

SARAWAK

HEDDA MORRISON



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Shortly after sunrise the Mukah fishing fleet, manned by Melanaus, sets out to sea. Broad roomy vessels called Barongs, they fish throughout the fine weather season from March to September. During the rest of the year their activities are restricted by the season of rough weather called the Landas and during this time fishermen must turn their attention to planting padi or to working sago and timber.

FOREWORD BY MALCOLM MACDONALD

ONCE UPON A TIME Sarawak enjoyed a romantic fame as the realm of the White Rajahs. The story of its government through the century from 1839 to 1946 by three benevolent English autocrats, the Rajah Brookes, is one of the most attractive tales in the annals of sophisticated man's rule over primitive man.

Ten years ago, however, the third Rajah decided that he could no longer raise the resources or command the expert experience required to give his half-million subjects modern progressive government. Money was needed for economic and social development, technical advice was required if agricultural, medical and educational advance was to be soundly guided, and a broad political wisdom would be essential if the evolution of a still politically untutored population towards self-government was to be prudently accomplished. His Highness felt deep trust in the British Government's ability to provide these things, and so he ceded Sarawak to King George the Sixth.

The task of leading the people of Sarawak through all the changes of these eventful times now rests, therefore, on the British Government, Parliament and public.

They are accustomed to such responsibilities, for they have long exercised them among many different races in many varied lands. On the whole they have carried out their trust with success. There are several reasons for this. One is that the British usually like the peoples whom they govern, feel a ready sympathy with them, and sincerely desire their well-being and happiness. Thus it is that they have generally associated themselves with the aspirations of dependent peoples for increasing self-reliance and self-government, and Britain has become the centre of a great and growing Commonwealth of free nations round the earth.

In this remarkable, world-wide family of peoples Sarawak's citizens have now a place. No human beings are more likeable, and in no country is the business of government conducted with a finer sense of friendly partnership between the rulers and the ruled. As the pictures in Hedda Morrison's book show, the population is very mixed, including large communities of Malays, Chinese and Melanau as well as tribes of simple jungle dwellers like Ibans, Land Dayaks, Kayans, Kenyahs, Muruts, Kelabits, Penans and others. The mixture creates many problems which can only be solved if the government is understanding and impartial and strives to combine the different races in a harmonious society. The task is complicated not only by wide contrasts in the characters of the various races, but also by the different stages which they have reached in social evolution. Far up the rivers in the tropical jungle primitive groups of nomads still live. Other clans of settled longhouse dwellers are, in some places, little further advanced. Down-river their kinsmen are more 'modern' but they too have far to go before they can hold their own with the Malays in administrative experience and the Chinese in commercial genius. Inevitable changes are bringing the communities into ever closer contact, and economic and political clashes between them would be inevitable if government were not as tactful as it is benevolent. The clashes might be even physical, for many of the men of the jungle are only recently reformed headhunters.

The problem is eased by the engaging natures of the principal communities involved. The Ibans and other tribesmen are robust, intelligent and gay, the Malays and Melanau are truly nature's gentlemen, and the Chinese have the virtues of their wonderfully civilised race. Above all, they are all smiling, friendly

peoples who respect each other and are gradually adapting themselves to play their parts in a new, united little nation.

Their varied characters and capacities are suggested in Hedda Morrison's photographs. Her affectionate understanding of different types of people, her deep interest in their problems, her indefatigable zeal as a jungle traveller and her superb skill with a camera combine to make this picture-book a brilliant image of Sarawak life. She has lived for many years in the colony, where her husband is one of a team of devoted government officers. It is a happy coincidence that a fine artist has found such attractive models in such an interesting land.

1957

MALCOLM MACDONALD

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS BOOK is a very personal record of what I have seen and enjoyed photographing during the eight years which I have spent in Sarawak. It cannot pretend to be a complete photographic record of every aspect of life in the country. That would call for a book many times the size and I hope that those who turn to it for something which it does not contain will forgive me. The choice of photographs was mine and mine alone, using Kodak materials and Rollei cameras.

I planned a book on these lines for several years but it might not have seen the light of day had it not been for the interest shown by Mr. R.E. (Hector) Hales, who directs the activities of the Associated Companies (Sarawak Oilfields Ltd., British Malayan Petroleum Co. Ltd., and Shell Company of North Borneo Ltd.) of the Royal Dutch-Shell Group operating in British Borneo. Mr. Hales has always taken a great personal interest in the people and the life of the country and felt that the world at large would like to know a little about them as well, and to this end was able to persuade the Royal Dutch-Shell Group to give generous financial assistance towards the production of a book on

Sarawak by Messrs MacGibbon and Kee. I am more than grateful for his interest and the ready help of the Shell Group.

I have many other acknowledgments to make. If I was to make them all in full this preface would cover many pages. My sincere thanks are due to so many.

To Sir Charles Arden Clarke, the first Governor of Sarawak, who, when I arrived in the country, encouraged me to travel both on my own and on my husband's official tours.

To Sir Anthony Abell, the present Governor, who has not only given me every encouragement in my work but has also allowed me to accompany him on some of his official journeys which enabled me to see certain ceremonies which I would not otherwise have had an opportunity of photographing.

To Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, until recently Commissioner-General for South-East Asia, who has kindly written a foreword to this book. Mr. MacDonald, whose interests and inclinations would have fitted him wonderfully well to be an upriver District Officer, has found time from his many other duties to visit almost every part of Sarawak.

To my husband's Residents and colleagues in the Government service who have always helped me and given me every facility to travel where I liked.

And finally, and most important of all, my thanks are due to innumerable Chiefs and Headmen and Sarawak men and women in every walk of life who have extended to me their friendship and hospitality during my stay in their country. Sarawak is a very happy land and particularly happy for those Europeans who are fortunate enough to reside there and who find themselves freely accepted as equals and friends by the people of the country. These are the highest privileges which a people can confer on their visitors and I am deeply conscious of the honour done to us.

1957

PREFACE TO THE 3RD EDITION

MUCH HAS HAPPENED since this book first appeared in 1957, but the photographs remain a truthful record of life in Sarawak at an important stage of its history. I have not attempted to change the photographs or the descriptive material.

The pace of change since then has been very rapid, especially in the political field. The first political party was formed in 1959. Only four years later Sarawak achieved independence through the establishment of Malaysia and became one of the states in the new Federation. The fact that the people of Sarawak convincingly opted for membership of a larger Federation rather than isolated independence showed how quickly the political process had developed and the sound political judgment of the Sarawak public. The state is well represented in the Federal Parliament and state politics have developed in an effective and constructive manner.

The establishment of Malaysia was opposed by the then government of Indonesia but Sarawak came successfully through the difficult period of confrontation. Indonesian hostility was contained with the minimum of force and the vast majority of the state's population gave solid support to the Malaysian and

Commonwealth forces sent to Sarawak for their protection. Looking back, it now seems obvious that confrontation helped to draw Peninsular Malaysia and the Bornean states together far more quickly than might otherwise have been the case.

The most harmful aspect of confrontation lay in the defection of many young Sarawak Chinese who had become communist sympathisers. Expelled from Indonesia after the change of government there in 1965, their return to Sarawak led to a period of insurgency which particularly affected areas of the 1st Division and of what used to be known as the 3rd Division (it has now been split into the 3rd, 6th and 7th Divisions). By a remarkable piece of conciliatory persuasion, however, most of the insurgents still at large were induced by Sarawak's Chief Minister, Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Yakub, to give up the struggle and to return to society at the end of 1973.

Education has made great strides. Primary schools are now to be found everywhere, even in the most remote rural areas, and there is a large and still growing network of secondary schools. Substantial numbers of Sarawak men and women have completed full tertiary courses of education in a wide variety of fields and now provide the state with the fully educated human resources which it needs to draw on to satisfy its political, social and economic needs.

There has, of course, been a rapid growth in the population which has roughly doubled in the past twenty years. The total population was only 546,385 when the first accurate census was taken in 1947. The total for the 1970 census was 975,918. It continues to increase at a rate of about 2½ per cent per annum and the population is a very young one. Improved health services have meant that several formerly important diseases have been virtually eliminated or brought under control. This has been helped by a dramatic improvement in communications. A network of roads all over the state is now well advanced and there have also been great improvements in air communications. Forest-based industries have greatly expanded and Sarawak is now an important petroleum producer.

Inevitably growth and development have not been uniform. Perhaps least marked because so difficult to achieve are improvements in the economic efficiency of the countryman. Much intensive effort has been devoted to new planting schemes and to the introduction of agricultural extension services but in many

rural areas there has been little change in farming practices. There is only limited interest on the part of educated young people in settling on the land. The higher standards of living in urban areas and the prospect of regular salaried employment has led to a marked drift to the towns. These problems are not being ignored—they are appreciated by the federal and state governments who are doing everything they can to solve them. Nevertheless, as in so many other Asian countries, it is the problems of the rural sector which remain the most intractable.

Happily, underlying all the progress and growth and development the spirit of the Sarawak peoples remains as it has always been—warm, tolerant and hospitable. The charm and dignity of the way of life they have evolved for themselves in their own fair land continues unaltered.

1976

SARAWAK—THE LAND AND ITS STORY

SARAWAK lies just north of the equator along the north-west coast of Borneo—fifty thousand square miles of hills and swamp land—its frontier marching with that of Indonesia. It is a long, narrow strip of country with a coastline five hundred miles in length but with few places more than fifty or sixty miles from the sea. With Brunei and Sabah which adjoin it to the north, Sarawak occupies about one-third of the large island of Borneo, the remainder of the island being Indonesian territory.

The traveller will normally approach Sarawak from Singapore although an alternative route exists from Hong Kong. At dawn he will find himself at the mouth of the Sarawak River leading to the capital, Kuching; it is a broad, silent waterway fringed with low-growing nipa palms; in the distance are forest-covered blue mountains. The coast is generally low lying and marked by long lines of graceful, pine-like casuarina trees on the seaward side. Only in the south and north of the country is anything in the way of cliffs and rocky shores to be found.

Green is the predominant colour. Sarawak has an abundant rainfall which

supports a mass of vegetation. The soils are by no means rich but everywhere the country is tree-covered, except where man has felled the jungle and burned it for purposes of cultivation. Because of the heavy rainfall the climate is cool and healthy. Temperatures are never extreme, varying between 75 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit and the heavy rainfall has the effect of keeping the country clean and free of dust and flies.

Because of the rainfall Sarawak is also a country of innumerable rivers, some of very considerable size. They rise in the hills of the interior and course turbulent and free through rapids and gorges until they reach the placid lower reaches and the great swamps through which they finally reach the sea over shallow bars which hinder navigation. They bring with them great masses of sediment and slowly build their deltas further out to sea. The decaying vegetation in the swamps forms extensive areas of peat while the brackish deltas support forests of mangroves.

Between the swamps and the sea there is generally a thin belt of sand on which grow the casuarinas, strange trees which can only reproduce themselves on bare sand on the seaward side. Where the rivers break through this belt are to be found villages of Malay and Melanau fishermen, their houses built high on piles along the sheltered river banks. The people earn their livelihood by fishing, planting padi and working timber and sago. The larger villages will support a few Chinese shops or a small bazaar. Most of the swamp land is unsuitable for cultivation.

Further inland there is a countryside of low, rolling hills. The more distant ones are still covered with primary jungle but in the more settled areas the old jungle has been cut and burned off for padi planting and only secondary scrub remains, interspersed with fruit, vegetable, rubber and pepper gardens.

In the lower reaches of the large rivers the people are Chinese, Malays and Melanaus mixed with Ibans, but further inland the predominant peoples are Ibans and Land Dayaks, Kayans, Kenyahs, Muruts and Kelabits. Settlement is largely concentrated in the south-western corner of the country and immense areas in the north-east, towards the Indonesian border, are virtually uninhabited. Most of the hill country is of no great altitude but in a few places, mostly along the border and in certain places in northern Sarawak, fair-sized mountains

occur rising to altitudes of 5,000 feet and over. In north Sarawak there is a small but distinctive high-land area adjoining similar country on the Indonesian side where communities of Muruts and Kelabits live in fertile valleys at an altitude of 3,000 feet.

The rivers are the main channels of communication. There are no railways and few roads even, for there is little good road stone to offset an immense abundance of mud. The whole pattern of settlement is geared to the river systems. Some roads are slowly being built and a few aerodromes exist and more are planned, but the abiding impression which any visitor will take away with him is of a land of rivers: big rivers, small rivers; shallow rivers and rivers which are impassable in heavy flood; deep rivers up which a man may travel by launch or outboard-engined canoe and rivers beset with rapids where paddles and poles are the only means of progression. And even when the traveller at last finds himself a footpath he will generally find himself walking along a river bank and very often wading up the stream bed itself.

Sarawak is not a heavily populated country. It still only contains some 12 or 13 persons to the square mile. Its small population is largely the result of the country's poor soils. Borneo did not attract many immigrants and was passed by when more fertile neighbours such as Java were being populated. The various Sarawak peoples have reached the country at different times from the mainland of Asia. They arrived from various directions, some probably from the direction of Celebes and others from Sumatra and Malaya. The mainly Malaysian inhabitants have a good deal of superficial similarity, being brown-skinned, of medium height with straight black hair, well built and good looking. The Malays, relatively late immigrants, and Arab traders brought the religion of Islam to the country. The most recent immigrants of all are the Chinese who have arrived in considerable numbers during the course of the last hundred years though trading connections with China have existed for a thousand years or more.

When the first Europeans came to Borneo in the early 16th century, Sarawak formed part of the domains of the Sultan of Brunei who at that time not only controlled most of the coast of Borneo but part of the southern Philippines as well. The seas were relatively safe and there was a considerable volume of trade with China. As European influence began to make itself felt in South-East

Asia and European trading monopolies distorted the natural pattern of trade. Brunei, in common with many other states in the so-called East Indies, fell into decay, and the seas, for want of profitable and legitimate trade, became infested with pirates. In the southern part of Borneo Dutch influence became paramount.

Sarawak was acquired by an adventurous Englishman, James Brooke, who visited the shores of Borneo to seek his fortune in 1839. He found Sarawak in a state of turmoil as the Malays and Land Dayaks of the hinterland of Kuching had rebelled against the exactions of the Brunei rulers. Brooke's help was sought by the Brunei chiefs and he restored order without bloodshed and was rewarded by the Sultan with the title of Rajah of Sarawak. Subsequently he and his successors extended their influence until Sarawak assumed its present form early in this century.

The Brookes were autocrats but exceedingly benevolent ones. They brought order and peace to a country rent with chaos and anarchy, introduced a form of direct government well suited to the people, and suppressed abuses, inter-tribal warfare and the practice of headhunting. In particular the people were strictly protected from anything in the way of European commercial penetration. One of the most marked characteristics of Sarawak today is the importance of smallholding in the economy, and the virtually entire absence of large European-owned estates. Sarawak under the Rajahs was a contented country, largely devoid of racial tensions, where the handful of European officials was closely identified with the land and its people because these men devoted their entire careers to this small state.

During the second world war Sarawak was occupied by the Japanese who governed the country with their characteristic brutality and inefficiency for four long years. The Europeans were interned in Kuching where many lost their lives or their health through starvation and lack of medical care. The Japanese were totally unable to keep the country efficiently staffed or supplied with essential medicines, cloth and foodstuffs. When the Australian forces reoccupied Sarawak they found an exhausted and run-down country.

In 1946 the third and last of the Rajahs ceded Sarawak to the Crown and it has, since then, had the status of a British Colony. Post-war history has been one of prosperity and relative quiet. Great strides have been made in the fields

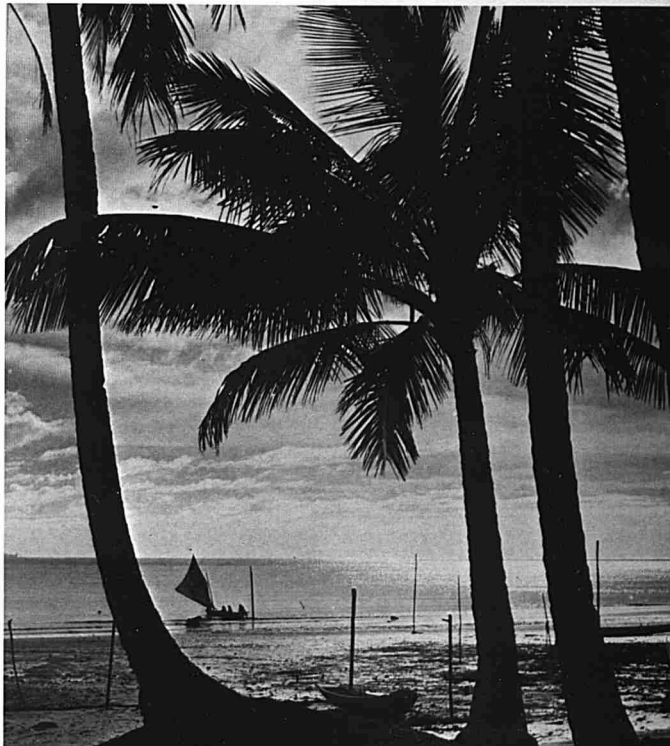
of education, local government and health. A comprehensive development plan has been drawn up and financed, partly by help from Britain but very largely by funds provided out of Sarawak revenues. The traditional close contact between the Administration and the people of the country has been maintained.

There have been troubles, too. There was agitation against cession on the part of a small minority of Malays and this led to the brutal assassination of a Governor in 1949. Communist influence has grown among the Chinese and an isolated terrorist incident occurred in 1952. But compared with many other countries in Asia, Sarawak is an oasis of calm and orderly progress where a diverse, multi-racial society has established an exceptional degree of inter-racial harmony. It is a friendly, tolerant, heart-warming, hospitable country where the visitor is welcome, wherever he or she may go.



The deep sea nets are dried on large racks at Paloh, in the estuary of the Rejang. Here the fishermen work at night, unlike their neighbours further north at Mukah who do their fishing during the daytime. Various methods of fishing with nets and lines are in use, even a system where fishermen swim after the shoal of fish and chase it into a net suspended over their boat's side.

Evening at Kampong Rejang just inside the mouth of the river bearing the same name. The Rejang is the largest river in Sarawak and is a most important channel of communication with the interior, being navigable by ocean-going vessels as far as Kapit, 120 miles inland. At Kampong Rejang the river is several miles wide, a huge expanse of turbid water between muddy, low-lying banks.



Children search for shells at low tide below Tanjong Lobang in northern Sarawak. The coastline of Sarawak is almost uniformly flat and low lying and there are only a few places such as Tanjong Lobang where cliffs are formed by hills and bluffs adjoining the coast.





From the top of Tanjong Lobang a fine view may be obtained south over a broad bay to the Lambir hills in the background. Palm trees fringe an occasional Malay village or Kampong and Chinese have planted rubber and pepper gardens.



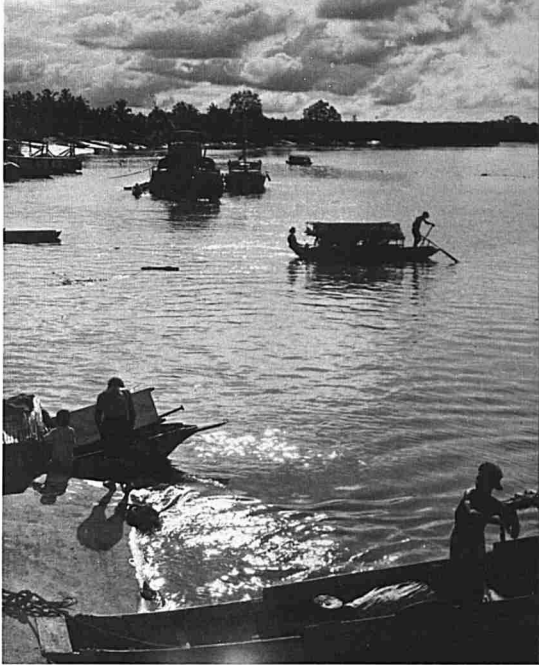
Matu is a small centre in the coastal area of the 3rd Division. A small group of Chinese-owned shops cater for the trade of several Melanau villages in the neighbourhood. It is a pleasant, sleepy little place with a fast flowing, clear but dark brown stream stained by the peat of the neighbouring swamps.

The beach near Oya at low tide. Generally speaking there is a belt of sand along the shore and extending a little way inland. Between Oya and Mukah cars and buses can drive along the sands.





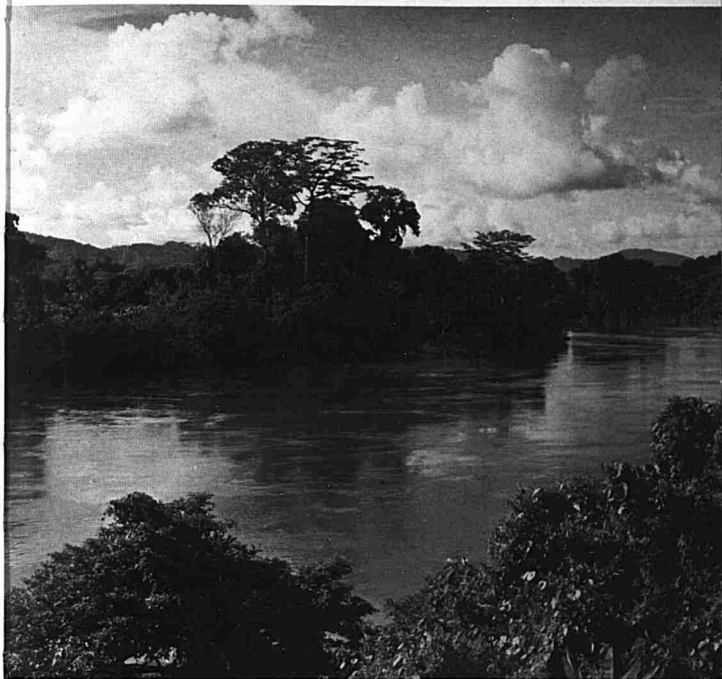
The Lawas River follows a short navigable course to the sea in extreme northern Sarawak. Most of the Sarawak rivers are navigable by launch or canoe for great distances inland but at Lawas the hills rise quickly and the river soon changes into a rushing mountain stream.



Evening at Sarikei, a port on the lower Rejang which is accessible to ships of up to 1,000 tons. Sarikei itself is swampy and low lying, an important place of export for rubber and, especially, pepper which is grown on the well-drained hill slopes which are to be found a little way inland.



Away from the coast the rivers run through low hills where the Ibans or Sea Dayaks make their homes. This view from the house of Penghulu Jinggut on the Balleh River above Kapit is typical. The original forest has long ago been cut down in the cultivation of hill rice and replaced with secondary growth and numerous rubber gardens. In a sheltered place below the house are kept the all-important canoes.



Beyond the last Government station at Belaga the Rejang River is known as the Balui, still an important river, although some 250 miles from its mouth. Access to the upper Rejang is greatly hindered by the Pelagus rapids not far above Kapit. The people living in the area which it drains are Kayans and related peoples.

The relatively highly populated areas inhabited by Ibans in the 2nd and 3rd Divisions have long ago been denuded of forest owing to the demands of shifting rice cultivation. Impoverished and with little topsoil remaining, the land is covered with coarse lalang grass and low scrub. The poles of the small pepper garden belong to a member of the house of Rimong, on the watershed between the Skrang and Layar Rivers in the 2nd Division.



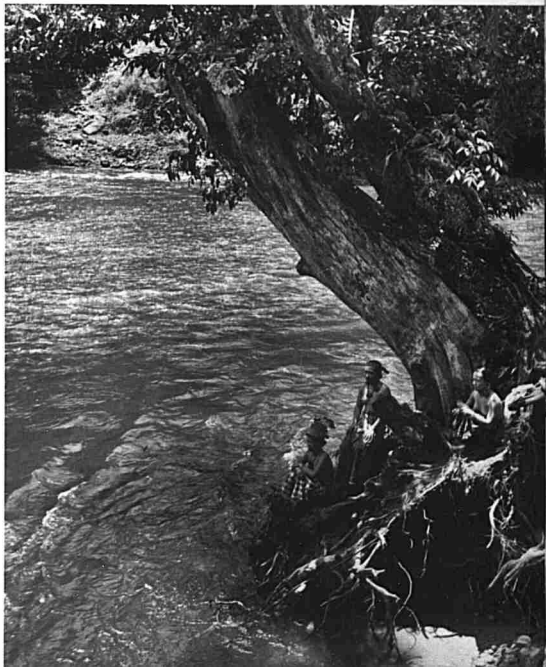


In the Kanowit District of the 3rd Division, an Iban mother and her two daughters cross a log bridge on their way to a longhouse party. Although some of the Sarawak peoples are able to build cane suspension bridges, the Ibans rarely do more than fell a convenient tree to span a stream.



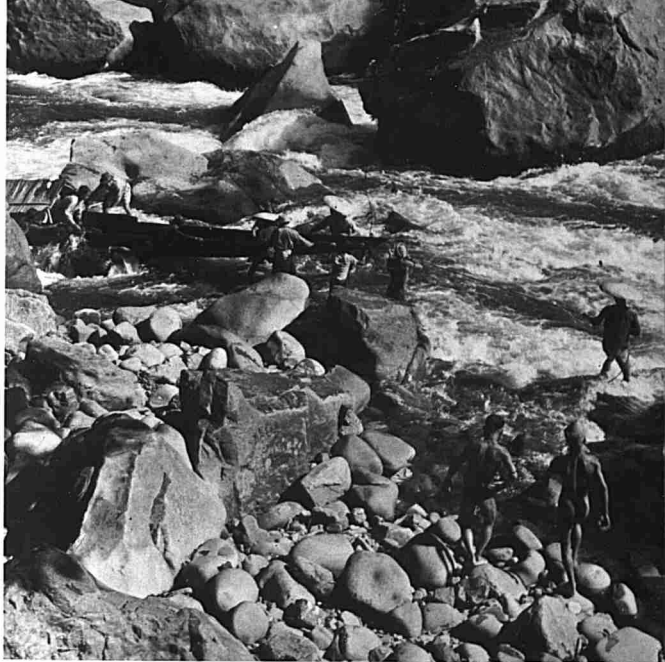
A little way above Belaga Fort and Bazaar the Belaga River flows down to join the Balui. It is a typical inland stream with numerous rapids barring progress so that if one wishes to proceed upriver it is sometimes necessary to leave the boats and make a long detour over steep hills before reaching the river again.

At Long Buroi on the Dapoi River a group of Sebop girls sit by the riverside. All life depends on the river. In high water after heavy rain movement upstream or downstream is impossible on the hill rivers, because no canoe can stay afloat in the rush of water. In very low water it is equally difficult because then canoes must be hauled by man force up and down shallow reaches.



The Patah River is an important tributary of the Baram. Once the valley was well populated though today only one longhouse is left. The river is unusually beautiful, flowing through numerous gorges overhung by trees and rocks. In some places the rapids are so fierce that all luggage must be unloaded and carried over a portage while a few skilled boatmen shoot the rapids in the empty boats.



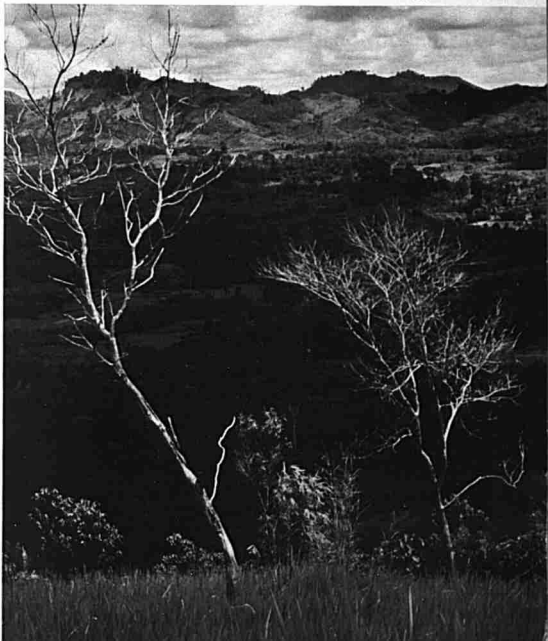


Perhaps the most dangerous river in Sarawak is the Akah, also a tributary of the Baram. Boats must be hauled through rapid after rapid and even moderate rainfall renders the river impassable. The Kayans of the Akah are, with good reason, the most skillful boatmen in Sarawak.



