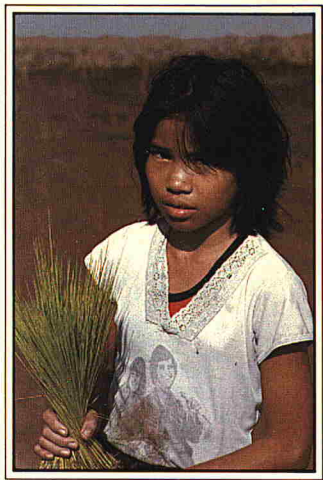
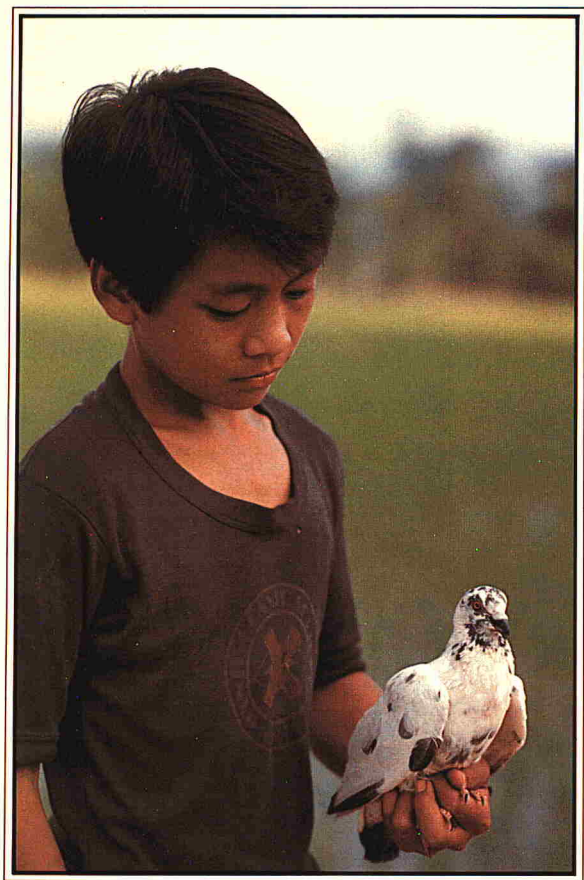


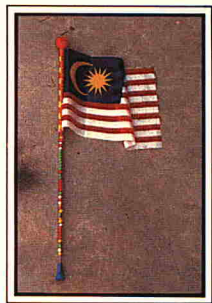
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# CHILDREN OF SABAH

STANE SALOBIR  
CECILIA LEONG





# **CHILDREN OF SABAH**

STANE SALOBIR  
CECILJA LEONG



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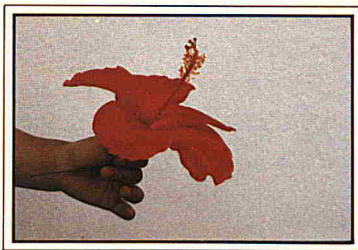
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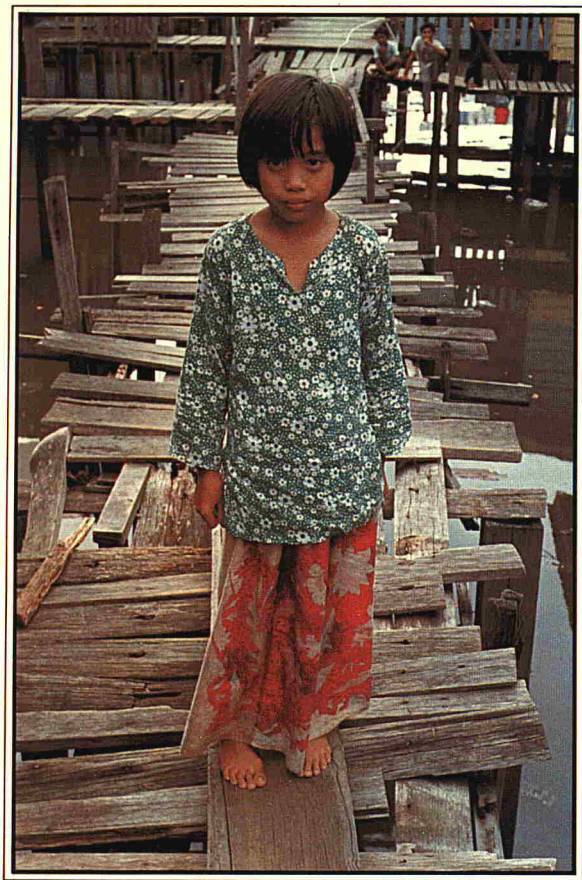
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## INTRODUCTION

This book records on film of the various aspects of a child's life in Sabah. Through the pages are the many moods of children, expressions of happiness, excitement, boredom, irritation and curiosity. CHILDREN OF SABAH is full of beautiful moments shared with children, talking to them, playing with them or simply watching them.

My project of photographing the children of Sabah has been a work of discovery in many respects. After working closely with them for many weeks I found that I have come to know and love the people and places of Sabah better. The children represent the way of life of Sabahans through their activities of home life, be it work or play.

The children of Sabah, like children all over the world, love to be photographed. They pose smiling and acting out various gestures. These gimmicks are good but I feel that the best photographs are the candid ones. Here, there is no disturbance of the natural behaviour of the child. My basic idea is to portray children naturally, without making them self-conscious.

On many occasions however, I photographed children who were totally aware that they were being taken. In most cases they cooperated fully. Children are curious, they are interested in what the stranger in their midst is doing, particularly if he is a photographer.

Talking to the child and letting him relax in front of the camera will produce good results. Sometimes the element of surprise on a child's face can be captured while the child is still reacting to the presence of the photographer. Generally, children are totally unpredictable, they may pose unabashedly or cry or simply run away.

One thing that makes it easier for the photographer in Sabah is the people. Sabahans do not view the photographer's assignment as an intrusion into their lives. Rather, they welcome you into their homes, scold children into striking the right poses for the camera. This warmth and hospitality can best be illustrated when we went "children hunting" in Kampung Likas, Kota Kinabalu. This was during Hari Raya Puasa (celebration of the end of the fasting month for Muslims) when four families invited us, strangers, into their family celebrations. More food and drinks were laid out, the picture-taking can wait, they said.

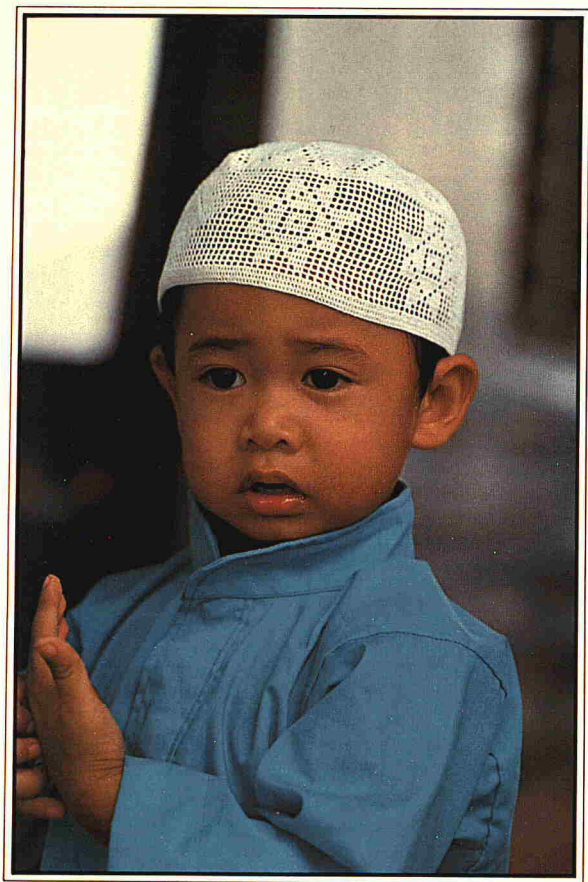
Nevertheless, it was always my practice to approach the adult in the vicinity first before I started clicking away. A simple request, "Bolehkah saya mengambil gambar anak Encik?" was almost always greeted with the affirmative, "Boleh!"

Children has been my favourite subject all along. In my travels in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia and Africa I have learnt to appreciate the simple and uncomplicated lives of children. The pictures in this book were taken with a manual camera, SLR 35 mm.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting and photographing the children of Sabah. The photographs in the following pages are for all who love natural beauty and children.

**STANE SALOBIR**

January, 1983



## PREFACE

CHILDREN OF SABAH was conceived early last year but because of work commitments we were not able to start until the middle of the year. We travelled for the whole of June to all corners of Sabah, taking altogether 1000 shots.

Later when we went back to our respective jobs we spent whatever spare time we had, making short trips to the outlying areas of Kota Kinabalu, to the islands nearby and to areas within Kota Kinabalu itself. These trips were made during weekends, public holidays and frequently after office hours between 4.30 to 6.30 pm. During this time I was also involved in researching and writing the text.

As the project was not stretched over a long period of time the excitement and interest that came initially was sustained throughout.

For me, previously a child of Sabah, this exercise was more than just a piece of work I had to do. It brought back vivid memories. While researching the chapter on games I realised how much more fun we had had in our childhood than children today. Nothing beats the thrill of picking up rubber seeds in the afternoon. Wading up and down the stream near our house, catching fish, dragonflies and anything that could be caught was a special pleasure.

We spoke to hundreds of children while photographing them. They talked about their adventures, their loves, their fears and their ambitions. I always tried to learn more about children by talking to them away from the watchful eyes of adults and this has proved to be an enlightening experience. The thoughts they revealed were astonishing. Sometimes though, their expressions are not so much clever as precocious. Like the eight-year old of whom I asked what he would like to be when he grew up. Instead of the standard reply of wanting to be a fireman or a doctor or carpenter, he remarked, "Well, I have not actually made that decision yet".

Childhood is the time for dreams. Nowhere else is more conducive to dreams than rural Sabah. In the calm waters of the Labuk River you see a young girl sitting motionless in her small boat. Is she fishing or dreaming, or fishing and dreaming? Amidst such quiet beauty surely dreams can only be the best, thoughts can only be beautiful.

Our project took us through Sabah by air, by bus, by motorboat. We were on the train, in my faithful Datsun, and of course we walked a great deal. All in all, we covered about 2000 kms.

To the various persons and organisations who helped in one way or the other towards the making of this book, our grateful thanks. In particular our appreciation to the people in the rural areas who went out of their way to arrange for transport and accommodation for us. Most of all, our thanks to the children of Sabah who cooperated spontaneously.

It is hoped that this book will give you as much pleasure as we had in producing it.

CECILIA LEONG  
January, 1983

## WHERE IT IS

Sabah lies on the northern part of Borneo, the world's third largest island, between 4° and 8° north of the equator. With an area of 72,500 square km Sabah is washed by the South China Sea on its west and by the Sulu Sea on the east. To the north, across the Sulu Sea, are the Philippines. East of Borneo, across the Straits of Makasar is Sulawesi. On the south, across the Java Sea are other Indonesian islands. Peninsular Malaysia is to the west, where the Java and South China Seas meet.

Lying within the tropics the temperature does not average more than 32°C. Hot sunny days and cool nights typify most of the year. Rainfall varies between 60 to 120 inches. Sabah has been called "Land Below the Wind" for its tranquillity. Sabah is a land of mountains, rivers, valleys, plains and rolling hills. Mount Kinabalu reaching to a height of 4101 m, is the highest peak between the Himalayas and New Guinea. Large areas of the state are covered in dense jungles. It is on the coastal plains that the majority of the people are inhabited.

## A BIT OF HISTORY

In early times Chinese traders came to Sabah for camphor, birds' nests and spices. Even today, in the most remote village there is the Chinese shop stocked with basics like sugar, sardines, oil and flour. In the 13th century, Arab traders frequented the area, they were responsible for spreading the Islam faith.

It was only in 1881 that a formal system of government was set up in Sabah, by the British. This lasted for about 80-odd years.

Sabah on September 16, 1963 became a state of Malaysia.

## THE PEOPLE

Sabah is a melting pot of many ethnic and immigration groups.

