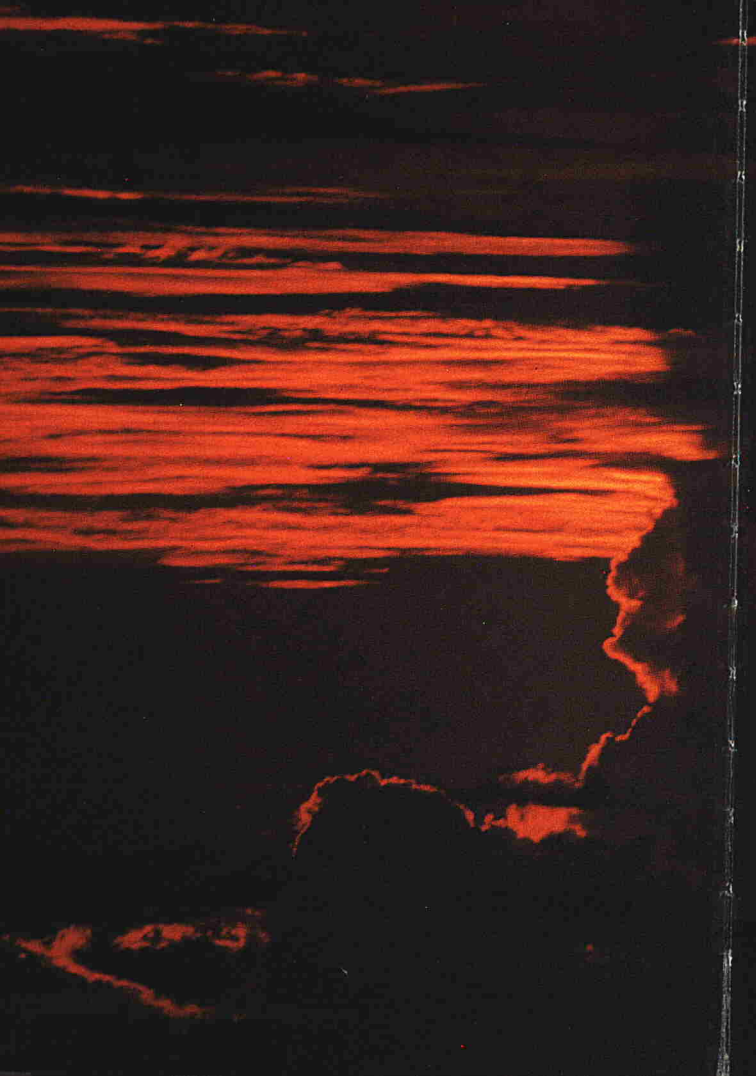
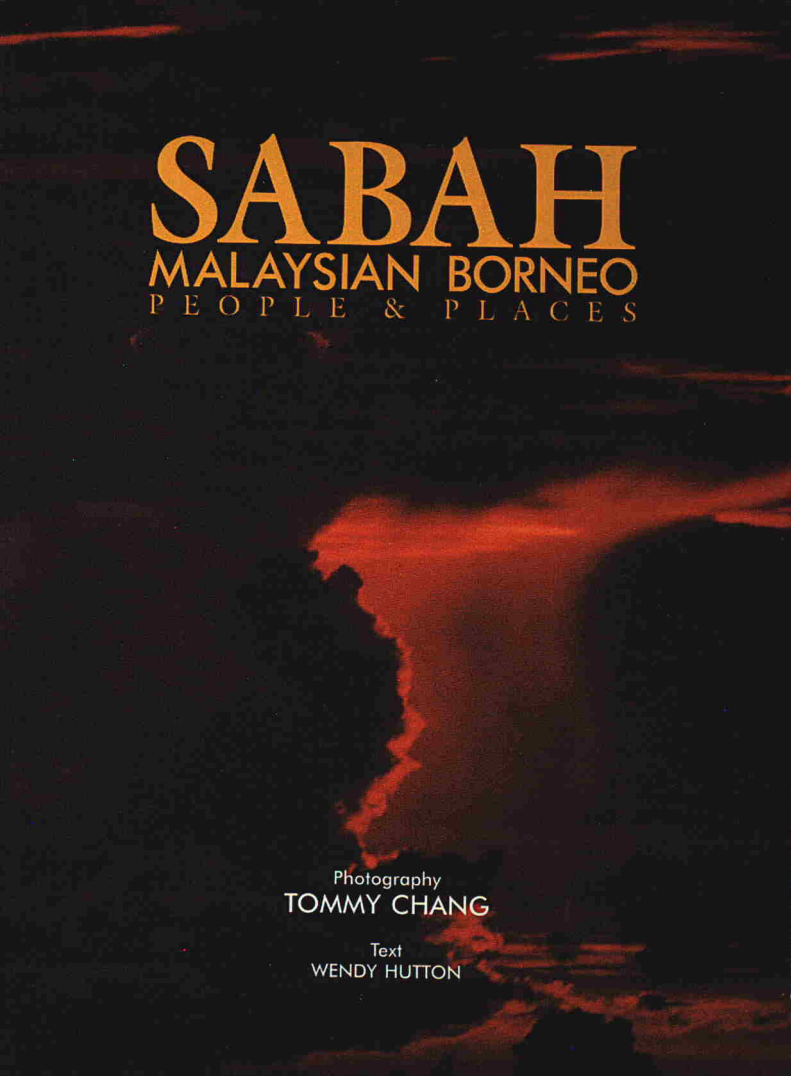


SABAH

MALAYSIAN BORNEO
PEOPLE & PLACES





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Photography
TOMMY CHANG

Text
WENDY HUTTON

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PEOPLE & PLACES

Published by Tommy Chang Image Productions Sdn Bhd

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**FOREWORD BY THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHIEF MINISTER OF SABAH**



Sabah is a microcosm of immense and fascinating diversity – nature's rarest gift.

This Borneo State, a member of the Malaysian Federation, has peoples inhabiting nowhere else on Earth. Their heritage of languages, cultures and traditions is unsurpassed in richness, vibrancy, colour and distinctiveness – yet living side by side in undiminished harmony – ever ready to extend their welcome and hospitality to everyone.

On the cool slopes of Mount Kinabalu, more than 1,000 species of orchids await appreciation. In the warm depths of our seas, corals and other myriad of marine life flourish in abundance.

Many secrets of our mountains, rainforests, and seas, as well as folklores, lie hidden and mysterious – expectant of discovery, understanding and enjoyment. The Government's efforts in the preservation and conservation of our ecosystems are therefore urgent and paramount.

World renowned researchers, like Jacques Cousteau, and casual visitors from many parts of the world find a part of Sabah filled with special significance to them. Into the next millennium, Sabah can strive to become again a focal point, the cross-road of interest and knowledge for peoples of all continents.

Sabah peoples and places, their unique existence are subjects of many photographic studies. **SABAH – MALAYSIAN BORNEO, PEOPLE AND PLACES** is one of the latest attempts to record and increase our awareness and understanding of this microcosm. This book is for the enlightenment of anyone charmed by the mystic of Borneo.

Datuk YONG TECK LEE

Chief Minister of Sabah
Malaysia



**MESSAGE FROM THE
HONOURABLE MINISTER OF
TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL
DEVELOPMENT SABAH**



Sabah, located on the island of Borneo is proud of its natural heritage and its cultural diversities. The state Government welcomes visitors to the state to experience nature at its best. Our annual international events, like the Mt. Kinabalu Climbathon and the Borneo Triathlon has attracted participants from several countries.

Nature tourism is an important asset to Sabah and the State Government has made conservation of vital areas such as the Danum Valley Conservation Area, the Lower Kinabatangan River and many land and marine parks maintained by the Sabah Parks and State Wildlife Department.

Our islands with its sandy white beaches, rugged terrain mainland and our cultural festivals will definitely excite an adventurous traveller in search of a relaxing holiday or an exciting outdoor adventure.

This book is the work of Mr. Tommy Chang, a leading photographer from Sabah, whose pictures has graced several international books and magazines. He has travelled extensively around the State photographing scenes and events that are so rare that not many people, even locals, have a chance to witness it, is published in this book. This book is Sabah in a nutshell.

Datuk BERNARD G. DOMPOK

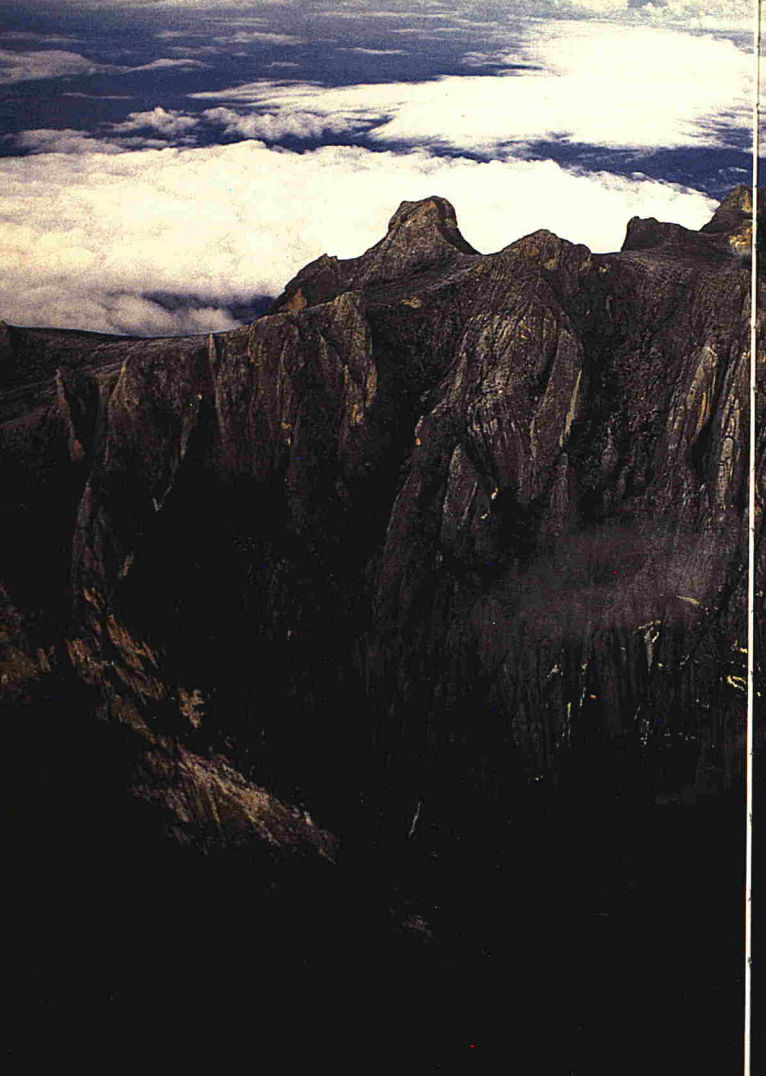
Minister of Tourism and Environmental
Development, Sabah, Malaysia





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Mount Kinabalu is crowned by a series of jagged peaks, eight of them thrusting up over 4,000 metres. The mountain is split by Low's Gully, a chasm which plunges almost vertically for a terrifying 1,600 metres.



A bevy of future beauties dressed in traditional finery, these Rungus girls are from Kampung Bawanggazao, in northwest Sabah. Their simple garment of homespun fabric is a backdrop for the magnificent beads prized by the Rungus.



Ancient rituals and chants have been passed down verbally for countless generations by the ritual priestesses of the Kadazan/Dusun tribes. This venerable lady is a Kadazan from Penampang, near Kota Kinabalu.





Almost one-third of the world's pitcher plants are found in Sabah. They obtain their nutrition by trapping insects and digesting them with enzymes produced in their pitchers. Nepenthes x trusmadiensis is found only on Mount Trusmadi, Sabah's second tallest mountain.



A school of trevally fish swarming in the clear waters off Pulau Sipadan; Sabah's reefs and mangrove estuaries help maintain a rich and diverse marine life, the reefs also providing a source of unrivalled beauty for divers.



The granite slabs of Low's Peak look almost insurmountable in this view, yet these climbers following the track up to the summit find Mount Kinabalu more demanding on the lungs than on mountaineering skills.



The dawn mist rising from the rainforest floor almost obscures an *orang-utan* stirring in its nest of branches near the great river silently snaking towards the Sulu Sea. Across on the west coast of the awakening land, a brightly painted wooden canoe returns with the night's catch, riding the waves of the South China Sea into a sheltered lagoon backed by the simple

INTRODUCTION

wood and thatch homes of a remote fishing village.

In an isolated hamlet nestling in the mountainous interior, bright-faced children down a bowl of noodles before slipping out into the faint light to trudge several kilometres to school, while their parents shoulder split-bamboo backpacks and head for a day in their rice fields.

Not long after the far-distant city has been awakened by the haunting call of the *muezzin* from a gold-domed mosque, a group of elderly Chinese perform their morning *tai chi* exercises in a park, moving as gracefully as the delicate white egrets picking their way through the nearby marshes. And above all this, a group of weary but triumphant climbers gaze

down on the northern tip of Borneo, perched on the granite summit of Southeast Asia's highest peak, the 4,101-metre Mount Kinabalu.