The soils of Sarawak are by no means rich but the pepper vine thrives and is an important product of the country. At Engkilili in the 2nd Division, below the mountains on the Indonesian border, are many pepper gardens. Mostly they belong to Chinese but quite a number are owned by Malays and Ibans.

Eroded, impoverished land near Tebekang in the 1st Division where the Land Dayaks have over-cultivated the soil and reduced the fertility until a living can hardly be won from it any longer. Where originally huge forest trees grew there is nothing now but poor scrub. The bare patches, which look as if they are stretches of pleasant meadow land, are covered with the vile, coarse lalang grass.



The uninhabited parts of the interior are still covered with dense forest. From an altitude of about 5,000 feet on Kapal Labong in the Ulu Limbang there is nothing to be seen but dense hill forest stretching away to the Kelabit country beyond the horizon. Stunted moss forest on top of the mountain provides a clear view over the countryside, a rare thing in the true jungle country.





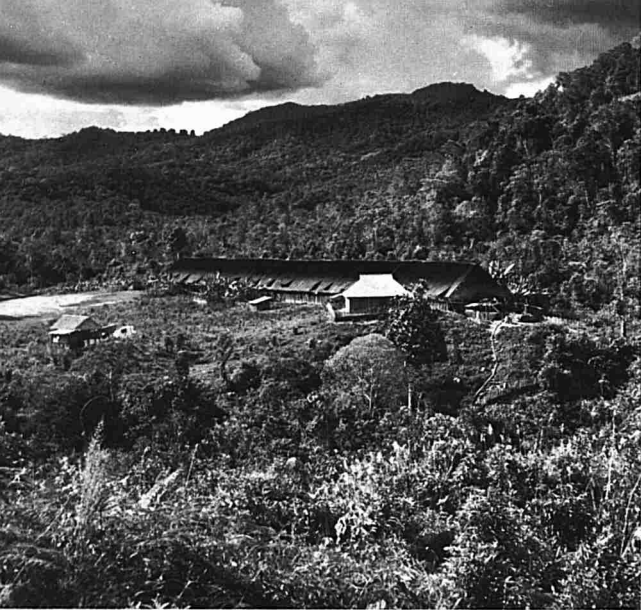
Down beneath the trees there is quiet and calm. There is little undergrowth and little direct sunlight. Really large trees are found at some distance from each other and the prevailing impression is of innumerable, rather small, straight boled trees. The forest is a very silent place. There is little animal life and even the birds keep mostly to the top of the forest canopy.



Paths through the forest generally follow the water courses. When canoes can proceed no further the traveller walks on up the stream bed, making detours over the necks of bends. Eventually, near the source of the stream the path will strike off up the hillside and after a steep climb the traveller reaches the watershed. From here he will walk down to reach another stream flowing in the opposite direction and so down until navigable waters are reached again.

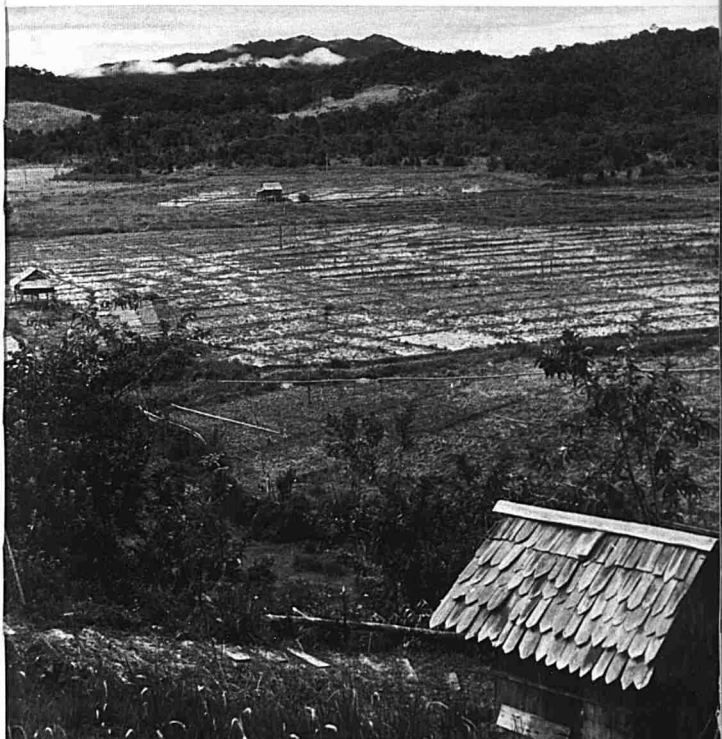


When the canoes are left behind overland travel is arduous and slow. In Borneo the shortest distance between two points is nearly always over the top of the highest place for miles around. The longest all-walking journey in Sarawak is that from Lawas up the Trusan Valley to the Indonesian border and on this track, between Long Beluyu and Ba Kelalan, the loaded porters must scramble up some particularly steep and difficult slopes.



The so-called Kelabit plateau occupies the high country at the headwaters of the Baram River. Nowadays there is a small airstrip in the centre of the area and it can be reached in little over an hour from the coast in a light aeroplane. But overland travel to reach the longhouse at Pa Mein may take a couple of weeks and still longer if the rivers are in flood. It is a very fertile area and inhabited by a particularly friendly and hospitable people.

At Boreo, the centre of the Kelabit country, there is a small Government office. Below the office there is a charming view over the highly cultivated, irrigated padi fields. This form of padi cultivation is rare in the interior of Sarawak and is only practised by the Kelabits and by their relatives, the Muruts, of the adjoining Trusan Valley.



PADI—THE STAFF OF LIFE

PADI IS UNHUSKED RICE, the staple diet of all the Sarawak peoples, except the roving Penans of the jungle. It is grown in two principal ways, either as hill padi on dry land or as wet padi in swamp or irrigated places. In both cases it is the same hardy plant, though some varieties have been evolved which flourish better in one environment than the other. Rice occupies the place of the bread and potatoes of Europe though it is perhaps even more important than these foods, as there are far fewer alternative foodstuffs available in Borneo.

Wet padi is cultivated by Malays, Melanaus, Chinese, Muruts and Kelabits. The Malays and Melanaus and some Chinese cultivate the swamps, generally patches of alluvium in the river deltas or areas of shallow peat. Padi cannot be grown successfully on deep peat. Rainfall and occasional floods provide natural irrigation. The crops are generally good and artificial irrigation is not practised.

True irrigated padi is grown by some Muruts and Kelabits (though some find it less trouble to plant hill padi) and by a certain number of Chinese. In places where a stream can be diverted over low-lying land, controlled irrigation

is possible so that just the right amount of water can be led to the fields along small channels and retained when necessary by surrounding bunds or low earth walls.

These wet padi areas are cultivated year after year. The surface is cleared of grass which is generally burned off and the ground is then hoed before flooding. The cattle-owning Malays and Muruts of northern Sarawak churn up the mud by driving a group of buffaloes round and round in the flooded field. The padi is planted out in nurseries and then transplanted by hand to the prepared field though where padi is very abundant it is sometimes sown direct. After this the fields need periodic weeding and birds and animals must be scared away until the harvest is collected.

Far more hill padi is planted than swamp padi. The classical system is to clear the undergrowth in an area of old jungle and to allow it to dry off. Then the jungle is felled and when that is dry too the entire area is burned in a huge, roaring blaze. If the burn is successful not only is the soil beautifully cleared for the reception of the seed padi, but the soil is enriched by the wood ash. Across the burned area the planters then go to work, the men in front making holes into which the women, following behind, drop the seed padi.

It is a wasteful method of cultivation. When old jungle is felled the same land will produce good padi for two or three consecutive seasons but the burns destroy all protective vegetation. Heavy rains soon remove the topsoil and the fertility of the land is quickly reduced.

When all the old jungle of an area has been felled, the cultivators are at first faced with two alternatives. They can either move to another entirely new jungle area or they can once again fell the scrub which has replaced the first lot of old jungle. Generally speaking the latter course has been followed. If farming can be carried on over a cycle of about 15 years between cuts, the fertility of the soil can be maintained fairly satisfactorily. But as the population increases so does the pressure on the land and the cycle may fall to ten, eight or even five years. The continual burning and washing away of what little topsoil remains has a disastrous effect on the padi crops.

Eventually two rather different alternatives have to be faced. Pressure on the land must either be reduced by some of the cultivators moving to fresh

jungle areas, which at the present time is a matter of difficulty and always involves a considerable journey, or the people must change their methods and move to swamp areas. In Sarawak today both types of move are taking place.

The principal cultivators of hill padi are Ibans and Land Dayaks, Kayans, Kenyahs, Kedayans and some of the other inland peoples such as Muruts and Kelabits. Provided there is an abundance of jungle, hill padi cultivation is simple, productive and less troublesome than swamp padi cultivation, but it involves serious and ever growing problems of soil impoverishment.

Innumerable rites and customs are attached to the cultivation of padi. All the pagan peoples hold various ceremonies both before and after planting. For instance the Ibans have three principal ceremonies, that of blessing the whetstones before clearing commences, blessing the seed padi shortly before it is planted and a harvest festival to celebrate the bringing in of the padi from the field. Generally speaking the fields are cleared or the jungle felled in June or July. August or September is the month of burning when the sky is filled with a brown haze from the smoke of innumerable fires. Then the fields must be weeded until the padi is harvested in February or March.

The harvest is the happiest time of the year. In the Malay villages it is the season of courting when the boys and girls can become acquainted working together in the fields. The festivals staged by the pagan peoples after the harvest are especially important and are marked by the consumption of immense quantities of pleasant rice beer. It is a most arduous time of the year for the traveller, for not only must he drink the rice beer which will be pressed upon him by his hospitable hosts and hostesses, but he must do his work as well.

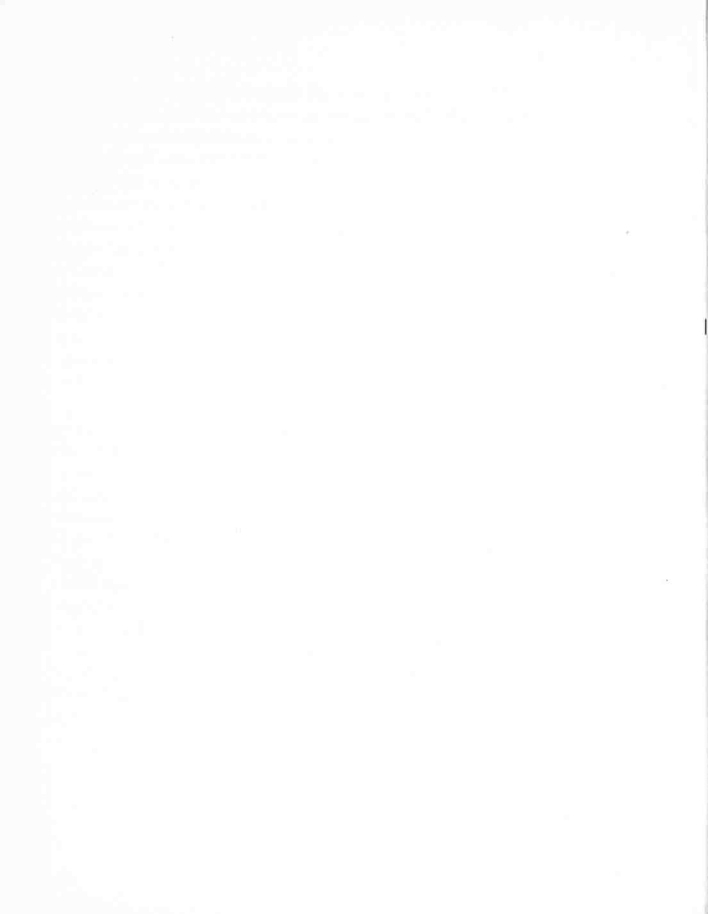
There are considerable differences in padi planting skills. Some of the cleverest are the Muruts of Ba Kelalan at the head of the Trusan and the Kelabits of the Ulu Baram. These people grow so much padi that they are even able to use it for feeding to their pigs, an unheard of thing elsewhere in Sarawak. Some Malays and Ibans are highly skilled, especially the Malays of the 5th Division and the Balau Ibans of Bijat, below Simanggang in the 2nd Division.

When the Chinese turn their hand to padi planting they are, perhaps, the most skilful of all padi planters. Many Chinese were specially brought into Sarawak to cultivate padi but they found it far more profitable to plant rubber

instead. When the prices of rubber and pepper are high they prefer to work their own and other peoples' gardens and buy imported rice but when prices for these commodities are low they produce large quantities of excellent padi.

Yet despite the importance of padi production in Sarawak there is never enough rice to go round. It should be possible to make the country self-sufficient but this is not the case at present. Sarawak has, in fact, been an importer of rice almost throughout its recent history, apart from the years of the Japanese occupation. Too much of the settled land has lost its fertility and the empty areas are too far away for settlement to be attractive there. It is difficult to induce Ibans and Land Dayaks who are accustomed to plant hill padi to plant swamp padi instead, although there are considerable areas of suitable swamp land available. The Chinese have planted rubber where they should have planted padi and they encounter difficulties in acquiring fresh land in areas reserved for native peoples. Every year it is necessary to import some 20,000 tons of rice from Thailand and Burma.

Rice forms the basis of all the principal meals of which there are generally two a day, in the morning and evening. For the European it is a pleasant food if accompanied by some meat or vegetables, or some appetising agent such as pickles. But eaten as it often is by the country people of Sarawak, boiled and plain with a little salt only, it is a tedious, stodgy food. Its value as a foodstuff depends on how thoroughly it has been milled. The fine white, milled rice which is liked by Asians is lacking in essential vitamins. Eaten by itself it quickly produces deficiency diseases such as beri-beri. Pounded rice with some of the reddish pericarp remaining on the grain, in the way rice is generally produced in the home in Sarawak, is, however, a healthy and nutritious food.





The ears of padi are harvested individually with a small knife known as the ketam. For the countryman the whole cycle of the year's activities revolves around the padi plant. The various stages of cultivation are the calendar of the countryside, clearing the undergrowth, felling the jungle, burning off, planting, weeding and, finally, the harvest.



Ibans burn off a hillside in the Ngemah River, a tributary of the Rejang. During August and September the sky is hazy and overcast from hundreds of such fires. It is a crucial time for the countryman. Given dry weather and a good burn to enrich the soil with wood ash he can be reasonably certain of a good padi crop. But if autumn rains prevent a good burn, leaving branches and dead leaves only half consumed, the subsequent harvest is bound to be a poor one.

Padi fields surrounding a newly built Iban longhouse in the hill country between the 2nd and 3rd Divisions. Such hill padi fields are rarely more than steep slopes covered with the half burned trunks of felled trees. Fruit trees and rubber will be planted near the longhouse. The padi land will be left and in a few years' time it will be covered with a thick growth of scrub.





The cultivation of padi is associated with many ceremonies which vary between the various races of the country. Here a group of Kayans not far from Belaga in the upper Rejang sit and pray for a good harvest with all their most valuable property—strings of beads—suspended above them.



Muruts planting hill padi. The men walk in front carrying sharp ended poles with which they make holes in the bare, burnt earth. The girls follow behind and drop two or three grains of padi into each hole made. Several families combine together to do the work.



Young padi growing in the Julau Valley of the 3rd Division. Small farming huts, or langkaus, are dotted about in the padi fields where the people come to live during the farming season. This is necessary because the fields are usually a considerable distance from the longhouse. Whole families move to the langkaus to weed the fields and protect the growing padi from birds and animals and the longhouse is left deserted.



Ibans harvesting on a hillside overlooking the Rejang River near Kanowit. It is a hard and arduous task, largely performed by the women who work methodically, with backs bent, under the pitiless sun. Below the padi land are rubber gardens along the riverside flats.

A Malay girl of Sundar, in the 5th Division, works in her padi nursery, preparing the seedlings for transplanting to the padi fields, tied in neat bundles with tops of the plants trimmed off. The yields from padi planted in good, alluvial soils of this nature are much higher than those from hill padi and the same land can be cultivated for year after year. But the work is just as hard and a special hazard is provided by the big horse leeches of the swamps known as lintak.





The padi plants are transplanted into the fields at Lawas. The plough is rarely used in Sarawak, and in the 5th Division the padi fields are broken up by driving buffaloes round and round in the mud to reduce it to the correct, water-logged consistency. Elsewhere the ground must be broken up with hoes, though experiments are being undertaken in mechanical cultivation.



(above) Harvest is a busy time, like harvests everywhere, and every member of the family turns out to help. In return for help in harvesting, those who have not planted any are given a share of the crop and in this way some of the fishermen obtain their padi with the minimum interruption of their fishing activities.

(opposite) The harvest is the only time of the year when Malay boys and girls are able to mix freely and get to know each other. It is the traditional time of courting. The girls wear their good clothes and all their finery, despite the mud, and when the harvest is over many marriages are celebrated.

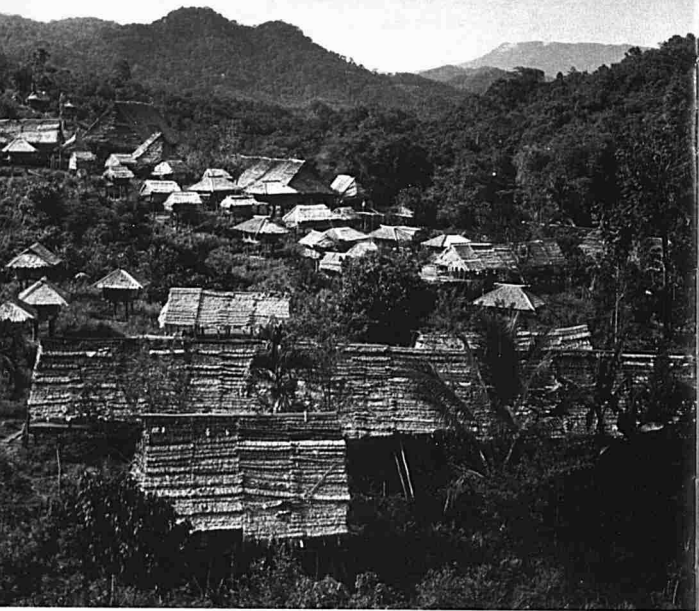




As the baskets are filled with ears of padi they are brought to a collecting point and later transported to the farming hut or longhouse. These Ibans are taking a rest and having their midday meal, a little shade being provided by an old mat propped up on a few sticks.

A Kenyah man and woman at Long San in the Baram thresh the padi ears by trampling on them to separate the ears from the stalk. They have perhaps anticipated the harvest, for the basin in the background was full of rice beer to which they frequently turned for refreshment.





The storage of padi is an important matter. The Kayans and Kenyahs build elaborate rice barns near the longhouse but separated from it as a protection in case of fire. The barn is raised on poles and the padi is threshed in the space below. Such separate storage is a prudent precaution but in practice they are generally close to the longhouse and if the latter does burn down, the barns often catch fire as well.

The Ibans do not bother to build padi barns but keep the padi in large bins in the longhouse loft. The bins are made of lengths of bark which are sewn together with rottan. Padi can be stored successfully for several years but once it has been converted into rice it will deteriorate after a few months.



Everywhere in Sarawak the pounding of padi to remove the husk is dull, hard work which is undertaken by the women and girls. The rhythmic, drum-like noise is one of the most characteristic sounds of longhouse life. Here Kelabit girls are at work at Bario in the Ulu Baram





At the other end of the country Land Dayak girls at Tebekang, near Srian, are doing the same. The most popular labour-saving devices in Sarawak are small diesel-engined padi mills which are often found among the more prosperous communities. Unfortunately, although they give the girls more leisure, the results are not for the good of the people because the rice is milled too white and much of the food value is consequently lost.



Rice can be cooked in a variety of ways. A very simple method is to use a length of bamboo as this old Iban lady is doing, in the Ulu Entabat of the 3rd Division. The bamboo becomes charred and a fresh length is needed each time any cooking is undertaken. In some parts of Sarawak simple clay cooking pots are still made but generally speaking the durable iron pot bought in the bazaar is used.



Iban girls in the Ngemah River prepare rice for making beer or tuak. Rice is a source of drink as well as of food, and the glutinous type, which contains little protein, is readily converted into a mild but alcoholic beverage. The rice is brought down to the riverside, to save the trouble of carrying water up to the house, and cooked in lengths of bamboo on the shingle bank. It is then spread out on mats, mixed with yeast and placed in jars to ferment. The Iban tuak is a rather sweet drink but the borak brewed by the Kayans and Kenyahs has a bitter taste.



In northern Sarawak, as here among the Muruts of the Trusan, rice is cooked until it is soft and then good-sized dumplings are wrapped in leaves. It is a convenient way of dealing with the rice and the dumplings are particularly handy for travelling.



More generally, as among the Ibans and the Malays, the rice is cooked until the grains are soft and swollen but not until they have lost their shape. The rice is taken on the individual's plate and eaten by hand with salt and any vegetables and meat and fish available.

THE ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

SARAWAK is nowadays firmly wedded to a money economy. Even the most unsophisticated countryman has an acute and perceptive understanding of the value of a dollar. But this has not traditionally been the case throughout the country.

The inland people have always had certain special standards of wealth. Their money consisted of ancient beads and Chinese jars, Brunei brass cannon, gongs and buffaloes, mostly obtained by changing jungle produce with coastal traders. The rich man accumulated such wealth, which was a factor in assessing social prestige, marriage settlements, fines for breaches of native custom and payments of blood money when peace was made between feuding tribes. But in ordinary everyday life there was little need for any form of money. The longhouse community was well-knit and persons in need could turn to other members of the community for assistance. Most of the things in daily use could be made by the people themselves, including cloth which was woven from a form of cotton by some peoples and beaten out of bark by others. The main requirements which had to be brought in from the outside world were salt and iron. Although some

salt springs exist in the interior both these items had normally to be obtained by exchanging jungle produce with the downriver traders, Malays and Chinese, who had learned the value of money at a much earlier stage.

As the country became settled the demand for money and the things which it would buy increased, though the longhouse people still live a highly communal existence and they still today value traditional forms of wealth. Imported cloth, steel implements, tobacco, kerosene and guns came within the reach of far more people, provided that money could be earned. And consequently the production of goods for sale became an essential factor of existence.

Sarawak is primarily an agricultural country and the people must rely almost entirely on the produce of the soil to provide them with money. By far the most important cash crop is rubber which was introduced at the turn of the century and has now been planted all over the country. There are few large estates, which were discouraged by the Rajahs, but innumerable smallholdings. Except for some of the inland people such as the Muruts of the Ulu Trusan, the Kelabits, Penans and some Kayans and Kenyahs, rubber gardens are to be found everywhere and are owned by people of all races.

The rubber tree is not a very elegant one but it is hardy and simple to grow. It thrives in most places in Sarawak except in swamp land and deep peat and along the seashore. The average garden is quite small, perhaps two or three acres of irregularly planted, medium-sized trees with rather greyish bark and dark green leaves. It is common to describe the gardens, especially those which are not held under title, in terms of the number of rubber sheets which they can produce in a day.

Rubber is contained in the latex which is exuded from a cut in the bark of the tree. The bark is cut, or to use the correct expression, the rubber is tapped, early in the morning. The white, milky latex is collected in small containers at about 10 or 11 o'clock and taken to a convenient place, usually a little shack in the rubber garden, for processing. It is mixed with water and with either formic or acetic acid. The acid makes the rubber coagulate and it is then put through rollers to make it into the form of a sheet. When the sheet has dried it is smoked and it is then ready for export.

The trade in rubber is nearly all in the hands of Chinese who send it to Singapore

for sale in the great rubber market there. It pays a substantial export duty based on the Singapore price but although it is one of the most important sources of Government revenue, it is not a very satisfactory major crop. Most of the rubber produced is of low quality. Methods of tapping and processing are often extremely crude and many of the gardens have been planted on unsuitable soils. Many smallholders do not bother to tap when the price of rubber is low so that when the price is high there is a corresponding increase in the amount produced. Since the war this has varied from 55,000 tons in 1950 to 23,000 tons in 1954. The great advantage of rubber is that it is a widely distributed form of wealth and a reasonable price brings a high level of prosperity to all sections of the community.

Second only in importance to rubber is the cultivation of pepper, the familiar spice, which is a small berry produced by a vine. In Sarawak the production of pepper is very largely a Chinese industry. It is an intensive form of cultivation requiring limited space but considerable capital. The vine is trained up hardwood stakes and needs a great deal of fertiliser in the way of prawn refuse and burnt earth, that is earth which has been piled over a slow wood fire. The vines are allowed to grow to a height of ten to twelve feet. The gardens have a neat, orderly appearance; the dark green bushy vines in rows of military precision; the soil clean-weeded and devoid of any covering growth. The latter practice, frowned on by agricultural experts but universally followed by the Chinese, is a serious source of soil impoverishment.

The pepper berries are red when fresh; when sun-dried they turn black. The more valuable white pepper is produced from the same berries by soaking them in water to remove the outer skin before drying.

Pepper is a traditional produce of Borneo but it is cursed by two things, violent price fluctuations and a disease for which no remedy is known. Perhaps because of the intensive and rather unnatural form of cultivation to which it is subjected pepper is liable to be attacked by a disease which destroys whole gardens with appalling rapidity. And being a commodity where a little goes a long way it is often over-produced. Since the war prices for white pepper have varied from \$1,000 to rather more than \$100 per picul or 133 pounds. Such price changes have been typical of the history of pepper in Sarawak but nevertheless it is a vitally important ingredient in the economy of the country.

A product which has declined in importance is sago, the starch obtained from the pith-like interior of the trunks of certain large palm trees. In the early days sago was one of the most important products of Borneo and the Indonesian part of the island is still today known as Kalimantan or Sagoland.

There are two kinds of sago: a small thorny palm which grows in the hills of the interior and a very large, graceful palm which grows in swampy places in the lowlands and may be thorny or not. The former is an important substitute for padi for the interior people and the latter provides the sago of commerce and is eaten to some extent by the coastal Melanaus.

Sago palms have a life of about 13 years at the end of which they flower and die. The method of working the sago is basically the same in the case of both hill and lowland sagos. The mature palm is cut shortly before it flowers, the trunk cut into lengths and split. The interior pith is rasped or beaten and water is poured over it. The water carries off the starch which settles in a cheesy mass in a trough below. Dried, it forms commercial sago. It is an inferior foodstuff though it can be improved by mixing it with rice bran. It is, however, a useful crop, especially for the Melanaus, because the lowland palms grow in swamp areas where no other crop can be produced and the upland sago provides a most valuable food reserve in the interior should the padi harvest be a failure.

While sago has declined, timber has immensely increased in importance since the end of the Japanese war. The reasons for this are interesting. Although great areas of the interior of Sarawak are covered with old forest, most of the timber is extremely difficult to extract since people have tended to settle in the more accessible places and fell the jungle for padi planting. Before the war the interior timber was regarded as the most valuable kind. There was some production but it was on a limited scale.

