the rice that they grew on the hill slopes and the animals they reared or hunted. They grew cash crops such as rubber, coffee and groundnuts and collected jungle produce. It is popularly believed among the Kayans and Kenyahs that their ancestors came to Sarawak from south Kalimantan, Indonesia, because they were collecting jungle produce while making their way to Brunei to trade.

Among the Dayaks the Kayans and the Kenyahs are the two ethnic groups that have already achieved a fairly high level of culture even before the war. They still retain many of their characteristics. They are skilled at the art of carving and sculpture, making



spears and swords as well as making blow-pipes. They are expert at weaving baskets, hats and ornamental beadwork. They are gifted in music, singing and dancing. Their musical instruments like the Keluri (the bamboo wind-instrument) and the Sapeh (the stringed instrument) are representative of their tribes. In their singing their vocal harmony is so natural and well blended that it is unsurpassing even by the professional.

The Kayans and Kenyahs are not only expert boat-builders but they are also skillful boatmen. Their handicrafts have become very popular items in the market.

The Penans and the Punans are minority ethnic groups. Though the Penans spend most part of their lives in the jungle, they have their fixed market-days. On market-days, they would bring their woven items and handicrafts as well as the jungle produce they had collected and the animals they had hunted for sale or barter. In their own way, they too have played a role in the economic field of the country.

Hence, it is fair to say that in the development and the prosperity of the Rajang Basin all the ethnic groups have in their separate ways made their contributions.

It is undeniable that in various fields of economic activities in the early 20th Century, the methods of production were generally quite primitive and productivity was low. This could be attributed to the fact that formal education was not yet popularized and the standard of whatever education available was generally low. According to the *1937 Sarawak Education Report*, the different types and number of schools in the whole of Sarawak were as follows:-

<b>TYPE OF SCHOOL</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
<b>Native Schools</b>	
Malay School (Gov't)	5
Malay School (Gov't Aided)	3
Malay School (Private)	2
Sea Dayak School (Private)	2
Special School (Police)	2
<b>Mission Schools</b>	
Junior Secondary (mainly Chinese pupils)	5
Land Dayak School	10
Sea Dayak School	10
Melanau School	4
Chinese School	18
<b>Chinese Schools</b>	
Junior Secondary	9
Primary School	128

In the 3rd Division, that is, the land that covers most of the Rajang Basin, there were 45 Chinese schools which were affiliated to the Methodist Mission in the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlements. The racial composition in the schools was as follows:-

<b>RACE</b>	<b>PUPIL ENROLMENT</b>
Chinese	10,924
Malay	1,906
Melanau	630
Sea Dayak	346
Land Dayak	299
Indian	75
Eurasian	63
Others	42

In 1939 the total population of Sarawak was 490,585 of which 123,626 were Chinese (Purcell, 1951 : 429).

From the above statistics, we can deduce that most of the people of Sarawak were illiterate. Government efforts at making formal education available to more people began during the British colonial period. From then onwards, the Sarawak society especially the native communities experienced tremendous change.

On the other hand, the non-existence of writing does not equate absence of culture. The natives of Sarawak not only have beautiful songs and graceful dances they also have a high standard of arts; their creative compositions are original and inspiring while their poetry is rich in content. In July 1973, the Sarawak Museum published two large volumes containing 1389 pages of works of poetry of the various natives in Sarawak, even the Penans, the forest dwellers, have their beautiful folk songs and soothing lullabies. This is part of the very valuable cultural heritage of Sarawak worth appreciating and studying.



Fig. 140 The Melanaus living along the coastal region of the lower Rajang Basin, traditionally specialised in making boats, sailing and fishing.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 141 Casting a 'jala'; one of the methods of fishing practised by people living along the river.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 142 Fishing with a trap at the mouth of the river, called 'jermal' by the Melanau. (Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 143 Fishing with a 'phukat'; a shallow sea fishing method known as 'anchau' in Melanau. The net is dragged to form a semi-circle in the sea and is later pulled towards the shore with the catch. (Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 144 Modern deep-sea fishing with a drag-net.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 145 Melanau 'panau' fishing. The nipah palm leaves are thrown into the sea to give shelter to the fish, then the divers go down to chase the fish into the net.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 146 A Melanau woman barbecuing fish.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 147 A traditional medicine man using his magical power to heal a woman suffering from headache.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 148 Ibans drying the illipenuts or 'engkabang'on rattan mats; a jungle produce with a high economic value.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)

Fig. 149 A native tapping jelutong; a high economic value jungle produce.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)







Fig. 150 A native cutting rattan; an important jungle produce of the Rajang Basin.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 151 Iban men tying rattan into bundles at the river bank of Kapit.  
(Photo: I.A.N. Urquhart)



Fig. 152 An Iban weaving a rattan mat.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 153 An Iban girl weaving a 'pua kumbu', the durable dyes used are made from plants and the traditional designs are of typical of Iban culture. The 'pua kumbu' is now a decorative item, the favourite of both locals and foreigners.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 154 Ibans beating the drums to welcome guests on a festival day.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 155 Ibans performing a ritual.



Fig. 156 A Kayan loading 'damar' into his boat at Batang (River) Balui to take to the town for sale. (Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 157 Penans selling the wild rubber collected from the jungle. (Photo: Hedda Morrison)

From the above pictures, we can see the different economic roles played by the various races in the Rajang Basin.

## CHAPTER 14

### CHINESE SOCIETY OF THE RAJANG BASIN BEFORE WORLD WAR II

Before World War II, the Chinese society in the Rajang Basin depended mainly on an agrarian economy. Out of the 30,000 Chinese living in the Sibul District, for example, only about a sixth were urban dwellers and the rest were rural folks.

As a result of soaring prices in agricultural products in the decade between 1920 and 1930, the settlers began to enjoy the fruit of their labour and the success of the agricultural settlements attracted many more Chinese immigrants to the Rajang region. Apart from the Minnan (Zhangquan), Fuzhou, Guangdong (Cantonese) and Xinghua people, there were Chaozhou (Teochew), Hainan and other minority dialects of Chinese. They too had contributed to the prosperity and progress of the Rajang Basin of today.

Although the disastrous fire of 7th March 1928 had destroyed most of Sibul town, it was rebuilt with assistance from the government. New shops were built which formed the foundation of the modern Sibul Town, and some of these shops still exist today.

Before the war Sibul town had about 150 shops but the number of businesses in operation was more than 300, suggesting that every shop had more than two businesses. Among the businesses the sundry shops and shops dealing with exports and imports accounted for the greatest number. Next came the 'Shui Ke' or travelling salesmen who usually brought the goods that the businessmen at the smaller riverine towns had ordered and on their return trip these travelling salesmen purchased local jungle produce for export. There were shops dealing in an assortment of businesses. For example, there were shops selling clothes, bakeries, coffeeshops, jewellery shops, and shops that housed the building contractors and oriental or Chinese medicine shops. There were the barbers' and hair-dressers' shops, carpentry shops, hardware shops, bicycle shops, shops specialised in capping teeth with gold,

blacksmiths' shops, photo studios, shops dealing in foreign currencies and helped the settlers to send money to their families in China, shops serving cooked foods and shops selling western medicines. It is clearly shown in the above list that these shops dealt mainly with the daily necessities and there were hardly any professional services of modern standard. From the commercial situation in Sibul town, it could be seen that the whole society was still in a fairly slow and early stage of development.

At that stage of development, industry consisted mainly of handicrafts on a small scale. However, worthy of mention were the wooden and rattan furniture and processed jelutong. These were processed and manufactured by Chinese from the raw materials collected and sent to the town by the natives. This is a good example of the complementary roles played by the Chinese and natives in developing the economy of the Rajang River Basin.

The main exports of the Rajang Basin were rubber, pepper, sago, rattan, wild rubber, logs, damar, engkabang (illipenuts), and jelutong. Most of these were either collected or produced by the natives and sent to the town to sell to the Chinese businessmen who packed and exported them to other countries. This is another instance of the co-operative efforts made by the various ethnic groups in developing the economy of the Rajang Basin.

Before the Second World War, logging was already an important industry in the Rajang Basin. In 1923, along the Rajang River there were four sawmills with Lihua (Lee Hua) Sawmill being the biggest in scale. In 1938 the Borneo Company Limited began logging in the Upper Rajang between Sungai Pelagus and Belaga. Well-trained elephants were imported from Thailand and Siamese workers were employed to manage the elephants in the lumber job.

Since then the timber industry had developed at a tremendous pace. In 1933, the total timber exported from Sarawak was 331 tons worth \$12,000 (Sarawak dollars). By 1964, the export of timber from Sarawak increased to 184,000 tons amounting to \$32,000,000 according to *A History of Forest Industry in Sarawak* by David Parsons published in the 1966 issue of *The Sarawak Teacher*, Vol.2 No.2.

Before the war, there was no machine-driven equipment so logging was rather primitively carried out. The Iban workers felled the trees with saws and axes, pushed the logs into the river and let the current carry the logs downriver to the sawmills. As the river provided the only means of transport, logging was carried out in the vicinity of the river.

In fact, in the Rajang Basin, water transport played a significant part in the lives of the people, in the development of society and the building up of an economy. In the early 20th Century, river transport was the only possible means of communication. Thus, in the contract between the Rajah and the Chinese settlers, it was always clearly stated that the government was responsible for building a wharf and a road leading to the agricultural settlement. Initially, the Chinese settlers travelled by boat or dugout made by the natives. As many of these early settlers could not swim they were drowned whenever they fell into the river. Later on, when the settlers had to transport their agricultural produce for sale in town, they constructed their own boats to ply along the river.

In 1910, Rev. James Hoover introduced the steamship to the Rajang River. By 1920, there were boats with outboard-motors and steamships on the Rajang River, and with Sibuluan as the centre, some of them plied up-river to Kanowit, Song and Kapit while others downriver to Binatang (now Bintangor) and Sarikei. Although the boats with outboard-motors were faster, they were smaller in capacity and could not carry a lot of goods. On the other hand, the steamship or commonly known as the motor-boat came in two types: the single-decker and the double-decker. Each boat could carry between 50 and 100 passengers. These motorboats were faster and safer than the little dugouts, so most people preferred the motorboats, thus bringing good business to the boat owners.

The earlier type of motorboat was driven by a five-horse-power engine and was smaller in size. According to the reminiscences of Datuk Liu Huigan (Datuk Lau Hui Kang), when the war ended in 1945, he started a passenger motor-boat driven by a eight-horse-power engine plying between Sibuluan and Bukit Lan. As the passenger-boat business was very competitive, he had to pro-

vide good services in order to attract passengers. Very often he accompanied the passengers to the market or the shops and helped to carry their purchase to the boat. In this way he ensured that the passengers would make the return trip by his motorboat. It was a hard life, according to Datuk Liu, but, by afternoon when the motorboat returned with a full load of goods and passengers, he had a satisfied sense of achievement. It is possible that Datuk Liu's great success in business in later years has been precipitated by this sense of achievement.

Steep competition in the shipping business caused the Sibuh shipping industry to improve steadily. From the earlier steamship driven by a 5-horse-power engine, it was bettered by one with at least 100-horse-power. According to the '*15th Anniversary Special Supplement*' of the Sibuh Hardware Importers Association, there was, in 1941, a passenger motorboat fitted with an engine of more than 200-horse-power plying between Sibuh, Binatang and Sarikei. It was structurally very modern with comfortable seats, and moved steadily and fast. It was considered the most advanced steamship then. During the Japanese Occupation it was commandeered by the Japanese but was later sunk by the Allied planes (Ejiong Sufu, 1977, *From the Progress of the Sibuh Hardware Business to the Development of the Shipping Industry* : 196).

However, in those days a typical return-trip by motorboat from Sibuh to Sarikei had to take one day, and from Sibuh to Kapit two days and one night. As much time was wasted on the trip it was uneconomical. It was only in the late 1960's that we saw the first appearance of express-boats on the Rajang River, thus ushering in a new era of the shipping industry in the Rajang Basin. Nowadays, the Express-boat plying between Sibuh and Kapit is fitted with a single-engine of 2,070 horse-power, taking about four hours each way, whereas the Express-boat running between Sibuh and Sarikei is fitted with a double-engine totalling 3,100 horse-power or a triple with 3,500 horse-power taking about an hour one way. Those with a triple-engine also ply between Kuching and Sibuh. So, by comparing the initial 5 horse-power engine of 1910 with the modern 3,500 horse-power engine, we cannot fail to recognise the progress made in the shipping industry of the Rajang



Basin.

The development of the Rajang Basin has resulted from a flourishing economy which in turn has facilitated the progress of society. But, what has actually engineered a progress society is the power of education. Today, the Rajang Basin has produced many outstanding personalities and numerous professionals who are found all over the state of Sarawak; this is the fruit of education.

Undeniably, in the enterprise of education, the Christian missions have played an influential role. Before the Second World War, there were about 30 schools in the Rajang region managed by the Chinese communities including Zhonghua Primary School and Zhonghua Secondary School in Sibu, Guangguo School and Daiqun School in the Guangdong (Cantonese) Settlement, Yiting School in Kanowit and Funan School in Kapit. The majority of the other schools were established and managed by the Methodist and Catholic Missions. Two outstanding examples in Sibu are the Sacred Heart School established in 1902 by Rev. Aloysius Hopfgartner of the Catholic Mission and the Methodist School opened in 1903 by Rev. James Hoover and Mrs Mary Hoover of the Methodist Mission.

In fact, as early as 1883 the Catholic Mission had already gained a foothold in Kanowit where St. Francis Xavier's School was established. By now the school has already had a history of 113 years.

The primary and secondary schools established by the Chinese communities have not only popularized education but also cultivated many talents which contributed greatly to the progress and development of society. Similarly, the contributions made by the Christian Mission schools towards the society and country of Sarawak are well-known facts. The Christian churches were usually found wherever there were Mission schools. Education in such schools and religious activities tended to be closely related, thus school education helped complement religious education while religious education helped fill the gap in school education. This educational environment had influenced the development of students' thinking, conduct, knowledge and capability. Besides, the fact that one language was used in school as a medium of instruc-

tion and another in religious teaching helped the students from the Christian Mission schools to master two languages.

Generally, the Chinese communities value their religious beliefs and their children's education in addition to their attention to social services and spirit of patriotism. Sibü is an exemplary town where social welfare services are very well carried out. The well-known charitable organizations are the Guang Han Society founded by the Min (Fujian dialect) Guang (Guangdong or Cantonese) people, the Guang Yuan Society by the Fuzhou, and the Sibü Benevolent Society established for all the ethnic groups. All these organizations have made great contributions towards social welfare services while the individual who made the greatest contribution was Liu Qinhou or Lau King Howe (1869-1932).

Liu Qinhou, a Fuzhou, educated in China and received his higher education in the Philippines had held an official position in China but in 1916 he emigrated to Sarawak to work at the Sibü agricultural settlement. There, he saw many sick people but there was no hospital to look after them. In 1930 he put forward a proposal to the Resident of Sibü, C.D. Adams, about donating his land and money to build a hospital. His proposal was well received by the then State Secretary of Sarawak, T.C. Swayne, who agreed to name the hospital after the donor - Lau King Howe. On 7th March 1931, Rajah Vyner Brooke, the Third Rajah of Sarawak, presented to him an award in recognition of his generous gesture. In May the same year, Liu Qinhou (Lau King Howe) returned to China where he died the following year. For more than 60 years the Sibü Lau King Howe Hospital had provided medical services which had benefited a multitude of people of all ethnic groups in Sarawak. Lau King Howe Hospital in Sibü ceased to function when the new Sibü Hospital was completed and began to provide medical services in 1994. But, from the educational point of view and historical significance, Lau King Howe (Liu Qinhou), the man and benefactor, will always be remembered and respected; he should be emulated by all the people in Sarawak.

On 7th July 1937, the Resistance War against the Japanese broke out in China, and like all the overseas Chinese elsewhere,

the Chinese in the Rajang region were actively involved in the anti-Japanese movement. In Sibü the Chinese communities under their Headman, Liu Jiachu, and other community leaders like Lin Kaiqin, Zhang Chongluo, Chen Lixun, Liu Xianren and Chen Shutian formed a Relief Fund Committee to raise funds and to appeal for clothing for the war refugees in China. At the same time, they carried out various propaganda activities to recruit all the overseas Chinese to take part in the Resistance War against Japan. In 1939, when a group of Chinese Muslims from China, led by Ibrahim Ma Tianying, visited Sibü to spread the anti-Japanese movement, they not only obtained the unanimous support of the Chinese but also the generous donations from the Malays. In May 1941, when the Chinese Consul for North Borneo, Zhuo Huanlai, paid a visit to Sibü he was warmly welcomed by the Chinese communities there. In fact, among the overseas Chinese at that time, never before in the history of the Chinese race had there been such animosity towards the Japanese and such determined spirit in opposing the enemies. There were more than 3,000 overseas Chinese youths who went to China to fight in the Resistance War against the Japanese and many died in the battle fields in China.

On 1st September 1939, when the Second World War broke out the Sarawak Government also began to raise funds to help Britain and China in the war against Germany and Japan.

On 24th September 1941, while Sarawak was celebrating the centenary of the Brooke rule the war clouds loomed over its sky. On 24th December of the same year the Japanese invaded and occupied Sarawak, and its people began to live in darkness.



Fig. 158 The after-math of the Sibü disastrous fire of March 7, 1928.



Fig. 159 Group photo of students, teaching staff and members of the School Board of Management of the Sibü Guanghua (Kwong Hua) School after the graduation ceremony in 1924.



Fig. 160 The first batch of junior secondary graduates of Sibu Methodist Yuying Girls' School with Principal, Mrs Mary Hoover, in 1932.

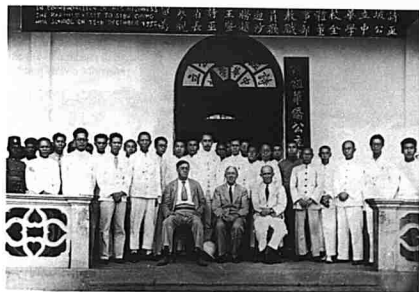


Fig. 161 The 3rd Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke (middle) posing with members of the staff and Board of Management of Zhonghua School, Sibu, during the Rajah's visit to the school on December 12, 1932, accompanied by the Sibu Resident C.D. Adams (right) and Rev. James Hoover (left). Rev. James Hoover was the Supervisor and Spokesman of the Sibu agricultural settlers, and he was so much trusted by the Rajah that he participated in the government affairs; his unquestionable position is from the photo.

The Lau King Howe Hospital

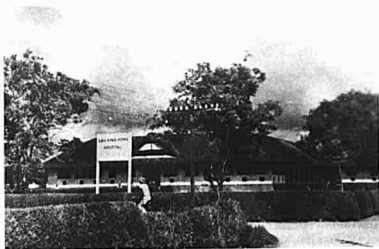


Fig. 162 The Liu Qinhou (Lau King Howe) Hospital in Sibuhay.



Fig. 163 Mr & Mrs  
Lau King Howe  
(Photo supplied by  
Liu Zizheng, Sibuhay)



Fig. 164 A Chinese farmer weeding in a pepper garden near Kanowit, while the yam plants are catch-crops before the pepper vines climb up the posts. This is a glimpse of the life of a farmer in the agricultural settlement.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 165 Chinese traders buying camphor from the Kayans, 1902.



Fig 166 A Chinese trader selling goods in his boat-shop on the river near Kanowit; a way of trading by many Chinese before World War II.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)

Fig 167 A Chinese launch driven by steam-engine plying up and down the river providing good services to the commuters as well as transporting goods.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)







Fig. 168 A Fuzhou farmer making soya-bean sauce; a skill shared by the Xinghua farmers also.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 169 Bakery has been flourishing and Sibuyan is famous for its buns, and moon-cakes.

## CHAPTER 15

### RAJANG BASIN UNDER THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION

During the Second World War, the Japanese control of the Pacific Ocean and its invasion of the Southeast Asian countries had been very well planned and prepared. So, when it successfully bombed the American naval base at Pearl Harbour on 7th December 1941, causing the U.S. naval forces ineffective in the Pacific Ocean and enabling the Japanese forces to sweep rapidly southwards. The Japanese forces landed in Miri of Sarawak on 16th December 1941, with the objective of occupying the oil-fields there. On 19th December 1941, twelve Japanese planes raided Kuching, the Capital of Sarawak. On 25th December 1941 the Japanese troops occupied Kuching, and on the same day nine Japanese bombers carried out air strike of Sibu in the Rajang Basin. The people in Sarawak had not experienced modern warfare; they were unprepared and did not know what to do in fear and panic.

The following night after the bombing, that is on 26th December 1941, a party of European government officers retreated to the upper Rajang intending to cross the border to escape to the Dutch Borneo. On the morning of 27th December 1941 at about 11 o'clock the Resident of Sibu, Andrew MacPherson, appointed Datu Mohammed to take charge of Sibu and left for the upper Rajang (Lin Kaiqin or Ling Kai Cheng, 1990 : 60). Unfortunately, the movement of the party consisting of European officers, women, and children led by Andrew MacPherson and G.R.H. Arundell, the Resident of Simanggang, the Second Division of Sarawak, was betrayed by the Iban ex-prisoners and they were all killed by the Japanese at Ulu Mujang in the upper Batang Ai (Reece, 1993 : 143n).

After the departure of the Resident and the European officers there was a total disruption of civil administration and in the absence of governance, riots were rife. In the evening of 26th December 1941, rioters started looting the government rice store in

Sibu town. The next morning at the Sibu wharf, they looted the goods belonging to two British Companies stored in the godowns there. In the afternoon of 27th December, many more people gathered at Bukit Lima intending to loot the government padi (rice) store near the wharf. After the appeal and advice given by Lin Kaiqin (Ling Kai Cheng) and other Chinese community leaders, the people dispersed. But on 28th December 1941, while the Chinese, Malay and Iban community leaders were at an emergency meeting discussing the steps to be taken, the government padi store at Bukit Lima was forced open. However, before looting could start, Lin Kaiqin and a group of Chinese leaders with the help of the police force hurriedly arrived and managed to prevent the looting of this government padi store. The same afternoon the commercial sectors organised themselves to prevent crime and disorder. The next day the Ibans swarmed to Sibu in their longboats, but precaution had been taken by the commercial sectors and the Ibans were not allowed to go ashore. Zhang Chongluo (Teo Chong Lo) requested the help of the Iban leaders to stop possible looting and killing. Finally, it was decided that Datu Mohammed distribute two bags of padi to each boat and afterwards the Ibans returned to their respectively longhouses (Reece, 1993 : 60-62).

Had it not been for the capable leaders of the different ethnic communities, the looting might have developed into a disaster. Though the Sibu people had got over a near disaster, rumours were rife and people were panicky. As a precaution, the suburb dwellers and villagers formed vigilante corps and the men were put on duty day and night. This could not be a permanent measure, so the commercial sectors appointed three leaders as their representatives who went to Kuching to get the help of the Japanese to maintain law and order in Sibu. That was the best solution under the situation at that point in time.

On 19th January 1942, a troop of Japanese soldiers led by Asao arrived, thus putting an end to the looting and disorder in Sibu. Then in the same year on 23rd June, Senda Kojiro, the Japanese Resident of Sibu appointed by the Japanese Military Government in Sarawak, arrived with about 60 officials and formed the divisional government in Sibu. Only then did peace and order re-

turn to Sibü.

The invading Japanese army was the 37th Army which had initially set up its military government headquarters in Kuching. But in October, 1943, the 37th Army moved the headquarters to North Borneo (Sabah) in case of an Allied counter-attack. The Japanese military government set up 5 'shu' or prefectures with administrative centres at Kuching, Sibü, Miri, Jesselton (renamed Seikai by the Japanese) - now Kota Kinabalu- and Sandakan (renamed Tokai by the Japanese) respectively. From this administrative set-up, it was clear that the Japanese military government placed importance only on the bigger towns and the riverine agricultural settlements; they were, on the other hand, afraid to go to the interior. And because of their fear of the interior, many Chinese were able to escape to the rural areas, away from the Japanese persecution during the war years.

However, the peace in Sibü after the arrival of Senda Kojiro was short-lived. By 15th August 1942, the Japanese military government carried out a massive arrest of the Chinese community leaders and the members of the China Relief Fund Committee. Among the 21 personalities arrested were Zhang Chongluo, Zhou Yulin, Chen Zhongchi, Jiang He, Liu Jiachu, Lin Kaiqin, Huang Jinghe and Chen Lixun. After having been imprisoned for a month, they were released on 16th September 1942; this is a Japanese way of making the Chinese leaders obedient to them. After their release, the Japanese military government informed the various Chinese leaders to dissolve their associations and commercial organisations, and to form a Joint Peacekeeping Association to help the Japanese military government keep law and order in Sibü. The Chinese communities were summoned to assemble at the Zhonghua Primary School where they were told to elect the committee members for the Joint Peacekeeping Association. As a result, Zhang Chongluo was elected President while Lin Kaiqin the executive secretary and all the former members of the China Relief Fund Committee were given various positions (Lin Kaiqin or Ling Kai Cheng, 1990 : 62-63).

What followed was a period of steep taxes demanded from the Chinese communities and brutal Japanese rule. To punish the

Chinese for raising money for the China Relief Fund, the Japanese military government ordered the Chinese communities in Sibul to contribute \$700,000 of 'shujin' meaning 'redemption money' (Reece, 1993 : 144-145). Besides the 'shujin', each Chinese had to pay \$6 of poll tax per person and buy the defence coupons for the sale of rubber.

By October 1942, all the schools were ordered to close and in their stead Japanese Public Schools were opened. The teachers in Sibul were given special training to enable them to teach in these Japanese schools.

Apart from brainwashing the people through schooling, the Japanese also utilised other forms of propaganda, such as, the newspaper, radio broadcast and cartoons. They also made use of important events like the Japanese Emperor's birthday and the official visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Tojo to influence the people. In addition, the Japanese tried to associate themselves with other ethnic groups by recruiting their leaders in the administration and they posed as if they were the saviour of the natives. Many community leaders and Datuks including Abang Haji Openg in Kuching and Tuanku Bujang in Sibul were the desirable persons the Japanese wanted to associate with.

In order to carry out their economic exploitation of the people, the Japanese military government established Japanese commercial firms, Japanese banks and agricultural settlements in Kanowit; they had monopoly of most businesses. Towards the later part of the war, when the tide of war seemed to turn against the Japanese, communication was disrupted, and because the sources of food, clothing and other daily necessities were cut off, the Japanese military government had to solve the food shortage by turning their attention to growing padi and other food crops.

As a military objective in Sibul, the Japanese military government impounded large areas of land with rubber plantations in the Xinghua Agricultural Settlement near Sungai Merah for the building of an airport. They recruited by force many local workers to construct the Sibul airport which was bombed by the Allied planes towards the end of the war together with the school and the church at Sungai Merah. In the early 1950's, this airport was re-

paired for the Sarawak Civil Aviation which started operation on 1st July, 1952. Later on the runway was extended and widened to a length of 5,500 feet and a width of 150 feet. Although the airport served only small passenger aircraft, it had brought a new era in transportation into the Rajang Basin. This airport had served the people of Sarawak, particularly those of the Rajang Basin for 43 years, and it only ceased to be used when the new Sibu Airport began operation in 1995.

The post-1944 period saw the Japanese defeat in many battles but the Japanese soldiers became more atrocious. In November, 1944, there happened in Sibu the 'Kang Ri Hui' or the 'Anti-Japanese Organization' incident that rocked the whole town. The Japanese military government arrested more than 30 Chinese accusing them of anti-Japanese activities and tortured them into admitting their guilt. Eventually, on 9th June 1945, the Japanese executed Zhang Jieru and Liu Zhonghong while the others had to serve an imprisonment of 3 to 10 years or for life.

Meanwhile, the Allied counter-attack had already begun. On 25th March 1945, the Australian Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD) sent out the first group of paratroopers, code named 'Semut I', headed by Major Tom Harrison, and landed at Bario on the Kelabit Highlands to organise the natives for a counter-attack. Simultaneously, the Allied planes began bombing Sibu town. The Allied airstrike of Sibu that caused most casualties and damages to buildings was the one that took place on 4th June which killed more than 150 people and hit most parts of the town. On 10th June, 1945, Major-General George Wootten led the Allied Forces comprising 23,553 men of the 9th Australian Infantry Division, 6,525 men of the Royal Australian Air Force and 1,254 Americans (Harrison, 1990 : 259) and liberated Labuan Island and Brunei Bay after a fierce battle with the unrelenting Japanese, resulting in the Allied losses of several thousand men.

On 16th April 1945, the Australian Services Reconnaissance Department sent out a third group, which had been a part of 'Semut II', code-named 'Semut III', commanded by Major Bill Sochon (W.L.P. Sochon). Major Sochon's 'Semut III' which consisted of 500 Iban warriors and an armed troop made up of other natives

and some Chinese moved downstream along the Rajang River, first re-occupied Belaga on 1st June, recaptured Kapit on 24th June and then re-occupied Song on 27th July and Kanowit on 7th August 1945. Prior to the war, Bill Sochon was the Assistant Divisional Superintendent of Police and Prisons for the Third Division from 1929 until 1938 and therefore had first-hand knowledge of the land and people of the Rajang Basin. During this 'Semut III' counter-attack he gave order to the Iban warriors to take the heads of the Japanese soldiers who either successfully escaped or had their heads taken by these brave and enthusiastic warriors. When they reached the Japanese agricultural station in Kanowit, the Japanese had already escaped leaving behind 23 Chinese workers whose heads were also taken by the Iban warriors (Leigh, 1974 : 33).

When the U.S. dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively on 6th and 9th August 1945, and Russia declared war on Japan on 8th August 1945, Japan was so depleted militarily that the Japanese Emperor finally surrendered unconditionally to the Allied Forces on 15th August, 1945.

In the reminiscences of Lu Yiren, a soldier in Sochon's 'Semut III', entitled '*Fifty Years After The War*' published in the See Hua Daily News dated 20th August, 1995, was a detailed description of the surrender of the Japanese Forces in Sibü. He narrated that Sochon's troop came downstream and went ashore at Da Qun Wharf. The spot where the surrender was to take place was at middle Lanang Road. In the middle of the road was a row of desks. At about 10 in the morning, the Allied Forces, led by Sochon who was accompanied by some army officers and a row of armed guards behind him, proceeded to the town from Da Qun in the upper Lanang area while the Japanese Resident of Sibü carried a white flag and in the company of his fellow officers, also followed by a row of armed guards walked towards the appointed spot from the town centre. The leaders of both parties walked towards the row of desks, but the armed guards of both sides stood about fifty yards from the desks. The Japanese Resident handed over his sword to Sochon who received it as a mark of Japanese surrender, thus ending the Japanese rule of Sibü which was taken over by the Allied Military Administration. Immediately after the



surrender, the Japanese led the Allied Forces personnel to the town to finalise the handover of the various civil departments. The next day the disarmed Japanese soldiers and officers boarded an Allied warship and were taken to Kuching as prisoners of war. The Japanese rule of 3 years and eight months finally ended, concluded Lu Yiren.