The KADAZANS form the largest indigenous community, comprising 30 percent of the population. They are found mainly on the west coast and the interior districts. Expert rice farmers, the Kadazans were the first native people to use the plough in Sabah. Even today many still use the simple wooden plough aided by the water buffalo.

Sabah's former headhunters, the MURUTS, still hunt for wild game with the blowpipe and poison darts. They are concentrated mainly in the interior.

The BAJAUS, sea pirates in the old days, are now Sabah's pony and cattle farmers and rice planters.

The MALAYS are a coastal people and are one of the smallest indigenous groups of Sabah.

The largest immigrant group, the CHINESE, from the start were traders. Most of them live in the towns or near towns. Other immigrants are the FILIPINOS and INDONESIANS.

Indigenous Sabahans also identify themselves by names referring to their religion, language or the place they live. This makes it difficult to identify specific peoples in the state. As well, one group might call themselves by one name while others will call this group by a different name.

Among the main races cited above are countless subgroups. For example, the 1970 census listed 11 communities among the Kadazans. The languages that the Kadazans speak include Tatana, Klias River, Kadazan, Rungus, Papar, Bisaya, Kujau, Eastern Kadazan, Coastal Kadazan, Northern Kadazan, Lotud, and Minokok.

Then a community in Semporna who originated from Southern Philippines speak a mixture of Spanish, Tagalog and Cebuano. The Sabah Chinese speak the dialects of Hakka, Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew and Hailam.

Sabah has a population of slightly more than 1 million.

## THE CHILDREN OF SABAH

### Physique

The Sabahan child has jet black hair, dark brown eyes and, depending on the locality, may have a cocoa brown skin, to a delicately fair complexion. Along the coasts, by river settlements and other areas his *cafe au lait* skin comes from hours of playing and working in the sun. In the valleys and up in the hills where the air is cool, the child's skin is softer and fairer. A Chinese girl, led to believe that fair is beautiful, avoids the sun under the shade of an umbrella. A Malay girl, similarly, will shun the outdoors when commented on about her dusky complexion; she will thus stop playing football with her friends.

Even so, one cannot generalise too much on the looks of the Sabahan child. Within the same community, or same family even, a slant of the eye, shape of the nose, all make the Sabahan children seem so individual, so lively and so varied. Most children here have straight hair but there are others who have the tightest of curls from birth.

Naturally with more outdoor work and exercise the rural child in Sabah is much stronger than his urban counterpart. It is amazing how many miles those little feet can cover, barefoot, on jungle tracks or on the hot surface of an asphalt road. His arms look tiny but they pack a lot of muscle in there, with hours of boat paddling.

A dainty-looking girl can deceive the eye. She gets up before dawn, makes coffee for the family, taps a few rubber trees and after school looks after younger brothers and sisters.

### Work

Generally Sabahan children have the same kind of responsibility and upbringing that most Asian children have.

Often it is not a parent who looks after the young child but an older sibling. Older brothers and sisters care for the young child at work and at play. They are also responsible for feeding the young ones. It is towards this concept that Sabah has accepted the international Child-to-Child Programme set up during the International Year of the Child in 1979. This programme was designed to teach and encourage older children to care for the health and general development of younger children in and outside their families. Sabah has adopted Dental Health Care for its 1982 Child-to-Child Programme.

Helping with the housework is taken as a matter of fact. It is not uncommon to see a five or six-year old, with a baby on her back, tending to some chore in the home.

A Kadazan girl in her early teens is already expert in planting rice seedlings in the *padi* field. Knee-deep in the freshly irrigated field she performs the back-breaking job in the sun. Often she helps in the whole laborious process, from planting to harvesting.

The family boy does the chopping of the firewood and he helps to clear weeds in the compound. In many villages you will see children, hardly out of infancy, carrying parangs and small knives. A knife is a useful thing to have on a walk in the countryside. If he sees some nice young bamboo shoots he will cut them for his mother's pickle pot. Any intruding weeds or twigs in his path can be slashed off.

Certainly the rural child leads a more frugal existence. For a start his school is quite likely to be situated some distance from his home. Often he thinks nothing of walking 15 km to and from school. Too much walking wears out school shoes quickly; on our travels we saw quite a few children walking barefoot, shoes in hand. The privileged child in the town is often chaffereaued to and from school and is more pampered in other ways.

Usually it is the duty of the older children to coach the younger ones in lessons after school. This is among the poor families. In the towns where people are more affluent, after school tutors are engaged to help with the homework.

While Sabahan children on the whole work hard, they play hard as well. Some, with the greatest of ease have combined work with play. A girl plays hopscotch with a baby sibling on her back. Or she may spend hours in the afternoon sun, wading up and down the nearby stream, scooping small fish in her hands and depositing them in her little fish basket. What a joy it is to catch the silvery and slippery anchovies in one's hands! It is hard to tell whether this is work or play here for the fish will be cooked for dinner.

## School

Every child is entitled to free primary education. Currently there are 150,000 children in primary schools and 63,000 children in secondary schools. This does not include the number of children enrolled in kindergartens.

Bahasa Malaysia is the medium of instruction in schools. Subjects taught are English, Malay, and Chinese languages, history, geography, health science, civics, art, singing and arithmetic.

School hours average between five to six hours. For Muslim children there is also two hours of religious school in the afternoon. In fact before formal schools were started in Sabah, Islamic teachers taught boys and girls Koranic verses in Arabic.

The Sabah child is impeccable in his dress. His school uniform remains immaculate throughout the day and while he may kick and roll there is that inborn care not to soil his clothing too much. White canvas shoes remain so by week's end.

## Health and Welfare

Maternal and child health care services in Sabah began with the setting up of health centres in the 1950s. These were aimed at promoting health care and preventive services for pregnant mothers. At these centres too the health needs of children are looked after.

Since these were set up, mothers and children have become healthier. There were less deaths among women in labour and death rates among infants dropped considerably. Before this, diseases like measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, poliomyelitis were prevalent among children.

Welfare organisations that help children with special needs include the Sabah Cheshire Home, the Sabah Mental Health Association and the Sabah Society for the Blind. The Cheshire Home cares for the disabled and the chronically ill. The Mental Health Association and the Sabah Foundation have set up a school in Kota Kinabalu for mentally retarded children.

Juvenile courts consisting of a magistrate and two advisers try all offences (except those punishable by death) committed by persons under the age of 18. These courts also deal with any child brought in by a social welfare officer or by the police who need care and protection. A remand home has been set up in 1971.

The Department of Welfare Services gives financial assistance to orphans and other needy children. Money is given for school books, transport fares and clothing. The Princess Anne Children's Home in the capital houses orphans.

The adoption can also be made through the native courts.

Since 1979 the Sabah Government has been providing free uniforms, shoes, pencils and exercise books to school-going children. Milk is also distributed free four times a week.

## Figures

In 1980 when Sabah's population was 863,038 there were 143,286 children below the age of four. Of this number, 71,986 were boys and 71,300 were girls. In the same year, 10 to 14-year-olds numbered 110,447; 56,661 were boys and the rest girls.



## GAMES SABAH CHILDREN PLAY

In earlier decades Sabah children played more traditional games within their community. Today less of these games are played as interest is in the internationally known games. However in the rural areas children still enjoy the games of old. Besides adding variety to play, the "older" games require a bit more effort in fashioning out game materials.

One of the earliest records of self-made toys in Sabah was mentioned by John Whitehead in the 1880s. While travelling on the west coast he noted, "In our house the Kadyans (Kedayans) have left some children's toys; this was the only attempt towards making models to amuse children that I ever notice in Borneo. The toys consisted of several well-made models of boats; but the chief object of interest was a peculiar wooden animal on four wheels, which looked more like a rabbit than anything else... but .... it was the model of a buffalo....."

Some of the traditional games are universally known like hopscotch, marbles, hide and seek and kite flying. Others have variations in other Malaysian states as well as in other Asian countries.

### Order of Play

Before traditional games can be started there is the pre-game ritual. This is similar to the tossing of the coin to decide who is to be "it" or who gets the advantage of starting first.

One version is to have all the participants form a circle. Each child with palm outstretched hits his chest several times, at the same time, chanting, "Ohh Ohh tui" (in Chinese, or its equivalent in other languages). At the word "tui", the children fling out their arms in mid-air. You have two choices - to lay out your palm downwards or upwards. If there were five players, and four had their palms upwards, the one with his palm downward starts play first, or becomes "it", depending on the kind of game played. If, however, two had palms upwards the system breaks down. But no matter, another system is used. The two with the palms upwards will now be out and only the three others have to go through the other system.

Each child brings his tightly closed fist to the back of his head and call out, "One, two, three". There are three choices, to throw out your arm with a fist, or showing the outstretched index and middle fingers, or a flat palm. The fist is a stone that can crush the two fingers; the two fingers represent a pair of scissors. But the palm is a piece of paper that wraps up the stone. And the pair of scissors cuts the piece of paper.

### Traditional Games Rubber Seeds

They scour the floor of the rubber estate, looking for rubber seeds. Armed with paper bags or milk tins they pick up the shiny brown seeds. Those with a good round shape and have that extra hard kernel are greatly sought after.

"Plaak! Plaak!" As new seeds up at the trees are being dispersed from the outer shells carrying the seeds, excitement mounts. The children run to where the seeds fall and it is sheer delight to hold a new seed in the hand, still warm, like a newly-laid egg.

Little sisters and others who don't quite know what to do with the seeds tag along anyhow. This group's aim is strictly confined to building up a collection. Hundreds of seeds are packed into containers and often placed in hiding places. One favourite place is under the bed.

For the older ones, rubber seeds provide all kinds of interesting games.

Playing the *lazangan* (Kadazan word for windmill) is one. Three holes are drilled on the seed, one at the top, one at the bottom and another in the middle. The flesh is scooped out. A thinly scraped piece of bamboo attached to a lollipop stick is inserted through the seed, from the top and bottom holes. A piece of string fixed on the stick comes out of the middle whole.

Hours of pleasure can be had by pulling the string and the bamboo scrape whirrs like a propeller.

Another game is to have 10 seeds in hand and challenge another person with the same number of seeds. Two players squat on hard ground. The first person who gets to play first, places his seed on top of his opponent's and holds them together with the left hand. With the right hand he brings down his fist, hard. If he has a hard enough seed and if he had used all his might he will crush the bottom one. The winner is the player with the greater number of uncrushed seeds.

There are afternoons when no rubber seeds can be found. Those desperate enough will aim at the green shells up at the rubber trees with stones. These they hit open to get the seeds. But these are still young seeds and are never as good for play as the hard brown ones that are naturally dispersed.

### Flying Kites

Flying kites among the indigenous children is usually after the harvesting season. Kites made of colourful waxed paper and bamboo, flying the blue sky, above the freshly harvested *padi* fields is a treat to see. Chinese children fly kites only in certain months of the lunar calendar.

### Rubber bands

Rubber bands that are widely used in shops to secure packages are highly treasured. They come in all sorts of colours and the finicky collector separates them into pinks, yellows, blues, reds and greens.

Considered a game for the girls, one is played thus. Two children sit on the floor and places two rubber bands some cms apart. Taking turns, each child moves close to her rubber and makes a small short puff with the lips. The aim is to move the owner's band towards the other player's. Once a player's overlaps the other's she wins and she collects the loser's rubber.

Rubber bands are also collected and strung together for skipping. Two girls, usually, hold the rubber rope while others skip. A variety of feats are performed during the skipping. She might touch the ground with one hand while skipping, then try with two hands. With one foot she might do the figure of eight in mid-air.

### Galah

Yet another game strictly for the girls is playing *galah*. An open area is needed. A rectangle with two lines running through it are drawn on the ground.



Two teams, each with four or more children play the game. Each team chooses its own leader. The team that defends the lines as above, stations one or more players on lines AB, CD, EF and GH.