These are but a few images of Sabah, the most physically varied and arguably the most beautiful region in all of Borneo. Sabah is poetically known as the "Land Below the Wind" due to its location just south of the vicious typhoons which annually sweep through the Philippines. The state covers the northern extremity of the world's third largest island, the fabled Borneo, where men were once believed to have tails and exotic treasures were gathered as tribute to the powerful Celestial Emperor of China.

Bare geographical facts can only begin to convey the variety of Sabah's terrain, which is almost 75,000 square kilometres in area. The coastline of nearly 1,500 kilometres is bathed by waters whose very names promise romance: the South China Sea, the Sulu Sea and the Celebes Sea. Dotted about these seas are exquisite islands fringed by coral reefs, islands where giant sea turtles come ashore to lay their eggs and where sea gypsies only recently exchanged their nomadic life on wooden sailing boats for stilt houses perched over the reefs.

Borneo is, above all, the home of ancient rainforests filled with a bewildering diversity of plants and animals. Within Sabah's forests, orchids cascade down from massive trees festooned with lianas and bird's-nest



SABAH MALAYSIA



Note: Map Not to Scale

ferns. Ungainly hornbills flap noisily above other creatures of the forest: the tiny mousedeer with its legs as frail as toothpicks; beautifully patterned clouded leopards; furry gibbons with their distinctive early morning call and the rare Asian Two-Horned Rhinoceros.

On Sabah's east coast, vast areas of seemingly inhospitable swamplands are, in fact, home to an exciting range of flora and fauna: estuarine crocodiles; the remarkable long-nosed Proboscis monkey found only in Borneo; the intelligent and gentle *orang-utan* (a native of Borneo and Sumatra) and jewel-coloured birds.

Contrasting with Sabah's virgin forests are huge plantations of fast-growing softwood trees, oil palm and cocoa plantations, rice fields, vegetable farms and even a dairy farm and tea plantation high in the mountains.

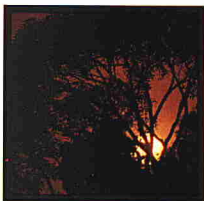
Borneo has long been wreathed in mystery and the subject of exaggerated travellers' tales. The island itself is relatively young, beginning its emergence from the sea some 15 million years ago, long after the age of dinosaurs. Around three million years ago, layers of sandstone, mudstone and limestone rose up from the ocean floor, forming the land masses which have gradually weathered to create those seen today. Until the end of the last Ice Age, Borneo was part of what is known as Sundaland, linked by land bridges with Java, Sumatra and the Malay peninsula. As a result, much of the flora and fauna now found in Borneo is shared with these regions, although many endemic species developed during the 10,000 years since the ice cap melted, flooding the land bridges and leaving Borneo isolated.

Located just north of the equator, Sabah enjoys a tropical climate with average temperatures ranging between 23°-32°C throughout the year. Naturally, the temperature drops with increasing altitude, a fact brought home vividly to climbers of Mount Kinabalu, where the mercury can plummet to below zero on the summit.

The hot, humid climate of Sabah means that there are few remains of man's early history, no ancient temples, palaces or fortresses. However, archaeologists have unearthed stone tools dating back perhaps 20,000 years at Lake

Tingkayu, in eastern Sabah, and more recent remains in the form of coffins and earthenware pottery have been found in cave burial sites in the hinterland of Darvel Bay.

Archaeologists and anthropologists have been unable to establish any links between the early Stone Age hunter-gatherers of Lake Tingkayu and the ancestors of today's indigenous Sabahans, who are thought to have begun migrating here from the Asian mainland some 4,000 years ago.





They established themselves in coastal regions, but were gradually driven inland by newer arrivals, particularly during the past two centuries. The rich variety of Sabah's ethnic composition today (some experts define 55 major linguist ethnic groups) matches the physical variety of the land itself, with each group having its own costumes, music, dances, rituals and handicrafts.



Sabah's people went about their business of farming, fishing and gathering pearls, sharks' fins and edible bird's nests; from the forests they extracted rattan, wild fruits, *damar* (a resin), scented *gaharu* wood, hornbill casques and rare bezoar stones, trading with the Chinese who, records show, had been sailing south on the end-of-year monsoon since as early as the 7th century.

Few local inhabitants probably knew or even cared that Sabah was nominally controlled by the Sultan of Brunei, the Muslim sultanate to the south, which had achieved its zenith during the reign of Sultan Bolkiah in the 16th century. By the time European traders and adventurers started turning their attention to Borneo, Brunei was in a state of decline and ceded increasing chunks of northwest Borneo (Sarawak) to the English Brooke family (the famous "white Rajahs") and, to the British crown, the island of Labuan off southwest Sabah.

In 1865, the American consul to Brunei purchased rights to most of today's Sabah; these were eventually acquired by an Austrian, Count von Overbeck, and an English trader, Alfred Dent. To ensure their claim to the land, von Overbeck and Dent obtained leases not only from the Sultan of Brunei but also the Sultan of Sulu, the latter claiming that he had been promised part of Sabah by Brunei during the late 17th century (a promise apparently never honoured).

Dent founded a company in 1881, transferring his rights to Sabah, along with the rights he had already been sold by von Overbeck. In 1882, this became known as the Chartered Company and a new period in Sabah's history began. Sabah became known as British North Borneo and was administered by officers employed by a private company.

The first capital of North Borneo was established in Kudat, although frequent pirate attacks and a shortage of water led to its transfer to Sandakan on the east coast a couple of years later. A trading post was also established on Gaya Island, but after this was razed to the ground in 1897 by a Bajau rebel, Mat Salleh, the settlement was moved to the mainland and named Jesselton.

The Chartered Company was to rule British North Borneo for the next 60 years, during which piracy was considerably reduced and a limited infrastructure developed. Bridle paths were cut through virgin jungle, rubber and tobacco plantations established, a system of administration and justice set up and a railway line (the only one in all of Borneo) begun.



The shadow of WWII fell on British North Borneo with the Japanese occupation of 1942 and the imprisonment of large numbers of Allied forces. Local resistance movements were brutally suppressed and their leaders hanged, but after Allied bombing of Sandakan, Jesselton and Labuan, the Japanese finally surrendered.

The town of Sandakan was totally obliterated by the bombing, and although Jesselton was only marginally better off, it was decided that the capital should be moved across to this west coast settlement. As the enormous cost of rebuilding the state was too great for the Chartered

Company, which had never made the enormous profits they had expected from British North Borneo, the territory became a British colony in 1946.

In 1963, the Federated Malay states on the Malay peninsula some 600 kilometres distant proposed the formation of a new country, with Singapore, Sarawak and British North Borneo joining them to create a new nation, Malaysia (which Singapore was to leave two years later). British North Borneo regained its original name, Sabah, and in 1967, the name of its capital was changed from Jesselton, which commemorated a director of the Chartered Company, to Kota (The City of) Kinabalu.



Sabah today is home to some 1.6 million people, with roughly half of them dependent upon agriculture and forestry for a living. The hardwood timber from the state's rich rainforests dominated the economy until relatively recently (in 1977, the peak period for timber, it provided almost 80 percent of Sabah's revenue). These days, the emphasis is on sustainable logging and downstream processing of timber.

Other important crops include oil palm and cocoa, grown mostly on the east coast. Sabah is the only state in Malaysia to produce copper, mined on the slopes of Mount Kinabalu. Another natural resource, oil found off Sabah's west coast, contributes only marginally to the state's economy as it receives only 5 percent of the total revenue. Small and medium-scale private industries are found within the state, although until their recent privatisation, major industries such as Sabah Gas Industries, Sabah Forest Industries and Sabah Shipyard were state owned.

The natural beauty of Sabah's rainforest and beaches, combined with the genuinely warm welcome given by its diverse people, makes Sabah an increasingly popular tourist destination. But while facilities for the visitor are constantly being introduced and upgraded, tourism is seen by Sabahans not so much as an industry but as a chance to share the treasures of Borneo with the rest of the world.

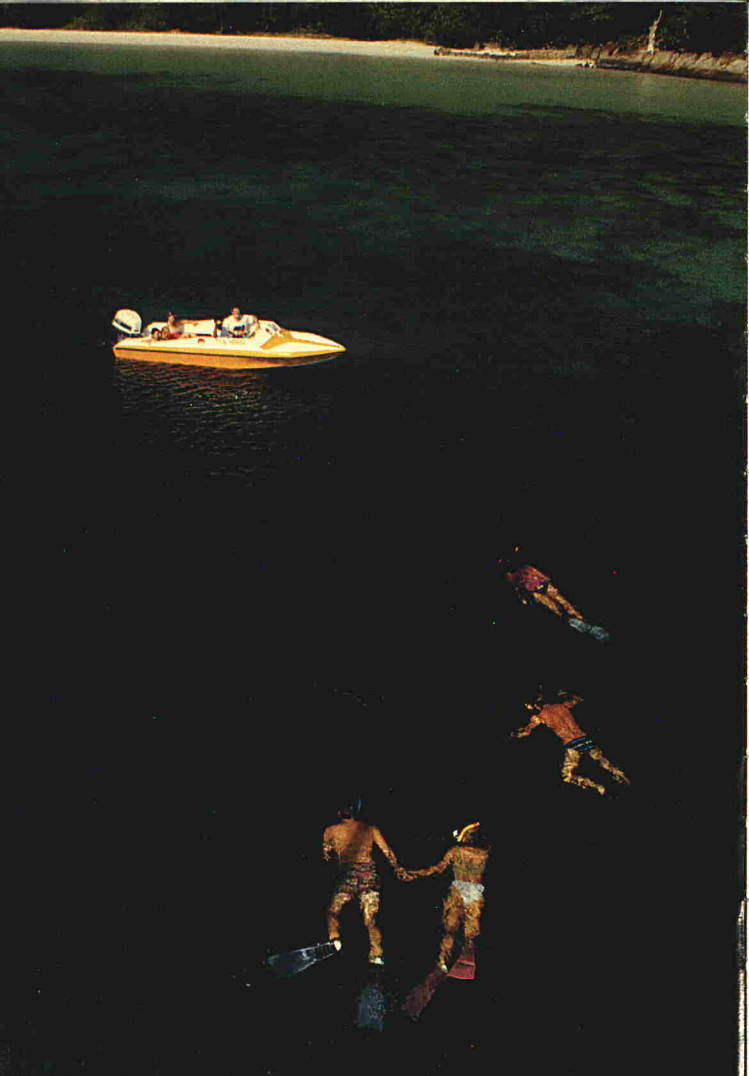
Page 22: A winsome young orang-utan clings cautiously to a vine in the Sepilok forest. **Page 23 & 25:** The rainforest at dawn and at dusk. **Page 26:** An old print of an Illanun. **Page 27:** A 19th-century view of Mount Kinabalu. **Page 28:** The beauty of the virgin rainforest. **Above:** A Dusun girl from Kota Belud.











We sailed (past Papar) along as beautiful a coast as can be conceived: ranges of hills rising one beyond the other, some grass-covered, others still clothed in forest, with soft valleys and lovely bays, and here and there patches of bright sandy beach, with Kina Balu towering in majestic grandeur as a background.

These words, written by the British explorer Spenser St John in 1858, are still a valid description of Sabah's west coast, now the most populated region of the state with around 40 percent of its inhabitants in the political divisions of West Coast and Kudat, the far northern tip.

The people of the region include the indigenous Kadazan/Dusun, Bisayan and Kadayan, later joined by Bajau, Illanun and Obian, all of whom settled along the coasts. While the Kadazan/Dusun were primarily agriculturalists, the coastal people concentrated on fishing and salt making and were reputedly not averse to the odd spot of piracy. The Bajau became adept at rearing cattle and horses, becoming known as "Sabah's cowboys" for, as St John also noted, "the Bajau is essentially a non-walker (who) never makes use of his own legs if he can possibly get an animal to carry him".

The scattered communities living along the west coast have retained much of their ethnic individuality and lifestyles right up until the present day. There are Bisayan who harvest the sago palm on the Klias Peninsula; rice-growing Kadazan living on the same land where their ancestors erected stone megaliths right up until the beginning of this century; Lotud growing fruit and rice around Tuaran; a Bajau fishing community in the stilt village of Mengkabong, in Kota Belud, cattle-raising Bajau and Illanun weaving their distinctive motifs; with Rungus folk living in longhouses and cultivating rice, maize and tapioca in the Kudat district. There are, of course, people from every ethnic group now engaged in different occupations and modern professions, joined in the towns by Chinese Sabahans, many of them

THE WEST COAST

descendants of the Chinese brought in by the British from as early as 1882 to help solve the labour shortage. A considerable number of Chinese have

intermarried with the indigenous people over the past century.

The sandy beaches noted by St John still dominate the western coastline, and there are also stretches of mangrove swamp which create a habitat for a range of fascinating plants, animals and birds, as well as being vitally important to the region's rich marine life.