However, though the Japanese had finally left Sarawak, they had also left numerous problems which resulted in temporary social disorders. Those who had been Japanese collaborators and Japanese military police informers had now become 'street rats' - the object of vendetta. So, when the Australians landed, there arose everywhere in Sarawak a stormy 'Anti-Japanese running-dogs' vendetta, from which there was no escape for the Japanese collaborators and informers. Some of them were beaten to death, some managed to escape, others mysteriously disappeared and still many more begged to be kept in jail for protection from those who were intense on taking revenge. Of those who sought protection of the jail, the majority were members of a certain community whose 'Independence League' had publicly supported the Japanese and collaborated with them.

When J.B. Archer, the former Chief Secretary of Sarawak, came out of the Batu Lintang Camp after liberation, he demanded action to be taken against the native leaders who had collaborated with the Japanese and were therefore traitors to the country.

Undeniably, the people who had suffered the most under the Japanese were the Chinese who hated, without exception, the individuals who had collaborated with the Japanese and spied for them. There was a case in Miri where a group of women wanted to lynch a Chinese for having been a Japanese collaborator. The Kuching rioting of 11th October 1945 was another act of revenge. To understand their intense hatred and feelings for revenge, we need only have to imagine the punishment of lynching when a person is put to death by the slow process of slicing the limbs and other parts before beheading.

When China came out victorious in the Sino-Japanese war and became one of the Four Big Powers, the hundred year national humiliation was wiped out once and for all. The mainland

Chinese were joyous and the overseas Chinese, who were considered Chinese nationals and had shared their sufferings, naturally rejoiced with them. In Sarawak, the Chinese raised the Chinese Nationalist Flag to celebrate the National Day 10th October or the Double Ten. In Kuching at the Song Qinghai Ground (Song Kheng Hai Ground) a big assembly of people including the Australian troop gathered to celebrate the Allied Victory and Chinese National Day officiated by Wang Zhangshui (Ong Tiang Swee), the Chinese community leader in Kuching, and Brigadier T.C. Eastick, Commander in charge of the Australian troops stationed in Kuching, spoke at the assembly. After the speeches was a spectacular procession through the town followed by other activities. This high-spirited nationalistic display of the Chinese incurred much anxiety and enmity of the other ethnic groups.. The next day there was a clash between the Chinese and Malays at the Kuching market. The Chinese hatred for those who had been Japanese collaborators and informers was so recent that a group of more than 1,000 Chinese quickly gathered at the Kuching Brooke Dock Yard and planned to burn the mosque and the village nearby with drums of kerosene. Fortunately, the Australian troops arrived just in time to stop a possible disaster.

In fact, before the cession of Sarawak to the British Crown, except for the few educated Chinese who took part in the Sarawak politics, the majority of Chinese were only interested in the politics of China and got involved in their political movements. This could be attributed to their historical background, cultural origin and the economic ties with China. These overseas Chinese, whether during the Brooke rule or the Japanese Occupation, were considered nationals of China, thus making them associate themselves more with China and that 'Tang Shan' was their home. After the cession because of political changes and new status many young Chinese leaders emerged and began to take part in the local politics.

However, the nationalistic spirit brought about by Chinese victory in the Japanese War and displayed by the Chinese in Kuching had tremendous impact on the other ethnic communities. The Malay National Union of Sarawak (Persatuan Melayu

Kebangsaan Sarawak) in Kuching and the Malay Youth Movement (Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu) in Sibu were the two Malay political bodies that had a great influence on the politics during the incident of cession of Sarawak.

The Japanese Occupation was an important event in the history of Sarawak that had caused great sufferings and disruption. But, those who had gone through it had very little written records of it and putting their experiences in book form was scarce. Perhaps, they did not want to recall this Japanese nightmare. There are two books about that period of time in Sibu : 'Tieti Xia De Huiyi' (*Reminiscences of Time Under The Brutal Japanese Army*) by Liu Yongzhi (1969, 2nd ed.) and 'Sibu Jie Hou Zhui Ji' (*Recollections of War Time Sibu*) by Liu Zizheng (1955). There are several books about the Batu Lintang Prisoner of War Camp in Kuching, for example, 'Three Came Home' by Agnes Newton Keith (1948); 'Vile Response' and 'The More Fool I' by Michael O'Connor (1991); 'The Undercover University' by Frank Bell (1991) and 'Return To A Dark Age' by Bill Young (1991). These books were written by foreigners who were ex-prisoners themselves. Only recently (1995) a book entitled 'From An Army Camp To A Teachers' College - a History of Batu Lintang Teachers' College' was written by Julitta Lim Shau Hua, a lecturer of Batu Lintang Teachers' College. She gave a brief but accurate description of the camp and corrected some erroneous details made by earlier writers. The organisation of counter-attack and the historical facts about the guerrilla warfare in the interior of Sarawak were recorded in 'World Within' by Major Tom Harrison (1959). Others included 'Semut I' by Bob Long (1989) and 'New Zealand's Secret Heroes (1991) and 'Silent Feet - The History of 'Z' Special Operations 1942-1945' by G.B. Courtney, as published in the two-part article 'The War In The Rejang' by Haji Yusuf Heaton in the Sarawak Tribune, dated 15th March and 16th March, 1995. Culturally, it would be a very meaningful task if the locals could organise themselves to document, edit, compile and publish this period of the history in Sarawak.



Fig. 170 Japanese high-ranking officers of the 15th Army that invaded British Borneo posing in front of the 15th Army Headquarters. Front row, left to right: Lieut-Generals G. Yanagida, S. Tanaka, R. Mutaguchi, S. Matsuyama, K. Sato. Middle row, centre: Major-General H. Obata.



Fig. 171 Prince Maida, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Forces in British Borneo. He died in a plane crash on September 5, 1942, near Bintulu when he was on his way to officiate the opening of the new airport on Labuan Island.



Fig. 172 Community leaders of various races posing with the Japanese government leaders during the Japanese Occupation of Sarawak. This photo had aroused the 3rd Rajah's great resentment.



Fig. 173 Wartime Japanese propaganda poster. The Japanese depicted themselves as the saviour of the Malays.



Fig. 174 The Memorial of Prince Maida, made of belian wood and originally erected at Tanjung Batu near Tanjung Kidurong, but it was removed and taken to Japan.  
(Photo: Ho Ah Chon)



Fig. 175 Tom Harrison with a Dayak leader. Major Tom Harrison was air-dropped onto the Kelabit Highlands on March 25, 1945, to organise the counter-attack against the Japanese



Fig. 176 Major Bill Sochon, the Commanding Officer of the Allied Forces in the counter-attack against the Japanese in the Rajang Basin.

Major Sochon ... fought against the Japanese in B...  
and Rajang



Fig. 177 Major General Hiryo Yamamura, Commanding General of Japanese forces in Kuching, handing over the samurai sword to the Commander of the Australian 9th Division, Brigadier Thomas Charles Eastick in the solemn surrender ceremony held on board the Royal Australian Navy corvette, the H.M.A.S. Kapunda at Pending, the present Datuk Sim Kheng Hong Port, on September 11, 1945.

Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 178 Major General Hiryo Yamamura signing the Instrument of Surrender on board the H.M.A.S. Kapunda.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 179 Major General Hiryo Yamamura leaving the H.M.A.S. Kapunda after signing the Instrument of Surrender.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



BRITISH BORNED AND NATONIA ISLANDS

INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER

In accordance with GENERAL ORDER No 1 - MILITARY AND NAVAL issued by Imperial General Headquarters, by direction of the Emperor and pursuant to surrender by the Emperor to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, of all Japanese Forces, I,

*Major General Kiyoo Yamamura, Commanding General Japanese Forces Kuching*  
hereby

- A. Proclaim the Unconditional Surrender to the Commander KUCHING FORCE the officer designated to receive such surrender of all Japanese Armed Forces and all Armed Forces under Japanese control in SARAWAK SOUTH of the line of RAJANG RIVER to junction with RIRANG RIVER thence RIRANG RIVER to SARAWAK boundary.
- B. Command all Commanders and members of the Japanese Armed Forces and Controlled Forces within the aforesaid area to cease hostilities immediately, lay down their arms, remain in their present localities and do all such acts and things as may be required of them by the Commander KUCHING FORCE.
- C. Command all Civil, Military and Navy officials and all members of the Japanese Armed Forces to obey and enforce all Proclamations, Orders and Directions issued by the Commander KUCHING FORCE.

Signed *Pending* on the *twentieth* of *September* 1945

*H. Yamamura*  
Commander

Accepted *Pending* on the *twentieth* of *September* 1945

*T.C. Eastick*  
Lieutenant  
Commanding KUCHING FORCE

Fig. 180 Copy of the full text of Instrument of Surrender.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 181 After the Japanese surrender, the ex-prisoners at Batu Lintang POW Camp hoisted the Sarawak Flag. 2nd right, J.B. Archer who became the Acting Secretary of State and advocated severe punishment to be meted out to the Japanese collaborators, but the Rajah disagreed.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 182 Japanese prisoners of war waiting at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce Building before leaving Kuching.  
(Photo: K.F. Wong)



Fig. 183 Local residents of Kuching crowding around to see the Japanese POWs. (Photo taken from p. 48, 'K.F. Wong - the World Renowned Photographic Artist', by Fong Hon Kah & Julitta Lim Shau Hua).



Fig. 184 Japanese POWs smoking away. (Photo taken from p.47, 'K.F. Wong - the World Renowned Photographic Artist', by Fong Hon Kah & Julitta Lim Shau Hua)



Fig. 185 Brigadier T.C. Eastick speaking at the combined celebration of China's Double Tenth National Day and the Liberation of Sarawak held at the Song Qinghai (Song Kheng Hai) Ground in Padungan, Kuching, October 10, 1946.

## CHAPTER 16

### IMPACT OF CESSION

While the founding of Sarawak was an important historical event, the cession of Sarawak which effected it from an independent country to a British colony was an international event that had a far-reaching influence. Because of violent opposition from the people, the event of cession had caused a great impact on the political situation in Sarawak, and the subsequent British colonial rule had changed the direction and path of political development in Sarawak.

The serious consequential events of the cession could be attributed to the fact that it was done too hurriedly and rashly. Besides, the fact that Rajah Vyner Brooke had even exercised unconstitutional practice in order to achieve his own selfish objective aroused great dissatisfaction among the people of Sarawak.

On 31st March 1941, when Rajah Vyner Brooke announced in the presence of his senior government officers and community leaders in front of the Astana (Palace) a new constitution which would change the government of Sarawak from an autocracy to a constitutional monarchy with the objective of leading Sarawak towards self-rule. The new constitution for Sarawak was proclaimed during the Centenary of the Brooke Rule, under which the first Council Negeri met in November 1941. But, a month later Sarawak was invaded by the Japanese putting a halt to the implementation of the new constitution.

Although Sarawak was liberated on 11th September 1945, Rajah Vyner Brooke and Ranee Sylvia did not return to Sarawak until 14th April 1946. Contemporaneously, Rajah Vyner Brooke had already decided to cede Sarawak to the British Crown. In February 1946, Rajah Vyner Brooke published an official statement in England informing the people of Sarawak about his decision to cede Sarawak to Britain.

Prior to the release of the official statement on cession in England, he had sent his Private Secretary, Gerard MacBryan, to

Sarawak to pave the way by lobbying for the support of the leaders of the various ethnic communities.

The persons who had exerted an influence on Rajah Vyner Brooke's decision on the cession of Sarawak to Britain were Raneë Sylvia and Gerard MacBryan - the former being his wife and the latter his Private Secretary. Because of mutual benefits there was co-operation but also power-struggle between them. Raneë Sylvia disliked both her father-in-law, Charles Brooke, and her brother-in-law, Bertram, whom Charles Brooke loved. However, Raneë Sylvia bore Rajah Vyner Brooke three daughters and no son; and according to the order of succession by the Salic Law (a law forbidding a female to accede to the throne), the next in line was Bertram or his son, Anthony. This was not what she wanted to see. So, she and MacBryan teamed up to try to modify the Salic Law so that her eldest daughter Dayang Leonora could become the ruler (Sylvia Brooke, 1993 : 156). MacBryan had ulterior motives; he hoped to marry Dayang Leonora and then being the consort he would be able to control Sarawak, hence his enthusiasm in helping Raneë Sylvia. But, their scheme was aborted as it was strongly opposed by Bertram and Anthony. And since their daughter could never accede the throne, and since both Rajah Vyner Brooke and Raneë Sylvia would want neither Bertram nor Anthony to become the Rajah, their only solution was to cede Sarawak to Britain. But, Rajah Vyner Brooke and Raneë Sylvia seemed to have a difference of opinion on the time of cession. Raneë Sylvia thought it should not be too hasty as the Malays, Dayaks and Chinese had not been prepared for this change. According to her, when Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander, was on his visit to Kuching on 15th April 1946 to sign the document to end the Allied Military Administration and to hand it over to the Rajah's Civil Government, he told Raneë Sylvia about his opinion before his departure. He thought that the cession of Sarawak was too hasty, and that it should not happen during the Rajah's life time but a few years after his death and after the history of Sarawak had been written (Sylvia Brooke, 1993 : 160). What Lord Mountbatten had said then was fairly objective and practical; he, however, was unaware of the power struggles within the Brooke's

family.

Under the influence of MacBryan, Rajah Vyner Brooke wanted to accelerate the cession of Sarawak to Britain. Now, Rajah Vyner Brooke was already an old man of 72 and without a son to succeed him; besides the war had humbled the whites' supremacy and the people in the Dutch East Indies rose up against the white colonist rule and to fight for independence, and the future of Sarawak would not be so peaceful as in the pre-war period. The most important thing in Rajah Vyner Brooke's mind was that it would be more beneficial to him by giving Sarawak to Britain than to his younger brother Bertram or his nephew Anthony. Therefore, on 24th October 1945, Rajah Vyner Brooke and George Hall, Secretary of State for Colonies in the Colonial Office, signed a memorandum regarding the cession of Sarawak to the British Crown. Meanwhile, MacBryan was sent as a Special Representative of the Rajah to Sarawak to lobby for the support of some members of the Supreme Council for the cession plan. Because of MacBryan's unfavourable past track record, the Colonial Office and the War Office were reluctant to entrust such an important task to him. However, Rajah Vyner Brooke insisted on his appointment as he believed only MacBryan had the ability to successfully obtain the agreement of the Sarawak Supreme Council members (Reece, 1993 : 187).

So, at the end of 1945, MacBryan came to Sarawak with a sum of 55,000 British pounds, of which a sum of 22,500 British pounds was intended as charitable payments to the Malay, Dayak and Chinese communities for the hardships suffered during the war years. Of the amount Wang Zhangshui (Ong Tiang Swee) and Datu Pahlawan Abang Haji Mustapha received \$42,500 each for distribution to the members of their communities left destitute by the war (Haji Mohammad Hasbie Sulaiman, 1989 : 71). The rest of the money consisted of back-payments of salaries and allowances to the Malay Datuks who received it with the notice that it was the last salary for them. Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah, being the most senior in rank, received \$12,000 (Sarawak dollars) while the other Datuks received \$10,000 each. When Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah realised the purpose of the payment,

he considered it a bribery and returned the sum to the Allied Military Government (Heaton, 1974 : 39). At the same time MacBryan wanted them to sign their names in a letter supposedly requesting the Rajah's return to Sarawak. Actually, the content of the letter in English was a declaration of their support of the Rajah's decision - the cession of Sarawak to the British Crown. MacBryan even coerced them to the effect that if they refused to sign, the government would denounce them as traitors to the country for they had collaborated with the Japanese, and if they signed in support of the Rajah's decision, then all their past crimes would be waived. Unlike steadfast men such as Jian Zhangbo, a Chinese community leader who was unflinching despite Japanese torture, various community leaders, to a certain extent, had collaborated with the Japanese; so they were led by their nose to sign the letter which MacBryan brought to the Colonial Office in England on 16th January 1946.

Although the Colonial Office in Britain had obtained the letter signed by the various community leaders and the Malay Datuks purportedly supporting the Rajah's decision, it could not stop the wave of anti-cession movement in Sarawak. Even in England those who were opposed to the cession alleged that Rajah Vyner Brooke's action was morally and constitutionally wrong. The anti-cession movement was getting so wide-spread that the British government, in May 1946, sent two members of parliament, D.R. Rees-Williams of the Labour Party and David Gammans of the Conservative Party to Sarawak to survey the political situation. The results they collected showed that the majority of the community leaders supported cession. While all this was going on, the British government suppressed all news regarding the anti-cession movement in Sarawak and stopped Bertram and Anthony Brooke from returning to Sarawak. It was not until 2nd April 1946 that Bertram was allowed to return on the condition that he was not to oppose the decision of the Sarawak Council Negeri on cession. The British government was of the opinion that since many of the community leaders had signed the letter to support the Rajah's decision, the Cession Bill would surely be passed by the Sarawak Council Negeri.



On 13th April 1946, Rajah Vyner Brooke and Ranee Sylvia arrived in Singapore to finalise the details of the handing over with Lord Mountbatten. Next day, they returned to Kuching by seaplane. According to Ranee Sylvia's recollection, they had never had such a grand welcome before. Hundreds of brightly decorated boats lined up along the river banks and a multitude of people standing along the banks waving their handkerchiefs and little flags to welcome them. When they stepped ashore, the people hugged their Rajah and some were moved to tears. After the 21-gun salute they entered the Astana (Sylvia Brooke, 1993 : 158-159).

When they went round the town of Kuching, they were greeted by an atmosphere of festivities; the shops owned by the Chinese were beautifully decorated with lanterns and the Sarawak flags and the Chinese Nationalist Flags were hung side by side. However, when they reached the Malay kampung (village), what met their eyes were numerous anti-cession slogans and posters.

On 15th April 1946, accompanied by the senior government officials the Rajah arrived at the Court House to attend the handing over ceremony. First, the representative of Lord Mounbatten announced the handing over of power from the British Military Administration to the Civil Government of Sarawak, followed by Rajah Vyner Brooke's proclamation of regaining the rule. Then, after Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah had presented the Sword of State to the Rajah, the various community leaders pledged their loyalty. However, this Civil Government lasted only 1 month and 2 days and Sarawak was ceded to Britain.

The sessions of the Sarawak Council Negeri that met from 15th May to 17th May 1946 debated the question of cession. As the voice of anti-cession was getting so loud that the British Colonial Office had resorted to unfair means to gain a majority vote by transferring away or retiring those Council Members who were opposed to the cession so that they could not vote. Furthermore, during the voting the proposal and proceedings were not translated into the native languages, so those Council Members who knew no English could hardly follow. Finally, the Cession Bill was passed with a simple majority of 3 votes, that is, 19 for and 16 against. Actually, the majority of people at that time were against

cession, and had Bertram Brooke come out to contest it, the Cession Bill would not have been passed. But, Bertram was a true gentleman and he would not want the question of cession to add to the rift between him and his brother Vyner. Therefore, he merely expressed that it was not proper to hurriedly pass the Cession Bill before the people had fully understood it.

On 21st May 1946, Rajah Vyner Brooke signed the Instrument of Cession at the Astana. Two hours later, he and Ranee Sylvia left Sarawak and had never returned again. In 1963, Sir Charles Vyner Brooke died in England at an old age of 89 whereas Lady Sylvia died at the age of 87 in Barbados in the West Indies in 1971.

After the departure of Rajah Vyner Brooke, the anti-cession movement developed into a more organised and stronger movement.

Among the anti-cession organisations, the Malay National Union which was led by Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah, Abang Haji Bolhassan and Abang Haji Zaini was the strongest and largest one with more than 30,000 members. The Sarawak Dayak Association with a membership of about 500 led by Barbara Bay, Philip Jitam and his brother, also joined the anti-cession movement. However, they consisted of the Dayaks living in Kuching who had had a Christian education and who knew about the political situation then. But, very few of the Dayaks living in the upper reaches of the rivers knew what was happening in the country. The Sarawak Women Association (Persatuan Kaum Ibu Sarawak) was a big and strong organisation whose members had played an important role in the anti-cession struggle. Datuk Ajibah Abol who became the Minister of Social Welfare in the Sarawak State Cabinet (1974-1976) had been one of the outstanding women leaders during the time of anti-cession movement. The Overseas Chinese Youth Society (Huaqiao Qingnian She) which was formed in 1946 was against cession; its leaders considered it an act of betrayal and advocated self-rule for Sarawak while proclaiming that Wang Zhangshui (Ong Tiang Swee) and other Chinese community leaders who had signed the letter in support of the Rajah's decision were unfit to represent the Chinese community. Because many

Chinese community leaders had co-operated with the Japanese during the war, they had lost the respect of the Chinese people. This brought about the rise of a new generation of Chinese community leaders. Another Malay group known as the Young Malay Association and led by Abang Haji Mustafa, however, was pro-cession. But, they had about 2,000 members only and were often despised and shunned by the opposition groups. It was not until 1947 that the Sibu Malays formed the Young Malay Movement (Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu) and supported the Kuching anti-cession movement, thus making it even stronger.

In September 1946, MacBryan came back to Sarawak to finalise his divorce with Hajjah Sa'erah and to settle the last of the Rajah's properties on the latter's behalf. While he was in Kuching, he was shocked by the strong anti-cession movement and he accused the Datuks for not doing their duty to influence the people.

The first governor for the Sarawak colonial government, Charles Noble Arden Clarke, arrived in Sarawak on 29th October 1946, and as the anti-cession feelings were rife, he was not accorded any welcome ceremony in Kuching and even in Sibu and Miri the Malays boycotted him.

On 21st November 1946, Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdillah, the leader of the anti-cession movement, died. His death further agitated the anti-cession movement to a climax and his house, Darul Kornia, became the place where all the anti-cessionists converged.

On 24th November of the same year, when several thousand Malays were in the mosque praying for independence, freedom and the revival of the Raj, they heard the news of the colonial government banning Anthony Brooke from entering Sarawak. This came as a great shock to Anthony's supporters.

The order of this ban ignited a large protest demonstration of more than 30,000 Malays and Dayaks.

Following this demonstration, the Sarawak colonial government, on 10th December, issued an Official Circular, known as Circular No.9 of 1946 (Appendix IX), advising all civil servants including the teachers to be loyal to the colonial government; that those who did not wish to continue their service had to report to their immediate boss before 31st December 1946, and that those

civil servants who got involved in any anti-cession or dissident activities might be sacked with immediate effect. When this Circular was sent out all the Malay civil servants were adamant; about 353 government civil servants signed a letter of protest. Later on, about 409 civil servants including school teachers resigned, although this mass resignation was known as 'Pergerakan 338' or the '338 Movement' (Haji Mohammad Hasbie Sulaiman, 1989 : 108-121).

On 1st July 1947, the first anniversary of the cession of Sarawak to the British Crown, the anti-cessionists held a big demonstration. That morning, 16 anti-cession groups gathered at Darul Kornia, and then in high spirits they marched from the Malay village to the Clock Tower in the town centre fiercely protesting against cession.

Faced with this strong resistance, the colonial government adopted different strategies. On the one hand, they warned both the press not to print any news of the anti-cession activities and the European officers not to support the cessionists; and on the other hand, they tried to win over the people by allotting 5 million pounds from the British Colonial Office for improving the conditions of service of the lower income group of civil servants.

By August 1948, the anti-cession movement had been going on for two years, but to no avail. So, the Malays in Sibu acted vigorously by establishing an action committee known as the 'Thirteen Precepts' or 'Rukun Tigabelas' planning to assassinate the colonial governor. On 14th November 1949, Duncan George Stewart arrived in Kuching as the second governor of Sarawak. On 23rd November, he officiated at the graduation ceremony at Batu Lintang Teachers' Training Centre and on 3rd December he paid his first visit to Sibu. On arrival at Sibu, he was shaking hands with those who had lined up to welcome him. A young Malay teacher, Rosli bin Dhoby, pretended to trip and fall while seemingly trying to take a photograph of the governor, and the governor bent down to help him up. Just at that moment, Rosli quickly took out the kris hidden in the camera and stabbed his abdomen. Although a plane with a team of medical personnel was immediately sent by the British High Commissioner for South East Asia,

Sir Malcolm MacDonald, to take the governor to Singapore, but as the kris was greased with poison and there was some delay, Duncan Stewart finally died in the Singapore Hospital on 10th December 1949, less than a month after his appointment as the second governor of Sarawak.

This incident came as a great shock to all the people of Sarawak, and the colonial government took stern actions against those involved. All the branches of the 'Young Malay Movement' or 'Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu' in Sibu were closed and banned while its members were interrogated. On 2nd March 1950, Rosli bin Dhoby and Morshidi bin Sidek were sentenced to death by hanging. Three weeks later, Awang Rambli and Bujang bin Suntong followed them to the gallows. The other seven men were charged and served imprisonment sentences of varying lengths.

In 1951, Anthony Brooke announced his decision to abandon the anti-cession plan and urged his supporters not to take any more action, and consequently, many civil servants who were members of the '338 Movement' or 'Pergerakan 338' went back to their different posts.

During this time, the colonial government had already won the support of the majority of the Ibans. Providentially, the prices of jungle produce had risen bringing in better incomes for the people. Generally, the lives of the people were better off and the political situation gradually became more stable.

When talking about the cession of Sarawak, we must mention Gerard MacBryan. He was Rajah Vyner Brooke's Private Secretary and exerted a great influence on the Rajah. Because he had played an important role in expediting the cession of Sarawak, it is, therefore, appropriate to introduce this interesting character in the drama of cession.

He was born Gerard Truman Magill MacBryan in 1902 to a neurologist father, who was the Director of a Mental Hospital at Box near Bath, England. Ironically, in 1920, he was interviewed and accepted by Bertram, the Rajah Muda, for service in Sarawak. Little did Bertram know at that time that this man was to cost him and his son the throne to the Raj of Sarawak.

MacBryan was tall, handsome and intelligent with a fair

complexion, bright eyes, and a dynamic personality. It had been remarked that his personality was over and above the sum total of the attractiveness of all those present. Although his mind was peculiarly imaginative, he was a genius in his own right. As long as his mental illness did not recur he could do things that no other person could. That was why Rajah Vyner Brooke had recalled him after having twice sacked him, and even appointed him his Private Secretary.

At first, MacBryan was posted to serve in Limbang but because he was unable to adapt to the local conditions he was transferred to Kapit in 1922. He had aptitude for languages, so within a short time he could speak several native languages. With this ability to speak the local native languages and his outstanding diplomacy he was able to bring about a truce between the Kayan and Kenyah tribes and the Ibans culminating in the peace settlement ceremony held in Kapit in 1924. During the ceremony MacBryan spoke in Kenyah and Rajah Vyner Brooke was extremely impressed, and as he knew how to please the Rajah, he had quickly won the Rajah's confidence. Although Rajah Vyner Brooke was quite aware of the fact that MacBryan was a schemer and conspirator, he still had him in his service.

In 1928, MacBryan suggested the Rajah award the title of Datuk to more Malays and make Wang Zhangshui (Ong Tiang Swee) the highest ranking leader for the Chinese community, with the calculated design of easy contact and control.

In 1930, MacBryan followed the Rajah back to England. Shortly after, the Malay Datuks accused MacBryan of interfering with the native affairs, so the Rajah forbade him to return to Sarawak.

Soon, his scheming mind took him to Australia where he had plans for gold-mining but his plans did not materialise as his mental illness recurred. Fortunately for him, a rich farmer's daughter, Eva Collins, took care of him and he gradually recovered. In May 1932, he married Eva Collins and returned to Sarawak with her.

In 1935, when Eva Collins returned to visit her relatives in Australia, MacBryan suddenly announced his marriage to Sa'erah,

a Malay woman, and having been converted a Muslim, he wanted to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. He wrote to Ranee Sylvia informing her that he would not return to Sarawak again. He said he was determined to unite all the Muslims living in the land stretching from Morocco to the Philippines. So, during his pilgrimage in Mecca, he said he paid a special visit to the King of Saudi Arabia in order to carry out his plan. Later, Owen Rutter, a specialist on Sarawak history, interviewed him and wrote the pilgrimage story as described by MacBryan in a book entitled '*Triumphant Pilgrimage*'. But, some people doubted his story and suspected he did not even reach Mecca. However, his grand plan of uniting all the Muslims of the world was a total failure.

In April 1936, on his return from Mecca he stopped at Singapore and announced that he wanted to return to Sarawak. But, Rajah Vyner Brooke exercised the Undesirable Persons Order forbidding him to return. Notwithstanding, he arrived at Pending on 4th May 1936, but was immediately arrested and repatriated to Singapore.

Shortly afterwards, Rajah Vyner Brooke informed him that he could be with his wife, Hajjah Sa'erah, and as she was a Sarawakian he could, therefore, return to Sarawak.

At the end of 1941, after the Sarawak Centenary Celebrations, in the capacity of Private Secretary, he followed Rajah Vyner Brooke on a tour of Malaya before proceeding to Australia. When they arrived at Surabaya, Java, on their way to Australia Sarawak was invaded by the Japanese. The Rajah sent him to West Borneo to meet the European government servants in the Sarawak Civil Service who had escaped and to bring them to Australia. But, MacBryan himself was arrested, mistaken as a Japanese spy, and was sent to the Changi prison in Singapore. Fortunately, he was rescued and sent to Perth, Australia, together with those who had fled Sarawak before the Japanese arrival (Haji Mohammad Hasbie Sulaiman, 1989 : 69-71).

MacBryan's role in the cession of Sarawak has already been narrated earlier on.

After the war, in 1947, he sold the house in England which his father had left to him and ventured into the diamond business

in South Africa where he married a white South African woman.

Two years later (1949), while he was in England his mental illness recurred and he had to stay in a Mental Hospital where he was visited by the former Rajah Muda, Anthony Brooke. Even the former Rajah Vyner Brooke and Ranee Sylvia, had paid him a visit. Ranee Sylvia, in her book *'Queen of the Head-hunters'* had a vivid description of their meeting at his bed-side in the Mental Hospital (Sylvia Brooke, 1993 : 177-178).

After his recovery in 1950, MacBryan visited Kuching to discuss with the Sarawak Colonial Government the matters of the 'Trust Fund', but to no avail. Then he left for Brunei. The Sultan of Brunei employed him as Political Adviser to Brunei hoping to make use of MacBryan to negotiate with the British government about the increase of tax for the oil drilled in Brunei. The Sultan of Brunei had an only child, a daughter, Tuanku Ehsan, so MacBryan encouraged and supported Tuanku Ehsan to accede the throne. Again, like the case he had tried to engineer in Sarawak, it was a failure.

Then, MacBryan returned to South Africa, and shortly afterwards he went to Hong Kong and lodged at an inn. He died in Hong Kong in 1953. In her book, Ranee Sylvia wrote that he died of starvation, but another source reported that he was murdered.

The event of the cession of Sarawak directly affected the well-being of its people. It aroused political awareness in all the ethnic groups of Sarawak. The majority of Chinese who were originally concerned about and involved in the political activities of China had now switched their attention to the political development of Sarawak.





Fig. 186 Kuching residents, government officials and the armed forces waiting in front of the Clock Tower for the arrival of Rajah Vyner Brooke to officially take over the Government. (Photo taken from p. 57, 'K.F. Wong - the world Renowned Photographic Artist' by Fong Hong Kah & Julitta Lim Shau Hua).