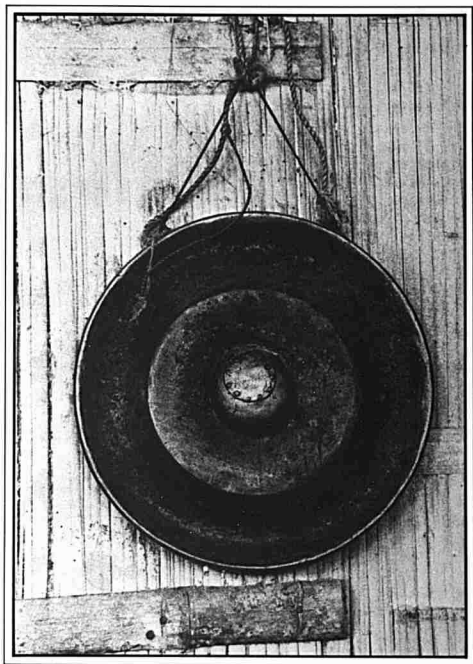
The attacking team tries to go through all the lines, starting from AB to GH without being touched by the defenders.

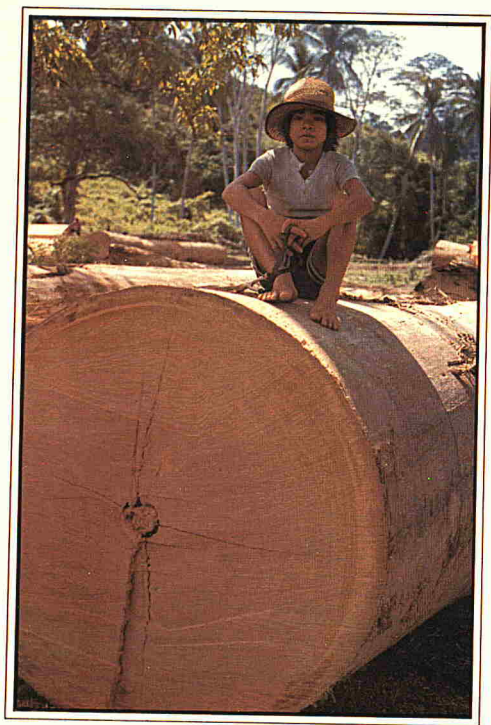
All but the leader of the defenders cannot move away from their own lines. The leader can tour all the lines, helping out in the weaker defending lines and where the stronger attacks are.

As soon as an attacker has gone through from AB to GH without being touched, the team has won. The game is restarted. If an attacker is touched by the guards the teams change sides.

Today Sabah children play more of the internationally known games. Just about every village has its own football playing area. Where there is no proper field any open area will do. Two sticks stuck into the ground on two sides serve as goal posts. Materials needed for the game are simple, children and a ball. While some play barefoot others don the wellknown brands of football shoes. Football is not only for the boys. In some places it is played just as enthusiastically by girls. Many techniques are copied religiously from television. Telecasts of football matches from overseas are popular. The first football match was played at Sandakan on April 6, 1899.

Other "formal" types of games played are badminton, sepak takraw and table tennis.





## EAST COAST

SANDAKAN, our first destination on the east coast, grew from a fishing village to what is now one of the largest towns in Sabah today. It is reached from the state capital by air or by bus along the 400 km road, a journey of 10 hours. The town was totally destroyed by the end of World War II but as the timber trade flourished, Sandakan became the busiest timber centre between the 1960s and 1970s. Like most towns in Sabah and because the Chinese predominate here the town has a most Chinese character.

About 25 km from Sandakan town is Sepilok, where the world's largest orang utan sanctuary is found. The orang utan is a large ape, the original wild man of Borneo.

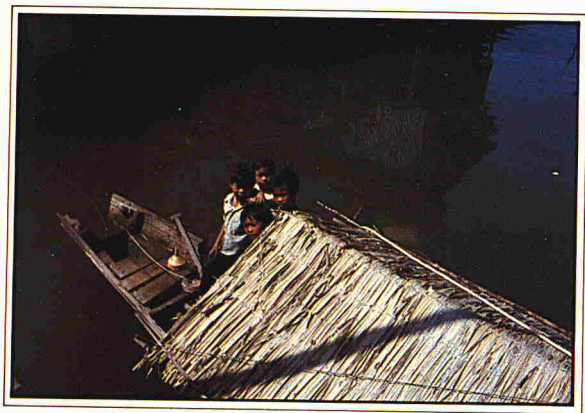
BELURAN, a small town, is perched on the bank of the Labuk River. It is about 82 km from Sandakan. Here are a good mixture of people, Kadazan, Orang Sungeis, and Chinese. Kolapis, further out, at the mouth of the Labuk is a village on the river.

LAHAD DATU was reached by bus, a four-hour journey from Mile 32, Sandakan. A smallish town, Lahad Datu caters to the timber, cocoa and oil palm trade. Sea food is plentiful here.

SEMPORNA, on the south-east coast was also reached by road, through Kunak. Oil palm and cocoa plantations lined both sides of the road – there are also stretches of primary jungle. A colourful and lively town, Semporna is famous for its seafood: lobsters, prawns, crabs and a great variety of fish.

Across the bay are many islands. We chose Pulau Bumbun where we visited Kampung Labuan Haji, a Bajau village of 300 people.

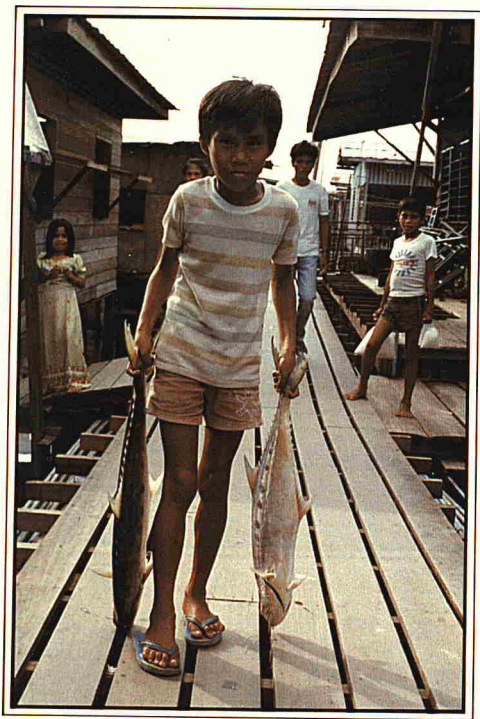
TAWAU was the last stop on the east coast. It is a busy and important centre for many agricultural produce.



Roofed with palm leaves this boat can stay out at sea for days

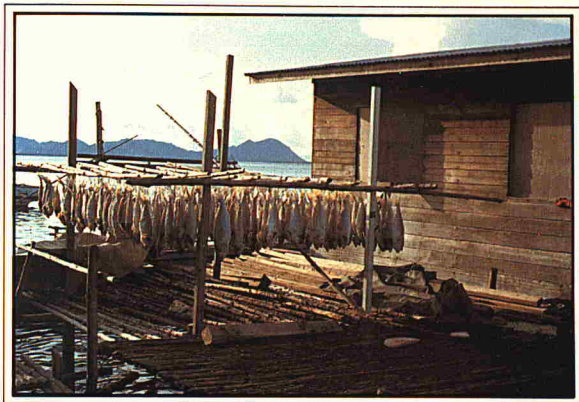


On the Labuk river. Nowhere else is more conducive to dreams than rural Sabah



Seafood forms an important part of the daily diet; it is plentiful on the coasts.  
Scene at Beluran

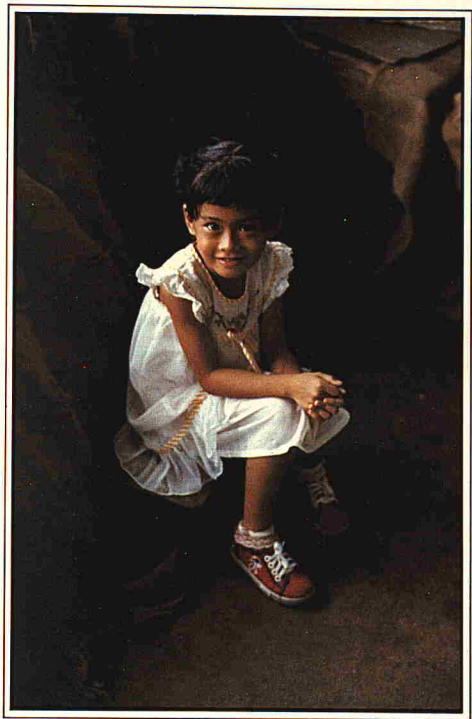




Salted fish is left out to dry in the sun and sea air for seven days. A favourite delicacy.  
this salted ikan merah (red snapper) is eaten with rice



Su En, 6 years, against bougainvilleas, a perennial flowering shrub



Sandakan girl



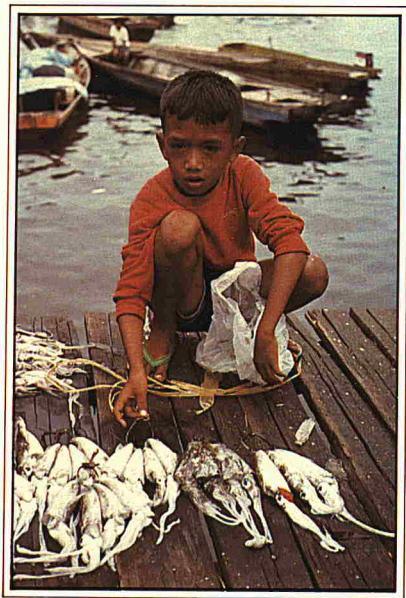
Tet Loong, 8 years, by Chinese temple at Lahad Datu



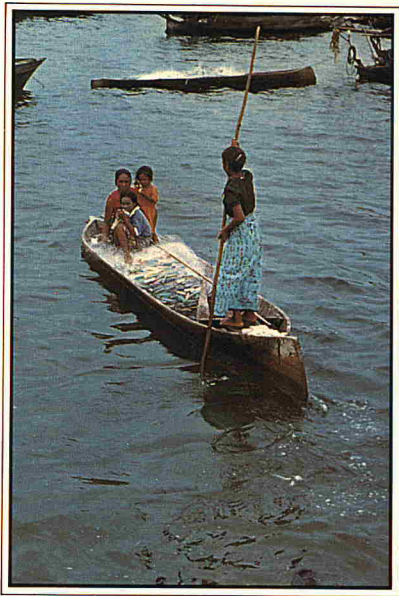
## TREES

*A tree here  
A tree there  
So many trees around me*

*Tall trees  
Upright trees  
They go up so high  
To reach the sky*



A part time businessman hawking cuttlefish (M\$4 a kilo) at the Semporna fish market



Mother takes children for morning shopping. Most women shop daily for the day's food. This ensures that the family's fruit and vegetables, meats and fish are always fresh.

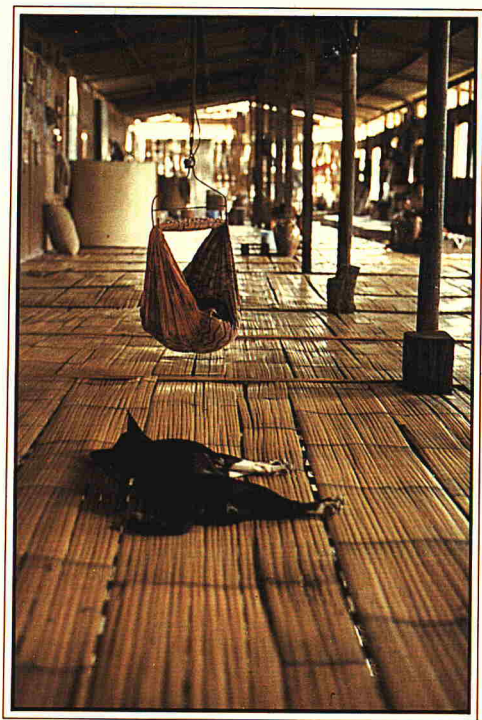


Ida'an girl watches from a window. The Ida'ans are a small community of Lahad Datu. Some of them are birds' nests collectors at the Madai Caves.





The walls and roof of this house are made of different kinds of palm leaves. The nipah palm leaf is more commonly used. While the men cut the palm fronds for this purpose the women weave the leaves for the walls and roofs.