The southernmost portion of Sabah's west coast lies on the wide sweep of Brunei Bay,





where the small town of Sipitang is dominated by the timber industry and Malaysia's sole pulp and paper mill. Further north, at the mouth of the Padas River, Weston remains a sleepy backwater, despite plans made during the colonial era for it to become a terminal for the trains carrying produce from the Interior. John Weston had overlooked the fact that the bay was too



shallow for ships to anchor; thus, the railway was routed northwards from Beaufort, continued up through the rubber estates around Membakut and Papar on to its terminal at the port of Jesselton (today's Kota Kinabalu).

North of Kuala Penyu, on the largely swampy Klias Peninsula, is a group of lovely islands with coral reefs and sandy beaches. Pulau Tiga, two nearby islets, Kalamunian Damit and Kalamunian Besar, and their surrounding waters comprise the Pulau Tiga Park, which preserves the marine life as well as the wildlife and forest on land.

Kota Kinabalu sprawls along a narrow strip of flat land fringed by the sea and backed by the lower slopes of the Crocker Range, the wall of mountains running from the north of Sabah right down to its border with Sarawak. The harbour is afforded excellent protection by a large island, Pulau Gaya. Together with four smaller islands, Manukan, Mamutik, Sapi and Sulug, Pulau Gaya has been preserved as part of the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park. This Park is a superb recreational area as well as providing a protected environment for a variety of plants and animals.

Beyond the mountain range north of Kota Kinabalu lie a succession of lovely narrow valleys filled with picturesque paddy fields, and beyond these, the town of Kota Belud, renowned for its lively Sunday market or *tamu*. Heading north, the road passes a huge freshwater swamp designated as a bird sanctuary, while beyond the fertile fields of the Tempasuk plain, the hills are covered with softwood forest.

Finally, one reaches the district of Kudat, shaped like a deep crescent cradling Marudu Bay. The Rungus of Kudat are the most traditional of all Sabah's peoples, and are known for their unique longhouses and fine handicrafts. As they are agriculturalists rather than fishermen, their longhouses are built inland. However, it is still possible to see the Rungus carrying their produce to small villages along the west coast, where they trade their vegetables for the fish caught by Illanun and Obian in the waters off Kudat's glorious long beaches and sheltered lagoons.

Page 30-31: Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah, with Sutera Harbour Resort project on the top right corner. **Page 32-33:** Sailing near Pulau Manukan. **Page 34:** Snorkellers exploring the waters off Police Beach. **Page 35:** A glorious sunset, seen from Tanjung Aru beach. **Page 36:** Friends at a kampung house in Tamparuli. **Above:** Pulau Sapi, part of Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, with Pulau Gaya to the right.





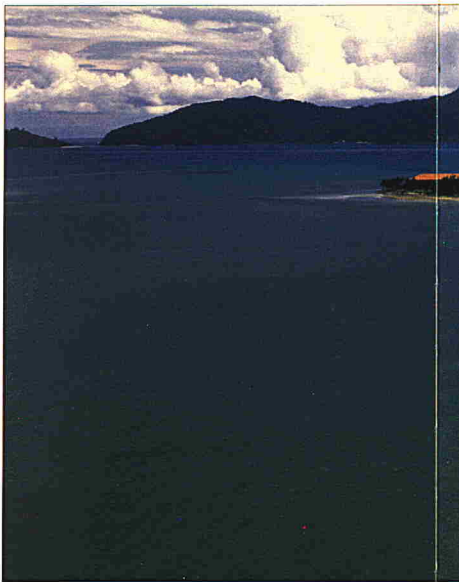
Left: An aerial view of the peninsula at Tanjung Aru, with a resort hotel and marina.

Below Left: The striking 30-storey Sabah Foundation building mirrors the waters of Likas Bay, northeast of downtown Kota Kinabalu. Pulau Gaya is seen to the right of the Sabah Foundation tower.

Below: From the three buildings left standing in Kota Kinabalu at the end of WWII, the city has developed into a mixture of functional post-war reconstruction and striking modern buildings.



At Tanjung Aru beach sweeps up to a small peninsula, a fringed coral reef, where Shangri-la's Tanjung Aru Resort occupies the most of its perfect location. The beach is Kota Bharu's most popular recreational area from dawn, when joggers and tai chi exponents dominate, until sunset, when families and friends gather to watch the often spectacular sailboats and to enjoy the cool evening air.





Left: Sailing is an increasingly popular sport in Sabah. Kinabalu Yacht Club, located on Tanjung Aru beach, offers local youngsters the opportunity to learn the sport free of charge. The Club was host to the Asian Optimist Championships in 1994, and Sabahan sailors were selected for the Malaysian national team in the 1995 South East Asian Games.



Above: Part of Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, with Pulau Manukan to the right, Pulau Mamutik in the left foreground, and Pulau Sulug seen in the background.

Opposite Top: The jade-coloured waters bathing the reef fringing Pulau Manukan provide a dramatic contrast to the deep water in front.

Opposite Centre: Pulau Sapi is linked by a shallow reef to Pulau Gaya.

Opposite Bottom: The pleasure of spending the night on a tropical isle is made possible by the seaside chalets on Pulau Manukan.





Above: The deep inlet of Police Beach, located on the north side of Pulau Gaya, is perhaps the most exquisite spot in all of Tunku Abdul Rahman Park. Pied hornbills, monitor lizards and wild pigs can all be spotted here on occasion, while the mixture of vegetation is a naturalist's delight. The fine sandy beach, clear waters and reefs make Police Beach perfect for a day in the sun.



Below: A marine biologist charts a patch of reef off one of the islands of Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, where the mixture of hard and soft corals and other marine life is typical of Indo-Pacific marine environments.







Left: The vast shallow reef surrounding Pulau Mengalum, located around 35 nautical miles off the west coast of Sabah, is larger than the island itself.

Uninhabited except for a quarantine station, Mengalum is a popular destination for sports fishermen.

Below: The ones that didn't get away; fish caught off Mengalum during an annual fishing contest.





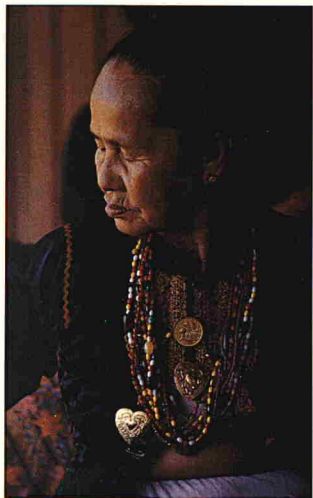
Above: The stilt village of Mengkabong, located in an estuary just south of Tuaran, is home to Bajau who were traditionally fishermen and salt makers. The original nibong palm walkways and palm-thatch houses of this huge water village have almost completely given way to modern building materials.



Below: Many of the people of Mengkabong still make their living from the sea, their sturdy wooden boats hand-crafted in the village itself.







Left & Opposite: The old generation and the new: Lotud women from Tuaran, in traditional adornment. Their unusual head-dress consists of a band of palm leaf inlaid with gold, bordered with thin strips of red-dyed rattan, completed with bunches of feathers and dangling beads set in the hair.

Below: The Kadazan/Dusun people of Tuaran, 30 kilometres north of Kota Kinabalu, form a sub-group known as the Lotud. Their relative isolation ensured the maintenance of their distinctive dialect, costumes and customs, for until modern times, Tuaran was accessible from Jesselton (today's Kota Kinabalu) only by boat to Mengkabong, and then by bridle path.





Above & Opposite: The sompoton, a musical instrument originally from Tambunan district, is now widely popular among the Dusun and some Muruts. It is made from a dried gourd with a total of eight bamboo pipes inserted into it, held in place by beeswax and fine vines. The sound of the sompoton has been described as a cross between a mouth organ and a bagpipe, without the shrillness of the latter.

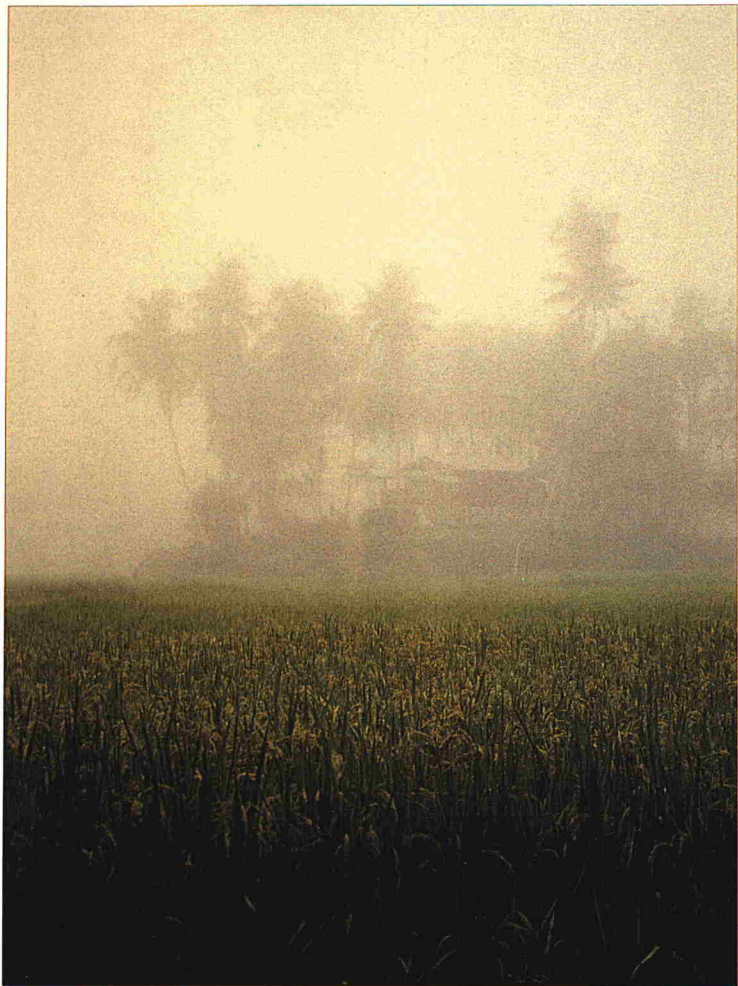


Right: The Jew's harp or bungkau is an easily made and inexpensive musical instrument found throughout Sabah. It is supposedly effective in attracting edible lizards, and was used for farewell and battle songs, as well as during celebrations following the rice harvest. Many villagers, such as this boy, play it purely for personal pleasure.

Below: The long-necked lute or sundatang, made of jackfruit wood and two brass strings, an instrument once popular among the Kadazan/Dusun peoples of Sabah.









Above: Grain storage huts dot the fertile Tempasuk plain in Kota Belud district.

Opposite: A hillock with a farmer's house set in a coconut grove rises like an island from a sea of paddy fields, hauntingly lovely in the early morning mist.





Although originally coastal people who made their living from fishing, Sabah's west coast Bajau have become proficient horsemen. The fashions for decorating their ponies have changed over the years, and generally consist of strips of woven fabric, ribbons, leathers and strings of bells. The all-encompassing costumes seen here are a modern re-interpretation of the decoration seen in old photographs of Bajau ponies, making them look vaguely like the mounts of medieval European knights.



Above: Bajau dancers don elaborate finger sheaths. The boat-shaped centre of their distinctive head-dress is hung with long strands of gold-coloured beads and other ornaments. Many Illanun (also known as Irtanun) have intermarried with the Bajau and certain aspects of both cultures have become interchangeable.



Below: Dusun Tindal, seen here in their traditional finery, are the original inhabitants of the Kota Belud region, where large numbers of Bajau have settled over the past two centuries.

Bottom: The finely embossed decorative silver boxes often used to hold lime powder for sireh or the betel nut quid are used as an adornment by the Bajau, as well as by the Dusun Tindal.





Above: The water buffalo and cattle market at the famous Kota Belud tamu. Tamu, regular weekly or monthly markets, were introduced during the colonial era and remain one of Sabah's most colourful and entertaining events.

Opposite Top: Strings of dried yeast which are used to make Sabah's popular rice wines, tapai and lihing.

Opposite Centre: Dried fish are not only a practical standby for rural folk without access to refrigeration, but are enjoyed for their distinctive flavour.

Opposite: Everyone comes to the Kota Belud Sunday tamu. Dusun with fruit, vegetables and wild honey from the slopes of the Crocker Range; Bajau with dried fish and brightly coloured woven food covers seen here as well as Indian and Chinese traders up from the city with clothing, hardware and kitchen goods.







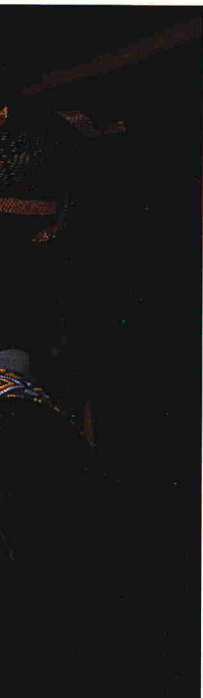


Page 64-65: A Rungus couple at the entrance to one of the rooms of the verandah running the length of a typical longhouse made of bark, wood and thatch.