Since the end of the war it has been found that some of the timbers which grow in the accessible swamp forests of the deltas are, in fact, extremely valuable. As a result there has been a rush to extract swamp forest timber, especially one known as ramin, and timber exports have risen steadily from 5,698 tons in 1947 to 316,853 tons valued at \$21,962,000 in 1955. However, until a satisfactory method has been found of working the interior forests, production has probably now reached its peak.

The timber firms are mostly Chinese and European owned. The most skillful loggers are Melanaus but numbers of Ibans, Kayans and Kenyahs also obtain well-paid employment with the timber firms. In one place in the upper Rejang elephants were introduced to help work the timber but the experiment was not very successful. Elephants were difficult to obtain (some were brought from circus work in England) and several of the animals died from some strange disease.

Another tree crop is the engkabang or illipe nut. This is the fruit of a large tree which is planted in considerable numbers along the inland rivers and is a source of excellent vegetable oil. Periodically the trees produce enormous quantities of nuts: as many as 16,000 tons have been exported in a single year, but it is a very erratic crop which only occurs once in every five or six years. Perhaps it is just as well because an engkabang year is one of innumerable quarrels, especially among Ibans, as descendants of men who migrated from an area to find new land return to their ancestral homes to claim shadowy rights to a share in the crop produced from trees allegedly planted by their ancestors.

Other small but wealth-producing Bornean specialities are edible birds' nests, made from the salivary excretion of species of small swifts which nest in large numbers in certain limestone caverns. Chinese greatly esteem a soup made from these birds' nests but for the European palate it is rather a dull form of food. Dammar is a resin, superficially resembling amber, which is produced in great lumps by some jungle trees. It is a source of varnish. Jelutong, a latex tapped in much the same way as rubber, is used in the manufacture of chewing gum. Jangkar and nyatorian (gutta percha) are jungle forms of rubber used for insulating cables. Rottans are long, climbing jungle palms which produce strong canes for furniture manufacture, fishing rods, ski poles and walking sticks.

In the past mineral production has been of some importance in Sarawak. Antimony ore, mercury, gold and coal were produced but except for a little gold, none of them is produced today. Rather small deposits of bauxite are being worked now, and before the war the Miri oilfield was a substantial producer. Today it has passed its peak and only produces about 50,000 tons a year though the entire production of Brunei, amounting to some 5,000,000 tons per year, is exported through Sarawak and there is a small refinery at Lutong. Apart from the possibility of further deposits of oil which are still being energetically searched for, there is

little mineral wealth.

Fish are caught in the sea and rivers and form an important source of food, but the fisheries are far from rich and much salt fish has to be imported. Similarly pigs, ducks and chickens are reared in small numbers but there are hardly enough to satisfy local demand. Of cattle there are virtually none, a few odd animals here and there and a small stock in the 5th Division. A variety of tropical fruits is cultivated but they are mostly irregular and seasonal in availability, while vegetables are produced for the local markets by Chinese gardeners.

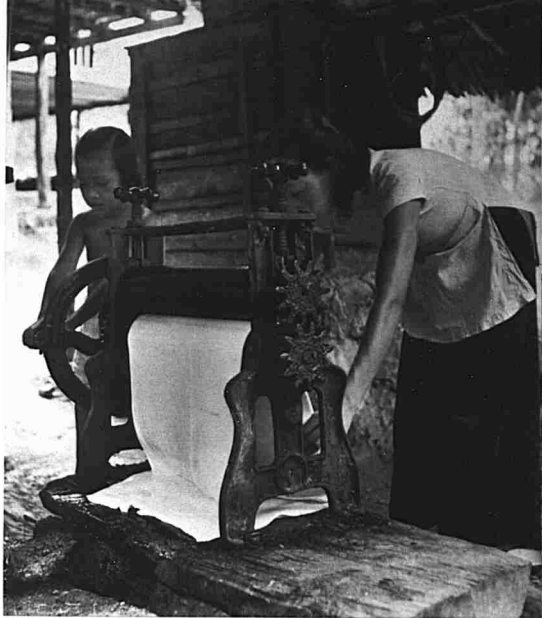
The limited production of the necessities of life—rice, meat, fish and vegetables—results in high living costs. Sarawak is undeniably a very expensive place and the new arrival is liable to feel that his dollar, with an exchange value of two shillings and fourpence, has a true value of about ninepence. It is, in fact, one of the most expensive countries in Asia but, paradoxically, wealth is so widely distributed that serious poverty is virtually unknown.



Loading sago at Kuching for export to Singapore. Sarawak exports a number of commodities such as rubber, pepper, sago and timber in order to pay for essential imports of cloth, petroleum, rice, sugar, machinery and many other things. Most of the trade is routed through Singapore.



Rubber is the most important cash crop in Sarawak. The first people to plant up large areas were Foochow Chinese who immigrated from China at the beginning of the century. It was intended that they should plant padi but the Foochows quickly realised that rubber was a much more profitable crop. In the intervening years they have greatly prospered and nowadays rubber is to be found everywhere in Sarawak and has been planted by people of all communities. Here two young Foochow girls tap rubber near Sarikei.



Foochow mother and daughter work a rubber mangle or roller. Nearly all the rubber gardens are owned by smallholders and worked by the entire family. Early in the morning a thin sliver of bark is removed and this causes the latex to flow and drain into cups suspended below. Later it is collected and strained, coagulated with acid and rolled into sheets for eventual drying and smoking.



Sarawak is famous for its pepper, the berries of a vine which thrives in India and South-East Asia. It requires careful cultivation and this is undertaken almost entirely by Chinese. The vine is trained to grow up tall, hardwood posts and is intensively treated with fertilisers, mostly the non-edible part of dried prawns, known as prawn dust, and burnt earth which has been heaped over a slow wood fire. Until it comes into bearing after two or three years, all young berries are carefully removed. This stimulates rapid growth.



The berries are red when they are ripe. They are removed from the vines and either dried immediately to produce black pepper, or fermented in water, the outer skin removed, and then dried to produce the rather more valuable white pepper. Although a very important crop, pepper is unfortunately highly speculative and there are very wide price fluctuations.

Sago is another important crop in Sarawak. It is the starch extracted from the pithy centre of a large palm tree which grows in the coastal swamps. The palm is felled, cut into logs and floated downstream to the nearest village. Here the logs are split and the pith rasped to the consistency of coarse sawdust.





The rasped pith is placed on a mat or in a large basket and stamped on and shaken while water is poured over it. The basket technique is used in the Matu area of the 3rd Division, while in the Mukah and Oya Rivers mats are favoured. The water washes out the sago which settles as a white cheesy mass in a trough below. After it has been dried it is ready for export.



A log raft near Linga in the 2nd Division ready to be towed out to an ocean-going ship for loading. Such rafts must be stoutly made to stand up to the strong tides and currents which are a feature of the rivers near their mouths. Another source of difficulty are the bars at the river mouths which generally hinder the approach of shipping. Only at the mouth of the Rejang can large ships cross the bar.

Manhandling a log through swamp jungle. The workers are Melanaus who have evolved a scientific system. They place the log to be moved on small logs pierced with holes at the ends. Through the latter poles are placed to lever the log along until it can be loaded onto the narrow gauge logging railway. Other peoples such as Ibans simply push and pull the log along by main force.





Engkabang or illipe nuts drying on the verandah of an Iban longhouse. The nuts are produced by a big tree which is semi-cultivated and planted near the streams, but unfortunately it only bears fruit every few years. The nuts produce a valuable vegetable oil and there is usually a good demand for it. Ibans retain a certain amount in bamboo containers for their own use. It becomes quite hard and will last for years.

Edible birds' nests are a famous Bornean product. They are the nests of species of small swifts which breed in the great limestone caverns which are found in various parts of the country. The nests are made from the saliva of the birds and are a favourite Chinese delicacy. Rights to the caves are owned by various natives and nests of good quality, such as these being auctioned under Government supervision at Long Lama in the Baram River, are extremely expensive.





A Kayan from above Belaga on the Balui River moves bales of dammar prior to taking them downriver for sale in the Bazaar. Dammar is a form of resin which is produced naturally in great lumps by certain forest trees in old, hill jungle, and is found lying about at the base of the trees. Burned in smaller pieces, it provided the native lamps before the introduction of kerosene and it is exported for the manufacture of varnishes.



Penans watch jangkar being weighed at a Government-supervised trading meeting in the Ulu Baram. Jangkar is a form of jungle rubber used for insulating cables. The Penans fell the tree and cut grooves in the bark to drain off the latex. The Penans are a timid, jungle people, easily imposed on and the trading meetings are supervised to ensure as far as possible that they are not swindled.

Jelutong is another form of jungle rubber obtained from a large tree which grows wild and is tapped in rather the same way as rubber. It is used in the manufacture of chewing gum. The jelutong does not have a very appetising appearance and the Ibans and others who collect it are always amused to be told that in America people pay for the privilege of chewing it!



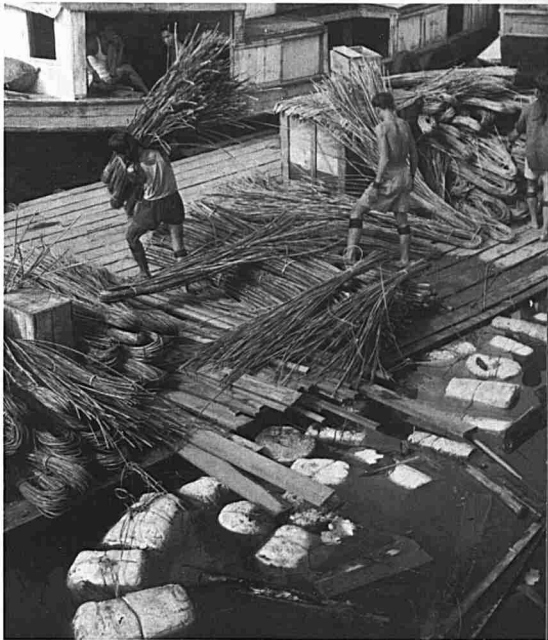


Rattan is a term covering various kinds of thorny, climbing palms which may grow to a length of a hundred feet or more. The palm canes are extremely tough and durable. In Borneo they are used for innumerable household purposes for lashings of all kinds. They are exported for manufacture into furniture and such goods as fishing rods and walking sticks.



Some rattan is used for making cane furniture inside Sarawak. It is a light, strong and comfortable material for chairs. Rattans are easy to cultivate and Ibans plant a certain number for their own use. Generally speaking, however, the wild canes are taken from the jungle.

At Marudi in the Baram consignments of rotan and jelutong await shipment to Kuching from where they will be sent to Singapore. A peculiarity of jelutong is that it decays on exposure to the air and when awaiting shipment it is best kept in water. It is a curious commercial fact that from Marudi it is cheaper to send produce to Kuching for transshipment to Singapore than to load direct into ocean-going vessels lying off the nearby port of Miri.



Formerly the Miri oilfield was an important producer. It had passed its peak when the Japanese occupied Sarawak. Today it produces only a trickle of oil but numerous old oil well derricks still stand gauntly among the scrub. The main producer now is the Seria field further to the north in Brunei.





The search for oil continues energetically all over Sarawak. Here the equipment for a seismic exploration party is carried by Iban porters through jungle near Marudi in the Baram. Enormous sums have been spent on the search for oil in Sarawak but so far nothing has been found to replace the Miri field.



Paloh, in the delta of the Rejang, has a long tradition of salt making. The roots and stems of nipa palms which have floated down to the sea are burned and the ashes, which contain a high proportion of salt, are collected. Sea water is poured through the ashes and the salt is washed out to produce a saturated solution for boiling down in oblong, bark containers. The latter can be used only once and must then be thrown away.

Salting fish for preservation at Belawai in the Rejang delta. Although some fish caught off Sarawak are put on ice and taken to the larger centres of population for sale, most of them are salted and a few smoked so that they can be transported inland more easily. Salt fish are also welcome during the north-east monsoon from about October to March when very little fishing can be undertaken.



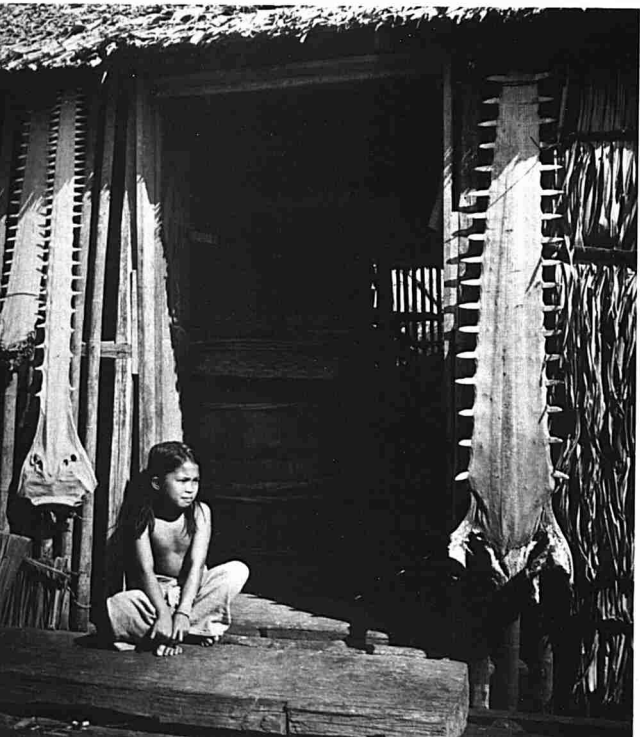


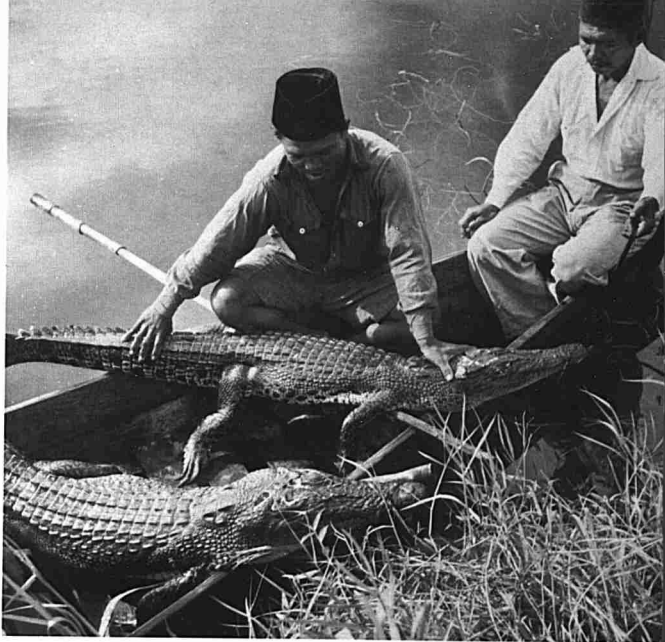
Sometimes the salt is simply rubbed into the flesh of the fish but at Kuala Lawas the Malays split the fish, dip them into a salt solution and then put them out on a verandah to dry in the sun. While many of the fishermen are Malays, the fish trade is almost entirely in the hands of Chinese.



Fish are caught in a variety of ways, in nets and traps and on various types of lines. At Kuala Lawas a Malay removes a large Ikan Dui or pomfret from his trap. The Ikan Dui is one of the best fishes in Sarawak waters. In such traps the fish are led along a bamboo fence as the tide goes down until they enter a funnel at the end from which they cannot escape.

Sometimes immense sawfish, a kind of ray, are taken in the fish traps. Young sawfish are commonly caught and offered for sale but the adults grow to an enormous size and must be treated very cautiously. A fine collection of the saws is to be seen at Belawai.





Crocodiles are not especially common in Sarawak but they are responsible for an occasional death. They are found not only in the rivers but along the coast as well. Quite a number of people specialise in the catching of crocodiles which are generally speared at night by lamplight. Unfortunately the crocodiles which are best worth catching are the smaller and less dangerous ones as the valuable belly skin decreases sharply in value with size.



Pineapples are one of the most common fruits and are particularly valuable because they thrive on peaty soils where other fruits do not do well. The best pineapples are planted by small communities of Bugis immigrants from the Celebes but as yet there is no canning of pineapples for export.



Sarawak produces many tropical fruits. A small Chinese girl sits by the family stall at Binatang. She is selling oranges, bananas, rose apples and a fruit known as buah belimbing. Although it might be thought that in a tropical country there would be little demand for temperate zone fruits, surprising quantities of oranges, apples, grapes and pears are imported to the bazaars.



Perhaps the most famous fruit in Borneo is the durian, a great spiny fruit which grows on a tall, cultivated tree. The large white seeds are contained in segments of sweet, smooth, edible flesh. The fruit has a rather rank smell, especially when it has been kept for a few days, and many Europeans dislike it for that reason.



Bananas are planted around every house and there are a great number of different kinds. They are cut down just before they are ripe and allowed to ripen on the stems hung up inside the house. Bananas are particularly simple plants to grow. A stem with its roots is planted out. The stem will continue to grow and will produce fruit and will throw up numerous young banana plants from its base which will in time produce fruit themselves.



Coconuts are also grown around the house and there is a certain amount of cultivation for copra production. Where the palms are tall they must be climbed by a man who twists the ripe nuts off their stalks and throws them down to the ground. They are an essential ingredient in nearly all forms of Malay cooking.

The Malays are not commercially minded and most of their businesses, when they exist at all, are quite tiny. In Kabong a young girl hawks cakes made from glutinous rice and coconut for sale to the neighbours. Such cakes and a cup of sweet coffee constitute the breakfast of the Malay villager.



A common plant in the tidal swamps is the nipa palm, a low-growing palm which thrives in brackish water. It is a very useful plant, for its leaves provide an excellent thatch which has a life of about seven years and the flower stem can be tapped for sugar. Here a Malay in the lower Rejang clears around the flower stem prior to making insertions in it and draining off the sweet sap.





At Kuala Lawas two Malay women prepare Kajangs, rough mats made from the inner bark of the nipa stem. Kajangs are waterproof and are used in the same way as tarpaulins to protect goods from the rain and to provide the walls of temporary houses.



Formerly the Tanjong people of Kanowit were a powerful tribe related to the Kayans of the upper Rejang. Nowadays they are greatly reduced in numbers but they are still the most skilled basket makers in Sarawak. In the past they made their own vegetable dyes from various jungle plants but nowadays they find it simpler to buy imported paints in the bazaar.



The only native silversmiths in Sarawak are immigrant Malohs from the Kapuas River in Indonesian Borneo. They specialise in making the silver girdles which are worn by Dayak girls on festive occasions. They are made from innumerable little silver rings threaded on lengths of rotan which are attached one to another to form a sort of corset.



A group of Kedayan girls sell their rubber sheets to a Chinese trader in Merapok on the Sabah border. With the proceeds they will buy their everyday requirements such as kerosene, salt, cigarettes and matches. The trader weighs the rubber with Chinese scales or daching. In his office he will have numerous account books maintained in Chinese characters. His native customers accept these accounts without question. It is true that most Chinese traders are fair and honest in their dealings with natives but it is a one-sided system since none of the customers ever has the knowledge necessary to check the accounts.

In Miri Bazaar Chinese traders weigh the all-important rubber sheets in the five-foot way outside their shop which is full of miscellaneous goods. It is always a source of surprise for visitors to see how nearly every shop deals in the same things but the fact is that nearly all smallholders have their own traders with whom they deal, largely on credit. It would not occur to them to try dealing next door and in fact the next door trader would not accept their custom.

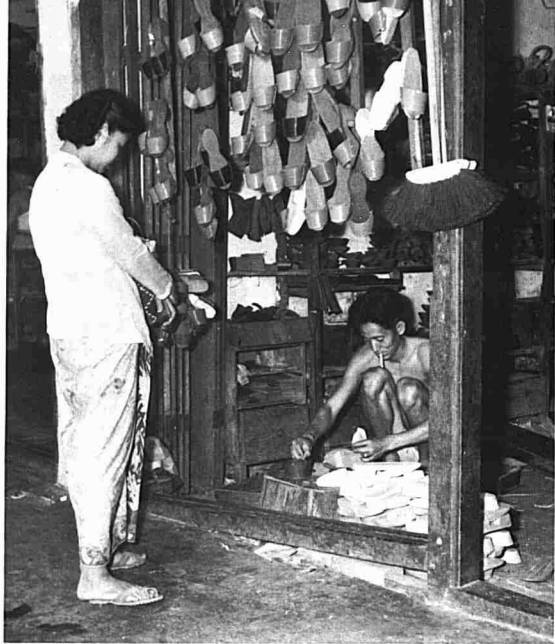


A group of Ibans who have completed their day's shopping await their canoes near the end of Simanggang Bazaar. The shops are nearly all built to standard designs, single or two storeys, a verandah or projecting upper room providing the covered five-foot way, a very necessary arrangement in a country where the sun is hot and the frequent rainstorms heavy.



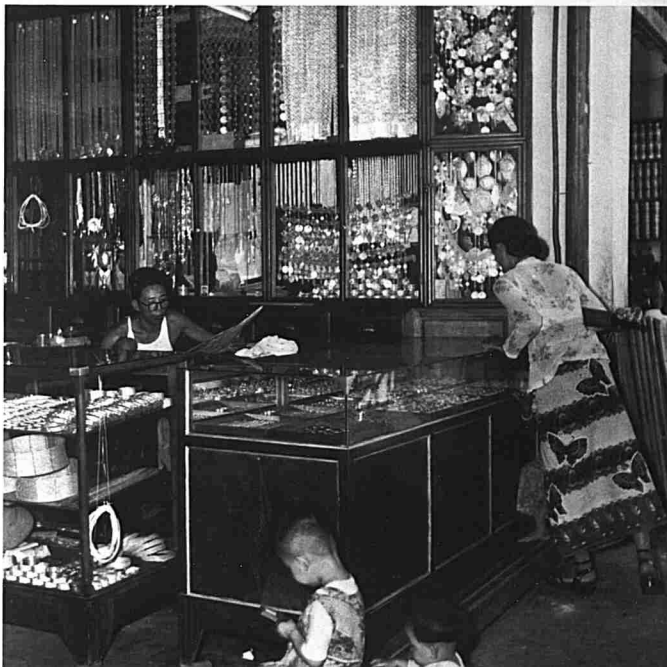


Chinese scales or daching are universally used throughout the country and are made by craftsmen in Kuching. The mode of manufacture and especially the drill are typically Chinese. It is remarkable how Chinese crafts are maintained abroad even by those Chinese who have never set foot in the land of their ancestors.



The making of simple wooden slippers is another Chinese importation. They are widely used by the Chinese themselves and they have caught on with the Malays and other local peoples. Their noisy clatter is a typical sound of the bazaars.

The Chinese are the universal jewellers and have shown much skill in adapting their products to conform with traditional Sarawak types of silver jewellery. Gold jewellery is bought largely as an investment. The goldsmiths act almost as bankers for they will generally undertake to buy back their gold whenever called upon to do so at a small fixed discount so that gold can readily be converted into cash.



Anything can be bought in a Chinese shop. Not every Malay has his own coconut palm and here in Sibu a trader is selling a coconut required for making a curry to a Malay lady who wears one of the big, black and red Melanau hats.





Turtle eggs are a popular delicacy and are produced in large numbers on certain islands off the extreme western coast of Sarawak. Profits from their sale are by tradition devoted to certain Islamic charities. They are a useful food, the shell tough and leathery, and the contents never become hard no matter how long the egg is boiled.



Pots and jars have always been valuable and useful articles in Sarawak. Ancient jars are objects of very great value and near Kuching Chinese potters have settled and produce not only copies of the jars treasured by natives but also household pots and utensils. They make use of a primitive potter's wheel which is kept in motion by an assistant who spins the wheel round with his foot, a system which has been in use in China for thousands of years.

Sibu is quite well known for its noodle manufacturers. On a number of open spaces near the bazaar the long strings of machine-made noodles are stretched out to dry. They are quite elastic and while they are drying a workman gently stretches them out still further to make the individual strings as fine as possible.



THE MELANAUS

THE MELANAUS are the original inhabitants of the coastal areas of Sarawak, from Rejang to Bintulu. They were a very distinct people, akin to the Kayans of the interior, but nowadays they are much mixed as a result of intermarriage with Malays. Their language and much stratified social system remain distinct however. A coastal Melanau can still make himself understood among the Kayans of the Ulu Rejang.

Originally they were pagans living in longhouses. A small proportion remain pagans, being known as Likaus, but the majority have been converted to Islam and a much smaller number to Christianity. In their physical appearance, their villages and their way of life, they bear a superficial resemblance to Malays. At the turn of the century there were still quite a number of Melanau longhouses but today it is doubtful whether there is a single true longhouse left. There are now about 45,976 Melanaus.

The Melanaus are famous for their sago. Living as they do in the coastal swamps where there is little well-drained land it is natural that they should cultivate swamp crops and they have always been known as producers of sago.

Originally this was their staple crop though in addition they cultivate some rice and collected jungle produce. At the present day they have planted a good deal of rubber on any available well-drained land. They provide skilled loggers in the swamp forests and undertake various types of sea fishing.

The rivers along which they live drain great peat swamps and the water is a dark chocolate colour, almost black from above, and contrasting strangely with the luxuriant green of the banks and the blue sky. The usual Melanau village is a straggling line of houses along the river bank, fronted by another line of trampling platforms actually over the river, on which the sago is worked. On the platforms people are generally hard at work, trampling the sago on mats or in large baskets, pouring water over the pith to carry the starch down to big troughs below, and everywhere there is an immense quacking from the innumerable ducks which feed on the sago refuse.

The houses are of the usual Malay type and are rectangular in shape, about thirty to forty feet long and twenty to thirty feet wide, with the long side facing the river. They stand on piles to keep them off the ground which is nearly always liable to flooding. In the better houses the piles and framework are made of hardwood, the best kinds of which will last for seventy to one hundred years, and the walls and floors of wooden planks. There are cheaper but less durable substitutes: the tough nibong palm for the framework, and sago thatch for the walls. Such houses cost little to build but only last seven to ten years.

In the front of the house is the living room. Generally Melanau sit on mats on the floor but it is common for the living room to be furnished rather uncomfortably with western style table and chairs, the elaborateness of the furniture reflecting the social position of the owner. Behind the living room are the sleeping quarters containing large wooden bedsteads under mosquito nets. The rooms are divided by plank partitions and lit by open wooden windows in the daytime (glass is only gradually coming into use) and kerosene lamps at night. The roof is made of sago palm thatch which will last for several years, though expensive houses will be roofed with ironwood shingle which are very strong and durable.

The kitchen occupies a cubby hole at the back of the house or, in the better houses, a small building separated from the main body of the house by a plank walk. There are no chimneys: the smoke merely escapes up through the roof,

and a separate kitchen not only keeps the house cleaner but is a useful fire precaution. Cooking is done with firewood on a low, earthen hearth. Water is probably brought up from the river but it is common to have an old empty petrol drum or a large jar situated in a convenient place to catch rain water from off the roof. Refuse is thrown through a hole in the floor to the ground below where it is taken care of by floods, chickens and ducks. The toilet is usually a small enclosed cubicle on the floating landing stage opposite the house. Sanitation is not highly developed in the country areas of Sarawak but because there is a heavy rainfall and such an abundance of water generally, there is little water-borne disease or dysentery, though hookworm is common.

Entrance is gained to the house up a flight of wooden steps, generally without any handrail, which is reached along a line of logs laid on the mud from the landing stage. The polite visitor will remove his shoes if he is wearing any, upon entrance. He will always be sure of a warm welcome. He will be invited to sit down and he will be offered whatever refreshments are available, generally coffee and sago biscuits, which consist of sago flour mixed with a little rice bran and which are crisp and tasty. He will find the house of substantial construction, spotlessly clean, cool and completely weatherproof.