Fig. 187 Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdillah handing over the Sword of State to Rajah Vyner Brooke, first right, Rane Sylvia. (Photo taken from p. 59, 'K.F. Wong - the world Renowned Photographic Artist' by Fong Hon Kah & Julitta Lim Shau Hua).



Fig. 188 Rajah Vyner Brooke and Ranee Sylvia posing in front of the Astana with two Iban leaders of the Rajang Basin, 2nd left, Temenggong Koh, and 1st right, Penghulu Jugah.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 189 Rajah Muda Anthony Brooke.



Fig 190 A legendary man,  
Gerard MacBryan



Fig 191 Gerard MacBryan in  
Arabian apparel when he  
went to Mecca.



Fig. 192 A valuable historical photo of Rajah Vyner Brooke signing the Instrument of Cession, sitting next to him, the British representative, C.W. Dawson, sitting 1st right, Chinese Community Paramount Leader, Wang Zhangshui (Ong Tiang Swee), standing 2nd left, Datuk Bandar Mustafa.



Fig. 193 The first Sarawak Colonial Chief Secretary of State, Christopher W. Dawson, born in 1896, became the Secretary of Defence of Malaya in 1941 but was taken prisoner when the British army was defeated by the Japanese. In 1946, as the representative of the British Government he received the cession of Sarawak and became its Chief Secretary of State in the Sarawak colonial government; the Government Circular No. 9 he issued in the same year caused a political storm in Sarawak.



Fig. 194 Sir Charles Vyner Brooke and Lady Sylvia living in retirement in England.

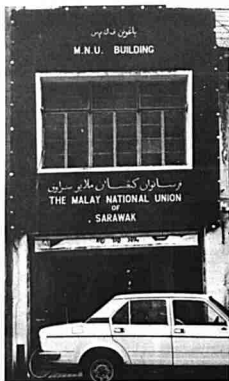


Fig. 195 The Malay National Union Headquarters of Sarawak (Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak) at Tun Haji Openg Road, Kuching. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 196 The anti-cessionists; members of the Malay National Union of Sarawak. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 197 Resigned in protest against the Colonial Government Circular No. 9, members of the 'Barisan Pejuang 338' in front of Darul Kornia, residence of Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah, now Zhonghua Middle School No. 4, Kuching.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 198 Women and children in the Anti-cession Movement.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 199 The largest ever held Anti-cession Procession passing by the Pavilion, opposite the General Post Office, Kuching.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

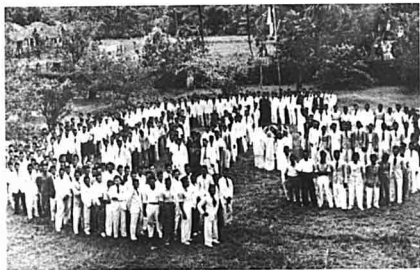


Fig. 200 Government servants gathering in the open space in front of the residence of Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah protesting against the Government Circular No. 9/1946.



**Appendix IX: A Copy of the Government Circular No. 9.  
(Taken from the Education Department Annual  
Report 1946).**

**SECRETARIAT CIRCULAR NO. 9/1946.**

In view of the political change in the status of Sarawak by which on 1st July, 1946, it became a Crown Colony, His Excellency the Governor has directed that this Circular should be sent to all Government officers on the Establishment.

- (a) Government expects and requires absolute loyalty from all its servants.
- (b) Since there is no question of any change in the present regime or any reversion to Brooke Rule, Government will not permit or tolerate any association by its servants with any activities designed to keep alive the question of cession.
- (c) There will be no victimisation for any speech or act of any Government servant in the past relating to the question of cession, but each Government servant must now make up his mind whether he wishes to serve the present Government loyally and faithfully or not.
- (d) If you do not feel that you wish to continue in the Government Service under these conditions, you should inform your Resident, District Officer, or Head of Department, as the case may be, before 31st December, 1946, and he will advise you as to the course you should pursue.
- (e) Any Government servant in future who associates himself with any activity designed to keep open the question of cession or commits any act of deliberate disloyalty to Government will render himself liable to instant dismissal.

You are asked to acknowledge receipt by signing the attached slip and returning the slip at once to your local head of Department or District Officer.

Kuching, 10th December, 1946.

C.W. DAWSON  
Chief Secretary.

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I acknowledge receipt of Secretariat Circular No. 9/1946.

## CHAPTER 17

### SARAWAK DURING BRITISH COLONIAL DAYS

Politically, we are opposed to all forms of colonialism, however, from the historical point of view, we cannot deny the fact that the Sarawak colonial government, in the 17 years from 1946 to 1963, had made many contributions particularly in education, agriculture, fishery, timber industry, oil industry and basic infrastructure. The well-administered system of the civil service was instituted during the colonial period. Undeniably, in the post-war international environment, no individual could single-handedly lead Sarawak towards becoming a prosperous, flourishing and strong nation; neither Rajah Vyner Brooke nor Tuan Muda Bertram or his son, Rajah Muda Anthony. Today, we should be able to face this historical fact with an objective attitude and to objectively appraise that period of time.

Administratively Sarawak was divided into five Divisions and each Division had several Districts. In 1948 the Sarawak colonial government instituted a law which allowed the Local Authorities to be set up in the country. Each Local Authority elected their councillors to form the Local Authority Council which managed the administration of their district. Each Local Authority Council was empowered to set up schools, manage the government machinery and develop the infrastructure of their district. In addition to the Rural Districts there were three Municipal Councils, namely, Kuching, Sibu and Miri. Each District Council in turn elected their councillors to form the Divisional Advisory Council. From the 5 Divisional Advisory Councils 21 members were elected, and 1 from each of the 3 Municipal Councils, making a total of 24 Unofficial Councillors. In addition, there were 14 Official Councillors who were senior government officers, 4 Councillors appointed by the Governor and 3 Standing Members. These 45 councillors formed the Sarawak Council Negeri or the Sarawak Legislative Council. Though this tripartite electoral system came to an end when the system of direct election to the Sarawak Coun-

cil Negeri replaced it in 1969, the Local Authority Councils instituted by the colonial government still play an important role in the government machinery of today. This tripartite system has effected the government organization to have greater representation of people and more democratic spirits, thus assisting the government machinery to run effectively and uninterruptedly. This is the colonial government's contribution towards the democratically political development of Sarawak.

Furthermore, the general achievement made by the colonial government in the development of formal education in Sarawak has been obvious. Not only is education in Sarawak directly related to the culture and educational standard and system of Britain but it is also inseparable from the contributions in all fields made by the other British Commonwealth countries.

In 1948 the colonial government established Batu Lintang Teachers' Training Centre with an affiliated School at the site of the former Batu Lintang P.O.W. Camp. It has today developed into Batu Lintang Teachers' College with a student population of more than 1,000. Although the affiliated school lasted only a few years, many of our today's State Cabinet Ministers and outstanding personalities had at one time been students there.

Soon after the establishment of the Local Authority Councils, each Local Authority set about building schools in their district managed by a district education officer and largely financed by the colonial government. By 1963, there were 591 Council Schools with a student population of 44,572 (Annual Summary for 1963, Sarawak Education Department, p.6). It was not until 1973 that these Local Authority Council Schools were taken over by the Ministry of Education of the Federal Government of Malaysia.

During the colonial rule, the '*1955 Report on Education*' by E.W. Woodhead which was also known as the Woodhead Report had a far-reaching influence on the development of education in Sarawak. Based on the proposals in this report, the Sarawak colonial government in 1956 implemented the 'Grant Code', a system of granting aids, by which the colonial government could manage and control the schools accepting government aids. This educa-

tional act had a great impact on the Chinese society. On the one hand it improved the facilities of the Chinese primary schools, raised the teachers' salaries as well as training teachers for the Chinese primary schools; but on the other hand it utilised the conditions attached to the grant in aids to restrict the development of the Chinese secondary schools. As a result of some Chinese secondary schools accepting the grant in aids and others rejecting it, there emerged two types of Chinese secondary schools : the Independent Schools and the Aided Schools. In actual fact, only the Independent Schools remain Chinese Secondary schools where the medium of instruction is Mandarin; the so-called Aided Schools have developed to be like any other government secondary schools.

In 1957 the Sarawak colonial government established the Sarawak Teachers' Training College in Sibu to train teachers for the Chinese schools. In the same year the Tanjung Lobang Government Secondary School (renamed Kolej Tun Datuk Tuanku Haji Bujang since 1971) in Miri and the Kanowit Government Secondary School (renamed Sekolah Menengah Kerajaan Dato Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub since 1971) were open. In 1958 Dragon Government Secondary School (renamed Kolej Tun Abdul Razak since 1979) was established at the 24th Mile, Kuching-Serian Road, Kuching. In 1962 the colonial government built secondary schools at Bau, Saratok and Limbang. All these government secondary schools began cultivating more and more talents. This trend had changed the former total dependence on the Mission Schools and the Chinese Schools to taking the responsibilities of educating the children. In one of the State Cabinets in the 1970's, all the Ministers except one were from the Mission Schools. Such a line-up is not likely to happen again.

In addition to building more schools, the colonial government started the School Broadcasting programmes or Radio Lessons to supplement school education in 1959, awarded Colombo Plan Scholarships, provided Sarawak Government Scholarships and other overseas training opportunities to train skilled technicians and specialists in all fields. In the early years of independent Sarawak, all these trained local personnel played a very important role in the process of handing over of government from the expa-

triates.

By comparing the figures given in 1946 with those of 1963 we can get some insight into the development of education in Sarawak during the colonial days.

#### Educational Statistics 1946

Type of School	Number	Pupil Enrolment
Government Schools	74	5,655
Mission Schools	31	4,300
Chinese Schools	173	18,222
<b>Total</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>28,177</b>

(Source: A Brief Survey of Education in Sarawak, 1946, p.18)

#### Educational Statistics 1963

Type of School	No.	Student Enrolment
A. Government & Aided Schools		
1. Government Schools		
(1) Primary	593	45,359
(2) Secondary	11	2,018
(3) Teachers' Colleges*	3	368
(4) Technical & Vocational	2	66

2. Mission Schools		
(1) Primary	143	19,805
(2) Secondary	16	4,590
3. Private Schools	4	950
4. Chinese Schools		
(1) Primary	224	38,310
(2) Aided Secondary	9	3,008
B. Unaided Schools		
1. English Schools		
(1) Primary	8	840
(2) Secondary	21	5,031
2. Chinese Schools		
(1) Primary	9	621
(2) Secondary	10	3,080
TOTAL	1,053	124,046

(Source: Annual Summary for 1963, Sarawak Education Department, p.6.

\* In the original statistics, the 3 teachers' colleges were excluded.)

When the statistics of 1946 and those of 1963 are compared, it can be seen that in the 17 years of the colonial rule the student enrollment had increased more than 4 times. This educational development had caused tremendous fundamental changes in soci-

ety, especially so to the rural communities. From the social history presented in the pictures of the *'Vanishing World'* by Huang Jiefu (K.F. Wong) and Hedda Morisson, we can see the changes in the rural society during this period of time in the history of Sarawak.

Apart from the advancement made in politics and education, Sarawak's economy and basic infrastructure too had improved. In order to develop Sarawak's economy, the colonial government financed and undertook the research and studies of the cash crops, such as, rubber and pepper, in order to improve their quality and yields; great efforts were also made in the studies and development of industries such as fishery, cattle farming, timber, and petroleum. All the efforts made by the colonial government had caused great growth in the economy of Sarawak. In 1959 the total exports of Sarawak was \$533,390,873 (Sarawak dollars) whereas imports amounted to \$455,065,641 with a trade balance of \$78,325,232. The main exports and their values are as follows:

<b>EXPORTS (1959)</b>	<b>VALUE IN SARAWAK DOLLARS</b>
Petroleum	\$351,182,759
Rubber	\$ 94,898,236
Timber	\$ 31,040,471
Pepper	\$ 18,097,820
Engkabang (Illipenuts)	\$ 19,976,395
Sago	\$ 2,399,769
Jelutong	\$ 1,577,072
Damar	\$ 3,842,537
Copra	\$ 54,694

(Source: Sarawak Annual Report, 1959, pp.25-30).



The achievement in economy enabled the colonial government to carry out the construction of the infrastructure such as the construction of roads, wharves, airports and the supply of medical services, water and other welfare services.

Having inherited the style of the Brooke's rule, the colonial government respected the traditions and cultures of all the ethnic groups living in Sarawak and practised western democracy, open and just political culture. We owe such a harmonious, stable and flourishing society of today to the good foundation laid from the time of the White Rajahs to the time of the colonial government. Therefore, it would be a disservice to history and undialectic to ignore the contributions and influences made in this period of time.

Undoubtedly, the colonial rule of Britain had its global plan, its political designs and its economic objectives. Whenever the colonial government felt that its benefits were being threatened, it would react and suppress any activity that posed as a danger to its interests. On the other hand, fighting for independence and freedom was the political trend in the colonised countries all over the world. In 1957, Malaya gained its independence while Singapore was granted self-rule status. It was under such an international political situation that the Sarawak United Peoples' Party (SUPP), the fore-runner of political parties in Sarawak, was founded on 4th June 1959 with the objective of fighting for independence and the establishment of a constitutionally democratic country. However, the post-war period saw the waves of socialists' revolutionary thoughts roaring in the Asian and African countries, and when the revolution of the Chinese communists was victorious and established a New China, the Chinese youths in Sarawak were most affected and exhilarated. So, in their struggle for independence from the British colonial rule they resorted to radical tactics. Although the leadership of the Sarawak United Peoples' Party comprised of mostly English-educated persons who were not radical, yet the lower rung members who formed the main stream of the Party were mostly Chinese-educated and radical. The socialists stand of the Sarawak United Peoples' Party coupled with the leftist attitude of the main stream members caused those members with different cultural backgrounds and economic interests to leave

and form new political parties. These political parties carried out a fierce political struggle for power unprecedented in the history of Sarawak prior to the formation of the Federation of Malaysia.



Fig. 201 Sir Charles Noble Arden Clarke, the first Colonial Governor of Sarawak, from 29th October 1946 to 26th July 1949.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 202 Mr Duncan George Stewart, the second Colonial Governor of Sarawak, from 14th November 1949 but died on 10th December 1949.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 203 Sir Anthony Foster Abell, the third Colonial Governor of Sarawak, from 4th April 1950 till 15th November 1959.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 204 Sir Alexander Wadell, the fourth Colonial Governor of Sarawak, from 23rd February 1960 till 15th September 1963.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 205 Group photo of recipients of Flags and 'Letter of Appointment' (Surat Kuasa) with the Governor Sir Charles Nobel Arden Clarke on 6th May 1948, in front of the Government building, Sibul. Their support and loyalty was important to the colonial government at that time. Front row: third left, Penghulu Jugah, and fourth left, Temenggong Koh.



Fig. 206 Group photo of Chinese Community leaders from the various regions of Sibul with the District Officer and the Resident of the 3rd Division, 5th July 1957. These community leaders played an important role in matters related to the civil administration of Sarawak.



Fig. 207 Group photo, left to right, Abang Haji Openg, R.G. Aikman, the secretary of State of Sarawak, Zhou Yulin (Chew Geok Lin), and Penghulu Jugah, taken on 14th May 1953, before flying to London to attend the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of Britain on 2nd June 1953.



Fig. 208 Scouts and students of Zhonghua Middle School, Kuching, taking part in the torch-light procession to celebrate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, nearest the camera, Scout Fong Hong Kah, the author of this book.



Fig. 209 Sir Malcolm MacDonald, the British High Commissioner to South East Asia, posing with two Iban leaders at the longhouse: first left, Temenggong Koh, and left third, Penghulu Jugah, during the High Commissioner's visit to Kapit in 1954. (Photo taken from 'K.F. Wong - the World Renowned Photographic Artist' by Fong Hon Kah & Julitta Lim Shau Hua, p. 195)



Fig. 210 Temenggong Jugah speaking at the Sarawak Legislative Council Meeting of 1959. (Photo taken from 'K.F. Wong - the world Renowned Photographic Artist' by Fong Hon Kah & Julitta Lim Shau Hua, p. 205)



Fig. 211 Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, husband of Queen Elizabeth II of Britain welcomed by people of all races during his visit to Kuching on 27th February 1959.



Fig. 212 A class in a rural school, many such primary schools were set up and managed by the Local Authority Council during the colonial period in Sarawak.





Fig. 213 A Melanau Fisherman  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 214 Xinghua (Heng Hua) trawler using the drag-net at the sea near Belawai Lower Rajang.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig 215 Fisherman returning with the day's catch, on the bank people waiting to buy fish.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 216 A Malay Satay Stall in the 1950's.

(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 217 Motor-boats or launches of single- and double-decker anchoring at Sibuan wharf, a very common sight before the appearance of Express-boats in 1969.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 218 Group photo taken on 15th February 1958, Dr. Harold N. Brewster and the staff of Christ Hospital established by the Methodist Mission. Dr Harold Brewster, Director of Christ Hospital from 1956 till 1958, son of Dr William Brewster who was the benefactor of the Xinghua Agricultural Settlement in Sibuan.



Fig. 219 Dr Chen Yingrong (seated), China's first Consul to Sarawak, at a welcoming party given in his honour by the overseas Chinese at a local cinema during his visit to Sibü. Dr Chen assumed office on 20th January 1948 and left on 16th July 1949.



Fig. 220 The staff and committee members of the well-known Guang Yuan Benevolence Society, Sibü, which has done outstanding social work.

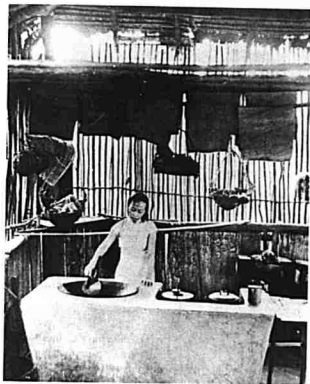


Fig. 221 The kitchen of a house in the Sibu Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement. Hanging above the open earthen stove are rubber sheets being dried by smoke into an almost transparent yellow colour.

(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 222 A family at the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement having a meal.

(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 223 A Chinese father teaching his son to write with a brush.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)

Fig. 224 The gold and silver jewellery in a Chinese goldsmith's shop, the favourite items of the native women.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)





Fig. 225 Chinese traders  
buying birds' nests from the  
natives.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 226 Iban men buying bowls and  
plates from a Chinese shop at Meluan  
in Upper Rajang.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 227 Kelabits drinking home-brewed rice wine by using a bamboo and sucking the wine from the earthen jar.

(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 228 Cock-fighting, an exciting gambling sport, staged at Binatang and attracted a large crowd of various races.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



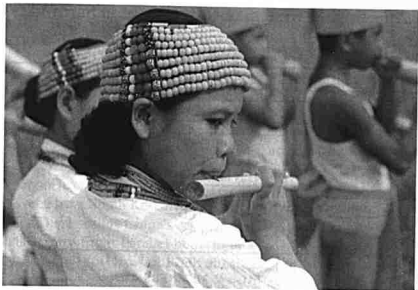
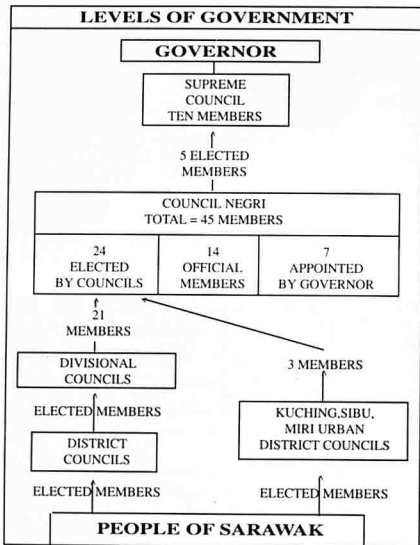


Fig. 229 Bamboo band of the Kelabits capable of producing beautiful music.  
(Photo: K.F. Wong)



Fig. 230 Graceful Feather Dance by Kenyah girls in colourful traditional costumes and wearing unique cone-shaped ear-rings.  
(Photo taken from 'K.F. Wong - the World Renowned Photographic Artist',  
by Fong Hon Kah & Julitta Lim Shau Hua, p. 143)

## Appendix X: System of Government in Sarawak.



(1960, Vernon Mullen, *Sarawak and Its People*, OUP/Borneo Literature Bureau, Sarawak, p. 83).

## CHAPTER 18

### INFLUENCE OF THE KOREAN WAR

In June 1950 the Korean War broke out, and under the banner of the United Nations the U.S.A. dispatched a large army to join the other troops from the Western European countries to fight in Korea. China warned the U.S.A. through the Indian Ambassador not to cross the Thirty-Eight Parallel, the latitude dividing North Korea from South Korea, to the Yalu River which is China's frontier. Disregarding China's warning, the U.S. army not only crossed the Thirty-Eight Parallel but also proceeded to the bank of Yalu River. On 18th October, 1950, after being provoked by the Americans' action, China sent a voluntary army to help defend North Korea against the American army (Snow, 1970 : 117). In one camp were the U.S. and Western European armies while in the opposing camp were the North Korean and Chinese armies with support from Russia; it being an actual show of might by both the Eastern and Western Groups. This war was so fiercely fought that it seemed like heralding another World War. This situation caused the prices of commodities like pepper and rubber rocketing high in the international market; the price of Sarawak pepper reached \$1,000 per ton while that of rubber touched the region of \$400 per ton. This sudden rise in the prices of the local produce had a great influence on the whole of Sarawak; it had immensely stimulated the economic development of the Rajang basin.

According to the statistics recorded in the Sarawak Annual Report, 1959, the total exports and imports in Sarawak Dollars, excluding that of petroleum, for the period from 1950 to 1955 are as follows:

YEAR	EXPORTS	IMPORTS	BALANCE
1950	\$150,026,931	\$ 90,251,992	\$59,774,839
1951	\$212,193,376	\$120,931,843	\$91,261,533
1952	\$140,196,527	\$112,261,699	\$27,934,828
1953	\$134,237,277	\$130,951,594	\$ 3,285,683
1954	\$136,013,176	\$135,479,268	\$ 533,908
1955	\$159,797,145	\$148,891,946	\$10,905,199

(Source: Sarawak Annual Report, 1959, p.29)

From the table given above, the largest amount of exports occurred in 1951, at the height of the Korean War, and so the biggest balance. Like in the past the high prices of agricultural produce could not stay for a long period of time but fluctuated according to the world situation, so when the Korean War ended in July 1953 the prices of agricultural produce also dropped.

However, the consequential influence of the high prices of agricultural produce in Sarawak indirectly caused by the Korean War are still visible today. When the prices of agricultural commodities rose, the farming communities became rich and their purchasing power strong, resulting in a flourishing commerce and a progressive society. Actually the effects of the Korean War did more than making the farmers rich; it made them turn towards the more lucrative commercial world. Those farmers who were farsighted, dynamic and well-informed pooled together the money they had made from agriculture and invested it in commerce and industries. This economic power that emerged after the Korean War of the 1950's is now thrusting its tentacles of development beyond the land of Sarawak. Therefore, it is inaccurate to say that the effect of the Korean War on the prices of agricultural produce had come to past; actually its influence has been, and still is, stimu

lating the Rajang Basin.

In the early 1950's when the prices of rubber and pepper were at their record high, an exhilarating atmosphere prevailed throughout the rural districts of Sarawak; whether the natives or Chinese, all were living in a rather luxurious life. Some Chinese farmers bought shophouses in town and began to lead a life of a businessman while others improved the facilities in their own district like improving the roads, and buying all the available modern electrical appliances for the home. Some generous souls donated large sums of money towards the educational funds while the addicted fans of cock-fighting went by plane with their birds to wherever there was cock-fighting. At the corner of a main street a particular man was even seen carrying a bag containing currency notes and distributing them to all the passers-by. Such were the varied scenes in the booming old days of the 1950's. However, the good fortune went as quickly as it had come; the prices of agricultural produce had dropped and except for those who had gone into doing various businesses in town, most of the rural farming folks had gone back to square one.

However, the Chinese settlers of the Rajang Basin were more enterprising. They pooled their money together and invested in commerce and industries, and because of their courage, determination, far-sightedness and their entrepreneurial skills their investments had made successful returns and further developed their enterprises. From farmers they became owners of small businesses, and today they have become giant entrepreneurs.

Before 1950 the commercial enterprises in the towns of Sibu, Kanowit and Kapit were mainly in the hands of the Minnan or Fujian people while those in Binatang (Bintangor) and Sarikei were largely owned by the Guangdong or Cantonese people. In banking, there was the Guanglee (Kong Lee) Bank owned by the Cantonese and the Huada (Wah Tat) Bank belonging to the Fujian people. Shipping, big commercial firms and export and import business were managed by the Fujian people. The Fujian businessmen like Zhang Yandu, Zhang Chongluo and Zhou Yulin were not only well-known in and outside Sarawak, they were very much respected by the people of Sarawak.

The urban migration of the Chinese settlers of the Rajang Basin and their eventual change from agricultural to commercial enterprises occurred only after 1950. As an example, before 1950 the Fuzhou in Sibul were managing only traditional provision shops and other smaller businesses; there was no big enterprise of any sort. The evidence is seen in the classified advertisements printed in the '50th Anniversary of the Sibul Fuzhou Settlement Souvenir Magazine' (1951).

However, by the early 1950's the commercial situation had changed. Fuhua (Hock Hua) Bank began business in 1952 and as a finance firm it has developed rapidly and played a very important role in assisting the Fuzhou in commerce and industries. Not long after the opening of Fuhua (Hock Hua) Bank, there were more than ten banks and finance companies owned by the Fuzhou people.

Following the banking business there appeared big enterprises owned by the Fuzhou in Sibul, for example, the W.T.K. Groups (1950), Sarawak United Sawmill Company Limited (1954), K.T.S. Company Limited (1956), Pan Sarawak Company Limited (1961), Delta Company Limited (1962) and Kong Ming Bank (1965) while the See Hua Daily Newspaper was established in 1952 (*Seventy Years of Ken Huang* [ meaning The Opening Up of Barren Lands], 1970 : 167-177).

Furthermore, some Fuzhou finance groups which have gone into the construction business, shipping, hotel industry, hardware, ship-building and timber industry have expanded their businesses not only to many parts of Sarawak but also to many overseas countries. They have contributed greatly to the economic development of the nation.

The economic force that emerged during the Korean War is undoubtedly strong, well-organised and full of adventurous spirits and its influence, whether locally or internationally, is gradually increasing.



Fig. 231 A Farmer harvesting pepper berries.



Fig. 232 Close-up view of pepper berries.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 233 A Fuzhou girl  
collecting latex.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)



Fig. 234 A Fuzhou mother and  
her daughter putting rubber  
sheets through the rollers of a  
manually-operated mangle.  
(Photo: Hedda Morrison)





Fig. 235 Natives selling their rubber-sheets to the Chinese merchants.

Fig. 236 A logger measuring the tree trunk ready for felling. In 1923, there already existed 7 sawmills in Sarawak; Selalang being an important area then, and among the sawmills: Lihua (Lee Hua) Sawmill started in 1917, Huasen (Hua Seng) Sawmill, 1935, and Borneo Company, during their 3rd venture, imported elephants from Thailand to help in hill-logging.





Fig. 237 Loggers manually transported logs from the jungle, a typical feature of earlier lumbering when there were neither machines nor roads.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 238 An elephant, one of the troop of 22 imported by Borneo Company, carried out orders given in Thai by the Thai Worker. When the Borneo Company ended its hill-logging in 1958, the elephants were sold to Gongtai (Kong Thai) Sawmill.



Fig. 239 Sibuhua (Hock Hua) Bank which began business in 1952 occupied the shop opposite this present one, and is now expanded to various parts of the country. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 240 K.T.S. Sibu, started in 1956, is now a giant multinational corporate with a diversity of businesses.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)

## CHAPTER 19

### ANTI-IMPERIALIST AND ANTI-COLONIALIST MOVEMENT

Independence and self-government are a nation's ideals and the dignity of its people. Although the colonial government had contributed to the construction and development of Sarawak and had achieved what the Rajah Brooke's government could not have done, yet, the people's yearning for independence had not diminished. After the assassination of Duncan Stewart, the Second Governor of Sarawak, in Sibiu on 3rd December 1949, the storm of anti-cession had calmed down, but after 1950 this yearning for independence and self-government was so strong that it re-surfaced and was reflected in the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist movement.

In Sarawak those involved in this anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist movement were people of all races, but, the principal moving force came from the Chinese community; partly because of the influence of the international political situation and partly because of the internal policies of the colonial government of Sarawak.

The Chinese are a complex race. Professor Tien Jukang, in his book entitled *The Chinese of Sarawak*, had a sharp observation of this Chinese community in Sarawak. He said, *'The complexity of the facts makes all facile generalisations in purely political terms unrealistic. The Chinese are neither all political agitators nor all apathetic. They are members of particular social groups in particular social situations, and their actions are explicable only in terms of that membership and those situations.'* (Tien Jukang, 1953 : 1)

Professor Tien Jukang's observation of the overseas Chinese society aptly explains the attitude change of some Sarawak Chinese from supporting the colonial government to opposing it, and from opposing the formation of Malaysia to supporting it. Confucius said, *'A great man's attitude towards the world is such*

that he shows no preference, but he is prejudiced in favour of justice.' This is the source of all Chinese thinking and behaviour.

Professor Tien Jukang was born in 1916 in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China. He graduated from the Xi Nan (South West) United University during the time of the Anti-Japanese War. After the Second World War in 1945, he went to England for further studies and obtained his doctorate degree from London University in 1948. On 7th September, 1948, he was appointed by the Colonial Office in England and sent to study and research on the Chinese society of Sarawak. He considered the Chinese society in the First Division a very good sample for study as it had not only communities of various Chinese dialects but also two social types : the urban and rural. Thus, he spent a large part of his time in Kuching to do his research. As a man of high moral values and academic achievements, and with his patriotic spirit, Professor Tien Jukang had won the respect of the Chinese society; and his thoughts and views had also had a great and far-reaching influence on the Chinese society. On 23rd October 1949, he left Sarawak for England where in 1950, he completed his monograph on the Chinese of Sarawak. Ever since its first publication it has become an authority on the study of the Sarawak Chinese and in the 1950's it was listed in the reading list for the Sarawak Civil Service examination. After returning to China, he taught at Fu Dan University in Shanghai and Zhe Jiang University. Six years ago he was a Visiting Lecturer at the Princeton University, U.S.A. In the Foreword he wrote to the biography of 'K.F. Wong - The World Renowned Photographic Artist' (1995), he was full of praises for the 'Beautiful Borneo'; the land which he visited 45 years ago seemed to have captivated his mind.

During the period of political turbulence of the 1950's, both locally and overseas, the Chinese community in Sarawak began to play a role in the political stage of Sarawak. Contemporaneously, the influence made by the political change in China on the Sarawak Chinese was obvious.

On 1st October 1949, the People's Republic of China was established. In her new year message of 1950, Ho Xiangning, Director of the China Overseas Chinese Affairs, called upon the over

seas Chinese to fight against the imperialists and the reactionalists, besides welcoming them to join the rank of reconstructing the Motherland.