Above: The Rungus, a sub-group of the Kadazan/Dusun who live in the Kudat district of northwest Sabah, are renowned for their weaving and beadwork. These men wear the sigar head-dress, woven jackets and straps of brightly coloured beads threaded in geometric patterns.

Opposite Top: Rungus longhouses, which are distinctively different to any other found in Borneo, are located in relatively dry agricultural land rather than along rivers; thus, they are only slightly raised above the ground. They also have outward-sloping walls of slender wooden poles along the front of the verandah or communal area, allowing for a welcome circulation of air.

Opposite: The ritual blessing of a longhouse at Kampung Bavanggazao, where it is possible for visitors to stay overnight and enjoy Rungus hospitality.







Above: The Rungus are regarded as among the most skilled craftsmen in Sabah. Like all of Borneo's indigenous people, they prize antique beads and are skilled at creating jewellery from tiny modern glass and plastic beads, incorporating traditional motifs.

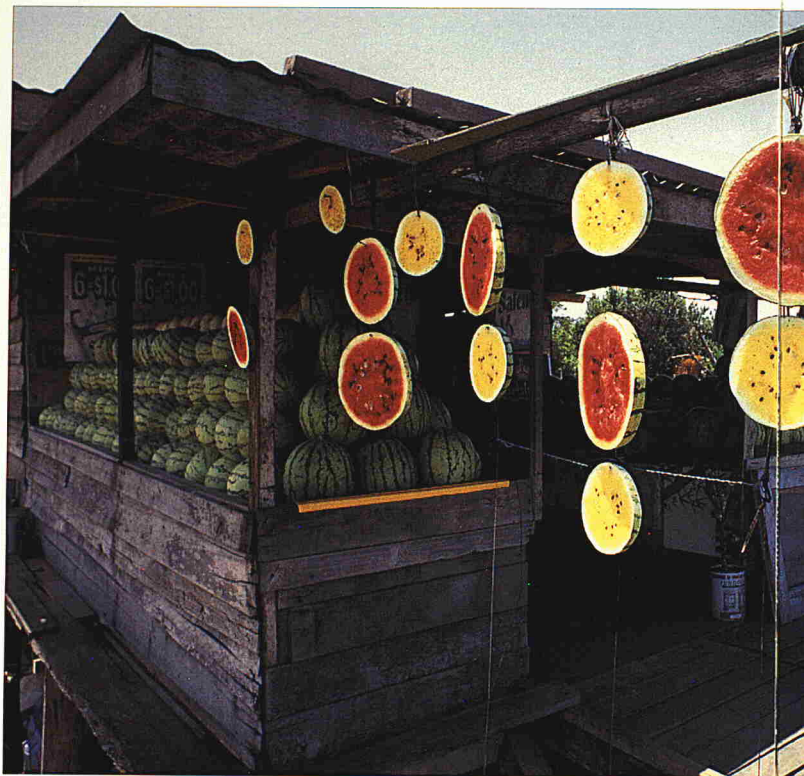
Left: Learning beadwork starts young with the Rungus. These girls are sitting on the split bamboo floor of a longhouse verandah, with the outward-sloping wall clearly visible to the left, and the private rooms of the families sharing the longhouse to the right.

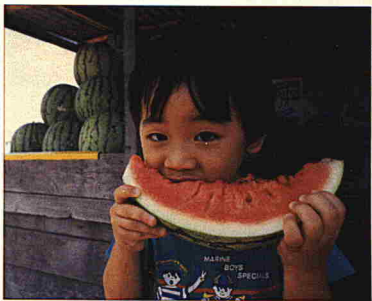




Above: Strands of beads and tiny metal rings form a girdle wound around the hips; the crossed bands of modern beadwork are joined by necklaces of antique beads.

Opposite: Rungus women performing a typical dance. The older woman to the left is wearing brass anklets, once common among married women but rarely seen today. Her bracelets (which, like the anklets, are never removed) are made of brass with rings of white shell at either end; the same shell is fashioned into discs which are worn about the neck.





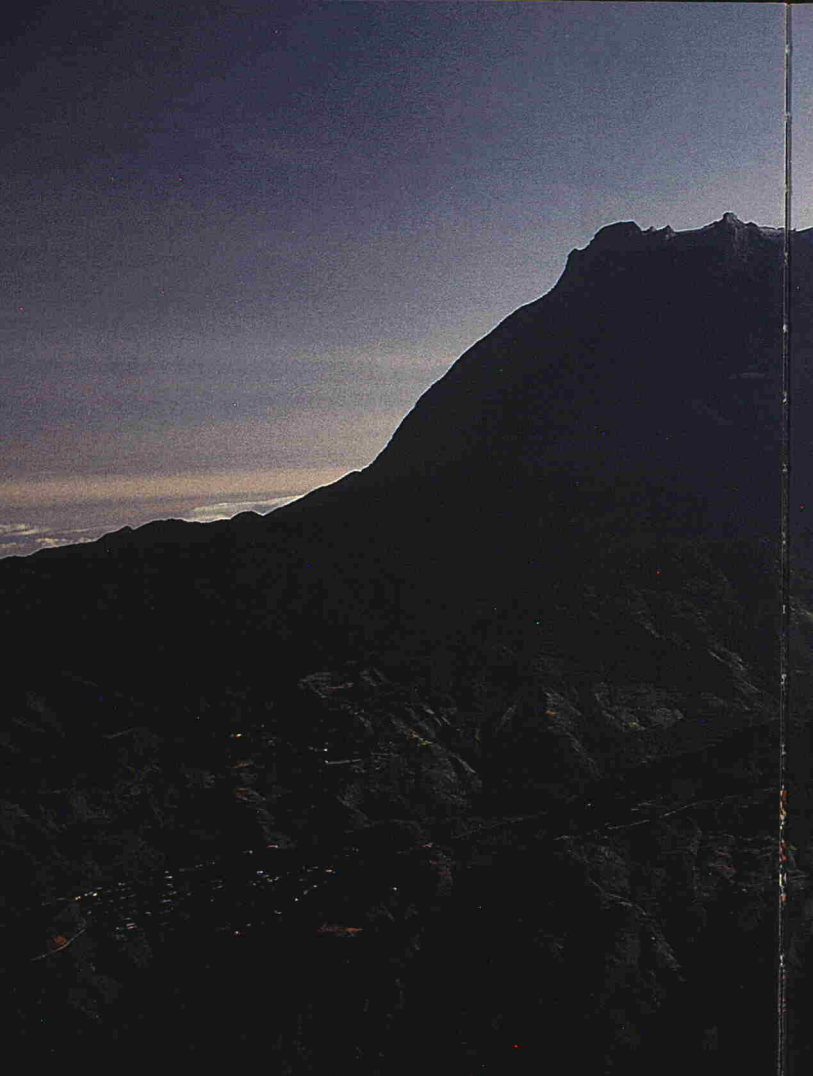
The seemingly infertile soil at the back of Kimanis bay, south of Kota Kinabalu, was once filled with cinnamon trees. Today it is watermelon country, and farmers erect stalls decorated with eye-catching circles of their fruit to attract passing motorists. As the young boy above would surely agree, there's nothing more quenching than a watermelon on a hot tropical day.



Above: A Sea Krait slithers across a rock on Kalampunian Damit, an island in the Pulau Tiga Marine Park popularly known as Snake Island, since it seems to be the favourite breeding ground for these snakes off Sabah's west coast. The snakes are shy and almost never seen by swimmers.

Opposite: Bare trees cling to the rocks on Snake Island, a tiny crescent of sand and rock to the north of Pulau Tiga.













Isolated from the world by almost impenetrable mountains covered with dense jungles, haven to primitive tribes living as their forefathers once did — this is perhaps the image some romantic outsiders still hold of Borneo's interior regions. In these days of helicopters and satellite imagery, nowhere is truly isolated, yet parts of Sabah's interior allow glimpses of those romantic dreams, interweaving them with modern-day realities. It is possible to hike through virgin forests, to ride the rapids in a native canoe (or a modern inflatable raft), to sample the local rice wine, to dine on wild pig or deer and to find traditional handicrafts still being created and used for everyday tasks.

Sabah's centre, separated from the west coast by the Crocker Range, contains several fertile valleys where a number of indigenous Sabahans, forced inland by more recent arrivals, established isolated farming communities. Many of these inland people belong to the Kadazan/Dusun group, although in the mountainous south, there are a number of groups known collectively as Murut or Hill People. The political boundaries drawn up by the British designated this heartland as the Interior, although the remoteness and inaccessibility of much of this region is shared by the far southwest of the Sandakan division, which adjoins the Interior.

Since the opening of a road across the Crocker Range, via Sinsuron Pass, the long fertile plain stretching from Tambunan south through Keningau to

THE HEARTLAND

Tenom is easily accessible. This is a region of split bamboo houses, of clear streams and surprisingly cold waterfalls tumbling from mountains into narrow valleys. The cultivated landscapes are

those of rice fields, long-established rubber plantations and, around Tenom, a rich variety of agriculture including coffee and fruit trees.

The plant life of the Interior region includes a number of endemic species, that is, those found nowhere else: these include some varieties of the *Rafflesia*; several pitcher plants or *Nepenthes* (some located on the slopes of Trus Madi, Sabah's second highest mountain) and a number of native orchids.

The small and pleasant town of Tenom, the terminus of the railway running from Kota Kinabalu via Beaufort and through the Padas Gorge, came into being after a couple of vast rubber estates, Sapong and Melalap, were established by the British. Although these estates are still in existence, Tenom is known primarily for its Agricultural Research Station, which has carried out important studies on cocoa, coffee, fruit trees and other agricultural produce. The Research Station also includes an orchid research centre, where Borneo's single biggest collection of indigenous lowland orchids (astonishingly varied and beautiful) is housed, together with a







number of exotic species and hybrids. This valuable and important orchid collection is slated to become part of an exciting new Agricultural Park currently under construction.

Travelling south from Tenom, the sealed roads give way to tracks, which eventually become challenging logging roads providing access to the forested hills of the remote southwest. Tucked some 1,000 metres or more up in these hills, isolated communities of Murut, the last people in Sabah to give up head-hunting, still dwell. There is also

a small number of Lun Dayeh people whose forefathers crossed into Sabah and Sarawak from neighbouring Kalimantan. Even today, political boundaries are a concept rather than a reality for many Lun Dayeh, who trek back and forth to Kalimantan to visit relatives. They think nothing of the three-to-four-day journey, scaling mountains, fording streams, and brushing off leeches only when they become too numerous. These inland peoples live largely from subsistence agriculture, planting rice, tapioca and fruit trees, catching fish in the rivers, hunting in the forests and gathering edible wild plants and fruit.

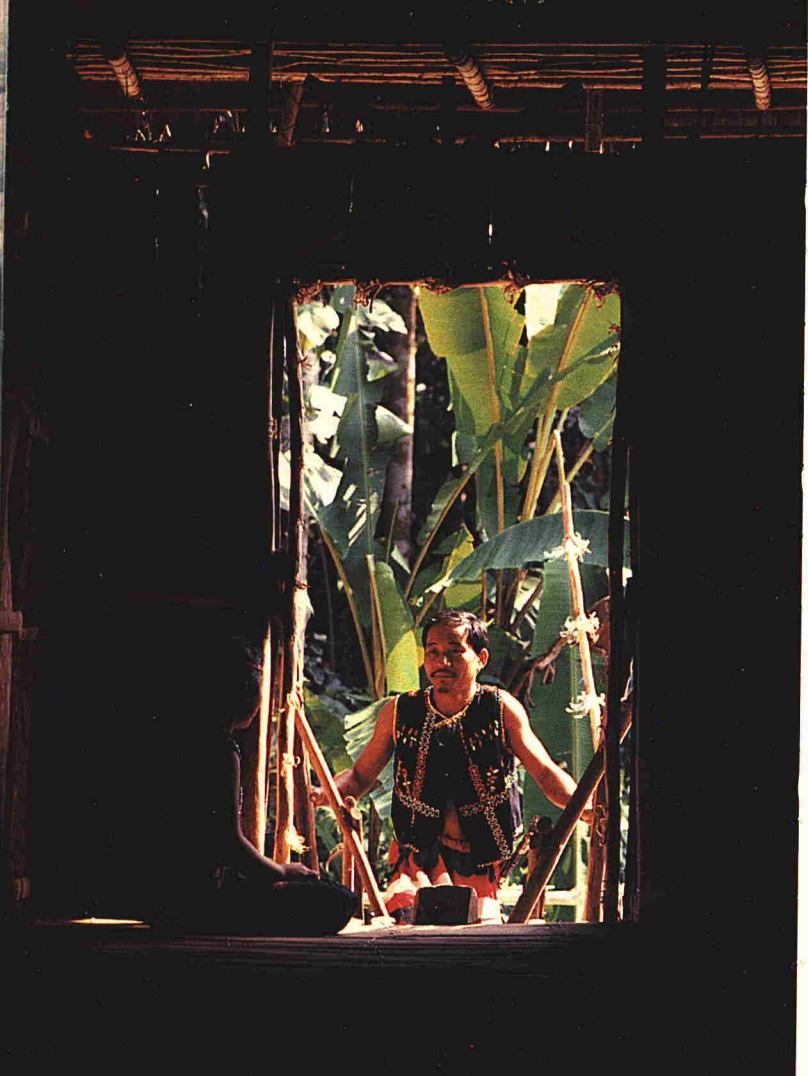
Roughly in the centre of the Interior plain, Keningau is a town that has grown up around the timber industry. The road heading eastwards from Keningau passes through logged areas and eventually across ridges covered with virgin forest. The village of Sapulut is officially where the road ends, although logging roads currently make it possible to drive on towards the last outpost, Pensiangan, once a government centre but so remote that facilities were transferred to Nabawan, half-way along the Keningau road.