## INTERIOR

From Kota Kinabalu to TENOM by train takes you through the towns of PAPAR and BEAUFORT. A distance of 155 km, the rail crosses the Crocker Range, follows along the Padas River and through the Padas Gorge.

TENOM is a Murut area although the Chinese own most of the shops in town. Rubber and cocoa are the two main crops grown here.

On the road to Tomani is Sapong (a rubber growing area) Kampung Paal, Kampung Mamaiton, Kampung Kalibatang, all Murut villages. Tomani consists of a few derelict shops that are scantily stocked. Kampung Marais has a few longhouses, also in poor shape. It has a community hall, a shop and a big playing field.

Kemabong, home to both Muruts and Chinese is like a garden village with lots of green. You approach it from a huge hanging bridge over the Padas River. Two short rows of wooden shophouses, a police hut and a school complete the picture.

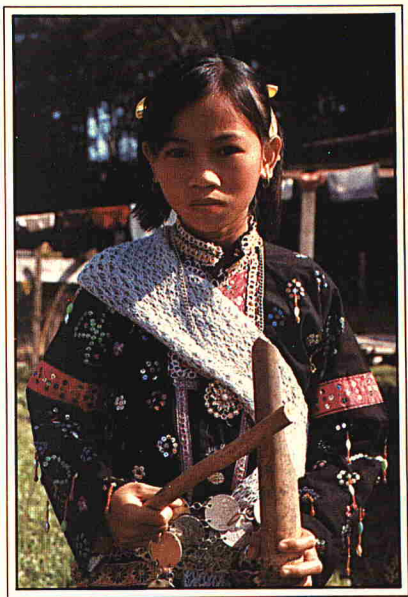
Melalap, another rubber growing area, has a mixed population of Muruts, Chinese, Kadazan and Javanese.

Tenom to KENINGAU by road is about 45 km. Keningau, the largest town and administrative centre in the interior has attracted both local and foreign workers to the many projects started there.

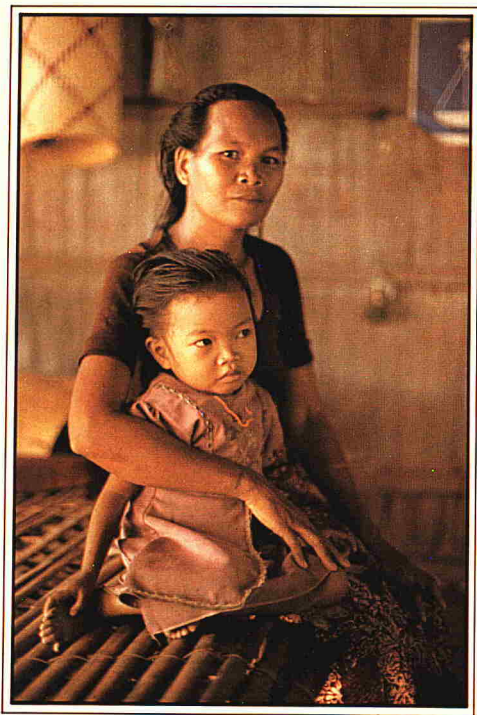
The journey from Keningau to NABAWAN over a distance of 68 km took almost 2½ hours. Nabawan is a settlement simply carved out from primary jungle. The District Office here also looks after Pensiangan, Sabah's border town to Indonesian Kalimantan.



On the slow train to Tenom  
This is Borneo's only railway line, it runs for 155 km from Kota Kinabalu to Tenom



Suliath, 9 years, member of the Murut Cultural group in Kampung Limbawan, Keningau



Widely spaced bamboo floor makes for cool lying down in the longhouse



*There was an old man  
who went to his kebun  
He planted some timun  
But up came a demon  
And so the old man  
Ran off to Bum Bun*

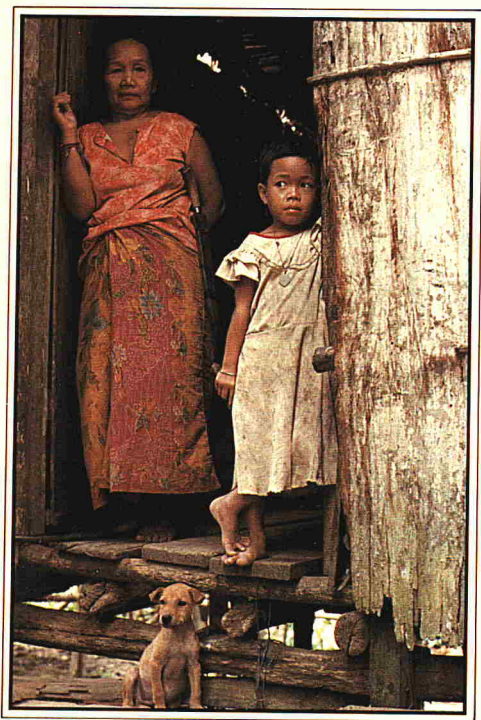


Catching small fish with bare hands at shallow stream





Tomisa, 5 years, touches tree that forms part of house.  
The Sabah government rebuilds longhouses that have grown into disrepair  
to maintain the longhouse community.



Tree bark forms part of front door



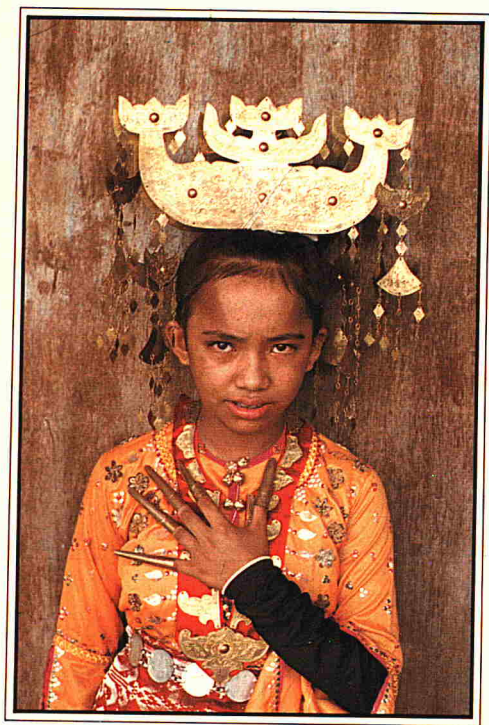
View from a window of split bamboo.  
A strategic position to see if father is back from the fields



To the shops. Tomani bridge.  
Rivers provide an important means of communication in forested areas



Rubber first became a significant tree crop in Sabah in the early 1900s



## NORTHERN REGION

KOTA BELUD, a two-and-a-quarter hours' drive from Kota Kinabalu is home to the Land Bajas. They are what travel writers like to call the cowboys of Sabah. This is not without justification for they are skilful pony and cattle farmers. They also plant rice and this they sell at the Sunday *tamu* (open air market). The *tamu* here is a colourful one. Bajau men and women wear their cloth headgear, the buffalo auction is on and the air is thick with tobacco smoke, smells of local cakes, seafood and the exhortations of medicine men. Kota Belud has many hills and miles and miles of flat padi land.

As you get out of Kota Belud and approach KUDAT district the people you see are most likely to be Rungus, a Kadazan group. Many of their women still wear their traditional dress, black cotton, brass and bead necklaces. The Rungus plant rice and maize and tend to their coconut farms.

KOTA MARUDU is a small and untidy town. Its well maintained coconut plantations however make the outskirts of the town most appealing.

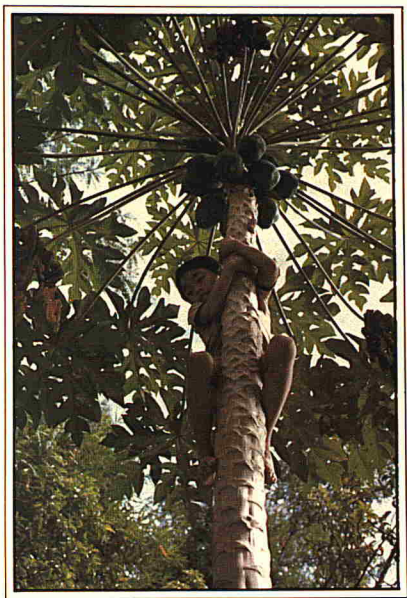
Sabah's northern most town, KUDAT was the state's first capital. The town, of both wooden and concrete shophouses, is neat and compact. Kudat has many stretches of sandy beaches. Two of these are Sequati and Bak Bak.

PITAS, about 64 km from Kota Marudu is one of the most isolated districts in Sabah. Its facilities are rather basic.



Rungus father and son at makeshift stall selling barbecued maize. Wayside vegetable and fruit stalls are set up on rural roads. A tin for the customer's money is seen as sufficient for transactions. The owner is somewhere else, working at his fields perhaps





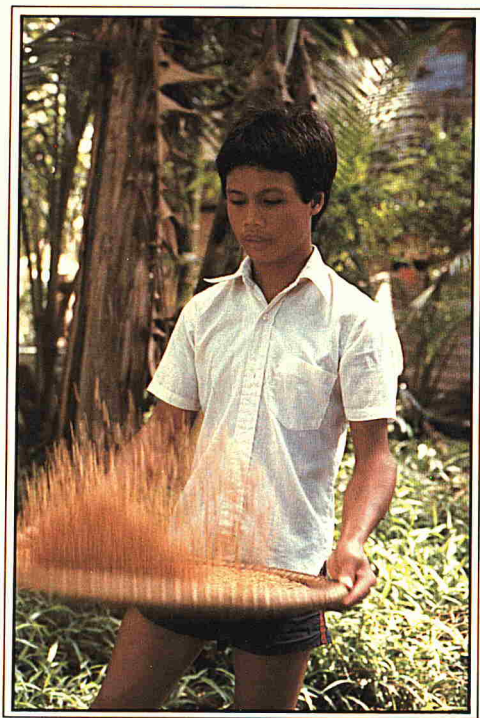
The papaya is a succulent and non-seasonal fruit. It is high in both vitamins A and C



Baby Maslida, three weeks old, Kampung Mantanau, 32 km from Kota Belud.  
The cotton sarong makes for cool lying down as a swinging cradle



Bodi, 4 years, and mother in 29-door longhouse, Kampung Bualog, Kudat. From the time a child can understand the rudiments of his language he is fed tales of spirits and demons.



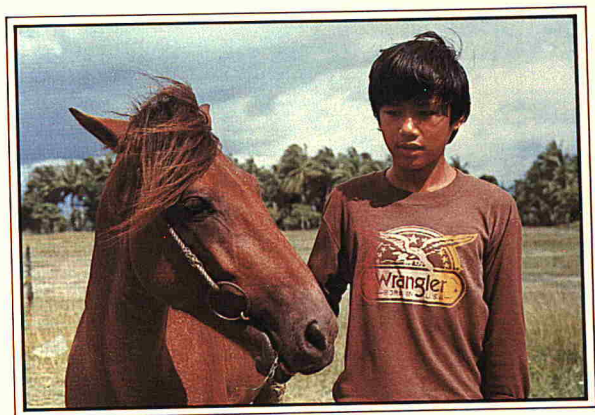
Bilan, 16 years, of Kampung Tempasuk Satu, winnows rice before school



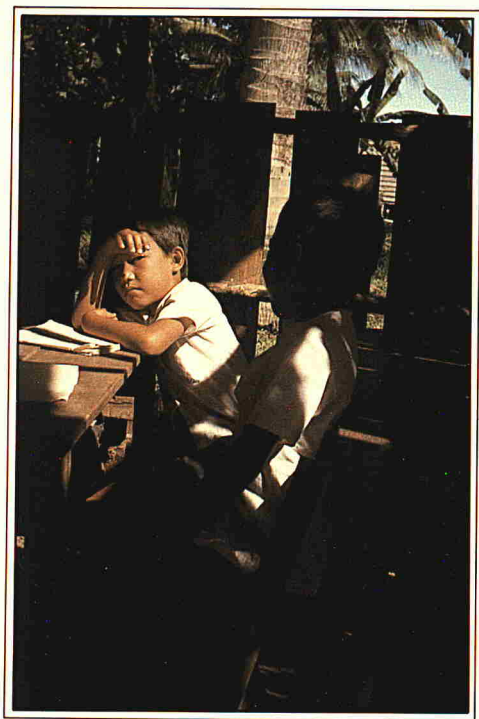
*After the rain  
The grass is more green  
As the sun shines again*