As a result of living along the rivers in swamp country the Melanaus are an exceptionally amphibious people. The children learn to swim almost before they can walk. Nearly all progress is by canoe, sometimes even to visit the house next door. They possess a distinctive type of fishing boat called a barong, a big, beamy, seaworthy craft, propelled by a large sail when a favourable wind is blowing and by oars at other times. It is one of the only Bornean boats in which the rowers face the stern. In these boats the men go out to sea to places where lines of palm leaves have been anchored. For some reason shoals of fish love to rest beneath these leaves and when the Melanaus find a shoal they dive overboard and actually swim after the fish to drive them into a large dip net which is let down over the side of the barong and pulled up when the fish are in the net.

The Melanaus are a fine looking people; the men are strong, energetic and industrious and the girls are unusually pretty. As a people they are exceedingly likeable, humorous and intelligent but they are not pushing and forceful and

for that reason do not play as large a part in Sarawak as their abilities would appear to fit them for. They are, however, showing much interest and considerable aptitude in the development of local Government bodies.



At the entrance by river to the Melanau village of Matu, an idol standing in front of a model boat has been erected by pagan members of the community in the course of ceremonies for the cure of sickness.

The Melanau country is one of quiet flowing streams stained dark chocolate brown from the peat swamps. The land is flat and low lying and transport is everywhere by boat. In the swamps grow the sago palms which provide the people with a cash crop and there is some good alluvial rice land as well.





Women gossip on the village road in Oya on the coast. The road runs along the sandy strip which lies just behind the beach. The tempo of life beneath the coconut palms and fruit trees is a gentle one. When they go out of their houses the women wear a veil or a large, wide-brimmed, black and red palm leaf hat.

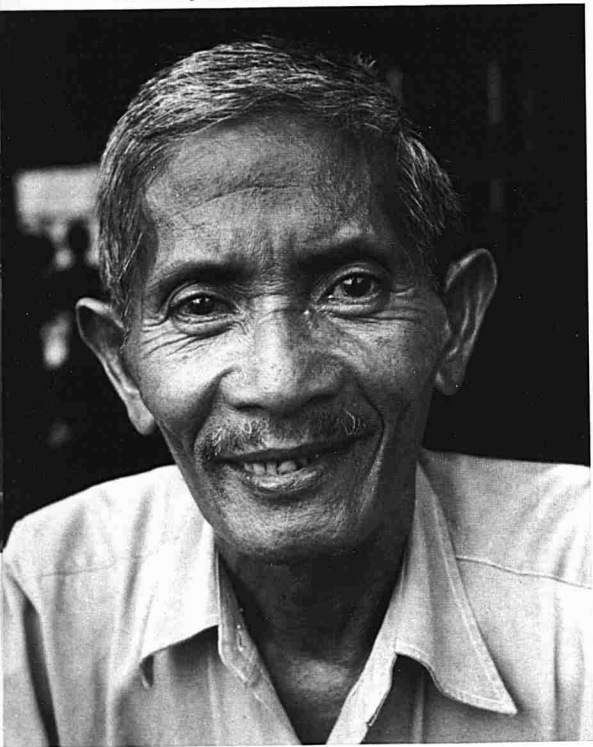


Very often the rivers are brackish or unfit for consumption and so drinking water must be brought from a source of fresh water, usually a small tributary stream above the village. Such work can be undertaken by the small children who become skilled paddlers at a very tender age.

In most Melanau villages the main street is the local river flowing past a line of houses on each bank. There are rarely any footpaths along the muddy top of the river bank though houses are sometimes connected by rickety plank walks. Generally, in order to go visiting, it is necessary to take a canoe.



The Tua Kampong or Headman of Kuala Matu, a cheerful, intelligent, good-natured person. Malay cultural and religious influence is strong in the Melanau area.





A Melanau fisherman and his wife overhaul a casting net in the bare living room of their house. The casting net is one found all over eastern Asia, a circular net with weights round the outside and attached to a cord in the centre. Skilfully thrown in shallow water it mushrooms out and, hitting the surface of the water, sinks slowly down on top of any unwary fish or prawns which are drawn into the net when it is pulled up.



At certain seasons of the year the sandy shallows along the coast swarm with shrimps and prawns. A Melanau at Belawai uses an immense shrimp net called a sungkor which he pushes along the shore in front of him. There are various kinds of shrimps and prawns of varying sizes but they are all good to eat and those which are not consumed fresh are cooked and dried, while the discarded legs and shells are sold as prawn refuse to provide a fertiliser for pepper gardens.

Boys making sago pearls, the form in which sago is generally eaten by the Melanaus. The sago flour is mixed with a little rice bran and slightly dampened. The mixture is shaken vigorously together in a hanging shallow basket and quickly forms itself into numerous pellets. These are dried again and baked to form small biscuits.





At Kampong Medong, upriver from Dalat, a Likau witch doctor is at work. The patient, the middle-aged woman in the foreground, had complained of headaches. The witch doctor sits on a length of rotan suspended from the ceiling and with much drum beating puts himself into a trance. Eventually he peers into the upturned drum where he claims he is able to see what sort of evil spirit had caused the headaches. Liberal fees must be paid and if one witch doctor is unsuccessful, the patient is always free to engage another!



Old ladies in Bintulu making the well-known Melanau women's hats. They are made from palm leaves, gaily coloured black and red, and are light and comfortable to wear. A rather more elaborate hat is made for the men, much smaller and more conical.

Melanau girls are renowned throughout Sarawak for their good looks and sweet dispositions. Daro was the fortunate home of this young lady but every village contains girls who would be considered beautiful in any country.





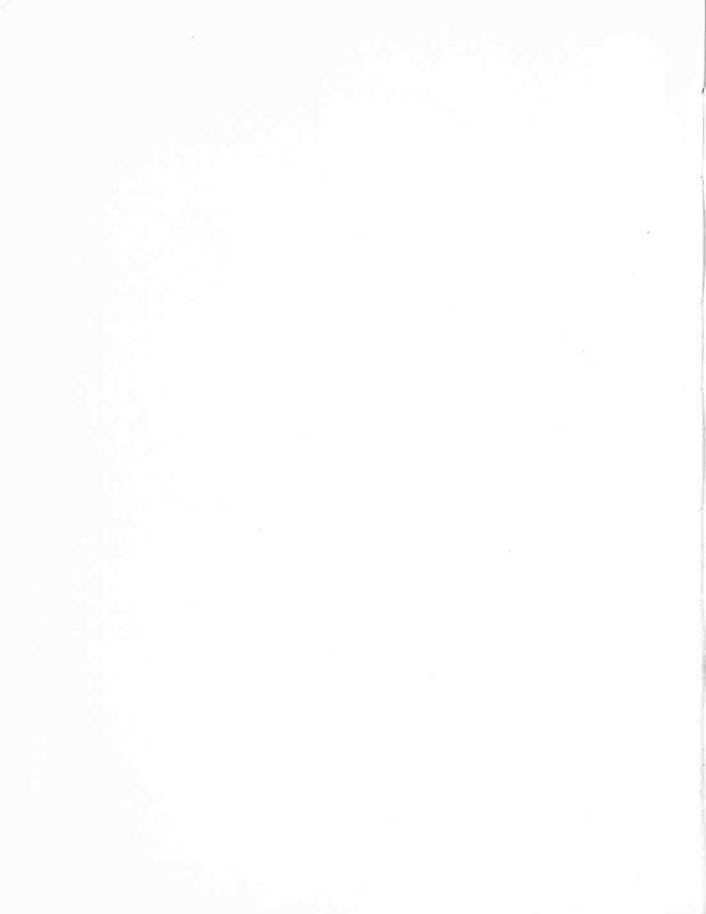
Two elderly ladies wear old fashioned and traditional Melanau jackets. They are preparing sireh, one of the less attractive habits of the country. The nut of the areca palm is cut into little pieces by the lady on the right. The pieces are chewed with sireh leaves, produced by a cultivated vine, and a little lime. The mixture is said to be soothing and good for the digestion but it is an unsightly habit. Constant chewing wears down the teeth which are also turned black and the saliva, which must constantly be ejected, is turned bright scarlet in colour. The habit is, fortunately, going out of favour with the younger generation.



A Kedayan woman of Merapok, near the Sabah border, rests from the labour of harvesting padi. The Kedayans are another small but distinctive group of Muslim people who are to be found in the 4th and 5th Divisions. Very little is known about them. They are said to be immigrants from Java. They are not, however, a river or a seafaring people but live inland. They possess rubber and fruit gardens and plant a good deal of hill padi.

In the Limbang Valley live numbers of Bisayas, a curious isolated group of people who may perhaps have originated in the Philippine Islands. They are certainly related to the Melanaus, although the areas in which the two races live in Sarawak are separated by a considerable extent of country. The Bisayas occupy some exceptionally fertile land and keep a fair number of buffaloes. Many are still pagans.





THE MALAYS

WHEN THE FIRST RAJAH came to Sarawak the Malays were politically the most important people in Borneo. At the time the Malays of Sarawak were in revolt against the Malays of Brunei. As a race they were more advanced than the other native peoples of the country. Many of them had received some education and were literate in the Jawi or Arabic script. The whole of Borneo was politically under Malay domination and had been for hundreds of years.

The Rajahs were successful in enlisting the support of the Malay element of the population and it was upon Malays that the Rajahs' Government very largely relied for support. It was they who provided many of the Government servants, particularly the administrators who stood between the small European element and the people of the country. It was they who loyally supported the Rajahs, provided the core of his fighting forces, manned his ships and held nearly all the high offices of State. The only schools which the Government maintained were Malay schools. Their language is the *lingua franca* not only of Sarawak but of the whole of South-East Asia as well.

The Malays are a coastal people who have spread far up the rivers of Sarawak.

Their villages are always to be found near water. They live in houses which are raised on stilts as the sites of the houses are generally low lying and liable to be flooded. Their villages or kampongs are compact. Each village is in the charge of an elected Headman or Tua Kampong who is paid a small salary. The Headman is the leader and representative of the community and he helps to settle family disputes. The Malays have their own family law based on the Koran and this family law is codified and recognized in the Courts. In the village it is the Islamic faith which keeps the community compact, for Malays are a religious people who attend their mosque regularly for prayers. The Mosque is the heart and nerve centre of the community in a very real sense.

It is in fact the religion of Islam which binds Malays together wherever they are to be found. It was brought to South-East Asia by Arab traders in the Middle Ages long before the impact of the west was felt in the area. Descendants of these Arab traders still bear honorific titles indicating their descent from the prophet. The true homeland of the Malays is probably Johore in southern Malaya, and parts of Sumatra, and from here, being seafaring people, they spread out to reach Borneo. In the course of time the Malays of Sarawak have in many cases intermarried with the local peoples and adopted their children; their wives and adopted children have become converts to Islam. The process is still going on.

Malays take their religion very seriously. The social and religious standing of the man or woman who has made the Haj or pilgrimage to Mecca is very high and every year many Malays desert their green and well-watered country to make the difficult and costly journey to the burning shores of Arabia. Their religious faith has been a strongly unifying force inculcating as it does a common way of life, a common ethical system and a common culture. It is very noticeable in Sarawak how the teachings of Islam quickly produce a considerable measure of uniformity among those who embrace that faith, regardless of the original racial stock.

While a strongly religious people the Malays of Sarawak are not in any way bigoted. On the contrary they are a very tolerant people. Their women go unveiled and there is no purdah. While the ban on the eating of pork is strictly observed, nearly all Malays smoke and a good many drink alcohol as well.

Although polygamy is permitted for Muslims, it is very rare indeed in Sarawak.

The main Malay areas are to be found in the coastal districts of the 1st and 2nd Divisions but nearly every town and administrative centre has a Malay community. Their numbers total about 136,232, or approximately one-sixth of the population of Sarawak. In the coastal districts of the 3rd Division the Malays and Melanaus are much mixed, and the Malays of the 5th Division are more closely akin to the people of Brunei whose customs and language differ in some respects from those prevailing in Sarawak. But wherever they are found Malays have many characteristics in common, and they form a remarkably homogeneous group not only in Borneo, but in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula as well, with close relations in Java and Celebes.

By temperament Malays are easy-going to a fault. At the same time they are, fundamentally, a highly intelligent people. They are capable of hard and sustained work in directions which interest or appeal to them. But economically they have not advanced very far largely because of their lack of thrift and their willingness to live on credit which Chinese traders are only too willing to supply. Islamic injunctions against receiving interest on money handicap Malays in business and they are so generous and open-handed that wealth is rarely retained. A Government officer, for instance, who retires from the service after many years of hard work with a substantial sum from his provident fund, is all too often quickly relieved of the greater part of his savings by friends and relatives whose requests for financial assistance he has not the heart to resist.

Intellectually Malays are a gifted and artistic people. They are intensely musical and they are born actors with a true theatrical sense. Their style of dancing is distinctive—the so-called gendang where one or more pairs of men dance to and fro facing and following each other, with much movement of the arms, to the music and singing of girls who sit behind a low curtain hung across the room. In modern Malay dancing boys and girls dance together in the same general style, but Sarawak Malays are conservative and this type of dancing is not yet accepted and is only to be seen when professional girl dancers are present.

Malays gain their livelihood largely by fishing and agriculture. They are traditionally good seamen and Sarawak Malays are no exception in this res-

pect. They also have a strongly mechanical turn of mind and given the training they learn to become good engineers. There are a few small Malay traders but they rarely achieve much success in this field. They provide many civil servants and a large proportion of the police force.

Personal relations with Malays are always agreeable. They are the most charming and delightful people to live amongst. They are extremely sensitive, possess great natural dignity, tact and good manners, and at the same time have a ready sense of humour.



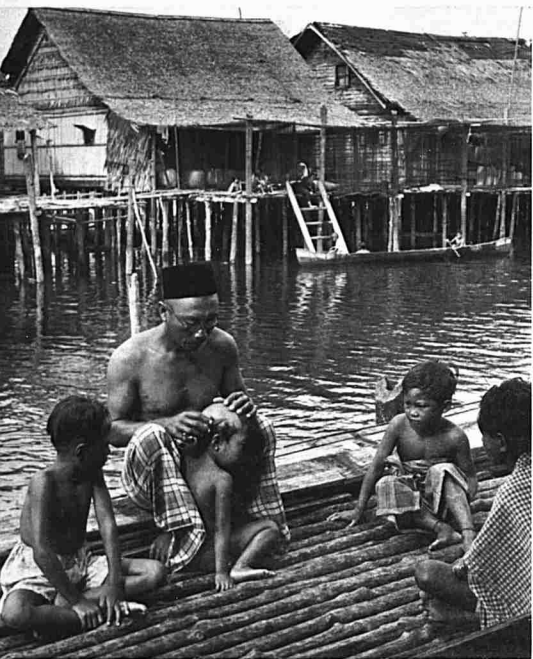
The daughter-in-law of Tua Kampong Zainal Abidin of Lawas, a lady of great charm and personal distinction. The mother of a large and happy family, she personifies the natural dignity and grace of her people.



Village scene. The houses crowd one upon another, each one perched on the top of piles, the only possible building system for a people whose houses are generally situated in tidal areas liable to flood. Houses such as these are cheap and simple to make, the walls and roofs being of palm leaf thatch, and they have a useful life of about seven years.

Malay kitchen. The emphasis is on simplicity. Wood is used for fuel and the hearth is a shallow box filled with clay and raised off the ground. The smoke escapes through the roof. The jars hold water carried up from the river. The walls are made from bark. Food consists largely of rice, fish, some pickles and vegetables.





A kindly fisherman of Awat-Awat, at the mouth of one of the channels through which the Trusan River reaches the sea, gives some of the village children a much needed haircut. In a village such as this the children learn to swim at a very early age and soon become expert boatmen as well. Even to cross the village street means stepping into a canoe.



The Malays are a very bath conscious people. In Awat-Awat the villagers are always short of fresh water and so this mother must give her small daughter a salt water shower in the evening.



Weddings are very elaborate and it is customary for the bridegroom to wear some smart and colourful uniform produced to a local design. At a wedding in Lawas the bridegroom is brought to the bride's house on a float towed by the Government launch. Friends carry elaborate wedding ornaments and the Tuan Iman, the religious head of the community, holds the bridegroom's hand.

Marriage has a strongly religious significance. Before a wedding in Kuching the bride reads the Koran at a prayer meeting attended by the neighbours. Behind her is the marriage bed. The display of ornamental skewered eggs which are painted red appears to be a local Sarawak custom.





Later, at the wedding of the same girl, the guests bless the happy couple with *tepong tawa*, a solution of white lime which is smeared on the foreheads of bride and groom, while a few grains of rice, dyed yellow with saffron, are scattered over their heads. Each guest in turn comes forward to play his or her part in the traditional ceremonial.



Malays also have their traditional types of medicine. A speciality of Lundu is the preparation of the ingredients for a mixture much valued by pregnant women. It is made from the bud of a Giant Flower or *Rafflesia* which is sliced up fine and mixed with various spices.

Malays are devout Muslims and every year those who can afford it set off on the long, costly and arduous pilgrimage or Haj to Mecca. The time of departure is always a colourful affair when hundreds of relatives come down to the quay to see the pilgrims off and to wish them well.





Return from the Haj. The happy pilgrim strides down the gangplank, happy in the knowledge of his achievement and the spiritual contentment which it brings. In his arms he holds his little son who has made the pilgrimage too and wears a Bedouin costume in miniature, while a friend offers his congratulations upon the completion of a successful journey.



Only the men and boys take part in the Malay form of dancing known as the gendang. Behind a low curtain stretched across the room sit the girls, beating out a strong rhythm on the drums and singing to the dancers, one at a time. On the other side of the curtain the men sit, or stand stiffly around and every now and again step on to the usually tiny dance floor with a friend to glide up and down towards and away from each other, reversing and pirouetting.

The gendang seems rather dull for the girls who never dance themselves. But they still seem to enjoy the party as they sing the well-known Malay songs which sound oddly South American and discuss among themselves the boys on the dance floor. The boys too have a chance to show off and to flirt with the girls who are in no way concealed by the curtain.



A Malay speciality is Sate, little pieces of savoury beef or chicken grilled on skewers over a charcoal fire and eaten with rice and a hot and appetising sauce of ground-up peanuts. Cooking, however, is generally in the form of curry, hot and highly spiced, but much smoother than the Indian curries because of the amount of coconut which is introduced into the dishes.





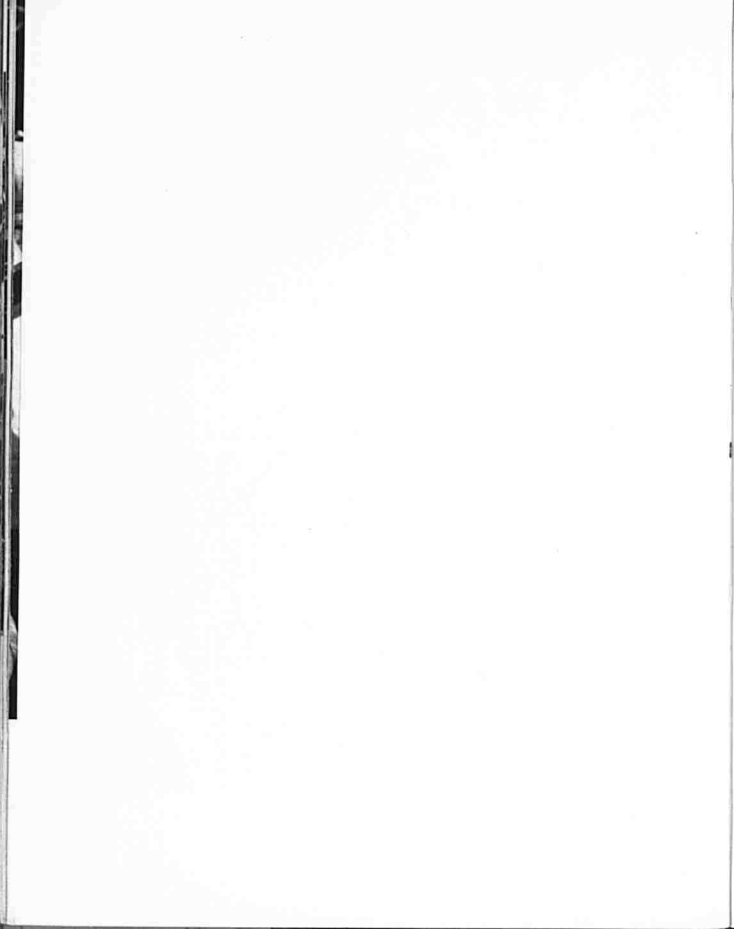
Immediately before their New Year the Malays, like good Muslims everywhere, observe the fast of Ramadan known as Bulan Puasa. For a month no food must pass their lips between dawn and dusk. When the fast is over the festival or Hari Raya is celebrated and everyone must needs go visiting to wish their neighbours a happy New Year, wear their best clothes, talk of old times and drink innumerable glasses of lemonade and sometimes something stronger, and eat the excellent cakes which every housewife has baked for the occasion.



The Malays are extremely musical. They love to sing to the notes of their own types of guitar. There is a great resemblance to Spanish in the melodies and songs. Perhaps they have their origin in the advent of Spaniards and Portuguese in the Eastern seas in the 16th century. An especially valued type of guitar is that in which the end is bound in the skin of a monitor lizard.

The Malays would perhaps advance faster in the world if they did not take life quite so easily. But there is no lack of lively intelligence when they do care to exert themselves. Abdul Jaman is a well-known trader in the 5th Division, quick, enterprising and possessed of a most cheerful and humorous outlook on life.





THE CHINESE

THE CHINESE number about 244,435 or approximately one-third of the total population of Sarawak, and from the economic point of view they are by far the most important racial group in the country. They are the universal middlemen and traders. Not only do they completely dominate the export trade in rubber, pepper and sago but they control a substantial part of the import trade and provide nearly all the shopkeepers, artisans and small businessmen of every description. They produce considerable quantities of rubber, most of Sarawak's pepper and all the locally grown market produce. Professional men are largely Chinese and so are large numbers of Government officers.

Chinese wealth and influence have been built up slowly over the years and the connection with Borneo is a long standing one. It is known that Chinese have been trading with Borneo for hundreds of years, travelling in their big ocean-going junks. From China they brought pottery, porcelain, beads, cloth and piece goods, and they took away with them pepper, shark fins, gold dust, camphor, ironwood for coffins, birds' nests, the casques of hornbills for carving into ornaments, rhinoceros horns and the ingredients for Chinese medicines, such as the

gallstones of monkeys. Even today old Chinese jars are among the most treasured possessions of the people of the country and dumps of innumerable broken fragments of porcelain mark the sites of ancient trading centres where, it would seem, the traders sorted out their wares and threw away the broken pieces.

Probably the first Chinese to come to Sarawak were the Hokkiens, the tough, self-reliant, seafaring people of Amoy in Fukien Province, and the Hakkas who provided the early gold miners and whose rebellion in 1857 nearly resulted in the overthrow of the then infant state of Sarawak. They were followed by people from many of the other groups of south China, the most important being the Teochews, Hainanese, Henghuas, Cantonese and Foochows. The Foochows were the last to arrive. There are Chinese families which have been residing continuously in Sarawak for more than one hundred years. Such long established residents are closely integrated into the life of Sarawak, but although this is less so with more recent arrivals, it is true to say that the Chinese have adapted themselves with extraordinary skill and understanding to their new environment.

The Chinese are largely confined to the coastal areas, and to the neighbourhood of the settlements or bazaars which are almost entirely Chinese. In trade matters they perform an essential function, for they provide the market without which the native producer could never hope to sell his goods profitably. They are indefatigable businessmen and always ready to take the risks without which trade must stagnate. The Rajahs clearly recognised this useful function, but strictly limited the amount of land which Chinese could acquire. This was to prevent the enterprising and industrious Chinese from acquiring an undue proportion of land from the easy-going and improvident natives of Sarawak. As a result there are relatively few land disputes between the races, although there is now a good deal of land hunger on the part of the Chinese who are rapidly increasing in numbers.

The Chinese produce some padi and when they set their hands to it, they are very efficient and successful padi planters. They have, however, generally found it more profitable to plant something else. This is what happened in the case of the Foochows. About the year 1900 American Methodist Missionaries persuaded the Rajah that it would be an excellent thing for the economy of Sarawak if selected families of Christian Foochows were permitted to immigrate and

plant padi in the then empty country in the lower reaches of the Rejang River. The Rajah agreed and the Foochows came, but they found padi planting unprofitable and so turned to rubber planting. They planted up large areas of rubber, very often unfortunately on unsuitable peaty soils, and they prospered exceedingly during recurrent rubber booms. When prices of rubber were low, they borrowed land from Malays and Ibans, since their own was under rubber, and produced abundant crops of padi. When prices of rubber were high they returned to rubber tapping. Today the Foochows are a very well-to-do community and their industry and thrift have brought the Rejang quite exceptional prosperity.

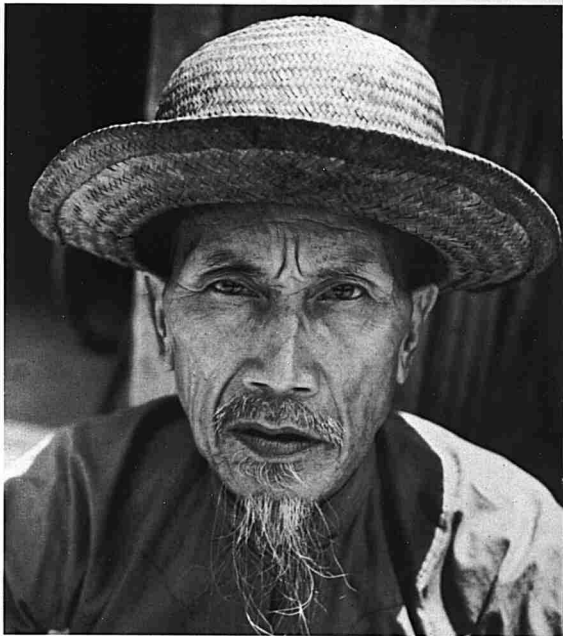
Relations between Chinese and natives vary from place to place. Inevitably there is some dislike on the part of natives for Chinese, who are the rich people of the country, and rich people are never entirely popular. For the native the Chinese, not the European, is the capitalist, for there are so few Europeans that their influence is much less noticeable. Sometimes Chinese are guilty of sharp practice in their dealings with native customers and even though this is comparatively rare, it nevertheless generates a disproportionate amount of ill will. Yet on the whole race relations are astonishingly good, and in every bazaar and other centre are to be found Chinese who have a deep and sympathetic understanding of the other peoples of Sarawak, speak their languages admirably, and have established relationships of perfect mutual trust and confidence with their native neighbours.

In Government service the Chinese play a particularly important part. They provide an overwhelmingly large proportion of the technicians, clerks and hospital staff, the typists, accountants and wireless operators. In the past Chinese have not occupied posts in the administration, but they now have the same opportunities as Dayaks, Malays and other indigenous peoples to become administrative officers and magistrates.