The rivers around Sapulut and Pensiangan provided the only feasible method of transport until recently, and even today, Murut communities are built along the riverbanks and the locals travel by canoe powered by an outboard engine. But this is still Borneo and the Interior still holds its challenges. When the water level is low, there is no alternative to hauling the canoe through the stony shallows, and when the rivers run high, the rapids provide a challenging and exciting ride.

Upriver from Sapulut, a finger of limestone points skywards through the surrounding forest. Batu Punggul, as the outcrop is known, can be scaled by those with a good head for heights, and the caves beneath explored. Who knows just what treasures these caves are hiding? Local legends explain the presence of a wooden beam wedged impossibly high in the roof of one of the caves, yet no-one has fully explored the many levels of the dark and mysterious interior of Batu Tinahas. The Interior still hides many secrets.

Not far from Batu Punggul as the hornbill flies is Sabah's Lost Paradise, a Shangri-La rimmed by a steep limestone escarpment which remained totally untouched by man until the past decade. The Maliau Basin, cradled within its circle of mountains, holds a wealth of yet-to-be-discovered botanical treasures as well as a spectacular seven-tier waterfall cascading on one side of the basin.

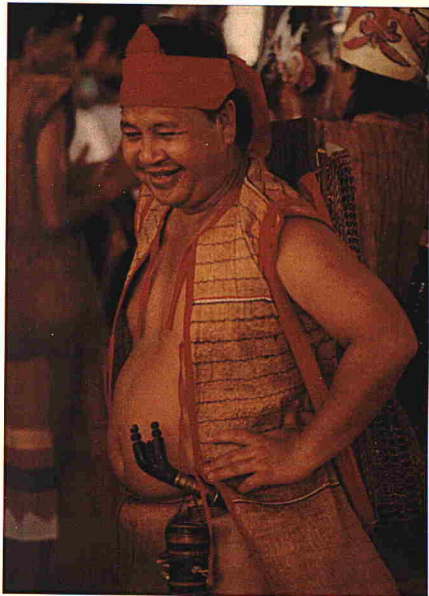
Page 110-111: Finely woven mats and baskets created by Murut living south of Pensiangan. **Page 112-113:** A fish pond in the Lun Dayeh village of Long Pa Sia. **Page 114:** This seven-tier waterfall is just one of the marvels within Maliau Basin. **Page 115:** Murut traditionally hunted with blowpipes. **Opposite:** Murut women with their baskets and mats, which resemble those made by Dayaks in Kalimantan. **Above:** A ring of clouds marks the edge of the 1,500-metre-high escarpment of Maliau Basin.



Opposite: A Murut climbs to the entrance of a longhouse on the Sapulut river, near Batu Punggul. Highland Murut longhouses were always built near rivers, the sole highways through the mountainous jungles of southwest Sabah.

Right: A jolly Murut in a costume made of beaten bark cloth. His ancestors were renowned for their hunting skills and independence, and were the last group in Sabah to give up head-hunting.

Below: A group of Timugon Muruts from Ulu Tomani, a village south of Tenom, where cultural shows are occasionally presented.







Left: The 170-metre limestone pinnacle, Batu Punggul, pierces the rainforest in the heart of Sabah's Interior.

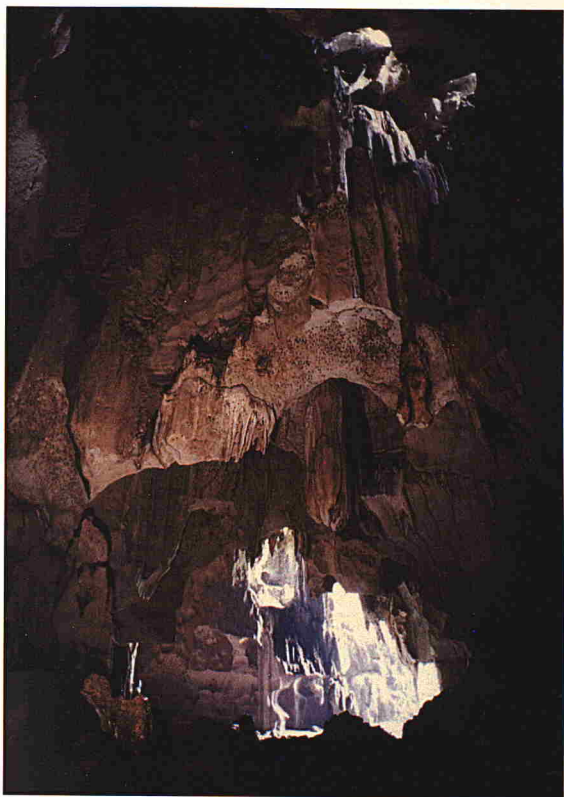
Opposite Below: Part of a longhouse built at Batu Punggul to accommodate visitors.

Below: A Murut leaps high for the prize suspended in the rafters, launching himself from the lansaran or springy platform that is a unique feature found in the centre of Murut longhouse verandahs. Legend has it that the prize which used to hang above the lansaran was the newly taken head of some unwary opponent; these days, it's more likely to be money.

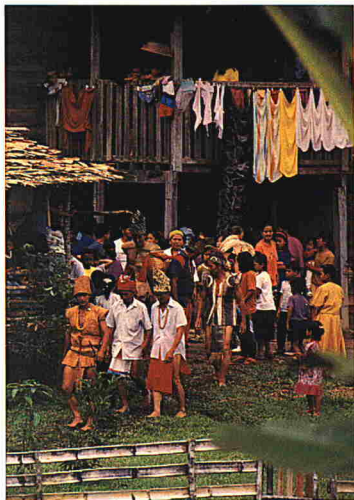




Two cave complexes are found at the base of Batu Pungul; the one known as Batu Tinahas is reported to have at least three levels, although the caves have yet to be properly explored. According to Murut folk tales, the main chambers of both cave complexes were once longhouses which were turned to stone; today, Muruts point to a massive timber beam wedged high in the roof of Batu Tinahas as an evidence of the original longhouse.







Opposite: A Lun Dayeh bride walks with her family to a bride-wealth exchange held at Long Pa Sia, an isolated community of people whose ancestors trekked into Sabah across the mountains from northwest Kalimantan (Indonesia) in the earlier part of this century.

Left: The groom, decked out in barkcloth, approaches his bride together with the members of his family. The bride-wealth at this particular ceremony included wine jars, cattle, bush knives, an annual supply of firewood for the bride's family, kitchen goods and clothing.

Below: The feast is not complete without Nasi Buaya, rice mounded in the shape of a crocodile, which is a symbol of bravery and strength.





Top: The Pegalan river sparkles its way down the Interior plain stretching from Tambunan to Keningau, and on south to Tenom. These boys make the most of a lazy afternoon.

Above: Local "cowboys" race on the back of water buffaloes, strong and patient animals which are invaluable in the flat rice fields of the Interior. In the early years of this century, the local police force used to be mounted on water buffaloes.

Opposite: Rice fields near Tambunan.





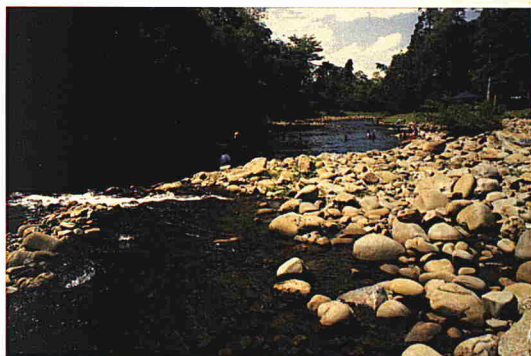
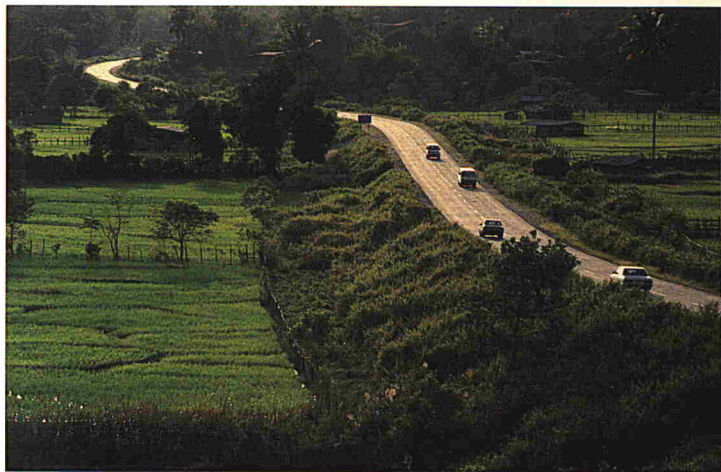
Above: The "nipple" eggplant, a member of the Solanaceae family, is grown for medicinal purposes by the Tambunan Dusun.

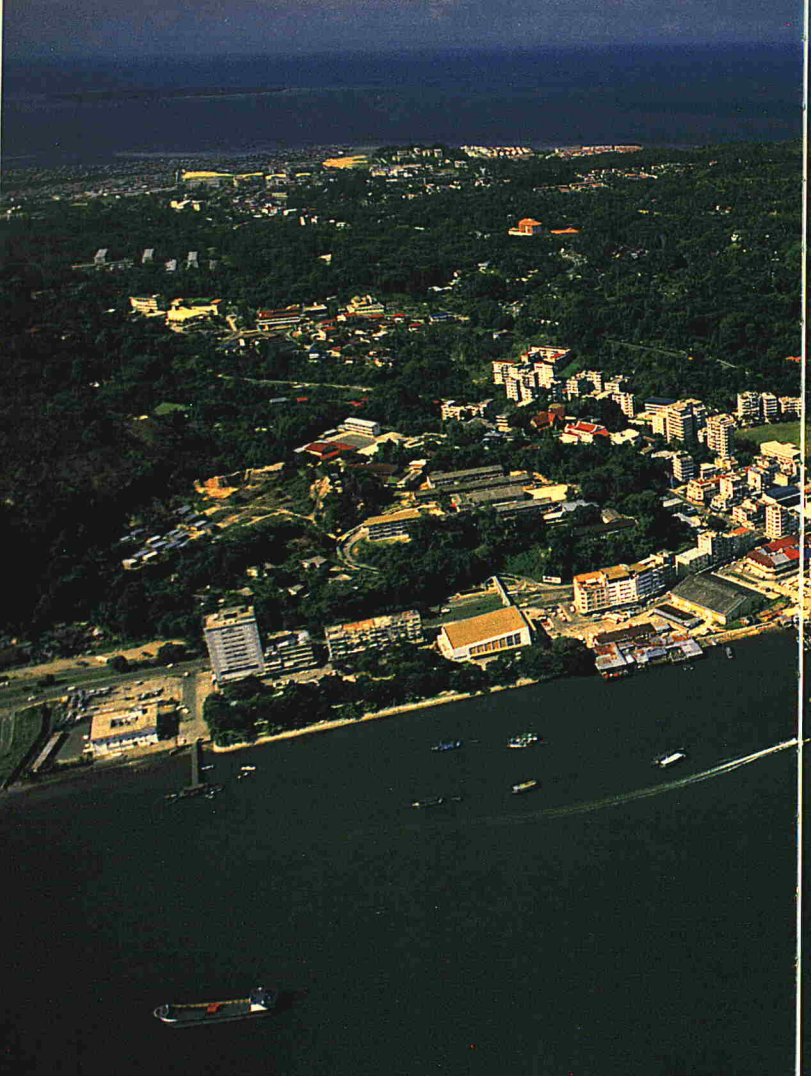
Left: The Mawah waterfall tumbles into a pool on the eastern side of the Crocker Range. Further up this side of the range, not far from the Rafflesia reserve, the more spectacular Sinsuron Falls pour into a very narrow, cool valley.

Opposite Top: The road linking Tambunan with the busy town of Keningau passes through a landscape of rice fields, which run the gamut from the tender emerald of young seedlings to the dusty gold of the heavy heads of ripe grain.

Opposite: A pretty picnic spot on the Bingkor river, known as Taman Bandukan, is generally an excellent place for viewing hundreds of butterflies.















The swampy foreshores of much of Sabah's east coast might seem a somewhat unpromising region, yet man has lived along its bays and rivers for centuries. In fact, evidence of the oldest human settlement in Sabah, dating back an estimated 20,000 years was uncovered on the edge of what was once a lake known as Tingkayu.