On 6th February 1950, Guo Moruo, Chairman of the Defence of World Peace Committee of China, in the commemoration of the anti-colonist day he telegraphed a message to the students and youths living in foreign colonies, encouraging them to continue their struggle for national liberation and to topple the colonial government while expressing the support of the Chinese people for their fight for justice. The messages of both Ho Xiangning and Guo Moruo had a tremendous influence on the Chinese youths of Singapore, Malaya and Sarawak.

On 1st June 1950, Britain officially recognized the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China. Everywhere in Sarawak grand celebrations which were held to commemorate the establishment of Sino-British diplomatic relation were participated by senior colonial officials and Chinese community leaders. The effect of such propaganda and atmosphere on the people was beyond the imagination of the colonial government. Bathing in the joy of celebration, both Chinese and native youths sang and danced to the then popular tune of 'Padi Planting Dance'. This event resulted in many Chinese youths with lofty ideals and sincerity went to partake in the task of reconstructing China. In the early 1950's whenever the *M.V. Rajah Brooke* left the Kuching wharf, it was loaded with Chinese youths and students. Those who stayed behind began the struggle against the colonial government and the reactionalists. Thus, instances of boycotting classes, workers' strikes and anti-colonial government activities happened one after another.

Consequently, the colonial government in Sarawak counteracted by taking strong measures to curb the impact. The colonial government was well aware that the strongest opposition came from the educated strata of the Chinese community, so the strategies taken by the colonial government included the close supervision of the Chinese cultural activities and tight control restricting the educational development of the Chinese community. It was under such circumstances that the Woodhead Sarawak Education

Survey Report was made with the White Paper stipulating the system of Grant Code Regulations. In November 1955, the representatives of the Chinese Education Committees from the whole of Sarawak met at the premises of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (now the Chinese Historical Museum), Kuching, to discuss the question of whether or not to accept the colonial government's proposal. The result was 13 votes against 12 votes; with a majority of 1 vote passing the resolution of acceptance. The government's grants in aid system which was implemented in 1956 had a great influence on Chinese education in Sarawak.

Another measure that met with resistance from the Chinese community was the Trade Licensing Fee. The Woodhead Report had also proposed an increase in the Trade Licensing Fee in order to cover the expenses required for the implementation of the grant in aid system, which was passed by the Council Negeri Meeting of December 1954. The proposed Trade Licensing Fee which was to become effective as from 1st January 1955, would bring in \$3,500,000 (Sarawak dollars) to meet educational expenditures. In order to reach the target sum, the Trade Licensing fees were raised; some even with an increase of 1000 times. This government policy was fiercely opposed by all the Chinese businessmen in Sarawak. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Sarikei reacted by going on a ten-day close-shop strike. It was unanimously followed by the businessmen of Binatang (Bintangor), Sibul, Kuching, Bintulu, Miri and other towns. Faced with such a nation-wide strike, the colonial government had but to retract the licensing act and to make further adjustments.

While education is the spiritual trust of a race, commerce ensures survival; and both education and commerce are great concerns of the Chinese community. The colonial government policy on both had shocked the Chinese community into realizing that only political strength could essentially protect the interests of the people. So, they actively embarked on the road of party politics to fight against colonial rule in order to obtain independence and self-government.

The colonial government of Sarawak reacted relentlessly to the situation with stern measures of suppression by closing down



the press, banning books, arresting and banishing the leftists, withdrawing the registration of Chinese societies and forbidding Chinese cultural activities.

In the midst of government reaction, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), a multi-racial socialist political party was formed on 4th June 1959. Its main aim was to achieve independence through constitutional means so as to establish a democratic system of government. Besides, it also aims to promote racial harmony and solidarity, economic and cultural development. The first party president was Wang Qihui (Ong Kee Hui) who came from a well-known family in Kuching. Right from his great-grandfather Wang Youhai (Ong Yew Hai), his family had been very much respected by all the races in Sarawak, his grandfather Wang Zhangshui (Ong Tiang Swee) was the leader of the Chinese community in Sarawak, his father Wang Guanxing (Ong Kwang Heng) and uncle Wang Helong (Ong Hap Leong) were well-known personalities in Kuching. Wang Qihui (Ong Kee Hui) himself had a close relationship with the Sarawak colonial government and the Secretary of SUPP was Yang Guosi (Stephen Yong Kuet Tze), a well-known lawyer in Kuching. Although the main stream of the party came from the leftists, under the leadership of Wang Qihui and Yang Guosi, the SUPP adopted a middle-roader party line; their practical attitude had solved several party crises and led the party along the present path.

Being the first political party in Sarawak, and when it was formed, the SUPP was supported by people of all races, thus making it a strong force that stimulated the rise of party politics in Sarawak. This came as a shock to the colonial government that tried all ways and means of weakening it. On 9th April 1960, the Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS) was formed with the former members of the Young Malay Movement as the fundamental while there were many Iban and Bidayuh members as well as some Chinese and Melanau members. The president of PANAS was Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha and its secretary was Abang Osman who was the former secretary of the pro-cessionist Young Malay Movement.

In 1961 the Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA) was

formed consisting of the members of the former anti-cessionist movements, namely, the Malay National Union (MNU) and the Sarawak Dayak Association and other organisations. It, too, had some Chinese members. The president of BARJASA was Datu Tuanku Haji Bujang, and among its committee members were the former leaders of the Malay and Dayak anti-cessionist movements and well-educated young members. Because of their party leadership's past experience in the anti-cession movement, in the early days the BARJASA was tinted with anti-colonialism, and some of their leaders harboured anti-Chinese thoughts. However, all this has now become history.

In 1967, the Parti Bumiputra was formed with the amalgamation of Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS) and Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA). Prior to this combination, the Chinese members of the two parties had already left.

In 1961, the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), the first Dayak political party was formed with J.S. Tinker as its president and Stephen Kalong Ningkan as its secretary. Both of them were from the Second Division of Sarawak and had been the employees of the Shell Petroleum Company in Sarawak. After the 1963 General Election, Sarawak formed its first elected government with Stephen Kalong Ningkan as its first Chief Minister.

In 1962, the Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA) was formed with its leadership made up of the Ibans from the Rajang basin. Its president was Temenggong Jugah who had been the Vice President of PANAS before. In 1973, the PESAKA and Parti Bumiputra were combined to form the Parti Bumiputra Bersatu (PBB).

The Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) was formed in 1962 with a rightist inclination as opposed to the leftist inclination of the SUPP. The SUPP had a large grass-root strata made up of labourers, farmers, shopkeepers and the educated people whereas the SCA consisted mostly of the rich Chinese businessmen with little grass-root support and some of its leaders were ex-SUPP members. Although the SCA was not a strong party in terms of number, it was a member of the State Alliance and representing the Chinese community in the Sarawak government, thus it played

an important role in the formation of Malaysia. In 1970, the PBB and SUPP combined to form a Coalition Government, and the SCA lost its influence and was dissolved just before the 1974 General Election.

In 1964, another multi-racial political party called the MACHINDA was formed by those Malays, Chinese and Dayaks who had left the various previously established parties. As its leadership came from various parties with different political views and ideals, there was internal rift and was finally disbanded in 1967.

Since the establishment of the SUPP in 1959, party politics had developed very rapidly within a short period of several years but racial political parties expanded even faster. This is because at that time political power and racial interests were generally seen to be related. This political development coupled with the vigorous anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist movement in many parts of the world had caused Britain to consider abandoning the colonial rule of Sarawak and seeking a formula for giving independence to Sarawak. Therefore, when the Malaysia Plan was raised, it immediately got the approval of Britain; and this is actually the result of the political development of the three Borneo states - Sabah, Brunei and Sarawak.



Fig. 241 Rosli Dhoby  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 242 Rosli Dhoby was arrested on the spot after he assassinated the 2nd Sarawak Colonial Governor Duncan Stewart on 3rd December 1949.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 243 The anti- Malaysia Plan protest initiated by SUPP in 1962.



Fig. 244 The Supp Secretary General consoling the parents of political detainees who began a hunger strike at the Mile 6 political detention camp on June 6, 1968, Kuching.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 245 The Secretary General of United Nations, U Thant, sent a survey commission headed by Laurence Michael More, to find out the wishes of the people of Sarawak regarding the Malaysia Plan. This U.N. survey commission arrived at Sibul on August 27, 1963, and faced a large crowd of protestors. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 246 A convoy of cars taking members of the United Nations Survey Commission to Sibul town. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 247 The protesters in confrontation with the Police personnel in front of Methodist Secondary School, Sibü. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 248 Police personnel running away from the rioting crowd.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 249 A Police Officer's car was turned to the side with screens broken.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 250 A Police personnel fell during the rioting .  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)





Fig. 251 Arrival of anti-riot squad, and police personnel made a come-back.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 252 'Caught You!'  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 253 Workers exhuming the graves of Rosli Dhoby and Morshidi Sidek at the Kuching Prison ground and collecting their remains on 1st March 1996. They were both executed and buried on the same day.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 254 The remains of Rosli Dhoby, Morshidi Sidek, Awang Ramli and Bujang Suntong being flown to Sibu for reburial on 2nd March 1996.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)

## CHAPTER 20

### FORMATION OF THE FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA

On 27th May 1961, the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, delivered a historical speech at a press luncheon held in Singapore for the members of the Association of Foreign Reporters in South East Asia suggesting that the people of Britain, Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo come to an understanding whereby the region could have closer political and economic co-operation. This was the first time the Malaysia Plan was publicly mentioned.

After the Malaysia Plan had been mentioned, it was welcomed by some but opposed by others. This political conflict gradually developed into armed struggle which caused more than ten years of turbulence in this region resulting in a great loss of lives and properties.

In order to understand how it all started and developed, there is a need to fully understand the political situation at that point in time and the international social background. Though the Federation of Malaya obtained independence in 1957, and because of the Malayan Communist problem, its relation with Britain became very close; so close that it neglected its relation with the countries in the east. So, to the socialist countries the Federation of Malaya at that time was considered a member in the Western camp. When the Federation of Malaysia was formed it did not have any diplomatic relation with China until 1974. By the 1980's Malaysia adopted the 'Look East' policy and shook off the western influence to become a completely independent, self-government country. The open-door policy of the 1990's has won the strong support of all the ethnic communities in the country. Hence, the political inclination of Malaysia in the early years after its formation was very much different from that of today.

In Sarawak, those who were pro-Malaysia Plan believed that it was the path for Sarawak to become independent whereas those who were opposed to the Malaysia Plan insisted Sarawak get its

independence first and not through the formation of Malaysia. President Soekarno of Indonesia who was well-known for his anti-colonial rule sentiment fiercely opposed the Malaysia Plan claiming that it was a form of neo-colonialism; to him it was a conspiracy of the Western countries, planned and arranged by Britain. The Philippines, on the other hand, asserted its rightful claim to North Borneo (Sabah), and was therefore against the Malaysia Plan.

As there was opposition from the different ethnic groups of people in Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah) and strong protests from the neighbouring countries against the Malaysia Plan, Britain was obliged to send a Commission to ascertain the views of the peoples of Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah). The Commission that arrived in Kuching on 19th February 1962 consisted of the following members:

Lord Cobbold : Chairman (Former Governor of the Bank of England)

Sir Anthony Abell (Former Governor of Sarawak, nominated by Britain)

Sir David Watherston (Former State Secretary, Malaya, nominated by Britain)

Dato Wong Pow Nee (Huang Baoni, of MCA, Chief Minister of Penang)

Enche Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie (The Permanent Secretary, Minister of Foreign Affair, Malaya)

(The last two members were nominated by the Government of Malaya.)

In Kuching, Sibu and Miri the members of the Commission met with strong protests of anti-Malaysia Plan from various ethnic groups who wanted independence of Sarawak. The results of the Commission's findings were that about a third of the people in Sarawak supported the Malaysia Plan, a third agreed to the Plan with conditions while another third of the people were against it.

At the time when the Malaysia Plan was being discussed, because the leftists had a great following in Singapore coupled with the active leftists in Sarawak, Britain was anxious to see Malaysia Plan materialize in order to counteract the leftists' influ-

ence in Singapore, Malaya and the Borneo territories. After the Commission's survey Britain vigorously tried to push the Malaysia Plan while those anti-Malaysia Plan actively carried out their protests. In this anti-Malaysia Plan movement, the leftists had played an important role.

Nowadays, whenever the Malaysia Plan is being discussed some western historians often categorically claim that the Chinese were against it while the Malays supported it. It is extremely misleading and harmful to use a sweeping statement like that. Actually among the supporters and those who opposed were people of different ethnic groups. The members of the Parti Rakyat of Brunei who staged an armed rebellion were not Chinese. Even in the SUPP of Sarawak, only about half of its members were Chinese and the other half natives. According to the statistics of January 1963, the racial composition of the SUPP was as follows:

Race	Membership	% of Total Population
Chinese	54%	31.5%
Iban	32%	31%
Bidayuh	6.5%	8%
Malay, Melanau & Others	7.5%	29.5%

(Michael Beckett Leigh, 1974, *The Rising Moon*, Sydney University Press, p.16)

Fearing that the multi-racial SUPP would get too strong, the colonial government used the usual political tactics of spreading rumours that SUPP was a Chinese political party so as to cause the non-Chinese members to leave, thus achieving the objective of weakening it. But, the greatest impact inadvertently affected the SUPP came from the armed rebellion of Parti Rakyat of Brunei.

On the night of 8th December 1962, A. M. Azahari, leader of the Parti Rakyat of Brunei led about 2,000 armed members in a rebellion to attack the police station and the oil-field installations.

In fact, a day prior to the rebellion, the Parti Rakyat of Brunei had sent representatives to Miri to discuss their plan with the SUPP leadership there. They met at the abandoned Oil-well No.1 in Miri. Being a party believing in constitutional struggle rather than armed struggle, the leadership of the SUPP in Miri did not agree to their plan; they thought what the Parti Rakyat planned to do would only destroy its future, not forgetting that their party had recently just won 22 out of the 23 seats in the Brunei Legislative Council. However, as the military training activities of Parti Rakyat had been exposed, they had to act quickly. As soon as the rebellion broke out, the armed forces of Parti Rakyat quickly occupied Seria, the centre of the oil-fields and took Limbang and Sibuti in Sarawak. Their objectives were not only to liberate Brunei but also Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah) from the colonial rule, so as to form an independent nation with a federation of the three Borneo territories. Britain deployed its armed forces by sending the Gurkha troops who suppressed the rebellion after a week's fierce fighting.

After the Brunei rebellion, the colonial government of Sarawak launched the Big Arrest Incident. Many of the leaders of the SUPP were arrested, others went underground and the young people crossed the border to Kalimantan, Indonesia, to undergo military training. The native members of the SUPP were coerced and forced to leave the SUPP, resulting in the drawbacks of the growth of the SUPP in the rural areas. Contemporaneously, the colonial government banned the Chinese newspapers in the bigger towns : the Xin Wen Bao in Kuching, the Min Zhong Bao in Sibu, the Sha Min Ri Bao in Miri, and the Tuan Jie Bao which was the party newspaper of the SUPP in Kuching. The colonial government used all the available mass media like the radio and newspapers to spread propaganda detrimental to the SUPP.

Furthermore, the colonial government declared emergency ordinances with which to arrest and imprison those Chinese and natives who were known to be anti-colonial and members of the North Borneo National Army.

In fact, the colonial government of Sarawak had already taken suppressive measures against the anti-colonial activists. In 1951, the leaders of the student strike at Kuching Chinese Middle School

(Zhong Hua Zhong Xue) were arrested and the leftist Zhong Hua Gong Bao was banned. In 1952, many more leftists were arrested and then deported to China. In 1954, the registration of the Chinese Public School (Zhong Hua Gong Xue) at 17th Mile, Kuching-Serian Road, was revoked because the colonial government considered both the members of the School Board of Management and the teachers of the school leftists.

From 1961 onwards the Sarawak colonial government declared several ordinances to curb anti-colonial activities and activists, for example, in addition to the Local Newspapers Ordinance, the Societies Ordinance and the Trade Union Ordinance there were the Residence Ordinance (1961); the Public Order Ordinance (1962); and the Preservation of Public Security Bill (1962) which forbade any gathering of more than 5 people. Among the people arrested on 22nd June 1962, were Huang Jizuo, Wen Mingquan and their wives whose movements were restricted under the Residence Ordinance, and who later chose to go to China. Wen Mingquan had come back to the border of Sarawak to lead an armed troop but later returned to China where he has been living since. Huang Jizuo returned to the border of Sarawak and became the Chief Commander of the North Kalimantan Army (Pasukan Rakyat Kalimantan Utara or PARAKU) and fought against the government forces. It was not until 21st October 1973, that he laid down his weapons and returned to society when he and Datuk Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub signed the Memorandum of Understanding in the then Simanggang, Second Division of Sarawak.

It was in this state of affair that the tripartite system of election was held in Sarawak on 23rd June 1963, so as to form a new government to pave the way for the formation of Malaysia. In this election, the SUPP narrowly missed the chance to form the government or else the history of Sarawak would have been different.

This tripartite system of election was carried out in the 24 districts including the municipalities of Kuching, Sibuan and Miri, in the 5 divisions of Sarawak. From the 24 districts and municipalities 429 rural and urban councillors were elected, and from among them members of the Sarawak Legislative Council or Coun-

cil Negeri were chosen. The number of members allocated to each of the 5 divisions is as follows :

Division	Members
1st	10
2nd	6
3rd	11
4th	6
5th	3

The SUPP's activities were very much restricted by the government after the incident of the Brunei rebellion and their influence in the rural areas was relatively weakened, besides being unfairly treated in this election (Leigh, 1974 : 40-52). But, its leaders were confident of winning the seats in rural districts and municipalities of the 1st and 3rd Divisions as well as controlling the two Divisional Advisory Councils and they would be able to form the government by having 21 members in the Legislative Council.

However, there were only two camps in this election; one was the Sarawak Alliance consisting of the BARJASA, SNAP, PESAKA and SCA and the other consisted of SUPP and PANAS. The result of the election showed that SUPP and PANAS won 10 Legislative Council (Council Negeri) seats in the 1st Division, but in the 3rd Division they lost the Binatang seat so losing the chance of controlling the 3rd Divisional Advisory Council. Thus, contrary to their expectation they were not able to form the government.

The victory of the Sarawak Alliance ensured the Malaysia Plan being materialised. However, the protests from overseas countries as well as from within Sarawak were so fierce that the United Nations had to send a nine-member team headed by Laurence Michael More to Sarawak and Sabah to ascertain the views of the



peoples there. The feelings of the anti-Malaysia Plan protesters were mounting and getting out of hand that there appeared a rioting mob in Sibul when the United Nation Team was there. Because the U.N. Team could not complete the survey in time, the formation of the Federation of Malaysia originally scheduled for 31st August 1963 had to be postponed to 16th September 1963.



Fig. 255 Father of Malaysia:  
Tunku Abdul Rahman.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 256 Group photo of delegates to the 4th Meeting of Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee taken in front of the Kuala Lumpur State Secretariat on 8th January 1962; the 1st was held in Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu), North Borneo (Sabah); 2nd in Kuching, Sarawak; and 3rd in Singapore.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

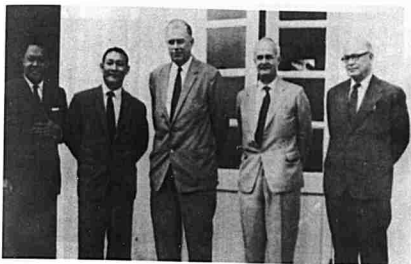


Fig. 257 Commission of Enquiry led by Lord Cobbold to ascertain the wishes of the peoples of Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah) about the Malaysia Plan, from left: Encik Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie, Datuk Wong Pow Nee, Lord Cobbold, Sir David Watherston, Sir Anthony Abell.



Fig. 258 Ong Kee Hui (1st right) and Shih Dai Seng (1st left) welcoming back the Sarawak representatives at Kuching airport on 12th July 1963 after signing the Malaysia Agreement in London, the garlanded from left to right: Abang Haji Openg, Temenggong Jugah, Datuk Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha, Ling Beng Siew. The Malaysia Agreement which was signed on 9th July, 1963, includes the 20 Points Agreement self-guarding the autonomy of Sarawak, which cannot be abolished without the expressed consent of the peoples of Sarawak. (Please refer 'The Birth of Malaysia', 2nd edition with an introduction by Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min, 1995, Kuching.)



Fig. 259 YB Khir Johari, representing the Federal Government, at a solemn ceremony held at the Central Padang (now the Heroes' Square), announcing the Independence of Sarawak with the Formation of Malaysia on 16th September, 1963, from left: 1st Head of State, Datuk Abang Haji Openg, 1st Chief Minister of Sarawak, YB Stephen Kalong Ningkan. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 260 Datuk Abang Haji Openg taking the oath before Sir Campbell Wylie, the Chief Justice of Borneo, to become the 1st Head of State of Sarawak. (Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 261 The 1st Head of State of Independent Sarawak, Datuk Abang Haji Openg, seeing off the last Sarawak colonial governor, Sir Alexander Wadell.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)

## Appendix XI: The Signatories to the Malaysia Agreement

In witness whereof the undersigned being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Agreement.

Done at London this ninth day of July, 1963, in five copies of which one shall be deposited with each of the Parties.

Bagi menyaksikan Perjanjian ini, yang menanda tangan di bawah ini dengan mendapat kuasa berbuat demikian, telah menanda tangan Perjanjian ini.

Di-perbuat di-London pada sambilan haribulan July, tahun 1963 sa-banyak lima naskhah, satu naskhah daripadanya hendak-lah di-simpan oleh tiap2 Pihak yang membuat Perjanjian ini.

For the United Kingdom;

Bagi pihak United Kingdom:

*Herb Luberton*  
*Burton Sandys*  
*London.*

For the Federation of Malaya:

Bagi pihak Persekutuan Tanah Melayu:

*T. T. Gopalan*  
*Abdullah*  
*Taib*  
*Abdullah*  
*S. M. Yusoff*


For North Borneo:  
Bagi pihak Borneo Utara:

*[Handwritten signatures and names for North Borneo]*  
W. S. Hony  
/For Sarawak:

For Sarawak:  
Bagi pihak Sarawak:

*[Handwritten signatures and names for Sarawak]*  
T. J. J. J.  
R. J. J. J.

For Signature:  
Bagi pihak Singapura:



Yusof Ishak

(Taken from 'The Birth of Malaysia', 1995, 2nd edition with an introduction by Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min, pp. 178-179).



## CHAPTER 21

### THE TEN YEAR TURBULENCE

The period after the formation of the Federation of Malaysia saw the armed confrontation of Indonesia against Malaysia. In addition to the Australian soldiers, Britain sent the British soldiers and also deployed the professional Gurkha Regiment who were well-known for their bravery and military acumen.

Indonesia had their regular army as well as volunteer forces which were strengthened by armed forces made up of Sarawak youths who had crossed over the border to Kalimantan in Indonesian Borneo. Initially, these forces made up 4 battalions with the commanding headquarters set up at Sintang, Kalimantan, and the others stationed at the border of the First, Second and Third Divisions of Sarawak.

According to the reports in the Indonesian newspapers, the number of Sarawak youths who had gone over to Indonesia for military training was more than 6,000. This figure was, perhaps, a little exaggerated. Some people had estimated it to be about 3,000, which seemed to be a more likely figure. By the time peace came in 1973, the armed communists of Sarawak had fewer than 1,000 members. Although this armed troop consisted of mainly Chinese, there were other races as well; from the Iban members, Ubong was the most well-known one. Another example was Suhaili bin Bujang, a Melanau, who was the Captain of a column of the North Kalimantan People's Army (Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara or TNKU). In early 1964, he was ordered to lead a column of 25 TNKU soldiers which consisted of 9 men of the Indonesian Volunteer Forces and 16 Chinese to transport a large amount of weapons in a barge to Binatang (now Bintangor) in order to set up a military base there and to train more armed personnel. This large collection of weapons included some 30-round Sten-guns; rifles; 3 heavy-duty machine-guns that could shoot down a helicopter; a collection of pistols; and more than 10,000 rounds of ammunition. The barge had to travel on international waters before entering the

Rajang River. On 8th January 1964, they landed on Pulau Paloh, an island at the mouth of the Rajang River. Then in two smaller groups; one with 9 men and the other with 16 men, they set about getting to Binatang. Unfortunately, on its return-trip to Kalimantan, Indonesia, the barge that had brought them to the mouth of the Rajang was discovered by the Government Security Forces and thus their whereabouts was exposed. The Government sent 60 boats of armed men to surround Pulau Paloh. In the exchange of fire, 2 Chinese and 1 Indonesian in the smaller group of 9 were killed and several were injured. Among them was an Indonesian whose arm was severed and another who had a bullet that went right through one temple and out from the other, but surprisingly, he survived although his health was no longer as good as before. They hid for about a week in the dense jungle of the island. When the government forces raided the island, they had no choice but to escape. Even the local inhabitants of the island had to escape. The armed men, taking 3 rifles each, managed to escape in a boat towards the direction of Binatang. But, soon their movement was again discovered, and on 15th January 1964, while they were at the Sarikei Wharf refuelling their boat, they were surrounded by the government forces. Captain Suhaili knew that it would be useless to resist, so he ordered all his followers to come out to surrender to the government forces. That was an incident related by Chen Zhaoxing during an interview on 13th April 1996. He was a member of that TNKU column, and had been imprisoned for 12 years, during which time he learned tailoring and Bahasa Malaysia, for the latter he obtained a Junior Certificate (LCE) in the examination he sat. He speaks perfect Malay and now, he is a professional tailor; the proprietor of Xiang Rong Tailor at 3rd Mile, Rock Road, Kuching. He thinks Suhaili bin Bujang was, and is, a good upright man. On 16th September 1963, the present Head of State of Sarawak, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi Aduce, who had slipped from the surveillance of the colonial government, also crossed over to Indonesia where he had been the Secretary of Defence of the United Nations of North Kalimantan (Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara or NKKU); a dreamed nation of the nationalists. But, he returned to Sarawak in 1969 (Sanib Said, 1991 : 201).

At that point in time, those who were anti-Malaysia Plan had similar views. As an example, Sabli Hamid, the secretary of the branch of the Sarawak Youth Movement in Limbang, had expressed thus to the Cobbold Commission team when they were conducting the Commission of Enquiry in Sarawak : *'It was a trick ... by which Malaya hoped to colonise the Borneo territories ... and that the Malaysia Plan was not an honest effort to assist the Borneo people. These three Borneo territories should be given independence first if the Borneo people's interest were at heart'* (Sanib Said, 1991 : 182).

The source of anti-Malaysia Plan thinking could be traced to the anti-cession movement of the 1940's and the anti-colonial movement of the 1950's. By the 1950's, the Chinese youths had formed the Sarawak Xianjin Qingnian Xiehui (Progressive Youth Society) and a secret organization, code-named '0'. There were also the farmers' associations, trade unions and similar leftist organisations. Before the Brunei rebellion of 8th December 1962, members of all these organisations toed the line of constitutional struggle through political parties so as to achieve their nationalist ideal of independence for Sarawak. At that time there was no communist organization. The North Kalimantan Communist Party was only formed on 30th March 1970 by Lin Yanhua (pseudonym of Lin Hekui) and Huang Han (pseudonym of Huang Jixiao). Its core members were from Huang Han's troop called Huoyan Shan (literally means Flaming Hill, a place in the legend of the Monkey God) and the inauguration of North Kalimantan Communist Party was declared at Nonok (now Asajaya) in the First Division of Sarawak. After the Brunei revolt, the British colonial government took stern measures and carried out mass arrests of those anti-colonial activists. Thus, many of them were forced to go underground to carry out the armed struggle. In 1963 Wen Mingquan and Huang Jizuo (Bong Kee Chok) returned from China to lead the armed struggle along the border of Sarawak and west Kalimantan. On 30th March 1964, Wen Mingquan formed the People's Guerrilla Troop which grew from 45 to about 200 strong with its headquarters at Sungkung, Kalimantan. On 26th October 1965, Huang Jizuo (Bong Kee Chok), as the Commander-in-Chief,

declared the establishment of the North Kalimantan People's Army (Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara or TNKU) with its headquarters at Maro, Kalimantan. In order to ensure the safety of the leader, Wen Mingquan was recalled to China on 29th September 1965 just before the coup d'état in Indonesia. Before his departure, Wen Mingquan handed over the command of the army to both Huang Jizuo and Lin Hekui.

The period between 1963 and the Indonesian coup d'état of 1965 saw the most active armed struggle of the anti-Malaysia activists in Sarawak and Indonesia. They were not only swiftly armed but they also carried out frequent guerrilla warfare in Sarawak. On 12th April 1963, Tebedu, a small town in the Serian District of the First Division of Sarawak, was attacked by the guerrillas. On 27th June 1965, under the cover of darkness the armed guerrillas advanced onto the Kuching-Serian Road, raided the Police Station at 18th Mile killing two policemen and blasted the bridge at 24th Mile while killing three local civilians. Realising the gravity of the situation and in order to prevent the spread of guerrilla activities, the government exercised the 'Operation Hammer' on 6th July 1965 by resettling the people living along the Kuching-Serian Road in 3 fenced-up controlled areas at 15th Mile (Siburan Village), 22nd Mile (Beratok Village) and 24th Mile (Tengah Village), restricting the movements of the resettled villagers and having curfew hours imposed.

In June 1966, Sarawak not only faced armed raids but its Alliance Government also experienced a serious political crisis. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the First Prime Minister of Malaysia, was dissatisfied with Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the First Chief Minister of Sarawak, for maintaining the colonial image; he wanted the latter to expedite the process of Malaysianisation. Hot arguments ensued from this conflict resulting in Stephen Kalong Ningkan being replaced by Penghulu Tawi Sli. However, Ningkan took the case to court, and on 7th September 1966, the High Court in Kuching judged the case in Ningkan's favour. After Ningkan had been reinstated, the Malaysian government declared a state of emergency in Sarawak on 15th September 1966, and made a con-

stitutional amendment empowering the Governor or Head of State of Sarawak to summon the State Legislative Meeting (Council Negeri) to remove Ningkan from the post of Chief Minister. When the Council Negeri was summoned, a vote of confidence was taken, and out of the 42 councillors in the State's Legislature 25 cast their vote of no confidence against Ningkan. So, Ningkan stepped down a second time and Tawi Sli filled the post; a complex political crisis of the Sarawak Alliance Government had thus come to past.

However, the capability and authority of the Sarawak Alliance Government had always been questioned and challenged by the opposition, the most threatening challenge came from the Sarawak United People's Party. That was why the period immediately after Malaysia the SUPP had been frequently oppressed; its leaders and members were arrested, its branches in Lundu, Sarikei, Engkilili and Miri were banned, its party newspaper the Tuan Jie Bao (Solidarity Newspaper) was stripped of its licence to print, and its activities were strictly restricted. After the 1969/1970 general election, Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, recognised that the stability, development, progress and prosperity of Sarawak could not be realized without the support and participation of the SUPP. So, he invited the SUPP to form a Coalition Government. After having narrowly missed the chance of forming a government in 1963, the SUPP decided to participate as a partner in the Coalition Government. This decision by the SUPP leadership had begun a new era in the politics of Sarawak to be written.