Rungus couple in traditional finery.  
The Rungus women make fine beadwork for necklaces, bangles and belts

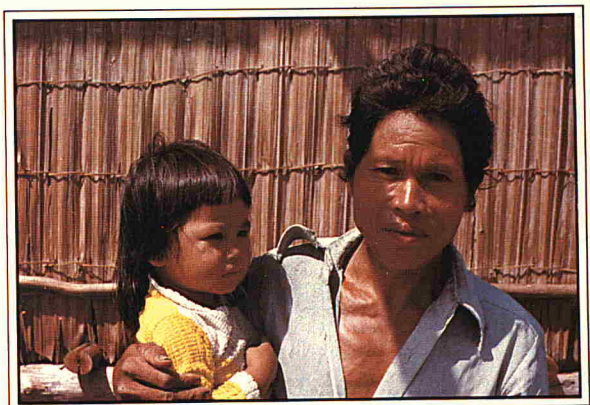


Boy exercises pony in Kota Belud before the Sunday races in Kota Kinabalu



In the classroom of half-walls and earth floor.  
Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Terengkongon, school of 70 pupils





Father and daughter in front of palm-leafed house. Sequati, Kudat



## CAPITAL SHOTS

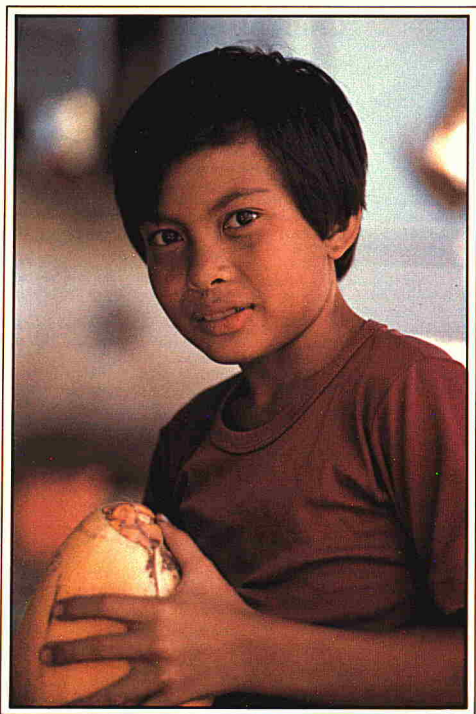
As the capital of Sabah, Kota Kinabalu is the administrative centre and headquarters to statutory bodies and private companies. Its modern offices and concrete blocks show that Kota Kinabalu is a new municipality. The capital has a cosmopolitan population. You are quite likely to meet a dozen nationalities if you took a walk around the town.

It is only outside the town area however that makes the district such a delightful place. Tanjung Aru is famous for its clean and unbroken beach. There are several equally nice beaches in the district but these are less frequented. Off the coast are many islands; Sunday is a favourite time for island hopping.

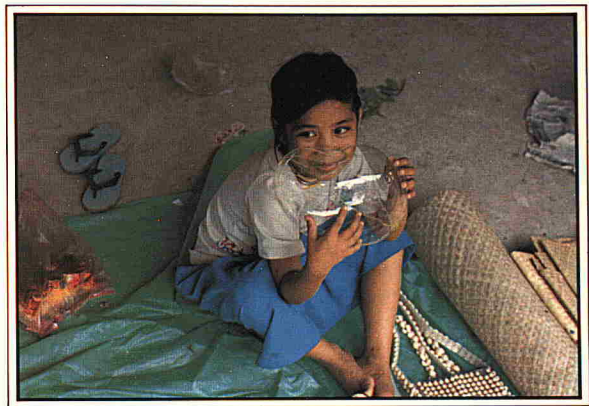
Penampang, about 15 km away is a Kadazan area. *Padi* fields worked by water buffaloes are very much part of the scene. Even though most of the Kadazans here have at least one member of the family in the government service or working in a private firm, home life is still quite rural. The family still plant *padi*, rear pigs and poultry.

Kampung Sembulan is a water village of many races. It is about 3 km from Kota Kinabalu. Up north is Mengkabong, a water village too, but occupied by Bajaus only. Men, women and children visit each other or sell wares by boat paddling.

Tuaran is half-an-hour's drive away. Its Sunday *tamu* (open air market) is one of the most traditional in Sabah. Kadazan women still dress up in their black costume with ornaments for the market.



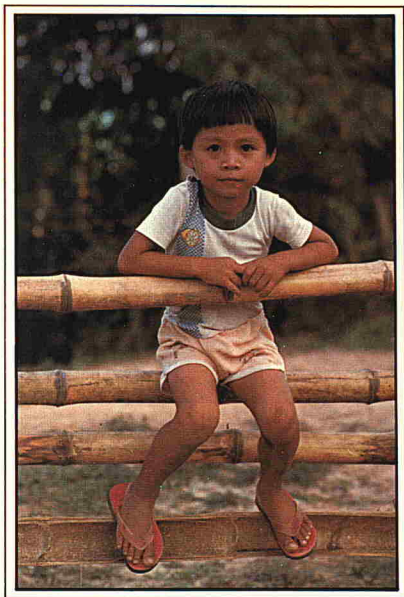
The young coconut yields soft firm flesh and a sweet fresh juice



Bubble blowing while stallkeeping. Grass mats and shell-crafted bags for sale, Tuaran



Simple soccer, Shantung Valley, Penampang



Bamboo is used for fences against pigs and buffaloes from rooting cultivated land



*Izou tanak tapasang  
Ngaan ku ih Onong  
Anangan zou monglak  
ha ha ha ha ha*

*Izou tanak tolungou  
Ngaan ku ih Onong  
Anangan zou miad  
mm mm mm mm mm*

--- Kadazan nursery rhyme

*I am a quiet child  
My name is Onong  
I always like to laugh  
ha ha ha ha ha*

*I am a stubborn child  
My name is Onong  
I always like to cry  
mm mm mm mm mm*

--- translated by Erna Jaua





*Zzzz Buzzed the bug  
The breeze blew  
over both sides of the palm  
Tik! Tak! sound the drums  
It swept over the top palm*

--- Chinese Nursery Rhyme, translated



Practising for the church choir, St. Catherine's, Inanam



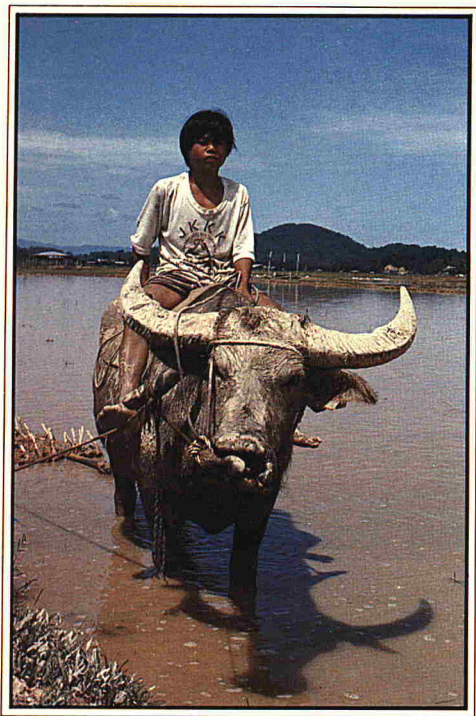
In Chinese New Year mood, Jade, 2½ years, Taman Stephens



Litah, 9, against a boat, Pulau Gaya.  
Pulau Gaya, a favourite picnic island, is also home to a few hundred water villagers



Show of hands to decide order of game.  
This is a similar principle to the tossing of the coin to decide who is to be "it" or who gets the advantage of starting first.



## FROM THE COAST TO THE MOUNTAIN

Forty-five km away from Kota Kinabalu is PAPAR, a small and modern town, close to the west coast. The Kadazans, Chinese and Malays live in this area.

A few kms beyond is BONGAWAN, reached both by car and train. Bongawan is the entrance point to several coastal villages, Kampung Brunei, Pimping and Binsoluk. All three are Malay fishing villages. Binsoluk, in my opinion, is the most picturesque Malay village of Sabah.

MEMBAKUT, a sleepy little town, mainly exists for the railway. As the train pulls out of the station the town goes back to sleep again.

BEAUFORT looks different from other Sabah towns in one aspect at least. Its shophouses are built high off the ground as the town frequently floods when it rains.

A short distance away is WESTON, a well known area for seafood, particularly crabs.

Further down the coast is SIPITANG, a seaside town. It is the only district on the west coast that has a Murut population. Here also are the Kedayans, Malays and Chinese.

SINDUMIN is the last post on the coast before you reach the Sarawak border. It is a one street town.

MOUNT KINABALU, the highest peak between the Himalayas and New Guinea, at 4,101 m, is held in reverence by both the local people as well as by visitors. It is the one place in Sabah that holds the most magic, myth and splendour. The Kadazans believe the mountain to be the "resting place of departed spirits and a dragon's home".

Because of its isolation, Kinabalu has its own climate, of cold, rain and mist. It is rich with plant and animal life. Rafflesia, the largest flower in the world, is found on the east side of Kinabalu, at 1700 m above sea level.

Before you attempt to climb the mountain you first arrive at the Kinabalu National Park. As the park is located at a height of 1700 m the air is refreshingly cool. It is one of the most popular spots for holiday makers.

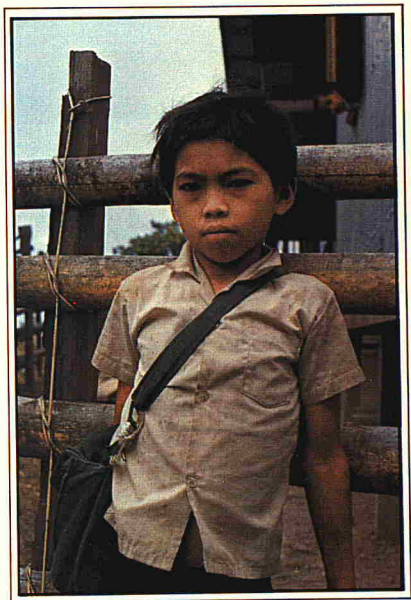
Just down the road is KUNDASANG, the centre for temperate vegetable growing. The Kadazans form the bulk of the population here. Although most of the crops harvested go to the other towns, roadside stalls display many kinds of fresh vegetables.

TAMBUNAN, again mainly populated by the Kadazans is a vast inland plain. Rice and vegetable planting is the main occupation.