Sandakan Bay, a deep natural harbour, has long been a trading centre for the region. For countless centuries, swiftlets have obligingly built their edible nests of saliva on the cave walls at Gomantong, nests gathered for trade with the Chinese, who are prepared to pay exorbitant prices, believing them to have medicinal value.

Other caves along the huge Darvel Bay to the south of Sandakan also yield a similar treasure. The indigenous Ida'an people, who converted to Islam in the 15th century, have records which indicate that they have been harvesting the Madai Caves for some twenty generations, probably around 400 years. Intriguingly, Brunei historical records hint that there was a 15th-century Chinese settlement on the east coast of Sabah, thought to be along the Kinabatangan river, although evidence of this has yet to be uncovered.

Although they dealt with the Chinese, local traders also gathered their produce for sale to the Sultan of Sulu's representatives. According to Spenser St John, writing in the mid-19th century, they traded "white birds' nests, pearls, wax, sea-slug and the best kind of camphor", gathering their goods together for an annual trading session.

By the time the Chartered Company was looking for a site for a settlement on North Borneo's east coast, there was already a group of huts near the mouth of Sandakan Bay known as Kampung German. This was the base for a group of Western gun runners supplying the Sultan of Sulu. A fire destroyed this wood and thatch settlement shortly after the Chartered

THE EAST COAST

Company moved in, so a new settlement was built nearby at Buli Sim Sim. This was to become known as Sandakan and

was the capital of British North Borneo from 1884 until 1945.

During the early days of British North Borneo, tobacco and coconut plantations were established near Sandakan. The richest harvest of all, however, was the hardwood logs extracted from the rainforests inland from the swampy coast. These enormous heavy logs, exported for use as railway sleepers, were cut and dragged out of the forest largely by manpower, and it was not until the widespread use







Page 130-131: Sandakan, the capital of Sabah until the end of WWII, spreads along the edge of Sandakan Bay. **Page 132-133:** A Green turtle, one of the two species found in Sabah. **Page 134:** Some of the loveliest lowland rainforest in Sabah can be viewed just 25 kilometres from Sandakan, at Sepilok Forest Reserve. **Page 135:** The islands off Semporna are bathed by beautiful clear waters. **Opposite:** A gaily decorated boat at the Lipa-Lipa Regatta. **Above:** Many stilt villages perch over the reefs around Semporna.

of chainsaws and bulldozers in the 1960s that the forests were harvested on a large scale.

Today, the gently rolling hills of much of the east coast between Sandakan and the southern town of Tawau are covered with oil palm plantations and, to a lesser extent, cocoa. Large areas of original forest have been preserved in Danum Valley Conservation Area and Tabin Wildlife Reserve, with smaller areas at Tawau Hills Reserve, Kulamba Wildlife Reserve, Sepilok Forest Reserve and Gomantong Forest Reserve.

Sabah's east coast faces the Indonesian island of Sulawesi (once known as Celebes) and the southernmost islands of the Philippines. The people of eastern Sabah are noticeably different from the west. The indigenous groups, the *Ida'an* and *Orang Sungai* (River People), were joined by groups from islands of the southern Philippines: Bajau (whose dialect and customs differ to those of west coast Bajau), Cagayan, Suluk and a small community of *Illanun* at the mouth of the Tungku River. A considerable number of Indonesians, mostly Buginese from Sulawesi, have settled in the Tawau area.

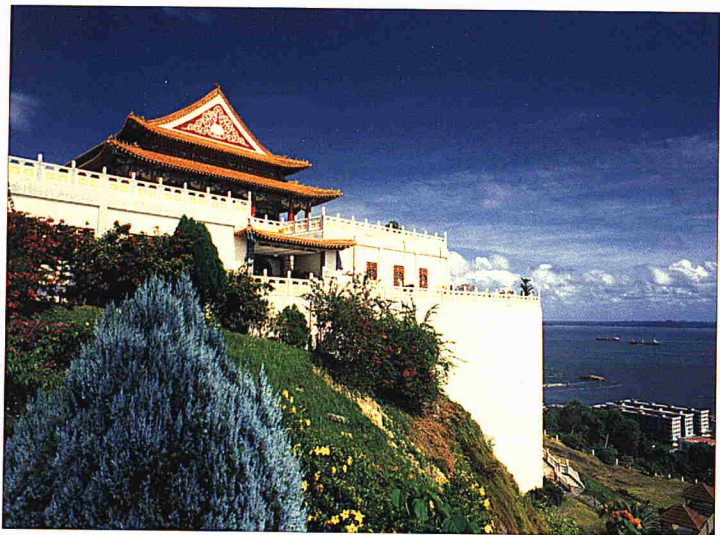
Sandakan remains the most important town on the east coast, and has a large Chinese population. Lahad Datu dominates the northern end of Darvel Bay, with the small town of Semporna poised on its southern arm. Tawau, to the far southeast of Sabah, is a major centre for timber, cocoa and oil palm.

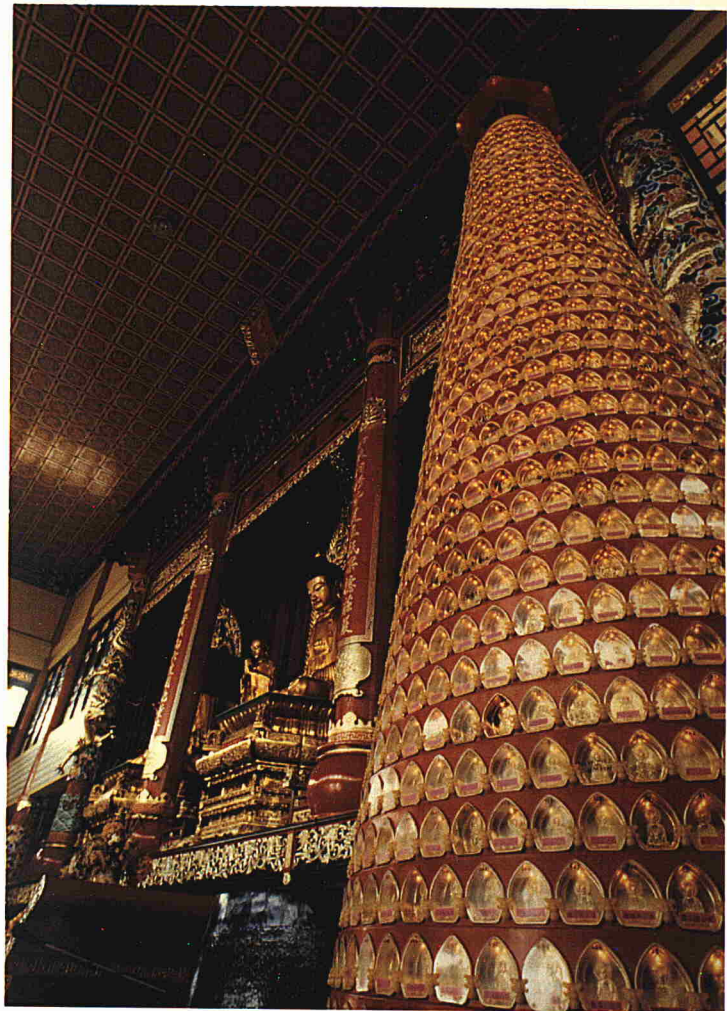
The east coast is blessed with an abundance of wildlife, particularly nesting turtles easily seen in the Turtle Islands Park; *orang-utan* which can be observed at Sepilok Rehabilitation Centre; birds' nest caves at Gomantong and Proboscis monkeys and birdlife along the lower Kinabatangan river (especially around Sukau). The largest, most accessible variety of wildlife is found at Danum Valley, where the Borneo Rainforest Lodge is located.

Magnificent marine life is found around the islands of Darvel Bay and to the southeast of Semporna. Some of these islands are little more than shallow reefs, sometimes with a cluster of stilt houses. Others rise up dramatically, like Pulau Bohey Dulang and Pulau Gaya, both rims of a long extinct volcano. The islands off Semporna were recently gazetted as a marine park and will eventually be accessible to the public.

One area where the marine life is well known is the island of Sipadan, south of Semporna. Acclaimed by Jacques Cousteau as one of the world's top diving spots, Pulau Sipadan rises up 600 metres from the floor of the Celebes Sea, mushrooming out to form a tiny island. The spectacular sheer wall of coral on the north of the island, the undersea caves, the turtles swimming fearlessly around divers, the spectacular range of colours, shapes and sizes of the fish and the corals, all make Sipadan an area of remarkable beauty.

The most spectacular of Sandakan's many Chinese temples is the Puu Jih Shih Buddhist temple, which occupies a stunning location on a hillside at Tanah Merah, south of the town. The building, opened in 1987, cost US1 million; almost as much again was spent decorating the lavish interior with more than 1,700 lamps, three massive statues of Buddha made of carved teak coated in gold foil and 34 pillars encased by writhing dragons.









Left: Mating Green Turtles in the waters of the Turtle Islands Park, about 40 kilometres northeast of Sandakan.

Opposite: Pulau Selingan, where visitors can view nesting turtles almost every night of the year. By some mechanism yet not understood by scientists, female turtles always return to the very island where they were born to lay their eggs.

Below: The turtles dig a hole in the sand and lay around 100 eggs, which are collected by rangers and protected from predators. When the hatchlings emerge, they are released into the warm waters of the Sulu Sea.

Bottom: Only a small percentage of these newly hatched turtles will survive and eventually return to Selingan.





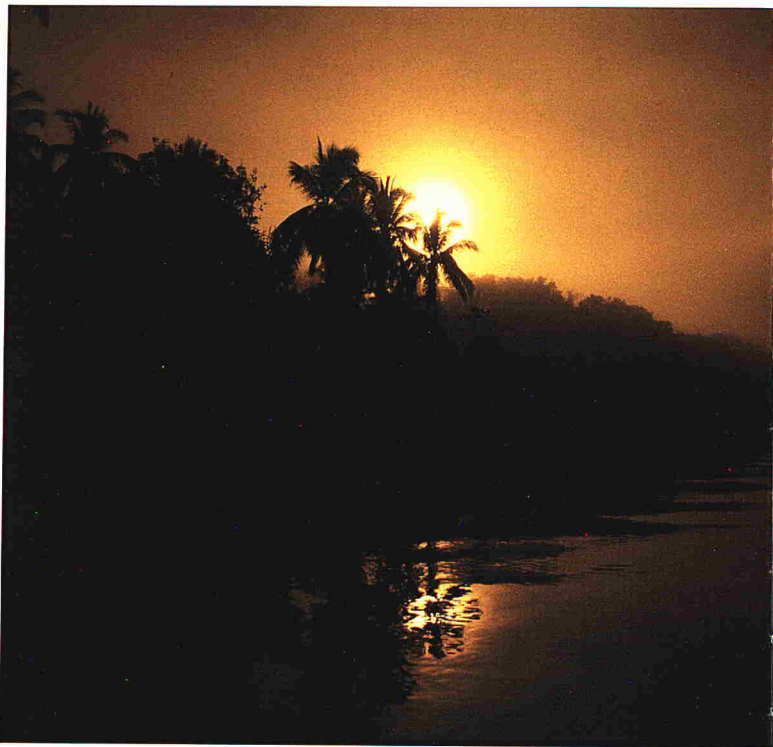
Left: Twice a day, young orang-utan are given bananas and milk at a feeding platform in the Sepilok forest.

Opposite: The orang-utan, an ape which does not have a tail, moves cautiously through the forest, always clinging carefully to lianas and vines with its long arms and legs.



Left: Orang-utan babies, surprisingly like human infants in their behaviour, are cared for by their mothers until they are at least two years old. This youngster is looking decidedly bored by life.





Above: Dawn along the Kinabatangan River, at 560 kilometres, the longest river in Sabah.

Opposite Top: The wide brown ribbon of the Kinabatangan.

Opposite Centre: The changing course of Borneo's great rivers results in stretches where river bends become isolated, forming what are known as oxbow lakes.

Opposite: An egret flies across the Kinabatangan River, one of the best places in Sabah for viewing wildlife.







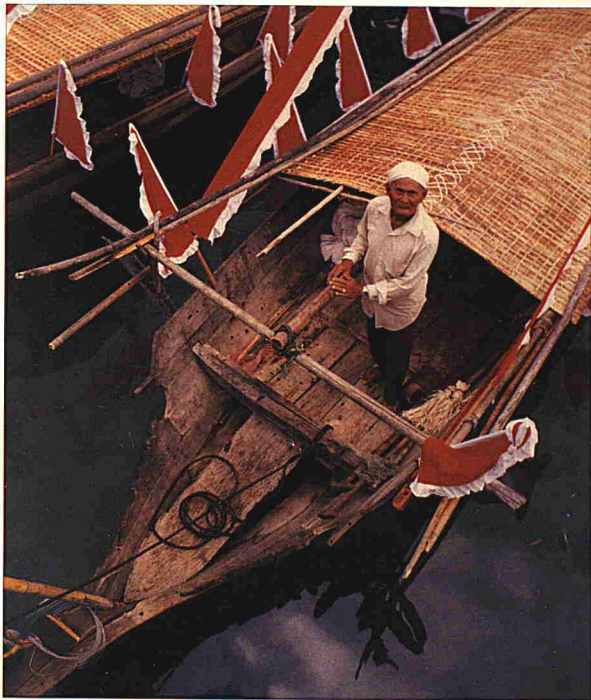
Left: A family group of Proboscis monkeys, found only in Borneo, with their characteristic long noses, huge bellies and long white tails.