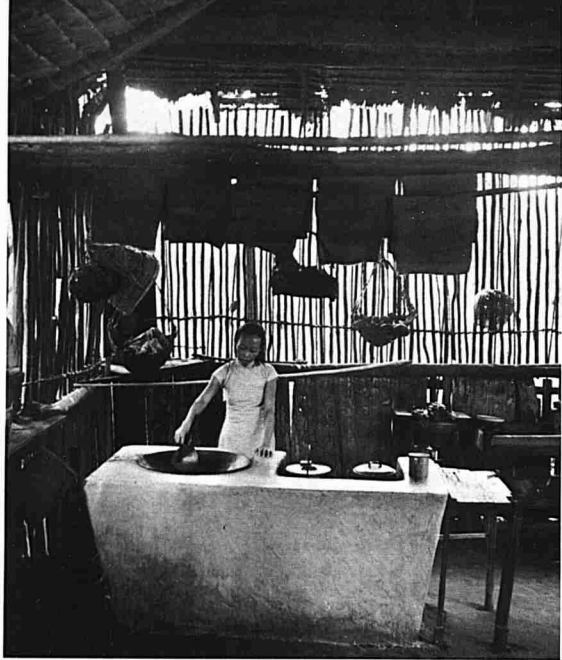
The great advantage which the Chinese have always enjoyed over the indigenous peoples of Sarawak, apart from their industry, lies in their superior education. Chinese are the most dedicated educationalists in the world. Wherever they have settled they have immediately financed and opened their own schools where children are taught reading and writing in Chinese characters, mathematics and Chinese history. Their education has imperfections but it is far better than that received by any of the native peoples. In addition many Chinese are Christians

and they have always made up the largest proportion of students in the English Mission Schools.

The Chinese of Sarawak, being all southern Chinese, are still very divided into the widely different dialect groups of their home areas, although the teaching of Mandarin, the language of northern China which has now been accepted as the national language, is slowly bringing them together. The various groups have differences but at the same time they have certain characteristics in common. They are cheerful, adaptable and hardworking; they are a reasonable people much given to compromise; they have no bigoted notions on life; they are very tolerant and they have a great sense of humour. If they have one particularly strong characteristic it is a pride in their own history and culture, and the biggest problem in Sarawak today is to reconcile that eminently reasonable pride of race with the need to establish the Chinese as a fully integrated and harmonious part of Sarawak's varied, multi-racial society.



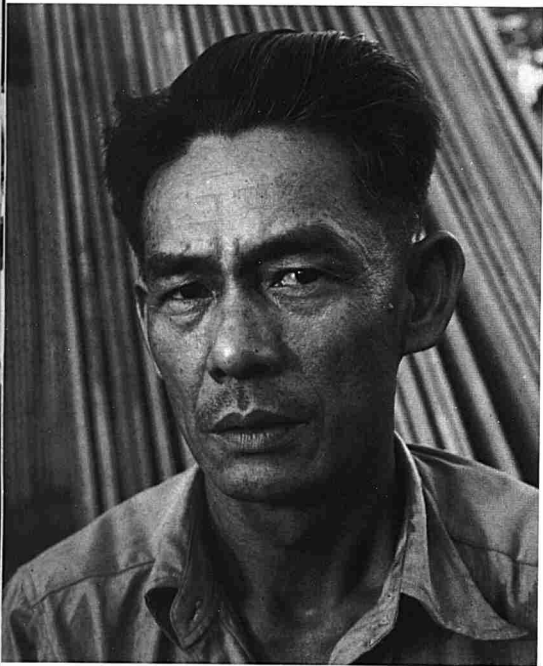
An elderly Foochow immigrant to the lower Rejang differs but little in appearance from his compatriots of Mintsin near Foochow. He has adapted himself to life in a tropical country but wears the wide-brimmed straw hat and the typical jacket of his homeland. He came to Sarawak as a poor coolie and by dint of thrift and hard work he and his family have achieved a position, if not of affluence, at any rate of comfortable prosperity.



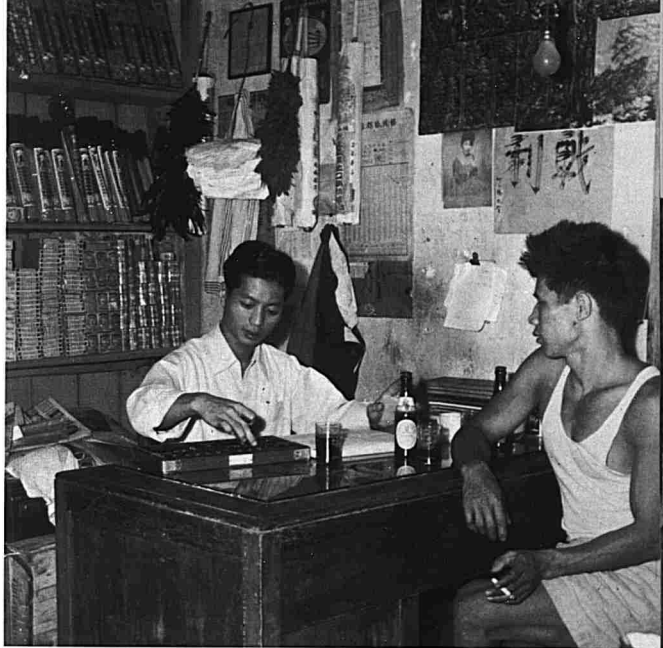
A Foochow housewife cooks the lunch for her family in the kitchen of her home in the country. It is a simple but comfortable building with palm-leaf thatch roof and rubber sheets hanging up to dry over the clay cooking stove. Everything is spotlessly clean and the meals which she produces for her large family are tasty and appetising.

The family sit down to a nutritious lunch of bowls of rice eaten with pork, vegetables and bean curd cakes, the latter made from imported soya beans, a valuable low-cost source of protein. The Chinese are increasing rapidly in numbers and their families are nearly always large and healthy. The food is eaten with the help of chopsticks, the traditional Chinese feeding implements which are simple, efficient and convenient.

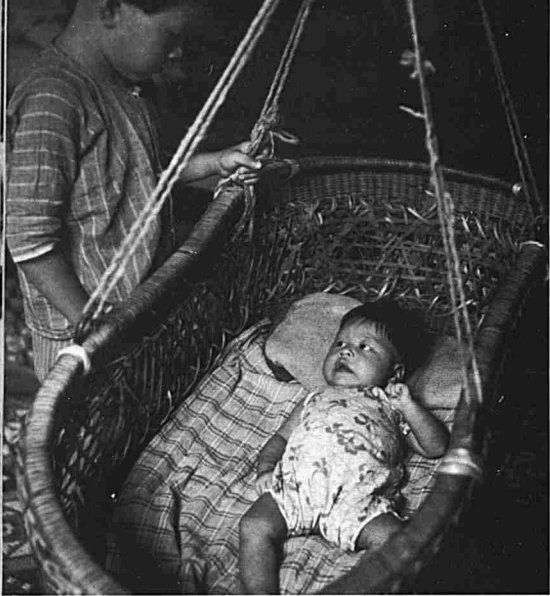




A leading contractor of Lawas. A careful, reliable man, he did not contract for very large works but those which he undertook were always characterised by good organisation involving the employment of both Chinese and Malay workers and by excellent craftsmanship. The Chinese dominate the contracting business throughout Sarawak and any form of construction work is very largely dependent on their skill and ability.



Two traders of Kuching discuss a business deal over a friendly glass of Guinness, a drink that is extremely popular among the Chinese of Sarawak. One of them is using an abacus, the Chinese calculating machine. Chinese learn their mathematics with an abacus and a really skilled operator can produce results that for accuracy and speed will rival those obtained from any western calculating machine.



Foochow cradle. Chinese housewives are exceptionally busy and hardworking people and the older children look after their young brothers and sisters as a matter of course. The cradle is merely a large basket produced by a neighbour down the road and suspended from the ceiling.



A small Chinese boy views the camera with some suspicion. Chinese adore their children, and centuries of ancestor worship have engrained a deep-seated preference for boys on the part of many of the less sophisticated members of the community.



The Chinese are careful and thrifty in all things, including the use of land. Near Kanowit a pepper gardener works in his garden. The pepper cuttings have been newly planted and are shaded under clumps of grass. In between the pepper vines are planted yams, the leaves and tubers of which are used for pig food.



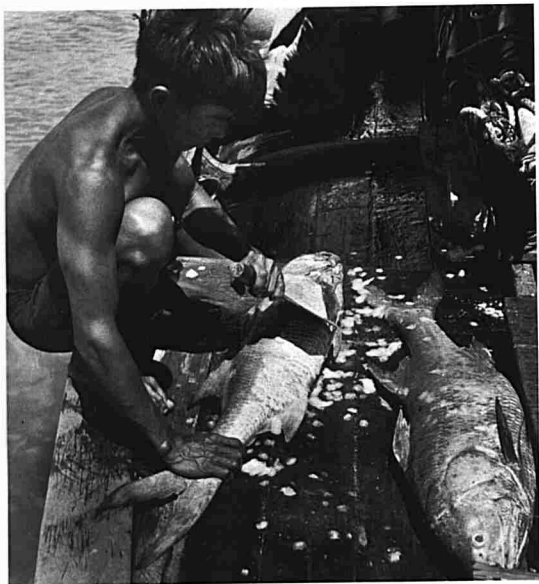
View over a tiny sauce factory. The Chinese are quick to turn their hands to any kind of business. The small factory belonged to a Foochow rubber planter who also planted pepper and ran a small village store. The sauce is a traditional one, made from soya beans which are pounded and allowed to ferment in jars in the sun.



A Foochow father helps his son to do his homework writing Chinese characters. The Chinese are devoted to their language and culture and in town and country alike are to be found numerous schools at which the children learn to read and write in the language of their forefathers.

Children start to work at a very early age. The families of rubber gardeners tap rubber in the morning and go to school in the afternoon. Here a small boy teaches his still smaller sister how to tap rubber. The rubber is of indifferent quality and unskilful tapping often damages the bark but nevertheless the efforts of such children do much to increase the wealth of the community as a whole.





At Belawai, in the delta of the Rejang, a Henghua fisherman cleans his catch before it is salted and dried. The Henghuas, a group of people who originate in Fukien Province, are the best fishermen in Sarawak. They go far out to sea in quite small junks and produce considerable quantities of fish which are partly salted and partly sold in the fresh state.



When the fishermen come back to port they must clean and dry their nets and repair them where necessary. At the Henghua Co-operative village near Kuching a sturdy fisherman carries a long net back from the drying racks.



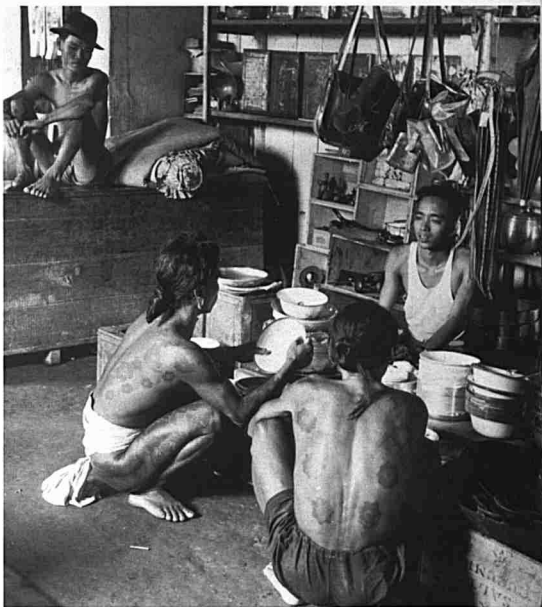
When they are not in school the children of families who live in the bazaar will sometimes amuse themselves on the five-foot way in front of the shops. Here a friendly Kuching stationer has lent a group of children some illustrated comics imported from Hong Kong to look at.

Chinese turn their hand to every sort of craft. They are the universal artisans. For instance nearly all tinsmiths in Sarawak are Chinese. They produce a variety of pots and pans; funnels, sieves for straining latex and kerosene pumps; dustbins for the bazaar and watertight travelling tins for the country.



In Miri a shopkeeper dozes during the midday heat, his fruit and cigarettes untended. But Sarawak is an honest country and he is unlikely to find anything missing when he wakes up again.





Chinese shopkeepers show great skill in catering for their native customers. The businesses are largely run on credit and little money changes hands. These Meluan Dayaks have brought in rubber or padi and they will take away with them from the Foochow shopkeeper anything from salt and kerosene to enamelled dishes and gaily coloured umbrellas. Such trading calls for a high degree of mutual trust and it is the shopkeeper with a reputation for fair dealing who prospers.



Outside the Miri fish market a large catch of small fish has been dumped because there is no more room inside. The fish are small and bony but they provide a useful food for the poorer members of the community. Fish which are not sold fresh are salted, dried or smoked.



Pickle vendor in the Kuching market. Some pickles are home-made. Others are imported from China. Pickles are important for people who live on a diet of rice because a small quantity helps to make the slightly unappetising bowl of rice very much more interesting and tasty. They also provide the essential salt in the diet since Chinese never put plain salt on the table at their meals.



Chinese do not confine themselves to static shops. Many of them are boat-hawkers with a little floating shop in a covered boat which they row from one village or longhouse to another. In the Bawan River near Kanowit the boat-hawker weighs out some tobacco for Iban customers while his assistant makes a note of the transaction. Boat-hawkers live lonely and sometimes dangerous lives but they seem content. Overheads are small and profits correspondingly large.

In the Kanowit River a Chinese launch pulls into the bank while Iban tuba fishing is in progress. Communications up and down the rivers are largely maintained by Chinese launch owners who provide reliable and safe, if slow and uncomfortable, services for passengers and goods. Competition is fierce and as a result the country people are benefited by a reasonably efficient and economical transport system.





The Chinese are the market gardeners of Sarawak and they produce all the locally grown vegetables. Soils in Sarawak are poor and unpromising but almost every Chinese house with a garden will have a small, productive vegetable plot. Here a Hakka woman at Lawas tends her cabbages.

The house of a Chinese gardener near Kapit Bazaar, ramshackle and tumbledown, with great strings of washing hung out to dry and piles of firewood under the house. Such a house does not indicate great wealth on the part of the owner but it is highly probable that he will eventually save enough to build himself a substantial residence for the enjoyment of his old age.



Padi milling is another form of business where the Chinese play an important part. Pounding padi by hand to produce rice is a tiresome business and local producers, both natives and Chinese, prefer to bring their padi to a miller who, in return for a small fee, or sometimes in exchange for the bran only, will put the padi through his mill to produce crisp, new, white rice.





Not all Chinese plant padi but when they do they usually produce exceedingly good results, such as this girl from Binatang harvesting ears which reach far above her head. Normally the harvester must stoop to collect the padi ears.

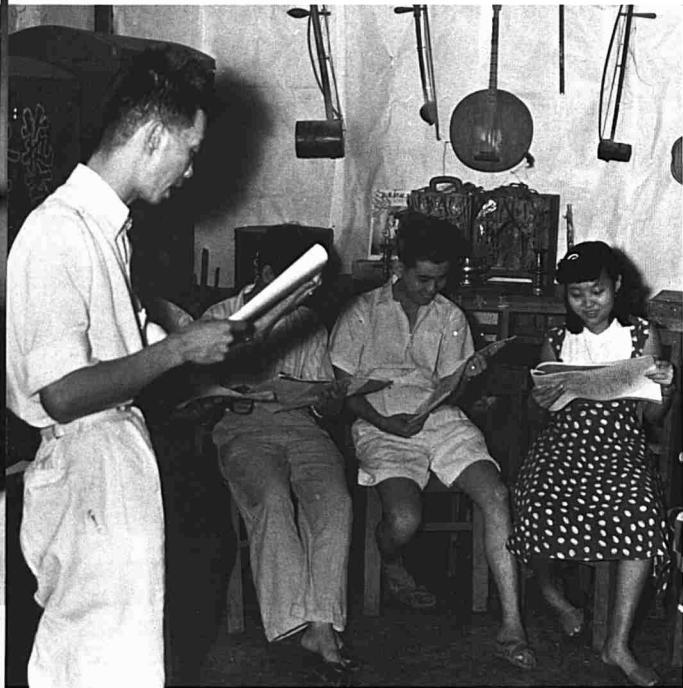


Hugo Low, until his recent retirement Chief Clerk in Lawas, has spent about a quarter of a century in Government service as his father, who was also Chief Clerk in Lawas, did before him. A keen sportsman who keeps his own pack of dogs for hunting pig, and an indefatigable gardener, Hugo is liked and respected by members of all racial communities. He personifies the best type of Chinese Government servant, steady, reliable and loyal; the counsellor and friend of his Resident and District Officer.



A young Foochow schoolgirl. Good looking and with the natural grace of her people, but simply dressed. Her hair is severely bobbed although permanent waves are common amongst more sophisticated girls. Such schoolchildren take their studies very seriously.

Chinese are extremely keen on the theatre and in Sarawak there are a number of amateur societies where the members, mostly young shop assistants, amuse themselves by presenting the old traditional dramas of their ancestors. Here in Kuching members of the Fukien Dramatic Society read a play in their headquarters, the back of a shophouse in the suburb of Padungan.





On special occasions the Fukien Dramatic Society performs a play on an old stage situated in front of one of the temples in the city. There is no charge for admission and crowds of interested spectators attend. From their slender savings the members of the Society have succeeded in purchasing elaborate wardrobes of traditional costumes to wear upon such occasions.



On the Fifteenth day of the Eighth Lunar Month the Chinese of Sarawak still celebrate the Mid-Autumn or Moon Cake Festival, really a harvest festival. In Chinese business matters it is an important time of settlement when debts must be paid and accounts squared. The full moon of Mid-Autumn is round and symbolises a happy, complete family circle. In Kuching an old lady presides over the Festival of Reunions, as it is also known, with her grandchildren. At this season it is customary to exchange gifts of rich and highly spiced cakes, the largest of which are divided up among the family and are known as cakes of Happy Reunion.

In the Moon Cake shops the employees are busily at work preparing the necessary cakes, for which there is always a tremendous demand. After the work is finished and the seasonal demand catered for, the proprietors entertain their work people to an immense Chinese dinner.



A large proportion of the Chinese in Sarawak are Christians but many of them retain their old beliefs as this old lady offering a prayer before a small temple shrine in Kuching.





During the celebration of a traditional Chinese Festival in Kuching the usually rather deserted Chinese temples spring to life. Candles and incense are burned by devout worshippers, generally women, and enormous quantities of paper money are offered up on great bonfires.

THE IBANS

THE IBANS OR SEA DAYAKS are the most numerous racial group in Sarawak. They number about 241,544 souls, roughly a third of the total population. They are to be found in most parts of the country but principally in the 2nd and 3rd Divisions. A hundred years ago they were nearly all located in what is now the 2nd Division but since then they have spread over the 3rd Division and into the 4th Division and 5th Division as well. They appear to have reached Sarawak from the Kapuas area of Indonesian Borneo where many Ibans and closely related peoples still live.

They are a lively, restless, energetic people much given to wandering. As famous "Headhunters of Borneo" they are probably the best known people in the entire island, for although headhunting was formerly practised by many Bornean peoples, it was the Ibans who undertook it on the largest scale and their readiness to go out to sea on their forays not only brought them into relatively early contact with Europeans but also into conflict with the first Rajah. It was for this reason that they were known as Sea Dayaks although they do not live along the sea coast. When James Brooke first came to Sarawak the Ibans were

a truculent, powerful community who terrorised the coasts and rivers. Their piratical power was broken by the Rajah with the help of the British Navy in the forties of the last century.

The Iban way of life is highly communal and on the whole very free and democratic. They generally live in a longhouse, a village community under a single roof. The longhouse consists of a long, open verandah called a tanju, running the whole length of the house. Parallel to this, inside the house proper, there is a long, covered room also running the whole length of the house, called the ruai. This occupies about half of the covered portion of the house. The inner half is made up of a line of individual rooms or bileks which are generally referred to as doors. The tanju is used for work purposes, drying padi and clothes and for various ceremonies. The ruai is a communal room for social occasions and the bilek is where the individual family eats and sleeps. Above the bilek is a loft where padi and household goods are stored.

Each family is responsible for building and maintaining one segment of the house, the bilek and the part of the ruai and tanju opposite. There are well established rules and customs for building and maintaining the individual shares, and penalties exist for failure to maintain them properly.

The average family door will contain about six to eight people, husband and wife, two or three children and some odd relatives. Each door has its head or tuai bilek. The number of doors in a house varies considerably, anything from ten to sixty, though the average number is about fifteen. The various tuai bileks elect a headman for the house, the tuai rumah, who acts as the representative of the house and has powers to settle small disputes. All family and social disputes are settled according to Iban customary law. The headmen for a given area, usually a river valley containing twenty to thirty houses, elect their own Chief or Penghulu who is paid a salary by the Government and is responsible for the good order of his area and for settling the more important family and land disputes. He is supposed to visit every house in his District at least twice a year.

There are no hereditary chiefs. While the Penghulus and headmen are usually well-to-do by Iban standards, as they must undertake a good deal of entertainment, they maintain no state and their share of the longhouse is indistinguishable from that of anyone else. Heredity is respected and a Penghulu is often suc-

ceeded by his son but there is no rule to this effect and the son must still be elected by the headmen. In this egalitarian system the Ibans differ markedly from the Kayans and Kenyahs.

The traditional way of life of the Ibans revolves around the cultivation of hill padi, cutting and burning the jungle, planting hill padi for a year or two and then repeating the process until, after an interval of about fifteen years, the young trees which have grown up on the first patch have become big enough to fell again. The hill soils are poor and it is quite a good way of cultivating such country provided the soil is not overworked. But as the population increases so does the pressure on the land and soil fertility is reduced to a dangerous level. When this point has been reached the Ibans would normally move on into another fresh jungle area but today there is no longer unlimited jungle available for such moves. As a result a good many Ibans have abandoned shifting cultivation and adapted themselves to life in the swamps although this is not their natural environment. The great migrations of the Ibans, unknown in detail for lack of written history but which have probably carried them from somewhere in the Yunnan area, down through Indo-China and the Malay Peninsula and so to Sumatra and Borneo, are coming to an end.

The restless Iban spirit is shown in another way in the journeys and expeditions undertaken by the young men. In the bad old days the men would go off in parties headhunting, attacking and killing the people of other tribes, some of them other branches of the Iban race. The taking of a head was the proof of manhood. It could be that of any human being, man or woman, child or adult, and it was treated with much respect in the house, its reception being the occasion for a great feast.

It took a tremendous and sustained effort to suppress headhunting and until recent years there were continual minor outbreaks which had to be punished by the Rajahs. Punitive expeditions had to be organised and if possible the headhunters apprehended and the heads taken from them. There was little bloodshed. Sympathisers were liable to have their houses burned down or suffer the inconvenience of banishment to another river. The death penalty for convicted headhunters was rare. They were more often imprisoned for a term and eventually released to become, in many cases, particularly staunch and reliable supporters

of the Rajah's Government.

When headhunting was discouraged the young men would go off on long journeys collecting jungle produce and from the proceeds they would acquire wealth with which to impress their fellows. They were, and are, very willing to venture outside Borneo. In remote longhouses in Sarawak one will come across Ibans who have spent years working in Malaya or Celebes, Sumatra or New Guinea. Nowadays the most popular form of work is in the oilfields, or with the Army in Malaya. Numbers of Ibans have worked as trackers with the British forces in the struggle against Communist terrorism and they have been formed into a special unit called the Sarawak Rangers. Many of them have greatly distinguished themselves in action.

The majority of Ibans today own some rubber. They are not very skilled rubber planters and much of their rubber is tapped by Chinese sharecroppers. The communities downriver which have been in the closest contact with missionaries and Government officers are now comparatively sophisticated and education has made progress, although the number of well-educated Ibans is still sadly small. In the upriver areas they still live very much as their forefathers did and even the slightest degree of literacy is comparatively rare.

Ibans listen politely when their District Officers lecture them on the need to send their children to school but the schools which are founded rarely thrive. "The trouble is, you see," the District Officer is liable to be told, "that our children don't like going to school." And few Iban parents are prepared to force their children to do anything against their will. Indeed it is not so long ago that a group of headmen petitioned the Government not to waste the time of themselves and their people by opening schools in their area. Interest and understanding of the value of education are steadily growing, but it is a slow process.

Life for the young among the Ibans is indeed a very free and easy affair. The children are thoroughly spoiled and their parents dote on them. So fond are the Ibans of all children that they are only too glad to adopt the children of other races. In this way many small Chinese girls have been adopted from poor but numerous Chinese families. A cash settlement is involved and the little girls are brought up as Ibans on terms of complete equality and are soon indistinguishable from their playmates. Iban children have nothing to do but play all day. As

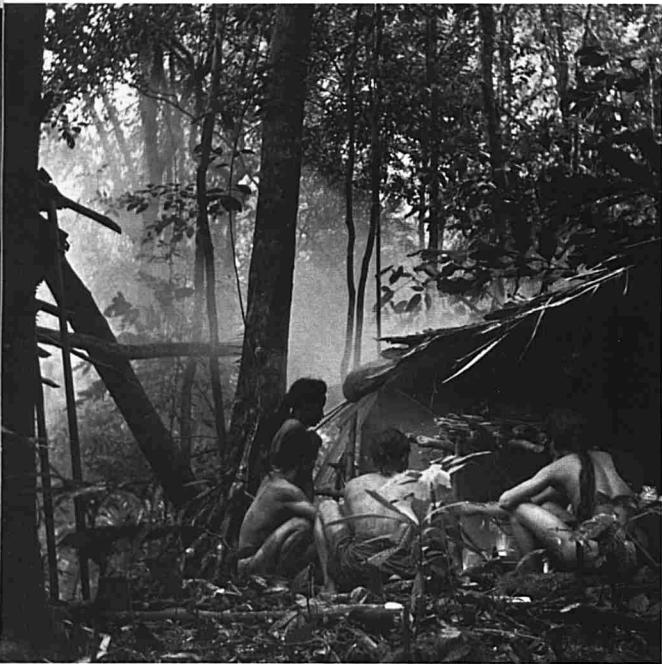
they grow older the boys spend much of their time hunting and fishing and the girls learn to help their mothers in household tasks. The boys and girls mix freely and free love is the rule among the young unmarried people of the communities who are still pagans. When, however, they settle down and get married their family life is exemplary. Married couples are usually very faithful to each other and although divorce is easy it is not especially common. Monogamy is the almost invariable rule.

The Ibans are an independent, brave, good-humoured, generous, open-handed people. They are also excitable and emotional. Their personal honesty and innate sense of hospitality are outstanding. There are no locked doors in longhouses. Theft is very rare and intensely despised. The visitor must be fed and looked after no matter how short of food the people of the longhouse may be. The old and infirm are well cared for and there is a strong sense of communal responsibility for the weaker members of the community. Ibans are hardworking when they consider the work necessary or interesting and they are the most lively and entertaining of companions.

Their relations with Europeans have always been cordial. Even when they were in rebellion against the Rajah's authority there was little bitterness. The Rajahs insisted on their officers maintaining close contact with the people. It is a tradition which has been maintained under the Colonial Office regime. The District Officer is expected to visit every longhouse at least once a year. There are no special resthouses for the visitor who will put up his camp bed on the ruai or in the headman's bilek. He will be hospitably entertained and when Ibans come to town it is customary for them to call on the District Officer in the evening for a drink and a chat. It is a pleasant relationship of mutual respect and mutual esteem.



From the top of Sepali, a prominent hill on the watershed between the Ngemah and Katibus Rivers, two Dayaks look out over their cloud-draped homeland in the soft early morning light. Before them stretches mile upon mile of tangled broken hill country intersected by considerable rivers, covered with scrub and jungle except for an occasional patch of cleared land to show where padi has been grown in the last season or so.