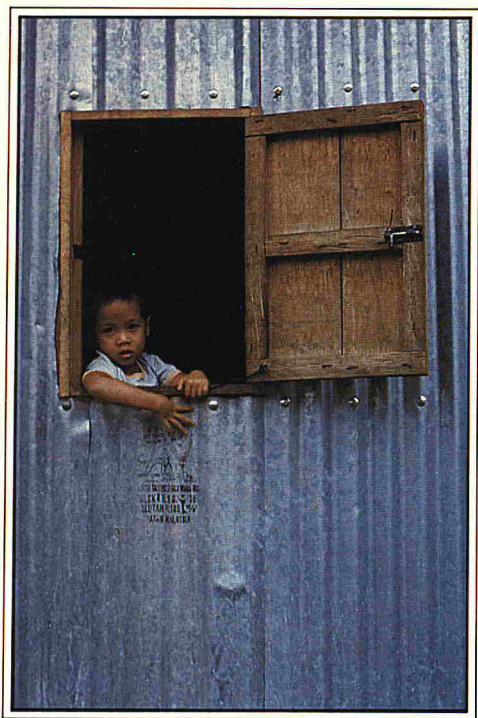


Mother tidies daughter's hair for the camera





Walking home from school, Kundasang



House of zinc sheets guard against regular rain and wind in the hilly areas

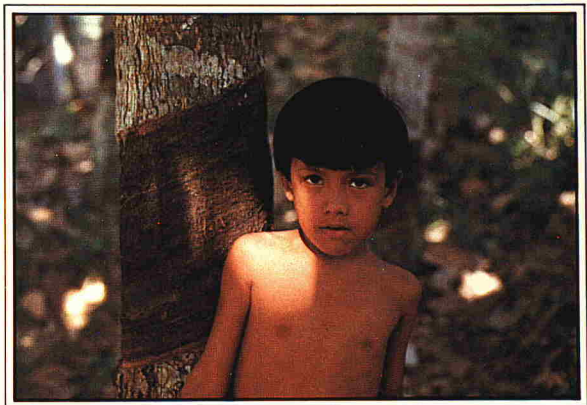


*Rugged, jagged  
Serene and gentle  
All at once*

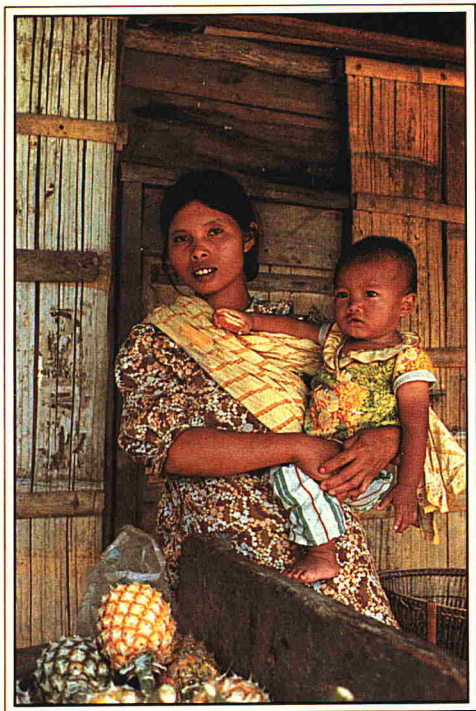
*You beckon, I come  
Time after time  
Kinabalu, my Kinabalu*



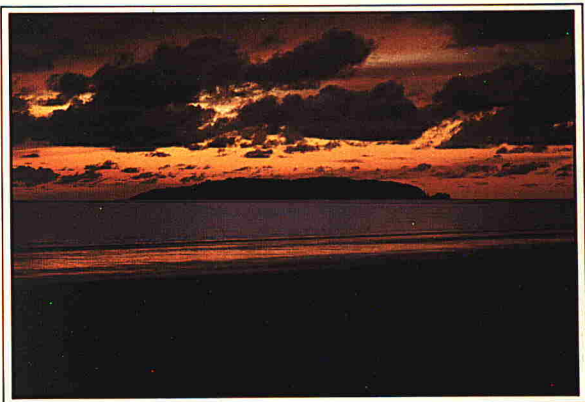
It is the responsibility of the woman of the house  
to weave baskets from grass and leaves as containers and carriers



Suffian, 6 years, Kedayan, by a rubber tree, Kampung Lingkungan, Sipitang



Pineapples for sale outside house on small shelf.  
Most of the pineapples in Sabah are grown for the fresh fruit market.



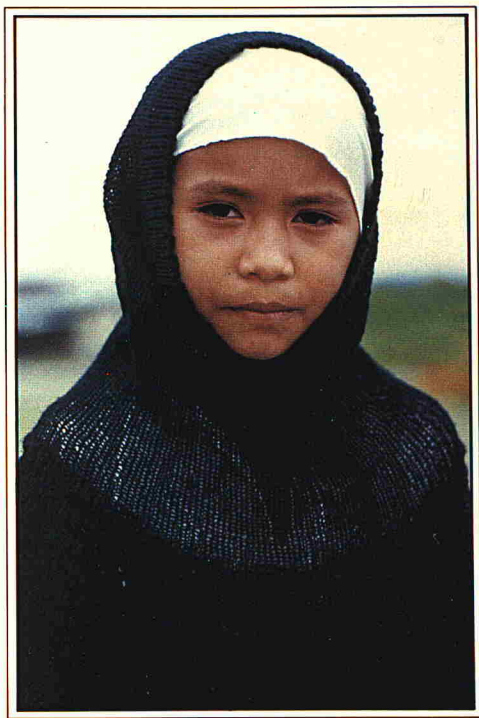
#### SABAH STATE ANTHEM

Sabah my mother land  
Our most beloved land  
Come all young men and women  
Arise, let us all unite together  
Come all, unite and work together  
for freedom forever and ever  
Together let all people strive  
for the peace and freedom of Sabah



Deroidah, 8 years, uses a broad leaf for shade against the sun, Kampung Pimping.  
This same variety was previously used as wrapping for food purchases.





Nor Khatijah, just before religious school begins



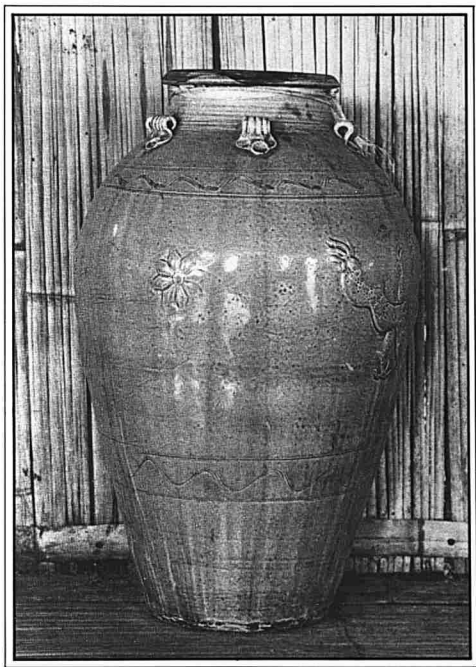
Jaimin, 12 years, with his favourite shopkeeper outside the neighbourhood store



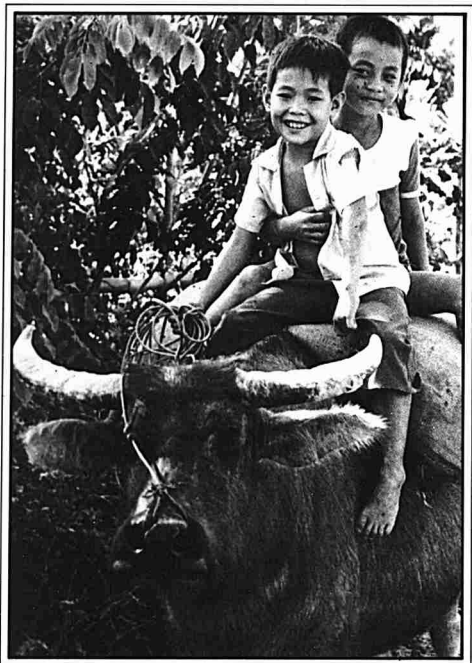
Florian, 11-year old Kadazan, adjusts his kain daster, the traditional headdress which is also worn by the Bajaus, Illanuns and Suluks



Boy from a Murut longhouse at Kampung Marais, 41 km from Tenom



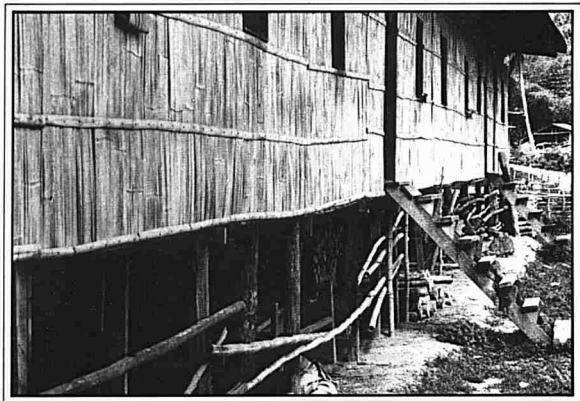
The tajau, a porcelain jar, often of Chinese origin, is a feature of the Kadazan and Murut home. It contains the family brew made of rice or tapioca



Water buffaloes in Sabah are highly prized beasts (at M\$1000 each). They help plough padi fields, carry firewood and are paid as dowries as well as fines



The native conical hats are as varied as the wearers.  
Sabah hats are usually made from palm leaves, rattan, bamboo or with a combination of these

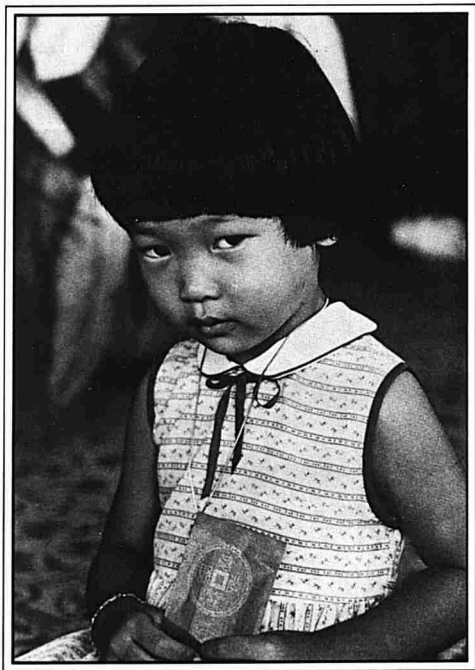


Longhouses are fast disappearing from the rural scene as more families opt for single family houses

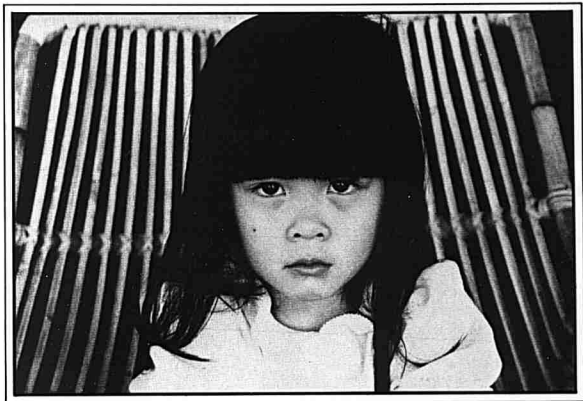




The Sabahan child has jet black hair and dark brown eyes

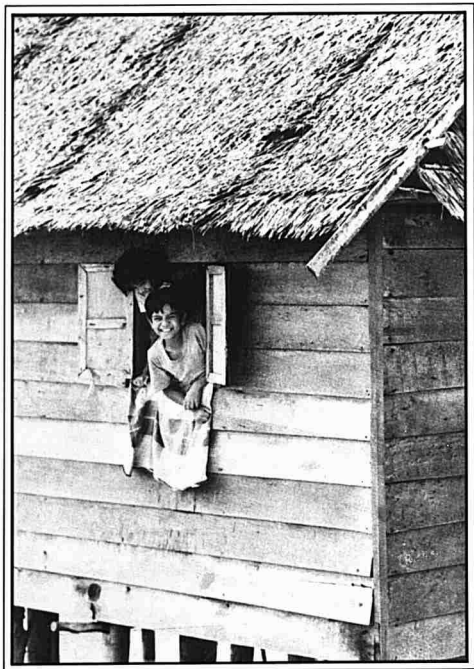


Girl holds the gift of angpau, a small red envelope that contains money during Chinese New Year



*Mama what are the little birds doing  
in the dark moody sky  
What are they doing all perched  
on the power lines*

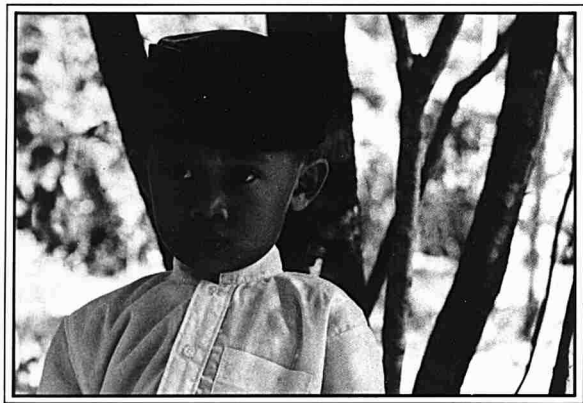
*Have they all come out to greet us  
from the train  
Just arrived into Tenom town*



View from the window, Kampung Mengkabong



Menglabong is a Bajau water village, 30 km from Kota Kinabalu



Malik 5 years, from Kampung Laut Inanam



Generally Sabahan children have the same kind of responsibility  
and upbringing that most Asian children have