Opposite: One of the tourist lodges in Kampung Sukau, near the mouth of the Menanggal River, where Proboscis monkeys can generally be seen at dawn and dusk, socialising and eating the leaves of their favourite *Sonneratia* trees.

Below Left: Misty morning on the Menanggal, a tributary of the Kinabatangan.







Above and Left: The Bajau and Suluk along Sabah's east coast were once known as sea gypsies. They lived on lipa-lipa boats, cooking, sleeping, fishing and socialising in the same small space. Note the woven mat that forms the roof of the boat above. Today, wooden boats are still made at Pulau Bum Bum, off Semporna, although they are no longer intricately carved as in the past.

Opposite: A brightly decorated boat taking part in Semporna's Lipa-Lipa Regatta.



Top: Houses perched over the shallow waters above the reefs around Pulau Haji Labuan are still preferred to life on shore by many Bajau and Suluk fisherfolk.

Middle: Simple wooden stilt houses are brightened with hand-woven mats of dried pandanus leaf, like this one in a Suluk home.

Right: It has been said that the only time the sea gypsies went ashore was after their death. Elaborately carved grave markers on Pulau Haji Labuan mark the final resting place of many of these folk.

Opposite: A boy diving for shells on the wall of a coral reef.





Above: Two varieties of swiftlets build edible nests in a number of caves near the coast and on some islands. The Madai Caves entrance is visible with the village houses built near it.

Opposite Top: The harvesting of Gomantong Caves, carried out using rattan ladders and bamboo poles, is strictly controlled by the Wildlife Department to ensure conservation of the species. As soon as the swiftlets have built their nests, they are gathered. The birds rebuild their nests and lay their eggs. When these have hatched and the young swiftlets literally flown the nest, these nests are gathered for a second harvest.

Opposite: The swiftlets whose saliva is used to create the nests. The superior 'white' nests, which lacks the twigs and leaves woven in the 'black' nests, can fetch up to US\$500 a kilo.







Above: The contours of hillsides cleared for the planting of oil palms create swirling patterns.
Left: River and road intersect through an oil palm estate. Cocoa plantations also abound, especially in Tawau district, while plantations of fast-growing softwood trees and of valuable rattan vines are also found in eastern Sabah.



Above: Oil palm seedlings in a nursery.

Left: The water buffalo is still the most useful form of transport within the plantation, dragging drays of ripe berries to a road for collection by truck.

Below Left: The ripe oil palm berries, from which oil is extracted and refined for use in food, soap and cosmetics.

Opposite: A forest plantation, an Albizzia growing in Sabah holds the world record for the fastest rate of growth of any tree: almost 16 metres in just three years.













Borneo ... the land of apes and monkeys, the home of the orang utan, the country of the headhunter, perhaps the sepulchre of the mysterious missing link! Despite such speculation, no missing link was ever discovered in Borneo, yet the rich diversity of its rainforests and marine life are more than enough for the most avid naturalist.

A combination of good fortune and good planning has made Sabah the best place in all of Borneo for observing the island's diversity of wildlife: it is possible to snorkel over a coral reef, explore limestone caves with edible

WILDLIFE

birds' nests, observe turtles dragging themselves ashore to lay their eggs, watch win- some baby *orang-utan* learning to cope with the wild, marvel at Oriental Darters plunging into the river to spear a fish, and laugh at the

antics of pot-bellied Proboscis monkeys crashing noisily through the mangrove forest.

The three major habitats for Sabah's wildlife are the swamp forests, the rainforest and the coral reefs. On the west coast, the largely swampy Klias Peninsula juts out to the south of Kimanis Bay, forming the northern arm of Brunei Bay. Although much of the area has been cleared, the swamps around the Padas Damit river are home to estuarine crocodiles, small groups of shy Proboscis monkeys and large flocks of migratory ducks, as well as other wetland birds.



Another fascinating habitat is found on Pulau Tiga and the two smaller islands making up the Pulau Tiga Park, accessible from Kuala Penyu on the Klias Peninsula. Within the undisturbed rainforest on Pulau Tiga are monkeys, squirrels, tree-shrews and a variety of birds including the unusual megapode, a hen-like bird which lays its eggs in a mound, leaving them to incubate in the heat of the sun. The aptly named Snake Island (or Kalampanian Damit) just north of Pulau Tiga is a breeding ground for sea snakes, which can be found curled up around the rocks or slithering across the sands. This same small island also attracts magnificent frigate birds, which soar high in the sky before plunging with incredible speed to catch fish (or steal it from another bird).

Just off Kota Kinabalu is a group of five islands which comprise the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park. The majority of the largest island, Pulau Gaya, is conserved within the Park and is home to wild pigs, macaques, monitor lizards, squirrels and birds, including the black and white or Pied Hornbill. One of the trails on Gaya leads across a patch of mangrove swamp with its own unique ecosystem including crabs, fish that "walk", darting kingfishers and, of course, the curious mangrove trees themselves.

The marine life in the waters around Sabah is not only of vital economic



importance to the fishing industry but a source of great beauty. Coral reefs, some of them threatened in the past but now regenerating, are found off most coastal regions, except where rivers flowing into the sea prevent their formation. The main areas of interest are around Pulau Tiga, the islands of the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Layang Layang (an atoll far to the west), Pulau Sipadan (Malaysia's only oceanic island) and the islands off Semporna.



Perhaps the most rewarding area for discovery of Sabah's wildlife is the east coast. Sepilok Forest Reserve (43 square kilometres in size), located 25 kilometres outside Sandakan, contains some magnificent lowland rainforest which gives way to swamplands on the edge of the bay. The major attraction at Sepilok, however, is the *orang-utan* rehabilitation programme, established in 1964 to help train illegally captured *orang-utan* — many of them babies whose mothers had been shot — to learn to fend for

themselves in the wild. Young *orang-utan* are closely monitored and taught how to move through the forest. Animals still not totally adapted to the wild return from the forest to a feeding platform for milk and bananas twice a day.

At Turtle Islands Park, some 40 kilometres north of Sandakan, nesting turtles, so graceful and swift in their normal element of the sea, lumber ashore and laboriously dig a hole with their flippers before laying a stream of eggs. The islands and surrounding waters of this Park are among the most important nesting areas for turtles in all of Southeast Asia, although it is also possible to see them on occasion on other islands and beaches of Sabah. Since 1977, a conservation programme has been in action to ensure the survival of the turtle, which is threatened by a variety of predators (including man). The eggs laid by nesting turtles are gathered, reburied and protected from marauding rats until the baby turtles hatch. The hatchlings are then released into the sea and those that survive will, some twenty years hence, return to the very island on which they hatched to repeat the cycle.

The Kinabatangan River and its oxbow lakes are the epitome of humid Borneo swamps, the slow brown river and its tributaries weaving through huge tracts of mangrove trees and *nipa* palms. Although the river — Sabah's longest — has been a vital waterway ever since man has dwelled in the region, the absence of large-scale settlement along its banks means that there is still a large amount of wildlife, including *orang-utan*, Proboscis monkeys, birds and many other small mammals. Herds of Asian elephants, which are found only in this northeast portion of Borneo, are sometimes seen in the less swampy regions near the Kinabatangan.

Despite some loss of habitat due to forestry of the area away from the





Kinabatangan River, the riverine swamps are still largely undisturbed and offer the opportunity of viewing the wildlife from a boat on the river or one of its tributaries. The best known area is around the village of Sukau, and particularly along the small Menanggol river, although more adventurous visitors will find plenty to experience further upriver.

The biggest drawback along the Kinabatangan is the presence of Proboscis monkeys, remarkable creatures found only in Borneo. The males have huge pendulous noses, fat bellies and thick long white tails, while the smaller females have a delicate snub nose and less-pronounced bellies. Late each afternoon, groups of monkeys gather in the mangrove trees along the banks of the river, eating, socialising, fighting, crashing through the trees with astonishing leaps or even swimming across the river with their webbed feet.

Not far from Sukau is an outcrop of limestone caves which are harvested twice a year, as they have been for centuries, for the edible nests of two varieties of swiftlet. Believed to have medicinal value by the Chinese, the birds' nests are extremely valuable. Men literally risk their lives scaling bamboo poles and rattan ladders to remove the nests from the roof of the caves. Gomantong Caves are protected within a forest reserve and the gathering of the nests strictly controlled to conserve the swiftlets. Other caves where the birds' nests are harvested are found at Madai, between Lahad Datu and Semporna.

All of Sabah's mammals (including the rare Asian Two-Horned Rhinoceros), around 270 species of birds and countless thousands of insects are known to dwell in the richest conservation area of the state, Danum Valley, roughly two hours' drive from Lahad Datu. Set aside for conservation and research in 1981, the concession covers an area of 438-square kilometres and includes a field centre where both local and foreign scientists work on a variety of projects, including exciting reforestation programmes and trials for low-impact logging.

The Borneo Rainforest Lodge, located on a bend of the Danum River within the conservation area, offers a perfect base for discovery of the rainforest, not just its wildlife but the complexity of the entire rainforest environment. There will not be the hordes of game as on the African plains (this is the rainforest, an entirely different habitat, after all), but the thrill of individual discovery of the virgin rainforest along any of the fifty kilometres of trails, of turning a bend in the river and seeing a wild elephant cooling off just in front, of sitting in an observation tower high in the trees and watching a Green Imperial Pigeon preening itself nearby, of seeing the flash of a startled deer in the forest while on a night drive or watching a slow loris gazing down with its huge round eyes simply cannot be equalled.

Page 158-159: An egret taking off from the Kinabatangan River.
Page 160-161: The magic of Sabah's underwater world. **Page 162:** A Crested Fireback Pheasant.
Page 163: A bear cat or binturong.
Page 164: An Estuarine Crocodile.
Page 165: A Common Night Heron. **Opposite:** A grimacing orang-utan. **Above:** Macaque mother and baby.



A male orang-utan warns off an intruder with calls and threatening gestures before retreating higher in a tree. Orang-utan are usually shy and gentle, although mature males can be unpredictable in their behaviour.





Left: A male Proboscis monkey seems to be gazing disdainfully down his long nose.

Below: A salt lick in Tabin Forest Reserve attracts animals in search of mineral salts.

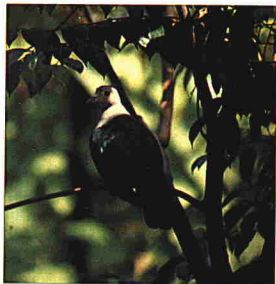
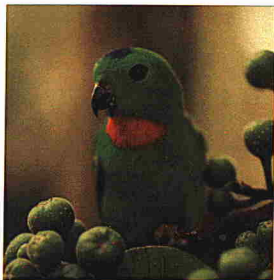
Bottom: The Borneo Rainforest Lodge in Danum Valley offers the chance to discover the rainforest in style.

Opposite: A Barking Deer known locally as a muntjac; two other types of deer are also found in Sabah.

Opposite Below: The rare Asian Two-Horned or Sumatran Rhinoceros.







Above: A Bulbul, one of the 11 varieties of this bird found in Sabah.

Left Top: The Blue-Crowned Hanging Parrot.

Left Centre: A Buffy Fish Owl.

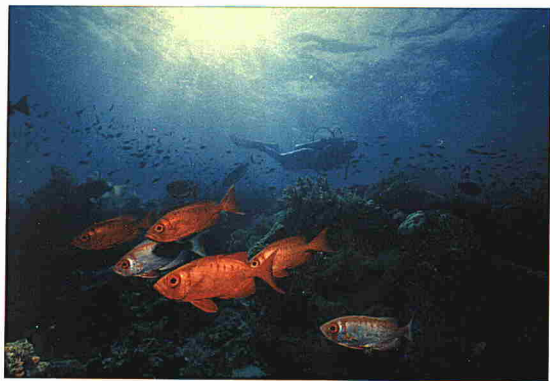
Left: Green Imperial Pigeons are relatively common in lowland forest.



Opposite from Left: Stingless bees at the entrance to their hive; nymph of the stink bug, *Pycanum rubens*; Male Three-Horned Rhinoceros Beetle; man-faced bug or *Catacanthus incarnatus*.
Below: A cloud of Common Grass Yellow Butterflies.