The Indonesian coup d'etat of 30th September 1965 dealt a fatal blow to the anti-Malaysia armed personnel. Whereas the 1962 Brunei revolt forced them to go underground, the 1965 Indonesian coup d'etat left them no choice but to lay down their arms and walk out of the jungles. This had come about because prior to the coup d'etat the Indonesian government had harboured the communists and opposed the Malaysian government. It had not only given assistance to the anti-Malaysia armed forces, it had also provided them with safe bases in Kalimantan and vast area of land for retreat without any restriction. After the coup d'etat the

Indonesian government became anti-communist but pro-Malaysia, and made a joint effort with Malaysia to eliminate the communists who were now being wedged between two formidable forces and their days were numbered.

In 1966, in the midst of such unfavourable circumstances, conflicts within the leadership of the People's Guerrilla forces of North Kalimantan (Pasukan Rakyat Kalimantan Utara or PARAKU) caused the leftist leaders: Ye Cunhou, Yang Zhuzhong, Lin Yanhua and Huang Han (Huang Jixiao) to go on separate ways. Ye Cunhou and Yang Zhuzhong retreated with their troops to the border region of the First Division of Sarawak as there was no longer any refuge in Kalimantan. By March 1969, as there was shortage of food and assistance of any sort was severed, they were wiped out and their leaders, Ye Cunhou and Yang Zhuzhong died in action at Sungkung in Kalimantan. Another guerrilla leader, Lai Chun (pseudonym of Lin Guangmin), was captured in action in June, 1968 by Indonesian forces.

Lin Guangmin was a Kejia (Hakka) man from Sibu. He was educated in both Chinese and English in Sibu and then Kuching. As a student he actively led all sorts of student activities. In early 1963 he escaped to Indonesia together with Ye Cunhou, Yang Zhuzhong, Zhu Zengren and Tian Yunduan. In 1964 Lin Guangmin became the Secretary of Finance in the North United Nations (Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara or NKKU). Ye Cunhou was the Secretary of Information, Wen Mingquan was Secretary of Social Affairs, Ahmad Zaidi was Secretary of Defence and A. M. Azahari was the Premier of the NKKU.

On 4th May 1965, when the Afro-Asian People Solidarity Organization Conference was held in Ghana, Africa, Lin Guangmin was among the representatives of North Kalimantan who attended the conference. After the conference the North Kalimantan party followed the representatives of China led by the party leader, Liao Chengzhi, to visit China. In Beijing, he met with Marshal Chen Yi, China's Minister of Foreign Affairs. When the revolt broke out in Indonesia, Lin Guangmin was in Djakarta on the Java Island of Indonesia. In the middle of 1966, he returned to the guerrilla warfare in the jungles but he was captured in action and sent

back to Kuching in July 1968. Lin Guangmin was imprisoned with Huang Jilin in the Detention Camp at Bukit Siol, Kuching. There, they stayed for a year before their release. In March 1973 Lin Guangmin and Huang Jilin became Special Assistants to the Chief Minister of Sarawak. Now, Lin Guangmin is a senior officer in the Sibuan Chang Qing Groups (Syarikat Rimbunan Hijau), the President of the Sibuan Ke Shu (Hakka) Association and the President of the Da Pu Clan Association, Sibuan. He frequently publishes his translated works in the newspaper.

In 1970 after the all-out raids on the People's Guerrilla forces of North Kalimantan, what remained of the People's Guerrilla forces retreated to Sarawak. Lin Hekui and Huang Jixiao led their Huoyan Shan troops to the coastal region of the First Division of Sarawak, set up their headquarters there and actively carried out their guerrilla warfare. But, in February 1970 the government forces carried out the 'Operation Jala' (Giant Net Operation) and defeated them while also causing great loss of civilian lives and properties.

Another troop of the People's Guerrilla force which was led by Huang Jizuo (Bong Kee Chok) and Bei Wendui entered the Second Division, from where they proceeded to the Rajang region. In 1968 Song Ping (pseudonym of Li Tianyang) led a column from the second troop of the North Kalimantan People's army and opened up a secret passage to the Rajang region. Then, with the assistance of the local Ibans they were able to get in touch with Hong Chuting, leader of the armed work force in the Rajang region.

Li Tianyang was a Xin An Ke (Sin Onn Hakka) from Sungai Maong, Kuching. In the 1950's he joined as a member of the Xianjin Qingnian (Progressive Youth) Society, and was later absorbed into the secret '0' organization. During a midnight in early June, 1963, he left Kuching for Tanjung Datu and then from there to Indonesia. After having received military training, he first operated along the border of Sarawak, but later he went to join the North Kalimantan People's Army at Sungai Maro, Kalimantan. Sungai Maro has a tributary that meets the Sungai Katibas just above Song along the Rajang River in Sarawak. It was from there that Li

Tianyang and his column of guerrillas opened up a route to link the Rajang River. His duty was to open up roads and fight, and he was an expert in ambush combat. Twice he commanded the column that laid the ambush of government forces killing more than twenty of them with the result that a handsome prize was offered for his capture.

The armed work force operated in three regions known as the OMT units. OMT refers to the initials of the town names : Oya, Mukah and Tatau. The leader of the guerrilla force in this area was Hong Chuting, a Chaozhou (Teochew) man. He received his Chinese secondary education in Kuching. He possessed organisational skills, and the extremely good relationship he had established with the common people there had provided a good cover for his armed work force so that they could move quite freely in the town area. When the People's Guerrilla forces of North Kalimantan entered the Rajang region, the number of skirmishes increased there. So, the government had to take stern political measures and carry out large scale raids. The following incidents will give readers a glimpse of the state of emergency in the Rajang Basin.

On 8th August 1969, a large scale raid was carried out by the government forces.

In 1970, the government imposed a 24-hour curfew for 73 days at Sungai Bidut region so as to carry out military operation. Because this was the meeting place for the armed guerrillas operating in the Rajang Basin. These two raids involved more than 2,000 government military men.

In 1972, the government formed the Rajang Security Command or RASCOM in order to strategically split up the armed guerrillas, surround and raid them. For this, the government forces were stationed at Durin ferry point, Sungai Merah, Bukit Lan, Tulai, Binatang (Bintangor) development area and Tanjung Kungchit in order to stop their activity and cut off their local contacts. After the establishment of RASCOM the activity of the Sarawak Communist Organization was drastically thwarted and it gradually declined.



On 22nd September 1973, the Chief Minister of Sarawak and Director of Operation, Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub ordered the arrest of 30 well-known personalities in Sibu for having been involved in assisting the communists with cash and kind. That was the 'Operation Judas' (a biblical name synonymous to 'traitor') which shocked the society of Sarawak.

The turbulence during the period from 1963 to 1973 had caused great sufferings and the loss of more than a thousand lives; many homes were broken and the economy of the whole society was disrupted. The farmers in the affected areas had lived in fear. Fortunately, by the end of 1973, peace finally came.



Fig. 262 Marshall Chen Yi, Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China meeting the representatives of the United Nations of North Kalimantan (Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara or NKKU) led by Lai Chun (pseudonym of Lin Guangmin) in Beijing in the evening of May 27, 1965.  
(Photo supplied by Lin Guangmin).



Fig. 263 Group photo of Marshall Chen Yi (middle) of China and NKKU representatives led by Lai Chun (4th right). (Photo supplied by Lin Guangmin)



Fig. 264 The author, Fang Hanjia (Fong Hon Kah) interviewing Lin Guangmin at the Sibu Ke Shu (Hakka) Association office on July 10, 1995.



Fig. 265 The author interviewing Song Ping (pseudonym of Li Tianyang) at the author's house.  
(Photo: J. Lim Shau Hua, 1995)



Fig. 266 The Wedding photo of Song Ping and Bai Lian taken in the jungle in December, 1973. (Photo supplied by Li Tianyang)



Fig. 267 The Inauguration of North Kalimantan Communist Party with the members of the Huoyan Shan armed force on March 30, 1970, at Nonok (now Asajaya), a coastal town in the 1st Division (now Kuching Division), Sarawak. Front row: 1st right, Commander Huang Han (pseudonym of Bong Kee Siaw), 2nd right, Commissar Lin Yanhua (pseudonym of Lin Hekui)



Fig. 268 The 24-hour round the clock curfew of Headhunting Operation (Operation Ngayau) in Sibuan beginning August 9, 1971, emptied the streets of all civilians. (Photo: RASCOM)

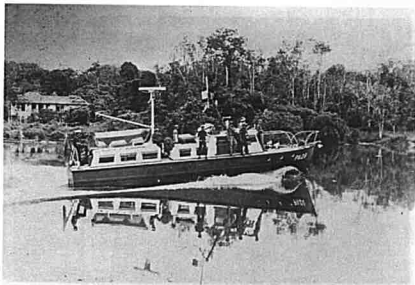


Fig. 269 The armed Marine Police patrolling along the Rajang River during the 24-hour curfew imposed in August, 1971. (Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 270 The Marine Police keeping their vigilance on the Rajang River during the curfew in August 1971.  
(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 271 The Chief Minister Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub speaking to the government armed forces in Kanowit during the 'Headhunting Operation or Operation Ngayau' in 1971.  
(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 272 Members of the Sibuan Vigilante Corps (Relawan Rakyat or RELA) pledging their loyalty to the government and their determination to fight the communists during a ceremony held at Catholic High School on May 6, 1972 before they were given weapons for self-defence.  
(Photo: RASCOM).



Fig. 273 Chief Minister Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub speaking to secondary school students at Methodist Secondary School, Sibuan, on April 21, 1972, about 'Nationalism versus Communism' in order to help fight the influence of communism on the students.  
(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 274 Group photo of officials of the Rajang Security Command or RASCOM (Pemerintahan Keselamatan Kawasan Rajang) taken on March 26, 1972; the setting up of RASCOM by the government played a decisive role in the situation in the Rajang Basin.

(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 275 The Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Huang Shunkai (Dr Wong Soon Kai) saluting the government armed forces during an official ceremony to mark the end of RASCOM on April 7, 1995. (Photo: MIS)



## CHAPTER 22

### SRI AMAN MOVEMENT

The 'Operation Sri Aman' was the peace movement that ended the ten-year turbulence in Sarawak.

On 10th October 1973, Huang Jizuo (Bong Kee Chok) wrote a letter in Chinese, although he could read and write in English, to the then Chief Minister of Sarawak, Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, expressing his willingness to lay down arms in order to help contribute towards peace and national reconstruction. His younger brother, Huang Jiquan who was with him in the jungle of the Second Division, accompanied by a bodyguard brought this letter to Kuching and hand-delivered it to the Special Branch of the Police Headquarters in Kuching. On 13th October Chief Superintendent Ali Kawi, the police officer-in-charge of the Special Branch, went with Assistant Superintendent Anthony Liew and Huang Jilin, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister, to see the Chief Minister, Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub who was resting in the General Hospital in Kuching. Huang Jilin verbally translated the content of the said letter for the Chief Minister. As soon as he had heard it, he immediately left the hospital to make the necessary arrangements for the peace talk. Consecutively for three days on 19th, 20th and 21st October 1973, Chief Minister Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub and Huang Jizuo (Bong Kee Chok) held talks in the Government Rest House in Simanggang, Second Division of Sarawak. The peace talk progressed very smoothly, and finally both sides reached an agreement and a memorandum of understanding was signed. So, peace was finally achieved in Sarawak after ten years of turbulence. This was a significant event in the modern history of Sarawak; a day all races had yearned for. In order to commemorate the 'Operation Sri Aman' the Government Rest House was called Rumah Sri Aman, and the town of Simanggang and the Second Division of Sarawak was renamed Sri Aman and Bahagian Sri Aman respectively.

The fact that the peace talk could progress so smoothly was

because both sides had come to the table with genuine sincerity and the urgent wish for peace.

In the ten-year turbulence, the efforts to eliminate the Sarawak armed communists had cost the government more than 10 billions Malaysian Ringgit which was a very heavy financial burden. It had also cost a lot of lives. In order to cover a vast region infiltrated by the communists, the government had to deploy more than 10,000 military personnel. The government troops suffered a considerable loss of lives because the communist forces had undergone basic military training. Besides, those in command had studied guerrilla tactics and strategies, so the raids they carried out on the government forces and the ambushes they laid often incurred the loss of many lives of the government forces. To quote two examples, the Huoyang Shan (Flaming Hill) guerrilla force's raid on the Indonesian air-base at Sanggaurelo on 16th July 1967 had caused loss of properties and lives; and the ambush of a government army truck along the Lundu Road on 26th March 1972 had 15 dead and 4 injured. This was not the work of an undisciplined mob, but that of a well-trained army. Apart from the loss of lives and heavy financial burden, the war against the communist guerrillas had also affected the implementation of various government construction projects such as road construction. If the turbulent state were allowed to continue, it would cause more severe social disorder which the government could ill-afford. That was why the government also wanted peace.

For the Sarawak communists, the situation was worse. Ever since the Indonesian revolt of 30th September 1965, Indonesia had become an anti-communist country. It had not only stopped its confrontation of Malaysia, it had also made a joint effort with Malaysia to suppress the communists. Thus, the Sarawak communists found themselves wedged between two great enemies. Then on 7th July 1970, the Sarawak United People's Party, the Parti Bumiputra and Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak formed an Alliance Government. By joining the government, the SUPP became a member of the ruling party in the Malaysian Government, and Yang Guosi (Stephen Yong Kuet Tze) in his capacity as the Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak became a member of the Sarawak Se-

curity Council. This unexpected turn of political event had a significant impact on the Sarawak Chinese community, causing a confidence crisis within the SUPP and a fatal blow to the Sarawak Communist Organization. The Sarawak government's setting up of the Rajang Security Command (RASCOC) in 1972 gradually gained control of the situation. Besides, the setting up of armed Vigilante Corps (Relawan Rakyat or RELA) by the local residents living as far upriver as Kapit had helped curb the sabotage activities of the communists. In an interview, Temenggong Cai Xingmin said he was then the Chairman of a Vigilante Corps with a strong force of more than 200 members. There was also the Tenants Registration Exercise whereby a house owner had to report to the government any visitor or guest who stayed for the night. Under such tight control, the communists had little room to manoeuvre and were frustrated. The rural society in this turbulent situation had suffered total disruption; and the rural folks, therefore, yearned for peace and stopped supporting the communists. The Sarawak communists were now in a situation where both internal supply line and external aids had been severed, coupled with the world situation where their ideal world of communism was full of conflicts : China and Russia, the two giant communist countries, had become antagonists; their idols Mao Zedong (Chairman of China's Communist Party) and Liu Shaoqi (President of The People's Republic of China) were engaged in a power struggle; and even Lin Biao (Minister of Defence of China) betrayed China, but died in an air-crash while attempting to escape. All these incidents inflicted a heavy blow on their ideals and ideology; they were disappointed, disillusioned and more and more of them were prepared to surrender. At the same time, they could see that the Sarawak Alliance Government had not only achieved a great deal to better the lives of the people but had also had the support of the people. Besides, the government's treatment of the returnees; the former leftists who had turned over a new leaf of life, was one of forgiveness and understanding. Consequently, those who remained in the jungles had lost the will to fight. From 1973 onwards, more and more communists surrendered to the government authority, sometimes even the whole group came out to surrender. By the time

Huang Jizou (Bong Kee Chok) returned to his base after the peace talk, many of his close comrades had already surrendered. Thus from the returnees the government obtained the details of his movements, and his troop stationed at Batu Lintang of the Second Division was surrounded by the government forces. Under such circumstances, the only choice was to lay down their arms.

By August 1974, a total of 585 Sarawak communists walked out of the jungles and returned to society, among them 321 were from the First and Second Divisions and 264 from the RASCOM region (Huang Jilin et al, 1989 : 342-343).

In April, 1986, Zhang Yahua (pseudonym of Zeng Peixiong) and 16 followers were surrounded by the Indonesian forces and surrendered to the government authority. On 17th October 1990, Hong Chuting in the Rajang region signed a peace agreement with the government and led his followers numbering 52 out of the jungles and returned to society. The armed struggle in Sarawak had finally come to an end.

The 'Operation Sri Aman' was not only a joyous occasion for all the people in Sarawak it had also attracted international attention. On 4th March 1974, the then Chief Minister of Sarawak, Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, briefed a group of more than 100 local and foreign reporters at the Tun Abdul Razak Hall (Dewan Tun Razak) in Kuching about the details of the 'Operation Sri Aman'. At the same time a grand peace rally was held in Kuching, Sri Aman (Simanggang), and Sibiu.

Today, whenever we mention 'Operation Sri Aman', we will certainly remember Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub and Huang Jizou (Bong Kee Chok). Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub was resourceful and able to use a man according to his ability; he was a dynamic political leader. Had it not been for him, there would not have been a Coalition Government of different political parties; and without the Sarawak Coalition Government, there would not have been the 'Operation Sri Aman'. These two incidents had significantly influenced the historical process of Sarawak and the political development of the country because the Coalition Government of Sarawak was the fore-runner of the National Front Government and the 'Operation Sri Aman' was the model of peace settlement:

the terms and conditions of which were also accepted by the Malayan communists. We must also remember the important roles played by Tan Sri Wang Qihui (Ong Kee Hui) and Datuk Yang Guosi (Stephen Yong Kuet Tze) who were then, respectively, the President and Secretary-General of SUPP.

Admittedly those who went to the neighbouring country in order to fight for the independence of Sarawak from the British colonial rule were people with lofty ideals and a sense of sacrifice. But, the methods they used were erroneous; their dogmatism had led them astray to the detriment of themselves and society. Today, these sons and daughters of Sarawak who were anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism and who have survived the turbulent period are now serving in their different capacities - as Head of State, State Cabinet Ministers, Legislative Council Members and ordinary citizens - contributing towards the reconstruction of society. Their loyalty and patriotism, and their sincerity towards social services have earned the respect of all the people of Sarawak.

To sum up the whole situation a quotation from Zi Gong (Tzu Kang), the student of Confucius, will aptly apply; he said, *'The faults of a great man may be compared to the eclipses of the sun and moon. While he is committed, everyone sees him, but once he changes, everyone gazes up at him in respect.'*



Fig. 276 Chief Minister of Sarawak, Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Ya'kub (left) and Commander and Commissar of North Kalimantan Peoples' Army (Pasukan Rakyat Kalimantan Utara or PARAKU), Huang Jizuo or popularly known as Bong Kee Chok (right) signing a Memorandum of Understanding at the Simanggang Government Rest House (now Rumah Sri Aman) to end the ten-year turbulence on 21st October 1973. (Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 277 The author (right) posing with the Assembly man for Sri Aman, YB Michael Pilo (left) in front of Rumah Sri Aman; the latter was the 18th District Officer of Kanowit in 1971.



Fig. 278 The Peace Rally or Sri Aman Parade held in Kuching on March 4, 1974; front row: 3rd left, Datuk Yang Guosi (Stephen Yong Kuet Tze), 4th Temenggong Jugah, 5th Tan Sri Ghazali Shafiee, 6th Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, 1st right Tan Sri Datuk Shen Qinghong (Sim Kheng Hong).



Fig. 279 Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub welcoming the first batch of Sarawak armed communists who laid down arms to return to society after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.



Fig. 280 Group photo of the first batch of returnees of the Sungai Bakong area with the government security force waiting to be air-lifted back to society on 13th December, 1973.



Fig. 281 Two high-ranking Sarawak communist leaders Huang Lisheng (left) and Bei Wendui (right) destroying weapons used in the jungle. The former is now a businessman in Sibu whereas the latter is a famous Chinese physician at Selangau, popularly known as 'Doktor Komunis' to the local natives.





Fig. 282 Newspaper clippings from the various newspapers about the Sri Aman Operation.



Fig. 283 Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub cuddling a child of one of the returnees in a joyous function celebrating the ex-communists' return to society. (Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 284 A fun-filled evening for those who returned to society. (Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 285 Happy faces of the returnees.  
(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 286 The signing of the Peace Agreement (Perjanjian Damai) between the Malaysian Government represented by the Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib and the State Secretary Tan Sri Datuk Amar Bujang Noor and Hong Chuting (Hung Chu Ting), Leader of the last batch of Sarawak Communist Guerrillas in the Rajang Basin on 17th October 1990, to mark the end of the Sarawak Communists' armed struggle and their return to society.

(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 287 Tan Sri Datuk Amar Bujang Noor and Hong Chuting exchanging the signed documents of the Peace Agreement witnessed by the Chief Minister of Sarawak Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abdul Taib.

(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 288 The last foothold of the North Kalimantan Peoples' Army (Pasukan Rakyat Kalimantan Utara) led by Hong Chuting.



Fig. 289 Life of the PARAKU members in the jungle camp. (Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 290 The PARAKU members welcoming the Government Officials to their Camp after the signing of the Peace Agreement. (Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 291 The Guerrillas handing over their arms.  
(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 292 A female guerrilla leaving the jungle to return to society.  
(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 293 The last batch of the Sarawak Communist Guerrillas numbering 52 boarding the Royal Malaysian Air Force helicopter to return to society on 3rd November 1990.  
(Photo: RASCOM)

## CHAPTER 23

### BEGINNING OF PEACEFUL RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIETY

After the 'Operation Sri Aman' the turbulent situation in Sarawak basically came to an end and the society in Sarawak became more settled. As the rural areas regained peace and order the controlled villages became free and the curfew hours were abolished. Following this sequence of events, the political detainees were finally released from the Political Detention Camp at 6th Mile along Kuching-Serian Road, Kuching.

Ever since the Coalition Government of Sarawak came into being in 1970, and through its dynamism and efficiency it had made outstanding achievements in all fields. In 1973 when the grand celebrations were held on the tenth anniversary of the birth of Malaysia, Sarawak began to use its new State Flag, State Emblem and State Anthem thus bringing a fresh countenance to the State.

Meanwhile the national politics of Malaysia had undergone a tremendous change. After the racial riot in Peninsular Malaysia on 13th May 1969, the then Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, replaced Tunku Abdul Rahman as the Prime Minister of Malaysia. In order to prevent any re-occurrence of racial strife, the government took stern steps forbidding activities that touch on racial sensitive issues; the *Rukunegara* (The Principles of a Nation) was declared for ensuring a common objective among its people; the *Kementerian Perpaduan Negara* (Ministry of National Solidarity) and the *Lembaga Perpaduan* (Board of National Solidarity) were set up to promote racial harmony and unity. Today the national spirit of unity has been the ultimate result of such necessary measures. To further strengthen the unity between the races, Tun Abdul Razak in 1974 formed a coalition government comprising most of the political parties in Malaysia. This United Front or *Barisan Nasional* resolved their problems through discussion and negotiation while avoiding any public arguments or

debates that might undermine racial harmony and national unity.

Meanwhile, party politics in Sarawak was also undergoing changes. In 1973, *Parti Bumiputra* and *Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak* amalgamated to form *Parti Bumiputra Bersatu* (PBB). Later on when *Parti Bumiputra Bersatu* (PBB) and *Sarawak United People's Party* (SUPP) joined the *Barisan Nasional* (The United Front), the Coalition Government in Sarawak was renamed the Sarawak Barisan Nasional Government.

It was in this political setting, both at the State level and Federal level, that Sarawak held its second direct General Election between August and September, 1974. Contrary to general expectations, the results showed that the Opposition party, Sarawak National Party (SNAP), won 18 seats bettering its original 12, whereas SUPP, a member of the State Barisan Nasional, though used to enjoy full grass-root support from the Chinese community, lost 3 seats, a drop from the original 12 to 9. Even the SUPP's Secretary-General, Yang Guosi (Stephen Yong Kuet Tze) lost to Luo Fuji (Lo Foot Kee) of SNAP in the Kuching Timur Constituency. However, Xie Jinxin (Chia Chin Sin) and Lin Pengxiong (Ling Beng Siong), who became SUPP members after the dissolution of the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) prior to the General Election, won their seats, thus making a total of 11 seats for SUPP. The other opposition party and independent candidates suffered total defeat. The State Barisan Nasional formed the government with a majority of 30 seats, and the State Cabinet was enlarged from 7 ministers to 13 members including the 3 posts for assistant ministers. Shen Qinghong (Sim Kheng Hong) replaced Yang Guosi (Stephen Yong Kuet Tze) as the Deputy Chief Minister, and Dr Huang Shunkai (Dr Wong Soon Kai) was appointed Minister for Agriculture and Community Development. The latter was a well-known doctor in Sibu, and because of his good reputation and popularity he was invited to join politics as a member of the SUPP. Later on in Miri, Dr Chen Kangnan (Dr George Chan Hong Nam) joined politics under the similar circumstances. Now both of them are the President and Secretary-General of the SUPP respectively.

The SUPP, in their post-election analysis of the 1974 Gen



eral Election, attributed the Chinese electorate's switch to the opposition to their dissatisfaction and grievances in the implementational discrepancy of government policies on land, education, and civil service as well as the New Economic Policy. Hence, their voting for the opposition was to convey a message of protest against the discrepancy. Having studied the related causes, the SUPP leadership submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister on 12th September 1974, urging him to fairly treat the SUPP's requests. This incident caused such a rift between Datuk Yang Guosi (Datuk Stephen Yong Kuet Tze) and Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub that both could neither co-operate nor tolerate each other.

At dawn on 30th October 1974, the Chairman of SNAP, Datuk Huang Jinmin (Datuk James Wong Kim Min) was arrested at his residence in Kuching, detained without trial and was only released on 10th March 1977 (James Wong Kim Min, 1983 : viii - xv). During Datuk James Wong's absence, the Secretary-General of SNAP, Leo Moggie, took over the helm. On 1st November 1976, SNAP joined the Barisan Nasional. Meanwhile the relation between the SUPP and Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub not only did not improve but got worse. By 1977, no communication was possible between the SUPP and Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, but instead there was mutual criticism in the newspapers. Then on 26th December 1977, during the SUPP Central Executive Committee meeting, there was even discussion on whether the SUPP should stay in the Barisan Nasional Government. Though the majority voted to stay, they conveyed to the then Prime Minister Tun Hussien Onn about the impossibility of their working with Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub and wanted him to step down. On 26th March 1981, Datuk Abdul Rahman Ya'kub stepped down and the present Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Taib Mahmud took over the helm of the Sarawak Government. But, on 2nd April 1981 Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub was appointed the 4th Head of State of Sarawak. The 3rd Head of State was Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Muhammad Salahuddin who, on 2nd April 1977, succeeded Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang, the 2nd Head of State.

Despite the eventful political arena of Sarawak, the society

was largely serene; various reconstruction projects were carried out in peace. For example, in 1977 the major projects included the Housemen's Quarters of the General Hospital in Kuching, the Mental Health Unit in Sri Aman (formerly Simanggang), the Health Centre at Sambir, the Penghulu Ibau Primary School (SRK Penghulu Ibau) near Sibu, the Cross Bar Telephone Exchange at Bintulu, the Kenyalang Market in Kuching, the Agriculture Training Centre in Sibiew near Bintulu, the Palm Oil Mill in Niah near Miri, and the State Complex in Kapit. At the same time the government also promoted and sponsored various healthy cultural and sports activities for the young people.

In 1978, the important projects undertaken by the government included the RM 36 million Cement Grinding Plant in Kuching, the RM32 million Sibu Port, the Federal Complex (Wisma Persekutuan) in Kuching, the Matang Government Secondary School (SMK Sheik Haji Othman Abdul Wahab) near Kuching, the Junior Science College (Kolej Sains Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah) at Petra Jaya, Kuching, the Stampin Government Secondary School (SMK Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Gapor) and the Sarawak Motor Industry at Pending, Kuching.

Of course the construction and development of Sarawak are not limited to those mentioned above. The government had made outstanding achievements in infrastructure, for example, the building of roads, bridges and airports; the construction of port facilities at Kuching, Sarikei, Sibu and Bintulu; the supply of water and electricity in the rural areas; the improvement of telecommunication, postal services and the setting up of local radio stations.

Agriculture which has always played an important role in the economy of Sarawak has been in the government's priority list. Sarawak has achieved many successes in the field of agriculture through the various schemes set up by the government. Among the Agricultural Crop Subsidy Schemes are the Rubber Planting Scheme; Coconut Planting Scheme; Padi Planting Scheme, Agriculture Diversification Scheme; Pepper Subsidy Scheme; Agricultural Livestock Subsidy Scheme and the Inland Fisheries Development Scheme. In order to help farmers solve their problems, the government sends out technical personnel to provide field and

extension services, and to raise the over-all standard of agriculture, the government provides the necessary agriculture education including staff training, and farmers training programmes as well as the setting up of Farmers Training Centres and Farming Institutes. In addition, the government established Farmers Organisations and Rural Home Economics classes were held and Veterinary Extension Services were provided. The government's policy on agriculture has greatly raised the education level of the farmers which in turn has steered Sarawak towards the modernisation of an agrarian economy.

In the development of industries, the government has not only allocated land at Pending for large-scale industries but has also trained skilled personnel for the small scale industries.

In the marine fishing industry, the government provides loans for the fishermen to acquire fishing boats to carry out modern deep-sea fishing.

In order to facilitate economic development, the government set up the State Economic Planning Unit and established the Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) and the State Land Development Board (SLDB). Such far-sighted and dynamic economic planning did not meet with disapproval, but the division of economic benefits was a bone of contention.

In popularising education and raising the standard of education, the government has achieved good results. In 1975, the Common Entrance Examination was abolished and every primary school child enters the secondary education, thus receiving 9 years of basic education. In order to cater for all the primary school children, the government undertook the building of secondary schools. In May 1971, by the act of an Ordinance the Sarawak Foundation was established which has been awarding scholarships to encourage students in achieving academic excellence and in providing financial assistance for students to further their studies. In this aspect, the Sarawak Foundation has made great contributions towards training manpower for the country. In 1973, the then Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub successfully fought for better terms and conditions of service for the Sarawak teachers and the civil servants in the other government departments.

On 22nd July 1972, the Sarawak Government organised the 150 youth organisations in the State into a multi-racial Youth Organization known as SABERKAS, and Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub was elected the first Chairman. At the same time the government set up Youth Settlement Scheme to engage young people in healthy agricultural production activities.

Besides all those mentioned above, the government also set up the State Sports Council which took care of the construction of the State Stadium and promotion of a variety of sporting activities.

The State Government has the confidence and ambition of making Sarawak the Model State in Malaysia.

This period of peaceful reconstruction has laid a good foundation for the future development of Sarawak.



The end of the ten-year political turbulence saw Sarawak onto the road of rapid reconstruction; many major projects were completed one after another. The fruit of reconstruction could be seen everywhere in the urban areas, but the following photographs will give readers a glimpse into the improvements made in the lives of the people in the lower Rajang Basin and the reconstruction of the society in the coastal region.

Fig. 294 Fisherman scooping jellyfish from the sea; a delicacy and an important marine product exported mainly to Hong Kong and Japan. (Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 295 Melanau girls cleaning jellyfish.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 296 Melanaus pushing sago logs onto the riverbank.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 297 Workers at the semi-mechanised sago factory, grating of sago into 'ripo' or sago saw-dust is done by machine but the extracting of sago flour is manually done.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 298 A chipwood factory at the suburb of Rajang Town; timber logs are being carried by the conveyor-belt to the factory.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 299 Wood chips produced at the Chipwood Factory at Rajang Town will be processed into chipwood boards for making furniture. (Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 300 Low cost housing estate in Rajang Town.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



## CHAPTER 24

### POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE RISE OF NATIVES (BUMIPUTRAS)

Ever since attaining independence in 1963, the most significant social development in Sarawak is the rise of the natives, through political power, to become the main stream of the social development of today.