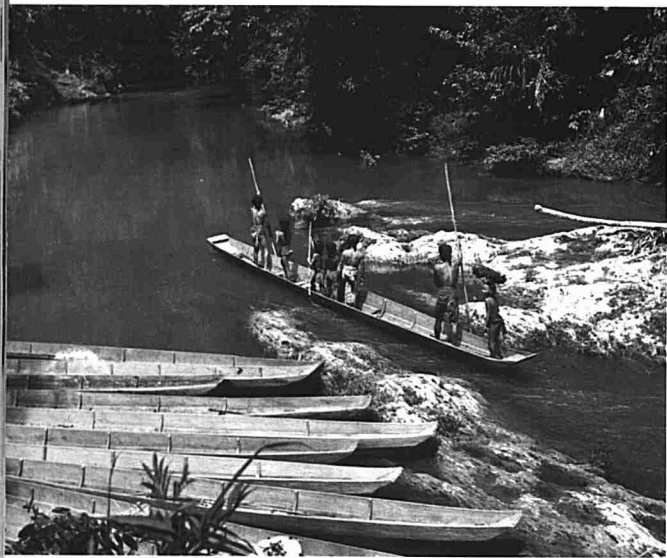


In the old jungle on the slopes of Sepali a Dayak hunting party have built their camp, a simple lean-to shelter thatched with leaves. Dayaks are clever at erecting such shelters in a very short time. They love to make journeys to such isolated places to fish and hunt. They are the keenest sportsmen and hunting and fishing are two of the great pleasures of life.



The jungle can be a very dry place and those who travel in it may suffer severely from thirst in dry weather if they leave the vicinity of streams. The Ibans and other Bornean peoples have discovered that certain creepers contain water. If a length is cut off, clear, pure water can be drained out of one end. It is essential to cut off a length because if the creeper is merely severed a vacuum effect prevents the water from running out.

A party of Iban men and boys set out on a short journey upriver from their longhouse. Light strong canoes are used in the upper rivers, poled in the shallows and paddled where the reaches are deep and placid. Ibans are marvellously graceful and dexterous at poling such canoes. The canoes are far from steady but it is almost unknown for an Iban to fall while poling.





When rapids are reached the canoes must be dragged by main force over the treacherous and slippery rocks. Going barefoot as they do the Ibans find their footing with surprising certainty while the European flounders clumsily about. Coming downriver the Ibans will try to shoot the rapids unless the river is dangerously high.

Ibans fishing with a large dip net. The further man beats the water and hopes to drive the fish into the net held by his companion. As a people they have very catholic tastes in regard to food and even the smallest fish will readily be eaten. Indeed they are such diligent and enthusiastic fishermen that few streams near a longhouse contain fish of any size at all.





Ibans are a light-hearted people, full of jokes and high spirits. Here two Ibans from the Balleh, above Kapit, break into an impromptu dance on a shingle bank beside one of the crystal clear, upriver streams. If such a stream is clear it means that the weather has been dry. After rain it will become a brown torrent discoloured by silt and the bank will be several feet under water.



Life is fun for Iban children. They are kindly treated, they can play all day and stay up late as well if they want to, and there is nearly always a good, safe stream just below the house for them to swim and paddle in. They are usually very healthy but often pot bellied from worm infestations which, however, do not seem to do them any serious harm.

A typical longhouse landing place. In a sheltered eddy the light Iban upriver canoes are tied up with lengths of rattan. On the right is the Government boat of the District Officer, much larger in size and with a roof of palm leaf thatch. Children play in the shallows. Ibans return from the padi fields wearing their broad hats and on the left a man carries a bundle of firewood up the steep notched log which acts as a ladder up the high bank.





Looking over a thirty-door longhouse in the valley of the Ngemah. It is a matter of great difficulty to obtain a clear and unobstructed view of a longhouse because they are always surrounded by rubber gardens and haphazardly sown fruit trees of many kinds. On the right of the house may be seen the long open verandah or tanju.



Young girl carrying her small brother down the entrance ladder of the longhouse. The ladder simply consists of a hardwood log into which are cut notches. In wet weather they can be very slippery and handrails are far from being the general rule. Their existence usually means that a visit from a European is expected.



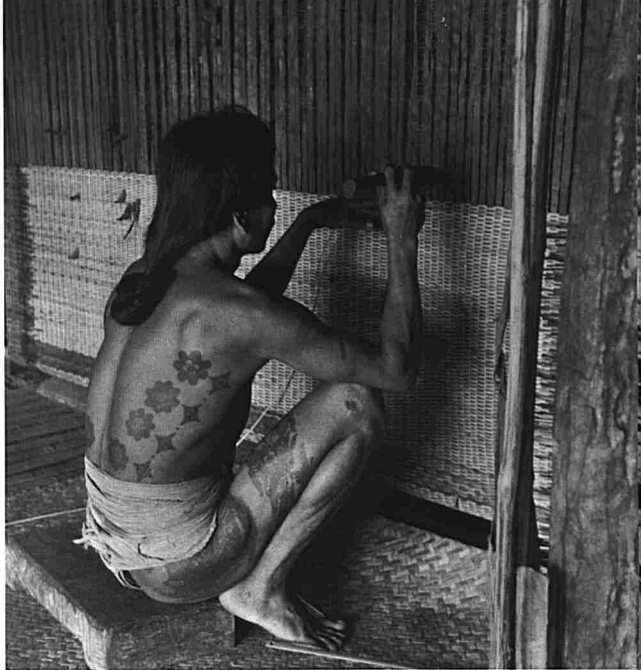
At the top of the ladder or tangga stretches the communal room, the ruai. Normally it is straight, leading to the tangga far away at the other end of the house. Parallel to it, behind the partition to the left, stretch the private rooms. The ruai is a place for work and social gatherings. When a visitor arrives mats are unrolled for him to sit upon and they are rolled up again when not in use.



Group of Iban women on the ruai listening to a discussion with a Government officer. The women occupy a position of equality and respect. They take part in discussions and arguments. They work hard but they have considerable independence and in Iban custom their position is in no way inferior to that of their menfolk.

Iban women making hats of finely split rattan with a vigorous black and white design. The Ibans are clever with their hands and exceedingly hard workers when engaged on a task which interests them. Such hats are very useful when working in the open padi fields under a hot sun and they are so wide that they almost have the same effect as an umbrella when worn in wet weather for a walk or open canoe journey.

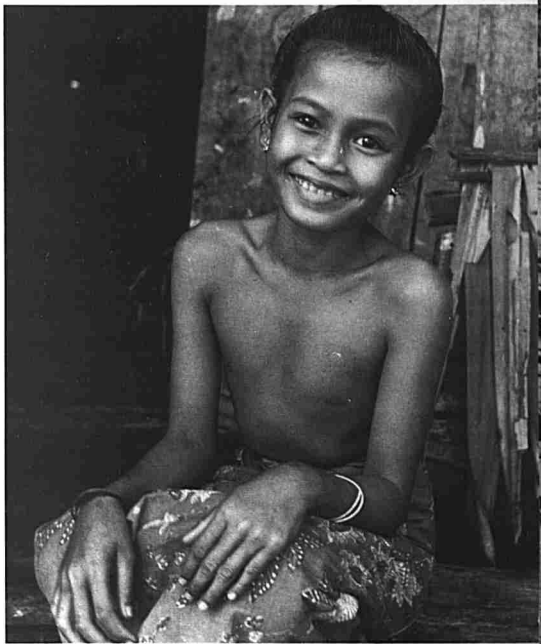




Preparing a stout form of mat made from lengths of rotan and bark cloth. Mats such as these are generally put down to form a floor when people are dancing.



Iban matriarch, the good-hearted, strong-minded, kindly wife of a headman in the Ranau River of Kanowit District. Hardworking, hospitable and an excellent hostess, she ran her house with meticulous efficiency. She was in fact organising the building of a new longhouse and never did communal effort proceed more smoothly.



Young Iban girl from the Selidap River near Binatang. The Iban girls are charming, lively, intelligent and full of fun. They are very hardworking and undertake all the tedious domestic tasks such as pounding padi and carrying water up from the river in empty gourds and lengths of bamboo. The men build and repair the houses and chop the firewood but nearly every other form of household activity is undertaken by the women.

The little son of Penghulu Itam of the Ulu Entabai in Kanowit District is helped into his first sirat by his father. The sirat is the loincloth of the Bornean peoples, a length of cloth tucked through the legs with the short end in front. The long end is wound round and round the waist and finally hitched into the back of the part running between the legs.





A small boy lights up his cigarette from that of his father. The children start smoking at a very early age. It is probably a harmless habit for there is only a very tiny bit of tobacco rolled into a fine piece of palm leaf. Nevertheless it is curious to see a small child handling a cigarette like an expert.



There are no professional carpenters and builders among the Ibans. A man builds and when necessary repairs his own part of the longhouse. If it is a big task he will gladly be helped by his friends. Here two men repair the roof of the ruai where it opens out into the tanju. The roofs are made either of some form of palm leaf thatch or of hardwood shingles. Few nails are used. Everything is tied together with lengths of rattan.

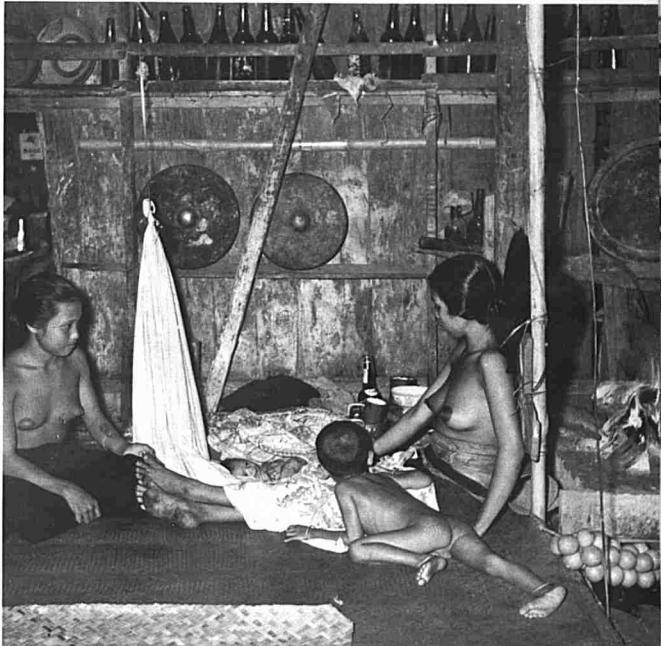
Early morning toilet on the tanju of a small Iban longhouse in the Bakong Valley, a tributary of the Baram River. Ibans are a cleanly people but inevitably some of the country folk pick up pests such as lice and, lacking any effective chemical with which to destroy vermin, the girls systematically comb out their long hair and destroy the vermin by hand.



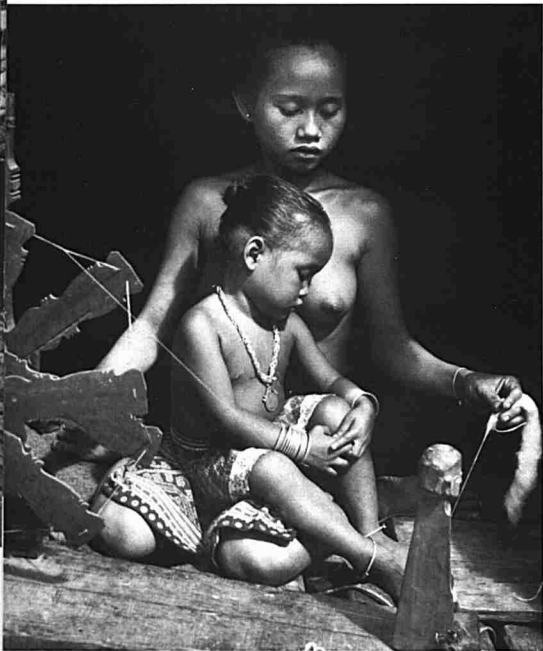


An Iban mother and her children examine the family treasure chest of silver jewellery. They love to invest their wealth in silver which they purchase from the Chinese Bazaar traders, mostly belts and chams and bracelets and little vanity boxes. On ceremonial occasions they wear as much of the jewellery as they can possibly manage.

A young Iban mother looks down on her recently born child. Around her waist she wears a special bark cloth girdle as she rests with her back to the family hearth. After a few days of rest she will return to her household work as if nothing had happened.



An Iban woman of the Balleh spins cotton thread while her little daughter, tired from the excitement of a party, dozes against her breast. The Ibans are clever at working cotton and grow a certain amount near the longhouses. They spin the thread and dye it and then weave it into blankets and skirts.





Weaving a blanket (pua kumbu). The loom is a simple but effective one. The woman leans back against the bark cloth girdle to brace it taut as she moves the shuttle to and fro. Such blankets are made for ornamental purposes. They adorn the longhouse walls during parties and are used to cover mattresses provided as seats of honour for guests but for the rest of the time they are put away in chests.



On their way to a party at a neighbouring house a group of Iban girls cross one of the small tributaries of the Poi River in Kanowit District. The stream flows through shady fruit and rubber gardens planted along the banks. The noise of gongs being beaten close by comes echoing through the trees.



When guests arrive at an Iban party they are greeted by the girls drawn up on the tanju in all their party finery and ready to press a welcoming drink of tuak on the guests. Sometimes it is a very long gauntlet which has to be run but by Iban etiquette the guest may pass his drink back to the girl offering it, after he has taken at least a sip, and the girl must then empty the glass herself!



Another form of welcome is provided by the men of the house beating a vigorous tattoo on their drums, hollowed out lengths of tree trunk with monkey skin strained across the top. A thong around the big toe keeps the drum in place.

Inside the house the guests are led to a place of honour. Drinks are produced and plates of food for a formal offering to the spirits. Then the head of the house, in this case Penghulu Sengalang of the lower Entabai, waves several protesting chickens over the assembly, invokes the goodwill of the spirit world and makes a graceful speech of welcome.

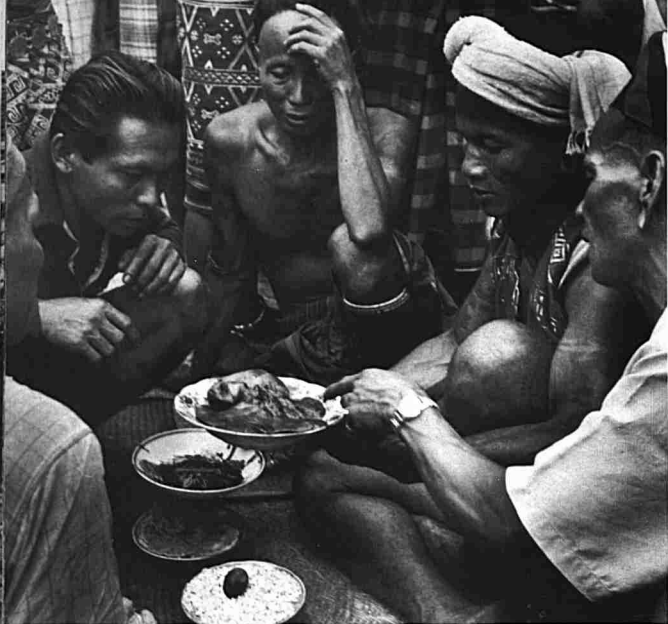




A miring ceremony in the Ulu Ai of the 2nd Division — a common form of offering to the spirits. Plates filled with fluffy puffed rice, heavy glutinous rice and small rice cakes are laid out in rows of seven. A little sreh, tobacco, salt and a small helping from each plate are piled onto a big plate together with eggs and a small cup of tuak. The plate is then taken away and hung up in the ratters of the house for the refreshment of the spirits.



An Iban orchestra generally consists of girls. Melody is provided by a set of small gongs played almost like a xylophone, generally seven notes to a bar, and volume by the big gongs and drums. It is a form of music that seems to have been introduced from Java and is rather crude to western ears at close quarters though it has a singular charm when heard on a still night at a little distance. Then the tinkling notes have all the enchantment of fairyland.



The traditional life of the Bornean peoples was largely regulated by omens, particularly the way certain birds called and crossed one's path. But perhaps the most important form of omen-reading involved the examination of the liver of a newly slaughtered pig. The livers of pigs were examined upon every important occasion, at the time, for instance, of going to war or the time of making peace and at every festival. Here a group of Ibans study the shape and condition of a pig's liver at a Begawai Kenyalang or Hornbill Festival in the Ulu Ai.

The Begawai Kenyalang was originally connected with headhunting and was in honour of Sengalang Burong, the Ruler of the Spirit World and the God of War whose particular bird is the Rhinoceros Hornbill. A great feast is given which lasts for three days to the drinking of immense quantities of tuak. At the conclusion of the feast, elaborate carved representations of the Hornbill are erected on the tops of high poles. Here Penghulu Ningkan, who gave such a feast to celebrate a good harvest and the return of many Sarawak Rangers from fighting Communist rebels in Malaya, attaches a length of newly flayed pigskin as an offering in the bill of one of the Hornbill images.





In the cool of the evening a group of Iban elders in the Julau River gather round a small fire on a hearth of the ruai. Above them hang a collection of blackened skulls, the heads which past generations of their ancestors took in war. The Ibans are a conservative people and pagan communities still keep their heads though they are venerated very much less than formerly. On the other side of the ruai rubber sheets hanging up to dry add a touch of modernity.



The Ibans have no script of their own. Their nearest approach is a system of preparing spirit tablets, again to invoke the goodwill of the spirit world, and these are put up in the lofts on suitable occasions. The tablets are covered with little hieroglyphics and the general meaning can be understood by men from quite different areas. It is perhaps a script in embryo.



At their parties the Ibans do a good deal of dancing, generally a kind of stylised war dance. For this they put on traditional war dress, an elaborate head-dress, a goatskin poncho over the shoulders or more elaborate cloak decked with the tail feathers of hornbills. The tattooed hands indicate that the dancer, a Balleh Iban who took part in operations against the Japanese in 1945, claims to have killed a man.

The war dance. A slow deliberate measure with much posturing punctuated by sudden leaps and fierce shouts. In his right hand the dancer wields a sword and very often his left hand holds a shield. Iban after Iban demonstrates his skill. By origin it is probably not an Iban dance at all but has been learned from the Kayans. Iban girls rarely dance. Though often extremely pretty they lack the skill in dancing of the Kayan and Kenyah girls.



Two of the most treasured possessions of the Ibans are children and fighting cocks. They are most enthusiastic over cockfighting. It may almost be regarded as the national sport of Sarawak. The cocks are carefully tended and are kept tethered in the ruai. They render sleep difficult because if, in the middle of the night, one cock wakes up and crows, all his companions do likewise and the noise is deafening.





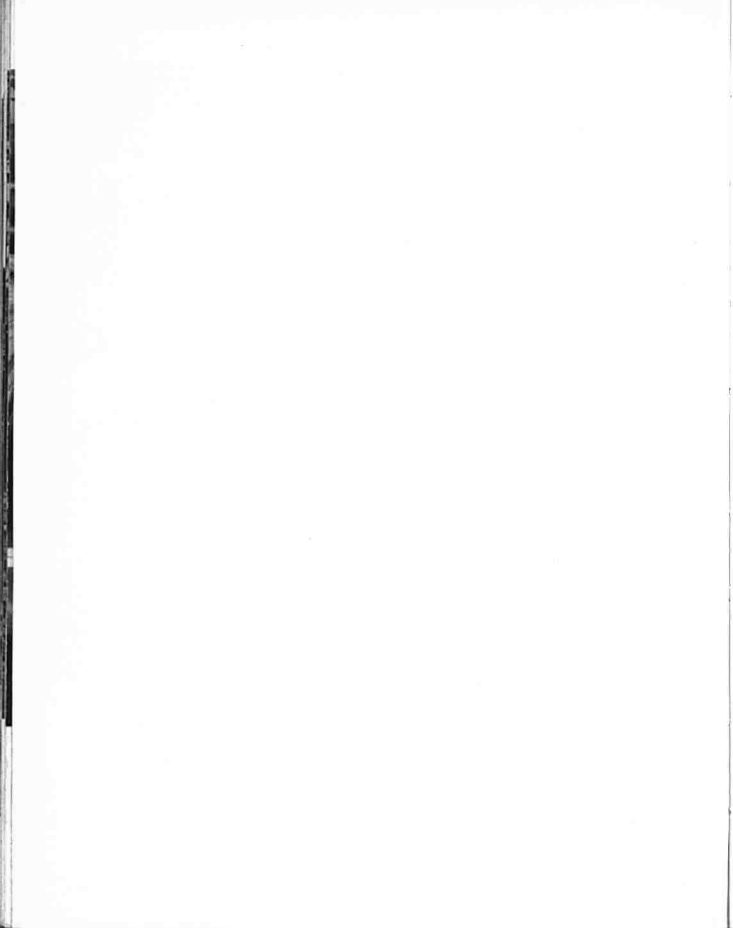
A downriver cockfight staged by Ibans at Binatang. It is a brutal sport. Cocks are the most pugnacious of birds and to one of their natural spurs, which are relatively harmless, is attached a highly lethal, razor-sharp, steel one. The birds must fight until one is killed or runs from the other. Every cockfight involves the death or maiming of numerous birds.



Another popular sport is tuba fishing. Tuba or derris, the root of a vine which is cultivated on a small scale, is beaten and mixed with water. When this is done a poisonous solution is formed and if it is poured into a river, the fish are stupefied and rise to the surface where they can be netted or speared. It is a very destructive method because all the fish in the river, both large and small, are likely to be killed. Penghulu Entalar of Meluan blesses the pile of tuba roots before they are beaten out and asks for the help of the spirits in securing a good catch.



The annual regatta, a form of sport encouraged since the days of the first Rajah. The Ibans assemble with their narrow racing boats of various sizes. The noise and excitement is tremendous and the tasks of starters and judges most exhausting, the starters because an assembly of such boats is virtually uncontrollable and the judges because the losers tend to argue heatedly that they, in fact, were the winners. There are side shows, swimming events, greasy poles, pillow fights, music and a tote and in the evening free cinema shows and dancing competitions.



THE LAND DAYAKS

THE BIDAYUHS OR LAND DAYAKS are a tribe of rather more than 60,890 people who are found in the interior of the 1st Division of Sarawak. Similar peoples live in the adjacent regions of Indonesian Borneo. As a group they are quite distinct from any of the other peoples of Sarawak. They live in a special style of house, they possess their own system of customary law and their language, although related to Iban, is also distinctive. Despite the fact that their numbers are not great, they are divided into a number of smaller groups characterised by differences of dialect.

A hundred and twenty years ago the Land Dayaks were in some danger of extinction. They are a mild and inoffensive people and although as individuals they do not lack courage, they were unable to withstand the inroads of the warlike Ibans coming from the 2nd Division coupled with the brutal exactions of the Brunei Malay rulers of Sarawak. The Brunei rulers not only bullied and enslaved the people but had no compunction in allowing expeditions of Ibans to attack the Land Dayak areas. The Ibans kept the heads of the people they slaughtered and handed over the slaves whom they captured to the Brunei people as their

share of the loot.

The Rajahs brought the Land Dayaks peace and security. They have steadily increased in numbers ever since, though they still reside in roughly the same area as where the Rajahs first found them, unlike the more active Ibans who have continually pushed into fresh country and are now to be found in almost every District in Sarawak. The Land Dayaks are very conservative and singularly lacking in the way of wander-lust. There is a good deal of land hunger in the hill areas where they reside and where they cultivate padi by the usual wasteful system of shifting cultivation. The land has been overworked and much of its fertility has been lost but despite this they are, as a people, very reluctant to migrate to other areas of Sarawak. A curious feature of their padi cultivation is that they do not cut off the head of padi with a small knife like the other peoples of Sarawak, but pluck it off between their fingers.

In appearance Land Dayaks are short and generally rather round-faced. Their best known characteristic is the wearing of brass rings round the legs by the girls. It is a custom which is not so common now as it used to be but the practice is quite unique and is not practised by any of the other Sarawak peoples. It is not just a matter of wearing a few odd rings around the ankle. The whole of the leg between the middle of the calf and the knee is covered with rings which are quite heavy and uncomfortable to wear. It is a painful and ungraceful custom, since it deforms the calf muscles, but Land Dayak girls are the slaves of fashion in just the same way as their sisters in more advanced countries. In days gone by similar rings were worn around the forearm.

The women also have a curious dance where two of them circle round each other with their arms extended and a length of cloth suspended from them, so that they look like two big ungainly birds. The peculiarities of the Land Dayaks are believed by some students to be due to some long-forgotten Hindu influence. Hindu remains have been found in the Land Dayak country. Certain of their spirit beliefs are reminiscent of the Hindu pantheon and the Land Dayaks like to cremate their dead, again a habit which is unknown among other Sarawak peoples.

They live in longhouses which bear a general resemblance to the Iban longhouses except that they lack the open verandah or tanju. Their villages, how-

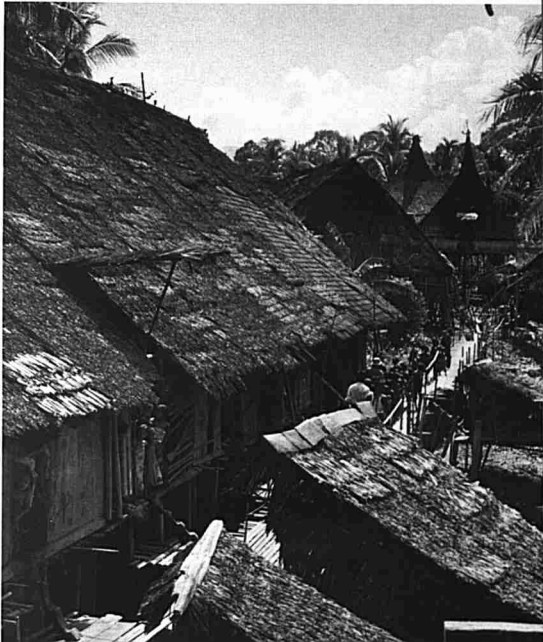
ever, differ from those of other Sarawak peoples in the possession of tall, sharp-roofed buildings separated from the longhouses, which are used for social gatherings, accommodating visitors and as a sort of club house for the bachelors of the village. Having been in contact with Europeans for a long period of time a good many have embraced Christianity but the process is not complete and this sometimes leads to much bickering and argument, especially in regard to land disputes.

As with most other Bornean peoples, land rights are not conveyed by title. The descendants of the first man who felled a piece of virgin jungle for padi planting have the right to use the same land but it is of course a very vague system in the absence of written records. Especially in a fairly densely populated area there are, after the passage of fifty years or so, a number of people entitled to a share in the utilisation of any given piece of land and squabbles about ownership are inevitable. They become particularly embittered when some of the disputants are Christians and some pagans. Much of the time of the administrator is spent in adjudicating land disputes.

In their system of Chiefs and Headmen the Land Dayaks resemble the Ibans but their Chiefs are called Orang Kaya, literally Rich Men, and not Penghulu. It is curious to meet one of the Chiefs wearing on his hat or jacket a badge bearing in large letters the legend O.K.



The Land Dayak village of Kampong Pichin in Serian District consists of several longhouses linked by walks made of lengths of split bamboo. In addition to the longhouses there are two guest houses, characterised by their high pointed roofs, which are used both for social occasions and for entertaining guests in preference to the longhouses, which are small and rather nondescript in comparison with most Iban houses.





Bamboo is an extremely useful and easily worked material. It is really just a giant grass, very heavy when green but light and strong when dried. Its main disadvantage is that it is far from durable and quickly rots or is eaten by borer insects. The Land Dayaks make good use of bamboo to make walks across damp places but in such a place the lengths of bamboo will only have a life of about a year or even less.

There is very little forest and indeed very few trees of any sort in the Land Dayak country which has been cultivated to such an extent for so many years that now the people must turn to the abundant bamboo which has sprung up to provide firewood, a practice which is rarely seen in other parts of Sarawak.



The joints of giant bamboo can be used as water carriers. It is the task of the women and girls to carry the water-filled joints up from the stream, which is some way from the house, as well as various children who expect to be carried too.