A tree trunk, roughly notched, serves as staircase for many rural houses

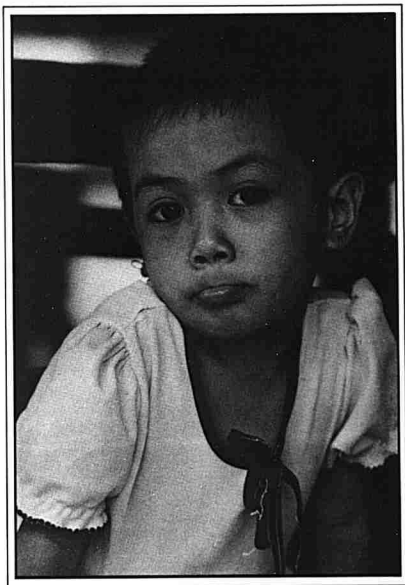




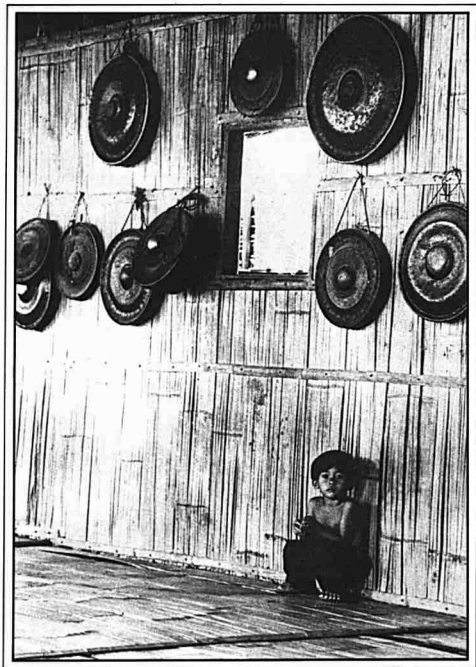
The backpack baskets are of many varieties but basically they are used to carry rice, sago, food and drinks for field work and so on



The Kadazans form the largest indigenous group in the state



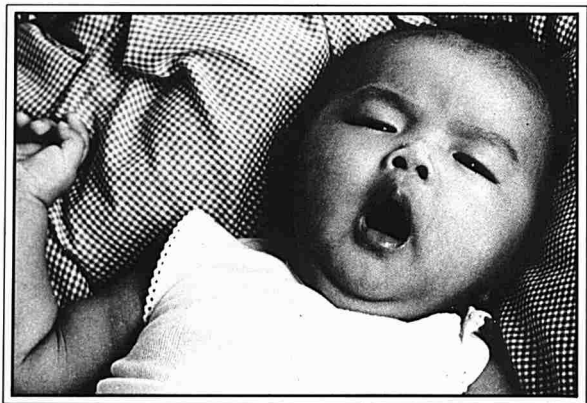
Penampang is one of the areas that have a high concentration of Kadazans



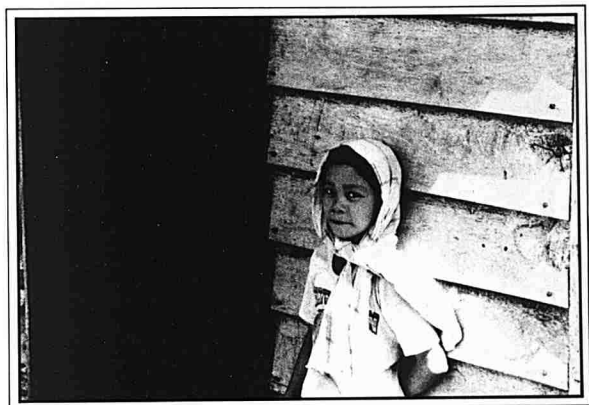
Brass gongs are just about the most valued musical instruments of the native people. They are used for both solemn and festive occasions. Kampung Pulong, Melalap



Looking after the younger sibling is a family responsibility



Leong Yun Fa, 2 months old, Tanjung Aru

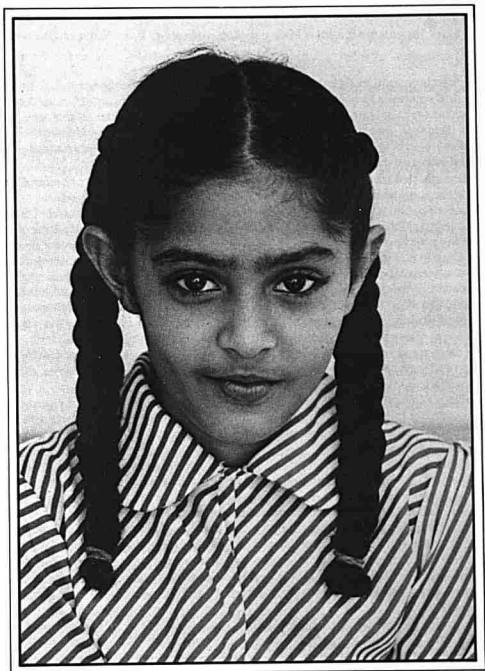


Maternal and child health care services in Sabah began with the setting up of health centres in the 1950s



Elizabeth, 11 years, of the Sekolah Seri Mengasih, a day school for the mentally retarded in Kota Kinabalu





The Sikhs first came to Sabah from India in the early 1880s as recruits in the police force

## FOLKLORE

**Biar mati anak jangan mati adat – Malay saying, meaning “Even if the child dies, never let custom die”**

Book learning came to Sabahans less than 100 years ago. Sabahans did not have written languages and whatever knowledge was imparted from old to young went by word of mouth.

Instruction on craft learning, from parents to offspring were given in this way. Today the bobohizan (Kadazan priestess) teaching her understudy prayers and incantations relay on this method. Likewise, explanations are made for ceremonious rituals at birth, marriage, death, and the planting and harvesting of rice.

It is through oral tradition too that folk tales were and are told. From the time a child can understand the rudiments of his language he is fed tales of spirits and demons.

Folk tales of Sabah revolve around the animal kingdom. Different kinds of animals and birds are first introduced to children at story telling time. Rice planting which forms such an important part of the lives of the people provide a backdrop for many narratives. Many stories give a strong sense of the forest. Certain animals and birds associated with human failings and virtues of greed, cunning, intelligence, generosity, modesty kindness are made to play leading parts in folk stories.

The deer, in Sabah folk tales, depict characteristics of quick wit, kindness and has the ability to get out of any situation. The monkey plays the role of cunning and cheekiness; the water buffalo is seen as a hard worker, obedient and is not overly bright; and the crocodile is the silent attacker.

While some tales carry no message others are lessons of moral.

In the days of not so long ago when headhunting and piracy was rampant children were told tales of skull collecting and other forms of bloodshed. These were not mere fables, many of them were of true life experiences of people in the region.

The telling of folk tales usually takes place at night after the evening meal. For a couple of hours, grandmother would hold her grandchildren enthralled of the antics of characters in the animal kingdom or of the human race. When stories of ghosts and monsters get frightening little ones would move closer to grandmother.

During the rice harvesting season when the whole family camps out at the sulap (a small hut for temporary living in the rice field) grandmother carries on the tradition of story telling by the light of the kerosene lamp.

Folk story telling is one of the ways Sabahans preserve their family links.

In the past these folk tale sessions were part of the task of child rearing. Today this custom is being rapidly replaced by radio and television. Nearly all households possess the transistor radio. Television sets are found in the most far flung corners of the state. Video recording machines are fast becoming popular too. Still, in the dead of the night, children listen, enraptured, of tales of giants and genie. These tales are often told by grandmothers who heard the same tales from their grandmothers a long time ago.

## THE SNAIL AND THE DEER

Courtesy, Sabah Museum and  
Summer Institute of Linguistics

One day there was a thirsty deer who went down to a stream to drink. when he arrived at the water he started to bend his head to drink, but before he started to drink he saw a snail attached to a big stone. So he said: "Hi, my snail friend, you are here."

"Yes, I am here," replied the snail. The deer saw that the snail moved like a sick person because he crawled very slowly, and the deer laughed loudly. "What are you laughing at, my deer friend?" asked the snail.

"Oh, nothing, friend, only your movement made me laugh because if there is a war on and you walk slowly you will be chased."

"Ah, do not tease me, my deer friend. Although your step is long, we haven't seen it in action yet," said the snail.

"Eh, my snail friend, you are brave," said the deer, and he laughed again. "How about us having a race, my snail friend?" And he laughed again.

But the snail said: "Although I am very slow, maybe I want to try too; how do we know if we haven't tried?"

So the deer was jealous because he thought that his body was big, and he bent down to look at his long legs and said: "Ha, when can we have this race?"

"In six days' time," said the snail, "and we'll meet again on the seventh day."

"Very well," said the deer, "but where are we going to race?"

"We'll start running from up there at your place," said the snail, "and then we'll come down here and walk until the seventh hill. We'll stop there. Whoever reaches the seventh hill first is the winner."

"Okay, fine," said the deer. So after the agreement was made, they separated.

Then the snail consulted six other snails about the race with the deer. He said to them: "It all started like this, friends: there was a deer going down to drink when he saw me crawling. Because I was moving slowly as all snails do, he laughed loudly at me until we made the agreement to race. So we will all get ready here on the seventh day, and when the deer calls: "Where are you, snail?" answer: 'I am here.'"

He told all the snails from the first to the sixth to do this, so there were seven snails altogether, one snail ready on each of the hills.

When the seventh day came they met on the hill as agreed and lined up. The deer said: "When I count "one, two, three, run." Both of them were ready, and the deer started counting: "One, two, three," and they ran.

The deer ran straight ahead without looking back because he was afraid that he would lose the race. When he arrived at the second hill, he called: "Where are you, snail?"

The snail who was already positioned there replied: "I am here."

When the deer heard that the snail was in front of him, he ran very fast. When he arrived at the third, fourth, fifth, and now at the sixth hill, the deer was tired. He called and found that the snail was still ahead of him. "Wow!" said the deer, "he can really run fast!"

When he was about to arrive at the seventh hill, the deer called: "Where are you, snail?"

The seventh snail replied: "I am here," because he was ahead of the deer. Then, before he arrived at the end, the deer fainted from exhaustion.

## THE GIANT OF KINORINGAN

as told by Edward Burungoh

Long ago, in the peaceful village of Kelawat in Sabah, there lived an old man and his wife who had no children. Time after time, they prayed to Kinoringan (God of the Dusuns) for a child.

One day, when they were having lunch, a strange light suddenly filled their room. They were terrified and crept to one corner of the room and closed their eyes tightly.

A voice said, "Do not be afraid, I have come to help you. Kinoringan will give you a child."

The old man and his wife opened their eyes slowly, thinking they would see a spirit with wings. But they saw nothing, only the strange light. "Where . . . where are you?" said the old man trembling with fear, "and . . . and how can we have a child?"

"Do not ask questions, old man," said the voice again, "But listen. You must not let the child see blood for seven weeks. Farewell." The strange light became smaller and smaller until at last it was gone.

Several months later, a beautiful baby boy was born to the couple. Everyone was very happy in the village. The old man, remembering what the voice had told him, took great care to keep the baby away from blood, and the villagers, who knew about the promise, helped him.

For six weeks, the baby was well looked after. On the seventh week, the people who were looking after the baby were not so careful. While they were busy talking, one of the guards knocked a jug onto the floor. It smashed into little pieces near the baby. One of the sharp bits fell on the baby boy's arm, and cut it. Blood began to flow down his arm into a pool on the floor.

The baby saw the blood on its wrist, and suddenly there was a quick flash of lightning, followed by rolling thunder. It was so sudden that the villagers didn't know what had happened. The people who should have been guarding the baby saw the broken pieces of the jug lying on the floor where they had left the tiny boy. The baby had gone. A search for the baby began. The baby had seen blood – the promise to Kinoringan had been broken and now they would be punished.

For many days the people of the village lived in fear. They were afraid of Kinoringan, and how he might punish them. But, the months passed and nothing happened, and the villagers soon forgot all about it.