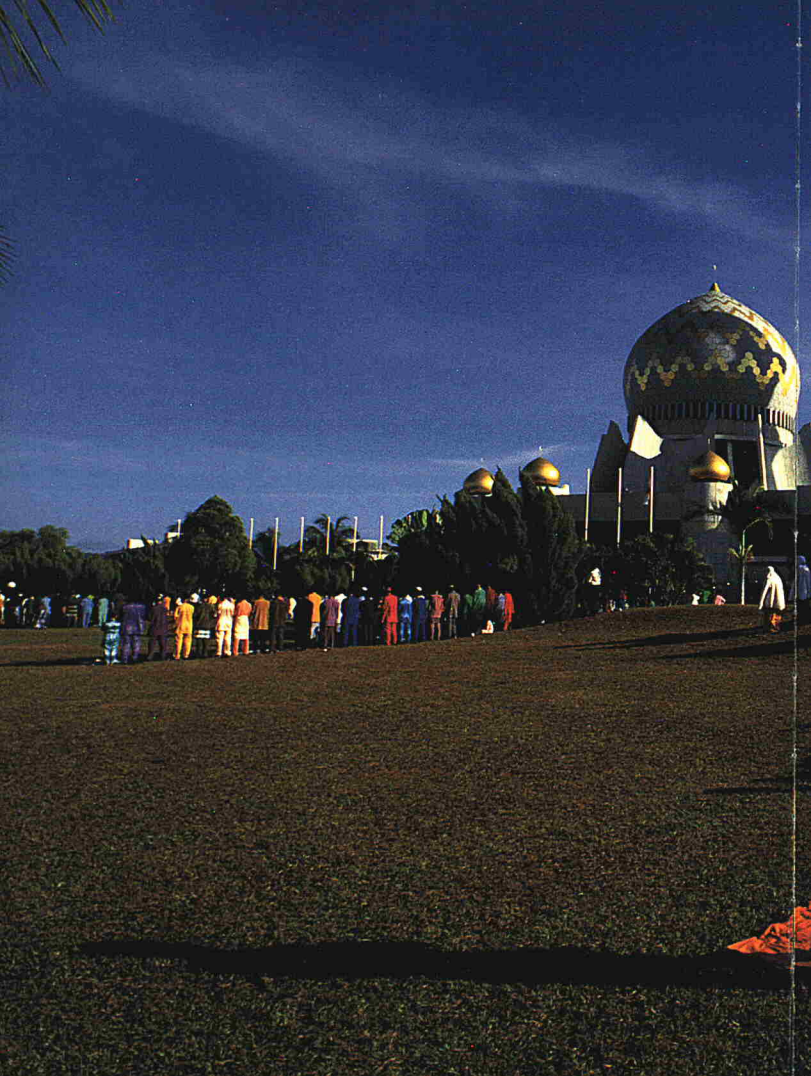


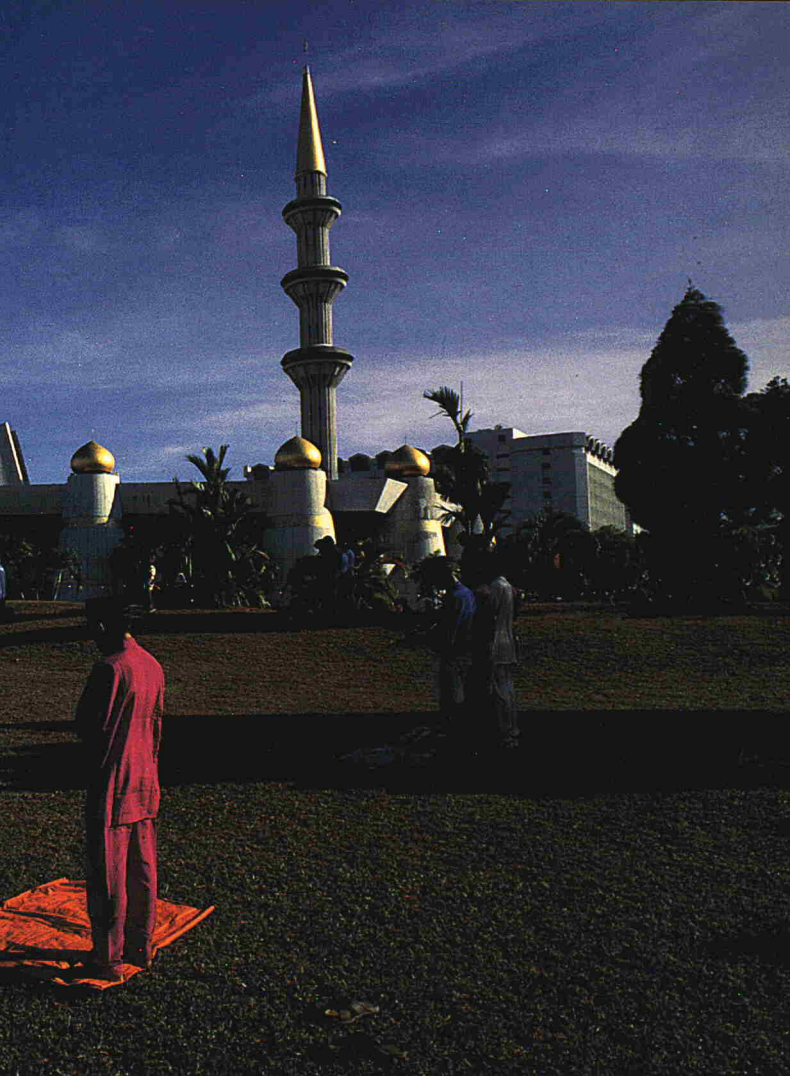


Above: Green Turtles are found in abundance at Pulau Sipadan and remain unconcerned by the presence of nearby scuba divers.

Opposite Top: Brilliant red Squirrel Fish.

Opposite: Bat Fish swimming under a jetty.











The many different ethnic and religious groups living side by side in Sabah make for a wonderfully diverse culture. As the country modernises, however, it is inevitable that certain rituals are less frequently performed and traditional dress is generally reserved for special ceremonial occasions rather than worn everyday. Nonetheless, during festivals and celebrations held throughout the year, the rich fabric

TRADITIONAL RITES AND CELEBRATION

of Sabah's society is dramatically revealed.

Despite their diversity, indigenous Sabahans speak languages from a single major family which is divided into four sub-groups: Dusunic, Murutic, Tidong and

Paitanic. Dusuns comprise the biggest group of indigenous Sabahans, with sub-groups such as the Kadazan, Rungus, Lotud and Kuijau. The so-called Hill People or Muruts, found in southwestern Sabah, are a group of a dozen tribes, including the Timugon, Tagal, Gana and Nabai. The third linguistic family is the Tidong, Muslims living in eastern Sabah. Finally, there are the Paitanic-speaking peoples, mostly inland dwellers, some of whom now refer to themselves as Orang Sungei or River People. The Ida'an, who own rights to the rich birds'-nest caves on Sabah's east coast, are also part of this linguistic group.

Later arrivals who help make up Sabah's rich tapestry of cultures include the Bajau, Muslims who traditionally are coastal people but who have, on the west coast of Sabah, become renowned as cattle farmers and skilled horsemen. Other groups who originally came, like the Bajau, from the southern Philippines included the Iltanun (who are also now known as Iltanun), Suluk, Cagayan and Obian.

The state's cultural cocktail has been further added to with the influx of Chinese settlers over the past century, many of the early arrivals marrying local women and producing children of mixed background. There is also a number of settlers from Indonesia, with Javanese, Buginese, Timorese and people from Flores, as well as a small number of Lun Dayeh who migrated from Kalimantan, the Indonesian portion of Borneo.

With so many different ethnic groups and a diversity of religions, including Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, there are almost endless opportunities for celebration. Sporting events, too, are often colourful affairs, although the biggest celebration of the year is the Harvest Festival, observed at the end of May with rituals to preserve the rice spirit, cultural performances, traditional games and the selection of a Harvest Queen.



Page 178-179: Muslims at Kota Kinabalu's State Mosque on the occasion of Aidil Fitri, known in Malaysia as Hari Raya. **Page 180-181:** A group of Dusun Tindal from the Kota Belud region, with a male priest or bobolian in the foreground. **Opposite:** Ritual priestesses at a rice fertility ceremony in Papar. **Above:** Gongs hang ready for a celebration.



Above: Dusun Tindal ritual specialists in their traditional finery.

Left: A pile of charms and fetishes used in a Dusun Tindal ceremony at Kota Belud.

Opposite Top: Lotud priestesses or tantagas from Tuaran.

Opposite Right: Antique jars known as gusi are venerated by the Lotud, who believe them to possess spirits.

Opposite Far Right: An antique Chinese porcelain jar is among this Lotud priestess's ritual objects.











Page 186-187: A sumazau dance honouring the rice spirit is performed at a balai ceremony at

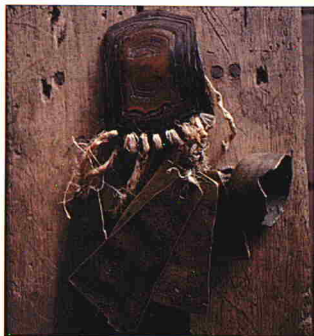
Above: A senior Papar priestess.

Above Right: Beads, shells and a tiny antique jar are worn by a ritual specialist at Papar. Individual antique beads among the strands she is wearing are believed to have the power to cure various ailments, such as snake bite.

Opposite Top: A portion of turtle shell, metal clappers and a broken bell form the gongding, part of the Tambunan Dasun ritual paraphernalia.

Opposite: An elderly Tambunan priestess or bobolian.



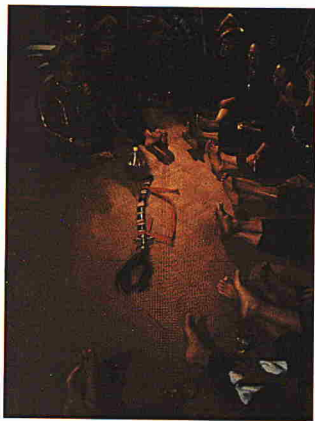




Above: A group of Lobou Muruts from Kampung Sook, South east of Keningau, at a ritual ceremony.

Left: This "smiling stone", a talisman outside a Murut house, is supposed to ward off evil spirits.





Left: A sacred sword sits in the midst of a circle during a Penampang ritual.
Below: A Penampang Kadazan bobohizan leads a chanting group in a ceremony.





Above: Many traditional ceremonies, such as this one being held in a rice field near Kuala Penyu on the Klias Peninsula, involve prayers to ensure a bountiful harvest and to honour the rice spirit.

Left: Chicken, an egg, rice and bananas are all part of the offerings to the rice spirit or Bambaazon.





Above: Beautiful Kadazan/Dusun girls compete for the honour of being chosen the Unduk Ngadau during the annual Pesta Kaamatan or Harvest Festival. The Unduk Ngadau represents the daughter of the Creator, who was sacrificed to provide food for humans.

Right: Rice is still harvested by hand, using a short blade which is discreet enough not to alarm the rice spirit. A small, hand-held sickle is found throughout Southeast Asia, where almost all communities believe that their all-important staple has a soul or spirit.

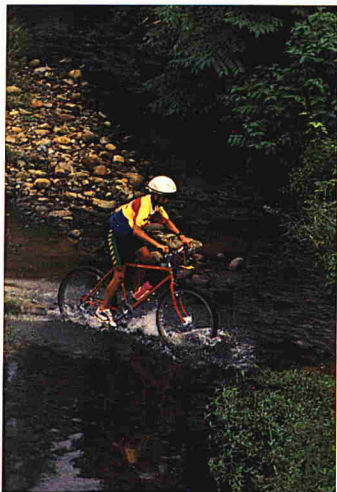






Above: During the Merdeka Day celebrations on the anniversary of the founding of Malaysia, marchers proudly bear the national flag.

Left: Dancers from many different ethnic groups perform during the Merdeka Day celebrations.



Left: Sabah's varied terrain is ideal for many exciting sports, including mountain biking.

Below Left: White water rafting on the Padas river, the most challenging of all Sabah's rivers.

Opposite: The first stage of the Borneo Triathlon, which attracts athletes from around the world.

Opposite Bottom: Dragon boat races are held annually in the calm waters of Likas Bay, in Kota Kinabalu.







Above: The construction of St Michael's Church in Sandakan, the oldest in Sabah, was begun in 1893.



Left: One of Sabah's newest churches, at Limbanak in Penampang district, just outside Kota Kinabalu.

Right: "Lions" lie waiting for dancers to don their costumes and begin the popular dance, an essential part of the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations.

Below: Known as "big head dolls", dancers wearing gay masks appear along with the lions at New Year celebrations and on other festive occasions.



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

This book is a pictorial record of the people and places of Sabah. A project that took 3 exciting & frustrating years to complete. Trekking through the leech infested wet tropical jungles, losing and damaging some Nikon equipment now and then, flying high over Mt. Kinabalu with freezing fingers trying to trigger the shutter release and diving the depths of Sabah's shoreline, drowning my 15mm Nikonos camera & lens. Attended several cultural rituals that not many people have the opportunity to witness and later joined them in merry making. Lost a few good friends in a span of 3 years, these are just some memories a photographer will always cherish. This book is dedicated to my children Lynette & Adrian for their love & understanding when I am away from home on assignments.

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