In a democratic society, politics is part and parcel of the life of a people. It is the right and responsibility of a citizen to take part in the politics of his own country.

Participation in political activities is our right. We need political strength to protect our interests, and only through the influence of political strength can we then achieve further development.

Participation in political activities is also the responsibility of a citizen because if we do not participate in political activities, our democratic system will not function and a democratic government cannot materialise. Besides, the democratic society will not obtain speedy progress and development because it does not get the best contribution from its people.

Therefore, it is impossible for any person who does not fulfil the responsibility of a citizen to want to covet political power while it is grossly unfair for a person who has fulfilled his responsibility and yet does not enjoy the benefits inherent in that responsibility. There must be a balance between political power and responsibility, otherwise there will be social disorder.

The Malaysian society is multi-racial. Admittedly participation in political activities is important for every individual but it is more important for a racial community because it is through political strength that the interests of a racial community, in the realm of economy, education and culture, can be protected. Only when a racial community is assured of such protection can they continue to progress and develop. This is of utmost importance to the Malaysian society and to Malaysia as a nation for in a multi-racial

society set-up we cannot afford to lose the balance between rights and responsibilities. If that rights-responsibilities balance is lost the society will head towards fanatical extremes, and the disparity between the progressive or the have and the primitive or the have-not will be too wide to be rectified. When this situation happens, it will not only affect the progress of social development but it will finally end in disastrous disorders.

Malaysia is a good model where the different racial communities progress through the participation of political activities, and Sarawak is a fine example.

In the history of Sarawak the different racial communities had played their different roles performing their varied social functions. For example, in the time of the White Rajahs the Malays were appointed to the different civil posts to help the White Rajahs rule Sarawak; the Dayaks formed the main backbone of the White Rajahs' armed forces; and the Chinese who were engaged in commerce and agriculture concentrated on the economic construction of Sarawak. To the White Rajahs, this was the best system of division of social labour and hence, their method of 'divide and rule'. This type of society lasted until independence. But, after independence the government wanted to promote understanding and unity among the races in order to fairly look after the interests of all the communities, it was imperative to restructure the society. This restructuring of society will have to depend on political strength to manoeuvre and to bring it to completion.

Like all the other regions in Malaysia, party politics in Sarawak and the interests of each of the races cannot be separated. Being the first political party in the political history of Sarawak, the SUPP, though the strongest multi-racial political party, has had one of its initial objectives in protecting Chinese education and Chinese commercial interests.

The establishment of the Sarawak United People's Party had had a great impact on the Malay and Dayak communities. Though the Parti Negara Sarawak (PANAS) and Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA) were initially multi-racial; both parties had Chinese members, gradually the native racial tints were getting more and more obvious until they amalgamated to form the Parti

Bumiputra resulting in the departure of the Chinese members. On the other hand, the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) started as a single race party but has become a multi-racial political party after absorbing other races as members, nevertheless its Dayak tint is still very strong. Though the Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA) started with the Ibans of the Rajang basin as the mainstream, was combined with Parti Bumiputra in 1973 to form the Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu (PBB) and has become the biggest natives party in Sarawak. In 1983, the split within the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) saw Leo Moggie lead a group of his followers to form the Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS). All these political parties have represented their various races to appeal, to fight for their benefits and to ensure their rights in the restructuring of society.

In comparison to Peninsular Malaysia, the racial composition of the society in Sarawak is comparatively more complex; among the races in Sarawak there are natives and non-natives and among the natives there are more than 20 different races. Thus, in the sharing of rights and benefits there are bound to be conflicts which could result in political crises. Therefore, the Sarawak Barisan Nasional (the Sarawak United Front) Government has to be very fair, careful and sensitive in managing the state affairs, and not to be prejudiced.

As a matter of fact, from the time of the White Rajahs to the time of British colonial period the basic welfare of the different races had been looked after. After the formation of Malaysia, the natives of Sarawak through their political strength urged the government to formulate policies and to adopt effective measures in helping them eradicate their poverty and backwardness. Within the period of more than 30 years and through the national education policies, the government has cultivated among the natives myriad number of professionals and skilled personnel in all fields; and under the New Economic Policy the government has helped the natives to achieve great success in agriculture, commerce and industry. With their level of education being raised, their economic power strengthened and their cultural enterprise improved, the natives society has advanced by leaps and bounds; these achieve-

ments have further strengthened their political power.

From the rise of the Sarawak natives and the successes they have made in politics, culture and education, we can clearly see the importance of people's participation in political activities. However, we should not forget that the main objective of political activities is to promote the progress and development of society, and the foundation of progress and development lies in a society that is harmonious and peaceful, while a harmonious and peaceful society depends greatly on the balance of political rights and responsibilities of its people.



Fig. 301 Welcoming Sarawak's first Chief Minister YAB Stephen Kalong Ningkan back from Kuala Lumpur, from left YAB Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the State Secretary G.A.T. Shaws (with hat), Wang Qihui (Ong Kee Hui), Datuk Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha, and Abdul Taib Mahmud. Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan emerged as one of the native leaders in modern time.



Fig. 302 Datuk Penghulu Abok, member of the Sarawak Cabinet and an Iban leader, visiting the vegetable stalls put up during the exhibition of Home Economics Achievement Day at Batang Igan area.

(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 303 Tan Sri Datuk Amar Temenggong Jugah, as Federal Minister of Sarawak Affairs and the Paramount Chief of the Ibans, speaking to the residents of Rumah Ubong at Batang Balleh in the upper Rajang Basin.  
(Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 304 Minister of Local Government and Housing, and well-known Malay leader in Sibu, Ahmad Zaidi (present Head of State Tun Datuk Patinggi Ahmad Zaidi Adruce) officially declared open the new building of a primary school at Durin. From left: Divisional Education Officer William Hsu, Resident of 3rd Division Mr Yao Ping Hua, Encik Sandah Anak Jarow. (Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 305 Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, a dynamic Melanau leader, accompanied by the Resident of the 3rd Division, being welcomed by the people of Sarikei on his arrival to give a talk to the teachers of Sarikei District on 21st April 1972. His ability to use the right person for the right job helped Sarawak to progress rapidly. (Photo: RASCOM)



Fig. 306 The present Chief Minister of Sarawak in his younger days, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, an outstanding Melanau leader, has been active in politics since the 1960's, and became the 4th Chief Minister of Sarawak since 1981. He is a far-sighted, creative and liberal politician. His concept of politics of development has not only spearheaded overall development of Sarawak but also changed the people's attitude towards politics. He is the longest-serving Chief Minister of Sarawak with the most achievements.

(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



## CHAPTER 25

### RAJANG BASIN DURING THE 1970'S

In the 1970's the Rajang region experienced a tremendous change in its history.

The 1970's saw the Melanau community achieving unprecedented progress in the realm of politics, economy, culture and education. The decisive factor came from the political influence; the starting point could be traced to 1970 when Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub became the Chief Minister of Sarawak. Then, this influence continued when Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, the present Chief Minister, took over the helm. Other outstanding Melanaus during this period of time included the 3rd Head of State, Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Muhammad Salahuddin, State Assemblymen, State Cabinet and Federal Ministers who are Melanaus. To date they have not only contributed significantly towards raising the political status of the Melanaus but have also exerted far-reaching influence on the thinking and attitude change of the Melanau community as a whole.

Generally, the Melanaus have raised their educational level and cultivated a large number of skilled and professional personnel who are playing significant roles in the government machinery as well as in the commercial and industrial sectors.

The Melanaus have also progressed in the economic field. With the assistance from the government the traditional occupations of the Melanaus like fishing and sago manufacturing have already moved towards modernisation. The slow process of producing sago flour manually has been replaced by machine, so the manufacturing of sago has gone from the cottage industry to that of a modern factory that can produce large quantities of it. Besides, their participation in the palm oil industry and timber industry has greatly helped Melanaus in their economic development.

The Malays of Sibu in the 1970's, too, achieved great progress in political as well as economical development. In politics, Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang who originated from

Sibu was the 2nd Head of State of Sarawak from 1969 to 1977. His son, Datuk Wan Yusof was a State Assembly man while the present Head of State Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi was the Minister for Local Government and Housing in the 1970's.

In the economic field, a large number of Malays in the Rajang, through the various government sponsored schemes, took part in commercial and industrial activities. By the 1970's, as Sibu had developed rapidly into a larger town, the Malay village like Kampung Nyabor became a new section of the urban area, and the Malay landowners became proprietors of shops.

The Chinese society in the 1970's, too, experienced rapid change and progress. If we study the population census of the Sibu District and Sibu town, we can see clearly the progress made in Sibu town and also discern the development of the Chinese society in the Rajang Basin. In 1947, the total population of Sibu District was 40,102 and the population of Sibu town was 9,983 which accounted for about 1 quarter of the total population in the Sibu District. According to the 1980 census, the total population in Sibu Rural District was 48,106 while the Sibu Municipality had a population of 86,680 which was twice more than the Sibu Rural District. This was due partly to the expansion of Sibu urban area and partly to the urban migration of rural folks. This situation revealed that Sibu was in a flourishing and progressive state of development.

Since the beginning of the 1970's, petroleum has topped the list of the total exports of Sarawak, but the timber industry has always taken the second place. In 1971, the total export of timber was worth RM113 million, but by 1980, the timber export rose to a total of RM236 million (Malaysian Information Services Department, 1993 : 49). In Sarawak, most of the timber industry is mainly concentrated in the Rajang region, and those involved in the timber business are mostly the Fuzhou (Foochow) people of the Rajang region. To better improve and co-ordinate the timber industry in the State, the Sarawak Timber Industries Development Corporation (STIDC) proposed new concepts and set up an institute to train skilled personnel for this field. Thus, the STIDC has assumed a leading role in the wood-based industries in the State.

by consolidating the wood-based manufacturing and processing industries as well as providing the know-hows to promote the economical use of timber. About 90% of Sarawak's wood-based manufactured goods are exported overseas; timber logs are exported to Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore; and the main buyers of processed timber are Germany, Britain, Italy, Holland and U.S.A.

In addition to the timber industries, the Chinese in the Rajang region are also importers and exporters, dealing in whole-sale and retail-sale of manufactured goods as well as running businesses in transportation; ship-building; hotel; finance; food and drinks; and other consumer services. They still carry on with their pioneering agricultural production of cash crops like pepper and rubber.

By the 1970's the financial force of the Rajang basin has begun to make its presence felt in most of the major towns within the country; investing on land, banking, construction works, hotels, hardware and other related businesses. The Rajankians with their financial force have achieved successes and they still go on expanding.

The development and advancement of the Chinese society in the Rajang region can be attributed to several factors. In the 1970's the emergence of a new generation of political leaders among the Chinese in the Rajang region had, to a certain extent, united the Chinese society, and led the Chinese community in economic development and cultural construction.

The level of culture and education of a race has direct influence on its rise or fall. The advancement of a race depends on the high level of education; and the possibility of its success can only be raised by its culture. In these two aspects, the Chinese community was more advanced than the others. The various Chinese communities of the Rajang region not only built primary and secondary schools but they had also trained numerous skilled personnel. Besides, from 1939 onwards they had more than 25 publications ranging from the Chinese daily and the evening newspapers to the weekly and monthly magazines (*Souvenir Magazine of the 2nd Conference of the International Association of Fuzhou Corporations*, Sibul, Sarawak, 1992 : 61). All these publications dissemi-

nated not only news but also up-dated the information and knowledge much needed by the Chinese in various fields of work or profession. The Chinese literature in the Rajang basin had made great contributions towards the Chinese culture during its growth and development. The anti-colonial ideology of the 1950's and 1960's had produced works typical of that period of time, thus contributing towards the new Chinese literature and causing a revival of creative writings which were published in the literature section of the local newspapers. An article by Asaman (pseudonym of Deng Yujiang) entitled '*The Changes of Chinese Literature During the Glorious Years*' which was published in the 24th June 1993 issue of the Malaysia Daily News had a detailed description of the Chinese literature during that period of time.

The Chinese literature of the Rajang region had its own uniqueness that was not found anywhere else; its lyrics and poetry were composed in classical forms. This could be traced to the early Chinese immigrants of the early 20th century for among the pioneer settlers who came to the Rajang region were scholars and Christian missionaries who were well-versed in Chinese classics and had been trained to write in the Chinese traditional classical style. Under their guidance, writing literary works in the classical style was popular, and it has prevailed until today. These literary enthusiasts and poets who met regularly to compose poems and couplets also formed their poetry societies which later became a literary organization. Today, their poetry which possesses an uniqueness typical of the ethnic culture and ethnic background has great literary and historical values. It would be a meaningful task if these early 20th century literary works were to be compiled and published; it could add colour to the cultural heritage of Sarawak.

In the 1970's the Ibans of the Rajang basin experienced remarkable social change. Their longhouse living styles and their agricultural production techniques all progressed towards modernisation. Many young people left their longhouses and farms to seek a new life in towns. Modernisation and urban migration had caused great impact on their traditional society.

The Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation

ties (SALCRA) which played an important role in the development of agriculture in the State had stimulated the Ibans to improve their agricultural production techniques. From the end of 1970 till early 1980, the SALCRA developed an area of 3,000 acres of land at Nanga Sekuau, near Sibul, under the rubber planting scheme. This scheme involved the participation of 473 Iban families from 16 longhouses and each family was allotted 4.5 acres of rubber plantation. In this vast rubber estate there was water and electricity supply; a medical centre; a primary school and a Border Scout Post. This is an example where the Iban village life was urbanized and their production techniques in agriculture were modernised.

From 1970 onwards there were big groups of Iban youths migrating to the towns. Among them were some professionals and government employees but the majority were working in the private sectors as workers in the factories or firms. Because of their low educational qualifications the small wages they earned were not enough to maintain a reasonably comfortable urban life and many of them lived in simple wooden houses in a squatters' area at Upper Lanang Road, Sibul. According to the 1980 population census there were 6,797 Ibans living in Sibul (Sutlive, Jr., 1992 : 191), but the actual number might exceed this figure.

The urban migration of Iban youths from the rural villages had basically influenced their traditional ethnic culture. The thinking governing the Iban traditional communal life-styles began to be replaced by the private ownership concept. When money gradually began to be important in one's life, the trend of private ownership was inevitable.

The Orang Ulu or the people in the interior of the Upper Rajang basin such as the Kayans, Kenyahs and the other minority races were also affected by the impact of social change. From the time of colonial government, the Orang Ulu began to receive modern education and many became Christians. The Paramount Chief of the Orang Ulu, Temenggong Oyang Lawai Jau, also became a Catholic. This acculturation had produced in the younger generation a large pool of manpower. By the 1970's among the Orang Ulu there were many professional who had made contributions in

political, economical, cultural and educational fields in Sarawak.

The economic development since the Korean War had markedly changed the life-styles of the Orang Ulu. In their longhouses the material conditions gradually improved and by the mid-1960's the Orang Ulu had radios; tape-recorders; sewing-machines; out-board engines; rice mills; electricity generators; and other modern facilities. These material goods had changed their traditional life-styles and their traditional thinking, making them more materialistic and more individualistic (Ding Seling & Jayl Langub, 1989, *The Sarawak Museum Journal* : 24).

The social change in the various communities of the Rajang basin had also affected the nomadic Penans in the upper reaches of the Rajang. In the past, the Penans in the forested land drained by the Balui River, a tributary of the Rajang, used to lead a nomadic life. Now, they had gradually become more settled down. Those who had settled down at one place started to build more lasting houses and plant crops like padi, tapioca and yam. Many of them started to rear chickens (Jayl Langub, *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 1989 : 172).

In the Rajang Basin of the 1970's, the timber industry spear-headed the speedy economic development which expedited social change. This developmental force is now thrusting into the land beyond the Rajang.



Fig. 307 The fishing village at Belawai.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)

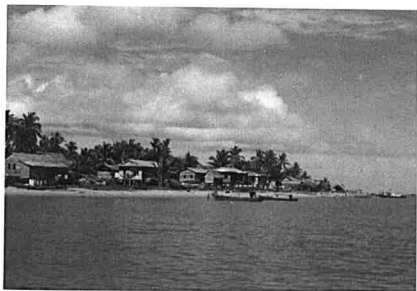


Fig. 308 The scenic Belawai fishing village.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 309 Shops in Belawai Town.



Fig. 310 The author at the wharf, Dalat Town on 21st July, 1971.



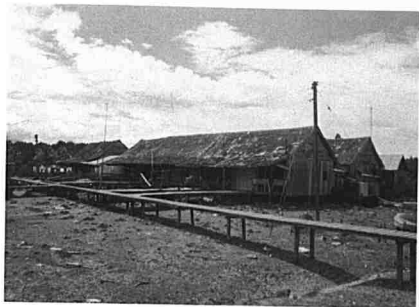


Fig. 311 Paloh, a coastal village.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 312 Women at Paloh getting water from the well.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 313 The harbour at Matu, a coastal town.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 314 View of Daro, a coastal town at Lower Rajang.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 315 Shophouses at Daro Town.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 316 Group photo of the author (1st right), his colleague Yi Huamin with the trainees of Sarawak Teachers' College in front of Chong Wen Primary School, Mukah, in July 1971.



Fig.317 Trainees of Sarawak Teachers' College in Sibul posing in front of the shops in Oya Town.



Fig. 318 Binatang (Bintangor) Town in 1972.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah)



Fig. 319 The New Zealand High Commissioner to Malaysia, Mr. Weir and his wife visiting Rajang Teachers' College at Bintangor on 28th September 1973, back to camera, the Principal of the College, Mr. Encharang Agas. The Rajang Teachers' College was built with financial aid from New Zealand Government under the Colombo Plan; the third teachers' college in Sarawak training teachers for the State.



Fig. 320 Members of the Swimming Club of Rajang Teachers' College with their Tutor by the swimming pool, 1976; RTC is the only teachers' college with a standard-size swimming pool.



Fig. 321 The Exco Members of the Student Union of Rajang Teachers' College with the Principal, Encik Mohammed Sabil (4th right), and Vice Principal, Mr Fong Hon Kah (4th left), 1976.



Fig. 322 Sarikei 1969.



Fig. 323 Aerial view of Sibuan, 1976.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 324 The rapid development of Sibuan since the 1970's saw the former Kampung Nyabor being replaced by new concrete multi-storey shops.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah)



Fig. 325 Boats with outboard-motor, commonly known as 'River Taxis', played an important role in transporting goods and commuters along the Rajang River.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 326 Since 1969 the Express-boats have been an important means of transport, but in the 1990's they are facing stiff competition from the better network of roads.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



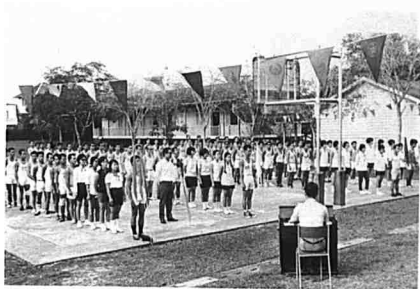


Fig. 327 The Annual Sports Day at Sarawak Teachers' College, Sibü, near the old airport. Photo taken on 17th October 1970 shows a unique situation where the organ was moved to the field to provide the music for the singing of the National Anthem.



Fig. 328 Choir of Sarawak Teachers' College in Sibü giving their presentation on 8th April 1970.



Fig. 329 Group photo of basketball players of Sarawak Teachers' College, Sibul, and the visiting U.S.A. basketball team - 'The Ambassadors' - at the College basketball court in July, 1971.



Fig. 330 The author with the trainees of Sarawak Teachers' College posing in front of Fu Nan (Hock Lam) School, Kapit in 1972.



Fig. 331 Belaga Town in Upper Rajang Basin, the shops at lower left were destroyed by fire.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 332 The old row of shops in Belaga Town that was destroyed by fire; note the carved chairs for shoppers to rest.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)

## CHAPTER 26

### DEVELOPMENT BEYOND THE RAJANG BASIN

The development of manpower and the economic force that originated in the Rajang Basin has gone beyond the original region. It covers various fields and can be divided into several periods of time.

From the turn of the 20th Century, Sibü was the centre of development for the Rajang Basin, and since then the manpower and resources of Sibü have always played a very important role not only in the opening up of land within the Rajang region but also beyond it.

Before World War II the pioneers from the Sibü Agricultural Settlements had gone to places like Binatang (now Bintangor), Sarikei, Kanowit, Kapit, Julau, Mukah, Bintulu and the Baram area to develop agriculture there. After the war the Fuzhou (Foochow) people from Sibü went to Limbang, Simanggang (now Sri Aman) and Miri to cultivate the land there but some of them went to Kuching and were engaged in industry, commerce and other construction businesses.

After the Korean War, the economic force derived from the agricultural settlers of Sibü emerged to become various financial groups and formed a variety of corporate organisations. These groups including the Borneo United Sawmills Sendirian Berhad, Hock Hua (Fuhua) Bank Berhad, Delta Berhad, W.T.K. (Wong Tuong Kwong) Organisation, K.T.S. (initials originated from Kuching Timber Store, the name of Datuk Liu Huigan's first timber company, but now they represent the present company Qi De Hang) Sendirian Berhad, Pan-Sarawak Company Sendirian Berhad, and the later Rimbunan Hijau Sendirian Berhad have become diversified multi-national corporate organisations. Their businesses have expanded from Sibü to the rest of Sarawak, and from Sarawak to the rest of Malaysia, and from Malaysia to other overseas countries. For example, the Borneo United Sawmills Sendirian Berhad of Sibü expanded its business to Hong Kong in 1955 to promote

Sarawak timber in the international market which has boosted the timber industries of Sarawak.

Huada (Wah Tat) Bank, the earliest bank established in the Rajang basin, and Gongmin (Kong Ming) Bank have extended their businesses beyond the Rajang basin by setting up branches in the major towns of Sarawak. But, the bank that has developed very fast with strong financial standing and the most number of branches is the Fuhua (Hock Hua) Bank. In 1952 when the Hock Hua Bank opened for business its registered capital was RM2 million although the actual capital was RM1 million. By the end of 1994 the group's total assets accounted for RM4,203 millions and the bank's assets accounted for RM2,976.6 millions (*Hock Hua Bank Annual Report, 1994* : 16).

In 1956, the K.T.S. Sendirian Berhad, originally traded in timber business under the name of the Export Section of Huashen (Hua Seng) Sawmills Company Limited, had its humble beginning in a room in the premises of Sihua (See Hua) Daily Newspaper at No. 11, Island Street, Sibul. Today the K.T.S. Sendirian Berhad has become a giant multi-national commercial corporate group. It has not only extended its businesses to the various parts of the country and overseas countries like China, it has also diversified its businesses to more than 10 entities.

The Rimbunan Hijau Sendirian Berhad, which emerged later than the K.T.S. Sendirian Berhad as a huge enterprising group, has branches in the major towns of Sarawak and its businesses have expanded to many countries of the world, including Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. It has a large-scale timber industry manufacturing innumerable wood-based products. It is also distinguished in its efforts on cultural enterprise; it owns the Xinzhou (Sin Chew) Daily Newspaper which is one of the two largest Chinese daily newspapers in Malaysia and its newspaper business has extended to Peninsular Malaysia and Hong Kong.

In addition, from the Rajang Basin there are the W.T.K. Organisation, Delta Berhad, Pan-Sarawak Company Berhad and the other big corporate groups like those established by Tan Sri Chen Boqin (Ting Pek Khiing) and Datuk Huang Suanan (Wong Sung Ann), all have subsidiaries engaging in a diversity of enterprises.

These corporate groups have made great contribution not only to the development of the Rajang basin but also to the nation. The success story of each one of them can be the national model. However, until today there is no professionally written book that has objectively made a factual account of their achievements; if there were, their success stories would certainly become a catalyst to the young people of today.

Apart from these corporate groups, there are the small- and medium-scale enterprises that have extended from the Rajang to the other towns, and they, too, have played an important role in the social development of Sarawak.

The expansion of the Rajang people or the Rajankians is not confined to the industries and commercial businesses; this expansion beyond the Rajang includes the professional services provided by the personnel of various professions. For example, the Timberland Specialists Medical Centre at 3rd Mile Rock Road, Kuching, is a medical centre that has been formed by the concerted efforts of the medical personnel who were born in the Rajang region. This example shows us that the young Rajankians not only have received a good education but they also have the ambitions and the co-operative and united spirits : such an example is a good model for the young people to emulate.

In the field of press business, the Sihua (See Hua) Daily which was established in 1952 is the most popular daily in Borneo and it has a huge readership.

In the academic field, the studies and research made by the Sibuan-based historian, Liu Zizheng (Lau Tzy Cheng), are not only held in high esteem in Malaysia and Singapore, but they are also much valued by the historians in China. Liu Zizheng was born in 1931 in Minqing District, Fujian Province, China. Ever since his mother brought him to Sibuan in 1936, he has settled there all his life. After he completed his Senior Middle education in 1952, he has concentrated his time and energy for the last 40 years on studying and researching on the history of Sarawak. He has been a prolific writer and to date he has written more than 20 titles; such an achievement is very rare in Malaysia.

In the field of photographic art, there is Huang Jiefu (K.F.Wong); the world renowned photographic artist. Huang Jiefu (K.F. Wong) is the son of Huang Dexin who was among the first group of Xinghua (Henghua) people who came to the Xinghua Agricultural Settlement in Sibul. K.F. Wong was born in 1916 at the Xinghua Agricultural Settlement at the middle reaches of Sungai Merah (literally means Red River because of the colour of the water from the swamps). He received his early education in Sibul and then in Xianyou, his home village in Fujian, China. In 1935 he went to study photo-taking at Quanzhou in Fujian Province of China. In early 1938 he opened the Anna Studio in Kuching and embarked on a career of a photographer. In the 1950's his photos on the life of the natives of Sarawak created a stir in the international photographic arena. In the last 50 odd years he has been bestowed with more than 10 honorary titles and more than 200 awards and medals. In September 1995, he was presented with the highest award, an Hon. F.R.P.S., by the Royal Society of Photographic Arts of Britain, acclaiming his achievements in the photographic art internationally.

Apart from the Chinese, there are other Rajankians among the other races who have achieved successes in politics, economics and education. Datuk Amar Leonard Linggi Jugah, a lawyer, is a good example of a successful Iban. He was active in politics and served as one of the deputy Chief Ministers, but left politics to concentrate on his business. His investments in finance and construction have been a great success and his business has expanded from the Rajang Basin to Kuching and other towns.

The Rajankians have also been outstanding in politics. After independence among the 5 personalities who had been Head of State, 3 are from the Rajang Basin; and among the 4 Chief Ministers, 2 are closely related to the Melanau community of the Rajang Basin. In the other professional fields, there are many well-known and outstanding personalities who have come from the Rajang Basin and who have made great contributions to Sarawak and the nation as a whole.

After more than a century of hard work and struggle, the development of the Rajankians has gone beyond the Rajang Basin



and out into the international circle. Today in almost every corner of the world we can find the presence of Rajankians, even in Australia one of the Rajankians has become the mayor of a city. This is indeed a wonderful achievement.



Fig. 333 Huang Jiefu (K.F. Wong), the world renowned photographic artist, was born in the Xinghua Agricultural Settlement in Sibei.



Fig. 334 Liu Zizheng (Lau Tze Cheng), the well-known historian from Sibei.



Fig. 335 The finance organisation that has expanded beyond the Rajang Basin, Fuhua (Hock Hua) Bank at Tun Abang Haji Openg Road, Kuching.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 336 Kingwood Inn in Kuching, another example of the expansion of finance from the Rajang Basin.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah)



Fig. 337 Kuching Park Hotel built by Rajang financiers.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah)



Fig. 338 The Timberland Medical Specialist Centre in Kuching, a concerted effort by  
a group of medical professionals from the Rajang Basin.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah)



Fig. 339 The Central Park Commercial Town constructed by the K.T.S. Group originated from Sibul.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah)



Fig. 340 The new K.T.S. Headquarters in Kuching, officially opened on 31st January 1996.



Fig. 341 The 18-storey Chen Boqin Building (Wisma Ting Pek Kiing) in Kuching.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)

## CHAPTER 27

### NEW LOOK OF THE RAJANG BASIN

In the post-1990's a new countenance generally prevailed in the development of the Rajang Basin.

From the 1980's onwards, under the politics of development engineered by the present Chief Minister of Sarawak, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr.) Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, the political situation in Sarawak has been stable, economy flourishing and society progressive. The Rajang Basin like the main artery has significantly activated the economic growth of Sarawak.

The sago processing and manufacturing industry in the coastal region of the Rajang Basin, has as from the mid-1980's entered an age of modernisation. It used to be a manually operated cottage industry, but now it is factory operated and fully mechanised. According to Huang Nanhai (Wee Nam Hai), the proprietor of Nitsei Sago Industries Sendirian Berhad in Mukah, the sago palm is a store of treasure; every part of the palm - the leaves; barks; and siftings - is useful, and sago flour is getting more and more widely used as an ingredient in food and drug manufacturing industries. It is used as an ingredient in the manufacturing of a myriad of items, for example, granulated sauce like the Ajinomoto; glucose; wine; vinegar; dark and light soya sauces; paper; starch and office glue; pills like Panadol; cakes and biscuits; rice noodles like Beehoon and Kuehteow and dessert like pudding. Presently in the international market, the demand is so great that at times a situation arises where demand is greater than production.

About 5,000 families living in the coastal region of the Rajang Basin are involved in the sago industry; most of them supply sago logs to the four main sago-flour processing factories. Nitsei Sago Industries Sendirian Berhad is an example and it employs about 50 workers. The monthly out-put of sago-flour is about 600 tons. Because of its good quality, each ton of sago-flour can fetch more than RM800. As the factory is fully mechanised, the whole process of turning sago logs into sago-flour takes about 25 to 30 min-

utes and its quality is therefore guaranteed. In the traditional method of making sago-flour, it would take a few days to dry the sieved but wet sago, and if the weather were bad the quality of the flour would be badly affected.

Normally it takes about 10 to 12 years for a sago palm to mature before it is cut. After felling, it is sawn into about 10 logs of about 3 feet long each. The factory needs about 5,000 to 6,000 logs each day, that is, it needs a daily supply of raw material from about 500 to 600 sago palms. The consumption of raw material is, indeed, big. Recently about 40,000 acres of swamp land has been planted with young sago palms, about 80 palms to an acre of land, and these will take 10 to 12 years to mature. Presently, however, the factories still cannot meet the international demand for sago-flour; the present total out-put of the factory mentioned above can only supply the market in Peninsular Malaysia.

The industries like sago processing and manufacturing, timber and wood-based, and oil palm have greatly improved the economy of the people in the coastal region of the Rajang Basin. Now, along the picturesque banks of the Mukah river, new houses have sprung up; Mukah is flourishing and a new town is being rapidly developed, and it is linked to Sibul by road. Even the two coastal towns of Matu and Daro are linked by road. When the Tanjung Manis Port is completed it will give impetus to the development of the coastal region of the Rajang Basin.