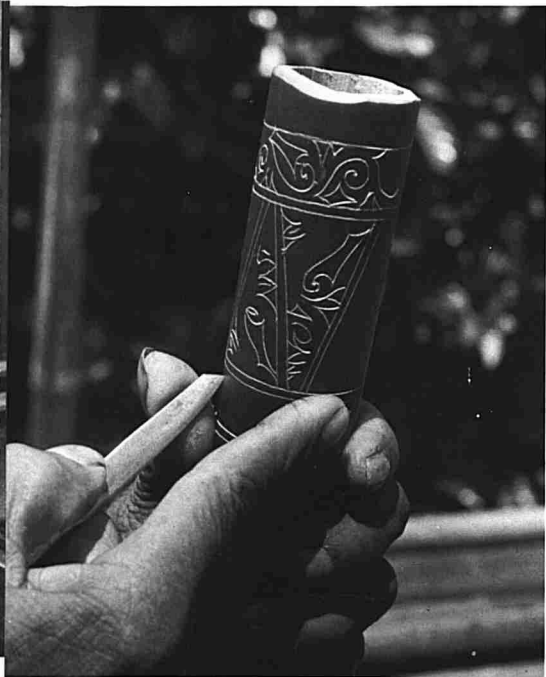
Split lengths of bamboo make useful water pipes and the Land Dayaks are clever at arranging their water supply so that the water receptacles can be filled with as little exertion as possible.



The Land Dayaks often smoke a primitive hookah or water pipe, again made from bamboo. Water fills the large section of bamboo above the level where the pipe bowl joins it and the smoke can be sucked up through the large section, passing through the water before it is inhaled by the smoker.

A group of Land Dayaks march off to the padi fields carrying the handsome and elaborate baskets which they make from bamboo and lengths of cane. They are quite unlike the carrying baskets made by any of the other Sarawak peoples.



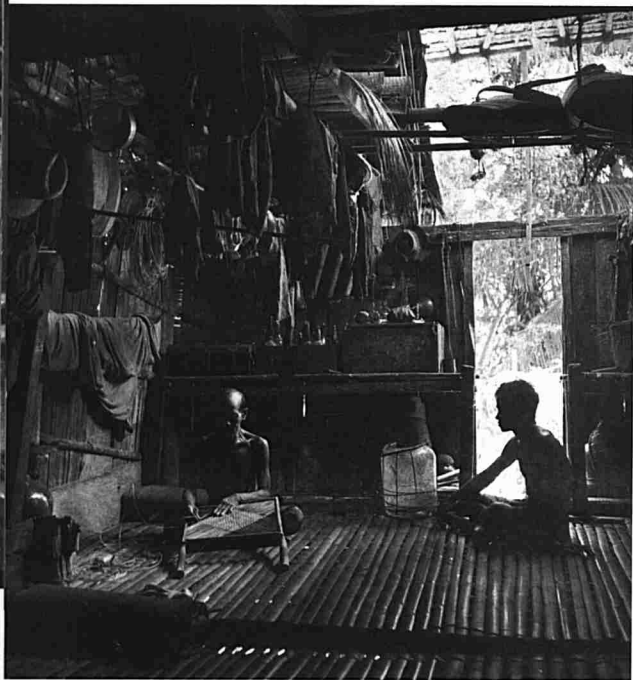


The Land Dayaks make many little articles out of bamboo and these they carve in their own way with a stencil design. The carving is done entirely by eye and the way the knife is held is strange to the European way of thinking.

The most skilled bamboo carver of his village. Perhaps his looks portray something of the racial character of the Land Dayaks: mildness, good nature and a certain diffidence and lack of bold self-confidence.



The inner room of a Land Dayak family is small and not particularly tidy. Everything possible is suspended from the ceiling, or hung up on the wall — padi carrying baskets and lengths of rattan, a mosquito net, hats and a rubber latex strainer — while the owner squats below and weaves himself a new mat.

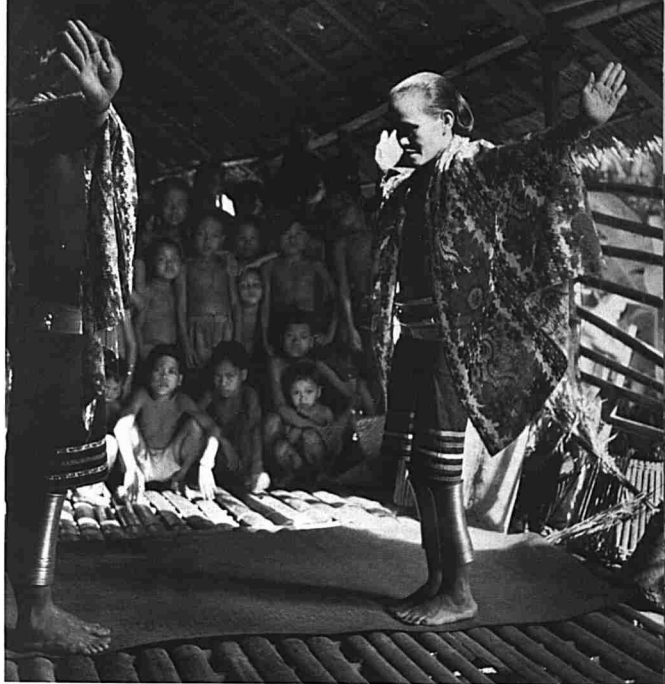




Land Dayak woman splitting a length of rattan. Her legs are encased in a solid sheath of metal rings, heavy and uncomfortable but nevertheless the custom and fashion of her people. Inevitably such rings deform the calf muscles; it is a matter of difficulty to take them off and the women cannot squat comfortably like the other Bornean women as the legs must be kept stretched straight out.

Land Dayak girls dress up in their best finery. They wear the leg rings, which to all intents and purposes must be regarded as fixtures, very short skirts, and rattan and silver girdles.





Later they perform a curious dance when, with arms outstretched, and with lengths of sarong hanging from them, they pace to and fro on a mat, looking for all the world like two huge ungainly birds with wings spread.

KAYANS AND KENYAHS

INLAND, in the upper waters of the Rejang and Baram Rivers live the related Kayan and Kenyah peoples. They were once the great rivals of the Ibans and occupied the whole interior of Sarawak from the Pelagus rapids to the Baram. They were numerous and warlike and had probably migrated into Sarawak from the Batang Kayan in what is now Indonesian Borneo. The Ibans, pushing in from the south-west, soon came into conflict with them and a state of perpetual warfare and savage raids prevailed between the two groups. In 1863 the Kayan-Kenyah power was broken in the great Kayan expedition which was led by Charles Brooke who later was to become the second Rajah. The Kayans had thought themselves safe behind the barrier of the Pelagus rapids. They had not only taken the lives of many of the Rajah's subjects but they had also sheltered the murderers of two of his officers who lost their lives in Kanowit in 1859.

As a result Charles organised an expedition with the aid of his allies the Ibans, of whom 15,000 made their way past the supposedly impregnable rapids and drove far beyond Belaga to the consternation of the Kayans who made no effective resistance. It is not one of the most creditable episodes in Sarawak's history.

for the destruction and loss of life were prodigious. It had the effect of destroying the power of the Kayans who were never again a political force to be reckoned with.

In addition to the loss of life caused by warfare with the Ibans, the Kayans and Kenyahs have been decimated by disease. They live in what are apparently delightful and healthy valleys but their numbers have steadily declined and now, including all the related groups such as Kejamans, Skapans, Berawans and Sebops, they total about 15,992 souls. Continual epidemics and a high rate of mortality have steadily whittled away their numbers and it is only within the last few years that it has been established that the valleys in which they live are highly malarial. This has been discovered by experts of the World Health Organisation who have also shown that modern methods of spraying the houses with chemicals such as DDT and Dieldrin can control malaria under Bornean conditions. In all probability chronic malaria, and the lowered vitality and decreased resistance to other diseases which it induces, has been the main cause of the decline of these peoples.

Kayans and Kenyahs, though closely related to each other, are entirely different from Ibans and Land Dayaks. They are physically bigger people, their languages are different and their traditions and social systems are entirely dissimilar. They have a great respect for their hereditary Chiefs and they are very much more class-conscious than the other peoples of Sarawak. In the longhouse the Chief occupies a very large room in the middle of the house and the ordinary people spread out on either side, decreasing in social standing as they become further removed from the Chief's door. The Chiefs have great authority. Even their padi fields are cultivated for them as a sort of feudal due.

The longhouses are also quite distinct. In a Dayak longhouse everything is propped up and tied together with rotan in a rather untidy manner. The Kayan and Kenyah system is much more scientific, for the roof is balanced on massive central pillars. There is no outer verandah and the floor is made up of long, roughly hewn planks running down the length of the house.

Formerly Kayans and Kenyahs were extremely superstitious. Their lives were regulated by omens. If the wrong bird flew across the path they would abandon a journey. Rigid custom decreed that at certain times they must shut

themselves up in their houses for days at a time even if this meant that pests consumed all the young padi in the unguarded fields. But since the end of the Pacific War they have thrown off their superstitions. Many have become Christians while others have accepted the Bungan faith, a curious local religion with some Christian features. The old superstitions are now largely things of the past.

In general Kayans and Kenyahs are progressive and exceptionally school-conscious. They are quiet and reserved: slow and rather phlegmatic. They are very artistic, making beautiful mats and palm leaf hats and various kinds of beadwork, and some groups, particularly the Sebops and Berawans of the Tinjar, are very skilful wood carvers. They work hard and they are all magnificent boatmen, possessed of wonderful poise and completely fearless in even the wildest rapid. They plant hill padi for which there is more than enough land in their under-populated home areas. From their farms they are always ready to return home to their longhouses to entertain the visitor with one of their justly celebrated parties.

Their parties are famous because their music, songs and dancing are all far more highly developed than those of the other Bornean peoples. Their music is produced with the sape, a kind of simple guitar, and the keluri, a miniature organ with various pipes set in a gourd. No one who has ever heard Kayans or Kenyahs singing will ever forget it. A man or a woman sings a refrain, often part of a long story or a fabulous account of the virtues of a visitor, and the whole house, singing in harmony, comes in with a great full-chested chorus. The process is repeated again and again.

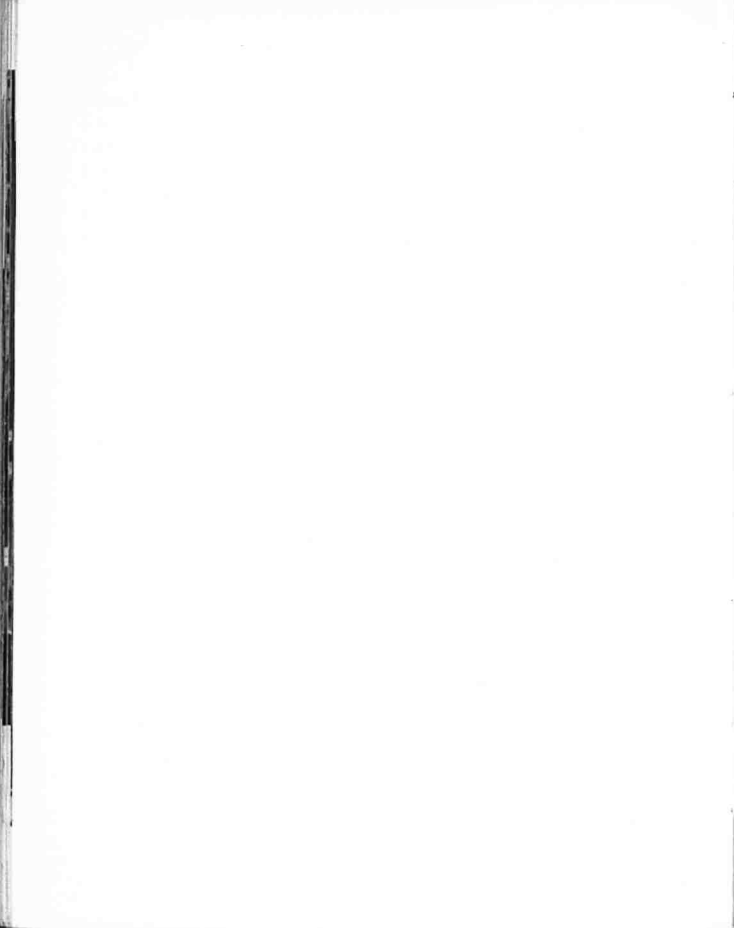
The Kayans are probably the originators of the stylised war dance which is now common among the Ibans but the girls also are extremely talented and graceful dancers. One of their most delightful dances is the hornbill dance, when they tie hornbill feathers to the ends of their fingers which accentuate their slow and graceful movements. For party purposes everyone in the longhouse joins in and parades up and down the communal room led by one or two musicians and a group of girls who sing. The whole line of dancers executes some simple movements in unison and everyone joins in the choruses whether they can sing or not.

The borak, the rather bitter rice beer which the Kayans and all the other people

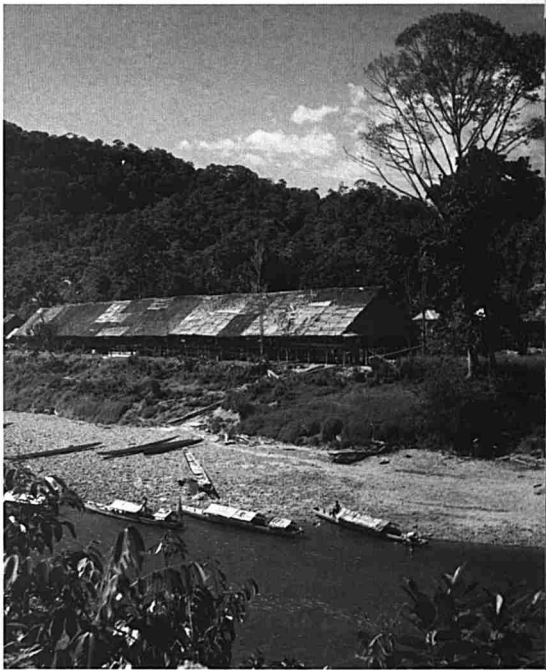
of the upper Rejang and Baram make, flows freely. Visitors have to withstand innumerable songs of welcome from pretty girls, each song ending up with a glass of borak which no guest can resist for the simple reason that if he refuses the girls seize him and pour the borak down his throat by main force. The only safe defence is for the visitor to burst into song himself—the house will happily join in the chorus whether he sings *Onward Christian Soldiers* or *Waltzing Matilda* or the *Wearing of the Green*—and address his song to one of the girls who in turn must drink the borak like a man. Kayan parties are fun.

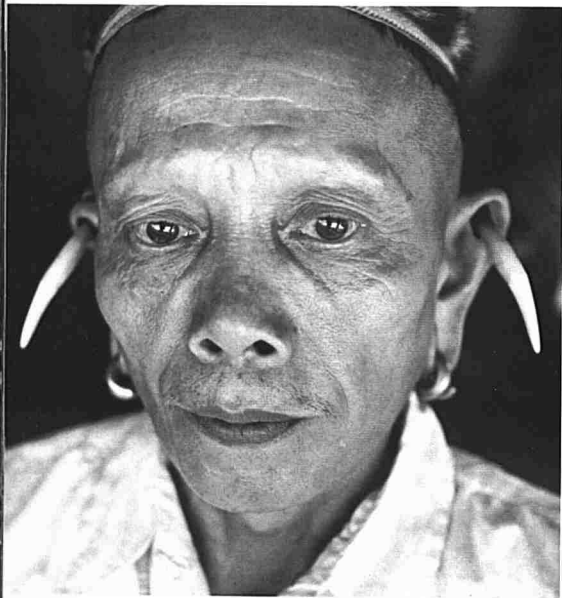
And just to round things off when the visitor leaves the next morning the girls come and smear his face with soot (most difficult to remove) and then throw him in the river, as a sign of friendship for, they say, "We are now such good friends that we can even play practical jokes on our guests." They take these liberties with even the most exalted visitors.

Kayan-Kenyah life is not, of course, just one unending round of parties but they are certainly some of the happiest memories which the visitor will take away with him from Sarawak.



One of the last of the Kenyah houses in the upper Baram is Long Sela'an. Actually there are two long-houses, one behind the other and since they are of recent construction and the usual fruit trees have not been planted up in front, a good view may be secured from a bluff on the other side of the river.





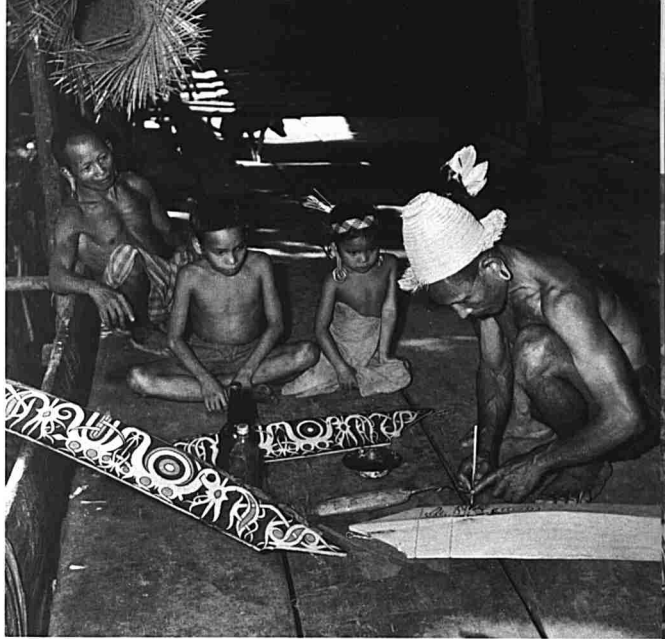
A Kayan elder of the Baram River wears a neat white shirt and the eye teeth of a Clouded Leopard through holes in the upper parts of his ears, secured to one another by a string round the back of his neck. A kindly, thoughtful man and a leader of his own community.

Kejaman girl of the upper Rejang, the daughter of a well-known Chief. Her ear lobes are distended by heavy rings, her forearms thickly tattooed. The smooth faces of many Kayans and Kenyahs are due to the systematic removal of eyebrows and eyelashes.



Kenyah women are skilful mat makers. Mats are an essential floor covering, readily removed when not in use and hung up out of the way. They must continually be replaced because they do not have a very long life. One of the more depressing signs of sophistication in longhouses is the quite frequent use of lengths of linoleum bought in the bazaar instead of the traditional mats.



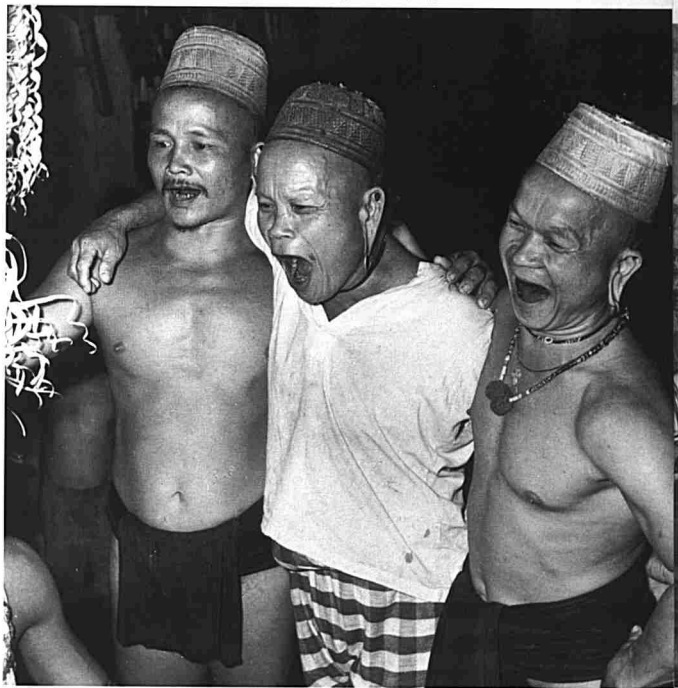


Shields are still made for war dances and for sale in the bazaars as ornaments. The maker, a Badang from the last house in the Ulu Baram before the journey to the Kelabit country is commenced at a place called Lio Matu, paints the shields in traditional Bornean designs. He wears a jaunty little rottan hat ornamented with hornbill feathers.



Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, the paramount Kenyah Chief in Sarawak, addresses his people on the spacious verandah of his longhouse at Long Sar, just above Long Akah. Descended from a long line of great Baram chiefs, the Temenggong is a tremendous personality in his own right who has led his people wisely through difficult periods of stress and change. He had the tragic misfortune to lose his magnificent longhouse which not long after the photograph was taken was utterly destroyed by fire.

The Kayans and Kenyahs and their relatives are all splendid singers. They are very musical, sing in harmony, and both men and women have melodious voices. Usually an individual sings verse after verse of the song and the rest of the house joins in the chorus. These three cheerful Sebops from the Tinjar are lustily bawling out the chorus of a jovial drinking song.





Two little Kenyah girls watch from a distance the proceedings at a longhouse party. The slit skirts were once universally worn by the Kayan and Kenyah girls but now they are only to be seen worn by the children or sometimes by old women working in the fields or padi barns.

Tattooing the forearms of a young Kejaman girl in the upper Rejang. It is a painful process. The designs are painted on with soot which is driven into the skin by innumerable taps with a sharp-pointed instrument. The tattoos nearly always become infected and fester but nothing serious ever seems to result from this apparently dangerous and highly septic process.



A Kejaman sits sadly by the coffin of his little son who has died the previous night. He and his wife kept their vigil for three days before taking the coffin to a little burial shelter by the riverside. A year later the bones would be removed and placed in a jar for burial in the ground, in the case of poor people, or in an elaborate miniature house on top of an ornamented pole in the case of an upper class family.



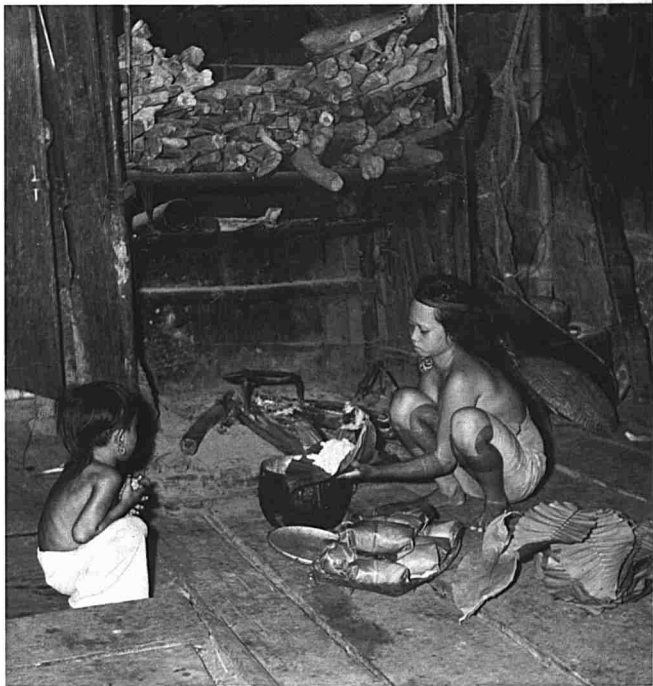


In olden days the Kayans erected magnificent burial posts made from long-lasting ironwood which are known as Salongs. The carving is very fine but difficult to photograph since Salongs are mostly to be found in groves of tall trees close to the river. Borneo is largely devoid of good stone and burial posts such as these are about as close as the Bornean peoples have ever come to leaving behind them ancient monuments.



At Long Buroi, the most remote house in the upper Tinjar, a former witch doctor conducts a healing session by invocation to the spirits. 'Former' witch doctor because the people are Christians but agreed to re-enact a pagan healing session for the benefit of the curious photographer. The sick man squats thoughtfully at the feet of the witch doctor while a friend plays a keluri.

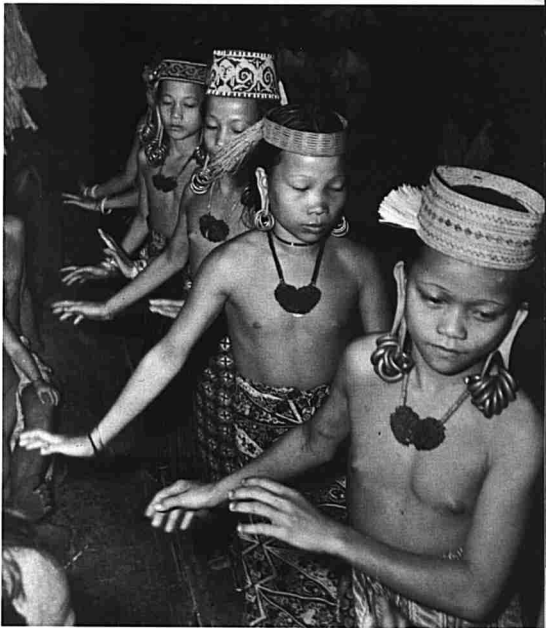
A Kayan woman prepares rice for her guests. It is cooked until it is very soft and then wrapped up in bundles enclosed in leaves. Her legs are heavily tattooed and her little son looks on, grasping a spent flash bulb in his right hand.





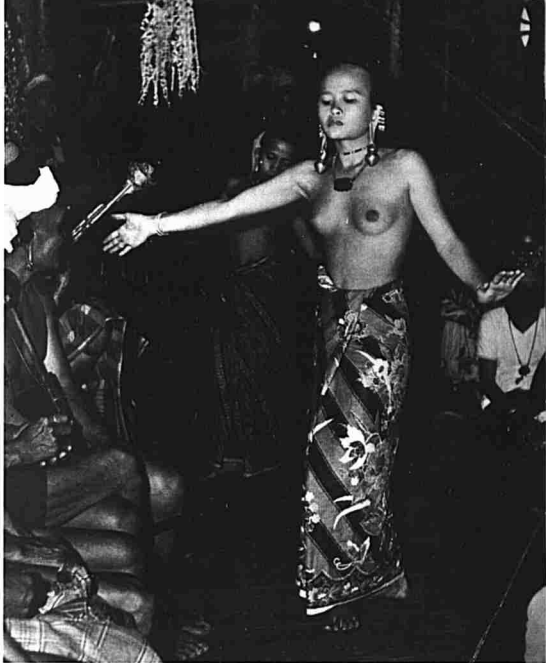
A young Kenyah dancing. He wears a cloak of goatskin and in his rottan-cap are hornbill feathers. He has drawn his parang, the sword he wears by his side, and leaps fiercely about in simulated combat. The Kayans and Kenyahs are much more skilful dancers than the Ibans and any Ibans who dance well have generally learned to do so in Kayan and Kenyah houses.

Girls dancing at Long Sela'an in the Baram. Led by a musician playing a sape or guitar they pace up and down the longhouse executing charming and graceful little movements first to one side and then the other, with movements of arms and stamping of feet and always in unison. After the girls have put on their show piece the spectators join in until they are all dancing up and down the longhouse and they keep it up until dawn.



All the Sarawak peoples are intensely hospitable and take pride in entertaining the visitor. No one has ever been more hospitable than the late Berawan Chief, Penghulu Lawai of Long Teru in the Tinjar Lawai on the left, with a rottan cap, smiles with satisfaction at the wonderful dinner of fish, pork, rice and vegetables which he has prepared to entertain a large party of travellers.





The Berawan girls are naturally graceful and the heavy weights which hang from their ears no doubt contribute to this in the same way as the carrying of water jars on the head induces a graceful gait. The head and neck remain poised since any sudden movement is uncomfortable, and such a girl carries herself with both grace and dignity.

MURUTS AND KELABITS

THE MURUTS live in the 5th Division of Sarawak, in the Lawas and Trusan Valleys. Nowadays there are relatively few left, only about 3,000 on the Sarawak side though there are very much larger numbers across the border in Indonesia. Originally they were a numerous people but they suffered greatly from disease around the turn of the century, mainly from smallpox and cholera. Sixty years ago there were probably more than 10,000 Muruts in Sarawak.