One day, the villagers all came to a meeting in the square. Suddenly, a man covered with blood pushed through the crowd and ran straight to the headman. It was Talip, one of the headman's warriors.

Talip fell to the ground, breathing hard. "Talip! Talip!" cried the headman, picking him up. "What has happened? Where is your brother? Who did this to you? Tell me, Talip."

"A giant . . . caught Tiap. I . . . ugh!" Talip fell back on the arms of the headman. He was dead. The headman was puzzled and angry. Talip and Tiap were his best warriors.

Next morning, twenty strong men set out with the headman to search for the giant.

It was late in the afternoon and the men were tired after walking so many miles through the forest. They came to a river and decided to rest.

The headman suddenly saw a shadow. A one-eyed giant stood looking down at them. His eye gleamed. His teeth were as big as elephants' tusks. The body was hairy and the finger-nails were like the talons of an eagle, but much bigger.

For a moment, the headman just stared at the giant. Then suddenly, he shouted, "Run into the forest. Hurry!" Some of the men sprang up and ran to the forest with the headman, but the others were too frightened to move. The giant swooped down and lifted four of them up – two in each hairy hand. The monster ate them one by one.

The others ran back to the village. Everyone heard how the giant had eaten four of them. Some decided to move to another village. The headman told his people that the giant would kill them if they left their village. The monster was waiting outside the kampong.

When the villagers heard this, they stopped packing their belongings. The headman was a wise man. They decided to listen to his words.

As time went by, the villagers had less and less food to eat. They could not hunt in the forest because the giant was there.

At last the headman asked the spirit of Libabau to help them.

The spirit of Libabau heard the headman's cry for help and came to the village.

"What help do you need from me?" asked the spirit.

The headman told the spirit about the giant and how they needed food but were too frightened to hunt outside the village. Then the headman asked, "Why is the giant here? Why won't it go away?"

"I'll tell you," said the spirit. "Kinoringan was very angry with the people of Kelawat. They did not listen to his warning. They let the baby boy see blood on the seventh week. He changed the baby into a giant and sent it back to frighten the people of Kelawat. But I will help you. The giant can only be killed when seven arrows have been shot into its eye. The tip of each arrow must be dipped in a pot of blood seven times. The blood must come from all the people in this village. You will find the bow and the seven arrows just outside your village."

Then the spirit of Libabau left the village. The headman took a pot, pricked himself, and a drop of blood fell into the pot. All the other villagers did the same.

The next morning, the headman left the village with the pot of blood. No one else was brave enough to kill the giant, and anyway he was better at shooting with a bow and arrow than the other villagers.

He found the bow and seven arrows and walked into the forest. He came to the place where the giant had eaten the four men. The headman felt very, very angry again. He decided he would not go back to the village until he had killed the giant. He vowed to destroy the giant or die in the attempt.

He saw the giant in the afternoon. It was even more terrible than he remembered. Quickly dipping one of the arrows seven times into the pot of blood, the headman shot the arrow at the giant's eye.

The giant saw the arrow coming and put out his big hairy hand to catch it. The headman's heart beat hard. It would be terrible if the giant caught the arrow.

But the arrow flew through the giant's hand. The giant let out a loud cry of pain as the first arrow hit his eye.

The headman dipped the second arrow seven times into the pot of blood and shot at the giant. The giant could not stop the arrows no matter what he tried to do. The headman saw that these were magic arrows! When the last arrow hit the giant's eye, he let out a terrible cry. The headman stared. The giant was slowly getting smaller. Suddenly the giant had gone.

The curse of Kinoringan had been broken and the village of Kelawat was happy again.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE DUSUN ALAB

as told by Mokhtar Ali

A long, long time ago there was an eagle whose name was Tundra Sarek. He lived in the Interior but he was not very happy. He wanted to get married.

One day he met a beautiful eagle, Burong Bugang, and he decided that this was the eagle he wanted to marry. He had a rival, Burong Montis, of whom Burong Bugang was rather afraid, because he was evil.

After a while Tundra Sarek and Burong Bugang were married and by and by Burong Bugang laid seven magnificent eggs. Fearing that Burong Montis might harm the eggs in some way, Burong Bugang went to see him. She warned him not to go near the eggs or to fly over them until such time as they were hatched. To this he agreed.

The eggs began to hatch. Out of five of the eggs stepped five strong men who went off to different parts of Sabah. A man was breaking out of the sixth egg when Burong Montis, ignoring his promise, flew over the two remaining eggs. The man was almost clear of the sixth egg when the shell closed over one of his legs and severed it.

Burong Bugang called this one-legged man Aki Simbol and provided him with a leg made out of bamboo (poring). Although she waited for a long time the seventh egg did not hatch and slowly turned into stone.

Aki Simbol married and had seven children. The descendants of these seven children are called Dusun Alab and now occupy the area around Lanas.

Aki Simbol went to Tambunan and there married a Dusun girl. This girl had seven children and the descendants of these children can still be found in the Tambunan Plain today.

Later Aki Simbol went to live at Bingkor where he married once more and again had seven children. The descendants of these children cannot be traced. It was there that Aki Simbol eventually died.

The Dusun Alab claim that the unhatched egg can be seen on the bank of the river Liu at the foot of Mount Trus Madi, this also being the place where Tundra Sarek and Burong Bugang were married.

The descendants of Aki Simbol's first wife at first made a settlement at the foot of Mount Trus Madi, but as life proved very difficult there they moved downstream to Tulid. Later a group from Tulid carried on further downstream and split into three parties to establish the villages of Penipi, Kuit and Alab on the banks of the river Labau.

The people who formed these three villages are sometimes called Dusun Labau because they were the first people to settle in the area along the river Labau.

## A MURUT TALE

as told by Kisar Tuki

Once upon a time there existed an isolated village at Sapong inhabited by the Murut people. Among these people lived an old grandmother and her grandson call Kalawon. Kalawon was a small child when his parents died. And so it was that he was brought up by his grandmother.

The Muruts here lived by planting rice and tapioca. Kalawon's hobby, like other boys in the village was hunting.

One day Kalawon, asked permission from his grandmother to go hunting. As grandmother knew how much Kalawon loved going into the jungle, she said yes immediately. She prepared some food for Kalawon to take with him on the trip. Kalawon wrapped the food up and put it on his backpack made of bamboo and rattan. Kalawon promised his grandmother that he would be back by night.

Armed with his blowpipe Kalawon walked towards the dense jungle where he knew wild boar and deer were plentiful.

However, Kalawon had no luck that day. He walked for miles and still he could not bag anything. It was almost sundown. Feeling dissatisfied, Kalawon continued to walk further, hoping to spot some animals. It was getting darker, still, Kalawon failed to get anything. Kalawon was disappointed and he made his way home.

As it was getting too dark Kalawon was not able to see his way at all and he decided to spend the night under a tree. Kalawon slept very well as he was so tired.

When morning came it was drizzling and Kalawon became unhappy with the thought that his grandmother would have been worried about him. Quickly he started on his feet.

Suddenly Kalawon heard some voices nearby. Cautiously Kalawon moved towards where the noise came from. He hid behind a tree and saw seven men. They were strangers to him, they were a people more good looking than the Muruts. Kalawon could not help admiring their handsome faces. They were carrying clay soil to a place not far from Kalawon. Kalawon knew this place as Sungei Biah.

Curiously, Kalawon went nearer to the group. Suddenly, the leader of the group spoke out, "My brothers, stop working for a while for I can smell and feel someone watching us!" When Kalawon heard this he felt terribly frightened and started trembling.

The leader of the group told Kalawon to come out of his hiding place and not to be afraid as they would not harm him. When Kalawon heard this he relaxed and walked bravely out to meet the group.

"Why were you spying on us?" asked the leader of the group.

Kalawon replied that he came upon the seven brothers by accident after his hunting trip.

"Well, I want you to promise not to tell anyone what you've seen. We are making steps out of this clay soil to heaven."

"If you can keep this secret to yourself, I will let you marry the seven princesses of my people."

And so it was that Kalawon stayed on and helped these people to build the steps towards heaven. He liked it there as he was given tasty food to eat too.

One night, when the moon was full, seven princesses came down from heaven and were introduced to Kalawon. Kalawon was speechless with admiration for they were so beautiful. The thought of marriage to them all was a happy one.

The princesses then went to bathe in the river and later joined the group.

Kalawon was smiling all the time. After a while he felt homesick so he asked the group leader whether he could go home for a while. He was allowed to do so.

Kalawon walked at a fast pace, all the time thinking over what he had seen. Before he realised it Kalawon had reached home.

All of Kalawon's people came to meet him for they thought that he was lost in the jungle. His grandmother and everyone else pressed for the story of his absence.

Without a thought Kalawon spoke to them of the strangers he had met and of the steps that were being built up to heaven.

When Kalawon had finished his story everyone wanted to go to River Biah. Kalawon said they should not do this as he had promised those people not to reveal their secret.

But his people were persistent and so Kalawon brought them there. Kalawon cautioned them not to go near the seven brothers.

"You were supposed to have kept our secret and now all our efforts at making these steps will be wasted. These steps will never reach heaven as the secret is not kept by you," the leader of the seven brothers said when he saw Kalawon and his people.

Today we can still see a mound of clay of 30 metres high, about five km from the Sapong shops. The Murut people call this place "Tanah Pinisi".

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## CAPTIONS FOR PLATES NOT LISTED EARLIER

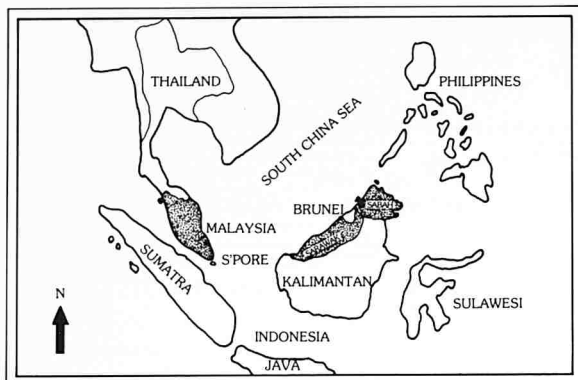
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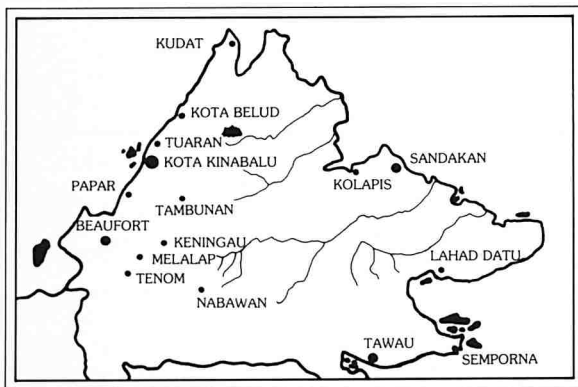
3. Getting a handful of rice seedlings for planting
  4. Penampang boy with dove, reared as a domestic fowl
  5. The national flag of Malaysia
  6. Bajau elder in his rice field with the family pony, Kampung Kesapang
  7. Malaysia's national flower, the bunga raya or hibiscus
  8. The baju kurung is one of the most feminine traditional dresses of Malaysia
  10. Muslim boy, Kampung Likas
  18. Sabah is a world exporter of hardwood logs
  27. Boys at hanging bridge, Tomani. Hanging bridges are cheaper to build and are characteristic as river crossings
  32. Interior of Murut longhouse, Kampung Pulong, Melalap
  37. Boy and fowl, Nabawan
  44. Halijah, 13, in traditional Bajau costume. It is worn by Bajau brides as well as on other festive occasions
  51. Sabah lies entirely in the tropics
  56. Aesthetics aside, the lotus flower holds mystical values for the Chinese people
  62. Yolande, 6, daughter of Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Datuk Conrad Mojuntin, at Harvest Festival, 1982
  63. At Chung Hwa kindergarten
  68. Anthony, 13, guides buffalo to level in the earth in preparation for the rice planting
  73. Kinabalu has a climate of its own, rain, mist and cold
  77. Typical end to the day in Sabah, Tanjung Aru beach, Kota Kinabalu
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