The construction of the Tanjung Manis Port is scheduled to complete by 1998. On completion, this far-sighted, large-scale project will greatly benefit and significantly influence the development of commerce, industry and the whole society of the Rajang basin. However, the development of the Tanjung Manis Port itself needs certain prerequisite conditions : it must be well-planned with the infrastructure projected to meet the ever-growing needs of a modern town; it needs a wide network of sea, land and air communication; it needs manpower of high calibre to effectively manage it; and it must provide good services in order that it will survive and continue to develop. To fulfill the ideals of the Tanjung Manis Port, the State Government will have to put in a lot of hard work.



Sarikei, the Divisional Headquarters of the 6th or Sarikei Division, is developing very rapidly. On 1st June 1973, in order to facilitate more effective administration, the Government of Sarawak subdivided the vast Rajang Basin which was originally the 3rd Division into 3 administrative divisions, namely, the 3rd Division with its headquarters at Sibu, the 6th Division with its headquarters at Sarikei and the 7th Division with its headquarters at Kapit.

Sarikei is also known as the Pepper Town and the Pineapple Town because of its large production of high-quality pepper and unique-textured pineapples. In fact, Sarikei has always been well-known for its agricultural produce and it was in the last decade that it began to develop along the path of commerce and industry. Presently, Sarikei has emerged with a flourishing and rapidly progressive climate of development.

On 16th August 1993, when the ten-storey government building, the Wisma Jubli Mutiara (literary means the Pearl Jubilee Building) was ready for use, it marked an important milestone in the development of Sarikei. Besides, there is the Federal Complex; the District Council Building; the Telecom Building; the Customs Building; and the Port Authority Building. All these impressive buildings have given a new countenance to Sarikei.

The public amenities and infrastructure of Sarikei, such as, medical services, water and electricity supplies, telecommunication services, and the network of roads in the urban and rural areas have been markedly improved. The bridge linking the Sarikei town on both sides of the Sarikei River has enabled the expansion of Sarikei and it will further enhance its future development.

As the population of Sarikei increased, there followed the appearance of a new urban area. Because its commerce is flourishing, the finance and banking businesses are also developing relatively fast, and today Sarikei is proud to have 7 banks and 6 finance companies.

Furthermore, the development of sports and the promotion of tourist industry and its related hotel industry and other consumer services have thrust Sarikei towards modernisation. The future development of Sarikei will naturally depend on a better

communication networks to link Tanjung Manis, Bintangor and Sibü. Especially important is the road linking it to Tanjung Manis where the wood-based industrial town and the sea-port to be built there will further help Sarikei in becoming more flourishing and progressive.

Kapit, the Divisional Headquarters of the 7th Division at Upper Rajang, is typically rich in the colourful Iban culture, and its beautiful mountains and graceful flowing river were once the idyllic setting for many foreign movies in the 1950's. Datuk Dr Zhuang Zongxian (Dr Chong Chun Hian) in his reminiscences of his first official trip from Sibü to Kapit as a government medical officer had this to say about the Rajang in the 1950's. *'The boat journey was very pleasant. The jungle was lush, river water clear, birds, fish, and wild life were plentiful. We saw several families of wild boars swimming across rivers. Had we wanted to, we could have speared them, or even caught them alive'* (Chong Chun Hian, Sarawak Gazette 1993 : 6). Kapit in the 1950's was indeed full of idyllic beauty.

After Kapit became the Divisional Headquarters of the 7th Division in 1973, massive government buildings such as the Civics Centre, the Government Hospital, and the Sports Stadium which were constructed one after another. Besides, the timber businesses picked up which made Kapit into a flourishing town where the number of new shops and concrete residential houses increased, resulting in the town extending into the rural land which was once covered by jungles.

The economy of Kapit relies mainly on timber industry and forest produce which depend entirely on market demands that are basically unstable. Therefore, to ensure a bright future, Kapit needs to expedite its development towards a diversified economy. To enhance the development of commerce and industry, vast areas of land can be utilised for growing cash crops, rearing livestock like cattle, and fresh-water fish culture; the rich forest resources can provide the raw materials used in the light manufacturing industries; roads must be constructed to provide better land communication with the other major towns in the State. At the same time, we should take advantage of the natural fauna and flora of the

Upper Rajang to develop eco-tourism. Only then can Kapit develop steadily on the foundation of a diversified economy without having to rely solely on the timber industry.

What will significantly affect the future of Kapit is the Bakun Dam Project at about 37 kilometres from Belaga at the upper reaches of the Balui River, a big tributary of the Rajang River. This Bakun Dam Project which is expected to be completed by the year 2005 will cost an immense sum of RM15 billion and will have a production capacity of 2,400 mega-watts. When this mammoth Bakun Dam begins operation it will certainly cause immeasurable impact on the whole of the Rajang Basin.

Belaga is a town located at the hilly region of the upper Rajang basin, at the confluence of the Belaga River and the Balui River, about 192 miles from Sibü. The natives here are predominantly Kenyahs whereas the Chinese living here are mostly Zhang Quan (Hockien) people; the descendants of the pioneers from Fujian in China, who have had a long history of trading in Belaga. Towards the end of World War II in 1945, the Allied Forces began their counter-attack at Belaga and liberated the Rajang basin. On 22nd August 1995, the disastrous fire destroyed 3 rows of 20 old shophouses overlooking the Belaga River. When new and more solid shophouses are built, Belaga, too, will have a new look.

Today, among the towns in the Rajang Basin, the one with the most population and fastest development is Sibü. Presently, the total population of the Sibü Rural District is more than 50,000 but the population of Sibü Municipality has 130,000. Because of the dense concentration of population and a flourishing economy, the face of Sibü is being continually transformed.

In recent years, the basic public amenities and facilities of Sibü have been greatly improved; the new Port Authority Building, the Sibü General Hospital, the Airport and other government buildings were constructed one after another and are now fully operational. The road system which used to be less developed has also been improved.

In urban Sibü, the commercial corporate groups are developing at an amazing rate; one after another commercial complexes and classy hotels have sprung up. The multi-storey Hock Hua

(Fuhua) Bank building which was completed in 1995 is the most magnificent building in Sibü. Because of its rapid growth, the present Sibü urban area is now over-crowded and must extend inland towards the Oya Road region. This will be the direction of the future expansion of Sibü.

Sibü is not only flourishing commercially but it has also taken the lead in cultural activities. For example, the Sihua (See Hua) Daily and the Malaysia Daily play an important role both in the mass communication within the Chinese community and in promoting Chinese literature.

Furthermore, the Cultural Heritage Committee of Sibü has set up in the Sibü Civic Centre a Museum which displays the cultural artefacts of all the races and houses a collection of valuable historical records and books, making it a centre for the study and research on the ethnic cultures of all the races living in the Rajang Basin.

With its headquarters based in Sibü, the Sarawak Chinese Cultural Association leads the Sarawak Chinese society in their cultural activities which include organising Chinese Cultural Seminars and publishing books about Chinese culture and Chinese literature. It has contributed much to the development of Chinese culture in the State of Sarawak.

The Sibü Taiwan Graduates Association which took the lead in publishing a series of books written by the Taiwan Graduates domiciled in Sarawak has also helped raise the Chinese cultural level and stimulated favourable reactions from the Chinese community.

Sibü is basically a commercial and industrial society, and in this society the Chinese community plays a crucial role, especially the Fuzhou (Foo Chow) Chinese. Ever since they entered into the commercial and industrial world in the 1950's, they have been sensitive to all commercial and industrial opportunities and have been successful in their endeavours as a result of their fore-sight, sincere and committed attitudes to work, their ability to co-operate and united spirit. Their success reveals a truth; the truth that one reaps what one has planted; nothing is free and there is no short-cut to success. When a group of 44 Sarawak Chinese entre-

preneurs led by Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Huang Shunkai (Dr Wong Soon Kai), the Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, went on a business tour of Fujian, China, from 26th December 1994 to 4th January 1995, their trip caused an educational awareness and an awakening among the people of Sarawak. This was so because among the tour members there were Ministers from the State and Federal Cabinets, State and Federal Assemblymen, and the representatives of corporate giants who were mostly from the Rajang Basin; they were the descendants of the pioneer settlers who emigrated to the Rajang Basin from Fujian in China a century ago. Their successes have been built on the foundation made by their ancestors who had led a frugal life of living from hand to mouth experiencing hardships, sufferings and arduous struggles. This historical fact of their achievements is not only the treasured store of experiences of the Ranjankians but it is a model for all the people in Malaysia to emulate. It is a glory for the hometown of the pioneers and serves as a mirror for the open policy of the 12 billion people of China.

Presently, many corporate groups are building complexes in Sibul, it is believed that in the near future Sibul will have a new countenance. Unlike the private companies of the past, these corporate groups have a sound organization with an capable board of managing directors and their continual development and expansion can be expected.



Fig. 342 Aerial view of Tanjung Manis Harbour with ocean-going vessels at the mouth of Rajang River. (Photo: Lim Yu Seng)

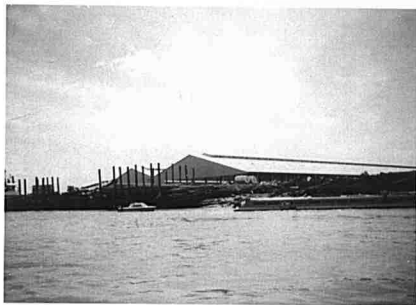


Fig. 343 Part of Tanjung Manis Harbour.  
(Photo: Fong Nyan Shin, 1995)



Fig. 344 An ocean-going vessel berthed at Tanjung Manis Harbour with a local commuter boat beside it.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 345 A modern Iban longhouse along the Sibü-Mukah Highway.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 346 A new Mosque in Mukah with impressive Melanau culture.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)





Fig. 347 Rafts of sago-logs on Mukah River.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)

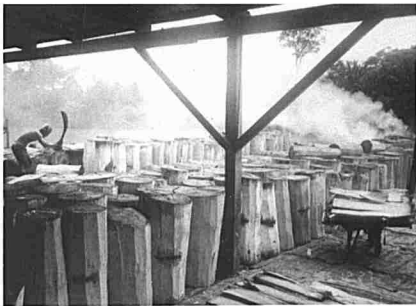


Fig. 348 Sago logs with bark removed; a worker removing bark with a parang or knife. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 349 Logs of Sago are being carried by conveyor-belt to the grating machine where the grated sago is mixed with water and sieved to extract the sago powder.

(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 350 The mixture of sieved sago powder and water is sent to tanks which will be dried in a machine.

(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)

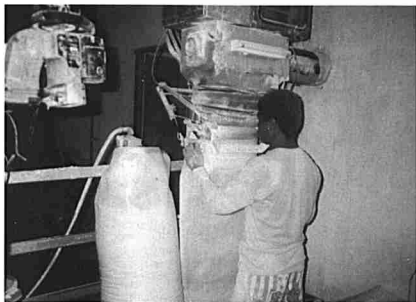


Fig. 351 The sago flour is being packed in bags.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 352 The bags of sago-flour have been labelled ready for export.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 353 Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud greeted by a Chinese lion dance troupe on his way to officiate the opening of the Festival of the Sea or Pesta Ka'ul, a traditional Melanau feast, accompanied by the Resident of Sibul, Mr Fang Ciping (Fong Su Ping, on the right behind the Chief Minister)  
(Photo: Mr Lim Yu Seng)

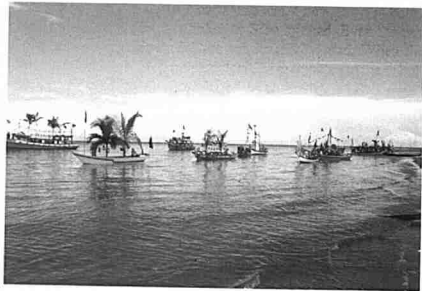


Fig 354 Ceremony in progress to celebrate the Festival of the Sea or Pesta Ka'ul at Mukah.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 355 The traditional Melanau swing or 'tibau' in Mukah.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)

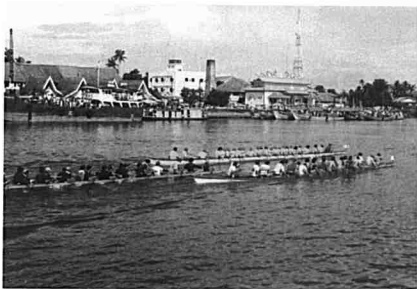


Fig. 356 Regatta on Mukah River.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 357 Sarikei, the town of pineapples, a transformation of the Sarikei of 1969.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 358 The new look of Bintangor.  
(Photo: Sarawak Museum)



Fig. 359 Mosque at Kampung Nyabor, Sibu.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 360 Yong An Ting  
Daboagong Temple of Sibu,  
behind it the Pagoda built in  
1989.  
(Photo: Soon Choon Foo)



Fig. 361 The Catholic Sacred Heart Church, Sibu.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 362 The Methodist Church, Fuyuan Tang, Sibu.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)





Fig. 363 Rajang Port Authority Building, officially opened on 21st July 1988.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 364 Containers at Sibul Wharf.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 365 Wharf for Express-boats, Sibuan.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 366 The new Sibuan Airport, officially opened in 1995.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)

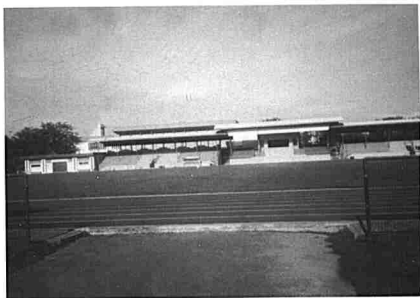


Fig. 367 King George VI Memorial Ground, Sibu.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 368 Headquarters of Rimbunan Hijau Sdn. Bhd., Sibu.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 369 Headquarters of Delta Finance Co. Bhd., Sibul.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 370 Banguan Hung Ann, Sibul. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 371 Hotels by the river bank, Sibü.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)

Fig. 372 Hock Hua Bank Headquarters, Sibü, officially opened in 1996.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1996)





Fig. 373 One of the poor narrow lanes amidst the high-rise buildings in Sibul.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 374 Felling trees with a modern machine. Timber industry is still the backbone of the economy of the Rajang Basin, and many of its successful timber merchants are investing their wealth in foreign countries.  
(Photo supplied by Rimbunan Hijau Sdn. Bhd.)

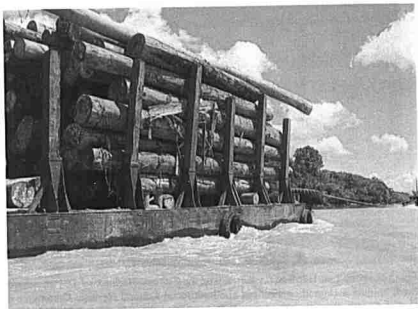


Fig. 375 Transporting sinker logs on the Rajang River.  
(Photo supplied by Rimbunan Hijau Sdn. Bhd.)



Fig. 376 At a timber processing  
factory along the Rajang River.  
(Photo supplied by K.T.S.)



Fig. 377 Datuk Lau Hui Kang, Chairman of the Cultural Heritage of Dewan Suarah, Sibul, holding a committee meeting. The multiracial Cultural Heritage Committee of Dewan Suarah plays an important role in promoting the cultural activities of all the races in the Rajang Basin. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 378 Group photo, from right: Datuk Lau Hui Kang, Chairman of Cultural Heritage Committee, Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Wong Soon Kai, Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, Mr & Mrs Lim Bao Chang, at the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to Mr and Mrs Lim for their generous donation of their precious collection of antique Chinese ceramics to Dewan Suarah Museum, Sibul. A public exhibition of the said ceramics was officially opened by the Deputy Chief Minister on 28th January, 1995, at Dewan Suarah, Sibul. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)





Fig. 379 Datuk Lucas Chin, former Curator of Sarawak Museum, introducing the exhibits to Tan Sri Datuk Amar Wong Soon Kai. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 380 A Ceremony of Cultural Exchange between the Sarawak Chinese Cultural Society and the History Department of Dan Jiang University of Taiwan, photo shows Professor Dr Huang Jianchun of the History Department of Dan Jiang University (2nd left) and Datuk Lau Hui Kang, Chairman of Sarawak Chinese Cultural Society. (Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 381 Official opening of One-Man Art and Calligraphy Exhibition by Fang Niensheng (Fong Nyan Shin) on 27th January 1996.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1996)



Fig. 382 Shophouses under construction at Kapit.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 383 The new building of Funan (Hock Lam) School, Kapit.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)

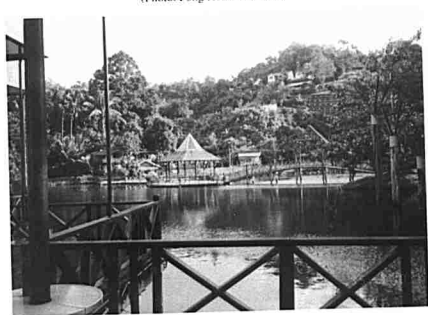


Fig. 384 The former Lotus Pond at Kapit has become a scenic garden.  
(Photo: Fong Hon Kah, 1995)



Fig. 385 New shophouses at Belaga Town.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 386 New District Office Building of Belaga Town.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 387 Site of Bakun Hydroelectric Dam Project at upper Belaga.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 388 Waterway for building the Bakun Dam.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 389 Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Sri Dr Mahathir Mohamad officially launched the start of construction work on the Bakun Dam on 16th March 1996. Photo from right: Federal Minister of Energy, Telecommunication and Post, Datuk Leo Moggie, Chairman of Ekran Group responsible for the Bakun Project, Tan Sri Ting Pek Kiing, Chief Minister of Sarawak, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, and Prime Minister Datuk Sri Mahathir Mohamad. (Photo: MIS)

## CHAPTER 28

### LEADERS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE RAJANG BASIN

Not just every race but every individual has played a role in the development and progress of the Rajang Basin. Numerous leaders of every race have contributed towards the achievements in politics, economy, education and other related aspects. As space is limited in this book it is only possible to mention some personalities who are representative of the people living in the Rajang Basin and their contributions towards its development at the crucial periods of time in the history of the Rajang Basin. If every successful individual and his contributions were to be introduced to the readers, it would require a big volume of "Who's Who in The Rajang Basin" to record all of them.

#### SECTION A : PIONEERS OF DEVELOPMENT



**Fig. 390 Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Haji Bujang Bin  
Tuanku Osman (1898-1986)**

Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Bujang was a descendant of an Arab merchant, born and educated in Sibu. In 1927, he joined the Sarawak Police Force under Rajah Brooke's government until he became a Native Officer in 1934. In 1946 when Sarawak was ceded to Britain, he was the leader of the anti-cessionists in Sibu. In 1957, the British Government bestowed on him the decorations of M.B.E (Member of the British Empire) and O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire) two years after his retirement in 1960. In 1961 he and some Malay, Dayak and Chinese leaders founded BARJASA (Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Anak Sarawak or the United Front of the People of Sarawak) of which he was the Party President. In 1969, he was appointed the 2nd Head of State of Sarawak until 1977. His other titles included Datuk (1955), Tan Sri (1967) and Tun (1970). He died in Kuching on November 28, 1986.



**Fig. 391 Tun Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah Anak Bareng (1900-1981)**

Tun Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah was a prominent Iban leader in the Rajang basin, and became a member of the Sarawak Legislative Council in 1952. In 1962, he and the other



Iban leaders of the Rajang basin founded the PESAKA (Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak) of which he was the Party President. In 1963, he went to London to sign the agreement pertaining to the Formation of the Federation of Malaysia. Later he was appointed the Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs, and was re-appointed a second time in 1970. From the 1950's until the 1970's Tun Jugah had been an active personality in the political arena of Sarawak and played an influential role in the Formation of Malaysia. He was out-spoken and had the good of Sarawak at heart; even before the late Tun Razak, he bravely criticized the discrepancy in the government policy and administration of Sarawak. He retired in 1974, and died in Kuching on 8th July 1981. He was honoured with the title of Tun post-humously.



**Fig. 392 Mr Zhang Yandu or Teo Yien Too (1867-1950)**

Mr Zhang Yandu was born in Haideng District in Fujian Province of China. At the age of 17, he emigrated to Sibu where he led a frugal life and then opened his trading business. He became wealthy because of his thriftiness and hard work. He was generous, active in social welfare activities and had held important posts in various

social welfare organisations. He was appointed the First Kapitan (Leader) of the Chinese Community in Sibü by the 2nd Rajah of Sarawak, Rajah Charles Brooke, in 1906.



**Fig. 393 Mr Zhang Zongluo or Teo Chong Loh (1877-1957)**

Mr Zhang Zongluo was born in Haideng District in Fujian Province of China, and emigrated to Kapit in 1889. In 1892, he moved to Sibü where he carried on with his commercial and shipping businesses. He gave cash donations to the victims of the disastrous fire of Sibü in 1928. His friendliness, sincerity and commitments to social welfare services had won him government recognition and the respect of all the races. In 1951, the British colonial government awarded him an honorary medal for services rendered to the country.



**Fig. 394 Mr Zhou Yulin or Chew Geok Ling (1904-1965)**

Mr Zhou Yulin's ancestors emigrated from Haideng District in Fujian Province of China to Penang, Peninsular Malaysia, where he was born. He was educated in Singapore but later came to Sibu to seek his fortune. He married Zhang Zongluo's daughter and became a business partner of Zhang Zongluo when they opened the 'Huada (Wah Tat) Money Exchange and Remittances' which was the forerunner of the present Huada (Wah Tat) Bank. He was active in educational and social welfare services. In 1945 he risked his life to help the Allied Forces in their counter-attack to regain Sibu, and for which he was bestowed the title of M.B.E. (Member of the British Empire). In 1953 he went with Tun Haji Openg and Tun Jugah as the representatives of the three racial communities of Sarawak- Chinese, Malay and Dayak - to witness the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of Britain. In 1957 he was appointed the 3rd Chinese Kapitan (Chinese Community Leader) of Sibu.



**Fig. 395 Mr Huang Naishang or Wong Nai Siong (1849-1924)**

Mr Huang Naishang was born in Minqing District in Fujian Province of China. He was a patriot and revolutionary of China. In 1898 when the Reform Movement initiated by the scholars and intellectuals failed, he escaped to Nanyang. So, in 1900 he arrived in Sarawak seeking agricultural land and signed an agreement with the 2nd Rajah of Sarawak to bring in farmers to settle and cultivate the land in the Rajang basin. From 1901 to 1902 he brought in more than a thousand Fuzhou (Foochow) agricultural settlers and became the Gangzhu (Proprietor) of the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement in Sibü. In 1904 he returned to China. Although under his management the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement was not very successful, his pioneering efforts will never be forgotten; thus even today the people of Sibü especially the Fuzhou people still respect and remember him.



**Fig. 396 Rev. James Matthews Hoover (1872-1935)**

Rev. James Hoover came from Pennsylvania State of the U.S.A. and had been working as a Christian missionary in Penang, Malaya, before coming to the Sibuluhou Agricultural Settlement in 1903. When the Sibuluhou Agricultural Settlement suffered severe set-backs, many settlers left to work elsewhere leaving less than 700 of them in the settlement. Rev. James M. Hoover not only helped them solve many of their problems but also introduced machines and production techniques from the West which stabilized the work of the Settlement and facilitated its rapid development. Rev. James Hoover had made immense contributions to the modernisation of the Rajang Basin and won the praises and respect of all the races and the Rajah himself. His historical achievements should deserve higher appraisals.



**Fig. 397 Mr Liu Jiazhu or Lau Kah Too (1878-1954)**

Mr Liu Jiazhu was born in Minqing District in Fujian Province of China. In 1901 he followed Huang Naishang to Sarawak to establish the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement. He was practical and his capability was very much appreciated by Huang Naishang. After Huang Naishang's return to China, Liu Jiazhu and a few other settlers helped James Hoover manage and develop the agricultural settlement in Sibü. Later, he became successful in agriculture as well as in his business. He was active in educational and social welfare services, and played an important role in developing the culture and education of both the Sibü Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement and the Rajang Basin. In 1941, during the Sarawak Centenary Celebration, he was awarded the Long Service Decoration by the 3rd Rajah of Sarawak.



**Fig. 398 Temenggong Koh (1870-1956)**

Temenggong Koh was a great warrior and the great leader of the Ibans in Kapit of the upper Rajang region. His bravery in battles and fairness in management had won the respect of the Iban community. In 1924, he helped in bringing about the Peace Talk among the rival native tribes in Kapit, and in appreciation of his contribution the 3rd Rajah made him Temenggong or Paramount Chief of the Ibans and appointed him a member of the Sarawak Legislative Council. Even in the 1950's he was still active in politics. He adopted Malcolm MacDonald, the British High Commissioner in South East Asia, as his son. In 1956, he died at the age of 86 in his hometown, Kapit.



**Fig. 399 Mr Deng Gongshu or Tang Kung Shook (1870-1936)**

Mr Deng Gongshu was a Cantonese pioneer from Sanshui District of Guangdong Province in China. Like Huang Naishang, he emigrated to Nanyang (South East Asia or South Seas) to seek self development after the failure of the Reform Movement in China. In 1901, he signed an agreement with Rajah Charles Brooke, the 2nd Rajah of Sarawak, to bring in Cantonese farmers to cultivate the land in Sibul. From 1902 to 1917, the number of Cantonese farmers in the Sibul Guangdong (Cantonese) Agricultural Settlement was about a thousand and had opened up 10 areas. They had made great contributions to the agricultural development of Sibul, especially pepper growing. Like Huang Naishang, Deng Gongshu had not achieved much success and returned to China in 1910. But, as a pioneer in opening up the Rajang Basin he should deserve our respect and remembrance.





**Fig. 400 Mr Jiang Yiqin or Kong Yit Khim (d.o.b. & d.o.d. unknown )**

Mr Jiang Yiping was born in Guanning District of Guangdong Province in China. In 1903, he led a group of Cantonese to Salim in the Rajang Basin to cultivate the land there. Like the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement in Sibul, the Guangdong Agricultural Settlement had a Gangzhu (Proprietor) but, unlike the centralised management of the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement, the various areas were managed by different companies of various sizes and with varied conditions, and so, their achievements varied from one area to another. Under Jiang Yiqin, the Guangnan Company was well managed and achieved more successes. He was knowledgeable, possessed organisational skills and the achievements of Salim Cantonese Agricultural Settlement were attributed to his expertise. His monograph on the *'Nanyang New Guangdong Settlement at Salim'* is the only important record of the Sibul Guangdong (Cantonese) Settlement, and is a valuable piece of literature on the early 20th Century society of the Rajang Basin.



**Fig. 401 Rev. Lin Kaiqin or Lim Khai Cheng (1897-1987)**

Rev. Lin Kaiqin was born in Xianyou District in Fujian Province of China. In 1913 he followed his parents to work in the Xinghua (Heng Hua) Agricultural Settlement in Sibü, and he was successful in trading. Being a very devoted Christian, he actively contributed much towards the spreading of Christianity. Like the other Chinese community leaders, he was committed to the educational development of the Chinese community in Sibü; building schools, giving cash donations as well as land for building schools. He was highly respected and trusted by the people, and in recognition of his contributions to education and church, a room was named after him in the Fuying Building of Fuyuan Tang (Church) in Sibü.



**Fig. 402 Mr Lin Zimin or Ling Chu Ming (1898-1956)**

Born in Gutian District in Fujian Province of China, Mr Lin Zimin came to Sibu to help his elder brother in his shop, Lin Gongtai (Ling Kong Thai). Later, business was bad as a result of world depression and his elder brother had died, Lin Zimin moved to Bukit Lan and turned to agriculture. He planted a few hundred acres of rubber trees and set up Lin Gongtai Mill, initially for rice milling and rubber sheets pressing. Later, it was developed into Lin Gongtai (Min Ji) Saw Mill to cater for the timber business which became one of the earliest and most successful timber businesses, thus laying the foundation for today's Gong Tai or Kong Thai (1963) Company Limited. Lin Zimin had contributed tremendously to the river transportation of the Rajang, especially the promotion of water communication between Sibu, Bintang (Bintangor) and Sarikei. Besides, he gave both money and labour in repairing bridges and building roads so as to benefit people of all races. He was a devoted Christian and active in educational, social welfare and religious activities. He had been the Director of the Board of Management for Peiying and Kaizhi Primary Schools

and financed the building of facilities such as the Lin Zimin Library at Methodist Secondary School and the Lin Zimin Hall at Sacred Heart Secondary School in Sibul. In recognition of his contributions to society, he was appointed the Community Leader of the 8th Region of Sibul by the government, a post he had held for 28 years. He had also been the Vice Chairman of the Sibul Rural District Council. His children who are well-known in the commercial and political circles established a school and a library in memory of their father Lin Zimin's contributions towards the cultural and educational development in the Rajang Basin.



**Fig. 403** Temenggong Chen Lixun or Ting Lik Hung (1914-1992)

Temenggong Chen Lixun was born in Gutian District in Fujian Province of China and educated first at a school in Gutian District and then in Fuzhou City. On 20th November 1933, a group of the Nationalist Party (Guomintang) Army Officers led the 19th Army and set up the 'Chinese Republic's Revolutionary Government' at Fuzhou City to oppose Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai Shek). It was at this time that Chen Lixun joined the 19th Army of the Guomintang

(Kuomintang). This incident came to be known as the Min or Fujian Incident. When the Fujian Incident failed, Chen Lixun was sent to further his studies at the Central Military School for Cadets at Luoyang City in Henan Province in China. After graduation, he followed the army and fought in many battles in areas north and south of China, and because of injuries he retired from his military career. In 1937, he came to Sibu to manage the Yufeng Money Exchange established by his father. During the Japanese Occupation of Sarawak he was arrested together with other Chinese community leaders who were involved in the Anti-Japanese Movement and all were imprisoned. In 1951, he gathered his fellow-Fuzhou people and set up the Fuhua (Hock Hua) Bank. Under his efficient management, the business of Fuhua Bank developed rapidly to become a well-known name in the finance world. He was active in social work and had been the leader for a gross of social organisations apart from giving donations and labour to the construction of primary and secondary schools. He had even built a school for the children of his traditional hometown in Gutian District in Fujian Province in China. Among the decorations bestowed on him by the government in recognition of his contributions to society are the O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire) from the Queen of Britain in 1960; the P.B.S. (Pingat Bintang Sarawak) from the Head of State of Sarawak in 1965; and the Datukship of P.N.B.S. (Panglima Negara Bintang Sarawak) in 1970; and in 1977 he was appointed the Temenggong or Paramount Chief of the Chinese Community in Sibu, Sarawak.



**Fig. 404 Pemanca Deng Dunxing or Teng Tun Hsin (1904-1996)**

Pemanca Deng Dunxing was born on 18th March 1904 in Minqing District in Fujian Province of China. When he was eight years old he followed his fraternal uncle to Sarawak. He and his father, who had come to Sarawak earlier, settled down at Rajang Town at the delta of lower Rajang. He was educated at Guanhua (Kwong Hua) Secondary School on the bank of the Rajang and Methodist Secondary School in Sibu. After graduation he worked in the Government Land and Survey Department. He left the government post in 1940 and started his own business in Binatang (now Bintangor). Pemanca Deng Dunxing was a very devout Christian. He was righteous and active in social services, having made numerous contributions towards local education, religion and social welfare services. It was he who initiated the merging of Zhongguo Public School and Kaiwen Secondary School into Kaizhong (Kai Chung) Primary and Secondary Schools. In his active years he had held many important posts : the Supervisor of Methodist English Secondary School for 23 years; the initiator for the setting up of Methodist Kindergarten; the founder of Binatang Chinese Chamber of Com-

merce and its President for 11 years; one of the founders of Kaiguang Methodist Church, Binatang Fuzhou Association and Binatang Home for the Aged. In recognition of his contributions to society, he was appointed Kapitan and then Pemanca or the Chinese Community Leader in Bintangor, and among the medals he received are A.B.S., P.P.M. and P.T.J. Pemanca Deng Duxing, who was the father of YB Deng Lunqi (Lawyer Teng Lung Chee) Assistant Minister in the Sarawak State Cabinet, died in Kuching on 30th July 1996.