Although a good many Muruts live in the lower reaches of the Trusan, they are really a hill people and they have some of the characteristics of hillmen everywhere. They are independent, tough and stocky, having curiously well-developed calf muscles. Except in the downriver areas all movement is on foot as the Trusan, although an important river, is not a navigable one. The Muruts live in the valleys of the tributaries, mostly on the true right bank and stout walking is called for in travelling from one village to another.

Formerly the Muruts lived in longhouses but today the longhouses have largely broken up and the people live in villages of separate houses on the Malay model. Some Muruts, particularly those at the headwaters of the Trusan, are skilful

planters of irrigated padi. They produce large quantities but due to difficulties of transport they cannot market it readily since every pound of rice must be carried down to Lawas on somebody's back.

In the old days the Muruts used to convert great quantities of rice into borak. In fact they enjoyed the reputation of being the most drunken people in Borneo and perhaps in the world. It was quite customary for many Muruts to drink themselves into a state of insensibility every evening. They were in fact steadily drinking themselves out of existence.

The squalor and wretchedness arising from this continual drunkenness made the Muruts a particularly useful object of Missionary endeavour. In the thirties Missionaries succeeded in converting nearly all the Muruts to Christianity. The Muruts grasped at this new faith much as the drowning man is said to grasp at a straw. From being the most drunken people in Borneo, they became the most sober. The traveller in the Trusan on his way up to the head of the river will walk for some ninety miles and never will he be offered a drink. For an emotional outlet the Muruts now sing hymns vociferously before dawn and last thing at night.

Undoubtedly their conversion saved the Muruts though there is still much ill health, particularly malaria and tuberculosis, among them. The complete change in the way of life called for much strength of character. But the Muruts are a dour and obstinate people, completely inflexible once they have made up their minds. They had a particularly good record during the war when they stood by their European friends who took refuge in Murut country, aided Allied flyers who were shot down and took up arms against the Japanese with considerable success when paramilitary forces were organised in the Trusan in the closing stages of the war.

Their most valued possessions are old jars (which are a particularly inconvenient form of valuables in hill country where everything must be carried), bead necklaces and head-dresses and buffaloes. Their property disputes are peculiarly protracted. Cases are still brought up which, it is calculated, must have been dragging on for sixty years!

The Muruts are a positive people who are particularly school-conscious. With some of the Sarawak people it is difficult to get the children to go to school.

With Muruts the problem is to provide enough schools to take all the children who want to enter them. They are not a demonstrative people but to those who know them they are the best of friends.

Closely related to the Muruts are the Kelabits who live in the headwaters of the Baram not far away from the Ulu Trusan. There are only about 1,300 Kelabits left although, like the Muruts, they were once far more numerous. Until the war they were perhaps the most isolated people in Sarawak but this has now changed due to the choice of the Kelabit country as the point of entry for Allied parachutists during the war, the interest taken in them by the Sarawak Government since and the progressive spirit of the Kelabits themselves.

In 1940 there was probably not a single Kelabit who could read or write. Today literacy is widespread among the younger generation, schools have been established and this once isolated people are playing an increasingly important part in the life of Sarawak. Even their isolation has been much reduced by the construction of an airfield at Bareo in the centre of the Kelabit country.

Like the Muruts the Kelabits are hillmen. Many of their villages lie at an altitude of 3,000 feet or so, on what is often called a plateau, though geographically this is a misnomer, their homeland being a broad vale in the moderately elevated country at the head of the Baram. The climate is cool and healthy and physically the Kelabits are the strongest and best built people in Sarawak. They are skilful agriculturists and although many of them plant hill padi, a good deal of irrigated padi is grown under a peculiar system involving the use of particularly small padi fields. They are industrious gardeners and the Kelabit country is the only part of upriver Sarawak where good vegetables can be obtained.

They have the same interest as the Muruts in old jars and beads and buffaloes but, unlike the Muruts, although they have in many cases been converted to Christianity, they have not given up drinking. They were never hopelessly heavy drinkers like the Muruts though immense quantities of rice beer are consumed when they do hold parties. The rice beer is easily produced due to the abundance of padi.

The social customs of the Kelabits differ rather from those of other peoples. The girls sing long songs of welcome to visitors but the Kelabits are not skilled dancers. Rice beer is pressed on the visitor but by Kelabit custom the visitor

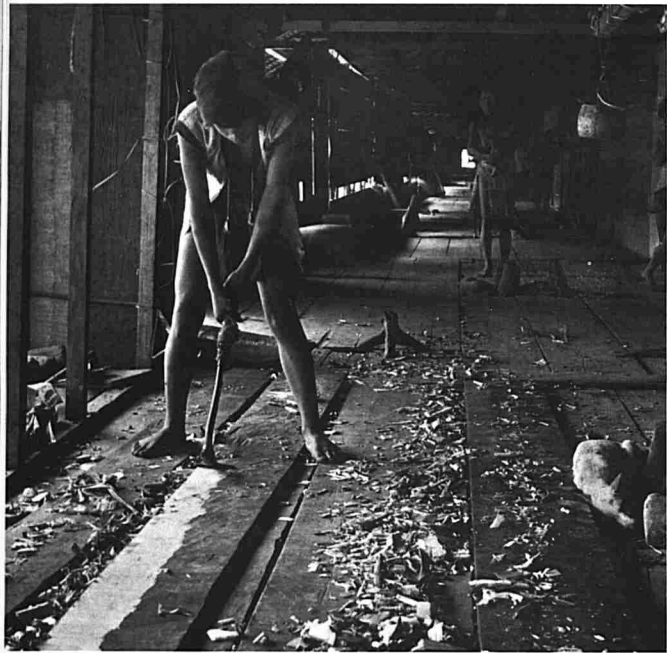
may pass his drink to his hosts time after time before he actually drinks a cup of rice beer himself. A most disastrous system of drinking is out of a bamboo tube inserted into a jar of borak. Also inserted into the jar is another bamboo tube containing a float. The float can be adjusted so that the person drinking must lower it by a certain distance. Skilful manipulation can mean that the drinker must needs consume about a gallon of borak to lower the float by the required distance. Drinking parties are associated with gargantuan feasts of stewed pork or beef. Great tureens are tipped onto a mat and the meat divided up among the guests with packets of rice. There is no more warm and generous hospitality in the world than that dispensed by the Kelabits but sometimes it is a little overwhelming.





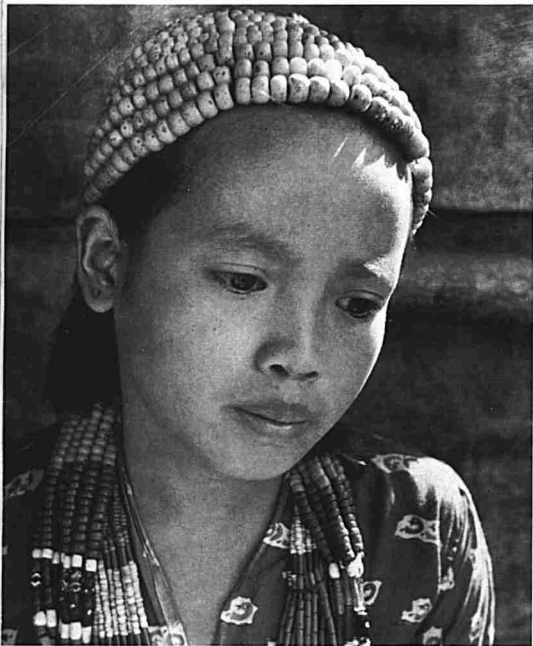
The principal Murut village in the Brayong Valley, a tributary of the Trusan. Formerly the Muruts who lived in the Trusan had longhouses but now these have largely gone out of use and have been replaced with individual Malay style houses. In the foreground are irrigated padi fields built by Indonesian Muruts. The Sarawak Muruts are well-to-do in comparison with their relatives over the border whom they hire to do their heavy work for them.

In one of the few remaining longhouses near the Sarawak-Indonesian border a Murut laboriously prepares a rough hewn plank. Everything must be made by the people themselves for it takes them eight days of hard walking to reach the coast and everything that is brought in must be carried in.

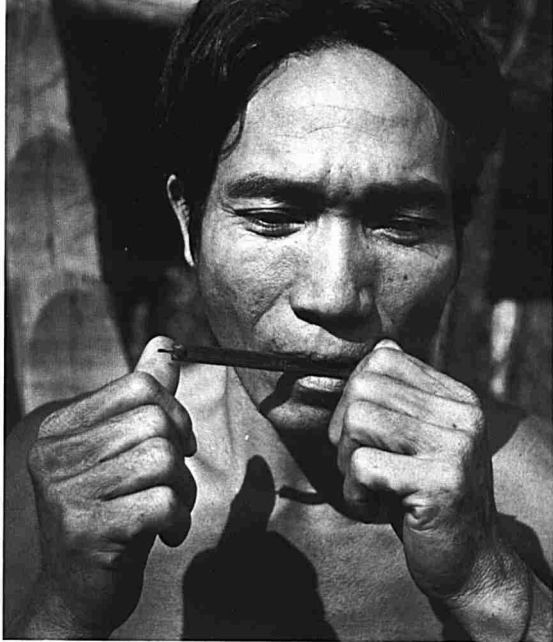




Because of their isolation and transport difficulties, the Muruts are some of the only people in Sarawak who still make their own earthenware bowls and cooking pots. Other races have long ago found it less trouble to buy their cook-pots in the bazaar. The Muruts have no potter's wheel. They insert a stick into a cylinder of solid clay and slowly enlarge the cavity by working with their hands and beating with wooden trowels until the pot takes shape.

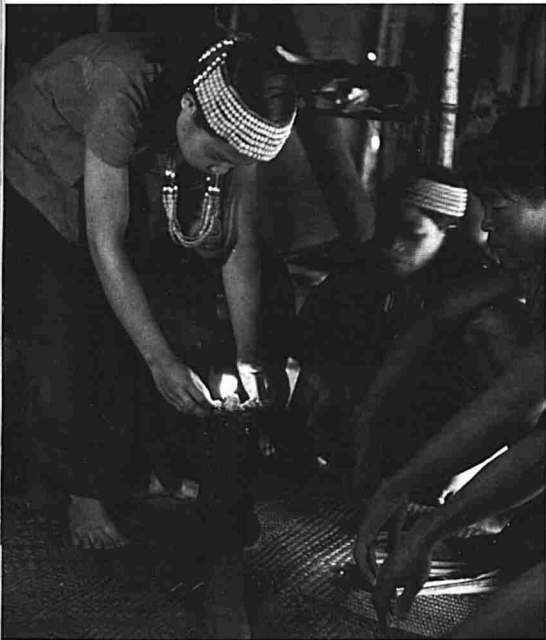


A young Murut girl of good family wears a small fortune in ancient beads. Her cap, made of yellow glass beads, is probably worth about £100 and those around her neck are worth perhaps as much again. They are mostly glass, though some are agate, and the thin narrow ones are coral. They are highly valued and constitute a form of currency. Some beads are of Chinese origin but others appear to have come from the Middle East.



A Murut man strums on a Jew's Harp. They are a peculiarly unmusical people and lack the musical instruments used by other Sarawak peoples. They are great and enthusiastic hymn singers and they make up in volume what they lack in harmony. Even the Jew's Harp is probably an introduction from the coast.

Kerosene is troublesome to carry up into the Murut country and still to be seen there are the traditional dammar lamps, a simple wooden stand made from a length of branching tree stem. The dammar, a jungle resin, burns freely but slowly and little pieces must continually be added. Such flaring, smoky lamps invest the longhouse with surprising beauty and fill it with a pleasant aromatic scent.





A comely Murut girl prepares palm leaf thatch for her longhouse. There is no ironwood in the Murut country and thatch must be made either from a form of jungle palm or from wooden shingles which are not a true hardwood and only have a short life.



Muruts have suffered greatly from ill health in the past but due to the good work of men like Hospital Assistant Heng Kia Hem, who cheerfully leave their families and the comforts of the District Headquarters to make the long and arduous journey upcountry, the position is steadily improving. A Murut policeman, Constable Kading, leans against the house post acting as an interpreter from the peculiar Murut language into Malay.



At Ba Kelalan, at the head of the Trusan, there are several salt wells. The salt water is dipped out of the well and carried in lengths of hollow bamboo to a shed where the water is boiled away in large iron pots. Formerly, when access to the coast was difficult and dangerous, such salt wells were an important economic asset and the salt was traded over a wide area. The workers are wearing coats made from bark cloth.

The Kelabits are closely related to the Muruts and live in the neighbouring headwaters of the Baram. The journey from the Ulu Trusan to the Ulu Baram is quite a short distance in a straight line but involves crossing some very rough and broken mountain country. The Kelabits are less sophisticated than the Muruts and the dandy will carefully trim his hair in the traditional manner during a jungle halt en route to a longhouse party.





At a halt in the road a group of Kelabits gossip with their headman. They are halting by two Batu Selupid, stone blocks which in days gone by the Kelabits used to set up as memorial stones. It was often necessary to carry the stones for considerable distances. For similar commemoration reasons the Kelabits would cut great gaps in the jungle on hill crests or dig substantial ditches in unexpected places. The completion of such works was always the occasion for a gargantuan party.

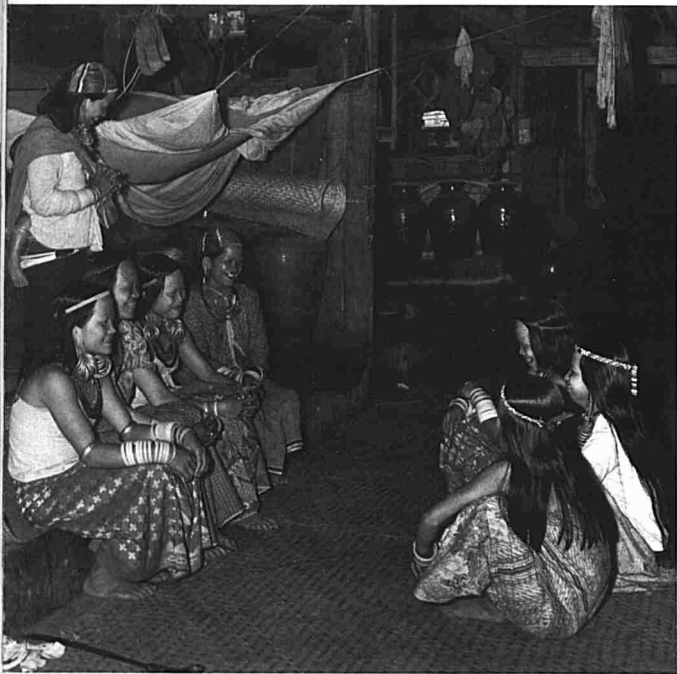


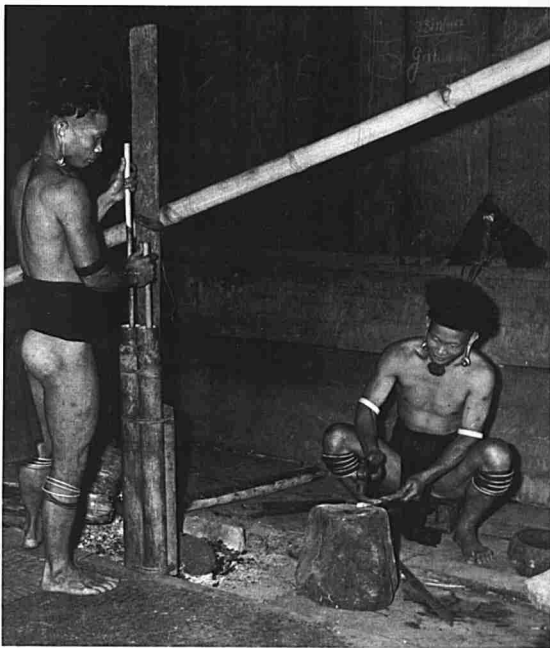
Half game, half dance, Kelabit girls amuse themselves with two rice pounders. The girls with the poles bang them on the length of wood beneath, and then bang them together, in rapid time. The dancer must hop nimbly in between the two poles until, eventually, her foot is caught and she receives a resounding whack on the ankle.

In a farming hut used by the people of Long Medihit, an isolated Kelabit community in the Ulu Limbang, two women play with perhaps the simplest string instrument in the world. Made from a length of bamboo, it is a remote relation of the guitar.



At Boreo in the heart of the Kelabit country a group of Kelabit girls sit gossiping in one of the inner rooms. There is little privacy in longhouse life at the best of times but especially is this the case in Kelabit houses where there are no walls between the various family rooms. Like the Muruts the Kelabit girls wear bead caps but of a slightly different pattern.

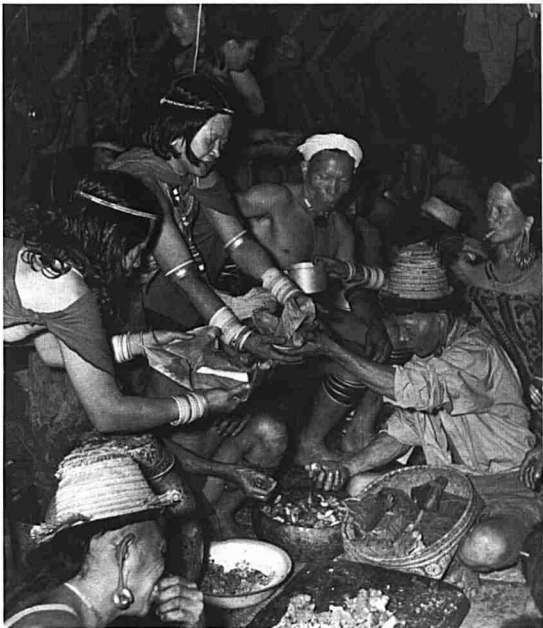




The Kelabits are clever blacksmiths and make excellent parangs, the general-purpose sword, which can be used for anything from clearing jungle to decapitating fallen enemies. The steel must be brought up from the coast but no coastal Chinese can make the blades, convex on one side and concave on the other, which the Bornean peoples most value. The blacksmith wears a monkeyskin cap while a friend operates the simple bamboo bellows.

Kelabit hospitality revolves around the consumption of vast quantities of rice beer brewed in ancient Chinese jars. A party is extremely exhausting for visitors but Native Officer Tinggang Malang seizes the initiative and superintends the drinking. The drinker must suck the beer up a bamboo tube and lower a float in another tube by a stipulated amount. It is none too sanitary a way of drinking but no one seems to suffer more than a sore head the next morning and if anything comes up the tube, swallow quickly. It is probably only a cockroach!





An essential item in the party is an immense feast of rice and stewed beef. One Kelabit divides up the food and hands it out to the girls for distribution. A woman passes a pannikin of rice beer and one guest has jammed a bone in his molars. The noise, the good humour, the hospitality are almost overpowering. The smoke-filled room is packed to capacity. And when the meal is over the serious drinking will go steadily forward until dawn the next day or, perhaps, the dawn of the next day or even the dawn after that!

THE PENANS

THE PENANS are the only true jungle dwellers among the people of Sarawak. Although some of the other tribes such as Kenyahs or Ibans may live in jungle areas, they essentially follow a settled way of life and they devote their energies to destroying the forest cover for the cultivation of rice. Individuals and parties may make long trips into the old jungle, hunting or searching for jungle produce, but primarily they are cultivators of food crops.

The true jungle Penans, however, live their whole lives in the jungle. They have no permanent houses but keep continually on the move. They build little temporary settlements which they occupy for a month or two to work jangkar or to shoot monkeys. Such settlements will be near a supply of the wild jungle sago which provides them with their staple article of diet. When the sago is worked out or when game or jungle produce becomes scarce and difficult to

find in the area, they move on somewhere else.

One might expect to find the Penans a primitive looking people but this is not the case. They are big and strongly built. The men are fine looking people with the general Bornean cast of countenance and the girls are very pretty when they are young. As a result of continual hard travelling their feet are greatly developed, and their complexions are pale through always living in the jungle shade. They are a very timid people and dependent on longhouse dwellers for the supply of certain necessities of life, particularly cloth, salt and iron.

The trade with Penans is a lucrative business because the Penans kill hundreds of monkeys and from a small percentage of those killed they are able to obtain the large gallstones which are highly valued by the Chinese for medicinal purposes. Similarly they bring in the dried bladders of the little honey bear and, before it became extinct in Sarawak, the valuable rhinoceros horn. These articles, together with dammar and jangkar and the fine mats which they make, the Penans trade with the Kayans and Kenyahs who in their turn sell the jungle produce to the Chinese of the Bazaars.

It is a system that is open to abuse and for many years now the jungle Penans have brought in their produce at various Government supervised trading meetings, two or three times a year. Since the Penans have no boats, trading meetings are essential for them. A date is set by knotting a length of rotan with the same number of knots as there are days to go until the next meeting. The Penans undo a knot each day and so they know when to attend the trading meeting or *tamu*. As a result of the more favourable prices which they get for their produce, the Penans now own quite a few worldly goods and some even have shotguns instead of their traditional hunting weapon, the blowpipe. They are extremely accurate marksmen with a blowpipe and can kill monkeys and other game readily and silently with poisoned darts but the gun, despite the noise it makes, has the advantage of a longer range.

Some Penans have settled down in longhouses. Those who have done so for many years follow a way of life that is very similar to that of Kayans and Kenyahs but the change is not too easy and a newly established Penan longhouse is far from pleasant. This is largely due to the fact that newly settled Penans have no pigs. There are no sanitary conveniences in any Bornean longhouses.

Refuse is just thrown out of the door and the people relieve themselves in the bushes a little distance from the longhouse. It appears a most unhealthy and insanitary system but in fact the longhouses of the settled peoples are clean and free from flies. This is largely due to the keeping of pigs and it is these unpleasant but useful scavengers living under and around the longhouses which ensure that the neighbourhood is kept clean. But where a house without pigs is to be found there are innumerable flies and other insects and a general atmosphere of filth and squalor.

Although Penans live such a primitive existence, they are some of the best craftsmen in Borneo. They weave the finest and most beautiful mats in the whole island adorned with extraordinarily lively black and white designs. These they produce in their little jungle shelters, working entirely by eye, and the finished article is something of which any craftsman in the world would justly be proud. Settled Penans are also skilled blacksmiths, and sword or parang makers, and they are the makers of the famous blowpipes, which are bored with extraordinary accuracy out of a single piece of wood up to eight feet long. For these reasons their services are quickly sought when they settle down.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether the people known as Penans are one or two peoples, Penans and Punans. There are certainly wide apparent differences between the jungle Penans and the settled people who call themselves Punans but research into their languages would appear to show that they have at least a common origin, though they may well have arrived in Sarawak, coming from the Indonesian side of Borneo, at different times. The total numbers of both groups amount to about 4,000 persons, confined to the upper Rejang and Baram River systems.

The most salient characteristics of the Penans are shyness and timidity, and this is especially marked in the case of the jungle Penans. Theirs is a hard life. The jungle for them is not an idyllic place of rippling brooks and pleasant, sun-dappled woodlands but rather a place of hunger, mud, wetness and terrifying ill health. For generations the Penans were virtually the private property of the great Kayan and Kenyah Chiefs. The Chiefs protected them to some extent, as they would any other valuable and money producing property, but despite

their protection the Penans were often attacked by bands of headhunting Ibans. Today the Penans are free men and live in a state of reasonable security but they have not yet thrown off their traditional outlook that they are a weak and defenceless people for whom flight is the only refuge from oppression.



A group of settled Penans in the valley of the Nibong, a tributary of the Tinjar, eat a meal of sago. It is a sticky, unappetising food and eaten with a form of chopsticks. The Penan dogs nose hungrily around. Settled Penans learn to cultivate padi but they continue to rely to a considerable extent on sago for their food.

Checking the calendar of knots, the temungku tali. The Penans have no accurate way of estimating the passage of time and in order to know when they should appear for the next trading meeting, a date is set and the various family groups are given lengths of rattan in which are tied as many knots as there are days to go until the date of the next meeting. The Penans undo a knot each day and in this way know when to come out from the jungle again.



By their jungle shelter in the Ulu Limbang a group of Penans talk to Muruts encountered by chance by the riverside. The jungle Penans live in such little shelters, sleeping on platforms raised off the ground and feeding on game and wild sago. They move over a wide area of jungle. This particular group have now moved out of the Limbang and returned to the Tutoh, a tributary of the Baram from whence they originally came.





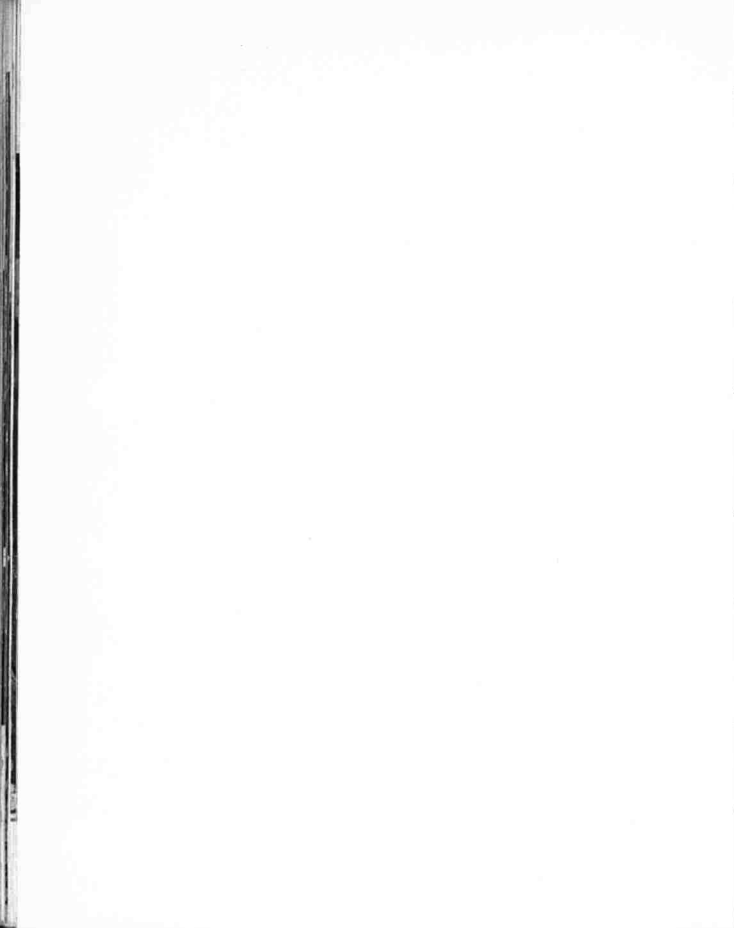
A family group of Penans encountered at a trading meeting at Lio Matu in the upper Baram. They were in a wretched state as a result of continual attacks of malaria. Yet despite isolation and ill health the Penans appear to be holding their own and even to be increasing in numbers.

A young Penan married couple. Although the hard life they lead causes them to age quickly, the Penans are naturally good looking and love finery and ornaments as much as any other people. Since, however, they have no boats and all their property must be carried on their backs, their opportunities for acquiring wealth and for economic advancement are very limited.





A young Penan squats in the quiet of the jungle floor. In the bamboo box by his side are the poison darts for his blowpipe with which he can kill monkeys and other game. Intelligent and strong, he is yet as nervous and timid as any other creature of the wild.



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Note. Within the limits of the text and captions of this photographic book it has not been possible to give an exhaustive account of the history of Sarawak, the customs of its peoples, the topography of the country and its exploration and many other matters. The following bibliography is, therefore, attached for the benefit of any reader who wishes to learn more. It is a fairly complete list of most of the books dealing with Sarawak. It does not, however, include rare pamphlets, Parliamentary papers and Blue books, and papers in scientific publications such as the *Journal of the Malay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*, the *Ibis*, and many others.

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