## SECTION B : CONTEMPORARY LEADERS OF DEVELOPMENT



**Fig. 405 Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Muhammad Salahuddin**

Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Muhammad Salahuddin was born at Kampung Nangka to a noble Melanau family. His father, Penghulu Abang Bareng, was a famous leader of the Melanau community. Tun Salahuddin is the only son of the late Penghulu Abang Bareng. After his education in Sibu, he joined the Civil Service

and rose to the rank of a senior government officer before his retirement. He was the Chairman of the Sarawak Public Service Commission prior to his appointment as the Head of State of Sarawak on 2nd April 1977. Tun Salahuddin is an amicable man, and is concerned with the people's welfare during his term as Head of State of Sarawak, from which he retired in 1981.



**Fig. 406 Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi Aduce  
Mohd. Noor**

The present Head of State of Sarawak, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Ahmad Zaidi Aduce was born on 24th March 1924 at Kampung Hilir in Sibu. When he was young he studied English at the English Section of Zhonghua School in the town in the morning, and in the afternoon he studied Malay at the Abang Ali Malay Primary School (Sekolah Melayu Abang Ali) in Kampung Datuk. After obtaining the Cambridge Junior Certificate in 1938 at St. Thomas' Secondary School in Kuching, he entered the Anglo-Chinese School in Singapore where he obtained the Senior Cambridge Certificate, and in 1941 he entered a teachers' college, Maktab Perguruan Sultan Idris, Tanjung Malim, Malaya. Because Malaya



was invaded by the Japanese, he had to return to Sibu. Later, he was sent by the Japanese government in Sarawak to study veterinary science at the Buitenzorg Veterinary School at Bogor, Indonesia, where he first met A.M. Azahari who was also sent there by the Japanese government in Brunei. After the war they both witnessed the rise of nationalism displayed by the Indonesians in their fight for independence. In 1947, he returned from Indonesia, and in 1949 he obtained a British Government Scholarship to study at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland where he obtained a Master of Arts Degree. Then in 1955 he studied at London University where he obtained a Diploma of Education in 1956. He was the first Sarawakian to have achieved such a high academic qualification. On his return to Sarawak, he served at the Sarawak Education Department, and was promoted to the post of Divisional Education Officer of the 3rd Division (now Sibu Division) of Sarawak. In 1957 he was elected Chairman of the Sarawak Youth Front (Barisan Pemuda Sarawak) which was a radical, anti-colonial organization. After the Brunei Rebellion led by A.M. Azahari, he was arrested and was later put under house arrest. On the day of the Formation of the Federation of Malaysia, he escaped to Indonesia. While he was in Indonesia, he was the Secretary of Defence of the North Kalimantan United Nations (Kesatuan Negara Kalimantan Utara). In 1965, the coup d'etat in Indonesia changed the situation both within and without the KNKU and Sarawak. In 1969 he returned to Sarawak, and later he became a Minister in the State Cabinet. In 1985, he was appointed the 5th Head of State of Sarawak; a post he is still holding. Tun Ahmad Zaidi is gentle and soft-spoken, few could imagine that he was once a radical revolutionary leader. On 25th April 1996 he was appointed the 1st Chancellor of University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).



**Fig. 407 Datuk Zhang Shouhui (Datuk Chong Siew Fai)**

Datuk Zhang Shouhui, whose ancestors came from the Taohua Village in the Dapu District of Guandong Province, China, was born on 4th January 1935 at Sarikei. Like all the other children in Sarawak at that time, his former education was delayed by about 4 years because of the Japanese Occupation of Sarawak. It was not until 1946 that he could go to study at St. Anthony's School in Sarikei. In the early years it was normal to find a Mission school in the Rajang basin offering a curriculum taught in both English and Chinese (Mandarin) and thus producing bilingual students. While at St. Anthony's School, Zhang Shouhui studied all the school subjects in the English in the morning school and in Chinese in the afternoon school. Within a short period of 3 years, he completed his primary education. Then he went to St. Joseph's Secondary School in Kuching for 2 years and obtained the Junior Cambridge Certificate. In 1952 he began to teach at his former school in Sarikei and helped in his father's shop after school. He obtained the Senior Cambridge Certificate through private study during his free time. His perseverance led him on to studying prition

vately the Higher School Certificate or Advanced Level subjects. In September 1962, before he could complete the Advanced Level, he was admitted by Lincoln College of Laws in London, England, to read laws. So, his former education before the tertiary level took about 5 years only. In May 1965 he returned a qualified lawyer. In November 1973 he set up his law firm and in November 1979 he was appointed Judge of the High Court in Borneo. He was appointed Judge of the Federal Court in July 1994 and since June 1995 he has been the Chief Judge of the High Court in Sabah and Sarawak. From 1975 till 1979 he was the President of the Sarawak Advocates Association and the Chairman of Gucheng Association. In July 1984 he was awarded the Datukship P.N.B.S. (Panglima Negara Bintang Sarawak) by the Head of State of Sarawak.



**Fig. 408 Tan Sri Datuk Amar Lin Pengshou (Ling Beng Siew)**

Tan Sri Datuk Amar Lin Pengshou, one of the sons of Lin Zimin, was born in Sibu on 13th December 1926, but his parents came from Gutian District in Fujian Province, China. He had his educa-

tion in both English and Chinese. From 1955 until 1962, he was a member of the Sarawak Legislative Council and from 1958 till 1962 he was also a member of the Sarawak Supreme Council. In 1962 he was elected Chairman cum Treasurer of the Central Executive Committee of the Sarawak Alliance. As the President of the Sarawak Chinese Association, he played an important role in the decision of Sarawak pertaining to the Formation of Malaysia. From 1963 till 1969, he was a Parliamentary Member in the Federation of Malaysia. He has been active in promoting the educational and cultural development of the Rajang basin, he also contributed much in building schools and setting up libraries. He was awarded the Datukship in 1964 by the Head of State and the title of Datuk Amar in 1977. In 1983 the Agong awarded him the title of Tan Sri.



**Fig. 409 Datuk Amar Lin Pengxiang (Ling Beng Siong)**

Datuk Amar Lin Pengxiang was born in Sibul; one of the sons of Lin Zimin who originated from Gutian District in Fujian Province of China, and younger brother to Tan Sri Datuk Amar Lin Pengshou (Ling Beng Siew). He received his early education in Sibul and

tertiary education in Australia. He managed the business of Lin Gongtai (Ming Ji) Saw Mill after his father's death in 1956. Then in 1963 when Gongtai (Ming Ji) Saw Mill was re-organised and renamed Gongtai or Kong Thai (1963) Company Limited, its facilities and techniques of production were modernised with a good marketing network which made it one of the first timber companies to go into the international market. He is not only a timber tycoon but he has been actively involved in the banking and finance as well as politics. In 1959 he was appointed a member of the Sibü Rural District Council, and in 1963 an Official Member of the State Legislative Council. In 1967 as a Councillor representing the Sarawak Chinese Association, he was appointed Minister of Youth and Culture in the State Cabinet when Penghulu Tawi Sli was the Chief Minister. He won in both the 1970 and 1974 State General Election. Before the 1974 election when the SCA was dissolved he joined the SUPP. In 1978 when the SUPP of Sibü had a split, Datuk Amar Lin Pengxiang left the SUPP and retired from politics to concentrate on his business. He has been active in social activities and held various important posts in social organisations. He had contributed a lot to the development and modern construction of Dunhua (Tung Hua) Primary and Secondary Schools. In recognition of his contributions he was awarded the Datukship by the Head of State in 1967 and the title of Datuk Amar in 1984.



**Fig. 410 Datuk Amar Leonard Linggi Jugah**

Datuk Amar Leonard Linggi Jugah, son of Tun Jugah, was born in Kapit and received his education in Sibu and Kuching before going to England to read law. In the early 1970's he was active in the political arena of Sarawak and was a Deputy Chief Minister. When he retired from active politics, he turned to the commercial world; he had large-scale construction projects in Kapit and has since expanded his business to Kuching, investing in finance and banking businesses as well. He set up the Tun Jugah Foundation which finances studies and researches on the Iban culture. Datuk Amar Linggi Jugah is presently the most successful Iban entrepreneur from the Rajang Basin.



**Fig. 411 Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Huang Shunkai  
(Dr Wong Soon Kai)**

Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Huang Shunkai was born in Sibul on 10th February 1927 to a family whose ancestors originated from Minqing District in Fujian Province of China. He studied at Guanhua (Kwong Hua) School in Sibul, received his secondary education at Huaqiao Secondary School in Singapore, studied medicines at the University of Malaya, Singapore, and later a medical specialist course in England. After his graduation in 1953, he did his housemanship in Singapore before returning to Sarawak to join the Medical Department in 1955, and rendered his service at Liu Qinhou (Lau King Howe) Hospital in Sibul. In 1970 he left the Government Medical Service and started his private practice. Because he is skillful, kind and friendly, he has been so well-known that his name has become a household name. In 1974 he was invited to join the SUPP and won in the general election, after which he was appointed a Minister in the State Cabinet. In 1982 he was elected Secretary-General of the SUPP and became its President in 1990. He has been the Deputy Chief Minister since 1991. He

was awarded the title of Datuk Amar by the Head of State and Tan Sri by the Agong.



**Fig. 412 Datuk Leo Moggie Anak Irok**

Datuk Leo Moggie is from Kanowit, one of the 2nd generation Iban leaders in the post-independent Sarawak. He had his tertiary education at Otago University of New Zealand where he obtained a Master of Arts Degree in history, and later a Master Degree in Business Administration from the Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A. On his return he worked in the Government Civil Service until 1974 when he resigned to join the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) which was then an opposition party when Sarawak held its 2nd direct General Election in August/September 1974. When the results were known on 14th September the SNAP won 18 out of the 48 State Legislative Council seats while the coalition of PBB and SUPP won 30. Ever since he won the State seat for Kanowit constituency in 1974, his political career has been smooth sailing. When the SNAP President, Datuk Amar Huang Jinmin (Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min) was arrested on 30th Octo-



ber 1974, he led the party in the capacity of its Secretary-General. In 1976 he led the party to join the State Barisan Nasional and became a member of the State Cabinet, and later he became a Minister in the Federal Cabinet until now. In 1983 he contested the SNAP President's post but lost to Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min, after which he left the SNAP with a group of his followers to form Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) on 9th September 1983, and became the affiliated part of the Barisan Nasional known as the BN-Plus. In the Ming Court Incident of 10th March 1987 the PBDS joined the Maju (Progressive) Group led by Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub in an attempt to topple the leadership of Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, but in vain; and PBDS ended up in the opposition. It was not until 1st June 1994 that the 3 component members of the State Barisan Nasional agreed to let PBDS return to the State Government. Although PBDS was in the opposition in the State, it remained a component part in the Federal Barisan Nasional Government. Thus, Datuk Leo Moggie's position in the Federal Cabinet has not been affected. On 1st July 1980, he was awarded the Datukship P.N.B.S. (Panglima Negara Bintang Sarawak) by the Head of State of Sarawak.



**Fig. 413 Datuk Liu Xianzheng (Datuk Law Hieng Ding)**

Datu Liu Xianzheng was born in Sibu on 4th October 1935 to parents who were from Minqing District in Fujian Province of China. He went to Zhongzheng (Chung Cheng) Primary School and Methodist Secondary School in Sibu. Then he studied at the Nanyang University of Singapore where he obtained a Bachelor Degree in Commerce in 1960. After graduation he worked as a senior executive officer in a private firm. At the same time he was active in politics and was a Councillor and Chairman of the Sibu Urban District Council. From 1973 until 1982 he was appointed Senator in the Federal Parliament. Later he was elected Member of Parliament. From 1974 till 1987 he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary. On 20th May 1987, he was promoted to the post of Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Environment, and a full Minister for the same portfolio on 27th October 1990. Apart from his duties as a Minister, he is also holding several important positions in the SUPP, local social and community organisations. He is ever ready to help those in need. Datuk Liu Xianzheng and Lawyer Deng Lunqi have made concerted efforts in facilitating

the development of Sarikei into a modern town. In recognition of his outstanding services he has been awarded various decorations : P.B.S., K.M.N., P.B.J., and the Datukship of P.N.B.S..



**Fig. 414 Datuk Liu Huigan (Datuk Lau Hui Kang)**

Datu Liu Huigan was born on 14th June 1926, in Minqing District in Fujian Province of China. In 1928 his parents brought him to Sibu in the company of the early immigrants, and settled down at Bukit Lan, a village in the Lower Rajang about 12 miles away from Sibu. In December 1941 he completed his secondary education at Dunhua (Tung Hua) Secondary School. Soon the Japanese came and he worked on the farm for a living. After the Japanese surrendered in 1945, he ran a passenger motor-boat business. From 1953 onwards he turned to timber business. In 1956 he set up Hualin Saw Mill at Simunjan and became its Managing Director. In 1962 he set up the Qi De Hang popularly known as K.T.S. Company Limited dealing in the purchase and export of timber. His company started with a capital of RM100,000 and a staff of 3 clerks. Its beginning may be humble, but the K.T.S. under his manage-

ment has developed into a multi-national corporate group. Its main business is still timber based, with a production of about 100,000 cubic metres of processed timber. Datuk Lau is equally outstanding in social services by giving cash donations to schools and churches as well as being actively involved in social organisations : the former President of the 3rd Division Federated Chinese Association; the present Chairman of the Cultural Heritage Committee who led in the setting up of the Cultural Heritage Museum in the Sibu Civics Centre (Dewan Suarah); and as the President of the Sarawak Chinese Cultural Association he was responsible for the setting up of the Chinese Cultural Museum in Sibu and engineering Chinese cultural activities in the State. He was also responsible for organising the Sibü Federated Chinese Independent Schools Association in raising a permanent foundation fund of RM3 million, centralising the management of funds, improving the teachers' salaries and raising the standard of the students through improvement in facilities. He had held for 10 years the post of President of the Federated Board of Management for the Independent Chinese Schools in Sibü, and the Chairman of the Federated Sarawak Independent Chinese Schools Board of Management. His leadership is also required in various business and social areas : President of the Sarawak Timber Merchants Association; Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Timber Merchants Association; the State and National President of the Blind Centre Association of both Sarawak and Malaysia; Chairman and Committee member of a number of primary and secondary schools. He took the lead by donating RM1 million for the permanent fund for the Sarawak Federated Independent Chinese Schools Board, and in 1994 on the occasion of his Golden Wedding Jubilee he donated RM600,000 to educational, cultural and charitable organisations. His contributions to social services are immeasurable.



**Fig. 415 Datuk Zhang Xiaoqing (Datuk Tiong Hiew King)**

Datuk Zhang Xiaoqing was born in Sibiu on 18th March 1936, and his parents were from Minqing District of Fujian Province in China. He was educated at Catholic High School in Sibiu, proficient in both Chinese and English, and had studied by correspondence courses from Xiamen (Amoy) University. Datuk Zhang started as a senior officer in a big firm, and in 1975 he established the Rimbunan Hijau Sedirian Berhad, dealing in the timber business purchasing and exporting timber. He has been successful and within 20 years he has developed Rimbunan Hijau Sdn Bhd into a diversified multinational timber-based corporate. He has been active in educational and cultural activities, especially in promoting Chinese literature. Under his management his corporate group bought over the Xinzhou Daily (Sin Chew Jit Pao) based in Peninsular Malaysia and the Hong Kong based Ming Bao. He was the 1st President of the Sarawak Chinese Cultural Association and the current President of the World Fuzhou Association. He set up the Rimbunan Hijau Foundation which awards scholarships to qualified students from under-privileged families regardless of race or

religion. He was a Senator in the Malaysian Federal Government and he was awarded a Datukship (P.G.B.K. or Panglima Gemilang Bintang Kenyalang) by the Head of State of Sarawak in 1990.



**Fig. 416 Temenggong Datuk Zhai Zhenqi  
(Temenggong Datuk Tai Sing Chii)**

Temenggong Datuk Zhai's parents came from Jibao Village in Gutian District, Fujian Province, China. He was born on 24th March 1930 at Engkilo in Sibul. He was educated both in English and Chinese. After graduation he taught for a while before turning to the timber business. He and his friends established the Pan Sarawak Company Limited and was himself the Managing Director. His business has extended to other parts of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, and his company has joint ventures with companies in Asia, Europe and Australia. He has also diversified his business by setting up companies such as Pan-Sarawak Share Holders Company Limited, Yema (Malaysia) Company Limited, the Malaysia Press Company Limited, and the Empire Wood Company Limited, and is either Director or Board member of the said compa-

nies, and has contributed much to social welfare services. In recognition of his contributions to society he was awarded the Datukship by the Head of State in 1981, and in 1992 he was appointed the Leader of the Chinese Community in SibU with the title of Temenggong.



**Fig. 417 Datuk Chen Renhua (Datuk Teng Chin Hua)**

Datuk Chen's parents were from Xianyou District in Fujian Province of China. He was born in SibU on 15th March 1932. He was educated in both English and Chinese. In 1952 he worked at a well-known firm, and because of his diligence and capability he was promoted to the rank of General Manager. As from 1963 he held the post of either Managing Director or Board Member, in the Lienhe Sawmill Company Limited, and Xin Lienhe Share Holders Company Limited. In 1980 he was the Managing Director of Nanyang Timber Trading Company Limited and one of the Directors of Xingan Enterprise (Malaysia) Company Limited. Datuk Chen Renhua has been active in social services; he was the Chairman of the SibU Xinghua Puxian Association; the President

of Sibu Chinese Chamber of Commerce; President of Sibu Federated Chinese Association; President of Sarawak Federated Chinese Association and the President of the Federated Malaysian Xinghua Association. Presently, he is Honorary President of several organisations and associations, and Chairman and Board Member of a number of primary school boards, a member of the Sibu Port Authority and Sibu Benevolent Society. Datuk Chen is conscientious in his work, kind and amicable to those who come into contact with him. In 1988, he was awarded the Datukship (P.G.B.K. or Panglima Gemilang Bintang Kenyalang) by the Head of State of Sarawak.



**Fig. 418 Temenggong Cai Xinmin  
(Temenggong Chua Syn Meng)**

Temenggong Cai Xinmin's ancestors were from Chongshan Village in Xiamen, Fujian Province, China. He was born in Kapit on 25th April 1929. He was educated at Funan Primary School in Kapit and later he had his secondary education in Zhonghua Middle School and St. Thomas' Secondary School in Kuching. In 1955



he started work at the Christ Hospital in Kapit but resigned when he was appointed the Chinese Kapitan (Community Leader) in 1965, and assisted his father to run the shop in Kapit. Temenggong Cai Xinmin has been active in social welfare services and among the posts he held were Chairman of Board of Management for Funan Primary School, President of both Zhangquan Association and Taishan Ting Association in Kapit. In 1970 he was Chairman and member of the Vigilante Corp (Pasukan Kawalan) with a membership of more than 200. In 1980 he was appointed Pemanca; 1985 the Temenggong (Community Leader) of the Chinese in Kapit. Now he is active in trading and construction business.



**Fig. 419 Temenggong Datuk Haji Mohd Fauzi Abdul Hamid**

Temenggong Datuk Haji Mohd Fauzi, a Malay leader from Sibul, was born in 1919 in Sibul, Sarawak.. He received his education in Sibul and joined the Government Civil Service after graduating from secondary school. He is married to Dayang Zainab and has four sons and a daughter; three of their children are teachers. Temenggong Fauzi enjoys playing badminton, and excelled in that

sport in his younger days, having won many trophies in Badminton tournaments. He is very active in social welfare activities. He is a member of the Malay Union Club, Committee Member of the Sibu Muslim Welfare Board (Lembaga Amanah Kebajikan Islam) and Committee Member of the Cultural Heritage Committee, Dewan Suarah, Sibu. He is very much respected by people of all races and has been appointed Temenggong by the government in recognition of his contributions to society. Temenggong Datuk Fauzi is now a well-known businessman in Sibu.



**Fig. 420 Datuk Huang Chuankuan  
(Datuk Wong Tuong Kwang)**

Datuk Huang Chuankuan's father, Huang Shutang, who came from Minqing Diistrict in Fujian Province of China, came to Sarawak with Huang Naishang in 1902 and worked in the Fuzhou Agricultural Settlement in Sibu. Datuk Huang Chuankuan, born in Sibu in 1919, is a far-sighted entrepreneur with fortitude. After the war, there was a great need for reconstruction in many places. At that time Datuk Huang Chuankuan was a young man. But, recognising

that timber was a raw material for building he actively involved himself in the development of logging business and became the pioneer to enter the international timber market with great success. In the 1960's Datuk Huang Chuankuan's WTK Organisation extended its business to various regions of Sarawak. Now, WTK Organisation has become a multinational company with a diversity of businesses which include logs and timber processing, property and real estate development, disposable glove manufacturing, trading and authorised dealership, mining and plantation, insurance, shipping, tourism and travel services. In 1989 the completion of the WTK Headquarters, the Hong An Building (Bangunan Hung Ann), marked another milestone in the rapid development of WTK Organisation. From 12th April 1993 onwards, the WTK Organisation initiated a new era in logging by the use of helicopter in transporting logs in Bintulu District. Datuk Huang Chuankuan has actively involved in social welfare services. The positions he has held include Chairman of the Sibü Fuzhou Association, Chairman of the Sibü Minqing Clan Association and Chairman of Guang Yuan Benevolent Society of Sibü. His sons, Huang Qiye (Wong Kie Yik) and Huang Qinai (Datuk Wong Kie Nai) were former Senators in the Malaysian Senate.



**Fig. 421 Tan Sri Datuk Chen Boqin (Datuk Ting Pek Kiing)**

Tan Sri Datuk Chen Boqin (Tan Sri Datuk Ting Pek Kiing) whose ancestors came from Minqing District in Fujian Province of China was born in Bintangor. Bintangor has a giant-sized orange model in the River Front Garden, a symbol of its famous citrus fruit. Tan Sri Chen's father was involved in agricultural enterprise, growing cash crops apart from oranges. He received his primary and secondary education respectively at Kaizhong Primary School and Kaizhong Secondary, Binangor. After school he used to help his father in the farm. He started with a small-scale construction business but was not successful. However, he took a new turn in the 1980's after his return from Australia. Now, after a period of hard work, he owns five listed companies with assets worth more than several hundred millions. The Ekran Group, one of his companies, is undertaking the task of constructing the Bakun Hydroelectric Dam in Upper Rajang. He not only owns a jet-plane but has an airline company as well. His work efficiency and speed has made deep impression on the general public. For example, the construction of UNIMAS and development of the Pulau Lankawi

resort have won him the trust of the higher government authorities. Often a successful Rajankian will remember to repay the society from where he has originated. Apart from giving cash donation to schools, he has plans to set up Radio as well as Television Stations with the objective of benefiting the rural people. His foresighted and dynamic plans are practical ways of providing social services to the society. Tan Sri Datuk Chen Boqin's success in business is the result of his personal qualities of diligence, sincerity and reliability.

## SECTION C : OTHER LEADERS OF RAJANG BASIN

In the last five decades, apart from the personalities mentioned above, the Rajang Basin has produced many reputable leaders and professionals of various races in politics, economy, culture, education and social service organisations. They are Datuk Huang Qinai of the W.T.K. Groups; Dr She Ruyu (Hii Yu Ngiik) of Yunguang (Yung Kong) Groups; Awang Hipni Pengiran Annu, the former Minister of Youth and Culture; the former Minister of Land and Mineral Resources, Penghulu Francis Umpau; and the former Minister of Communication and Works, Datuk Tajang Laing - all were in the State Cabinet led by Penghulu Tawi Sli. In the younger generation of leadership of the Rajang Basin, there are the former Deputy Federal Minister of Education and the present Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, YB Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad; the Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly, Datuk Huang Shunke (Datuk Wong Soon Koh); Assistant State Ministers, YB Wahab Bin Dolah and YB David Deng Lunqi (Teng Lung Chii); Senator Liu Huizhou (Lau Hoi Chew); YB Zhang Taiqin (Tiong Thai King); YB Datuk Ding Yongmian; YB Dr Sun Chunde (Dr Soon Choon Teck); YB She Qingxuan (Thomas Hii King Hiong); Community Leader Liu Xianying (Lau Hieng Yieng); and Indonesia-based Datuk Huang Suanan (Wong Siong Ang), all these are well-known people from the Rajang Basin.

## CHAPTER 29

### CONCLUSION

From the description given we can see a uniqueness in the development and progress of the Rajang basin in the last hundred years, and this uniqueness has been derived from the uniqueness of its historical and cultural background.

Culture is the lifestyle of a race comprising the realms of language, customs, ideology, attitudes and behaviours, social structure, methods of education, literature and arts, science, technology, and religious beliefs. It is the characteristic identity of a race; the basis of its survival and the hub of its development.

The development and progress achieved in the various fields in the Rajang Basin have been the fruit of concerted efforts made by all the races. However, the force that led in the dynamic economic development came chiefly from the cream of the community with a unique sub-culture. Their good educational background, wide economic horizon and far-sightedness have put them in good stead, and with their earnest determination, perseverance and fortitude they have overcome all difficulties and achieved great successes. An obvious example is that in the 1970's the corporate groups of the Rajang Basin were operating successfully while in other parts of the country businessmen were only in the process of promoting corporate companies. In the 1980's when the economy was in the doldrums many companies either suffered severe setbacks or ended in bankruptcy, but the corporate groups of the Rajang Basin survived the economic storm. This must be undeniably attributed to their foresight, excellent knowledge and wisdom.

The continuity and stability qualities of culture and education are vital factors in promoting a stable society and its continuous progress. However, we must recognise the fact that both culture and education have their backwardness and conservativeness which cause drawbacks and self-isolation. Therefore, it is essential for a race to constantly examine its own culture and education

and through comparative studies to absorb the good qualities of other cultures so as to raise its own cultural level. Only in this way could a race continue in the process of renewal and make progress in society.

In the author's study of the working papers presented by the various racial communities during the 1988 and 1993 Cultural Seminars of the races in Sarawak, the paper by the Malay community was more global and the most forward-looking which stressed the importance of science and technology education. The other races tended to limit themselves to the discussion of purely cultural matters, especially the traditional ones. Traditions definitely have their values, and history deserves our recollection, but we should not forget the more important attitude of being forward-looking so that our people can survive and progress in an international society that is changing and developing incessantly. In 1993, the main theme of the Cultural Seminar was '*Towards the Society of 2020*'; the national vision of building a progressive industrialised country based on hi-technology. However, during the Cultural Seminar the messages of building a hi-tech society were surprisingly few. It is hoped that in future cultural seminars, apart from discussions on traditional cultures there should be committed interests in the study of modern culture because modern culture affects the survival and progress of a race. If a race were so poor and backward that it could not survive, where would its traditional culture be? Similarly, as the Chinese saying goes, '*When the skin is no longer there, where can the hair attach to?*'

The leaders of the various races in the Rajang Basin are today facing two challenges : one is the fierce competition in the international society, and the other is the continual and balanced development of all the racial communities in the Rajang basin. Confucius said, '*In seeking a foothold for self, love finds a foothold for others; seeking light for itself, it enlightens others also.*' A great leader is one who possesses such love and benevolence for all his peoples and all things in the universe, and who is rich in righteousness and lofty morality. Leaders with such qualities and cosmopolitan outlook will not only bring about greater progress but will also transform the Rajang Basin into a caring society, thus



achieving a spirit of brotherhood. In the process of national development and even in the international world, the progress of the Rajang Basin and its outstanding achievements in politics, economy and education in the last hundred years have, indeed, set a glorious model for the history of human society.

The history of development in the Rajang Basin is likened to this great river itself; it has gone past countless years, flowing from the mountains to the hills down the valleys to the plains of the motherland and finally pouring into international waters.

History will always remain history; and facts will remain facts. There is no need for us to white-wash the deeds of our ancestors, neither should we be disquietened about what they experienced because they lived in the environment of the historical past with very different social conditions. However, we should be proud of what we have achieved today because that is the fruit of hard work. Nevertheless, we should not forget that somewhere in this world there are more diligent, more advanced and wiser peoples and nations. Thus, we should always maintain a forward-looking attitude, and continue seeking a greater advancement.



Fig. 422 Sarawak Delegates from the Rajang Basin on a business familiarisation tour of Fuzhou, China.  
(Photo supplied by Fong Nyan Shin)



Fig. 423 Sarawak Delegates from the Rajang Basin at the grave of Huang Naishang in Fuzhou, China.  
(Photo supplied by Fong Nyan Shin)



Fig. 424 Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud raising the new State Flag at the State Stadium, ushering in a new era in Sarawak.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)



Fig. 425 'All men are brothers': the spirit reflecting the different races in the Rajang Basin with different cultural, historical, and economical background and different lifestyles, living in harmony and making a concerted effort in the building of our country; such spirit provides the foundation of stability, progress and economic advancement for a multiracial nation - a model for the world to emulate.  
(Photo: Lim Yu Seng)

## EPILOGUE

After having done the proof-reading of the 150 thousand word script of '*A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak*' and the captions of the 400 odd illustrations, the research project that I undertook since November 1994 has finally come to an end.

The time spent on writing has taken 50% more than that of the original schedule, and so has the number of words and illustrations been increased to more than double the original plan. However, after browsing through it, I still feel that in terms of content it is still scanty. Because of various constraints, I have to omit places like Durin and Julau. For example, despite the fact that Belaga is historically important, geographically beautiful, culturally rich and colourful with more than 10 ethnic groups dwelling there, it could only be given a very brief description.

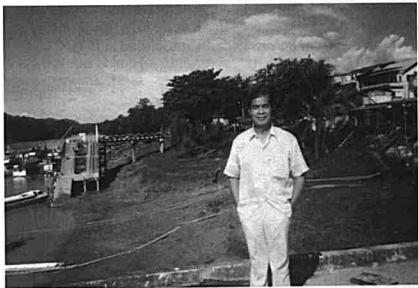
Because of this reason, I sincerely hope that our cultural organisations would carry out a project to introduce to the readers locally and abroad the heritage of the Rajang Basin : the cultures of its various ethnic groups, its economic life, the historical sites and beautiful scenery of its big cities, small towns, and villages. It is a very important and meaningful cultural undertaking, and it should be done as soon as possible to capture this rapidly changing society.

'*A History of the Development of Rajang Basin in Sarawak*' is the first book of its kind, so it cannot be claimed to be an ideal piece of work. I sincerely hope that it could draw the attention of interested people so that more and better works would soon follow.

Fong Hon Kah,  
Rong Lu,  
Kuching, Sarawak.  
23rd June, 1996.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The author at the river bank of Kapit, 1995.

(Photo: Fang Nyan Shin)

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The translator at Cambridge, 1991.

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